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MAR/10

Where Ideas Are Tested: Carnegie Mellon's School of Architecture |
Making Lemonade: AIA Pittsburgh's Unemployed Architects Group | What Has the
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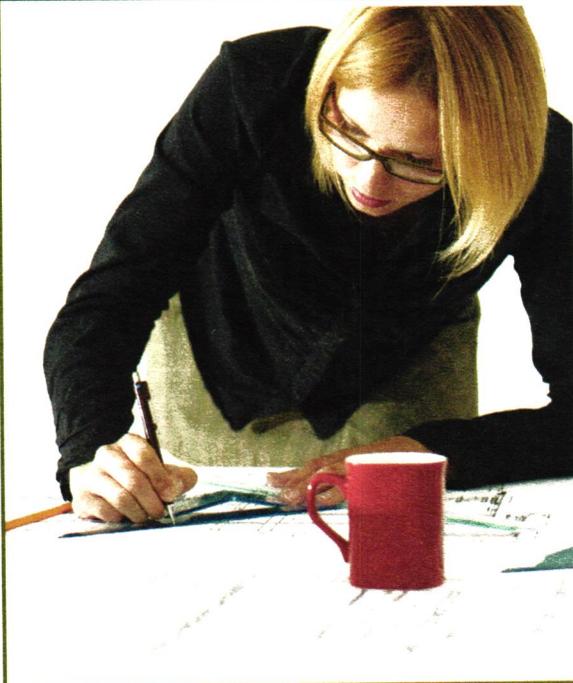


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HOMEFRONT

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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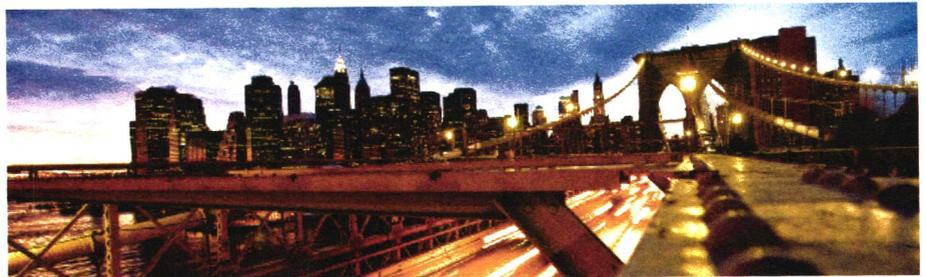
The AIA plays an active role in the continuing education of its members, striving to provide opportunities for AIA members to maximize their professional skills through effective learning partnerships. Each member is required to complete 18 hours of continuing education annually, with 8 of hours relating 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. 



ARCHITECTURE FOR HUMANITY, PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

“Design is important to every aspect of our lives. It informs the places in which we live, work, learn, heal, and gather.”

Pittsburgh has a new volunteer organization, a local chapter of Architecture for Humanity, which brings together those who care about a sustainable future through the power of design. The chapter is coordinated by three design professionals – Sophia Berman, an architectural designer at IDC Architects; Jennifer Lucchino, owner of inter*architecture and adjunct faculty at Carnegie Mellon University; and Lindsey Masarik, an interior designer and faculty at Kent State University.

The AFH Pittsburgh chapter held its first event this past December, building dollhouses from recycled materials to reach underprivileged children during the holiday season. Monthly meetings began in February 2010, and are held on the first Thursday of every month at 6 pm. Location is determined each month. To learn more or get involved, contact afhpittsburgh@gmail.com. 



Photos by Tom Fitzpatrick, Visual Perceptions



where ideas are tested

Inside Carnegie Mellon University's School of Architecture

CHARLES ROSENBLUM AND BECKY SPEVACK, EDITORS

To know an architect in the city of Pittsburgh is to likely know someone who has been educated at Carnegie Mellon University's School of Architecture. Its presence and contributions to the architectural community cannot be overlooked, from the David Lewis Lecture Series, giving us the opportunity to hear from some of the world's finest urban designers, to participation in the Solar Decathlon, which tied together principles of sustainability with a focus on collaboration and community. In a recent conversation about the School, professor and head Stephen Lee, AIA shed some light into what has made it so strong.

"We are currently and have always been focused on educating practitioners. Our main goal is to educate students to be critical thinkers and how to formulate questions." To this end, the curriculum has been designed threefold: to encourage students to be curious about and to engage with the world around them, to provide them with the fundamental principles of the way things work, and finally, to provide them with a set of skills that are future-looking, preparing them for careers as architects. Lee also points out the extreme rigor of the curriculum, the intensity of the five year program. "We work to expose the students to great opportunities," he says. "It is

OPPOSITE: Students collaborate on shelving units for a Solar Decathlon house

incumbent on those students to take advantage of them.” One such opportunity is to participate in exercises and activities beyond the School’s walls. In the pages that follow are essays written by three students doing just that. Each piece looks at a specific aspect of the School of Architecture and what it is offering the next generation of architects.

SUSTAINABILITY ON A BROAD SCALE

BY ANNEMARIE MALBON

To the professors and students in the School of Architecture, sustainability is more than just the newest buzzword; it is an integrated and essential part of the first professional education. Since the 1970s, Carnegie Mellon has placed a focus on sustainability and today identifies sustainable design as one of the defining interests of the School of Architecture. As Stephen Lee, current head of the School, says, “it is a part of our culture.”

As such, sustainable design plays a key role in the five-year curriculum. Students are exposed to aspects of sustainability in all ten design studios, as well as many of the required and elective courses that accompany them. There is no “Sustainability 101”; rather, issues of sustainability are, as Lee notes, “totally embedded in the curriculum.”

Too many people, according to professor Azizan Aziz, think of sustainable design as an “add on” to the design. “To me,” he says, “sustainable design is like putting on your clothing; you do it every day.” As essential as designing bathrooms in homes, sustainability cannot be separated from the design process. Thus sustainable design should not be designated to one course; instead each student and each project should incorporate sustainable ideas. While many universities are just now seeking to incorporate classes on sustainable design, these ideas exist within the framework itself at CMU.

Carnegie Mellon’s focus on sustainability within an integrated curriculum allows sus-

tainable design to be approached from different perspectives. All environmental design strategies are not taught in one semester but instead divided among three required courses that cover, first, passive strategies, then active mechanical systems, and lighting approaches. The strength of Carnegie Mellon, according to Professor Vivian Loftness, FAIA, is that the university is “committed to teaching both systems [passive and active] with more depth and for a longer period of time.”

Carnegie Mellon also addresses the broader context of sustainability. Especially in undergraduate education, it is important to “situate the issue of sustainability in a cultural and ethical matrix,” says professor Christine Mondor, AIA, whose classes address both the social side of sustainability and the understanding of ecological systems. Sustainability, she observes, implies a relationship, and it is this understanding that allows students to expand their views of sustainable design beyond a simple building checklist and even beyond the profession of architecture itself.

In the past, Loftness notes, architects “have assumed that you come up with a design and then build it,” but sustainable designs, whether the goal is low carbon emissions or zero energy, require integrated design. The struggle today, she adds, “is to expose students to the notion of collaborative design.” Teaching sustainable design is not just about imparting “the facts,” but about encouraging students to work within a system—and not only with other architects. Students must think like engineers so that they can understand how to “integrate systems designed by other professionals into the design,” according to Loftness. The “notion of the architect as a soloist,” she stresses, “needs to be replaced by the architect as conductor.”

The School seeks to create an active educational environment in which students are able to participate directly and search for solutions. There has been a generational shift toward sustainability in the past ten years, and students are coming into the program with more interest

and awareness in sustainable design. They see, says Aziz, “the value and urgency of trying to create sustainable built environments.”

Thus the school’s role lies in providing the resources and opportunities to explore and learn, whether it be through living laboratories like the Intelligent Workspace that allows for measurement and observation, or design-build projects like the Solar Decathlon, or the range of required and elective courses from Systems Integration to the History of Sustainable Architecture. “Experience—knowing that it matters,” says Mondor, “that [sustainability] is not some abstract concept, is the key to wanting to know more.”

Sustainability, as a central commitment within Carnegie Mellon’s School of Architecture, exists not as one course but as a series of experiences and opportunities throughout the curriculum. Sustainable design is fostered by the real-world interests of the faculty and the students’ desire for knowledge and experience.

THE POETICS OF REALITY: CMU STUDENTS IN REAL WORLD SITUATIONS

BY TALIA PERRY

The ‘real world’ is a terrifying prospect to many students quickly approaching graduation day. The best option as some see it is to hide in the bubble of academia until you’ve run out of degrees, funds, or both. It would seem, though, that the leap we all must inevitably take is best approached at a running start. Carnegie Mellon University’s School of Architecture has found many ways to integrate ‘reality’ into its curriculum, and students have embraced the opportunity.

A word often associated with the architectural profession is ‘responsibility.’ Architects are held accountable for style, for performance, for implicit meanings of their designs. And although there is no actual equivalent to the Hippocratic Oath, responsibility to the client has been and remains an implicitly fundamental principal of architecture.

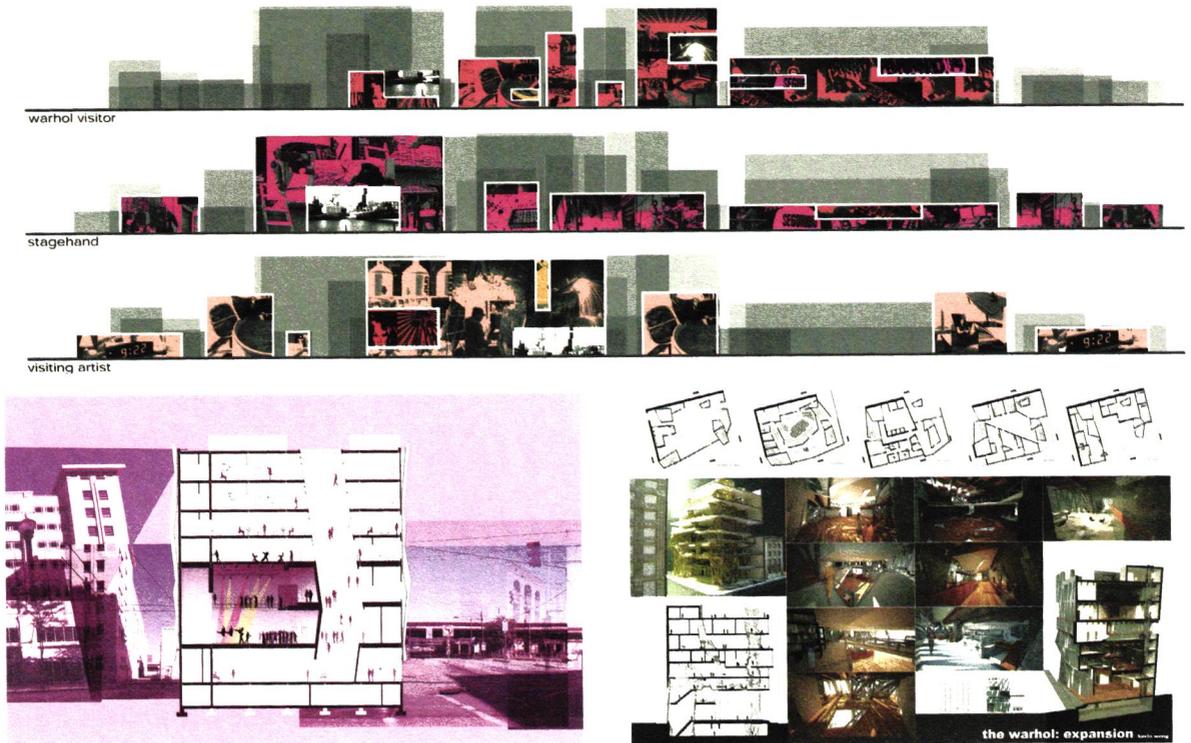


The notion of architect as soloist needs to be replaced by the architect as conductor.

VIVIAN LOFTNESS, FAIA



ABOVE: Students collaborate on the 2007 Solar Decathlon house



Proposals for the expansion of The Warhol, from fourth year Occupancy Studio

CMU's School of Architecture defines the fourth year fall semester as "Occupancy Studio," dedicating the semester to the study of the relationship between occupant and architecture. In some cases, this includes active participation with an actual client. Last fall, Mick McNutt, AIA, a member of the adjunct faculty and professional architect with EDGE studio, gave the students of his fourth year studio the opportunity to work directly with the director, curators, and managers of The Warhol on the proposed expansion of the museum.

McNutt emphasizes this type of ongoing active response as fundamental to the students' experience. "The demands of clients is somehow greater because they are actually going to pay for and inhabit the building one designs. This level of 'reality' forces the student to respond to the needs of an actual person who will occupy the constructed space rather than to the desires of a critic who analyzes and questions the design and its processes."

Responsibility takes on another layer of meaning when coupled with the reality of constructability. The Design Build program at Carnegie Mellon University, orchestrated by the

School of Architecture's T. David Fitz-Gibbon Associate Professor John Folan, AIA, combines analysis, design, and construction into a single project that grows beyond the limitations of a purely academic existence. Students work alongside a chosen community of Pittsburgh, studying the neighborhood intensively before they begin the design process, and eventually go on to the physical realization of building this design.

In the 2008-2009 academic year, students immersed themselves into the project of designing the Hamnett Homestead Sustainability Living Center, preparing documents to represent their ideas to the community, documents for approval by structural engineers, and legal documents. Construction began last summer, with students turning their ten months of preparation into a structure that hopes to give something back to the community from which it arose.

Fifth year architecture student Nelly Dacic sees this sort of follow-through as fundamental real-world experience, recognizing the extraordinary amount of ownership over the final product as incomparable to presenting a collection of drawings and models to a jury and pro-

fessors. “School projects rarely go much further than ‘design development,’ and although most of us had had internships in which we had participated in making construction documents, being the ones solely responsible for the entire process simply does not compare.”

This year’s group of students has started proposals of their own Design Build project, for the community of Homewood-Brushton. When asked about how constraints of constructability might modify the conceptual design process fourth year architecture student Kaitlin Micunas responded that “constraints for constructability are a source for innovation – there are many parameters to take into account from finances to feasibility to time restraint to community impact to code restrictions and more.”

The relationship between thinking and making is one critically engaged at Carnegie Mellon throughout the five years of the school’s B.Arch. program. Materials and Assembly, a second year course taught by assistant professor Dale Clifford, specifically spotlights the mind-to-hand and hand-to-mind communication. Students are encouraged to explore and experiment through model-making, combining this tactile experience with their rational understanding of structure to produce a series of iterations responding to this rigorous process.

Clifford, emphatic about the importance of working models to contribute to the development of a design, explains, “For us, working models are a vehicle to discovery, innovation, and practical application. [...] A working model—differentiated from a ‘presentation’ model—gives us information on how to proceed

with a design prospect. A working model helps us to gain new knowledge about the project from multiple and varied viewpoints; it is literally a creative, pragmatic, and experimental window into the possible contribution of our work.”

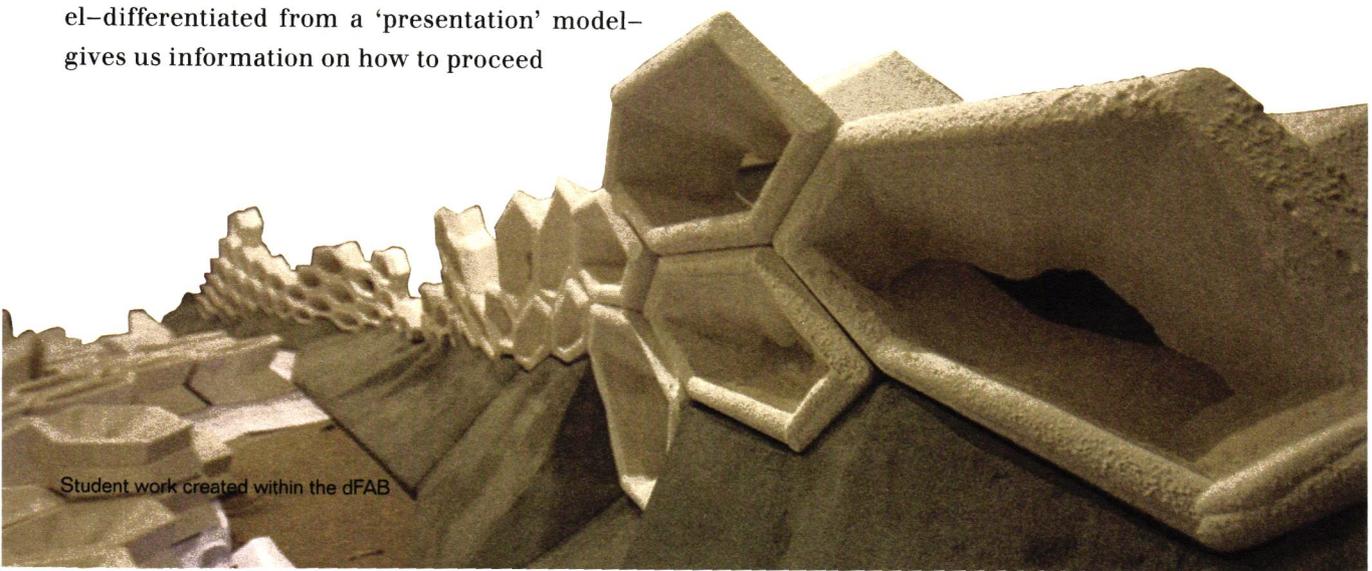
The ‘real world’ us students have heard whispers of throughout our academic lives sometimes seems like a threatening storm cloud of anxiety ready to pour down on us the second we graduate. But gradual introductions to this untested ground have proven sturdy enough to carry our heavy academic baggage while establishing a new comfort zone in this place you call ‘reality.’

ARCHITECTURE AND TECHNOLOGY: WE HAVE ROBOTS – ARE WE AS COOL AS GREG LYNN?

BY MATTHEW HUBER

We live in a world where five-year-olds navigate YouTube with the same mundane ease that their parents assume while perusing the morning paper. New software, sustainable gadgetry, and automated manufacturing daily appear with the revolutionary vigor of the latest iPhone app. The relationship between technological fascination and respect for tradition is becoming ever more important. The School of Architecture at Carnegie Mellon University is exploring how the analog and the digital, the real and the virtual, can grow together.

For Carnegie Mellon, however, this brand of forward thinking is nothing new. Littering its



Student work created within the dFAB



As students quickly learn, materials and processes present resistance and limitations and as a result inform design. This is not a linear process but rather a continuous feedback loop. JEREMY FICCA, AIA

archives are as many photos of students working lathes as drafting details or hitting the books. Founded in 1900 as the Carnegie Technical Schools, the institution owes its origins to training the sons and daughters of mill workers through a hands-on approach to the latest technologies. The recent trend of bolstering novel digital processes with physical corollaries is just the latest manifestation of the school's legacy.

The most obvious and perhaps compelling advancement on this front is buried five floors below the first-year studios in Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall. The recently established Digital Fabrication Lab or dFAB is a menagerie fit for a technophile's dreams. The facility grants access for students to a range of equipment, including two 3-D printers, a laser cutter, a vacuum former, a CNC milling machine, an additive robot, and a massive, versatile, 7 axis industrial robot rigged for milling or other operations.

The host of a recent symposium entitled Robotic Tectonics, Jeremy Ficca, AIA, assistant professor and director of the lab, invited leading innovators from similar institutions to discuss and demonstrate the possibilities of robotic fabrication in architecture. As the title of the symposium and much of the work presented indicate, Ficca believes that dFAB tools are reintroducing materiality and tectonics to the discourse of architecture.

He sees the seamless integration of the lab into studio coursework as a crucial strength of Carnegie Mellon's curriculum. Not only does the lab offer a direct bridge between digital modeling and the real world, but experience there also provides students with crucial insight into the reality of otherwise abstract drawings and images on screens. Ficca explains, "as students quickly learn, materials and processes present resistance and limitations and as a result inform design. This is not a linear process, but rather a continuous feedback loop."

The dialogue begins as early as students' first semester. As part of the required curriculum, Lucian and Rita Caste Professor of Archi-



TOP: Digital Fabrication Lab facilities, BOTTOM: Recent student work from the dFAB

ecture and Urban Design, assistant professor Pablo Garcia teaches the course Introduction to Digital Media I (IDM). Students are taught to investigate the relationship between digital and analog methods of representation.

In addition to researching advanced digital procedures, Garcia is using funding from the *Ferguson-Jacobs Prize* to rebuild analog drawing machines from the 16th to 19th centuries. He explains the importance of maintaining a hybrid position between the digital and the analog: “The absolute state is not relevant; the suppleness and flexibility of the user to navigate both sides, to be multilingual and multi-dextrous, is paramount in the 21st century.”

Offered in the same semester as IDM, professor Ramesh Krishnamurti – who is known for research in computational design - instructs students in Descriptive Geometry. Invented in 1765 by Gaspard Monge, the practice marries mathematics and drawing to describe complex three-dimensional geometry in two dimensions. Armed with nothing but drafting tools and calculators, students are rigorously prepared for the complexities of computer modeling programs, such as Rhino and 3ds Max.

In advanced courses, Krishnamurti teaches students to discover shape grammars in various architectural typologies, from Palladian villas to the ornamentation of Frank Lloyd Wright, to the

configuration of traditional Taiwanese houses. These explorations predate computer-generated grammars, but inform the algorithmic and parametric design courses that implement advanced software and basic scripting. In addition to pure form, Krishnamurti is also introducing the analysis and generation of sustainably performative architecture through BIM.

The work of architecture’s latest digital prodigies – Greg Lynn, MOS, and Lars Spuybroek included – obviously involves the latest technologies: seven axis robots, CNC mills, BIM, scripting, or parametrics. But a historical and theoretical grounding in the architectural traditions these technologies advance make the work significant.

At Carnegie Mellon, students are prepared not simply to operate advanced computer-controlled equipment, photoshop like a Hollywood professional, and model irregular geometry; they learn to understand the complexities underlying these tools and to translate abstraction to reality. As Garcia summarizes, “the technology is always there, and the collaborative demands force a great leader, a conceptual thinker, and an adept manager to corral all the methods and talent around them. So let’s make architecture school a laboratory, a place of experimentation, a place where ideas are tested and making takes precedence.” 



What has the AIA done for me lately?



With the dedicated support of members, the AIA has continued to advance the value of architects and architecture, especially during these tough times. **What has the AIA done for you lately?** Here is an overview of recent activity at the national, state, and local levels.

Providing Resources for Navigating the Economy

NATIONAL: The AIA is providing current information about practice in this difficult economy through a series of Web seminars. Without leaving their offices, members can communicate quickly and economically with experts in industry-related fields to get answers to questions specific to their practice. Members can view presentations such as “Projecting Finance for Architecture: What Is the Real Outlook?” and other programs within AIA’s Navigating the Economy on the AIA website. It’s free as a member benefit.

STATE: AIA Pennsylvania successfully advocated for the establishment of the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) Advisory Council to review proposed changes to the UCC in Pennsylvania, in order to protect the statewide building code we all worked so hard to put in place. To protect the integrity of the architect’s seal, we continue to file unauthorized practice of architecture complaints with the State Architects Licensure Board. To facilitate the licensure process, AIA Pennsylvania successfully advocated for the ability to take the ARE concurrent with IDP.

LOCAL: The Unemployed Architects Group, meeting biweekly at the AIA Pittsburgh office, hosts a number of educational seminars with guests covering topics ranging from starting your own firm to alternative architectural practices and understanding unemployment benefits. Any and all local architects who find themselves without a job are encouraged to attend.

Leading Efforts in Sustainability

NATIONAL: The AIA Committee on the Environment (COTE) and its Top Ten Green Projects awards program recognize the benefits of sustainable design and acknowledge architects as leaders in the creation of environmentally responsible design solutions. Now in its 14th year, the program is one of the best-known sustainable design recognition programs in the nation, with winning projects recognized in the national press and at the AIA National Convention.

STATE: A high priority in AIA Pennsylvania’s legislative agenda has been advocating for sustainability incentives and policies. A recent success was the advocacy for a \$650 million dollar renewable energy loans and grants program. The chapter also wrote and had introduced legislation to establish a tax incentive program for private sector green projects in Pennsylvania and green standards for state funded buildings.

In the summer and fall of 2009, we conducted the “Opportunities in an Energy Based Economy” seminar for members across the state. The purpose of the seminar was to teach members about:

- New project funding and incentives for energy focused activities that are available through the state to help get projects built
- Opportunities for members to diversify their practice
- Learning ways to help firms stay relevant in an energy based economy

LOCAL: Last year alone, AIA Pittsburgh offered the possibility to earn up to 8.5 Sustainable Design Approved HSW Learning Units, covering topics such as “sustainable and energy efficient building envelope design” and “sustainable architecture and the changing economy”. The chapter continually strives to offer as many continuing education opportunities as possible. Look for more opportunities coming soon at Build Pittsburgh 2010.

Creating Public Awareness

NATIONAL: “Tell Me Your Story” is a 2010 initiative that seeks to elevate an understanding of the resource that is America’s architects. Designed to be low-cost, high touch, the program (modeled loosely on NPR’s StoryCorp series) seeks to engage the public throughout the year in lively conversations about the transformational power of design.

STATE: The AIA Pennsylvania Architectural Excellence Awards program serves to educate the Pennsylvania legislature and the public on the broad range of architects skills and services, as well as to encourage and recognize work that is not limited to the traditional practice of building design. This program also encourages the demonstration of exceptional professional skill within the entire scope of the design continuum, recognizing and publicizing it with awards. Being a part of the annual Architects Day events, all entries are exhibited throughout the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg – a fitting backdrop for legislative discussion.

LOCAL: Design Pittsburgh is an opportunity to celebrate architecture and design and honor those who create it. It is also an opportunity to promote to a broad audience the importance of the professional practice of architecture, as its members help create healthy, sustainable communities – better places to live, work, and play. In 2009 we had a record number of attendees – over 450 people visited the exhibit and attended our event. With the Pittsburgh Magazine® media partnership, our print and web ads reached a total of 341,275 readers, and more than 28,000 individuals visited the Design Pittsburgh and the People’s Choice Award voting site. WDUQ on-air promotions of Design Pittsburgh reached an average of 179,700 listeners weekly, and 865 website visitors and newsletter subscribers received information about Design Pittsburgh. Through increased public relations efforts, thousands of individuals were exposed to architecture in our region.

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Develop educational programming, giving you the opportunity to influence what you would like to learn.

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Contact AIA Pittsburgh at 412-471-9548 or info@aiaphg.org to sign up for a committee. For a complete list of committee descriptions and more info on AIA Pittsburgh, visit www.aiaphg.org

BREAKING

FROM THE FIRMS

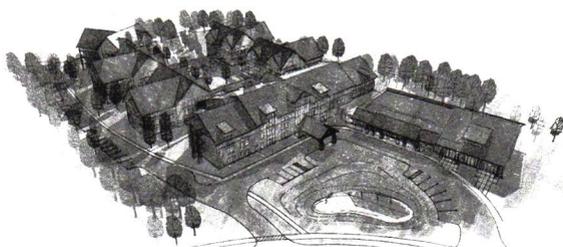
Perkins Eastman, in collaboration with Tokyo-based Asai Architectural Research, is finalizing the design of Sun City Kawasaki, a new 329-resident independent living facility. The approximately 6.68 acre property offered a host of challenges, including an irregularly-shaped and multi-level site, strict height and shadowing setback limitations, a pro forma that dictated a very high unit density, and a goal of integrating into the 2- and 3-story residential neighborhood as harmoniously as possible. Groundbreaking is anticipated by April 2011. Additionally, construction is underway and scheduled for completion late summer 2010 on the new Cumberland Village independent living facility designed by Perkins Eastman. Located on the UPMC Passavant Campus in Pittsburgh's North Hills, this new 99-unit residence for older adults offers a choice of apartments and villas surrounding a green-roofed plaza, restaurant-style dining, wellness center, clinic, and meeting facility with a 250-seat auditorium for resident and hospital use.

Construction has started at St. Clair Hospital on an addition that will create three new operating rooms. The new ORs, mechanical support space, and the alterations to the existing surgical suite that will integrate the new facilities were designed by **VEBH Architects**.

WTW Architects has teamed with Grimm + Parker Architects of McLean, Virginia in the design of George Mason University's renovations and



Sun City Kawasaki



Cumberland Village

additions to Student Union Buildings One and Two. As part of its focus on student life, George Mason University hopes to create a Regional Electronic Gaming Center as part of its expansion of the Student Union Buildings (SUB I and II) at its Fairfax, VA campus. The Gaming Center is just one element of the \$32 million project. Construction for SUB I should be completed by the end of 2010, while construction on SUB II is likely to begin in 2010 with completion expected in early 2011.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Jen Bee, AIA announces the launch of **Jen Bee Design LLC**, an architecture firm dedicated to the revitalization of our local communities. Recent efforts include consultations and design work for various small business owners in Irwin, PA in conjunction with their

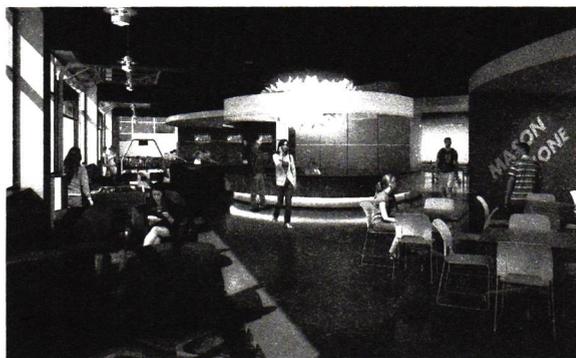


Bee

bers, **George Halkias, AIA** and transfer **Tim Cowan, AIA**. A Pennsylvania State University graduate, Halkias has nearly 20 years of experience and offers depth of knowledge in design for federal projects. As an architectural group leader, he will work with his new team to build upon the office's design portfolio for commercial and government clients. Cowan, a senior associate, recently transferred from the firm's Butler location. Since joining Burt Hill over 20 years ago, he has become one of the organization's top leaders in healthcare planning and design. In his new role, Tim will continue to strengthen relationships with existing clients including UPMC, Evangelical

Main Street program, and collaboration with Economic Development South and Anne Swager, Hon. AIA in submitting a proposal to the AIA SDAT program for the Route 51 Corridor.

Burt Hill's Pittsburgh office has hired two new mem-



George Mason University Gaming Center

GROUND

Community Hospital, and Wheeling Hospital.



Halkias

Judy Coutts, AIA, Architect, has become certified as a Woman Business Enterprise by the Pennsylvania Department of General Services. Judy Coutts, AIA, was formed in 1995 to serve clients who need help solving problems related to the built environment, and managing the design and construction process. Hers is the first woman-owned architecture firm in Blair County.

GAI Consultants, Inc. has completed its merger with Bonar Group, a Fort Wayne, Indiana-based consulting and engineering firm. Bonar Group provides engineering, surveying, and planning services for municipal and commercial clients and has a staff of more than 60 located in five offices throughout the Midwest. GAI's latest expansion caps a year of growth in 2009. Last year, GAI opened

new offices in Murrysville, PA; Mount Laurel, NJ; Tampa, FL; Boca Raton, FL; Richmond, VA; and Charlotte, NC.

The Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania, Inc. (MBA) announced the election of Thomas A. Landau of Landau Building Company as President of the Association. Along with Mr. Landau, the MBA also elected the following members to serve as Executive Officers: Vice President - Steven M. Massaro, Massaro Corporation; Treasurer - M. Dean Mosites, Mosites Construction Company; Executive Director - Jack W. Ramage.

VEBH Architects staff member Jacklyn Dunn has become a licensed architect. Dunn has been a member of VEBH for more than seven years, providing design and support for the firm's work in education, healthcare, and with other public building types. She holds a Bachelor of Design in Architecture degree from the Pennsylvania State University.

After 35 years, **Glen Schultz, AIA**, a principal and vice president of planning for WTW Architects, has re-

tired. A graduate of Kent State University, Schultz joined **WTW Architects** in 1976 and became the firm's director of planning in 1986. He has earned numerous awards for institutional, corporate, and educational master planning, as well as having authored dozens of articles on the planning process for national publications. He is also currently a member of AIA Pittsburgh's Board of Directors.



Schultz

KUDOS

The Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architects has voted to award the 2010 AIA Gold Medal to **Peter Bohlin, FAIA**. Bohlin, founder of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, is renowned for his versatile, contextual use of materials. The AIA Gold Medal is considered to be the profession's highest honor that an individual can receive.



Bohlin

Alexandria City Public Schools received first place in the "Student Population 10,001 and Up" category of the 2009 VSBA Green Schools Challenge sponsored by the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA). **Hayes Large Architects** recently assisted Alexandria City Public Schools in transforming its T.C. Williams High School Minnie Howard Campus into a working Green School Laboratory to test sustainable building features and emerging green technologies prior to implementing them across the school system. The Green School Laboratory project demonstrates the school system's deep commitment to going green and was one of the factors in their receiving first place for their division. **Randy Hudson, AIA** of Hayes Large's State College office is overseeing the project.

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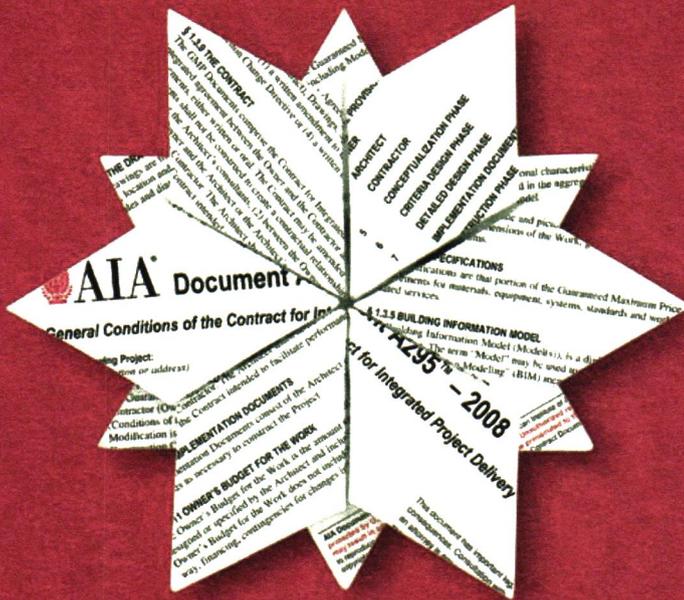


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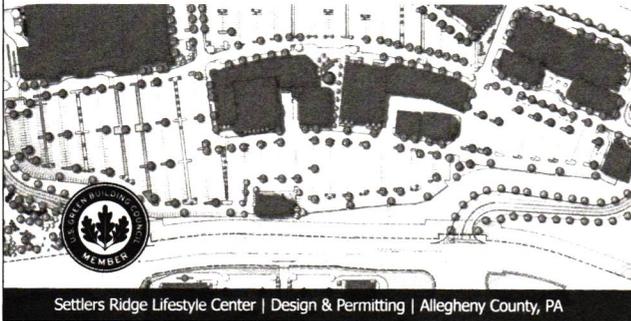


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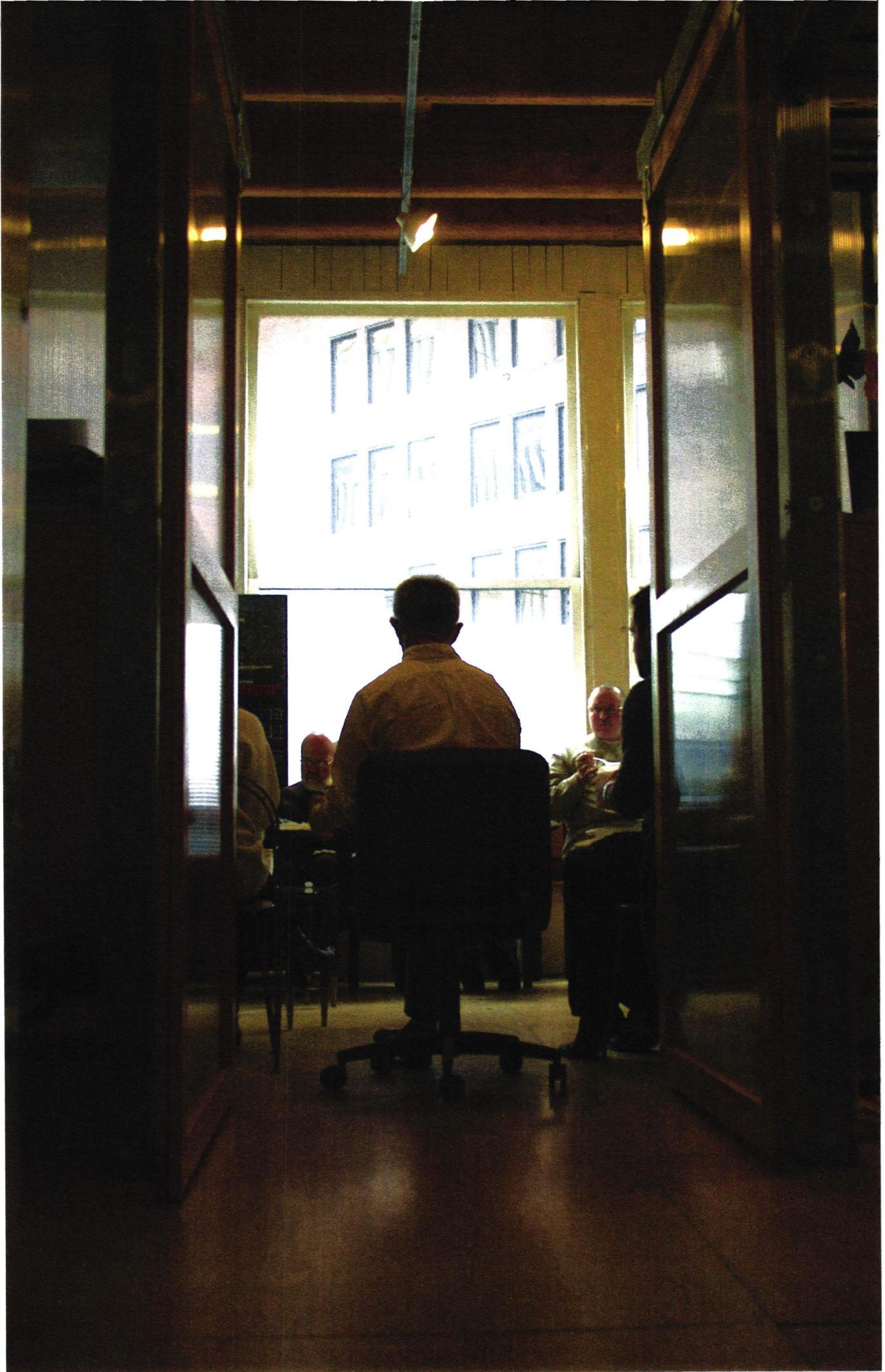
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one on one with a few well-established architects in the area to talk about their own experiences in running an architecture firm. “From these meetings I have gained valuable insight,” Bee says. “I have also realized that there is such a strong current of support running through the architecture community of Pittsburgh.”

Many like her have toyed with the idea of starting their own firm, but for right now, they are working on small, independent projects as a means to continue plying their trade. Paul Levine has been consulting for other firms while developing clients and projects. He has also renovated his own kitchen, doing all of the design and construction himself. Levine entered the remodel in the Renovation Inspiration Contest, held annually by the Post-Gazette and the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh, and was named Small Project Runner-Up.

Mike Clark has also managed to continue working since being laid off last March, on a



Being laid off catapulted me out of a comfort zone and forced me to re-examine...everything. JEN BEE, AIA





I have met hundreds of good people whose paths I have crossed only because I had time and made the opportunities. What I have been able to learn from and about this diverse group is priceless. The networking and marketing skills learned are immeasurable. TOM DONOGHUE, AIA

number of side projects that have “serendipitously found me”. Additionally, he has volunteered his time with CDCP’s RenPlan as well as “helping many neighbors with small and large design issues.” Clark is still weighing whether or not to take the leap and strike out on his own. “I seem to keep getting work,” he says, “but whether it’s enough to keep me fully employed is the question I keep asking myself.”

For Timothy Nanzer, “the hardest part of being laid off is not really being at a point in my career where I feel I can really progress outside of a firm environment.” Although he has been working in the field since finishing school almost 10 years ago, he had yet to become a registered architect. Since being laid off last May, though, he was able to finish the last few exams and is now registered.

“If I had another five years experience I could probably form my own firm and make a go of it,” Nanzer thinks. “As it stands, I know a lot of the nuts and bolts of putting a set of drawings together, but have almost no experience getting clients, negotiating contracts, or doing space planning.” Which hasn’t stopped him from trying to learn those things, but he recognizes that that education is happening in a vacuum.

LIFE-LONG STUDENTS

Tom Donoghue, AIA muses that since being laid off “for a while I was actually too busy.” Having just passed the one-year mark, Donoghue has filled the past 365 days with his love of learning. The list of programs and seminars he has taken is as long as his arm, covering topics as broad as technical training to investing. Having spent “more than two decades as an architect’s client, planning and managing projects for a multi-national corporation.... CAD really passed me up,” Donoghue explains, but he has rectified that with Autodesk’s Revit Essentials training, which was offered by CAD Research free of charge to recently laid off architects. But that is just a drop in the bucket.

“After all of these years as a project manager, I am now formalizing that knowledge through a



Paul Levine, AIA renovated his own kitchen.



seven seminar course at the University of Pittsburgh's Katz School of Business in preparation for the PMP (Project Management Professional) certification exam."

Additionally, he has pursued online training with the International Code Council, becoming certified by the ICC as a Building & Accessibility Plans Examiner and as a Commercial Building Inspector. "I expect to receive the same certification from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania any day now."

He is also involved with a number of business networking groups, which have helped expand his marketing skills and business education, as well as a yearlong investment training program. "If I didn't have to get back to work," he confesses, "I would never leave school."

Donoghue is not the only one taking advantage of this time away from an office. A number have studied and taken the exam to become LEED Accredited Professionals. Others are able to go to conferences they may not have found the time for in the past. Many are volunteering, finding the time to help others using the tools they have developed throughout their career at community-based nonprofits such as the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

SILVER LININGS

No one *wants* to be laid off. No one is hoping to be handed the pink slip. But the numbers keep

growing, and more and more, members of the Unemployed Architects Group are finding joy in their fate.

"Since I have been laid off, I feel like things have opened up to me in so many ways," explains Bee. "If you were to ask me eight months ago if I'd ever want to start my own firm, I'd say 'no way' because I would spend less time doing the design and project management work that I love. Now I can't imagine *not* being responsible for all aspects of the business."

Others commented on the large life lessons learned; many have been reminded that life is unsure, that nothing is as secure as it seems. Life is fragile and ever-changing. "Time is now on my side to take care of the little things you never seem to have time for," Levine remarks. "Becoming the primary care giver to my daughter has been wonderful."

In talking with members of the Group, the tone is positive and the perspective is well earned. "Comfort zones can be dangerous, they are not very conducive to personal or professional growth," says Bee. This bunch of 50 has learned how to not only exist but thrive outside of their comfort zones, taking on new challenges and pushing themselves in new directions. "Sure, I wake up with an undefined panic once in a while, but I am happy to trade in a sense of security for a sense of adventure," Bee expounds. "I learned that things are never as secure as we think they are, so why not just enjoy the ride?" **C**



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