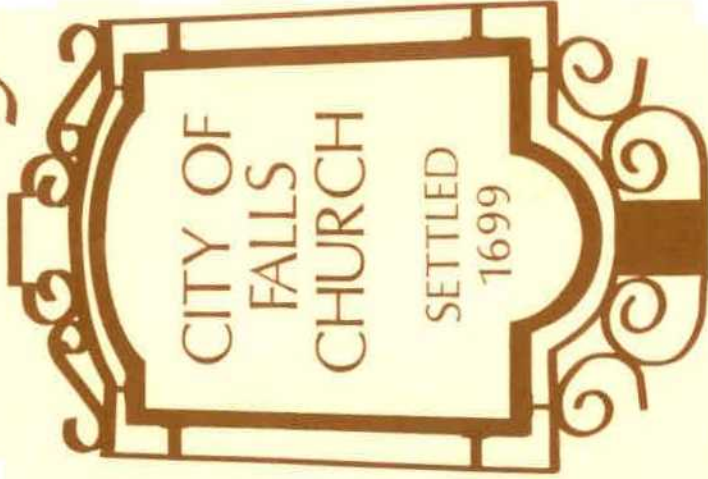


Village

Preservation & Improvement

Society



Program Guide

*Promoting Quality of Life in the City of Falls Church
for Over 110 Years*

V.P.I.S.
P.O. Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22040

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 66
Falls Church, VA



Printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink.



HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY

About 110 years ago, Village Improvement Societies began forming in towns throughout the East Coast. Prompted by national and regional trends (there were four Societies in Fairfax County), a Village Improvement Society (The Society) was established in Falls Church in 1885. The purpose of the Society was to improve community appearance and cultural life. The Society planted trees, helped start the first library in Falls Church, initiated first Arbor Day in Virginia (1892), held concerts and other cultural events, built public sidewalks, and was a strong influence in shaping Falls Church as a modern town.



THE SOCIETY TODAY

Members are primarily residents of the City of Falls Church. Some former residents or neighbors who have an interest in the unique work of the Society are members as well. Members are of all political persuasions and are bonded by an interest in and commitment to improving the community.

The Society is organized into three program areas: Design and Development, Cultural Programs, and Natural Resources. Each program area has its own mission, committee, and tasks.

DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

The Society strives to achieve a vibrant, attractive and sustainable community; to participate in the City's long-term planning process and to pursue the preservation of historic resources.

Annual Excellence in Design Awards

Plaques and certificates are presented to residential, business, or public facilities each year to recognize excellence in architectural or landscape design.



Historical Preservation

The Society provides tours and other programs to encourage preservation of structures and stories that give Falls Church a sense of place and purpose.

VPIS Design Advisory Program

The Society advises City Council, Commissions, City staff, developers, and individuals who wish to change the design of the City.

Sustainable Development

Lectures and discussions are oriented toward helping the City develop in a style that is advantageous not just for the present, but also for future generations.

Local Publications

Books, articles, and studies are published to improve understanding of local history and design.

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The Society produces cultural activities that enrich the lives of citizens and relay heritage from one generation to the next.

Home Concert Series *Winter Months*

Area professional musicians perform jazz and classical music at evening recitals in local homes. Seating is very limited and tickets are sold, in advance, through the *Virginia Village Catalog*.

Arbor Day *Third Friday in April*

In conjunction with the City, The Society sponsors tree planting ceremonies at four schools and a celebration at Cherry Hill Park. Trees donated by the Society are planted throughout the City.

Earth Day - *Third or Fourth Saturday in April*

The Society and the City sponsor Earth Day. Activities include City Spring Cleanup, a "March-For Parks," a park restoration party, native plant sale, and backyard restoration workshop.

Attic Treasures Sale - *First Saturday in May*

Citizens donate treasures for the annual fundraising sale at the Community Center. Sale items are displayed in settings depicting a village setting. An auction, Society Cafe, and live music are also popular attractions.

Memorial Day Parade & Booth

Our parade entry always reflects one of our programs, such as tree planting or historical preservation. Our booth provides local information.

It's A Wonderful Life - *Thanksgiving Weekend*

A free showing of this classic film (B & W 16mm) speaks to the village image to which we aspire.



Summer Concerts in Cherry Hill Park

Co-sponsored with Foxes Music, Cue Recording, and the City, these free concerts are fun for all ages.

Farmers Market Booth - *June-October*

The Society sponsors a beverage and information booth each Saturday at the City's Farmers Market. All proceeds are used to plant trees.

Independence Day Readings - *July 4*

Unique to Falls Church is the reading of the foundation documents of the United States. Members of the audience are encouraged to participate.

Spring and Fall Programs - *June/November*

The general membership meeting highlights a speaker, a forum for voting on important issues, and a slide show on unique local features.

Heritage Presentations

Special presentations on our heritage are made periodically. These events are announced through The Society publication, *The Village Way*.

The Virginia Village Catalog

A catalog of Falls Church products and gifts designed to promote pride in the village is published annually.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Society identifies, preserves, and restores natural resources and educates the public on the issues affecting these resources.

Commemorative Tree Program

The Society plants trees honoring deceased members and special events. Anyone may donate a tree to be planted in the City to commemorate a birth, death, or special event. A grove of the commemorative trees is planted on Arbor Day each year.

Planting Parties

Planting parties teach proper planting techniques and provide citizens with an opportunity to help beautify the City.



City Streams Task Force

The Society works with the City to restore streams and implement the **Urban Forest Stream Valley Demonstration Project**. The Task Force sponsors workshops and develops watershed education tools, including the first topographical model of the City.

City Tree Tours

The Society conducts tree tours for Falls Church school children, enabling them to learn about the specimen trees and arboreal gardens of the City. Tours are available to groups upon request.

Presidents Garden

A garden honoring Presidents of the Society is being developed by the bike bridge on West Broad Street.

Elizabeth Graham Garden

A past leader is honored each year by expanding the Society-funded entrance garden at Mt. Daniel School.

Joseph Morsch Garden

A bequest from the estate of Society member Joseph Morsch enables the Society to establish a garden along the W & OD Bike Trail. Completion of the garden is slated before the Falls Church Tricentennial Celebration in 1999.

Environmental Task Force

The Society sponsors projects and presents awards to youth groups or individuals for restoring natural resources in the City.

Environmental Review

The carrying capacity of physical environment for Falls Church is tested with each new development and public works project. The Society strives to mitigate this impact on the air, soil, water, and biological diversity by offering innovative options to developers and City planners.

To Become A Member of the Society:

- Complete the form found in the *Membership Guide* and mail it to the address listed below

or

- call (703) 532-0884

or

- write to:

The Village Society
P.O. Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22046