

The Newsletter for

# Ambler Farm



Volume Six Fall 2009

The mission of the FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM is to celebrate Wilton's agrarian roots through active learning programs, sustainable agriculture, responsible land stewardship, and historic preservation.

Artist Leslie Concannon returns to Ambler Farm again and again to paint the Raymond-Ambler White House. Leslie generously donated these evocative paintings to the Summertime BBQ silent auction to help raise funds for the restoration project currently in progress.



#### FOAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ann Bell, *President*  
Alison Semple, *Vice President*  
Terry Scarborough, *Secretary*  
Tracy Taylor, *Treasurer*

Michele Bennett  
Amy Burke  
Mike Cuddy  
Mark Keough  
Andrea O'Meara  
Jim Meinhold  
Philip Richards  
Dan Riley  
Nick Sitinas  
Rebecca Thompson  
Jeff Turner  
Jannice Williams

Advisors to the Board:  
Casey Healy  
Pamela Hovland

This newsletter was printed on paper made from 30% post-consumer fiber and manufactured using non-polluting, wind-powered energy. It was edited and designed by Pamela Hovland. The photographs were provided by various friends of the farm.

#### Wilton Residents and Friends of Ambler Farm,

"This place is beautiful" is what a fourth grader from Bridgeport's Madison Elementary School said upon entering the Carriage Barn for the cornbread baking session of the day-long LINKS program held at the farm. What made this comment special was that the boy was blind and yet he, like everyone who visits Ambler Farm, "sees" what a remarkable place it is.

Many of the children from the visiting school had never been to a farm before, never put their hands in the dirt to plant a seed, never looked at the unique beauty of a stone wall running along a hayfield, never touched the soft fur of a rabbit or a lamb, and never took a ride on the back of a tractor. It's days like this that are cause for celebration and make us realize just why Ambler Farm is so important.

And this is what the farm is all about – celebrating our community's agricultural roots and rural history with hands-on programming, sustainably managed land and organic produce, historically restored buildings put to good use, and expansive open space. All this in the heart of Wilton and available to anyone and everyone.

Most of all Ambler Farm is about celebrating its members and the entire community without whom it could not exist and thrive as it has so successfully done.

As always, best wishes from the farm,

ANN BELL, *President*, FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM  
and the FOAF Board of Directors

## An end-of-season update from **The Gardens**

### Agriculture



*"I liked the planting station because Farmer Ben said that the potatoes have these things sticking out of them and those are eyes! How awesome is that! And we dug up the dirt to put the potatoes in. And then we gave it a pat."*  
– Tamique

With one growing season behind us, Ben Saunders, Ambler Farm's farming manager, began planting seeds in his greenhouse in early winter. Things looked promising as the farm stand opened with loads of fresh greens and numerous transplants. However, as our fellow farmers and gardeners can attest, it soon became a challenging growing season. Though the Ambler garden contains sandy soil and receives full sun all day, an entire month of cool, rainy weather had a significant impact on our crop, delaying harvesting and reducing the yield. And to make matters worse, like other farms up and down the East Coast, we were hit by Late Blight (the cause of the Irish potato famine in the 1840s). This fungus-like organism travels through the air and is a rapid killer of tomato and potato plants. Once a plant has been infected with blight, little can be done to save it and it must be pulled from the ground and thrown out. Despite all these issues, and thanks to Ben, numerous volunteers, Devin, and Will Keelips, a high school student who worked with Ben throughout the spring and summer, the farm continues to offer an abundance of organic produce including a variety of greens, beans, broccoli, carrots, squash, zucchini, and of course, our signature beets! The fresh-picked produce is available at the Ambler Farm Stand on Tuesdays and Saturdays through October and at the Wilton Farmers Market. You won't be disappointed.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE

Jim Meinhold, *Chair*, Sally Bordonano, Dave Bulpitt, Mike Cuddy, Gretchen DeMattia, Kevin Meehan, Stacy Robertson, Ben Saunders, Jannice Williams

#### THE APPRENTICE FARMERS + MENTORS

Sam Bell, Julia Davatzes, Ian Gleckler, Greg Halbrook, Brooke Hermann, Laura Howells, Tom Howells, Kendall Keough, Patrick Lyons, Tessa Markham, Kate Meehan, Ian Miller, Roman Musilli, Emily Myers, Sara Perlee, Jackson Ratner, Katie Sanna, Sam Schmitt, Ryan Troost, Samantha Walsh; Mentors: Kyle Deviney, Sean Troost

## The Learning comes in many forms and for diverse audiences

The farm's programming goal is to appeal to a wide audience – from schoolchildren to empty nesters – we aim to offer something for everyone. As a result we have introduced a variety of programs – see below – some of which we hope to expand as demand dictates. We have enjoyed a harmonious collaboration with other community organizations and individuals in order to offer classes as diverse as rural crafts and garden design. This year we have expanded on these experiences and are offering a wider range of programs.

### Programs + Events



*"I thought rural life was a thing of the past, but when I moved to Wilton I was so pleased to discover Ambler Farm and all it offers to the townsfolk."*  
– Ambler Farm neighbor

#### Field Walk with Farmer Ben

Sunday, September 27, 4PM  
For all ages

#### Ambler Farm Day

Sunday, October 4, 12-4PM  
For all ages

#### The Perfect Pie

Friday, October 2, 9:30-11:30AM  
For adults

#### The Art of Tea

Sunday, October 11, 2-4PM  
For adults

#### Beginning Beekeeping

Sunday October 18, 1-2PM  
For adults

#### Connecticut Bird Migration

Saturday, October 24, 3-5PM  
For adults

#### Fright Night

Friday, October 30,  
6:30-8:30 PM  
For children in grades 3-5

#### Scrumptious Seasonal Soups

Sunday, November 8, 1-4PM  
For adults

#### We Give Thanks for Cookies

Sunday, November 22, 1-3PM  
For adults

#### Wilton Library + Ambler Farm

##### Reading Series

Seeds: September 16  
Leaves: October 14  
Flowers: November 14  
Fruit: December 16  
1:30-2:30PM  
For children 5 + under

##### Art of the Wreath

Friday, December 4, 7PM  
For adults

##### Holiday Greens Sale

Saturday, December 5, 9AM  
Sunday, December 6, 11AM  
Saturday, December 12, 9AM  
Sunday, December 13, 11AM  
For all ages

#### Valentine's Tea

Sunday, February 7, 2PM  
For children + adults

#### Organic Food + Wine

Thursday, February 25, 7PM  
For adults

#### Egg Hunt + Breakfast

Sunday, March 21, 10AM  
For children

#### THE PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Rebecca Thompson, *Adult Programming*, Diane Harley + Jannice Williams, *School Programming*, Andrea O'Meara, *Children's Programming*

## A welcome gift for **The Red Barn**

Ambler Farm received a \$5,000 grant from the Connecticut Trust which will be used towards final repairs to the red hay and dairy barn. The purpose of the grant, which falls under the CT Trust's Historic Barns of Connecticut division, is to support efforts to preserve the iconic historic barns of Connecticut. Projects receiving grants must meet certain criteria. First and foremost barns must be an exemplary example of a barn type or era. The projects should fill a demonstrated need and provide a clear benefit to the community. The barn should be located in the public view and ideally be used for agriculture. Ambler Farm's red hay and dairy barn met all these criteria.

Sitting on the farm's highest point, the red barn was designed and built in 1899 by George Abbot, a locally renowned architect, and is a fine example of a gambrel bank barn. Gambrel refers to the roof style and the bank refers to the simple construction technique of building the lower level into the side of the hill therefore permitting the two levels to be entered from the ground. The structural framework is post and beam and the layout system square rule. The barn was originally used to house cows and contained their milking stanchions, some of which are still in place in the lower level. Hay was stacked high and stored on the upper level along with farm equipment.

The funds from this grant will be used to repair and stabilize the barn including replacing and repairing windows, rotting fascia and siding, and adding new floorboards in the loft. Repairing the barn ultimately supports the ongoing preservation of Ambler Farm and will ensure its continued use as a place that allows people to reflect, learn, and respect Wilton's agricultural heritage.

### **THE BUILDINGS + GROUNDS COMMITTEE + VOLUNTEERS**

Mike Cuddy, *Chair*, Marie Donahue, Dick + Hancy Husta, Mary Kimberlin

## Restoration continues on **The Raymond-Ambler House**

Restoration of the Raymond-Ambler House is under way. Tecumseh Woodworks, Inc. – a firm specializing in restoration and preservation of historic homes and buildings – has completed the first phase, which included the removal and cataloging of interior trim, molding, and doors, and plaster removal. As work has progressed, each step has been documented in photographs for future reference.

Some interesting items found in the walls and under floorboards paint a picture of the past, including several handmade shoes, some stiff, high shirt collars, a piece of Norwalk Pottery, and a coin purse. Also revealed behind the plaster and molding are the signatures of various people who worked on the house during its remodeling over the years.

The state of the building is now being carefully evaluated and a reconstruction plan put in place. A number of basic structural details, such as shoring up deteriorating beams, repairing leaking roofs, and replacing the house's sill, are currently being addressed, and then the next steps for the final restoration will be carried out. Once the work is complete, the Raymond-Ambler House will be an excellent place for educational programs, meetings, offices, and storage, and its restoration will mark the final phase of the rejuvenation of Ambler Farm.

### **THE WHITE HOUSE COMMITTEE**

Ann Bell, *Chair*, Mike Cuddy, Marie Donahue, Pamela Hovland, Dick + Nancy Husta, Phil Richards, Robert Russell, Scotty Taylor, Rich Vail, Carl Yoder

## Buildings + Grounds



*"Barns are a symbol of our rich agricultural heritage, and they truly enhance our landscape...I applaud the CT Trust for Historic Preservation and those dedicated local residents who are the Friends of Ambler Farm."*

– State Representative Peggy Reeves

## Project Update



*"Making this house available to the public offers an opportunity to expand what we do at Ambler Farm. Both adults and children will benefit from this restoration project."*

– Pamela Hovland

# Ambler Farm

Post Office Box 7442  
Wilton CT 06897

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WILTON CT  
PERMIT NO. 39



**Mailing Address:**  
Friends of Ambler Farm  
Post Office Box 7442  
Wilton CT 06897

**Farm Hours:**  
The farm is open from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year. There is parking next to the farm at the Ambler soccer field parking lot.

**Farm Address:**  
257 Hurlbutt Street  
Wilton CT 06897

**Farm Directions:**  
The farm is located at 257 Hurlbutt Street in Wilton, Connecticut. If you are coming from points north or south on Route 7, turn onto Route 106 north. Travel 1.2 miles. Take a left on Hurlbutt Street. Travel .7 mile. The farm is on the left.

**Website:**  
[www.amblerfarm.org](http://www.amblerfarm.org)

This newsletter issue was again underwritten through the generosity of

## The Village Market

Please join us for the ninth annual

# Ambler Farm Day

Sunday, October 4th; noon to 4PM rain or shine

A family event featuring:  
hayrides + farm animals + pumpkin patch  
children's crafts + scarecrow-making + hay maze  
quilting + woodworking  
the famous apple sling shot + trebuchet  
live music + a silent auction  
an appearance by the Wilton Militia  
apple pie + bake sale + garden market  
great food + drink, including a farm-style lunch

Set on eighteen acres at 257 Hurlbutt Street in Wilton CT  
Entrance fee is \$20 per family; Senior citizens \$10  
Parking is limited; gates open at 11:45 AM  
There will be a parking shuttle from Cannondale Station.  
All proceeds benefit Ambler Farm.



# Thank you!

Again, our heartfelt thanks for the support from our members during the past year:

## The Alber Family

Jane + Moses Alexander

## The Amadeo Family

Donna + Mike Amato

Elizabeth Raymond Ambler Trust

Marjorie Anderson

Jennifer + Brian Angerame

The Avallone Family

The Babkowski Family

Elizabeth A. Baker

Ann + Jon Bell

Penny + David Bennett

Anne Bennett

Michele + Mark Bennett

Carol D. Bernhard

Mariann + Jon Bigelow

The Blacks

Regina Borden

Sally + Frank Bordonaro

Brenda + Paul Breitenbach

Kathleen + Bill Brennan

Thomas J. Bronner + Mae K. Tighe

Alice B. + James T. Brown Jr.

Sara Lee + Norris Browne

Tish Brubeck

Denise + David Bulpitt

Kimberly + Patrick Burke

The Callaghan Family

Meg + Rob Campbell

Elena + Michael Carroll

Leslie + Scott Case

Debbie + Greg Chann

Debbie + Raul Chavez

Harold Clark

Carrie + John Corcoran

Janet + Peter Coviello

Susan + Ivan Crowther

Amy + William Curley

Lisa Hahn + Chris Depping

Nancy + Mark Deviney

Nancy + Karl Dolnier

Paula + Sal Dominick

Marie Donahue

Eve + Tim Donovan

R. Sean Duff

Christina + Woodson Duncan

Lisa A. Dunn

Suzanne + Jon Ellenthal

Janell + Len Federico

Kimberley Felton + Mike Ukropina

Claire + Greg Fennessey

Jane Field

The Fleitz Family

Diane + Stephen Fogerty

Tony Fouracre + Mari Okie-Fouracre

Sharon + William Gallagher

Neil Gluckin

Terry Goodwin

Kris + Marc Granetz

Laurie + Howard Greene

Margaret Gregory

JoAnn + Jeffrey Gulbin

Suzanne + Dan Hagmann

Diane + Fred Harley

Sally + Thom Healy

Jade Hobson + Debra Singleton

Schwemm Hoch Family

Elena Bullen Hood + Richard Brooker

Pamela Hovland + Steven Lawrence

The Huber Family

Nancy + Dick Husta

The Jankowski Family

Jeannette, LLC.

Dianne + Stephen Jones

Wm. Jeffrey Jones

The Jonsson Family

Sally + Steve Kalin

Cynthia Keating

Carole + Tom Kelleher

Pamela + Mark Keough

Andrea Kepic + Sam Carbone

Michele + Bernd Klink

Suzanne + Craig Knutson

Larry Koch

Michele + Mark Kolier

Jeanne + Victor Konefsky

Jeanette + John Kuhns

Gail Lavielle

Fran LeBarron

Alice Levin

Ellen + Scott Lewis

Sheila + Jamie Lillis

Theresa + Dennis Lyon

Anna + Bryan MacDonald

Cory, Ian + Noah Macdonald

Catherine + Joe Magnano

Mary Beth + Tim Mahon

Kathie + David Mandel

The Maruyama Family

Patrick McKenna

Laurie + Peter McTeague

Nicole Meek

The Meinhold Family

Melani/Keelips Family

Metchick Family

Sharon + Mark Misknis

Megan + Jason Morris

Wendy J. Murphy

Tracy + Brian Murray

The Nash Family

Barbara + Thomas Nixon

The Nobumoto Family

Vernita + Edgar Nordgaard

Christina + Geoffrey Norman

The O'Halloran Family

Andrea + Patrick O'Meara

Margaret Mazer Ogdon

The Olstein Family

Barbara + John Osterholm

Nicolas Petit + Family

Zelie + Andy Pforzheimer

Kay Phelan

Karen + Bob Pingarron

The Quigg Family

Amy W. Quigley

Robynne + Kevin Quinn

Annabelle Reid

Rachael + Bradford Rhine

Anne + Philip Richards

Liz + Dan Riley

Beverly + Greg Rodiger

Mr. + Mrs. J. Paul Rodriguez

Rolling Hills Country Club

Mr. + Mrs. Francis E. Rosenbaum Jr.

The Routledge Family

Kathleen + Keith Rubin

Carol + Robert Russell

The Salatino Family

Terry Scarborough + John Savarese

The Schattenfield Family

Sea Beans Studio

Karen + Perry Seelert

Susan + Barry Seigerman

Alison + David Semple

Anissa + Jim Shannon + Family

The Simmons Family

Jessica + John Skipper

Gail Federici + James Smith

Melanie Mier + Joseph Sokol

St. Matthew's Parish

Janine Sullivan

Jayne + Tom Sullivan

The Taffler Family

Rosemarie + Ronnie Tauck

Tracy + George Taylor

Rebecca + Ben Thompson

Stella + Richard Thorogood

The Ungerman Family

Jimena Vignola

The Village Market

Maria + Damon Vocke

Liz + Bob Volatile

Sheila + Gary Wakoff

The Walsh Family

Fei Wang

Maria Wilcox

Lisa + Bryan Williams

Leland R. Wilson

Carl + Elfriede Yoder

Karen + Andrew Zuckert

## OUR WISH LIST

The following items will help us on the road to improving the farm. We welcome your donations. Contact us at 834.1143 or [info@amblerfarm.org](mailto:info@amblerfarm.org) with any questions.

Kenmore 11-cup food processor - \$75

Kitchen Aid 5-speed hand mixer - \$75

Cookie sheets - \$125

Cupcake pans - \$75

White kitchen towels - \$40

Pastry brushes + cutters - \$40

Digital produce scale - \$300-\$400

Vacuum cleaner - \$250

Shades for restroom windows - \$300

Pop-up tent - \$350

Farm tractor (w/loader + backhoe)

New or used pickup truck

Garden tractor

## Become a Member (or renew your membership).

# Membership



FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM invites you to share the continuing growth of the farm by becoming a member or by renewing your membership for the year ahead. Our membership year is October 2009 through September 2010. Membership entitles you to obtain discounts on many farm program fees and to receive timely updates on our activities. We invite you to participate in the events and volunteer opportunities available at Ambler Farm and welcome your input through the website.

### Membership Application

---

Name (as you wish it to be listed in our membership directory)

---

Address

---

Email address (a clearly written email address allows us to send to you email updates of farm activities)

---

Telephone number

Please mail this form to:  
FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM  
Post Office Box 7442  
Wilton CT 06897

Or, save an envelope and stamp and  
become a member online at  
[www.amblerfarm.org](http://www.amblerfarm.org).

All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent  
allowed by law. Thank you for your  
generous support.

- \$35 Individual membership (\$25 Senior)     \$50 Family membership  
 \$100 Sustainer     \$250 Cultivator     \$500 Grower     \$1000 Steward  
 My company will make a matching gift. (Please attach your company's form.)  
 I would like to make a major gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 My check is enclosed (payable to FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM).  
 Please charge my  MasterCard  Visa

---

Signature

---

Credit card number

Expiration Date

Please mail this form to FRIENDS OF AMBLER FARM, Post Office Box 7442, Wilton CT 06897  
All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you for your support.

### Online Application

You will also find a membership application on our website at [www.amblerfarm.org](http://www.amblerfarm.org).

### What's New at the Farm?

Your membership automatically subscribes you to Ambler's monthly email newsletter which provides farm updates, information about upcoming programs + events and what's available at the farm stand.