Sustainability Challenges
Universal Design
by Prof. Jim S. Sandhu

It is a great honour to be invited to write about the Majority World in Universal Design Newsletter: The intention of both the publisher and the contributor is to broaden design practitioners’ awareness of and response to the needs and requirements of Majority World citizens, particularly regarding the question of how UD Principles can be applied to world citizens who live in poverty. While the Intermediate or Appropriate Technology movement (with its emphasis on small-scale, locally-controlled, labor-intensive, energy-efficient, and environmentally sound design) has been influential in the Majority World, Universal Design has had very little impact in this context. It is my hope that initiating an on-going dialogue on UniversalDesign.com can help us find out why this has been the case. After all, if Universal Design and affordability are two keys of Universal Design.

The Environmental is Political:
Universal Design and Social Sustainability
with Leslie Kanes Weisman

When we think about sustainability; environmental stewardship, biodiversity, and energy efficiency come immediately to mind. But sustainability requires attention to the impact our choices have on people as well as consideration of the impact on the natural environment.

Leslie Kanes Weisman came to architecture from a background informed by the civil-rights, anti-war and feminist movements of her youth. “It was natural and imperative,” she says, “for me to approach architecture as a socially-embedded discipline and practice.” Kanee Weisman’s approach scrutinizes the power relationships embedded in a built environment that are often derived from a world view that “assigned different power and status to women and men, young and old, rich and poor, black and white, gay and straight, able bodied and disabled.”

For free pdf versions of UDN, visit us online at: www.UniversalDesign.com

See The Environmental is Political, page 8

See Sustainability Challenges Universal Design, page 7
Years ago, Ron Mace told me that Universal Design was not a matter of creating designs where one-size-fits-all, but rather creating designs with flexibility that allow everyone to find a way to use an object or space. Those words come back to me as we initiate this discussion of Sustainability and Universal Design. With the diversity of opinions as to whether or not Sustainability and Universal Design share common ground, we come to the inevitable question of whether any single design is truly universal - that is usable by everyone. When we think of the diversity between the Majority World and the wealthy Minority World, (discussed by Jim Sandhu in the article Challenges for Universal Design on page 1) it becomes immediately apparent that the opulent residential designs of 21st century technology that are appearing in the United States and Europe have almost no bearing on reality in India. According to Abir Mullick, “55 percent of Indians have no access to any kind of toilet in the first place.” (See The Public Toilet Project in the World Update on page 5.)

It’s my belief that Universal Design changes from place to place and from time to time. I think it is important for us to come to understand how Universal Design can apply to both the Minority and Majority World and how it can improve the lifestyle of all. In October of 2009, my editorial presented the trefoil emblem of economic, natural, and human resource sustainability championed by Valerie Fletcher, Eric Mitikin, Elaine Ostroff, and others. This concept places Universal Design at the center of human resource sustainability. A universally designed environment allows everyone to participate and contribute. Human potential is conserved instead of being wasted. Harold Kiewel has recently expanded on this concept by using the LEED triple bottom line of economic responsibility, environmental stewardship and social justice as the basis for his premise that there is no Sustainability without Social Justice. See Kiewel’s PowerPoint presentation on the Sustainability page listed below.

This entire discussion of how Universal Design is truly universal becomes easier and more relevant when we stop trying to talk about specific designs as being universal and start to talk about the process of Universal Designing. Originally suggested by Dr. Edward Steinfeld, AIA, who said that “universal” is in the eyes of the beholder, what we’re really talking about is the process of creating Universal Designs – how sensitive the designers are to the users and how clever they are at accommodating those needs with the resources at hand.

We, at UniversalDesign.com, hope to support the discussion around this topic. This issue of Universal Design Newsletter kicks off an effort to present and discuss the question of how Universal Design fits into the concept of Sustainability and how we can create designs that work for all people. We’ve launched a new Sustainability page on UniversalDesign.com at www.UniversalDesign.com/interest/sustainability where anybody can learn and share ideas of Sustainability and Universal Design. Regardless of your opinion as to what is or what is not Universal Design and how that relates to Sustainability, we hope you will share your viewpoint with us.
DOJ Grants Extension of Compliance Date for Existing Pools to May 21

In a precedent setting act, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) postponed the date for compliance with sections 242 and 1009 of the new 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design that relate to the provision of accessible entry and exit to existing swimming pools, wading pools, and spas until May 21, 2012.

Also, DOJ signed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) seeking public comment on whether a longer period of time would be appropriate to allow pool owners and operators to meet their compliance obligations. Specifically, the NPRM proposes a 180-day extension of the deadline. Comments on the NPRM will be accepted until April 4.

Links to the immediate 60-day extension of the compliance date for existing pools and the NPRM seeking public comment on a longer extension of the compliance date for existing pools are available at www.UniversalDesign.com/may21.

U.S. Access Board to Charter Advisory Panel on Medical Diagnostic Equipment

The U.S. Access Board is organizing an advisory committee to advance its development of new standards for medical diagnostic equipment and seeks applications from interested parties to serve as committee members. This committee will provide assistance to the Board in finalizing standards for diagnostic equipment it released for public comment in February.

A notice published by the Board provides further details, including application instructions. The deadline for applications is April 27. The committee is expected to meet at least four times over the course of two months beginning in September. Committee meetings will be open to the public and will provide opportunities for all interested parties to provide information. Further information can be found at http://www.access-board.gov/medical-equipment.htm.

NEA Funding Opportunity for Universal Design

The National Endowment for the Arts announced new funding opportunities for projects that demonstrate Universal Design features in its Grants for Arts Projects. Art Works supports “the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts.”

The NEA’s Office of Accessibility has supported the growth of the Universal Design field through its leadership initiatives and is offering this new opportunity for funding Universal Design projects. The announcement of the grant opportunity identifies four priority areas including creation, engagement, livability and education. Each area offers examples of the types of outcomes sought for potential projects.

The deadline for applications is August 9, 2012, with funds available June 1, 2013. Grants generally range from $10,000 to $100,000. View grant guidelines at: www.arts.gov/grants/apply. Select the design discipline and choose Grants for Arts Projects.

Call for Proposals on ICC A117.1-09 - Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities

Universal Design and Sustainability in Architectural Education: A Student’s Opinion
by Matthew Tierney

How does Universal Design become an active ingredient in creating a more sustainable world within the realm of architectural education?

In the past five years, I have seen a tremendous resurgence of sustainable design solutions within the realm of my architectural education at the University of Minnesota's College of Design and the University of Oregon’s School of Architecture and Allied Arts. However, most of this conversation has revolved around the use of energy efficient building envelopes, the economic benefits of renewable energy production, storm water management systems, and reducing our carbon footprint in urban and rural areas. The missing component within this movement is the notion that social equity within the built environment can have the same type of positive effect in creating sustainable buildings, neighborhoods, and cities as do the more commonly recognized environmental counterparts. There are economic, environmental, social, and political benefits in creating egalitarian architectural solutions that go beyond energy conservation and ecological stewardship to embrace social sustainability. Too often designers consider social sustainability to be “auxiliary” considerations that are left until the end of the design or planning process. This happens in academic design studios and in the real world and as a consequence, social sustainability only appears in added elements instead of integrated components of the system.

The provision of Universal Design or even access within multiple scales of design has a range of benefits for individual entities, communities, and cities if it is considered as a critical ingredient in creating sustainable communities, instead of simply satisfying a code requirement. Architectural academia tries simultaneously to balance and promote many different considerations. Fire safety, zoning codes, construction management, energy efficiency, powerful conceptual ideas, and geometric composition are literally just scratching the surface of what it means to create a building. For this reason, I believe that the study of architecture and professional practice needs to create a holistic paradigm of designing buildings that create synergistic solutions to complex problems. These solutions should seek to combine multiple seemingly disparate elements such as social equity and environmental stewardship into single designs which have the ability to deal more efficiently with the complexity demanded by the built environment.

Once reconceived, Universal Design solutions can be recognized as one means of creating multiple economic, social, and ecological benefits within the built environment. These critical questions need to be addressed in academia as well as within the realm of professional architectural practice if accessibility is to become an integral part of the sustainability of the buildings, landscapes, and cities of our future.

Universal Design and Sustainability in Homes and Communities

Sustainability and Universal Design naturally go together as buyers start thinking about energy efficiency and low maintenance as investment strategies for aging in place. For what good is the capital outlay of an investment meant to be paid back over years of use, if a homeowner has to leave the home because it no longer works for them due to injury or physical limitations brought on by age?

Anthony Palladino, building designer of Golden Rule Builders in Northern Virginia, stresses the time it takes to educate prospective buyers of the value of integrating green, sustainable and Universal Design into their homes. The conversation usually begins with requests for energy efficiencies and an exploration of systems and products that meet those needs. Durable, quality craftsmanship is next in the discussion as the custom homebuilding client is looking for something that lasts – and as Palladino says, “that is another way of saying sustainable.”
INDIA
The Public Toilet Project

Professor Abir Mullick of Georgia Institute of Technology spent much of 2011 as a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar-in-residence at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, India. The focus of his research, the life and needs of slum dwellers, resulted in The Public Toilet Project.

Prof. Mullick’s research team studied the needs of independent users (those who can operate on their own), dependent users (elderly, children and people with disabilities) as well as care providers of children (parents) and dependent adults. Since most public toilets neither support safe use by disabled users nor allow receiving care, the team’s work has adopted a Universal Design approach, ensuring that all users receive equal access to public toilets.

The lack of toilet facilities for the majority of the population, or roughly 600 million people, has crushing health and economic effects on the otherwise robust growth of the nation.

About 535,000 children under five years of age die each year due to diarrhea and other infections due to poor sanitation, lack of hygiene, and open defecation that contaminates drinking water. Also, 73 million working days are lost every year due to sickness resulting from consumption of contaminated water and no sanitation. The current technology for public latrines is seriously outdated requiring 750,000 scavengers to collect excreta from 13 million bucket latrines. Only 15% of schools have toilets, resulting in high female dropout rate due to feminine hygiene needs. While local governments have attempted to provide free community toilets, they are almost unusable due to lack of maintenance.

Mullick’s pre-fab design addresses problems of manufacturing, costs, water availability, waste disposal, distribution, and cultural assimilation. Finally, the team identified five new businesses associated with the development and installation of the public toilets projects, assuring that the model will be economically sustainable by increasing the tax base and generating new jobs. For more on The Public Toilet Project go to www.UniversalDesign.com/interest/sustainability.

UNITED KINGDOM
Sustainable Fire Engineering for People and a Better World

C.J. Walsh, Sustainable Design International, Ltd., considers sustainability of design from the perspective of social wellbeing and human safety. In a July 2011 presentation to the International Fire Conference, he makes the case for enhanced construction and safety measures to improve survival in high-rise buildings. His presentation outlines critical deficiencies in current fire engineering design and practices, and advocates that issues such as vulnerable building users, safety of firefighters and emergency workers, and adaptations to climate change and severe weather events all be addressed in a Fire Engineering Code of Ethics. Walsh suggests that current fire engineering design and practice is more focused on “the cost effective compliance with minimal fire safety objectives mandated in building legislation and codes” than issues of the environment, protection of property, protection of first responders and the health and safety of all users.

Walsh’s 52-page presentation goes beyond engineering recommendations for structural improvements to the consideration of the human factors of occupancy and evacuation. For example, he suggests that planners should calculate that at any given time, 10% of a building’s occupants may need rescue assistance. He makes recommendations for structural enhancements to delay the impact of fire on a structure as well as optimal features for areas of rescue assistance and evacuation routes. Metrics for calculating safe areas and triage areas in size and distance from buildings will be helpful for evacuation planners, first responders and community medical personnel. For more visit www.UniversalDesign.com/interest/sustainability.
The Cottages at Greenwood - Incorporating Value and Principles in a New Community

In a suburban county better known for its luxury homes on large lots, the affordable Cottages at Greenwood are a welcome addition to Howard County, Maryland. At 1,300 square feet, the size alone would be news, but this development of 10 homes goes beyond affordable to green, sustainable and universal in design.

The Cottages developers, Hamel Green, with Howard County as a partner, espouse the philosophy that “affordability strategy starts with the principle that high-quality design must make homes less expensive to purchase and more economical to live in. Both of these goals are accomplished by designing super-insulated ‘Near Net Zero Energy’ homes, which harness inexpensive construction strategies to produce dramatically lower utility bills.”

They demonstrate a new definition of aspirational. These are homes people are going to want to move to, not just as first time homebuyers, but as empty nesters. Low on maintenance and with easy access to functional elements such as electrical outlets, control panels and appliances, current owners of the sold-out first phase will have no trouble attracting buyers should they decide to move out. But they really won’t need to go anywhere else soon. The Cottages feature open floor plans in the main living area, two full baths and three rooms that can flex with the needs of the residents. A bedroom today could be a den/reading/craft room tomorrow, and then back to a bedroom if necessary to accommodate an elderly parent or a new addition to the family. Perhaps best of all, with no stairs to navigate, wide, well-lit hallways, a curbless shower and comfort height toilets, the home will be comfortable to residents and guests of any age or ability.

Louis Tenenbaum, Aging-in-Place and Universal Design Specialist, advised the development team throughout the process and was the “voice” recommending building practices and features that would allow anyone to move about the homes and community. According to Tenenbaum, the design process included many meetings with the entire team to analyze the benefits and affordability of each element. The group went through numerous iterations of plans to balance design, functionality and marketability.

This was a project that challenged the usual way of doing business and each team member had to consider alternatives to familiar design practices. The team engaged in a "corollary benefit approach," that is, balancing the sometimes higher cost of a desirable universal or green design element with other savings either immediate or over the lifetime of the product. Tenenbaum points out that the zero step entry for example, requires careful grading but savings are realized by not having to construct and install steps, porches and railings.

Other exterior features making the Cottages a welcoming, livable community include hard-surfaced walkways, easy to read house numbers and homes grouped in clusters to foster community connections.

Inside, features such as multiple work...
Design means anything, it has to have some degree of universal applicability.

Designing for sustainability and social responsibility, or to put it more bluntly - designing for our future survival, is an enormous professional challenge. How can design overcome poverty and environmental degradation while providing spaces and elements that are inclusive?

How can design-related professionals balance these three goals when designing for the Majority World? The following questions serve as a starting point for thinking through the recent but logical marriage between Sustainability and Universal Design.

• How do we apply Universal Design principles in the design of spaces and elements for people whose prime concern and uncertainty is their next meal?
• Should the principles of Universal Design be expected to incorporate availability, affordability and sustainability?
• How do we define Universal Design for a context in which basic standards, building codes, regulations, planning permission, health and safety standards, accessibility services and infrastructure are absent?
• How do we reconcile capital-intensive Universally Designed technology from industrialized nations with the low-cost, locally controlled solutions that often work best in the Majority World?
• How can design-related professionals develop Universally Designed elements and spaces using technology that can be easily maintained with the resources readily available to those living in the Majority World?
• How can we reconcile the labor-intensive aspect of technology that works well in the Majority World with the 6th principle of Universal Design which calls for “low physical effort”?
• In the U.S. a great deal of attention has been given to the Universally Designed house, but the concept of “home” that these designers are working with is far from universal.
• For instance, all of the various Universal Design considerations regarding doors (i.e. width, weight, swing-clearance, just to name a few) are irrelevant in a society where the concept of a door in the ‘home’ does not exist.
• What is a ‘home’ for a foot-traveling, highly self-sufficient native Australian citizen?
• What is a ‘home’ for pavement dwellers dealing with the harsh realities of extreme poverty?
• In India the word ‘shatri’ can refer to an umbrella or a range of makeshift shelters. At what point does a shatri become a ‘home,’ and how can Universal Design be applied to a shatri?
• How can design-related professionals balance these three goals when designing for the Majority World? The following questions serve as a starting point for thinking through the recent but logical marriage between Sustainability and Universal Design.

Design professionals must take context into account if Universal Design is going to be relevant to the Majority World.
The Environmental is Political, from page 1

As a founding faculty member at the School of Architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology, Kanes Weisman actively brought critical pedagogy and collaborative, interdisciplinary problem solving strategies into architecture education. She utilized public funding for university-service-learning to incorporate non-profit groups into her classroom. “These groups became ‘pro-bono clients,’” she says, “that enabled me to link rigorous academic theory and knowledge in the classroom with real world “hands-on” learning in the community. At the epicenter of her many goals for service learning courses was a “hope that students would come to see that being an architect —with all the formal and technological demands the role rightly involves— and working for social justice for all people and a sustainable future do not have to be at odds.”

Kanes Weisman’s long experience with social and environmental activism allowed her to recognize and articulate the connection between Universal Design and social sustainability that influenced the movement in the early 2000s. To help students engage with the issue, she published a Universal Design checklist with Elaine Ostroff.

One of her ongoing projects is providing adequate housing for all people. “Although probably every architectural degree program in North America includes courses that address housing design relative to urban renewal and the needs of poor and homeless people, students are rarely required to learn about the social and political contexts in which housing is designed and built, manufacturing processes, real estate and land use development, political systems,… and community organizing— all the things that architects need to know to be effective advocates of housing as a basic human right for all people.”

Also important is “green-consciousness” in design education as “we begin to discover and understand the ethical and moral consequences of choices we make in selecting building materials and technologies.” She sees sustainable design education and practice as a means by which “architects can and must make a major contribution toward creating a future in which humanity and nature coexist in a healthy, supportive, diverse condition.”

In 2010 Kanes Weisman shifted from education to policy as department head of the Zoning Board of Appeals in her local community. “After almost four decades, I simply decided that it was time to apply my energy and professional expertise elsewhere. For me this work is another rewarding vehicle for socially and environmentally responsible activism.” Here, Kanes Weisman has been able to actualize many of her ideals for a socially just community.

After over four decades devoted to social justice, Kanes Weisman has stayed inspired through the very virtues she advocates; adaptability and interrelatedness, plus a healthy sense of humor. For more go to www.UniversalDesign.com/interest/sustainability.

The Value of Sustainability in Homes and Communities, from page 4

Then there is price, surprisingly not the starting point of the conversation. The educated buyer understands that ultimately price includes monthly utility bills and replacement costs as well as how their investment will perform in the marketplace.

Palladino says, “People know they want things that make sense to them, things that make their lives easier. They may not (initially) know what to ask for but they know they don’t want to spend time and money on replacements and maintenance.”

“At least 85% of buyers in Northern Virginia are bringing up the conversation of alternate energy sources,” he says, “and most expect things
Lutron Quantum Light Management System
Lutron’s Quantum Total Light Management system uses occupancy sensors, daylight sensors, controllable shades, timeclocks and manual controls to efficiently control a building’s lighting and save energy. Occupancy sensors turn off lights when everyone leaves the room. Daylight sensors automatically adjust artificial lights, dimming them if there is adequate natural light and raising them if the clouds roll in. The automated shade system raises and lowers the shades throughout the day based on the angle of the sun, automatically reducing sun glare and solar heat gain while still making efficient use of natural lighting. The system can be easily controlled from any device that can run a web browser, so that users can easily adjust the lights right from their desks or web enabled handheld. The system can support up to 10,000 separate users, with each user’s profile defining which lights and shades they can control.

Solar Ear
In 2009 Howard Weinstein was granted the title of Tech Award Laureate for his invention of Solar Ear, a solar powered hearing aid for people throughout the world without access to electricity or the money to buy replacement batteries. The small, lightweight unit charges two AA rechargeable batteries through its solar panel. The two AA rechargeable batteries are then used to charge the hearing aids. This way the unit can charge on a windowsill during the day, and then charge the hearing aids overnight, when they aren’t in use. Solar Ear is inexpensive when compared to other hearing aids, selling for around $50 each. The AA rechargeable batteries last for 2-3 years and can be replaced at the end of their lifecycle for a few dollars. All Solar Ear products are manufactured in Brazil, by young employees with hearing impairments.

FabCab
FabCab designs and sells pre-fabricated and kit-built environmentally-friendly accessible homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which can be used as a home, home office, caregiver’s residence, in-law apartment, or even a vacation property. The houses incorporate zero threshold doors, open floor plans with plenty of clear floor space, sliding doors, and accessible kitchens and bathrooms. The houses are built with recycled and renewable resources and the pre-built manufacturing process minimizes the amount of waste. Structural insulated panels (SIPS) and high efficiency hot water heaters save energy, while low VOC paints and finishes create a healthy indoor environment. State of the art water efficient plumbing fixtures by TOTO reduce the consumption of water, and optional cisterns can catch and store rainwater from the roof.
He has noticed another societal shift as thoughtful home owners are investing in sustainable homes. When people see their home as more permanent, they want to look for more permanence in their community. They look for sidewalks, a bus stop, transportation and community services that will allow them to not just live but participate in their community. In his words, “building better homes helps build better communities.”

For more on sustainable building and universal design from the builder’s perspective, see “Ask A Builder” at http://www.goldenrulebuilders.com/ askabuilder/index.shtml.

DOJ maintains that its Technical Assistance document on accessible pool entry and exit imposes no new requirements. Since its publication, the document has stirred a certain amount of controversy, particularly in the hospitality industry.

### ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Accessible Pools Means of Entry and Exit

Earlier this year, the Department of Justice (DOJ) published a Technical Assistance document entitled “ADA 2010 Revised Requirements: Accessible Pools – Means of Entry and Exit,” explaining how the 2010 ADA Standards for new construction and alterations apply to accessible means of entry into swimming pools, such as pool lifts, and instances when portable lifts can be used. DOJ maintains that its Technical Assistance document on accessible pool entry and exit imposes no new requirements. Since its publication, the document has stirred a certain amount of controversy, particularly in the hospitality industry.

However, on March 15, when the new requirements were due to become effective, DOJ acknowledged the numerous questions raised and challenges faced by pool owners and operators in determining their obligations and postponed the date for compliance with sections 242 and 1009 of the 2010 ADA Standards from March 15, 2012, to May 21, 2012. See Reg/Leg watch on page 3.

The Accessible Pools Technical Assistance document describes categories of pools as defined by the 2010 Standards and outlines the ongoing obligation of Title II and Title III entities to ensure upkeep of accessible features. The document addresses the frequently overlooked area of staff training as an obligation that is essential to the ongoing availability and maintenance of equipment and safety considerations.


### Updated ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal

The Institute for Human Centered Design has updated its 1995 Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal. The new checklist reflects changes in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and provides recommendations on prioritization of barrier removal in commercial facilities and clear room-by-room checklists for access reviews. Resources providing further information are included. The document is available in text and PDF formats and is downloadable from: http://www.ada-checklist.org/checklist.html.

---

**The Value of Sustainability**, from page 8

like better insulation, insulated windows and high efficiency heat pumps as a matter of course. Less than half go all in with geothermal or solar units but the consideration of those systems is no longer rare. Customers are also expecting products to last, so a 25-year warranty is now the minimum. The expectation is that products should be durable for 50 years or longer.”

To Palladino, that durability or sustainability also means designing homes with adequate space and features that support use by residents and visitors of all ages and abilities for all the time they are in the home.

He has noticed another societal shift as thoughtful home owners are investing in sustainable homes. When people see their home as more permanent, they want to look for more permanence in their community. They look for sidewalks, a bus stop, transportation and community services that will allow them to not just live but participate in their community. In his words, “building better homes helps build better communities.”

For more on sustainable building and universal design from the builder’s perspective, see “Ask A Builder” at http://www.goldenrulebuilders.com/askabuilder/index.shtml.
The Cottages at Greenwood, from page 6

Green design features and sustainability were paramount to the development team, as their interpretation of affordability extends beyond the purchase price of the home to the upkeep and long-term maintenance. They describe the community as:

“Craftsman-style cottages with a site design that is integrated with the topography, minimizing vegetative clearing, erosion, vista and grading impacts. Individual homes are oriented to maximize solar benefits and energy conservation. Canopy shade trees will be planted along west and south sides of the homes not shaded by street trees to reduce energy use and increase comfort. Canopy shade trees along the drive shading south-facing homes will reduce pavement reflection of heat to reduce energy use and increase energy conservation. The most progressive storm water best-management practices have been incorporated into the site plan to maximize ground infiltration, including complete on-site storm water capture. All streets, drives and patios – including a central community court – will utilize asphalt-free permeable paving. Homeowners could pay up to 70% less to heat and cool our Eco-Cottages than they would in standard homes.”

The idea of homes that are green, universally designed and affordable has resonated with buyers in Howard County. All units in the first phase of the Cottages were sold well before the project was completed. The team is just beginning Phase II and is considering new features in keeping with the values and practices they demonstrated in Phase I.

For more information about the Cottages at Greenwood and a link to floor plans, features and qualifying income levels for purchase, visit www.UniversalDesign.com/interest/sustainability.

Making Restaurant Tables Compliant

PROBLEM: Restaurants with moveable, pedestal-base tables (that do not provide required wheelchair knee and toe clearance) typically move smaller tables together to accommodate larger groups. How can they provide patrons who use wheelchairs with a choice of accessible seating options that is comparable to that provided to other patrons?

TIP: In circumstances where there is hostess seating provided, table extenders can be used to connect two adjacent tables to create an accessible gap between two otherwise non-accessible tables.
April 19, 2012: Universal Design is the Focus of ASID and CEU Event, Boston, MA. 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm ET. Valerie Fletcher, Executive Director of the Institute of Human Centered Design, will speak on the 21st century demographic patterns that are impetus to inclusive/universal design. http://asidne.org/calendar/events/21st-century-demographic-patterns/.

April 26, 2012: ADA vs. Universal Design - Distinctions and Similarities, Washington, DC. 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm ET. This will be a discussion of the differences between Universal Design (UD) and accessibility requirements, such as those found in the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design. http://aiadc.com/calendar.


May 3, 2012: Accessible Communication Elements and Features, Access Board Webinar and Audio Conference 2:30 – 4:00 ET. This session will review the scoping and technical provisions for accessible communication elements such as fire alarm systems, signs, telephones, detectable warnings, assistive listening systems, ATMs and two-way communication systems. http://www.accessibilityonline.org/Schedule.


May 19, 2012: Welcome Home: Universal Design, Sustainable Design, and Baby Boomers 8:30 am – 10:00 am ET. This AIA Continuing Education session presents the results of a nationwide survey to prioritize the features of home design important to prospective buyers within the baby boom generation. http://convention.aia.org/event/daily-schedule/session-search.aspx.


June, 2012: Accessible Miniature Golf Courses, Access Board Webinar and Audio Conference 2:30 – 4:00 ET. This session will review the specifications for the design and construction of miniature golf courses and highlight frequently asked questions about accessibility at miniature golf facilities. http://www.accessibilityonline.org/Schedule.

For more information or to submit your event for the next issue, visit www.UniversalDesign.com/news-and-events/calendar