

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Summer 2010

### May 15 Work Day

by Gail McCormick

Volunteers from People Making A Difference (PMD) provided very valuable assistance at the last Friends of Spy Pond Park Work Day, especially by their extensive cleaning of the shoreline.



Vaccaro Family (David, his son David, Mark, and Claudia) from Stoneham; Noel Jeon, Boston; Jane Lee, Arlington; and Priscilla Lippert, Cambridge Not pictured: PMD Founder & Executive Director Lori Tsuruda, Boston

PMD is a nonprofit organization formed to promote informed and responsible volunteerism through hands-on work on the part of volunteers who help local communities. We greatly appreciated their assistance. Other volunteers included the Arlington/Belmont high school crew team members and area residents who pulled up invasive weeds and grass and assisted with grooming the shoreline.

The next Work Day will be on June 26th from 1-4 p.m. with a rain date on Sunday, the 27th. Weeds are particularly prolific at this time of year, so we'll need as much help as possible. Bring gloves if you have them and meet at the end of the Park near the playground where you will find FSPP volunteers ready to put you to work. Teenagers need a parental signature on the [liability waiver form](#) available on our website.

Information about the rest of this year's work dates can be found on the FSPP website [friendsofspypondpark.org](http://friendsofspypondpark.org).

### Adopt a Spot

by Anne Ellinger

Do you have a favorite spot in Spy Pond Park, someplace you frequently return to and enjoy? Perhaps you often watch the sunset from "the third rocky outcrop to the right of the beach." Maybe most mornings you watch your toddler run up and down the sandy ramp in the area in front of the playground. Or there's a special tree you lean against as you stretch after a run.

If you have a special spot, what if you "adopted it" as a place to take care of? As I wrote in last month's newsletter, almost every day I exercise by dancing on the staircase between the bike path and the playground. I've informally adopted it. I pick up the litter – not only the beer bottles and brown paper bags, but the little flotsam and jetsam that collects on the edge: cigarette filters, scraps of foil from gum, the plastic ring off a bottle. That's pleasantly concrete, but what's REALLY satisfying is that bit by bit, I'm removing the grass that's overgrowing the sandy path to the stairs. I bring my trowel, and each day prod up turf for the duration of one song on my ipod. Three minutes a day... and by the end of the summer it will be all clear.



I imagine I'm not the only one who cares for that area. Most days I spot other Park-lovers quietly picking up trash or pulling out invasive plants, and for all I know others have a fondness for the stairs. If we each adopted the spot we frequented most often – cleaning trash, pulling weeds, removing invasive plants, keeping the paths from being overgrown – we could easily keep the whole Park green and clean. Maybe the Friends of Spy Pond Park could even create an online map of the park where we noted our special spots and could see areas yet to be adopted.

In the meantime, feel free to adopt any spot of your choice. The park will thank you with its beauty.





# Spy Pond Weed Treatment

by Bill Eykamp

Some of us witnessed the airboat cruising Spy Pond on June 1st. (The Everglades comes to Spy Pond.) Pictured is Gerry Smith of Aquatic Control Technology, Inc. in the pilot's seat. He was adding the herbicide fluoridone, known by its trade name Sonar, to counter a growing infestation of aquatic weeds, primarily Eurasian watermilfoil.

For old-time users of Spy Pond, memories persist of weed infestations so dense it was almost impossible to row across the Pond. The weed accumulation on oars was so heavy rowers had to shake them off after every stroke. Milfoil and coontail were the primary culprits. When the water was eventually treated, it was almost miraculous—the weeds simply vanished over a period of about a month. The waters stayed clear for years. In fact, major infestations of coontail have not been a problem since.

Milfoil is a different story. It is an exotic, introduced to the U. S. by the aquarium trade because it looks really good in a fish tank. Apparently, some aquariums got dumped into water bodies (a really bad idea on many fronts) and milfoil was off and running. It propagates by rooting fragments, almost perfect for transmission by boats being moved between water bodies. It has become a major problem throughout the U. S. The many lakes

of the upper Midwest are mostly infested, in addition to most in New England and New York.

This created a major market for Sonar because it has a very desirable profile of being very effective on milfoil with minimal adverse side effects. Its mode of action is that it inhibits carotenoid synthesis (the yellow pigments we see in autumn leaves). Carotenoids are a main defense against ultraviolet damage to chlorophyll. When the carotenoids go, the plants get fatally sunburned. It acts fairly slowly, which has the advantage of avoiding a major accumulation of dead vegetation on the pond bottom.

Sonar also has some inherent toxicity advantages. It is used at exquisitely low concentration, less than 20 parts per billion (and that is really dilute). Since animals do not make carotenoids, there is less likelihood of causing unwanted problems. The material is regarded as so safe for humans that drinking water supplies are not shut down even for a day when reservoirs are treated.

No chemical, not even H<sub>2</sub>O, is above suspicion. Naturally, fluoridone has critics. So far, the consensus view is that its benefits far outweigh its risks.

On the other weed front, in our winter issue phragmites treatment was featured. Now the results can be seen. Recall that only water based phragmites were treated. A rough survey shows only a few percent re-growth in most of the treated area. Permits are now being considered to treat the land-based phragmites not included in the first treatment.



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

# Fun in the Sun at Spy Pond Park Festival June 26

by Betsy Leondar-Wright

You *really* won't want to miss this festival!

Spy Pond Park has never seen so much fun on one afternoon as it will see on Saturday June 26 (or Sunday if rain) from 1 to 4 pm.

You can watch the Parade of Animals march through the park at 1:30 p.m. or so, greeted by a brass quartet. Children will wear headdresses turning them into the creatures of Spy Pond and Spy Pond Park created that morning at the Arlington Center for the Arts workshop (email Pam Shanley at [pam@acarts.org](mailto:pam@acarts.org) to register your child).

Besides the brass band, you'll be able to listen to other great entertainment:

1. The Dixieland Band of Eva Balazs, author of *Spy Pond Stories* and a long-time FSPP member, will play rollicking music.
2. A chorus of FSPP members will sing newly written song parodies about Spy Pond.
3. Storyteller Garry Carlson will tell the story of how his father discovered the mastodon tusk in Spy Pond many years ago.
4. Teenage choreographer Maya Bermudes will lead a dance routine (show up at the boat ramp at 12:30 p.m. if you want to dance)

Kids will make pinwheels, bark boats, masks and other crafts, as well as getting their faces painted.

Kids and adults can win prizes by solving puzzles and scavenger hunts that teach you how to care for Spy Pond and the park. A Spy Pond History Mysteries scavenger hunt will have you hunting clues all over the park, and an Alien Invasive Species hunt will involve actually ripping them up.

A special toddler table will let preschoolers do puzzles and leaf hunts that teach about nature without requiring reading.

The prizes for puzzles and scavenger hunts will be especially spectacular this year, thanks to generous donations by The Book Rack, Coyote Impressions, Eric Berger, and others.

The first ten new members to join the Friends of Spy Pond Park at the T-shirt table will win free pints of Ben and Jerry's ice cream. And, as always, you'll have an opportunity to help beautify the park by joining the Work Day volunteers.

If you'd like to help make the festival happen, call Betsy Leondar-Wright at 781-648-0630.

Hope to see you in the park on June 26!

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

I am so excited about the activity in Spy Pond Park so far this year! Thanks to all the wonderfully ambitious people who have volunteered on Work Days, including those who were there for the first time, from People Making a Difference and the Arlington Belmont crew team. Our Beautification Co-Chairs, Doris Birmingham and Gail McCormick have efficiently organized what needs to be done so workers can make the greatest impact providing park maintenance. Hopefully, the increased turnout will continue all summer. Please consider lending a helping hand on any of the remaining Cleanup Days.

Most of all, we are eagerly anticipating celebrating Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond on June 26 (rain date June 27). Betsy Leondar-Wright and Anne Ellinger, Co-Chairs for Outreach/Park Events have put together a wonderful range of events that will be fun for adults and children alike. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. We are grateful to them and to the Arlington Center for the Arts where the crafts workshop led by educational artist, Pam Shanley, will be held the morning of the Festival in the Park and the Work Day.

Other hard workers have been essential to the success of our efforts: Lally Stowell and Jacki Katzman, Publicity Co-Chairs, and Eric Berger and Jamie Ciocco, VPs for Communications. Without them, no one would know what is going on in Spy Pond Park. I hope to see you all in the park soon. Please tell your friends and neighbors and get them interested, too.

Thank you so much to all of you who have responded to our May solicitation for dues and donations. I am happy to announce that we have a new Membership Secretary, Marshall McCloskey, who will be updating the database records and sending out acknowledgement letters for your 2010 tax records from our Treasurer, Jane Whitmore. If you have not done so by now, please send in your checks so we can sustain the momentum of celebrating Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond. We can all benefit from your support. We'd also like to welcome you at our FSPP meetings at my beautiful condominium overlooking Spy Pond. Come see the view, listen to our plans, and bring your ideas for enhancing Spy Pond Park.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman  
President  
Friends of Spy Pond Park



# So Much Glass!

by Betsy Leondar-Wright

During the April and May Spy Pond Park Work Days, I volunteered for glass duty: picking up pieces of broken glass along the shore and in the shallow water. There was glass in every stretch I checked, sometimes a lot right there on the surface, sometimes just a little that only showed up when I raked away the top layer of sand.

PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)



While I was picking up glass from the “beach” below the wheelchair ramp, I saw two adorable and happy pre-school kids wing barefoot, just a foot from where I had picked up about half the shards of a broken beer bottle. It reminded me of the old joke “What’s worse than finding a worm in your apple? Finding half a worm!” I would have been happier if I’d found all parts of the bottle.

When I was inspecting the sides of the boat ramp, a guy wearing only flip-flops brought his kayak down the ramp, and he stepped into the glassiest area while carrying all that weight. If he’d stepped on a big piece of glass, it could have cut right through his thin plastic soles. And all along the shore, the wonderful volunteers from the rowing team were wading barefoot. I’ve seen them carry their boats in and out barefoot for their afternoon practices. Wouldn’t it be awful if one of those athletes got injured stepping on glass?

The worst spot is below the stone wall, the stretch of Park shore nearest the Boys and Girls Club. Years ago when the parking lot extended all the way to the wall, teenagers used to park there and throw their bottles at the wall. FSPP’s clean-ups have usually omitted that part of the Park, since it gets little pedestrian traffic. But people do fish there and kids have worn paths through the brush. However, that whole area is littered with broken glass, on and below the surface of the dirt and sand.

Back in the mid-1980s, the Pond was much more full of trash than it is today. My friend Christopher and I were wading in Spy Pond when he stepped on a rusty nail, and we had to go to the emergency room. I don’t want that kind of thing to happen again.

One solution is to spread the word about always wearing shoes when stepping into the Pond. Parents – warn your kids about glass! Signs could warn new visitors.



PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)

But so often Park visitors don’t have sandals or water-shoes with them. And it’s human nature for kids to run from the playground towards the water on hot days, and parents usually want them to take their shoes off before they get them wet. We want people to enjoy the open shoreline areas and wade in the shallow water. Realistically, some barefoot shore walking is going to happen.

Could this be the summer when we free the shoreline of glass? If you walk in the Park, could you sometimes carry a work-glove and a baggy and pick up some glass from the shoreline as you walk? If you volunteer at one of the Work Days, could you spend part of your time collecting glass? Could we make the Park a safer place for feet?



PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)



## Take a Kid Carpin' June 27

By Jerome Moisand

You fish for carp? Really? Why? This is the typical question I get from passers-by intrigued by my long rods and strange set-up. Here is my answer. First, carp are big fish. In Spy Pond, the average size is around 10 pounds, and I caught a 21 pound biggie a few years ago. Next, carp are real fighters giving you heart pounding excitement. Last, carp can be caught in many ponds and rivers, they can be caught from the shore with no need for fancy boats, and anybody can do it, notably kids.

Would you like to see your kid catch a freshwater fish bigger than anything you ever caught? You don't know how? **Come to Spy Pond Park on June 27<sup>th</sup>.** I will be there with several other experienced carp anglers, and our aim will be to make kids catch their very first carp and teach them basics. This might take a little while, carp fishing can be slow, but I guarantee a tidal wave of excitement when they start biting.

PHOTO BY EDITH MOISAND



### Practicalities:

- This event is intended for kids from 8 to 14. Parents are encouraged to come, to bring some food and drinks, and take many pictures.
- We will bring some fishing gear that kids can borrow, and bait too. If you prefer to fish with your own rod, a 7 foot bass rod could do the job.
- No registration, just show up and we'll try to accommodate you. Depending on the number of people and the fish activity; we'll take turns to maximize chances.
- We'll have two sessions, one from **8am to noon**, the other from **3pm to 7pm**. During times of inactivity, we'll show various techniques, explaining rigs, how to play a fish, to release it in good health, etc.
- This event is actually part of a new national event organized by the Carp Anglers Group, and (subject to parent's authorization) pictures of kids with their trophy catch will be published in the corresponding carp magazine.

E-mail at [jmoisand@gmail.com](mailto:jmoisand@gmail.com) for more information. And check my stories at <http://www.carpiopedia.com>.

## A Young Man for All Seasons

by Eric Berger

It's not every day you meet a very talented high school tenth grade artist who won the two mile race at the Junior Varsity Dual County League outdoor track meet, but that's exactly what Quentin Stipp achieved in 2009 during his freshman year running for Arlington High School. Quentin is the young man whose lovely illustration of Spy Pond appeared in all its serene majesty in the spring 2010 issue of the Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter. He's also created the wonderful illustration of Spy Pond Park gracing the poster announcing the Festival to celebrate Spy Pond Park on June 26, and I had the pleasure recently of interviewing him.

Quentin has been drawing since he was a little boy, and some of his early creations dealt with very simple animations. Only in the last six months has he been drawing illustrations utilizing a Wacom tablet and pen format, mapped to the dimensions of a computer screen. It was with this format that Quentin created his lovely illustrations of Spy Pond Park. The tablet oriented pen represents a very natural way for Quentin to illustrate his creative concepts with great linear control.

"When you make a line on the tablet surface, it appears proportionally longer on the computer screen. Pressing on the pen creates different line widths," Quentin explained.

Quentin's talents and interests have also taken him into the music world. He plays the keyboard, and recently created a cartoonish, stylized, artistic rendering of a piano, seen from just behind the pianist. The viewer sees the piano and the pianist's hands poised above the keys.

Quentin enjoys using the program GarageBand to help develop his keyboard skills. He's also branching out into drawing more complex animations, that is, when he's not performing as a stand out runner for Arlington High School in the fall as a member of the cross country team, in the winter as a member of the varsity indoor track team, and in the spring as a member of the varsity outdoor track team.



ILLUSTRATION BY QUENTIN STIPP

# Friends of Spy Pond Park next meeting at Karen Grossman's Sunday, July 11, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. 32 Hamilton Road #402

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990  
email [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

Park on Linwood Street off Mass. Ave. or on Lakehill off Lake St. at the far end of the complex.

## To join Friends of Spy Pond Park...

Send your annual dues (\$15 individual, \$25 household, \$5 low-income) to:  
FSPP, P.O. Box 1051

Arlington, MA 02474-0021

For more information, call a Friends officer.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| President: Karen L. Grossman              | (781) 646-5990   |
| General Vice-President: Elizabeth Karpati | (781) 643-4172   |
| Treasurer: Jane Whitmore                  | (781) 648-4330   |
| Recording Secretary: Gregory Watt         | (781) 643-9642   |
| Membership Sec'y: Marshall McCloskey      | (617) 548-9877   |
| VPs for Communications (Newsletter):      |  |
| Eric Berger                               | (781) 859-5096   |
| Jamie Ciocco                              | <a href="mailto:jamcio@gmail.com">jamcio@gmail.com</a> |
| Co-Chairs for Publicity:                  |  |
| Jacki Katzman                             | (781) 648-9227   |
| Lally Stowell                             | (781) 777-2759   |
| Co-Chairs for Beautification:             |  |
| Doris Birmingham                          | (781) 641-2392   |
| Gail McCormick                            | (781) 646-0614   |
| Website Chair: Fred Moses                 | <a href="mailto:fred@fmoses.com">fred@fmoses.com</a>   |
| Co-chairs for Outreach/Park Events:       |  |
| Anne Ellinger                             | (781) 646-1705   |
| Betsy Leondar-Wright                      | (781) 648-0630   |
| Town Day Coordinator: Gregory Watt        | (781) 643-9642   |
| Grant Writer: Gail McCormick              | (781) 646-0614   |

For newsletter contributions, contact [berkshire2@juno.com](mailto:berkshire2@juno.com)  
General comments can be sent to [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)

Friends of Spy Pond Park • <http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org> • P.O. Box 1051 • Arlington, MA 02474-0021

## Work Days for 2010

Meet at our table near the playground to sign in and get your work assignment. We have tools, but it is a good idea to bring your own work gloves and a set of small pruning shears if you have them.

Sat., June 26, 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sun., June 27, 1-4 p.m.)\*

Sat., July 10, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date Sun., July 11, 1-4 p.m.)

Sat., Aug. 21, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date Sun., Aug. 22, 1-4 p.m.)

Sat., Sept. 11, 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sun., Sept. 12, 1-4 p.m.)\*\*

Sat., Oct. 16, 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sun., Oct. 17, 1-4 p.m.)

\*A children's art festival will be held in the Park during work hours on this date.

\*\*A fun/activity day will be held in the Park during work hours on this date.

*It is very helpful if you can respond to our e-mails and phone calls with a "yes" or a "no." It enables us to better plan the work and also to contact you if we have to declare a rain day. Doris: 781-641-2392; email [dabirming@aol.com](mailto:dabirming@aol.com), Gail: 781-646-0614; email [gtmccormick@verizon.net](mailto:gtmccormick@verizon.net).*



## Celebrate Spy Pond Park!

**Saturday June 26**  
(Rain Date Sunday June 27)

**CRAFT WORKSHOP & PARADE OF THE ANIMALS**

KIDS ages 5-12 What animal do YOU want to be?  
10 am - Make headaddresses & puppets at  
Arlington Center for the Arts  
Pizza lunch  
1 pm - Parade to the Spy Pond Park Festival  
Suggested donation: \$10 per family  
Preregister: Contact [pam@acarts.org](mailto:pam@acarts.org)

**SPY POND PARK FESTIVAL 1 to 4 pm**  
Crafts, puzzles, scavenger hunts, story-telling, music  
By the playground off Pond Lane

**WORK DAY 1 to 4 pm**  
Come pull weeds, collect litter & make the park shine

For more info, contact the Friends of Spy Pond Park:  
781-648-0630  
<http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org>






ILLUSTRATION BY QUENTIN STIPP