

McCoy Farm & Gardens NEWSLETTER

Main entrance: 1604 Taft Highway • Front gate: 1715 Anderson Pike • Mailing address: P.O. Box 443, Signal Mountain, TN 37377 • Website: www.mccoypwalden.org

Volume Two: Issue Two

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You Are Invited to:

"Volunteer Work Day" 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday, February 18. We welcome you to bring tools - rakes, pruners, saws, shovels, trowels - and friends too!

Volunteer Work Days will be the second Saturday of every month with the next planned March 11 and April 8. Come and join the fun and fellowship of meaningful work together.

Thank You - \$10,000 Challenge Met!

We are very pleased to announce that you met the challenge of an anonymous donor who gave McCoy Farm & Gardens \$10,000 and pledged to match new gifts up to another \$10,000. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$10,000 before the deadline, and our special donor has already given the second \$10,000 says Gene Adams, Treasurer. Susan Snow, Private Events Chairperson, reports more potential revenue from possible weddings in May.

The "sleeping porch" upstairs in the main house is already finished, and a three pronged effort to reconstruct and enlarge the Blacksmith Shop is underway by the Lion's Club.



Some of the fifteen members of the Lions Club who have worked on the Blacksmith Shop so far. Photos by Paul Jensen. Their Centennial Legacy aim is to rebuild the structure into useful operating condition while preserving its historic appearance.

Coming soon are improvements to the well house/potting shed, and bracing for the barn. EPB will install underground power to the structures. Adding three rest rooms to the Carriage House by Memorial Day is next. There was a motion, seconded, and approved by the Board for a \$40,000 expenditure for all these improvements. Thank you again!

Latest Wildlife Walk Report

On January 22nd, Kevin Calhoun led a lively group consisting of Linda Collins, Doug Newton, Mickey Robbins, Luke Thompson, Paige Thompson, Hilda Horton, and Bob Franklin on a wildlife walk. All birds seen or heard were recorded. The total number of species observed during this and two earlier surveys is 51.

A crab apple tree is being used as a food source by at least three species of birds. A large nest built of leaves is usually a squirrel nest. A large nest of sticks is usually a raptor nest, and two stick nests were found. One near the parking lot looks like a possible Cooper's Hawk. This species has been seen in the area.

The group also discussed invasive plants removal and replacements. Cardinal flower, jewel weed, and Joe Pye weed might be planted along the seasonal stream and wet areas. For wildlife, cross vine and/or trumpet vines might climb some of the dead standing trees.

The Mission of McCoy Farm & Gardens is to restore, enhance and preserve the historic McCoy homeplace so that it may serve the community as an arboretum, natural area, and venue for public and private events.

Sometimes you get what you need

by Andy Jones

Late in the summer of 2015, I ran into Mickey Robbins who brought up the McCoy project and asked if I would help him set a gate post in cement. Wiley Fox that he is, he suggested I might also enjoy helping with some unruly bittersweet vine along Anderson Pike. And, oh yeah, the entire 38 acres has been consumed by this vine and many other types of invasive vegetation – including privet the size of mature old-growth forest.



Dr. Andy Jones

Like most residents of Walden, I had been driving around this historic place most of my adult life without realizing its overgrown beauty and magic. What immediately grabbed me was the sense that I had stepped back into a time not fragmented by text and e-mails and the background noise of a television in every room. It has the feel of a time when the desire to talk to someone involved getting on a horse. If one's letter writing was interrupted, it was probably due to a goat getting into the garden, or a well pump malfunction.

Like many people, I wanted to help bring this place back to life so others could share a place – a history – that is rarely seen outside of books. I was hooked, and by late September I was spending every spare afternoon there.

What looks like dense forest used to be fields, pastures and gardens. Senator Bachman

and Martha McCoy had a great fondness for special trees and plants. Winter aerial pictures show that the property was planted with rows of trees from Anderson Pike to the house. This was not apparent at first, but one of my initial projects was to clear the overgrowth from the "pasture" across from St. Augustine Church.

Working with Mickey Robbins, Bob Franklin, Larry Mick, Charles Adams, Doug Newton, Jeremy Logan and others, the rows of hemlocks and hardwoods were gradually revealed. Mountains of vines, brush and dead trees were hauled to the fire maintained often by Susan Snow. This was just one corner of the action, as many others were working around the property, and volunteers were finishing the bridge.

It also became clear that for McCoy Farm & Gardens to be safe for the public, the old swimming pool had to be filled. Who even knew there was a swimming pool? It was so overgrown that it could only be found by a narrow path through another privet jungle. Fortunately EPB was clearing power lines on the mountain. For truck loads of mulch, all that was required was the removal of a mountain of vegetation and a solid path for the trucks. Mayor Bill Trohanis ordered heavy plywood for the path. Then the dumped fill mulch had to be hand raked to the back walls of the pool.

What took a lot less effort and time for me was the friendship that comes from working together on an amazing project. There have been so many discoveries that have evolved with this process. The real blessing to me has been the people I have met and the friendships. Who knew that the McCoy project would take such a place in my life?

Hours, Access & Information

The 1.1 mile long walking and running trail is open during daylight hours, seven days per week. Access the trail at the 1604 Taft Highway entrance, and park in the first gravel lot located outside the inner gate.

The McCoy grounds are open to the public Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Please enter through the Taft Highway entrance and park in the main gravel lot. A handicapped accessible portable toilet is located at the orchard end of the gravel lot.

OFFICERS:

Mickey Robbins, President
Bob Franklin, Vice President; Corporate Secretary
Gene Adams, Treasurer

DIRECTORS:

Charles Adams
Linda Collins
Joe Davis
Andy Jones
Anne Leonard
Jeremy Logan

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Shannon Handy, Strategic Planning
Jody Hunter, Gardening
Susan Snow, Private Events
Karen Stone, Newsletter

WALDEN OFFICIALS:

Mayor: Bill Trohanis
Aldermen: Lee Davis, Thom Petersen

Support McCoy Farm & Gardens

The McCoy Farm and Gardens is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. All contributions are charitable and tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law, as determined by your tax advisor.

The 38 acre parcel with the Bachman-McCoy home, pavilion, carriage house, barn, unimproved blacksmith shop, apple house, various other smaller structures, and gardens are leased from the Town of Walden. Volunteers are very important to the organization, in all areas. Your donations are welcome and will be used to improve the structures and gardens.

Please send your check to:

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P.O. Box 443, Signal Mt., TN 37377

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