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# THE BERRY BEST OF WHITESBOG

NEWSLETTER OF THE WHITESBOG PRESERVATION TRUST

AUTUMN 2000

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## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Many of you that have visited Whitesbog in the past several years know that one of the important volunteer organizations residing in Whitesbog Village is the Pinelands Antique Engine Association. Among the Association's many activities in support of our efforts, one has been to restore the blueberry field that has become a key part of the Trust's Blueberry Festival.

The Association is located in two historic Whitesbog buildings, the Power House and the Machine Shop/Garage. The Power House is being restored and will be used by the Association as an antique engine museum. Tom Darlington, the grandson of Whitesbog's founder, remembers from his childhood in the 1930's that "the Machine Shop/Garage played a very central role in the operation of Whitesbog. All the motorized equipment used on the farm were maintained in the Machine Shop, and some of the specialized farm machines were even designed and made there. Most of the year round employees gathered in the Machine Shop/Garage each morning to collect their machines and get last minute instructions for the day's work. The gasoline generator, which provided electricity for all of Whitesbog, occupied the back of the Garage. In many ways the Machine Shop/Garage was as essential for the operation of Whitesbog as the much larger and more impressive cranberry house".

Unfortunately, due to other priorities for the limited Whitesbog Trust funds, the Machine Shop/Garage today is in serious disrepair. The building *must* have a new roof immediately to prevent further structural damage and to save this historic structure. A new roof will cost \$12,000. Therefore, we are asking our friends and members to contribute to this special critical project to save the Machine Shop/Garage roof. Once the building is stabilized, we will seek funding to restore the building as Tom Darlington remembers it.

Fred Gibbs, President  
Whitesbog Preservation Trust

## WPT PRESERVES MEMORIES

For the past 17 years the Whitesbog Preservation Trust has been engaged in preserving buildings and grounds at Whitesbog. This year, with financial assistance from the NJ Council for the Humanities, the Trust is working to preserve what may be an even more valuable resource; the memories and personal accounts of those who lived and worked at Whitesbog. The Whitesbog Preservation Trust first developed a list of over 100 people who lived and worked at the farm in the years prior to 1967, before it became part of Lebanon State Forest. Then on June 3, 2000, we held our first Whitesbog Reunion when nearly 40 people came to share their memories and photographs. During the reunion, video recordings were made of interviews with many of those in attendance. A second day of interviews was held in August. Altogether, over ten hours of "broadcast quality", taped interviews were recorded. The story that is unfolding from these interviews is giving us a technicolor view into daily life at the farm. Some of the accounts go back to the 1920's and include descriptions of what it was like to harvest cranberries by hand, life at the General Store, or how Elizabeth White entertained children at her home. The picture of life at Whitesbog is surprisingly complex and includes accounts by many of the local Pines folks, the Italian workers from Philadelphia and a number of African American families. It is especially interesting to hear the accounts of life in the satellite communities of Florence and Rome, which are now open fields with only meager traces of the buildings which once housed Whitesbog's families.

These accounts are now documented for posterity and will allow people to gain a unique understanding of Whitesbog. The immediate use of the interviews is the production of an eight minute video that will offer visitors to the village, an insightful introduction to this remarkable piece of history. Whitesbog Preservation Trust plans to seek funding to pursue additional interview recordings and the production of a 30 minute documentary.

Bill Bolger, WPT Board of Trustees

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**SARSAPARILLA, RINSO AND  
UNEEDA BISCUITS  
AT THE GENERAL STORE**

NJ Division of Parks and Forestry has completed building renovations to the General Store. What's next?...finishing the inside of the main room with the look of a 1920's, 30's and 40's General Store. The P.I.N.E.S. program, along with any interested volunteers will be working on the project during the summer and fall of 2000. Richard Rolle and Martha Windisch, Whitesbog Preservation Trust volunteers, have already gotten off to a great start. A couple of years ago Martha began the project of reading, organizing, and marking for reference, information in the White family files about the history of the village, which Tom Darlington had graciously donated to the Trust. Richard Rolle has taken on the new project of researching what would have been in a "typical" general store during those early years. He has been making phone calls, visiting other historic places, and using the internet to gather this information. The oral history project, headed by Janet Robbins and Bill Bolger, will hopefully round up some memories from all the people that lived and worked in the village in the past. Chris Bethmann, Superintendent of Lebanon State Forest, will provide guidance of the project. We hope to have one wall of shelves and one section of counter built and installed by the end of fall.

As time goes on, we'd like to stock the shelves with authentic and replica grocery goods of the past. Visitors could experience the "good 'ol days" in this re-created General Store Museum and it could be used in educational programs during the week for school students.

If anyone has photographs of the inside of the store when it was in business, we would really like to see them. Or, if you are interested in sharing memories, building shelves, staining woodwork, donating period items, researching, or providing other guidance on this project, please call me ASAP at 609-893-1765.

Maria Peter  
Program Coordinator  
P.I.N.E.S. Program

**BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Whitesbog Preservation Trust Buildings Committee has been working on several projects over the past six months. The biggest development for the Trust came in June with the signing of a lease with the Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC will now be using Suningive, Elizabeth White's old home, as their new Pinelands Regional Office and as housing for one or two employees. This will duplicate the historic use of the building, which Ms. White had designed as an office/residence in 1923. The Trust has contracted to install new heating and air conditioning using existing ductwork. Provisions in the lease will still allow for public tours during our major events.

We are very excited to have one of the state's leading environmental organizations as a tenant and partner. The Trust and the Conservancy share many of the same goals, so Whitesbog Village is sure to benefit from the presence of many new visitors who undoubtedly share our love for the natural and cultural history of the Pinelands.

The restoration of the Powerhouse continues with extensive brickwork repairs preceding the reconstruction of the roof. As we go to press, the framing and sheathing is complete and we are fielding bids from contractors for a standing seam metal roof. When completed, the building will be turned over to the Pinelands Antique Engine Association for use as a display and storage space, for their extensive collection of historic NJ agricultural machinery. We are extremely indebted to PAEA for all their efforts over the years to help preserve Whitesbog.

In another ongoing relationship, the Pinelands Institute for Natural and Environmental Studies (P.I.N.E.S) has secured funding to help restore several buildings used in their education program. (see related story) Over 10,000 students visited Whitesbog last year as part of the P.I.N.E.S. program. Plans for restoration of electric to both the barrel factory and the barrel storage warehouse are a few of the joint efforts between The Trust and P.I.N.E.S.

John Joyce  
Buildings Committee Chair

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## WHITESBOG NEWS BITS

- Good news! Diane Pontarelli, a resident of Whitesbog Village applied to Wal-Mart for a grant to obtain a wheelbarrow for the garden restoration and ended up with a \$1000 check. This makes the second time Diane has gotten us some funds. Her last triumph was \$1500. Way to go, Diane!
  - This money will not only get us a wheelbarrow, but will help rebuild the potting shed so it can finally be utilized properly.
  - Calling All Volunteers!!! We are in need of a few folks who would like to be trained to do Cranberry Harvest Tours in the fall, and Village History Tours year round. The Cranberry Harvest Tours remain one of our most popular events offered at Whitesbog and we would like to expand the program with your help. Tom Darlington has graciously agreed to do the training. He will also assist with the Village History Tours Program taught by Janet Robbins and others. Please call today if you are interested so we can set up dates for the training.
  - Ellen Terry, one of our dedicated volunteers, has "revived" the Garden Club and has many active, working volunteers. Ellen is so organized, she even writes and sends out a Garden Club Newsletter. If you would like to join them you can contact Ellen through the Trust office. Thanks Ellen, for taking on this responsibility and doing such a good job.
  - The Pinelands Antique Engine Association (PAEA) has been maintaining our blueberry fields for several years which makes it possible for visitors to the Blueberry Festival to pick their own berries. Now they have asked for help with their newest ambitious project.

The weeds and grass and bramble between the bushes have become very overgrown and need to be uprooted and cleared away. We have set aside **Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>** (rain date November 5) as the clean up day and we need YOU! Please call to sign up. We can use all the help we can get. You should bring gloves, a rake, a hoe and anything else you think you might need. Drinks and a light lunch will be provided.
  - Welcome to The Nature Conservancy, our newest village residents. TNC has opened a field office in Suningive. We are thrilled to have them here and look forward to a long lasting relationship between our two organizations.
  - For those of you who don't know, aside from maintaining the fields, PAEA maintains and drives our hay wagons during events and do a hundred other things. Whitesbog would be hard pressed to manage without these great volunteers.
  - Pat Frasier, another village resident, conducts monthly moonlight walks through the village. This is a nice event that we offer to the public and we are grateful to Pat for her efforts on behalf of the Trust.
  - WPT is participating in the Boscov's Friends Helping Friends Day, this year to be held on Tuesday, October 17 at all the Boscov's stores in NJ, PA, and DE. This is a fun day, a good time to get a jump *and* a discount on holiday purchases, and a way to help us as well. Each \$6 ticket we sell entitles the bearer to five, 20% coupons and a chance to win fabulous prizes. All ticket proceeds go to the Trust. If you would like some tickets to sell or purchase, please call us.
  - If you are interested in coordinating a St. Patrick's Day 5K or 10K run for the Trust, we want you! We would love to host some runs at Whitesbog but need someone who is willing to be responsible for managing race details. We can offer assistance and can secure help for the day of the race, but due to time constraints, we can not take on another project at this time. Call Sue if you would like to volunteer for this.
  - Again a giant thank you to all of you who worked at this year's Blueberry Festival. We could not do this wonderful event without volunteers. We are approximately \$10,000 richer due to your efforts.
  - And speaking of the Blueberry Festival, it was selected as the **Second Best Summer Event** in Burlington County by the *Burlington County Times*. The trust received recognition and a certificate at the August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Pemberton Town Council.
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Dear Friends,

As you have learned from this newsletter, the Trust has been very busy trying to move forward with our plans to restore the village and Elizabeth White's garden to its original state. Not solely for historical purposes, but to instill pride in local and state residents for the treasure that is Whitesbog.

As you also know, to accomplish this takes money. If everyone reading this newsletter responded to our President's article about a new roof, by donating just \$35 each, we would have enough money to complete the roof. **You** can make the difference.

Since we receive no state or federal funding, your support is critical. Won't you please consider helping us with a special gift at this time? Just write "new roof" on your check to ensure that your money will be earmarked for the correct purpose.

Thank you for your help and support.

**Please Note:** *Due to the expense involved in the printing and mailing of this newsletter, beginning with our Spring mailing, only paid members will receive the publication. Thank you for your understanding*

THE HALLOWEEN EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 2000 HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.  
WE APOLOGIZE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE

*Visit our website: [WWW.WHITESBOG.ORG](http://WWW.WHITESBOG.ORG) or call: 609.893.4646*



## **Whitesbog Preservation Trust**

120-13 Whitesbog Road  
Browns Mills, NJ 08015

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# Whitesbog Preservation Trust

120-13 Whitesbog Road, Browns Mills, NJ 08015 ♦ 609.893.4646

## Calendar of Events January – June 2001

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### January

6<sup>th</sup> **Moonlite Walk** 7pm

### February

10<sup>th</sup> **Moonlite Walk** 7pm

10<sup>th</sup> **Tundra Swan Tour** 10am and 12pm

17<sup>th</sup> **Tundra Swan Tour** 10am and 12pm

### March

3<sup>rd</sup> **Volunteer Work Day** 10am to 3pm

3<sup>rd</sup> **Star Party** 6pm Sponsored by the Astronomical Society of Toms River Area (ASTRA). Gaze at night sky with powerful telescopes. (rain date 3/10)

10<sup>th</sup> **Moonlite Walk** 7pm

### April

7<sup>th</sup> **Volunteer Work Day** 10am to 3pm

7<sup>th</sup> **"A Work in Progress"** Walking tour and update on restoration progress in the village. 3pm

7<sup>th</sup> **Moonlite Walk** 7pm

28<sup>th</sup> **Volunteer Recognition**

### May

5<sup>th</sup> **Volunteer Work Day** 10am to 3pm

5<sup>th</sup> **Spring Peepers Moonlite Walk** 7pm

26<sup>th</sup> **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Canoe Exploration Trip**  
Bring your own canoe or kayak and brown bag lunch. 11am to 2pm

### June

2<sup>nd</sup> **Volunteer Work Day** 10am to 3pm  
(National Trails Clean Up Day)

2<sup>nd</sup> **Moonlite Walk** 7pm

30<sup>th</sup> **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Blueberry Festival**  
Interpretive tours, blueberries, food, baked goods, antiques, music, children's activities and much more.

*There is a nominal fee for most events.*

*Please call ahead to register and verify dates and times. 609.893.4646*

*All events meet at the Whitesbog General Store. Historic Whitesbog is located at mile marker 13 on Route 530, southeast of Browns Mills in Pemberton Township, NJ.*

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Whitesbog is administered by the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry as part of the Lebanon State Forest.



# OCTOBER IS PINELANDS MONTH!

## NEW JERSEY PINELANDS MONTH 2000

Sponsored by

**PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE**  
in cooperation with Whitesbog Preservation Trust

PRESENTS

### FIFTH ANNUAL OPENING CELEBRATION

"Unbarren Barrens: The Next 100 Years"

**When:** Sunday, October 1, 2000  
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Rain or Shine

**Where:** Historic Whitesbog Village  
Route 530, Mile Marker 13  
Browns Mills, NJ

— FEATURING —

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Pinelands Music & Folklore   | * Cranberry Harvest Tour | * Crafters' Demonstrations  |
| * Rehabilitated Bird Release   | * Pinelands Exhibits     | * Pine Barrens Book Signing |
| * Pine Barrens Wagon Tour      | * Children's Games       | * Village Walking Tour      |
| * General Store Ribbon-cutting | * Antique Engines        | * Sled Dog Demos/Rides      |

*For details and a free New Jersey Pinelands Month 2000 event calendar,  
contact Lillian Opdycke at 609-894-8000 or [lillian@pinelandsalliance.org](mailto:lillian@pinelandsalliance.org).*