

## Monthly Meeting | ●●●●●●●●●●

November 18, 2009 | Wednesday 11:45 am

Our November meeting will be held at **The Montgomery Country Club** in the Colonial Room.

## Speaker and Sponsor | ●●●●●

Our program for our November luncheon will be provided by **Business Interiors**. Their presentation will consist of Knoll and Dirrt showcasing their company's products as they relate to sustainable design. Business Interiors is looking forward to getting these great products familiar to the A&D community.

In the years since their beginning in 1987, Business Interiors, Inc. has enjoyed extensive growth in the field of contract furnishings. Their philosophy of total customer service and customer satisfaction has demanded the expansion of their employee roster to over ninety employees in three cities. Headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, with additional showrooms in Montgomery and Huntsville, Alabama, Business Interiors, Inc., specializes in providing sales and service of contract furnishings throughout the state of Alabama. As the exclusive Knoll and Kimball® Office "Choice" dealer for the state, Knoll and Kimball Office are joined by a list of well over 300 other manufacturers that offer their products to customers through their dealership. Business Interiors is proud to provide in-house design, CADD specification, project management, and warehousing, & installation for a complete offering of services to their clients.

Hope to see everyone there!

## Chapter's Message | ●●●●●

Episode 11:

The one about Interns -

Since my tenure is drawing short as the chapter president I wanted to share some probably random thoughts about our chapter, the profession and interns...or I can write about the origin of Thanksgiving which is customarily the subject of chapter presidents November newsletters.

Ok, interns it is.

Why did I choose Montgomery to start and spend most of my career? Well besides the fact that Alex Alkire personally came to the fourth floor of Dudley hall while I was in the middle of some sort of thesis induced stupor and apparently convinced me that Montgomery was better than school. I still can't remember if he got me to sign something. But anyway, it probably had more to do with the fact that I needed to stay close to Auburn while my spouse finished her masters. Montgomery was going to be a two year gig tops. However, a funny thing happened while we were here...recession, black Monday and the oil bust.

During that time frame the late eighties, my step father, who is in the architectural profession, was laid off three times in my hometown of Dallas, Texas. Friends who had gotten those great jobs in more exotic locations in the northeast and Florida were also looking for work. But somehow, Montgomery with its mix of universities, state government and military bases just kept going and never missed a beat. It got hard to leave. The next thing you know it's a mortgage, 2.5 kids (ok. 3), a dog,

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November 2009

# ELEVENTIONS

NEWSLETTER

THE MONTGOMERY CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

two cars and 22 years later. What the heck happened?

As it turned out, despite my assumptions about the Montgomery area from the outside, it has been a great place to spend a career. I have made a lot of friends and have been able to participate in some great projects. I have also had the pleasure of meeting and working with some truly great architects and mentors. So, with all of that said and with the Montgomery Chapter being such a great place to work.....where are the interns?

I know all things seem bigger when you're younger so maybe it's just a perception, but I am not seeing a lot of interns active in our chapter or present at our meetings. I remember a time when we had monthly after hour's meetings and socials for the young architects and interns. Some of you long time members may remember the annual Jubilee gate competition just for interns. We also had a few other design competitions as well. Are the interns out there in the work force I am just missing them?

As someone who is active in recruiting new employees for our firm, I can tell you that over the past couple of years, Montgomery has been a very tough sell to recent graduates. It is increasingly difficult to compete with places like New York, Atlanta, Nashville, Charlotte and even Birmingham when it comes to attracting talent. The interns who have ties to the area are quickly sought out by local firms. I am convinced that the Montgomery Chapter firms must try harder and perhaps try a different strategy in order to attract top talent. Let's be honest, an intern who chooses to work in Montgomery or the surrounding area will probably not be able to work on an Olympic Stadium or design some new structure in China or Dubai. We need to change the playing field.

So how about this? What if the Montgomery Chapter and its member firms became nationally recognized as the most Intern friendly and best place in the country for a graduate architect to learn how to practice the profession of architecture?

Here are 10 random things to consider:

1. This whole idea of spending 20 years of servitude and earning your dues before having

a leadership position in a firm is outdated. Firms should recognize and support the talents of the younger practitioners and provide a clear and documented path for advancement.

2. Firms should remove the cloak of secrecy surrounding fees and contracts. I am embarrassed to admit that I worked for 13 years before I reviewed a contract. Firms need to know that an intern can grasp the financial and legal concepts of producing a project.
3. Architecture is a design field but it is also very much a business. Interns need to understand basic business concepts and the issues involved in managing a practice. There is a reason you just can't buy the latest cool software. This will insure that senior partners can feel better about turning over the reins at some point.
4. Interns should be given an opportunity to be in charge of something. Anything. Not just the toilet elevations on sheet A5.2. It could be the company Christmas party or it could be a small project. Give them a chance to show leadership.
5. Interns should take registration seriously and become licensed in a timely manner. It is a two way street with firms. You cannot expect more responsibility and money of you are not willing to put forth the effort to actually join the profession as a registered architect.
6. Firms should be aware of the areas where an intern needs knowledge and IDP credits and enable them to achieve those hours. It may not always be efficient, but it is necessary. Interns should have reasonable expectations and know that you can't just run off for a week and do site visits.
7. Both interns and firms should be flexible when it comes to time management. The fact that we usually must work extra hours to complete a

project should be communicated and understood by all. The fact that an intern may need to spend time on an unproductive task in order to advance their knowledge or meet IDP requirements must also be understood by the firms.

8. Firms should hire students every summer whether they need them or not. What better way to introduce them to the area.
9. Firms should get involved with our local universities. Our chapter is blessed to be the only chapter serving the only two Architecture programs in the state. This should give us a distinct advantage when it comes to interacting with students and potential employees. There are many ways that our local Architecture programs could use our support, and it does not mean just financial.
10. And most important, encourage and financially support them to become members and active within our chapter.

This list is not all inclusive and I know many of you could add a few more. I also think there are some firms who are already doing many of these things and it shows by their ability to attract talent. I firmly believe we can gain a reputation as a chapter of being intern friendly and the word will spread among the students. Let's put our chapter on the map.

**Freddie Lynn Jr. AIA**  
President Montgomery AIA

And one last thing...the pilgrims started thanksgiving when they broke bread with the Indians a long time ago. Happy Thanksgiving. The end.

## October Meeting Recap | ●●●●●●●●

The October meeting was the Chapter's annual October Fall Party at The Marina Bar & Grille in Montgomery. The event was once again graciously sponsored by Southern Sash. The Chapter expresses a great appreciation for their time and effort required for this event.

The night was perfect for the great food, cold beverages and a casual atmosphere. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2009 Mike Barrett Memorial Award to **Betty Plaster**, Commercial Marketing Representative for Alagasco. The award was presented by Chapter President **Freddie Lynn** and was given to recognize the outstanding contributions of Betty Plaster to the architectural profession.



2009 Mike Barrett Memorial Award Winner – Betty Plaster



Betty Plaster with Husband and Sons.



## Announcements | ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

AIA Montgomery's Second **Annual Design Award Gala** is Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm at the Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery. The cost is \$35.00 per person with Corporate Tables for eight available for \$300.00.

The Gala Committee is proud to announce that sponsorship has been obtained for 16 students from Auburn and Tuskegee University School of Architecture to attend the event. Along with their attendance, several of the University students' works will be on display during the Gala. This year's Design Award Ceremony will consist of the awarding of three awards as selected by the design jury and one Members Choice Award as selected by those attending the Gala. Also, this year's Gala will include the announcing of the winner of the Chapter's first annual Contractor Recognition Award.

We hope that everyone will be able to attend. Invitations will be mailed to all members the week of Thanksgiving. Please RSVP by the 8<sup>th</sup> of December to [sking@brownchambless.com](mailto:sking@brownchambless.com) or by phone to Stephen King at 334.834.8340.

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All Chapter members are requested to be present for the November Luncheon in order to vote from among three nominees for the Chapter's first **Contractor Recognition Award**. The award will be given to a contractor (general or sub) within the Chapter's area that has diligently shown excellence in their trade and over time become a valuable partner in the architectural community. The award will be presented to the winner during the 2009 Design Award Gala.

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As another year is comes to an end the Chapter's Executive Committee is already looking into 2010 and the goals for that year. The following Committees are under development.

Draw Montgomery Art Competition  
2010 Design Award Gala

New Membership  
University Relations  
Benefit Golf Tournament

Please consider participating in a committee to ensure the growth of our Chapter. If you know of an event for 2010 or a possible committee that you would like to see developed by our Chapter please contact Stephen King, 2010 Chapter President.

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The **Tuskegee University Department of Architecture** is offering the following seminars and workshop regarding design and energy considerations in buildings. Open to Architects, Professionals and Students of Architecture, seating is limited. RSVP at 334-727-8329.

Seminar I:

Russ McIver - Southface Energy Institute

### **LEEDS 3.0 | The Energy Code**

November 18<sup>th</sup> 2 - 5 PM CEUs: 3 HSW

Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104

Tuskegee University

Workshop:

Oliver Pennetier – Symphysis Inc.

### **Environmental Analysis using Ecotect**

February 3<sup>rd</sup> 9 - 12 PM | 1 – 4 pm

Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104

Tuskegee University

Seminar II:

Dr. Henry W. Brandhorst, Jr. – Director, Space  
Research Institute Auburn University

### **Photovoltaics – Application & Integration**

November 18<sup>th</sup> 2 - 5 PM CEUs: 3 HSW

Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104

Tuskegee University

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The **Auburn University Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS)** will be hosting its annual Internship Fair at the Auburn University Student Center in Auburn, Alabama on

the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2010. Auburn students majoring in architecture, interior architecture, landscape architecture, community planning, industrial design, and graphic design will be available for interviews. For information, visit [www.cadc.auburn.edu/aias/internship](http://www.cadc.auburn.edu/aias/internship).

## Upcoming Events | ●●●●●●●●●●

November 18

**Montgomery Chapter AIA Monthly Meeting**  
Montgomery Country Club  
Montgomery, AL

November 18

**LEED 3.0 | The Energy Code Seminar**  
Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104  
Tuskegee University, AL

December 10

**The Montgomery Chapter AIA Second Annual Design Award Gala**  
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel  
Montgomery, AL

January 20

**Montgomery Chapter AIA Monthly Meeting & Past-President Luncheon**  
Montgomery Country Club  
Montgomery, AL

February 3

**Environmental Analysis using Ecotect**  
Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104  
Tuskegee University, AL

February 3 - 4

**Auburn AIAS Annual Internship Fair**  
Auburn University Student Center  
Auburn, AL

March 10

**Auburn AIAS Annual Internship Fair**  
Wilcox 'A' Building – Lecture Room 104  
Tuskegee University, AL

### **Please take Special Note:**

Please send event listings, announcements, and acknowledgements for inclusion in the newsletter and/or web site to President-Elect Stephen King at [PresidentElect@aiamontgomery.org](mailto:PresidentElect@aiamontgomery.org).