



Andover Village
Improvement Society
Andover's Land Trust
Founded 1894

Spring 2017
Vol. 124, No. 1

avis update

AVIS Thanks Donors While Hiking the Merrimack River By John Hess

On Sunday, November 13th, The Andover Village Improvement Society (AVIS) welcomed over fifty (50) people to a party in celebration of the generosity of donors. The event was held at the Melmark School on River Road in Andover.

Prior to the event, David Dargie, Land Manager for AVIS, led a group of thirty-one (31) people on a hike along the banks of the Merrimack River. He showed donors the beauty of the River and discussed the importance of protecting it for habitat and for drinking water. AVIS launched a campaign in 2016 to raise funds to purchase thirty-four (34) acres of Merrimack River property in order to preserve the land for future generations. Please see our website for an update.

After the hike, donors convened to share stories, food, and beverages. The party also included several speakers. The evening began with a welcome by Mike Timko, President of AVIS, who thanked the guests for their support. Mr. Timko pointed out that AVIS, a completely volunteer, non-profit organization, relies entirely on the generosity of donors to make the acquisition and maintenance of properties possible.

Susan Stott, Land Acquisition Chair, reported that: "AVIS has reached more than 60% of its goal to raise \$400,000 to purchase the river front property from its current owner, Melmark New England." She said that: "Donations from the community are critical for AVIS to complete the purchase of this property."

Ms. Stott introduced Peter Troy and Rita Gardner of Melmark. They explained the history and mission of Melmark New England which currently has a waiting list of over 400 students. Melmark is a private school which provides services to children with autism

spectrum disorders. Melmark recently acquired the land that was the home to the Saint Francis Seminary from 1930-1977.

The featured speaker for the evening was Gary Gresh of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Mr. Gresh explained that one of the many responsibilities of the AMC is the coordination of activities surrounding the 130 mile Bay Circuit Trail. The Bay Circuit Trail links communities around Boston and provides recreational opportunities for the public. Eighteen (18) miles of the Trail are in Andover and a portion of the Trail on the Merrimack River will be protected when AVIS is successful in acquiring the land from Melmark School.



On Sunday, November 13, 2016, David Dargie led a hike for AVIS donors to show them the property on the Merrimack River that AVIS plans to purchase. (Photo courtesy of Mike Timko)

Shawsheen River Dam at Stevens Street Removed By John Hess



Photos courtesy of the Andover Townsman and John Hess

On December 19, 2016, a team of workers began to remove the dam owned by Atria Marland Place on Stevens Street in Andover. The removal of this dam is part of a long term effort to restore New England's rivers and streams to their more natural state in order to, among other things, allow fish to swim upstream. Nick Wildman of the MA Department of Fish and Game made an excellent presentation on this subject at the AVIS Annual Dinner in March 2016. As reported in the Spring 2016 Update, 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 (also removed this past winter) was built for ornamental purposes in the 1920's for William Wood, President of the American Woolen Company.

Goldsmith Woodlands used for Bewitched in Andover

AVIS Trustee John Hess joined volunteers from Andover Trails and the Andover Historical Society on October 23, 2016, for an event in the Goldsmith Woodlands that attracted over 150 participants. Part of the Historical Society's popular Bewitched in Andover series, interpreters shared stories of Ann Foster and Martha Carrier, near neighbors of Foster's Pond, as well as other Andover residents accused of witchcraft during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

Trails and Sails in Andover

Once again AVIS coordinated with the Addison Gallery of Art, the Andover Historical Society, and West Parish Cemetery to sponsor events in Andover for the Annual Trails and Sails event in September 2016. AVIS Trustee Denise Boucher led a hike of 12-15 people in the Goldsmith Woodlands. Plan to attend the Andover events in September 2017. Check the AVIS website or FaceBook page for more details or go to the website of the Essex National Heritage Area: <http://www.essexheritage.org/ts>

New Taft Reservation Parking Lot

By John Hess

AVIS strives to improve its reservations over time. Our volunteer Wardens and Rangers do an excellent job keeping an eye on these properties. From time to time we also get assistance from other sources. This past Fall, access to the Taft Reservation was enhanced by the addition of a turnaround area at the end of Vine Street. Vine Street was closed off at Route 125 a few years ago. This created a dead end street and a problem for the Town of Andover snow plows. Thanks to collaboration with Marc Fournier, Deputy Director of Public Works, the Town created the turnaround shown in the photo which also serves as a nice parking lot for the Taft Reservation. The Taft Reservation stretches from Salem/Vine Street to Wildwood Road. We hope you will try it out.



Photo courtesy of John Hess

www.avisandover.org
978 - 494 - 6089
[facebook.com/avisandover](https://www.facebook.com/avisandover)

Matt Dallett and Libby Poland Leave the Board of Trustees

By Kay Frishman

Long term Trustees, Matt Dallett (August 2016) and Libby Poland (March 2017), have stepped down from the Board of Trustees (shown at the 2016 Annual Meeting with President Mike Timko).

Matt resigned as Treasurer from AVIS after serving as a Trustee from 1998. As AVIS became stronger, acquired more lands, and did more fund-raising Matt's job grew. He was not only the Treasurer, capably handling all our monies, but also our in-house legal adviser. He did so many tasks that we only now fully realize how many! When he resigned, we needed to replace him with two new trustees!

Libby served as a Trustee beginning in 1999. She, most skillfully, was in charge of volunteers and events. She organized all of the Annual Meetings—from soup to nuts!—confirming and setting up the locations, organizing the food, and finding the speakers. In addition, over the years, she found jobs for all the many volunteers.

We will miss you both and thank you for everything you have done!



Photo courtesy of John Hess

Celebrating The Shawsheen Greenway

by Steve Golden

Much beloved, and not fully enjoyed, 2017 will be an important year to celebrate our remarkable section of the Shawsheen River. Mark your calendars for 6/11/2017 for a Shawsheen Greenway Celebration. The full day of events will include opportunities for guided paddling trips on the River, and Poms Pond, as well as guided hiking trips. Canoes and kayaks will be made available for a small fee, so that those at all skill levels will get to enjoy the River. Cosponsored by Shawsheen Greenway, Andover Recreation, Andover Youth Services, AVIS, Andover Trails, SRWA, Andover Conservation Commission, Andover Historical Society, & Andover Chamber of Commerce, the Celebration will culminate in a campfire and special treats at Poms Pond beach. Look for sign-up opportunities in the Andover Recreation catalog. Contact shawsheengreenway@gmail.com if you wish to volunteer to help.

For the Love of Forests

By Walter Kittredge

What would the world be, once bereft of wet and wilderness?

Let them be left,

O let them be left, wilderness and wet;

Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

-Gerard Manley Hopkins

We all love the woods for our favorite recreational activities, whether it's hiking, biking, boating, skiing, jogging, swimming, birding, horseback riding, you name it. The color green, the sounds of birds and wind in the leaves, the swish of waves on shores, and streams trickling over rocks, the smell of moist earth and wildflowers, all these things soothe us, connect us, heal us. We leave the woods better people than we entered, quieter, at peace, invigorated, refreshed. Our minds are clearer, our bodies purified with fresh air, our spirit renewed. The aesthetics of forests are an enormous free benefit. The beauty of the forests with their jeweled lakes moving through the seasons garbed in winter snow and ice, transformed into spring greens, summer wildflowers and fall colors, move us to a deeper appreciation of our lives in the context of nature.

All this would be enough to justify the existence of the forests we've set aside, but there is much more, in the form of ecological services they perform. In 1896 the Andover Village Improvement Society started out saving one iconic place, Indian Ridge, beginning a century of conservation whose legacy has resulted in preserving over 1,000 acres. Soon afterwards in 1916 Harold Parker was charged with buying and reforesting burnt, cut-over land to ensure future supplies of timber for the state, ultimately resulting in the

3,500 acre Harold Parker State Forest. What they couldn't foresee was that the rapid urbanization of this area would put increasing demand on an even more critical resource, water. As it just so happens, AVIS reservations and Parker State Forest preserve a major headwater of the Ipswich River, now one of the most endangered rivers in the country. The forest with its organic soils absorbs rainfall, slowly releasing it to the tributary Skug River. The ponds created out of the Skug's feeder streams by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's also contribute to maintaining water levels, holding floodwaters and also slowly releasing them to maintain water flow in the dry summer months. Without these preserved headwater forests, the Ipswich River would be in far worse shape, and could not even begin to sustain the current levels of water use.

Another service the forests provide is the sequestering of carbon, while also removing particulate pollution, purifying the air for us, contributing to the local reduction of CO₂, and helping to reduce the effects of climate change. As if this wasn't all enough, there is a higher purpose to the forest, the preservation of biodiversity. Without conservation areas the vast majority of native plants and animals would have gone extinct locally. This is because landscaping fashions eliminated the native world from our homes, filling our yards with non-native lawns, foundation shrubs and trees that provide little food and scarce habitat for birds and wildlife.

When you come back from the forest, remember how wonderful you felt there, and think how you could feel that way all the time by bringing a little wildness back into your own yard. The National Wildlife Federation has information on how your home landscape can provide increased ecological value. Take a moment to check out their Garden for Wildlife page (<http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife.aspx>), and see how you can create a better future for yourself and nature.

Help Count the Herring in the Shawsheen River

by Jon Honea

With the removal of the Marland Place Dam and the Balmoral Dam we will be able to welcome river herring back to the Shawsheen River. Environmental Science professor, Jon Honea (Emerson College) is on the Andover Conservation Commission. To monitor their recovery he is organizing an annual volunteer herring count in Andover during their spawning run this spring (April and May). See <http://www.onthewater.com/riverherring/> for examples on other rivers in the region. Each count will be just 10 minutes of observing with a hand-held clicker and then recording the results. Volunteers will do 9 of those each day, so there'll be lots of opportunities to participate. Come on your own or bring the family and help monitor the restoration of the watershed you love! Please contact Professor Honea if you want more information jonhonea@gmail.com or watch for announcements on the AVIS webpage or FaceBook page once the dates are set. There will be a brief training workshop and he expects to have an online signup system.



AVIS Trustees Denise Boucher and Jim Sutton led a hike for members and prospective members in the West Parish Meadow, Indian Ridge, and Baker's Meadow reservations on September 17, 2016. (Photo courtesy of John Hess)

Led by Warden Pete Vachon, a work party cleared debris from the Shawsheen Road Reservation on Saturday, September 10, 2016. (Photo courtesy of Emily Trespas)

Letter from the President



By Mike Timko

In March 2016, a purchase and sale agreement was signed with Melmark New England for the waterfront portion of the former Franciscan Seminary land. AVIS began a quiet campaign to raise \$400,000 to acquire and develop trails on two parcels totaling 34.6 acres along the Merrimack River. In September 2016 AVIS reached out to all AVIS Trustees and past leadership donors and then in November asked for support through the Annual Appeal from the entire AVIS membership. At the end of December 2016 AVIS had received more than 200 gifts for land acquisition from 6 foundations and 170 individual donors totaling \$316,000. Many donors gave to the September request and then again to the Annual Appeal in November. The success of this first phase of the Franciscan Campaign will enable AVIS to acquire the first parcel (26.6 acres) in March 2017. We continue to raise the remainder of the funds to purchase the second parcel (8 acres -2018) and to develop a trail system. Thank you to all of AVIS generous donors who have made this first step possible.

In addition, AVIS has been awarded a reimbursement grant from the Massachusetts Conservation Partnership Grant program. At the conclusion of the acquisition the state will reimburse AVIS \$85,000 of its acquisition costs. This reimbursement grant will be placed in the Nat Smith and Peggy Keck land acquisition fund to provide resources for the next open space parcel AVIS has the opportunity to acquire and permanently protect.

In November AVIS approached George Behrakis, who owned the last six (6) acres in Andover along the Merrimack River, east of the Tewksbury Town Line, to ask how AVIS might acquire and protect his riverfront property. Mr. Behrakis consulted with his family and in November 2016 they donated this third parcel along the River to AVIS.

Pulte Homes, the developer of senior housing on the site of the former Franciscan seminary, plans to donate seven (7) acres of open space (a fourth parcel) to the Andover Conservation Commission in February 2017, as required by their special permit from the Planning Board. AVIS is working with the Conservation Commission to integrate the trail network on the AVIS and Conservation Commission properties.

What does this all mean? AVIS generous donors, listed in this Update, have made it possible for AVIS and the Town to permanently protect almost forty (40) acres of Merrimack riverfront open space. The Conservation Commission will join AVIS to dedicate the 26.6 acres of AVIS property as well as the Behrakis donation and the new Conservation Commission open space on April 29, 2017. We invite the whole Town to join us for a day above the river as we thank everyone who has made this possible.

Membership Renewal Time By Jim Sutton

AVIS relies on its membership fees to support our annual operating costs and to assist in acquiring new properties when they become available. As you read this Update, Membership renewal letters will already have been sent in February.

Your support is especially important now as AVIS continues the Capital Campaign for the acquisition and trail development of 34 acres of land along the Merrimack River. Please respond to the renewal letter generously. If you haven't received the letter, please join by going to our website at <http://www.avisandover.org/join.html>

Mack Gives Back By John Hess

AVIS teamed with students from Merrimack College on Saturday, November 5, 2016, for a work party. The group of thirty (30) students and five adults under the leadership of AVIS Volunteers Burt Batcheller and Paul Dick, as well as AVIS Land Manager David Dargie, constructed a trail and removed invasive plants to create a new link to the Deer Jump Reservation.

The day was part of the Mack Gives Back initiative, a community-wide Merrimack College event that happens every year in November. As part of the initiative, college students do community service to benefit residents throughout the Merrimack Valley and beyond.



Photo courtesy of Samuel Zhang

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.
- The many donors to our Annual Appeal, our Capital Campaign, and those who gave in Memory/Honor of others. Please see the list on the next page.



In recognition of his many years of service and financial support to AVIS the Trustees named a trail in honor of John Wragg. Mr. Wragg is shown here with fellow Ranger Dick Dillon and Land Manager David Dargie along Rognar's Route in the West Parish Meadow. (Photo courtesy of Floyd Greenwood.)

Donors

Capital Campaign Donors as of 1/11/17

FOUNDATION GRANTS

Bafflin Foundation
Davis Conservation Foundation
Fields Pond Foundation
Foundation M
Highland Street Foundation
The Stevens Foundation

CONSERVATIONIST

George Behrakis
Rosalyn K Wood

ENVIRONMENTALIST

Marjorie and Fred Snell
Susan Stott

FORESTER

Rhonda Fogle & Alex Asch
Joan Canterbury
Jim & Sue Curtis
Alan French
Bev Guiry & Bernard Savord
Frank & Belva Hopkins
John W. Murphy
Mike & Judy Timko
Tom and Kathy Timmins

NATURALIST

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Linda and Larry Ardito
Shawn Burke & Monica Schnitger
Andrew & Elise Caffrey
Gladys Catterton Memorial Fund
Leona Doherty
Dave & Kate Doub
Jack & Alix Driscoll

Ruth (Rusty) H Dunbar
David & Lynn Eikenberry
Bonnie & Paul Floyd
Kay Frishman
Jeffrey Gealow
Annie & Bob Gilbert
Amy & Joel Janovsky
John & Margaret Kimball
George MacNaughton & Deborah Warren
John & Joan McArdle
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Michael & Judith Rich
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Vicky & Jim Sutton
Top of the Hill Fund
David & Susan Wahr
The Waldo Trust
Bob Weggel
John Wragg

HIKER

Douglas & Diana Berthiaume
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Dan & Molly Feeley
Robert & Jeanne Gable
Jane Gifun
Kathleen & John Hess
Norman Jacobs
Mark & Cate Kaluzny
JoAnn & Donald Leitch
Ruth McQuade
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Peter & Danette Morris
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Quaker Hill Foundation
Terrie & Kevin Reid
Joe Ruma & Helaine Palmer
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Robert Webber

OTHER

David & Louise Abbot
Adirondack Foundation - Rocky Bog Fund
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Linn Anderson
Ed Anson
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Melissa Bacskai
Colleen A & Henry A Bayard
Elizabeth Black
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Denise Boucher & Girish Rao
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Lori Buseck & Clive Bolton
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JoAnn & Robert Jacobson
Joan M Johnson
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Alan Kenney & Rebecca Kenney-Olofsson
Chris & Erin Klein
Alice Kleinhans
Susan Klem
David Kloss & Karen Scott
Jacqueline Kovacs
Phebe Kwass
Brian Mooney & Rosemary Lappin
Jasper Lawson
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Todd & Deb Merrill
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Ann Fay & Rob Michaels
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Martha & Rod Owen
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Philip & Patrice Pierce
Pine Level Foundation
Mary Pritchard
Michael Psoinos

Arthur Purcell
Peggy Rambach
Bill & Judy Reghitto
Retelle Tree Corp.
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Susan Riley
Anthony J. Risitano
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Norman & Suzanne Scarpulla
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Amanda & Lou Shipley
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Sally Wallace
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Frances Burger & Paul Wender
Frances Y J Wheeler
Judy Wright
Barbara & David Wrightson
Therese Zemlin

Conservationist (\$10,000+)
Environmentalist (\$5000-9999)
Forester (\$2500-4999)
Naturalist (\$1000-2499)
Hiker (\$500-999)

Gifts were given in 2016 in honor or memory of the following:

Given in Memory of

Peggy Keck, by:

Ellen Bedrosian
Marilyn Blumsack
Rusty Dunbar
Alan French
Bob and Jeanne Gable
Joan Harris
Heather Holman
Charles and Suzanne Kendrick
Priscilla Loring
Nancy Mulvey
Bev Oliver
Elinor Olney
Peggy Rambach
Retelle Tree Corp.
Myrna Silverman
Marj and Fred Snell
Susan Stott

Given in Memory of

Doris Dargie Batey, by: Pete Basiliere

Given in Memory of Wolf

Berthold, by: Pat and George Edmonds

Given in Honor of Burt

Batcheller, by: Nancy Gump

Given in Honor of

Matthew Dallett, by: Mary Pritchard

Given to thank John

Hess and Alix Driscoll, by: Dave and Debbie McCarthy

Given in Memory of

Marta Hornidge, by:

Alan French, Paul and Deborah Properzio, Elinor Olney, Donald Secor
Given in Memory of Al Koch, by: Richard H. Homewood

Given in Memory of

Russell Lowe, by: AHS Class of 1985

Given in Memory of Bob

McQuade, by: Ruth McQuade

Given in Memory of

Albert J. Page, by: Elaine C. Page

Given in Honor of John

& Betty Provasoli, by: Todd & Deb Merrill

Given in Memory of Kay

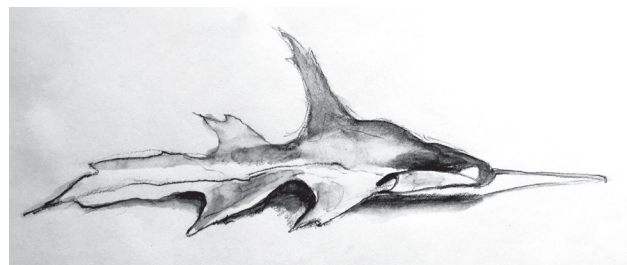
Quill, by: John and Carol Baffi Dugan

Given in Memory of Al

Retelle, by: Bonnie and Richard Bourdelais

Given in Memory of Dr.

Paul Wender, by: Frances Burger & Paul Wender



As we contemplate the changing seasons we are thankful for the open space throughout Andover and for this drawing by Emily Trespas.

If you notice any errors or omissions, please let AVIS know immediately.

Avis Membership

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Dues: _____ \$30 Individual _____ \$100 Sustaining
_____ \$50 Family _____ \$15 Student & Senior

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

AVIS
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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For additional AVIS events see
AVISANDOVER.ORG

To check for other hikes visit
ANDOVERTRAILS.ORG

For AMC walks see
AMCBOSTON.ORG

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

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

CALENDAR

Tues., March 14, 2017
AVIS Annual Dinner and Meeting
6:00pm • Old Town Hall
20 Main Street, Andover

Guest Speaker – Rusty Russell, Director of the Merrimack River Watershed Council. Topic: "Strangers in a Strange Land--Habitat and Water Conservation at the Dawn of a New Era". Cost for dinner is the same as last year, \$28. Make check payable to AVIS and send it to Judianne Livermore, 175 Summer Street, Andover, MA 01810. Deadline is February 28, 2017. Further information, please call (978) 475-4521. No charge for those who wish to attend for just the speaker at 8:00 pm.

Sat., March 25, 2017
Work Parties
9:00am to 12:00noon & 1:00pm to 3:00pm

At 9:00 we will meet at the Nat Smith Reservation off of Bailey Rd. at the intersection of Gina Jo Way and Starr Ave. We will be cutting a new trail and trimming existing trails. At 1:00 we will start the afternoon segment trimming trails at the Sherman Reservation. Park on Hacienda Way and walk down the road to the trailhead opposite #236 Haggetts Pond Rd. Come for the morning, the afternoon or the whole day. For info call AVIS Land Manager, David Dargie 978-996-4475.

Sat., April 1, 2017
Work Party
9:00am to 12:00noon

We will be cutting new trail at the Lowell and Lawrence Railroad Reservation and installing new signs. Meet at the trailhead next door to 448 Lowell St. at 9:00. For info call AVIS Land Manager, David Dargie, 978-996-4475.

April and May 2017
Annual Herring Run Count

Volunteers are needed to count the river herring in the Shawsheen River. See story elsewhere in this issue of the Update for details.

Sat., April 29, 2017
Celebration of New Reservation
461 River Road

AVIS is currently purchasing a portion of the former Franciscan Seminary on River Road. See Letter from the President elsewhere in this Update. Please check our webpage or FaceBook page for more details. Rain Date of April 30, 2017.

Sat., June 3, 2017
National Trails Day

For further details and updates check our website or just get out and enjoy the trails on your own.

Sun., June 11, 2017
Celebration of the Shawsheen Greenway
Various locations

The full day of events will include opportunities for guided paddling trips on the River and Pumps Pond, as well as guided hiking trips. See more details on page 2.

Sat., September 9, 2017
Andover Day
10:00am – 4:00pm
Main St, Downtown Andover

Join AVIS and dozens of other vendors at Andover's traditional celebration. AVIS will have a booth on Main Street and welcomes all members to stop by for a visit.

MIKE TIMKO
President

JIM SUTTON
Membership

JOHN HESS
Editor

LINDSEY CHANDLER
Designer

