



FALL 2008

Volume 31 • Number 2

# Landlines

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Since 1976

## Am I a Member?

If you are not, we would like you to be! Often people are unsure of whether or not they are members of the Simsbury Land Trust. Annual membership is based on the calendar year. Renewals are sent beginning in late fall for the next calendar year membership.

### Why do you need members?

Annual membership contributions are key to the daily operations of the SLT. Membership donations are like votes when we apply for public and private funds. The more members we have, the stronger our voice is with funders.

Your annual contribution funds:

- *Stewardship* — property maintenance, trail work and new trails and bridges.
- *Communications* — Landlines, our newsletter, the website, postcards and other notices of SLT events, activities and news.
- *Day-to-day operations* — our small office in Tariffville, two part time employees and other daily activities.
- *Recreation and education events* — including bike rides, hikes, guided tours and educational seminars.

### We donated to the Campaign for Simsbury.

#### Why doesn't that make us members?

Only those making membership contributions are counted as members. While other donors are very important, donations to other areas are used for the specific fund the money was designated for — campaign, stewardship or other areas. Membership donations are used specifically for the operations of the SLT.

### What other ways can I support the Simsbury Land Trust?

There are several ways for donors to support the Simsbury Land Trust — campaign, annual appeal and bequests.

*Campaign for Simsbury donations are used to purchase properties* — including Rosedale Farms, the first two parcels from

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## The Campaign for Simsbury Update Acquisition Progress Continues

The SLT is currently focused on important acquisition efforts. Two of these are making progress and one was recently completed.

**Tulmeadow Triangle and Pasture:** Yes, we are still working on this one. We had expected to close this transaction in early 2008. By the end of 2007 we had successfully raised the private funds and had obtained two generous public grants, one from the USDA-Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the other from the CT-DEP Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Program. Since then we have been in continual negotiation with the parties to be sure the conservation easement accomplishes everyone's objectives. We believe we are now in the final steps of that process.

**Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot:** In June, 2008, the SLT submitted a grant application for funds to help in its effort to protect 73 acres of woodlot on Tulmeadow Farm. If the application and the ongoing solicitation of private funds are successful, this will complete the protection of all 260 acres at Simsbury's oldest and largest working farm. It will save one of the last unprotected portions of an open space corridor that stretches from Ethel Walker to the Massachusetts border. It will enable the continued maintenance of one of Simsbury's few remaining succession



forests and a productive source of wood and timber. This site also provides the venue for Flamig Farm's popular Halloween Hayrides that take place for several weeks every October. This is an important project, it is one of the more challenging that we have undertaken and we will need your help over the coming months. Keep us in mind!

**Lee Holcomb's Hillside:** One of the most remarkable natural features of Simsbury is the pair of ridges that form the east and west sides of the town. Over the years, far-sighted individuals have given large tracts of these hills to the state for park land, and the Town has acquired additional parcels, most recently the Gerston Tract south of Tariffville. Equally important, the Town, years ago, enacted regulations that require homeowners along the hillside to maintain trees on the down hill side of their homes. As a result, all of the residents and visitors of Simsbury can experience the joy and inspiration of looking to the hills and seeing our town in a natural setting, not surrounded by another row or cluster of houses. Lee Holcomb has shared this vision for a long time and this summer he helped make it a reality by donating an easement to the SLT. This will preserve his 20 acres of hillside above East Weatogue Street in its natural state far into the future (see related article). Thank you Leland!

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## 2008-2009 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## LANDLINES —

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# Letter from the President

— Chuck Howard

This is my first Landlines letter as president of the Simsbury Land Trust, but before giving you an update on SLT activities, I want to thank Dick Davis for his extraordinary leadership as president over the past 12 years. Under his leadership, the Simsbury Land Trust has made remarkable progress in preserving irreplaceable open space in Simsbury. On behalf of the officers, board, and members of the Simsbury Land Trust, I want to thank Dick for his efforts to make Simsbury a more wonderful place to live and work. The good news, though, is that Dick is continuing his efforts on behalf of the SLT as chair of our Acquisitions Committee. I have no doubt that we will continue to reap the benefit of his instincts for land preservation and the trust that land owners have in both him and the SLT to protect land that is entrusted to the Simsbury Land Trust.

The SLT remains in a strong position to continue to move forward with its preservation efforts. We are pleased that we have approximately 850 members, though we always would like more members. We hope that those who have may have let their membership lapse, those who have not previously been members, and those new to town will join us. The acquisition of new properties has also presented opportunities for you to volunteer and become involved with the stewardship activities of SLT. (See the related article in this issue.) We need your support now more than ever.

Although we completed the fundraising for the second phase of Tulmeadow Farm (the Triangle and the Pasture) last year, we have encountered delays in actually closing on the acquisition of the development rights for these parcels. We expect to close on them before the end of this year, and will then move forward with the final phase of Tulmeadow Farm—the 73 acre woodlot. This will be our most ambitious fundraising effort to date, given how valuable this land would be for housing and how easily it could be developed. Even with applications for governmental grants that we have submitted, we will need to raise over \$1 million in private funds from people in town. The woodlot is an integral part to the continued success of the farm, and the failure to preserve it would be a great loss to us all. Anyone who has ever participated in the Halloween hayrides from Flamig Farm knows how wonderful this land is.

Meanwhile, there have been other property preservation successes, not just for SLT, but also for the town. One of these is the donation by Leland Holcomb of land to SLT on the east ridge of town. In addition, the town voted at the special town meeting in early May to acquire the Gerston property in Tariffville with the help of a state grant. This 50 acre parcel is a valuable addition to the protection of the east ridge of town where the Metacomet Trail runs. At the town-wide referendum later in May, the town also voted to acquire the Meadow Wood triangle. This 77 acre parcel, including the triangle at the intersection of Firetown, Holcomb, and Barndoor Hills Road is, in my opinion, a signature piece of property for preservation because of its location in the wildlife corridor between Great Pond State Park and the McLean Game Refuge and because of its potential for agricultural purposes.

I want to congratulate Diane Nash and Susan Masino, who were named Conservationists of the Year last summer by the Trust for Public Land for their accomplishments with Keep the Woods and the successful effort to help the town acquire the Ethel Walker woods.

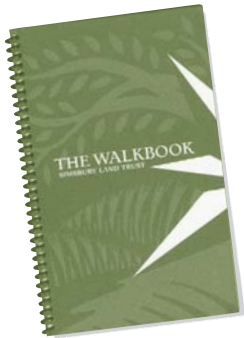
As you can see, our town has been blessed both by so many people who value the need for land preservation and the solid record of their accomplishments. Won't you join us?





## Am I a Member?

(continued from page 1)



*A free copy of The Walkbook will be sent to all new members.*

Tulmeadow Farm, 80-acres of west ridgeline property, and our current project, the 73-acre Tulmeadow Woodlot. These donations are separate from membership, and support all campaign related purchases and operating expenses.

to help build a long term Stewardship Fund for the future needs of the SLT.

**Bequests** — over the past seven years property and monetary bequests from O. Preston Case, the Walker Family, Alice Weldon and Marie Dugan have helped the SLT complete Campaign acquisitions and added valuable properties to the list of those protected by the SLT.

October is membership month! Please take a minute to complete the enclosed envelope and join or renew your membership today. Or, visit our website at [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) for a convenient credit card payment option.

**Thank you for your continued support!**

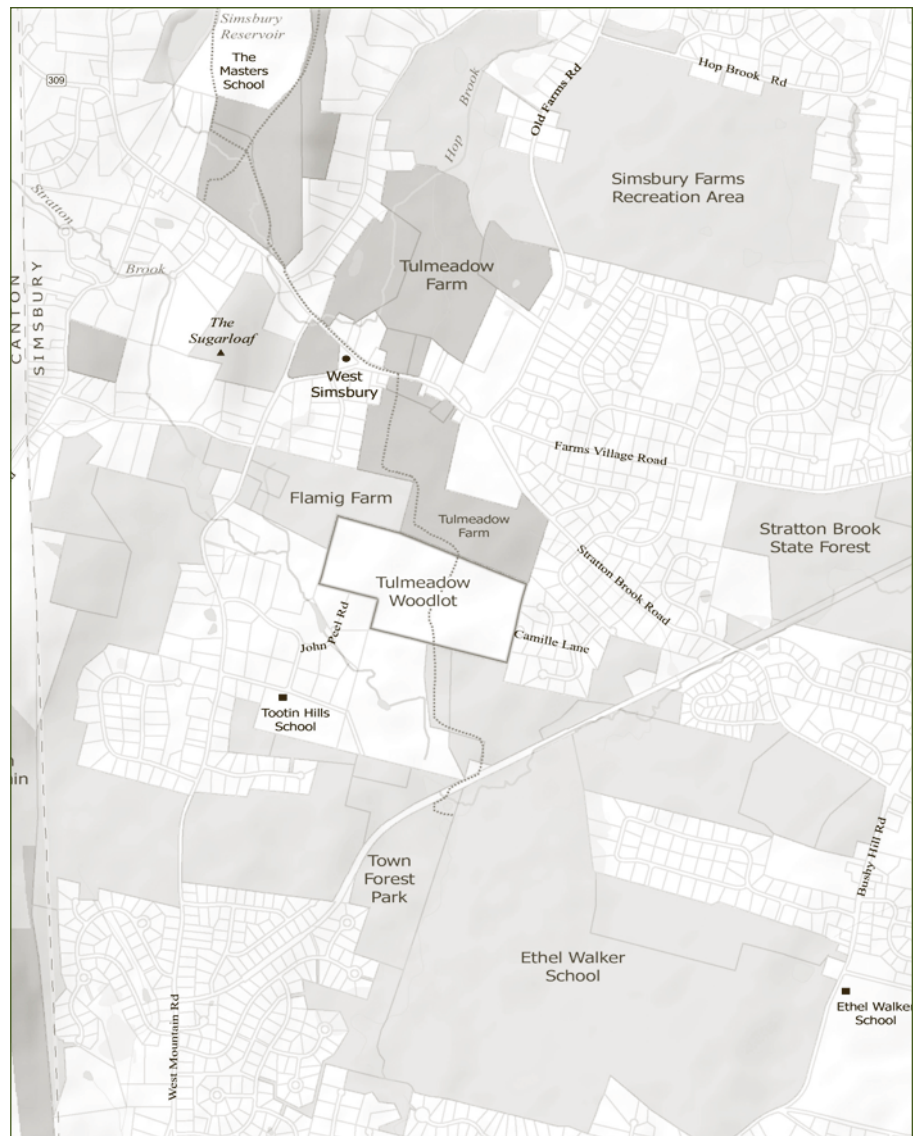
## Acquisition Progress Continues

(continued from page 1)

Many of us do not own valuable conservation land such as these. But we can all participate in such conservation efforts in equally important ways.

- Donate cash or other assets that can be used to purchase land or protective easements.
- Volunteer our time to the capital campaign.
- Support the SLT by becoming a member or renewing our existing membership.

Visit our website at [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) for more information on these options.



## Preserve the Corridor — The Tulmeadow Woodlot Makes it Complete

*The shaded areas are already protected properties, illustrating the importance of protecting the Tulmeadow Woodlot in order to maintain a wildlife corridor. We need your help to finish the farm and preserve this corridor. The Tulmeadow Woodlot is a key unprotected piece.*

## The Legacy Society — Support the SLT through Planned Giving

Planned giving offers a wide range of gift options for people who care about protecting Simsbury's rural landscapes. Because of the variety of tax benefits that are designed to encourage charitable giving, planned giving may enable you to give a more significant gift than might have otherwise been possible, while at the same time allowing you to receive a range of potential financial benefits.

If you would like information about The Legacy Society and planned giving options, or if you would like to make a gift to the Simsbury Land Trust, please call the office at 651-8773 or visit our website, [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org). You should also consult your financial or tax advisor about which options may be most beneficial for you.



# Why Go Wild and Scenic?

By Sally Rieger, Trustee  
Chairman, Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study Committee

When the Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study Committee nears the end of its work, residents in the towns will have the opportunity to express their support for a Wild and Scenic designation. The Study Committee is very excited and optimistic about the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook's inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

## Why support a Wild and Scenic designation?

- The National Park Service has funded several research projects for the Wild and Scenic Study. These include a review of town regulations related to protection of the rivers' outstanding resources, further investigation of archaeological sites along the river, and a study of the economic impact of the river. The information from all of the research will be available to the towns for their use at no cost.
- The Act would establish an advisory management committee which would receive annual funding from the National Park Service for river-related conservation projects and education. Some of this funding would be available to local groups in the form of small grants for projects that support the goals of the management plan.
- National Park Service staff would provide current, sound scientific information and technical resources for river-related conservation projects. Scientific information and technical support could also help local land use boards to make defensible land use decisions, potentially saving them both time and money. Under the Wild and Scenic Act, local boards and commissions retain their current roles in planning and regulation.
- The management plan would help develop a cooperative partnership between the state, the towns and other stakeholders to protect the rivers for generations to come. The committee would provide oversight for the designated streams and would work cooperatively with the state, the National Park Service and town governments to help safeguard a valued community resource.
- A Wild and Scenic designation brings prestige to designated rivers. It could potentially be used to leverage



funding for grants to local land trusts, other conservation organizations, and towns for relevant projects.

- A Wild and Scenic designation would encourage tourism and recreational use of the rivers, increasing business locally. According to economic research done in connection with the Wild and Scenic Study of the Upper Farmington, users of the Upper Farmington River bring 9.5 million dollars annually into the river towns. An economic study currently underway for the lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook will help to quantify the economic value of the two waterways.

The Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study Committee is working hard to develop public understanding of the advantages of a Wild and Scenic designation. Different towns will voice their decisions in different ways, whether by a town meeting vote, a referendum or other means. The study committee has already begun talking to town officials about the best way to assess public opinion without burdening the towns.

## Dick Davis Honored by SLT for 12 Years as President

The Simsbury Land Trust honored Dick Davis for his 12 years as president at a celebration in June held at Rosedale Farms. Chuck Howard, incoming president, praised Dick's contribution to the town. Here are excerpts from his comments:

"We should pause and reflect on the accomplishments of the Simsbury Land Trust while Dick Davis was president. These include the following acquisitions:

Hedgehog Mountain—19 acres

The Bog—approximately 40 acres

The Arnold property (with the Canton Land Trust)—67 acres

Rosedale Farms—Development rights acquisition of 109 acres

Tulmeadow Farm—Phases one and two of development rights acquisitions for a total of 187 acres  
The Master's School—75 acres..."

"This was not just the work of Dick Davis; many others contributed to these efforts. But it was the leadership and vision of Dick that pulled it all together. It was his integrity and steadfastness that built the relationships that made people comfortable enough to agree to give or sell land to the Simsbury Land Trust..."

"To express our appreciation, we wanted to do something more permanent and public. We have not named a trail after him in keeping with his belief that the SLT should not be in the naming



# Long Time Resident Gives Back to an Important Cause

By Jesse Imse, Simsbury High School contributing writer

As a resident of Simsbury for twenty years, Deb Barberi has also been a member of the Simsbury Land Trust for as long as she can remember. Throughout her membership, she has come to realize the importance of conserving land for our town. The Land Trust has provided a major voice in conservation efforts. In addition to her support of this organization, Deb had a strong desire to volunteer in their efforts.

This year, Deb has contributed as a steward of the historic Wegner Property. The role of a steward involves visiting the property to become familiar with it and to observe changes. Stewards also make recommendations for managing or improving the

property. In addition, Deb monitors the Bluebird houses on the property, discouraging invasive species such as House Sparrows that disturb the shy and beautiful Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows that use the boxes to nest. She does a great job with this because of her love and interest in birds. As a volunteer for the Land Trust, Deb does not have to spend many hours a day caring for a property; instead, she can drop by anytime during the day to ensure the conservation of this area.

Deb has always been a strong believer in the conservation of property and feels that it is her duty to help in the cause. She conserves the land for the wildlife, hiking, open space, and the



history of the town.

Deb Barberi is an important asset to the Simsbury Land Trust as her volunteer work is greatly appreciated. She lives with her husband, Jay Barrett who is also an avid Simsbury Land Trust member and conservationist along with Morgan and Timmy her two dogs.

Visit [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) for the complete article.



## Gift to Land Trust

By Bill Howard

Leland Holcomb, a direct descendant of one of the earliest families to settle in Simsbury, has deeded a conservation easement on 20 acres of land in East Weatogue to the Land Trust. The wooded property is on the north side of Old Hartford Road (Rt. 185) and will further protect the natural beauty of Talcott Mountain and the eastern gateway to the Town.

The family history goes back to 1639 when Thomas Holcomb moved from Dorchester, Massachusetts to Windsor, Connecticut and not long after to Massaco, as the land was called until 1742. His son, Joshua was granted an original tract of land near the Barn Door Hills in 1688 that was farmed by many generations.

In 1882 the family bought land in East Weatogue from the Humphrey family, also an early settler, and established a dairy and tobacco farm which was operated until the 1955 flood caused too much damage to continue farming. The farmhouse, barns and some of the land was sold to Brian Foley in 1994...and over the years more land was sold off, until now only about 70 acres remain in the family.

Times certainly change, but we are fortunate to have had so many wise and dedicated residents serving the Town for over 300 years. Those that grew up on farms have a deep and special appreciation of how the land gives life and sustenance. Leland's love of the land and the town led to this donation to forever preserve a little of the landscape he so fondly remembers.

Visit [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) for the complete article.

business. We have, however, decided to dedicate a trail to him. We have it on good authority (his wife) that his favorite trail is the Bog Trail on North Saddle Ridge Road, and we are having a bronze plaque prepared with the following inscription that we will place on that trail:"

*This trail is dedicated to Dick Davis, president of the Simsbury Land Trust from 1996 to 2008. Through his leadership, tireless dedication, quiet manner, and absolute integrity, the Simsbury Land Trust became a major force in land preservation in the town of Simsbury, preserving over 550 additional acres of open space and agricultural land.*

*This legacy will benefit the Town of Simsbury forever.*

*Dedicated by the Simsbury Land Trust Board of Trustees*

*June 2008*



# Local Conservationists Walk from Ethel Walker to Massachusetts

Representatives from the Simsbury Land Trust, Granby Land Trust and Keep the Woods walked the open space corridor stretching from Ethel Walker School through Tulmeadow and Flamig farms and Simsbury's West Ridge, the McLean Game Refuge, Enders and Tunxis State Forests to the Massachusetts marker. The group walked the 25 miles to celebrate recent additions to the corridor by each of the three organizations and to call attention to the remaining unprotected land that makes up this contiguous natural wildlife corridor.

The group started at the center of the Ethel Walker School at 6 a.m., and ended at the northern terminus of the Tunxis Trail on the Massachusetts border 12 hours later. With Hurricane Hannah threatening, the group was fully aware that finishing might not be possible, but the weather held off and the group finished just as the skies opened up.

Only two significant sections of this corridor remain unprotected — the Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot in Simsbury and the linkage between Enders and Tunxis State Forest in West

Granby and Barkhamsted. The Simsbury Land Trust's primary current project is the Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot. It is working with the Tuller families to "finish the farm." This 73 acre woodlot will be the last of three conservation easements that provide permanent protection to the 260 acre Tulmeadow Farm.

The walk was organized by Bob Bingham, a trustee of the Simsbury Land Trust and long time advocate of completing and broadening the corridor. Other hikers were Susan Masino (Keep the Woods), Gary Adamson (Granby Land Trust), and Karen Brand and Jim Veltrop (Simsbury Land Trust).

Bob Bingham described the day as "...one of the best ever. Over the years, so many people and organizations have worked to protect this corridor and now it is so close to becoming a reality! It is a spectacular natural feature consisting of nearly 10,000 contiguous acres and it is incredibly gratifying to experience first hand. We are so fortunate to be able to live in a major metropolitan area and to have such an extensive and



environmentally vibrant natural corridor right here in our back yard."

Everyone in the group concurred that protecting the remaining linkages is imperative. As Susan Masino put it, "...when you literally have a hundred years of so many people's work invested to get us to this point, the least we can do is finish the job. There are only two or three remaining pieces from Ethel Walker to the Massachusetts line. These certainly are worthy of becoming a project of regional focus."

## Behind the Scenes Stewardship Efforts Program is key to organization's long term success

While the Simsbury Land Trust's acquisitions get the headlines and are most visible to the public, much of the work of the SLT is in the unheralded area of property management. Under the leadership of the Stewardship Coordinators (see left) and with the help of many volunteers, the Simsbury Land Trust has recently created hiking trails on the property acquired from The Master's School and created additional connected hiking trails and a new trail head parking and information area at 60 Westledge Rd. Volunteers have also continued their efforts to control invasive plants there and elsewhere. With the help of Fernando Rincon of the USDA, the SLT received a multiyear WHIP grant to combat invasive plants on the Case property on Ferry Lane, and the results are beginning to show.

Stewardship volunteers regularly monitor our conservation easements at Rosedale Farms and Tulmeadow Farm. Periodic monitoring is required by the grants from state and federal agencies which helped fund the purchases of the development rights. (We can always use easement volunteers, so please let us know if you have a special interest in our farms.)

In this process, we have encountered concerns with adjoining property owners who have undertaken activities on SLT property that should not have occurred. In these situations, we have notified the landowners involved and asked them to rectify the situation. Simsbury Land Trust properties benefit the public generally, but they also have a direct benefit to adjoining property owners who have immediate access to them. Our guiding principle has been to try to be good neighbors but also to recognize that our fiduciary duty requires us to protect the property that has been entrusted to us.

For information on volunteering visit our website at [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) or call 651-8773.



### SLT Stewardship Coordinators:

Karen Brand: *Compliance Monitoring Coordinator*

Steve Osborn: *Property Steward Coordinator*

Don Rieger: *Trail Coordinator*

Sally Rieger: *Habitat Coordinator*



# RECREATION AND EDUCATION EVENTS

*Did you know you can now register for an event online at [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org)?*

## **Geology Hike**

**Sunday, October 26**

**1:00 p.m.**

**(Raindate Saturday, November 1)**

**Meet at The Master's School main parking lot.**

Walk with Jelle deBoer, Professor Emeritus of Geology, Wesleyan University, to the Western Border Fault Valley in Simsbury. Learn about the valley's formation and why rock on one side of the valley is about 200 million years older than the rock on the other. See an excellent example of a talus slope where cool air moving out of the bottom of the slope results in a microclimate allowing plants typical of northern New England to grow here in Connecticut. Allow 2.5 hours for this walk which includes some rough, slippery and uneven footing. Not



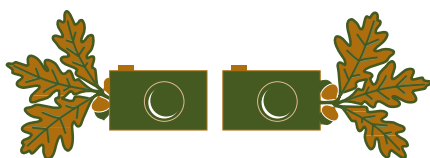
suitable for small children. To register call the Land Trust office at 651-8773.

## **Visit the Bog Walk for a Fall Foliage Treat**

A short hike to the boardwalk at the Simsbury Land Trust Bog will provide autumn color from extreme beginning to the end of the foliage season. The earliest blazing reds of the fall can be seen from the many red maples scattered throughout the bog. These maples are actually "floating" in the mat of sphagnum moss which is so characteristic of New England bogs. Later in the season this same vantage point will provide a stunning view of the yellows, oranges and browns of West Mountain's hardwoods as they yield to autumn's chill.

The trail, also found in The Simsbury Walkbook, begins on town property approximately .25 miles down on the right on North Saddle Ridge Drive, and is marked by two stone pillars. Follow the path to the signs marking the entrance to the bog. The walk is less than a mile round trip and is easy for all ages. If you have yet to venture to the bog be sure to read the educational signs along the way and try to visit the trail in each changing season. For a longer hike from a higher vantage point try the Cathles Trail which begins a short way down the road at the end of North Saddle Ridge Drive.

*Note: This is a residential neighborhood, so please be careful where you park your car.*



***Don't miss our Annual Photo Contest!***

All photos must be taken on a SLT property or at a SLT sponsored event. See [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) for details!

## **"Loop Year – 365 Days on the Trail"**

**John Sheirer**

**Thursday, November 6**

**6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

**Simsbury Public Library  
Program Room**

John Sheirer, Author of the book, "Loop Year; 365 Days on the Trail" will discuss his book. Copies of the book will be available for sale and for signing. The program is free of charge and open to the public. RSVP to Amy Zeiner, Simsbury Land Trust at 651-8773 or [amyzeiner@aol.com](mailto:amyzeiner@aol.com)

## **Pilfershire Trail Hike**

**Sunday, November 16**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Meet at the Northwest corner of  
Highridge Road**

*Our most popular hike returns!*

Join Trustee Fred Feibel on a tour of old cellar holes and remnants of what had once been "Pilfershire Village". Hikers will step back in time to get a feel for how some of our earliest settlers lived. Learn how the houses had looked and get some insights about the people who had once made them their homes. Explore stone walls, streams and examine native plants, many of which Native Americans had shared the uses of with our colonists. Many hikers will return with a new found appreciation for our forefathers on West Mountain and an urge to look even deeper into this beautiful part of Simsbury. Dress appropriately for possible cool and wet weather. Parts of the trail are likely to be wet. This is a hike of moderate difficulty.





## SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

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### Time to renew your Simsbury Land Trust Membership for 2009!

Your membership provides crucial financial support for continued land preservation in Simsbury. Please use the enclosed envelope to send in your 2009 membership today!

Memberships are based on the calendar year. Thank you for your continued support.



### Did you miss the Tour Des Farms? Forgot about the hike in Tariffville?

*Sign up for the SLT Email list to get timely reminders for our events!*

Don't miss our next event. Visit our website at [www.simsburylandtrust.org](http://www.simsburylandtrust.org) and register for our email list and receive periodic updates on Simsbury Land Trust news and reminders for recreation and education events. You can unsubscribe at any time, and the list will not be shared with any other organizations.

Registration is quick and easy.

