



CO LUM NNS

MAR/10

Where Ideas Are Tested: Carnegie Mellon's School of Architecture |
Making Lemonade: AIA Pittsburgh's Unemployed Architects Group | What Has the
AIA Done For Me Lately? | AIA Pittsburgh, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects

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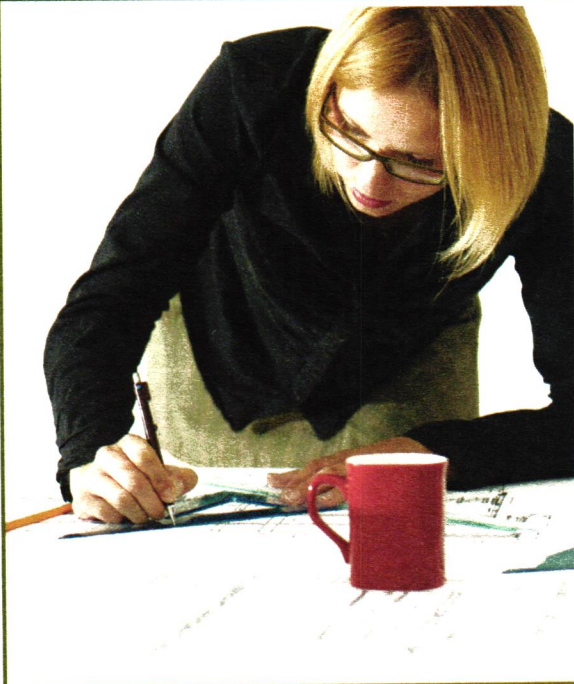


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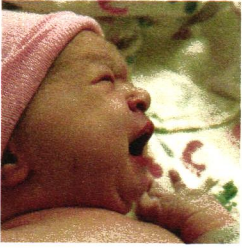
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HOMEFRONT

BY BECKY SPEVACK



Take a minute. Stop and think back to your school days, be they elementary, high school, or college. Call to mind that one teacher or professor, the one that can still put a smile on your face, the one that made you look forward to each class, the one that made you want to work harder and be better, the one that believed in you. Carol Bush – that is the name of my favorite teacher. She had wild red hair and icy blue eyes. Her favorite colors were orange and lime, which she wore often, and often together. Her voice could carry out of her classroom and down a corridor if she so chose. She was larger than life. I remember being frightened of the prospect of being in her class going into tenth grade, but within weeks I was enamored – with her teaching style, her sass, her ability to build up your confidence as you take small steps in the right direction. She was the first person that seemed to really believe that I could write, and write well. She encouraged me to find my voice and make it heard.

As some of you may well know, I gave birth to my first child this past September – a baby girl, Calliope. And every day since has been a new experience, each 24 hour period filled with learning and adapting. In just five short months, being a mother has taught me to live in the moment, to enjoy each smile and giggle. It's taught me to slow down. It's taught me that although she can't talk, she is more than adept at expressing herself and her needs. And it's taught me that I have a capacity to love that makes my chest swell and feel like my heart might explode out of my ribcage. I speak for both my husband and myself when I say that our little muse has shifted our focus and forever changed how we view the world. She is our teacher now, and as each day breaks, new lessons abound.

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We are fortunate to live in a city with some world-class schools. The universities in our backyards are shaping our future. Our cover story is a look at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Architecture, created from within its own walls. Three student writers highlight the strength of the program and some of the resounding themes that are focused on throughout the five year education – sustainability, groundbreaking technologies, learning to practice in real-world situations. As I worked with both assistant professor Charles Rosenblum and School of Architecture head Stephen Lee, AIA to bring this feature together, I was reminded of life as an undergraduate. You work so hard to absorb everything you can, to best prepare you for what lies ahead, for your transition into the workforce. But in an economy like ours, there is no guarantee of employment, no promise that you will be able to graduate from your life as a student into one of a career-driven professional.

The second feature (found on page 25) tells the story of a group of resilient architects who have recently found themselves unemployed in these tough times. The group has been brought together by AIA Pittsburgh for bimonthly lunch meetings, but the members of this group have really taken it upon themselves to create a positive environment to support one another, to educate and encourage as they look forward and try to figure out what comes next.

All of the players within this issue, myself included, find themselves in transition. We are all in a place where life is undefined and moving forward. Some of us have chosen this place and are comfortable here. Some find themselves wondering “Why me?” and “What’s next?”. All have a story to tell, a voice to be heard, and today, you are our audience. **C**



BENEFICIAL INTERACTIONS

BY KEVIN WAGSTAFF, AIA

I am writing this in the airport on the way back from a Carnegie Mellon design studio field trip to Las Vegas. Dick Block, Associate Head of the School of Drama, and I are co-teaching an interdisciplinary theater design studio including both architecture and drama students. The studio is the brainchild and beneficiary of theater consultant Leonard Auerbach, an alumnus of both the CMU School of Architecture and the School of Drama. Mr. Auerbach's impressive resume includes several Cirque de Soleil theaters, and he generously arranged behind-the-scenes tours of Cirque's technically superlative venues for both "Love" and "Ka" followed by a spectacular show. If all goes well with this experimental studio, it will represent a great example of the beneficial interaction of practice and education.



I had initially declined to teach again this spring due to the time challenges involved in teaching while practicing. Then last September, Stephen Lee, AIA, the new Head of the School of Architecture, offered to host our AIA Pittsburgh annual meeting at the school. After talking with faculty and touring the Solar Decathlon House and the extraordinary Digital Fabrication Lab, I found myself really appreciating the way that being even a small part of CMU can recharge one's enthusiasm for architecture.

Through interactions with faculty, especially Professors Khee Poh Lam, Vivian Loftness, FAIA, and Volker Hartkopf, I have been challenged to expand my idea of what architects can and should do. To be sure, the School of Architecture still resides in the College of Fine Arts, but their application of scientific research methods to building performance and evidence-based, quantitative tools to the design process is pointing the profession in a promising direction. Their work serves

as a model for a more balanced and integrated approach to the discipline of architecture.

One of the things that attracted me to Pittsburgh when I moved here 17 years ago was the combination of a strong professional community – including a great local AIA chapter – and a world-class architecture school, both located in a beautiful, urban city that is indeed very livable. Both the profession and the academy are stronger if we support each other and interact on a regular basis.

CMU has a long tradition of including Pittsburgh practitioners as adjunct faculty and guest jurors. Likewise, many CMU architecture alumni find an internship, a career, and a home here. CMU architecture faculty are acting as consultants on projects in Pittsburgh and around the globe, bringing pioneering building performance expertise to professional practice. For example, Professor Lam is consulting, among many projects, on a web-based green building code in China and Cancer Research Center in Taipei.

I'd like to close with a plug for a new opportunity for both established and emerging practitioners to benefit from the academy. Assistant Professor Jeremy Ficca, AIA has been doing extraordinary things in the creation and expansion of the Digital Fabrication Lab and this summer he is ready to share his very cool toys with professionals. The Digital Fabrication Lab [dFAB] will offer AIA-registered continuing education courses on the topics of advanced digital workflows and digital fabrication. These immersive courses will offer in-depth case study presentations as well as hands-on overviews of emerging design, communication, and fabrication techniques. Be on the lookout for more course details this spring. **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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GET AN EARLY START ON YOUR AIA CES LUs

The AIA plays an active role in the continuing education of its members, striving to provide opportunities for AIA members to maximize their professional skills through effective learning partnerships. Each member is required to complete 18 hours of continuing education annually, with 8 of hours relating to health, safety, and/or welfare (HSW) and 4 hours relating to sustainable design.

BUILD PITTSBURGH 2010

Have you heard about IPD – Integrated Project Delivery – but you're not quite sure what to make of it? Want to learn more? Then you won't want to miss the 9th annual Build Pittsburgh on Thursday, May 6th at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. This year's conference will focus on IPD and trust – the key element to ensuring success of this delivery process. Stayed tuned to www.aiapgh.org for more details!

AIA NATIONAL CONVENTION 2010: Design for the New Decade

Looking for a chance to get away, enjoy some sunshine, and take in great educational programming? Join your fellow architects this June in Miami, Florida for the AIA's National Convention and Design Exposition. The Convention is being held June 10th - 12th and offers more than 400 programs – workshops, seminars, tours, exhibits, and more! Acknowledging the current economic challenges, convention registration fees have not been increased from 2009. Register before the Early Bird Discount deadline of March 29th, and save even more! And if you just can't make it to Miami, you can still experience many of the educational offerings by virtue of the Virtual Convention. All three keynote presentations and over 30 seminars will be available via simultaneous Webcasts, with opportunities to earn learning units from your office chair. You can also check out the Design Exposition via the Virtual Expo, which allows you to interact with almost 100 exhibitors. To learn more, go to www.aiaconvention.com. 