

The Village Way

May/June 2001 Vol. 34, No. 2

Maintaining Community Through Preservation

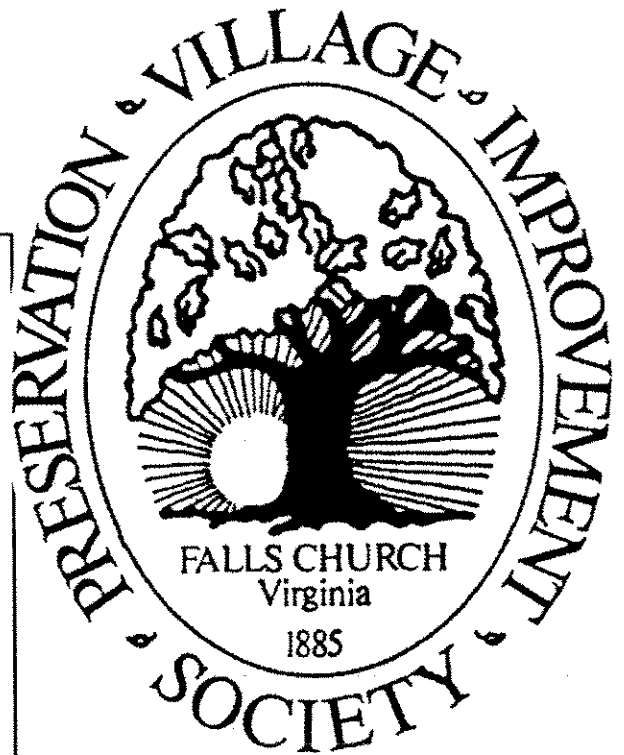
Suburban sprawl is the dominant trend in terms of the way regions grow throughout the U.S. The evidence is unmistakable. In this region most of this new wasteful development is taking place miles and miles away on the periphery, but its effects can be felt in our city in many ways. By definition, new development on the suburban fringe requires the production of additional infrastructure—including buildings, roads and schools. These patterns work to directly undermine older, established communities like Falls Church.

Although it may not be obvious at first glance, the work of the Village Society contributes to the fight against these sprawling development patterns that are so ubiquitous here and in nearly every community throughout the country. Part of the core mission of the Society is to protect our natural and built environment, historic structures and landmarks; and to encourage beautification of the community. When we are successful it makes Falls Church an attractive place to live and do business and mitigates some of the growth that must be accommodated elsewhere.

The work of the Village Society occurs not so much in preserving great monuments or major historic structures within our borders, but in terms of protecting the unique character of the City and the quality of life it supports. As our June 14 keynote speaker Richard Moe points out, "It has to do with the way individuals, families and communities come together in good environments." This means the preservation of neighborhoods with sidewalks, stately trees and established parks. In Falls Church, this sentiment is manifested in the downtown Crossroads area and economic development efforts to revitalize it.

Preservation is an essential element of this revitalization effort—again, not necessarily in keeping the existing structures intact, but ensuring that our community's sense of itself is not obliterated as has happened in others across America. It is important to remember that economic development and preservation are not mutually exclusive but are inextricably linked.

In sharp contrast to newly developing places, older suburbs like Falls Church can build on historically rich foundations in creating places where retail, business, pedestrian and social activities can thrive. The role of preservation in this effort is not only to enable us to better understand who we are, but also where we are going.



Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

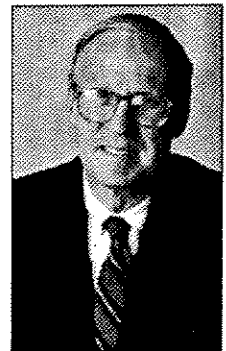
P. O. Box 6824

Falls Church, VA 22040

e-mail: fcvpi@yahoo.com

www.vpis.org

Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be the keynote speaker at the **VPIS Spring meeting on June 14th.**



He recently noted, "I look forward to the day when all Americans will want to save the best of the past because they realize it enriches the texture, character, and livability of our communities."

Please see Calendar on page 6 for more details.

Year 2001 Officers

President: Ruth Rodgers 105 Buxton Road
(H) 532-8144 rrodg@aol.com
(W) 202-628-9222 rrodgers@hrrc.org

Vice President: Rob Puentes 705 Fulton Ave.
(H) 536-5192 fcvpis@yahoo.com
(W) 202-797-6071 rpuentes@brookings.edu

Treasurer: Carl Close 152 Reese Place
237-7236; candmclose@aol.com

Publicist: Martha Lostrom
809 West Broad Street
536-4955; mlostrom@narfe.org

Recording Secretary: Brad Gernand
1204 Seaton Lane
241-9265; oklahombre@yahoo.com

2001 Board of Directors

Peter Adriance 241-7015 padriance@usbnc.org

Meade Atkeson 241-2477

Nancy Brandon 536-8230 nancbrand@aol.com

Les & Cindy Brorsen les.brorsen@ey.com

William Fry 532-4829 ewmfry@aol.com

Melanie Griffith 532-5349 griffithsm@fccps.k12.va.us

Mark & Ellen Gross 533-8197

oaks303@aol.com and Mark.L.Gross@usdoj.gov

Jon Hundley 534-5492

David Eckert & Annette Mills 532-0884

Joanne Rodman 534-9328 rodman.joanne@epa.gov

Frank Ross 533-9418 dfross69@hotmail.com

Ray & Marie Stewart 241-2339

rcsfcv@aol.com and Hawkeye423@aol.com

Gail Wadsworth & Peter Markham 534-4144

wadmark@erols.com

Midge Wang 534-8394 mthopewang@yahoo.com

Cay Wiant 533-3831 wiantjc@earthlink.net

President's Message

Well, as many have commented, the first weekend of May passed without the Society's annual Attic Treasures Sale. For those of you who called, wrote or emailed with questions, I can only say—please save all your special treasures until next year. Last year, when we learned that the Community Center was not going to be available because of the reconstruction, we held the Sale at another time and place. However, the Sale was not as easily accessible to the public as it had been at the Community Center and the results were disappointing. This year the VPIS board voted to postpone Attic Treasures until 2002.

We look forward to the opening of the enlarged and wonderfully updated Community Center in June and plan to book space in the beautifully refinished gymnasium for a reinvigorated Attic Treasures Sale (its 35th year!). As always, we will gratefully accept your donations in the days leading up to next year's Sale. If you have a place to help us store donations that can't wait until next May, please call me or any Board member listed on page 2. We hope that we can count on your enthusiastic participation next year!

On May 11, following a VPIS Board discussion of proposed changes to the City Tree ordinance, I sent a letter to the Mayor and City Council explaining the position of the Board on the proposed changes. As you know, VPIS has a long history of planting and preserving trees and in the past has always supported a strong tree ordinance. Because of this, the letter stated the Board recommendations that certain proposed changes not be made with

regard to historic, specimen and street trees. The letter supported other changes, such as adding civil penalty provisions.

I then attended the City Council meeting of May 14 and spoke during the petition period, reiterating the Board's position. Because several amendments had been made to the proposed changes by staff, some of our concerns had already been addressed, particularly with regard to changes that would have added limitations to the phrase "property undergoing redevelopment." (You can read the full text of the letter to the City Council on our website, www.VPIS.org.) The City Council unanimously passed the revised and amended changes to the Tree Ordinance. Some of the VPIS suggestions were not included in the revisions. While City staff seems comfortable with the changes, we should maintain a close watch on how the revisions affect heritage and specimen trees. Please contact the City Clerk's office if you would like to receive a copy of the changes to the ordinance (T01-10).

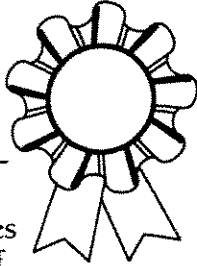
The Board of the Village Society will continue to monitor City legislative action that relates to the Society's mission. We are working on a system to alert VPIS members in a timely manner of upcoming issues and the potential of VPIS taking positions on certain issues so that VPIS members will be able to make their opinions known to VPIS officers prior to Board discussions.

Finally, don't forget the Annual Spring Meeting, June 14. See you there!

Ruth Rodgers, VPIS President

Upcoming Society Events

Village Society Commendation Awards



At the Spring Meeting, two awards of commendation will be presented to businesses for their support of the Society and the Neighborhood Tree Program.

Starbucks

For the past 8 years, Starbucks has provided coffee, cups, and napkins to the Society to sell and raise funds at the Farmers Market for planting trees in the City. Over \$20,000 later, many healthy trees have been planted in City parks and along the streets.

Arnold Communications

VPIS Member Matt Smith of Arnold Communication has provided invaluable service to the Society by designing the logo and promotion plan for the Neighborhood Tree Program. Through Matt's design skills and exceptional creativity the Neighborhood Tree Program is off to a terrific start. The signs and brochures provide lasting images and will help ensure the long-term success of the Program.

Invitation to Membership

The Village Preservation and Improvement Society, founded in 1885, is an active nonprofit citizen volunteer organization in the City of Falls Church, Virginia. For those who are not yet members of the Society, we would like to extend our invitation to join. Please clip out and send in the membership form on the bottom of page 5 or contact any of the Board members listed on page 2 for more information.

Please note corrected date for the Spring General Membership Meeting is June 14!

The Society's Spring Membership Meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 14 at 7:30 p.m.** in the historic Falls Church Episcopal at 115 East Fairfax Street. The keynote speaker will be Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Other important items include presentations of the **26th Excellence in Design** and Village Society Commendation Awards (see below). We will also receive the recommendations of the **Earth Charter** study committee, review the latest Society activities and preview some of our summertime events. Refreshments and camaraderie will follow. Call any Board member for more information. All VPIS members and the general public are welcome to attend! Please don't miss it!



The 18th annual Falls Church Independence Day Readings will take place once again in the City Council Chambers on July 4th at 12 noon. The Society extends a cordial welcome to all residents of Falls Church and the surrounding communities to participate in these patriotic readings about the origins of our country. Of course, admission is free.

The purpose of the Readings is to offer the opportunity for retelling part of the story of how the American Constitution and way of life were created. The Readings provide a framework in which we can recall our revolutionary origins. They allow us to go back in time on July 4th by reconstructing the historic context of how we came to be.

More than 80 citizens participated in the first Independence Day Readings held by the Society on July 4, 1984. Plan to take part in this year's meaningful event that recognizes the national holiday celebrating our country's origins and the democratic principles upon which our nation was founded. Lou Olom, one of the founders of the 1965 reconstituted Village Society, will lead the program.

The documents that will be read by residents of every age include: 1) George Mason's Fairfax Resolves, 2) The Virginia Declaration of Rights, mostly drafted by Mason and a precursor to the Bill of Rights, 3) the American Bill of Rights and 4) the Declaration of Independence. Copies of each are available on the Society's web site (www.VPIS.org - click on "Historical Programs".) Come and read these fascinating documents with us. They may provide new meaning to Independence Day and to the fireworks that follow in the evening.

Birdsey Grant Northrop

Patron of Village Societies

By Dave Eckert

The following information was uncovered by Society members this year, while researching the background of Virginia's first Arbor Day.

Village Improvement Societies (VIS), such as ours here in Falls Church, were common throughout the United States in the late 1800s. The earliest existence of a VIS can be traced as far back as 1824 to Poughkeepsie, New York, and the first VIS to be incorporated was in Stockbridge, Massachusetts in 1853. However, the popularity of these hometown organizations did not catch on right away.

In the 1870's, Dr. Birdsey Grant Northrop, a retired minister and state superintendent of schools from Kent, Connecticut began writing articles and traveling throughout the country encouraging the development of local organizations to plant trees, provide cultural events, and initiate and support local libraries.

Dr. Northrop was born on July 18, 1817 and educated at Yale and Yale Divinity School. In his diverse career, he was a clergyman, educator, state official (in both Connecticut and Massachusetts), author, and lecturer. He published extensively on forestry education and town planning, and was a prominent lecturer in his day.

The last thirty years of his life were dedicated to helping communities recover from the physical and emotional devastation of the Civil War. He focused on three community themes: organizing a VIS in every town, instituting Arbor Day ceremonies through local public schools, and improving educational and hous-

ing conditions for African-Americans. His energy, intellect, and power of persuasion essentially changed the face of the American community.



Our current Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) is a reincarnation (1965) of the original Falls Church VIS (1885), which in turn patterned itself after the VIS in Stockbridge. Without the national proselytizing by Dr. Northrop of Village Improvement Societies and particularly the one in Stockbridge, it is unlikely that in 1885 the citizens of Falls Church would have ever started this organization.

Dr. Northrop was invited to Falls Church by the Society and spoke at what is now the Falls Church Woman's Club on December 28, 1891. It was at that meeting that he convinced the Society to initiate the first Arbor Day in Virginia.

Our Society owes a debt of gratitude to this long-forgotten American hero for his inspiration. More information about life and accomplishments of Dr. Northrop is available on the VPIS web site: www.VPIS.org.

8th Annual Tinner Hill Street Festival

The Society is co-sponsoring the Tinner Hill Festival for the eighth year. Held on Saturday, June 16 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., across from the Tinner Hill Monument, the festival celebrates the hill where the first rural branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in the United States was formed. The festival is free and open to the public.



Musical highlights include the contemporary Philadelphia funk band "Soul Selby" plus African-American step dancing and storytelling, and a return of the fabulous Howard Brother Singers. African-American arts & crafts and food will be sold, and free sight and hearing testing from the Falls Church Lions Club will be available. There will be face painting, storytelling and a clown for children. For adults, local businesses are offering free drawings for products and services.

For more information, call 703-532-0884.

NOTICE

In order to more timely inform Society members of upcoming Board actions and activities, the agenda for each Board meeting will be placed on the Society's web site www.VPIS.org as soon as it is available. If you would also like the agenda sent to you directly by email, please send a quick note to fcvpis@yahoo.com.

Please remember, Society members are welcome to come and observe at every Board meeting.

**Project
Update:**

Neighborhood Trees Program



The City's Neighborhood Tree Program (NTP) planted its way into spring in the City of Falls Church. Forty citizen volunteers and the City's Landscaping Division planted over 20 trees (oak, fringe tree, and serviceberry) along Lincoln Avenue and added 11 more trees to complete the fall planting along Hillwood and Sherrow Avenues.

Additional trees were planted along various streets around the community. Volunteer Neighborhood Tree Coordinators Tom Clinton, Doug Fridrich, Adam Gruen, and Timothy O'Connell were assisted by volunteer coordinator Annette Mills and Landscape Supervisor Shirley Street to ensure residents are pleased with their trees.

The new NTP brochure, *Choosing the Right Tree for Your Yard*, is now available at the Mary Riley Styles Public Library, in the lobby at City Hall, and on the Society's web site. The brochure will be available at the Community Center once it opens.

For further information on the program, please call NTP Chair Annette Mills, at 703-532-0884.



Clip and Send

2001 Membership Registration Form

Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please check appropriate box(es):

- \$10 Subscribing Member
- \$25 Heritage Member
- \$50 Arboreal Member
- \$100 Preservation Member
- \$300 Tricentennial Member
- \$ _____ Additional Donation

I would like to help on the following activities (please check a general category and/or circle a specific event):

- ADMINISTRATION (Publications, Membership, Archives/Local History)
- ENVIRONMENTAL (Tree and Garden Planting, Stream Restoration, Arbor Day, Earth Day)
- CULTURAL (Attic Treasures Sale, Independence Day Readings, Summer Concerts in the Park, Farmers Market, Memorial Day booth/parade, Tinner Hill Festival booth)
- DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT (Village Design, Excellence in Design Awards)

Please complete this form and mail it with your check to:

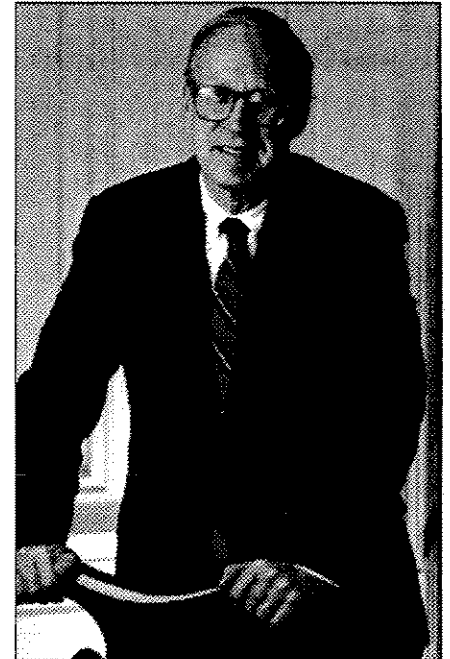
Village Preservation and Improvement Society
P.O. Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22040

National Trust for Historic Preservation President to Address Falls Church Village Society

Public Invited to Attend Annual Meeting, June 14

The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society welcomes Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as the keynote speaker for its annual Spring Meeting. Mr. Moe will address Society members on "The Main Street Program Meets Downtown Falls Church." The meeting will be held on June 14, 2001 at 7:30 p.m. in the historic Falls Church (established in 1734, rebuilt in 1839), located at the corner of East Fairfax and South Washington Streets. The public is invited to attend and partake of the refreshments served after the meeting.

In accepting the invitation to speak Mr. Moe said, "I look forward to the day when all Americans will want to save the best of the past because they realize it enriches the texture, character, and livability of our communities." In a May 4 speech before the National Press Club, Mr. Moe urged the White House to start a dialog on America's cities, declaring, "Forging effective public/private partnerships, emphasizing the preservation and reuse of existing buildings, eliminating barriers and creating incentives for reinvestment are the tools that work."



When Richard Moe became the seventh president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, he brought to the position a lifelong interest in history and a career-long commitment to public service. A native of Duluth, Minnesota, Mr. Moe graduated from Williams College in 1959 and soon launched the public-service career that led to administrative positions in city and state government and the chairmanship of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. During this period he also received a law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

In 1972 he moved to Washington to be administrative assistant to Senator Walter F. Mondale. Five years later he was named chief of staff to Vice President Mondale and a member of the Carter White House senior staff. He practiced law in Washington from 1981 until he assumed the presidency of the National Trust in January of 1993.

A member of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House and the boards of the Ford Foundation and the Civil War Trust, Mr. Moe was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Maryland in 1998 which recognized his work in the field of historic preservation. He is co-author of "Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl", a study of the causes of urban decline and the use of historic preservation as a tool for revitalization, published in 1997; and author of *The Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the First Minnesota Volunteers*, a Civil War history published in 1993.

Chartered by Congress in 1949, the National Trust is the largest nonprofit preservation organization in the United States. It has approximately 270,000 members nationwide, operates six regional offices and has 20 historic sites. As president, Mr. Moe is responsible for leading the organization in its mission to provide leadership, education and advocacy to save the nation's diverse historic places and create more livable communities for all Americans. Under his direction, the National Trust has become an outspoken and effective advocate of controlling sprawl, has launched efforts to demonstrate and document the effectiveness of preservation as a tool for community revitalization, and has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the organized preservation movement.

VPIS - Summer 2001 Schedule

June

14 **Spring General Membership Meeting** 7:30 pm—9:30 pm
The historic Falls Church Episcopal Church, 115 East Fairfax St.
Keynote address: Richard Moe, National Trust for Historic Preservation

16 **Tinner Hill Festival** 500 S. Washington St. 1 - 5 pm

21 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park** Airmen of Note - 7 pm

28 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park**
Mike Maher Quartet - 7 pm

* Don't forget to stop by the VPIS Booth at the Farmer's Market booth in front of City hall every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 noon! Falls Church and VPIS products will be available to purchase at the booth.



July

4 **Independence Day Readings**

City Council Chambers - 12 noon

5 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park** Dave Elliot Band - 7 pm

12 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park**

Andrew Acosta's New Old time Pickers - 7 pm

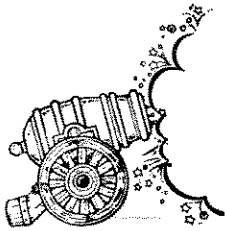
19 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park**

Falls Church Swing Ensemble - 7 pm

26 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park**

Sunshine Skiffle Band - 7 pm

August 2 **Concert in Cherry Hill Park** Falls Church Concert Band - 7 pm



Falls Church Village
Preservation and
Improvement Society
P. O. Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22040

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FALLS CHURCH, VA
PERMIT NO. 66