

C O L U M N S



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Computer Shock

Michelle Fanzo, Editor

"It is only when you try to make a living thing of the machine itself that you begin to betray your human birthright. The machine can do great work—yes—but only when in the hand of one who does not overestimate its resources, one who knows how to put it to suitable work for the human being."

—Frank Lloyd Wright



The tremendous amount of response

gathered from members when researching this month's new technology feature tells me computers are an explosive topic—whether it be from the perspective of perfecting 3-D animation or still learning how to save a file. With just enough room to present an overview of the beeping, whirring, clicking invasion in area offices, some of the more futuristic, broader market concepts got pushed off the page. I'd like to intrigue you with the following thoughts picked up off the editing room floor:

The integration of CAD will be so complete in the next decade, the technology will actually "disappear." (An architect not using CAD will be like a dentist not using Novocain, says one hi-tech article.) Clients can play a more interactive role in their projects by manipulating 3-D design images, so there are fewer costly changes later. Mainframe and microcomputer software will merge into one stream, providing the depth of mainframe with the fluidity of the Macintosh. Be ready for holographic CAD libraries, supplier catalogs arriving on CD ROM, life-size 3-D walk-throughs, and office-to-office computer networks, where an architect in Pittsburgh can send a drawing to a firm across town or across the country without leaving his desk.

Now that you're really confused, I'd like to draw attention to *Columns'* letters to the editor page (Insites), where we have nine times the amount of usual correspondence. This has nothing to do with new technology and everything to do with the old concept of an expressive forum. We wish to strongly encourage the further use of your membership publication as a place to communicate ideas, offer praise and voice concerns. Keep the letters coming!

And finally, a warm welcome to Doug Shuck, AIA, our chapter's new president.

'Till next month...🏠

Michelle C. Fanzo

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On the Cover

Desmone & Associates
award winning *Armstrong*
County Small Business
Incubator Building.

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. The objective of the Chapter is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA 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 Telephone: 412/471-9548; FAX: 412/471-9501.

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COLUMNS

Insites

Mailbox

Kudos for Columns

In the five years we have been publishing Columns, we have rarely received reactions to the publication. In the last three months we have seen half a dozen members put pen to paper expressing their praise. We would like to share some of your fellow members' thoughts with you.

...The new look to *Columns* is refreshing and we look forward to the expanded editorial perspective.

Deborah Elliott and Charles DeLisio, AIA
STUDIO DeLisio Architecture & Design

Just a quick note of thanks and appreciation for all your work and time putting together the Habitat story for *Columns*..Keep up the energy and enthusiasm!

Scott Mulrooney, AIA

Nice issue!

Bill Swain, FASLA, Associate AIA

...I am impressed with *Columns'* more critical editorial approach. If *Aris* (Journal of the CMU Architecture Department) is seen as an annual forum for thematically focused architectural discourse, *Columns* can be more timely, immediate, and even more controversial. This might take the form of book reviews, debates, or architectural issues in other cities which might be of particular interest to your readership.

Paul Rosenblatt, AIA

I'm enjoying the new look and greater substance of your magazine. As you know, the appearance of *Columns* has gone through a number of changes over the past few years but never this drastic and never with a result so graphically elegant.

Robert J. Bailey, AIA, CCS

Support for Designers

I have been both embarrassed and offended by much of the recent official commentary on the issue of licensing for interior designers. It's almost as if the inferiority complex we as architects suffer in relation to doctors and lawyers is given vent by downgrading our fellow professionals in the interior design discipline.

Mr. Pfaffmann's references to "trade school values" and "flavor-of-the-month profession" bespeak a severe lack of both respect for and understanding of the interior design profession. Our staff includes both architects and interior designers. I have developed enormous respect and admiration for the skills which differentiate interior designers and architects.

Interior designers are not only as skilled, in many cases they are more capable than the average registered architect when it comes to planning commercial space. Interior designers frequently have a much better understanding of both the aesthetic as well as the technical issues, including matters of code requirements.

The assertion that only architects are able to look after the public interest when it comes to matters of building interior space may indeed protect our market for services but it hardly serves the public interest. We as architects have a duty to look after the public interest, which includes supporting legislation which would separate the qualified interior designers from the dilettante who has a flair for color.

We would do better as architects to spend our energy scrutinizing our own standards of professional practice, rather than standing in the way of others who are attempting to improve theirs.

Mark McCormick, AIA
Principal, McCormick McCarthy Inc.

(Editor's note: PSA and the AIA Pittsburgh Board of Directors are opposed to the licensure of interior designers in Pennsylvania.)