

# Great Lakes Design Line

American Institute of Building Design, Michigan Society

Summer 2003

## Presidents Message

By Jack Shelby

This has been an interesting year for my design business. Building designers are on the leading edge of proposed building projects and often get a feel for what is to come and an initial sense of the state of the economy. When building designers are busy builders, their subcontractors and suppliers will be busy within a few months. When building designers are slow, the builders and their trades can expect to slow down. This year I can't seem to get a handle on pulse of the state of economy. One minute I am swamped with a number of new calls coming in and new work placed in my lap, and the next minute the phone goes dead and projects get canceled or postponed. I sense there are people out there with money to spend and building project to invest in, but they can't seem to make the commitment. It seems to be the year of customer waffling.

Michael Lotterman was our Michigan delegate at the A.I.B.D. National Convention this year. The convention was held in Seattle, Washington, July 14<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup>. Mike invested a lot of time in a successful lobbying effort in Lansing last year for Public Act 495 that was signed into law by then Governor Engler on July 3, 2002. Mike serves on a couple of committees at the National level, is familiar with the territory and will be a good representative for our Society. We will look forward to his presentation at the Fall Conference

It is also that time again to reelect new Michigan AIBD officers; to take office in January 2004. Please be thinking of good officers for the coming 2 years—yes—especially you!

The fall conference will be held in beautiful Charlevoix (see related articles in this newsletter). Here is an interesting phenomenon; it seems the best conferences are the ones where many of the spouses and significant others come along. So let us continue this tradition.

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## *The Significant Others: Reflections From the President's Wife*

By Dorie Shelby

(Fall 2003 Conference Coordinator)

Plans for the fall Conference in Charlevoix are falling into place. Most importantly, I've reserved the meeting room so the AIBD members will have a place to go and something to do while we shop, eat and enjoy all that a September weekend in Charlevoix has to offer.

We'll be staying at the Weathervane Terrace Inn, a landmark destination situated between Lake Michigan and Round Lake on the Pine River Channel in Charlevoix. Like the amazing "mushroom houses" we'll be seeing, the Weathervane terrace Inn was designed by the legendary Charlevoix builder Earl Young. If you want to wallow in the ambiance, you might want to request a room in the Lake Michigan Wing. These rooms promise a fireplace and Lake Michigan views from the Jacuzzi tub.

If you are an AIBD spouse trying to decide if you should attend this conference, start packing now! The conference is "spouse friendly" with plenty of organized and unorganized spousal activities on the docket.

Friday morning we can linger and chat over the free continental breakfast at the Inn. We'll join our husbands/wives for lunch and then an afternoon of touring the area by trolley, followed by dinner at the very quaint and very charming Grey Gables Inn.

On Saturday, while our AIBD members are hard at work making advances in building design, we can again linger over our continental breakfast, fortifying ourselves for the official AIBD Spousal Power Shopping Tour of Charlevoix and areas beyond

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Significant others continued from page 1

This activity typically lasts as long as our credit and concludes with a sampling of local happy hour fare.

Of course, if you prefer to relax and walk along the beach, lie by the pool, read a book, or explore on your own, those opportunities abound. If you are new to the group, know that the AIBD spouses are a friendly and welcoming bunch and we would love to have you join us. Mark your calendar and make those reservations. See you there!

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### **The Conferences Just Keep Rolling On By:**

By David Velderman

Once again another AIBD-MS Conference has flown right by. The Spring one-day 2003 Conference came and went before we even knew what hit us. I want to thank everyone who helped to make it possible; especially Nan Noonan. She did a terrific job quickly making the conference and coordinating people presenting at this first ever one-day, conference at Webers Inn in Ann Arbor, MI. Many others helped to pull it off as a team effort, Jay Noonan and especially Terri (on site coordination) and Bob (getting a presenter) Vieracker.

Friday afternoon was the continuation of the structures class with a good turnout. This will be continued this fall; date and time yet to be established.

We had Supplier presenters from Colonial Brick, Window Craft windows, Soft Plan, and Lakeside Windows.

There also was a presentation by architectural critic, Dale Northrup, on Frank Lloyd Wright homes (FLLW). This was topped off by a GRAND tour of FLLW Home, The Palmer House by the original owner.

Thanks again to all who made this one day event happen.

### **Articles / Design Submissions**

By David Velderman

Thank you to Jack, Dorie, Mike, Rick and Lynne and Glen for your submissions and support to the newsletter.

I encourage all members to submit articles and / or a design of projects and articles you think are interesting are proud of. Contact me or e-mail your info to me. I would love to include your examples.

***Share your excellence !***

### **General Membership Meeting Minutes**

By Lynne Coulter, AIBD-MS Secretary

**May 3, 2003  
(at the Spring 2003 Conference)**

- **Called meeting to order at 9:10 AM by President, Jack Shelby**
  - Jack Shelby opened the meeting by stating the General Meeting will be in two parts today. The morning will be reports and open discussions of current topics affecting us and the way we do business.
  - Jack reported on the AIBD National Insurance (E&O) and the problems facing the insurance industry. AIBD E&O insurance is reported to be going up substantially. We discussed alternative insurance providers. A letter from National was presented and is available upon request from Jack.
  - Phil Forsyth talked about an AIA letter campaign directed at building inspectors outlining the AIA interpolation of 'habitable space' for basements vs. finished basements.

Jack reported on Governor Granholm's goal to curb urban sprawl, and the MHB is watching what will develop on

General Membership meeting—continued  
from page 2

- this issue. Concerns are that decision making about 'urban sprawl' will move from the local government's jurisdiction to the state level.
- The State of Michigan is updating the Michigan Energy Code.
- The Michigan Residential Code is in the process of being updated. Current code has no requirements for interior doors which is just one of the items that may be included in the update.
- Jack announced potential new members: Jan Lyndrup, Stephen Aker and Tim Ferris.
- **Meeting suspended at 9:25 PM until after the speakers and presenters.**
- **Meeting resumed at 3:20 pm and was called to order by President, Jack Shelby.**
  - Minutes from the January 11, 2003 General Meeting were approved.
  - Treasurer's Report was presented and approved.
- **Old Business:**
  - Ron Ressler reported on the website situation. Still wants to contact Scott regarding changes and upgrading. He will present results at the fall conference.
- **New Business:**
  - Jack announced that David Velderman is Chairperson for Corporate Membership and Lynne Coulter is Chairperson for New Members.
  - Discussed location and speaker topics for the 2003 Fall Conference; it will be Charlevoix with Dorie Shelby being the coordinator.
  - Jack Shelby discussed briefly who was going to attend the July National AIBD Conference in Seattle, Washington and what topics and/or areas of concern should be presented in regards to our members in Michigan. The 2003 Representative will be Mike Lotterman.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM**

## **Road Trip to Pennsylvania—Frank Lloyd Wrights Fallingwater Tour**

By Rick White

It was a rainy Saturday morning May 31, 2003 as we began our trip. As Mother Nature continued to bless us with rain, we made our way on 69 South into Indiana and onto the Indiana/Ohio turnpike headed east. Making our way into Pennsylvania with the rain still coming down we began thinking that this weekend getaway was going to be one big washout.

Arriving at our first stop just an hour southeast of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in a small rural area surrounded by hillsides of trees, we decided to settle in for the day at a lodge in the quiet countryside of Chalk Hill, Pennsylvania. Staying here at this place reminded me of an old roadside motel mixed with the feeling of a camp retreat in the middle of what appeared at first to be nowhere.

Waking up early Sunday morning, June 1<sup>st</sup> after a stormy night of rest we discovered that we were only 10 miles from our destination.

If you haven't guessed, Deanna and I are headed for Frank Lloyd Wrights (FLLW) designed, Fallingwater home. As we began our second day making our way though the winding country roads surrounded with beautiful hillsides and trees it feels like you are in another world. Then in between the trees, out of nowhere, we arrived at a gate—a rustic, detailed work of art that invites you onto a gravel pathway as you make your way down; to the parking area, ticket booth, pavilion and gift shop. As we waited for the others, 8 additional to our group to arrive we enjoyed the wonders of nature that fully surrounded us.

The rest of the tour group arrived and we began our intimate small group tour by way of a small gravel pathway that feels like a place you are not supposed to travel alone on, her at this protected private property. As we got closer to our destination, you begin to hear the wonders and peacefulness more intensely of nature. One begins to hear the faint sound of running water out in the distance. The sound level grows with each step finally seeing the water roll over rocks and boulders to form waterfalls. Ahead a house of great magnitude appears; the house I only have seen in pictures, which do not match what the senses are now heightened to.

We stop a few feet from the house at the crossing bridge awaiting our tour guide for the day. A tall, gray-haired, older gentleman approaches and begins the stories held within this magnificent home. He recalls summers here as a boy, a time to hear first hand experiences. This man's grandfather was a servant for the Kaufmans, the original owners. The Kaufmans were wealthy merchants from Pittsburgh and this was their second (a weekend) home. Our guide recalls his childhood here as we cross and approach the house. The water rushes underneath as you begin to see the relationship it has with this home as we step off the bridge and back in time.

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Falling Water: continued from page 3Falling Water: continued

As I walk towards the home I imagine 1920's vintage automobiles as we walk up the path to the house. We finally enter the home through a door and immediately experience the "Wrightness" of the Great Room. Stone floors (over concrete), a great stone fireplace, a dining area, a typical Wright small kitchen (room only for servants with a butlers pantry to serve the Great Room / Dining table) all very familiar features of a Wright home and of the times they were designed for ~ the 1920's. When you are in the Great Room you notice how quiet it is when the windows are closed. As soon as unique glass sliding door down to the waterfall balcony below or any of the glass doors or windows elsewhere are opened the full intensity of the sound of the waterfall comes in.

Many stories prevail on this tour. Stories such as: 1) The stones of the great room were never washed because they would be too slippery; 2) The window frames are a burnt red which Mrs. Kaufman never cared for but Wright insisted on because it was Wrights favorite color (noticed by Mrs. Kaufman upon first meeting Wright and seeing the color of his automobile); 3) Window screens were added later (after Wright was gone) because of the many insects; 4) The kettle in the great room was only used once because the fire would take the paint off and then would need to be repainted; 5) Kaufman Jr., their only child and son, never married, had no offspring, and had no interest in his father's retail business, was highly educated and spoke several languages; 6) Wright designed the dining and deck chairs, but when they arrived did not sit well on the stone floor so Mrs. Kaufman had her own chairs designed (which are still there) and kept only one of Wrights chairs for show; 7) The Kaufmans were art collectors and the art is still in the home and 8) Kaufman Jr. loved books and the collection is now altered due to moisture damage over time to the books.

Wright was not known for construction perfection or quality, and I noticed many roof and window leaks etc. are still in the home. The cantilever balcony/floor system in the main house had just completed being repair (having been closed to the public) as the original design was inadequate and sagging significantly. What was/is an outstanding fact is that Wright had the great intuition to use this material (reinforced concrete) at the time when concrete was just beginning to be used in America. Reinforced concrete was definitely in its infancy as to how to use it.

After seeing the servants quarters and their balcony, we left the main house and walked up the stone steps to the visitors house up on the hill; lined by typical but unique FLLW canopy and lighting. Wright leaves no item undone, as to being

thought out, as to its design and place in the larger scheme of the home and landscape. This extra "home" (guest house) on a hill just behind Fallingwater is of itself magnificent.

Time passes very quickly on this tour, with much thrown at you in a short period of time. Strangely, it feels magnificent to just wallow in the ambiance of this peaceful environment, not wanting to really leave. Not really sure why but feeling the essence of the greatness of this place. Maybe it was just the location, the peaceful woods, the stream or just the waterfall through part of the house. I believe that it really is the "exponential sum" of them all; a treat for sure. It was amazing that a home so lacking in quality construction, but eloquently restored, has this kind of an affect.



As we left the house, to end our tour, and returned to the pavilion, Deanna and I both acknowledged how thankful we were to have witnessed this great artist, dreamer and the inspirational designer, that Wright was. It is great that this is preserved for

designers like us and for all persons. I believe this can encourage the dreamer, artistic/creative designer within ourselves to come forth when it can. Sometimes I think we get too involved in doing just another fairly traditional home and ignore this aspect of our self. This helps me to remember that I can always apply some aspect of this "exponential sum" in little ways to make a persons home a little more special. In that, it truly is a pleasure to have a place such as this preserved for us all and future generations.

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### **AIBD-MS Contact Information:**

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## ***Fall A.I.B.D. – Michigan Society Conference in Beautiful Charlevoix Friday September 12th – Saturday September 13th***

The Fall 2003 AIBD Michigan Society Conference will be held in Charlevoix, September 12 and September 13 at the Weathervane Terrace Inn & Suites.

If you haven't been to Charlevoix, you will find it to be a charming, classic, historic resort town bounded by Lake Michigan, Lake Charlevoix and Round Lake. It is home to a number of legendary "mushroom houses" designed and built by famed architect Earl Young. It also has plenty of beautiful beaches, blue water, fall color, unique shops and a small town ambiance.

This conference has several special activities, designed for AIBD members and their spouses, planned for Friday. We'll begin with lunch and a lecture at Staffords Weathervane Inn. Author/Historian David Miles will talk briefly about the history of Charlevoix and the famed architect who lived there, Earl Young. Young designed and built the Weathervane Terrace Inn & Suites, as well as, Staffords Weathervane Inn where we will be having lunch. After lunch, Miles will lead us on a trolley tour of several historically and architecturally significant Charlevoix neighborhoods, including the neighborhoods with the "mushroom houses". The tour will conclude with a stop at The Castle Farms barn complex. Originally part of a 1600 acre farm owned by Sears, Roebuck and Company President Albert Loeb in 1918, Loeb hired Chicago architect Arthur Huen to design a model farm on which he could raise prize winning livestock using the newest farm equipment sold through the catalog. Huen designed Normandy style stone barns and a French Renaissance Chateaux Style home. The complex has recently undergone extensive restoration and been reopened to the public for community events. Following the tour, we will dine in Victorian Charm at the Grey Gables Inn.

### **Accommodations**

Weathervane Terrace Inn & Suites  
111 Pine River Lane  
Charlevoix, MI 49720  
1-800-552-0025  
1-231-547-9955

Special AIBD room rates for Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup> range from \$59-89 depending on room type. Rates for Friday and Saturday are slightly higher, ranging from \$97-143 per night. The Weathervane Terrace Inn & Suites offers free continental breakfast. Checkout their website for information on other amenities and driving directions.

[www.weathervane-chx.com](http://www.weathervane-chx.com)

Reservations should be made by calling the Weathervane directly, no later than August 12. Be sure to mention AIBD.

### **Conference Registration**

The conference registration fee includes:

Admittance to Friday and Saturday educational sessions and vendor presentations  
Friday lunch  
Friday Architectural tour and lecture  
Friday evening dinner at Grey Gables  
Saturday lunch

It does not include the cost of accommodations at the Weathervane. Remember to make your own reservations by calling the Weathervane directly.

Check-in begins at 7:30 a.m. Friday in the meeting room. A light continental breakfast will be available. Conference sessions begin at 8:00 a.m.

Member Conference Registration Fee = \$150.00

Non-Member Conference Registration Fee = \$175.00

Spouses or guests who are not registered for the conference but would like to participate have two registration options:

**Spouse/Guest Activity Package:** includes Friday's lunch, lecture and architectural tour, and evening dinner at Grey Gables = \$85.00

**Spouse/Guest Activity Package & Sessions:** includes Friday's lunch, lecture and architectural tour, Grey Gables dinner, all educational and vendor sessions and Saturday Lunch = \$125.00

**Registration deadline: August 12, 2003 or ASAP to be included in the meals**

**See the registration form on page 8**

**Meet a member; AIBD-MS**

Many times we do not get enough time or opportunities to get to know the great design talent that we have within our organization. This will be an attempt to get to know us all one by one as we go along. I have chosen to do one individual at least per newsletter (space permitting), and am beginning with some members of the current Board of Directors. I also have found in the quest to interview Lynne for the newsletter that she has won AIBD's 'Honor Award' for her entry to the AIBD & Garlinghouse Design Competition 'Unbuilt Design-Over 3251 sq. ft.' division! Congratulations – Lynne.

**Introduction to new segment -** I was presented with an excellent proposal to showcase the great variety of individuals that we have in the AIBD-MS chapter.

**Meet Lynne Coulter**

By David Velderman

I interviewed Lynne just after she and Glenn (her husband) returned from the Port Huron – Mackinac sailing race, finishing in the top 1/3 of the pack and the top 15 of their class. This is a significant aspect of Lynne's life – their sailing. They sail for leisure but also competitively as well. Lynne has a very unique history to get where she is and what she currently does.

She was born in Lansing and raised on Detroit's east side until she left to attend Ferris State College (now Ferris State University) initially for teaching. After a year and a half, she left Ferris to embark on a different career path. Through several job changes and night courses for accounting and business management at Oakland Community College and Oakland University, Lynne progressed from accounting clerk to Assistant Vice President/Budget Director for a mortgage company. After 11 years with the mortgage company, Lynne realized that it was time for another career change. In between the accounting courses, Lynne enjoyed taking life drawing classes, as well as oil painting and water colors. It was time to find a career that would use these talents and interests. She quit cold turkey from a very well paid position to return to college at Lawrence Technological University for Architecture. After 4 ½ years of working part-time for a structural engineering firm and carrying a full load of architecture courses, she graduated with a BS in Architecture in 1987. She worked for an Architectural firm and a shopping center developer before starting her own company in 1992. Initial projects were renovations of and additions to existing Oakland County homes.

Her interest in sailing blossomed after meeting Glenn Lahti in 1989 at the start of the Port Huron to Mackinac Island Race. From sailboat racing and cruising, they both realized that if there was one place they wanted to live it was Drummond Island because it was at the head of Lake Huron and a half day's sail to the North Channel. Lynne and Glenn were married in 1992 on Mackinac Island after the Port Huron to Mackinac Island Race. In that first year of marriage, besides starting her own company, they purchased a 3.25 acre waterfront parcel on Drummond Island, and a larger sailboat. When Glenn retired from Macomb Community College, they moved into the house (that Lynne designed of course). Before moving to Drummond Island, many of Lynne's clients in Oakland County had property in the northern Lower Peninsula on which

they wanted a home built on for their retirement years. Lynne had found her niche: designing waterfront cottages and homes for empty-nesters and retirees. In the last year her projects have ranged from a renovation of a sauna on Big Trout Island to a 4,200 sq. ft. home called Green Creek Lodge with water on three sides in Cheboygan (which is the project she just received the Honor Award for).



Lynne and Glenn have been on Drummond Island for 3 years now, Lynne indulging in every aspect of residential design and Glenn enjoying retirement. Aside from the usual small town fund raisers and various volunteer community projects, this year they are involved in Drummond Island's Sesquicentennial Celebration. Lynne worked on the graphics for the commemorative program and button. Also this year her company sponsored the First Annual 'Junk' Sculpture Contest. As her contribution to the development of an interpretive nature trail, Lynne designed, carved and painted the trail signs. Although cottage designs are her primary focus, she does not limit her practice to it. She enjoys a variety of design challenges and has a very positive view of what she enjoys about designing.

She has been associated with AIBD for the last 2 years and serves on the AIBD-MS Board as Secretary, as well as New Member Chairperson. Lynne said that she joined AIBD because of its principles and continued pursuit to enhance the knowledge of those in the residential design field. What she enjoys the most at the spring and fall conferences is the Round Table discussions where members are free to share real life experiences with problems and solutions. She feels that AIBD's strongest asset is member experiences and their willingness to share their knowledge.

I was very impressed with how she has throughout her life, particularly in recent years, stayed focused on who she wanted to be and allowed the clientele to compliment what she had to offer. By this I mean she focused on what and where she wanted to live, being a designer, and doing the variety of design options presented. She stayed very flexible as to how she applies her skills. That is why she calls her company Architecture etc. Ltd. Doing what ever a client may want: home design, garage design (Architecture), murals, and furniture design (etc.) until it's time to go sailing (Ltd.)

She has a great attitude. She believes in working with what is offered, and believes in doing a custom home for all income brackets. She highly recommends being patient and flexible. There is fun and income to be made enjoying what you do, and Lynne is proof of it.

Thank You Lynne for being part of AIBD Michigan.

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**“Designing an Away Room”** is taken from the 2002 August/September Fine Homebuilding Magazine, Taunton Press; by Sarah Susanka, contributing editor and Author of “Creating the Not So Big House” , 2001. All rights belong to Taunton Press

## **Designing an Away Room**

The away room is a newcomer to the stable that constitute a house. It was invented to solve a common problem in homes: dueling noises. Whether the battle is TV vs. conversation or stereo vs. video games, household noise can disturb even the most focused family member. In many houses, it can be difficult to find a place that isn't filled with either human or electronically generated sound.

Therefore, with noise as motivation, the away room was born. The new addition is a small space where one of two things can happen. A door can either confine noise to or block noise away from the away room. You actually can design the away room to serve both functions. For example, when the clanging of pots and pans makes it difficult to hear the 6 o'clock news, a TV in the away room can be used. When a movie is being viewed on the away room TV, someone not interested in the film can move to the family room to read or listen to music.

**WHERE TO PUT IT.** One of the keys to the effectiveness of the away room is to position it properly for your household. For most, an away room works best if it opens directly off the family room through a French door. Because young children generally follow their parents around, there's little likelihood that younger children will use either room independently. Older kids, however, will be able to make significant noise (which, of course, is their tendency) in an away room without creating a disturbance. The visual connection afforded by French doors will keep older children from feeling cut off while allowing parents to monitor their children's activities. Positioning the away room adjacent to the living room or kitchen keeps families close together while effectively containing noise.

If the away room is intended as a retreat for adults and older children, a location farther away from the main living area may be more appropriate. A more isolated location creates an escape where family members can find greater privacy and acoustical separation. An away room could also have a desk and comfortable sitting chairs much as you often see in many dens. Someone using the away room in a house arranged in this fashion, however, may be perceived by the rest of the family as absent from family activities. In some households, this is normal and acceptable while in others it is not, so the location of the room should reflect the needs and personalities of the particular household.

**THE NATURE OF THE DOOR.** We rarely stop to think about how powerful a message a closed door sends. If the door to the away room is solid, closing it sends a clear signal that the person within doesn't want to be disturbed. On the other hand, when the room's user doesn't want to send a strong message and leaves the door open, the acoustical value that inspired the room in the first place is greatly diminished. For that reason, my preference is to use a double French door where possible. This type of door maintains a visual connection and softens the message sent by a closed solid door while continuing to block noise.

**REMODELING TO ADD AN AWAY ROOM.** Away rooms are not exclusive to new homes. In many older homes, an existing room can be converted to an away room with only slight remodeling. Although it is typically accessed through a hallway, a bedroom adjacent to the living room is common in ranches and bungalows. Adding a pair of French doors to the wall separating the living room from the bedroom and closing off the door opening in the hallway converts the bedroom into a perfect away room with an ideal location.

Some homes have a rarely used dining room. Fitting a pair of glass doors in the dining room opening transforms the existing space into a useful away room. You can decorate the room for a designated purpose, or leave it as a dining room with the table serving as a desk. The result is a great place to pay bills, talk on the phone or read. While the space remains a dining room, the doors allow it to serve alternative functions with greater acoustical privacy.

**DESIGNING THE AWAY ROOM.** Once the location of the away room has been determined, its size, character and layout must be considered. Away rooms don't need to be large and will be more welcoming if their scale contrasts with the adjacent room. In new homes, I usually size away rooms 11 ft. by 15 ft. However, a smaller room works fine. Start by listing the activities that could occur in the room. If the room is to serve as both a retreat and an activity, some functions may duplicate those that take place in other rooms. The following is a list of activities that could be accommodated:

- Video game playing
- Internet browsing
- Playing with toys
- Talking on the phone
- Listening to music
- TV watching
- Studying
- Paying Bills
- Reading

Next, determine the furnishings you want in the room. If the primary function of the room is a secondary TV area, you will want to make sure that the seating is comfortable and that the TV is centrally located. Other activities can take place in a small alcove along one wall. If you make a list of priorities, you'll see which activities should influence design. If you want to monitor the children's activities, make sure sightlines to the main activity areas are unobstructed.

Away rooms negate the need for the multitude of single use rooms that are becoming increasingly common. With more efficient use of space, houses can be smaller, giving family members a greater sense of connection. This versatile room eliminates common noise issues and increases overall household harmony without confining anyone to the far reaches of the house.

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Please cut this section out and mail to the address below

**AIBD-MICHIGAN FALL CONFERENCE 2003  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am registering for:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Member conference registration @ \$150**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Non-Member conference registration @ \$175.00**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Spouse/Guest Activity Package @ \$85.00**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Spouse/Guest Activity Package and Sessions @ \$125**

**Make checks payable to AIBD-MI**

**Mail payment to:**

Rick White  
6790 Orchard Meadow Drive  
Portage, MI 49024

**Registration Deadline: August 12, 2003**

**“When a Double Vanity Just Won’t Fit”**; by Jim Kregel ( a frequent lecturer on kitchen and bath design and lives in St. Paul, Minn.) is an article from the Journal of Light Construction, March 2003; a product and copyright owner of Hanley-Wood Publications

## When a Double Vanity Just Won’t Fit

By Jim Kregel

The National Kitchen & Bath Association’s (NKBA’s) *Bathroom Planning Guidelines* provide practical dimensional requirements for every fixture used in the bathroom, along with the floor space required around fixtures and vanities. Of the 41 guidelines, it’s difficult to implement even half of them in practice, however, for one simple reason: There’s rarely enough space available. Still, the guidelines serve as a useful point of reference – it’s handy to know what the generally accepted planning standards are before departing them. And all of the guidelines consider safety first, a standard that I would never depart from.

Despite the obstacles, our typical client would like us to remodel a standard 5 x 9 foot bathroom to include a double vanity and a whirlpool tub. We can’t work miracles, but I’ll offer some practical ideas on how to accomplish the impossible.

**TWO’S A CROWD.** A bathroom containing two lavs, or basins, is a terrific option, but to meet NKBA guidelines 14 and 15 (and these are minimum requirements), you must have 15 inches from the center of the first lav to an end wall or countertop edge, and then 30 inches from center of lav to center of the next lav. If you do the math, that calls for a minimum of 60 inches, or 5 feet of wall space. Five feet really isn’t enough for comfortable, simultaneous use of both lavs. Six feet is a real world comfort minimum, with 36 inches between lav centers. In fact, most research suggests that a 42 inch wide single vanity is the perfect size for most users.

The biggest complaint I address in designing a bathroom (or kitchen) is the lack of counter space. So I remind my space challenged clients that a second sink isn’t as useful as a large mirror and extra counter space, which most couples have determined are what really make their shared bathroom work. I might also inquire whether they get ready at different times most mornings – if so, the need a second bowl will only be occasional.

Since counter space is critical, don’t forget to take advantage of the space above the toilet if you are able to. I often run the countertop right over the tank, creating what is called a banjo top. But remember to leave the tank accessible for repair by making the section of the counter that goes over the tank removable. Wall brackets or a piano hinge offer two obvious solutions.

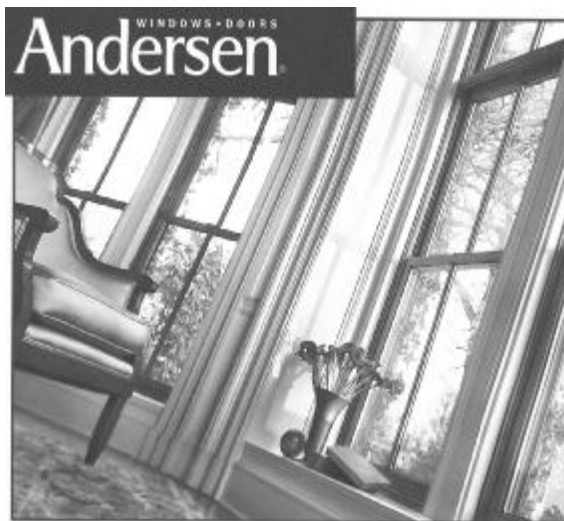
**AVOID THE PEDESTAL.** Pedestal lavs are great design elements in the right setting and perfect compliments in a powder room or guest bath, where a minimal form can make a small area seem larger. But they provide no counter space. Nearby wall shelves can be also a fix for a pedestal sink if absolutely necessary. Many wall hung or table mounted lavs also leave the space feeling open while also providing a work surface around the basin.

**VANITY HEIGHT.** While a 32 inch vanity is an industry norm, and that works well in most children’s baths, today’s sophisticated, multi-user bathrooms often feature split level, dual lavatories. Typically, the lower level is set between 30 and 34 inches, and the higher level from 34 to a maximum 42 inches for taller clients. In a 5 x 9 foot bath, a compromise height for a single lav is in order. I generally choose a 34 to 36 inch high vanity that works well for an average adult’s height. Compromise is a key element for remodeling in general – we rarely have an ideal space to work with.

**MIRRORS AND LIGHTING HELP.** Don’t overlook the power of the mirror to transform a space. The number one rule for determining mirror size and placement is to make certain the mirror is both high and low enough to work for your clients and their children. Being tall, I find that most mirrors are not installed high enough, forcing me to scrunch down to see while I shave or comb my hair. In the same context, don’t forget shorter users and children. Can they see comfortably, without straining? There are no hard and fast rules on dimension here – go by your clients heights and preference and what the space will allow. As a general rule, the bottom of a vanity mirror should be no higher than 40 inches above the floor. Don’t overlook the incredible “enlarging” effect that custom mirrors have on a small bathroom space. You may not be able to make the room larger but you can make it feel as though you did.

**LIGHTING.** Great mirrors without great lighting don’t serve your client well. The rule of thumb that I apply here is to be certain there’s good lighting on both sides of the mirror, with light fixtures placed at a height that will provide the greatest illumination at about the same height as the primary users’ eyes (normally 3 to 6 inches lower than their overall height). Of course, with two users of different heights, you have to compromise. Overhead lighting alone, as in recessed lighting or fan-light fixtures isn’t adequate, as it tends to cast shadows and leave mirror users in the dark. Fixtures that surround the mirror (often referred to as Hollywood lighting) actually rate high, as they provide good continuous lighting without “hot spots”.

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## ***Designer Showcase***— This newsletter has two submissions

### ***The Kazdofsky Residence***

Submitted by ***Mike Lotterman***



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### ***The McClure Residence, Rochester MI.***

Submitted by ***David Velderman***

*(3D Model Rendered/Raytraced with Chief Architect CAD Software using the view of the customers site)*



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## Great Lakes Design Line—Newsletter

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