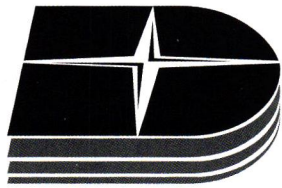


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# Comings and Goings by Tracy Certo



*Good architecture, like good literature and music and art can inspire like that: it can take you someplace you can't quite get to on your own.*

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**On the cover:** Competition entry for Berlin Centre of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung by Jean Nouvel, Heinz Architectural Center

### Looks like introductions are in order.

First let me say how pleased I am to be your editor. Second, excuse the golf clubs in the photo. (Long story, short column.)

I am not from Pittsburgh, but the ties are strong. As a kid, we drove here from Chicago, flat as a runaway, and I remember the thrill of entering tunnels, exiting to rivers and rumbling down steep, bricked streets to get to my grandparents' house. Pittsburgh fascinated me back then—how do those hillside homes stay up like that?—and it still does. That's why when I hear glowing praise from outsiders, such as those at the future of the riverfronts forum, (page 10) it's so heartening.

At that forum, Robert Yaro said that the dirty secret of economic development in America is that half of every graduating high school class leaves. The most successful places see that a new crop moves in. Upon hearing that, I thought of my own two sons, 11 and 8, who have, I think, a better than average appreciation of Pittsburgh. They love the inclines, the strip district, the Smithfield Street Bridge, and the fountain at the Point (where they think swimming should be allowed. Let's talk waterfront development, shall we?). One of their favorite places is what they once called the Andy "Warthog" museum.

Years from now when they graduate, will they stay? Will they go? Will they go and come back? Since moving here when I was 16, I've left and returned twice. My husband and I enjoyed life in California for five years before coming back eight years ago with kids to settle happily in Mt. Lebanon.

Pittsburgh has been good to us. Since returning, I have struck out on my own, writing newsletters, corporate speeches and local and national freelance articles. As a writer, I am fortunate to be able to explore my interests: children's issues and health, travel and the environment, golf at one point (that explains the photo) and architecture. Recently, I wrote about David Hoglund's (FAIA) brilliant design of the Alzheimer's unit, Asbury Place.

The latter was for Mt. Lebanon Magazine where I am a contributing editor and it was one of my most rewarding pieces. After my visit, I was so inspired that the story poured out of me nearly intact and in record time. Not only did I make a fast deadline, but I also won a Golden Quill award. Good architecture, like good literature and music and art

can inspire like that: it can take you someplace you can't quite get to on your own. That said, I must admit that the judges based the award not so much on the writing, ahem, but rather "the unusual treatment of an unusual subject matter." For that I thank David.

Another time I wrote about architects' favorite houses in Mt. Lebanon which was not only instructive but also a lot of fun. Paul Tellers, AIA and I toured a bungalow, Rich Bamburak, AIA led me to an impressive Tudor and Art Ruprecht, AIA to a Wrightian prairie style house.

It seems I'm a sucker for touring great houses. The first place we saw when we went househunting in Los Angeles years ago was the magnificent Gamble house in Pasadena. Name your price! we joked to the docent.

Although I majored in journalism in college, Intro to Architecture was my favorite class and I'd like to think I know a thing or two about it. Still, interviewing Joe Rosa at HAC (p. 6) was eye-opening. Sometimes it comes down to what you *don't* know about a subject. Along the way, I'll be asking you for your help. Count on it.

The day before I met with Anne Swager, Hon. AIA, to discuss this position, I ran into Bill Bates, AIA. It was a rather serendipitous meeting since he not only encouraged me to take the job but then told me he started *Columns* more than 10 years ago. (Hey, Bill, I took the job!)

It didn't take much convincing. When I met with the dynamic Anne, I was sold. Besides, she told me I would meet lots of smart, interesting and encouraging people and find it very stimulating. Who can resist that? Only one issue later, I see she is right.

At the members meeting, many of you shared your opinions of *Columns* and gave me suggestions, all duly noted and I thank you. (I must say, after a few drinks the ideas were really flowing.) I encourage you to keep them coming. Call. E-mail. Offer opinions or story ideas. Keep in mind I'm here to help you and I welcome your correspondence, always.

To those of you who have already welcomed me so warmly, I thank you. I look forward to meeting the rest of you very soon. A special thanks to Anne for this sweet opportunity. I hope to make the most of it.

AIA Pittsburgh serves 12 Western Pennsylvania counties as the local component of the American Institute of Architects and AIA Pennsylvania. The objective of AIA Pittsburgh is to improve, for society, the quality of the built environment by further raising the standards of architectural education, training and practice; fostering design excellence; and promoting the value of architectural services to the public. AIA membership is open to all registered architects, architectural interns, and a limited number of professionals in supporting fields.

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## Appreciation of a Good Scenic View by Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA

### Most of my family hails from

down the peninsula. The peninsula terminates in Thomaston, Maine, which is home to the Maine State Penitentiary. As a child, I could never sleep on the few nights that we heard some poor soul had made a break from the prison. I was always sure he would find his way to our house, break-in and do us all ghastly harm. This was not an idea from which my grandmother ever tried to dissuade me. An obsessive worry wart, she always seemed to believe that a little dose of fear would help all of us grow-up. A recent unexpected and extended stay in Maine made me realize how silly my childhood fear had been.



*Good transportation policy is more than safety, maintenance issues and vehicle movement. It is also about place, views, urban design and even sprawl.*

My husband, Bill and I with Ellen, age 4, flew from Pittsburgh one recent Saturday morning to see Betsy, age 21, who had decided to spend her fall break with her grandparents and numerous cousins in Maine. We planned to return on Tuesday. Unbeknownst to us, Ellen had the very beginning of an ear infection. Unfortunately, plane rides can super charge such infections and in her case that is what happened. By Monday, Ellen was running a high fever, listless and complaining that everything hurt.

I fretted that we would all catch her flu and fed her clear liquids. Tuesday she was much worse and we were off to a strange pediatrician and eventually the emergency room of the local hospital to bring the infection under control. Several injections and doses of designer drugs had Ellen back on her feet by Friday and we were finally able to return home.

It was a stressful time but our distress was somewhat mitigated by the beautiful ocean views and the peak color of the leaves. Since we were 35 miles (one way) from the doctor's office, the hospital, and the grocery store, we saw lots of scenery. On Tuesday alone I traveled over 200 miles much of it with my mother who reminded my constantly about how dangerous the roads are. Several weeks ago,

my parents were involved in a minor fender bender when two cars tried to simultaneously pass them. No one was hurt and my parents' car was not even damaged. However, the road did get clogged up with relatives when two different cousins and their families stopped to offer their support and chat about what could have happened.

Well aware of how badly I had neglected my job, I drove into town early on the Saturday after we had returned. I was amazed to find that the ramp to the 10th Street Bypass had finally reopened. My fear of toppling trucks as you make the sharp turn (part of the familial worrying tendency) was overcome with excitement that my commute would return to a more normal 30 to 45 minutes but something was different. It took me a few nanoseconds to realize that the jersey barriers were all on steroids. They'd grown overnight. We no longer have to worry about falling over the sides of the ramps although trucks in the next lane can still topple over on us.

In 1996, the Federal Highway Safety Administration passed new federal regulations for highway safety. They included raising the height of jersey barriers now renamed F barriers to accommodate the height of SUV's. Unless equally crash resistant barriers can be found, they will be used across the Fort Pitt Bridge. We might be safer but our views of the rivers will be nonexistent and our vista of the city as you come through the tunnels will be greatly restricted. The Riverlife Task Force is working on possible alternative solutions. I know they will pull out all the stops and ask for our help.

In the meantime, I can't help but wonder how much better off we would be if we stopped thinking one solution suits all. Good transportation policy is more than safety, maintenance issues and vehicle movement. It is also about place, views, urban design and even sprawl. Let's take off the blinders.





## Your Two Cents (and about 750 words)

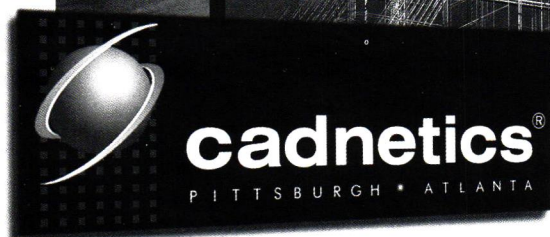
*Your Viewpoints and Opinions Are Needed!*



**C**olumns is launching a new feature with a catchy name that we haven't yet thought of. Here's the idea: a full page each issue will be an opinion piece written by you similar to "My Turn" in Newsweek. You can sound off on an issue or express an opinion or viewpoint on anything architectural: urban planning, riverfront development, green building, you name it. All we ask is that you keep your piece to 750 words or less and submit a photo, formal or otherwise.

In addition, if you think of a catchy name for the space, then you'll win a wonderful prize that we haven't come up with yet. (Just a thought but maybe "In Addition" would work?)

As long as we're in the planning stages and ripe for ideas, now's the time to submit. Any issue, any viewpoint, 750 words. Email to [tcerto@adelphia.net](mailto:tcerto@adelphia.net) or call ahead to discuss at 563-7173.



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# Changes at the Heinz Architectural Center: by Tracy Certo

*New Curator + New Space = Big Ideas*

Joseph Rosa is talking folds, blobs and boxes. This is not, as one might think, in reference to the renovations at the Heinz Architectural Center which the new curator is overseeing. Now that the Frank Lloyd Wright office is gone and a new gallery is in its place, the total exhibit space has jumped from 2700 to 4000 square feet. "That will allow for better use of space," says Rosa. "It's convertible space where we can now build installations, and it will provide more flexibility with exhibits and bigger shows."

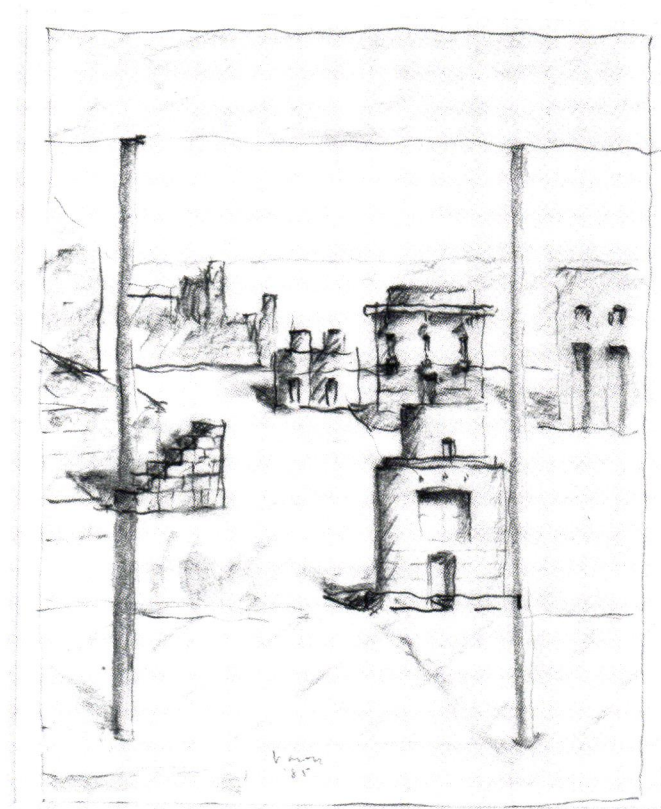
And that is what Rosa's folds, blobs and boxes are in reference to: an upcoming show, about architects in the digital age. Opening in February, the show will illustrate the rapid evolution of architecture in the computer era with sketches and models as well as computer-generated drawings and CD-ROMs.

"There's a very big shift in architecture with grads coming out of school today who are very computer literate," says Rosa, who earned his master's degree in architecture from Columbia in 1979, before the computer era. "It's changing the playing field," he adds, to the point that computer-influenced design is now becoming mainstream.

It's the digital era that is producing "endless technical variations" of materials such as slumped glass—the 10-foot-high walls that resemble wrinkled paper in the new Conde Nast restaurant, for instance—and ball-hammered aluminum. It's avant-garde architecture, he says, coming from architects such as Greg Lynn at Yale and Peter Eisenman, FAIA. It's folds. It's blobs. It's boxes.

Rosa wants people to know that "the same technology that goes into designing sneakers also goes into designing buildings." He has just returned from the Venice Biennale where, he mentions off-handedly, he saw "a lot of blobs."

Blobs? A good example is Gehry's Experience Music Project in Seattle. Supple, morphed, engulfing you—with few or no square corners.



**Michael Graves, FAIA sketch for "Industrial Landscape Mural", Environmental Education Center, Liberty State Park, Jersey City, New Jersey 1985. Graphite on tracing paper. Heinz Architectural Center.**

Folds are like the multiple pleats or flutes on a column. An example is the building exterior of the Staten Island Science Center.

And boxes? A reconceived computer-based box, such as Preston Scott Cohen's Terminal House.

The key to all of them is the computer and the way it's shaping things.

His show will introduce the public to the trends in the digital age and in the process, no doubt, surprise and amaze and provoke reaction.



The goal for Rosa and assistant curator Tracy Myers is to offer shows that enlighten yet challenge at the same time. They want to make architecture accessible yet raise serious questions about current trends such as this one.

As Myers points out, they are encouraged by the success of the Carnegie International which proves that people are willing to push their own envelopes. Myers' current show, *Aluminum in Architecture*, ("a show without a colon," she cracks) is now open in the renovated space.

That space includes the new gallery with the same Belgian linen panels covering the walls, dark oak woodwork, and cove ceilings. Walls and doors have been reconfigured, creating a more efficient and circular flow throughout the space. As for the Frank Lloyd Wright office, it has been painstakingly dismantled and is in secure, climate-controlled storage until they devise a better way to exhibit and interpret it. For insurance reasons, the storage location can't be revealed.

### Paving the Way for the Eureka Moment

Since opening in 1991, HAC's three main areas of focus have been history, the recent past and the near future, says Rosa. The historical has been emphasized more than the others but things should balance out soon, he says. Every curator has his or her own interests, and both Rosa and Myers happen to be in contemporary architecture. Myers defines that as something from "the last ten years or the last 10 minutes" as opposed to mid-century.

With the renovated gallery space allowing two shows simultaneously, one objective is to juxtapose two different kinds of shows. That way, a visitor interested in seeing one show is exposed to something different in the other and hopefully, that will spark interest—maybe even what Myers dubs a "Eureka moment." That moment of illumination, when someone's eyes light up while seeing a show, is the kind of thing that sets Myers' pulse racing. Although she would like more people to understand and appreciate architecture, she knows that's not always the case.

"Architecture is the most experienced but the least understood of the arts," says Rosa. "Many educated people still

think architecture is about classical columns and a pattern book."

"We want people to pay attention, to better understand what architecture and design is about, says Myers. "They have a right and a reason to be interested," says Myers. "They should care."

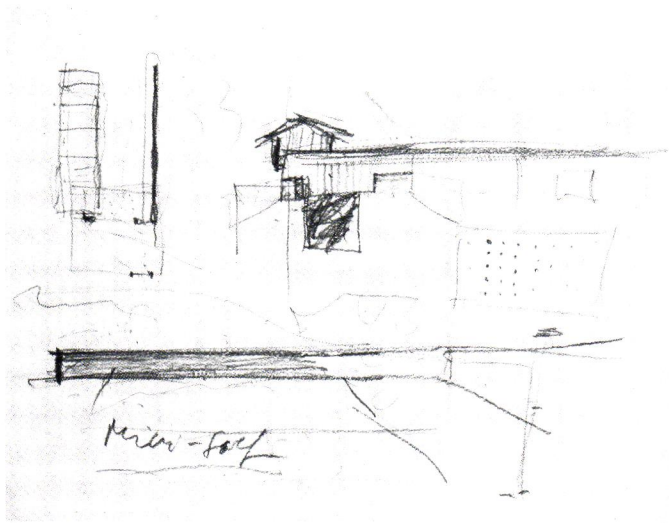
Part of HAC's mission is to generate and foster that kind of public understanding and appreciation. Not only will it benefit architects but it will also benefit Pittsburgh. Hence their part in the forum on the Future of Pittsburgh's Riverfronts, similar to a previous one on the controversial issue of riverboat gambling that HAC also co-sponsored.

Their jobs are made easier by the strong relationship that exists here in Pittsburgh between the AIA, CMU's School of Architecture and their center. "It's unique, says Rosa, who has worked in other cities, notably D.C., and has never seen anything like it. "We all have similar goals," he says

*There's a buzz about Pittsburgh already, they say, and they would like to capitalize on that. Pittsburgh should be a destination point for architects and those interested in architecture, says Rosa.*



**The new curator of Carnegie Museum of Art's Heinz Architectural Center, looks forward to taking the vision of his predecessors to the next level. (See dossier, p. 23)**



**Herzog & de Meuron Sketch for "House for an Art Collector," Therwil, Switzerland, 1985 Graphite and charcoal on computer paper. Heinz Architectural Center.**

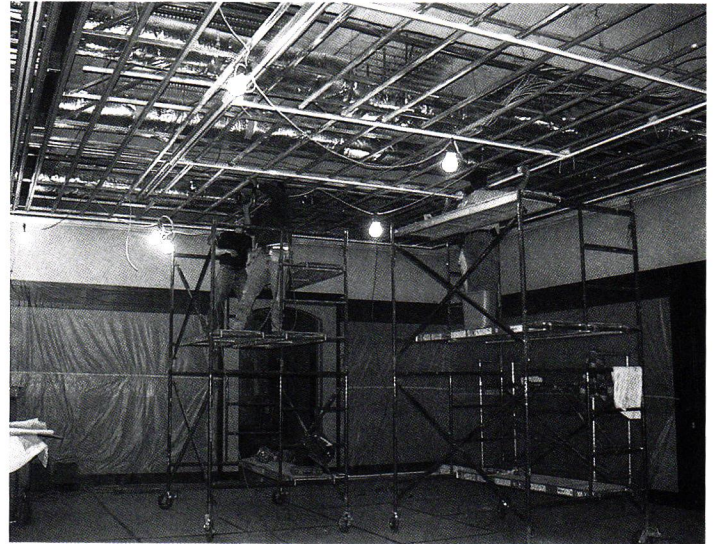
of the three groups, "although the objectives may be different, we all understand and respect them."

There's no "turf guarding" as Myers interjects. Joe agrees, crediting Anne Swager, AIA Pittsburgh executive director as being the kind of leader who has that bigger picture mentality and inspires cooperation in others.

Generating local enthusiasm and visibility among architects, students and the public is one goal; another is achieving national prominence. The Carnegie Museum of Art is the only museum in the country to have a dedicated space of this scale for architecture. (The entire HAC comprises 17,000 feet, including the storage space.)

From its founding in 1990 with a \$10 million grant from the Drue Heinz Foundation, HAC was never meant to be an architectural archive. Instead, the objective is to further appreciation of architecture through inspiring exhibits, films, lectures and programs.

The center will now include two shows a year plus a traveling exhibit and the regular publishing of brochures and catalogues. A twice-a-year mailer featuring shows and lectures will also be printed and sent not only locally but also



**The new gallery will allow for better use of space.**

to other architectural firms outside the region and to relevant universities.

With the additional square footage and the potential for bigger shows, HAC can now generate more interest on a national level. "We want to establish a cultural identity that is more widely comprehended," says Rosa. Already HAC has a national reputation and presence that they want to maintain if not expand. "We're getting there, happily," he adds.

There's a buzz about Pittsburgh, they say, and they would like to capitalize on that. Pittsburgh should be a destination point for architects and those interested in architecture, says Rosa. So if there's a layover at the airport, he suggests that a visitor can use the time wisely to visit the Heinz Architectural Center.

If they're like most visitors, they'll be impressed as soon as they enter the three-story space with its "stucco lustrato" walls, smooth pigmented plaster in a dramatic mango-mustard color. Like the exhibits they want to create, the space that is carved within the Carnegie Museum of Art is bold and welcoming and challenging all at once. And now, with the additional gallery, it could be that much more.



## Gotta Aluminate by Tracy Certo

*Tracy Myers, assistant curator*

Tracy Myers had her own Eureka moment years ago when she took off from her job as a paralegal one afternoon to tour the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There, she was struck suddenly and overwhelmingly with the desire to become an art historian. For the next seven years, she worked nights while earning her masters in art history at the City University of New York. As she was pursuing her Ph.D. in her penultimate semester, the 34-year-old art historian took a course in the history of architecture. And, boom! It was a déjà vu Eureka moment all over again. "It totally turned me around," she says.

Her studies in architectural history led to her job as a directorial assistant at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. There she met Dennis McFadden, then HAC's curator, who offered her the job of assistant curator in 1997. Today in a neat twist of irony, she overlooks the massive copper window from the Cooper Hewitt building where she once worked, from her office at HAC.

The Lancaster, PA, native is high-energy, smart and hardworking. Her work extends beyond the boundaries of the Carnegie Museum, into the Hill District, for instance, where she is involved with the Coalition for Healthy Urban Habitat. That led to a cover story of her in *In Pittsburgh* last Fall where she was quoted as saying: "I have a deep sense of populism. Museums are mostly white institutions. There's a perception that they—all museums, not just this one—are buildings only certain people go to. It's important for me to make a connection between our institution and those people in the city who don't think of the Carnegie as theirs." ("Sometimes outsiders make the best Pittsburghers," the author enthused.)

As assistant curator, Myers understands her role is also one of an advocate for architecture. She is emphatic about the impact of architecture on everyday life and how people not only should care about it but also should understand it.



**Tracy Myers**

"Good design is necessary," says Myers, echoing AIA philosophy. And with the expansive burst of new construction in Pittsburgh the past year, design is front and center in the news. The time has never been better to get this message across, she says.

On this particular day, like many others, the South Side resident is rather crazed, she admits, trying to get the aluminum in architecture exhibit together. She doesn't have a photo of herself to use in this issue—she suggests a sketch of a stick figure with glasses. (It would work.) Later, she fires off a prompt email response to *Columns* then signs off with typical flair. "Gotta aluminate!" Which kind of sums up her philosophy right there.

# Developing a Master Plan for the Riverfronts: by Tracy Certo

*Forum brings together architects, planners, and the public*

**C**elebrate the nature of the rivers. Make better connections to the neighborhoods. Encourage everyday activities on the rivers. Honor the history of Pittsburgh.

These are four objectives of the Riverfront Task Force Committee, led by Alex Krieger, FAIA, of Chan Krieger & Associates, that were discussed at the forum on the future of Pittsburgh's Riverfronts in September. (Look for another forum this month.)

The basic message? Think big, as Krieger told the gathering of the several hundred at the Lecture Hall of the Carnegie Museum. Riverfront trails are just a first step, he said. Pittsburgh should go beyond that first step and imagine the many possibilities. He then presented a myriad of ideas from other cities, from Portland to Paris, in an inspiring slide show. At one point he juxtaposed a slide of the dilapidated Lawrence Paint Company building with a slide of Gehry's Bilbao museum. Think big indeed.

"The message was very clear: to keep our standards high and increase the quality level of whatever we do," said Steve Quick, the AIA rep on the Urban Design Committee. "I very much believe in that," he added. "My hope is that out of this will come a commitment by everyone involved to really seek the best. What's been shown by Chan Krieger and the design team is that there's a tremendous potential here."

"I haven't seen an idea about transforming the city with as much potential to be worth everyone's effort," said Roxanne Sherbeck, AIA, of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, the local architect firm on the project. "There are a lot of people really interested in this."

Getting a fresh and encouraging perspective from outside experts helps, said Joseph Rosa, whose HAC supplied the meeting place. Due to better than expected attendance, the room was changed to the Lecture Hall. "This put us into context," said Joe Rosa. "We got a fresh perspective from some who haven't been here before."

Sherbeck agreed. "It was really interesting to hear people from other places give a fresh look at Pittsburgh's situation and compare it to other cities," she said. "We may have heard it before but it needs to be reinforced. It's a big effort and a big change in how we think about ourselves. We need to bolster it in every way we can."

Robert Yaro, executive director, Regional Plan Association in New York, talked about the need for companies to attract the most highly skilled workers. They, in turn, are attracted to live in cities where the quality of life is best.

"Pittsburgh's challenge," he said, "is to focus and capitalize on the city's unique cultural, educational and natural resources."

The revitalization of cities is going on nationwide and worldwide, said Yaro, and the focus is on the rivers. In this post-industrialized era, when factories that used to line rivers are being torn down, space for redevelopment is available. Yaro cited many cities, such as Chattanooga, Cleveland and Columbus that are undergoing or have undergone renewal.

As for Pittsburgh? "This is a spectacular setting for a city," he said, adding that there's almost a mystical quality to it. An advantage to its compact and self-contained nature is that there's less sprawl, he noted.

The potential is here, he said. And the key? "The dirty secret of economic development in America is that half of every graduating high school class leaves town. The most successful places see that a new crop moves in."

The forum differed in format from the previous brainstorming session in June, focusing instead on examples of what other cities have done. After a roundtable discussion of all speakers, moderated by CMU professor Richard Florida, public discussion took place.

The Riverfront Task Force co-sponsored the gathering with the Heinz Architectural Center offering the place and brochure mailings, and AIA offering its mailing list and easy sign-up for LU's for architects.

*"What's been shown by Chan Krieger and the design team is that there's a tremendous potential here."*



### Summary of Recurring Themes

In June, the Riverfront Task Force held its first Riverlife Brainstorm Session. The following, a summary of issues raised there, was distributed at the forum on Sept. 23.

### The Image of the Rivers

- Recast Pittsburgh as a riverfront city. Promote the view of Pittsburgh as a waterfront place through activity, design, publication, etc.
- Emphasize the importance of vistas and views both of the city and rivers and from the Downtown and the rivers.
- Experience the riverfronts more on a multitude of levels. We need places to dangle our feet in the water. We need places to get in and out of the river. We need to be able to experience the water.
- Celebrate Pittsburgh as a "City of Bridges."

### The Use of the Rivers

- Complete the trail system around the rivers.
- Locate additional uses on and adjacent to riverfront trails.
- Promote connections to the neighborhoods.
- Provide more access to the riverfront for recreational boaters.
- Provide overnight docking facilities for visitors.
- Propose three-mile no-wake/low-wake zone to create a "Pittsburgh Harbor".
- Review jurisdiction issues and enforcement of safe boating regulations.
- Emphasize maintenance and clean-up of rivers.

### River Related Development

- Utilize the reality of the river environment as an inspiration for design. Riverfront development has an obligation to address the river with a "front."
- Activate streets and public spaces.
- Hard wall edges along the riverfronts create wake problems.
- Existing edges are an impediment to getting to the water.
- Provide higher density riverfront in areas of greater urban concentration.
- Desire for more downtown and river-connected housing.
- Use mixed-use approach to development, not 'single-



**Bohlin Cywinski Jackson rendering**

use' programming.

- The multi-use riverfront: riverfronts not just for walking or biking, but for eating, sitting, etc. Connect a series of spaces, not merely a promenade along the river.

### Connections to the River

- Safety: the need for a density of people for feeling of safety.
- Accessibility: Not simply access points, but full connectivity for the disabled. Provide more activity and visual identity to Pittsburgh related to the rivers.
- More river-related programming. Overall, more downtown and riverfront activities in addition to the Arts Festival and the Regatta.
- LRT service extended and promoting public transit throughout the region.
- Water shuttle/taxi service.
- Review/revise plans for riverfront roads/highways.

### Additional Recommendations

- Expand the scope of the Design Team's study areas to include more of the rivers.
- Expand the outreach of the Riverlife Task Force to get broader participation throughout the region from groups and communities that are often underrepresented.

# Building an Earth Friendly House

by Gary P. Moshier AIA

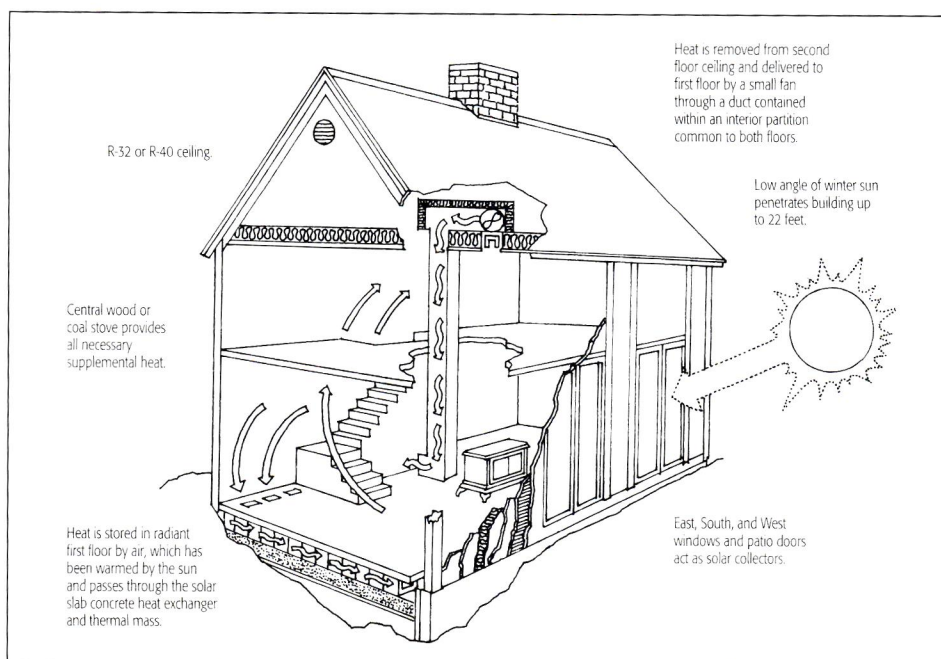
## Review of "The Natural House: A Complete Guide to Healthy, Energy Efficient, Environmental Homes" by Daniel D. Chiras

**T**he *Natural House: A Complete Guide to Healthy, Energy Efficient, Environmental Homes* by Daniel D. Chiras starts out as the story of one man's house, but ends up as a thorough and well organized resource guide for anyone wanting to design and/or build an earth friendly house. Chiras, with a Ph.D. in physiology, teaches sustainability and biology courses at the Universities of Colorado and Denver. The fact that he has authored textbooks and books on sustainability and global environmental policy is evident as he tackles some relatively complex techniques and concepts and organizes and illustrates them to be easily understood by the uninitiated. With 16 chapters organized in three parts, the book can be cherry picked for specific information as easily as read from cover to cover as an introduction to the art and science of building a natural house.

Part I: The Sustainable Imperative, is the manifesto for both the author's house and the Green Building movement. Part II: Choices is 9 chapters, each discussing a different structural and envelope system. All of the eco-favorites are ad-

dressed, including rammed earth, straw bale, adobe, and log homes. Chiras examines each in a thorough manner including the history, pitfalls and strengths of the systems. Clear and consistent diagrams, black and white photos and numerous sidebar comments and boxes explain the finer points. Each chapter has an "Interviews with Innovators" section where the author interviews prominent figures in each of the technologies. Part III: Sustainable Systems gives similar treatment to the other systems within the house, including passive solar heating and cooling, generating electricity, rain and gray water systems, green materials and site considerations.

A thorough resource guide, broken down by chapter, citing books, magazines, videos, builders/suppliers/manufacturers, and organizations offering additional information on each topic caps off the book. All in all, this is a useful and usable tool for architects, owner-builders and contractors. A must read for anyone planning to design or build a truly natural house.





## Principles of Sustainable Design and Construction: an excerpt from *The Natural House*.

Make it small. In the natural world, extravagance is a rarity. As a rule, organisms survive on what they need—no more, no less. In my classes I like to remind my students that you won't find a robin with two nests, one for the chicks and the other to hold stuff.

Make it efficient. Efficiency is a cornerstone of sustainability. For example, a designer can save a considerable amount of wood by selecting a simple rectangular design over a more complex one.

Energy is another prime target. One of the most effective ways of saving energy is to properly insulate the walls and ceilings of a house and to install energy-efficient windows. Sealing a house against leaks is another efficiency measure worth its weight in wool sweaters. Daylighting, the appropriate placement of windows and daylighters to provide natural interior lighting is another efficiency measure that can dramatically reduce daytime electrical demand while creating a more aesthetically appealing atmosphere.

Working in well-lighted spaces may increase personal productivity and enhance mood as well.

My previous house, a standard passive solar home, would have required a \$40,000 to \$50,000 photovoltaic system; my current house, personally designed to be as electrically efficient as possible, does nicely with a system that costs \$12,000.

Use recycled building materials and recycle all waste. In building a sustainable home, domestic and industrial wastes are one of your greatest assets. Used automobile tires, straw, pop bottles, drywall, clothing scraps, newspapers, cardboard, plastic milk jugs, and a host of other secondary materials are all being used.

Recycling should be built into every house. Convenient recycling centers in kitchens and garages are essential and will become more important as cities and towns the world

over divert more and more waste from landfills and incinerators into the recycling network.

Tap into the Earth's Generous Supply of Renewable Energy. Renewable resources such as trees and soil are regenerated by natural processes. They could provide a steady stream of energy and building materials ad infinitum if only we are smart enough to manage them properly and protect them from the avarice of many. Wind and sun are also renewable resources that cannot be depleted; the only limitation to their use is our own imagination.

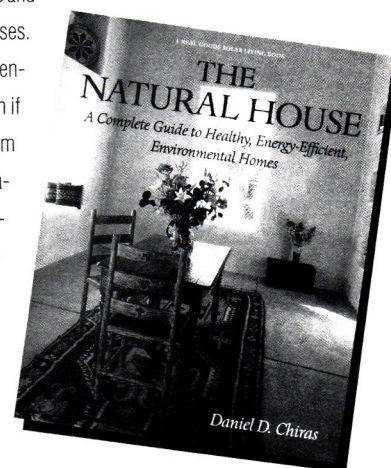
Create a Safe, Healthy Living Space.

In other words, it is as good for the people who will live in it as it is for the environment. A healthy home is free of drafts in the winter and cool in the summer. And of course it is free of toxic substances.

Make it easy to operate and maintain. Sustainable homes should be easy to operate and should require as little maintenance as possible. Passive solar homes are a good example. Many natural building products also provide durability and low maintenance. Stone is the ultimate in long-lasting materials. Rammed earth is a close second.

Make your home economical in every sense of the word. Even with some unfortunate overruns, my house cost \$5 to \$15 per square foot less than most other new spec homes in my area.

Consider life-cycle costs of all materials and products. During a life-cycle cost analysis, economists attempt to tally all costs, then try to place an economic value on them—including the very tangible costs, such as the cost of labor and fuel prices, as well as the very real but hard to assess impacts such as the product's contribution to air pollution, illness, habitat loss, and the like.



CHELSEA GREEN PUBLISHING  
COMPANY, 2000

## Animal Architecture: Masters of sustainability by Tracy Certo

*No it's not about gargoyles on cathedrals. Animal architecture is a fascinating look at the extraordinarily well-designed homes that creatures build by instinct. You want to talk green building? These guys have it down pat. Literally.*

"If we were to transfer a large termite nest to human scale, their tower would rise to the height of a mile and would house the entire population of New York."  
Juhani Pallasmaa

They build to change their environment, to provide shelter and safety and to improve their quality of life. In other words, their objectives are much like those of the human architect but animals do it all by instinct.

Animal architecture fascinates because it works. If awards were bestowed, animals would have a burrow-ful for ingenious design that includes temperature control and waterproofing, ventilation, pest control, water management and gas exchange. And they are considered to be masters of sustainability since most of their materials are not only natural but in many cases, self-manufactured and recyclable. Efficiency is their hallmark.

"The key test for the value of studying animal architecture comes from its ability to show architects new ways of making things work," says Mike Hansell at Glasgow's Institute of Biomedical Life Science. "There is evidently hope among

architects that such "wisdom" accumulated in architecture through millions of years of evolution, will provide rather precise models for a new, more environmentally sympathetic architecture.

Consider the termite. Known for their ingenuity in solving temperature problems, termites build to keep the colony cool. Their nests, some soaring as high as twenty feet, have thick walls that seal in much-needed moisture while keeping out the heat. Channels and ducts run throughout the structure to circulate air. The nests are oriented so that the broad sides are turned toward the east and west for temperature control. When the strong midday sun hits the smaller surface, its effect is further reduced by the tapering of the walls.

In Indian Wells, California, architect Eric Naslund's search for natural cooling solutions led to a similar strategy. His newly-built homes are oriented on an east west axis for more efficient cooling and he uses vented thermal chimneys to pull and then release rising warm air.



**A park ranger inspects the giant nest of a mallee fowl in Australia. The male spends 11 months a year building the nest and constantly adjusting its temperature by adding or removing layers.**



### From the Firms

► **Damianos & Anthony** has been selected for exterior renovations to the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children. Jendoco Construction Corporation is the contractor.

**Gardner & Pope Architects** has been awarded the contract for a 9200 square foot community center for the East Union Presbyterian Church in Cheswick, PA. Repal Construction is the contractor.

**MacLachlan, Cornelius & Filoni** is designing a new Center for Admissions for the College of Wooster in Ohio. In addition, **MCF** is designing a new Alumni House for the California University of Pennsylvania and renovating the Bost Building, Iron & Steel Heritage, in Homestead, PA.

**Pfaffmann & Associates** is designing a new educational wing and Parish Hall renovations for the Church of the Ascension in Oakland. Jendoco is the contractor.

**Ruprecht Schroeder Hoffman** has been awarded the construction project of the Center Township Elderly Housing building in Center Township, Beaver. The four-story, 36,888 square foot building will feature 48 one-bedroom units. Repal Construction is the contractor.

**Weber Murray Fox** was selected as the architectural firm for a new \$6 million municipal complex in Ross Township. Last year the firm performed full architectural and construction management services for a Community Center for Bethel Park.

**WTW Architects** has been selected to design a new Regional Heart Center for Jefferson Hospital in Jefferson Borough, PA. The \$10 million, 64,000 square foot addition and renovation will be underway this fall and should be completed in early 2002.

### Business Briefs

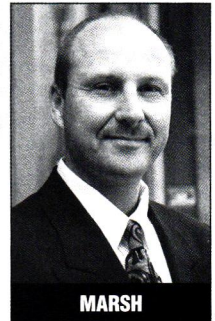
► **WTW Architects** welcomed James P. Horvath to the design team and Jocelyn J. Pittser to the interior design group.



WHITE



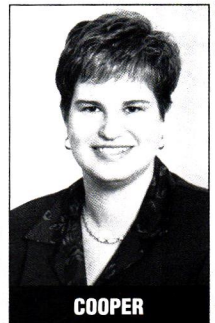
ETZEL



MARSH

LLI Technologies is pleased to announce the following have become shareholders within the company: James D. White, P.E. has been named Principal of Design Services. Regis L. Etzel, P.E. has been named Principal of Construction Services. Leo E. Marsh, P.E. has been named Principal of Information Technology Services.

Elwood S. Tower Corporation announced the promotion of Susan M Cooper P.E., to Associate and Senior Project Manager.



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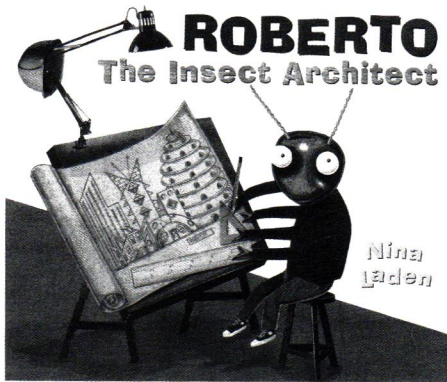
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## Roberto the Insect Architect



If there's a child on your holiday list, Roberto the Insect Architect would make a good gift. It's a story of a young termite who "goes against the grain". Roberto is an ambitious bug who would rather play with his food (wood) instead of eat it. He moves to pursue his dream of becoming a successful architect but "hope didn't come cheap in the big city" and Roberto struggles, living in a flea-bag hotel run by a nervous tick.

Along the way, he seeks advice from famous insect architects such as Fleas van der Rohe and Hank Lloyd Mite. One day he comes across a run-down block of crumbling buildings and garbage. His luck changes as he designs an entire neighborhood and builds wonderful homes of recycled materials for his creature friends— "Each one was a work of art." Not only does Roberto achieve fame but he makes a lot of insects happy. ("I am a house fly again!" says one.)

With colorful collage illustrations and a warm story filled with puns, this is a great gift from an architect to any child interested in bugs, building, or fulfilling a dream.

Available in bookstores or call Chronicle Books at 800-722-6657 to order.



## When the nitty gets gritty architects turn to us.

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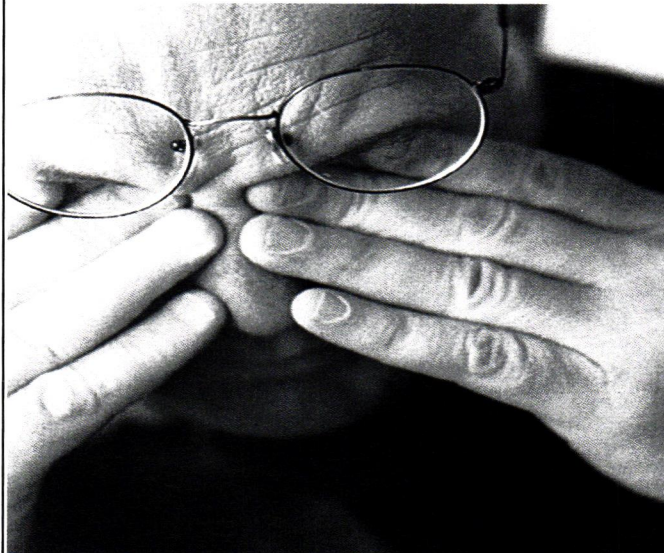
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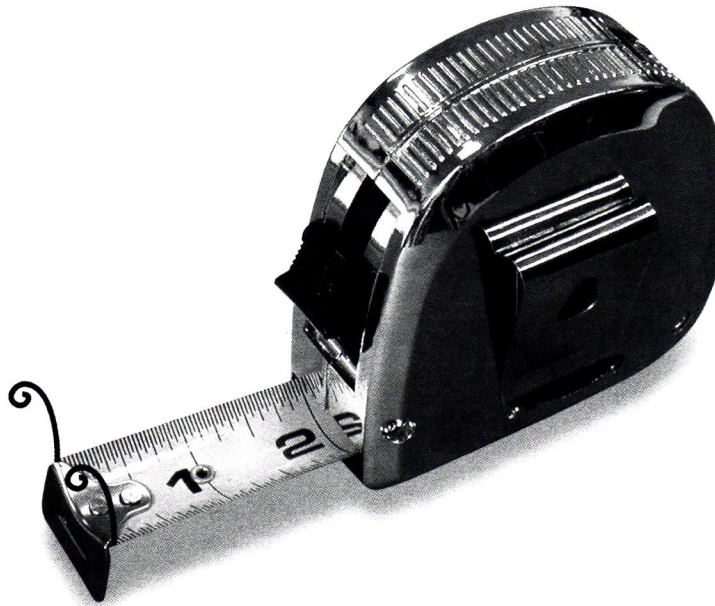
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# Building Blocks

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## November 28, Tuesday

BOCA Chapter of Western, PA

### Overview of the International Building Code – 2000

Holiday Inn, Greentree

7:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Reservations by November 15 - Firm

Henry Hegerle 412-381-4989 or hegerle@usaor.net

(8 H/S/W L.U.'s)

## December 12, Tuesday

### Construction Contracting for Public Entities in Pennsylvania

A one day seminar designed for architects, engineers, contractors and builders. This seminar is designed to discuss both recurring issues and new developments in the public contracting arena.

Areas to be discussed include:

- Strategies for Contracting with Multiple Prime Contracts
- Pennsylvania Sales and Use Tax Considerations
  - Financing Public Projects
- User's View of Public Project Contracting
  - Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act
  - Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law

Engineer's Society of Western Pennsylvania, 337 Fourth Ave., Registration 8:30 a.m. For information call Lorman at (715) 833-3959.

(6 H/S/W L.U.'s)

## AIA ACTIVITIES

### November 3, Friday

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

### November 10, Friday

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

### November 14, Tuesday

#### AIA Pittsburgh Board Meeting

5 p.m. at the Chapter office. All members are welcome, 471-9548.

### November 14, Tuesday

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

### November 16, Thursday

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

### November 29, Wednesday

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

## 2 C O L O E N D A R

## AROUND TOWN

### November 8, Wednesday

#### Society of Design Administrators.

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

### November 14, Tuesday

#### CSI Meeting. Positive Pressure Treating of Fire-Rated Doors.

Greentree Holiday Inn, 6 p.m. social, 6:30 p.m. \$20. Reservations by November 10 to Deborah Merges, 724-375-2113 or dmerg@home.com.

### November 17, Friday

**The 2000 Landis-Epic Lectureship.** The Post-Tensioning of Architectural Structures in Structural Steel. This seminar will discuss the post-tensioning of four very different steel structures: a long-span arena, a moderate-height office building, two leaning buildings, and an unusual cable-stayed bridge in Japan. Featuring Mr. Leslie E. Robertson, P.E. University of Pittsburgh Frick Fine Arts Auditorium, 3 p.m. - Lecture, 4:30 p.m. Reception. Please RSVP by Nov. 7 at 412-624-9870.

### November 29, Wednesday

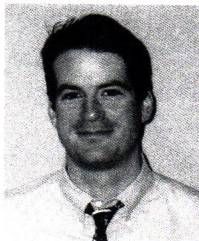
**AIA MBA Committee Meeting.** Master Builders Association, 2270 Noblestown Rd. 6:00 p.m. 412-922-3912.

Please send your information to the attention of Joan Kubancek, AIA Pittsburgh, 211 Ninth Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, or fax it to Joan at 412/471-9501. The deadline for inclusion is normally six weeks prior to publication. If you would like information describing qualified continuing education programs, please call the AIA office at 412-471-9548.

## Welcome New Member!

**Michael P. Corb, Associate AIA,** is an architect with **Burt Hill Kosar Rittelman Associates.**

He served as project architect for the lower school renovation of Sewickley



Academy, the outpatient surgical suite of Health South, Mechanicsburg and the South Central Elementary School of Canon McMillan School District. Michael is a graduate of Tulane University and he enjoys cycling and flyfishing.

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

# CONTRACTORS' DIRECTORY

A LISTING OF AREA CONTRACTORS AND THEIR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. To include your firm in this directory, call AIA Pittsburgh at 412-471-9548.

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# Joseph Rosa

*Curator, Heinz Architectural Center*



**Favorite Museum:** Carnegie Museum of Art

**Personal:** I live in Highland Park and have been married for nine years with one child and three cats.

**Years in practice:** I was most recently Chief Curator at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC and since 1989 curated over twenty-five exhibitions. I was also an Adjunct Professor of Architecture at Columbia University from 1990-94 and a Visiting Lecturer at a Division of City University from 1985-95. From 1979 to 1989, I worked in architectural firms such as Gwathmey Siegel, and Peter D. Eisenman.

**Education:** Bachelor of Architecture, School of Architecture, Pratt Institute; Advanced Degree in Design, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation; Columbia University; and doctoral candidate Art History, Columbia University.

**Favorite Project:** My scholarship on the architect, Albert Frey (1903-1998). He was the first disciple of Le Corbusier to build in America. His 1931 Aluminaire House was featured in the acclaimed 1932 International Exhibition of Modern Architecture curated by Philip Johnson, FAIA and Henry-Russell Hitchcock at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. In 1934 he moved to Palm Springs, California and established the style today known as desert modernism where most of his works still stand.

My book *Albert Frey, Architect* (Rizzoli, 1990) and traveling exhibition *Albert Frey, Modern Architect* (1991-95) started a renewed interest in Frey and the post-World War II modern architecture of Palm Springs. Frey found himself again becoming a public figure and enjoyed a renewed dialogue with younger architects and designers. Most importantly, he was able to witness the next decade of vast interest in his architecture and his life.

In 1995 a German edition of the book was produced and in 1999 it was reissued in English with a new Afterword by Princeton Architectural Press.

**If you hadn't been an architect, you would have been:** a Curator of Architecture.

**What's the best part of your job and why?** Being able to look at critical historical and current issues in architecture and make them engaging for the general museum viewer.

**What's the most annoying thing architects do and why?** They assume that I know their work.

**Favorite architect:** Le Corbusier. I have over seventy books that relate to him—need I say more.

**Best gift to give an architect and why.** A BIG dictionary because most of them cannot spell.

**What is the next big architectural trend and why?** Folds, Blobs, and Boxes: Architecture in the Digital Era. Come see my exhibition in February and see why.

**I want to be remembered for:** My briefcases.

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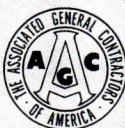
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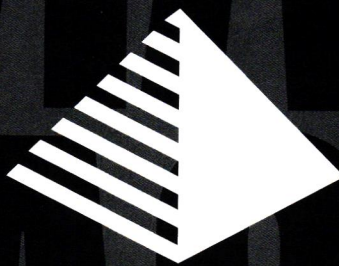
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### December 2000

- Design Awards
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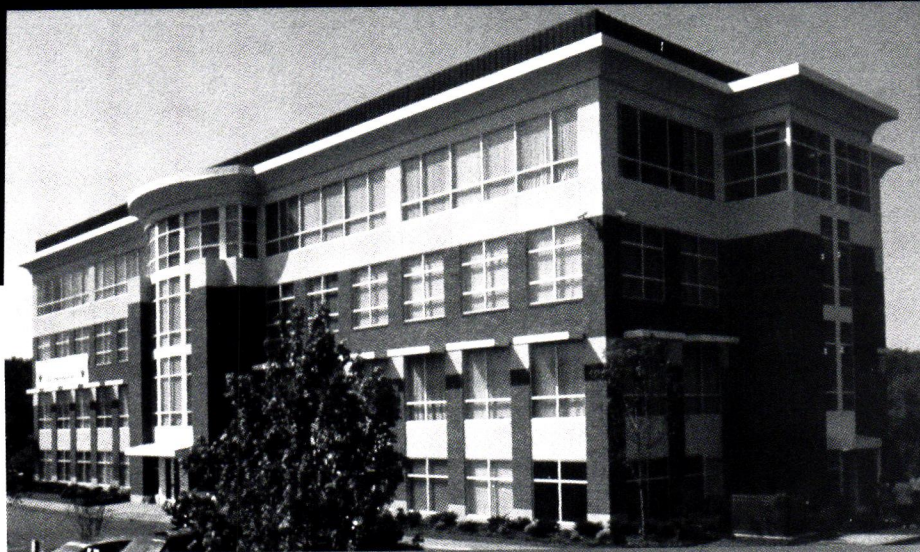
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