

# feedback

Our Summer issue highlighted the 25th anniversary of the transformation of Pittsburgh's downtown red-light district into the region's center for art and culture. We also looked at how the nonprofit Construction Junction turns demolition waste into usable material for construction and home décor, and at how the Endowments' summer internship program helps high school graduates learn about philanthropy and their community.

## **Building Trust** (Summer 2009)

Christine O'Toole's article "Building Trust," about the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's 25th anniversary, perfectly illustrates the vision and creativity of those who sought to convert the city's seedy red-light district into a sophisticated cultural center.

Jack Heinz and a group of smart, creative visionaries built more than just the Cultural District; they also helped to transform Pittsburgh into America's Most Livable City. As the region was reeling from the loss of the steel mills and half its population in the 1970s, Jack Heinz's bold decision to invest in the creation of a world-class cultural scene was a catalyst for the city's second Renaissance. This Renaissance laid the foundation for the administration of my father, Mayor Richard Caliguiri, and forever improved the landscape and image of Pittsburgh.

The fact that a mid-size city like ours has as many wonderful cultural opportunities as it does is not by coincidence, but rather a result of the Trust's continuing vision to pursue an ambitious programming agenda. The energy and vibrancy of the Cultural District today gives Pittsburghers the opportunity to experience first-rate performances, as well as new options for living in a revitalized downtown.

Aside from being mayor, my father had a secret desire to be a tap dancer—though from what I can remember, he wasn't much on his feet. Regardless, he often took my brother and me to see plays, the opera or the symphony. It was his way of teaching us that Pittsburgh was more than just sports and steel. I know I have enjoyed taking my children to experience world-class arts right here in their hometown.

I also know that my father, like Jack Heinz, would be enormously proud of what the Cultural Trust has created in 25 years. I, for one, can't wait to see what it does in its next 25 for an encore.

David J. Caliguiri  
Consultant, GSP Consulting  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## **Stage Craft** (Winter 2009)

"There are no small parts, only small actors," goes a familiar saying among theater folk, though it is frequently uttered with a knowing tone of disbelief. (Oh, yes, there are small roles.) Jeff Sewald's "Stage Craft" article for *h* moves me to adapt the shibboleth, without the cynicism, to "There are no small arts organizations, only small budgets."

From my own experience in the arts and as a theater arts professor, I can tell you that anyone who has managed an arts organization knows there is no direct, positive correlation between the quality of an artistic event and its budget size. If there were, we would never have heard of multi-million-dollar flops on Broadway. Nor is the inverse true: Poverty does not guarantee integrity.

Pittsburgh's small arts community proves again and again the virtues of working small: diversities of size, ethnicity and genre; risk-taking; the discovery of new voices and talents. It is our great fortune that the foundation community has, for a long time, recognized small arts organizations as artisanal providers. A key component of Pittsburgh audiences avidly seeks them out the way some of us go after local produce, homemade pies and free-range chickens.

Foundations, corporations and patrons with discretionary dollars to spend must remember that in tight times, small arts organizations need extra protection because their margin for survival is so narrow. They are our one essential luxury.

Attilio Favorini  
Professor of Theater Arts  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

## **Turning Yellow Buses Green** (Spring 2009)

As described in Christine O'Toole's *h* magazine story "Turning Yellow Buses Green," the importance of retrofitting school buses with pollution controls cannot be overstated. I head Environment and Human Health Inc., a nonprofit composed of doctors, public health professionals and policy experts dedicated to protecting human health from environmental harms through research, education and improving public policy. When our group conducted a 2002 study on school bus pollution, we found that children were exposed to diesel exhaust on their school buses at levels that were five to 10 times higher than the outside ambient air.

At the time of my organization's study, buses were not retrofitted with pollution controls, and they also were allowed to idle. Our report, "Children's Exposure to Diesel Exhaust on School Buses," recommended a ban on school bus idling. This was the cheapest and easiest way to reduce some diesel exposures. Connecticut state legislators passed this law after they saw the exposure data in our report.

Our second recommendation was to retrofit the school buses with pollution controls. We knew that a retrofit program would give the school children the added protection they needed, but we also knew it would take money to accomplish. This is why it was so exciting to see the wonderful *h* magazine article about the retrofit program in the Pittsburgh area.

Congratulations to all for undertaking such important work and protecting children's health.

Nancy Alderman  
President  
Environment and Human Health Inc.  
North Haven, Conn.

*Correction: A photo caption for the "How We Spent Our Summer Vacation" story about the Endowments' youth philanthropy internship misidentified a Marilyn G. Rabb Foundation peace rally.*