NAOP’S Work to Preserve U.S. Capitol Grounds Gains Momentum

As construction activity continues on the massive U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, NAOP brought together local and national stakeholders to talk about the future of the Capitol’s historic landscape and to advocate for its preservation and restoration. “A Design for Democracy: An Olmsted Vision for the U.S. Capitol Grounds, 1874 - 2005,” held June 14th at the National Building Museum, included presentations by renowned Olmsted scholars and longtime friends of NAOP, Charles Beveridge and Arleyn Levee, as well as insightful remarks by Richard Longstreth, professor, George Washington University; David Maloney, deputy state historic preservation officer, Historic Preservation Office (Washington, D.C.); Nellie Longsworth, government affairs consultant and former president of Preservation Action; and Charles Birnbaum, NAOP board member and director of the Historic Landscape Initiative of the National Park Service.

Participants included representatives from federal and capital region agencies including the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, scholars, national organizations such as the American Society of Landscape Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and citizen advocates. Representatives of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) and its consultants were also involved. The AOC is currently preparing a master plan for the entire U.S. Capitol Complex, which consists of the Capitol itself, House and Senate Office Buildings, the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress.

From the beginning of the master planning process, NAOP has been the leading voice for the preservation of the historic Capitol landscape. Now it is joined in its advocacy by other stakeholder groups.

This fall, NAOP’s board of directors and its Leadership Council met in Washington, D.C. Attendees had an opportunity to tour the Capitol Grounds and met in a joint session with the Office of the Architect of the Capitol to discuss the master plan process and its implications for the historic landscape. For more information, visit http://www.olmsted.org.

Image courtesy of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

NAOP Receives Preservation Mass Award

The Frederick Law Olmsted Award, given annually by Preservation MASS to recognize outstanding leadership in landscape preservation, was awarded to the National Association for Olmsted Parks for its 25 years of service to the legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted. Following a slide presentation about the Olmsted design legacy, NAOP co-chair Lucy Lawliss accepted the award at a dinner held on June 30th at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston. Former NAOP Chairs Betsy Shure Gross, Arleyn Levee, Jerry Baum, Faye Harwell and Caroline Loughlin; Executive Director Catherine Nagel; as well as other trustees and friends from New England were among the 300 guests who enjoyed the evening. Boston holds an important place in NAOP’s history, as it was the site of NAOP’s official establishment in 1981 — the same year that the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks was founded. The Boston Red Sox, The City of Boston and the Nantucket Historic District Commission were also honored for their preservation efforts. For more information on Preservation MASS, visit http://www.preservationmass.org/.

A reception for NAOP members preceded the event at the Copley Plaza Hotel, and gave trustees and staff the opportunity to meet with representatives from Emerald Necklace Conservancy, the Library of American Landscape History, Brookline Greenspace Alliance, Friends of the Muddy River and many others.
Our recent request to members for news from around the country generated an overwhelming response. We have received reports from coast to coast about the successful work that citizens and professionals are spearheading to restore their local parks. As you will read on pages 5 and 6, the process of bringing these centers of our communities back to life starts with advocacy, both passive and active. Kathleen P. Galop shares information about the Olmsted legacy through speaking engagements to the general public including garden clubs and continuing education programs; The Center for Law in the Public Interest has used an open space report by the Olmsted firm in Los Angeles — never realized — to adopt and implement a vision for a network of parks, playgrounds and transportation; and Friends of Piedmont Way in Berkeley, CA, has formed a coalition to restore an Olmsted-designed parkway. As a result, it has been selected as a pilot project by the National Park Service’s Historic American Landscape Survey.

This fall, the NAOP board and Leadership Council met in Washington, D.C, for continued discussions with key stakeholders and staff of the Architect of the Capitol about the future of the Olmsted-designed landscape surrounding the U.S. Capitol Grounds. The gathering was another step in a campaign that has included several public forums to educate the public about the significance of this design legacy and to build a coalition around its preservation of the west side while a master planning process is underway (cover page). We are pleased in this issue of Reprints to include important documents relating to the Capitol Grounds project, which will be included in Volume VII of the Olmsted Papers, “Parks, Politics, and Patronage, 1874-1882,” edited by Charles Beveridge and to be published next spring.

Finally, we have been phasing in a new “look” for our organization. It includes the redesign of the logo and all of our communication material, the redesign of the Web site (http://www.olmsted.org), and, as you may have noticed in the spring issue of Field Notes, an updated layout and graphic treatment for our newsletter. We appreciate the effort of the committee that oversaw this project: Jerry Arbes, Charles Birnbaum, Meg Cheever, Anne Knight, Lucy Lawliss and Alida Silverman.

—Catherine Nagel

Connecticut, Frederick Law Olmsted’s native state, is brimming with activities. On May 12, 2005, the Institute of Living commemorated the Hartford native with the dedication of a new and first known sculpture of FLO created by Italian Bruno Lucchesi for the grounds of its Hartford campus. FLO and Calvert Vaux were hired in 1861 to create a park-like setting for what was then the Hartford Retreat. Many of their original design elements have been preserved here. The Hartford Arts Council spearheaded this project and funding.

July 1st saw the signing into law of S.B.794 creating April 26th forever as Frederick Law Olmsted Day in this state. Thanks to the enthusiasm and dedicated work of the bill’s author, State Senator Bill Finch, the bill passed the Senate on April 6th, 2005, and the CT House of Representatives on June 3rd. Senator Finch said, “Perhaps no Connecticut native has impacted the United States in such a pervasive and dramatic fashion…”

Landscape Architect Norma Williams has spearheaded the organization of Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance (COHA) dedicated to preserving the Olmsted legacy throughout the state including Bridgeport’s Beardsley and Seaside parks, New Britain’s Walnut Hill Park, Waterbury’s Fulton Park and Hartford’s Pope Park, the latter currently undergoing revival through the efforts of a “friends” group.

On June 16, 2005, ground was broken for the first phase of the Pope Park Master Plan, which outlines $13.5 million in improvements to Pope Park, a century-old Olmsted park in Hartford, CT. The $400,000 first phase consists of a new entryway at the northeast corner of the park and pedestrian path improvements that will include handicapped access to the park’s pathway system. For more information on Pope Park, visit http://www.popepark.org.

Through advocacy, research and public education, COHA’s plans include developing a database, website and heritage trail map of both public and private Olmsted designed projects. “Save the week of April 26, 2006,” urges Jean McKee, board member of NAOP and COHA and an Olmsted relative, “Everyone come to Connecticut to join in the planned celebration.”
Advocacy/Education

NAOP board members Charles Birnbaum and Lucy Lawliss examine three different cities and their different approaches to recommendations made by Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm in the summer issue of Common Ground, the award-winning magazine from the National Park Service. Charles and Lucy interview three executive directors: Susan Rademacher of the Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy; Deborah Trimble, formerly with Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the NAOP board; and Robert García of the Los Angeles Center for Law in the Public Interest, who takes inspiration from an Olmsted plan that never was implemented, but might be one day.

This article is especially important to the citizens of Los Angeles as the Center for Law in the Public Interest notes, “This year marks the 75th anniversary of the publication of the 1930 Olmsted Report ‘Parks, Playground and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region.’ The Olmsted Report recommended 71,000 acres of parkland, and another 92,000 acres in outlying areas, with 440 miles of connecting parks and parkways, including a parkway along the Los Angeles River. The Report proposed the joint use of parks, playgrounds, and schools to make optimal use of land and public resources, and called for the doubling of public beach frontage. The Olmsted Report inspired the vision. The people of Los Angeles must carry it out.” To read the article or learn more about the Olmsted plan for Los Angeles, visit http://commonground.cr.nps.gov/97_Current_Issue.cfm.

Kathleen P. Galop, principal of Preservation Possibilities and a founding NAOP trustee, in Summit, NJ, reports that she has been giving talks about the Olmsted Legacy in NJ through the Horizon Speakers Bureau for the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. She has given ten presentations during the past two years, and the interest in Olmsted continues to grow. For more information, you may contact her at kpgalop@worldnet.att.net. Her talks focus on the Olmsted legacy evident in the Essex County and Union County park systems.

Former Central Park administrator, founding president of the Central Park Conservancy, and NAOP member and former trustee Elizabeth Barlow Rogers announces the formation of the Foundation for Landscape Studies to support activities that will further landscape history scholarship and promote historically informed landscape preservation and design. Mission-related goals include the publication of Site/Lines, a literary forum for essays and reviews of books, exhibitions and designs dealing with landscape themes and projects; the sponsorship of lecture series; and collaboration with various institutions and organizations seeking to broaden landscape studies and historic landscape preservation as a field of research, inquiry and action. For more information, send an e-mail to RogersEB@aol.com.

Friends of Piedmont Way is working to save an historic Olmsted California roadway. In 1864, Frederick Law Olmsted was still undecided about his future even though he and Calvert Vaux had recently completed New York City’s Central Park. Olmsted spent a year in California running a gold mine that failed so he thought he would start a morning newspaper in San Francisco. Vaux, certain of his own commitment, attempted to convince Olmsted that he too ought to devote his life to the fledgling field of the Arts; to “sylvan art,” not gardening or architecture, but landscape architecture. In 1865, the College of California called upon Olmsted to conceive a plan for its new campus and surrounding neighborhood in Berkeley. The resulting Piedmont Way is the seminal residential parkway design of Frederick Law Olmsted, where he explored ideas that became the hallmark of his residential work over the next three decades, as he made landscape architecture his life’s work.

Despite its designation as a California Historic Landmark in 1989, Piedmont Way has steadily declined over the years. In 2003, community members formed Friends of Piedmont Way to rehabilitate the parkway by halting further despoliation and increasing public awareness through an innovative partnership between the City and the University. Olmsted scholar Cathy Garrett has undertaken a historic resources study of the parkway. On August 10th, HALSNCC (Historic American Landscape Survey Northern California Chapter) chose to survey Piedmont Way as one of its first three pilot projects. More information is available at http://www.piedmontway.org/.

The Emerald Necklace Conservancy launched three initiatives in May to honor the memory and legacy of Boston’s former parks commissioner, Justine Mee Liff, who held the position from 1996 until her death in 2002. Its second annual Party in the Park luncheon raised money for the Justine Mee Liff Fund for the Emerald Necklace, netting close to $100,000. In addition, two long-time civic leaders, Eugenie Beal and Norman Leventhal, were honored with the first Justine Mee Liff Spirit Award, which celebrates the vision, wisdom, humanity and joy that the parks commissioner brought to her work. The Emerald Necklace Conservancy and Boston Parks Department also planted 16 bushes of the newly-hybridized Justine Mee Liff rose in the historic Rose Garden in Boston’s Back Bay Fens. For more information on the Conservancy, visit http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/index.cgi.

Recognition

Lillie Petit Gallagher, an NAOP member, was awarded the annual State Preservation Award in June from the Louisiana Preservation Alliance (LPA) for her preservation work with the City Park Golf Course in Baton Rouge. LPA is the National Trust liaison preservation organization in Louisiana.

In July, she was also honored with the annual 2005 Preservation Award given by the Foundation for Historical Louisiana, another Louisiana preservation group based in Baton Rouge. Once again, she received recognition for her work in providing the leadership
for the preservation of the City Park Golf Course and the City Park.

Lillie reports that the City Park and the City Park Golf Course suffered only wind damage from Hurricane Katrina. BREC (Baton Rouge Recreation) crews were cleaning up the debris the day after the storm. The golf course is reopened and in use. A week prior to Katrina, the BREC Commission contracted with the firm of Carol R. Johnson and Associates (CRJA) (Boston, MA) to be the design firm that will oversee and manage the restoration of City Park Golf Course and City Park. City Park Golf Course was recently cited in an essay, “In Defense of Open Space,” by NAOP trustee Charles Birnbaum in the September/October 2005 issue of Preservation magazine as an example of how “focal points” and pavement are ruining America’s parks. To view the article, visit http://www.nationaltrust.org/magazine/current/ feature3.htm. For more information on the City Park Golf Course, contact Cityparkfriends@aol.com.

NAOP member Jon A. Peterson’s book, “The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917” was the recipient of the 2005 Spiro Kostof Award from the Society of Architectural Historians. His book gives major attention to both Frederick Law Olmsted Senior and Junior, and to the role of landscape values and the park movement in the birth of American city planning. The Award is given to a work in any discipline related to architectural history and urbanism that has made the greatest contribution to our understanding of historical development and change.

**Restoration**

Atlanta’s Olmsted Linear Park Alliance (OLPA) is conducting a $4.2 million campaign to rehabilitate the largest of the park’s six segments. A three-acre demonstration project in the 22-acre Deepdene segment is underway to spotlight its picturesque beauty. OLPA has previously raised approximately $5 million to rehabilitate the five pastoral segments, including Springdale, which should be completed in November 2005. For more information, visit http://www.atlantaolmstedpark.org/.

The restoration of the Prospect Park watershed continues. The second phase of the Binnenwater/Lullwater project is reconstructing the Park’s watercourse and its surrounding landscape. Originally designed as an open-air reflective pool just downstream from the Ravine, the Binnenwater had become a slow-moving swampy channel overgrown with dense thickets. This project will continue the natural and cultural restoration of the Park to its historic intent. Visit http://www.prospectpark.org/ for more information.

In 1903, John Charles Olmsted recommended that Seattle preserve land for a park at the south end of Lake Union. Almost a century later, Seattle Parks and Recreation acquired property in the area, and with the help of a recent $10 million donation from Vulcan Inc., has plans to develop the site into a 12-acre park known as South Lake Union Park. In addition, on September 24th, the local community will celebrate the re-opening of Cal Anderson Park, which includes the Lincoln Reservoir and Bobby Morris Playfield. Lidding of the reservoir at this Olmsted-designed Seattle Historic Landmark has created four new acres of park space. The voter-approved Pro Parks Levy funded park improvements including a prominent new water feature, and landscaping and furnishings consistent with Olmsted design. Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks have been involved in planning the park and celebration. For more information on Seattle parks, visit http://www.seattle.gov/parks.

**UPDATE ON PIEDMONT PARK ADVOCACY**

A parking deck inside Atlanta’s Piedmont Park? NAOP sent a letter in May to the chairman of the Mayor’s Task Force on Piedmont Park, strongly recommending the reconsideration of the 800-space parking deck proposed for inside the Park. The deck is part of the proposed master plan for the North Woods section of Piedmont Park adopted by the Piedmont Park Conservancy in November 2004. This plan was the product of what was called a comprehensive planning process that included a variety of stakeholders including surrounding neighborhoods and activity interest groups. A grassroots organization of citizens called the Friends of Piedmont Park opposed the proposal of a parking deck inside the Park from its inception. Public opinion has been so intensely divided that the mayor of Atlanta created a task force to consider the issue in order “to unite the community.” The task force report is being awaited. The Atlanta City Council makes the final decision after review and comment by the City’s Urban Design Commission.

As stated in the letter (viewable at http://www.olmsted.org), NAOP’s concern centers on the impact of such a deck on the historic landscape and recommends the 1995 master plan for Piedmont Park as the basis for a more effective solution. The 1995 master plan uses the Olmsted Brothers 1912 master plan as its framework and has been the guide for the Park’s ongoing rehabilitation. An independent review panel was convened by NAOP co-chair Lucy Lawliss to meet with the executive director of the Piedmont Park Conservancy and the plan consultant. Members of the panel were Georgia-based cultural landscape professionals: Professors Marianne Cramer and Ian Firth from the University of Georgia’s College of Environment and Design, and Tracy Stakely, Southeast Region, National Park Service. The panel’s report to NAOP provided a significant component of the basis for NAOP’s letter. NAOP’s Advocacy Committee views use of such a panel as a model. More information is available at http://www.piedmontpark.org and http://www.friendsofpiedmontpark.org.
NAOP GOES TO BUFFALO, NEW YORK FOR AN Urban Parks Conference

With a rainbow arcing across the eastern sky and a crimson sunset lighting up the waters of Niagara Falls, there was a strong sense that FLO himself looked down on the sublime evening of May 19th with approval. This gathering, made possible by NAOP, City Parks Alliance (CPA) and Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy (BOPC), with support from the National Park Service and Delaware North, brought together park professionals, advocates and partners for a three-day conference, “It Takes A Partnership: Urban Parks In The New Century,” from May 19-22. The sessions highlighted the shared challenges and opportunities to protect and preserve our country’s urban park legacy. With our CPA friends, we explored places and projects underway to enhance the urban park system so that it serves current and future constituents.

The conference beginning was no less spectacular than its end. On a perfect, early-summer evening, NAOP joined with conference participants and friends to celebrate NAOP’s 25th anniversary and its founding in Buffalo, NY. In the neoclassical ambiance of the Erie County Historical Society with a magnificent terrace overlooking Olmsted’s masterpiece, Delaware Park, celebrants shared stories and introduced founding members who contributed to NAOP’s start. Welcomed by Debbie Trimble (formerly with NAOP and BOPC) and founding NAOP board member and Buffalo native Joan Bozer, participants then heard meaningful remarks by Olmsted historian and NAOP founding member, Charles McLaughlin, who died in September. This was followed by a call for all current and former NAOP board chairs to come to the podium, a group that included Tupper Thomas, Betsy Shure Gross, Charles Beveridge, Faye Harwell, Caroline Loughlin, Charles Birnbaum, Jerry Baum, Lucy Lawliss and NAOP’s rising co-chair, Susan West Montgomery, a former director of BOPC. The celebration culminated with NAOP awarding the first “Caroline Loughlin Award” to Caroline Loughlin for outstanding service to the organization and in recognition of her hands-on support over the years for ORGO — the online research guide to the Olmsted records.

NAOP board members were distinguished presenters throughout the Conference; beginning Friday morning with Ethan Carr, Lauren Meier and Charles Birnbaum — national leaders in academic, private and public practice — conducting a dynamic discussion on the importance and process for attaining national designation as a historic park. Other conference highlights included a day in the field with the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP). Charlie Pepper, deputy director of the OCLP, with Kim Fulton (BOPC) discussed and demonstrated appropriate preservation maintenance techniques to preserve the character of historic parks. Frank Kowsky (NAOP) with Charles Beveridge and Debbie Trimble organized a series of tours that included the Buffalo Olmsted park system as well as our final evening at Niagara.

In Memoriam

As we go to press, NAOP is very sad to learn the news that founding board member, founding editor of the Olmsted Papers, author and scholar, Dr. Charles Capen McLaughlin, died September 2nd after a heart attack. He will be missed. The spring issue of Field Notes will have a remembrance of Dr. McLaughlin’s “Olmsted-inspired” life and career by Dr. Charles Beveridge, current editor of the Olmsted papers, colleague and friend.
INTERPRETING OLMSTED

The Cultural Landscape Foundation Launches Olmsted Education Initiative

Combining history, artistry, technology and innovative educational principles, the Cultural Landscapes as Classrooms (CLC) series created by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) creates a dialogue among students, teachers, historic figures and places, and the professional disciplines of landscape architecture and historic preservation. These interactive modules are designed to let the user travel through some of America’s most significant landscapes.

The CLC series draws on the multiple intelligence theories of learning and is developed primarily for middle school students; nevertheless, the modules offer a rich educational opportunity for anyone interested in this country’s landscape heritage, regardless of age or occupation. The visitor charts his own course, availing himself of the Visitor Guide to pursue specific topics and themes inherent in the landscape. The various ways to navigate the virtual landscape tour reflect differences in individual responses and interests. Users can explore a specific visual feature by zooming into the map of the landscape. Each category in the main menu guides the visitor’s exploration through an array of material at each location on the map. The visitor may choose to investigate the landscape by following the menu to review a narrative history of the place, to choose among different types of views and vistas, or to opt for fun special features. The archive provides historic and contemporary reference material for further research on any related topic.

TCLF is pleased to announce the completion of the second CLC module in the series, “City Shaping: The Olmsteds & Louisville.” Best known for his work on Central Park, the U.S. Capitol Grounds, and the Biltmore estate, Frederick Law Olmsted was the acknowledged master in his field when he was commissioned to design a park system for Louisville, KY. In Louisville, Olmsted Sr. and his sons created an interconnecting system of parks, parkways and boulevards. Between 1891-1928, as the Olmsted designs were realized, the design firm literally shaped the city for future generations. The Louisville work also included adjacent residential subdivisions, estates, and institutional grounds. This arrangement was the ultimate and last park system of Olmsted’s career. NAOP trustee Charles Birnbaum founded TCLF in 1998. Visit http://www.tclf.org for more information.

News From Fairsted

In preparation for a major construction project to improve its fire suppression, museum climate and site drainage systems, the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site is now closed to visitors and will remain so until the fall of 2007. Gradually all staff (except for 2-3) are moving on an interim basis to other nearby National Park Service sites. The site’s interpretive and educational staff will continue to offer some off-site programs during the construction period. The archives staff moved to a temporary off-site facility in the Boston area; they are now open for limited archival reference services. Check their website for contact information and updates at http://www.nps.gov/frla.

The Olmsted site is working closely with local educators to develop Good Neighbors: Landscape Design and Community Building, a new interdisciplinary program being designed for 3rd graders in Boston and Brookline, MA. The program will be launched following construction in the newly rehabilitated barn/model shop at Fairsted. It focuses on the art, science, history and civics of landscape design and is targeted to underserved students in communities adjacent to Olmsted parks. Partners include the Boston and Brookline public schools, NAOP and the Massachusetts College of Art.

- Lee Farrow Cook, Site Manager, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

ERRATA

An article about Essex County’s Historic Documents Library in the spring 2005 issue of “Field Notes” omitted some important information:

The Library’s archive is not simply a static collection of documents. Use by researchers and students is encouraged by the County, whose Executive, Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., notes: “Our County parks have been the neighborhood backyards and vacation spots for our children and families for generations. As recreation and leisure activities have changed, so have our parks to accommodate them. We are fortunate that the former Parks Commission maintained such comprehensive records. Our archives give us an open window into our past and enable us to see the role and influence our park system has had in our history. Being able to understand the history of our park system gives us even more reason to appreciate its beauty.”

The collection is overseen by its dedicated archivists Joseph Lanzara and Kathy Kauhl. For more information, contact Kathy Kauhl at 973-268-3500, ext. 240.
**NAOP LEADERSHIP NEWS**

At the May 19 board of trustees meeting in Buffalo, NAOP elected the following slate of officers for the 2005-2006 year: Lucy Lawliss, Susan West Montgomery: co-chairs; Faye Harwell, secretary; and John Karel, treasurer. Susan replaces Jerry Baum, who has retired after four years as co-chair but will continue on the board as chair of development. Committee chairs for the new fiscal year also include Lauren Meier, Research; Alida Silverman, Outreach/Education; and Caroline Loughlin, Administration.

Six people were elected to a new term on the board:
- Royal Alley-Barnes (Seattle, WA), manager of the North Region Parks Resources and Athletic Fields for the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.
- John Karel (St. Louis, MO), director of Tower Grove Park.
- Nicholas Quennell (New York, NY), architect and landscape architect and a partner in Quennell Rothschild & Partners, LLP.
- Christopher FitzHenry Robling (Chicago, IL), principal of Jayne Thompson & Associates, which specializes in public relations and lobbying.
- Susan West Montgomery (Takoma Park, MD), former president of Preservation Action, a historic preservation advocacy organization.
- Kevin Moore (Newark, NJ), project director for Weequahic Park Association, was elected to a second term.

**NAOP/CPA HIRE NEW STAFF MEMBERS**

April Croft has been hired as a program manager for the NAOP and City Parks Alliance partnership. During her career, she has worked as a program assistant for US/ICOMOS supporting their mission of conservation of the world’s cultural and architectural treasures and as a contractual project manager at the National Park Service’s Regional Partnerships Office managing projects and activities in the fields of heritage/cultural preservation, environmental conservation and sustainable tourism. As a communications coordinator at the New York Convention & Visitors Bureau, she marketed and promoted New York City as a tourism destination, including its green spaces. She earned degrees in international affairs from The American University of Paris (B.A., 1987) and the American University in Washington, D.C. (M.A., 1992).

Brett Sheppard has recently joined our staff as the office manager/membership coordinator. Brett will work with us to improve our administrative system and broaden our outreach to current and prospective members. He has moved to Washington, D.C. from Asheville, NC, where he helped found a non-profit to preserve and protect green space. In 2004, Brett earned a dual master’s in natural resources/sustainable development and international affairs, the first from The University for Peace in Costa Rica and the second from American University’s School of International Service. He received his undergraduate degree from Texas A&M University in civil engineering.

**PUBLICATIONS**

The National Park Service’s publication, “A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports,” is again available from the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). As a supplement to the Guide, there are now 16 Landscape Lines — the 14 original Lines plus 15, “Historic Trails,” and 16, “Historic Roads.” These two new publications include well-researched historical contexts, thoughtful interpretations of cultural landscape terminology, and applied approaches to documentation, analysis and treatment. These can be ordered online at http://www.gpo.gov/ (on the web page click under GPO Access, then U.S. Government Online Bookstore) or by phone: 202-512-1800, toll free at 866-512-1800, or via fax at 202-512-2104. Reference the following:

- Stock Number 024-005-01220-6 – “A Guide to Cultural Landscape” (with 16 Lines). Price $64.00.

In partnership with NAOP, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation of the National Service is producing Clippings, a new series. This series, published periodically, addresses cultural landscape preservation maintenance and stewardship topics. Introduced at our Buffalo conference, the first issue focuses on tree planting in historic landscapes. Clippings is viewable at http://www.nps.gov/oclp/Clippings.pdf. Comments on the content of the publication may be e-mailed to FRLA_olmsted_center@nps.gov.

**HOLIDAY BOOKS**

The holidays are right around the corner! Please keep NAOP in mind when preparing your gift list. By ordering through us you typically receive a discounted rate from the list price while helping us support our mission. See the enclosed order form for more details.
The board of trustees of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) announced the selection of eight individuals to receive honorary membership in May. Dr. Charles Beveridge, a NAOP Leadership Council member, was one of the eight honorees. Honorary membership is one of the highest honors ASLA may bestow upon non-landscape architects. Since its founding in 1899, the Society has conferred honorary membership upon only 90 individuals. The 2005 honorees received their certificates on May 13 at a dinner in their honor in Washington, D.C.

Less than two weeks later, the ASLA board selected the recipients of the 2005 Medals and Landscape Architecture Firm Award, to be presented on October 10, 2005, during the ASLA Annual Meeting in Fort Lauderdale, FL. For the first time since 1990, the ASLA will recognize two exceptional individuals with Olmsted Medals: Charles E. Beveridge, Ph.D., Hon. ASLA and The Hon. Wangari Maathai, Ph.D., Honorary ASLA, Kenya’s assistant secretary of environment, wildlife and natural resources, and the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. The Olmsted Medal is awarded to individuals, organizations, agencies or programs outside the profession of landscape architecture for environmental leadership, vision and stewardship.

Charles is the leading authority on the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of the landscape architecture profession. In his work as an author and scholar, he has devoted his 40-year career to the study of Olmsted’s philosophies and achievements in landscape architecture. Since 1986, Charles has been the series editor of the Olmsted Papers Project at American University, a 12-volume series published by Johns Hopkins Press. He has presented more than 100 lectures on Olmsted and his firm to public, professional and academic audiences. In addition, Charles has served as advisor to the U.S. Postal Service in 1999 on the Olmsted stamp, as historical advisor to National Geographic’s March 2005 feature article on Olmsted, and as a consultant on HGTV’s Olmsted program in 2001.

Founded in 1899, ASLA is the national professional association for landscape architects representing more than 15,000 members. ASLA promotes the landscape architecture profession and advances the practice through advocacy, education, communication and fellowship. Learn more about ASLA at http://www.asla.org.
To Whitelaw Reid, 209 W 46th St.
26th Nov. 1874

Dear Mr Reid;

The length of this letter requires an apology, first from me to you; then if you print it, from those you invite to read it.

Consider, then, the importance the Capitol has as betokening and as tending to form and train the tastes of the nation, and the fact that the wisdom of destroying the old ground, was, before it was done, much questioned and excited a good deal of feeling. Besides these two considerations, I have had in mind this also, that few people seem even to imagine that designing grounds is a natural process of adapting means to ends—to a series of well considered and carefully ordinated ends—as much so as the planning of a ship or a factory or a newspaper, and that the same methods of design are not applicable to all kinds of grounds in all sorts of places. I have therefore given some slight suggestion of the true process toward the close of the letter.

If it is too long have what you want taken out of it & made your own.

I am just starting for Washington.

Yours Sincerely,
Fred. Law Olmsted

—Ethan Carr
From the New-York Daily Tribune,  
December 5, 1874

THE NATIONAL CAPITOL  
Mr. Fred. Law Olmsted on the  
Improvements in Progress  
Characteristics of the Old Capitol Grounds—  
Details of the Improvements—  
Due Allowance to be Made for  
Architectural Effect—Progress of the Changes

New York, Nov. 27, 1874  
To the Editor of the Tribune

Sir:

I cheerfully comply with your request for the means of laying before your readers a more complete and detailed explanation than that supplied by the report of the Secretary of the Interior, of the operations in progress on the ground east of the National Capitol. The need for it I presume to lie in the fact that, while much destruction is evident and a large force is at work, nothing is approaching completion, no improvement is found, and no intelligible plan can yet be recognized.

The place was originally a flat table, slightly inclined toward the west, where a straight street, crossing it from north to south, formed the only approach for carriages to the Capitol from any direction. East of this street there was a rectangular grass-plat bounded by straight walks; other trees appear to have been planted, at an early day, in imperfect rows alongside these walks, most of which died young. At various periods since then trees have been planted in and adjoining the first rows, some to take the place of those dying; some because of unwise haste to secure shade; some because they were of species newly arrived in the country and fashionable, and some with no intelligent purpose. A great number of rank upstarts were allowed to crowd and distort and starve the more permanent and valuable sort. The original thin soil had probably been worn out and washed away under colonial tobacco culture, and left little but a sterile and exceedingly stiff brick clay, over which street-sweepings from the old dirt roads of Washington, with some Tiber mud, have from time to time been laid. A careful forester’s survey made this Summer indicated that the trees must have been generally taken from the woods, poorly lifted and poorly planted, and that their roots had rarely attempted to penetrate the clay but had sought food by running far and wide close to the surface. Three-fourths of them were in unsound condition, many far gone with decay, and the foliage of nearly all began to wilt after lacking rain but two weeks. With two exceptions the largest and best stood near the east boundary, their roots breaking out on a bank eight feet in height formed by the recent grading down of First-st., which bank barred both approach and vision toward the Capitol. Shrubs and flower beds were dropped about here and there, many of the shrubs being of late sick or dead, and the flower beds overgrown by grass and weeds.

Olmsted’s 1874 Capitol Grounds plan, adopted by Congress in 1875. (Courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol)
THE OLD GROUNDS NOT IN HARMONY WITH THE CAPITOL

Looked at by itself, without reference to the Capitol; looked at in comparison with what is now to be seen in the early building stage of a designed improvement, or with any of the desert tracts which lie at short distances in all directions about it, it might be regarded as a beautiful place, and it tolerably served the purpose of a local playground for residents of the neighborhood. Its devastation could not therefore be projected without some pathetic feeling, nor without giving occasion for honest, earnest, and rational remonstrance. The beauty of the trees and old associations connected with them have been feelingly described, and it has been urged that once removed they could not be replaced in fifty years.

On the other hand, it was to be said that the Capitol could not be replaced at a cost of less than $20,000,000, of which sum but a small part represents the body of conveniences provided for the transaction of the business of Congress, the remainder and larger part standing for the means of a suitably dignified, beautiful, and imposing effect in the vestment of these conveniences; that the ground, as it was, contributed not in the slightest degree to the conveniences for business of the Capitol, while, because of the inclination of the surface toward the building and the position of the trees, not half its due architectural effect could be enjoyed; that scarcely one of the larger trees had 50 or even 20 years’ life in it; and the Capitol, being a permanent and monumental structure, the ground about it should be managed with reference not merely to present but to future effect.

THE OLD PARK SWEPT AWAY

This view has prevailed, and the old park has accordingly been swept away. Congress, at the close of its last session, having provided means for the purpose, the work began under contract on the 17th of August, since when there has been not yet quite time, with all the men who could be employed economically, to accomplish the grading, the amount of earth to be removed being about 150,000 cubic yards. Other operations seen in progress on ground where the grading is complete are the tillage and tempering of the newly exposed subsoil to the depth of two feet; the return to it of the old soil with additions to the depth of a foot; the taking up of the old sewer, drainage, water, and gas pipes, and the laying
of new and much better and more elaborate systems of each; the transplanting of some of the more thrifty of the old trees which have been preserved, to new places; and some laying of curb, gutters, gratings, and road and walk foundations, with a little pavement. These operations have seemed detached and purposeless because divided by those of grading, but the missing links are expected to be for the most part inserted before Winter stops work, when the plan will be more intelligible.

**MAIN PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN**

The general design is very simple, and will be easily understood. It has two purposes: First, to provide convenient approaches to and standing room about the Capitol; second, to allow its imposing dimensions and the beauty of its architecture to have due effect, and so far as possible, to aid and heighten that effect.

The idea of a park, flower-garden and play-ground is discarded, and the whole meager area of the little lot in which the Capitol is placed is to be treated as a courtyard and dependency of the building. A paved carriage-court is to extend all along its east front, giving access to each door. Walks and carriage-ways are to be formed between it and each of the fifteen streets leading from all sides toward the Capitol; the course of these approaches, with one exception, will be curved, but each curve is to be governed by reference to a purpose of convenience. Where two purposes of convenience come in competition, that one is to be allowed the advantage by yielding to which greater breadth for turf surface will be gained; and by humoring this secondary purpose as much as possible, without an essential sacrifice of convenience on the whole, two elliptical spaces are to be obtained, measuring each from 400 to 600 feet across, in which a field of slightly undulating surface may be formed, unbroken, except by a few groups of trees.

**SUBORDINATION OF THE GROUNDS TO THE BUILDING**

As the trees to be planted grow, the larger part of the road and walk space will be shaded, but the object of happy compositions of the foliage with the Capitol, and of pleasant views from important points of the Capitol is not to be sacrificed to the object of making its courtyard, in all its parts and in all seasons, a perfectly comfortable lounging place or exercise ground.

The same principle of subordination to the building will prevent the introduction in any part of the ground of local ornaments, whether in flowers, leaf-plants, or other objects simply curious or beautiful in themselves. Those matters only will be decorated which by their position and form carry out, repeat, and support the architectural design, nor will any decoration be such as to hold the eye of an observer when in a position to take a general view of the Capitol.

The carriage-court will be bounded opposite the building by a walk or esplanade, laid with colored tile, and this will be separated from the broad turf spaces beyond it by a structure combining the purposes of a parapet or barrier, and a seat, so curved in plan, that unobstructed views of the Capitol may be obtained from it at various distances from 100 to 300 feet from the nearest point of its front, and at every practicable angle of vision. The parapet is to be formed of blue and red stone, and is to be also divided by piers, supporting bronze gas-posts. This work is under contract, and, if the weather is favorable, sections of it are expected to be complete before Congress meets.

**FURTHER PLANS IN PROGRESS**

The roads are designed to be of concrete, but only the base of gravel will be laid this year.

Other details can hardly be explained without drawings, and what has been said will sufficiently indicate the general intention.

No work has been done on the ground west of the Capitol, except in the deposit for storage of material taken from the east side. Designs for important improvements are, however, advanced, and are soon to be submitted to the Committee of Congress.

Your obedient servant,

Fred. Law Olmsted