

# Friends of Saxonville

Newsletter of The Friends of Saxonville, P.O. Box 3236, Framingham, MA, 01705-3236

Winter 2004

## *Troop 21: Preserving the Path*

by Brian Jones

The Carol J. Getchell Nature Trail has always been a focus of scouting efforts in Saxonville. The trail is particularly a favorite for Eagle projects, especially for Troop 21 Saxonville where two Life Scouts are on their way to becoming Eagle Scouts. Dan Cleveland and Jeremy Longden are both currently putting their efforts towards renovating and improving the trail. Both Scouts want to keep the trail in shape for future generations.

The Nature Trail was created by the Friends of Saxonville. One of the pivotal people in its creation was the late Carol Getchell. This remarkable woman was principal at Stapleton Elementary School for many years. Loved by many, Carol Getchell touched many of the students at Stapleton. Dan Cleveland and Jeremy Longden are two of these students. Both credit their Eagle projects, the nature trail dedicated in her name, to this remarkable woman.

Both scouts began planning their Eagle projects in mid-July and both have progressed quickly since their launch in late September. Each has banked around 80 hours. The intention of both scouts is to make a lasting impression on the nature trail and to improve it for future generations.

Dan Cleveland's project will include three signs positioned at the beginning, end, and Cameron axis point of the trail. These signs will tell the history of past eagle projects related to the trail, the history of the trail itself, as well as the life of Carol Getchell. He will also be putting in five benches, one of which will be put in by Danforth bridge. The other four benches currently reside in Dan's nature classroom, the biggest component of his Eagle pro-



ject. When asked about the classroom Dan commented that "It was Carol Getchell's dream to have it built (the classroom). I remember that she always had a passion for inspiring an interest in learning and I wanted to help by making her vision into something tangible."

Jeremy Longden expresses similar wishes in his project. "I wanted to do my Eagle project in honor of Carol Getchell to keep her memory alive. She helped me a lot when she was principal and this is my way of thanking her." He will be putting his efforts into the renovation of the trail. In addition to putting in one bench, Jeremy will be putting up directional signs with interesting facts along the trail as well. However, he has been putting most of his energies towards preserving the trail itself by putting stepping stones along the trail in order to provide easier access for people. Rain becomes an issue the day after a downpour because of the difficulty of traversing a trail under two inches of mud. In addition, two walk bridges have been repaired and a tree log has been removed that blocked the trail.

Both Dan and Jeremy have had a generous supply of labor from their fellow scouts in Troop 21 as well as from the Friends of Saxonville. Mike Basile, Committee Chairperson of Troop 21 and Ken Menzies, Scoutmaster have helped both boys formalize their projects and provided an initial push. Also Matt Zettek of the Framingham Advocates for the Sudbury River has donated a tremendous amount of his time to seeing their projects through.

*Photo: Fellow Troop 21 Scouts help out on Jeremy Longden's project*

### Inside this issue:

- Troop 21 Trail Projects
- School Days
- Historic Danforth Street Bridge Landscape
- Annual Meeting and other Upcoming Events
- Saxonville Postcard from the Past

## *Update: Historic Danforth Street Bridge*

**Photo and Article by George Dixon,  
Landscape plan by Julie A. Ferrari, RLA**

There are exciting things happening down by the river! Our restored 1890 Pratt pony truss bridge is back and has a beautiful new paint job and wooden deck. Although it is not yet open to the public, we are truly grateful to the Federal government for saving “Our American Treasure”. Now it’s up to our Town and citizens to make this truly the jewel of Saxonville. To begin the process, the Friends of Saxonville were pleased to meet Julie Ferrari, a Registered Landscape Architect and a mother of a Stapleton kindergartner. She has donated her services to provide an exciting conceptual plan for our site, as shown in the drawing on page 3. This plan was recently presented to the Town officials who have been working with us to make this public right of way truly a treasure that we can all enjoy.

Our dream is that over the coming years, this site will become a pedestrian and cyclist crossroads as well as a wonderful place to enjoy the designated Wild and Scenic Sudbury River. A key piece of the plan that Julie has created for us is an information kiosk, which can provide information about many of our efforts here – the Carol Getchell Nature Trail, the bridge, the Cochituate Rail Trail and our Historic Walking Tour. We believe that over time this can be an important focus for all the “Friends “ and visitors.

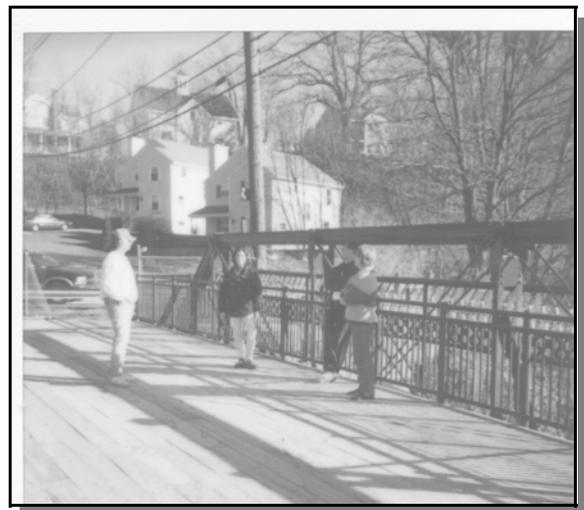


### **Saxonville makes a great new Friend...**

Julie A. Ferrari, Principal of Ferrari Site Planning and Design and a Registered Landscape Architect, began her professional experience 12 years ago when she worked for the National Park Service, documenting and drawing the historic roads and bridges of Mount Rainier National Park in Washington. She then worked for the architecture firm Imai/Keller, Inc. of Watertown, MA and was an Associate Landscape Architect at Sasaki Associates, also of Watertown, for 5 years. At Sasaki, Ms. Ferrari was involved in the design and construction of several projects, including corporate, campus and urban landscapes. In September of 2000, Ms. Ferrari began a private practice in Framingham.

The Board of Directors of Friends of Saxonville thank Julie Ferrari for her generous contribution and volunteer spirit!

In the photo below, Julie Ferrari, center, discusses her plan with Board members on the newly restored Historic Danforth Street Bridge





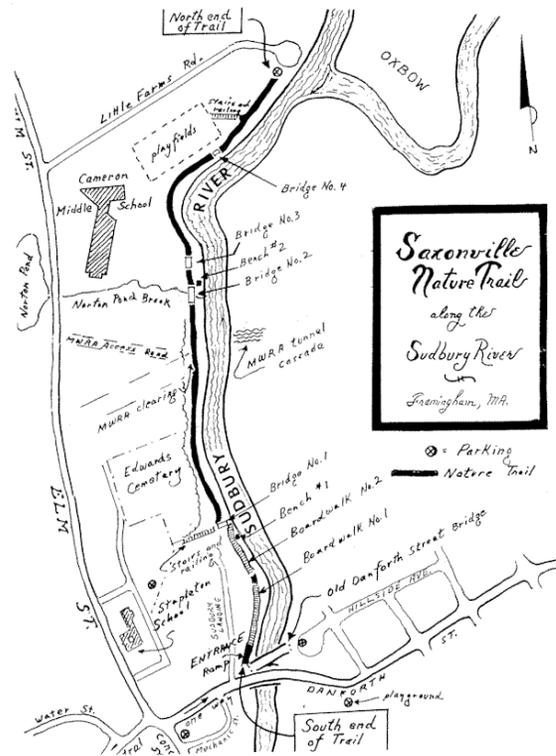
# More on Saxonville Troop 21

The author of our cover story, Brian Jones, is a Life Scout and a student at Xaverian, where he writes for the school newspaper.

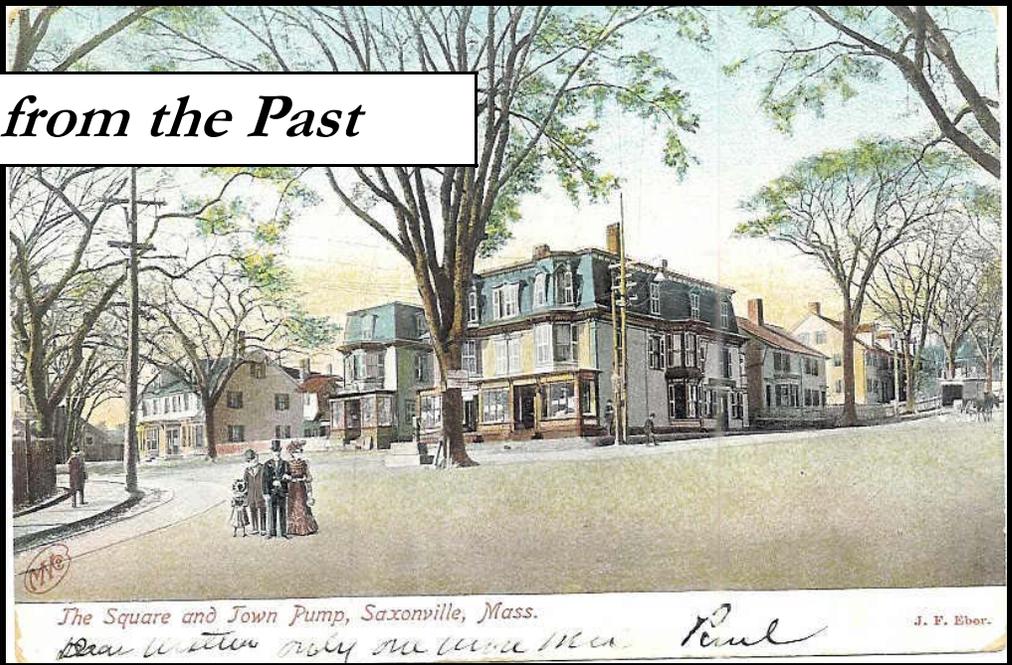
Boy Scout Troop 21 will soon celebrate its 50th year in Saxonville. The Troop began in 1954 and has run continuously since then. Presently, they meet once a week on Friday nights at St. George's Church. Overnight camping excursions are made monthly to interesting and/or challenging locations throughout New England.

Today the Troop has 19 Scouts and always welcomes more, age 11-17. Younger boys can join the associated Cub Scout Pack 2, which meets one Thursday per month at St. George's Church.

For more information about Troop 21, please contact Dave Longden at [dlongden@ix.netcom.com](mailto:dlongden@ix.netcom.com) or phone at 508-877-7034.



## Postcard from the Past



# School Days

## Interview and Article by Cynthia Busone

Jim and Janice (Kirkpatrick) Rousseau, who graduated from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the Saxonville School in '52 and '54 respectively, grew up in Saxonville very close to the school, he on Elm Street, she on Edwards. During their years in Saxonville these school sweethearts (they married in 1957) have witnessed many changes in the school and the village, but there is a strong sense of continuity, too!

"We both grew up within a stone's throw of the school," offered Janice and Jim as they sat in their cozy living room on Potter Road. "In fact," added Janice, "when we first came to Saxonville my family lived in a house on Johnson Street. Jimmy would ride on his bicycle over there to play with Jackie Gallimore. I was in the second grade and Jim was in the fourth." Even the most relaxed of parents would think several times before sending children off on a bike through the traffic in McGrath Square now, but back then more people were on foot than in cars, and the busiest times at the Square occurred when the B&W bus arrived on its runs to and from Framingham.

Jim recalled that although most of the students walked to school, the Mayos brought in outlying children. "They still had some horses, but had started using station wagons - a Pontiac, I think, and later a couple of school buses, with Harry Thorpe and Charlie Crawford as the bus drivers. Now, over one hundred buses get the kids to school," said Jim, who is one of those drivers.

Elementary school passed in a happy blur. Of course there was no library at the school, but there were regular trips to the Michael Simpson Reading Room in the Schaltenbrand Block, and taking a walk was fun! No cafeteria graced the building when the school went on single session during the 1949 -50 school year. Desks were scrubbed and students ate lunches brought from home in their classrooms.

The auditorium with one basketball net on the balcony wall and the other above the stage doubled as basketball and volleyball court. When the folding chairs were removed, how the lovely Palladian windows were saved from flying balls is a mystery! There wasn't a computer or printer in sight, and thus not many handouts, but Miss Gina McGraw, the school secretary had her typewriter and carbon paper and mimeograph machine in the office for really important matters. Miss Falby, the sixth grade

*(Continued on page 6)*

## MONEY MATTERS



This past quarter has seen many efforts to raise funds for various Friends of Saxonville initiatives.

Carla Fink, FOS member and volunteer, worked with Jan Harrington, FOS VP, and the Town of Framingham Planning Department to submit two grants.

One grant seeks Town-controlled Community Development Block Grant funding to install handicap access features on the Athenaeum. Presently, lack of these features prevents FOS from obtaining additional funding for use or renovation of this town-owned historic landmark.

The second grant was a joint submission with the Town of Framingham to the Massachusetts Turnpike Tourism Grant Program. Our submission sought funding for full-color, tourist-type brochures that would highlight our many recreational, environmental and historical sites and offer trail maps and walking tour guides.

Also in the works is a second try at grant funding for capacity building, so that we may have the tools necessary to grow our membership and enlarge our audience.

Aside from grant-type fundraising, Friends of Saxonville recently received a \$1000 donation to its "challenge" for Athenaeum restoration. Generous donations have also been received from former Saxonville residents and local organizations.

If you wish to make a financial contribution toward the specific FOS initiative of your choice, you may do so using the membership form on the back of this newsletter.

*(Continued from page 5)*

teacher, stood out as Janice's favorite (one grade, one teacher for it, back then), and although the "special teachers" for music, art, and gym only came around once every two weeks, there were music books for daily singing, afternoon games of softball on the playground and plenty of art projects in class. After school activities in the school neighborhood included playing ball on Edwards Street, sledding in the cemetery, skating at the Barney and playing near the stone wall that bounded the property surrounding the wooden building. Although TV's were beginning to appear in village living rooms, the programming (usually test patterns in the day time) did not send children running in from outdoor play! A "Play Station" was the area around the rickety balance beam, the jungle gym, or the fire escape!

By junior high (these classes were held on the top floor of the school) students moved around for classes, brought books home for homework, AND there were some men teachers on the faculty! Mr. Sannicandro, Mr. Bazzinotti, and Mr. McMillan taught math and social studies, and Mr. Roberts supervised the shop, boys' gym classes, and coached the boys' sports teams. Even the elementary kids had a man teacher – Mr. Convery!

Junior high was special! "We cast our votes for president by putting our ballot in a box in the auditorium. Eisenhower won in our election. Maybe I voted for him because of the talks around the table with my family," smiled Janice.

Ninth grade was a truly exciting year. Ninth graders were the head of the school and were expected to lead by example; there were privileges too! Officers were elected, and Janice became class treasurer. The class prepared its yearbook – the Saxophonia – by writing a greeting from president, Joe Zichella, and a history, will, prophecy and "ifs," composed by various class members. The will hinted, but only barely, at the changes in store for the school, when Claire Welch left her chewing gum to help set the cornerstone for the new addition. Gina in the office made multiple copies for the class, and then, in that low tech era, each cover was colored by hand in the school colors, blue and gold!

Girls got white dresses for the class picture and graduation at Nevins Hall. Boys steeled themselves for suits or sport coats, shirts and ties! For weeks the gym classes practiced the grand march with its ranks of students entering the auditorium floor by twos, then fours, then eights, followed by pin wheels and larger

circles, all for the enjoyment of parents and townspeople who looked down from their seats in the balcony at the emerging patterns below on the dance floor, colorful with tulle ballerina length gowns and white shirts and ties! Janice was going with Jimmy, now a high school student, and shortly before the prom a box arrived by mail from Boston to her house on Elm Street. With it was a note from her grandmother who had found the dress in Filene's Basement and wanted Janice to wear it, "if she liked it".

"Like it?! I loved it," laughed Janice. "It had a white net skirt and a gold lame top. It was just beautiful!" So, in her new gown, with Jim at her side, the couple walked down Elm Street to the auditorium. Families gathered in the balcony and at the rear of the hall, and Jim's Nanny and Grampy were seated at the side of the hall, as the festivities began. Janice's class of '54 was the last ninth grade class to graduate from Saxonville. The following year the entire junior high was sent to the Memorial School. An era had ended. But for the happy crowd at school there was the wonderful fun of a formal occasion, surrounded by the people closest to them to warm and reassure them as they moved on to a bigger stage and their places in it, well prepared by where they came from.



***A special thank you...***

***To Cynthia Buscone***

*Consistent contributor to this newsletter, dedicated volunteer, and the author of "Do You Remember Maybaskets?", which is the inspiration for our May Day Event Celebration!*

*The editor welcomes all letters, articles and story ideas! Please forward your suggestions to Charlene Frary at 870 Old Connecticut Path or CFraryRltr@aol.com*

***Annual Meeting  
Tuesday, April 6th***

***7:00 social, 7:30 meeting –Stapleton Elementary School***

Join us and bring a new “Friend” to the 6th Friends of Saxonville Annual Meeting! Celebrate winter’s end, visit with neighbors and friends and catch up on Friends of Saxonville business – perhaps even relive some school day memories in this vintage school auditorium.

**Annual Topics include:**

- ◆ President’s Address
- ◆ Treasurer’s Report
- ◆ Election of New Officers
- ◆ Progress reports on all Initiatives
- ◆ Upcoming events , including  
May Day, Riverfest and  
FHSM House Tour

***New This Year...  
Volunteer  
Appreciation Program***

And you won’t want to miss our featured speaker:

***Todd Robecki***

*Chair, Framingham Historic  
District Commission*

*On the topic of*

***Saxonville’s Historic  
Architecture...  
“What Style is It?”***

Board of Directors  
Friends of Saxonville

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- Jan Harrington, Vice President
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\* terms expire April 2004

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Friends of Saxonville  
PO BOX 3236  
Framingham, MA 01705

# Friends of Saxonville Membership Form

(detach and return to Friends of Saxonville, PO BOX 3236, Framingham, MA 01705)



The mission of the Friends of Saxonville is to educate the public about the special identity of Saxonville, an historic neighborhood of Framingham, Massachusetts, and to preserve, enhance and protect its cultural, environmental and historical qualities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTRIBUTION \$ _____ (Minimum annual dues are \$15)	I am interested in:			
<input type="checkbox"/> ATHENAEUM	<input type="checkbox"/> NATURE TRAIL	<input type="checkbox"/> FUNDRAISING	<input type="checkbox"/> RAIL TRAIL	<input type="checkbox"/> DANFORTH BRIDGE