

## Greetings from Sholan Farms

Our 2018 season is beginning! Thank you to all our valued volunteers, staff and customers. This is the time of year filled with excitement and optimism. The apples, peaches, raspberries and blueberries are all set and it looks like another fantastic harvest just weeks away. The vegetable garden and pumpkins have all been planted.

Everyone wants to know what is new. During the winter, the Board spent countless hours developing a new 5-year business plan, which is filled with many goals and objectives. We will need help from everyone to complete the many tasks. The 2017 Annual Report has just been released. Copies of both documents are available on line or by contacting a board member. Each document is filled with information and exciting new goals that we can all work on.

We welcome our new Orchard Manager, Sam Holmes. We welcome back Emily Watkevich our Assistant Farm Manager and Cindy LaFleur, our Farm Stand Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. Emily spent the winter months pruning the apple trees.

We have a passion to restore this orchard, and to see it used to its full capacity. However, it is not just our orchard-it belongs to the community! This is your orchard as well as ours! Help us make it productive again! As a non-profit organization, we rely on the support and contributions of volunteers. Helping out benefits everybody involved! By giving your time, you can essentially purchase apples. 10 hours of work converts to half price on apples.

To the numerous volunteers, many of whom we see each time we call, a heartfelt thank you. To the City of Leominster, thank you for enabling us to be the partner organization to make a difference at Sholan Farms. Finally, to the community, we ask for your continued involvement, including membership and support of Sholan Farms, to keep it a viable asset. We will continue to advocate for its maintenance, protection, and preservation. We will look to everyone to work toward the goal of keeping Sholan Farms the treasure it is. May your investment of time and talent be an equal partner to your enjoyment of Sholan Farms.

### Join us to keep this legacy alive.

The Friends of Sholan Farms is a 501(c)3 volunteer organization that assists with programs, maintenance, farming, and preservation of Sholan Farms. The Farm is owned by the City of Leominster and protected under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) and a Conservation Restriction (CR). As a city owned property, Sholan Farms belongs to us all. We encourage you to visit the farm and enjoy the beauty and tranquility that is Sholan Farms. Note: Since 2001, The Friends of Sholan Farms have harvested over six million pounds of apples, many of which have been donated to local food banks and non-profit entities.

-Joanne DiNardo, President BOD

## Board of Directors

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**Special thanks to the Friends' Board of Directors who volunteer their time throughout the year to make Sholan Farms succeed. A sincere thanks goes to family members who have also given of their time and support the board members which enabled them to make such a commitment to Sholan Farms.**

**Thank You All**

## Orchard Manager—Sam Holmes

Hello All!

When I was tasked with writing my first Orchard Manager's report my mind started whirling with all of the information that could/should be included. So much has happened in the few months since I started, it would take up more than just a page of the newsletter!

First things first, let me introduce myself. My name is Sam Holmes and I live right here in Leominster, MA. Originally from Shirley, I moved to Leominster about four years ago with my better half Valerie and our cat Paige. Nine months ago we welcomed our son Tate into our world. He is growing very fast and loves tractors just like his Dad. As challenging as parenthood can be, we can't imagine life any other way.

In my off time, one could find me playing softball in the LAMSA league on Litchfield Street, or flag football in the Eagles Club league. On particularly lucky days, I may make it out to play some golf! I also commit my weekends in the spring and summer to coaching thirteen year old baseball for the Nokona Baseball Club in Ashland.

As for my professional experience, I have worked in many different fields. Most recently I spent four years as a special educator in the Ayer –Shirley school system. More applicable to my current position; I have years of managerial experience as well as five years working at Twin Valley Farm in Pepperell. At Twin Valley, I gained much experience with a lot of the equipment we use here at Sholan.

I started with Sholan Farms on March 30th, and haven't looked back since. It feels like yesterday I was putting on my heavy coat to go out and prune apple trees. Since then, I have been learning a ton, accomplishing a great amount, and meeting a myriad of people. One thing is for sure: Sholan Farms is right up my alley!

Over the past few months, I have been working primarily getting the fields ready for planting, while maintaining the orchard and doing a bit of learning in between. There certainly is no shortage of jobs to do while at Sholan.

Most recently, we have been working hard to get all of the seeds in the ground for a (hopefully) fulfilled crop of farm stand produce for the upcoming season. We are almost done, and nearing the point in the year where we might be able to take a deep breath or two!

As I said I have met many people already in my time as Orchard Manager, and I am always happy to hear from each and every one of them what sort of connection they have to our community farm. So if you haven't already, feel free to introduce yourself, lend a helping hand, or just say hello!

Best Regards,

Sam Holmes

## Facilities Update

Work continues around the farm to keep everything looking good. Already this year we have accomplished the following:

- The farm and farm stand were cleaned up and prepared for the Apple Blossom Festival.
- Leominster CTE Carpentry and Electrical shops completed work on our new storage building. -
- Grass around the farm stand and the entire orchard is continually being mowed. -
- The well that was drilled last year is now online. It is so nice to be able to fill storage tanks and not worry about the well going dry. -
- The blueberry irrigation system has been set up.

If you have some time we could use some help with the following:

- The new storage building and mixing station storage shed need to be painted. -
- We need to set up new shelving in the new storage building.

If you would like to help send an email to: [info@sholanfarms.com](mailto:info@sholanfarms.com) or contact Steve Smith at 978-870-27  
--Steve Smith, Vice President Board of Directors

## Volunteers are the heart and soul of Sholan Farms!

Each year Sholan Farms prepares for their harvest season which takes place from late August through the end of October, by recruiting volunteers and seasonal staff for a variety of tasks. Sholan Farms continues to grow in popularity and as a tourist destination which results in the need for more volunteers. You might be thinking that you can't fit one more thing into your busy schedule but please consider even if it's a couple of hours a week, or one afternoon a month, or a couple of mornings a month, any combination will work. Even if your time is limited during the Harvest Season we would appreciate as little as three hours of your time. As a thank you, each volunteer will receive half off on apples after achieving 10 hours of volunteer time!

Here is a list of some of the tasks that need to be done at Sholan Farms:

- blueberry and raspberry picking in the morning (usually about 9am for an hour or two)
- mowing, pruning, weeding, spreading mulch
- Tour guides on wagon rides (script is written)
- working in the farm stand, cashier, answering the phone, restocking produce, sweeping and straightening out
- working in the Country Store

This is just a partial list of the many things that need to be done to keep the farm thriving and growing year after year. There's a lot more to it than polishing, grading, and packing apples. I agree that polishing apples is fun and many people want to do it but please consider and or ask what other areas need tending to at Sholan Farms

If you are the type of person who "hates to get your hands dirty" but wants to contribute to your community, consider becoming a member of the Friends of Sholan Farms. Sholan Farms has different levels of membership. Beginning at \$25 annually for individual, family and corporate members. The yearly membership fee entitles you to discounts and attend meetings throughout the year.

Please call the farm stand and leave a message or send me an email to: [cindyafleur@sholanfarms.com](mailto:cindyafleur@sholanfarms.com) and I will be glad to discuss more in detail. I look forward to hearing from you at the farm!

Best Regards,

Cindy LaFleur

Farm Stand Manager and Volunteer Coordinator

## Mandatory Volunteer Training

We've heard from many volunteers that there are many things about Sholan Farms that they were unaware of. We understand that many of you have volunteered for a long time but never received a complete orientation to Sholan Farms. To remedy this and be sure that everyone is properly trained we are holding two training sessions that will include cash register training for those interested in working at the register and a general orientation about the farm and what we have to offer.

**Wednesday, August 22 from 6 to 8 pm and Saturday, August 25 from 9 to 11 am**, both at the farm stand.

Refreshments will be served at these trainings. If you are a cashier or want to be a cashier it is mandatory that you attend register training that will be held at the same time. Procedures, pricing, and equipment changes from year to year and we want you all to be comfortable using the cash register.

If you can not attend either of these trainings please contact Cindy LaFleur at 978-840-3276 and we will schedule another training to accommodate you. Thank you so much for all that you do for Sholan Farms.



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***Growing Apples for your Health!!***

## FRIENDS OF SHOLAN FARMS

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This newsletter was compiled and  
edited by Patti LaGrassa

### **About Our Organization**

The Friends of Sholan Farms is a non-profit corporation that relies solely on the support of its members, sponsors and volunteers. We are formed under the 501(c)3 statutes and all donations are a tax write-off. Founded in 2001.



### **Calendar Notes**

#### July

-U-Pick Raspberries and Blueberries.  
Keep an eye on website for opening dates,

#### August

--August 15, 6 pm, Volunteer Welcome  
Back BBQ under the tent  
-August 22, 6-8 pm & 25. 9-11 am Volun-  
teer Training -  
August 25-26 Opening Weekend

#### September

-September 22 -23 Cream of the Crop  
and Johnny Appleseed Homecrafters  
Weekend

-September 23 Sun Multisport Events  
Trail Run

#### October

-October 6-7-8 Annual Harvest Festival

#### Sholan Farms Staff

**Sam Holmes, Orchard Manager:**  
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