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Cover Photo:
Whifler Residence, Burlingame, CA

AIA SMC
PO BOX 5386
SAN MATEO, CA 94402
650.348.5133
www.webcom.com/smcaia

CHARRETTE NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS - SAN MATEO COUNTY - SUMMER 2002



Building 157, Lockheed, Sunnyvale

Members of the San Mateo AIA Chapter enjoyed a wonderful afternoon tour of a historic green building, Building 157, located on the Lockheed campus in Sunnyvale last month. On May 22nd, Lockheed hosted our Green Committee's second scheduled tour of the year.

Although battleship gray, Building 157 stands in stark contrast to its surroundings of mostly windowless buildings. Five stories of high horizontal bands of faceted windows designed to bring natural light deep into the space have a gem like appearance in the middle of this otherwise stark campus. Eighteen participants were welcomed in the lobby by Mike Dooley, Lockheed's staff architect, and shown into the 'Lightrium', a one hundred foot high atrium at the buildings core, criss-crossed by escalators. Natural light from expansive skylights flooded the 'Lightrium' while aerospace engineers employed gaily colored sun umbrellas to shade their computers from glare at their workstations. Between the 'Lightrium' and the outside windows, 'Lightshelves' took on the form of winged aerodynamically expressive elements that bounced light in from the outside perimeter glass. Although 75% of Building 157's interior illumination is provided by natural light, our guides freely discussed the many mistakes that were made and the many lessons learned, during the buildings 20 year use, in the correct way to bring natural light into a building and conserve energy.

The 1-1/2 hour tour was enjoyable and informative in an easy going and informal fashion. The Green Committee invites other Chapter members to join us on our next scheduled tour, to be announced very soon.

Cheers,
John Hermansson

Building 157, Lockheed, Sunnyvale

By: John Hermansson
Green Committee Tour Organizer

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A Day at Runnymede

By: Roger Hagman

The June 8th at Runnymede Sculpture Farm in Woodside was a smashing success. The over 60 people in attendance enjoyed ideal weather as they took leisurely strolls throughout the 120 acre estate. Many in attendance brought elaborate picnic lunches, and dined under shade of the magnificent oaks. A few even bicycled to the event. The "Farm" is the setting of over 120 impressive pieces of sculpture, which line the trails and dot the meadows. The farm, which is being assembled by fellow architect Adolph Rosekrans who lives in Berkeley. The sculptures were collected by the late John Rosekrans, (he passed away last year) who was Adolph's brother. We are very grateful to Peter Rosekrans, a landscape architect in San Francisco, who made the day possible. Peter attended the event and shared some of the history of the property with our chapter. The estate is rarely opened to such a small group. To be able to view this very unique setting in this intimate way is a very rare opportunity. Our special thanks go out to Peter and Adolph and the staff of Runnymede who made our visit such an enjoyable event.





Interview with Paul Zimmerman AIA Emeritus

By: John Lucchesi
June 2002

College of San Mateo, at the top of the hill terminus of Hillsdale Boulevard... Building 19, Room 114, the student-

made 60's era poster on the door is a black and white photo of an outward looking eye stating: "Department of Architecture". Inside, "Room 114+1/2" is written in pencil on the door to the small office to the left. Above the door is a hand formed clay plaque from the 70's declaring simply "The Womb" (courtesy of former CSM student Maureen Morton, now Hillsborough Planning Director). A familiar voice and a pair of true, true blue eyes are my warm welcome. Professor Paul Zimmerman, Architect, AIA Emeritus is attempting to sort through his "stuff" of about 35 years of teaching and learning at CSM. As of this spring he is also "Professor Emeritus" and moving on.

JL: *Before "architecture" you had a life in music?*

PZ: Those were the days my friend! We thought they'd never end. . . Yeah, I traveled with several big bands during the war years and afterwards. Had a lot of memorable experiences, including spending a season with Gypsy Rose Lee and playing a show with Peggy Lee for a while. That all came to an abrupt end with the Korean War. I went into Air Force and spent my entire service there as a musician. When I got out, I launched directly into my architectural career. However even then, the horn turned out to be a wonderful thing. I made all kinds of money with it for very few hours while I was in school. Really, it supported me and paid my way through school. Now the grand kids play the horn.

JL: *Did something during the music years lead you to architecture?*

PZ: No, actually John, the idea of being an architect started way back before the music career. I grew up in Wisconsin, in the shadow of Frank Lloyd Wright and I was very much aware of his work. I was very much taken by it and felt there was sort of a calling there. Not terribly strong at first, but that was the definite direction I wanted to always go. Then the war

came along. With the bright lights, I got into the music business. It was a detour I spent many years traveling through. It wasn't until I was in the service that I realized I was spending all my free time looking at buildings, experiencing places, looking at cities and the quality of people's lives.

Anyway, by the time I got out of the service, I knew exactly what I was going to do. Four days after I got my discharge, I was enrolled in the University of Wisconsin. They were very nice there; however, in those days I had to take an engineering type curriculum because they didn't have architecture. And so I applied for Berkeley and was accepted. By the end of the year I transferred out here and that's where I've been ever since.

JL: *When did you graduate from Berkeley?*

PZ: The year that Wright died, 1959. As a matter of fact, Phil (Dixon) and I were both in the same class and graduated at the same time.

JL: *Were you there when Wright visited Berkeley?*

PZ: Yes. I remember sitting outside Wurster's office window. The window was wide open and it was a hot day and he was in there working. Wright was sitting outside the window with all us students telling us how he thought Wurster was the worst shanty builder on the West Coast. Wurster never said anything. I imagine he kind of burned a little bit. Well I don't think Wright's concept of how buildings go together was exactly the same as Wurster's. Of course, Wright's was right and if you didn't agree with him, you were wrong.

JL: *That was not typical of your studio class experience at Berkeley?*

PZ: I had studios from all the major architects there at the time. Wurster of course and Vernon DeMars and, oh, Joe Esherick. That was a great class, design studio. It was really the highlight. A marvelous person and great architect. He knew how to extend it. How to get it from him to you, and how to get it to mean something to you. I thought that was valuable. As a matter of fact, much of my own technique in teaching today comes from being associated with that class. It's just a marvelous way of teaching.

JL: *Getting the students to see their own design and what they're doing even though they may recognize it at first . . .*

PZ: Yeah, rather than "do it as I do it", the approach is: "how can you make what you want to make, and the make it the best you can?" It was a real eye-opener.



MOVIE REVIEW - BLUE VINYL
A new film by Judith Helfand and Daniel Gold
 By: Phil Bona

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Well you may or may not have seen this frightening and funny film on HBO, but it has been playing the past month or so at the PG&E Center in San Francisco. Blue Vinyl has won the Excellence in Cinematography Award at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival, the Best Documentary Award at the Bermuda International Film Festival, and the Audience Award at the Philadelphia Film Festival.



I had the opportunity to be present at the debut showing of the film at the PG&E Center in San Francisco with Judith, Daniel and the co-producer Julia Parker. These are real people who have asked a lot of questions and done their homework on the topic of Vinyl, its manufacturing process, fabrication, consumer usage and disposal.

It all starts when Judith's parents replace the rotten wood siding with blue vinyl siding on their house in Long Island. Her father was told that vinyl siding was safe, and would only let off toxic gas in the rare event of a house fire. But after Judith's experience with cancer caused by a synthetic estrogen and anti-miscarriage drug prescribed to her mother during pregnancy, she figured any material so loaded with synthetic chemicals had to pose some kind of risk. So, with a piece of vinyl siding in her hand she took off on a journey to find out if there are really issues with vinyl.

She visited Louisiana which produces about a third of North America's PVC, the key ingredient in all vinyl products. She arrived in Lake Charles just in time for Mardi Gras and it soon became clear that her father's answer to rotten wood was somebody else's toxic hazard. She tried to visit the plant but was turned down and referred to the industry's trade association, the Vinyl Institute whose information was firmly founded in the many attributes in the uses of vinyl. She found out the a lot of PVC has been made for Europe in Venice Italy since the 1960's. So she went there.

Judith found a number of Italian workers including Ampelio Magro who worked as a "bagger" in the factory. He now speaks with the aid of a vibrating voice box. "One day I went to lunch to eat, and I washed my hands, and my arms. And when I dried myself, and I looked at my hands, they were white. My co-worker looked at me and said: 'The dust. What have you done to yourself?' And I couldn't wash it off. 'And the dust that you breathe,' he said, 'When will that come off? If it won't even come off by washing your hands?'" She found that of those who worked there, many have contracted a new form of lung cancer at the larynx and only a few are still alive.

After more probing, this toxic odyssey led to the question: "Is there an affordable building material that didn't harm anyone at any step of its life cycle." Judith became obsessed with the idea of taking the vinyl siding off her parents house and replacing it with a less harmful material. Her co-

and cut a deal with a "green" straw-bale house builder to come home with her to Long Island to help talk her parents into stucco. But, her parents didn't like stucco, so they went looking for recycled wood instead. After an exhaustive search she found an old red barn in upstate New York (c. 1890). They tore off the vinyl siding, installed the recycled wood siding...and the house is STILL blue.

An environmental health movie — let alone a "social change" documentary has never been this much fun. At this point their goal is to support the growing national grassroots movement to transform the polyvinyl chloride (PVC) industry so that it is no longer a source of environmental and human harm. For more information about PVC and the movie, please log on to <http://www.myhouseisyourhouse.org>.

Reviewer's note:

"The problem with PVC can be summed up in two words: TOXIC LIFECYCLE. Throughout its lifecycle, PVC can cause harm. PVC requires hazardous chemicals in its production and very hazardous chemicals, such as dioxin and PCBs, are byproducts of that same production. PVC leaches or releases harmful chemicals in some consumer products, and toxic byproducts, including dioxins, are created when it is burned. The alarming news is that vinyl production is on the rise, despite the fact that safer, feasible alternatives currently exist for almost all vinyl products. The manufacture of PVC can put worker health and fence-line communities at risk through exposure to hazardous chemicals that can cause a number of severe health problems including cancer, endometriosis, neurological damage, immune system damage, respiratory problems, liver and kidney damage, and birth defects."

As Architect's we had better be knowledgeable about this topic and perhaps reconsider specifying the use of PVC Vinyl and related products or at least notify our client's of the potential health risks. This may become the next "Asbestos." Check it out.



"I thus appeal for a kind of architecture of common sense based on fundamentals that we can all know, understand and feel." —from Thinking Architecture, by Peter Zumthor, 1998, Lars Muller Publishers, Princeton Architectural Press Inc.

Most of the architecture books I've managed to collect or wished I had collected over the years have been image-seductive. Like many architects, I believe books may be thought to be a cheaper way to travel, that is, they're another way to satisfy our need to take in more of the world, to see and to broaden our scope of experience. This book has no enticing images to inhale, but it nevertheless illustrates how architects can creatively "think" about buildings, materials and places, as well as illustrating the beauty and value in doing so. Don't worry, the book is short (64 pages) and composed of four brief and inspiring lectures given by the author over a period of about ten years. His topics range from "the hard core of beauty", childhood memories of vernacular architecture, the value of place and wholeness in design, education, looking and trying to understand the wonders of the built environment around us.

Zumthor is not about intellectual pinheaded ideology or starry eyed fluff. Although incredibly insightful and often tenderly personal, Zumpthor's essays are tersely clear and rationally to the point. Here is a very contemporary Swiss architect dedicated to exploring and developing his craft through real "building thoughts". These are his offerings to us, so that we too may "think architecture" in our craft.

"But in passing, I may say that real thinking is better done without words than with them, and creative thinking *must* be done without words. Hence you must think in terms of *images*, of pictures, of states of feeling, of rhythm." Louis Sullivan, Kindergarten Chats, 1918

AIACC Mentoring Program

By: Letrice Sherrillo, Assoc. A.I.A.
Chair AIACC Mentorship Program

The true source of ones own success can be attributed to mentorship. Mentoring is the foundation of what we do. In recent years, there has been a growing concern within the architectural profession that the younger generation may not have the proper knowledge and skills to carry the torch of the architectural profession into the future. Our profession to a large extent has lost that tradition. We would like to rekindle this tradition. Many of our colleagues, both established as well as emerging, have stated that the source of their own success can be attributed to the mentoring that they received early in their careers from individuals they would consider mentors.

The AIACC Pilot Mentoring Program is a framework of components along with various tools to assist mentors and protégés. The challenge and opportunity is yours to further develop and enhance the program and process of Mentorship in the profession. Be a part in making a difference in someone's life and career.

Many of our chapter members are excited in becoming one of the leaders in The AIACC Pilot Mentoring Program. Here is an opportunity to take a strong role in leading the profession within California in revitalizing the culture of mentoring. Please get involved and don't forget to bring your mentor or your favorite young emerging professional to the July BBQ.

William a. Whifler, A. I. A.

Professor and Co-Founder of the Department of Architecture
at College of San Mateo
Bachelor of Architecture, Stanford University

By: John Lucchesi

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William A. Whifler A. I. A.

“Pseudo-thinking is always imitative, real thinking is always creative. Real thinking is always in the *present tense*. You cannot think *in* the past, you can only think *of* the past. You cannot think in the future, you can only think *of* the future. The one is the function of the historian, the other that of the prophet. ...real thought, vital thought, is born of the physical senses. It is in the present that you *really live*, therefore it is in the present, only, that you *really think*. And in this sense you think *organically*. Pseudo thinking is inorganic. The one is living, the other dead. The present is the *organic* moment, the *living* moment. The present is that twinkling of an eye that separates death from life, as time moves on: but one thought is quicker than the twinkling of an eye.” Louis Sullivan, Kindergarten Chats, 1918

Whifler Residence, Hillsborough, California



Whifler Residence, Burlingame, California



Whifler Residence, Hillsborough, California

I first came across these words while researching a report on Louis Sullivan during my first year of studying architecture. It was at the College of San Mateo and my design instructor was “Mr. Whifler”. At this time, I will pass on discussing my warm memories of Mr. Whifler as a teacher, except to mention that he was the only “instructor” I ever experienced at any level of my architecture education who pretended never to have a pencil or pen with him during studio. Unlike every other “quick -draw” professor or T.A., Mr. Whifler would not give in to the temptation of “try this” or “do this”...his first response was: “I don’t have a pencil...show me what you’re thinking...no, no, you draw it...” Thanks.



As a teacher and an architect, I believe Bill Whifler thought and designed “organically” as Sullivan described. His work is not dependent upon references to anything but its own reality. Except for his collaboration on the design of the Burlingame City Hall, Whifler was a maker of homes. To this day, these dwellings, unless painfully remodeled, remain vital and true to their own materiality and purpose. However they are not autonomous icons of separateness, as some architectural anti-humanists today would encourage. Rather, they tend to exhibit a sensitive “wholeness” and sympathy for a non-simplistic unity of space, structure, material, purpose, architectural form and environmental setting.



Whifler Residence, Burlingame, California

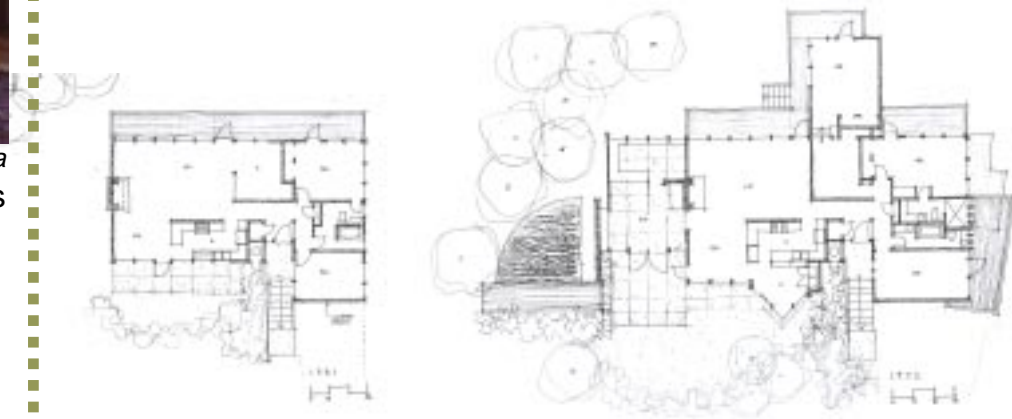
A native of the San Francisco Peninsula, Bill was a graduate of Burlingame High School and Stanford University. It is difficult to experience his work without sensing a belonging to this place, the Bay Region, and its rich tradition of design in the company of Wurster, Esherick, Callister and even Turnbull. Having said that, Whifler’s approach remains somewhat unique even in these circles with his characteristically



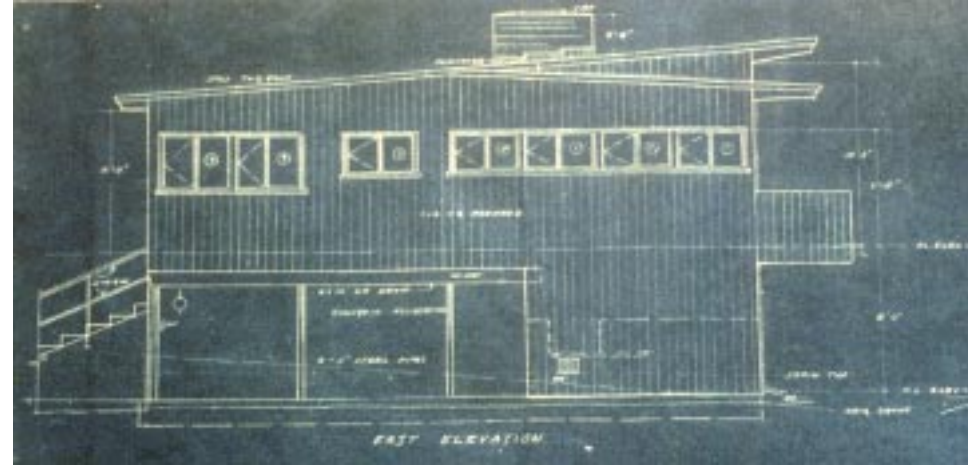
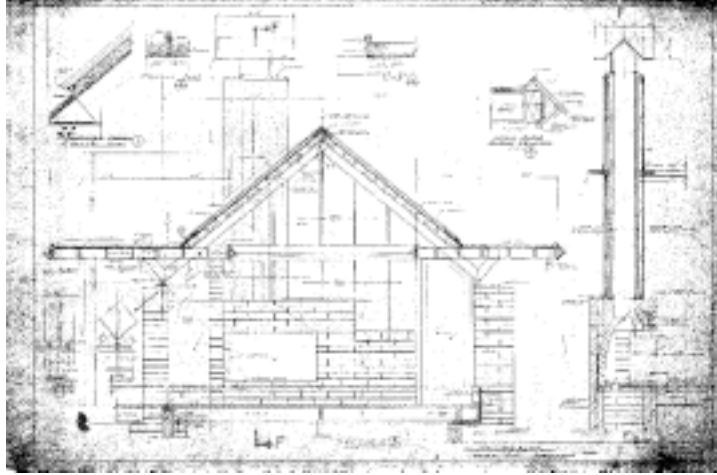
Whifler Residence, Burlingame, California

well crafted integration and expression of steel, glass and concrete block.

Featured here are two residences. His own home, located in Hillsborough and built essentially by Bill himself with help from his children, was a labor of love that evolved and grew over time with the size of the family, through about eight additions and remodelings from 1952-1965.



1951 - Whifler Residence, Hillsborough, California - 1972



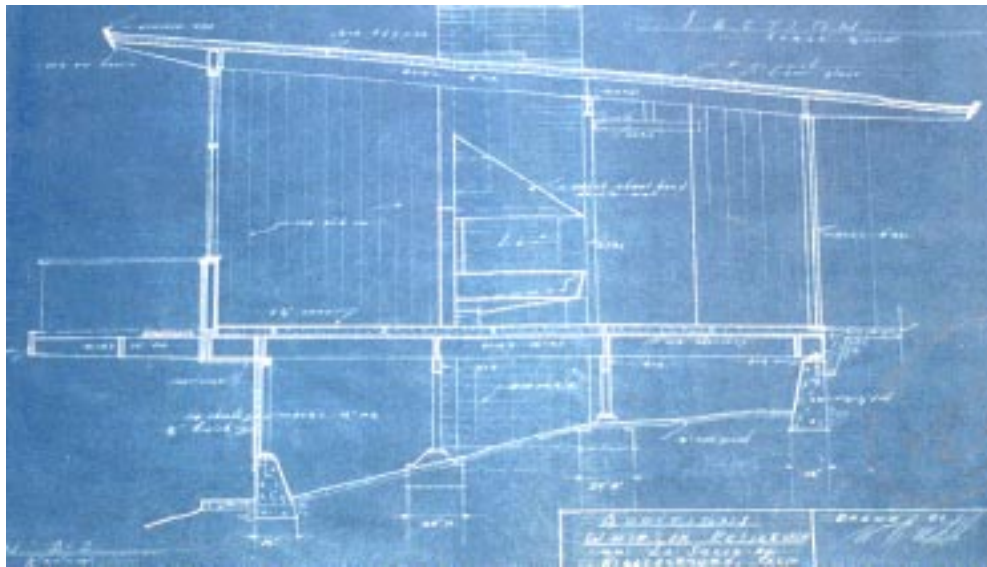
This home also became his personal design laboratory for experimenting with his favorite materials and details, from structural steel, to butt glazing, to birdhouses (happy birds!). The other home was designed for his mother in 1966, on a compact site adjacent to their family home in Burlingame. A tiny home by today's gluttonous standards, it is a jewel-like home of carefully composed wood, steel, concrete block, and glass in a thickly wooded creek bank setting. The architecture speaks for itself.

B & W PHOTOS BY:
 COLOR PHOTOS BY:
 SCANNING DONATED BY:

GRAEME WHIFLER
 REBECCA BAUSER
 BARKER BLUE

William a. Whifler, A. I. A.

By: John Lucchesi





John A. Matthews Architects has handled large complex projects and small intensively-detailed projects. We place a high priority on quality design and responsiveness to the client's needs.

We have lately developed a particular specialty of storefront projects in the downtown commercial district. The firm has been retained by three local communities to design storefront renovations as part of redevelopment efforts in the downtown. We have done remodelings in historic buildings and are familiar with the Secretary of Interiors design guidelines.

We seek to produce designs that are sensitive to the context of the street and give clients the presence they want to project. Sometimes that means discovering hidden details and features which can be exploited in an old building. Sometimes it requires finding a new response to a building or the street to produce the impact or mood the client is looking for.

We also offer full design services from conceptual design through construction.



John A. Matthews, A. I. A. Principal

Jack founded John Matthews Architects in San Mateo in 1986. He was previously employed as Project Architect with Peterson Architects in Menlo Park from 1976 to 1986. Prior to that he was employed by: Whisler-Patri Architects, San Francisco, George Cody, Architect, Palo Alto, and Milton Johnson, Architect, Palo Alto.

Awarded a Bachelor of Architecture Degree, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 1972. Studied Architecture for one year in Florence, Italy, 1970-71.

Licensed to practice Architecture in California, 1976.

Corporate Member of the American Institute of Architects since 1976.

President for the San Mateo County Chapter A.I.A., 1992

Member of Board of Directors A.I.A. California Council, 1994-96

Member of A.I.A. Committee on Historic Resources

Speaker at A.I.A. National Conventions, 1998-99

Planning Commissioner, City of San Mateo, 1995-2003

President of the Board of Directors for HIP Housing, San Mateo. HIP Housing is a non-profit corporation providing housing to the needy and dispossessed.



Nan Croley
Bachelor of Architecture, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York
Bachelor of Arts, Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio



John Lucchesi, Architect, A.I.A.
Member, Planning Commission, City of South San Francisco, 1992-96
Member, Design Review Board of South San Francisco, 1986-1992
Member, American Institute of Architects, San Francisco Chapter Member, Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
Master of Architecture, University of California at Berkeley, California, 1983
J.K. Branner Travel Fellowship, 1982-83
Represented U.C. Berkeley at the International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design in Siena, Italy, 1982
Bachelor of Science with a Major in Architecture, Washington State University, Pullman Washington, 1978



Laura Acevedo-Diaz, A.I.A. Associate
Master of Architectural History and Preservation, University of Illinois, Illinois, 1998-99
Alan K. and Leonarda Laing Fellowship
Master of History of Latin American Architecture and Urbanism, Universidad Nacional de Tucuman, Argentina, 1996-97



Murat Kaya
Bachelor of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Department of Architecture, 1991-1995
Construction Management Certificate, 2001
University of California, Hayward, CA



Elizabeth Matthew, A.I.A. Associate
Bachelor of Architecture, University of Bangalore, India 1986-1991
Master in Architecture, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1999-2000





ISTANBUL, TURKEY



Byzantium, Constantinople or Istanbul - call it what you will, this city that spans two continents is a jumble of cultures almost as Byzantine as the Grand Bazaar. The Holy Emperors were once crowned in Hagia Sophia and the treasures of the Ottomans are on display at the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace, whose maze of 500 rooms contains a king's ransom in jewels



The Palace of Knossos is connected with thrilling legends such as the myth of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur. The palace dates back to the early 15th century B.C, the height of the Minoan Civilization. Knossos was the source of inspiration for Frank Lloyd Wright in his design of the Johnson Building.



The Celsus Library is the centerpiece of the ruins at Ephesus, Turkey. Completed at the height of the city's power, in 125 A.D, the library once held over 12,000 books. Built in commemoration of the death of the provincial governor, its tenure lasted only a mere century and a half before being destroyed by the Goths in 265 A.D.



Motivation had completely disowned me for this article. I just couldn't think of anything to climb up on my soapbox about or discover something that was really driving me. This is indeed strange! Are the planets misaligned?

Then I was talking to a coworker about volunteer work and it hit me. That was my motivation. At least it was motivating enough to get me out of bed early on a Saturday morning, and for me that requires a minor miracle.

This year, I have participated in two different housing volunteer programs. The first was Rebuilding Together, formerly Christmas in April. The second was Habitat for Humanity. For those of you that haven't been involved in either of these two programs, I strongly suggest you check it out, even if it's only once. To give you a quick picture, Rebuilding is for current homeowners who are having problems maintaining their homes. A team comes in and fixes the problems within one day. As this program is only once or twice a year, there are lots of perks, t-shirts, breakfast, lunch, coffee, and a big BBQ party/celebration afterwards. The drawback is that there is quite a lot of pressure as it's necessary to complete all the tasks in one day. At Habitat, there were no t-shirts, coffee, etc. We were lucky to get water. However, the schedule was relaxed, as they do this every day. Whatever couldn't get done today, could get done tomorrow. Now in my case, we were very lucky, as the owners that had moved into the first phase decided to create a feast for us at lunch. This was great, but not common place. Those are the facts of my experience. The comradery, the inspiration, the sense of community one probably cannot relate to without having experienced it themselves.

Inspiration can be hard to find in our daily toils and the benefits one can gain from such work are worth the aching knees and bruised thighs. And of course, as architects, it all comes back to our core need to design, inspire and share our creativity with the world. The skies did not open up and the angels did not sing, but a certain satisfaction was gained, and maybe that is all we need.

Recognize Us? By: Wayne Gherke

During much of 2001 our Chapter's Government Relations Committee worked closely with San Mateo County Supervisors to receive recognition for San Mateo County firms in the County's selection process. San Mateo architects offers several benefits for the County. We bring a good understanding of local issues. Our firms have a high ratio of principals to staff, so we can provide leadership of senior staff for projects and we are responsive since we live and work near our projects. These factors allow us to provide quality architectural services. As well, many cities and counties give preference to local architects, so giving San Mateo County architecture firms a preference for local projects balances our opportunities to participate in public projects. County projects are built with our tax dollars. Hiring San Mateo County architects will keep more of those tax dollars here in San Mateo County.

After receiving indications at the start of the year from Supervisors of their interest in discussing this subject with the Chapter, Supervisors Richard Gordon and Jerry Hill met with our committee members to discuss approaches. After several months of discussion with the Supervisors and Senior County Administrative Staff, the following wording was agreed upon:

PARTICIPATION BY LOCAL SAN MATEO COUNTY ARCHITECTS

The County is interested in receiving proposals which include the participation of local San Mateo County architects in the design of this project. The County recognizes that participation of local San Mateo County architects can be particularly valuable in providing community knowledge and perspective. Proposals should identify whether a local San Mateo County architect is participating and detail the nature and extent of that participation. Participation of San Mateo County architects will be taken into consideration by the County in evaluating qualifications and proposals.

With our new Government Relations Chair Keith Bautista AIA, present, the Supervisors formally adopted the wording by resolution on January 15, 2002.

Our 2002 Government Relations Committee is composed of Chair Keith Bautista, joining members Wayne Gehrke AIA and Michael Kastrop AIA. In addition to Keith Bautista AIA, special thanks go to Phil Bona AIA, and Paul Gumbinger FAIA, for their work with County officials to see this important chapter goal realized. Our Chapter is very appreciative of the leadership offered by Supervisors Richard Gordon and Jerry Hill.



CHAPTER EVENTS

By: Dianne Whitaker, A.I.A.
AIASMC Treasurer

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August 14

Board of Director's Meeting
11:30 AM @ AIASMC office

August 29

Monthly Program
Small Firm Forum / Creating a Digital
Portfolio
6PM San Mateo City Hall room c

September 11

Board of Director's Meeting
11:30 AM @ AIASMC office

September 18

Monthly Program
Breakfast with the County Supervisors
7:30 am Pete's Harbor

October 9

Board of Director's Meeting
11:30 AM @ AIASMC office

October 16 or 23

Monthly Program
Annual Business Meeting & Elections
Time and Location to be Announced

October 24

AIA / ASID / NKBA Trade Show
Bridging the Gap
4:00 – 9:00 PM @ Hotel Sofitel

**Contact the AIASMC Office
at 348-5133 for more information.**

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

By: Dianne Whitaker, A.I.A.
AIASMC Treasurer

Since April 2002, the AIA San Mateo County Chapter has been joined by the following new members:

Dawn E. Merkes, AIA of Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., located in South San Francisco. Dawn is a Principal with the firm. Architect Member.

Heather H. Young, AIA. Heather is employed at CAS Architects in Mountain View. Architect Member.

Tina Facos-Casolo, AIA, of Hillsborough. Architect Member.

Jim McGovern of James E. McGovern, Inc. Jim is an insurance agent located in Belmont. Professional Affiliate Member.

In addition, the following new members joined the Chapter during the last quarter of 2001. We regret that their names were not mentioned in the last issue of the newsletter.

Eric Neahr Rohlfing, Assoc. AIA, of Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., South San Francisco. Eric is an Associate Member of the AIA.

Radziah Mohamad, AIA, of Mitiken Architecture, located in Berkeley. Architect Member.

Greg Smith, Assoc. AIA, of William Churchill Architects, Half Moon Bay. Greg is an Associate Member of the AIA.

The Chapter extends a warm welcome to each of our new members and looks forward to meeting each of you at future Chapter events!



Interview with Paul Zimmerman

By: John Lucchesi

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JL: *He seemed to have a real skill at that, and I guess he was able to do that with his clients as well.*

days. I started out with a small firm in Berkeley. The kind of work he had wasn't that exciting, but at that point in time, I was trying to figure out what this business was all about, and he gave me quite a bit of latitude. I was able to be involved in many different things in the office, including dealing with the clients, which for somebody just out of school, was pretty awesome.

JL: *That is often hard to get just out of school.*

PZ: You know, this comes up quite a bit at school here. We try to talk pretty straight to the students about these things. It is my sense that you need to have a variety of experiences. If you can work for several offices the better. Of course in a small office, you have a chance to do many things. You have to because you just don't have the manpower to do anything else. And so an alert student can just absorb like a sponge because you have all sorts of opportunities to be involved in many things. Whereas in a large office you have more of a tendency to be pigeonholed because of the structure. You're either drafting or you're just doing this or that, but you may not be exposed to the variety of experiences, that is unless you have a principal who wants to help young people develop. I might suggest someone like Paul Gumbinger has made it a point to do this kind of thing over the years.

Now over at Berkeley, it had been a tradition that the Dean of the College of Architecture would have the fifth year class at his house for informal socials or "teas". Wurster hosted these 'Dean's Teas' also, at his home, except in place of tea we'd have beer, peanuts and cheese. We'd sit and talk about architecture and it was very enlightening. I don't know if they still do that over there now but that was a very wonderful opportunity to talk to someone who was on the cutting edge of things at that time.

I remember when Wurster was asked "What is the most important thing we could take with us, as we leave the "Arc" in Berkeley?". He thought for a moment and said, "the realization that you only have the tools with which to get an education." (laughs). We thought that was a very strange answer. But you know, *he was absolutely right!*. I've come to see that that's precisely the strength and value of an education at a place like Berkeley. They give you the tools. They don't just teach you how to do something. They give you the tools to think and to develop yourself as a whole person. Then you've got to pick up the 'nitty-gritty' skills and fill in the empty spaces as you go along. He was actually right.

JL: *Did this sensibility carry over to the program at College of San Mateo?*

PZ: Yes, very definitely. We've never emphasized 'training', that is: 'do this and you'll get a job'. We've tried to develop the whole person and give the individual a sound basic desire to understand, to learn, and

to appreciate his or her own ability. Then when they went on to a University, they are able to really function at a level necessary to accomplish what they want to accomplish. I think for the most part, we've been pretty successful. It's been a hard road sometime, but this has been the philosophy from day one and we see no reason to change it all.

JL: *I remember Bill Whifler telling us, when I was a student here, how he felt it was his job to first unteach us from what we learned in high school . . . and then somehow allow us to think for ourselves after that... uninhibited again.*

PZ: Yeah that's right, I forgot about that. But yeah, that's right. (laughs). And it still carries on today. It's amazing the things people get from the high school experience, whether they studied drafting or something called architecture it's often a 'locked-down and don't make any moves unless somebody blesses you'.... 'Don't talk to anybody, don't look at anybody's work'. And Bill was right we've got to unteach that. And once that happens, then the sky's the limit.

JL: *When did you and Bill get together to form the department at CSM?*

PZ: Well, it was around 1965 or '66 right after I had finished up working on the Stanford Linear Accelerator. I had gone to work for Charles Luckman in 1962, the year that Kennedy was assassinated, and his office was awarded the contract to design it. Actually, it was a split contract. Luckman's office was to do the whole design and then an engineering and construction consortium called ABA, Aetron, Bloom and Atkinson, were to build it. I had a wonderful opportunity to stay with it from the design through the working drawings.

It was around that time Bill and I met. We were members of a San Mateo contingent of the AIA SF Chapter. There wasn't a chapter down here at the time. But it was during those years that Bill and I knew a fellow up here, who was teaching some drafting courses and I think a little design course or something. There was a history course about architecture, which left something to be desired. And that was it. That instructor eventually bailed out. Before he did, we started talking with him about other possibilities, and this eventually got us into speaking with the dean of the division, which eventually got us involved with the president of the college. They were all very much interested in having a real architecture program here. One that would actually help students transfer to accredited universities. And so it was ideal. All the pieces were sitting there like blocks scattered around the floor. It was just a matter of getting them and putting something together.

We wanted, and they allowed us, to have pretty good control of how things were done here. And so it went. The whole thing. Both of us had tenure, and the rest of it is history since '66 or '67. It's been fun. Bill's passing away, in '84 was a real loss, but his mark could be felt.



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JL: *The design studio environment at CSM was always much more like those at the university level, an active, working place, rather than the typical Community College model of a pristine drafting room or classroom. Not too many people realize how unique this is at this level.*

PZ: Yes, that was absolutely mandatory. This was one of the things we told the Division Dean at the time, that this was not going to be a normal classroom operation, where people spend an hour and walk out and the professor locks the door. I guess he must have been convinced of its value, because he made it happen. And it has been proven to be the right thing to do.

JL: *It's a creative place that allows them to do what they want, express themselves and be a little more relaxed and freethinking.*

PZ: After they get over the first hump, the first day where nobody talks to anybody, it's intense. Everybody knows what everybody else is doing and has got something to say about it and that's what I want. That's what I want to have happen. You know yourself, because you went through this thing, that in spite of this, we never have two solutions that are the same. It certainly is a very positive demonstration that there is something good going on here. The other side of this is that the transition to the university is smoother. We've found, from students who come back to visit, which most of them do, that it was just like going to another room.

JL: *Having an understanding of the design process was a help.*

PZ: Yes, I think that's a good way of putting it, understanding, being comfortable with the process, and being part of it.

JL: *For as long as I've been teaching here as well as when I was a student here, I don't remember any incidents or improper behavior associated with the open studios.*

PZ: Yeah, that's been one of the interesting and unique things here. We don't have that kind of problem. Even back in the sixties, when these groups of people went through and trashed the campus. They beat up students and faculty, damaged equipment in the classroom, set fire to things. The only place that was not touched was this area. In those days we had walls covered with student work. I was here. They came down the hallways with bats and sticks and pipes and things like that. They trashed the area down the hall, but nothing was touched here. Why? I don't know. I don't know whether there was some understanding or sympathy with what we were doing here. I have no idea.

JL: *From your point of view what has been the most significant change over the years here at CSM Architecture?*

PZ: I think the biggest change has essentially been in the makeup of the students. And where they come from. When we first started out here,

for instance, for almost a woman in the class. Always men, and they were always Caucasian. Around 1980 we began seeing more women and a wider variety of backgrounds, age groups, ethnic backgrounds, races, interests, and we started getting more and more people coming from other countries. Anyway, it pretty much stayed that way, and it's a wonderful mix. It's a wonderful mix of individuals. And all this contributes, in my opinion. This is what helps to make a well-rounded architect, one who has had the blinders taken off and sees the world for what it is, and understands and appreciates it. You see the students in here. They're like a family. That's a wonderful thing. We're very fortunate in having that.

JL: *If we look around, we are made aware of a real hands-on approach to making things. You and Bill built the three-station darkroom out of a storage room and the studio workstations out of plywood and doors. It seems you've always tried to remind students of the reality of building and had them actually build something every year.*

PZ: It was an interest that Bill and I had and believed in. Yeah, we believed that the architect must understand that what is being put down on that piece of paper isn't just a line. It's got real thickness, weight, character, all these aspects, it's going to be material. Material is the language of architecture. Without building it, or making it visible, it's an idea. Even a painter, if you can't get something on the canvas, it's just an idea. We always thought if students could at least try to understand materials, their potential and limits and how they go together, they would be in a better position to think creatively. Having said all that we must also be reminded of Corbusier's "concept first, details later". You don't start with materials and say, "what can I do with it?". You start with what you want to do and say what materials are appropriate. What was built in your year?

JL: *A geodesic dome of cardboard panels.*

PZ: A geodesic, yes! (laughs)...Yeah, and remember when we put the thing up, it was real windy that day, and trying to hold that thing down was something. It was big enough to drive a truck into the center of it.

JL: *You returned to Berkeley as a graduate student. How was it being a student again?*

PZ: I went back in '83 and got my MArch in '84 and then I launched into a Ph.D. program, which I spent about five years completing everything except the dissertation. I just never got around to doing the dissertation. It was wonderful. John, I had so much fun. It's criminal I had so much fun. And Berkeley was still the smorgasbord. Geez, whatever you want to do, it's there. As a matter of fact, the Examiner did a whole piece on me. Somehow I ended up being the oldest Ph.D. student on campus. (laughs) So they had a picture of me sitting at my desk, talking about my practice, education and all these other things as



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though it was some great thing that I was able to do all this. In truth, I was having the time of my life.

JL: *Have you or Bill ever felt the need to introduce a particular ideology for any reason or to align the program with any particular university's approach?*

PZ: Not really. I think we've been more concerned with trying to open up young minds and get them to see the different ideologies out there and begin to see their own potential and abilities.

JL: *Sometimes students have hard time understanding that all the instructors here, including you and Bill, were always practicing architects. Some may think that it is a challenge to balance teaching and practice, but you always seem to have such a good time doing it.*

PZ: Being involved here makes you stay on top of your profession, because it doesn't take long for students to see that you're blowing wind. They spot right away whether you know what you're talking about or you don't. From that standpoint, it's a great advantage because your practice actually improves as a result of it. From the other standpoint, the students know that they're speaking and interacting with people who understand what the world of architecture is about. I had an office, let's see, for thirty years. I also had many students from here that worked for me as interns. And did I harvest big financial benefits from having them work there, likely not. But was there a mutual level of learning? Yes. To be a teacher and a mentor, that's where I thought the value was.

JL: *Are you concerned that this sensibility has less value in today's profession?*

PZ: Yeah, I think if IDP can be made to work, that would be a wonderful thing. But I fear that there's going to be a lot of very quiet resistance to it for economic or business reasons, and I don't know what the answer to that will be. Everybody may talk the big talk but not necessarily walk the big walk.

JL: *It needs the support of the firms and the practitioners.*

PZ: I think it's a different mindset. You've got to get the idea. Maybe it's obvious to me because this is how my mindset has been all my life. That is, that we as practitioners, as professionals owe something to the people who will follow us, to help them, to make sure that they become the best possible representatives of our profession. It's not only about hiring drafters. I think the whole architectural industry has to change that mind set and accept that we must extend our knowledge and extend our abilities and extend our concepts and all the other things that are involved in the world of architecture to the young people coming up. It's something that we owe to our profession because, I don't know about you, but having had the opportunity to be an architect and to do the things I've done is just an absolutely marvelous thing in my life. I think also, as Louis Kahn said, "There is no such thing as Architecture, rather it's the *service to architecture* that we profess."

JL: *That's a very nice thought.*

PZ: Maybe there's something to that.

As of this writing, the College of San Mateo is not seeking to fill the full time faculty positions left by the passing of William Whifler or by the recent retirement of Paul Zimmerman, and the continued existence of a Department of Architecture at CSM is uncertain.

Thanks to Paul Zimmerman
and Paolo Lucchesi



PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION AT COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO
MAY CONTACT JOHN LUCCHESI AT 650.340.1107 OR AT john@matthewsarchitects.com



Green Building Award

SSMC, in partnership with the San Mateo County Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and County of San Mateo RecycleWorks Green Building Program, is offering a special award this year to the owner, architect and developer of the most sustainable building in San Mateo County. This award will honor the building or project that efficiently uses green building materials with efficient structures and equipment that reduce energy use and pollution. For more information and selection criteria, contact the AIA chapter at (650) 348-5133 or e-mail John Evans at evanshmb@pacbell.net or visit www.RecycleWorks.org.

For this 1st Green Award we have decided to encourage as many applications as possible. Because it is the first year the building can be of any age, but must be a completed project and located within San Mateo County. Three levels of awards. Everyone who submits get recognition, several honorable mentions and one most note worthy project.

- Request for nominations—Sept 15.
- Submittals for award due Nov. 1

If wish to have your firm represented in the Charrette Newsletter please contact Noemi Avram @ 659-579-0995.

Committee members who contribute to the newsletter will have the first opportunity to have their firm profiled. We are looking to have a full inventory of Chapter members work on file as part of our database.

We will post these on our website We are accepting committee members to help for the fall issue.

Please submit all inquires to
Noemi Avram :
noemi@gumbingeravram.com
August 15, 2002

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SUMMER 2002
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We invite our chapter members to submit examples of their work that reflects their style of detailing / sketching ideas for their projects. We will scan images.

AIA SMC
PO BOX 5386
SAN MATEO, CA 94402
650.348.5133
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650.348.5133
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