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## November 2006 Archives

NOVEMBER 2, 2006

### Should We Be Bilingual?

Or, is it time to pass on "Archispeak?"

This week, Grace Kim, AIA, the "doer" in our [Doer's Profile](#), says that for architects, "so much of what we do is listen to the stories of our clients and reinterpret them into physical form." Are we adding extra grief to this complex process when we make "Archispeak" our language of choice?

I'm not talking about "Archibabble," that pseudo-intellectual bs that wanna-be superstars (and, okay, architecture writers sometimes) shovel about. I think we could agree that Archibabble could go away and the world would keep spinning.

But what about "Archispeak," that fun and handy shorthand that architects all understand among themselves? Is fenestration really more than doors and windows? Means of egress really means more than how to get out of the building? Is it really shorthand or is it a secret handshake, designed to keep the cognoscenti in and everyone else out? Just asking.

It drives me bats when my business-oriented and -educated colleagues shorthand about "buckets" and "ops plans" and "the brand." How do clients like "parti" and "schematics" and "sustainability"?

The Small Projects Practitioners Forum is [collecting Archispeak terms](#) to prepare a glossary for translation to clients. Send your terms to them, or send us your comment here, we will forward it. And let us know what you think: Is Archispeak a necessary tool, or should it become a dead language?

Posted on November 2, 2006 12:00 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(16\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

NOVEMBER 10, 2006

### It's Time to Really Dig In and Pull

It has certainly been an interesting week of change. When the 110th U.S. Congress convenes this coming January, we will be seeing dozens of new elected legislators and their newly formed staffs on Capitol Hill. Without regard to political affiliation, rest assured that the AIA will have our own cadre of skilled, informed people at the ready, making appointments, and pressing the agenda of AIA public policy that your Board of Directors has set out to create a better built environment.

Does that mean it's time to take a break? Most definitely, no.

If you've ever pulled in a tug-of-war, you know that the effort isn't over when the center ribbon moves to one side or the other. It's over when you've moved the opposing team to your side. Now, I want to stress again that I'm not talking about ideology here. I am talking about public policy for the common good.

For instance, issues the AIA has been championing and for which movement forward looks promising at the federal legislative level include:

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- Sustainability—funding for alternative energy sources, more stringent caps on greenhouse gas emissions, and renewal and strengthening of the Clean Water Act, including to reduce storm-water runoff
- Health care—coverage that is affordable for small businesses
- Taxes—ensuring breaks for historic preservation, affordable housing, and energy-efficient building
- School construction and modernization—reinvigorating the drive for funding.

A perfect example of the coordinated efforts to move these topics ahead at the federal, state, and local levels is sustainability. The Mayor's Institute recently adopted its 2030 Challenge—inspired by the AIA 2006 National Convention pledge to make our buildings carbon-neutral by 2030. We are currently marshalling the [resources](#) to achieve that ambitious goal, as outlined in [AIArchitect](#).

Another Board objective is to support AIA members seeking state and local elected office. This is a difficult undertaking, but achievable, as the results of the 2006 elections make clear. A large part of that success can be attributed to AIA-member support for ArchiPAC and our state PACs.

Take encouragement that we are bringing the political debate to the AIA's side. And it will happen when everyone digs in and pulls as hard as we can; in unison.

What do you think?

Posted on November 10, 2006 12:00 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#) | [TrackBacks \(0\)](#)

NOVEMBER 15, 2006

## Is Diversity Something We Really Care About?

At the AIA 2004 National Convention in Chicago, delegates called for a study of AIA demographics. Thereby, the mission of the AIA Diversity Committee, which I chair this year, received a much-needed boost.

That mission:

- Expand the diversity of the design professions to mirror the society that we serve
- Promote awareness of the contributions of architects from under-represented racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability groups
- Encourage alternatives to traditional practice models
- Provide opportunities for an ever-greater variety of individuals to become architects, take advantage of leadership opportunities, and influence our practices and our professional lives.

So diversity means more than race and gender, it reaches to **all** manners of discrimination against our fellow professionals, including the long-held notion that if you don't act or look like one of us, you're not really an architect.

But do we really care as a profession (or as a nation)?

I wonder even as I read about the King Memorial groundbreaking, because I've seen some of the readership numbers on an AIArchitect series on diversity by Stephen Kliment, FAIA, which are very low despite the articles being very interesting; so much so that the Diversity Committee has opted to include them as Featured Articles on our AIA.org page.

I challenge you to read: "[What the Numbers Tell Us](#)," "[The Trailblazers](#)," and "[The Trailblazers: Six Profiles](#)" and not be enthralled. Try it and ...

Tell us what you think.

NOVEMBER 30, 2006

## Collective Commitment Through Individual Contribution

by *AIA Executive Vice President/CEO Chris McEntee*

Your AIA is architects working together for the good of the profession and the society it serves. That is the impetus behind the “[Covenant Between the AIA and Its Members](#),” which the Board approved in September. I applaud that bold move. By building from individual contributions, the AIA accomplishes things no single architect can accomplish alone.



Of course, this kind of synergy doesn't just happen. It requires common, transcendent goals—as we discussed in [my last blog](#)—and the forging of a strong good-faith partnership among members—today's topic.

Commitment to common goals benefits everyone. This was the chief reason 13 architects founded the AIA 150 years ago, and commitment to common goals is the reason the Institute is today vital and growing.

AIA members have been making this point for generations. At the 1938 AIA Convention, Francis P. Sullivan, FAIA (who had designed part of the Russell Senate Office Building) delivered a sentiment made famous years later in President Kennedy's inaugural address: “When [architects] ask the Institute what it has done for them, [they] are missing the whole point of the Institute's purpose,” Sullivan said. “The real question is: ‘What can you and what will you, through the Institute, do for the public good and the good of your profession?’”

What do you think?