



FRIENDS OF BRIGHTWOOD PARK QUARTERLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

December 2021

Can it be that winter is approaching, and the year is ending? Each season brings its own beauty to the park. From the icicles that hang from branches to the snow covered trails, winter brings a certain sparkle to the park. Strap on some snow boots or shoes and enjoy a walk in the wonderland!

Events Calendar:

December 9, 2021 **Let It Snow!** Classes for children ages 2-8:

Class Schedule:

10-10:45 AM 2- 3 year olds with adult

11-11:45 AM 4 -5 year olds

3:30-4:30 PM 6 - 8 year olds

Register for classes at <https://secure.rec1.com/NJ/westfield-nj/catalog>.

January 8, 2022 **Annual Meeting of FOBP Voting Membership – If you would like to attend, please be sure to pay your dues by December 31, 2021!**

March 18, 2022 **History tour**
You can sign up at <https://secure.rec1.com/NJ/westfield-nj/catalog>

Coming in the Spring:

FOBP and Westfield's Green Team will be partnering together to promote the Great Swamp Watershed Association's Native Plant Sale. Information on the sale will be coming in the months of January, February, and March. Our hope will be to have a Brightwood Park pick up for those ordering native plants - as we did last spring.

In the works – Are you interested?

Winter Tree Walks – Information sessions on how to identify trees in the winter

Lanternfly egg mass hunt in March or April 2022

Demonstration session in May/June 2022 **on how to make circle traps** to catch adult lanternflies that will typically hatch in July

Let us know if you would like to attend these sessions.

In this issue you will find: Events Calendar, History Corner, updates from our various committees, important lanternfly information, notes from the FOBP President, Annual Voting Membership meeting information with nominated Board of Directors' Candidates, and details of FOBP merchandise!

Did you see ... the arrival of Fall colors in the park?

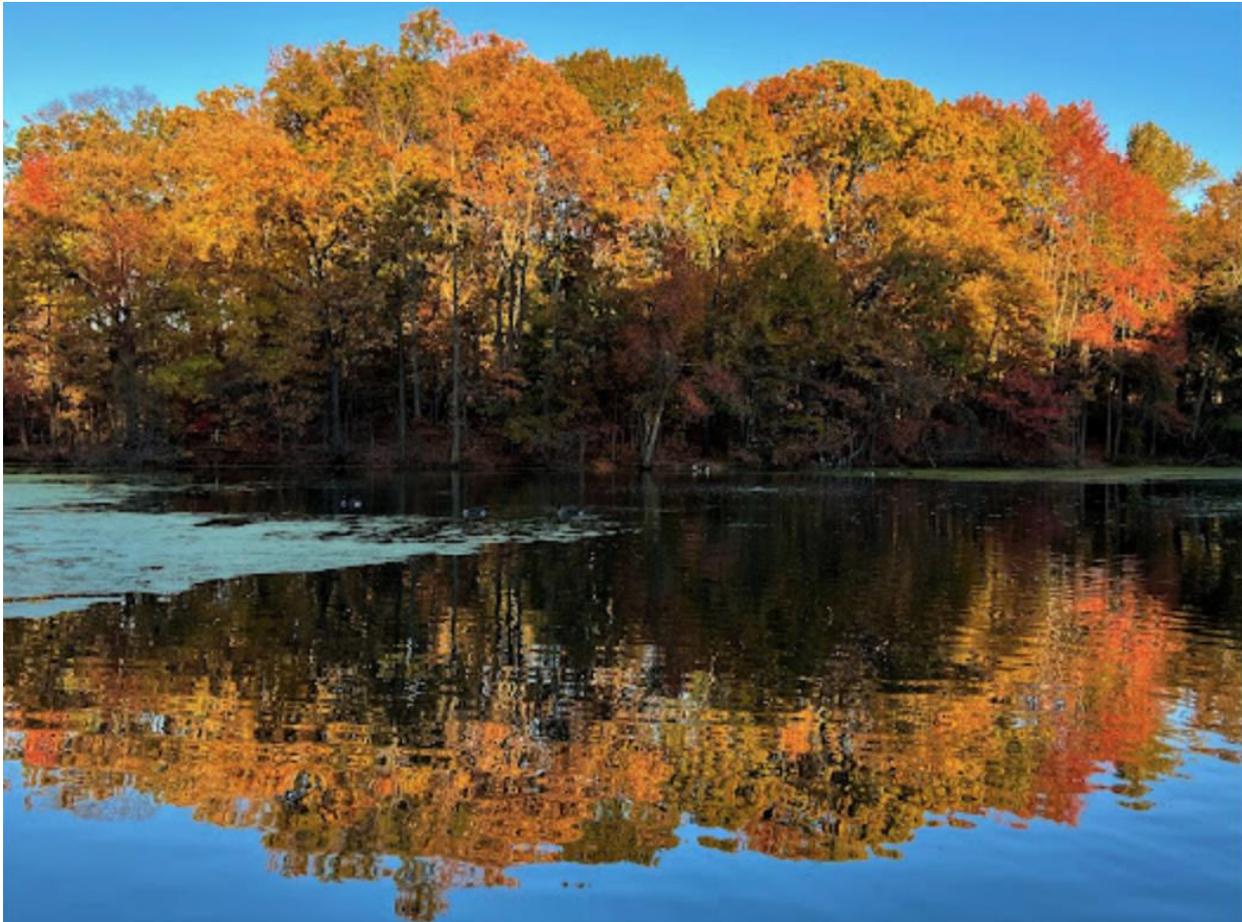


Photo by Chuan-Chu Chou

History Corner:

FAMILY, FAITH, HOME, MUSIC, WORK, LIFE

Hunter Bullock and Martha Byrd Bullock – 333 Randolph Place

As was true of most African American families who eventually moved to the Big Woods in Westfield, Hunter Bullock and Martha Byrd migrated north from southern states in the early 1900's. Like many of their neighbors, they found work, raised a family, worshipped and lived lives leaving a quiet mark on Westfield.

Hunter Bullock was born around 1890 in Henderson, North Carolina. Hunter's father passed away when Hunter was fifteen. In 1910, Hunter and his mother were still in Henderson, but had moved in with relatives. Hunter worked as a laborer at Corbitt's Motor Buggy Company. Martha Byrd, was born in 1896 in Greenville, South Carolina. Little is known about their early lives, or how and when they first met.

It is documented that Martha and Hunter were married in New Jersey in 1911. Four years later, the State Census reported that the Bullocks owned a home in Scotch Plains on Richmond Street, near the Shady Rest Country Club, where they lived with two daughters, Dorothy (3 years) and Virginia (1 year old). Hunter listed his employment as a laborer.

The Bullock's house had been identified in a 1914 Tax Sale Notice for \$6.30 in unpaid taxes. It is not known if the Bullock's home was eventually foreclosed or if they moved for other reasons. However, from 1917 through 1919, the Bullocks rented a house at 648 West Broad Street in Westfield. According to the Westfield Leader, in June 1919, Virginia Bullock, now five years old, sang for the McKinley School PTA year-end meeting.

By the 1920 US Census, Hunter and Martha's family had grown to five children ages six months to six years old including Dorothy, Virginia, Elnora (Nora), Bradford, and Beatrice. Hunter was working as a moulder in a foundry.

By 1922, the Bullock family moved to the corner of Netherwood Avenue and Randolph Place, within the future site of Brightwood Park. They paid \$20 per month in rent. Hunter found work at the Union County Mosquito Commission, a job he would retain until



1Photograph of the "Randolph Pl" street sign recovered in 2021 near the Bullock family home



his retirement. The house at 333 Randolph Place would serve as the

Bullock home off and on for the next thirty years. The photograph to the left is of a stone step that leads to the suspected site of the Bullock home.

The 1930's were a mixed blessing for the Bullock family. Dorothy married Charles Watson in 1931. In March of 1931, Virginia Bullock performed in a Roosevelt School play that was written up in the Courier News. Sadly, just three years later, Virginia died at the Bonnie Burn Tuberculosis Hospital (later to become Runnells Hospital) in Berkeley Heights. Her funeral took place at St Luke's AME Zion Church on Downer Street in Westfield, and she was buried at Fairview Cemetery. The Bullock family may have may had some consolation when, in 1935, Nora married Russell Waller. They held their wedding reception at the Shady Rest Country Club. That same year, the rest of the family moved to 157 Liberty Street, a house owned by Allen McPhaul.

The 1940's did not start well for the Bullock family. In February, 1940, their rented home at 157 Liberty Street caught fire and was partially destroyed. Two months later a shed and pigsty in the back of 157 Liberty Street were lost in a second fire that news reports said had started in the "adjoining garbage dump." Hunter was subsequently cited by the Westfield Health department for keeping pigs and ordered to remove them. The Bullocks moved to Smith Street near their former home on Randolph Place, and also near to the rental home of their married daughter Nora, her husband Russell Waller, and their daughter Martha.

In 1948, Martha arranged a Variety Show at St. Luke's AME Zion Church on Downer Street to raise money for a church window in memory of their daughter Virginia. Martha was very active in Church life at St. Luke's. She taught Sunday school, served in the Church Choir, led the Junior

Choir, and was a Church Stewardess. When Hunter retired from the Mosquito Control Commission, he worked as the custodian for St. Luke's.

Hunter and Martha Bullock remained in the Big Woods until 1965, but as the Town moved forward with acquisition of the site for the Park, they moved to Plainfield. Hunter died four years later. Martha died fifteen years after Hunter, and at her death was survived by her 6 children, 17 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and 7 great-great-grandchildren.

History tours

FOBP's historian, Rob Lombard, brings to life stories from the Big Woods. In guided tours of the park, remnants of homes and the St. Thomas A.M.E. church steps remind us of the mostly African American residents who migrated from the south in the early 20th century seeking more opportunity. The next tour is scheduled on March 18 2022. You can sign up through the Westfield Recreation Department website: <https://secure.rec1.com/NJ/westfield-nj/catalog>

Rob is also working with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Association to update their publication "African Americans in Westfield, New Jersey 1720 – 2020", to include information about the former residents of the Park site.

Education Committee:



Nature Programming for Children

Friends of Brightwood Park and the Westfield Recreation Department welcomed the Brightwood Park Nature Detectives aged two to eight to classes this fall. Hiking in the woods amongst fallen leaves, the children experienced the seasonal changes in nature.

In September, the children learned about trees. In October, the focus was on leaves. Finally, in November, wind was featured.

With the sun shining through the trees, they circled the park letting their streamers fly in the air behind them. Loving nature!

Halloween Jack-O-Lantern Walk



This Halloween FOBP and the town's Recreation Department held our first annual Halloween event in the park. Initially planned as a one hour event for 50 families, the spots quickly filled leaving many disappointed on a long waiting list. Not to leave kids out of the fun, FOBP mobilized enough volunteers to open up a second session.

Thanks to Rob Lombard and a dedicated team working through the town's DPW, a section of the pond-loop trail received a needed "face-lift" of eight cubic yards of stone dust. FOBP members and volunteers held a pumpkin carving event and turned out 35 to 40 pumpkins to line the trail.

On a blustery Fall evening, Jack-O-Lanterns were out in force to welcome little trick-or-treaters to the forest. The woods were full of ghosts and witches blowing in the wind as the costumed hikers did a scavenger hunt along the path seeking them out.



Then the pirates, witches, Flintstones and princesses colored goodie bags for good things to come as they continued their walk along the path. Stopping at tree trunks for treats, they were greeted by our many volunteers.

It was a spooky good time that we hope to make an annual tradition.

(Photos by Chuan-Chu Chou)

Ecology Walk

On November 14, 2021, FOBP welcomed families to the park for an ecology walk to learn about the park. The walk highlighted the plants in the park including a discussion of the invasive plants and our hopes for restoration of the native plants needed to sustain life. Hikers got a look at the mysterious fenced off meadow section and learned it is the future site of our demonstration garden.

Lanternfly Education Session

On November 14, FOBP teamed up with Westfield's Green Team to offer a viewing of the film, *Uninvited: The Spread of Invasive Species*, followed by an information session on the lanternfly given by the Green Team's Lois Kraus and Westfield High School student, Steven Hess.

Uninvited is a documentary about the damage that invasive species cause to the natural environment, communities, and economy. Interestingly, it discusses some of the issues we face in Brightwood Park including knotweed and other invasive plants as well as lanternflies. The film is not all doom and gloom as it highlights methods New York State has adopted to address the invasions. Yet, it gives a sober assessment of the need for all property owners to share responsibility for the biodiversity that sustains us all. Think global, act local!



We highly recommend that you watch this informative documentary produced by West Field Production Company and the NY DEC. It can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKh8Lc31rm8>

Park Health Committee:

Invasive Plants

If you have walked in the park recently, you may have noticed the diminished areas of Knotweed and Wisteria along the pond loop trail. Undoubtedly, there are still plenty of acres that are overrun by these invasive plants. However, in the past year, the spread has been halted and remarkably reversed in broad sections of the park.

The photo to the right is of just one of the areas that has been cleared (for the moment) of Wisteria. This invasive vine had carpeted the forest floor before it was cut down. With each successive sweep of Wisteria in these areas, we diminish its ability to exile all native plants.



This progress is made possible by the dedicated volunteers of the Westfield Parks Invasive Plant Strike Force. On Wednesday mornings, you will see these volunteers cutting through the invasive plants. This section of Wisteria was removed on one such morning.

Pond

In other good news, on November 10th, the town's contractor replaced the poorly functioning pond aeration system with a quieter six diffuser system. You can see the difference in output as these new aerators create ripples in the surface of the water. We are encouraged and optimistic that this system will make a big difference in the dissolved oxygen levels in the pond.

In addition to the new system, the town advises that its contractor will perform regular evaluations and treatment of the pond in a proactive approach. These measures should bring big dividends next summer for the fish and wildlife that rely upon the pond for habitat and food.

A last measure that will be a longer range goal is restoration of native shoreline plants and shrubs. Beyond just creating an appealing landscape, plants along the shoreline absorb excess nutrients before they enter the water helping to maintain a healthy aquatic system. FOBP is in the process of creating a demonstration shoreline garden to display what a healthy environment will look like.



[Photo by Chuan-Chu Chou]

Park Clean Ups

The Green Team held a clean-up day on October 24, 2021. FOBP members were on hand to help collect trash. We continue to make headway in removing mostly decades old pockets of trash. Amazingly, we still find bottles, metal, and other household items from days gone by.

Park Infrastructure Committee:

As previously reported, FOBP has two open projects with the town.

FIRST, FOBP donated a durable message board for the park. Per the town's protocols, it has purchased it, and FOBP will soon be reimbursing the cost. The town's Department of Public Works will install it at its earliest convenience after the completion of leaf collection. FOBP has offered to work with the Recreation Department to develop content for the message center. We have suggested maps of designated trails, historical information, and environmental data. We are awaiting confirmation from the town on how we can best collaborate with it for this project.



SECOND, FOBP is hard at work on demonstration gardens that will showcase native plants in three different park environments: shoreline, woodland, and meadow. The small temporary enclosures are designed to prevent deer browse when the native plants arrive in the spring.



Woodland Garden

You can see the temporary fencing of two small garden enclosures in the meadow to the left as you walk down the pond loop trail towards the junction of the two ponds. A third enclosure will be built along the shoreline.



Meadow Garden

Fund-Raising Committee:

FOBP sends a big thank you to those who joined as voting members. Funds from dues help us cover our operating expenses including insurance, internet, post office box, and program costs. While we are an all-volunteer organization, these basic costs must be met.

We also greatly appreciate those who have made donations that will support funding for the message center and demonstration gardens. This October, FOBP also applied for a grant from the Rotary Club to help defray a portion of the cost for the demonstration gardens. We are awaiting word on our application.

Notes From the President:

Friends,

As we enter our second year, it is a time for great hope. The park's ecology is on an upward trajectory, and more people are visiting the park to enjoy nature. FOBP is looking forward to a collaboration with the town to continue to improve the park and offer more programs. To this end, we have prepared a three year plan to hopefully develop an agreed upon plan of action with the town to achieve these goals.

Some of the goals in our plan include:

Ecology:

- Continued advocacy to encourage members to volunteer with the town to remove invasive species and work with the town to restore native plants;
- Creation of demonstration gardens for shoreline, meadow and forest understory protected by temporary fencing;
- Creation of pollinator gardens;
- Consultation with a trail expert and the town on how best to maintain trails and eliminate unauthorized trails that jeopardize ecologically sensitive areas;

- Continued study and evaluation of the pond health to determine if additional water flow to the large pond is possible and if other measures are needed to reduce duckweed and water-meal on the pond surface;
- Advocacy for the town to complete the fencing improvements;

Education:

- Partner with the Recreation Department to offer preschool programs, special events for Halloween and Earth Day, and ecology and history tours;
- Offer information sessions on topics of interest such as lanternflies, invasive plants, etc.;
- Promote Art in the Park such as plein air painting and/or art for children;
- Partner with Westfield schools, scouts, clubs, science classes, service organizations and other interested groups to develop/offer nature programming.

We have many more ideas on how to serve the community while preserving nature. For example, we could offer a Little Library Nature Book Share, senior nature walks, photography, music in the park, yoga/pilates and so much more. Much depends upon expressed needs in the community and volunteers to make it happen.

FOBP has ambitious goals that can only be accomplished in full partnership with the town and with the support and volunteerism of our “Friends.” We look forward to a close collaboration with the town and our community at large to restore Brightwood Park to a healthy and beautiful biodiverse ecosystem.

Ultimately, Brightwood Park’s future depends upon us. I guess in the same vein, our future depends upon our ability to protect and preserve biodiversity in parks such as Brightwood. Considering the goals of the recent climate summit, preservation of this open space is particularly timely.*

Peace,
Denise Ricci
President

*See efforts underway in Mercer County to preserve open space recounted by Michelle Byers, Executive Director of NJ Conservation Foundation at <https://www.njconservation.org/protect-green-save-green/>

One and Done Volunteers!

If you share our love of the park but are not ready to make a full commitment, please consider volunteering for our One and Done projects. Email FriendsOfBrightwoodPark@gmail.com.

Friends of Brightwood Park Merchandise

Show your support for the park. FOBP merchandise makes good Holiday gifts. Order online and your gifts will be delivered locally to your door step.

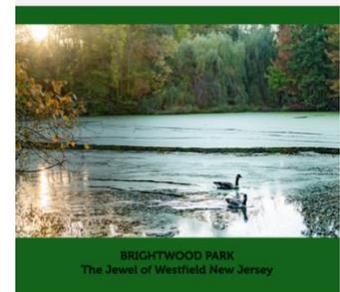
Caps and Tees:

FOBP has caps and T-shirts for sale on our website. To place an order, please visit: <http://www.friendsofbrightwood.org/shop.html>.



Calendars

2022 Calendars feature nature photography by Chuan-Chu Chou and Kevin Redden taken in Brightwood Park. The calendars can be ordered on-line or purchased at the Town Bookstore.



Friends of Brightwood Park Greeting Cards

Need a card to write to a friend, to celebrate a special occasion, or to accompany a gift? Artistic cards featuring the natural beauty of Brightwood Park signed by photographers, Chuan-Chu Chou and Kevin Redden, are available in downtown Westfield at **Baron's** and the **Town Bookstore**.

FOBP sends a special thank you to these local businesses who are supporting Westfield's nature park!



Baron's



Town Bookstore

Lawn Signs

Share your love of Brightwood Park. FOBP's beautiful green heron lawn signs are available for free! If you would like a lawn sign, visit our webpage: <https://www.friendsofbrightwood.org/shop.html#/>



Annual Meeting of Voting Membership – January 8, 2022 11 a.m.

Voting members will vote on the Board of Directors and help set the direction of FOBP for 2022.

The nominees for the Board of Directors include:

Chuan-Chu Chou (going by Chuan-Chu) is a self-appointed Brightwood Park Ranger and goes to the Park usually twice a day, sometimes three times. He made a full circle, with college major of forestry, then a Master in Biochemistry (National Taiwan University) and a PhD in Molecular Biology (UCLA), a 36-year career in pharmaceutical industry (Amgen, Schering, Merck etc.), and now released back to nature again. He loves hiking in the park, making friends with both people and other forms of life including fish, birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, mushrooms, and all kinds of plants, flowers, and fruits. He loves recording the beauty of the park by photography and sharing his discoveries with friends of Brightwood Park.

Jen Condadina is a Westfield resident and Brightwood Park neighbor for the past 23 years. She is a Penn State grad, former High School English teacher and mom to three grown daughters. A fitness enthusiast with an interest in travel and writing, she hopes to add value to the continued efforts of the park's programs.

Karrie Hanson thought she might become a limnologist (lake scientist) at an early age, but chemistry, then engineering, then electrochemistry (batteries for EVs), and finally inventing & building internet services got in the way. After a PhD at the University of California at Berkeley, she was a researcher at Bell Labs/AT&T Research for 33 years. She is enjoying merging almost all of these interests in the Brightwood Project. She is also a member of the Westfield Green Team and the Downtown Westfield Corporation Economic Vitality committee, and has volunteered in Westfield for many years including leading the Porch Preservation zoning change and the restoration of the Reeve House for the Historical Society. She is married to Ben Greene and mom of three daughters.

John "JPL" Linderman is a slow - and getting slower - moving outdoors enthusiast. JPL is a frequent visitor to nearby Brightwood Park; a less frequent visitor to National Parks and Forests in the West, Alaska and the Adirondack High Peaks; and a daily attendee at Khan Academy. He is interested in

way too many things to be much good at any of them. JPL has three math and computer science degrees from MIT and worked at Bell Labs in NJ for 39 years.

Denise Ricci has been a near daily visitor of Brightwood Park for over twenty years. She has a passion for the park as a refuge from the stresses of everyday life. She is an avid hiker who has experienced trails in our National Parks as well as those in Canada, Galapagos, and Europe. A retired attorney, she graduated from the University of Notre Dame Law School (too many years ago to mention). She is the parent of three and grandparent of five! She has served as President of Friends of Brightwood Park.

Questions for Voting Members:

Do you have any ideas for programming or information sessions you would like to see in the park?

Would you be willing to volunteer to bring programs to fruition?