

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Winter/Spring 2023

The Spy Pond Pumpkin Fairy Tree

By Peggy Fenner, Artistic Designer



PHOTO BY LIDIA SCHER

Many on the Minuteman Trail stopped at Peggy Fenner's whimsical fairy house to write letters to fairies. They put the letters in a box on this tree, which overlooks the path through the park.

While the blend of colors radiating from the Spy Pond Park trees was spectacular this fall, there was one tall tree with three trunks along the bike path that drew the attention of curious onlookers, young and old, for three months.

It became known as the Pumpkin Fairy Tree, decorated with an artistically designed fantasy display, featuring a hand-crafted family of fairies and elves. These endearing miniatures sat on branches beneath their bright orange pumpkin hut. Nearby, visitors found a wooden box filled with smaller pumpkin fairies that sat on perches, surrounded by sticks, flowers, moss and their duck friends. Anyone stopping by to take a closer look, could almost hear the voices of the fairies calling them to read the message on the wooden, flip top mailbox, hanging below their home. There appeared to be a Woodland fairy riding on the back of a feathery owl who kept a watchful eye over the box for the fairies.

The message the elves and fairies left for passers-by read, "We wish to help make your dreams and wishes come true... ones for yourself, your families, and the world. Leave them in the mailbox, along with toys and treasures so we will know we are all connected to each other."

(Continued on page 4)

Local Artist Creates FSPP Environmental Poster

By Jenny Babon

ArtsArlington's spring 2022 Artist-in-Residence Kari Percival created a new poster for FSPP, showcasing Spy Pond's environs and the important role that the Friends of Spy Pond Park has in protecting and preserving this Arlington gem. The artwork is part of a poster series "There's No Place Like Home," a public arts project sponsored by the Town of Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture. These posters were designed to support local organizations working on community causes, including protecting the environment and ensuring food security.

"We are very grateful and excited to have Kari design a poster that reflects the mission of FSPP and informs the park visitors and nearby residents about small acts they can do to preserve and protect Spy Pond," Karen Grossman, President of FSPP.

The FSPP poster and the rest of the series is currently on display at the Roasted Granola in Arlington Heights. **A reception for Kari Percival will be held on March 5, 2023 from 1-3pm at Roasted Granola. Everyone is invited!**



ARTWORK BY KARI PERCIVAL

FSPP 2023 Annual Meeting Presentation

By Douglas Rosner & Rosemary Burke
as recorded by Megan Chrisman

PHOTO BY AB CREW TEAM



Arlington/Belmont Crew Team: Past, Present & Future

AB Crew is a team drawing from Arlington, Belmont, and Minuteman Tech High Schools that competes locally, regionally, and nationally. The team began in 2005 in Belmont; Rosemary credited the program as a life-changing experience for many rowers, including her daughter who was one of the founding members. They were able to sign up some teachers as coaches and workouts were held in the school gym; they acquired boats from another program. The parents built the boat racks and the team raised funds through bake sales. It took a couple years to find a permanent place for the team to row. In 2009 an Arlington business owner who was coaching a Worcester team approached them to collaborate with Arlington students who were rowing on Spy Pond, where they have been rowing ever since.

AB Crew has qualified for the US Rowing Youth National Championships and medaled in Boys Lightweight Four. They are four-time MPSRA state champions and have also rowed in the Head of the Charles Regatta. Jane and Beril, two varsity girls' team athletes, spoke about what it's like to compete. Jane started on the novice girls' team as a new student in the area and was happy to meet new friends, along with experiencing what it's like to row. Beril tagged along with a friend who was doing the summer Learn to Row program for just two weeks but ended up joining the team for four years. They both appreciated how AB Crew is dedicated to the sport and the love of rowing.

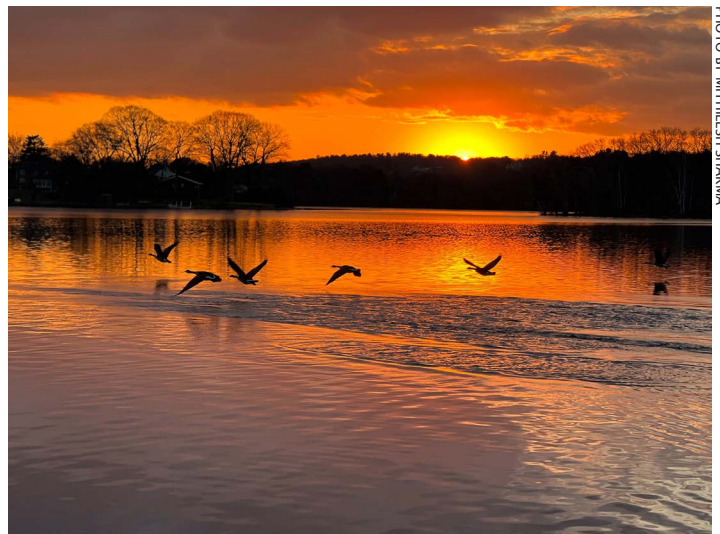
The practice schedule can be intense during the 2-month training periods with 5-6 practices a week. The team has even

rowed out in the snow! Covid made practices more challenging to do safely, but the team bought single and double crew boats to still give athletes the ability to practice on Spy Pond, one of the only places that they could access outside of the house. Both racing seasons are approximately two months long with six consecutive weeks of races. Saratoga starts off the racing season in April and is a fun team trip. There are a lot of scrimmages in the spring because the races are shorter then. US Rowing Northeast and MPSRA is usually in Lowell and sometimes a boat qualifies for the US Rowing National Championship in Sarasota, as the novice boys' team did last year. In the fall the regattas go off one at a time and teams generally row against the clock. They tend to be longer races and take place around New England in areas like Lowell, New Hampshire, and Cambridge across September and October. The team maintains a food trailer to feed the 100+ athletes.

Unlike with soccer and other sports, most would-be rowers are novices, so the team welcomes any interested new team members residing in Arlington or Belmont from the three feeder schools. The AB Crew Board has formed a DEI committee to ensure that all students have an opportunity to benefit from being a part of the rowing community. They also promote rowing in 8th grade classes and recreation centers.

The club is a self-managed 501(c)(3) non-profit. The operating budget runs around \$100k per season, funded by athlete fee revenue and fundraisers. Boats can be very expensive; an eight-person boat can run around \$45k. Athlete fees are \$1150/season along with travel expenses and financial aid is available.

Betsy Leondar-Wright asked if the adult rowing sessions that the AB Crew team formerly offered might be renewed and Doug replied that it could become a consideration in the future. Karen Grossman asked the athletes what thoughts help them get through a challenging race or training session and they replied that the coxswains encourage them to row for their teammates; it's also inspiring to feel how fast the boat is going, especially compared to other boats. FSPP thanks the speakers and the crew team for the opportunity to learn more about their history!



Geese at sunset

PHOTO BY MITHILESH SHARMA

2022 Accomplishments and 2023 Goals

(All Standing Goals were reached, except increasing active membership, participating in Eco Week or Feast of the East, and selling more t-shirts, since the playground was closed.)

2022 Goals Attained:

1. Monitor and influence as much as we can the Park Commission's efforts re: shoreline rehab, path improvement, and tot lot play area in our best interests.
2. Determine the need for alternatives for handling litter/trash and investigating how other towns do it.
3. Monitor the town's pursuing finances for establishing signage about the soil erosion project and care of the planting beds.
4. Put up a sign in the rain garden explaining its environmental purpose and the added fencing (presented in plans for playground renovation).
5. Identify and award 1-2 worthy citizens for outstanding service to the FSPP.

2023 Goals:

1. Monitor and influence, as much as we can, the Park Commission and ConComm's efforts re: shoreline rehab, path improvement, and playground area in our best interests.
2. Coordinate with Hardy School re: a unit for study of the Spy Pond Park environment and field day in SPP involving parents, the DPW, and Charlotte Milan from Arlington Recycle – this was done in 2018 and will be investigated for 2023.
3. Determine the need for alternatives for handling litter/trash along with the DPW.
4. Recruit a General Vice-President.
5. Communicate with Public Art to explore additional art for the park and investigate what is being done in other parks and investigate themes with connections to Arlington history and indigenous peoples.
6. Monitor the town's pursuing finances for establishing signage about the soil erosion project and care of the planting beds.
7. Put up a sign in the Linwood (and Pond Lane?) rain garden(s) and planting bed signage explaining its environmental purpose and the purpose of the end fencing.
8. Identify and award 1-2 worthy citizens for outstanding service to the FSPP.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

In January, Director of Parks and Recreation Joe Connelly re-convened the Friends of Parks group that hadn't met for a couple of years. He's requested a list of maintenance and other requests from each park. The FSPP board members and I came up with items reflecting our 2023 goals. It's great to have a forum for discussing issues in common with other parks.

Winter is evident in full force as I write this, but Spy Pond has not fully frozen over yet this winter! The playground is near completion, but we are waiting for some consecutive days of over 50° weather when Rae Contracting can install the final layer of the poured rubber surface in the spring. Children are eager for the reopening day to be announced and are itching to explore the new equipment!

In addition to completing the playground renovation, the Town needs to turn its attention to stabilizing and vacuuming the porous path that goes through the park. The renovation of that path was done at the same time as the Conservation Commission's Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project, approximately three years ago. Presently, it can filter stormwater before it enters Spy Pond. However, if the path particles are not secure and the path not maintained properly, it will become impervious. It would be good to have this done after the playground construction work is complete. So, I have asked David Morgan about obtaining the necessary funding to protect the financial investment and the health of Spy Pond.

After a wonderful presentation by A/B Crew Team representatives, at the January Annual Meeting we celebrated our last year's accomplishments, set goals, and elected a slate of officers. Thanks to the 133 people who made financial contributions in 2022. We are looking forward to a successful year of Work Days when our Beautification Committee will guide the many individuals and groups of volunteers who gather to help groom the park, especially the planting beds. If you are able, we'd love to have you join us! Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman
President
Friends of Spy Pond Park

FSPP Saturday Work Days

By Lally Stowell

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days begin on May 20th and will continue through October. 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 two 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, members of the Beautification Committee will be available to assign tasks, work together with volunteers, answer questions and welcome suggestions. All workers must let us know of their interest and bring a signed liability waiver form (parents must sign for under-18s) to participate. We have a limited supply of tools so if you have gloves and/or clippers, they would be greatly appreciated. Please bring water, too.

Below is a list of Work and Fun Days for 2023. They will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below. The hours for May, June, Sept., and Oct. are 9-11 a.m.; for July and August 8-10 a.m. We encourage you to come as often as possible for whatever length of time you can give. We also hope you will 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 having many eager volunteers work with us this year. For more information, contact Lally Stowell: lallystowell@icloud.com.

FSPP 2023 Work Day Schedule

May 20, 9-11 a.m. (rain date May 21, 1-3 p.m.)

June 10, 9-11 a.m. (rain date June 11, 1-3 p.m.)

July 15, 8-10 a.m. (rain date July 16, 1-3 p.m.)

Aug. 19, 8-10 a.m. (rain date Aug. 20, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 30, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 1, 1-3 p.m.)

Oct. 14, 9-11 a.m. (rain date Oct. 15, 1-3 p.m.)

Sept. 9 Fun Day 10 a.m.-1p.m. (rain date Sept. 10, 1-4 p.m.)

Fun Day involves children's activities in Spy Pond Park; It is not a scheduled Work Day.

Liability waivers are required for all participants in these Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the form <https://friendsofspypondpark.org/pdf/liability-waiver.pdf> 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 Work & Fun Days.

Pumpkin Fairy Tree

(Continued from page 1)

Here are some examples of notes that were left in the box through the fall months by people of all ages and cultures:

"You have made my day!"

"Hello faiary and elf friends,,,thank you for protecting the trees and nature of Spy Pond!"

"I wish I can be able to say bye to my best friend when I go back to Japan."

"I wish the magic would never end."

"I am a fairy too."

"I wish I had a nicer brother."

"May we love and be loved with compassionate hearts."

"here is only one thing I have dream forever, and I hope this will finilly work. My dream is that I want my Mom and Dad to be nice to each other again."

"We love it and wish we could live here!"

"I dream of becoming an artist."

"I wish to be a vet."

"I love you fairies."

"Duendeciteos, Son reales? Caminan par lo calle?"

"Porque los quiero ver por favor. Con Carino, Maximo."

"Hi fairy friends, I hope for peace, progress, and prosperity for our community! Happy Fall!"

Each day I eagerly walked to the tree to collect over one hundred touching messages written in Spanish, Chinese, and English! Throughout the fall, the nature of this one tree in Spy Pond Park expanded and became a site which served as a source of inspiration and interconnection for our international community who love to experience the beauty and peace generated by the pond and its best friend, the park.

Editor's note: Peggy has designed a new fairy folk display which will, hopefully, appear in the Spring. She hopes to expand the magic this wonderful steadfast tree generated for the Friends of Spy Pond Park and beyond.

PHOTO BY BETSY LEONARD-WRIGHT



This eagle, the female of the pair nesting in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, has been perching regularly on the steeple of Calvary Methodist Church on Linwood Street, one block from the Park

PHOTO BY BRIANNA GOLDSTEIN



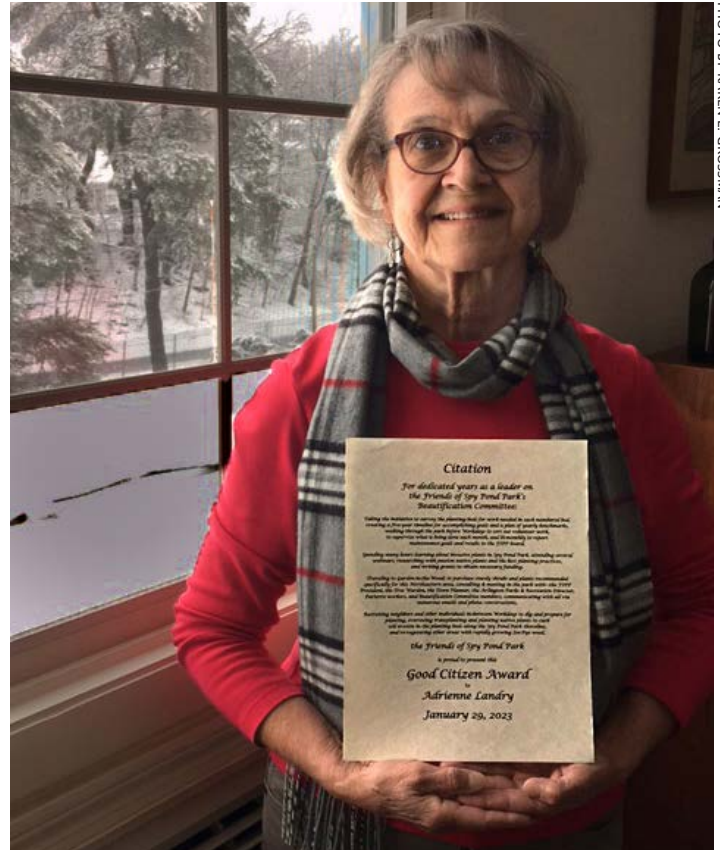
Rae Contracting laid down the base for the path and the ground surface near the swing and see-saw structures

PHOTO BY JENNY BABON



Viewing the see-saw and the swing structure in the renovation, children can't wait for the playground to open

PHOTO BY KAREN L. GROSSMAN



Adrienne Landry was pleased to be honored with the FSPP's Good Citizen Award at our January 29th, 2023, Annual Meeting

Citation

*For dedicated years as a leader on
the Friends of Spy Pond Park's
Beautification Committee:*

Taking the initiative to survey the planting beds for work needed in each numbered bed, creating a five-year timeline for accomplishing goals and a plan of yearly benchmarks, walking through the park before Workdays to sort out volunteer work, to supervise what is being done each month, and bi-monthly to report maintenance goals and results to the FSPP board,

Spending many hours learning about invasive plants in Spy Pond Park, attending several webinars, researching with passion native plants and the best planting practices, and writing grants to obtain necessary funding.

Traveling to Garden-in-the-Woods to purchase sturdy shrubs and plants recommended specifically for this Northeastern area, consulting & meeting in the park with--the FSPP President, the Tree Warden, the Town Planner, the Arlington Parks & Recreation Director, Parterre workers, and Beautification Committee members, communicating with all via numerous emails and phone conversations,

Recruiting neighbors and other individuals in-between Workdays to dig and prepare for planting, overseeing transplanting and planting native plants to curb soil erosion in the planting beds along the Spy Pond Park Shoreline, and re-vegetating other areas with rapidly growing Joe-Pye weed,

the Friends of Spy Pond Park

is proud to present this

*Good Citizen Award
to
Adrienne Landry
January 29, 2023*

Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

on
Sunday, March 5, 2023
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA
&
Sunday, April 30, 2023
7:00 p.m., Zoom link TBA

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.

President: Karen L. Grossman (781) 646-5990
General Vice-President: Open
Treasurer: Susan Saw (781) 439-1490
Recording Secretary: Megan Chrisman (760) 604-8384
Membership Secretary: Daniel Jalkut (617) 276-6672
VPs for Communication & Outreach:
Lauren Bonilla fsppvolunteer@gmail.com
Jamie Ciocco jamcio@gmail.com
Communication, Outreach and Publicity Committee:
Anne Ellinger (781) 646-1705
Marshall McCloskey (617) 548-9877
Phinney Morrison
Chair for Publicity: Jenny Babon (774) 253-6325
Beautification Committee:
Adrienne Landry
Lally Stowell (781) 777-2759
Web Developer: Julie McBride
Chair for Outreach/Park Events:
Betsy Leondar-Wright (781) 648-0630
Photographers and Videographers:
Jenny Babon (774) 253-6325
Fred Moses fred@fmoses.com
Mithilesh Sharma (617) 233-9218
Photographer's Assistant: Open
Post-processing: Mark Sandman
Newsletter contributions and general comments can be sent to
fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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

We recognize those who have made contributions to the FSPP in 2022. This money enables us to pursue our mission of supporting the preservation, enhancement, and enjoyment of Spy Pond Park and Spy Pond as natural and community resources. We extend sincere thanks for the generosity and commitment of the 133 individuals, households, and foundations involved in this effort.

2022 Donations

\$300

Katherine Shields

\$200-\$299

Anonymous
Brad Barber
Dr. Norman Garber
Paul Lipsky
Shawn Szturma

\$195-\$199

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Katy Wolff

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