

On Board the AAARC

AUGUST 2006

THE A. AUSTIN AMERINE RETREAT CENTER NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2



"to create a peaceful, nurturing environment conducive to the spiritual and personal development of people and organizations from all spiritual and cultural heritages"

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New Proposals Approved for the AAARC

Recently the Board of Directors spent a day out on the property with our advisor architect Paul Gilger, to begin the site planning process. As they explored possible building sites for the lodge, campground and small satellite lodges, discussion also ensued over where to place things such as meditation sites or pavilions for special events such as weddings. One exciting proposal advanced by Paul was to create an over the water pavilion on the edge of one of the ponds. It would serve as both a place for special events such as weddings but also as a meditation place. Additionally it was discussed and approved to create a path around the pond that contained shrines to the major religions of the world. The Board immediately saw this area as a destination spot for visitors to the Retreat Center.



Location of the Future Water Pavilion and Spiritual Path

Several entirely new concepts also emerged during the course of the day. These developed into the approval of two proposals that will expand the inclusiveness of the Retreat Center and truly make the Retreat Center a welcoming place for people from all spiritual and cultural heritages. On top of one of the tallest mounds on the property the Board approved the building of a Peace Pagoda. It would be one of only a few in North America and could become a future pilgrimage site for Buddhists and others from around the world. The design would be simple and open to take in the beauty of the surrounding area and be a place to reflect and meditate on bringing peace to the world.

The second concept approved was to create a sweat lodge that could be used for either Native American ceremonies or other types of sweat meditations. Several possible locations were discussed but the actual location and design is still to be determined.

In the Next Issue of On Board

Board Member Profile

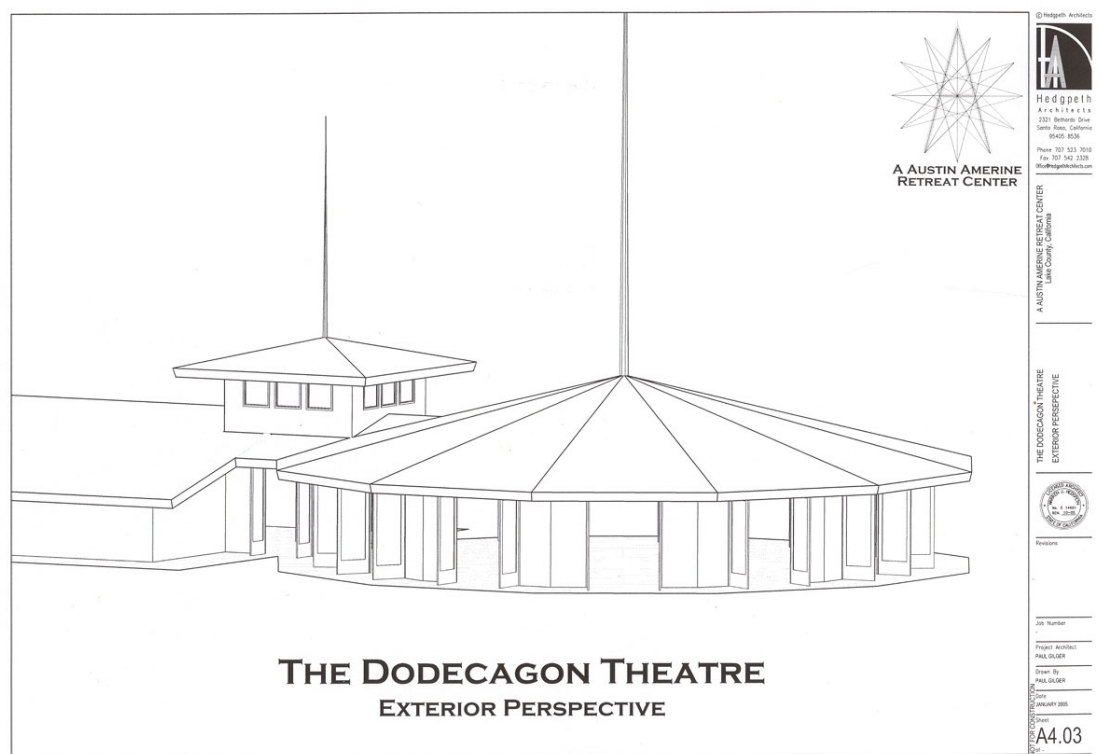
The Latest News

More Conceptual Drawings

Local History

Building Concepts - Part 2

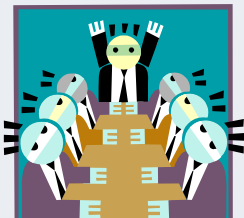
In the last issue of *On Board the AAARC* we highlighted the conceptual drawing of the main lodge as designed by Paul Gilger, one of our advisors. Below is the concept for the main gathering space which will be at the end of the main lodge building. This gathering space will be a signature building for the AAARC.



Designed to have a maximum capacity of 300 people the interior will be sloped down to the center with moveable chairs. The space could be configured for "in the round" or semi-circular gatherings. All of the doors will be French type glass doors allowing for an almost 360 degree view of the surrounding countryside. Built as a 12 sided building it symbolically encompasses many spiritual concepts that the number twelve embodies in many beliefs throughout the world. For example the twelve apostles in Christianity, twelve signs of the zodiac, twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve Imams in Shi'a Islam, the twelve Olympians in ancient Greek mythology, etc.

A spire rising from atop the structure is designed to be visible from almost anywhere on the property and sits atop a skylight in the center of the roof. The spire also doubles as a lightning rod and communications tower. A tentative site has been located for this building that will command a stunning view of the retreat center property

In our next issue we will highlight another aspect of the main building complex.



AAARC Board of Directors

Keith Kunkel, President
Jill Nelson, Vice-President
Karl Vidt, Secretary/Treasurer
Cindy Acker
Don Ross

2 vacancies (seeking persons with a background in fundraising, marketing, or community building. If you are interested in serving on the AAARC Board please contact Keith Kunkel)

AAARC Advisory Board

Paul Gilger
Terri Echelbarger
Tim Webb
Kathy Zalewski
Jennifer Kruse

Staff

Mel Johnson, Executive Dir



News from the AAARC

Attention Southern California Supporters

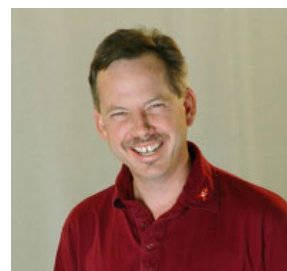
The AAARC has been accepted into the Ralphs Supermarket's Community Contribution Program. If you shop at Ralphs here is a quick and easy way to help us out. Simply log on to www.Ralphs.com and click on Community Contribution, click on Participant and follow the easy steps to enroll. Be sure to complete all the requested information including our NPO # which is 82712. When you shop with your Ralphs card a percentage of your purchase goes to the Retreat Center without any cost to you!! And remember if you are an Albertson's shopper a similar program is available to you as well. See our website www.aaarc.org for further details.

Mistletoe Sales Already!

Believe it or not Christmas is coming!! Last year the AAARC harvested mistletoe from the property, packaged and sold it. Each bag included a sprig of mistletoe tied to a red ribbon and a description on the history and mythology surrounding this ancient custom. Organizations and individuals who bought these bags were very pleased and we are now taking orders for this holiday season! Here is an opportunity to help out the AAARC and make a little money for your organization by purchasing from us and reselling them to your members or just pre-order some mistletoe for yourself. Contact Mel Johnson for further details.

New Board Member Added

Don Ross is the newest member to join the AAARC Board of Directors. Don is the CEO of OptiWell Inc., a company that provides community health education in schools and businesses and is a training center for the American Safety and Health Institute. Don began teaching as an HIV educator in 1991 and is now an expert in blood borne pathogens. He ran programs and trained speakers for many agencies in northern and southern California. In 1998 he was hired by the San Diego Red Cross, cross-trained as a CPR and Child Care instructor, quickly becoming one of their most popular workplace instructors due to his unique use of humor to drive a point home. In Feb 2006, he returned home to northern California to expand OptiWell. Don is also a Buddhist and an accomplished webmaster and brings many skills to the AAARC Board.



Yahoo Newsletter Mailing List Created

Because our email list has grown so large, we have created a Yahoo Groups mailing list to avoid having the AAARC newsletter bounced as spam. We were having problems with certain email providers who no longer allow email that is sent to multiple addresses. In addition this group list allows us to conduct polls and post pictures of the progress of the Retreat Center. If you know of someone who would like to receive the newsletter have them go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aaarc/join> to sign up.

Contact Us



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Road Repairs and Improvements Completed

After months of work the repairs to AAARC's road system have been completed. Damage from last winter's devastating storms included washouts, slumping, small land and rock slides, and deep rutting. The repair and improvement work cost close to \$50,000 but has resulted in a vastly improved road. If you would like to donate to the repair fund please contact Mel Johnson. The following photos show a small amount of the extensive work that was done.



Slumping Along Road



Slides removed and Road Widened



Before and After



Drainage Improved and Road Widened Along the Entire Length

If you know of others who would like to receive a copy of *On Board* or you do not want to receive future copies of this newsletter please send us an email at newsletter@aaarc.org and let us know.

Supporting the AAARC

Current Needs

Volunteers:

To assist with work on the property



Items:

Office Supplies



Chainsaw



Ways to Donate

There are many ways to support the AAARC. Please go to our website www.AAARC.org for more details on how to sign up.

Indirect Donations

On Line shopping

The AAARC is listed with the charity shopping mall, www.Igive.com which acts as a portal for hundreds of well known stores such as Best Buy, Barnes and Noble, and Office Depot.

Albertsons and Ralphs Supermarkets

The AAARC is a member of the Albertsons Community Partners program and the Ralphs Community Contribution program. If you shop at these grocery stores a percentage of your purchase is given to the AAARC at no cost you.

EBay

The AAARC is listed with EBay's charitable giving arm www.MissionFish.org Link your EBay ID to Mission Fish and select the A. Austin Amerine Retreat Center as the recipient of from 1 -100% of your sale.

Direct donations

It is not too late to consider making a pledge to AAARC for 2006. Remember all donations to the AAARC are tax deductible. Go to www.aaarc.org and follow the directions.

Here are some ways your direct financial gifts can help:

\$50 will buy 6 pounds of native grass and wildflower seed to heal road scars

\$100 will buy 12 bales of straw for erosion control

\$150 will buy a tent for our first program event

\$300 will buy needed hand tools

\$500 will make a payment to our road contractor

\$1,000 will surface 300 feet of our 15000 foot road

\$1,500 will buy a storage container for tools and supplies

\$2,000 will pay the liability insurance on the property

\$2,500 will pay the 2006 property taxes

\$5,000 will pave the entrance

Volunteer Work

We are looking for volunteers to help out in a variety of tasks. If you are interested in assisting us in building the vision please contact Mel Johnson or Keith Kunkel.

*AAARC President Keith says:
Have a Great Labor Day
Weekend!!*

