

Inside this issue:

[Founder's Corner](#) 2
 by Oakes Plimpton

[New Board of Directors, Officers Elected](#) 3

[Field Day, 4th Wrap-Up](#) 3

[Free Friday Flicks](#) 3

[Fundraising Efforts](#) 4



Spring Community Build Slated for Playground

Spring and early summer were jam-packed with planning and budget meetings in preparation for renovations at Robbins Farm Park. We have several pieces of relevant news to report.

The Arlington Parks and Recreation Department and Carol R. Johnson Associates, the landscape architecture firm hired by the Town of Arlington to redesign Robbins Farm Park, held a public meeting in June to present the immediate plans and long-term ideas for the Farm. CRJA representative Jill Ochs-Zick presented the overall design plan and equipment specifications for the playground. She wasn't able to provide a lot of specifics about the budget but the dollar figures discussed—nearly \$500,000—did raise eyebrows.

To better understand the overall plan and the budget figures, a group of FORFP officers met in the weeks after the public meeting to go through the budget line by line, reorganize categories, and prioritize work. The major cost categories in the first phase of the project are: replacing existing playground equipment; adding independent play structures and replacing creative play structures; resurfacing the playground to bring it up to current safety code; reconstructing the stairs, handrail and supports on the hill slide; controlling erosion; installing fencing along Eastern Avenue; demolition and construction costs; removing existing tennis courts, regrading and restoring green space; and design fees. In light of the continued shortfall in funds, FORFP has committed to undertaking a

major fundraising effort. This will allow the Town to remove nearly \$50,000 from budget planning—roughly the cost of the independent play and creative structures and the site furnishings. In addition, we suggested other areas that could be eliminated or considered in a later phase. We submitted our ideas to Parks and Rec in late June and the commissioners approved our suggestions. Plans are proceeding based on the revised budget and plan.

In addition, to avoid breaking up projects over two or more construction periods, Parks and Rec requested that the Town move funds appropriated for Robbins Farm in 2003 into the 2002 budget. The Town approved, bringing the total available funds to \$473,000—\$300,000 approved by Town Meeting in 2001, \$23,000 for handicap access and the \$150,000 from the 2003 budget. The current plan calls for roughly \$300,000 to be spent on the playground area, \$100,000 on the tennis court area and the remainder on associated design and construction fees.

Construction plans have been postponed until spring of 2003, when we will work with the Town, CRJA and the final playground equipment manufacturer to do a "community build" of the playground. This will again save a considerable amount of money and give community members an opportunity to literally get "hands on" involvement.

If you know of any person or company with special skills in construction or construction equipment who would be willing to donate

(Continued on page 4)

Park Renovation Schedule

- Final playground design is being completed now.
- A major fundraising effort will be launched in the fall with opportunities for businesses and friends to become involved.
- Construction documents will be completed by the end of the year and bid requests will go out to construction companies after the first of the year.
- Playground equipment will be ordered by the Town after the first of the year.
- A construction company will be chosen and heavy work, demolition, regrading, and paving will be completed in April.
- The Robbins Farm community will come together in April and May to complete work on the playground.



Founder's Corner

by Oakes Plimpton

World War II and Robbins Farm

Robbins Farm Park was opened at the start of second World War (1942) and, even before it became public property, people visited the Farm as though it were a park: "I remember in 1937, we all went to the crest of the

According to Town records, the Town voted 152 to 4 to take the park by eminent domain December 15, 1941, only a week after Pearl Harbor. As you can imagine, the Park provided a good view of the Boston skyline and surrounding area for

spotting enemy planes. A Mr. Beecy moved that the Town turn the Park over to the United States Government for purposes of defense for the duration of the War, but the Moderator declared his motion out of order. As may be seen in the photograph of the opening of the shuffle board courts in June of 1943, the American flag is flying and there are some people in air raid warden uni-



hill, right next to the iron dog, to watch the Von Hindenberg go by on its way to New Jersey. It blew up the next day"

forms. The following passage is a description of a wartime field day held at the Park (September 23, 1943): "The crowd was highly amused by the field events. These in-

cluded hoop races, potato races, balloon blowing and a snow shoe race. The feature field event was a tug-of-war between a dozen of the older boys and a group of British and American sailors assisted by a few local men to make up for the required number. On the first try the rope parted and the seafarers landed but not in a manner to which they were accustomed and to the accompaniment of roars from the crowd. On the second try the hawser held and the navy nearly dragged the boys into the Brackett School yard."

As has been reported in this column before, an offshoot of the War effort was the creation of community gardens — Victory Gardens as they were called then. The produce was displayed at the field day, and a Donald Estey sent me the 1st place ribbon his mother won for her preserves, and the 2nd and 3rd place ribbons he won for his tomatoes, dated 1943! Ralph Sexton, presently a Park Ave. resident, sent in a photograph of his Victory Garden after the 'victory' dated June or July, 1946. See pages 109 and 112 of Robbins Farm, a Local History — also pp 47, 68, 69 & 78.

This September, local residents will likely gather again on Boston Hill to search the skyline and remember victims and fallen heroes of a more recent war. Peace to you, yours and ours.

Oakes' book, *Robbins Farm, a History*, is available at Robbins Library, the Historical Society, Jefferson Cutter House and the Town Barbershop or by email, robbins_farm@hotmail.com.

Robbins Farm Almanac is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. We welcome and encourage any articles or suggestions. Please email them to Susan Bernhard, Editor, at robbins_farm@hotmail.com. If you would like to become a member, email us or call 781-648-1998.

Friends of Robbins Farm Park Officers 2002-2003

Jennifer Rothenberg, *President*
Jack Rogers, *Vice-President*
Frank Days, *Treasurer*
Sandy Carmichael, *Clerk*
Corinna Vanderspek, *Membership Secretary*
Oakes Plimpton, *Founder/Historian*

Monthly meetings of Friends of Robbins Farm Park are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm at the Jefferson-Cutter House in Arlington Center. Summer meetings will be held August 14 and September 11.

Field Day and 4th of July Events Deemed "Big Hits"

Field Day, which was held June 23, was a tremendous success. After a rain delay of one week, FORFP was able to rally volunteers and put on an old-fashioned fun day for Field Day participants.

About 300 people attended this second annual event which featured games and races, face painting, a moonwalk, and a raffle. Cotton candy and popcorn were big hits with the kids and the pie eating contest drew contestants ranging in age from 4 to 14. Thanks to the local businesses who donated raffle items: Trader Joe's, Starbucks, Lakota Bakery, Panera, Foodmaster, Blue Ribbon BBQ, Tea Tray in the Sky, Henry Bear's Park and Quebrada Bakery.

Events like this wouldn't be possible without the tireless help of our volunteers. This year, Beth Girioni spearheaded the Field Day effort, coordinating lead volunteers and organizing meetings and planning sessions. Jack Rogers led the moonwalk and music, Leslie Ouellette led face painting, Rudie Lion led the field games, Sandy Carmi

chael organized ticket sales, Carole Kasper set-up and manned the FORFP booth, Oakes Plimpton designed the scavenger hunt and Suzanne Kaminsky and Susan Bernhard led the food sales and raffle. Also, thanks to DJ Matt Ruffing for the use of his DJ equipment.

We saw many improvements in this Field Day over the last, improving upon our successes and learning from our mistakes. We are committed to this event as an anchor for summer fun at Robbins Farm and are already looking forward to a great time next year.

Over 3,000 people were at Robbins Farm for what has become an annual favorite--the 4th of July celebration. FORFP was out in full force for this fundraising opportunity. We sold water, ice cream and the very popular glow-sticks. What a beautiful sight it was to see the hill lit up with red, white and blue glowsticks and happy faces as the fireworks show began.

Thanks to the board members and all the volunteers who worked so hard to make both

At our Annual Meeting held just prior to Field Day, the Friends of Robbins Farm Park voted in a new board of directors and officers.

2002-2003

Board of Directors:

Susan Bernhard
Bud Carmichael
Roly Chaput
Frank Days
Sharon Days
Don Kalischer
Carole Kasper
Judy Leich
Jim Miller
Oakes Plimpton
Greg Porfido
Jack Rogers
Jennifer Rothenberg
Corinna Vanderspek

Special thanks to our outgoing officers, Vice-President Roly Chaput and Treasurer Chris Hall and to our outgoing board members Marc Dohan and Rudie Lion. Your efforts are truly appreciated!

events big hits: Mike Girioni, John & Jennifer Ouellette, Joe Tarantino, Jeff Bransford, Chris Connolly, Ned Schmidt, Andrew Cornell, Jill Carter, Liz Williams, Kim Cayer, Liza Gleason, Banks Poor, Marianne White, Jennifer Ouellette, Chris Kasper, Tad & Val Evans, Stephanie Franzosa, Amy Travis, Ann Wynne, Julie Ross, Meryl

Brenner, Marlene Rockmore, Joel Sachs, Maureen Kuper, Marianne Comeau, Connie Russell, Jenn Tripp, Marie Useoff, Dan Straub, Cindy Stewart, Nan Cormier and Bettina Gentile. If you helped and your name is not on the list, please know we truly appreciate your efforts and apologize for the omission. Thanks again!



Free Friday Flicks on Tap for August

FORFP will host Free Friday Flicks on August 9 and again on August 23. FORFP invites friends and neighbors to come to the park, bring your blankets and chairs and watch movies on the big screen under the stars. We will be showing two presentations each night,

one appropriate for younger kids and one "family" movie. On August 9 we will be showing Jimmy Neutron starting at 7:00 pm and Spy Kids starting at 8:30. On August 23 the early show will be Shrek and the feature presentation will be The Wizard of Oz. Many

thanks to our sponsors for these summer events, RCN and Duke Energy.

So pop your popcorn, grab some drinks and head out to Robbins Farm in August for Free Friday Flicks. In case of rain, movies will be held the next night. See you there!

Free Friday Flicks at Robbins Farm

August 9 (raindate 8/10):

7:30 pm--Jimmy Neutron 9:00 pm--Spy Kids

August 23 (raindate 8/24):

7:30 pm--Shrek
9:00 pm--The Wizard of Oz

Friends of Robbins Farm Park

*Friends of Robbins Farm Park
34 Eustis Street
Arlington, MA 02476*

Phone: 781-648-1998

The Friends of Robbins Farm Park is a community organization formed to promote the beautification, restoration, improvement and maintenance of the Robbins Farm Park in Arlington Heights, Massachusetts. We sponsor and promote cultural, educational, recreational and other community activities throughout the year. We invite active membership in the organization and seek to represent the Robbins Farm Park community.



Director of Fundraising Named

Recognizing that available Town monies would not cover all the planned renovations at the Farm in Phase I, FORFP decided we needed to create a fundraising committee and appoint a Director of Fundraising who would guide us and lead our efforts. Carole Kasper has been a force behind some of our best organized efforts to date including a very successful public information session held last fall. She volunteered for the fundraising directorship and the Board overwhelmingly supported her. She is now forming a fundraising committee and is looking for interested volunteers to commit to research, planning and helping out with fundraising efforts in the near future. If you have experience with fundraising or if you're just ready to get involved in FORFP, please consider contacting Carole by email at ckasper@rcn.com.

Spring Playground Construction

(Continued from page 1)

their time and/or materials, please have them contact Jen Rothenberg at jenjenroth@rcn.com or 781-648-1998. In addition, we will need willing and able bodies--no particular skills necessary, to help with this community effort. More information will be available and distributed well in advance of this major undertaking. If you'd like to get your name on the volunteer list now, please

Our new web address is:
www.robbinsfarmpark.org

Make it a "favorite" today! We will post issues of the Robbins Farm Almanac there as well as park updates, event schedules, and volunteer opportunities. If you would prefer to read your Almanac online and save us postage, please email Susan Bernhard at robbins_farm@hotmail.com. We will add you to our email distribution list.

contact Sharon Days, FORFP Volunteer Coordinator at shp@hannify.com.



Shakespeare Redux

The Comedy of Errors was rained out in July and has been rescheduled for Monday, August 19 at 6pm. Keep your fingers crossed for a beautiful summer night and bring a picnic to Robbins Farm to enjoy the Trinity Rep players' performance, sponsored by FORFP, Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park and the Arlington Center for the Arts. Refreshments and t-shirts will be available for purchase.