



RITree Sentinel

TREE ACTION: Counting Our Rings



POINTS OF INTEREST

Change Of Date

RITree Annual Conference (see page 3)

RITree At Work

(see page 2)

Tree Steward Education Course (see page 7)

New Board Member Profile (see page 3)

Technical Information (see pages 4 & 5)

We're often asked, by people who know we do tree preservation work, how old we think a certain large, elegant tree might be.

My husband, David, will joke, "Let's cut it down and count the rings."

RITree, by now, is sturdy and mature, with well-formed branches reaching out into the lives of many Rhode Islanders. Luckily, we can trace our history while leaving our organization intact.

This summer, RITree has been doing just that, as we work on a new 5-year Plan, the third since our beginnings in the early 1990s.

It is encouraging to see how many of our goals we have accomplished, such as establishment of the Tree Steward Course, with its endowment. There are ongoing areas of endeavor, like public awareness, outreach, and the need for strong partnerships with other environmental groups. And there are new priorities, like stronger advocacy and a greater voice in the related fields of arboriculture and urban forestry. Even our mission statement is up for review, to be sure it still articulates, clearly and fully, the spirit of where we want to be going in the future.

It is remarkable work to be doing, looking both backwards and forwards on behalf of all our members.

And I think I speak for everyone who has been a part of the Review Team, when I say it has been an honor to feel engaged and inspired by our shared past and future. We are a beautiful tree, and our rings are growing.

This Tree Action was written by Marguerite Flanders, who is Exe. Secretary and Project Coordinator for the Tree Council, but in real life Margie, as we call her, is a Poet. She lives in Wakefield with her husband David, who also is very active on the council. Both stay very busy with local environmental organizations and issues.

RITree At Work

Did you ever wonder how RITree manages to offer so many programs, put out a newsletter, keep in touch with all members and tree stewards, and still have time to hold Board meetings, Executive Committee meetings, and an Annual Conference?

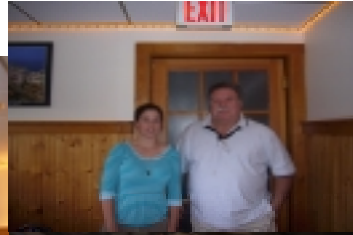
The answer is, it takes time, organizational skills, the work of two dozen or so RITree board members, staff, and thousands of volunteer hours each year. Much of the work is done by folks working at home, in constant touch with each other by phone or e-mail. Projects and programs happen across the State. But the center of operation is still in Providence, at the home office of Vernon and Jeanne Current.

On any given day, you might find Jeanne working with Margaret Brookner and tree stewards assembling manuals for the next Tree Steward Course, conferring with John Campanini and Margie Flanders on an upcoming issue of the Sentinel or working with Doris Alberg on our annual report. Dozens of calls and e-mails are answered or referred to others. The many questions or requests citizens and RITree Members have are for information about our work or application forms for our many programs. Jeanne also creates and sends out all our brochures and membership letters, as well as thank you notes to contributors. If it is September, you might

find Pauline Smith in the office, sending notices about the Arbor Day Poster Contest to schools and community centers. You may find Fred Stolle talking to Steve Pilz on the phone getting updates on the Arbor Day Plantings.



checked and updated by summer interns Sanne Kure-Jensen, a tree steward, and Kate Sayles, URI forestry student, under the training of Paul Dolan, in our office in N. Scituate.



On a recent Wednesday several members of the Strategic Planning Team met to discuss progress of the 5-year Plan, and then stayed for the Executive Committee meeting. Vern & Joe working hard to keep our complex book-keeping balanced at the end of the day. Afterwards, Jeanne and Margie discussed the menu for the Annual Conference. Just one afternoon at the Current's house! And from this center, work spreads out across the state, with plans for the West Elmwood Summer Mentoring Program, City Tree Inventories, lectures, and Tree Steward 2 workshops. The new Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Registry data is being

Fred and John meet with potential donors. Margie writes memos to the Board or types up minutes. The Grants Committee, headed up by John DiPanni, is reading ATB proposals. Siobhan is entering data on the Volunteer Hours Database. This is only some of what gets done, by some of our dedicated members. There is so much to do, and such varied work, from digging holes for young trees, to envisioning our future. Some of the results are invisible, some are out there shading our streets. But it is all important. Join us. Be a part of our mission: to care about trees, and to assure that they remain a big part of the lives of all Rhode Island.

© 2007 Rhode Island Tree Council
P O Box 6144,
Providence, RI 02940
401-861-1995
RITree@RITree.org
www.ritree.org

RITree Sentinel Editors
John Campanini, Jr.
Jeanne Current
Margie Flanders

Layout– Jeanne C Current

Proofreading–Sallie Sirhal

Officers:

Chairperson
Frederick W. Stolle, Esq.
Vice Chairperson
Margaret Ryan
Treasurer
Vernon G. Current
Secretary
Marguerite Flanders

Board of Directors:

Doris Alberg, Lisa Beaulieu,
Rick Beaulieu, Sara
Bradford, John C. Carter,
John L. DiPanni, Paul Dolan,
Thomas Dupree, David
Flanders, Jay Glasson, Esq.,
Craig Hotchkiss, Matt
Largess, Tom Morra, David
Nickerson, Steven Pilz,
Chris Rooney, Siobhan
Sullivan, Matt Sweet,
Doug Still

Advisors:

Sharon Conard-Wells
Patty Cottrill
Chris Fletcher
Brian Maynard, PhD
Scott Wheeler

Trustees:

Peggy Boyd Sharpe

Consultants

Margaret Brookner
John Campanini
Jeanne Current
Margie Flanders

Contributors

John Campanini,
Paul Dolan
Margie Flanders
Tom Morra
Scott Wheeler
Sanne Kure-Jensen

RITree In The News

RITree Annual Conference-October 12, 2007



RITree has moved its Annual Conference from spring to fall, and from Newport to Warwick this year. We are planning a great day of speakers, awards, a shorter RITree General Meeting, and a superb buffet luncheon.

We have learned from past experience what it takes to run an entertaining conference; timely subjects, excellent food, and an inviting setting where people are happy to meet and socialize. We are proud to announce that in 2007, once again, we will follow this winning combination. The topics we will discuss, climate change, storm damage and the profession of arboriculture, have all become more closely allied since Hurricane Katrina devastated the City of New Orleans in 2005. Our talented speakers will examine this relationship. Along the way, they will also explain what we need to know and how the rules that govern them have changed, and why these subjects are destined to affect living systems in present and future generations.

Tree Stewards are the heart and soul of the RITree Council. There are about 550 of them in all. Many give their time freely, helping us spread our message of tree care across the state. Our records show that nine of them have done something very special; they have logged more 350 volunteer hours of community service. They will be honored for this special achievement during the Award's Ceremony portion of the conference's morning session.

Finally, the 2007 conference will be held for the first time at the Aldrich Mansion, the former estate home of Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, which overlooks scenic Narragansett Bay in Warwick. The Chateau-styled Mansion has seventy-rooms, many of them adorned with ornate paintings and woodcarvings only found in the 20th century homes of the rich and famous. The 75 acre-grounds surrounding Aldrich Manor are impeccably graced with sprawling emerald-colored lawns and diverse arrangements of many notable trees and shrubs. We believe it has the right stuff for making this conference a truly memorable experience. So come join us for a nice day of good fun, exciting lectures and other delights, like the guided tour of the estate's beautiful trees, which will start immediately following the conclusion of the conference.

RITree Board Member Profile– Who Is Doug Still?



Doug Still, City Forester of Providence, is the most recent addition to the RITree Board of Directors. Hardly a stranger to RITree, he is known to many of us through his work on the Providence Street Tree

programs. But what we didn't know was that he received a B.A. in Art History from Oberlin College, and worked in an art gallery in NYC for five years after college. There, he began taking continuing ed. classes at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx in botany, horticulture, and landscape design.

What he really loved were the classes on tree identification. It made him first start to notice the trees on his block in Brooklyn, and how important they were to the city. Wondering how he could make a new career out of his interest, Doug researched urban forestry, and applied to graduate school. Penn State University took him in without much undergraduate science background. After two years studying with Henry Gerhold*, he returned to New York City to work for the NYC Parks Department in the Central Forestry Division, where he worked for nine years before coming to Providence.

Doug was actually born in Wakefield, RI, and grew up on Cape Cod, so he loves being back in New England. One of his recent interests is history, and he's been learning a great deal about early Providence and Rhode Island, and finds it fascinating to understand the history and changes in the landscape, especially when it comes to parks (or even specific trees) that he now helps manage. He has also been doing a great deal of family genealogy, tracing his mother's family (Westcott) back to Stukely Westcott, one of the original settlers of Providence along with Roger Williams in 1636.

Since being appointed City Forester in 2005, Doug has shown himself to be a natural ally of RITree, and we are very pleased to welcome him to the Board of Directors.

**Dr. Henry Gerhold is a Professor of Forest Genetics at Penn State University that has done extensive research in urban forestry, especially in developing new urban tree cultivars. He wrote the reference "Street Tree Factsheets."*



Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Registry by Sanne Kure-Jensen

Beginning in the 1970, Richard Champlain, a noted ecologist from Jamestown, measured and recorded hundreds of native and naturalized trees throughout Rhode Island. Through the generosity of many donors, including Helen Walker Raleigh, and technical support from leaders in the forestry community, RITree is now able to continue the project that Richard Champlain started years ago.

RITree, the Division of Forest Environment, the RI Natural History Survey, the Society of American Foresters, and the International Society of Arboriculture are currently compiling the Champion Tree list. They will be measuring trees to find the largest of each species, using a formula developed by American Forests, that incorporates a tree's height, circumference, and crown spread.

In May of this year, RITree hired three field examiners to record and document RI's Champion Trees, using Champlain's list and records compiled by scores of volunteers in previous years. Kate Sayles is working in the northern part of the state, Doug Dalton is covering the southern part of the state, and the city of Newport, and Sanne Kure-Jensen is covering most of Newport and Bristol counties. Their work also includes the many outstanding ornamental specimens planted a century or more ago. Please go to www.ritree.org Helen Walker Raleigh Champion Tree Program or call 401-861-1995 for more info.

Dear Dr. Dendro:

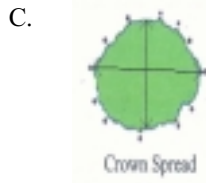
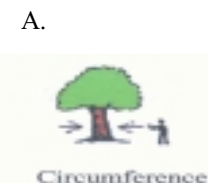
I'm excited that RITree is looking for Champion Trees. I think I have one, a huge Sugar maple. My problem is I don't know how to measure it and figure out it's total points. Can you help me?

Vincent F., Warwick, RI

Dr. Dendro replies:

Yes, Vincent I can help. Just read the following explanation. A champion tree is the biggest tree of its kind based on total points. Points are awarded from measurements taken of the tree's circumference, height, and crown spread. The tree with the highest total point number is determined to be the state champion. Take the measurements and convert them to points as described below:

- Circumference** Record in inches the smallest circumference between 4 1/2 feet and the ground below the lowest fork; score 1 point per inch.
- Total Height** Record in feet the distance between the base of the trunk and topmost twig; score 1 point per foot.
- Crown Spread** Record in feet average width of crown measured in two directions. Divide number by 1/4; score 1 point per foot.



Blithewold's Magic Trees by Sanne Kure-Jensen



As part of our work on the Champion Tree Project, Kate Sayles and I measured nearly a dozen of the magnificent trees at Blithewold Mansion, Garden & Arboretum in Bristol. One of Blithewold's signature trees is their Giant Sequoia, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*. Julie Morris shared its wonderful history.

John De Wolf, Blithewold's landscape designer, brought a sequoia seedling back from a trip to California and grew it in the greenhouses at Prospect Park in Brooklyn where he was Superintendent. When the tree outgrew its greenhouse location, De Wolf shipped it via train to Bristol in 1911, where it was planted in the Enclosed Garden. He also planted *Chamaecyparis* (False Cypress) *Taxus baccata*

(English Yew) and *Sciadopitys verticillata* (Umbrella Pine) nearby to act as nursery trees, protecting the sequoia's roots and keeping the winter winds at bay. Eleven other sequoias on Blithewold's grounds were propagated from this first specimen in the Enclosed Garden.

This lovely Giant Sequoia reaches nearly 90 feet. Kate and I also measured nearly a dozen potential champion trees at Blithewold including lovely specimens of *Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky Coffee Tree), *Liquidambar styraciflua* (Sweet Gum) and a very large *Juglans mandshurica* (Manchurian Walnut).

Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum is located at 101 Ferry Road, Route 114, in Bristol, Rhode Island. The grounds are open year round from 10 am to 5 pm daily. There is an admission charge of \$10.00. The mansion is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm through Columbus Day. For additional information see www.blithewold.org or call 401-253-2707.

-
- D. **Total Points** Circumference + Total Height + 1/4 Crown Spread = total points

For example, let's calculate the total points for the current Champion Sugar maple located in Glocester, RI.

The circumference is 176 inches; height 95 feet; average crown spread 120 feet. The total point score for this tree is:
 $176 + 95 + 120 / 4 (30) = 301$.

So, Vincent get out your measuring tools and calculator and get going; if your Sugar maple point total exceeds 301, it's the new state champion!

GLOSSARY CORNER

Excurrent vs Decurrent

These may not be common terms used in our everyday discussion of trees, but they are very important, nonetheless, and are explained in the Tree Stewards Education Course to further our students' understanding of basic tree structure and how trees grow.

The terms, excurrent and decurrent, refer to the two general forms (the shape created by the trunk and branches) that we observe in trees. The **excurrent** form is characteristic of trees with a cone-shaped or pyramidal crown (See Fig 1). Trees with this form have lateral branches radiating from a strong central leader. Most conifers (pine, spruces, etc.,) and many deciduous trees (linden, Pin oak, etc.,) have an excurrent form.

Trees with **decurrent** form differ from those with excurrent form in that they lack a main leader to the top of the plant. Instead, their crown is composed of several to many large, equal-sized branches (See Fig 2). These large branches are often called scaffold branches. Trees with this pattern of growth often produce round to wide-spreading crowns. Most deciduous trees, especially as they mature, have a decurrent form (Red oak, elm, and Japanese zelkova, etc.).

Finally, despite these different patterns of growth, periodic pruning is the key for maintaining good branch structure in both excurrent and decurrent species. In the former, pruning should focus on the elimination of any overly aggressive limbs that would challenge the central leader. In the latter, it should focus on the development of alternating scaffold branches by eliminating any multiple limbs growing at the same location (opposite) along the trunk.

Patterns of growth, tree structure, and more are important concepts taught at the Tree Stewards Education Course. For details on this program, contact RITree at 401-861-1995 or by e-mail at RITree@RITree.org.

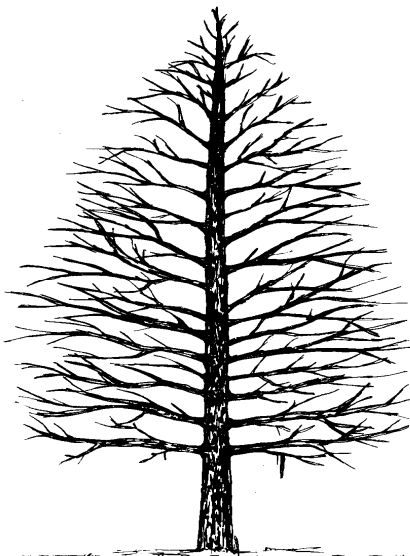


Figure 1. Branches radiate out from a central stem in trees with an excurrent form.

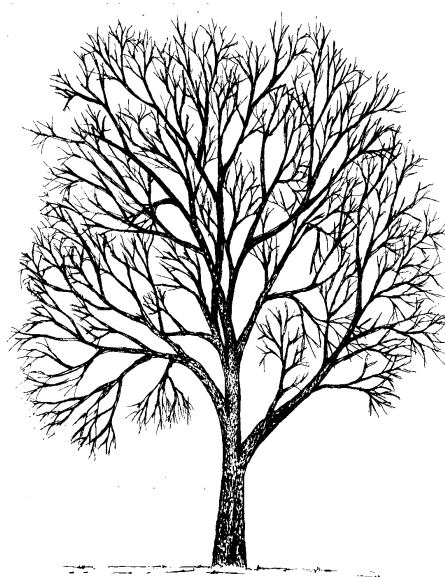


Figure 2. Decurrent trees lack a central leader; the crown is composed of a number of equal-sized branches.

Around the State

Habitat For Humanity Tree Plantings

In April, RITree participated in two recent Habitat for Humanity projects in North Providence. The landscapes for the two newly-built houses were being coordinated by members of the RI Federation of Garden Clubs, and we offered to plant a tree at each site, as part of our Arbor Day Planting Program.

We kept in touch over the winter, and chose trees appropriate for the small yards, coordinated planting dates, and discussed the right spot for the trees. The two Chinese dogwoods were donated by RITree, through generous funding from the **Mihalides Family Foundation**.

RITree members planted the trees, and properly mulched them, while other volunteers were busily planting shrubs and other greenery. Those of us who worked on the project were inspired by the many folks putting in long hours to bring beauty to the two neighborhoods.

We were also pleased to teach the new tenants about the care and planting of young trees, so the dogwoods will continue to thrive.

RITree hopes to continue our partnership with this important organization. Habitat For Humanity is changing the lives and landscapes of many Rhode Islanders, and we look forward to working with them on more tree plantings.

Recent Tree Warden Appointments

Ray Olson – Smithfield; Ray is a former Tree Steward. He is an ISA Certified Arborist. Before retiring 2 years ago, he was employed for 10 years by the City of Providence as an urban forestry inspector.

Robert Sepe – North Providence; Robert previously worked for Northeastern Tree Service and D & D Tree Service as a sales representative. He is a RI certified arborist.

Paul Pagliarini – Johnston; Paul is a RI certified arborist. He is a co-owner of Central Nurseries, Johnston, and runs its Construction and Maintenance Division.

.....
Cathy Sparks was recently named by Governor Carcieri as Chief of the RIDEM-Division of Forest Environment. Cathy becomes the first woman in the 100 year history of this agency's founding to hold this post. Prior to being named Chief, Cathy was responsible for the division's forest health monitoring program.

RITree sends their congratulations to all of these persons and wishes them the best of luck in their new positions.

WHAT'S UP IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

RITree would love to hear from any Tree Stewards, Tree Wardens, Conservation Commissions or Tree Boards, or RITree members, etc. who can report on tree-related events, plantings, programs, or tree policy issues in their city or town. Send news to: ritree@ritree.org

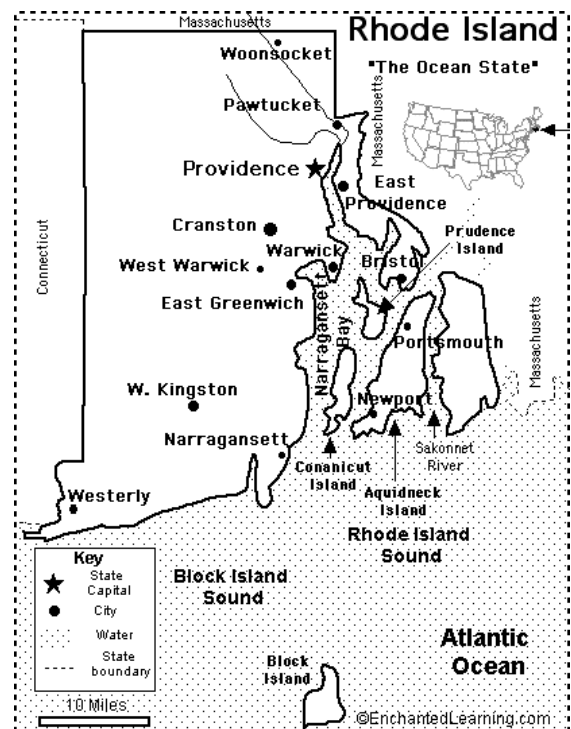
Providence-City Forester Douglas Still announced the key findings of the year-long Providence Tree Tally at a news conference held at a Smith Hill neighborhood park in late June. The results show that Providence's 25,000 street trees are worth about \$81 million. Complete inventory results can be viewed at:

<http://204.17.79.244/pforest/index.html>

East Providence-Nearly 80% of this community's street tree inventory has been completed according to Tree Warden Michael Bartlett. The tree count currently stands at 4,307 trees with about ¼ of this town's 190 linear miles of roads still needing to be surveyed. Inventory specialists Pauline Smith and Laura Allen plan to finish this tree analysis project by late fall 2007.

Lincoln-Former Tree Steward Judy Hadley is hard at work coordinating Lincoln's first ever tree inventory project. Volunteers are needed to help canvass town streets. A training session will take place on August 30, 2007 between 6 pm and 9 pm at Lincoln Town Hall. For more information, or to volunteer, call Judy at 401-724-5292.

Portsmouth -Portsmouth is the most recent to attain Tree City USA status.



Quick Tree Announcements

RITree Stewards Pin Coming Soon

The RITree Council's official Tree Stewards Volunteer Hours pin, designed by Tree Steward Robert Matthews, will be coming to you soon. Tree Stewards are eligible for a pin when they have completed the basic education course, and reported 30 hours of volunteer time. People who missed classes are invited to make them up during any subsequent session.

As each Tree Steward achieves 30 hours of community service, they will receive their green and gold pin with a "30" charm. As they send in reported hours for each level thereafter (100, 300, 500 and 1000) they will receive a new numerical charm to hang from their pin.

The only stipulation on volunteer time is that it concerns trees and in some way benefits the broader community. It is not limited to Tree Council events or work, and can include advocacy, education, or planning, as well as hands-on tree planting or care. Hours can be reported by letter or e-mail, and should include date, location, type of activity, and approximately how many participants if it was a group activity.

So, Tree Stewards, be proud of the time you have given, to be a good citizen and to better our earth. More than 150 Tree Stewards have sent in their recorded hours and will receive their pins very soon. Please send in your hours if you haven't already, and continue to watch how quickly you rise from one level to the next. Best of all, the pins are stunning, and sure to get noticed. What a great way to advocate for trees, by wearing on your hat or jacket!

BECOME A RHODE ISLAND TREE STEWARD!

Would you like to learn more about:

Tree biology
Tree identification
Tree planting & pruning
Tree health
Urban forestry
Soils
Untold benefits of trees

Tree Stewardship combines learning about and caring for trees, as well as understanding how people and trees can best grow together! The classes this fall are to be held at the **DaVinci Center**

**470 Charles Street
Providence**

SIX EVENING CLASSES: 6:30 TO 9:00 PM
Wednesdays Sept. 19-Oct. 24

See application on back page.
TWO SATURDAY OUTDOOR WORKSHOPS
To be announced

Please take time to renew your 2008 RITree Council membership!

Please take time to renew by responding to your 2008 renewal letter that you will be receiving after October 1, 2007 or by filling out the membership box provided below. Many of our members are unable to do hands on projects, but your financial support is also very important. Please give a little more this year to help support the council — it's an ongoing work all year long!

Leaf \$35.00 Trunk \$100.00

Branch \$50.00 Forest \$250.00

(please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Tel: H _____ W _____

E-Mail _____

Credit Card# VC or MC _____

Exp. Date _____

Check Out Our Web Site

www.ritree.org

Two excellent articles, too lengthy for the Sentinel, are posted on the RITree Web site for all to read.

One, by ISA-certified arborist and RITree Board Member, Tom Morra, is titled **Arborists' Role in Educating the Consumer: Just How Important Is It?** Tom discusses the tricky issue of working for people who are knowledgeable enough to know they should hire an arborist, but who sometimes instruct them to do work that is not appropriate or arboriculturally sound. This thought-provoking article speaks to both arborists and consumers, in its plea to recognize the value of trees, and the need to give them the best care possible.

The second article, by City Forester of Newport, Scott Wheeler (on RITree's Board of Advisors), is about a **Municipal Arborist Exchange** program, matching Scott with an arborist in Guernsey, the 2nd largest of the Channel Islands, off the French coast but tied politically to Great Britain. Scott tells a fascinating story of meeting with the principal arboricultural Officer, with whom he shared many connections and concerns. It is also the story of an island with a unique challenge: dealing with Dutch elm disease, when an Elm species, known as Guernsey Elm, represented over half the tree cover on the island.

To read both articles in full, check out www.ritree.org, and browse the other links as well.



RITree Council
 PO Box 6144
 Providence, RI 02940
 (401) 861-1995
 www.ritree.org

Non-Profit Organization US Postage PAID Providence, RI Permit #1425
--

Please register me for the upcoming Fall 2007 Tree Stewards Education Course, DaVinci Center, 470 Charles Street, Providence Wednesdays Sept. 19–Oct. 24, 2007

(please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Tel: H _____ W _____

E-Mail _____

Credit Card# VC or MC _____

Exp. Date _____

*Please return with **\$55.00** check
 or credit card # and exp. date to*

RITREE COUNCIL
 P O BOX 6144
 PROVIDENCE, RI 02940

*For immediate and secure registration
 by credit card or for more information,
 call or e-mail: Jeanne / office systems*

Tel: 401-861-1995
Fax 401-331-7701
RITree@RITree.org