

Fans return for annual horse show, country fair

It's a Labor Day weekend tradition for many in Chester County

By **MARCELLA PEYRÉ-FERRY**
Special to the Local News

WEST VINCENT — With one day of fun finished, the 65th annual Ludwig's Corner Horse Show and Country Fair promised more family activities and entertainment today and Tuesday.

The three-day event is a Labor Day weekend tradition for many

Chester County residents.

"We always come here every year," said Cindy Simmons of Cochranville,

who watched her daughter ride in the show. "We love it. This is the top-notch riders of Chester County."

While many volunteers and visitors have a long history with the event, there are always lots of newcomers, too. Young families in particular are drawn to the country fair, with its rows of inflatable rides, a big tent filled with children's games and special entertainment.

"Our kids love horses and dogs, so it's a way to get our

fill of both," said Cathy Wetzel of Downingtown, who attended Saturday with her husband, Jim, and daughters, Noelle and Abbey. "They're having a great time. There's lots of things to do. I used to horseback ride, so it's nice for me, too."

Saturday's demonstrations included Kiley Hellhake and her Chincoteague pony that performs

tricks and paints and pictures. Hellhake said she became involved because "they were looking for something for the kids tent." A former member of the Pickering Hunt Pony Club, Hellhake, 24, of Downingtown, once rode in the Ludwig's Corner Horse Show.

On the list of special attractions for today is a carriage-driving exhibition. And the Spring Hollow Golf Club will host a Birdie Ball.

On Monday, an antique car show will run beside the horse show, and the Dog Training Club of Chester County will make an appear-

ance.

Highlights in the horse show ring include the lady's sidesaddle class, family class, and hunt teams today.

For Labor Day, the horses will take on higher obstacles in the \$7,500 jumper classic.

The appeal of Ludwig's Corner goes beyond the immediate area. The Stein family drove from Allentown on Saturday for a first visit to Saturday's Corner.

"We came to see the horses and dogs," said Kimberly Stein, who arrived with her husband and two small children. "They love animals, and it was a nice drive."

Riding in the horse show is one of the main attractions for local equestrians, who also contribute time to keep the event running smoothly.

On Monday, young volunteers such as Katie Skog and Krissy Guthrie from Glenmoore were working in the parking lot and food booths before returning today with their horses to compete.

"I've been a volunteer seven or eight years," Guuthrie said. "The whole horse show runs on volunteers. We ride in the show, so we volunteer. It's al-

MORE ONLINE

For more information on Ludwig's Corner Horse Show and Country Fair, visit www.ludwigshorse-show.org.



Photo by Marcella Peyre-Ferry

Performing pony Minnow gives Kyle Hellhake of Downingtown a kiss Saturday at the 65th annual Ludwig's Corner Horse Show and Country Fair.

ways fun, too. All your friends are here. You get to socialize, and this is a good view of the show ring."

Some of the volunteers helping with the event are also local business owners who give their time to the community.

Geraldine Jacobs and her husband, Allen Barol, were working at the coffee stand. The event is a good business connection for Jacobs, who does Equine Massage.

"I love horses. To me any time I'm around horses is fun," Jacobs said.

Local grounds such as the

Pickering Hunt Pony Club and the Cross Roads Church help by providing volunteers, but keeping new volunteers coming in is important to the event, which relies on them to make the weekend possible.

"There's a good group of core people who come back every year," volunteer coordinator Lynne Cooksey said.

Daniel Robinson lives within sight of the show grounds and has been a volunteer since 1997. Every year he has worked taking money at the entrance to the parking lot but has never gone in to watch the horse

show.

"This is volunteering," he said cheerfully.

Proceeds from the event help preserve open space and the 33-acre show grounds.

On a similar theme, the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust had a tent with information available to visitors about preservation efforts in the area.

The Horse Show and Country Fair is near the intersection of routes 401 and 100. The event runs 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Labor Day, rain or shine.