



FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK

1920 EAGLE DRIVE

BALTIMORE, MD 21207

www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org

Summer 2016

A Boyhood in the Park Saves It from an Expressway

As a kid, growing up on Brookwood Road, Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park was Thomas Ward's playground. As an adult, when plans for the East-West Expressway (today's I-70) threatened to slice through the park with multiple lanes of concrete, Ward helped lead the fight to stop construction of the road. And, when he discovered survey stakes that proved the highway planners had not followed requirements for the project's environmental impact study, his finding helped derail the plan for good.

When Thomas Ward died in March of this year at 89, he left behind a strong legacy as a lawyer, City Council member (in 1967 he cast the only "no" vote against the expressway), Circuit Court judge, Liquor Board Commissioner, and environmental activist.

In a December, 2008, memoir, "Remembrances of Leakin Park and Gwynns Falls," Ward wrote that he began his "love affair" with the park in 1937 when his sister came down with scarlet fever, and he, quarantined, had to stay out of school. With his mother's permission he explored the nearby woods at the foot of Brookwood a few years before Baltimore City acquired the land of the former Winans estate: "The mystery and glory of the future Leakin Park began to unfold that day as I hiked farther and farther into the deep recesses of those beautiful woods [and] down into the valley."

Over the following years he ventured farther, exploring various portions of the Crimea Estate: "the magnificent Orianda house," "a stone fort with iron cannons," the root cellar that seemed like a "dungeon," and "an immense waterwheel"—all still there. As the young Ward explored farther, he found new wonders: "Lengthening my hikes in the summertime, I discovered an area where the stream widens



Buttercup Meadow, one of the natural spaces made possible by preserving the parks boundaries.

out . . . [to create] a popular swimming hole full of kids, who daily made the trip from the Edmondson Avenue area . . . to take their daily swim." Nearby, the "rock escarpment," named "Bean Hill" by the boys, "presented a challenge too obvious to ignore, so we climbed it from time to time."

In 1972, in the case of Thomas Ward et al. v. the Federal Highway Administration, federal Judge James Miller ruled against the highway officials, effectively ending the plan for the expressway to run through the heart of Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park. A version of this article appeared in the Hunting Horn.



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Reflections on Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv.

Amy Stump

Many of us experienced a childhood immersed in nature. Some of us grew up on a farm or in a rural environment and can recall picking corn from the field to be put straight into boiling water or skating across a frozen pond to school. Even in population-dense suburban Chicago, riding a bike to the river to hunt for turtles is the most salient memory of my childhood. During the dog days of summer, did we sneak inside to a cool basement to play Space Invaders? Of course we did but once discovered by our parents, we were soon outside again searching the brush at the edges of our yards for berries and scooping insect larvae out of puddles.

Unfortunately, Richard Louv tells us, daily interaction with nature in childhood seems to be a thing of the past. One reason seems to be that as the population increases, open space decreases and the woods simply are not there to explore anymore. Fear of abduction and accidents causes some parents to keep their kids indoors. Perhaps most importantly, the lure of computers and video games simply draws kids towards the sofa or desk. As one child quoted in the book explains, why go outside? All of the electrical outlets are inside.

The result is a generation of individuals that are detached from their food source and have minimal familiarity with the geography, flora, and fauna that surrounds them. Essentially, they are ignorant of the environment that serves as the very basis of their continued existence.



Ben, son of Amy Stump

This lack of intimacy with nature has several deleterious effects. Building forts and tree houses develops creativity and brainpower far more effectively than any computer-based activity, the author argues. In the past, great thinkers (Benjamin Franklin and Mark Twain, to give two examples) frequently cited inspirational childhood experiences in nature as seminal to their adult achievements. Are we hampering children's creative development by depriving them of these experiences?

Furthermore, kids who sit indoors tend to become less fit and less attentive and diagnoses such as childhood diabetes and ADHD skyrocket. Anyone who has experienced a

contemplative stroll in the woods can attest to the calming effects of nature. Could fishing or watching the sunset substitute for Ritalin?

Perhaps most frightening for those of us who love and appreciate nature is who will be the future stewards of the environment when the majority of an entire generation is being raised indoors with only a passing interest in the natural world?

As one reads Mr. Louv's account, it becomes clear that adults are the ones responsible for this shift in behavior and thus we can also rectify it. Living so close to Patapsco State Park, the Chesapeake Bay, and of course, Leakin Park, we have ample opportunities to expose our children to the natural world on a daily basis. We can teach them about wildlife, encourage them to experiment with the natural world, and instill in them an awe for their environment. One cannot overstate the importance of teaching our children to connect with nature, our future may depend on it.

Magnificent Birds make a comeback

The wading bird (with the long legs) is a Yellow-Crowned Night Heron. The photo was taken along Dead Run where these birds nest in the spring. They typically arrive in April and are resident through November, feasting on the stream's abundant crayfish.

The other bird is an Osprey, clutching a Smallmouth Bass it had just fished out of the Gwynns Falls. The photo was taken from my porch in Windsor Hills, high above the Gwynns Falls Gorge along Wetheredsville Road. It is heartening to see that the Gwynns Falls has rebounded from a state of serious degradation so that the fish population now attracts these magnificent birds.



*Photos and description
by Dave Hollander*



Annual Meeting

The FOGFLP Annual Meeting was held on April 17, 2016 at the Orianda House. The guest speaker was Lisa Schroeder, President and CEO of The Parks and People Foundation. Ms. Schroeder reported on her last 15 years of experience with the Riverlife Project in Pittsburg which transformed the formerly industrial and dilapidated harbor area of Pittsburg to an urban green space.

She enumerated 10 lessons learned through her work in Pittsburg and aims to apply them in Baltimore with the continuation of the Baltimore: One Park concept. The Friends are excited to have Ms. Schroeder back in Baltimore and look forward to working with her to continue to strive toward a greener, healthier, and safer Baltimore for all.

As is our custom, FOGFLP annually recognizes community members for their commitment to our organization and our park. Awards this year were presented to Mary Hardcastle, Volunteer Coordinator with Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks; Heather Higgins, Baltimore Herb Festival; and Joe O'Connor, former board member and trail crew member extraordinaire.

An introduction of officers and board members was made with no new members added. Several members stepped off the board this year but wish to continue to contribute to the goals of the FOGFLP in their own speciality areas. The board is thankful to former board members Ed VanderBosche, Joe O'Connor, Katie Merkle, James Parr, Rob Naumann, and Jim Brown.



Lisa Schroeder and Antonio Carpenter, FOGFLP Board member

Current Board of FOGFLP \ Officers: George Farrant-President, Heide Grundmann-1st Vice President, Dick Fairbanks-2nd Vice President, Joy Goodie-Treasurer, Zack White-Secretary Board Members: Roberta Sharper, Jerome Golder, Jo Orser, Karen Hull, Antonio Carpenter, John Chambers, Vanessa Molock, John McCaul, Bridget McCusker

Events/Things to do in the park

Nature Art in the Park held their 2016 Exhibition on May 29. Come out and see the new nature art installations at the Eagle Dr location off of Windsor Mill Road or check out the Facebook page, Nature Art in the Park (NatureArtBaltimore).

Second Sundays in the Park, 11:00am - 3:00pm, continue through November. Upcoming dates are: June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13. This is a family friendly event that includes miniature steam engine train rides (free), playgrounds, hiking trails, Nature Art installations, picnic areas, tennis courts, historic buildings, the Carrie Murray Nature Center, bicycles, games, and all that Mother Nature has to offer.

Summer Concerts are Back! 4th Thursday from 6:30 - 8:30pm at 1920 Eagle Dr.

June 23 - Slagz

July 28 - Todd Marcus Trio

August - Kelly Bell Band

Summer Solstice Full Moon Hike at Carrie Murray Nature Center, 5-8pm, \$7.00. 1901 Ridgetop Rd. Check out the Carrie Murray Nature Center website for more information.

Tuesday Trail Work, 9-11am. Contact Jo - (410) 566-2230 or George - (410) 566-2101.



Two sisters, two nieces, and two guys having fun in the park.



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Enjoying the Herb Festival, Heather Higgins-Chairperson, and mystery lady who reported she's been to every festival since it began.

Summer 2016

GET CONNECTED!

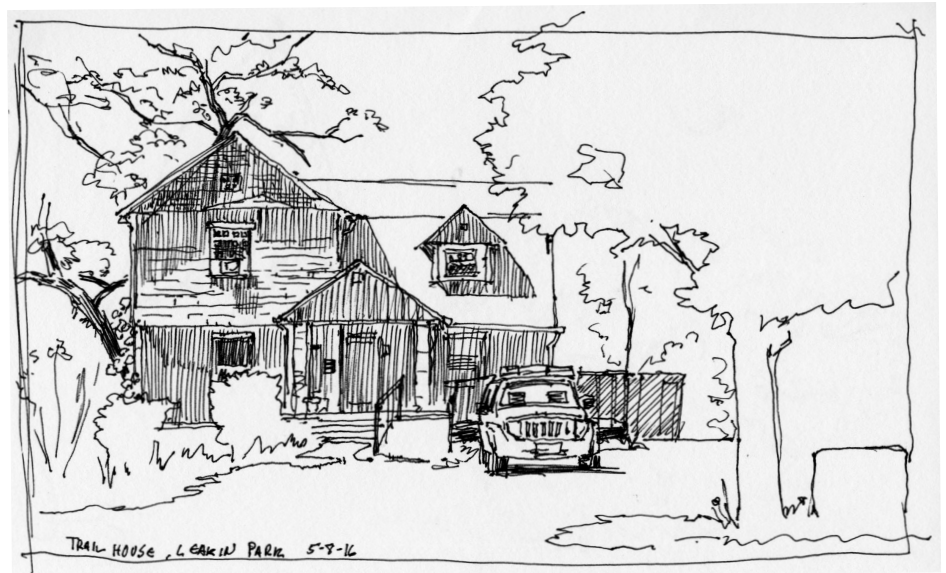
Here is how to get connected to Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park and all of Baltimore's Parks:

Join Baltimore Parks Meet Up. www.meetup.com. Sign up and log in. It's free and you will be connected to events and happenings in all of our parks.

Follow The Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park on Facebook, www.friendsofgwynnsfallsleakinpark.org

Follow The Friends of Gwynns Falls Leakin Park on Instagram (FOGFLPMEDIA Check images and videos of Gwynns Falls and Leakin Park. Post your park pictures, use #gwynnsfallsleakinpark or #sylvanhideaway

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Sketch is by Art Lien

Hope to see you in the park or on the internet!