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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Fall,

As another construction season winds down we sit back to reflect upon this season of projects and plan for next year. And what a year it has been. The Chapter has been busy with events from Trivia Night early in the year, to Lobby Day in April, to our LARE review, to the Golf Outing, and most recently the Michigan Conference on Landscape Architecture. We had a great event, from the Sketch and Photo Crawl, to the Vendor Expo as well as our amazing educational sessions. We learned about Building Diverse Human Habitats from Mikyoung Kim, FASLA; Climate Change and Resilient Urban Design from a panel of experts; Surfacing Natural Systems from Curt Culbertson, FASLA, and Navigating the Options in a Tech-Centric World from some of our state's experts. We also received an update from National ASLA President, Shawn Kelly, FASLA. The conference ended with our chapter awards dinner which you'll see more about in our next issue of MiSITES. Thank you to all of the attendees who came to our event this year. And a special thank you to those who put in the countless hours to plan and organize the event.

This issue has some great articles covering a wide range of topics. I'm extremely impressed by the work the Detroit Collaborative Design Center is doing throughout their communities. One of our chapter's newly raised Fellows, Bob Grese's is honored through a retrospective of his career. And Joan Nassauer, FASLA, FCELA discusses the role of Science in Landscape Architecture. As we start planning our 2020 activities as a chapter, we are always looking for volunteers. If you'd be able to volunteer in any capacity, please let us know. If there are any activities you'd like to suggest we are always looking for new opportunities for our members. The best way to stay up to date on all of our happenings is to check out our website, michiganasla.org and to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Linked-in.

Ben Baker, PLA, ASLA President, Michigan Chapter of ASLA

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ON THE COVER: Detroit Collaborative Design Center community workshop in Detroit, Michigan. (image credit: Brilliant Detroit)

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DCDC developed a workshop to engage the local youth of the neighborhood. Source: Brilliant Detroit

DETROIT COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CENTER: ENGAGING YOUTH FOR EQUITABLE OUTCOMES

Detroit, Michigan

CHARLES CROSS, ASLA, DETROIT COLLABORATIVE DESIGN CENTER

As Detroiters begin to see increased investment in their communities, one organization is investing in the future by transforming underutilized housing stock into early childhood development and family centers.

Brilliant Detroit is a non-profit organization devoted to cultivating neighborhoods that nurture children and their families. Focusing on from ages 0 to 8 years old with the goal to help children and families by healthy and school ready, the organization hires residents from the neighborhood to provide the programming,

resources and services at the Brilliant Detroit homes. Currently, there are 11 homes up and running, with plans to open another 13 by 2023. The Detroit Collaborative Design Center is working with Brilliant Detroit to create educational exterior play space at several of these centers.

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) is a non-profit multi disciplinary architecture and urban design firm at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture. DCDC, founded in 1994, has worked with over 100 nonprofit

organizations, community groups, philanthropic foundations and faith based groups throughout Detroit.

DCDC developed a workshop to engage the young people in the neighborhood of the Brilliant Detroit Central House. Youth from ages 2-15 along with their parents came to participate in the workshop. This workshop consisted of students and parents sketching their thoughts as to what elements should be on the site and where those elements should be located. The participants were very engaged in the process and had no shortage of opinions. They were very clear as to their vision for the space.

Some of the key elements that came out of the workshop included:

- A community table for the children to be able to play, work on crafts and eat outdoors, but also to accommodate community meetings
- A stage built near the house (which will also serve as a deck) so the children and community can enjoy performances, readings and other events
- A vegetable garden to provide food for the parents in the community and also provide an educational opportunity for the children to understand how to grow their own food, harvest it and prepare it.
- A natural play area for the development of the children's motor skills
- A paved walkway for riding tricycles and big wheels
- A butterfly garden
- A tree house (The design team provided cardboard for the children to build what they called a tree house. Two groups formed and each built what they would like to see as part of the final construction.)
- A bike/trike repair station
- A space for quiet time and reading
- A rain garden to deal with stormwater

DCDC created the landscape context (top left) while workshop participants helped design and layout the site elements (bottom left). Source: Charles Cross These key elements were included in the design. The children, of course, wanted the project built the day after the workshop, but the project is currently in the design development stage. A phasing plan is also being developed.

This project required the DCDC design team to listen in a meaningful way. All too often children, especially in underserved communities, are not afforded the respect of having their opinions taken seriously. Designers do not give the community, or in this case, the children a voice. They already have a voice! The goal of this workshop was to inform the design team of the needs of the children/community (lifting up their voices), making the engagement more of a meaningful experience, while letting them know the design team is truly listening. This approach brings equitable outcomes to the project, a true sense of ownership by all, and the understanding that regardless of age, one can impact how space is used in communities that have been historically underserved and under-resourced.

PROJECT: Brilliant Detroit Central DESIGN TEAM: Detroit Collaborative Design Center BY: Charles Cross, ASLA Director of Landscape Architecture Fulbright-Hays Fellow Detroit Collaborative Design Center University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

ROBERT "BOB" E. GRESE, FASLA

Ann Arbor, Michigan

DR. DAVID C. MICHENER, CURATOR, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN MATTHAEI BOTANICAL GARDENS & NICHOLS ARBORETUM

Robert E. Grese is the Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the Director of the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum.

Bob Grese (n). a. One who transforms by doing, especially while training students and not calling attention to oneself. b. A visionary leader and mentor nationwide, especially where contemporary issues of landscape architecture, history, site integrity, sustainability and public engagement intersect. c. Unifying leader during institutional merger and restructuring with successful transformation to a coherent academic unit.

So begins Bob's entry in my edition of the *Dictionary of Legendary Leaders*. But there are so many intersecting facets to Bob's professional and public roles that few perceive the full scope and depth of his interests and impacts. Just his list of recent professional associations and service activities is 24 entries deep. And that's recent. His elevation to the ASLA Council of Fellows is as well-deserved as his signature discretion was expected in announcing it to colleagues and staff.

If it's a fools' errand to try and summarize more than four hours of phone interviews with colleagues and former students, an ample sheaf of heart-felt email testimonials, and better than a quarter century collaboration at the University of Michigan, it's one well worth attempting.

Impressive in its own right is Bob's academic legacy. Leading or working with over 100 graduate students in team or individual theses or practica during his 34 years on the faculty at the University of Michigan. Writing or editing books already destined to be classics in landscape architecture history, as *The Native Landscape Reader*, University of Massachusetts Press (2011), *Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*, Johns Hopkins University Press (1992), and the forthcoming co-edited book on the impact of peonies in American garden culture, to be published by the University of Michigan Press in 2021. Add to this Bob's scores of articles and chapters with colleagues and students in sustainable design, regional ecological design, historical site integrity, volunteerism, the psychological benefits of engagement in green spaces—all these in addition to his teaching portfolio. Only then does one perceive the outline of just the academic facet of Bob.

When asked for perspectives, numerous peers, former students who are now established professionals, and staff he has mentored willingly emerged. Some provided profound but brief notes. For others an hour's interview felt insufficient. All have a consistent theme of career-changing transformative experiences infused with examples of leadership in action. Faculty peer MaryCarol Hunter noted his remarkable integrity and consistency: "Bob is the same person to every person he meets" whether they are deans, faculty, students, members of public commissions, or casual visitors at the Arboretum. She highlighted his nuanced studio, administrative, and public-session listening skills that allow him to constructively bring to the surface critically important thoughts including those with unexpressed internal contradictions, as well as those voices which were admirable for their intensity if not articulation. MaryCarol reflected a core role with his unassuming listening: "He's a bridge-builder, a healer, a unifier". One result is that Bob developed an unrivaled interdisciplinary network of peers, friends, and colleagues spanning the nation and all aspects of private, civic, and academic practice such that he was able to help students discover doors they could open.

Reinforced by insights from my recent interview with Bob, it becomes clear that there is a fundamental triangulation: a) focal goals are kept in view, b) new

ideas are welcomed from anywhere and anyone, and, c) student conceptions and then design-build projects become exploratory learning episodes where the idea and the long-term focus creatively and iteratively interact. Everyone learns, everyone benefits. "Why wouldn't I say yes?" was Bob's concise response when I asked his motives for myriad projects at each of the Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

Among the several scores of student projects are at least a dozen that have led to the physical and conceptual revitalization of the Nichols Arboretum, ranging from the provocative yet ephemeral simplicity of the Daffodil Line; through the complexities of completely refocusing the Centennial Shrub Collection; to inventories focused on natural diversity, site reviews, and restoration planning.

Another set at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens have taken complex, iterative lives of their own and become part of significant funding campaigns. These include the Bonsai and Penjing Garden, the Gaffield Children's Garden, the Great Lakes Gardens, and Sam Graham Trees. Many more are currently underway related to sustainability-themes, from the Medicinal Garden to the entire Campus Farm complex.

This is not to slight the complex ecological restoration and mapping projects involving all four properties (for all see: https://mbgna.umich.edu). Peter Olin (FASLA, Director Emeritus, University of Minnesota) captured highlights of this triangulation that are all part of one system: "Bob has distinguished himself as an educator and scholar. In 34 years of teaching and scholarship he has brought Jens Jensen back into relevance for the profession and turned out inspired graduates while managing two important gardens and made them a success."

The student reflections from this process are profound. Of the many to choose from, an insight from Bill Schneider (founder of WildType) cuts to a core life skill: "He is reluctant to tell you what he thinks about your work but instead nurtures skills that allows students to evaluate their own work and the work of others. Ultimately this is what we have to do professionally."

Joel Perkovich, PLA, ASLA (Alleghany County Parks) enriches the contexts by adding, "... trusting me with large-scale design-build projects ... that gave me the confidence and experience ... in my role as practitioner and professor I aspire to his standard of care."

Bob's continuing presence in the professional lives of students was a recurrent theme, here as stated by Jennifer Austin. "Bob still remembers and highlights to others your contribution to the program and or Matthaei-Nichols years later, which I think helps keep each of us connected."

Joe Howard (Harvey Ecology) caught the spirit of many peers. "Even in talking through this and reflecting back, his influence is at the core. It's an approach, a demeanor, an ethos account for the more successful components in my career. Listening and then understanding where it needs to go. It's completely Bob fashion: humility and humbleness are as more effective in the long run. This is as powerful as it is not obvious. It takes a vision and continues on the path toward it. It chips away for years – looking to the long arc and finding the right resources at the right time. I have complete admiration."

Let us celebrate Bob's sense of humor while living his values—and his ability to take humor, too. As a native plant pioneer in his then-conventionally landscaped Ann Arbor neighborhood, Bob used his new garage green roof to inspire students. In the words of Jennifer Austin "The roof could be seen from the inside of his house so we [students] thought it needed an inhabitant to enjoy it. So, we secretly re-homed a garden gnome to live on it... I wonder if it is still there?" •

Tree Peonies

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Bob Grese leading a group at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum. Source: Dr. David Michener

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS USING SCIENCE: OBLIGATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

JOAN IVERSON NASSAUER, FASLA, FCELA

Landscape architects have been called to support research as part of a 21st century vision for landscape architecture to redesign communities in support of global sustainability (Landscape Architecture Foundation, 2016). To accomplish this necessity, landscape architecture practice, scholarship, and teaching must embrace science and engineering, but, in my view, we may not be adequately connected to these wide-ranging disciplines. We all share some responsibility for this disconnect. Now, our ethical obligation to forge deeper, stronger connections is far greater and more urgent than before. Moreover, our

opportunity to deliver on the promise of a new vision is enormous, if we can marshal the knowledge and societal influence to act on it.

Historically, landscape architecture's relationship with science and engineering is fraught, and misunderstanding continues to this day. The ways in which science and engineering are intrinsic to landscape architecture and the need for collaboration across disciplines have been documented and debated since the earliest days of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), more

than a century ago (Nassauer 1985; Howett 1998). However, early and persistent resistance to the perceived threat of sullying the art of landscape architecture with the mundane, or formulaic, or positivist demands of science and engineering remains today (Fein 1972; Grose 2017). For example, at the 26th annual meeting of the ASLA, President James L. Greenleaf vigorously asserted that, "We are not a science; we are not a trade; we are dealing with a fine art. We want to hold our ideals to those higher levels," (ASLA 1927). By the mid-1980s, the controversy appeared to be resolved when the ASLA Constitution was amended by two fundamental changes; to call for the advancement of knowledge, and to characterize landscape architecture as both an art and a science (Article II, ASLA Constitution 1985). Today, few of us would guestion this characterization, but considerable uncertainty and even controversy remains about how to accomplish it. How do those of us landscape architects who may dub ourselves urban ecologists or landscape ecologists or restoration ecologists ethically draw on the science implied by those titles? How can we credibly contribute to it? How do all of us landscape architects ensure the capacity of our work to meet urgent social and environmental needs?

A way forward will challenge the profession to change, not to reject our traditions but deliver on them. I see the following key changes. We must:

- Teach students to critically access and use scholarship, including relevant work in science and engineering disciplines.
- Teach students how to talk across disciplines, using verbal and visual language as boundary objects not as private disciplinary codes.
- Expect faculty to generate scholarship that is both credible beyond our own discipline and societally relevant.
- Expect faculty to collaborate with colleagues in science and engineering disciplines to generate new knowledge and to engage with society to address real challenges in a way that opens opportunities for practice.
- Ensure that practitioners have access to all relevant refereed scholarship.
- Expect ASLA and LAF to lead in achieving these objectives.

Each of these suggested changes deserves scrutiny and discussion (Nassauer 2019). Here, with an opportunity to address Michigan practitioners, I want to address the last two points.

First, regarding refereed scholarship: An enormous amount of refereed scholarship, highly relevant to landscape architecture practice to advance sustainability and equity, is available. Most of this scholarship is found in journals established in the 1970's – with a rich backlog of relevant knowledge and constantly advancing new knowledge. These journals use a blind referee process for ensuring that scholarship is judged for its intrinsic quality rather than by personal or reputational characteristics of its authors. For example, Landscape and Urban Planning, the journal that I have edited for the past five years employs a double-blind referee process. The authors of each paper submitted for publication are anonymous to 2 - 5 expert reviewers who are themselves anonymous to authors to whom they provide detailed comments about the paper's quality. The journal's editors rely heavily on reviewer comments to determine what papers are of sufficient scholarly quality for publication. Only about one in ten submitted papers passes this standard and ultimately is published.

Why should practicing landscape architects care about the process for publishing scholarly papers?

- Compared with only professional experience or professional lore conveyed in magazines, scholarly knowledge about landscape functions more reliably predicts how landscape architects' designs will function over time.
- Landscape architects can use reliable knowledge about how landscapes function as a powerful foundation for innovation, inventing new landscape compositions that not only LOOK different but function differently.
- Landscape architects who value collaboration with colleagues in sciences or engineering enhance their own credibility as collaborators when they have substantial scholarly knowledge from their own discipline to offer in exchange.

In short, scholarly knowledge can help practitioners know what to ask of their collaborators, what to promise about their designs, and, perhaps most important, to reliably deliver on their promises for sustainability and equity.

Some of the most relevant refereed journals for landscape architecture practice are not only Landscape and Urban Planning, but also Landscape Ecology, Landscape Research, Landscape Journal. Journal of Landscape Architecture, Environment and Behavior, Environmental Psychology, Journal of Environmental Management, and Urban Forestry and Urban Greening – and this list is incomplete. The store of knowledge for landscape architecture is abundant and growing.

A question remains about how to access this knowledge, which exists largely behind publishing house pay walls. As editor of Landscape and Urban Planning, I have been working with others to address the pay wall obstacle. The demand for global online Open Access to scholarly knowledge has become pervasive and insistent, and access parameters are changing toward openness. For now, the best tip I can offer those who do not have access to paid journal subscriptions is: Use Google Scholar. It is an eminently searchable free data base, and currently the most comprehensive for landscape architecture. Note that Google Scholar is not the same as Google or a Google search. Google Scholar gets searchers to refereed scholarship. Many scholars post pre-publication copies of their articles, and these can be downloaded for free individual use via Google Scholar. Further, if you find a paper on Google Scholar and discover it cannot be downloaded, email the author to request such an individual copy for your personal use. Most of us do research so that it can be used. We welcome the opportunity to share it appropriately.

Second, regarding the expectation that ASLA and the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) lead in facilitating the changes I suggest here: Acknowledging the wealth of existing relevant science and engineering knowledge and seeking guidance from leading scholars about how to employ that wealth of knowledge will help ASLA and LAF better serve the profession. Stand-alone initiatives by landscape architecture organizations will become more effective to the degree

that they incorporate the breadth of scholarship within and at the boundaries of the profession. Both ASLA and LAF should join the voices seeking greater access to journals, as well as work with journal editors and publishers to reduce barriers to access for their members by other means.

The need for landscape architecture to extend beyond and art in order to evolve in service to society permeated the earliest discussions of the ASLA (1927) as well as the substance of the 1972 Fein Report. It should permeate our thinking today. LAF's 2016 "New Landscape Declaration" touches on many topics that are the subjects of mushrooming new knowledge in science, engineering, and landscape architecture. There is no doubt that practice must use this knowledge more rigorously and effectively to substantively address the vision that has been declared.

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