

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Winter 2014

### People Making A Difference<sup>®</sup> Celebrated their 1,000<sup>th</sup> Project!

By Karen Grossman

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



**PMD volunteers with FSPP's new cart for transporting debris to the pickup location**

Yes, on July 7, 2013 in Spy Pond Park, People Making a Difference<sup>®</sup>, under founder Lori Tsuruda's competent leadership, participated in their 1,000th work project. The volunteers helped clear invasive plants from the planting beds, cleared grass from the fence, and transplanted ferns with the members of the Friends of Spy Pond Park. We have appreciated their help for the past few years and were honored to have them in our park marking this momentous milestone. You can find out more about this organization and their activities at: [www.pmd.org](http://www.pmd.org).

### Winter on Spy Pond

By Eva Balazs

I remember many good winters on Spy Pond. A good winter meant good for skating; it meant long stretches of dry, cold days and little snow. Those were the years before skating rinks were built in town. Those who loved to skate had to wait 'til Spy Pond froze. Usually in the middle of December, after several very cold nights, we could hear powerful pounding in the distance. It was like thundering, all over the pond, a sure sign that the ice sheet was forming. Soon it would be thick enough for skating.

The first ice of the season often was "black ice", transparent and dark, born within a short period of intense cold. One can see through, at some places down to the bottom, seeing fish swimming by and seaweed floating in the current. It's a strange feeling walking over black ice, quite intimidating.

After school and on winter holidays, Spy Pond was the liveliest place in town. Everybody was on the ice. There you met old friends and made new ones. You saw boys on bicycles, little boys on tricycles, dogs with their families, and mothers pushing baby carriages or pulling sleds with red-cheeked youngsters hanging on. Sunday mornings there were father and son hockey matches right in back of our house. Our son, André, and his friends looked forward very much to playing these games. On Wednesday afternoon, daughter Marianne would have a group of little figure skaters. At the age of 12 she was a much-revered authority for teaching the figures to 6 and 7 years olds.

There were many fine figure skaters around us, but nobody was better than my friend, Nancy Flynn, a real star... Then there were speed skaters, constantly training, and running around the pond more and more times... And we had kite flyers! Yes, kite flyers... on skates!

And we had parties, of course: birthday parties with cake and candle blowing... and games and hot cider for the little folks. And evening parties for big folks, with spicy hot wine... I certainly remember my first skating party! It was at night under a full moon in January of 1952. Clouds darkened the moon from time to time and millions of stars shone bright and clear. It was a beautiful night, bewitching. Everybody was on skates, but stayed close to shore. Spy Pond seemed immense and mysterious. I felt the pull of the unknown-what a peculiar sensation!

With steady, long strides, one-two, left-right, one-two... I started forward, absorbing the thrill of the moment. Suddenly, with a thunderous bang, right in front of me, the ice cracked open! The split wasn't wider than an inch...hardly a dangerous situation, but it startled and scared me. I thought, "Now, what? What do I do next?" I spun around and was heading home, in a hurry, heart pounding... I saw the fire far, far away... I felt like flying!

Oh, yes! Winter was a special time, indeed. Thank you for asking me to reminisce. My very best wishes to you all!



**Skaters took advantage of five cold days and clear ice to play hockey on Spy Pond the day before a big snowstorm**

PHOTO BY FRED MOSSES

# Winter Closing In

By Bill Eykamp

As this is being written, Spy Pond is partly frozen. Things will be different when the newsletter comes out, because things change quickly at the beginning of the ice season. Looking out my window, I see many acres of fresh, smooth ice. I also see large stretches of open water, and several small “islands” of water surrounded by ice.

This year, there are more mergansers than anyone can remember. They’ll be gone for sure in a day or two. Many seagulls accompany them. For the seagull, the mergansers are their “fishing fleet.” Grab and go.

When the wind stops, it doesn’t take much freezing weather to form ice, but today the wind is strong, and that stirs the water. Almost all the water in the pond is above freezing, and that is true throughout the winter. Even when there’s enough ice to support skating, if some infernal engine could stir all the water in the pond, the ice would melt.

What I see today is a lot of wavelet action meaning the water is being pushed downwind. The subsurface water rising to replace it is well above the freezing point, so this can continue for quite some time. One cloudless, still night and the mechanism stops and the pond will freeze over. Then, wind has no effect on the liquid water, and it sweeps heat away from the surface of the ice, making the ice thicker.

Almost every year there is talk of “springs.” If there were a spring, the water coming out of it would always be about the same temperature, somewhere in the 50’s F. Spring water would be buoyant, and if there were much of it, it would melt the ice over where it rose. Some years there are very persistent patches of unfrozen pond. Rarely do these patches appear in the same place, year to year. I am very skeptical of the spring hypothesis, but proving a negative is difficult.

Soon (maybe already) there will be snow. Snow is an excellent insulator, so ice doesn’t thicken very fast when snow-covered. Winter air is almost always colder than the underlying ice, so heat moves upward. The way heat moves through snow is complicated, because it requires the movement of water vapor, and that changes the shape and size of the snowflakes as it passes through. That is responsible for much of the aging of snow phenomenon so well known to cross country skiers.

So, a freezing or ice covered pond is not as uncomplicated as you may think, nor is it as simple as I have described it. Enjoy it while we can; spring will come eventually.

# FSPPP 2013 Accomplishments

1. Sought additional funding sources
2. Maintenance details:
  - Planting (attempted transplantation) and soil enrichment in beds 2 & 3 (not done since need was unknown)
  - Pursued poison ivy eradication
  - Minimized invasive plants
3. Installed and monitored maintenance for a portable toilet at Spy Pond Park 4/1-10/31
4. Involved more school groups in maintenance
5. Scheduled a different group for each Work Day
6. Scheduled more nature crafts in the park, when possible
7. Advocated for MyRWA to collect more water quality data for Spy Pond
8. Maintained bulletin boards

# FSPPP Goals for 2014

Continue as listed above with the following changes:

1. Soil enrichment, if necessary, and include keeping the park free of trash (as is possible)
2. Advocate for MyRWA to collect more water quality data is being done, so delete this
3. Install stone sculpture by Kevin Duffy



PHOTO BY SARAH WILSON

Students from Matignon High School’s Key Club volunteered in Spy Pond Park on October 5



# 2013 FSPP Annual Meeting Presentations

By Bev Williams, Secretary

Nathaniel Stevens, Head of Arlington's Conservation Commission coordinated a walk through Spy Pond Park to investigate the erosion in Spy Pond Park that might be affecting the health of Spy Pond. On October 18 FSPP President Karen L. Grossman, Betty Athanasoulas and Elizabeth Karpati of the Beautification Committee, Leslie Mayer and Don Vitters of the Park Commission, David White and Charles Tirone of the Conservation Commission, Michael Rademacher, the DPW Department Head, and Kellie Connelly looked at problem areas in the planting beds adjacent to the shoreline.

Cathy Garnett, a Registered Landscape Architect and Arlington Conservation Commissioner, used David White's photographs from that walk to illustrate her talk at our Annual Meeting on December 8. Cathy noted that half of the park still has adequate vegetation. However, she encouraged us to look at the original proposed park design from ten years ago along with actual planting notes, update the planting beds and correct erosion that has occurred since the 2006 renovation.

Her suggestions include:

- Eliminate informal pathways that lead to erosion,
- Watch where plants are gone and grass has moved in,
- Check invasive plants that have moved to other parts of the park,
- Use rocks and coir rolls to combat erosion on the shoreline and discourage walkers along the shore,
- Determine which plants from the original plans have survived and use those as replacements,
- Take up grass in stages, replacing with native plants and shrubs near the black fences,
- Make replacements according to a master plan, and
- Keep encouraging volunteers to help maintain the park!

Kellie Connelly, also a Registered Landscape Architect, was our second speaker who presented the "big picture" by showing us plants that could be used in this area. "Natives" refer to plants and trees native to New England and "naturalized" plants are those that have adapted to the climate of New England. She showed us many photos that included trees, shrubs, and low-to-the-ground plants that could be used in our park. Since there were many possibilities, Kellie has given the FSPP her recommended list of trees and plants. She also brought books and catalogs from which we

could learn about and purchase these plants. Kellie and her son use Spy Pond Park, and she thanked us for our efforts in keeping the park beautiful.


## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Happy, Healthy New Year! We have already experienced our first snowstorms of this winter and activity in Spy Pond Park has decreased. However, the Friends of Spy Pond Park has continued working with the Conservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission to discuss the need for additional plantings in Spy Pond Park. The beautiful black fence installed during the 2006 park renovation was intended to protect the fragile plantings. However, it has been only partly successful in enabling the plants to thrive. There is evidence of shoreline erosion and paths are worn in areas where people have walked closer to the shoreline within the planting beds. Many of the original plants have perished over time. Some beds are only sparsely populated with bushes, ferns, and flowers to hold the soil and curb erosion.

At our Annual Meeting in December Cathy Garnett and Kellie Connelly addressed these issues and offered possible solutions. The FSPP has sought landscape architects to design a plan to curb erosion, outline a maintenance plan that will be feasible to enact using Town and FSPP resources, and result in the installation of rocks, coir rolls, plants, bushes and trees as soon as possible. This necessary intervention, not unusual seven years after the park's renovation, may be more costly and involved than all parties envisioned, even if enacted in phases. In addition, the parties who would draw up the plans are busy until February. However, we will continue to pursue obtaining assistance and funding to enable further action in this process.

We appreciate the support of our members and donors in 2013. We'll be in touch with you to let you know if we need help gaining additional financial assistance for this project. We look forward to this year, making significant progress towards the 2014 goals and banding together to gather momentum, as we have in the past, in maintaining the beauty of Spy Pond Park and protecting Spy Pond.

Sincerely,  


Karen L. Grossman  
 President  
 Friends of Spy Pond Park

# Monday Walks through the Park

By Betty Athanasoulas, Elizabeth Karpati, Gail McCormick, Richard Norcross, Bev Williams, Beautification Committee

Each Monday morning before a Saturday Work Day at the playground entrance to Spy Pond Park, the Beautification Committee gathers under Lally Stowell's leadership. As she takes notes, we decide on priorities and begin to observe: cans in the pond, broken branches, grass between the rocks lining the paths, invasive plants that seem to re-appear each month, cigarette butts around benches and picnic tables, papers among the trees, and by Linwood Beach, as always, goose poop.

Lally labels the planting beds by number, and by Saturday, she erects signs and distributes notes. She assigns each of us to supervise one or two planting beds. As volunteers arrive and pick up gloves and tools, we are ready to help them begin the specific tasks for that area.

To assist all of us, Lally has taken photos of "save" and "get-rid-of" plants. Her enthusiasm and careful planning for these seemingly mundane tasks has helped in our making the park beautiful. Watch out! Her joyful spirit is catching. Join us next spring for a Work Day.

# Snacks for FSPP Volunteer Workers

By Gail McCormick

Volunteers helping at Work Days have been enjoying the bagels, muffins, cookies and other pastries set out on one of the tables. They might not know that The Food Recovery Project provides these treats.

Since March 2012, the project has recovered over 14,000 crates of food that otherwise would largely have been discarded. This has amounted to several hundred thousand dollars in retail food value.

Unpaid volunteers collect fresh produce, bread, canned and other foods daily for redistribution to food pantries, low-income senior housing complexes, the Arlington Senior Center, Bunker Hill Community College Single Stop Program, and other public or non-profit institutions including the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

Businesses donating food include Panera Bread, Starbucks, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods Market, and the new Kickstand Cafe in Arlington Center. The Food Recovery Project recently won the MassRecycle 2013 Reuse Award that is given for outstanding achievements by individuals, public servants, municipalities, businesses and organizations in promoting recycling and waste reduction in Massachusetts.

You can make a tax-deductible donation through one of the Project's fiscal sponsors, Minuteman Parent Association, 758 Marrett Rd., Lexington, MA 02421 or Massachusetts Climate Action Network, PO Box 51563, Boston, MA 02005. Include a note indicating that it is restricted for use by the Food Recovery Project. Sustainable Arlington, a Vision 2020 Environment Task Group Committee, is also a sponsor. The FSPP is grateful for this effort that brings enjoyment to so many people, saving food for others to appreciate.

# A Wonderful Community of Active Workers and Members

By Lally Stowell

A huge 'Thank you' to all who volunteered this spring, summer and fall to keep Spy Pond Park looking beautiful and welcoming for the many visitors who enjoy it all year 'round. Spy Pond Park would not be the unique place it is without all your many hours of work and dedication. Some of you came to our monthly Work Days on your own, some with friends and family, and some with your volunteer community, school or work group. You collected trash and recyclables, cut back or pulled out invasive plants, pruned or thinned the overgrown planting beds, raked the playground, removed tall grasses from the fences, and dug up clumps of grass from between the cobblestones. There sure was a lot to do!

Every active member of the FSPP contributes in his/her own way. Many of you offered valuable advice and suggestions. Some of you collected trash and debris on other days as you walked through the park. There were a number who became new members or renewed old memberships, making it possible for us to purchase new tools and supplies. You might not have been able to come to our Work Days, but contributed in the form of membership dues or individual contributions. We offer a hearty 'thank you' to you all!

We have special gratitude that we want to express to the groups and their leaders who participated, some for several years in a row: BU students and alumni participating through the BU Global Day of Service; Lori Tsuruda and People Making a Difference®; Mali Ouzts and employees of HDR Architecture; Joan Amon, Ari Azamelis, Greer Dent and members of the novice Arlington/Belmont Crew Team; and Jasmine Leal with members of the Key Club at Matignon High School in Cambridge. Thanks, also, to Volunteer Match for connecting us with great volunteers and groups who participated during the season.

We hope you continue to visit Spy Pond Park with friends and family over the winter months and return to help us welcome and nurture spring plants and flowers during our Work Days beginning next April. The Beautification Committee—Gail McCormick, Beverly Williams, Betty Athanasoulas, Dick Norcross and I—send out our appreciation for all your efforts.

# Arlington Whole Foods Outreach

By Sally Hempstead, V.P. for Communication and Outreach

Whole Foods has a wonderful program that benefits non-profits in the area in which their markets are located. The Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSSP) through the efforts of our President, Karen Grossman, were the fortunate recipients of this community outreach during the month of October sponsored by the Whole Foods in Arlington on Mass. Avenue. Colorful coupons were printed identifying the non-profit, the Friends of Spy Pond Park, with a detailed explanation on how to contribute to the cause by adding one to five dollars or more to the shopper's grocery receipt at the register. These coupons were handed out on Town Day in September and at the Arlington store during October. Karen Grossman and Sally Hempstead, representing FSSP, were on hand a few evenings during the month to talk to shoppers and explain Spy Pond Park's benefit to the community and the activities we offer. Katie Lamie, the Whole Foods Marketing Liason for the Arlington store, was a great help in advising the most opportune time to be there and where we should set up the cart for maximum advantage. Four to seven in the evening the store hosts the largest group of shoppers. Even though they were tired after a long day and hurrying home to dinner, they were enthusiastic about Spy Pond Park and its place in the Arlington scene and happy to make a contribution at the register. All in all, the FSSP collected \$225.09 that will be put to good use supporting our efforts to beautify the park.

## Art in Spy Pond Park in 2014

By Kevin Duffy

The concept for a stone carving for Spy Pond Park evolved from my involvement in a Waldo Park project in 2013 that was a collaborative effort by Arlington sculptor, Bill Turville, two other artists, and me. My part was to carve a small granite rabbit that was placed in a hollowed out section of the tree. The success of that sculpture inspired me to want to create other public art works in stone in Arlington. Initially, Spy Pond Park was one of three locations on which I was focusing.

At that time, I only knew I wanted to carve some type of animal. The resting swan seemed the most compatible with both the parks' landscape design and the pond being home to many types of waterfowl. However, at first I made small maquettes of three different animals, including a swan. The response from all groups to whom I presented my basic proposal: the Arlington Cultural Council, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Friends of Spy Pond Park Board, was overwhelming in favor of the swan concept.

I am looking forward to actually begin carving in early 2014. The rough carving will be done at The Contemporary Arts

International Facility in Acton. Later in its development, the piece will be transported back to Arlington where the finish work will be completed. I hope to install the final sculpture at a still to be determined location in Spy Pond Park at some point in late spring or early summer.

*Editor's note: Kevin Duffy began his career as a painter and illustrator and now focuses his efforts on monument conservation and commercial stone carving. He recently received the top award at the annual juried members show "Small Works" at the Arlington Center for the Arts. You can learn more about him at: [www.duffysculpture.net](http://www.duffysculpture.net).*



PHOTO BY SHERIDAN KAHMANN PHOTOGRAPHY

Lally Stowell and Gail McCormick, Beautification Committee members are pleased with volunteers' work on the last Work Day

## Search for 2014 Fun Day Coordinator

By Karen Grossman

As you probably know, the Friends of Spy Pond Park has sponsored a Fun Day in Spy Pond Park each year since 2006, and others even before that. Betsy Leondar-Wright has been the primary organizer of these wonderful events. Unfortunately for us, in 2014 she will be on a book tour promoting her newest book all summer and will be unavailable to organize the activities for a September Fun Day.

Therefore, we have been searching for someone else to donate the time and energy to coordinating Fun Day 2014. We are hoping that someone will assume Betsy's position next year. Betsy has a list of Fun Day activity leaders and prize donors for you to use. She would provide a time line that you could easily follow to help manage contacting these people/businesses. Perhaps, if we have two volunteers, we could have Co-Chairs for Park Activities in 2014. Please give full consideration to undertaking this rewarding role. Seeing the happy faces of the children enjoying the activities in Spy Pond Park makes it all worthwhile! Thanks, we hope to hear from someone as soon as possible: [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org).



**Friends of Spy Pond Park  
next meeting  
at  
Karen Grossman's  
Sunday, February 9, 2014  
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: 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](mailto:jamcio@gmail.com)
- Co-Chairs for Publicity: Open
- 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](mailto:fred@fmoses.com)
- Chair for Outreach/Park Events: Open
- Fundraising Chair: Jason Fligg (781) 724-7638

Newsletter contributions and 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

We recognize those who have made contributions to the FSPP in 2013. 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 144 individuals and households.

**2013 Donations**

**\$1200**

Monsanto via David Cleary

**\$200+**

David and Lauren Kopans

**\$100-\$200**

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- Eric Hall Anderson
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Kari Schlicht  
Lally Stowell

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