

Scout Project Gets Samuel Senior Park Ready for Classes



Samuel P. Senior Memorial Park was once home to an outdoor classroom designed to educate local children about the role wetlands play in improving water quality and providing wildlife habitat. Thanks to the efforts of Milo Goldstein and fellow Boy Scouts from Troop 66, the park is ready to do so once again.

Built in 1963, the outdoor classroom had sustained extensive damage from storms, wind and rain since its original construction. With its raised planks over the wetlands and prime location on Center Road, across from Town Hall, the park is a little-known town treasure.



Milo Goldstein and Charles Lynch at the entrance to Samuel P. Senior Memorial Park. — Kris Lynch Photo

“Over the years, and in particular due to Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the classroom was badly damaged and became unusable,” said Charles Lynch, president of the Samuel P. Senior Memorial Park Board.

The damaged classroom turned out to be the perfect opportunity for Milo Goldstein, 15, a junior at Joel Barlow High School. Milo has been a member of Boy Scout Troop 66 for three years and is working to earn his Eagle Scout badge.

One of the requirements is to “plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school, or your community,” according to the Boy Scouts of America. Repairing the classroom fit the bill perfectly for Milo.

“I looked for a project that would benefit Easton, not necessarily one I chose myself,” he

said. "In searching and asking around for what the town needed, I found Mr. Lynch's request for the outdoor classroom restoration, and took it on."

Goldstein started planning the project last November and began the physical labor of repairing the classroom with a group of Boy Scouts that he oversaw. The scouts built six 10-foot long wooden benches and a lectern with pressurized lumber supplied by the park board.

"I am definitely most proud of the bench stability and design," Milo said. "They are visually similar to the old benches, but these won't fall apart in a few years and are very sturdy. The design was a culmination of my own efforts as well as some research I did both online and asking around."

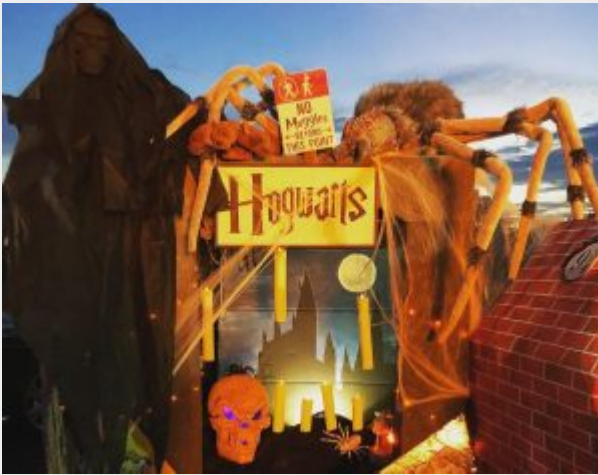
The project took around three weekends and was completed on Oct. 10. The restored classroom can accommodate roughly 25 students.

The next step is for the park board to find local experts who can volunteer to speak at the classroom about the wetlands, plants, and trees in the area and provide a thorough educational experience to students who visit the park. Lynch and the board will reach out to educators at Helen Keller Middle School and Samuel Staples Elementary about classes for Easton's elementary and middle school students.

"We thank Milo for this excellent work in designing this project, obtaining the materials, and rebuilding this outdoor classroom," Lynch said. "We wish him success in receiving his Eagle Scout badge."

Maps for self-guided tours of the park are available at the Easton Library or can be accessed [here](#).

Halloween Celebrations Change But Carry On



For years now, after summer has ended, the Easton community looks forward to celebrating fall with festivities organized by town residents. However, public health restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic are causing major changes and cancellations for this year's celebrations.

The most beloved autumn event, the bonfire and Halloween costume contest, will not be taking place this year due to capacity regulations for outdoor events to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The Lions Club of Easton has sponsored the bonfire for decades, according to Charles Lynch, one of the event leaders.



The Lions Club bonfire at Samuel Staples Elementary School is a Halloween Eve tradition.

“The Lions Club has been sponsoring this event for the past 75 years,” Lynch said. “Timothy McCann and the fire department help set up these big 30-foot wooden posts for the bonfire, and people come in their best costumes, eat snacks, listen to music and drink cider.

“Normally we have a crowd of 300 to 400 people, but this year the max capacity could only be 150 guests because of Covid,” said Lynch. “So, the Lions had to cancel the Halloween bonfire.”

The pandemic has taken a toll on other autumn events this year as well. The annual Trunk or Treat event at Samuel Staples Elementary School also had to be canceled. The event would have been set up for people to decorate their trunks with a theme of their choice and hand out candy to the children.

“We’ve been having it here in Easton for seven or eight years now where we typically get around 350-400 participants, and we’re all really upset that it’s not being held this year,” according to Danielle Alves, Easton Park and Recreation Department director.



The Easton Public Library Storybook Parade marches along Morehouse Road. —
Archive Photo

The Easton Public Library usually hosts autumn events such as the storybook parade and Country Fair and Cow Chip Raffle that help with fundraising. The fundraising event was discontinued a few years ago due to the lack of active Friends of the Library members, and the book parade will be different this year due to the pandemic, according to Lynn Zaffino, library director.

“For almost 30 years, the friends have been doing a book parade and this year we are making it a car parade,” said Zaffino. “So, normally it would be a parade that starts a mile up the road where children and parents dress up as their favorite book characters and would march from the school to the library. But this year we’re encouraging people to decorate their cars in book themes, and the kids will get goodie bags at the end of the parade instead of activities inside the library.”

The library would normally hold an event the week before Halloween where children trick or treat inside the library, except that this year it will be held virtually.

“Normally we would ask all of the kids from the children’s program to come throughout

the week dressed up and we would take them trick or treating around the library to different stations,” said Zaffino. “What the children’s department is doing instead is a Halloween program over Zoom called Zoomaween, where the kids can wear costumes if they want, share their favorite books and listen to the librarians read Halloween picture books for the younger kids and scary books for the older kids.”

The Easton Community Center will also sponsor Halloween events, according to Tina Turechek, art and marketing director. Turechek said they have created fun events that comply with Covid -19 safety guidelines to keep the community happy and safe.



The ECC Pet Halloween Costume Contest invites the community to submit photos by Oct. 25 for community judging on Oct. 26.

“We are going to be running a social media Pet Halloween Costume Contest, where participants will submit photos to the Easton Community Center,” said Turechek. People

may send in their photos to be posted online and vote for their favorite on Oct. 26.

“Our preschool will be having a Halloween parade outside by class only in smaller groups than usual, but each child participating will be dressing up in their Halloween costume and marching around the ECC gazebo,” Turechek said. “We will be having individual Halloween classroom parties in the preschool as well.”

The pandemic may have changed Halloween this year, but community leaders are hopeful that the events they’ve planned will still give everyone that warm festive feeling during such a confusing time.

“I think the main thing that I’m hoping is that although things aren’t running the way they normally do that people will still try and find a way to participate in the events because we are really trying very hard, and we have been ever since we were shut down in March,” said Zaffino. “We are trying to engage with the community in different ways with digital and virtual programs to let people know that the library is here and we’re still offering things to the community.”

The Lions Club plans to bring back the bonfire “as big as ever next year,” Lynch said.