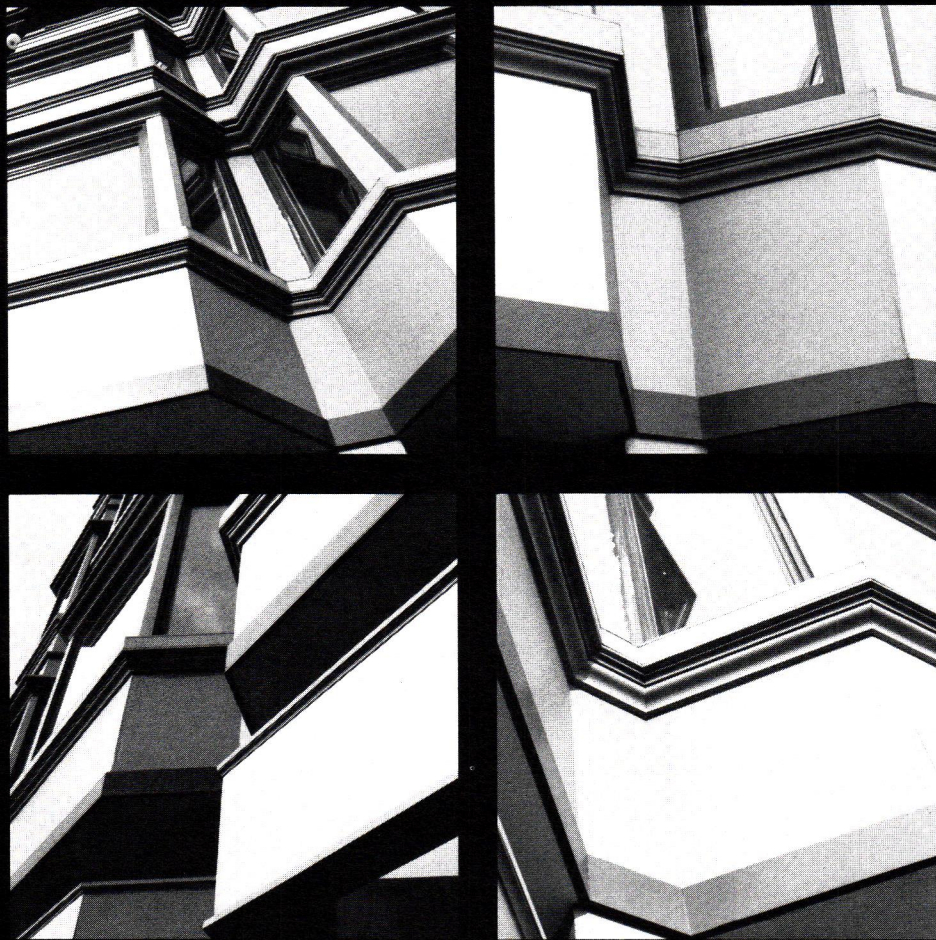


C O L U M N S



VOLUME 5, NO. 10

THE PITTSBURGH CHAPTER, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

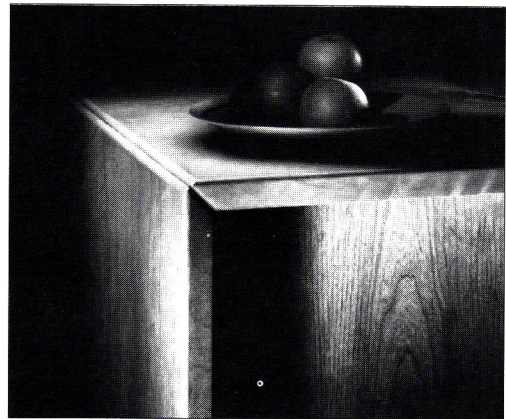
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View Point: The Juggling Exercise

Douglas C. Berryman, AIA, President



I've been drawing this little figurative Santa Claus for over 20 years, using him in one situation or another to send holiday greetings at this time of year. The one you see pictured is that which I sent out two or three years ago (and I include it here, where I have a modicum of editorial control, lest it had not made the grade elsewhere in this issue). I find it somehow appropriate, now, as I sign off as President of the Chapter, to use the little guy as a symbol of this past year.

There have been times when the juggling exercise has gone along nicely, like S.C. in the top drawing. Benign assistance in the background, watching, entertained, as one deftly manages to control personal relationships, a practice, AIA work, free time (or other pursuits) — with the constant reminder that they are all, after all, up in the air.

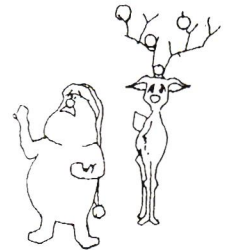
Then comes a time when you're just not sure how to keep it all going — and may not know where the time has gone. In those cases, the support from around you is there to catch at least some of the snowballs.

The unflinching efforts of the staff at the Chapter office caught more of my snowballs than I can now remember — and I'm sure they'd like to throw them back at me now and then. I'd like to thank them anyway: Nancy Tragard and Susan Dornburg have been oftentimes unsung heroines in their untiring efforts to take care of the needs of the members, and I'm especially grateful for their humor and willingness to work with me; and Anne Swager, Executive Director — I could *never* say she's unsung (certainly not now, anyway) and it's impossible for me to use the term "quiet diligence" when describing her. But she made my year sing; and, with Nancy and Susan, made this year easy. I'm truly grateful to them — terrific ladies, and, I hope, lasting friends. Remember how much they do — for all of us.

My practice suffered its own ups and downs this year, as I'm sure did your businesses (nice to know the government says the recession ended last Spring — who writes that stuff?) But the practice didn't suffer due to excess or extraordinary time spent on AIA business — mostly because of my good fortune and foresight in employing Gwen Williams, who just "happens" to also be Membership Chair. Because of her knowledge of the AIA, locally, statewide and nationally, I could rely on Gwen for the support anyone could need in order to do this job. She, too, made it easy (most of the time) to be President.

There's another group that made it easy — you all. You make this organization, after all. And your involvement, activity and professionalism, especially the committee chairs and their hardworking members, have been an inspiration. Thank you for that.

So here's to the next year! I hope you all will be healthy and happy — and your businesses will be *immensely* successful. Happy Holidays! 🏠



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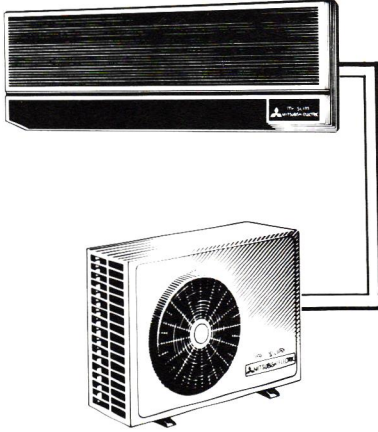
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On the Cover

A quartet of details from L.D. Astorino & Associates, Ltd. downtown headquarters. *Story on page 6.*

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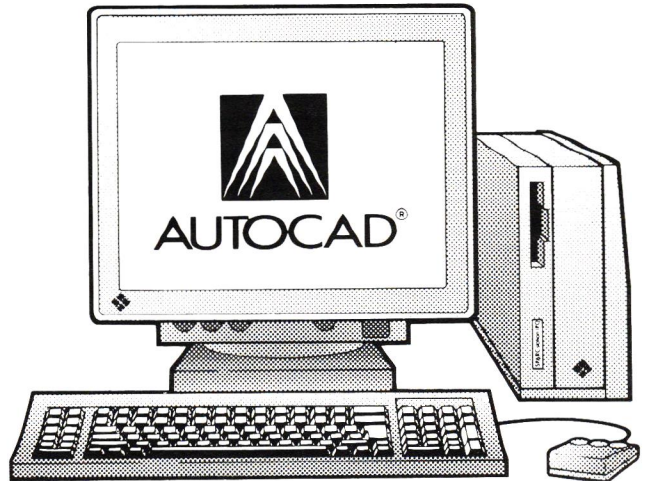
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Grading the “Boss”

Anne Swager, Executive Director

I was ill-prepared for a number of the challenges I faced when I began my career in non-profit management. The pluses I brought with me included my finance background from my years as a banker and my ability to simultaneously do numerous unrelated activities from my time as a mom. But, like anybody else I come with my own boatload of negatives, too.

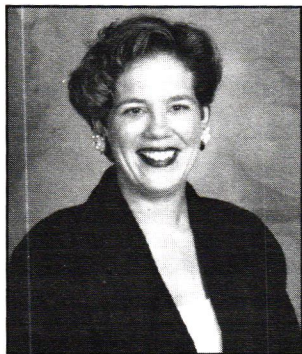
Patience has never been my forte. Rather than allowing the volunteer process to take hold I would grab at the project only to find myself overwhelmed in the end. Enabling versus doing is a vital art form to master in a primarily volunteer organization. But hardest of all for me has always been the constant change of “masters.” Just about the time you figure out the pluses and minuses of your “boss” the president, a new one is elected and you are back to square one. The only constant in this process is that each president is different and comes in varying forms of difficulty. Thankfully the good generally far outweighs the bad.

One of my favorite associations was with a fellow who worked right down the hall from my office; he was supportive of our efforts, worked hard, and was very bright. He only had one drawback. He’d come to my door whenever he needed to talk with me and if I happened to be on the phone or otherwise occupied he would snap the fingers on his right hand and then sweep his hand over his shoulder with his thumb in the upright position. This disconcerting gesture meant to convey that my urgent attention was needed as soon as I was finished. It worked but I always began these conferences somewhat annoyed. I could probably fill a whole book with horror stories but I’d have a hard time with the usual disclaimer that none of my “characters” were meant to resemble anyone living or dead.

Working successfully with a president depends on a few key elements. Most of them are obvious but difficult to attain. Good communication and listening skills, accessibility, patience, and realistic plans top my list. Taking time on both sides is a necessity. Wrap all this in a great sense of humor and you have at least a B+ situation. I used to think I could tell who would be “good” and who I could work with well. After numerous bad picks, I decided to let fate take its course. Of course, I had no choice when I arrived at the AIA. One president was already in office and she was a gem and the next was predetermined. Boy, did I luck out!

Doug Berryman has not only been terrific fun to work with and for but he also kept all of us, staff, Board, and committees on track and moving forward. We will finish this year with a list of accomplishments. His thoughts and plans have often been provocative and, at the very least, made sense. As a result, I dumped many a days frustrations on him and in return got a laugh and words of encouragement. He has been a great cheerleader. His sense of humor is legendary. Read his column or attend a meeting where he speaks and you know what I mean. Time is always short but this year’s lousy economy must have made running a practice and a chapter office truly burdensome. If so, I never knew but I sure am grateful that Doug took the time. Doug, you were tremendous fun, a terrific motivator, and an A+ President.

I started the year guessing I’d gotten a great “boss.” I was right. The part I never guessed was that I’d get such a super friend, too. Thanks Doug! 🙏



Anne Swager

See the winning entries in this year's Chapter Design Competition at the Awards Ceremony on Thursday, November 14. Full details and reservation form appear on page 19.