The Friends of Buttonwood Park

The Leaflet

Spring 2018

Protect the past, Improve the present, Plan for the future

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Volunteers Clear the Way for Spring Blooms

Thank you to all our volunteers — and members like you — for making the park the respite from urban life that so many enjoy. Without you, we wouldn't have the beautiful park that you see today.

The sight of daffodils in the Buttonwood Brook Wetlands Buffer Garden this past April was a welcome sign that spring had finally arrived. A small group of volunteers took advantage of unusually mild weather to prune bushes, clear debris, and remove several tree branches in the aftermath of last winter's storms.

One of the volunteers was board member *Lorraine Perry* who personifies the spirit of volunteerism in our community. Lorraine was crowned "Mother Earth" —a fitting title—at the Earth Day Eve Parade in New Bedford. She was chosen for her "exceptional stewardship toward our natural environment." Congratulations, Lorraine, for the well-deserved public recognition of your dedication and hard work.

Historic Buttonwood Park Provides Lessons for 'Lifelong Learners,' Thanks to Your Support

Richard Leary with 'lifelong learners' overlooking the gardens in the Dell

As the ***Second Half Lifelong Learning*** students toured the park last fall, they viewed many of the historical features that Charles W. Eliot — of the renowned Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot landscape architecture firm — envisioned when he visited the site in 1895.

Eliot's plan was never adopted. But the Friends—following the 1986 Renewal and Restoration Master Plan which created the Great Lawn and the pedestrian Concourse, among other things — adheres (whenever possible) to Olmsted's philosophy and design principles that define Buttonwood Park as a cultural landscape.

Of her experience in the Arboretum — which follows 19th century naturalistic planting principles — city historian and walk participant, Peggi Medeiros, later wrote that *"wandering through on a blue sky October day is magical."*

Because of Your Giving, a Young Family Enjoys Springtime in the Park

On a rare, sunny day in early April, the park was filled with the sights and sounds of active, young families — excited to be outdoors and taking in the fresh air and sunshine after a long, harsh winter. The Friends met one such family at the Buffer Garden.

Four-year-old William was strolling the park with his Mom and Dad and baby brother Lincoln when the daffodils *(or was it the large pile of branches?)* caught his eye. William stopped by to say hello to the volunteers and lent a helping hand. Thanks, William. We hope you and your family visit often.

Popular Swan Paddle Boats Return to Buttonwood Pond

"Buttonwood Park provides an ideal setting for swan paddle boats" –Cynthia Days

Visitors of all ages enjoy swan boat rides on opening day

At the opening ceremony this past April, Cynthia Days — who owns and operates the paddle boat concession with her husband Allen — remarked that "Buttonwood Park provides an ideal setting for swan paddle boats." Their company, La Gondola, Inc., has been operating at Roger Williams Park in Providence, R.I. since 2004 and is committed to "wholesome family entertainment."

The swan boats can accommodate up to four people and will be operating until September 30th.

Concerned Citizens Address Canada Geese Over-Population

You Can Be A Part of the Solution

A group of citizens, concerned over the geese population in the city, has formed the ***Waterfowl Issues Study Group.*** It includes city employees, members of the Friends of Buttonwood Park, and members of the Buttonwood Neighborhood Association. The group is researching the problem, looking into possible humane solutions, and planning strategies.

Thank you for your help educating others on the harmful consequences of feeding bread to waterfowl

The following are significant preventive measures discussed by the group as reported by Richard Leary

- A method known as "addling" destroys the eggs. The more humane and preferred form of addling is oiling the eggs, which prevents the eggs from hatching. *(A nesting study needs to be conducted prior to any of these methods being used)*
- Use of drones with high-resolution imagery to spot and survey nesting areas that are difficult for humans to access *(some nests might be located as far as two miles away from the pond)*
- Use of dogs to chase and harass the geese
- Suitable fencing (such as chicken wire) where no other barrier exists
- Spraying the grass around the park with an irritant that is not harmful to humans

It was also noted that additional solutions may come to light when, in the next few years, a new dam (Fuller Parkway) is built and the pond is drained.

Education is also an important factor in controlling the geese population. The popular activity of feeding bread to the waterfowl — which many of us have been guilty of at one time or another — disrupts migration patterns, pollutes the pond, and is a health hazard to humans.

Waterfowl can also develop a deformity called 'Angel Wings' which prevents them from flying. When you see families feeding the waterfowl, gently remind them that they are not helping... just the opposite, in fact.

"The Oldest Tree on Earth"

The ginkgo tree (*ginkgo biloba*) is a "living fossil" that has survived over 270 million years. A native of China, it was introduced to Europeans in the mid 1750s. The ginkgo is admired worldwide for its distinctive fan-shaped leaves, twisted branches, and magnificent, golden display of fall color — shedding its leaves in a single day. Adding to its popularity is its resiliency and longevity. In Japan, 6 ginkgoes near Hiroshima survived the atomic blast. Recently, at the site of a Shinto shrine, the stump of a 1,000 year-old fallen ginkgo —and a replanted section of the trunk — have sprouted leaves.

Your gifts allow us to care for the ginkgo and 13 other unique specimen trees in Buttonwood's Arboretum. Thank you for your continuing support of our mission.

Friends of Buttonwood Park is an all-volunteer (501)(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 1986

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Mission Statement

'Stewardship, Protection, and Renewal'

Our mission is the maintenance and improvement of the park with a focus on supporting and executing projects and activities that contribute to the physical and mental well-being of our urban population — while protecting and preserving the park as a historic landscape.

GREAT PARKS MAKE GREAT CITIES

Do you wish to honor a special friend, commemorate a milestone occasion, or memorialize a loved one in a lasting, meaningful way? Several of the park's trees were severely damaged in last winter's storms. The evergreens were especially hard hit and many were felled. The Friends need your help replacing them.

A memorial tree is a living tribute that will stand for decades. In addition to its scenic beauty, your tree will also help the environment and provide vital health benefits to this and future generations.

Through the Friends' ***Commemorative Tree Program***, your memorial gift will be acknowledged on a bronze plaque and displayed prominently on a wall at the Francis J. Lawler Library. It will list both your name and the name of the honoree. The type of tree and its placement in the park will be determined by the Friends according to the park's Master Plan.

For more information, please email Thelma Baxter at *thelmabaxter@hotmail.com or friends@buttonwoodpark.org*

When was the last time you saw a Monarch Butterfly?

The delight at seeing the Monarchs roaming our gardens on their yearly migration is a cherished childhood memory that many of us share. Today, their numbers are dwindling to the point where the species is on the verge of extinction.

You can help by planting milkweed seeds in your garden after the last frost in spring. It is the only plant where the Monarch lays its eggs. The caterpillars feed on the leaves whose toxicity protects them from predators.