

# BUILDING SCENE

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THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1992

## BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES

### Block promoted

Jon Block has been named assistant manager of the facility management of team of Ellis/Naneyert/Gensheimer Associates, Troy. An architect, Block has 16 years of experience in space analysis, project planning, design, construction and facility management. He is also the 1992 chairman of Meadow Brook Hall's Concours d'Elegance, the classic car show/benefit for the historic home.



Jon Block

### Leading builders

Builder magazine, the National Association of Home Builders publication, has determined the top five builders in the Detroit area, based on 1991 figures. They are: Pulte Homes Corp. of West Bloomfield with 375 building permits taken; Crosswinds Community of West Bloomfield with 250 single-family closings; Classic Construction of West Bloomfield with 175 single-family closings; Holtzmann & Silverman Cos., Farmington Hills, with 147 closings; and the Selective Group, Farmington Hills, with 130 closings.

### Watson a catalyst

Doug Watson, executive vice president of Wade Trim/Associates received the 1992 Catalyst Award from the Consulting Engineers Council of Michigan for his leadership in developing a 10-week management training program with Lawrence Technological University, Southfield.



Doug Watson

The program covers human resource development, financial management, quality control, conflict management in project environment and creative leadership development.

### Magazine rating

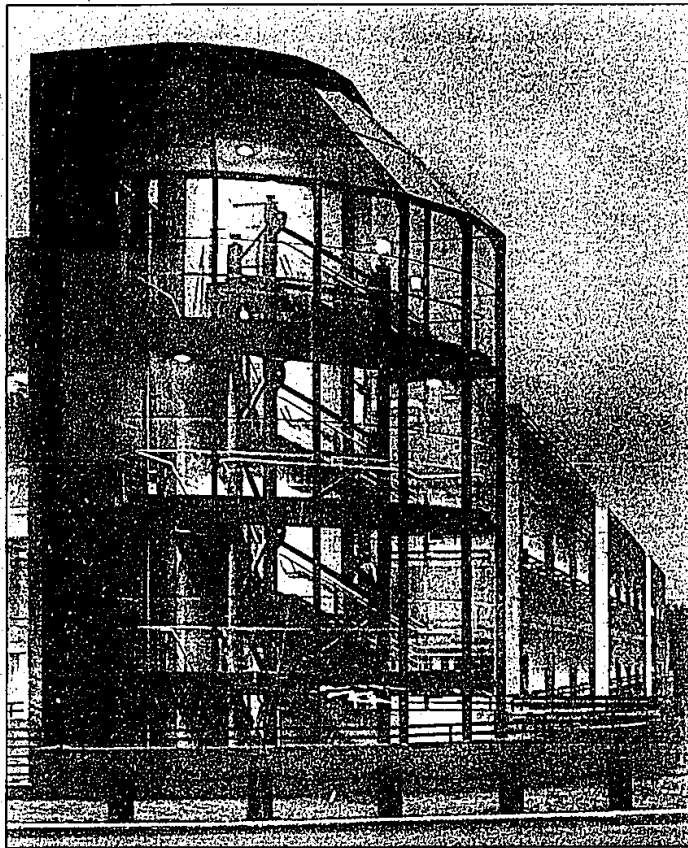
Remodeling magazine has named Newmyer Inc. of Walled Lake a top remodeling company by including it in the publication's BIG 50 list for 1992. The listing is intended to note companies who set the standard for "professionalism and integrity" through their expertise in marketing, business management, design or community impact.

### Alberici open house

J.S. Alberici Construction Co. is celebrating the acquisition and opening of its office at 13040 Merriam, Livonia.

### 2nd phase for Citation

Citation Club, a Bertak/Fisher development, has begun building phase two of its apartment complex at the northeast corner of 13 Mile and Haggerty. Units are available starting at \$709.



CHUCK LARK

Parking with honors: The Chester Street parking structure in Birmingham earned the architecture firm of Luckenbach, Ziegelman and Partners an honor award from the AIA Detroit.

## Architects toasted, roasted at Cranbrook

Architects honored their own Saturday at Cranbrook and listened to speaker Brendan Gill chastise the profession for pandering to pedestrian tastes.

By DALE NORTHRUP  
SPECIAL WRITER

What could be a better setting for an architectural awards ceremony than Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills? This educational community originally gave rise to such design luminaries as the Saarinen family: Eliel, Eero, and Loja; Charles and Ray Eames; Florence Knoll; and Harry Weese, all of whom

were responsible for shaping the built environment with which we are familiar today. Their creative enterprise continues to serve as a source of inspiration for the designers of tomorrow.

Eliel Saarinen once said, "Always design a thing by considering it in its next larger context — a chair in a room, a room in a house, a house in an environment, environment in a city plan." So it

only seems appropriate that the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects should continue Saarinen's edict for good design with an awards presentation at Cranbrook on Saturday.

The event dovetailed with the 60th anniversary of the founding of Cranbrook by Detroit newspaper publisher George G. Booth. Birmingham architect Robert Ziegelman, president of AIA Detroit, acknowledged that the primary objective of the awards is to focus public attention on the value of excellence in architecture, which is the most pub-

lic of all art forms. Rather than handing out awards in a private ceremony as in past years, AIA Detroit this year invited students and educators to participate.

And the winners are:

The 25-year award for the Beckwith residence in Franklin by William Kessler and Associates (formerly Meathe, Kessler and Associates); honor awards to Luckenbach Ziegelman and Partners for the Chester Street parking structure in Birmingham; and to Victor Szukl and Associates for the Merrill Park Town-

See ARCHITECTURE, 2G

## Basements: knock on wood

By GERALD FRAWLEY  
STAFF WRITER

Houses are made of wood, and basements are poured concrete and concrete block — that's just the way it is in Michigan.

Well, sometimes. In recent years, Michigan builders have been experimenting with different types of construction materials, and now a Farmington Hills builder is offering permanent wood foundations.

"That's right, wood. You know, the stuff that rots, gets eaten by bugs and generally falls apart. Michigan weather would eat it up and spit it out like a wad of bubble gum on a little league baseball diamond.

Wrong. Joseph Blustic, president of B. J. Enterprises in Farmington Hills, is building a house with a permanent wood foundation outside of Ann Arbor. Blustic said he doesn't normally build wood foundation houses — in fact, this is the first — and he isn't certain the demand for them will grow in coming years.

A permanent wood foundation is a load-bearing, lumber-framed wall framed with 2-X-6s or 2-X-8s that's sheathed with plywood. It sits on a concrete footing or a bed of gravel or crushed stone. It is constructed much like the standard stud wall.

But there are differences, the most significant being the need to resist backfill and exterior water pressure. For that reason, proper fastening and blocking techniques are critical.

Wood foundations are also specially treated — wood treated for use as an outdoor deck is not suitable for a wood foundation.

There are some advantages to homes with wood foundation, he said.

"For one, it's dryer," he said. Anyone who has every been in a home with a poured cement or concrete block basement can easily attest to the fact that there is a certain amount of moisture in the air, he said.

A wood foundation is also warmer and insulated, he added.

The real plus for homeowners, he said, is the ease of finishing — both on the interior, and in the case of a walkout basement, on the exterior walls.

Installing drywall, paneling or other wall coverings is a fairly straightforward job and can be done by the homeowner. "A hammer, some nails, and that's about it."

Installing over concrete walls or cement blocks requires drilling and anchoring and is much more difficult, he said.

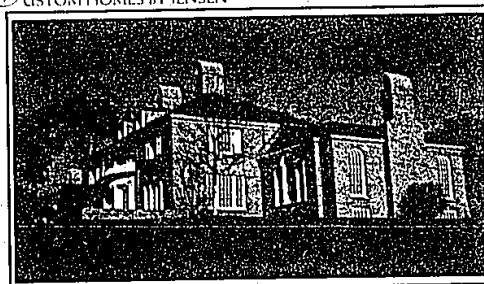
Blustic said in addition to the home he is currently building, a second client is considering a wood foundation. "People do ask about it, but we don't suggest it on a regular basis."

The drawback to the wood foundation, he said, is it's more difficult for the builder to install and is slightly more costly — at least it was for the first basement he built.

Blustic said with experience, the cost of installing a wood foundation would probably fall. Assuming lumber prices remain comparable to concrete prices, the two would cost about the same.

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## Custom Homes by Jensen



The Jensen Group



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