Focus

The Leadership Challenge

“The real leader has no need to lead—he is content to point the way.”

—Henry Miller

“When the best leader’s work is done, the people say, ‘we did it ourselves!’”

—Lao Tzu

“...the greatest duty of any statesman is to educate.”

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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January 2002

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Greening Chicago

Wed., January 9, 12:00 noon
AIA Chicago
Sponsor: Planning & Urban Affairs PIA
Alexandra Holt, deputy commissioner for the Chicago Department of Environment, will discuss the benefits of making Chicago a greener city, such as improved drainage and energy conservation. How is this being accomplished? What new design techniques are being developed in pursuit of green goals? Bring your lunch; beverages provided. 1 LU/HSW

Corporate and Building Security: An Engineering Perspective

Wed., January 9, 5:30 p.m.; AIA Chicago
Sponsor: Corporate Architects PIA
Come learn from Henry Garcia of Kroll/Schiff and Associates about designing for security. This consulting engineering firm has worked on high-profile projects for Fortune 100 corporations and real estate developers around the world. 1 LU/HSW

LEED Training Workshop

Thurs., January 10
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Chicago Architecture Foundation
224 S. Michigan Ave. (first floor)
Sponsor: Environment PIA
The U.S. Green Building Council developed the LEED Green Building Rating System, a comprehensive design and assessment tool specifically for the U.S. market, to help building industry professionals improve the performance and measure the sustainability of their projects. Understanding LEED is an important step for architecture, engineering and construction professionals seeking to develop buildings with superior economic and environmental performance. Facility or real estate portfolio managers who master LEED concepts and processes become knowledgeable planners of green design and construction. Learn to apply LEED to your design practice and building projects by attending this workshop.

Workshop attendees will receive:
• Training workbook and speakers notes
• Green Building Rating System
• Free access to the LEED 2.0 Reference Guide
• Access to the LEED credit interpretation rulings Web site for one year.
• Discounts on green building and sustainable design resources.
• Continental breakfast and lunch.

Concrete Restoration at Unity Temple

Thurs., January 10
12:00 noon; AIA Chicago
Sponsor: Historic Resources PIA
Structural engineer Thomas Rewerts, a consultant with Construction Technology Laboratories Inc., and Alex Era, Era Construction Company Inc., will discuss the restoration of the cantilevered roof slabs at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple in Oak Park. Causes of the concrete’s deterioration will be discussed as well as the innovative techniques used to remove and replace the damaged concrete on the soffits and fascias of the roof slabs. This current project also involved the development of a concrete mix that would match both original concrete surfaces as well as the 1973 shotcrete restoration of the exterior walls. Bring your lunch; beverages provided. 1 LU/HSW

continued on page 4
Tour: New Cook County Hospital
Sat., January 12
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Meet at the Walsh Construction trailer
750 S. Winchester Ave.
Sponsor: Architecture for Health PIA

This tour and discussion of the long-awaited Cook County Hospital will focus on its state-of-the-art planning, design and construction. Representatives from CCH Design Group (a joint venture of Loebl Schlossman & Hackl, HDR, McDonough and Globetrotters), contractor Walsh Construction and Cook County Hospital will lead the tour. Limited to 30 participants. Hard-soled shoes and hardhats required. 2.5 LU/HSW

Point-Supported Glass Structures
Thurs., January 17, 12:00 noon
Chicago Bar Association
321 S. Plymouth Court
Sponsor: Technical Issues PIA

Timm Walker of MERO Structures will offer design “rules of thumb” related to the design of point-supported glass structures that have been popular in Europe over the last few decades and have been steadily gaining acceptance in the US. Spaceframe and glass/steel canopies will also be discussed. Lunch is available (purchase ticket in CBA Shop) or bring your own. 1 LU/HSW

Why Not Designer-Led Design/Build?
Wed., January 23, 5:30 p.m.
OWP&P, 111W. Washington St., #2100
Sponsor: Design/Build PIA

This is a program for those architects who are doing or thinking of offering design/build services to their clients. Bruce Ream, AIA of OWP&P Design/Build will discuss the risks and rewards of designer-led design/build. Compare risk in the traditional delivery process to the design/build process: what risk is faced by each player in the team: owner, architect and contractor? What does each member want, and what does each member need? 1 LU
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I am both humbled and enthused to be president of AIA Chicago in 2002. Guided by membership surveys, our Board each year creates opportunities to enrich your experiences and support our community.

The 2002 Action Plan continues the following initiatives:

- Value to our membership through leadership development, learning and networking opportunities provided through the Professional Interest Areas (PIAs)
- Pathway to Licensure: the development of an architect from university studies through exam success and licensure. Elements of this program include student mentorship, ARE preparation, and IDP participation and support.
- Outreach to our Fellows, our “senior statesmen” who are a tremendous resource for activities and events such as the annual Professional Development Conference
- Diversity. This starts with encouragement at the academic institution level, and continues into our profession with outreach to, and connection with, minority organizations including Chicago Women in Architecture (CWA), Illinois Chapter of National Organization of Minority Architects, (INOMA) and Arquitectos, The Society of Hispanic Professional Architects.

Through my increased involvement with national AIA programs, it has become clear to me that our Chapter is held in very high esteem by our peers around the country. This observation is based on meetings with other large chapters where we discuss membership, organization, programs, outreach, and finances. AIA Chicago has focus and direction, vitality and financial strength, and top-notch leadership at the staff and volunteer levels. We are blessed with an exceptional staff, led by Alice Sinkevitch, that is a resource for the national organization as well as our peer groups. This group includes Joan Pomaranc, Susan Larson and Laurie Petersen, Jamie Juliano, Crystal Gagler, and Linda Freeman. I encourage you to get to know them; they are a remarkable resource.

Leadership in the Chapter exists at many levels: the Board of Directors, various Board committees such as Finance and Sponsorship, and the 13 PIAs and two committees. From time to time a task force is established to focus on a specific issue; this month’s article, Year in Review, highlights some of these accomplishments. David Urschel, AIA, our past Treasurer, is currently spearheading our efforts to plan local events for the 2004 AIA Convention scheduled for Chicago in the late spring of that year.

As we take another small step into the third millennium, I am struck by the changes that are possible in our society, changes perhaps prompted by the actions of September 11: it is reported that people are demonstrating more patience, increased kindness, and more interest in the well-being of others. There is a sense that volunteerism has increased. Perhaps, in a small way, AIA Chicago offers opportunities to get involved, participate, interact with our peers, and “pay it forward” to the next generation of architects.

The openness and accessibility of our organization is manifested within the PIA structure. The national PIAs provide unofficial guidelines for our local PIAs. Whatever your interest, these groups are informal organizations where new faces are welcome and encouraged. The leaders of these PIAs—the chairs, co-chairs, and steering committee members—are working hard to provide programs for you; please take the opportunity to sample them.

I would like to close this letter by expressing my appreciation for the guidance and feedback provided by our current and past Boards and executive committees. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Tom Zurowski, AIA, our 2001 president.

I look forward to working with and for you, to guide AIA Chicago this year.

Jonathan L. Fischel, AIA
President
**Year In Review**

**Highlights from 2001: Emphasis on Leadership, Community Outreach**

![From left to right: Jack Hartray, FAIA; Ald. Mary Ann Smith; Tom Zurowski, AIA; and Jonathan Fischel, AIA.](image1)

**Programs and Events**

Each year, members of AIA Chicago’s Professional Interest Areas (PIAs) sponsor numerous events, including workshops, seminars, lectures and tours. In 2001, tours proved to be some of the more popular events. They included the Sara Lee Corporate Headquarters (Corporate Architects PIA); Ronald McDonald Children’s Hospital (Architecture for Health PIA); Tribune Interactive (Interior Architecture PIA); HALO Headquarters (Interiors and Corporate Architects PIAs); and The Houses of Tomorrow in Indiana (Historic Resources PIA).

![Alan Madison, AIA facilitates one of five groups assembled for the Historic Bungalow charrette.](image2)

**Working With an Architect**

This annual spring seminar series proved popular again, with 125 participants attending seven city and suburban locations. The free programs help homeowners understand the design and construction process. A special bungalow edition was presented at the Chicago Architecture Foundation to an audience of 120.

"The two architects let me know it’s okay to dream," said one participant at the Sulzer Public Library in Chicago.

The following AIA Chicago members led the workshops: Robin Whitehurst, AIA; Steve Moylan, AIA; Rob Sierzega, AIA (chair); Scott Rappe, AIA; Chris Turley, AIA; John Hershey, AIA; Tom Prairie, AIA; Constantine Vasilios, AIA; Alan Madison, AIA; David Wytmar, AIA; Fred Wilson, AIA; Bud Dietrich, AIA; Dan Sih, AIA; Joakim Backstrom, AIA; Trish VanderBeke, AIA; David Seglin, AIA.

![Alan Madison, AIA facilitates one of five groups assembled for the Historic Bungalow charrette.](image3)

**Community Design**

On April 25, members of AIA Chicago presented community design issues to the 48th Ward Zoning and Planning Committee. Tom Zurowski, AIA; Jonathan Fischel, AIA; Jack Hartray, FAIA; and Alice Sinkevitch, Hon. AIA were invited by Alderman Mary Ann Smith, who is concerned about evaluating proposed developments in her ward on the Far North Side.

![Alan Madison, AIA facilitates one of five groups assembled for the Historic Bungalow charrette.](image4)

**Historic Bungalows Charrette**

On April 28, representatives of AIA Chicago led a community design charrette for the Historic Chicago Bungalow Initiative. The charrette brought together five groups of nine to 10 people comprised of homeowners from the neighborhood; representatives from the Greater Southwest Development Corp.,
The Houses of Tomorrow tour was sponsored by the Historic Resources PIA.

Department of Housing, Department of Environment, Chicago Park District, and Mayor’s Office of Persons with Disabilities; members of the Environment PIA; accessibility specialists from William Won Architects; and senior housing experts Chuck Floramo, AIA and Steve Montgomery, AIA of Environ.

Five housing types were explored — accessible, family (2 adults, 4 children), empty nester, home/office, and related living. Schematic design concepts for four existing bungalows were created from group discussions and developed into construction documents by Sonoc Architects. A parade of homes is planned for Spring 2002.

AIA Chicago facilitators were Rob Sierzega, AIA; Alan Madison, AIA; Scott Rappe, AIA; Brian Miller; and Ellen Bailey Dickson, AIA.

Great Places and Spaces

On May 19 and 20 — as part of “Great Chicago Places & Spaces: Celebrating Chicago Architecture,” the City’s two-day showcase of architecture, landscape and interior design, urban planning and historic preservation — AIA Chicago sponsored a walking and sketching tour of Michigan Avenue and Grant Park. Father and son architects, John Schlossman, FAIA and Peter Schlossman, AIA, led the 90-minute tour. They spoke briefly about the design of the street and park, and offered insights into the techniques architects use to draw buildings.

Zoning Reform

At the request of the Mayor’s Zoning Reform Commission, AIA Chicago members participated in a series of zoning reform workshops in June. The commission was divided into six committees that each hosted a workshop. They were: Central Business District Committee; Residential and Housing Committee; Neighborhood Commercial, Retail and Industrial Committee; Administration and Enforcement Committee; Open Space Committee; and the Transportation Committee. For more information about this effort, see the Web site of the Mayor’s Zoning Reform Commission at www.cityofchicago.org/Mayor/Zoning.

108 N. State

In an effort to spur a renaissance for 108 N. State (Block 37), AIA Chicago co-hosted an intensive, two-day series of workshops on September 6 and 7. Two dozen members of the Chapter, representing 20 firms, took part in the charrette. They were joined by developers and planners representing the Urban Land Institute, the program’s co-sponsor.

The workshops yielded a range of innovative ideas for the property which could ultimately house a mixed-use complex. “It holds great potential as a retail destination, a transit center, or a year-round public space,” said Alice Sinkevitch, executive director of AIA Chicago. “Our members are pleased to be working directly with the City to uncover the possibilities.”

ARE Preparation

Forty-four associate architects spent the weekend of July 13 through 15 in Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology getting ready to take the Graphic Divisions of the Architect Registration Examination (ARE). For the second year, AIA Chicago brought Professor Norman Dorf, AIA to Chicago to teach his well-known weekend lecture and mock exam program.

Design Excellence

With more than 700 members of the architecture community attending, Designight 2001 was a huge success.
Of the 250 entries in the Distinguished Building, Interior Architecture and Divine Detail categories, the jury presented 12 Honor Awards, 13 Citations of Merit, and five Special Recognition Awards. John Callaway, host and senior editor of WTTW’s Chicago Stories, served as master of ceremonies.

The award winners were exhibited at the Chicago Architecture Foundation in October and November. All 250 entries can be seen on the Chapter’s web site at www.aiachicago.org.

Annual Meeting

Richard Swett, FAIA, former ambassador to Denmark and congressman from New Hampshire, spoke on the importance of architects pursuing civic leadership roles. (See Cover Story, page 16). Jeff Bone, AIA and Sharlene Young, AIA received Young Architect Awards.

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Winners of AIA Chicago’s 2001 Distinguished Service Award Announced

On November 27 the Board of Directors of AIA Chicago voted to bestow the Chapter’s Distinguished Service Award on James J. Lucas and John R. (Jack) Lesniak, AIA.

Lucas is a manufacturer's representative for ProSoCo, Inc., a building cleaning and stabilization products company, as well as several other product lines. He “has been there day and night for the architectural profession for the past thirty years,” in the words of nominator Walker Johnson, FAIA.

Lucas has educated architects about methods of cleaning and restoring old buildings through frequent speaking engagements and numerous articles. He is well known for sharing his expertise in terra cotta, stone and masonry to help architects and clients make decisions about the best products and processes for particular situations.

A member of the Construction Specifications Institute, Lucas has won many honors from CSI, including the Robert Brousseau Memorial national award. Local projects for which he has provided assistance include the Rookery, Reliance Building, Wrigley Building and the reconstruction of Wacker Drive.

Lesniak is a deeply committed veteran volunteer for the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust. His involvement began in 1974, when he joined the organization that had saved the home and studio and was planning its restoration. He is currently one of seven original volunteers still giving time to what was formerly known as the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation.

Lesniak has been involved in every Wright Plus house walk since 1975. His extensive research on many of Wright’s houses has become a model for others at the Trust. Other activities include serving as day leader of tours, member of the restoration committee, chair of the interpreter committee, contributor to the monthly volunteer newsletter, and chair of the Unity Temple Architectural Restoration Committee. He also recently began a three-year term on the Oak Park Historic Preservation Committee.

By day, Lesniak is head of the Construction Administration group at OWP&P Architects.

Residential Projects Requested for New Book

Author and architect Duo Dickinson is seeking projects for a book on residential architecture to be published by Taunton Press in 2003. Projects should be custom-designed homes that have building budgets similar to those of high-end speculative homes. The thesis of the book is that residential architects need not be budget-busters; that while their fee is always an added cost, the net result of their involvement can be a dwelling that is affordable for those who are in the speculative subdivision market.

Dickinson has written five books for McGraw-Hill over the past 20 years. He requests that the following materials be sent to him as soon as possible: (1) laser prints or slide duplicates of interiors and exteriors sufficient to describe the house; (2) a simple narrative description of the house and how it fulfilled both the architect’s and the homeowner’s dreams while dealing with budgetary realities; (3) a fairly simple description of the building budget. Dickinson’s address is 94 Bradley Road, Madison, CT 06443.
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The Leadership Challenge

Thoughts from Ambassador
Richard Swett, FAIA

By Ambassador Richard N. Swett, FAIA

Approximately two weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks, I had the sad opportunity of visiting ground zero in New York City. As I gazed anguished and angry at the smoldering ruins, another very different image crossed my mind. It was a painting called The Architect’s Dream by the American artist Thomas Cole. In it we see an architect seated on an enormous book, with his drawings close at hand. Spread out before his sleeping figure is a depiction of his extraordinary dream: a magnificent city of temples, agoras, fountains and pyramids, all bathed in a golden light. It seemed a strange image to come to mind in the midst of New York’s terrible devastation—but then again perhaps not so strange.

American society is in a period of profound and far-reaching self-examination in the wake of the September 11 attacks, with virtually every aspect of our society under scrutiny. Yet in the midst of this massive mobilization and review I have been concerned, though not
surprised, at the relative lack of attention paid to the architect’s perspective on the design of our buildings, cities or our entire built environment.

Of course it was no accident that the terrorists targeted the World Trade Center Towers, the Pentagon and, presumably, the Capitol or the White House. They are obvious symbols of American might: economic, military and political. Architecture is the public face that any society presents to the world. By choosing these targets, the terrorists clearly wanted to punch America in the face. Now, as our society fights back to protect and defend both our physical homeland and our values and way of life, we are turning to political leaders from a host of professions.

For example, in recent weeks the only physician in Congress, Senator Bill Frist of Tennessee, has served an invaluable role in helping to explain and bring perspective to the anthrax threat. Likewise, Secretary of State Colin Powell inspires confidence in his new role as a five-star diplomat navigating treacherous international waters. His image of a warrior turned statesman recalls earlier figures such as Dwight Eisenhower and of course George Washington.

Which brings me to Thomas Jefferson and why I am disappointed, though not surprised, that the architect’s voice has been little heard during our recent crisis. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, governor of Virginia, secretary of state, president of the United States, founder of the University of Virginia, was an architect. He brilliantly embodied an ideal I have fervently espoused since 1990 when I became the first and only architect to serve in Congress in the 20th century: the ideal of architects as leaders and statesmen.

I believe that architects—with their passion for harmonious design, their instinct to provide protection and shelter, their understanding that beneath the veneer every structure must have a strong foundation, and their invaluable ability to reconcile the needs of clients, communities and their own design inspiration—have a huge contribution to make to building the America we all dream of. And yet for a long time architects have been largely AWOL when it comes to helping lead on the big issues facing our country. What a loss. It was Mark Twain who observed that if the only tool you have is a hammer, after a while every problem begins to look like a nail. Looked at from that perspective, the American government doesn’t have a very well equipped toolbox.

We are all familiar with the heavy preponderance of lawyers among our chief lawmakers. But other nations provide intriguing models of how architects can more meaningfully influence their societies.

I recently completed three years of service as our nation’s ambassador to Denmark, a country justly famous for the excellence of its design of everything from buildings to bottle openers. Although Denmark has few architects serving in high elective office, the profession as a whole plays a far more prominent role in society. In a country of few natural resources, design is considered an economic engine. Design is also a quality-of-life issue, because there is a constant desire to provide the best living conditions for the broadest cross-section of the population.

In Denmark, architects and politicians have relationships that produce a hybrid of the two professions. Education incorporates an understanding of design principles. Perhaps most importantly, Danes consider it vital to address fundamental questions of design in addition to those of defense, the economy, social justice etc.

Of course, there are groups and individuals in America that recognize the desirability of a more proactive role for architects in our public policy life. The Design Futures Council brings together the leaders of over 40 of the top design firms to discuss and develop ways to better serve a dynamic society and its revolutionary technological changes. The Leadership Institute of the AIA is specifically geared toward encouraging and supporting members of the profession who enter public life, and there are numerous individuals who are superb role models. But this Institute has had difficulty gaining support from the very profession it desires to help.

In the end it comes to this: will more architects be ready to shoulder greater responsibilities as part of a diverse and dynamic patchwork of American leaders drawn from many walks of life? I hope that my many colleagues who are both architects and patriots will step forward to become builders of the dream.

See page 18 for an interview with Ambassador Swett.
By P.K. VanderBeke, AIA

PKV You have followed an unusual career path. Could you describe how your career goals evolved from architect to congressman to ambassador?

RS I started as an architect with a very strong desire to be a master builder, to oversee the entire process of creating buildings. Working for SOM in San Francisco just wasn’t giving me this experience, so I started a design/build firm. We got involved in building subsidized housing through which I gained an understanding of the financial end of things. My father was building alternative energy plants on the East Coast and asked me to join him, so I moved there and we did several plants. Work in the energy sector is very political so I became interested in the political persuasion aspects of the work. I recognized that the congressman in my district wasn’t doing a good job of representing us and no one was running against him, so I said that I would find someone to run or I would run myself. That’s how I became a congressman at age 33. Then, when I ran for re-election in 1996, I lost by a handful of votes, and Bill Clinton called that night and asked if I’d like to be an ambassador.

PKV What other insights did you gain from your experience in Denmark?

RS Danish design is all about bringing people together. In America, sprawl has divided our communities and created inhospitable environments. We need to re-examine our ego-driven design and ask what type of life we would like to promote.

PKV What are some of your current activities?

RS I serve on several corporate boards and recently organized a charrette at the State Department on how to design an information integration system. We used architects instead of accountants or other consultants because architects are trained in knowledge integration. We’re working with firms like NBBJ and Gensler who do this sort of work for their clients and may be considering a move into the field of relationship integration design.

PKV That’s very intriguing. My most successful projects come when clients bring me their needs and preferences, and we discuss how they hope to live in their homes.
RS  You're right that this can be applied to even the smallest residential projects. Architects are trained to listen in that special way, and you’re addressing the key areas such as plans for expansion or contraction, pay off on investment, time constraints, and goals for the future.

PKV  So many people confuse leadership with management. Let's talk a bit about leadership.

RS  Leadership is most successful when it is inclusive. Architects are trained to build consensus. Business management schools err in downplaying leadership as a key quality in those they admit. Architecture schools miss emphasizing communication as a skill. Professional schools need to look for leadership qualities as a pre-requisite for admission.

PKV  What can a young architect or intern do to prepare for taking a leadership role?

RS  School is one place to work on this. Design is better if it is articulately explained and dynamically managed in order to persuade the client to build a project. The AIA is reviving the Leadership Institute, which, as you know, is a terrific way for architects to discover and hone their leadership skills and meet others to share information and experiences. (See sidebar.) And firms need to work on developing leadership within their ranks, developing project managers and encouraging community participation. Good writing skills make a good impression, and it's worth taking the time to write clearly and concisely in all communications. The Internet has done damage to writing skills, and a poorly written e-mail reveals weakness when it could impress with the ability to put thoughts together, to compel and inspire. The pen is mightier than the sword and even mightier than the drafting triangle.

Richard N. Swett, FAIA served as ambassador to Denmark from 1998 to 2001. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from New Hampshire in 1990. Swett co-authored the Congressional Accountability Act and authored the Transportation for Livable Communities Act, key provisions of which were included in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Legislation that he introduced to encourage energy conservation and use of renewable energy was included in the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

Ambassador Swett is a licensed architect whose experience encompasses architectural design, project management, corporate management, project development, and finance. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and the Design Futures Council, and is a member of the Board of Peers overseeing design quality issues for the General Services Administration. He also holds positions on several corporate boards including the position of Senior Counsel at APCO Worldwide, a global strategic communication and public relations firm. Swett received a bachelor's degree in architecture from Yale University.

Ambassador Swett has been twice awarded the Presidential Citation by the AIA and has received numerous honorary degrees. On April 30, 2001, Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark bestowed the Grand-Croix of the Order of the Dannebrog (the Danish equivalent of knighthood) on Ambassador Swett.

Trish VanderBeke, AIA is principal of P.K. VanderBeke, Architect, in Chicago. Established in 1991, the firm works primarily in the field of single-family residential, renovation and restoration. VanderBeke was a member of the 1997 inaugural class of the AIA Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C., where she met Ambassador Swett. They have continued to correspond with each other and have participated in several of the same panel discussions on the topic of leadership and architecture.

AIA, Georgetown University to Conduct Leadership Institute this Spring

The AIA, in partnership with Georgetown University, is accepting applications for the 2002 AIA Leadership Institute from members who want to increase their effectiveness and personal involvement as community leaders. The program will accept 25 candidates for an intensive, experiential three-day program March 21 to 24 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Applications are due January 18.

The goal of the Leadership Institute is to enable architects to exercise greater influence outside the profession through participation on civic and community boards, though elected or appointed office, or in volunteer activities that demonstrate the important contributions architects can make.

Georgetown University's Center for Professional Development faculty and architects recognized as leaders within their communities will moderate the discussion and workshops. Each participant will have the opportunity to assess his or her leadership skills and experience, discuss the assessment with faculty skilled in executive coaching, and develop an individual plan to achieve specific leadership goals.

An application and more information are available online at www.aia.org.
In the Wake of September 11: The Impact on the Insurance Industry and the Design Community

By Dan Buelow

While we will never be able to place a value on the human loss and suffering associated with the recent terrorist acts, the insurance community has in fact been trying to quantify the damages of what will prove to be the single largest catastrophe—man-made or natural—in the history of the industry. Every insurance company, every line of business and every consumer will be impacted. While the overall industry appears financially solid, the solvency of many individual companies, and certainly many current products and programs, is questionable.

A Changing Insurance Environment

Until fairly recently, most design firms found insurance coverage both affordable and available. Things have changed. Most insurance companies had been increasing rates since the beginning of this year in an effort to become profitable, and the events of September 11 have accelerated this trend.

Many design professionals will remember that in the mid-1980s it was extremely difficult to find affordable professional liability insurance, with firms paying as much as six percent or more of gross revenues for it. In the 1990s, the insurance industry rebounded, competition increased, and pricing trended downward. Over the last six years, many companies entered the professional liability market with dubious and even reckless business strategies. Between 1994 and 1999, the average rate for A/E professional liability insurance, as a percent of a firm’s annual fees, dropped from a range of 2.5 percent-4 percent to around 1 percent. Most insurance firms are now unprofitable. They had begun recently to increase pricing, restrict terms and look a lot harder at their exposures. And then came September 11.
The Impact on the Design Community

If the current economic slowdown does become a sustained downturn, history tells us to anticipate an increase in claim activity against design professionals. To add to this, we have in fact seen a recent influx in Error and Omissions claims due to design errors. We attribute this to the recent boom in construction and the difficulty A/E firms were having in keeping up with this demand and in finding adequate staff. Many recent claims can be attributed to work being pushed down to levels of inexperienced staff, and/or insufficient resources allocated to projects.

We now anticipate the insurance environment over the next 12 to 18 months to look somewhat like it did in the 1980s. The last 12 months have brought rate increases of 10 percent to 20 percent. It now appears that rate increases for all lines of business will be roughly double these. In addition, certain insurance products such as project-specific insurance and specific job excess have become increasingly difficult and costly to secure. We have also seen insurance companies take a much harder stance with firms that have poor claims history and/or engage in certain project types such as condominiums.

Recommendations

Every design firm, regardless of size, should have at least one person who is responsible for the risk management of the firm. The fundamentals of risk management require a good understanding of the areas of (1) risk transfer and (2) assuming and controlling exposures. You can transfer your risks in essentially two ways: by contract and by use of specific insurance products. However, it is neither commercially viable nor feasible to transfer all of your exposures; you must take a proactive and sustained approach to identifying and controlling your risks.

Continued on page 22
You should also work with an insurance agency and broker that specializes in risk management and insurance for design professionals. A good broker should provide valuable advice and education for your firm on how to transfer, assume, and control your exposures; negotiate your contracts; and avoid legal pitfalls.

Lastly, every firm should implement an education program that focuses on risk management for all its employees. While all firms will be faced with increases in their insurance rates, those with poor loss histories will experience the greatest difficulties with both availability and pricing. Aside from the significant distractions a lawsuit can cost your firm, the impact on your insurance costs will now affect your bottom line more than ever.

In closing, it’s important to stress that we are confident in the overall financial strength of the insurance community. And it is also important to recognize that insurance rates have dropped significantly over the last ten years, and we don’t anticipate pricing levels to climb anywhere near the levels of the mid-1980s. However, we are in the midst of significant change. The importance of staying in tune with this changing market, and educating every member of your firm on how to manage your risks and avoid claims, cannot be overstated.

Dan Buelow is Managing Director of Hobbs Group/AVA, an insurance agency that specializes in risk management and insurance for design professionals.
PEOPLE/FIRMS

T. Gunny Harboe, AIA has been elected a regional director from Illinois to the national AIA Board of Directors. His three-year term begins this month.

EHDD Architecture has announced the promotion of Marc L'Italien, AIA to a principal of the firm. L'Italien joined EHDD in 1990 and has directed the firm's Chicago office since 1997. Recent projects that have won Design Excellence awards from AIA Chicago include Habitat Africa!—The Forest at the Brookfield Zoo, the Exploris Museum in Raleigh, NC; and renovation of the central rotunda at the John G. Shedd Aquarium. Current work includes the Shedd Aquarium; the Computer History Museum in Mountain View, Calif.; and the Valparaiso University Library in Indiana. L'Italien has a bachelor of science degree from the University of Michigan and a master of architecture from Yale University.

Paul DeCelles, AIA has joined the Chicago office of HOK (Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, Inc.) as group vice president and architectural practice leader. He will coordinate and focus the firm's wide array of specialized professional services to serve the Chicago office's growing list of clients. A 20-year veteran of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, DeCelles led professional planning and architectural teams on a variety of large-scale projects throughout the U.S. and abroad. Most recently, he managed the A/E team for the reconstruction of Chicago's State Street which earned the national AIA Honor Award for Urban Design.

Scott J. Garland, AIA has announced the launch of Scott J. Garland Consultants, Inc., a development, design and construction consulting firm. Their address is 5514 N. Paulina St. in Chicago and their web site is www.scottjgarland.com.

The Proteus Group, LLC is a new architecture, interior design and engineering firm specializing in health care projects. Chicago AIA members include Frank E. Talbert, AIA, Timothy M. Gregg, AIA, William R. Gran, AIA, Aaron D. Perkins, AIA, Rod M. Pasyk, AIA, Katherine E. Moore, AIA, and Bruce W. Wexelberg, AIA. Their office is located at 1700 W. Van Buren St., Suite #050.

OWP&P has promoted 21 employees. The new senior associates are Aaron Shepard, AIA, Teri Wright, AIA, Dianne Dakich, Assoc. AIA, Mark Adams, IIDA, and Beverly Fields. Eleven members of the architecture group were promoted to associate. They are Sandra Bonderud, Mark Cabrinha, AIA, Justin Cafferty, Grace Chang, Ratana Cheyapanta, Rebecca Deren, Rand Ekman, Helen Fantini, AIA, Alissa Smith, Alan Treuthart, and Louis Vavrouxos. Other new associates are Suzanne Carney, Chester Olzewski, Maurya Cohan, Mandy Pals, and Mayu Roy.

Richard E. Carlson, AIA of Cannon Design was a presenter at the North Central Regional Conference of the Society of College and University Professionals on October 21, 2001.

Henry J. Hawry, AIA died at his Evanston home on October 23 after a long illness. He was 76 years old. Hawry studied architecture and structural engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and art at the School of the Art Institute. He worked at firms including the office of Ludwig Mies van Rohe, Skidmore Owings & Merrill and C.F. Murphy. Hawry was involved with the design of Lafayette Park Apartments in Detroit, Inland Steel Building, Daley Center, Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and King Abdul Aziz University in Saudi Arabia. He taught architecture, structural engineering and construction sciences at IIT, Auburn University and King Faisal University.

Shirley Norvell Anderson, Hon. AIA has been appointed to the Illinois Capital Development Board.

James Follensbee + Associates, Ltd. has a new address: 272 East Deerpath Road, Suite 244, Lake Forest.

Terry Owens, AIA has joined the Oak Brook office of FGM Inc. as director of operations. He is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of firm-wide project practices in FGM's various offices. Formerly a principal at Perkins & Will, Owens has a 30-year involvement in national and international projects including the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, W.W. Grainger Corporate Headquarters and the Skybridge Tower Condominium Development.

Environ, Inc. has announced that Enrique Suarez has been named a principal of the firm. Susan King, AIA and Kevin Ryder have been promoted to senior associate, and Linda Blanchard and Richard Rucks, AIA were named associates.

Robert P. Ludden, AIA has been appointed vice president responsible for managing the Chicago office of HLM Design. Sheila Cahnman, AIA, ACHA and Elizabeth Rack, AIA, ACHA, principals at HLM Design, have been promoted to associate vice presidents. Both Cahnman and Rack recently spoke at the National Symposium on Healthcare Design 2001 in Nashville, Tenn.

Professor John Silva, chairperson of the architectural and interior design programs at Triton College in River Grove, will be retiring after 33 years of service to the profession. He plans to travel around the country with his wife in their motorhome creating interactive sculpture, mobiles and art furniture for children's hospitals. You can view his work on the web at www.blueberryrus.com or contact him via e-mail at jksilva@koral.com.

PROJECTS

Holabird & Root recently completed the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) Advanced Computation Building Addition at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The 17,000-square-foot facility, believed to be the first of its kind, is served by a six-foot-deep raised-access floor. The floor depth and the unique HVAC system allow for precise modulation of air flow, temperature and humidity. A 90-foot-square, column-free space can be expanded to create a 90-foot by 270-foot continuous open space with almost no downtime for the existing structure and its systems.

The Capital Development Board has approved the initial phases of the University Center project. This joint venture of Legat Architects and HOK is currently in preliminary design. The center will provide a single facility in Lake County where 12 major universities will offer a variety of advanced baccalaureate and graduate coursework. One of Legat Architects' recently completed projects is Rolling Hills Place, a new 60-unit assisted-living center. The 48,100-square-foot building is an addition to the Slovak American
Charitable Association's skilled nursing facility, Rolling Hills Manor. The building's design groups the residences into four "neighborhoods," each featuring a café and juice bar, music room, computer lab and game room. Other amenities include a spa and wellness center.

Stephen Rankin Associates has designed a new factory and office building for Gemini Moulding. The 50,000-square-foot facility is located in Elgin's Northwest Business Park.

Warman Olsen Warman has added another project in the neighborhood of the Prairie Avenue Historic District to its portfolio of residential high-rises. The Prairie District Homes include 49 townhomes and 180 tower residences in the Central Station development.

Construction is underway on the $11 million, 4-story addition to the Chicago Military Academy in the historic Bronzeville District of Chicago. Maureen Reagan Architects, Ltd. is the architect-of-record commissioned by the Public Building Commission of Chicago for the Chicago Public Schools; DeStefano and Partners is managing architect; and Nia Architects is associate architect. The addition's west elevation includes a link that features a clock tower and a memorial plaque illustrating the building's history from the original 1915 armory for the 8th Infantry Regiment of the Illinois National Guard to the present United States Military High School.

Ross Barney + Jankowski is currently designing a new elementary school in Columbus, Indiana for the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. The South Side Elementary School shares a relatively flat and open, thirty-three acre site with an existing middle school and will be sited to create a true campus atmosphere with shared athletic fields, walking paths, and parking. Paths and roadways will reinforce the patterns of the parcel's topography and the geometry of neighboring development. The pre-kindergarten through fifth grade student population is anticipated to be 800. The 105,000 square foot facility will embrace elements of small schools, sustainable and universal design. The steel and concrete plank structure will be exposed throughout and clad with wall systems that express and reinforce the activities inside. A wind funnel tower will rise from the central area to bring natural ventilation into the high-volume spaces. In the classroom wings, south-facing walls will be double-leaf systems designed to either trap and dissipate heat during the winter months or promote air circulation and ventilation. The building is designed for the year-round needs of the school population and the larger community. Clustered between classroom wings are the common spaces. The gymnasium and "commons," with their separate entrances and glowing walls, will be the beacons for the building's use as a community center. Construction of the $19 million facility, which is currently in design development, is anticipated to start in the summer of 2002.

Judson College continues its 2001-2002 Architecture Lecture Series on Thursday, January 24 with Nader Tehrani of Office dA in Boston. Calvin F. Lewis, FAIA of Herbert Lewis Kruse Blunck in Des Moines will speak on February 21, Paul A. Harding, AIA of Chicago's Harding Associates is featured on March 21, and the series will conclude with Will Bruder of Phoenix on April 4. All lectures are on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Judson College Fine Arts Performance Hall, 1151 N. State St., Elgin. For further information, call 847/695-2500 ext. 3350.

Jonathan Fine of Jonathan Fine and Associates Architects will discuss the threat to Chicago's historic commercial corner buildings as part of the monthly Preservation Snapshots series sponsored by the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois. The public is invited to attend this free program (bring a brown-bag lunch) at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday, January 17 at the Claudia Cassidy Theater on the second floor of the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St.
"Hedrich Blessing: Painting with Light" is on view through March 16 at the ArchiTech gallery.

The Graham Foundation opens its 2002 program season with an exhibition of the work of Xavier Vendrell, professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Entitled "Retrospective Thoughts on Works in Progress," the exhibition presents a selection of Vendrell's projects in Spain and America from 1986 to the present. Vendrell has practiced architecture in his native city of Barcelona since 1983 and founded Xavier Vendrell Studio Chicago/Barcelona, a collaborative practice of architecture, landscape and design, in 1999. He will present a lecture, "Professionals and/or Magicians," at the exhibition's opening on Wednesday, January 23. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and the lecture begins at 6:00 p.m.; seating is limited to the first 150 people. Both the lecture and the exhibition, which continues through March 14, are free and open to the public. The Graham Foundation is located at 4 W. Burton Place; hours are Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Further details are available at www.grahamfoundation.org. Upcoming lectures include Robert F. Gatje speaking about "Remembering Marcel Breuer" on February 6.

The Structural Engineers Association of Illinois (SEA01) will hold its 2002 Trade Show on Thursday, January 24 at the Palmer House, 17 E. Monroe. There will be six speakers, and 15 vendor representatives available for discussion. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m., followed by vendor presentations between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m., and vendor exhibits scheduled for 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The show is open to the public and the cost is $5. If you wish to attend, contact SEA01 executive secretary Donna Childs at 312/372-4198 or Roger Reckers at 312/341-0055 ext. 17.

Architects & Engineers

The Prairie District Homes by Warman Olsen Warman

AIA
Catherine M. Baker, Landon Bone Architects; Lynn Boeke, Skidmore Owings & Merrill; Denis Patrick O'Malley, VOA Associates; Michael Lubbers, CUH2A; James Kaufman, Synthesis Architecture and Design; Douglas Zalis, DeStefano and Partners; Mel Persin, Mel Persin, Architect; Ramu Ramachandran, Skidmore Owings & Merrill

Emeritus
Paul Shaver, Shaver Architects

Associates
William McMillan, Antunovich Associates Architects; Hiromi Kagawa, McDonald's Corp., Restaurant Design Group; Michael Grage, Skidmore Owings & Merrill; Seth Ronig; Jaime Midkiff, Legat Architects; Michael Stopka, Paul Berger & Associates; Vuk Vujovic, Legal Architects; David Olgoli, Ph.D., Judson College

Professional Affiliates
Michael Mcnish, Pinnacle Contractors; Frank Clements, FASLA, Wolfl Clements and Associates; Mike Lange, Clay-Products; David Roe, Metro Design Associates; Donna Kelly, BizBuzz Marketing Communications

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Greening Chicago. Planning & Urban Affairs PIA. 12:00 noon; AIA Chicago. Bring your lunch; beverages provided. 1 LU/HSW

Corporate and Building Security: An Engineering Perspective. Corporate Architects PIA. 5:30 p.m.; AIA Chicago. 1 LU/HSW


Concrete Restoration at Unity Temple. Historic Resources PIA. 12:00 noon; AIA Chicago. Bring your lunch; beverages provided. 1 LU/HSW


Tour: New Cook County Hospital. Architecture for Health PIA. 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon; meet at the Walsh Construction trailer, 750 S. Winchester Ave. Limited to 30 participants. Hard-soled shoes and hardhats required. 2.5 LU/HSW

Point-Supported Glass Structures. Technical Issues PIA. 12:00 noon; Chicago Bar Association, 321 S. Plymouth Court. Lunch is available (purchase ticket in CBA Shop) or bring your own. 1 LU/HSW

Why Not Designer-Led Design/Build? Design/Build PIA. 5:30 p.m.; OWP&P 111 W. Washington St. #2100. 1 LU

Xavier Vendrell. Lecture to open exhibit of recent work. The Graham Foundation, 4 W. Burton Place. 6:00 p.m.; seating is limited to 150. Information: www.grahamfoundation.org or 312/787-4071.