

Update on Purchase of Property on the Merrimack River By Susan Stott

Thank you to the many individuals and foundations who contributed to the purchase of the former Franciscan Seminary land through your contributions to the 2016 Capital Campaign and Annual Appeal.

AVIS closed on the first Franciscan parcel, 26.6 acres, with Melmark New England in early April 2017. This summer (2017) the Appalachian Mountain Club Teen Trail crew staff supervised members of the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team as they improved the Bay Circuit Trail across this property. In addition, several Boy Scouts will complete their Eagle Scout projects, doing trail work and building bridges. If you walk along the river you will notice that the trail has been relocated in places and is wider and more stable. The trail work, as well as the land acquisition, was funded by the Franciscan Capital Campaign.

By the end of this year AVIS hopes to complete the fund raising for the acquisition of the second Franciscan parcel, eight acres, and plans to close with Melmark in early 2018. Having received a Conservation Partnership Grant of \$85,000 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the first parcel, AVIS has applied for a Conservation Partnership Grant of \$44,000 for the second parcel and will hear in December 2017. AVIS must raise the total purchase price of \$88,000 before it can be reimbursed 50% of the purchase cost by the State. The AMC teams have already started to improve the trails on this eight acre parcel.

Another seven acres will be protected by the Conservation Commission, as a condition of the permitting for the Riverside Woods senior housing development. In addition, the Behrakis family do-

nated the last six acres on the river before the Tewksbury Town line, west of the AVIS Spalding Reservation, in November 2016.

The generosity of six foundations and more than 200 individuals funded the purchase of the first parcel and the summer trail work. AVIS anticipates the 2017 Annual Appeal will enable it to complete the protection of a total of almost 200 acres (from East to West: Deer Jump Reservation, 131 acres; Franciscan purchase, 34 acres; Conservation parcel, seven acres; Spalding Reservation, 16 acres; and Behrakis gift, six acres). This includes an additional half mile of the Bay Circuit Trail, which runs two miles along the Merrimack River in Andover beginning at Launching Road.

Together we did it!





(left) Susan Stott, AVIS Trustee, welcomes the crowd to the celebration of the new AVIS property on 4/29/17.

(right) George Behrakis receives a sign from Mike Timko and Susan Stott. The Behrakis family was recognized at the celebration of the new AVIS reservation (former Franciscan Seminary) for their donation of 6 acres for a new reservation along the Merrimack River.



Pictured are members of the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team who, on July 21, 2017, made improvements to the Bay Circuit Trail along the Merrimack River under the supervision of leaders from the Appalachian Mountain Club.



Pictured are members of the Groundwork Lawrence Green Team who, on August 2, 2017, worked on the Bay Circuit Trail along the Merrimack River under the supervision of AMC team leaders Seth King, on the left, and Masuzyo Mhango, on the right.

Great Local Conservation Volunteer Opportunity! By Kevin Porter

The Andover Conservation Commission seeks volunteers to help with the Retelle Reservation Interpretive Project. The goal is to create a self-guided tour of the property highlighting its history, flora and fauna, and wildlife relationships through numbered stations, QR codes and descriptive/interpretive panels.

They are looking for volunteers with skills in:

- Graphic Design and Art to create maps and interpretive panels
- Mapping & GIS
- Historical Research
- Naturalists to help identify the flora and fauna and their interrelationships
- QR coding

The search is open to anyone in the community willing to volunteer their time and skills. If you are interested in working on this project or would like more information, please contact Wilow Cheeley, Conservation Overseer, at cheeleyw@gmail.com

The project is the initiative of Kevin Porter, Vice Chairman and Overseer Coordinator for the Commission.

Bay Circuit Trail Closed Temporarily By John Hess

Some readers, particularly those using River Road and Bailey Road, may have seen that National Grid installed a new set of poles along their right of way in West Andover. These new poles were needed to carry additional transmission lines from New Hampshire to Tewksbury. To complete the Merrimack Valley Reliability Project, National Grid pulled a new transmission line (345kv) across the Merrimack River. This new transmission line, as well as the existing power lines, crosses above the Bay Circuit Trail (the BCT uses the Deer Jump Trail) along the River. For the safety of all, the trail needed to be closed during the week of May 8th while the new line was installed. There will be an additional closing later in the year for National Grid to pull additional cables.

AVIS managed the closure of the trails by placing warning signs and hazard tape at both ends of the trail and at various points along the trail. Melmark School approved a temporary exit from the BCT eastbound across their property allowing hikers to use River Road instead of the Deer Jump Trail. Westbound hikers were able to exit

the trail at a point just east of the power lines along an easement that AVIS has there.

Thanks to the following volunteers who assisted with the sign placement at the beginning of the week and removal at the end of the week: Rich Bizzozero, Jane Cairns, Annette Grams, Kathy Hess, Susan Stott, and Jim Sutton.

www.avisandover.org 978 - 494 - 6089 facebook.com/avisandover

Andover's Backyard Video

AVIS is featured in a Boomer Being TV show titled Andover's Backyard. It is hosted by Leslie Noymer. "Boomer Being" is a program dedicated to the issues and topics the 'Baby Boomer' generation contend with in the twenty-first century. Please check out the show at Andover TV.org. Click on "Programs" on the left-side of the home page and then look for Boomer Being Episode 34.

AVIS Adds to Rail Trail By John Hess

AVIS recently established a new reservation - the Lowell & Lawrence Railroad Reservation. This lovely stretch of woods is between Lowell Street and the Conservation Commission land along Bellevue Avenue. It is next to Ironstone Farm. AVIS negotiated with Ironstone Farm to acquire the property through a trade for land AVIS owned off of Newport Circle. It allows hikers on the Haggetts Pond Rail Trail to walk continuously from High Plain Road to Bellevue Avenue. An extension of the rail trail into Tewksbury is being developed by the Conservation Commission. Eventually, this new trail could be an alternate route for the Bay Circuit Trail.



Photo by David Dargie

Finance Report for Calendar Year 2016 By Larry Ardito

Income		Expenses		
Membership Dues	\$ 23,062	Fundraising	\$	1,874
Contributions/Grants	391,092	Program Services		33,123
Investment	19,057	Management &		26,521
Other	19,253	General		
		-		
Total	\$ 452,464	Total	\$	61,518
Net Income/(Loss)	\$	390,946		
Improvements to Reservations 4,926				
Land Acquisition		250		

The expenses above do not include the tens of thousands of dollars' worth of time contributed by volunteers, including Rangers, Wardens, Trustees, work parties, and pro bono lawyers and graphic designers, who do the work to keep AVIS running and its reservations available for the public. Note: Former Franciscan Seminary property purchased in FY2017.

Hike the Recently Acquired Franciscan Property

By Fred Snell



View of the Merrimack River from AVIS reservation.

Please join me for a hike along the Merrimack River on newly acquired AVIS land. Many individuals and foundations contributed to this exciting land purchase, just finalized this spring, which protects our trail along the beautiful river as well as the health of the river. Downstream, the river supplies the drinking water for Lawrence, Methuen, and some of Andover. The trail itself was a pathway for Native Americans long before settlement by Europeans.

This walk will take about one and one half hours and cover about 2.5 miles. There are some hilly sections along the route. Special Instructions: Bring water and bug spray. No restroom facilities on site. Well behaved dogs on leash welcome.

Location and Driving Directions: Parking at 461 River Rd, Melmark School, Andover, MA, 01810. From I-93 Exit 45, River Road, proceed west past Mobil Station for 3 miles to sign for The Melmark School. Enter driveway on the right and go to parking lot to right of building. Leader's Telephone: 978-390-3164

Trails and Sails is an annual event sponsored by the Essex National Heritage Area. It takes place over two weekends in September. Enjoy a variety of guided walks, paddles, historical tours and other adventures for all ages, skill levels and interests, that will connect you to the spectacular places, history and heritage that define the Essex National Heritage Area—the 34 cities and towns of Boston's legendary North Shore. It's all FREE. For additional Trails and Sails events for September 15-17 and/or 22-24 go to: http://essexheritage.org/ts

AVIS to Launch New Website

Watch for the launch of AVIS's new website this Fall. With the able assistance of Chris McKenna and Webmaster Bob Friedensen, AVIS has redesigned its website to be more user friendly, particularly for mobile devices.

Japanese Stiltgrass Found in Andover By Susan Hegarty

I went out to the Rafton Reservation on August 25, 2017, and saw Japanese Stiltgrass growing in the area beneath the powerlines. Stiltgrass is considered an early detection and rapid response invasive species. There is quite a bit of it under the powerlines.

When I first noticed the stiltgrass (on south side of trail in powerlines) I hung an orange flag. This was the largest patch that I saw. It continues approximately 100 feet to the northeast from the point where I placed the flag. But I later noticed that there is stiltgrass

in varying sized patches and at varying distances from one another, along the entire stretch of the ROW that I walked.

Japanese stiltgrass is an annual, and it begins flowering around mid-September, so it needs to be managed (cut or pulled) before it sets seed and spreads even more. The accompanying photo shows the silvery line on the mid rib of the leaf blade is pretty distinctive. It has weak roots and is easy to pull.



Photo by Susan Hegarty



AVIS Board members Amy Janovsky and Buzz Stapczynski are shown talking to two of the leaders of the West Middle School Field Day on June 8, 2017. Students from the school hiked, listened, and observed the Indian Ridge Reservation, West Parish Meadow, and Baker's Meadow.

AVIS Receives Stewardship Grant By Jim Sutton

Several months ago, AVIS applied to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation for financial assistance in developing a 10-year Forest Stewardship and Bird Habitat Assessment Plan for the Spalding, Deer Jump, and Franciscan Reservations. The DCR's Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator has recently notified AVIS that it is eligible to receive \$5,065 in reimbursement once a Consulting Forester has prepared a plan. The forester will support AVIS in its guardianship of its woodlands by considering multiple aspects of forest management including soil and water quality and the way the woodland fits into the larger landscape. In addition, the Consulting Forester will assess the woods for existing and potential bird habitat.

Evelyn Retelle, Warden Extraordinaire of Baker's Meadow By Alix Driscoll

The history of Baker's Meadow is extraordinary: it was a King's Grant in the earliest days of the Town for harvesting peat for fires by the Abbot family; Alexander Henderson flooded it for raising muskrats in the early 20th century; and it is now an AVIS reservation, but none as extraordinary as its warden, Evelyn Retelle. She has been protecting the neighboring now waterlily-covered pond, all 55 acres, for 57 years. I daresay, a bit more than one year for every stunning acre. "She has been a great friend of birds and wildlife in Andover for decades, introducing people of all ages to the nature of our town and continues to do so as she watches over AVIS's Baker's Meadow," says Don Cooper, chair of the Andover Conservation Commission. And she did it with her husband, Al, conservationist, powerful AVIS leader, and first chair of the Andover Conservation Commission.

"Al is the reason that we have the reservation," Evelyn shares. He was at an AVIS meeting and reported he had heard that Alexander Henderson needed money for his proposed development and soon he and Harold Rafton had negotiated the land purchase. It was the first reservation acquired under the aggressive purchase program, according to Juliet Haines Mofford, who wrote AVIS, A History of Conservation, and the Meadow cost \$4,500. Evelyn and Al shared the mission of protecting the meadow as they shared their lives together.

Birders

To bird together they travelled extensively to Australia, Central and South America, plus

Europe and Africa as birders. Both led the Merrimack Valley Bird Club and have been active for decades. Evelyn continues to lead nature walks in town. The Merrimack Valley Bird Club has named the spring walk "The Al and Evelyn Retelle Memorial Walk" like the one named for Oscar Root in North Andover.

Evelyn's roots

Growing up in Pepperrell, Evelyn was active in 4-H, raising two saddle horses as a national

winner, a pony and two pigs, followed by an exchange visit to Germany. She directed the YWCA day camp at Captain's Pond. A graduate of UMass Amherst, she taught science in Lawrence for 10 years. Evelyn shared that, when Al was working in a paper mill just out of school, he was befriended by Oscar Root, an ornithologist and teacher at Brooks School, who shared his love of bird watching, especially the sightings of a rare snowy owl. Al became besmitten by birds. His mentor, Root, helped him to go to college; he grew into a leading Andover conservationist.

The Conservation Commission has renamed the 52 acre reservation, a rare meadow, along the Merrimack River, The Al Retelle Reservation in his memory. It was once a fishing site for Native Americans and later farmland.

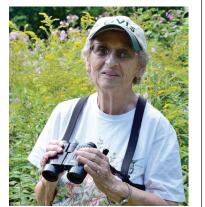
About Baker's Meadow

Although it is really a pond, Baker's Meadow is named for Dr. Symonds Baker, who lived in the late eighteen century in Andover. Repairs to the dam in 1968 by Al, Claus Dengler, Tom Cone, Wolf Berthold, Nat Smith and students from Phillips Academy kept it a pond. That activity was followed by trailblazing and birdhouse building by the same group, adds Mofford. An impressive 145 varieties of bird have been recorded on this AVIS reservation and it is an important resting place for migrating species. Evelyn boasts that she has seen wild turkeys, deer, fisher cat, raccoons, muskrat, beavers and mink. Son Rob Retelle raised a cygnet, a baby swan, one year. The pond has hosted hockey games, skating and lots of bon-

Why Evelyn protects Baker's Meadow?

"Seeing the land preserved, viewing the change of seasons, watching the young birds hatch and being one with nature," drives this passionate woman.

Evelyn Retelle readies for bird watching in Baker's Meadow. Photo by Floyd Greenwood



Letter from the President

By Mike Timko



For the past 123 years, AVIS has had one goal in mind, to improve and maintain the living conditions in Andover. At first that meant planting flowers and cleaning up dumps in an over-industrialized landscape. Then it was staving off overdevelopment by buying up and protecting large areas of unused land before developers could find a way to use it. Now we are acquiring selected pieces of land. This year we secured an important piece of land that became available in order to protect a long chain of connected parcels along the Merrimack River; and began improving it for the use of the public in perpetuity.

I know that I speak for all of the Trustees, Wardens, Rangers and volunteers that it is very gratifying to accomplish each of these things. Through all of this, it has been the involvement and generosity of our members that has allowed us to do what we do. You should all feel a great sense of satisfaction that your membership dollars as well as donations to the Annual Appeals and Capital Campaigns have been well spent.

Every few years we send a mailing to everyone in town who is not a current member. This year we did that and many of you joined for the first time. Welcome. We hope you will decide to stick around and become active in the organization. We also had quite a few returning members who were still in our database who had not chosen to renew their membership in many years. We are happy that you decided to come back and hope that we can remind you of why you joined in the first place.

Please know that we deeply appreciate your faith and support.

Capital Campaign Correction

We realized, after the Spring Update was published, that we did not list Virginia Begg as a donor to the 2016 Capital Campaign. We apologize to her for the oversight and to anyone else we missed. Thank you again to all our donors.

New Members from 9/16 – 8/17

Thank you for supporting AVIS with your membership and for joining us in keeping land protected and open to the public.

Christian T. Andersen Michael Anthony Thomas Appleby Janet M Arnold Matthew Aumais Lillian B Ayscough James Baker Janet & Jim Baker Mr. Daniele Baliani Nate & Molly Beams Thomas W. & Rona H. Beetham Everett L. Belisle, Jr. Mary & Al Belle Isle Frank & Rita Bird Michael Blanchette Bryan Boatner Fran & Sandy Bolway Isabelle Boulain Robert W Bouzon Michael C & Katherine A Bruno Arthur M Brussard Danald & Lynne Bulens Ken Cain Frederick B. Callanen, Jr. William & Alison Campbell Robert Candela Kristina Jean Cappello Thomas J Carli John G Carlson Leslie Carrio-Modderno Caruso Audio Video, Inc. Andrew F. Cavanaugh & Abigail M. Locke Dana Chisnell Richard Churchill Peter D. & Renee V. Clark Robert Colombosian Halie & Scott Corning

Tom Costello & Kary Robertson Veronica V. Croke-Golden James T. Cronin Melissa Cryan Robert M & Charlene T Dalton Frederick Delisio Justin DeMarco Susan Diachisin Daniel Donahue Andrew Dorsey James Doucett Katherine S Dow Yuantai Du Elizabeth Ducot Ann M. Dwyer Mark Ebert Thomas H Einstein Deborah Ellison Martin B. Epstein Evolution Multifamily Jonathan S Fain Andrew Falender & Jacki Lenth Fields Pond Foundation Brian & Lisa Flagg John B Flemming Cheri Folkner James J. Fragala Susan & George Gardner William A. Gauvin Amy Varney & John T. Germaine Karen-Ann Glennon Thomas J & Eileen Glynn Tracy P Goodman Dennis Gu Jack Hall Michael L & Helen L Hanigan Alexander G. & Elizabeth

Brandon Herscovitch Susan Horgan Carlie Hornbrook Edward Hosmer Timothy Janas Steven R & Anita L Johnson Helen C. Kampion Joan Karpinski & Laurence P. O'Toole James P. Kartell, M.D. Suzane M. Kavanagh Cindie & Jim Kazmer Thomas King Susan Klem Scott C & Dana C Knight Ann Knowles Elizabeth L Koontz Kimberly L. & Arthur J. Kudla Rob Lacroix Karen L Lambert Joanne Landers Tracy & Robert Landini James L. Landy Richard S Leonard Suzanne Leonard-Vazquez Laura Lindstrom Judianne Livermore Robert Lord Barbara & David Lundbom Michael A & Maryruth Luther Ellen R & Stephen Lux Mark D. & Doona P. MacLean Kathleen Magardo John B Mahoney Dorothy Mastromonaco Stephanie M Mauge Andrew & Angela McBrien George W. McCarthy Francis R & Joan McCarthy Kate McHugh Cornelius J. McLarney

Ruth McQuade Dave Meehan Joann Michalik David A & Kelly E Michaud Robert Millar Andrea Monderer Genee & Bernard Morrissey Barbara Murphy George L & Audrey J Nason Douglas Nason David Nedde Andrew Novelline George Nugent Bud O'Leary & Janet Swartz Melissa O'Neill Sydney J. Owens Helaine Palmer & Joe Ruma Steven R Pekock Kimberly J. Perry & John J. Marocco E. Victor & Veronica J Pierni Patricia Polizzi Conrad L & Sharon M Provencher Oliver Purwin Iric Rex Richenbacker Resources, Inc. Ronals J Rieder & Martha Miller Henry S & Amy Risman Christa E. Ritter Joan M. Roberge Jonathan Rodin Susan Rodriguez Ethan Rosenbaum John Rothwell Robert Russell Rocco Salerno Anthony P. Salerno

Abhijit S. Savarkar

America Foundation Peter Schwarz Lisa Scott Thomas M & Gayle E Seman Laura Shanahan Paul Silver Sue E Sinacore Lisa Catherine Smith & Aaron L. Schwartz Will Song Joy S.G. Stafford Jessie Stanley Susan Stempek Philip S & Charlotte L Stettiner Gabriel & Rachel Tash Charlotte B Taylor TelecomPioneers Tracey F. Tenney Tom & Kathy Timmins Arthur F Tucker Angelica Urena Carl J. Uthus Anne Vaillancourt Camiel P. VanderMaelen Nicholas J. Vaudo Francois Vignon Robert Webber Bob Weggel Carleigh Welsh George W & Patricia J Wermers Sabrina J. Witt Eric K. Wragg Mark T. Wyeth & Sherri L. Hallgren YourCause, LLC Trustee for Thermo Fisher Scientific Tina Zekis Tudor Zetea

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Shawsheen Greenway Summer Update By Steve Golden

Hedstrom Henlin

Junior Rangers Recruited

More than 200 Andover youth completed the Shawsheen Greenway Junior Ranger program this summer and took the pledge to be good stewards for the future. Supported with a grant from the Essex National Heritage Area, the program is a partnership between Andover DCS-Recreation and the Shawsheen Greenway. The program was conducted as part of the recreation programs at Pomps Pond and at Pop-Up Orientations. The Ranger Reports remain available from the Andover Recreation Department for families to complete on their own. Those who complete five of the 10 fun activities are eligible for an official Junior Ranger Badge. More information is available by contacting shawsheengreenway@gmail.com

River Keeper and Crew

Every Tuesday evening, starting in August, a robust crew, led by River Keeper and AVIS Ranger Ken Doran, worked in the Shawsheen clearing debris and safety hazards to improve navigability on the River. Most of the work focused on the sections of River between Dale Street and Central Street, and above the Ballardvale Dam to Tewksbury. Both sections are now clear of major paddling obstacles and are prime areas for canoeing and kayaking this fall. As conditions are always changing, as well as the water levels, the River Keeper asks that you report conditions requiring attention to shawsheengreenway@gmail.com.





Three new Junior Rangers explore the River wearing their badges in August 2017. Photo by Kerry Manual

Mike Dempsey and Ken Doran participate in the Shawsheen River cleanup in August 2017. Photo by Steve Golden

Avis Membership				
Name:				
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· 				
Town, State, Zip:				
Phone:				
Email:				
Dues:\$30 Individual\$100 Sustaining				
\$50 Family\$15 Student & Senior				
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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

Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017 Walking Tour of Historic Mill District • 9:30 – 11:30 am Andover Historical Society, 91 Main Street, Andover

Step back in time to the 19th century to explore Andover's fascinating Historic Mill District! Participants will be led on a guided walking tour that examines the history of the buildings where 19th century Andover mill owners and factory workers lived, worked, and played alongside family and neighbors. The tour will cover about 2.5 miles over road and sidewalks with hills. Bring water, wear comfortable shoes. This is part of the Essex National Heritage Area

Trails and Sails event. See www.essexheritage.org/ts for more information.

Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017 Trails and Sails Hike along the Merrimack River 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm 461 River Road, Melmark School, Andover

Once again AVIS will participate in the annual Trails and Sails event sponsored by the Essex National Heritage Area. Join Fred Snell for a hike along the Merrimack River and see this newly acquired property – formerly the Franciscan Seminary. See more details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Saturdays in October Work Parties

Times and locations TBD

Amy Janovsky and AVIS Wardens are organizing teams to pull invasive plants. Please help us out. Check our website for more details or call 978-475-8655.

Sunday Oct. 1, Oct. 15 & Nov 5, 2017 Hike with AVIS • 2:00 pm
Locations to be determined

Join AVIS on Sunday afternoons this Fall. Tentative locations are Goldsmith, Shawsheen and Rafton reservations. Please check the website for more details or call the hike leader, Denise Boucher, (508) 265-3093.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017 AVIS Work Party 9:00 am – 1:00 pm Turtle Mound, Lakeside Circle, Andover

Join Warden Ken Doran and Land Manager David Dargie to cut brush and rake leaves in this new AVIS location. Bring work gloves. For questions call 978 996-4475.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 2017 No Cause to Judge Them: A Narrated Hike

Them: A Narrated Hike
Through Baker's Meadow
2:00 pm

Join the Andover Historical Society for a narrated history hike through land once owned by Rev. Francis Dane and his family in commemoration of his Oct. 1692 petition that helped to end the witch hunt. Meet at Baker's Meadow Reservation. This event is co-sponsored by Andover Trails Committee. Free and Open to the Public. For more information on where to meet, parking, etc., go to the Historical Society website at www.andoverhistorical.org/ bewitched-in-andover

Tuesday, March 13, 2018 AVIS Annual Dinner and Meeting 6:00 pm – Old Town Hall

6:00 pm – Old Town Hall 20 Main Street, Andover

Please save the date.



