



FRIENDS OF GWYNN'S FALLS/LEAKIN PARK

1920 EAGLE DRIVE

BALTIMORE, MD 21207

www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org

Summer 2014

Americorp to the Rescue with a New Boardwalk

Joe O'Conner

Every Tuesday morning a small group of Friends volunteers works on some of the routine maintenance projects in the park such as pruning shrubs, weeding flower gardens, and clearing debris from the trails and grounds around Eagle Drive and Winans Meadow. However, there are always projects on the "to do" list that require the Friends to call for reinforcements. For two weeks, beginning on March 24, a dedicated hard working group of seven members of Americorp answered the call.

The Magnificent Seven went straight to work and within a couple of hours carried a truckload of tools, lumber, and gravel up a steep section of the Old Fort Trail to a very distressed area in need of repair. An old boardwalk on the trail was blocking spring water and storm water coming down the adjacent hill from flowing across and off the trail. Instead, the water was pooling along the trail creating a large area of mud.

The Americorp crew planned to demolish and remove the old boardwalk, dig new drainage ditches across the trail to carry off the spring water and storm water, build a new larger boardwalk, and landscape the area with a new grade reversal to prevent storm water running down the trail from reaching the boardwalk. Within the first day of work the Americorp crew made enough progress on the new boardwalk project that they were able to split the crew into two groups in order to offer the Friends assistance with other tasks in the park.



While the first crew continued their work on the new boardwalk for the Old Fort Trail, the second crew painted the storage sheds behind the Trail House, cleared debris from the Dead Run along Franklinton Road, made a section of boardwalk out of old picnic tables and placed it on the Old Spring Trail, planted new shrubs around the Orianda House, and repaired the boardwalk on the Wetland Trail. By the end of a very productive two weeks, the Americorp crews completed at least a dozen projects in the park.

The Americorp crew was made up of young people from around the country, from Oregon to Minnesota, Missouri and Baltimore. During their stay in Baltimore, the Americorp members lived in the Trail House on Eagle Drive. After their two weeks of work in Gwynns Falls Leakin Park they worked on other park projects throughout the city and then moved on to other projects around the country.

The Friends enjoyed getting to know these young people, thanks them for their work, and wishes them well. The Friends also thanks the Department of Recreation and Parks for coordinating the Americorp effort and the Parks and People Foundation for providing grant funds for the materials used in the new Old Fort Trail boardwalk. These two weeks in the spring are another reminder of the many hands joined together working to make this park the beautiful jewel that it is.

SAVING THE BRIDGE

George Farrant

In the early spring, several members of The Friends became quite concerned about the number of large tree trunks that had been pushed up against and under the footbridge just east of the Winans Meadow parking lot. They were concerned that with the amount of rain we had experienced in the area and the forecast for much more rain, the logs would continue to rise and eventually overtake the bridge, push it out of its moorings, and float it down stream. The City Parks Department was contacted and on April 28, a work crew used heavy equipment, chains, and chain saws to remove the large tree trunks and save the footbridge from being severely damaged. A Parks Department official was heard to say, "Timing is everything."



Before and after photos of the footbridge and flooding

ART IN THE PARK

Jo Orser

Art in the Park continues for its fourth year with new installations along established walking trails in the park. The loop trails can be accessed directly in back of the tennis courts. Directions and descriptions of the various art pieces are available at the edge of the tennis court

parking lots. Walking along these trails, which take about 15-20 minutes, one can see the creations of inspired artists made from natural materials mostly found in the park. Take a walk when you are next in the park or make a special trip to see them. You will be surprised and amazed by the creations.

PARKS AND PEOPLE CELEBRATION

George Farrant

National Trails Day was on Saturday June 7 and The Parks and People Foundation celebrated in style by holding their 30th anniversary event in the Winans Meadow area of Leakin Park. The day started early with the planting of 18 trees around the parking lot and along the Gwynns Falls Trail switchbacks near the Water Wheel. Two park benches were placed that provide a lovely view of the stream and are dedicated to the memory of Bill Eberhard, a long time activist and member of the Trail Council who contributed many hours to bicycle and hiking trail maintenance. After the hard work was done, families and friends were treated to a barbeque, entertainment, and speakers. Winans Meadow is looking good these days and we are thankful for all the hard work by our many volunteers who care for our 1200-acre park, the largest wilderness park inside a city east of the Mississippi River.

PARK STEWARDS PROGRAM

George Farrant

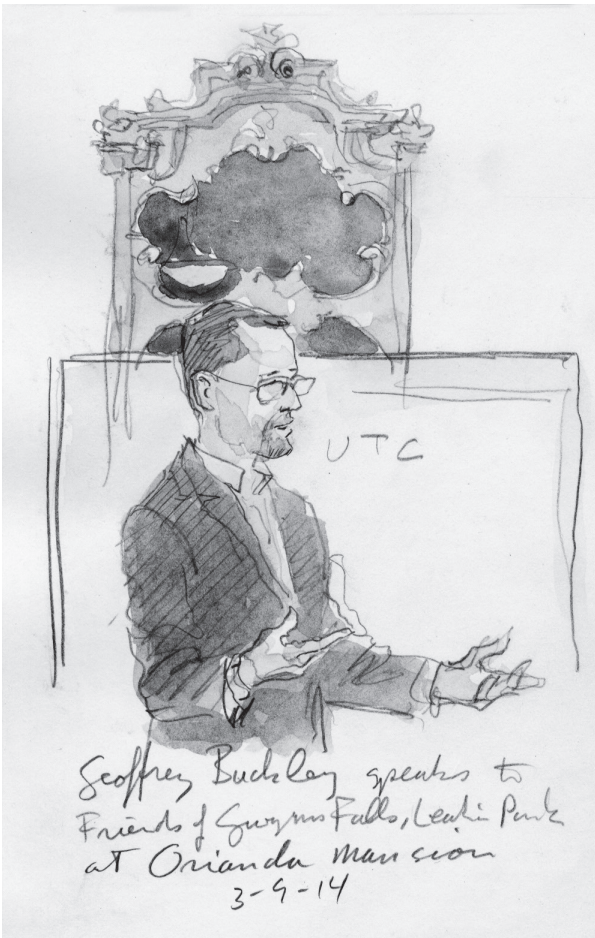
FOGFLP was recently awarded a grant from Parks and People to hire two park stewards for the summer months who will be stationed in the Winans Meadow Area on Saturdays and Sundays. Their responsibilities include interacting with visitors to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, providing information about activities in the park, helping visitors to find trail heads, participating in park maintenance, and monitoring the parking lot and bathrooms. Our stewards, Fred Norton, an ecology student at UMBC, and Dan Hukportie, an economics major at Washington College and an outstanding lacrosse player, will be officially "on the trail" beginning the weekend of June 14/15. Please take the time to welcome them when you are in the park on the weekends.

FRIENDS OF GWYNNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK ANNUAL MEETING

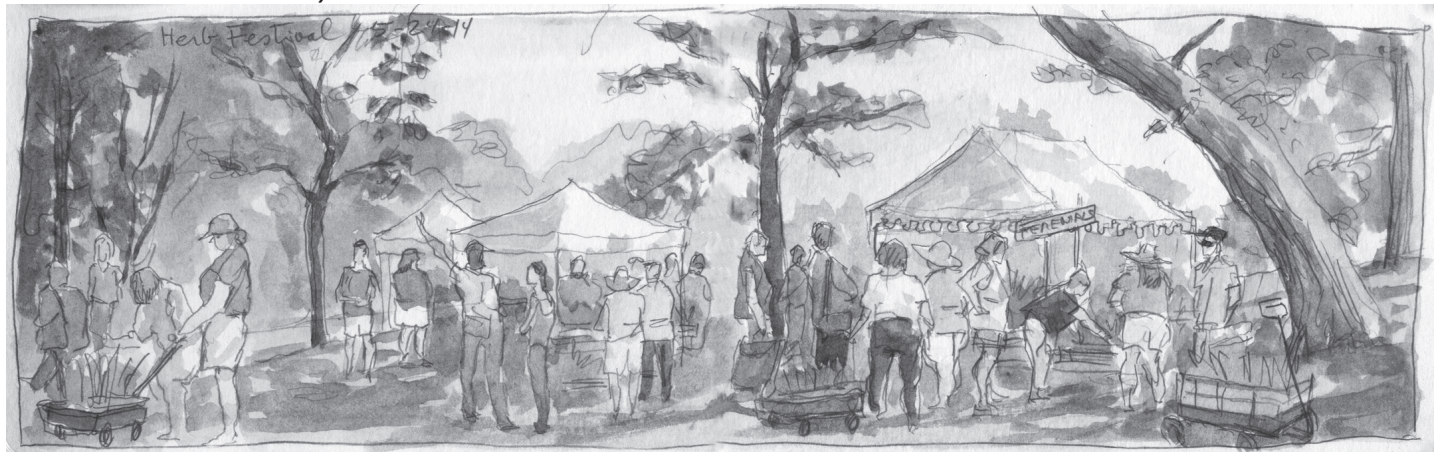
The Friends held their annual meeting on March 9, 2014 at the Orianda Mansion.

The guest speaker was Geoffrey Buckley, Associate Professor of Geography at Ohio University. Professor Buckley received his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, College Park and has studied Maryland Forestry extensively. His presentation included historical information about Baltimore's early experience with professional forestry. Professor Buckley is the author of *America's Conservation Impulse - A Century of Saving Trees in the Old Line State*.

Following the presentation, an impressive list of the many activities and accomplishments of the The Friends during Jo Orser's five-year term as President were highlighted. The Friends also recognized Ed Simmons for his many years of dedication to maintaining the herb garden at the Chapel and Benny Foreman of the Department of Recreation and Parks for always being available to assist The Friends. New officers were introduced and include: George Farrant – President; Heidi Grundmann - First Vice President; Dick Fairbanks - Second Vice President; Joy Goodie – Treasurer; Karen Hull – Secretary; Bridget McCusker – newsletter editor.



Sketches by Art Lien



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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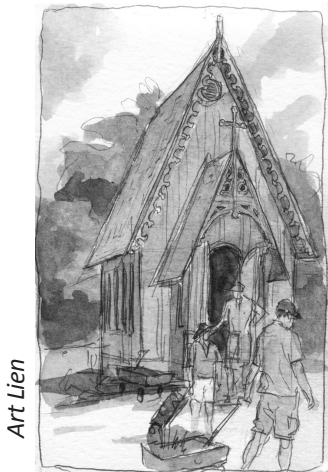
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*Contributions to FOGFLP are tax deductible.



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BGE PIPELINE UPDATE

Jo Orser

Discussions continue between BGE, the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Friends about the best option for the gas pipeline through the park. The Friends primary goal is to minimize the number of trees that must be cut in order to have a 75 foot clearing, 50 feet of which will be replanted by BGE, with small trees of course, after the pipeline goes in. Four options are on the table.

On June 3rd, representatives from each of these groups walked what is being labeled the northern route because of its path along the northern edge of the park. Because it takes advantage of existing asphalt road beds, Windsor Mill Rd., Hutton Rd. and Wetheredsville Road, it is the favored route of the Friends although it is a bit longer route. BGE favors

the original proposed route which comes into the park parallel to Cooks Lane, turning east and then running parallel to Briarcliff and Winans Way, across Winans and directly up the hill to Rognel Heights. It then follows the edge of the park through the Rognel Heights neighborhood until it rejoins the existing pipeline. The entire route will require a 50 foot permanent clearing so that the pipeline can be inspected from the air. Also, the Maryland Department of the Environment has very stringent requirements regarding water and stream requirements before permits will be granted. The discussions and ultimately the decisions take these requirements into account.

Discussions will continue but as one year has now passed since the pipeline proposal was announced, a final decision will probably be reached this fall.