

AIA MIDDLE PA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

MP3 Walking Tours

Brian W. Hayes, AIA

Travel is part of an architect's education. By attending the AIA National Conference there is the opportunity to experience the architecture of prominent places and get CEUs in the process. This year in San Francisco, the AIA offered self-guided walking tours using an MP3 player with a recording by Mitchell Schwarzer who is a professor of art and architectural history at California College of the Arts. There were four tours of the downtown area: South of Market, Financial District, Civic Center, and Union Square.

Each tour started at the Moscone Center and the recording told you what streets to take and what buildings to look for. Mr.



▲ Transamerica Building, William Pereira. According to Mitchell Schwarzer, most people can only identify the San Francisco skyline if this building is in it.



Schwarzer was a great tour guide, especially when I could rewind, fast forward and pause. He was clear and interesting and held my attention for each one-hour tour. Mr. Schwarzer explained the architecture contextually as a product of the times, the geography, economic conditions, and other factors that all contributed to what you were seeing. It wasn't all about the composition of brick, steel, and glass.

I thought this type of tour was a good alternative to looking at the backs of a group of people and not being able to hear the tour guide over the traffic noise. To get credit for the tours you had to log on to the AIA San Francisco web site and take a quiz for each tour. Some of the questions required listening to the recording again, which I think proves that the AIA put together a meaningful educational program.

◀ Circle Gallery, Frank Lloyd Wright. This building design is a direct contrast to other retail stores that utilized large expanse of glass to show off the wares inside the store to draw people in.

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NEXT MID POINTS

Deadline for articles and information for the next newsletter is:

August 28, 2009

Please contact Dee Columbus,
Editor, tdta2000@comcast.net

STAY CONNECTED

Please send new member information and any changes and/or additions in your contact information including email addresses to:

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Please be sure to visit the AIA Middle PA Chapter website to view the following:

- Chapter Officers
- Calendars
- Newsletter Archive
- Executive Committee Minutes
- Membership Information
- AIA Links
- Sponsorship and Advertising
- Mission Statement
- Project Photos

Message From the President

Rick Cyman, AIA

Every year, I look forward to attending the National AIA Convention. One of the reasons I enjoy going to the convention is because I can usually obtain most of my required continuing education credits in a few days. Another reason focuses on friendships. Over the years, I have made several friends from other parts of the country, and we don't usually talk much throughout the year. It is always enjoyable to spend some time at the convention catching up on what is new in our lives and careers.

This year's convention was especially memorable because it took place in San Francisco. My first visit to San Francisco was in 1977 when I got married—my wife and I spent 10 days traveling around the bay area. Since then, we have been back to the city by the bay a number of times; I think it is our favorite area to visit.

In many ways, San Francisco has not changed much in my eyes during the last 30 plus years. The skyline, Golden Gate Bridge, Union Square, The Warf, Alcatraz Island, Sausalito, the Cable Cars, and the Painted Ladies all give the impression of being unchanged and timeless. The weather never seems to be too cold or too hot, sometimes a little foggy and rainy, but always pretty mild. If you are looking for warmer weather and sunshine, a drive south down Highway 1 takes you to Carmel, Pebble Beach, and Big Sur. Driving south along the ocean is a spectacular experience—one that you will never forget.

This year, Amy and I decided to drive north up Highway 1 to visit the wine country in Mendocino County. The five-hour drive along the ocean was incredible. The highway is situated several hundred feet above the ocean and is separated by rocky cliffs. The water is a color of blue that is hard to describe and there are breath-taking vistas around every turn. As you drive along the highway, you can't help but develop an appreciation for what it must have taken to build this road system; it is truly a masterful combination of design and engineering.

As we traveled north, Amy and I drove through many small towns—Bodega Bay and Ocean View were two of our favorites. We also stopped at several boutique style wineries for tastings, snacks, and bottles.

Attending the convention was equally enjoyable. I signed up for four tours that included a recently renovated downtown retail mall, a bus tour of a neighborhood of modern California style homes built in the 1950's and 60's, a tour of several downtown public LEAD housing projects, and a tour of vintage Victorian homes. In addition, I spent a few hours at the trade show, attended the Candidate Speeches, Regional Caucuses, Post Caucus Meeting, PA Alumni and Fellows Reception, and our Annual Chapter Dinner, which I have to say, was the most enjoyable event of all.

Next year's venue is in Miami Beach; I'm thinking...Coconut Grove, Art Deco, Collins Avenue, and maybe a suntan...hope you can join us.

Regards,

Rick

AIA Associates Corner — 2009 Links

Mellisa Bernstein, Associate AIA

AIA PA Regional Associate Director
mbernstein@klingstubbins.com

Position Open

AIA PA Associate Director

David E. Reasinger Assoc. AIA

PA Associate Committee Member
der19@psu.edu

Arthur Sheffield

PA Coordinator, Intern Development Program (IDP)
idp@aia.org

Business Cents

Occasional comments on the business of design by J. Richard Fruth, AIA

I thought that I was a loyal customer having purchased an insurance package with only two minor claims in 17 years. Then my home insurance arrived with a 15% premium increase. I called the broker and told him that we needed to do better than that. He agreed to look into it and said that he may have to change carriers including the auto carrier – that was fine with me I just wanted the costs lowered. A few days later I got a call back with good news. The insurance premium, coverage and carrier would not change. All I had to do was to fill out an application as a new customer and agree to a home inspection. Great!?

That got me thinking. Is the reward for being a good customer getting to pay 15% more than a new customer?

How do you treat your current customers? Are you more responsive to new prospects than current clients? Will a prospect get a better fee quote than an old customer? Why?

On June 22, The Wall Street Journal had another take on this subject in an article on page R4: ‘Why a Loyal Customer Isn’t Always a Profitable One.’ One of the keys to their thesis is in the title; has that loyal customer been profitable, or are you subtracting from the bottom line every time you do one of their projects? Does the loyal customer send other work your way [both their work and by referring others]? Do the customer’s projects contribute to your practice goals for the future? Is the customer loyal in the way they treat you and your team?

The Journal cited a research study that showed 20% of the customers were profitable, 60% were break even, and 20% were unprofitable. Where do your customers fit in this breakdown?

The Business Cent: know where your repeat customers are on the profitability-new business-treatment scale. Then treat them accordingly when pricing their next project. It will contribute to your bottom line. Think about it.



AIA

Middle Pennsylvania Chapter ANNUAL PICNIC Friday, July 17, 2009

Klein Immergrün, 439 Brick Road, Loretto, PA 814-472-7411
Summer home of Mr. and Mrs. L. Robert Kimball and former
Norman Village, part of the Charles Schwab Estate

5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Social – Compliments of L. Robert Kimball & Associates
Architects and Engineers

6:00 p.m.
Dinner

\$25 per person (guests are welcome)
RSVP to **David E. Reasinger, Assoc. AIA**
by Monday, July 6, 2009 at noon.
phone (814) 863-3868
email der19@psu.edu

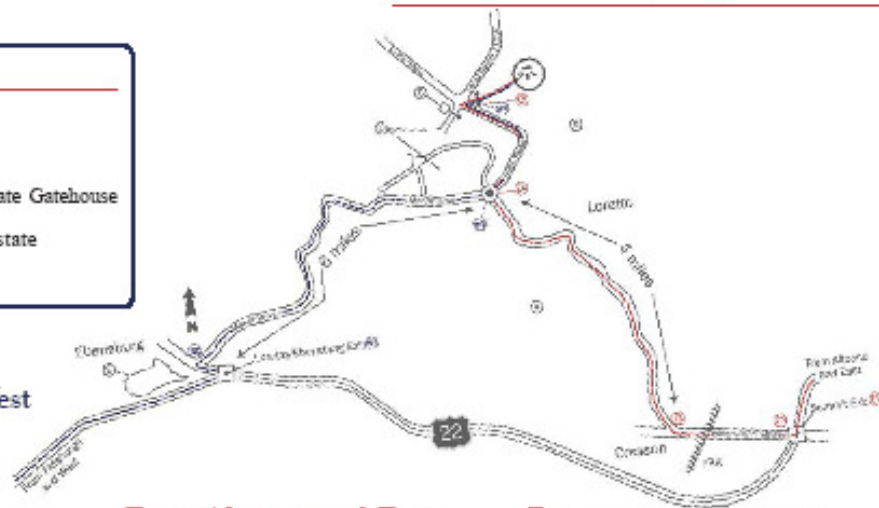
Make check payable to AIA Middle PA Chapter
and mail to **David E. Reasinger, Assoc. AIA**
Pennsylvania State University
113 Office of Physical Plant
University Park, PA 16802

Landmarks

- A** Saint Francis University
- B** Immergrün Golf Course
- C** Former Charles Schwab Estate Gatehouse
- D** Former Charles Schwab Estate
- E** Lake Rowena

From Pittsburgh and West

- W1** Take US - 22 East to Loretto / Ebensburg Exit.
- W2** Turn sharp right at traffic light (Lake Rowena on left) onto Manor Drive.
- W3** Drive 6 miles to Village Cross Monument Circle. Go Straight. (Don't knock over the monument and don't bear right.)
- W4** Pass Immergrün Golf Course on right. Turn Hard Right at stop sign and go through ivy-covered stone gate posts to Klein Immergrün.



From Altoona and East

Take PA Turnpike to Bedford Exit -
Take Route 220 N to US Route 22 West.

- E1** Take US-22 West to **Summit Exit**.
- E2** Turn right onto William Penn Highway. Go straight at Cresson traffic light. Go under what was the Pennsylvania Railroad main line tracks.
- E3** Pass McDonald's. Turn right at Dollar General. Drive four miles. Proceed thru Loretto to Village Cross Monument Circle.
- E4** Bear Right and Pass Immergrün Golf Course on right.
- E5** Turn Hard Right at Stop sign and go through ivy covered stone gate posts to Klein Immergrün.



Chapter Symposium Set for November 5

It's getting closer! Plan to join colleagues from across west central Pennsylvania at our upcoming Symposium on November 5 at the Penn Stater. Here's what you can expect:

- Dynamic presentations – Earn up to FIVE continuing ed credits!
- Changes to the LEED certification process, highlighted by experts from Green Building Alliance-Pgh
- In-depth review of key IBC changes, presented by the Centre County Code Administration
- A virtual tour of the Armstrong World Industries headquarters building – the only project in PA to receive LEED EB Platinum certification
- Unexpected legal considerations when going green
- At your request – An expanded product expo that gives you more time to check out industry innovations
- Room for more than 30 companies, with these companies already signed on:
 - Architectural Resources
 - Automated Entrance Systems
 - CAD Research – LUNCHEON SPONSOR
 - Centria
 - Comfort Supply
 - Construction Supply Centers
 - National Shelter Products
 - New Holland Concrete
 - Pella Windows
 - Sherwin Williams
 - Supply Source
 - Zurn Industries
- Great give-aways
- On-line registration after Labor Day at www.aiamiddlepa.org

Save-the-Date reminders have been mailed to more than 500 architects, engineers, construction professionals and supporting businesses throughout west central Pennsylvania. Look for registration materials after Labor Day, including a first-ever on-line registration option. Check the web site for regular event updates or contact Anne McGrath, event coordinator, at annefmcgrath@verizon.net or 814-539-1317. See you there!

For the Good of the Order

Comments on the Profession of Architecture by Tom Columbus Jr., AIA, LEED AP

Has the economy bottomed out?

From national indices, the trend seems to be that it is not getting much worse (of course how much worse could the sluggish economy get!) Although slowdowns in the A/E world and allied fields, are continuing (with pockets of exceptions), housing starts actually jumped 17 percent in May (after seasonal adjustments) and durable goods orders actually increased in the same month.

These national indicators are pointed in the right direction. The much discussed Stimulus Package will, hopefully, keep them pointed the same way and move forward dragging the bigger commercial projects back onto the computer screens we architects and engineers sit in front of daily.

Penn State Law Building Highlighted by National Publication

The recently completed Lewis Katz Law Building of the Dickinson School of Law on the Main Campus of The Pennsylvania State University at University Park was once again the “Star”. This building was among several highlighted in the June 12, 2009, issue of [AIArchitect](#). This national publication of the American Institute of Architects included a feature story on this building which was designed by Polshek Partnership.

The article discussed the building’s design features included in the 114,000 square foot interior. Included in the text were the sinuous lines, the glass expanses, the building’s transparency, the extraordinary law library, and the incorporation of important, highly used, student and faculty areas.

As we have seen from the various tours that the Middle Chapter has been able to participate in both during and after construction, the Lewis Katz Law Building, which also houses Penn State’s School of International Affairs, certainly fulfills the University’s desire for an outstanding campus centerpiece.



Night of the Limos

After a busy day at the AIA 2009 National Convention and Design Exposition on Friday May 01, 2009, we were looking forward to the annual Pennsylvania Fellows and Alumni Reception being held at the San Francisco Marriott. Representation included Pennsylvania Schools of Architecture and AIA PA, honoring AIA PA Members and University Alumni who have advanced to fellowship in the AIA. At the end of the activities, the AIA MPC had made dinner reservations at the Absinthe Brasserie and Bar in the Van Ness neighborhood of San Francisco. Upon our arrival in the lobby of the Marriot, we were faced with an extremely long line of people waiting for transportation to their destination on a rainy evening. After about 20 minutes into a 45 minute wait — with the line not moving — we were approached by a friendly limo driver offering us a ride to the restaurant. The rate was reasonable, and we eagerly accepted.



During our superb meal in a relaxed atmosphere, we reminisced about the many convention activities and the wide range of tours available in the city and surrounding areas. At the conclusion of dinner, we again were faced with requiring transportation back to our hotels. We were almost immediately greeted by a unique limo driver and companion white dog, with an offer we couldn't refuse — especially since it was still raining. As the group entered the limo, two items came to mind: One, we were in what we could only describe as a vintage 1980ish disco-like limo which had everyone in stitches (see accompanying photos) ; Two, we had the companion white Pomeranian dog that as we traveled to our destination would routinely bounce back and fourth from the front seat to the back seat entertaining us all as we chuckled and sometimes laughed out of control. As we arrived at the hotel it was the culmination of a perfect evening with friends and colleagues.



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