

Woodstock Villager

Mailed free to requesting homes in Eastford, Pomfret & Woodstock

Vol. IV, No. 2

Complimentary to homes by request

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'An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.'

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

Lussier wins timber harvest lawsuit

JUDGE RULES AGAINST INLAND WETLANDS COMMISSION

BY CHENOA PIERCE
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

POMFRET — The Robert Lussier vs. the Pomfret Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission lawsuit is one for the history books.

The lawsuit recently ended in Lussier's favor and has been designated as the first of its kind.

According to Lussier, the owner of Great Woods Companies, the lawsuit stemmed from a May 2007 request for a permit to timber harvest where he asked for a jurisdictional ruling to do so.

"All members agreed to jurisdictional ruling at that time," Lussier said.

Shortly thereafter, according to Lussier, former board member Paul Hennen began to question the ruling, asking about access to the area where the harvest would take place, past applications and the possibility of a public hearing.

Lussier said that both he and Inland, Wetland and Watercourses

Commission Chairman David St. Martin informed Hennen that public hearings were never held for permitted, as-of-right activities (such as farming and forestry); they were only held for significant impact applications.

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Walktober events step off Oct. 5

FULL MONTH OF WALKING TOURS, EVENTS OFFERED

BY CHENOA PIERCE
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

The signs of autumn are everywhere: The air is crisp, the leaves are changing colors, pumpkins are ripening and the Quiet Corner is gearing up for The Last Green Valley's 18th annual Walktober events.

Formerly known as Walking Weekends, Walktober features a variety of fun, educational, informational and entertaining walks the whole family can enjoy throughout the month of October.

Last year, 6,000 people attended the events offered in October, according to Michelle Bourgeois, tourism coordinator for The Last Green Valley, with some walks having crowds around 100. The Creamery Brook Bison Farm tour was one of them.

The event's name change, according to Bourgeois, was done to incorporate all things October.

"We wanted to celebrate everything that is going on in October," she said. "We came up with Walktober just to make it catchy."

In addition to the name change, the scheduling has been modified, giving walkers the chance to participate in some walks during the week, instead of just on the weekend. The changes also eliminated the need to schedule some events into the month of November, something that was done last year to accommodate all of the planned walks.

Walktober officially begins at 9 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 5, with a bike ride at West Thompson Lake that kicks off from the parking lot of the West Thompson Dam, as well as two walks in Massachusetts. Walkers need wait only an hour more when the "Exploring 300 Years of Village Life" walk kicks off at the American Legion Hall, at the junction of Roseland Park and Stonebridge Roads in Woodstock.

Walktober officially ends following the 9 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 30, walk in Griswold titled "The Vampires of Jewett City."

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Celebrating all things green

SUPPORTING LOCAL FARMS AND THEIR FOOD IS THE MESSAGE

BY MATT SANDERSON
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

WOODSTOCK — People were reminded of what The Last Green Valley is last Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Celebrate Agriculture festival at the Woodstock Fairgrounds.

Since 2001, this time of the year holds true in celebrating agriculture to educate New Englanders about what it is that keeps the region so friendly, so steadfast and so accessible to agriculture and its

beneficial business. However, attendees were also able to witness some of the reasoning behind Celebrate Agriculture, which is to remind people that as the landscape continues to change and "big-box" commercialism and industrial development create pockets within the land, consumers can still find what they

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Matt Sanderson photos

Above left: Nasima Tarabishy, of Pomfret Center, took second place in the annual Egg Dessert contest for her best-ever blueberry cake. With her is Eleanor Provencal, a volunteer at Celebrate Agriculture.

Above: Nicholas Fontaine holds a chick last Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Celebrate Agriculture fair at Woodstock Fairgrounds.

Buell's receives Century Farm Award



Chenoa Pierce photo

From left, Patty, Jeff and Jonathan Sandness pose with the Century Farm Award plaque inside the store at Buell's Orchard.

ORCHARD AS BEEN IN BUSINESS SINCE 1889

BY CHENOA PIERCE
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

EASTFORD — Every year, the State of Connecticut honors a farm in the state for consistently remaining in business for a century or more.

This year, a farm close to home received the prestigious honor:

Buell's Orchard, located on Crystal Pond Road in Eastford, was the one chosen to receive the Connecticut Century Farm Award from Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

"No more than one farm a year [receives it]," said Jonathan

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Foye to retire from headmaster job

WILL LEAVE WOODSTOCK ACADEMY AT END OF SCHOOL YEAR

BY MATT SANDERSON
VILLAGER STAFF WRITER

WOODSTOCK — The campus of Woodstock Academy is abuzz over the announcement last Thursday from Headmaster Richard P. Foye that he will retire at the end of the 2008-'09 school year.

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Matt Sanderson photo

Last week, Woodstock Academy Headmaster Richard Foye announced that he will retire at the end of the current school year. He has served as headmaster since 2004.

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TIGERS WIN
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VILLAGER TRIVIA!

On what vegetable did an ancient Egyptian place his right hand when taking an oath?
Answer on page 2.

Celebrate Agriculture educates another crowd once again

AGRICULTURE

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need and enjoy about the outdoors closer to home.

Visitors were able to try a hearty breakfast, visit various demonstrations, music and exhibits, peruse the farmers' market and children's areas, and enjoy the animals.

Messages on picket signs were plucked into the earth along every pathway on the fairgrounds that gave an environmental statistic that directly affects or impacts northeastern Connecticut and southern New England.

Visitors were informed to buy food, fiber and forest products from local farms, businesses, farmers' markets and farm stands. The pamphlet told visitors to ask for locally grown foods when they make their next trip to the grocery store.

It also stated that visitors support town and state legislation that encourages smart growth and keeping productive farms and forests for present and future generations.

"It was very positive," said Lynn Weaver, chairman of the Celebrate Agriculture Steering Committee. "Attendees enjoyed a variety of activities that both children and adults were able to participate in. The parking lots seemed to fill up quicker than they did in past years. The event is very much about agricultural education and helping people living in The Last Green Valley to understand the benefits they receive by having a viable farming community."

Weaver said he heard a comment from a visitor that they were appreciative that they could purchase locally grown food at the event as well as buying other local wares.

"They knew the money they were spending was going back into the farming community," he said.

Weaver said he got a lot of positive feedback from folks who took the ride through the working dairy farm, which was Fairvue Farms adjacent to the fairgrounds.

"I heard one mother share the excitement of her children of being able to ride right through [the dairy barn]," he said. "You always hear of a farm operation, but when you ride through a barn with cows on both sides of you, there's nothing like it. Thanks to Paul and Diane Miller."

Weaver said northeastern Connecticut's farming community does a lot of work, and as consumers, we need to make sure they have what they need to operate.

Sherry Simpson, president of the Eastern Connecticut Forest Landowners Association (ECFLA) and the Wolf Den Land Trust (WDLT), had a booth open at the fair to educate folks about the benefits of being a woodland owner, as well as what is presently going on in the condition of the area's forests. The ECFLA and WDLT are based out of Brooklyn.



Travis Hayward, of Ashford, holds a chick at the Celebrate Agriculture Fair last weekend.



The Celebrate Agriculture's animals and vegetable crew made a rousing appearance last weekend at the annual fair.



Local band Yankee Dogs plays smooth country tunes last Saturday, Sept. 20, at the Celebrate Agriculture fair at Woodstock Fairgrounds.



Competitors for Soren Eriksson's Game of Logging cut a lot of timber last Saturday, Sept. 20, for the Celebrate Agriculture Fair.

"We have about 400 acres protected," said Simpson.

She said that decades ago, it was common for woodland owners to own more than 100 to 200 acres of land. She said now as people age, woodland owners have 50 acres or less of land.

"There's a changing demographic," she said.

During Celebrate Agriculture, there were also logging competitions outside, courtesy of Soren Eriksson's Game of Logging, as well as a children's parade. Live music was played by local bands Yankee Dogs and Peter Lange and Hickory Wind Music.

The traditional egg dessert contest was also held. Entrants were required to bake

their good, which had to be a dessert, with one egg and either a fruit or a vegetable grown locally. The Connecticut Poultry Association sponsored the event.

In first place was Nancy Shaw with her Marlborough pie. In second place was Nasima Tarabishy, of Pomfret Center, with her blueberry cake. In third place was Shirley Couture, of Jewett City, with her custard pie, and in fourth place was Jennifer Esposito with her blueberry bread pudding.

For more information on Celebrate Agriculture, visit www.celebratingagriculture.org on the Web. You can also contact the USDA Farm Service Agency at 774-8397. For more information on the ECFLA, visit www.ecfla.org on the Web.

This event showcased the benefits agriculture provides the Quinebaug-Shetucket region as well as the challenges farms face today. Agriculture based in the hills of northeastern Connecticut and south central Massachusetts lies in what is called The Last Green Valley between Washington, D.C., and Boston. Woodstock, as being the host of the event, is a profound example of a town working with its agricultural industry to maintain agriculture as an integral part of both its economic and environmental future.

Matt Sanderson may be reached at (860) 928-1818, ext. 110, or by e-mail at matt@vil-lagernewspapers.com.

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