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FOR WEEKEND EDITION RELEASE
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**An INVITATION to A CELEBRATION OF TREES
at the NMAI & F. L. OLMSTED PARK AND ARBORETUM**

The **Frederick Law Olmsted Park and Arboretum** at the world-renowned **National Museum of American Illustration (NMAI)**, located at Vernon Court, 492 Bellevue Avenue, Newport, RI 02840, is holding a gathering on **Saturday, May 28th** to celebrate our recent arboreal accomplishments.

The Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Program, administered by the **Rhode Island Tree Council**, recently evaluated the trees on the grounds of the NMAI and Olmsted Park and identified four as "State Champion Trees," the oldest and/or largest of their respective species.

Having four "State Champion Trees" at one location is, in itself, remarkable! The particular four trees selected are unprecedented for two reasons: Firstly, many other Rhode Island Champion Trees are on private land and unavailable to the public, while these particular Champions are on land which welcomes public visits; Secondly, three of the selected trees were planted in 1884 by America's first and most preeminent landscape architect, **Frederick Law Olmsted**, for whom our Olmsted Park & Arboretum are named.

Olmsted personally planted the Champion Trees on these grounds, as well as many of the other trees in the vicinity. He planted in groupings, with many redundant selections. Periodically, the lesser, weaker trees were culled, which ultimately left the best of each species for us to enjoy today. This past January the grounds of the NMAI were certified as a **Level 1 Arboretum** by the international arboretum certification organization, ArbNet, becoming the fourth professionally accredited arboretum in Newport.

To note these momentous events, the NMAI is holding "**A Celebration of Trees**" on the grounds of our F. L. Olmsted Park & Arboretum on Bellevue Avenue in Newport from **11am-1pm on Saturday, May 28, 2016** (rain date 5/29/16). The public is invited and the event is free. At the celebration we will formally accept the designation of these trees from the Rhode Island Tree Council and will officially dedicate the property as a certified arboretum. There will be brief remarks from state officials and dignitaries, including Dr. Brian Maynard, Professor of Horticulture in URI's Department of Plant Science, tree care information, climbing demonstrations, free soil testing, and a public tour of the grounds at the conclusion of the event. **All Celebration attendees will also receive half-price admission to the NMAI on the 28th.** We hope to see you there!

Yours Sincerely,

James Rugh, Director of Special Projects
National Museum of American Illustration, and F. L. Olmsted Park and Arboretum

For more information, contact the NMAI at (401) 851-8949, email art@americanillustration.org, or visit our website at www.americanillustration.org. Off-season hours (Labor Day-Memorial Weekend): Fridays, 11am-5pm. Summer hours (Memorial Weekend-Labor Day): Thursday through Sunday, 11am-5pm. Guided tour given on Fridays at 3pm, year-round. \$18 adults, \$16 seniors/military, \$12 children ages 5-12. Children under 5 not admitted. Schedule subject to change; please call to confirm.