



Making Long Island a better place to live and work

January 27, 2009 - Long Island

Having worked in the chapter for over 5 years, from chief cook and bottle washer to now chairman, I am always thankful for and to our membership. I was fortunate to have been recruited by the founding members and began working with them on a very simple mission, transforming how buildings are constructed on Long Island. Oh, and by the way you can help us increase our membership. It was at this point that the first committee was formed, the membership committee. Since then we have expanded to over 12 committees and 350 members.

So it is with great pride that I take over the chairmanship of the Long Island chapter of the USGBC. Having witnessed its phenomenal growth and following in the footsteps of its early leaders, Peter Caradonna, Ron Vitori, and most recently Gary Anzalone, the challenge is great.

We are facing a watershed moment in not only our chapter's history but Long Island's as well. For the first time in a long time our economy is less than prosperous, our building industry less than explosive and our communities less than stable. It is against this backdrop that we at USGBC-LI look at the silver lining presenting itself. All of us are taking a look at how we do business, budget for the future and make decisions for our families.

I see opportunity in these circumstances for the green building industry to shine. With economies of scale and sustainable design as our foundation, we are poised to make progress in our mission in a big way. And we look forward to bringing all members of the Long Island community into our tent. From individuals to organizations, all are welcome.

Our evolution as an organization continues with the inclusion of some of Long Island's brightest and most talented people. Come and help us affect not only how buildings are constructed, but how we educate our members, how we interface with our local municipalities, and most importantly how we sculpt our children's future.

My own children were the impetus for me joining USGBC, and I am proud to say that being a part of this organization has helped me do something that will positively affect their futures here on Long Island.

Finally, our second annual Building Green Long Island gala is scheduled for March 18. We will showcase two of Long Island's leaders in going green: Babylon town supervisor Steve Bellone, a political leader in developing green initiatives both commercially and residentially; and the Blumenfeld Development Group, which has become an industry-leading development firm that specializes in converting underutilized real estate into vibrant, innovative, progressive spaces that meet the economic and social needs of the community.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet, work and interact with all those individuals and organizations that are committed to making Long Island a better place to live and work.

Art Desin Jr. is the 2009 chair of USGBC-LI.

