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Great Park designers checked out San Francisco

By **SONYA SMITH IRVINE WORLD NEWS**

San Francisco was the place to be over the past weekend for landscape architects, and that means a group from the Great Park ventured to the trolley city.

At the American Society of Landscape Architects, Master Designer Ken Smith spoke in the Newsmakers Roundtable about the Great Park project. The panel was focused on influences that inspire architects' work, and issues facing landscape architecture and the design profession.

"I am excited to take part in this conference that focuses on large complex projects in the United States like the Orange County Great Park," Smith said.

At the same conference, Principal Designer Mia Lehrer was inducted as a fellow of the architects group. She was nominated by her peers for the honor.

"I am extremely honored to be recognized by fellow professionals for doing work that I love to do," Lehrer said.

GROUNDED

The orange balloon only managed to get off the ground for three hours over the weekend – two hours on Thursday and one hour on Saturday – because of high winds. That means the balloon is just one flight away from 1,000 at 999 flights to date. A total of 23,275 people have ridden on the balloon so far. Of those, 17,333 were adults and 5,965 were children.

METROPOLITAN

Mia Lehrer, one of the principal designers for the Great Park, recently was interviewed by MetropolisMag.com about the park plans. For a link to the full Q and A, go to www.oregister.com/greatpark. The interview states that Lehrer was to give Metropolis an interview from the orange balloon - but an old base hangar substituted because high winds grounded the balloon.

Metropolis' Jade Chang asked Lehrer, among other things, "How do you create a landscape where nothing exists?"

Lehrer's response: That was the big question. Ken did some exploring around Southern California. There are a lot of canyons; the one at Balboa Park [in the San Fernando Valley] was especially influential. The curvilinear spaces in the Orange County Great Park, the decision to keep the two runways, those decisions came from exploration. This is how you would connect this site to some of the other features in Southern California.

For more on the Great Park project, visit www.oregister.com/greatpark .

Send tips, comments or questions for this weekly Great Park column to sosmith@oregister.com .