Economic ups, downs, twists and turns are nothing new.

"This is my first recession experienced. I can tell you, I do not like it much."

"Make sure that you take advantage of all the resources that your university offers and don’t take for granted that fact that you are supposed to learn when you are in school. Too many people think they know everything, when really they know nothing."

"Believe it or not, now is a good time to do some Pro Bono type work and invest in the good will of the community. We are not the only people suffering right now."

"Yes, we have found more competition and from companies that are not in the same line of business as we are. We are a specialized firm doing rehabilitation and restoration. We have noticed more and more interior firms or firms specialized in hospitality competing against us."

"The realization that personal lives would be upset by lay-offs or other cut-backs was sobering."

"We have updated our marketing materials, reached out to new potential clients, looked at partnering for new types of projects, and improved our networking."
The Quarterly Newsletter of the Architects League of Northern New Jersey

March 19, The ALNNJ held a seminar on the topic of the value of integrating horticulture into the interior and exterior of our buildings. The presentation was by Christopher Raimondi of the Raimondi Horticultural Group, Inc., at the Ramapo School of Business designed by SNS Architects and Engineers.

April 13, We held our monthly meeting at the NJIT Design Showcase at the NJ School of Design where the speaker was Stephen Kieran a founding partner of KieranTimberlake.

Mr. Kieran is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Design, and Endowed Professor in Sustainability at the University of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Planning. KieranTimberlake believes in the design process as the first art. Great and wonderful architecture cannot be made without the clear vision and guidance of a provocative client working in critical union with the aspiring architect. We employ collective rather than singular intelligence in the making of architecture. Their process is holistic involving many layers of information and participants at one time. They believe the core acts of the Architect are the creative selection, organization, integration and articulation of systems about the issues, ideas, ideals and daily use of the inhabitant. Our art is the discovery of external and interior and articulation of systems about the context of site circumstance, that lead to a vision that is unique. It is the needs of the inhabitant, in the making of environmental challenges. When harnessed, knowledge drawn from multiple perspectives and diverse sources can be a potent ally in addressing the problems faced by our global community.

Our actions can no longer be localized as issues of environmental well-being and cultural relevance now extend beyond political borders. We have a responsibility to pave the way for future generations while we attend to the concerns of everyday enterprise.

We live in a world that is growing smaller, faster and more competitive with every moment. As national and political boundaries grow less relevant, the clash of cultures becomes more intense. The profession of architecture is in the midst of incredible change—from the people it serves, to the world’s major cultural centers and commercial institutions. He is the “Master Plan” Architect for the World Trade Center rebuilding project. Libeskind, one of the world’s most important living Architects and urban designers, also showed slides of his buildings described his Jewish inspirations and working processes. He also signed copies of his new book, Counterpoint.

May 9th, The Carl Kemm Loven House Tour with Glen Rock Historian Nancy Atkins Peck. The tour consisted of 9 of Mr. Loven’s Projects in Ridgewood & Glen Rock, including Mr. Loven’s own residence. Loven is most known for his picture-perfect cottages with quintessential Normandy features: the distinct turret that sits separate from the house, with its cone-shaped copper top, tall, narrow casement windows; and gabled dormers. Other details add to its charm: the multicolored slate roof, the original red brick exterior that age has made appear whitewashed, window flower boxes and brick and stucco chimneys.

May 28th, We held the well attended annual Tradeshow with Newark-Suburban Housing Foundation at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe. Some of the topics of interest included “Sustainable Trade Offs” presented by Bill Munoz and “Window Fenestration and the USGBC LEED Green Building Rating System” presented by Howard Hogan, and other programs which contributed to our much needed AIA LU’s, Sustainable LU’s, and HSW LU’s.

If you have any ideas for a program or special event, or would like to get involved with any committee please contact me.

Frank Cunha III, AIA
AIA-ALNNJ Past President 2009

“A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.”

~Francis Bacon, Essays, 1625

~Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist,” 1890

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing worth knowing can be taught.
Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly?

The possibility of running out of work and/or capital, spotlighted how quickly the balance of keeping talented employees (that take years to find and develop) profitably engaged could crumble. The realization that personal lives would be upset by lay-offs or other cut-backs was sobering.

Q. Knowing that this down turn was approaching, did you prepare for it?

We absolutely saw a lack of work coming by December 2007 while the press debated for six more months if a recession was coming. We adjusted our spending, reduced benefits and had to lay off some staff in January 2008, which was difficult, but allowed us to get through the year. Conversely, we are now seeing a marked increase in future prospects while the press continues to report old statistics. Knowing that architectural backlog is a leading economic indicator, we predict a pick-up in construction to follow in several months.

Q. How does this down turn compare to others you have experienced?

We have only laid off people once before during the downturn of 1993. This downturn is worse and has taken about 18 months to work through.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level?

The key is to develop complete trust with your clients by working at the highest levels of professionalism, and absolute integrity. Do what you say you will do when you say you will do it. That is harder to implement consistently than it sounds.

Q. Can you describe at least one positive element as a result of the current economic situation?

The current economic situation has reinforced the need to stay out of debt, to save for a rainy day, and to be diversified. We need to look beyond our careers and financial prosperity. Sometimes we need a downturn to serve as a wakeup call to make us realize our family lives and personal experiences are our true valued possessions.

Q. Do you feel more competition from other firms? If so, can you describe what you see happening?

Our geographical area has consistently maintained abundant high quality competition, hence the need to develop strong relationships with existing clients, referrals, and repeat business.

Q. What measures does your office take in slower periods to maintain staffing levels?

During this past slowdown we were forced to temporarily suspend overtime and matching contributions to the 401k plan, and to even cut hours for some, to preserve and distribute the work we have. The talented professionals that produce our product (design) are too valuable to lose after the investment we have made in professional development and training.

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

From our viewpoint, the recovery started two months ago. We have seen a marked increase in requests for proposals, some of which are a direct result of stimulus funding. Our backlog is trending upward for the first time in two years.
Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly?
The influx of inquiries and new projects slowed down during the winter months but it appears to be catching up again, hopefully. We are slow in comparison with other years but we have been able to hold. We are still maintaining our staff and compensations have not been affected so far.

Q. Knowing that this down turn was approaching, did you prepare for it?
We were more aggressive in our marketing efforts.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level?
Never stop learning and always be pro-active. Always be one step ahead.

Q. Do you feel more competition from other firms? If so, can you describe what you see happening?
Yes, we have found more competition and from companies that are not in the same line of business as we are. We are a specialized firm doing rehabilitation and restoration. We have noticed more and more interior firms or firms specialized in hospitality competing against us.

Q. Are you doing anything differently as you prepare to take your ARE exam?
N/A. However, I’m mentoring a few interns and they are accelerating the process in order to better compete in the current market.

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?
Don’t know. But I don’t think it would be soon.
Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly?

After the last few very busy years, it seems like a more normal pace to my work schedule has developed. Economic recession is never good but the craziness of my previous work schedule is not missed.

Q. Knowing that this downturn was approaching, did you prepare for it?

Yes, conserve cash, reduce overhead, minimize expenses.

Q. How does this downturn compare to others you have experienced?

You live long enough and you start to recognize the pattern of the business cycle. This downturn does not seem as bad as the ’91 to ’95.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level?

Believe it or not, now is a good time to do some Pro Bono type work and invest in the good will of the community. We are not the only people suffering right now.

Q. Can you describe at least one positive element as a result of the current economic situation?

The fluctuating business cycle is kind of like spring cleaning for the economy. In our industry, throw out methods that don’t work and focus on what does. Upgrade, streamline and do what you must to survive. Those who realize this quickly will have, and cause, less pain when this downturn concludes later this fall. I already see some signs of recovery.

Q. Do you feel more competition from other firms? If so, can you describe what you see happening?

There is more competition, but I don’t want every job, just the good ones. I encourage my clients to obtain fee quotes from as many firms as they want. I also caution them that there are varying levels of service and various different ways to calculate fees. Be clear and define your scope carefully. Clients are getting smarter about how they make their selection. The better the client understands your talent, your reasoning and how you charge, the more likely they will hire you.

Q. As a sole practitioner do you feel you are in a better or worse situation for survival than a larger firm? Why?

Economically with the downturn, much better as sole practitioner. I used to have 4 people working, when things get tough, tough decisions have to be made. That stressed me out more than anything. I don’t have to deal with that at this time, but who knows what the next downturn will teach me. In the future, will I learn from the past?

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

I already see signs of recovery, at least in this geographic area. Not everyone is having trouble getting loans from banks. Some of the people that call me actually say they were waiting for the downturn to start their project, since they thought construction will be cheaper. They are now saying it is not that cheaper but that it is just easier for them.

Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly?

The recession has also made me realize how vulnerable the architecture industry is and how hard it can be to get a job. Many of my classmates that graduated this year did not find employment in the architecture field or in any other field for that matter. One of my friends sent out 300 resumes, got 2 call backs, and no job.

Q. Knowing that this downturn was approaching, did you prepare for it?

I made sure that I had a position at the architectural firm I worked at for the last 2 years. Even though I worked at an architectural firm, I also took most of the money that I had saved up and placed it in an online banking system, instead of the traditional banks. I received better interest rates, even as the interest rates fell during the last year.

Q. How does this downturn compare to others you have experienced?

Since this is my first true economic recession, I have had to experience as a student/employee. I have had to deal with this situation every day.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level?

Make sure to gain as much experience you can and work on your craft.

Make sure that you take advantage of all the resources that your university offers and don’t take for granted that fact that you are supposed to learn when you are in school. Too many people think they know everything, when really they know nothing.

Q. Can you describe at least one positive element as a result of the current economic situation?

New Jersey, and for that matter the entire United States has relied on suburbanization growth and sprawl for too long. The recession in some ways has helped to reverse this cycle. Businesses, even though they are downsizing are consolidating into the cities or urban fabric they belong in. In the past 30 years too many suburban office parks have become the norm instead of downtown city centers. Government, commercial, and infrastructure consolidation must happen for the United States to sustain itself. There is no hierarchy of architectural order or the urban fabric within the United States; a sprawl residential complex can be next to a 8 story commercial building in the middle of farmland. Cities, even though they may be struggling at this moment must take this time to reinvent themselves and stop the further suburbanization of America. The recession has helped to stimulate this move back to the cities. New ways of living must be imagined.

Q. Can you describe the general feeling of other students at the school?

The feeling among students, I believe, is frustration and hopelessness. Graduating seniors cannot find full time jobs and in school students cannot find internships. However even though this may be the case a lot of people are able to take some much-needed time off. Many students are traveling around the US and to Europe, others are just taking it easy at home, and maybe working at the jobs they were at during high school, if they can get them. The only thing is that most are not making money, which for many is a difficult situation.

Q. Are you doing anything differently as you prepare to take your ARE exam?

I am taking the LEED 2.2 exam before it changes.

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

Hopefully by June 2010 when I expect to graduate, however I think to fully recover it may take at least another year and a half.

Member:

William J. Martin, RA, AIA, P.P., AICP
Sole Practitioner
WJM Architect

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Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

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Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly? 

Obviously, finances are biggest impact. Psychologically there are also many affects. My self image and self worth has always been derived from my career. We spend so much time and effort in our professional activities, to suddenly be at a lack of activity and income, it is difficult to focus on those activities to again derive income, let alone remain vital in the profession.

Prior to the collapse the company did take the opportunity to retool, train in things such as BIM and start a LEED group to get staff accredited. This was in anticipation of ‘Green’ technologies coming to the fore and readying for the new economy. I myself am now a LEED AP and with years of experience in sustainable design, thought I was already prepared for the new economy.

Q. How does this down turn compare to others you have experienced? 

In my experience, Architectural decline, as well as improvement tends to precipitate actual economic downturns or recovery. I do recall that for certain companies, whose market base was more varied, they tended to fare better in downturns. Generally, not all markets are affected at the same time. Back in October 1987, when the market took a big hit, there was not an immediate downturn in all markets. I was working in a pre-dominately residential firm at the time and yes, clientele immediately responded. Having suffered financial losses, many tabled many different types of residential projects. I was let go, however, I had opportunities to move to many different firms and had numerous offers to that effect. I chose to work in government sector anticipating more security there.

Today’s downturn is unusual in that it affected all markets; residential, commercial and even government markets are all affected. I am sure some companies in line with government contracts may be experiencing some stimulus with ‘shovel ready’ projects proceeding (not much help for design work) or funding provided on long dormant IDIQ’s, but that does not relieve others in the profession that are not aligned to derive those projects.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level? 

It is difficult to say. I know my personal circumstance is that I worked for a company with much less of a local presence and to compound that, was chartered out of state as a General Business, being employee owned and technically, not permitted to provide Architectural service here. The company obtained authorization for limited building design under engineering standards. Not to get into any specifics, the company also frowned upon moonlighting and had discovered I had an operating website before they had developed their own in the early nineties. I was instructed to remove the website and not to market myself while in their employ. I would have been fired although I would have never competed with my firm and personally felt I could have brought more work to the firm. This kept me out of the loop on developing more local contacts and communicating with people in the field, whether developers, builders etc. and pursuing any other work.

On the flip side, I was working with a fairly large size and growing firm and was developing many contacts in what was a growing field with steady work.

My advice is that our profession is one where communication is vital and maintaining associations with colleagues, other professionals, builders, developers, etc. will lead to more opportunities than otherwise separating yourself from those contacts.

Also, I would advise, that when opportunities present themselves from your developed contacts, that you take time to consider when to make a change and not fear the consequences of leaving what would seem to be a secure position. You owe it to yourself for your own personal growth to do that.

Q. Can you describe at least one positive element as a result of the current economic situation? 

Well, it is ‘green’ design that is going to save the economy, the earth and save our profession. At least that is what I keep on hearing. Back when I started my education, on the tail end of the seventies there was much going on in the field with Ed Manzera writing about passive solar energy design and the like. I recall incorporating all the basic sound good design practices, natural light and ventilation, proper siting considering terrain and local conditions and numerous others in student work than in actual practice. That is now going to change and responsible responsive design considering energy and the environment are going to become mandates. There has been too much poor design and development that have manifest from our past practices; I believe responsible design and better design will be more the norm. I think it is evident, and will be to potential clientele that the services provided by skilled Architects are vital for realizing responsible design in the built environment. Now, if we can get just compensation, would be nice.

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

The crystal ball says it is already happening with minor upticks in fee inquiries. As I said before, Architectural improvements generally precipitate economic recovery. I believe a lot is in process for those individuals fortunate enough to have government IDIQ’s. With more programs coming available to the private sector that may improve as well, although we are at the mercy of banking and financial institutions to loosen the flow of credit.

This is my first recession experienced. can tell you, I do not like it much.

Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level? 

I would recommend to do whatever you can to get more accreditations, LEED AP, Master’s Degree, Work experience. It is a really competitive business, and you need to make sure, you have just enough knowledge to get that job.

Q. Can you describe at least one positive element as a result of the current economic situation? 

I think, it is a perfect opportunity for people to invest in real estate and also in the stock market which is at it lowest level ever, but make sure you do your homework before investing in any company at all.

Q. Are you doing anything differently as you prepare to take your ARE exam?

I would rather wait a little longer before sitting for the ARE, especially now, that it has changed and fees have changed too. I think interns, need to get more experience and more exposure to site construction, so that taking the ARE would not be such a difficult test.

Q. When do you anticipate that the economy will improve?

It is hard to say, but I would think once the house market indicator begins to increase and optimism in people begin to increase, this is where I would think the economy will start improving.
**Leagueline 3Q 2009**

**The Quarterly Newsletter of the Architects League of Northern New Jersey**

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**Pella’s beautiful Mahogany, Alder, Douglas Fir and Pine windows and doors have the amazing ability to turn estimates into sales. That’s The Power Of Yellow.”**

**THE POWER OF PERSUASION.**

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**Student:**

**Maria Nosova**  NJIT

**Q. How have the current economic conditions affected you most profoundly?**

I just returned from a study abroad program and graduated. I will be receiving my diploma by the end of August. I am a bit worried about the job market. I am not sure if I have as much choice as I would have last year or the year before. I am currently working part time and figuring out a plan on what to do next. I think that the economic conditions affected all of us college graduates and made us more competitive than ever.

**Q. What advice would you give to others approaching your experience level?**

Paying attention and asking a lot of questions is always a good idea. Also I think that as an intern one should go for the job rather than the name. It is more important to get a good experience doing different things than being stuck in a print room at a known architect’s office. If one can combine both that is great, but it is just as important to pay good attention to what you going to do as an intern as it is to where you are going to work.

**Q. Can you describe the general feeling of other students at your school?**

As I just graduated and still have a job I am in much better condition than some other students or graduates.

**There are quite a few people that are having trouble finding a job and that is why we have to be more careful with the way we present ourselves and the choices we make.**

**Q. Are you doing anything differently as you prepare to take your ARE exam?**

I am working toward getting all of my IDP credits and slowly studying for the exam. The next step will be getting the preparation book and all the exact information on the exam and how, when and where to take it. My plan is to become a licensed architect before I move on with my studies. I feel that being just out of school my memory is fresh and it will be much easier to take the exam as soon as possible.

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**ALNNJ Student Scholarship Winners  (Second in a series of three)**

**Maria Nosova** of NJIT received the Clarence Tabor Memorial Scholarship Award.

Pictured above left... Urs P. Gauchat, Dean, College of Architecture and Design; Maria Nosova; Frank Cunha, III.  The 2008 NJIT School of Architecture Awards program was held at Weston Hall on Monday, September 22, 2008. The Architects League handed out 5 giant checks to three recipients of the 2008 scholarships and two 2007 recipients who qualified for a grant from AIA National's scholarship award match program.

**How did you become inspired to be an Architect?**

When I was a kid blocks was my favorite game. I always tried to make the tallest tower that could stand on its own. My grandfather is an architect in Russia, and I used to watch him working and to keep me busy he thought me how to draw windows, doors and elevators, so I was working with him. I was also always interested in math, physics and acting. Architecture combined everything I liked in something I liked even more.

**What are you most looking forward to once you graduate?**

I am looking forward to opening my own practice. I am going to set a goal to change people's perspective about architecture and about the way we live and make the world a better place to be.

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"The ‘Gold Standard’ of doing business has tarnished over the years but not with T.M. Brennan. It is the only standard that they do business! They have to be the best contractor in the state!"
Borough Administrator, Bloomingdale, NJ

"Project was extremely well managed and executed. It was one of the most efficient operations I’ve been involved with in the last ten years. I felt Brennan brought a new level of energy to the project. They did what they said they’d do, and on time and on budget."
South Orange and Maplewood School, NJ

"...one of the many things that impress me about T.M. Brennan is that they work through (issues) without stalling. I’d compare their capabilities to contractors...in the $200-300 million range."
Sowinski and Sullivan Architects

"T.M. Brennan is easy to work with...always looking for ways to produce the best product for the client."
Charles Schaffer Associates, Architects
ALNNJ members toured nine Norman Revival-style homes in Ridgewood and Glen Rock designed by Carl Kemm Loven, Architect and Past President of the ALNNJ. Loven designed many homes throughout Bergen County from the 1930s through his death in 1965. The photo is of his former residence in Glen Rock which he designed.

AIA Convention 2009

The 2009 AIA National Convention took place April 30 to May 2 in San Francisco Ca. This year’s theme was The Power of Diversity: Practice in a Complex World, which looked into how the industry is adapting to changes within the architecture profession. Next Year’s convention will be held in Miami, Florida from June 10 thru June 13, 2010.

Carl Loven Tour

May 9, 2009, Glen Rock, NJ

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A Conversation with Daniel Liebskind
May 5, 2009
Congregation Beth Shalom, Teaneck

The Congregation Beth Shalom in Teaneck contacted me to invite members of The Architects League to join the synagogue members in attending a “Conversation With Daniel Liebskind” on May 5th. The format was a Q & A with Sam Norich, editor of the Forward, Jewish magazine, and Daniel Liebskind, an Architect and son of holocaust survivors. After WW II, he and his parents lived in Poland, then Israel, and then they came as immigrants to America, due to a music scholarship Daniel had received. Liebskind is mainly known for the master plan of the redevelopment site for the proposed 911 replacement buildings. Daniel’s plan was for five new buildings grouped in a circle, in an ascending order of height. The first and tallest building proposed, the “Freedom Tower” was designed with a spire at the top, which Daniel likens to the torch of the Statue of Liberty welcoming immigrants to America. Daniel is committed to creating architecture which has a connection to Jewish history, such as the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Berlin. He reflected on his personal experiences, and explained that art and music inspires his architecture creatively. Many of our members attended, and several felt refreshed to hear an architect speak about his feelings and experiences rather than the nuts and bolts Architects are so use to hearing.  – Bobby Kaplan, AIA

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The ALNNJ 2009 4th quarter Leagueline will highlight our member’s work. This year we will for the third alternate year feature our professional work, personal or our firm’s. This year’s ending issue is a celebration:

**What We Do: 3 !**

What are you currently working on or do you have a favorite past project you would like to share with your colleagues? A high resolution jpeg image and a brief description are required to present your work in the annual COLOR issue. There will be an initial deadline to guarantee inclusion of July 31st. We ask that you email your entries directly to aiawork@sns-arch-eng.com

Thank you, Fay Logan, Editor L4Q

### Milestones

**Grace Marie Fitzgerald** born April 17th at 3:24 pm. 6 lbs. 13 oz., 19.5” long. Grace is doing Great! Mom (Jen) & Dad (John) are learning.

**Luke Manuel Pereiras** born March 9th at 6:33 pm. 6 lbs. 9.5 oz., 18” long. Mom, Dad (Manny) and Luke are doing great.

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### New Members

The Architects League is pleased to announce their newest members:

Greg Bastug, Talk of the Town

C.J. Ettelson, Kone Elevators

Joseph Hendershot, Associated Technology, Inc.

Jason R. Atkins, Assoc. AIA

Mukti Bajaj, Assoc. AIA

David C. Schwartz, AIA

Kone Elevators

**M I L E S T O N E S**

**ALNNJ 10th Annual Golf Outing**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in July**

**ALNNJ Hudson River Sail from Crotona Point to the Beacon Museum of Art**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in August**

**ALNNJ 11th Annual Golf Outing**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in September**

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### Calendar of Events.09

**SUMMER EVENTS**

More at www.alnn.org

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### Special Events

**ALNNJ**

**MoMA Young Architects Program 2009**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in July**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in August**

**ALNNJ No Membership Meeting in September**

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### Summer Recommendation

**MoMA**

**ALNNJ**

**ALNNJ**

**ALNNJ**

**ALNNJ**

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### Recommended

**Elegant dinner near the Rockefeller Estate.**

Blue Hill at Stone Barns opened the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, NY. Sourcing from the surrounding fields and pasture, as well as other local farms, Blue Hill at Stone Barns highlights the abundant resources of the Hudson Valley. www.bluehillfarm.com

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### What We do: 3!

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### Thank you

Thank you, Fay Logan, Editor L4Q
Leagueline
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