

C O L U M N S



Greening Our Schools + Renaissance and Renewal at Build Pittsburgh

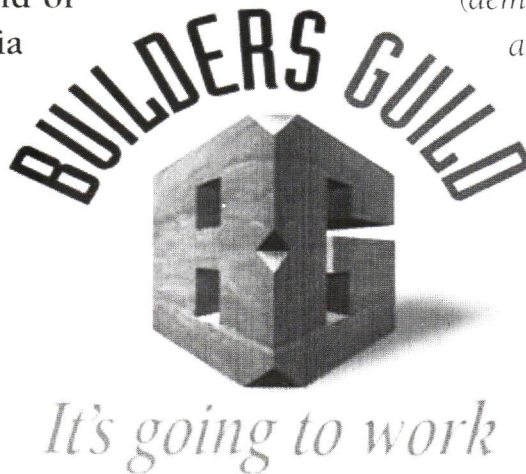
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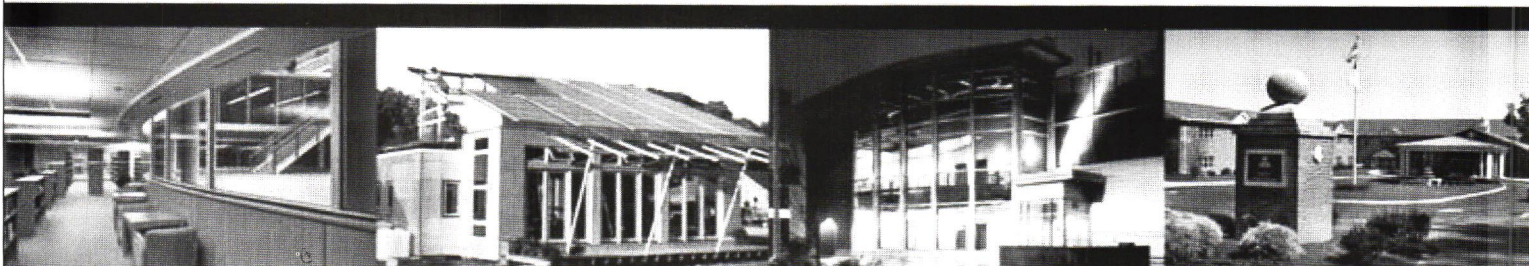
The Builders Guild of Western Pennsylvania, . . . representing a unified construction industry of building trades unions, 33,000 skilled craftsmen, union contractors, contractor associations and industry professionals working together to deliver **value** at every phase of the construction project.

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Taking Risks, Creating Influence



*Influence is the game
and we continue to strive
to be heard by public
agencies, elected officials,
private clients and yes,
even the public at large.*

I am coming up on a significant anniversary.

In mid-May, I will have been with the AIA longer than I ever imagined possible. I have no intention of mentioning how long that actually is because it would only forever fossilize me in your minds. Suffice it to say, I have seen a lot. In trying to decide what to write for *Columns* this month, I couldn't resist the lure of reflecting back and thinking forward.

I can still remember my interview for the job in Bill Bate's conference room in what was then the Westinghouse Building. I knew when I left that the interview group intended on hiring me although they hadn't said so. I was on cloud nine, so much so in fact, that I tripped on the Boulevard of the Allies skinning my knee and ripping 2 gigantic holes in my stockings. A lot has changed since those days and a lot has stayed the same.

When I started we were just relocating the office into the CNG (now Dominion) Tower. Since our space wasn't finished I spent the first six weeks working from an assortment of cardboard boxes in our landlord's conference room. We are on our third space now and how it looks and functions remains one of the primary concerns of the Board of Directors and members. If I want to stall a year's worth of plans all I have to do is suggest moving and everyone casts aside every initiative to focus on space. Unlike previous spaces, the space we now occupy is filled with natural light and has a full kitchen. Much like every space we have previously inhabited many of you like it and many of you don't.

When I began, our annual budget was one seventh of what it is today and it was derived from only two sources: dues and document sales. There was no charge for member meetings and attendance or lack thereof which was the biggest problem. Today our revenue comes from a variety of sources which still includes dues and document sales

in addition to sponsorships, advertising and user fees. We never had enough money to do what we wanted way back when and we still don't. However, we remain very risk-oriented for a small nonprofit and we usually will not let lack of money hold us back from trying a really good idea. We charge for a number of our meetings but still hold a number of events for free and lack of attendance is still a huge problem. Believe it or not attendance never seems to be effected by whether or not we charge.

Naming the primary goal of AIA Pittsburgh when I started is easy: The Board wanted to have meaningful influence both in the public realm as well as with private clients. There was lots of talk about the architect as *Master Builder*. While I don't hear that term used as much these days, the goal remains the same. Influence is the game and we continue to strive to be heard by public agencies, elected officials, private clients and yes, even the public at large.

If you were to ask me what our greatest achievement has been I would say it was where we wanted it most. We have influence. We have a voice in many city and regional issues and that voice grows every day. The power of architecture and the passion of architects are our aces in the hole in the game of influence. We will always want more and what we have will never be enough but what we have achieved is pretty awesome. Build Pittsburgh's keynote breakfast with two Governors and a Congressman, while not a definitive measure of influence, was still to me a very proud (and historic) moment in our history.

I can't predict the size of the budget or where we will be located in 2010 or 2015 but I can guess that we will still be begging you to attend events, you will still sign up at the last possible minute and we will still be trying to make sure that good design is a primary ingredient in our region.

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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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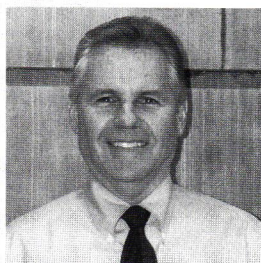
Leading the Future of our Cities By Stephen Quick, AIA

Tom Briney, AIA, called it a “watershed”

event for AIA Pittsburgh and I couldn't agree more.

This year's Build Pittsburgh conference firmly established our organization and our members as significant players in the future of our region. The message was clear from two governors, backed by numerous political and local leaders at our keynote event and reiterated throughout the seminars. Both Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack and our own

Governor Ed Rendell cited the significant and unique role architects play in creating livable communities by providing vision, design and planning and both acknowledged how important architects are to the political process. Of all the professionals, architects are best suited to help lead the future of our cities and regions, they suggested.



As a result of the Build Pittsburgh conference, I feel confident that architects in the Pittsburgh region are actively sought by our political leadership and looked to for helping set future agendas.

Kate Schwensen, FAIA, president-elect of AIA, couldn't have been more complimentary about AIA Pittsburgh's leadership in many of the Institute's programs and our willingness to pioneer new initiatives. And local leaders in several of our seminars encouraged us to take an active role in new local and regional activities. I can't tell you how many of our community leaders and conference attendees have approached me since the event to praise the Build Pittsburgh event and their appreciation for our hosting Governor Vilsack. As a result of the two-day conference, I feel confident that architects in the Pittsburgh region are actively sought by our political leadership and looked to for helping set future agendas.

In that regard, a few members led by Ed Shriver, AIA of Strada have started discussing our Chapter's participation in the AIA's Sesquicentennial—the 150th anniversary of the AIA—celebration “Blueprint for America.” All chapters have been asked to embark on a catalytic project that will have a lasting impact on their local region. At AIA Pittsburgh, we are already discussing a number of ideas, from a livable communities advocacy effort to architect-led projects that would have a broad public appeal. While we hadn't reached any recommendations for the Chapter to consider by the time of Build Pittsburgh, we felt the op-

portunity was ripe to use the keynote breakfast, with two governors and many local leaders and the press present, to convey our Chapter's commitment to achieving more livable communities throughout our region.

I had the opportunity to give the keynote breakfast's opening remarks and used the occasion to convey that commitment:

“You all know that architects design buildings, but you may not know that architects also design communities. Architects bring to the table the knowledge and inventiveness to create place. Architects do this all the time. The design and visioning, that architects do on a daily basis, can become community assets and add value. Architects help to define and create value. Good design attracts businesses and new residents. Good design contributes to strong and healthy communities.

“Place-making and creating value mean a number of things. Economic growth is stimulated by creating desirable environments. Livable communities are synonymous with a higher quality of life and amenities and attract the resources—the human capital—that now drives our economy. Prosperity results from increased livability. Forward looking cities embrace these ideals. As cities and regions compete with one another, livability and amenities become even more important because livable communities are now expected.

In recognition of this cultural change throughout the country, AIA Pittsburgh is redirecting our collective energy to making this region's communities even better. More livable. More healthy. More safe. More environmentally responsive. More sustainable. More enjoyable. And even more beautiful.

“AIA Pittsburgh is committed to helping this happen. AIA Pittsburgh intends to celebrate the opportunities this community has generously shared with us by reaching out even further to be of assistance as we move this region forward. Our commitment is to pledge to help our local communities on issues and vision. We are in the midst of defining this volunteer effort—it could be anything from advisory roles to architect-led initiatives and projects. What I want

