Our 18th Arbor Day: Friendship, Fun and a Flourishing Park!

Crystal brilliant skies of a glorious spring day greeted neighbors at our annual Arbor Day beautification of Burnham Park on April 29 (postponed a week due to April 22nd’s heavy rain and wind).

So who was there? Those who arrived at 9:00 AM were met by two hearty souls, Chris Karcich and Hans Vienna, who had already spent an hour pulling detritus from Burnham’s lower pond!

And their initiative was only multiplied by the fresh arrival of BPA neighbors and friends who joined the morning crew.

Our thanks to all who participated – the Villhauer family, Rob Pica, the Li family, the Carcich Family, Michelle Esposito, Nicole Fletcher, Kay Kribs, Imre Bajusz and his young son Daniel, Rick Bye, Deborah Macomber, the Moster family, Hans Vienna, Joe Attamante, Lynn Siebert, Bill Claxton, and members of the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee and the Alexander Hamilton Neighborhood Association – and all others. (Profound apologies to any whose names we missed).

And what did we do?

We planted four new, beautiful trees: a Red Leaf Maple (from Country Mile Garden) and a Kwanzan Cherry (from the County Shadetree Commission) were sited in the more
“cultivated” portion of the park and two others, a Pin Oak (from Country Mile Garden) and an American Red Bud (donated by the Whippany Watershed Action Committee in memory of Mary Arnold’s mother) were placed in the wilder “back area.” The ongoing goal is to put younger trees near some of the older, failing trees so as the older trees die off, the younger ones will be there and ready to serve as replacements. A short ceremony was held to dedicate the tree in memory of Mary Arnold’s mom. Mary, our long-time BPA member and valued neighborhood resource, thanked all present, indicating how thrilled she was and how much her mother would have loved such a beautiful tree.

In addition to the tree plantings, we accomplished the following: removal of fencing that had served its purpose in protecting the riparian buffer zone; filling (many!) trash bags with assorted refuse from the pond and shore, and bundling remnants of fence posts. Following our labors, we enjoyed the hearty sandwiches from Morristown’s C’est Cheese.

Best of all, we connected as a community...seeing old neighbors, catching up on each other’s news, meeting new friends, having fun working and joking together on a beautiful spring day! It doesn’t get much better than this! This is our neighborhood and we’re proud to be part of it! There’s just a special magic that comes from working together on something as a community. We couldn’t have asked for a better day.

Our thanks to Morris County Shade Tree Commission for the beautiful Cherry tree and, particularly, to Tom of Country Mile Gardens for the magnificent, mature Oak and Maple trees he provided us at a significant discount. A special thanks to Vince Molnar, Morristown’s Superintendent of Public Works, and to his crew for their continued help and support. Vince and his crew did all of the digging and placing the trees, and went beyond the call of duty in removing and re-siting the cherry when we realized that it was submerged in our originally chosen site and needed a place with better drainage. In keeping with our neighborhood’s spirit, several Burnham Parkway neighbors, Imre, and Paul, have taken a personal and communal interest in seeing that the new trees, and last year’s as well, get all the water they need. Many, many thanks to all of our Arbor Day partners! For photos of this year’s efforts, check our website at www.burnhampark.org in a few weeks.

Moms and Tots: BPA’s Younger Set

Spring has sprung and so have the adventures of the Moms & Tots! In April, the Moms went to “Origin” for dinner, took the kids to a petting farm and held weekly play dates and dinner play dates at Burnham Park. Weekly indoor infant play dates were held as well. The Moms also had a lovely family bar-b-que and met the dads. The Moms decided to add some events especially for them to our calendar!

In May, the Moms & Tots will continue to meet at the playground at 3:30 on Mondays, and at 5:30 on Tuesdays for our Picnic Dinners. Wednesdays are infant play dates held at members’ homes and are at 10:30 am. Nature Walks will also be planned. On Wednesday the 17th, the Moms & Tots will be taking a trip to Peddler's Village to shop, play and eat lunch. On Friday the 19th at 8:30 pm, the Moms will be going to dinner at Pamir in Morristown. On Sunday the 21st, the dads will be taking the kids to Sun High Valley Orchard to see the animals and eat lunch. ALL information about these and other events can be found on our website, by clicking on the events: www.momstots.carcich.net

The dads are also planning a “Dad’s Night Out” so please email their addresses to Jen Carcich so they can be added to the Dad list.

If Jen Carcich does not have your email address, please email it to her as she no longer makes phone calls, but instead sends out weekly reminders/reports about all of the great things the families are doing in and around Burnham Park. The website is updated daily so check it often!

Enjoy your families.

• Jen Carcich  fadoo3@aol.com  973 451-9090

Special Offer for Family Safety: Pediatric CPR Training offered June 7, 2006: This event is open to BPA members, newcomer members and various friends!

Thanks to Jen Carcich, this training will be offered on Wednesday, June 7th at 5:30pm at the Carcich home (34 Mendham Ave.). The cost is $40 per person (all money goes to the training). Training is about 3 hours. We know it might cut into bedtime routines, but consider skipping a bath for the night! Jen has graciously agreed to hold babysitting in her basement (Mason’s playroom) and yard so you all can attend. She will be babysitting and implores any of you who are already trained to help her babysit!! (Please send your child’s dinner otherwise it will be mac and cheese all around!) ANYONE is welcome, moms, dads, grandparents, relatives... but we only have 15 spaces.

Here’s what Jen needs from you:
• spread the word about the class
• your $40 cash/check sent to her (Atlantic Health Systems is providing the course)
• if you need babysitting, how many kids you will be bringing
• email her if you are already trained and can help watch the kids

This is a great opportunity to be prepared and to help each other out! As a community we can really make this work.
Morristown History Updates
Willow Hall — Hope on Appeal?

Despite the best efforts of the Cutler Park Neighborhood Association, the Friends of Historic Speedwell, various expert witnesses, members of the Historic community and concerned residents, the Morristown Board of Adjustment voted 8-1 (in early April) to grant the multiple variances that allow the proposed townhouse project to move forward. Expert witness, Planner, Kathryn Gregory, hired by the Friends of Historic Speedwell, was particularly instructive as she systematically rebutted the developer’s testimony and painstakingly explained point-by-point how the proposed project failed to meet the burden of proof required by Morristown’s own statutes and ordinances. An appeal of the board’s decision is pending.

Knox Artillery Brigade Encampment
Marches Forward!

We are pleased that both Morris Township and the Morris County Park Commission have expressed interest in seeing some significant portion of the Knox Artillery Camp protected! In addition, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection’s February 28, 2006 response to BPA Vice-President Joe Attamante’s letters about the site reads in part:

“The Department shares your concern with the loss of lands associated with the Revolution...The Historic Preservation Office has consulted with Ernest Bower, who mapped the area you cited. It’s his belief that there is a low probability of archaeological remains at the Route 24 property you write about, because of extensive 19th century quarrying at the site. He has suggested other, less disturbed areas associated with the Knox encampment. I appreciate your concern and want you to know that the Green Acres Program will look into the Knox encampment suggestions by yourself and Ernest Bower.
Signed: John S. Watson, Jr.”
Deputy Commissioner
With copies to Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen and DEP Commissioner Jackson

BPA VP Joe Attamante’s Feb. 9 letter to Congressman Frelinghuysen urging acquisition of the remaining undisturbed portion of the Knox site with copies to NJDEP Commissioner, Historic Preservation Office, et al, reads:

Dear Congressman Frelinghuysen:

Since my last week’s letter to you regarding the Knox Artillery Camp, I have discovered additional, hopeful information.

After looking more closely at maps drawn by Ernest Bower, comparing them with survey maps, and walking the site of his findings, I now know a significant portion of the Knox encampment: several acres between two steep slopes, is undisturbed and could be saved. This salvageable portion is adjacent to the current development, a brigade site that was never protected, now completely plowed and graded, with foundations in.

In my February 1, 2006 letter I described the artillery brigade of General Henry Knox which occupied one third of a mile on either side of Mendham Road, and identified the immediate threat to the now developed area, believing that this was all that might be saved. However, Knox’s men also occupied the high ground several hundred feet back from the road which would have afforded a good line of sight of any approaching British forces. (See 1994 Ernest Richard Bower document from Park Service archives for location and evidence of this habitation).

I believe we have another opportunity to preserve this Revolutionary War site. This would require the National Park Service, NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Morris Township, Washington Association and others to step up, overcome years of neglect and indifference and conduct the necessary archeological and other surveys recommended decades ago by Edward Rutsch, James Kochan and others.

At least one of the property owners of the land occupied by General Knox’s soldiers asked if I knew of a way to preserve her land through a state program such as the farmland trust since she and her husband will likely sell it soon. If other landowners are similarly motivated and become willing sellers, a “park” of protected area could be established with access by trail to Jones Drive, Kahdena or Mendham Roads. I have notified preservation groups such as the Archeological Conservancy and Morris Land Conservancy who might provide funds for land purchase.

I would very much like to meet with you and stakeholders like the Washington Association, National Park Service and others to explore ways to preserve this undisturbed portion of the Knox Artillery Camp that played a significant role in our war for independence.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Attamante
Copy to:
D. Guzzo, New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation
L. Jackson, NJ Department of Environmental Protection
F. Mainella, National Park Service
B. Mitnick, Washington Association
R. Turner, Morristown National Historical Park

Archeologist Ernest Bower recently re-confirmed the location of this undisturbed portion of the artillery park

In March, at the invitation of Morris Township’s Historic Preservation Commission, Mr. Attamante explained what he knew about the site and presented the case for acquisition and preservation.

Committee members were unanimous in support of preservation. Mayor Robert Nace, indicating his awareness of the site’s historical importance and interest in its preservation, said that he would discuss the matter with the Open Space Committee and Dave Helmer, Director of the Morris County Park Commission. We thank the mayor for attending the meeting and for his willingness to help.
We believe that a trail could be constructed between Fosterfields and the Park Commission’s property on Kahdena Road that abuts the former brigade site. It is possible to create a park of several acres, thus completing preservation of the last remaining brigade site from the 1779-80 period. With willing sellers (the property is currently owned by four persons) and a consortium of buyers, a Revolutionary War era park can be created!

Newsflash: Following Joe Attamante’s recent conversation with NJDEP Deputy Commissioner John Watson, he provided Deputy Commissioner Amy Cradic with a copy of the Attamante February 9, 2006 letter (see above), confirming the remaining undisturbed portion of the site. According to Commissioner Watson, if it (the site) is as described, it would likely be eligible for Green Acres funding. He also indicated that the department had preserved thousands of acres this year and would work with other agencies such as the Morris County Park Commission and Morris Township to provide the necessary funding for purchase - provided there are willing sellers. Morris Township has included the site among those considered worthy for possible purchase.

BPA thanks VP Joe Attamante for his untiring efforts to help preserve this piece of our country’s history!

CCRC Update

The NJDEP is awaiting a response from St. Mary’s Abbey to its February 9, 2006 letter regarding the proposed amendment for the Saint Mary’s Abbey Continuing Care Retirement Community from Bureau Chief Terry Pilawski. A response was due March 23, 2006.

The letter from Terry Pilawski, Chief, Bureau of Watershed Regulation, to Tony DiLodovico of Schoor DePalma, the Abbey’s consulting engineers, addressed issues raised by the public as well as by private and government experts during and following the January 4 and 5, 2006 public hearings. Chief Pilawski on behalf of the NJDEP said that,…”the department will require additional information to address the following comments, which have not been sufficiently addressed in prior submittals.”

The Abbey was required to address the following issues:

Endangered Species – Comments from John C. Staples, Assistant supervisor of the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service regarding, “The recent discovery of a summer breeding colony of the federally listed (endangered) Indiana Bat (Myotis sodalis) in close proximity to the proposed CCRC development necessitates careful consideration by the Department.”

Stormwater Management and Site Design - Comments questioning “aspects of site design as they pertain to the Stormwater Management Regulations (N.J.A.C. 7:8)...
From Great Swamp to Highlands...

BPA extends its best wishes to Julia Somers, visionary leader of the Great Swamp Watershed Association who, in the coming months, will leave the Great Swamp to become Executive Director of the Highlands Coalition. The Coalition is a conglomerate of NJ statewide and grassroots environmental groups whose goal is to educate municipalities and individuals about the crucial benefits of the NJ Highlands Act: the protection of vital water resources supplying millions of northern NJ residents with potable drinking water and the preservation of the Highlands irreplaceable ecosystem. The Highlands Act also protects agricultural lands, wildlife species, communities as well as scenic and historic resources. Under Somers' remarkable leadership, the Great Swamp Watershed Association has evolved into one of the premiere environmental and conservation groups in the state. She has reassured us that she will remain based in this area and will also be continuing her work for the preservation of the Washington Valley. We have no doubt that we will all continue to reap the benefits of Julia Somers' outstanding talents and formidable knowledge of all things environmental!! Congratulations and best wishes from BPA for success in the new position!!

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News Alert: Missing Cat "Spot"

Small, White cat with black tail, two black spots on head and black spot on body, was wearing pink collar with a ID and a bell
Lost in Burnham Park
If seen call Jen Carcich at: 973-451-9090

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Donation towards new park bench

We and are trying to acquire a bench near the playground in Burnham Park. We are collecting donations for the bench at this time. If you are able to donate any amount, please send it to Bill Claxton, Treasurer, 32 Dorothy Drive

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Membership/Dues Payment

I/We enclose our 2006 Burnham Park Association dues of:
☐ $10 Basic/Pine  ☐ $25 Sponsor/Maple  ☐ $50 Patron/Beech  ☐ $100 Benefactor/Oak  ☐ $250 Thomas Paine Club

Name:_____________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________________
Telephone: ________________________________________________________________________________

If making additional contribution, please indicate amount and purpose (e.g. plantings for Arbor Day, etc.)

Amount:____________________   Purpose: __________________________________________________

Fill in your name, address and telephone number on this stub. Make checks payable to the Burnham Park Association.
Sent to our treasurer, Bill Claxton at 32 Dorothy Drive, Morristown, NJ 07960. Thanks to those neighbors who have supported BPA so generously.

DUES PAID IN THE LAST 3 MONTHS OF 2006 GET CREDITED TO CALENDAR YEAR 2007
Worried that your pet won't receive enough TLC while you are away? Teacher with prior experience as a dog walker available for pet sitting in your home during weekends, school breaks and summer vacation. Call Jennifer at 973-451-9090.