

POINT REYES LIGHT

Volume LXI No. 35/ Point Reyes Station, California

October 23, 2008



TOMALES > History center embraces modernity with plans for high-tech archival room. /8



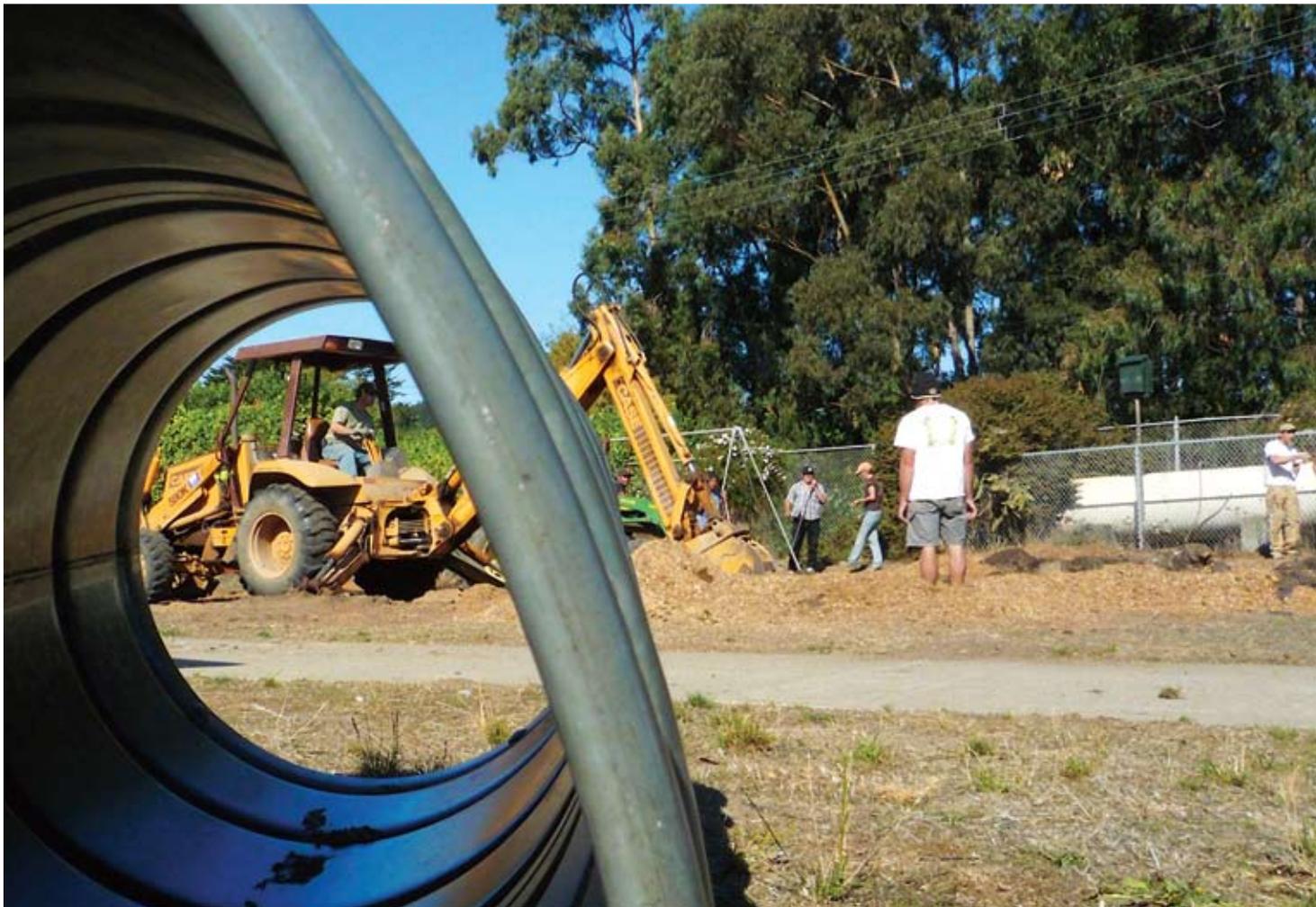
BOLINAS > Do-it-yourself hippie era documented in new museum exhibit. /7



INBRIEF > Bolinas mesa fire at Coast Gaurd station is under investigation. /2



CALENDAR > Papermill Creek Children's Corner hosts benefit party on Saturday. /16



The old slide at Stinson Beach School offered a tubular view at Sunday's Harvest Fair. Photo by Robert Plotkin.

Nine month sentence for Bo woman

by Janet Fang

Suraya Jaimee Khalil of Bolinas was sentenced to nine months in county jail and five years of supervised probation Wednesday at the Marin County Superior Court for her involvement in the late-June assault on Bolinas transient Ricky Green.

Suraya (pronounced "Sah-day-ah") Khalil, 22, had pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the crime and to misdemeanor in the assault. Khalil faced up to three years in state prison.

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Beaurocrats ponder ozone

by Janet Fang

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has been holding a series of community meetings this fall to discuss and receive input on the 2009 Bay Area Clean Air Plan.

"We want to get your thoughts before we get too far down the road," said Principal Planner David Burch at a meeting in the Petaluma Library on Tuesday evening. "The purpose of the plan is to improve air quality and protect public health."

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) regulates air quality in nine counties, including Marin, San Francisco, and parts of Sonoma. Emis-

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Prop 7 threatens local control of renewables

OCEANS /5

Toothed whales are the apex of marine mammals

GUEST COLUMN /9

What would Senator Paul Wellstone say?

Shelter on the Pacific coast

by Jacoba Charles

The packed pages of *Builders of the Pacific Coast* provide a refreshing look at what shelter can mean: in his latest book, Bolinas author Lloyd Kahn sifts through the cookie-cutter architectural dross of America to collect some prize samples of creativity, beauty and craftsmanship.

Through text, photographs and diagrams, Kahn documents the counterculture carpentry of the Northwest coast, from San Francisco to Vancouver Island.

The structures in the book—which range from spherical "free spirit" tree houses suspended in the woods, to

whimsical cedar-shingled gazebos and campers that look like modified garbage trucks—are one-of-a kind products of vision, revision and persistence.

Each of the 48 chapters focuses on a particular site, genre or craftsman (and the builders are, almost exclusively, men). Some—such as Lloyd House—occupy many pages, though most take up only a few, and are dense with biography and myriad images. Some read like family albums, full of snapshots of kids and neighbors. Nature is featured nearly as prominently as the buildings, almost all of



Buildings that incorporate driftwood, living trees and sensuous shingled curves fill the pages of *Builders of the Pacific Coast*, the latest book by Lloyd Kahn.

>> Shelter

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which are embedded in the dense forests, fields and rocky shores that are so intrinsic to the region place and its people.

Initially, Kahn set out to write a book about the builders of North America, but during his first trip up the coast in 2005, he quickly narrowed his focus.

"I was astonished at the quality of design, imagination and craftsmanship in this part of the world," Kahn wrote in the introduction to *Builders*. "It was apparent that there could be a book on this area alone."

The book is Kahn's third on building design in as many decades. The *New York Times* called him a "steadfast chronicler of offbeat owner-built shelter" in a 2004 profile.

Kahn's turn toward architecture began in the 1960s, when he quit his job in insurance to work as a carpenter. Eventually his passion for green and sustainable building led to the books that he is now most well known for.

In addition to being an author and a publisher, Kahn is an athlete, a world traveler and, according to an interview with the *Light* in 1993, a "frustrated newspaper editor." He ran a newspaper while in the Air Force in Germany and later worked for the Whole Earth Catalog. "But in the long run I didn't have the stomach for even bi-monthly, let alone daily, deadlines," Kahn wrote in a *Hearst News* article.

Consequently, he went on to form Shelter Publications, which has put out books by various authors on subjects ranging from cooking to stretching to sewer systems.

At the start of his career as an author, Kahn wrote two books on domes, which he was enamored of at the time. The dome that he built for himself in Bolinas was featured in *Life* magazine; he later dismantled it.

In 1973 Kahn published *Shelter*, a rambling inventory of alternative and hand-built houses from around the globe that in many ways was an offshoot of the Whole Earth Catalog. The book was quickly embraced by back-to-the-landers for its ethic and its instructions.

Decades later, when he was working on *Builders*, Kahn discovered that he was

now writing about people whom his first book had inspired.

"An amazing thing unfolded as I traveled," he wrote. "Time after time, builders would tell me that this or that building was inspired by...*Shelter*. In fact, just about every builder I ran across was familiar with the book. Wow!"

After *Shelter*, Kahn's next major work was released in 2004, when he published *Home Work: Handbuilt Shelter*. As with his first book, *Home Work* spanned the globe, representing over 30 years worth of traveling and documenting hand-built houses. The book includes indigenous peoples' homes on several continents; off-the-grid houses in California; fantastical sculptural buildings; and homes made to be moved, from tents to busses.

"There is a heavy West-coast bias at work," wrote one reader in a favorable review. "Every builder profiled seems to have a sauna and a beard, and I could swear there's a pot plant in the foreground of one of the photos."

Kahn's three books overlap, play off one another and diverge in a way that mirrors the varied yet coherent nature of the structures they document. Each also represents the spirit of the times; *Shelter* is more chaotic and homegrown,

while both *Home Work* and *Builders* are streamlined, modern interpretations of the same energy. Clearly what Kahn loves are these buildings, the people who made them, and the voyages that brought him to their doors.

"I ended up being a compulsive communicator," Kahn wrote. "It's the journalism bug: I no sooner discover something wonderful than I want to show everyone what I've found."



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