

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Summer 2014

Boston University's 2014 Global Day of Service at Spy Pond Park

By Elana Lowell, BU SAR 2016

Eight Boston University (BU) students shipped off to Spy Pond Park on April 19th to join four BU alumni participating in the first Friends of Spy Pond Park clean up of the season. Our efforts to help were part of our participation in the 2014 BU's Global Days of Service program, in which current students and alumni of BU collaborate to perform various community service projects throughout the greater Boston area. On other days throughout the month of April BU alumni contribute their time elsewhere all over the world. This is the third year of this great program that encourages those with past and present BU affiliations to help others in need wherever we are!

It could not have been a more beautiful day as the pond glistened and the sun shone brightly on everybody who aided in giving the park a spring awakening. The park provided us with terrific scenery as we devoted our time to sprucing up different areas. The day also was a wonderful opportunity for BU students and alumni to connect and get to know each other. We worked together and assisted in raking leaves and cutting up long branches, then placing them into brown bags. Others revived the pathway through the park by clearing the cobblestones of sand and dirt. BU students and alumni also cleaned the debris along the shore of the pond. There was a lot to do.

Overall, it was a worthwhile and rewarding day; all of the hard work done by the BU students, alumni and Friends of Spy Pond Park produced a record-breaking 51 bags of yard waste!

PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA



BU students and alumni at the Global Day of Service

Moonlight Beach Party at the Arlington Reservoir



Join us on Saturday, July 26th for a fun filled evening of music, dancing, food, drink, live auction and raffles.

The Arlington Reservoir beach will be transformed into a paradise under the stars! Enjoy a fun adult evening with a special catered dinner as we raise funds and awareness for Arlington parks.

The event will take place from 7 pm to 11 pm and tickets must be purchased prior to the event at www.arlingtonparks.org. We hope to have a couple of tables from the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

Tickets are \$65 each or \$120 per couple.

The event is being co-sponsored by the Arlington Recreation Department and the Arlington Parks Alliance.

The Arlington Parks Alliance is made up of representatives from the community and local Friends groups that work collaboratively to assist the Park and Recreation Commission's efforts to preserve, protect, restore and enhance the 27 parks and playgrounds in Arlington.

The Arlington Parks Alliance (APA) will provide private funds, advocacy and volunteers to supplement gaps in Town funding to help with special projects and the perpetual maintenance of our parks and fields.

For tickets and more information, contact www.arlingtonparks.org.

Friends of
Spy Pond Park

FAMILY FUN DAY

**SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 6,
1 - 4 PM**
(rain date September 7, 1-4)

Nature crafts!
Scavenger hunts!
Live music!
Boat trips to Elizabeth Island!
Contests & prizes!
Fun for the whole family!

For more info,
visit us on facebook!
or www.friendsofspypondpark.org




Talking About Not Feeding the Geese at Spy Pond Park

By Lally Stowell

Parents enjoy sharing their children's delight when a goose or duck approaches to take bread or crackers from their hand. It can be a magical moment. It helps to think about this and to acknowledge it when speaking with families about why feeding the geese is bad for the birds, the pond and us. Children, as well as their parents, will listen if we acknowledge how they feel and share what we know respectfully. You can tell them, "It's a lot of fun to feed these birds and I know you want to help them, but feeding them is actually bad for them. Those geese eating mostly bread and crackers is like our eating mostly cookies and chips. It's too much junk food. Like us, the geese aren't going to be healthy and strong because they're not eating enough good, healthy food. Also, many baby geese don't learn how to look for natural, healthy food like grasses, leaves and insects. They depend on this junk food. In the wintertime, many still expect food from people and don't migrate to warmer places soon enough. Goose poop is another big problem. It makes a big mess on the grass, is not healthy for people and can cause plants and fish to die when it gets in the water. Arlington wants to keep the water, the plants and all of us healthy, so the Town has made feeding the geese illegal. It's

a good idea. It would be great if you could tell your friends about this so they'll know what you know about why it's bad to feed the geese." It will help us all if you take the initiative to approach others to spread the word in a respectful way.

Spy Pond Canoe & Kayak Rentals

The Arlington Recreation Department is once again pleased to announce canoe and kayak rentals at Spy Pond for the spring/summer 2014 season.



To register go to: http://www.arlingtonrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=27952

General Information

Hourly rentals are planned for Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm at the public boating ramp at Spy Pond Park, Pond Lane.

The season runs from June 14 to late August (pending available staff).

All participants must wear life jackets.

Hourly boat rentals rates are \$10 for a single kayak, \$15 for a tandem double kayak and \$15 for a canoe.

For further information, contact Arlington Recreation at 781-316-3880.

Age Requirements

Ages: 18 & Up Adults ages 18 and up may sign our rental Release From Liability And Indemnity Agreement form and paddle on their own.

Ages 13 to 17 Small groups of up to four (4) children ages 13 through 17 may paddle unaccompanied when each child's parent or guardian signs our Release From Liability And Indemnity Agreement form. The waiver or permission form must be presented in person by a parent or guardian. Groups of more than four (4) children of those ages must be accompanied by an adult on the water. Each adult is responsible for up to six (6) children of this age.

Ages 12 and under All children ages 12 and under must be accompanied on the water by an adult (age 18 and older) but may paddle their own boat. Each adult can be responsible for up to two (2) children of this age.

President's Letter

Hi Friends,

Summer is here and along with it comes the growth of vegetation in the Spy Pond Park planting beds, including invasive species! Consequently, the Beautification Committee is busy working with the various volunteers and groups that come to help out. We have a few people who have dedicated their time each month and even in between Work Days to groom the cobblestones and path, prune dead branches and pull invasive plants that threaten to take over.

Thank you, also, to the novice members of the Arlington/Belmont crew team and parents of the regional winners who competed in the June national competition in California who joined us on our June Work Day. We collected at least 20 bags of natural debris, invasive plants, recyclable cans and bottles, and trash to clean up the park. If you walk through the park and take a small bag to collect refuse so the park will always look great, perhaps others will gain more respect for the upkeep required to make it look beautiful at all times. Thanks to all of you who love Spy Pond Park.

Carol Johnson, landscape architect, Conservation Commissioners, Joe Connelly and the Park Commissioners, and the Department of Public Works continue to discuss plans for securing the shoreline and ensuring the survival of the plants along the shore of SPP. It seems many people are venturing into the planting beds to get closer to the water. Since there is erosion at the water's edge, we're seeking to limit the foot traffic there. We encourage people who fish or just are enjoying the view to keep to the designed paths and steps rather than walking through the planting beds. The FSPP with DPW help may do some planting in one or two beds where the shoreline is more secure. Since ducks are happily resting in some of the planting beds, we want to preserve their habitat, whenever possible. We intend to support any request for additional capital funds and to be proactive in enacting a solution to shoreline erosion.

In August we hope you'll be able to admire the granite swan sculpture by Kevin Duffy installed at Linwood Beach. Watch for the announcement of its dedication on our September 6th Fun Day in Spy Pond Park. We'll be giving a Good Citizen's Award that day, as we have done in the past. Come to find out who is the deserving recipient.

Finally, if you haven't sent in your annual dues, please do so. We'd like to replace the popular digging equipment in the tot lot playground at the Pond Lane end of the park. We appreciate your support of all the Friends of Spy Pond Park endeavors. I hope to see you soon in our popular park along the Minuteman Trail in East Arlington and, perhaps, at the Party by Moonlight at the Reservoir on July 26. Let's support all the parks in Arlington!

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

Fish Story

By Charles Schwab

Strolling down along the pond
on a summer Sunday in the park,
reveling in the scene revealed,
I encounter a young lad

standing there at water's edge,
pole in hand, line angled out,
attended by a practiced angler
showing the previously untaught one

how to control the taut line,
to reel in the caught fish;
how to net, unhook, and then to hold
a very real-live nine-pound carp.

As a camera captures this scene,
before the release of a grateful captive
and return to its own special world,
my thoughts slip back to another summer's day,

when trolling off Sanibel Isle
I hooked a small speckled trout,
small but large enough for cooking,
cooked at once and served for dinner;

a tiny fish snatched from the Gulf,
unnoticed, unceremoniously eaten.
How often have I mulled this matter:
whether it's better most times to be

a big fish in a little pond
or a minnow in larger waters;
carp-like fame or anonymity.
But maybe there's no choice to make,

existing as we all do
simultaneously
in a small pool and the immense ocean.

Athanasoulas and our President, Karen Grossman ably provided information and fielded questions about our park, its events and purpose. Karen worked double duty as she also represented The Mystic River Watershed Association manning their booth as well.

There were demonstrations in reusing trash, textiles, plastic containers, food scraps and rainwater. A type of wooden rainwater barrel was displayed across the aisle from our booth with instructions on its use in the garden. At 10 a.m., Jeremy Lyons presented Fun Family Music in the Selectman's Hearing Room followed by local Historian, Richard Duffy, at 11 a.m. who discussed, "Bringing Energy-Efficiency to an Arlington Antique House". Also from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., the Lexington Pygmy Goats visited the parking area and the farmer discussed how the leaves, brush and grass that they eat is turned into composted manure which enriches the soil so more forage is available, a definite example of recycling. Back inside you could see many displays. One was repurposed art that included old T-shirts embellished with lace cut and tied into something new and special created in workshops given earlier in the winter by the Arlington Cultural Council. "Trashformations", a student recycled competition and art show exhibited on the Town Hall Stage, showed a variety of repurposed objects and so-called trash. For those who like to explore our Town on foot, Walking in Arlington had a booth that gave out annotated maps of all the Historic and Civic Places in our town. The entire day was a lesson on how we can all improve our environment by keeping our community on a natural path, an idea whose time has come.

Feast of the East 2014

By Sally Hempstead

The Feast of the East blew into East Arlington on June 14 under gray and drizzling skies. Town folk did not let the weather deter their joy and showed up ready to have fun and learn more about their neighborhood on the south and east side of Arlington. The Friends of Spy Pond Park had a booth on the corner of Egerton and Mass Ave. sharing the block with "Walking in Arlington", "ATED Arlington Tourism" and a truly gifted face painter. As the day grew brighter, our booth was visited by scores of young families who eagerly signed our e-mail list. All were enthused about our park and its variety of activities including a playground, groomed paths for carriages, picnic tables, kayak and canoe rentals, and a pond with swans, ducks and yes, the inevitable geese. Afternoon brought occasional breaks of sun and a super rock band, The Hardy Boys, all fathers from The Hardy School on Lake Street. They enlivened our day and accompanied the crowd as they munched their way through a variety of street food including pastry, pizza, ice cream, popcorn, Nepalese, Indian and Persian fare. As always, our friendly and welcoming volunteers from the FSPP, Jason and Erin Fligg, with their ray of sunshine, Hank decked out in a straw fedora, were on hand to share their love of Spy Pond with all visitors and our rock, Marshall McCloskey, performed ably in his role as Closer. The Feast of the East again demonstrated Arlington's warmth and charm: a small-town feel in a big town setting.

ECOFEST 2014

By Sally Hempstead

"Reduce, Revise, Repurpose" was the theme of this years' EcoFest held at The Arlington Town Hall on March 29, 2014 from 10am-2pm. The FSPP booth was opposite the side door opening on to the parking area where throughout the day, townspeople were able to enrich their gardens by filling their own containers with high quality free and local compost. The booth was cheerfully hosted by six friends of Spy Pond Park. Marshall McCloskey, Sally Hempstead, Bev and Wally Williams, Betty

Planning for the Beach Party at the Arlington Reservoir, July 26, 2014

By Karen L. Grossman

Joe Connelly and Jennifer Rothenberg met with a few representatives from Arlington parks during the spring and winter to define the mission for an organization that would deal with town-wide park issues. The new name replacing "Friends of Parks" is "Arlington Parks Alliance" (APA). Hopefully, that's a little 'catchier' so it will be easier to remember and will bring to mind what we hope to accomplish.



The mission of the APA is as follows:

Representatives from local Friends groups work collaboratively to assist the Park and Recreation Commission's efforts to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the 27 parks and playgrounds in Arlington.

The Arlington Parks Alliance (APA) will provide private funds, advocacy and volunteers to supplement gaps in Town funding to help with special projects and the

perpetual maintenance of our parks and fields.

As we move forward with our planning of a **Beach Party, on July 26th**, we have listed the following as our main goals for the event:

- Help bring the community together
- Raise awareness about our parks and the Recreation Department
- Raise tax-deductible funds to better maintain and beautify our parks throughout the Town

We hope many Friends of Spy Pond Park members will volunteer to help plan and bring to fruition this first event in order to make it a big success! Contact me as soon as possible at fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org to find out how you can get involved.

Shakespeare in the Park

Arlington's Favorite Summertime Tradition!

Enjoy the bard in your backyard with two summer performances - come early, bring chairs or blankets and a picnic. Sponsors of Shakespeare in the Park will sell desserts and beverages to supplement your picnic baskets.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Presented by New Rep's Classical Repertory Company

Sunday, July 13 5:00pm

Menotomy Rocks Park Jason Street, Arlington MA
FREE

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)

Presented by Arlington Children's Theater

Sunday, July 27 5:00pm

Arlington Center for the Arts Foster Street Courtyard, Arlington MA FREE

IN CASE OF RAIN: *the show will go on at the Arlington Center for the Arts Theater, 41 Foster Street. Check back here for updates.*

Support the Shakespeare Fund

2013 marks the 13th anniversary of Shakespeare in Park in Arlington! ACA relies on support and sponsorships to present this beloved summertime tradition. Your support will ensure Shakespeare in the Park will continue as a free community program in the years to come. Thank you!

To make a donation:

donate online fast, easy & secure: <https://npo.just-give.org/nonprofits/donate.jsp?ein=04-3034682>

or send a check payable to: The Arlington Center for the Arts 41 Foster Street Arlington, MA 02474

All contributions are tax deductible.

2014 FSPP Work & Fun Days

By Lally Stowell

We encourage all who enjoy Spy Pond Park to come and join our efforts to maintain and preserve this unique spot for the many families and visitors who come from all over throughout the year. We need your help pulling weeds and invasive plants, removing fallen branches, clearing the beaches and playground, and picking up trash. Our Work Days are scheduled for three hours, but any amount of time is greatly appreciated. A lot can be accomplished, even in a short amount of time. This is an opportunity to meet and work side by side with others who love the park and enjoy helping to keep it looking beautiful. It is also an opportunity to learn more about native and invasive plants.

For each monthly Work Day, we will provide photographs and mounted samples of plants and flowers we work to preserve and invasive plants that we need to prune or remove. These samples will be available to inform and guide volunteers. Members of the Beautification Committee will be available to assign tasks, work together with volunteers, answer questions and welcome suggestions.

Below is a list of 2014's remaining Work Days. We encourage you to come as often as possible and to encourage your friends, family, members of your community groups and colleagues at work to participate. High school students can earn community service credits. We look forward to a record number of eager volunteers this year!

Saturday, July 12, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; rain date July 13, 1-4 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 2, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; rain date Aug. 3, 1-4 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 6, 1-4 p.m.; rain date Sept. 7, 1-4 p.m.

Work & Fun Day*

Saturday, Oct. 18, 1-4 p.m.; rain date Oct. 19, 1-4 p.m.

***Fun Day includes Children's activities in Spy Pond Park and Arlington Land Trust boat trips and tours of Elizabeth Island for visitors**

For questions contact Lally Stowell, member of the Beautification Committee, 781-777-2759.

Liability waivers are required for all participants in the above Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form from the FSPP website, fill it out and bring it with you. Children below 18 years of age must have parental signature to participate in Spy Pond Park activities sponsored by the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

Aquatic Food Webs

By Bill Eykamp

I was out a few weeks ago with my Secchi disk, measuring the transparency of the water column in the pond. The transparency is a function of everything that interferes with the passage of light. Where we test in Spy Pond, there is essentially nothing there except algae and related biota.

There is still nothing green showing, but there was plenty of life in the water column, even though it was cold and the ice hadn't been gone all that long.

The aquatic food chain starts with really small organisms, primarily phytoplankton. There are many varieties, up to and including the blue-green algae that become prominent in very warm weather. Blue-greens are the descendants of algae that lived billions of years ago, and who produced the most profound pollution in the history of earth, the introduction of oxygen. Not all pollution is bad, as it turns out. Probably because of the toxins they produce, they are among the least favored menu items for the next level up the food chain, in addition to being a problem for swimmers and livestock.

Phytoplankton harvest light and carbon dioxide to produce carbohydrates. This is real food, because it contains energy that other organisms can utilize. They contain chlorophyll-a. Incidentally, chlorophyll is green because it reflects green light, not because it absorbs it. This carbon fixing feeds the entire chain.

Algae are grazed by zooplankton. The Daphnia family is prominent, among whose number is the water flea. These organisms are just large enough to be seen without magnification. These animals are food for forage fish that consume them in huge quantity. Medium fish and large fish eat forage fish, including the young of all species, are eaten by. The old cartoon showing ever-larger fish about to be swallowed by their predators makes the point, even if it is oversimplified.

From the forage fish upwards, there are lots of takers: Waterfowl (mergansers, seagulls, cormorants, etc.), Birds (osprey, eagle, etc.), Reptiles, including snapping turtles, and Mammals, including raccoons, muskrats, homo sapiens.

I've provided but a very few examples of a very large, highly evolved community of organisms that inhabit the water and air in our pond. It all starts with the basics at the bottom of all terrestrial food chains—water, carbon dioxide, sunlight, and a few critical nutrients.

PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA



BU student leader, Elana Lowell, consults with FSPP President and BU alumna, Karen L. Grossman

Edging Towards a Beautiful Spy Pond Park

By Jim McSwiggen



Jim McSwiggen working on his cobblestone project in SPP

It seems to me that the best way to make things look great is to focus on the borders. I would argue that this is true both for haircuts and for landscaping. If the edges look good, people will happily overlook many other imperfections.

At one of the last Spy Pond Work Days of 2013, I was asked to work on cleaning out the grass and dirt from in between the paving stones flanking the walkways in the park. I didn't get very far that day, but from that effort I realized two things. First, that cleaning up these border stones was probably the single most effective way to beautify Spy Pond Park. Second, that completing such an effort would take a lot more time than is available in a half dozen of the regular Work Days. In April of this year I resolved to adopt this task for myself, and to work on it whenever I could find the time.

I started at the Linwood Street entrance on April 5th and finally reached the Pond Lane entrance on June 11th. Cleaning the border stones has taken about 65 hours of work. It involved

cutting back the grass overgrowth, scraping away grass, weeds and dirt from between the stones, sweeping off the loose dirt, raking smooth the dirt on the paths, and then disposing of the larger clods of sod. These weren't just my efforts, however. Five young women from Boston University helped out during the first Spy Pond Work Day, volunteer Seth Anderson joined me on two other days to help, and volunteers, Susan, and her son, Han (I didn't get their last names), joined us on the second Spy Pond Work Day. I thank all of these people—both for helping to move the project forward, and for providing much valued company while doing the work.

Alas, the work doesn't end after this first round, because then the whole thing needs to be started over again. Already the Linwood Street entrance is showing evidence of weed invasion, both between the border stones and on the path itself. We are fortunate to live in an area where plants do well for three fourths of the year, so the park maintenance also needs to be continued throughout those seasons. If you see us (me and my dog, Danny) working on the park border stones, feel free to join in the effort. Indeed, you are very much welcome to give added help with the work that you know the FSPP is doing in the park even if it isn't an official Work Day.

Red-Tailed Hawk Spotted in East Arlington

By Pinal Maniar

One sunny day in May my eight-year old daughter, Aadya, was playing in our backyard bordering the bike path in East Arlington. When

she spotted the red-tailed hawk perched on the roof of our neighbor's garage, she ran inside to tell me about it. So I quickly grabbed my camera and rushed out; I never had seen it despite stories I had heard. As you may guess, I was very happy to find it still there, presumably looking for its next catch. That's how I was able to capture a great shot of this wonderful bird of prey.



Red-tailed hawk spotted near Spy Pond

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

PHOTO BY PINAL MANIAR

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meeting at Karen Grossman's Sunday, August 3, 2014 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: Marshall McCloskey (617) 548-9877

Recording Secretary: Beverly Williams (781) 316-1917

VPs for Communication & Outreach:

Sally Hempstead (860) 944-1370

Jamie Ciocco jamcio@gmail.com

Chair for Publicity: Elaine Crowder (781) 648-1927

Beautification Committee:

Betty Athanasoulas (781) 646-1343

Gail McCormick (781) 646-0614

Richard Norcross (781) 641-2404

Lally Stowell (781) 777-2759

Beverly Williams (781) 316-1917

Elizabeth Karpati (781) 643-4172

Webmaster: Fred Moses fred@fmoses.com

Co-Chairs for Outreach/Park Events:

Erin and Jason Fliggburger (781) 724-7638

Fundraising Chair: Jason Fligg (781) 724-7638

Newsletter contributions and 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



Arlington Center for the Arts Artist, Marjorie Glick (middle) shares her skills with students from her watercolor painting class

PHOTO BY MARY SOLENO