

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Summer 2012

Help the Spy Pond Mural Project!

by Adria Arch



An illustration of the proposed mural with artwork by Jordawn Moses, Joboda Kachi, Lydia Genard, and Claire Luneau-Stevens

In the spring of 2011, Arlington High students were invited by the Arlington Public Art Committee to submit an image to be selected for a banner overlooking Spy Pond. Four images were chosen from over sixty entries by Arlington High School students. The selected images will be printed in a row, creating a colorful montage that highlights this special location. The mural, 25 feet high by 100 feet long, will be digitally reproduced on a mesh banner celebrating the recreational and natural resources of Spy Pond.

This project will be the first large-scale public art project facilitated by the newly created town wide group, Arlington Public Art.

An eye catching banner, covering a large blank façade next to Spy Pond, will enliven the view from the bike path and surrounding homes, and bring attention to the Boys and Girls Club and attract visitors to Arlington.

The goal is to have the banner in place by September 8, 2012, the date that is set for the celebration honoring the twentieth year of the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

The cost of funding this project is \$8000. We need your help today to make this banner a reality! Any amount you can contribute would be much appreciated.

TO DONATE, send a check to Spy Pond Mural Project, c/o Arlington Center for the Arts, 41 Foster St., Arlington MA 02474.

Arlington Public Art is a group of citizens and community groups working to increase the quality of life in Arlington by providing broader opportunities for the creation and installation of public art. Members include representatives from the Arlington Center for the Arts, the Arlington Cultural Council, Arlington Tourism and Economic Development Committee, Arlington Public Schools, Vision 20/20, and local businesses and business associations.

Girl Scouts Give Work Day a (Green) Thumbs Up

by Sarah Endo

Girl Scouts + Garlic Mustard + Goslings = Great!

That's the new equation we learned on a sunny Saturday in May when Girl Scout Troop # 75264 from Hardy School volunteered for a Work Day at Spy Pond Park.

Lally Stowell put four first-graders and parents to work in a way that was educational and fun. First she taught us about invasive species, and challenged the kids to spot them. She explained how the colorful yellow iris flowers along the pond's edge may look beautiful, but can take over and throw the pond's ecosystem out of whack.

Then, she taught the troop how to identify garlic mustard, with its spiky white flowers and scallop-edged leaves. Armed with their new knowledge and four pairs of gardening gloves, the scouts enthusiastically found and pulled garlic mustard by the armload.

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First-grade Daisy Scouts Tess, Anna, Veronica and Emilie proudly display garlic mustard they weeded at Spy Pond Park

PHOTO BY SARAH ENDO

A Tree for the Park

by Doris Birmingham

PHOTO BY CORINNA VANDERSPEK



John Deutschmann demonstrates tree planting for volunteers

On a breezy April morning a group of about 15 people assembled in Spy Pond Park to observe John Deutschmann of the DPW's Tree Division give a demonstration on the proper way to plant a tree. The audience included several Boy Scouts, members of both the Arlington Tree Committee and the Arlington Garden Club, and myself, representing the FSPP.

For several years, parents who have brought their children to the playground have complained about the lack of shade, so in 2011 the FSPP asked the Tree Committee for two trees to be planted near the west section of the playground fence. Because of high demand and budget restraints, we received only one tree, a sugar maple, a hardy, long-lived (up to 300 years) native species, which grows relatively quickly to at least 80 or 90 feet, and will provide brilliant, and, if we are lucky, even multi-hued fall foliage.

This year, the Friends requested a second tree, and the Committee responded with a red oak, which, like the maple, is fast growing and prone to even greater longevity (conceivably 500 years!), will reach a similar height, and in autumn will display bronze foliage that will contrast with the reds and oranges of the maple and the yellows of nearby willows and birches. Together, the two trees will add greatly to the beauty of the park and in a few years provide plenty of much needed playground shade.

Mr. Deutschmann explained that he would be doing a bare root, as opposed to a balled root or containerized, tree planting. This method is often preferred because bare root trees can have up to 200% more roots, cost less, and aren't heavily burdened with soil, thus making them easier to plant. The trick is to get the tree in the ground very soon after purchasing it, and if planting must wait a few days, to store it in a cool, climatically controlled environment. He stressed the importance of planting any tree at the proper depth so that the root crown is just covered with soil. The day before the demonstration he had used a backhoe to make a hole nearly two feet deep, and that morning two DPW workers shoveled out almost another foot of soil while John discoursed on aspects of tree planting and care. In less than an hour the tree was firmly in the ground and carefully staked. FSPP workers have since laid down a layer of hemlock bark mulch at its base, and FSPP member, Wally Williams, has faithfully watered it during the occasional periods of sparse rainfall.

The Arlington Tree Committee was established in 2010 by the Board of Selectmen. Its mission is to promote the protection, planting, and care of the trees of Arlington. Anyone interested in learning more about the Committee's work as well as facts about Arlington's trees, hints on planting and caring for trees, and other tree-related information will find its website very valuable: www.arlingtontrees.org. Meanwhile, the Friends of Spy Pond Park is grateful to both the Tree Committee and the DPW for giving us the maple and the oak, both of which are now thriving in their new home.

A Long-time Dream Comes True: Canoe & Kayak Rentals at Spy Pond Park

by Betsy Leondar-Wright

When her kids were small, Charlotte Milan really wanted to get them out paddling on water. She bought a double kayak, but putting it onto the roof of the car and driving to a river or lake was too complicated, so the kayak mostly sat by her house.

When Spy Pond Park was renovated, the new boat ramp gave her the idea that Spy Pond would be a good place for public boat rentals. But the Recreation Department had already tried it,



Charlotte Milan

PHOTO BY BETSY LEONDAR-WRIGHT

with an outside vendor who required pre-payment online, and too few people planned ahead. She came up with a dream of pond-side boat rentals that would work for spontaneous passersby.

This summer her dream is coming true. The Recreation Department will rent canoes and kayaks every Friday through Monday from June through August: \$10 an hour for a single kayak; \$12/hour for a double kayak; and \$15/hour for a canoe. Pre-buying a pass for 5 to 17 hours online at www.Arlingtonma.gov/recreation and search for the word "kayak" (or go directly to <http://1.usa.gov/K6VlmF>) not only helps the program buy more boats, but it gives you a bargain with extra hours for your money.

When Charlotte first proposed this idea several years ago, there were so many obstacles to a boating program that a lesser woman might have given up. The prohibition on business transactions in Spy Pond Park, the previous failed program, boat and equipment storage, staffing and fundraising to buy boats all made her dream seem impossible. Then the Arlington/Belmont Crew team created the fenced enclosure for their boats in the Pond Lane parking lot, and they were glad to share it, which took care of one problem. The Recreation Department, a self-supporting quasi-town agency that already hires youth for other summer jobs at the Reservoir and at its camp, enthusiastically agreed to sponsor and staff the boat rental program, too. Arlington High School offered to lend its six canoes for the summer. Meanwhile, Charlotte had completed a business degree, and when she drew up a business plan, she realized that the only remaining obstacle was the money to buy the kayaks from Charles River Canoe & Kayak. So far three have been purchased, and she hopes to raise \$5,000 to buy three more this summer.

This one-woman initiative has taken Charlotte innumerable hours over two years. Where did she get the motivation for such an effort?

An ardent environmentalist, Charlotte is active on the Eco-Fest Committee and Sustainable Arlington. When Eco-Fest focused on water and storm water management in 2011, she found herself thinking about Arlington's water resources. She told me, "When people get out on the water, they'll love it and then learn to take care of it, and gradually they'll be drawn into environmental stewardship. They'll contribute to the Elizabeth Island Fund and help the Friends of Spy Pond Park weed out invasive plants."

In business school Charlotte studied "Social Entrepreneurship," meaning enterprises that support themselves but don't need to turn a profit, dedicated to some social good. Besides recreation and environmental awareness, the new boat rental program will also promote youth empowerment and jobs for teenagers.

Charlotte sees an age gap in who volunteers. "Arlington has an incredibly active volunteer community, but most volunteers are over 50. Kids enjoy the open spaces, but the young parents are busy, and only people over 35 can afford to move here. So I worry that there's little involvement of people between 17 and 35. If we drew people aged 20s and 30s into environmental stewardship, they'd keep thinking about their own habits throughout their lives."

President's Letter

Hi Friends,

Summer is here and we've accomplished so much this year already! Our shed is expected to be up and the portable toilet should be in place in the park soon near the tot playground by Pond Lane. And, thanks to FSPP advocacy, the Town hired Heimlich Construction to re-grade areas of the path through the park, eliminate the grass growing on it, and spread and compress aggregate on the surface, including the handicapped ramp. We hope that now rainwater will flow off the path onto the grass minimizing erosion. With annual maintenance, the path should stay in pretty good shape. Yes, we have reached some important 2012 goals.

We appreciate all who have helped complete park projects and those who have volunteered on the three Work Days so far. Special kudos to Marshall McCloskey, Jason Fligg, Erin Freeburger, Ed Filisko and Lis Pardi who worked so hard to build a sturdy foundation and erect our storage shed. Did you see the Hardy students' designs at the picnic on June 9 that will adorn the rain garden plant labels? Charlotte Milan did a wonderful job coordinating with the school's art teachers and presenting information to the children about our new rain garden! Park visitors eventually will be able to identify the plants as they grow and bloom over the years.

It was fun spending time with people at the rescheduled picnic, enjoying the park after a rainy week to celebrate the 20th anniversary year of the Friends of Spy Pond Park. Yes, it did seem that April showers arrived in June this year!! It was good for the environment after a dry winter. However, the invasive plants have been growing, too, so we need lots of help on our remaining Work Days! Please refer to the schedule on the last page and join us, if you can.

We are grateful to those who've paid membership dues to support our newsletter outreach in the park and in the libraries, too. If you haven't sent your dues and donations to us, remember, you can always donate on our website. Thanks to all for your continued interest in our organization and Spy Pond Park.

Finally, we are happy to announce that Jason Fligg arranged for the production of an adorable public service announcement for the FSPP. Check it out on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLeNIN1C3tk>.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman, President
Friends of Spy Pond Park

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Visitors eat under the willows on the day celebrating FSPP's 20th anniversary year

Girl Scouts Give Work Day a (Green) Thumbs Up

(continued from page 1)

When some Canada geese strolled by, Lally got the kids thinking about why it's important not to feed Canada geese and their young, besides it's against the law.

We finished the day under a shady tree beside the pond, with Lally leading the scouts in a game-show style quiz reviewing what they had learned.

All the scouts gave their Work Day experience rave reviews:

"They [Lally and the other FSPP organizers] made it really fun and easy enough for us kids."

"I liked learning about weeding and I think it's really helpful for them to do that and let everyone join in."

"I used to call them baby geese but now I call them goslings because of our Work Day."

"Let's do it again!"

Thank you, Friends of Spy Pond Park! Our troop will be back to lend a hand again!

Come to Fun Day Sept. 8

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

Last year's Fun Day festival was such a success that we're going to offer all the same activities again this year: music, nature crafts, face- and hand-painting, games and prizes, simultaneous with a Work Day to clean up the park.

Kids and adults can learn about the Spy Pond ecosystem in fun, hands-on ways on Saturday, September 8 from 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sunday 9/9 1-4p.m.).

Nature-themed prizes donated by The Book Rack, Coyote Impressions, other local businesses and FSPP members will reward the clever participants who solve puzzles and scavenger hunts.

Volunteers are needed to lead activities, perform music, solicit prizes, set up and clean up. To offer your help, call Betsy Leondar-Wright at 781-648-0630 or email betsy@classmatters.org.



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

Betsy Leondar-Wright wades in the water to grab debris from the edge of Spy Pond

BU's 2012 Global Day of Service in Spy Pond Park

By Robert Molloy



PHOTO BY GREG BRETT PHOTOGRAPHY

The afternoon of Saturday, April 14th was sunny and warm, a perfect spring day for the Boston University Global Day of Service volunteers to work with students from BU, Karen Grossman and Jason Fligg, BU alumni, and other Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) in an effort to spruce up the Spy Pond Park area for the busy spring and summer seasons. I am a 1984 graduate of the Boston University School of Law and we volunteered as a family through the BU program. I was joined by my wife, Kathy, daughter, Emily (a junior at AHS) and son, Colin (an 8th grader at the Ottoson). Kathy and I volunteered to work on pulling as much garlic mustard as we could that day. Garlic mustard is a non-native, invasive species that tends to crowd out indigenous plants. In an effort to eradicate it or, in any event, to control it, it is best to pick garlic mustard (roots and all, which is much easier to do than with a dandelion) prior to its going to seed. Kathy and I have a lot of experience picking garlic mustard in the woods in Michigan where our family vacations each summer. We were both pleased that we were familiar with the natural “enemy” and felt confident that we could be helpful in this role. Emily and Colin, however, who are sick-to-tears hearing about garlic mustard and its impact on the eco-system, and despite the fact that they are already veteran garlic mustard pickers, opted to pick up trash. This was not an easy undertaking because of all of the broken beer bottles on the downslope leading from the bike path to the playground. It is hard to imagine that people can be so thoughtless to hurl glass in that area where so many children play.

The FSPP had every tool we and the other BU volunteers needed to do our chores. It is an incredible feeling when you look up and see a large number of people all working towards the same goal, some workers in the woods, some in the clearings and a vast majority working hard along the water's edge. There

was tremendous satisfaction at the end of the day to see all of the leaf recycling and trash bags filled to the brim and ready to be picked-up by the trucks deployed by Arlington's DPW.

About a week after the day of service, I received an email survey from BU and one of the questions was why did you volunteer. Among the choices was the answer that was clear to me the minute I saw the question, it was a great activity to do with your family.

Editor's note: more photos from the BU Global Day of Service at SPP are on the web: <http://www.flickr.com/search/?w=37654619@N06&q=spy%20pond%20park>

Get a *Friends of Spy Pond Park* Sticker



Available at clean-up days with any \$2+ donation!



PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN

Charles and Mike from Heimlich Construction re-grading areas of the path through Spy Pond Park

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meeting at Karen Grossman's Sunday, August 5, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. 32 Hamilton Road #402

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990
email 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: open	
Treasurer: Jane Whitmore	(781) 648-4330
Recording Secretary: Beverly Williams	(781) 316-1917
Membership Sec'y: Marshall McCloskey	(617) 548-9877
VPs for Communications (Newsletter):	
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Co-Chairs for Publicity:	
Jacki Katzman	(781) 648-9227
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Chair for Park Events:	
Betsy Leondar-Wright	(781) 648-0630
Outreach Coordinator: Sally Hempstead	(860) 944-1370
Fundraising Chair: Jason Fligg	(781) 724-7638

For newsletter contributions, contact berkshire2@juno.com
General comments can be sent to fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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

<http://www.facebook.com/friendsofspypondpark>

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notified about upcoming

- Family Fun Days
- Park News
- Special Activities

2012 FSPP Work & Fun Days

June 23: 1-4 p.m. (rain date June 24 1-4 p.m.)

July 21: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date July 22 1-4 p.m.)

August 18: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. (rain date August 19 1-4 p.m.)

Sept. 8: Work & Fun Day 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sept. 9 1-4 p.m.)

Oct. 13: 1-4 p.m. (rain date October 14 1-4 p.m.)

For questions:

Work Days-Lally Stowell, Beautification Committee,
781-777-2759 lallystow@yahoo.com

Fun Day-Betsy Leondar-Wright, Chair Park Events,
781-648-0630, betsy@classmatters.org

Available for purchase at the FSPP booth

- *Spy Pond Stories* by Eva Balazs: \$25
- Friends of Spy Pond Park T-shirts in all sizes: \$10-\$15