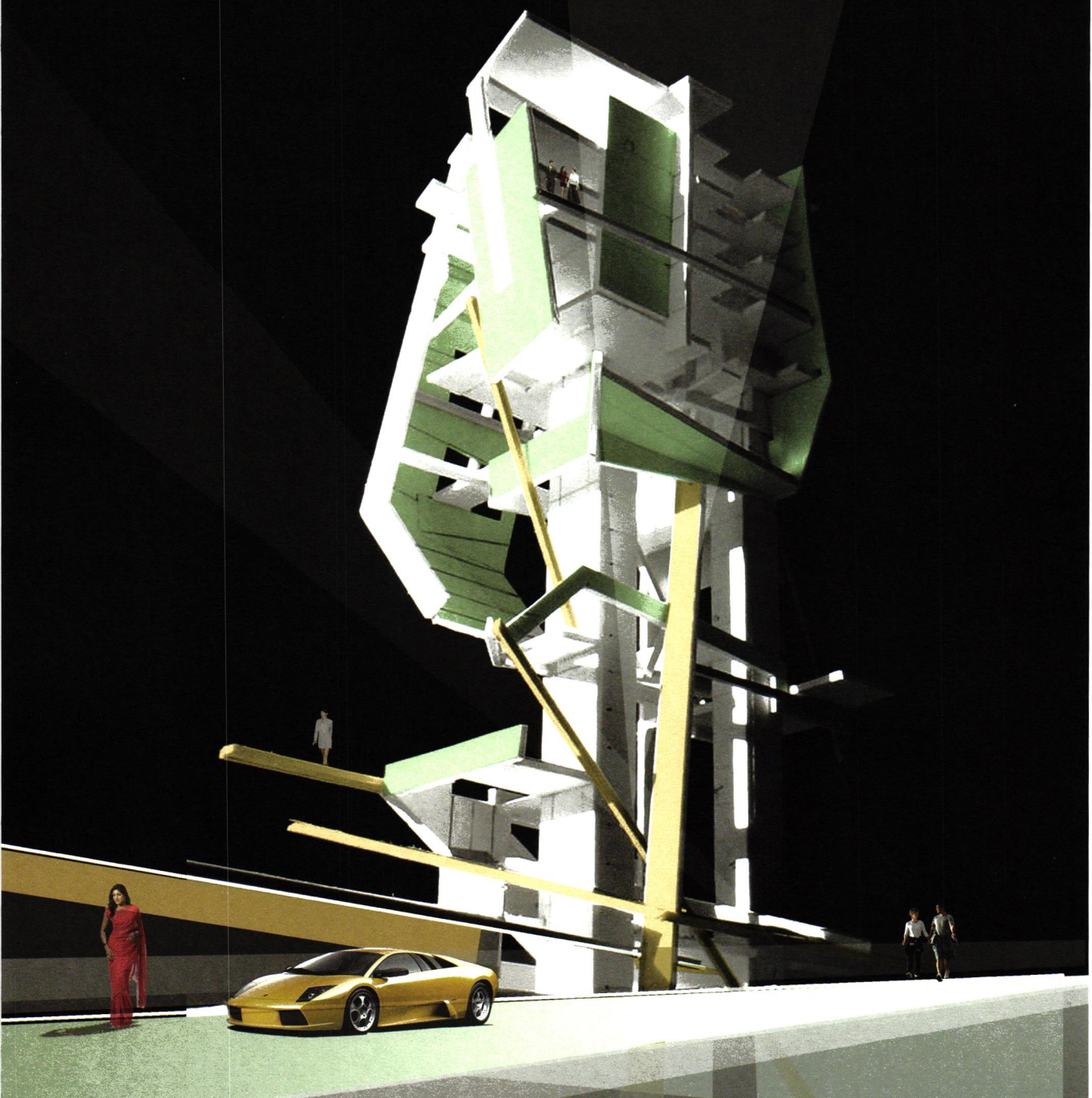


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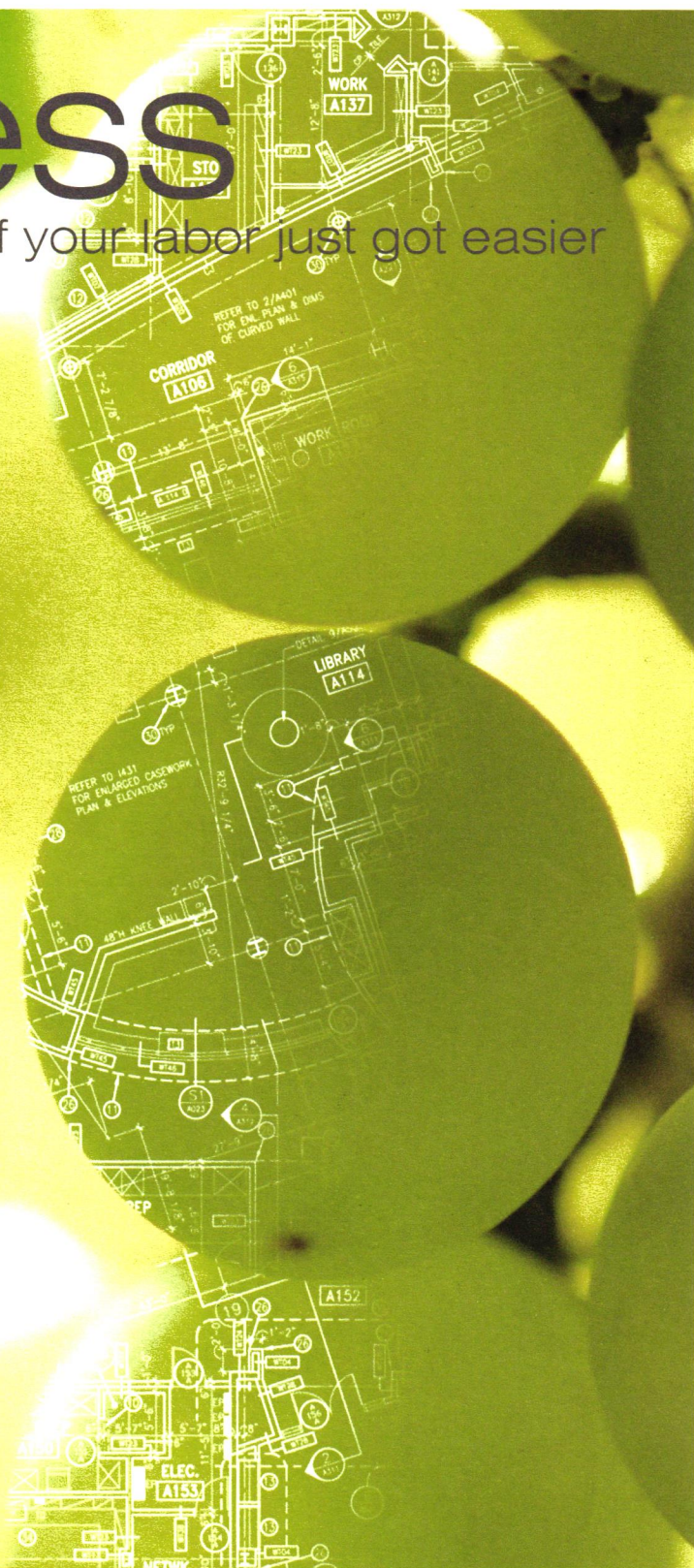
AUG/08

The Art of Experimentation: Where art and architecture meet | The Eighteenth Anniversary of ADA: One advocate's tale | Habitat: Exploring the places where architects work | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

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HOMEFRONT

BY BECKY SPEVACK



AIA Pittsburgh receives a lot of magazines. I don't know how we were placed on many of the mailing lists, nor can I figure out why we would be targeted to receive such publications, but with each visit to the mailbox, it seems as though I introduce a new piece of reading material into the office. If you have been to the office, you may have noticed them, stacked high on the small metal cabinet in the bathroom. The stack slowly grows, an inch here (Architectural Record), a half-inch there (Architecture Boston), until closing the door threatens to tumble the pile. At that point I usually spend a solid half hour sorting through them, deciding which ones are worth keeping – those that get tossed at my feet – and which ones have exceeded their shelf life – those that are chucked into the hallway to be bundled for recycling. We usually hold on to the architectural magazines, whereas the weekly Pittsburgh Business Times is discarded after only a week or two. But once in a while, something will catch me by surprise.

During my most recent dig through the magazine pile, I came across an issue of BusinessWeek SmallBiz. I didn't recognize it, but the graphics and images were interesting, so I set it aside for future reading. The cover boasted "Meet the Antipreneurs: They're Against Advertising, Globalization, & Big Business." It sounded provocative, if not exactly interesting. On the bus that afternoon, I pulled out my new find, and started leafing through it. The thing is, weeks after bringing it home, I still haven't read about those "antipreneurs". Instead I focused on an article called "Graveyard Shift", which highlights a new line of entrepreneurs in the funeral industry, business men and women who have introduced a number of spins to a centuries-old business, offering everything from eco-friendly burial shrouds to the opportunity to have cremated remains scattered through a fireworks

continued page 2

AUG/08

In this Issue |



The Art of Experimentation: Where art and

architecture meet page 6 | The Eighteenth Anniversary of ADA: One advocate's tale page 26



Habitat: Exploring the places where architects work

News page 4 | Breaking Ground page 18 |



page 16

On the cover: Jindal Villa, Mumbai, India

display. The stories told in this short feature fascinated me on a number of levels. What stood out most of all were the people behind such ideas. Not only had they thought up the products, but they followed through, investigating what it would take to create such opportunities, going through research and development, trial and error, and then having to sell someone else on the marketability and need for their idea.

This willingness to try something different, to step outside the norm, is where the chances are often found to create something great, to reinvent public perception - within a profession, and on a larger scale. As a profession, architecture has had its fair-share of risk-takers, architects who refuse to conform, who push materials, ideas, physics, and even contractors to the very edge, who only feel comfortable at that edge, where they can look out into the vast unknown, and begin filling it with their own ideas of what a building should be. Just like the trailblazers in the funeral business, such architects are willing to take risks, and to experiment. Our main feature in this issue focuses on experimentation and how it has impacted the built environment. Writer Deborah Knox spoke with some local architects who have drawn attention for their innovative design work about the risks they have taken.

In the vein of experimentation, we are also introducing a new feature for *Columns*. You may recall the occasional “Habitat” feature of old, in which former editor Tracy Certo explored the places architects call home. “Habitat” is back with a new spin – a look into architects’ offices and work spaces, their home away from home. If you are like many of the architects I know, you know what it is to spend long hours in the office – arriving early in the mornings, into the evenings, on the weekends. Architects have a reputation of having a strong, lasting work ethic, and of being extremely detail-oriented. It seems that architects spend a lot of time in the studio, and some weeks, it seems as though they live there. It is with this in mind that we introduce the new “Habitat.” *Columns* will visit an office, acquire photographs of the space, and talk with members of the firm. We’ll find out what it is like to work at a featured office and how the design of the space reflects the work the firm does. For this introductory edition of Habitat, we visited the newly-named Rothschild Doyno Collaborative. With a new space in the Strip District, the firm has a lot to say about location, mindset, and design. If you think your firm would like to be profiled, please let me know at bspevack@aiapgh.org! 



WALKING THE WALK

BY ANNE J. SWAGER, HON. AIA

When the ADA was first signed there was a lot of noise as architects, contractors, and the like focused on the lack of clarity inherent in a law that was essentially about civil rights but also happened to address issues of the built environment. The development community was understandably concerned about the impact these new regulations would have on costs. The law lacked the surety of a building code and no one was trained to interpret it. Luckily for Pittsburgh, we had Bob Lynch, FAIA, who understood the law and the nuances necessary in designing for a wide range of disabilities. Bob has spent the majority of his career insuring that the needs of this ever-growing population are met and that we are all the beneficiaries of his work. Be sure to read our interview with him on page 26.



When the ADA passed in 1990 I knew only a few people with disabilities. Things changed for me in 1996 when my youngest child Ellen was born and subsequently diagnosed with cerebral palsy. While her disabilities are much less severe than many others with the same condition, she has spent varying amounts of time in a wheelchair. She has also walked with the aid of a walker. She transitioned to walking independently after she was caught running down the corridors of her elementary school, lifting her legs and “gliding” until her walker stopped. This terrified the entire school, as witnesses were sure she was headed for disaster each time she flew by.

While Ellen now walks independently she cannot negotiate steps without a railing. If a curb is relatively small she can step up or down from it unaided, but if it is typically sized she needs an arm assist. Ellen becomes more independent each day but many challenges remain.

By the time you read this column, I will be recovering from total knee replacement surgery. I have struggled for the past several months with a very painful knee condition, with the inability to walk very far or to stand for any length of time. I am fortunate that my lack of mobility is temporary. However, I have had it just long enough to really appreciate the differences that thoughtful design can yield. I can't wait to walk easily again and in the meantime, I have to confess... I am grateful for drive-throughs.

In this issue we also sadly say goodbye to Jon Shimm, AIA. Jon suffered a heart attack that ended his life far too soon. I had the privilege of working with Jon for a number of years. He was a thoughtful and diligent Board member. He always spoke his mind and could be counted on to present alternative views. Jon believed in the talents of everyone around him and always pushed me to do my best work. He was one of the few people in my life who called me “Swager” and got away with it. One year, Ellen was recovering from some painful surgery at the Children's Institute. My husband Bill and I were with her around the clock, except one Sunday when Jon rescued us and took us on a tour of “Summerset”. We checked out the whole site, the views, and then toured model homes. Then, of course, we critiqued everything. That was Jon... reaching out to others.

Jon deeply loved his family. He was proud of his boys, Abe and Alex, and his wife, Judy. He loved the family dog, Jazz, too – despite her mischief. I will miss Jon's sense of humor, his intense interest in all things political, his encouragement, and our frequent lunches when he always bragged about Alex, Abe, and Burt Hill. Jon was the real deal and I am grateful for the gift of his friendship. **C**

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. 4



DESIGN PITTSBURGH 2008 = PAPERLESS SUBMISSIONS

In a continued effort to streamline processes and cut down on waste, AIA Pittsburgh introduces paperless submissions for 2008. All submission kits and information will be available on our website for download. Please make sure to read submission criteria thoroughly and feel free to call the AIA Pittsburgh office with any questions.

AIA PITTSBURGH CONTINUING EDUCATION ACADEMY

Still need some continuing education credits? Looking to learn something new? Join Ron Blank and Associates and AIA Pittsburgh on Tuesday, September 16th for a full day of continuing education seminars worth 6 AIA/CES LUs (HSW). This opportunity will be held at the Regional Enterprise Tower, 425 Sixth Avenue, 23rd Floor, and includes complimentary breakfast and lunch. The cost is \$100 for AIA and CSI members who register before the early bird deadline of September 7th, \$125 for those who register after the deadline; \$125 for nonmembers before September 7th, and \$150 for nonmembers after the deadline. To register, you can contact the AIA Pittsburgh office at 412-471-9548, or register online by going to the AIA Pittsburgh website: www.aiapgh.org/calendar.html

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:00 AM – Registration & Breakfast

8:30 AM – Anti-fracture/Sound Control & Waterproofing Flooring Underlayments

This session will focus on anti-fracture membranes for ceramic tile and stone flooring and why these products are an important part of today's tile installations. Also covered: sound control and more.

Speaker: Rocky Hill, Protecto Wrap
(1HSW LU)

9:30 AM – The Basics of Polished Concrete

At the conclusion of this course you will have a better understanding of what polished concrete is and how it is achieved mechanically, enhanced chromatically, and protected chemically.

Speaker: Jason Barnes, Productions Team
(1HSW LU)

10:30 AM – Understanding Quartz Surfacing Material

What is quartz and where can it be found? What is the Breton manufacturing process? What are the differences between acrylic solid surfaces, stone, and quartz surfaces?

Speaker: Dennie Rickman, Consentino USA
(1HSW LU)

11:30 AM – Lunch

12:30 PM – Best Practices & Guidelines for Tile Installation

We'll explore best practices for surface preparation, tiling over radiant heat flooring, installing glass tiles, and installing porcelain tile.

Speaker: Brian Petrucci, Flooring Group
(1HSW LU)

1:30 PM – Specifying for Mold, Moisture, & Fire Management

This session will examine construction materials that inhibit mold, fungus, insect propagation and preventing Sick Building Syndrome. We'll also look at materials that offer ASTM fire/water/smoke protection, and more.

Speaker: Michael Raimondo, Dragon Board
(1HSW LU)

2:30 PM – Solutions for Large Openings

This session will focus on the use of large, movable wall systems and door systems for large openings.

Speaker: Kevin Mowery, Nana Wall Systems
(1HSW LU)

3:30 PM – Closing & Networking