



Educational Farm & Nature Preserve

Farm Connection

by
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RADAR IMAGINING AT STRATFORD'S HISTORIC CEMETERY

The 200-year old cemetery at Stratford Ecological Center on Liberty Road made front page news in the Delaware Gazette on August 24 and 31. Stratford volunteer John Tetz invited reporter Brandon Klein to visit the site, located on top of a secluded wooded hillside near the Sugar Shack, to observe the process of locating the burials and boundaries using technology. He did a great job sharing the project with the local community.

John and his team have been researching and cleaning up the neglected cemetery for the past three years. A “peep” underground would provide much needed information. Stratford has a vested interest in the cemetery, and the nearby community of Stratford. Stratford’s co-founder Louise Warner’s great great grandfather, Judge Hosea Williams, operated a paper mill on land purchased from Colonel Forrest Meeker in 1838. Colonel Meeker was the second person to own the land, and a prominent figure in the War of 1812. Judge Williams sold the land, only to have it return to the family in 1953, when Louise’s father Galen Oman purchased 236 acres from the Garth family of Stratford.

Four technologies were used to survey the site, by Dr. Jarrod Burks of Ohio Valley Archaeology Incorporated. A laser transit for mapping existing headstones, a magnetometer and ground penetrating radar to look underground for evidence of graves, and a drone for 3D mapping the surface. Still and video pictures were taken during the process. Dr. Burks plans to share his findings and recommendations at an open evening meeting at Stratford. The late September date is yet to be determined. Then the work will begin to find and reset buried stones, erect markers, fence, and write the story of the cemetery. Folks interested in joining in this work would be most welcome.

Bob Harter and his crew of invasive plant removers were pleased to share the results of their work over the last couple of years with The Ohio Invasive Plant Coalition on September 8. The Coalition was not only impressed with the amount of work completed, but with the amount of energy emanating from those involved with the project. Not many people want to spend time on their hands and knees in muddy conditions pulling out stubborn plants! The plants were introduced from the 1750’s, mostly from central Eurasia, to use in horticulture. They flourished and seeded outside their boundaries, and took over from the more desirable natives species. The worst culprits are the bush honeysuckle, barberry, privet, winged burning bush, multiflora rose and garlic mustard. Once an area is cleared, trees and bushes that provide food and shelter for wildlife are planted to block out the sunlight, and prevent regrowth.

Paula Ziebarth, the Ohio Bluebird Society Delaware County Area Contact recently submitted her 2016 Stratford Bird Trail Report. Bluebirds are not the only bird monitored at Stratford. In fact, the 11 bluebirds are only a small proportion of the various young fledged in 2016. The Purple Martins did particularly well, increasing from 77 fledged in 2015, to 139 this year, with a similar number of eggs. The tree swallow egg numbers remained constant, with 96 fledged in 2015, and 104 this year. The weather, and the availability of food, plays a big part in how many young survive. In lean years the adult's survival instinct kicks in, and they feed themselves first. The importance of these birds cannot be overstated, as they provide natural insect control in our fields, orchard and gardens.

Lightning, our black llama, has been absent from the farm for the past month. He became infected with the larva of meningeal worm. The larva migrates through the spinal cord and causes neurological problems, including lameness, paralysis, and blindness. The usual host is the white-tailed deer, which is not affected. Lightning was very sick and his previous owner, Barb Baker, took him home to nurse back to health but she had to send him to the OSU Veterinary Clinic. It is a relief to share he responded to the treatment, and will soon be returning to Stratford.

The next big event at Stratford is the annual 5K Run/Walk and Harvest Fair on Saturday, September 24. The Run/Walk registration is at 8:00 am. and sets off at 9:00 am. The Fair runs from 10 am. to 4 pm. Details are on our website. Both are great fun for individuals and families. We hope you will come out and experience this extra special day on the farm.

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