



SKETCHES

Newsletter | March 2016

Greetings AIASMC Members!

This is the first quarterly newsletter I'm sending during this year of my presidency. Without clogging your inbox too much, each quarter I'll provide an update of what National is doing for us, pass along AIA Chapter info, and touch on WHAT DOES AIA DO FOR US? This letter will focus on updating you on what we learned at AIA Grassroots Leadership and Advocacy Conference in February.

I started writing this in the airport in Detroit waiting for my flight home after attending Grassroots. Each year, our Chapter sends the chapter President, Vice President, and René as our Executive Director to the conference. I went last year for the first time and came back very inspired from Washington DC. This year the Leadership portion was in Detroit and the Advocacy portion will be later in the year in DC. ***As I did last year, I'm returning from Grassroots feeling inspired and energized about what we do, about architecture, design, construction, and the practice of architecture— and more informed about the AIA — and I thank the Chapter for sending us to the conference.***



A few highlights:

Before the conference started, I had the chance to see Detroit with family friends that live there, which was really great especially since the weather cooperated! As a native Californian from the Bay Area, I was a little afraid of the potential of literally freezing in Michigan in late February. But when a

little snow did come, I was prepared and there was no frostbite or cancelled flights. My friends gave me a great tour and I saw historic buildings by Detroit Architect Albert Kahn; Lafayette Park, a residential



community in the city by Mies Van Der Rohe; Belle Isle, a state park on the Detroit River which has a beautiful old boat house being restored by the rowing team and others. I had dinner at the historic 1915 Detroit Athletic Club overlooking Comerica Park and Ford Field, the professional sports venues right downtown. My friends

also showed me many varied neighborhoods around the city and took me to Shinola, a hip Detroit retail business now also in Palo Alto and San Francisco. One of the highlights of my tour was the Heidelberg Project, an open-air art environment that consists of two blocks of painted houses and art on vacant lots using discarded items. It's been around for 30 years and there were lots of visitors the day I was there! Check out the website: <http://www.heidelberg.org/>



Once the Conference started, I soaked in a lot of information and enjoyed the time between sessions with people from chapters across the state and across the country. Some sessions were good “nuts and bolts” sessions with information about chapter boards & board meetings, sponsorship opportunities for chapters, etc. In this way, Grassroots and AIA National provides good support to the local chapters. René had the opportunity to meet with Executive Directors and attend session specific to his work for our chapter. There were also some great speakers. One speaker talked about working with the Planning Dept. and communities, and he spoke



of Charrettes similar to ones that our chapter has done in the past. The closing speaker was Jennifer Granholm, the former Governor of Michigan. She talked about the need for work on aging infrastructure systems and the huge opportunities for engineers and designers. She was compelling and, in fact, very, very moving to me as she highlighted the story of Flint, Michigan.



Robert Ivy, from AIA National, gave a report and noted that involvement in the AIA has increased and there are now

88,000 members, the highest since before 2008! He touched on some of the work of AIA National such as a Diversity Survey that will be used to move forward and increase diversity in our profession; the Knowledge Communities that are offered and how participation has had a big increase; the improved technology that they are using for website and registration (If you haven’t noticed, maybe that

means it’s working!). He talked about the issues they continue to Advocate for on behalf of the profession such as advocating against Sales tax for professional services; community service for Student Debt Relief; and maintaining tax Credits for Historic Preservation work; and from AIA CC at the state level, advocating against Sales tax for professional services.

Before I close, I want to note just a few great things that are going on in our Chapter. I’m always reminded that although we are a small chapter, we have a lot going on!

- **DESIGN AWARDS:** This year is a Design Awards year so keep that in mind as the year progresses.
- **SUMMER HOME TOUR:** We have a Home Tour on August 6th with AIA Santa Clara Valley so watch for info on that. We will need many volunteers to help that day – ***please consider helping us!***
- **CRAN:** CRAN, the Custom Residential Architecture Network, a Knowledge Community, is hosting the 2016 Symposium in September 18-22 in Santa Rosa. For more info contact us or check out: <http://network.aia.org/cran/home>
- **MENTORSHIP:** Lastly, I sat in on the Mentorship program in Menlo park last week and it looks so fun! Two of our members took this on and started by having a “Speed Dating” event to match up seasoned professionals and emerging professionals. Let us know if you are interested in being a mentor.

You can reach me or René Peraza, our Executive Director, to get connected to any of these activities at: mwilliams@hpsarch.com or rene@aia-smc.org

I look forward to seeing you at the next AIA SMC Chapter event!

Thanks,

Margaret Williams, AIA | President AIASMC

