



The Friends of Valley Falls, Inc. Newsletter

www.friendsofvalleyfalls.org

Volume XXIV Number I

SPRING

May 2015

VALLEY FALLS FARM _____

Buildings and Grounds

As did many other buildings in the area, the farmhouse at Valley Falls Farm suffered from some ice damage during this grueling winter. Repairs are in progress. The Vernon Garden Club has begun spring tasks in the herb gardens in the cold frames. Our gardener, Ellie Fiske, is doing some initial pruning, and scoping out of her task list for the coming season. Beekeeper Allen Valli reports that the two hives are doing well and the bees survived the winter. And the farmhouse tenants are preparing the lower cold frame for their summer veggie crop. We surely do welcome spring this year!

Heritage Center in the Stable

We are beginning work on the establishment of the Heritage Center in the stable, funded by a State of CT grant. First step is preparation of the building: clean-out and interior painting. We have received quotes for the paint job, and will select a contractor within the next week. The Center will focus on the “Gentleman’s Farm” era of ownership of the Valley Falls area by the Batterson-Beach family, 1915 to 1958. We will be advised by consultants Donna Baron and Jennifer Eifrig of Musevue 360 in planning for the Center.

Summer Tours at the Farm – Wednesdays 1:00 to 3:00 pm

One of the goals in our strategic plan is to increase public outreach. To this end, the Farm will be open to the public Wednesday afternoons, July and August, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Someone will be on site to talk about the buildings, or you may just enjoy a quiet walk around the property. 🌿

VALLEY FALLS PARK _____

Cold Springs and Good Fishing

At this time of year, fishing is an especially popular activity at Valley Falls Park. The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) stocks Valley Falls Pond early in the year, mainly with trout. Both the Pond and Railroad Brook, which flows through the Park, provide plentiful sources of fish for the angler throughout the year.

Trout need cold water streams and very clean, unpolluted water to survive. The Tankerhoosen River Valley is remarkable for its abundance of cold water springs and streams, and pristine waters. The springs feed the small streams that eventually flow to the River. They are, in fact, the main source of water in the River. Many of these springs can be seen bubbling in areas around Valley Falls Park in the spring. Look for them the next time you’re in the Park – and remember that those springs create the perfect habitat for the abundant trout population in the Park and in the Tankerhoosen River Valley. 🌿

**FRIENDS OF VALLEY FALLS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Ginny Gingras 875-9865

VICE PRESIDENT

Dave Herrmann 872-0461

SECRETARY

Marilyn Steele 872-1666

TREASURER

Robert Letendre 875-4623

DIRECTORS

Karin James 872-0684

Joe King 871-2357

Ann Letendre 875-4623

Paula Passaretti 875-1695

Don Sierakowski 872-2154

SUPPORT

Amy Paterson, Esq. 645-8555

Dan Wright 872-7517

Bill Wardrop 872-4028

NEWSLETTER

Lisa Letendre 633-7666

SAVE THE DATE

**2015 ARTISTS DAY AT THE FARM
SUNDAY, AUGUST 23**

Our fourth Artists Day will be held on August 23rd. Plein Air artists from across the state will spend the day painting scenes of the Farm. The public is welcome to come and view the artists as they work from **1:00 pm to 3:30 pm**. A reception will follow. Displays of artists' works will be available for sale in the red barn.

**BELDING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
AREA – THIRD GRADER FIELD TRIPS
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Would you like to assist? Field trips for third graders to the beautiful Belding Wildlife Management Area are held each year, planned and led by Wildlife Biologist Jane Seymour of the CT DEEP, and steward of the Belding. For more information and to volunteer, contact Jane at Jane.Seymour@ct.gov; 860-306-5418. The fun-filled days are scheduled below:

Center Road School – Monday, May 11th and Tuesday, May 12th

Lake Street School – Wednesday May 13th

Maple Street School – Thursday, May 14th

Skinner Road School – Monday May 18th

Northeast School – Tuesday May 19th

Rain Date – Wednesday, May 20th, if needed.

**THE STONE SLAB MYSTERY:
IT'S GOSHEN, BY GOSH!**

Curiously, there are three or four large slabs of beautiful, smooth stone, about 4-feet square, on the ground by the rear entrance of the farmhouse. We have never been able to find out why they are there, or from where they came.

We decided to use the stone slabs to make a patio area, but additional pieces would be needed. We visited **Better Stones on Tolland Street** in East Hartford and met owner, **Bud Smallwood**. Quelle surprise! He knew all about our stone! During the '50s Bud himself had mined Goshen stone at the quarry at Bolton Notch, just a couple of miles from the Farm. "It's Goshen stone", he said. "That whole hill at the Notch is Goshen." Bolton Quarry closed several years ago, he added – and the only place you can get Goshen stone now is western Massachusetts, at the Goshen Stone Company, on Rt 9 in the town of Goshen. Many of the sidewalks of

(Goshen, continued on page 3)



Goshen Stone Slab at Valley Falls Farm

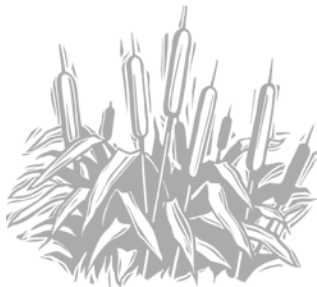
NATURE NOTES



RAMP (*Allium tricoccum*), a North American species of a wild onion also called wild leek that grows in soils that are sandy, moist and often found on hillsides and near streams. They do grow in our area. The season is short. The leaves are tender early in the season (April or May), and the bulbs are edible year round. The leaves have a strong garlic-like odor and onion flavor. The bulbs are strongly rooted just beneath the surface of the soil. The ramps are considered a delicacy and are found on menus at top restaurants. They can run \$20/ lb. or \$5/ bunch in some Farmer's Markets. Ramps are considered species of special concern in Maine, Rhode Island and Tennessee and Canada.

BLOODROOT

The single Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*) was given to me by Eleanor Warren, Girl Scout Leader, who introduced me to Valley Falls Park in 1970. From that one plant that she gave me, I have many scattered around my woods and gardens. The plant is one of the first wild flowers to appear in the Spring. They multiply because ants carry the seeds to feed on them, eating only the outer cover and leave the seeds, planting them. I would like to share this lovely plant with others. If you would like a plant, please call Ginny at (860)875-9865). ☺



“THREE-WALK WEEKEND” AT VALLEY FALLS PARK MAY 16TH AND 17TH

Spring is bursting out all over in the Park! The birds are singing, the wildflowers are blooming, and the streams are flowing over rock and pebble. Come, enjoy.

“Birds in the Park”, a birdwalk led by Denise Anamani. Saturday – May 16th at 7:30 am.

“Wildflowers of Valley Falls” – a wildflower walk led by Ginny Gingras. Saturday, May 16th at 1:00 pm.

“Rock & Railroads” – a geology and RR history walk. Led by Don Sierakowski, Sunday, May 17th, 11:00 am.

Each walk will be a leisurely ramble, 2 hours or less. Meet in the gazebo at the Park. ☺

(Goshen, continued from page 2)

Brooklyn NY are laid with the Bolton Quarry Goshen, he noted.

Goshen stone is an unusual, variably colored variety of mica schist, found mostly in New England. These same 4-foot-square stone slabs are also in the basement of the farmhouse. So - while we don't know for certain, we do think there's a high probability that the Goshen stone slabs at the farmhouse came from the Bolton Notch Quarry.

Thank you, Bud, for shedding some light on our “stone slab mystery”. ☺

2015 CALENDAR – SAVE THE DATES! JOIN US!

- ★ **THREE-WALK WEEKEND** – May 16th and May 17
Bird Walk, Saturday May 16, 7:30 am
Wildflower Walk, Saturday May 16, 1:00 pm
Geology & RR History Walk, Sunday 11:00 am
- ★ **ARTISTS DAY AT THE FARM** – Sunday, August 23rd, 1:00 pm, Valley Falls Park and Farm
- ★ **FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING** - Sunday, September 27th, 1:00 pm, in the Red Barn
- ★ **SUMMER TOURS** at the Farm – July and August, Wednesday afternoons, 1:00 to 3:00 pm.
The Farm buildings and grounds will be open for tours and leisurely walks. 

Spring Newsletter 2015
www.friendsvalleyfalls.org

The Friends of Valley Falls, Inc.
P.O. Box 2008
Vernon, CT 06066

