The NEW Palazzo Urn 29, LS 9800

LONGSHADOW®
Hand crafted in Southern Illinois by Classic Garden Ornaments, Ltd.®

LONGSHADOW.COM
Editor’s Message
From the Trustee
From the President
Biomimicry in Landscape Architecture
The Merritt Parkway
How New Urbanism Will Save The World: A New Look at Urbanism
Iconic Connecticut Landscapes: Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. at Trinity College
Lunch By The Falls
Pioneers of Connecticut Landscape Architecture: John Alexopoulos
This issue of The Connecticut Landscape Architect is dedicated to different sides of the same coin: education and advocacy. In the first part of the year I had the privilege to experience UConn’s landscape architecture program first hand as I accepted an offer to teach LA class 3230W, filling in for Kristen Schwab who was on sabbatical. Not having much experience with the UConn program, I went into this without expectations, but I can now tell you that the program is filled with bright, ambitious, and talented young women and men. These students understand that they can address the challenges of climate change, urbanization, and sprawl through landscape architecture and they are eager to join the profession. If I went in with low expectations, I emerged with respect for the UConn landscape architecture program and its students. I also emerged with an appreciation of how difficult and challenging it is to be an instructor. Professors Mark Westa, Kristin Schwab, John Alexopoulos, and Peter Miniutti are doing yeoman’s work in the education of our future landscape architects. 3230W is a writing class so, consequently, I have showcased some of the student work in this issue.

For an update on the chapter’s advocacy efforts, see the Trustee’s and President’s columns. Suffice it to say that Aris Stalis, Peter Viteretto, Debra De Vries-Dalton, and others have been very busy on behalf Connecticut landscape architects. This is time-sucking, frustrating, and demanding work. Be thankful that there are those in our chapter that are willing to speak up and not be satisfied with grumbling amongst ourselves.

One great way to combine education and advocacy is through the Architecture, Construction & Engineering (ACE) mentorship program, which works with high school students. Architects, engineers, and construction professionals make up teams, who meet for two hours biweekly to help guide students through a design project. Participation in this program is a terrific way to not only educate students on landscape architecture, but advocate for the profession to other design professionals. Involvement with ACE can be particularly beneficial to emerging professionals, as you will form relationships with architects, engineers, and construction managers with whom you may later collaborate (or be hired by). Advocacy is a long, slow, thankless process and there are few opportunities for instant rewards, but this is one of them. Landscape architects are welcome but typically under-represented on teams in Connecticut. For 2017/2018 there will be teams in Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport and Southington. PARTICIPATE! You will not regret it.

W. Phillips Barlow, PLA, ASLA, AICP, LEED AP
From the Trustee

ASLA held their annual Advocacy Day in Washington, DC on April 27. Participating for the Connecticut chapter was myself, CTASLA President Debra De Vries-Dalton, and ASLA Licensure Committee chair, Bob Golde. Through their annual member survey, ASLA had determined that the most pressing issues to members were active transportation (walking and biking) and green infrastructure. As such, the Connecticut team advocated for funding of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program and for the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Your team visited the offices of Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, and Congressman Joe Courtney. All welcomed our visit and promised to support our causes.

Following Advocacy Day was the mid-year meeting of the Board of Trustees. Perhaps the most compelling presentation over the two-day event was a presentation on the “rebranding” of ASLA. Richard Poulin, Principal of the New York City-based graphic design firm of Poulin and Morris, presented schematic design sketches for the Society’s new logo and website layout. Other topics discussed were declining landscape architecture school enrollments, the Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) mentoring program, and the 2017 ASLA elections.

Elected to vice president positions for 2017 were Lake Douglas, FASLA (Education), Eugenia Martin, FASLA (Government Affairs), and Haley Blakeman (Communications). ASLA President-elect candidates (including our own Bob Golde) outlined their presidential aspirations in speeches to the trustees. A first for me was participation in a “march,” the Climate March on Washington, which took place on Saturday. ASLA leadership, feeling that the climate issue was of vital importance to our profession, created a three-hour window in the schedule so that trustees and chapter presidents could participate. Regardless of personal politics, this was a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the passion that people from all backgrounds have for environmental protection.

Of special interest to me for 2017 is the ACE mentoring program, as I feel that this program is a great way to not only increase awareness of landscape architecture, but also attract the best and brightest high school students to our profession. I will have more information later about how to get involved, but for now I challenge each of you to consider sharing some of your time in the fall 2017 program. Landscape architects are represented on the national as well as state board of directors, but typically landscape architects are not well represented on local mentoring teams. Let’s not hide our light under a barrel! We have a lot to offer.

W. Phillips Barlow, PLA, ASLA, AICP, LEED AP
Clay pavers have rich, warm colors with great aesthetic appeal. The perfect complement to brick, block and many other building materials.

Durability
Clay pavers last more than 100 years

Colorfast
Clay paver colors will never fade

No Degradation
Significantly exceeds rigorous freeze/thaw standards in salt water

Strength
12,000 psi average compression

PINE HALL BRICK
AUTHENTIC CLAY PAVERS

pinehallbrick.com
800.334.8689
info@pinehallbrick.com

SUSTAINABLE LIGHTING SOLUTIONS

Proudly representing many of the premier lighting manufacturers and servicing the New England design community for over 10 years.

ROADWAY
RESIDENTIAL / DECORATIVE STREETSCAPE
LED RETRO-FIT PARKING GARAGE COMMERCIAL

WWW.APEXLIGHTINGSOLUTIONS.COM
877.886.2843

STREETScape LIGHTING

EFFICIENT PATH LIGHTING

DECORATIVE LIGHTING

ROADWAY LIGHTING
Ever mindful of the importance of new ideas and energy that our next generation of landscape architects possess, CTASLA is pleased to celebrate our landscape architecture students and their work in this issue of our magazine. Our local profession greatly benefits from possessing an accredited landscape architecture program at the University of Connecticut, which provides the initial education and training to their students, our future landscape architects.

CTASLA supports our future landscape architects by providing a variety of programs aimed at preparing them to achieve success as students, emerging professionals, and beyond. Some of our outreach includes scholarship funds. This year we gave $2,500 in scholarship grants to two Connecticut students, Lia Rodriguez and Alex DiStefano. Other student outreach programs include reviewing student portfolios, participating in design critiques, and assisting in student design projects at the University of Connecticut.

It is rewarding to see the engagement and growth over time as our young professionals enter our communities and generously volunteer their time to help new students and emerging professionals in return. Mike Rettenmeier from our Executive Committee worked tirelessly over the past couple years to provide support to UConn students. Oliver Gaffney, currently serving on the ExComm, coordinated with Matthew Cosma to start CTASLA’s Emerging Professional group, which now actively meets at a variety of CTASLA-sponsored events, including LARE Reviews.

By far the most valuable service we can provide to our future landscape architects is to ensure strong demand for landscape architectural services. This is always part of our advocacy work, on both the federal and chapter level, to continually raise public awareness for the wide range of services landscape architects provide in creating well-planned, livable communities. The American Society of Landscape Architects recently completed their stunning renovation of the Center for Landscape Architecture in Washington, DC. The renovated space at the Center will introduce and showcase the depth and breadth of our profession’s work to visitors near and far.

On the state chapter level, our Advocacy Committee, chaired by Aris Stalis (with thanks to Philip Barlow and Peter Viteretto), played an important role in the State of Connecticut’s recent decision to add the position of “Landscape Architect on Call” at the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). This reflects the recognition of the value achieved by adding a landscape architect to a community project. Landscape architects typically strive to: understand a community’s needs; protect sensitive environmental areas; and work with all stakeholders and professionals to arrive at a well-balanced solution.

Our services are in greater demand today than ever for collaboratively solving complex issues including: designing for resiliency due to climate change and rising sea levels; creating economically vibrant neighborhoods; managing stormwater ecologically and cost-efficiently through green infrastructure; designing pollinator-friendly habitat throughout our roadways and neighborhoods; and adapting auto-centric networks to multimodal transportation corridors that meet the needs of all members of the community. CTASLA is so fortunate to have many helping hands and generous, dedicated members who selflessly give hours of their time to make our profession stronger and our communities a more enjoyable place to live.
Biomimicry is a way that we can emulate nature in order to solve design problems. When faced with a challenge, we can look to nature and find examples where it has solved those challenges. By utilizing nature’s genius, we can design in a sustainable way. Biomimicry is an ancient tool that can be utilized today to achieve higher levels of sustainability in our landscape. Janine Benyus, a scientific writer who believes that humans once knew biomimicry intimately, states, “When the forest and the city are functionally indistinguishable, then we know we have reached sustainability.”

Nature has benefited from a 3.8-billion-year research and development period. According to architect Michael Pawlyn, it is imperative that we utilize this intensive level of investment. Pawlyn describes three habits of nature utilized in design: creating a radical increase in resource efficiency, shifting from linear to closed looped systems, and shifting from a fossil fuel to a solar economy.

Nature has limited resources. Through billions of years of evolution, nature has utilized its resources to preserve and support natural systems. One example of using biomimicry to create an increase in resource efficiency is the colossal greenhouse constructed by the Eden Project. Designed by architect Nicholas Grimshaw in Cornwall, England, the Eden Project houses the largest greenhouses in the world. The Eden Project is an example of how humans can interact with and influence their environment. How the Eden Project design problems were addressed reflects principals of biomimicry.

A challenge of the project was the structural design of the greenhouse on the irregular landscape of the site, which was an industrial pit regularly quarried for kaolinite (making it a constantly changing landform). Grimshaw’s answer to this physical constraint was the natural physics of “soap bubbles,” whose forms adapt to any surface and whose joint lines are always perpendicular at their seam. Soap, seen as a consumer product of our modern world, occurs naturally (though rarely) in nature. Bubbles are simply a volume of air or gas that is trapped by a film or membrane. Bubbles can be found in nature in places such as the foamy edges of lakes and rivers and other bodies of water. Basing the “lean-to” Biome structures on soap bubbles was a perfect way to build on the uneven and shifting sands of the pit. The skeleton of the biomes were emulated from the structure of pollen grains and carbon molecules, forming the greenhouse roof into a geodesic dome composed of hexagons. This efficient structural solution presented one problem: the freestanding scaffolding would have to support the weight of expensive and heavy glass hexagons. Looking at natural examples of pressurized transparent membranes (such as vacuoles of plant cells), Grimshaw decided to omit the glass, and instead use ETFE, a high strength light polymer that can be layered, welded together, and inflated with gas to create a membrane. This also allowed the design to maximize the size of the hexagonal shapes of the dome. Each hexagonal unit of ETFE was seven times the area of the glass unit, and only one percent of the weight.
breakthrough with biomimicry facilitated another, and thus had a positive domino effect. The large lightweight membranes required less steel, which meant less structural weight (and thus more savings in the foundation) as well as more sunlight exposure, which decreased the need for extra heating in the winter. The total weight of the greenhouse roof structure is actually less than the weight of the air inside of the building. The Eden Project is thus a great example of how mimicking natural systems can lead to increased resource efficiency.

Biomimicry can also be used as a solution to resource depletion. Humans tend to utilize resources by extracting them, turning them into short-life products and then disposing of them. Nature is better at using resources sustainably. In an ecosystem, the waste from one organism becomes the nutrient of another. This process of recycling resources is a sustainable balance that has preserved life efficiently for billions of years. One example of a project that deliberately tried to mimic nature is the “cardboard to caviar” project, by Graham Wiles, manager of the Green Business Network (GBN). His approach was a simple closed loop system. A restaurant that has to dispose of cardboard boxes pays Wiles to shred them. Horse stables then pay Wiles for the shredded cardboard, which they use as horse bedding. The stables also pay Wiles to take away the worn horse bedding, which he then feeds to worms. The worms are then fed to sturgeon, which produce caviar, which Wiles then sells back to the restaurants. This is a business model of the closed loop approach that is based on mimicking nature’s resource recycling in its ecosystems.

An example of this closed loop model in landscape architecture is the Falk School of Sustainability at Chatham University, Pittsburgh, designed by Mithun Inc. This campus features its own closed loop ecosystem. Solar panels and three micro wind turbines generate 100 percent of the campus electricity, while geothermal systems generate all the heating and cooling. Plumbing systems collect and treat stormwater and wastewater for reuse as greywater and irrigation. The farms produce crops for consumption in the dining commons. The geothermal and solar power allow hoop houses to continue vegetable crop growth through the winter. The wastewater collected for irrigation also includes aquaponics that uses 600 rainbow trout and tilapia that create nutrient-rich wastewater for hydroponic crops. When this water is consumed by the crops, it is purified enough to go back into the system for the fish. At the end of the year, the fish are harvested for consumption and the school starts over with new fish the following year. This is a great example of the biomimicry of closed-loop systems in landscape architecture, combining form and function with efficiency and sustainability.

The last step in Pawlyn's three elements of nature-inspired ways to reach
Biomimicry cont’d

Sustainability is the conversion of a fossil fuel economy to a solar economy. Every year, the sun provides us with 10,000 times more energy than the energy we utilize. The energy crisis is thus not an issue of lacking resources, but a challenge to our engineering capability. Nature has been utilizing solar energy for billions of years. The chemical energy that we burn in order to fuel the mechanical processes of life are primarily acquired from energy that is produced in the core of our sun through nuclear fusion, and dispersed outward in the form of light and heat. Plants have successfully evolved to convert this solar energy to chemical energy. Animals eat the plants and we then eat those animals, acquiring the energy that was originally produced within our sun. The implementation of solar energy in landscape architecture is a great way of bringing together this concept of nature’s energy production. In Singapore, architects and landscape architects have recently devised a collection of solar powered “artificial trees” that stand 25-50 meters over the vegetative environment of the “Gardens by the Bay,” a nature park consisting of three immense gardens. The artificial trees not only generate solar energy, but they also act as air venting ducts for nearby conservatories, and collect rainwater for irrigation systems. The “solar canopies” absorb and disperse heat, so they operate as temperature moderators to maintain the climate of the varying plant habitats on the site. A project in New York City aims to do this by building “solar baths,” or a collection of solar panels, at Freshkills Park. The Mayor of New York announced that the installation is set to power 2,000 homes and will increase the City’s current renewable energy capacity by 50 percent.

Though only three examples of biomimicry have been discussed here, there are countless more. Biomimicry as a tool is highly effective in any design profession. The goal of a designer is ultimately to solve problems. Nature is the ultimate problem solver. By observing how nature functions and mimicking its processes, designers can generate solutions to any programmatic problem. Nature is the most effective designer.

Rubson Guimarães, a native of Brazil, graduated from the UConn Landscape Architecture program in 2017. CTASLA recognized Rubson with an honor award for his outstanding academic achievements.
DRAKELEY POOL COMPANY
new york
connecticut
massachusetts
860.274.7903
drakeleypools.com

Discover the Drakeley difference.
Stony Creek Granite

The source for iconic landscapes and architecture throughout America.
Stony Creek Granite is an integral part of America’s enduring landscape and architectural history—from the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty to Boston’s South Station to some of the most prestigious universities including Yale, Columbia, and Quinnipiac. Today our stone is used in notable urban design landscapes including New York City’s Battery Park and Federal Plaza, as well as distinguished residential projects. Stony Creek Granite is America’s local, sustainable granite and the most natural choice for your next project. Please contact us to arrange a visit to the quarry and to learn more about this rare, historic stone and how we can bring your vision to life.

Visit www.stonycreekquarry.com
When thinking of an iconic human-built environment, one that comes to mind is the highway. The highway is the direct result of industrialization and the spread of suburbs, linking dense cities with the natural beauty of the rural forests and coastal areas of Connecticut. This meshing of development and nature is a prime example of human intervention on the land. When considering the idea of sustainability, parkways come to mind.

One of the best known and oldest scenic parkways in the United States is the Merritt Parkway, constructed in 1938 through Fairfield County, Connecticut. Its main goal was to alleviate congestion from Route 1 between New York and Connecticut, while preserving the natural beauty of the countryside.

The parkway faced great opposition in its six years of construction. First proposed in 1923 by the Westchester Park Commission, many of the wealthy families living in Fairfield County opposed the parkway. They feared that a parkway would bring New Yorkers into their countryside and pollute it. This fear led to the creation of the Fairfield County Planning Association (FCPA) which voiced their opinions against the New York regional plan.

In 1925, the state Highway Department allocated $15,000 to begin surveying of the newly deemed Merritt Parkway, named after Congressman Schuyler Merritt. The first construction contract, however, was not issued until 1934. In the years immediately following the Great Depression, parkway construction provided much needed federal money and jobs to many workers on the east coast.

Designed to be an aesthetically pleasing highway, the parkway is 37 miles long. A. Earl Wood, engineer for roadside development, and landscape architect Weld Thayer Chase envisioned a beautiful roadway. They conspired to create something like Frederick Law Olmsted would produce. Chase supervised the planting of over 60,000 woody plants while still protecting the native existing species. In addition to the landscape, the parkway also features 69 unique bridges designed by architect George L. Dunkelberger, who based each design off of popular architectural movements of the 1930s.
Merritt Parkway  cont’d

The Merritt is one of the few highways that is listed in the National Register of Historical Places, and is an amazing example of how human efficiency and natural beauty can be combined.

The Merritt Parkway is a sustainability-based design pre-dating the current focus on sustainability, created to alleviate the pressure caused by industrialization, suburbanization, and the mass influx of cars. It had a direct purpose and provided a new connection between New York City and Connecticut, allowing for efficient travel on an aesthetically pleasing road. It created revenue for Fairfield County with tolls (up until 1988 when it became the first free limited access parkway in the United States). However, most importantly, Chase and Woods designed it to fit into the existing countryside of Fairfield County. Everything in the design was created with preservation and enhancement in mind. The 69 unique bridges found along the parkway all interact and blend with their settings. The medians between the lanes are created with shade trees with massive canopies. This thematic use of nature is evident when driving the parkway today. The entire route is a pleasure to experience during any of Connecticut’s four seasons.

As the parkway has aged and gained historical importance, it has also evolved to fit our needs and requirements. The first of these changes (still ongoing) were safety improvements. The parkway, classified as one of the most dangerous highways in all of the United States, is ten times deadlier than the average highway — mostly due to the lack of proper on-ramps and the neglected vegetation in the medians (the pruning of the massive shade trees has recently been prioritized). The lack of appropriate merge lanes is also very dangerous, especially when combined with a general disregard for the 45-55 MPH speed limits on the parkway. The merge lanes have recently undergone renovation to fit the needs of what is now a high-speed parkway.

The parkway design itself creates a unique problem, as its aesthetic attributes have been the cause of the parkway’s greatest threats. As Amy Freitag, program director of the U.S. World Monuments Fund, states, “Balancing the functionality of the parkway while protecting the aesthetic qualities that make it unique pose challenges still to be addressed.” The goal of preserving what makes the Merritt Parkway unique and special, while keeping up with the needs of the modern world, is extremely challenging. The effort to maintain its natural beauty while providing for 21st-century transportation will determine if the design is sustainable. In spite of its flaws, I believe that the Merritt Parkway will continue to be an ideal design for a scenic highway and will continue to be adapted to the current generation’s needs and wants.

Matthew Spencer grew up in Coventry, CT and graduated from the UConn landscape architecture program in 2017. While at UConn Matt was Vice President of the student ASLA chapter. He is interested in biomimicry and biophilic design and would like to find a job in a firm that utilizes these concepts to interweave the natural and fabricated world. CTASLA recognized Matthew with a Merit award for his capstone project.

In addition to the landscape, the parkway also features 69 unique bridges designed by architect George L. Dunkelberger, who based each design off of popular architectural movements of the 1930s.
The global sustainability crisis has become a hot topic now that we are seeing the consequences of the unnatural way of life to which we have grown accustomed. The overuse of polluting, single-passenger vehicles, the degradation of the natural environment, and the decline of our cities are the leading causes of this sustainability crisis. We can begin to address these problems with the proper implementation of New Urbanism principles.

Suburban sprawl is a trend that developed in the mid-1900s in American society, in an attempt to escape from the dirty cities of the time. Suburban sprawl and large neighborhood development were made possible by two key innovations to our modern transportation system: highways and the automobile. People no longer had to live where they worked. Suburban living and big city wealth were now attainable. This would prove to have several subversive effects on our economy, our communities, and most importantly, our environment.

Suburban sprawl is a relatively new form of development. In contrast, urbanism is essentially an ancient way of life, where people are concentrated in one area (of a city or a town). For centuries man has practiced New Urbanism principles, including walkable blocks, accessible public spaces, and mixed uses of residential and commercial. The term “mixed-use” simply means several uses, such as shopping, dining, living, events, etc., within close proximity of one another. A “mixed-use building” typically includes commercial, office, and living space, often separated by floors. It’s important to understand the vocabulary because terms like these are used when describing urbanism development. Many would argue that the goal of New Urbanism is to promote “neighborliness, environmental sustainability, economic efficiency, prosperity, historic preservation, participation in civic processes, and human health.” Conventional zoning and subdivision regulations over the past 50 years have proven to be restrictive by controlling what you can and can’t develop, and where. The original idea of zoning was to separate uses — such as industrial and residential — from one another in attempt to promote communal health and aesthetics. However, the result has been the spread of suburban communities, which diminish these desirable characteristics continued on page 18
Types of reclaimed antique granite include:
Curbs, cobbles, well covers, steps, slabs, landings, wall stone, veneer stone, driveway edging, architectural pieces and much more.
Stop by our UBS Granite
10 acres storage yard.
9 Oak Street Westerly Rhode Island
(800) 439-2832
UnitedBuildersSupply.com

Enhance your next project with the unique and rich look of old world New England granite.

2016 Antique Granite Offerings
New Urbanism cont’d

that New Urbanism promotes. Separating land uses places a reliance on vehicles and parking, further polluting our environment. The sprawl of development simply consumes more land, decreasing natural environments and ecologies.

There are approximately ten New Urbanism principles. Those that pertain and contribute to a more sustainable way of living include walkability, mixed-use and diversity, mixed-housing (usually pertaining to available units or housing affordable for all levels of financial income), increased density, smart transportation (i.e., public bus systems, bike riding, walkable streets, etc.), and sustainability itself — developing land that not only protects and nurtures nature, but enhances it.

In his book, Gray World, Green Heart, Robert Thayer states that the habit of associating the name of cars and other technologies with animals and other natural things is a poor attempt to deal with the clear distinction that exists between technology and nature. He splits technology into two domains — personal and impersonal. Cars and other technologies help serve as a facilitator for our modern lifestyles. Thayer fears that we become what we own. Cars themselves are not so much the issue as is their overuse. According to Thayer, as the user and creator of what is destroying our environment, we are to blame. We depend on our cars, which has resulted in the segregation of uses and zoning. By combining uses into one area and applying new urbanism principles to our modes of development, we eliminate the need to overuse vehicles. We reduce the amount of impervious surfaces we need for roadways, parking, etc., and in return, we reduce our overall carbon emissions.

Climate change has clearly become a relevant political topic, especially in the last decade. Global warming has become less of an idea and more of a scientific fact. In short, global warming is happening and natural disasters are inevitable. A rise in global temperature does more than just melt the ice caps and raise the sea level. Global climate patterns and currents...
are also altered, meaning catastrophic and dramatic storms occur in places that typically have not experienced these natural phenomena. Climate change is more than just a local issue — it’s an international issue. Andrés Duany, an American architect and urban planner, believes that mitigating the effects of global change will quickly turn to a reaction, in means of survival, when the disasters occur; the time has passed for prevention of natural disasters. Rather, we need to shift our focus to adapting to them. Duany describes it as a “circling of the wagon” mentality. He believes that the most valuable trait in the planning profession will become adaptation — we must start practicing it now to be relevant in the near future. The large-scale impacts of global climate change will take place in an increasingly dramatic manner, and it is up to urban planners, architects, and landscape architects to learn how to adapt our places and communities to these changes. This is what some are calling, “New, New Urbanism.” Duany calls it Tactical Urbanism. The driving principle behind tactical urbanism is that several small, short-term actions in urban design will lead to long-term change. Examples of this include converting parking areas to parks, implementing several modes of public transportation, promoting mixed use and low-income development, among other steps.

Polluted, unhealthy cities should be a thing of the past. The image of city residency being only for those of lower incomes living in slum conditions and the rich living in extravagant condominiums needs to be outdated. Cities need to be developed following the New Urbanism principles to attract and bring people back downtown to live, work, and spend.

Tristan Welch grew up in Northeastern CT and graduated from the landscape architecture program at the University of Connecticut in 2017. He recently joined SLAM Collaborative. CTASLA recognized Tristan with an honor award for his outstanding academic achievements.
Many of us know landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.’s work in Hartford at Keney Park and The Institute of Living, but it may come as a surprise that he was also involved with the Trinity College campus, albeit not as successfully.

At the time when the college was moving from its campus adjacent to Bushnell Park (selling the site to the State of Connecticut to build the state capitol), several properties were under consideration. The possibilities included sites on Farmington Avenue, Windsor Road, Park Street, Blue Hills Road, and Summit Street. Trinity College trustees initially asked Olmsted to develop criteria for evaluating the campus sites (Olmsted was an obvious choice for the trustees, as he was well known for his design of New York City’s Central Park). Presumably the trustees would have used Olmsted’s criteria to evaluate the sites, but ultimately they were divided as to which was the best location for the new campus. Trinity President Thomas Pynchon and the trustees then engaged Olmsted to advise on the specific properties under consideration. Olmsted ultimately recommended the Blue Hills Road site. In his hand-written, 21-page report of 1872 he states, “The Blue Hills site has the greatest apparent eminence, and a group of large buildings set upon it would be seen from a greater distance on all sides than either of the other sites.” For unknown reasons, the trustees did not heed Olmsted’s advice and they made an offer of $2,000 for Penfield Farm on the north side of Park Street. The bid was ridiculously low and not accepted (the old campus had been sold for $600,000). A detailed plan by Olmsted protégé, landscape architect Jacob Weidenmann, was then prepared for the Farmington Avenue site, but for reasons known only to the trustees, the Summit Street site was ultimately approved and purchased.
for $225,000. That site was not the obvious choice. Although it did occupy high ground with sweeping views, it was surrounded by cheap boarding houses, a gravel pit, and a cemetery. In addition, students considered the site to be far removed from the city center. In spite of the rejection of Olmsted’s initial recommendations, in 1873 he was asked by Trinity president Jackson to advise on the Summit Street campus. Olmsted again ran into disfavor, as his recommendation included the necessity of acquiring several adjacent properties (this was a theme with FLO as he had also demanded that the proprietors of New Britain’s Walnut Hill Park acquire additional land before he would produce a master plan). Once again, the trustees ignored his advice and did not purchase the land (although the land that Olmsted wanted appears to be part of today’s campus).

Records in the Trinity archives include references to Olmsted being engaged again in 1875 to landscape and lay out the Summit street campus grounds (no planting plans have ever been located). The Olmsted archives do have many topographical studies and preliminary sketches for the campus, as well as a final plan for the layout and planting of Summit Street and numerous reports and correspondence. A detailed sketch from the archives depicts the Long Walk terrace abutting Summit Street, much as it appears today. In his definitive history, *Trinity College in the Twentieth Century*, author Peter Knapp states that Olmsted advised architect Kimball on the siting of the Long Walk building, along the Summit Street ridge, suggesting that it be placed in a north-south axis. Knapp also reports that in 1883 Olmsted recommended that a line of trees be planted perpendicular to the existing line of Elms at the Long Walk, forming the distinctive “T” pattern. After succumbing to Dutch elm disease, the Elms were replaced in 1977 with Marshall’s Seedless Ash trees.

The involvement of Olmsted and his sons at Trinity College continued until the early 1890s. In 1892 Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., wrote to Trinity College in response to a request for his father to visit the campus and advise on “proposed work to the rear of the college.” In 1893, the firm produced a plan for “A Parkway West of College Building” (Summit Street).

Like much of his best work, Frederick Law Olmsted’s contribution to the development of the Trinity College campus is subtle and nuanced. Although he advised on the campus development for over 20 years, today his contributions to the development of the lovely campus are underappreciated and all but unnoticed.

— Phil Barlow is principal of TO Design LLC, Landscape Architects, in New Britain.
YOUR ONE VISION.
OUR INFINITE CHOICES.

CREATE.
Begin with your inspired vision.

COLLABORATE.
Trusted, experienced and on the cutting edge of paving stone technology, the Unilock team has the expertise and customer service to fully develop your creative paving designs.

CUSTOMIZE.
Unilock will create a unique custom look for your next project. Optimizing colour, finish, texture and size, our team will work closely with you from start to finish to make your designs a reality.

PROJECT: Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University. East Lansing, Michigan
DESIGN: Hamilton Anderson Associates
PRODUCT: Promenade™ Plank Paver with Umbrato® finish

Contact your Unilock Representative for samples, product information and to arrange a Lunch & Learn for your team.
Since 1970, Planters’ Choice Nursery has been in the business of growing and sourcing beautiful plant material for discerning professionals for more than 45 years. Since 1970 we continue to expand our already vast operation in all directions, exceeding the ever-growing demand for quality nursery stock in New England.

140 Huntingtown Road
Newtown, CT 06470
(203) 426-4037

496 Bunker Hill Road
Watertown, CT 06795
(860) 945-6588

www.planterschoice.com
One of the smallest of Connecticut’s town parks and possibly the most surprising is Stony Brook Park, located in Darien, just off Ledge Road (Exit 10 from I-95). The brook making its statement in a most unlikely environment, between the railroad tracks and I-95, owes its uniqueness to an exuberant tumble of water and a rocky strewn, hilly patch of woodland. It is the town’s most soothing, unknown, and unexpected haven.

To paraphrase Ian McHarg, from his book Design with Nature, “…here are these selfsame precious things, unconscious selected and arrayed, sun and shade, trees and water, the sounds under silence. What enormous power is exerted by these few elements in these tiny spaces!”

Keeping McHarg in mind, I decided that this unique little place required some investigation. A small, dirt-paved parking area adjacent to Ledge Road provided a place to stop and check it out. What came into view was a pandemonium of water. Crashing over rocks and boulders with a 50-foot drop, the water boisterously muscles its way downward. The falls are not that large, but because of recent heavy rain, a voluminous amount of water blocked out all sounds from the nearby thruway, erupting around and over large boulders as though trying to push them out of its way as it crashed downward over the cataract of ledge rock.

Clambering over these outcroppings of ledge beside the waterfall, I could not help but wonder why it had taken me so long to discover this wild place. It is amazing how we will travel far afield to seek beauty when one only has to look locally. Do we mistake the distant unfamiliar for beauty?

Curiosity beckoned me further into the woods to investigate; the ground was wildly strewn with lichen-covered mossy ledge and boulders of all shapes and sizes. The glacier did its work here. Pressing on, there were interesting overlooks on top of giant boulders offering various views into the rambunctious falls. Watching the action from above proved exciting.

What is it that makes us want to experience a waterfall? It is three things: One, it improves mood — seeing flowing and falling water puts us into a good mood by erasing all our cares. Two, relaxation — the sound of moving water tends to relax and calm us. And, three, it improves respiration by breathing in the ionized water vapor that is generated by a waterfall. You can almost taste the power of the water.

Twenty feet beyond the falls the brook vanished into a large tunnel-like culvert and disappeared under the thruway, a sad ending for a magnificent stream. Seeing this stream disappear so abruptly encouraged exploration to find out just where this stream came from and where it went. Stony Brook starts as wetlands in New Canaan, five miles to the north, feeding a man-made pond at an Olmsted Brothers-designed estate (now Waveny Park). The stream then crosses beneath the Merritt Parkway, winds its way through several of Darien’s residential areas, flows below the railroad tracks, over the falls,
beneath the thruway, and finally emptying into Long Island Sound just north of the historical Ring’s End Landing. The brook is a twisting stream of six miles, dropping 650 feet along the way.

One cannot help but wonder what the native Indians felt or thought about this naturally beautiful brook. Siwanoy Indians, a sachemdom of the Wappinger tribe, originally occupied this area. What did they think about this unique stream — was it sacred to them?

Standing alongside this turbulent stream one is not aware of its current non-idyllic surroundings. Only when a commuter train rushes by is one aware of the railroad tracks that form the northern border. Upon leaving, a young woman remarked to me, “The brook flows between two rocky hills, providing privacy and quietness, isn’t it great. I love this place. So close and yet so remote.”

The falls were once a part of a 110-acre farm, which was sold in 1796, long before the railroad was constructed (1846) and I-95 was built (1956). The town landfill came after I-95, as did the hotel/assisted-living complex. The locals remember that the long-since-vanished pool created beneath and by the falls had a unique name — “Bare Ass Pond.”

A small sign identified this spot as “Stony Brook Park” — appropriately named. The sign indicated that the park was a scant 11.3 acres. We must be thankful that at least this much has survived intact to 2017. A fellow enthusiast noted that during the summer months he buys his lunch at the nearby Whole Foods and enjoys the tranquility of “lunch by the falls.” Sounds wonderful, I think I’ll try it. Lunch by the falls — has a nice ring. As McHarg reminds us “Here are the selfsame precious things.”

— Richard Bergmann is principal of Richard Bergmann Architects, of New Canaan.
Stay current with dozens of Landscape and Horticulture classes, including:

- Landscape Measurement
- Naturalistic Landscape Design
- City Roof Design
- DynaSCAPE and more.


Learn more at nybg.org/adulted
BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

We're Bartlett Tree Experts, a 100+ year old tree and shrub company with global reach and local roots. Our services include:

- Tree & Shrub Pruning
- Cabling & Bracing
- Fertilization & Soil Care
- Insect & Disease Management

Call 877.BARTLETT (877.227.8538) or visit BARTLETT.COM

POLYGON

Polygons is the leader in the design, engineering, and manufacturing of open air structures.

From your first ideas to completed installation, Polygon's streamlined process makes creating the perfect structure for your site, easy and efficient.

Expect the best.

EBRICKS

100% Reclaimed Historic Products

LARGE INVENTORY OF
Granite Cobbles
Street Brick Pavers
Medina Cobbles
Curbing
Stone Sidewalk Slabs
Bridge Abutment Stones

(716) 691-3061
www.exbricks.com

OBRIEN & SONS

Elements for a great outdoors

93 West Street
P.O. Box 850
Medfield, MA 02052-0660

OFFICE 508.359.4200
TOLL-FREE 800.835.0056
FAX 508.359.2917

mail@obriensandsons.com
obriensandsons.com

Villano Park
Hamden, CT
Single source for all your of clay and concrete paver needs. A variety of colors, textures, sizes and prices to meet the design goals of your project. Since 1923, The Homer C. Godfrey Company has been a full service provider from concept to completion. We deliver.

For information please contact:

mel@homercgodfrey.com | todd@homercgodfrey.com | geoff@homercgodfrey.com
1360 Central Avenue • Bridgeport Connecticut • 06610 • P: 203.336.1823
Peaking with UConn Associate Professor of landscape architecture John Alexopoulos at his office on the bucolic Storrs campus, it’s hard to imagine that in decades past he was fighting to improve life for Hartford residents. In addition to his long career at UConn, John is a pioneer in the struggle to bring playgrounds, parks, open space, and community gardens to those that needed them most. If you live, work, or play in Hartford, chances are that at some point you have experienced John’s work.

John is a homegrown success. Growing up in Norwich, CT, he loved the outdoors and drawing, so of course he was destined to be a landscape architect. Like many of us, John spent his childhood days immersed in nature, running through fields, climbing trees, and splashing through streams. The compact layout of Norwich (what we now call New Urbanism) allowed the young explorer to walk or bike to the city core or woods. So how does the son of a clerk discover our profession? It’s a long story…

Sometimes it’s difficult to tell in hindsight what events change the course of one’s life, but in John’s case, it would seem that a chance encounter with a force of nature was key. While attending the University of Hartford (studying Math and Physics), he worked for a landscape contractor. One day when working on a residential site, a car roared up and out sprang a young man, carrying plans and engulfed in pipe smoke. Rudy J. Favretti proceeded to direct the crew with his vision for the property, jump back into his car and then speed off to his next destination. John wanted HIS job. But first was the matter of the proper education. A few phone calls later John was enrolled at UConn, where Rudy was an instructor in what was then the horticulture department (there was no landscape architecture program at the time).

After graduating from UConn, Favretti recommended John for the MLA program at the University of Massachusetts, and John went on to become the first UConn graduate to earn a MLA degree from that program (1969). A summer-long trek in Europe after college graduation set the tone for John’s long career as a landscape architect. Traveling from London to Scotland to Denmark to Munich in a VW Beetle, the young man experienced firsthand some of the greatest urban spaces in the world.

Anxious to apply what he had learned at UMass and in Europe, John’s first professional job was with the Boston firm of Moreice and Gary. Confident and “full of himself,” an early humbling experience was a desk crit with Gray. Reviewing a storm pipe profile, Gary noticed that at one point, the pipe was out of the ground. The well-mannered mentor remarked, “Perhaps the pipe ought to be lowered”! Properly humbled, John proceeded to learn all that he could at the technically focused firm.

After a year in Boston, Rudy Favretti again intervened in Alexopoulos’s life, calling to offer him a position as a neighborhood planner with the recently formed Betty Knox Foundation in Hartford. John readily accepted and soon found himself working under the legendary architect Jack Dollard, who was the Executive Director. With an office in Hartford’s Union Station (where Hot Tomatoes restaurant was later...

continued next page
located), John embraced the urban challenges of Hartford’s poorest citizens, planting trees, designing playgrounds, and establishing community gardens. Eventually he became the first Executive Director of the Knox Parks Foundation (which continues to this day), founded to “use horticulture as a catalyst for community engagement.” While at Knox, John produced the seminal publication on the Hartford park system, *The Nineteenth Century Parks of Hartford*. Painstakingly researched and illustrated with the historical plans of Frederick Law Olmsted, the Olmsted Brothers and others, John wrote and published the book through the Knox Parks Foundation. It remains the “go to” reference for the history of Hartford Parks.

So how did John become a UConn professor? Again, destiny prevailed. Needing someone to write the Knox Parks newsletter, he made a deal with Favretti: John would teach a course at UConn if Rudy would write the newsletter. Starting with a graphics class, John taught part time for seven years before committing to full time. Forty years later John is still on the faculty.

In John’s other life as a consulting landscape architect, he is perhaps most proud of his work at the Jordan Cove neighborhood in Waterford, CT. Jordan Cove is one of the first projects in Connecticut to utilize Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, including permeable pavers, rain gardens, and bioswales.

Part of John’s legacy as a landscape architect is that his son also joined the profession. Nicholas Alexopoulos is also a UConn landscape architecture graduate. Landscape architecture runs in the Alexopoulos family!
Celebrating 21 years

Adirondack Natural Stone, LLC | 8986 State Rt. 4, Whitehall, NY 12887

Distinctive granites quarried from the Adirondack Mountains and distributed all over the world.

AdirondackNaturalStone.com | (518) 499-0602
You can tell it’s Victor Stanley. 
It can tell your landfill diversion.

INTRODUCING VICTOR STANLEY RELAY™

A wireless sensor that continuously monitors fill level, 
system temperature, weight, location and collection status, Relay is 
invisible to the public eye. But you can see how it helps you maximize 
efficiencies in collection planning, scheduling, and routing.

Contact Charlene Vera at charlenev@victorstanley.com

VICTOR STANLEY RELAY™
STREET LEVEL SENSING™ & WASTE CONTROL SERVICE

VICTOR STANLEY®
Create a timeless moment.*

VICTORSTANLEY.COM