

Cranbrook hosts Saarinen reunion

The name "Saarinen" conjures up countless images for today's architects, planners, designers and historians. To learn more about the inner workings of the Saarinen architectural studio, Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills is hosting Aug. 11-13 a reunion of former employees, design associates and students who comprised the Saarinens' architectural practice in the United States.

The Saarinen reunion offers former Saarinen associates an opportunity to reminisce and share memories of their roles in the Saarinen legacy, while at the same time providing valuable archival information about one of the most influential architectural practices of its time.

This reunion also offers architectural historians, art historians and the curatorial staff of Cranbrook the chance to learn about the philosophy, working conditions and atmosphere of the Saarinen era from the people who actually helped shape it. Proceedings of the conference will be recorded.

The Saarinens' practice was known throughout the years as Saarinen and Swanson (father Eliel with his son-in-law, J. Robert Swanson); Saarinen, Swanson and Saarinen (with the addition of Eliel's son, Eero); Saarinen and Saarinen and finally Saarinen Associ-

ates. It was characterized by a creative process that included the input of clients, staff engineers, draftsmen, craftsmen, model makers, engineers and principals.

Beyond a handful of exhibitions that have highlighted the architects' work, little attention has been given to a comprehensive assessment of the studio's position in 20th century architecture.

The weekend will begin with attendees reacquainting themselves with former colleagues and friends at a welcoming reception the evening of Friday, Aug. 11. Saturday, Aug. 12, reunion attendees will be involved in round table discussions designed to explore various projects, time frames and working relationships of the Saarinen era. The weekend closes with a farewell brunch Sunday, Aug. 13.

The Saarinen family — Eliel, wife Loja, daughter Eva-Liisa and Eero — were an active and talented group of individuals. In 1925, the elder Saarinen, already an accomplished architect in his native Finland, was hired by George Booth, a Detroit businessman and owner of The Evening News, to build Cranbrook, an educational community dedicated to excellence in the arts, education and science.

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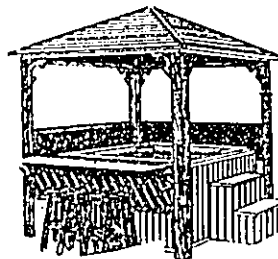
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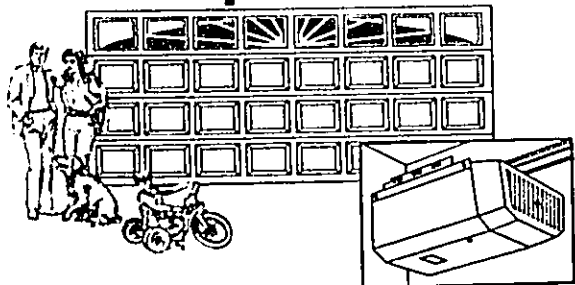
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