

Message from the President

To all our staff, volunteers, donors and supporters,

Sholan Farms is very fortunate to have such a diverse and talented group of volunteers, staff and customers. This year, many of you came forward and contributed your skills and ideas. Every positive contribution, no matter how big or small, makes Sholan Farms a place you can be proud of and keeps our customers and community happy.

2017 was a year full of surprises, change and growth for Sholan Farms and this will continue through 2018 as we affirm our purpose and work together to set the values, goals, and visions for the next five years. The Friends are excited about the year ahead. This will be our 18th apple harvest. We are already busy pruning the orchard and the Apple Blossom Festival planning team is in full swing.

It is with great sadness that we announce that Mike Meehan has decided to leave Sholan Farms. We wish him well as he pursues his own passions. We are truly grateful to Mike for giving us eleven years of exemplary leadership, can-do attitude and enthusiasm. With his help, we have been developing a transition plan. The board is in the process of interviewing applicants to fill the Farm Manager position. Emily has already begun the pruning of over 3,000 trees and will need help.

As mentioned in the past, the spirit of Sholan Farms is alive due to the enthusiasm and camaraderie of our volunteers, staff, and customers. People often ask what they can do to help Sholan Farms to remain the natural treasure of our city. The best answer I can give is to get involved. If you see something that needs fixing or cleaning up on the Farm and you are willing to help do it, please contact a board member and let us know.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year. We also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work, dedication, support and generosity to Sholan Farms.

Please join us to keep the legacy alive.

-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

Christmas Trees



The second year of Christmas tree sales went very well. We sold 97% of the trees we bought compared to last seasons 93%. We ordered Balsam and Frasier Fir trees ranging in height from 4 to 12 feet.

We were finally able to add wreaths to our lineup this year. With the help of Cynthia, Jeffrey and Cindy we were able to offer decorated wreaths as well as plain wreaths.

Mike, Emily, Justin, Josh and Cindy did a great job getting the farm ready, greeting the customers and helping them once they made their selection.

Overall, we are very pleased with how this past year went. We sold more trees and almost all of the wreaths. We continued selling apples well past the end of October. Christmas tree sales continue to bring in customers who had never been to the farm for apple picking. Hopefully, we will gain some new apple season customers due to this new venture of selling Christmas trees.

-Steve Smith, Vice President BOD

Facilities Update 2017

We were very busy during 2017 working on many projects around the farm.

- ◆ All of the picnic tables were repaired and repainted.
- ◆ New seats were installed on the back up tour wagon.
- ◆ The green water tank was given a new coat of paint.
- ◆ Trellis posts for the blackberries were installed.

A new storage trailer was donated. This trailer is being used for long term storage and storage of the equipment we have for Christmas tree sales. All the trailers were cleaned out and reorganized. The front half of the three remaining trailers is now used for storage leaving the back half for equipment or workspace.

Leominster DPW spent several days around the farm and accomplished the following:

- ◆ Removed old regrid and installed paving to improve the access to the farm stand.
- ◆ Installed and paved a walkway from the parking lot to the farm stand.
- ◆ Improved the staging area around the storage trailers.
- ◆ Created a new tour wagon route for festivals.
- ◆ Helped with the installation of the new well by digging a 100 foot trench.
- ◆ Moved the old storage building across the street so it can be used for berry sales in the future.

As you already know, the existing well has been very slow to recharge and went dry last year during the drought. We were able to acquire a grant for a new well through the USDA. The new well was drilled in late September and brought online in October. We are very pleased with the new well. The old well was producing maybe 2 gallons a minute while the new well is producing 20 gallons per minute.

We could not have completed these projects without the help of our dedicated volunteers and help from Holman Construction, Glenn Hines Construction, Kenan Young, Leominster DPW, Leominster Center for Technical Education and Joe Conti.

-Steve Smith, Vice President BOD

Apple Blossom Festival 2018

As I sit here freezing it's hard to believe that it's almost that time of year to start planning this year's festival. The Apple Blossom Festival gets bigger and better each year. The date for this year's festival is Saturday, May 19, from 10 to 4, with a rain date of Sunday, May 20. This will be my fifth year chairing the event and I am so thankful for all the help I have received from all the volunteers. Every year is challenging and seems to have a few hiccups but we always manage to work it out in the end.

Last year was a very successful event. Sponsorship was up, Silent Auction sales were good, the Bake Sale sold out again, we had more business vendors than ever, and more crafters than ever. The Entertainment was awesome with selections for everyone. The kids and adults loved the magician. I think we finally got it right with placing the entertainment tent in front of the farm stand. Did I forget to mention the food trucks? The food was great. Lobster Rolls, Steak and Cheese, Pizza, Fried Chicken, BBQ and the usual Hot Dogs and Hamburgers. The lines weren't too long and most of the food vendors sold out. We had a beautiful Butterfly release to finish off the day.

I will be making my usual phone calls in the next few weeks to check in with all the team leaders and hope they are all still committed to helping out again this year. The first planning meeting will be on Tuesday, February 13, at 1pm at Leominster Public Library. I hope I see you all there. We welcome new faces, fresh new ideas, and your good advice.

-Patti LaGrassa, ABF Chair, Secretary BOD

Farm Stand Manager

Sholan Farms has an amazing group of volunteers who really care about the orchard. My first year was both challenging and rewarding.

I was impressed by how much gets done in the course of a short period of time. One of the things that was amazing was how the volunteers pull together and get to work. The school tour team completed 40 tours serving 1300 children and adults in just 7-8 weeks. They all work so well together.

It was wonderful to see so many of you polishing, grading and packing apples with such care. These men and women come to the farm stand and get to work. Sholan Farms volunteers not only keep the Farm Stand stocked, prepare apples for farmers markets and retail sales, but packed over 190 bushels of apples for donation to charities, non-profit organizations, and local businesses. The Thanksgiving pack out saw another 750 3 pound bags prepared for donation. It was fabulous to have apples available through Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Every time I put out an email request for help someone stepped up to the plate to help out. I want to thank each and every one of the volunteers that take time from their personal life to commit to such a wonderful cause.

-Cindy LaFleur, Farm Stand Manager, Volunteer Coordinator



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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

January

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon
January 21, 2pm, Italian American Center

February

ABF planning meeting, Tuesday, February
13, 1pm, Leominster Public Library

March

ABF planning meeting, Wednesday, March
14, 5pm, Veterans Center followed by
Winter Friends Meeting at 6pm

April

ABF planning meeting, Wednesday, April
11, 1 pm Leominster Public Library

May

ABF planning meeting, Wednesday, May 9,
1pm, Leominster Public Library

Apple Blossom Festival, Saturday, May 19

Sholan Farms Staff

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Coordinator:**

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