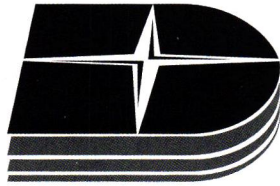


C O L U M N S



**THE NEW LOOK OF CMA'S
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Comings and Goings by Tracy Certo



Good architecture, like good literature and music and art can inspire like that: it can take you someplace you can't quite get to on your own.

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On the cover: Competition entry for Berlin Centre of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung by Jean Nouvel, Heinz Architectural Center

Looks like introductions are in order.

First let me say how pleased I am to be your editor. Second, excuse the golf clubs in the photo. (Long story, short column.)

I am not from Pittsburgh, but the ties are strong. As a kid, we drove here from Chicago, flat as a runaway, and I remember the thrill of entering tunnels, exiting to rivers and rumbling down steep, bricked streets to get to my grandparents' house. Pittsburgh fascinated me back then—how do those hillside homes stay up like that?—and it still does. That's why when I hear glowing praise from outsiders, such as those at the future of the riverfronts forum, (page 10) it's so heartening.

At that forum, Robert Yaro said that the dirty secret of economic development in America is that half of every graduating high school class leaves. The most successful places see that a new crop moves in. Upon hearing that, I thought of my own two sons, 11 and 8, who have, I think, a better than average appreciation of Pittsburgh. They love the inclines, the strip district, the Smithfield Street Bridge, and the fountain at the Point (where they think swimming should be allowed. Let's talk waterfront development, shall we?). One of their favorite places is what they once called the Andy "Warthog" museum.

Years from now when they graduate, will they stay? Will they go? Will they go and come back? Since moving here when I was 16, I've left and returned twice. My husband and I enjoyed life in California for five years before coming back eight years ago with kids to settle happily in Mt. Lebanon.

Pittsburgh has been good to us. Since returning, I have struck out on my own, writing newsletters, corporate speeches and local and national freelance articles. As a writer, I am fortunate to be able to explore my interests: children's issues and health, travel and the environment, golf at one point (that explains the photo) and architecture. Recently, I wrote about David Hoglund's (FAIA) brilliant design of the Alzheimer's unit, Asbury Place.

The latter was for Mt. Lebanon Magazine where I am a contributing editor and it was one of my most rewarding pieces. After my visit, I was so inspired that the story poured out of me nearly intact and in record time. Not only did I make a fast deadline, but I also won a Golden Quill award. Good architecture, like good literature and music and art

can inspire like that: it can take you someplace you can't quite get to on your own. That said, I must admit that the judges based the award not so much on the writing, ahem, but rather "the unusual treatment of an unusual subject matter." For that I thank David.

Another time I wrote about architects' favorite houses in Mt. Lebanon which was not only instructive but also a lot of fun. Paul Tellers, AIA and I toured a bungalow, Rich Bamburak, AIA led me to an impressive Tudor and Art Ruprecht, AIA to a Wrightian prairie style house.

It seems I'm a sucker for touring great houses. The first place we saw when we went househunting in Los Angeles years ago was the magnificent Gamble house in Pasadena. Name your price! we joked to the docent.

Although I majored in journalism in college, Intro to Architecture was my favorite class and I'd like to think I know a thing or two about it. Still, interviewing Joe Rosa at HAC (p. 6) was eye-opening. Sometimes it comes down to what you *don't* know about a subject. Along the way, I'll be asking you for your help. Count on it.

The day before I met with Anne Swager, Hon. AIA, to discuss this position, I ran into Bill Bates, AIA. It was a rather serendipitous meeting since he not only encouraged me to take the job but then told me he started *Columns* more than 10 years ago. (Hey, Bill, I took the job!)

It didn't take much convincing. When I met with the dynamic Anne, I was sold. Besides, she told me I would meet lots of smart, interesting and encouraging people and find it very stimulating. Who can resist that? Only one issue later, I see she is right.

At the members meeting, many of you shared your opinions of *Columns* and gave me suggestions, all duly noted and I thank you. (I must say, after a few drinks the ideas were really flowing.) I encourage you to keep them coming. Call. E-mail. Offer opinions or story ideas. Keep in mind I'm here to help you and I welcome your correspondence, always.

To those of you who have already welcomed me so warmly, I thank you. I look forward to meeting the rest of you very soon. A special thanks to Anne for this sweet opportunity. I hope to make the most of it.

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Appreciation of a Good Scenic View by Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA

Most of my family hails from

down the peninsula. The peninsula terminates in Thomaston, Maine, which is home to the Maine State Penitentiary. As a child, I could never sleep on the few nights that we heard some poor soul had made a break from the prison. I was always sure he would find his way to our house, break-in and do us all ghastly harm. This was not an idea from which my grandmother ever tried to dissuade me. An obsessive worry wart, she always seemed to believe that a little dose of fear would help all of us grow-up. A recent unexpected and extended stay in Maine made me realize how silly my childhood fear had been.



Good transportation policy is more than safety, maintenance issues and vehicle movement. It is also about place, views, urban design and even sprawl.

My husband, Bill and I with Ellen, age 4, flew from Pittsburgh one recent Saturday morning to see Betsy, age 21, who had decided to spend her fall break with her grandparents and numerous cousins in Maine. We planned to return on Tuesday. Unbeknownst to us, Ellen had the very beginning of an ear infection. Unfortunately, plane rides can super charge such infections and in her case that is what happened. By Monday, Ellen was running a high fever, listless and complaining that everything hurt.

I fretted that we would all catch her flu and fed her clear liquids. Tuesday she was much worse and we were off to a strange pediatrician and eventually the emergency room of the local hospital to bring the infection under control. Several injections and doses of designer drugs had Ellen back on her feet by Friday and we were finally able to return home.

It was a stressful time but our distress was somewhat mitigated by the beautiful ocean views and the peak color of the leaves. Since we were 35 miles (one way) from the doctor's office, the hospital, and the grocery store, we saw lots of scenery. On Tuesday alone I traveled over 200 miles much of it with my mother who reminded me constantly about how dangerous the roads are. Several weeks ago,

my parents were involved in a minor fender bender when two cars tried to simultaneously pass them. No one was hurt and my parents' car was not even damaged. However, the road did get clogged up with relatives when two different cousins and their families stopped to offer their support and chat about what could have happened.

Well aware of how badly I had neglected my job, I drove into town early on the Saturday after we had returned. I was amazed to find that the ramp to the 10th Street Bypass had finally reopened. My fear of toppling trucks as you make the sharp turn (part of the familial worrying tendency) was overcome with excitement that my commute would return to a more normal 30 to 45 minutes but something was different. It took me a few nanoseconds to realize that the jersey barriers were all on steroids. They'd grown overnight. We no longer have to worry about falling over the sides of the ramps although trucks in the next lane can still topple over on us.

In 1996, the Federal Highway Safety Administration passed new federal regulations for highway safety. They included raising the height of jersey barriers now renamed F barriers to accommodate the height of SUV's. Unless equally crash resistant barriers can be found, they will be used across the Fort Pitt Bridge. We might be safer but our views of the rivers will be nonexistent and our vista of the city as you come through the tunnels will be greatly restricted. The Riverlife Task Force is working on possible alternative solutions. I know they will pull out all the stops and ask for our help.

In the meantime, I can't help but wonder how much better off we would be if we stopped thinking one solution suits all. Good transportation policy is more than safety, maintenance issues and vehicle movement. It is also about place, views, urban design and even sprawl. Let's take off the blinders.



Your Two Cents (and about 750 words)

Your Viewpoints and Opinions Are Needed!



Columns is launching a new feature with a catchy name that we haven't yet thought of. Here's the idea: a full page each issue will be an opinion piece written by you similar to "My Turn" in Newsweek. You can sound off on an issue or express an opinion or viewpoint on anything architectural: urban planning, riverfront development, green building, you name it. All we ask is that you keep your piece to 750 words or less and submit a photo, formal or otherwise.

In addition, if you think of a catchy name for the space, then you'll win a wonderful prize that we haven't come up with yet. (Just a thought but maybe "In Addition" would work?)

As long as we're in the planning stages and ripe for ideas, now's the time to submit. Any issue, any viewpoint, 750 words. Email to tcerto@adelphia.net or call ahead to discuss at 563-7173.

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Changes at the Heinz Architectural Center: by Tracy Certo

New Curator + New Space = Big Ideas

Joseph Rosa is talking folds, blobs and boxes. This is not, as one might think, in reference to the renovations at the Heinz Architectural Center which the new curator is overseeing. Now that the Frank Lloyd Wright office is gone and a new gallery is in its place, the total exhibit space has jumped from 2700 to 4000 square feet. "That will allow for better use of space," says Rosa. "It's convertible space where we can now build installations, and it will provide more flexibility with exhibits and bigger shows."

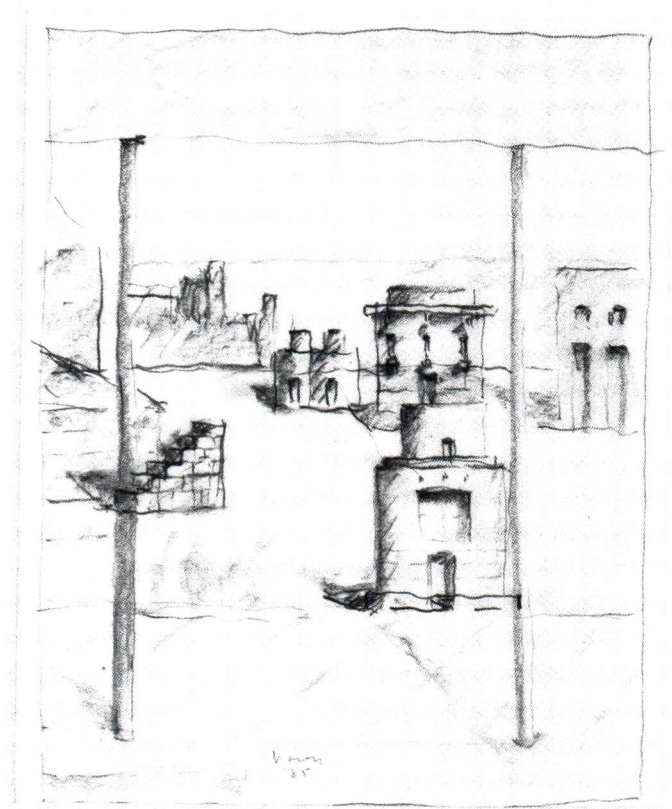
And that is what Rosa's folds, blobs and boxes are in reference to: an upcoming show, about architects in the digital age. Opening in February, the show will illustrate the rapid evolution of architecture in the computer era with sketches and models as well as computer-generated drawings and CD-ROMs.

"There's a very big shift in architecture with grads coming out of school today who are very computer literate," says Rosa, who earned his master's degree in architecture from Columbia in 1979, before the computer era. "It's changing the playing field," he adds, to the point that computer-influenced design is now becoming mainstream.

It's the digital era that is producing "endless technical variations" of materials such as slumped glass—the 10-foot-high walls that resemble wrinkled paper in the new Conde Nast restaurant, for instance—and ball-hammered aluminum. It's avant-garde architecture, he says, coming from architects such as Greg Lynn at Yale and Peter Eisenman, FAIA. It's folds. It's blobs. It's boxes.

Rosa wants people to know that "the same technology that goes into designing sneakers also goes into designing buildings." He has just returned from the Venice Biennale where, he mentions off-handedly, he saw "a lot of blobs."

Blobs? A good example is Gehry's Experience Music Project in Seattle. Supple, morphed, engulfing you—with few or no square corners.



Michael Graves, FAIA sketch for "Industrial Landscape Mural", Environmental Education Center, Liberty State Park, Jersey City, New Jersey 1985. Graphite on tracing paper. Heinz Architectural Center.

Folds are like the multiple pleats or flutes on a column. An example is the building exterior of the Staten Island Science Center.

And boxes? A reconceived computer-based box, such as Preston Scott Cohen's Terminal House.

The key to all of them is the computer and the way it's shaping things.

His show will introduce the public to the trends in the digital age and in the process, no doubt, surprise and amaze and provoke reaction.