Letter from the President
Aaron Zahm, ASLA

Many of you have likely been asked some variation of the question, “How did you get into landscape architecture?” I’m guessing each NMASLA member has had a different path to the profession, some very different from others. But perhaps as interesting a question is this one: “How did you find out about landscape architecture as a career?” While I took a traditional (yet less common) path by going straight into a BLA degree program right out of high school, I actually can’t remember how or when I first heard about landscape architecture. It seems like most people have familiarity, from an early age, with professions that are far more obscure than landscape architecture. So what gives? And why do my own family members not even know what I actually do? By the time you’re reading this, many of you will have participated in the first of many public awareness events to help eliminate that obscurity surrounding our profession. ASLA chapters across the country are taking part in this effort and events will continue through 2012. The campaign is an important one. The National Endowment for the Arts

2010 Golf Tournament Costume Winners!
projects a 20% growth rate in employment for landscape architects through 2018. That’s twice the projected rate of architects and higher than any other design profession they analyzed. And imagine how the demand will grow when the masses know what the heck we do. Please join us as we spread the gospel! Share the link asla.org/design with people you meet and participate in organized awareness events with us throughout the year.

This Summer Sponsor Spotlight edition of the NMASLA newsletter is our opportunity to say thanks and to recognize the support of our generous sponsors. Our sponsors make it possible to carry out the many endeavors of our Chapter each year and we couldn’t possibly be successful without them. The following pages spotlight the various products and services of our NMASLA friends. I hope you’ll take a moment to thank these vendors for their support and to find ways to team with them in your everyday practice.

See you at the Golf Outing and Vender Expo!

To comment on the President’s message, please email responses to Aaron: azahm@mrwnm.com
NMASLA
golf outing 2011
+ vendor expo

Friday, August 26th
11:30am
desert greens
Golf Course
10035 Country Club Lane NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114

REGISTRATION FEE:
• $85 Golf + Lunch + Expo
• $25 Lunch + Expo

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Registration Deadline: August 22, 2010
*Format: 4-Person Modified Scramble. Mulligans $5 each. Singles and incomplete teams are welcome!

Checks payable to: NMASLA
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SplashPads
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Water!
We all love it; whether we are swimming in it, running thru it, or just listening to it crash on the shore. Even those who don’t enjoy playing in water seem to love the sound of it falling from the sky. Adults love it, children love it, and even babies enjoy the feel and react to the sounds of water.

I started my professional career as a lifeguard at a city pool. I spent my summers at lakes and even lived on the coast for 10 years – I love water, as do most people. Obviously pools or lakes cannot be in every neighborhood, so for those who love water, there has been a recent trend in the Parks and Recreation industry…the SplashPad! If you’ve ever been to a SplashPad during operational hours, you’ll find that the children (and most adults) love them. Brandon Gibson, with the City of Albuquerque, summed it up by saying, “Our spray pads are very popular and we’ve had great responses from the public at our spray parks, which is why we are building another one at Wells Park. Every community seemed excited when we’ve added these parks to their neighborhood.”

What is a SplashPad?
SplashPads are a dynamic, interactive, fun way to get wet and stay cool in the summer. They are often in a free-standing park environment but can be part of a pool or a segment of an aquatic center. SplashPads can be as simple as a few ground sprays shooting water to more complex systems of spraying arches, dumping buckets, water cannons and many, many other fun features. They can be used by children of ALL ages, from toddlers to seniors, including those persons with disabilities.

Two types of SplashPads have been designed by the industry, each fill a specific need.

Flow-Thru System
The Flow-Thru system takes clean water from the city/county water lines, sends the water through a distribution manifold system and sprays the water through features and then the water runs into the sewer system. It can start with the touching of a bollard and the controller sequences the water features…which adds fun to the SplashPad. A sequence usually runs about 4 minutes total time, changing the spray pattern every minute or so.

There is the concern of “wasting water” on Flow-Thru projects and often
all that is needed is to provide a little education to the public on this concern. It’s important to inform them that the water is going into the sewer system and not the Rio Grande River or to Tingley Beach. Treating and reusing the water is the exact same process that we’re familiar with, either with the water from our homes or our businesses. The post-treated water is the same water we currently use for drinking, showering and creating our delicious New Mexican green chili soups. Also, the 4-minute operating cycle was designed so that if someone started the system and walked away only a small water usage is sent to the sewer. The water flow won’t start until someone touches the bollard and then the spraying process begins again. Without a doubt providing a little education at the beginning of a project can help you with public opinion.

Recirculation System
The second type of system is more complex. Recirculation systems have water running from a city/countty line into a holding tank, which goes to the pump/filter system; then is treated with chemicals, sent to the distribution manifolds, flowing out to the SplashPad, going into the drain system and returning to the holding tank. The complex process is very similar to most swimming pool pump rooms. The water is checked for proper chemical levels prior to going to the water features, to ensure only properly treated water touches the users. The same 4 minute bollard cycle is used, but because water flow is not based on water line size these systems can run more features at a given time. These projects tend to be larger in features than Flow-Thru designs.

The City of Albuquerque SplashPads use Recirculation Systems, with one of the reasons being the “wasting water” image. Another concern that has been discussed is the “carry off water” taken from the SplashPad when a child leaves the splash area. And after speaking with several SplashPad owners, there seems only a small amount of water is carried off or has to be replaced.

Another SplashPad concern is Cryptosporidium and the thought of it spreading at aquatic settings. Cryptosporidium is an extremely tough parasitic disease that is extremely hard to kill, even with the use of chlorine. The most common symptom that occurs with a healthy immune system is diarrhea, but it can be more serious for those with weaker immune systems. Every few years there is a public outbreak in the United States and sometimes it is discussed in relation to aquatic centers. SplashPads can include a UV filtration system on the Recirculation system, which addresses this specific issue.
“They can be used by children of all ages, from toddlers to seniors, including those persons with disabilities.”

What’s Under that SplashPad?
The first common surfacing material under SplashPads is concrete. As you would imagine water and concrete can be slippery, so a medium brushed concrete is often specified for this option. Another option is Aqua-Flex; which is a chlorine resistant, adjustable traction, non-permeable surfacing made for SplashPads. It can be installed with or without surfacing attenuation, which you see on traditional playgrounds.

Benefits of a SplashPad
Some of the benefits of a SplashPad are easy to see, like an increased use of a park or pool and all the fun the public has at the site. There are a few other items that you might not think about so quickly.

Lifeguards – if you have a SplashPad as part of a pool, you should include a lifeguard. However, if your SplashPad is free-standing in a park, most often there is no lifeguard or other support staff. When designed and constructed correctly, there should not be any standing water at the site. Unlike a wading pool, SplashPads may reduce your insurance and liability while providing fun water play to the public.

Expanded Business Hours and Days – The trend in the past few years has been to run our pools from Memorial Day to Labor Day. As pools aren’t often operated for a profit, and in these times of shrinking budgets, we’ve seen either the pool season cut short or the hours of operation reduced. When you have a free-standing SplashPad in your park system, you can run these systems for longer seasons and longer hours. It is set up on the controller that’s turned on at the start of a season, then turned off at the end of the year.

Maintenance – the Flow-Thru systems requires little
technical knowledge and while it’s not maintenance free, it has very low maintenance demands. The brain of the system are automated and do not require staff attention. The daily maintenance consists of cleaning off the SplashPad surfacing and removing any debris from the skimmer baskets…and that’s it!!! The Recirculation system does take a trained individual to run; due to the pumps, chemicals, filters and a few other items. It is recommended that the operator is either an AFO/CFO depending on what your agency recommends and someone that has aquatic maintenance experience. Still, compared to staffing and operating a pool, these systems are easily maintained, with many portions being automated.

In a time where shrinking budgets and staff are of paramount concern, SplashPads is one answer to providing programs and activities to the public at a reasonable price. If they are used as a free-standing park item, SplashPads can be marketed to the public as a no cost form of recreation. Positive Press is always great for an organization! Even if it’s part of an existing pool or aquatic center, it provides interactive water play for toddlers, children, teens and adults and can increase traffic to your sites.

On several SplashPad visits, I’ve heard adults say that they wish we had these water playgrounds when they were younger…and I agree. In fact, visit a SplashPad or better yet, bring a City Council member to one and you’ll find that it’s almost impossible not to smile when you hear the laughter of children as they run from one feature to another. Add the sound of water spraying and falling to the surfacing, you’ll once again remember why you love the sound of water.

Please direct any comments or questions to Duke DeFillippo:

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Don’t Forget!

CRD is Co-Sponsoring 2 CEU sessions on Splashpads!

When: September 9th, 2011
Time: 8:00am - 1:00pm
Cost: $15 for NMASLA members
Where: West Mesa Aquatic Center
6705 Fortuna Rd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87121

What:
• Introduction to SplashPads
• Construction & Operational Costs of SplashPads

There will also be lunch and a 30-minute extra session on what is new to the SplashPad market from Vortex International. For more information contact our office, or Aaron Zahn, President of NMASLA at azahn@mrwnm.com. We’re bringing in the West Coast’s premier SplashPad guru, Kevin Spence of Vortex, to provide the information.

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Chapter Events

Q2 Annual Golf Tournament
Date: Aug 26, 2011
Location: Desert Greens Golf Course, Albuquerque, NM
Note: See Attached Flyer

SplasPad Educational Session
Date: Sept 9, 2011, 8am to 1pm
Location: West Mesa Aquatic Center, Albuquerque
Note: More info at nmasla.org

NMRCGA Expo & Conference
Date: Sept 13-15, 2011
Location: McGee Park, Farmington, NM
Note: Visit www.nmrgca.org for more information

NMASLA Design Awards Project
Submissions Due
Date: Sept 15, 2011

Membership & Address Changes
Please email Amy Bell: abell@mrwnm.com

Newsletter
The NMASLA newsletter is produced by students in the MLA program at the University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning.
Please submit articles, news, photos, corrections, etc., to the editor:
Alex Leider aleider@unm.edu

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