Outdoor Odyssey at Amberations

How many of you remember when summer vacation meant playing outside, building forts, eating picnic lunches under trees every day and playing board games in a tent when it rained.

As this newsletter goes to print we are in the planning stages of a summer nature program for youth. Starting in July we plan to offer young people ages 8 – 13 the chance to enjoy our natural setting under the safe supervision of experienced counselors. One week sessions will be offered from 10am to 5pm Monday through Friday starting July 7th.

Anticipated cost for our Outdoor Odyssey at Amberations is $250.00, subject to change pending insurance fees. Plans will be finalized and registration forms available at our Open House on May 4th.
Several years ago, my husband and I first learned of Amberations via their newsletter. Soon, our Sunday walks included a stop at the barn to bring treats to and visit with the animals. We eventually met Gloria and her family and I promised I would become a volunteer when I retired. I always enjoyed my visits to the barn, which I found to be fun and relaxing – a welcome change from my job as a hospital nurse. We also became familiar with the upper fields and hiking trails and enjoyed hiking to the barn from there.

When I retired in November, Gloria took me on a guided hike, sharing Amberations’ history and her vision for the future. I was impressed with her commitment to her dreams for this wonderful organization and started my volunteer work here caring for the animals.

I teamed up with Diana, another volunteer and the treasurer, to do a weekly evening feeding. I have thoroughly enjoyed the transition from caring for people to caring for animals. I find my time at Amberations rewarding and fun. Diana is great to work with and the animals keep us on our toes.

Within my first two weeks of volunteering here, we had the pleasure of hosting a group of girls from LaFayette chaperoned by a former co-worker of mine. They thoroughly enjoyed their visit, interacting with the animals and hiking the trails with Gloria.

Recently I attended a board meeting and had the opportunity to meet other volunteers and founding members. With this dedicated staff and all that Amberations has to offer the community, I look forward to a successful future for Amberations.

At this meeting I was happy to accept my new role as volunteer coordinator. I hope you will contact me to see how you can become involved in this wonderful organization.

For more information on becoming a volunteer contact Becky at rebah@twcny.rr.com or call Amberations at 636-7166.

During our spring wedding preparations last spring we discovered we could make our paths more wheelchair friendly and quite visually appealing by laying down our leftover shingles.

Chris Stahl and his daughters, Bronte and Willow, discovered laying shingle paths can actually be fun. Together they collected additional bundles of shingles donated by McClurg Remodeling and Construction and continued with our path project.

More donations have come in and the Stahls have told us they will spend some of their spring break continuing our paths. Thank you: Willow, Bronte, and Chris.

If you have donations of bundles of shingles or care to help with this project, please contact our volunteer coordinator at rebah@twcny.rr.com.

Volunteer Coordinator:
Becky Hudson

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Dog Lovers

We are happy to see more and more dog walkers on our paths. Please be very careful and keep your dogs on leashes around the farm animals. Big Joe is a herd animal and considers our sheep and goats his herd. He will do anything to protect them and considers all dogs a threat. On the few occasions we let our herd roam the fields we will make sure there is signage in place. A basic rule of thumb is to park in the upper fields for dog activities. If you choose to park at the barn, please leash your dogs until you are on the trail.

Board Members

Amberations is proud to announce their new Board of Directors.
Anne Brittenham & Paul Brittenham: Co-presidents
Ashley Hass: Vice-president
Diana Green: Treasurer
Stephanie Dexter & Tyler Knapp: Public Relations
Rebecca Hudson: Volunteer coordinator

You may notice that for the first time since Amberations’ beginning there is no Wiley on the Board. John and Gloria Wiley continue to let Amberations enjoy their lovely acreage for our venture. They are both as involved as ever and thrilled to have the additional support of our new members.

The Rummage Barn
Clean Outs and Buy Outs

Sue Harrington
1166 Otisco Valley Road
Preble, New York 13141
(315)636-7267

Fingerlakes CHIROPRACTIC of SKANEATELES
Dr. Christopher Stahl
1416 E. Genesee St.
Skaneateles, NY 13152
(315) 685-1422
1 Mile East of the village

R.J. Frost Hauling, LLC
TREE • BRUSH • JUNK REMOVAL
We Haul Everything!
Attics • Basements
Building Demolition • Excavation
Dumpster Removal
2388 Otisco Valley Rd.
Marietta, NY 13110
315-636-8925

Rebound Sports & Orthopedic Physical Therapy
37 South Street
Marcellus, NY 13108
(315) 673-1007

Main St. Pharmacy
11 E MAIN ST
MARCELLUS, NY 13108
(315) 673-2410

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“...and all the angels pray for peace”
Another of Amberations dreams will soon be coming to fruition. Throughout the world artful nature lovers have been planting, twisting, and bending willow saplings to create play spaces and growing sculptures.

It has been our goal to craft our very own creation. Soon Amberations will start a willow tunnel adjacent to our stream near the barn. *Salix purpuria* is a willow clone bred by researchers at SUNY ESF for biomass production.

We recently learned that Richard Kopp, one of our supporters and faithful volunteers, actually bred the clone and worked on willow bioenergy research for 14 years. Rich has graciously agreed to help us get our project underway by funding the purchase of the plants and overseeing the planting.

Our *Salix purpuria* saplings will arrive the weekend of our Bike Ride and Open House. Preparation and planting will take place that weekend. Be sure to let us know if you would be willing to help with this fun project.

**Willow Art Project**

**Yes, I would like to support Amberations**

name ________________________________
address ________________________________
phone number ________________________________
email ____________________________________

**Adopt an Animal**

I would like to adopt ____________________________

(minimum - $120/yr or $10/mo)

**Pledge**

Pledge Amount_______ How often? ___ yearly ___ monthly
Business Card Size Advertisement $50
General Donation $20 Other______________
New Construction by ESF

We are hoping to christen our composting toilet during our May 4th event. When the ESF Engineering for a Sustainable Society (ESS) agreed to take on this project they probably didn’t anticipate how involved it would be.

Prior to our Fall Festival they called to ask if there was a carpenter we knew that might be willing to help oversee things. As a not-for-profit we are constantly looking for help so at that point there were no volunteers left that we hadn’t already asked. Almost jokingly we suggested they start construction during our festival and someone would surely turn up.

Little did Tony Russo know when he came out for a day of good food and music that he would be that someone. For every nail hammered and board cut from that point on, Tony was giving lessons and guidance in carpentry.

When their schedules forced the students to halt construction with winter approaching, Tony found a friend, Karl Poplawski, and together they finished the roof. We are hoping and feeling confident that when the students come back to finish this project in a few weeks, Tony will be there.

Thank you so much Tony!

Special thanks to Kristine Ellsworth who has been overseeing this project, the ESF ESS students involved in the composting toilet construction, and William Ellsworth for his assistance on the project.
Our farm family has grown. After the passing of our three legged sheep, Smiley, last year Ruthie came to live with us. Ruthie is a rare Olde English Babydoll Southdown sheep. She is a lovely addition to the crew and probably our most mild mannered creature.

Soon after adopting Ruthie, Boo joined the crew. Boo is a Nigerian Dwarf Goat. While she definitely looks sweet and loves people, Boo can be quite pushy with her four legged friends. To attest to that fact is our newest goat Lilly.

Charlie, our retired Postmaster from Marietta, called looking for a home for Lilly (we call him Billy). Charlie described Lilly as a “teenager” with a colorful past. Apparently he was born at a petting zoo where he would have been euthanized, due to his less than shapely legs.

Fortunately he was rescued and has gone from home to home. Charlie thinks he has had as many as fifteen families.

Lilly has settled in well, having survived a short spell of harassment from Big Joe (our donkey) and continued badgering from Boo.

Happy and Shadow, our lovable barn cats, have managed to stay quite warm and snuggly in spite of the cold this winter. Happy is turning into more of a homebody, his stints away becoming less and less frequent.

Our roosters and chickens continue to come and go. As of this writing we have seven healthy hens, one rooster and one chicken of questionable gender. Melmar, our banty rooster, has been retired to the home of the Wileys. Melmar had an almost fatal encounter with a wild animal but has recovered nicely. He may make a guest appearance at our Open House, May 4th.

Finally, our guinea hens. Our pair hatched 22 keets this past spring. We let them raise their family in the wild and 6 keets managed to survive. This spring we plan to immediately cage any young to prevent predators taking them. That means we may have guinea hens available.

When you hear the racket that sometimes pierces the airwaves at the barn, please remember, in addition to being loud guard birds, these guys eat the ticks that spread Lyme disease. They are great for the environment.