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Spring clean up

photo by Judy Leich

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

### What's Happening...sundial, slide, membership news

**Sundial:** You may have heard about plans to build a human (analematic) sundial at the oval. The sundial subcommittee met over the winter to discuss our progress on our goals and action plan for the upcoming year. Our project has two goals. First, we want to work with teachers and community members to involve students in the design process and second, we hope to build a sundial at the park. We are making progress on both goals.

On the curriculum goal, we added sundial activities on our website. If you are looking for an activity for a lazy, sunny summer day, try making your own Paper Plate Sundials. Click on the Sundial Project link on our homepage ([www.robbsfarmpark.org](http://www.robbsfarmpark.org)) to download the directions.

Next fall we plan to have a subcommittee meeting to begin the preliminary study. We'll need people interested in technical aspects of constructing the sundial to research and write portions of the study.

Finally, at this fall's Field Day, we plan to run an activity designed to appeal to all ages to help us mock up and try out a sundial at the oval. This will help us collect data we need for the construction

plan. If you are interested in getting involved in this project, send an email to:

[volunteer@robbsfarmpark.org](mailto:volunteer@robbsfarmpark.org) and we'll make sure you are invited to the fall planning meeting!

**Membership:** After a productive November membership drive, Membership Secretary Jim Thompson reports we have 376 members. The FORFP database design was improved through the efforts of Don Kalischer, and a team of volunteers stuffed envelopes. Caring for our members means updating email lists, so if you have recently changed your email address please let us know at [friends@robbsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbsfarmpark.org). You can also let us know if you wish to opt out of email.

**Slide:** As any parent who has mended a child's teddy bear knows, a well used and well loved thing wears out. FORFP Board member Jennifer Rothenberg is working diligently with the Parks and Recreation Commission to develop a renovation plan for the big slide. The effort includes research into the sturdy slides used at waterparks and improved safety features.

Watch the newsletter for updates.



*Frolicking dogs and their owners appear in our park in the early hours...*

## Canine Concerns the Subject of Two Town Meeting Articles

By Roly Chaput

As I looked out my back window the other morning, I was reminded of spring by the growing number of people out on the Farm in the early hours with their dogs. They seem to congregate behind the house on the flat section and as the owners chat, the dogs in a myriad of sizes, colors and shapes, play, run and chase balls and sticks.

Just the right kind of social action for our four legged friends and what appears to be a good time for local "over the

fence" gossip by their owners.

Their actions also reminded me that there are two warrant articles about dogs in this year's Town Meeting which starts on April 28th.

Article 28 proposes to let the town to set up certain hours for off leash use in certain parks and playgrounds. It was inserted by ten registered voters after the Green Dog Committee

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**A Message from our President, Tony Vogel Spring, 2008**

*WHAT IF...Some 60 years ago, the area we know as the "Old Farm" neighborhood (across from the Brackett School) was developed. It's hard to believe, but the area where 75 homes now stand was once farmland owned by an eccentric farmer named Nathan Robbins. Apparently, there was some discussion about trying to maintain this land as it was once used for recreation and open space. Before the area was developed, it was said that this area afforded residents a most spectacular view of the city of Boston . . .*

\* \* \*

And so it ***might*** have been.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the founding of FORFP it seems appropriate to look back and appreciate those that are responsible for creating and maintaining our park, truly the "heart" of our community.

We tend to take our jewel of a park for granted, but without the generosity of Nathan Robbins and the tenacity of individuals and groups such as the Heights Tower Association there would be no Robbins Farm Park.

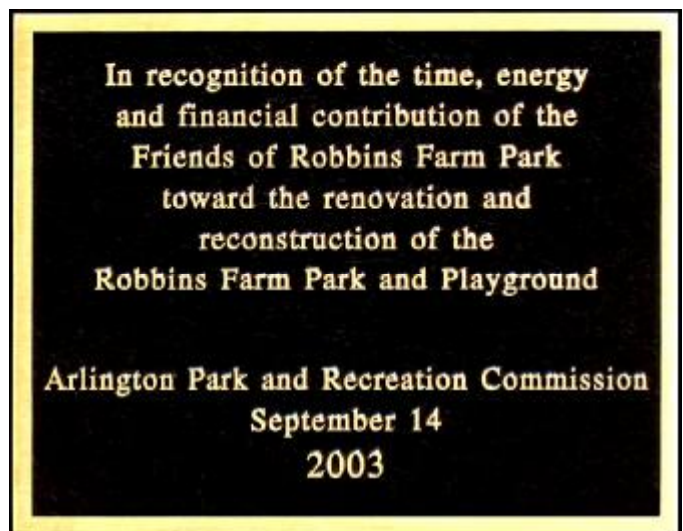
When my wife and I came to Arlington in the early nineties, we knew little about the park and nothing of old Farmer Robbins. When a group of our neighbors started working on the renovation of the playground some ten years ago, we were also oblivious – caught up as we were with the first demands of parenthood.

But over the years, our family has literally grown up in and around Robbins Farm Park. We would rarely spend time in our own backyard – we had our park! We began to attend community events at the park, and we soon realized our neighbors were running them. These volunteers were continuing the tradition of generosity and volunteerism that began with the generosity of Nathan Robbins.

Last summer, in assuming responsibility from the town for our most popular event, our Independence Day celebration, our group had one of its greatest successes. This could not have happened without the help of many donors and volunteers, and certainly not without the leadership of the dedicated Jen Rothenberg. This year, Christian Klein, the Friends' president the last two years, takes over from Jen as our new Community Outreach Chair. We also want to congratulate Jen on her new role on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Friends, we'll be counting on you again this year to keep our traditions going. There will be a new one too. This fall, we'll celebrate FORFP's first decade with a party for all members. More about this later!

Tony Vogel  
FORP President



**The New Kiosk Plaque—recently installed**

**What Might Have Been . . .**



**Our Good Fortune . . .**



## Community Outreach Needs YOU!

By Christian Klein

### Community Outreach Chair

Spring is in bloom, and summer won't be far behind. With the change in season comes a change in our community outreach program as well. Our wonderful chair of many years, Jen Rothenberg, has stepped aside, and I am inheriting this excellent program.

We will start the year in May with our Cleanup / Kite Day extravaganza. Come to the park in the morning to help clear away the remnants of winter, and get a free kite to decorate and fly in the afternoon.

A new event on our list, sponsored by neighbor and Arlington resident Jeff Alexander, is a series of four Astronomy Nights. You can learn about the program at his website, <http://landmanatee.com/astronomy.html> or contact him at [jalex-ar\[at\]landmanatee.com](mailto:jalex-ar[at]landmanatee.com)

Our real summer season kicks off with the Annual July Fourth Celebration from Robbins Farm! This event was formerly sponsored by the Town, but it is now a Robbins Farm event shared with all. We will have the John Penny Band, the concert from Boston, and, of course, the fireworks from the Esplanade up on the big screen.

Shakespeare will be at Menotomy Rocks this summer, and we encourage everyone to go and enjoy their

hospitality. You can read more about Shakespeare in the Park at the Arlington Center for the Arts website, as they are a co-sponsor.

FORFP's next event at the Farm will be movie night on August 15. Film suggestions are more than welcome.




Fall brings the much loved Boston Baseball Night at the end of September. I hope it will be as great a game as opening day. Field Day comes in October, when we host a carnival for all ages by the playground. There will be games, puzzles, food, and all manner of festivities. We wrap up the season with our Fall Cleanup, when we put the park to bed for the winter.

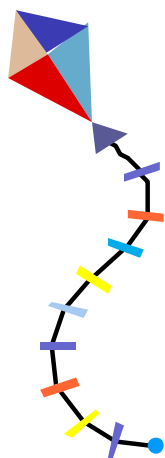
I am confident it will be a great summer, but it will only work if we all come together as a community and make it happen. Every one of us in the Friends is a volunteer, and we need all of you to be a volunteer as well. Whether you would like to help with fundraising, planning, advertising, set-up, staffing, clean-up, etc., we would love to have whatever time you can offer. If everyone does a little bit, this could be the best summer ever at the Farm. Please write to [volunteers@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:volunteers@robbinsfarmpark.org) and let us know that you want to be a part of a summer of successful events at Robbins Farm.

## SUMMER SCHEDULE of EVENTS:



Cut out and post on your refrigerator!

DATE:	EVENT:
April 26 (Sat)	Astronomy Night
May 3 (Sat.)	Spring Clean-Up & Kite Day 9:00 am to 12 noon Kite flying in the afternoon Bring rakes, shovels, gloves!
June 14 (Sat)	Astronomy Night
July 4 (Fri)	Independence Day Celebration with the spectacular Boston fireworks on the big screen
	
July 26 (Sat)	Astronomy Night
July 27 (Sun)	Shakespeare at Menotomy Rocks Park Much Ado About Nothing, 5:00 p.m. See Arlington Center for the Arts website.
	
Aug 15 (Fri)	Friday Night Flicks — 8:00 p.m. A family night out, title to be announced
	
Aug 23 (Sat)	Astronomy Night
Sept. 20 (Sat)	Arlington Town Day 10:00 to 3:00 visit the FORFP Booth—for info, hats, books, and t-shirts
Sep 26 (Fri)	7:05 pm Baseball Night! <b>BOSTON BASEBALL NIGHT</b> An annual event featuring your favorite teams on the big screen
Oct 18 (Sat)	Field Day-an Annual Tradition! 1:00-5:00 pm Activities for the whole family
Nov 8 (Sat)	Fall Clean Up Day and Bulb Planting 12:00 -2:00 pm



**Clean up and Kite Day,  
Saturday May 3  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
followed by afternoon  
Kite Flying**



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

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

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

## Concerning Canines

*. . . continued from page 1*

felt that there was not enough town-wide support to promote the program. There should be considerable discussion on town meeting floor and I trust members will understand that the suggested rules will alleviate a contentious situation here in town. Article 29 proposes to prohibit dogs in Menotomy Rocks Park. I suspect it will not fare very well especially if the previous article passes.

My guess is these two articles won't come up on the agenda until the second or third night of town meeting. As always, the meeting is broadcast on a local cable channel and will be worth watching. If you want more info, by all means, call me or Marlene since we will be there to represent you on all 77 town meeting articles!"

*Robbins Farm Almanac is a biannual newsletter published by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. It is also posted on our website in color. 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 2007-2008

*Anthony Vogel, President  
Judy Leich, Vice-President  
Roly Chaput, Treasurer  
Oakes Plimpton & Sandy Carmichael,  
Co-Clerks/Recording Secretaries  
Jim Thompson, Membership Sec'y.  
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 typically held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm at the Jefferson-Cutter House in Arlington Center. Anyone may attend. Check the web site as occasionally the meeting place changes.*

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