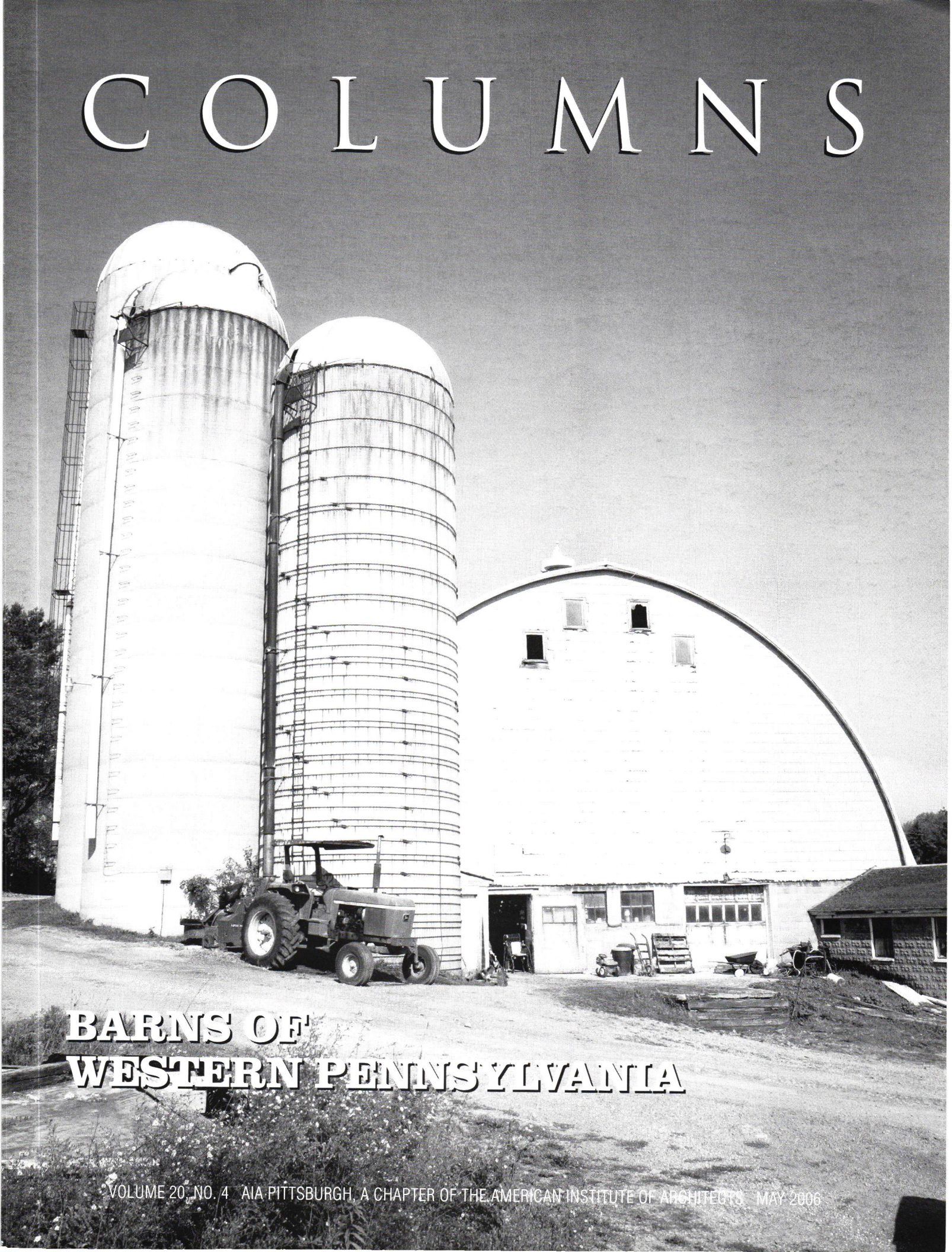


COLUMNS



BARNs OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

VOLUME 20, NO. 4 AIA PITTSBURGH, A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS MAY 2006

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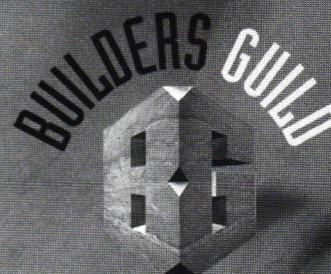
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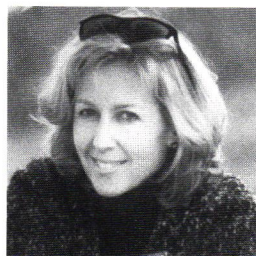
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Diggin' In By Tracy Certo



It's been gratifying to feature a number of different voices in Columns. If you'd like to write something for Columns, get in touch.

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On the cover: Gothic-Arched Truss Barn, Jenner Township, Somerset County (1951), from the show *Barns of Western Pennsylvania* at the Heinz Architectural Center through May 28. Photo by Tom Little, 2005.

I couldn't get Julie Wagner, Assoc. AIA

out of the ditch. It didn't seem fair that day after day she was in there digging away but that's what she wanted. She turned down other construction jobs I offered and who was I to argue? My niece, Amanda, was in there as well and she didn't want to get out either. (My son, Andrew, aka Andres, was in there, too, but he ditched to haul stones and concrete.) Turns out they were all having a good time working with some of the Costa Rican locals and, despite a language barrier, we heard a lot of laughing from that direction. Mostly, they were determined to finish and they did.

Julie was a trooper in more ways than one. A primo ditch-digger, certainly, but also a sport about writing about the experience of taking a Global Village trip through Habitat for Humanity (p. 6). As some of you—those who responded to the call for help in *Columns* late last year—know, I led a team of 17 to Costa Rica in February where we spent five days building. In the mountain valley town of LaSuisa, we helped build eight concrete block houses that were stacked on a slope at the base of a mountain, with coffee plants with their green beans on one side and banana trees with their green fruit on another and all around, killer views that inspired us all. As I suspected, it was gratifying to have an architect (in training) there. Sure enough one day I saw Julie with blueprints in hand asking questions and commenting on the design. I only wish we had room enough for all who expressed interest in going.

On the other hand, when I told Anne J. Swager, Hon. AIA, about the great response, she suggested I lead a Habitat trip for a team of architects to build along the Mississippi Gulf. (And I assume she's first in line to go so let's just count on that.) Who else is in? Email me at tcerto@adelphia.net and we'll see if we have enough for a team—we need at least 10 for a trip sometime in the fall.

This year, I'm sad to say, I'll miss Pedal Pittsburgh, one of my favorite annual events, since I'll be in New York for a reunion of friends (from the first Global Village trip I took). So if you're in town, take my advice: GO. It's a wonderful way to really see the urban splendors of Pittsburgh—and you'll get a chance to bike over bridges, always a bit of magic.

WHICH leads me to a book review (p. 18) by Bob Bailey, AIA of WTW Architects, about bridges in Pittsburgh. It's a good, informative and fun read about a book by the same author as *The Steps of Pittsburgh*. If you like bridges in Pittsburgh—and who doesn't?—you probably appreciate barns, too, yes? You'll enjoy Mattie Schloetzer's article on Barns of Western Pennsylvania. I learned more than a few things reading this piece—and there's still time to see the terrific exhibition at the Carnegie Museum of Art.

Finally, Jason Vrabel of the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh wrote an intriguing and informative article (p. 14) about the organization where he poses questions that will interest architects.

It's been gratifying to feature a number of different voices in *Columns*. Next month Roxanne Sherbeck, AIA chimes in about her experience as a juror at the Boston Society of Architects.

If you'd like to write something for *Columns*, get in touch and let's talk. The more voices in *Columns*, the better. We'd love to hear from you.

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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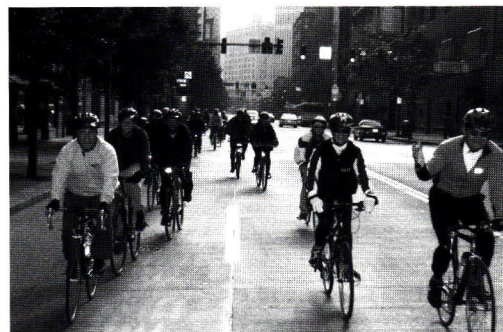
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Pedal Pittsburgh: One Beautiful Ride

For many, it's the best biking event in the city. Bike an urban course, one of the most scenic in the country, that starts from the Chevrolet Amphitheater through the South Side, goes over the Hot Metal Bridge, through downtown and the North Side, to the Strip District and beyond—how far you go is up to you.

Whatever you do, save the date: This year Pedal Pittsburgh 2006, the premiere cycling event in the city, will be held on Sunday, May 21st. A Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP) event, Pedal Pittsburgh is a ride, not a race, that offers a variety of course options ranging from 6 to 60 miles to accommodate everyone from families and recreational riders to hard-core fitness enthusiasts. Drawing more than 2,000 riders each year, the event highlights the neighborhoods and design landmarks that make Pittsburgh unique: historic and architecturally notable buildings, quaint shops, and beautiful parks and trails. The goal is to emphasize the role of design in strengthening communities and shaping the future of the region.



On-line registration is available by visiting www.pedalpittsburgh.org. Registration received by May 1st is \$20 for individuals and \$45 for families (parents riding with children under the age of 18). After May 1st, the fee is \$25/\$50. For more information, call the event hotline at (412) 232-3545 or visit www.pedalpittsburgh.org.

AIA Architects and Interns at the Carpenter's Training Center Wood Trim Class



On March 16th architects and architectural interns gathered for the Wood Trim class, one of the many classes offered through the Carpenter's Training Center Mini-Camp for architects on Neville Island. The trim class paired two interns or architects with a carpenter's apprentice to learn the nuances of applying crown molding and finish trim. Class participants had to measure, cut and install various pieces of wood trim along a segmented base. Each part of the base varied in length and occasionally transitioned at various angles. A key element of the class was learning how to correctly determine the angles necessary to form a tight fitting mitered edge. The carpenter's apprentices were very helpful and showed everyone how to use the circular saws and other equipment needed to do the work.





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PURA VIDA ^{IN} COSTA RICA

BY JULIE WAGNER, ASSOC. AIA
PHOTOS BY DONNIE WAGNER
AND CRAIG MEBANE

On a recent trip to Costa Rica to build houses for Habitat for Humanity, I learned about Pura Vida "the pure life" and managed to get my hands dirty in the process.

Tucked in the fold of the December issue of *Columns* magazine was this heading: "Habitat Build Costa Rica Wants You." My quick response to the ad secured my husband, Donnie Wagner, and me the last two spots on the Global Village trip through Habitat. The group was co-led by *Columns* editor Tracy Certo and Rebecca Mebane, a friend Tracy met the previous year on a Global Village trip to Chile. Of the seventeen teammates going to Costa Rica, five had met in Chile and the rest were family and friends, including three teenagers. From December to February we received email correspondence from the co-leaders, providing us with an extensive list of items to bring, cultural traditions to be aware of, and a travel itinerary for the nine days we would be in Costa Rica.

My husband and I arrived at Pittsburgh International Airport at 4:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 16. Shedding our winter layer of clothes as we flew, we then had a two-hour layover in Atlanta and arrived in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, nine hours later. We had been instructed to wear our Habitat for Humanity T-shirts so we could be easily identified as we exited the airport.

Once the entire group was together, we hopped on a bus headed west over the mountains and to our home for the week.

For seven days we stayed at CATIE, a school for tropical agricultural research and education, occupying more than 2,000 acres of lush landscape. We stayed in two modest houses on campus and ate breakfast and dinner at the cafeteria, a half a mile walk through a variety of fragrant flowers, exotic birds and a scenic lake. This was a welcome alternative to eating breakfast in my car.

The group commuted by bus ten minutes to work each day, past brightly colored houses lining the roads, to La Suisa or "Little Switzerland". The town is so small that local residents must often take a bus to the neighboring town in order to get groceries. This task often consumes an entire day.

The Habitat neighborhood occupies a slice of land squeezed between a coffee field and a dairy farm. The right houses under construction were lined up on a hillside with beautiful views of surrounding mountains.

Each house has the same layout: three bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen and a family room, all tucked into a seven meter by seven meter footprint, approximately 450 square feet. The materials used to build the houses are typical of the area and consist of block walls, a con-



A TYPICAL DAY

- Wake up around 6:30 a.m. to the sound of morning showers some days or many exotic birds chatting and for me an alarm clock of course.
- After a quick walk to the cafeteria and a huge plate of eggs, fresh fruit, rice and beans and a lot of fresh coffee we headed off to the construction site.
- Tasks for the morning shift were translated and offered up to the group for pickings.
- A solid four hours of work interrupted only by the delivery of slices of fresh mango, pineapple, melon and bananas.
- Around one 1 p.m. we stopped for lunch. Held at the home of a neighbor, the meal was deliciously different each day but somehow always involved rice and beans.
- After lunch we headed back to the site to start new tasks or to continue to tackle a long project.
- At 4 p.m. we stopped for the day and cleaned the tools we had been using.
- Drive back to CATIE for a quick game of soccer and to clean up before dinner.
- Dinner was another incredible meal followed by a local dessert such as tres leches, a cake made with three kinds of milk.
- Hang out at the restaurant/bar located on the campus playing cards, singing songs or involved in an intense game of ping-pong.
- Crash at 10 p.m. if not earlier.



Julie and Donnie Wagner



La Suisa

crete slab on grade and a pitched tin roof supported by steel trusses. Although the concept of a neighborhood was not common practice for the Costa Rican Habitat affiliate, it has proven to be an efficient and economical means of producing homes.

I experienced this efficiency at work first hand in the preparation and pouring of the floors. The group was divided into two teams with one team in charge of preparing the floor. The excess dirt from digging trenches was used to bring the floor up to the appropriate height. A layer of gravel was then evenly spread out and tamped with a hand tool to achieve the required depth. (I only accidentally tamped my foot two times.) One team measured and cut the reinforcing bar to fit the floor layout and then tied the pieces together. As each layer was completed, we worked our way up the hill to the next house.

Another team was in charge of mixing and pouring the concrete, focusing each day on completing one house. The process for making the concrete involved filling five buckets with gravel and dumping them into the concrete mixer followed by nine buckets of sand and a 120 lb. bag of cement and nine buckets of water. After a thorough mixing, the concrete was ready. We pushed our wheelbarrows into line and proceeded to load the fresh concrete then carry the full wheelbarrow carefully downhill a bit, onto a narrow ramp and through the front future door. The wheelbarrows were dumped out one by one while a local worker spread the concrete and preceded to screed it smooth. We continued this until the mixer was empty and we prepared a new batch. Over the course of five days we prepared, poured and completed five floors. (The local construction team was very happy with that!)

Another daily task was digging trenches for the septic systems and the water supply. Tucked in behind tall stalks of sugar cane the connection for the water supply began approximately 880 large steps from the neighborhood. The trench needed to be two feet deep in order to protect the pipe from grazing cows that could inadvertently crush the pipe by walking over it. After two days of digging, the trench ended up to be only fifty feet long but it was gratifying to know our hard work would one day help supply fresh water to someone's home.

On the last two days of our trip the group of 17 set off to explore Costa Rica, driving five hours north toward La Fortuna, a town that sits at the base of Volcan Arenal, an active volcano. The area is home to many adventures such as white water rafting, canopy tours and hikes around the volcano. Although the head of the volcano



Julie looking over the blueprints and getting excited



Amanda (the editor's niece) happy in the trenches

was covered in dense clouds, we were able to spot a few tiny sparks at dusk as we made our way to Tabacon, a wonderful hot springs resort. The multiple springs of lava-fed water flowed over cascading pools surrounded by thick forest. After five days of intense building, the steaming hot water was the perfect antidote to sore muscles.

The next day we drove one hour north for a guided tour on a boat through the Caño Negro (black lagoon), a wildlife refuge that snakes its way along the Nicaraguan border. We sighted many beautiful birds such as the snow egret with bright yellow feet that act as built-

in bait when he wiggles them. And we saw two of the three types of monkeys indigenous to the area, the howler monkey and the white-faced capuchin monkey (coffee colored fur with a cappuccino colored face). We floated for three hours using binoculars to spot things hidden in the canopy or at the edge of the water. At one point our boat captain pulled in particularly tight as we all stared hard to see what he had seen. Attached to the underside of a limb eight tiny bats hung camouflaged against the bark of the trees swaying like tiny leaves in the breeze. Another native of the river is the crocodile and we saw many, some perched on floating tree limbs motionless in the midday sun.



All seventeen members of Team Pura Vida along with construction crew and future homeowners and other villagers in front of one of the Habitat houses. Pura Vida is a Costa Rican term that translates as pure life or Life is Good.

TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH GLOBAL VILLAGE

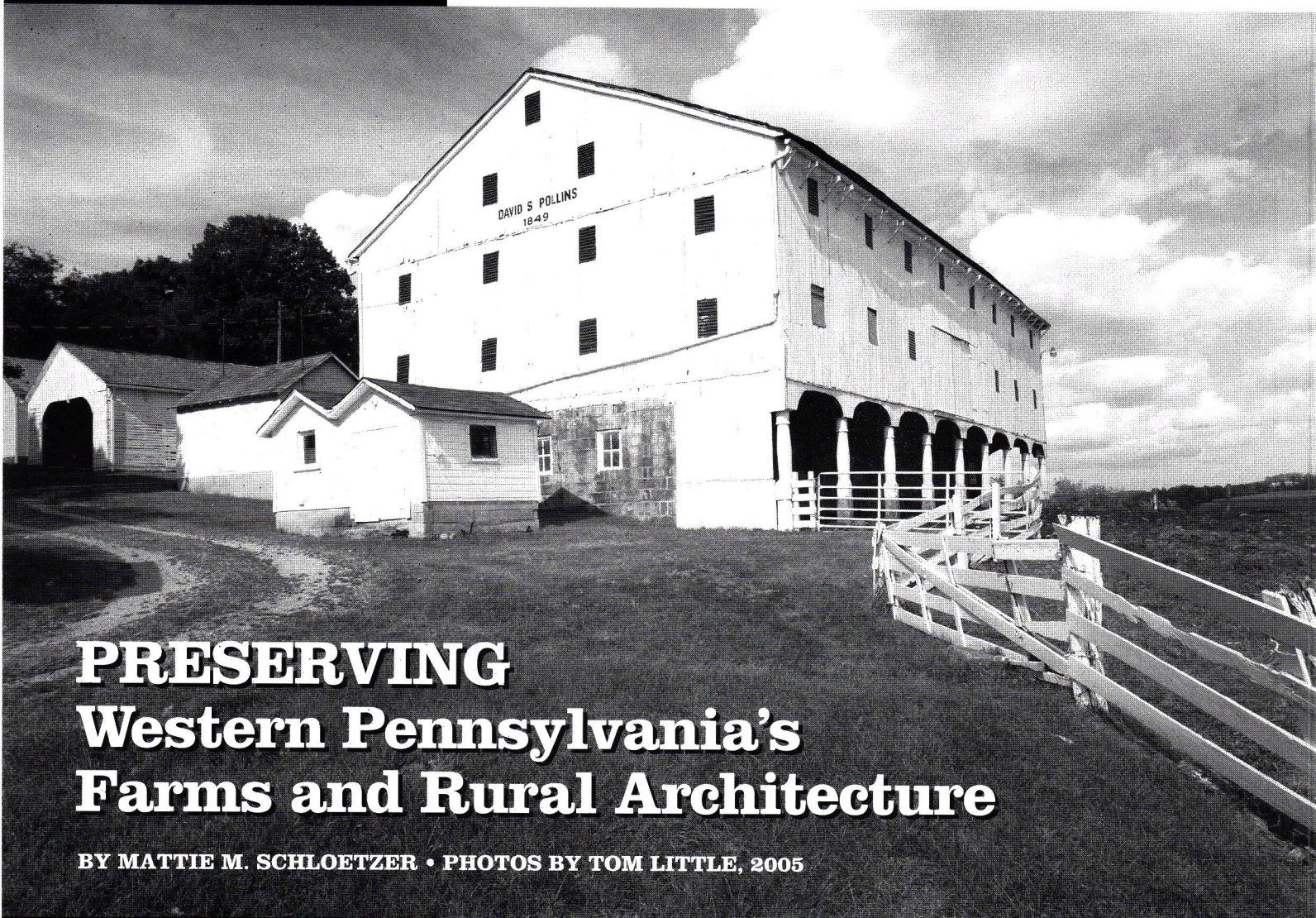
- I absolutely recommend a Global Village trip. It is so difficult to describe how truly meaningful the trip was. My advice? Take one and see for yourself.

- Physically, I found great satisfaction from being able to use my hands and body to build the houses—and not function solely connected to a computer or telephone. Working alongside the people who would one day be living in the houses drove me to work harder and faster. I was most touched by the experiences I shared with the local people and our team. I found that a smile is understood in any language and the ability to laugh together creates friendships, even after only a few days.

- A Habitat trip puts our crazy lives into perspective by bringing an awareness to other cultures and to the simplicity that guides them. The gratitude expressed by the local people is humbling and addicting all at the same time. Will I do it again? Yes! It's the combination of wishing I could do more and the desire to lead a more genuine life that will drive me to continue travelling with Habitat for Humanity Global Village. The amount of sweat and energy you put into the experience is greatly surpassed by the amount of satisfaction you experience from using your hands to help build someone a home.

GENERAL TIPS

- Neck pouch for passport and money. It can be tucked under any shirt and allows you to keep important information on you at all times.
- Bring a tool belt. Even if you don't bring tools it allows you to carry work gloves, a water bottle and safety glasses while keeping your hands free at the job-site.
- Learn several words to assist you while working. Our co-leaders provided us with a list of construction words in Spanish that proved helpful during the build.
- Learn several phrases that will help you travel the country or bring someone who speaks the language! (Several of our team members spoke Spanish.) Know how to ask how much something costs or to be able to tell someone where you need to go.
- Bring a book to read or a journal to write in. It will occupy you while you're traveling or help to record the experience.
- Think about adding a few extra days to the vacation to allow for some additional time to explore the country.
- Small gifts such as Frisbees, books, and soccer balls are extremely appreciated by the children.



PRESERVING Western Pennsylvania's Farms and Rural Architecture

BY MATTIE M. SCHLOETZER • PHOTOS BY TOM LITTLE, 2005

Agriculture is the largest industry in Pennsylvania, producing more than \$45 billion in annual revenue and providing approximately one job in agriculture and related business for every six jobs in Pennsylvania. So it's not surprising that Western Pennsylvania is home to nearly 22,000 barns.

ABOVE: Posted-Forebay Barn, Unity Township, Westmoreland County (1849). One of William Penn's five Manor lands, this property was named Sewickley Manor for its location overlooking Sewickley Creek in Unity Township. Received through Penn's heirs, seven generations of a single family have owned this land.

Barns of Western Pennsylvania: Vernacular to Spectacular, on view at Carnegie Museum of Art's Heinz Architectural Center through May 28, documents the evolution of barns in our region and their continued influence on architecture today. Photographs commissioned for this exhibition, rare agricultural journals, architectural models and drawings, as well as an elaborate display of barn building tools, interpret the development of barn buildings from basic log to elaborate timber frame and now metal scaffolding. The exhibition also illustrates the tremendous diversity of barns (round, octagonal, and gothic arch to name a few), demonstrating how farmers selected designs that suited their individual farming needs.

If you look closely at some of the photographs exhibited in *Barns of Western Pennsylvania*, you may notice that a few barns now serve as enormous storage sheds for basketball hoops and old tires. Some of the barns, which date back as far as 1794, may appear shabby and near collapse. In addition to celebrating the richness of Pennsylvania's rural architecture, the exhibition unintentionally demonstrates the decline of family farms. Farmers may be land rich, but they are cash poor. They face a tough challenge when it comes to keeping their land profitable through agriculture.¹ In early March, Carnegie Museum of Art, in collaboration with Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF), sponsored a panel discussion, *Preserving Western Pennsylvania's Farms*, to address this difficult issue. A diverse audience of museum and PHLF members, farmers, students and barn enthusiasts, numbering close to 175, was present for the program.

The goal? To inform people about rural preservation efforts in our area and introduce them to experts in the field. The setting of the Museum of Art's theater for this type of discussion helped ensure the program would attract casual observers who learned something about rural preservation, while providing farmers and owners of nonworking farms with information about resources to protect their land and farm buildings.

Participating in the panel discussion were Jack Miller, director of Gift Planning, Pittsburgh History & Land-

marks Foundation; Martha Jordan, a professor at Duquesne University School of Law and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation trustee; Ron Beinlich, a local farmer and chairman of the Allegheny County Farm Preservation Board; and Roy Kraynyk, executive director of Allegheny Land Trust.

Each of the participants spoke briefly about their work in preservation before convening on stage to field questions from the audience. Martha Jordan began the program by defining the term "preservation easement." This was particularly important because each of the subsequent presenters referred back to easements as a tool for preserving farms and historic buildings. A preservation easement is a perpetual restriction on the use that may be made of land or of a historic building, protecting it from alteration or destruction. Under the terms of an easement, a property owner grants an interest in his/her property rights to a tax-exempt organization whose mission includes land conservation or historic preservation. In return, the owner may obtain substantial tax benefits.

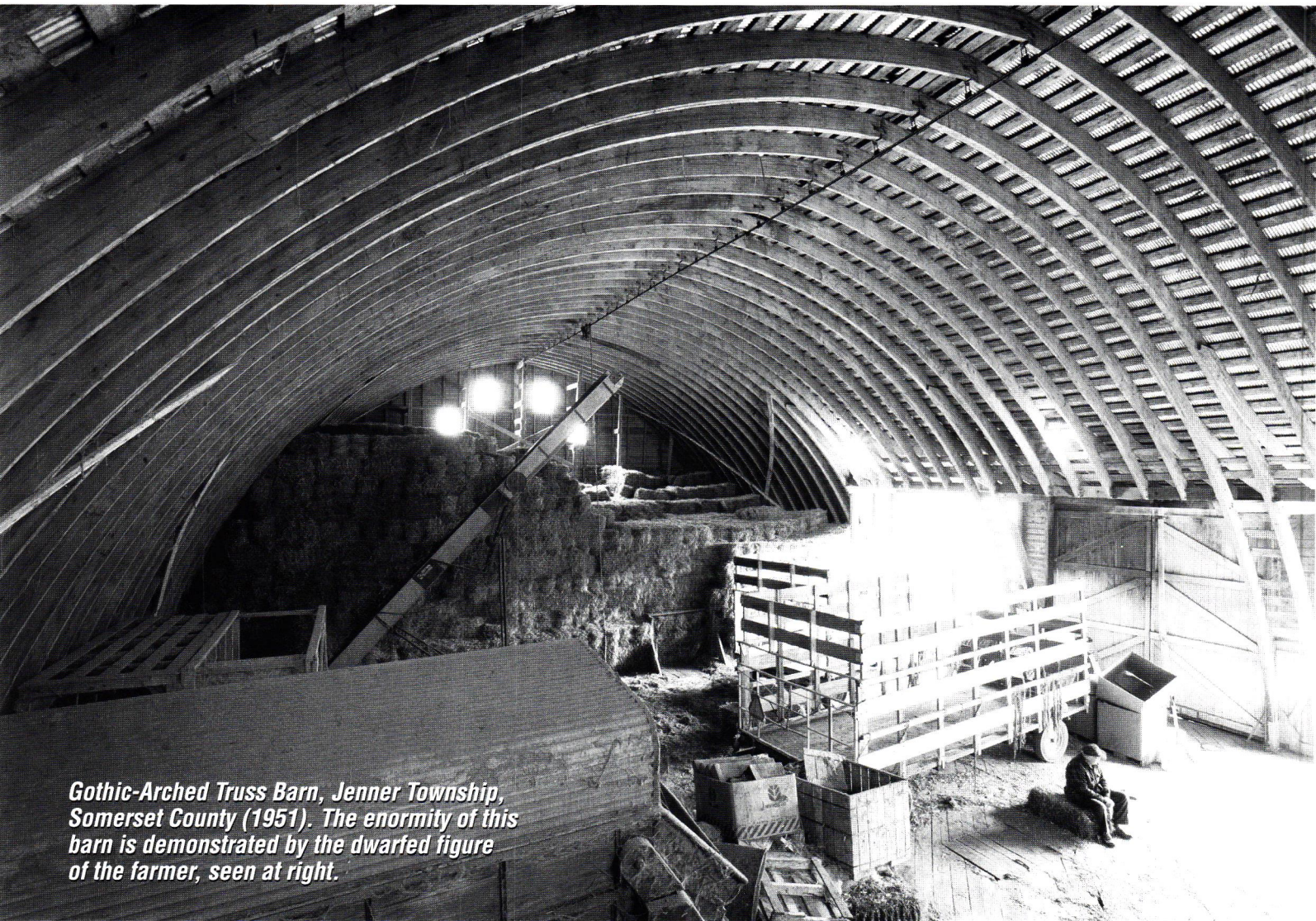
Preservation easements exist in a variety of forms, but the discussion focused mainly on façade easements, which prevent alteration of the shell of a historic building, and development rights easements, which restrict development of the land on which the historic building resides. Although easements last forever, Jordan explained that they should not prevent a property owner from continuing the current use of the land. Land subject to a conservation easement may be sold or given away and may pass by will after the owner's death, but the new owners are still bound by the terms of the easement. Jordan commented on Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation's successes in purchasing easements on farm building facades, as well as development rights easements covering entire farms.

Jack Miller expanded on Jordan's points in explaining PHLF's Historic Farm Preservation Program, which offers a range of planned gifts that help farmers reduce estate, income and property taxes, while preserving historic farm property. Since 2000, Landmarks has saved more than 1,300 acres and ten structures through

**Photographs
commissioned for this
exhibition, rare
agricultural journals,
architectural models
and drawings, as well
as an elaborate
display of barn
building tools,
interpret the
development of barn
buildings from basic
log to elaborate timber
frame and now metal
scaffolding.**

¹ Overall, Pennsylvania converted to development some 1.14 million acres, or 1,800 square miles, of fields, open space, and natural land between 1982 and 1997—the sixth largest such conversion after Texas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and California. This equates to 209 acres per day, or 9 acres per hour, every hour (The Brookings Institution.)

² Major funding for this effort came in the form of a \$500,000 Richard King Mellon Foundation grant.



Gothic-Arched Truss Barn, Jenner Township, Somerset County (1951). The enormity of this barn is demonstrated by the dwarfed figure of the farmer, seen at right.

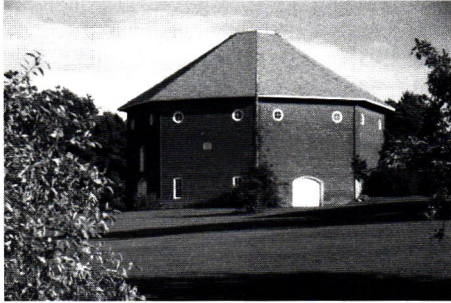
this program.² Miller spoke about a variety of negotiations with rural landowners. Later in the program, Miller fielded questions about tailoring easements to specific farms. For instance, farms do not have to be working farms to be considered for easements but there is a minimum requirement that may disqualify farms from the program. However, there are minimum age and acreage requirements that may disqualify farms from the program.

Similar to Landmarks, the Allegheny Land Trust (ALT) has protected over 1,250 acres of biologically important and scenic land in 17 municipalities in Allegheny

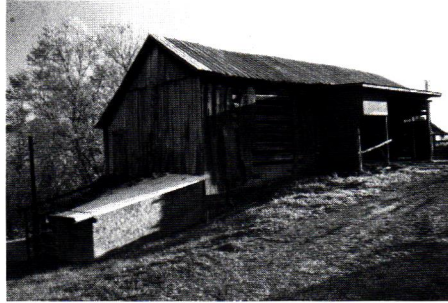
and Washington Counties. ALT either purchases or accepts donations of land and conservation easements from landowners. Easements can come at a considerable cost to the preservation charity if it must purchase them at fair market value. Roy Kraynyk mentioned the need to raise money in creative ways. For instance, ALT is currently selling limited edition prints of paintings by Pittsburgh artist Nat Youngblood depicting events of the French and Indian War. All proceeds from the sale of prints support ALT's land conservation programs. This is an interesting connection to the *Barns of Western Pennsylvania* exhibition, which

includes a Youngblood watercolor of the Wylie Barn from Washington, PA.

Ron Beinlich serves on the Allegheny County Farmland Preservation Board (as does Kraynyk), which administers the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Program. From the perspective of a farmer and preservationist, Beinlich educated the audience about the local farming industry and emphasized why protecting farmland is important, even to city dwellers. He recounted some surprising figures. The cost of eggs has barely increased over the last 50 years. The current supply of local corn is expected to earn farmers about three and a



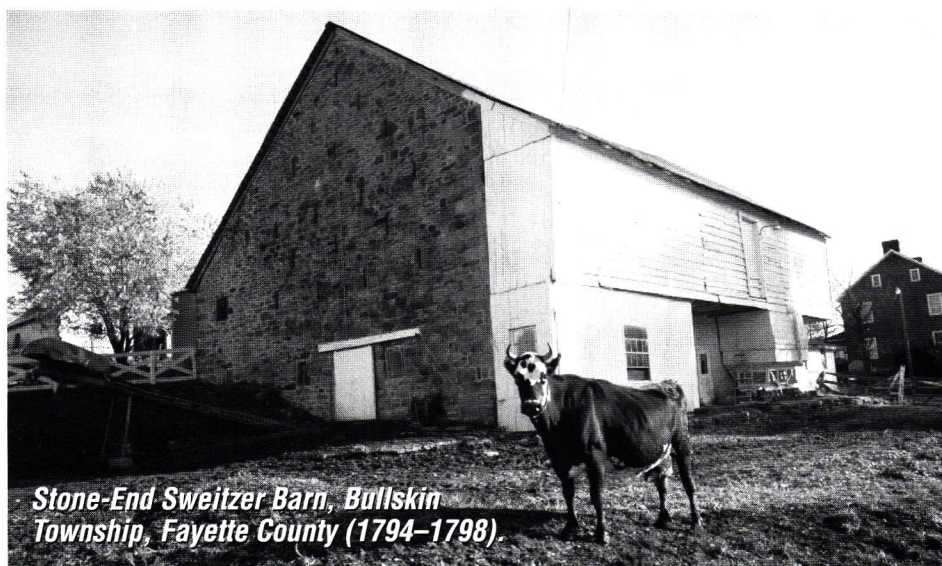
Brick Octagonal Barn, North East Township, Erie County (1879) is a rare example of this unusual shape and construction method for a barn.



Log Barn, Blaine Township, Washington County (c. 1835-1840).



Klein Immergrun Barn, Loretto, Cambria County (1920), designed by Richard Henry Dana, Jr., illustrates how barns are used to store things other than animals and feed.



Stone-End Sweitzer Barn, Bullskin Township, Fayette County (1794-1798).

half cents a pound this summer. While the surplus that keeps American food prices so low would seem to make farm preservation unnecessary, in reality farmland in the most densely populated areas of the country is rapidly disappearing. In its place, subdivisions and super-sized shopping malls now stand. Urbanites don't often recognize the impact of such development on them until forced by a natural disaster—such as the flooding in Millvale in 2004. That was attributable in part to overdevelopment because excessive hardscape impeded drainage. Beinlich observed with evident pleasure that the Allegheny County Farm Preservation Board has saved every farm it has attempted to protect from development, amounting to nine farms and a total of 1,100 acres. Beinlich and Kraynyk have the opportunity to continue their preservation work with \$3.6 million available this year to purchase easements from Allegheny County's farmers.

A lively extended discussion followed the presentations, allowing the panelists to respond to more specific questions about family farms and easements. Jack Miller, of PHLF, estimated that as a direct result of this program and the contacts audience members were able to make with panelists, two or three farms may be preserved. For the Heinz Architectural Center, this was a particularly gratifying fulfillment of the mission of enlightening the public about the physical environment.

Mattie Schloetzer is the departmental assistant at the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation:

www.phlf.org; click on Programs and Services tab, then click on Farm Preservation Easements.

Allegheny County Farm Preservation Board

Web Site: www.county.allegheny.pa.us; in the Other Counties Entities menu, click on Authorities, Boards, Committees, then select Allegheny County Preservation Board in the drop-down menu.

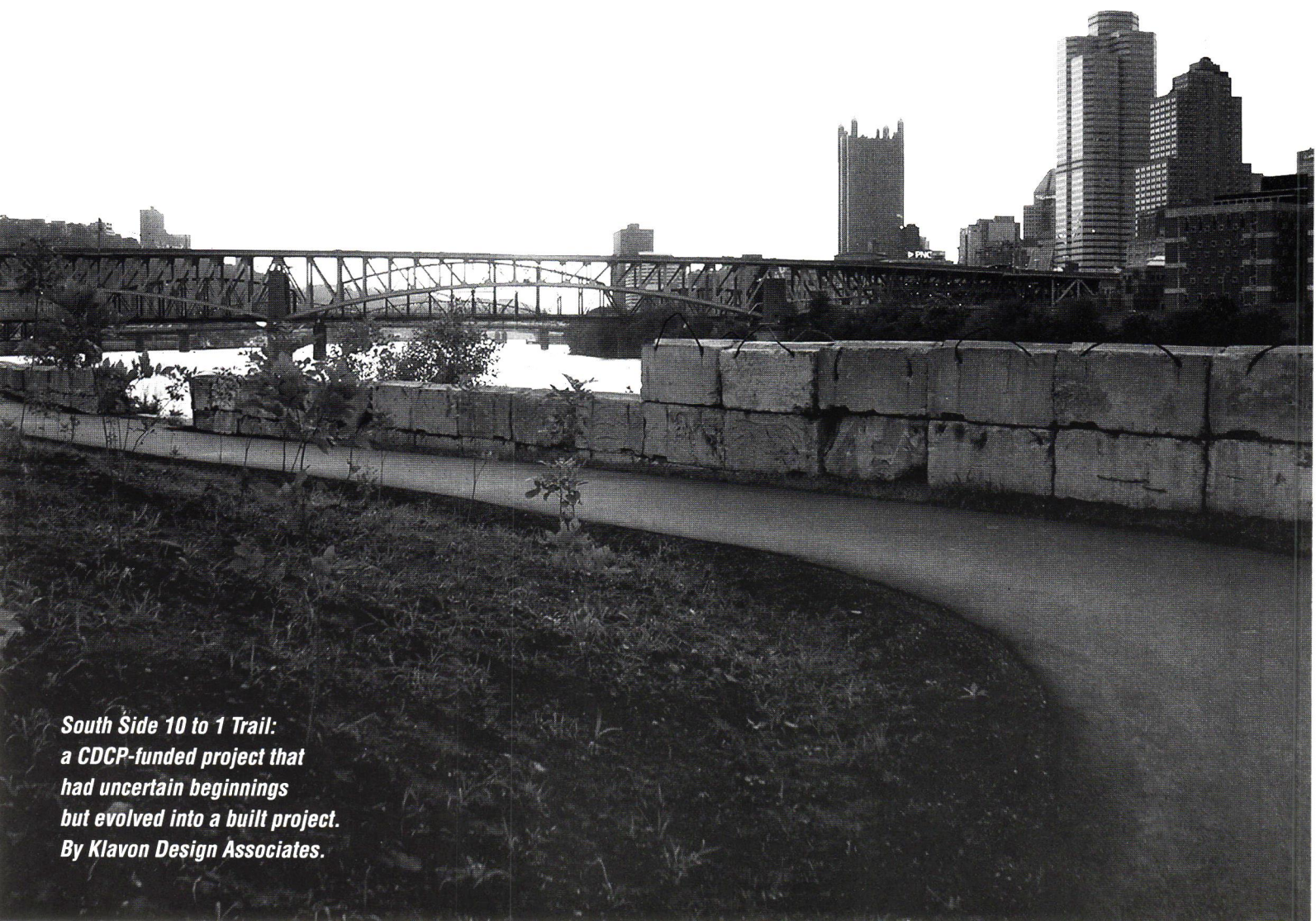
Allegheny Land Trust Web Site:

www.alleghenylandtrust.org

For the Public Good

Community Design Generates Value for
Pittsburgh's Design Community

BY JASON VRABEL



*South Side 10 to 1 Trail:
a CDCP-funded project that
had uncertain beginnings
but evolved into a built project.
By Klavon Design Associates.*

The practice of community design and development has been instrumental in improving the quality of life in Pittsburgh neighborhoods for the past three decades. While it's obvious that some communities have been more successful than others, community design has had its greatest impact in areas that possess a healthy tension between strong assets, such as good housing stock, and a private market that has turned dormant.

Community design, as it's practiced in Pittsburgh, is generally understood as a collaborative form of architectural practice in which non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) and ad hoc stakeholder committees serve as clients, and hire architects, landscape architects and planners to assist with the design of new or renovated buildings, public spaces, or broad community plans. In most cases, the CBO is a community development corporation (CDC) that manages a project by overseeing the design process, engaging the community and assembling financing from public and private sources.

Most can agree on two things: the role of community design is indispensable to the social and economic

By the time the CDCP celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2008, it will have single-handedly fundraised for and paid out \$1 million in professional design fees.

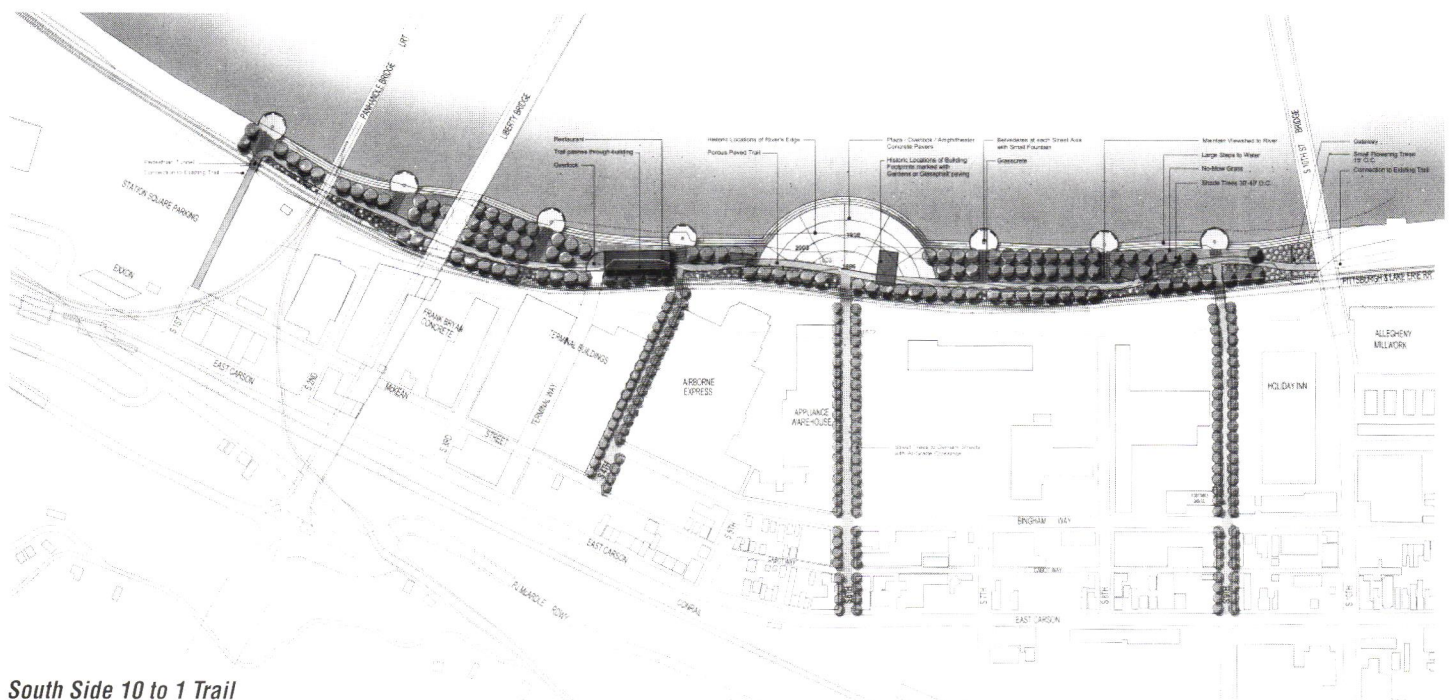
health of weaker-market neighborhoods, and the role of talented designers is essential to that process. But that invites a more open-ended question: What is the value of community design to the collective professions of architecture, landscape architecture and planning? Within the term 'value' exists smaller questions, such as: Are design firms being paid enough for their services? Is there too great an expectation that firms provide pro bono or discounted services? Or conversely, should they provide more pro bono or discounted services?

These questions alone warrant a broad and inclusive dialogue. This article will be limited to a specific question of whether community design, as it's practiced locally, is a consistent source of revenue for design firms.

Since 1988, the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh (CDCP) has been awarding grants to CBOs through its

Design Fund program, for the sole purpose of enabling neighborhoods to access schematic-level design services for their various revitalization projects. With these designs, organizations can effectively raise funding to pay for additional design services, predevelopment and construction financing. Design Fund grants typically range from \$1,000 to \$25,000, with the CDCP providing an average of \$3,500 in technical assistance. Part of that assistance includes working with a CBO to develop an appropriate scope of services and issue a Request for Proposals, and providing a short-list of qualified firms. That list is derived from a longer list of approximately 65 firms that are pre-qualified through a Request for Qualifications issued by the CDCP annually.

Once a consultant is selected, they establish a signed contract with the CBO based on the agreed-upon scope and fee. Despite careful attempts to match a reasonable



South Side 10 to 1 Trail

"Gambling that a project will move ahead should not be part of any business strategy, including the practice of architecture." – Dan Rothschild, AIA

scope to the fee, this has proved to be more art than science, and sometimes results in unforeseen complications that consume a consultant's time rapidly. Unfortunately, this is sometimes the nature of community development, particularly when an organization is going through the design process for the first time, or has no capacity to expand the fee.

Dina Klavon, ASLA, principal landscape architect of Klavon Design Associates, competes for community projects for two primary reasons. First, she believes that good design should be accessible to those of varying means, and secondly, her philosophy is to include pro bono projects as part of the firm's portfolio, her way of giving something back to the community. She notes that in some instances in which she's given something up front, it's paid off in the end. The Fineview Overlook and the South Side 10 to 1 Trail are two examples of CDCP-funded projects that had uncertain beginnings but evolved into built projects that generated positive revenue for Klavon's office.

Another benefit to this work? "These organizations all have volunteer boards of directors, many of whom have professional lives outside the community, and they have occasionally proven to reemerge as future clients," says Klavon.

Another firm which values community-based projects as an important piece of the firm's overall body of work is Rothschild Doyno Architects. Dan Rothschild, AIA is quick to point out the importance of stating the proposed fee in a Request for Proposals. This has been a standard CDCP practice for several years, but prior to that when it wasn't, it resulted in serious misunderstandings between community groups and design professionals. "A preliminary design project can be done in five days, five weeks, or five months, and each will produce a very different outcome with a very different fee," says Rothschild.

Rothschild attributes much of his firm's success with community-based projects to a simple method for evaluating financial feasibility. His firm breaks the fee down into billable hours and applies those to the pro-

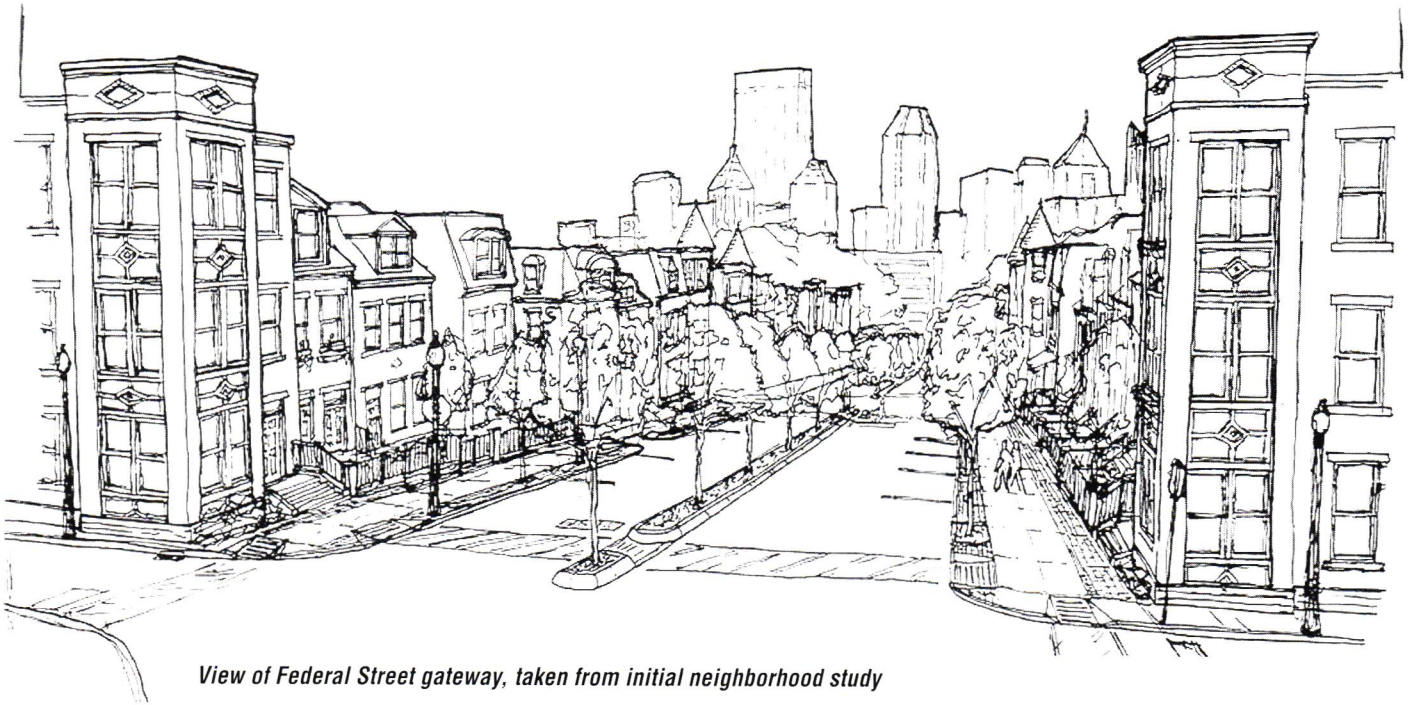
posed scope of services; if that yields a "workable solution" to the project, then it makes sense to pursue it. That way, if a project doesn't go ahead for some reason, his firm can put the project behind them and move on. "Gambling that a project will move ahead should not be part of any business strategy, including the practice of architecture."

From these examples we have a partial picture of the value of community design for the professional design community. Looking at some basic data helps to complete it. The Design Fund has supported 195 projects and provided \$858,000 in grants to date, one hundred percent of which was paid in direct fees to local design firms. By the time the CDCP celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2008, it will have single-handedly fundraised for and paid out \$1 million in professional design fees.

Moreover, CBOs have paid over \$1.6 million for *additional* design services in connection with those projects. In other words, the local design community has earned an additional two dollars on average for every dollar earned through a Design Fund project. Roughly one-third of the projects have reached construction, and have generated more than \$73 million in construction value and community reinvestment. For every project that has moved into construction, firms have earned on average \$5.64 for every dollar earned through the original grant.



Federal Hill Housing redevelopment, by Rothschild Doyno Architects



View of Federal Street gateway, taken from initial neighborhood study

Rothschild cited the Federal Hill housing redevelopment as an example of how effective the program can be. A \$10,000 Design Fund grant enabled Central Northside Neighborhood Council to complete a housing study with his firm in 1998. That is exactly how a seed grant is supposed to work, he says, adding, "It's a real project now, and the architecture and engineering fees that have been earned are fifteen times that of

the original grant funds and there is still more work to be done."

By looking at actual data and selected testimonials, we can safely conclude that community design continues to serve as a valuable source of revenue and opportunity for the collective design professions in Pittsburgh. The relationship, however, is not free of unfulfilled expectations. Currently, the CDCP is developing a Stra-

tegic Plan for the Design Fund to evaluate its effectiveness, and to chart its course for the future. As part of that process, more than fifty interviews were conducted across a variety of disciplines, including seven from local design firms. The outcomes will be incorporated into a strategic document that will improve the performance of the Design Fund for both community organizations and design professionals alike.

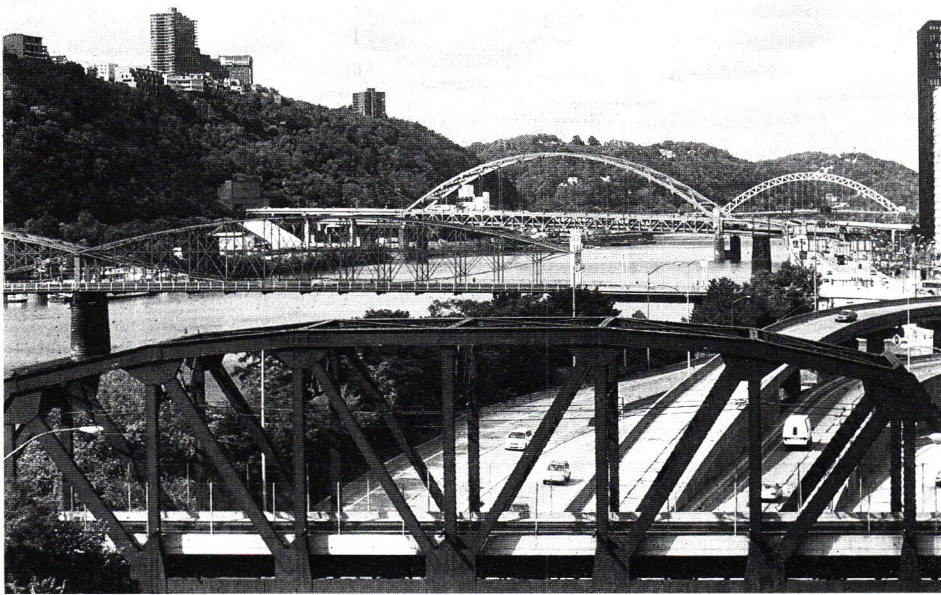
And lastly, it's important for all of us to remember this: *pro bono* is a Latin term that means *for the public good*, not *for free*.

Jason Vrabel is Design Fund Program Manager of the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh. If you have thoughts to share on this topic, or wish to inquire about pre-qualifying your firm for the Design Fund Program, contact Jason at 412-391-4144 or jvrabel@cdcp.org.



THE BRIDGES OF PITTSBURGH

BOOK REVIEW BY BOB BAILEY, AIA
WTW ARCHITECTS



View of Monongahela River bridges looking northwest. The Panhandle (light rail) bridge is in the foreground followed by the Smithfield Street, Fort Pitt and West End Bridges.

It is a paradox that the feature most responsible for the proliferation of Pittsburgh bridges, the topography, at the same time prevents a grand vista of many of its bridges. Now there's a book, *The Bridges of Pittsburgh*, that gives you an upclose and personal look at Pittsburgh's many bridges. This is a friendly book, a "Burgh-y" book if you will. Author Bob Regan and photographer Tim Fabian have collaborated to produce what Regan calls "a celebration of bridges." Reading it will give you no reason to think otherwise.

The simple purpose of this book is simply to explore one of Pittsburgh's characteristic features, its bridges. The book does not make pretensions to scholarship. Regan readily acknowledges more comprehensive resources, sees his book as a complement and/or introduction to them and in fact quotes from two of them.

Which is not to say that the book doesn't contain valuable information. For instance, Regan straightens out the matter of just how many bridges Pittsburgh (proper) has (*not* the County or the metro area). Approaching the tally a couple of different ways he arrives at a best count of 446, certainly more than Venice, Italy, and St. Petersburg, Rus-

sia, its nearest rivals. The breakdown includes 126 owned by the City, 21 by the County, 186 owned by PennDOT, 42 by the Port Authority, and 71 by railroad companies.

The book is divided into three parts: Bridge Background, The City of Bridges, and Bridge Tours, followed by two appendices. The second appendix, The Big List, enumerates each bridge within the City of Pittsburgh limits. Covering the history of bridges as well as unique Pittsburgh bridges, the book even devotes a chapter to "negative bridges," what the author dubs tunnels.

Succinctly distilling bridge history to a mere three pages, Regan states, "Truly there was more development in bridge building, design, technology and material during the 19th century than in the preceding 2,000-3,000 years," adding, "Pittsburgh's need for bridges all but guaranteed that it would also become a mecca for innovation and technology." And yes, Regan mentions the fact that bridge engineers hold their annual international conference in Pittsburgh.

One of the bridge pioneers discussed is George Ferris, famed for the wheel that bears his name which was in-

vented for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. I submit that most people do not know that Ferris had a company in Pittsburgh that tested and inspected metals for bridges. Ferris died prematurely in 1896 at the age of 37; we may have seen more remarkable things from him had he lived.

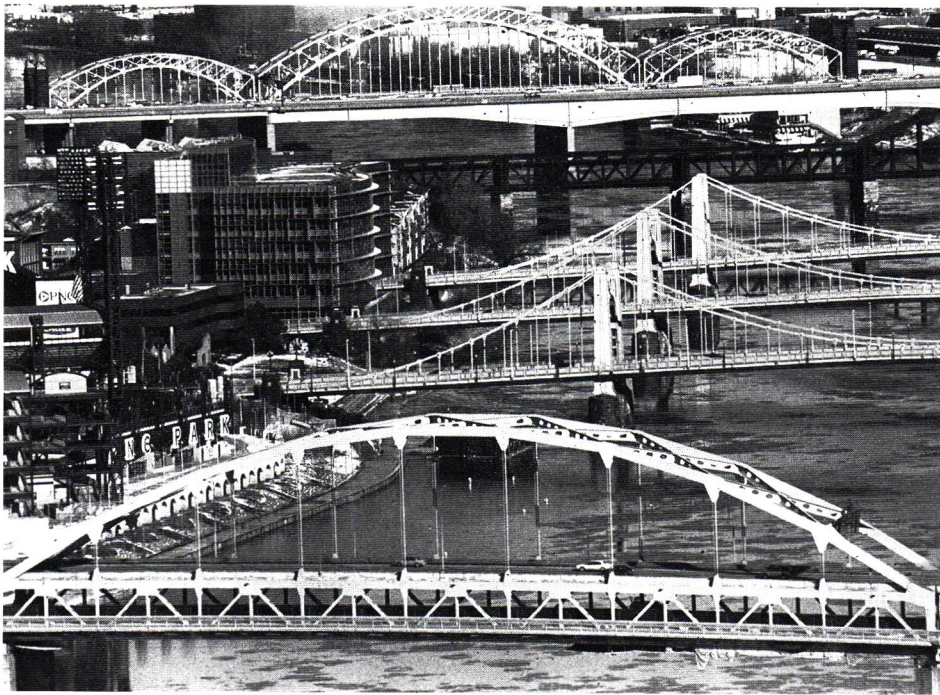
Another pioneer is George Richardson, a bridge designer and engineer for Allegheny County's Bureau of Bridges, who was influential during the 1920s and 1930s—what could be called the golden age of bridge building in Pittsburgh. Regan includes a gracious acknowledgement: "...he was involved in the founding of a local engineering firm, HDR Engineering, which is still in existence today."

The book emphasizes the variety of bridges to be found in Pittsburgh: "Numbers alone don't account for the title of City of Bridges. Equally important is the variety. Pittsburgh has or has had pedestrian, automobile, railroad, bus, light rail, water, hot metal, and incline-carrying bridges. It also has or has had covered bridges, wooden bridges, all steel bridges, toll bridges, and bridges of every style, shape and form except for a drawbridge." Regan adds, "...only ten of the city's ninety neighborhoods are bridge deprived."

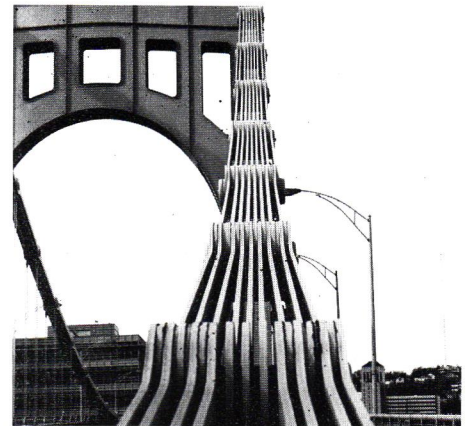
We learn that many handsome bridges exist here because of the approval process: "The Art Commission, established in 1911, evaluates the form and appearance of all bridges costing more than \$25,000. Their approval is necessary prior to any bridge construction or reconstruction." (One wonders how they seemed to have cast a blind eye to the Veteran's Bridge, a real clinker in the panoply of wonderful 'Burgh bridges.)

In one of the best chapters, The Head Count, Regan first qualifies then quantifies the bridges with the benefit of Geographic Information System technology—a real boon for those seeking maps that show (most) structures. Using GIS mapping technology, Regan mapped all *non*-railroad bridges within the city, writing, "It is interesting to note that a map of all these bridges shows that, with the exception of the I-279 corridor, the bridge pattern was quite similar to that of the rail lines."

Interspersed through the book are diagrams of eight variations of bridge types, a bridge vocabulary, a map of city



This view of seven downtown bridges crossing the Allegheny River demonstrates the incredible variety of Pittsburgh bridge styles. From top to bottom they are the 16th Street (trussed through arch), the Veterans (beam), Fort Wayne Railroad (double Warren truss), the Three Sisters (self-anchored suspension) and Fort Duquesne (arch with truss-braced deck).



Detail of the steel eyebar chain on the former 9th Street Bridge, now the Rachel Carson Bridge.



The Panther Hollow Bridge in Schenley Park opened in 1897 and was designated a city landmark in 2006.

bridges, an enumeration of the largest extant Pittsburgh bridges, a list of the largest former Pittsburgh bridges now demolished, and a even a group poem to the 10th Street Bridge, written by the 5th grade class of Philip Murray Elementary School in January, 2004.

Pittsburgh's one aqueduct and four viaducts are also tabulated. Part III: Bridge Tours includes maps for tours by driving, walking, bicycling, and river excursion. Regan was so impressed by a report on the Herr's Island Railroad Bridge by a fourth grader from Aspinwall in 2005 that he graciously included the entire report as Appendix I.

With the writing style of a storyteller, you easily imagine the author relating the stories in the book, and the touches of wry humor are enjoyable:

Alluding to the unusual fact that at least one Pittsburgh bridge has in fact been relocated downstream, he writes: "There seems to be bridges everywhere, and although London Bridge is now in Arizona, all the Pittsburgh bridges are still here or in some cases, nearby."

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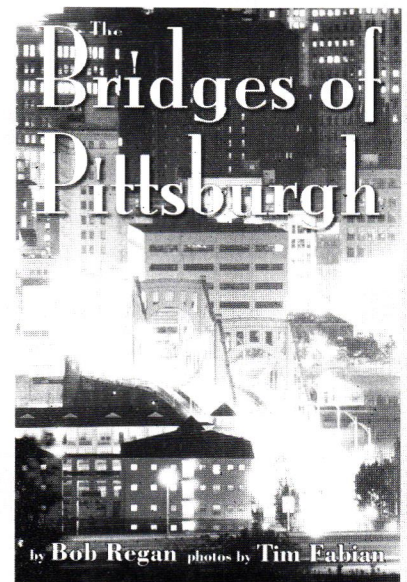
And in a bit from *Pedestrian Bridges/Schenley Park Tufa Bridges*, he comments: "The most spectacular occurrences of tufa are the coal like "Tufa Towers" of Mono Lake, California. However, the tufa of the Schenley Park bridges is fittingly more pedestrian, having come from Ohio."

There are many fascinating nuggets, like this one: When the USX tower was built, a railroad tunnel was removed during deep excavation for the parking garage. During construction of the garage, the tunnel was reconstructed on a bridge spanning the fourth level of the garage. So Pittsburgh has a bridge (tunnel) inside a building carrying light rail traffic.

Regan offers a suggestion for the future:

"The bridges would benefit by lighting them in a dramatic fashion for "Light Up" night...and in a more modest fashion on a permanent basis."

If I was a tourist in Pittsburgh I would buy this book. It is saturated with Pittsburgh flavor, readily readable at any point to which you may open it, with a hand-friendly size and a modest price. It is enjoyable and valuable inspiring readers to develop an appreciation for bridges not typically noticed when traveling around the 'Burgh.



TITLE: The Bridges of Pittsburgh

AUTHOR: Bob Regan

PHOTOS: Tim Fabian

PUBLISHED BY: The Local History Company

From the Firms

► **KSBA Architects** is designing a \$2.3 million, 17,000 sf, three-story building for Klingensmith Drugstore located in Ford City, PA. First floor is a retail drugstore and the upper floors will accommodate professional medical offices.

JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design announces their selection as the Architect and MEP Engineer of Record for two new Brooks Brothers stores in Saucon Valley, PA and the Waterfront in Wichita, KS. **Tom Mrozinski, Jr., AIA** is JSA Principal-in-Charge.

Landau Building Company was recently awarded both the general construction contract from the North Hills Community Outreach for construction of the Millvale Community Center and the general construction contract for the WVU Hatfield's Restaurant renovation in Morgantown, WV. They have also completed the addition and renovations to the Homewood Brushton YMCA in Homewood and major expansions to St. Gregory Parish in Zelienople.

Business Briefs

► **David W. Bostak, AIA**, of **KSBA Architects**, recently passed the architectural registration exam and became a registered architect in Pennsylvania. Mr. Bostak was also named an associate of KSBA.

Mick McNutt, Assoc. AIA joined **EDGE studio** as an Architectural Designer in February 2006. He holds a BA from University of Pittsburgh and Masters in Architecture from Syracuse University.

JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design announces the following new employees: Juan Duque and Rick Eckles as project managers, Jim White as mechanical designer, Kyle Sawchuk and Michelle Botelho as intern architects, Cassandra Baker as manager of Business Development, and Rae Dawn Pance as CADD draftsperson.

Robert J. Bailey, AIA, has rejoined the professional team at **WTW Architects** in Pittsburgh.

Massaro Restoration Services, LLC announces two new employees. Randy Cataldi joins the company as a project coordinator with more than 29 years of experience. Doug McCanch joins as a certified restoration technician with more than three years experience in the restoration field.

PSI announces the addition of John Bonassi as a senior vice president for impact projects and key client development. Mr. Bonassi earned a Bachelor's Degree from West Liberty State College and a Master's Degree from Duquesne University.

Kudos

► **KSBA Architects** recently received a citation from U.S. General Services Administration/Public Buildings Service for outstanding contribution to Excellence in Federal Design on the United States Courthouse project in Erie, PA.

The Association of College Unions International (ACUI) has presented **WTW Architects** of Pittsburgh with two Facility Design Awards of Excellence out of only four such awards presented at the ACUI's annual meeting. The WTW projects honored (pictured below) were the new Student Union at the University of Akron and the new Student Center at DePaul University.



Student Union at the University of Akron



Student Center at DePaul University

Hayes Large Architects LLP announces that partner **G. Randolph (Randy) Hudson, AIA**, has been named the 2006 recipient of the Alumni Award for Architecture awarded annually by the Penn State University's College of Arts & Architecture. According to Dick Durst, dean of the College, one individual is selected annually from each academic unit. "The awards are presented to individuals on the merits of their career successes," said Durst.

C-Thru Design led by Pittsburgh architect **David Roth, AIA**, received an honorable mention award for contributing important ideas to the West End Pedestrian Bridge competition (sponsored by the Pittsburgh Riverlife Task Force).

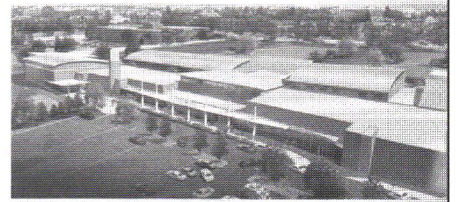
The Contamination Control Technology (CCT) Conference, which was held this March in Boston, featured local architect, **Thomas E. Hansz, AIA**, in two seminars on the planning of nanotechnology cleanrooms. Hansz served as the Chairperson for the conference's Facilities Design/Engineering/Construction track, which included notable cleanroom experts from around the United States.

AS SEEN ON TV. The Beaver County Transit Authority's travel center (pictured below), designed by **Maynes Associates Architects**, is featured in a current Duquesne Light Company television commercial running through May. "We paid particular attention to the quality of lighting," says **Paula Maynes, AIA** regarding the BCTA travel center. The interior of the glass-enclosed customer service center is indirectly lit creating a pleasant glow and the underside of the exterior canopies are illuminated. Acting as a backdrop to the canopies, a screen wall (which now has climbing flowering plantings not seen in the photo here) is also lit. "We provided illuminated bollards which run the length of the bus berthing area as well as decorative parking lot lighting," says Maynes. The effect of the combined lighting treatments creates a striking appearance at night as well as day. Certainly Duquesne Light thinks so. Look for the fish-eye lens view of a BCTA bus pulling out of the travel center station—it appears right after the image of Point State Park.

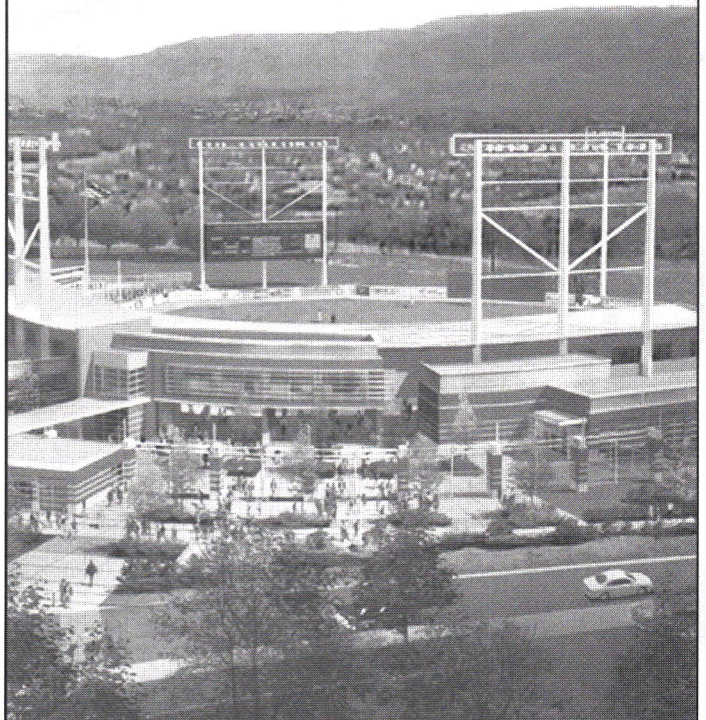


Beaver County Transit Authority's travel center

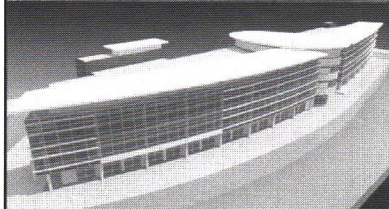
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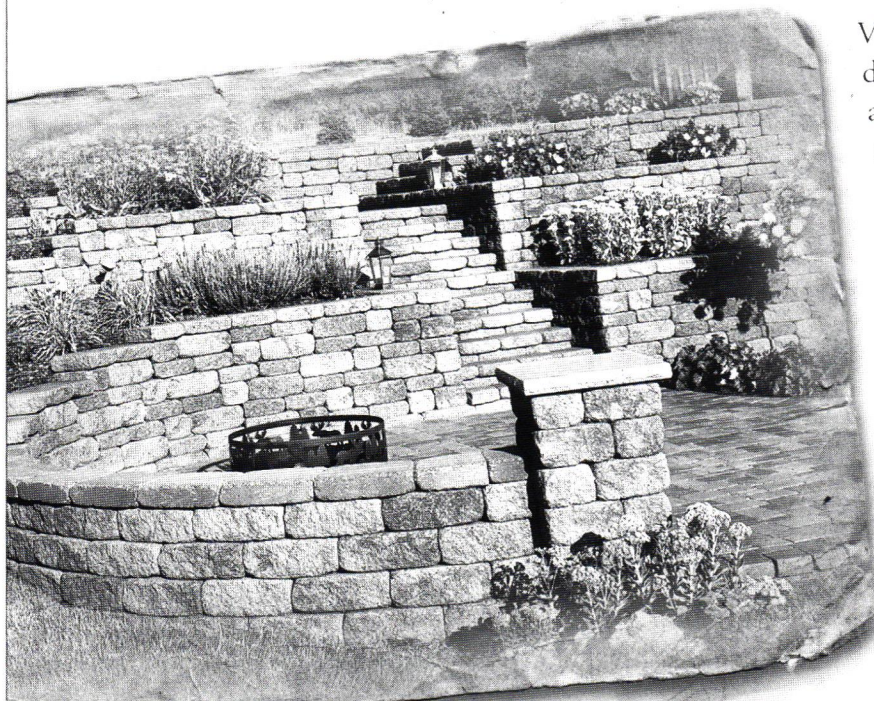

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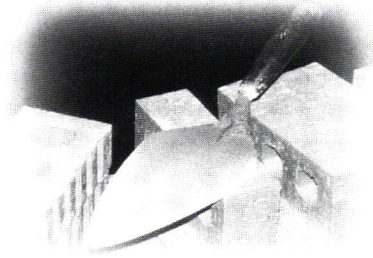
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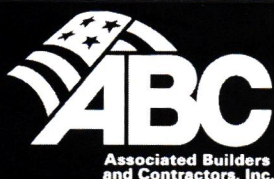
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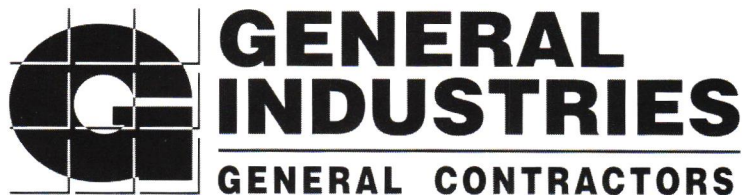
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