
THE BALANCE SHEET

CHESHIRE LAND TRUST cheshirelandtrust.org VOL. 41, No. 2 SEPTEMBER 2013
Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969



Ives Farm and CLT's new timber frame barn as seen across lush fields of peppers and squash

A DAY AT THE FARM

The new barn at Ives Farm has finally taken its place on the iconic Cheshire St. property. To celebrate this achievement CLT is hosting “**A Day at the Farm**”, Saturday October 5th. 9 AM – 4 PM (Rain date Sunday Oct. 6). The day will celebrate the entire farm. Take a self-guided tour of the barn and surrounding fields or join one of two guided walks led by Mark Kasinskas. View farm machinery and vintage tractors that will be display. And for all of you that love a flea market the day will be punctuated with a lineup of area antique and collectable dealers situated near the new barn who will ply their paraphernalia for purchase. Inside the barn, CLT, the Cheshire Historical Society and the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society will have informational displays. Across the street at the farm stand, the day's festivities will be accented by hay rides and outdoor fun for kids of all ages thanks to Joe Arisco and T&D Growers. Don't miss a day on the farm. It will be a day of fun and your eyes will be opened to the treasure that is Ives Farm. **(For dealer inquiries or more info-Call Rick Marinaro 203-250-9275)**

MY CHESHIRE PERSPECTIVE

By Amy Casavina-Hall - CLT governing board

There is something to be said about growing up in a remote corner of town. I missed-out on sidewalks and streets full of kids and I always had to adopt a friend's neighborhood on Halloween. But for me there was always plenty of wonder wandering in the rural northeast corner of Cheshire to keep me busy.

My family bought a farmhouse just down the road from Ives Farm in 1978. I had an endless supply of what was humbly considered to be the best corn in the world. There were acres of open fields along the Quinnipiac River to romp around on. There were hundreds of simple pleasures there for a child; its cattail draped ponds, brambles of black raspberries, magnificent orange sunsets over expansive fields, and the farm's windmill – looming like a giant over the fields below.

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MY CHESHIRE PERSPECTIVE

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I never saw myself returning, much less living with my husband and two young boys in the same “this is Cheshire?” corner of town. But, here we are.



Over thirty years later, there are neighbors who knew me as a child as well as many new families and neighborhoods. The charm of this area is anchored by Ives Farm. Owned and operated by the Cheshire Land Trust, Ives farm looks nearly identical to the corn-stop of my youth. The tending of the fields marks the changes of the seasons. The white farmhouse and stone walls smile along the street. Tractors still slow the traffic on Cheshire Street; reminding everyone that Cheshire was and remains a town where farming shapes the land and the people.

Now I find new pleasures with my children. We stop for fruits, vegetables, and corn (still in a class of its own) at the farm stand. I'm always charmed by the picture of Betty Ives that hangs reverently on the wall next to the register. We have brought friends to the CLT-led hikes along the property, and we all stop to pick the tall grass and appreciate the views. Admittedly, the windmill's size has been humbled with my age but I bet it's huge to my boys' young eyes. And my kid's shouts of delight at seeing the tractors work in the fields never grow old.

Go exploring on the properties protected by the Cheshire Land Trust, and share a favorite old or new memory on our Facebook page.

IVES BARN TAKES SHAPE

JUNE – AUGUST 2013



ON THE FARMS IN CHESHIRE

By Tim Slocum

Some 200 years ago when streets Brooksvale, Cheshire and Cook were being settled, land that laid dormant for hundreds of years was awakened as fertile fields were laid out for farming. In time their bounty brought more settlers and ever since these carefully tended fields have continued to bear fruit. Today, the Cheshire Land Trust owns or has conservation easements on some of Cheshire's earliest and longest surviving farms. Follow me on a quick tour of our farms.

This story begins with CLT's **Brooksvale Farm Preserve** on South Brooksvale Rd., which has been continuously farmed by the same family (Jean McKee) since 1725. In recent years hay and corn had been the principal crops but today, on tidy fields surrounded by neatly laid out stonewalls, these fields are now covered in a cornucopia of vegetables that are flourishing in its rich moist lowland soils. For the past few years Paul Zentek, who has a large farm on Higgins road, has planted and harvested pumpkins, tomatoes, peppers, squash and sweet corn here. It seems that vegetables are a valuable cash crop and variety is the key.

Giddings Farm along Boulder Road is another CLT conservation restricted farm property that is considerably smaller but nonetheless provides a cash crop of pumpkins and corn for a tenant farmer who operates a stand elsewhere in town. Owner Bob Giddings tends to some egg laying chickens and cultivates flowers and vegetables for his own consumption. He is also a volunteer at the neighboring Friends of Boulder Knoll farm. The "Friends" have a few acres cultivated at the former Lassen Farm. Lassen's farm was Cheshire's last large dairy farm, once big consumers of corn and hay. Thanks to the generosity of local taxpayers this town-owned land is protected from development but large agricultural pursuits have not taken place there.

Along rural Coleman Road one encounters the **Leavenworth Tree Farm**. Earlier this year the well-known tree farm became a CLT protected property with restrictions placed on its future development by an agreement with the Leavenworth family. It is hoped that the tree farm will continue long into the future. Time will tell but in the meantime the property will never become a subdivision to the delight of CLT members and the surrounding neighbors.

My story ends with a drive along Cheshire St., which has been dominated by **Ives Farm** since 1867. It can be said that it is Betty Ives who put the Land Trust in the farming business full time. And NO, members aren't doing the cultivating but we are tending its largest property and one of the largest active farm properties in Cheshire. The Ives and Pelz farms combine cover 177 acres along both sides of Cheshire St. Over sixty acres are cultivated for hay and vegetables that include a variety of peppers, tomatoes, squash, eggplant, sweet corn and pumpkins. Ives is farmed by Joe and Michael Arisco of T&D Growers. They are in their third year on the farm and we couldn't be happier. Straight trucks leave daily during the late summer months loaded with vegetables destined for Bozzuto's, Cheshire largest taxpayer and one of the state's largest grocery wholesalers. T&D also maintains a retail stand on the property, which is visited by hundreds of area patrons every week. This spring strawberries were picked to the delight of family's that spent the late days of May picking these delicious strawberries.

Farms survive and thrive all across Cheshire. This bounty can be had by anyone in town. Support your local farmers. Visit your favorite vegetable and fruit stand this fall and throughout the year. Your local grocers also sell native locally grown fruit and vegetables. We are blessed to still have this rich bounty and we have local framers to thank for that. We also have donors and members of the Cheshire Land Trust to thank. Through our collective efforts we are helping our local farmers to thrive because we know...**No Farms, No Food.**

A TRIBUTE...

JOSEPHINE KOWALSKI CLT FOUNDING MEMBER



**Jo Kowalski and her brother-in-law Bernie
CLT picnic - 2006**

Josephine Kowalski passed away August 14. She was a CLT founding member and one of Cheshire's most ardent supporters. She filled her near 96 years dedicated to family, hobbies and causes that have benefited many Cheshire residents.

When the Land Trust was just an idea, Jo Kowalski joined in the early efforts to breathe life into the notion of an organization that was committed to preserving Cheshire's open spaces, wetlands and forests. With Jo's help CLT got its wings in 1969.

In addition to her early interest in starting the trust, she was elected and served on the governing board for 35 years (1969 – 2004). She was CLT's first treasurer, a stint she effectively managed for 25 years. She was also a charter member of the Suburban Garden Club and the Cheshire Historical Society.

Jo Kowalski leaves a legacy of caring service to a community she loved and enriched. In appreciation of Jo's longtime service, CLT planted a Copper Beech tree in her honor in 2005. That burgundy leafed tree is now thriving at the corner of Cornwall Ave. and S. Main Street.

CLT Notes & Happenings

Stewardship Day

The fall stewardship day has been scheduled for October 19th, rain date of October 20th. Land stewards and any one willing to volunteer will meet at the Ives Barn for an 8 a.m. start. Our standard monitoring needs to be done. This includes boundary line inspections of each property and a written report on each property as to its current condition. Downloadable and printable forms are available from CLT's website. Specific tasks are planned for a few of our larger properties that include upgrading boundary line signage at Fresh Meadows, Judd Preserve, and Brooke Preserve off Sperry Rd.

These larger properties in particular need trail clean-up. Dress appropriately for field conditions and bring your loppers and weed whackers. Stewardship co-chairs Mark Kasinskas and Rick Marinaro will lead the team effort.

Fall Hikes

Hikes are planned for Fresh Meadows and Brookes Preserve in November. The exact dates will be announced in the local papers and the CLT website. We are also doing email blasts to members who have signed on to this service. If you want to receive info on future hikes and other Land Trust business sign up for E blasts at www.cheshirelandtrust.org.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

It's time to renew your membership if you haven't done so already. The membership year is from 4/1/13 to 3/31/14. Your Donations are tax deductible. The Cheshire Land Trust actively manages 25 properties and 6 conservation easements totaling 568 acres. Membership dues and contributions provide for management of these properties.

(WE MUST INCLUDE AN ENVELOPE WITH EACH MAILING FOR POSTAGE WEIGHT UNIFORMITY. WE DON'T EXPECT YOU TO PAY TWICE...PLEASE PASS A MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE ALONG TO A FRIEND)

WE RECEIVE NO LOCAL TAXPAYER FUNDS

Learn more at www.cheshirelandtrust.org