

THE LIVING NEW DEAL

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

Progress Report for 2018

Dick Walker
Project Director

"Women & the Spirit of the New Deal" Conference, Oct. 4-6

We hit a new high with this conference, held at the University of California, Berkeley. A great line-up of speakers addressed both the pioneering role of women in the New Deal and how women are leading the way forward again today. The talks were uniformly of high quality and participants were delighted by the depth and breadth of coverage; everyone came away enthusiastic and energized for the battles ahead.

Around 190 people attended the conference and about 80 went on the field trip up to Tilden Park and the Berkeley Rose Garden, where they were greeted by the city's mayor. Awards were given to Robert Reich by the Frances Perkins Center and to several local organizations working with youth by the National New Deal Preservation Association. Conference sessions were videoed and posted on our YouTube channel. Kudos to Susan Ives for organizing the conference, which was co-sponsored by the Perkins Center and NNDPA.

Other Special Events

- We put on an exhibit of the photographs of Arthur Rothstein at the Canessa Gallery in San Francisco, December 7-27, 2018, organized by his daughter, Annie Segan, a Living New Deal Associate in New York. Half the proceeds from sale of the beautifully printed and framed photographs were donated to the LND thanks to the generosity of Annie and her partner Brodie.
- A 1940 WPA scale-model of San Francisco has been recovered, cleaned & restored by the SFMOMA and will be going on display by neighborhood in 29 branch libraries around the city in 2019. The model was saved through the work of Gray Brechin and restored under the guidance of SFMOMA's estimable Stella Lochman.
- There will be a special session on the forthcoming New Deal map of Washington DC at the annual conference of the American Association of Geographers on April 7, 2019, which takes place in Washington. Gray Brechin, Brent McKee, Rachel Brahinsky, Alex Tarr and Joni Palmer will present at the session. Thanks to Dick Walker for organizing this.

New Deal Inclusion Series

A new section of the Living New Deal website, called "New Deal Inclusion", went up on the website October 1st. It is the work of Brent McKee over several months, helped by DW, Gray & Lisa. It covers Latino- Asian- African- Native-Americans, Women, the Disabled, Jewish refugees, and the Elderly. It also incorporates the former Working Together gallery. Each segment includes text, references and archival photos, and the layout is elegant. These topics are controversial, but our primary goal is to answer unfounded or unreasonable criticisms of the New Deal for its stance on race, gender, immigration and so forth. The chief takeaway is that despite the entrenched biases and structural limitations of American society at the time (and a couple terrible decisions by FDR), the New Dealers did an enormous amount to secure the well-being of groups excluded from mainstream America and its advantage and to advance the cause of civil rights in all its forms.

New York Branch of the LND Launched

We set in motion a major effort to follow up on the success of the much-admired map and guide to "New Deal New York" produced in 2017. The idea is to get the city to recognize its New Deal heritage by posting plaques or signage giving proper credit to the New Deal for its massive transformation of New York. A committee was formed under the leadership of Peggy Crane and Grace Roosevelt, which includes many leading historians of NYC such as Mike Wallace, Kevin Baker and Marta Gutman. Peggy Crane was added to the LND staff as project director.

Washington DC Map & Guide

We have begun work on a Washington DC pocket map & guide, similar to the one for New York City that came out in 2017. Brent McKee has been hard at work on research in the National Archives and around the city, and he has prepared an extensive list of sites and murals to confirm, research and photograph. Many of those are already on our national map, but there is a much follow-up work to be done, as well as data entry. Gray Brechin is assisting Brent and one of our Associates in the Washington area, Maureen Budetti, is working with Brent, as well.

Living New Deal Center Prospectus

We took a big step in planning for a Living New Deal Center by producing a formal, thirty-page proposal to present to potential funders. The proposal lays out our vision for the Center and a step-by-step strategy for realizing it. The goal is to build a permanent institution to house the functions of the LND, including research, education and policy, on a much-expanded basis. It would continue our work unearthing the immense legacy of the New Deal; educating the general public about the importance of public works, public art and good government on the New Deal model; and making the case for enlightened public policy today along the lines of a New New Deal. It would be both a study center and a museum for the 21st century.

We conducted a focus group in San Francisco to introduce the idea to colleagues and potential donors and invite their input and Susan Ives produced an elegant brochure to focus people's attention on the Center idea. The need now is to design and gear up for a major capital campaign and expand our organizational capacity. Thanks to Dick Walker for writing the proposal and for board member Sara Boettiger for her encouragement and advice. We also received valuable input and cost estimates from Tom Ancona, a professional museum designer in Portland, Oregon.

Website Work

- We added around 1,500 new sites to our national map of New Deal public works, most of which were contributed by our 50+ National Associates and Core Team members – though we continue to receive submissions from new friends around the country.
- Lisa Thompson continued to make additions and improvements to the website. This year, these included special sections for the Women & New Deal Conference, New Deal Inclusion, and the monthly New Deal Lowdown report, as well as linking the website to the new YouTube video channel.
- Elena Ion wrote up a host of news posts throughout the year, as well as keeping track of announcements about LND events and press coverage.
- Our website received more than a half million visits in 2018—a new record for us.

Outreach and Social Media

- Susan Ives produced four Newsletters, featuring articles and reviews on New Deal topics past and present.
- Elena Ion produced eight monthly eblasts, the "New Deal Lowdown", featuring highlights of our work and current events.
- Our mailing list for these publications has grown to over 4,000 subscribers.
- Lisa Thompson created a Living New Deal YouTube channel for all our videos, including conference videos.
- Elena Ion has been putting up photographs and galleries of New Deal works on Instagram.
- Susan Ives oversaw our Facebook page, which doubled to 1,500 followers in 2018.
- Team members gave a number of talks and tours on New Deal topics. Gray Brechin and Harvey Smith did joint bus, boat and walking tours in San Francisco and Berkeley for LaborFest; Smith did talks on the New Deal in Sonoma County and on the Berkeley campus; Brechin gave talks in San Francisco, Berkeley, Mill Valley, Santa Rosa and beyond; and Brent McKee spoke at the Clifton House in Baltimore.
- Harvey Smith worked on the exhibition "Building Bridges, Not Walls" at the Berkeley Historical Society, which included several New Deal references.

Staff News

- Elena Ion took over from Erin Reding as LND Manager, while continuing as our Research Manager and gatekeeper for new site submissions and information going up on our website's national map and database.
- Glenna Anton is back on staff doing parts of the manager's job in Berkeley while Elena has been in Romania the last six months to help out her mother after father's death.

- Margaret (Peggy) Crane joined our staff to head up the New York branch of the LND and our efforts to get plaques or signage installed on major New Deal sites around the city.
- Brent McKee continued as our Project Historian, working mostly on the Inclusion section and Washington DC map research.
- Evan Kalish continued as our Researcher-At-Large, making road trip forays to Oklahoma & Texas, Florida, Arizona & New Mexico and New England.
- Susan Ives continued as our Communications and Events Director, organizing the Fall conference, putting out newsletters and overseeing our fundraising appeals.
- Lisa Thompson continued to manage and update the Living New Deal website.
- We signed up nine new National Associates this year: Ernest Everett-Blevins, Maureen Budetti, Eveline Evans, Jeremy Gill, Kara Heitz, Ken Liss, Fern Nesson, Kathleen Pagan, and Bobby Tanzilo. Thanks to Elena Ion for her efforts in recruiting new associates.
- We gained a new volunteer Core Team member, Dylan Nelson.

LND app for iPhone

Unfortunately, we made little progress on our crowdsourcing app this year. The basic version created for us by Kevin Friedly is functional but not ready for public release. It needs major design upgrades, which Lisa Thompson has proposed in detail. After a long communications breakdown, we're back in touch with Kevin, who is working on the app again.

Finances

The Living New Deal is financed almost entirely by private donations. It continues to operate at a level of about \$125,000 per year in expenses. There was a small deficit incurred in 2018, but there is still a healthy balance in our bank account thanks to carryover from the previous year. We thank our donors, large and small, for their generosity and support.

A full 2018 Financial Report for the Living New Deal non-profit arm has been submitted to the Executive Board.