

For Immediate Release,
Southbury, CT
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The Southbury Historical Society and the Southbury Land Trust are pleased to announce the launch of an exciting new preservation project. The two organizations are partnering with farm owner Marie Ludorf to preserve one of the region's most beautiful and historically significant farmscapes: the barnyard at Ludorf Farm, located in the bucolic Purchase section of Southbury. Marie Ludorf has donated the ca. 1820 Ludorf barn and related outbuildings on nearly two acres of scenic pastureland to the Southbury Historical Society. The project's goal is to adapt the iconic 19th century barn and its surrounding landscape for re-use as a farm heritage museum, including a much-needed archive and artifact storage area for the Historical Society.

According to Historical Society President Don Meyer, "Marie's extraordinarily generous donation includes much of the Ludorf family's extensive collection of antique farm implements and records. Open on a seasonal basis, the museum will showcase this marvelous collection, as well as exhibit similar collections from other Connecticut area farms." Other programs may include special exhibits, "living history" events, demonstrations of historic farm practices for children, and guest speakers. Ludorf Farm is listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

To protect the museum site's historic integrity, Ms. Ludorf also donated an agricultural conservation easement on approximately four acres surrounding the barn parcel to the Southbury Land Trust. This sweeping landscape of hand-laid fieldstone walls and rolling pastures dotted with grazing cows not only offers a protected viewshed, it is also adjacent to the Southbury Land Trust's 188-acre Ivers/Bassett Nature Preserve. According to Land Trust Vice President Anne Colby, "Conservation easements are great planning tools for farmers and landowners, allowing land to continue as private property in active farm use, while protecting future viability by prohibiting residential development. Easements offer significant tax benefits as well."

In 2007, Southbury Land Trust purchased conservation easements on adjacent portions of Ludorf Farm as part of the Trust's farmland preservation effort. Colby explained, "Thanks to Marie Ludorf's incredible generosity and vision, we are privileged to participate in this new venture: to create a really unique--and fun-- museum experience, on one of the region's most breathtakingly beautiful farms. Once restored, the Ludorf Farm Museum will provide the ideal setting to study and enjoy the area's agricultural history—in its original context surrounded by an active working farm."

Prior to the purchase, the two non-profits commissioned a structural engineering study of the antique barn. The report was funded by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation's new "Barns Grant" program. The barn was deemed in remarkable condition and ideally suited for full restoration and future public enjoyment.

The joint endeavor by the Southbury Historical Society and Southbury Land Trust is a win-win which simultaneously preserves the past, protects the future, and benefits the community now. Don Meyer said, "This combined project assures that the barn's historic value and picturesque views will be enjoyed for many generations to come."

Photo Caption: Pictured in front of the Ludorf Barn is the joint preservation committee, SHS Board members Bob Gault and Robin Stiles, SLT Vice President Anne Colby, SLT/SHS Board member Mark Manville, SHS President Don Meyer, and Marie Ludorf, front and center.

Additional information: please contact Karen Huber @ SLT – 203-264-4441. For details from the SHS, their phone number is 264-8825