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Robbins Farm Almanac . . . the newsletter of the Friends of Robbins Farm

### Park Update—Oval and Sign Two Projects in the planning stages

By Oakes Plimpton

Two projects to improve the park amenities and look are underway.

FORFP got in touch with Community Outreach Group Design, a non-profit volunteer organization to get us underway in the re-design and restoration of the park.

You pay an administrative fee, and then the landscape design for your project is provided gratis. Margaret-Ann Rice of Future Design – Landscape volunteered her services. She designed a directional compass for the viewing oval and a simple garden at the old mansion foundations, with a historical sign like the ones along the bike way to be incorporated into the garden. You can learn more about them at

<http://cogdesign.org/>

In 1992 I myself raised funds through the Parks Beautification Fund for a sign that was installed April 11<sup>th</sup> on a pole by the old tennis courts, but stolen May 31<sup>st</sup>! A second sign along Eastern Ave. was also stolen. Naturally this time around we wanted to secure the sign so that it couldn't be stolen or graffitied. As the new interpretive sign featured a photograph of Farmer Robbins' cow tethered in front of the mansion we contemplated either attaching the sign to the boulder below the foundations, or there at ground level.

But our sign consultant, Ray Cyr of Arlington, advised attaching it to the boulder would not be feasible. Ray Cyr Sign & Banner will make the sign out of a material called Fossil, which is graffiti proof

see *Projects . . . . continued on page 2*

### Fruit Trees for Robbins Farm: Back to our Farming Roots

By Mike Smith

Friends of Robbins Farm Park member Russ Cohen has very generously offered to purchase, plant, and care for some new additions to our Park – namely, fruit and nut trees and shrubs. The entire board of directors is enthusiastically behind this idea, and members of the board have spent time walking the park with Russ to discuss the best possible locations for our new additions. Russ is no newcomer to the planting and care of trees. He, along with his friend, Ted Siegan, have been directly responsible for creating other 'urban orchards' in and around the Arlington area, much to the delight of those who have gotten to taste the fruits of their la-

bors. Russ has been planting and taking care of fruit trees on public property since the mid-1990s. He buys his tree stock from either an urban orchard organization called Earthworks Projects <http://earthworksboston.org> a greening and food production program that works with local groups to plant, maintain, and harvest fruit- and nut-bearing trees, shrubs, and vines on urban land, or the Fedco Trees company, a co-op garden supply company in Maine.

We feel that having the Park once again bear fruit will be a wonderful way to harken back to and celebrate the Park's farming origins. I am in the process of

see *Fruit Trees . . continued on page 2*





(above) Daffodils come through and lift their heads to spring!

(below) Wanton destruction of one of the new maples near the playground—what can we do to stop vandalism?



## *A Message from our President, Christian Klein*

*Spring, 2006*

At last, spring is finally here, although it sometimes feels like fall never really left us. The mild, dry weather this past winter really reduced the opportunities for sledding. My family received a toboggan at the holidays, and we had only one good opportunity after that to take it out for a run. Time to pack it away for another year.

I wish to thank all the board members for all their work over the fall and winter preparing for the warmer weather. Corinna Vanderspek organized the purchase and planting of the bulbs that are making their appearances around the park. Oakes Plimpton and Tony Vogel have been preparing a proposed plaque that describes the history of the site from the American Revolution through today. Beth Girioni, Liza Gleason, and Jen Rothenberg have developed an exciting schedule of events for the summer. Mike Smith has been researching the possibility of returning fruit trees to the farm. Others have been pursuing issues of communications, graffiti, vandalism, maintenance, membership, and many other topics vital to the group. On behalf of the Friends, I thank you all. The most important contribution you can make to the park this summer is to volunteer to help out at our summer and

fall events. As you can see from the preliminary schedule elsewhere in this newsletter, we have an exciting lineup with everything from celebrations, to movies, to fun for all ages. We need volunteers to help in the planning, staffing, and operation of each and every event. While we have a core of dedicated volunteers who have generously given of their time and energy over the years, I am actively encouraging others in our community to also step forward and acknowledge how important the park events are by volunteering to help.

To volunteer, send an email with your name, phone number and interest to [friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org). Someone will get back to you. Not into email? Simply phone 781-646-2775 and leave a message for Liza. Please give generously of your time to help make this a great summer at Robbins Farm Park.

My best wishes to you all for a safe and happy summer.

Christian Klein

FORFP President

### *Fruit Trees . . . . continued from page 1*

helping with exact species selection, as well as drawing up a site plan to illustrate the proposed planting locations. The site plan will then be used to garner final approval from the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission. The board hopes to have the new plants in place sometime this spring if possible, or else in the fall.

By the way, if you'd like to help with this planting effort, or the 'watering brigade,' please contact FORFP at [friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org).

### *Projects . . . . continued from page 1*

— one of our directors, Don Kalischer, tried it, and the paint rubbed right off. Tony Vogel, another director, who is helping to improve the graphic design of the sign, suggested we move the sign to the kiosk by the playground. Good idea! We discovered back in 1992 that sign stealing was considered a rite of spring — lets hope that custom has receded, but we'll attach the sign in such a way that it will be very difficult to remove.

So the mansion foundation gardens are on the back burner, but see the daffodils and other spring bulbs

planted around. The redesign and improvement of the viewing oval is ongoing; we may choose the simplest course which would be to color the cement a darker color to reduce the glare.

These two projects are financed through the Friends with money raised for park improvements and restoration. Let us know if you have any thoughts or ideas about same.

Sneak Preview: look in the book *Robbins Farm, a Local History, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1995*, to see a picture of the old sign, p.120; and pictures of the cow and skaters by the barn, pp. 4, 31, and 117 that will be included on the future sign.

## Robbins Farm Curfew: Questions and Answers

By Marlene Rockmore

As summer approaches, many friends of Robbins Farm like to go for a nighttime stroll, enjoy the view, or walk the dog. But did you know that according to town bylaws, all Arlington parks are closed from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.?

Several members of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park Board recently met with Captain Rich McLaughlin, and Sergeant Rich Flynn, Patrol Supervisor of the Police Department, to discuss the enforcement of the curfew. The Police Dep't. is charged with upholding the bylaw and tries to use good judgment when confronting someone in the park after hours. We learned that complaints, especially on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, have dropped dramatically over the past few years, and we appreciated their efforts.

We asked other questions about enforcement of the curfew:

**How do they handle each occurrence?** The police explain that there is a 9:00 p.m. curfew and the person must leave the park. Usually, they will comply. Sometimes, people will tell the officer that

they were not aware that there was a curfew.

**Are incidents recorded?** If there is a serious issue, the officers take names/addresses which go into a data base. If needed, follow-up action is taken.

**Why do the cruisers drive up into the park overlook area?** The officers are patrolling in one-man cars, and they must cover a large part of town. If there is an incident call, they must be able to respond quickly, and a walking patrol officer would lose time returning to his car.

**Can we replace the current signs about the curfew?** The police had the DPW install curfew signs last summer. The Board has been working with the Park and Recreation Commission to create a more welcoming sign. Look for them this year.

Please feel free to contact the FORFP Board if you have concerns about the park closing bylaw and its enforcement. If you observe or hear an incident in the park, please call the Arlington Police Department at 781-643-1212. Do not confront anyone yourself.



### Kite Day, Saturday May 6

Bring a picnic and your favorite kites to this FREE family event co-sponsored by Arlington Center for the Arts and the Friends of Robbins Farm Park! Kite Day is part of A.C.A.'s Asian Festival. For more information see their web site: <http://www.acarts.org/>

**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

## SUMMER SCHEDULE of EVENTS:



*Cut out and post on your refrigerator!*

- | DATE:             | EVENT:  |
|-------------------|---|
| April 29th (Sat.) | Spring Clean-Up Day<br>9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.<br>Bring rakes, shovels, gloves!   |
| May 6 (Sat)       | Kite Day 1-4 p.m.—see box   |
| July 4 (Tue)      | Independence Day Celebration with the spectacular Boston fireworks on the big screen  |
| July 28 (Fri)     | Friday Night Flicks - title to be announced   |
| Aug 6 (Sun)       | 5:00 pm (Note! at Menotomy Rocks Park) New England Shakespeare Festival's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" co-sponsored with A.C.A. and Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park |
| Aug 25 (Fri)      | Friday Night Flicks - title to be announced   |
| Sept. 9 (Sat)     | Arlington Town Day visit the FORFP Booth—for updates, hats and t-shirts   |
| Sept 15 (Fri)     | Red Sox Night!<br>6:30 p.m., game time 7:05<br>Back by Popular Demand!<br>Watch the Red Sox play the Yankees outdoors on the big screen, under the stars.         |
| Oct 14 (Sat)      | Field Day-an Annual Tradition!<br>2:00 -4:30 p.m. Activities for the whole family   |
| Oct 15 (Sun)      | (Rain date for Field Day)   |





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*Robbins Farm Almanac . . . the newsletter of the  
Friends of Robbins Farm Park, Inc.*

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website: [www.robbinsfarmpark.org](http://www.robbinsfarmpark.org)

## Membership Drive a Success

### By Mike Smith

For the first time in its history, The Friends of Robbins Farm Park included in its annual membership drive a mailing to 1,000 non-member households. Although this increased the drive's total expenses, it successfully prompted eighty-three new households to join!. As a further experiment, The Friends also offered two different levels of membership during this drive: a one-year, \$10.00 level, as well as a three-year, \$25.00 level. The three year option was preferred, with approximately 57% of all respondents choosing the lengthier term.

The results of our 2005 Membership Drive, as of March 15, 2006:

120 returning members

83 new members

203 membership replies from a total mailing of 1,277. Dues raised totaled \$3,755. Additional donations came to \$1,245. for a total of \$5,000.

*Robbins Farm Almanac is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. If you would like to see this newsletter in color you can view a copy of it on our website. We welcome and encourage your suggestions for articles. Please write or email to the attention of the editor. If you would like to become a member, write or email the membership secretary at [friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org)*

#### Officers 2005-2006

*Christian Klein, President*

*Marianne White, Vice-President*

*Roly Chaput, Treasurer*

*Sandy Carmichael, Clerk*

*Mike Smith, Membership Secretary*

*Oakes Plimpton, Founder/Historian*

*The Friends of Robbins Farm Park, Inc. is a community organization formed to promote the beautification, restoration, improvement and maintenance of Robbins Farm Park in Arlington Heights, Massachusetts.*

*FORFP is a charitable, not-for-profit 501-C-3 corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. 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.*

*Monthly meetings of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm at the Jefferson-Cutter House in Arlington Center. Anyone may attend.*

*Don't forget to renew your membership to keep receiving the Almanac. Our spring issue contains the Summer Events Calendar.*