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From the President

by Laurie Firor, ASLA

The New Mexican landscape captured my heart over a decade ago and I knew that I must make it my home. One reason that drew me into this profession and to this part of the world was my fascination with roof gardens. I had read of New Mexico's reputation for inventing and accepting innovative architecture such as the straw-bale home. Given the historical use of flat rooftops in this climate, I naively assumed that there would be roof gardens lining every street. I quickly learned that despite a concept's significance and plausibility, a lack of knowledge in a subject often results in it being ignored.

Life all over the globe was largely spent outdoors and commonly upon rooftops until central heating and air conditioning was popularized in the mid-1940s. Ever since, deserted roof areas primarily serve as 'dead' spaces. Fortunately, the concept of the rooftop as a neglected resource is changing in North America. New Mexico has been patiently reviewing the results of precedents in other states.

This 'green' endeavor has begun to win favor recently with local developers. I had the great fortune of working on a project in Albuquerque that was considered the city's premier roof garden project. Although Mayor Martin Chávez received mixed feedback on this project, the fact that our city took a chance and opened a dialogue on the benefits of green roofs is a token of success. What surprised me the most was the lack of knowledge of the history and benefits of roof gardens in our struggles for more sustainable development practices even among related professions. As a result, I'd like to take this opportunity to provide some roof garden fun facts for you to mull over. Forgive me for running off on a tangent as you've already been warned of my passion for this subject.

There are two forms of roof gardens: intensive and extensive (a.k.a. eco-roofs or greenroofs). Intensive roof gardens (essentially container plantings, pathways and seating atop a roof) are generally intended for pedestrian passive use. Extensive roof gardens (essentially a thin layer of living vegetation installed atop a con-

"From the President" continued on page 2

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"From the President" continued from page 1



Historic painting of a roof garden. Submitted by Laurie Firor

ventional roof) are rarely entered except for maintenance. The main purposes of extensive roof gardens are to add insulation, address ecological issues and to improve views from overlooking offices and apartments.

The roof garden has been a basic element throughout the history of houses in other countries with low rainfall and mild winters (sound familiar?). I could ramble on about roof garden stories involving King Nebuchadnezzar's Hanging Gardens of Babylon (c.600 BCE), Russian czar Peter the Great, Norwegian sod roofs, and early 20th century theatre roof gardens such as the infamous Waldorf-Astoria. This technology has been advancing for thousands of years. Today, there are minimal problems in roof garden construction and maintenance.

As technology is refined and roof gardens prove more ecological, economical and healthfully productive, I see them becoming a common element in urban construction. Integrating nature into the urban fabric has always been a desirable amenity and design criteria for city dwellers and designers alike. Plants are nature's therapy and may provide a sense of nurturing through a connection with nature. Roof gardens bring vegetation to an otherwise barren rooftop. Additional insulating layers will lower costs associated with indoor climate control systems and will reduce the urban heat island effect. However, the common attitude prevails that rooftops are for the birds—literally.

The benefits of roof gardens are extensive. The costs of upgrading a desolate rooftop to a roof garden are quickly offset by the

short- and long-term ecological and health contributions.

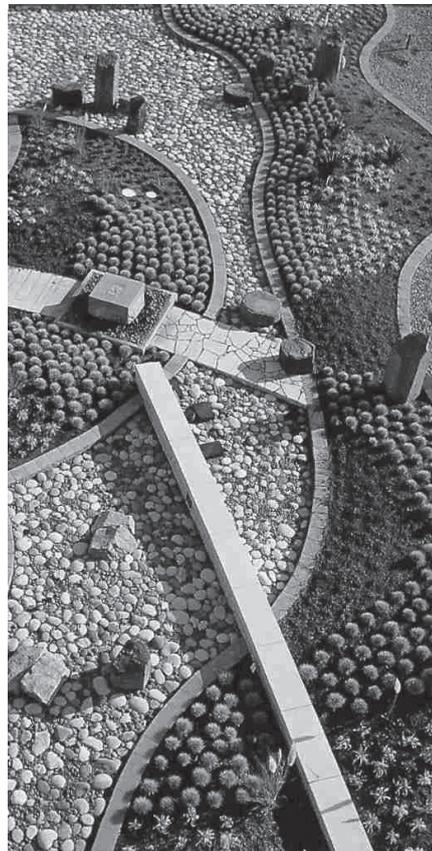
Designing a rooftop development is a relatively simple procedure. The design can be more complex if the proposed roof development is considered in the original building design. For retrofits, the most important limitation is the structural capability of the existing building. Although some additional support can be constructed, the expense is often great. Lightweight soil and concrete alternatives can lighten loads dramatically. Climatic amelioration is accomplished with a combination of plantings and screens providing wind and sun control. By using alternative energy systems (such as solar panels, windmills, and greywater recycling) a building's maintenance will not only be economically intelligent, but ecologically responsible as well. Storm water runoff levels are greatly reduced with roof gardens, as is the urban heat island effect. If the correct combination of materials and placement is assembled, the imagination has no limits in roof garden design.

I dream of a world where the built and natural environments coexist in harmony and sustainable balance. Carpe diem holds true. Cornelia Oberlander said it best: "If we are to survive in our cities... we need roof gardens." 

To comment on the President's message, please email responses to me:
Firor@consensusplanning.com



Intensive roof garden, above. Extensive roof garden, below. Photos submitted by Laurie Firor



Fortunately, the concept of the rooftop as a neglected resource is changing in North America.

Case Study: The Rehabilitation of Roosevelt Park

by William S Perkins, ASLA

Roosevelt Park, one of Albuquerque's New Deal era landmarks, had become rundown after nearly 70 years of serving the public and was facing formidable challenges in its care and maintenance. In recognition of its historic character, the City of Albuquerque committed to a planning, design and rehabilitation effort that has helped restore this park to its landmark status.

Background

Roosevelt Park is important not only for its historic landscape associated with the early Southwest urban parks movement, but for its association with New Deal public works projects in New Mexico. During the period 1933-1941 vari-

ous New Deal agencies, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) carried out more than 30 park construction or improvement projects in or near the state's towns and cities.

Intended at the time of their inception to provide work relief for unemployed workers during the Great Depression, these park projects also were intended to enhance community life, providing green, shaded lawns, and sometimes a water feature such as a pond. Appearing at a time when relatively few parks existed in New Mexico, these parks incorporated elements of 18th and 19th century English landscaping practices such as terraces, scenic vistas, and random groves of trees. Adapted to the Southwest's arid climate and termed by scholar Baker Morrow, FASLA, "frontier pastoral"

landscapes, they represented both practical and aesthetic contributions to their urban environments. Nearly three-quarters of a century later, many of these parks continue to offer urban dwellers inviting sites for enjoyment and relaxation. Roosevelt Park is no exception. A labor-intensive WPA project in which landscaping accounted for most of the 20,000 construction hours, the features that its designer, C. E. Hollied, gave it 75 years ago, and the vision that Albuquerque's ex-officio mayor Clyde Tingley held for the park, made it one of the most popular facilities in the City's growing recreational system.

Historic Status

Roosevelt Park was listed as an Albuquerque City Landmark in 1990 and listed in the National Register of Historic places in 1996. When it was recognized as a City Landmark, the Landmarks and Urban Conservation Commission cited three features as character defining: its rolling grass-covered surface, the Siberian elms lining the perimeter and forming interior groves, and the masonry walls appearing along the park's southern perimeter and at various locations within the park. These features, as well as the roadway lining the park's southern perimeter, were also recognized as historic resources in the nomination listing Roosevelt Park in the National Register.

The Challenge

By the late 1990's the park was showing its age. Masonry walls



Post card image of the newly constructed Roosevelt Park. Circa 1930's

were deteriorating; many trees and shrubs had died, grass struggled to survive on slopes and areas of heavy use, and the irrigation system was faltering. The park's patrons were diverse, ranging from neighborhood residents to disc golfers to dog owners to the homeless. While these diverse groups generally co-existed, the police regarded the park as presenting law enforcement issues. Accommodating the

concerns of park users, as well as security issues, comprised one of the challenges in rehabilitating the park. Other issues included:

- Balancing water conservation objectives with the water needs of the extensive grassy slopes.
- Balancing enhanced accessibility with the need to preserve the flowing topographic character.
- Planning for the next

generation of trees as the aging elms inevitably decline.

- Providing enhanced recreational opportunities in the light of changing neighborhood demographics.

In early 2003 the City of Albuquerque initiated the task of planning for the park's rehabilitation. Landscape Architect William S. Perkins, ASLA led the planning process, establishing and guiding an advisory committee of committed citizens and professionals through a lengthy series of work sessions and public meetings to help create the masterplan for the park's rehabilitation.

Implementation

Following the planning and design process the City, under the leadership of Mayor Martin J. Chavez, committed to three successful phases of work: first, to prune all 200 elm trees, many of which were in dire need of such care; second, to restore two of the most prominent masonry walls; and third, to accomplish a major portion of the masterplan improvements – irrigation, site furnishings, perimeter walkways, play structure, parking, signage, improved accessibility.

Mountain West Golfscapes led the construction effort enlisting key support from The Hilltop for tree care work and from Kopolov Construction for masonry rehabilitation. The park reopened to citizens in 2007 with a fresh finish for its honored historic character.

...Features that its designer, C. E. Hollied, gave it 75 years ago and the vision that ...ex-officio mayor Clyde Tingley held for the park, made it one of the most popular facilities...



Roosevelt Park reopened in 2007, post-rehabilitation. Photo by William S. Perkins



bill@wsperkins.com

The three phytoremediation processes that apply to the contamination of the thesis site are rhizodegradation, phytodegradation, and hydraulic control

Thesis Summary: Waste Not: A Sustainable Clean-up Strategy for Old Gas Station Sites

by *Sasha Needham, MLA*

Abstract

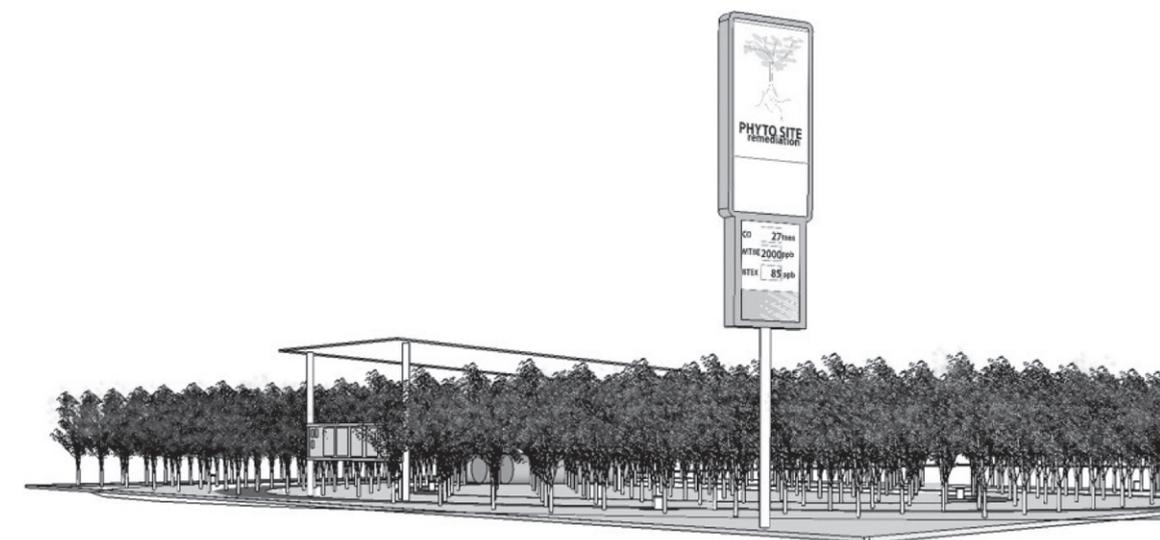
This investigation began with a site, and then worked backwards and forwards again to encompass an industry, a policy, and a technology. The site, an old gas station on Isleta Blvd., was for sale. It was occupied by an auto body shop, but no longer sold gasoline. The property was listed as a Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) site, with known groundwater contamination. Similar old gas stations all over Albuquerque have been re-purposed or sit empty. I sought to design a phytoremediation project that would address the soil and water contamination on-site, while re-purposing the

original gas station elements in order to trade on their iconic status and remind the community what caused the contamination in the first place.

Old gas stations pose a problem across the country for several reasons. As gasoline begins to degrade, it forms highly carcinogenic benzene compounds (BTEX). Gasoline additives such as lead and its replacement methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) are also harmful to human health. Old gas stations damage communities economically through loss of revenue and perceptions of disuse and blight. LUST contamination is regulated by state and federal agencies. In New Mexico the LUST program is regulated by the Petroleum Tank Storage Bureau (PTSB), a subset of the state Environment Department. Available Albuquerque data tracks 534 sites known to have had leaking tanks, and many more could exist.

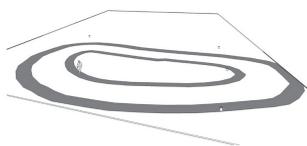
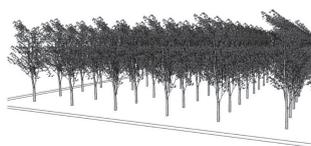
Remediation, by definition, sounds sustainable, yet the most common method for cleaning up petroleum contamination involves scooping out multiple tons of soil and/or water and hauling it to remote facilities for storage or burial. The hidden costs of moving the contamination, such as carbon released into the atmosphere through the burning of the fuel, are potentially huge. While the implementation of phytoremediation is relatively cheap, the environmental monitoring process over the course of a decade or two can even out costs. However, phytoremediation lends itself to community education, additional green space, reduction of waste, and the City's goals of "greening" Albuquerque. Further, by dealing with the contamination on-site, phytoremediation puts a local spin on environmental contamination and the community's role in solving it.

Proposed phytoremediation for an old gas station site: Phase One



Phytoremediation is a group of natural processes in which plants convert contaminants in the soil or groundwater into less harmful substances. There are many phytoremediation processes, but the three that apply to the contamination of the thesis site are rhizodegradation—soil microbes in the plant’s root zone break down the chemicals, phytodegradation—the chemicals are absorbed by the plant and broken down within its tissues as part of photosynthesis, and hydraulic control—trees contain the contaminants in the ground water from spreading by their rapid pumping action. Using the issues of scale and time as guiding principles, the design goal is to create a kit-of-parts for gas station remediation sites based on historic precedent that can adapt to a variety of sites. The component parts will reveal chemical progress and re-use elements that will connect a single site to other city-wide sites through visual recognition. This will be done by adapting the iconic elements of the gas station industry to function in the remediation process or to educate the public about the processes occurring beneath the soil. Re-use is paramount.

The planting plan was dictated by appropriate species and root coverage. Plant species were chosen according to the type of chemicals on-site and based on species tested in EPA projects. I favored plants which commonly grow in the Rio Grande Valley. A tight grid of Rio Grande Cottonwood, planted in rows oriented perpen-

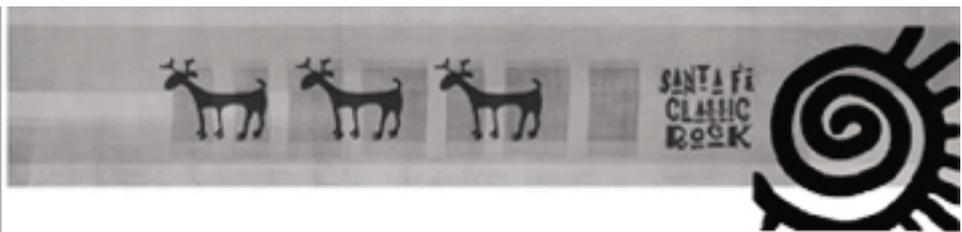


dicularly to the direction of the water table flow, is under-planted with a mixture of sheep fescue and strawberry clover. Both create dense roots, can tolerate shade from the tree canopies, slow down in winter but don’t go completely dormant, and have quick root turnover and nitrifying properties. Design elements will address time in multiple ways. The borrowed iconic gas station elements, canopy, price sign, and tanks, reference the site’s past. Phasing the design to address the growth of its trees and its contribution to the neighborhood fabric takes the site into the future. Tracking carbon offsets

*Design Components:
Site elements that have significance to either the history of the gas station, or the contamination that is unseen below ground:
Canopy, Sign, Tanks, Trees and Paths*

and contaminant levels shows time passing through quantifiable and changing numbers. Finally, re-development brings back commercial use and economic productivity to the site.

Phytoremediation may take 20 to 30 years to complete, but it will be a productive, educational and attractive landscape during those years. Meanwhile, due to a lack of redevelopment pressure many of these sites have already sat idle or underused (not to mention contaminated) for almost 20 years already. I think the investment of time is well worth it.



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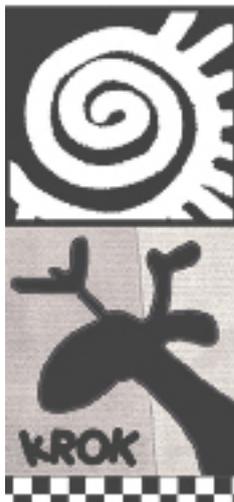
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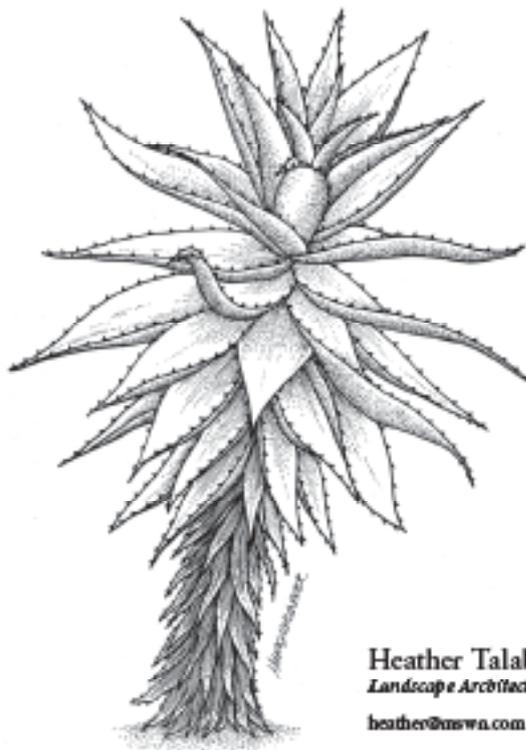
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Plant Translation 101

by Peter Wong, ASLA

From Peter's blog: Casa Coniglio ("Rabbit House") <http://www.casa-coniglio.blogspot.com/>

One of my favorite games to play is Plant Translation. It is most effectively played when traveling and visiting gardens in climates other than my own. Though I realize I'm playing it even when I'm reading magazines or garden books. It's simple to play. You've probably already figured out how.

It goes like this: when you see a nice plant combination, think about translating that combination to your climate. Think of as many plants as you can that can be utilized to achieve a similar result, substituting one plant for another, or all of the plants for others. When you think you have exhausted all the reasonable possibilities, or when the plant op-

tions start to degrade the design, repeat the process using another climate. I generally translate the scenes I see into plants that would work in Albuquerque. I try to come up with at least three options, but sometimes come up with twenty or more.

Here's an example. I'm reading the book Beth Chatto's Gravel Garden. There's a beautiful scene where a bold silvery spire of *Verbascum bombyciferum*, the purple-pink globes of an *Allium* and the silver and white of a white-flowered *Helianthemum* stand out against a dark green background. I realize that these plants can all be grown in Albuquerque. They probably wouldn't even need all that much water. Similar *Verbascums* and *Helianthemums* are even sold at nearby nurseries. But let's translate this scene to other plants, perhaps looking more like New Mexico, perhaps not. The impact of the scene comes

from several layers. There is the impact of the bright silver and white against the dark background. There is the fine texture of the *Helianthemum* against the large bold leaves of the *Verbascum*. The *Allium* is a bit of fireworks, unnecessary in my mind, but a bit of fun. It would only last a week or two and the rest of the scene would have to hold its own. The globes do contrast nicely with the forms of the other plants, and the color is similarly cool.

Let's start with the *Verbascum*, since it the least likely to be seen in Albuquerque gardens. What else has similar boldness and color? You might first think of the genus *Yucca*, which has bold form, but be careful of the color, which is typically olive rather than silver. *Agave* might make a better translation, being careful again to use the most silvery forms. Any *Agave* would translate soft touchable fuzziness of the *Verbascum* into the Southwest vernacular of tough and spiky. How about something softer instead? The large silver leaves of *Cardoon* would work, and still give the sense of an upright rosette. Like *Verbascum*, *Salvia argentea* has bold leaves, essentially disappearing in the winter, and a bold flower stem - branched instead of linear. The fuzzy leaves provide a similar tactile texture.

Okay, now that you've got the idea, let's try translating the other-worldly moss tufts of New Zealand, or for Advanced Translation, the underwater gardens of Takashi Amano. C'mon, it will be fun. ☞

Design Workshop's 2008 Internship Charrette To Take on Santa Fe's Gateways

by Megan Harrod

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO — Planning and design firm Design Workshop is hosting a student internship that will study and create new visions for Santa Fe's gateways – the first approaches and connections into the city from interstates and highways.

The 10-day charrette will run from May 28 through June 6 at the firm's Santa Fe office. The program is highly competitive as last year there were 313 applicants and the selection was narrowed to 17 finalists. This year the numbers will be similar as the participants will formulate strategies for how to shape the city's doorsteps while allowing the landscape and ur-

banism to evolve into a clear blueprint that reflects Santa Fe's culture, art, environment, economics, and community. The charrette and presentations to local government officials and the public will be followed by a 10-week paid internship in one of Design Workshop's seven U.S. offices.

Since 1985, Design Workshop's internship program has attracted gifted scholars of landscape architecture, architecture, urban design and planning from all over the world. The program introduces students and professionals to our firm and projects, provides an opportunity for Design Workshop to develop relationships with graduates for future positions, helps play a role in shaping the education of future professionals in our industry, and provides for the cultural exchange of design philosophies and ideas. In the past, Design Workshop's student charrettes have focused on a variety of projects in locations such as

Calgary, Phoenix, Denver, South Lake Tahoe, Salt Lake City, and Asheville. To learn more about the internship and charrette, please visit the Design Workshop website at: <http://www.designworkshop.com/careers/internship2008/>.

Design Workshop is an award-winning, international firm practicing landscape architecture, land planning, urban design, and tourism planning. Design Workshop combines principles of smart growth, sustainable design, and environmentally-sound planning to reconcile economic needs with the preservation of scenic, cultural, and community values. Design Workshop's pioneering efforts have been recognized with more than 125 awards from such organizations as the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Planning Association, and the Urban Land Institute. For more information, please visit www.designworkshop.com.



Euphorbia 'Red Wing'
Photo: Courtesy of Peter Wong

SOCLAS Update

by Jennifer Oram, president

This year's membership consists mostly of first and second year graduate students. We will be addressing such issues as our founding book club, organizing a trip to Arcosanti, preparing for the upcoming portfolio review with Harold Lind on March 28-29, touring Plants of the Southwest, and addressing needs and concerns

in the new building, George Pearl Hall. SOCLAS membership is looking forward to the April month celebrating Landscape Architecture, and is interested in parking lot design.

Classes are keeping us busy, as usual. We will inform NMASLA of our final presentation dates and topics if anybody is interested in attending.

As always, thanks to NMASLA for support and guidance.



Chapter Meetings

Weck's Restaurant, 3913 Louisiana NE, Alb, NM (505-881-0019), located on the west side of Louisiana just south of Montgomery Blvd. Please join us for monthly chapter meetings, usually held the second Tuesday of the month at 11:30 a.m.

Guest Speakers:

Anyone wishing to be a guest speaker should contact Lisa Powell at 505-830-5400.

Tuesday, April 15:

ASLA President Perry Howard is to speak at the UNM Campus; *Increasing Diversity*
April is Landscape Architecture Month!

Tuesday, May 13, June 10

Speakers to be determined.

Events

MRCOG Public Involvement Committee

MAINTAIN OUR AGING INFRA-STRUCTURE: April 3, 2008, 6PM

BUILD COMPLETE STREETS:
June 5, 6 PM

Landscape Architect Registration Examination – Preparator Courses

Section C (Site Design) April 11-13
Section E (Grading, Drainage & Stormwater Mgt.) April 25-27

MUDDY WATTER BLUES 2008

SCIECA, Erosion & Sediment Control, San Antonio, Texas, May 19-21

June Garden Tour:

If you have a garden or landscape to nominate for this year's tour, please contact Lisa at lisaepowell@yahoo.com

For More Information Visit the Chapter website:

<http://host.asla.org/chapters/newmexico/calendar.htm>

Membership & Address Changes

NMASLA Membership Updates

To update your address or mem-

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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 current editor:

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Website

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Landscape Tour
Saturday, June 7, 2008

website: <http://host.asla.org/chapters/newmexico/information.htm>
for more info contact Lisa Powell: LISAPOWELL@YAHOO.COM

stay
tuned...

for additional
gardens, locations
and more
information on
our website.



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