

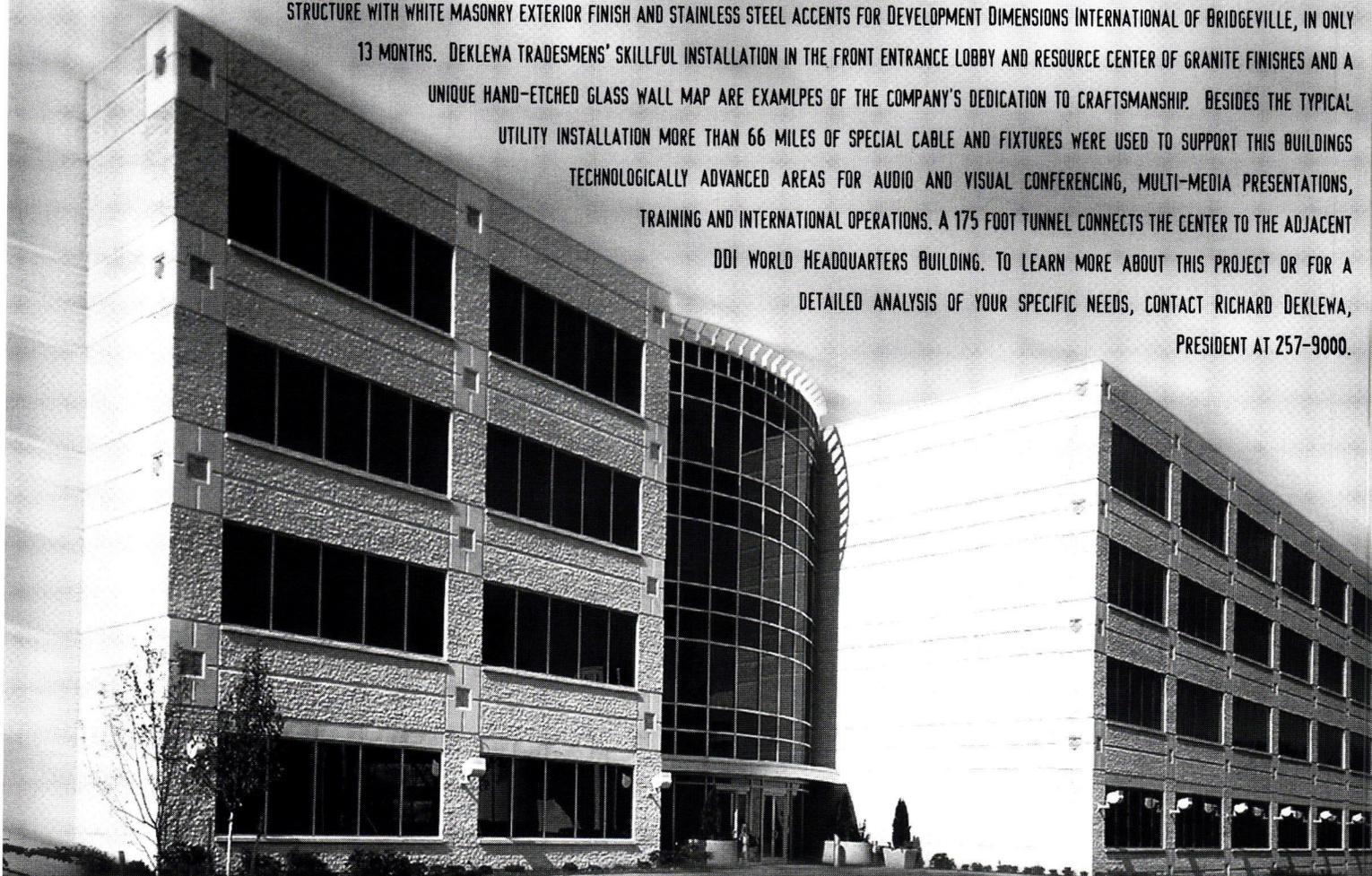
C O L U M N S





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GENERAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING SUCCESS

Out on a Limb

by Anne Swager, Executive Director



The perception is that architects are an expensive commodity out of reach and not necessary for the regular guy on the street.

Two recent television programs featured

the woes that homeowners often encounter when they rely upon the services of a home builder/remodeler. After long exposés on the scams that homeowners endure at the hands of unscrupulous builders, neither *Primetime Live* nor *20/20* mentioned the obvious resolution to this problem. Hire an architect! It's easy in this situation to point fingers and blame the media for shortchanging the profession but the problem probably goes deeper than just some reporter not doing a very good job. I suspect the worst. I think other professions have been much more aggressive about staking their claims and getting big pieces of the action. The general public is no longer clear on what architects do and for whom they do it. The perception is that architects are an expensive commodity out of reach and not necessary for the regular guy on the street.

At Grassroots in February, Terry McDermott, AIA's CEO, announced a bold initiative to try to change this perception. He wants the membership to take a vote at the AIA National Convention to support a three year television ad campaign with an increase in dues. The extra dollars will be escrowed directly for the campaign. I believe in the initiative and think the benefits to the profession far outstrip the costs. Be sure to watch *AIArchitect* for more detailed information on this campaign.

Since I don't have to pony up with the bucks, you probably think this is a no brainer for me. However, that's not quite the whole story. As one of the tiers that receives money, I know that by increasing the dollars to one tier there is a slim chance that the membership would tolerate a dues increase from either of the other two tiers. This makes my job in the next three years all the harder.

In 1997 the dues from the architect members of AIA Pittsburgh will only support 27% of the yearly expenditures. The remainder of the money is raised through various nondues revenue sources, the major ones being *Columns* and document sales. Members wanted more services and a more visible presence for the AIA. Accordingly, our bud-

get, since I began, has quadrupled, primarily due to an aggressive fundraising stance on behalf of the Board and staff. We have added affordable health insurance and the Resource Center to benefit the fastest growing segment of the architectural market, the small firm. The Resource Center is fee based. However, the costs far outstrip the fees we charge the firms who have binders in the office. With 170 requests for architects since January 1, this is a service the consumer loves and yet, the architectural firms are slow to recognize.

Two years ago, we began a placement service. Susan Traub of our office has spent more and more of her time finding qualified candidates for openings in your offices and referring them to you. In 1995, she found 39 jobs in 35 offices. In 1996, 46 architects were hired by 43 firms. What started as a labor of love (she really likes doing this more than the books) now consumes half her time.

We've seen some interesting phenomenons in this business. We had one firm who hired people and laid them off just before the minimum time to qualify for unemployment. Some of you have a much more difficult time keeping employees than others and it very seldom has anything to do with what you pay. Some firms have such a great reputation that they have no problem filling a vacancy. This year, we began charging for the service. While still far below the market rate for similar services, we have received some flak for this decision. The Board felt it was unfair for dues to support a service which benefited only a few members.

As an organization, we cannot continue to increase services without a source of revenue. Fundraising is effective but not reliable. To insure the future of a service which only benefits a few, it must be supported by those who receive the benefit. Outsourcing is a new word but not a new concept. You use your billable hours to design and get more work, and we'll use our staff to find you capable people to get the job done. 🏠

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On the cover: The redevelopment of the 300-acre former USX Steel Works site in Homestead is but one of many regional development projects currently underway. Photo courtesy of Park Corp.

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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I am leaving Columns to explore my interests in a broader context. The opportunity to work in a German federal ministry and also for an urban development think tank in Berlin was too much to pass up.

The Last Word

by Michelle Fanzo, Editor

This, my 48th issue as editor of Columns,

will be my last. For five years—almost my entire time here in Pittsburgh—I have written and edited articles in this publication about architectural trends, the urban environment, community dialogue, people and the spaces they inhabit. Each story gave me a new insight into Pittsburgh and the architectural community in western Pennsylvania. I have found my interest in architectural-related issues increase steadily over the years, and have pursued stories for other publications about economic development, community development, cultural heritage and design issues.

Very often I have heard one member or another talk about placing a building, or the field of architecture as a whole, more in the context in which it exists. I am leaving *Columns* to explore my interests in a broader context. I recently received a year-long Robert Bosch Fellowship to look at urban issues surrounding German reunification, particularly in Berlin. The opportunity to work in a German federal ministry and also for an urban development think tank in Berlin was too much to pass up.

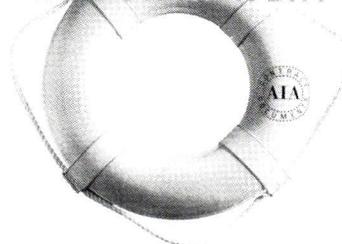
In cleaning out my desk to hand over the reigns of *Columns* to its new editor and past contributor, Cheryl Towers, I discovered all the cards and letters I have received from members over the years. There were a number of notes welcoming me to town (responding to my September 1992

column "Why Pittsburgh?"), letters of thanks and correction, and notes from architects who too have moved on to other opportunities. The letters were from a wide range of people covering a broader range of topics—riverboat gambling, the Wabash Bridge (whatever happened to that?), Habitat for Humanity, comments on our typeface, architectural doodles, concern over the destruction of Oakland's Syria Mosque, joy over the destruction of CMU's Skibo Hall. Nearly five years of notes and remembered comments provide strong evidence that Pittsburgh's architectural community is interested in the future of the city and region, and that *Columns* has been the premiere vehicle for expressing those interests and opinions.

Whether my departure is temporary or permanent (too soon to tell), it is with mixed feelings that I leave *Columns*, and Pittsburgh. I cannot say where my year in Germany will lead, but I can already tell that I will miss Pittsburgh and all the supportive, encouraging people I have met here.

I came to my position with a writing background and some architecture history knowledge. I leave knowing not only the vocabulary for and phases of designing and constructing a building, but the heartfelt frustrations and genuine joys that exist in the practice of architecture. I will carry what I have learned here, and the memory of those whom I have learned from, with me where ever I go. 🏠

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Regional Development

by Michelle Fanzo

PART FOUR IN A FOUR PART SERIES ON DEVELOPMENT IN PITTSBURGH AND THE REGION

A plan to develop a cohesive regional agenda for development is in its infancy and faces some well established challenges.

Since 1950 all growth in the urban U.S. has been of a low density, spread out suburban style. According to urbanologist David Rusk, the 522 central American cities had a collective density of 5,873 people per square mile in 1950. In 1990, that number was 2,837. Forty-seven years ago Pittsburgh was considered a high density city with over 12,000 people per square mile, today there are less than 6,700 per square mile. Between 1982 and 1992, the amount of agricultural land in the five county region of western Pennsylvania declined from 673,000 acres to 527,000, a conversion of nearly 150 square miles of land from agriculture to urban purposes. This is an area three times the size of the city of Pittsburgh in a region that has lost some 200,000 residents in the same period.

It is clear people are consuming more land today than before World War II, and that consumption has increased over the decades. Western Pennsylvania is a prime example of this trend, with 200,000 new housing units built in the region between 1970 and 1990—the height of regional population decline. However, whether these and other forms of area development are bad, good, or a mixture of both are widely disputed.

A Regional Plan

Bill Hudnut, former mayor of Indianapolis and now at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, DC, likens a healthy region to a cookie rather than a donut. The donut concept of edge cities and affluent development ringing the urban core has occurred in numerous American cities in recent decades. According to Rusk and others, this has a negative impact on the region as a whole. On the other hand, a cookie concept, says Hudnut, offers a better disbursement of opportunities, amenities and economic viability.

Pittsburgh's dramatic steel decline affected the city, suburbs and even the countryside, a phenomenon that some say has staved off a worse donut effect that the area currently has. However, the region exhibits a pattern of uneven growth, the North Hills's rapid development being an indicator. A significant part of uneven development emerges from a lack of a regional focus or plan. However, a number of regional organizations have recently come together to try to change this.

The Pittsburgh Regional Alliance (PRA), Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Coalition (SPRPC), and other county and municipal groups have formed a coalition to begin identifying opportunity areas in an effort to form a regional development agenda. Each county will create its own priority list to be reviewed by the larger groups for viability and regional implications. The results will then be brought to Harrisburg to present a coordinated, prioritized agenda for the region. "We want to show that the counties support each other," says Timothy Parks, President and CEO of the PRA, a coalition of five private sector economic development agencies. "State funds have been skewed towards the eastern part of the state, in great part because they are more unified than we are."

"We're trying to move towards targeted growth," says Bob Kochanowski, Director of SPRPC. He expects modest regional growth over the next 20 years, particularly in three areas: New Stanton, the airport corridor, and Cranberry. The goal, he says, is to get county plans in accord with regional plans, then get municipalities in accord with regional strategy.

The group is defining 11 economic opportunity areas—areas within which there is growth, development, private investment, water and sewage—that also need improved

transportation. "We're creating task forces in each area to look at projects which offer the best investment packages for growth. Then we will try to incorporate them into an updated regional plan," says Kochanowski. "It's problematic though because when you define a 'have' area, you also define a have not, and people aren't comfortable with that."

He anticipates hard work ahead if the region is to have a coordinated plan. This is made all the more difficult since SPRPC has no authorization or firm role in land-use planning to enforce recommendations. In Pennsylvania, land-use falls under the jurisdiction of municipalities, and there are 415 municipalities in western Pennsylvania. "Coordination will not be easy," says Kochanowski.

Though positive about talks of a regional agenda, Frank Brooks Robinson, AIA, President of Regional Industrial Development Corp. (RIDC), feels competition between the counties will never disappear—and maybe shouldn't. "People should focus on strategic opportunities in their county. They know it best. However, there should be a period where they step out of the local role and think about regional needs." Ideally, Robinson would like to see 10-15% of economic development efforts in western Pennsylvania have a regional perspective.

He supports the concept of a network of suburban and urban industrial development parks to strengthen the region. He advocates for sites where entrepreneurial businesses—what he calls the economy of tomorrow—can be nurtured until they are strong enough to stand on their own.

A City and Its Suburbs

Rusk, in examining 522 cities in 320 metropolitan areas (for his book, *Cities Without Suburbs*) concluded that there

are three key indicators of city/regional health. Once a city has lost more than 20% of its population, has a disproportionate minority population in relation to the region, and has an income level that is 70% less than its suburban income level—those cities are on the steady decline. Rusk asserts that there has yet to be a city in the above mentioned situation that has been able to turn around its decline. Twenty-four American cities fit Rusk's profile of declining city/region, including neighboring Cleveland, Philadelphia and Youngstown. Though Pittsburgh has had a 45% population decline and has an 18% higher distribution of African-Americans than its suburbs, it is not on the list—but only because the decline in the Pittsburgh area strongly affected the suburbs and outlying cities and towns as much as the city. Per capita income in the city is presently 87% of its suburbs.

The need for a strong regional core is rarely disputed, but achieving it is another matter. "If you kill the urban core, it will pull down growth in the rest of the region," says Don Smith, Director of the Center for Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University. "The suburbs don't believe this. They don't pay taxes to the city and don't see why they should. At the same time, thousands of suburbanites drive into the city every day. They wouldn't have a job or a place to live without the city."

Smith says State funding should not be used for the relocation of businesses to industrial parks from one part of the region to another. "Unless a company is not competitive in its old location and will be in its new regional location (like being nearer to the airport)—moving that company is not good for the region. On the other hand, encouraging people to leave the city for the suburbs, or worse, subsidizing those companies to leave the city for the suburbs with state money, makes no economic sense."

Decision-Makers

Some argue that talking about regional priorities and supporting start-up businesses take a back seat to the interests of developers and transportation planners. "I don't think, as some assert, that developers drive planning, but I have to acknowledge that some opportunity areas are created because private developers have made a decision

about what will work. If we're going to be customer oriented, this is the reality," says Parks. "Developers do what the customer demands. It boils down to trying to make sense of the different forces at play and reach a balance."

Fred Bonci, Professional Affiliate, of LaQuatra Bonci Associates, Inc., and others advocate for a balance between such economics and quality of life standards. "Unless someone can figure out a way to instill a quality of life and standards ethic, I don't think there's much hope for improvement. When municipal officials talk about Wal-Mart, they all talk about how many jobs will be created. That's it.

How do you instill a land preservation ethic in that discussion? I believe there is a point where good planning means good economics."

Bonci also advocates for engineering-based concepts to be more inclusive of resource-based standards. He and others call for better preservation of natural systems, better site planning standards and accountability for following them. The problem, he says, "is that when we tried to do this regionally with the airport corridor, Wal-Mart came in and received so many variances, it brought the planning back to the way it was before."

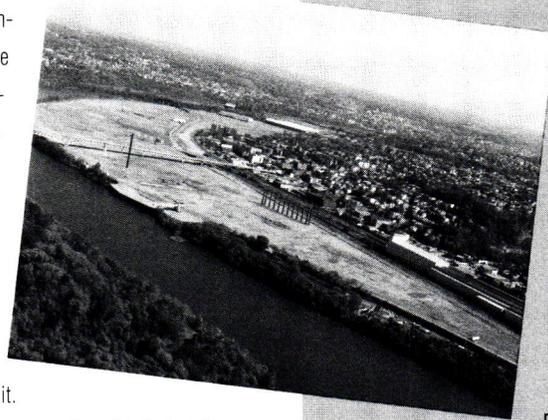
Currently, transportation planning and its connection to development is one of the key issues under debate, particularly at SPRPC. Some argue the region needs to consider new beltways and roads tied to outlying economic development opportunities. Others argue highways create sprawl and problematic growth. Either way, the region's \$5 billion development fund shortfall is a problem.

While a small sampling of western Pennsylvania players suggests setting a regional agenda will be difficult, many officials and architects sense there is a concerted effort underway to organize and prioritize development projects and issues. The reality, says Parks, is that even after each

In the Works

The master plan outlining an extensive mixed-use development for this prominent Homestead 300-acre site has just been released. The five year development plan for the former USX Steel

Works site includes entertainment, recreation, specialty and larger box retail, housing, R&D, offices, and manufacturing. Park Corporation, owner of the site, has recently lit the smoke stacks remaining on the land



as part of an effort to preserve some of the historical steel equipment and artifacts.

One of the great advantages to developing brownfield sites, says Kelly Park, VP of Park Corp., is that they open up land where infrastructure is already in place. A frequent disadvantage is the cost of cleaning and developing the site. However, legislation passed by Gov. Ridge in 1995 has tied redevelopment standards for brownfield sites to their new uses, making them more attractive to developers.

of the ten counties has identified two or three crucial projects, there may not be enough funding to proceed on all of them. "We may have to whittle the list down and choose to focus on the ones that are ready to go immediately." Odds are, developing a regional plan will not be a simple process, but the fact that there is a process underway at all, say many, is a significant step towards improving economic vitality in the region. ■

Local Talk

by Michelle Fanzo

Western Pennsylvania architects identify poor or absent infrastructure, misvalued property, old buildings, and struggling downtowns as some obstacles to quality development.

“How you organize your government defines how you think of yourselves as a community. This [the Pittsburgh region] is a community that is highly fragmented by governance, income, race and ethnicity, and my guess is, without major changes in that picture, it’s going to have tough sledding in a multicultural, global 21st century economy.”

— DAVID RUSK

In Uniontown, the sewer and water systems are 100 years behind the times. Damaged and circuitous roads make many Mon Valley towns difficult to reach, leaving them disconnected from the region’s opportunities. Greensburg continues its fight to revitalize downtown while two large malls draw customers away from Main Street. Butler’s downtown, suffering similar decline, hasn’t even started that fight.

There was a period from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s when Pittsburgh and its surrounding towns and counties were moving in the direction of being one continuous entity in people’s minds. Interdependence of resources, labor and transportation unified the region and spread prosperity from West Alexander on the West Virginia border to



ABOVE: In an effort to better integrate service structures into communities, N. Lee Ligo and Associates designed a more traditional-looking, neighborhood friendly branch (top) for the First National Bank of Slippery Rock than had previously existed (bottom).



LEFT: Many of the buildings on the main street in Franklin were constructed during the oil boom of the mid-19th century. The downturn in the area’s economy in the mid-20th century has left many of these buildings intact, but covered with false facades. Lee Ligo and Associates recently refurbished the facades of these Franklin structures, as well as installed new lighting, sidewalks and plantings.

the shores of Lake Erie. Today there is great polarization between the City of Pittsburgh, and the opportunities there, and its suburbs and outlying areas. This helps perpetuate uneven regional development, as well as varying viewpoints on what should be a regional priority for limited funds.

"We have designed apartment buildings where we had nowhere to dump storm water—this lack of just plain basics retards development," says Dale Drost, AIA, of Dale Drost and Associates in Uniontown. "It's going to take a massive infusion of money to change this, and a lot of federal funds for this purpose have dried up."

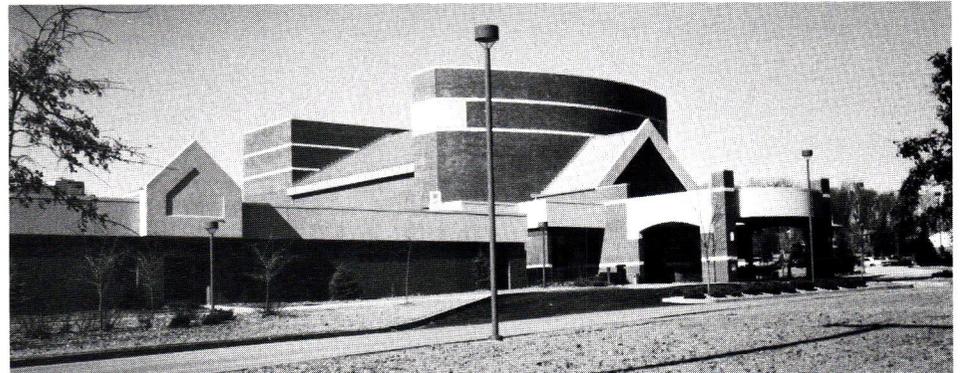
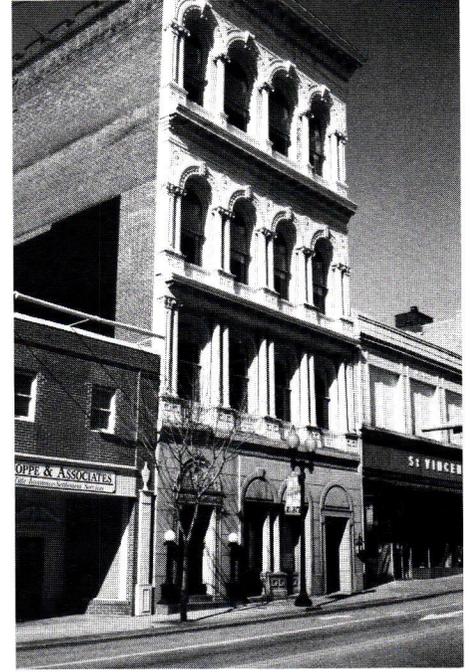
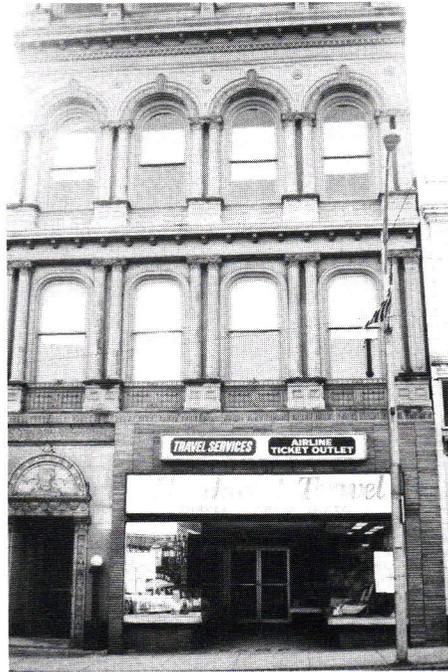
In Uniontown as elsewhere in the region, the tax value of property is decades behind the actual value. Developers often find this a disincentive to development, fearing new construction will draw huge taxes to offset the shortfall on older properties. Age and environmental concerns, such as asbestos, also deter development in older communities, often where local development is most needed. These are but some of the obstacles to improvement and economic vitality in western Pennsylvania. However, there are initiatives underway, both local and regional, public and private, attempting to change the development climate.

Rolling Up Sidewalks

Downtowns from Greensburg to Connellsville to Butler are wrestling with empty store fronts and few amenities to draw customers. Low cost housing for the elderly has been one option for revitalizing old downtown buildings. However, says Drost who has worked on such projects, this kind of development does not often spur spin-off activity, and he warns against areas placing all their redevelopment hopes in one basket.

The age and poor condition of many older buildings make renovation and redevelopment costly in regional cities and older towns. "Someone can go outside the city limits and build easier and cheaper. There is often lead paint or other environmental issues to deal with in city buildings. Parking is a problem too," says Jack Sillaman of Joseph Pellis and Associates in Greensburg.

After Pittsburgh, Greensburg, Butler and Elwood City used to be the three major retail and downtown hubs in the region. All have faced a declining customer base, major anchor store closings, decaying infrastructure, and residents'



TOP (Before & After): The JEM Associates Building in downtown Greensburg was renovated by Joseph L. Pellis & Associates. The cast iron facade was renovated and the first-floor exterior of the former Masonic Temple was redesigned. The second floor is occupied by the architecture firm. BOTTOM: Joseph L. Pellis & Associates designed this state-of-the-art Science Hall for Westmoreland County Community College. Community colleges, says Jack Sillaman, project architect, are some of the fastest growing institutions in the region.

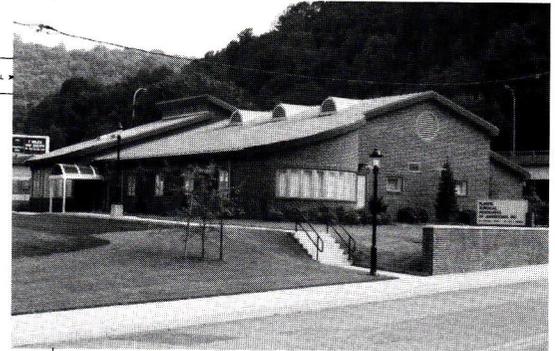
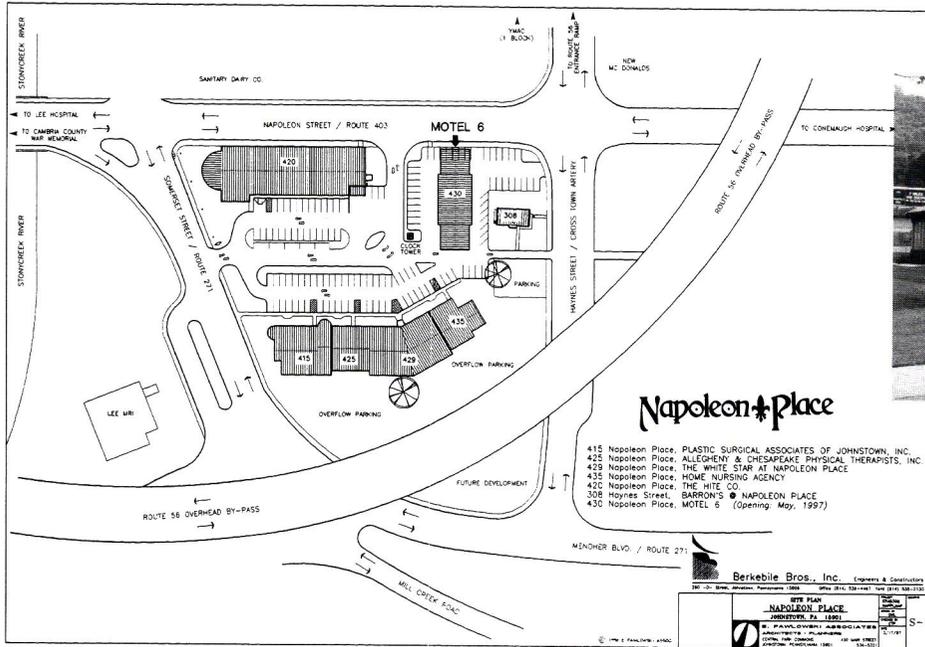
preference for malls and easy parking. Slowly, however, regional centers like Greensburg are bouncing back from what many say was their worst time in the '80s and early '90s. A new addition is being built on the Palace Theater in Greensburg and the recent renovation of historic theaters in Uniontown and Vandergrift have spurred activity there as well.

Additionally, industrial park development has prospered in Westmoreland County. Aggressive business attraction for its seven industrial parks is part of the reason for the

area's slow but steady growth. "Because county growth is pretty strong, it will help the city," says Sillaman. There is significant development activity between Greensburg and Latrobe and heading out towards Irwin. Kennametal Corp. is building a large addition that is also attracting people back to the area.

Coming and Going

Highways are opportunities, says Lee Ligo, AIA of Lee Ligo and Associates in Slippery Rock. As president for the last



Napoleon Place, a medical arts and mixed-use complex in Johnstown, is an example of efforts to bring traditional services back to the city center. This first building on the site, for the Plastic Surgical Associates of Johnstown, was designed, along with the rest of the complex, by E. Pawlowski Associates. According to the firm, the doctors that relocated their practice to this "area-in-transition" were viewed by many as being brave urban immigrants.

two years of the Butler County Community Development Corporation he has received up to 20 calls a day concerning development issues and opportunities from people in other areas. "They look at a map and they see Butler's proximity to Pittsburgh and routes 79 and 80."

Transportation access, says Ligo, is part of the reason he is so optimistic about the county's future. Butler County recently announced plans for the first of at least five industrial parks to be built within its boundaries. "We've really made an effort to try to develop parks in all four corners of the county as well as the center, to spread the opportunity," he says. Among Butler County's development strengths are, says Ligo, its relatively low taxes and bucolic setting, mixed with easy access to Pittsburgh.

There are, however, obstacles to industrial development. "There's no money from the state," says Ligo. "We have to work with tax abatement. In Ohio they're offering 15 year tax abatement and giving ground away. How do we compete? We've started talking with school boards about this. What we're asking is for them to give up taxes for 3-4 years so as to have a healthy community at the end of that time that will be paying taxes. Abatement attracts industry, which brings jobs. It's a two-way street—a community-oriented industry can do a lot for schools."

"Big industrial parks may attract business, but they also disrupt a sense of traditional communities," says Terry Necciai, architect and Main Street Manager in Somerset since 1994. "I think that development comes from community development. I'd rather see hundreds of people who care about their community contribute \$25, than have the government come in and spend \$100,000 to build industrial parks."

It's not one big industrial park or signature development that will save struggling communities, he continues, but people that will buy back their towns and invest in them individually. "Community development is economic development on a small scale." The best plan for the region, he feels, is to find a way to both inject new systems into the region, which may be a new highway, but also maintain the integrity of the towns.

Small Packages/Big Picture

Necciai, who with architect Steven Chaitow, AIA runs Terry E. Necciai, Historic Preservation Consulting, has a different perspective on regional development than many architectural firms. He and his partner have completed 150 small projects in the last three years, ranging from fixing old front porches to building a mini-mall in Brownsville. "We

did construction on one mini-mall for 50 cents a square foot," says Necciai. For the pair, their job is about helping people find ways to improve their surroundings, big and small.

Necciai has been struck by how many small towns in the region are living museums. "Because a town died in 1845 it still looks like 1845. West Alexander stopped in the 1870s. There are towns like this all over the region. A lot of communities we deal with have architecture like Seaside, FL, except it's the *real* thing. But who's going to live there? There's a lot of people that are lost because they don't know how they fit in any more, and the fringe areas require an enormous amount of creativity to even find architectural commissions."

Urbanologist David Rusk concurs with Necciai, as he stated in a 1995 speech in Pittsburgh that Allegheny County was going to decline if structures and policies were not put into place, particularly at the state level, that could bring about solid growth management while maintaining value in older communities. Others make the point that regardless how you view much of contemporary suburban development, it looks pretty darn much the same everywhere. Malls, fast food restaurants, housing developments look alike from Monroeville to McCandless to Dormont. Where

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Victor O.
Schinnerer
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CNA



is the sense of place, of community pride, they ask. "What is unique about a region, what expresses the personality and distinctiveness of a place, are its older neighborhoods and commercial areas," says Rusk.

One of the main problems in outlying regional cities like Johnstown, DuBois and New Castle is that when hard times hit, they have few assets to draw upon. When the main industry disappears, what is left? Necciai and others discuss a need for a mechanism to share the benefits of the region more broadly. The fragmentation of municipalities and jurisdictions, however, make this nearly impossible.

Unifying objectives and municipalities is a recipe many architects and regional officials support. Extreme separation by jurisdiction, race and income opportunities serve to hurt overall regional economic competitiveness, says Rusk. "How you organize your government defines how you think of yourselves as a community. This [the Pittsburgh region] is a community that is highly fragmented by governance, income, race and ethnicity, and my guess is, without major changes in that picture, it's going to have tough sledding in a multicultural, global 21st century economy." 🏠

LEFT: The Heritage, designed by Dale Drost & Associates, is a new five-story apartment building for senior citizens built on the site of three multi-story downtown Uniontown buildings that were unoccupied above the first floor due to code restrictions. RIGHT: The Fayette County (Uniontown) Public Service Building is a retrofit of a 90-year old former department store, executed by Dale Drost & Associates. With sensitive planning, some historic buildings can be saved and retrofitted to perform modern, high-tech functions, such as this building housing the county's 911 Command Center.

Snake Oil Architecture?

by Jack R. Scholl, AIA

America's urban problems are far too complicated for New Urbanism's predetermined solutions, says one architect.

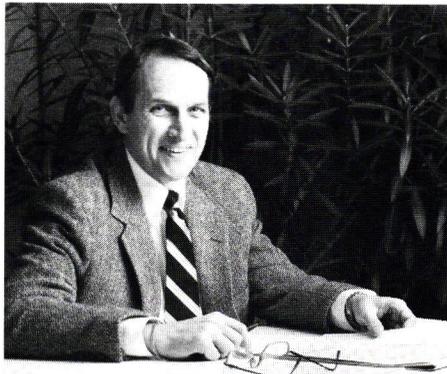
In the December issue of *Columns*, the introduction to a four part series on development in the region stated New Urbanism has emerged as a prescription for residential and urban concerns. The article identified two principles at the root of New Urbanism: citizen-based, participatory planning and design, and the neighborhood as the essential element of development.

This "prescription" is reminiscent of the days of healing potions and elixirs, replete with the accompanying sales pitch, "take this for whatever ails you." While the root of this elixir may include the principles for participatory planning and neighborhood development—arguably the two most fundamental planning principles against which virtually no one can argue—there are four troubling ingredients to this remedy for the '90s.

The Pattern Book

New Urbanism embraces the concept of a pattern book (or design guidelines as they were previously known) which exclude a host of physical forms present in existing communities. Site development options not in the book are not permitted. The problem with the New Urbanism Pattern Book is that a majority of Americans love cul-de-sac streets and detached single-family homes, which are not included in the book. There is a vast amount of market research that demonstrates repeatedly that the site development features the book excludes are the very features many Americans want.

Hence, New Urbanism development on greenfield sites will typically be relegated to niche markets with relatively small absorption. Experienced community developers have recognized this for many years and it is not a coincidence that most New Urbanism development is undertaken by relatively inexperienced first-time developers, not yet exposed to the realities of absorption and cash flows over several real estate industry cycles. Places like Seaside, FL will always provide an opportunity for unique "stage set" devel-



Development forms like strip malls address very specific market and customer preferences that make them successful. The challenge is not to ban such forms, but to better educate both the public and private sector on the value of properly planned and designed surfaces. —JACK SCHOLL, AIA

opment. However, the vast demand for housing in the future will continue to be met by paying very close attention to what people truly value for themselves and their communities.

The Picturesque

Inherent in the New Urbanism appeal is the attractiveness of place. The New Urbanism Town Center is always "pretty", and when compared to contemporary urban America, looks quite desirable. The problem is that New Urbanism advocates confuse attractiveness with form. A strip shopping center is not inherently ugly. The difference in attractiveness between a strip center in Monroeville, PA and one in Charlottesville, VA is noteworthy, and the reason has to do with each community's site development and subdivision ordinances relating to such things as the amount of previ-

ous surface, site grading criteria, and plant material requirements. There has to be the political will to enact proper controls on site development and the market environment to utilize such controls as competitive advantages.

Simply assuming that specific development forms should not occur because they are poorly executed belies a superficial understanding of the issue and is doomed to failure. Development forms like strip malls address very specific market and customer preferences that make them successful. The challenge is not to ban such forms, but to better educate both the public and private sector on the value of properly planned and designed surfaces.

The Salvation of America

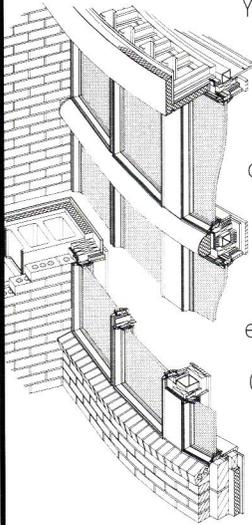
Implicit in the hype surrounding New Urbanism is that its power will be the salvation of urban America. According to a *Columns* reference in December, the *New York Times* feels "the Congress on New Urbanism is the most important phenomenon to emerge in American architecture in the post-Cold War period." Ironically, the most practical application of New Urbanism may be to stop growth in suburban and rural areas. Rewiring the private sector to build according to rules, for which there is limited if any market interest, has proven to be a very effective no-growth technique.

This use of New Urbanism is difficult to challenge in court—the public sector in these areas are "only establishing high standards" for their communities. Therefore, in communities where New Urbanism is adopted as part of development controls, the elixir promoted as salvation for new urban development will end up prohibiting such development.

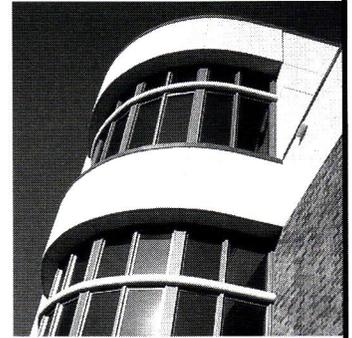
The Urban Sprawl

New Urbanism is positioned to be the solution to urban sprawl—admittedly a critical problem in contemporary America. However, the sermon that the New Urbanism of,

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say, Kentlands, MD is, in fact, preventing sprawl is hypocritical. This project, as well as most of the built examples of New Urbanism to date, are located in the middle of farmland miles from any existing urban development.

We have literally thousands of acres of New Urbanism infrastructure in place—our existing *central cities*. We certainly do not need to create more of this kind of community development under the guise of reducing urban sprawl. What we do need is rational public policy that restricts New Urbanism to use the existing in-place infrastructure which is consistent with the pattern book. Pittsburgh has many excellent examples of this approach:

- *The Mexican War Streets* - the rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods that have fallen into disrepair.
- *South Side's new Riverfront Community* - the reclaiming of an original urban neighborhood that had previously been razed for industrial purposes.
- *Crawford Square* - the restoration of a former in-city housing area.

All of these examples maintain a sensitivity to the context of an area, be it residential grid streets and alleys, housing designs with porches, rear entry garages, or small or no side yard setbacks. These are all sound design principles practiced for many years, as are other New Urbanist principles of incorporating color, materials and textures of an existing urban fabric. The irony is that extending New Urbanism to greenfield sites in the countryside under the auspices of controlling urban sprawl only contributes to such sprawl. The New Urbanism movement should focus on rehabilitating the central cities of Baltimore, MD and Washington, DC, not creating Kentlands.

The planning and design of communities is a symbiotic relationship between the market and the land—a constantly changing dynamic that varies with location, time and culture. The planning and design process can be standardized, but its product must vary according to its specific context to be successful. The prescriptions of New Urban-

ism insist on a predefined product—contemporary America's urban problems are far too complicated for such a static approach. As with the elixirs of the past, New Urbanism with all its hype, will ultimately fall prey to the inherent weaknesses of its ingredients. ■

Jack Scholl, AIA is the managing partner of Environmental Planning and Design. An active member of the Urban Land Institute, Scholl has over 30 years experience in strategic planning, urban and waterfront projects, and site design and construction. A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he is the recipient of a Fulbright Grant and an AIA Medal of Honor.

Creating Home by Val Zarro, AIA

A recent discussion of New Urbanism has spurred one architect to take a closer look at the role of citizen participation in community building.

In December, *Columns* carried an article exploring New Urbanism's potential contribution to rebuilding communities, highlighting two underlying principles as a basis for development: citizen participatory planning and design, and the neighborhood as the essential development unit. Regardless of how fully one endorses New Urbanist principles, I believe that most of us would agree that the neighborhood unit—its human scale, tree-lined streets, pedestrian orientation, porches and squares—makes social and economic sense. Certainly these elements would promote social contact, the seed for the development of community.

Economically, integrated planning makes sense since many municipal support services are maintained around-the-clock. Diverse uses spanning the greater part of the day are a much more efficient use of support services than the polarized single-use office area that empties out at the end of the work day. Integrated planning also promotes rational use of available transportation means, such as pedestrian, private or public, or a combination of these, as most appropriate. For example, the most effective means of transportation within a small radius is pedestrian.

While the social and energy reduction benefits of the physical structure proposed by New Urbanists is relatively easy to comprehend, it is worthwhile to discuss the more complex of the two principles: the role of citizen participation in community development. A look at the historical development of citizen participation, in particular its contribution to the development of dwelling and community, will help us to understand the potential and limits of physical structure in the creation of communities.

Citizen participation, in particular in the shaping of the living environment, came to the forefront of public attention in the late 1960s. This was spurred in part by socially conscious architects who took "arms" alongside citizens to

stop the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of large-scale housing projects. In the beginning, the architect acted as an organizer to mobilize the community in "stop-action" sit-ins and demonstrations. Protest was clearly aimed at the anonymity of the new housing project; at its inhumaness. Numerous efforts and examples of involving the citizen in community building followed. From these, we can identify three meaningful forms of participation: political, educational, and qualitative. This distinction results from an understanding that the participatory process varies depending on the particular socio-cultural situation.

Political Form

The political form is the use of citizen participation to gain power in the decision-making process. In this case participation means actions parallel to the normal political process, such as voting for public officials. For example, take a look at the blighted urban areas comprised of what Christopher Alexander termed a "tapestry" of cultures—a pluralistic society, or in political terms, a conflict society. Here, where diverse groups struggle for their right to share in the benefits of the affluent society, the most appropriate form of citizen participation is the political. For these communities, possibly, the best type of participation is that used by the influential activist architectural group, ARCH. In the 1960s, the group opposed the renewal plan for Harlem, NY, then slated for 80% demolition to displace the existing black population and attract middle class whites.

ARCH exposed the intention of the planners, and proposed its own plan for renovating existing buildings and new construction of low-income housing. It then helped organize political pressure groups. Furthermore, it established an educational program for high school students to help them become architects, planners, surveyors and guided three



The creation of communities implies a willingness by architects and planners to relinquish a certain amount of power and to allow citizens to participate.

—VAL ZARRO, AIA

hundred students from four schools to conduct sociological studies comparing Harlem to other city neighborhoods. For ARCH, planning and urban renewal was a social process: the result of society's cooperative struggle and not an individual's dream of the future, regardless of its ingenuity. The citizens, therefore, were to be allowed, not only to formulate their needs, but also to partake directly in the planning and design of the environment. They argued that only through direct participation could the citizen become aware of how public funds are used and have some control over them.

Educational Form

The educational form develops a person's capacity to express himself and to articulate needs, desires and aspirations. This form of participation is guided by the conviction that the active involvement of the individual will develop a sense of responsibility, first towards community, and then towards the environment and society at large. Such responsibility is a precondition for solving social problems, such as vandalism, alienation, and crime. As an educational tool, the participatory process is guided by the concept of learning what results from the individual's interaction with the environment. Studies show that people do not adjust well to environments that are too alien or where there is too much discrepancy between it and innate human characteristics and needs. (Possibly, New Urbanists argue just this when proposing traditional principles to provide people with patterns that are more suitable to human traits.) The individual, therefore, has to play an active role in shaping the environment according to his needs and desires.

As an educational tool, citizen participation implies an exchange of one-way and two-way information. One-way information includes interviews, inquiries, exhibitions, flyers, the media. The most effective proves to be the use of

the local newspaper. The primary aim of one-way information is to relate or to gain information by those responsible for planning. It contributes most effectively in awakening an awareness of potential problems and is, therefore, valuable if used in conjunction with two-way information formats such as seminars and public hearings. Seminars can be used to discuss proposals, generate designs, exchange ideas and views, and have proven to be the most successful means of giving citizens a feeling that they have gained knowledge and contributed viewpoints.

Qualitative Form

The qualitative form emphasizes participation to produce a better product. It is based on the conviction that citizen input contributes to the creation of an aesthetically richer environment. Citizen participation in the design of architecture and community begs the question of degree and way in which people can be involved. Fredrik Wulz, in his book, *Design Principles for Urban Architecture*, offers a helpful scale of participation ranging between two extremes: Autonomous architecture—the exclusion of the citizen, and Ad hoc architecture—the exclusion of the architect. From least to most participation, the others are: the Representative, the Inquiry, the Regional, the Dialogue, the Alternative, the Collaborative, and the Self-Determining. If we accept the premise that only true participation leads to the creation of strong communities, only the Alternative, Collaborative and the Self-Determination principles apply. In the Alternative, the citizen participates by choosing among various alternatives within a pre-established framework. In the Collaborative, the architect and the citizen plan and design together. In Self-Determination, the citizen plans, designs and possibly builds portions of his dwelling.

Common to all three, is that citizens participate within a pre-established framework that considers factors beyond the individual's most immediate needs and awareness. In

the other four principles, while citizens can be considered, the ultimate decision lies with the architect. Supplementa-tion, theoretically known as Structuralism, proposes permanent versus changeable elements that make up the architectural whole. Both at the individual building level and at the urban design level, it means the design of primary and secondary structures, the former the more permanent, the latter the more changeable. For example, at the urban design level, the urban grid is a primary structure and the individual buildings are the variables. In an individual apartment building, the primary is actual structure and major infrastructure elements, such as mechanical hook-ups. The layout of the individual apartments are the variables. In both cases, we have common frameworks that allow individual human actions to take place—the interaction between the two creates places that satisfy people's need to identify with the environment.

The creation of communities implies a willingness by architects and planners to relinquish a certain amount of power and to allow citizens to participate. Studies have found that communities following such principles have a very low rate of turn-over and that the method promotes a strong spirit of community—something that architects, whether subscribing to New Urbanism or not, embrace. 🏡

Val Zarro, AIA is principal of Zarro & Associates: Architectural Design and Research. In addition to 16 years of architectural practice in New York, Zarro received his Ph.D from the Stockholm School of Architecture, Sweden for his theory on the development of an architecture that contributes to a sense of place.

Kudos

→ **P. Richard Rittelmann, FAIA** has been appointed to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Advisory Committee for a three-year term. ORNL established a Scientific Advisory Committee to offer advice on the pertinence and effectiveness of its scientific programs.

From the Firms

→ Klavon Design Associates recently relocated to larger offices at Two Graeme Street, Market Square. Also, Rachelle Wolf, ASLA, has joined the firm as assistant landscape architect.

Business Briefs

→ Eichleay Engineers Inc. announces the appointment of Glenn M. Avick as General Manager of its Peter F. Loftus, Facilities Engineering Division. Mr. Avick joins Eichleay having most recently served as the Director of the Engineering and Construction Departments at the University of Pittsburgh.

Edward P. Elinski has been named Executive Vice President of **Burchick Construction**. Mr. Elinski is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University in civil engineering and was formerly with Baker-Mellon Stuart as VP of Operations.

Harry A. Trout, senior staff industrial hygienist for **GAI Consultants, Inc.**, has been elected president of the Pittsburgh Local Section of the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

Seminars & Forums

→ *Health Facility Design Standards Seminar*, sponsored by the AIA, will take place in six cities in the coming months. The all-day workshop deciphers the ins and outs of health care design. Registration is \$195 for members who register 30 days before the workshop, \$245 for those who register closer to the time of the event. Workshops will be held in New York, (April 12), Baltimore (April 26), Dallas (May 10), San Francisco (July 12), Chicago (July 26), Boston (September 6), and Cleveland (September 20). For more information, call 800-242-3837.

The 8th Annual Environmental Forum for Business, April 28-30, offers two conferences of interest to architects: "Design and Construction for the 21st Century: Architecture and Construction for a Resource Efficient Future" and "Growth Management and Sustainability: Triumphs and Challenges." William McDonough, Dean of the School of Architecture for the University of Virginia, widely known for his talks on sustainable development, will be the keynote speaker. Held in Spokane, WA, additional information can be requested at 509-323-2641.

Competitions

→ *The Felissimo Design Awards* offers four \$5,000 cash prizes for innovative and artistic designs by artists in the US. Applicants may submit prototypes of vases, planters, gardenware, tableware, etc. reflecting this year's theme: "The Elements of the Home". Submission deadline is April 30. For more information or an application, call (212)366-6900 ext. 219.

Boston Society of Architects is sponsoring two design awards programs. The *Architectural Design Awards Program* is open to all Massachusetts architects' projects and any architect anywhere who has designed a built project in Massachusetts. *Unbuilt Architectural Design Awards* is open to any architect, architectural educator or architecture student. Submissions are due in early September. Guidelines can be requested from BSA: 617-951-1433 ext. 221.

Membership Committee

Maureen Guttman, AIA, 531-3338

AIA Pittsburgh welcomes two new members:

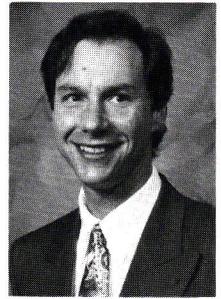
Stephen Sobina, AIA **Schultheiss & Associates PC**

SCHOOL: Penn State and University of Pittsburgh

PAST PROJECTS: PCI Patient Garden, Poli on the Green, several CHP and UPMC clinical, research and office facilities.

INTERESTS: racquetball, bicycling, traveling

COMMITTEE INTERESTS: Professional Development



Evan A. Wimer, AIA **Burt Hill Kosar Rittelmann Associates**

SCHOOL: University of Cincinnati

SPOUSE: Kathy

CHILDREN: Evan Alan (30), Erin Anne (21), John Paul (19)

PAST PROJECTS: Kennametal World HQ, the Biomedical Science Tower and Medical Research Facility at UPMC

INTERESTS: Gideons International, church activities

COMMITTEE INTERESTS: Environment

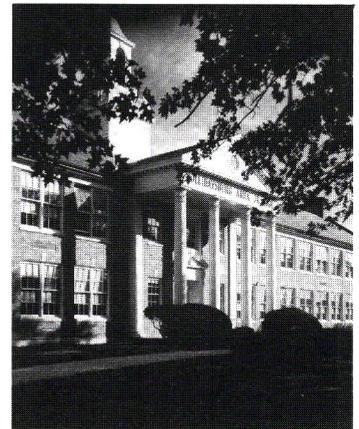


AIA Gallery: Hayes Large 75th Anniversary

Hayes Large Architects is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary this year. One of the activities associated with this celebration will be a retrospective show of the firm's work at the AIA gallery. This show will include photographs, drawings and models representative of Hayes Large Architects' seventy-five years of practice. Work from the Pittsburgh firm of Prack and Cerasini, and the Harrisburg firm of Lawrie & Greene—two architecture firms that merged with Hayes Large Architects 10-15 years ago—will also be featured.

The show will open with a reception on Friday, April 18, 1997. To commemorate this occasion Hayes Large Architects will

award its first annual scholarship to eligible students in the fields of education and health administration. The show will run until April 29, 1997.



Please Note COLUMNS Address Change

Please send all *Columns* information that was formerly sent to Michelle Fanzo to Cheryl Towers, 112 N. Woodland Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15232; phone: (412) 362-1844, fax: (412) 362-8192.

Corrections

On Page 9 of the January 1997 issue of *Columns*, we failed to credit Edge Architects for the drawing of the loft project at 429 First Avenue. • Also, new member Andy Jamrom's name was misspelled in the March issue. We apologize for the errors.



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AIA ACTIVITIES

April 2, Wednesday

April Members Meeting: Robert Rosenfeld, NCARB Director of Intern Services leads a discussion on "**Bridging the Gap, the future of the profession.**" Carnegie Mellon University at 6:30 p.m. A project of The Pittsburgh Intern and Young Architect's Forum, a subcommittee of AIA Pittsburgh's Professional Development Committee. Cost in advance: \$20 AIA members, \$25 non-members, \$10 interns (\$5 more at the door). For information call Rebecca Henn, 765-3890.

April 4, Friday

Communications Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, 471-9548.

April 8, Tuesday

AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting
5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, 471-9548.

April 9, Wednesday

Professional Development Committee Meeting, noon at the Chapter office, Carl Freedman, AIA, 462-9300.

April 11, Friday

Committee on the Environment, noon at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA, 231-1500.

April 15, Tuesday

Legislative Committee Meeting,
4:30 p.m. at the Chapter office, Jim Sheehan, AIA, 682-6008.

April 16, Wednesday

Hornbostel lecture: "Geological Architecture," Stanley Saitowitz, Principal, Stanley Saitowitz Office, San Francisco; 6 p.m., Carnegie Museum of Art Theatre, 268-1541. Sponsored by AIA Pittsburgh, CMU Architecture Department and the Heinz Architectural Center.

April 30, Wednesday

AIA-MBA Meeting, 6 p.m. at Building Industry Center, Jack Ramage, 922-3912 for more information.

1 C 9 A 8 L 7 E N D A R

AROUND TOWN

April 3, Thursday

Robert Grudin lectures on "Design And Aspiration," Carnegie Museum of Art Theater at 6 p.m.

April 8, Tuesday

CSI Chapter Meeting: "Protective Roof Membrane Systems," speaker, David Roodvoets, CSI, of T-Clear Corp. Drinks: 6 p.m., dinner: 6:30, program: 7:30, Wyndham Garden Hotel, Pittsburgh airport area. Call 823-5063 for reservations by Friday, April 4.

April 16, Wednesday

SMPS Meeting: "Industrial Panel" - Rivers Club, One Oxford Center; registration 11:30, lunch 12, program 12:30. For more information or to RSVP, call Paul Messineo, Jr. at (412) 823-2020 or fax him at 824-7302.

April 19, Saturday

Tour of environmentally friendly homes in the area. Free for W. PA Sustainable Energy Association members, \$4 for non-members. For information call 431-4449 ext. 236.

ONGOING

Through April 20

The Old World Builds the New: The Guastavino Company and the Technology of the Catalan Vault, 1889-1962, at the Heinz Architectural Center through April 20.

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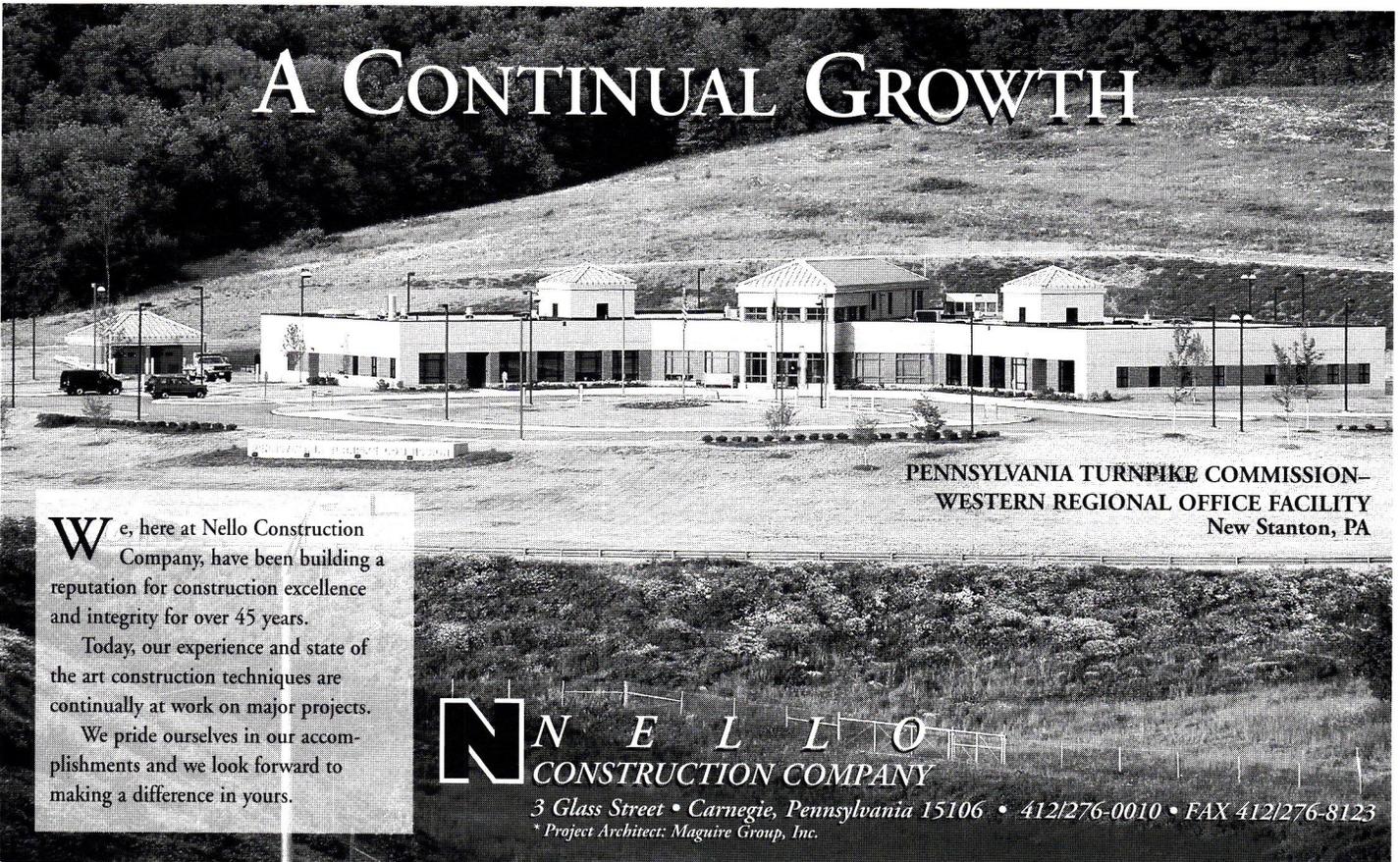


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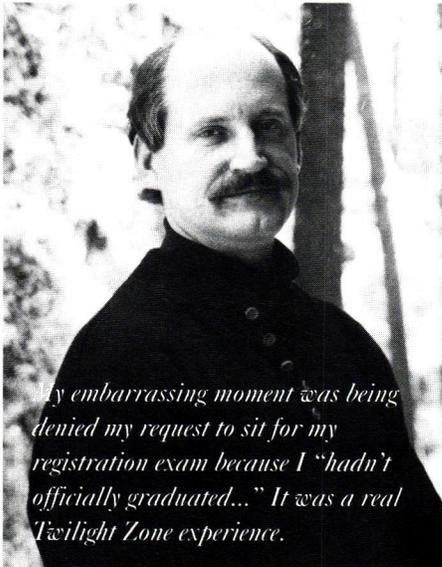
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My embarrassing moment was being denied my request to sit for my registration exam because I "hadn't officially graduated..." It was a real Twilight Zone experience.

Family: Father of two—Orion Alexander, 17, and Danille Renee, 15.

Years in practice: 18

Education: University of Cincinnati, B.Arch; Slippery Rock University, MS in Sustainable Systems.

First job: Marburger Farm Dairy. I was a milkman and farm laborer. It was a great job—hard work but very enjoyable.

Project you are proudest of: Being part of creating the Masters of Science in Sustainable Systems Program at SRU. It was the first of its kind in the country. I'm equally proud that I am the first architect to hold that degree.

Most embarrassing moment: Being denied my request to sit for my registration exam because I "hadn't officially graduated..." It was a real Twilight Zone experience.

Building you'd like to tear down: Peter Eisenman's addition to the University of Cincinnati's College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning. I cried when I saw what he did to my 'ole school. If architecture is supposed to evoke an emotional response, I guess he succeeded.

If you hadn't been an architect what would you have been? I think I can only be an architect. I feel like Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*. I've been an architect in my previous ten lifetimes. I feel I'm slowly getting better. By 3010 I should have it down.

If you could live anywhere in the world, where? Nowhere in particular. My ideal retirement is to sail from place to place on something long and seaworthy, from one warm weather port to another.

What's the most annoying thing architects do? Misrepresent their work in hopes of getting the next job, not giving credit to individual architects in favor of the corporate identity, and not listing all the collaborative partners, firms or consultants that participated in a project on promotional literature.

The one thing you wish they'd teach in school: Reality 101.

Favorite building: Just about any European cathedral. What's that saying, "If you don't think stones can fly..."

Favorite city: It's a toss up between Amsterdam and Paris—Paris because of the sheer beauty of some of the timeless architecture and famous streets; Amsterdam because of the scale, water and pedestrian character of the neighborhoods.

Favorite architect: It's a tie between I.M. Pei and Michael Graves—Pei because of the degree of resolution in his buildings and the elegance of his integrations; Graves because he's a Cincinnati grad—what can I say?

Favorite Pittsburgh neighborhood: Mount Troy and Pitt View Avenue—where I was born. My childhood home is still stuck on the side of a cliff.

Wish list for Pittsburgh: A serious Environmental City Initiative complete with courage, vision and tangible change, sustainable community design and development, an end to urban sprawl and chaotic edge city development, and a world class mass transit system.

I want to be remembered for: trying to make sustainability happen in Pittsburgh.

I belong to the AIA because: It enables me to accomplish what I have come to believe are the important things about why I practice and teach—to combine environmental stewardship with professional practice.



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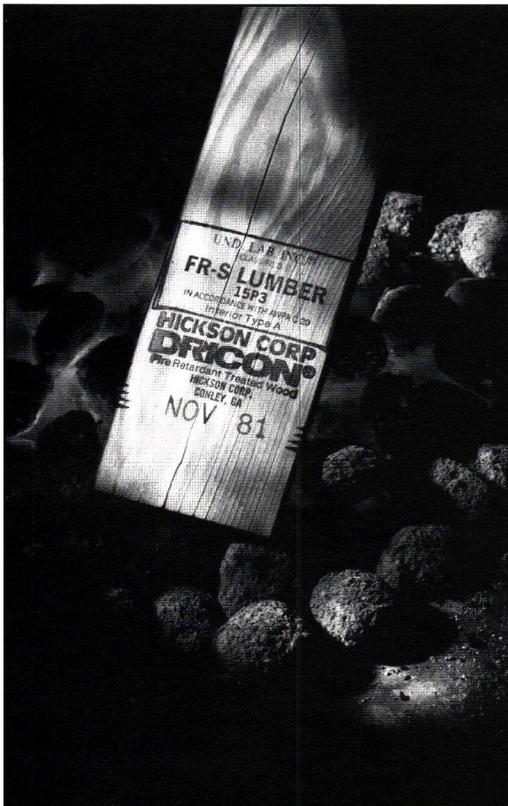
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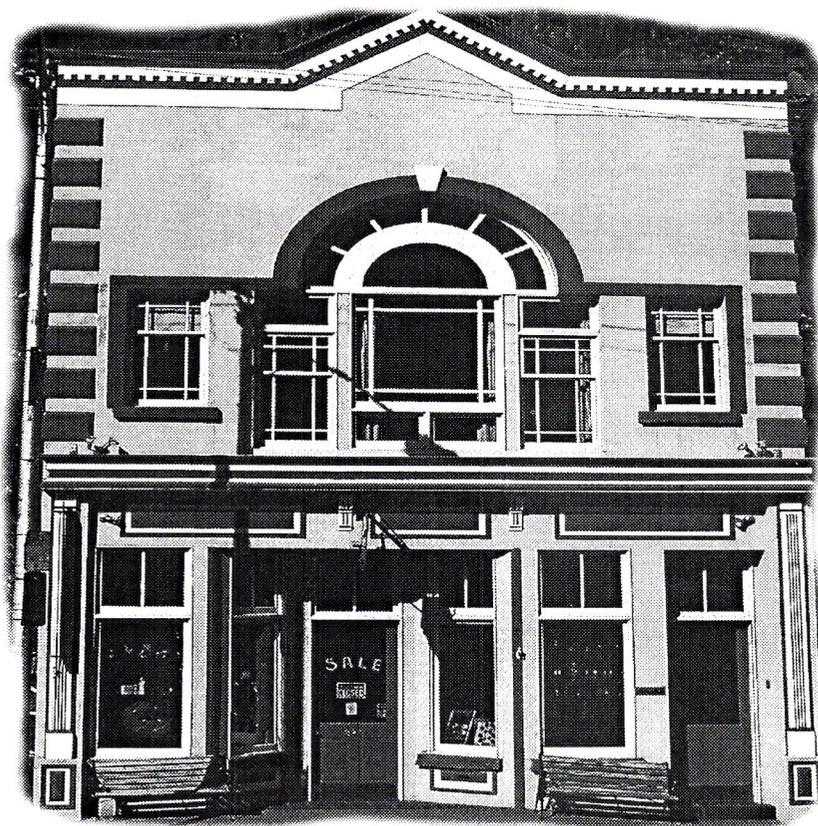


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