

IN BRIEF

Harvest Days Farm Tour upcoming

The Culpeper Office of Economic Development and the Culpeper Harvest Days Farm Tour Committee will host the 10th Annual Harvest Days Farm Tour the weekend of October 6-7 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. each day.

The tour is free and visitors will be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of the country on farms in the beautiful Blue Ridge foothills. The theme this year is "Commerce Grows on the Farm," and the farms selected to participate reflect not only the agricultural history of the county, but also the millions of dollars in production, wages and salaries generated by the agricultural industry in our county and state.

The Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center at the Depot in downtown Culpeper will serve as the welcome center for this year's tour. The Depot on Commerce Street is also the location for the Piedmont Railroaders' fabulous train exhibit and a Farmers' Market brimming with fresh vegetables, fruits in season, and baked goods to delight both the eye and the palate.

Both traditional and unique farm sites will be offered on this year's tour. Allow time to peruse a herd of buffalo, enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride and watch a llama traverse an obstacle course.

For detailed site information and a schedule of activities, visit the Harvest Day's Web site at culpeperag.org/farmtour2007. Call 727-3410 for additional information or to receive a brochure or e-mail sbrown@culpepercounty.gov.

Citizens must work for multi-use trails

In 1979, a Trail Legislative Package was formulated in Fairfax County, sponsored in the Virginia General Assembly by Senator Charles Waddell and signed into law by Governor Dalton.

This legislation enables every city, town and county in the state to master-plan for multi-use trails — multi-use defined as walking, biking and equestrian use.

As a result, Fairfax County has 1,400 miles of trails on their master plan. Manuals and maps were prepared by citizen committees in every district. Also after many years, an official position was created for a staff member to be delegated as the Trail Coordinator for Fairfax County.

All of this came about through the efforts of citizen participation when they realized that 'unofficial trails' were being paved over with development. It wasn't an easy road, but with the encouragement of the Northern Virginia Park Authority and the Fairfax County Park Authority, citizen lobbying became effective.

Unless multi-use trails are part of a comprehensive master plan, once the land is developed the opportunity is gone.

Multi-use trails are not only important as an alternative means of transportation, recreation and linear parks, but should also be viewed as part of Homeland Security plans. In the event of a disaster, abandoned vehicles will clog the highways.

Master-planning and inclusion in a comprehensive plan is the key.

CONTRIBUTED REPORTS

FARM & GARDEN

Travelers enjoy trails, hospitality in Jersey

British couple's 'crazy ride' bringing other riders together

We have been traveling all over the northeastern states this week, trying to bump up the numbers of places ridden as time marches relentlessly on and the weather has started to cool down.

Although we are currently in Vermont (more on that next week), I wanted to tell you about our visit to New Jersey in particular, although before that, we did make a flying visit to a wonderful equine rescue and rehabilitation center located in both Delaware and Maryland.

Summerwinds Stables (or Greener Pastures, as it is known in Maryland) was founded in 2001 and is currently operated by Elena DiSilvestro and her father Tony.

Only last year the center was able to expand from the cramped 10-acre site in Delaware to incorporate the 80-plus-acre farm in Maryland, and they also expanded their sphere of work to incorporate therapeutic "summer camps" for local disaffected children, using the horses to help and heal as much as possible.

We intend to go back and see Elena and her crew over the next few weeks, as they were in the middle of moving house from one farm to another, and at the same time getting ready for a family vacation to Florida with the children (the first in many years) when we were there.

We didn't have a great deal of time to chat to them about the organization and the great work they do, plus it was such a beautiful site to visit, we thought a return trip would be well in order.

We moved on to our stop in Alexandria Township, N.J., which was initially a bit of a last-minute thing as the place we had intended to go let us down and an impassioned plea on one of the many horse lovers Web sites brought us an invitation from Beth Borbone to stay at her farm in Alexandria and ride on some of the local trails.

Well, I don't know if you believe in fate or not, but in retrospect this seemed like destiny had been at work.

We had some of the most wonderful days with Beth and her family at the farm, which as they had only moved into it recently, was a little on the topsy-turvy side, and we couldn't have wished for a better time.

Beth had undergone cancer surgery and chemotherapy earlier in the year, yet her hospitality knew no bounds — she and her husband John totally blew away the myth about New Jersey folk being inhospitable!

When we stay with people during our travels, we don't ask for much more than a place to park the trailer, a place to park the horses (just a bit of field will do) and if we can, a hook-up to electricity and if we can get it, water. Beth wasn't having any of



A rider approaches Beth Borbone's farm, located in Alexandria, N.J., where David and Anita wound up after their original plans fell through at the last minute. The traveling couple was blown away by the hospitality of Beth and her family.



DAVID AND ANITA HASBURY-SNOGLES

that though — we were invited to dinner with the family every night (whether we wanted to or not!), and running errands to the shops, sorting the laundry, etc. etc. was done to order!

Veritable feasts were enjoyed along with plentiful wine, and we had some fun times on the Nintendo Wii playing golf, tennis, boxing and even ten-pin bowling with her and her husband, John. The horses enjoyed cozy stables at night and plentiful pastures during the day, and certainly wanted for nothing themselves.

One of the best things about staying with Beth, though, was that she introduced us to some members of the Alexandria Equestrian Association (aeaj.com) who promptly invited us on a ride with them across their latest trail. We rode with the president of the association, Judy Tucker, and several other members, such as Tom Aversa and Lou Corba, and were out on horseback for close to five hours that day!

You may recall a few weeks ago that I wrote about the Culpeper Horse Owners Association (choa-va.com) and their efforts to get a new circular trail established around the town, joining many historical sites together.

Well, the AEA has managed a similar thing up in Alexandria, only they did a little more in the beginning, joining with the local townspeople to buy up an old ranch and convert it into a

riding center with indoor and outdoor arenas, a dressage arena, round pen and, of course, miles of trails around the area.

The really clever bit, though, was that they worked with the local authorities in the beginning to raise the funds to purchase and then convert the property, and incorporated soccer fields and other sports facilities for the local children within it.

This way, a lot more people get to enjoy the facility, perhaps take a greater interest in equine activities that they wouldn't otherwise see, and the town has a vested interest in maintaining and preserving the property, so they share the costs of its upkeep with the association.

The AEA also works with developers and town planners to have set-asides preserved for new trail rides whenever a new building program takes place, and it was on one such trail that we were very honored to have been invited to ride this time.

They also run Team Penning, indoor polo and other events in their arena to which many out-of-state competitors will come, and so raise further funding for the association and local charities that they like to support.

Tom, Judy and the other members of the committee (all volunteers) made us feel both extremely welcome and even a little important, introducing us at every opportunity to anyone they met along the way, stating how privileged THEY felt at our having chosen Alexandria to be the venue for our New Jersey ride.

It's nice to think that in some small way we can "give a little back" by doing this "crazy ride" of ours, and we felt this was one such example — not just for the fact that we do have an effect on the people's lives we interact with (hopefully for the bet-



David Snogles, foreground, Tom Aversa, middle, and Judy Tucker ride one of the most recent trails established by the Alexandria Equestrian Association.

ter), but we do actually help facilitate other people getting together and getting to know each other — relationships that will continue long after we are gone!

Beth was fairly new to the area and didn't know the people from the AEA, but because we were coming along and she wanted to set up a trail ride for us, she got in contact with them and

horizons have now been broadened all around! Until next week

David and Anita Hasbury-Snogles are British residents riding across the United States on horseback to raise money for charity. Visit HorseQuestUSA.org for more information. David can be reached at david_hasbury@yahoo.com.

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