

## Top Wilmington Architectural Firm Goes to the Dogs

One of the latest projects of Delaware architectural firm Bernardon Haber Holloway has literally “gone to the dogs,” receiving top honors for charity at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Barkitecture Competition at the Chase Center on the Wilmington Riverfront in May.



Wilmington, DE June 1, 2006 – Many people consider themselves “lucky dogs” to land a building designed by one of Delaware’s top architectural firms, Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects PC (BHH), known for designing state-of-the-art office complexes, senior care facilities, industrial complexes, and golf and country clubs in the Mid-Atlantic region.

With offices in Wilmington, Delaware as well as Kennett Square and Downingtown, Pennsylvania, BHH has won awards for designing such projects as the Fieldstone Golf Club, Greenville, DE; Amtrak Training Center, Wilmington, DE; preservation of the Indian River Lifesaving Station Complex, Bethany Beach, DE; and; Spring Run at Willow Valley, Lancaster, PA, to name a few.

Just for fun, however, the firm decided to roll up its sleeves this spring and complete a project just for dogs, in hopes of raising money for a local animal welfare agency, Faithful Friends, a Wilmington-based operation that offers spay and neuter programs, community pet education programs and a “no-kill” adoption policy for hard-to-adopt pets.

Faithful Friends partnered with the Delaware Chapter of the American Institute of Architects to hold the **Barkitecture Gala - Doghouse and Cat-Condo Competition** on May 20, 2006 at the Chase Center in Wilmington, and 19 of the structures were auctioned off to benefit the animal charity. A panel of seven judges (including two four-footed ones) awarded the BHH entry the “Best in Show” award, and the house was auctioned for the second-highest bid (\$775) and donated back to Faithful Friends. Guests at the Gala also voted to give it the “People’s Chews Award” for the most popular design.

A team from BHH volunteered their time in the evenings to design and construct the dog house, entitled “Bone-I-Fide Cottage,” which took about 12 weeks from start to finish.

“Time management was quite a challenge,” noted project designer Mike Welz, who helped oversee the construction of the doggie-sized cottage. “We had five to seven people on it during the construction phase, with everyone contributing nights after work. It took about a month to conceptualize, a month to draw up, and a month to construct—and we were still working on it up to the moment it was taken to the competition—but it was worth all the hours we put into it to see it go for such a good cause.”

When asked what part of the project was the most fun, Mike Welz felt that “getting into the client’s head” was the most intriguing aspect.

“Try to figure out what a dog would like...that ended up being quite creative,” he said. He also observed that seeing the design process through construction and finished product in so short a term was quite satisfying—a micro process as compared to a large building, which might take years to complete.

BHH founder Art Bernardon was also pleased with the results of the competition. “We’re really proud of all the hard work from our staff and the team that put this together,” he said. “Teamwork is the reason it came off so well, and I can’t say enough about these volunteers—in my mind they’re all ‘top dogs.’”

In an unusual twist, one of the firm’s earlier projects received recognition at Barkitecture as well. While attending the auction, a competitor’s design called “The Salty Dog” caught the eye of BHH marketing coordinator, Diana Gonzalez. It was a replica of the Indian River Life Saving Station in Bethany Beach, Delaware, which BHH helped to renovate and restore.

“Two 10<sup>th</sup> grade students of the Charter School of Wilmington designed it,” said Gonzalez. “The moment we saw it we knew we had to bid on it. Between bidding on that house and designing our own, we very much enjoyed the Barkitecture experience. It’s a wonderful cause, and a fun way to give back to the community.”

Contact:

**Diana Gonzalez**  
**Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects PC**  
[www.bernardon.com](http://www.bernardon.com)  
**610-444-7879**  
[dgonzalez@bernardon.com](mailto:dgonzalez@bernardon.com)