

## Money...Food...Fame...Sex...Architecture...



Architects, like all humankind, are driven in some measure by passions great and small. When our passions align with projects, we are able to transcend the limitations of staffing, schedule, and budget – to one degree or another – and make the impossible happen. A personal example – my own work on Sacramento’s Globe Mill, or the Hotel Stockton in downtown Stockton – both city block sized historic adaptive reuses of staggering complexity. Even I am incredulous at times that with so many millions of dollars at stake, and the endless stream of brain damage issues over the course of years that I was intrepid enough to take on these adventures with so few resources ... if I had looked down, while on the tightrope, I might have gotten intimidated – but being the passionate and driven sort, I pushed ahead against the odds and the result is a legacy project which will be a source of pride for all my days. In this effort, the efficiency of me, and my tiny staff of three, was as near to 100% as I think humans are capable. My effectiveness though? In retrospect – that was at least a couple of notches lower.

Given my predilections in the area of passion, you won’t be surprised to hear that my term as AIACV president has stoked a ‘fire in my belly’. Juggling ongoing business, family and friends ... at times I’m about breathless with the challenges and incredible opportunities the AIACV presently faces. While we are in fact nearing 900 in membership, the truth is that the majority of members are ‘absentees’ who pay their dues and never engage. Of the 1100 or so bulletins we electronically distribute, only about 300 are opened, and the biggest read is on the order of 50. Our roster of active “committees” has dwindled to just a few. My most pressing question for this year: **“How can we Activate the Membership”**. With activation will come action, and strength, and an increasing role for us in promoting and defending the role of architects in shaping the future of our region. The present toolset that traditionally has been in place does not seem to be effective anymore. Who among us is not stretched thin, and as a result winces when the words ‘committee’ or ‘committee meeting’ come up. Our organization is not alone in facing this trend, as chronicled by Robert Putnam's book BOWLING ALONE.

After considerable thought, and brainstorming with EXEC committee members Bruce Monighan and Matthew Shigahara and the rest of the board and our Ed and staff, a picture of a different approach to the structure of member involvement is emerging. At the top, are three focus areas identified on our January Board retreat. Each of these is assigned for broad overview to a member of the executive committee for liason and coordination. Where we have groups that will interact with government or the public,



board involvement is especially critical, as our reputation is our highest value as an organization. Polls show that the public has high recognition, respect, and trust in those people who use the initials AIA – and in fact many members of the public think AIA

literally means ‘architect’. As an organization, our reputation is our most treasured asset, and this was reinforced by my recent participation in grass roots in Washington DC (see photo article in this bulletin).

In each focus area would fall **Working Groups** (aka committees – which meet on some regular schedule, and have goals and objectives), and **Interest groups** (which are loose associations of members who share a common interest in a topic or practice area)

The outline as it is emerging is looking something like this:

**Connection** – this is the biggie – as it embraces connection between members, between the AIACV and the public, government and the community at large.

Working groups will include

**Communications** – the big picture of how we interact with the members and stakeholders Jack Paddon has just agreed to lead this and put a team together. One interesting task in addition to coordinating all the working groups under this heading will be to look more closely at the possibility of a semi- annual print magazine by the AIACV (an idea which has already garnered some initial interest from two of our publisher members/partners.)

**Exhibits** (for our new gallery space) this group is up and running, led by Steve Jones who is very familiar with the gallery scene

**Second Saturday** programs – which will be targeted directly at public participation – a new group yet to be formed; Jennifer has put some great ideas together in outline form to get the ball rolling.

**Events** Our Master of this area of course is Kim Anderson ... and I’ve loved working with her on everything from the Murder Mystery to the free Kegger Party ... but I suspect there are others who might want in on the action ... as this is where for most members the rubber hits the road.

**Government relations** and advocacy – which will be spearheaded by a Government Relations Officer. Bruce Starkweather AIA has agreed to take this on – and he is at most every meeting of consequence, which corresponds to my personal mantra – “if you’re not in the room, you’re not in the deal’.

**Interest group coordinator: this role is open** – and would involve keeping an up to date list of the interest groups and contact information on the web. The groups themselves will be varied and perhaps numerous; examples might include

Architect’s spirit (which will be led by our own indefatigable Saxon Sigerson), Codes, Fellows, Historic preservation (all open) ... and practice areas interest groups such as education, health, environment



(COTE is a robust and active ongoing committee led by Brian Sehnert), There are others of course including Academy for Health, a women in architecture group, emerging professionals, Beep, IDP, IPD, BIM ... as you can tell this list gets long quite quickly. Interest groups are envisioned as being flexible – some structured, but most being loose associations of people who share a common interest and keep abreast of developments in the topic area by whatever means they choose (which could range from traditional regular meetings, to email/chat/beer or wine gatherings, etc. If interest groups are open and flexible, taken together they represent the depth and breadth of the knowledge, experience, and passions of our diverse membership, and a great opportunity for YOU (yes you!) to put a stake in the sand and gather kindred spirits around you. Send an email with any interests ... and keep an eye on the web for this area to coalesce over the next few months.

***Design Review Task Force*** – a kickoff meeting of this group will occur Wednesday March 12<sup>th</sup> at noon at the chapter office. It's core mission: to assist local governments in their struggle to 'regulate design' without stifling creativity, innovation, and diversity. For more, see the bulletin notice.

## The second broad area is **Policy/Operation**

This is the core of our organizations' conducting business in a sound and efficient manner. The working groups under this heading include

***Bylaws*** A team led by Carl Lubawy AIA and Don Comstock FAIA is crafting the first comprehensive new bylaws for the AIACV in some 40 years. Initial discussion indicate the new bylaws will be a broad and general framework to allow flexibility and creativity in the future.

***Policies*** Another group, which will be spearheaded by Bruce Monighan, is going to start to put in written form the board adopted policies that guide our day to day operation and implementation of our mission and strategy. Rather than starting each year with a relatively blank slate, a good collection of board policies will allow new boards to focus in on specific areas, with a solid foundation already in place for most chapter business and activity.

A new concept is the creating of a ***Leadership Council***. The idea is simple – EVERY former and present AIACV board member is automatically a member of this council, which would meet once a year in October or November in a social setting and brainstorm – from where have we come, where are we going, what are the opportunities, constraints and challenges we will together face. The chair of the council would present a summary to the new board in December after the elections. This group is open and unformed at present.

The final area is **Grow/Sustain**. No organization can remain stagnant for long. We must choose to either shrink, or grow – and we are definitely targeting the latter. Working groups in this arena include

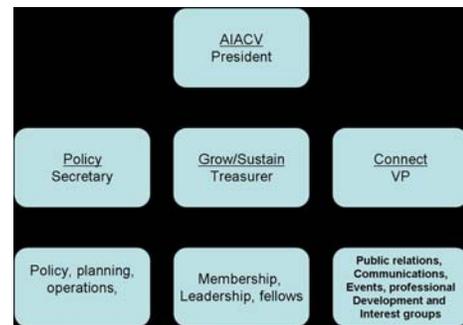
**Membership** A working committee headed by Ed Mojica AIA is developing some innovative and exciting programs that will increase our energy by bringing new members and interest to the AIACV along with activation and benefits to existing members. Watch for an announcement of the first program soon, which I think will create quite a buzz.

**Events reporter** Based on the high ‘click count’ of the photo piece I did on some of the year’s initial events, it would be great to have a small cadre of folks that attend events to take pictures and put nifty articles in our publications on the fun happenings and the people who make them fun ...

Interest groups in this area will include fellows ... and .... well you get the idea ...

Whew ... what an armful. As you can see, there is still a lot of ‘fleshing out’ to do, and loose ends to wrap up. There are many opportunities here for member activation of course, and this undertaking is large enough to be still a work in progress during the entire course of the year. Don’t be surprised if a board member calls on you to play some role in this emerging landscape of the AIACV activated membership. Somewhere in this rich matrix, there

is a recharge for your own interests, a connection to kindred spirits, or current information that may help with a particular issue at hand – a network of working members, each facing their own challenges and by sharing even snippets of time and energy, finding resources to make their own journey easier and more enjoyable. Or ... perhaps just a fun group with which to have a beer or glass of wine! Join us!



For a powerpoint outline of this evolving framework (Thanks Matthew Shigahara!) see this link: [www.boldone.com/aiacv](http://www.boldone.com/aiacv) ... and please send your comments, thoughts, suggestions, and interest. And Now ... let me turn to another passion on that list ... Hey – now THAT’S not what I meant ... it’s dinner time ...



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