

FALL 2006

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#### Rain Dampens Summer's Big Screen Activities

Careful behind-the-scenes planning goes into Movie Night and Red Sox Night at Robbins Farm. Besides renting the screen and the sound system, we must arrange to pay appropriate public showing fees for movies and get broadcast permission from NESN. So it's doubly disappointing when the rains come...We try to set up a rain date when possible. We hope to see you at a sunny Field Day, Saturday, October 14, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Join us for old-fashioned races, a moon walk, face painting, a park scavenger hunt, and refreshments. With so many events, volunteers are welcome!



*Paraglider in the Park*

*Photo by Oakes Plimpton*

## The Sundial Project and SAME at Brackett School

Everyone who has spent some time at the viewing oval on the top of Boston Hill has noticed the light and the view. The view, of course, is inspiring—but so is the blank concrete surface. There have been several incidents of graffiti, and the general feeling is that the bare concrete surface could be more elegant and at the same time less inviting to damage, whether inflicted by the winter weather or the graffiti artists. This is where art of another type comes in: the art of telling time by sundial. Tony Vogel, Marlene Rockmore, Mona Zeffel, Judy Leich and other friends of Robbins Farm Park have been studying ways to involve the Brackett students in an enjoyable understanding of the sundial, with the hope of eventually designing some kind of human sundial at the viewing oval. The beauty of this type of sundial is that there is no permanent gnomon (the vertical part of

the sundial that casts a shadow.) Instead, this function is performed by a person standing still and observing where his or her shadow falls. Time indicators, called jewels, can be embedded in the ground or in a paved surface. They can be as simple as a stone or as complex as a ceramic mosaic roundel. This spring, when the Science and Math Enrichment (SAME) event takes place at Brackett School, the hope is that a unit on sundials around the world can be presented. One easy type of sundial that the children can make is with straws and paper plates. The first phase is sharing with the students. Later phases are envisioned—taking the design to a more sophisticated, buildable level, and fund raising for a graffiti-proof, enjoyable viewing oval with—as a wonderful bonus—a sundial function. Let's hear it for Latitude 42deg24'48"N, Longitude 71deg10'30" W!

### Robbins Farm, a Local History Watch for a Third Edition!

By Oakes Plimpton

Eleven years have passed since the second edition was published — a lot has happened. As before, the original book will be reprinted with addendums added. The second edition had one addendum, but then just after it was published, nieces of Farmer Robbins wrote me with wedding

photos of Farmer Robbins first marriage to a wife who tragically died young, and new 1930s farm photos. So we had to publish a second addendum, which I had to glue into each book.

The new third edition will be published by FORFP. The commercial publisher is the Penobscot Press, a vanguard press connected to the Picton Press, a historical press located in Maine.



## A Message from our President, Christian Klein

Fall 2006

***This year FORFP will concentrate on planting small bulbs such as crocus and scilla under the fruit trees. Come out and help during fall clean up day, October 28.***

***Check the website prior to the event to confirm the date. Cancellation notices will always be posted in case of inclement weather.***

[www.robbsfarmpark.org](http://www.robbsfarmpark.org)

It seems that autumn has come a little early this year. After scrambling during this past week's chill to find my children's long pants and shirts, it has finally sunk in that school is starting back up. You may think that this would signal a slowing of the events at the park, but the season is still going strong. I want to thank the members of the Community Outreach committee, Beth Girioni, Liza Gleason, and Jen Rothenberg. They developed the fun schedule of summer events and will continue to lead the planning into the fall. Our traditional summer nemesis, rain, made far too many appearances at our events. A deluge right before the Independence Day celebration had us all diving for cover. Luckily, it ended quickly, and the night was a great success. Since then, we've had two movie nights rained-out. Our annual Red Sox Night at the Park on September 15 was cancelled as well. As the Sox fans say, maybe next year!

Our largest event of the summer, Field Day, will be October 14. We'll have rides, games, food, and all your neighbors, so make sure you don't miss out. This event requires the support of many volunteers to be a success. I hope we can count on a little of your time.

The Board has been up to more than just fun and games. Oakes Plimpton and Tony Vogel have finalized a plaque describing the history of the park from colonial times to the present. It will be installed on the entry kiosk in the coming months. Marlene Rockmore is starting a committee looking into ways of improving the overlook by creating a large-scale sundial. Corinna Vanderspek is again organizing a bulb planting party for later in the fall. Others have been pursuing issues of maintenance, membership, and many other topics vital to the group. On behalf of the Friends, I thank you all for your continued good work.

Autumn also brings the annual meeting of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. We will gather together in November to reflect on the year, elect directors and officers, and set a course for the following year. This is a perfect opportunity to become more involved in shaping the future of the park. I encourage all Friends to consider volunteering to serve on the board. I started attending board meetings several years ago to find out more about the future of the playground. It proved to be such a great opportunity to be a part of this community, that I have been excited to continue serving on the board ever since!

Christian Klein

FORFP President

## HISTORICAL SIGN UPDATE

By Tony Vogel

On June 13<sup>th</sup> Oakes Plimpton and I met with the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission to present our final design for a sign on the History of Robbins Farm. We are pleased to announce that the sign was enthusiastically approved by the Commission. As he noted in the spring newsletter, Oakes has had this project in the works for awhile. Careful observers may remember the first version of this

sign, which made a brief appearance bolted to the old tennis courts. The sign consists of a delightful planting layout of the fields drawn by Geoffrey Stiles in 1990 and based on the recollections of his father. This diagram and the period photos also appeared in Oakes's book, "Robbins Farm, a Local History". The result will be a permanent reminder of the debt we owe to the Robbins family for the lovely park which we all so enjoy. We are proceeding with the fabrication of the sign which we

plan to install this fall on the kiosk at the Eastern Avenue entrance.

In the meantime, for a preview, check out the temporary vinyl version which has been placed on the side of the kiosk facing the park.

(see image to the right)

# Robert K Forte

## PHOTOGRAPHY

AND THE FRIENDS OF ROBBINS FARM PARK  
ARE HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE  
THE 3rd ANNUAL

### Robbins Farm Park Family Portrait Day

Location: **Robbins Farm Park**

Date: **Sunday, October 22, 2006**

Time: 9AM-4PM

Sitting Fee: \$45 (Includes 1-8x10 Portrait)

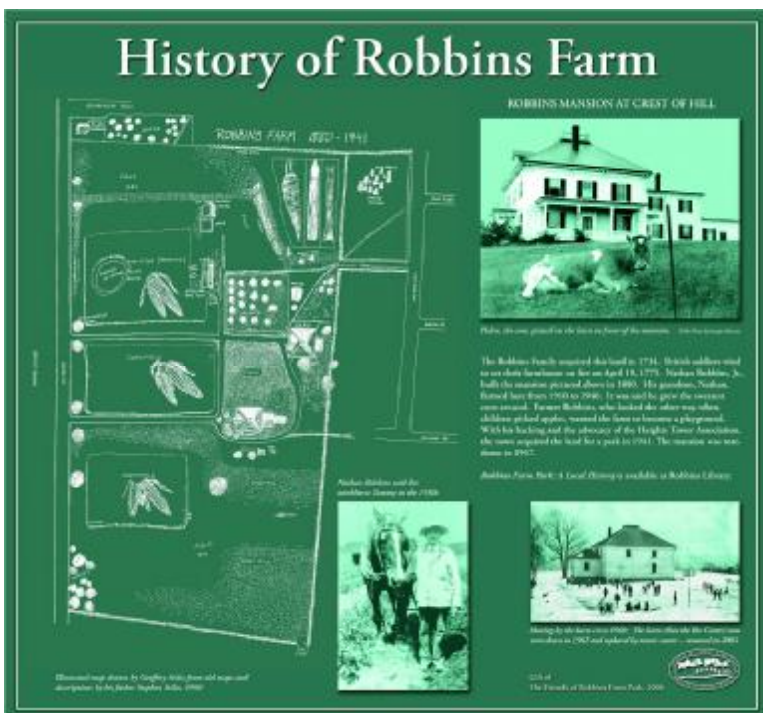
Please contact Liza Gleason at

[liza\\_gleason@comcast.net](mailto:liza_gleason@comcast.net) or 781.646.2775

to reserve your portrait session.

To preview Robert K. Forte's work please visit his web site at:

<http://www.rkfortephotography.com/portrait.html>



The Historical Sign to be installed on the Kiosk on Eastern Ave.

## FALL SCHEDULE of EVENTS:

Cut out and post on your refrigerator!

- | DATE:         | EVENT:   |
|---------------|--|
| Oct 14 (Sat)  | Field Day 1:00—5:00 p.m.   |
| Oct. 22 (Sun) | Family Portrait Day—see left<br>9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.             |
| Oct. 28 (Sat) | Rain date for Portrait Day   |
| Oct. 28 (Sat) | Fall Clean Up and<br>Bulb Planting Day, 9:00 a.m. to<br>12:00 p.m. |

### BECOME A FRIEND OF ROBBINS FARM PARK!

TM

Receive the newsletter mailed to your home and support the events, activities and projects that make the park a great place in all seasons. Come to an open meeting the second Wednesday of any month if you wish. Contact the membership secretary by email at:

[friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org)

YOU CAN WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE  
NEWSLETTER!

TM

Stories, suggestions, brief letters or a good digital photo are welcome in this newsletter.

Please e-mail:

[friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org) with your ideas.





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

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Robbins Farm—a Local History...

The third addendum tells the story of the formation of Friends of Robbins Farm Park, the revival of Field Days, Shakespeare in the Park, Movies and Red Sox games, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July showing of the fireworks and concert, and the great renewal of the park — the new Community Build playground, replacement of the abandoned tennis courts with a landscaped knoll, the new viewing oval with benches, the planting of blooming crab apple trees, Friends' planting of daffodils and tulips! Photographs of most of this are to be found in the new addendum. There's a little history too, Eli Robbins hiring Daniel Webster to successfully overturn a Lexington Selectmen's decision to turn down permission to open a Tavern!

***Robbins Farm Almanac is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. 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**

***President, Christian Klein  
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.***

***FOREFP 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. <http://www.robbinsfarmpark.org/Membership/membershipform.htm> Each issue contains our upcoming events calendar.***