

SUMMER 2011

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside is dedicated to sustaining Olmsted's vision for Riverside for generations to come. Its 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.

Membership is open to all interested individuals for a \$25 tax-deductible contribution by check or online.

Olmsted Society
PO Box 65
Riverside, Illinois 60546
www.olmstedsociety.org



(Left) Ames Principal Colleen Lieggi, second-place winner Samuel Halwaji, and Aberdeen Marsh-Ozga.

(Bottom left) Blythe second-place winners Ava Maria McCarthy and Steven Sanduski, first-place winner Olivia Joy Liu and Principal Bob Chleboun.

(Bottom right) Central first-place winner Anna Strubbe, Skye Ozga, Olivia Louthen, and Joseph Connelly.

“Reflections On Riverside” 2011 Poetry Winners

A record 138 students put pen to paper and participated in The Frederick Law Olmsted Society's fifth annual “Reflections on Riverside” Student Poetry Contest. The contest, open to local elementary and junior high school students, asks students to reflect upon Riverside's natural areas and convey their impressions in poetic form.

Each young poet was personally recognized at the year-end ceremonies of six area schools where the Olmsted Society awarded participants gold foil certificates and warm congratulations. First and second place winners were treated to framed certificates and sizable Aunt Diana's chocolate bars featuring the Society's trademark oak tree. First place winners also received a cash prize.



NEWSLETTER, SUMMER 2011

THE FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED SOCIETY OF RIVERSIDE

If you have a question or comment about the newsletter, please direct them to newsletter@olmstedsociety.org.

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Library: Constance Guardi

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Thomas Jacobs, and Sally Faust

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Media: Sandie Petrzilka

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Newsletter: Sally Faust

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and Jane Kunka, Lonnie Sacchi, Ted
Smith, Geri Tauber

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The Frederick Law Olmsted Society
of Riverside
PO Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546

Dear Friends,

With so many new faces on the FLOS board, a survey was conducted to shed light on our directors' attitudes toward our society and our community at large.

What came to light was that this board is as diversified in their opinions, on most issues, as there are native and non-native weeds in my garden. One of the survey questions, however, produced surprising agreement. "What is the most pressing issue for FLOS today?"

Our reputation. It is remarkable how difficult it is to get beyond the things that have happened in the past, to sway long-held views about the Society and its activism. From a fight over a tot lot in the Long Common more than 40 years ago, to the use of petunias, I do believe it fair to question whether the Society has always rightfully claimed Olmsted's name.

But then again, let's take a look around. Similarly well-to-do villages like Clarendon Hills for instance, have changed for the worse in character over the last few decades. Led by a belief that bigger is automatically better, homeowners in these places have built jumbo-sized homes on their lots, trading in open and public space in exchange for oversized living space and private backyards.

Not so in Riverside. There is something here that has prevented this loss of open space and loss of community.

We should never be shy to claim our fair share of this achievement. The Olmsted Society of Riverside has been the singularly most important group in preserving our village's legacy over the past few decades. Thank you, former Society and Board members, for this achievement. The current board is committed to carry the baton forward—in the spirit of relevance, respect, and collaboration.

Kim Jacobs

president@olmstedsociety.org

The Ultimate Long-Range Planner

by Olmsted Society board member Jim Petrzilka

Someone once wrote that predictions are difficult; especially concerning the future. This did not seem to deter Frederick Law Olmsted, who once wrote that he designed no effects that would take less than 40 years to be realized. This bespeaks a supremely competent and confident man who both knew what he was doing and knew its intended effects on the future.

However, in some respects Olmsted found it as difficult to foretell the future as the rest of us mere mortals. He may have known what he was doing but his battles with customers, particularly of the municipal variety, illustrate just how difficult even Olmsted found it to realize his plans for the future. Forty years is a long time. A tree can grow to a considerable height in 40 years. Entire forests can grow, empires can topple, and an army of noxious weeds can take over. A relatively ephemeral thing like a municipal budget for landscape design and maintenance, to say nothing of a political cast of characters with an entirely different view of the future, or no view at all, can change in a relative twinkling, stymieing the best of Long Range plans.

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside, a dauntless organization, recognizes both the advantages and the pitfalls of Long Range Planning. We have maintained for several years an active Long Range Planning Committee to gaze into the crystal ball and try to determine the best ways, over time, to realize our mission of promoting Olmsted's vision for Riverside for generations to come.

This process can be fraught with difficulty and even lead to controversy. Occasionally the Frederick Law Olmsted Society has been accused of being anti-children, anti-recreation, anti just about everything concerned with truth, justice and the American way. This apparently goes with the territory of trying to envision the village as Olmsted would have wanted to see it, which we believe is the village that most of our residents want to live in, and then trying to make it happen, or, conversely, to make something not happen that would neither fit the village that Olmsted planned nor be a wise expenditure of money in any case.

Take the anti children accusation. Being anti children would certainly be news to the many parents with young children who currently serve on the Olmsted Society Board. Especially since a good deal of their time on the Board is spent on trying to find ways to more fully engage our children in appreciating and participating in the community.

Take the recent recreation controversy. Frederick Law Olmsted was about as pro outdoor recreation as a person could be. The concepts and benefits of healthy recreation permeate his writings. Somewhere he writes that he does not believe a young person is fit who cannot go 12 miles on foot in less than two hours. Oops! Another instance of faulty Long Range Planning. Couldn't he foresee that the majority of our citizens of all ages have enough difficulty just rising out of their chairs after a vigorous bout of TV watching or video gaming, or texting, or tweeting?

So the Olmsted Society is 100% for all forms of recreation. But we are not for spending our hard working citizens tax dollars on things like expensive equipment installed in, or ill conceived landscape modifications made on, the Des Plaines River flood plain, to be washed away or ruined, the money literally drained away, during the next flood.

Whether it is Frederick Law Olmsted doing the Long Range Planning or the Frederick Law Olmsted Society, competent planners should always consider the unforeseen, the unexpected, and especially the unwanted yet inevitable, when planning. Some desirable things may no longer be possible or affordable. Implementing many good ideas may be difficult because of the lack of human and monetary resources. This should not preclude us from speaking out on issues that affect the preservation of our great legacy.

Riverside is a great American place. People do travel here from all over the world to see it and study its charms for possible application elsewhere. This is because enough Riverside citizens, from the very beginning, knew and appreciated its value and planned ahead. One may argue against some of their decisions, but it is very hard to argue against the results they have achieved so far. With that in mind, and even though we are following in the footsteps of perhaps the ultimate Long Range Planner, the FLOS Long Range Planning Committee intends to soldier on.

Olmsted Society in the Community

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society (FLOS) is participating in several Riverside Community events this year:

RIVERSIDE FARMERS' MARKET, WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2:30-7:00 PM

CRUISE NIGHT, THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 6:00-9:00 PM

CAR SHOW, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM

Membership information will be available as well as current events and upcoming projects. Please stop by and say hi. For more information, send an email to media@olmstedsociety.org.

Zoo Woods and Waubensee Nature Walks a Success

The Olmsted Society free guided nature walks in April and June, led by Olmsted Society member and Forest Preserve District of Cook County Master Steward John Kolar, were informative and fun. On April 30, John Kolar led a dozen participants through Zoo Woods to see at least 15 different sedges and 20 different grasses. We saw trilliums, blue cohosh, wild ginger, trout lily, toothwort, may apple and jack in the pulpit.

Much of the buckthorn is gone from this area thanks to the RBHS Ecology Club and their scheduled workdays and to the Olmsted Society, who has donated over \$15,000 over a five-year period to pay for interns to restore these woods.

The Waubensee Preserve tour on June 4 was attended by nine very hot nature lovers. We started along the old sidewalk, carefully stepping around poison ivy and finally walked into the prairie where we saw white indigo, big blue stem and Michigan lily. We plan to schedule another series of tours in the fall, so stay posted.



THANK YOU TO ALL "GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE" VOLUNTEERS

On Saturday, April 16 the Olmsted Society hosted "The Garlic Mustard Challenge", a fun community service project to help control the spread of garlic mustard in Riverside. FLOS partnered with the Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership (NIIPP) for this event.

Our Great Garlic Mustard Challenge at the Scout Cabin was a success. First it was a success because we found very little garlic mustard growing, thanks to the efforts of a prior work day and the Eagle Scouts pulling garlic mustard around the Scout Cabin. We showed our volunteers a video about identifying the invasive garlic mustard plant (see it on our website!) and had an actual plant for them to see. Then we set out to find garlic mustard and to pick up any trash we found. We found more trash than garlic mustard, but we did collect a gallon of the weed.

Garlic mustard is an invasive plant that was brought over to the United States by European settlers as an herb. Unfortunately, with none of its native competitors present, garlic mustard has spread virtually unchecked across the county and can be found in more than 30 states as well as parts of Canada. Not only do these invasive weeds choke out native wildflowers, out-competing them for space and sunlight, but they also excrete chemicals through their roots further preventing wildflower growth. Garlic mustard and other invasive species pose a serious threat to the biodiversity and overall quality of our beloved natural areas. Thanks to all for braving the cool temperatures to join us for this event.



Given the number of fine entries received, the following students are to be commended for the particularly thoughtful nature of their poems:

Ames	1st place: Michael Kusz	Des Plaines River
	2nd place: Samuel Halwaji	White Tail Deer on my Lawn
Blythe Park	1st place: Olivia Liu	Mother Nature and the River
	2nd place: Ava Maria McCarthy	Town by the River
	3rd place: Steven Sanduski	Riverside's Beauty: Reflections of a First Grader
Central	1st place: Anna Strubbe	Des Plaines River
	2nd place: Taylor Kosiak	Spring in Riverside
	3rd place: Connor Waddle	Spring in Riverside
Hollywood	1st place: Maddie Meehan	Frederick Olmsted River
	2nd place: Danielle Ciombor	
St. Mary's	1st place: Kane Layng	Arbor Day in Riverside
	2nd place: Laura Durkin	Lighting the Landscape
Hauser	1st place: Gia Cinkay	River
	2nd place: Elizabeth DiMonte	Ode to Flowers

To celebrate the accomplishments of our 2011 contest participants, all 138 poets and their families are invited to participate in a Reflections on Riverside Poetry Reading and Reception at the Riverside Public Library on Thursday, July 28th at 7 p.m. Please register by phoning 442-6366.

While the winning poems can be viewed at www.olmstedsociety.org the Society will also be preparing Reflections on Riverside: Volume II this summer. All entries from 2010 and 2011 will be included.

HOW DOES A POEM MEAN?

In "How Does a Poem Mean?," world-renowned author John Ciardi asserts that readers who focus on "what" a poem means are too often tempted into paraphrasing . . . and wind up missing the point. A poem, Ciardi posits, is to be experienced, not simply interpreted.

What Ciardi asks of readers, the Olmsted Society asks of Riverside's young poets. "The Reflections on Riverside contest encourages direct, sensory experience of nature," explains program chair Aberdeen Marsh-Ozga.

"The first time a person stops and really observes some aspect of their natural environment, it can be difficult to reduce the essence of that experience to writing. While it can feel awkward at first, it's an important process. The more we do it, the deeper our personal understanding. It's exciting when a young person takes their experience in nature to the next level and can share that experience through a few well chosen words."

(Photos, clockwise from left) Aberdeen Marsh Ozga with Hauser first-place winner Gia Cinkay.

Aberdeen Marsh-Ozga with Hollywood first-place winner Maddie Meehan.

Hollywood second-place winner Danielle Ciomber.

St. Mary's second-place winner Laura Durkin with Aberdeen Marsh-Ozga.



Help Beautify Riverside's Green Spaces

Join The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside as we team up with the Village of Riverside to beautify our green spaces with Landscape Workdays.

Scottswood Common and Longcommon Common serve as the backbone of Riverside's landscape architecture. Both were intended to be part of a green space stretching all the way to downtown Chicago. The parks on the riverbank follow the meandering Des Plaines River.

Frederick Law Olmsted designed these parks to provide changing vistas for both pedestrians and vehicles. His plan can be better realized by reducing shrub overgrowth and eliminating weeds. Join us as we tame, and then maintain your public parks of Riverside.

All workdays are scheduled for Saturdays from 9am-12pm. Look for the Riverside Public Works dump truck. Come for an hour or three, whatever your schedule allows. Supervised children are welcome. Service hour credits are available. Bring your favorite work gloves & a water bottle. All other supplies and snacks will be provided.

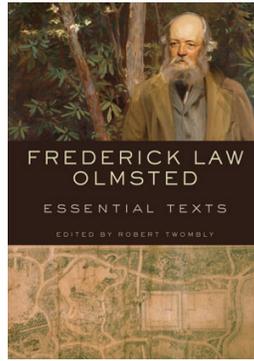
LANDSCAPE WORKDAYS 2011 SCHEDULE

JULY 30	9AM – 12PM SCOTTSWOOD COMMON
AUGUST 13	9AM – 12PM TRIANGLE AT SCOTTSWOOD AND MILLBRIDGE
SEPTEMBER 10	9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)
OCTOBER 1	9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)
OCTOBER 22	9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)
NOVEMBER 12	9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)

For more information or to be added to our FLOS landscape committee e-list, please contact: Holly Machina and Cindy Kellogg, Olmsted Society Landscape Committee Chairpersons at landscape@olmstedociety.org.

RIVERSIDE RIPARIAN RESTORATION ROUNDTABLE A SUCCESS

The Restoration Roundtable hosted by Chicago Wilderness in collaboration with the Olmsted Society of Riverside was informative and a great opportunity for participants to network before and after the event. Almost 100 people attended the May 12th Roundtable, titled Urban River and Riparian Restoration at Riverside Township Hall. Brook Herman, a US Army Corps Engineer and Karen Kabbes from Kabbes Engineering spoke about the challenges and successes of riverbank restoration after the removal of a dam. Their knowledge and experience was evident during the question and answer section of the event. Jim Petrzilka and Holly Machina, both from the Olmsted Society board also spoke at the event. Jim detailed the history of Riverside's dams while Holly explained the challenges she has experienced while attempting to restore the riverbanks of Riverside, particularly along Riverside Road. The information gathered from this event was valuable and has led to the formation of a task force to begin restoring our riverbanks in earnest and will include scheduling regular prescribed burns. This Roundtable event occurring here in Riverside with a topic that is of importance to local residents is a direct benefit since becoming a member of Chicago Wilderness. The Olmsted Society is thrilled to have made this connection with Chicago Wilderness and we see more collaboration in the future. Please watch local cable Channel 6 to view the event if you missed it, as they were there to video record the entire event.



INVITE FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO TOUR HISTORIC RIVERSIDE

Learn about the history of Riverside and discover the winding roads, delightful parks, beautiful landscapes, and varied architecture that make up this historic landmark village. Conducted by the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside, the two-hour guided walking tours are divided by region (north and south) and alternate monthly. Groups from one to 100 are led on a two-hour tour that departs from the Riverside Railway Depot, 90 Bloomingbank Road, at 2 p.m. on Sundays. The walking tours are an excellent way to share the unique attributes of Riverside with your family, out-of-town guests, friends and others unaware of Riverside's national significance. Special group tours can be arranged upon request.

JULY 31 (NORTH TOUR)

AUGUST 28 (SOUTH TOUR)

SEPTEMBER 18 (NORTH TOUR)

OCTOBER 30 (SOUTH TOUR)

The North Tour covers the area north of the railroad tracks and features the Longcommon (key to Olmsted's plan), an architecturally significant school, a place of worship designed by Jenny, and homes by Silsbee, Wright, Perkins, and Purcell & Elmslie. The South Tour includes Swan Pond Park, Scottswood Common, Wright's Coonley Estate and service buildings, architecture by Jenny, Drummond, Kenny & Vinci, Wittlesey, and a home designed by Olmsted's partner, Calvert Vaux.

Tours are \$10 per person (\$3 discount for Olmsted Society members and seniors 62+). Proceeds benefit the Olmsted Society and go toward landscape preservation, educational programs and architectural restoration in Riverside.

For more information, contact Tony Pecelunas, Olmsted Society Tours and Education Chairman, at 708.442.7675 or email tours@olmstedsociety.org.

Addition to The Olmsted Library Collection

The newest addition to the Olmsted Collection in the Riverside Public Library is a wonderful, relatively short 326-page anthology of Frederick Law Olmsted's key writings, entitled "Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts," edited by Robert Twombly, a teacher of architectural history at the City College of New York. If you have no other books of Olmsted's work this would be a good place to begin studying him. The 25-page introduction and the 16 selections, dating from the 1850s to the 1890s, provide a good perspective from his early interests to his mature thoughts.

The five chapters cover youthful observations, small residential sites, cities (including a report of the aftermath of the great Chicago fire of 1871), landscape gardening, and the history and theory of park design. For Riversidephiles, you will find a copy of the General Plan for Riverside 1869 on p.131. Check it out from the Olmsted Collection and then purchase it for your private collection. It is a handy reference tool and good reading, even for those well-versed in Olmstedian philosophy.

Established by the Olmsted Society in agreement with the Riverside Public Library, The Olmsted Collection is a permanent memorial collection of books and other historical documents relevant to the works, history and reach of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's greatest architect and designer of the Village of Riverside. A complete listing of books and materials included in the collection can be viewed on our website; the collection is open to the public and is located in the southwest corner of the main floor of the Riverside Public Library. To donate a book relevant to this special collection, please contact library@olmstedsociety.org.



The Frederick Law Olmsted
Society of Riverside

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED SOCIETY OF RIVERSIDE

Your support will help promote the progress of Riverside, educate residents about the history and significance of the Village, and support active involvement in the Village's needs. Membership covers a calendar year and entitles you to participate in the Society's functions free-of-charge or at discounted prices, reimbursements in Riverside's co-op tree planting program, and the quarterly newsletters. Please return this form with your check payable to the Frederick Law Olmsted Society, PO Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546. Please contact membership@olmstedsociety.org with questions or see our website at www.olmstedsociety.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Reliable Redbud (\$25-\$49) \$ _____

Hearty Hickory (\$50-\$99) \$ _____

Sugar Maple (\$100-\$249) \$ _____

Mighty Oak (\$250+) \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

New Member Renewal Gift Membership

Name _____

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Please provide your email address so we save paper and trees!

COMMITTEES

Put your talent to work
and your energy to good
use by joining a committee!

- Architecture
- Landscape
- Housewalk
- Membership
- Library
- Public Relations
- Newsletter
- Website
- Tours/Education
- Other Talents _____