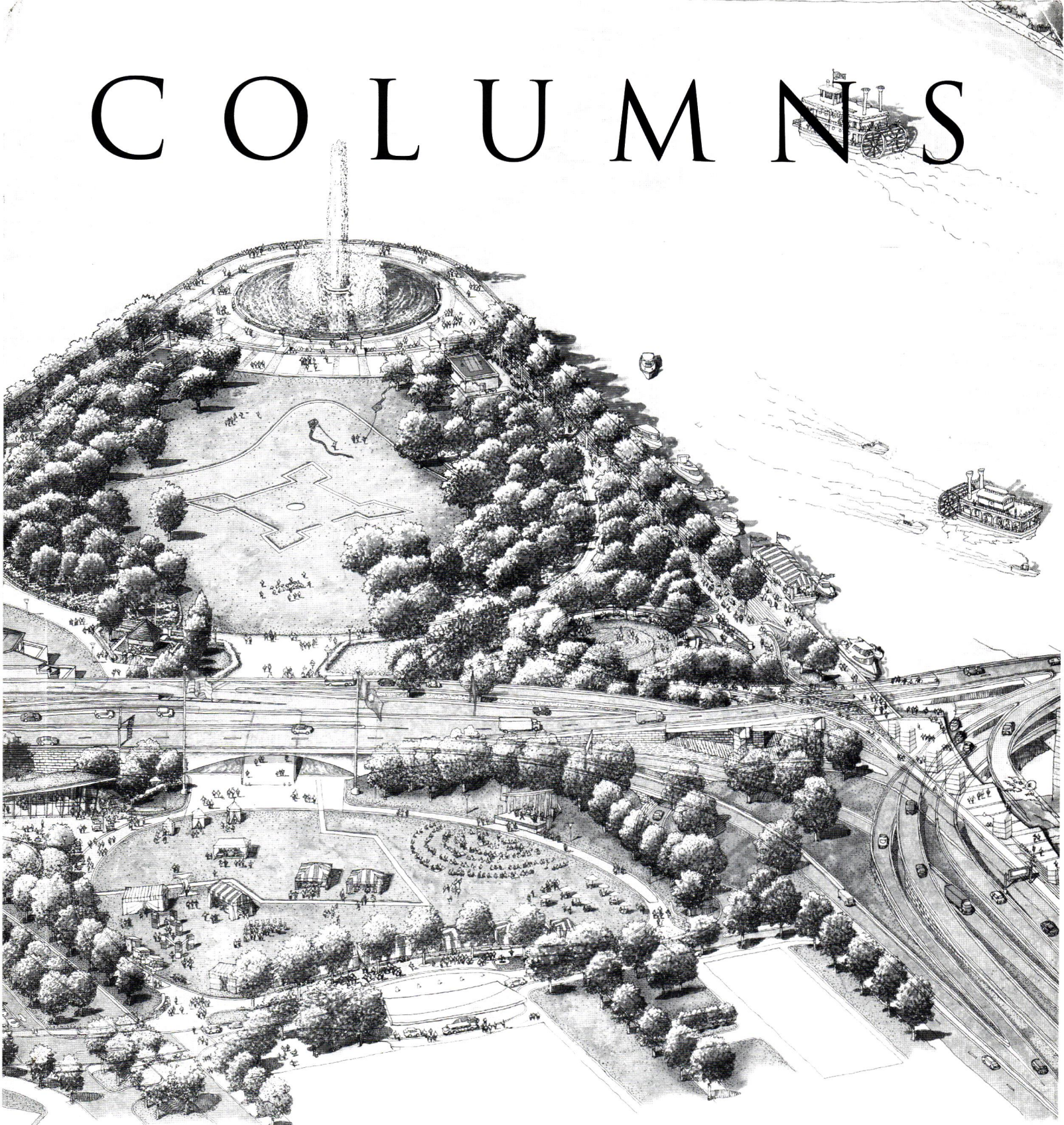


C O L U M N S



Celebrating Summer

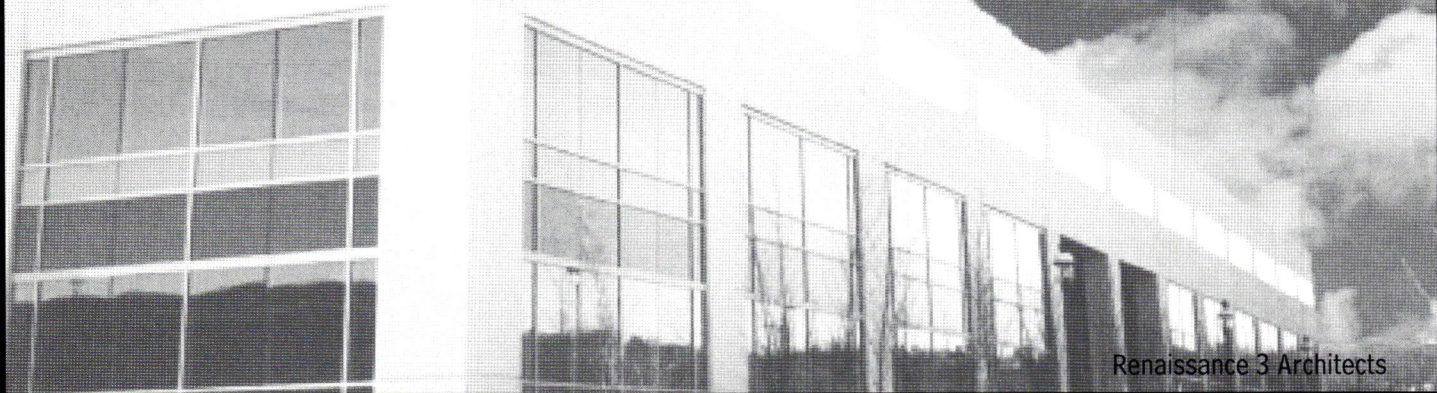
SUMMER IN THE CITY: Riverlife's Plans for Point State Park and the Mon Wharf

PERFECT SUMMER READING: *The Perfect House* and *Home by Design*

THE PERFECT SUMMER VACATION FOR ARCHITECTS: Asheville, NC

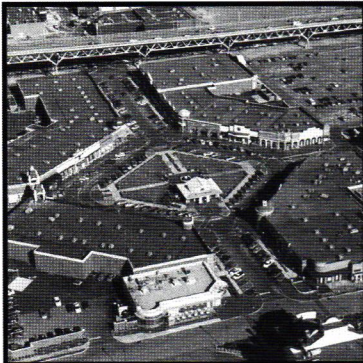
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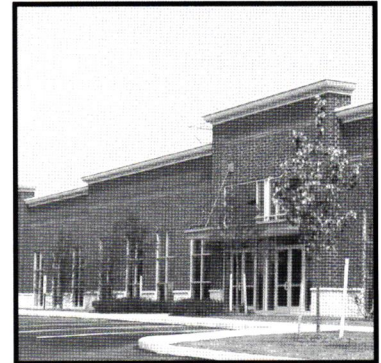
BEST MIXED USE

The Waterfront
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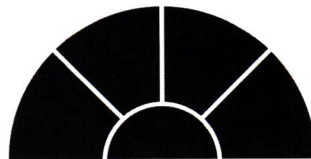
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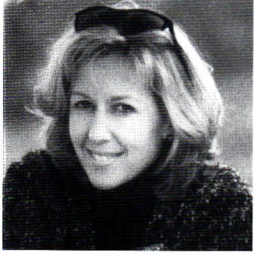
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A Foundation for Good Design

By Tracy Certo



“Good architectural design is every bit as important as good nutrition. Both are good medicine for our physical and spiritual well-being, and a lack of either one can cause a myriad of unnecessary maladies.” – Sarah Susanka

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On the cover: The Master Plan of Point State Park by Pressley Landscape Architects.

At Build Pittsburgh in April,

Mary Navarro, senior program officer at the Heinz Endowments, posed a challenge to architects in her seminar: how is it possible to advance good design so it's embraced by a whole community? The problem, she said, is that good design is not the community value it needs to be. Is there a city in the country where this is true? she asked.

No one came forward with an answer to that question but there was another relevant one underlying it: is there any other city in the country where a major foundation is helping to lead the charge in its civic design?

It's highly unusual for a foundation to participate in design matters. When she went to a recent national foundation conference, Navarro was the only program officer in the room involved in design issues of any kind. Yet here in Pittsburgh, she is leading the charge for the Endowment's Civic Design Initiative, which she presented at Build Pittsburgh, and she is serving as the co-chair of the design committee of Riverlife Task Force. Which makes this city very fortunate.

Since the initiative is unprecedented, Navarro said they don't have models. And while her foundation can jumpstart an initiative, in this case civic design, it cannot sustain it long-term. "I look to you for guidelines," she told those present and the seminar soon morphed into a forum for discussing a variety of design issues, primarily how architects can serve to heighten awareness of good design.

Many suggestions were raised. Alan Weiskopf, AIA made the point that the most important component to health, safety and welfare concerns is the element of design. That connection, he said, is the major step to policymakers embracing the value of design.

Other suggestions included involvement in zoning boards and planning commissions where architects can play a key role in the process. (Peters Twp., it was noted, has a full-time planning director.) Get a seat at the table. Get elected. Serve on a community board—all solid suggestions. Grassroots AIA and livability issues, which are in the forefront for architects now, need to be made commu-

nity values, offered AIA Pittsburgh President Dan Rothschild, AIA, who has been writing an excellent series of columns on these issues in this magazine (see page 4).

Education is key, said others, including mentoring high school students as future leaders and programs such as ACE mentoring, Carnegie Mellon's Architecture for Kids and Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation's Architecture in Schools.

Someone suggested the idea that Riverlife Task Force's standard of design could push the agenda forward with its broad-based principles.

Related to Alan Weiskopf's comment about health safety and welfare, one point that wasn't raised (at least in this session) was the idea of green building pushing the value of good design. And where else to do this but in the greenest city of all? (We're still #1, reports the Green Building Alliance, with Sacramento, California a close #2.)

Tying into green building and the Heinz Endowments, Teresa Heinz Kerry is giving Pittsburgh a nice boost with all the campaign publicity she has engendered. On 20/20 during a Barbara Walters interview, they showed a gorgeous shot of the convention center followed by another impressive photo of the Water Walk as they noted Pittsburgh as the greenest city in the country, thanks in large part to Mrs. Heinz. The *New York Times* trumpeted the success of the Ft. Pitt barrier bridge project in its recent and lengthy article on Mrs. Heinz, crediting AIA Pittsburgh. And other major newspapers and magazines are weighing in, (view them at www.johnkerry.com) praising our architecture and the greening of our city. That's one powerful way to advance good design.

In her wonderful new book *Home by Design*, Sarah Susanka (p. 8) of the *Not So Big House* book, argues that good architectural design is every bit as important as good nutrition. "Both are good medicine for our physical and spiritual well-being, and a lack of either one can cause a myriad of unnecessary maladies." What better argument to advance good design as a community value?

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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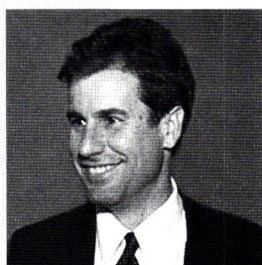
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THE AIA BRAND: Community

By Dan Rothschild, AIA

The AIA Brand Study,

which describes three pillars that support our organization, continues as the focus of my messages this year. Previous columns focused on Advocacy and Knowledge; this one will connect those themes to Community.



The AIA is a place where members can come together, enjoy each other's company, learn from each other, and band together to accomplish things we cannot do alone.

Our sense of community extends both inward and outward. Our inward focus creates an organization that celebrates a sense of community. Opportunities abound for architects to connect with each other locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is the power of this collective to achieve that which we cannot achieve individually. This purpose naturally extends outward, since architecture is the most public of all art forms.

OUR INWARD COMMUNITY

Knowledge

Our AIA community is strengthened when architects come together to increase our knowledge base. Last month's message described the positive educational benefits to those who attended our annual Build Pittsburgh conference. The power of this collective energy was also very evident for those who traveled to Chicago last month for our national convention. Whether it is large national gatherings, or our monthly local membership meetings, the combination of education and fellowship is a central part of our purpose, one that contributes to our sense of belonging to a community.

Advocacy

When we engage in advocacy that directly relates to our professional practice, we strengthen our AIA community. Last month I traveled to Harrisburg with several AIA Pittsburgh Board members for the annual "Architect's Day," to play an active role in pending governmental legislation affecting our profession and our communities: Green Building Incentives, Transit Revitalization Investment Districts, and Historic Preservation Tax Incentives. A portion of your dues to AIA Pennsylvania helps to fund a lobbyist who provides support for these efforts. Past President of AIA Pittsburgh, Rich DeYoung, AIA, now chairman of the AIA PA Political Action Committee (PAC), gave a presentation on the status of our contributions to the campaigns of supportive legislators. Please visit AIA Pennsylvania's website www.aiapa.org to learn more about Architect's Day and to make a contribution to our AIA PA PAC.

Diversity

Our AIA community can only be strong, however, if it reflects the greater community. Sadly, the demographics of the architecture profession are not reflective of the diverse society that we serve. The AIA approved a resolution at this year's convention to strengthen the demographic diversity of our profession, particularly in career advancement for minorities and women. The AIA will collaborate with related organizations and support research initiatives and ongoing data collection to better understand who enters and succeeds in the profession and why.

OUR OUTWARD COMMUNITY

Knowledge

The AIA's outward reach to the greater community helps to build the knowledge base of those partners who participate in creating a positive built environment. At AIA Pittsburgh this is evidenced by our successful Design Pittsburgh activities, such as the public display of over 100 presentation boards at our Design Pittsburgh Gala, the Carnegie Museum, and the lobby of the USX Tower that educate the public about great design. The "Architects' Saturday" tours during Design Pittsburgh are often the first glimpse that would-be architects have of a professional office. Our public meetings this year included the sold out screening of "My Architect" and the lecture of Sarah Susanka, AIA author of *The Not So Big House*.

Advocacy

Our responsibility to help the community find its collective voice through advocacy also strengthens the AIA. On the local level, we recently joined with the Riverlife Task Force to challenge the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Mon Fayette Expressway. On the state level, AIA members recently participated with the Department of Education on how to improve the delivery of public schools in our state. This multi-faceted report that addresses selection process, fees, design benchmarking, and construction delivery options will make the state more effective in delivering quality educational environments to our children.

The AIA is a place where members can come together, enjoy each other's company, learn from each other, and band together to accomplish things we cannot do alone. We know that the sense of belonging is a primal emotion. As architects, we understand that the power of place reinforces this sense. The AIA is that place for architects, a place where we share a common culture, language, and passion.

