What has the AIA Done for Me Lately?

Dale Nelson, AIA, President of AIA Montana

Ever hear of the old adage you get out what you put in? If a person just puts in the yearly $400-500 dues, and does nothing else with the AIA, except put AIA after your name, then yes, it does seem pretty pricy to pay $200 per letter, and two of the letters are the same to boot!

I will be the first to admit that when I was a recent graduate and licensed architect, I did not see the value of paying my hard earned dollars to belong to some "club" of architects. After all, I'm an Architect! Why do I need to talk to or associate with other architects who are my mortal enemies?!

I did not have the advantage of belonging to the Student Chapter of the AIA at my University, through my own fault or not, I did not know that such a beast existed. When I see the advantage that the students at MSU get today, by belonging to the AIA, in the form of scholarships, camaraderie, and support in their chosen profession, I am envious that I didn't have that. The thing that I find the most rewarding that the AIA has done for me is to have been on the Scholarship Committee, that interviewed the students who applied for AIA scholarships, and to actually change someone's life a little bit for the better, by awarding a scholarship to them.

Montana is only a short time away from requiring continuing education for licensed architects, and that will be another advantage for those who belong to the AIA, as it is already for people licensed in states that require continuing education to maintain licensure. It is very convenient to log on to the AIA website and print a transcript and attach it to the renewal form.

State, regional, and national conventions are another great recourse that the AIA offers. Being in a profession where the majority of the firms in our region are small (one or two people) firms, these venues are a great place to see what the rest of our industry is doing and to meet allies, if only to go drink a cool beverage with a couple of times a year!

ENGAGE. CONNECT. SUCCEED. For more information and details regarding the benefits of membership, visit: http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/aia/documents/pdf/aiab093541.pdf
A client approached our firm with the dream to design a new lap pool for his private residence on Whitefish Lake, just north of the ski town of Whitefish, Montana. His intent was to create a new outbuilding for this pool, perched precariously upon a steep slope high above the water. The program was unveiled as a unique combination of elements: 1) 75’ single lane Lap Pool; 2) Japanese Tub / Spa; 3) Changing / Shower Area; 4) Exercise Room; 5) Fine Art Gallery; 6) Storage; and 7) Mechanical.

In terms of the building character, the client desired traditional forms to blend with the other buildings on the site, but with contemporary components to provide contrasting accents to special areas within the building. Together, we envisioned a small collection of buildings sited randomly along the hillside, nesting themselves into the contours where appropriate, but also boldly contrasting the grades by extending portions of the building out over the steep slope in locations of surprise and delight. The Lap Pool, it was decided, would be the showcase element that would contradict the site's natural contours, manifested in a long glassy extrusion that floats out and over the hillside.

The approach to the building begins well down the hillside, providing a compact yet pleasingly lush, lit landscape pathway. This path accesses the glazed front entry area, which greets newcomers with a panoramic view out toward Whitefish Lake, framed by the Lap Pool and the Art Gallery buildings. From here, access can be gained to the Art Gallery to the left (sealed from the humid atmosphere of the pools by a monumental pivot door) or the Lap Pool to the right, where one is greeted by an informal seating area and fireplace (note: At the time of photography, the furniture had not yet been put in place). Further movement within the space allowed access to the Tub and Changing Area, or the Exercise Room upstairs. Returning to the Entry Area, access can be gained by a flight of stairs downward to the lower level storage room below the Art Gallery, as well as to a lower level 'back door' entry.

Materially, the building's exterior is a simple earth-toned plaster, cedar trim, and prefinished metal. On the interior, the majority of the walls are plaster, with wood accents where appropriate. The flooring is largely slate, quarried in Montana. The windows are wood interior, clad in aluminum on the exterior.

While the client was not interested in pursuing LEED for the project, the building does have sustainable mechanical systems in place: The primary HVAC systems are water source heat pumps that utilize the water of nearby Whitefish Lake as their source of heat addition and heat rejection. Waste energy recovered from dehumidification is used for pool and interior space heating. Radiant floor heating is incorporated throughout the facility. A direct-digital controls system was provided for automated control and monitoring of the HVAC systems and management of HVAC energy consumption.

The building envelope design consists of high performance Low-E insulating glazing units with wood or thermally broken aluminum framing systems. The glazing was selected to maximize natural daylighting. Motorized shades were provided for solar control and to reduce heat transmission.

The flat roof portions of the building are designed as green roofs, and double as outdoor living spaces in the summer months.
**MERIT AWARD: Great Falls ‘Orange Crush’ Office Building**

**Project Description:** Constructed in 1917, ‘The Orange Crush’ building served its initial purpose as a three-story warehouse, typical for the time period it was built, utilizing bonded masonry exterior walls interlaced with heavy timber framing. Consecutive decades brought about new tenants using the building for its singular purpose, leading to gradual wear-and-tear on the structure and inevitable neglect. Despite the glaring challenges associated with renovating the ailing building, the client saw value in resurrecting the structure to a new era with a renewed purpose.

Having outgrown their previous office, the client set forth with the intent to provide for a versatile, yet comprehensive office space for multiple tenants. The design encompassed a renovation primarily focused on the exterior of the structure and the main two floors of the building, all while preserving its historical nature.

Starting with the existing (yet failing) foundation comprised of cut-stone, the choice was made to completely encase it in concrete to preserve its integrity. The basement would be utilized primarily for storage, while the third floor would be set up as a lease opportunity for up to 5,000 square feet. The floors were re-framed where necessary to accommodate an ADA accessible elevator at the main lobby and two new stairwells. The pre-existing freight elevator shaft, no longer in use as an elevator, transformed into the footprint for a spiral staircase that transcends three stories, while dually providing for an ascending library. Concerning the interior finishes, all the existing paint in the building was removed and the original masonry face and wood joists have been restored to their original condition. The roof has been completely redone along with the installation of solar ducts.

Though reconstruction would be challenging, the benefit to the company and city would be potent. As an heirloom to Great Falls, these buildings of the boom era are of value to both the fabric of the city and its history. By breathing new life and attitude into this oft neglected structure, we can breathe new energy into the downtown and the community.

**Project Location:**
Great Falls, Montana

**Lead Architect:**
Anthony Houtz, AIA

**Architecture Team:**
Martin Byrnes
Gary Morris
Cory Jassen
Allen Meadors
Brad Gilchrist

**Firm:**
CTA Group
219 2nd Avenue South
Great Falls, MT 59405
anthonyh@ctagroup.com
The clients, one of whom is a working visual artist, are serious art collectors and former gallery owners. They wanted a small, energy-efficient home that engaged the landscape and embraced the rural setting. In addition to the basic requirements of a two-bedroom house, they wanted a separate guest house/studio, outdoor rooms, pool and barbeque area. The site is in the Santa Ynez Valley in California. With a Mediterranean climate, it is hot and dry in the summer and fall, with warm to cold winters; noticeable cooling occurs at night throughout the year. At times strong western breezes prevail.

Notched into a small bench on a steep hillside, the house was conceived of as a device to connect to the landscape; openings frame views near and far and blur the distinction between indoor and outdoor rooms. Exterior shading combined with the thin building sections and generous openings keep the house cool despite extreme summer temperatures. Combined with site walls and trellis structures, the landscaping – composed of drought tolerant natives – further defines the outdoor rooms and makes a gradual transition into the natural landscape.

To review these and past AIA Montana Award recipients, visit: www.aia-mt.org.
Project Description: Montana Cycling and Ski is a new bicycle and ski retail building that strives to appear professional, yet provide a casual environment for customers shopping for new recreational equipment. It was a goal of the owner to develop a gathering spot for organized or informal groups departing on cycling rides. Outdoor areas adjacent to the store and at the south end of the site provide gathering spaces and seating to encourage this use. The site is located at the crossroads of several local bike paths and departure points for locally popular rides and was a deciding factor in site selection by the owner and architect over an earlier identified central business district location. In building a new structure on an outlying site, the owner felt it critical to create a sustainable building that showcased it’s green features as a key element of the business’ culture.

Program Requirements: The program was based on developing a retail bicycle sales building with simple sustainable finishes and systems. The building needed to be sustainable to dovetail with the owner’s energy and cost saving philosophy, and cycling consumer choices to minimize individual impact on the planet. Energy modeling was used to determine what materials and systems would be implemented related to efficiency and payback periods of various strategies. Programmatic site goals included orienting the building for proper passive solar gains and shading, and creating a protected gathering space and customer entry.

Sustainability Goals: The Montana Cycling and Ski building was designed from the start with the goal of developing a sustainable building employing energy conserving practices, materials and systems and making the building a statement of the company philosophy on sustainability. A driving goal of the building was to create the best insulative envelope with proper site orientation to minimize requirements for extensive mechanical systems. Another goal was to develop an envelope and systems that conserved, but paid back on the investment well within the life of the material or equipment. The method used to achieve this goal was implementation of energy modeling and cost benefit analysis. Energy modeling was used to determine systems such as furnaces, heat recovery ventilators, a SIP panel envelope system, roof insulation construction method, glazing systems, sun shades, operable window quantities and perforated window shades. Employing thermal mass in exposed interior concrete floor slabs was a goal to minimize internal differential temperature in a climate that can see 80 degree swings. Selection of and exclusion of interior finishes worked toward the goal of minimizing the amount of finish materials used to create the building that called for fewer resources and allowed for expenditures on a better insulative envelope, more efficient mechanical systems, and implementation of exterior sun shades. A final goal of the business was to allow the building to be educational regarding systems, envelope and building finishes employed in the construction of the building. This is achieved by a handout pamphlet available to visiting customers and posted signage in the building that describes some of the visible sustainable elements.

Design Solutions: The design solution for Montana Cycling and Ski implements a straightforward building form that is informed by site forces and distribution of building program that locates functions in specific areas as needed while keeping the retail sales floor flexible for seasonal changes and future alteration without having to remodel the building. Many display fixtures were designed as part of the project and have casters to allow relocation and changeable new configurations. Use of exposed concrete floors and roof structure as finish materials reinforces the straightforward form with unadorned interior finishes in a majority of areas. Natural daylighting and views to the exterior reduce the need for electric lighting and create a pleasing interior environment for a customer base of outdoor-oriented people.
**Project Description:** The Dell Silicon Valley Research and Development Center is Dell’s splash into the Bay Area. Traditionally a computer hardware company with a commodity approach to their products, Dell strategically acquired innovative start-up software companies in Silicon Valley to expand the reach of their solutions for customers. The Research and Development Center consolidates three different acquisitions of these software engineering companies into an existing three-story, 84,000 square foot building in Santa Clara, California.

**Program Requirements:** Unlike the trendy funkiness of the Google and Facebook campuses, it is important that Dell’s introduction to Silicon Valley leave an impression of a global company that is sound and established, yet innovative, sophisticated, and professional with contemporary aesthetics so Dell can compete for top talent. Each of the three acquisition groups occupies one floor of the building. This natural separation helps to maintain the group’s identity and autonomy as their unique cultures are assimilated into Dell’s. Each floor accommodates approximately 80 personal work stations, a data center and lab work area tailored to the group’s needs, conference spaces, and office support spaces. The building lobby serves as reception and security functions for all floors. Software engineers love to snack and play video games! Each floor has a central space for gaming, snacking, collaboration, and “all hands” meetings.

Dell has a traditional culture of super-efficient work environments that maximize their floor area. It is not ironic that the 1999 movie “Office Space” was filmed in Austin, Texas. The center of the cubicle farm universe is in Round Rock, Texas, at Dell’s main campus, just outside Austin. The Silicon Valley work culture, in contrast, is an extension of life. Life can happen anywhere, and therefore work can also. This value manifests itself in work spaces that are open, friendly, bright, innovative, and connected to nature. Balancing the contradiction between these competing cultures was a key challenge for the design team.

“Collaboration leads to innovation” applies to software engineers just as it does for many other creative pursuits. Because work can happen anywhere, the flexibility to collaborate needs to be accommodated everywhere. The cubicle, re-named “personal desk system” to help break the Round Rock stigma, presented a unique challenge to creating a collaborative work environment. The Dell standard is 8’x8’ cubes with 5’ high walls which don’t foster collaboration. Admittedly, software engineers like the idea of squirreling away into their own private holes. Therefore, another challenge for the design team was to fashion the magic cubicle. Personal work spaces need to be acoustically and visually private, yet open for collaboration with a visual connection to others. They need to have the flexibility to be personalized, yet standardized to meet Dell facilities requirements.
AIA Welcomes New Graduates!

Mary Klette, Associate AIA Director

AIA is welcoming new graduates to the profession with a complimentary Associate membership. This is a great way for AIAS members to continue their participation and a chance for those who are not currently AIA members to get involved. To be eligible, one must have graduated with a professional degree in architecture from an accredited school, and provide a copy of their transcript along with their application.

Membership features all the benefits of Associate AIA members, including a subscription to ARCHITECT magazine, the official magazine of the AIA. The 18 month duration begins upon the date of graduation, so those interested should sign up early to get the most out of this promotion. As noted on the application, this only applies to the AIA National dues of $106.00. AIA Montana dues and potentially other local chapter dues are not included in the waiver. AIA Montana dues are $25.00 per calendar year, and are pro-rated accordingly. Local dues may vary.

I highly encourage those who are eligible to take advantage of this opportunity and pass on the information to others who might be interested. Applying is easy – just visit the following link: http://www.aia.org/about/memberservices/AIAS077102?dvid=&recspec=AIAS077102

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions at mary@nelsonarchitects.com.

MT Board of Architects & Landscape Architects Update

Dale Nelson, AIA, President & Board Member of MT Board of Architects & Landscape Architects

The State of Montana Board of Architects and Landscape Architects is proposing continuing education requirements for all licensed architects and landscape architects. The Board is currently in the process of identifying the requirements of other states and comparing them to the AIA’s requirements with hope of making all continuing education requirements similar on a national level. It appears that the AIA’s requirements are the most stringent at this time, with most states at approximately 12-24 hours of continuing education units (CEU’s). The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) has compiled documentation of the more than 40 states that now require CEU’s, and these requirements range from 8 in Texas to 50 in Puerto Rico.

The State Board is considering modeling Montana’s requirements after the AIA or NCARB requirements so there will be some consistency in the number of hours and the material content required. In my opinion, there is quite a bit of merit in having similar requirements, as well as having a national clearinghouse of sorts to track hours. Perhaps the AIA should better position itself to be a tool that architects use to track their various state licenses, as well as continuing education hours.

The Landscape Architects may choose to wait until the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (CLARB) sets their standards for CEU’s before they adopt CEU’s for Montana.

“I highly encourage those who are eligible to take advantage of this opportunity and pass on the information to others who might be interested.”

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The AIA Mission Statement:
The American Institute of Architects is the voice of the architecture profession dedicated to serving its members, advancing their values and improving the quality of the built environment. Through a culture of innovation, the American Institute of Architects empowers its members and inspires creation of a better built environment.

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Montana Chapter of the American Institute of Architects was founded on June 4, 1921.

From the AIA Montana Office

It has been a great year for AIA Montana. Membership is up. Several members have reported up ticks in the economy and guarded hope for more projects as 2013 gets underway. Over the last few weeks, AIA Montana has been able to post job openings – something that has not been happening for many months.

AIA Montana has again contracted with Jennifer James for lobbying services during the 2013 Legislative Session. Bill Grant with Richard Shanahan and the AIA Board members and any AIA Montana members that wish to be included will act as the Montana AIA State Government Network Committee. If you are interested in being included in these emails, please let me know. We are happy for the extra help – these sessions move very quickly.

The 4th issue of the Montana Architect Magazine is schedule for distribution in the next few days – keep a look for your issue.

Thank you for the continued pleasure of serving you as your Executive Secretary. AIA Montana is a diverse, resilient and forward thinking group that is a great joy to serve. The AIA Montana Office will be closed from December 24 till January 1.

I wish each and everyone of you, your families, and your firms a Merry Christmas & Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Connie Dempster
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Link for All States License Lookup

http://www.engineersguideusa.com/architect_license_lookup.htm
This site has links to every states’ licensed architect ‘look-up.’
A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL THE VENDORS AT THE 2012 FALL CONFERENCE!

These are the vendors that contributed to the success of the AIA Montana Annual Fall Conference
— Remember to give them a big THANK YOU when you are planning your next project!

Metropolitan Hardwoods / Evoke Flooring
www.evokeflooring.com

Cold Spring Granite Company
www.coldspringgranite.com

Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
www.m-m.net

Otis Elevator Company
www.otis.com

USGBC Montana Chapter
www.usgbcmt.org

Integrity Sales / American Lighting
www.americanlighting.com

Decra Roofing Systems, Inc.
www.decsa.com

PacifiCAD, Inc.
www.pacificad.com

Montana Plans Exchanges
www.montanabid.com

Tyco Thermal Controls
www.tycothermal.com

Lutron Electronics Co., Inc.
www.lutron.com

High Prairie Marketing / Sarnafil & Hunter Panels
jhovdenes@yahoo.com

Forzley Sales
www.forzleysales.com

Axmen
www.axmen.com

Georgia Pacific Gypsum, LC
www.gpgypsum.com

Minot Builders Supply
jbartram@minotbuilderssupply.com

Malisani, Inc.
www.malisaniinc.com

Sierra Pacific Windows
www.sierrapacificwindows.com

LP Smart Siding
www.lpcorp.com/smartside/

Daltile
don.dewit@daltile.com

Metal Sales Manufacturing Corp.
www.metalssales.us.com

Valley Glass
www.valleymountain.com

Thompson Tile & Stone
www.thompsonstonework.com

Dundas Interiors
www.dundasinterior.com

Ingersoll Rand
www.schlage.com

Tri-Jack Design Products Co.
www.trijack.com

NorthWestern Energy
www.northwesternenergy.com

Rocky Mountain Steel Foundations
www.rockymtnsteel.com

BSI: EPS Roofing, SIPS, RIGID INSULATION & GEOFORM
www.bigskycontrol.com

Big Sky Acoustics, LLC
www.bigskyacoustics.com

Simpson Strong-Tie
www.strongtie.com

DATE SAVER!

2013 AIA Montana Annual Fall Conference
September 12-14, 2013
Montana State University