

# daLa news

Balancing the human experience with the health of the natural systems

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## Didona Associates enters its twentieth year

With even more passion and dedication to designing places that balance the human experience with the health of our natural systems, Didona Associates is entering its twentieth year. When Jane Didona started Didona Associates in 1989, she wanted to develop a company that created incredible outdoor places. Her love of the outdoors started at an early age when she started a landscape maintenance business at age 13. She became fascinated with the natural world. Combining this passion with her love of design and art, Jane decided to become a landscape architect and was lucky to attend the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, graduating in 1978.

This amazing journey started in 1989. Didona Associates – Landscape Architects started with two important projects: the site planning of the Town Center in Somers, New York and the community center in South Windsor, Connecticut. 1996 was an important year: Keith Beaver joined the firm and they won their first design award for a residence in Danbury. In 1997, Keith became a partner and the Firm was selected to design Elmwood Park located in Danbury, Connecticut. Elmwood Park has won several awards and ten years after its ribbon cutting is still considered the precious treasure of Danbury. Didona Associates has continued to pursue diverse types of work from the private and public sector continuing to

incorporate the principles of sustainable site design coupled with the principles of design and landscape preference in each. This is their brand.

Didona Associates is truly grateful to all their loyal clients for giving them the opportunity to contribute to the health and beauty of the outdoor world. This milestone is not an end but a beginning. Didona Associates – Landscape Architects is still evolving and we would like to share this evolution with you in the months to come.

Thank you for your faith in our firm. We feel the future is full of incredible opportunities.

## daLa wins two awards

Didona Associates – Landscape Architects is proud to announce that Wooster School Beautification Plan and the Stanley L Richter Park Master Plan received awards from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Wooster School Beautification won the Honor Award, the highest award in its category of planning analysis and Richter Park won a Merit Award in the same category. Please read more about each project inside.

*"create a school that was not only attractive but was an example of environmental stewardship and education"*

## Wooster School Beautification Plan

Wooster school did not expect a **green school plan** when they hired Didona Associates to design some beautification elements for their Danbury campus. But after Didona Associates reached out to the school community, the program for the project had to change. The consensus was to create a school that was not only attractive but

was an example of environmental stewardship and education. The elements used were permeable pavers, rain gardens, bio filtration swales, riparian buffers, native plantings, meadows, dark sky compliant lights, and recycled site amenities configured to create a new Wooster identity.

The plan was honored at the 2008 CTASLA Awards dinner with the highest award in the category of planning and analysis. Even more exciting is that Wooster School has begun to implement the plan by changing grass into meadow, installing native trees and working on a grant and permits to renovate their pond.



## Richter Park Master Plan

How does a park accommodate an internationally known golf course, a local arts facility, a gourmet restaurant, a popular hiking trail and a small tennis facility? Didona Associates reached out to the community in order to discover the answer. Through several stakeholder and community workshops and extensive review and

research, it became apparent that the answer was multifaceted. There is the physical plan that discusses improvements to the facilities including a new maintenance compound, a renovated and expanded arts complex, a community room for meetings, an expanded clubhouse with better parking and circulation, a new practice facility that will help

the golf course remain competitive, a new recreational facility to support the hiking trails and tennis courts and a remediation of all the wetlands incorporating the principles of the USGA environmental game of golf. But, physical improvements alone will not create a sustainable park without a clear economic, administrative and communication plan. The economic plan discusses budgets, fundraising, and bonding as methods to sustain the park. The administrative plan discusses the chain of command and the benchmarks for success necessary to maintain consistent action towards implementing the plan. The communication plan discusses internal and external means of getting the message out and keeping it alive. The success so far is that Richter Park has already been transformed by the hiring of a new general manager, a revitalized Richter Park Authority, physical improvements to its golf course, and the creation of a fundraising organization for the park called FORe.

Didona Associates was pleased when this comprehensive master plan was honored with a merit award for planning and analysis from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture.



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Plans that work

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## daLa has received WBE certification in NYS

Didona Associates – Landscape Architects has received WBE certification in New York State. daLa also has DBE certification through the Connecticut Department of Transportation and

Vermont DOT as well as the set aside, woman owned designation through the Connecticut DAS. These certifications provide opportunities for minority and women owned businesses to

compete on publicly funded projects. Didona Associates is also in the process of attaining certification with NYDOT and New York City.

## Keith Beaver is now LEED AP

daLa is proud to announce that Keith Beaver has received his LEED Accredited Professional designation. By attaining this designation, Keith joins the over 60,000 building professionals that have become accredited since the program was launched in 2001.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design,

construction and operation of high performance green buildings. By recognizing performance in 5 key areas: Sustainable Site Development, Water Savings, Energy Efficiency, Materials Selection and Indoor Environmental Quality, the program promotes a whole building approach to sustainability. As a LEED AP, Keith has demonstrated a thorough knowledge of green building practices and the LEED green building rating system. As the

building industry moves closer to a more sustainable design approach, Keith is prepared to help our clients facilitate the integrated design process and streamline their project's LEED certification.

For information on LEED and green building practices please visit the U.S. Green Building Council at [www.USGBC.org](http://www.USGBC.org)

## Jane and Keith participate in two panels

This past month was busy for Jane and Keith as they prepared for and presented in two roundtable discussions:

Jane was proud to be asked to be a part of the **Western Connecticut State University Leadership Program**. Sharing the podium with James Schmotter, president of WCSU, and Andrew Timmerman, owner of Fairfield Crystal was an honor. Discussion included the qualities of leadership, the balance of business

with personal life, the decision process in starting a company and the process of growing a company. The program lasted two hours and was a vibrant interchange between the panel and this group of student leaders.

At the **Annual Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association's Winter Symposium & Expo**, Keith was one of 5 panelists for the "Landscape Architects - Working Together" session. The panel of Landscape

Architects and Landscapers discussed how the two professions can better work together to produce great projects for our clients and promote a more harmonious working relationship between the two professions. With an audience of about 60 people, the discussion was lively with a great exchange of ideas. Everyone came away with a better understanding of the "other sides" point of view and how we can better work together as a team.