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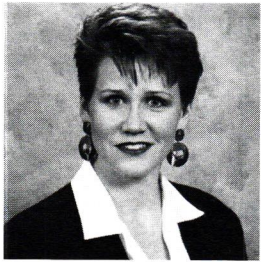
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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

PSA: Angels for Architecture by Maureen Guttman, AIA President



Survey after survey from the AIA national

and local components show that the most important activity of our professional organization is to monitor and positively affect legislative issues. As many of these issues are in the hands of state governments, we tend to rely on our state components to monitor the activities of the legislature as they relate to architecture and construction. The Pennsylvania Society of Architects (PSA) is your legal guardian angel in Harrisburg.

PSA's membership is composed of all the members from the eight local components across the state. A relatively small percentage of those members actually reside in the Harrisburg area, yet much work gets accomplished each year by the staff and the volunteers (members) from all over Pennsylvania who are committed to making PSA a forceful and credible presence in this state's lawmaking scene.

Among the issues before the state legislature that PSA is working on this year are:

- Passage of a Statewide Building Code (House Bill 1128). This bill has passed the House of Representatives and is currently sitting in the Senate Local Government Committee. While there is some concern that this bill may not make it out of committee this year, this is as close as it's ever been in the 30-plus years PSA has pushed for it.
- Licensing of Interior Designers (House Bill 1892). PSA has worked with representatives from the interior design community and with the House Professional Licensure Committee to reach a compromise position on how certification for interior designers could be granted without undermining the integrity of the health, safety and welfare issues that the licensing of architects represents.
- Local Tax Reforms (Senate Bill 2). Thanks in part to reasoned opposition from PSA, the House Finance Committee has removed language from this bill which would lower the debt limit permitted by school districts before the district must submit to a voter referendum.

These bills have been around for awhile, and most of us have some familiarity with them. A new piece of legislation has been proposed, however, that could affect our individual businesses more profoundly.

In Pennsylvania, an architect is required to design single-family homes, as well as renovations and additions requiring structural or egress modifications. Most people (the home-buying public, builders, code officials, and many architects) are under the impression that single-family structures are exempt from the requirement that an architect prepare the drawings. In fact, the only residential construction exempt is that which an individual designs for his own home.

Of course, we all know how diligently this has been enforced. The suburbs of Pittsburgh are filled with single-family structures which have never passed before the eyes of an architect. Adding insult to injury, the Pennsylvania Builder's Association (PBA), having successfully created a market which circumvents the law, recently introduced House Bill 1953 which called for the legalized exemption of one- and two-family dwellings from the purview of the Architect's Licensure Law.

Understanding that a large percentage of architects in this state are sole practitioners relying on residential design for their livelihood, PSA's Board of Directors initiated discussion with the PBA for the purpose of developing legislation which preserves the health, safety and welfare of all Pennsylvania citizens, while encouraging a partnership between architects and contractors in the home-building industry.*

The compromise that has been proposed by PSA is one that, if accepted, will create winners all around. In a nutshell, the exemption allows for builders to use commercially published or model homes construction drawings prepared by an architect licensed in any U.S. jurisdiction, provided that those drawings be reviewed, signed, sealed and adapted to the specific site by an architect licensed in

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AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and the Pennsylvania Society of Architects. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh 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.

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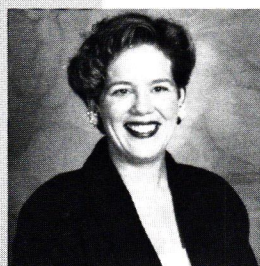
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A Call for Alternatives

by Anne Swager, Executive Director

From the day I found out I was pregnant,

I began to worry. Already a busy Mom—two kids, a dog and two cats, and a full-time employee—I knew better than to expect that my organizational skills could accommodate a new baby. Babies need time and attention, generally when you are suffering from major sleep deprivation. Being an all out advocate and practitioner of eight solid sleep hours a night, I knew a lot, mainly me, was going to suffer once the baby arrived. I had no idea how I would juggle everything, especially my job.



As the work force continues to diversify, alternative work arrangements, whether temporary or permanent, can answer a variety of different needs.

I could not fathom how I would eke out the extra hours in my already overcrowded day to meet the reasonable expectations of life like food, warmth and shelter. Nevertheless, ready or not, Ellen arrived. Maternity leave helped. I was up to five hours of sleep a night when I was due back. But with Ellen's early health problems, caring for her took on a new dimension. The pediatrician insisted she not be put into day care—too many errant germs from other adorable babies—and that I nurse her as long as possible to give her immune system that extra edge. The first requirement was solved with a full-time babysitter but the second meant somehow Ellen and I needed to be together. A couple of short trips to the office convinced everyone that Ellen would not sit patiently by while Mom worked. She demanded attention and only Mom's attention would do. Rank and relative importance of caller, visitor, meeting meant nothing to Ellen.

The resolution: I work at home part-time. This works fairly well if you don't count wrestling the phone away from the teenagers long enough for business calls. Ellen also needs medicine every several hours, even throughout the night.

Fearing I might lapse into hallucinations from sleep deprivation, the AIA Pittsburgh Board allowed me to come back to work gradually. At first it was half-time, then three-quarter time, and now finally, full-time. I also flex my time, which means the babysitter works all the time, the kids eat macaroni and cheese, and I work a lot of evenings. Needless to say, this type of work arrangement is not perfect but it does help with some temporary, albeit not so short-term, problems.

I recently read an article about work habits in America compared to other countries. The article quoted a study which found that Americans work harder than everyone else in every other country. Yes, that includes Japan. The study measured actual hours on the job and that was the determining factor for who worked the hardest. We do, and no surprise, we are mad about it. The vast majority of those surveyed would take a 20% pay cut just to stay home more. If I took a 20% pay cut I would have to come home to a house in a different neighborhood, but that aside, I sympathize. As the work force continues to diversify, alternative work arrangements, whether temporary or permanent, can answer a variety of different needs. In my case, I was willing to take a reduced income to be able meet my family's needs. I really enjoy what I do and the AIA has invested considerable time and dollars to help me do my job well. It would have been a loss to both sides if I could not have continued.

When I hear the word trend, I always think of bell-bottom pants, flowered shirts and peace symbols. Some trends however, never disappear. I suspect that alternative work arrangements are here to stay. They make sense in a world which is rapidly changing, and most of all they can often meet the employers and employees needs. 🏠

