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# The Unspoken Gender Gap in Youth Parks

By Karen Kristensen, MBCSLA

You might notice that girls, representing half the youth population, are not often seen at outdoor youth recreation facilities. Youth facilities are intended to be good places for all youth to socialize, gain skills and get exercise. However, facilities with a traditional mix of skateboard and/or BMX spaces, basketball hoops, inline hockey courts and volleyball nets are often low on female participants.

As a Park Designer for West Vancouver, I became curious about girls' use of parks when I noticed our youth recreation area at Ambleside doesn't attract girls to active participation, despite our efforts to include girls in the design process. To find out why, I asked girls (aged 12 – 18), mothers, teachers, recreation programmers and youth workers. I also participated in a panel discussion at Recreation Rendezvous 2001 with Jennifer Fenton, Co-Chair of Promotion Plus, Jay Balmer, Youth and Skatepark designer and Sydney Millar, National Coordinator for On the Move to explore these questions:

- A. Where are girls, if not in parks?
- B. What kinds of activities do girls typically like to do and why?
- **C.** What are the barriers to the use of outdoor youth areas by girls?
- D. What conditions have to be in



"Ambleside Boys" — photo by K. Kristensen

place to encourage girls to use the parks?

# Where are the girls?

As with boys, the interest and aptitudes of girls covers a vast range. Physically active girls are most often involved in highly organized group activities including soccer, softball, gymnastics, ice skating, swimming and the like. Girls who are inclined to join groups and classes and have families with time and resources for transportation and fees have access to a huge array of recreation options. A significant number of girls from families with fewer resources to support their involvement in activities lose out. Access to informal, inexpensive

outdoor recreation that takes place in parks seems to be available only to a small number of girls who are very self-assured and athletic. A large subgroup of girls avoid continued on page 2

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The purpose of Sitelines is to provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the profession of Landscape Architecture. Individual opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the BCSLA. parks because of concerns for physical safety as well social concerns related to the nature of competitive sports. Compounding this is the amount of family responsibility girls are expected to take on for babysitting, making dinner and other traditional chores regardless of financial resources. The reality is that only 11% of girls are still physically active by age 16 – 17 (Hay and Donnelly, 1996).

### What girls want

Keeping girls physically active takes encouragement and girls really want encouragement. The "On the Move" program provided by CAAWS (the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity) has found that in recreation programming, "girls want fun, a mix of physical and social activities, input into program design, girls and women only programming, a safe and supportive environment, peer age groupings, basic skill learning, role model leaders, food and choice of clothing and music".

With respect to outdoor recreation, exceptional leadership that taps into what girls want can result in successful opportunities for girls to learn to feel comfortable engaging in outdoor settings and activities. Exposure to comfortable experiences of independent park use provides girls with the confidence to access informal activities that can be taken into adulthood such as mountain biking, in-line skating, basketball, skate boarding, running or hiking. Girls seek moral support in their activities. Part of that support relates to ensuring park spaces feel welcoming and safe. This is where park design comes in.

### What Will Make Parks More "Girl Friendly?"

Inclusive youth facility design provides broad ranges of activities, levels of physical challenges and places to hang out. Inclusive design creates environments that feel and are socially and physically safe. Providing youth with this safety demands that sites be located in the heart of the community in highly



"Ambleside Social Space" — photo by K. Kristensen

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visible, accessible and populated public places. Experience has shown that people like watching youth at play and youth like to feel the comfort of places with high degrees of public surveillance. Busy plazas, recreation and community centres, youth centres and schools that are in the public eye are good places for youth recreation. Within those places, supportive amenities such as telephones, washrooms, drinking fountains and lighting add to a sense of support and security. Incidentally, the things that make public spaces feel safe for girls also provide safety for smaller, shy and less skilled boys as well.

# Variety Works!

Youth park design ideally strives to provide graduated levels of difficulty and visual exposure. Providing

interesting options for beginners and gradual skill development supports informal and programmed activities for girls and boys. A basketball hoop off to the side from the main area will feel more comfortable for the shy and less selfassured girls. Back eddies with lower curbs, rolling terrain and open space for practicing in-line skating or skateboarding is less intimidating for the novice. Variety with lots of beginner terrain makes youth areas more likely to attract both genders and a broader range of young people from the skilled to the novice, or the observer.

# Provide Social Opportunities

Hanging out, telling stories, goofing around and flirting are important aspects of growing up for girls and boys. It should not only be



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allowed, but encouraged in youth parks. Simple things like rain shelters and lots of different, interesting places to sit in small or larger groups makes all youth feel welcome. Grassy knolls, seating nooks, steep steps, sculpture that can be sat on provide a variety of settings for social interaction.

Our challenge as park planners, designers and programmers is to create intriguing socially and physically safe ways for all youth to enjoy the benefits of youth parks. This requires "girl sensitive" programming and design to ease the way for girls in parks and attract a broader range of boys and girls in youth facilities.

# Convocation

By Cornelia Hahn Oberlander, CM, FCSLA, BCSLA, FASLA

# Simon Fraser University June 5, 2002

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, Distinguished Platform Party, Fellow Graduates and Guests: It is with a deep sense of pride and pleasure that I accept this honorary degree and the opportunity to address the Class of 2002. When my family first learned of this event they immediately asked: "How can you deliver an address without your 35mm slide show?" This question prompted me to think of celebrating your graduation on today's World Environment Day. This day was established 30 years ago with the first UN Conference on the Environment, in Stockholm. It focussed on the interdependence of people with their environment. One hundred and eighty nations gathered to warn us of climate change, pollution of streams and rivers, scarcity of water, extinction of plant and animal species, and the ensuing health problems of our planet.

Today Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN, calls on us all to shoulder responsibility for the environment and refers to World Environment Day as "one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action." Nowhere is this more urgent than here in our Lower Mainland region. Your daily ascent to Academia on the Mountain gave you the pleasure of being close to nature in all seasons and of entering a well-planned, man-made environment. This built form, thoughtfully planned and designed by the architects Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, began in 1963. It allows all of us to pursue studies in an environment resembling Plato's Academy.



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Centuries ago Aristotle urged US to acquire sound moral and ethical values by saying "best is he who makes his own discoveries; good is he who listens to the wise." These words are still appropriate in today's very difficult times.

In the next two decades twice as many

people will live on the same amount of land in the Lower Mainland. We

Cornelia Oberlander —

drawing by Cameron Murray

will have twice as many cars, yet we will increasingly need more open space for our recreation. Land space is finite and human needs are infinite. Vancouver's air is altered by an increasing quantity of car exhausts. We have to change our lifestyle if we want to reduce the air quality destruction. We have to learn this locally, nationally and globally; to enjoy good health we have to change our way of living and working. We have to trade in our beloved SUV for something simple: perhaps a Mini Minor running on hydrogen. I hope Canada will bear witness to this idea by signing the Kyoto Accord.

In the next decade just east of here a new community will arise. I want to commend the Board of Governors and the University administration for its bold "Green Building Guidelines" implying respect for the unique Mountain environment, as well as the concept that land is a resource and not a commodity for sale. Therefore I am encouraged by SFU's important Vision Statement for the proposed UniverCity which states: "Ownership of all land will remain with the University and properties become available to developers through long term leases." Now, as concerned citizens, we must watch how the

developers will perform. Learning about the envi-

ronment should start in pre-kindergarten where our individual behaviour is shaped. In the last decades we have seen some changes: no smoking in certain places, reduced water consumption in public washrooms, sorting of garbage, lawn sprinkling regulations, and recycling procedures. This is a beginning, but not enough. We must revise our building standards and codes to construct more efficiently and encourage a re-use of materials. A smarter use of public transportation is essential or walking to our destinations. Better still, neighbourhood planning which supports a human scale can make that car trip

unnecessary by bringing living and working places closer together. It is increasingly important to choose where we live, where we work, where we shop, where we send our kids to school and where we find recreation. These functions are interdependent and should be planned as an integrated and environmentally responsible community. We must learn to live more modestly and yet we must not lose sight of our innate need to remain close to nature. I am encouraged by a recent initiative by BC Hydro to harness energy from ocean waves on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Hydro expects the project, the first of its kind in Canada, to begin generating electricity from ocean waves by 2004.

The Bible tells us: "Do not hurt the earth, neither the sea nor the trees." This wisdom should instill in us the joy of life to carry on and guide our work and stimulate our imagination. I dream of Green Cities with Green Buildings where rural and urban activities live in harmony. This means community gardens, urban forests, river parks, nature reserves, woodlands, and usable Green Roofs. It means the application of old and new environmental technologies to purify waste water, and restore waste sites with plants. It means a collaboration among professionals so that building and site become one and the city fits the region. "Achieving a fit" between the built form and the land has been my dictum. This can only be done if all our design-related professions cooperatively demonstrate their relevance in meeting the enormous developmental challenges facing our increasingly crowded urban



# Convocation ... continued from page 4



regions. The planet's survival is at stake. Global population will double in this century and two-thirds will live in the city; while all of us will live by the city.

What then are our tasks? It used to be the Three R's: Reading, Riting, and Rithmetic. Now we must add three more R's: Respect for each other and for nature, Responsibility for the Environment, and Risk-taking with innovation. How do we implement these tasks? We need Vision, Imagination and Motivation or VIM. The planet needs peacemakers, healers and restorers — people with moral courage who will make our cities better places to live in and who are willing to take Risks in achieving it. As leaders of the next generation, you should also be guided by the 3 P's: Patience, Politeness, and Persistence. These 3 P's will allow you to believe in yourselves and to work with others.

## IN CONCLUSION

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, fellow Academics, honoured guests, allow me to congratulate all those who have worked hard for their degrees, and to their parents, faculty and friends who have supported them in more ways than we will ever know. I am deeply grateful to this University which saw fit to include me in its ranks of honorary graduates, a singular honour indeed. Let me assure you that we, the graduates of 2002 will celebrate not only our graduation but also World Environment Day by applying what we have learned at Simon Fraser University. So go forth with your newly acquired knowledge and make the world a better place to live. You will make Canada a country continuing at peace, committed to the sustainability of its people and their environment, and thereby achieving leadership among the nations.

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I would like to conclude with the spirited words of Doctor Seuss.

"Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! You're off and away! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go. And will you succeed? Yes! You will indeed! (98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed) So . . . be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea, you're off to Great Places! Today is your day! Your Mountain is waiting. So . . . get on your way!"

("Oh The Places You'll Go", By Doctor Seuss) 🖾

# Guenter Edel Remembered

By Clive L. Justice, LMBCSLA, FCSLA

I can't remember whether Guenter took any of the pre BCSLA exam courses we gave at UBC prior to his taking the eight-part Pre-Examination to qualify for registration as a Regular Member of the BCSLA, but I do remember persuading him to take the exams. I was sure if he became a registered landscape architect he would be able to claim a salary increase in his position as acting Parks Director for the city of New Westminster. After Guenter became registered I believe he did get a substantial raise and it helped his qualifications to full confirmation as Parks Director.

Guenter's pride and joy were the hillside adventure playgrounds he created in several of the residential areas of the Queen City. One playground I remember was a fabulous hillside playground of logs that he showed me at the city's southwest end, somewhere before you got to the Queensboro Bridge. I think there was a bit of competition going on between Heinz Berger, West Van's Parks Director, Dirk Ostinde Park's superintendent for North Vancouver District and New Westminster's Guenter over who could design and build the safest and most creative play structures using found and natural materials. All these great creations by Heinz, Dirk and Guenter lost out to the prefabricated play equipment that made liability insurable for worried city and municipal legal departments who looked over their shoulders to the south.

For many years Guenter and his family lived in one of New Westminster's old heritage houses continued on page 6





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# Guenter Edel Remembered . . . continued from page 5

across from the great collection of trees in Queen's Park. This collection of coastal conifers, Eastern and European deciduous trees has some of the oldest trees in the lower mainland planted well before those at Riverview. Guenter was very proud that he was the steward of some of the oldest park planted trees in BC, those in Queen's Park.

In 1979 it was Guenter's turn to host the international Northwest Parks and Recreation Association's annual September training institute. It consisted of workshops and local park tours on design, management and maintenance of parks and park facilities held for parks supervisory staff from Northwest parks departments in Oregon, Washington and B. C. For one workshop Guenter asked New Westminster Architect Jim Carlberg and myself (there was no resident New Westminster landscape architect then) to give a paper on the theme of Dollar Saving Park Design; Jim for park facilities and I on park site design and planting. I heard afterwards that Guenter and his New Westminster

Parks team had put on one of the best training institute sessions ever held by the NWPRA. I also heard Guenter did an even greater job when New Westminster hosted the Canada Games in the 1980's.

Guenter Edel was helped by membership in our profession to secure an increase salary and to qualify as Parks Director; but this was repaid tenfold by his dedicated and long service to enriching the livability and beauty of the urban environment in New Westminster. True to the standards and ethics of our profession he made improvements that leave the landscape better than he found it. Guenter Edel we thank you.

Guenter Edel (1929 - 2002)

# Why CE?

By Yolanda Leung, MBCSLA

In 1996 the CSLA Board of Governors adopted a policy and subsequently developed a series of recommendations on Continuing Education. The BCSLA Code of Ethics (1996) asked landscape architects to continue their education in order to maintain competence and to advance the body of knowledge within Landscape Architecture. In 1997, as part of the Landscape Architecture Project (LAP I), several workgroups convened to research and develop recommendations in many areas of interest.

## The Continuing Education Committee took the initiative to:

1. Research the requirements for continuing education among associated professions and affiliate associations.

- Compile a general list of continuing education facilities and programs available to the professional.
- **3.**Enable members to locate opportunities where Continuing Education credits are available.
- 4. Research opportunities with lower mainland and provincewide education institutions to aid in organising, administering and advertising BCSLA Continuing Education Programs.
- 5. Work towards a mandatory Continuing Education Program.

Since that time, the CE Committee has presented a Voluntary Continuing Education Proposal that was approved by members of the BCSLA at the 2001 Annual General Meeting. We had approximately 30 completed Voluntary Continuing Education Monitoring Forms returned for 2001. We are now half way through the three year voluntary phase of the program. We have also helped to shape the newly revised bylaws accepted by BCSLA at the 2002 Annual General Meeting.

# What's New?

- The BCSLA formally endorsed the City Program at SFU Continuing Education where BCSLA member who attend various lectures, seminar and programs may request to have their CE Credits recorded.
- **2.** The BCSLA has committed to the organisation of a joint conference with other land professional organisations including:



# LARE

### By Joseph Fry, MBCSLA

Earlier in May of this year, the BCSLA traveled to Seattle to observe review sessions for the Landscape Architectural Registration Examination (LARE) organized by the Washington Chapter of the ASLA. Over the course of two weekends, four of the five exam sections were reviewed for approximately 25 candidates, including at least two from BC and one from Oregon. As an introduction to the LARE, these annual sessions have proved invaluable to candidates in Washington resulting in a marked improvement in exam success rates within the state. For this reason, the BCSLA observed these sessions with the intention of investigating the feasibility of administering LARE review sessions in BC.

# **Content of the Sessions**

As ASLA Washington Chapter president and session instructor Brooks Kolb described, the sessions are "intended to familiarize candidates with materials covered in the exam and how to prepare for the exam. They are led by co-teachers who have recently completed the exam process themselves, at least within the last two to three years." Kolb further elaborated that "it is assumed that the candidates are well-versed in the principles of landscape architecture. The sessions are not designed to be comprehensive training sessions. If you need help with grading, you'll have to get that elsewhere.'

Each session began with a general review of the content of Sections A, C, D and E of the LARE (Section B was not covered as it has traditionally been a less difficult section). The information packets included: a list of publications for studying, a recommended toolbag for the exam, on-line resources, and sample vignettes from the LARE. The Section A, Legal and Administrative Aspects of Practice review included an evaluation of general principles and tactics to completing the 160 multiple-choice questions. Section C, Planning and Site Design, involved a review of several vignettes, key concepts, and some time-saving techniques. Section D, Materials and Methods of Construction was recently changed to a multiplechoice format, and included an exhaustive review of the materials listed in the LARE Reference Manual. During the review session for Section E, Grading and Drainage, candidates had time to complete two quick vignette questions and review them for errors.

In conversation with participants, the sessions introduced several previously unknown formats in the exam and consequently helped to allay fears that many had of the exam process. But in addition to familiarization with the LARE, the sessions also gave candidates a first opportunity to connect with each other and form study groups, and also revealed areas where candidates have weaknesses that required more study time. Mark Vaughan of Vaughan Landscape Planning and Design in West Vancouver traveled to Seattle for the first two sessions and was impressed with the amount of exam-relevant knowledge provided. "The sample vignettes and tips included in the handouts were excellent at capturing the essence of the exam. I also felt it was very important to have someone teaching the session who had written the exam recently - the information

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they imparted from their own experience was really valuable."

Although each session delved into material specific to each area of study, some universal concepts emerged from all of these sessions:

# Start the study process early.

Cramming for the LARE does not work! The session leaders recommend starting the study process at least three months prior to the exam. Allow time to collect materials, organize a schedule, study and write sample vignettes, order diagnostic vignettes, and relax immediately before the exam.

# Organize study groups.

The general consensus among the session leaders was that study groups greatly increase the chance of success on the LARE. This study strategy allows candidates to share information, run mock exams, and by sharing resources, reduce the cost of buying study materials.

# Know the LARE Reference Manual.

The LARE includes a standardized manual for issues pertaining to professional codes, zoning, setback requirements, universal access, and materials. It is the definitive reference for all questions in the exam and should be thoroughly understood if not memorized. The manual comes in an orientation package for all candidates, and is also available on-line at CLARB.org.





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### LARE

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# Understand what the LARE is testing.

As CLARB describes on their web site, the exam is "designed to test for a minimum competency in a specific area of knowledge which is important to the health, safety and welfare of the public." Many candidates make the mistake of embellishing their designs beyond what is explicitly asked for and fail as a result. Familiarization with the exam objectives is fundamental to success.

### Ask for help.

The BCSLA office offers assistance in preparing for the examination process, and can direct you to sources for study material. If you work with other registered landscape architects, most are happy to provide advice based on their own LARE experience.

# Review Sessions in British Columbia

As the Seattle experience has demonstrated, fostering greater success with the LARE and offering auidance to future landscape architects are some of the benefits of these review sessions. Because of the positive comments offered by participants; the BCSLA will, over the coming year, explore the feasibility of running similar sessions at home. These review sessions will follow the Washington model; but will also acknowledge the challenges of geography in our province and could be complemented by on-line classes or discussion boards hosted by BCSLA.org. If you are considering writing the LARE, or if you are interested in getting involved as a session teacher, we would like to hear your comments or questions regarding

LARE review sessions. Feel free to contact Tara at the BCSLA office by email at admin@bcsla.org.

# **On-Line Resources:**

### CLARB.org

The Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards administers the LARE in 46 states and 2 provinces. This is a good starting point for information.

### BCSLA.org

Our own website has downloadable files outlining the road to licensure in BC, and the administrative requirements for writing the LARE in our province.

### ASLA.org

The ASLA website has links to several LARE guides, including an excellent downloadable document called LARE: A Guide for Professional Development, Virginia L. Russell, Editor.

### Why CE?

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PIBC, AIBC, BCLS, BCAAIC, and REIBC with a working title of "Land Summit 2004".

- CE credit opportunities are identified in regular email updates and in Sitelines.
- Information on continuing education is available through the password protected portion of the BCSLA website.
- 5. We are considering an on-line

Monitoring Form in the Members Only page of the website, for easy tracking of CE credits.

# What's Next?

The primary focus is a smooth transition to the mandatory continuing education program. Beginning in 2004, Continuing Education will be mandatory for Landscape Architects. Here are the next steps.

- Prepare for mandatory Continuing Education.
- 2. Continue to send lecture, course and program information to

BCSLA for distribution on the email bulletin.

- **3.** Continue to refine the CE Monitoring Form (paper and electronic) to make completion, submission and tracking of credits easier.
- Enlist more participants on the CE Sub-Committee to share the work.
- Establish a Volunteer Steering Committee for the Land Forum 2004.
- **6.** Develop and organise CE programs for BCSLA members.

# noticeboard



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# **BCSLA 2002 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

August	June LARE Results Available On-Line
September 12 – 15	CLARB Annual General Meeting New Orleans, LA
September 13	SFU Urban Design Certificate Program Cohort Application Deadline
September 18	BCSLA Public Sector Sub-Committee Meeting
September 18 – 19	CanWest Hort Show Vancouver, BC
September 20	Washington Chapter ASLA Fall Conterence & Expo Seattle, WA
September 21	BCSLA Board of Directors Special Meeting
September 26 – 29	National Association for Olmstead Parks Meeting Montreal, QC
October 7 – 13	IFLA World Congress in the Baltic
October 10	LARE Order Deadline for December 2002 Sitting
October 19 - 22	American Society of Landscape Architects Annual General Meeting San Luis Obispo, CA
October 25	BCSLA Board of Examiners Sitting (date tentative) UBC MacMillan Building — Vancouver, BC
November 21	Harry J. Webb Lecture (date tentative) UBC Robson Square Campus — Vancouver, BC
November 22 – 23	CSLA Board of Governor's Meeting Vancouver, BC
November 22 – 23	BC Landscape & Nursery Association Management Symposium & Think Tank Vancouver, BC
December	BCSLA Festive Season Party
December 9 – 10	LARE Candidate Sitting Vancouver, BC
December 31	BCSLA Membership Dues Payable BCSLA CE Monitoring Form Submission Deadline

noticeboard





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### **Sitelines Annual Guest Editor**

Your Communications Sub-Committee is looking for a creative Guest Editor for the 2003 Sitelines Annual. We are hoping someone from the Interior, Vancouver Island or northern BC will volunteer to serve as the Editor focusing on the profession in their area. This is your opportunity to highlight an aspect of the profession that you feel is important. The Editor will be responsible for composing the Editors Message, identifying articles and submitting a draft outline for the Board to review. The outline should focus on what the content will be. Your time commitment is minimal as most of the technical work is done by BCSLA and the publishers. As the Guest Editor your task is the creative part of the Annual. Contact the BCSLA office if you are interested in helping out. **BCSLA CE Credits Available.** 



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