

# FRIENDS OF FOREST HILL PARK

*The Forest Hill Park Post*



January 2019

President	Patricia Wood
Vice President	Terry Fitzgerald
Treasurer	Lee Shewmake
Secretary	Carolyn Paulette

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

## Victorian Christmas Brings Cheer

The children's eyes were bright and smiles abounded at the Stone House on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

Youngsters listened to the Backpack Storyteller with rapt attention as she told them about the Steadfast Tin Soldier and the Stocking Girl. As the storyteller finished the stories, she asked if anyone had heard the jingle bells near the rear door and, at that moment, Santa appeared! All eyes were on the jolly fellow dressed in red as he greeted the children and took his seat near the Christmas tree.

The little ones began to visit Santa and he remarked how some had grown since last Christmas. The children, one after another, shared their Christmas wishes and each received a candy cane as Santa wished them a Merry Christmas.

Many of the children made cards and ornaments at the craft tables. Lots of creativity was on display and parents seemed pleased to have the cards and ornaments to take home.

There were visitors of all ages. Some came without children and they, too, enjoyed the spectacle and good will. The hot cider, cookies and other treats enhanced the Christmas spirit as did the bountiful seasonal decorations throughout the house.



## Combating *Albizia Julibrissins* in Forest Hill Park

*Albizia Julibrissin* trees, better known as Mimosas, are aggressive invaders in Forest Hill Park. *Albizia julibrissin* is native to Asia and was first introduced into the U.S. in 1745. It has been widely used as an ornamental. The only positive attribute of this foreigner is the blooms, which are fluffy, fragrant and pink.

Mimosas are small trees, growing to a maximum height of about 30'. Sometimes they have multiple trunks. The leaves resemble ferns and flowers appear in early summer in groups at the end of branches.

Mimosa fruits are 6" long pods containing seeds that develop in late summer. The seeds are carried by birds and animals to surrounding soil. The seeds will take root in any type of disturbed soil resulting in mimosa trees growing in old fields, along stream banks and roadsides. Once established, mimosa is difficult to remove due to the long lived seeds and its ability to re-sprout vigorously.

Friends of Forest Hill Park has been removing mimosa trees from park land, but recently called in reinforcements to take down three large invaders that had grown too tall to cut with hand saws. Michael Gee, Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Crew Chief, arrived with a truck full of tree removal gear, including bright orange coveralls.

Once cutting angles and the felling area had been decided, Michael, with power saw in hand did quick work. Two volunteers dragging cut trunks and limbs to a central pile finished the project.



Michael is visible only because he's wearing an orange helmet.



**Mark Your Calendar** for the Conservation Landscaping Workshop, presented by Bill Shanabruch, March 23rd from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Stone House.

The workshop will include a walk in Forest Hill Park to identify common invasive plants and a hands-on demonstration of proper planting and mulching techniques. **This workshop is FREE for members of Friends of Forest Hill Park and costs \$15 for non-members. All participants will receive a complimentary native plant from Reedy Creek Environmental. Advanced Registration is required. Workshop size is limited to 20 participants.**

**Registration will be available on our website during February.**

## The Quest

The Community Roots program has enabled us to receive and plant several young trees in the park during the last two years: two bur oaks, two beeches, two poplars, a sycamore, a sweet bay magnolia, a maple, a hackberry and a red bud.

The variation of species was intentional because diversity in woodlands is healthy and offers enhanced beautiful colors and patterns. Our list this year was not complete, though, without a post oak and a white ash.

Neither of these trees was available locally, so the quest began. We found our post oak at a nursery in Tennessee and located our white ash at a nursery in Georgia. Our final planting party this year was December 1st when the white ash tree became the newest tree in the park.

Each new tree is surrounded with mulch, staked and watered to give it the best chance to grow and thrive. Planting is only the beginning of our mission to supplement the older tree stock in the park. Checking on the health of each newly planted tree for 2-3 years helps eliminate problems that might cause damage.

An example is the newly planted sweetbay magnolia tree that looked so healthy on the day of planting, yet one week later was nearly defoliated. A close look revealed that deer had rubbed against the little tree's trunk causing limbs to drop to the ground. Fortunately, the magnolia continues to appear healthy. Deer persist in rubbing against tree trunks, mature and young, but it is rare that permanent damage is caused.

Visits will continue to all of the new trees until they are beyond two years old. It's enjoyable to see how they're growing and to help them prosper, if needed.



The white ash tree's new home in Forest Hill Park. L to R, Mary, Carolyn, Suzette, Pat and Terry (photographer) were on site.

## Happy New Year from Friends of Forest Hill Park



My pipe is out, my glass is dry;  
My fire is almost ashes too;  
But once again, before you go,  
And I prepare to meet the New;  
Old Year! A parting word that's true,  
For we've been comrades, you and I –  
*I thank God for each day of you;*  
There! Bless you now! Old Year, good-bye!

Robert W. Service, "The Passing of the Year," 1912