



**FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK**  
 1920 EAGLE DRIVE  
 BALTIMORE, MD 21207  
[www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org](http://www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org)

**Fall 2012**



Come out to the park and enjoy a day of games, lively activities, music and good fresh air at the Family Fun Day on **Sunday, October 14th, from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm.** If you know a kid or two, bring them along.

Along with the usual running of the steam trains, there will be a stilt-walking workshop, pogo sticks for hopping until you're out of breath, jump roping the tame way with one rope or if you're really courageous double-dutch with two, golf frisbee on the lawn, hopscotch with different eras of hopscotch patterns and games brought by a representative of Fit and Fun, a Baltimore Y outreach promoting more exercise and better nutrition and a food truck that specializes in healthy food. Music will be provided by the Sau au Lait, a Dixieland jazz group. At the labyrinth,

## Family Fun Day

**October 14, 2011**

a spokesperson will be available for explanations and guidance, and the Ori- anda House will be open for display and details of the recent renovations and memorabilia. Nature in the Park will have nature art workshops as well as a guided tour of the Nature Art exhibit.

Or just meander about the grounds watching others in fun activities.

One of the 2012 goals for the Friends has been to provide several opportunities for kids to get outdoors doing inexpensive activities that can be duplicated by families in their own free time. In the spring Docs in the Park was featured with volunteer doctors present to encourage healthy activities. The October Family Fun Day is the second event with the same objective.

## Annual Harvesting of the Chestnuts

If you drive along Windsor Mill Road very often, you may have noticed that every year during the month of September, there is the constant presence of folks, mostly of Korean origin, circling the graceful line of the beautiful large Chestnut trees. If your curiosity has been enough to give a second glance, you have probably discerned that they appear to be looking for something on the ground. Well, indeed they are and it is not a lost article. They are collecting the fallen chestnuts.

Finding the nuts is one step, gathering them is another. It is not an easy task because the shell of the chestnut is covered with very prickly spikes – so prickly that they are

not picked up by hand. Instead, the gatherers use their shoes to pry them open and then touch only the smooth nut itself.

After a wind storm, the harvest can be quite substantial, and you will notice an increase in the numbers of people.

The nuts ripen at the same time of the year as a major harvest festival in Korean culture. It is called Chuseok and comes on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Lunar calen-



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## Opening a New Sustainable Multi-use Trail

In January, 2012, an expert whom the Department of Recreation and Parks hired to evaluate park trails gave a sobering report about the poor condition of trails in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. He reported that if the goal is to have trails with greater usage, improvement needs to be made. The trails need to be designed to be sustainable and to be used for a variety of users. The greatest problem that he saw as he hiked the park was from erosion caused by trails going straight up and down the hillsides. Once water starts on a path, the path only becomes deeper. The Friends could only nod in agreement at his assessment.

Without knowledge of the completion of the report, but with knowledge of the accuracy, the Friends presented the R&P Department with a proposal to move ahead with a pilot project on one of the most eroded trails within the park. Eric Crawford, member of the Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts Association, who has had much experience with trail building and repair in Patapsco State Park, agreed to assist with the design. He recommended flagging a path through the woods with a rise of no more than an 8% grade



– creating a meandering trail along the hillside to replace the eroded one.

During this past summer with the energy and strength of 16 young workers from the Student Conservation Association for six weeks, the trail was cut through the woods. The counselors supervising these young people were well trained with trail blazing, water management techniques, and leading youth who have had little to no experience working in the woods and using picks and shovels. The purpose of the SCA is to acquaint young people, aged 16-18 years, with environmental issues, conservation practices and life skills, one life skill being summer work experience.

On October 3rd, the Friends had a ribbon cutting for the new trail with representatives from the R&P Department and persons who had a hand in some stage of the project. Some improvements were noted but those will come with volunteer time and the wear of walkers' shoes. The new trail retains the name of the Old Spring Trail and can be accessed near the intersection of Wetheredsville and Hutton Roads on the Gwynns Falls Trail. Come see what you think. Does it meet the goal of being a sustainable multi-use trail?

## Baltimore Toolbank Tools to Power Community Projects

*John Enny*

The Friends have recently discovered a new resource in town that will likely come in handy as we work with larger and larger volunteer groups. We also want to help spread the word to other groups who would benefit if they knew about the organization's purpose and resources.

Tools, in sufficient numbers, are often a barrier for small non-profit groups. A group frequently lacks storage space or may not have the funds to buy the necessary number or types of tools needed for limited use. You may have attended a service project where volunteers could have benefitted from a few more rakes, wheelbarrows and shovels. For example, it is handy to have 20 loppers to remove invasives along the edges of the walking trails or 25 buckets to collect trash along the Dead Run.

The opening of the new Baltimore Community ToolBank, modeled after the first such group founded in Atlanta in the '90s, helps to solve problems like these. In Baltimore, the Parks and People Foundation, with leadership from Guy Hager, was instrumental in bringing the ToolBank here with the purpose of increasing the capacity for volunteerism and service. Friends groups, religious or educational institutions, community gardens and neighborhood associations can borrow all the landscaping, painting, cleaning, construction, safety and event gear they need.

Organizations interested in borrowing ToolBank tools and equipment must register online at [www.baltimore.toolbank.org](http://www.baltimore.toolbank.org) and submit documentation of their charitable efforts in order to be approved as a member agency. Membership is free, and the low handling fees are only incurred when a tool order is placed.

The ToolBank is conveniently located in a warehouse at 1224 Wicomico Street, close to Ravens stadium – a short detour from the Gwynns Falls Trail. If you are a member of a non-profit organization where at times extra tools would be helpful, contact the Toolbank for information.. Visit [www.baltimore.toolbank.org](http://www.baltimore.toolbank.org), stop in for a tour, or give them a call at 410-244-5565.



## The Olmsted Imprint on Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park

Ed Orser

The creation of both Gwynns Falls and Leakin Parks owes a great deal to the famous landscape architecture firm founded by Frederick Law Olmsted. His son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., or "Rick," played a key role in the Baltimore park story.

In 1903 the Olmsted firm, under Rick's leadership, was asked to prepare a comprehensive plan for the Baltimore park system in advance of anticipated annexation. The report, submitted in early 1904, singled out the stream valleys as the distinctive natural feature of the region and urged their acquisition in advance of development--an argument that blended prudent financial and environmental considerations.

The report recommended immediate expansion of Gwynns Falls Park, then only a small parcel of land near Edmondson Avenue. The widened valley just above the Edmondson bridge caught Rick's attention as "a great meadow flanked by steep and attractive hills," and the narrow gorge beyond it to the north had "scenery [that] is remarkably beautiful, of a picturesque and sylvan sort seldom possible to retain so near a great city."

Over the next decade the Olmsteds worked with the city park board to acquire land along the Gwynns Falls--the meadow becoming athletic fields (today's Leon Day Park), and the narrow gorge featuring a popular promenade along the filled-in former mill race (today, the Mill Race section of the Gwynns Falls Trail).

In 1926, in a follow-up report for Baltimore parks, the Olmsteds recommended extending park land along both the Gwynns Falls and Dead Run valleys. The latter, they wrote, was "considered by all who view it as one of the very best bits of scenery near Baltimore." Rick remembered that recommendation in 1939 when he was asked to provide advice on the site for a new park to be funded by a bequest from Baltimore lawyer J. Wilson Leakin. Weighing potential sites throughout the city, Rick came down firmly on the benefit of acquiring the Crimea, the former estate of Thomas Winans, writing: "[It] is so nearly in condition, just as it now is, to be a very beautiful and valuable park. . . . a type of park which is notable for its exceptional natural beauty, of a sort very keenly enjoyable, in a quiet, leisurely way, by many kinds of people."

Following Olmsted's advice, the city acquired the valley portion of the Crimea estate in 1941 and the upland section, including the Orianda House, in 1948. So, the Olmsteds laid the foundation for today's Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, its 1200 acres making it the largest woodland park in an eastern city.

## 2012 Photography Contest Winners

The results of the third photography contest, BALTIMORE CITY PARKS, OUR PASSION, sponsored by the Friends were announced with an exhibit and reception in the Orianda



House on Sunday, Photo by June Cole Baltimore City Zoo

June 10. Amateurs of all ages were eligible to submit photographs taken in any Baltimore City Park. Some winning photos of previous years were also on view.

Cash awards were presented to the first place adult winners and youth winners in two categories. Amateurs of all ages were invited to submit one entry in four different categories: wildlife, plants, people, and landscapes and structures. Winning contestants were interviewed to explain their motivation for taking their winning picture.

Congratulations to all winners for showing off beautiful themes in our City parks, from fine details to intriguing perspectives and a thank you to all participants who enjoyed exploring our small and big parks. We are very grateful to our two independent professional photographers, Donna Stupski and Doug Retzler, who judged the contest.

### YOUTH CATEGORY

Landscapes and Structures: Georgia Stolle-McAllister  
People: Rowan Stolle-McAllister

### ADULT CATEGORY

Wildlife: June Cole  
Landscape and Structures - Fei Lee  
People - Abe Yoffe  
Plants: Martha Gatewood

*Many thanks to Katie Merkle, Heide Grundmann, and Vanessa Molock for providing leadership for this project and to Outward Bound and Rick Smith for the use of the Orianda ballroom.*



To become a member of the Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, please send this completed form along with your check\* to: Friends of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, 1920 Eagle Drive, Baltimore, Md. 21207.

LEVEL: Individual \_\_\_\_\_\$10 Family \_\_\_\_\_\$20 Nonprofit \_\_\_\_\_\$25 Patron \_\_\_\_\_\$100 Sustainer \_\_\_\_\_\$250

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\*Contributions to FOGFLP are tax deductible.





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2012 Photography Contest Winner  
 Landscape and Structures - Fei Lee *After the Storm*

## Fall 2012

### Annual Harvesting of the Chestnuts

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dar. When translated to the Gregorian calendar, the date is not always the same, but it falls during the month of September. This year the date was September 30th.

In Korea, the tradition is for all to pay respect to their ancestors by returning to their ancestral home to give care to family tombs. Some have said that the human migration during this three day holiday is the largest in the world. The ancestral tombs are cleared and cleaned, and food is left on the graves. The family that has assembled for the annual reunion also enjoys a large feast of traditional harvest foods and one of the favorites is the crescent-shaped rice cake which is filled with steamed chopped chestnuts. The nuts are prepared for an assortment of other Korean dishes as well. Many Korean Americans continue to observe these family traditions from the old country, but if they are first generation without parental graves, they focus on the feast.



In an interview with Angela Ha, who has operated a store on the corner of Windsor Mill and North Forest Park for 22 years, she said that the folks who come to the park come mostly because of nostalgia for traditional ways. The flavor of the nuts is the same, and they can easily be purchased at H-mart at Route 40 and Rolling Road, but those who know about the trees, particularly the elderly, continue to do what they did in "the old country."

Leakin Park serves many people in a variety of ways. When the trees were planted for their beauty, who knew how they would be used?