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23 January 2025

AIA Michigan Newsletter #1
Mosaics and Margins

It is -15° F. with wind chill…Jeez it's cold…-5° if the wind decided not to show up…It is early morning…and…Snow is falling, well, more like drifting to the ground! I hate the cold…but, when snow joins in, the child in me breaks out. Those who know me would say that the child in me is always trying to break through. That may be true…but it seems appropriate at this point, because I am writing my first AIAMI newsletter and I am excited that this year has begun. I am excited for working with many of you that I know well…and those of you, I will get to know well…

I can hear our windchimes in the background. They are becoming the soundtrack of this newsletter.

I would first like to thank Todd Drouillard, AIA for his superb and steadfast leadership during what became transitional times. None of us could have expected the challenges that came to the forefront this past year…and Todd met them with the leadership we needed.

This is my fifth year on AIAMI's Board of Directors…and the spirit on the board has been consistently one of collaboration and community building. Thus, I do not begin the year with my own agenda…One that I created in isolation…instead, it is one that we have created and my hope is we will continue to nurture it together. Todd and I met regularly for the past two years. This ensured that we crafted and adapted a vision through what we heard from our members…It is not a vision based on one individual…This collaborative leadership followed the same spirit as set forth by our predecessors: Paul Haselhuhn, AIA, Cindy Pozolo, AIA, and Bob Hoida, AIA…and I look forward to working with Tom Reder, AIA, 2025 AIAMI Present-Elect.

Therefore, based on our collaborative work, I would like to suggest a theme for this year…Mosaics & Margins…This is based on a shared perspective of AIA Michigan, where variety is celebrated over singularity. We are a large state with a variety of markets, geographies, ways to practice, and architects to meet and serve them. Like a mosaic, where each ceramic or glass tile can have individual color, shape and identity, while still creating a bigger picture, we thrive when each of us retains our identity while still being a part of a larger community…our AIA Michigan Community! In other words, we are simultaneously a part of Alpena, Ann Arbor, Bay City, Calumet, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Harrisville, Iron Mountain, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette, Monroe, Newberry, Ossineke, Petoskey, Traverse City, etcetera…as well as, together we make AIA Michigan. We can be local and connected to the state at the same time. I have always been a part of AIA Michigan because I believe that we are

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stronger through both our differences and similarities…and because of this, we create a bigger picture of our state's architecture community.

Raise your hand if you love working on strategic plans. Raise your hands if you think most strategic plans sit on shelves inspiring very little action. Twenty years ago, I would have not raised my hand for the first question and would have raised it for the second. Because of my skepticism, I became interested in ways to make strategic planning integral to inspiring us to move forward…and…Believe it or not, 2025 marks the last year of AIAMI Strategic Plan. This means that we are in for a year of looking forward and thinking big…to prepare the 2026-2030 strategic framework. More on this in our next newsletter.

If you got this far into the newsletter…ha…then you are already an active and engaged AIA Michigan community member. However, AIA Michigan must engage and inspire those who see themselves in the margins and feel that we do not care about their issues…in other words…the people who did not read past the word: windchimes or deleted the email without reading anything.

With this in mind, please invite me…invite me…and…invite me again to anything that you would like me to attend anywhere in the state. I am available to come to any event, any chapter meeting...

I look forward to working with you this year and beyond…to getting to know you better…or…to meeting you for the first time!

Cheers!

Dan Pitera, FAIA, NOMA, Hon. FALA
23 January 2025 @ 6:00 am