

# MALABAR FARM NEWS

The Malabar Farm Foundation

Summer 2019

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## “In The Spotlight”

### Malabar Farm Exhibit Opens at the Little Buckeye Children’s Museum

A new Malabar Farm State Park exhibit sponsored by the Malabar Farm Foundation has opened in the Little Buckeye Children’s Museum at 44 W. Fourth St. in downtown Mansfield. This is one of the first outreach programs the Foundation has done in collaboration with another community partner. Victoria Cochran, Special Events Coordinator of the Malabar Farm Foundation, wanted to make more people aware of the state park which is the only working farm in the Ohio state park system as well as the former home of Pulitzer-prize winning author Louis Bromfield and his family. She worked on the project for 2 years and presented the idea to the Foundation board as a way of reaching small children as well as their parents and grandparents who will be bringing them to the museum. Over 70,000 children and adults are expected to visit the museum this year.

Malabar Farm naturalist, Mark Summer along with Malabar Farm Foundation board member, Tom Bachelder spent numerous hours painting the barn scene and activity table for the exhibit. The exhibit highlights some of the many activities kids can enjoy at Malabar Farm. The barn theme includes stalls for the animals as well as a window view of Mt. Jeez. The Spinning & Weaving Guild at Malabar Farm made costumes of cows, pigs and sheep for the children to put on while riding the green toy tractors that were donated by Step2 in Perrysville. Children can also use their imagination to play on the activity table which has a replica of the barn with toy animals.

Brochures that list all the events for the year at Malabar Farm State Park are stocked at the exhibit as well as Foundation brochures. It is the hope of the Malabar Farm Foundation that families who visit the Little Buckeye Children’s Museum will also visit Malabar Farm State Park to enjoy the hiking trails, farm animals, take a Big House and wagon tour or attend the many special events held at the park. For more information about the museum follow them on Facebook or visit [www.littlebuckeye.org](http://www.littlebuckeye.org).

### *Join ~ Donate ~ Volunteer!*

The Louis Bromfield Society is the membership program established to raise funds in support of Malabar Farm State Park’s mission.

Your membership dues help the Malabar Farm Foundation, an independent, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, continue to make education, development, and preservation projects possible at Malabar Farm State Park. All contributions are tax deductible, as provided by law. **Member \$50.00 / Friend \$100.00**

## Looking Back . . . . .

**By Tom Bachelder, Malabar Farm  
Foundation Board Member**

*The seventh issue of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation Newsletter was published in November of 1959. It continues the story of Malabar Farm following the death of Louis Bromfield. (Information in italics below was added to the original Newsletter text.)*

**November, 1959 (No.8)**

At Malabar Farm preparation for winter is in full swing. Chipmunks have been scurrying for weeks back and forth along the rail fence back of the Big House, their cheeks bulging with kernels of corn, which they are storing away in some secret cache. Ears of corn tucked in this fence at the ends of the rails are also bringing in the farm’s cardinal population from the multiflora rose hedges, where they spent the summer. Malabar’s people too are responding to the age-old urge to prepare for winter, installing storm windows and checking the heating equipment. Corn picking from our 75 acres of Dekalb hybrids is under way, but is a slow process with a one-row picker which is continually breaking down. Complicating matters further this year is the prevalence of corn stalk rot, not only at Malabar but in other sections of Ohio. Officials who had predicted a bumper corn crop are now revising their estimates downward. Stalk rot causes the stalks to fall over and with the corn lying on the ground, the picker is not able to pick it up.

The delay in autumn coloring of the trees and other vegetation, has prolonged the visiting season at Malabar Farm. Normally, the number of visitors drops off sharply after the first week in October, when the fall colors are at their best. This year sugar maples, which predominate, were most vivid during the week of October 18. (Cont. page 2)

## The Malabar Farm Foundation

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**Looking Back. . .** (From page 1) An event of the greatest importance to Malabar occurred at the end of October. The Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Foundation received its exemption from federal income taxes as an institution engaged in charitable, scientific, literary and educational activities. Under its state charter, the Foundation has acquired and will operate, expand and develop Malabar Farm for the purpose of practicing, teaching and conducting there at, as well as elsewhere, a conservation, education and research program in agriculture.

For some time the Foundation has realized the need for an Agricultural Board to develop policy and program for all of the diverse farming operations at Malabar. During the past month the Board came into being when Dr. John Sitterley of Agricultural Economics at Ohio State University, accepted appointment and was immediately designated Chairman.

Other appointments of the Agricultural Board are expected in November. At least two other Boards are being considered, one to develop the program for the Ecological Center and the other to formulate plans for educational activities at Malabar Farm.

The first public lecture of the winter 1959-1960 series, held in the auditorium of the Big House on October 24, attracted an enthusiastic audience who came to hear Christ Pataky, Mansfield nursery owner, photographer and amateur naturalist. The speaker mentioned the new nut tree plantings at Malabar, pointing out that an English walnut scion grafted onto a native black walnut tree last spring had produced more than two feet of growth during the summer. Mr. Pataky illustrated his lecture with color slides. The usual social hour followed in the dining room of the Big House, permitting the audience to become better acquainted with the speaker.

*I believe that the "auditorium" at the Big House is the same room referred to elsewhere as the lecture room, a large stone-lined room in the basement. There is no other space in Louis Bromfield's home that could come close to being called an auditorium.*

### **Big House Restoration Ongoing - By Fred Malone, Malabar Farm Foundation Board Member**

Five years ago this past April, I arranged for two conservators from the Inter-Museum Conservation Association (ICA) of Cleveland to assess the art and textiles in the Big House. I had worked with these folks while I was President of the Marion County Historical Society, so I knew their capabilities.

The ICA, as they are called, is a 501(c)(3) that works with museums and art galleries the world over doing art and artifact restoration. ICA has a staff of conservators that specialize in oil paintings, watercolors, prints, paper items, textiles, statuary, and furniture. They have a reputation of having the best conservators known worldwide and they are less than ninety minutes away from Malabar Farm.

Shortly after their visit in April of 2015, we developed a plan of what art needed to be cleaned, restored or preserved first. Consideration was given to all aspects of the treasures in the house. The items that seemed to need the most immediate attention were the oil paintings. We determined there were 35 oils, not including the Grandma Moses paintings (2), that needed conserved. The two Grandma Moses paintings – *The Postman* and *Springtime*, had been addressed in 1987 by the ICA. We had them re-checked in 2015 during the previously mentioned on-site visit, and they were in excellent condition with no attention needed for another fifty years or more. This speaks to the attention and quality of the work being done by the ICA.

Fellow board member, Tom Bachelder and I reviewed the list of oil paintings and determined the order in which we would proceed. It was apparent to us that the two most prominent paintings in the house were located in the Red Room and the Living Room. The painting of Louis and his favorite boxer Prince in the living room had to be first along with the portrait of Louis and Mary in the Red Room, which was painted on the coast of France. It is obvious to the viewer which place Louis was the most happy by the expression on his face.

Sometime in July 2015, my wife Terri and I went to the Big House to remove the first two oils and prepare them for the transport to the ICA in Cleveland. Thus began this long labor of love to totally restore, conserve, and preserve all of the art and artifacts in the Big House.

Recently, the last oil painting was taken to the ICA and will be brought back later this fall. However, we have only scratched the surface of the work yet to be done. The Big House is full of hundreds of works of art, which include many awards, diplomas, and other important documents in the paper line. In addition, there are items that will need to be archived and preserved.

We are just beginning to concentrate on the artwork on paper. These items alone will no doubt take another five to seven years to complete. As you can see, this overall project will most likely take fifteen years or more.

To date, the Malabar Farm Foundation has spent \$85,000 to \$95,000 on art restoration. In addition, another \$40,000 in donations covered the cost of re-creating the Jimmy Reynolds drapes in Louis Bromfield's office, new LED lighting throughout the house and all new ultra-violet protective blinds for the 89 windows in the Big House. The funding for the window blinds came from three donor-advised funds through the Richland County Foundation. The new LED lighting came from Jeremy Lucas, owner of NuGen LED Solutions & NuGen Outdoor Enterprises, LLC. Our thanks go to these named and unnamed donors for their support of our Big House project.

We would also like to thank all our Malabar Volunteers for their hard work at Foundation events at the farm. Money generated from events such as the Big House Valentine's Bash, annual Sunday Drive Car Show and others go toward this massive project.

Most of all, I want to thank my partner in this project, Thomas Bachelder, who has been there since the beginning and keeps me on an even keel when I get frustrated. With the continued support of the Foundation Board of Directors, we will see this project to the end.

## **Listening to the Past and Seeing the Future – Bromfield and the Artistic Revolution**

By Paul Sukys, Professor Emeritus, North Central State College

Over the last two years this column has focused on Louis Bromfield's political philosophy by exploring several sources including a radio broadcast, a pamphlet entitled *England: A Dying Oligarchy*, a short story named "Thou Shall Not Covet," and three of his novels, *The Green Bay Tree*, *The Rains Came*, and *The Man Who Had Everything*. Each of these sources has revealed a great deal about Bromfield's political philosophy. However, there comes a time in any study when it is appropriate to pause and re-examine the roots of that study. In our look at Bromfield the writer, that time is now.

The source of Bromfield's success is embedded in his talent as a novelist. Bromfield, like any really good writer has an instinctive talent for using language in effective and entertaining ways. Such talent however, must be nurtured in an environment that encourages the writer to read, write, revise, and write again. Bromfield was fortunate to have a mother who made certain that he read the works of the great writers and who encouraged him to cultivate his talent so that he would one day join their ranks.

Bromfield's good fortune was not limited to his time in that early environment. He was also fortunate to have been born in an age of literary innovation. During this age, writers (all artists for that matter) were experimenting with the very nature of art. Much of this experimenting was done in reaction to the disorienting nature of the Great War which had disillusioned an entire generation, The Lost Generation, as it was later called, and had robbed them of their idealism and their optimism.

Consequently, as they structured their art, they did so within a world that had taught them that tradition, culture, industry, business, science, and the military could not be trusted. This realization gave these radical artists a license to experiment with wild and crazy techniques. This is why Fitzgerald, for example, replaces the conventional narrative of the novel with streams of musical verse that seem more like poetry than prose; why Hemingway's characters speak in clipped, brisk, telegram-like sentences that deliberately fail to mimic normal speech; and why Faulkner needs four pages to transmit what other writers can convey in less than four sentences.

Bromfield would have none of this. He refused to engage in this undisciplined approach to literary practice. Rather, he did what really great writers do best. He stuck to the basics: good plots, convincing characters, authentic settings, believable dialogue, and valuable, enlightening themes. This does not mean that Bromfield disapproved of the experimenters. On the contrary, he offered them both his respect and encouragement. We see this attitude highlighted in an essay that he wrote for an anthology entitled *Revolt in the Arts*. Bromfield's contribution to this anthology appears in the chapter entitled "The Novel in Transition". In this essay, Bromfield set out to prove that the alleged "revolt in the arts" was greatly exaggerated. What looks to the casual observer like a revolt in the arts, Bromfield argues, is simply the attempt by individual writers to communicate their reaction to reality in general and to modernity and the war in particular. Such reactions, Bromfield insists, are intense when they first occur but are generally short lived and often later abandoned by most writers who eventually return to more traditional formats.

This does not mean that the exercise in experimentation was a waste. On the contrary, Bromfield asserts that these written experiments provided a literary laboratory for the writers who engaged in them, and will continue to serve as a model for future writers who wish to imitate those innovations or to enter into an experimental period of their own. More to the point, such experimental interludes provide writers with a period of freedom that allows them to stretch their talent to the ultimate limits.

Writers are always free to experiment in any way they see fit. Still, these periods of revolt (Bromfield prefers to call them periods of transition) legitimize such experimentation and ensure that those innovative streaks will continue indefinitely into the future. Finally, Bromfield's approval of the literary laboratory of the 1920's should not come as a surprise to anyone who knows him because as we have seen again and again throughout his career, Bromfield remained a practical minded man who was more interested in results than in show.

**\*\*\* Save the Date \*\*\***

**"Barn Raising 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" - August 31 - September 2**



**This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the fondly remembered barn raising. Come and celebrate the occasion with activities pertaining to the history of barns and Bromfield traditions. The Barn Framers will be there. Visit [www.malabarfarm.org](http://www.malabarfarm.org) for more information on all the activities.**

## Around The Farm . . . . Bromfield's Granddaughter Visits the Farm

**Melanie Read and her husband Ron** visited Malabar Farm from May 24 – June 3. Melanie is the daughter of Hope Bromfield Stevens (middle daughter of Louis & Mary Bromfield). A welcome reception with board members and volunteers was held for them on May 30 in the Big House. One of the reasons for their visit was to bring the ashes of Anne Bromfield (oldest daughter of Louis & Mary Bromfield) to the farm. A memorial stone marker is being made by Thompson Memorials to be placed in the Olivet Cemetery at Malabar Farm.

During the visit, Melanie visited Kingwood Center Gardens to purchase native Ohio flowers. She planted them in the Terrace Gardens at Malabar Farm that were so special to her Grandpa and Grandma Bromfield. Ron and Melanie were also able to attend the Barn Dance on May 25 and spent several hours in the Big House with board members Fred Malone and Tom Bachelder. They toured the Big House and learned about the Art and Artifact Restoration Project.

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### **Meet the New Park Manager at Malabar Farm State Park**

Ashland County native, **Jenny Roar** is the new Park Manager at Malabar Farm State Park. Jenny lives in Northern Ashland County and has been with ODNR for 4 years. Her previous job with ODNR was working with marinas and boaters along the coast of Lake Erie. Roar grew up on a dairy farm in Ashland County and graduated from Crestview High School. She went on to earn her Bachelor's degree in education. She had plans to be a teacher, but after having her children and being a stay-at-home mom, she returned to the work force at the Ohio State University Extension Office in Ashland. She was then able to return to college and obtain her Master's degree in Environmental and Natural Resources. Roar says she has an appreciation of education and teaching and she would like to bring that to Malabar Farm.

**She also would like to work closely with the Malabar Farm Foundation and the Malabar Farm Volunteers to continue the vision for the future of the farm.**