

# Focus on Bryan Park

December 2021



The Newsletter of The Friends of Bryan Park - Dedicated to the Preservation and Improvement of Bryan Park

## RVAGROW BIG Farmers' Market from Karen and Doug Grisevich

It has been an amazing experience for **GrowRVA** to host the **RVA BIG Market** year round Saturday mornings in the **Azalea Gardens of Bryan Park**.

For the past two seasons, we have felt completely embraced by the neighborhood and Northside community.

We are in the middle of our Winter Season, Saturdays 9am Noon, November - April. We have over 50 full time and 40 part time farmers, artists and culinary artists participating. We hosted a well attended *Thanksgiving Market*, and will host a *Holiday Market* Wednesday, December 22, from noon to 5pm.



For our 2022 Summer Season, our hours will be 8am - noon, May - October. We hope to host over 150 small businesses this third summer season, in the lovely shaded setting of the Park's Azalea Gardens.

All **GrowRVA** market products are made and sold by each vendor, so everything is homegrown, homemade or handmade in Virginia. Vendors follow all *Virginia Dept. of Health; Virginia Dept. of Agriculture, City of Richmond* permitting, rules, procedures, and protocols. Random inspections occur on-site seasonally.

Our RMC Events parking staff has been amazing, utilizing the parking areas on rotating basis, and keeping the traffic flow through the Park's roadways steady. We have readily accessible ADA parking and are allowed to drop off/pick up guests with mobility issues. Sgt. Robert Jones of the *Richmond Police Dept.* is on site throughout the Market every week.

We invite you to follow **GrowRVA** and the **RVA BIG Market** on Facebook. This winter, we are revamping our website and will explore other social media options. We are also discussing improvements to the Market's footprint over the winter.



We appreciate the support of the *City of Richmond Parks and Recreation Department* – they are amazing collaborative partners ! We also look forward to working with **Friends of Bryan Park** to fundraise and build park and environmental awareness. One of our market artists, Mad's Kitchen Co. designed and printed a poster of Bryan Park, that is for sale weekly. Proceeds from the project will be given to **FoBP**.

Doug and Karen are on site every Saturday. Please stop by to say hello, shop; and support small business owners, and love your local!

[GrowRVA.com](http://GrowRVA.com)

*In 1994 Friends of Bryan Park was founded by a group of City and County residents to prevent the City from "developing" Bryan Park into a golf course. A few years later, we bought and installed Bryan Park's first playground, partnered with the Central Virginia Soccer Association (CVSA) to build the Soccer Fields, and stopped the City from removing the Bellevue Bridge in 1999 for a highway flyover. We placed Bryan Park on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002, and continue to plant trees, fight invasive plants, and try to "go native". As a non-profit, we promote environmental education, experiencing nature firsthand, and wholesome outdoor activities.*

***We protect and improve Joseph Bryan Park - won't you join us and become a member?***

## Latest News on Bryan Park

by Rick Sinsabaugh, VP, FoBP

**H**ello friends, neighbors and all who enjoy **Joseph Bryan Park**.

The past year has seen the **Friends of Bryan Park** succeed in getting some projects completed, some projects pushed further along.....still in progress, and some that we have not been able to move forward but continue to address. For the ease of informing you, I will rip off a favorite western of mine and call these the **Good**, the **Bad**, and the becoming **Less Ugly**.

### THE GOOD:

- We have completed all the camp house repairs and the facility is once again serving as our meeting place to discuss, plan, and implement the work we are doing in the park.
- Randy Smith has assembled a great volunteer group which has planted a wide variety of trees that park users will be able to enjoy for generations to come. Fall is the best tree planting season, and he is in full speed ahead mode with his project and tells me there are still volunteer opportunities for all.
- Janet Woody has been leading crews in the **Azalea Garden**. Comprised of other board members and volunteers, this effort will restore the area around the fountain back to the **Azalea Gardens** former glory.
- **Westminster Canterbury** has donated some very nice benches. With the help of City staff we have placed them at various locations in the park where visitors will be able to enjoy the beautiful scenery and shade that the park offers.
- We are in the process of renewing our contract with Kristi Orcutt and **RVA Goats** to have the lovable goats in the park for the coming year. The goats not only help us in our continuing battle against invasive plants but also provide much enjoyment for adults and children.

### THE BAD:

- There is still no bathroom in **Bryan Park**. We have raised considerable funding to be donated to this critical project, but it remains in limbo.
- A new underground power line to the fountain in the **Azalea Garden** has also not moved forward. This would mitigate the stagnant water and duckweed issues and create a beautiful area where all that enjoy the **Azalea Garden** could meet. With the generous contributions from our supporters, the funding is in place; we are waiting on the necessary permits.

### LESS UGLY.

- We completed the 2021 contracted period for fighting invasive plants. We will need additional funding to support this project for the next few years -- it is expensive, and invasives are in most of **Bryan Park's** wooded and sunny areas. We are reviewing the 2022 proposal which will be finalized shortly. But have faith; we are making a difference. The area on the back loop, where kudzu has killed many large mature trees, has been cleared. However, it will continue to require some less intensive treatments. We have a plan in place to reforest this area with our ongoing tree project. Our volunteers have cleared invasives from area between the soccer fields and shelter one. In the past this area had picnic tables and provided cool shade in the summer.

There is still much more to be accomplished. Please learn about our efforts and become part of them. Thank you to all of you who have volunteered your time and to all who enjoy **Joseph Bryan Park**.



### New Azalea Czar in the Gardens

**W**e are now focusing on revitalizing only the 31 beds in the Azalea Garden Pond vicinity. The Park's seventeen acres of azalea beds were too much for even an army to maintain. Most of the azaleas are 60-plus years old, the irrigation system is shot, the invasives are relentless, and the hotter and dryer climate has taken its toll.

So we are now working mainly in the eastern section of the park, where the **Farmers Market** draws thousands of people each weekend. We work in the quiet and calm of the Gardens, cleaning beds, removing invasive vines, and more. **FoBP** has planted a half dozen trees around the pond, including a Memorial tree (the pink dogwood). We will soon install two new memorial benches, and there is room for additional memorial trees or benches. They can commemorate the passing of a loved family member, or a wedding or a birth. Order a bench with a memorial plaque through **FoBP**, and your bench will be added to the pond area, where you want it to be.



*Board members lend a hand in the Gardens.*



*Marilyn masterminded the Azalea Garden revival.*

On a related note, Marilyn Erickson, our Azalea Garden Czar for almost 12 years has lead the Azalea Gardens clean-up, with maps, plans and willing volunteers. Her son, Porter Nilsson, also devoted considerable time over the years to help the volunteers and **Riverine Master Naturalists**. She is always looking for more help!

One of her regular volunteers, **VMN Riverine** Janet Woody, offered to help Marilyn with the endless job. Marilyn was glad to pass the responsibilities to Janet, who also has boundless energy and extensive knowledge of azaleas and gardening. Track down Janet if you want to volunteer with Randy and other AG regulars. Thank you Marilyn, for your leadership and persistence! If you have questions, or would like to volunteer or adopt an Azalea bed with friends or family, get in touch with Janet Woody, [janetwoody@mail.com](mailto:janetwoody@mail.com)

### Reforestation Underway

**Bryan Park** has a wonderful canopy of large, old hardwood trees but there are areas in need of a new generation of trees. Reforestation planning started some months ago, directed by Board member Randy Smith, to identify where we should plant new trees and which varieties to plant.



*Preparing a hole for the tree*

Trees were acquired from the *VA Dept. of Forestry* and purchased from **Enrichmond's Tree Lab**. Varieties being planted include red, white, and willow oak, beech, sycamore, red maple, black cherry, persimmon, holly, and others. Most of the new trees have a wooden stake with a ribbon attached so that we can see them and take care of them in their first two years. Contact Randy Smith if you'd like to help or have questions: [randysmith768@gmail.com](mailto:randysmith768@gmail.com)



*West of Shelter #1, small orange flags mark where oaks and maples have been planted*

## Annual Bulbs will brighten up Bryan Park

**L**ook for tulips and other bulbs to put on a show next spring. Bulb beds have been planted along the edges of the azalea bed and the brick walk leading from the soccer fields to the azaleas and Farmers Market, along Rosina's Lane. If you have questions or would like to volunteer with bulb gardening, contact Sam Emswiler, [semswiler@jtcc.edu](mailto:semswiler@jtcc.edu)

## Riverine Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalists

**R**iverine Chapter, Virginia Master Naturalists continue to work their magic in areas near shelter # 2, which was converted into a **Nature & Environmental Center** in 2012. In addition to expanding existing beds near the Nature Center, they've created beds north and west of the historic concrete bridge crossing Jordans Branch (**Gabriel's Prairie**), farther along the road on the right (**The Rennolds Garden**), and across the spillway near the Bryan Park Avenue, in the **Better Together Garden**.



Weeding at the Nature Center Pollinator Garden



Gabriel's prairie, recently planted

The annual **Master Naturalist** basic training (once a week, for 12 weeks, Jan. to April with great teachers and an open-book final exam) will start soon. Sign up on our website and join them! Pls visit: <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/how-do-i-start.html>

Native plants are selected for their survivability, beautiful blossoms, and as food to support local wildlife. Signage provides plant names and facts about pollinators and their preferred plants. A group of VMN volunteer meets every Friday morning to weed, maintain, and add new plants to these beds. We all are grateful for their improvements to the Park.

It is not necessary to be a master naturalist to volunteer or visit while they work. Master Naturalists enjoy talking about their calming work and can identify many plants for you – the natives, the invasives, and those plants for your special home or gardens' needs . If you have questions or wish to volunteer, get in touch with Jean Hollings, [hollingsjean@gmail.com](mailto:hollingsjean@gmail.com).

## Park Recycling Program

**FoBP** took over the Park recycling program, and with the City's help, has repurposed a chain-link fence for sorting and storing cans. **FoBP** also bought a large trailer to hitch to the City's Kabuto tractor, for collecting brush and cans.



Bottles and cans found in regular City trash cans, even with 5 new recycling bins.

**Note:** The cage needs to be better hidden, and moved a little further into the woods.

Anybody want to help us move it, in pieces, on a Saturday? Volunteer through our website!



The chain link cage being used for sorting and storing recycling materials.

### Big Princeton Creek Channel Clean-up Last Winter

**F**oBP cleared trees and vines growing in stone wall sides of Princeton Creek; and hired Davey Tree to cut them down to the roots' stubs and paint them, to prevent regrowth.



### Going Above And Beyond To Clean Up Princeton Creek

**F**oBP sponsored a river cleanup which ended up with canoists, wet suited volunteers and others making a major impact on the parks streams. Thank You!



### Plant Memorial Trees, Give Historic Benches

**F**oBP helped the Redmon Family plant three memorial trees, with a granite marker.



### Purple Martin Colony gets New Managers

**W**ith Adolph White's retirement last year, his good friend Thomas Foster (VMN Riverine, 2015) discussed assuming the responsibility for the Bryan Park colony in 2021– even though he has several other purple martin colonies in the region.

This spring, Thomas rehabbed the poles and barriers, cleaned, disinfected, and heat insulated the PM apartments. Shown at left, Thomas, Marthanna, Jean and other Purple Maniacs help raise the homes before the swarming, thrilling, migrating birds arrive in their favorite summer resort.



## Few Notes From The President

John Zeugner, AICP



I'll share some news with you, highlight a few of the **FoBP** accomplishments this past year, and identify City progress in **Bryan Park**. Remember, none of this could have occurred if not for the dedicated volunteers and passionate people who step forward to protect and improve Historic **Joseph Bryan Park**.

Volunteer at [www.friendsofbryanpark.org](http://www.friendsofbryanpark.org)

This spring, as soon as social distancing and mask guidelines relaxed a little, the **Friends of Bryan Park** rehabilitated the **Camp House**. Sheetrock was repaired, lighting and fans and plumbing were updated and new doors were installed. **FoBP** paid for all the repair costs. Skilled Board members and volunteers performed more than 100 hours to bring the building back! Now, it looks as elegant as it ever did.

In 2020, **FoBP** was pushing hard to buy a Pre-fab bathroom module to replace the aged cinder-brick bathroom, which had no heat and was closed annually from November to April. **FoBP** offered to pay for half of it, approx. \$55,000. It's delivery has been delayed, possibly because of COVID and labor shortages.

Then, this summer, Rick, Ed, Janet, Marilyn, and Jean helped repair and improve the Park's **Azalea Garden Shed**: fix broken windows, install racks for our tools, reorganize equipment and materials, and we added burglar protection.

Again, all labor donated by **FoBP**, and all expenses paid. That's real dedication to the Park!

Lastly, NONE of this would be possible without the dedicated and highly motivated **Friends of Bryan Park Board of Directors**, and our many volunteers! Thank you ALL !

## Professional Invasive Removal

While our volunteers do a terrific job of invasive removal, some jobs are too big to be managed by hand. In 2021, the Friends hired the **Virginia Forestry and Wildlife Group** to handle large areas, particularly a large kudzu patch in the western area of the park. Their work crews are certified to use herbicides when necessary, and they have a forest mulcher and other) to handle large-scale invasive treatment. Some of the plants targeted, in addition to kudzu, include English ivy, ailanthus, porcelain berry, knotweed, oriental bittersweet, Japanese Hops and lesser celadine.

The **Friends of Bryan Park** look forward to working with VFWG again in 2022 on targeted areas.

For more information contact **Virginia Forestry and Wildlife Group**: [info@vaforestwild.com](mailto:info@vaforestwild.com), web: [vaforestwild.com](http://vaforestwild.com)

## TEXT A DONATION TO OUR POND RESTORATION PROGRAM: – enter 44321, then enter BRYANPARK !

To assist with funding the project, the **FoBP** and the City launched a fundraising program through **GIVE LIVELY**, a platform for non-profits that enables direct text donations. Our goal is \$25,000. Fortunately, we recently received a large donation from a Bryan family member which will immediately bring our fundraising within \$5,000 of our goal ! We want to encourage friends and neighbors to consider larger gifts, which could be recognized with historic benches, memorial trees, and more.

**For larger tax-deductible giving opportunities,  
please contact us directly through our website  
([www.friendsofbryanpark.org](http://www.friendsofbryanpark.org))**



If you love Bryan Park, text 44321 to make a tax-deductible donation.  
[www.FriendsofBryanPark.org](http://www.FriendsofBryanPark.org)



### Richmond's NEW Community Gardens Coordinator Assigned to Bryan Park

**K**ate Rivera, the City-wide *Community Gardens Coordinator*, has established her office in the **Keepers House**, and will have access to the **Greenhouse** built by Parks and Recreation in **Bryan Park** some 15 years ago.



Unfortunately, the structure had not aged well. **Friends of Bryan Park** met with her when she arrived, in 2019. She wondered how she could rehab the building's main systems, and re-equip it.

**FoBP** offered to help. We, and the **Master Naturalists**, saw the greenhouse as an important educational resource; it could play an invaluable role in germinating, potting, and distributing native

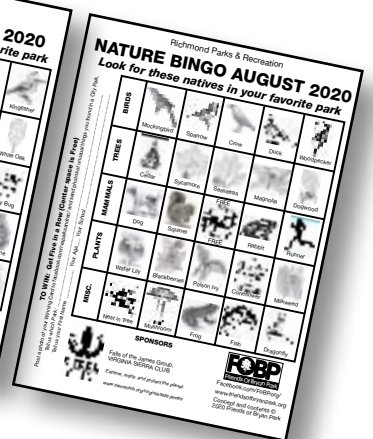
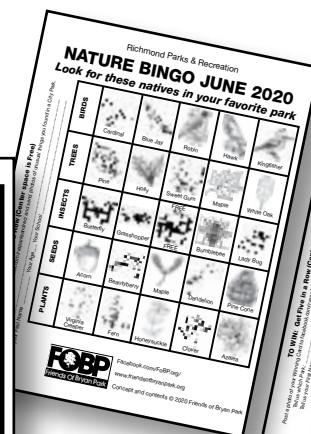
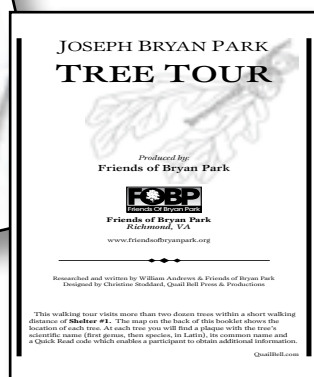


plants and veggies to the many Community Gardens in the City.

We found a donor willing to donate to **FoBP's** treasury, paying for the new interior irrigation system, heaters, fans, and more. It was operational by August 2019. As Kate began planting and growing, she soon discovered that more improvements were needed: durable growing tables, shade cloth, and mulch and soil. **FoBP** paid for these too. Late that fall, all she needed for the greenhouse was volunteers.

Then COVID hit. She and some volunteers planted the first year's crops, keeping social distance, but most of the *City Community Gardens* were closed for more than a year. She is hoping that next year be trouble-free!

**FoBP provides many educational materials for learning about Bryan Park and its wildlife, habitats and ecology. For more information please visit [www.FriendsOfBryanPark.org](http://www.FriendsOfBryanPark.org)**



**Please visit our website to get more involved with other projects and areas in Bryan Park. Visit our Facebook page, Friends of Bryan Park for current information on our activities and projects.**

www.friendsofbryanpark.org  
Become a Member of FOBP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(email addresses will ONLY be used to alert you to upcoming events/Bryan Park issues which may interest you. We'll also alert you when the latest issue of this newsletter is published and downloadable on our site.)

Please list your areas of interest in Bryan Park: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to Volunteer for events? \_\_\_\_\_

**Help support FoBP by becoming a Member:**

\$5 Student     \$10 Individual     \$15 Family

\$25 Friend     \$50-\$299 Benefactor

\$300-\$999 Park Guardian

Method of Payment:  Check     Pay Pal

Checks are payable to Friends of Bryan Park.

Please send to FOBP,  
P.O. Box 15481,  
Richmond, VA 23227-5481

*FoBP is an IRS-certified 501(c)3 non-profit.  
All donations are fully tax-deductable!*

**Friends of Bryan Park Board Members:**

John Zeugner, President 288-5005    Rick Sinsabaugh Vice President 517-6734  
Bill Pilc, Treasurer    Janet Woody, Secretary  
Nancy Baker    Samantha 'Sam' Emswhiler    Marilyn Erickson  
Ed Knight    Donna Lacy    Randy Smith    Sue Ridd    Bucci Zeugner  
Jean Hollings & Janet Woody, VMN Riverine Co-Chairs

**Other Important Contacts:**

3rd District Council Representative: Ann Frances Lambert 646-5055  
Christopher Frelke Parks and Rec Director: 646-5717  
Dan Bremner, Northside Parks Supervisor 646-0199  
Office in 'Keepers House and Lost & Found  
Police Emergency 911    Police Non-Emergency 646-5100  
Police Liaison: Lt. Robert Fleming: 646-1042  
Animal Control, M-F, 8AM-4PM: 646-5573    For weekends or emergencies: 646-5100

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*And coming in the spring, our  
popular Bryan Park note card  
set (with 5 park sketches).*

**Friends of Bryan Park**

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