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OREGON DAILY EMERALD your independent student newspaper

Conference looks at architecture in ecological terms

*The HOPES environmental conference included
panels, workshops, speeches and design projects*

BY MAIT CHABAN
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

As the unusual sun of winter cedes to spring rain, students are finding themselves stuck inside.

Oregon has received rain uncharacteristically late this year as a result of El Niño-like climatic conditions, resulting from changing weather patterns related to greenhouse gases, according to the National Weather Service.

What students might not realize is that climate-controlled, weatherproof buildings — not cars or gas-fire power plants — mainly produce these greenhouse gases.

These are the kinds of arresting facts Ed Mazria and other speakers brought to the 11th annual Holistic Opportunities for Planet Earth Sustainability, or HOPES, conference on eco-design arts, held this weekend at the School of Architecture and Allied Arts.

Mazria, a New Mexico-based architect and former University professor, gave the weekend's first keynote address Friday night. He emphasized how architecture is the only silver bullet in the battle against environmental degradation.

"Architecture needs to be designed to engage the environment in a way that dramatically reduces or eliminates reliance on fossil fuels," he said to a rapt audience of students, professors and professionals in a packed room in Lawrence Hall.

The key, he said, is education. Studios must be designed to educate students and faculty about sustainable design, and with America attracting the best international students, Mazria said he hopes this information will return with them and be disseminated.

"I think green architecture is the challenge of the day," University graduate Kevin Parkhurst said. Parkhurst established the HOPES conference with other students in 1994 as part of his master's in architecture project.

"What we established was a framework so each year they don't have to reinvent the wheel," Parkhurst said. "But they may have to put the spokes back on or adjust the seat."

Though the conference has not grown much in size over the years, it has grown in scope. This year, a design

competition was added with an award of \$1,000 for the best sustainable design.

Other events included panel discussions, workshops, featured speakers, professional showcases where firms presented projects, the Trashy Fashion Show where all the clothes were made from salvaged materials, and a 24-hour design charrette.

The charrette has been a part of the conference for seven or eight years, said Martha Bohm, head of the Environmental Design Center, a student group that runs the conference and other ecologically driven design events. Each year, teams of students and architects are given a site and 24 hours with which to create a design for it.

This year, the charrette focused on a local site, the heavily polluted Union Pacific rail depot in West Eugene. Now largely abandoned, it has been rendered a brownfield, or land that is unusable without further investment. Working with community members who live in the area, the teams had to create a program that reinvigorated nearby residential areas while cleaning up the pollution left by Union Pacific.

Community members approached the Environmental Design Center about the Union Pacific site in the early stages of planning, and it inspired this year's conference theme of "reVISION, reDESIGN, reSOLUTION," said Lilah Glick, an architecture graduate student who organized the charrette.

Jack Elliott, whose Ecological Literacy and Design class at Cornell University is the first of its kind in the nation, took greatest issue with the inaction of architects.

"A storm is brewing and we have to do something about it," he said during his keynote address Saturday night. "So much time is spent talking and not enough spent doing."

One architect doing proactive work is Cameron Sinclair, who gave the final keynote speech of the weekend. His non-profit Architecture for Humanity program works to house displaced people in Kosovo, Sudan and Sri Lanka, and also to build communities.

"Is it possible to make a sustainable environment for the next generation?" he said. "This is something our profession can tackle, and we must."

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Place	School	Lbs. per resident
1st	Miami	59.78
2nd	Oregon	56.60
3rd	Bowling Green	52.66
4th	OSU	51.51
5th	Ohio	49.55
6th	Mt. Holyoke	42.84
7th	Kalamazoo College	42.61

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