



BCT staff photo/NANCY ROKOS

Joe Darlington and Brenda Conner plan to open their White Star Country Store in Southampton on Thursday.

Cranberry growers hope new store will bear fruit

By Jason Bodnar
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SOUTHAMPTON — Joe Darlington and Brenda Conner are used to being surrounded by cranberries, maybe even some blueberries.

Early last week, however, the fifth-generation cranberry growers were surrounded by hand-made brooms, corncob checker sets and some hand-carved decoys.

With the cranberry boom long since over, Darlington and Conner figured they'd diversify their portfolio. So on Thursday, the

married couple plans to open the White Star Country Store on Route 206, just north of the Red Lion Circle and right next to the Evergreen Dairy Bar.

"When the cranberry industry crashed in 1998 and 1999, when the prices went down to 20 percent of what they had been, we realized it was foolish to put all our eggs in one basket," Darlington said.

This isn't quite your average country store, although it will sell traditional country store items such as candles, jams, jellies and hand-woven baskets.

See **STORE B2**

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Prostitution cause to more sp

Associated Press

NORWOOD — A growing number of New Jersey municipalities are creating their own regulations for hot spas and massage parlors after a series of high-profile prostitution busts in recent years.

The local rules include mandating background checks of people planning to open a spa or perform massage, requiring workers to undergo strict health evaluations and laying out sanitary regulations inside spas.

Some communities have even stipulated which parts of the body therapists are allowed to touch.

"I think it's helpful to ensure that people performing massages have the proper credentials. But whether it really deters prostitution is another question," Denvill or Gene Feyl, whose town approved a massage parlor ordinance two years ago. The Record of Bergen County for yesterday newspaper

Business donations

BUSINESS From B1

extra donation this year

Karen Peskoff, project manager at the complex has always had a good relationship with the police, fire and rescue departments and felt this was a good cause.

"Hopefully, we'll never



BCT staff photo/NANCY ROKOS

Manager Donna Mansdoerfer straightens merchandise inside the White Star Country Store last week.

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STORE From B1

display Tru-Blu's business sign at his store.

The White Star store will also be the hub for cranberry harvest tours that Darlington and Conner plan to offer in September and October. The tours will head from the store to the couple's farm in Whitesbog, about 12 miles away in Pemberton Township.

While on the tour, patrons will be able to experience Piney culture and learn tidbits about the area. For instance, Conner said the cranberry got its name because the plant's blossoms looked like the head of a crane, and Red Lion was named for the legend of a farmer slaying a lion that had been killing his livestock.

It comes from a family with plenty of history. Darlington's father, Tom Darlington, invented a mechanical cranberry picker. His great aunt, Elizabeth White, helped cultivate the blueberry. And his great aunt's father, J.J. White, founded the now-historic Whitesbog Village in Pemberton Township.

Moreover, Darlington recently purchased the trademark of the Tru-Blu Blueberry Cooperative Association Inc., which his great aunt helped found. The Pemberton Township-based co-op formed in 1927 and disbanded in June.

Darlington said he plans to

The highlight of the tour is people will have the opportunity to see a cranberry harvest in action, something Darlington said is vital to keeping cranberry farming alive.

"If we're going to continue to survive as an industry, we need the public to know what we're about," Darlington said.

The store, which is named for a brand of blueberries Darlington's grandfather sold, is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

For a tour schedule and prices, call (888) 272-6264 or visit www.whitestarcs.com.

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