

Lancaster Farmland Trust Honors 15 Land Benefactors

MTJOY (Lancaster Co.)—The annual meeting of the Lancaster Farmland Trust was held last evening at the Country Table restaurant. Fifteen new land benefactors were recognized, new officers were elected, and reports of the progress of agriculture land preservation were given.

In the executive director's report, Tom Stouffer said that the trust had never preserved more than 11 farms in any one year until 1997. By the end of the year, 16 farms are expected to be preserved, bringing the total to 81 farms and over 5,200 acres. Lancaster County has been designated as one of the world's most endangered sites by the World Monument Association. This heightens awareness of the problems of sprawl and farmland loss.

Stouffer said we are reaping the seeds that have been sown since the preservation movement began in the mid '70s. One out of every five acres preserved in Lancaster County has been preserved through the trust. This is significant because these are real land donors with substantial donations of the value of the easements made by the farm families involved. More than one out of five farms saved by the trust comes from Old Order Amish farmers because trust of private rather than governmental organization.

Next year, the trust will celebrate the tenth year in operation. The goal is to raise \$200,000 and have a celebration of 100 farms preserved at that time.

In the election of trustees, John H. Schwartz is president; Stephen M. Kraybill, vice president; Terry R. Scheetz, secretary, and Philip W. Kimmel, treasurer.

Board members are Barbara Shaw, Christian Herr, Kenneth H. Messner, and Amos M. Beiler. Also Christopher C. Barton, James R. Clark, Carolyn A. Kilgour, Stephen D. Locky III, James R. Shirk, and Gini L. Wagner.

The outstanding donor award went to Conrad W. Nelson. Gini Wagner, Ruben Weaver, and Rebecca Weiss were honored as volunteers of the year.

Recognized as 1997 land benefactors are:

Land Benefactors — 1997 Annual Dinner

Lancaster Farmland Trust honored the following fourteen landowners who have preserved their farms since the last annual dinner meeting:

Joseph G. Chamberlain is a Chester County businessman and has garnered much joy from reinvesting his profits back into farmland, renting the farms to young Amish families starting out, and taking a genuine interest in helping them eventually purchase the farms. He owns three adjacent farms in Little Britain Township along Ashville Road, close to the Octoraro reservoir. Two of the farms are productive dairies and one is a small greenhouse and vegetable operation. He preserved the three farms totaling 160 acres last Christmas.

Mr. and Mrs. Esh are Old Order Amish farmers. They have

preserved two farms, creating a block of 122 preserved acres in East Lampeter Township.

P. Robert and Deborah Wenger operate a 240 acre dairy along Cardinal Road in East Drumore Township. They farm with the help of two sons, and have recently experimented with milking three times a day, three days a week, to increase milk production. They are active volunteers in the Solanco Fair and continue to show cows at the local and state fairs. They preserved the farm last December.

Wayne and Vera Hottenstein own 26 acres along State Road in East Hempfield Township. The property is part of the original Hottenstein homestead which has been in the family for over 200 years. They learned about preservation from their attorney and from fellow easement donor and friend, Daniel Rohrer. There are now four farms preserved in East Hempfield, west of East Petersburg Borough.

Henry and Verna Stoltzfus decided to preserve a 62 acre dairy farm in East Donegal Township along Musser Road after reading an article about preservation in the Lancaster New Era. They drove across the county to New Holland to visit with the farmer featured in the article, and decided they were interested in doing the same. Henry is a founder of the agri-business Lancaster Level Flow. He and Verna have rented the farm for years to the same family; in fact, the second generation of that family is now farming the land.

Mrs. Martha Mayer decided to preserve her 100 acre farm after learning that one of her neighbors, Victor Engle, did the same. The farm was purchased by her parents in 1904, about the time Martha was born. It is farmed by a neighbor, Russell Swarr, who is also preserving his farm. It consists of 98 acres of tillable land along Garfield Road in Rapho Township.

Mrs. Paulyne Long and Mrs. Janet Eshelman preserved their father's farm in 1993 and are now preserving 15 acres of meadow and wetland as open space and a private nature preserve. This quiet oasis is sandwiched between their family farm, now owned by an Amish neighbor, and another preserved farm owned by David Byers. The wetland, which con-



The new officers of the Lancaster County Farmland Trust. From left, seated, John Schwartz, president, and Tom Stouffer, executive director. Standing, Terry Scheetz, secretary, Stephen Kraybill, vice president, and Philip Kimmel, treasurer.

tains headwaters of the Conowingo Creek, has been studied this fall by a senior biology class at Millersville University led by Dr. Guy Stuebeck, and it has been found to be in excellent condition.

Mrs. Ruth E. Stoltzfus was the gracious hostess of 300 of the Trust's members at our annual picnic in September. Her farm, known as "Greystone Manor", is situated along Oregon Pike in Manheim and Warwick townships. Mrs. Stoltzfus and the Trust thrilled the crowd with the announcement that 325 acres of the farm will be preserved in a joint preservation project among the Trust, the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board, and Manheim Township and Warwick Township officials. This public-private partnership of the Trust, as a non-profit organization, county agency and two municipalities is one of the most complex projects the Trust has been involved in to date. We are all very pleased that

the efforts to preserve this significant farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Stoltzfus The Old Order Amish family is preserving a scenic 55 acre dairy farm will be the first preserved in Bart Township.

Mr. and Mrs. Esh operate a dairy farm near the village of Monterey, south of Leola. This Old Order Amish family learned about preservation from their neighbor. They preserved 63 acres in Upper Leacock and 53 acres in Colerain Township in October.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller also farm near the village of Monterey in Upper Leacock Township. They are preserving a 55 acre dairy farm.

Mr. John K. Stoltzfus is preserving a 67 acre dairy farm along Newport Road in Leacock Township, 2 miles northwest of the village of Intercourse.

Rod W. Harnish is one of the earliest supporters of Lancaster Farmland Trust and one of the first easement donors, having pro-

ected a property in southern Mar-tic Township situated adjacent to the Tucquan Nature Preserve. As a successful businessman who builds communication towers, he has reinvested his profits into land, and he is now preserving a second farm he purchased adjacent to the first along Pinnacle Road.

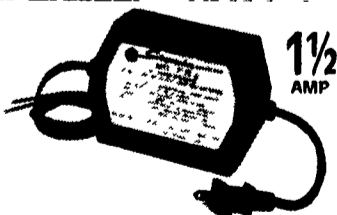
H. Eugene and Karen L. Garber are preserving a fourth property this year along Maytown Road in East Donegal Township.

The bare land will be joined with another farm, his 45 acre preserved farm, to make one 84 acre preserved farm. Significantly, all of the other adjacent landowners have preserved their farms, so the preservation of this 39 acres fills in the last piece of a large preservation puzzle, further securing East Donegal farmers as leaders in the county's (and the nation's) preservation efforts. This is the 52nd farm to be preserved in that township.

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