

the alliance

always aligned with clients in mind

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Issue ONE

Stage Right

American Players Theatre Turns To Strang For Direction

Environmental Stewardship

Energy Modeling: Smart From The Start

Empirical Design

Mueller Sports Medicine Brings Their Brand To Life



STRANG

Enthusiasm vs.

As we began to develop this, our inaugural issue of *The Alliance*, you can imagine the energy and imagination levels were high. The possibilities appeared without limit; no precedents, no templates – our staff savored that creative challenge. From the outset, our editorial goal was to share some amazing stories about our clients and colleagues here at Strang.

While there was no lack of ideas or enthusiasm, we needed to level a fairly steep learning curve. What to do? As it turned out, we took a cue from Strang's proven project development protocol: Listen ▪ Discover ▪ Design.

■ LISTEN carefully

During the Listening phase, we spoke with countless industry partners and business friends about their ideas. The message was clear: no one is looking to sit down and curl-up with a good newsletter. Keep the content concise, topical, and useful and yes, even entertaining – apparently, it's OK to smile or laugh a little.

The Learning Curve

■ DISCOVER with zeal

During the Discover phase, we uncovered even more truly remarkable insights about our clients. We are fortunate to partner with amazing organizations and we would like to share their stories with you.

■ DESIGN with passion

And finally, during the Design phase, we tested several graphic design and navigation practices. The results follow. We hope you'll approve.

So, what's important?

As with everything at Strang, *The Alliance* eZine will evolve through a focus on our family of clients and colleagues, leadership practices and continual improvement. At the moment, we still have plenty to learn, but we're working on it. Have a great start to the new year. And thanks for your time.

> Stage Right

American Players Theatre is recognized as one of the best classical theater companies anywhere. This story will take you backstage to learn about a redesigned and soon-to-be-constructed stage for the Hill Theatre.



> Empirical Design

Mueller Sports Medicine substantiates the brand's vibe and energy with an unrivaled line of technology-driven products. But behind that technology and partnerships with world-premiere athletes, there remains a heritage built upon unconditional loyalty to family, their hometown and all things UW-Madison Badgers. Here's your chance to meet the Muellers.





American Players Theatre Turns To
Strang For Direction



"This theatre is the heart of APT. It's the physical manifestation of all the poetry, all the artistry and all the beauty that happens every single night."

Brenda DeVita, APT Artistic Director

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."
From Shakespeare's "As You Like It."

All the world may be a stage, but there are few stages where those words resonate as they do at the Hill Theatre at American Players Theatre in Spring Green, Wisconsin.

Haven't been there? In a nutshell, here's what you're missing:

This simple stage tucked into a grove of oak and pine trees is the ultimate setting for watching some of history's greatest plays. The acoustics, combined with stars twinkling between the branches of trees overhead, add allure to an experience that is, in a word, magical.

"We love this little bowl in the hillside," said APT Artistic Director Brenda DeVita, who calls it her favorite spot on earth. "We can make our woods Shakespeare's woods, and we can play under the same stars Shakespeare played under."

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The Hill Theatre won't appear to change much after a renovation. But it will be safer and much more user friendly for actors at American Players Theatre.



APT'S STAGE (CONTINUED)

Problem is, they can't play on this stage forever. Years of use, harsh Wisconsin winters and age have all taken their toll on the structure and now it's time to rebuild.

But, before we get into all that, let's take a look back at APT's history.

American Players Theatre was formed at this hill near Spring Green, Wisconsin in 1978 and opened to its first audience in 1980. For the first decade or so, the venue drew about 50,000 people each year. But in the last 10 years, attendance has been in the 105,000 to 110,000 range. APT set a new mark last year with 114,500 people.

In 1995 - 15 years after it opened – the stage was rebuilt on a limited budget. There have been a

series of upgrades over the years, including a full renovation of the amphitheater in 2000. But that was 15 years ago.

So in order to once again make the stage safe for the players and viable for APT's future, it needs to be rebuilt again.

A challenging project you ask? You bet there are challenges. APT leadership had to raise the money, design a structurally sound facility, and complete it in time for the 2017 season.

The fundraising is being handled through APT's capital campaign: "The Next Great Stage." Difficult, but do-able since APT has a great product, a great need and a wonderful marketing campaign video.



[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

The design work is being entrusted to Strang, which designed APT's indoor Touchstone Theatre in 2009.

This project happens to be a bit different. This project is about making all the necessary improvements without losing the quaint ambiance people have come to love about the Hill Theatre. In other words, update the theatre but don't lose the magic.

This is important to APT. Just ask Brenda.

"This theatre – this Hill – is the heart of APT. It's the physical manifestation of all the poetry, all the artistry and all the beauty that happens every single night here under the stars," she said.

Suffice to say, rebuilding the stage would not be taken lightly. The goal was to make improvements in a way that people wouldn't necessarily notice what was done to the stage, but they would notice that it's better.

Strang was selected for the work, partly because APT had such a good experience working with the company in designing the Touchstone. DeVita noticed that Strang designers valued listening – not only to what APT wanted the Touchstone to look like, but to how APT wanted to build it.

This project, of course, is nothing like designing a new theatre. Rebuilding the Hill Theatre will take a mixture of creativity, engineering precision and

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APT'S STAGE (CONTINUED)

a sensitivity to preserving the intangible feeling that exudes from each performance.

“This is their home, and as is the case with anyone’s home, this should be treated with care,” said Strang Senior Project Manager Mark Bastian.

APT has a list of objectives for this project: rebuild the stage and its capabilities; improve audience sightlines and upgrade acoustics; upgrade the lobby areas to be more accessible; and expand and improve backstage areas.

The result is that directors and designers won’t

be limited to creating sets that fit into small backstage storage areas. Actors and crew members won’t be crowded together before, during and after shows. Audience members will be able to see and hear the shows better.

“If we can fix these issues behind the scenes, we can have a safer, happier company and a better experience for everyone,” APT Production Manager Michael Broh said.

It should also keep the cast, crew and audience happy for years to come at APT. And, of course, keep the magic of The Hill DeVita loves so much.

>>> Please consider joining Strang in support of the Ronald McDonald House Charities, Madison



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A Milestone Anniversary!



> Larry Barton Marks 30 Years At Strang

For architect Larry Barton, the last 30 years have gone faster than an Eddie Van Halen guitar lick.

It was 1985 when Larry began working at Strang as a CAD operator. Now he finds himself as President of the firm and wondering where the time has gone.

“I’ve been here a long time, but I still have that youthful spirit of a 20-year-old.”

When he was 20, Larry was working in construction and playing guitar in a band. But he was driven to accomplish more. So he quit his job, enrolled at Madison Area Technical College, and relied on income from his music to pay his tuition.

Strang provided the perfect outlet for his ambition. He credits the company for providing him opportunities and continuing to keep his enthusiasm alive.

“Even after 30 years, I still get excited about the future of Strang.”



Top: A Strang rendering of part of the addition at Mueller Sports Medicine in Prairie Du Sac. The company's founder played basketball for the Wisconsin Badgers in the 1950s.

empirical design

➤ Strang Helps To Bring The
Mueller Sports Brand To Life

Curt Mueller is quite proud of his family, his hometown and alma-mater.

And when you get to know Curt and his family a little better, you'll understand why. Let's crack open the family photo album and meet the Muellers.

Curt was born in Alma, Wisconsin and grew up just north of Madison, in the small town of Prairie du Sac. How small you ask? An old black-and-white photo from the mid-1940's shows sheep being herded through the downtown district. This is the same downtown where Curt's father, Oliver, ran the Mueller Pharmacy, one of the many independent Walgreens franchises during the 1950s.

Curt, a tall, lanky teenager with curly hair, was athletic enough to earn a varsity letter playing basketball for the Wisconsin Badgers while studying for a pharmacy degree. He was among that rare breed of multi-talented students. You know the type: smart, athletic, handsome. A small-town guy with a big personality.

An image frozen-in-time tells the story better than words – Curt on UW's home court, nimbly laying the ball toward the hoop over the outstretched arms of defenders. The next picture, shot after graduation, shows Curt and his father in the pharmacy: the curly-haired young man in a white lab coat standing beside his bespectacled father.

While he found great satisfaction working along with his father, Curt's passion for sports never waned.

Soon – and this is where the story gets almost too good to be true – Curt found a way to combine his interests in both pharmacy and sports by developing a new business in the basement of his father's drug store. You can't get more humble than starting out in the basement.

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MUELLER SPORTS (CONTINUED)

But Curt was on his way to creating a new retail category – Sport Care®. He would eventually sell the pharmacy as his business took off. His would become a true American success story.

His first products were Muellergesic and Hot Stuff Analgesic Balm. Other early products included Mtape, Mwrap, the Medi-kit trainer's kit and Quench Mist. Eventually, he developed Quench Gum, a line of patented braces and supports and a variety of sports medicine products for athletes in all sports. They included products like Stickum (spray or paste) that was popular in the NFL in the 1970s.

Among his first customers were high schools, Division I colleges and two of the oldest NFL teams – the Green Bay Packers and the Chicago Bears. When Curt began national distribution of his products, one of his first dealers was Badger Sporting Goods. Soon he was selling to retailers like Herman's

World of Sporting Goods and MC Sports.

Today, Mueller Sports Medicine products are sold to athletes of all ages in 109 countries, most Division I NCAA schools, and every NFL and NBA team.

While Curt's dream had become a multi-million-dollar international corporation, he remained in Prairie du Sac and kept his family closely involved. Curt is CEO. One son, Brett, is the company president. Another son, Jeff, is vice-president. Curt's daughter, Ginger Mueller-Mann, is vice president of the company's western region.

This generation of Muellers shares their father's pride. So it should really be no surprise they want to put their story on display at their company headquarters in Prairie du Sac.

The family told Strang designers their idea:



Renovate a warehouse into a showroom highlighting four elements of the company: pharmacies; sporting goods stores; sports teams; and international clients.

"What's really cool is how they were able to fit it all into this space and design it in a way that doesn't feel forced."

Brett Mueller, President, Mueller Sports Medicine



A throwback to simpler times? Sure. A sense of pride in family history? Definitely. Loyalty to UW sports? You bet.

The challenge for Strang was how to incorporate these elements in a 3,500-square-foot showroom. The solution was a tried-and-true visual technique.

Strang designers used forced perspective to make themes such as the inside of the Kohl Center (the Badgers' basketball home) come alive in a room that seats a couple dozen

people. The seating area is designed after the VIP seating area called the Buckingham Club at Camp Randall Stadium. The finishing touch is an 84-inch monitor designed to look like the top of the jumbo-tron at the Kohl Center.

"It's a very dramatic visual effect in a very small space," explained Strang Principal Architect Peter Tan.

Designers also created two facades of the

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Mueller Sports (continued)

UW Fieldhouse and Camp Randall Stadium as partitions between the various spaces.

The original Mueller Pharmacy storefront is set up next to the Badger Sporting Goods store. And an open area with tables and chairs is adorned from above with flags from the 109 countries in which Mueller does business. The back wall is a mural of Memorial Union Terrace on the UW campus.

A mural of downtown Prairie du Sac taken during the early years of the pharmacy business

brings visitors back in time. It has the same impact on the Mueller family.

“To see how far we’ve come, from my grandfather’s pharmacy to the years of building the business and involvement with the athletes, teams and the University of Wisconsin, it’s really quite a lot to take in,” said Brett Mueller.

“What’s really cool is how they were able to fit it all into this space and design it in a way that doesn’t feel forced. It makes us feel at home.”

>>> Please consider joining Strang in support of the United Way of Dane County

MORE PEOPLE ARE ON PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

With your gifts, United Way is providing job training, employment, housing, and early childhood support to young families to break the cycle of poverty.

Help us do more.
unitedwaydanecounty.org



United Way
of Dane County



Strang Celebrates 80 Years

> Friends, Associates, Colleagues Gather For A Historic Event

When we gathered our friends, clients and colleagues to celebrate our anniversary with us, the room began to buzz with laughter and great conversation. These people are the secret ingredient to our success and longevity. We hope you enjoyed the evening as much as we did. To the past 80 years and our bright future – Cheers!



Above: Strang engineer Scott Wheaton greets guests at the Alliant Energy Center; Above right: Strang President Larry Barton thanks those who have been party of Strang's history. Right: Guests and Strang associates enjoy the camaraderie.



SMART FROM THE START



Using energy modeling software, Strang engineers created this rendering of Summit Credit Union in Franklin, WI. It shows the simulated solar energy intensity over a one-year period and the impact of vertical shading devices.



ENERGY MODELING EMPOWERS
DESIGNERS TO KNOW NOW

Sunshine may be the last thing you think about when you're planning a new office building. At Strang, it's typically one of the first.

You see, it's in the earliest stages of design that Strang's Energy Modeling has the greatest impact on making a building comfortable and efficient.

There are many ways to measure the impact of the sun. Its warm glow does wonders for office morale, until it heats up the office like a sauna and you have to spend money cooling the air in the middle of winter.

It's these sorts of considerations that are met head on with Energy Modeling, a unique software tool Strang employs at the earliest stages of every project to best meet the building owner's objectives.

It does much more than just address solar issues. This suite of software

programs allows our experts to identify, analyze, and select the most sustainable building forms, site orientations, materials, construction practices and engineering systems for a specific facility.

Joss Hurford

Director | Energy Modeling +
Conservation



“For the best results, we like to consider these things before we settle on a particular form,” said Joss Hurford, Strang’s Director of Energy Modeling and Conservation. “Once the form of the building is determined, we’re limited with making improvements from energy modeling.”

In all cases, energy modeling results are customized based on the type of facility, the size of the building and the site. And they mean much more when the results come early in the design process and changes can be considered.

NOTEBOOK

> Strang Scouts Lead The Pack

Two members of Strang passed the leadership torch at Madison's Boy Scout Troop 122.



Peter Tan, Principal Design Architect at Strang, stepped down as Scoutmaster during the annual Court of Honor ceremony and handed the post to Alec Hembree, another member of Strang's architecture team.

Alec, an Eagle Scout, is atypical of most scoutmasters because he is not a parent.

> Strang Pedals For Boys And Girls

Pedaling hard under the hot July sun, a team of 11 bicycle riders from Strang raised nearly \$2,500 for the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County this past summer.

The riders from Team Strang were among hundreds of participants



of all ages and abilities riding either 8, 25 or 50 miles. Two members of the team rode the 50-mile course, while the other nine rode 25 miles.

Out-of-town clients often ask us to suggest eateries in Madison. Here's some pizza places our staff recommends:

What's your **F**AVORITE **P**IZZA PLACE

in the Madison area?



Jill Ruffridge, Human Resources:

"Greenbush Bar! I've only been there once and need to get back – it was 'memorable' pizza."



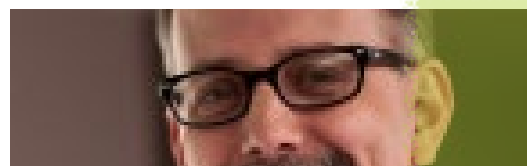
Britt Madelung, Interiors:

"One of my favorites is Café Porta Alba at Hilldale. They have delicious wood-fired Neapolitan style pizza."



Matt Hahn, Marketing:

"I would have to say Dahmen's Pizza Place. It's a great family-owned business."



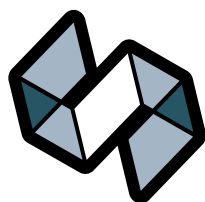
Wayne Whiting, Architecture:

"Angelo's Italian Restaurant in McFarland. Great People, great service, and great pizza!"

Let us know your favorite pizza place in Madison. We'll run some of the responses in a future issue. Visit our website or email pgill@strang-inc.com

www.strang-inc.com

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