



Friends of Salt Springs Park

July 2010

www.friendsofsaltspringspark.org

570-967-7275

Summer Cruisin'

Salt Springs is becoming a popular destination for regional motor-club members. This **Saturday, July 17**, during the noon hour, members of the Binghamton chapter of the Southern Tier Miata Club (Syracuse) are coming for a picnic. Their cars will be parked for display near the footbridge. Bring your own picnic lunch and come check them out.

Miatas, made by Mazda, are small, two-seat runabouts. They weigh less than 2,500 pounds, and their engines are smaller than some motorcycles — making them quite fuel efficient!

Fabulous Fourth

Nearly 200 people began their Fourth of July holiday at Salt Springs Saturday evening, July 3. The Mountain Aire Brass Quintet provided an hour of toe-tapping marches, polkas, and patriotic music. They ended with a medley of the Armed Forces theme songs, during which the veterans in the audience were given a special thanks.



"Buy Local"

Generations of Wheatons fed their families off the land at Salt Springs. The first generation would not understand the following excerpt. Fossil fuel? Synthetic pesticides? Some current farming practices are inefficient and environmentally harmful?

Matt Purdy, our Environmental Education Coordinator, has a weekly spot on the Montrose radio station, WPEL (96.5 FM), every Monday at 12:20 pm. Yesterday's theme was "buy local." He included the following excerpt, written by Steven Hopp in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (co-written with Barbara and Camille Kingsolver in 2007), titled "Oily Food."

While listening to the program, I couldn't help but imagine the range of reactions the various generations of Wheatons might have had, sitting around a radio in their kitchen at Salt Springs. One thing I think they'd agree on, though, is that the best food you can eat comes from your local farms.

Americans put almost as much fossil fuel into our refrigerators as our cars. We're consuming about 400 gallons of oil a year per citizen — about 17% of our nation's energy use — for agriculture, a close second to our vehicular use. Tractors, combines, harvesters, irrigation, sprayers, tillers, balers, and other equipment all use petroleum. Even bigger gas guzzlers on the farm are not the machines, but so-called inputs. Synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides use oil and natural gas as their starting materials, and in their manufacturing. More than a quarter of all farming energy goes into synthetic fertilizers.

But getting the crop from seed to harvest takes only one fifth of the total oil used for our food. The lion's share is consumed during the trip from the farm to your plate. Each food item in a typical U.S. meal has traveled an average of 1500 miles. In addition to direct transport, other fuel-thirsty steps include processing (drying, milling, cutting, sorting, baking), packaging, warehousing and refrigeration. Energy calories consumed by production, packaging and shipping far outweigh the energy calories we receive from the food.

A quick way to improve food-related fuel economy would be to buy a quart of motor oil and drink it. More palatable options are available. If every U.S. citizen ate just one meal a week (any meal) composed of locally and organically raised meats and produce, we would reduce our country's oil consumption by over 1.1 million barrels of oil every week. That's not gallons, but barrels. Small changes in buying habits can make big differences. Becoming a less energy-dependent nation may just need to start with a good breakfast.

Beginning next month, Matt will be a regular contributor to our newsletters.