Florida offers up lots of charts, facts, and figures re: why some cities are healthier than others: the U.S. "will not solve its health problems - or reduce its skyrocketing health care costs - until it comes to grips with the worsening class divide that plagues it."

Kimmelman calls for architects and planners to start taking parking lots (and spaces) seriously - and finds a few who do: lots "don't need to be dead zones" (great slide show).

Two RMJM experts push for and offer tips for energy-efficient retrofitting: "the task is daunting," and "huge barriers stand in the way...But we're not starting from scratch" (and a little biling can go a long way).

Glancey x 2: the week in review includes Helsinki's Chapel of Silence, designer shelters for NYC cats, and a proposed inverted pyramid for Tahrir Square + His picks of what he's looking forward to in 2012.

Russell finds the "default to blandness" of the new Gates Foundation in Seattle "is a lost opportunity," but at the Lance Armstrong Foundation in Austin, the "joy of giving and the connection people served is palpable" and "has a cheerful energy utterly invisible at the posh, sober Gates."

King pays tribute to Legorreta, whose "emphatic and boldly colored buildings are found throughout the Bay Area," but his "largest impact on the region could lie ahead."

Bailleul minces no words about the RMJM/YRM deal: "YRM's mistake was to believe it could trade on an illustrious past. RMJM's mistake could be in giving the remnants of this once great firm a desk" (then there's the staff left unpaid and in the lurch).

On a lighter note, a profile of the architect behind Lego's Architecture Series + Lego is looking for suggestions for the next addition to the series.

Weekend diversions:
- Riley taps the talents of rising architects to devise futuristic façades for the Shenzhen & Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture (great pix).
- Kimmelman visits MCNY's "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" and finds the grid "gives physical form to a certain democratic, melting-pot idea" - it is "the ego to our id."
- Schambelan visits the V&A's Postmodernism show and finds it more than just "a survey of Memphis and its fellow travelers" (she's also struck by teapots that "appear with bewildering frequency.

Brothers discovers what radical architecture was "before it was chic" at London's Royal Academy: "it is worth remembering what revolutionary architecture meant when it was more than an attitude."

Hawthorne's final Reading L.A. tackles three tomes that take on a contested public space and nature's place in the city.

A peek into "No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff" by Jeffrey Head (amazing slide show, too).

Mays hails "Unbuilt Toronto 2" that will "make the reader weep or cheer" - and hopefully think "anew about the Toronto we didn't get, the city we did, and the one we want."

Two icy offerings we couldn't resist: amazing eyefuls from the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in China and a Bavarian snow church (finally completed).
The Grid at 200: Lines That Shaped Manhattan: As "The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan, 1811-2011" at the Museum of the City of New York demonstrates, an 1811 map turned an island into a city that works and walks...The grid binds the island...gives physical form to a certain democratic, melting-pot idea...outsiders who move here become New Yorkers simply by saying so...The grid is the ego to our id. By Michael Kimmelman -- Frederick Law Olmsted; John Reps; Hilary Ballon [slide show] - New York Times

Does Postmodernism begin with the teapot? The question is prompted by the V&A’s "Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970–1990," where the vessels appear with bewildering frequency...The show is not just a survey of Memphis and its fellow travelers, however. By Elizabeth Schambelan -- Michael Graves; Ettore Sottsass; Studio Alchimia; Charles Jencks; Frank Gehry; Robert A. M. Stern; Robert Venturi; Denise Scott Brown; Charles Moore; Hans Hollein - Artforum

Ideology Through Geometry: What was radical architecture before it was chic? At a time in which the mantle of the avant-gardes has been inherited by...Rem Koolhaas...or by Zaha Hadid...it is worth remembering what revolutionary architecture meant when it was more than an attitude..."Building the Revolution: Soviet Art & Architecture 1915-1935"...conveys the electric energy and genuine radicalism of the works created during this period. By Cammy Brothers -- Vladimir Tatlin; Kazimir Malevich; El Lissitzky; Richard Pare - Wall Street Journal

Reading L.A.: The once and future Plaza, nature in the city; "Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space" by William David Estrada...a surprisingly propulsive narrative dotted with terrific photographs...William L. Fox's "Making Time: Essays on the Nature of Los Angeles"...essays on the complicated way that the natural world coexists with big-city Los Angeles...Robert Gottlieb's "Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City"...smart and useful summary of the contemporary city...By Christopher Hawthorne - Los Angeles Times

The rise and fall of Wallace Neff's bubble houses: ...were Neff's solution to a global housing crisis, and in the 1940s and '50s, Airforms went up around the world..."No Nails, No Lumber: The Bubble Houses of Wallace Neff" by Jeffrey Head [images, slide show] - Los Angeles Times

A Toronto that might have been: "Unbuilt Toronto 2: More of the City That Might Have Been" by Mark Osbaldeston...fresh compendium of history, lore and imagery is enough to make the reader weep or cheer...projects featured here as occasions for thinking anew about the Toronto we didn't get, the city we did, and the one we want. By John Bentley Mays - Globe and Mail (Canada)

Towering sculptures at the International Harbin Ice and Snow Festival in China [slide show] - Los Angeles Times

'God's Igloo': Village Opens Snow Church in Bavaria: Mitterfirmiansreut has opened a house of worship made of snow and ice to commemorate a similar church that took shape in the country 100 years ago. -- Alfons Doeringer [images] - Der Spiegel (Germany)

Yayoi Kusama: Flowers That Bloom at Midnight, Jardins des Tuileries, Paris, France