

## Good Neighbors (continued from page 3)

schools they have piloted and evaluated components of this innovative and multi-disciplinary curriculum with five classrooms in fall 2009; nine more pilot programs are scheduled for spring 2010. Using biography, social studies, science, art, and language arts, the program demonstrates that thoughtfully designed landscapes help build community and foster physical and spiritual well-being.

In July 2009, adults had the chance to learn more about *Good Neighbors* during a four-day summer institute. Supported by Friends of Fairsted, the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, National Association for Olmsted Parks, and the Public Schools of Brookline, the institute hosted 20 teachers, librarians, and members of the community in the newly rehabilitated barn and model shop at Olmsted NHS that will be home to the education program. Featured speakers included Ethan Carr of the University of Virginia, Julie Arrison, author of a new history of Franklin Park, Lauren Meier, historic preservationist with Pressley Associates, Inc., and Robert Corning, principal at the global design firm, Stantec, Inc.

When the program is fully implemented in conjunction with the site's reopening, the program will engage 750 third graders annually.

"Good Neighbors was really fun! I can't believe I'm saying this, but it was more fun than recess" - Grade 3 Student, Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School, Boston.

"I wouldn't change a thing, and that is largely based on the reaction of the children! ALL of my kids were engaged, and last week, two parents said to me "The boys are still talking about it." - Gretchen Albertini, Devotion School Grade 3 teacher and GN advisor.



A third grader from the Baker School in Brookline presents his park design ideas to classmates. (Photo by Joel Veak. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Olmsted NHS.)

### Lauren Meier joins Friends of Fairsted Board

Lauren Meier, ALSA, is a historic preservationist with Pressley Associates in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ms. Meier was the founding coordinator of the National Park Service Historic Landscape Initiative in Washington, D.C., and historical landscape architect for the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. Her landscape preservation work includes the restoration of the landscape at Fairsted, Frederick Law Olmsted's home and office. She is co-editor of the *Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm, 1857-1979*, and a board member of the National Association for Olmsted Parks.

## Superintendent Harrison and Friends President Loughlin visit offices of Massachusetts delegation in Washington



On July 27-28 Olmsted Site Superintendent, Myra Harrison, and Friends of Fairsted President, Caroline Loughlin, visited with members of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation staff: Karena Neubauer in Senator John Kerry's office, Bruno Freitas in Congressman Frank's office (4th District), John Juech in Congressman Bill Delahunt's office (7th District), and Morgan Gray in Congressman Ed Markey's office (10th District).

In addition to providing an update on the site's rehabilitation project and the General Management Plan process, the visit provided an opportunity for Friends of Fairsted to present members of the delegation with copies of the new edition of *The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm* along with site brochures and the Friends of Fairsted Annual Report. A copy of *The Master List* and other materials were left for Senator Edward Kennedy, as well.

Myra Harrison, Superintendent of Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, and Caroline Loughlin, President of Friends of Fairsted, with Bruno Freitas, chief of staff and legislative director for Congressman Barney Frank, Massachusetts' 4th District. (Photo by Iris Gestram, Executive Director of NAOP.)



# Friends of Fairsted

Advancing the mission of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

## Newsletter

Fall 2009

### Friends of Fairsted sponsors lecture on the Olmsteds' work in Brookline



Arleyn Levee, Friends of Fairsted Board member and event committee chair, shown with Keith Morgan after the well received lecture. (Photo by Jean Stringham.)

A free lecture - *Neighbors and Networks: The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline 1880 - 1936* - was presented by Boston University Professor Keith Morgan on October 28, 2009, at Wheelock College, Brookline. Under the sponsorship of the National Park Service and the Organization of American Historians, Professor Morgan has explored the impact of the Olmsteds and their office on the evolution of Brookline, Massachusetts, site of FLO's home and the firm's office. Based on this work, Professor Morgan discussed the relationships that facilitated the development of the landscape and influenced the town's planning policies.

The over-subscribed event was sponsored by Friends of Fairsted, Brookline

GreenSpace Alliance, Brookline Historical Society, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Fenway Alliance, High Street Hill Association, Historic New England, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Muddy River Restoration Project - Maintenance and Management Oversight Committee, NPS, Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, Society of Architectural Historians, and Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate.

### At the reception preceding the lecture...



Liz Vizza, Executive Director of Friends of the Public Garden (Boston) and Shary Page Berg, landscape preservation consultant and former site manager of Frederick Law Olmsted NHS.



John Munzer, Olmsted Site volunteer, with Ken Liss, President, Brookline Historical Society, and Susan Porter, historian. (Reception photos by Frances Shedd Fisher.)

### Friends of Fairsted collaborates with Boston Landmarks Orchestra on new composition about FLO

Friends of Fairsted joined other organizations to collaborate with Boston Landmarks Orchestra in the premier presentation, on July 26, 2009, of a new composition commissioned by the orchestra, "The Story of Frederick Law Olmsted," by Thomas Oboe Lee (music) and Nancy Stevenson (text). The concert, performed at Jamaica Pond in Olmsted's Emerald Necklace, was introduced by Cathy Fuller of WGBH radio and narrated by Gerry Wright, as Frederick Law Olmsted. A second performance, on September 2 at the Hatch Shell on the Charles River, was introduced by Charles E. Beveridge, series editor of the *Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, and narrated by former Massachusetts governor, Michael Dukakis.

The two free concerts, which drew a combined audience of several hundred, were warmly received. Other collaborators in the presentations were Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University; Emerald Necklace Conservancy; Esplanade Association; Friends of Jamaica Pond; and National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

## Olmsted NHS construction update

After four years most of the construction at Fairsted has been completed though visitors familiar with the site won't notice much that's different, except for the rehabilitated barn, which has been adapted for use as an educational area for school-aged children to learn about landscape design - beginning with the Good Neighbors Program. Most of the construction has been "below the skin" - including storm drain rehabilitation, electrical upgrades, improved security and advanced fire-suppression systems, and emergency lighting.

The principal construction task that must be completed before staff can

move back in and reopen the site to visitors is the rehabilitation of the fire-suppression systems in the historic office wing. Then come the clean-up and cosmetic upgrades like fresh paint. Perhaps even more time consuming and daunting will be the move back and repositioning of all the museum furnishings and archives that were stored off-site during the rehabilitation project - not a one-day moving experience with family pitching in and pizza for all! As with the construction project itself, the storage and relocation of museum artifacts and priceless archives will require expertise that exceeds that of "Joe's Gentle Moving Company."

Finally, and simultaneously, the Park Service is in the process of planning major new expanded interpretive exhibits that will be designed for installation on the first floor of the house. The exhibit planning process will include top-of-their-field volunteer experts in an array of professions, including landscape architecture, planning and history. The exhibits are currently scheduled to be installed during the fall of 2011.

NPS estimates that if all goes well, Fairsted will be able to reopen by the end of next year.

## Strategic planning underway at Frederick Law Olmsted NHS

Much has changed at Olmsted NHS, Fairsted, and in the world at large since 1983 when the site's first General Management Plan was created and in the 30 years since the Olmsted NHS was established to preserve the historic site and its archives. Funding was recently received to revise and update the 1983 GMP so that the site can best prepare to meet contemporary and future challenges.

An open house was held at Fairsted on a beautiful day in September, 10 days prior to a public meeting on September 23. Though the site is closed for construction to update systems and rehabilitate the barn as an educational center, at this special event tours of the site and grounds were available as a prelude to the planning meeting, including briefings on progress toward the creation of a model educational program for third graders - the Good Neighbors Program - in the renovated barn. Visitors were encouraged to think critically about issues the visit brought to mind.

The off-site public planning meeting began with an overview of the site's history, challenges and mission. Participants then selected a subject group or groups to join for candid discussion of issues they wished to see addressed in the GMP. Some of the subjects included were:

- ◆ How to create a satisfying visitor experience for both landscape and planning professionals and the general public.
- ◆ How best to interpret, to a diverse audience, the concepts and ideals put forth by Olmsted.
- ◆ How to realistically develop approaches that broaden access to the archival collections.
- ◆ How to balance encouraging visitor access with protecting the historic site from "wear and tear."

Participation by neighbors, educators, landscape

stewards, and parks advocates was lively. All participants agreed the process is well begun. A draft General Management Plan is projected to be available to the public late in 2010.

The public weighs in:

"Olmsted NHS should be a spark for engaging people for landscape stewardship locally and globally."

"Olmsted connected with all kinds of people - that's the essence of Olmsted; find the hook."

◆ How to create a satisfying visitor experience for both landscape and planning professionals and the general public.

◆ How best to interpret, to a diverse audience, the concepts and ideals put forth by Olmsted.

◆ How to realistically develop approaches that broaden access to the archival collections.



Celena Illuzzi, Interpretive Specialist, leads a tour of the site grounds at the Open House on September 13. (Photo by Joel Veak. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Olmsted NHS.)

## Friends host Hard Hat Sneak Preview of Fairsted

On May 21 Friends of Fairsted hosted a Hard Hat Sneak Preview of the Olmsted Site with updates on the rehabilitation program that is underway within Fairsted and the barn, as well as an overview of the Good Neighbors Education Program. David Bittermann, National Park Service historic architect, made a presentation outlining the complex process that has been followed to assure preservation of the site's historic integrity.



Attendees of the Hard Hat Sneak Preview just before the presentation by David Bittermann begins in the upper drafting room. (Photo by Frances Shedd Fisher.)

## Films about Olmsted in the works

Two documentary films on Olmsted and the Olmsted legacy, intended for PBS broadcast in 2010 and 2012, are in development.

*The Olmsted Legacy*, in production and scheduled for broadcast in 2010, is a feature length documentary that examines the formation of the great city parks in Urban America during the mid 19th century, and the role these parks continue to play over 100 years later. *The Olmsted Legacy* will be directed by Academy Award nominated and Emmy Award winning filmmaker George deGolian and produced by Emmy nominated Michael White. Principal funding for the project is being provided by Michael Messner and the Speedwell Foundation.

Friends of Fairsted was pleased to welcome the Atlanta-based production team from *The Olmsted Legacy*, and Mr. Messner, to our Hard Hat Sneak Preview of the Olmsted National Historic Site on May 21 of this year.

The second film on Olmsted is in development by Lawrence Hott of Florentine Films/Hott Productions, Inc. in conjunction with WNEB Buffalo. Laurence Cotton is writer/producer. The documentary is projected for presentation on PBS in 2012.

With multiple references to the Olmsteds in Ken Burns' recently aired, *The National Parks - America's Best Idea*, the timing of the two new documentaries seems a clear indicator of growing interest in the exceptional Olmsted legacy.



David Bittermann, NPS historic architect, Lee Farrow Cook, Olmsted Site Manager, and Caroline Loughlin, President of Friends of Fairsted in the upper drafting room after Mr. Bittermann's presentation. (Photo by Jean Stringham.)



Liza Stearns, Education Specialist, gives an overview of the Good Neighbors Education Program in the partially rehabilitated barn. (Photo by Frances Shedd Fisher.)



## Update on Good Neighbors, a Friends of Fairsted supported project

Liza Stearns, Education Specialist, and Celena Illuzzi, Interpretive Specialist, at Frederick Law Olmsted NHS, have spent a busy year working on the multiple components of *Good Neighbors: Landscape Design and Community Building*, the third-grade curriculum-based education program that will be a centerpiece of programming at Fairsted when it reopens. Working with a small number of Brookline and Boston public

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