Cornell University celebrates 75 years of planning
By George Homsy

The first planning lectures at Cornell University took place in 1918. It took another 17 years before the first planning classes were regularly taught. That 1935 program, the first formal planning instruction at the school, consisted of a full series of lectures featuring architecture, landscape architecture and engineering professors.

Last month, on October 15 and 16, the Department of City and Regional Planning celebrated 75 years of planning instruction at Cornell University. The festivities included talks by luminaries such as former Cleveland planner Norm Krumholtz and APA head Paul Farmer.

Though planning would start at Cornell University in 1935, it would be six years before the first master’s degree was awarded. Two students received a

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The New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act: Problem or Opportunity?
By Glenn Gidaly, AICP

Professional planners have always been in the forefront of advocating for innovative planning techniques and methods: form-based codes, transit-oriented development, senior overlay districts and, of course, Smart Growth.

“Smart Growth” has been viewed as a progressive, locally-based, logical and practical guide to planning and development. Conversely, “Smart Growth” has been also seen as government intrusion, as a means to limit private property rights or a conspiracy against our economy.

So, what exactly is “Smart Growth” and how will it affect your communities? As some have said, “I do not know what it is, but I will know it when I see it”. And,

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Congratulations New York Upstate APA Chapter 2010 Award Winners

Comprehensive Planning (two awards):
Lewis County Comprehensive Plan
Building UB: The Comprehensive Physical Plan for the University at Buffalo

Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice:
City of Rochester, Midtown Redevelopment Project

Planning Excellence Award for Grassroots Initiative: Experiencing it All from Mountain to Valley - A Raquette River Corridor Blueway Trail

Planning Excellence Award for Implementation:
Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan

Planning Excellence Award for Innovation in Sustainable Places: City of Albany Bicycle Master Plan, 2009

Outstanding Student Project (two awards):
Tioga County Resource Binder: Drilling in the Marcellus Shale (Cornell University)

Kid Corridors, Taking Steps to School: An Active Commuting Plan for the Williamsville Central School District (University at Buffalo)

Distinguished Leadership, Citizen Planner: Joanne Choboy and William Choboy, Town of Porter

2010 Distinguished Leadership, Elected Official: Laura P. Hackathorn, Trustee Village of Hamburg

Distinguished Leadership, Michael J. Krasner Professional Planner Award: Robert G. Shibley, AICP, University at Buffalo

Michael J. Krasner Memorial Scholarship: Tyler Mekus, University at Buffalo

Chapter Work Plan
By Ellen Parker, AICP

This August, the New York Upstate Chapter Board held a held 2-day workshop meeting in Utica. As part of our association with the national American Planning Association, each chapter is required to have a chapter work plan (for APA purposes, New York City is its own state). For several years the board has noticed that we are not keeping up to date on this plan. Under the current challenging financial climate, having an effective work plan is more important than ever. As a chapter, we are facing the pressures of additional duties, including added costs associated with the new certification maintenance (CM) program. We have had cut-backs in financial support from national APA and membership is falling. Like many other APA chapters, we thought it was time that we rolled up our sleeves and began the process of taking a hard look at how we, as a chapter with sections, operate.

The workshop was a first step. Moving forward, we have established a number of committees to look at a range of issues that may impact our members. Below is a very brief summary of issues addressed and the committees that will be created. We welcome your assistance in these efforts.

Membership: We recognize that the chapter exists to serve our members. We want our activities to be relevant, useful and enjoyable. We also want to increase the number of practicing planners who see the benefits of membership. We would also like to encourage more planners to get involved with section and chapter activities, and offer opportunities for participation that do not involve the level of commitment associated with being a board member. This committee is exploring ways to achieve those goals.

Outreach: The goal of this committee is to develop improved ways to reach out to non-planners and communicate the value and importance of planning in

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Healthy Planning, Healthy Living
By Douglas Appler, AICP

This year, the keynote address at the annual NY Upstate APA Chapter Conference explored the relationship between the built environment and levels of physical activity. Dr. Ann Forsyth, a professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, provided conference attendees in Niagara Falls with ideas about the ways that planners can improve the physical, mental and social well being of the communities in which they work.

Forsyth introduced the concept of the Health Impact Assessment and suggested that planners integrate this tool into their planning processes. Just as an Environmental Impact Assessment requires stakeholders to measure the possible effects of a proposal on the local environment, a Health Impact Assessment gauges the potential impact of on the community’s health. Items to be examined range from social networks to air quality. Forsyth suggested that a Health Impact Assessment can be included when planners and the public set community goals, collect and analyze data, and draft, implement and evaluate policies or proposals.

A list of items on a Health Impact Assessment might include locations of nearby parks in relation to local residential areas, location of homes near major highways, or accessibility to supermarkets. Forsyth maintains a Design for Health website (http://designforhealth.net) which contains ideas and instructions for integrating a Health Impact Assessment into the planning process.

Forsyth also emphasized the relationship between the physical environment and the behavior of the public as it relates to making choices for healthy living, that relationship is often overemphasized at the expense of the equally effective interventions that can be made through public policy. Giving the example of how high prices for parking can discourage auto-based traffic, Forsyth illustrated how even when uncoupled from any environmental change, decisions made in the realm of policy can be highly effective at encouraging healthier decisions by local residents.

In addition to the Design for Health website, Forsyth maintains a Healthy Metropolis blog at: http://healthymetropolis.blogspot.com.

Appler is a PhD candidate at Cornell University.

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Dr. Ann Forsyth gave the keynote address at the 2010 NY Upstate APA Conference. She discussed health impact assessments for communities. Photo credit: Gary Palumbo.

Cornell 75th Celebration cont’d
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Master’s of Regional Planning degree before the end of World War Two. Then, in 1947, the first full class was admitted to the master’s program as the Department of City and Regional Planning became official.

One member of that first class was John Reps. Now a professor emeritus at Cornell University, Reps opening address traced the history of the department and tracked it across the history of planning in New York State and across the country.

Other returning alumni included Norm Krumholtz, who led the charge of equity planning in Cleveland, and Rob Young, a University of Oregon professor who oversees a student effort to help communities plan for economic and environmental sustainability. Graduate and former professor Ken Reardon spoke about the massive effort by Cornell students to plan poor communities in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Honored over the weekend were three stalwarts of progressive planning who are retiring this year: Pierre Clavel, Porus Olpadwala and Lourdes Beneria. In 1987, Beneria became the first woman tenured in the department.
New Chapter Website to Launch
By Mark Castiglione, AICP

The Upstate Chapter will be launching a new website shortly. This update is long overdue and will help us to better coordinate and communicate. The new website reorients navigation so that our members can easily find information they need including CM opportunities and chapter/section events.

We will be using the website’s blog function to manage job postings, rfps, submissions. Those wishing to post can simply upload their content to the blog. All blog functions and the calendar have RSS feeds enabled so people can subscribe to receive automatic updates when new content or events are added to website.

The website’s calendar function and events listing feature includes Google maps to generate directions and will enable us to link to eventbrite so that we can more easily manage facilitate conference or other event registrations. Those wishing to add events to the calendar, please contact the Chapter’s staff consultant, Tanya Zwahlen at twahlen@frontiernet.net. We will continue to explore ways to maximize the potential of the website to provide better services, galvanize advocacy and to provide more timely information. Those interested in serving on the Chapter’s website subcommittee, please contact Mark Castiglione mark.castiglione@hudsongreenway.state.ny.us.

Chapter Board Retreat cont’d continued from page 2

New York State. Possible options include development of a brochure about planning, outreach to students, and better use of press releases about events and successes. We are looking at possible opportunities for greater coordination with organizations such as ASLA, and ways to reach out to organizations such as Association of Towns and NYCOM.

Advancement of the Profession: On a related effort, a committee is looking at ways to increase awareness of the planning profession. This committee will explore a range of options, from better PR to the option of a professional licensure for planners.

Schools: Our chapter has ties to the three universities with accredited planning programs (SUNY at Albany, SUNY at Buffalo and Cornell). We want to strengthen those relationships and look into developing ties to other schools with planning-related programs.

Legislative Agenda/ Issue Advocacy: Our new Director of Legislative Affairs and an appointed board member will be creating a committee to review legislative issues and develop an outreach plan for members who wish to get involved with influencing proposed state and federal legislation.

Awards: This committee will look at how we organize the awards program, including criteria, categories and organization of the awards ceremony.

Pending results of these committees, the chapter board will be looking at organizational issues, examining how best to organize the chapter into sections to meet the needs of our members. This committee will also look at how best to accomplish joint tasks, such as the conference, and explore how the Chapter can support local section activities.

Our goal is to make APA more relevant and useful for our members. We encourage your input on our efforts, and any participation you can offer.
Paul Farmer’s Reflections on Cornell and the Profession of Planning

On October 15th and 16th, the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University celebrated its 75th anniversary. A number of alumni returned to join the celebration, including the current Chief Executive Officer of the American Planning Association, Paul Farmer. Farmer spoke to alumni, faculty and current students about his career in planning and offered reflections on the profession. Below are edited excerpts from this session.

Getting into planning and into Cornell
I found out in 11th grade of high school that there was this profession call city planning. I found out in Shreveport, Louisiana after play practice one night. A kid’s dad was driving us home and on the back shelf of the car was the new master plan for metropolitan Shreveport. The father said, “I don’t have any use for that, if you want to take that home, go right ahead.” My parents recognized the name of the consultant and the next time Arch Winter was in town I met with him. Arch told me all about this wonderful profession called city planning. At that time his advice was that you have to get a civil engineering degree or an architecture degree. (That was the easy one for me, so I got an architecture degree.) And I said to him, “what do I do after I get my architecture degree?” He said, “go to Cornell.”

I entered in 1967. I entered into a class that was 100 percent white. It had two females, including the person who later would become my wife. She was easy to spot; she was one of two. By the class after ours was 50 percent female. That was how quickly it changed. It was a time of great social change and this department was a part of it.

On working in Pittsburgh
From the fall of 1980 to the fall of 1982, [Pittsburgh] lost 200,000 jobs. The bottom fell out and the steel industry would never recover in the same way. Yet, we had a growing downtown in the research and service sectors. And so we put together an economic development strategy and the planning department took the lead. By the end of the decade we had replaced those 200,000 jobs. They were different jobs. They were in different sectors. Spatially, they were living in different neighborhoods. So I like to say that change is inevitable, but decline is not. When we were redeveloping an island, it wasn’t just a physical redevelopment to go from slaughterhouses to a mixed income community. There was a chance to build a rowing club, because with the decline of the steel industry and barges leaving the river, you could safely start rowing again.

And who rowed? Ivy Leaguers. That was good because it got people on the island who would start looking around and say this wasn’t a filthy brownfield site that it used to be. What we did was, since we were giving the land for the rowing operation for a dollar a year, we insisted that they provide rowing opportunities for every school child in the city. Still today, in Pittsburgh, every school has a rowing program.

And at the Andy Warhol museum, because of city assistance, we mandated that the first four galleries be free and open for everyone forever. You simply dealt with equity issues, part and parcel, in

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everything you did as a planner. I happened to think that that came from the progressive planning that we had here at Cornell.

Understanding sustainability
Sustainability is a word that we all like to use, but we don’t know what it means. And terms can be hijacked. The dumb growth industries, like coal, are going to hijack everything they can in order to change the meaning. Sustainability is one of those words.

I challenge planners all the time. I gave a lecture about five years ago that was titled, “Sustainability: Planning’s Search for the Holy Grail.” I believe, that in planning right now we slap the word on everything, but we need to figure out what that means.

We’re trying to do that at APA. We have a new Sustaining Places initiative. We chose that consciously because we want the places we create to be sustainable and not have to be rebuilt. We also recognize that the places we create sustain us and sustain our civilizations.

President Obama and planning
I believe that the Obama administration is the most pro-planning administration since two administrations that might surprise you - LBJ and Richard Nixon. And I think that we've had a bipartisan neglect of planning issues for the 40 years after that.

Credibility, creativity and innovation
If you have credibility with your mayor, your city council, you’re going to be invited to the table on all of the important matters. Credibility comes from doing everything well.

We did food systems planning in Pittsburgh back in 1984 because we saw certain needs in the city. We bought the produce terminal. We didn’t want it to close down. We hired experts to help us understand the food industry. We were trying to keep some retail food services open in some neighborhoods. That was in 1984. Food planning burst onto the scene nationally here in the last decade.

So be innovative, be creative.

Planners’ Communications Guide
The Planners’ Communications Guide: Strategies, Examples, and Tools for Everyday Practice helps APA members reach and deliver positive, values-based messages about planning and APA to targeted audiences. The document is downloadable in full or in part at www.planning.org/communicationsguide and does not have to be read in its entirety prior to being used.

Three messages were developed, tested, and adopted by the APA Board of Directors with this purpose in mind:

- APA members help create communities of lasting value.
- Good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live.
- Planning enables civic leaders, business interests, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives.

The guide provides great examples of the benefits of utilizing a planner and implementing a plan in a chapter that describes the dollar value of planning. Another chapter describes how to form alliances with influential parties and key stakeholders from government, the development community, businesses, and the general public in order to gain support for your plan and put it into action. The guide explains that it’s not only your message, but how it’s conveyed, that matters.

The Planners’ Communications Guide: Strategies, Examples, and Tools for Everyday Practice empowers you as a planner by providing a multitude of communication options for delivering a message, project, plan or presentation to your audience.
The NYS Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act was signed into law on September 29, 2010. One of the most significant impacts of the Act is that all NYS funding agencies must now, formally, meet ten (10) Smart Growth goals. This provision, aimed at making targeted investments in public infrastructure (central water/sewer/stormwater), will have far reaching affects in terms of where and how public grants and low interest loans are awarded. If you boil the Act down to its core, this means that funding agencies will give preference and higher ranking and rating points to infrastructure projects that are located in what we planners typically call “priority growth areas.”

Within the body of the Act are ten goals, as they relate to public infrastructure:

1. Use, maintain or improve existing water and sewer services
2. Locate public infrastructure within municipal centers
3. Promote development projects in developed areas or in areas identified for development in a comprehensive plan, local waterfront revitalization plan or brownfield redevelopment plan.
4. Protect, preserve New York State resources
5. Foster mixed land uses and compact development
6. Provide for mobility through a variety of transportation choices
7. Coordinate between state and local governments
8. Promote community-based planning and collaboration
9. Ensure predictability in land use codes
10. Strengthen existing communities so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Planners should view the passage of this Act as an opportunity to promote good, sound planning practices. The following are some of the positive impacts that adherence to the new Smart Growth Policy Act can have on locales:

- Reinforce central location of important civic facilities; post offices, libraries, fire stations, public schools and community centers
- Emphasize non-motorized transportation
- Support transit-oriented development
- Promote safe routes to schools

Funding agencies, especially those financing water and sewer projects, are already up and running in terms of the Smart Growth Act. Very recently, new project scoring memos have been released from a number of agencies that detail how compliance with smart growth, which is considered to be a part of “green design,” can serve to earn your project additional points. In this era of diminishing funding resources and elevated competition for grants, getting all the scoring points you can is critical.

For instance, the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA), Water/Wastewater Loan/Grant Program provides for Discretionary Points for smart growth and green projects. The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC), under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) both acknowledge and provide additional points for better planned projects.

The Green Innovations Grant Program (GIGP), administered by the EFC was launched last year as part of the federal stimulus program. The EFC had such success with the GIGP that the Corporation is continuing the program with its own funds to promote innovative “green” projects around New York. Again, such projects should highlight smart growth in order to compete better and to secure additional points in ranking and rating.

We should look at the Smart Growth Policy Act as an important way to encourage redevelopment in central areas and to secure affordable financing for the upgrade of vital central water/sewer services. It is an opportunity not to be missed.

Gidaly is a Senior Project Manager with Barton & Loguidice. He is based in Ellenville.
Chapter President’s Message
By Ellen Parker, AICP

Greetings to all Upstate New York Chapter members. My first days as Chapter President have been busy. The chapter conference in Niagara Falls was a great success. I would like to thank the conference committee, co-chaired by Gary Palumbo and Eve Holberg, with lots of support from Rich Guarino and the Western New York Section, for a very interesting and enjoyable conference. We received many compliments about the venue, the food, the programs and the hospitality of the city. Central New York has already started planning for our next chapter conference, which will be September 28-30, 2011 in Utica.

Literally the day after the conference, I went to Washington, D.C. to attend the Chapter Presidents Council, which was held parallel with the Federal Policy meetings. New York Upstate is one of 47 chapters representing planners from across the entire country. The Chapter Presidents Council provides an opportunity to hear what is going on in other parts of the country, and also to bring issues and concerns to the national American Planning Association on behalf of our members. A clear message from all state chapters is the need to improve communication and services to our members in hard times.

It is clear that the “Great Recession” has been having an impact on planning. Membership is down in every state except Louisiana. There is a national effort to try to increase awareness of the profession and the value of strong planning, particularly during hard economic times. Major policy issues are on sustaining communities and rebuilding America (reinvestment in our infrastructure), both topics where planners can and should take a leadership role.

Back in New York State, our chapter board is undergoing a major effort of rethinking the Chapter’s role to be more useful and relevant to our members. The survey we held this year was a first step. The chapter board and the section directors attended a workshop in Utica over the summer to develop a new work plan for the chapter. I would like to thank all of those who gave up the better portion of two beautiful summer days to attend, and Judy Breselor, our Immediate Past President for spearheading the effort. We made great progress and several major initiatives emerged from the work session, which are highlighted in a separate article. We will be establishing committees to address those topics, and we welcome participation from all planners, not just Board members. Please contact me if you are interested in helping out.

We are updating the chapter website for the first time in over a decade. We are tentatively set to go live by the end of November. Please be patient with the bugs and give us plenty of feedback on additional features you’d like to see on the website to make it more useful for members. We’d like to thank our webmaster for many years, Jean Waterbury, for single-handedly keeping up with the current website, and also Mark Castiglione for his hard work during the transition.

We are continuing to develop our Young Planners Group. This is part of a national effort to recruit and maintain new members, particularly among the next generation of planners. The Young Planners Group focuses on planners under the age of 35, although us old folks are welcome as mentors at some of the events!

Our share of revenues from national APA has been declining while our costs, including the costs of getting programs approved for CM credits, have been increasing. As a result, the board determined it was necessary to increase the chapter dues. Chapter dues have remained unchanged since 2003. Based on the results of the membership survey, we presented a $5 yearly increase in dues at the Annual Meeting during the conference in Niagara Falls, which was accepted by the membership in attendance. While no one welcomes an increase, it is necessary to keep the chapter on sustainable fiscal grounds.

These are challenging times for planners with tight state and local budgets. At the same time, we are seeing a growing recognition of the importance of good planning to create places of lasting value. The places that have weathered the economic times the best tend to be those where good planning prevailed. Hopefully good planning will take our chapter forward in new and positive ways. I look forward to the next two years as your President.
New Research calls for Recreation-Based Urbanism in Adirondack Hamlets
By Daniel Kelleher

Few Adirondack hamlets integrate natural recreational opportunities with a cultural urban experience as well as Old Forge, New York. Surrounded by vast expanses of wilderness, the hamlet of Old Forge boasts a well-preserved, walkable core where one may enjoy boutique eateries and stores, catch a movie, or spend a day at the town beach. Emanating from its vibrant main street are miles of hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and snowmobiling trails that provide access to the region’s wild places.

The ability of visitors to experience both natural and urban environments from within Old Forge’s framework has led to the establishment of a thriving and expanding tourism industry. New research suggests that Adirondack hamlets with commercial districts designed upon principles of enclosure, permeability, visual quality, public space, density, and integrated nature access are more attractive to potential residents than those lacking a concentrated urban core. (Hamlets are not incorporated municipalities, but they are often the commercial and civic centers of towns.)

Using an urban design scorecard specific to Adirondack hamlets and a regression model, the research determined the impacts of urban design on population growth. The analysis found that municipalities which achieved higher scores on the design scorecard and increased their tourism industries experienced higher rates of population growth during the 1990s.

The scorecard rated the main streets of each principal hamlet on seven criteria:

1. **Enclosure**: the ability of vegetation and buildings to create an outdoor room by bounding the street
2. **Permeability and transparency**: a rating of the semi-public realm of stoops and porches along with the proportion of windows to blank street walls
3. **Visual quality**: the memorability of a place based upon its built and natural features
4. **Streetscape quality**: the walkability and attractiveness of the streetscape
5. **Public space**: an examination of civic places’ attractiveness, inclusion, and integration within the hamlet
6. **Density**
7. **Access to nature**: the inclusion of natural recreation amenities accessible from the hamlet core.

The criteria were weighted to create a “total urban design score.” The regression model found that neither design nor tourism employment growth alone is correlated with increased population growth. However, a place that both maintained a hamlet center that earned a high urban design rating AND increased its tourism employment saw greater population growth.

For every ten percent increase in a town’s design score/tourism employment growth interaction variable, a 3.8 percent population increase could be expected.

The study also found no connection between the percentage of land in a town owned by the state (i.e. land that is undevelopable due to its “forever wild” status) and population growth. Similarly, there was no correlation between the total land in a town designated Hamlet-the Adirondack Park Agency’s least restrictive land use classification-and population growth. Both regulatory issues had been considered impediments to growth by APA land use regulation critics.

The study does have some limitations. The employment data used in this model is from the years 1990 to 2000 while the design score is derived from current conditions. Also, the relationship is a correlation and does not necessarily show causation that the adherence to urban design standards leads to population growth. It is possible that causation goes the other way or some other factor influences...
Despite these caveats, the results articulate the possibility of a recreation-based urbanism that could work to revitalize Adirondack hamlets. In recent years, Old Forge has expanded its trail network, constructed a new arts center, and built a park in the center of town. Also, a new, privately owned, mixed-use building in the hamlet center encloses the street and uses an architectural vernacular similar to its surrounding buildings suggesting that local business owners realize the value of good design. The Town of Webb, in which Old Forge is the principal hamlet, increased its population by 17 percent between 1990 and 2000.

Towns could work to increase the quality of their downtowns by establishing architectural codes that enhance the towns’ visual quality, creating public gathering spaces, and expanding natural recreational opportunities that extend from the hamlet center. Establishing distinct brands by promoting events such as specialty craft fairs, adventure races, and outdoor concerts can also attract visitors to hamlets and work to grow tourism industries. Such interventions, which could be controlled by municipal governments, may work to create recreation-based urban environments that will help Adirondack communities to grow.

Kelleher recently graduated with his Masters of Regional Planning from Cornell University. This analysis, titled A Regression Model and Scorecard for Analyzing Population Growth, Design, and Tourism in the Adirondacks, comprised his exit project.
Krasner Scholarship Essay: Seeing Potential in Western New York

Congratulations to Tyler Mekus, the 2010 winner of the Michael J. Krasner Scholarship. Mekus is the University of Buffalo graduate student awarded a $1,500 scholarship based upon his essay, excerpts of which are included below.

As an individual who grew up in Western New York and has seen the beauty and wonder of this area, the field of planning has opened my eyes to the unlimited potential of this region. Upstate New York has been home to my family for over 200 years. My ancestors were some of the original settlers in Chautauqua County and the Southern Tier. They have held positions from farmers to factory presidents, and steel workers to salon owners - all while helping build the region we now know as Western New York.

My family has instilled in me a sense of pride in for Western New York, and the importance of giving back to a community and region that has been so generous to us over time. As this region has fallen on hard times recently with the loss of jobs and population, I have seen cities begin to deteriorate as people leave for better opportunities and a brighter future. The opportunity to bring positive change and influence to Western New York by my actions has been opened through career aspirations in urban and regional planning.

As someone who was always concerned with the physical environment and development issues facing my hometown and region, the field of planning was a natural fit. Often I was left discouraged by the loss of population and urban decline, while farmland and rural areas were facing growing development pressure. Urban and regional planning opened my eyes to our impact on the environment and, most importantly, how our communities and cities developed over time.

The University at Buffalo School of Urban and Regional Planning has been a godsend, as I have been able to study and work in my home region, while understanding the disparities and conflicts that exist in Western New York. Through the University at Buffalo I have been able to work with the politicians and planners who help shape Western New York. The educational and real world experience has allowed me to bring positive change as well as find a potential career path in Western New York where I can see my ideas and plans come to fruition.

After growing up in a small city hit by the loss of industry, the importance of economic development and planning to create communities attractive to business and development began to hit home. Planning must help revive our central cities and create an overall stronger region.

I hope to use my planning education from the University at Buffalo as a tool to create a renaissance in Western New York, and help build this region as my family and ancestors once did. With this knowledge I hope to embark on a career that will help create an innovative regional economy that is not only environmentally and financially sustainable, but also helps retain our population and attracts the best and brightest. The potential that this region and its residents contain is limitless. I hope to find myself in a position in the near future where I can use my knowledge and skills to help bring change and a transformation to this region I call home.

Call for Articles. The Chapter is interested in hearing about your projects and your thoughts on planning in Upstate New York and around the country. If you recently wrapped up a plan or want to discuss a particular issue, the Upstate Planner is your forum. We can help you shape your ideas and edit your text for publication. Please email your ideas to George Homsy at gch24@cornell.edu.
From the APA Region 1 Director
By Angela Vincent

The APA Board of Directors and AICP Commissioners met in Chicago in July for an American Planning Association Leadership Retreat. This retreat, which happens every two years, brought together new and existing Board members and Commissioners for a weekend of updates, brainstorming and teambuilding.

With President-Elect Mitchell Silver on board, it was time to begin the creation of a new development plan for APA. The purpose of this biennial plan is to outline new initiatives and establish priorities for the American Planning Association. It is a tool to ensure that operations and activities relate directly to our mission, vision, and goals.

The plan serves to guide APA’s leaders, the Professional Institute, chapters, divisions and all other components in formulating the association’s budget. We hold ourselves and the organization accountable as we work to achieve the goals of this Development Plan. The Development Plan will be devised over the next six to eight months, reviewed by the Board of Directors and voted on by the APA Board at the National Conference in Boston in 2011. Stay tuned for more information about this instrumental plan.

In March 2010, APA President Bruce Knight FAICP announced the Sustaining Places Initiative. This Initiative is a multi-year, multi-faceted program to define the role of planning in addressing human settlement issues relating to sustainability. President Knight emphasizes that this role is recognized as not being “limited to a building or a site, but encompasses all scales and all forms of organization of human settlements, from rural areas and small towns to cities and metropolitan regions. For highlights about the launch of this Initiative and updates about its progress, please visit www.planning.org/sustainingplaces/.

Great Places in America
Now in its second year, APA’s flagship program celebrates places of exemplary character, quality, and planning. Places are selected annually and represent the gold standard in terms of having a true sense of place, cultural and historical interest, community involvement, and a vision for tomorrow.

The communities chosen as APA Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live. They are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. They are places where people want to be — not only to visit, but also to live and work every day. America’s truly great streets, neighborhoods and public spaces are defined by many criteria, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement.

Know of a great street, neighborhood or public space that you think merits designation as a Great Place? Start planning now to designate this great place! Let’s show America how great the Northeast is! For more information, please visit: http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/.

APA Assistance for Planners
In these tough economic times, it is even more important that planners stay connected and have access to planning tools, resources and support. APA has created two ways to stay connected:

• The Unemployment Membership Category is available for those with an active (current and continuous) paid APA membership for the past 3 or more years. This category status entitles you to 1 year of membership dues at the unemployment rate for a maximum of 5 years (15 years of active service). This is not a billable rate, so you will have to request the unemployment rate each year upon renewal. Unemployment rates are $50 for APA dues, $10 for Chapter dues, and $25 for AICP (if applicable). All publications and divisions are at regular price. Call (312) 431-9100 or email customerservice@planning.org.

• Jobs Online: Looking for the next perfect planning job or internship? Search APA’s extensive database of jobs in planning: http://www.planning.org/jobs/

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions or ideas for future reports from the Board, Commission or SRC. Happy Fall! ☺

Email Vincent at angela.aparegion1@gmail.com, or by phone at (603) 305-5385.
Chapter Membership Survey Summary
By Tanya Zwahlen

Last July, the NY Upstate APA Executive Board surveyed its membership regarding their level of involvement with the chapter, ways the Chapter could better serve its membership and a proposed dues increase, which was approved at the Chapter membership meeting in September. Thank you to the 145 respondents who provided their input. Below is a summary of the survey results.

- 89% of respondents considered a $5 increase in Chapter dues reasonable and acceptable.

- 84% of respondents believe the NY Upstate APA conference registration fees are average compared to other conferences they have attended.

- 90% of respondents believe the Chapter should be active in local or state legislative issues.

- Additional services that members would find valuable if provided by the Chapter include: more on-line training, section-hosted law and ethics sessions, networking opportunities for students, a mentor program, and more partnerships with like-minded groups like ASLA, ITE, etc.

- Several respondents encouraged the Chapter to weigh in on local planning issues (board downsizing, village dissolution, brownfields, state taxes, IDA reform) and to advocate for good planning.

- 81% of respondents were not interested in a “Chapter-only” dues category that would provide access to local APA activities only. However, several respondents thought this might be a good way to engage non-planners in the organization.

Averaged Responses Regarding the Value of Existing Chapter Services
Planners from across New York State and the north-eastern region attended 20 sessions and mobile workshops to learn about cutting edge planning practices and to earn CM credits. Photo credit: Gary Palumbo.

Young planners enjoying the outdoor reception on Thursday evening. Photo credit: Gary Palumbo.

Planners hang out on Wednesday night in downtown Niagara Falls. Photo credit: Gary Palumbo.

AICP President Elect Anna Breinich spoke to the Upstate membership at the outdoor reception on Thursday evening. Photo credit: Tanya Zwahlen.

Transforming Communities
2010 New York Upstate APA Chapter Conference in Niagara Falls

Planners! Save the Date for next year’s New York Upstate APA Chapter Conference, which will be held at the historic Hotel Utica in downtown Utica on September 28-30, 2011. The theme will be Connecting Communities.