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"IMAGINATION IS AS IMPORTANT
AS KNOWLEDGE."**

ON THE COVER

Ettore Sottsass, designer of Knoll Furniture's Mandarin Chair, provides an unusual focal point for The Rivetti Group's new downtown showroom in the CNG Tower, designed by Ross Bianco Architects. See "Small Firm Sizes Up Big Projects" on page 12.

THE PITTSBURGH CHAPTER AIA serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and the Pennsylvania Society of Architects. Membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields. Chapter Headquarters: CNG Tower, 625 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412/471-9548.

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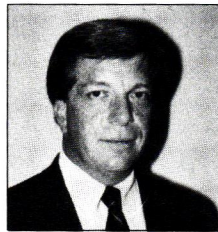
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VIEW POINT

DOUGLAS C. BERRYMAN, AIA, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT



Each year, chapters nationwide send their presidents and presidents-elect to Washington, D.C. to attend with regional/state board members and national officers a Leadership Training Conference called Grassroots. I was fortunate to have attended this year, and hope that I'll be able to convey what I learned to anyone who will listen. Space will not permit a complete recap here.

The conference makes available such a wealth and volume of information that it seems difficult to totally absorb all of it. Pieces and snippets do register, however, on a variety of topics delivered and disseminated by National AIA leaders, congressmen, National staff, other chapters and motivational consultants. The intent is to teach us how to lead; the session relies more on the attendees becoming self-taught.

The most beneficial aspect of Grassroots is without question the interaction and networking among all the players. This takes place during breaks (all of 15 minutes between 2 hour sessions), over dinner, during regional meetings or just listening to questions—and sometimes, answers. It is learning what other architects think, be they old or young (sorry, there is an arbitrary age cutoff for this category of 35 years; I'm still chafing at that). It's learning how they feel about themselves, their chapters, the National AIA, the environment, the whole profession, and on and on. It's learning from them about what can and should be done for the betterment of our respective roles in our profession; hopefully with a minimum of self-aggrandizement. And it's relevant because the exchange of ideas takes place between architects who are by nature committed to the process of interaction, thereby assuring that some action will ensue. It is the hallmark of Grassroots and, I would submit, the national convention.

We don't have National's 220 person staff (hard working people attempting to provide as many programs, services and lobbying efforts as possible — a subject for another article). We don't have concentrated workshops and seminars. But we do have our own "Grassroots" meeting every month, and more often, when one includes the committee structure. We're all leaders, after all, each in our own way, and for the most part, self-taught. The benefits derived from any Grassroots conference can be visited on this chapter by the members themselves coupled with the specific information distributed by National.

Our own interaction (I'm tired of "networking") here at the local level is what makes this organization. Δ