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Photo by Sandy Carmichael

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

Park Update: A summary of projects 'in the works'...

Many projects you read about only occasionally in the newsletter are actively being worked on by various town committees or by FORFP. Here is an update:

The *Open Space Management Plan for Arlington* includes a new section prepared for Robbins Farm. It is part of the Arlington Open Space Committee's five year plan and it will be a guide for town departments for the next couple of years before the report is published in its final form.

In response to some clearance and safety concerns with the large *rubber tire see-saw*, the Friends are proposing a safer, lower to the ground see-saw more appropriate for the youngest playground members. The new equipment will be reviewed by Parks and Rec. Watch the park for changes in this area.

The town is co-operating with the manufacturer of *the big slide*, which is currently closed due to cracks and splits in the plastic. The replacement parts are in the works, hopefully the replacement sections will be in before this summer.

Spring bulbs were slow to emerge, but have brightened the path across the park for those who observed them tucked in here and there.

Planning is underway on a cooperative ownership plan for the *large screen and projection equipment* that bring so much pleasure to the park on summer nights—from Fourth of July, to movie nights, to the newly introduced Red Sox night.

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Shakespeare comes to Robbins Farm in Taming of the Shrew

This summer's Shakespeare performance will be held at Robbins Farm on Sunday, August 7, at 5:00 p.m. The play will be "The Taming of the Shrew" performed by The New England Shakespeare Festival, a different troupe from prior seasons. It tells the story of Baptista Minola of Padua and his two daughters: the popular and demure Bianca and Katherina the Shrew! NESF will bring the use of cue texts to the play, reviving the Elizabethan practice of giving the actors scripts with only their own parts and just the first few cue lines of other parts. This was an early form of copyright protection — if anyone else got their hands on a script, it wouldn't be useful to them—it would contain one actor's part but never the whole play.

This left much room for interpretation and creativity on the part of the actors. The NESF will also employ more traditional costumes than we have seen in years past.

The show is fun and accessible to people of all ages. Picnicking is encouraged and there will be cold drinks and dessert for sale as well as items like t-shirts and tote bags. The performance is free and sponsored by the Arlington Center for the Arts in cooperation with the Friends of Robbins Farm Park (FORFP) and the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park.

For more information, check out NESF's website: www.newenglandshakespeare.org/index.htm.



Not buried treasure but tree planting going on here—three handsome maples will shade the picnic tables at the back of the playground. Here's FORFP treasurer Jim Thompson (above) digging deep with Roly Chaput and Sandy Carmichael (below) getting into the act.



A Message from our President, Roly Chaput

Spring, 2005

Looking out my window, I finally see more grass (actually brownish colored), than snow on the Farm. Wonderful!

However, I look back on a great winter season with many good days of coasting. I think we had more snow days this year than in recent memory, probably due to the unusual timing of the storms. They seemed to replace lost snow on the hills just as it was becoming too bare to use. Of course, those of us who had to shovel all that white stuff were becoming a bit perturbed. Winter felt a lot longer this year. Remember the great photos of kids on our hill in the Globe's, Northwest section of December 28th and January 2nd. Proof that our park is available year round.

Now that the daffodils have made their appearance, we can all look forward to springtime activities followed by a number of wonderful Summer events. Look for a "refrigerator list" schedule with dates and times on page 3.

Speaking of daffodils, keep your eyes open for the spring flowering bulbs which FORFP members planted last Fall. I imagine we'll get tulips up through May this year since winter was so long in releasing its icy blanket.

A special effort is now going on to make additional improvements in the park. Spearheaded by Oakes Plimpton, the Landscape and Historic Interpretation Committee will be presenting to the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission a plan to identify the location of the old Robbins mansion that was located in the park near the vista view site overlook-

ing Boston Hill. It will identify the house that Farmer Robbins lived in. Oakes and his team will also present a plan to paint the concrete oval at the vista view with a compass on it. This treatment will cut the glare and starkness of the oval as it now appears.

Another item of interest: using the "Trees" program recently sponsored by the town's DPW, the Friends have received three Maple trees that are scheduled to be planted in the playground (see pictures left) and provide shade to the picnic tables along the back edge. The trees were provided at half price to anyone in the town who wished to plant a street tree along their sidewalk and we requested several trees to fill in a spot that needed more shade. The red maple cultivars are one Red Sunset and two October Glories, which will provide beautiful color in the fall.

Finally dear readers: think about Robbins Farm Park and what you think ought to be there. It's time to fire up our thinking caps again and let the board members know what are your wishes. Let your imaginations prevail. Anything goes. What would be good at the park for you, for your friends and for the town. Write to us, E-mail us, call or just talk to us when you see us in and around the park. It's your park, we need and value your comments and criticisms.

See you on the "Farm"!

Respectfully,

Roly Chaput, President

NATURALIST'S CORNER — Birds in our Park

By Oakes Plimpton

Robbins Farm Park, having such a view, is a possible site from which to watch the spring and fall hawk migrations, though that always takes a lot of patience or luck. One observer several times around the end of August one year saw flocks of Night-hawks fly over (not a hawk but a "Goatsucker," usually to be seen catching insects at dusk, long pointed wings like a

large swallow). The great expanse of lawns of course attract many Robins, but look for Flickers, a large woodpecker which specializes in ants and is often seen on the ground. When it flies it shows a golden color under its wings, and a white rump. You should also be able to catch the red on its head.

There is a bird club in town known as Menotomy Bird Club. You can visit their

website for schedule of walks and slide lectures, <http://www.mrines.com/menotomy/>. There's also an e-mail line where people exchange their bird sightings (mostly local), instructions to join found on the Web pages. The writer of this column is a birder — if anyone wants to rise early for a morning bird walk during spring migration, to learn birds and bird song, or their kids are interested, e-mail me at pli-mag@rcn.com. Evenings possible, too.

P.S. An evening walk is possible, too.

Fun Ways to Get Involved with Robbins Farm Park

By Beth Girioni

Every year, the Friends of Robbins Farm Park (FORFP) board plans many fun activities for the community at our jewel of a park. The schedule for the Spring, Summer, and Fall is included in this newsletter in a handy cut-out to put on your fridge or bulletin board. If you are looking for a fun way to give back to your community, we invite you to volunteer at any of the upcoming events we have planned for this year.

Our 4th of July event and Field Day (scheduled for September 10) are the two events requiring the most volunteer participation to help make the events a success. However, all our activities including, Clean-up Day, Movie Nights, and Shakespeare in the Park, all require volunteer support to make them happen.

If you have volunteered for any FORFP events in the past, you can attest to how much fun it is to get involved. If you haven't yet volunteered, we invite you to contact us for more information.

Shifts at these events usually run an hour or two allowing you plenty of time to enjoy the event yourself.

Keeping our beautiful park clean, working at the FORFP booth selling glow sticks, or taking a shift at the moonwalk during Field Day can really make you appreciate the great community we have and how lucky we are to have Robbins Farm Park in our town.

So join us for another amazing year of great activities – your support and volunteering will help us make it all happen!

Contact us at: friends@robbinsfarmpark.org if you'd like to volunteer for an upcoming event. Let us know your preferred event (see list to right) and we will contact you! Please provide your name, phone number and e-mail

You can also write to:
FORFP Volunteers
P.O. Box 750013
Arlington, MA 02475

THANKS!

~ BECOME A FRIEND OF ROBBINS FARM PARK!™

Receive the newsletter mailed to your home and support the events, activities and projects that make the park a great place in all seasons.

Contact the membership secretary at friends@robbinsfarmpark.org

~ WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR THE NEWSLETTER!™

Do you have an anecdote from the park this morning or a memory of the park of days gone by? Stories, suggestions or brief letters are welcome in this newsletter. Please e-mail: friends@robbinsfarmpark.org with your ideas.

SUMMER SCHEDULE of EVENTS:

Cut out and post on your refrigerator!



- | DATE: | EVENT: |
|----------------|--|
| May 14 (Sat) | Kite Day and Park Clean Up (rained out) |
| July 4 (Mon) | Independence Day Celebration with fireworks on the big screen
 |
| July 29 (Fri) | Friday Night Flicks - title to be announced
 |
| Aug 7 (Sun) | 5:00 pm New England Shakespeare Festival's "The Taming of the Shrew" bring a picnic!
 |
| Aug 19 (Fri) | Friday Night Flicks - title to be announced
 |
| Sept. 10 (Sat) | Field Day and Annual Meeting |
| Sept. 11(Sun) | (Rain date for Field Day and Annual Meeting) |
| Sept. 17 (Sat) | Arlington Town Day visit the FORP Booth—for updates, hats and t-shirts |
| Sept 30 (Fri) | Watch the Red Sox play the Yankees outdoors on the big screen, under the stars.
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P.O. Box 750013
Arlington, MA 02475

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Friends of Robbins Farm Park, Inc.

email: friends@robbinsfarmpark.org

website: www.robbinsfarmpark.org

Park Update, cont'd.

FORFP's research team consisting of Jen Rothenberg and Beth Girioni are working with Comcast/Arlington Cable Access on a joint ownership program, allowing FORFP and other town groups access to projection equipment. Instead of the equipment rental and operating costs of \$1500-\$2000 per event, there would be much lower maintenance and projection costs.

Finally, the *mural project* proposed for the low concrete wall alongside the big slide has slowed down but has not been abandoned. After reviewing the proposal, Parks and Recreation expressed some concern that funds might need to be established to maintain the mural in case it was vandalized with graffiti or the paint flaked off. Their concern was that its removal or repair not be a liability to the Town.

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

Officers 2004-2005

Roly Chaput, President

Christian Klein, Vice-President

Jim Thompson, Treasurer

Sandy Carmichael, Clerk

Helene Newberg, 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 first 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.