

Save the Date!

Sunday

June 8, 2008

for the 2nd Annual Open Space & Farmland Preservation Clambake at the Clarksburg Inn



For more information on the Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council or the Agricultural Advisory Council, Call 732.446.4249 x 1103 We're on the Web www.millstone.nj.us

Agricultural Advisory Council Farming Seminars

The Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council sponsored 3 farming seminars that were held in October and November of 2007 and February 2008. Mr. Bob Bruch, the Economic Development Representative for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, presented *Farmland Assessment – Who Qualifies* on October 29th. Mr. Bruch explained eligibility, land area and sales requirements as well as qualifying criteria and filing for farmland assessment. The seminar concluded with a question and answer session during which Mr. Bruch fielded a variety of questions from the audience of approximately 25 property owners.

Mr. David Kimmel, Agriculture Resource Specialist with the State Agriculture Development Committee, presented *Right to Farm: What It Is & How Do You Qualify for Protection* on November 8th. Mr. Kimmel reviewed protection criteria, conflict resolution and mediation, protected activities and proposed equine rules.

On February 28, Nicole Ciccaglione, District Conservationist with the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA, NRCS), presented a Farm Conservation Plan seminar. All preserved farms as well as those considering preservation are required to have a conservation plan under the new state guidelines. The Millstone Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan can be viewed online at <http://www.millstone.nj.us/Farmland-Preservation-Plan.html>. Copies of handouts from these seminars as well as information about upcoming seminars are available on the Agricultural Advisory Council website at <http://www.millstone.nj.us/agricultural.html>.



Reminder

Farming season will soon be here! Please exercise caution and be courteous of farm vehicles sharing our roads.

Millstone Township Committee

- Mayor Nancy Grbelja
- Deputy Mayor Robert Kinsey
- Committeemen
- Elias Abilheira
- Mike Kuczinski
- Steven Sico

Millstone Township Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Pat Butch, Chairwoman | Diane Morelli |
| Cory G. Wingerter, Vice Chairman | Rich Mullarkey |
| Tony Alves | Tony Romano |
| Manny Blanco | Kristin Schloss |
| Charlie Denardo | Merrill Siedman |

Millstone Township Agricultural Advisory Council

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|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Anthony Romano, Chairman | George Asprocolas |
| Shirley Pinhas, Vice Chairwoman | Pat Butch |
| | Chet Halka |

PLEASURE PACE 2009

Watch in future issues for details regarding the 2009 Millstone Township Pleasure Pace. If interested in volunteering, contact Audrey at chrisjenmike@aol.com



Millstone Township

Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council

Farmland Preservation

Millstone Township's most recent addition to the Farmland Preservation Program is a 24 acre parcel on Yellow Meeting House Road. The property is an operating horse farm which provides care for retired race horses. Philip Klein, one of the owners, is a horse trainer and works to re-train retired race horses for their new life. Millstone's Planning Incentive Grant with funding assistance from both the State and County were utilized to preserve this farm.



With appreciation to
Millstone Township
for permanently preserving lands that
contribute to the
Assunpink Greenway
in partnership with Monmouth County and
D&R GREENWAY LAND TRUST

D&R Greenway Land Trust Appreciation Award

Pat Butch, Chairperson for the Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council, was recently presented with an appreciation plaque from D&R Greenway Land Trust. Ms. Butch was recognized for her outstanding efforts and partnership with D&R, Monmouth County and landowners in the preservation of land in Millstone Township. Congratulations and thank you, Pat!

Therapeutic Benefits of Millstone Land

Enjoying the open spaces and farmlands of Millstone Township is therapeutic for many who live here. However, one resident is doing her best to bring that enjoyment and benefit to others. Carol Wingerter uses her land to raise therapy dogs and is possibly the first in the nation to use a pony for pet therapy.

In 2003, Carol took classes to enable her to work with her Great Dane, Kiwi, as a therapy animal. Already interested in the benefits of working with animals and people with special needs, she was further inspired to combine it with her lifelong love of horses after watching a program on Animal Planet which featured a therapy miniature donkey. She investigated, and considerably decided to purchase a miniature pony after learning that neighbors often aren't pleased about the noisy braying of donkeys.

In July of 2005, she purchased Samson, a 6-year old pony. He grew a little too much to be considered a miniature, but he is still a very small pony. He is so small in fact, that he can't be measured using the traditional rulers for horses. After purchasing him, she spent some time training him to adjust to a halter, to being indoors in a barn and even to enjoying visits in her home. But overall, she credits his good natured personality and early imprinting with what makes him good for use as a therapy animal.

She travels with him from May to October, usually once a week, to visit schools for children with special needs or homes for assisted living. Many of the people she meets
(Continued on page 2)



March 2008 Bulletin

Northern Cardinal

by El Adams, resident



The Cardinal is a favorite bird of many people and it's easy to see why. The brilliant scarlet plumage of the male and beautiful shades of the female combined with their joyous song make them enjoyable to watch. Cardinals are found in Millstone the year round and are a delight to have at your feeder enjoying sunflower seeds or dried fruit.

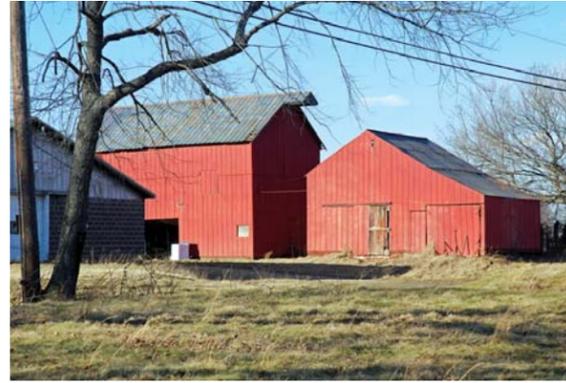
Cardinals mate for life and remain together the entire year. The female builds the nest and incubates the eggs but the male is always nearby singing or bringing her a seed. The young are cared for eagerly by the male while the female is sitting on the second brood. If you keep feeding until late spring or early summer you can see the male leading his young to the feeder so they can feed on the seeds on the ground and also learn where to find the food supply.

The cheer, cheer, cheer, call of the male makes one feel a joy in having such a bird in the neighborhood. Birds are creatures of habit and it is vital in the winter to keep feed in the feeder all the time. They not only eat to satisfy hunger but to keep warm and if they lack food they could freeze to death.

Enjoy them and keep your camera handy!

Spotlight on a Farming Family: The Homs

Millstone Township remains one of the few rural agricultural communities left in New Jersey, due to the hard work and sacrifice of its farming families. The Hom family has been a farming fixture in Millstone Township since they purchased their first farm here in 1958. But this beautiful piece of land on Millstone Road near Route 33 was not their first farm; they had already been farming in Monroe Township since 1946, just after World War II. As the family farm business expanded, more land was purchased in 1976, on Windsor and Perrineville Roads, on the border of Millstone and East Windsor. In 1985 the Homs added their last little piece of heaven on Battleground Road, a scenic 168 acre farm that brothers Frank and Wicki have decided to preserve.



The Hom brothers are second generation farmers who actively farm approximately 600 acres of owned or rented land, growing mostly oriental vegetables. This large amount of acreage allows them to also grow rye and straw, which is then harvested and used back on the farms for mulching purposes. Farming is not an easy job, with a season that usually runs from the middle of March through October. Preparation each year begins early, with the acquisition of capital and purchase of needed farming supplies.

When asked what he likes most about being a farmer, Wicki said that he enjoys the many challenges of planting something, watching it grow and ultimately making a profit. Also, working in the open air and being close to nature make farming a wonderful way of life. When asked about what he likes the least, he had a list topped with government regulations followed closely by the weather. Some years are extremely dry and in others Mother Nature delivers too much rain, high winds or hail, resulting in crops that rot in the field. A huge advantage that the Hom brothers have in battling these obstacles is experience, learned from years of trial and error.



When asked about why they decided to preserve, Wicki explained that the family had been interested since 1980 and felt

that the Battleground farm was a perfect choice because of its quality as a farm and its scenic beauty. One other strong reason to preserve is the farm's environmental sensitivity, which contains the head waters of the Rocky Brook Watershed. This watershed acts like a funnel that collects water from the area and then channels it into rivers and streams where it works its way south. They felt that as they would probably be the last generation of Homs to farm, they did not want this land to go under the bulldozers blade, but to be worked by other farmers in the future. The citizens of Millstone Township can only thank them for their hard work and generosity for allowing this little piece of our rural history to remain forever.

For more information regarding Farmland Preservation
Contact Lori Maher at 732.446.4249 x 1103 or l-maher@millstone.nj.us

Therapy Pony (Continued from Page 1)

have never touched a horse before. She travels with brushes and combs, for the kids to use, as well as lots of horse treats. Samson is so good at his job; he is even house broken and prefers to hold it until back in his trailer. Even so, Carol brings along a clean up kit, just in case. She has also purchased little sneakers for him to wear, so he doesn't slip on the tile flooring at the facilities she visits. She carries insurance through the US Equestrian Federation.

Living in Millstone has allowed her to enjoy keeping her horses and animals on her property. Preferring to care for them herself, she spends several hours outside each day. She would encourage others to get involved in sharing their love of animals as well as to get involved with a therapy organization. If anyone is interested in becoming involved with therapy dogs or horses Carol can be reached at 732-446-2706.



Precarious Fate of Horse Racing in New Jersey

An Interview with Resident Kelvin Harrison

The horse farms of Millstone Township are certainly beautiful and add greatly to the open space and rural environment of our community. But, as they say, they're not just a pretty face. What few of us consider is how much the horse farming community does to support our local and state industry.

Local resident Kelvin Harrison is very aware of how much the horsing community contributes and he's working hard to educate the masses. A VP with the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of NJ (SBOANJ), he has been front line in dealing with the dire state of the billion dollar NJ horse industry. For the past four years, the racing industry had been receiving a subsidy from the Casino Association of NJ, in return for the state not establishing video lottery terminals at the racetracks. That deal has since expired and the racing industry has since been asking the NJ State legislature to fulfill its promise to provide a purse supplement in its place. At press time, the state had yet to live up to its promise and the racetracks, and subsequently the horsemen, were feeling the pain.



A horseman for his entire life, Kelvin began training and working with horses at the age of 7 under his father's guidance. He immigrated to the United States from New Zealand in 1972, and has been living in Clarksburg for the past 15 years. As one of the top trainers in the industry, he currently has 40 horses here in NJ and another 5 in NY State. Past horses that he's trained include Sam Francisco Ben, winner of the 1989 Woodrow Wilson, and Frightening P, who is a world record holder Pacer. He believes that in 2008 he has the best prospects as he's ever had. Standout horses include: Double Dion, Born Storyteller, Free, RJ's Wildcard, Guienne Hanover, Golddust Beach, Masterpiece T, Devil Fish, She's So Hot and Baysign. He employs 7 people full time, but uses the additional support of a vet, farrier, and other related professionals.

Kelvin doesn't view what he does as a job, and in part credits that attitude for his success. He believes that it's a lifestyle – you need to eat and breathe horses. He enjoys being with the animals, and unless he has an appointment, doesn't look at his watch. He has instilled that work attitude in his 4 children, and two of them have followed his footsteps into the industry. His son Gregory lives in Florida training horses and his youngest son Bill works with him training here in NJ. Bill is planning on taking over after his father retires. He works at the barn mornings and early afternoons, after which he heads over to work evenings as a waiter at Luchento's, a popular local restaurant.



Their concern however, is whether or not he will be able to take over his father's business here in NJ, or be forced to relocate to another state. Although they aren't looking to go anywhere, if the horsing industry isn't resuscitated soon, they may not have a choice. Kelvin mentioned that although the Meadowlands has been the number one Standardbred racing facility in the world since opening in 1976, every week it is in danger of losing that distinction. As example, he explained that in 1977 a \$10K claiming race yielded a purse of \$8,400. In January of this year, it yielded only \$5,200. Factor in the rising costs of everything else involved in the industry; land, feed, equipment and even the horses themselves, and it's easy to understand how those in the horsing industry are suffering.

The fate of the horsing industry in NJ is precarious, even with the hard work of those like Kelvin who are committed to protecting it. But what we all need to understand is that without the horses, NJ would lose more than just beautiful horse farms. It would lose the people and jobs that are supported by them.

Rocky Brook Greenway

The Monmouth County Park System (MCPS) in conjunction with Millstone Township and D&R Greenway Land Trust recently completed the purchase of two farms located on Witches Hollow Road as part of the Rocky Brook Greenway Project. The two properties are adjacent to each other and total approximately 200 acres. Both properties have a rolling terrain containing agricultural farmland, woodlands and wetlands, which are critical to the preservation of local wildlife habitat and protection of the Rocky Brook Watershed. Goals of the MCPS Rocky Brook Greenway Project include protecting Perrineville Lake Park from incompatible development and preserving the stream corridor, trail corridor, and forested areas of Rocky Brook. Perrineville Lake Park currently consists of approximately 900 acres of county parkland in both Millstone Township and Roosevelt Borough which have been preserved for the recreational needs of future generations.