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ANDREA RUGG



JON MORRIS



DON F. WONG

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Photographer: Don F. Wong



JERRY SWANSON

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## Staff

- Editor** Camille LeFevre lefevre@aia-mn.org
- Graphic Design** Rubin Cordaro Design  
r.christian@rubincordaro.com
- Advertising Sales** Judith Van Dyne vandyne@aia-mn.org
- Publisher** Beverly Hauschild-Baron, Hon. AIA,  
hauschild@aia-mn.org
- Photographer** Don F. Wong info@donwongphoto.com



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### AIA Minnesota Staff

**Beverly Hauschild-Baron**, Hon. AIA,  
Executive Vice President, Publisher  
([hauschild@aia-mn.org](mailto:hauschild@aia-mn.org))  
**Deanna Christiansen**,  
Continuing Education Director  
([christiansen@aia-mn.org](mailto:christiansen@aia-mn.org))  
**Jennifer Gilhoi**, Communications Director  
([gilhoi@aia-mn.org](mailto:gilhoi@aia-mn.org))  
**Camille LeFevre**, Editor, *Architecture Minnesota*  
([lefevre@aia-mn.org](mailto:lefevre@aia-mn.org))  
**SallyJane Mathias**, Exhibit Sales Director  
([mathias@aia-mn.org](mailto:mathias@aia-mn.org))  
**Tom Moua**, Financial Manager  
([moua@aia-mn.org](mailto:moua@aia-mn.org))  
**Dorothy Rand**, Program Coordinator/AIGA  
([drand@aia-mn.org](mailto:drand@aia-mn.org))  
**Judith Van Dyne**, Advertising Sales Director  
([vandyne@aia-mn.org](mailto:vandyne@aia-mn.org))  
**Amber Wald**, Circulation Manager  
([wald@aia-mn.org](mailto:wald@aia-mn.org))  
**Don F. Wong** Photographer  
([info@donwongphoto.com](mailto:info@donwongphoto.com))

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## About Our Contributors

**ILL BEYER, FAIA**, is a principal with Stageberg Beyer Sachs, Inc., Minneapolis. In 2000 he won a Gold Minnesota Magazine Publishers Award for his Talking Point column.

**ACK EL-HAI** is a Minneapolis writer whose books include *Lost Minnesota: Stories of Vanished Places*, based on his column for *Architecture Minnesota*.

**URL GILYARD** is a Minneapolis freelance writer.

**INA GREENE** is a marketing director with LHB Engineers & Architects, Duluth, and a member of the *Architecture Minnesota* Committee.

**ETTE HAMMEL** is a Wayzata-based journalist specializing in architecture, who also reports for *Wayway News* and *Architectural Record*.

**NE KING HESSON, ASSOC. IA**, is a Minneapolis-based architectural researcher and writer, and co-author of *Ralph Rapson: Forty Years of Modern Design*.

**BARBARA KNOX** is a Minneapolis freelance writer and editor.

**OBERT ROSCOE** is head of his firm, Design for Preservation, Minneapolis.

**ON F. WONG**, who shot this issue's cover, is a registered architect turned architectural photographer who has won two AIA National awards for photography.

# Summer Light

In early May, I traveled to California to pursue another of my interests, dance, and was reminded of how art and architecture frequently intersect during my leisure time. My friend Heidi Duckler was premiering her latest site-specific dance at the Herald Examiner Building in downtown Los Angeles. Designed in 1914 by Julia Morgan, the first woman architect registered in the United States, the Mission Revival-style building was one of Morgan's first major commissions for news magnate William Randolph Hearst (owner of, among other media, the now defunct *Herald Examiner*).

On the way to the performance, Heidi's husband, architect Dan Rosenfeld, gave me a tour of downtown L.A. He pointed out the site of the new State of California Department of Transportation building designed by Morphosis; we stopped at the Bradbury Building, whose ornate wrought-iron stairwells, elevator cages and balconies were featured in *Blade Runner*; and we drove down a street of fantastic historic theater façades falling into ruin.

Dan's firm, Urban Partners LLC, specializes in adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the *Herald Examiner* is on their docket. Before Heidi's show, we peeked into rooms that are now ad-hoc sets for film and television—a hospital waiting room, a police station—and the apartments that once belonged to Hearst and Marion Davies.

Heidi's dance began in the sumptuous lobby, moved to a newsroom set, then wound down several stairwells into the cavernous press room. Here her performers raced across catwalks, enacted domestic scenes on old couches and dragged each other from one end of the room to the other on a high, rolling contraption. Later Dan told me about other projects he's working on—The Ambassador Hotel (where Bobby Kennedy was shot), the old county jail, the Pasadena train station—and proudly added that, "Before we're done, Heidi should have danced in all of them."

Heidi and Dan's remarkable partnership and the blend of art and architecture in their lives is inspiring. When does business end and fun begin

if you're enjoying yourself and doing what you believe is meaningful work? The architects who worked on the projects in this edition of *Architecture Minnesota*—which explores the lighter side of the architectural spectrum, buildings for sports and leisure—would agree.

Projects include the Monticello Community Center, an ensemble of recreational and civic spaces offering something for nearly everyone in or near Monticello; an Arts and Crafts-style golf clubhouse in Washington; the Golden Gopher football club's new Hall of Traditions at the University of Minnesota; and a multipurpose park pavilion on Prior Lake. Readers for whom leisure implies quieter pursuits will enjoy the charming lakeside teahouse, the vibrant new St. Paul bookstore and the essay on the cultural importance and architectural significance of Minnesota's neighborhood movie theaters.

Given the magazine's recent features on such cultural crises as post-9/11 security concerns (January – February 2002) and Minnesota's shortage of affordable housing (May – June 2002), there comes a time when even editor/writers have to lighten up—although this issue's travelogue on the Agnes Martin Gallery might indicate that old habits die hard. How can I resist pursuing such enticing links between art and architecture, even if they occur "after hours?"

Still, it's summer. The garden, the hiking trail and the hammock beckon. Ah, but there's that trip to see Calatrava's addition to the Milwaukee Art Museum . . . and maybe a quick return to L.A. to see another of Heidi's works (and I haven't yet visited Meier's Getty Museum) . . . oh, well.



DON F. WONG

*Camille LeFevre*

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## Calendar

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The annual series features speakers from the fields of architecture, industrial design, graphic design and new media. This year's series focuses on experiences from the intimacy of the page to the enormity of urban spaces, from personal relationships with objects to shared encounters in physical and virtual places. Speakers are: July 9, Elizabeth Diller, Diller + Scofidio, New York; July 11, Tony Dunne + Fiona Raby, Dunne + Raby, London; July 16, Bruce Mau, Bruce Mau Design, Toronto; July 23, Hani Rashid, Asymptote, New York; July 30, Christian Hübler, Knowbotic Research, Zürich.

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## Tofte Cabin Wins AIA COTE Award



PETER BASTIANELLI KERZE

**IN RECOGNITION OF EARTH DAY**, AIA National's Committee on the Environment selected its annual Top Ten Green Projects: examples of architectural solutions that protect and enhance the environment. This year's winners included the Tofte Cabin, Tofte, Minnesota, designed by Sarah Nettleton Architects, Minneapolis. The project is also the recipient of an AIA Minnesota 2001 Honor Award. (See *Architecture Minnesota*, March – April 2001.)

The program, which began in 1998, recognizes projects that address significant environmental challenges with designs that integrate architecture, technology and natural systems. Projects are evaluated for their contributions to the site's existing ecosystems, connections to the surrounding community, use of high-performance technologies, energy use and sensitive use of materials and resources.

Nettleton's renovation of the 1947 cabin on Lake Superior resulted in a 950-square-foot retreat that is a model of sustainable design. The cabin's original site and adjacent trees were retained; natural stack ventilation through low and high windows cools the cabin; a super-insulated thermal envelope minimizes the load on the geothermal-heat-pump in-floor heating system; and the heat pump provides domestic hot water. — C. L.

## Walker Expansion Refined

**IN APRIL**, the Walker Art Center announced its updated plans for expansion and remodeling of its facility. The design team, led by Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, in partnership with Hammel, Green & Abrahamson, Inc., Minneapolis, was joined by French landscape architect Michel Desvigne and London-based lighting designer Arnold Chan for the presentation.



©HERZOG & DE MEURON

Highlights of the plan include a new entrance on Hennepin Avenue, with the building reoriented to face Hennepin and offer views of Loring Park and the downtown skyline. On the west side of the facility, the Guthrie Theater will be razed for a new sculpture park. The form of the expansion, an irregular rectangle featuring "random" cutouts for windows, will be clad in a transparent membrane of coated-glass-fiber fabric, which, when illuminated from within, will glow like a lantern.

Inside the facility, the plan incorporates new spaces for individualized learning, an expanded library and archives area, double the amount of gallery space, a 350-seat performing-arts studio ringed by new-media galleries, an enhanced auditorium for film/video presentation, and new shops, restaurants and cafés. — C. L.





# Exhibit!

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## Endangered Places

**THE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE OF MINNESOTA** recently announced its annual list of Minnesota's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties. This year's diverse group includes two high-profile repeat listings from last year, a lime kiln, homes, places of worship, a school and several businesses. For more information call (612) 341-8140 or visit [www.mnpreservation.org](http://www.mnpreservation.org).



G. A. Carlson Lime Kiln, Red Wing.



St. Rose Catholic Church, Cherry Grove Township, Goodhue County.

Summit Avenue Houses and Median, St. Paul (repeat listing from 2001).  
Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis (repeat listing from 2001, see *Architecture Minnesota*, September – October 2001).  
G. A. Carlson Lime Kiln, Red Wing.  
Malcolm E. Willey House, Minneapolis (now under new ownership).  
Old St. Mary's Church School and Convent, New Ulm.

Mount Hope Cemetery, Afton.  
St. Rose Catholic Church, Cherry Grove Township, Goodhue County.  
Western Grocer Company Building, Albert Lea.  
B'nai Abraham Synagogue, Virginia (see *Architecture Minnesota*, January – February 2002).  
Spina Hotel, Ironton (see *Architecture Minnesota*, May – June 2002)



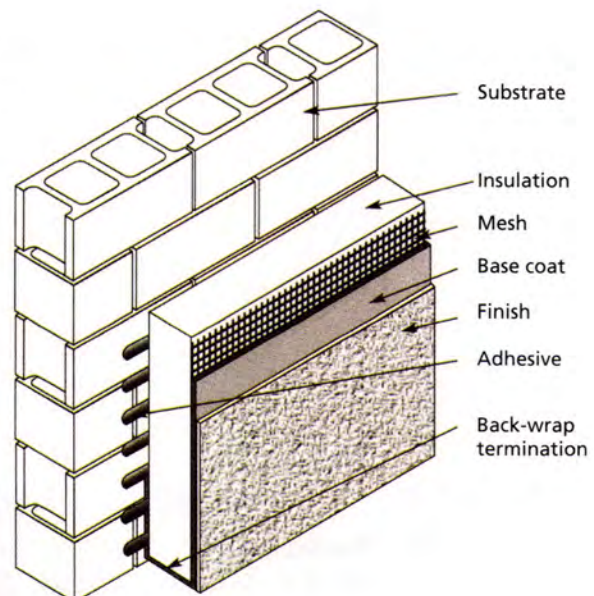
Western Grocer Company Building, Albert Lea.

### INSIDER LINGO *By Gina Greene*

#### EIFS

EIFS (pronounced "eefis"), an acronym for Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems, is more commonly known as synthetic stucco. Developed in Europe after World War II to repair war-ravaged buildings, EIFS is foam-board insulation covered with a synthetic base-coat material embedded with a fiberglass reinforcing mesh, which is then covered with an exterior layer that has a stucco-like appearance. Found on all types of construction projects, this exterior cladding system is literally a wrap around the building—a thermal blanket that gets high marks for energy efficiency.

EIFS also provides architects with the opportunity to create eye-catching and unique exteriors due to its versatility: limitless colors, various textures and the ability to be fashioned into any shape or design. While it may sound too good to be true, EIFS has a downside. Moisture can leak in and gather around windows and flashing, as EIFS does not allow moisture to escape. If not repaired, such moisture retention can inflict serious damage on the structural components of the building.







George Heinrich, photographer

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## AIA Minneapolis Chapter Merit Awards



*The Playwrights' Center: Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc.*



*Downtown School: Cunningham Group.*



*Minneapolis City Council Chambers: Skaaden-Helmes Architects, Inc., MacDonald & Mack Architects, Ltd.*

The first AIA Minneapolis Chapter Merit Awards, announced in March, resulted in three awards and three honorable mentions. Initiated to "recognize projects that tell a story of excellence beyond design, with submissions reflecting the variety of forces that shape a building," the program used the following criteria to judge the entries: budget/business; client/team satisfaction; community impact; design; environmental responsibility; and technical innovation.

The jurors were: Allyson Nemec, past president, AIA Wisconsin; Bill T. Conway, AIA, head, Department of Architecture, University of Minnesota College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture; Chris Stellar, architecture writer and editor; Mark Swenson, AIA, principal, Elness Swenson Graham Architects, and president, AIA Minneapolis Chapter; and Michael Lander, Minneapolis developer. Jurors spent an afternoon reviewing the submissions and a morning touring the finalists.

The three winners were:

- The Playwrights' Center: Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc., Minneapolis. "This was an exciting collaboration with the theater, neighborhood, artists and architects," the jurors said. "It was detailed to a high level despite a tight budget and serves as a beacon in the neighborhood."
- Downtown School: Cunningham Group, Minneapolis. "This project was strong in all of the judging categories, especially technical innovation, environmental responsibility, community impact and design," according to the jury.
- Minneapolis City Council Chambers: Skaaden-Helmes Architects, Inc., Minneapolis, and MacDonald & Mack Architects, Ltd., Minneapolis. "This project tells a story of a careful renovation, showing the change of use over time," the jurors commented. "Modern needs were cleverly added into an historic, symbolic space."



*East Village Neighborhood Housing Project: Miller Hanson Partners.*



*Minnesota State Capitol Rathskeller Restoration: Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc.*

In addition to the three AIA Minneapolis Merit Awards, three projects received honorable mention: East Village Neighborhood Housing Project, Miller Hanson Partners, Minneapolis; Minnesota State Capitol Rathskeller Restoration, Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc., Minneapolis; and East Side Neighborhood Services, Inc., Sjoquist Architects, Inc., Minneapolis.



*East Side Neighborhood Services, Inc.: Sjoquist Architects, Inc.*





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## Newsmakers By Bette Hammel

Architectural-history buffs, take note. Three of the Twin Cities's oldest firms began in St. Paul, one with a woman as lead designer. In 1922, architect William Ingemann opened a practice with his wife, Dorothy Brink, one of the first women to graduate from the University of Minnesota's architecture school. Later Milt Bergstedt, AIA, joined the practice, which eventually became Bergstedt Wahlberg Bergquist Rohkohl, today **BWBR Architects, Inc.** An even older St. Paul firm, **TKDA**, began in 1910 as Toltz Engineering Co., and by 1956 became Toltz King Duvall Anderson, now celebrating 92 years of practice as TKDA. The firm known as **Ellerbe Becket** was founded by Franklin Ellerbe in 1909 and later was led by Franklin's son, Tom Ellerbe, FAIA.

Having transformed the Grain Belt Brew House into its headquarters, **RSP Architects**, Minneapolis, is converting the neighboring 1893 wagon shed and 1913 millwright shop into the new Pierre Bottineau Community Library. Bryan Gatzlaff, AIA, principal architect, says the State Historic Preservation Office deemed only the wagon shed's structural trusses worth saving, so the rest of the building was demolished; a new glass curtain wall will face the garden at the Marshall-Broadway intersection. The millwright shop, its brick façade intact, will be renovated for public meeting rooms, book clubs and a kids' tech zone as part of the new library. The community plans to restore the little park's fountain when renovation is complete in summer 2003.

A residential icon designed in 1955 by **Philip Johnson** is being restored for new owners, Robert and Carolyn Nelson. Originally known as the Davis House, with a hilltop location overlooking Lake Minnetonka, it was home to the Winton family for the last 23 years. Although it has been well maintained, designer Suzanne Ritus of Miami Beach says she was commissioned to "bring the house back to its original state." Teak-paneled walls have darkened and marble floors need attention. New mechanical, heating and cooling systems will be added and a new kitchen will replace the old. With its open spaces, natural daylight on all sides, interior glass court for flowering plants and wide stone terrace, the 47-year-old house still demonstrates the modern timelessness of its famous designer.

The grand reopening last month of Walter Library, the 80-year-old stately fixture on the University of Minnesota's main campus, left Bill Beyer, FAIA, principal, and Drew Bjorklund, AIA, project architect, **Stageberg Beyer Sachs, Inc.**, Minneapolis, walking on air. As overseers of the complex restoration and renovation, they were justly proud of what teams of artisans, technicians, librarians, craftspeople, engineers, faculty and architects can achieve. Not only did the teams restore Clarence Johnston's classically elegant design, they also removed the stacks and inserted an addition for a state-of-the-art Digital Technology Center. With the library's green-marble pillars, grand skylights and ornamental plaster ceilings cleaned and fully restored, Beyer is convinced Walter Library is the most beautiful building in the state. "It's been a labor of love on all our parts," Bjorklund adds.

While traveling in Australia, **James Stageberg, FAIA**, and University of Minnesota landscape architect/planner **Clint Hewitt** (both with their spouses) spotted each other on a flight to Cairns. Hopping on a bus, they talked "Minnesotan" all the way to the Great Barrier Reef. Hewitt was invited to participate in a workshop at Sydney's University of Technology by the Society of College and University Planners. Stageberg was enjoying a "grand tour" of Australia and New Zealand.

## New Releases

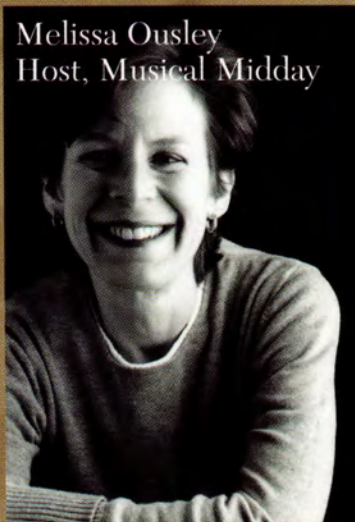
His watercolors of Minnehaha Bridges have been published in *Architecture Minnesota* (March – April 2000), have been exhibited throughout the Twin Cities and have garnered Victor Gilbertson, FAIA, a Minnehaha Creek Watershed Hero Award. Now his 101 paintings have been published as *Watercolors of Bridges Over Minnehaha Creek*. Designed by the Hennepin County Park Board and various architects and engineers, the bridges were constructed of diverse materials and function as pedestrian walkways, railroad trestles and freeway overpasses. Together, they make up a collection that's part of our metropolitan landscape and collective history. And Gilbertson's evocative watercolors commemorate for future generations this part of the Twin Cities built environment. — C. L.





# 89.3 WCAL's Musical Architects

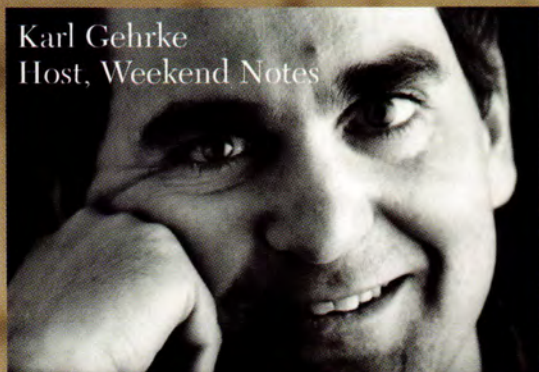
Melissa Ousley  
Host, Musical Midday



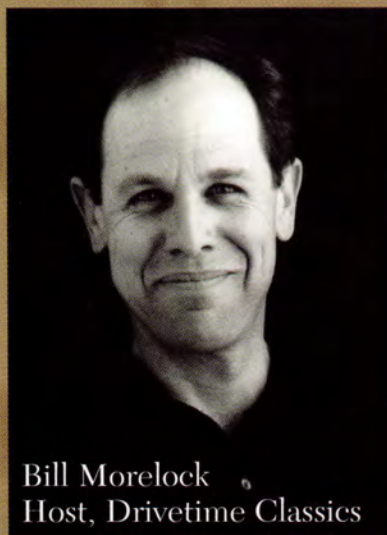
Steve Staruch  
Host, Top of the Day



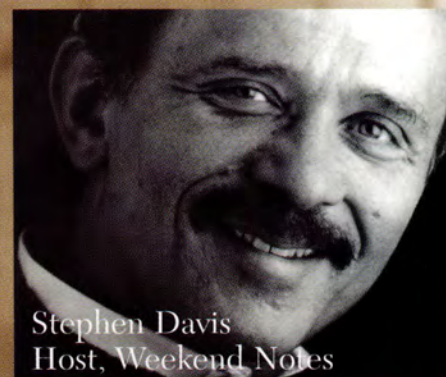
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# Children's Theater Company

Minneapolis, Minnesota

BY ROBERT ROSCOE

In the 1965-66 production of the Children's Theater Company's outlandish and surreal *Good Morning, Mr. Tillie*, various actors, props and backdrops were positioned to show only one side to the audience throughout the play: a monochromatic, mostly white façade. Then, at the sound of a whistle, everyone and everything pivoted, revealing brightly colored other sides. Suddenly, the stage was awash in a multihued frenzy of colors and wild patterns.

If one of the purposes of drama is to offer a prescient view of the world in which we live, then *Mr. Tillie* may have set the stage for the architectural controversy *dú jour*. In March, CTC announced its plans for the expansion and renovation of its current facility, which is connected to the southeast section of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The Institute's 1915 neoclassical architecture by McKim Mead and White, and its 1973 International Style addition by Kenzo Tange, have long presented a formal monochromatic façade to the public. CTC's proposed design, by Michael Graves Associates, Princeton, New Jersey, in association with RSP Architects, Minneapolis, encapsulates the south and east elevations of the CTC building, which was built as part of the Institute's expansion in 1973.

The purpose of the expansion, according to Teresa Eyring, managing director, CTC, is to provide additional space for existing, now-crowded programs and to create a new theater-education program for teenage students. CTC facilities, as built in 1973, she says, were an afterthought to the Tange expansion and no longer meet the theater company's needs.

Besides the programmatic impetus for additional space, Eyring notes, CTC has no identity as a stand-alone facility. "Most of the public thinks CTC is a part of the Institute," she states, "but we are in every way independent." Because CTC's existing layout is most conducive to an extension oriented to Third Avenue South, she adds, CTC and Graves felt a new façade could bring a "sense of life" to the neighborhood that Tange's reticent design does not deliver.

Just as in *Mr. Tillie*, Graves's design eschews the white formality of the existing buildings, proposing instead a postmodern ensemble of triangular forms, circles within squares and flat rectangular planes, all decorated in bright colors. Criticism of the design is two-fold. First, the 1973 addition by Tange has become a



The Institute/CTC complex's neoclassical architecture, and its International Style addition, have long presented a formal façade to the public, which Graves's proposed design would radically change.

well-respected (if not entirely well-loved) landmark in the local built environment. Tange's design exercised formal restraint in deference to the original museum's neoclassic stature. Many people feel the addition's status as a work by a 20th Century master warrants protection.

Thus, critics of the Graves design call it a colorized, Disneyesque addition to the existing building that would obliterate the Institute and CTC's main face to the public with a style indifferent to its predecessors. (According to Graves's design, CTC's west elevation, which faces the courtyard, and the principal interior spaces, such as the main auditorium, will remain untouched.)

Second, observers question whether we are seeing a slapped-together, quickly pasted-up design from Graves's early career—or leftovers from other projects. Linda Mack, architectural critic, *Star Tribune*, commented on April 14, 2002, that the design's "post-modern moves are out-of-date clichés."

The brouhaha over the Graves design, however, may actually be rooted in an important movement in the Twin Cities; a civic aesthetic developing around an urban conservation less in homage to historic edifices and more attuned to valued places that have served the public long and well enough to become our daily markers, part of our collective architectural memory.

*Continued on page 53*



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# Eight Days a Week

To enhance relationships with employees and congregants, corporations and megachurches are incorporating recreation and leisure facilities into their building programs

BY BURL GILYARD

**H**ey, baby boomers. Remember the basketball gym in your parents' church? Small and functional, nothing flashy, it probably doubled as a place for pancake breakfasts and potluck dinners. Or how about your father's office? Odds are it was a functional but drab space dominated by rows of desks and fluorescent lights. An integral part of families' work and worship lives, such church and office facilities fulfilled clearly defined functions, nothing more.

Today, however, these facilities are being replaced by sprawling megachurches and large-scale corporate offices whose architectural programs increasingly cater to the recreational interests of parishioners and employees. Architects who design places of worship are now being called upon to integrate expansive fitness and wellness centers in many churches. And although fitness centers are nothing new for corporate facilities, many companies are asking architects to look beyond barbells and design innovative spaces for both physical and mental relaxation, to keep employees refreshed and productive.

In both cases, catering to users' recreational and social needs offers the employer or church a way to cement deeper, broader relationships between itself and employees or congregants. This philosophy is perhaps best exemplified by the megachurches springing up in Minnesota's suburbs. The concept behind many of these churches is that spiritual fitness goes hand in hand with physical fitness.

According to John Justus, principal, Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc., Minneapolis, health-club-style fitness and wellness centers incorporated into church projects are a significant national trend in architecture. The master plan for HGA's Grace Church in Eden Prairie, for instance, includes a 54,000-square-foot Family Life Center.

The fitness and wellness complex will include three basketball courts, three volleyball courts, two racquetball courts, two exercise rooms with workout equipment and an indoor running track. The center will also have locker rooms, a snack bar, a game room for adolescents and a children's play area. "It's a mini-health club," says Jus-

tus, who works out of HGA's Sacramento, California, office. "Every church has a gym. This is a different animal."

With no shortage of health clubs across the Twin Cities, why would a church make an extensive fitness center a part of its program? "I think because the client feels sports are a very important part of relationship building," Justus says, adding that his clients view the fitness component as another way to attract people to the church. "It's an opportunity for people to invite others to their church, without having to attend church. It's kind of a secular door into the religious experience."

Justus notes that ultimately these projects can be seen as something more than mere places of worship. "The trend is to try and address every aspect of the believer's life," Justus

explains, by designing "a facility that's accessible seven days a week. A church becomes a community center almost."

In the same vein, Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Prior Lake is in the early stages of planning Shepherd's Path, a development slated to include five main components: the church, a significant fitness and wellness facility, senior housing, a learning center and a retreat/conference center.

"Their thinking is that the church of the 21st Century is going to be a lot like the church of the First Century," explains Peter G. Smith, AIA, principal, BWBR Architects, Inc., St. Paul. "The idea is that faith or religion is not just something that happens on a Sunday morning."

Instead, people will come and go from the church campus throughout the week, utilizing a variety of different services. Likewise, the client's interest in a fitness center reflects their holistic view of faith. "They felt it was an integral part of a healthy person's life and therefore should be a part of this campus," Smith says. "They see a real alignment in healthy bodies, healthy thinking and a healthy spirit."

"There's an understanding that wellness is good business, with a positive effect on employee morale."

*Continued on page 55*



## Oshkosh Water Filtration Plant

Oshkosh, WI

### LOCATION

Wirecut, splitface and sill block

### MASONRY

HNTB Corporation - Milwaukee, WI

### ARCHITECT FIRM

CDM - Chicago, IL

### ENGINEERING FIRM

2002 EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNER  
WCMA EXCELLENCE IN MASONRY COMPETITION



# SUCCESS IS IN THE DETAILS.

With every project, imagination and innovation are key. The Oshkosh Water Filtration Plant demonstrates that a careful, **consistent approach to materials and details**, and an integrated design, can be applied to even the most utilitarian of buildings. When HNTB Corporation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was designing the new facility, they turned to County Concrete to achieve their project goals of **economy and visual aesthetics**. HNTB chose wirecut and splitface masonry for the building's mass, while creative bands of light-colored sill block add striking accents. **Concrete masonry fulfilled the architectural goals** by giving the facility scale, rich textures, and visual compatibility with surrounding residential developments and the scenic environment. *What's next on your list? Show us your ideas and we'll deliver products to help shape your masterpieces.*

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# Disorders of Magnitude

BY BILL BEYER, FAIA

**M**y architecture fraternity's bowling team was the 1970 all-university champion. This was largely because I, as an alternate, only bowled one game. A decade later, I sponsored my future wife's bowling team, designing and financing the team T-shirts ("Bill Beyer's Bowling Beauties – Bill Beyer, Ace Freelance Writer: Spare Prose That Strikes the Right Balance"). So, as a former college champion and sports entrepreneur, I feel uniquely qualified to weigh in on current affairs in Minnesota sports.

The University of Minnesota recently reported on the dire financial state of its intercollegiate athletics. Because the Gopher football team doesn't attract enough revenue to support all of the non-revenue teams, there is a crisis. A new campus stadium will inevitably be part of the solution, reviving the golden glory of yesteryear and refilling the Gopher's coffers.

The Twins and Vikings also yearn for new stadiums. Between the three teams, at least a billion dollars worth of stadium cash cows, with separate revenue streams to feed the escalating big-sport greed, will be required to avert cold-Omaha-hood.

Because dome-covered baseball has lost whatever charm it had, a new pro-sports venue would likely feature a retractable roof. To avoid sticker shock, ballpark prices lately have been quoted as "roof-ready." But at \$100 million first cost amortized over 30 years, a retractable roof would end up costing at least \$6 million per year. Assuming a dozen rain and snow outs each year, the roof cost per rain out

would be \$500,000. For that princely sum, you'd think weather events could somehow be mitigated.

Our society is nuts for sports. We swoon for our home teams, get riotously happy if they win. Perversely, we also seem to measure our own self-worth in their pennants, trophies and medals. Awash in the recent flood of sports lucre, we've so far been willing to pay any price for such reflected glory. But measuring our regional quality of life by ballpark caliber rather than by parks and open space, affordable education, housing and public transportation is truly nuts.

My firm has designed several of the university's athletic and recreational facilities. My clients at the Department of Recreational Sports exemplify the true amateur's love for sports, recreation and fitness. They promote the healthy balance of body and mind, competition and fun that builds fully educated students.

The department serves 45,000 students at the Twin Cities campus with an annual operating budget of about \$100 per student. This includes 27 sports clubs (21 co-ed) for 996 dedicated student athletes who compete against other universities' clubs for the sheer love of their games, and who raise half their budget from outside sources.

In contrast, the annual operating budget for Gopher athletics is \$45 million, about \$61,000 for each of its 734 student athletes. Meanwhile, pro sports demand even more—and more—revenue. Between the need and the greed, we have to strike a better balance.

"Football: A sport that bears the same relation to education that bullfighting does to agriculture."

— Elbert Hubbard





JOEL KOYAMA

# Bridging Community

A new community center in Monticello brings together the city's diverse population and interests while generating downtown redevelopment

*By Camille LeFevre*



Project team (back row, from left to right): Mark Wentzell, AIA, Ron Ankeny, AIA, Michael Matthys, Mike Zenz; (front row, from left to right) Berry Holtz, Michelle Maiers-Atakpu, Duane Kell, FAIA.

**A** growing community at the northern edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area, Monticello is a small city with a traditional downtown and a booming freeway commercial strip. For years, community leaders sought to find a way to bridge both areas of Monticello, and to bring together the city's aging residents and new families, city functions and recreational activities.

Under the leadership of former mayor Bill Fair, the citizens of Monticello voted to support the design and construction of a new community center on downtown's Broadway

Avenue adjacent to I-94. Completed in 2000, the 82,000-square-foot civic structure, designed by Ankeny Kell Architects, P.A., St. Paul, not only links the old and new parts of Monticello because of its location. It also generates, and represents, a whole that's significantly greater than the sum of its parts.

Because of the myriad activities and functions the building contains, "It's a place for all the residents of Monticello to meet, connect and create friendships," explains Jeff O'Neill, deputy city administrator/community development director, City of Monticello. Gathered around





the building's connecting spine or "main street" are senior, teen and child-care centers, aquatics and fitness centers, community education and meeting space, city offices and council chambers, and the offices of the National Guard.

In addition, the community center has become "a great activity generator for retail and services in the downtown area, which was in a state of decline," O'Neill continues. "Part of what preceeded the development of the center's building program and architecture was a downtown redevelopment plan. The community center was one thing we identified that could breathe life into downtown. And that has certainly happened."

Appropriately, the design process began with intensive community input, says Mark Wentzell, AIA, design principal, Ankeny Kell. "We lunched with seniors, had pizza parties with the skateboard kids, held a design competition with high-school students, had open houses for people interested in the swimming pool. We visited with everybody in town."

"Buildings like this are about community pride, not just recreation," he adds, "so we needed to get the whole community involved." As a result, the Monticello Community Center "has something for everybody."

As on an old-fashioned main street, a variety of "storefronts" are located on the building's



JOEL KOYAMA

*The community center's design includes a curving form that symbolically embraces the town (opposite), a copper-clad light monitor and other forms that demarcate interior functions (top) and an outdoor wheel park for skateboarders (above).*





DON F. WONG

*The building's interior functions, including the senior center (top right), the City Council chambers (above right), the aquatic center (opposite top) and the gymnasium (opposite right) are lined up along a "main street" or corridor (above).*

primary corridor: the gymnasium and aquatics center; the climbing wall; the National Guard; child-care and teen centers; and City Hall. "The senior center is in a cul-de-sac because it's a little quieter," Wentzell says.

Each section of the building is also signified through specific materials: the gym is clad in precast concrete, the pool in copper; the meeting rooms are contained in a curving brick wing with glass; city offices are clad in brick and have a bay window at one end so people can view proceedings.

"We played materials and masses off of each other," Wentzell explains, "but the pieces of the ensemble are connected by large expanses of glass that provide visual connectivity. In this building, it's all on display."

Indoor and outdoor spaces also intertwine. The community room opens onto a terrace; the aquatic center on to a sundeck and a wheel park for skateboarders. A window at the top of the pool slide juts out of the building, putting the swimmer outside for an instant before

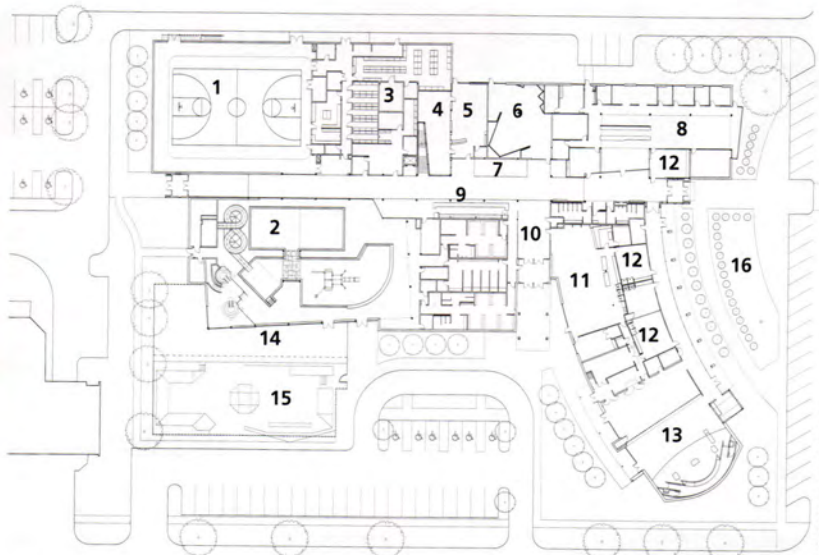
taking the plunge. A window into the second-floor fitness track allows passersby to see runners' legs silhouetted against frosted glass.

"The layout of the building and the combination of uses is wonderful," O'Neill says. "Just about every segment of the population is benefiting from the facility. All of the clubs in town have meeting rooms here and the building has become the town event space, with the high-school prom held here, a wedding every weekend, even craft shows."

"Our level of use of the facility is equal to or greater than we ever expected," he continues. "We're bringing people from a 40- to 60-mile range into Monticello. And the building is influencing redevelopment in this area. In and of itself it's a great facility, but it's also creating the momentum for a general resurgence of activity in downtown Monticello."

**Monticello Community Center**  
**Monticello, Minnesota**  
**Ankeny Kell Architects, P.A.**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**





COURTESY ANKENY KELL

## Main-floor legend

- |                     |                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Gymnasium        | 9. Control                        |
| 2. Aquatics center  | 10. South entry                   |
| 3. National Guard   | 11. Senior center                 |
| 4. Child play space | 12. Meeting rooms                 |
| 5. Child care       | 13. Council chambers/banquet hall |
| 6. Teen center      | 14. Sun deck                      |
| 7. Climbing wall    | 15. Wheel park                    |
| 8. City offices     | 16. Civic plaza                   |





JON MORRIS

## Best Seller

A new bookstore on St. Paul's Grand Avenue incorporates lively design cues to encourage literary interaction *By Barbara Knox*



Project team (from left to right): Eric Reiners, AIA, Dan Rominski, AIA, Nicole Semmler, Matt Brinza.

When Minnesota native Julia Coyte first got the notion to open a bookstore, she wanted something different. "Most bookstores are very square, very straight-edged," Coyte says. "I wanted a place that didn't put people to sleep." After turning to Architecture Unlimited, Inc., St. Paul, Coyte got the high-energy space she envisioned.

Called Bound to Be Read, the new bookstore on St. Paul's Grand Avenue puts a decidedly different face on all things literary.

Although the first Bound to Be Read store opened in Coyte's adopted city of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and another soon followed in Key Largo, Florida, the St. Paul store, which opened in November 2001, is the true





FRANZ HALL

realization of her dream. "I always knew I wouldn't open a store in Minnesota until I got a space on Grand Avenue," says Coyte, president, Bound to Be Read stores, which are owned by Hubbard Broadcasting. "That's just where it had to be."

Occupying approximately 15,000 square feet in the new Victoria Plaza building at Grand and Victoria, Bound to Be Read sets itself apart from typical book superstores with a series of carefully calculated design innovations. "We set out to create an identity for a new type of bookstore, something that wasn't all dark wood and stodgy," says Dan Rominski, AIA president, Architecture Unlimited

Stodgy it is not. Bound to Be Read pulses with energy, from its black-and-white-striped

columns to the bursts of red and yellow that punctuate the space. A lively children's area beckons off to one side of the store, while the storefront eatery, the Buzz Café, provides a cheerful place to nosh and chat.

Because Coyte felt the Albuquerque area had a paucity of children's activities, she planned a larger-than-average children's section in her first Bound to Be Read. After it was pronounced a hit there, the concept became an integral part of the stores' program.

In the St. Paul store, visitors reach the children's book area by walking over a bridge in a retail area stocked with toys and gifts. Featuring such whimsical, child-scale amenities as a boat, a school bus, a train and an ice-cream truck—all of which welcome little ones to climb inside

*A primary design feature of the lively bookstore, which includes a café (above), is the abundance of curvilinear forms (opposite), while a literary carpet guides visitors by the special-order desk to various areas of the store (top).*





JON MORRIS

*The store places special emphasis on areas in which children can enjoy books, including a stage for author readings or story time (above) and a train that doubles as shelving (opposite top), while adults are welcome to settle into comfy chairs (opposite below).*

and curl up with a good book—the area is a favorite with families.

Screened from view behind a curvilinear partition near the back is the story time corner, where children gather around a throne-like chair to eat snacks, listen to a good tale or perhaps meet the author of one of their favorite books.

That kind of interactive approach to books and to the space defines the store. Clusters of chairs scattered throughout Bound to Be Read invite people to relax with a new book. A homework table, surrounded by the store's reference materials, offers a quiet study zone. The

home-and-garden section includes a metal potting table. In each area, there's an information station that allows browsers to search for specific titles.

Because hosting community activities became so popular at the Albuquerque store, Coyte was determined to bring a similar schedule of events to the St. Paul venue. Accordingly, the project team provided space for a variety of activities. Tucked behind the Buzz Café is a small space dedicated to book clubs and an events area in the middle of the store is designed to host community groups, author readings and book signings, even musical events.





The exposed ceiling structure, lighting and drop-ceiling treatments help define areas of the store. A bank of "clouds," for instance, hovers over the checkout zone, while metal grids or curvilinear ceiling sections are suspended over other areas.

The lighting scheme provides further cues to the store's layout: pendants hang above the seating areas, track lighting illuminates the events area and playful fish-shaped fixtures accent the children's sections. Underfoot, a "literary" carpet inscribed with first lines from famous novels guides shoppers through the store.

Like a good Broadway show that smoothed out its rough edges first by playing out of town, Bound to Be Read has opened in St. Paul to rave reviews. With its lively welcoming design and open-door policy, the store has settled quickly, and quite comfortably, into Minnesota's book-loving community.

**Bound to Be Read**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**  
**Architecture Unlimited, Inc.**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**







JOHNSON DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHICS

# Nineteenth-Hole *Bungalow*

A tournament-players clubhouse in Washington links Arts and Crafts-style detail with a Northwest-lodge vernacular *By Barbara Knox*



Project team: Pamela Kilian, Richard A. Heise, AIA.

One part grand Northwestern lodge and two parts charming Arts and Crafts-style bungalow, the Tournament Players Club at Snoqualmie Ridge, Snoqualmie, Washington, was an “opportunity of a lifetime—and not just because of the budget,” says Richard A. Heise, AIA, president, HRMA, Inc., St. Paul.

The three-person firm, whose work focuses primarily on golf-course clubhouses, was asked by the client to design a 48,000-square-foot clubhouse in the shadow of Mount Si just east of Seattle, while maintaining an artisan’s attention to detail. “Working with Weyerhaeuser on this project was an amazing experience,” Heise says. “Their care, as a client, was something that we were really ready for and they responded.”

According to Arne Michaelson, former director, golf-course operations, Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company, HRMA was the clear front-runner for the job from the start. “Dick Heise and I had worked together on a very successful clubhouse

in Tacoma,” he says. “While it wasn’t on the same scale as Snoqualmie Ridge, that project certainly indicated the kind of quality work [HRMA] could do.”

Michaelson readily acknowledges that Weyerhaeuser was committed to creating a first-class facility in Snoqualmie from day one. “We wanted a premier facility that displayed a silent







JOHNSON DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHICS

strength," he says. "Driving up to this building now, you almost don't realize how incredible it is until you walk inside, when it all unfolds around you."

The clubhouse, which functions as the nerve center for a Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, is part of a larger golf community being built in the small town of Snoqualmie. The clubhouse complex, which includes full golf amenities, tennis courts, a fitness center, and family and ban-

quet dining rooms, is sanctioned by the Professional Golf Association. For Heise, that meant also working with the PGA to ensure the clubhouse had the amenities and systems to accommodate major professional-golf-tour events.

Inspired by the rows of Arts and Crafts bungalows found in nearby Seattle, Heise chose materials consistent with those of a typical bungalow: natural limestone covers the base of the clubhouse, while shingle siding extends to the roof.

*The clubhouse (opposite), inspired by the rows of Arts and Crafts bungalows found in nearby Seattle, has a number of amenities, including family dining rooms with spectacular views (top) and a pro and gift shop (opposite below).*





JOHNSON DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHICS



Featuring exposed rafter tails, the roof is pitched at a shallow angle—again, a hallmark of bungalow design. Simple trusses mark the entrances to the clubhouse. With its silver-stained siding and off-white trim, the building is a subtle architectural statement.

Inside, the “wow” factor kicks in. Post-and-beam construction reveals massive Douglas-fir timbers holding up 35-foot-high ceilings that allow for large windows framing spectacular views. Oversize limestone fireplaces add to the Northwest-lodge feel.

Sticking close to his bungalow theme, Heise chose American cherry woodwork, specifying a hand-rubbed finish. The doors, the handrails, even the joinery are authentic to the Arts and Crafts style of design, albeit on a large scale. The handrail for the main stairs, Heise says, is emblematic of the project as a whole. “That handrail was built on site by a master carpenter who worked on it for more than a month,” he says. “That shows the kind of commitment to quality this client had.”





JOHNSON DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHICS

To the uninitiated, the Arts and Crafts-style furnishings may appear the standard trappings of a private clubhouse; actually, they're original, custom-designed Stickley furnishings, rendered in American cherry with a hand-rubbed finish. Even the lockers in the workout area are derivative of the Stickley style. "We designed the furnishings in conjunction with the Stickley team," Heise explains, "adding our own details and making the pieces work for this space."

A collection of original art, curated to reflect both the rugged location and capture the spirit of the region's heritage, provides the dramatic finishing touch, along with a series of golf-themed paintings by Jack Nicklaus.

"It's not that Weyerhaeuser simply gave us a blank check on this project, but rather that they

had a commitment to do it right, to do a quality project," Michaelson says. "We're very pleased with how the clubhouse is functioning and how well it's been received by the community."

Meanwhile Heise, whose firm will have completed 115 golf facilities by the end of this year, reports that the Snoqualmie Ridge project had an unexpected effect on the firm. "Our whole office is into the Arts and Crafts style now," he says with a laugh. "When you work on a project of this caliber, it's just bound to make a lasting impression."

**Tournament Players Club at Snoqualmie Ridge**  
**Snoqualmie, Washington**  
**HRMA, Inc.**  
**St. Paul, Minnesota**

*Inside the clubhouse, an exposed pitched roof in the lodge-like bar area (opposite below) contrasts with the more intimate lounge areas (opposite top and above), with their Arts and Crafts-style details and customized Stickley furniture.*





ANDREA RUGG

## Tea Cozy

A playhouse enjoyed for generations is refurbished as a teahouse for reading, relaxing and refreshment *By Camille LeFevre*



ANDREA RUGG

Rosemary McMonigal, AIA.

In 1925, the Weavers built a playhouse for their 12-year-old daughter, Harriet, on their property near Pelican Lake, Minnesota. The eight-by-ten-foot structure was placed a short distance from the main cabin so Harriet could have privacy, even spend the night there if she was brave. It was called the "One-Step Inn," because of the one step up into the cabin.

Harriet grew up to have several children of her own. When her granddaughter Amanda turned 12, Harriet's son John Weaver moved the playhouse closer to the top of the hill and Amanda

used the cabin for six years. In 1997, Harriet's son Dr. Arthur Weaver bought the family's Pelican Lake property and hired McMonigal Architects, Minneapolis, to create a master plan for the unusual site and its structures. The master plan included building a new guesthouse, remodeling the main cabin, and relocating and refurbishing other buildings, including the playhouse.

"The thrust of the master plan was to decide what has nostalgic value and should be saved, and how to best reorganize uses and resite buildings," says Rosemary McMonigal, AIA, principal,





ANDREA RUGG

McMonigal Architects. The architect relocated the playhouse, nestling it into the trees in a flat area between the main cottage and the guest cottage.

She specified a new foundation, siding, paint and roof for the playhouse based on the design details established with the other buildings. But she kept the interior character of the structure, as well as the original windows and door.

Meanwhile, JoAnn Weaver, Arthur's wife, an avid collector of antique toys and a Beatrix Potter fan ("her death date is my birth date," she says), renamed the playhouse Peter Rabbit's House. Today, she says, the one-room teahouse is a cozy place for reading, listening to music, painting with watercolors and, of course, taking tea.

A retreat for both adults and children, Weaver adds, the teahouse is also a showcase for many of her treasures, including games brought back from England and antique toys. With its wood floor, mismatched windows, wicker furniture and bead-board wainscoting (left over from another project on the property that McMonigal designed), the teahouse preserves and extends a vital part of Weaver family history.

"We are very strong on keeping connections with the family," Weaver says. "We've often said that we know Harriet would approve of what we've done with the teahouse, since she was so family oriented and left us such a legacy of love and the lake."



The summery playhouse (opposite) now boasts new siding and a 1930s British tea sign (top), and is refurbished on the interior with bead board (above) used on another project.

#### Peter Rabbit's House

Weaver Point, Pelican Lake, Minnesota

McMonigal Architects

Minneapolis, Minnesota





DANA WHEELOCK

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA FOOTBALL TEAM ATTRACTS  
AND TRAINS RECRUITS WITH A NEW HALL OF TRADITIONS  
AND A PHYSICAL-CONDITIONING FACILITY

## GOPHER GOAL

By Burl Gilyard



Project team (from left to right):  
Randy Bolduc, Ira Keer, AIA,  
Richard Miller, AIA.

**T**he University of Minnesota football team was once a powerhouse. Under Coach Bernie Bierman in the 1930s and '40s, the Gophers earned five national championships. The team even won the Rose Bowl in 1962. Without a recent winning streak, however, the university has pursued other methods of attracting potential recruits to play football in Minnesota, including the expansion of the on-campus Gibson-Nagurski Football Complex.

In 2000, the Gibson-Nagurski building, which houses the team's indoor-training facility, was updated and received a new entrance: the Hall of Traditions, which commemorates Gopher football highlights. Linked to Gibson-Nagurski by a steel-and-concrete marquee and a skyway is the Golden Gopher Strength and Conditioning Facility, a new state-of-the-art weight-training gym in the Bierman Field Athletic Building completed in 1998.





DANA WHELOCK



About the Hall of Traditions, says Scott Ellison, director, athletic facilities, University of Minnesota, "We wanted the history and the traditions of Minnesota football displayed, but we wanted to do it in such a way that we could sell the program to recruits when they walked in." Thus the project team at Ellerbe Becket, Minneapolis, delved into the game itself for design cues, recreating a football field inside the hall.

"As you enter the Hall of Traditions, you're on the 50-yard line," explains Ira Keer, AIA, senior interior project architect, Ellerbe Becket. To the left is a rotating 21-foot-high, brass-colored statue of legendary Gopher fullback and tackle Bronislav "Bronko" Nagurski, who appears to be barreling down the "field."

The field is made up of green and white porcelain tiles, complete with hash marks, while an orange-brown tile at the outer edge of the hall demarcates the sidelines. At the end of the narrow 3,400-square-foot space is a towering goal post of custom-fabricated metal and PVC tubing, which marks the Hall of Tradition's "end zone" and doubles as a motorized projection screen.

An awards case along the north wall, constructed of dark-cherry and light-maple wood (to reflect the Gopher's maroon and gold team colors, Keer says), holds trophies, jerseys, programs,

game balls, built-in interactive video screens and player photos and biographies.

A glass curtain wall brings natural light into the high-ceilinged, two-story room. Open to the public during regular business hours, the Hall of Traditions is also used for special events, banquets and press conferences. Below the hall, on the building's lower level, Ellerbe Becket overhauled an old weight-training gym into 6,000 square feet of coaching classrooms for the team.

The new 12,000-square-foot weight-training facility is located in the Bierman building across the street, in a space once occupied by basketball and volleyball courts. For starters, Keer says, the project team tore out most walls on the building's south and west sides, replacing them with a two-story glass curtain wall that mirrors the Hall of Tradition's façade to the north.

To maximize space in the gym, Keer suggested adding a mezzanine level supported by three steel columns encased in impact-resistant foam sculpted to look like flexed biceps. "We decided to turn the columns into icons of pumped-up muscle," Keer says. Heavy-duty power-lifting machines and free weights are set up on the main floor, while lighter-weight aerobic-workout machines and exercise mats are on the mezzanine level.

*The new Hall of Traditions (opposite), which celebrates Gopher football highlights, is linked via skyway (top left) to a state-of-the-art weight-training and physical-conditioning facility (above).*





DANA WHEELLOCK



COURTESY ELLERBE BECKET

The Hall of Traditions (top and above) takes its design cues from the game of football and features an awards wall showcasing team memorabilia.

Two large photo billboards depicting play-action football scenes hang from the partition wall separating the new gym from the old basketball court; a series of acoustic panels, which double as maroon and gold banners, hang from the ceiling. Both capture the “pageantry” of football, Keer says, while controlling sound in the gym. “Three simple, bold and inexpensive design ideas—the columns, the banners on the ceiling

and the billboards—turn this potentially bland space into the drama you now see,” Keer says.

When the gym first opened, Ellison notes, it was the largest, most impressive such facility in the Big Ten conference. Though designed for the football team, today the gym is open to all university athletes. Together the new Hall of Traditions and Golden Gopher Strength-and-Conditioning Facility are the pride of the football team.

“Our design team really hit its mark,” says Richard M. Miller, AIA, principal in charge, Ellerbe Becket. “The project does everything it set out to do; creating one of the top strength-and-conditioning facilities in the country while celebrating the spirit of University of Minnesota athletics. The project will help recruit and train what we hope is the next generation of university champions.”

**Hall of Traditions and Golden Gopher Strength-and-Conditioning Facility**  
**(Gibson-Nagurski Football Complex)**  
**University of Minnesota, Minneapolis**  
**Ellerbe Becket, Minneapolis**





JERRY SWANSON

building resembles a country manor sited in a semi-rustic setting. Two gas fireplaces enhance the building's use as a warming house for ice skaters. Skylights near the peak of the 20-foot cathedral ceiling flood the interior with light. Sustainable-design strategies used in the building include non-toxic finishes, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, and recycled building materials.

In the end, both architect and client are more than satisfied with the result. Friedges reports that the pavilion is "a fabulous building that's been very well received by people here." Cornwall, in turn, says the project was in many ways an idyllic job.

"Because we had to work so closely with the carpenter and other subcontractors on the building details, I was able to experience that craftsman/architect relationship that so many architects dream about," he explains. "So for me, the pavilion was a fun project."



*A big house on the prairie, the versatile Prior Lake pavilion (opposite and top) has a residential feel enhanced by the building's homey wood-paneled interiors (above).*

**Lakefront Pavilion**  
**Prior Lake, Minnesota**  
**Bentz/Thompson/Rietow, Inc.**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**





ANDREW FLACK, BUZZ INC.

## Room with a View

By Camille LeFevre

The octagon, symbol  
of immersion and  
resurrection, shapes a  
space for considering  
Agnes Martin's  
minimalist art

**M**y first introduction to Agnes Martin occurred on Sunday, November 15, 1992, while reading the *New York Times*. Pictured with Michael Kimmelman's article, "Nature's Mystical Poetry, Written in Paint," was one of the most intriguing artworks I'd ever seen. It didn't matter that the image was reproduced in black and white. Between the horizontal lines of Martin's structural grid pulsed brushstrokes that conveyed both the emptiness and purpose of painted space; that offered the transcendence of places in which one meets the infinite and oneself—the desert, the prairie, the vast interior of the soul.

Several months ago, I met the minimalist painter during a symposium sponsored by the Harwood Museum in Taos, New Mexico, in honor of Martin's 90th birthday. During the three-day event, Taos cognoscenti and celebrities attended a dinner for Martin. Academics and curators from Yale University, the Pace Wildenstein Gallery in New York and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., provided interpretations and accolades of Martin's work. There were musical performances, film screenings, a gallery opening, all of it great fun.

But I yearned to visit the Agnes Martin Gallery at the Harwood, an octagonal room designed to house seven blue-and-white paintings



Martin completed in 1992 and donated to the museum in '94. The gallery is something of a pilgrimage site, "a place to encounter the sacred," as one speaker put it, akin to the Rothko Chapel (also octagonal) at the Menil Collection in Houston. Before leaving Taos, I set aside an afternoon for contemplation in the gallery and experienced the respite often sought but rarely found in the harried everyday world.

The traditional structure of a baptismal font is an octagon; similarly, entering the gallery through its portal, the eighth "wall," one feels immersed in Martin's work. On each of the seven white eleven-by-eleven-foot walls is a five-by-five-foot acrylic and pencil canvas in a silver-metal frame. At first glance, the paintings look like variations of pinstripe shirts or seer-sucker suits. Their giddy names—"Lovely Life," "Love," "Happiness," "Perfect Day," "Ordinary Happiness," "Innocence," "Playing"—contrast with their formalism, their structural rigidity.

In the center of the room are four square golden-wood benches by late sculptor Donald Judd. Above the benches is an oculus that filters Taos's legendary light into the room. Shifting from bench to bench, painting to painting, I realized how Martin's horizontal grid is an architectural framework for her bands of dappling color; an armature through which an expansive sense of emotion is manifested and released.

An archetypal balance of forces, Martin's work juxtaposes not only defined linear edges and soft brushstrokes, but also masculine rigor and girlish innocence; structure and freedom; simplicity and complexity; mind and spirit. There's nothing of the ferocity and indifference of the desert here. Unlike the work of her late contemporary Mark Rothko, there isn't any psychological trauma or portent of a storm rising.

Instead, Martin's work offers peacefulness, tranquillity. Created in a state of meditation, her paintings induce a meditative state. The longer I sat in the gallery, the more friendly her paintings became, the warmer their cool blues seem to be. Light suddenly intensified in the oculus and the room glowed. I remembered Martin's gentle clasp, her soft hands, her gleaming eyes.



ANDREW FLACK, BUZZ INC

And I saw her reflection in her paintings: a positive, elemental philosophy of life free of excess, manifested in disciplined work that not only celebrates states of emotion but shares them with the viewer. Just as the baptismal font symbolizes resurrection, so does the octagonal Agnes Martin Gallery, an architecture for paintings, provide a sanctuary for the reconsideration of art and life.

*Housed in Taos's Harwood Museum (below), the octagonal Agnes Martin Gallery (opposite and top) has become a pilgrimage site for devotees of Martin's work.*







LIEBENBERG & KAPLAN PAPERS, NORTHWEST ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARIES

## Screen SAVERS

*By Jane King Hession, Assoc. AIA*

While neighborhood movie theaters have largely declined throughout Minnesota, some, like the Suburban World, still celebrate the spirit of moviegoing

**G**oing to the movies has long been a popular American pastime. For generations, the moving picture has captured the imagination—and pocketed the spending money—of cinema enthusiasts young and old. Movies have come a long way from the first black-and-white silent shorts of the early 1900s to the full-color, computer-enhanced, wide-screen blockbusters of today.

Movie theaters have also changed. Today, going to the movies means driving to the multiplex—an architecturally undistinguished box generally located in a shopping mall or near a highway off-ramp. Although comfortable and convenient, one multiplex is, architecturally speaking, much like all the others. But this was not always so. There was a time when the theater itself was worth the price of admission.

Minneapolis, like most American cities in the early 20th Century, boasted a number of archi-

tecturally significant movie theaters, the largest of which, like the State, Orpheum and Radio City, were located downtown. It was only at the “movie palace,” so named for its highly ornamented surfaces and sumptuous interiors, that anyone could freely access and be comfortably entertained in such a rich architectural setting. It was, as movie historian Ben Hall described, “an acre of seats in a garden of dreams.”

But the movie theater was also a neighborhood mainstay. By the late 1920s, 43 theaters were open for business in Minneapolis neighborhoods. The theaters, often located along major streetcar and bus lines, drew most of their patrons from the surrounding neighborhood. The patrons, in turn, took great pride in their local theaters and loyally frequented them.

Although many of these buildings have fallen to the wrecking ball, suffered major renovations or been adapted for other uses, a few stunning





examples of the golden age of the neighborhood movie theater still stand in Minnesota.

Among the survivors is the Granada Theater, currently known as the Suburban World Theater, in Uptown—the first neighborhood theater in Minneapolis to show talking pictures. The Granada was designed in 1928 by the architectural firm of Liebenberg and Kaplan, which would go on to create hundreds of theaters in the Upper Midwest. It is the only remaining example of an “atmospheric” theater in Minneapolis.

Unlike the opulently ornamented movie palace, the atmospheric theater strove to create an exotic, usually open-air venue in which to view a film. For the Granada, Jack Liebenberg designed a Churrigueresque fantasy in which patrons found themselves sitting under a starlit Spanish sky. The illusion began on the street with a soaring ornamental stone façade that commanded Hennepin Avenue (then lined with sim-

ple one-story storefronts) and a glittering two-story “Granada” sign that drew people to the box office with its beacon-like brilliance.

Once inside the auditorium, moviegoers were instantly transported to an open-air courtyard in distant Granada, Spain. The effect was achieved through the application of faux balconets, balustrades, arched doors and windows, decorative grillwork, statuary and greenery on the theater walls.

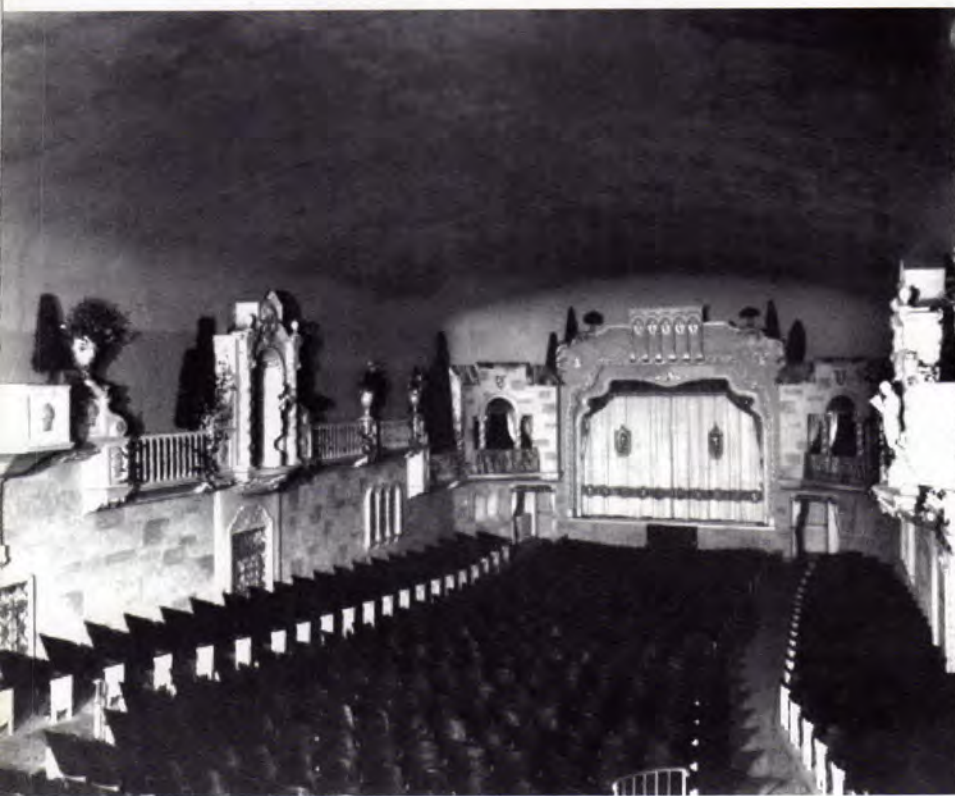
Above, twinkling stars and floating projected clouds moved across the deep-blue night “sky” of the vaulted auditorium ceiling. The escapism of the warm romantic setting, coupled with the glamour and magic of the movies themselves, created an irresistible haven for Minnesotans, particularly during the cold winter months of the Depression era.

Although the popularity of the neighborhood theater remained unchanged for many years, styl-



*The former Granada Theater (1928, opposite), was the first neighborhood theater in Minneapolis to show talking pictures and has been through several incarnations; as the Suburban World, it retains the essence of its original façade (2002, above and top).*





LIEBENBERG & KAPLAN PAPERS, NORTHWEST ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARIES

stylized space, it played a much more significant role in the life and times of its patrons. In the pre-television, pre-Internet world of the early 20th Century, the theater served as a conduit between small communities and the larger world as history unfolded in "The March of Time" and "Eyes and Ears of the World" newsreel footage. Above all, the neighborhood theater, one of the most architecturally distinct buildings in the community, contributed to the unique sense of place that helped generate a feeling of neighborhood ownership, pride and belonging.

After World War II, the number of neighborhood theaters began to decline across America. With the advent of television, more American families stayed home to be entertained. As urban populations shifted to the suburbs and interstate highways proliferated, new, more generic movie theaters were built in easily accessible suburban locations.

As movies became more spectacular through the possibilities of color, sound and special effects, movie theaters were no longer "gardens of dreams," but undistinguished rectilinear boxes. As revenues dropped off, many neighborhood movie theaters were leveled, retrofitted or modernized beyond recognition.

Those that remain continue to be objects of fascination and delight. Thanks to the enterprising efforts of some determined creative individuals, a few vintage theaters are struggling to regain their place in the fabric of their neighborhoods, sometimes in new and different ways.

istically it went through many evolutions. The atmospheric theater, which reflected the romantic themes and escapist settings of early cinema, soon gave way to new, even more exotic styles.

The discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922 spawned a rash of Egyptian theaters. Art Deco was a particularly popular motif for theater design that paralleled America's growing love affair with the stylized design and sleek materials of the machine age. Art Deco gave way to Streamline Moderne, which was an expression of the growing national fascination with high-speed travel.

Liebenberg and Kaplan designed theaters in all of these styles including the Egyptian Theater (1938) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the Art Deco-style Norshor Theater (1941) in Duluth and the Streamline Moderne-style Hollywood Theater (1935) in northeast Minneapolis, among many others.

While the main purpose of the neighborhood theater was to provide escapist entertainment in a highly



DON F. WONG





The Suburban World Theater, the former Granada, is attempting to make a comeback as a destination venue featuring art-house, independent and international films often coupled with food and live entertainment that enhances the movie experience. (A recent *Titanic* evening featured a meal recreated from a surviving menu from a first-class cabin on the doomed ship.)

The Riverview Theatre (1948) in Minneapolis has remained a single-screen movie theater for more than 50 years and entices people to step back in time via its '50s-era lobby and enjoy midcentury moviegoing. The neighborhood theater is still alive elsewhere Minnesota, as well. The Main Street Theater (1939) in Sauk Centre was recently restored to its original condition through a grant from the state of Minnesota.

The Art Deco-style Hollywood Theatre (1936) in Litchfield is the only theater in Meeker Coun-

ty. Others include the Gopher Theater (1940) in Wheaton, the Comet Theater (1938) in Perham, the Rialto Theatre (1937) in Aitkin and the 1930s LeSueur Theatre, in LeSueur.

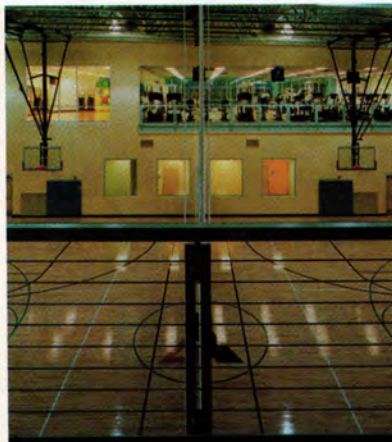
Despite these success stories, the neighborhood theater remains an endangered species. Yet now, perhaps more than ever, people need to reconnect with their neighborhoods, their home turf. "History has taken place here," explains Simone Ahuja of the Suburban World Theater. "People have very specific memories and a tremendous fondness for this theater."

Today, our neighborhood theaters need a whole new generation of people to come to the movies and create their own enduring memories. In fact, only their attendance will sustain these special places. As Ahuja says, "I hope people don't only appreciate these theaters when they are gone." Saving them is as simple as going to the movies.

*Elements of the Suburban World's original interior (opposite top), designed to resemble an ornate and romantic Spanish courtyard, made it through one renovation (opposite below). The theater has been further remodeled to function as a cinema dinner theater (top).*



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## endangered

Continued from page 19

In this mode of urban conservation, new building projects are evaluated according to their appropriateness within the network of collective memory. As such, the Graves façade is at odds with the architectural continuum initiated in the early 20th Century with McKim Mead and White's architecture, which symbolized Minneapolis's emergence as a cultural force with modernism at its core.

Minnesotans cautiously welcomed modernism, tolerating its midcentury blandness but eventually reacting against modern architecture's intolerance of urban streetscapes and its hard-edged seriousness. Today, however, modernism has become a mainstay of popular culture.

During the retro-noir film *L.A. Confidential*, moviegoers oohed and aahed at the modernist Hollywood hillside house designed by Neutra that was a scene location in the movie. In magazine ads, automobile companies position their sedans in front of modern buildings; they apparently now see these structures fitting into America's stylebook and as being appropriate for purveying product.

In other words, modernism has ceased to be cold, but is now cool. Modern structures built just after the mid-20th Century have accrued enough time and public exposure to imprint their attributes on our collective memory. Unfortunately, the public is warming up to modernism at a time when a great number of modern architectural landmarks have already been razed or are threatened, including, respectively, the Pillsbury House on Lake Minnetonka, designed by Ralph Rapson, FAIA, and his Guthrie Theater.

The Institute/CTC complex presents the dual possibilities of respect and opportunity: respect for the nearly 30-year-old Tange continuation and an opportunity to extend modernism's growth. If these are the virtues the public is seeking, they do not appear in Graves's retro-postmodern design.

In the recent past, architects have arrived at a design methodology by which

Continued on page 54



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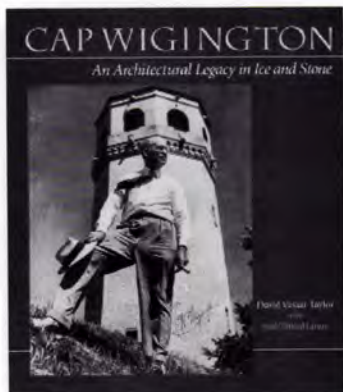
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*"An excellent portrait of a talented and long-overlooked architect who made a substantial contribution to St. Paul architecture. This well-written book adds significantly to the literature of the architectural history of Minnesota."*

— Alan Lathrop, Professor & Curator, Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota

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## endangered

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they can create continuations to traditional buildings; interpretations of original architectural themes, without imitating them, that allow the building to continue to state its original presence. Tange's addition to the Institute is an excellent example of this approach.

When asked how he sees his role in designing additions to significant works of modern architecture, Graves replies, "I don't distinguish [between old and new]. The city is like a living organism, and its parts need to change here and there. My work will be changed eventually."

"Look at Saint Peter's in Rome," he offers, as an example. "The building represents a succession of architectural attempts throughout the Renaissance—Bramante, Raphael, Peruzzi, Antonio da Sangallo and Michelangelo—all changing previous architectural intentions and a great design evolved."

Does Graves think he would endanger the architectural integrity of the Institute/CTC complex by his proposed design? "No, I don't see this as a problem," he answers. "We have to respond to changes in programs and attitudes." For CTC officials, the issue of respect for modern architecture is not so much a problem as an opportunity.

Eyring, for instance, says she is excited about seeing the work of McKim Mead and White, Kenzo Tange and Michael Graves in an ensemble here. Whether this three-part continuation should find more sense of respect if Graves would become a reversible Mr. Tillie is not part of her concern.

"Michael Graves himself put it this way," she says. "I would like to be around 50 years from now just to see what some future architect might add to what I and my predecessors have done." **AM**



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Marigold Ballroom, 1336 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis (1924-1975)

Dance halls sprang up all around Minnesota during the 1920s and '30s, the result of the popularity of jazz and an explosion of social dancing. At the peak, Minneapolis alone had more than a dozen licensed public halls for dancing. The Marigold Ballroom (pictured here in 1930) was probably the most famous.

Although a smaller club, the Marigold Gardens, had operated at the Nicollet Avenue address since 1915, a new and enlarged Marigold Ballroom opened in 1924 to the music of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. The 10,300-square-foot building contained one of the largest dance floors in the region.

On that floor crowds waltzed, cha-chaed, lindy-hopped, tangoed and polkaed to music played by the bands of a succession of musical luminaries: the Dorsey Brothers, Paul Whiteman, Guy Lombardo, "Whoopie" John Wilfahrt and many others. (A house group, the Marigold Entertainers, commercially recorded "Jealous" and "When My Sugar Walks Down the Street" in 1929.) Through most of the 1940s the Marigold was open for dancing seven nights a week.

Dancers walked into a cavernous Art Deco interior with a lounge divided from the dance area. There were two bandstands on opposite corners of the floor, allowing for one band to follow another without any setup delays. Dozens of six- or seven-sided chandeliers hung from a ceiling richly decorated with a lined grid pattern.

Around the United States, ballrooms met hard times with the decline of Big Band music and the rise of television after World

War II. The Marigold managed to hang on, undergoing a thorough remodeling in 1950 that removed many of the Art Deco details, replaced the two bandstands with one and added a distinctive neon sign.

A new maple dance floor, installed at a cost of \$10,000, allowed for effortless dancing, boasted the manager, because "the wood is laid in four directions, so you're always dancing with the grain of the wood." Nearly everyone noticed a big sign in the lobby that read, "Never Grow Old Dancing at the Marigold."

But the Marigold's core crowd was undeniably dying off. During the '60s, business reached a low ebb. The next decade brought a modest increase of interest in Big Band music of the past and owner Elmer Larson, who bought the ballroom in 1972, had high hopes for the Marigold.

Larson tried to attract younger crowds with a series of pop acts, including Melissa Manchester, Billy Joel and Bonnie Raitt. The lounge, now resembling something from an aging bowling alley, proved congenial to their music. The crowds came, although they alienated the Marigold's older clientele. ("The kids don't dance. They sit on the floor!" declared one ballroom dancer.)

The Marigold might have lasted a good while longer if the Loring Park Development Project hadn't claimed the block. After an emotional last dance on May 25, 1975, attended by many married couples who had met at the ballroom, the Marigold closed down. It was demolished in November of that year. A hotel and municipal parking ramp now occupy the site. **Jack El-Hai**



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