

New Jersey News

Battleview Orchards, Freehold, NJ

First Generation: In 1908, Charles R. and Carrie Applegate purchased 130 acres to be used as a general farm, deeded as Battleview Farm. In 1928, Charles' son, Leslie, becomes the first National President of the Future Farmers of America (currently the National FFA Organization).

Second Generation: 1922, Charles purchased an

orchard in Colts Neck for his daughter, Ruth, and her husband, John Barclay, to farm (Eastmont Orchards/Delicious Orchards). Charles' sons, Leslie and C. Richard, take over the home farm after their father passed in 1929, growing 500 acres of apples in the Wemrock Road area and selling mostly through the wholesale



Jess, Scott, Lisa, Kyle, and Mitch Applegate (left to right in photo), owners of Battleview Orchards in Freehold, were honored with the Century Farm Award presented by Rob Swanekamp (right) President of the NJ Agricultural Society at the NJAS Annual Gala and Fundraiser on March 11, 2017. The fourth and fifth generation of the Applegate Family are fruit and peach growers, and direct marketers, and have been continuously farming on their land for 108 years. Photo Credit Jerry Frecon.

market. In 1945, the brothers divided the farm, with Leslie operating Battleview Orchards and C. Richard operating Wemrock Orchards. In 1964, retailing began in the barn that dates back to the Revolutionary War, which still stands on Wemrock Road. In 1965, 100 acres were condemned and purchased by the State of New Jersey under the Green Acres program and is now part of the Monmouth Battlefield State Park.

Third Generation: In 1965, Leslie decides to retire and sell his remaining acreage and cold storage to his son, Norman and his wife, Betty Lou. Battleview Orchards retail market opens on Wemrock Road, down the street from the old barn. The retail market replaces an old cider mill and packing house operation. The new retail location includes state of the art packing and processing equipment. In 1970, Norman purchases additional acreage on Kinney Road expanding the operation to include peaches, strawberries, blueberries, sour cherries, and pumpkins. In 1972, Battleview Orchards becomes one of the first farms in NJ to offer “Pick Your Own” fruit. The “Pick Your Own” Membership card is created to keep in touch with the picking customers. In 1987, Norman sells his farmland on Kinney Road and exits the wholesale market to concentrate his efforts on the growing retail and “Pick Your Own”. Betty Lou retires from the business and leaves Norman and their son, Scott, to run the business. In 1989, Scott marries Lisa, who joins the business in 1990. Norman divides his time between NJ and his newly planted orchard in Vermont.

In 1991, the school tour program is reintroduced by Lisa.

Fourth Generation: In 1995, Norman sells the business to Lisa and Scott, and devotes all of his time to his Vermont orchards. (He has since fully retired and lives with Betty Lou in Georgia. The retail market is doubled in size, expanding the produce department and installing a larger bakery area and donut area. In 2002 – Scott re-introduces strawberries to the crops grown at Battleview. Strawberries are now grown on plastic beds and the strawberry plants are planted every year in September. In 2003, the roof collapses due to heavy snow causing total demolition of the original building. The retail market is rebuilt within five months. In 2006, the farm introduces their own grown sweet corn. It was a tremendous success and is now a part of the crops grown. In 2011, the farm introduced their own crop of Jersey tomatoes which is now a staple crop at Battleview.

Scott and Lisa and their children, represent the 4th and 5th generation. Their oldest son, Kyle, graduated from West Virginia University in 2015 and has come back to work full-time at the farm. Their son, Mitch, is a junior at Penn State studying Mechanical Engineering. Their daughter, Jess, is a junior in high school and works part time in the business. The Applegate Family has farmed on this site, in Monmouth County, since the farm was founded in 1908. Scott is the president of the NJ Apple Council and Lisa is an active member on the Customer Service Council of Farm Credit East.

Ruth M. Best of Best's Fruit Farm Passes

Ruth M. Best, 79 of Hackettstown, NJ passed away at her home on Sunday, January 15, 2017 surrounded by her loving family. Ruth spent most of her life taking care and looking after other people who needed help. She will be missed. Born in Lancaster, PA, Ruth was the daughter of the late Frederick & Emilie Schwanda Walters. Ruth has been a lifelong resident of the Hackettstown area and with her family owned and operated Best's Fruit Farm and Market in Independence Twp. Previously; Mrs. Best served on the Independence Twp. Board of Adjustments and the Central School P.T.A.. She is survived by her loving husband, Robert Best, Sr., One son, Robert (Bobby) Best, Jr. and one daughter, Kim Best. Three beloved Grandchildren, Heather, Justin and Rachael and was survived by six Great Grandchildren. Interment will be at the Stanhope Union Cemetery, Stanhope, NJ. Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.cochranfuneral.com. Donations may be made to the charity of ones choice.

Peter Melick, 2017 New Jersey State Horticultural Society Outstanding Fruit Grower

Win Cowgill

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Peter Melick, was presented the New Jersey State Horticultural Societies Outstanding Fruit Grower's Award at the 72th North Jersey Fruit Meeting, held in Flemington NJ on March 1, 2017.

Peter Melick is a Hunterdon County Fruit Grower, who operates Melick Town Farm with his family. Peter is partners with his brother John and sister Melisa in Melick's Town Farm. Of course parents George and Norma are still looking over their shoulders.

Their operation consists of pick-your-own in two locations, a cider mill, 3 retail markets, multiple tailgate/farmers markets and agritourism activities with 125 acres of orchard-35 acres of peaches and 90 acres of apples as well as cherries and Asian Pears. They farm a total of 200 acres of mixed vegetables, small fruit and tree fruit.

In addition they are know for their sweet cider production, currently over 100,000 gallons a year are produced.

Most recently they have expanded a Hard Cider Business obtaining a NJ Farm Winery Lisence. New

and growing. Their target markets are wholesale to local bars and restaurants, liquor stores as well as retail through their multiple outlets.

Peter Melick received a Bachelor of Science degree from Albright College with a double major in Business Management and in Political Science. He was a graduate of the first class of the New Jersey Agricultural Leadership Development Program. He has been a long-term

member of the NJ State Horticultural Society and served as President for two years in the 1990s. Peter has been a leader in his community, having served as Chief of the Oldwick Fire Company for 6 years. He also is a past president of the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture. Peter was a long term appointee to the Hunterdon County Agricultural Development Board and served as its



Peter Melick, center, recieved the NJ State Horticulture Societies Outstanding Fruit Grower award at the North Jersey Fruit meeting on March 1, 2017. The award was presented by NJSHS President Dale Davis IV (left) and Greg Donladson (right), NJSHS business manager. Photo credit: Jerry Frecon.

chair. Peter has been a long term member of the Hunterdon County Board of Agricultural.

Peter has a long term monthly column he writes in the Gardner News publication.



Myron, Darlene, Pam, and John Hurff received the NJ Peach Promotion Council Tony Russo Farm Marketing Award from the New Jersey Agricultural Society. The award was presented at NJ Agricultural Convention in Atlantic City. John and Pam Hurff, owners of Wm Schober Orchards in Monroeville, were recognized for their unique and innovative marketing programs to consumers and special programs for veterans. Photo credit: Jerry Frecon.





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