

# WMAIA news

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

## Looking Back, Looking Forward

In this issue of WMAIA news we thought it would be fun to squeeze in some of the articles we haven't had space to run in recent editions. Now that we're in the midst of winter's chill, it's a nice indulgence to let our minds drift back to sunny summer travels and past experiences and lessons. It affords us the opportunity to reflect on what lessons we've learned, and to look forward to what lies ahead.



WMAIA President Jeremy Toal AIA  
photo by Lauren Cancelmo

## New Year Greetings

by Jeremy Toal AIA  
President, WMAIA

**Hello, and thank you for electing me to serve as your WMAIA chapter President!** It has been a pleasure to serve these past two years as Vice President under Tom Hartman's leadership, and I really can't say enough about this Executive Committee. Everyone contributes so much time and talent to make chapter programs happen, and to keep members up-to-date on the latest chapter news.

Over the last few years, the Chapter has built relationships with allied professional organizations, and effectively advocated for the profession at the state level. We threw a great AIA New England Conference and Design Awards this past fall, showing our fellow architects from around the region what a great, livable community we have in Northampton. We also showed the community of Northampton a little of what we architects have to offer in a very successful gallery exhibit held in conjunction with the Conference. We'll be doing more of these exhibits to highlight member work in the future.

Our chapter continues in strong financial health, with a balanced annual budget and a comfortable reserve fund. We hope to use profits from the 2011 AIANE Conference, along with some funds from reserves, to establish a Foundation to support student scholarships, as well as special projects and initiatives in the region. Bill Austin AIA (billa@austindesign.biz) is heading up the effort to establish the foundation, and would love to include members who share the desire to have a lasting impact in the community.

## Inside

Looking Back, Looking Forward . . . . 1  
New Year Greetings . . . . 1

### OUR NEWS

SDAT Updates . . . . . 2  
WMAIA Scholarship . . . . . 3  
The Rise of the Falls . . . . . 4

### MISCELLANEOUS

Kudos . . . . . 5  
Dietz Wins Award . . . . . 5  
Architects as Leaders . . . . . 5  
AIAS Update . . . . . 5  
West Branch . . . . . 6  
Campus Planning . . . . . 6  
Coldham&Hartman Office Move . . . . 6  
99% Invisible . . . . . 6  
Riverscaping Update . . . . . 6

### TRAVEL

Due Viaggi . . . . . 7  
A Tale of Two Realities . . . . . 8  
Field Trip . . . . . 10

### OPPORTUNITIES

A Study Tour of Cuba . . . . . 11  
NESEA Building Energy 12 . . . . . 11

### WMAIA PROGRAMS

Spring 2012 WMAIA/Five College  
Architecture Film Series . . . . 12

# OUR NEWS

## continued from Page 1

We're continuing many of the programs you know and love, including the bi-annual Design Awards program (which is on again in 2012), and the Architecture Film Series will start again this spring (send Lorin your ideas!). There will be the usual plethora of CEU programs, and we'll be looking to balance the technical and sustainable side with more programs about design excellence, and tours of projects in the region (your projects!)

We're also looking forward to some new initiatives. With the support of the chapter, South Hadley Falls was just awarded an SDAT grant. A new class offering, from the UMass Architecture+Design program (and supported by WMAIA and AIA National) seeks to develop civic and leadership skills among architects by engaging both students and emerging professionals in a unique format. We'd also like to co-create some form of professional/student community design-build collaboration which will expose students to real clients and actual construction, and expose the community to the value of good design.

You'll be hearing more about these initiatives in the coming weeks, and be forewarned: We'll be asking for your input and help! I believe collaboration is the key to success in so much of our work, and I sincerely hope that you all will find some way to contribute your creativity and experience and energy to this dynamic and effective community we call WMAIA!

Please don't hesitate to call or email me with your thoughts and ideas, or if you'd like to get involved with one of the programs mentioned above. Thanks!

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## SDAT Updates

**Congratulations go to South Hadley, which recently received an SDAT grant from the AIA.** The community of South Hadley Falls will be the topic of an intensive planning exercise which will involve national planners, neighborhood members, town leaders and WMAIA members. You'll read more about the South Hadley SDAT in Helen Fantini AIA's article on Page 4.

In recent years WMAIA and its members have supported SDATs in three other communities in our region: Northampton, Pittsfield and Orange as well as a similar planning project in Holyoke funded by an AIA 150 Blueprint for America grant. Here, **WMAIA news** returns to those communities for updates and words of advice for South Hadley.

While the SDATs in Pittsfield and Northampton were very successful, the 2010 process in Orange didn't go as smoothly because the community wasn't as ready to collaborate. Political upset interrupted the process and the community has not yet wrapped up their SDAT. Holyoke's was a community-based exercise to broaden the vision for the greater urban center that involved guests from Puerto Rico and Los Angeles and projects that brought together designers and students from city schools. The final report for Holyoke's planning grant should be produced in the next few months. Here are some words from Pittsfield and Northampton:

### Deanna Ruffer, Community Development Dir. at City of Pittsfield:

*"The 2006 SDAT process has been by far the best planning exercise for Pittsfield in the seven years I've been on the job, because of the quality of volunteer participants, who could quickly articulate direction and ideas both verbally and graphically. The*

*resulting document is the most useful tool we have for moving forward. It was very hard work and took more energy and resources than we had anticipated, but we pulled it off and the SDAT was invaluable."*

*"The two most significant accomplishments in Pittsfield have been the integration of greenways through the community and the unification of three downtown neighborhoods, which continues to blossom."*

### Wayne Feiden, Dir. of Planning and Development at City of Northampton:

*"In October 2005, with support from WMAIA, Northampton hosted an AIA SDAT as the kickoff event in what eventually became our Sustainable Northampton Comprehensive Plan. The SDAT engaged the city and built a community sustainability dialogue. This momentum supported our comprehensive planning process and ultimately resulted in a much better, and probably less expensive, comprehensive plan.*

*I found the Northampton's SDAT so useful that I have gone on to serve on 13 AIA DATs throughout the US, leading five of them.*

*My experience is that there are two critical ingredients for the success of a SDAT:*

- 1. The community has to be ready for the process and the new ideas. Only the community can make sure that diverse stakeholders and decision makers at all levels participate. Only the community can commit to working after the SDAT to implement those recommendations that resonate.*

- 2. The SDAT needs to include the right expertise and perspective. To get that, it is critical that during the preliminary visit the SDAT staff and team leader understand as much about the challenges and opportunities as they can."*

## WMAIA Scholarship

Each year WMAIA offers a \$1000 scholarship to a graduate student who exhibits design excellence and community involvement. For the second year in a row, our \$500 contribution was matched by AIA National. WMAIA invites students to submit their best project for consideration. This year we received many excellent applications and are pleased to award the 2011 scholarship to Julian Rosario.

Julian, who expects to graduate with a Master of Architecture from UMass Amherst in May, grew up in Guam and Virginia. He is a member of the Air National Guard in a Combat Communications Squadron stationed at Otis Air National Guard Base and has spent time in many states as school and military obligations require. Julian enjoys travel and photography. After graduation he hopes to have a cross country motorcycle tour of national parks and to hike to Macchu Picchu.

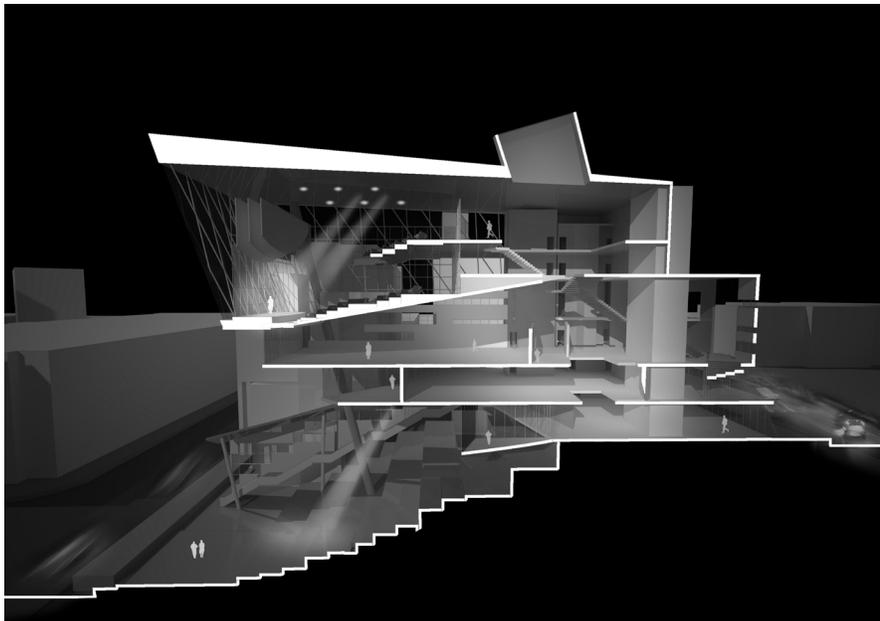
Julian's winning project was the design for a new building in Pynchon Plaza in

downtown Springfield. Sandwiched in a block between a parking garage and residential building, Pynchon Plaza is mostly made up of concrete with an inoperable outdoor elevator tower and 'grand' steps that resolve the 40-foot drop from the Springfield Museums complex at the top of the hill to the sports arena at the bottom. This park has been closed and fenced in for 20+ years.

The studio's goal was to redevelop the site by reestablishing a connection from the museum to the arena, and further down to the Connecticut River.

Engaging the public in town meetings to solicit the residents' and business owners' input led to Julian's decision to insert program elements to complement existing ones and improve the overall condition of the neighborhood. New program includes a gallery for local and visiting artists, a restaurant/bar and a performance hall/theatre that would treat spectators to performances elevated above the city.

Shortly after the studio presented all its proposals to the city, Pynchon Plaza was opened to the public once again.



Section through Julian's design for a new multi-use building in Springfield's Pynchon Plaza drawing by Julian Rosario

## 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.

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).

## The Rise of the Falls

By Helen Fantini AIA

Several months ago a group of South Hadley residents representing a broad range of town boards and commissions, business, and institutional interests formed a steering committee for the purpose of pursuing the 2012 AIA Communities by Design Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program grant. The first charge for this group was to define the challenges and issues facing a unique neighborhood in South Hadley, South Hadley Falls. On December 6th, South Hadley received notification that its application for the SDAT Program had been accepted.

The \$15,000 SDAT grant covers expenses associated with bringing a multi-disciplinary team assembled by the AIA (typically five to seven individuals) to South Hadley. The Town will be responsible for furnishing in-kind donations, such as meeting space and office equipment use, as well as a cash match of \$5,000. The real value of this program, however, is the professional expertise and fresh perspectives brought to bear on the community's particular set of problems.

South Hadley Falls is a distinct neighborhood within the town of South Hadley. Its geographic location, alongside the Connecticut River and a dramatic waterfall influenced its development in the late 18th century as a thriving place to live and work and continued to be so for well over 150 years. Over the course of the last six decades however, the Falls has experienced a gradual decline in its economic and physical vitality. Major employers have downsized or left town altogether, leaving buildings and lots vacant and underutilized. Many of these vacant lots are located within the 100-year flood plain. The riverfront and waterfall are currently almost invisible to passersby.

Our project title, "The Rise of the Falls", expresses the Town's aspirations for the

future of the Falls, a community that in many ways mirrors the larger history of the United States and our region from its colonial origins to the post-industrial present. We are optimistic that with the help of the AIA's SDAT Program, we can bring together varying interests (preservation and development, the natural and the built environment) to stimulate revitalization of this unique place.

South Hadley is well-positioned to take full advantage of the SDAT Program as many preceding actions have helped to pave the way. Concluding in 2010 and the result of a three-year process, the Town adopted a Master Plan, the first in over 30 years. Core Initiative #1 of the Master Plan is, "Revitalize South Hadley Falls." One of the four Plan Principles is "Sustainability." But what does this mean? How do we translate this goal into achievable action? And how can we put the tenets of sustainability to real use as we work to improve this neighborhood?

Our SDAT application is structured around three main topic areas outlined in the application guidelines. In brief, the following issues were defined within the categories:

- Environmental: flooding, transit and land use
- Social: sense of place and public spaces
- Economic: revitalization, jobs and public policy/planning

The picture in the Falls is already brightening. Recently, two public and private sector developments have generated new energy and optimism. First, the town is moving ahead on a plan to build a new library on a riverfront site directly overlooking the falls. The land is purchased, the Massachusetts Library Association

has awarded the town a \$4.8 million grant (approximately 50% of the construction cost), and voters have approved means to borrow the remainder. Secondly, E-Ink, a company that manufactures screens for e-readers, has moved its production operation to a vacated industrial building on Gaylord Street in South Hadley Falls and has plans to expand.

South Hadley is fortunate to be partnering with area colleges on this SDAT. Stephen Schreiber FAIA, Director of the UMass Amherst Architecture+Design Program, has served on the steering committee in an advisory capacity. Professor Michael Davis, Director of the Architectural Studies program at Mount Holyoke College, is a South Hadley resident and member of the committee.

We are eager to begin! We are currently working on fundraising, and are awaiting word from the AIA about selection of a SDAT team leader. We have requested that the full SDAT visit occur in mid-to-late April, 2012. A preliminary visit by AIA representatives is expected in February or March. Through conversations with other WMAIA members who have participated in an SDAT, we have learned that they are most successful when a broad range of constituencies are represented; we need to have the right people at the table for these important conversations. In particular, we are very interested in involving this architecture community to maximize the success of this great program. I welcome any interested parties to contact me via e-mail: [hfantini@hotmail.com](mailto:hfantini@hotmail.com).



View of South Hadley Falls  
photo by Helen Fantini AIA

# MISCELLANEOUS

## Kudos

In October the Historic Preservation Program at UMass Amherst became the only degree-granting preservation program to be voted into the National Council of Preservation Education. And in November the program was awarded the second annual Preservation Massachusetts "Community Spirit Award" for the efforts of its students in documenting damage in Springfield following last June's tornadoes.

The program, which blurs the boundaries of art, architecture, history, and good old-fashion sleuthing, has very quickly establishing a reputation for undertaking projects across the Commonwealth, projects in which its students are not afraid to get their hands dirty.

Professor of Architecture and History Max Page notes that the Community Spirit Award is especially meaningful because it recognizes the program's growing identity and focus on public resources and community history.

To learn more about the program please visit <http://umasshsv.wordpress.com/>.

## Dietz Wins Award

**Dietz & Company Architects was one of 48 firms from across the country to be honored with the PSMJ Circle of Excellence Award for 2011.** The honor is notable as well since Dietz & Co. is one of the few woman-owned firms on the list and only one of a handful from the New England region. PSMJ annually surveys architecture, engineering, and construction firms. The 2011 Circle of Excellence Award was determined by weighting each firm's ranking in reference to a set of benchmarks that reflect the performance of design firms in various aspects of business operations.

## Architects As Leaders AIAS Update

WMAIA, in collaboration with the UMass Amherst, is offering a new course this winter / spring called "Architects as Leaders". The course is open to architecture students (for academic credit), and for free to interns (for supplemental education credit), and architects (for continuing education credit).

The intent of the course is to promote civic engagement and leadership in architecture. This course will have a unique approach to leadership education that combines practical theories and opportunities for students to study the characteristics of authority, leadership, social and role dynamics, political processes and the values that orient their careers. Participants will also practice strategies for leading positive change, such as forming organizations, planning events, volunteering, fundraising, and creating awareness campaigns. The course will focus on personal, group, and global dimensions of leadership.

The 13 week course will be taught by Kerry Dietz AIA, owner of Dietz and Company Architects, Inc., in Springfield. The course will be offered at UMass Amherst Design Center in downtown Springfield on Wednesdays, 5:30-8:00pm, beginning in January 25.

A total of eight participants are being recruited from the Western and Central MA Chapters of the AIA, and from nearby Connecticut. The collaboration of students and interns/architects will make this course particularly exciting. If you are interested, please contact Kerry at [kerryd@dietzarch.com](mailto:kerryd@dietzarch.com) or Stephen Schreiber FAIA at [schreiber@art.umass.edu](mailto:schreiber@art.umass.edu).

by Kathryn Wetherbee  
Affiliate WMAIA/AIAS

The fall semester for the AIA student (AIAS) chapter of the University of Massachusetts Amherst was filled with exciting events, conferences, and much planning for the year ahead! We welcomed new members into AIAS while also welcoming back familiar faces. Many of our members traveled to Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island for a Fall Quad Conference. The conference is a chance for the North East quadrant of AIAS chapters to gather and share ideas. We explored the theme of "Connections: Past and Future," and participated in a variety of activities including lectures and events, and had time to network with our fellow students. We participated in a daylong charrette to inform the design and revitalization of Warren, RI's historic downtown. Back home at UMass we held events such as Portfolio Review Night, various workshops, and a favorite, Mentorship Night where students have an opportunity to engage with local architects. We would also like to thank the professionals who volunteered their time to that event.

We have a very exciting announcement for the upcoming spring semester: our chapter will be hosting the Northeast Quad Conference for the first time ever! We will be welcoming 49 schools from New England to UMass to participate in our weekend conference featuring speakers, design charettes, and many other events. The theme of our conference is "Local Focus Global Reach" and will be held Friday, April 20 through Monday, April 23. We are very excited for this opportunity and if you have any interest in getting involved please email [aias.umass@gmail.com](mailto:aias.umass@gmail.com).

## West Branch

On December 8, 2011 the USGBC Massachusetts Chapter, announced the establishment of West Branch to serve Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin counties. The USGBC MA -West Branch seeks to educate, advocate, and collaborate on sustainability and green building initiatives and is committed to building partnerships and regional alliances with other Pioneer Valley organizations to support the local green building community. Branch Steering Committee Chair, Ludmilla Pavlova AIA said, "As an advocate for green buildings in the Pioneer Valley for over a decade, I am thrilled that the dedication of our West Branch volunteers has been recognized by the Massachusetts Chapter and we are now part of the community of leaders in sustainability."

The USGBC MA - West Branch has leadership with a diverse background that includes passionate individuals who are beginning their careers, as well as seasoned practitioners with decades of experience. During the last year the group has hosted two LEED Study Groups, sixteen LEED Webinars and had three successful networking events. Next year they plan to continue offering LEED Study Groups, increase webinars and live presentation offerings, and vigorously network and cultivate leaders of the green building movement in western Mass. Among the group's steering committee are the following WMAIA members: Ivan Chow AIA, Laura Fitch AIA, Ludmilla Pavlova AIA, Chris Riddle AIA and Aelan Tierney AIA. For more information see <http://usgbcma.org/westernMA> or contact [pavlovagillham@gmail.com](mailto:pavlovagillham@gmail.com).



Follow this QR Code to UMass Amherst's Master Plan Explorer: <http://maps.admin.umass.edu/apps/MasterPlanExplorer>

## Campus Planning

UMass Amherst is in the process of developing a master plan for the campus – the first in 20 years – that will serve as a guide for sustainable future development and will reinforce the campus strategic academic plan known as the Framework for Excellence. With 28 times the acreage of the Boston Common, more than four times the square footage of the Empire State Building, and a weekday population of more than 40,000, the campus is a little city of learning and entrepreneurship. The master plan effort integrates systems planning for utilities and transportation, residential, academic, student life, athletic and administrative buildings, and natural systems in a manner that provides an overarching vision and identity for the future of the campus.

The master plan draft was released for public comment on November 16, 2011 and features the Master Plan Explorer – an interactive site that not only offers a wealth of information about the evolving UMass campus, but also provides opportunities for feedback. [www.umass.edu/cp](http://www.umass.edu/cp)

## Coldham&Hartman Office Move

Thomas RC Hartman AIA and Bruce Coldham FAIA have moved Coldham&Hartman Architects from North Amherst to the center of town. You can now find them in their new digs on the third floor above A.J. Hastings at 49 South Pleasant Street, Suite 301 Amherst, MA. 2011 was a busy year and this move provides space to grow and expand their capacity for 2012 and beyond. [www.coldhamandhartman.com](http://www.coldhamandhartman.com).

## 99% Invisible

Roman Mars has been referred to as the Ira Glass of design. His podcast, called 99% Invisible, is a project of KALW, the American Institute of Architects, San Francisco and the Center for Architecture and Design. He tackles the interface between humans and the objects and spaces we create. Episode 43 is called, "The Accidental Music of Imperfect Escalators" and looks to Washington DC's subways for audio inspiration. Find him on the web at [www.99percentinvisible.com](http://www.99percentinvisible.com).

## Riverscaping Update

Riverscaping, a program sponsored by Five College Architectural Studies Program to explore our relationship with the river through design studios, research, lectures, and a design competition announces that a large number of submissions were received by the December 10 deadline. The jury for the competition (to create installations on four sites along the Connecticut River) has been rescheduled for January 9 and results will be posted the following day. Check back on January 10 for results! [www.riverscaping.org](http://www.riverscaping.org).

# TRAVEL

## Due Viaggi

Stephen Schreiber FAIA and Chris Farley AIA both travelled to Italy with their families this past summer. They covered some serious ground, taking in sights from north to south. Enjoy!



Agrigento Temple in Sicily  
photo by Chris Farley

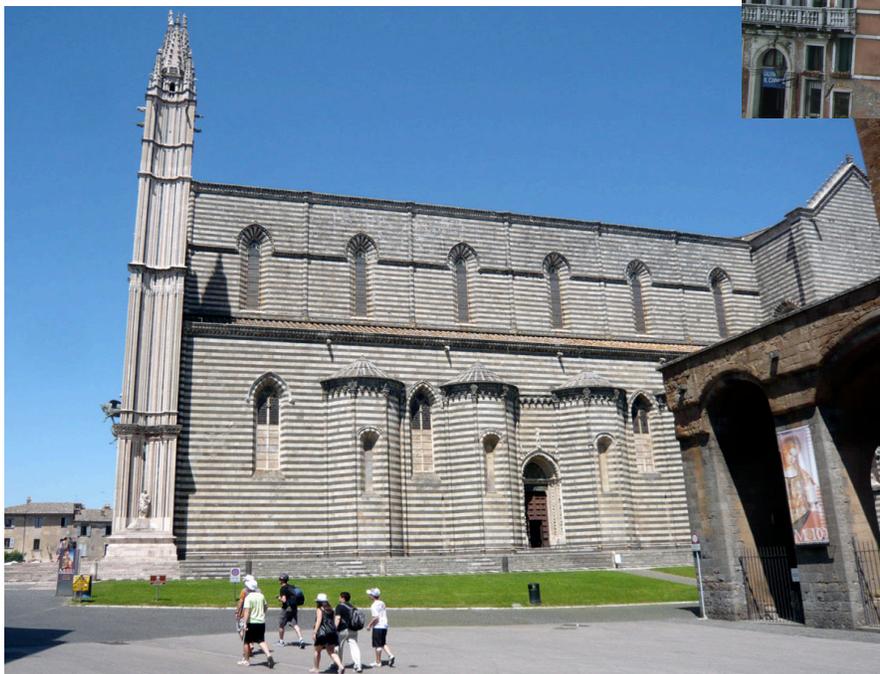


Steve and Kate Schreiber in Venice  
photo by Jane Thurber



From a bridge in Florence  
photo by Steve Schreiber

Orvieto Cathedral  
photo by Chris Farley



View from St. Peter's, Rome  
photo by Chris Farley



## A Tale of Two Realities

By Bill Austin AIA

**Nova Scotia and Haiti, both places are associated with the Atlantic Ocean, predominantly rural, but with big cities, natural beauty, friendly hard working natives, strong cultural roots, and histories intertwined with the French.** One is on the North Atlantic, often cold, grey, damp. A place of solitude, fogbound, bare granite, pointed spruce trees, rough cold water, and a primordial fight for survival. The other surrounded by the aqua warm Caribbean, tropical, hot, humid, lush, crowded. The fight for survival is over in Nova Scotia, but not in Haiti. With my wife Joan, I travelled to both of these places this year and my experiences there have become entwined within me.

Ghost 13 happened June 2011 in Nova Scotia. This architectural conference subtitled “Ideas in Things” took place at Shobac, the saltwater farm of conference originator, architect Brian MacKay-Lyons. Conferees stayed in

historic Lunenburg, a quaint, picture perfect fishing town and UNESCO Heritage site, and were shuttled to Shobac for the daytime presentations. Evening keynote addresses were held in St. John’s Anglican Church in the center of Lunenburg. This was the 13th summer gathering at Shobac and the first for practicing architects. In the past, they were construction workshops for architectural students, mostly from Dalhousie University in Halifax. In addition to teaching construction skills, the instructors would draw upon the history of the land, and remnants of ancestors: old barns, wrecked ships and such from whence the ghosts are evoked. These qualities earned the workshops the name Ghost Lab. To see some wonderful images go to <http://www.mlsarchitects.ca/ghost/>.

Overall, the conference dealt with issues of sustainability, regionalism, education, art, and craft. The roster of presenters was incredible, representing talent from all over the world. There was a small sense of an “old boys club” in that many had been each other’s students or teachers or had participated in earlier Ghost events, and in the unspoken requirement



Stutchbury, Murcott, Frampton & Pallasmaa  
photo by Marcus Gleysteen

that you must be a modernist. The first keynote address, titled ‘Place’ was given by Kenneth Frampton. Dressed in black, erudite, and in control, he seemed to be apologizing for his association with post modernism. He was really quite frank about his ambivalence or perhaps even his relevance. Very approachable, he was in conversation throughout the conference.

Glenn Murcott gave the last keynote address and could not have been more different. Glenn used a series of written questions as a launching pad to soar freely through his life, work, and whatever else happened to occur to him. He usually circled back to the question and was funny, provocative, insightful, and forthcoming. Evoking the image and spirit of Santa Claus, Finnish architect and philosopher Juhani Pallasmaa set aside his written lectures and spoke extemporaneously about human nature, sustainability, and beauty.

The daytime workshops offered five or six presenters along with a wrap-up panel discussion. The first day’s theme seemed to be loosely focused on craft and materiality and included presentations from Rick Joy, Wendell Burnette, Debora Berke, Marlon Blackwell, and Ted Flato, whose presentation was my favorite given his warmth, intelligence, creativity and commitment to sustainability.

Day two included Patricia Patkau, who gave an outstanding presentation about



Shobac is available for rent for conferences. In this view are the barn, cottages, and conference building.  
photo by Bill Austin AIA

the changes in her life: retiring from teaching and stepping back from her practice, and the effects of her creative process, especially the Winnipeg skating shelters. <http://www.patkau.ca/projects.htm>. Other presenters included Peter Stutchbury, Brigitte Shim, and Vincent James with Jennifer Yoos.

The third day revolved around teaching and community activity with presentations by Steve Badanes, a former Jersey Devil; Andrew Freear, who is amply filling Sam Mockbee's shoes at the Rural Studio and gave the saltiest presentation; and Dan Rockhill, who, working with students at the University of Kansas, is designing and building incredible community buildings.

The food was excellent and there was time for solitary hikes around Shobac or Lunenburg to digest all that needed digesting. I'm still digesting! This conference was so rich and meaningful for me. Its location at the edge of the ocean was perfect to contemplate the exquisite architecture, the lofty philosophical underpinnings I was being exposed to and how I relate and compare to all of this: my personal existential dilemma! Despite the tamed landscape and the neat, civilized safety of Nova Scotia, the natural beauty remains forceful, even scary. Altogether, it was a perfect place to be inspired and learn.

While you can roam around rural Nova Scotia barely seeing other people, you can't go anywhere in Haiti, no matter how rural, without running into somebody. Joan and I are working with FONHOH, the Kreyol acronym for The Foundation for the Honor of Haiti ([www.fonhoh.org](http://www.fonhoh.org)). Run by Marky Jean-Pierre this non-profit seeks to overhaul and invigorate the Haitian educational system. Changes would include teaching in the Haitian language of Kreyol, rather than French, and spreading schools throughout rural areas. A disproportionate number of teachers and students died in the January 2010 earthquake due to the concentration of schools in Port-au-Prince. We have been developing conceptual plans



Neighbors and future students in Haiti  
photo by Bill Austin AIA

for two campuses on land owned by FONHOH, and, in November we went to Haiti to meet teachers, look at the land and experience Haiti. Flying over Haiti, the land looks empty and peaceful, until you circle over Port-au-Prince. As I focused in, it seemed the earthquake occurred two weeks ago, not almost two years ago. So much rubble remains.

There are people everywhere in Haiti. The streets of Port-au-Prince teem with a chaotic mix of people, donkeys and cows, taptaps (the colorful ubiquitous jitneys), motorbikes, cars and trucks, all honking, swerving, dodging, careening, barely missing. The roadways are one long open market on both sides. Tent cities where half a million souls still reside are packed in everywhere. There is an acrid haze of dust, diesel fumes, and charcoal fires. Haiti has its ghosts, too, but they are visceral, fresh, and seething around us.

As we climbed out of Port-au-Prince towards the Central Plateau, the roadside vendors thinned then vanished. The constant line of pedestrians dropped to single file, but never completely disappeared. There are numerous villages and towns throughout rural Haiti all active with the fullness of daily life. Poverty is everywhere, but the people

(at least those we met) are positive, entrepreneurial and industrious. All kinds of food are available and it's all good. The trip to the school sites took a long time, partly because the roads are so bad and partly because Marky was obligated to visit family and friends, all of whom were so willing to share what they had with us.

When we finally arrived at sites, we were struck by how beautiful the surrounding country is. What an opportunity to do something wonderful and so needed. My existential angst is now diminished. We can make a difference here. The process of getting the schools built will be difficult, not the least because we still need to raise the money. But these schools will be solid and safe; and, hopefully along with the natural beauty of the countryside, inspiring and a perfect place to learn.



Bill and Joan's  
design for a new school in rural Haiti  
rendering by Bill Austin AIA

## Field Trip

By Erika Zekos, Associate AIA

On a sunny August afternoon I packed up my kids and a picnic lunch and headed to Stockbridge to visit Naumkeag, the summer cottage of the Choate family of New York. By today’s definition, this three-story, shingle-style house is no demure cottage. Designed by Stanford White of McKim, Mead and White in 1885, it boasts 44 rooms and originally commanded 50 acres of property. Today the house is operated by the Trustees of Reservations.

Our house tour began with the striking of a two foot diameter brass gong from China that sits on the entry patio. Inside, the house was clearly designed with care and attention to every detail, but it’s not ostentatious – no gilded ballrooms like their contemporaries, the Vanderbilts - rather a series of well-proportioned, wood paneled spaces designed for dining, receiving guests and reading. In fact, it was the library that most impressed the kids with its floor to ceiling bookshelves and antique globes. I enjoyed the entry hall for the way it drew attention away from the architecture and out to the hills

beyond.

Many of the construction details are also compelling. The house is wood construction, but it features concrete floor slabs and a fully integrated, gravity fed water hose system to reduce the potential for loss in the event of fire.

While the house is impressive, the site is probably most known for its landscape. Daughter Mable Choate, who inherited the property in 1929, worked with landscape architect Fletcher Steele over 30 years to design the many themed gardens. A set of stairs, the “Blue Steps” is modeled loosely on the landscaped hillside of the Villa D’Este in Tivoli, but softened here with a more modest approach and New England plantings.

Naumkeag was the Native American



Naumkeag from the rose garden  
photo by Erika Zekos Assoc. AIA

name for Salem, Mass, where Joseph Choate was born. The name also means “shalom” or peace and welcome. The house and gardens that share the name are indeed welcoming and a pleasant place for a summer afternoon.

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# OPPORTUNITIES

## NESEA Building Energy 12

March 6 - 8

Seaport World Trade Center, Boston

Registration is open for BuildingEnergy 12; the most established and most cross-disciplinary renewable energy and high performance building conference in the region. NESEA brings together architects, engineers, builders, policymakers, developers and building managers for three days of networking, accredited educational sessions and a high-level trade show. [www.nesea.org/be12/conferenceregistration](http://www.nesea.org/be12/conferenceregistration).

## A Study Tour of Cuba

March 17-24

For anyone interested in the history of architecture, the history of modernism, and the merger of modernist with historic forms and styles, Havana at this moment in time is a uniquely fascinating place. The goal for this trip will be to give participants a grounding in the recent history of Cuba and Havana in particular, and to see how Cuban society has wrestled with key issues: how do we preserve historic buildings and neighborhood while building a modern city? What does the history of modernism have to teach us for contemporary design? How we do

we incorporate both our valued history and cutting edge technology and new design approaches?

Students in Architecture + Design and related disciplines degree programs, and professional architects, planners and preservationists are especially urged to apply. For information about tour details, costs, CEU credits email tour leaders: Max Page ([mpage@art.umass.edu](mailto:mpage@art.umass.edu)) and Joseph Krupczynski ([josephk@art.umass.edu](mailto:josephk@art.umass.edu)).

## WIN THE CHANCE TO SHOWCASE YOUR MOST INSPIRED WORK 2012 myMARVIN ARCHITECT CHALLENGE



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# WMAIA PROGRAMS

## Spring 2012 WMAIA/Five College Architecture Film Series: A Shifting Focus: Perspectives On/In a Changing World

**Special Event** (in conjunction with the UMASS Historical Preservation Program) - please note location & time:

### "UNFINISHED SPACES"

Cuba's ambitious National Art Schools project, designed by three young artists in the wake of Castro's Revolution, is neglected, nearly forgotten, then ultimately rediscovered as a visionary architectural masterpiece. Directed by Alysa Nahmias and Benjamin Murray

#### 1st Showing

**January 24, 7:30 pm**

Herter Hall 227, UMass, Amherst

(on campus parking is free after 5:00pm)

#### 2nd Showing

**January 26, 6:00 pm**

ADP (Alliance to Develop Power), 130 Union Street, Springfield MA

For all films -

**1.5 AIA LUs (approval pending)**

**Location & Time (unless otherwise noted): Pruyne Lecture Hall @ Fayerweather Hall, Amherst College, 6:30pm.**

**All films followed by discussion.**

**Free and Open to the Public**

#### March 7

##### "UP FROM ASHES"

This film chronicles a community's efforts to build a sustainable public library in Michigan.

#### March 29

##### "CITIZEN ARCHITECT"

A documentary about Samuel Mockbee's work with students and communities in rural Alabama. See this film and get

inspired for a proposed WMAIA-sponsored community design/build initiative!

#### April 11

##### CHRISTO and JEANNE-CLAUDE ON FILM

A film (to be selected) providing insight into the artists' work in anticipation of Christo's visit (part of the Five College Architecture Riverscapes project) on April 19.

#### April 25

##### "AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH"

Al Gore's Academy Award winning film will be shown to re-inspire the conversation in anticipation of Gore's visit to Hampshire College on April 27.

Other WMAIA programs resume in February. Watch your mail (and email!) for program updates! If you have not been receiving WMAIA emails, please contact [director@wmaia.org](mailto:director@wmaia.org).

**WMAIA** news

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Amherst, MA 01002

