Everyone likes a good party, but AIA Buffalo/WNY knows that continuing education credits are a high priority for architects. For several years, our Chapter has provided comprehensive CEU options. Sometimes these programs are self-produced, meaning that the Chapter conceives of the topic and manages the credits. Other times we partner with vendors, other AIA Chapters, or like-minded organizations in order to make programs and credits available. In 2015, we made 22 continuing education units available – and 2016 is shaping up to be just as good.

The 2016 calendar tentatively includes learning events focused on AIA Fellowship and cloud computing services. We are also planning to tour the renovated Hayes Hall on UB’s South Campus and the new building at 250 Delaware Avenue. Rounding out the winter season, the AIA is partnering with Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) of Buffalo and the Construction Exchange to host the owner/architect/contractor symposium known as Build Up Buffalo.

Great things are on the horizon for 2016! Feel free to make a suggestion about a topic you’d like to learn about, or a building you’d like to visit by emailing our Programs Committee Chair at: trider@trautmanassociates.com.

Hoping to see you at our 2016 programs!
Allied Memberships

It must be the New Year because everybody is sending out reminders that it’s time to think about memberships and annual fees! The AIA Buffalo/WNY chapter for several years now has maintained some varied membership options. Of course all our Architect members will get a reminder directly from AIA National about their renewal, if they haven’t already! We have several other membership classifications that fall under the general label of Allied Membership. These memberships are specifically for non-AIA affiliated individuals or companies who have a direct interest in the profession and are provided directly by the local Chapter. Last year the AIA Buffalo/WNY Chapter purposely chose not to seek renewal fees because we were in the midst of reconfiguring and rebuilding our Allied Membership program. This was done because we were attempting to make sure we had a worthwhile product for our industry members. We think we have that product now, so over the next month all our past & present Allied Members will receive a much more detailed package with a number of Allied Membership options. We, of course, would love for all our industry partners to maintain a relationship with the chapter, but for those who decide to opt-out, the end of February is the magic cutoff date. Only those individuals and organizations who have signed up will receive notification of Continuing Education programming and the numerous chapter special events as of March 1st. We will be hosting a number of new events this coming year that will be excellent opportunities to meet and chat with members of both the local architecture profession and the wider design and construction industry. Thank you for your past support of the chapter. We look forward to hosting you at as many of our events in the coming year as we can.

Mike Anderson, AIA. President-Elect

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Design Awards + The power of an idea
Kenneth S. MacKay, AIA

It was an honor to MC the Annual Awards Ceremony last month. I hope that I conveyed a sense of my belief of how important these awards are to the chapter and the profession. In my introduction I restated the selection preprocess that the Chapter has chosen to follow: Each year the projects submitted to the Design Awards are sent out to outsider reviewers to be judged impartially. What is meant by ‘peer chapters’ is chapters with similar numbers of members located in cities of similar size as Buffalo/WNY. The intent of this process is to ensure that submitted projects are judged fairly by architects who are familiar with similar local conditions and circumstances.

This year the awards were judged by members of the Austin, Texas Chapter of the AIA. They did an exceptional job and should be commended. How architects define their peers says a great deal about their aspirations. In my closing comments at the Awards Gala I mentioned a recent exhibit in Chicago that focused on the work of young architects in Dublin, Ireland. Having directed a summer abroad program in Ireland for the past ten years I am familiar with the recent history of the profession in Dublin. The generation of architects currently exhibited in Chicago has benefited from the work of two previous generations regarding the establishment of the cultural milieu in which they work.

Those who know Dublin from only a short stay often see the Reconstruction of the Temple Bar section as the exemplary turning point for Dublin architecture. The ‘definitive’ book on the reconstruction, Temple Bar- the Power of an Idea, was published in 1996 to coincide with the completion of Phase 1 of the development. It was written five years after Group 91 Architects won the Temple Bar Framework Plan competition and were awarded the commission of making new public spaces and surrounding buildings as proposed in their competition. The book, much like a contemporary monograph, includes a series of invited essays, which (also like many monographs) read as part history/ part myth building. It is no coincidence that David MacKay (no relationship to me) of the Barcelona firm of Martorell, Bohigas and MacKay wrote one of the most compelling essays in this book. As architects and urban planners, Martorell, Bohigas and MacKay had made a significant impact on the reconstruction of Barcelona leading up to the 1992 Olympics. One might say that they were the intellectual and inspirational mentors of the architects of Temple Bar. What took place in Dublin would not have taken place without the example previously set in Barcelona.

When I see the interesting projects being designed by architects in Buffalo today I often wish to ask them the source of inspiration. As we launch this most recent incarnation of the AIA Buffalo/WNY Newsletter, it would be great if we could use it as vehicle for an extended discussion of the power of inspirational ideas. I would be interested in hearing from you regarding the architects and who have inspired your work. Feel free to drop me a line at macka@buffalo.edu.
2016 SCHOLARSHIP OPENS
And meet our 2015 recipients
Yadira D. DeSantis, Associate AIA

AIA Buffalo/WNY is pleased to announce that applications for the third annual AIA Buffalo/WNY Scholarship will be available February 2016. The scholarship supports local architecture students from within the chapter region as they embark on the path to licensure through their pursuit of a professional architecture degree.

The AIA Buffalo/WNY Chapter in partnership with the Buffalo Architecture Foundation will dispense up to $5,000 in scholarship funds for 2016. Amounts awarded will depend on quantity and quality of applicants and will be applied to the 2016/2017 Academic Year. The AIA Buffalo/WNY Scholarship is financed by chapter programming such as the AIA Golf Outing and a grant from AIA National. The program is open to students who have completed at least one year of undergraduate course work and are enrolled in an eligible school.

In 2015, twelve (12) applications were received for the scholarship. The winners again exceeded all expectations and demonstrated a strong commitment and passion for architecture, shown by their dedication to their studies. The scholarship committee awarded three (3) worthy candidates – 1 award of $2,000, and 2 awards of $1,000. Winners were notified by mail and honored at multiple AIA Buffalo/WNY functions and in recent publications. Our 2015 recipients, pictured from left to right, were Olivia Arcara of Amherst NY, who attends SUNY at Buffalo, Alexis Richbart of Lockport, who attends Pratt Institute, and Austin Tylec, of North Tonawanda who attends SUNY at Buffalo.

To apply for the 2016 Scholarship or for more information, please visit http://www.aiabuffalowny.org/scholarship
Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please send any scholarship questions to info@aiabuffalowny.org

IN OTHER NEWS...

The 2015 Holiday Party was a hit!
Keep your eyes open for more events and gatherings in 2016.

To read an interview with local architect Paul McDonnell, winner of the AIA NYS Excelsior Award, click HERE
Written by Nicolas Isaacs, AIANYS Director of Communications

STAY TUNED – WINTER GOLF IS COMING!
BECOMING AN ARCHITECT

Michael LaValley, AIA, LEED AP

Even as I write this, the idea that I have crossed the finish line and emerged as an Architect is surreal to say the least.

As a kid, it was simple. I could gather small, colored blocks together and create fantastic sculptures, cars, and buildings. I may have considered myself so at the time, but I was not an Architect.

Years later, my professional journey became more arduous and real. Like most high school juniors, I searched for an educational program that would lead me into a successful college experience. After careful consideration, I knew that the architecture program at Syracuse University was the right choice for me. I felt prepared and ready to begin my university adventure, but I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

No one can explain to you what the experience of studio will be like. My first days were particularly intense. These moments are intentionally crafted to separate students from the program that aren’t cut out for its rigorous and taxing workload - the initial rite of passage.

We were asked to complete a single task - create a perfect 6" cube out of museum board. Then we were even given three days to complete it. You could tell right from that moment who was going to make it and who was not.

At the end of three days, we had our first critique. It was brutal to say the least. Several of my friends were even brought to tears.

‘Work on your craft!' 'What is this?' 'You all have to start over!'

Rather than deter my confidence, that first critique stirred a fire in me and left a lasting impression on my life.

Beyond school, some graduates jump straight into their exams, eager to complete their licensure as soon as possible. My own trajectory was a bit different. Upon graduating, I was given several opportunities to gain experience in other areas of my career and my exams were essentially put on hold. In retrospect, these opportunities (becoming an associate director for AIA Buffalo/WNY, achieving status as a LEED Accredited Professional, entering several design competitions, and participating in the Buffalo Architecture Foundations' Arch + Ed program) helped me prepare for the exam in ways that aren't necessarily tangible or direct. They are, however, responsible for actively developing my professional relationships, experiences, and character - highlights I personally hold as invaluable to my career. They are the pieces that form who I am today.

At some point though, I knew I had to make my exams a priority. In late 2013, I started my first exam. Thirty-two testing hours and 7 exams later, I completed my final exam section in September 2015, made my dreams into reality, and became a registered architect.  

Being an architect is not something I take lightly. Not long ago, I received my registration certificate from the State of New York in the mail. As I held it in my hands, I was filled with both an intense sense of gratification and a profound commitment of responsibility to the culture that I now serve.

In every sense of the word, ‘architecture’ is a profession and its architects exist, in part, to protect the welfare of those who enjoy the comforts of the built environment. In many respects, architects are the keepers of this constructed world, the advocates of our culture - recording our time in history for the next generation.

I still have my old museum board cube. It’s slightly dusty and a little worn around the edges, but I keep it as a reminder where I came from and what I have achieved.

I am an Architect.

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Michael is an Architect in Buffalo, NY. He is currently acting Secretary of the AIA Buffalo/WNY Chapter. He has helped emerging professionals and seasoned veterans alike develop their skills, pass the Architect Registration Exam, and evolve their careers. You can find more of his work on his architecture blog, www.evolvingarchitect.com.