From the President

Dear Knoxers,

I hope you are all healthy and enjoying our beautiful park. Andy Hillman tells me that park attendance is at an all-time high. The new parking lot really helps!

Landscaping around the new lot, the roof on the guest house, the memorial benches and many more improvements are due to the efforts of your Board and our Executive Director, Kathleen York, and of course yourselves!

2020 has been a challenging year and we have not escaped the pain. With tight constraints concerning gatherings and events, our revenues are down almost 100%! Still there are many needs in the park. Please invite your friends and neighbors to join “The Friends of Knox Farm”. Anything you can do to help goes right back into the park.

I want to note a recent change to the Board. Our treasurer, Nathan Leiter moved away to take a new job. Our intrepid, VP, Paul Battaglia stepped in as “acting” treasurer and also lead the search for a replacement. I am very happy to welcome Caroline Walter who was elected treasurer at the September board meeting. You will see her profile here in the newsletter.

The mission of the Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc. (Friends) is “to preserve and promote the unique character, history and beauty of the Park for the community and for generations to come.”

The project to improve six barns and plant trees in the park, described in Kathleen’s report are shining examples of what the “Friends” can do. Recently an official from NYS Parks called our group the best “Friends” group in the state. We look at this not in comparison with other Friends groups, because they are all doing their best, but rather as a recognition for all the hard work everyone has done over the years.

I want to thank you all for your dedication.

Jerry Irving
Executive Director’s Report

Although 2020 has been a year lacking in group activities or fundraisers, the Friends have been very active in our ongoing work to support and improve the park.

Almost a year ago we identified preservation efforts to the barns at the entrance to the park as a project that had become a critical need. Last December we submitted a grant request to Parks & Trails NY for funds to accomplish this task. In July of 2020 we were able to announce the award of $75,000 from Parks & Trails, along with a $25,000 match from the Friends. As of the release of this newsletter, we have officially begun the planning and bidding phase of this ambitious project and hope to make some visible progress before the WNY weather turns towards winter. This year-long project will result in substantial improvement to the structural integrity and visual impact of six of the seven barns at the Buffalo Rd. entrance. We are grateful to Parks & Trails NY for their generosity; please see the official press release below for more information on this important organization. I also wanted to take a moment to highlight two other key players in the success of this project:

NYS Parks has partnered with the Friends throughout this process. The actual price tag of this improvement is closer to $225,000, but is being supported in-kind by the State through engineering services and labor; making our initial investment stretch much farther. In a year when state funded projects are severely limited; it is a small silver lining to have this labor force available to us.

Our award of $75,000 from Parks & Trails was successful, in part, due to a larger than necessary grant match on our part of $25,000. That was possible due to the incredible support we receive from our members and the community. A $17,000 gift from the East Aurora Music Festival in 2019 and additional funding through donations and membership insured that The Friends were able to meet this financial responsibility. More importantly, this sends a clear message to our grantors that the park is an important asset to our community. I want to thank each one of you for your contributions; they all make a difference.

In our summer newsletter, I announced another grant received through the Vogt Family Foundation. The grant has funded the purchase of a 500-gallon irrigation tank to support the transplant of trees in the park. Additionally, two dozen trees have been ordered and most of those will be planted this fall to begin landscaping around the new parking lot expansion. Stay tuned for your opportunity to purchase “Tribute Trees” to help keep our park beautiful and to honor loved ones and special occasions.

The Friends hope to continue the momentum we have begun with these grants and are in dialogue with the State concerning further improvements. Despite the challenges we are sure to face in the coming year(s), it is clear that Knox Farm State Park is an important asset to this community, and your continued support is vital to our work.

Kathleen York

admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org
Friends of Knox Farm Receives Grant to renovate the iconic barn structures at the entrance to the park.

East Aurora, NY – The Friends of Knox Farm, Inc. was awarded a $75,000 matching grant from the Environmental Protection Fund’s Park and Trail Partnership Grants program to accomplish repairs and painting of the seven barn structures located at the main entrance of the park. The Friends’ will have to raise an additional $25,000 in matching funds, for a total of $100,000. A 2019 gift of $17,000 from the East Aurora Music Festival will act as seed money for this match.

The grant is one of 29 awards totaling $900,000 for organizations dedicated to the stewardship and promotion of New York’s state parks and historic sites, trails and public lands. The grants will be matched by over $300,000 in private and local funding and will support projects to strengthen Friends groups and enhance public access and recreational opportunities.

Friends groups—nonprofit organizations often made up entirely of volunteers—are essential to the stewardship and promotion of our state park system. These dedicated groups raise private funds for capital projects, perform maintenance tasks, provide educational programming, and promote public use through hosting special events.

The Park and Trail Partnership Grants are administered by Parks & Trail New York, a statewide non-profit organization, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation.

Parks & trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin said, “It’s inspiring to see the transformational effect of the Park and Trail Partnership Grants and how they are enhancing the ability of Friends groups to make an even greater contribution to the stewardship of New York’s great outdoor spaces. These grant funds will enable groups to leverage more private and federal funding, marshal more volunteer power, and augment the state’s historic investment in parks, trails and other public outdoor places.”

Anyone visiting Knox Park in the past year has noticed the condition of the seven barns at the entrance to the park. Peeling paint has exposed the wood siding in many areas and has resulted in rot and deterioration. The first phase of this project will be to replace and repair siding then paint the Heifer barn. All barns will then be primed and painted to mitigate further deterioration, while greatly improving the barns’ appearance.

Kathleen York, Executive Director of the Friends, explains the decision to preserve the barns: “While we have no shortage of projects at Knox Farm that deserve funding, the preservation of the iconic barns represents a perfect opportunity to partner with the state in order to accomplish an improvement that will impact every visitor to the park entering through the main entrance. Along with the state funded parking lot expansion; completed early this summer, this project will greatly improve every visitor’s initial experience to this beautiful State Park.”

More information on Park and Trail Partnership Grants can be found at www.ptny.org.
ATTENTION MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the members of Friends of Knox Farm State Park, Inc. will be held on Thursday, October 22, 2020. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. In light of the challenges presented by Covid 19, the meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

Notice of the meeting and related information have been mailed to all members on the membership list of the corporation at the close of business on September 21, 2020, the record date for the meeting fixed by the Board of Directors. Those members will be eligible to vote at the meeting provided their membership dues are current at the close of business at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21.

All members are encouraged to attend the Meeting. Those planning to attend are asked to register by email addressed to our Executive Director, Kathleen York, at admin@friendsofknoxfarm.org as soon as possible, but in no event later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21. Please provide your email address with your registration. The Zoom link to the Meeting will be emailed on the day of the Meeting to those registered. You must be registered to attend.

Whether or not you plan to attend the Meeting, we strongly urge you to submit a Proxy so that we will be assured of a quorum. A form of Proxy that may be used for this purpose was enclosed with the Notice of the Meeting and is also available on our website, www.friendsofknoxfarm.org. You will receive a self-addressed envelope in which to return the Proxy. The Proxy may also be scanned and emailed to the email address above.

In summary:

- Make sure your dues are current by October 21.
- If attending the meeting, register and provide your email address as soon as possible, but no later than October 21.
- Whether or not attending, sign and return your Proxy as soon as possible, but no later than October 21.

We will be electing six directors at the Meeting, five of whom are incumbent directors eligible for reelection and one of whom is a new candidate. The names of all the candidates appear on the Meeting Notice. Biographical information regarding the candidates is available at our website. The Agenda for the evening will include the President’s annual report, the Executive Director’s report, the Treasurer’s report, and the election of directors.

If you have any questions regarding the Annual Meeting, please contact Kathleen York at the email address above.
Hello and Happy Fall Friends! I believe we’ve all had a year filled with many challenges. In New York State Parks, this has meant new budget restrictions and limitations, hiring freezes, additional sharing of resources, and many new protocols and procedures. However... there has also been great progress at the park this year, with much more coming.

As most of you are aware, the parking lot & entrance/exit project was completed this summer and has aided in accommodating the ever growing #’s of people looking to escape and enjoy all Knox has to offer. The project included paving the existing lot at the Red Barn complex, expanding the parking lot with addition of a gravel lot off the north end, and adding a new two-way entrance/exit driveway from Buffalo Rd. There is now space for 140 vehicles in the parking lot and the dangerous mixed vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the park has been significantly mitigated due to vehicles exiting directly back out to Buffalo Road.

The next phase of work around the parking lot and driveway is implementation of a planting plan that was developed by a Niagara Region landscape architect. The intent is to blend the lot and road with the surrounding beautiful landscape. Park Staff will be planting 19 trees this Fall and several more trees and shrubs in the Spring. Many of the trees for this work are being purchased with grant funds awarded to the Friends of Knox by the Vogt Foundation. The grant also paid for a watering trailer that will be used for supporting tree planting at Knox for years to come. Thank you, “Friends”, and especially to Kathleen York for her work in putting together the grant application that is making a tree planting program and sustainable maintenance of the plantings possible!

Other projects this past season have included:

- A mason from Niagara Regional maintenance department repaired areas of failing Stucco on the back of the Carriage building and the adjacent garages, rebuilt stone steps near the screened in porch at the Main House
- Roof and gutter repairs on several buildings, including the Milk House, the Show Barn, the house at 469 Buffalo Rd, and the clay tile roofs on the Carriage Barn and adjacent garages by the roofer from Niagara Regional maintenance department
- Installation of more memorial benches and pads
- Reconfiguration of the small dog park and other fence lines to prevent dogs from entering muddy drainage areas
- Repair of leaking underground water and gas lines
- Trimming and removal of hazardous trees
- Many other repairs of buildings, maintenance/grounds equipment, bathroom fixtures, etc.
- Countless hours of work in the planting beds and gardens

Continued on next page
From the Park Manager
By Andy Hillman

Although the traditional end of “peak park season” has come and gone with Labor Day, the activity and work at Knox Farm is continuing strong. Which reminds me... I would be remised if I failed to mention that a dedicated park staff member who has been an instrumental part of getting the job done here, has decided to retire. For those of you familiar with Audrey Petrie and her work, you no doubt have some idea of her love for the park and the spirited energy she puts into everything she does here. Audrey will be sorely missed as an employee, but we hope we continues to grace us with her presence at Knox as a friend. Please join me in wishing her happiness as she enters the next phase of her journey!

That’s all I have for now. Hope to see you all around the park!

Friends of Knox Board Welcomes Caroline Walter:

Caroline Walter recently joined The Friends Board and has taken on the responsibility as Treasurer. Caroline is from Orchard Park and is currently a CPA with Freed Maxick, CPAs. She has been visiting the dog park at Knox Farm for several years and has joined in hopes of being able to give back to her local community. She has previously served as Chair of the Finance Committee at SS Columba Brigid and a committee member for the Kidney Foundation of WNY’s annual 5k run. We are thrilled that Caroline is part of the Friend’s board and look forward to getting to know her.
The holidays are not cancelled this year! You still want to find that perfect something for the loved ones in your life now more than ever, right? Please join us for our First Ever Virtual Holiday Shopping Extravaganza Saturday, November 14th until Sunday, December 13th! Plenty of time to get in all your holiday shopping as well as support local businesses that need your patronage especially during this unprecedented time!

What a perfect opportunity for small groups of family and/or friends to get together safely and shop in an intimate setting. Set a time and place to socially distance meet, grab all your refreshments from our local sponsors and have a blast!

This is a fundraiser sponsored by The Friends of Knox State Park, Inc. All monies raised go to the betterment of the Park.

Stay tuned for a list of vendors and sponsors!

If you are interested in becoming a vendor or sponsor, please email info@themansionatknoxfarm.org for the details.

Please share with all your friends and invite them to the event on our Facebook page, The Friends of Knox Farm Holiday Shopping Extravaganza
Fall is in the Air

Summer has been good to the gardens surrounding the Mansion. Although the pandemic has kept many of our greened thumbed retirees at home, a core group of volunteers have sought out their weekly refuge from COVID among the blooms. As the temperatures and leaves begin to fall, we have been busy dividing and transplanting many of the beautiful perennials to ensure they get off to a good start next spring.

A special thank you to the family of Betsy Graves, long time supporter of Knox Farms, for sharing many of Betsy’s perennials with our Club. We enhanced not only Betsy’s Memorial Garden at the front circle, but also the Secret Garden and many others. Crafted from reclaimed wood from the Park’s buildings, the Secret Garden has been blessed with a new gate, courtesy of frequent visitor Chris Malik. Much appreciated Chris!

Grab your hand tools and join us for some socially distant gardening Thursday mornings from 9 -10:30am at the Mansion. Drop in volunteers always welcome! For more information, email Lisa Schifferle at dlschiff@roadrunner.com.

Save the Date

“I Love My Park Day” is Saturday, May 1, 2021

Help us keep the flowers blooming at Knox

DONATE TODAY!

To make a donation, visit www.friendsofknoxfarm.org/donate or mail checks to Friends of Knox Farm, PO Box 601, East Aurora, NY 14052 and note “Knox Garden Club” in the memo section of your check.
BOOK YOUR MICRO-MANSION EVENT TODAY!

www.themansionatknoxfarm.org
716-714-9553
It's that time of year again, birds are heading south, the greens of summer are being replaced by yellows, oranges and reds, the air is getting cooler and the days are getting shorter. It is the season of autumn. With autumn comes a new perspective of the park. Woodpeckers and Blue Jays are busy collecting the bounty of acorns produced by oak trees, the summertime songs of katydids and cicadas begin to fade. Meanwhile, male White-tailed deer show off their impressive antlers, now free from the fuzzy velvet covering that supplied their growing accouterments with nutrients. It's an exciting time to explore the park, and one that goes by fast.

Autumn also provides us the opportunity to look back at the hustle and bustle of summer! This past August the park hosted its first ever BioBlitz! For those unfamiliar with the term, a BioBlitz is an event that brings together naturalists, biologists, conservationists and nature enthusiasts alike, to survey and document as many species as possible in a given area, in a given amount of time. Our Knox Farm BioBlitz was a 2-day event, held on August 22nd and 23rd. Six field teams convened throughout the day to survey targeted taxa such as birds, mammals, reptiles/amphibians, plants, invertebrates and fungi. A guided hike was led for each field team to give participants the opportunity to learn and share from other team members. There was also the option to tackle an assigned territory alone, helping to cover as much of the park as possible. With Knox totaling 633 acres, this was no small task!

However, with the expert eyes of 32 participants, the group was able to document over 400 species in the park! This was well above the expected number, given we only had 2 days to survey. Breaking down our total, the group was able to record 38 species of birds, 6 species of mammals, 161 species of plants, 5 reptile and amphibian species, 163 invertebrate species, 45 species of fungi and lichen and 2 species of fish.

One of the many highlights was the discovery of a new species of butterfly for the park, the Harvester. The Harvester butterfly has the distinction of having the only carnivorous caterpillar in our region! Caterpillars feed on the woolly aphids of beech and alder trees. The butterflies we documented were restricted to an area of the park with a high concentration of alder, giving us a place to look for caterpillars in 2021!
Knox Nature News Continued..

For those interested in learning more about the BioBlitz, click on [Knox Farm State Park BioBlitz](#) and explore all of the incredible discoveries for yourself! Don’t forget, while this BioBlitz was an organized group event, you can have your own personal BioBlitz whenever and wherever you’d like! You can even have a BioBlitz in your own backyard! This is a great way to learn about local nature and discover the incredible diversity we have in our own neighborhoods. As always, I encourage you to get out and enjoy all seasons of nature, you never know what awaits you.

*Bird Field Team*

*Aquatic Surveying*

*Viceroy Butterfly Caterpillar*

*Red-bellied Woodpecker*
Knox Farm State Park
INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS
Autumn 2020

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

Saturday, November 7th
10:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.
Autumn Tree I.D. Hike
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

Saturday, November 7th
1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m.
Saturday Saunter in Library Woods
Enjoy a slower paced walk to witness the diversity of life found within Library Woods.

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Saturday, December 19th
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

Saturday, December 19th
2:00 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.
Evergreen Envy
Explore nature’s Christmas trees as we unravel the mystery of why evergreens stay, ever-green!

Call 716-549-1050 to register

Please note that we do not allow pets on our programs unless otherwise specified.
This policy is in place as a courtesy to our program participants, as well as for their safety, those of the pets, and for the wildlife that we may encounter during the program. Thank you for your cooperation.

Wildlife Illustrations by Matthew Nusstein
Friends please be aware

ATTENTION DOG OWNERS

LEASH LAW IN EFFECT
TITLE 9 NYCRR 397.6

POOPER SCOOPER LEASH LAW IN EFFECT
TITLE 9 NYCRT 375.1

VIOLATORS SUBJECT TO $100 FINE
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

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

☐ INDIVIDUAL $25  ☐ FAMILY $40
☐ SENIOR $20     ☐ STUDENT $20
☐ PARTNER $100   ☐ PREMIER $300
☐ PATRON $500    ☐ 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.