

SPRING 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](http://www.olmstedsociety.org)



## Restoration Award Given to Recognize Giuseppe Zappani, Arcade Building

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society's Restoration Award is given to recognize a building owner's outstanding efforts restoring their home or structure within the Village of Riverside. This year, at our annual meeting in January, the Olmsted Society selected Mr. Giuseppe Zappani to receive the award for his restoration of the exterior masonry of one of Riverside's most notable historic structures, The Riverside Improvement Company Building, AKA, The Arcade Building. The award was presented to Mr. Zappani by Vice President Tim Ozga and Architecture Chair Sander Kaplan. Mr. Zappani received a resounding, and very touching, standing ovation from the audience.

Riverside was designed with a vision which was for the parks and gracious living spaces designed by Frederick Law Olmsted to flow around a quaint city center. In 1871, the Arcade Building was designed by Frederick Clark Withers to complete the vision for Riverside. Withers designed a place where residents could have easy access to all modern conveniences.

Over time, the Arcade Building developed a spotted history. Non-sympathetic changes were made to the exterior; a one story addition was added; ground level brick was stuccoed over; the roof line was significantly altered; and asphalt shingle roofing replaced slate. Most recently, the Arcade went from a building in need of some deferred maintenance to one that was truly endangered.

In April 2010, Giuseppe Zappani proposed to not only pull the Arcade building back from the brink, but to restore it to its 19th century glory. In August, Mr. Zappani purchased the building and, soon after, masons began restoring the first-floor façade, stripping it of its non-original stucco sheath and reconstructing it in its original Milwaukee cream and red brick—something unseen for decades. It is for this work, done with such sensitivity for the original materials, that the Olmsted Society presented its Restoration Award to Mr. Zappani.

On behalf of the Olmsted Society, we would like thank Mr. Zappani. We look forward to seeing the Arcade building brought back to its original grandeur.

## NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2011

### THE FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED SOCIETY OF RIVERSIDE

If you have a question or comment about the newsletter, please direct them to [newsletter@olmstedociety.org](mailto:newsletter@olmstedociety.org).

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

## Dear Friends,

Spring brings with it a renewed enthusiasm and excitement of all that can be accomplished. We are scheduled and ready to tackle this year's projects; many landscape workdays and walking tours, new ideas are germinating for the 2012 Housewalk, and children are just beginning their journeys out of doors looking for inspiration for the perfect poem.

All of this is moving forward, but we need everyone's help and involvement for continued FLOS success within our village's landmark landscape.

Our first board of director meeting of the year was an open meeting held at Township Hall, so as to better involves our membership. It was a great meeting and I hope our membership attendance will increase at our next open meeting on September 6th. Reminders are sure to come later.

In addition, it is this Board of Directors intention to begin this year by actively engaging with our membership, utilizing their talents, and tapping into their ideas and enthusiasm. Very soon, our committee chairs will be placing calls out to those of you that have checked an interest on your membership application.

Although Olmsted is the reason the Society was formed, perhaps it is time to think the word Society before Olmsted. We are only a Society because of the people that have joined us.

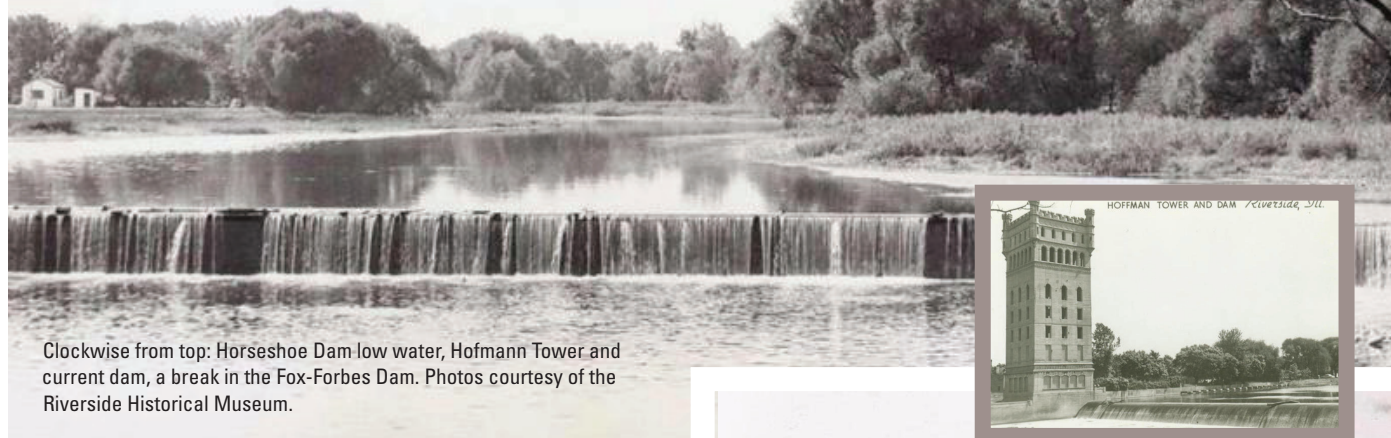
The time is now for us to form a true society. It is time to hear from all members and residents. It is time for all to participate in the preservation of our treasure, Riverside.

Kim Jacobs

*[president@olmstedociety.org](mailto:president@olmstedociety.org)*

## A History of Dams in Riverside

by Olmsted Society board member Tim Ozga



Clockwise from top: Horseshoe Dam low water, Hofmann Tower and current dam, a break in the Fox-Forbes Dam. Photos courtesy of the Riverside Historical Museum.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the US Army Corps of Engineers appear ready to proceed with at least the first phase of an ecological initiative which will impact Riverside's Landscape along the Des Plaines River: the notching of Hofmann Dam, removal of the Fairbank Dam and the re-grading of Swan Pond. As the planning and eventual outcome of these events are of great interest to the Olmsted Society, we present this history of dams in Riverside so that our members can be informed and participate in discussions moving forward.

Humans interacted with the Des Plaines River long before Riverside was founded in 1868. What is today the village of Lyons is home to Portage Creek, a section of travel along the Chicago Portage which connects the Mississippi to the Great Lakes. Used regularly by the Northwest Indians, these portages were later promoted by Marquette and Joliet's 1672 expedition. The portages advanced the settlement of Chicago and established Lyons as a trade town during the 19th Century.

In 1827, the first dam at the Hofmann site was built by the Laughton Brothers. The dam was placed upon a natural waterfall along the Green Bay Trail of the Indian, also known as the Riverside Ford. The waterfall is formed by a limestone shelf which at one time, following the last Ice Age, marked the shores of Lake Chicago. The Laughtons developed this geologic feature to power the first sawmill of Northeastern Illinois thus beginning a period of urban growth in the region. The Laughtons' dam, of simple timber construction, was short lived and the sawmill is presumed to have closed around 1839.

In 1866, the Fox Brothers purchased the site and established the Riverside Milling Company. Their grist-mill



was powered by a newly constructed stone and timber dam. While repaired multiple times due to its use of semi-permanent materials, this dam, in the shape of a horseshoe, would sustain the Riverside Milling Company for the next 31 years.

In 1868, just two years following the construction of the Fox Dam, the Riverside Improvement Company engaged Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to develop a planned community on the land to the north and west of the Des Plaines River. Olmsted encountered the curvilinear Fox Dam during his landscape survey and commented on it in his Preliminary Report:

"It will probably be best to increase the height of the mill-dam so as to enlarge the area of the public water suitable for boating and skating, and so as to completely cover some low, flat ground now exposed in low stages of the river. At the same time, a larger outlet should be provided to prevent floods above the dam from injuring the shore. A public drive and walk should be carried near the edge of the bank in such a way as to avoid destroying the more valuable trees growing upon it, and there should be pretty boat-landings, terraces, balconies overhanging the water, and pavilions at points



desirable for observing regattas, mainly of rustic character, and to be half overgrown with vines.”

Olmsted named the crossing just downriver of the dam the Millbridge Crossing. Unfortunately, it took another 40 years for Olmsted’s vision for recreation along the Des Plaines to be realized.

In 1907, the dam and surrounding properties were purchased by brewery owner George W. Hofmann Jr. Hofmann Beer was featured at Doty’s tavern in Lyons, built on the former site of the Riverside Milling Company. With visions for a grand recreational area, Hofmann began improving the grounds for his new attraction, Niagara Park, named for the outcrop of bedrock on the floor of the Des Plaines at the dam site. Clam bakes, boat rides, family picnicking and outdoor entertainment were advertised.

In 1908, the H.W. Sauber Construction Company built an improved horseshoe dam with a concrete base and wooden struts atop matching the height of the Fox Dam. The dam comprised but a section of a larger superstructure connecting it with the Hofmann Tower and platforms on either side of the Des Plaines. Niagara Park’s beer garden and facilities occupied the scenic triangle section of land surrounded by present day Joliet Road, Barrypoint Road and Ogden Avenue.

The success of Niagara Park diminished as an exploding population began dumping raw sewage into the river. Intended to retain a pool of water for boating, the Hofmann dam was instead retaining raw sewage and sludge. This together with Prohibition forced George Hofmann, Jr. out of business in the 1920s. However, he did not go quietly. Appalled by the raw sewage that contributed to the demise of Niagara Park, he adamantly opposed dumping activities and advocated for the sanitation of the Des Plaines. Attempting to halt the spread of pollution, Hofmann refused local demands to open his flood gates and allow the sludge to pass. As a result, the Sanitary District of Chicago built a by-pass at the Hofmann dam in 1928 along the north bank of the river in order to divert accumulated pollutants.

Between 1930 and 1933 additional improvements implemented above the Hofmann dam resulted in dispersal of approximately 4 feet of sludge from behind the dam. In 1936 the Works Progress Administration (WPA) removed the failed wooden crest atop the concrete dam which effectively lowered the dam’s crest and headwaters. The WPA also constructed a retaining wall on the riverbank of Swan Pond at this time. Remnants of the wall and other WPA projects are still visible around Swan Pond today.

The current dam was constructed by the State of Illinois in 1950 following much public concern over the crest level. Eventually, a concrete dam was erected in a straight line spanning the entire width of the Des Plaines with a crest level at 25.56’ equal to the heights of the prior dams of wood or partial wood construction. This 1950s dam remains intact to date.

Certain concrete walls lining the river, original to Hofmann’s design, were removed or reconstructed in 1950. Additional aspects of Hofmann’s design including the retaining walls east of the Tower on the south bank were removed in 1984. The only original elements of Hofmann’s design remaining today are the wall and boat docks on the south bank of the river west of Hofmann Tower and the Tower itself.

Several years ago, ecological concerns led to the proposed notching of the Hofmann dam, as well as the removal of the smaller Fairbank dam and Armitage dam in River Forest. The intent is to improve ecological and recreational usage of the Des Plaines River by allowing natural fish recolonization, recreational boat passage, improved water quality, and restoration of a natural sediment transport system.

In 2003, supporting the concept behind the project, then-Olmsted Society president Constance Guardi wrote:

“We believe that improving the ecology and the recreational uses of our river is entirely within Frederick Law Olmsted’s vision. We fully support this project to improve the Des Plaines River and our River Park. The removal of an old dam that has outlived its original commercial and boating purposes will result in significant ecosystem improvement and enhanced leisure use. A large complex National Historic Landmark village such as Riverside, with its numerous parks including the River Park, is a living landmark and requires evolutionary changes to maintain and improve its qualities over time. This project is a positive evolutionary change.”

In Riverside, the project has been described as including a re-grading of the Swan Pond flood plain, restoring the oxbow along the western boundary and installation of an outlet at the northeast corner of the park. River bank restoration is also a proposed component. It is our understanding that these projects are to be completed in phases and that plans will be developed first for the removal of Fairbank dam, next for the notching of the Hofmann dam, and finally for restoration of Swan Pond and the areas affected by construction. The Olmsted Society has offered to review and comment upon the plans at each stage once submitted to the Village. We look forward to providing our members with updated information on this project going forward.

## May Roundtable Planned to Discuss Riverbank Restoration

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society, in conjunction with Chicago Wilderness, the Lower Des Plaines Ecosystem Partnership, and the Village of Riverside, is hosting an expert round table discussion entitled “Urban River and Riparian Restoration” in May 2011, at the Riverside Village Hall. Experts from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Kabbes Engineering and other Chicago area wilderness organizations will make presentations about the removal of the South Batavia Dam and Hoffman Dam and the restoration of habitats along riverbank corridors. The presentations will be followed by a lively discussion among experts in the fields of aquatics and habitat restoration. Please check this website in coming weeks or email [landscape@olmstedociety.org](mailto:landscape@olmstedociety.org) for the date and further details.

## 5th Annual “Reflections on Riverside” Poetry Contest Deadline April 30

It’s that time of year again: Spring is springing and the Olmsted Society is accepting entries for our 5th annual “Reflections on Riverside” Student Poetry Contest.

To encourage exploration of Olmsted’s landscape during this amazing time of year, Riverside-area elementary and junior high students are challenged to create poetry that reflects upon, or encourages reflection upon, any of Riverside’s natural areas.

Cash prizes of \$25 are awarded to the winner from each participating elementary school. \$50 is awarded at the junior high school level. All students receive certificates of recognition and will be able to reference their works in a professionally bound book to be maintained in the Olmsted and Local Authors sections of the Riverside Public Library.

Entries must be postmarked by April 30, 2011. Complete Rules and Official Entry Forms are available at [www.olmstedociety.org](http://www.olmstedociety.org)

Judging occurs in the first weeks of May. Members interested in judging or in helping to prepare “Reflections on Riverside: Volume 2” for binding this summer can e-mail [poetrycontest@olmstedociety.org](mailto:poetrycontest@olmstedociety.org) to become part of this epic initiative!



## JOIN US SATURDAY, APRIL 16 FOR “THE GREAT GARLIC MUSTARD PULL”

Grab your family and friends to be a part of a fun community service project to help control the spread of garlic mustard in Riverside.

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. Sapling growth is similarly limited by monocultures of garlic mustard. Garlic mustard and other invasive species poses a serious threat to the biodiversity and overall quality of beloved natural areas

Sponsored by the Olmsted Society, the event begins at Scout Cabin on Fairbanks Road where we will kick off with an orientation and safety talk. No experience is required, but please dress appropriately. Bring work gloves and hand tools if you have them, and wear sturdy clothing (long sleeves, long pants and boots). Snacks and drinks will be provided – but bring your own water bottle. We look forward to seeing you there!

**THE GREAT GARLIC MUSTARD PULL**  
**SATURDAY, APRIL 16**  
**9AM - 11AM**  
**SCOUT CABIN, FAIRBANKS ROAD**



March 26 was the Olmsted Society's first landscape work day of 2011. On a cold and windy day, more than a dozen volunteers helped put mulch down in the Big Ball Park on Longcommon Road.

## Lend a Hand at Our 2011 Landscape Workdays

In 2011, The Frederick Law Olmsted Society is again teaming up with the Village of Riverside to help beautify our green spaces.

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 & snacks will be provided.

### HELP WEED OUR PUBLIC PARKS

<b>APRIL 9</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM LONGCOMMON (BIG BALL PARK)</b>
<b>APRIL 30</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM LONGCOMMON (TURTLE PARK)</b>
<b>MAY 14</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM LONGCOMMON (AT ADDISON RD)</b>
<b>JUNE 25</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM SCOTTSWOOD COMMON</b>
<b>JULY 9</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM SCOTTSWOOD COMMON</b>
<b>JULY 30</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM SCOTTSWOOD COMMON</b>
<b>AUGUST 13</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM TRIANGLE AT SCOTTSWOOD &amp; MILLBRIDGE</b>
<b>SEPTEMBER 10</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)</b>
<b>OCTOBER 1</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)</b>
<b>OCTOBER 22</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 12</b>	<b>9AM – 12PM RIVERBANK (TBA)</b>

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@olmstedsociety.org](mailto:landscape@olmstedsociety.org).

## OLMSTED SOCIETY LECTURE INVITES DISCOURSE ON FUTURE OF RIVERSIDE

On March 23, the Olmsted Society hosted the lecture "Riverside in the Urban Millennium – The Need for the Next Civic Spirit" which was presented by board member Tom Jacobs at Riverside Township Hall. The lecture explored the question of what we ought to be doing today, in the broadest sense, if we are serious about being stewards for Riverside.

As beneficiaries of Frederick Law Olmsted's plan, which is the physical embodiment of his vision of civic spirit, Tom posited that we need to build upon this civic spirit. The lecture attempted to spur public discourse about the "what" and "how" relating to Riverside's future, and to bring together as many residents, civic groups, business owners, and elected officials as possible.

A large and diverse audience attended, including several Village of Riverside trustees, school board members, a school superintendent, and Library board members.

In its conclusion, the lecture outlined four elements as the essence for a 21st century vision for our community: celebrating our unique sense of place by building up cultural and eco tourism, becoming a model for equitable performance excellence for all by advocating for public school reform, increasing governance efficiency by collaborating across political and district lines, and by leveraging our world-class public transportation set-up by investing in no-carbon emissions modes of local transportation.

## Free Zoo Woods and Waubensee Preserve Tours

### **ZOO WOODS TOUR**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30**

**NOON – 2PM**

**CHILDREN'S TOUR 11:15AM – 11:45AM**

### **WAUBANSEE PRESERVE TOUR**

**SATURDAY, MAY 14**

**NOON – 2PM**

**CHILDREN'S TOUR 11:15AM – 11:45AM**

Please Join Olmsted Society member, and Master Steward of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, John Kolar on two informative tours of Zoo Woods and the Waubensee Preserve.

These areas were once owned by the Riverside Improvement Company, and were never fully developed prior to the company's bankruptcy and the subsequent acquisition by the county for incorporation into the Des Plaines River corridor. Both contain remnants of the pre-settlement flora and fauna of the region and, thanks to the hard work of the Riverside Brookfield High School Ecology Club, the student body in general on Day of Service days, interns from the Morton Arboretum, the Brookfield Zoo, the Natural Gardens and the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, are well on their way to full restoration of the richness and diversity of the northern Illinois landscape. Much of the work and many of the tools and resources used came from the Olmsted Society's generous support of the Ecology Club.

The first tour will take us through the re-emerging prairie and savanna of Zoo Woods and into the recently reclaimed woodlands. Here we will see many of the native spring wildflowers indigenous to Riverside. These areas were cleared by Audubon interns, who were funded by the Olmsted Society, this last fall and winter. We will be among the first visitors seeing these plants in almost a century.

The second tour will include the prairie and savanna of the Waubensee Preserve. Starting from a buckthorn desert eight years ago, volunteers and interns have produced almost ten acres of extremely high quality prairie and savanna.

Tours are free of charge; RSVPs are not necessary, but welcome. Walk-ins are also welcome. The Zoo Woods entrance is located just south of 31st Street and just east of 1st Avenue. The parking lot is "U" shaped with two entrances off of 1st Avenue. Park at the northern end of the parking lot. Waubensee Woods is located two blocks south of Forest Avenue and 1/2 block west of First Avenue. Please enter Waubensee Street from First Avenue and park on the south side of the street.

For questions about the tours or to be added to the Landscape Committee e-list, please contact Landscape Committee co-chairs, Holly Machina or Cindy Kellogg at [landscape@olmstedsociety.org](mailto:landscape@olmstedsociety.org) or 447-0226.

## RIVERSIDE WALKING TOURS 2011 SCHEDULE

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.

**MAY 29 (NORTH TOUR)**

**JUNE 26 (SOUTH TOUR)**

**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](mailto:tours@olmstedsociety.org).





The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside

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### 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@olmstedociety.org](mailto:membership@olmstedociety.org) with questions or see our website at [www.olmstedociety.org](http://www.olmstedociety.org).

#### MEMBERSHIP

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable Redbud (\$25-\$49) | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearty Hickory (\$50-\$99)  | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Maple (\$100-\$249)   | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mighty Oak (\$250+)         | \$ _____ |
| Total Enclosed                                       | \$ _____ |

- ☐ New Member    ☐ Renewal    ☐ Gift Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**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 \_\_\_\_\_