

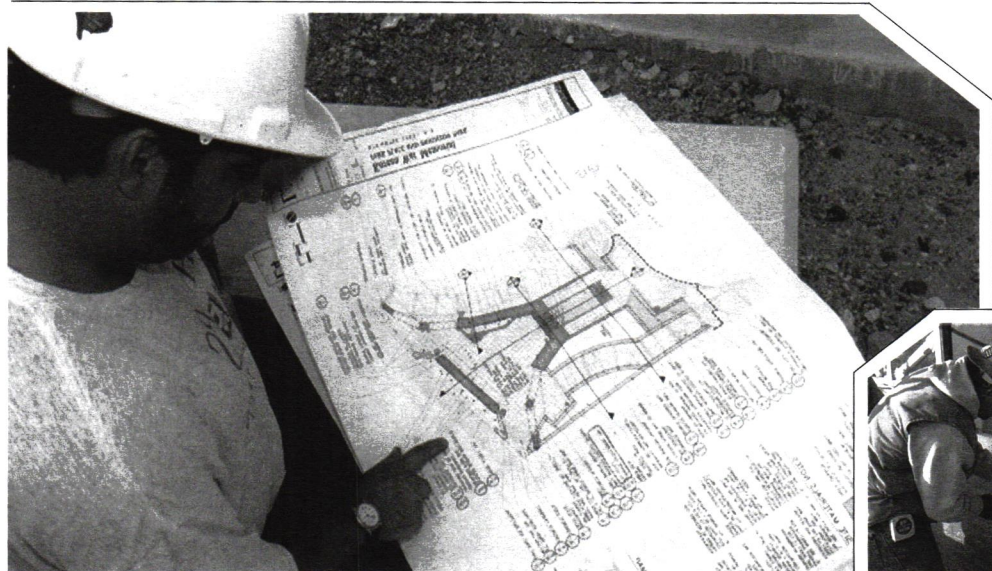
COLUMNS



FEB/08 The Future for Architects | Love at First Site: new residents like what they see | Masonry Camp: International Masonry Institute Program for Young Architects | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

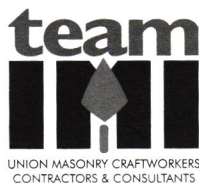
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HOMEFRONT

BY BECKY SPEVACK



A lot has been written about change, and a lot has been said. Bob Dylan and David Bowie come to mind, as do John Steinbeck and Thomas Paine. But we each have our own personal experiences with the topic too. Some of the major life changes that have occurred in the three years I have been in Pittsburgh include purchasing my first car (and it was new!). Welcoming the first addition into my family, my dog, a lab-mix named Sasha. Becoming a homeowner. As an artist, was part of my first group show in the city. And these are just a few of the standout examples, while so many others exist in the background and on the perimeter, so many small steps towards growth.

Each new year brings with it thoughts of new beginnings. This year especially change is in the air. The race for the White House began early and strong, and already so much has happened. What started as a packed ballot has been stripped down in just a few short weeks. Over the next ten months, America will be tuning in to more debates and speeches, listening and learning about new avenues to follow and new directions planned, in hopes of choosing the strongest candidate to lead our country. Change is exciting, but the unknown can also be a time of apprehension.

As we as a country go through this turbulent and uncertain period, we as a city are going through our own transformation. With Pittsburgh's population in decline, it is perhaps lesser known that it is also made up of an increasingly mature demographic, with an elderly population that is over 5% higher than the national average. This is something that is going to continue to have a lasting affect on the city. How this city responds and evolves over the next five, ten, even twenty years will redefine Pittsburgh. Will our city grow? Will it attract new businesses and professionals? Will it continue to be a great place for venture capitalists and tech start-ups? As someone with a vested interest, I certainly hope so.

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Cover photo by Rob Strovers

But what will help it thrive? The constantly changing face of how the world is run, how business is handled, is going to have an impact, and we can only hope Pittsburgh adapts.

A similar scenario can be witnessed within the world of architecture. The way architecture is practiced is changing and evolving. Technology is constantly altering the possibilities and with each new change firms need to take a hard look at their practice to decide how to move forward. Just two years ago AIA Pittsburgh's own Dick Rittelmann, FAIA wrote a feature on the future of architecture (*Columns* April 2006). Looking to that for inspiration, we have taken a new view on the topic, talking with young professionals about the changes they have already witnessed, and what they hope to encounter over the years. One point that resounds is that the profession is losing many recent graduates to a number of related fields, and our new chapter president, Paula Maynes, AIA, speaks to that in her column, "Viewpoint" on page three.

One thing that unites our country, our city, and the architecture profession right now, besides change, is hope. The two can often be intertwined, and these situations prove no different. As we move forward and try to affect change, to do so without hope would seem foolish and defeatist.

In grade school, I was required to memorize and analyze Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope Is the Thing With Feathers" and I can recall it to this day. I often find myself repeating the short lines in my head when calm and inspiration are needed, and find the imagery it conjures – hope as a bird, free to fly, soaring to increasing heights – help to steer me through moments when a little guidance is needed most. We need to each find the little thing that can help us through as our work and living environments are drastically altered, so that we may maintain the hope and drive needed to push the work we do, the place we work, the city we live in to function at its (and our) peak in these ever-changing landscapes. 

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –*

*And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of Me.*

-Emily Dickinson



A GROWING CHALLENGE

BY PAULA R. MAYNES, AIA

We can each point to moments in our lives when we grew a little more, when we realized we are bigger, braver, or wiser than we had thought. My abbreviated list includes some classic life-altering events:

- Overcoming a fear by learning to float at age 7.
- Collecting my first paycheck at age 17.
- The excitement and trepidation of a recent college graduate moving to the vast and wild west, sight unseen, at age 22.
- The awesome, terrifying, and joyful responsibility of thinking beyond my own immediate needs in becoming a parent at age 32.



At any age it is a thrill to exclaim, “Hey, look what I can do!” I can easily declare that the daily problem solving challenges of an architectural practice offer a constant, stimulating, and varied set of opportunities to learn and grow.


During college, a mentor surprised me with the suggestion that I could define for myself what it means to be an architect. Would it be artist, designer, technician, businesswoman, marketer, historian, sociologist, mind reader, place-maker, advocate...? To me, architecture is a team sport, which requires talent, enthusiasm, and leadership. My team is comprised of many individuals beginning with my staff and partner, a consultant team, the extended project team including the catalyst – the client – and members of the community. Architecture truly is a most public art.

Recently I’ve heard grumblings that the profession of architecture is at a crossroads. New technologies demand that established professionals continue to incorporate new modes of production and communication into their practices. Yet, it is technological advances that have allowed the profession to press the envelope of

creative expression through the ages. Young graduates are both shrinking in number and turning to more glamorous fields that promise higher levels of compensation through the production of virtual architecture. This is potentially our great loss, our next generation. Perhaps we will step forward as mentors saying, “There is still room to define for oneself what it means to be an architect.” I do not know any two practices that are the same.

With that said, I do find that architects have a special way of envisioning the great potential of any situation. What I love most about the AIA is the interaction I share with a group of individuals who recognize possi-

bilities, who are strongly community-oriented, and who understand the link between *quality of life and quality of environment*.

As the 2008 President of AIA Pittsburgh, I would like to hear your thoughts about how AIA Pittsburgh can serve its members and the community. We will be redesigning our website this year. If, in the meantime, you haven’t explored the AIA National website, www.aia.org you are missing out on a host of remarkable resources: the Knowledge Communities’ Best Practices, the Small Firms Resource Center, information for Emerging Professionals, and the recently launched SOLOSO, an online resource for architects to share and exchange information. I have been involved in the AIA for several years and feel that I am just beginning to scratch the surface of what the institution has to offer. Please contact me at prmaynes@mayneassociates.com, particularly if you have ideas about recruiting/mentoring a diverse and talented pool of professionals. We will address this challenge during Build Pittsburgh, our annual educational event. Hey, look what WE can do with your participation! 

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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Volume 22, No. 1




SUSTAINABILITY 2030

In a continued effort to raise awareness and create a better understanding about the impact of the built environment we live and work in, here is a look at some of the accomplishments being made by the AIA:

50»50

The AIA's year-long initiative to demonstrate the environmental consequences of construction and building operations has culminated with the publication of 50 specific strategies to reduce carbon emissions at <http://www.aia.org/fiftyto fifty>. The strategies, which offer a range of design opportunities, are described in detail with examples and links to relevant sites. The effort follows the AIA's adoption of the 2030 Initiative, a pledge to achieve zero carbon emissions from buildings by that year.

The 50/50 resource is one of several projects completed under the leadership of AIA National Vice-President Norman Strong, FAIA in his role as leader of the Board of Directors' Sustainability Discussion Group (SDiG). Other projects include the development of a green-meetings guideline, curriculum development, amendments to the profession's code of ethics to include sustainability, and an evaluation of sustainability-rating systems. Learn about these initiatives and more at www.aia.org/susn_rc_default. 

2008 LEAP YEAR PARTY

Join us – a community of architects and design professionals – as we celebrate those individuals who have recently taken a professional leap! On February 28th, we will be recognizing the accomplishments of newly registered architects and welcoming new AIA Pittsburgh members.

WHEN: Thursday, February 28, 2008
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Outlaw Studios,
2420 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15222



During this evening, individuals will be able to tour the studio, network, and enjoy food and drinks with fellow design professionals.

5:30-6:30: Newly registered architects and new AIA Pittsburgh chapter members are invited to a pre-party meet & greet. During this time, these individuals will have the opportunity to meet fellow colleagues in a more intimate setting, engage in a little Q & A, and gather information on the AIA Pittsburgh chapter and the design climate in the Pittsburgh region.

COST: Free for newly registered architects and/or new AIA members that have received this status within the past year. Others: \$15 per person.

To sign-up for this event or for more information, contact AIA Pittsburgh at 412-471-9548 or visit our website at www.aiapgh.org. 