

# COLUMNS



METAVILLA MÉTACITÉ  
10<sup>e</sup> EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE D'ARCHITECTURE  
VENISE, 2005  
PAVILLON DE LA FRANCE  
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## Venice Biennale



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# In This Issue

By Tracy Certo



*In the next issue, April, we will unveil—ta da!—our new design.*

## I've been waiting long years to say this:

the issue of *Columns* you are now reading will be the last one you'll see in this format. In the next issue, April, we will unveil—ta da!—our new design. It's been a long time coming. Although we had all agreed that *Columns* needed a new look, it took the persistence and planning of Eric Osth, AIA to really push it through. He was new to the communications committee when, in a meeting one day, we mentioned the need for a redesign. But instead of noting it and moving onto something else, he asked questions about what it would take and then he emailed me one day with a plan and a schedule to move it forward.

Long story short: after an online survey to find out what you want in *Columns*, and after a series of meetings to determine what *Columns* is and what we want it to be, Anne Swager, Hon. AIA and the board approved Eric's proposal and Wolfe Design was hired through an RFP process to do the new design. And now? We anxiously await the results. If there was an emoticon that symbolizes an outsized whoo-hoo!, I would place it right here.

Meanwhile, we've been focused on this issue which features the intrepid and always fun Tracy Myers who made two big journeys recently: one to Robinson Twp and the other to Venice to see the Biennale. Don't miss her illuminating report. She's joined by another architect, Jonathan Scelsa, who also went to the Biennale and took dozens of good photos, many featured here.

Speaking of photos, a confession: although I went to the AIA holiday party where I took a number of amusing photos of our new president, Jim Radock in the traditional wig, along with the ever-entertaining Tom

Briney, unfortunately, the photos were inadvertently deleted from the photo card. It was the first time that ever happened and I'm sure the last. So that means Jim-in-wig will not have his picture appearing in this issue. I am sorry and I am sure (okay, probably not) that he is, too. And to all the other presidents whose photos appeared here year after year in white-hair splendor, I apologize for my competence in not deleting yours.

To punish you further, and to fill the space reserved for the lost photos, we're including a photo essay of Greek columns, photos which were not inadvertently deleted from my camera card during a recent and extraordinary trip to Santorini and Athens, Greece. As one of you said at the holiday party, it's an architect's dream trip. And as another architect confided, "I would die to see the Parthenon." As requested, I took some photos for you and I share them with you here.

While Athens was built with power in mind—the awe-inspiring Parthenon looming over the city is a constant reminder—I doubt that Pericles had happiness as a goal when he led the design of the city. Read Bob Bailey's book review of *The Architecture of Happiness*, an interesting concept, on page 14. Now that I read the review, I'd like to read the book. (hint, hint, Bob)

Also in this issue we feature the Desmone family in their idyllic Fox Chapel digs. (Everyone here working on *Columns* wants to move into that house.)

Enjoy this issue, the last in the old format. Whoo-hoo! We are so looking forward to sending you the *next* one.

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**On the cover:** The French pavilion at the Venice Biennale, where a "Metavilla" of scaffolding literally supported the spontaneous 24/7 life activities of two dozen artists and architects who built and inhabited it. Photo by Jonathan Scelsa, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.



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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## The AIA Family

By Jim Radock, AIA

### In our house, architecture is a family affair.

For my wife, Donna and me, it's been that way for a while. We spent five years together at Penn State. There were long hours studying for the A.R.E. (the old four-day marathon version). We shared snacks out of a cooler during the Building Design exam (being seated alphabetically had its advantages). Today, I redline prints on the floor while she sits at the computer editing specs (often accompanied by the late news or Letterman's Top Ten). And the kids find it novel that their classmates' parents have different jobs.



*I can promise you that the projects that we are planning are an extension of the type of community outreach that our chapter has been championing for the last several years.*

But, as you'll read in a future issue of *Columns*, we are hardly unique in our situation. Architects think alike. The practice of architecture is a passion as much as it is a profession. The sheer commitment required to pursue a degree, a license, and a career requires a unique mix of drive and talent. Architects understand each other, because they share the abilities to perceive the world around them in a comprehensive manner and to visualize the possibilities of what can be.

Architects realize that it really is both the big picture **and** the details that matter. That's probably why architects often gravitate toward one another.

When the AIA speaks of "community," it is a broad statement. Certainly, a large part of the mission of the AIA is to engage in outreach to the community-at-large—to promote the value of good design as a means to improve the livability of our environment (and to increase the public recognition that architects are the professionals with the knowledge and skill sets to lead that charge).

In the past few years, you've heard a lot about the American Institute of Architects' commitment to communities. That theme will be reiterated many times this year, as the AIA celebrates its sesquicentennial. One highlight of the AIA 150 Blueprint for America program will be National Architecture Week, April 9<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>.

Across the nation, local AIA components will extol the benefits of good design through specially organized public events. AIA Pittsburgh's AIA 150 team, under the leadership of Ed Shriver, AIA, has been busy making big plans that I will discuss in depth in the near future. I can promise you that the projects that we are planning are an extension of the type of community outreach that our chapter has been championing for the last several years.

But community outreach is only half of the picture. The AIA, as the national membership organization for architects, is its own community—"the community of architects," as stated at the beginning of the AIA Brand Statement of Intent. The AIA's new Mission Statement reads even more definitively: "The AIA is *the* voice of the architectural profession and *the* resource for its members in service to society" (italics added).

Those are big shoes to fill. So who, exactly, is the AIA? We all know that AIA components nationwide are staffed by many dozens of dedicated and talented employees, including our own full-time staff of three. But the fundamental core that drives the mission and function of the AIA is its members: ordinary architects working on behalf of the betterment of the profession, the environment (built and otherwise), and society.

The AIA Pittsburgh Board of Directors convenes at the beginning of each year for a strategic planning session to evaluate last year's goals and accomplishments, and to chart the course of the coming year. This is the time of year when we take stock of the programs and products that we want to deliver, and reconcile them with the tools and resources at hand. Simply stated, our resources are our operating budget (including our staff) and ourselves. Given the resources at hand, AIA Pittsburgh has consistently been able to deliver a great deal of value to its members, and we strive to exceed expectations. Your Board is keenly aware of the cost of membership, and it is our aim to maximize your return on your investment in the AIA. (continued next page)





## Caruso Elected National President of AIAS

The American Institute of Architecture Students is happy to announce that Andrew Caruso has been elected as the 51st National President of the AIAS. Caruso is a recent graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and believes strongly in the strength and importance of the organization to affect change within the built environment and architectural education. He is happy to join a distinguished history of Carnegie Mellon leadership at the national level and to guide the organization into its next half-century of success.

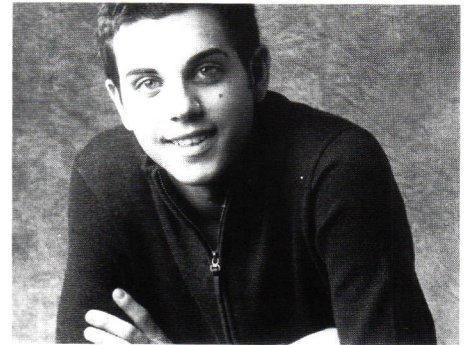
As National President, Caruso will oversee advocacy and policy initiatives within the education and practice of architecture across the United States, with particular focus on the impact of these issues on the student and internship communities of the profession.

Caruso is Past-President of the AIAS at Carnegie Mellon University and received a Bachelor of Architecture with honors this December. Among many scholarships, he received four personal commendations from the School of Architecture for leadership and design excellence, University Merit scholarships, was named a 2006 Andrew Carnegie Scholar, and awarded the prestigious Stewart L. Brown Memorial Scholarship by AIA Pittsburgh in recognition of his design accomplishments and professional promise.

Additionally, Caruso is a LEED Accredited Professional, and his art and architectural forays have been exhibited and published nationally, contributing articles to the

CRIT Journal and the AIA Committee on the Environment. Andrew was also honored to speak at the 2006 International Conference on Humanities and the Arts on several topics in Architecture.

Caruso remains active within the collateral organizations, having served on the AIA Pittsburgh Board of Directors, on visiting teams for the National Architectural Accrediting Board, and as an active IDP participant. He currently serves the American Institute of Architecture Students on the National Board of Directors as the 2006-2007 Director, Northeast Quadrant and has recently been elected 2007-2008 National President. He looks to pursue foci in urban planning and



policy, public transportation, universal design and architectural education.

Further information on the American Institute of Architecture Students is available at [www.aias.org](http://www.aias.org).



### WTW Top Fundraisers

**The WTW Architects team was the top fundraisers for the Jingle Bell Run/Walk for the Arthritis Foundation. Way to go, guys! BACK ROW: Tom Davis, Arwen Davis (team captain holding trophy), Valerie Vrable, Barb Steinberg, Karen Mueller, Bob Dezort, Tom Wiley, AIA MIDDLE ROW: Doug Shuck, AIA, Paul Tellers, AIA, Rich Bamburak, AIA, Jill Payne, Larry Payne, AIA, Rich DeYoung, AIA FRONT ROW: Robert Bailey, AIA and his dog Zack.**

### THE AIA FAMILY continued

That's where you come in. Let us know what you think. Tell us if there's something that we should be doing better, or if we should be doing more of one thing or less of another. Let us know how you can help—whether through championing a particular passion, or providing a continuing education program at Build Pittsburgh. There are many levels of involvement where you can help. The AIA recently released a Covenant between the Institute and its Members, which is intended to describe

what members may expect of the organization, and how they, in turn, can contribute to the value of their membership. As Tom Briney, AIA wrote this time last year, "you gain value from membership directly in proportion to your involvement."

Personally, I can attest that, when architects work together on a common goal, the whole does exceed the sum of its parts. In this year of the AIA's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary,

I am the beneficiary of the groundwork laid by the Chapter Presidents who preceded me during my tenure on the Board: Jon Shimm, AIA, Rich DeYoung, AIA, Dan Rothschild, AIA, Steve Quick, AIA, and Tom Briney AIA, not to mention all of the hard work of the other board members, staff, committee members, and volunteers. I have found that AIA Pittsburgh is truly a community, or family of architects.





**Città. Architettura e società**

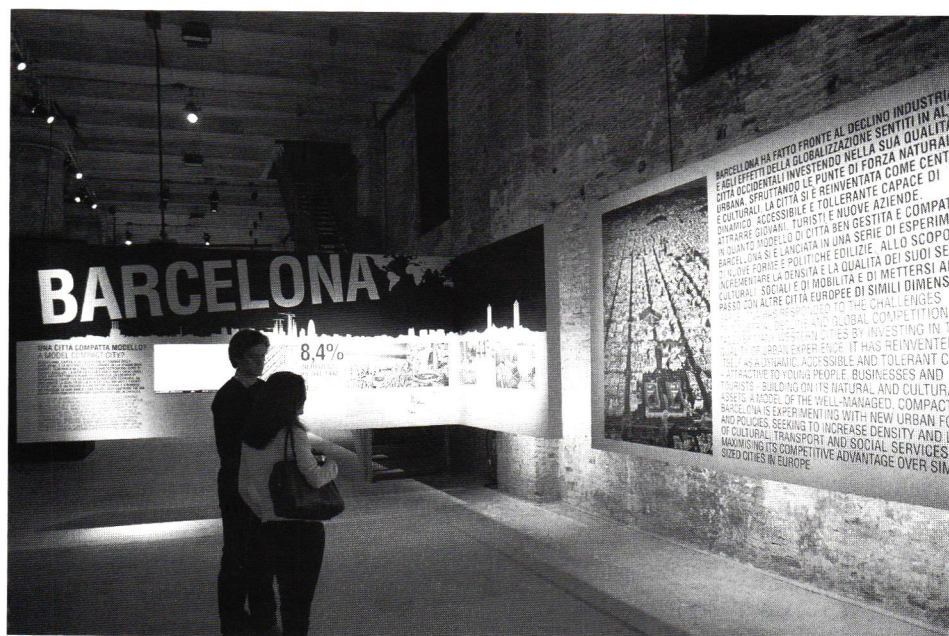
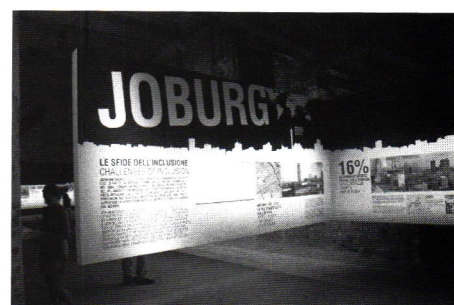
**Notes on the Biennale:**  
*Cities, Architecture and Society*

By Tracy Myers



One day last summer, I went to Robinson Towne Center to buy a cell phone. You wouldn't think that this is a big deal, but it turned out to be quite a saga. As Mapquest predicted, it took about twenty minutes to drive the roughly 13 miles from my house in the South Side to the mall. It took another twenty minutes to find the Verizon store, though, because once I turned off Park Manor Boulevard, I became lost in the complete formlessness of the quintessential suburban American shopping mall. (Park. Manor. Boulevard. Individually, those words make sense. Together—not so much.) I drove back and forth across the highway from Robinson Towne Center to The Pointe at North Fayette a couple times, passing stores selling every brand of phone *but* the one I wanted before I finally found the Verizon store—pretty much where I'd started my search. Unfortunately, they didn't have the phone I wanted. To add irony to irritation, after an hour-long drive back to the South Side on a road choked with traffic for a Kenny Chesney concert at Heinz Field, I discovered that there was a Verizon store right in my neighborhood (but not listed on the website).

This little melodrama came back to me as I immersed myself in the pile of material I collected at the Venice Architecture Biennale in the fall, because the condition of hyper-urbanization assayed by the Biennale's central exhibition—titled *Cities, Architecture and Society*—is the diametrical opposite of the pattern of development represented by the conjoined malls in North Fayette. While more than half of the American population now lives in suburbia, the majority of the planet's population now lives in cities; the United Nations predicts that by 2050, the number of city-dwellers will rise to seventy-five percent. The tenth edition of the Biennale, described by its organizers as “a discourse on the consequences and possibilities of architecture applied to urban and meta-urban systems,” examined physical, economic, and social conditions in sixteen mega-cities: London, Berlin, Barcelona, and the Milan/Turin metacity; Istanbul, Cairo, and Johannesburg; Mumbai, Shanghai, and Tokyo; Los Angeles, Mexico City, and New York; and Caracas, Bogotá, and São Paulo.



*The Biennale examined physical, economic and social conditions in sixteen mega-cities.*





*Perhaps the most effective elements of the exhibition were huge stalagmite-like models representing the density of each city.*

Presented in the picturesquely decayed, thousand-foot-long Corderie dell'Arsenale (a disused rope-making factory), the exhibition, which was organized by Richard Burdett of the London School of Economics, marshaled mountains of data in what amounted to a primer on urban analysis. Demographic, economic, and cultural information for each city was presented through a combination of aerial photographs and satellite images, videos of graphically presented statistics, photographs (and occasionally models) of a very few architectural projects, sound installations, and words—many, many, words. The seemingly endless expanse of the Corderie was disrupted at five points by what the organizers described as “aerial installations”: aerial photographs of cities representing different processes of urban growth, projected onto structures on the floor such that visitors

◆

**Setting forth his summary in the form of a question—“Can Cities Change the World?”—Burdett exhorted architects to consider the constructive, or at least instructive, role their work might play in creating more tolerant, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable cities whose systems of governance advance rather than undermine these qualities.**

◆

literally walked across the landscape. Perhaps the most effective—certainly the most affecting—elements of the exhibition were a space featuring huge stalagmite-like models representing the density of each of the sixteen cities and, farther along in the long sequence, large light boxes on the floor that showed in time-lapse form a 24-hour period of activity in a public space in each city. The experience of these components provided both visual and mental relief from over-stimulation by the overwhelming quantity of data presented elsewhere in the exhibition.

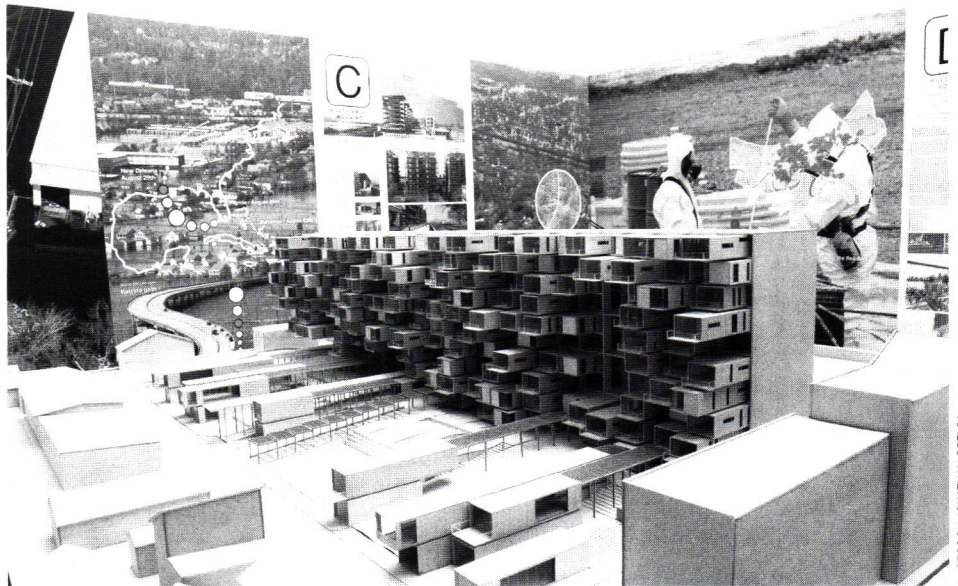
So, what did *Cities, Architecture and Society* reveal? If measured against Burdett's improbably modest objective of “investigating models of interaction between cities, architecture and inhabitants” by focusing on physi-





*Large light boxes on the floor showed in time-lapse form a 24-hour period of activity in a public space in each city.*

cal conditions, the exhibition certainly redeemed itself. In many ways, though, the statistical and pictorial evidence it presented simply fleshed out a story about the contemporary metropolis in developed and developing countries that most of us already know in its broad outlines: massive urbanization has created great disparities in social and economic conditions, left a heavy footprint on the environment, and severely eroded the distinction between public and private. This is not to say that nothing new was to be learned from the exhibition. While the almost mind-numbing sea of data representations ultimately resolved into a blur of consciousness for me, the overarching impression of the utterly abject poverty in which urbanites in much of the developing world live did point to the urgency of Burdett's more polemical purpose, which was revealed



*The U.S. pavilion focused on post-Katrina rebuilding, featuring urban planning and urban design schemes, as well as proposals for multi-family and single-family dwellings.*





**Aerial installations employed aerial photographs of cities representing different processes of urban growth, projected onto structures on the floor such that visitors literally walked across the landscape.**

at the end of the exhibition. Setting forth his summary in the form of a question—"Can Cities Change the World?"—Burdett exhorted architects to consider the constructive, or at least instructive, role their work might play in creating more tolerant, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable cities whose systems of governance advance rather than undermine these qualities. Though dense, exhausting, and ultimately unsuccessful as an exhibition, *Cities, Architecture and Society* was, for anyone who still believes (as I do) in the redemptive and nurturing capacity of architecture, a refreshing break from the usual starchitectonics of the Biennale.

To move from the Corderie to the Giardini, where the thirty-plus national pavilions are located, is to be launched from the dark, data-rich environment of analysis embodied by *Cities, Architecture and Society* into the brilliant messiness of life that the exhibition describes. Alternately inspired and trite, profound and silly, engaging and annoying, lucid and obtuse, the *padiglioni* offered up a wonderfully wide array of forms of presentation. Undoubtedly the most talked-about venue was the French pavilion, where a "Metavilla" of scaffolding literally supported the spontaneous 24/7 life activities of the two dozen artists and architects who built and

inhabited it—as well as visitors, who were encouraged to linger and participate in this "architectural act." At the opposite end of the experiential spectrum, the Dutch pavilion featured *Seeing is Knowing*, an exhibition by the Netherlands Architecture Institute of perspective renderings of imagined cities dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

Predictably, the United States' pavilion focused on post-Katrina rebuilding, featuring urban planning and urban design schemes, as well as proposals for multi-family and single-family dwellings. Quite less predictably, the Hungarians explored the local impact of China's growing economic influence by creating highly entertaining animated installations from cheap Chinese-made gadgets, toys, and other plastic tschotchkes. The urban implications of China's extraordinarily rapid development were explored in the Danish pavilion in a unique joint exhibition with China: *Co-Evolution* presented proposals for large-scale sustainable urban plans that evolved from a collaboration of four Danish architectural firms with faculty and students from four prestigious Chinese universities.

The Hungarian and Danish/Chinese pavilions illustrated an aspect of the global city that, curiously, was not addressed in the exhibition in the Corderie—namely, the intersection of what Saskia Sassen describes in her catalogue essay as "thingness" and "flow." While the world's economy is increasingly founded on digital transmission and transactions—on flow, in Sassen's terms—the global and the digital are dependent on physical resources, on things. "Things and materiality are critical for digitization and globalization," she writes, "and places matter for global flows." The critical message of the Biennale, it seems to me, is that the ability of architects to shift their depth of field from the local to the global, from thing to flow, will determine both the viability and credibility of the profession in the future.



# More Notes on the Biennale

By Jonathan A. Scelsa, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson

In 2006, for the first time in history, 50% of the world's population lives in cities, and it is projected that by the year 2050 that ratio will increase to 75%. This statistic is the catalyst behind the Venice Biennale's 10th International Architecture Exhibition, *Cities, Architecture and Society* curated by Richard Burdett. The Venice Biennale's greatest strength is that it identifies and analyzes critical contemporary conditions that architects are and will be facing. The exhibition then goes further to invite a diverse host of architects from around the world to offer strategies and solutions to the condition at hand.

Perhaps the greatest example of this expository analysis followed by new architectural explorations was lo-

cated within the galleries of the Arsenale. The Corderie, the main facility within the Arsenale, housed the muscle of Burdett's *Cities, Architecture and Society*, focusing on the analysis of 16 cities selected due to their diversity in urban conditions. This central exhibition featured a certain exegetic clarity which was quite refreshing as it gave the visiting architect a sound analysis upon which they might develop an opinion and potentially approach their own designs within the urban context of these cities.

Paired with this scientific exposition of civic analysis was the new Italian Pavilion. In contrast to the Padiglione Italia located in the Giardini, which for decades has played host to the artistic and programmatic choices of

the Biennale's invited director; the new Italian Pavilion had been commissioned to reestablish the Italian presence through the promotion of Italian national art and architecture.

The inaugural exhibit of the Italian Pavilion, "The New City: Italia-y-2026. Welcome to VEMA," did just that, as it commissioned 20 Italian architect teams to design and plan a new Italian city between Verona and Mantua. The new city of VEMA was designed to be a directional opposition to the architectural drift that is so prevalent today. The process began with Curator Franco Purini's design for the master plan, in which all the architects were to design within. Purini sought to create a city of architectural constructs endowed with

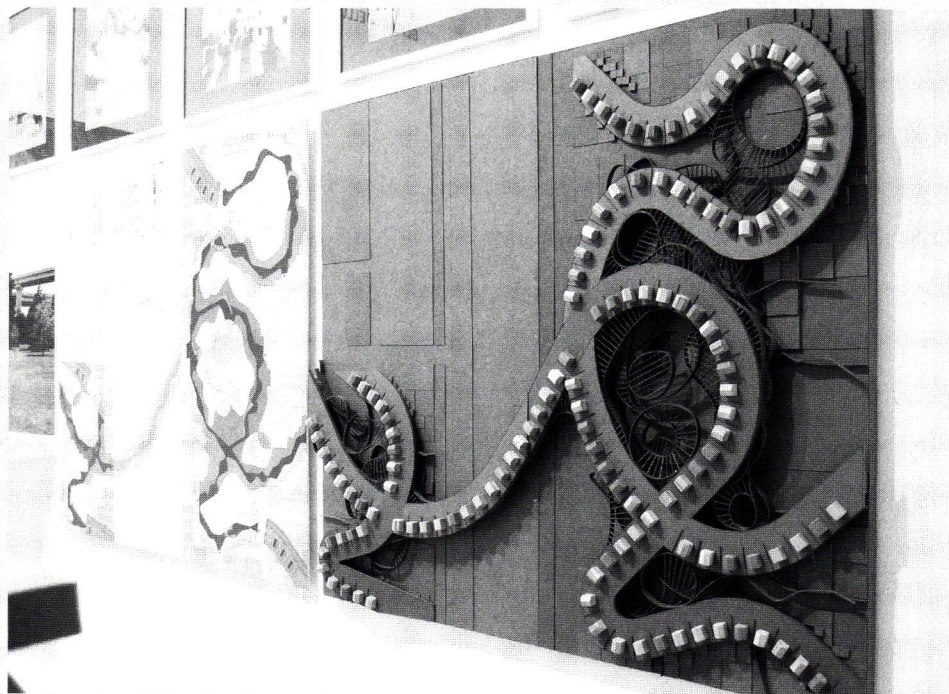


PHOTOS THIS SPREAD COURTESY VENICE BIENNALE



integrated connections, not a space colonized by a sum of individual acts of architecture. Each of the twenty teams of architects were contracted to design different parts of VEMA, from bridges to affordable housing to parks, while remaining part of an integrated whole. The centerpiece to the pavilion and the exhibit was the superlative 7.7m by 5.5m model of VEMA, which served to synthesize the individual efforts of the twenty teams into a cohesive totality.

These two exhibitions exemplified one of the many conditions in which the 10<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition would present information and a wealth of knowledge to its spectators. Simply stated, the biennale is a global education, one which exposes its visitors to a saturation of contemporary architectural concepts, ideas and solutions from around the world.







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# THE ARCHITECTURE OF HAPPINESS

BOOK REVIEW BY ROBERT J. BAILEY, AIA

In his 1923 seminal book *Towards A New Architecture*, Le Corbusier stated that the function of a house was to provide a shelter against heat, cold, rain, thieves, and the inquisitive; a receptacle for light and sun; and a certain number of cells appropriated to cooking, work, and personal life. What Corbusier discounted is the intangible in architecture, the evocative as opposed to the purely functional.

"The failure of architects to create congenial environments mirrors our inability to find happiness in other areas of our lives. Bad architecture is in the end as much a failure of psychology as of design," writes Alain de Botton in *The Architecture of Happiness*. This new book explores the psychology of architecture: if, why, and how architecture can impart a sense of happiness to one who experiences it.

de Botton is a Ph.D and author of several books on subjects such as the psychology of travel experience and the anxiety of what people think of us. His book reveals a certain familiarity with architectural theory and history but the flavor of the discourse is that of someone not trained as an architect but who knows what he likes.

The psychology of architecture is a little like the psychology of sales and its adage "sell the sizzle, not the steak." In Corbusier's work - despite his prowess at self-promotion—the 'steak' tends to come through a bit too relentlessly. (Wright, another master of self-promotion, perhaps conveyed 'sizzle' a good deal better.) The concept of "happiness" and how it is supported by architecture, seemingly needs to be considered in broad terms: satisfaction, fulfillment, joy, delight, even achievement. A person with a childlike sense of wonder, for instance, might find delight in the ersatz "architecture" of Disney World. One can see, then, the difficulty in trying to put even the most scholarly of arms around such a notion.

John Ruskin, de Botton reminds us, said we ought to seek for our buildings not only to shelter us but also to *speak* to us "of whatever we find important and need to be reminded of." For the factory workers of Pessac, Corbusier's housing didn't "say" much (or at least not what they wanted to "hear"). Corbusier missed the point that, while the units at



***The home of Italian writer Curzio Malaparte suggests characteristics of straightforwardness and stability that idealistically oriented its owner toward those values rather than providing a reflection of his actual character.***

Pessac represented an effort to strip housing of decoration that he found superfluous in the age of technology, the people who lived there had their fill of the industrial aesthetic at their job all day. They wanted a dwelling that was homey and nurturing (evoking comforting images that they associated with "happiness") which is why after a few years all the units had been transformed to reflect their owners' tastes.

de Botton nicely expounds on the concept that buildings speak to us, suggesting that they furthermore give an impression, an attitude, because we perceive this about objects, even to the point of being anthropomorphic, and respond accordingly to the impressions we receive from buildings. How does this work? De Botton explains: "The wealth of information we are attuned to deducing from living forms helps to explain the intensity of feelings generated by competing architectural styles." He adds: "So refined is our skill at detecting parallels to human beings in forms, textures and colours that we can interpret a character from the humblest shape." And yet, though we intuit

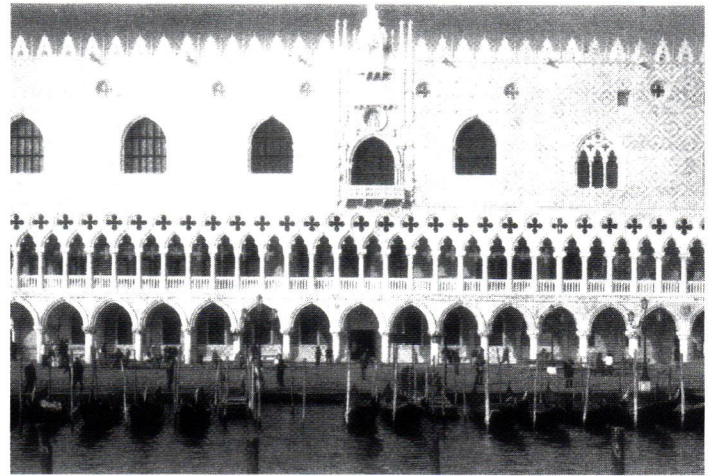
this, process it, and respond to it, we (even as architects) don't seem to discuss it much. "It remains odd," de Botton notes, "to initiate a conversation about what a building is saying," whereupon he speculates on the "what if" of a comprehensive dictionary of the implications of architectural elements. (Imagine us devious architects getting our hands on such a thing.)

The important transition de Botton makes is when he seeks to explain what this 'language' of architecture actually means. Even if we were fully cognizant of what this architectural language implies in a building, it in itself is not sufficient to tell us why we find some compositions of architectural elements "beautiful" or admirable and others we find repugnant. What we see as beauty in a building de Botton equates to the use of an architectural language that suggests values we think worthwhile. It is because of this, de Botton asserts, that the architecture we perceive as "beautiful" is that which evokes those feelings we associate with happiness. The French writer Stendhal, asserts de Botton, perceptively wrote 'Beauty is the promise of happiness.'





*This house has an honest, serene feel to it that can help us recover our sense of self and regain some vitality after a hectic workday.*



*de Botton suggests that we have a desire in architecture to see order achieved when chaos is still evident, such as the disparate elements, patterns and rhythms brought together in a dazzling composition that is Venice's Doge's Palace.*

But why do we make such associations? Why is it necessary to strive for the affirmative, the beautiful in architecture? de Botton posits, "...at its most genuine, the architectural impulse seems connected to a longing for communication and commemoration, a longing to declare ourselves to the world through a register other than words, through the language of objects, colours and bricks: an ambition to let others know who we are—and, in the process, to remind ourselves." And yet, this declaration can swing, as our emotional needs and societal values change.

Through history we have often seen idealization of architecture, de Botton suggests, in buildings whose aesthetics move us by suggesting values better (or nowadays at least different) than what we are. de Botton offers the atrium of Gehry's DZ Bank in Berlin as a contemporary example, in which unusual and free-form spatial objects are in direct contrast to the often somber and tedious work occurring in the immediately adjacent offices.

I enjoyed the illustrations (black and white). There were a few shots that are the 'same old' for that particular building but generally the book offers new images (and not just of buildings) or at least different images of those buildings we've seen endlessly. There are no footnotes, chapter notes, or bibliography.

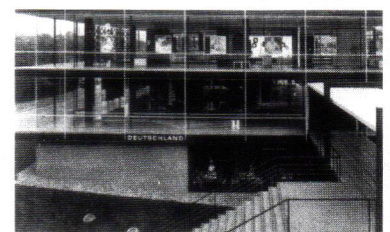
WHAT WE SEE AS BEAUTY  
IN A BUILDING de BOTTON  
EQUATES TO THE USE OF AN  
ARCHITECTURAL LANGUAGE THAT  
SUGGESTS VALUES WE THINK  
WORTHWHILE. IT IS BECAUSE OF  
THIS, de BOTTON ASSERTS, THAT  
THE ARCHITECTURE WE PERCEIVE  
AS "BEAUTIFUL" IS THAT WHICH  
EVOKES THOSE FEELINGS WE  
ASSOCIATE WITH HAPPINESS.

For the most part, de Botton's points are valid, and there are certainly aspects in here for architects to think about and take to heart. Consider this statement on the tenuity of aesthetic value: "A building of the right proportions which is assembled out of inappropriate materials will be no less compromised than a courageous man lacking in patience or insight." Yet there are a few

bumps in the road; the expository writing is generally fine, but some of the longer descriptive passages, such as the first chapter in part I, I found to be overwrought, detracting from the tenor of the book. Also, de Botton's glide over centuries of architectural history to alight on certain watershed moments is certainly meant as a distillation in order to set the stage for his arguments; nevertheless whereas non-architects would be beguiled, I find it simplistic. Although the book, for me, concludes underwhelmingly, de

Botton ultimately equates beauty and balance in architecture with mental health and happiness. Getting there clearly is another matter.

At \$25 and 260-some pages, the book is worth a read by architects. It can help us understand why certain works of architecture have the effects on people that they do.



*German Exhibits at World's Fair, 20 years apart, illustrate two distinct temperaments of buildings. TOP: Albert Speer's very assertive 1937 entry is about power. BOTTOM: Egon Eiermann's 1958 entry uses horizontality and transparency to convey calm and democracy.*



# HABITAT

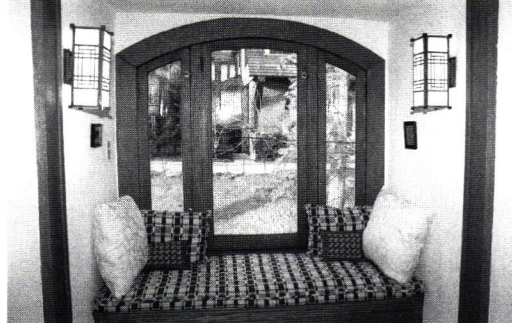
A Glimpse of Architects at Home



Chip Desmone, AIA and Lynn Desmone • Fox Chapel







When Lynn Desmone saw the house four years ago when she was in the Fox Chapel area visiting, it was love at first sight. She called Chip and said they had to see it. They did, and loved it, but it wasn't until it dropped in price that it became within range.

"It was hard leaving the city," says Chip who liked the Kentucky St. location of their former Shadyside house. "But if you're going to leave the city, this is the house for it."

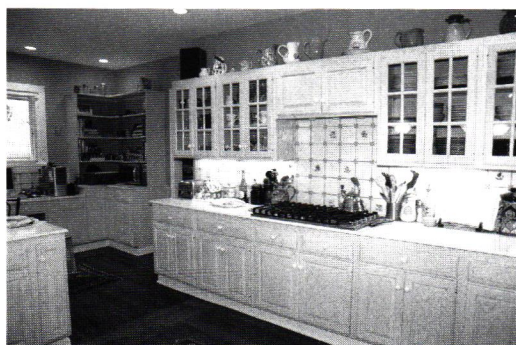
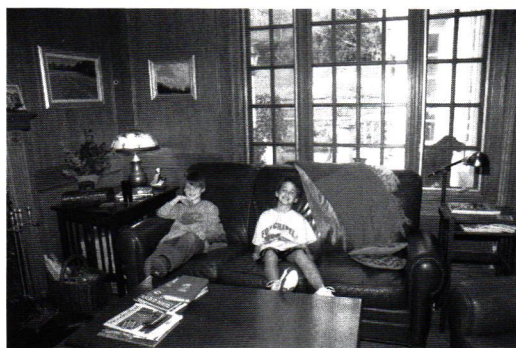
Hard to argue with that. The charming, deep yellow Craftsman-style house on a street that's more of a country lane has an enviable mix of intimate charm and expansiveness. You could fall in love with this place for many reasons: the long rows of original windows, the richly paneled walls in the high-ceilinged family room, the custom wood staircase railings, the skylights that flood the interior with natural light.

In the master bath addition, Chip's favorite spot in the house, the roomy slate shower is the focal point. Their favorite room in the house would have to be the terrace just outside the bank of floor-to-ceiling windows in the back of the house. (That was a prior addition designed by Doug Berryman, AIA, which included triple closets for ample storage.)

In the summer, the spacious yard bursts into a bloom of gardens. In the winter, the silhouettes of trees allow views of the neighbors' beautiful yards and houses. (Next door is a stunning, solid stone Craftsman style that looks straight out of Roycroft in Buffalo.)

What does Chip like best? "The great light," he says with a smile. Second is the outside with its flagstone patios and gorgeous gardens.

It's an ideal house for sons Luke, 11 (named after Grandpa) and Joey, 9, who get plenty of running around space and a great school district too. For Lynn, who is sales manager at Liberty Mutual, and Chip, it's a dream of a house in a picture-perfect setting. Someday in the future at another stage of life, they'd consider returning to the city. But for now, they're savoring all the bucolic charms of life in a rambling Craftsman. • PHOTOS & TEXT BY TRACY CERTO



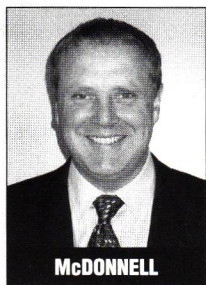


By Becky Spevack

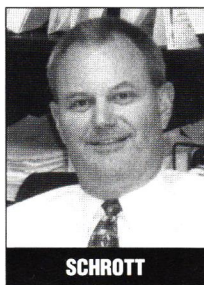
## From the Firms

► The North Hills School District school board has voted to hire **Eckles Architecture** to perform additions and renovations on Highcliff and McIntyre Elementary Schools.

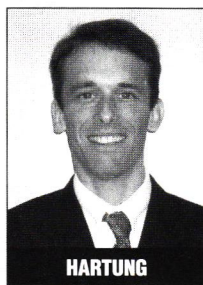
**IKM** has been awarded several major healthcare projects. The Reading Hospital and Medical Center awarded the architecture and design of a new \$30 million, Freestanding Acute Rehabilitation Hospital, with **Michael McDonnell, AIA** to serve as principle-in-charge. A \$40 million, new Orthopedic Specialty Hospital for a major midwestern health system has also been awarded, and will be led by **John Schrott, AIA**. **Roger Hartung, AIA** will serve as principal-in-charge for a new Heart Hospital for a prominent up-state New York hospital system. Additionally (below), the firm has completed two major science building projects: the Penn State University Food Science Building and the Slippery Rock University Science Building.



**McDONNELL**



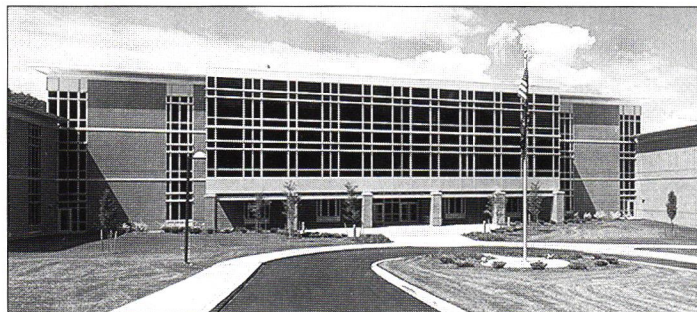
**SCHROTT**



**HARTUNG**



**Penn State University Food Science Building**



**Slippery Rock University Science Building**

**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** has announced the completion of the new Pennsylvania State Police Barracks building (below) in the Borough of Jefferson Hills, PA. The 8,900 sf barracks was built by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission for the state police and is located along the Mon Fayette Expressway, which overlooks the turnpike. JSA project team included Steven Ackerman, AIA, project architect, Christopher DiCianna, project engineer and Anita Myers, project interior designer. Site/civil engineer was GAI Consultants Inc. and contractor was Dick Corporation.



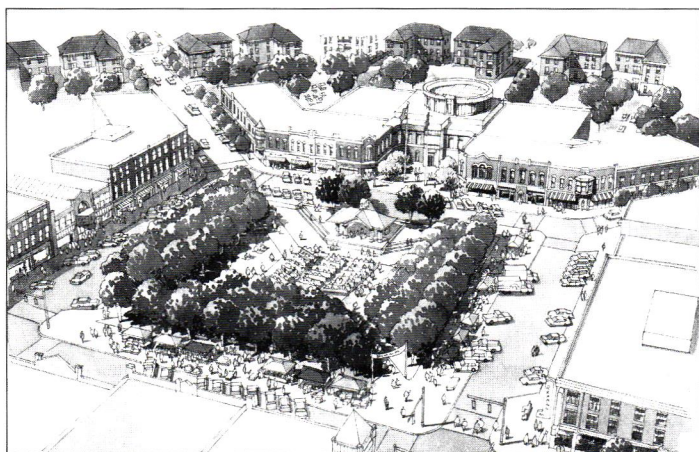
**L. Robert Kimball & Associates, Architects and Engineers**, has been awarded contracts for several correctional facility projects. Architectural and engineering design services will be provided for a new two-story masonry correctional center in Indiana, PA. Kimball, in association with Erdman Anthony, is also providing design services for the expansion and renovation of the Rensselaer County Jail in Troy, NY and design and construction administration services for the relocation of the Livingston County jail in Geneseo, NY.

**Urban Design Associates** was selected to prepare the rebuilding plan for the Lafitte, Tremé, and Tulane-Gravier neighborhoods in New Orleans, Louisiana. The plan proposes 555 new housing units on the Lafitte site and 945 new housing units on vacant parcels in the adjacent Tremé and Tulane-Gravier neighborhoods. UDA was commissioned by the City of Ankeny, Iowa, and DRA Properties to design the Master Plan for Prairie Trail, a new mixed-use community in Ankeny, north of Des Moines, which will include 1,900 housing units, a new town center for Ankeny, and 500,000 sf of commercial development. Also, UDA was commissioned by Leyland Alliance, LLC, Tuxedo, NY, to produce a pattern book with controls and standards for Storrs Center, a new mixed-use development adjacent to the University of Connecticut's main campus in the town of Mansfield.





*Lafitte neighborhood in New Orleans*



*Master Plan for Prairie Trail mixed-use community, Ankeny, IA*

**WTW Architects** has completed a renovation of the former Market Street Elementary School in Warren, PA into the headquarters for Pennsylvania General Energy (below), an oil and gas exploration and production company. Renovation of the 26,000 sf, two-story structure cost an estimated \$3 million.



## Business Briefs

► John Reddick of **Burt Hill** has obtained his architectural registration license. John has been a valuable employee in Burt Hill's Health Care Department for 19 years. He has completed many renovation projects for UPMC Presbyterian and other health care clients.

**Eckles Architecture** announces the addition of a new technical specialist, Robert Duffy.

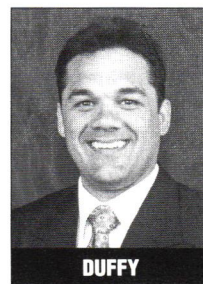
General Industries has hired Douglas E. Mahaven as a senior estimator. With over 30 years of experience in the construction industry, Doug brings to General Industries a wealth of knowledge in the industrial, commercial, institutional and heavy/highway sectors.

**Hancock Architecture**, Rochester, PA, hired Jason Shymoniak, a recent graduate of Kent State with a Masters in Architecture. Jason has begun the IDP process and plans to become registered in the state of Pennsylvania.

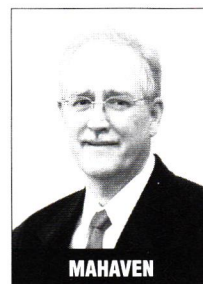
**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** has announced the promotions of two of its staff members: **Mark Lighthall, AIA** to Senior Associate and Robert Cortopassi to Associate. Lighthall has been with JSA since 1997 and currently serves as an architectural team leader. Cortopassi has been with JSA since 1990 and is a licensed engineer.

A new design-oriented architectural firm, **mossArchitects**, opened its doors in East Liberty on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Andrew Moss, AIA returned from Denver to his native Pittsburgh in 2003, inspired by the change and potential he saw in this city. For the past three years, he has worked as director of the Pittsburgh branch of Semple Brown Design. mossArchitects currently employs five people and specializes in creative and unique offices, restaurants, recreation design, residences, lofts and adaptive reuse.

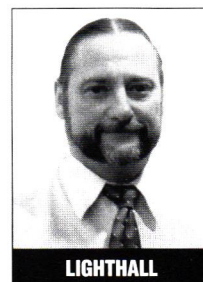
**Thomas Briney, AIA**, has joined **Perkins Eastman** as a senior associate with more than 28 years of experience in the design of a variety of architectural project types. James Kraus has joined Perkins Eastman as an interior designer with more than 13 years of experience. Karen Harr has joined as a project administrator. Additionally, Laurie Butler and Jennifer Bubnash recently received their LEED®-AP Accreditation.



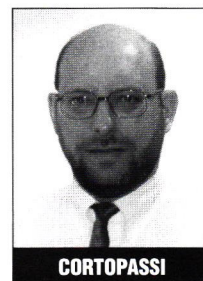
**DUFFY**



**MAHAVEN**



**LIGHTHALL**



**CORTOPASSI**



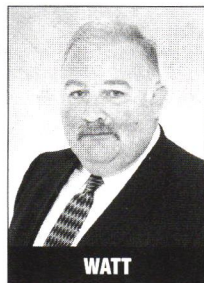
**L. Robert Kimball & Associates** announced staff additions to its Pittsburgh office. James Lockard, Patrick Savage, Steven Watt, and Keith Williams have all been hired as project managers for various departments within the firm.



LOCKARD



SAVAGE



WATT

**Renaissance 3 Architects** has hired **Tom Wiley, AIA**, **Martha Giraldo, Assoc. AIA**, **Suzanne Kile**, **Christopher Gruendl, Assoc. AIA**, **Rebecca Faldowski, Assoc. AIA**, **Breanna Kristian**, and **Christina Kuzma**.

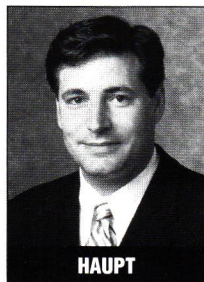


WILLIAMS

## Kudos

► **L. Robert Kimball & Associates** was recognized for two projects in American School & University's 24th Annual Architectural Portfolio 2006. Kimball received a Specialized Facility Citation for The Pennsylvania State University's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park in State College, PA, and was named in the Outstanding Post-Secondary Buildings category for Harrisburg Area Community College Select Medical Health Education Pavilion in Harrisburg, PA.

**Chris Haupt, AIA**, of **L. Robert Kimball & Associates**, has been selected as a founding member of the newly established Sports Marketing Advisory Board (SMAB) at Duquesne University. The founding SMAB members will work with the Duquesne Sports Marketing faculty and staff to address placement for jobs and internships, fund raising strategies, recruitment, retention, and program marketing.



HAUPT

**JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design** announced that two of its recently completed projects won the following awards: The Biomedical Science Tower 3 building (above, right), designed with Payette Associates for the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Oakland, won an award for "Best Building over \$5 Million" from the Master Builders Association of Western Pennsylvania, Inc. Contractor was Mascaro/Hunt. The Pennsylvania State Police Barracks (see image on page 16), designed for the PA

Turnpike Commission and located along the Mon Fayette Expressway in The Borough of Jefferson Hills, won "Best Project under \$5 Million" from the Master Builders Association of Western Pennsylvania, Inc. Dick Corp. was general contractor.



The McGinnis Education Center at Camp Guyasuta in Sharpsburg was recently recognized with a Silver Rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED™ for New Construction rating system. The Boy Scouts of America, Greater Pittsburgh Council owns and operates Camp Guyasuta and the McGinnis Education Center to serve the youth of southwestern Pennsylvania; more than 48,000 young people participate in its programs. The Project Team includes **Moshier Studio, Architects**; Turner Construction, BDA Engineering, Pashek Associates, and Civil and Environmental Consultants.

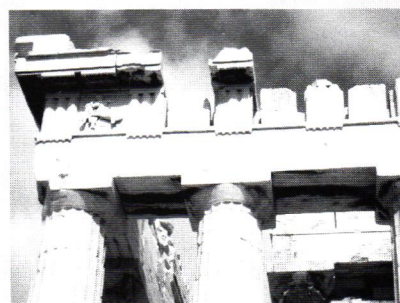
**Deepak Wadhvani, AIA** of **Renaissance 3 Architects** has been appointed to both the City Theater Board of Directors and the Global Focus Advisory Committee at Chatham College.



# GREECE IS THE WORD

By Tracy Certo

From the Parthenon to the Temple of Zeus, spectacular columns tower all over the ancient city of Athens. Some are restored to their original splendor while others show their centuries-old age and still others are just as startling in their raw power as they lay fallen, in precise, even sections which hint of their construction eons ago. During a recent trip to Greece, the editor of *Columns* couldn't stop taking photos of all kinds of things, but especially columns. We thought it would be fun to share in *Columns* Magazine.





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WEB SITE: www.burchick.com

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# 2006 BUILDING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

## *Congratulations to the following Project Teams for Winning the 2006 Building Excellence Award!*

### BEST PROJECT OVER \$5 MILLION

PROJECT: Biomedical Science Tower 3, Oakland  
CONTRACTOR: Mascaro Construction Company, L.P.  
MBA SUBCONTRACTORS: FRANCO; Gaven Industries; Richard Goettle, Inc.;  
McKinney Drilling Co.; Phoenix Roofing, Inc.;  
SPECTRA Contract Flooring; Wyatt, Inc.  
ARCHITECTS: Payette Associates, Inc.  
JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design  
OWNER: University of Pittsburgh

### BEST PROJECT UNDER \$5 MILLION

PROJECT: State Police Barracks, Jefferson Hills  
CONTRACTOR: Dick Corporation  
MBA SUBCONTRACTORS: Flooring Contractors of Pittsburgh, LLC; FRANCO  
ARCHITECT: JSA Architecture Planning Engineering Interior Design  
OWNER: Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

### EXCELLENCE IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

PROJECT: The Encore on 7th, Pittsburgh  
CONTRACTOR: Mascaro Construction Company, L.P.  
MBA SUBCONTRACTORS: FRANCO; Giffin Interior and Fixture, Inc.;  
Phoenix Roofing, Inc.  
ARCHITECT: HKS, Inc.  
OWNER: Lincoln Property Company

### DESIGN/BUILD

PROJECT: "Jewel in the Woods" The Julie Clakeley Memorial  
Center for the Spirit, Wexford  
CONTRACTOR: Massaro Corporation  
MBA SUBCONTRACTORS: Marsa, Inc.  
ARCHITECT: Tassarò Katselas Associates, Inc.  
OWNER: The Woodlands Foundation



Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania  
Jack Ramage, Executive Director  
phone 412.922.3912 \* [www.mbawpa.org](http://www.mbawpa.org)



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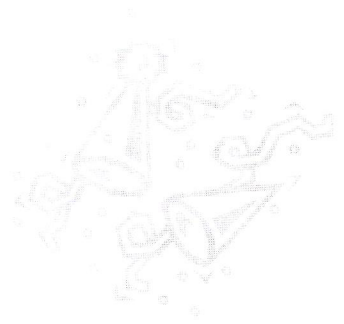
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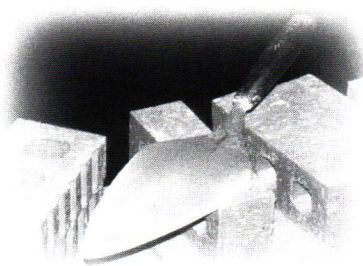


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- ◆ Keep your eyes peeled for the April 2007 issue of *Columns*. AIA Pittsburgh and Wolfe Design have teamed-up to produce a brand new look for our magazine!
- ◆ Stay posted for events to take place during Architecture Week: April 9 - 13, 2007! [www.aiapgh.org](http://www.aiapgh.org)



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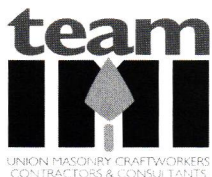
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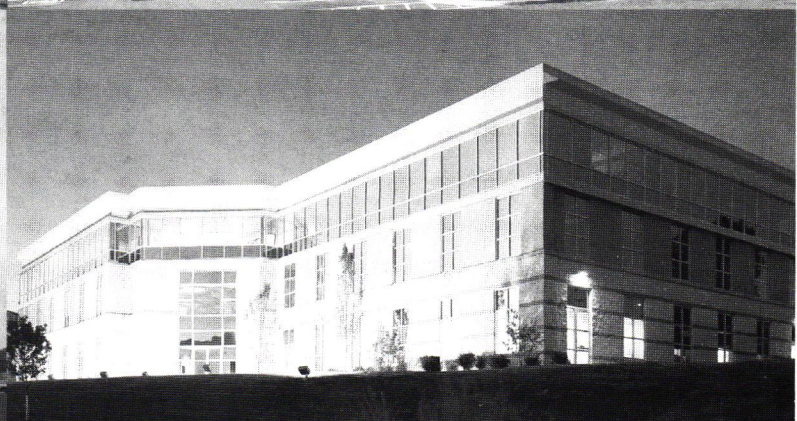
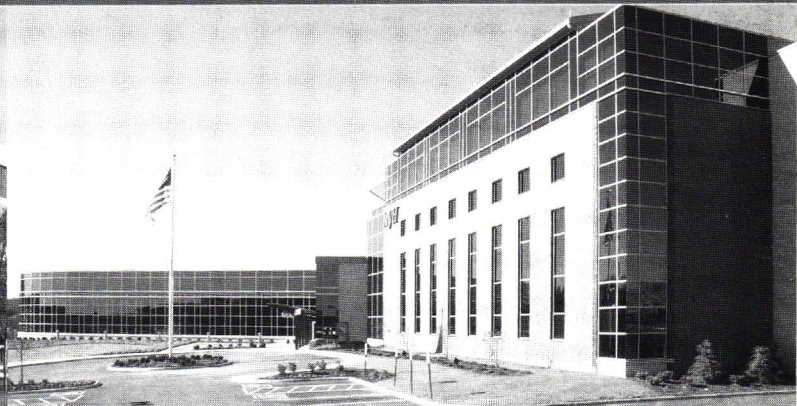
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