

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Fall 2012

Windy Fun and Work in Spy Pond Park

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

PHOTO BY PINEET SYAL



The Lokensgard Blechbläser Ensemble entertains on Fun Day

It was so windy on Saturday, September 8 that the Friends of Spy Pond Park's (FSPP) Fun Day almost got blown away. Paper puzzles, bark boats and newsletters blew off tables and flew around the park like confetti. The plan to have canoes and kayaks available to paddle to Elizabeth Island for the Arlington Land Trust's tours had to be scuttled, though the crew team's motor launches were still able to ferry dozens of people across the pond.

Despite the wind, Fun Day that I organized was a lot of fun! Thanks to many hard-working volunteers, hundreds of kids and adults learned about the Spy Pond ecosystem and how to care for it, enjoyed the park, and made original hand-made creations.

Kathy Modigliani and Rafe Ezekiel helped kids decorate and launch bark boats using all natural materials. Anne Wynne of Habitat taught bug-lovers to catch, examine and draw insects. Laura-Marie Small and other Kidcasso staff generously helped kids make craft projects. Alice Tracey and Anne Ellinger painted faces, and Pinal Maniar drew henna tattoos on people's hands and arms. Eva Vander Giessen and Gail McCormick helped pre-schoolers draw pictures of the creatures who live in and around Spy Pond and hunt for leaves. I sent older kids off to search for clues about Spy Pond's history, to rip out invasive weeds and to identify leaves from trees. Kate Barvick interviewed park-lovers for a video about Spy Pond Park for a Girl Scout project and the Lokensgard Blechbläser Ensemble entertained everyone in the park with lively music as visitors participated in the wide array of activities.

As you can see, Fun Day was a community effort by many, including Neal Tracey, Sally Hempstead, Peter Bermudes, Ly Perry, Gail Leondar-Wright, Jacki Katzman, Puneet Syal, Lally Stowell, Peter Belknap and the ALT, and FSPP President Karen Grossman. Special thanks to the Book Rack for generously donating kids' nature books as prizes, and to Dave Ledwig of ReMax Realty for lending A-frames and other signs. More than 50 volunteers from People Making a Difference (PMD), the Arlington/Belmont Crew Team with Joan Amon, and the FSPP weeded, pruned bushes, and cleaned the park guided by Doris Birmingham and Beverly Williams' Beautification Team during the simultaneous FSPP Work Day.

The Friends of Spy Pond Park began this annual tradition of combining a Fun Day festival with a monthly Work Day in 2006 and hopes to continue it for many years to come. You can visit our booth every Town Day and once a month in the park April-October to buy t-shirts and play games there, too.

For more information, to make a donation, or to become a member of the FSPP visit www.friendsofspypondpark.org or you can "Like us" on Facebook. Join in on the last Work Day of 2012 on Saturday, October 13 1-4 p.m., rain date on Sunday.



PHOTO BY PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)

Standing, left to right: Ellen Kranzer (Arlington), Joseph Kesselman (Arlington), Ian Lai (Somerville), Daniel Yankowski (Chelsea), Elizabeth Mojica (Dorchester), Philip Milmoie (Allston), Amy Troutman (Arlington; PMD Board Director). Kneeling, left to right: Yoonjeong Cha (Cambridge), Michele Mitsumori (Boston), after weeding to clear the planting bed at the water's edge. Not pictured: Lori Tsuruda (Randolph; PMD Founder & Executive Director)

As Summer Ends

By Doris Birmingham

PHOTO BY JENNIFER COEBEL



Crew team with found wagon wheel: Eryk Dobrushkin, Jonathan Daniels, Slex Gharibian, Brendan Mooney, Ekim Otucu, Liam McDonough, Connor Giallongo, Mike Tripp, Meg Poterba, Ellie Cayer, and Annalise Routenberg

“What does the FSPP Beautification Committee do with the arrival of fall?” asked Eric Berger, who was trying to help me find a topic for the fall Newsletter. “The simple answer to that question” I responded, “is that we breathe a sigh of relief, but there must be more--I’ll give it a try.”

The Beautification Committee, by the way, is composed of Gail McCormick, Beverly Williams, Lally Stowell, and myself. We all try to be on hand for every work day to supervise our volunteers, but we also do other things such as consulting with Town officials when we need their help, recruiting community groups to volunteer, maintaining tools and supplies, and, as many of you know very well, telephoning about 50 FSPP members each month to encourage them to join us on Work Days. Since there are seven FSPP Work Days between April and October, we are pretty busy for more than half the year; hence the sigh of relief.

PHOTO BY KAREN CROSSMAN



Thanks to the Garden Club for maintaining the SPP rain garden

After breathing that sigh, we go on to think grateful thoughts about the many people who make our job both possible and rewarding. First and foremost, we thank our loyal member volunteers, several of whom seldom miss a Work Day. We rely heavily on them not only for their backbreaking labor but also for their knowledge, which means they can help to supervise the inexperienced workers who arrive each month. We also thank those members who cannot come to Work Days, but whose membership dues and contributions make it possible for us to purchase tools and supplies and, this year, to even purchase a tool shed, of which I’ll say more below. Next, we thank the community groups which have bolstered our ranks this year: the BU alumni and students, who joined us for BU’s Global Day of Service; Mali Ouzts and her colleagues from HDR Architecture, Inc. in Boston; Single Volunteers, who twice sent several willing workers; Brownie Scout Troop #75264, which came twice, first, to pull out invasive garlic mustard and later to weed our fern gardens; People Making a Difference, which ‘civilized’ what we thought to be a hopelessly overgrown bed; the Arlington/Belmont Crew Team, which vigorously pruned the roses and uncovered some amazing trash in and around Bed #1. On October 13, a second grade Brownie troop led by Jenny Brown and Rebecca Aaronson will help us pick up the end of season trash. Without everyone’s help, it would be impossible to keep the park clean and to “stay on top” of the unwanted plants that energetically invade our planting beds each season.

Finally, this year we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the special Friends who assembled and installed our



PHOTO BY KAREN CROSSMAN

Ed Filisko, Marshall McCloskey, Jason Fligg, and Erin Berger erect the shed on July 21

storage shed. After six years of parking our growing inventory of tools and supplies in the nooks and crannies of kindly FSPP members’ basements and garages, we finally have a “room of our own,” making our job oh, so much easier. Four of our members merit special laurels for accomplishing this feat: Marshall McCloskey took the lead in seeing the project through from beginning to end; Erin Berger, Jason Fligg, and Ed Filisko assisted Marshall during many sweaty hours in preparing the foundation, assembling, and installing the shed. Kudos to all of them!

So with another growing season over, and the work and worries behind us for a few months, the Beautification Committee, and I hope many of you, too, will often walk through the park to enjoy its quiet beauty, wonder at the barrenness of planting beds that this spring and summer were veritable jungles, and experience the satisfaction of knowing that due to you and the efforts of so many people, the park is being preserved for the benefit of our environment and the lasting pleasure of its many visitors.

PHOTO BY JAMIE CIOCCO



A Pond by Any Other Name

By Eva Vander Giessen

Every once a while, a word miserably fails to convey the grandeur with which it is entrusted. Such is the case with New England's calmly understated "pond."

Where I come from - a small town in California -- the word "pond" dredges up images of murky pools, ankle-deep water, and ducks confined to eight square feet of paddling glory. Here, "pond" hints at a world of breathy expanses that defy human limits.

I'm captivated by Spy Pond's hushed elegance, its soft soundscape, how the trees nudge up right to the edge of the shoreline. As of this month, I have the good fortune of spending half my year in Arlington, and I'm enchanted by Spy Pond. How can simply walking up to a pond wake up the spirit? Stir the soul?

No wonder timeless poetry was born by a New England pond. I have discovered its kin five steps down Linwood Street, and you can bet that innocuous word will be infused with wonder from now on: "pond."

Why I Seek Your Shore

By Anne Ellinger

Pond, I can't breathe today --
Too much city noise and rush.
So I seek your peace:
The kiss of waves...
The hush of leaves...
The squawks and hum of summer life...
I am renewed.

Pond, I need company today --
Too much computer, too much phone.
So I seek your peopled shore:
Smile at playing children...
Hear Spanish, Russian, Chinese...
Greet strangers, hug neighbors...
I am renewed.

Pond, I need to cry today --
Too much to bear in this troubled world.
So I seek your wise counsel:
The ever-changing waters...
Tender silver light...
Stillness and depth...
I am renewed.

Pond, I need to celebrate today --
Being alive is more gift than I can hold.
So I seek your joyful mirror:
A thousand sparkles...
The breathtaking liftoff of a dozen wings...
Laughter in the distance...
I am renewed.



PHOTO BY PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE (WWW.PMD.ORG)

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Fall is here and we have had wonderful help keeping Spy Pond Park looking good! Many thanks to the Beautification Committee: Doris Birmingham, Gail McCormick, Beverly Williams, and Lally Stowell for making all our Work Days a great success and the Chair of Park Activities, Betsy Leondar-Wright, for planning and enacting a wonderful Fun Day this year. I am truly grateful to all the people who donated literally hundreds of volunteer hours in Spy Pond Park.

As we go to press, we are planning for our Town Day booth and will report on activities at what promises to be a busy day for outreach there for the Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP). We hope to have some photos and a report from our Outreach Coordinator by the Winter Newsletter, thanks to Sally Hempstead.

I want to thank Eric Berger for his faithful recruiting and editing newsletter articles for the FSPP for the past five years. He and Jamie Ciocco, VPs for Communication, have given invaluable assistance and dedication to our maintaining what I consider to be high quality publications, thus enhancing our outreach efforts. I congratulate Eric and Jamie on this important contribution to the FSPP. Yes, indeed, supporting Spy Pond Park is quite a team effort!

By the way, I am still looking for someone to step up to the role of Executive Vice-President, a position that has remained open for a couple of years. You could offer assistance to me in leadership of this exciting community building organization. Consider this opportunity for giving back to the Town of Arlington and all our Friends. Please contact me at fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org to discuss this further a.s.a.p.

The 2012 Annual Meeting will be held on December 2 at the Jefferson Cutter House 5-9 p.m. You will receive a notice in November regarding this event: a potluck supper and meeting to discuss 2012 accomplishments and set goals for 2013. Note the date on your calendar now and I hope to see many of you there.

Sincerely,


Karen L. Grossman
 President
 Friends of Spy Pond Park

The Fish Story

By Jerome Moisand

As is now customary, we organized a carp fishing event for kids at Spy Pond the end of June, 2012. This was part of the "Take a Kid Carping" national event, its 3rd edition. This year, we decided to have one day with newbies with the same format as usual, while the day after, we did something new, a half day advanced session with kids who had already caught a carp with us in the past two years.

We pre-baited with corn every morning the week before, and Saturday morning, everybody was ready to catch big fish. It didn't take long. Minutes after we started, we registered a few of the early arrivals. Young Brian caught a stunning 16.4 lb fish! No question about the fish surviving in Spy Pond nowadays. Brian's fish, landed with a bit of help from his mentor Eric, turned out to be the biggest of the event.

We were hoping for fast action at this time, but alas, biting turned out to be slower than expected. Our expert photographer (Sheridan) was almost as anxious as her son, Davis, to see him catch a nice one. When the bite alarm finally resonated, David was on it, and after a protracted fight (yours truly having to jump in the water to get the line out of treacherous weeds and rocks), Davis delivered a 15.8 lb beauty making his mom beam eye to eye!

Young Dara and the very animated Avery landed two smaller carp afterwards, and that was it for a fairly slow morning. Actually, that was it for the day as a thunderstorm totally disrupted the afternoon session, and aside from the fun of jumping in big water puddles, all we succeeded to do was to get thoroughly soaked.

The next day was very different, as we spent much more time practicing many aspects of carp fishing with a small number of kids. After Anya quickly landed a first fish, we went through bait making (eliciting a few 'yuks' from the girls), practiced casting, making knots and rigs, playing and netting a fish (real or simulated), etc.... Eric came up with the amazing idea of using a large shark hook to show knot making that was the highlight of the day! This was actually so successful that the kids kept making knots by themselves just for fun. They also learned how to weigh a fish, and how to release it in good health, while Mike was doing a great job of helping parents understand that carp fishing doesn't require much of an investment to get started.

As far as fishing goes, again, this was definitely slower than the previous year. Eliza and Michael did get one while Ashby was unfortunate enough to lose one in the rocks. No matter, the spirit was good and kids were very patient and attentive up to the end of the morning when we threw all the bait leftovers in the water to feed those fish and make them bigger for next year! Many thanks to Mike, Iain, the other Mike and Eric for their help in mentoring the kids during those 2 days, and to Sheri for the great photos!

PHOTO BY JEROME MOISAND



Eric and Brian with the beginner's first catch of the day

The full version of this story, including all pictures we took of the event can be found online: <http://tinyurl.com/7nhvxns>.

Editor's note: The fish in Spy Pond are not safe for human consumption since the bottom of the pond contains substances that are hazardous to your health.

PHOTO BY PINEET SYAL



Passengers return from a tour of Elizabeth Island with the Arlington Land Trust on the September 8th Fun Day

Kayak and Canoe Rentals at Spy Pond

By Charlotte Milan

The first summer of the Park and Recreation Department's boating program was a success! Hundreds of people who don't own their own kayaks and canoes came out and spent an hour or two on the pond this summer. According to employees Dan and Brittany, weekends were busy with paddlers, but Mondays and Fridays were slow. Joe Connolly, Recreation Director, considered this first year a success and will continue to plan for next year. A few more kayaks will need to be purchased, especially an additional double kayak, which was the most popular boat to rent.



PHOTO BY PINEET SYAL

The student employees left in August to go back to college, ending the program at the end of the summer. Perhaps in future years, we can see canoeing and kayaking continuing into September and October on weekends, and start the program in late spring.

The program would not have been possible without the support of the Park and Recreation Commission, as well as the generous sharing of canoes by Arlington High School and the sharing of storage space by the Arlington and Belmont Crew program.

Let the Recreation Department know you liked the program, and if you would like to help raise funds to purchase three more kayaks for Spring 2013, contact Charlotte at charlottemilan@gmail.com.

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

at Karen Grossman's
Sunday, Oct. 7, 2012, 7:00pm
32 Hamilton Road #402

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

& Annual Meeting
at the Jefferson Cutter House
Sunday, Dec. 2, 2012
5 pm potluck dinner, 6 pm meeting

with Michael Rademacher, Director DPW; details to be
mailed and announced on the FSPP website.

RSVP (optional) to 781-646-5990
email fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
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| General Vice-President: open | |
| Treasurer: Jane Whitmore | (781) 648-4330 |
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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

Maintaining the Historical Markers

By Helen Krikorian

While I was walking on the bike path, I noticed that the historical marker at Lake Street was VERY dirty so I went there another day and cleaned it.

I took Lysol Disinfecting Wipes that come in a cylinder-type container, also, a plastic bag to throw in the used wipes. It took a LOT of wipes because it was so dirty, but I think it would be easy to keep it up. I also cleaned the marker at Linwood Street along the bike path. I'm so proud of all the work that has gone into making the park so inviting that I want to do my share on keeping it attractive. Perhaps you'd like to help, to keep the historical markers clean somewhere else along the whole Minuteman Trail, too. Perhaps the Bicycle Committee would appreciate someone to organize this effort. Your thoughts would be appreciated: helenm2005@gmail.com.

Final 2012 FSPP Work Day

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



PHOTO BY KAREN GROSSMAN

On the September 8th Fun Day Ritika and Santana show off their prizes as their grandmother, Kalyani, admires them.