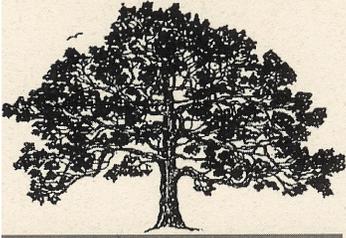


WINTER 2008



FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED SOCIETY OF RIVERSIDE

Newsletter

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society is dedicated to sustaining Olmsted's vision for Riverside for generations to come. It's members are guided by his concern for humanity, nature, sense of community and the innovative and thoughtful essence of his work. The Olmsted Society invites residents and visitors to join us in learning, protecting the environment, and preserving our cultural and physical heritage.

The Book Corner: Notes on the Olmsted Collection

by Jane Kunka

Library Committee New Acquisitions:

The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm 1857-1979

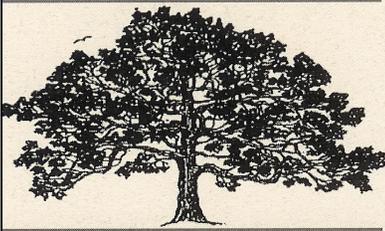
The scope of the Olmsted legacy - while known to a small group of historians, design professionals and local activists- is now more accessible to the general public. The second edition of The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm, first published in 1987, was republished in April 2008 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Greensward Plan for Central Park. Co-published by the National Association for Olmsted Parks and the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, National Park Service, the book has been expanded to more than 6,000 projects and organized into fourteen thematic sections, ranging from parks, parkways, recreation areas and scenic reservations to exhibitions and fairs.

The Master List tells an astounding story about the influence of the Olmsteds and their partners on the built landscape in the United States and abroad. As Charles E. Beveridge details in his introductory essay, the firm drew plans for more than 700 parks and parkways, 2000 private estates, 350 suburban communities, 250 college and school campuses, almost 100 residential institutions, more than 100 public buildings, 125 commercial buildings and 75 churches.

The Master List features new sections to help individuals and professionals understand, restore and protect Olmsted designs in their communities. An essay on researching an Olmsted landscape provides a practical approach for starting this process. Other essays describe the Olmsted influence on the development of the National Park Service and the firm's impact on the development of landscape architecture beyond America's borders.

This book includes a state by state survey of the firm's work and will interest those of us who know the Chicago area well. Many Chicago parks were designed by the Olmsted firm.

Ms. Caroline Wheeler donated The 2008 Winter edition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin to the Olmsted Collection. The entire edition is dedicated to the Greensward Plan for Central Park on its 150th anniversary. It includes an interesting history of the park's design by Olmsted, and many beautiful maps and color plates. The Olmsted Society is very grateful to Ms. Wheeler for her generous donation.



www.olmstedsociety.org

The Frederick Law Olmsted
Society Of Riverside

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2008

Founded in 1968, the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the original village plan, developed in 1868 by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux. Membership is open to all interested individuals. Annual Membership is available for a \$25.00 (tax deductible) contribution.

Officers

President: James Reynolds

Vice President: Thomas Jacobs

Treasurer: Theresa Pelletier

Secretary: Yvonne Lucero

Committees

Architecture: Sander Kaplan

Thomas Jacobs

Fourth of July: Sander Kaplan

Housewalk: Constance Guardi, Kimberly Jacobs, Theresa Pelletier

Landscape: Cindy Kellogg, Holly Machina

Library: Jane Kunka,

Long Range Planning: Lonnie Sacchi,

Membership: Joanna Beaumont, Tim Ozga

Newsletter: Chandra Reynolds

Tours/Education: Tony Pecelunas, Lonnie Sacchi,

Website: Kevin Hicks

Honorary Directors: Ted Smith, Mike DeLise, Geri Tauber

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PO Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546

A Letter From The President

I am amazed at how fast my three-year term as President of the Olmsted Society has passed, but when I reflect on the events of my term I can see why the time has flown by. I deem it an extreme privilege to have been chosen to serve this wonderful Village we call home and to be one of the stewards, along with our board members, of Olmsted's legacy.

The road has not always been smooth, but then it would not have been interesting nor challenging. The people I've met and come to know have made the texture of my tenure interesting and rewarding, but it is the constant struggle to maintain the enduring vision that Olmsted had back in 1868 that has been the Holy Grail.

Education, in my view, must become a main focus of our future endeavors as a society. It was my personal education on the landscape; guided by senior members of the Society, that allowed me to see the fragile landmark we are living in with new eyes. Education is, after all, what informs, inspires and enriches our life.

We are at a crossroads here in Riverside and are faced with adversity once again with less than ideal financial times. With the advance of some natural pests along with dwindling tree inventories and the very real possibility of benign neglect, our landscape needs our help more than ever. It is at times like these that we need to encourage more participation from our residents.

Careful planning of the landscape is required, lest we do more harm than good. The simple planting of a new tree may, in and of itself be a good thing, but when that tree is planted in the middle of a meadow that was carefully designed by Olmsted to be open space, it destroys and desecrates the preservation of a master plan that has endured for almost 140 years. Olmsted planted on our ground the way a painter carefully applies paint to a canvas, however he did so with three dimensions at hand. He sculpted and fashioned pleasant surprises and soothing green vistas for all to drink in. The subtle "Green Rooms" that were designed into our landscape, were created by careful planning, planting, and patience. To unknowingly plant in the middle of one of these rooms speaks of indifference and ignorance and should be considered a grievous error. Perhaps this is a mistake of the uninformed, ordered by the indifferent, but a mistake none-the-less. It should be our mandate to cry foul and with a gentle hand indicate the correct path. It is only through constant vigilance and hard work that we will be able to accomplish our goal of maintaining and preserving the Riverside we now know for future generations.

The Olmsted Collection in the library holds many amazing books that instruct us on the appropriate designs for our landscape. Jane Kunka, our library committee chair, has always encouraged the reading of these books, and I echo her request. Much is to be learned about the subtlety of Olmsted's design, but the most amazing thing to be learned is how much of a miracle the existence of Riverside actually is, given the adversity that was faced to get the project done. Adversity seems to always be with us, so our constant vigilance to overcome it must be our mandate!

I will now step aside for a new President, but I will not relinquish my fervor, passion, and dedication for the goals of the Frederick law Olmsted Society. My wife, Chandra, and I will remain on the board to encourage, educate, and hopefully enlighten those who come behind us. Many thanks for your kind words and attentions over these last three years!

James D. Reynolds, Pres.



Membership Review, One to Ten

By Joanna Beaumont

Dear Members,

This year we enjoyed the support of 224 members. Your generous donations allowed us to accomplish many tasks that directly benefited Riverside and all of its residents.

First, some of your money went to the professional design of our Central Business District's landscape. We were able to hire Mauro Crestani, a well regarded landscape architect, who is very familiar with the Olmsted philosophy, as he has lived right here in the village until recently. His expertise provided a well thought out design for the CBD.

Second, we joined in the Fourth of July celebration and promoted the Olmsted Society by driving an eco-friendly, electric float, decorated by member volunteers. We promoted Olmsted and native planting by offering native plants to residents.

Third, the Olmsted Society proposed a "green" approach to running our municipality to the Village. Our own eco-conscience think-tank crafted guidelines that would help Riverside save energy and funds while maintaining the current level of residential ser-

vices.

Fourth, our very active Landscape chair organized volunteer workdays to clean and weed our nature areas throughout the village.

Fifth, The Olmsted Society purchased and donated four gallons of Arbotect to help the Village in fighting Dutch Elm disease.

Sixth, invaluable RB Ecology Club and Audubon intern workers were again working in our forests and your donations paid for their effort.

Seventh, several architectural lectures were delivered throughout the year, educating us all on how to be more green, and about saving the history of both architectural structures and the landscape.

Eighth, our housewalk was a success again this year. We orchestrated hundreds of volunteers to provide an educational walk through the gems of our community. Your money spent on organizing the event was returned manifold by tickets we sold.

Ninth, our website is being re-organized and re-developed so we can provide easier access, timely information about our activities, receive input from our members, replace some of our paper mailing by e-mailing, and allow the public to

sign up on line for membership.

This will reduce our "administrative" costs and the impact on the environment. The professional website design is fiscally possible in part due to the fee reduction of one of our own Riverside website developers. He generously is offsetting some of his costs with a membership to the Olmsted Society. We truly appreciate this contribution of his highly skilled services.

Finally, our biennial budget was hotly discussed and carefully trimmed. Several items were reduced, some eliminated altogether. Our mission of preserving Olmsted's legacy and educating the public remain our focus and the budget cuts were implemented to keep that possible. We would like to thank you for caring about our work and encourage your comments and ideas. We also hope that you will extend your support into the upcoming year, join us on one of our committees, and bring in your friends and neighbors. In a community as unique as Riverside, we feel that being a part of the Olmsted's Legacy is a win/win proposition. When the landscape and history is maintained, our pride and home values stay high!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH: "The History of Central Park from the early eighties is explainable mainly on the basis of three shortcomings, sadly familiar in other political affairs...*First*, failure to understand clearly that adherence to some self consistent controlling purpose and policy is essential to good results in the management of any long-term investment of a sort readily subject to depreciation like the Park, and failure to live up to such an understanding with courage and energy. *Second*, inability to comprehend the special justifying purposes and values appropriate to the Park, and failure to appreciate the technical means necessary for preserving these in the face of greatly increased use. *Third*, subordination, whether conscious or unconscious, of the motive of effective management of the Park as an instrument of public service to other motives such as the following: a desire to divert funds needed for the proper service of the Park to serve other more appealing ends, public or private; a complacent desire to please individual friends and political associates in the disregard of the public interests ..." *Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (Forty Years of Landscape Architecture Central Park)*

The Riverside Landscape:

“NATIVITY”

A reprise from past Newsletter, March 1990

Native plants are currently enjoying a modest spate of popularity among the more environmentally enlightened landscape architects practicing in America. Articles appearing in *Landscape Architecture* (the Journal of the American Society of Landscape Architects) have begun to notice the advantages of using native plant communities¹ in their work. The often vaunted and applauded Suburban Tree Consortium has expressed a desire to offer seed-grown trees from local seed sources to its members.² Olmsted's mentor, Andrew Jackson Downing, was the first outspoken advocate of American trees practicing in this country.³ Olmsted himself, while not a pedantic purest,⁴ relied heavily on native materials for his most enduring landscapes. Jens Jensen, designer of Chicago's West Side Park system, including the seminal Columbus Park, not only used native plants almost exclusively, but was one of the founders of the Friends of Our Naïve Landscape. Alfred Caldwell, now enjoying a renaissance of notoriety, was apprenticed under Jensen and adopted his landscape palate unreservedly.

So what? Is an infatuation with local trees and shrubs simply a manifestation of Botanic chauvinism, unredeemed by any objective rational? Not quite!

If you have a Forsythia in your yard, you may wish to try this experiment: go flush your toilet. If the water flowing out of the bowl circulates in a clockwise direction, your Forsythia will not bloom this spring. Moreover, your Flowering Quince will not flourish and your English Holly (*Ilex opaca*) will perish utterly.⁵

Coriolis force⁶ determines the rotation of vortices in your bathroom bowls and also the direction of the Bermuda Current which carries warm water from the Gulf of Mexico, up along the East Coast of the United States, across the North Atlantic and down the West Coast of Europe. Since that part of the Northern Hemisphere is dominated by prevailing westerly winds, the climate of western Europe, up to the Urals, is tempered by warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean.⁷

Moreover, since this oceanic circulation is reasonably constant throughout the year. European seasons tend to be stable, relative to the temperature fluctuations of Chicago, for instance.

Western Europe experiences few April and September freezes, or January thaws; just slow, steady warming from January to August and then slow, steady cooling until the

next January. In Chicago, we have temperature fluctuations in the course of a week which Paris will not experience in four months.

One result of this stability is an indigenous European flora which has adapted to predictable climatological progression and has become accustomed to regulating its collective metabolism in accordance with mean daytime temperatures.

In Chicago, where the climate is governed by upper air currents which vary daily, a plant which has evolved under European conditions, or has been hybridized by European horticulturists for their local conditions, is at a hopeless disadvantage.

An English Holly, growing in England, will assume that day time temperature of 60 degrees (following a month of colder temperatures) means the approach of the vernal equinox with subsequent temperatures of 70 degrees, and will begin the business of gearing up for the spring by producing new growth, safe from killing frosts.

The same Holly, planted in Chicago, will make the same assumption after a week of January thaw. When the February blizzards hit, accompanying sub-zero temperatures will kill off all its premature new growth. On the other hand, most plants native to the Chicago region, accustomed since the last ice age to erratic variations in seasonal temperatures, have evolved a metabolic response to day length, a more reliable indicator of seasonal progression. No matter how warm January gets, the buds of Persimmon and Bus Oak and Blackhaw and Hazel stay tightly closed against the rigors of February. Only when the increasing hours of sunlight indicate the approach of spring will these wily natives break dormancy and prepare for warm weather.

Furthermore, because of this superior adaptation, native plants require far less maintenance than European, or European developed, species. Compare the native Hazels growing along the southwest border of the Scottswood Common with the adjacent European Lilacs. The Lilacs are rank with dead branches and rotting stumps while the Hazels, which are exactly the same size, are uniformly healthy, vigorous and vital.

Moral: you can fool Mother Nature, but it is not cheap.

1. Curiously, Olmsted pioneered this process by creating, in the

OLMSTED BOARD NOMINATIONS FOR 2009

The Nominating Committee for the Olmsted Board would like to present the following nominations for 2009 Olmsted Society Board:

President: Kim Jacobs

Vice President: Tim Ozga

Secretary : Cindy Kellogg

Treasurer: Theresa Pelletier

Two Year Term New Board Members: Jim and Sandee Petrzilka

Two Year Term New Board Member: Bill Sleeth

The Nominating Committee was made up of Chairperson Lonnie Sacchi, Board members Connie Guardi and Tony Pecelunas, and at large members Joe Cablk, and Donald Spatny, These nominees will be presented and voted on at the annual meeting.

ANNUAL OLMSTED SOCIETY MEETING UPCOMING!

All Olmsted Society members are invited to attend the upcoming Olmsted Society Annual meeting. Please come and meet the Board of the Olmsted Society, vote on the newly nominated Board Members, and see the lecture and slide show of

THE RESTORATION AND CONVERSION OF THE COONLEY COACH HOUSE

Presented by Dean Eastman

When: January 16th, Friday

Where: Riverside Township Hall

Time: 7:00 pm

NATIVITY, continued..

- salt marshes of the Boston Fenway, a salt marsh. It flourished until pollution wiped out all life in the Boston Bay except rats.
2. A desideratum which Riverside has already realized.
 3. Needless to say, European horticulturalists have coveted and esteemed American plant material since Sir Walter Raleigh turned up with *Nicotiana tobacum*.
 4. His sometime collaborator, Charles Sprau Sargent, would sneak into the office when Olmsted was out of town and change planting lists to exclusively native species. Olmsted Jr. would then change them back.
 5. Actually, all toilets flush clockwise the Northern Hemisphere.
 6. Invented by the French civil engineer, Gaspard Coriolis.
 7. Few people realize that Chicago is slightly south of Rome and London, slightly north of Winnipeg.

2009 Membership

Membership is for the calendar year. If you have not renewed your membership for 2009, please return this form with your check payable to: Frederick Law Olmsted Society, P.O. Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | General Member | \$25-\$49 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Contributing Member | \$50-\$99 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron Member | \$100 and above | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gift Membership | \$ Add Amount | \$ _____ |
| | Total Enclosed: | | \$ _____ |

The Olmsted Society welcomes your participation in our ongoing activities. Put your talent to work and your energy to good use by joining a committee! Check off the committees that interest you. The Chairman will contact you with more information.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housewalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tours/Education | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Talents _____ | |

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please give us your email address, so we can save paper and trees!

Contact Joanna Beaumont at
 Brutusanddaisy@yahoo.com

www.olmstedsociety.com



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 P.O. Box 65
 Riverside, Illinois 60546
**Come to the Annual Meeting
 Presentation
 The Restoration and Conversion
 of the Coonley Coach House
 By Dean Eastman
 Jan 16, 7pm Township Hall**

