

Pinelands festival features a guest with historical ties

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PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP — Technically, Tom Darlington will be a guest presenter Sunday at the Pinelands Festival of Celebration. He may be a guest, but no one's going to have to show him around.

Darlington was president of the company that owned what is now Whitesbog, the village in the Brendan T. Byrne State Forest that is the site of the annual celebration.

Darlington has plenty of Whitesbog history to talk about. The area is noted for its cranberry and blueberry production, and he has connections to both fruits.

Darlington invented the dry-harvesting cranberry picker, which cut the number of cranberry-harvesting workers by 90 percent. His aunt, Elizabeth C. White, is responsible for the cultivation of the blueberry.

Sunningive, White's home for 31 years, is in

Whitesbog. The Pinelands Nature Conservancy is scheduled to lead tours of it Sunday.

White's father, J.J. Darlington, founded Whitesbog in the mid-1800s.

The Pinelands Festival of Celebration, in its seventh year, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. As always, its unofficial start will be at noon, when the Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge of Medford releases a rescued bird.

"A lot of people get really touched by that really moving moment," said Margaret O'Gorman, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance's director of development.

For the first time, the festival will include guest presenters. Darlington will speak about the cranberry-producing industry.

Other presenters are scheduled to talk about things such as the Jersey Devil, famous and infamous people in Pinelands history, and endangered species in the Pinelands.

The entrance to Whitesbog is on Route 530, one mile north of Route 70. For more information, check www.pinelandsalliance.org or call (609) 894-8000.