



ULSTER CURRENT

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Please Note:

- ◆ **Volunteer Recognition**, Thursday, April 28, 2005, 7 pm at the Kingston Heritage Area Visitor's Center, 20 Broadway, Kingston. Narrated Trolley Bus tour departs @ 7:30 pm
- ◆ **7th Annual 4-H Captain & Crew Golf Classic**, Thursday, May 19, 2005, Apple Greens Golf Course, Clintondale, NY
- ◆ **Garden Day 2005, The Secrets to Gardening Success**, Saturday, April 30, 2005, 8:30-3:30 pm, SUNY Ulster, Stone Ridge Campus

MEETING A CHALLENGE

Members, Friends & Colleagues:

The opening of the Horticulture Hotline and diagnostic lab, is a sure sign that spring is just around the corner. Changes in our surroundings brought about as the snow recedes and ice melts are always welcome; however, over the past few months our Association has experienced some significant changes that are not so warmly embraced.

Faced with the possibility of a 25% tax increase to county tax payers, the Ulster County Legislature made some very difficult decisions when adopting their 2005 budget. Their decisions, while sparing the jobs of county employees, led to a \$34,000 (7.8%) cut in funding for our Association. As a result, two full-time positions were cut and one full-time job was changed to half-time.

We have faced funding challenges before. Over my 15 year tenure, this Association has been level funded nine times with small increases (2 & 3%) just twice in the last six years. Since Extension is designed by federal statute to be funded through a partnership between the federal, state and county governments a cut in county dollars effects our appropriation on a state and federal level as well.

We have made huge strides in attracting support from sources outside of the



government through grants and reimbursable programs; however, our ability to meet these challenges is not limitless. Adequate core funding from governmental partners is essential for us to continue to help our communities preserve agriculture, protect open space and the environment; to help children, youth and families develop the skills and experiences they need; and to assist those with limited incomes, including the recently unemployed, through financial and nutrition education programs.

We hope to get through this current financial crisis without losing any more staff or needing to cut programming.

We look to you for help as our professional, dedicated, hardworking staff continues to deliver of-the-moment programming to our constituencies in the most fiscally responsible, efficient manner possible. Become an ambassador for

what you think about all we do here and how it affects you. With the decrease in positions and program support, we're encouraging volunteers to help us answer phones and get mailings out. Printing costs have put a real burden on the organization's finances. If you can receive mailings and program information by email, let us know. Use our website: www.cce.cornell.edu/ulster - many of our programs have printable registrations available. Keep in touch and let us know your thoughts on "making the best better" to borrow a phrase from our 4-H Youth Development program. Feel free to contact myself, any of our staff or any Board and Program Committee volunteer listed on the second page of this publication.

Sincerely,

Lydia M. Reidy

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Executive Director

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A Fond Farewell To June Strand



Teaching Ag In Kingston's Classrooms

Reaching an expanded and more diverse audience has long been a goal of our 4-H programming, and thanks in part to a 21st Century Grant we've been able to accomplish this.

In fact, during the summer of 2004 our 4-H program reached new audiences when eight 4-H youth used their knowledge of poultry to enrich other youth's lives, and make a difference in their community, by teaching Poultry Science to children attending the Kingston City School District TOPS Program.

With the assistance of Extension educators, 4-H parents and leaders, the 148 at-risk youth participating in the program learned about Poultry Science and animal care from the 4-H youth. 74% of youth in the two elementary schools qualify for free or reduced lunch and 57% of the students participating in the summer program were minorities.

The opportunity to interact and learn from positive 4-H youth role models drastically improved classroom

behavior and increased student desire to learn. At the end of the summer, all of the students that participated in the program were able to properly identify different types of poultry, understand why poultry is raised and recognize its importance as an agricultural product. Through our program children that live in an urban community are receiving agricultural experience firsthand and learning about the importance of agriculture in each of our lives.

Little Ones' Changes Hands



Growing The Master Gardener Program



Cornell University
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Ulster County

The Master Gardener Program is sprouting in new directions with a crop of new volunteers and a new program coordinator as well!

In October, Dona MacWilliams, an educator with vast amounts of environmental and volunteer management experience, took over the helm assuming responsibility for all aspects of a program that brings residents of Ulster County ecologically sound, science-based practices to use in their home gardening projects.

Dona comes to Extension by way of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater where she spent thirty years working with volunteers coordinating aspects of every event, fundraiser and project thereby helping Clearwater gain its nation wide recognition.

She has twice served on Clearwater's Board of Directors, and was involved in the fight to make GE responsible for cleaning up the PCB's in the Hudson

River. Her horticulture background comes from working one-on-one with landscapers and homeowners in high-end nurseries, and large tree farms serving both the commercial and residential communities.

"I am interested in getting involved in hands-on community projects that will benefit the overall quality of life in those communities," says Dona.

With the assistance of over 40 Master Gardener volunteers, the program she oversees provides gardening, landscaping & pest management advice via the Horticulture Hotline & diagnostic ser-



Class of 2005 Master Gardeners

vices; educational tours, workshops & trainings; and initiates special planting and demonstration projects in communities throughout Ulster County. There is no doubt that under the direction of Dona's talents and skills the program will continue to sprout and grow in communities throughout the county. For more information about the Master Gardener Program, please call 340-3478.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM FOR AG PRODUCERS

Over the past few years, residential development and the number of farms and acreage cultivated in Ulster County have increased. While most people may find this statistic contradictory, Jake Wedemeyer of Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation Service and Hort Educator Teresa Rusinek see these facts as the rationale behind an Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program for Ulster County.

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary incentive-based program that helps farmers operate environmentally sound and economically viable businesses. The program helps farmers address sources of water pollution

originating from agricultural activities by assessing environmental concerns associated with their farming operations and implementing practices to address those concerns; documenting current stewardship; and developing management plans in compliance with state and federal environmental regulations. AEM programs also help farmers to manage manure and fertilizer nutrients; manage barnyard run-off and process wastewater; conserve soil; and protect drinking water. Active, public en-



agement in the program may also improve neighbor and community relations, and heighten community awareness of the multiple benefits of agriculture. To find out more about this program or for information about how a routine farm practice such as the establishment of a waterway diversion or the installation of an irrigation system or deer fencing may fall within the AEM program please call Jake Wedemeyer, UC Soil & Water Conservation, 691-7162 or email Teresa Rusinek: tr28@cornell.edu.

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Mission Statement

The Cornell Cooperative Extension system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.



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web! www.cce.cornell.edu/ulster

*Building Strong
and Vibrant New York
Communities*

*To receive this newsletter via e-mail, please contact Lisa Berger,
Editor, at lp41@cornell.edu*

Managing

LITTLE ONES' CHANGES HANDS

SAYING GOOD-BYE

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