New Jersey News

Notice

The Annual Meeting of the New Jersey State Horticultural Society will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday February 1, 2012 in the Tower Suite of the Hershey Motor Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA.

Cowgill Visits New Dean of Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture, June 2011

Invited by Dr. Russell Redding,(left) new Dean of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Win Cowgill (Right), Area Fruit Agent with Rutgers Cooperative Extension .& editor Horticultural News, tours peach plantings and reviews future orchard plans with Orchard Manager Doug Christie (center).

Peter Melick
Distinguished Service to Hunterdon Agriculture Award

Peter Melick received the 'Distinguished Service to 'Hunterdon Agriculture Award' at their annual dinner meeting of the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture, November 12, 2011, Flemington, NJ. Peter Melick is Co-owner of Melick's Town Farm in Oldwick, NJ. He is a grower and marketer of fresh fruits, vegetables, and flowers. The retail and wholesale operation also includes the production of fresh apple cider. Peter served as a member of the Board of Directors and past president of the New Jersey Horticulture Society.

Peter's strong sense of community and public service began at a young age. He is a tenth-generation farmer, and has lived his entire life in Oldwick, NJ. As a boy, he was a member of Boy Scout Troop 199, where he reached the rank of Eagle Scout. After graduating from Voorhees High School, he attended Albright College in Reading, PA. While in college, Peter completed a comprehensive marketing study on his farm for one of his business classes. This exercise opened his eyes to the many possibilities available in agriculture and the future of his family's farm. Upon graduating in 1989, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and Business Management, Peter returned to help manage his family farm.

Peter Melick, Oldwick, NJ was presented a gift by Irvin Hockenbury as he was recognized by the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture with the 'Distinguished Service to Hunterdon Agriculture Award' at their annual dinner meeting, November 12, 2011. Photo Credit Win Cowgill

Peter has been active in both the agricultural community and his local community, and he has served in many leadership positions. He was a member and President of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture. He is past-Chairman of the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board, past President of the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture. He is a past Farm Bureau Director representing Hunterdon County and he has also served as a member of the Tewksbury Township Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Peter also serves his local community in many ways. He is a member of the Tewksbury Township Committee, and he currently serves as Mayor. He is the current President, and past Chief of the Oldwick Fire Company. He also serves as a Hunterdon County Deputy Fire Coordinator. He is a member of the Zion Lutheran Church in Oldwick and is the President of the New Germantown Cemetery Association.Peter was awarded the New Jersey Outstanding Young Farmer Award in 2006, and he was a national finalist.

Peter is a columnist for the "Gardner News" and he has been featured on Fox Business News. Peter and his wife Denise have three sons: Will age 10, Andrew age 9, and Matthew age 6.

Samuel F. Sorbello, 78, Passed on December 7, 2011

Sam Sorbello was a retired peach grower with his son is Fred. Their farm was called Hill Creek Orchards. Sam lived the American dream. He married his high school sweetheart and started a successful business which impacted the dinner table at every home in our area. Samuel F. Sorbello was born in Mullica Hill in 1933 into a home where no English was spoken. He attended public school through the 11th grade and then went to work on the family vegetable farm.

At 22, against all advice, Sam ventured into farming on his own. He and his wife, Rose, used most of their cash wedding gifts to buy a used tractor and to make ends meet. In 1960 he began planting fruit trees, all peaches. After seven years he completed the transition from vegetables to fruit. Growing and selling peaches changed the family business in more ways than Sam could imagine. In the era when Sam farmed, each picking was packed and shipped to market immediately. This practice delivered wonderful products to Philadelphia but, at the height of the peach harvest, glutted the market and greatly depressed prices. Sam soon noticed that, only weeks after the New Jersey harvest peaked and supply dwindled, the price of a bushel of peaches rose dramatically. In 1964 Sam and Rose built their first cold storage building that could be chilled to 36° F. With cold storage available, Sam could hold the last 6,000 bushels of his harvest in reserve until other farms had picked and sold their fruit. Delivering to merchants in Philadelphia a few weeks later, he tripled the value of the peaches he had stored because he was the only grower with a supply. In 1973, Sam built a refrigerated warehouse for frozen food. Frozen seafood and blueberries were among the first such products he stored. In 1978 he responded to a customer's request and built the first USDA inspection facility in the Philadelphia area. This venture was in response to a meat importer dissatisfied with the service available from New York City's port. This facility attracted the business of many beef importers who formerly relied on New York and shortly thereafter Philadelphia dominated this business. Sam and a business partner expanded, buying frozen food facilities in Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey. One Camden warehouse, "Dockside," was the largest portside frozen foods warehouse in the world. But, over time, the environment in which these businesses operated chaffed on Sam. He was happiest in Mullica Hill and so, in 1981, sold his interest and returned to his roots.

As a younger man, Sam enjoyed hunting in the rural area of Mullica Hill. When he retired, he took up golf and loved it. Sam and his wife, Rose enjoyed many great years in Longboat Key, FL where he fished and boated. Sam served on the South Harrison Township Committee and the School Board. He was never afraid of a challenge and Sam's brave determination will be with his family forever.

Sam is survived by his wife of 55 years, Rose (nee Cristaudo). Beloved father of Fred and his wife, Cheryl and Samuel J. and his wife, Colleen. Grandfather of Daniel A., Alexandra D., Jeffrey J. and Nathaniel A. Sorbello. Greatgrandfather of Alexander C. Sorbello. Brother of Bennie Sorbello, Joseph Sorbello, Frances Passeri, Fina Rainear and the late Anna Cocove. Nephew of Sam Bonaccorso.

Donations: Jefferson Foundation for Crohn's Disease Research 925 Chestnut St. Suite 110 Philadelphia, PA 19107.