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## [From CWA's President]

A few years ago I saw a billboard while I was waiting for the bus. It was an advertisement for a local college which had introduced the slogan "Create. Change." as way to brand their identity. While my recollection of the details are fuzzy – they may have punctuated the phrase a little differently, and I can't remember any accompanying imagery - what I do strongly recall is the powerful effect of those two words in combination. Since then, I have rolled these words over again and again in my mind, each time extracting a slightly different definition.



**Create. Change.** At times, I have taken these words as a mandate to "make things happen". It's a simple directive to be effective - to move an organization or cause forward. As women practicing architecture, we are changing the profession, however as we all know there is still work to be done to increase the diversity in our ranks. While according to the 2006 AIA firm survey, women now account for 26% of staff in architectural firms, and women principals/partners have increased from 4% to 16% since 1999, there is still a large gap between the percentage of women in architecture schools (approximately 40%) and those who go on to get licensed (approximately 13%).

**Create. Change.** Alternately, I think of the act of creating, and how that has the power to literally shape the outside world. This definition is of particular interest to those of us whose job it is to be imaginative, visual and, quite literally, to construct. As architects, what we create on a daily basis transforms our cities, our landscapes, our neighborhoods, our public spaces and our infrastructure.

**Create. Change.** Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, is the notion that the act of creating transforms ourselves. On a very personal level, the belief that I am creative underpins my identity. I think this is common to most of us in the profession – there is a very real need to create that feeds our souls. I used to think that everyone felt this need to make things, to see, to draw, to translate – now I understand that for those of us who do share this powerful feeling, it's a gift.

Welcome to a new year of membership in CWA. We have a number of exciting fall programs planned for the 2007-2008 year that I hope you will enjoy – all focus on ideas, opportunities, people and organizations that are changing the architectural community here in Chicago. At our membership reception in October, we'll have a program on "Designing an Olympic Bid: Chicago's Pursuit of the 2016 Games." In November, we will team with AIA Chicago to host a panel on publishing – we'll hear from panelists on how projects are selected for publication, how stories and themes are chosen, and what goes into launching a new magazine. Finally in December, Sarah Herda, the new Director of the Graham Foundation, will speak at our annual Holiday Party at Prairie Avenue Bookshop.

So create...and change. I look forward to seeing you all this fall.

Beth Erickson, CWA President

## [Calendar of Events]

Confirm dates, times and locations with the sponsoring organization. Be sure to check the CWA website periodically for new events! RSVP to all events by emailing [RSVP@cwarch.org](mailto:RSVP@cwarch.org)

### August 8 - November 16

Me, Myself and Infrastructure: Private Lives and Public Works in America @ Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 South Michigan Avenue. 9am-5:30pm Sponsor: Chicago Architecture Foundation,

### September 20 - January 5, 2008

Intersections: Views Across Chicago @ The John Buck Company Lecture Hall Gallery, 224 S. Michigan Ave. Opening Thursday, October 11, 5:30-7:30pm Sponsor: Chicago Architecture Foundation.

### October 2007

[04] CWA Member's Reception @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue, Join us for cocktails and networking 5:30-6:30pm, Presentation at 6:30pm. Presentation: Designing an Olympic Bid: Chicago's Pursuit of the 2016 Games. Guest Speakers: Linda Mastandrea and Beth Erickson. CWA members: free, Non-members: \$25 [applied toward membership]

[16] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue, Join us for cocktails and networking 6:00-6:30pm, Meeting 6:30-7:30pm. All members are welcome! RSVP

[25] Happy Hour @ The Gage: 24 South Michigan Avenue, A chance to socialize and have a drink or two with fellow CWA members. 6pm. RSVP to [Rachel.Branagan@lucienlagrange.com](mailto:Rachel.Branagan@lucienlagrange.com)

### November 2007

[15] Publishing Panel Discussion hosted jointly with AIA Chicago @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue, Join us for cocktails and networking 5:30-6:30pm, Discussion at 6:30pm. Moderator: Dennis Rodkin. Panelist: Joann Gouchar AIA [Senior Editor for Architectural Record, and Contributing Editor for GreenSource], Jan Parr [Editor, Chicago Home + Garden], Mitchell Obstfeld [Founder and Publisher of i4design magazine], Lisa Skolnik [City Editor of Metropolitan Home and freelance writer for i4design magazine], Brenda Butler [Senior Features Editor Chicago Tribune]

[20] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue, Join us for cocktails and networking 6:00-6:30pm, Meeting 6:30-7:30pm. All members are welcome! RSVP

### December 2007

[06] CWA Holiday Party @ Prairie Avenue Bookshop: 418 S Wabash. Enjoy the season, support the CWA Scholarship Foundation and start your holiday shopping at Prairie Avenue Bookshop. Guest Speaker: Sarah Herda, Director of the Graham Foundation.

[18] CWA Monthly Meeting @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue, Join us for cocktails and networking 6:00-6:30pm, Meeting 6:30-7:30pm. All members are welcome! RSVP





Photos from left to right: Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, Carol Ross Barney, Cynthia Weese. © 2007 The Art Institute of Chicago, used with permission.

Introduction by Judith De Jong

In January 2005, the Department of Architecture at the Art Institute of Chicago, in collaboration with CWA, submitted a grant proposal to the Graham Foundation that outlined a proposed addition to the Art Institute's ongoing Chicago Architects Oral History Project. Of the seventy or so oral histories on the website, only three were of women architects, a distressingly low number that did not begin to articulate the contribution women have made to architecture and architectural history in Chicago. The grant, entitled "Women Architects and Chicago's Oral History Program", proposed that members of CWA, with administrative support from the Department of Architecture, would research and interview three significant architects in Chicago: Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, Carol Ross Barney, and Cynthia Weese. The grant also proposed to videotape the interviews, a significant advance that would provide a visual history along with the traditional oral one. Letters of recommendation and support for the proposed project were written by Carol Crandall, Kristine Fallon, and Kate Schwensen.

In July 2005, we were thrilled to hear from the Graham Foundation that our grant proposal had been funded! At our kick-off meeting soon thereafter, we broke up into three research and interview teams: Susan King and Meggan Lux (Gertrude Kerbis); Deborah Burkhart and Martha Thorne (Carol Ross Barney); and Judith De Jong and Pamela Hill, with preliminary input from Jodi Feldheim (Cynthia Weese). Throughout the project, Carissa Kowalski Dougherty provided significant support and coordination from the Department of Architecture at the Art Institute.

Research took many forms, including books and articles written by or about the women, FAIA applications, preliminary meetings with the women themselves, visits to projects they had designed and built, etc. Luckily for us, Art Institute intern Gideon P. Searle had prepared preliminary research

*"Of the seventy or so oral histories on the website, only three were of women architects, a distressingly low number that did not begin to articulate the contribution women have made to architecture and architectural history in Chicago."*

during the summer of 2005 as a point of departure for all three research teams. About mid-way through the research, we met as a group to develop a set of common questions to ask all three women, such as "what does practice in Chicago mean to you?". Since all three interviewees were founding members of CWA, we also had a particular interest in their roles in the organization.

The interviews were held in various locations last summer (2006), with videotaping by Judith McBrien and Jim Morrisette of Perspectives, followed by interview transcription from Jennifer L. Hensley of Lee Perfect Transcribing Company. Fall of 2006 was devoted to developing the supporting written material that accompanies each oral history at the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries at The Art Institute of Chicago, including a biographical summary, preface to the bound edition, and list of topics. And finally, in August 2007, after almost two years of hard work, the completed oral histories became available online at [www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/caohp/](http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/caohp/).

Obviously, these oral histories would not have been possible without the incredible commitment of, and time from, the three architects we interviewed: Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, Carol Ross Barney, and Cynthia Weese. They have all contributed in significant ways to Chicago architecture, and we are most grateful for their participation. In addition, our gratitude goes to the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, who graciously and generously funded this project.

View **video clips** and **complete transcriptions** of the oral histories in PDF format on The Art Institute of Chicago's website

[www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/caohp/](http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/caohp/) ↗

Hard-copy transcripts may be consulted at the following institutions:

The Ryerson & Burnham Libraries at The Art Institute of Chicago – complete collection  
Chicago Historical Society – partial collection  
Canadian Centre for Architecture – partial collection

## Gertrude Lempp Kerbis on the Origins of CWA

Quote from the "Oral History of Gertrude Kerbis," Gertrude Lempp Kerbis, pg 34-35.  
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"Yeah, that was the year that I sent out a bunch of letters—in 1973. I had a little office at 664 North Michigan and all these women came and I had just a little bitty room—it was about ten by twelve or ten by fifteen—and we all sat around and talked about the status of women in architecture. Because I felt that some of my experiences—[at that point] I was on my own, but some of my experiences in the firm—should not be repeated. Maybe if we would talk to each other and tell each other what firms would encourage women and what firms were really bad for women, if we just talked to each other about the status of women in architecture in Chicago, it would benefit all of us. And although I had a family and I was on my own, I just thought that I would not benefit from this thing, but I thought it would help in general. So I started that and then, eventually, Natalie came from New York—I don't know if she was in town at that time. I know she didn't come to the early meetings, but anyway, Natalie de Blois and Carol Ross Barney and a number of others continued the organization, and then they made this wonderful exhibit. They had actually two exhibits about women's work, which was very important and it was a good vehicle for young people. I think the attendance was very good for these exhibits. One was at the Women's Gallery and one was at the Historical Society [Chicago History Museum] and they were terrific. They were written up and it was really very good [for us]."

## Cynthia Weese on Leadership

Quote from the "Oral History of Cynthia Weese," Cynthia Weese, pg 43.  
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"Oh, I think one issue that I have thought a lot about and I think is important in terms of architects is the issue of leadership—because architects are born leaders. I tell students this all the time. They are born leaders. They really do know how to present themselves—they learn how to present themselves—and I think it's a responsibility that people need to exercise in a larger context. I think they need to be a part of something larger than their own lives. I think they need to be a part of something larger than their own office. I think they have to and I tell students: "Run for mayor." I don't encourage them to run for mayor of Chicago—but mayors have a huge impact on the physical part of their cities. The designers that I know who are very effective are also very good leaders. You can talk about leadership in two ways. Robert McGregor Burns [an academic who has written about leadership] talks about transactional leadership, which is, you know, politics: You do this for me, I'll do that for you. And: I've done this for you, you do that for me. Then he talks about transformational leadership, which is where you work together toward a common end. He talks about having a leader not getting so far ahead [that he or she is] looking back and finding nobody following. I've found that you have to bring at least the majority of people with you in anything that you do or it doesn't really work out. For one thing, it doesn't suit the culture. But I think that's a tremendously important thing for students, too, as education looks inward—which is terribly, terribly important—but then I think you look outward and you need to bring everything that you've developed and continue to develop in terms of your work and design and thinking about light and thinking about sun and movement—those are all critical to me as an architect. But you need to be able to bring people with you, literally, because you do transform them. You transform people, and you need to understand that you're doing that as a leader."

## Carol Ross Barney on Being a Chicago Firm

Quote from the "Oral History of Carol Ross Barney," Carol Ross Barney, pg 7-8.  
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"Being known as a Chicago firm? Sort of. You start out and you say, "What else am I going to be known for?" Over the years, I've become extraordinarily impressed with the fact that architecture, unlike other design areas, is really influenced by where it's going to be built. I mean, a building sits on a particular piece of ground and it moves with that ground, so the architect's response—if it's very good—has to do with that place, and that's really different than, say, a telephone or a car that's mass-produced. Buildings are basically made by hand. Maybe some century they won't be—maybe pretty soon—but, right now, they're made by hand and I think it's hard to think about [a building] not being of its place. But, as far as being about Chicago, I'm very rooted to this place. I spend my entire life within ten minutes of my birthplace. I was born in Grant Hospital. I was baptized at St. John Cantius Church. They're both about ten minutes from here. So, I feel rooted here. In the early years of my practice, when I'd get a commission—even ones that are pretty well-known, like Cesar Chavez [Multicultural Academic Center] or Little Village Academy—I didn't spend much time researching about the place because it was my place and I knew it almost instinctually. That was important to all the early things that I did—that I knew the place. And later on, when we started practicing across the country, it was a shock to find out that I didn't know as much about places I was working in as I did about Chicago because [the location] was so important to the design method and process."

## [Member News]

**Kristen Armstrong Matz, LEED AP** recently joined Teng & Associates.

**Tracey Brewer**, Michael Hershenson Architects, had a baby girl, Naomi Johanna Brewer, on August 26.

**Debbie (Swibel) Fox**, Lucien Lagrange Architects, married Joe Fox, SCB, on April 28, 2007 in Chicago.

**Dianne Kontos** recently joined Lucien Lagrange Architects.

**Lisa Kulisek**, Tigerman McCurry Architects, is expecting a baby girl on October 10.

**Meggan Lux**, URBANWorks, Ltd., recently became a licensed architect.

**Kate Michaud, LEED AP** recently joined URBANWorks, Ltd.

**Marsha Spencer**, Proteus Group, is expecting a baby in the first week of October.

*We want to hear about your accomplishments - new positions, new jobs, new projects, awards, travels, births and other milestones. Please submit all news to Mindy at [mviamentes@muller2.com](mailto:mviamentes@muller2.com) for inclusion in the next edition of the Muse.*

## Save the Date

Join us this fall for the **Annual Member's Reception [10.04.07]** and **Publishing Panel Discussion [11.15.07]**  
See the Calendar of Events for details.