



Reporting Meeting of March 6, 2017

Calendar of Events

Last Week: Club Assembly Jon Costolo gave a fine overview of Rotary, local, district and international

This Week: Charlton's Featherbed Farm – Tim Biello

Next Week: TBD

Coming Up: March 20 - Spring Dinner @ SCCC, 6 pm

Attendance: Rotarians: 18; Guests: 1

Invocation: Dan Stec

Note: Regular meetings are held Monday Evenings at 6:00 PM in the William E. Sewell Memorial Room at the Ballston Town Hall.

Please give suggestions for future programs to Jon Costolo.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Annual dinner at SCCC will be 3/20 at 6 pm. Cost is \$25/pp and can be paid at our 3/13 meeting or the night of the dinner. Please rsvp to Gregg Schorr (gschorr@hs-e.com) with your entrée selections by 3/9.
- Beth's surgery went well and she is on the road to recovery. Get well soon!
- Safe travels Gini and Rey.
- Welcome soon-to-be member Steve Geene.
- Happy Dollars were collected by Mike Brewster.

Featherbed Farm – Tim Biello

A St. Louis native, Tim Biello studied rural sociology with a focus on agriculture in college. In 2004, his interests reached a new level while living in New Orleans and teaching outdoor education programs to inner-city kids. A couple of years later he applied for an internship and started working at a non-profit farm in the Hudson Valley, near New Paltz. From there Tim spent three years managing farms in Essex and Madison counties before moving back to Saratoga Springs where he had spent several years as a youth. His goal all along was to buy his own farm. After an exhaustive five year search for the right farm, Tim and his wife Jamielynn founded Featherbed Lane Farm with help from the New York City based Local Farms Fund, whose mission is helping young, beginning farmers get started. The Biellos currently

run the farm under a lease-to-own arrangement and hope to buy it outright in 2020.

Featherbed Lane Farm is 63 acres of mixed woods, wetlands and fields - roughly half of the property is open, tillable land. With its high quality soils, level fields and adequate water sources, the property is well-suited for agriculture. With its diverse habitats and ecosystems, the farm is also a wonderful place to encourage and sustain wildlife. The Biellos goal is to run a successful farm business that produces nutritious foods while building their soils, caring for their livestock, stewarding their land, respecting their employees and contributing to their community.

A defining feature of the farm is their work with four draft horses - a pair of large Percheron geldings and two Brabants, a mare and gelding (Bear, Duke, Lynn and Clyde). Tim works with draft horses because he likes that their food can be grown on the farm, or nearby, and that their waste (manure) is a valuable product for fertility. The main reason he farms with draft horses is he enjoys the process of working, learning, communicating and growing with them.

They grow a diversity of crops and raise a diversity of livestock on the farm. They rotate when and where these crops are grown and when and where the animals pastured, both within a year and from year to year. Diversity and rotations help to avoid or diminish pest pressures as well as maintain and increase soil health and animal health. Other benefits of on-farm diversity and rotations is they create conditions for healthier crops, which leads to increased yields and minimize or completely remove the use of pesticides and herbicides.

Featherbed Lane Farm's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) begins in 2017 and they are looking initially for forty members! CSA is a model of farming that allows people to buy their food directly from a local farmer. A distinguishing feature is that people who wish to buy from a CSA farm make an up-front commitment to the farmer by pre-purchasing food, which helps the farmer secure early season capital. As a CSA Member, you get farm fresh produce every week of the year, all year round. Their CSA is also free choice, which means members get to choose the produce, and how much of it, that they want to eat each week. They do not pre-box member's share. Members take what they want.

Reported by Gregg Schorr

March Set Up: Mike Brewster, Gregg Schorr, Tom Brownell, Ray Callanan Cleanup: Beth Brownell, Bob Youmans, Mary Anderson

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Service Above Self

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