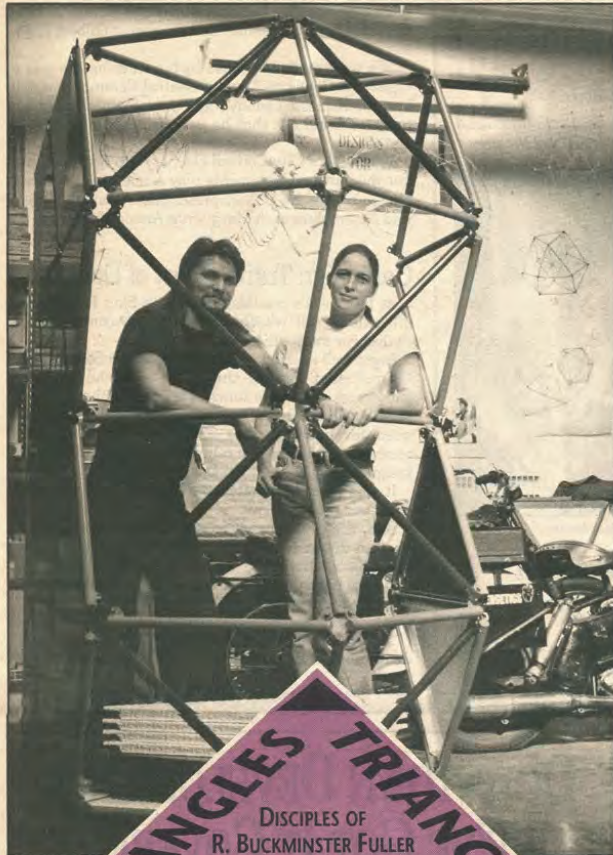


DOWNTOWN NEWS



**DISCIPLES OF
R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER
WAGE A DESIGN REVOLUTION
FROM THEIR DOWNTOWN LOFT**
— SEE STORY ON PAGE 7 —

**TRIANGLES TRIANGLES
TRIANGLES**

ARCHITECT JIM WALTERS, LEFT, AND KAREN REESER HAVE PACKED THEIR DOWNTOWN LOFT WITH ART BASED ON R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER'S FUTURISTIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES, WHICH THEY EXPECT TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY THINGS ARE BUILT. FOR THEM, IT ALREADY HAS.

Here's Looking at No Ric's Place

Patsaouras Heads off Approval of World Trade Center's Entertainment Complex With Cries of "Bars, Bars, Bars"

by Dave McCombs

Haseko (California) Inc. has found out the hard way that Nick Patsaouras doesn't want any new drinking establishments in Downtown Los Angeles.

As a zoning appeals board member, Patsaouras led opposition to Haseko's application to convert the World Trade Center's 90,000-square-foot concourse into an entertainment complex. The plan called for three restaurants and Ric's Place, a dance club, comedy stage and sports bar. In a recent 3-0 vote, the board rejected Haseko's application, which had previously been approved but was appealed by nearby residents who objected to the potential noise of proposed outdoor restaurants.

"There were bars and bars and bars," said Patsaouras. "It was ridiculous. Downtown would be the bar

capital of the world! You can quote me on that."

Bar None

The decision stunned Haseko officials.

Downtown urban planners have long sought new nightlife venues as a way to encourage residential development, spark pedestrian traffic and shake off the perception that the central city is "dead after five."

With this in mind, the plan to convert part of the World Trade Center into a restaurant, food court and nightclub with comedy, dancing and a sports bar seemed certain to please city planners.

But the Community Redevelopment Agency's initial enthusiasm for the project waned after some residents of the Bunker Hill Towers apartments

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Who Will Inherit Molina's Throne?

Council Seat Hopefuls Play Waiting Game for Endorsement

by Steven Wolf

No one is sure who will succeed Gloria Molina on City Council when the election takes place this June. But as candidates prepare to sign up for the race this week, many think her endorsement is a necessary prelude to capturing the seat.

They say Molina's triumphant victory in last month's election, which elevated her to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, endowed her with the political authority to hand-pick her successor.

Her aides say, however, that despite the new Supervisor's efforts to encourage various candidates to run, she has yet to settle on a final choice. This has

created a political vacuum which many would-be candidates now find themselves trying to fill. Several of them are supporters of Molina; in all likelihood the Supervisor will have to decide between friends when she delivers her endorsement.

Waiting to Throw Weight

Just after Molina's victory, her chief of staff, Alma Martinez, was eyeing the race. Assemblywoman Lucille Roybal-Allard also acknowledged considering a run. However, both have withdrawn their names from consideration. Now Roybal-Allard and her father, Congressman Ed Roybal, are reportedly waiting

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Ninth District Contenders in Their Own Words

As the April 9 election approaches, the two leading candidates for the late Gil Lindsay's council seat address the issues in separate, exclusive sit-downs.

RITA WALTERS

HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM GIL LINDSAY?

HWell, there were almost two Gils: the Gil before his illness and the Gil that illness intervened on. There's a difference there. I'd like to go back to the early Gil. My comments are not meant to diminish his contributions or tarnish his legacy, but the southern portion of the Ninth council district is suffering from a lack of basic city services. I'm not talking about anything exotic, or anything that's not already in the city budget—just things like street sweeping every week. I'm talking about posting the streets and then enforcing it that so the streets can be swept.

WHY HAVEN'T BASIC SERVICES BEEN DELIVERED TO THE DISTRICT?

I have no idea why. After the recent rainstorms, so many of the storm drains and gutters were just chock full of trash. The water was collecting on the curbs and

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BOB GAY

HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM GIL LINDSAY?

HThe first difference is that I'm running an active campaign. That's something that you haven't seen in a long time. I am bringing a degree of vitality to the district. That's also something you haven't seen in quite a while. There's no question that Gil Lindsay got tired in his last several years, and wasn't active—just basically sat there.

WHY HAVEN'T BASIC SERVICES BEEN DELIVERED TO THE DISTRICT?

One thing I've articulated is that we don't as yet have a single city commissioner from the southern section of our district on any city commission. When you have a problem in Van Nuys or Woodland Hills, on the west side, the Palisades or San Pedro, you appear before that commission and it's your neighbors. In a real sense a lot of these policy decisions are made at the commission level before they

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A Love of Triangles

Two Young Designers Enamored of Architectural Pioneer R. Buckminster Fuller Engage in a 50-Year Experiment

by Dave McCombs
 Outside their loft, the Downtown skyline bristles with rectangular high-rises. Inside Jim Walters' and Karen Reeser's converted warehouse, a menagerie of wood-and-paper models convey a triangle-based aesthetic. Miniature pyramids, geodesic domes and intricately constructed spheres dangle from the 40-foot-high ceiling. These seem primitive next to Walters' rhombic dodecahedron, a visually perplexing composite of triangles and pyramids. Welcome to what Walters and Reeser call their "50-year-experiment." Based on concepts pio-

neered by R. Buckminster Fuller and Charles Eames, the couple have dedicated themselves to a futuristic design aesthetic and to "trying to change environments rather than trying to change people." It is an ambitious agenda, calling for nothing less than a high-tech revolution in design and construction. "The technology applied by the typical automobile lags 10 to 25 years behind the latest developments. For a military jet, the lag might be five to 10 years. But housing and most other buildings use century-old design technology," says Walters. "That's absurd."
Design Environment
 A "learning laboratory," their loft brims with organized clutter. In one corner, a 1964 Harley Davidson police motorcycle leans on its kickstand next to a partition assembled from pieces of a geometric jungle gym that Walters helped design for a park. Paintings of spheres clustered among concave wedges share a wall with four-inch block letters reading "Synergetics, Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking, R. Buckminster Fuller."
 Harley and all, the space has the feel of a classroom. Rows of hard-bound books are shelved

beneath desks made from salvaged office doors. Easels, paints, model-making tools and other art materials rest within easy reach.
Life as Laboratory
 "Bucky [Buckminster Fuller] believed that documenting a process was very important," notes Walters, pointing to the banks of file cabinets in one corner of the loft. Reaching into his desk, he pulls out a slender coffee-table-sized book, *A 50-Year Experiment*. The couple launched their essay in 1987 by sending copies of the self-published volume to close friends. The book, writes Walters in a letter to ar-

"If you think of a bunch of water molecules as a kit of parts, then snowflakes exemplify maximum diversity with a minimum inventory of parts," Pearce has said. Triangle-based architecture has many other advantages, Walters says. It uses fewer raw materials, is lighter and, because of its exceptional rigidity, can be used to span vast distances without column supports. Fuller (1895-1983) began experimenting with these concepts in the late 1950s. His geodesic dome designs have been used to build homes and other structures around the world.
Following Fuller
 After graduating from USC in 1984, Walters found work at Neuhart Donges Neuhart, a Los Angeles architectural firm. "Following Fuller" is the title of a book he is currently writing. "The goal here is to afford architects the maximum design diversity with the minimum inventory of components. In the Seventh Market Place space frame, for example, thousands of steel struts of the same dimensions and specifications are bolted together in triangles to form an arena-sized crown. Were a rectangular-based geometry used, the inventory of parts for the same structure would be far greater."



Designers Jim Walters and Karen Reeser in their Downtown studio.

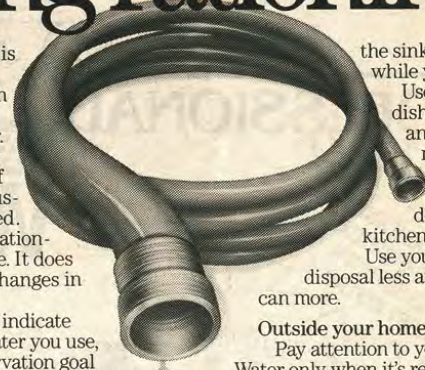
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chitect Peter Pearce, is "to declare publicly our intention of repeating Bucky's life-long experiment and providing for humanity two additional thoroughly documented case histories of the 50-year experiment."
 For now, most of Reeser's and Walters' work is with Pearce Structures, a Los Angeles-area design, engineering and manufacturing firm. Headed by Pearce, the firm has pioneered the "space frame" concept, which uses tubular steel struts bolted together in combinations of triangles. The steel crown atop the Seventh Market Place tri-level shopping mall at Citicorp Plaza is Pearce's work, as is the covered concourse connecting the two buildings of Downtown's Figueroa Plaza. The architect has created sculptures for the Beaudry Center in City West and the Ronald Reagan State Building on Spring Street. "Pearce has survived and grown on these small add-ons to buildings—entryways, atriums and canopies. But Peter's heart is in developing a new technology for the world and a new building industry for architects," Walters says.
Kit of Parts
 The key to this technology, says Walters, is the

Now that rationing is here, you're probably seeing money go down the drain every time you turn on the water. That's a good thing. It means you're aware of the consequences of using more than you need. But keep in mind, rationing isn't a jail sentence. It does mean making some changes in your daily habits. Your water bill will indicate exactly how much water you use, and what your conservation goal will be. On average, a family uses 450 gallons a day. To cut back 10%, most families will need to save about 45 gallons a day. That means shorter showers, turning off the faucet while you brush your teeth, and watering the lawn less. Just common sense. These are some of the things you can do to conserve water. And make rationing a little easier to live with.
The bathroom and kitchen.
 Believe it or not, 40% of the water we use every day goes down the toilet. So consider an ultra low-flow model. Check your toilet for leaks. And stop using it as a wastebasket. When you brush your teeth, fill a glass with water and turn off the tap. And fill

How to stay out of hot water during rationing.



the sink with water while you shave. Use your dishwasher and washing machine for full loads only. And don't let the kitchen faucet run. Use your garbage disposal less and garbage can more.
Outside your home.
 Pay attention to your lawn. Water only when it's really thirsty. Consider planting drought-resistant plants. And make sure your sprinklers are hitting the grass, not the pavement. Don't run the hose while washing your car. And check everywhere for leaky pipes, hoses, and faucets.
 If you follow these simple guidelines, you may be surprised at how much water you save. You'll see that water rationing and meeting your monthly conservation goal isn't so scary after all.



If you have any questions about rationing, or you want more conservation ideas, call us at 800-722-1122. And don't worry. If you're careful, you won't get in over your head.

Rationing. It's only scary if you're wasting water.

BY MARIA BUZANIS-FLANNIGAN

LUNCH HOUR

TAKES YOU
10 MINUTES OUTSIDE DOWNTOWN

Palette Pleasers

Fun on Mats, Selection on Menu Give Colors a Happy, Growing Clientele

The L.A. Mart—not to be confused with the California Mart—is a one-million-square-foot wholesale complex that houses 300 design showrooms on 13 floors.

Although it's not open to the public, the L.A. Mart's corner of Washington and Broadway has the distinction of being the first place Billy Graham preached to the masses, and where many a travelling circus used to pitch tents.

The Mart first opened its doors back in the late 1950s, complete with a restaurant called Chalon on the bottom floor. Chalon went through three or four owners and many unhappy diners until new owners stepped in, changed the name to Colors, brought on chef *Christophe Bernard* and updated the decor this past January.

Approximately two months after opening, it's obvious that Colors is a

big, bright hit. Colors is open to the public and, fortunately, is large enough to accommodate its steadily growing clientele.

Crayons

Colors' seating area begins outside the restaurant's entrance and then meanders inside with a row of cushioned booths along the walls and tables that continue to the salad bar.

The salad bar sort of separates the restaurant from the café at the back of Colors. The café serves breakfast, as well as grilled lunch items.

Colors' tables are spread with linen tablecloths and paper covers, the latter designed to accommodate the scribbling child in you, who is also supplied a container of colorful crayons.

It's a great place for a lunch date with a kinder-



Chef Christophe Bernard and manager Richard Oakley display lunch grill items at Colors.

gartener...or an art major.

Soup Can't Miss

The menu is small but has something for everyone. Starters (\$3.75-\$6.75) include a green salad and angel hair pasta with garlic, tomato and basil (both American Heart Association-approved "Heart Healthy" items), the smoked salmon plate, Caesar salad and a not-to-be-missed tortilla soup.

The soup is made by pureeing fresh vegetables along with fresh tortillas and cilantro, Mexican oregano and cumin until it's thick and flavorful. The warm soup is served with a dollop of sour cream, fresh avocado, a sprinkling of cheddar cheese and blue corn tortilla strips.

Twin croissant sandwiches with a choice of tuna or chicken salad (\$6.50) and a ground turkey or beef burger (\$6.95) come with a choice of shoestring french fries, sweet fries made with sweet potatoes or fruit.

There are three salads (\$3.25-\$7.50): a spinach made with barbecue chicken and garlic dressing, a fruit salad and Chinese chicken salad. There's also an adequate but not particularly interesting salad bar.

Open-Faced

Entrees (\$6.75-\$11.25) include grilled vegetables topped with Gorgonzola cheese, grilled salmon, Fettuccine Al Arrabbiata (spinach fettuccine with vegetables in a spicy sauce), grilled chicken

This Week's Target Area

10 Minutes Outside Downtown

Colors
1933 S. Broadway, in the L.A. Mart

and the house specialty, the L.A. Filet.

My companion ordered the latter, seared medallions of beef on fontina cheese toast dressed with a mild-tasting green pepper sauce. This delicious sandwich was served open-faced with onion rings and a small green salad.

I ordered the grilled chicken marinated in a tangy olive oil, lemon and fresh herb combination, which was accompanied by basil linguine and a cold chopped tomato and cucumber salad. The cool salad in the olive oil and lemon dressing surrounded the warm chicken and

pasta as an attractive complement.

The soup of the day was a hearty corn and pea chowder (\$3.50). Daily specials also include an omelette du jour, sandwich and entree special.

Colors also has a small espresso bar for early risers who fancy a muffin and coffee.

Make reservations for lunch, but if you happen to find yourself in the neighborhood, Colors moves a steady line of customers any time of day.

Colors is at 1933 S. Broadway in the L.A. Mart. Open for breakfast and lunch. Prices: moderate. Call 749-6528.

A 50-Year Experiment

Continued from page 7
Angeles architecture firm that incorporates Fuller's design philosophy. Reeser, a 1982 USC grad, soon joined Walters at the firm. While there, the two designed a traveling exhibit for IBM computers.

At Neuhart Donges Neuhart, they heard of Pearce, a follower of Eames and Fuller. In 1987, after a two-year sabbatical, Walters and Reeser landed jobs at

sports stadiums, Pearce is working on a deal to design and build outlets for a nationwide franchise.

The project will use the kit-of-parts concept, and could involve a very high level of computer design. The idea is to mass-produce components for highly customized designs.

"This is an intelligent program," Walters says. "Once you define the conditions, such as demo-

of housing, says Walters, whose beyond-the-shoulder-length hair betrays his alternative lifestyle.

Matters Metaphysical

As with Fuller himself, many of the design concepts advocated by Walters and Reeser address metaphysical issues. The couple describe their design mission in broad terms: "To scientifically explore the design process and learning process for the purpose of bringing about the comprehension of a grand strategy for all problem-solving. By using comprehensive, anticipatory design science strategies, this partnership resolves to convert its experience to the highest advantage of others. This is to include any ventures this partnership decides to undertake."

As for their relationship, Reeser fondly recalls a metaphor Walters once coined.

"He compared [our being together] to superconductivity," she says. "He said that the reason we stay together is the same reason two atoms travel through a superconducting chamber in tandem. It was so romantic, because we, like the atoms, are able to meet any obstacles as long as we stay together."

"Like atoms, we are able to meet any obstacles if we stay together."

—Karen Reeser

Pearce Structures.

Since then, Pearce has won a contract for Biosphere II, a hermetically sealed, 137,000-square-foot greenhouse near Tucson, Ariz., designed to replicate the conditions in Biosphere I—earth.

The \$150 million project is an important one for Pearce, says Walters, and the beginning of a new era for the company.

While pitching projects from giant pyramids to

graphics, climate, *et cetera*, the computer will describe the geometry that is most efficient for that system."

"The whole thing is generated right on the computer. Then it goes to the manufacturing process, where the computer is connected to robotic components that produce the struts as needed," he adds.

The same concept could be applied to the creation

A TASTE OF RESTAURANTS

10 MINUTES OUTSIDE DOWNTOWN

ASTRO FAMILY COFFEE SHOP

2300 Fletcher, 663-9241. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, budget to moderate. This is a great coffee shop. It's clean and casual and the staff is great. Astro makes a sandwich called the Riviera that combines freshly roasted turkey, bacon and avocado and a side of potato salad or coleslaw. When was the last time you had fresh-roasted turkey at a restaurant? The Coffee Shop also has omelettes, sandwiches, hot specials and a decadent-looking dessert carousel.

BARRAGAN'S

1538 W. Sunset Blvd., 250-4256. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, moderate. Barragan's is a family-owned restaurant that has been a favorite of the Echo Park community since it opened in the early '60s. Today, Barragan's continues to serve both the Echo Park residents and Downtowners who don't mind the short drive up Sunset. In addition to the standard fare, Barragan's dishes up favorites like Mexican-style fried spare

ribs and shrimp in ranchera sauce.

BODHI GARDEN

1498 W. Sunset Blvd., 250-9023. Lunch and dinner, budget. Bodhi Garden is a macrobiotic Chinese vegetarian restaurant that has absolutely no atmosphere but will cost you next to nothing. The menu includes items like Bodhi Chow Fun, Deep-Fried Stuffed Taro Root and Tofu with Black Moss. The owners are Buddhist and speak very little English but try their best to explain various dishes and preparations. The hours vary so call first.

CAFE BLANC

3706 Beverly Blvd., 380-2829. Lunch and dinner, moderate. Formerly the Ishi Grill, Cafe Blanc is housed in a tiny white box of a building next to a car repair shop on Beverly. In other words, you'll drive right past the place if you're not careful. The prices are pretty moderate at lunch but can escalate considerably at dinner. The lunch menu is small and includes choices like grilled meats, pasta and daily fish specials. There are re-

freshing salads and delicate homemade desserts.

GLORIA'S CAFE

3603 Sunset Blvd., 664-5732. Lunch and dinner, moderate. Gloria's is sort of scruffy-looking outside, but inside it's filled with fun art, sparkly seat cushions on the chairs, an indoor garden patio, all awash in pink. The menu is pasta, shrimp in a basket, crepes, meatloaf and fish specials. The clientele includes artists, Downtowners and the locals. The food is good and the price is right. Service is friendly too.

LA SERENATA DE GARIBALDI

1842 E. First St., 265-2887. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, moderate. This is a terrific Mexican restaurant just east of Boyle on First Street. It's on the south side of the street, so pay attention or you'll drive right past this gem. It's nothing to look at from the outside, but inside La Serenata prepares tasty items like fish quesadillas made with either mahi mahi or halibut mixed with cheese and spices.

MANAGUA

1007 N. Alvarado, 413-9622. Lunch and dinner, budget. Nicaraguan food served in an indoor patio setting. Try specialties like Chanchito Frito, fried pieces of marinated pork served with steamed casava root or