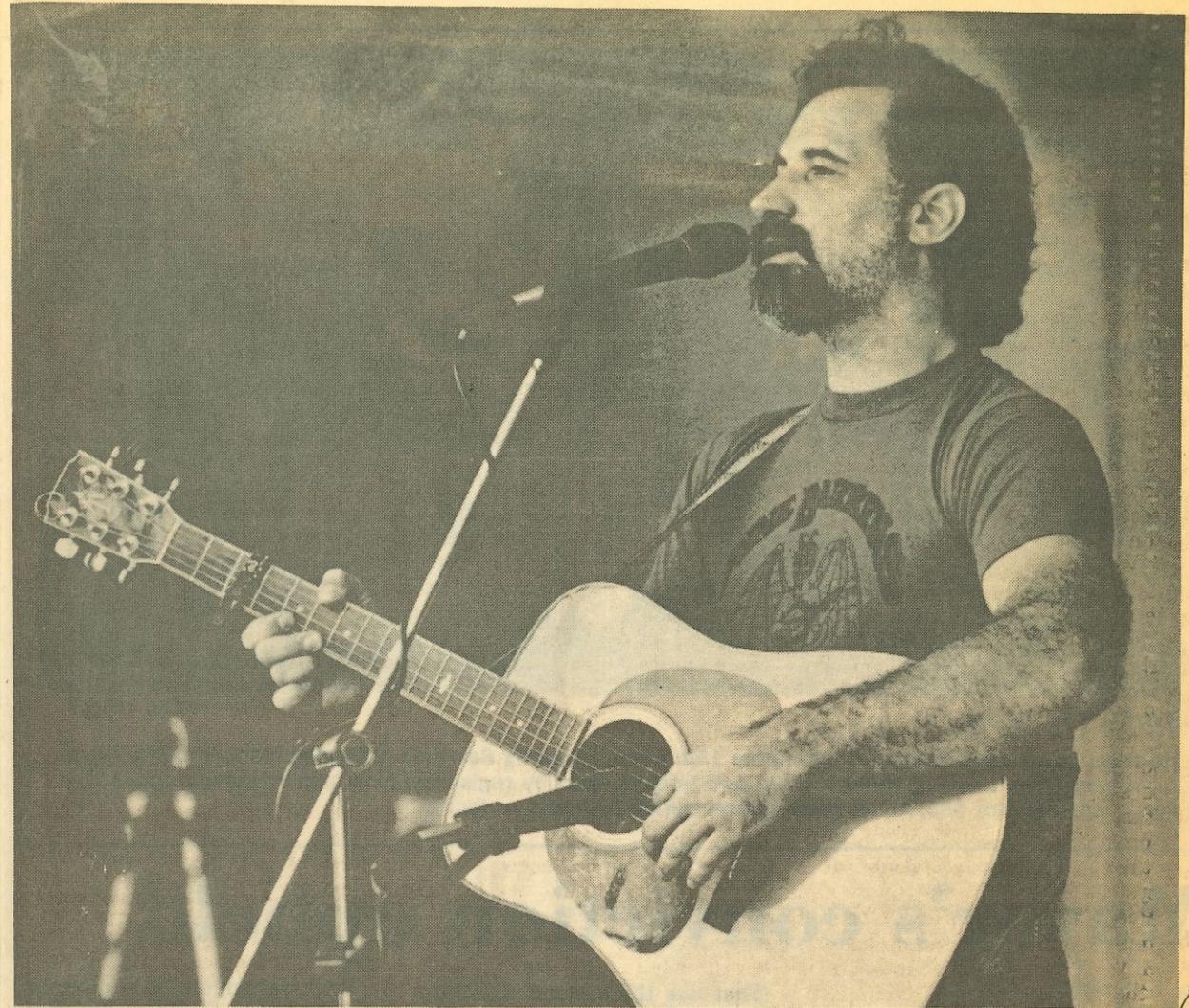


# Summer fun



Howard Boyd (center) tells the history of Whitesbog Village during a walking tour yesterday.



Dave Orleans entertains the crowd during yesterday's festival in Whitesbog.

BCT staff photos/Dennis McDonald

## Whitesbog festival celebrates the blueberry's roots

By Bruce Martin  
Special to the BCT

**PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP** — Blueberry lovers from all over the state descended on the birthplace of the tasty fruit yesterday.

About 1,300 people braved threatening skies to attend the seventh annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival.

Some sat on the grass in the middle of historic Whitesbog Village and listened to folk and rock music provided by the day's bands.

Others strolled among tables displaying handmade items offered by 30 crafters.

Still others explored cranberry and blueberry bogs. And just about everybody sampled blueberry cuisine.

"I love 'em," said Margaret Kolicco of Garfield. "I'm enjoying a blueberry doughnut and I had a blueberry croissant. I came down here and pigged out."

She and her husband, Joe, have attended all but one of the celebrations.

"We enjoy the festival very much. We come all the way from Bergen County," she said. "We like the country atmosphere. The people are friendly, the blueberries are good and the air is clean."

"When you come from Bergen County, you notice a big difference. You can breathe without smelling what the nearest factory is producing that day."

"This is what it's all about," said Gail Munz of Lambertville. "People getting together and sharing music and laughter. I like the food, fun and festivities."

"We always do festivals but we've never done a blueberry," said John Kelly of Haddonfield.

"We love blueberries," said his wife, Joan. "We had chocolate-covered blueberries and blueberry funnel cake."

"We hope the festival provides the impetus to preserve the history of Whitesbog," added John.

That's the hope of the Whitesbog Preservation Trust, the non-profit organization that sponsors the event.

The fete is held each year to foster public awareness of Whitesbog's

unique role in New Jersey's agricultural and cultural heritage and to secure its preservation for future generations.

Proceeds go toward restoration of Whitesbog's buildings. In its heyday, the village housed about 80 workers.

The blueberry came into being as a result of cranberry farmers looking for a crop to grow in their off-season.

Elizabeth White, working with Dr. Frederick Coville, developed the fruit from wild huckleberries in 1916.

After reading of the doctor's experiments, Ms. White talked her father, the most successful cranberry farmer in the state, into sponsoring Coville's work and hiring local woodsmen to find the best bushes.

In addition to being paid, those who brought in the finest specimens were rewarded by having the variety named after them.

Some 200 runners kicked off yesterday's festival with a 10-kilometer run. Mount Holly's Joe Abrams won the event in 31 minutes and 56 seconds, breaking the old record by two minutes.