

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Berry good idea

As people get older, they soon find a lot of things they memorized in school have completely disappeared from their consciousness. More often than not, we struggle to bring back information we know is just there under the surface.

The things we do remember usually have some sort of personal association. Either they are tied to an emotion, or sometimes they are something that made us laugh at the time.

Smart educators know this and use a variety of tools to help children remember. How many of today's grandparents remember learning their ABCs by singing a song? Associating a lesson with something entertaining or hands-on helps individuals retain that information far longer than reading it in a book and taking a pop quiz.

Some years ago, a Pinelands teacher named Kevin McGorty, found a key in helping children learn history was to include local history in the lesson. As they studied about certain time periods, he incorporated what was going on here in Ocean County during the same period into the lessons, making them more personal for students.

In Stafford Township, where the stewardship of the environment for its citizens is a key factor in municipal government, students in various levels of the schools are educated on the importance of conservation.

A project at the Intermediate School has children learning about the importance of blueberry and cranberry cultivation in South Jersey in past and present times. Children will be planting their own small "crops" and nurturing them as well as visiting historic Whitesbog in Pemberton and other areas.

Years from now, when their children spoon some fresh blueberries into their cereal, their parents will be able to relate the story of Elizabeth White and how the lowly huckleberry came to become the fat juicy blues we all know and love, or how New Jersey is the third largest cranberry-growing state in the union. And the tot will look up at his parent, with the innocence of youth, and marvel at how Mom or Dad seems to know everything.