

PRESS RELEASE

The 25th Anniversary Celebration of the High Street Hill Neighborhood Association's Friends of Leverett Pond

Brookline's High Street Hill Neighborhood Association's Friends Of Leverett Pond celebrates 25 years of Olmsted Park restoration on June 15, 2003.

Join neighbors and friends on the banks of Leverett Pond for music and dance, pony rides and nature walks. Visit with professional artists and view works inspired by our local park. Kids of all ages can enter the Costumed Pooch Parade or the Stone Skipping Contest or get up close to a real fire engine. Watch Morris dancers, participate in an Olmsted Park treasure hunt or share ice cream and cookies with your family and friends. Follow the bagpiper around Olmsted Park as the community celebrates.

Starting at 2pm and continuing until 5pm (see attached schedule) at the intersection of Allerton Road and Pond Avenue, the celebration will serve to call attention to a local landscape treasure. The afternoon will feature remarks from representatives of local agencies and information from local environmental groups. Copies of the Emerald Necklace Restoration Master Plan will also be available. At 5pm, the HSHA will hold its Annual Father's Day Picnic.

The story of the Friends of Leverett Pond (FoLP) is a story of progress from deterioration to delight: 25 years of activism, research and planning and national, state and local networking have transformed one of Frederick Law Olmsted's most significant landscapes from a local liability into a treasured town-wide asset.

The High Street Hill Association's (HSHA) formed the Friends of Leverett Pond in 1978 to help restore and preserve a jewel in Olmsted's Emerald Necklace that had been

tarnished and neglected. Twenty-five years ago the pond served as a dump for tires and shopping carts, the paths were overgrown and the bridges and benches were in disrepair. Concerned neighbors banded together, forged links with like-minded groups and worked hard to bring attention to Olmstead parks everywhere and reverse the decline. In many ways efforts of the FoLP have turned into what is now an ongoing \$92 million Emerald Necklace Restoration Project.

The FoLP is one of the oldest organizations in the nation concerned with restoration of parks designed by Olmsted and the second oldest park friends group in Brookline. It has been, and continues to be, a catalyst for the Olmsted historic landscape preservation movement in the Commonwealth.

Partnering initially with the Brookline Conservation Commission then with the Brookline Parks and Recreation and Preservation Commissions as well as other agencies, the FoLP:

- Was instrumental in the formation of the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP) in 1980
- Hosted the first NAOP conference, held in Brookline, Boston and Cambridge
- Helped establish the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks from which grew the Commonwealth's Department of Environmental Management's Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program (funded with \$15 million in the 1983 open space bond bill and \$17 million in the 1987 bond bill)
- Worked with the Brookline Olmsted Advisory Committee to create the Emerald Necklace Master Plan for Brookline and Boston that made possible state restoration funding to be invested in Olmsted Park. Community development block

grant funds from the town restored the Cumberland Road footbridge, private funds restored the footbridges in Willow Pond and both state and Massachusetts Historical Commission funds restored the Allerton overlook and the cove bridge.

- Devised a plan with private developers and town agencies to save the historic Free Hospital for Women (that lies adjacent to Leverett Pond) by sensitively adapting it for use as condominiums. In 1982 the FoLP was recognized with an award from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- Received a commendation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives for their efforts to clean up Leverett Pond.
- Participated in the Muddy River Action Group that was established after the 100-year floods of October 1996 and June of 1998.
- Continues to participate in the \$92 million Emerald Necklace Muddy River flood remediation, water quality improvement, habitat enhancement, and historic preservation project through the Secretary of Environmental Affairs Emerald Necklace Citizens Advisory Committee.

Join us! Help celebrate the work of our neighborhood to restore this asset to the community and enjoy this gemlike component of the famed Emerald Necklace, which connects Pill Hill, Brookline, to the Olmsted legacy in Boston, New York, Atlanta, Seattle, Louisville and other cities across the nation.

Come celebrate our role in restoring Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of common ground, of a place where all are welcome, of an oasis in the city.

Celebration Schedule

25th Anniversary of the Friends of Leverett Pond and HSHA Annual Picnic

Saturday, June 15th (no rain date)

2:00 PM

Gather on the banks of Leverett Pond

2:30 PM

Parade around Leverett Pond led by bagpiper

3:00 PM

Welcoming remarks by HSHA co-chairs of the
25th Anniversary Celebration

Betsy Shure Gross

Lucy Aptekar

Remarks by Town of Brookline officials

Joanna Wexler, Chair, Brookline
Conservation Commission

John Bain, Chair, Brookline Parks and
Recreation Commission

3:20 PM

Alumni Photograph of the original members of
the Friends of Leverett Pond. An historic photo
opportunity!!

3:30 PM

Tree planting in honor of the Friends of Leverett
Pond

Costumed Pooch Parade around Olmsted
Park..Prizes will be awarded.

Dog obedience class

4:00 PM

Stone-Skipping Contest

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Pony rides

Continuous Fun from 2:00 PM until 5:00 PM

Morris dancers

Musical performances

Brookline fire engine tour

Book sales

Cookie sales

Treasure hunt

Bicycle workshop

Nature walks

Emerald Necklace Master Plan walk

Clothes line art creations and sales

Artists' renditions of Olmsted

landscapes

Photography and fine art

5PM: Start of the Annual HSHA Father's Day Picnic

Bring something to barbeque (grills will be provided) and a dish to pass with your neighbors.

For more information contact:

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