About Maple Tree Farm

Maple Tree Farm, in the heart of the Catskill Mountains on NYS Route 214, is a rambling, historic Victorian house built in 1866 (or maybe 1907). The big house, which has 27 rooms and a wrap-around front porch, is on 125 acres of fields and mountain-side. Owned by Sam & Miriam Ginsberg, it was rented to Videofreex / Media Bus from 1971 to 1978 for $400 a month, then raised to $450.

There are many many maple trees, but, although it produced maple syrup, there is no evidence that it was otherwise a farm. Under Annie’s management we did have a quarter-acre abundant vegetable garden.

For the Freex, MTF housed a multi-camera TV studio, control room (with Davidson’s handmade wooden consoles), videotape archive and library, screening room, photo dark room, business office, and Chuck’s electronics shop. We operated as a multi media production studio and media workshop, with grants supporting The Media Center in Lanesville (one of the first), and a pirate TV station transmitting a mile or so up and down the narrow Stony Clove valley.

Besides the productions, which took place on an ongoing basis by the productive Freex, there were rock concerts on the lawn, all night drumming parties, cider-pressing parties, and skinny dipping in the stream across the road, all videotaped of course.

Several hundred visitors, who often worked in the studio on their projects or collaborated with us, sometimes slept for a night or a month in one of the 5 guest rooms. Filmmaker Shirley Clarke decorated one of the guest rooms (including with gold and maroon wall paper). Actress/comedian Lily Tomlin visited overnight, and had us shoot videos for her Broadway show. Animator/artist Jane Aaron lived in the efficiency apartment connected to the big house and made her first two films there. Ant Farm’s Media Burn was partly edited in our editing room. Mary Curtis and Cy Griffin were married in a spectacular alternate culture celebration. Two Hog Farm buses with 75 truly alternate culture tie-died hippies showed up and stayed for a few days. Over time the wary Lanesville residents, some having lived in the valley for several generations, became our friends and Lanesville TV collaborators.

MTF is now known as Breathe Inn, an AirBnB “with exquisite modern country details,” including a salt water swimming pool, yoga studio, basketball court, and more.

Rooms 1971 – 78 (*latter use)  Total 27

3rd floor  8: front guest BR (*Tracy Griffin), SB BR, guest BR opposite SB, middle hall - DG drafting/storage, middle guest room/locked storage, DG BR + drawing rm (*combined as 1), guest rm (*dark rm).

2nd floor  10: CK & AW BR + sitting rm (*shop), guest BR under stairs, BF & NC BR + sitting rm, PDT & CV BR + sitting rm (*Sarah Teasdale), DC BR, guest BR near bath rms, Shirley Clarke memorial guest BR across bridge [seasonal].


Additional out buildings: “Efficiency” studio apartment (*Jane Aaron), 1BR cottage (Horrible Howard Raab), storage shed.
Breathe Inn today.

Bart, Nancy & Chuck, looking to the future, as the last Videofreex move out of Maple Tree Farm in 1978, say 'goodbye' to our beloved landlord, a stunned Sam Ginsberg. Lanesville TV transmitting antenna in the background.