



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Spring 2016
Vol. 123, No. 1

avis update

Remembering Peggy Keck, 1923-2016

By Susan Stott

Peggy Keck moved to Andover in 1957 with Jim and two small children, Pat (age 1) and Rob (age 3) when Harold Parker Rd. was still a dirt road. Peggy soon became involved in the League of Women Voters (LWV) and AVIS. At that time the LWV was a force for the improvement of Town government. Peggy played a major role in passing the Town's first bond for funding open space at town meeting in 1967. She became a member of the Andover Planning Board in 1968, a critical role as she helped shape land use policy in Andover, still reflected in today's zoning.

Peggy left the Planning Board in 1980 to go to England the year Jim was on sabbatical. She returned to Andover to learn that Pole Hill was threatened by development and persuaded the Town to exchange Pole Hill for the Tea-lots near South School, preserving Pole Hill as important Town open space.

In the early 1980's Peggy was the volunteer campaign manager for Sue Tucker's first and second successful runs for the House of Representatives. Sue wrote: "Peggy approached this job the same way she approached every project in her wonderful lifetime of accomplishment: with intelligence, organizational skills, and passion. When Peggy spoke, people listened."

Peggy also returned to the AVIS Trustees, which she left during her 12 years on the Andover Planning Board. She succeeded Harold Rafton in leading the AVIS land acquisition effort. Under Peggy's leadership AVIS was able to protect the West Parish Meadow, establish the Burns, Collins, Gardner, Sherman, Stanley and Sunset Rock reservations, and add to the Deer Jump, Hammond, Purdon, Smith and Taft reservations.

More recently, Peggy served on the Town's Open Space task force and played an important role in passing the open space funding for the purchase of the

Reichhold property, followed by years of work to acquire two of the three Reichhold parcels along the Shawsheen River. Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski called Peggy the "conscience of the community". We can all think of the times when Peggy spoke at Town meeting to ask us to vote for what was in the best interest of the Town

I personally loved Peggy's stories. Not many know that Peggy and Jim were at Los Alamos in 1945. Peggy told me how she and others drove out before dawn to witness the first atomic explosion. I will miss Peggy's wisdom and leadership and I will miss my friend.

Photo by Fred Snell



Proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline Update

By John Hess

Kinder Morgan/TGP filed their full application on November 20, 2015 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for the proposed Northeast Energy Direct (NED) pipeline. This pipeline would carry natural gas from the shale fields of Pennsylvania to Dracut, MA, and then on to Danvers, MA, through Andover and many other communities. There are many questions still to be answered including whether this natural gas is needed. MA Attorney General Maura Healey has opposed the pipeline in a report released on November 18, 2015. Those wishing to become Intervenor's needed to apply to FERC by January 15, 2016. The next step is for FERC to issue a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, presumably in the summer 2016 with a final decision by the end of the year. There are also a number of state hearings regarding the MA DPU approval of this pipeline: approval of local distribution companies purchasing gas from NED and eminent domain access to the property of owners who have not given approval for Kinder Morgan to survey their land. For more information see: www.plan-ne.org.

AVIS Annual Dinner

Please join us on March 8, 2016, for the AVIS Annual Dinner and speaker. This year we are pleased to present the following topic: *Dam Removal and River Restoration in Massachusetts*. Our speaker is Nick Wildman from the MA Department of Fish & Game, Division of Ecological Restoration. The talk will cover the past, present, and future of dams in Massachusetts as well as the dramatic environmental benefits that can come from removing aging dams, including the two in Andover. This project will begin in the summer of 2016. Please see the Calendar section in this Update for details about the speaker and registration information or contact Libby Poland, 978-475-6159. This year our Annual Dinner is sponsored by: Doyle Lumber, Enterprise Bank, LaPlume & Sons Printing, Schneider Electric, TD Bank, and Town Market.

Letter from the President

By Mike Timko



The success of AVIS as a preserver of the character of Andover has depended on a few key activists each generation. Their skill and persistence have allowed us to continue to grow in the face of relentless development. In January we learned that Peggy Keck, who led our Land Acquisition Committee for many years, passed away. I can add little to what Susan Stott, who succeeded Peggy in that position and worked with her for many years, has shared elsewhere in this *Update* except to say that I admired Peggy tremendously.

One focus of both Peggy and Susan has been the preservation of riverfront property. Last year AVIS was successful in obtaining 10+ acres on the shore of the Shawsheen River. As I am writing this, we are in the final stages of negotiations on as much as 34 acres of Merrimack River shoreline at the old Franciscan Monastery. If we succeed there, we will need to rally all our resources to raise the money we will need. Fortunately, we expect to have up to three years to complete the fundraising. Please stay tuned for the latest developments!

Outdoor Challenge 2016

The Andover Trails Committee had a successful outdoor campaign in 2015 and are challenging us to all get outdoors in 2016. Few communities can offer the breadth of quality outdoor experiences which are available in Andover. Make this the year that you take advantage of Andover's great outdoor spaces. Please go to their home page, andovertrails.org, to find out the standards for hiking, running, biking, swimming, fishing, and much more for the 2016 Andover Outdoor Challenge.

Membership Renewal Time

AVIS relies on its membership fees to support our annual operating costs and to assist us to acquire new properties when they become available. As usual, our membership renewal letters will be sent this spring. Please respond generously. Anyone joining by April 20, 2016 will receive two decals for your car or another location. Thank you.

Shawsheen River Dam Removal Project

Compiled By John Hess

Early colonists harnessed the power of New England's rivers for a number of purposes that formed the backbone of the Industrial Revolution. Initially, these dams were often seasonally operated so that valuable fish runs could still continue. Today, the vast majority of our dams are iconic parts of our communities, but largely without practical use. As climate forces continue to stress these aging structures, many owners have become interested in eliminating the risks posed by the dams while restoring the rivers' historic functions.

The Town of Andover has been awarded state and federal grants for the removal of two dams on the Shawsheen River. Andover received a \$25,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Department of Fish and Game. Atria Senior Living, Inc. was also awarded a \$12,000 grant. These funds will help to match \$789,000 from the U.S. Department of Interior's Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief-Coastal Resilience Grant program via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The Shawsheen River is a tributary of the Merrimack River, and removal of the dams will restore passage for resident and migratory fish and improve public safety. One dam (3' high by 30' long) is located near the Balmoral apartments in Shawsheen Square and the other (12' high by 30' long) is near Atria Marland Place on Stevens Street. Both dams are in various stages of disrepair.

"The goal of the Shawsheen River Restoration Project is to restore the passage of diadromous fish, including American eel, American shad, and river herring (blueback and alewives). All of these species are present today in the lower Shawsheen River drainage, but are prevented from using most of the river habitat by the presence of three run-of-the-river dams in the town of Andover. These dams consist of the Balmoral Dam, Marland Place Dam, and Ballardvale Dam. The restoration of fish passage on the Shawsheen River would provide significant benefits to the ecosystems of the Shawsheen River, Merrimack River, and Gulf of Maine." (from Historic Properties Treatment Plan, MA Department of Fish and Game, 4/24/15). The Ballardvale Dam is not scheduled for removal at this time. Learn more at www.ecorestoration.org/#!shawsheen-river/cqwu.

The removal of these dams is not without controversy. The Andover Preservation Commission voted in June 2012 to oppose the removal of the dams. They said that the removal would "...have an adverse effect on the historic integrity of both the Shawsheen Village National Historic Register District and the Andover Village National Register Historic District." The dam at Marland Place was built to power the mills along what is now Stevens Street, starting as early as the 17th century. In about 1823, the current dam was built for Marland Mills for production of wool. The Balmoral Dam was built as an architectural feature in about 1922 for William Wood, President of the American Woolen Company.



BALMORAL DAM & STEVENS STREET DAM
photos courtesy of Andover Townsman

Disjointed Thoughts of a Wandering Hiker

by Mason Browne

Should I take the chance? The ice looked thick enough. The opposite shore was only 30 feet away and the water could not be deep. There were even footprints in the snow that proved that others had dared to cross this short stretch of ice on Foster's Pond. But it had recently warmed and the ice might now be thinner. Should I take the chance of falling in? Or should I take a longer route to access the un-walked portion of the trail on the far bank? —Given the wintery conditions, I opted for the less daring route.

Why so many meandering trails? Walking every AVIS trail requires walking virtually every esker, which are very abundant on AVIS properties. The tops of eskers are perfect locations for trails as the brush is minimal and the ridges offer good vantage points. However, eskers meander and (to a hiker) can show frustratingly little purpose to their direction; but such paths do provide a tour of Andover's glacial past. Eskers, glacial erratics, ponds, bogs, streams, and rocky soils are all abundant; as are many stone walls (which appear to be man's way of rearranging glacial rock deposits).

Do I really need a map? My vintage 1994 AVIS hiking map was proving to be inaccurate. There were many unmapped trails, and even some of the property boundaries seemed misplaced; but what should one expect from a \$4 map? I then discovered AVIS' on-line interactive maps. These newer maps are free and proved to be quite accurate. (Sometimes 'free' is better). The differences between the 1994 and the newer maps highlighted the significant additions to AVIS' properties made since 1994. Not only were there new Reservations, but also additions to existing Reservations, new trails and new access points. The newer maps highlighted my prior hiking "errors and omissions", thus creating a need to revisit multiple reservations to do "mop up" hikes. I certainly had not been hiking all the AVIS trails in the shortest possible distance!

Where should I draw the finish line? What is with the Bay Circuit Trail, sort of sharing with the AVIS trails? And what about all those raised boardwalks? They cannot all be AVIS paths? And what about all the other adjoining paths? They all became a tease of "walk me too". But I think I have now walked all the listed trails. Do I really need to bushwhack this abandoned trail? The brush became too thick to penetrate, the snow too deep to walk, and the stream too deep and cold to cross. --- My mind then told my feet that it was time to stop.

Editor's Note: Mason Browne is an Andover Resident, AVIS Member, and forester. This is the second of a two part article that he submitted to the Update. Please see the first part of the article in the Fall 2015 Update on our web page – www.avisandover.org

AVIS Highlighted in Andover Video

Thanks to Leslie Noymer of the Center at Punchard, AVIS has been featured in a video produced by the Town's community access TV station. Check out "Andover's Backyard" on www.AndoverTV.org. The Program is under Boomer Being, #34.

Interview with the Rafton Wardens from Schneider Electric

By Alix Driscoll

"I like the trails and sharing them," smiles Mike Condor, who is out on the trails several days a week at lunch, a 15 minute cross-country trek to enter Rafton. "It's an antidote to work."

Walking and taking pictures creates peace and relaxation for Rich Vogel. Cross-country skiing lures Sarah MacDougall onto the trails; she did course work in environmental science and finds her trail maintenance chores are a splendid way to stay connected. "Rafton is a cool site."

"I am very grateful to AVIS; it's a real gift," says Gary Myers who walks on the trails every day at lunch. And so is the gift of Gary and his six colleagues from Schneider Electric, on Federal Drive, to maintain the trails, flora and fauna on the AVIS's Rafton Reservation as wardens.

Ramona Hatch, who feels right at home in the woods due to childhood memories in Maine forests, leads groups of employees volunteering at the Rafton Reservation each month from spring to autumn. Ramona and others on a Community Relations committee decided to care for Rafton Reservation about the time that Schneider, 700 employees strong, moved to Andover from North Andover, Billerica, and Kingston RI. In the summer months they draft their young interns to join in the adventure of trail work. Ramona shares that the company so values employee service to their new community that this volunteer time into the woods is underwritten, including the purchase of many tools.

Schneider is the first local corporation to offer this generous service to AVIS. This dovetails well with days of service including local churches, temples, youth groups, scouts, Non Sibi days by Phillips Academy students and neighborhood groups.

Ramona explains it is a company value to give back to its community and to put into practice sustainability, while AVIS's proximity is a wonderful benefit to the employees.

"I spend much of my time indoors in front of a screen. It is refreshing to be out there working with my hands ... The AVIS reservations are an amazing resource, and it feels great to have an opportunity to give back to them," agrees Nick Zakas.

Next steps? The Schneider Seven have plans to assess the needs of their part of Rafton Reservation and to organize more work parties including larger groups of their colleagues.



L to r: Mike Condor, Gary Myers, Ramona Hatch, Sarah MacDougall and Kyle Sweeney. Missing are Iliana Voynichka and Nick Zaras. All are both Schneider employees and Rafton wardens. Photo by Rich Vogel.

AVIS would welcome employees of other companies in town to become wardens of other reservations, to maintain the trails and to oversee their needs.

Avis Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues: \$25 Individual \$100 Sustaining
 _____ \$40 Family _____ \$10 Student & Senior

You can join or renew online at www.avisandover.org/join.html or make check payable to "AVIS" and mail to :

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PO Box 5097
Andover, MA 01810.

For information about planned giving or stock donations contact info@avisandover.org. Contributions and dues are tax deductible to the extent permitted by federal regulations. Thank you!

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Spring 2016 Calendar

Tues., March 8, 2016 AVIS Annual Dinner and Meeting

6:00 PM
Old Town Hall
20 Main Street, Andover
Dam Removal and River
Restoration in Massachu-
setts - Nick Wildman, MA
Department of Fish &
Game.

6:00 pm - Social Hour
7:00 pm - Dinner
8:15 pm - Business Meet-
ing and Presentation
(open to public at no fee)

Price for dinner is \$28.
For further information
please contact Libby
Poland at (978) 475-6159.
Please send checks made
out to Andover Village
Improvement Society to
Libby Poland, 22 Wolcott
Street, Andover, MA
01810.

Sat., March 26, 2016 Work Party

9AM – 2PM
Sanborn Reservation
All volunteers are welcome.
Take Dascomb Road,
left turn onto Shawsheen
Street in Tewksbury, left
turn onto Bridge Street,
left turn onto South Street
and park in circle at end
of South Street. We will be
removing trash and spruc-
ing up this new reservation.
Bring work gloves. A pizza
lunch will be provided. Led
by David Dargie, [david@
dargie.com](mailto:david@dargie.com), 978-996-4475.

Sat., April 2, 2016 Work Party

9AM – 12PM
Burns Reservation
All volunteers are wel-
come. Park on Chester
Street near trailhead
between #14 and #16.
We will be sprucing up
this reservation. Bring
work gloves. Led by David
Dargie, [david@
dargie.com](mailto:david@dargie.com), 978-996-4475.

Sat., April 23, 2016

Earth Day Celebration &
Dedication of expanded
Sanborn Reservation
12 noon – 2pm
Sanborn Reservation
AVIS purchased 11 acres
of land to expand the
Sanborn Reservation and
to protect the Shawsheen
River on the west side of
I-93 (see Fall Update at
our website). Volunteers
have been cutting trails
and cleaning up this
reservation to improve
public access. Please join
us for hikes, canoeing, a
pot luck lunch, and other
fun – we will supply des-
ert and beverages. Take
Dascomb Road, left turn
onto Shawsheen Street
in Tewksbury, left turn
onto Bridge Street, left
turn onto South Street
and park at end of South
Street. Check website for
further details.

For additional AVIS events,
see avisandover.org.

For AMC walks, see
amcboston.org/andover.

To check for other hikes,
visit andovertrails.org.

The AVIS Update is a
biannual publication of The
Andover Village Improve-
ment Society. The mission
of AVIS is to acquire and
preserve Andover land in
its natural state. More than
1,000 acres of land are man-
aged by AVIS and are open
to all for passive recreation.

www.avisandover.org
978-494-6089

facebook.com/avisandover
update@avisandover.org

Please be sure to check our website, avisandover.org,
for hikes and other activities during the summer.

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Designer





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Thank You to Our Donors

We can never thank our supporters, volunteers, and donors enough. Here are a few we wish to recognize:

- The Boston Foundation for annual grants of \$5,000 from the Bessie P. Goldsmith Fund that are used for improvements and maintenance on the Goldsmith Reservation, as well as necessary tools and equipment.
- Mass. Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) for clearing and removing invasive species from the Deer Jump Reservation.

In addition, we thank the following donors to our Annual Appeal at the end of 2015:

AVIS DONORS More than 150 donors generously gave to the AVIS annual appeal. The total raised in the annual appeal was \$36,563 from October 1, 2015 through January 2016 (\$25,628 for General Support, \$4,320 for the AVIS Land Stewardship Endowment Fund and \$6,615 for the Peggy Keck and Nat Smith Land Acquisition Fund). The donations include one grant and 15 Leadership donations totaling more than \$18,000. Gifts to AVIS were made in memory of John Allen, Al Koch and Roger J. Smith.

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Rocky Bog Fund

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(\$1000 or more)

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