Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter Winter 2013

Thanks to our **Beautification Volunteers**

By Lally Stowell

We would like to thank all of you who volunteered and who brought friends and relatives to volunteer during our monthly Saturday Work Days this past spring, summer and fall. Spy Pond Park would not be the beautiful and unique place it is without all of your many hours of work and dedication. We hope you will continue to spread the word and encourage individuals and organizations that might like to participate in our Work Days in 2013.

We would like to give special thanks to groups who have worked with us over the years: People Making a Difference®; BU students and alumnae who participated during the BU World Service Day; members of the Arlington/Belmont Rowing Team, members of the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Daisy Troop (young Girl Scouts); members of the High Rock Church, employees of HDR Architecture, members of Single Volunteers and Volunteer Match, and numerous individuals who are members of The Friends of Spy Pond Park and the Arlington community. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of those of you who collect trash and debris on your own as you walk through the park.

We hope you continue to visit Spy Pond Park over the winter months and return to help us welcome and nurture spring plants and flowers during our Work Days beginning in April.



Volunteers from People Making a Difference® (www.pmd.org)



Brownie Troop #65251 and their parents tackle the invasive plants in the planting beds on the last Work Day of 2012

Enthusiastic Helpers in Spy Pond Park

By Lally Stowell

On Saturday, October 13, fifteen 2nd graders from the Brownie Troop #65251 arrived at our last Work Day of the season with rakes, gloves, sharp eyes and boundless energy. They began with a walk along the planting beds, identifying the remaining flowering and invasive plants. At the same time, they spotted and collected many empty bottles, cans, candy wrappers and other pieces of trash along the way. One set of sharp eyes found an old radio hidden from view in a thicket of ferns.

With equal energy, the girls raked and cleared debris from one of the beaches, broke up fallen branches, raked the wood chips in the playground, and pulled tall grasses from fences surrounding the playground and the planting beds.

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Enthusiastic Helpers

(continued from page 1)

Finally, they came together with their trash, grasses and branches, discussed how to dispose of their collected items and "sorted all the things into bins" - either the recycling bin, trash barrel or yard waste bag provided - "same as we do at home." The girls made or confirmed their decisions about where to place each item by reading information from their copy of the Town of Arlington Recycling and Trash Guide for Residents.

They also learned about where the Town takes each category and what happens to it. "I learned that there is a special place to put electric stuff not in the trash. I didn't know that in recycling, the machines turn recycling into tiny pieces and then those tiny pieces can make a bench or chair or another bottle or can."

When asked what is special about Spy Pond, responses included: "It makes me feel nice...., It makes me feel peaceful...., The pond looks like sparkling jewels...., Plants and animals depend on Spy Pond because it's good for their lives...., and I love Spy Pond."

The Friends of Spy Pond Park appreciates the awareness, enthusiasm, hard work and growing involvement of Arlington's youth in the care of our parks and open spaces.



Recycling in Arlington is important



Working hard on Belknap Street after the microburst

Microburst Silver Linings

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

When the extreme weather event hit the Spy Pond Park area last July, we were out of town, and we got a phone call from our neighbor who said, "A tree fell on your house!" We counted our blessings when we came home and saw just minimal property damage. But, we cried as we watched huge ancient maples sawed into pieces and hauled away.

Of the six tall trees that had shaded our house in the 16 years we've lived here on Belknap Street, five are now gone. Our street looks barren and urban. I used to lie in our backyard hammock and croon that I was looking up into an "ocean of leaves." Now the hammock view is just sky. Though, of course, we counted our blessings that neighbors and their houses all survived, emotionally we spent late summer grieving for our lost trees.

But, over the next four months, more and more silver linings became apparent. First, the garden seemed to go on steroids; huge basil bushes, volunteer tomatillos and pumpkin, and super-sized flowers graced our lawn. We no longer have to restrict our plantings to "shade tolerant" varieties. Next, we realized we're newly eligible for solar panels; we signed up and will soon become producers of renewable energy, paying less for our electricity. Then fall came, and guess what? No raking! Not a leaf has fallen on our property.

Sweetest of all, now that the leaves are down, I realize that our tiny sliver of a view of Spy Pond between two houses has grown to a bigger sliver. With some trees gone, I can see more of the lovely water and the sunset from my front window. I thank the microburst for these unexpected gifts.

Arlington Public Art Celebrates the Completion of the Spy Pond Mural

By Adria Arch, Public Art Committee

The largest piece of public art in Arlington is now installed on a wall overlooking Spy Pond, and there was a public celebration Sunday, December 9 at 2 p.m. from a vantage point in Spy Pond Park at Linwood Circle.

A 25'x 100' digital mesh mural featuring images inspired by Spy Pond's natural and recreational resources and printed by the locally owned business Arlington Banner and Flag, has been hung on the side of the Arlington Boys and Girls Club building overlooking Spy Pond.

The public was invited to a short reception featuring key speakers including John Budzyna of the Arlington Center for the Arts, David Ardito, Interim Head of Visual Arts for Arlington Public Schools, Alan Manoian, the Town's Economic Development Officer, and Karen Grossman, President of the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

We are indebted to David Ardito, Interim Head of Visual Arts for Arlington Public Schools, for facilitating the mural images and to the students whose work will be displayed for all to enjoy. The four young artists, two of whom are now at college, were invited to be present at the reception: Jordawn Moses, Jobada Kachi, Lydia Genard, and Claire Stevens-Luneau.

The mural is the result of a fundraising campaign to raise awareness and interest in public art in Arlington. It is the product of a successful collaboration between many groups in town including the Arlington Center for the Arts, Arlington Vision 2020, Arlington Public Schools, Arlington Planning Dept., Arlington Boys and Girls Club, Friends of Spy Pond Park, and numerous businesses and individuals.

Fundraising for the mural included last summer's Chairful Where You Sit, a pop up installation of chairs displayed on the Minuteman Bike Path. Over 30 local artists donated their time and talents to reinventing used chairs that were available to the public for a donation of \$100. Artbeat, the Creativity Store, located on Mass Ave in Capitol Square, sponsored the Art Gecko public art fundraising campaign this summer. Currently, public funds are not yet available for public art, however many businesses and residents have contributed generously to the project.

History of the mural: In the spring of 2011, Arlington High students were invited by Arlington Public Art to submit an image to be selected for a mural overlooking Spy Pond. Four images were chosen from over sixty entries by Arlington High School students. http://www.acarts.org/pdfs/SpyPondMural_StudentArtists.pdf



Student artwork for the mural was chosen specifically to highlight the artistic talents of our youth and to engage the community in supporting youthful creativity. Rather than choose an image by a professional artist, APA felt that youth-generated imagery would be more easily supported by residents. Images generated by young people, many who have fond childhood memories of Spy Pond and the Arlington Boys and Girls Club, seemed especially appropriate for the setting. The eye catching, colorful mural covering the large blue wall next to Spy Pond, enlivens the view from the bike path, Spy Pond, and surrounding homes, and will attract visitors to Arlington. If you haven't seen it, yet, take a walk to the park to see it soon.

Town Day 2012

By Sally Hempstead

This is my second Town Day in my adopted city, Arlington. It started out much like the first with an early rising and a sigh of relief as I saw bright skies to the east. Rain had been predicted. Soon I was off to the corner of Pleasant St. and Mass Ave. to find out where our booth would be placed on the street. The Friends of Spy Pond Park tent sits among the other park booths near Jason St. with the one advantage that we have a dance studio group to our east; consequently, FSPP enjoys great music all day. Jason Fligg and a loyal friend help me set up the canopy and tables. Yep, you guessed it, just as we finished, the skies opened up and it poured. Everything blew around. Tablecloths and brochures became soggy. People were soaked. However, it is always darkest before the dawn and soon the sun came out, everything dried and the day proceeded without incident. Bev and Wally Williams were my first volunteers and Wally's way with newcomers started the morning off on an upward swing. Jason made many appearances during the day, handing out membership forms to the crowd and chatting up all visitors interested in FSPP's involvement with Spy Pond Park and its care for the environment. Lally Stowell stepped in after lunch and welcomed the, by now, mighty throng of information seekers. At days end, Karen Grossman, our ever diligent president, helped us put the booth to rest.

With all our members' help, FSPP had a wonderful, productive day. Our new SPY stickers at \$2 each earned us \$30, we sold \$111 worth of T-shirts in both youth and adult sizes, Arlington's generous townspeople donated \$46 to our park and we added \$55 in new memberships. My brother-in-law, who was visiting from Florida, was amazed at the friendliness and generosity of the Arlington citizenry. Having experienced it firsthand, it defines why I live and give here.

2102 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In addition to the standing accomplishments, the following were successfully completed:

- 1. Filed a permit for, purchased, and placed a storage shed in the gravel parking lot.
- Collaborated with Town officials and neighbors to eliminate dumping and partying in the park.
- 3. Encouraged people to pick up litter in the park.
- Involved more groups in maintenance while continuing to solicit volunteers whose names are in our database, and others from the community.
- 5. *Investigated digitizing the memory scrapbooks*. (not completed)
- 6. Filed a permit for installing a portable toilet in Spy Pond Park and achieved its installation.
- 7. Arranged for the Town to plant an additional tree at the playground.
- 8. Investigated, with DPW, concrete pavers with holes for a durable, but permeable path surface.
- Monitored re-grading of the path through the park and solicited solutions for other maintenance issues from DPW.
- 10. Supported the erection of the mural on the Boys and Girls Club building.

Goals for 2013

- Seek additional funding sources
- Maintenance details:

Plantings and soil enrichment in beds 2 & 3; Pursue poison ivy eradication; Minimize invasive plants

- Install and monitor maintenance for a portable toilet at Spy Pond Park April 1-October 31
- Involve more school groups in maintenance
- · Schedule a different group for each Work Day
- Schedule more nature crafts in the park, when possible
- Advocate for MyRWA to collect more water quality data for Spy Pond
- Maintain bulletin boards

The DPW and Spy Pond Park

By Beverly Williams

Michael Rademacher, Director of the Department of Public Works for the Town of Arlington, was the speaker at the Friends of Spy Pond Park Annual Meeting at the Jefferson Cutter House on Sunday, December 2, 2012.

President Karen Grossman introduced Mr. Rademacher and thanked him for accompanying her through the park. The speaker graduated from UMass Amherst and has worked in Environmental Engineering for both private firms and state governments. He consulted with New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont on projects to bring freight railroad corridors up to standards for passenger line use. Michael, who discovered that he enjoyed public sector work more than the private sector, began work in Arlington in 2007 as Town Engineer. He was promoted to Director of Public Works in January of 2011, the "Year of the Big Snows". The department employs over 75 workers in Administration, Engineering, Cemeteries, Natural Resources (parks and trees), Properties (Maintenance), Highways, Motor Equipment Repair, and Water and Sewer Utilities.

Many of us were surprised to learn that the Department is responsible for over 100 miles of public roadways and 25 more of private roads, 250 miles of water and sewer pipes and 75 miles of storm drains. They maintain over thirty town parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, and open lands and keep 150 town vehicles in working order. The shade trees at Spy Pond Park are a few of the 19,000 public trees under the care of the DPW.

Are you aware that ten employees are needed to maintain the sixty-six acres of "large parks"? Two just collect trash; the others mow the grass and mark lines weekly in season for all the different sports played on the public fields. Of course, they also must maintain the equipment and do other tasks, as needed.

The speaker noted that some areas of park concern fall under Joe Connelly's Parks and Recreation purview, and the DPW works closely with that Town department.

After having studied the issues at Spy Pond Park, Director Rademacher explained that the fountains are tied into the irrigation lines without backflow protection; a new supply line and construction of proper backflow is needed to fix this problem. The park, being a dead-end, receives a great deal of water runoff, leading to path erosion. In the future, DPW will maintain the catch basins on a schedule and work on securing, and maintaining better materials for the paths that will not need replacement as often as is necessary presently. He remarked that the persistent poison ivy problem could be better handled by outside contractors. "No one in the department hopes to get this assignment. As careful as they have been, one employee has been out for a week." Also, he mentioned planting some bushes adjacent to the bike path near Linwood Circle to prevent bicycles from travelling down the slope onto the path through the park.*

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Rademacher, his wife Annie, and their three young children are Arlington residents and, he noted, "the third legal keepers of chickens in the Town." Since Michael and his family enjoy Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond, he spoke from both a professional and a personal interest in the park. He thanked the Friends of Spy Pond Park members for their diligence in helping to keep the park beautiful. Those in attendance applauded in appreciation for Michael Rademacher's presentation and his work on behalf of Arlington residents and all others who enjoy the beauty of Spy Pond Park.

*Editor's note: The path through the park is not really wide enough and was not designed for bicyclists, walkers, and baby carriages travelling in two directions. We encourage bicyclists who want to be closer to the water to walk their bikes through the park or leave them in the racks that are at either end of the park while they enjoy the park more safely by foot.



President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! 2012 was a great year for the Friends of Spy Pond Park. We kept after the invasive plants in the planting beds in the park with the help of many groups of volunteers and raised more money than ever enabling us to have a portable toilet in the park. We hope to make the latter possible again this year throughout the active seasons due to your generosity. Again, we have listed members and donors on the last page of the newsletter as a way of thanking you all.

Thanks also to those who have been invaluable board members who are stepping down from their leadership roles. Doris Birmingham has been a strong presence for three years planning for park beautification and ably guiding volunteers on Work Days; Eric Berger has handily coordinated our wonderful group of writers for the FSPP newsletter for five years; and Jane Whitmore for three years embraced the job of putting our financial affairs in order, including filing necessary forms going back four more years. I have appreciated their involvement and support so much.

I'd like to welcome some new faces to the FSPP Board: Betty Athanasoulas and Richard Norcross have kindly consented to join the Beautification Committee. Sally Hempstead will assume the role of VP for Communication and Outreach to collect articles from those of you who write for our newsletter and to disseminate information about the FSPP at tabling opportunities in Town. If you'd like to make a contribution to the newsletter, just email Sally. We are grateful to Marshall McCloskey for filling the Treasurer's position this year, expanding his previous commitment of maintaining the database. Names and contact information for all FSPP Board members is listed on the last page of the newsletter in the upper right hand box.

We hosted a wonderful reception at Linwood Circle on December 9 for the artists whose designs are incorporated in the wonderful mural on the Boys and Girls Club wall facing Spy Pond. The weather cooperated and those who attended were treated to a fine view of the mural. If you haven't seen it yet, take a look. The FSPP is happy to support public art in Arlington and offers thanks to those of you who donated to this worthy cause.

Finally, on behalf of the FSPP I'd like to express our gratitude to Michael Rademacher, DPW Director, for his interesting discussion in December before our Annual Meeting. Please consider coming to our next meeting on February 10 to hear what we're planning and tell us your ideas for 2013. You can also visit our table at the Town's EcoFest on Saturday, March 23 at Arlington's Town Hall, and see our display at Robbins Library during the month of March, to find out how you can get involved in the activities of the FSPP.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Grossman, President Friends of Spy Pond Park

Report Waterfowl Feeding Sites & Waterfowl Sightings

From MassWildlife News

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) is asking for help from sportsmen, birders, and other interested conservationists across the state to report sites where wild ducks and geese (waterfowl) are being fed or to report sightings of ducks and geese they see feeding at artificial waterfowl feeding sites from January 6 - January 26, 2013. Information needed for these reports include town, specific location (address, map, or GPS coordinates), date, number, and the kinds of wild ducks and/or geese observed. Currently, MassWildlife is trying to determine if there is a correlation between artificial feeding sites and waterfowl population size. Feeding site locations or waterfowl feeding reports should be reported to H Heusmann, MassWildlife Waterfowl Project Leader by e-mail at: h.heusmann@state.ma.us; phone (508) 389-6321; Fax (508) 389-7890; or postal mail at DFW Park Mallard Survey, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA 01583.

Every five years, since 1973, MassWildlife has conducted a winter waterfowl survey of sites where people feed wild ducks

and geese. Designed primarily as a count of wintering mallards, the survey includes information on all waterfowl seen, including Canada geese. The statewide survey covers public and private property in city, suburban, and rural areas. Sites may be located on fresh water, salt water, and estuaries. Other feeding sites include parks, beaches, and backyard bird feeding stations. Because feeding locations change between each 5-year cycle, the most current information on artificial waterfowl feeding locations is valuable.

While MassWildlife discourages feeding of wildlife, there is no state law or regulation prohibiting this activity and the feeding of ducks on some sites has been going on for decades. Some municipalities do restrict or prohibit feeding. Mallards are by far the most common duck seen at feeding sites, but MassWildlife is also interested in obtaining information about other ducks and geese seen feeding at these sites: black ducks are commonly observed along with wood ducks, pintails, gadwalls, wigeons, and hooded mergansers. Canada geese are well known visitors to feeding sites and their presence is often the impetus for towns and cities to pass feeding prohibition bylaws. Results from this year's survey compared to past surveys will be available later in the winter.

Editor's note: The Town of Arlington sent this notice to the FSPP. We remind you that there is a law prohibiting the feeding of geese and ducks at all water bodies in Arlington. We encourage you to send the requested information to MassWildlife authorities.



Community and Cooperation

By Jason Fligg

In September, Arlington Brownie Troop #1007 learned the value of community and cooperation, and the FSPP was there to be part of it all. It began when one Brownie's little sister was diagnosed with Pediatric Pulmonary Hypertension (PH), a rare life-threatening disease, and the rest of the troop was motivated to act. For their first fundraising project ever, they came up with a plan to fashion hairpins, friendship bracelets, and other crafts to disseminate raising money and awareness about this little known and underfunded disease. They quickly created the crafts, but soon learned it was too late to get a booth for the upcoming Arlington

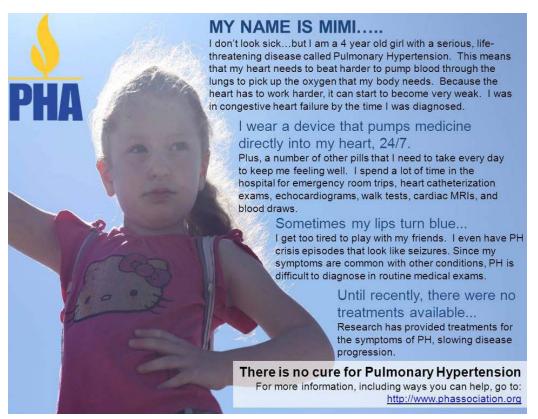
Town Day. Word of mouth spread about their predicament and when the FSPP members heard about it, they couldn't say no to Brownie Troop #1007 and their worthwhile cause. The FSPP committee decided to share their booth space with these young girls to help spread awareness for two great causes.

These 17 young girls worked hard, taking shifts at the FSPP booth to distribute their crafts and hand out literature about Pediatric PH. Within a few short hours, they handed out over 200 pieces of literature and raised over \$350 in donations for Pediatric PH Research. The story of their spirit and the generosity of the FSPP spread on email and through the Arlington Listserve, they inspired other Arlington citizens to donate to PH, with some even matching the raised amount.

The great community of Arlington continues to impress. It's amazing what can be done in such a short time, with good intentions, hard work, and a little bit of luck!

To learn more about Pediatric PH and to donate, visit http://www.phassociation.org/Donate/.





A Sincere Thank You

By Jason Fligg

I want to say thank you to the Friends of Spy Pond Park on behalf the McNiff family, who are so grateful that they had a home base to raise awareness for their daughter Mimi's health issues. They have a rather large email list, to which they sent out the following message:

This past Wednesday one of the brownies suggested the first project should be crafting hair accessories to sell and raise money to help find Mimi a cure. On Thursday, September 16 little girls and 6 adults crafted for two hours. Jason, our neighbor, helped us borrow a piece of the Town Day booth at which he was assisting for the Friends of Spy Pond Park (an amazing group!).

All the girls took shifts seeking donations for the craft items and handing out literature about the disease (we distributed over 200 pieces) raising \$351 for the Pediatric PH Research Fund! It is amazing what so many caring people accomplished in such a short amount of time!!! Thank you again to everyone for helping us to bring a cure closer to us all!

I really feel that we did the right thing and brought a lot of young, interested people to our little part of Town Day. Thanks for being so accommodating, and letting this little pocket of hope take place under our tent!

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meeting Karen Grossman's **Sunday, Feb. 10, 2013** at 7:00 p.m.

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

32 Hamilton Road #402

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
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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 fred@fmoses.com Webmaster: Fred Moses

Chair for Outreach/Park Events:

Betsy Leondar-Wright (781) 648-0630 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

Stephan Miller

We recognize those who have made contributions to the FSPP in 2012. This money has enabled us to pursue the mission of supporting the preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond as natural and community resources. We extend our sincere thanks for the generosity and commitment of these 137 individuals and households.

Winter 2013

2012 Donations

\$100-\$200

Eric Hall Anderson Eric & Barbara Baatz Dr. Norman Garber James & Charlotte Milan Kate Thompson

S50-S99

Marianne & Kevin Barbera Sue & Henry Bass Evelyne & Xavier Benveniste Doris Birmingham Lionel Fergus & Gerda Brown Roger Dempsey & Linda Chase The Fliggburger Family Robin Goldstein Helena & Bertrand I. Halperin Sally Hempstead Peter & Jane Howard Dave & Lauren Kopans Betsy & Gail Leondar-Wright Adam & Ashley Lorenz

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Akila Padmanabhan Mary Parlee S. Georgine Pennington William Reardon, Jr. Emily Snyder Alicia Russell & David Stipp Adele C. Walsh Amy Wyeth

\$5-\$25

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