



Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc.

Fall 2019

From the President

Dear Fellow Members:

I hope you were able to enjoy the Park this Summer. Many did. It was a busy summer, and attendance at the Park continued to increase. Often, parking was at a premium; but relief is on the way. By next Spring, the parking area by the red barns will be paved and new parking will be added. We look forward to its completion. Another project in the works is the replacement of the roof on the Guest House near the Mansion. Friends has committed \$10,000 toward the cost of this project, which we hope will be completed this Fall, weather permitting.

Summer developments of note: Kathleen York, our first Executive Director, joined the team and hit the ground running. (Her initial offering to our Newsletter appears in this issue.) Kathleen is housed in the Friends' newly opened office, which is located on the second floor of the Park Office Building. The renovation of the gardens in front of the Mansion and the installation of the nearby Betsy Graves Memorial Garden were completed. If you have not seen them, I encourage you to stop by. Special thanks to our Garden Club and Board member Carlie Graves for their efforts in the planning of these projects. Many new benches were installed throughout the Park as part of our memorial bench program, administered by Paul Babbitt. And, of course, our fourth annual Bark Bash was held at the Park on August 4th.

By all accounts, Bark Bash was a great success. We do not have a count of the actual attendance, but we do know that nearly 1,900 vehicles entered the Park that day. Our thanks to our Bark Bash Committee, chaired by Board member Rachel Stepien (who conceived the event in the first instance), to all our many volunteers, to the participating vendors and pet shelters, and last, but not least, to Park Manager Andy Hillman and his staff, for making the event possible. Through these efforts, we raised more than \$10,000 that day. More important, in light of our mission, was the number of visitors to the Park that day, many of whom were there for the first time. We look forward to the fifth edition of the Bash next summer.

Our next project is the Holiday Arts and Crafts Show at the Mansion on Saturday and Sunday, November 9th and 10th. The Art Show's Committee, under the leadership of Marcia McNallie, has been hard at work in preparation. The Mansion will be filled with exhibitors displaying their wares. This Show has always been one of our more popular events. I am certain this year will be no exception. We hope to see you there. Details are on our website.

Finally, I should inform you that our annual Membership Meeting will convene at 5:30 p.m. on October 29 at the Mansion. Our speaker for the evening will be Mark Mistretta, NYS Parks Western Regional Director. The evening also will include the President's annual report, a financial report by our Treasurer, Donna Lough, action to approve a technical amendment to the corporation's Certificate of Incorporation, and the election of five directors (three incumbents and two new directors). Biographical information regarding the candidates will be included with the formal notice of the meeting, which will be mailed to members in the next week or so. An informal buffet dinner will follow the meeting. If you are not able to attend the meeting in person, we would urge you to submit a Proxy so that we will be assured of a quorum. The Proxy form will be included with the meeting notice.

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Executive Director:

Kathleen York

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Rachel Stepien

Jeanne Viger

From the President

The upcoming Membership Meeting also will be an occasion to honor two of our directors who will be leaving the Board after years of stellar service to the organization. Peggy Cooke joined the Board in 2006. Early in her tenure Peggy served as our Treasurer. She led the effort that resulted in our agreement with NYS Parks for Friends' management of the Mansion, and until last year served as the Chair of our House Committee, the committee that oversees the operation of the Mansion. She served as the Chair of the committee that organized the receptions that accompanied the BPO concerts in the Park, and for several years served as Co-Chair of our Art Show Committee.

Sandy Roemer joined the Board in 2012. She became our Secretary in the same year, a position she held until 2015, when she was term-limited. She again assumed the position in 2018. Throughout her time on the Board, Sandy has been our unofficial Friends Good Will Ambassador and our model volunteer.

This will be my last newsletter article to you as Friends' President. My third term in that office will end in November. It has been my honor and privilege to serve. I am truly grateful to my predecessor in office, Carol Wageman, for laying the ground work for much of what has been accomplished, to my fellow directors, past and present, for their hard work and dedication in furtherance of the Friends' mission, and to you, our members, for your support of our efforts.

Paul A. Battaglia, President of Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Mansion at Knox Farm State Park

Tuesday, October 29th 5:30 pm

Guest Speaker:

Mark Mistretta, Western Regional Director NYS Parks

Informal buffet dinner will follow

Suggested donation \$15.00

From the Executive Director

The Friends of Knox Farm State Park have taken a huge step towards achieving their vision of being the premier Friends group in New York State this year. With the help from a grant received through Parks and Trails, New York, and the hard work from our volunteer board of directors the position of Executive Director became a reality in the spring of 2019. I am honored and thrilled to take on the challenge of developing this position. The Friends of Knox Farm exists to preserve, promote, and protect the unique beauty and history of Knox Farm. As Executive Director, my goal is to facilitate the board's strategic plan and secure funding that will ensure the public use and enjoyment of the park for years to come. Community advocacy is another important aspect of this position. Do you have a business, special interest group or civic organization that would like to know more about the park? I encourage you to reach out and allow me to introduce myself and the Friends to your group.



Since my mid-July start date, I have been overwhelmed by the warm welcome from board members, state park employees, and park visitors. I have participated in accepting a generous donation from East Aurora Music Fest, attended my first Bark Bash, and am looking forward to the Holiday Art show. You can often find me enjoying lunch just outside the dog park, and I can't wait to see how the park transforms with the coming of fall weather.

Knox Farm State Park is a special place. Due to the age of the estate and buildings, there is a long list of projects that require attention to ensure their viability. Much of this is reliant on funds and man-hours supplied in part by the Friends. I cannot imagine a more supportive community than the Southtowns to be working in. The next time you visit the park, take time to admire the new walkway and landscaping in front of the Mansion. This is an excellent example of Friend's money being put towards park improvements with special thanks to the Knox Garden Club for many hours of their time. You may also notice 17 new red maples recently planted around the Stable roadway; a gift from a park lover who recognized the loss of many of our trees and has supplied the park with 37 in the past three years. It is this spirit of generosity and civic pride that makes Knox Farm an exciting place for me to work and support. As beautiful as the grounds are, I truly look forward to making connections with the members, volunteers and patrons in the months ahead.

Kathleen York

admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org



From the Park Manager

By Andy Hillman

Hello Friends Group members! It's been a busy summer at the park and attendance has been especially high with the great weather. Dog Park users, photographers (for weddings, proms, engagements, senior pictures, etc.), walkers, runners, picnickers, cyclists, birders & nature enthusiasts have all been out in full force. The estimated attendance from June 1st to August 31st was 136,000! The increasing popularity of the park has made accomplishing some of the basic maintenance tasks a challenge, especially in areas like the dog park. We make every attempt to conduct maintenance and projects during off peak times and the brief periods of lower usage, but this isn't always possible. Thank you for your patience and understanding when these activities are underway!

Lots of work has recently been accomplished by Niagara Regional Parks crews at the Stable complex including repair of rotted and crumbling arches on the back of the building, replacement of broken missing clay roof tiles, replacement of leaking cast iron wastewater lines, and repair of many broken window panes. The work has come out great and we look forward to more progress with these beautiful buildings.

Knox Farm State Park staff have been conducting several projects this summer. In the dog park, a new gate was installed, and paddock fencing was replaced at the main entrance near the sheep barn. An entrance paddock with gate was installed in the "back" large dog area to help make the transition safer. Water lines were run and frost-free water spigots installed in both of the large dog areas. Park staff also installed 5 concrete pads and assembled benches for the Friends "Memorial Bench" program. The benches are located throughout the park in locations that provide a rest with beautiful views. Thank you to all who donated to this great program!

There have been many events and programs held at the park this summer including:

- A painting class for kids held in the Guest House for 2 weeks in August conducted by the Town of Aurora Recreation Department.
- Filming of "Diary of a Lunatic" (an Amazon Prime series) and a TV commercial at the end of July and beginning of August.
- The 6th Annual "Cross Country Crusade" on August 17th conducted by the Mercurio family. 100% of proceeds from this event go to Camp Good Days, to help kids with cancer and their families.
- Many popular interpretive programs that were filled to capacity, including nighttime firefly walks and kayak classes on the upper pond.
- A cyclocross on August 25th held around the Stable and the surrounding south-east end of the park. Approximately 160 people participated in this fun and exciting event.
- Several Yoga classes have been held in the Orchard located near the Native Landscape Materials Center.
- Bark Bash with an incredible turn out and over-abundance of great dogs and dog owners.
- Over 10,000 Visitors during the music filled Borderland Festival

We have some events and projects still coming up this year. Several Cross Country events will be taking place throughout the fall, including High School "Sectionals" on November 8th, which will involve approximately 1,200 participants. A trail improvement project was put out to bid in July and a successful bidder was selected. This project involves removal of soil and adding gravel base and fine gravel surfacing on 3,174 linear feet of trail. This popular trail currently has no base or surfacing and has been just a mowed path through fields, which get very soggy and muddy during wet weather. The improved sections of trail will be from the "Red Barns" parking lot to the "upper woods" and then from the opposite corner of the "upper woods" nearly to Knox Road. We hope to see this project underway in the very near future.

That's all for now. Hope to see you all around at park!



Garden Updates:

It's been an eventful summer around the mansion gardens. Two big projects were accomplished this summer; both enhancing the beauty at the entrance to the mansion.

Through the generosity of our Friends, the hard work from our Garden Club volunteers, and the expertise and labor from Murray Bros. Landscaping, a new stone walk and improved landscaping was installed at the front of the building. Interested in becoming part of the gardening community at Knox? There are opportunities to garden solo or with others. You can find out more by contacting Lisa Schifferle at dlschiff@roadrunner.com. The gardeners meet first and last Thursday at 10:00am through October 25th, so there's still a chance this season to become involved!



Our most recent improvement was created as a loving memory to a very special Friend and board member, Betsy Schwartz Graves. Betsy was a tireless advocate for the Friends and an avid gardener. Through memorial donations in her name and services donated by Mattucci Design LLC, Betsy's family chose to transform the area around the front drive to the mansion. A new walkway now encircles the bench and is planted with a variety of flowering shrubs and trees, perfectly complimenting the space in front of the house. If you have a chance, rest for a bit on the bench, look out over the fields, admire the mansion, and honor one of our dear Friends.



Bark Bash 2019

A beautiful summer day and a park full of dogs and dog people. Our fourth annual Bark Bash brought together some pretty special elements. Approximately 4,500 people (and not quite as many canines) gathered around the Knox farm dog park area for a day filled with fun, food, and many opportunities to interact with organizations and vendors who share our love for our pets. An impressive \$10,000.00 was raised during this event and will be put right back into projects that serve the park and its patrons, (both two legged and four legged). Event changes this year included a new parking scheme that greatly improved the flow of traffic coming into the park and we had many positive comments from visitors. We strive to continue making improvements and always welcome constructive suggestions.

As always, The Friends could not coordinate and run an event like this without the help of our dedicated volunteers. Interested in being a part of Bark Bash 2020? It's not too early to reach out. admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org

We are equally grateful to our generous sponsors. If you patronize the following businesses, please let them know that you also appreciate their support of Knox Farm:

DIAMOND
Country Comfort Inn

PLATINUM
Healthy Pet Superstore
Fetch The Vet
Pipeworx by Minx

GOLD
Sit Means Sit Buffalo
Weekday Best
Amy Lynn's Animal Care, LLC

Pets Potions
Burck's Black Rose Kennel
Doggie Stylz
Pin Ups For A Cause
Ray Laks Honda
Elaine's Flower and Gift Shoppe

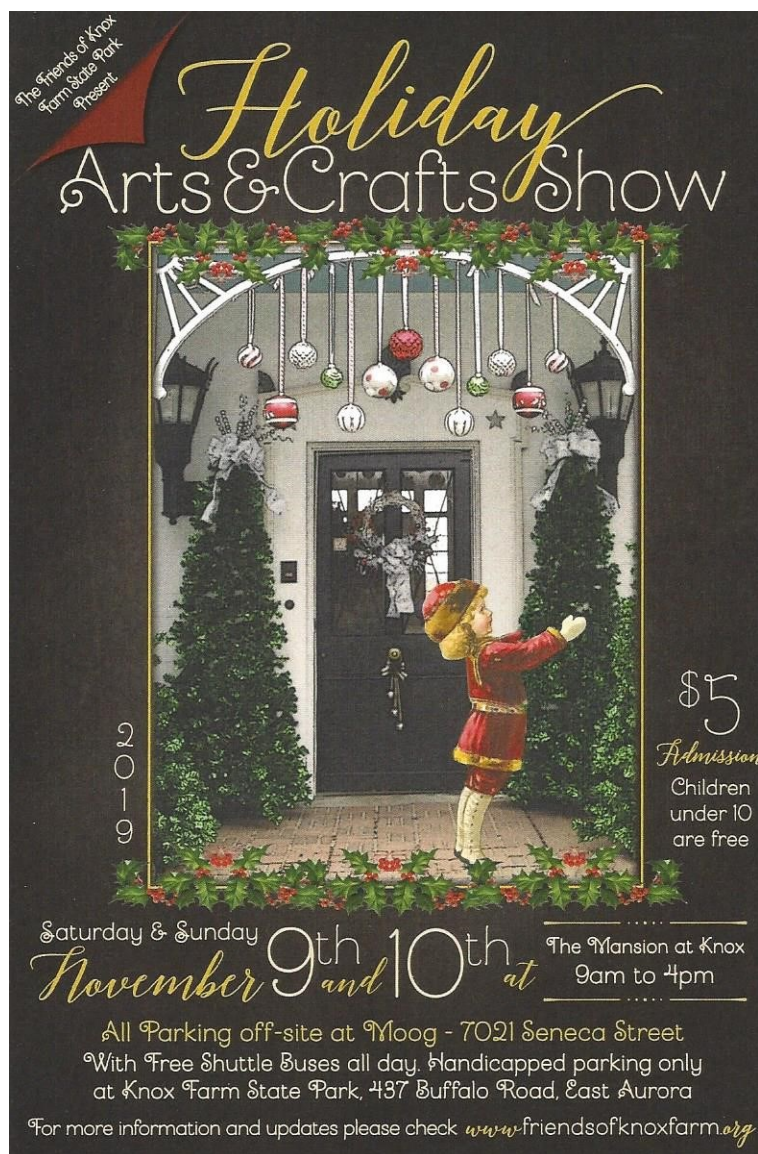


We are already thinking about Bark Bash 2020; our **5th annual!!** Do you have a theme suggestion or another idea that will make it the best year ever? Would you like to volunteer, sponsor, or participate as a vendor? Contact us at admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org and let's start planning!

The Friends of Knox Farm State Park invites you to
Our Holiday Arts & Crafts Show on Saturday, November 9th from 9 am - 4 pm
And Sunday, November 10th from 9 am - 4 pm

All proceeds will benefit the Friends of Knox Farm State Park.

If you would like to volunteer and have not yet done so please contact -
Judy @jms-friendsofknox@roadrunner.com



Matthew Nusstein

Park Naturalist

New York State Parks, Recreation and

Historic Preservation



Knox Nature News

Another summer has passed and soon it will be time to break out our favorite jackets and hats. As with people, many plants and animals in the park are preparing for the colder months ahead. Chipmunks will be busy collecting nuts and fruits to store underground for leaner times, while migrating birds will be feeding heavily on the bounty of berries produced by shrubs such as dogwoods and viburnums. Trees themselves are not only producing berries, nuts and seeds but they are also going through changes in their leaves, something we all look forward to every year!

The famous colors of autumn have long been a mystery of nature. Originally frost was believed to be the main mechanism to producing such wonderful colors, but we now know it is a result of various pigments found within the leaf tissue itself. Every leaf is made of hundreds of thousands of small living cells, each being filled with blobs of colored chemicals or pigments. The most familiar to us is the green pigment which we know as chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is the key component in the production of food for the plant. It captures the sun's energy to convert water and carbon dioxide into simple sugars. During this food making process, chlorophyll is continually broken down and replenished at a high rate, thus making the leaf appear green to our eyes. But come autumn the tree begins to slow its replenishing rate and more chlorophyll is used than replenished. This allows other pigments, which have always been present in the leaf, to finally reveal themselves to eager onlookers.

The new colors we see are compliments of carotenoids, the yellows, browns and oranges that now appear. Carotenoids are common in many living things. We see them in carrots, corn, daffodils, egg yolks and even in some species of birds! In the park this fall look for these brilliant colors in our hickories, ash, maples, tulip trees, aspens, sycamores and black cherry!

Yellows and oranges aren't the only colors we enjoy however. Reds and purples also decorate our autumn trees. These spectacular colors are courtesy of another group of pigments in the cells called anthocyanins. Unlike chlorophyll and carotenoids, anthocyanins are not present throughout the summer growing season. Their formation begins in late summer and is more complex. It is a result of a breakdown of sugars and the level of phosphate in the leaf. During the summer phosphate is abundant and is crucial for the breakdown of sugars, but in the autumn the phosphate is moved from the leaf and stored in the stem of the plant. This change alters the sugar breakdown process and anthocyanins are produced. The brighter the light during the process the more vibrant color display we see. Furthermore, the more acidic the liquid in the leaf is during this time, the more red we see. The more alkaline the liquids are the more purple we see. Look for the vibrant reds and purples in the park's dogwoods, red maples, grapes and some oak species.

Look for bright days and cool nights this fall as these conditions favor a colorful autumn; an early frost spoils the fun. Be sure to take a walk along the trails this fall and see which colors you can find. Every fall is different and it's a great way to enjoy our beautiful park!

Matt Nusstein, Park Naturalist



Amanita

Knox Farm State Park

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Autumn 2019



Amanita

Join a park naturalist on our free interpretive programs!
All programs meet in the visitor parking area.

Friday, October 25th

10:00 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.

I BIRD NY

Our parks offer incredible birding opportunities for all ages. Join us each season as we explore a different park and learn about our local birds.

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Tuesday, November 12th

1:30 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.

Autumn Tree I.D Hike



White-breasted Nuthatch

Hike through the fall woods to learn some basic tips and tricks that will help you to identify trees even after they have lost their leaves!

Call 716-549-1050 to register



Red Oak

Tuesday, November 12th

5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Moonlight Meander

Embark on a crepuscular journey through Knox Farm to experience the park in the glow of a full moon.

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Saturday, December 21st

10:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Knox Farm Christmas Bird Count

Join us for our annual Knox Farm Christmas bird count! We will be birding as a group.
 Both veteran and beginner birders welcome.

Call 716-549-1050 to register



Red-breasted Nuthatch

Saturday, December 21st

2:00 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.

Winter Solstice Hike

Welcome in the winter season as we enjoy a trail hike through the park during the shortest day of the year!

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Wildlife Illustrations by Matthew Nusstein



New York State
 Department of Parks, Recreation
 and Historic Preservation

Knox Farm State Park

Dog Park Rules

- **Use the Park at your own risk. You are responsible for damage or injury inflicted by your dog(s). Knox Farm State Park will not be responsible for problems, accidents, damages, or injury occurring in the Dog Park.**
- **Dogs must be healthy, preferably spayed or neutered, current on all inoculations, and wearing a collar that displays license tags. Use proper area for your dog. Those under 30 pounds go in the Small Dog Area; those over 30 pounds go in the Large Dog Area.**
- **Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.**
- **Handler must stay with and carry a leash for his/her dog(s) at all times. Limit is two (2) dogs per handler.**
- **No puppies under four months are allowed. No female dogs in heat are allowed. Any dog mounting another dog must be removed from the Dog Park.**
- **If a dog exhibits aggressive behavior or excessive barking, it must be leashed and removed from the Dog Park.**
- **No food, drink, or smoking in the Dog Park.**
- **Training treats are allowed.**
- **If your dog digs holes, please fill in.**

ALWAYS CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG. BAG AND DISPOSE OF WASTE IN CONTAINERS PROVIDED.

Please enjoy the Knox Farm Dog Park responsibly. Thank you, and have fun!

Friends - Please Share with anyone you may know who is looking for a unique venue to hold an event. Thank You!



WELCOME TO THE *Main House* AT KNOX FARM STATE PARK



This unique venue can be rented for
weddings,
corporate events,
private parties,
& fundraising events
May through October.



For more information, availability and rates; please visit our website, weddingsatknox.com

Your Input Matters

We would like to hear from you. If you have thoughts about the park that you would like to share with the Friends Board of Directors and the readers of this newsletter, email them to us at admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org. We will include them in a future issue of the newsletter as space permits.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PARTNER \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> PREMIER \$300 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PATRON \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS \$250 |

For VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES or TO JOIN ONLINE

VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.friendsofknoxfarm.org

*Business members are listed and linked on our website

About The Friends of Knox Farm State Park:

The Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation. Our primary mission is to promote, support, preserve and protect the recreational facilities, natural habitats, permanent green space and historic education programs and activities that develop an understanding and appreciation for the Park, nature and the environment. We work under a partnership with New York State Office of Parks and Recreation to facilitate our mission.