

A Book Review:

FLOODPROOF RETROFITTING: HOMEOWNER SELF-PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOR
by Shirley Bradway Laska with commentary by French Wetmore, Wallace A Wilson and Molly J O'Toole, Peter J May, Patricia A Bolton, and Raymond J Burby.
Boulder, CO: University of Colorado.

LeClair Harper

This book studies the self-protective behaviors of people living in areas where flooding is prevalent. The nature and type of actions taken by people to protect their homes are studied to consider ways in which government intervention and policy may improve floodproofing actions by individuals.

Section One details studies conducted with residents in Louisiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Laska addresses the type of floodproof retrofitting that is already taking place and how much it costs; the experiences, information, and/or education contributing to retrofitting activities; the role that government intervention plays in effecting retrofitting activities; and programs that may increase retrofitting activities.

Chapters in this section explore--through the use of these studies --the context and nature of retrofitting behaviors, the type of damage and the type of homeowners affected by the flooding, the effect of educational programs, the nature of retrofitting, including what is done, who does it, and how it is paid for.

These chapters demonstrate the use of floodproof retrofitting, who is most likely to floodproof retrofit, and what type of intervention can help to increase floodproof retrofitting. Extensive use of tables and some use of figures make the statistical data readily accessible. The text does an excellent job of interpreting that data.

Section Two is concerned with the role of governmental policy in floodproof retrofitting. Four chapters written by experts in policy and hazard mitigation support the findings of the studies detailed in the first section. These chapters address the reasons government should be involved in floodproof retrofitting, the methods and extent to which the government should be involved, actions and concerns pertaining to floodproof retrofitting in state and local levels of government, ideas that can be borrowed from previous energy conservation programs, and the role of floodproof retrofitting in floodplain management.

This section would be useful for anyone involved at any level of government policy-making pertaining to disaster aid and flood education. The arguments of the experts are clear and convincing and complement the statistically based studies of Section One. Section One, likewise, complements Section Two by providing extensive data to support generalizations and recommendations.

The book ends with a chapter by Laska summarizing findings and examining the implications of the study to recent and future policy decisions.

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A Book Review:

SO--YOU WANT TO BE AN INNKEEPER by M Davis, P Hardy, J Bell and S Brown.
San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 209 pages.

Julia T Poynter

The use of historic housing stock by the bed and breakfast industry has been increasing in the past decade. Guests have come to expect historical structures for this small but growing section of the hospitality industry. This book addresses areas that should be considered when starting and/or managing such an operation. Because the authors all have first-hand experience in owning and managing an inn, the book is written to share their knowledge and experiences.

The book is divided into seven sections beginning with identifying characteristics of the industry. How bed and breakfast inns differ from the country inns and bed and breakfast homestays is discussed, as well as trends in the industry. The "test" to determine whether innkeeping would be a good profession is realistic and informative.

The next section discusses guidelines for opening an inn and includes a skills checklist and resources available for those who need to develop skills (an appendix also has a listing of suggested resources). Finding a good location and evaluating the market after making a selection are presented. Legal issues discussed include choosing a legal structure and a brief listing of federal, state and city/county regulations. The selection of support persons such as a lawyer and accountant is also discussed. Overall, this section presents a broad view of issues that need to be addressed before opening.

The section of financial planning and the section on buying, selling, and leasing an inn are the two best sections of the book. The authors have taken care to stress the need to return a profit and how not accounting for expenses can jeopardize this objective. Developing a business plan, projecting financial needs, and analyzing cash flow are discussed--a section that other books of this nature often fail to include. The section on buying, selling and leasing is new to this printing and is a much needed and excellent source of information.

The section on things to do before opening has numerous suggestions that are realistic and relatively inexpensive to implement into the operation. This is also true for the suggestions in the marketing section. As the success of an inn is dependent upon its marketing efforts, the authors have given many excellent suggestions and guidelines. Actual information from inns across the nation has been incorporated, making a difficult subject for a novice more understandable. Even for the experienced innkeeper, these ideas are useful.

The last section discusses daily operations: policies and procedures, reservations, staffing, and insurance. Also included is a discussion on professionalism and cash flow management. More importantly, this section includes a discussion on the need for the innkeeper to avoid burn-out.

While written for those interested in starting a bed and breakfast inn, this book would be of interest to those who work with prospective and actual innkeepers. The book is easy to read and filled with real life anecdotes from actual innkeepers and support persons. As "the complete guide to operating a successful bed and breakfast inn," this book lives up to its advertising and is an excellent resource that will be of value to any person interested in this subject.

Julia T Poynter is an Assistant Professor at The University of Georgia in Athens.

A Book Review:

THE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING DESIGN FILE by Barrier Free Environments, Inc.
New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, Inc., 1991, 213 pages.

Bridget A May

The need for universal housing is increasing as the median age of the population rises and new legislation on accessibility passes. Designers and planners often find it difficult to create aesthetically pleasing dwellings that will accommodate nearly all users. To assist in this process is a goal of *The Accessible Housing Design File*, and it does so with style and thoroughness. Described as a 'how-to manual' for people who want to attain "universal usability while maintaining and enhancing marketability," the book contains 300 illustrations in seven chapters and covers nearly all aspects of accessible home planning. The chapters are Vehicular Transportation and Parking, Entrances, Site Design, Doors and Doorways, Windows, Kitchens, Baths and Bedrooms. Each begins with a drawing and brief discussion of the features of accessibility for that specific area. The following pages present a broader range of illustrations and more in-depth information. The sections on kitchens, baths, and bedrooms conclude with sample rooms.

Visuals are the real strength of this book. Floor plans, elevations, and perspectives depict entire rooms as well as their individual components. Some illustrations show people, both disabled and able-bodied, using the spaces. The examples demonstrate what works, what does not, and some of the hazards the disabled face in poorly designed houses. Text and examples cover existing and new construction, and the models can be used in single- and multi-family dwellings. Basic design information, such as ramp slopes, cabinet heights and widths, clearances, knee spaces, and turning spaces, for all rooms is also given. The accompanying text amplifies and clarifies the drawings that are fully dimensioned. The authors note that the dimensions meet or exceed the American National Standards Institute's (ANSI) Standard A117.1 (1986) and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards.

Most examples are for people with mobility impairments, but a few for those with hearing or visual disabilities are included. Some aspects of universal planning are left out. For example, laundry facilities are shown once and only in a bathroom, and no accessibility standards are given. The placement of outlets, thermostats, and fuse boxes are not discussed or illustrated. However, the authors emphasize in the introduction that the book is to be used with ANSI and UFAS regulations as well as state and local regulations.

The book is a valuable resource for educators, designers, and students. The visuals make excellent solutions themselves or can serve as creative springboards for other solutions. In addition, a designer does not have to read pages of text to understand the needs of the disabled in home planning. The graphics are easy to comprehend; therefore, one does not have to be an expert in accessibility to create housing that is attractive, accommodating, and safer for nearly all users.

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