

SPRING 2012

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Newsletter of the Friends of Robbins Farm Park

Planting layout for the 2012 Robbins Farm Garden

Come Celebrate—new slides effort to be honored!

Come celebrate the rebuilding of the slides at Robbins Farm Park on **May 12**. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the community whose donations helped rebuild the slide. Over \$27,000 was contributed to the town to offset the cost of rebuilding, with extra for a maintenance fund as well. Parks and Rec, FORFP and all of us made it happen! The celebration is at the slides on Saturday afternoon, **May 12 at 4:00 p.m.** Enjoy cupcakes, music and remarks, a ribbon cutting and a chance for one and all to enjoy the slides. **May 19** is the rain date, just in case.

The annual Arlington Patriots' Day Parade will be held on **Sunday April 15**. The parade will start at 2:00 p.m., at Brattle Street and Mass. Ave., and will march east on Mass. Ave. Arlington scouts will be marching with the Save Our Slides Thank You banners—they will be assembling at Mirak around 1:00 p.m.

Check out the latest amenity—a new blue Porta-Potty at the park. This program is supported by the Friends of Robbins Farm.

The Robbins Farm Learning Garden has begun to run a year round program. That means that multi-year plants like asparagus can be grown. Peas, garlic, lettuce, and Jerusalem artichokes are in the ground. The garden is a demonstration project and you may find inspiration for your own garden there, or just enjoy the gardening skills on display by the neighborhood "green thumbs." Participation in the project is by application through the Park and Recreation Commission.



Downy Woodpecker

Spring Birds and Surprise Wildlife -

Another great pleasure in our park!

by Roly Chaput

If you want to spend an afternoon looking for a variety of birds in Robbins Farm Park, this is the best time to do it. Early spring seems to be the time for many birds to look for nesting sites and preparing to raise their young.

I have had the fortune to watch many birds flying to a bird feeder hanging from my garage or trying out my bird bath which is especially popular when the sun is high and the temperature gets up over 40 degrees. They have even looked into a somewhat colorful bird house that my wife bought a few years ago as an attractive yard ornament but is now under serious consideration as a home for a couple of sparrows who seem to dominate the bird species in the yard.

(Cont'd on page 4)

An appreciation of Robbins Farm

By Heather Peske, Friends of Robbins Farm Board Member

Robbins Farm is a special place for many of us here in Arlington, for friends in surrounding towns and for visitors from afar. On several recent days at Robbins Farm, we asked visitors to the park to reflect upon two questions: *What does Robbins Farm mean to you? Do you have any special Robbins Farm memories?*

Jennifer Jacoby of Arlington reminisced on Robbins Farm as a companion over time: "I remember when I was extremely pregnant with my second daughter. I had taken my first daughter to play and got on the swings myself. I had read on the internet that swinging could help entice an overdue baby. It didn't work, but I will always remember hanging out in the park on that early summer evening watching my toddler play and thinking how much life was going to change when the next baby arrived. Little did I know that I would have another daughter and then a third. Now I go to the park with three girls to play. That's my memory - going from a mom of one playful park-goer to a mom of three playful park-goers. And Robbins Farm witnessed it all."

One recent almost-spring evening, Eddie Wisdom of Arlington emerged from the park toting a ukulele and a broad grin. "I love sitting here playing my ukulele and just enjoying the evening" Wisdom remarked.

Charlie Toulmin of Arlington recalled the stunning spectacle of the recent Jupiter-Venus conjunction he viewed from Robbins Farm. In mid-March, the two bright planets appeared lined up together in the sky, producing a breathtaking sight.

On a Saturday in late March, a young girl named Lila gazed in wonder at two "kite surfers." Leaping into the air at the top of the hill at the Farm, they harnessed the wind power and glided to the bottom.

"Mama," Lila whispered breathlessly, "are they going to fly all the way to Boston?"

On the same day, visitors from Washington, DC admired the gorgeous view. One remarked that the top of the Farm was a perfect place for a planetarium.

Mary Wu of Arlington described searching for a house with her husband and happening upon Robbins Farm: "It was a beautiful day and there were TONS of people at the park...families picnicking, kids playing soccer, people flying kites, the playground was packed. We sat on a bench up at the overlook and both said at nearly the same time 'We want to live near this park.'" Indeed, Robbins Farm is a beloved friend, a treasure of Arlington and a maker of memories.

Sharon Patton Days of Arlington said it best: "Robbins Farm Park means.... Fireworks on the 4th of July, summer Shakespeare, Red Sox games on cool, autumn evenings, sledding and hot chocolate on snowy winter days....helping to build the new playground, rolling down the hill with my 3 year old and fun for all on the BIG slide!"

Happy Spring!

Do you have any special memories or stories about the park? Send them to the editor at: friends@robbinsfarmpark.org



Illustration courtesy Meredith Leich



Spring 2012 - Events Outlook

By Christian Klein, Events Coordinator

Winter didn't try too hard this year. The bulbs have been up all over the park for weeks. Plans for the summer have also been sprouting, and we have a full summer of fun and entertainment ahead of us, with a little celebration for good measure. I look forward to seeing all our members and neighbors at our great events over the summer. The full schedule is printed in a tear-away list in this newsletter, but let me give you a few highlights.

Our Annual Spring Cleaning / Kite Day double-feature is at the end of April. Come help clear away the remnants of winter, and get a free kite to decorate and fly for the afternoon. Participants of all ages are always welcome; just bring a kite and have fun.

This year, we are having a special celebration. As you all know, our beloved hill slides were damaged and needed to be replaced. Through a joint effort with the Town's Recreation Department, the Friends raised the necessary funds to replace the slides. This May, we will take an afternoon and celebrate the generosity of our community. Please come and enjoy the results of your efforts!

The summer event season officially starts with the Independence Day Celebration from Robbins Farm! We'll have all your favorites: the John Penny Band, the concert from Boston, the fireworks from the Esplanade, and maybe a surprise or two. Grab your friends and come join the fun!

Movie Night is at the end of August, and I welcome all suggestions for movies. September brings Boston Baseball Night, featuring our favorite home town 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 and maybe even a little Shakespeare. 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, clean-up, 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 and let us know that you want to be a part of the action at your neighborhood park, Robbins Farm Park! Thank you!

Confirm times and dates at
www.robbinsfarmpark.org

Cut out and post on your refrigerator!



- | DATE: | EVENT: |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| April 28 (Sat) | Spring Clean-Up & Kite Day
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Kite flying in the afternoon
1:00 to 3:00
Bring rakes, shovels, gloves! |
| May 12 (Sat) | Big Slides Celebration (Rain date May 19) 4:00 p.m.
Come to the Big Slides Celebration |
| July 4 (Wed) | Independence Day Celebration
with the spectacular Boston fireworks on the big screen and live performance by the John Penny Band—starts 6:00 pm |
| | Harvard Alumni Jazz Band
(To be confirmed—check website) |
| July 22 (Sun) | Shakespeare in the Park
"As You Like It"
presented by the Arlington Children's theatre. Location to be determined. |
| July/Aug | Rockin' Robbins and other musical events—check web site |
| Aug 25 (Sat) | Saturday Night Flicks — 8:00 pm
A family movie night out, title to be announced—see website |
| Sept 15 (Sat)
(rain date Sept 22) | Arlington Town Day
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Visit the FORFP Booth for info, hats, books, and t-shirts |
| Sept 29 (Sat) | Baseball Night
6:30 p.m. Picnic
7:05 p.m. Game Time
An annual event featuring your favorite teams! |
| Oct 20 (Sat) | Field Day —an Annual Tradition!
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. |
| Nov 3 (Sat) | Fall Clean-up and Bulb Planting
9:00 a.m. |



**BOSTON
BASEBALL
NIGHT**





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Friends of Robbins Farm Park, Inc.*

e-mail: friends@robbinsfarmpark.org

website: www.robbinsfarmpark.org

Wildlife in our park, cont'd.

In just a few hours the other day, there were a number of birds sampling our feeder which has a mixture of tempting seeds including black and striped sunflower, thistle, peanuts, millet, milo and cracked corn. Corn was not popular but several squirrels found it on the ground after the birds tossed it out!

"Who was there?" you say. Certainly the flock of sparrows (usually known as English or House Sparrow). They would fly in all together and surround the feeder in a variety of postures. They were joined by Nuthatches, Titmice, and Chickadees along with ground feeders such as Cardinals, Blue Jays, Juncos, Mourning Doves and an occasional Starling. There was even a Downy Woodpecker who tried the feed holes but shortly went back to a nearby White Oak to dig out worms, hopefully the pesky winter moth!

In addition to these feathered wonders I remember that last summer we had a visiting flock of turkeys. Mona ZefTel reports a wonder of a different sort, at 7:30 am she and other dog-walkers observed deer in our park!

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
Judy Leich, Newsletter Editor

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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.

www.robbinsfarmpark.org