AIA Eastern Pennsylvania
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Learn more at iaeeasternpa.org
President's Message by Jared Bilsak, AIA

Greetings!

We have an exciting year planned ahead with a variety of tours, presentations, and learning opportunities! Later on this month, we will be touring the Keystone Cement Plant. In June, we will be touring Lafayette College's new Rockwell Science Center, and in the Fall, we will be touring and seeing new architectural projects in New York City. These are just a few of the exciting tours and events that we have planned.

We recently expanded our leadership with Martin Smith, NCARB as our Event Planning Chair. Martin is the Assistant Vice President of Experience + Education for NCARB and is a great resource here in our chapter!

Our chapter will continue strengthening its relationships with other local organizations such as CSI Greater Lehigh Valley, Green Building United, CREW, COAA, and local colleges.

On a personal note, I have recently embarked on a new venture. Due to this extra time commitment, I have decided to step down as chapter president as of May 1st, 2022. President-Elect, Megan Henry will be moving into the President position. Megan is extremely organized, knowledgeable on the inner workings of the chapter, dedicated, and hard working. I have no doubt that Megan will be a great chapter leader!

After completing one term as president and being involved in our local leadership board since 2015, I am grateful to have served you and the members of our chapter and community over the last 6 and a half years. This experience has been an exciting journey and I encourage other members to get involved so they can help shape our chapter’s direction and provide new opportunities to our members!

On behalf of our board, we look forward to your participation and hope to see you at one of our upcoming events!

Jared Bilsak, AIA, LEED AP, WELL AP, CDT
2022 Chapter President

State Director Update by William Kraft, AIA

AIA Pennsylvania has been very active to start the new year introducing our new State leadership team, providing continuing education credits, Architectural Excellence Awards, PA critical legislative affairs, PA Building code updates, and more.

Continuing Education seminars already completed this year include: Creating Value for Small Firms, Masonry QC, Live Energy Analysis: Aligning budgets with Conservation Goals. Upcoming events include: March Jobsite Masonry Troubleshooting, April Society of Architectural Historians, June AIA Conference on Architecture in Chicago and much more.

Critical to all PA Architects is the UCC adoption of the 2018 International Building Codes and the ICC A117.1 Accessibility Codes. Please see the AIA PA web site for more information and the changes to the codes.

Architect’s Action Day will be announced soon so make sure you know who your local PA House and Senate representatives are and check the AIAPA web site regularly for this year’s date.

AIA PA has a number of committees providing position statements on legislative affairs, recognizing design excellence, energy conservation, and many more. AIA PA is the leading voice for the practice of architecture in the state of Pennsylvania. Stay informed and get involved as leaders in our communities. www.aiapa.org
December 9th, 2021 saw a special President’s Night event take place. After nearly two years of pandemic induced virtual meetings, the members of AIA Eastern PA met in person to celebrate another successful trip around the sun! The mood was festive and participants seemed genuinely happy to be face-to-face sharing drinks and conversation with friends and colleagues. The 1869 Luckenbach Mill in the old Bethlehem Industrial quarter provided a unique and interesting venue for the event. Following cocktail hour and opening remarks by our current Chapter President Jared Bilsak, we sat for dinner and started the evening by honoring friends and mentors lost in 2021. Lawrence Greene, Charles Shoemaker, and Bill Watson were eulogized for their contributions and leadership to the profession. AIA Eastern Board of Directors and officers worked their way through the administrivia of the evening presenting past and upcoming events, state and national happenings, and election of officers for the upcoming year.

The highlight of President’s Night, as always, was the presentation of awards. Andrew Mitchell started things off by presenting the 2021 scholarships. The winners; Cameron Fisher of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and Emily Bartera of Thomas Jefferson University, each received an award of $1000 and were selected based on their portfolio submissions of student projects, academic accomplishments, and financial need. The Scholarships are funded by AIA Eastern Pennsylvania member contributions along with matching grants from the AIA Foundation, a charitable arm of the AIA National Component.

Jared Bilsak reclaimed the microphone to give Special Recognition awards to several members of our chapter Joy Cohen and Joe Biondo who seem to always be working tirelessly behind the scenes in support of the chapter’s efforts in finding and reviewing scholarship applicants, promoting chapter events and generally lending a helping hand whenever it’s needed.

The night was capped off with Ana Sarachaga presenting the 2021 Design Awards to two very deserving firms. As we all know and have lived, 2020 and 2021 presented us with all sorts of new challenges. Meeting those challenges required time and effort that many of us did not have and could not afford, and unfortunately that came through in the low number of award applicants. In response to this, the board decided to trim the number of winners to the two best projects. Awards of merit, based on Jury feedback were given to these deserving projects: Cheston Elementary School designed by Alloy5 Architecture, and Newtown Middle School designed by Breslin Architects. Project photos and descriptions can be found on the chapter website: www.aiaeasternpa.org/design-awards/2021-design-award-winners-submissions/

We thank all the firms who participated and congratulate the winners and scholarship recipients. Here’s to a happy, healthy, prosperous 2022!
Award Winners

Above: Award of Merit - Newtown Middle School - Breslin Architects
Below: Award of Merit - Cheston Elementary School - Alloy5 Architecture
2022 Event Preview

Keystone Cement Plant Tour, April 28 1-3pm

Presentation at Bru Daddy’s Brewing Co. Allentown, PA - May 26th.

Rockwell Science Center Tour, Lafayette College, Easton, PA - June 8, 2022

Determining the best system for managing moisture can be challenging. Many factors such as climate, cladding, and cost should be considered when designing a sustainable wall. This course explores those factors, as well as trends in building codes and best practices.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?
Residential/low-rise commercial architects & design professionals, custom home builders, contractor superintendents, service/warranty managers, contractors specializing in the installation of cladding. Masons, manufactured stone veneer or stucco, as well as mold or moisture remediation contractors.

NOTE: This is an AIA/CEU offering 1 learning unit and counts as a Health, Safety, & Welfare (HSW) credit.
Joint AIA/CSI Event Recap: 2018 ICC Code Update

January, 2022
Since the advent of social media marketing, consumers have been able to vet your business and make buying decisions based on your brand image. Best practices caution businesses against being too self-centered on promotion (read: narcissistic posting) and not revealing enough of who creates the culture of the firm.

One of the best ways to articulate your firms’ values into action on social media and in boots-on-the-ground marketing tactics is by getting involved in your local community. This strategy does not end at the annual golf outing or occasional food drive. It includes mobilizing your entire team to engage different stakeholder groups that leverage their talents and interests.

We all know not every project brings creative fulfillment. Providing your opportunities, and Threats) on your team – you can place the right people in the right community engagement roles and start your program.

A note about the “Threats” to your firm in the SWOT analysis: If you feel your firm is stretched too thin - and you can’t afford to pay your staff to engage in these events – consider what opportunities are left on the table for another firm if you opt out? First, these authentic acts of creative community service provide the firm with meaningful branding opportunities in person and social media. Naturally, word-of-mouth referrals increase because your region gets to know the firm on multiple levels.

However, perhaps more importantly (considering the industry’s talent drought) this is also an employee engagement and professional development opportunity. The strategy values your employees as multidimensional people who have interests and artistic skills that go beyond the studio.

We all know not every project brings creative fulfillment. Providing your people with another outlet for growth of talents and interests brings more job satisfaction, and therefore less turnover. Do you want to lose your new hire to a firm that provides something more than just a 9-5 grind and occasional happy hour? Of course not!

Here is an example chart for you to get started:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Stage</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Tech 2 Early – first job</td>
<td>Eager and Open; free evenings</td>
<td>Young Professionals Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Tech 1 Mid-stage early</td>
<td>Ready for new challenges and design leadership</td>
<td>Creative Nonprofit Activities Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect 1 Mid-stage</td>
<td>Deep knowledge and represents the firm well</td>
<td>Key Opinion Leader expert branding in business networking groups and publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1 Mid-to-Late</td>
<td>Seasoned professional; knows the business and firm inside out</td>
<td>Serving on boards, committees, judges’ panels, and live presentations</td>
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Staff Members of Muhlenberg Greene Architects take a field trip to Woodlawn and the Pope-Leighey House with the local History Center client via their members-only bus trip. The staff performed a game show style presentation, engaged attendees, and assisted the client with an architect’s perspective of the historic properties. In addition, this served as a team-building event and a day out engaging in subjects the firm is passionate about. Strategy Note: each employee who participated took a personal day to attend.

By: Muhlenberg Greene Architects, Ltd.
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Your Firm in the Community

Start asking your team to investigate events, networking groups, and nonprofits in which they are interested in engaging. Next, identify what market segments these opportunities interact. Then, try out a pilot program and get feedback from your team members on their goals for professional development. You’ll be pleasantly surprised how many multi-level multi-stakeholder groups your firm will meet, the additional word-of-mouth that results from it, and the ease in which you can achieve desired firm branding that translates into your digital presence just by putting the firm’s values into action.

Muhlenberg Greene Architects takes part in a local community mural program, by hand-painting versions of pretzels that were installed outside in the local city center with additional artists in the area. Strategy Note: each employee painted a pretzel canvas on their own time, using materials provided by the mural organizer.

Suzanne Cody, Associate, Business Development & Marketing at Muhlenberg Greene Architects of Wyomissing, PA, translates the firm’s strategic goals into effective public relations, marketing and communication efforts which increase awareness of the firm’s capabilities. Suzanne has a BFA in Interior Design from Moore College of Art and Design, and a Digital Marketing Certificate from Penn State University. Connect with her on LinkedIn at https://www.linkedin.com/in/suzanne-cody/

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