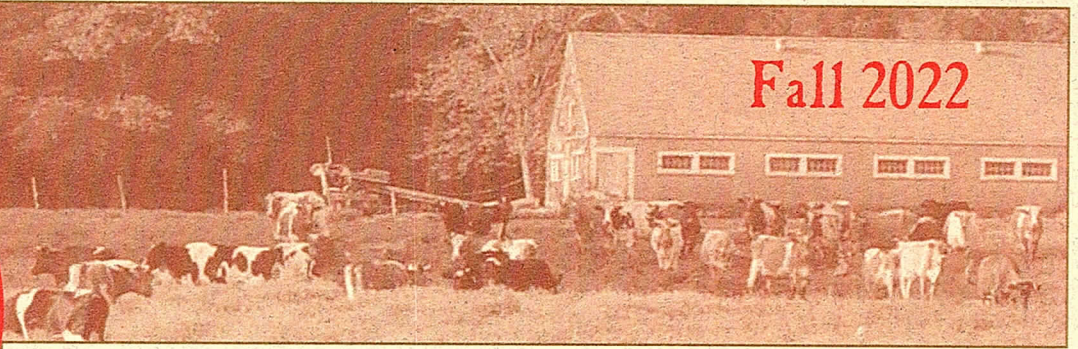
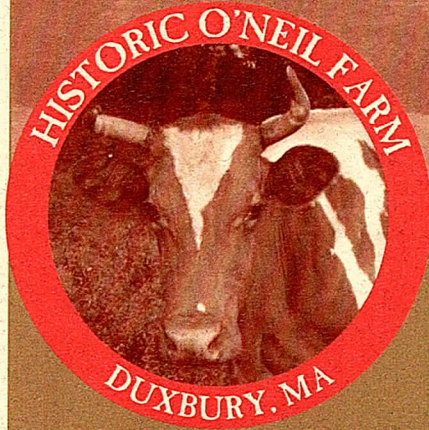


Fall 2022



The Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation committed to maintaining the 145-acre farm in agriculture in perpetuity, preserving and protecting the historic landscape and natural habitat, providing educational programs, and offering public access to the farm.

Board of Directors:

Sam Butcher,
President

Susan Schortmann,
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Kimberly Glattstein
Jessica McNally
Douglas Muir, Esq.
Jaime Nielsen
Carl O'Neil

Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc.
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Duxbury, MA 02331

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website: historiconeilfarm.org

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The Autumn Avenue trailhead parking lot is open dawn to dusk.

We've mentioned the transition at the farm and we are making progress.

In the barnyard and in the fields, Carl continues to manage the herd and all that goes with it. There is the feeding, managing herd health, milking and even introducing a few new calves to the mix. There is also the management of the field, the haying, spreading the nutrients (manure), management of invasives, and removing the trees that fall into the fields after storms. It is a lot.

Carl continues the slow but methodical process of downsizing his herd. If you walk the fields and track the girls you might see that there are a fewer of them. Carl has carefully and thoughtfully reduced the size of the number of milking cows and the size of the replacement herd in recognition of the need to eventually transition to the new farmer. That process will continue.

Meanwhile we continue to work on trail improvements. We recognize that it is not enough to have a beautiful farm. We need to create ways for people to get to the farm and to enjoy the farm and all of the surrounding streams and woodland. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, we are working to make the trails more accessible and less "rugged". We are looking to keep the footing a little drier, a little less hazardous and we are trying to create spaces for people to stop to enjoy the view. We hope to complete some of these changes this fall, in time for some stunning foliage walks.

If we are lucky, some of the work on the trails will be supported by grants. We have applied for several small grants to improve access over several wet areas. Some of the improvements will require the assistance of volunteers. The grants will not cover all of the expense and labor associated with bog boards. Also, we hope to get a load of wood chips dropped off and may need volunteers to help move the woodchips onto the trails and rake them into place.

Maintenance and improvements to the farm can be expensive and require support. We are applying for grants to provide some of this but your donations are greatly appreciated.

**We thank you for your support as we move forward.
Sam Butcher, President**



**We Welcome
Erik Boyer**

Welcome to our new board member Erik Boyer.

Erik Boyer is the Director of Field Operations at Wildlands Trust, overseeing the management of over 8,000 acres of protected open space in Southeastern MA.

Erik is originally from southern NJ and currently lives in Mashpee. We are encouraged by his experience with managing conservation land and trails.

Continued Improvements to the Trails

By Sam Butcher

The farm's trails system, the Avery and Chandler Trails, both accessible off Autumn Avenue, have always been an integral part of the Historic O'Neil Farm offering walkers the opportunity to take in both a view of the pastoral farm and a serene walk in the woods. We continue to work on improvements.

Since the inception of the Historic O'Neil Farm, the Village at Duxbury has not only been our geographically closest neighbor, they have arguably been our most important neighbor. The Farm and the Village share a long property boundary and many of those who support the Farm are residents of the Village.

With this close connection in mind we are working to improve access and opportunities for residents of the Village at Duxbury to enjoy the farm, especially the Avery Trail. Residents can access a loop trail from two points along the parking areas on the west side of the Village to walk either clockwise or counter-clockwise. Along the way walkers can enjoy views of the farm and fields as well as the natural, wooded splendor.

We are also exploring other ways to improve the connection between the Village and the Farm. We would love to coordinate "walks and talks" which might increase resident engagement.

The Chandler Trail, on the north side of Autumn Avenue and also accessible from the Autumn Avenue parking lot, is a little longer and offers a more wooded experience though there is a field that Carl hays. If is a beautiful, contained and sunny spot that seems miles away from any hub bub.

But if you walk the trails as often as we do you know that some sections of the Avery and Chandler trails can be pretty treacherous at times. During the spring and after heavy rains portions of the trails can become small ponds. In other areas the roots have become a tripping and ankle-turning hazard. Of course, both of these hazards come as a result of lots of trail use – which is a good thing – but these hazards deserve attention, so that is what we are working on.

We recently applied for a grant that will, if funded, provide funds to construct several "bog board" over sections of the trails that become inundated with water. These structures will allow walkers to pass over the wet areas a little more easily during the wet time of the year. These bog board are by no means "bridges," so do not expect a major construction project, but they should help you keep your shoes a little drier.

In other areas the compaction associated with lots of foot traffic has resulted in tree roots coming to the surface. Anyone who has walked the trails knows that these roots can pose a hazard to tripping or twisting an ankle. In the coming weeks we are going to have a load of wood chips delivered to the farm (and probably dropped in the Autumn Avenue parking lot) and from there the chips will be lugged to different places along the trails where roots are a particular problem. In the short term, as we place the chips and before the chips get compacted, the footing might be a little soft, but as more people go back and forth over the path, we are optimistic that the chips will be able to hide the roots a bit and make the walking a little easier. These wood chips are a bit of an experiment but we are optimistic.

We are also looking to create or expand areas where people can simply pause and enjoy the view. We hope to include a bench or two where people can simply rest. We find that taking the time to simply enjoy watching cows as they graze, watching the swallows diving and swooping at the bugs, or admiring a hawk as it circles above can be meditative.

Fingers crossed, you will see these improvements in the very near future.



News from Farmtastic 4-H

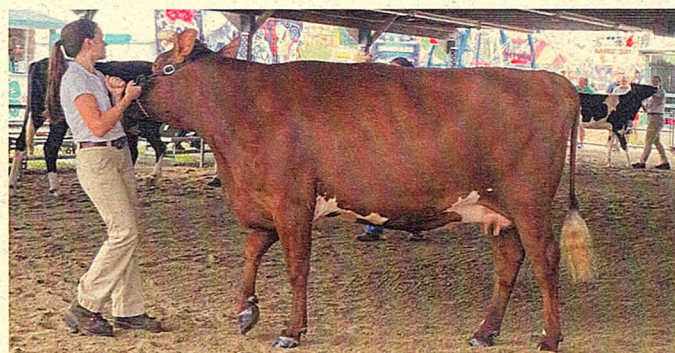
By Jaime Nielsen

Farmtastic 4-H'ers enjoyed another successful year on the farm with Mr. O'Neil's cows.

The club works hard all year long helping to take care of the calves and yearlings. In the spring, each member is assigned their own 4-H project cow to practice with and take to the show. The 4-H'ers learn through hands on experience, learning about farming, teaching the young cows to walk politely on a halter, and washing and clipping their hair to prepare for shows.

This year the club took cows to show at: Barnstable Fair in July, Marshfield Fair in August, and the Topsfield Fair in October. All of the effort on the farm is rewarded in the show ring; kids compete against their friends and other youth farmers and 4-h'ers in fitting, showmanship, and breed classes. They are judged on how well they prepared their calf for the show, how effectively they can show off their calf to the judge, and how well their calf represents the ideal dairy cow. Congratulations to the Farmtastic 4-H club for winning awards—Fitting and Showmanship Champion, Best of Breed for Guernsey, Holstein, and Milking Shorthorn, and Best of Show—at the fairs they visited this year.

Interested in 4-H? Reach out to the Plymouth County 4-H extension office and ask for Cathy.



Sam Donohoe with Ceres at Marshfield



Will Jones with Johna (left) and Cooper McDonough with Bexley (right) at Topsfield



Visit our website at:
www.historiconeilfarm.org
or find us on Facebook and Instagram:
[@historiconeil](https://www.instagram.com/historiconeil)



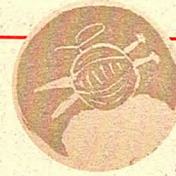


The Historic O'Neil Farm stamp that will be found in the hidden letterbox



Letterboxing

By Kimberly Glattstein



The moonbeam and stitches stamp Karen created to stamp in the log books of the letterboxes she finds.

Do you enjoy a treasure hunt? There is a community of "treasure-hunters" that would like you to join them on their quest to explore the outdoors and share with others your explorations.

In the 1850s with a Victorian guide, James Perrott left, in a remote area of Dartmoor, England, a bottle containing his calling card and request for visitors to contact him if they found it. Recording their accomplishments many hikers left their own calling cards and in 1888 a small tin box replaced the bottle. In the tin box, visitors left self-addressed postcards for people to mail if they found the box. Two decades later the suggestion for a rubber stamp logging the visit was implemented and consisted of a box containing a logbook and a rubber stamp. Forty years later a second one was placed in the area and others later on. In 1976 a guide map pinpointing fifteen letterboxes located in the Dartmoor area was created. By the 1980s the number of letterboxes grew in the thousands and Letterboxing became a full-fledged hobby where people called "letterboxers" created descriptive names for themselves, designed and created personal stamps marking the letterboxes they found.

Finding the letterbox remains a "treasure hunt" within the natural surroundings of which they reside and in order to preserve the natural areas a "code of conduct" has been established amongst people who embark on this hobby:

- 1. Boxes should not be sited in any kind of antiquity, in or near stonewalls or buildings.**
- 2. Boxes should not be sited in any potentially dangerous situations where injuries could be caused.**
- 3. Boxes should not be sited as a fixture. Cement or any other building material is not to be used.**

In 1998 the Smithsonian magazine published a small article about this tradition and this British hobby, previously centered in Dartmoor, grew to people hiding letter boxes around the globe. The hobby has grown and the internet has facilitated a means of disseminating letter box hunting hints so now letterboxes can be spotted across the United States. The hobby has spread from letterbox hunting to also letterbox "planting".

In 2018 a Duxbury librarian introduced letterboxing to her co-workers and planted a letterbox in the Duxbury Library. Locations of letterboxes are found through www.atlasquest.com. Her coworker, Karen Hahn, enjoyed spending time hiking and cycling around the South Shore, so soon utilized letterboxing in her weekend/holiday explorations - combining enjoying the outdoors with the challenge of a treasure hunt.

Enjoying filling her logbook with stamps from the letterboxes she found, Karen, expanded to planting her own signature stamps and letterboxes in areas that will inspire other people's sense of adventure. Currently, she has planted 31 letterboxes and has created a separate "log book" recording her uniquely designed stamps, their locations, and the date she planted them. Each person who begins planting letterboxes creates a "handle", i.e. nickname, and logs their planted letterbox. Karen's handle is "Stitches and Moonbeams".

Our board member Kim Glattstein asked Karen if she would "plant" a letterbox on the Historic O'Neil Farm Avery trail and Karen was very receptive, creating a unique "Historic O'Neil Farm" stamp and planting letterbox somewhere on the Avery Trail. You can find clues to find the Historic O'Neil Farm letterbox along with many others planted around Duxbury by visiting www.atlasquest.com and click on LetterBoxes/Simple Search. Enter "Historic O'Neil Farm" in Basic Search Name and click "Search". To view the details click on the "Historic O'Neil Farm" link and access the clue information.

Ready to search for the Historic O'Neil Farm Letterbox? Look up the clues to the letterbox, bring a small notebook and your unique stamp to the Autumn Ave. trailhead of the Avery Trail, and follow the clues. We hope you enjoy this discovery activity that encourages the exploration of the outdoors and fun for all ages. In addition, there is a geocache on the trail. An informational handout is available at the Autumn Ave. trail head.

Please respect the "code of conduct" for letterboxing and "waiver of responsibility and disclaimer" indicated on the website. Historic O'Neil Farm encourages visitors to explore our trails and natural surroundings and leaving this preserved area as they found it.



Farmtastic 4-H'ers, volunteers, and Alumni, joined Carl O'Neil in the show ring for an official "Thank you" after the dairy show at the Marshfield Fair. The judge this year was Meredith Reimer, a Farmtastic 4-H'er alumni.

Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc.
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See inside for:

Trail Improvements
Continue

Farmtastic 4-H

Letterboxing

Glimpse the Seasonal Changes on Our Trails



Thank You

Your Support Is Important

Historic O'Neil Farm seeks grant funding for our projects and activities whenever possible, but financial support from the public is crucial for us to maintain the Farm property, keep the fields open and free of invasives and maintain and improve the walking trails which have become so important for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the last remaining dairy farm in southeastern Massachusetts. We are embarking on a number of exciting trail improvements and enhancements this year, as described in this newsletter, and your financial support will make a big difference.

Please consider Historic O'Neil Farm when you make your plans for annual contributions and help us continue to share our 300 year old farming legacy with the community.

Donations can be made using the adjacent form and mailed to:

**Historic O'Neil Farm, P.O. Box 2755,
Duxbury, MA 02331**

or online at

www.historiconeilfarm.org/donate

The board of directors thanks you for your generosity and continued support.

YES, I am committed to helping Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. move into the future. Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other

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