

# COMMUNITY NEWS

April 26, 2001

Whitesbog celebrates Earth Day with ribbon cutting

## Whitesbog celebrates Earth Day

by Ina Z. Cabañas

Many neighbors, friends, and volunteers gathered, on Earth Day, at Whitesbogs to celebrate the reopening of the refurbished power house and potting shed in Elizabeth White's garden. Built sometime in the 1920s, the potting shed originally served a dual function both as an outhouse and potting shed. After years of neglect it was rebuilt to look exactly as it had when the famous Elizabeth White used it to plant her hybrid blueberries, the very ones we eat today.

Mayor Thalia Kay, mayor of Pemberton Township and a trustee of Whitesbogs, helped cut the ribbon during the ceremo-



TOM WALKER

*Bill King (with scissors), President of the Pinelands Antique Engine Association, cuts the ribbon on the restored Power House with members of the Engine Association.*



TOM WALKER

Fred Gibbs, President Whitesbog Board of Trustees, Mayor Thalia C. Kay, Tom Darlington, previous owner of Whitesbog, Christian Bethmann, Superintendent of Lebanon State Forest, from left, cut the ribbon on the restored potting shed in Elizabeth White's garden.



Fred Gibbs, President of Whitesbog Preservation Trust addresses members and volunteers at the Annual Board Meeting of the Trust.

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ny. Originally from Maine, Mayor Kay recalled how she use to pick blueberries in her youth in Maine. "I feel like it's like home here," Mayor Kay talked about Whitesbogs. "It's not all asphalt... it's part of a bigger scheme of Pemberton Township, part of the fact that we want people to come and visit. We want our school children to enjoy their heritage that's here. This is really a year round destination point." She ended by thanking all of the many volunteers that have worked to keep Whitesbogs alive. "Thank you to all of the volunteers who take such an active part in what we do here in Whitesbogs... that is so absolutely beautiful and it's still alive and well."

Tom Darlington, Elizabeth White's nephew, was on hand for the festivities. He related childhood memories of his many summer vacations visiting his aunt at Whitesbogs and working in the cranberry and blueberry fields. The original powerhouse, in its day, provided power to the storage & packing house for the cranberries. The Pinelands Antique Engine Association volunteered their labor and worked for over six months to restore the powerhouse. They will use the old powerhouse as a museum. The museum will now provide a home for all of the machines that the Pinelands Antique Engine Association has to share with the public. Many of their machines date back to the 1920s and 1930s and

would have been used on a plantation like Whitesbog.

Whitesbog Preservation Trust raises money and provides all of the manpower to rebuild and maintain the buildings and grounds at Whitesbog. The trust was created about 20 years ago. It started with just a small group of volunteers & grows each year. It's across the board a private & public partnership.

Sue Goldstein is the acting executive director. She tells of the many hours the volunteers have worked to refurbish Elizabeth White's original garden that has been considered one of the top gardens by horticulturalists in the state of NJ. The volunteers are restoring the property to its original splendor. Elizabeth White use to sit in her liv-

ing room on the second floor of her house & love to look out at the bogs. Years of neglect brought overgrowth so tall that the view of the bogs was invisible. Volunteers, after laboring for many months, cleared out all of the overgrowth.

Volunteers have put in wooden pipes to move water to the bogs. Originally, pipes were made from wood. Masons are now looking at the brick walkways for restoration. Some future projects will include looking to clear growth from around the bogs & ponds, replanting the garden to look like it use to in the time of

Elizabeth White, replanting the original blueberry testing garden, and making necessary repairs to the buildings on ground.

Goldstein and the trust work hard to raise money and look for volunteers. State grants have helped in the past.

"We need money to continue the restoration because this village is beautiful and we want to keep it that way and have people come and visit." The trust has a volunteer work day once a month, usually the first Saturday of the month.

The Blueberry Festival, always the last Saturday in June, is June 30 this year.