

OFF TO A GOOD START • Jeffrey Sydness

"It's a good time to start a firm," believes Jeffrey Sydness, AIA, who recently launched his architecture practice in New York with two major commissions in Shanghai plus other projects Stateside. "I don't feel brave about this. I should have done it 12 years ago."

Sydness has reason to be confident, having helped such previous distinguished employers as Philip Johnson & John Burgee and Swanke Hayden Connell to cope with the vagaries of business. What makes a big difference now is the power of new technology. "With CAD you can take on large-scale projects without the overhead," he notes. "It makes a 10-person firm the equivalent of a 40-person firm 10 years ago." Yet Sydness doesn't feel the architect-client relationship is changing that much. "It's still based on trust," he observes.

He's been preparing for this since age six, drawing house plans and elevations that made people say, "You're going to be an architect," long before getting his M. Arch. from U. of Minnesota, taking off for Boston and locating in New York. Running a firm is still work, of course. "You want the office experience to foster harmony, cooperation and a good time," Sydness insists. "Why else would you be a designer?" True to his word, he also makes a point of enjoying fami-

TAKING THE SOFT PATH • Tom Newhouse

"We've been hideous gluttons," exclaims Tom Newhouse, owner and principal of industrial design and interior architectural consulting firm Thomas J. Newhouse Design. His harsh words reflect his feelings about the lack of environmental consciousness that has prevailed in our country. And his deeds live up to his words.

Working primarily in the fields of furniture design, interior architecture, space planning and major appliance design, Newhouse has incorporated his soft-path ideals into his designs. "There are four things to balance when creating good products," says Newhouse, "aesthetic beauty, ergonomics, affordability and environmental sustainability." Large companies such as Herman Miller and Viking Range Corp. have applauded his efforts and made profits on them, as evidenced by the popularity of his Limerick stacking chair, designed for Herman Miller to be 100% recyclable and affordable.

With a passion to live differently, Newhouse and his wife have resided in an award-winning passive solar, earth-sheltered studio/home that he designed and built in 1978. "West Michigan is a relatively free place to experiment architecturally," claims Newhouse. Here's hoping your separate peace catches on, Tom!



SYDNESS

PANTELO



NEWHOUSE

BRONKAR

ly life with his wife and daughters through sports. It's certainly a good time to be working or playing with Sydness and Company.

DALLAS CHEERLEADER • Judy Pantello

Growing up a Hoosier had a undeniable affect on Judy Pantello, the first new principal named by The Lauck Group in Dallas since 1990. A native of Fort Wayne, Ind., Pantello still recalls her roots though she graduated in 1976 with a B.A. in Interior Design from Ball State U. and moved to Dallas after graduation when her boyfriend got a job there. (They've now been married 17 years.) "Growing up in Indiana instills a strong work ethic," says Pantello.

Her jobs have also schooled her well. After working for a developer of corporate America's real estate, she served two multi-disciplined architecture firms before joining The Lauck Group in 1992 as director of new business development. "I've always wanted to go beyond being an artist," she admits, "to create environments where people live or work." Proof of her success are the VIP clients she has cultivated for the firm, including Mary Kay, Sterling Software, Andersen Consulting and Xerox Corporation.

Pantello enjoys inspiring others to reach their highest potential. "I'm a cheerleader," she declares. "It's important to take your enthusiasm and motivate others." Living in Dallas with her husband, a high school counselor, she relieves stress by gardening and traveling. Although she's dying to revisit Europe, she wants to see a lot more of the USA first. The Hoosier in her knows it's a big country, and someone has to design it.

DON'T PUT IT IN PRINT • Marcie Vesel Bronkar

Don't let the name fool you. Though Los Angeles-based textile designer Marcie Vesel Bronkar enjoyed a reputable career designing residential fabrics and wallcoverings for Martex Pepperell, West Point/Stevens, Springs Industries and P. Kaufmann, her own company, Home Couture, has much to offer the contract market. "I really didn't plan on doing this," admits Bronkar, who trained as both a printmaker and a painter at the Art Students League of New York, RISD and the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts. When first approached about the possibility of transferring her prints to fabrics, she was appalled. "I was a purist fresh out of college," she explains. "But then I realized I could still be creative and get paid for it. That led me to a career as a designer."

After years of creating decorative printed fabrics, she founded Home Couture in 1991 to design woven textiles that emphasize rich colorways, luxurious textures and natural fibers. for contract and residential applications. Her designs are highly influenced by her painting, from which she draws inspiration for color and texture. "It feels good now to do what I believe is beautiful," she says.

A native New Yorker, Bronkar bristles at the term "L.A. designer," but admits being transplanted four years ago has broadened her horizons. "My New York design background is traditional and conservative," she says. "Here I've started to use fabrics in different ways." Her collections include everything from mohairs to sheers that she enjoys mixing unexpectedly. Bronkar will still do custom prints—but only on her own terms. Once a purist... right, Marcie?