

# WM|AIA news

Newsletter of the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

## Grassroots 2010: Design as Inspiration, Engagement, Collaboration

By Jeremy Toal AIA

Inspiration, engagement, and collaboration were the themes of this year's AIA Grassroots Conference held in Washington DC from February 3 through 5.

Inspiration, for me, came mostly in the form of beautiful, white snow. The first flakes fell as my plane touched down in Baltimore and followed me along the highway while I shuttled to DC. When I arrived at the conference site in the late evening, there was already an inch on the ground and it was coming down fast. It inspired me to forgo mindless channel surfing on the insanely large flat-screen in the room and take a late night walk in our nation's Capitol. (Exploring cities late at night is a habit that began while living and studying abroad in Florence, Italy, and has turned out to be one that's difficult to give up.) It had been twenty years since I was last in DC, and I had become an architect during that time. I wandered around the Capitol District for a couple of hours, the snow piling up on my hair (I didn't bring a winter hat...who knew I would need one in DC?), taking in the silent sights – white stone monuments, bathed in pink light, sparkling with the new snow. Then back to my room...busy day tomorrow...

The Conference officially began for me on Wednesday morning, with a pre-conference workshop called "Mastering Collaborative Leadership". The session used the classic film 12 Angry Men as a study in group dynamics and leadership. (Not coincidentally, the "hero" of the film is an architect, played by Henry Fonda.) It was a great exercise - digesting the film in 10 or 15 minute sections and dissecting the various jurors positions, expressions, and tactics to highlight collaborative leadership techniques that work and those which alienate and undermine the work of the group. I found the session to be fascinating and the concepts applicable to many situations from the conference table to the dining room table.

Still on the topic of collaboration, I did have the opportunity to connect with many of the great leaders and executive committee members of our neighboring



Grassroots Footnotes cartoon drawing by Peter Kuttner FAIA President of Cambridge Seven Associates and AIA Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

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## OUR NEWS

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components in the region. While the New England crew dined together at Old Ebbitt Grill – DC’s oldest saloon – I was able to hear how one chapter leverages committees to accomplish goals and implement programs, and discuss how another chapter measures their success in delivering professional development programs to their members. I also had the great surprise of running into an old college friend, now practicing in PA and President of the Hershey Chapter. We caught up over a few drinks and he shared how he set up a lecture series, bringing in star designers to talk to local architects. (He would also want me to let you know that our Alma-Mater, Syracuse University, currently has the number one ranked basketball team in the country – Go, Orangemen!)

Ok...on to engagement, and one of the primary purposes of the conference. Beyond the cultivation of leadership at all levels of the organization, the Grassroots Conference is also about engagement in the profession at the highest levels. This means participation in the legislative process through advocacy for the profession and the built environment. This year’s advocacy agenda was designed to address the current priorities on Capitol Hill – job creation and economic stimulus. The message was, in a nut-shell, that architects are problem-solvers, and that our work can help create stronger, healthier, and more sustainable communities. The Legislative Affairs team came up with a plan – literally – The AIA Blueprint for Economic Recovery 2010. This blueprint (seen at right, displayed by our own Erica Rioux Gees AIA, in front of the Capitol) outlined five recommendations aimed at helping struggling communities to rebuild, freeing up credit for commercial projects, expanding energy-efficient commercial building tax deductions,



Erica Rioux Gees AIA  
photo by Jeremy Toal AIA

providing relief for small businesses, and supporting funding for school modernization; all of which would not only help to build better communities and reduce carbon emissions, but would also put many thousands of people in the architecture and construction industries back to work. So, hundreds of architects from all over the country streamed out of Metro cars toward Capitol Hill with these wonderful blueprints, drawn by the BSA’s own Peter Kuttner FAIA, to

meet with our elected representatives (or at least their surprisingly young congressional aides).

My experienced partner Erica and I first met with one of Congressman Olver’s aides, who was already well versed in the issues. We were preaching to the choir. Erica had a committee meeting to attend, so I was on my own for the next meeting with one of Congresswoman Tsongas’ aides. I had some time to kill between meetings, so Erica recommended I check out the cafeteria in the basement of the Congressional office building. As I walked into the bustling cafeteria, who should I see walking straight towards me but Congressman Olver! I had met and spoken with him a couple of times a few years ago when he was engaged in an initiative to explore economic development opportunities for towns in his district along the Route 2 corridor. I approached the Congressman, introduced myself, reminded him that we had spoken before, explained that I had just finished meeting with his aide, and briefly summarized the points of the AIA Blueprint for Economic Recovery. We talked there in the cafeteria for several minutes, leaning against the condiment table, and I came away feeling good that our Congressman would take time to speak openly with a constituent, unscheduled and unscripted.

By the time I got back up to the



Grassroots Footnotes  
cartoon drawing by Peter Kuttner FAIA President of Cambridge Seven Associates and AIA Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

hotel for the rest of the afternoon's meetings and presentations, talk of the impending blizzard approaching DC was beginning to take a very serious tone. "Stormageddon" was approaching and all indications were that DC was going to be completely shut down by late Friday afternoon. My flight home was scheduled for Friday evening (not good). Once again, the snow was inspiring....inspiring me to get out of town. I got ahead of the curve and was able to find a seat on an earlier flight. I made it out before the city was buried and shut down for the better part of four days. I did, however, miss the entire slate of workshops and peer group meetings scheduled for Friday, which was definitely disappointing.

All in all, the 2010 AIA Grassroots Conference was a great experience for me. I came away inspired, engaged, and ready to collaborate, and I would love to hear from our membership - What WMAIA program and initiative would inspire you? How would you like to engage our community? What organizations should we be collaborating with? I can be reached at [jeremyt@dietzarch.com](mailto:jeremyt@dietzarch.com).

## DSB Inquiry

By Lorin Starr Affiliate WMAIA, WMAIA Executive Director

In recent months, several WMAIA members have contacted me with concerns regarding the Massachusetts Designer Selection Board (DSB) process. For those who don't deal with the Designer Selection Board let me explain that the DSB is an autonomous eleven member board that selects designers for public building construction throughout the Commonwealth. Eight members are appointed by the Governor, three of whom are registered architects, three registered engineers, and two representatives of the public who are not architect designers, engineers, or construction contractors.

Three additional members are appointed by the following professional societies: AIA Massachusetts (AIAMass), the Massachusetts Society of Professional Engineers (MSPE) and the Associated General Contractors (AGC).

The concern of our members centered on the number of state projects in our region that are awarded to architects from outside the region. As a result of these members' inquiries, I contacted Gordon P. Sainsbury AIA, RIBA, Director of the DSB and explained our concerns. In particular I pointed out that "geographic location of the firm with respect to the proposed project" is one of the criteria for selection. I also asked for more transparency in the selection process - in particular posting of project awards. The DSB stands behind the transparency of their process noting that "minutes are public information and the firms are...published in the Central Register following their selection."

As a follow-up to this inquiry, I would like to consider holding a meeting in our region with the AIAMass member of the DSB to give members a chance to ask direct questions about the designer selection process. I will arrange for this program if there is sufficient interest among members. Please contact me at [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org) if you feel this would be useful to you.

Here are recent statistics regarding DSB award of projects in the western MA region for calendar year 2009:

- Number of projects advertised: 11
- Of projects advertised, those applied to by western MA architects: 8
- Number of western MA projects awarded to western MA architects: 3

## WMAIA NEWS

The Western Mass. Chapter of the American Institute of Architects publishes WMAIA News four times a year. It is circulated to all members, advertisers and subscribers.

Please direct all newsletter correspondence to Erika Zekos Associate AIA, Editor, Studiozed, 40 Hulst Road, Amherst, MA 01002 (413) 559-0224, [studiozed@comcast.net](mailto:studiozed@comcast.net).

Articles, photos, notices of events and other information are welcome.

Opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the WMAIA. The Editor reserves the right to reject or revise material as space and subjective opinion permit.

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For more information on the WMAIA Chapter, please contact Lorin Starr, Executive Director at [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org).

## HERS at a PACE

By Thomas RC Hartman AIA

WMAIA and AIA Mass have been working over the past year or more with our building industry colleagues to advance the common acceptance of Home Energy Rating Systems. I've written a couple of articles in this newsletter and elsewhere and am starting to be contacted by various constituents around the country. There is a groundswell of activity and a rich diversity of ideas and approaches to what is essentially a common and critical goal: *How do we, as states and as a nation, understand, design, finance, and act on improving the efficiency, health and comfort of our existing and new housing stock.*

Last Fall I was surprised by a short, thoughtful, and potent report from the Vice President. The report was issued in October of 2009 and is titled "Recovery through Retrofit" and can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Recovery\\_Through\\_Retrofit\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Recovery_Through_Retrofit_Final_Report.pdf).

### From the report:

#### Barriers to a National Retrofit Market

Despite the economic and environmental benefits of improving home energy efficiency, a series of barriers have prevented a self-sustaining retrofit market from forming, including:

1. Access to Information: Consumers do not have access to straightforward and reliable information on home energy retrofits that they need to make informed decisions.
2. Access to Financing: Homeowners face high upfront costs and many are concerned that they will be prevented from recouping the value of their investment if they choose to sell their home. The upfront costs of home retrofit projects are often beyond the average homeowner's budget.

**Energy Efficiency Components Label  
with Simplified Prescriptive Path Listing**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMPONENTS		
Address: _____		<b>Insulation* Value</b>
Ceiling	Flat	R- 49
	Vaulted	R- _____
Walls:	Above grade walls	R- 21
	Basement walls (finished)	R- 11
	Crawlspace foundation	R- 20
Floors:	Over unheated spaces	R- 21
	Perimeter slab	R- 13
	Under slab	R- _____
Exterior doors:		R- _____
Windows:	NFRC unit rating (or)	U- .35
	Default window rating	U- _____
Water heater:	Energy factor (EF) rating	.54
Heating system:	Energy efficiency rating	78%
	(AFUE for gas; HSPF heat pump)	
Heating ducts:	Systems sealed Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No _____	
	In non-conditioned areas	
	Insulated Supply R-8 Return R- 6	
Other (i.e., ventilation systems, radon abatement) _____		
Insulation Subcontractor _____		
Certified by: _____ Date: _____		
Builder (Company): _____		
<small>The home builder certifies compliance with ARM 24.301.162 by completing and signing this label.</small>		
<b>THIS LABEL MUST BE PERMANENTLY AFFIXED BY HOME BUILDERS TO THE INTERIOR BREAKER PANEL ON ALL NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 50-60-803, MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED</b>		

When shopping for a new home or planning to build one, consider what you want to see on this label when the house is finished. You want the highest R-values and the lowest U-values you can afford.

Montana's new-home energy label

3. Access to Skilled Workers: There are currently not enough skilled workers and green entrepreneurs to expand weatherization and efficiency retrofit programs on a national scale.

In December, I learned that the State of Montana has been requiring home builders to place a basic information sticker on the electric panel since 1995! They have a great resource of information and guide books at <http://www.deq.mt.gov/Energy/default.mcp.x>.

Outlined in the Harvard Business Review "Breakthrough Ideas for 2010", a relatively new concept is spreading across the country that facilitates the financing needs described in the Vice President's report. The concept is PACE financing, or Property Assessed Clean Energy.

From the Pace Now website [www.pacenow.org](http://www.pacenow.org):

A PACE bond is a bond where the

proceeds are lent to commercial and residential property owners to finance energy retrofits (efficiency measures and small renewable energy systems) and who then repay their loans over 20 years via an annual assessment on their property tax bill. PACE bonds can be issued by municipal financing districts or finance companies and the proceeds can be typically used to retrofit both commercial and residential properties.

In Oregon, a similar but different metric from HERS has been developed and is called the Energy Performance Score. A report is available at [www.earthadvantage.org/eps.php](http://www.earthadvantage.org/eps.php) from August 2009 and states the following:

The goal of the Energy Performance Score (EPS) 2008 Pilot was to find an effective, accurate, and cost effective method and set of tools to calculate and report on a home's energy performance. The pilot drew upon the United Kingdom's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) program that measures and reports on home energy use and associated carbon emissions. The EPC includes a score sheet graphically depicting energy use and carbon emissions and a multipage report describing energy improvements that can be made to lower energy use and costs.

Lastly, here in our Commonwealth, we have movement at the state level to put PACE financing into action. I've been forwarded the following bill, but am not certain of its current status as of this writing.

"An Act Relative to energy efficiency of residential properties"

SECTION 56. Section 7 of chapter 44 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2008 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after paragraph (3B) ...really, I'll spare you the rest.

In the coming months, WMAIA will be organizing a "summit", or potentially two, that invites the various industry

stakeholders to an evening meeting to discuss these initiatives with the goal of building a common understanding of what we think can be accomplished to readily improving the efficiency, health and comfort of our existing and new housing stock. Wright Builders has generously offered to sponsor the event and it is now in the formative planning stages. Please contact me at **Tom@ColdhamAndHartman.com** if you have suggestions, ideas, or experiences that can be of assistance.

## New Website Service

WMAIA is pleased to announce that we are now listing job openings on our website.

Contact Julie Waggoner at **jwaggoner@micablue.com** to learn about posting a job for your firm. And be sure to check **www.wmaia.org** regularly for a listing of job openings in the area.

## WMAIA Design Awards 2010

WMAIA is pleased to announce its Design Awards 2010.

Every other year, the WMAIA Design Awards showcase the work of architects in our region.

Eligible projects are any building type anywhere in the world completed in the last ten years where the architecture firm/architect-of-record has its principal office in Western Massachusetts.

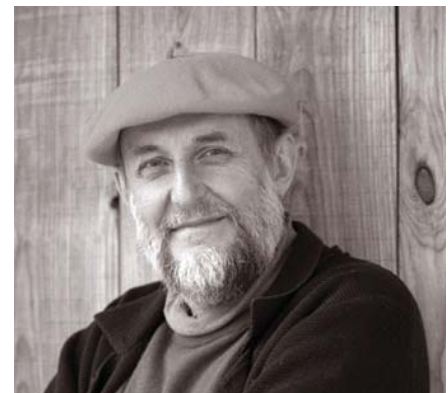
The deadline for submission will be June 30, 2010.

A Call for Entries will be posted on our website (**www.wmaia.org**) and mailed shortly.

## Bruce Coldham Elevated to FAIA

In February, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) elevated 134 architects to its prestigious College of Fellows, an honor awarded to members who have made contributions of national significance to the profession. One of our own, Bruce Coldham of Coldham & Hartman Architects of Amherst, Massachusetts, was elected to receive this honor because of his contributions to the practice of architecture. Bruce Coldham was an early leader in an integrated design approach to producing durable, verifiably high-performance, resource-conserving buildings. Additionally, he pioneered the establishment of co-housing as a viable housing option in the eastern U.S.

Out of a membership of more than 84,000, there are fewer than 2,600 AIA members distinguished with the honor of fellowship (WMAIA now has seven members who are FAIA!). It is conferred on architects with at least 10 years of membership in the AIA who have made significant contributions in the following areas: the aesthetic, scientific, and practical efficiency of the profession; the standards of architectural education, training, and practice; the building industry through leadership in the AIA and other related professional organizations; advancement of living standards of people through an improved environment; and to society through significant public service.



## Support for WMAIA Associate Members:

### Andrea Olson to Lead Chapter's IDP Effort

WMAIA is pleased to announce that Andrea Olson Associate AIA has been named IDP Coordinator for our chapter. Andrea, a 2009 graduate of UMass' M.Arch. Program, will work with others who are working toward their registration requirements. By having a local IDP Coordinator we hope to provide better access to AIA resources to those working toward registration in our region. Many thanks to Andrea for taking on this effort! Please contact Andrea at **andreaolson@hotmail.com** if you are interested in joining the IDP group.

### ARE Study Group

by Caroline Petrovick

I am happy to announce that our ARE study group is rolling along. We took exams in March and April and we are still looking for more group members for the remaining exams. Our group tentatively has four members for the May exam. Please contact me if you would like to join the group in May or if you are interested in joining a future group.

To help with this study group, I am still attempting to start an ARE study library. If anyone has used ARE books or flashcards that they would be willing to lend to aspiring architects or if you are in a similar study rut and need some motivation and/or empathy, please contact me at **caroline@coldhamandhartman.com**.

# HONORS

## Smart Growth Awards: Sustainable-Equitable-SMART!

WMAIA, in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Valley Development Council, launched a Smart Growth Ideas Competition this fall to generate ideas for three real sites in the region. The winners were announced on April 26th at the Kittredge Center at Holyoke Community College. In case you missed the event, here are a few images from the winning project submissions and a selection of juror comments. WMAIA would like to thank Erica Rioux Gees AIA for her commitment to organizing this project. A summary publication showcasing all of the winners will be available soon on the competition website, [www.valleyideas.org](http://www.valleyideas.org) and through [www.wmaia.org](http://www.wmaia.org).

## SOUTHAMPTON

### 1ST PLACE: Southampton Village Center

Kraus-Fitch Architects, Amherst, MA & Walter Cudnohufsky Associates, Ashfield, MA (Laura E. Fitch AIA, Karelt De La Cruz, Jennifer Luck, Walter Cudnohufsky)

#### Jury Comments:

- This entry is the best in thinking through how to make a village center - it slows people down, makes connections, works for pedestrians.
- Interesting that one side of street is traditional side walk, and other side has broader paving (small plazas) for book fairs, etc. The small commercial entities with small plazas is much more "Southampton-ish" than other entries.
- Love the postcard quality of rendering.



### 2ND PLACE: Bet on the Farm

Glickman Schlesinger Design Office, Brooklyn, NY (Lauren Schlesinger Associate AIA, Adam Glickman AIA)

#### Jury Comments:

- Good theme for Southampton. Good connectivity with village center. Builds local identity.
- Rendering of farmers market is very successful/effective bike racks, etc. are nicely developed.



### 3RD PLACE: Smart Growth Concepts

Philip D. Burdick AIA, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning, Springfield, MA

#### Jury Comments:

- Reinforced main street took advantage of views and greenspace.
- Locating active senior housing on the more flat part of site is appropriate.



## Smart Growth Competition Jury



Our jurors met on March 5th to review the competition entries. There was spirited debate and an overall appreciation for the quality of the ideas and level of complexity that was presented. The jurors noted that every board offered, “useful design strategies that could form the basis of a best practices guide” They also appreciated the diversity of the three sites and congratulated the competition organizers on a job well done.

From left to right: Donna Salloom, MA DEPH; Kathleen Dorgan, AIA, LEED-AP; Mark Abramson, President, REALTOR® Association of Pioneer Valley, CCIM, GREEN, CBR; Robert P. Mitchell, FAICP; André Leroux  
photo by Lorin Starr Affiliate WMAIA

## HADLEY

### 1ST PLACE: A New Vision for Hadley

Classic Colonial Homes, Inc. (Lance Kirley, Keith Kirley, Aaron Helfand), Leverett, MA

#### Jury Comments:

- Deserves award for presenting transition to future. Suggests a land use pattern and design along Route 9 that shows there can actually be some well-thought-out realistic development.
- Shared parking for retail and housing units along Route 9 is good strategy.
- Submission has best appreciation of local history and aesthetic.

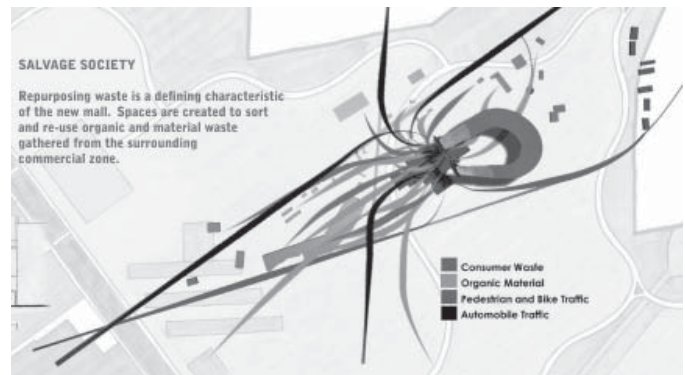


### 2ND PLACE: Salvage Society

UMass Amherst Student Team A (Dorrie Anne Brooks, James Fiore, John Edward Hulsey)

#### Jury Comments:

- Really appreciated the “let’s-fix-the-mall-and-make-it-work” idea, rather than destroying mall. Improving upon what’s already there is a great approach.
- Appreciated ideas of starting with the deteriorating resources and thinking about food production.

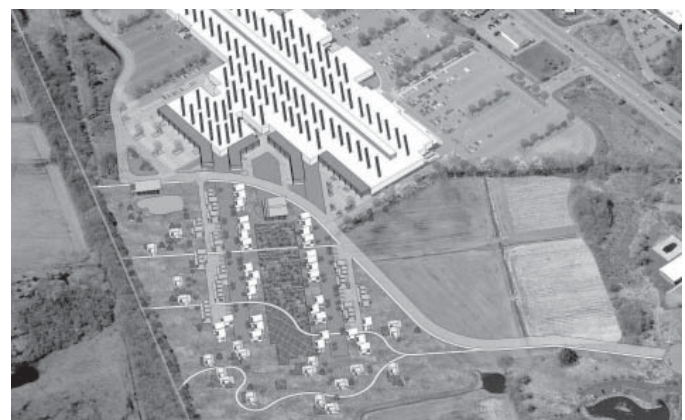


### 3RD PLACE: Cultivating a Viable Community

LDa Architecture & Interiors, Cambridge, MA (Treff LaFleche AIA, Doug Dick AIA, Mike Waters AIA, Kimberly Barnett)

#### Jury Comments:

- Strong idea to put a front on the back of the mall and re-orient it towards the new development - developing back of mall is an excellent concept.
- Nice scale of residential development - it’s feasible, seems most appropriate to this community.



### HONORABLE MENTION: Agritopia Green

Dodson Associates, Ltd., Ashfield, MA (Harry Dodson, Peter Flinker, Brock Cutting, Hillary King)

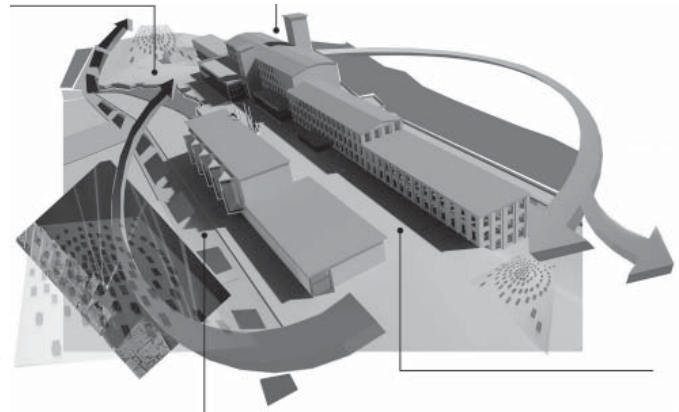
## PALMER

### 1ST PLACE: Succession at the Thorndike Mill

Coldham&Hartman Architects, Amherst, MA  
(Coldham&Hartman Architects with Cecilia Valinotto, Hernan Barufaldi)

#### Jury Comments:

- Realistic scale of intervention and inspirational project. Amazing visions of what could transpire and how the site transforms.
- Great idea to turn industrial elements into focal-point sculpture.
- This scheme could work as artists' colony - there already are important blocks to build with in existence on site now.



### 2ND PLACE: Thorndike Village

Teng-Yen Lin, Boston, MA

#### Jury Comments:

- Lovely images and sense of celebration. Would be exciting to watch the future transition.
- Well thought-out bike lanes and transportation.



### 3RD PLACE: Energy Thorndike Mill Reuse Project

Philip D. Burdick AIA, Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Planning, Springfield, MA

#### Jury Comments:

- Really worked with geography/topography well.
- Overall site plan is successful - things in sensible locations, housing supporting mixed use, parking reasonable.



### HONORABLE MENTION: Smart Growth & ReUse Plan

Michael Blackburn, Andrejs Galehnicks

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS

In addition to review by our esteemed jurors, all of the competition entries also toured their "home" site. The boards were on display for several weeks in various public locations and viewers had the opportunity to vote for their personal favorite. We are glad to have had the opportunity to share these innovative ideas in a more public realm. The boards will continue to be available to each community for display. Here are the winners of the People's Choice Awards:

**SOUTHAMPTON: Bet on the Farm**  
Glickman Schlesinger Design Office  
Brooklyn, NY

**HADLEY: A New Vision for Hadley**  
Classic Colonial Homes, Inc.  
Leverett, MA

**PALMER: 88 steps @ Thorndike**  
Ross Landscape Design  
New Jersey



## CONFERENCES/PROGRAMS

### Greening the Valley

*Reminder! The UMass Amherst University Gallery exhibition closes Sunday, May 9.*

#### Tour of Sustainable Architecture in the Pioneer Valley

Saturday, May 8 (Rain or Shine)  
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

This is a free tour of the most extraordinary energy efficient contemporary houses in the Pioneer Valley. The tour spans a geographical area from East Longmeadow to Brattleboro, VT and includes a variety of buildings from communal villages to state-of-the-art private homes. Special sites include the Beaver Lodge in Ashfield, a LEED Platinum certified educational center, and BluHomes, a

first-of-a-kind manufacturing company of Green Houses.

For more info and to register:  
<http://www.umass.edu/fac/universitygallery/calendar.html>.



Greening the Valley Exhibit  
photo by Erika Zekos Assoc. AIA

### AIA National

Design for the New Decade

June 11 - 12  
Miami, FL

With over 200 continuing education opportunities and featuring keynotes from the likes of Peter Bohlin, FAIA, and Daniel Pink, this year's convention will discuss how the modern, global economy is redefining our profession. Help shape the future of architecture by recommitting ourselves to our discipline's primary mode of thought and action—*design*.

Visit <http://www.aiaconvention.com/> for registration information.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### New Home Earns Energy Incentive

The Center for Ecological Technology (CET) announced recently that the Campbell-Gregory residence in Greenfield is the first Massachusetts home to earn an \$8,000 incentive for building a home that is 60% more efficient than a standard new construction home.

"It's exciting to see builders, homeowners and architects striving for such deep energy savings – the homeowners will enjoy the results for years to come – a more comfortable home that costs less to operate," said CET's Megan McDonough.

CET performed the required home energy rating (HERS) analysis and third-party inspections that led to the homeowners

qualifying for the \$8,000 Massachusetts New Homes with ENERGY STAR Tier III incentive.

The project, designed by Eco+Plan, LLC of Greenfield, features a passive solar design and solar hot water system; 12" deep walls filled with R-40 cellulose and a tight building envelope (tested at 1.21 ACH50 with a blower door). The house received a HERS rating of 40.

When asked if building to such a high energy efficiency standard was harder than conventional building James Meehleder of Turn Key Builders, Inc. said, "When building a super insulated house, you are still employing known building practices, just in a modified way. All in all, when you look at the whole project and the trade-offs that you make, the process doesn't differ much in scope of work or cost as a conventionally built home."

### Summer Design Academy

**Know a teen interested in architecture?** Check out the UMass Amherst Architecture + Design Program's Summer Design Academy. This three-week program provides an opportunity for high school students interested in architecture, landscape architecture, urban or interior design to experience the profession and see firsthand the kinds of activities that take place in a university architectural program. The Design Academy's interactive educational experiences include design exercises, hands-on building and model-making activities, visits to architecture offices and various lectures, films and campus tours. View more information at [http://www.umass.edu/architecture/news\\_events/index.htm](http://www.umass.edu/architecture/news_events/index.htm).

## NESEA Building Energy Conference

By Bruce Coldham FAIA

**The Building Energy Conference of the Northeast Sustainability Association (NESEA) has been an annual event for over thirty years now.** From the beginning, the event has convened a spirited community of cross-disciplinary practitioners focused on durable, energy efficient building and renewable resource harvesting. The BE conference continues to nurture that community, and to grow that community inter-generationally — to enfold a younger cohort.

Initially, attendance was strong among designers, and designer-builders focusing mostly on residential scale construction. In the 1990's, when professional associations established requirements for Continuing Education Credits, the conference expanded to enfold coverage of larger and more complex high performance building and utility scale renewable energy initiatives. Attendance steadily grew and for the past five years the event has taken place at the Boston World Trade Center complex. This year a really positive development was the prominence of amazing young people in the room. Some of those young folks are truly inspiring, and they are all set to take over.

The Building Energy Conference showcases innovative ideas, projects, products, and people. It tests and challenges those who present their material. It sustains a network of sustainable energy systems thinkers in our region. It spawns collaborative teams and business partnerships.

The conference program of events is assembled by a semi-self organizing group of 30 or more active members of a conference planning committee in a time-honored fashion that horrifies/astonishes most conference planners. But it is what makes the Conference a unique event;

it's what gives it its edge.

Our desire for rigor has led to a "Case Study" trend established this year that requires an array of actual performance data to be presented in project presentations. "How do we know if we are winning" says Paul Eldrenkamp "— if you we don't keep score?". Paul is a Boston contractor/remodeler who has been active in NESEA for many years and who was recently the Residential Buildings task force leader of the Governor's Zero Net Energy Buildings Task Force. The Northeast Sustainability Association and its Building Energy Conference is keeping score.

Among the issues considered at this year's conference were the capacity of renewable energy sources to power a post-petroleum society, what is the likely impact of peak oil - what it means (and does not mean), and how it should affect the way we think and act. Among this year's presenters were a number of individuals reminding us all that embodied energy and carbon in our structures has enduring value. John Straube (Waterloo University professor and researcher) always makes building science seem like a rollicking ride that you can't help but enjoy. Katrin Klingenberg continues to challenge with her efforts to translate the extreme standards of the German passive house movement to North America. And Jean Carroon FAIA, from the Boston architectural firm of Goody Clancy, who challenges the nerdy assumption that stringent energy conservation always trumps the social/cultural value of existing buildings.

Next year's conference focus, the range of speakers and the topic spread will, of course, be driven by the sensitivities and passions of a large group of people - the BE-11 Planning Committee.

As the designated conference chairperson for next year's event, I am charged with managing the Planning Committee and delivering another successful program. WMAIA members like Marc Sternick AIA, and Jeremy Toal AIA are already

deeply involved, and I hope that others will join the effort. It is a personally fulfilling endeavor.

## WMAIA Members On NESEA Board

**In January, the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) appointed Marc B. Sternick AIA, LEED AP to its 13-member board of directors.** Since 2003, the vice president and senior architect at Dietz & Company Architects has been helping organize the annual NESEA conferences such as the Building Energy Conference in Boston. At this year's conference Sternick presented a session on high performance public housing.

"For years I have looked to NESEA to raise the level of my practice and increase the depth of my sustainability knowledge. It is now time for me to step up and take a more active role in helping to steer this important organization," says Sternick of his new appointment.

Marc joins another WMAIA member, Bruce Coldham FAIA on the NESEA board. In addition, Chris Hoch of National Fiber (a WMAIA Corporate Affiliate member) is currently serving as the Vice Chair.

## Sawmill Story

by Erika Zekos Associate AIA

**Cowls is a western Massachusetts institution,** a family owned company that has been active in the building trades for nine generations. Recently they made the decision to close their sawmill - a source for locally grown and finished lumber for the last seven decades.

The company is the 12th oldest family-owned businesses in the US and, notably, the 84th oldest in the world (Family Business Magazine, 2009). Jonathan Cowls moved his family from Hadley and purchased his farm and timberland in North Amherst in 1741 and the

family has been managing timberland and supplying various materials to the construction trade continuously since then. Cinda Jones, the current president of the company said, "Over the past 270 years we've been farmers, road builders, trolley track manufacturers, lumber manufacturers, and building materials retailers." Today they are known for Cowls Building Supply, providing lumber and finish materials for construction as well as for their kitchen and bath Design Center.

While the company has been around for hundreds of years, they have seen a number of changes over the decades. Cowls' history in the lumber business began soon after Jonathan Cowls settled in North Amherst. First with a portable sawmill that was moved from lot to lot and in the 1930's with a permanent electric powered mill on the current site on Sunderland Road. The Building Supply Center opened in 1980 and the Design Center was launched in 2006. In 2002 the sawmill was completely razed by a massive fire, but was rebuilt. Today, while the Building Supply and Design Center are going strong, the mill is looking for a new owner.

I recently had an opportunity to talk with Cinda Jones and her brother Evan, Vice President of Cowls Building Supply about the closing of the sawmill. According to Cinda, adapting the "business to meet the needs and opportunities of our evolving community" has been an important factor in their longevity and the recent changes mark just another chapter in their long history. As it says on their website <http://www.cowls.com>, "If the Cowls Companies were one of their own Eastern White Pine trees, its trunk would be 150 feet high, 50 inches in diameter, and reveal more than 260 annual rings."

**WMAIA: Recently Cowls decided to close the sawmill and planing mill. Can you discuss what contributed to that decision?**

**Cinda:** The sawmill was never a profit center, but it well supported our other businesses: the retail store and the

timberland management. As time went on, it cost more and more to manufacture products, and we realized we could do a lot better selling logs than manufacturing lumber from them.

**WMAIA: What are the plans for the thousands of acres of Cowls-owned timberland?**

**Cinda:** Cowls timberland division will expand its land base and land use. We are working with the state's broadband initiative to help rural communities get connected. We are interested in hosting alternative energy facilities such as solar and wind. We've never done a large scale Conservation Restriction before and are considering one to seriously commit to a long term future of sustainable forest management. There are a couple towns interested in pursuing elderly and workforce affordable housing in partnership with Cowls and we are open to these discussions.

**WMAIA: The closing of the mill comes at a time when awareness of sustainability issues is increasing. What are your plans for meeting the demand for locally grown wood now that the mill is quiet?**

**Evan:** We have relationships with several local mills and a few in Maine and Vermont. Many of them are interested

in purchasing logs from us. Cowls will continue to have the best selection of locally grown and manufactured lumber.

**WMAIA: What other ways does Cowls aim to meet the need for sustainable materials and products?**

**Evan:** We carry a large assortment of "green" materials, and are always taking suggestions for new items. From no VOC paints, to PVC trim boards with a large recycled content, we strive to be the place to go for sustainable products.

**WMAIA: Is there anything else you would like WMAIA members to know?**

**Cinda:** The sawmill closing will be seamless for Cowls Building Supply customers. The same great locally milled materials will be available, and our green building materials inventory is growing every day. Cowls Building Supply offers services like designer visits and professional measuring, and free delivery, that blow the big box stores away. WMAIA architects should make appointments with Cowls Design Center designers and see what our kitchen and bath software can contribute for ideas. Whatever your focus... energy savings, cost savings, green materials... our experienced professionals can improve your project's success.



One of the many old structures on the Cowls sawmill property  
photo by Erika Zekos Associate AIA

## Why Isn't Every Project a LEED Project?

by Erin Nunes Cooper AIA

**"If LEED is supposed to address all areas of sustainable building, why isn't every project a LEED project?"** This question was asked by a student, at the start of the UMass Amherst AIAS event on the LEED Rating System in the fall semester. The question went right to the heart of what I call the LEED debate.

I was invited to speak at this event, to provide an overview of how to develop a successful LEED Certified Project, and to answer questions about the LEED Rating System and LEED AP exam from undergraduate and graduate students in the UMass Architecture program. This opening question led to a more engaging discussion about sustainability and green building that is worth sharing with our organization.

First, I'll note that five years ago, at the USGBC Greenbuild Convention, and many schools of architecture, it seemed that everyone was caught up in definitions and semantics: Green vs. Sustainable, Eco-friendly or Bio-inspired. Various definitions were overly debated and argued, with no real outcomes. Since then, the arguments and definitions have largely been forgotten, freeing us all to get back to what we love to do: design better buildings.

We revisited some of these definitions during the AIAS discussion:

### **Sustainable Building: A building that:**

- Is **CONSTRUCTED** with environmentally benign and local materials
- Is **OPERATED** without adverse environmental or human health impacts
- Relies completely on **RENEWABLE ENERGY** and emits 0 green house

gas emissions

- **DECONSTRUCTS** into 100% reusable or recyclable components at the end of its useful life

(My definition, with some points adapted from many other sources)

### **Green Building: A building that:**

Uses design, construction, and operations practices that significantly reduce the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants through

- Sustainable site planning
- Safeguarding water and water efficiency
- Energy efficiency
- Conservation of materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality

(From a 2002 USGBC training workshop)

Using the above definitions, "Green" is the weaker of the two, but it's the one that defines the LEED Rating System. "Sustainable" is possible, but somewhat vague and more difficult to achieve. I'm of the opinion that over time, the definition of a "Green" building should evolve to become synonymous with "Sustainable" building, and the LEED Rating System along with it. I often tell my students and clients that LEED certified buildings are green buildings, which is not the same thing as sustainable buildings. With this understanding, I choose appropriate systems or goals based on individual project circumstances, including the budget.

In western Massachusetts, "buy local" is a cultural mantra, CSA's thrive, and people are willing to wear sweaters in the winter and sandals in the summer instead of adjusting their thermostats. Professional architects and builders have experience in zero net energy building, green house gas emission reductions, and low-impact development. Our professionals are active members of the AIA's Committee on the Environment (COTE), NESEA, numerous local planning and green ecology organizations, and (to a lesser extent) the USGBC. Architecture

students educated in the Pioneer Valley are surrounded by studio instructors, lecturers, and mentors who are well versed in sustainability. This is surely not the case in many other regions, cities and towns. Throughout the course of the AIAS discussion, I posed the argument that we may not be USGBC's perfect target audience for the LEED Rating System.

I use the LEED Rating System daily, and I do have significant criticisms, including a lack of robust metrics on some credits, exclusion of comprehensive life-cycle cost measurements, relatively high time and expenses associated with the documentation process, lack of annual renewals, and failure to adequately address zero-carbon goals. These points were all discussed in our AIAS event and identified as potential reasons why the LEED Rating System should not be used for all projects.

I consider all of these criticisms valid, however when I also consider the stated goals of the LEED Rating System and how it measures up to competing systems, I find that despite the criticisms, LEED has merit and value for many projects and clients. One aim of the system is that certification should be achievable with a reasonable approach and level of effort and experience. It is particularly relevant to those projects and clients that would otherwise build according to the status quo or code minimum building.

We discussed an example of one of my past clients; a business owner in another state. When I began the office renovation project, this client introduced himself and confessed that he only recently began recycling at home. His second grade daughter came home from school with an Earth Day packet and emphatically declared that he was "destroying her future" by throwing away his water bottles every day. He took to recycling at home, and when it came time to renovate his office, he asked me to make sure that it had "all of that green stuff" in the design. This client was uninitiated in the

world of green building, and for him, the LEED system was the ideal tool to bring him into the fold. Just as that UMass student alluded to in her question, the system reads as a code and guideline that spans multiple facets of green building. By using the LEED system, my client could begin to understand that beyond recycling, his building site, water use, materials, energy use, and occupant comfort all contribute toward the impact of his office on the environment.

One of the initial goals of the LEED Rating System was to provide an achievable, measurable, and verifiable system that would transform the market place. For all of its shortcomings, the system generally meets this goal. Indeed it did in the case of my client. I am currently working on an ambulance corps project in Connecticut, and funding for the project requires LEED Certification. I am also consulting on the Centerpoint project, an office campus that anticipates attracting more tenants because they can market the building as LEED Certified. In all of these projects, green building strategies would not be included without the LEED rating system.

In a geographic region where mixed opinions about LEED pervade, many UMass architecture students as well as professionals are left wondering if they should pursue LEED Accreditation. My response is that while it may not be necessary here in western Massachusetts, becoming a LEED AP can't hurt. There will be clients who request LEED certification because it is a recognized name. I do believe that all architects should be familiar with basic strategies to use sites efficiently, reduce water consumption in buildings, select appropriate materials, reduce energy loads, maximize the efficiency of building systems, provide healthy indoor environments, and design for the local macroclimate and conditions. To a great extent, these concepts correspond to the categories in the LEED system. I've seen the system used as a tool for professionals whose

education and experiences leave gaps in green building concepts. I certainly recommend accreditation for students and professionals who intend to practice in areas where LEED is more popular or required. Many states, including our southern neighbor Connecticut, have legislation in place that requires LEED Certification for some building types.

A few weeks after the UMass AIAS event, I heard Paul King, The Chief Executive of the UK Green Building Council deliver a Master Speaker address at Greenbuild, USGBC's annual conference. The most memorable moment of the entire series was when a Drexel University student stood up, took the mike, and simply asked him "What is your personal definition of 'sustainable'?" I love the question and the direct, courageous way in which she asked it. Paul was stumped for a moment. He stammered, collected his thoughts, and after a pause answered her by first referencing the Brundtland Commission's definition of, "one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." and added that he just tries to do the right thing. Which is exactly what we all want to do.

*Erin Nunes Cooper AIA, LEED AP is an architect and green building consultant in Northampton, MA. She is the owner of Cooper Green Design and served as a Subject Matter Expert at the Green Building Certification Institute during the development of the new LEED rating system and exam. She teaches Daylighting in the National Sustainable Building Advisor Program for professionals at Gateway Community College.*

*Emily Trulson, Affiliate WMAIA and President UMass AIAS, organized the AIAS LEED event at UMass Amherst*

## Architect Will Ride

by Larry Tuttle AIA

*Editor's note: This year WMAIA member Larry Tuttle AIA is planning to ride in the Pan-Massachusetts Challenge; an annual cross-state bike ride that raises money for life-saving cancer research and treatment at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. This year's race will take place August 7 and 8. Larry can be reached at Architectural Insights in Palmer at 413-283-2553 or go to <http://www.pmc.org/> and donate at the paceline under his name.*

**A sophomore participant in the event this year, I find myself a bit more knowledgeable and tremendously more dedicated.** After successfully completing the one day goal set last year I intend to dedicate my energies to double my riding and fund raising goals. This summer I have committed to the full ride from Sturbridge to Provincetown. At 57 for this year's ride I will not be the oldest and I guarantee I won't be the fastest but I assure all my supporters that I will finish the ride of nearly 200 miles over the two day event.

My participation last year was very personal and the satisfaction I obtained has carried me forward. The people I met and stories I heard have inspired me to reenter the event without hesitation and attempt to do as much as I can towards this valuable research and fund raising. The Pan Mass Challenge is one of just a handful of fund raising venues where 100% of funds gathered are routed to the intended cause. Please consider supporting this fund-raising challenge and actively participate in creating a positive outlook for all those confronting the challenges of cancer.

In addition, if you are interested in participating in training rides around western MA and /or future charity rides in New England please get in touch. Thank you in advance for your support.

# IN THE WORKS



**Camphill Village USA**  
**Copake, NY**

**Green River Architecture of Great Barrington** has just completed the renovation of Brookledge and Russet, two homes at Camphill Village USA, an intentional community for adults with developmental disabilities, co-workers, and their children. Each was a 9 bedroom, 2,850 square-foot, one-story home. They were built inexpensively about 45 years ago and served the community well, but they had uncomfortably small rooms, poor insulation and antiquated mechanicals. The complete renovations include additions to increase their sizes to 5,050 square-feet (Brookledge) and 6,200 square-feet (Russet). All exterior walls and ceilings received upgraded cellulose and rigid insulation. Both buildings received new pre-finished fiber cement siding, windows and doors, metal roofs, condensing gas boilers and solar domestic hot water systems. A PV electric system serving these buildings and one additional house was built in an adjacent field.



**Montessori School of the Berkshires**  
**Lenox**

**Dana Bixby Architecture of West Stockbridge** has just completed The Montessori School of the Berkshires. The school, which opened on April 26 is designed for 125 students and will be applying for LEED certification. The project team includes Foresight Land Services (engineering/sitework) and Greylock Design Associates (master plan and landscape design). The LEED coordinator is Brandee Nelson of Crawford and Associates.

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# IN THE GALLERIES



A view of Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle's "Gravity is a force to be Reconned With". This installation is a recreation of Mies van der Rohe's 50x50 House (1951). The glass house is constructed at approximately half scale and inverted, the ceiling of the original becoming the sculpture's floor, the floor becoming the ceiling, and all interior elements such as Mies-designed furniture and partition walls installed upside down. At Mass MoCA through October 31.

photo by Erika Zekos Assoc. AIA

## The Art of the Brick

June 16 - September 5, 2010

Springfield Museums, D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts

Some artists use paint, others bronze – but Nathan Sawaya chooses to build his awe-inspiring art out of LEGO® building bricks.

This exhibition features more than thirty works created solely from standard toy building bricks. Nearly one million colorful pieces transformed into whimsical and awe-inspiring images are on display, elevating this common toy to the status of art.

## True and Honest Before the World

May 29 - October 31, 2010

Hancock Shaker Village

"If you could pick any Shaker creation that for you, best illustrates the Shakers' enduring influence, what would it be and why?" The responses to this question form the basis for this 50th Anniversary exhibition curated by designer Michael Graves, television personality Al Roker, furniture maker Thomas Moser, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Come see their picks, hear their comments on Shaker contributions, and offer your own reflections on what "Shaker" means to you in this special interactive exhibit section.

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# WMAIA PROGRAMS

**Monday, May 3, 5:00 PM**

*Our Architecture Through Film Series concludes with:*

**Spaces: The Architecture of Paul Rudolph**

Oscar-nominated documentary followed by a discussion led by Professor Tim Rohan.

Location: Fayerweather Hall (Pruyne Lecture Hall), Amherst College  
1.5 LUs. Free for members.

This film focuses on the work of Paul Rudolph (1918-1997), American architect and dean of the Yale School of Architecture for six years. His most famous work is the Yale Art and Architecture Building (A&A Building), a spatially complex Brutalist concrete structure.

**Wednesday, May 5, 3:30 PM**

*The Greening the Valley lecture series concludes with:*

**Regenerative Design in the Public Realm: A Lecture by Artist Michael Singer**

Location: Cape Cod Lounge, Student Union, UMASS/Amherst  
1.5 LUs. Free and open to the public; registration and fee required for reporting of LUs.

## Your Travel Sketches Wanted!

Are you planning your summer trips to remarkable architectural sites near or far? Do you have a sketchbook filled with drawings from a favorite voyage long ago? Please keep WMAIA news in mind and send us your drawings! We are looking forward to a showcase of WMAIA member travel sketches in our fall issue. Contact Erika at [studiozed@comcast.net](mailto:studiozed@comcast.net) for more info.

If you have a suggestion for a WMAIA program - a building you'd like us to tour or a professional development topic you'd like us to cover - please email Lorin Starr, WMAIA Executive/Program Director at [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org) or call 413-665-2424.

And don't forget to check [www.wmaia.org](http://www.wmaia.org) for program information.

**WM|AIA news**

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