

# Friends of Spy Pond Park Newsletter

## Winter/Spring 2018

### Hardy Times Articles by Third Grade ELL Students

PHOTO BY HEATHER SMITH



(l-r) Artur, Zarar, Sajeel, and Kanon, reporters for the Hardy School News, were happy to have the experience of interviewing FSPPP President Karen L. Grossman

### The Best Guest Speaker

By Zarar Khan

I interviewed Karen from Spy Pond Park. She is an agent of change. She got involved in the park because she was living next to Spy Pond Park. The mission of Spy Pond Park is to support the preservation of the park in Arlington. 1,000 people are involved and they clean it once a month. They use shovels and forks. She started doing the Fun Day once a year starting in 2006. People cannot swim in the pond because there's no lifeguard. In the park there are ducks, geese, birds, swans, eagles, and more. People can get involved by going to their website [www.friends-of-spypondpark.org](http://www.friends-of-spypondpark.org). I hope you have a good time.

### Karen Grossman is an Agent of Change: She Works to Help Clean Spy Pond Park

By Sajeel Khan

Do you now how Karen Grossman got involved in friends of Spy Pond Park? She lives near the park and she heard about a group coming together to fix's the pond and park.

*(Continued on page 2)*

### 14th Annual Spy Pond Trails Day

Saturday, May 12, 9 AM – 1 PM

Meet your neighbors, make an impact, try something new, learn valuable tips for maintaining your own property. Please join us on Spy Pond, Arlington, for our 14th annual gathering to improve this scenic slice of public land so enjoyed by all. We'll be pruning vistas, bagging litter, controlling invasive plants, and maintaining access trails to the pond. Join us for as little or as much as you like. Equipment and snacks provided, but please pack your own lunch for after. Hosted by the Spy Pond Environment Task Group (volunteers working in partnership with the town), the Boy Scouts, the Belmont/Arlington Crew, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. C'mon down and join the party! Qualifies as a community service project. Participants should bring sturdy footwear, work clothes, a hat, sunscreen, and rain gear. Liability waivers will be available and must be signed by all participants (under 18 need approval from—and are preferably accompanied by—a parent or guardian). Location is along the path that parallels Route 2, between Lake St. and Pleasant St. Recommended parking: take exit 60 off Rt. 2, head towards Mass. Ave. (N) on Lake St., first left onto Colonial Drive, left onto Roanoke, left and park along Spy Pond Parkway. For more info: (781) 641-2506 or [www.arlingtonma.gov/spypond](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/spypond)



PHOTO BY LISA REVOLDIS

"Ripple", giant knitted sleeves for bikeway trees near Spy Pond Field by 60 town volunteers, coordinated by Adria Arch, Arlington Public Art

# Hardy Times Articles

(Continued from page 1)

Do you now what the mission of friend of Spy Pond Park? The mission of friend of Spy Pond Park is to keep the park and pond in good condition and make it better.

Do you now how often they work to clean Spy Pond Park? Ones a month, from April to October, 7 times a year. FSPP has Fun Days in September in Spy Pond Park every year. If want to learn more or be a member of Friends of Spy Pond Park go to there website: [www.friendsofspypondpark.org](http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org).

## Karen Grossman Is An Agent of Change: All About Spy Pond Park

By Artur Makaryan

Karen Grossman is an agent of change because she is a leader and the president of friend of Spy Pond Park. There are 1,000 people in the mailing list in Spy Pond Park. It really isn't safe to catch fish from the pond because fish eat poisonous plants under water. So if you eat that fish that had eaten the plant you will get sick. There are many wild animals living in Spy Pond Park. There are rabbits, foxes, geese, ducks, squirrels, swans, racoons. If people want to get involved so they can help they can look in computer in a cite that says Spy Pond Park google@cite. You can go to visit [Friendsofspypondpark.org](http://Friendsofspypondpark.org). One way you can help is to go clean Spy Pond Park once a month with a group of friends.

## Why is Ms. Karen Grossman is an Agent of Change: Friend of Spy Pond Park

By Kanon Yoda

Do you know how often do the friends of spy pond park clean? They go down there once a month (April to October) 7 times per year. They used to only go two times per year. In 2006 they fixed all the park. When it was finish, they went to the spy pond park. They saw pretty flowers so they wanted to keep the spy pond park beautiful and never let the spy pond park be dirty again. Right now there are about 1,000 of people in a large mailing list. But not all people come to clean. A lots of people buy the stuff that help to clean the spy pond park like clippers (long ones and short ones), saws, wheel barrows, rakes, and forks for taking the grass that is between the stones and shovels. If you want to get involved then you can go to the website ([www.friendsofspypondpark.org](http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org)).

*Editor's note: Hardy School teachers Heather Smith and Mandy Massis' English Language Learner (ELL) students interviewed*

*Arlington Agents of Change. FSPP President, Karen L. Grossman, was honored to be one of them. She thoroughly enjoyed meeting the students and answering their many thoughtful questions. We hope you've enjoyed reading what they learned about Karen, the FSPP's mission and our activities.*



PHOTO BY LISA RENOLDS

“Current”, an environmental art installation by Provincetown artist Frank Vasello, flowing from the Minuteman Trail into Spy Pond Park

## Thoughts of Spy Pond Park

By John and Sara Sharp, Arlington Heights

We don't get down to Spy Pond Park more than just several times a year; just want to say that improvements over the last several years are very impressive! FSPP stands out as a marvelous example of what volunteers can do with a rather slim piece of real estate wedged in between the bikeway, the pond, and various buildings, for the enjoyment of all who live nearby. I used to pass by rather frequently when my daily runs took me there. Now that I am not running nearly so far, I have not been there so often. Still it's nice to see what a devoted group of citizens can do for the enjoyment of everyone!!



Betsy Leondar-Wright wearing boots plays solo broom hockey on the Spy Pond ice

## OUT ON THE ICE

By Betsy Leondar-Wright

It's glorious to be out on top of Spy Pond in the winter!

One day in early January I saw skaters on the pond ice and wanted to join the fun. I ran home, grabbed a broom and a tin can, and went out for a game of solo broom hockey, wearing boots.

I skidded and slid and kicked my can all the way to the island, then tromped around to see how different everything looks in winter. The birch trees are especially beautiful when viewed from the high point of the island, with the icy pond as backdrop.

I liked watching others enjoying themselves in such a variety of ways. Most exciting was the big plastic ice kite; the wind blew a skater across the pond at astonishing speed. There were two hockey games, one near Rt. 2 and one near the Boys and Girls Club. The ice fishers near the island said they hadn't caught anything yet. Lots of little kids seemed to be getting the hang of skating for the first time. Some parents stood on the shore and took photos; Pinal Maniar took a break from photographing her own family to take this picture of me.

On the way back, I stopped often to look at the patterns in the ice. Bubbles, cracks and trapped leaves all look like framed works of modern art under the glassy surface. Windblown water had frozen in mid-swell, leaving nature's speed bumps there to slow down skaters.

Spy Pond is beautiful in summer, too, but could it be that this is actually its most exquisite season?

## Area Events

### Mill Brook & Wellington Park Public Meeting

March 8, 6 p.m.

Senior Center, Main Room, 27 Maple Street, Arlington. The Town of Arlington, in collaboration with the Mystic River Watershed Association and the Mill Brook and Wellington Park Revitalization Project Steering Committee, is hosting the 1st of 3 official public workshops for the Mill Brook and Wellington Park. The purpose of these interactive workshops is to gather public feedback regarding the revitalization of the Mill Brook corridor between Brattle and Grove Streets, with a specific focus on Wellington Park. [Read additional details and add to your iCalendar at arlingtonma.gov.](#)

### EcoFest 2018 Focuses on Sustainable Land Use

March 24 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Town of Arlington hosts EcoFest at Town Hall to inform and entertain the public around an important theme relating to sustainability and our local environment.

This year's event, titled **EcoFest 2018: Greenward**, will be held on **Saturday, March 24, from 10 am to 2 pm**. The free program with activities for all ages centers on three aspects of public and private land use: **Land and Water Management, Plants and Pollinators, and People and Healthy Ecosystems**.

For more information, visit the EcoFest website at [arlingtonma.gov/ecofest](http://arlingtonma.gov/ecofest), or contact Charlotte Milan at the DPW at [cmilan@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:cmilan@town.arlington.ma.us).

### Bird Walk in Spy Pond Park

Saturday April 14, Rain Date April 21 8-10 a.m.

Join birder John Sharp as we check out arriving Spring bird migrants. Spy Pond Park attracts both perching birds and water-fowl so there will be some variety. Beginners and accomplished enthusiasts all welcome. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you can. Meet at the Spy Pond Park playground off Pond Lane. Postponed a week if it is actually raining.

### CPA final plan for Spy Pond Edge Protection and Erosion Control Project

Watch for notice of this meeting that will define construction beginning in 2019.

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES



Snow blows over Spy Pond ice from snow dunes

## FSPP 2017 Accomplishments

**It was agreed that most of the goals set for 2017 were largely met. These were:**

- Aid in applying for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for feasibility study, 30% design, engineering, survey, and presentation costs to curb shoreline erosion along Spy Pond Park area, etc.
- Rally support for a presentation concerning Conservation Commission's request for CPA funds to Selectmen and Town Meeting.
- Help prepare and support application for funds for permits and construction from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).
- Plan and promote a Spy Pond Park Fun Day with the Arlington Land Trust in September.
- Facilitate Kevin Duffy's making "Penny" the swan sculpture permanent art in SPP.
- Follow up on replacement of one backless bench near Linwood Beach.
- Continue to pursue replacement of Serviceberry to the right of second bench from Linwood.
- Complete the job descriptions for officers and committee chairs.
- Assess the number and placement of trash barrels in Spy Pond Park and determine if more permanent barrels should be purchased for the park.
- Recruit two new board members from a broad range of the membership

In addition to our standing annual goals:

- Increase active membership, enlarge the core group of volunteers
- Maintain the park as needed
- Have Town Day, EcoFest, & Feast of the East outreach
- Send bi-monthly meeting announcements & agendas
- Sell more t-shirts
- File annual report and PC report to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Have a library display, as permitted
- Increase awareness of FSPP and park events: hold a successful park activities day for children and families
- Maintain and update the FSPP database
- Maintain and update the FSPP website
- Publish quarterly FSPP Newsletter (next year – 3 issues)
- Maintain archives of news items on Spy Pond Park (Memory Scrapbooks & Newsletters)
- Create a scorecard on annual goals

We did not circulate a call for a Fundraising Chair and appoint someone to that position nor mount a campaign to raise money to cover rehabilitation costs, since these were not deemed necessary. And we were not invited to participate in EcoFest this last year, as the theme was changed.

## FSPP Goals for 2018:

- Look into alternatives for handling park litter/trash, investigate how other towns do it
- See that benches and tables get repaired, perhaps order a new one
- Monitor the Conservation Commission efforts re: shoreline rehab. and path improvement
- Explore additional art for the park
- Recruit a General Vice-President
- Recruit a Park Activities Co-chair
- Coordinate with Hardy School re: a unit for study of the Spy Pond Park environment involving parents, the DPW, and Charlotte Milan from Arlington Recycle.
- Support efforts to provide environmentally sound rat control measures in Spy Pond Park and Arlington, in general.

# Work and Fun Days for 2018

By Lally Stowell

The FSPP monthly Saturday Work Days begin on April 29th 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 three hours, but any amount of time is greatly appreciated. A lot can be accomplished, even in a short amount of time. This is an opportunity to meet and work side by side with others who love the park and enjoy helping to keep it looking beautiful. It is also an opportunity to learn more about native and invasive plants.

For each monthly Work Day, members of the Beautification Committee will be available to assign tasks, work together with volunteers, answer questions and welcome suggestions. All workers must sign a waiver form (parents must sign for under-18s).

We have a limited supply of tools, so if you have rakes, gloves and/or clippers, they would be greatly appreciated. Please bring water, too.

Work Days will be held on the Saturday mornings listed below from 10 a.m. -1 p.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 a record number of eager volunteers this year! For more information, contact Lally Stowell; [lallystow@yahoo.com](mailto:lallystow@yahoo.com). Mark your calendars now.

April 28, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date April 29 1-4 p.m.)

May 19, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date May 20 1-4 p.m.)

June 23, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date June 24 1-4 p.m.)

July 21, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date July 22 1-4 p.m.)

Aug. 18, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date Aug 19 1-4 p.m.)

Sept. 29, 10 a.m. 1 p.m. (rain date Sept 30 1-4 p.m.)

Oct. 20, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. (rain date Oct 21 1-4 p.m.)

Sept. 22, **Fun Day** 10 -1 p.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 the above Work and Fun Day activities. If you are working, please download the*

*form from the FSPP website, fill it out and bring it with you. Children below 18 years of age must have parental signature to participate in Spy Pond Park activities sponsored by the FSPP.*

## President's Letter

Dear Friends,

Although Spy Pond ice has persisted for weeks this year, we are closer to the beginning of spring! Recently, there was an ice fisherman enjoying the cold weather intermittently, warming up in his blue tent. Not my thing, but it was fun to watch him surveying each hole he had drilled through the ice to the water world below. There were a lone hockey player, one dog walker and the next day 2 ice skaters holding sails, waiting for gusts of wind! I hope all of you enjoy what each season has to offer.

On another note, I send thanks to FSPP Officers and Committee members, those of you who have joined us at Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) and Conservation Commission (Con Comm) meetings and/or contributed financial support in recent months. FSPP is also looking forward to our collaboration with the Hardy School PTO for their Fourth Grade Service-Learning Field Trip to Spy Pond Park on June 6. In a couple of months many of you will be in Spy Pond Park again to see spring bursting forth.

Fred Moses has posted some of the many photos from 2017 many people have sent us. Take a look in the FSPP gallery on the PICTURES page of our website: [www.friendsofspypondpark.org](http://www.friendsofspypondpark.org). You might even find yourself memorialized there! Thanks again to Fred Moses who has faithfully performed these tasks since he built the site in 2006.

Please note our Work Day schedule and join in to help clean up the park, work in the planting beds, groom the path and tot lot, or just cheer us on, as you are able. You all make FSPP a success. If you've viewed the oversized moon this winter or the striking sunsets so far in 2018, you'll continue to be able to seek out Spy Pond Park as a calming refuge from the trials and travails of any day. I hope to see you there or at other events in Town soon.

Sincerely,



Karen L. Grossman

President

Friends of Spy Pond Park

# Friends of Spy Pond Park: Volunteer Opportunities

By Karen L. Grossman, President

Want to assist the Friends of Spy Pond Park (FSPP) in a meaningful way? Below I have listed ways you can contribute, fulfilling various support tasks. We need to have public visibility via our website, maintain our database to keep track of our member involvement, and communicate with the public and our members about our events and activities. Please contact me via [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org) at your earliest convenience or 781-646-5990 for more information if you are the least bit interested in any of the positions described. It would be a great help.

## FSPP Vice-President

Stand-in for the FSPP President, as requested, at FSPP bimonthly meetings or with Town Committees and volunteer groups.

## Publicity Committee Co-Chair

Do social networking: post our Work and Fun Days on Facebook, Instagram, tweets and whatever else is available.

## Outreach and Communications Committee

Send out President's mailings using Mail Chimp.

## Writer for Newsletter

Write an article for our tri-annual newsletter that you feel would be of some interest to our members. Your thoughts about the park, pond, or our activities, and comments/poetry on an aspect of nature would be desirable content.

## Webmaster

(each task could be done by a different person)

### • Site pages

Most of the site's pages are relatively straight forward HTML. To maintain them, the webmaster needs to have a working knowledge of the following technologies:

- HTML 5
- CSS
- JavaScript, JQuery

### • Database

The member database is a SQL Server database hosted with the site. A C# application is the primary interface to the database and is used for updating its contents, retrieving member data, and generating reports. The webmaster needs to have a working knowledge of the following technologies to maintain the database and the database application:

- Microsoft SQL Server database administration (to administer the database itself and update the schema)
- Transact SQL (to maintain and update the body of database queries)
- C#, .NET, WPF (to maintain and update the database application)

### • Gallery

There is some learning curve, but the gallery is fairly simple to maintain – Karen Grossman has a pretty good understanding of it.

- jAlbum

## Bald Eagle Sighting

By Colin Blair

In early November I saw a very large Bald Eagle sitting near the top of a large, dead tree, maybe 25 feet from and above Spy Pond's edge. It was at the end of Peabody Road, down from Pleasant St, and across from Elizabeth island. It was very large, I'd guess about 4 ft. in height. It sat looking at the water below, and ignored the dive-bombing of numerous blue jays. It must have stayed 10 or more minutes after we spotted it from our house. Then, it flew up, circled a bit and flew off toward Route 2. Haven't seen other eagles since, though we had them frequently 2 winters ago. But, this one was far bigger, it seemed.

*Editor's note: We'd love to hear your experiences with nature near Spy Pond and Spy Pond Park, too! Please send them to: [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org)*

*Editorial Correction in FSPP Fall/Winter 2017 Newsletter: We apologize for a spelling error in the caption for the bottom right photo on page 6. The girl's name is Hana Amo, not Hana Amp.*



PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

Early morning ice hockey on the smooth ice keeps this skater warm in the cold, winter temperatures

# 2017 Annual Meeting Presentation: Arlington Tree Committee

By John Ellis as reported by Marshall McCloskey

There are 80 miles of public streets in Arlington, as well as various parks and open spaces which are of concern to the Arlington Tree Committee. The DPW is responsible for the planting and maintenance of *public* trees (not private) in Arlington. Pine trees are not planted by the Town.

The 2017 Tree Inventory Project, conducted by 2 interns and 60 volunteers contributing 250 hours, resulted in mapping 10,500 trees, consisting of 8,750 public street trees, 1,750 private street trees, and public trees in parks, schools, and the bike trail. There were 6,401 empty planting sites on public streets. See [www.OpenTreeMap.org/Arlington](http://www.OpenTreeMap.org/Arlington) for the results of this effort. They observed 94 species of trees, the most common of which were: Norway Maple 42.2%, Ash 8.93%, Red maple 7.81%, Honey



Norway Maple

locust 5.71%, Callery pear 4.12%. Ideally there would be no more than 30% of a particular tree family, 20% of a genus within that family, and 10% of a species within that genus. The large number of Norway maples in Arlington is due to the fact they are fast growing and were planted subsequent to the relatively recent Dutch Elm disease epidemic.

Some notable benefits of trees include:

- They lower summer air temperature, shade buildings and concrete, and return humidity to the air through evaporative cooling.
- Improved Health - Trees help reduce air pollutants that can trigger asthma and other respiratory illnesses.
- Employees who see trees from their desks experience 23% less sick time and report greater job satisfaction than those who do not.

In monetary terms, total annual tree benefits to Arlington amount to \$767,829 saved. This is based on:

- Energy conserved -1,113,880 kwh/year saved \$621,659
- Storm water filtered-17,716,214 gal/year saved \$14,172
- Air quality improved-22,706 lbs./year saved \$112,656

- Carbon dioxide removed-5,790,662 lbs./year saved \$19,340
- Carbon dioxide stored to date -5,012,870 lbs. saved \$83,542

There is a standard goal of 90% of planting sites having trees. Arlington's current density is 58%.

8,743 trees + 6,401 empty planting sites = 15,144 possible tree placement locations on public streets.

Arlington removes 200 trees year, and only plants 175-200 trees/year. There has been a net loss of 500 public trees since 2006.

Some of the issues with planting trees are that one needs to make sure that they are planted at the correct depth, otherwise the tree may not be healthy or damage sidewalks. Each 1 inch in diameter of the tree requires 1 foot of root space around the tree. And it is extremely important to follow through with watering the tree for a year after the planting, i.e. not to simply pray for rain...

Future concerns with regard to Arlington trees are: Ash trees are at risk of pests, Maple family: high risk due to density of tree population, sidewalk tree root damage, meeting American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for public sidewalks, and the effects of storms and warming trends.

Moving forward, Arlington will concentrate on: increasing street tree planting (800-1000 per year stretch goal), increasing staff for watering, and stopping planting maples.

*Editor's note: John Ellis is the founder of Optics for Hire, a company based here in Arlington. See (<http://www.opticsforhire.com>.) He mentioned that he used to sit on a bench in Waldo Park, enjoying the trees there. John became interested in how the Town is maintaining and growing its tree canopy after he learned a large bequest (\$150,000) to the Town for tree planting was unspent, and even more interested when he discovered the Town had not been posting tree removal notices on trees as required by state law. John found that there was, in fact, an Arlington Tree Committee established by the Board of Selectmen in 2010 and decided to join. He helped write a grant in the fall of 2016 to conduct a town-wide tree inventory that would be the basis for future tree planting and care in the Town, including the spending of the bequest.*



John Ellis, Arlington Tree Committee

PHOTO BY FRED MOSES

# Controlling Rodents in Spy Pond Park

By Laura Kiesel

It was the middle of the summer of 2016 that I first noticed rodents and recently I have seen them more frequently in Spy Pond Park, to the point where I stopped sitting on the rocks and was in the habit of leaving my feet up on benches and picnic tables.

## Why was this happening? I had one guess.

Starting in 2015, in the wake of the Mass Ave. project, many residential buildings (including my own) and private businesses began using a special class of rat poison, known as Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides, or SGARs. These poisons act by causing a rodent's blood not to clot and they die by internal hemorrhage. The problem is, the impacts of these poisons are not limited to rats and mice, but to any predator that eats them. This includes pets and wildlife species, such as coyotes, foxes, raccoons, herons and, most particularly, raptors like hawks and owls. In fact, it was SGARs that was responsible for the untimely death of beloved Ruby the Red-Tailed Hawk in nearby Fresh Pond. These poisons have had such a devastating effect on both animals and young children (who were ingesting them and winding up in emergency rooms by the thousands each year), that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned them from over-the-counter use--though some stores still have existing stocks on their shelves. However, a loophole in the law allows licensed pest control companies to still use these poisons in so-called "child resistant" bait boxes. While this may have decreased incidences of child-related poisonings, it still harms wildlife and pets, especially since many customers aren't told in product marketing about the environmental and public health dangers these poisons pose.

The EPA advises against widespread and extensive use of these poisons due to their deleterious effects on the environment. And according to the wildlife advocacy group, Raptors Are the Solution (RATS), overuse of these poisons can ironically make rat and mice infestations *worse* in a given area in the long run. This is because rats and mice are such prolific breeders--giving birth to as many as 2,000 pups annually. So, by the time one generation succumbs to available poison, the next is already being born. Additionally, leaving out poison is the equivalent of providing a 24-hour smorgasbord for rodents, thus drawing new rats to the area. Meanwhile, the most successful natural predators of rats and mice--owls and hawks--only have two to four chicks a year. And

if they die off from eating poisoned rodents, they are essentially wiped out of the area. Rats and mice thrive in the absence of their natural predators. This is not a theory. It's already happening all over the state. A study by the Tufts Wildlife Clinic, which has been closely studying the effect of these poisons on raptors in Massachusetts, found SGARs in the systems of 86% of the owls, hawks and eagles they biopsied.

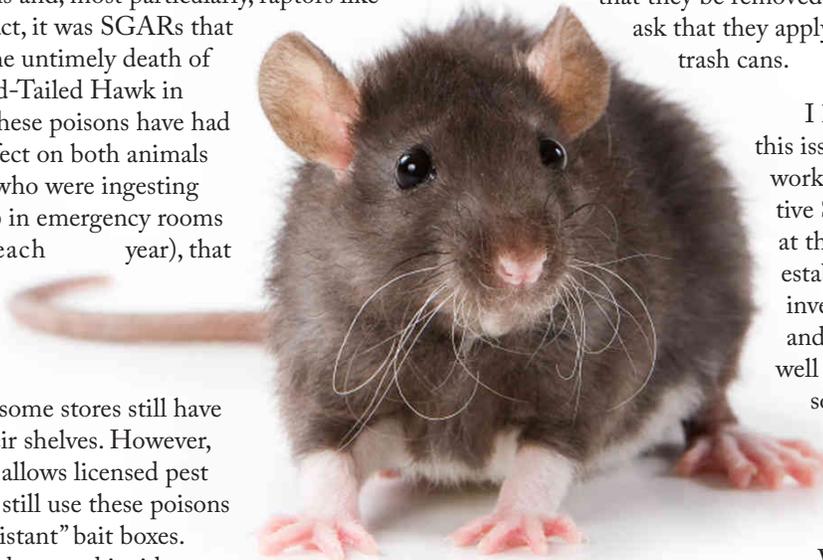
## Is there anything that can be done to control rats, both at the Pond and in Arlington, without killing wildlife and harming the ecosystems we care about? Yes!

One thing we can do is refuse to use rodent poisons, either in and around our homes and businesses and ask others to do the same. Instead, opt for using Integrated Pest Management methods, which emphasize controlling trash and food sources for rodents and utilize barriers so they cannot get into homes and stores. If and when lethal control is needed, opt for trapping and electrocution over poison. If and when you see SGAR poisons on the shelves in hardware and drug stores, request to management that they be removed. You can also contact the Town and ask that they apply IPM methods such as rat resistant trash cans.

I have also taken steps to address this issue on the state level and have been working in partnership with Representative Sean Garballey to introduce a bill at the State House that would seek to establish an independent committee to investigate the effectiveness of SGARs and their environmental impacts, as well as research more environmentally-sound and humane alternatives to rodent control. The Arlington Board of Health is also on top of this issue and has been tracking reports of rat sightings.

When the BOH identifies a rat nest or burrow, they can eradicate it using dry ice, which the EPA recently approved of for rodent control. Dry ice is not a poison and only works at the source of application. It does not harm other animals or wildlife. The BOH is also investigating other sustainable methods for reigning in rat infestations, including applying IPM methods.

At Spy Pond, the best thing people can do is voluntarily adhere to a "carry in/carry out" policy for their food and trash--that is, by packing it up and bringing it home to dispose of it rather than at the Pond. By doing this, rats will have less incentive to keep living at the Pond. Another important factor in decreasing rat populations on the Pond is to resist temptation to feed the resident wildlife, including waterfowl such as ducks and geese. It is actually illegal to feed the geese at Spy Pond and is subject to a \$100 fine as per Arlington bylaw Article 5. Leftover bread, chips and seeds from feeding the waterfowl, serves as supplemental



meals for rats. If you notice others feeding the waterfowl and feel comfortable doing so, let them know that it comes with a fine and is contributing to the Pond's current rat problem and alert the BOH. The Recreation division of the Parks Department is open to potentially implementing new trash receptacles and better signage on their lands in the coming years, though this change may not be immediate.

Finally, if you see a rat, or are aware of a lot of rat activity or nest in a particular spot, either at the Pond or elsewhere in Arlington, report it to the Board of Health at (781) 316-3170. If you suspect or notice any wildlife acting suspiciously ill or injured--exhibiting signs of weakness and disorientation, shivering, convulsions or bleeding from wounds, eyes and mouth (all symptoms of a potential poisoning), please call Arlington Animal Control at (781) 316-3950 or the Massachusetts Environmental Police at 1-800-632-8075 and report it to Tufts Wildlife Clinic at (508) 839-7918. If you suspect your pet has been poisoned (particularly after recently catching or ingesting a mouse or rat), please notify your vet immediately.

Natasha Walden of the Arlington Board of Health has assessed the situation, "Rodent Activity is a community-wide issue that requires a community-wide resolution. Focusing on an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to eliminate food sources and harborage areas is an essential component to effective rodent control." Hopefully, by working together and being more mindful of the effects of actions on our resident ecosystems and its other inhabitants, we can address this issue effectively and sustainably.

## Spy Pond in Winter

By Cathie Desjardins

It's like the dream where you open  
a closet or find some stairs  
to a whole new part to your house:

Here is a Land of Ice  
where there was none before,  
a village of people ice fishing, walking,  
sliding, talking, with the exuberance  
of people skidding around  
on a different planet.

Atolls of snow dot ice swirled into  
tiny frozen tsunamis.  
Wind gusting loose snow  
is almost enough  
to make an ice mirage where you can see  
long-ago skaters in woolen caps  
and mittens, hand knitted scarves,  
whizzing past without  
a thought of growing up, growing old,  
while crews of men and horses haul  
thick crystal blocks on sleds  
to ice houses on the shore

to be packed in sawdust  
and shipped to the tropics.

Walking ashore, out of the mist  
to the playground I see  
no one has trodden a path yet  
to the farthest swings,  
creaking in the wind. Here are the rungs  
of the blue structure our son climbed  
fearlessly as a toddler, decades ago.

Crayon color dump trucks are stalled in the snow:  
Shouldn't they be clearing  
swaths in the whiteness?  
I can't resist prying loose the red levers  
of the scoop, swooping up some snow,  
plopping it in a different spot.

Some kids turn up, blocky as packages  
in their snowsuits, and their parents bend  
to them, frolic a little in the snow.

I want to warn their hovering parents:  
*You think this will go on  
but soon they'll be taller than you  
and then gone.*

*The frozen cold can make it seem eternal  
but the seeds of new summer asters  
are already strewn under the snow.*

But the rough wind takes my words  
and the kids are shrieking now,  
skidding on their backs  
down the rollers of the bumpy slide.

*Editor's note: Cathie Desjardins has been a lifelong educator and writer as well as an avid gardener with a certificate in Permaculture. She is working on a second book of poems, *The Muse in the Garden*, to follow her previous book, *With Child*. She is currently Poet Laureate of Arlington and can be reached at [arlingtonpoetlaureate@gmail.com](mailto:arlingtonpoetlaureate@gmail.com) and [@poetryfandom](https://www.facebook.com/poetryfandom) on Facebook.*



PHOTO BY AMBER ESPAR

This January 2018 sunset photo captures some of the activities on frozen Spy Pond that included skating, ice fishing, cross country skiing, ice sailing, hiking, dog walking, and bicycling

# Friends of Spy Pond Park next meetings

at

**Karen Grossman's  
Sunday, April 1, 2018 &  
Sunday, June 3, 2018  
both 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:  
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For more information, call a Friends officer.

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We recognize those who have made contributions to the FSPP in 2017. 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 137 individuals and households involved in this effort.

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