



# The East Providence Historical Society

# Gazette

April 2022

Volume XXXIV No. 5

Dedicated to Preserving the Heritage and Enjoying the History of Our City

## April

Sunday, April 10

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Hunt House Museum open

Exhibit:

**“Ding, Ding, Ding  
Went the Trolley”**

Jesse Albright Collection

1:30 pm

Hikes at Hunts

Meet at the Gazebo

1:30 pm

Rumford Junction Band

Playing at Gazebo

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Family Games

## May

Sunday, May 8

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Hunt House Museum open

## June

Sunday, June 12

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Hunt House Museum open

### CONTACT US AT:

East Providence  
Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774

East Providence, RI

02916-4774

Tel. (401) 473-0677

Email: [info@ephist.org](mailto:info@ephist.org)

Web Site: [ephist.org](http://ephist.org)

## President's Letter

by Cheryl Faria and Jeff Faria, Co-Presidents

Welcome to Spring! It feels good to get back into our routines and begin to think about warmer weather! The days are getting longer, birds are singing again and we're beginning to see the welcome fresh growth of leaves, blossoms and flowers.

## John Hunt House Museum

We had our first Open House of the season on Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. Although it was a windy, chilly day, we were thrilled to see so many people visit the Museum, many for the first time! The Museum, which was professionally cleaned earlier in the month, was sparkling and bright, and many people enjoyed looking at Jesse Albright's extensive collection.

Jesse was a longtime friend of the East Providence Historical Society. He served on the Museum Committee and volunteered at many events. An avid collector of all things East Providence, he often went looking for and donated items the museum needed. A large part of his collection consists of photos of what he loved, trolleys and trains and their accompanying stations and bridges. His collection also consists of maps and aerial photos of the area, local business advertisements, Rumford Chemical Works items, East Providence schools documents, and photos and items from the many amusement parks and clubs that once existed in East Providence.



Continued on page 3

**The Gazette**

Is published by the  
East Providence  
Historical Society  
eight times a year

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI  
02916-4774  
Tel. (401) 473-0677  
Web Site: ephist.org

**OFFICERS**

Cheryl Faria/Jeff Faria  
*Co-Presidents*  
Deborah Ormerod *1st Vice President*  
Eric Underhill *Recording Secretary*  
Dorothy Thornley *Treasurer*  
Pat Henry/Sandi Barber  
*Corresponding Secretary*

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Paul T. Barnum *Buildings*  
Deborah Ormerod *Curator*  
Open *Education*  
Leslie Tente *Events*  
Cheryl Faria *Finance*  
Jeffrey Faria *Grounds*  
Sandra Turgeon *Marker Program*  
Miriam Kenney/Carole DiFabio  
*Membership*  
Nancy Allen *Museum*  
Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Newsletter*  
Nancy Moore *Preservation*  
Nancy Moore *Programs*  
Nancy Moore *Publicity*  
Deborah Ormerod *Website Manager*

**The East Providence  
Historical Society**

is dedicated to preserving the heritage  
and enjoying the history of our city.

**If you are not a member we  
invite you to join now.**

Annual dues are \$25 individual, \$35  
family or business, or a Life  
Membership for \$250.

Please make check payable to:

**East Providence Historical Society**

and mail membership form to

**East Providence Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 4774**

**East Providence, RI 02916-4774**

**"2nd Sunday" Spring Open Houses**

**April 10, May 8**

**1:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

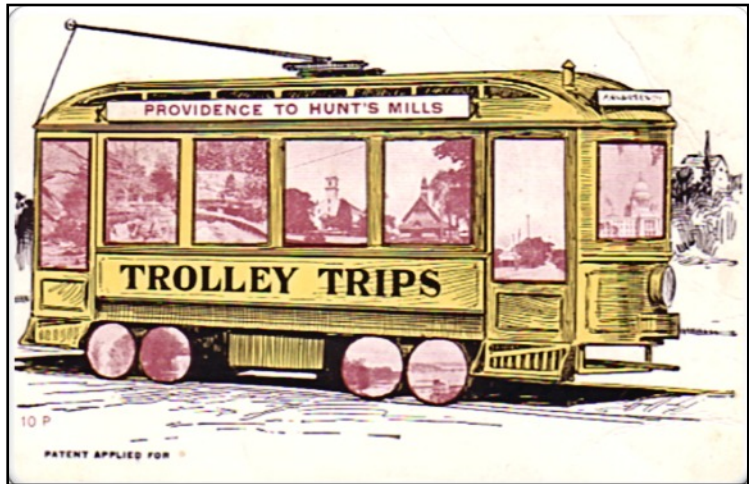
**New Exhibit: Jesse Albright Collection**

**Hikes at Hunt's : 1:30 pm Meet at the Gazebo**

**Family Games: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

**Rumford Junction Band : 1:30 pm at the Gazebo**

April signals the return of the blue herring run and the big birds which feed on them. Find a spot to watch at Herring Rock or at the dam. Check in with the 10 Mile River Group to become a fish spotter. The Albright Collection has many photos of the early trolley system in EP and some other local surprises. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions and give out free seeds. Play games with your family while you listen to the great sound of the Rumford Junction Band. The Hunt House and Hunt's Mills are ready for you!



**Membership Form**

New

Renewal/Change

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Individual

\$35 Family/Business

\$250 Life



## Presidents' Letter

From page 1

The next Open House will be on Sunday, April 13 from 1-3:30 and the Jesse Albright collection will again be on display in the Exhibit room on the first floor of the museum. In addition to the tours of the museum, guided by our knowledgeable docents, the library in the Education Center, staffed by historians Sandra Turgeon and Tom Warzeka, will be open. We will also have the monthly 1:30 pm 'Hikes at Hunt's Mills', led by Ernie Germani and Alex Kemp and children's colonial games on the lawn in front of the Museum. Weather permitting, we will have the Rumford Junction Band again playing in the Gazebo.



Mother's Day weekend.

Garden Center again this year. Jeff has been working to install some new shelving and grow lights. Our goal is to have seedling to give away to the Community Gardeners and to the East Providence community on

## RICHARG Grant

Last year we received a grant from the RI Council for the Humanities for a RI Culture, Humanities and Arts Recovery grant (RICHARG). Our new Technology Committee has been working on developing QR codes for accessing information about Museum and Education Center items and to develop a welcome sign at the entrance to the Hunt's Mills property.



## Heritage Gardens

The Heritage Gardeners will be meeting on Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> from 4-7:00 pm for our first 'Wine & Weeding' gardening session of the season to maintain the four gardens that surround the Museum. We garden from 4-6:00 pm and then adjourn to the Gazebo for a potluck dinner. On Saturday morning, March, 26, Cheryl and Jeff Faria, Dotty Thornley and Pat Henry attended a URI Master Gardener 'Meet and Greet' session to encourage new Master Gardeners to join our group. If anyone else wants to join us, please feel free to stop by!

## Community Gardens

The 26 raised bed gardens behind the John Hunt House Museum are beginning to come to life again. We have sent out renewal contracts to the 2021 Community Gardeners and almost all are planning to return to grow their own food in the 2022 season. We are fortunate to have a team of URI Master Gardeners and community gardeners working to start seeds in the



# “Happy 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Frederick Law Olmsted!”

## Barrington Parkway Designer

*Part one of this series contains Olmsted's own frank remarks about the area in the bid for his firm to do the work. Part two will assess the road from 1920 completion up to the nomination work in 1991.*

*The photos come from the Jess Welt collection (EPHS) Job # 3506 - Olmsted files, and photos from the EPHS archives*

In 1906 the firm of Olmsted Brothers, the premier American design group for scenic highways and landscapes, submitted a plan for a new boulevard in East Providence which would follow the contour of the upper bay shoreline from Warren Avenue to West Barrington. Work on what would be known as the Barrington Parkway began in 1910 and was finished by 1920 when the infamous Norway maple saplings lined the section from Fort Hill to Kettle Point. After WW II, the road became known as Veterans' Memorial Parkway and bears that name today. Many people have been under the mistaken understanding that the Parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, given the general reverence for Olmsted designs. And in fact, a full nomination application was completed in 1991 by consultant Lucinda Brockway and received full passage at the State level. For unknown reasons, the nomination was never sent on to the National Park Service which is ultimately responsible for approving the nomination.

During the recent discussions concerning the Metacomet Golf Course sale, members of Keep Metacomet Green and the EPHS began educating themselves about the history of that land and its surroundings. Researcher Anne Teipel came across the 1991 nomination for the Parkway and, realizing the importance of this designation, alerted both the Historical Society and the Historic District Commission about the 30 year lapse in follow-through by the Nat'l Park Service. Although the Parkway has protection

through the Cultural Landscape Foundation and the Metropolitan Park Commission, the EPHS has asked permission from the City and State to re-open the application through DEM which now oversees the road. Agreement that the Parkway should have national status has been accepted by all parties. An ad hoc committee comprised of the groups concerned with this re-application is being formed which will present a new request for nomination by DEM and follow the process through federal designation.

The following section is taken from the 1906 Olmsted report (Job # 3506) and generally outlines the necessity for a new road and the path it should follow and why. It is testimony to the genius of Olmsted that the Parkway, for the most part, retains the essence of the beauty of the bluff and the water features. And new development along the roadway has been moved back sufficiently allowing for entrances which are also winding and well landscaped. The East Bay Bike Path now runs along the western side and the maples didn't last 100 years but Olmsted Jr. would definitely recognize the company's work. It is entirely fitting that this nomination be renewed this year, celebrating Frederick Law Olmsted's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday April 26, 1822.



Lyon's Stock Farm views, with and without the Parkway. This area became part of the Metacomet Golf Course.

## Frederick Law Olmsted's Narrative of the Area

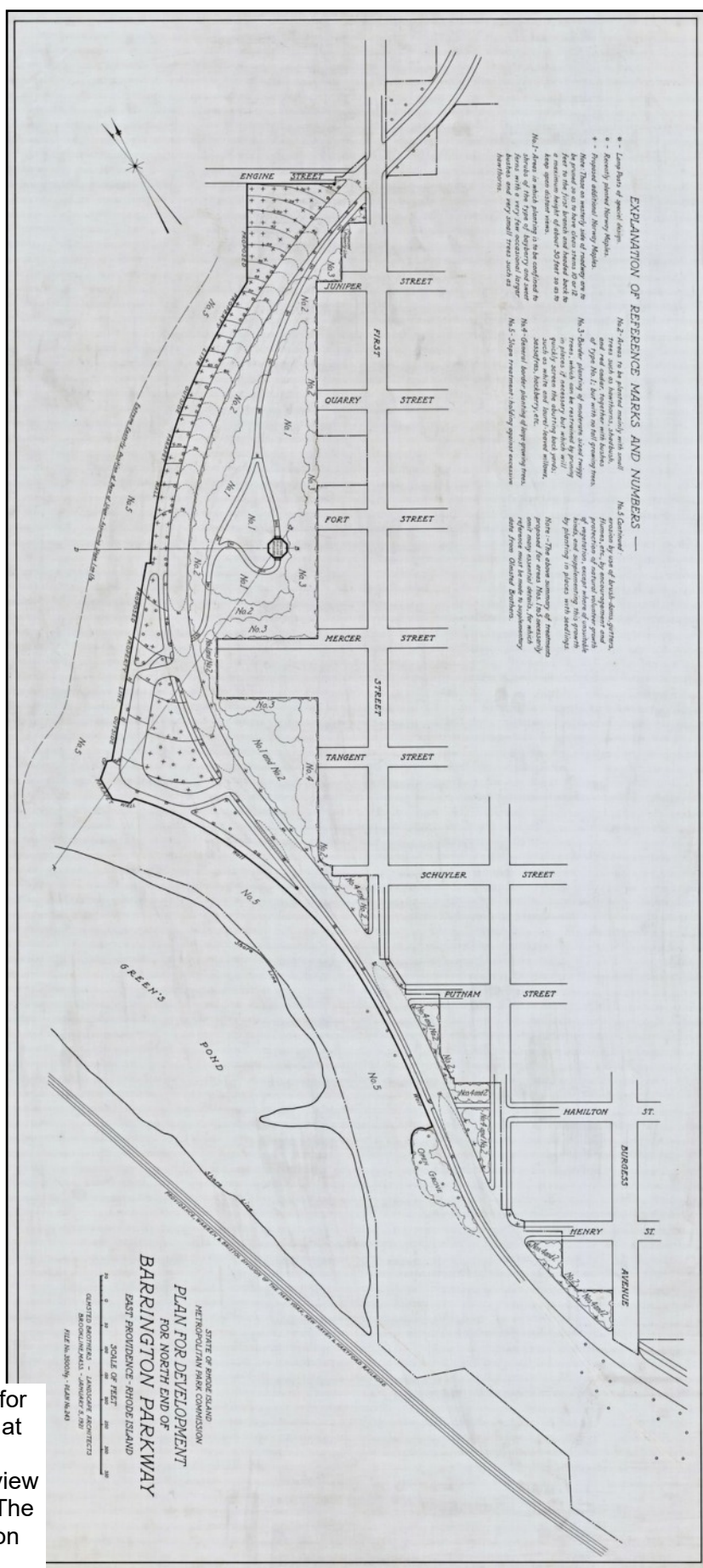
*"The obvious course for a highway to Riverside and beyond is parallel with the shore at the top of the bluffs overlooking the Bristol and Fall River railroad. As it is now, however, we have to proceed inland over the long and tedious Taunton Avenue hill, a mile and a half to the east, in order to find a road running southwest to the places on the shore. Beyond Riverside the road leading on to Barrington is almost as bad, for it contains many sharp angles by which it is unnecessarily lengthened.*

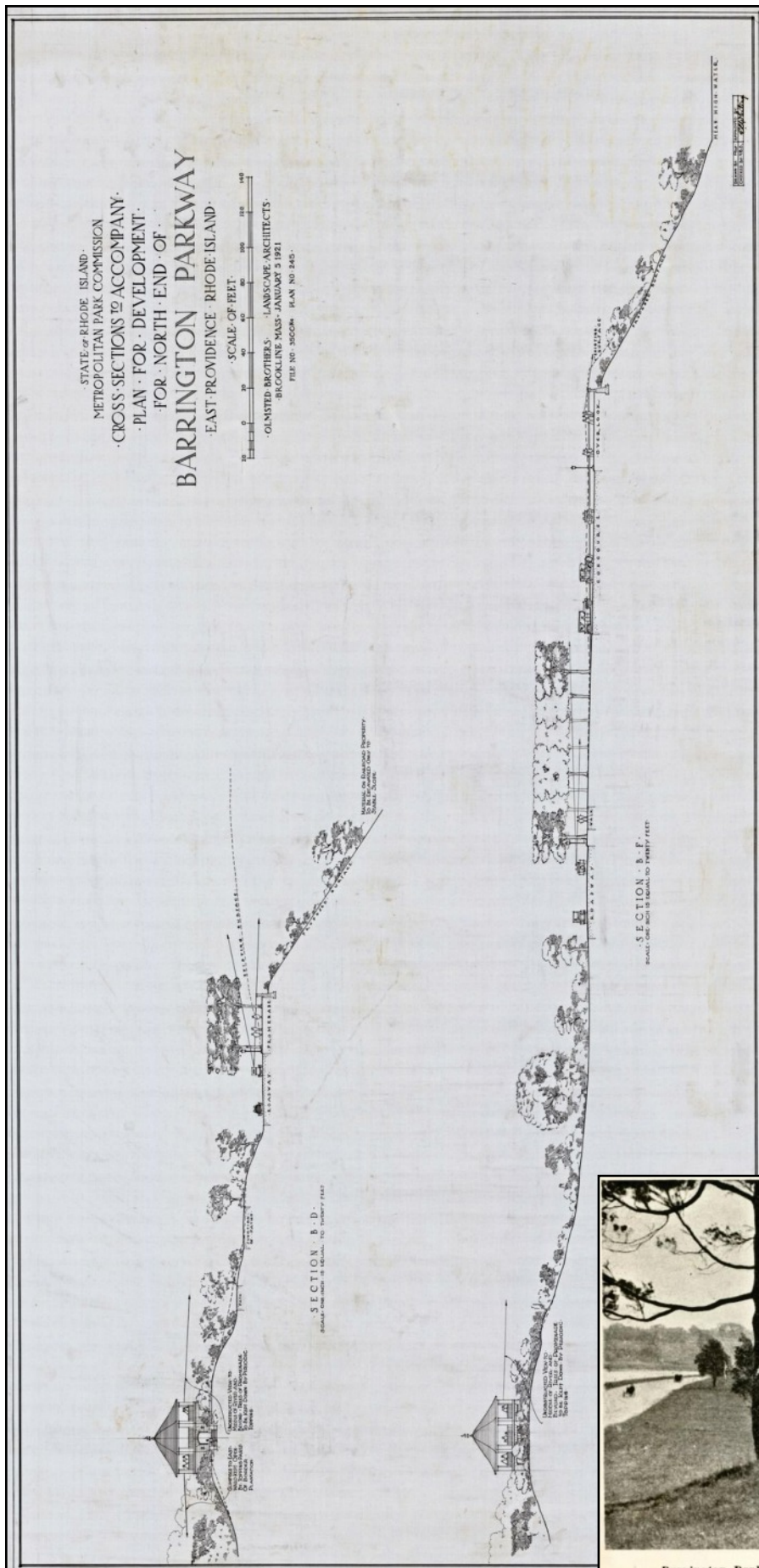
*Pawtucket Avenue, by which the southeastern towns are reached, is one of the busiest highways in the State. For the most part it is not unattractive, and from some parts of it there are grand and far-reaching views. Yet it is far from the populous waterfront, and so pitifully narrow that the trolley company has been obliged to buy a private right of way and cut down many splendid trees in order to get room to put in a second track without entirely destroying the driveway upon which a multitude of vehicles are constantly passing.*

*As soon as you have crossed the big bridge into East Providence at Watchemocket Square, you find First Street starting off at a right angle to the south in just the way that would be most direct. But you cannot drive very far on First Street, for the rains have gullied it until it looks like a miniature reproduction of a western river canyon.... The view from Fort Hill is always interesting, and when we have the glow of the setting sun, reflecting upon the still waters of the harbor and touching the great masses of smoke that roll from the tall chimneys, is combined with the sky line of the city and the ranges of distant hills, the scene takes on much beauty.*

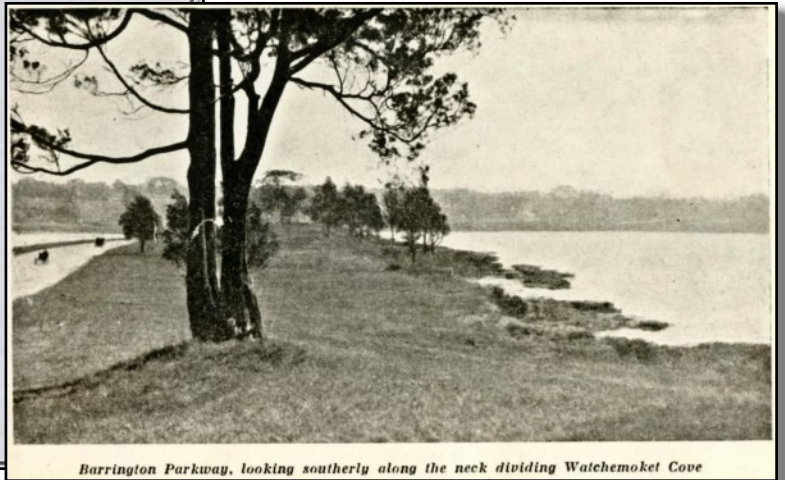
Part of the company's drawing package for the north end of the Parkway beginning at First Street..

Notice the proposed shelter to enjoy the view of the river on the west side of the road. The shelter is seen again on the cross section drawing of this area on the next page.





Behind the hill is Watchmocket - a district that is almost as crowded as any within the city limits. Nature made it beautiful but man has brought to it much ugliness. Fort Hill terminates in a precipice where the railroad excavations have cut away its western side, and south to the hilltop a flat table land extends along a bluff some seventy feet above the tracks. By happy accident, a strip four or five hundred feet wide along the edge has remained unoccupied and still affords a fine playground and promenade for the people of the tenement districts just beyond. For perhaps half a mile it is barren of trees. Beyond it is prettily wooded with cedars, and the steep sandy precipice gives place to a rounded bluff. So near is it to the homes of many people, and even to the centre of the city, that its usefulness for park land is very apparent. Down through the Lyon farm runs a beautiful grassy lane with great trees arching overhead, which the map calls *Vue de L'Eau Avenue*. If you have the effrontery to climb over the gates, you will find the way extending down to a long peninsula that nearly bisects Watchmocket Cove. Here the boulevard should cross by a little bridge or causeway. The natural grade leading up from the cove on either side is well adapted for a useful thoroughfare that should be prolonged behind Kettle Point and Squantum, and Boyden Heights and Silver Spring, until it enters the present highway in the rear of the Pomham Club where Pomham Avenue and Bullocks Point Avenue diverge."



Barrington Parkway, looking southerly along the neck dividing Watchmocket Cove

## A few views along the new Barrington Parkway

This is the lowest section of the road at Watchemoket Cove. Fort Hill is located in northerly direction, traveling south on the Parkway would take you up past Kettle Point and Squantum Woods.



The Parkway rises up toward Fort Hill. The road was lined with Norway Maples and already pedestrians enjoyed the foot path that was part of the design.

After cresting Fort Hill the traveler had a clear view of the Watchemoket section of East Providence. The dome in the foreground was the old gas storage tank.



## Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

- Spring is a great time to check your compost bin to see if it has broken down so that you can use it when planting this season. It is also a good time to turn the compost to aerate the center and bring a more rapid breakdown of material.
- One method of screening unsifted compost is to build a simple wood frame screen that would sit atop a large trash barrel. Buy heavy gauge square of 1 inch hardware cloth and build the wood frame that will sift the compost into the barrel. The



larger pieces can be scraped off and added back to the compost bin.

- Carefully rake your garden beds to clean them for the season. Add the leaves and debris to your compost pile!
- That was also an important time to attack weeds early before they flower and go to seed. As I've always said, an hour of weeding in April saves 10 hours of weeding in July!
- Once your perennials have sprouted through the soil, it is a good time to mulch the garden bed to prevent weeds from germinating. You can always scrape away the mulch when you're adding annuals to your garden later this season.
- As your lawn wakes up, treat for crabgrass when forsythia blooms.
- Prune roses by first removing any dead sections of branches. Then observe the shape that you would like the rose to generally grow into. Add compost to the soil around the roses to help give them more energy this year.



Pictured here is the fish ladder along the Ten Mile River at Hunt's Mills in East Providence. The Ten Mile River Watershed Council is looking for volunteers to count returning herring starting April 1st. Contact Keith Gonsalves at [keith@tenmileriver.net](mailto:keith@tenmileriver.net) to learn more. In addition, the East Providence Historical Society hosts an open house at this site in the Hunt House Museum on the second Sunday of each month, March through November, from 1 pm to 3:30 pm, and guided walking tours of the Hunt's Mills trail are offered at 1:30 p.m. by BHC Trail Ambassador Ernie Germani.



### Hunt's Mills Park: \$1,000+

P.T. Barnum and Patricia A. Anthony Cheryl and Jeff Faria Pat Paulson McGrail	Laurie and Bill McWeeney Dotty Thornley James N. Viara Lois Williams
--	---

### Crescent Park: \$500-\$999

Nancy Allen Roy and Claire Anderson	Nancy and Dan Moore Woods Heating Service
--	--

### Vanity Fair Park: \$200-\$499

Richard R. Bushnell and Paula Perkins David Czerwonka Carole DiFabio and William Litchman Virginia Neves Gonsalves Darryl Hardern	Elizabeth Ingraham Colin P. Kane Julie Lundgren Pat Paulson McGrail Jack and Kathy Richer Washington Trust
---	---

### Boyden Heights Park: \$100-\$199

Leroy and Karen Anderson Peter G. and Sandra M. Barilla Barbara Barnes and Beverly Pettine Patricia C. Birkes James Boyd K. Eric Crook and Joanne Perella-Crook Romeo DaSilva Bill Fazioli Wendy Edwards and Gerald Mischak Frederick F. Harrop Gordon R. and Wendy L. Wood-Hubbard	Michele Kazarian Dave and Eleanor Kelleher Miriam Kenney Valarie J. Lawson Ann Linde Tracy Moline John and Elaine Puhacz Michael and Norma Reynolds Ken and Barbara Rix Ed and Paula Serowick Bruce H. Tanner Charlene Underhill David Weed Margaret Wieboldt Kevin Zona
---	--

### Friends: \$25-\$99

American Ring Company Helen Archibald Sandra Barber Blackstone Valley Tourism Council James Robert Boyd, Jr. Ivan and Malinda Colon Helen Dooley Christine Ellis Gil Fletcher Pat Henry	Ngina Johnson Thomas J. Lavin III Ruth McCarthy K.A. McGovern Jayne Poland Alicia and Tom Ramian Mark Saunders Bonney B. Sevellon Barbara Simon Meredith Swan Jean and Gary Zunda
---	---

## The Historian's Circle

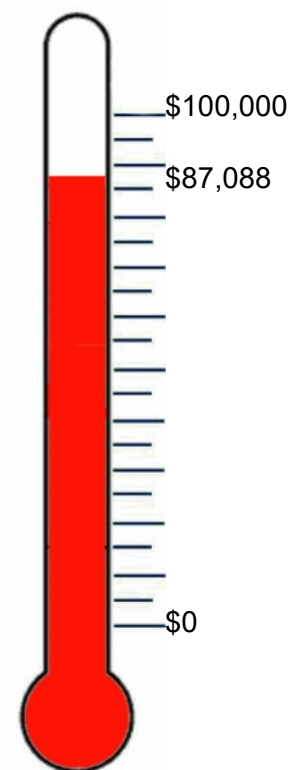
Thank you to those who donated to our Annual fund. With your Historian's Circle gift, you are helping the Historical Society meet our annual, strategic and endowment goals for the 2022 calendar year.

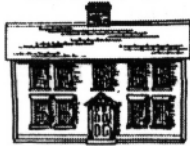
### Thank You!!

*If there are any errors or omissions in this list, please let Cheryl Faria know so we can correct it for the next issue of The Gazette.*  
401-419-8682  
cherylafaria@verizon.net

## EP Historical Society Endowment!!

We have set a goal to raise \$100,000 to establish an endowment for East Providence Historical Society. So far we have raised \$87,088 towards that goal.





*John Hunt House*

East Providence Historical Society  
P.O. Box 4774  
East Providence, RI 02916

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Providence, RI**  
**Permit #2712**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## Thank You to Our Sponsors!



Thank you for supporting the  
East Providence Historical  
Society.



**William Francis**  
Financial Advisor

1275 Wampanoag Trl Ste 12  
Riverside, RI 02915-1217  
401-694-1237

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING  
edwardjones.com

Member SIPC

MKT-5894K-A

