WALKING TOURS
with JOSEPH E. DAVID, AIA
Hello fellow League members, I hope that you have enjoyed the summer and are ready to jump into our fall activities. As I write to you, I have just attended the AIA-NJ Annual Meeting and I would like to take the opportunity to relate what is happening at that level. One of the most important activities there is the efforts to influence the laws and regulations that affect our profession by meeting with our state lawmakers. The efforts of our members have in recent years led to the passage of a “Good Samaritan” law, the decision not to add a service tax to Architect’s fees, and so far, the decision not to place undue restrictions on the use of light framing for buildings in our state. AIA-NJ recognizes the importance of this advocacy, and is planning to increase their efforts. I feel that our local component can also play a role in advocating for our profession at the local level. One example that comes to mind is to speak with local civic leaders about the role architects can play in helping their communities plan for resilience, environmental responsibility, safety, etc. I would suggest that we have a committee to pursue these interests. If you have an interest in taking part, please feel free to contact me.

We have had an eventful summer, starting with our June meeting at The Woman’s Club in Ridgewood. There, I had the pleasure of presenting our 2019 Scholarship Awards. Ralph Rosenberg and Anna Chang presented and led discussion of five videos about architects and their work. In July, members of the League participated in a multi-group networking barbeque at Reno’s Appliance in Paterson. Members were able to meet with builders, remodelers, interior designers, and kitchen and bath associates. Thanks to Reno’s for hosting this event, and hopefully we will attend in future years. Also in July, we held our 20th Annual Golf Classic at Crystal Springs Resort in Hamburg. As always, a great day, and thanks to Matt Fink for organizing this event. In September, our monthly meeting was held at the new ModernfoldStyles showroom in South Hackensack. There, Maggie Peters, from the NJ Economic Development Authority spoke about the current business climate and how it may affect development.

Coming up this Fall, we have some great programs scheduled, starting with the Tri-States Design Conference, “Breaking Ground” in Albany on October 17 – 19. Members from New Jersey will join with New York and Pennsylvania for educational opportunities and the Design Awards.

Our local October meeting will be held on the 24th at the Porcelanosa showroom in Paramus. There, designers from CentraRuddy Architecture will speak about their addition and renovations for the new Porcelanosa showroom in Manhattan. That project endured a four-year long struggle with the NYC historic preservation group. Also in October, Joe David will lead the fall Ted Kessler Tour on the 26th. This new tour will focus on Park Slope in Brooklyn. November will bring us our annual Arthur Davis Lecture, which will be held at the Sheraton Mahwah on the 21st. Malcolm Holzman, FAIA of Holzman Moss Bettnio will present. As always, this event is also our spouse’s night and the meeting at which we will vote on our board for 2020, so please attend. Also, please mark your calendars for the Installation Dinner, to be held on January 11, 2020 at Felina Restaurant in Ridgewood, a former bank that has been wonderfully transformed into an event venue. In addition to our own board, the 2020 board of AIA-NJ will join us, in honor of the incoming state president, the League’s own Steven Lazarus.

Todd M. Hause, AIA
ALNNJ President 2019

Grant recipients will be announced by AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey.

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Call for Applications

The Diane and Ben Lee Design Education Fund provides annual grants of up to $2,500 to schools, teachers, groups or individuals actively pursuing design curriculum in their school or educational entity that directly benefits New Jersey K-12 students.

Up to $2,500 in grants are to be awarded annually. This grant can be awarded to single submission or divided among multiple submissions, based on the discretion of the selection committee. Groups or individuals may apply. Grant awards will be made available to recipients in December 2019 and are intended for K-12 Design Programs that are scheduled for 2020.

Applicants must show how their program or proposal will directly benefit design education for New Jersey K-12 students.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative in their grant submissions. Include images, videos, multimedia files, etc. to explain your program or proposal.

Submissions will be reviewed by a selection committee appointed by AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey.

Finalists must make themselves available for an interview by the selection committee in late October or early November.

This fund is managed by AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey. American Institute of Architecture (AIA) components and sections are not eligible as organizations to apply for this grant.

Groups or individuals are not eligible to receive grants from the Diane and Ben Lee Design Education Fund in consecutive years.

Applications are due Monday October 21, 2019 at 5pm. All applications must be submitted electronically and applications can be edited up until the deadline. Start your application today at www.alnnj.org

Grant recipients will be announced by AIA Architects League of Northern New Jersey on Thursday November 21, 2019.

If you have any questions, please contact alnnj.applications@gmail.com
This year marks the thirteenth Ted Kessler Walking Tour, which means that if you managed to attend every one you would have walked well over fifty miles and earned 65 LUs. You also would have experienced the city in a way that you might not have expected—each tour is carefully planned to not only give you the best routes and best views of landmarks and neighborhoods, but also to include stories and stops that try to reframe the city in unexpected ways. My favorite part of planning these tours is finding a building or subject or architect and falling down a rabbit hole researching something I didn’t expect to. I am equally as excited about telling you all about the Chrysler Building as I am about telling you all about a small triangular plaque on the street that was a protest against eminent domain, or all about a city park civil engineer who had a buzzer installed in his coffin in case he was buried alive by mistake. Stories like these are a part of what makes the Architects League’s Ted Kessler Tours so unique and hopefully what makes them as fun to attend as they are to lead.

I am often asked a few of the same questions about the tours, so I think it makes some sense to use those questions to help give you a background of their history and future.

Q: How and why did these tours start?
In 2007, one time Architects League President Kevin Gore came up with the idea to honor one of our members (Ted Kessler) who had recently passed away. Ted used to lead walking tours for a middle school from Washington State that would visit New York every year on a class trip. Kevin’s idea was good but his plan for the tour was not especially well thought through. This led me to suggest that if we do a walking tour, we should think about it first and do it right, and this led directly towards me researching and leading the first tour in Fall 2007.

Q: How long does it take to research?
Longer than you think. Two months before the tour I am usually heavily researching and writing notes, although the handout often isn’t finished until a few days before we start.

Q: What sources do you use to research these tours?
It’s hard to beat the AIA Guide to New York for basic information, but most of the time they don’t go into too much depth. The Robert Stern New York 1900 series of books are also a solid resource to understand how the city progressed over time. Online, the NYC DOB has a BIS map that you can cross reference with the Metropolitan Archive, and there’s also a great map of landmark buildings and districts from the city. The New York Public Library is also a great resource for historic photos, and they even have a map that locates some photos by their nearest street corner.

Q: How do you pick a route?
I usually start in the spring thinking about what route might work for the next fall tour, or if a significant new building or park is scheduled to open that can anchor a tour. I will usually start on Google Street View to get a feel for what you can see, then spend a few weekends in the summer walking the neighborhood.

Q: How long are you going to keep doing this?
I had initially planned stopping after the first tour, then the fifth, then the tenth, but have kept going because there’s always been another area or neighborhood or building that I thought would be good to explore. I already have some ideas about the 2020 and 2021 tours, although nothing will be finalized until it gets closer.

Q: Which one is your favorite?
Each one is different so it’s really hard to compare them. That said, in 2015 I led a special version of the Lower Manhattan tour for the Spring Street International School on San Juan Island. It was a special request from Ted’s son Eric, whose daughter Addi would be on the school’s eighth grade trip.

This was the same school trip that Ted Kessler used to give tours to, and now I was leading a tour in Ted’s name for his granddaughter. It was a special moment for all of us and an overall great experience.
The sixth tour started at Grand Central Terminal just like the first tour, but this time we headed east to Tudor City, past the UN and right through Beekman Place before we took a ride on the cable car to Roosevelt Island. Fall 2012 was a really interesting time to walk the south side of the island—Louis Kahn’s FDR Memorial had just opened while the Goldwater Hospital had just closed and was waiting to be demolished to make way for the Cornell Tech Campus. Roosevelt Island is an incredibly interesting place, with its Main Street that feels like it could be an Eastern European housing project to its Swedish pneumatic tube garbage system, all framing spectacular views of Manhattan.
The idea of this tour started with a walk connecting two really interesting and very different college campuses - Columbia University and City College. In between and around them are so many great things to see, from the Cathedral of St John the Divine, to the 1 train viaduct, to Alexander Hamilton’s re-relocated house, to a terrific residential street that included the house used in Wes Anderson’s The Royal Tenenbaums. In between we saw hidden reminders of the Croton Reservoir system, talked about Columbia’s massive expansion in Manhattanville and ended in a public park on top of a sewage plant with sweeping views of the Hudson River and George Washington Bridge.
The Central Park tour was probably the hardest one to figure out. I had wanted to connect the Natural History Museum to the Met and Guggenheim (which is easy enough) but still find a route that best explains the design, ideas and history of the park. The final route connected Belvedere Castle and the Great Lawn and the Bethesda Fountain with harder to find highlights including some stone foundations from an predominately African American village that was demolished to build the park, to the entrance to an abandoned cave, to just the right framed view of my favorite stone bridge.
The Greenwich Village tour concentrated on the West Village, starting in Union Square and ending at the Picasso sculpture in front of the NYU I.M. Pei towers. Not only did we talk about all of the historic, pretty neighborhoods and all about Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses, but we also spent some time going in a darker direction that included the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, the location of a massive unmarked grave and even the site of CIA MK Ultra experiments. Something for everyone, I guess.
No one likes Penn Station, but it’s hard to beat its history and its continuing importance to the city and region. This tour looped around the station and even went inside to see some remnants of the original building, which are all still there hiding in plain sight if you know where to look. From Penn Station, we looped south and back through the West Chelsea Historic District and up to Hudson Yards. Three years ago, all of the buildings from the first phase were under construction and the first pieces of The Vessel were laying inconspicuously next to the third phase of the High Line waiting to be assembled.
After ten years walking around Manhattan, we headed to Brooklyn on a tour that connected all of the best parts of Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO where we walked under two bridges and over a recently closed one, saw Jane’s Carousel and the Empire Stores, and learned all about the mystery brownstone with blacked out windows on Joralemon Street. The area is a really fascinating mix of historic buildings and new construction, anchored by a riverfront park on reclaimed land with killer views of Lower Manhattan.
Long Island City at this point in its history is probably the most fascinating place in New York. It is one of the fastest growing and fastest changing neighborhoods anywhere, and every block or so the entire place changes character again and again. From a historic street of brownstones that could be in Greenwich Village or Park Slope, you’re only a few blocks from an industrial area, or a world class museum, or a quiet, unassuming residential street, or a brand new, shiny residential high rise tower. And you can’t go to Long Island City without walking along its wonderfully designed waterfront park with spectacular views of the East River, Manhattan and Roosevelt Island.
I’m finishing up the research on this year’s tour route, which starts at the Brooklyn Museum, heads into Prospect Park before crossing into Park Slope and Prospect Heights. There are so many interesting things to see and talk about on this route, including Barclays Center, Pacific Park, BAM and the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, before we end on top of the hill at Fort Greene. Downtown Brooklyn is rapidly changing, still grappling with some of the unintended affects of neighborhood upzoning by the Bloomberg Administration and it’s a great time to explore the area.
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ALNNJ 20th Annual Golf Classic
Monday, July 15th
Crystal Springs, Hamburg, NJ

For 20 years, the Architects League of Northern New Jersey Golf Classic has helped fund numerous architectural scholarships. Through this event and its fundraising efforts, we have ignited the imaginations, passions, and careers of many young architects. This year’s Golf Classic provided another exciting day out on the course and one that started with a bang. Lined with exploding golf balls, each foursome teed off for a beautiful day of recreation and networking within the architectural community. Thank you to our generous sponsors.

Networking Barbeque at Reno’s Appliance
On July 11, members of the League attended a networking barbeque at Reno’s Appliance in Paterson. Other groups attending the event were the American Society of Interior Designers, Builders Association of Northern New Jersey, Metropolitan Builders and Contractors Association of New Jersey, National Association of the Remodeling Industry, and National Kitchen and Bath Association. Everyone attending had a wonderful chance to make connections to meet people in allied professions, as well as enjoy the food. Many thanks to Reno’s for hosting the event.

September Meeting at ModernfoldStyles, Inc.
ALNNJ kicked off the fall with our September 19th meeting at the ModernfoldStyles, Inc. showroom in South Hackensack. Maggie Peters, a Senior Community Development Officer at the NJ Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), discussed Governor Murphy’s proposed tax incentive programs for New Jersey, and outlined several financing options for small- and mid-sized businesses. Peters also gave an update on the Brownfields Redevelopment Tax Credit and Loan Program for future developments, and provided an outline of several other programs for investing in communities, such as the expanded 21st Century Redevelopment Program. Many thanks to the folks at ModernfoldStyles for hosting us at their beautiful facility, tours of which followed the presentation.
October 2019
Archtober is New York City’s Architecture and Design Month, the ninth annual festival of architecture activities, programs and exhibitions taking place during the month of October. 2019.archtober.org

Alumni Member Meeting
Porcelanosa Showroom
Paramus, NJ

New MoMA Opens
October 21, 2019
moma.org

Blaqqu’s: Defacement
-the Untold Story
thru November 8
guggenheim.org

Making Knowing:
Craft in Art 1950-2019
Nov. 22 – Jan. 2021
whitney.org

Happy Halloween

Edith Halpert and the Rise of American Art
Oct. 18 – Feb. 9, 2020
jewishmuseum.org

Recommended
Frank Lloyd Wright’s Guggenheim Museum is Celebrating 60 years!
Visit once again.
guggenheim.org

Pierre Cardin; Future Fashion
thru Jan 5, 2020
brooklynmuseum.org

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New Members
ALNNJ is pleased to welcome the following New Members and Component Transfers:

Giana Abballe, AIA
Ryan Devenney, AIA
Eric Loo, Assoc. AIA
Rudolph Laze, Assoc. AIA
Jingwen Li, AIA
Evan Scaria, Assoc. AIA
Jacob Schaeffer, Assoc. AIA
Lawrence Turco, Assoc. AIA
Karen Umana, Assoc. AIA
Justin Vicente, Assoc. AIA

ALNNJ also welcomes the following New Allied Members:

Caitlin Frederick, Teknion
Nicole McAuley, Corian Design
from C.H. Briggs

The Architects League looks forward to your involvement and participation. Please introduce yourself at the next meeting or event.
Join us for the next Walking Tour with Joe David PARK SLOPE AND FORT GREEN BROOKLYN October 26, 2019

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