

February 25, 2016 | Around Town

## Newport arboretum has Jamestown ties

The Frederick Law Olmsted Park and Arboretum at the National Museum of American Illustration on Bellevue Avenue in Newport recently was recognized as an accredited arboretum.

Two Jamestowners are actively involved with the arboretum. Jim Rugh, a licensed arborist and former Jamestown Tree Preservation and Protection Committee chairman, is the volunteer coordinator of the arboretum. He is in charge of plan development and record-keeping. Matt Largess, owner of Largess Forestry, serves on the arboretum's advisory board. In 2006 Largess was named by Yankee Magazine as "Tree Preservationist of the Decade."



A worker with Largess Forestry installs a lightning rod in the cucumber magnolia at the National Museum of American Illustration. If lightning strikes, the tree won't be harmed. It's part of an effort to protect the historic trees

The state's newest arboretum seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of trees by preserving and enhancing two historically important, diverse gardens representative of the area's Gilded Age in the mid-19th century. It also honors the pioneering work of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's first landscape architect.

Half of the arboretum consists of the site of the Stoneacre, a mansion designed in 1884 and landscaped by Olmsted. It was Olmsted's first commission after he named the new profession "landscape architecture." The mansion was demolished in the 1960s.

The other half of the arboretum consists of Vernon Court, an adaptation of an early 18th century French chateau built in 1898 and landscaped in a manner similar to Hampton Court Palace's Pond Garden in England.

Efforts to revitalize and protect the historic trees throughout the public space are ongoing and new specimens have been added.