



Park Renovation Schedule

- Playground design is complete and equipment has been ordered including the six independent play structures purchased with monies raised by FORFP
- Construction documents have been completed and the construction bid process is underway.
- A construction company will be chosen and heavy work, demolition, regrading, and paving will be started in April.
- Sections of the park will be closed off from April until some time in June.
- The Robbins Farm community will come together in April and May to build the playground.

Fundraising Nets Over \$37,000 to Date

Last summer, a small group of FORFP members poured over the Town's budget for Robbins Farm Park, identifying items they believed could be viable fundraising targets. In the end, roughly \$54,000 worth of independent play structures and park furnishings were targeted. Our fundraising effort was launched.

Now, almost five months later, we have raised over \$35,000 toward our goal! FORFP wrote a check to the Town in February to purchase the play structures and the remaining amount may go toward the purchase of benches, tables, trash receptacles and other park furnishings or maintenance. Though we are still short of our ultimate goal, we are hoping that, through the continued efforts of the fundraising committee, the generosity of local businesses and corporations, and continued financial support from friends and neighbors, we will meet that ambitious goal.

Thanks to friends and neighbors who have contributed the bulk of the monies raised to date. In addition, we have had numerous corporate donors who have made contributions--Johnnie's Foodmaster, Cambridge Savings Bank, Cambridgeport Bank, Boston Federal Savings Bank, Fortis Health, RCN, and the families of Great Expectations Preschool. Neighborhood children rolled nearly \$700 in coins down the Big Slide last fall at our park birthday bash. Our Sled-a-Thon brought in nearly \$300 and one avid slider, Declan Newman, raised \$180 himself! In addition, Dunkin

Donuts in Arlington Heights donated coffee and hot chocolate and discounted donuts for our Winter Tent which we set up on a cold winter weekend in January. Special thanks to Michael Rothenberg with Peak Productions for producing the video shown on public access television and used in the fundraising effort. Thanks also to the volunteers who helped with the birthday bash and coin roll, the Slide-a-Thon preparations, Winter Tent, and the mailings.

Accolades would not be complete without mentioning the incredible effort put forth by FORFP President Jen Rothenberg. Jen has attended nearly every FORFP committee meeting--fundraising, playground design, community outreach and community build--in addition to planning and chairing the monthly FORFP meetings. She has been in constant contact with the Parks and Rec commissioners, the DPW and Town Manager, and the landscape design company. She has become versed in construction, playground design, and landscape vernacular and has interfaced with company representatives and overseen the process of ordering the independent play structures. In addition, she was actively involved in planning and executing both fundraising mailings. She has taken on a tremendous amount of work and our gratitude is more than well deserved.

All the hard work and generous donations will soon pay off. The Town is on target to begin groundbreaking in early April. Keep an eye on our progress by checking our website: www.robbsfarmpark.org.



Founder's Corner

by Oakes Plimpton

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.

Hats Off to the Yankee Farmer!

An Arlington Advocate reporter interviewed Nathan Robbins in his 94th year in 1959. Rather than paraphrase it, the article is reproduced in its entirety from the May 28, 1959 issue of the Advocate. From Robbins Farm: A Local History

93 Year-Old Farmer Recalls Early Days

by Joan Gillespie

When this town was hill and dale, Nathan Robbins was born.

Ninety-three years ago on Feb. 13, 1866, he was born at Pickney Street, Boston. The son of Edwin and Ellen Robbins, he is descended from a long line of Arlington philanthropists.

Another branch of the famous family lived in Arlington center and gave the town its library and Town hall buildings.

A grand old gentleman, Mr. Robbins is an admirable sight to see on his morning jaunts to the center. Sure of foot, he goes about his business, giving a dignified flourish of his wide-brimmed hat to all he knows. Several times a week a trip to Boston is on his afternoon agenda.

Farmer Robbins is a charming storyteller, and in a refreshing Yankee twang he recalls that there was snow on the ground for the April 19th Centennial of 1875, when Ulysses S. Grant, then president of the United

States went through Arlington. Most readers will remember the Robbins country estate when it still stood on the hillside of Eastern avenue, opposite the Brackett school. This spot has long been noted for its panoramic view of Boston. The site is now a playground, bearing his name.

Still vivid in the memory of Mr. Robbins is the spring of 1880, when his grandfather Nathan Robbins started construction of the home-stand. Then a boy of 14 he remembers that the ledge was so deep, blasting for the foundation took three months.

Despite this delay his family moved into their hilltop mansion the following Thanksgiving.

The house was worthy of the land and view. From the broad veranda, to the widow's walk, from the windmill atop the barn, to the sweep of the rolling hills, the scene was magnificent.

It was gracious living.

For many years Mr. Robbins farmed this rugged land. Daily he brought his produce to market—and as his grandfather and father before him—took his poultry to the Robbins stall at historic Faneuil Hall.

Corn was his specialty. Those who sampled it never forgot its sweetness.

The town, in agreement with Mr. Robbins, took the property by eminent domain about fifteen years ago as a playground for children.

Childless himself, happy he is to see children romping over the land he so faithfully worked.

With the razing of the house, a bareness remains. One of the last farms in town has passed into Arlington's history.

Just to keep the record straight, Mr. Robbins' direct surviving relatives are in California, children of his late brother Frank.

They are Josephine, a maiden lady, and Edwin, father of two, Virginia and Arlington.

Virginia is now Mrs. Austin Mero of Seattle and the whereabouts of Arlington, named of course after our town, is unknown.

Hats off to this Yankee farmer! Arlington is proud to have him in her midst.

To senior citizen Nathan Robbins we wish continued good health and a hearty thanks to a life lived well.

Almost exactly a year after the interview, Nathan Robbins passed away in his 95th year.

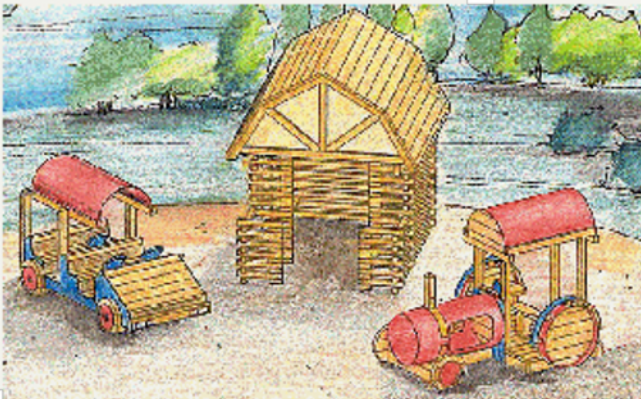
Volunteers Needed for Community Build

Though snow is falling as we go to print, FORFP is gearing up for a busy spring. Construction is scheduled to begin in early April and sections of



the park involved in the redesign will be closed off until some time in June. (The ball fields will not be affected by the closing.) The Community Build is slated to take place over two week-ends, April 26 and 27 and the following weekend, May 3 and 4.

A new committee has been formed to plan and coordinate the many facets involved in building the new playground using community volunteers. The Community Build group is made up of two components: actually building the equipment and providing support for the building crew and volunteers.



The Build Team is being head up by Christian Klein and Gordon Jamieson. We will need volunteers willing and able to do everything from sorting tools and equipment to doing the

heavy lifting and putting together the equipment.

The Support Team is being led by Kim Cayer and Liza Gleason. We will need volunteers to help with food, beverages, child care and general organizing. We will be offering child care on the first weekend April 26th and 27th for potty trained children up to 8 years old. Parents will be asked to send their children with their own lunch and snack. Special thanks to Bob Penta, Brackett School Principal for allowing us to use the school as a staging area. We will set up in the cafeteria and will be in the gym and music room and outside (weather permitting).

It's going to be a lot of work but we think a lot of fun too. We'll have music, food and we're working on a few surprises as well. So please consider volunteering your time and energy to help us build this wonderful playground for the children.

To volunteer for the Support Team, contact Kim Cayer at 781-641-1604 or mcayer@attbi.com. To volunteer for the Build Team, contact Christian Klein at 781-641-4211 or forfp@hush.com.



Pictures/drawings from top to bottom: 1) Seesaw 2) Wood play house and vehicles (note that the vehicle on the left will not have a roof. 3) The larger play structures though not in their actual placement on the playground 4) Multi-pondo.



Friends of Robbins Farm Park

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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.



Regent Theatre Performance to Benefit Robbins Farm Park

Since its inception last September, the Regent Theatre's Family Fun Saturdays series has become a popular attraction for families in the local and the surrounding communities. On March 15 at 10:30am, the Airborne Comedians will perform with \$1 from each ticket sale going toward our fundraising effort! Adding 21st century flash to the vaudeville tradition, The Airborne Comedians bring laugh

ter and amazement to audiences of all ages as they toss, then juggle electric guitars, lawn chairs, and other odd objects from one side of the stage to the other, or while riding six and seven foot unicycles! So come on down to the Regent, have fun with the kids and support our park renovation effort! For more information, visit www.regenttheatre.com or call 781-646-4TIX. [The Regent Theatre](#) is located at 7 Medford Street.

With this issue of the Robbins Farm Park Almanac, we increased our distribution to include friends and neighbors who generously gave to our fundraising campaign but are not active members of FORFP. If you would like to become a member, visit our website, www.robbinsfarmpark.org for a membership form, call 781-648-1998 or send email to robbins_farm@hotmail.com.

Your membership dollars allow us to conduct the fundraising campaign, print and mail our newsletter, provide family entertainment in the park, purchase supplies and materials for events, and continue to get the word out about our organization and wonderful park. Without your membership support, we couldn't do any of this. Please consider joining this worthwhile organization.

We will be electing new board members and officers in June. Let us know if you're interested!

Robbins Farm Almanac is published quarterly by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park and mailed to active members of FORFP. We welcome and encourage any articles or suggestions. Please email them to Susan Bernhard, Editor, at robbins_farm@hotmail.com. 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*
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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. The next meetings will be held March 12 and April 9.