

Summer 2013

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Newsletter of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park

## FORFP SEEKS FATE OF LONG LOST DOG



#### Park News:

Picnic Tables will be installed by FORFP volunteers on June 29 – more places to enjoy lunch outdoors!

#### Park News:

The FORFP Board received a Town of Arlington Good Citizen Award on June 27. Awarded by the Selectmen every five years, this award is an honor to FORFP Boards past and present for their good work at the park.

*“And then there was a statue of a dog that overlooked Boston, and it was about ... twenty feet on the Coolidge Road side of the shuffleboard. The dog had a great sweeping tail, and it disappeared...”* text and photo from Oakes Plimpton's book, Robbins Farm Park, A Local History, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed.

A subcommittee of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park, headed by Roly Chaput, has been conducting a search for the “lost dog” of Robbins Farm. Old-timers remember the dog fondly as a place where kids would sit to get their picture taken.

Last seen in the 1950's, this dog, probably made of bronze or cast iron, is similar to other dogs found in parks – including a famous dog called *The*

*Sentinel* in the Roger Williams Park Zoo.

Is our “lost dog” a copy of *The Sentinel*, sculpted by Thomas Frederick Hoppin in 1851? This dog, Black Prince, earned his fame by waking up the sculptor's family to a fire one night in 1849.

The Boston Globe carried a story about Robbins Farm's missing dog on March 14 – no leads have come in, but plenty of research has gone into spotting two dogs in Texas that look similar.

It remains to be seen if a facsimile of our lost dog can be made from the Texas look-alikes, but one can hope that this quest is a success! Send us your thoughts on how to find that dog!

## FOURTH OF JULY LINE UP TO INCLUDE THE REMINISANTS



Sadly, John Penny, leader of the eponymous band who has played at our July 4 celebration since its inception, passed away this winter. His vitality and talent will be missed by us all. After a broad search, we have selected The Reminisants to headline the Independence Day festivities at Robbins Farm Park. We hope you'll enjoy this great revival band that rocks to all the oldies and has had the honor of playing with everyone from the Beach Boys to the Shirelles. The usual big screen fireworks viewing and fun will be on tap! Come on out for the 4<sup>th</sup>!

## BILL ARMSTRONG IS GUEST SPEAKER AT ANNUAL MEETING

By Oakes Plimpton

This past January FORFP held its annual meeting in the community room of Robbins Library. Bill Armstrong, founder of Armstrong Ambulance Company, grew up right by Robbins Farm when it was a farm, and shared his reminiscences with us. He is now 88 years old, so from the time he was 8 until he was 17 it was a farm. He remembers going over to get milk from farmer Robbins for his household! He would sometimes watch him milk his cow, and every once in a while Robbins would squirt someone in the face!

Other boys would gather, and sometimes his crabby wife would come by, and then farmer Robbins would warn all the boys to hide. She would talk, but he would never talk back — he was always silent in her presence. He had chickens and an apple orchard, which was fenced, but the kids would get around that. Bill's most vivid memory was one day witnessing a headless chicken come running around the corner of the barn!! He had no idea! The boys sometimes tried riding the farm horse, but Bill said the horse would find a tree to trot under, and the boys would have to get off quick (or be knocked off). Bill very much appreciated growing up next to a farm, seeing how hard work produced produce and milk, etc., and providing them with a good mentor.



Stephen Stiles astride the dog statue at the farm, circa 1933, from Robbins Farm Park, A Local History by Oakes Plimpton. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. p. 16.

## Summer 2013 – Events Outlook

By Christian Klein,  
Events Coordinator

We have a full summer of free fun events and engaging entertainment planned for all our park friends.

The full schedule is included as a tear-away list in this newsletter, but I wanted to let you know about a couple of changes for this year.

The summer event season officially starts with the Independence Day Celebration from Robbins Farm. Please join us for our great new live band, The Reminisants, the concert broadcast from Boston, the fireworks from the Esplanade, and maybe a surprise or two. Grab your friends and come join the fun!

August will feature three major events this summer. Movie Night will be at the end of the month. We will host Shakespeare this year in conjunction with the Arlington Center for the Arts. We will also help host the first Arlington Animated Short Film Festival. This event is presented by Arlington Community Media, the Arlington Center for the Arts, and the Friends. We are still developing the details, so please keep an eye open for news.

September brings back Boston Baseball Night, featuring our favorite hometown team. Field Day arrives 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 the season with our Fall Cleanup, when we put the park to bed for the coming winter.

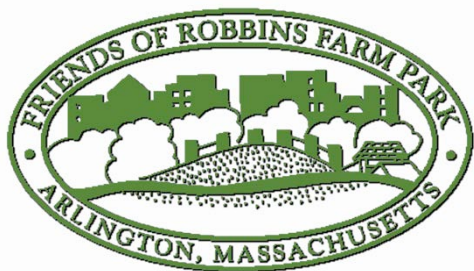
In addition to those fabulous events, there will be a concert series with local artists. I am confident it will be a great summer, but it can only happen if the community comes together to make it happen. Every one of us on the board is a volunteer, and we need all of you to be a volunteer as well! Whether you would like to help with fundraising, planning, advertising, set-up, staffing, cleanup, or any of the other jobs that go into a successful event, we need whatever time you can offer. Please write to [volunteers@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:volunteers@robbinsfarmpark.org) and let us know that you want to join your neighbors and be a part of the action at your park, Robbins Farm Park! Thank you!



### SCHEDULE FOR SUMMER 2013

Cut out and post on your refrigerator  
Check website for updates/rain dates

DATE:	EVENT:
July 4 (Thurs.) starts 6:00 pm	Independence Day Celebration with the spectacular Boston fireworks on the big screen and live music by the Reminisants
July 13 (Sat.)	Astronomy night - 8:45p.m. See Saturn and its rings! Come early for Venus & Moon set
August 7 (Wed.)	Harvard Alumni Jazz Band 6:30 p.m.
August 9 (Aug 10 –rain)	Animation Film Festival - 7 p.m. band, 8:30 films.
August 10 (Sat)	Astronomy night - 9:30 p.m. Perseid Meteor Shower
August 18 (Sun)	Shakespeare in the Park, 5:00 p.m.
July/Aug	Robbins musical events—check web site
Aug 24 (Sat)	Saturday Night Flicks - 8:00 Pixar's "CARS"
Sept 7 (Sat)	Astronomy Night - 8:15 p.m.
Sept 21 (Sat)	Arlington Town Day Visit the FORFP Booth for info, hats, books, and t-shirts
Sept 28 (Sat) BOSTON BASEBALL NIGHT	Baseball Night 6:30 p.m. Picnic, 7:05 p.m. Game Time. An annual event featuring your favorite teams!
Oct 19 (Sat)	Field Day-an Annual Tradition! 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Nov 2 (Sat)	Fall Clean-up and Bulb Planting 9:00 a.m. Rakes and trowels – put the park to bed for the winter!



P.O. Box 750013  
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the Friends of Robbins Farm Park, Inc.*

e-mail: [friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org)  
website: <http://www.robbinsfarmpark.org>

## Bulb Spotting at the Park

Did you spot the **Camassia quamash** this spring? Last fall we planted more bulbs, including some of these delightful and unusual bulb choices. We are hoping to spot these beauties at the Park:

For more detail see the planting page on the website at:  
<http://www.robbinsfarmpark.org/Landscaping/BulbPlantings2012.htm>



*Robbins Farm Almanac is a biannual newsletter published by the Friends of Robbins Farm Park. It is also posted on our website. We welcome and encourage your suggestions. Please write or e-mail to the attention of the editor. If you would like to become a member, write or e-mail the membership secretary at [friends@robbinsfarmpark.org](mailto:friends@robbinsfarmpark.org) -Newsletter Editor*

Officers 2012- 2013  
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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 first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. 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.*

<http://www.robbinsfarmpark.org>