



ART FARM

119 HIGHLAND AVENUE • MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT 06457
860-346-4390 • EMAIL: info@art-farm.org • WEB: www.art-farm.org

July 30, 2009

Mr. William Warner
Director, Department of Planning, Conservation & Development
City of Middletown
245 deKoven Drive
Middletown, CT 06457

Dear Bill,

ARTFARM is interested in leasing Parcel 5 (Brooks Road) of the Transferred State Land from the City of Middletown.

We propose to use the land for agricultural and recreational purposes while retaining the bulk of the property as open space available for public access. ARTFARM is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization which cultivates high-quality theater with a commitment to simple living, environmental sustainability and social justice. ARTFARM was founded in 2001 by Dic Wheeler and Marcella Trowbridge, and since 2006 has established a dynamic presence in Middletown through free annual *Shakespeare in the Grove* productions at Middlesex Community College, an annual EcoFestival, and its touring *Circus for a Fragile Planet*.

Since its inception ARTFARM has been looking for a small farm in Middletown on which to combine arts, environmental education and small-scale agriculture. In our spring 2006 newsletter we wrote: "It is our intention to acquire a farm in central Connecticut, and renovate the barn, turning it into a performance, workshop and retreat space. We are dedicated to the ideas of farm preservation and open space and greatly concerned about the increasing rate that developers are consuming Connecticut's precious lands. ARTFARM – a theater, a working small organic farm, and a retreat and workshop center where artists, activists, underserved young people and just good folks can come for renewal and inspiration."

Over a period of five years we envision building two small barns, both of them hay bale-insulated timber frame structures which we would create in a series of community barn raisings. These would serve as models of green, sustainable building practices. One barn, at the top end of the east meadow on the property, would serve as the "Art Barn" for the property and contain an open room for theater rehearsals, classes and small scale performances, as well as a small kitchen, office and some loft space. The second structure, at the top of the west meadow, would be the "Farm Building". This would contain chickens, goats and other farm animals, as well as provide storage for agricultural tools and small machines, a space committed to canning and produce preparation, and a central site for a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) and educational programs. We envision committing at least one acre in the lower part of the west meadow to agriculture, and will be planting native fruit and nut trees in part of that meadow as well. In the woodland between the two meadows we would like to create a "Children's EcoArt Trail", which would be a loop containing a series of low-impact, environmentally-based installations, activities and encounters with nature designed to help children understand natural systems and their place in the natural world. This would be open to the public as well as being accessible to school groups and other educational organizations. In the woodland on the

Cultivating High Quality Theater with a Commitment to Simple Living, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

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eastern side of the property we would like to create a "Braille Trail" on which blind persons could experience a directed environmental education experience, as well as creating/improving a connecting trail to the existing Blue Trail east of the property.

We have no intention of creating a commercial theater which would draw large numbers of people to the site on an ongoing basis. In fact, the parcel's proximity to Middlesex Community College would make it convenient to continue to hold *Shakespeare in the Grove* at the College each summer. The human traffic at ARTFARM itself would be restricted to relatively small groups of artists, students, families, school groups and individual members of the public attending workshops, retreats, small performances, walking the trails or purchasing farm produce. Having developed the Neighborhood Troupes program at Oddfellows Playhouse, we remain committed to providing access to arts and environmental experiences and education for everyone and are particularly interested in developing a program in which low-income youth could come to ARTFARM for educational and practical experiences in the arts, agriculture and environmental stewardship.

ARTFARM is requesting a 99 year lease on the land at the rate of \$1 per year. While this will not bring direct income to the City, the land will be cared for and the City will be nurturing a unique community resource which will serve the citizens of Middletown while attracting visitors and attention from throughout the region. We are a young organization that is rich in vision, artistry, human resources and respect for the land and local community, but at this point we are not a wealthy institution. We have, however, over several decades at Oddfellows and the last four years as ARTFARM, demonstrated the capacity to raise money, build and manage programs, and to create events and experiences that enrich and engage young and old members of the community. We feel that this will be an outstanding use of this very beautiful and fragile piece of City land. The parcel will be protected and remain available to the public, but it will also become a rich community resource to which people can come for hiking, for educational, arts and community programs, or to buy local organic produce.

Enclosed is a detailed proposal outlining our plans more specifically as well as supporting documents offering more background on ARTFARM and its vision for Middletown. We look forward to working with the City on gently developing this parcel into a unique sanctuary for nature, arts, agriculture and community in Middletown. Thank you for considering our proposal.



Marcella Trowbridge
Artistic Director

Sincerely,



Dic Wheeler
Executive Director

Enclosures:
Detailed proposal
ARTFARM Board of Directors and Advisory Board
2006 Vision document
2008 Program Flyer
2009 Newsletter: *State of the Onion*

Detailed Proposal from ARTFARM
Regarding the lease of city owned property on Brooks Road

Dic Wheeler, Executive Director
Marcella Trowbridge, Artistic Director
ARTFARM
119 Highland Ave.
Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 346-4390

Description of developer's current portfolio of similar properties.

ARTFARM is currently operating out of several locations around Middletown. The office (constructed from the ground up in a series of community "barn raisings"), BioBus, and vegetable garden are at a one acre plot at 119 Highland Ave. *Shakespeare in the Grove* runs for eight performances during the second half of July at Middlesex Community College, and rehearsal, storage and shop space at the College are used from May through July. *Circus for a Fragile Planet* and the *ARTFARM Ensemble Company* rehearse and occasionally perform at the First United Methodist Church. Storage of props, costumes and other equipment is in a barn on Arbutus Street. Throughout the year ARTFARM artists are performing and teaching at public and private schools, colleges, museums, fairs, festivals and conferences throughout the northeast. The organization is all over town and has managed to flourish, but now desperately needs an identifiable home to fully realize its vision and potential.

A description of the developer's experience developing, owning, and/or operating such uses.

The founders of ARTFARM bring years of leadership, organizational management, program development, artistic direction, financial management, event organizing, grant writing and community building experience to this project. Supported by a committed Board of Directors, an Advisory Board which brings a rich diversity of skills and perspectives, and an energized body of supporters who have been with them for decades and represent many age groups and segments of the community, ARTFARM has emerged over the past three years as a professional and unique non-profit organization which is making an impact on the cultural life of the area.

Before Co-founding ARTFARM, Executive Director Dic Wheeler was Artistic Director of Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater for over twenty five years. During this time the Playhouse grew from a fledgling program existing in borrowed spaces, into a multi-level youth arts program with an annual budget over \$500,000 and a 10,000 square foot facility in downtown Middletown. Dic created many programs at Oddfellows Playhouse, but two in particular continue to represent some of the Playhouse's most significant work – the *Children's Circus of Middletown* and the *Neighborhood Troupes Program*. These programs have instilled two generations of Middletown young people with skills and confidence, and have brought diverse segments of the community together through the performing arts. In 1996 Marcella Trowbridge joined the Oddfellows staff as Director of Education, and during the next decade she professionalized the Playhouse's curriculum, promoted higher artistic standards, and raised the bar for Middletown youth. She created a series of powerful original theater pieces with teenagers from Maplewood Terrace and brought conservatory-level classical training to local young people through the *Summer Shakespeare Academy*.

In 2005 Trowbridge and Wheeler left the Playhouse to put their energies into ARTFARM, and the new organization's annual budget grew from \$28,000 in 2006 to \$113,000 in 2008. Operating without its own facility, the organization has flourished by creating powerful work with high standards while

partnering with many other groups and institutions to manifest its unique vision of arts and environmental sustainability. Middlesex Community College (where Wheeler is an Adjunct Instructor in Theater) has provided a willing and beautiful home for Shakespeare in the Grove. ARTFARM has brought environmental education through theater to classes at Wesleyan through the *Feet to the Fire Initiative* and has been featured for the last two years at Central Connecticut State University's Conference on Climate Change. ARTFARM artists are active in the Education Departments at Hartford Stage Company and Long Wharf Theater, as well as teaching at public and private schools and colleges throughout the State. ARTFARM is currently collaborating with Oddfellows Playhouse and Matica Arts in creating a year-round *Connecticut School of Circus Arts*. ARTFARM's *Circus for a Fragile Planet* brings its unique blend of environmental science and circus to over thirty venues yearly, including the Governor's OneThing Expo at the Connecticut Convention Center, the New England Environmental Educator's Conference, Stepping Stones Museum for Children, the Discovery Center and to schools, colleges, arts centers and nature centers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire and Vermont.

While developing the organization's programs, we have been investigating models of land-based organizations which combine sustainable living, agriculture and arts. Since 2001 we have visited both the Solar Living Institute and Black Oak Farm in California, Vallecitos Mountain Refuge in New Mexico, the Center for Whole Communities and Bread and Puppet Theater, both in Vermont, Celebration Barn Theater in Maine, and Double Edge Theater, Earthdance and Rowe Camp and Conference Center in Massachusetts. We have interviewed the directors of these facilities and learned much about the challenges, the practicalities and the triumphs involved in creating and sustaining arts and environmental programs in rural settings.

A timetable for the completion of the project.

See table on page seven.

Evidence of the developer's qualifications and financial ability to finance the acquisition and development of the land shall be included.

We have thirty years experience raising money to support programs and facilities in the non-profit world. We believe that this is a vision that is fundable and will ultimately generate earned income through programs, services and produce.

A stumbling block for ARTFARM over the past four years in looking for a farm in central Connecticut has been the price of land. We have looked at many farms from Killingworth to Bolton, as well as farms in North Carolina, upstate New York and Vermont. Land in central Connecticut is expensive, but we value the community of support that we have developed over many years and would like to realize this vision in central Connecticut, and preferably in Middletown. One's money goes a lot further in upstate New York or North Carolina, but we have no community in those places, nor is there the affluent, educated and engaged population who would patronize a property like ARTFARM.

A low-cost, long-term lease from the City makes this project achievable, particularly if we proceed slowly and carefully with the development of facilities. We lower the amount of capital expenses by using sustainable, low-impact building materials and techniques like hay-bale and plaster or cob construction, and by utilizing community events to provide much of the person-power to raise and finish the barns.

A detailed summary of the funding sources for the project.

The first year of this project (see timeline below) would largely be focused on community events and a capital fund raising campaign. To acquire the funding to raise our first barn we would look to Foundations that support environmental sustainability and the arts, and to Connecticut-based corporations, utilities and government agencies. We would certainly pursue a Community Development Block Grant to help create a facility designed to provide access to natural and agricultural experiences to and develop practical skills in young people isolated by poverty. We would look to the DEP to partially fund the installation of solar panels on the barns, and seek out other government incentives to support alternative energy systems appropriate to the property.

A description of the developer's business plan and the proposed future uses of the property.

The property will bring together several separate but interconnected strands of education and activities while preserving the rural quality, accessibility and natural beauty of the parcel. Each provides a combination of earned income potential and opportunities to apply for grant support. These include:

- 1) Small-scale organic agriculture, including native fruit and nut trees, berries, livestock and vegetables. It will take a few seasons to discover which crops flourish on this land and for trees and berries to mature. Livestock will enrich educational opportunities on the land, while also taking a few years to build stock and assess what by-products can help support the facility – eggs, cheese making, goat milk and yogurt, etc. This venture should benefit from the current trend toward eating locally-produced foods.
- 2) Environmental education programs for youth and adults, including “hands-on” experiences with the livestock, vegetable gardens, and natural habitat exploration, protection and land stewardship.
- 3) Performing arts classes, workshops, events and small-scale performances. These have the potential to generate significant earned income, especially as ARTFARM develops its small but unmistakable niche by uniquely combining performing arts with sustainable practices and simple living.
- 4) Passive use of the land by individuals and families, including walking the trails and meadows or even bringing a picnic. Boxes at the trailhead can solicit donations from users, but mostly the organization will generate community good will and the support of neighbors and others by keeping this land unspoiled and accessible.

ARTFARM imagines continuing to partner with many other organizations and entities in bringing this vision to fruition and creating a natural place that is a legitimate community resource. Locally ARTFARM has already initiated partnerships with Middlesex Community College, Wesleyan University, Oddfellows Playhouse, Green Street Arts Center, Long Lane Farm, Buttonwood Tree, and the Vo-Ag High School. This land could allow these relationships to expand and others to emerge as ARTFARM is able to make its unique location and facility available.

A description of proposed improvements to the property.

As the timetable on page seven illustrates, development on this property will be handled slowly and carefully, with the intention of making the least possible environmental impact at each step along the way. ARTFARM's intention is to nurture, protect and preserve the land while creating simple, sustainable and creative ways to help adults and young people develop appreciation for and knowledge

of the natural environment and small-scale organic agriculture practices. We want more people to experience this piece of land, but to do so in a way that does not put its unspoiled character at risk. Initial improvements would include doing some cleanup of some evident dumping, then clearing and creating trails to provide a connection to the Blue Trail in Maromas. We would dig a well and build a composting toilet in the first year while becoming familiar with the land and raising money for capital improvements.

Over the second and third years we would like to build two small barns, one designed for performing arts events and classes, as well as community gatherings. The other would be for livestock, agriculture and environmental education. Both would be built through a series of community barn raisings using simple sustainable green building techniques under the leadership of a Connecticut based traditional barn builder (see www.traditionalbarnraisers.com for an example.)

In the woodland that exists between the two meadows we plan to create a "Children's EcoArt Trail", designed to help younger children have meaningful, fun and challenging interface with the natural world and to gain knowledge and appreciation of local ecosystems. This would be a short loop trail that might include recycled art (made from items salvaged during the clean up of the parcel), "discovery spots", mini-mazes and crawl spaces, or "EnviroHero" opportunities, and would have certain seasonally-specific elements (wildflowers, leaves, mushrooms, edible plants, etc.) that encouraged return visits.

A second specialized trail that we would like to develop is a "Braille Trail", aimed at both blind and seeing people, which would involve a simple plant identification and marker system.

Anticipated investment in the property.

The most significant investments in the property financially will be the two barns. One quote that I have received estimates that a timber frame, hay-bale insulated medium sized barn raised by a large group of volunteers could run from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

We will work slowly, raising money as we go from a variety of sources, and allow the project to manifest in phases. All construction will be as low-impact, local, sustainable and community-built as possible, lowering the cost and raising the level of community buy-in.

Costs early on will involve bringing in land engineers, water and land scientists and other experts to help make the best choices in terms of well placement, composting toilets, building sites, crop choices and placement of agricultural areas.

If this proposal moves forward we would expect to be asked to put together a more complete budget based on multiple quotes and a more thorough analysis of the parcel and its characteristics. Under the current time constraints we cannot prepare a complete and accurate budget for the project, but I would expect that we might invest \$500,000 in the property over the first five years.

PROJECT TIMETABLE: ARTFARM 2010 – 2014

	<u>PROJECTS</u>	<u>PROGRAMS</u>	<u>FUNDING</u>
2010	<p>Community clean up of property. Clear trail from entrance to stream & blue trail. Begin work on Kid's EcoArt Trail. Well & septic. Yurt for shelter.</p>	<p>Shakespeare in the Grove at MxCC. Touring performances and residencies. Outdoor class series in late summer and fall. Fall Harvest Festival. Circus school offsite.</p>	<p>Begin Capital Campaign. Pursue CDBG funding for facility development. Earned income from programs. Doris Duke and other foundations supporting capital expenses.</p>
2011	<p>Community barn raising. Finish Kids EcoArt Trail. Introduce farm animals. Clear land to cultivate. Plant fruit & nut trees.</p>	<p>Sustainable building internship. Shakespeare @ MxCC Initiate farm education/school groups. Fall classes and retreats.</p>	<p>Capital Campaign. Government funding for solar panels and energy efficiency. Earned income. Corporate, government & Foundation grants.</p>
2012	<p>Raise second barn. Create Braile Trail. Begin Community-Supported Agriculture. Solar panels provide power.</p>	<p>Green Arts programs for low-income youth. Regular classes, retreats, and internships. Small scale performances outdoors & in barn.</p>	<p>Increase earned income from educational programs and farm products. Touring fees.</p>
2013	<p>Improvements and finish work on barns. Create labyrinth and quiet space in woodland.</p>	<p>Develop "simple living" programs – canning, cheesemaking, breadbaking, etc.</p>	<p>Sustainable non-profit funding model combining earned income from programs & produce with grants for projects and operations. Broad funding base includes supporters of arts, environmental education and protection, organic agriculture and local individuals.</p>
2014	<p>Trail upkeep and expansion. Expand livestock population.</p>	<p>Establish annual rhythm of arts, environmental, community-supported agriculture & educational programs.</p>	



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Cultivating High Quality Theater with a Commitment to Simple Living, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

July 31, 2009

ARTFARM requests that the requirement of a \$10,000 deposit be waived in this case. ARTFARM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated on May 19, 2006.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dic Wheeler
Executive Director



March 2006 document

ART FARM

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WHAT IS ARTFARM?

ARTFARM is an independent organization, founded in 2001, dedicated to creating high quality theater with a commitment to simple living, environmental sustainability and social action.

It is our intention to acquire a farm in central Connecticut, and renovate the barn, turning it into a performance, workshop and retreat space. We are dedicated to the ideas of farm preservation and open space and greatly concerned about the increasing rate that developers are consuming Connecticut's precious lands. ARTFARM – a theater, a working small organic farm, and a retreat and workshop center where artists, activists, underserved young people and just good folks can come for renewal and inspiration.

Summers will be committed to producing high quality new and classic theater with a combination of professional actors, interns and community volunteers. A small group of interns, mostly college age or slightly older, will live on the farm for all or part of the summer and participate in both farm and theater related activities. They might be weeding or harvesting in the morning then running the light board or performing in the evening with seasoned professionals recruited from around the northeast. Community members could get involved backstage, or by helping with box office, hospitality or "front of house", or by lending their building, agricultural, or development know-how or sweat, by participating in one of ARTFARM's annual community celebrations at Summer Solstice or other times of year, or in any number of ways yet to be discovered.

During the school year, ARTFARM will continue to have touring shows available for schools, colleges, festivals, etc., combined with teaching residencies and directing productions in local schools and art centers, but the farm itself would function primarily as a center for workshops, retreats and community celebrations. Programs will range from one-day courses in "Sustainable Living", "Organic Home Gardening", or "Writing in Nature" to weeklong intensives in "Shakespearean Acting," "Creating Original Theater with Young People" or restorative retreats for artists, activists and everybody. Faculty will be drawn from regional artists, activists, farmers and educators in addition to teachers with national and international reputations.

SUMMER SHAKESPEARE:

ARTFARM mounted a free outdoor production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream this past July in the lovely Pine Grove overlooking the Connecticut River Valley at Middlesex Community College in Middletown. Over two weekends, more than 2,300 audience members were in attendance.

The performances were preceded by a lively Midsummer EcoFestival featuring not only music and dance ranging from American Roots to South Indian to Mexican-American to Australian Aboriginal, as well as circus performers and interactive Shakespeare, but also a rich variety of eco-activism.

There were local organic farmers with produce for sale, and organizations such as the CT Forest and Park Association, The Connecticut River Watershed Council, Wesleyan University's organic student-run Long Lane Farm and the City of Middletown's Recycling Program represented with information and exhibits on their conservation work and educational programs, as well as other local artisans, bread-bakers, etc.

The Midsummer Night's Dream cast was built around a core of professional performers and designers with a supporting cast of area adults.

We envision Shakespeare in the Grove becoming an annual event and significant summer tourism draw. This summer's production was co-sponsored by the Humanities and Arts Division of Middlesex College and was made possible in part by grants from Liberty Bank, the Middletown Commission of the Arts and many generous individuals.

Cultivating High Quality Theater with a Commitment to Simple Living, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

RETREAT FOR ARTISTS AND ACTIVISTS

We hope to offer a 5-7 day retreat in 2007. The retreat will offer three tracks of immersion: arts, sustainable living, and activism in the community. There would be daily master classes and workshops taught by area leaders for professionals, dabblers and the curious, supplemented with morning yoga, whole foods, time for dips in the lake and walks in the woods. Housing would be available.

NEW WORKS: THE WOMEN'S PROJECT/THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT:

There are two new works currently in the planning stages. The Color of Blood, which will examine the many faces of women in our society, the roles that they play and the circumstances that shape them. This original piece will be cross generational with a multicultural cast. Evergreen is a potential collaboration with the CT Forest and Park Association that explores environmental issues and our human interrelationships with the world in which we live. Both projects would involve community workshops, ARTFARM artists then culling material from these workshops in preparation of the script, and members of the ARTFARM company then performing these new works.

THE FOUNDERS -- WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?!!:

We bring to this vision years of directing, teaching, acting and administrative experience. Marcella has extensive professional performance credits across the United States. She is a director and classically trained actress and dancer and has been teaching since 1984. She was a founding member of Greenwood Theater Company in New York, and was the Associate Artistic Director at Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater in Middletown from 1997-2005. She has created multiple original full length theater pieces with groups on such topics as homelessness, youth and violence, race and the economic divide, and the pursuit of world and personal peace. Dic joined Oddfellows Playhouse in 1978 and was the Artistic Director from 1986-2005. A graduate of the Dell 'Arte School of Physical Theater, he was the founder and 15 year director of the Children's Circus of Middletown. Since 1980 he has performed and taught throughout the United States and Europe, has three times been a guest artist of the Czech Republic, and directed over 70 plays.

www.art-farm.org

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860.346.4390

We are people who understand how to run an organization and how to get things done. We are hoping to be able to keep ARTFARM in Central Connecticut, our home and base of support, and we are committed to preserving open space, pursuing small scale organic agriculture and encouraging simple, sustainable lifestyles in an arts rich environment.



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**ARTFARM Board of Directors and Advisory Board
February 2009**

Board of Directors

Marcella Trowbridge
President/Artistic Director

Dic Wheeler
Vice-President/Treasurer/Executive Director

Steven Blum
Attorney, Wharton School of Business Faculty

Pamela Lang
Professional Volunteer

Kisha McWilliams Michael
Arts Administrator

Advisory Board

Chaleen Abely
LMT. Founder, The Right Touch, LLC

Jennifer Alexander
Founder, KIDCITY

Stephan Allison
Coordinator, Middletown Commission on the Arts

Erica Blue
Berkeley Repertory Theater, Performance Artist/Educator, San Francisco

Terry Borton
American Magic Lantern

Trevor Davis
Realtor, Central Business Bureau Chair

Stephen Devoto
Wesleyan University Faculty, Farmer, Activist

Bill Earls
Albertus Magnus College Faculty

Cultivating High Quality Theater with a Commitment to Simple Living, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice

ARTFARM Advisory Board, page two

Ted Esselstyn
Appleloosa Artworks

Marvin Farbman
CT Legal Services Director (retired)

David Ferney
Arcata Playhouse/Dell'Arte Company, Blue Lake, CA

Sebastian Giuliano
Mayor, City of Middletown

Frank Kuan
Director of Community Relations, Wesleyan University

Mark McKenna
Network of Ensemble Theaters Board Chair, Touchstone Theater Founder

Ed McKeon
Motion, Inc., Middletown Eye

Wilfredo Nieves
President, Middlesex Community College

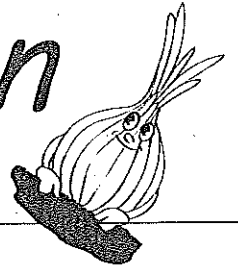
Mark Shadle
Owner, It's Only Natural Restaurant

Pamela Tatge
Director, Wesleyan University Center for the Arts

Katy Vicchitto
Farm Educator, Auer Farm



State of the Onion



Spring '09

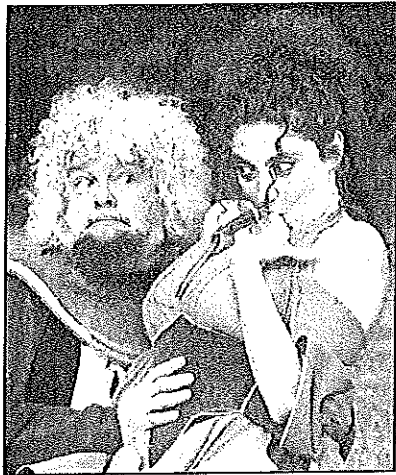
What's Up with ARTFARM...

Shakespeare in the Grove Summer 2009

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Save the dates!

This summer ARTFARM presents *The Taming of the Shrew*, directed by company member Joni Weisfeld. You can see this exciting and controversial selection from Shakespeare's canon at Middlesex Community College, in Middletown, Thursday through Sunday, July 16 - 19 and 23 - 26 at 7 pm. All performances will again be preceded by stellar headliner musical acts at 6 pm.



Dic & Joni rehearse for *Twelfth Night* for Shakespeare in the Grove '08.

— Photos by Yvonne Page

Starting at 4 pm, our popular "EcoFestivals" precede Sunday performances (July 19 & 26), featuring family-friendly circus and musical entertainment, interactive environmental activities and games, and area eco-vendors.

ARTFARM Launches New Shakespeare Touring Show

In response to requests for a Shakespeare-themed touring show appropriate for middle and high schools, we have re-animated *Shakespeare's Argument*, the 45-minute show that launched ARTFARM in 2001. In this lively piece, 4 performers bring to life characters from Shakespeare's plays, while engaging in an educational and entertaining argument about *what makes the Bard of Stratford so great anyway*. A terrific way to overcome 'Shakespeare block,' we are now booking for the 2009-2010 school year.

ARTFARM on TOUR: NOW BOOKING!

- *Circus for a Fragile Planet*
an environmental education circus
- *Shakespeare's Argument*
fast paced fun Shakespeare for students
- *Woman's Will*
dynamic journey exploring Shakespeare's women

Earth Day Eve: Transition Town Middletown

The stage is set in both Middletown and the world for many changes as the age of cheap oil ends and we increasingly begin to feel the effects of global warming over the next couple of decades. A proactive approach to this transition begins by talking about it with one another. What will Middletown look like in 2030? Join us for an open community conversation and imagination session focused on preparing ourselves and our community for life after fossil fuels. Come to the Russell Library in Middletown on Tuesday, April 21, at 6:30 pm and join us for an "Earth Day Eve" discussion.

ARTFARM's Shakespeare Sonnet Slam!

This unique fundraiser is something everyone can participate in. Perform a sonnet. Sponsor a performer. Host a pre-slam dinner party. This is the 400th anniversary of the first publication of Shakespeare's sonnets, and to honor that we want to get as many people as possible to perform his sonnets with style and originality. High school students, professional actors and everyone in between- pick a sonnet and find sponsors, or plan your party guest list, but mark your calendar for Friday, May 15. Check our website for details and entry information. *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day...When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes...Let me confess...O mel...*

Exciting ARTFARM highlights that you might not know about:

- In 2008, ARTFARM performances and residencies reached an estimated 8,000 people, as either participants or audience. *Circus for a Fragile Planet* performed 27 times last year and is booking briskly for next fall.
- ARTFARM residencies extended all over Connecticut and into New York in '08, but one of the most fun was at Snow School in Middletown. Marcella created a 30-minute performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* involving the entire 5th grade.
- Right now Dic is working with Brian Stewart's *Physics of Sustainability* class at Wesleyan University as part of the *Feet to the Fire Initiative*. Students will create original theater pieces designed to educate and raise questions about climate change, peak oil and the planet's finite energy resources.
- In November '08, the new ARTFARM Advisory Board met for the 1st time—a fine collection of 20 farmers, financial advisors, politicians, realtors, arts administrators, local business owners, professional volunteers and artists.



The Fossil Fools
in
Circus for a Fragile Planet



ARTFARM

119 Highland Ave. Middletown, CT 06457

Tel: 860.346.4390 info@art-farm.org www.art-farm.org



Dear ARTFARM Friends and Supporters,

It is a tough time to be a non-profit arts organization. A fledgling like ARTFARM is particularly vulnerable, but light on its feet. Our hearts break as we watch many beloved non-profits and local businesses, big and small, face challenging decisions, some even closing their doors. The show will go on here at the Farm, thanks to you and many others, but the past few months have not been easy.

Shakespeare in the Grove is at risk in 2009. Liberty Bank withdrew as our Signature Sponsor. Two of our 2008 Sponsors have come in at lower levels for 2009. Finding new corporate supporters is like looking for gold in a sandbox. We have taken tough measures to conserve resources, including cuts in the senior staff salaries, the elimination of an office position, reducing this annual mailing to one page, asking you to provide your own donation envelope, keeping our office very cold, and the Trowbridge-Wheeler family is waiving the nominal office rent for the year. The *Shakespeare in the Grove* budget for this year has already been cut 20% from last year, and there is not any fat to trim.

One thing we will not be cutting is artistic quality. We are committed to bringing work with integrity and high standards to our community. We believe this is a time of hope. We ask for your financial contribution because these times demand that we create meaningful work and serve our community. We need art. Art is like bread. It is fuel. It is resource. It is the record of our existence. Support us in supporting you. Support all the arts organizations that you believe in. To preserve the richness of our cultural life, we all need each other now.

With corporate and foundation support down, we need our core supporters to step up. Forty people giving \$250 each would replace the Liberty Bank sponsorship. Might you be one of those?

How Can I help?

Make your tax-deductible donation now!

◆ Sponsor an ARTFARM show.

Taming of the Shrew needs sponsors in the \$2500 - \$5000 range.

◆ Buy an ad in *The Taming of the Shrew* playbill. Rates are \$75 - \$350.

◆ Perform a sonnet in the SHAKESPEARE SONNET SLAM in May, or sponsor a Sonnet Slammer.

◆ Host a pre-slam dinner party.
Keep Free Shakespeare Alive!

◆ Volunteer: front of house, community set building days, our office.

Send a young adult our way for a back stage /technical internship

2008 ARTFARM Donors

Anonymous
The Aetna Foundation
City of Middletown
Liberty Bank
Middlesex Community College
Middlesex County Community Foundation
Middletown Commission on the Arts
Middletown Foundation for the Arts
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The Rockfall Foundation
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The Zukas Family
Jeremy & Virginia Zwelling

*= In memory of
Matt Nozzolio



ARTFARM

"TO CULTIVATE HIGH QUALITY THEATER WITH A COMMITMENT TO SIMPLE LIVING, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE."



NOW BOOKING

CIRCUS FOR A FRAGILE PLANET

Circus for a Fragile Planet uses the magic, fun and artistry of circus to convey a compelling environmental message. Built around key elements of the grades 6 through 10 core earth science curriculum, Circus for a Fragile Planet addresses critical issues such as global warming, weather patterns, critical habitat, population growth, resource management, alternative energy, recycling and species sustainability. Through clowning, juggling, acrobatics, stilt-dancing, unicycling, slapstick and other circus skills, this spectacle reinforces the choices each individual or community can make to help steer the planet toward a better future.

CIRCUS ARTS RESIDENCY*

This program exposes students to the fundamentals of circus, including clowning, physical comedy, juggling, acrobatics and equilibistics. The ideal Circus Arts Residency with a performance outcome encompasses six to twelve days and develops dexterity, discipline, strength, balance, hand-eye coordination, trust, communication, and both problem-solving and goal-setting abilities. Circus provides students with the immeasurable experience of having succeeded at something which initially seemed impossible. The INSTANT CIRCUS program is a one-day model in which ARTFARM circus artists descend on your community and create a circus performance with up to 45 participants in as little as three hours.



WOMAN'S WILL

Woman's Will is a dynamic hour-long journey into the riches of Shakespeare's world through the eyes of some of his most fascinating women. This character driven collection is executed with textual accuracy and emotional depth by ARTFARM Ensemble Company members Marcella Trowbridge and Jackie Coleman. The piece, while containing some well-known passages, presents lesser known scenes and monologues from a dozen different plays in a journey which is at times playful, at times dark and heart-wrenching, but always challenging and entertaining.

ORGANIC SHAKESPEARE RESIDENCY*

Dig the fertile earth of Shakespeare's world. Play with the rhythm of meter and the dynamic of rhetoric. Discover how the use and placement of language reveals psychological and plot shifts, moments of emotional truth and action. Learn how to access resources, analyze text and reveal character. On your feet, into your mouths and off the page.

*Residencies can be combined with ARTFARM performances or offered by themselves.

WWW.ART-FARM.ORG



THE ARTFARM ENSEMBLE

The ARTFARM Ensemble is a professional touring physical theater company dedicated to cultivating new interdisciplinary work. Traditional techniques merge with contemporary perspectives in the development of original works and fresh adaptations of classics. ARTFARM believes in theater as a tool for life skill acquisition, as a record of the history of the human condition, and as a catalyst for social change.

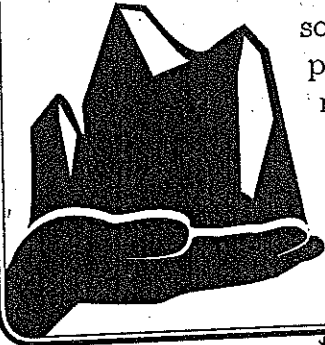
The ARTFARM Ensemble creates with a very physical approach, is progressive in its use of space and soundscape, and is committed to the use of multiple media to tap into the logic of ideas and to transcend and create a journey that an audience can internalize, process and respond to on a visceral level. The ARTFARM Ensemble is currently offering two new original works for University and adult audiences: **ICEBERG** and **LOVE**.

ENSEMBLE CREATED NEW WORK DEVELOPMENT RESIDENCY*

3-5 days of workshops culling and developing material from participants own life perspectives (including historical and literary resources). The group will select a theme and transfer this material onto the stage. Writing, Psycho-physical, Breath and Body, Development of Emotional Accessibility, Individual and Ensemble, Improvisation, Effective Stage Presentation.

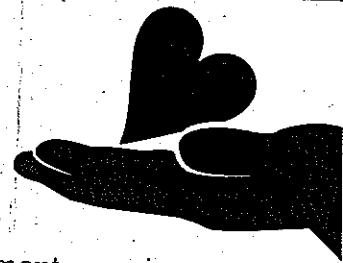
ICEBERG

Iceberg is an interdisciplinary exploration of interdependence. The work contains both facts and speculation and is at times linear and at times visceral and abstract. The movement, text and imagery developed from the company's inquiry process provide a framework for exploring the human condition and human behavior; social landscapes, indigenous practices, institutionalized methods, causes and effects of global climate change, the choices that we may or may not make and the possibilities for community transformation.



LOVE

Love. at the core of our very existence. the drive behind much of our basic behavior. the meaning of this essential, primary element ... elusive. the ARTFARM women. an investigative process. interviews. diverse members of the community. socioeconomics, race, age, circumstance. influence? experience. perspectives. essential truths? divergence? Rumi. the woman on the street. you. me. movement, sound. image, story. feel. love.



COMMEDIA AMERICANA

A one man show that introduces the history, style and characters of traditional Italian Commedia dell'Arte and provides a basic contemporary context.

COMMEDIA AMERICANA RESIDENCY*

A 3-5 day residency which extracts the archetypes from the characters of 16th Century Commedia dell'Arte and finds their modern manifestations. The process first introduces the characters and comic style of traditional Commedia, then allows participants to re-interpret the stock characters, creating their own 'Commedia Americana'.

