



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Friends of High School Park invite you to begin or renew your membership. Join our efforts to beautify and appreciate our 11-acre, native species park.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Individual Membership  \$40 Family Membership  New Membership  Renewal  Cash  
 Additional Contribution Enclosed:  \$10  \$35  \$75  \$100  Other  Check

This gift is in honor or memory of \_\_\_\_\_

This gift is given anonymously, please do not list my name in the newsletter.

Please make checks payable to: **Friends of High School Park** All contributions are tax-deductible.

Members and volunteers enjoy the camaraderie of working together and of attending educational programs. Please check any activity in which you have interest:

Arts in the Park  Communications  Education  Fundraising  
 Membership  Restoration  Work Days  Garden Club

MAIL YOUR DUES AND/OR CONTRIBUTION TO:

FRIENDS OF HIGH SCHOOL PARK PO BOX 11263 • ELKINS PARK, PA 19027

Thank you very much! You will receive our newsletter announcing events and activities in the park.



**Friends of High School Park**  
Montgomery Ave &  
High School Rd  
PO Box 11263  
Elkins Park, PA 19027  
215-782-8082

[www.highschoolpark.org](http://www.highschoolpark.org)

### SAVE THE DATE:

#### ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AT HIGH SCHOOL & OGONTZ PARKS

December 3, 2008 • 7-8:30 PM  
Curtis Hall • Curtis Arboretum, Church Road

Nonprofit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #12  
Elkins Park, PA  
19027



## NEWS

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Margie Patlak and

Martha Mowry, *Editors*

Sue Harvey, *Design*

#### TO REACH FHSP

[www.highschoolpark.org](http://www.highschoolpark.org)

215-782-8082

### Walk With a Naturalist

By Jamie Lemisch

A walk through the park is relaxing and enjoyable. But a walk through the park with a naturalist is eye opening. We all take leisurely strolls through the park, appreciating the lush green setting that surrounds us. But something happens when we walk through the park with the ability to distinguish one green plant from another. Suddenly, our surroundings come into focus and we gain a greater appreciation for what is around us. Last June, Peter Kurtz, a naturalist from Fairmount Park, gave us a peek through his lens.

Peter pointed out a number of plants on the walk. One of the first plants he showed us was found right under our feet as we stood in the mowed lawn around the meadow. Peter



Peter Kurtz points out a plant in the meadow.

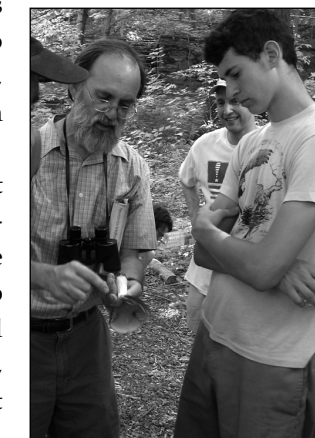
reached in his pocket, pulled out a small trowel and used it to loosen the soil around the base of the plant. Pulling the plant from the ground, he explained that this plant, called plantain, is an invasive that is native to Europe. Plantain was brought over by early colonial settlers. In fact, the Native Americans called this plant "white man's foot print" because they observed it growing anywhere the Europeans had settled. Because it spreads rapidly, crowding out native plants in the park we want to encourage to grow, plantain might be more beneficial once it's pulled out as it has medicinal properties, Peter pointed out. The plant can be made into a poultice and used to treat wounds. It is even said to have been used to treat snake bites and a variety of other ailments.

Another plant that Peter showed us is called dogbane which, unlike plantain, is native to our area. Peter explained that the stem of this plant can be used to make twine. He demonstrated by taking a piece of the plant which was dead and dried from the previous year. Crushing the stem with his fingers, the fibrous exterior separated so that a stringy material remained. Peter then twisted the material from top to bottom. When he was done, the end product looked like a small piece of twine which was amazingly strong. He passed it around to the group so that we could each tug at it to test its strength. This plant, Peter explained, was also of value to the early European settlers.

We continued on our walk where Peter pointed out plant after plant, each with its own name, distinct characteristics and often valuable uses that helped the people who settled our country years ago. It became apparent to me that our park's meadow, woodland and creek bed areas hold pieces of our history that are largely forgotten, and the stories that are contained within our parks are yet another reason for us to cherish our green spaces. Thanks, Peter, for the new perspective!



Peter Kurtz had an attentive audience as he revealed the history and uses of plants in the park.



Peter Kurtz explains the intricacies of a mushroom from the park.

### You're Invited:

#### ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AT HIGH SCHOOL & OGONTZ PARKS

December 3, 2008  
7-8:30 PM • Curtis Hall  
Curtis Arboretum, Church Road

The ecological restoration plan is a major achievement that will guide our work for the next 10 years. Come see the landscape designs for park entryways, preview educational signs and learn about the health of the meadow, the woods and the riparian/creek ecosystems and review the plans to improve them. Your input and support are critical to our success. **Please make it a priority to attend.**

For more information call 215-782-8082 or email [info@fhsp.org](mailto:info@fhsp.org)

Refreshments will be served. The first 25 people will receive a FHSP gift.

OUR LUCKY THIRTEENTH YEAR

By Caroline Stritzinger

# Arts IN THE Park

If you're superstitious, the number thirteen is associated with bad luck, but the thirteenth annual Arts in the Park fundraising festival was blessed with great weather, vendors, music, attendance and sponsors.

For the volunteers involved in planning this year, we did our usual nail biting as we checked weather.com for forecasts and tried to calculate our odds of sunshine for a day in what is typically a rainy season. Fortunately, luck was with us, as it turned out to be a lovely early June day, and hundreds of men, women



Ronna Kassel explains the FHSP mission to a passerby at the membership table at Arts in the Park.

and children began pouring in as the day's first live bands began to play.

We were also lucky to have 50 juried artisans exhibiting an outstanding selection of jewelry, pottery, wood, fiber art, stained glass, paintings, photography and more. Back in the early years, it wasn't so easy finding artists to be in the show. As Joy Schwartz, one of the founders of Arts in the Park noted, "I had to beg artists to come that first year." Over the years, though, the reputation of Arts in the Park has grown. Now artists are selected by jury, as the number of applicants exceeds available slots.

This year, as in past years, we had many artists right from Cheltenham Township or near by. Many of these artists have been in the show almost from the beginning. For example, Patti Dougherty, a jewelry designer who creates her own original glass beads, lives right in Elkins Park and teaches at Abington Art Center and was back again this year. We were also fortunate to have two internationally known Judaica artists from Elkins Park, Mordechai Rosenstein and Jeff Allon. Other local artists included Louise Sussman and Ellen Pine Litwin, both potters and members of Orchard Artworks cooperative, Tom Steigerwald, a gifted painter of larger-than-life floral works, Lisa Kelley with paper crafts and Lucia Welsh and members of Fireworks, a pottery group. Melrose Park artists included John Thomas with stained glass garden art, and Sue Harvey with silk-screened children's tee shirts. This year a new Cheltenham artist, Juha Hollo, joined the show with his paintings and prints.

Many of our musicians this year came from Cheltenham Township and included Cheltenham High School and independent groups performing jazz, rock, a capella and more. Another highlight was the return of Emcee Ben Laden, who played his accordion between sets and kept the audience entertained and informed about the day's performances and events.

Arts in the Park is the only fundraiser for the Friends of High School Park, and it has been instrumental over the years in funding the native plant restoration projects at High School Park.

Our 13th year was a record in financial sponsorship and we'd like to thank the following sponsors for their support: Moss Rehab/Einstein at Elkins Park, Sovereign Bank, Siegal and Drossner, P.C., Weichert, Milbert Insurance, Rochelle Sauber, Rocklege Veterinary Clinic, Cheltenham Township, as well as media sponsors, including *Montgomery County Town & Country*



An artist works his craft at the annual Arts in the Park festival.

*Living Magazine* and *Art Matters Magazine*. We are also thankful for our many Arts in the Park volunteers.

How lucky we were to have so many talented and giving people in our neighborhood to make our thirteenth Arts in the Park one of our best ever!



High School Park was filled with artist booths at the 13th annual Arts in the Park.

**THANK YOU TO OUR ARTS IN THE PARK VOLUNTEERS AND COORDINATOR!**

COORDINATOR - Gina Craigo • SPONSORS - Cliff Bassman, David Cohen, Jaimie Lemisch, Gina Craigo • VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS - Nancy Cortez, Maria Odelia Romeu • CHECK-IN/LOGISTICS - Marc Cortez • LOGISTICS - David Kaplan • ARTIST COMMITTEE - Caroline Stritzinger, Peg Mulligan, Cindy Blackwood, Ryan Heisner • ADVERTISING COORDINATOR/PR LIAISON - Caroline Stritzinger • GRAPHIC DESIGN - Sue Harvey & Vignette Visual Media • LEMONADE STAND - Rose Sluzas • FACE PAINTING - Sue Chirlin • CHILDREN'S CRAFTS - Cindy Blackwood, Jody Pelisch • FOOD VENDORS/RAFFLE - Linda Stern • SIGNAGE - Amy Steffen • PLANT SALE - CJ Smith • EMCEE - Ben Laden • MUSIC - Mark Kaplan and Karl Stark • FINANCES - Susan Weinberg/Karin Kaplan

## FHSP Member List\*

We are grateful for the tremendous support from our individual, family, and now business members. Members who recently joined or renewed are:

**NEW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

Elaine Alexander  
Ruth and Stuart Appel  
Austin Family  
Alison Carson & Neal Siegel  
Julie Cohen & Nigel Blower  
Carolyn Gessner  
Dennis Graber  
Bruce Guzzi & Patricia Deshon  
Belmont & Nina Haydel  
Kassutto Family  
Marlis Kraft -Zemel & Martha Butler  
Benjamin Lloyd & Susan McKey  
Deborah Meyer  
Alissa Orzea  
Mariah & Shawn Simon Hazani  
Linda Watson

**RETURNING MEMBERS**

Karoline Adler & Jon Auerbach  
Mary Amar  
Ellen & Bruce Asam  
Barbara & Thomas Bale  
Amy, Rick & Nina Bedrick  
Cynthia Blackwood - The Frame House  
Tom Bowman  
Greta Bunin & Andrew Gale  
Shelley & David Chamberlain  
Helene Daniel  
Stan Daniel  
Beth & Peter Denitz  
Gloria Detweiler & Paul Bukovec  
Jo Fagan

Suzan Fine  
Marsha & Robert Fischer  
Joyce Ford  
Lisa & Hannah Friedland  
Ellen Friedman & Jeff Cohen  
Harry Goodman  
Harriet & Juan Gottschalk  
Leba & Robert Grodinsky  
Joel & Toby Grubman  
Ayala & Hanoch Guy  
Ruth Heiges  
Joan & Richard Heller  
D'vorah Horn-Greenberg  
Eric Johnston  
Karin & Mark Kaplan  
Florence Kogen  
Steve Koniers & Eunice Cuirle  
Julie Kring-Schreifels  
Sharon Lauzus  
Michael & Caryl Levin  
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Michael Livingston  
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Claire Meyer  
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Margaret Mulligan  
Judith Myerson  
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Iris & Kevin Parker  
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Karen & Andy Schloss  
Mildred & Leonard Serody  
Carol Shackmaster  
June Siegel  
Debra Silberg & Mark Newman  
Chana Simon  
Liz & Bob Solms  
Theresa Spiegel  
Debra & Edward Strauss  
Caroline & John Stritzinger  
Donna Tretina  
Marie Valoris  
Morton Wallerstein  
Arlene & Herbert Wartenberg  
Jennifer, Dan, Lily & Henry Wasserman  
Wendy Weber  
Susan & Marvin Weinberg  
Shelly Zalesne  
Celeste & Steve Zelitch

*Thank you also to the several people who made contributions in honor or memory of a loved one:*

**IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF:**

Emily Leonard  
Sy Bassman  
Alfred Ennulat

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Wendy Weber  
Ellen Friedman & Jeffrey Cohen  
Emily Lustine

\*Please note that membership mailings are now mailed twice per year. If you're not sure of your renewal date, please check the bottom of the mailing label on this newsletter, the date you last renewed will be indicated. You may renew at anytime!

**FHSP MISSION STATEMENT**

The Friends of High School Park is a non-profit volunteer organization whose mission is to create, manage and preserve a viable native ecosystem in High School Park for the enjoyment of the community, in cooperation with Cheltenham Township. We are dedicated to inspiring the community to connect with others and the natural environment through service and learning connected with the park.

## BOOK REVIEW: *Bringing Nature Home*

The other day I noticed a few chewed leaves on one of my spice bushes (*lindera benzoin*). I was delighted. Not the typical gardener's response, I know, however, my perspective has been altered by the ideas of Doug Tallamy, Professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. Now I garden for insects.

"Are you crazy?," I can hear my fellow gardeners cry. "Haven't you heard of pest-resistant plants?" Let me explain. In his engaging and persuasive book, *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, Tallamy sheds new light on the enormous value of native plants for wildlife. Surprisingly, much of that wildlife hinges on insects, since they are the link between plants and most other life forms. As the jacket text explains, "Most native insects cannot, or will not, eat alien plants. When native plant species disappear or are replaced by alien exotics, the insects disappear, thus impoverishing the food source for birds and other animals. In many parts of the world, habitat destruction has been so extensive that local wildlife populations are in crisis and may well be headed toward extinction."

Tallamy's field research has shown that native plants provide forty times more food for birds than non-native plants. Many of us appreciate that berries and seeds are vital sources of food for birds, however, insects are perhaps more critical. Parents feed their young almost exclusively on insects. Caterpillars are among the most desirable. As a result of co-evolution, butterflies and moths are very particular about the host plants on which they lay their eggs. As you might suspect, only native plants can serve as hosts for native butterflies. Many such fascinating relationships are explored in the book.

Tallamy posits that the suburbs offer a tremendous opportunity to restore native habitat. Given our custom of planting trees and shrubs along our property lines, we can create large, somewhat continuous sections of native plants. The book strongly urges suburban gardeners to gradually replace alien ornamental trees with natives such as oaks, willows, and birches among others. He suggests that there is not enough undeveloped land left to do the job of ecosystem conservation, and that suburban property owners can make a big contribution.

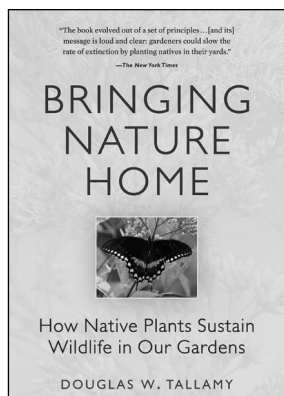
Doug's enthusiasm for his subject engenders a welcoming and enjoyable shift in attitude. In the chapter, *Gardening for Insect Diversity*, pictures of brightly colored caterpillars help the reader change from dreading bugs to hoping they will arrive. He explains, "Our nearly universal animosity toward insects is understandable, but seriously misplaced. Of the 9 million or so insect species on earth... a mere 1 percent interact with humans in negative ways. The other 99 percent of the insect species pollinate plants, return the nutrients tied up in dead plants and animals to the soil, keep populations of insect herbivores in check, aerate and enrich the soil, and .. provide food either directly or indirectly for most other animals." Ecosystem services provided by insects

By Amy Steffen

have been valued at \$57 billion per year.

Other chapters include *Blending in with the Neighbors*, and *What Should I Plant?* In the former, Tallamy shares design ideas that favor clustering shrubs and understory trees, while reducing the amount of open lawn. In the later chapter, he reviews the most valuable plant families from an insect and ecosystem perspective. He details the vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife supported by twenty families of native woody plants (willows, cherries and plums, birch, poplar, etc.). Oaks top the list, supporting over 517 species of lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). In contrast, the alien Eucalyptus supports only one species.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who cares about native plants, birds or the environment. Of course, anyone with a developed interest in bugs will also want to read it. We hear that life is a web—that native plants are essential to the well being of our ecosystems. Doug Tallamy's research and clarity illuminate the specific ways in which the web of life unfolds and functions. He cultivates an appreciation, and even a fondness for, insects which are vital to life as we know it. His book confirms that native plant restoration is essential and inspires us to continue transforming our suburban neighborhoods. Now I am not only delighted to see a spice bush swallowtail butterfly visiting my plants for nectar, but I look forward to finding a chrysalis hanging from one of my bushes and welcome some chewed leaves as well.



## President's Letter

By Amy Steffen

The essence of the mission of Friends of High School Park (FHSP) is to "preserve a viable native ecosystem in High School Park for the enjoyment of the community, in cooperation with Cheltenham Township." Our recent activities prove that we remain energetically aligned with this mission, from restoration plan to various community activities in the park.

The Ecological Restoration Plan, which is well underway, is the keystone for preserving the park's native ecosystem. Once the plan is completed, our restoration work can proceed with greater focus. Our fundraising efforts will be targeted to specific restoration and improvement projects. The timeline in the plan will enable us to more effectively coordinate our volunteers. New attention to monitoring results will help us better convey the story of High School Park and our community commitment to native ecosystem restoration. Chairing this committee is a primary focus of my efforts. The volunteers serving on this committee are greatly appreciated.

Lately, we are taking a more active approach to helping the community enjoy the park. **Programs in the Park** are bringing more people into the park while showcasing its native resources. Our first bird walk in May, and *Walk with a Naturalist* in June were both well-attended, informative, and fun programs. Soon our plan will provide signage concepts that will explain the park's native ecosystems and history. On Tuesday, October 7, we will gather for stargazing at 7:00 p.m. Our 13th Arts in the Park fair

was also a big success and big thanks to all of you who helped produce the event and attended it.

Of course our core work remains native ecosystem restoration. Dedicated volunteers participated in seven workdays over the spring. Then, Arcadia University capped the summer with a big effort on August 25. Gina Craigo deserves a big thank you for managing this large group on her own, going far above and beyond the call of duty. This fall, we will begin a new effort to train a core group of high school students to serve as volunteer supervisors. Sam Kassel, our featured volunteer in this issue, is the role model for this approach.

I want to especially thank the Board of Directors, who are truly the backbone of the FHSP. Since we are primarily a volunteer run organization, the directors act as virtual staff. Along with our talented staff person Gina Craigo, our Directors take responsibility and make sure to get things done. Jo Fagan, Gail Korostoff, and Cynthia Blackwood manage our park restoration and volunteer workdays, coordinating special mitzvah and scout projects. Ronna Kassel works to expand membership as well as runs the Programs in the Park. Caroline Stritzinger, Martha Mowry and Margie Patlak oversee communications, from newsletter to website. David Cohen, Cliff Bassman and Jamie Lemisch lead our fundraising, expanding our circle of sponsors and donors, and Susan Weinberg manages our finances. They do all this, provide overall guidance and then produce Arts in the Park. Our Board of Directors exemplifies the FHSP commitment to service and community and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

### UPCOMING PROGRAM IN THE PARK

#### ★ Stargazing in High School Park ★

Tuesday, October 7 • 7:00-8:30 pm  
(Cloud date October 8)

Led by Albert Lamperti, Observing Chairperson,  
Delaware Valley Amateur Astronomers Association

Gaze at the autumn sky by the light of the moon on this evening adventure. Through the use of telescopes, a laser pointer, and the naked eye, AI will help us identify and understand what we see above.

#### BRING A BLANKET

Meet at the High School Park shed, near the intersection of Montgomery Ave. and High School Rd. If there is too much cloud cover, the event will be postponed until 10/8.

Children are welcome at all programs and must be accompanied by an adult.

RSVPs very much appreciated, but not necessary. Programs in the Park are free events sponsored by Friends of High School Park

For more information, please contact FHSP • [www.highschoolpark.org](http://www.highschoolpark.org) • 215-782-8082 • [info@fhsp.org](mailto:info@fhsp.org)

## Leaves Of Three, Let It Be!

Poison ivy is native to this area, but that doesn't mean that it cannot also be invasive or a nuisance. As many as three-quarters of us can attest, it can cause a real itch!! Even its generic name, *Toxicodendron radicans*, sounds a bit intimidating.

You may try to avoid poison ivy, but that can be difficult to do since this is one clever plant, changing colors by season, and disguising itself to resemble other foliage. And poison ivy can be anywhere in a landscape—it can carpet the ground, as well as form vines that can be found climbing trees and fences. Poison ivy can thrive in sun or shade. The leaves are shiny and reddish in the spring, a dull or glossy green in summer and yellow to red in the fall. The plant has flowers and clusters of fruit which bear a resemblance to mistletoe. Even the leaf shape varies, with edges that may be smooth, toothed or lobed. The only consistent design feature is the pattern of leaf growth, which is a three leaflet configuration with one on the end and two opposing leaflets just below with shorter stalks (see photograph).

Poison ivy produces a substance called urushiol, which can be found on the leaves, stems, roots, flowers and fruit. It is

By Martha Mowry

released when the plant is bruised or damaged, and is potent all year round, causing a nasty blistering and itchy rash in susceptible individuals that make contact with urushiol. Note that you can come in contact indirectly with urushiol by touching items that have come in contact with poison ivy, including tools, shoes, clothing, and even pets. Urushiol stays active for at least a couple weeks and even longer in dry climates.

In spring and early summer, when the leaves are most tender and susceptible to damage, we are most vulnerable to poison ivy rashes. When skin comes in contact with urushiol, it begins to absorb it in as few as three minutes! The poison ivy rash does not spread from existing blisters; if you get it someplace else on your body, it is because that new spot has come in direct contact with urushiol. If you think you are immune to getting a poison ivy rash, beware! Susceptibility increases with exposure.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Sam Kassel

By Gail Korostoff

It's only appropriate that a park named after a high school should have volunteers who are high schoolers, and one of Friends of High School Park's high school heroes is Sam Kassel. The youngest volunteer supervisor at High School Park, Sam spent many hours this past spring pulling out invasive garlic mustard, thistle, and thorny wine berry, and has inspired others to do the same with his warm smile and enthusiasm.

"I enjoy spending time in High School Park because it seems so wild and free, especially the meadow," said Sam. "Participating in this organization gives me an opportunity to work outdoors while helping-out."

Sam will be a senior at Cheltenham High School (CHS) this fall. In addition to his commitment to the environment, Sam also enjoys playing guitar, ultimate Frisbee, snowboarding, hiking, reading and drawing. He spent the summer working full-time as a farm intern at the Pennypack Farm and Education Center, a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm in Horsham, Pa., where he learned the basics of organic farming. Sam is very excited to be attending Prescott College in 2009, where he hopes to study cultural anthropology and biology, while integrating his interests in music and art.

But fortunately Sam's still around for another year and during that time, he will be helping the Friends of High School Park recruit our first high school interns. With the help and sponsor-

### Leaves Of Three, Let It Be!

Continued from pg. 3

**So what can you do?** Prevention is the best defense—knowing what the plant looks like (see box), treating contact points expeditiously, thoroughly cleaning other non-skin items which may have been in contact, and getting rid of the source plants. Once the poison ivy itch starts, there are numerous over the counter remedies; in severe cases, systemic steroids may be required. Natural remedies exist also—e.g., the juice from jewelweed (also called touch-me-not) that is readily available is said to relieve the itch. Poison ivy is related to several other plants including mangoes and cashews. Some people find that it is better to avoid both while experiencing a poison ivy rash.

Just so it doesn't get a completely bad rap, poison ivy is useful to insects, birds and other wildlife. Birds eat the seeds and amazingly are unaffected by the toxin. So maybe poison ivy is one way that Mother Nature tries to tell us humans to respect her garden?!

In High School Park (HSP), efforts are underway to kill off only the poison ivy which is close to visitor paths. There is much too much poison ivy to rid the park entirely, and it is a natural part of the ecosystem we are trying to preserve for the birds, if not other critters. In addition, the Friends of High School Park (FHSP)

ship of Dr. Horn, head of the science department at CHS, we are hoping to train a small core of high school assistant workday supervisors. Students will receive training to identify the native species we want to encourage, the common invasive plants in our park we want to get rid of, the essentials of path maintenance, tool use, seasonal cycles of park work, and many of the birds, bugs, and animals that share the space in High School Park. They will attend many of our fall and spring workdays, as well as lend a hand for our annual Arts in the Park event. Students will even be able to use their park experience as the basis of their senior project for graduation! Contact us if you know of a Cheltenham High School student who would like to become an intern along with Sam!

We would also like to recognize two other regular student volunteers from the spring season: David Geron-Neubauer and Michael Lindy. Both are students at the Saligman Middle School, and volunteered as part of their Bar Mitzvah mitzvah projects. We really appreciate having young people take part in helping restore and maintain High School Park as a natural suburban oasis. Thank you, Sam, for taking the lead in this regard!

have posted information and photographs of poison ivy on the bulletin boards at the two main entrances that you can arm yourself with if you stray from the path.

#### WHAT TO DO TO PREVENT POISON IVY CONTACT:

- Use protective lotions before entering an area that might have poison ivy
- Wear long sleeves and long pants, as well as gloves
- Pay attention to what you are touching
- Stay on open paths and keep dogs on leash to prevent straying into untreated areas

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU CONTACT POISON IVY:

- Remove urushiol by washing as soon as possible the contact area on the skin with alcohol, water, soaps, or commercial products like Tecnu.
- Wash all items that have come in contact with soap and water.
- Wash clothing in hot water and soap.

#### HOW TO GET RID OF POISON IVY:

- Put a plastic bag over your arm and then pull out an individual poison ivy plant, roots and all. Invert the plastic bag, so it covers the plant and protects you from making contact with the oil, and discard it.
- Cut back the plant continuously until it dies
- Use commercial sprays like Roundup (will probably require multiple applications)

NOTE: Do not burn the plants as urushiol can be carried in the smoke and cause severe lung reactions if inhaled.



## FLOCKING TOGETHER Bird Walk at High School Park

By Margie Patlak

I thought I would be the only one. After all, how many people would give up a lazy Sunday morning to go bird watching in a suburban park at 8 AM? A lot, I discovered, much to my surprise. When I arrived at High School Park, clutching my coffee in hand, there were over a dozen people of all ages who showed up for the first bird walk in the park led by expert birder Ruth Pfeffer. Pleased to see such a good turnout, I then started to worry if the birds would turn out to fill the binoculars of these eager participants. Although I had read Mary Amar's wonderful article about all the wildlife she had seen in the park, (see the Fall 07 issue of the newsletter), I still had my doubts about the variety of birds that could be seen in such a tiny oasis of green.

Fortunately, that worry was quickly allayed because we literally hadn't gone but a few steps when Ruth excitedly pointed out about three different kinds of warblers that were avidly dining on the catkins hanging from an oak tree—a tree that hadn't leafed out yet, so we could actually see the birds. Then, in rapid-fire succession we saw or heard Baltimore orioles, several vireos, a red-breasted grosbeak, a flycatcher, and a wood thrush. "This is amazing," Ruth kept saying. "I can't believe all the birds we are seeing in this park."

Ruth was a wonderful guide. Her enthusiasm was contagious and we all learned from her vast knowledge of birds. By just listening to the bird songs, she let us know what birds were



All eyes were gazing upwards at our first bird walk in the park.

in the area and she even was able to identify birds flitting by that were in sight for no more than a few seconds. Many of us were skeptical about our potential birding abilities. It was so hard to nab these hyperactive birds in the scopes of our binoculars! But Ruth kept repeatedly pointing out to us the same birds until each of us eventually exclaimed with glee, "I see it!" And there was a growing camaraderie amongst us budding birders as we helped each other to see the birds hidden in the greenery. A camaraderie that was made even more special by the neighborhood context in which it occurred. I saw the mothers and children of my friends, my children's friends, a neighborhood librarian, local shopkeepers, as well as a few folks I got to meet for the first time.

I thought I was going to be the only one—and then I realized I was part of a neighborhood flock.

## Making Room for Natives—2008 Spring Work Parties

By Jo Fagan

This spring, we had a wonderful crew of volunteers for seven scheduled work days at High School Park that began on Earth Day in April and ended on June 22. These tireless workers tugged, dug, and lugged out a plethora of invasive weeds to make room for the native plants that belong in High School Park.

Although this work was not as exciting as planting "fun" stuff, such as trees or perennials, it is important work to lay the foundation for future plantings. Some of the "bad actors", as we like to call them, are garlic mustard, wine berry, wild grape, stinging nettle, English ivy and honeysuckle, and our volunteer crews removed them with vigor. We also spent time keeping our beautiful seating areas free of thistle, which is a prickly problem throughout the park.

Although our groups were small, our volunteers were very energetic and eager to accomplish the tasks created by Park and Restoration Management Committee (PRAM). PRAM would like to thank everyone who participated in our efforts. We especially

want to acknowledge the youth in our community that have given so much time to help us in the park. These students came to the park to do community service or special school projects, or just because they love the park and want to learn more about plants and native restoration. They asked great questions and participated with the knowledge that they were contributing to a wonderful resource for the community. Thanks to you all!

Now the fall work days are upon us, and we hope you will volunteer and help make High School Park the best it can be! Please contact Gina Craig at ginacraig@comcast.net to sign up!!

**Thank you to the following groups that participated in recent High School Park workdays. Your contribution to our native plant restoration efforts are much appreciated!**

- Wyncote Elementary Fourth Grade Class
- Robert Saligman Middle School
- Arcadia University - New Student Orientation
- Kol Ami Mitzvah Day
- Au Pair group, organized by Sharon Buckingham