

BUILDING SCENE

F

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1992

BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES

AIA names officers

Gary Skog of Bloomfield Hills has been named president of AIA Detroit, a chapter of the American Institute of Architects. President and principal at Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates, he served on the board of directors for AIA Detroit as vice president/president designate for 1991-92 and as secretary for 1990-91. Skog has been active in the chapter's design awards program and has served on the program committee for the annual convention.



Gary Skog

Carl D. Roehling of Birmingham has been nominated vice president/president designate. He is director of the commercial division of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates and a member of the board of directors. He also is treasurer of the Michigan Architectural Foundation and served as chairman for the Design and Construction Expo '92. Roehling is a member of the AIA national committee on the environment and has served as president, vice president, treasurer and secretary for AIA Michigan.



Carl Roehling

Larry Horning of Birmingham has been nominated to continue serving a two-year term as secretary. He is in marketing and sales at Computerized Facility Integration and served on committees for AIA Michigan Design Conference and Design & Construction Expo '92.

Paul A. Stachowiak of Birmingham has been nominated to continue serving a two-year term as treasurer. He is president of Giffels Hoyem Basso and has served as AIA Detroit as secretary and house tour chairman.

Mark Mardrosian, an associate with Albert Kohn Associates and Roger P. Snyder, president of Roger Snyder Architects, were nominated as chapter directors. Anne Bernardini of Birmingham continues to serve her three-year term. She is senior project designer at Harley Ellington Pierce Yee.

Serving terms as AIA Michigan directors are Graham Dickens, Daniel Redstone of West Bloomfield, Benedetto Tiseo and Robert L. Ziegelman of Birmingham, along with Arthur Smith who continues to serve his term.

Dickens is an associate at Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates; Redstone is president of Redstone Architects; Tiseo is president of Tiseo & Associates and Tiseo Interior Architects; Ziegelman is principal and chairman of Luckenbach/Ziegelman and Partners. Smith is president of Arthur F. Smith Architects.

Heather M. Perry-Mills, AIA intern, has been nominated to a one-year term as the new director. She is a graduate architect at Smith, Hinchman & Grylls Associates.

Kmart buys Sheffield

Kmart Corp. has bought 3270 W. Big Beaver Road, a 103,000-square-foot office building in the Sheffield Office Park, a four-building office complex in Troy, and is occupying 50,000 square feet of the building.

The Prudential Realty Group acquired Sheffield in May and has started a renovation program for the lobby and common areas of 3270 W. Big Beaver and will continue upgrading buildings and facilities.

Levin speaks at ESD

The future of construction infrastructure under the Clinton administration will be Sen. Carl Levin's topic when he addresses the ESD Construction Activities Committee luncheon beginning at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 12 at the Rackham Memorial Building in Detroit.

Tickets are \$25 for ESD members and \$25 for non-members. For reservations, call 995-4440.

The committee was established to foster improvements in the construction industry and is comprised of members representing a balanced cross-section of the industry, including design professionals, owners/users, contractors, suppliers and support services.

Residential construction

Construction of residential units in Oakland County dipped in October but rose slightly in Wayne County, according to the Michigan Association of Home Builders.

Housing starts dropped 5 percent in Oakland for the month, from 676 in September to 647. But year-to-date figures show a 1.1 percent gain in number of units and a 5.9 percent increase in value.

Wayne County posted a 4.2-percent gain in housing starts in October with 423 units compared to 406 in September. Year-to-date figures show Wayne housing up 14.9 percent and values up 17.3 percent.

Landscape convention

The Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association will hold its sixth annual convention and trade show March 17 and 18 at the Novi Expo Center. Management programs, technical seminars, classroom instruction and pesticide application recertification preparation and testing will be conducted.

The exhibit area will include booths for oversized equipment, nursery stock, irrigation and other green industry products and services. For information call 646-4992.



Tropical setting: Planterra's landscaping of the Midland Mall earned it a merit award in interior landscape installation in the 23rd Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program sponsored by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

Plantastic

A new approach to curbing pollution

Interior designers are taking a little advice from Mother Nature to not only beautify building interiors but also to cut down on indoor air pollution.

By R.J. KING
SPECIAL WRITER

Larry Pliska, founder and president of Planterra Tropical Greenhouses in West Bloomfield, says he has a solution to indoor air pollution posed by potentially harmful gases and chemical compounds: common and tropical plants.

Pliska's statements are backed by a recent report by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which determined plants can remove significant amounts of radon, formaldehyde, benzene and other pollutants from individual rooms in homes and offices over 24-hour periods.

"I'm not saying plants are the absolute cure-all for filtering out indoor air pollution, but they are the most efficient, effective and affordable solution we have," said Pliska, whose firm has received numerous interior landscape awards since its founding in 1973.

Most recently, Planterra received a merit award in interior landscape installation in the 23rd Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program sponsored by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, one of the industry's leading trade groups. In the past, Planterra has been honored for interior plant design at Detroit's Renaissance Center and the Galleria Office Centre in Southfield.

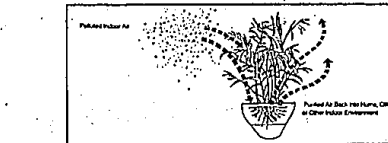
The latest award, landscaping the interior of Midland Mall in Midland included placement of 42 25-foot palm trees.

"We grow everything in our greenhouses and acclimate them to light levels in office buildings and homes," said Pliska, a Franklin Village resident.

"We have close to 1,000 plants, including 100-year-old cactuses and 10-foot-wide stack-horn ferns. Plants are an integral part of everyday living. They provide oxygen while complementing the architecture of a room. And there are a number of flowering plants which can help enliven a lobby or foyer, especially when certain colors are highlighted."

Airtight pollution

Following a tour of Pliska's five greenhouses, complete with such decorative touches as driftwood and small Buddha statues, Pliska leads the way back to his office, where on cedar walls hang Native American artifacts and framed photos of interior landscape designs.



Outsided in: Planterra turned the tables on Mother Nature by planting adaptable greenery at Galleria Office Centre in Southfield.

rior landscape designs.

"During the energy crisis, we began to tighten up homes and offices to conserve heat and cold air, but at the same time we allowed pollutants to build up in rooms, where they were more likely to leak out before," said Pliska, whose firm had revenues of \$2 million last year.

"According to NASA studies, and

others, something like a White Bird of Paradise or Hawaiian Ming Aralia will reduce the level of pollutants in a room to very low levels. People just seem to be healthier when there are plants around."

The polluting culprits are pervasive foam insulation, paints, carpets, furniture, adhesives, and other building materials. Even such in-

"I'm not saying plants are the absolute cure-all for filtering out indoor air pollution, but they are the most efficient, effective and affordable solution we have."

Larry Pliska
founder and president

nocuous items as felt-tip pens emit trace amounts of chemicals, many of which are carcinogens. At the same time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has warned that indoor air pollution constitutes as serious a health risk as outdoor pollution, causing perhaps thousands of cancer deaths or other illnesses each year.

Solutions in space

The search for solutions to indoor pollution began in space. After discovering synthetic materials used in Skylab emitted more than 100 chemicals, NASA began searching for ways to purify the air in confined space stations. Inspired by the use of plants, such as peace lilies, golden pothos and mother-in-law's tongues, NASA researchers turned to what gardeners and plant enthusiasts have long suspected — pollution absorption depends on a complex relationship between a plant's leaves, roots and micro-organisms in the soil.

"Man's existence on earth depends upon a life-support system involving an intricate relationship with plants and their associated organisms," the report concluded. "If man is to move into closed environments, on Earth or in space, he must take along nature's life-support system."

While the space agency's research continues, as scientists try to isolate the mechanisms of pollution absorption, Pliska has been building up his plant business, which includes more than 900 clients, 90 percent of which are commercial accounts, the rest residential.

Commercial clients include the Somerset Collection in Troy, the Arborium Building in Farmington Hills and the Kodak Building in Birmingham. Prices for plants range from \$95 to \$350, depending on size, selection and variety. Pliska and Planterra's 50 employees take into consideration several factors in selecting and placing indoor plants, including air and traffic flow and available light sources.

Once plants are in place, maintenance technicians will water, prune and fertilize on a weekly basis. Most maintenance fees start at \$50 per month, though prices do vary.