

Greetings from Sholan Farms

When you drive by during the winter months, chances are that it looks quiet here at Sholan Farms. That is far from the truth, our staff is busy pruning and our board and committee members have been busy hard at work budgeting, planning programs and events for 2019. Spring is just around the corner and before we know it we will all be ready for old man winter to be out of here. I am always filled with wonder and anticipation to see what the New Year will bring. For Sholan Farms that means new ideas, new friends, and many new ambitious adventures.

Everyone I talk to wants to know what is new and what is happening. In January we hosted UMASS and a number of commercial growers for a Flash Mob Pruning session and in February we hosted over 30 farming enthusiasts in a USDA pruning session. Sholan Farms has been selected to host the Mass 2019 Envirothon. The Envirothon is Massachusetts' leading natural resource education program for high school students, emphasizing hands-on, team-oriented problem solving and community involvement that prepares young people for environmental careers and active citizenship. For more information check out their website at <https://massenvirothon.org/>.

If you are interested in making a difference at Sholan Farms, I would like to personally visit with you to discuss the leadership opportunities available with the Friends, including committee work, farm stand cashier, and advancement to board positions. Non-profit board experience is welcome, but not required; business experience is also welcome. We are trying to find ways to offer more family friendly and community friendly events. We are actively seeking new partnerships, new members, and more volunteers. I challenge everyone to help showcase Sholan Farms.

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 even more successful. As a non-profit organization, we rely on the support and contributions of volunteers. Helping out benefits everybody involved! By giving 10 hours of your time, you can essentially purchase apples at half price.

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 Shoaln 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.

Joanne DiNardo, President, Friends of Sholan Farms

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,

Here we are about half way through a rather forgiving (knock on wood) winter at the farm. Currently we are working each day at pruning the orchard's roughly 3,500 trees. We can always use some help with pulling the trimmed brush out of the trees, in preparation for it to be piled up and burned in the spring.

Speaking of spring, we are just around the corner from the warmer months. Soon we will be preparing all the fields for planting our summer veggies, pumpkins, and gourds. Anyone who might consider themselves a "rock" star will be welcomed to help us pick rocks out of the fields.

Shortly following rock picking season will be berry picking season. We are looking forward to a plentiful blueberry, raspberry and blackberry season, and can always use extra hands to help us pick. Free samples always available for pickers!

Before we know it, apple season will be upon us again. Again, we can always use extra hands to help picking apples for cider. No experience needed!

Last season was a great first season for me at the farm. And I thank all the wonderful volunteers that made themselves available throughout the entire process. I look forward to this year being bigger and better than the last! With the help of our volunteers, we will make Sholan Farms an even more desirable destination for our community.

Best Regards.

-Sam Holmes

Facilities Update

Work around the farm continues all year long at Sholan Farms. Here is a quick update to what we accomplished in 2018.

Leominster Center for Technical Education Carpentry and Electrical Shops completed work on our new storage building. Storage shelving has been installed and all the items that were scattered around the farm are now inventoried and all in one place. The building was then painted by volunteers on the United Ways Day of Caring. The large apple sign that was originally made by Louis Charpentier is being refurbished and will be placed back on the front of the new shed by Spring. The old storage shed has been moved across the street and will be used for summer berry and peach u-pick sales.

Volunteers spent considerable time repairing all the broken railings on the gazebo and the band stand.

We were able to finally purchase a brand new 2017 Dodge Ram truck. Its been equipped with a plow and a lift gate. This is a huge improvement from our old truck. We can now deliver four bins of apples a time. The lift gate makes it so much easier for deliveries of apples and produce.

Another piece of much needed equipment is a Flail Mower which was purchased and will be delivered sometime in March. This new mower with a side arm will allow us to mow right up to the trees.

Many more projects are still in the planning stage and we are excited to see the growth and improvements this year.

These projects would not have been completed without the help of dedicated volunteers, Holman Construction, Glenn Hines Construction, Kenan Young, Leominster DPW, Joe Conti, and Leominster Center for Technical Education.

-Steve Smith, Vice President, Friends of Sholan Farms

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

-Anonymous

18th Apple Blossom Festival-May 18

We had our first planning meeting on February 11 and are off to a great start. All of our team leaders are back this year to help out. Here they are:

Sponsorship: Joe LaGrassa	Sponsor/Ad Book: Joanne DiNardo
Craft Show: Joanne DiNardo, AnneMarie Young	Silent Auction: Patti LaGrassa
50/50 Raffle: Patti Adams	Food Trucks: Patti LaGrassa
Coffee & Donuts: Gail Sullivan & Judy Daniels	Business Vendors: Patti LaGrassa
Community Outreach: Patti LaGrassa	Bake Sale: Mandy Senecal
Butterfly Release: Janice Gaudet	Advertising/Signage: Joanne DiNardo
Children's Activities: Linda DeMego	Parking/Traffic: Sam Holmes
Clean Up/Trash: Hal MacFadden	Entertainment: Bernadette Colley
Operations/Layout: Joanne DiNardo & Patti LaGrassa	Safety: Joanne DiNardo

Every festival brings changes and challenges and this year is no different. On Friday, May 17th, the day before our festival, Sholan Farms will be hosting the Envirothon once again. This event brings hundreds of high school students, environmental agencies and teachers from all over the state to Sholan for a day of learning. Of course this brings with it challenges for us to set up for the festival. We will be using the rental tents from the Envirothon and that will be a big help to us. Everything should be cleaned up and ready for us to set up by mid afternoon.

There will be changes this year in the Silent Auction. The last three years have been successful and labor intensive so we need to make some changes to keep it interesting. Instead of gathering donations from numerous donors and making up to 30-35 baskets we will break up into six teams of 2-3 volunteers who will gather and put together a theme basket each. Some of the ideas are: Lottery Ticket Basket, Gardening/Landscaping Basket, Household Basket, Children's Fun Basket, Wine and Cheese Basket, Dining Out/Entertainment Basket, Physical Fitness/Golf Basket. If anyone is interested in forming a team with another volunteer and putting together a basket please let me know and I will supply you with all the contact information you'll need and support.

Our next planning meetings are:

Sunday, March 10, 2pm, Leominster Veterans Center (see below for Info)

Tuesday, April 16, 1pm, Leominster Public Library, Historic Meeting Room, 2nd floor

Monday, May 13, 1pm, Leominster Public Library, Historic Meeting Room, 2nd floor

Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Patti LaGrassa, Festival Chair

Your Invited!!!!

The Friends of Sholan Farms Winter Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 10 at 2pm at the Leominster Veterans Center. This will also be the second planning meeting for the Apple Blossom Festival. Everyone enjoyed the Volunteer Luncheon in January so much that we decided to plan another Pot Luck! Lets get together and enjoy each others company at the end of winter.

We're asking for Casseroles and Desserts. No appetizers this time. Lets keep it simple. So bring your favorite tummy warmers and comfort foods! No RSVP is necessary. See you there!

Friends of Sholan Farms Winter Meeting/Pot Luck

Sunday, March 10, 2pm

Leominster Veterans Center

We need your help and are asking for a donation of a lottery ticket of any denomination to be used for a Lottery Ticket Tree for the Silent Auction.





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

March

Apple Blossom Festival Planning Meeting & FOSF Winter Pot Luck Sunday, March 10, 2pm, Leominster Veterans Center

April

Apple Blossom Festival planning Meeting, Tuesday, April 16, 1pm, Leominster Public Library

May

Apple Blossom Festival Planning Meeting, Monday, May 13, 1pm, Leominster Public Libray

Envirothon, Friday, May 17, 7am-3pm

Apple Blossom Festival May 18, 10 am-4pm

June

FOSF Annual Meeting, June 19, 6pm, Leominster Elks

Sholan Farms Staff

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Paul MacMahon, Assistant Manager