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Friendsofvalleyfalls.org

Dear Members and Friends,

As this summer's heat wave is waning, it is safe to say that we all are longing for the cool nights and crisp days of fall! We hope you all are doing well in this time of crisis and stress and keeping busy with the activities you enjoy. We greatly miss seeing new faces visiting the Farm as the pandemic has canceled our Open House tours, but we still are busy with the constant maintenance at the Farm. Chimney repairs were completed, and we are happy to report no more leaks!

Annual Meeting, Sunday September 27th, 1 pm – a Short Version!

In light of Covid, we will not have an invited speaker at the annual meeting. Instead, we will have a VERY BRIEF BUSINESS MEETING ONLY, to comply with our bylaws. We do not expect it to be more than twenty minutes. Per our bylaws, members must be given notice prior to the meeting of the location and the agenda. We will hold the business meeting outdoors, on the lawn by the silo garden, at the Red Barn, 345 Valley Falls Road. Chairs will be spaced twelve feet apart, masks will be required, there will not be any refreshments.

The business meeting agenda will be as usual, including the President's Report, Treasurer's Report, and Committee Reports. Election of officers and directors is done every two years. Fortunately, our next election is not until 2021. As usual, we will mail a

copy of the Annual Report to the membership after the meeting. Just as a final note – if you want to purchase honey, see the article below.



Heritage Center Update

Even under Covid19 circumstances, we've been able to make progress through the summer. Electrical work has been completed, including the new underground line to the stable and the track lighting to highlight displays. We've cleaned the outbuildings, sorted through their 100 years of stored "stuff", and culled out the items that tell the story of Valley Falls Farm. We are delighted with our finds, and are pleased to say that we are able to tell the story with ONLY the artifacts found on at the Farm, making it a truly local and authentic experience for visitors!

The final phase, organizing, cleaning, and labeling the artifacts, and setting up the displays, has begun. In keeping with our goal to use only on-site artifacts, we will



“re-purpose” old tables, barrels, and crates found on the Farm to show the vintage pieces. We have hired Austin Bach to manage this last project phase. Austin is a graduate of Maine College of Art, with a major in graphic design, and a minor in woodcraft.

We are pleased to have assistance from high school students Jacey Letendre (Glastonbury High School) and Stephanie Schmelter (Ellington High School), who are putting in time to meet their schools’ community service requirements. See their photos below, at work in the stable.



Vacant Apartment in the Farmhouse

We’re seeking a new tenant at Valley Falls Farm! The front apartment in our 1850 farmhouse is vacant. If you know of a person or a couple that would enjoy living in a cozy historic farmhouse (small rooms, wide floorboards) on the most scenic corner in Vernon,

and directly across from Valley Falls Park - please send them our way! The rent is reasonable, tenant pays heat and utilities, some minor caretaking activities required. Experience with having lived in - or cared for - a house is helpful. The apartment is on two floors. The first floor has a newly renovated kitchen, a living room, 3-season sunporch, and open porch overlooking the red barn and Park. The second floor has a bath and two bedrooms. Garden space is available for green thumbs! Email annletendr@aol.com if interested.

The Beehives of Valley Falls Farm

Most of the beehives at Valley Falls Farm survived the winter, but the rainy spring weather meant that the bees did not start producing honey until a bit later in 2020. The bees can tolerate the heat, but lack of rain ultimately means no nectar flow which also means less honey production. Allen Valli, Marcie Lavoie, and Tom Kaminski report that for the period of September 2019 through August of 2020 the six hives produced about 300 pounds of honey. If you would like to purchase their honey, contact Allen at 860/871-4410 or Marcie at 860/803-8678.

Valley Falls Park – and Covid19

The last day of swimming was August 23rd. In early August, a new admission policy was necessitated due to disregard of social distancing and littering problems. Also, the pond had to be closed to swimming for a short time due to high bacteria levels. We are very concerned about the high level of activity at Valley Falls Park since Covid19 came into our lives. During the summer months, Vernon's "jewel" became a popular place to be outdoors with family members and close friends.

Overuse of the park destroys the very reasons we love and enjoy the park – as a quiet place to walk in a peaceful setting, surrounded by an abundance of wildlife and greenery. BUT - the Park needs a rest! We haven't forgotten that our mission includes keeping a watchful eye on the Park's condition. We need to develop some measures to offset the overuse of the Park during these "days of Covid". We continue to have a good working relationship with the Parks & Recreation Department, and are hopeful we can work together to address the issue.

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