

Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

Fall 2010

Thanks for FSPP Workshop and Festival 6/26/10

by Karen Grossman

Hundreds of people attended the Children's Workshop, the Parade of Animals, the Festival and the Work Day sponsored by the Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) on June 26. We want to acknowledge all who made it all happen: the Arlington Center for the Arts, John Budzya and Linda Shoemaker for helping to pub-



Eva Balazs and the New New Orleans Jazz Band entertaining park visitors

licize our event and supplying a great location for the workshop; support in part by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency; Jennifer Melcher for lending us A-frames for our publicity campaign; Pam Shanley-Daube, educational artist, for the children's parade headdress and puppet making work-



Annie and Oliver Wright showing off delightful painted faces



Children providing appreciative accompaniment to the Lokensgard Blechbläser Ensemble

shop; Betsy Leondar-Wright and Anne Ellinger, FSPP Activities Co-Chairs, for organizing and planning the booths and activities. Businesses and individuals gave donations that added to the day's enjoyment: craft donations for giraffe magnets from Art Beat, six pond life activity books from The Book Rack, kites and other toys from Coyote Impressions, binoculars and toys from Eric Berger and Doris Birmingham, and ten free pint coupons from Ben and Jerry's.

There were many people who did something before, during and after the festival: Eric Baatz, Eric Berger, Maya Bermudes, Jessica Bewsee, Liz Blumenthal, Judy Brewer, Garry Carlson, Melody Chapin, Anne Ellinger, Lauren and Valentina Hefferan, Jacki Katzman, Gail Leondar-Wright, Fred Moses, DP Powell, Ellen Robertson, Rebecca Sacks, Myra Schwartz, Eric Segal, Quentin Stipp, Lally Stowell, Bryce Sullivan, Laura and Alice Tracey, the Lokensgard Blechbläser Ensemble, and Eva Balazs with the New New Orleans Dixieland Band. Our gratitude goes out these people who showed hundreds of Spy Pond Park visitors a good time. What they learned about the pond, the park, and FSPP will stay with them.

Thanks, also, to the workers who pulled invasive plants: Doris Birmingham, Elizabeth Karpati, William Stalcup, Rebecca Sacks, Seth Botos, and Bruce MacDonald.

We will again be working in Spy Pond Park on Saturday, September 11, 1-4 p.m. (rain date Sunday, September 12, 1-4 p.m.). We need more workers and welcome your help. To find out more about the Friends of Spy Pond Park, visit our website at <http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org>.



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

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SPY POND PARK MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL 9/11/10

On September 11, 2010 from 12PM to 4PM, Boston area artists, musicians, and performers of all kinds will converge on Arlington, MA. Their goal? To spread the joy of the creative arts to the people, and raise money and awareness for the Friends of Spy Pond Park, the group responsible for the upkeep of one of Arlington's recreational gems. Men and women of all ages are invited to come to Spy Pond Park and enjoy a day of music, poetry, arts and crafts, and the opportunity to volunteer some time to keep the park beautiful.



PHOTO BY DORIS BIRNINCHAM

Grace Huang, Olivia Upton, Jean Sicurella, Everett Upton, Dave Upton, Victoria Upton, Ella Upton (in blue shirt), High Rock Church volunteers at FSPP Work Day

Spy Pond Park is located along the eastern shore of Spy Pond, about a block west of Massachusetts Avenue between East Arlington and Arlington Center. The Minuteman Bike Trail, Linwood Street, and Pond Lane offer easy access to the festival. Visit <http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org> for more information.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Arlington Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.



If you would like more information about this event, call Seth Botos at (781) 354-2617 or Brian Biciocchi at (781) 718-8960. They are also contactable by email at sethbotos@gmail.com or shaqueesha_da_3rd@hotmail.com.

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Gabe and Ava Karlin pausing after the Parade of the Animals into Spy Pond Park from the Arlington Center for the Arts

For a small donation, anyone visiting the festival can participate in a number of arts and crafts activities. The music is free, and will be presented at several locations in the park. Some of these areas will also feature other performers, such as poets or dancers. A major component of the festival will also be the FSPP Work Day, start at 1 p.m. after the beginning of the festival. Attendees are encouraged to grab a pair of gloves and a gardening tool, and get to work in one of the Park's many planting beds. Volunteer work like this is vital and ensures that places like Spy Pond Park remain enjoyable to all for years to come.

**Visit the FSPP booth at
Town Day on Sept. 25!**

Please sign up to sit at the booth or help in other ways. Email Margaret Barrett: margo_boston@yahoo.com.

Four Nature Highlights of My Warm Months on Spy Pond

by Betsy Leondar-Wright

1. In May I saw the biggest turtle I've ever seen in the pond, on a downed tree trunk in the cove by Spy Pond Condos. It was the size of a dinner plate. It was much quicker to notice me approaching and to dive into the water than the smaller ones were. I bet that's how it survived to live so long!
2. In June I watched a huge osprey hunting for fish in Spy Pond. It was soaring very high, circling around the part of the pond between Rt. 2 and Kelwyn Manor. Three little birds were harassing it, following it and swooping very close to its tail. Suddenly the osprey dove, head down; I thought it would catch a fish in its beak, but actually it caught a fish in its feet. Then it flew up again – but one of the little birds grabbed the fish! A few minutes later it tried again, caught another fish, and this time managed to escape its pursuers and keep the fish by flying away from the pond.
3. In August I saw a small heron in the reeds by Kelwyn Manor, a type I'd never seen before, maybe a least bittern or a green heron. Its markings were beautiful, with a black cap, tawny stripes in front, yellow feet, and a dark greenish back. It was very shy, hiding from me and then skittering away when my canoe came close. When it was hiding from me, it pointed its skinny head and beak straight up to camouflage itself against the phragmites.
4. In the late summer and early fall, one of my favorite pond activities is popping jewelweed seeds. Jewelweed (*impatiens capensis*) has a lovely light-orange flower on gangly pale stalks; it grows in sunny spots in moist swampy ground and along shorelines. The juices in the stems are an old folk remedy for poison ivy and poison ivy, first used in this area by Native Americans. In summer the seedpods are just skinny little strings, but starting in September, the seed pods grow fat – and there's something extraordinary about them. There's a huge amount of tension inside, like a coiled spring. When you gently tap the sides of a seedpod, it explodes, and flings out little curlicues along with seeds. This is how the jewelweed spreads its seeds, by wind and animals brushing the seedpods and exploding them. For us humans, it's as much fun as popping bubble-wrap. You can find a few small plants near some of the stone steps in the park – or a lot of jewelweed bushes along the bike path where the ground is wet, including down the slope just before Varnum Street, or near Great Meadows near the Lexington line. I'm passing on my secret spots in hopes of sharing the popping fun with those previously uninitiated into jewelweed wonders.

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

The summer has flown by and we have enjoyed the continuous blooms and additional growth that has resulted from our eradicating so many invasive plants in the planting beds of Spy Pond Park. This year we have relied on many volunteers from People Making a Difference, the High Rock Church, and the Arlington/Belmont crew team. We are so thankful for all their work and have done outreach to solicit other help from the community. Here's hoping that more people will come to help on the remaining Work Days. If you know of another group that might be interested in doing community service to help us, please notify Doris Birmingham or Gail McCormick, Beautification Co-Chairs whose contact information is on the final page of this newsletter.

As you may know, Carol Johnson and Associates created the design for Spy Pond Park's renovation. Recently, we've been working with Carol Johnson and Senior Landscape Architect, Teresa Hodge, to find remedies for the path erosion throughout the park. For the Linwood Circle path to the pond, we are making arrangements for the installation of a durable product, StaLok, hopefully this fall. As for the other parts of the path and the handicapped ramp, Teresa has donated her time to draw up plans for re-grading areas that would precede any re-surfacing. We still have to present the drawings to the Town and seek funding to support these actions.

The June 26 Festival was a wonderful success and we look forward to more fun at another Arts Festival in Spy Pond Park on September 11, 12 – 4 p.m. that will help support our goals and raise funds for the park. So I hope to see you, your friends and family there to enjoy the wonderful activities that will be going on that afternoon. We'd like to count on you to join us as a Friend of Spy Pond Park. If you'd be able to help us spearhead a major fund raising campaign, let me know. Hope you have had an enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman
President
Friends of Spy Pond Park

Creating Spy Pond Park Song Parodies

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

At the Spy Pond Park Festival in June, the Parade of the Animals sang a song called “We all live on a pond that’s blue and green” based on Yellow Submarine by the Beatles, and a chorus of 8 singers sang several other Spy Pond songs.

Where did these songs come from? A few creative friends of the park dreamed them up, and it didn’t take long. Here are the steps you could take to create Spy Pond song parodies of your own:

1) First, think about something you want to communicate about the pond or the park. For example, Anne Ellinger was walking around the park and started feeling annoyed by the litter, wished she could tell individual litter-droppers how their tiny pieces of garbage add up.

2) Next, start humming, and see if a song you know well pops into your mind, and see if any Spy Pond-related words fit into the chorus. You might have to hum two or three or a dozen songs before anything seems promising. In Anne’s case, the children’s song Itsy-Bitsy Spider popped into her mind, and she started singing “itsy-bitsy garbage...” Soon she had a whole verse:

An itsy bit of garbage flew off my fingertip
And his and hers, and hers and his
There’s no place left to sit
Our beautiful Spy Pond is not a garbage pit
So I’ll pick up itsy garbage – every little bit

3) Then download the original lyrics from the internet, and print them out double-spaced, or just get a piece of paper and a pen, and start replacing line by line. A rhyming dictionary is a big help. (Unfortunately, not many words rhyme with “pond,” but lots rhyme with “Spy” and “Park.”)

The best song parodies stick closely to the original, using some of the same words, rhythms, and rhymes.

4) Your song will be improved with help from clever friends or relations. For the festival, I gathered some of the creative geniuses within FSPP: Eric Berger, Ellen Robertson and Anne Ellinger, plus two of the best song-parody writers in my family: Eric Segal-Wright and Gail Leondar-Wright. Several people brought rough ideas or draft songs to our songfest, and we spent an evening collaboratively improving them.

Eric Segal-Wright, who plays with his kids at Spy Pond Park four seasons a year, brought a draft of a song appreciating the various year-round fun to be had there based on the 1960s hit My Girl. Here’s the final version we sang at the festival:

My Pond

I go sailing, on a sunny day
When it’s cold outside, I’ve got the Ice Capades
In June or May
What could make me feel this way?
(Chorus:) Spy Pond! Spy Pond, Spy Pond
Talking bout Spy Pond – Spy Pond!

I don’t need no vacation,
In the south of France

I just put on my swimsuit,
And pull down my pants
I guess you’d say
What could make me feel this way?
(Chorus:) Spy Pond...

It gets SOOOO warm
It feels like a tub
I can row from the condos
To the Boys and Girls Club
I guess you’d say
What could make me feel this way?
(Chorus:) Spy Pond...

We wanted to end with a song inviting everyone at the festival to pitch in and help with the Work Day going on simultaneously, as well as other monthly Work Days. I put out a call for ideas, and Eric Berger came up with a very



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

funny draft to the tune of “I’m getting married in the morning” from My Fair Lady. Four of us worked together on revising it, with this result:

We’re Pruning Spy Pond Park in the Morning

We’re pruning Spy Pond Park in the morning,
Ding dong the vines will be refined;
Pull out your clippers,
Snip off some pippers,
And get us to the park on time.

We need your labor in the playground,
Dressed down and looking so sublime;
Join our work party
Stay hale and hearty
Let’s clean up Spy Pond Park on time.
When we are weeding
Weed right on in
Tearing up loosestrife
Heck it ain’t no sin!

We’re pruning Spy Pond Park in the morning,
Ding dong we’re ripping out the vines
You’ll be a hero
Weeds down to zero
So go get down and dirty
The park will look so purty
For your sake join us in the park this time



PHOTO BY DORIS BIRMINGHAM

Forester Soszey and Alice Tracey, assisted by Neil Tracey (not pictured), sold lemonade on July 10 and donated a free cup to any volunteer who worked in the park

Spy Pond Herbicide Top-up

by Bill Eykamp

On July 7, Spy Pond was closed for a day for herbicide treatment. Why, when the pond had been closed on June 1?

As you will (doubtless!) recall from the previous newsletter, the herbicide used against Eurasian watermilfoil is concentration dependent. While it works well in extreme dilution, 20 parts per billion, it does not work well at significantly lower concentration. It is very expensive, so, for many reasons, over-dosing is undesirable.

Ponds are not conical, but a cone is a better approximation of their cross section than a cylinder. The top foot represents a significant fraction of their total volume.

When Spy Pond was treated, it was below normal level. That meant that the volume of water was down, so less herbicide was needed to achieve the critical concentration. In early June, it rained enough to put about a foot of water into the pond. Some water left the pond via the outfall structure, taking herbicide with it. What remained was diluted to a level where it could not be relied upon to do its job. The herbicide acts slowly, so maintaining an effective concentration is vital.

And that is why Spy Pond was re-treated in July.

PHOTO BY DORIS BIRMINGHAM



Gail McCormick and Doris Birmingham, Beautification Co-Chairs, with High Rock Church volunteers pruning Spy Pond Park on July 10, 2010

Who wouldn’t want to pull some weeds with an invitation like that?

So now – why don’t you try it yourself? The same technique can be used for any other topic, of course – political satire, family occasions – but if you choose Spy Pond as your topic, you know you’ll have an enthusiastic audience. Your song parody could be published in this newsletter, or yours could be the song parody we sing at next summer’s festival!

Wildflowers, as Summer Ends

by Eric Berger

Eva Balazs, in her delightful book, *More Spy Pond Stories*, renders fond memories of wildflowers nestling Spy Pond's shores at the end of summer, perhaps her favorite time of the year.

"The prettiest wild flowers bloomed in late August, the island was full of berries. The fact that time was running out made each day more precious."



PHOTO BY DORIS BIRMINGHAM

Joe-Pye weed

Time...running out.

Eva remembers fondly canoeing close to shore, playing the game of who could name the most wildflowers, the "tall purple flowered stalks of Spiked Looseleaf" dotting the land. She spied the tall coarse-stemmed weed, Joe-Pye, with its "soft, dark purple florets". Great Mullins appeared, their "yellow flowers with leaves, blooms, seed pods all together on the same stalk at the same time."

There were so many different and beautiful wildflowers to enjoy. Queen Anne's Lace stood regally, its "lovely flowers changed into birdcage-like shapes to hold seeds." Spied also were wild cucumber, "with their long tendrils and spiny fruits." Burdock joined the party too, its little balls ever present that "cling and go where you go to set up a new life far from home." Not to be outdone were "Wild Mint, Clover, the lovely New England Astor, and Black-eyed Susans. The first Goldenrods, "harbingers of the approaching autumn," gracefully entered the scene.

Eva reminds us in her oh so special way that Goldenrods can help medicinally.

"Remember the story of Little Rabbit who had the ear ache? Mother Rabbit made a brew for him from that weed. When I was a child and had a fever, I too drank chamomile tea, which is the brew made of the dried flowers and leaves of the Goldenrod."

The ending of summer, like any time of year, comes alive poignantly and vividly, through Eva's writing about Spy Pond. If you haven't read her sweet book of remembrances, do yourself a favor — make it your friend.

Editor's note: Many of these flowers have been planted in Spy Pond Park and are there for all to enjoy, too.

Department of Health Alert 8/18/10

High levels of microcystis algae were detected at Spy Pond during water sampling performed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Water samples are being collected and monitored on a weekly basis. This Public Health Advisory will remain in effect until cell counts drop to safe levels for two consecutive weeks. This particular type of algae can be toxic if ingested in high doses and can cause skin irritation and a rash after wading or swimming. The Arlington Board of Health strongly advises residents not to swim or stand in the water and especially urges residents to keep pets away from the water.

Microcystis is a cyanobacteria algae that grows naturally beneath or on the surface of many waterbodies. Under certain conditions (such as warm weather and an abundance of nutrients in the water) the algae may undergo an explosive type of growth that results in dense, floating mats of algae. This is commonly referred to as an "algae bloom."

Contact with high levels of the cyanobacteria algae has been found to contribute to eye, ear, and skin irritation. Microcystis is different from most other types of algae because it contains and can secrete a toxin into the water. During an algae bloom, the amount of algae and toxin in the water can become elevated and exposure can be potentially harmful to people and animals.

Health concerns vary depending on the concentrations of microcystis and its toxin, microcystin. Ingestion of elevated concentrations of the algae and its toxin can lead to more serious health effects (e.g. muscle cramps, twitching, and liver damage).

For regular updates please check arlingtonma.gov/health.

You can read the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Microcystis Algae Bloom Fact Sheet here: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=7&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Community+Health+and+Safety&L3=Environmental+Health&L4=Environmental+Exposure+Topics&L5=Beaches+and+Algae&L6=Algae&sid=Eeohhs2&cb=terminalcontent&f=dph_environmental_c_beach_microcystis&csid=Eeohhs2

Editor's note: As the days get shorter and cooler the algae is likely to dissipate.

Take a Kid Carpin' - The Results

by Jerome Moisand

As advertised, we had our first Take a Kid Carpin' event at Spy Pond Park on Sunday, June 27. We were extremely lucky with the weather, and it worked remarkably well.

We had roughly 30 participants, quite a turnout. 13 young anglers caught their first carp, which weighed roughly between 6 and 14 pounds.



PHOTO BY EDITH MOISAND

The afternoon was much slower, with only two fish landed, the last one coming to young Tom who played it like a pro, without any help. Overall, 14 carp landed (Tom caught two), a few more escaped, we had plenty of action, and this was a great day of fishing.

All carp were released in good health, not only because there is a public health advisory against eating fish from Spy Pond, but also out of respect for those big fish.

Many thanks to all participants, and also to my friends Dominic and Eric who had much less luck in their own section, but who tried very hard to make it work. Count on us to do it again next year!



PHOTO BY EDITH MOISAND

Ashby landed the first one around 9AM, quickly followed by Jason. And then we had two runs at the same time. This was interesting, to say the least, to assist two kids at the same time dealing with two angry carp that were pulling the line like crazy! We did succeed in landing those two fish, and the morning kept going with multiple other catches, and a lot of excitement.



PHOTO BY EDITH MOISAND

Finally, a special thanks to Karen Grossman who helped me tremendously finding all the contact information to get proper authorizations and to advertise the event. The (renovated) Spy Pond Park is truly a beautiful place to fish.

E-mail me at jmoisand@gmail.com for more details. And check my stories at <http://www.carpipedia.com>.



PHOTO BY EDITH MOISAND

**Friends of Spy Pond Park
next meetings
at
Karen Grossman's
Sunday, Sept. 12, 2010 &
Sunday, Nov. 7, 2010
both 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.

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For newsletter contributions, contact berkshire2@juno.com
General comments can be sent to fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org

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

Work Days for Fall 2010

Meet at our table near the playground to sign in and get your work assignment. We have tools, but it is a good idea to bring your own work gloves and a set of small pruning shears if you have them.

Sat., Sept. 11, 1-4 p.m.
(rain date Sun., Sept. 12, 1-4 p.m.)**

Sat., Oct. 16, 1-4 p.m.
(rain date Sun., Oct. 17, 1-4 p.m.)

**A fun/activity day will be held in the Park during work hours on this date.

It is very helpful if you can respond to our e-mails and phone calls with a "yes" or a "no." It enables us to better plan the work and also to contact you if we have to declare a rain day. Doris: 781-641-2392; email dabirming@aol.com, Gail: 781-646-0614; email g McCormick@verizon.net.



PHOTO BY DORIS BIRMINGHAM