Mark your calendars! The Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks, Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Washington Chapter of ASLA, and City Park Alliance, invite you to the National Association for Olmsted Parks’ conference in Seattle, April 30 to May 4, 2003, the keynote event of a year-long celebration of the centennial of the Olmsted Brothers’ park plan for Seattle.

The Olmsted Legacy Conference will explore ways of preserving and enhancing our landscape heritage and examine methods of extending the Olmsted vision of a comprehensive system of parks and boulevards into contemporary urban planning. Thurday will be a day of lectures, workshops and tours, with an opening reception and keynote lecture by Jane Holtz Kay, author of Asphalt Nation and Lost Boston. Presentations, workshops, and tours will continue on Friday and Saturday, with additional tours on Sunday (May 4). The conference themes are: Honoring Our Olmsted Legacy, Extending the Olmsted Vision and Philosophy, and Responding to Contemporary Issues – Economic, Environmental and Social Justice. Local and national experts will address issues ranging from the challenges associated with working and designing in historic park landscapes to contemporary social and environmental challenges facing our urban parks and communities. For updated conference information, discounted rates for NAOP members and early registration benefits, see www.seattle.gov/friendsofolmstedparks.

For those interested in a total Northwest Olmsted experience, Portland is hosting an Olmsted Symposium immediately preceding the Seattle NAOP Conference (see www.olmsted2003.org). Participants will be able to travel by train from Portland to Seattle, as John Charles Olmsted did 100 years ago, or start the Seattle conference a day early with a train ride to Portland, Oregon, and back, including lectures and tours of Portland parks.

Seattle’s Olmsted Centennial

At the turn of the last century, Seattle recognized the need to preserve and protect its spectacular natural landscape while providing access to green space and healthy recreational opportunities within reach of all residents. Thanks to Seattle’s forward-thinking early civic leaders and the vision of the Olmsted Brothers’ comprehensive citywide plan, Seattle today has a nationally-recognized system of parks and boulevards that beautifully complements and showcases the natural landscape. The Olmsted plan looked forward 100 years to provide open space for a city of 500,000. Seattle has now reached that mark. Today’s challenge is not only to protect and preserve that century-old legacy, but also to carry Olmsted philosophy into the next 100 years of landscape design and planning to ensure the preservation of open space for future generations.

A year-long series of events will provide opportunities for community members and professionals to learn about and celebrate Seattle’s Olmsted legacy and its contribution to the development of the Seattle urban landscape. The Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks, Seattle Parks and Recreation and over 40 community, city and county organizations will sponsor walks, tours, work parties, exhibits, concerts and lectures in parks and park landscapes throughout Seattle.

For information about participating in or sponsoring the Olmsted Centennial Celebration or the Seattle 2003 conference, you can reach FSOP by email at seattle2003@olmsted.org, by phone at 206-352-9915 or visit us on the web at www.seattle.gov/friendsofolmstedparks.

Copies of the Mount Royal Charter and the NAOP Declaration on Mount Royal Are Available

These valuable documents may be used as models and inspirations for other communities. For a copy, please contact the NAOP Office at 508-820-7676 or email naop@resource-network.com

Past-Chair Harwell Designs DC Memorial

Faye Harwell, past chair of NAOP, was featured in People Magazine May 13 for her work in designing the George Mason National Memorial in Washington, DC. Faye created the garden and wall of quotations for the memorial, while artist Wendy Ross of Bethesda, MD created the hall-ion bronze portrait sculpture. Mason is remembered for writing the 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights, a source for both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Bill of Rights. General Hall, Mason’s beautiful farm south of Mount Vernon, VA, is open to the public. The memorial has a prestigious location in Potomac Park between the Jefferson and FDR memorials and was also featured in the June issue of Sculpture Magazine. Faye is a director of Rhodes & Harwell Incorporated, landscape architects and planners of Alexandria, VA. Faye’s other current projects include work at the National Arboretum, the National Zoo, including the Olmsted Walk, and Branch Brook Park, which NAOP conference participants explored during this Spring’s conference.

National Association for Olmsted Parks
NAOP Participates in Major Olmsted Initiative in Montreal by Daniel Chartier

Last year Montreal celebrated Mount Royal Park's 125th anniversary. Many events took place highlighting the park's evolution, with Olmsted himself showing up at several of the festivities.

The annual 2001 meeting of the American Association of Landscape Architects was to be held for the first time outside the USA from September 20-25 in Montreal. This event, prepared in collaboration with the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, featured Mount Royal Park as the host chapter's demonstration project. Tours, conferences and exhibits were prepared on the Olmsted legacy and the ongoing restoration process and workshops were designed to address current issues and invite public comment regarding the core area of the park. Representatives from the City of Montreal, les Amis de la Montagne (Friends of the Mountain) and the NAOP worked together to prepare a rich program.

Understandably, the tragic events of September 11 led to the cancellation of the event. In the three days prior to September 20, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects held a smaller event for some two hundred participants instead of the thousands that were expected initially.

In December 2001, les Amis, along with the Borough of Westmount, purchased an abandoned apartment building bordering the park. It was demolished to give back the land to the park and to improve the general quality of the area surrounding the park's west entrance.

Spring 2002 was very exciting. First, les Amis held a Summit conference on Mount Royal inviting Montrealers to discuss the urban and greenspace issues related to the mountain. A charter was endorsed declaring Montrealers should get to know their mountain better and that the mountain, of which the park is but one part, should be protected and restored in all its diversity. This Summit was followed by another organized by the City of Montreal with similar concerns being raised. The resulting consensus regarding priorities will undoubtedly serve as the basis for the next planning stages. Lastly the Quebec Cultural Commission held a public consultation, once again dedicated to Mount Royal, with a view toward confronting a national status to the mountain. These events are indicative of the deep dedication Montrealers have for their "little green mountain" and Olmsted's legacy.

NAOP Continues Focus on Capitol Visitor Center

The construction of the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, DC reported in the Fall 2001 and Spring 2002 Field Notes, is proceeding with a $99 million contract to build the foundation in a 60-foot deep hole. At the same time NAOP's warnings are being heard that the design of this massive, $3.35 million, underground building will compromise the Olmsted landscape in which it is being placed. On June 16, the Washington Post published Co-Chair Jerry Baum's letter summarizing the problem: "Olmsted created a landscape that befitted a monumental building in a civic setting. His East Lawn walkways and plantings made the Capitol the centerpiece of the visitor's experience. Olmsted's work on the Capitol grounds represents the longest and perhaps most satisfying consulting project of his career... The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is moving forward with a design that destroys the visual and spatial relationships of the East Lawn and sever the continuity of the historic circulation patterns with a descending approach ramp, centered on the East façade."

A second NAOP letter to the AOC elicited coverage by The New York Times on June 25, which noted that the current design of 560,000 square feet extends well beyond the paved plaza into space intended by Olmsted to be green and has already resulted in the destruction of dozens of towering trees. Some of the utilities will be placed in the large oval lawns which Olmsted envisioned as unbroken. Thomas A. Fontana, a spokesman for the AOC, responded, "We feel our design is really very responsive to the Olmsted landscape scene."

Attention now turns to the significant remaining portions of Olmsted's design, including the little-known spring house and the great western terraces.
The Olmsted Firm and Weequahic Park
Essex County, New Jersey

Editor's Note

Olmsted, Vaux & Co. made an initial report on "a site for a park at Newark" in 1867 (see Reprints, NAOP, Volume 5, number 1). Although that report became a basis for the location of Branch Brook Park, political wrangling among the different municipalities in the region prevented the implementation of a coordinated park plan. In the meantime, suburban growth in the region had turned parts of northern New Jersey into perhaps the first suburban metropolis of its type. The phenomenon of large-scale suburbanization required a new approach to park planning, and in 1894, with broad support from the public and local business associations, Essex County established the country's first county-wide park commission. By 1910, the county had spent six million dollars and created five principal parks: Branch Brook Park, Eagle Rock Reservation, South Mountain Reservation, Orange Park, and (in South Newark) Weequahic Park. Beginning in 1898, the firm of Olmsted Brothers had continued the association of the Olmsted firm with Newark and Essex County park planning and design. Between 1898 and the 1920s, Olmsted Brothers helped Essex County establish and develop sixteen parks (including Westside Park), three scenic reservations, and half a dozen (mostly unrealized) parkways. The following reports by the landscape architects to the Essex County Park Commission illustrate their concerns specifically for the management of Weequahic Park and Lake, which they recognized played a special role in the system because of its accessibility to urban populations and its tremendous potential as a scenic and recreational amenity.

Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners, Essex County, New Jersey, Department of Parks, 1898-1899 (Newark: Grover Brothers Printers, 1900)

Landscape Architects' Report.

December 14, 1899

Mr. Cyrus Peck, President Essex County Park Commission, Newark, N.J.

Dear Sir: Since the date of our employment (August 22, 1898), we have designed general plans for the completion of [numerous Essex County parks]... The parks and reservations have been selected most wisely both with a view to securing some of the most interesting existing natural scenery and with regard to an equitable distribution in relation to the existing as well as the probable future population of the county.

Weequahic Reservation

Weequahic Reservation has received much study by us during the year. The area of this reservation is two hundred and sixty-five and eight one-hundredths acres. It is only one and three-quarters miles from Lincoln Park which is about the centre of population for the southern
half of Newark and about three and one-half miles from Branch Brook Park. It is already accessible by two lines of electric street railway. It lies between the Lehigh Valley Railroad on the northwest and Park Avenue on the southeast and extends from Waverly Avenue on the northeast to Evergreen Cemetery and the county line, and private properties on the southwest. Its average breadth, from the railroad, is two thousand three hundred and ten feet and its maximum length, southwest from Waverly Avenue is five thousand nine hundred and twenty feet. Its principal topographical feature is a marsh, formerly salt but now fresh, with a brook, fed by springs, flowing through it. Except at the north boundary, where Waverly Avenue crosses the marsh, and except at three places on the northwest side where the railroad crosses arms of the marsh on high embankments, the marsh is beautifully enrobed with uplands, partly gently sloping, open farming land, but mostly rather steep, wooded banks. On the side toward the railroad, there are three headlands of considerable area, projecting out into the marsh, but, on the whole, this margin of dry land is so narrow and cut up that there will be practically no room for playfields, or broad effects. The southeast and southwest sides of the swamp, however, are wide enough for the simple, open style of park treatment, which is most useful for large numbers of visitors. At the end of the open upland nearest the city we propose a meadow or playstead, containing twenty-three acres, or, including its planted margins thirty-six acres. This will be the most popular, and as an investment for public health and amusement, the most valuable part of the park. Southwest of this charming natural landscape feature there is a racetrack, formerly used in connection with the county fairgrounds. As this artificial construction is completely hidden from the natural landscape portions of the park by a belt of trees along the edge of the marsh on the northwest side and by low hills at the northeast and southwest ends, and as the southeast side is very close to the boundary on Park Avenue, we have included it in our plan permanently, to be used as a speedway for fast horses. Southwest of this feature, and extending around the southwest end of the marsh to the railroad, there is a rolling land, mostly farm fields and pasture, but with a fine piece of wood, a few scattering trees and some good fence row trees. It is our plan to make this division of the park a comparatively wild and rough pastoral scene. The borders should be planted to screen out the existing and future factories and houses. Groups of shade trees, and on steep banks masses of shrubbery and trees should be added. An outer circuit drive through this section of the park may eventually be desirable, and has been planned for, and a few walks will be needed, but in the main this area will be left in a rough pasture state so that visitors may roam about as they like and picnic under the pasture trees or in the woods.

Although the marsh is at present a beautiful feature of the landscape, being green with sedges and cat-tail rushes, interspersed by little channels and pools of clear water and in some places with patches of golden rods, marsh mallows and other pretty wild flowers, yet it can scarcely be considered a desirable feature in the park. It has, of course, long been considered desirable, and it is our plan to turn the marsh into a lake with wholesome gravelly shores and water of ample depth to prevent the undue growth of water plants, which would otherwise soon restore a shallow lake to its mosquito-breeding condition. The springs have a flow which more than supplies the loss of evaporation, there being at the outlet under Waverly Avenue a minimum dry-
A Park at Newark

weather flow of about one million five hundred thousand gallons a day. The cheapest way of forming a lake would be to dam the water back at Waverly Avenue. We have adopted the plan to excavate the muck and sandy loam under parts of it, to the required depth. By occupying parts of the marsh with the circuit drive and walk and necessary slopes, by filling the portions to be left between the circuit drive and the railroad and Waverly Avenue, and by leaving certain other portions unexcavated in the form of points and islands, the area to be excavated will be reduced from eighty-four acres, the present area of the marsh, to fifty-four and five-tenths acres, the proposed area of the lake. Yet even with this saving there will be over half a million yards of muck and earth to be excavated. This vast amount of material can, however, be disposed of to great advantage in the following ways:

1st – The shore can be built out where the trees are very thick, so as to provide room for the lake shore walk just outside of the trunks of the shore trees, but still under their spreading branches.

2nd – The lake circuit drive, in order to keep on good lines and within reasonable distance of the margin of the lake, will have to be on filled ground in several places.

3rd – The proposed islands and points will have to be filled upon to a good height to be well drained.

4th – The border land between the circuit drive and the railroad and Waverly Avenue will have to be filled to at least a drainable height.

5th – The playfield has some very low areas in it and is too rolling for its purpose, and considerable filling will therefore greatly improve it. Part of this filling can be done with mud from the lake.

6th – The ground within the race track is too low, and by filling up to a level it can be made into a very desirable athletic field.

7th – A top drawing of the best of the mucky material from the marsh, to be ploughed in on the dry sandy uplands, will be very beneficial both for trees and turf.

8th – Some low spots in the pasture land will be improved by filling. One of these adjoins the railroad at the extreme west corner of the park. When filled this will make a desirable site for a steam pumping plant to supply the water mains throughout the park.

9th – A border mound along the low part of Waverly Avenue will be of great value in adding to the seclusion of the part of the lake circuit drive which will be near it and in assisting border plantations to hide existing and probable future factories and city houses to the north and northeast.

10th – A continuous border mound raised to a height of ten or twelve feet above the railroad tracks will be of enormous value to the park and especially to the part of it which will lie between the future lake and the railroad. The mound can be somewhat varied in height and outline so as to almost entirely prevent any effect of artificiality, and, when planted, it will completely hide the railroad and its trains and do much toward interrupting and deflecting the tremendous roar of the trains, especially that of the numerous long coal trains, running down the grade.
The landscape design of Weequahic Reservation will comprise the following features:

1st – The lake, completely surrounded by a border of trees and made accessible to visitors by a waterside path and a drive meandering unobtrusively among the trees but coming to the front at intervals to command the views. A boat-house with broad, sheltering roof and verandas will overlook the lake from the end nearest the city. This building will also afford accommodation for skaters in winter.

2nd – The playstead of open field for hundreds of children to play upon and for their elders to roam upon. This playstead will be overlooked on two sides from a drive and will be surrounded by a walk in the shade of the border plantation and groves of trees. But little shrubbery is allowable except to conceal the boundary fence needed to protect the ground from shortcutting. While the middle will be nearly level, the margins will have graceful undulations, lending variety of aspect to the frame of the woods. A field-house will be located at the east entrance near the street cars. In the basement there may be a check-room, dressing-rooms and toilet accommodations. Above these there will be a shelter from rain or sun for a large crowd, and here light refreshments may be provided.

3rd – The speedway—a track for speeding and fast horses, surrounded by a wide walk for visitors on foot and a wide drive for visitors in vehicles or on horseback; and outside of this again there will be a walk on the hills at the ends. Within the speedway a kite-shaped bicycle track is planned to enclose a field for match and other games of baseball for men and older boys, who should not be allowed to play ball on the playstead. An existing grand-stand on the west side of this open area overlooking the speedway, bicycle track and baseball field may be retained for some years, but will eventually need to be replaced by a more substantially built and better-looking structure. As the speedway and its accompanying drive and walks occupy all the ground between the steep wooded bank of the lake and the boundary, it is proposed to carry the lake circuit drive on a low filling in the edge of the lake, outside the trees. By this means the enjoyment of the lake scenery by those driving around it will not be rudely interrupted, as it would be if the drive is made to pass out of it into the speedway district, where the element of artificiality must necessarily predominate.

4th – The pastoral district, south and southwest of the lake. This includes three hills and three valleys, one of them being wooded with heavy timber. The lake circuit drive will afford views over or into this pleasing part of the park, and a loop drive, branching from the drive surrounding the speedway and connecting with the lake circuit drive at its bend in the wooded valley, will skirt the outer margin of the pasture land near the border plantation. It is proposed to keep the grass short by pasturing sheep upon it. A shepherd and his dog will protect the sheep during the day from stray dogs, and keep the sheep out of the border plantations and thick woods where the undergrowth must be preserved to clothe the ground, as it will be too shady for turf.

Essex County, New Jersey, Department of Parks, "Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners, 1898-99" (Newark, New Jersey: Grover Bros., Printers, 1900), 48-53.
New Publications

The Boulevard Book: History, Evolution, Design of Multiway Boulevards
By Allan B. Jacobs, Elizabeth Macdonald, and Yordan Rojë. 257 pp. Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press, 2002. $39.95. The term “boulevard” is not just a fancy synonym for “street,” but should refer to a particularly spacious street with an important landscape component, designed as much for people on foot as for vehicles. Louis XIV ordered the old rampion of Paris turned into pedestrian promenades in 1670, and Baron Haussmann expanded the concept there in the 1850s. Brooklyn built the first American system of multiway boulevards between 1870 and 1874 – Eastern and Ocean Parkways, designed by Olmsted & Vaux. This book analyzes these and other notable boulevards on every continent except Africa, and suggests ways to make them more humane as well as more functional. Illustrated with plans and drawings.

Rock Creek Park
By Gail Spilsbury. 96 pp., 50 photos & illus. Herndon, VA: Capital Books Inc (P.O. Box 660, 20172) November 2002. $16.95 cloth. Spilsbury, senior editor at the Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler galleries, offers a tribute to Rock Creek Park through archival photographs and paintings, combined with excerpts from the 1902 McMillan Commission Report, of which FLO Jr. was a member and which reshaped Washington as a City Beautiful, and from FLO Jr.’s later report. Practical information on park use is included.

A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens
By Susan L. Klaus. 207 pp. Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, in association with the Library of American Landscape History, Amherst. $39.95, June 20, 2002. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and architect Grosvenor Atterbury designed Forest Hills Gardens circa 1909, and the lucid and humane design of its 142 acres still stands out from its surroundings in Queens. Forest Hills Gardens marked a convergence of Garden City and Arts & Crafts Ideas from England with the Olmsted tradition of suburbs stretching back to Riverside, IL. The street plan devised by FLO Jr. merged the formality of the Station Square with the serenely organic patterns of the residential districts. Enlightened philanthropy helped: Olivia Slocum Sage, widow of Russell Sage, who was known for never giving away anything, undertook the project over a dozen years to a total of $380,000.

"In and Around Montréal"
Landscape Architect and Specifier News, September 2001, pp. 48-74. This trade journal’s coverage of Montréal begins with Mount Royal Park, “just one example of the splendor and excitement of Montréal.” Annotates lists cover parks and gardens, museums, streetscapes, public squares, historic buildings, and modern buildings.

"Montréal’s Top Sites" by J. William Thompson
"History of Landscape Architecture in Montréal" by Ron Williams and Peter Jacobs
"Le Mont Royal" by Peter Jacobs
Landscape Architecture, Sept. 2001, pp. 89-97 + 134-139. The events of September 11, 2001 caused cancellation of the convention in Montréal planned by the American Society of Landscape Architects, but several articles published in anticipation of the event remain useful to travelers to Montréal. Thompson writes, “Like an extruded version of New York’s Central Park, Mont Royal rises 550 feet above downtown.”

Justine Liff: Parks Champion
NAOP’s board of directors passed the following resolution in memory of Justine Liff who on died September 11, 2002 at the age of 55.
The National Association for Olmsted Parks mourns the City of Boston the death of Justine Liff, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation. Her knowledge, expertise and skills, her boundless energy, and her abounding concern for the parks and the people who use them were gifted recognized far beyond the Boston area, and have set a high standard for departments around the country.

During her tenure, the Trust for Public Land and the Urban Land Institute gave Boston’s park system a four-star rating, an honor shared only by Cincinnati and Minneapolis.

News from Around the Country
continued from page 2
for tennis golf balls. The new Audubon Park Golf Course is now open.

Pennsylvania
Pittsburgh – The City’s 3rd “Big Blaze” took place in mid May in Highland Park and yielded a tally of 967 species of plants and animals. Begun by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, the Big Blazes are a partnership of the Museum, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and the City of Pittsburgh. The event completed the survey of the city’s largest parks, providing a baseline of biodiversity in three urban parks.

May storms damaged trees in the parks, including very valuable old ones. This led to the establishment of an emergency tree fund by the Conservancy. Weather improved for the Conservancy’s annual Spring Hat Luncheon, which raises money for programs.

Massachusetts
Boston – Betty Sue Croce, a founding member of the NAOP, received the Paul E. Taingas Award in May from Historic Massachusetts Inc. The award cited the organizational skills she has brought to the Brookline Conservation Commission and Historic Massachusetts “Almost single-handedly, Betty expanded the vision of preservation from its focus mainly on buildings to include inclusion of historic landscapes, open spaces and community environment.”

Illinois
Riverside (Chicago) – The Water Tower, designed by William LeBaron Jenney for Frederick Law Olmsted’s first suburban, is undergoing restoration. Half the proceeds from this year’s “Holiday Walk” of the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside will go to that project.

Washington
Seattle – The Seattle Parks Foundation has an Olmsted Plans & Drawings collection thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks. This collection, begun as part of a King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission grant, is available for research and will be enlarged as funds permit.
Ken Knutsen an NAOP "Unsung Hero": Saved County’s Olmsted Plans and Drawings

Now retired, Ken Knutsen had been a licensed professional surveyor in New Jersey who worked for the Union County Park Commission. Engineering Department for 40 years.

In the 1970’s the Engineering Department decided to discard the Olmsted work drawings. Knutsen successfully pleaded for saving the drawings. As Union County landscape architect Sean Ryan (who told us about Ken Knutsen) wrote, “Today there is a growing awareness of the importance and value of having an Olmsted designed park system throughout Union County. And now everyone is pleased that this important record was not lost and thankfull that Ken took the actions that he did.” Newark Conference attendees saw some of the drawings – watercolored park master plans. Ryan makes the point that the drawings “can serve as powerful tools to help get the historical significance of this park system recognized and eventually restored.”

Of note: The Union County Park Commission (started in 1922) is the second oldest in the Country – oldest is neighboring Essex County (Newark). The Commission had hired the Olmsted firm to plan and design their county-wide park system. 80 – 90% of these plans were realized.

Preservation Technology and Training Grants

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) announces its 2003 Preservation Technology and Training Grants in historic preservation. The Center is a National Park Service initiative to advance the practice of historic preservation in the fields of archaeology, architecture, landscape architecture and materials conservation. Proposals that address critical challenges to the preservation of our nation’s cultural heritage through the innovative application of advances in science and technology will be considered. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, pending availability of funds. Proposal deadline: February 1, 2003.

The completed 2003 PTT Grant Call for Proposals and instructions on how to prepare and submit applications will be available on NCPTT’s Website www.ncptt.nps.gov or by calling NCPTT at 318-356-7444.

Field Notes
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