

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In AUGUST our annual Laurel Hill Day provided a unique opportunity to reflect upon our past and think about the future. Guests were able to see first-hand the tasteful site enhancements to the park and Daniel Chester French's rostrum, and our program celebrated the leadership role taken by women both locally and nationally.

At the center of the Laurel Hill Association [LHA] mission is our stewardship of the lands in Stockbridge that have been given over to our care. As I acknowledged at our recent Laurel Hill Day:

We stand on the ancestral homelands of the Stockbridge Indians. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this region.

The program was put into context by Bonney Hartley; Bonney is the Tribal Historic Preservation Manager of the Stockbridge-Munsee Nation. Bonney delivered the invocation, recited a poem written by a tribal member, and then shared the remarks that tribal President Holsey had hoped to deliver in person-outlining the leadership roles assumed by native women throughout history.

As we looked back on our 168-year history we also acknowledged the generous foresight of the Sedgwick Family who conveyed to Laurel Hill the park and surrounding land that was the core of our first holdings. From its earliest days the association has relied on the generosity of friends and neighbors who share LHA's devotion to the stewardship of land and enhancing the beauty and quality of life in the town and the surrounding Berkshires.

There are immense challenges that lie ahead not only for Laurel Hill and the town of Stockbridge but also for our nation, and our precious, increasingly fragile, planet.

We ask ourselves:

Can the Laurel Hill Association serve as a national model as we deal with the inescapable impacts of climate change: extremes of temperature, more frequent and fiercer storms, accelerated change in composition of forests due to invasives and warming median temperatures?

These challenges are inescapable and at times can feel overwhelming. And, yet, LHA is taking specific steps to enhance our properties and help meet these challenges:

- A priority is to maintain and enhance our trails. Windfalls are cleared and steps and bridges are repaired or replaced.
- A planned access route to the Butler Bench outlook will lead visitors to the hillside above the Laurel Hill Park rostrum.
- We work to combat invasives using the techniques approved by the national park service.
- In concert with abutters we employ the forest management techniques that will help strengthen our challenged forests.
- We will develop outreach educational programming with speakers and, in 2022, will celebrate the Bicentennial of the birth of master landscape planner, Frederick Law Olmsted. The Olmsted firm worked on the site plans for the Stockbridge Railway Station.

In short, Laurel Hill today encompasses the best of our past and will help our friends and neighbors prepare for the future. Working together we can make a real difference for the community we are all bound to cherish and protect.

Hilary Somers Deely President, Laurel Hill Association

(Front cover) The Rostrum at Laurel Hill Park (Opposite) View of Monument Mountain from atop of Laurel Hill



LAUREL HILL DAY

AUGUST 28, 2021

LAUREL HILL DAY started out a reasonably warm, but overcast day, precipitation forecast: 20%.

At 2:00 PM Association President Hilary Somers Deely started the Program. She welcomed everyone, and acknowledged: "We stand on the ancestral homelands of the Stockbridge Indians. We honor with gratitude the people who have stewarded the land throughout the generations and their ongoing contributions to this region." She followed with a history of how Mary Hopkins Goodrich had founded the organization, and how women had been involved in the organization over the years. She explained: "This year we have chosen as the focus for our program 'A Celebration of Women'...AND, another celebration here today is the 102nd anniversary of the brave Suffragettes. It took more years of struggle before women of color and indigenous peoples were assured full access to this basic right to vote." At the end, she asked for a moment of silence in memory of recently-deceased Homer ['Skip'] Meade, President of LHA from 1990-1992.

Invocation

Bonney Hartley, Tribal Historic Preservation Manager of the Stockbridge-Munsee Nation, read a poem for the Invocation, written in 1997 by tribal member Theresa Beaulieu.

(See the full text of the poem on the following page.)

Bonney followed with the remarks prepared by Tribal President Shannon Holsey: "A Woman's Place in the Tribe, Past and Present." Shannon was unable to travel from Wisconsin, due to the COVID pandemic.

While Solo Trumpeter Dr. Karen Lavoie played one verse of "For the Beauty of the Earth," the six Suffragettes rose and came in front of the Rostrum platform. The first two carried a laurel swag, which they draped over the arms of the Rostrum desk. They











You Are One Who Walked Yesterday

You are one who walked yesterday Pulled from your place in time, And now I see That your feet once stood here Imprinting the earth where I stand, In moccasins I will never see Dancing Bending in this same sun, To a song I will never hear The stories you would have told Were silenced by other tongues, Yet your blood is in mine A link over time I imagine your life from these feelings Though I see You belonged undisturbed Covered with this dust we share, Now walk with those who are gone Aapaachiiw [He/She returns]

sang three verses of the song, motioning for the audience to join in, then returned to their seats.

Memories of Laurel Hill

Celia de Gersdorf Kittredge told of attending Laurel Hill Day with her parents every year. Shirley Franz Miller told of her parents and LHA. Both ladies mentioned participating in the 1939 Stockbridge Bicentennial Pageant held in the Park. LHA Secretary Patricia Flinn read a humorous incident from an early 1900's Laurel Hill Day.

Keynote Presentation

President Deely then introduced the day's featured speaker, Jennie Ann Kassanoff, a professor of English at Barnard College, and Chairwomen of the Jacob's Pillow Board. Dr. Kassanoff started her presentation, which centered on Voting, Race and Gender in American Culture. Part way through, intermittent rain sprinkles started falling. Someone handed an umbrella to Jennie, who proceeded without hesitation. After about ten minutes, the sprinkles stopped.

Park Restoration

Susan Bubenas, member of the Properties Committee, gave an update on the Laurel Hill Park Restoration project. "Our sincere thanks to all those who assisted

over the past 3 years to support this restoration... a collective effort...made possible in part by grants from the Community Preservation Committee and the Lenox Garden Club." She noted that people were sitting on rocks that "were not visible two months ago." She spoke about the work done, and about the judicious approach that was used. "The 'restoration' and the attention paid speaks to the larger issues facing all of us - the issue of respect & honor for the past and the importance of history in our collective future." Susan thanked Pat Flinn, who championed the project, and Shelby Marshall who wrote the grant applications. Shelby was LHA President from 2015-2020, and to formally acknowledge his contributions, Susan noted his is the first name on the new Presidents Bench, located at the edge of the Glen. (See the separate Park Restoration article in this newsletter.)

Song with Trumpet and Benediction

The Six Suffragettes came forward, and accompanied by Dr. Lavoie, sang all four verses of "Old Laurel Hill," again encouraging the audience to join in. Rev. Liz Goodman, Pastor of the Monterey Church and the Church on the Hill in Lenox gave the Benediction.

President Deely thanked everyone for coming. She introduced each of the six Suffragettes, then invited everyone to enjoy the refreshments. As everyone made their way to the refreshment tables, Dr. Lavoie played one verse of "Ode to Joy" as a recessional. Participants and attendees enjoyed the bounteous Red Lion Inn fare: sushi, cookies, brownies, and lemon squares. Afterwards, things were packed up and the Rostrum glen was once again quiet. The gentle sprinkles had not marred another successful Laurel Hill Day.

Patricia Flinn Secretary, Laurel Hill Association

Thanks go to Lionel Delevingne and Jim Schantz for the photographs.

Special thanks to the Red Lion Inn for the refreshments and to John Drake and his golf cart for access assistance.

(Opposite from top) Gathering at Lauren Hill Park

Keynote Speaker Jennie Kassanoff with Bonney Hartley (left) and Hilary Somers Deely looking on

(From left) Pat Flinn, Jennifer Rambridge, Shirley Miller, Celia Kittredge (Suffragettes from left) Kate Fletcher, Ramelle Pulitzer, Kate Morris, Barbara Sims, Lis W heeler, Angela Cason

RESTORATION

Laurel Hill Park Restoration

ACCORDING TO one of the design principles of Frederick Law Olmsted, the "design should take advantage of unique characteristics of the site, even its disadvantages. The design should be developed and refined with intimate knowledge of the site." It is titled a "Genius of Place."

Laurel Hill Park existed in its exquisite simplicity long before Frederick Law Olmsted, yet it calls to mind many of his basic principles of landscape architecture. The connection is almost mystical. What we now call the Glen served as a meeting place, transit point, locus of activity for indigenous people, a place of community in the context of an evolving "town" in the 19th century.

The restoration and attention paid to Laurel Hill Park by the Laurel Hill Association speaks to the larger issues facing all of us - the importance of respect & honor for the past and the importance of history in our collective future. For example, the rock formations to the west form a natural amphitheater from which to view the soaring rock face. Was it coincidence then, that the Rostrum was sited below the rock face and facing those boulders & the mountains to the west or was it the influence(s) of a more informed natural perspective and the principles of someone like Olmsted that allowed more complementary effects?

In 2018, the Laurel Hill Association, took on the long overdue restoration of the Park, in particular, the Glen and its manmade edifices. The Association applied for a CPC Grant from the Town of Stockbridge under its guidelines for both Open Space and Historic Preservation. Work began under the grant to remove significant overgrowth of the Rostrum rockface and to reintroduce Mountain Laurel, its namesake native shrub and was completed in 2019. Beginning in 2021, the Association began the process to address the deterioration of the manmade features.

The Rostrum in the open glen was designed by famed sculptor Daniel Chester French, built by sculptor Augustus Lukeman, and dedicated in 1905 to Henry Dwight Sedgwick. The Butler Seat at the summit was installed in the late 1920s as a memorial to Prescott Hall Butler. The Musgrave Seat near the Rostrum, given by Lady Musgrave, the former Jeanie Field, was fashioned about the same time. Now, 100 years later, after the effects of seasonal temperature fluctuations, two of these structures needed attention and the Musgrave Seat was buried under leaf litter and vegetative overgrowth.

Whether the elements the Restoration seeks to address are manmade or natural, creating a healthy ecosystem creates conditions for natural healing and therefore sustainability and are thus the hallmarks of our efforts of restoring the Glen not only to a state more like its original, but one that is also resilient to face the challenges of the coming decades.

Thus far done "judicious" & selective work has been done on the ground so as to protect the potential presence of artifacts below ground belonging to the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican community. For example, when the laurels were replanted in certain areas, archeologic work was funded by the Association to insure the security of what may lie below. As many of you know, the Mohican presence is significant to so much that we value today in Stockbridge.

Current work this summer sought to normalize select, open areas in the Glen to mitigate the erosion due to run off and alleviate compaction on root zones by adding composted mulch & soils without below ground disturbance. We have done tree work, exposed boulders from years of leaf litter to allow seating & viewing to re-emerge. We have seeded and mulched, covered with straw and/or wood chips to secure the soil, protect tree roots, and provide a more consistent surface for walking. Improvement to the access way behind the Stockbridge police station was done out of a need for both access and safety. There is now signage where there was none, although a bit more is needed.

There is much still to be done in the Park. At present there is only one bench in the Park. Additional benches







will be limited in number to preserve the natural surroundings but would enhance the experience and use of the park for visitors.

The heavy use of the walkways and trails in the Park has degraded the health of the soils over time. Exposed roots are a danger to walkers and harmful to the trees, so composted mulch and other materials need to be added as a means of replenishment.

Handrails placed in select areas would increase safety and enjoyment. And perpetual general maintenance is a need for a popular area such as the Park for reasons of safety and due to impacts of climate change.

In the context of the upcoming Olmsted celebration, a large-scale restoration of the canopy, including the dead wooding of large, potentially dangerous trees, the culling of some invasive species and the introduction of much needed understory and shrub layers which would enhance multiple levels of the woodland is recommended. A Forest Management Grant was used in 2021 to suggest a stewardship plan which is currently being evaluated by the Association. In-kind donations from Berkshire arborists will be sought to help clear the overgrowth and mitigate the danger from dead limbs in 2022. Once the "preparation" work is completed, additional plantings of native species of various type and profile will enhance the success of the Park's ecosystem for decades to come.

The deed for the property upon which the Park sits was conveyed by the Sedgwick family to the Laurel Hill Association in 1878 and the deed dictates that the premises are "dedicated...to the use benefit and pleasure of the public intending that the same be protected and preserved forever for that purpose." We are committed to the dictates of the deed as conveyed.

It is the Association's namesake property and for good reason. It is a park, a place, and most importantly, it is a state of mind. I have never walked up to the Glen and not felt its majesty and sanctity. Visit any time of the year, any time of the day and if you pay attention, it will speak to you.

The restoration of its historical, human elements and the work to better reveal its natural beauty are the goals of the continuing restoration. If we do it well, we will honor the past and share it properly with the future.

> Susan Bubenas Treasurer, Laurel Hill Association

(From top)
Laurel Hill Park, Summer 2021
Newly Restored Rostrum
The President's Bench at Laurel Hill Park

WHAT'S NEW

Property Signs

It used to be that everyone in town knew about the Laurel Hill Association and its popular trails. Children in town went to school at the Plain School and Williams High School (now Town Offices) and played in Laurel Hill Park behind. They grew up hiking the Laura's Tower and Lower Bowker's Woods trails. But today, the town demographics have changed. A good percentage of residents did not grow up here. The Association decided it was time (after 168 years!) to identify the LHA properties readily available to the public and to get our name "out there."

Last year, the first five LHA property signs were installed:

- Lower Bowker's Woods on the Glendale Middle Road (pictured right)
- Chestnut Preserve on Route 7 South
- Roeder Park at the junction of Route 183 and the Glendale Middle Road
- Laurel Hill Park (2): one at the Town Offices entrance, and one at the Park Street cul-de-sac

The signs are in the shape of a laurel leaf, hung from a curved metal bracket mounted on a durable 6" x 6" cedar post.

Use Signs

New Use signs outline the etiquette hikers should observe when visiting an LHA property/trail...things they should do, and things they should avoid. The signs on LHA-owned properties (pictured right) have the LHA logo. For the signs on trails that span both LHA and town properties (ex. Mary Flynn Trail, which starts out on the town's Ice Glen property), the town gave permission to include the town logo.

New Website

The LHA website has been undergoing a revamp. Do check it out. Go to www.laurelhillassociation.org or easier still, scan the new QR code on back cover!

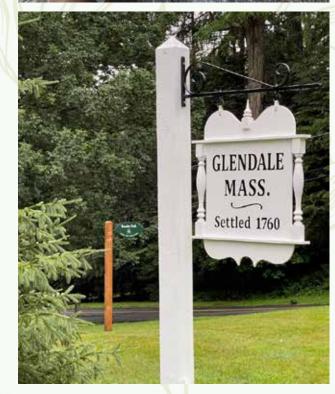












Interpretive Signs

Each of the association properties accessible to the public will have an interpretive sign that includes a short property history, a map, and descriptions of natural and man-made features. The first interpretive sign (pictured left top) was installed as part of the Laurel Hill Park Restoration project.

Rostrum Renovation

Do check out: 1) the restored steps, walls, and platform level by Tom Sermini; 2) the replaced bronze desk "arms" by Andrew Devries (1 & 2 see front cover); and 3) the re-carved Sedgwick Seat inscription by Rich Atwood (pictured left middle).

Glendale Sign

When the new LHA property sign was installed in Roeder Park, we noticed that the old "Glendale" sign was falling apart. Because it was an iconic fixture in the hamlet, it deserved to be replaced. An identical new sign (pictured left bottom) was made and installed in July, funded by a few Glendale friends. The origin of the first sign is unknown—who erected it or when. Hopefully one of you readers will have some information.

OR Code

A QR ("Quick Response") code has been created for LHA. It takes you directly to the www.laurelhillassociation.org home page when you scan it with your cell phone. The code appears on the new Use signs shown earlier in this article.

Trail Improvements

This past spring and summer, work was done on the trails at Lower Bowker's Woods. Walkways over a wet area at the start of the trail were replaced by the Greenagers. (See middle picture, opposite.) A part of the original trail that followed the old trolly line was opened. Where needed, brown directional trail signs were installed and blazes were added. For safety, a number of dead trees were removed near the parking area and behind the stone wall along the Glendale Middle Road.



Lower Bowker's Woods

\$500 and above

Lee Bolman and Joan Gallos Joseph and Susan Bubenas John and Patricia Chory Phil and Hilary Deely Lionel Delevingne and Judith Wilkinson Bridget Fawcett Marty Sennett and Christine Ferrero Lincoln Russell and Nancy Fitzpatrick Patricia Flinn James and Virginia Giddens Alex and Julie Margolies Hans and Kate Morris Carole Schulze

Michael and Ramelle Pulitzer Jim Schantz and Kim Saul Peter Schoeffer Harry and Elizabeth Seherr-Thoss Richard and Carol Seltzer Mark Siegars Victoria Sujata Beatrice F. Van Roijen Mark Williams

Elizabeth Armstrong and James Iglehart William Baker Jr. Carliss Baldwin and Randolph Hawthorne Robert Baum Stuart and Joanne Beck Frederick Beinecke Andre Bernard

Irene Bernstein

\$25-499

Judith Abdalla

Marion Adler

Robert and Helen Alsop

Marilyn Bethany Tammy and Michael Breitman Ronald and Cynthia Brouker Jack and Cindy Brown Deborah Buccino and Eric Plakun Linda and David Burghardt Dan and Joan Burkhard Christine Castellon Lisa Chamberlain Matthew and Catherine Chester Joseph, Stephen, and David Cohen Andrew and Jane Cohen

Donna Besaw

Joanne Conroy Barbara Cooperman *James and Catherine Daily* John and Helen Davies Michael and Marilyn Dee Peter Dillon Frank Dolson Laura Dubester Jay and Laurie Dubner Barney and Julie Edmonds Robert and Mary Edwards Gregory and Diane Eshleman Russell and Patty Fadding

Robert and Mary Feuer Eugene Fidell and Linda Greenhouse George and Florence Fletcher Steffi Fletcher Adaline Frelinghuysen Thomas Fynan Steve and Nancy Gallant Lisa Gamble Bruce and Beth Gamble Elizabeth Gellhorn George and Nini Gilder Lee and Erin Sheldon Doug and Sara Goudey

DONORS...Continued

Sue Griffis

Charles and Ioan Gross

Gary and Suzanne Gulbranson Wray Gunn and Cora Portnoff Dr. Phyllis Hammer Mr. and Mrs. Scott Hand Nathan Hayward III Carol Hill Albert Stuart and Susanne Hirshfield Mary Hoeltzel Alan and Sarah Wilken Richard and Linda Jackson Edward and Nancy Johnston Cynthia Kaplan Armand and Gloria Katz Jaime Kelly *Celia de G. Kittredge* Evie Klein and Bob Owens Earl and Janet Kramer Philip and Carol Laban Ed and Barbara Lane Mary Lou Lange Vincent and Elizabeth Lauten Elias Lefferman Richard and Cindy Levin Gerald and Andrea Levy Louise Lonabocker Yo-Yo Ma and Jill Hornor Barbara Mandell Shelby and Karen Marshall Brian O'Leary and Elizabeth McCarthy Helen McCormick Leonard and Barbara McCue Rodney McDaniel James and Suzanne McElroy

James and Deborah McMenamy Feith Menken Mary Ann Miles Michael and Nancy Miller Deborah Miller Timothy and Nancy Minkler Alan and Alice Model Christopher and Elissa Morris Harold and Jan Moskowitz James and Elizabeth Murray Charles Murray *Larry and Katherine Newey* Ben Northrup Dennis O'Brien James and Kimberly Obanhein Rosemary Orr *Matthew Levine and Sara Pasternak* Christopher and Christine Martin Duncan Pollock Don Chabon and Anne Rabinowitz Marc and Dede Rathbun Christine Rathbun C.C. Raymond Charles Cooney and Peggy Reiser Jay and Chantal Rhind James Riordan Bonnie Rosenberg Vlada Rousseff Glen Cherry and Elizabeth Rowe Fred Rutberg and Judith Monachina Jane Ryan Amy Sales Pamela Sandler

Don and Rosemary Schneyer

Thomas and Chris Schuler

Arthur and Ginger Schwartz Robert Sedgwick and Nan Fawcett Terrance and Jane Shea Peter Sherman Audrey Shulman Joan Sickler Len Sigal Barbara Silverstein Angelo and Joan Sinisi Starbuck and Anna Smith Ned Ide and Becky Smith Maureen Spollen Iris Stein Korman The Stevens household Paul and Lenore Sundberg Steven and Carol Targum Marc and Janet Teich The Tublitz Family Robert Turcotte George and Geri Turkington Michael Goodman and Judith Uman Gary and Charlotte Miller Peter Ungaro and Patty Caya Joe DeGiorgis and Joy Van Alstyne William and Diane Vogt The Voorhees household Charles Wales Harvey and Mary Waller

Christopher and Jane White

Howard and Linda Zonana

Richard Wilcox and Joyce Butler

Patrick White

Michael Wilcox

Jay and Terry Wise



Thank you, Earth Day Clean Up Volunteers!

Thank you to the 2021 Earth Day Clean Up Volunteers! More than 65 of you helped clean up Stockbridge and your efforts are appreciated by us at LHA as well as Stockbridge residents and visitors.

Alison Fox and the Austen Riggs Team

Bob Bartle
Jeremy, Hillary and Julian Beadell
Gail Beaudain and Jeff Baumwell
André Bernard
Sarah Boyd
Carl and Stephanie Bradford
Catherine and Matthew Chester
Phil and Hilary Deely
Laura Dubester
Arthur and Chris Dutil
Stew Edelstein
Julie and Barney Edmonds
Pamela Esler
Pat Flinn

Jane Goodrich
Christine Goretti
Vaunie Graulty
John Hart
Ellen Lanciano
Laurel Hill Team: Larry, Katherine, Luke,
Lincoln, Chantal, Roger and Patty
Shelby Marshall
Madeline and Stephanie Mason
Roxanne McCaffrey
Deb McMenamy
Mark and Nancy Mills
Theresa O'Brient

Ramelle Pulitzer
Marie and Keith Raftery
Christine Rasmussen
Martin Sennett
Gary and Paula Shalan
Kim Saul and Jim Schantz
Buck and Anna Smith
Peter and Nancy Socha
Cory and Mark Sprague
Lenore and Paul Sundberg
Lis Wheeler
Patrick White
Terry Wise

LAND & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

"In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nature

THE LAUREL HILL ASSOCIATION owns over 400 acres of land in Stockbridge, including Glendale and Interlaken. There is the signature property, Laurel Hill Park, and the Sedgwick Reservation that is home to popular destinations, the Mary Flynn Trial and Laura's Tower. It is also a gateway to the Town's ever popular Ice Glen. Other popular properties are Lower Bowker's Woods and the Chestnut Preserve. And we mustn't forget the property leased to the Stockbridge Golf Course.

As you can imagine each property has a story to tell. Part of that story is revealed in the archives of the Stockbridge Library, part of that story is revealed in the records of the land registry and probate courts, some of the more interesting bits of the story are revealed by Patricia Flinn, and most recently through Forest Stewardship Plans completed for eight of the Association's properties. In summary, those plans reveal the cultural footprint the Association inherited or acquired, the extent of diversity of natural resources at each property, and the opportunities to manage those properties consistent with the discoveries revealed in the plans.

Those plans also allow the Association to contribute to that story into the future. It is fair to say that these plans, which provide the kind of information and advice that was there but previously unknown, are the steppingstone for developing 'management' plans to meet the Association's strategic objectives. For example, with a better

understanding of the characteristics of the Four Corners/Byron Preserve, the management of these properties can focus on "protecting biological diversity, promoting wildlife habitat, and fostering opportunities for recreation."

Now that we have the facts about our properties, we can work with our stakeholders and neighbors to develop a management plan for each that accounts for its biodiversity, its use and long-term health. Laurel Hill Association wants to maintain its properties, where appropriate, for public recreation. Overuse must be addressed on some of the trails, and others need to have trails created. Yet others will remain as they are. The Forest Stewardship Plans are many lenses through which to address all the properties of the Laurel Hill Association. Each property has its own personality which gives rise to its current use. The plans will be guideposts as we prepare for their future use by addressing issues related to those features and the recommendations in the plans. We will endeavor to manage them all, as a family, so that they remain healthy and available to you and others.

The Laurel Hill Association's holdings, highly valued wildlife habitat, recreational resources and watershed and viewshed protection throughout Stockbridge, form an emerald necklace around our community. The Housatonic River, itself an iconic feature of the community, is a prominent feature of many of those parcels, and forms a string in that necklace connecting those protected and preserved open spaces. And we need your help to clean and care for those jewels. In addition to your financial support, we need volunteers with skills to carry forward the legacy of the Laurel Hill Association.

Mark W. Siegars Vice President, Laurel Hill Association



tiking Ice Glen by Lionel Delving

Laurel Hill Association

PO Box 24 Stockbridge, MA 01262 www.laurelhillassociation.org NonProfit Org US Postage PAID Permit 121 Pittsfield

For more information on how to donate or volunteer please contact LHA at 413-298-2888 or info@laurelhillassociation.org

The Laurel Hill Association is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization



