

# C O L U M N S

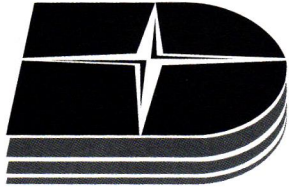


**TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING  
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**RECLAIMING OUR  
CULTURAL GEMS**

**LESSONS LEARNED:  
Communities Facing  
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# Happy New Possibilities by Tracy Certo



*New Year's Day has always spoken to me of possibilities: The wonderful things that could lie ahead if only we make them happen.*

## The best thing about a new year is

all the possibilities that lie ahead. Although the ringing out of the old on New Year's Eve is too melancholy for my tastes, the ringing in of the new is ripe with new challenges and new directions. It's a fresh calendar to post with 365 new days stretched out like blank canvases before you. New Year's Day has always spoken to me of possibilities: The wonderful things that lie ahead if only we make them happen.

Since taking over as editor, I've been hearing a lot regarding this theme—from the Riverfront Task Force in the November issue to the Pittsburgh Children's Museum and the National Aviary in this one.

It's not often I go to the Children's Museum without children (never before, in fact) but I greatly enjoyed my recent visit. It coincided with the final installation of the 26-foot high poodle sphinx. When I went to interview Chris Siefert for the article on Reclaiming our Cultural Heritage, (p.6), the museum was closed. The staff had just crowned the huge, imposing and totally fun fantasy figure and I let out a gasp when I rounded the corner and saw it. Imagine the kids' reactions.

On the second floor of the museum—where the poodle's shocking pink hair is at eye level, quite a sight—Chris showed me all six designs submitted by various architectural firms for the expansion of the Children's Museum. From the blob (“We would meet so many people who would come just to see this building,” he offered) to the winning nightlight design, “It's six different ideas of what architecture should be doing in 2000,” says Chris. Think of the possibilities.

Later that same day, I communed with the hyacinth macaw during my visit at the National Aviary. A day doesn't get much better than this. This gorgeous Brazilian native, it's black eyes rimmed in brilliant yellow met me with a penetrating gaze. He was showing off, clacking his black tongue at me, then hanging from his beak from the top of the cage as if to say, Is this cool or what?

Very cool. Just like the the National Aviary which is perched (sorry, bird puns) on the brink of big change. Some of the possibilities? Moving to the North Shore. Training eagles to fly down from Mt. Washington right into a new bird theater. Releasing a large flock of doves each day from the point. Ever see a flock of doves released? Dayton Baker asked me. It's a beautiful sight. They flock and fly one way and then another before heading back to their destination. Once, at a Rose Parade the float right in front of us released dozens of white doves. It was magical and the crowd loved it.

With or without such theater, the Pittsburgh Children's Museum and the National Aviary are two crowning achievements in our city and yet, it seems neither are given their due. Each draws over 100,000 a year to an area of town that's less and less a magnet. (The Hazlett is gone. What's left to attract?)

One, the children's museum is a stimulating and educational experience for our greatest resource, namely children. The other, the aviary, is a place of conservation for our other greatest resource, namely nature.

After listening to Chris and Dayton within hours of each other, I drove home from the North Side, charged. As Dayton said, and you hear this more and more lately, “Pittsburgh is a very exciting place to be right now.” Pink poodle sphinxes and blue hyacinth macaws and all.

While you're filling in your new 2001 calendar, save a date for the Children's Museum and the Aviary. Take your kids or borrow someone's. The memories you create will continue to inspire for a long time to come.

Wishing you all the best year ever, filled with enriching possibilities.

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**On the cover:** Interior, Allegheny County Courthouse. Copyright Clyde Hare.



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## Dickie's House

by Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA

### As a teenager, I had a couple of dates

with a young man named Dickie Geier. My parents were impressed because not only was Dickie's father the President of Cincinnati Millacron, and because he was a talented man, but also because his family founded the company. Dickie was a nice boy, reasonably attractive and very polite. I remember him as being extremely considerate and kind. He was so nice he was almost a nerd, but then he drove a really cool sporty little car, a one of its kind in the city. The relationship never went anywhere. While I liked him a lot, I thought he was boring, perhaps even dull. Dickie wasn't quick on his feet and for me at that age a witty repartee went a long way.



*Nothing can replace for me the actual experience of seeing a great building or a great place but often it is the photograph I see initially that gets me to the place.*

I cannot remember what Dickie looked like but I do remember his house. He lived underground. As you approached the house on a long driveway you saw nothing but rolling hills and some black stacks stuck in some earthen mounds. I remember not realizing I was at a house until we were walking through the front door. What completely wowed me was how open the back of the house was. It was mostly glass and opened up onto a lake. I doubt that he told me who designed it but frankly, it wouldn't have made any difference. I knew nothing about architects or architecture at the time.

I have never forgotten the house. It was one of those experiences when you know you are in a splendid and special place. Unlike anything I had ever seen, I was fascinated with why it was underground and how it must feel to live underground. The transformation from the front of the house, which was completely nondescript to the glass back of the house, which curled around a portion of the lake, was simply awesome. The protection of the earth over the house kept it cool in the summer and, conversely, warm in the winter (a novel approach back in those inexpensive energy days). I thought it all rather extraordinary and I bored my friends for weeks with "Geier House" stories. Dickie never asked me out again after that day. I suspect I was

way too interested in his house instead of him as he might have hoped. Then again, maybe he found me boring as well.

While in Borders this past week I couldn't resist picking up a copy of Metropolis. Last night I sat down to savor my new magazine and lo and behold, right in the middle of an article on Philip Johnson, there was a picture of the Geier House. Amazingly, I recognized the lake and the stacks on the house even before I read the caption affirming that it was the Geier House. Though I don't remember the exact spot which was photographed, the picture hints at the transition from underground to open and makes you want to see more. I wish I could see the house now through my more educated eyes but then I doubt Dickie would invite me especially since I have now called him boring in this article.

I read with avid interest the article on architectural photography in this issue of Columns. I am grateful to all the photographers who shared some of their secrets and generously gave of their time to help educate us. Further, I have to agree with the advice given *that a good project deserves a good photograph*. Nothing can replace for me the actual experience of seeing a great building or a great place but often it is the photograph I see initially that gets me to the place.

In January, I will begin working with a small contingent of AIA Pittsburgh Board members and a graphic designer to develop a new look for Columns. After 10 plus years of a similar look, we have decided that we need a new face. While I think our content is strong, our look is tired. All of us look forward to a reinvigorated magazine that portrays your work as best we can within our budgetary constraints. Your input into the process is welcome and indeed, you can expect a small number of questionnaires designed to give us guidance.

Mostly though, we need your good quality photographs of the wonderful work you do. I know we can count on you to help us step up to a higher standard.





## NEW COLUMN FOR COLUMNS

We're getting ready to launch the new column that features a unique perspective on architectural issues—namely, yours. David Vater, AIA is the winner of the contest to name the column. His winning entry? **In Perspective**. His prize, whatever that is, will be announced...well, eventually. We hope to have many submissions by then. Think about it: 750 words, any issue of your choice. Call ahead to discuss if you'd like: 563-7173.

### Architecture Tour to Columbus, Indiana

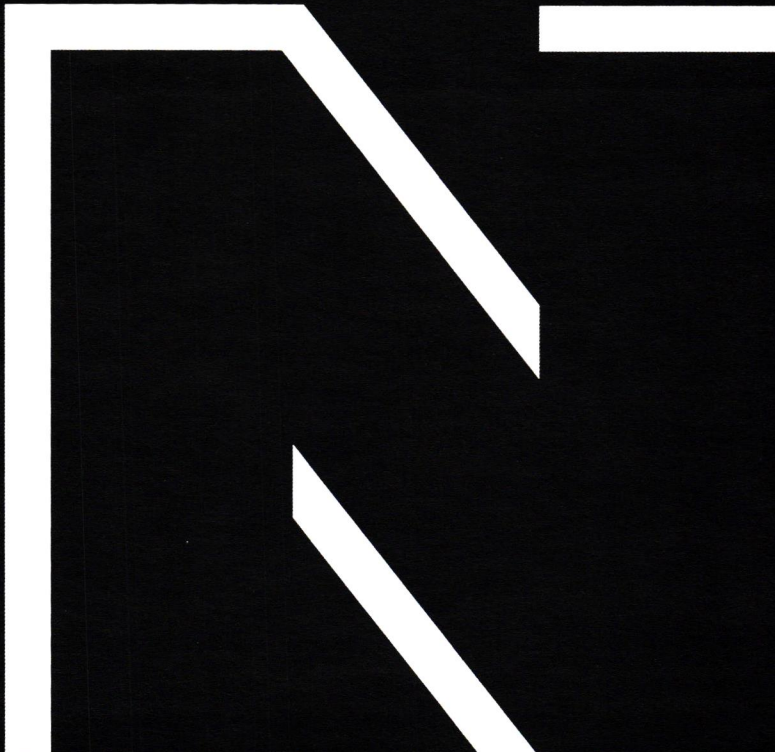
The AIA Pittsburgh Foundation for Architecture is sponsoring a spring tour to Columbus, Indiana. Columbus is a city of renowned architectural character, featuring the work of architects Cesar Pelli, Richard Meier, SOM, I.M. Pei, Gunnar Birkets, Robert Stern, Robert Venturi, Deborah Berke, Eero Saarinen and William Rawn. These projects were built with the support of the Cummins Foundation Building Program, a unique program designed to promote high-quality and innovative architecture.

The road trip, which is tentatively scheduled for early May, might also include a stop in Columbus, Ohio, to tour Peter Eisenman's Wexner Center for the Arts. Complete details will be published in the next Columns.

### Addition

In the September issue of Columns, the story Remaking the City featured the MonConn Bridge. The project firm for the MonCon Bridge project was Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc., an international planning and design firm with a Pittsburgh office.

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# Reclaiming Our Cultural Gems

*The Pittsburgh Children's Museum, Allegheny Commons and the National Aviary*

## The Pittsburgh Children's Museum

While the focus on the North Side has been on the new stadiums, other big changes are under way in the area: the expansion of the Pittsburgh Children's Museum, the imaginative plans for the National Aviary and the master plan to restore the once grand Victorian park known as Allegheny Commons.

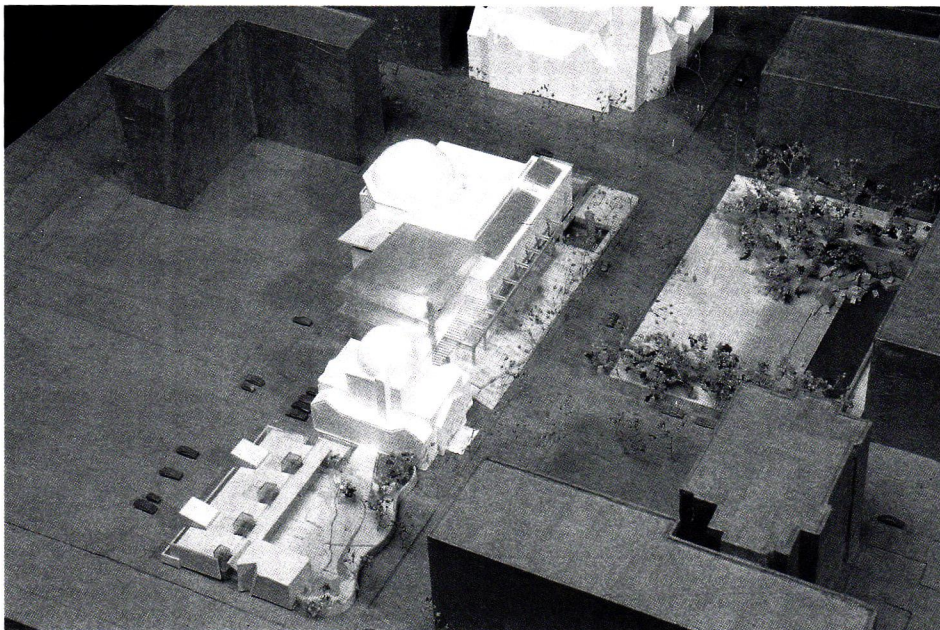
The winning design for the Pittsburgh Children's Center could help tie it all together. The folded glass cube design "created an east west organizational system that extends throughout the entire site, linking to the library and theater building to ours," says Chris Siefert, exhibits director. "I believe that axis can continue down to west commons into the aviary. I think that was one of the strongest organizational factors."

One reason the design won is because it fully met the criteria established by the museum. And the criteria was the

result of a community design charrette organized last year by Museum executive director Jane Werner. "It was one of the most worthwhile things I've ever done in my career," she says.

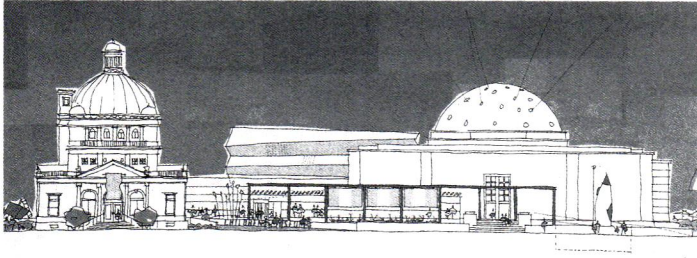
A wealth of ideas emerged through drawings and discourse regarding the use of the buildings, including the Buhl Planetarium and the land surrounding the Children's Museum.

"The charrette framed an understanding for us," says Siefert. "We came away from the event with a visual model of what we could be. The winning design best represents an extension of the charrette to the program we offered. All of the charrette materials were forwarded to the participants and it is obvious from all the entries that the teams read them and took them very seriously." (Werner was so pleased with the results that she's organized another charrette this month for ideas on exhibits.)



**View of massing model looking east/north. A large volume reminiscent of a lamp by the artist Isamu Noguchi links the existing Children's Museum and Buhl Planetarium. The beacon is a symbol for children's advocacy and care.**





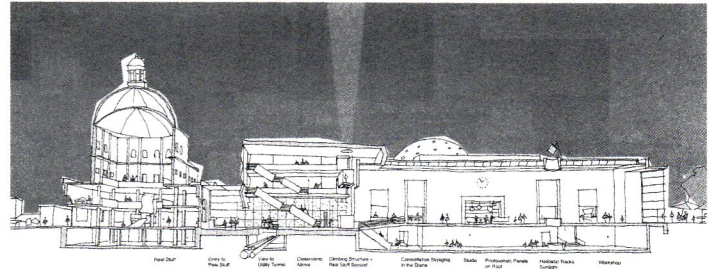
**Elevation drawing showing the addition linking the two historic buildings and establishing a new front door. There are awnings, flowers, and a lawn for lounging out front.**

If all goes as planned, the redesigned Pittsburgh Children's Center will not only provide a much-needed focus for the North Side but it will serve as a destination point for Pittsburghers and tourists, says Siefert, who is on the committee for the West Park restoration. He speaks for many when he says the North Side has the potential to be something really special but it lacks a center.

The public square across from Buhl Planetarium, which was the focal point years ago, is still referred to as Ober Park by some today. The square was redesigned in 1964 as part of the Urban Redevelopment Authority project to rebuild the North Side's central business district. (An interesting sidenote: The winner of the international competition, William Breger of the Pratt Institute, was the only one of 305 entries "of high enough quality to receive an award," the jurors commented.) At that time, the public market building was razed to make way for Allegheny Center Mall.

After saving the Post Office building from the same fate, the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation moved into the building. The organization resided there until 1991 when it gave the building to the Children's Museum. A few years earlier, the Children's Museum received a gift of thousands of puppets from Pittsburgh Puppeteer Margo Lovelace. That made the collection one of the largest in the country.

From its humble beginnings in the basement when the Junior League started the museum in the late 70s, the Children's Museum now occupies the entire building. Two years ago it underwent a million dollar renovation. And now, another phase is launched with the expansion plan of the Pittsburgh Children Center.



**East/West section drawing showing the different interior volumes of the buildings and how level changes might work. The proposal is a free spirited environment where children will feel comfortable, respected and creatively engaged.**

### Allegheny Commons

At the same time, a master plan is being planned for Allegheny Commons, the green space that includes West Park. Back in 1788, the land was set aside as "common land". Hence, the name Allegheny Commons or more typically, the Commons. The park that resulted was, according to Barry Hanagan of Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, "an extraordinary design for a new city park—like nothing else in the history of urban design at that time." As the city of Allegheny developed, the Commons defined the community and the institutional core and the resident areas beyond.

In 1867 Mitchell, Grant and Co. was chosen among five design firms to redesign the area. They turned it into "a textbook example of what great Victorian public space could look like," asserts Hanagan. The treatment was formal in some parts, more picturesque in other parts. The design held up well into the 1930's when the great fountains disappeared (a mystery but one theory is that the war effort was the cause) then all the identifying features of the park ultimately vanished, leaving just the footprint.

There is talk about restoring it to its original Victorian condition, from the plants used — they know what they are, they just don't know where they go — to the fountains. A full-scale restoration isn't likely, says Hanagan — but it is likely they will stick with the original design, just as they intend to do in the four major Pittsburgh parks. Today the challenge is to reintroduce the design.

Unlike many city parks which are more passive, Allegheny Commons is "heavily utilized" says Tom Barbush, the committee chair for the Allegheny Commons Steering Committee. Although "we're a couple of years away from know-



ing what we're going to do with it," community vitality issues are at stake — such as making it festive and reworking the lake to restore it to its original (manmade) condition "that looked natural and was useable."

The goal is to "recover the quality of the Commons as a place of beauty," according to Barbush. The group hired Pressley Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts to produce the 10 year master plan and management plan.

### The National Aviary

Meanwhile, over at the colorful National Aviary, executive director Dayton Baker knows what's feathering its nest. The aviary is unique and exceptional, says Baker, one of only two in the country (the other is in Salt Lake City). The challenge? Repackaging it and selling it to the public.

Today, the same product requires a different presentation than it did when it opened in 1952. Then its natural setting may have been 25 years ahead of its time, as Baker suggests. But it hasn't changed since and it needs to, he asserts. Think Sea World and Shamu. Think of the bird amphitheaters performances at Sea World and Disney World or consider how the National Aquarium changed the presentation of marine life. Then think of the 100,000 visitors who flock to the aviary each year and how many more would visit with a better presentation. "It's terribly exciting," he says.

Now that the Regional Asset District (RAD) dollars have stabilized funding (45% of their budget), it's allowing them to dream. And they're dreaming big.

Imagine if you will, an outdoor bird theater perched on the North Shore with bird performances—with the largest eagle in the world swooping in from Mt. Washington. A friend of Baker's, who trains for Disney, visited Pittsburgh recently to help with the concept. "It would be the best bird show in the world," Baker says. "It would be spectacular."

Or imagine the release of a large flock of doves, daily, from the Point. "We could create a tradition in Pittsburgh that would be known worldwide," he suggests.

None of this is rocket science, Baker says, but rather, a matter of repackaging. With its Congress-designated "National" title, the Aviary is rethinking its future and liking



**The snowy owl is one of 600 beautiful birds featured in natural habitats at the National Aviary, a Pittsburgh cultural gem that is undergoing change soon.**

what it sees. One model is the Netherlands'Emmen Zoo that blends zoo life with a natural history museum, emphasizing animal activities. With all the exciting potential plans, it might be easy to overlook the purpose of the aviary which is and always has been conservation. The more people Baker can attract, the easier his mission of conservation will be.

It's too soon to tell which direction the National Aviary is heading. It could be six months before anything is announced, says Baker who is clearly primed for action. They could decide to build new near the Science Center or renovate what they have. ("The park is gorgeous. We love being here," Baker says.) They could grow in \$10 million increments or they could spend \$50 million—or more—all at once. That is a matter for the potential investors waiting in the wings so to speak.

While that is up in the air, one thing is certain. "If we don't build it in Pittsburgh, someone else will," the director, a trained biologist says matter of factly. And then he adds with quiet confidence, "We'll be successful no matter where we are. We're waiting to burst forth."

*"The Pittsburgh Children Center is a great project for Pittsburgh and particularly an important keystone from an urban design standpoint."*



# An Insider's View: Local Architects Compete in National Design Competition

Competing in the NEA-funded national design competition for the expansion of the Children's Museum was a great experience for the local firm Rothschild Architects. "We're delighted that we got involved," says Ken Doyno, AIA, of the firm. Although their submission didn't win, their collaboration with Damianos + Anthony, led by Paul Rosenblatt, AIA, stood shoulder to shoulder with the other five designs. Their design was lauded by jurors and competition advisors for its energy and attention to detail.

"Developing a design in this manner gave us an opportunity to grow and stretch—like architectural calisthenics—which was extremely positive," says Ken. "The design focus had a positive impact on our other projects which was an outcome we hadn't foreseen."

Along with Dan Rothschild, Doyno was present at the museums' press conference on December 5<sup>th</sup>, where the winning entry, Koning Eizenberg Architects' folded glass cube, was announced. That, too, proved to be interesting for the local architects. "It was cathartic to talk to all the people involved in the process and break the silence," says Doyno with a laugh. "And it was fascinating to see how six different firms came up with six different design solutions. We enjoyed looking at each others submissions, we were congratulated on a great design, and we walked away feeling very positive."

As for the final selection? "I feel empathy for the jurors and advisors, sorting through all of the information in such a rigorous manner, and I'm impressed with what they did," says Doyno. The building form is simple, expressive, and actually quite humble in many respects which is in keeping with the Children's Museum vision for intimate spaces that are inviting for kids and parents.

"The Pittsburgh Children Center is a great project for Pittsburgh and particularly important keystone from an urban design standpoint. I'll look forward to going there with our daughter," says Doyno who adds, "We have really enjoyed working on the competition. We love mission-driven projects."

## The History

*The following was given as architectural and historical background to the six architectural firms in competition for the design of Pittsburgh Children's Center. It was written by Charles Rosenblum, a columnist for the Pittsburgh City Paper who teaches architectural history.*

The land now occupied by the Children's Museum, the Buhl Planetarium and the Carnegie Library/Hazlett Theater has a long history of public use and civic pride. When the City of Allegheny was first surveyed and planned as a county seat in 1784 and 1788 under orders from Benjamin Franklin, it was part of a Reserve Tract of 3000 acres to be used as payment for Revolutionary War veterans. The 36-block square grid plan with common land at the center and the periphery is familiar to many New England towns, but the practice also dates to ancient Rome and the Old Testament.

Although Pittsburgh appropriated the role of County Seat, Allegheny prospered as an independent city until 1907. Its many industries included iron, glass, rope, flour, oil, cotton, wool, brass, pottery and leather, among others. The cotton industry attracted the family of young Andrew Carnegie in 1848. By the end of the century, Allegheny's Ridge Avenue reputedly had more millionaires per acre than anywhere on earth.

Andrew Carnegie donated the Library and Concert Hall in 1886 as the first of his 2,500 such gifts nationwide. Pittsburgh, the intended recipient, failed to raise necessary maintenance funds, so the building went to Allegheny. Smithmeyer & Pelz, architects of the Library of Congress, won a nationally publicized competition to do the design. The clock tower marks the location at what was then the center of town, and the Richardsonian Romanesque style acknowledges the stylistic leadership of Henry Hobson Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse across the river, one of America's first internationally regarded buildings. In these decades, the eyes of the nation were on Pittsburgh. President Benjamin Harrison attended the opening in 1889.

What is now the Children's Museum began its life as the Allegheny Post Office in 1897 to the designs of William Aiken, architect of the U. S. Treasury and designer of many prominent federal buildings. This simple letter office proudly adopts a Renaissance dome as part of a nationwide trend to place the United States as the inheritor of and successor to the great civilizations of Europe. This building, which was saved from destruction by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Association, is now a prized landmark on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Buhl Planetarium is one of the North Side's most evocative buildings. It occupies the site of the Allegheny City Hall, which went out of use when Pittsburgh annexed Allegheny. Funding came from the estate of Henry Buhl, the department store magnate whose foundation still plays a prominent role in the civic improvement of Pittsburgh. The Buhl Planetarium, designed by Ingham and Boyd, opened in 1939. Its Art Deco design mixes classical architectural form with allegorical sculpture in a more forward-looking streamlined esthetic. This style is appropriate for the Zeiss projector inside, which can recreate the appearance of the heavens thousands of years into the past or future. For decades in the smoky city of Pittsburgh, the Buhl was a prosthetic sky for a city that rarely had a clear one.

The Urban Renewal of the 1960s, however well intentioned, destroyed hundreds of buildings in the interest of a failed shopping mall and several banal, alienating towers. The three historic buildings in the middle of Allegheny Center are reminders of a proud and vital community that can, through thoughtful planning and stewardship, both memorialize and surpass the area's illustrious history.



# Tips on Photographing Architecture

ADVICE FROM THE PROS



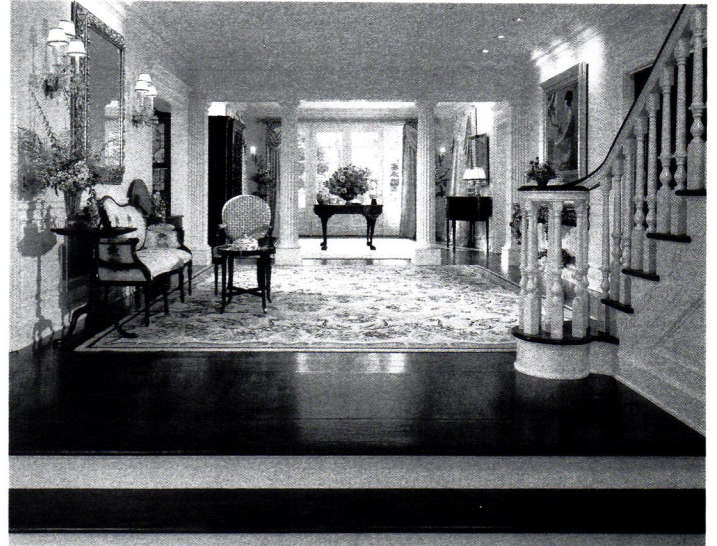
PHOTO COPYRIGHT ED MASSERY

**Waiting for the right light and shooting from the best angle provides a stunning photo of the Gulf Building. Supplemental light was used — strobes were placed across the street and inside the lobby.**

At its best, architectural photography is an artform. The question is: Do you want a decent photo simply to record your project or do you want an extraordinary photo that flatters your design, putting it quite literally in the best possible light?

By discovering and appreciating how professional photographers think and work, you can direct them more effectively as well as evaluate the work they do for you more competently, writes Gerry Kopelow in his book, *How to Photograph Buildings and Interiors*. You will save time, money and frayed nerves. With that in mind, we asked well-respected area photographers to share their tips on photographing architecture.





**INTERIOR FORMAL ENTRY — DARKER AND LIGHTER.** *Balancing light is tricky but the pros can handle it. In the darker photo on the left, Ed Massery used existing light to illustrate the difference between no supplement light and supplement light. In the well-lit shot, Massery used a dozen hidden strobes to achieve the flattering image.*

### The Best Conditions

Photographer Ed Massery suggests that an architect should have a working knowledge of photography so that he will neither expect miracles nor put up with sub-par work from a photographer. Good advice and the first of what we will offer here.

When it comes to getting the best photograph possible, Massery pares it down to three essentials:

- the ideal time to shoot;
- the ambiance of the day and
- the best location to shoot.

For instance, when Massery photographed the Grant St. Building downtown, he requested permission to shoot from a four-story building rooftop along the Blvd. of the Allies. There he set up the shot and waited, patiently, until the sun lit the building just so and the sky was reflected in the windows. Then and only then did he start shooting. The result? A captivating photograph that beautifully portrays the building.

Massery is the first to tell you that a photo shoot can take all day. Watching a photographer work is like watching

grass grow, he says. There's a lot of waiting and tedious and exacting lighting to set up (he's big on hidden strobes) until all the elements come together. Is the time and expense worth it? One look at his photos would convince anyone.

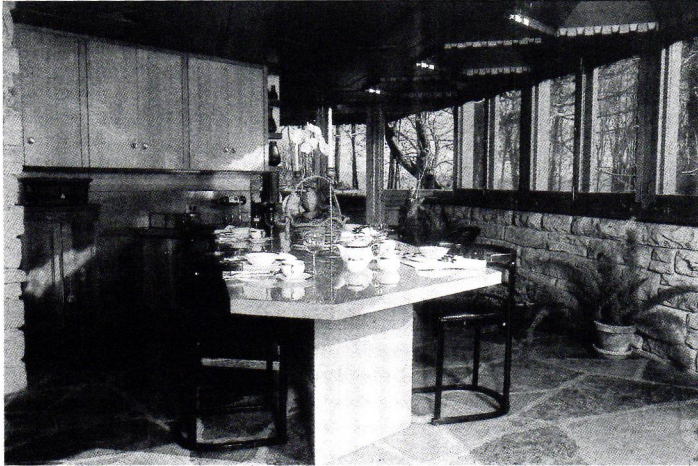
Like most photographers we talked to, Massery says the growing use of digital photography, usually done quickly by a firm member, can be self-defeating. "You do your best work so why shouldn't your photography represent that?" he asks.

He favors transparency film over negative because it offers higher color saturation and sharpness and it lends a three-dimensional quality to the photographs.

As for business issues, Massery suggests you understand the written agreement you have with the photographer. "I try to work it just as architects do," he says. "My agreement basically gives the architect unlimited use for their own use —portfolios, brochures, etc.— but they can't sell or give photography to anyone else. If someone else wants to use the image, they can call me. It works along the same lines as architectural drawings with architects."



PHOTOS BY ROBERT RUSCHAK



**This view was requested by the client to portray Wright's blending of the inside with the outside. The shot is a mix of ambient and fill light.**



**Same space, different approach by the photographer to give an idea of the way natural light works in the area. It was taken in the morning for the right sun light.**

*ADDITIONAL READING: PHOTOGRAPHING BUILDINGS INSIDE AND OUT, Norman McGrath, Whitney Library of Design HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH BUILDINGS AND INTERIORS by Gerry Kopelow, Princeton Architectural Press*

### Get the Picture Taken

Sometimes the best advice is simply to get the photograph taken in the first place. Photographer Linda Jeub, who used to work in an architectural firm before striking out on her own eight years ago, suggests that you get a photograph taken when the subject is fresh. Some buildings get worn fast, she says, citing a laboratory as opposed to a lobby. And sometimes despite best intentions, architects get caught up in the demands of architecture and don't get around to getting their design photographed.

A productive walkthrough with the architect is critical, says Jeub. It's a collaborative effort and the client should take his or her time in pointing out certain design aspects and what needs to be represented.

As for expense? Jeub, who has done her share of work for small firms, thinks the budget-conscious need to be selective in what they have photographed. If the budget isn't big enough to shoot every project, select a few that are representative and have them photographed.

"You don't need to spend a lot of money on everything but some things showcased is good," she says. "Everybody needs a portfolio."

### Be Prepared

Photographer Jim Schafer offers some very basic and practical tips:

Make certain the building is absolutely ready to be photographed. Are all the details and trim installed? Floors sealed and buffed? No wires showing? "This may seem silly but I can't tell you how often I find these things are not complete when I arrive to photograph," he says.

Supply the photographer with list of contact names, those involved with the day-to-day operations. They are the ones who know what's going on and can be very helpful. When are the floors cleaned? The lawns mowed? Who can be called about a circuit breaker? The custodial staff should know ahead of time that the photographer is coming. Their cooperation is priceless.

Plan ahead. "Everyone wants to shoot at the height of spring and fall," says Schafer. Get on the photographers' schedule early. "Every year we get a call from someone who says that they need something shot with 'fall color' just as the wind blows Western PA's last few leaves off the tree," he says.

Take advantage of film improvements. Color negative films, such as Fuji's Reale can handle, without filtration, the tricky fluorescent light conditions found in many building interiors. When used correctly, says Schafer, they can be an improvement, not a compromise.

Take advantage of new camera technology as well. Perspective control is no longer restricted to 4 x 5 format cameras. With the new "architectural" lenses, 35 mm cam-



eras can handle certain jobs as well. Choices are limited however. The widest lens available is not as wide as a larger format camera. A 4 x 5 format is still superior due to its larger image (a 4 x 5 transparency is 10 x larger than a 35 mm). When you need resolution and sharpness, the 4 x 5 outperforms in reproduction.

### Going Against the Grain

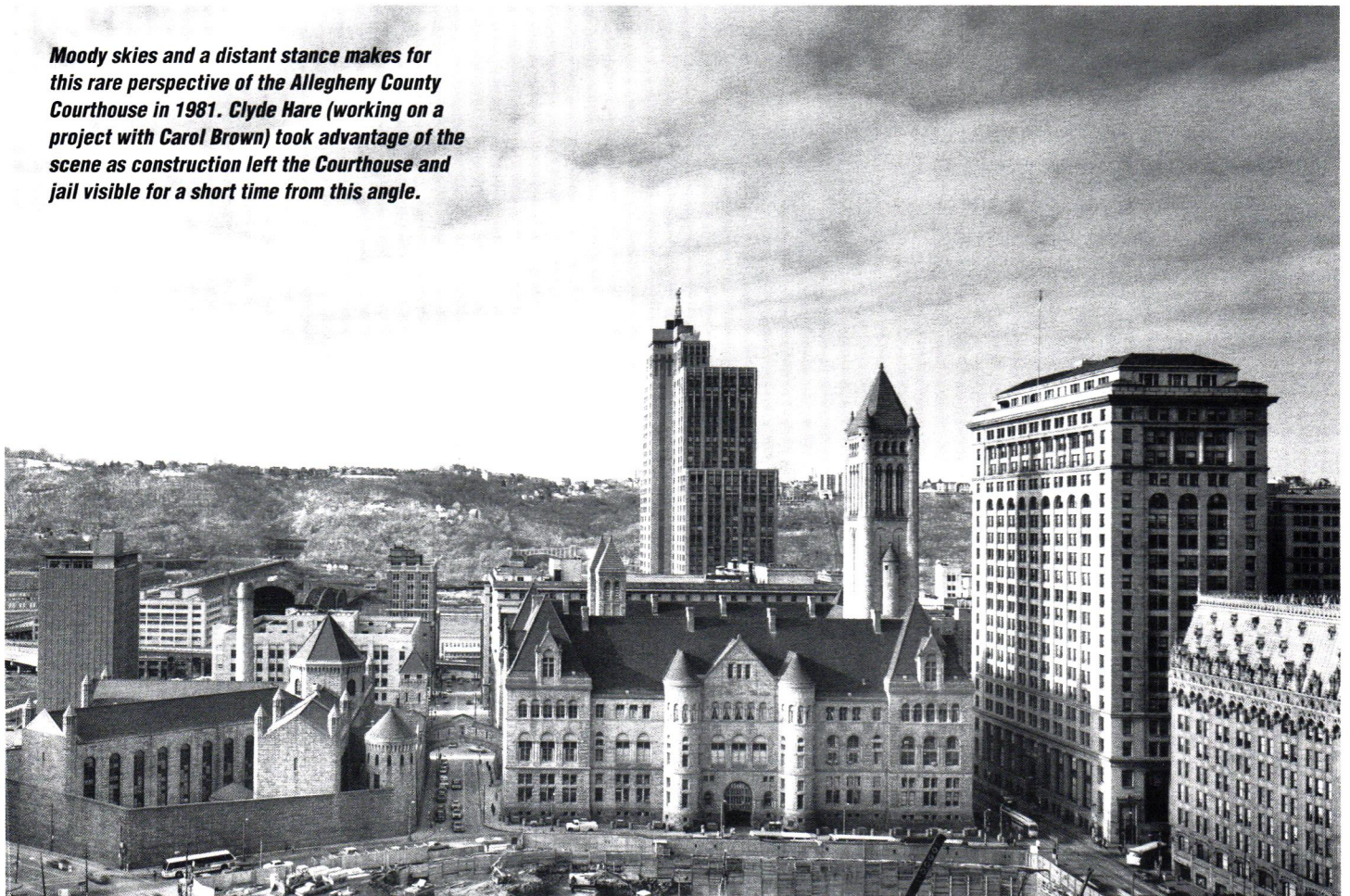
Bob Ruschak, noted for his photography of Fallingwater since 1991, says that every photographic situation is different. Generally, for exterior shots he prefers an early morning or late afternoon shoot for better light. He also prefers an overcast day or some kind of cloud cover for more even light and no hard shadow. As for interiors, the trick is to balance the inside light with the outside light. And that can get very tricky.

Then there's the matter of perspective. Traditional or non? "I like to go against the grain," says Ruschak. "Traditional photography gets as much of the room in as possible. I like to photograph more of the character of the room without showing everything. Sometimes, when you show everything, it's too confusing. Certain areas give you a better idea of character or flavor."

As for hiring a professional or doing it yourself, Ruschak says, "A niece with a camera does us a disservice. You want to show off your work and the better the photography and presentation, the more work you're going to get."

Like most photographers, Ruschak prefers 4 x 5 transparencies. If slides are requested, he'll shoot those. And he will convert transparencies to 35mm slides but he's not

***Moody skies and a distant stance makes for this rare perspective of the Allegheny County Courthouse in 1981. Clyde Hare (working on a project with Carol Brown) took advantage of the scene as construction left the Courthouse and jail visible for a short time from this angle.***





thrilled about that. In addition, he always shoots Polaroids to check the lighting and to show the client his idea: "Look, this is the way I see this." It's important to check in since you're working for the client, he says, and you need to know what has to be shown.

If you're going to do the photography, he suggests you shoot color negative film and then have the lab clean up the fluorescent or incandescent light.

Standard advice on shooting fluorescent-lit rooms is to use a magenta filter #40 which balances the green color of fluorescent light. But be warned: if daylight is coming in, that too will come off magenta. And remember: black and white covers a multitude of sins.

If lighting is everything, getting the lighting right is "not for the weak of heart or anyone who doesn't have a ton of patience," says Ruschak who takes two to three exposures for each light source.

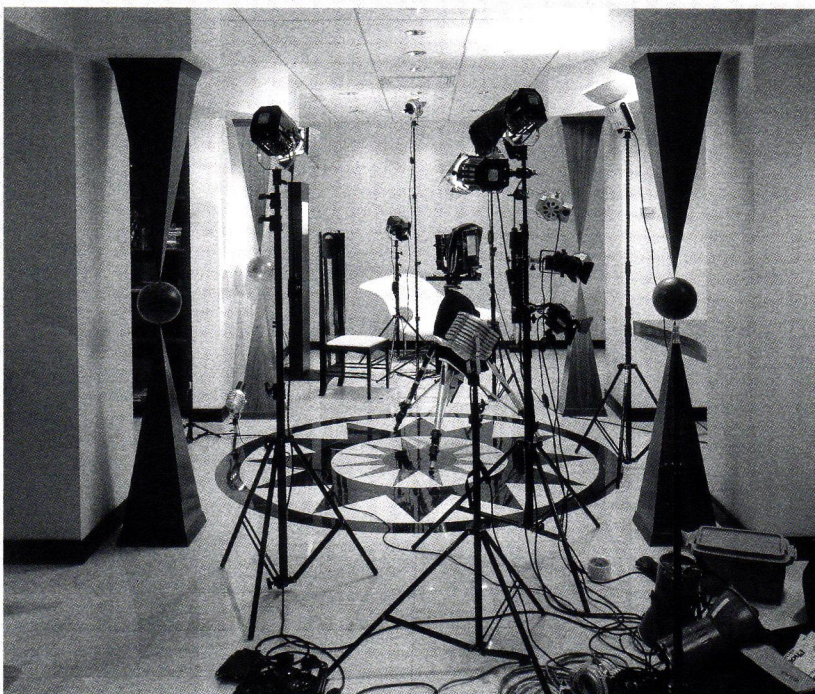
### Go For The Unexpected

Clyde Hare thinks most architects tend to think linearly. "Vertical is always vertical," says the photographer who taught photography at CMU for 13 years. Architects tend to be limited in their thinking, suggests Hare. So when it comes to photography, Hare's advice to architects is this: the more interesting photographs come when you really explore buildings. Often times an architect will want a photographer to do a meticulous photograph exactly like an architectural drawing.

Hare prefers going after the unexpected shot. For example, he points out that the front of the Westinghouse Building reflects Gateway Center. The PPG building is the same way. Walking through PPG's well ("the treatise on bowling," Hyde says in an aside) the ground level perspective is dull as dishwasher. Yet if you go to the top of the building and look down into the plaza, it's really beautiful," he says. The point? Change perspective and expand your thinking.



**This interior shot of the Mellon Bank Building, (now Lord & Taylor's) made the cover of Fortune Magazine for an article on the bank. Clyde Hare shot it from the above offices near the side window. He used existing light, planning for the best time of day when the floor was crowded with people.**

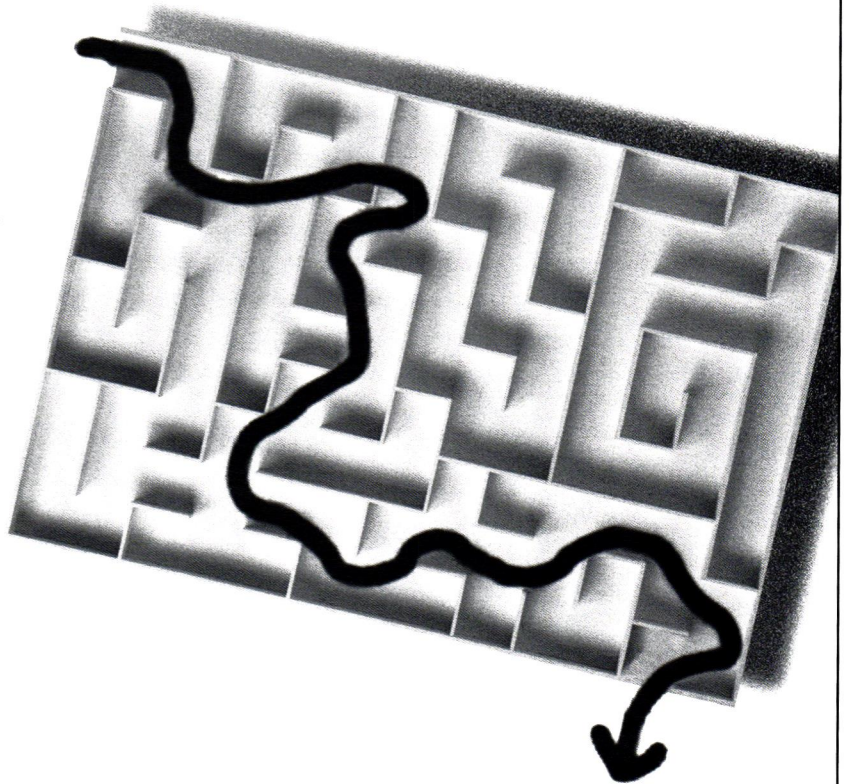


**Just your typical lighting equipment. This is the lighting equipment Ed Massery used for shooting a detail of casework in an office interior.**



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# Lessons Learned

## *Communities Facing Developers*

*The lesson learned in Friendship is that “communities can influence decision making where big corporations are concerned.”*

This is the story of a tight-knit and concerned community, Friendship, a developer that wanted to build there and the muscle flexing of the Friendship Development Association, Inc, that followed. As stories go, this one is short and sweet and upholds the promise of communities influencing big companies' building decisions. As stories go, this is a good one with community involvement, peaceful compromise, the ability of both parties to listen and an element of luck. We should also add there were a lot of meetings and it wasn't easy. And yet, if only they all went as well.

It starts when councilman Dan Cohen invited the Friendship Preservation Group and the Friendship Development Association (FDA) to a developer's meeting. There, McKnight Development of Oakland announced plans to build an Eckerd Drug store on the site of the old Firestone tire building, then in use as a four-story building for McKean Honda.

This was not good news to the community or the FDA, including board member Gary Carlough, AIA, a resident and a principal of EDGE-studio, architects and designers.

The plan was to tear down the historic building and erect a new 10,000 square foot store on the site with a cavernous parking lot. "That was not acceptable to anyone," Carlough says, who explains that the building shields the community from the busy Baum Blvd. District. Along with Baum Blvd. Dodge and the adjacent community park, it forms a portal to the community, a sequence of entry that would be severely disrupted by McKnight's original plans. "A huge and mostly empty parking lot would greatly affect that," Carlough says.

Additionally, the fear was that Eckerd Drugs might be fleeting, leaving behind a vacant building with a vast parking lot. Or worse, a fast food place would then go in. "And that would be horrible," Carlough adds.

As luck would have it "what we discovered was certain zoning variances were required for the group to proceed with the development. We said we would resist the variances but we would accept the existing building if it were renovated," Carlough explains. Initially, McKnight thought they were doing Friendship a favor by constructing a new building after demolishing an old building. "We had to convince them of its' value," Carlough says.

From the developers' viewpoint, it didn't make economic sense for Eckerd Drugs to renovate the building. Carlough and his group had to illustrate how they could do it. They proposed a development with a design strategy and a financial pro forma to suggest how it could work.

Their ace in the hole? "We knew we could hold up the project," says Carlough. The alternative proposal they submitted, complete with detailed architectural drawings, had Eckerd Drug on the first floor with a joint developer (to be found) using the upper three floors as residential lofts. The use made sense: Across the street, apartments had been successfully developed so the need was already demonstrated.

This plan meant that McKnight had to buy the existing building. Part of the cost was offset by the cost of demolishing the building, Carlough points out.

Parking was also a concern for Eckerd Drugs. The FDA proposed basement parking as well as on grade parking. The site plan called for 43 car spaces, the same as Eckerd planned for their own building. Residential parking would be accommodated in the basement level.

Luckily the floor plan size and proportions of the existing building "were nearly identical to the proportions of a built store," says Carlough.





***The community of Friendship is responsible for the new home of Eckerd Drugs in this historic renovated building. In the end, persistence and patience paid off as the developer agreed to the community's demands instead of it's original plans to build new. Architectural firm for project: Seigle•Solow•Horne Principal Architect: Donny Solow.***

The local representative from Eckerd Drug was, fortunately, a Pittsburgh guy named Lee Vereck who hailed from a similar old neighborhood, namely, Lawrenceville. At first, they didn't understand why a suburban development like an Eckerd Drug failed to fit into an urban environment like Friendship. But Carlough and his group were patient and persistent and in the end, able to convince them. "He was very supportive," says Carlough of Vereck. The upshot? Lee Vereck took the case to the Florida headquarters and pitched it to Eckerd executives.

Within a year, McKnight Developers and Eckerd Drug renovated the existing building although they didn't accept the whole development pro forma. Their concern was that visitors to the residential lofts would park in their lot so to avoid that, they chose to let the upper three stories go va-

cant. To give the floors a lived-in look, they installed frosted glass windows "that really do work quite well," says Carlough.

Instead of a bland box, Eckerd Drug now co-exists peacefully in the older building which is more suitable to the urban community. "Everyone is quite pleased. They like the drugstore in the neighborhood," says Carlough. He believes that "everything was aligned for the success" of the project. He credits the Rudolphs for their cooperation and willingness to listen and the Friendship Development Association with Becky Mingo as executive director for their patience and passion. "To some extent we got lucky," says the architect. But then, he adds, "you make your own luck."



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**From the Firms**

→ **DRS Architects** was awarded the contract for the Science, Technology and Cultural Center at the Butler County Community College. Jendoco Construction Corporation is the contractor.

**Perkins Eastman Architects** has been awarded two new projects for Penn State: a new \$4 million, 20,000 square foot administration building at the Beaver campus and a massing study for the Henderson Building at the main campus.

**Perkins Eastman** also announces that Theresa Lomperski has joined the firm as Operations Manager for the Pittsburgh office. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ms. Lomperski brings experience in project management and interior architectural design. She will manage the operations and human resource aspects of the practice.

**HNSDR ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS** announce the addition of Michael Marlette in the Pittsburgh office.

**Hayes Large Architects**, Altoona, announces the promotions of Russell D. Greaser to Director of Production and Thomas G. Reed to Director of Quality Assurance. Also, John Missell, AIA, of **Hayes Large Architects** was invited to speak at the annual conference of the European Council of International Schools in Nice, France and the conference of education administrators and board members in Columbus, Ohio. Both conferences were held in November.

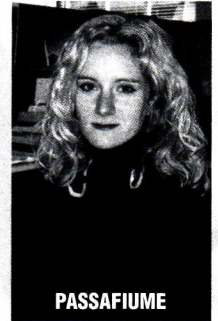
**Business Briefs**

→ P.J.Dick Inc. announces the promotion of George B. Mezey to President of Trumbull Corporation.

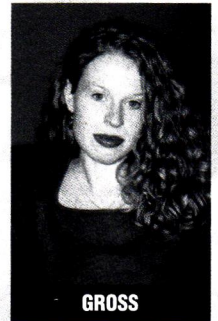
**THE BOOMERANG EFFECT** In a job market where competition for talent is fierce, **Burt Hill** has found an effective recruiting tool: the boomerang. Nearly 10% of Burt Hill's 350-member staff consists of former employees who have returned to the firm; so many, in fact, that Burt Hill now awards anyone who returns to the fold with a wooden boomerang to hang in his or her workspace.

"We work at staying in contact with people who leave the firm. If there are people who have worked successfully for the firm, we want them to come back to us, and fortunately many of them do," says John Kosar, Chairman. "We like to think that our positive work environment has a great deal to do with why they choose to come back to Burt Hill."

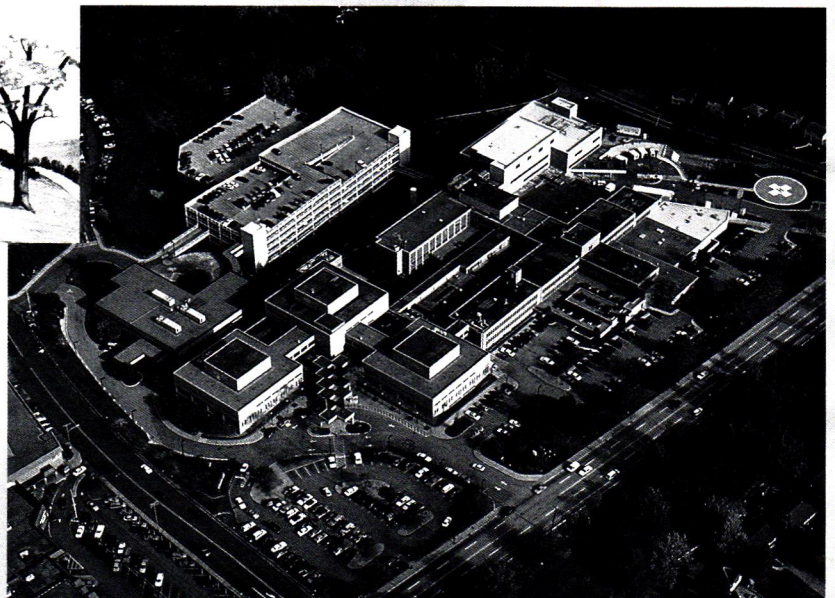
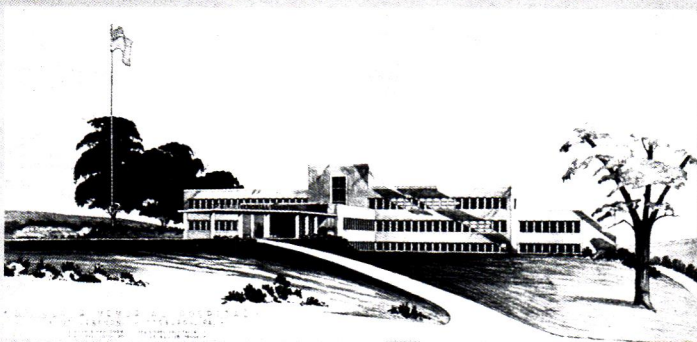
The two most recent boomerang recipients are Melissa Passafiume, Graphic Designer, and Debby Gross, Interior Designer. According to Ms. Passafiume, who left the firm at the end of 1999 to pursue another job opportunity and returned just nine months later, "It was the people at Burt Hill who drew me back. The energy and creative environment here make it fun to come to work each day. Plus I've always wanted to learn to USE a boomerang."



PASSAFIUME

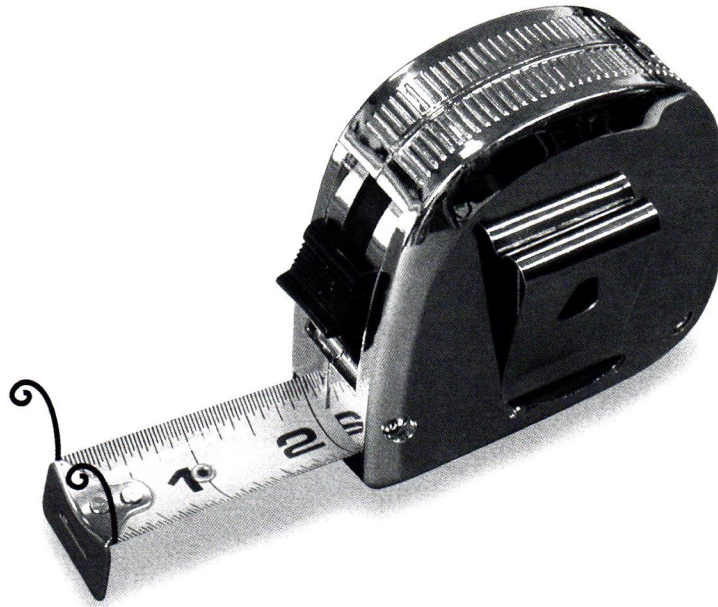


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**Valentour English Bodnar & Howell** has been involved in the master planning strategy of St. Clair Memorial Hospital for 50 years. The photo above is the original three-story building and the photo on the right, the complex 350 renovations later.





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## Bienvenidos New Member

AIA Pittsburgh welcomes new member Felipe Flores. Felipe does specification writing and detail drawings for flooring systems and floor design at Ardex, Inc. He is married to Marisela Flores and he enjoys music, movies and travel. At the Universidad Autonoma de Aguascalientes in Mexico, Felipe was the first U.S. citizen to graduate from the university's school of Architecture. Bienvenidos, Felipe!



*Felipe Flores and his wife Marisela*

## AIA ACTIVITIES

### January 8, Monday

**AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting**  
5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, 471-9548.

### January 9, Tuesday

**Professional Development Committee Meeting** noon at the Chapter office, 471-9548.

### January 12, Friday

**Committee on the Environment**, noon at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA, 252-1500.

### January 18, Thursday

**Legislative Committee Meeting**, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA, 252-1500.

### January 27, Saturday

**AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture Annual Retreat**, Chatham Village, 655 Pennridge St. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Contact David Vater for more information at 431-4245.

### February 2, Friday

**Communications Committee Meeting**, noon at the Chapter office, 471-9548.

### February 9, Friday

**Committee on the Environment**, noon at the Chapter office, Gary Moshier, AIA, 252-1500.

### February 12, Monday

**AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting**  
5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, 471-9548.

### February 13, Tuesday

**Professional Development Committee Meeting** noon at the Chapter office, 471-9548.

### February 15, Thursday

**Legislative Committee Meeting**, noon at the Chapter office, Chuck Coltharp, AIA, 252-1500.

### February 28, Wednesday

**AIA Pittsburgh's Foundation for Architecture Meeting**, 5 p.m. at the chapter office. David Vater, AIA 431-4245.

## 2 C 0 A 0 L 1 E N D A R

## AROUND TOWN

### January 9, Tuesday

**CSI Meeting. Specifications the Internet and Copyright Law.** Attorney John Sieminski of Wayman and MacAuley will discuss the impact of the internet on the architect's ownership of specifications. Mr. Sieminski is a frequent lecturer and author on construction law. Greentree Holiday Inn, 6 p.m. Social; 6:30 Dinner \$20. Contact Deborah Merges at 724-375-2113 or dmerg@home.com by January 5 for reservations.

### February 14, Wednesday

**Society of Design Administrators.** Monthly meeting at the Engineer's Club. 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 pm. Lunch \$17 members \$19.50 non-members. Reservations call Cheryl Marlatt at 412-281-1337.

### February 14, Wednesday

**AIA MBA Committee Meeting.** Master Builders Association, 2270 Noblestown Rd. 6:00 p.m. 412-922-3912.

### February 21, Wednesday

**The New Statewide Building Code - When, What, How.** The 9th Annual Pennsylvania Housing Conference on the new residential building code and what it means to anyone involved in the design and construction of houses. Radisson Hotel, Monroeville, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. To register call 814-856-2341.

AIA Pittsburgh is using e-mail to keep our members informed of the chapter's activities. If you would like to be included and are a member, please send your address to aiapgh@sgi.net.



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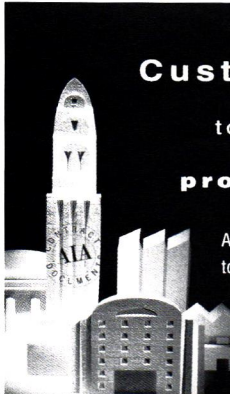
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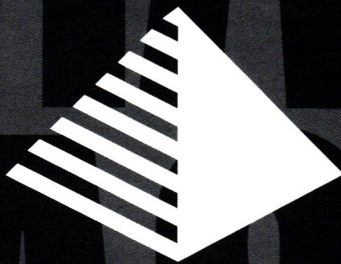
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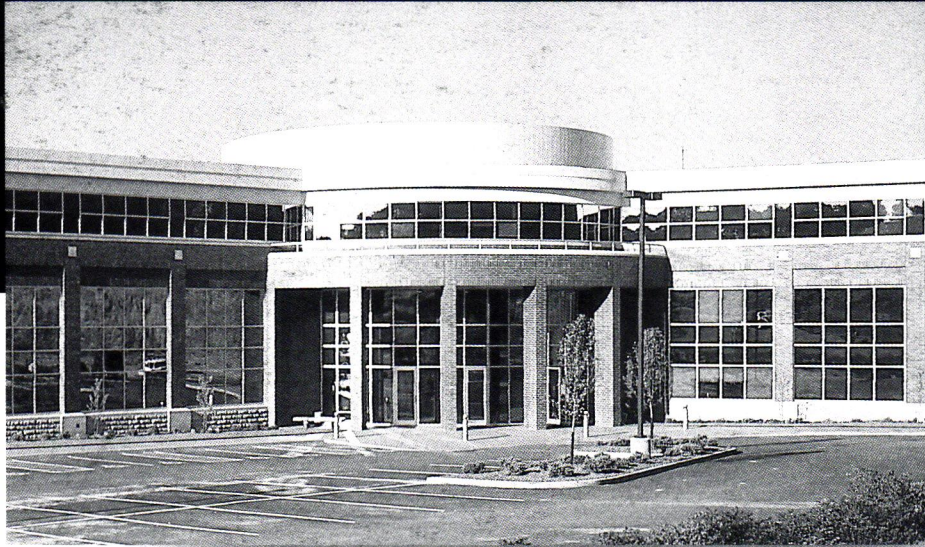
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