



Andover Village  
Improvement Society  
Andover's Land Trust  
Founded 1894

Spring 2012  
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# avis update

## Beautiful Property Donated by Gladys and Tony Sakowich

By John Hess

Gladys and Tony Sakowich have generously donated their beautiful family property at 26 Oriole Drive to the Andover Village Improvement Society. Longtime residents of Andover, the Sakowiches wished to make sure that this property, overlooking Baker's Meadow, remained pristine for future generations to enjoy. On Dec 1, 2011, the deed for this nine plus acre parcel was signed over to AVIS.

As part of the agreement for the donation, AVIS is required to take down the house (built by the Sakowiches in 1961). We will return the land to its original form. Two new trails are being cut to link the top of the hill on the new Sakowich Reservation to the Baker's Meadow trail system.

The house had been vacant for a few years after the family moved to New Hampshire but clothing and household articles remained. AVIS worked with many volunteers to prepare the house for demolition and much of the contents were donated to Habitat for Humanity, Lazarus House, and the Andover Historical Society.

Please join us at a dedication ceremony on April 28, 2012, 2:00 PM. Speakers, hikes, refreshments, and conviviality will help us to celebrate this property.

AVIS and the residents of Andover offer a heartfelt "Thank You" to the Sakowich family and to the other individuals and families who have made donations of land to AVIS. We also thank those who have donated money so that we can purchase and maintain the land with which we are entrusted.



## Annual Meeting

Thursday March 15, 2012

Memorial Hall Library, Andover, MA

Refreshments 7:30 PM

Business Meeting 8:00 pm

Agenda includes election of new Trustees, reports on new land holdings, and the Treasurer's Report for 2011.

Meeting is free and open to the public

## From the AVIS President

Fred Snell



This will be my last President's Letter since I will be stepping down as AVIS President this spring. When Nat Smith retired in the spring of 2005, I agreed to take on the president's role for five years. It is now seven years and time to pass the torch on to someone new. I will remain on the Board of Trustees and will help out on committees and special projects. The new president will be announced at our Annual Meeting in March.

I never dreamed of taking on the AVIS presidency since I was very happy to build trails and bridges and look over our properties as co-land manager with David Doub since 1999. When I was selected by the Board to do this, I said that I was very honored and would try to do the best job possible.

Looking back, it has been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience. I have learned a lot about dealing with volunteers, fund raising, and Town affairs.

Please let me summarize the major things that have happened with AVIS over the last seven years due to the hard work of the many people involved.

I totaled up our land acquisitions and was amazed to find that we added 29.5 acres prior to the generous donation of the Sakowich 9 acres making the total 38.5 acres. That's astounding in a well developed town such as Andover.

The AVIS Board of Trustees is a group of very talented and dedicated volunteers that never fails to impress me. We are well on our way to defining better ways to be organized and this will be rolled out in 2012.

Another learning experience was the 2005 beaver dam removal that did not have all of the proper paperwork filed that incurred a fine and remedial action by the State DEP. That involved a three year remediation action that was successfully completed with an approval letter from that agency.

AVIS is an absolute jewel to the people of Andover. It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve as your president. There are many interesting opportunities and challenges ahead—please lend your support to the new president.

Fred

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# Where Am I?

By Emily Trespas

Glacial erratics and massive stone walls freckle the landscape.



- A. Harold R. Rafton Reservation
- B. Skug River Reservation
- C. Sunset Rock Reservation
- D. Edmond E. Hammond Reservation

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## Rafton Reservation Hike

It was a beautiful day for a hike at the Rafton Reservation on Sunday, January 29. David Dargie and Burt Batcheller led the 43rd annual event, informing the 30 hikers of history and nature as they walked this magnificent property.



Answer: C. Skug River Reservation

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## West Parish Meadow



Boardwalk repair at the West Parish Meadow with Dick Dillon, Don Milligan, and David Dargie

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## Come Out of Hibernation & Volunteer

On March 18th AVIS plays an important role in the inaugural TARC Spring Thaw 6-Hour, which is an ultra run/walk event held in the Harold R. Rafton Reservation, as well as in Andover Conservation Commission Land, and along the Bay Circuit Trail.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 75 entrants repeat a 3.5-mile loop as many times as they aspire. Ultras cover more than a marathon distance and also include timed events, such as the 6-hour, when participants complete as many miles as viable in a fixed time. Depending on conditions, Spring Thaw competitors may complete one lap to over 10 laps in six hours!

As an AVIS Trustee and land warden (Stanley Reservation), I am excited by this opportunity to race direct through my running club, The Trail Animals (TARC). The TARC Spring Thaw 6-Hour raises visibility and funds for our local land organizations and introduces trail runners/walkers and volunteers to these beautiful woods.

While the race quickly filled to capacity, it is never too late to volunteer! Volunteers are needed to help with parking, guiding runners at trail intersections, registration, and general help and clean up. Please come out to share your love of the outdoors and encourage these dedicated participants.

If you are interested in volunteering for this event please contact me, Emily Trespas (Race Director), at [emily\\_trespas@yahoo.com](mailto:emily_trespas@yahoo.com).

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# Allan Smeltzer, Warden of the Burns Reservation

By Alix Driscoll

The Burns Reservation allows children “to do things that kids don’t do anymore, to use their imaginations . . . to play, to climb the mountain,” to run over one bridge to the little island and then off on the second bridge, says the warden of the Burns Reservation, Allan Smeltzer. In these days when *Last Child in the Woods* broadcasts a message of encouraging children to get out on the land and experience some wilderness to be fully educated, the Burns Reservation offers just this plus a healthy dose of adventure. “I want to give kids the opportunity to have the experiences that I had as a kid” in this village called Ballardvale, says Smeltzer .

Burns Reservation is actually two parcels connected by a stream. In 1992 the town dredged a boggy area with just a trickle of a stream that was silting up and threatening the land downstream by the Ballardvale Park and the train tracks. This resulted in a lovely pond with depth of 2-3 feet on Center Street across from the Ballardvale Fire House. To the west is the Chester Street parcel, which has an island connected by two scout-built bridges. The parcels were given by



Mrs. Forsythe in memory of her parents in 1992. It just seemed natural that Smeltzer who knew Mrs. Forsythe and the Burns family all his life and had caught frogs and tadpoles and skated there since childhood, would be asked to be the warden.

He’s a real manager. “Allan spends most of his time on vegetation management,” shares David Dargie. And so he blazes trails, mows the grass that has grown up from the old bark chip paths, weed whacks, keeps the reservation clean of broken trees and offers “Vale” residents a place of peace to sit awhile.

His wife, Mary, is the unofficial assistant warden; she joins him for work and brings him snacks, adds Dargie. Often the warden sees mothers walking children around the Ballardvale loop and then stopping at the bench at Clark Brook to have a snack or watch their children play on the island and along its shoreline. He has designed access areas that are comfortable for young families with baby carriages.

In the true sense of the word Smeltzer’s a townie. The Burns warden was born in Ballardvale at home, has lived in several neighboring houses and now lives on Tewksbury Street, where he can easily overlook “his” reservation. He’s worked as a stationary steam engineer making steam and electricity for Atlantic Gelatin in Woburn; when he retired a dozen years ago he redoubled his efforts taking care of the Burns and acting as a medical driver for seniors.

There is no end in sight to his wardenship. Why has he served as a warden of the Burns for two decades long and plans to continue? “The people in AVIS are good people and have a love for the land. You put in what you want to put in. There is much self gratification, to be myself,” says Smeltzer. “I love this land because I played on it as a kid.” Bring your imagination.

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# Moor & Mountain Closes Its Doors

By John Hess

After 45 years in operation Moor & Mountain has gone out of business. A true focus for all things outdoors, the store closed on January 31, 2012. As David Bunting, Andover Trails, put it: "Far, far more than just a place where you can go to buy outdoor gear - Moor & Mountain has... always been one of those very special stores where the proprietors not only talk the talk, they walk the walk. Alan French and Burt Batcheller represent an almost unfathomable wealth of local and global knowledge and passion... Thank you Alan and Burt - I'll never forget Moor & Mountain!"



Emily Trespas, Spring Melting, acrylic on canvas 2011

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The AVIS Update is a biannual publication of the Andover Village Improvement Society. AVIS’ mission 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.

PO Box 5097 Andover, MA 01810    [www.avisandover.org](http://www.avisandover.org)    [update@avisandover.org](mailto:update@avisandover.org)

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

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Goldsmith reservation hike led by Helen Palmer

## Winter - Spring 2012 Calendar

**Thursday, March 15**  
Annual Meeting  
Memorial Hall Library,  
Andover

Refreshments at **7:30 PM**, Business Meeting follows at **8:00 PM**. The agenda includes election of new Trustees, reports on new land holdings, and the Treasurer's Report for 2011. Meeting is free and open to the public.

**Saturday, April 28**  
Sakowich Reserva-  
tion Dedication  
26 Oriole Drive, Andover

The dedication of this fabulous new acquisition donated by Gladys and Tony Sakowich **2:00 PM**. Your presence at this dedication will let the Sakowich Family know how much this donation means to the people of Andover. Guest speakers and refreshments will be available. Please check our website for more details about the ceremony, including special hikes planned for that day.

**Tuesday, June 5**  
Foraging Walk  
Keck Reservation, Andover

Russ Cohen will lead a walk through the Keck reservation, focusing on edibles in the forest. There will be 15 minutes of opening remarks starting at **5:30 PM**. We will then head out into the reservation to learn about over two dozen wild edibles found here.

## AVIS Finances

2010

Total Income \$63,111  
Total Operating Expenses \$59,349

Your memberships and your donations mean so very much. Thank you. [www.avisandover.org](http://www.avisandover.org)

Fred Snell President  
Pam Eaton Membership  
John Hess Editor  
Lindsey Timko Designer

For additional AVIS events, see [avisandover.org](http://avisandover.org).  
For AMC walks, see [amcboston.org/andover](http://amcboston.org/andover).  
To check for other hikes, visit [andovertrails.org](http://andovertrails.org)



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