L aughter … and then an enormous SPLASH!

More giggles, whoops and shouts. Then … another ginormous SPLASH as bodies hit the water.

When you visit F.T. Proctor Park in late spring and throughout the summer, saunter down to Starch Factory Creek, located in the northeast section of the Park, just across the road and several yards down from the big stonework planter that sits below the row of flowering crabapple trees and the Lily Pond.

That’s where the action is, and we’re not just talking wildlife. We’re talking kids. Kids of all sizes – and ages – who like to swim and cannonball into the Creek’s cool water.

Starch Factory Creek is fast becoming a major attraction in the Park. And, in the last couple of years, the Central New York Conservancy and the City of Utica have made a number of positive alterations to the area.

There’s a Butterfly Garden with paths to walk, lots of wild flowers and tall grasses that make a perfect place to hide and large boulders to sit on and soak up the sun. American Elms have been planted along the Creek, too. And, perhaps best of all, the sloping terrain down to the Creek has been restored and replanted.

Before restoration, the Creek’s slope was a jumble of exotic shrubs, mostly rosa multiflora (Japanese rose) and Japanese knotweed. All of those exotics have been eliminated.

The slope was replanted using Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.’s 1914 planting plan as a guide. Winterberry, elderberry, red twigged dogwood and sweet pepper bush now grow along the bank. These are all hardy plants that do well in wet or dry conditions.

These plants also support wildlife that is native to the Park, especially birds. According to the Conservancy’s landscape design consultant, Katechen Cardamone, “Red twigged dogwood provides high lipid, fatty fruit for migratory birds. Winterberry retains its fruit into the winter and will sustain over-wintering birds.”

Like most municipal parks, F.T. Proctor Park has endured its share of environmental and cultural assaults on its original design. “Exotic invasive plants, the stress associated with public use – and sometimes – misuse and scarce resources for the repair and restoration of park structures have taken their toll,” said Cardamone.

Continued on page 3…
Park’s Butterfly Garden Inspires a Song

Quick – think of a song inspired by a place!

Oh, sure. There are songs about leaving your heart in San Francisco and loving Paris in the summer when it sizzles. There’s even a tune or two about what happens under the Boardwalk.

But, there’s a song that was inspired by Utica’s very own F.T. Proctor Park – it’s Butterfly Garden, to be exact.

Barneveld resident Roger Smith spends a great deal of time among Utica’s parks and on the Parkway. He’s been photographing F.T. Proctor Park since 2005 for the Conservancy’s calendar and newsletter.

But, the parks aren’t just a photo op for Smith. He truly enjoys walking the Park’s paths, talking to the dog walkers, bikers, ball players and stroller-pushers. He’s especially fond of the Butterfly Garden, no matter what the season.

Smith is also an inveterate journal-keeper and one day, his visit to the Butterfly Garden resulted in a set of lyrics, which he set to a tune. The resulting song, Mariposa Garden, appears on Smith’s newly recorded CD entitled “blues.”

He performed Mariposa Garden at a CD-release party at the Tramontane Café on Lincoln Ave, in late October. If you’re a musician, the guitar chords are D/A7/C9/D and it’s played in 3/4 time:

We went to the garden
Butterflies were gliding in the day
We sat in the sun, watching and holding hands
Here it is, a place for making life’s plans –
Bring your love, bring your love...

There’s no being angry
In mariposa garden
At noonday, when butterflies flex their wings
Or in evening when crickets, the crickets are chirping
Bring your love, bring your love...

We went to the garden
But the butterflies had gone for the day
So we sat on the wall and kissed like a couple of school kids
We planned a life bigger than the Pyramids
We brought our love, we brought our love and the garden did call.

Music and lyrics ©Roger B. Smith 2011
Saving the Creek...

continued from page 1

“Each season, the Conservancy fulfills its mission to promote healthy, sustainable, public green spaces by working a plan that marries the interests of historic intent with the health and future of the landscape,” Cardamone explained.

Next summer, there will be grins, giggles, and giant water splashes cohabitating nicely with feasting birds and butterflies along Starch Factory Creek. Don’t forget to bring your camera!

Making the Parkway even more memorable

With 8 of its 14 monuments “adopted”, the 2011 season on the Memorial Parkway offered a “wow-some” sight from May through the first week of November.

Thanks to the continuing generosity of several Conservancy benefactors who have underwritten the planting and re-design of many of the Parkway monument flower beds, by Memorial Day 2011, Central New York Conservancy and City of Utica workers and volunteers had the lengthy boulevard looking positively stunning from Genesee Street to Culver Avenue.

Several monuments received “special treatment” as a result of sponsorship. The World War II/Korean War monument (sponsored by Eugene and Loretta Romano) was enhanced with the removal of several sections of juniper.

The monument to Christopher Columbus (sponsored by Carin Mei) was planted with new flowering bulbs and perennials. A new design was introduced at the feet of General Pulaski (Christopher and Virginia Kelly are its underwriters). Shrubs were removed and a new design was introduced that features numerous spring bulbs and perennials. The City of Utica provided the shrubs and trees and the Conservancy purchased the perennials that will bloom for years to come. Conservancy intern Mike Cowley worked with landscape design consultant Katechen Cardamone and gardeners Cheryl and Peter Youngman to plant, grade, prune, weed, mulch and provide ongoing seasonal care to Pulaski and other Parkway monuments.

One of the monument beds required some intensive care because it became “drought stressed” before the Conservancy crew could get it properly watered. The bedding plants and flowers that surround the monument to Vice President Sherman (underwritten by Ron and Cecelia Gouse) nearly succumbed to the dry conditions and summer warmth. “There’s always a problem with heat from the sidewalk on this section of the Parkway,” noted Cardamone. The monument is sited at the corner of Burrstone Road and Genesee Street, where four lanes of traffic and several turning lanes subject plants and flowers to exhaust from cars and busses in addition to summer temperatures and dry conditions.

Several other sponsored monuments continued to receive updates and ongoing maintenance to their plantings:

Gen. Baron von Steuben (underwritten by Harold T. Clark/Adirondack Bank)
- The Swan Fountain (sponsored by William F. Locke)
- The Vietnam Memorial (adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Dave Short)
- The 9/11 Monument (underwritten by Drs. Frank Dubeck and Marybeth McCall)

There are still unique opportunities remaining for monument sponsorship. What could be a better gift for your family or friends than contributing to the continuing care of the gorgeous plants and flowers that adorn the monuments along Utica’s historic Memorial Parkway. To find out more about underwriting the design and planting of a monument, please contact William F. Locke, Conservancy President, at 315-724-4186.

One of the newly planted and designed beds created along the Memorial Parkway this Spring.

The Very Image of a General: The monument to Gen. Baron von Steuben received a “lift” with new plants and flowers.
A Season in Pictures

If you didn’t have the opportunity to visit Utica’s F.T. Proctor Park or the Memorial Parkway this spring and summer, here’s what you missed. It’s enough to make you plan NOT to miss it during the spring and summer of 2012!

The Conservancy’s 2011 on-site crew: (clockwise from upper right): Summer intern Mike Cowley, landscape design consultant Katechen Cardamone and gardeners Cheryl and Peter Youngman discuss the day’s plan of attack.

Heeere’s Mikey! Mike Cowley served as the Conservancy’s summer intern for 2011.

Before: Tall grass and overgrown weeds obscure the beauty of the stone work of what will soon be transformed…

After: …into a well tended small garden, thanks to the ministrations of a local garden club that “adopted” the stone structure.
"Borrowed views" is a phrase coined by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. to describe views of features beyond the original landscape.

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Woman at Work: Cheryl Youngman brought her expertise with growing things to F.T. Proctor Park during Summer 2011 where she and her husband, Peter, worked with Katechen Cardamone to keep the Parks and Parkway groomed and beautifully maintained.

A Park visitor steps a little closer to admire the delicate growth.

Peter Youngman trims and prunes judiciously near the entrance to F.T. Proctor Park.
Continuing the Conservancy’s Legacy

A great, big, bloomin’ thank you!

Each season since its inception, the Central New York Conservancy has received support from a number of individuals, garden clubs, companies and foundations who consider its work a significant priority deserving of support. Nearly $30,000 in gifts was received by the Conservancy from new and long-time contributors. Every gift is important, for your donations directly support the restoration and maintenance projects that keep Utica’s Parks and Parkway System in peak condition all year long.

Gifts (January 2010 – October 2011)

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New Sign in F.T. Proctor Park

Sign Language: City of Utica workers get ready to install the new sign in F.T. Proctor Park.

Every Picture Tells a Story: The newly placed sign in F.T. Proctor Park includes a map to help visitors find specific features.

Both Sides Now: The new sign in F.T. Proctor Park includes a map to help visitors find specific features.
Please help the CNY Conservancy preserve & protect Utica's Olmsted parks

You can help the Central New York Conservancy sustain its ability to preserve, restore and maintain the beauty and elegance of the Utica Parks System.

There are two straightforward and simple ways you may use to support the Conservancy:
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