

aiaVT



The aiaVT newsletter is published by AIA Vermont,
the Vermont Chapter of the
American Institute of Architects.

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president's column

*donna j. leban, aia, lc, iesna;
2004 president aiaVT*

The AIA Grassroots Leadership Conference is an annual event, and an opportunity to learn how AIA National functions, what resources are available through the National organization, and how to apply such resources to our State chapter. David Epstein, Hanne Williams, and I were privileged to attend this year's event, March 3-6, and to meet with our congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.

While in Washington, in what may not have been a coincidence at all, Representative Bernard Sanders asked AIAVT to present our views on the development of wind energy in Vermont at a press conference in Montpelier on Friday, March 12th. This press conference was organized by his office and other legislative supporters of thoughtful wind energy development. As you are aware if you regularly read the AIAVT newsletter, this issue is on the AIA Board's agenda as well. The text of my one-minute presentation is included below.



cont.

from The Architecture of Humanism/Geoffrey Scott
(1914; p.96-101)

...the art of architecture was bound to detach itself from mechanical science. The art of architecture studies not structure itself, but the effect of structure on the human spirit. Empirically, by intuition and example, it learns where to discard, where to conceal, where to emphasise, and where to imitate, the facts of construction. it creates, by degrees, a humanised dynamics. For that task, constructive science is a useful slave, and perhaps a natural ally, certainly a blind master. The builders

cont.

4.04:1

re: wind energy

Donna -

I appreciate your position statement toward wind energy in Vermont, at Congressman Sander's press conference. Not only does it provide an excellent perspective on the issue - aesthetics relative to energy consumption, livable communities, public process, etc., but you have given architects a seat at the table!

It gives me great satisfaction to see that AIA Vermont is taking a leadership position on things that really matter to architects, community, and future generations!

Keep up the great work!

*M. Hunter Ulf, AIA
UK Architects, P.C., Principal
AIA National Board, New England Director*

WIND POWER: AESTHETIC JUDGMENTS ARE OFTEN BASED ON MORE THAN LOOKS

Judgements of beauty are not always based only on the way things look. There is also an intellectual facet to all aesthetic experiences.

With apologies to Betsy Ross, an example of this is a comparison of only the two-dimensional, graphic design composition of the American and Nazi flags. From a purely visual aesthetic standpoint, the Nazi flag could be said to be compositionally superior in terms of balance, visual movement, element proportions, focal point, hierarchy of element sizes, form clarity and color harmony. Yet few people make favorable aesthetic judgements when looking at a Nazi flag.

Conversely, many Americans see "beauty" and are filled with many positive and proud thoughts when gazing at our flag during the National Anthem. The cause of this aesthetic opinion flip has to do with the individually-interpreted, intellectual meaning of each of these icons. The intellectually-based definitions that we have allowed into our conscious-

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As "advocacy" is one of AIA's major goals for the Architecture professional, I hope you will also consider your role in promoting ideals that architects hold, such as livable communities and smart growth, as well as clean energy development for the future.

I am here as President of the Vermont Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Just last night, our 12 member Board of Directors discussed the topic of wind energy in Vermont for over an hour. I've boiled that discussion down to a one minute summary, which I will read:

Architects work every day to create livable communities and healthy environments. We believe that clean energy resources that add to our State's economic vitality are essential to sustain our quality of life. Wind energy is one piece of the clean energy picture that we need in Vermont.

As with all new development, wind energy sites must be carefully studied and thoughtfully designed. Aesthetic criteria similar to that of Act 250 need to be considered, and the preservation of pristine areas where there are no existing roads is paramount.

Accurate representations of proposed wind energy facilities need to be presented to the people of Vermont. Realistic, computer-modified photographs are an excellent modern tool, which allows us to see installations as they would look from likely vantage points.

That said, we all know that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Can wind turbines lined up on a ridge be beautiful? Many people,

cont.

of the Renaissance gave architecture for the first time a wholly conscious liberty of aim, and released it from mechanical subservience. To recall the art of architecture to that obedience is to reverse a natural process, and cast away its opportunity. The Mechanical Fallacy, in its zeal for structure, refuses, in the architecture of the Renaissance, an art where structure is raised to the ideal. It looks in poetry for the syntax of naked prose...Now there is no reason why an art form, if it be regarded as significant at all, should have its meaning limited to an aesthetic reference. Romanticism, it is true, was concerned with the imaginative or poetic associations of style. But when once this habit of criticism was established- when once it seemed more natural to attend to what architec-

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4.04:2

ness, have subconsciously shaped our aesthetic judgement to the point of overpowering the purely visual aesthetic judgements we might otherwise make. The Nazi flag therefore symbolizes and triggers emotional reactions and meanings such as “hate,” “oppression,” “fear” and “evil” - a “negative” aesthetic experience. The American flag triggers subconscious emotions in most of us that include “pride,” “sacrifice,” “loyalty,” “unity” and “historic place” - a “positive” aesthetic experience.

The point of this example is that many of us in Vermont have not been careful to consciously monitor the quality and validity of information we are digesting into our subconscious process relating to windmills. Purely visual aesthetic judgements about windmills seem to be taking a backseat to what people perceive them to mean. There are many unjustified fears and partial-truths being peddled by those who oppose wind power about their visual impacts and the future of our environment, ecosystems and energy situations. They are busy trying to make us all see “Nazi flags” when we think of windmills so that their NIMBY aesthetic opinions will rule the day. I appreciate the efforts of these ‘Good Samaritans’ to decide for me that windmills are new, different, and therefore inappropriate, but as an architect and citizen, I think I’m qualified to think for myself.

These self-appointed keepers of aesthetic righteousness have been busy spinning tales about the evils of wind power. Their words are painstakingly crafted to subconsciously bias the public with phrases like “industrial factories along our ridgelines” and that a handful of sensibly-sighted windfarms “will turn Vermont into the pinwheel state”... I could go on for pages.

The net result of these distortions has been a subconscious aesthetic conclusion by some Vermonters that windmills are “evil” and “bad.” The purely visual aesthetic judgement of wind turbines is being overpowered by what people have come to believe they mean.

Unfortunately, many of the NIMBY’s have simply not yet found the courage to open their minds to the possibility of “joy” and the magnificently positive result that these projects could provide for our society, our children and our planet. In my mind, the aesthetic experience of viewing sensibly designed wind turbines is one of profound beauty. A “positive” aesthetic experience.

cont

including many architects think so. Inevitably, the question of beauty and aesthetics must be placed in the larger context of our limited choices for energy to fuel our modern lifestyles.

Wind energy represents one way in which our State and our Country can achieve a degree of energy independence. This is so important to us all, whether we want to admit it or not. In that context, I look at the Searsburg wind farm not only with admiration of the elegant forms set in nature, but with great hope for our future and that of generations to come.

I believe that there is room in Vermont for additional wind sites, which does not mean a continuous string of wind turbines on every ridge line, as some so fearfully predict. Let’s use the review process, as well as our need to see the greater good, in developing appropriate sites for wind energy.

What we can accomplish will be just another example of what makes Vermont so special.

ture indirectly signified than to what it immediately presented- nothing was required but a slight alteration in the predominant temper of men’s minds, an increased urgency of interest outside the field of art, to make them seek in architecture for a moral reference. Romanticism had made architecture speak a language not its own- a language that could only communicate to the spectator the thoughts he himself might bring. Architecture had become a mirror to literary preferences and literary tastes. Now, therefore, when the preoccupations inevitable to a time of social change and theological dispute

cont.

4.04:3



mcfarland state office building

New and different utilitarian structures that provide a service to man do not have to be seen as "inappropriate" or "bad" to a creative and open-minded soul. If that were true, how did awkward-looking lighthouses, dams, monuments, public art and flagpoles themselves ever end up as focal points on our post cards, calendars, photographs and landscapes?

Following the logic of wind power opponents, aren't sailboats and ski resorts architecture and man-made entities that stand out as separate from nature then visually offensive too? What is the subconscious aesthetic impact of watching a daily dose of soldiers in the Mideast die on television in order to perpetuate the lifestyle of the 20th century fossil fuel generations? What is the total sum aesthetic impact of alternative sources of power when we include infrastructure and delivery systems such as strip mining, oil spills and coal plant smokestacks?

I love to look at modern windmills. Their simple, clean and graceful form and kinetic movement carries strong visual aesthetic appeal to me because of how they look and for what they really mean. They are a bright symbol of hope. When I look at windmills, they symbolize and trigger comforting emotional meanings like "sanity," "intelligence," "maturity," "peace," "environmental congruency," "bright future," "harmony," "energy and political freedom," "high morality," "legacy to our children," "free fuel forever," "sophisticated simplicity," "cleanliness," "planetary stewardship," "the constant power of nature" and a reminder that maybe we can be intelligent enough to save ourselves and the planet after a century of ignorance, hedonism and bad choices relating to self-preservation. They silently convey to me that our society is finally evolving to become smart enough to produce what it consumes while minimizing the soiling of our fragile nest.

*keith dewey, aia, leed ap
weston, vermont*

state receives honorable mention in regional sustainability competition

Governor James Douglas announced on March 15, 2004 that the renovated McFarland State Office Building in Barre, designed by the Burlington architecture firm Freeman French Freeman, Inc., received Honorable Mention in the "Places of Work/Large Buildings" category in the recent Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) competition.

This is the second award for energy efficiency and adaptive reuse of the Barre City Hospital, originally built in 1914. In 2002, Efficiency Vermont awarded the 4-story, 50,000 sf project its "Best Integrated Design for Energy Efficiency in a Major Renovation" award because the project demonstrated a comprehensive approach to energy-efficient design, addressing all building systems to minimize energy use.

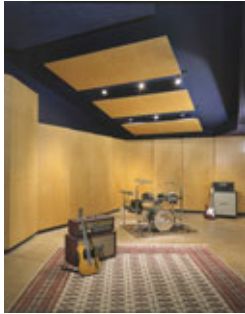
NESEA sponsors the highly competitive Northeast Green Building Awards that recognize outstanding achievements in high-performance architecture in ten northeastern states. Governor Douglas acknowledged the significance of this honor: "The State of Vermont must be a leader in demonstrating that sustainable design can be economically efficient and aesthetically innovative."

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had become predominantly moral, the language or art, reflecting them, was rife with ethical distinctions. The styles of architecture came to symbolise those states of human character in the craftsman, the patron or the public which they could be argued to imply. They were praised or blamed in proportion as those states were morally approved.

4.04:4

egan media productions, colchester



select design, burlington



firm profile- scott + partners, inc.

tyler scott, aia

Scott + Partners, Inc. is a six-person firm located in Essex Junction in the historic Brownell Block. Currently two partners, John Alden, AIA and I manage most projects. Additional staff include: John Rooney, AIA, Joel Page, Kimberly Wilson and Estelle Nelson.

The firm started originally in 1988 as a partnership with Ralph O' Mara-Garcia under the name Shelter Design, Inc. I moved to Vermont a few years earlier having worked both in construction and for architects in Ohio, Washington State and Montana. Ralph and I met working for Colin Lindberg in Burlington, and decided our best path was to start our own firm. Our focus at that time was primarily small commercial and residential projects, with some on-going projects at MCHV (now Fletcher Allen) and UVM. In 1995, Ralph decided that he would take a position with the INS, and I decided a firm name change was in order. In essence, Scott + Partners was "re-started" at that time; and soon after, Joel Page and John Rooney joined the firm.

We decided to focus primarily on healthcare, laboratory and commercial projects in lieu of single-family residential work. Also, we felt that instead of just chasing after particular projects, it was important to find good clients who would give us the opportunity to grow and maintain a certain level of business. (Good clients tend to produce good projects with fewer headaches.) I also never intended to have a firm larger than six or eight people – I wanted to maintain a higher level of personal involvement and quality. Since 1995, in addition to working on projects in health care, lab, and general commercial work, Scott + Partners has worked on several school, affordable housing, municipal and church projects. Most of our work has been in Vermont by choice.

cont.

essex high school library



essex high school library



private residence, williston



In design, we focus our energy, as do many designers, on listening to the client and providing viable options given the functional, contextual, and environmental concerns of the project. Many of our projects focus less on aesthetics, but instead require a great deal of attention to detail. The cardiac catheterization labs at Fletcher Allen or clean room projects at IBM are good examples. In other cases, we have been involved with interior design projects for clients such as Jager DiPaola Kemp and Select Design to whom the creation of a particular image linked to their own work is the primary focus of the design. For clients such as these, we tend to push the design language and aesthetics as much as possible. In general, we tend not to integrate “traditional” forms into our work. For lack of a better term, one might consider our work influenced most by Modernist work; but due to the variety of building types on which we work, it is difficult to find a distinct pattern. However, as a result of our exposure to many industrial- and laboratory-type projects, we tend to find ourselves working more comfortably with industrial-type materials and fairly spare detailing.

Another area of work we have found ourselves fairly involved with is affordable housing. Needless to say, these are not extremely profitable, but they are always projects that have a clear purpose and need. They are often interesting, challenging, and require a great deal of attention to detail and budget. They also require, due to the number of funders, the integration of often conflicting requirements; for example, historic preservation and energy use guidelines. We have completed several projects in Vermont over the past six years, including a 25-unit mixed use project at the Bus Barns in Burlington, a new 50-unit project near Maple Tree Place, and various renovation projects in Vergennes and Middlebury.

For more information on Scott + Partners, visit their website at www.scottpartners.com.

aiaVT welcomes

christina contis nambiar, *aia of jericho*
michael willard, *professional affiliate of burlington*

‘my architect: a son’s journey’

The film, My Architect, in Montpelier last month, is open at the Roxy in Burlington as of April 2.

Louis I. Kahn, who died in 1974, was one of the most important architects of the twentieth century. His dramatic death-alone and bankrupt in the men’s room of New York’s Penn Station-revealed a triple life: in addition to his wife and daughter, Kahn left behind two illegitimate children, by different women with whom he had long-term relationships. My Architect follows the five-year odyssey of Kahn’s only son, Nathaniel Kahn, as he travels the world to discover who his celebrated father really was.

Merrill’s Roxy Cinema
222 College St
Burlington, VT 05401-8318
(802) 864-4742



teaching for design: an introductory program for architects interested in teaching design to grade school children

jan ham,
‘learning by design’- massachusetts

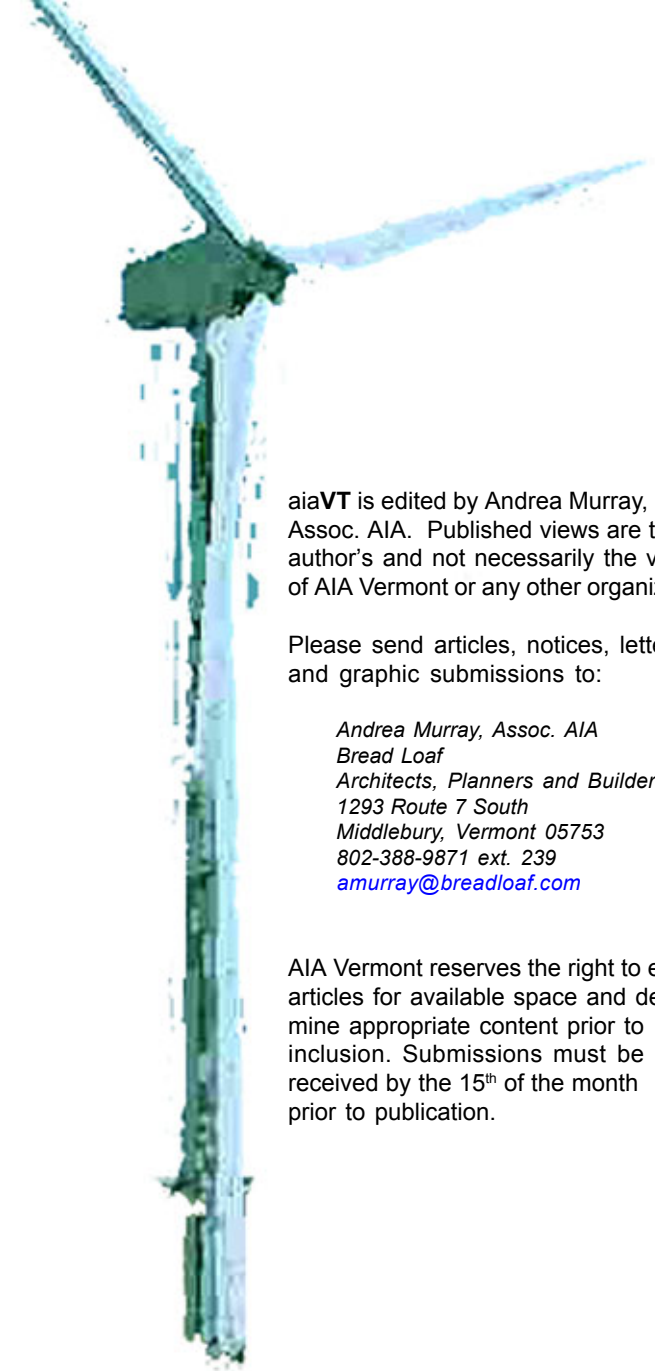
Workshop & Planning Session
Tuesday, May 18, 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Firehouse Center for Visual Arts, 149 Church Street, Burlington, VT

Wouldn’t we all have liked it if an architect had come into our elementary or high school classroom and helped us to develop plans for a dream house, build models, design a community, and explore the architecture of our world? Given the opportunity, children are eager and wholly-capable of expressing their ideas about places and spaces, and about themselves, through design.

If you would like to explore the idea of volunteering to work with children, come to this evening program/workshop. You will see and hear a presentation by Jan Ham, founder of and a master teacher for the Boston Society of Architect’s youth program, Learning By Design. You will receive a great packet of resources; get some practical advice on working with teachers and children; and enjoy practicing some hands-on design/build activities that you can use with young designers.

Learning By Design’s master teachers and volunteer architects engage children and youth, in and out of schools, in hands-on, real-world design projects.

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aiaVT is edited by Andrea Murray, Assoc. AIA. Published views are the author's and not necessarily the views of AIA Vermont or any other organization.

Please send articles, notices, letters, and graphic submissions to:

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AIA Vermont reserves the right to edit articles for available space and determine appropriate content prior to inclusion. Submissions must be received by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Learning by Design helps K-12 children, through explorations and design, develop “a sense of place.” By giving children the tools to make informed decisions about their built and natural environments, Learning by Design enables the next generation of designers, community leaders, and citizens to build a better future. Learning by Design architects volunteer in schools and at community sites. Our project themes include: Designing Dream Houses, Structures, Designing Outdoor Learning Spaces, Designing our Community, Architectural Walking Tours, and Box City, a community-building experience.

Teachers like architecture projects because these projects connect mathematics, technology, social studies and the arts. Community groups like architecture projects because the children can work with and design real community sites. If you would like to brainstorm about the possibilities and work with AIAVT to form a cadre of architect-volunteers; come join us at this workshop. We will talk about starting a small, pilot program, and where to go from there.

You can learn more about design education for children on the web at:

www.architects.org/lbd.



kelly karmel, aia

exhibit hall



better buildings by design 2004 draws over 900 professionals

amy rubin

Attendance records were broken last month, when more than 900 design and construction professionals gathered in Burlington for this year's Better Buildings By Design Conference. Presented by Efficiency Vermont in partnership with the AIA, the two-day event offered an expanded range of opportunities for design and construction professionals to view approaches and technologies that are being used to create and renovate today's most energy-efficient buildings.

"The designers and builders who attend this conference truly are Vermont's finest," says Blair Hamilton, Director of Efficiency Vermont. "It's a great feeling to provide this conference as a resource, because these are the people who Vermont business owners and homeowners look to, for buildings that are more energy-efficient, provide better indoor air quality, last longer and are more comfortable year-round."

A highlight of this year's conference was the launch of the newly-published *High-Performance Design Guide for Vermont and the Northeast Region*. Attendees received free copies of this guide, which provides insight into designing and constructing structures that use less energy, have healthy indoor environments and minimize use of natural resources. Complimentary copies are available through Efficiency Vermont at 1-888-921-5990, toll-free. By the end of April, downloadable conference presentations will be available at www.encyciencyvermont.com from such featured speakers as Kelly Karmel, AIA, of Design Balance; Marlin Addison, Principal of M.S. Addison and Associates; and Jeff Johnson, Executive Director of New Buildings Institute.

(Amy Rubin is a Public Relations Project Manager for Efficiency Vermont.)

"Working with
Efficiency Vermont
helps us save energy
and money
for our clients."

Jesse Beck, AIA, NCARB
President
Freeman French Freeman
Burlington, Vermont



1-888-921-5990
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Efficiency Vermont is your statewide energy efficiency utility. It was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters reduce energy costs and protect our environment, and is operated by an independent, non-profit organization.