



**President: H.Suzanne Bolton**  
**Editors: Sarah Meservey, Larry Finch**

**July 2007**

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**May 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Memorial Rededication and Park Tour**

On May 20th the Friends of Arlington Parks annual board meeting was held at Barcroft Park, in conjunction with a rededication of the Wayne Davis Memorial, as well as a park tour of parts of Barcroft and Allie S Freed Parks.

The eventful day began with the rededication ceremony to recognize a new bench, plaque and pair of trees planted in memorial to Wayne Davis. The bench, flanked by two newly planted sycamore trees, was installed across the path from the entrance to Barcroft Park. A large rock was relocated near the bench to hold the plaque. All these things were in place due to the hard work of Robert Upton and Howard Hudgins from the Parks Department.

The memorial was well-attended by members and board members of Friends of Arlington Parks, friends and relatives of Wayne Davis, Robert Upton and Greg Zell, head naturalist from Long Branch Nature Center. Barbara Davis, wife of the late Wayne Davis, said a few words about his long-time activism and dedication to the Arlington parks. She noted that Wayne was a cofounder of Friends of Arlington Parks, which grew out of attempts by residents to preserve nearby passive parkland and protect area wetlands. Friends of Arlington



Suzanne Bolton and Wayne Davis friend, Jo Carlberg, enjoy the memorial bench before the ceremony.



Barbara Davis tops off the soil on the newly planted memorial sycamore.

Parks would like to thank all of those at the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources who worked to make the new and improved Wayne Davis Memorial a reality. Arlington is lucky to have such dedicated public servants who are committed to protecting our environment and who are willing to work with citizens, even on weekends.

The dedication was followed by a tour of parts of Barcroft and Allie S. Freed Parks with naturalist Greg Zell. The tour began with the meadow directly behind the memorial, previously the site of an informal ball field and the location of the original Wayne Davis memorial site.

The small field has now reverted back to a passive space and has been thoughtfully planted with a variety of native species by the

Parks Department. The 2 acre meadow lies in the flood plane of the original four-mile run creek river-bed, roughly 100 feet south of the present-day creek's concrete spillway, over river-rock topped by a thin layer of soil. It is backed by a long ridge whose unique soil composition has resulted in a series of unusual wetlands that run along its base. Greg led the group through woods and bogs, showing wildlife tracks, interesting trees, shrubs and other unusual plants such as poison oaks. The tour was followed by refreshments and an annual board meeting of the Friends of Arlington Parks.



Greg Zell giving a Park Tour at Barcroft Park

## Progress at Barcroft Park

With 65 acres divided between passive and active areas, Barcroft Park is one of the County's largest and busiest parks. The first phase of an upgrade of the active part of the park has already been completed, and the County Board has now awarded a contract for the second phase of the upgrade.

The new contract provides for constructing a basketball court, reconstructing two tennis courts, and replacing a children's playground. More information on these activities, including a review of work already completed, can be found on the County website:

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/Communications/12008.aspx>

In our October, 2006 newsletter, we reported on repairs made by the parks department following the June storm. Shortly after our visit, we learned of the major project undertaken by Arlington Eagle Scout candidate Evan O'Rourke to fix a damaged and eroded park trail in Barcroft Park that is used by many Wakefield High School students. The project was conducted with the staff of the parks department and a team of 8 scouts and several adults and sisters of the scouts. The trail was



renovated several years earlier by Evans's brother. This project illustrates the role that Arlington residents can play in preserving their parks.

This photo of the finished project was taken by Nancy Buchholz to accompany an article she wrote about the project in Claremont Citizens Association's fall 2006 newsletter.

### **Future of Wilson School in Doubt**

For several months, discussions have been underway concerning the future of Wilson School, at 1601 Wilson Blvd., next to Rosslyn Heights Park and a fire station. The school was called Clarendon School when it opened in 1910. In 1926, the school was expanded and renamed in honor of President Woodrow Wilson. This is the oldest school in Arlington that is still part of the County school system.

Wilson School last operated as a regular elementary school in 1969. Since then, it has served other purposes, including some arts activities and providing "swing space" for classes from County schools that are undergoing renovation. To accommodate those students, trailers were set up on the school athletic field several years ago. Finally, the Mongolian School of the National Capital uses Wilson School on Saturdays to offer classes on the language, culture and history of Mongolia.

Last year, the Arlington School Board established a committee to make recommendations regarding future uses of Wilson School and some other school properties. The committee focused on this site as a potential revenue source, recommending that most of the school property and some of the adjacent County property be leased to a developer for construction of a high-rise building. Under that recommendation, the 1910 school building (but not later additions) would be preserved, with the high-rise building wrapping around the school. Superintendent of Schools Robert Smith has endorsed the committee's recommendations.

Rosslyn area civic associations are strongly opposed to development of the Wilson School property. They would like to see the school used as an arts center or for other community purposes. They also note that Wilson School and Rosslyn Heights Park provide the only green space in that area. The civic associations are asking that all of the existing green space be preserved and that the trailers be removed from the school property to restore access to the athletic field.

As part of their campaign, Rosslyn residents created a 10-minute film titled “Save Wilson School”, which can be seen as streaming video at <http://www.northrosslyn.org>. They also organized a well attended party at the school on July 2nd, where students from the Mongolian School performed traditional dances under two oak trees and members of the Arlington Artists Alliance displayed their paintings nearby.



Photograph of Wilson School in 1932, showing the original 1910 building and the 1926 addition (County Manager’s Library Collection)

Friends of Arlington Parks joins Rosslyn area civic associations in opposing development of the Wilson School site and the adjacent County property. There is a critical shortage of green space along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, and it is important to preserve all of the green space at Wilson School and Rosslyn Heights Park. Fortunately, development of these properties would require the

approval of both the School Board and the County Board. As this newsletter goes to press, the School Board has postponed its decision on the matter, while the County Board has not formally considered it.

## Renovation of Greenbrier Park

The renovation of Greenbrier Park, which adjoins Yorktown High School, is nearly completed. Athletic facilities at the park include a competition-quality field for football, soccer, and lacrosse; a running track; two softball fields; a baseball field; tennis courts; and a swimming pool. For evening events, the athletic fields are lighted using dark-sky technology. The rectangular stadium field is equipped with synthetic turf so it can be used in any season.

There are plans to renovate Yorktown High School over the next few years, replacing the present building with a new and larger one. In the course of that renovation, the existing swimming pool building will be removed and a new pool will be constructed within the existing building. A basketball court will be built in that area, replacing the court that previously was in the park.

The renovation of Greenbrier Park began with a community planning effort in 2001-02. The project was included on the Park Bond Referendum approved by voters in November 2004. Construction began in January 2006 and will be completed this summer.

Facilities at the park are shared by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) and Arlington Public Schools (APS). Four tennis courts are in the park while two others are on school property. The existing swimming pool, which is owned by APS, is on County property. Part of the current addition to the high school is also on County property. The park and school share parking space as well.

Greenbrier Park serves a variety of users, including Arlington residents, organized youth and adult teams, and Yorktown High School teams. Indeed, it could serve as a model for the kind of cooperation that Friends of Arlington Parks would like to see at recreational facilities across the County, whether they belong to PRCR or APS.



Greenbrier Park

At present, there are not enough parking spaces to meet the combined needs of the park and the school. As a result, park visitors may have to search for parking spaces

in the neighborhood, especially when athletic events and school activities (such as plays or concerts) are scheduled at the same time. The situation should improve when renovation of the high school is finished: when the new swimming pool is completed, the site of the existing pool building will be used for additional parking.

The athletic facilities are densely packed, leaving little room for trees in Greenbrier Park. Fortunately, there are still rows of mature trees – mostly willow oaks and white pines – along the park boundaries. Residents and PRCR planners are to be commended for preserving this green buffer between the athletic fields and nearby homes.

## **Donaldson Run Stream Repairs and Reforestation**

Like many other Arlington streams, the Donaldson Run channel in Zachary Taylor Park, which had been restored in 2005-06, was badly damaged by the June 2006 storms. That damage has now been repaired and, in addition, steps have been taken to reduce erosion along the stream in the future. In particular, stream banks have been re-graded, stone structures have been adjusted, and coarse cobble has been placed on the streambed.



County Parks Department photo of Donaldson Run

Donaldson Run is now better connected with its floodplain and should be able to handle runoff from most storms. To reforest the valley and provide floodplain vegetation, more than 400 trees and 600 shrubs were planted along the stream. In time, as vegetation becomes well established on the floodplain and as streambed materials become solidified, the stream should survive even exceptional storms.

A small reforestation project has also been undertaken in Zachary Taylor Park. Soil excavated from banks of Donaldson Run was used to fill a gully leading up a steep hill in Zachary Taylor Park. After the gully was filled,

the hillside was covered with erosion-control fabric and volunteers planted 95 seedlings to reforest the area. This project could serve as a model for reforestation efforts in other Arlington parks.

## News from the Arlington Parks and Recreation Website

### Public Tree Planting Program

Consider all the benefits that trees provide to our community. They help clean our air, reduce run-off water from storms, reduce the summer heat in heavily developed areas, reduce the cost of cooling homes by providing shade to the house, and add to the beauty of our neighborhood.



The Park and Natural Resource Division and the Arlington County Beautification Committee are accepting [applications](#) (38KB [PDF format](#)) for the Public Tree Planting Program from civic associations, neighborhood groups - formal or informal, civic groups, PTA's and garden clubs. For more information on submitting your ideas for tree plantings, please contact Patrick Wegeng at (703) 228-6521 or email [pwegeng@arlingtonva.us](mailto:pwegeng@arlingtonva.us).

### Bat Fest Arlington 2007

Gulf Branch Nature Center and Bat World NOVA present Bat Fest Arlington 2007 on Saturday, August 18. Meet bats and learn about them in this conservation and appreciation program. Registration required. For more details visit:

[http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/Documents/11184S\\_nagSu07.pdf](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/Documents/11184S_nagSu07.pdf)



## Help Take Care of Our Parks and Open Spaces

### Help with Invasives

Arlington County has more than 800 acres of parkland and open spaces, and it is difficult for the Parks Department to maintain the parks without volunteer effort. Help keep Arlington County parks beautiful! Join hundreds of other volunteers and help control invasive plants and clear trash in your local park. To check for current invasive removal events on the web, visit:

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/scripts/parks/ParksRecreationScriptsParksInvasiveEvents.aspx>

For more information, please contact Jan Ferrigan at 703-228-7636 or [jferriga@vt.edu](mailto:jferriga@vt.edu).

### General Volunteer Help

Can you help? The parks department is always looking for individuals or groups to help care for a designated County property for a minimum of one year. Some of the activities needed are watering plant materials, planting flowers, removing litter, tending new trees and shrubs. Get involved by calling the department's Volunteer Coordinator at 704/358-4730.

## Board Members Needed for Friends of Arlington Parks

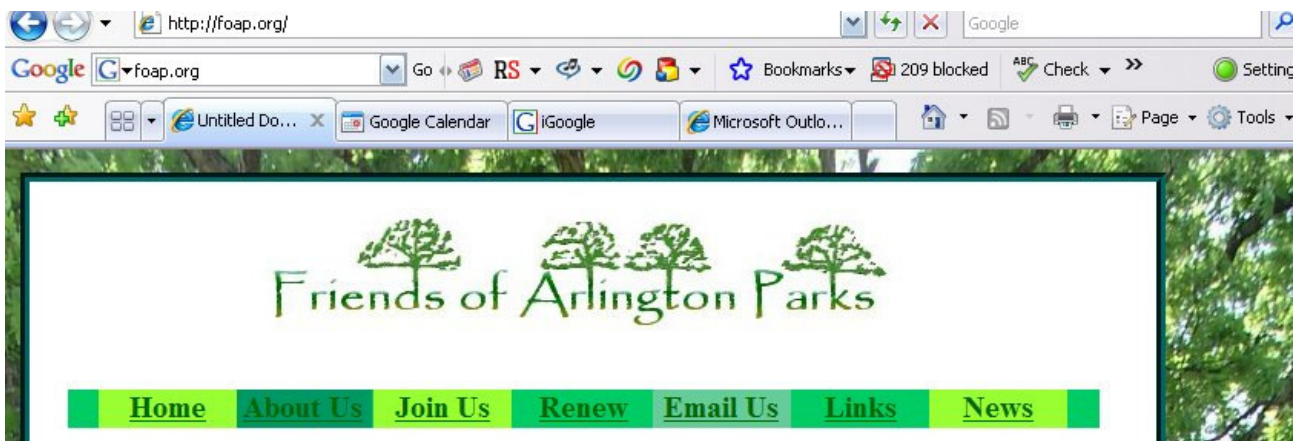
Retiring board members at Friends of Arlington Parks have left spaces on the board that need to be filled. Please consider joining the Board of Friends of Arlington Parks if you are interested in helping to preserve the green space in Arlington.



### Friends of Arlington Park's Website

Visit the Friends of Arlington Parks website to send us email, look for site links, find out news, sign up to get your newsletter online, or even pay your dues on line.

[Friends of Arlington Parks Membership Form](#)



To join *Friends of Arlington Parks*, or renew your membership, mail this form and payment to:  
Terry Hillerich, Treasurer, 3555 N. Somerset Street, Arlington, VA 22213

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here to get your newsletter by email \_\_\_\_\_

Add me/us to the volunteer list and contact. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ \$7 Individual \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Family \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Other contributions

*Please make checks payable to "Friends of Arlington Parks"*

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**Friends of Arlington Parks**  
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