

Laurel Leaves

Laurel Hill Association • Fall 2023

Historic!

*Shannon Holsey, President of the
Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans,
embraces Laurel Hill President
Hilary Somers Deely.
More on page 5.*



Laurel Hill Day highlights

Since the 1850s, Laurel Hill Association has celebrated the value of community in the village of Stockbridge. A well-loved tradition, Laurel Hill Day brings the Town together at the Rostrum on the last Saturday in August.

This year we enjoyed a day of speaker and song, revel and raptor, as youngsters and elders came together in sunlit Laurel Hill Park. Starling “Star” Childs engaged the audience with the wisdom of a master forester, overseeing a family grant to the State of Connecticut of 6,000 acres. Tom Riccardi’s gentle hand shared his rescued raptors with adults and children alike. The Stockbridge Festival Chorus, Tracy Wilson conducting, capped this day, a day like no other.



Student volunteer Henry Bradway repaired a railing and helped widen the Mary Flynn Trail this summer and fall. Henry is the son of Rich Bradway, president of the Stockbridge Land Trust. Father and son cleared some downed trees at the turnaround at the far end of the trail. Are you willing to help? Send a note to: info@laurelhillassociation.org



Star Childs: “My father’s admonition to me and my siblings was to ‘do everything in our power to leave the land better than we found it when we started.’”

Star Childs, progressive forester, delivers the 2023 Laurel Hill Day keynote address

“Community associations, like the model that Laurel Hill Association grew into, and public/private partnerships have taken root in cities and towns all across this great land. The hopeful signs are appearing everywhere in direct response to what I believe is our most pressing clear and present danger, that of our atmosphere warming too fast and the dangers that such warming will usher in.

“Young Mary Hopkins, experienced disheveled conditions from the back of her pony as she rode through the village and observed unkempt and degraded lands around early Stockbridge. That her community spirited organization should have taken hold as it has and lasted and flourished down through the decades is a powerful affirmation. As ecologist Aldo Leopold said, ‘Much of the damage

inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden her shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of her business, or she must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community.’”





President Hilary Somers Deely welcomes guests to Laurel Hill Day on August 26, 2023 at the Laurel Hill Rostrum.

Berle Family receives the 2023 Laurel Hill Association's Community Service Award

Lila Berle [left] and Mary Berle [right] received Laurel Hill Association's Community Service Award. The Berle Family was presented with the award in recognition of their extraordinary stewardship of their land and for their



contributions to organizations that support the community.

Lila's late husband, Peter Berle, was also recognized. Peter had a multifaceted career including the presidency of the National Audubon Society and, along with Lila, was one of the founding members of the Stockbridge Land Trust, where he later served as president.

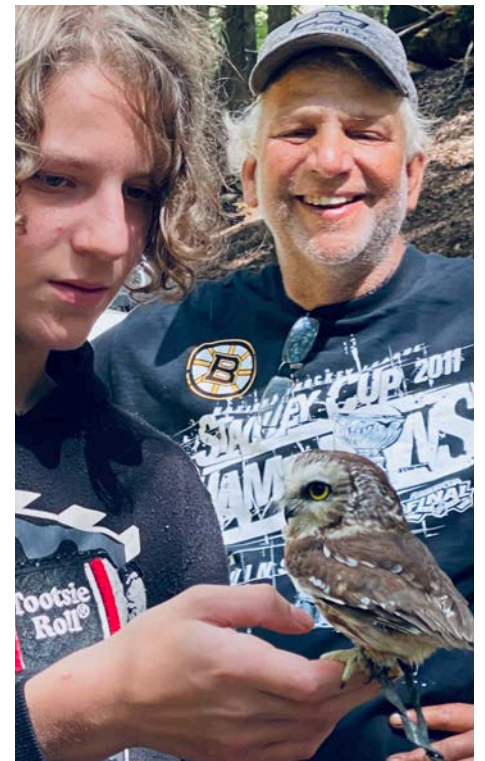
During her tenure as Board president at the Norman Rockwell Museum, Lila was instrumental in the Museum gifting the land between Butler Road and the Housatonic River to Laurel Hill Association.

Daughter Mary has taken over Lila's farm and has established a model of environmentally-sensitive sheep farm practices. Prior to her farming career Mary was a highly regarded educator serving as principal of Muddy Brook Middle School.

Deely welcomes guests to LHA Day

"Today land stewardship has never been more important. Accelerating climate change challenges all of us to devote our best efforts to help slow a process that could be disastrous for all. I remember the first Earth Day in April 1970. As a soon-to-graduate student at Simon's Rock, my classmates and I took a day off from classes. Special seminars were held introducing us to terms such as 'greenhouse effect' and 'carbon capture,' which were totally foreign to us; terms that today are a part of everyday conversation.

"The mantra of the 1960s was to 'think globally and act locally'; we were urged to consider the health of the entire planet and to take action in our own communities and cities. Local activism started long before governments began enforcing environmental laws. We were encouraged to protect habitats and the organisms that live within them. This message from the 1960s resonates today."



Jim Schantz

Jim Schantz is a longtime resident of Stockbridge and served Laurel Hill Association as a trustee from 2019 - 2022. Jim has sought inspiration from landscapes that are very familiar to LHA members as they've hiked the trails crisscrossing the land protected by LHA. Lower Bowker's Woods trail presents a matchless view of the Housatonic and Laurel Hill Park's Butler Seat provides an unmatched view of Monument Mountain.

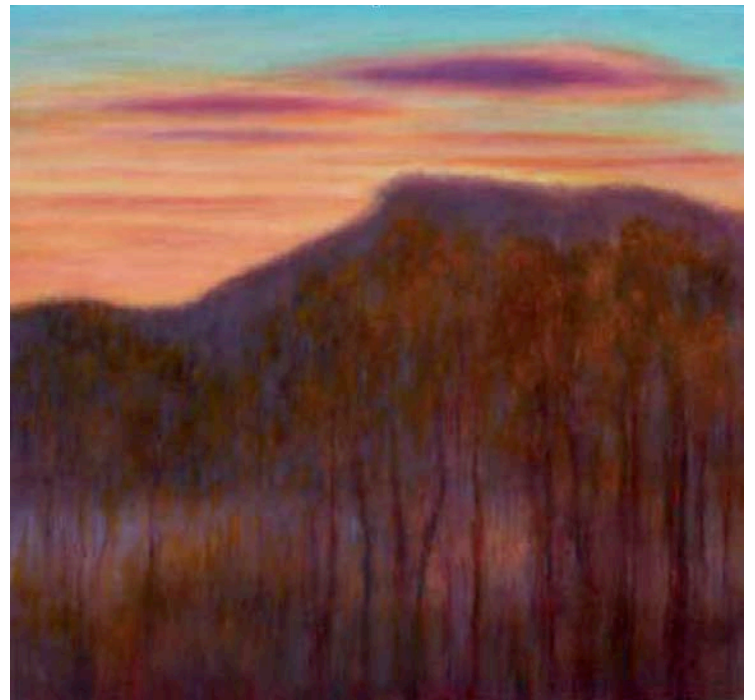
Jim's painting career spans nearly 40 years, throughout which nature has been a constant source of inspiration.

He received his BFA from Syracuse University, his MFA from University of California, Davis, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Brooklyn Museum School, and the Hornsey School of Art in London.

His works are included in museums and public collections, including, among others: The Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY); The Berkshire Museum (Pittsfield, MA); Art Complex Museum (Duxbury, MA); Children's Hospital (Chicago); Lowe Art Museum (Syracuse, NY); and the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University.



**A Bend in the
Housatonic
River**



**Monument
Mountain
in Fall**

Land Acknowledgement: Laurel Hill Association

Laurel Hill Day, August 26, 2023

At the beginning of the Laurel Hill Day Program, Trustee Rob Sedgwick read the following:

The Board of Trustees of Laurel Hill Association acknowledge that its properties are located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary homelands of the Mohican people, and before them, other indigenous peoples beyond memory or record.

We acknowledge that this land signifies great spiritual, historical, and cultural significance for its original stewards, the Mohican people.

Laurel Hill Association's Board of Trustees is committed to continually learning how to best care for the land we inhabit and to understand the history and rich cultures for those who cared for it before us.

We acknowledge that the plots of land which Laurel Hill Association stewards contain historical evidence of the Stockbridge Mohicans.

We thank the representatives of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans for guiding us to more fully understand their deep ancestral ties to the land we inhabit.

The cover photo was taken on August 30 when Shannon Holsey and Hilary Somers Deely embraced at the announcement by the Commonwealth of the MVP grant for the Tribe's acquisition of the 351 acres at Fenn Farm.



Thank you to our donors!

Laurel Hill Association gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their contributions between Oct. 1, 2022 and Sept. 30, 2023. If your name has been misspelled or inadvertently omitted, please contact us at: 413-298-2888 or info@laurelhillassociation.org.

Planned giving

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”

Over the past 171 years Laurel Hill Association has benefited from the generosity of our friends and neighbors. Planned gifts enable us to preserve the legacy bequeathed to us by generous supporters. You can help ensure that generations to come will know the pleasure of hiking our trails, strolling along the Housatonic or relaxing in our glens.

Bequests: Often the easiest. Simply designate Laurel Hill Association as a beneficiary in your will or living trust.

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Retirement Plans: Designate LHA as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan, and enjoy estate tax benefits.

Charitable Gift Annuities: Create a charitable gift annuity that provides you with a steady income during your lifetime, while supporting LHA with remaining funds.

To learn more, please contact:

Phil Deely/LHA, PO Box 24
Stockbridge, MA 01262
info@laurelhillassociation.org

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Please consult your attorney/tax advisor.*

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In the course of a year, Laurel Hill Association receives donations of goods and services which help our budget and are appreciated deeply. Our thanks go to:

LHA Trustee Brian Cruvey and Naumkeag for their donation of tulip bulbs that blossomed this spring in front of the Town Post Office.
The Town Highway and Police Departments for all their support of LHA throughout the year!

Kelly and Ricci Alessio for allowing use of their property to access a recent construction project on abutting LHA property.
Josh Needleman of Chocolate Springs for so sweetly contributing to Laurel Hill Day a large and most delicious box of chocolates!
Verne Tower for his work restoring the Butler Bench.
Robert Wesley for mowing.
Mary and Harvey Waller for

allowing us to meet in their lovely restored barn at Orleton Farm.
Kathy and Russ Ayres for hosting a reception at their gracious home.
Arcadian Shop for the welcome repellent for Laurel Hill Day.
Nejaime's Wine Cellar for their donations of delicious beverages.
Patricia Flinn and Patrick White for their graphic design efforts throughout the year.
All of our volunteers!



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National Heritage Area leaders visit Laurel Hill Park

On October 2, LHA Trustee Pat Flinn [front row, 4th from left] provided a tour of Laurel Hill Park and Ice Glen to National Heritage Area directors from across the United States. A beautiful fall day greeted our visitors from places like Nevada and South Dakota.

The visitors oversee National Heritage Areas — places where historic, cultural, and natural

resources combine to form cohesive, nationally-important landscapes. Unlike National Parks, National Heritage Areas are largely lived-in landscapes. Consequently, National Heritage Area entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

The host for the national gathering was the local Upper Housatonic

Valley National Heritage Area, which includes the Berkshires and Litchfield County in Connecticut. When the local area was being set up, Laurel Hill Association was included in the feasibility study, conducted by the National Park Service. Each fall, historians, naturalists, and environmentalists lead free walks in the towns in the Upper Housatonic Valley region.



Photo: Maria Bray