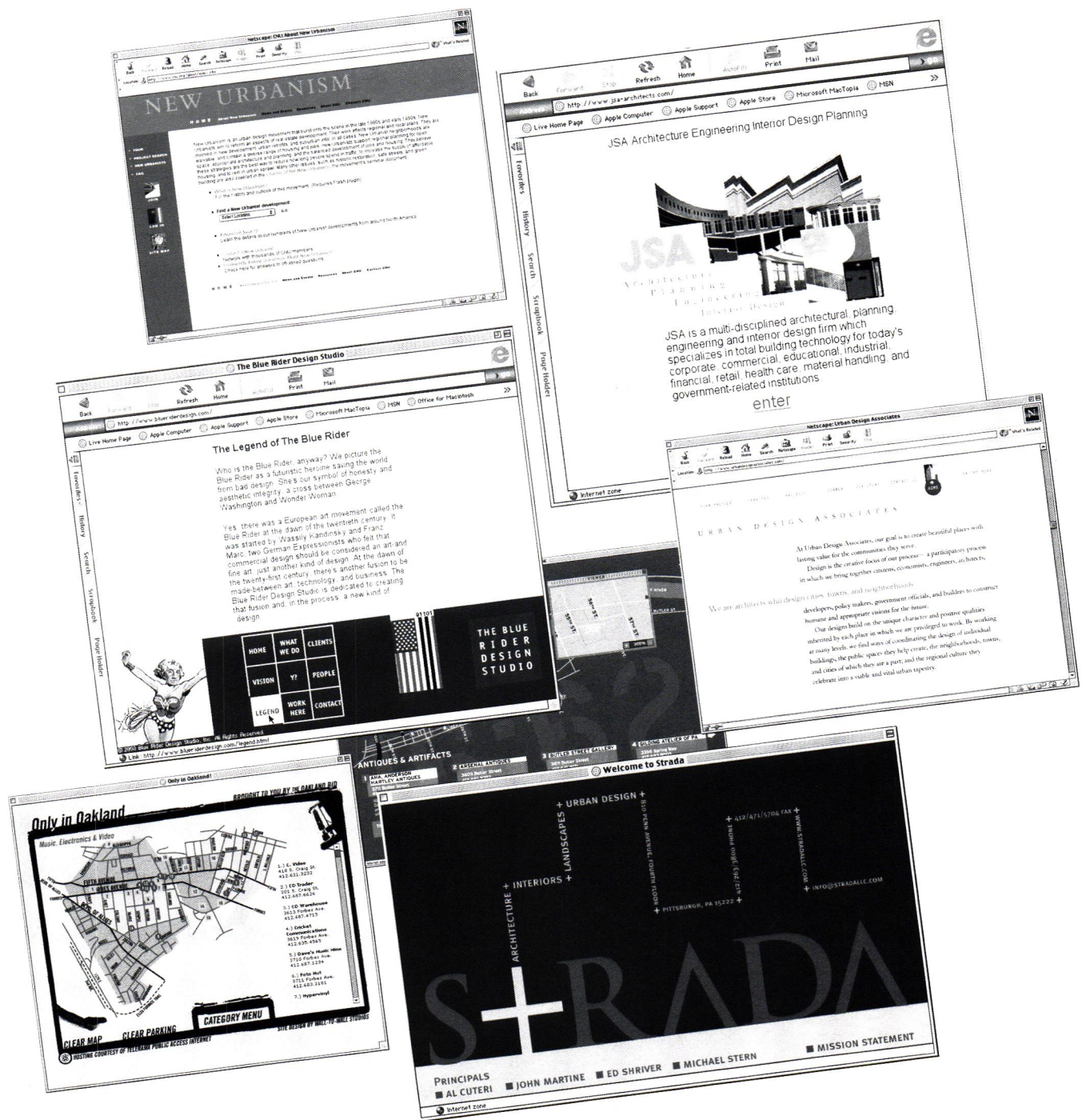


COLUMNS



Design As Identity: Corporate Branding and Web Sites

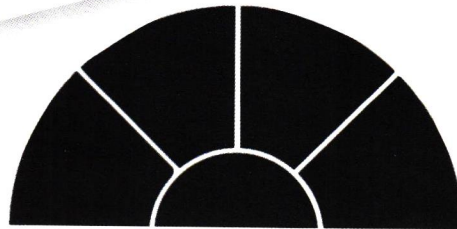
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Without You We are Nothing By Tracy Certo



We appreciate your ideas and we act on many of them. And we publicize upcoming features in Columns so you have the chance to contribute and you're not surprised when the article appears.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Design As Identity</i>	6
Corporate Branding and Web Sites	
<i>Developing Corporate Identity</i>	10
An interview with Bernard Uy of Wall-to-Wall Studios, Inc.	
<i>Association for Community Design</i>	12
Community Design Center of Pittsburgh to host 2002 Conference	
<i>Architectural Elegance</i>	14
A Review of <i>The Henry Clay Frick Houses</i>	
From the top	4
News	5
Breaking Ground	17
Calendar	21
Dossier	23

On the cover: Web site images designed by Mizrahi Design Associates; The Blue Rider Design Group; Terri Wolfe; and Wall-to-Wall Studios, Inc.

A few years ago the major paper in town

ran an obituary feature of our beloved school crossing guard. The reporter called me about the story and I told her a few anecdotes about this wonderful man. Once when I was having a bad day, I told her, Ed said he wasn't used to me not smiling and would I please cheer up? That's the kind of guy he was. But please, I requested the reporter, leave my name out of it. I gave her other names to call and we ended the conversation. So when the obit appeared in print the next day I was mortified to read the very first line: Tracy Certo was having a bad day.

I almost fell off my chair. With a first line like that, the second line should have read: In fact, she died. Whose obit was it, anyway?

Meanwhile, that very day I went to Ed's funeral where I met his wife. She asked me my name so I spoke my first name clearly and mumbled my last one. Pressed to repeat it, I cringed when she instantly recognized it. (Oh, the girl having a bad day!)

As it turns out, she was grateful for the article which, after the first goofy story about me, was a nice tribute to a special guy. Even so, after that incident, I vowed never again to talk to the media.

Sound strange coming from a reporter? It's not the first mishap I had. Once in Los Angeles I appeared on CNN with my then year-old-son in a backpack. The subject was pesticides and my presence with my toddler was requested by the political group I was working with. Sure enough, the camera zoomed in on us when the talk turned to children and just then my son looked right at the cameraman and uttered loud and clear, "Daddy!" The cameraman thought that was hilarious and yes, they aired it. Nationwide.

Another time I was interviewed, major paper, along with my husband, about couples paying for their own weddings. I was quoted as saying, "because we paid for our own wedding, we felt obligated to talk to our guests." I kid you

not. Turns out the stringer had a bit of a drinking problem and there we were talking to her over a few beers in a North Side bar. Who knew?

All this leads to the following: Normally I don't ask people to do something I wouldn't do but I'm about to. Because even though I am wary of reporters and the media, one upshot has been the extra care I take when writing about others. If someone doesn't want his or her name used, I don't use it. If someone says something they regret and asks me not to print it, I don't. I'm not perfect but I am careful. This is a trade magazine, after all, and it's about you and your profession. And quite simply, we'd like to hear more from you. So I'm dusting off the welcome mat.

Case in point: We can thank Kelly Baker of Mizrahi Design Associates for this month's article on corporate identity and Web sites. She contacted us a few months ago and asked if we would be interested in the topic as it relates to architectural firms. I liked the idea and as it turns out, so did the communications committee. We added a few names to the list of graphic design firms to talk to, and another article was off and running (rather, the editor was off and running with another article).

We appreciate your ideas and we act on many of them. And we publicize upcoming features in Columns so you have the chance to contribute and you're not surprised when the article appears. The more you contribute, the better Columns will be. That goes for Breaking Ground items and photos, too. (We love photos, especially well-composed, well-lit ones.)

If you make an effort to contribute, I in turn will do my best to make you look good. At the very least, I promise never to write an obituary and mention you in the first sentence. That would be the makings of a very bad day.

Contact the editor at tcerto@adelphia.net

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. 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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Do To You or For You?

by Anne Swager, Hon. AIA

I've been doing a lot of thinking about politics,

politicians and public policy of late. Some of this is due to my annual trip to Washington DC to lobby Congress about issues near and dear to architects' hearts. Some of this is because I went to AIA Pennsylvania's Annual Architect's Day to do the same. But mostly, it is because for the first time a government action, passage of Governor Schweiker's proposed budget, could drastically affect the quality of my family's life.



In the political arena, you can either have the government do to you or for you. Money helps make a difference.

At ten days of age, my youngest child Ellen had a life threatening viral infection. She lived due to the miraculous efforts of Children's Hospital. Our health insurance policy covered the whole bill for the three-week stay, which exceeded my gross yearly salary. We knew she had sustained some brain damage, but it is difficult to measure such things in an infant and so we waited. By nine months of age, it was clear Ellen needed more intervention and we quickly put her into physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. She is now six years old. She has made incredible progress but still has a long way to go before she can ever be measured head-to-head with a typically developing child. Her therapists love her because they see a child for whom therapy makes a tremendous difference. They expect that because of her intelligence, tenaciousness and determination, she might completely overcome the brain damage that resulted from her illness. No one can be sure, but you can bet that Bill and I, as her parents, want nothing less for her. To achieve this, Bill takes Ellen to the Children's Institute for five therapy sessions a week. She also takes therapeutic horse back riding which substitutes for a physical therapy session, and a therapeutic dance class. Our health insurance covers 36 therapy sessions a year. By the end of each February, we have no more coverage for therapy.

This is due to an action the state took some time back which limited the liability of insurance companies and thus, the cost to employers who provide health insurance. The state agreed to allow the health insurance companies to sign a contract with you for a specific level of service. Of course,

this implies that you have the choice to opt for (in my case) more therapy coverage if you so choose. You don't. The health insurance companies cover "get well" care, not long-term rehabilitative care. The state does cover children like Ellen under Medical Assistance as a back up to our primary insurance. This is fortunate because Ellen's monthly therapy bill, excluding dance and horseback riding (which we pay for out of pocket), is \$3,400. With the economic downturn, the state is reconsidering the Medical Assistance Program. As I sit writing this, the proposal on the table is to have parents pay their own bills if their income exceeds \$100,000 a year. At this juncture, we don't have a problem. Our income level is significantly below \$100,000 because my husband does not work so he can get Ellen to therapy. But if the measure passes, what he can and cannot do will be largely affected by the income limit. Even at \$100,000 a year, we can't afford \$3,400 a month.

I wrote two checks in the past month, one to national AIA's ArchiPAC and one to AIA PA's PAC. In the political arena, you can either have the government do to you or for you. Money helps make a difference. When an uncontested congressional race can cost \$1.5 million, it is not hard to see why politicians need money to keep their jobs and why those who provide it have access. Another option is to be compelling in some way: Funding for children with disabilities they didn't create compared to funding for a crotchety old man who developed lung cancer by choosing to smoke. If you are standing for reelection which one would you rather kiss?

While I find design and the practice of architecture to be of utmost importance, I think a lot of politicians could easily be swayed towards other priorities. It is even more important that you think about writing a check to one or both of these political action committees. Giving only when a really hot issue (like sales tax on professional services) is in the face of a politician is akin to not supporting your fire department during their annual fund drive. If you don't, it is unlikely they will be there when you need them. As cross as it may feel, your name is much more easily remembered when it has been seen as a signature on a check.



Peddle (sic) Pittsburgh

Volkswagen Pedal Pittsburgh – City on a Roll, will be held Sunday, May 19. Designed for all ages and riding abilities, the event offers a fun, educational bicycle tour through Pittsburgh neighborhoods. No matter which course you select, you'll enjoy a great ride, gain a new perspective on Pittsburgh neighborhoods and see that Pittsburgh is truly a *City on a Roll!*

The ride will showcase design highlights from Pittsburgh's recent renaissance. PNC Park, the convention center, an expanding network of riverfront trails, redevelopment of former industrial sites and innovative neighborhood initiatives are contributing to a renewed sense of excitement and enhancing Pittsburgh as a world-class city. These highlights and others, will be featured along course options of 15-, 25-, 35-, 50- and 60-miles to accommodate everyone from the weekend cyclist and families to the hard-core fitness enthusiast.

The event, which has attracted more than 12,000 participants since its creation in 1994, has grown to be one of the region's premier cycling events.

For those registering by May 1, the entry fees are \$20 for individuals, and \$45 for families (parents riding with children under the age of 18). On-line registration is available by visiting www.pedalpittsburgh.org. For additional information, call the event hotline at (412) 232-3545 or e-mail info@pedalpittsburgh.org.



Volkswagen Pedal Pittsburgh benefits the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP), a non-profit organization that helps to strengthen Pittsburgh and its neighborhoods through investments in planning and design. The CDCP provides

grants, technical assistance and educational programs that help homeowners and communities understand and effectively use professional architecture and planning services.

To ride or volunteer, call the Event Hotline at (412) 232-3545 or visit www.pedalpittsburgh.org.

Fallingwater: Work Continues

The \$11 million restoration of Fallingwater is well underway: the strengthening of the main level of Fallingwater is now complete, with no broken glass to report. As expected, the main level lifted about 1/2 inch and the temporary shoring is no longer supporting the building. In addition, the historic cracks on the master terrace are now gone. Looking pleased with the progress is John Matteo (from Silman's office), Jason Hughes (from VSL) and Bob Silman, and Mario Suarez (post-tensioning expert).

Fallingwater opened as planned in March with work continuing. VSL was scheduled to complete some crack repair and install carbon fiber rods over the historic cracks to prevent any further pulling up. Then work will begin running mechanicals through the living room and reinstalling the subfloor and stone floor, and the built-in furnishings. For more information or to schedule tours, call 724-329-8501.

