

# acclaim

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Alabama Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

December 2011

## Notes from Auburn

*Landscape architecture for the 99%! See what the MLA students have been up to recently*  
**Page 4**

## Trustee Report

*Ryan Collins updates us with all the national ASLA activities*  
**Page 3**



## Red Maples in the southern landscape

*Find out what Fred Spicer has to say about the topic*  
**Page 5**

## Do You know a Great Place?

*The Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) is now accepting submissions for the 14th Annual Great Places Awards for Place Design, Planning and Research.*  
**Page 6**

## Letter from the President

*Stephen Schrader has a few words to say as the new president*  
**Page 2**

## PLA use encouraged

*Check out the link and start using the abbreviation*  
**Page 3**

## Government affairs

*Get updated on state level issues*  
**Page 2**

## Looking for some hot stuff?

*We never disappoint! Add our Hot Dates to your calendar.*  
**Page 6**

## Time for license renewals

*Don't forget to renew your Alabama LA license by the end of January*  
**Page 6**

## Thank you, from the Past President

I am honored to have been part of the ASLA Executive Committee and represent Alabama at a National level. As I reflect on the changes we have experienced during my tenure I can not help but admire how strong our chapter and our profession are even as we are remaking ourselves and in some cases redefining who we are and how we practice.

I will continue to stay active at a State and National level as our Public Relations representative where it will be my charge to grow the understanding of our profession in Alabama. We need to stay involved and reach out to the needs of our communities and be the advocates for safe places, green spaces, and economic opportunities.

I am excited about the parts we have put in place over the last four years and look forward to our chapters continued growth under our new leadership. Thanks for the opportunity to be part of the Alabama Chapter of ASLA.

Tony Renta, ASLA

Past President

[trenta515@hotmail.com](mailto:trenta515@hotmail.com)

# From the New President

This is so exciting—I'm on the plane from Birmingham to Phoenix, then on to my first Annual Meeting of the ASLA in San Diego. I'm not chapter president yet, technically, but will be in a few days. It does not seem like six years have passed since I moved to Birmingham, went to work for Tommy and Ed, and got involved with ASLA. At that time, Sharon asked me if I would edit a chapter newsletter—a duty I kept throughout my term as secretary, but will now be handing off to Julie Hanes. I was thrilled when she called me during the chapter leadership nominations process and asked if there was a non-leadership job she could do. (She needs a job as an intern LA, if one of you can hire her—I can definitely vouch for her initiative!)

I didn't think I was ready for a leadership role in ASLA when I accepted the newsletter job—but the newsletter seemed like something I could do. It was while working on that project that I had the chance to build connections with other members of our chapter. When opportunities arose to do more with ASLA, it seemed natural for me to accept-- I felt ready...and more importantly, at that point I knew I was surrounded by some of the greatest people in the world who wouldn't let me mess up, and who make most of the job seem more like fun than like work. Without a doubt, I can say that what I get out of my ASLA membership is directly proportional to what I put into it—and there's definitely a generous multiplier in there. ASLA has given me opportunities I would probably never have had, like meeting with our representatives in Washington to ask them to support legislation that would create and sustain work for landscape architects (I hope we can do something similar in Montgomery, too), or presenting one of the educational sessions at the Annual Meeting.

The national organization of ASLA has made it easy for the voices of landscape architects to be heard with tools like the Advocacy Network that allows quick response to issues that arise (remember that licensure crisis they averted down in Florida last year?) That's just one of the unbelievable wealth of tools available on [asla.org](http://asla.org). We can even check on state-level legislation that could affect LAs and their practice.

The really great thing about being part of ASLA is that there is room for involvement at nearly any level of commitment members are willing to devote to it. Just take a minute and a half to respond to an Advocacy Network email alert. Just come to the Twin States conference in Natchez this spring. Just tell the people you know that you're a landscape architect, and what that means. These are relatively easy things, and things we keep doing over again, but they mean so much. Seemingly small things like these are the foundation on which ASLA builds.

Stephen Schrader, PLA, ASLA  
President, Alabama Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects

## State Level Government Affairs

Even though the Alabama legislature is not currently in session, now is a great time to let our Senators and Representatives know how legislation introduced in the last session could affect us if it moves forward in 2012.

**AL HB342** would require ALDOT to design complete streets and highways to enable safe access for all users, including bicyclists, transit, motorists and pedestrians of all ages and self-publish a best practices report 2 years after the act is effective demonstrating change in procedures to accomplish these goals. *Since this aligns with ASLA's national policy goals [http://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/Government\\_Affairs/Public\\_Policies/Transportation.pdf](http://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/Government_Affairs/Public_Policies/Transportation.pdf), please contact your state Representatives to encourage them to support this bill, and contact your state Senators to express support and encourage them to sponsor or co-sponsor a companion bill.*

**AL HB549/SB435** would make several amendments to the law which regulates the practice of landscape architecture in Alabama. Specific amendments include revising the renewal delinquency date to March 15 of each year, and clarifying language replacing "written exam" with "exam approved by the Board." A further amendment would remove a path to licensure through eight years' practical experience and would require an approved degree from a landscape architectural school, along with practical experience, to qualify for examination. *ASLA policy [http://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/Government\\_Affairs/Public\\_Policies/Licensure\\_Prerequisites.pdf](http://www.asla.org/uploadedFiles/CMS/Government_Affairs/Public_Policies/Licensure_Prerequisites.pdf) continues to support alternative paths to licensure; removing this provision from our statute would conflict with that policy statement. Please encourage your representatives to remove this particular provision from the proposed amendment.*

Want to know what else is happening? Use the ASLA Advocacy Network's bill tracker. <http://www.asla.org/ContentDetail.aspx?id=11490>  
You must sign in to access this feature.

Share your thoughts! Email [Stephen Schrader](mailto:Stephen.Schrader@asla.org) with your ideas, questions and concerns about pending legislation.

# Trustee Report on National ASLA Activities

Ryan Collins

Please [email](#) me if you have anything you wish to share on the next report. Remember, I am your “official” conduit to the national organization, and I will be at the mid-year meeting in Washington D.C. in May 2012 where I can speak to the ASLA staff and/or the Board of Trustees about our chapter’s or even an individual member’s concerns. I hope you find the following informative reading and links are provided for additional information.

## Governance and Administration

- At its San Diego meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the 2012 budget and Annual Operating Plan for the Society; amended the ASLA strategic objectives to include support and advocacy for the Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES™); adopted a policy regarding a universal designation for licensure (see Government Affairs section); reviewed progress of priority initiatives including the public awareness campaign, government advocacy, and SITES; held a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) assessment discussion as part of ASLA strategic planning. The Board also approved the recommendation of the Task Force on Accreditation and Reciprocity to expand the scope of the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) to include non-degree granting (certificate) first-professional landscape architecture programs; such programs would have to meet the *same standards* used by LAAB to evaluate degree-granting programs and would have to require a bachelor’s degree as a prerequisite to entry.
- The annual installation of officers was held on the afternoon of November 2, the final day of the 2011 Annual Meeting. Newly installed officers are: President Susan M. Hatchell, FASLA; President-Elect Thomas R. Tavella, FASLA; Education VP Richard K. Zweifel, FASLA; Communications VP Mark H. Hough, ASLA; and Government Affairs VP Chad D. Danos, FASLA. Officers continuing their service are: Professional Practice VP Edward G. Czyscon, FASLA; Membership VP Gregory A. Miller, ASLA; and Finance VP Vaughn B. Rinner, ASLA.

## Government Affairs

- At its San Diego meeting, the ASLA Board of Trustees approved the [Professional Licensure: Universal Designation](#) policy, which encourages all licensed landscape architects to use the *post nominal* designation “PLA.” As an abbreviation of the title “professional landscape architect,” it will better enable potential clients and the general public to identify licensed practitioners. It will also provide consistent recognition for the landscape architecture profession. In addition to the policy language, a [summary with frequently asked questions](#) is available to chapters for promotion of the designation to their members.
- On November 4, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee released a draft bill for a two-year reauthorization of the surface transportation law. The proposal did include a reauthorization for the Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School, and Recreational Trails programs. However, the proposal lumps all three programs together along with programs to build high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) roads and wetlands mitigation projects, and dramatically reduces funding levels for all programs. Under the proposal, states could also “opt out” of the pedestrian and bicycle programs and divert their portion of funding to spend on other road projects. ASLA and other Defense of TE coalition members have been working with EPW staff on amendments that would eliminate the “opt out” language and that would restore the independent status of these programs.
- During the recent in-person Chapter President’s Council meeting, also in San Diego, ASLA Government Affairs unveiled the [Transportation Enhancements Toolkit](#) that provides tools and information to help chapters become more involved in federal advocacy efforts to preserve the TE program. The TE Toolkit can help chapters prepare for in-district congressional meetings to talk to their federal legislators about the importance of the TE program to the profession and to local communities. If your chapter would like to participate in in-district advocacy meetings to talk about the TE program, please contact [Federal Government Affairs Manager Roxanne Blackwell](#); phone, 202-216-2334.

## Public Relations and Communications

- More than 40 media members registered for the ASLA annual meeting, including *The Atlantic Cities*, *Engineering News Record*, *Architect’s Newspaper*, *Garden Design*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Planetizen*, *ArchNewsNow*, and many more.
- Annual meeting coverage is rolling in from [Planetizen](#), [San Diego Union Tribune](#), [Atlantic Cities](#) and a [KUSI TV News](#) report from the EXPO floor.

## Publishing and Resource Development

- **A total of 5,576 attendees registered for the ASLA Annual Meeting and EXPO, making it the second largest meeting in ASLA history.**
- **The EXPO was the largest in ASLA history** in terms of square footage, number of exhibits, and revenue. With two booths sold on site, exhibit space and sponsorship contracts slightly exceeded the annual budget goal. Post-meeting surveys will be sent out later this week to attendees, exhibitors, and non-attendees, but initial anecdotal feedback seems to be quite positive.
- The January-June 2011 Publisher Statement for *Landscape Architecture Magazine* was released by the Audit Bureau of Circulations. The total average qualified paid and non-paid circulation is 18,941.

## Member and Chapter Services

The current ASLA membership now stands at 15,800

# Notes from Auburn:

Jocelyn Zanzot

## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE for the 99%!

When Rod Barnett, Chair of the Auburn MLA program puts this sign on his office door, its fair to say that our program has a position, not just a theoretical framework or curricular model. What does this mean for AU MLA studio culture, the types of projects we engage, the communities we reach? Might the notion of landscape in Alabama touch the quick of the 99%? Land, ecologies, economies, assemblages of difference, disparity of rights, needs and access to the city, visible and invisible barriers to performative productive landscapes. Certainly these concerns have historically been on the radar of Auburn's Landscape Architecture program. This short post will take a minute to look into one of our current graduate landscape architecture studios coming to fruition at the end of the fall semester 2011 in light of these questions.

**MLA 2: Maximal Thrift: ATL os:** The big project for the semester was kicked off with a 3-day field studies trip to New York City. We began with a walk across the Brooklyn Bridge to Michael van Valkenbergs' office where amongst several other ideas and projects we were treated to an overview of Brooklyn Bridge Park. After the show, which included a sweet model-making shop and an installed prototype grow-your-own Black Locust bench, we then went to investigate the new super-charged *hypernature* in person. It was a bit wooly, even toothy in parts, but concealed within a secret cove, sheltered Spanish steps lifting above the river. Crossing nearly ten miles on foot, we saw the light-industrial adaptive re-use of Red Hook, Ikea's canal/waterfront redevelopment, and wrapped the day up with a look/smell down the massively infrastructural and deeply contaminated Gowanus Canal. Day two: the Highline, the Hudson Riverfront, Teardrop Park and Bryant Park, a tour-de-force in contemporary landscape architecture and high stakes urban investment. Day 3 we spent with Michael Cluer of Sustainable South Bronx, touring the multimillion dollar green streets and green infrastructure project initiated by Majora Carter that will re-connect the Bronx to its riverfront with miles of bike and pedestrian trails, and fauna-friendly streets that clean storm water and mitigate pollution.

We were inspired by their co-creative economics and bundled systems approach to the project that made partners of industry and ecology towards education and jobs that benefit people of the community and make for a healthier and more fabulous neighborhood. Returning home, we have put this inspiration to the project of imagining future development scenarios for a 30-acre post-industrial site that could connect the Pittsburgh neighborhood with the Atlanta Beltline through design strategies that harness the potential of intersected landscape systems. Final presentations will illustrate landscape prototypes as well as landscape strategies for urban transformations that are shovel ready, consider the interim, and occupy the sustainable future.

We would like to invite you all to our end of term reviews; there are bound to be scathing critiques and simmering refreshments! It would be great to have your feedback and insights.

Thesis: **Wednesday Nov. 30th: 1-5pm**

Terminal Studio: **Friday Dec. 2nd: 1-5pm**

MLA Studio 2: **Wednesday Dec 7th: 1-5pm!**



# Can the Red Maple Fit Into a Southern Landscape?

By: Fred Spicer, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

**Q: Every fall, these trees light up a local apartment complex. I keep meaning to "figure out" what they are but always forget until the next year.**

**Any ideas? – Cathy A., Birmingham.**

A: This picture had me second-guessing myself, so I went out and looked. These are a cultivar of *Acer rubrum*, red or swamp maple, probably Red



Sunset® ('Franksred' is the cultivar name), but possibly 'October Glory'. If you look around commercial and residential landscapes in our area, and north and east all the way to Boston, you will notice that these are among the most commonly-planted trees. They can grow to 40' tall and more (though rarely that big here), to about one-quarter to one-half as wide. I do not feel they are a good choice for our area, in most cases, but you'll have to keep reading to hear me rant a little more about why.

At first I thought the tree in the photo might be a form of Southern sugar maple such as *Acer floridanum*, Florida maple, or *Acer leucoderme*, chalkbark maple, as both can have this deep red-orange fall color expression. However the leaves had three primary lobes, a doubly-serrate margin, and a reddish petiole (the stalk that attaches the leaf to the stem), the newest stems and buds were reddish, and the older stems and bark were silvery gray. All of those features definitively call out *Acer rubrum*. The sugar maples often have five primary lobes and always no serrations; their newest stems are dark brown and the buds are the same color and sharp-pointed. Their bark is not silvery, but pale brown or gray.

Interestingly, many people think the common name of red maple refers to fall leaf color, but that's not true, as wild trees can be green-yellow to yellow-orange to orange-red and anything in between; I always see more yellow than red in native trees. The red of those two cultivars is not the norm, and so adds to their popularity. The "red" in red maple actually refers to the tree's flowers, which are among the first to bloom in late winter, sometimes in late January. Although individually small, they bring a hazy flush of red (sometimes brown- or yellow-red) to hills, swamps and roadsides. Many people do not even recognize this very visible phenomenon

as the profuse flowering of large trees; such is the plant blindness that affects many. They might recognize the showers of helicopter blade-like samaras that spiral to the ground soon after as fruit, but the connection to the requisite earlier event is lost. I once had a fairly heated discussion with a garden center owner who vehemently insisted that this color was from newly-emerging leaves, so I suppose people not accustomed to looking at plants can be cut some slack for their ignorance.

In the US, *Acer rubrum* as a species is native in a nearly continuous distribution from east Texas to the northern tip of Minnesota and from the top of Maine south almost to the Florida Keys. It is most abundant and makes its largest growth (up to 100' tall) in moist, lowland sites (hence the swamp maple moniker) but research has shown that it is a very opportunistic native species that has, aggressively in some cases, recently expanded its range into drier and more upland habitats. The two main reasons for this spread are interesting and are thought to involve logging and deer. This species is considered a "soft" maple and its wood is not sought for commercial uses, therefore it gets passed over when an area is timbered, providing a copious source of seed to

repopulate cut-over areas. Red maple seed is also easily carried by wind, which is a very good way to move things uphill. It also matures in early spring when natural food supplies are relatively abundant. In so doing, it avoids much of the seed predation that occurs in the fall, as rodents and other animals hoard and gorge for winter. White-tailed deer, in vermin-like numbers in many areas of the eastern US, do not prefer its seed, or its stems, conferring another advantage. As to why I do not feel that Red Sunset® and 'October Glory' are good choices for us here in the Birmingham area (and south), it has to do with the regional adaptation of plant species. Selections from northern provenances (seed origin) generally do not do well in the south. Whether this has to do with our extended day length, high night temperatures or lack of winter chilling relative to more northern areas has not been well-researched; it may be the combination of all three. Both of those red maple cultivars emanate from northern climates, Michigan and New York, respectively, as I understand it. For optimum growth (longevity) in Birmingham, these selections require a rather large (wide) root

volume and consistent moisture (like ample irrigation or a lake- or streamside location) throughout the growing season. In addition, lights (such as along streets and in commercial parking lots) wreak havoc with their natural (circadian) rhythms, weakening them. Look around: these trees are in many areas and most of them are neither healthy nor vigorous – even though specimens that are nearly dead will still color-up dramatically every fall. As brilliant as the tree in the picture is, it is heavily stressed, has grown very little over the past several years, and supports a substantial (and detrimental) population of scale insects. Importantly, the insects are not the source of the stress; they're merely a symptom of the wrong plant in the wrong environment.

Due to their fibrous root systems, all red maples are easily grown in the nursery and easily transplanted in rather large sizes – but these cultivars are just not long-term trees for us. Perhaps if people planted them with the knowledge that they will live no longer than a redbud (~15 years), we'd be ahead of the game. That they're being planted all over the place, in a vain hope they will become truly large shade trees is unfortunate. That they're being used to replace a natural and self-sustaining forest of oaks, pines and hickories (and other trees) that can and do live for a century or more with zero human input is tragic.

I should mention that I see *Acer rubrum* (the species) growing wild virtually everywhere in Alabama. In lowland areas they make large, often very handsome, specimens; in dry upland sites, they are mostly (but not always) smallish, multi-stemmed and shrubby things. Occasionally, I do see plants of this species that rival the best commercial cultivars for intensity of red fall color. Southern nursery professionals need to make superior selections from southern populations of red maple so we can use this species over the long haul, and ditch those ill-adapted northern cultivars, regardless of how "pretty" they are for two weeks a year.

*To stay up to date on everything happening at The Gardens, from our wonderful educational opportunities like the Certificate in Native Plant Studies program to our events like Southern Tales, find The Gardens on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. We also invite you to visit our website at [www.bbgardens.org](http://www.bbgardens.org).*

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Reprinted courtesy Birmingham Botanical Gardens as seen on [al.com](http://al.com).

# Hot Dates

**Nov. 29-Dec.2**  
**Green Roofs for Healthy Cities 9th Annual Green Roof and Wall Conference,**  
 Philadelphia, PA  
[www.greenroofs.org](http://www.greenroofs.org)

**Dec. 5-9**  
**National BIM Conference,**  
 Washington, DC  
<http://www.aecocobuild.com/bim-conference>

**Jan 20, 2012**  
**ASLA Annual Meeting Call for Presentations**  
 closes midnight PST

**March 15-17, 2012**  
**LABash, Florida**  
**International University,**  
 Miami, FL  
<http://www.fiulabash2012.com/>

**April 12-14**  
**Twin States Conference,**  
 Natchez, MS  
**Landscape Architecture: Designing History**  
<http://twinstatesconference.com>

**April 20-23**  
**N.E. Miles Jewish Day School Indoor Golf Tournament**  
**LA Month Event –The PTA of the N. E. Miles Jewish Day School on Montclair Road in Birmingham has invited local landscape architects to participate in the school's spring fundraiser, an indoor mini golf tournament. Landscape architects will work with each of the classes at the school to design and build a 9-hole course, using the theme of "tikkun olam," or "repairing the world."**  
 Contact **Stephen Schrader** for more info.

**May 10, 2012**  
**Advocacy Day**  
 Washington, DC  
<http://www.asla.org/GovernmentAffairs.aspx>

**May 9-12, 2012**  
**Mid-Year Meeting**  
 Washington, DC  
**BOT=Board of Trustees**  
**CPC= Chapter Presidents Council**

Got a Hot Date to share?  
[Submit it](#) anytime.

## Great Places Awards

*A message from ACSA on behalf of one of our educational partners.*

**Do You Know A GREAT PLACE?!**

The **Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA)** is now accepting submissions for the 14th Annual **Great Places Awards** for Place Design, Planning and Research! EDRA's Great Places Awards are unique among programs that recognize professional and scholarly excellence in environmental design. They are distinguished by their interdisciplinary focus, concern for human factors in the design of the built environment, and a commitment to promoting links between design research and practice! Entries are welcome from the full breadth of environmental design and related research activities, including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, urban design, interior design, lighting design, graphic design, environmental psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography and the physical sciences. Projects should emphasize a link between research and practice, demonstrating how an understanding of human interaction with place can inspire design. A panel of illustrious jurors will select winners from four categories: place design, place planning, place research, and a book prize. This year's distinguished jurors include: **Richard Haag**, FASLA, BCSLA, Hon AIA, Principal, Richard Haag Associates; **Milenko Matanovic**, Executive Director, Pomegranate Center; **Julie Parrett**, RLA, Lecturer, Landscape Architecture, University of Washington; **Michael Pyatok**, FAIA, Principal, Pyatok Architects; and **Sharon E. Sutton**, PhD, FAIA, Professor, Architecture and Urban Design, University of Washington. For submission guidelines, rules and official entry form, please click [here](#), or visit [www.edra.org](http://www.edra.org). All entries for the 2012 Great Places Awards must be received by January 27, 2012.

ACSA-PartnerEmails-Full mailing list  
[ACSA-PartnerEmails-Full@mailingmaxx.acsa-arch.org](mailto:ACSA-PartnerEmails-Full@mailingmaxx.acsa-arch.org)

## AL LA license renewal

It's time to renew your AL LA license! Again this year, the Alabama Board of Landscape Architects will not be sending paper copies of the renewal form. I have attached a form or you can renew online by using this link: [https://www.alabamainteractive.org/abela\\_lr](https://www.alabamainteractive.org/abela_lr). The form and the link will also be available on our website ([www.abela.alabama.gov](http://www.abela.alabama.gov)). I have attached part of our handbook, which includes the documents referenced on the front page of the renewal form. If you still want a form and the other information mailed or faxed to you, please call our office at 334-262-1351.

-Don't forget you need to report 16 hours of CE, and 8 of those hours must be directly related to HSW (you still have until 12/31/2011 to earn CE for this renewal period!).

-Renewals are due by January 31, 2011. After that date, you'll have until June 30, 2012 to renew with a \$50 late fee. After June 30, 2012, you will be required to repeat the application process in order to be licensed.

-**Reminder:** those of you who received your AL license in 2011 either through examination or reciprocity are exempt from listing your CE for your first renewal cycle (you are not, however, exempt from paying your fee).

Please note our new address as we moved in August.

Leigh Moorer, Administrator  
 AL Board of Landscape Architects

New address:  
 5950 Carmichael Place, Su. 109-A  
 Montgomery, AL 36117  
 P&F: 334-262-1351  
 Normal work days: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays

## Executive Committee

**Stephen Schrader**— President  
**Ben Wieseman** — President-Elect  
**Tony Renta**— Past President  
**Ryan Collins** — Trustee  
**Jill Albert**— Secretary  
**Whit Macknally** — Treasurer  
**Chad Bostick**— Huntsville Section Chair  
**Lois Shindelbower**— Birmingham Section Chair  
**Jocelyn Zanzot**— Montgomery Section Chair  
**Matthew Alfele**— Mobile Section Chair  
**Julie Hanes**— ACCLAIM Editor

## Chapter Committee Chairs

**Ben Wieseman** — Design Awards Committee  
**Sharon Deep Nelson** — Fellows Committee  
**Birgit Kibelka** — Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) Chapter Liaison

*Executive Committee member names are live email links.*