Happy New Year! I hope everyone is looking forward to the exciting 4-H events planned for the coming year.

Often at the beginning of a new year, we set goals for things we would like to see happen in the coming year. Do you realize you are half way there? You already set your 4-H goals back in the fall when you received your project record books. Now all you have to do is continue to track your progress throughout the year. Why not try bringing your record book along with you while you are on a car ride and fill it out while you travel, or enter a few lines while waiting your turn at something during your club meeting. If you take a few minutes consistently, it won’t creep up on you come fair time. All the best in meeting this goal and any others you have set for yourself in the new year.

Join us for a Mural Project

Are you looking for an opportunity to be creative? Then come to a design meeting about how best to represent the Mercer County 4-H Program in paint! That's right; a local mural artist has agreed to work with 4-H staff, members and volunteers to draft a fun, all-inclusive depiction of what Cooperative Extension is all about. Our building will be the canvas! If you are interested, please respond by January 31st to be included on the planning list. Once you have expressed interest, look for e-mails with further information.

Exploring Leadership with NJ 4-H - On-line Learning Experience

Ten 4-H teens from two Mercer County clubs, Science 4-Communities and The Clever Clovers, participated in an on-line pilot program to learn more about leadership. Members were able to discuss their ideas about leadership with fellow 4-Hers and develop personal leadership goals. Thank you Mercer County 4-Hers for your time and your feedback!

As always, 4-H members can be counted on to “Make the Best Better”
Achievement Night 2011

A year of 4-H fun and learning was celebrated at Achievement Night on November 4, 2011. Volunteer leaders recognized their club members with pins and certificates as well as inspiring words and praise. Leaders were honored by 4-H staff and club members alike because ... without you, the club program would not exist!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATED SUPPORT!

This year at Achievement Night, three members were selected to win prizes for their efforts in preparing their Club Project Record Books. One winner from each of three grade categories was chosen, grades K-5, 6-8 and 9-13.

Members of the Clever Clovers Club take a break from their Community Service event which was held at the Cherry Grove Farm in Lawrenceville. The club brought their famed “Goat Cart” and provided rides for those who attended the open house event at the farm.

Proceeds from the Goat Cart rides were donated by the club to “Farmers Against Hunger.” This organization has been helping farmers donate surplus produce to soup kitchens, food pantries and those in need for over ten years!
Princeton Agricultural Association Leadership Award

Alex Byrnes, a member of The Clever Clovers and The Rusty Bolts Tractor Restoration 4-H clubs, received an award for leadership skills and community involvement from the Princeton Agricultural Association. The tribute and a savings bond were presented to Alex at a dinner on December 8, 2011. Alex had the following to say about the evening, “The event at the Princeton Agricultural Society was a great time and I had a lot of fun. The dinner that we had was nice, and talking with our hosts was a good experience as everyone was very friendly. It was truly an honor to be one of the 4-H members winning this award.”

CONGRATULATIONS ALEX!

Public Presentation Workshop

To start off the new year, a Public Presentation workshop was held following the Clever Clovers business meeting. New club members had the opportunity to watch as Clever Clovers Officers conducted the monthly meeting. Three members did their club level public presentation at the meeting. Officer Roles and Meeting order, as well as Parliamentary Procedure were also reviewed. Thank you to Clever Clover leaders and members for hosting this Mercer County Club Program event!

As a fun challenge, 4-Hers arrange themselves in birthday order, without talking!

New members look on as Lizzie Elliott does her public presentation.
The Shades of Pemberley 4-H Club not only dances together every month, but we have been engaged in a number of community service activities.

This fall we took a bit of time to help out with folding “bird bags” for Hannah Suthers’ bird-banding station near Hopewell (http://hopewell-birds.freehostia.com/index.html). At the station wild birds are caught in almost invisible “mist nets.” The birds are carefully removed from the nets by trained “banders” and placed in soft cloth bags to be carried to the banding table. There a small metal band is placed on the bird’s leg, and the bird is weighed and measured before being released. Detailed records are kept which are used to track migration and habitat change. Each bird gets its own freshly laundered bag, so every week, especially during migration season when there are LOTS of birds traveling through, there is a lot of washing, drying, and especially sorting and folding to be done.

We did a second bird related project, putting together a nesting box for Wood Ducks, ducks which actually nest up in hollow trees or in nesting boxes provided for them by helpful humans. The finished nesting box was mounted on a tree in The Drexel Woods which is overseen by The Lawrence Nature Center (http://lawrencenaturecenter.net/)

By: Lindsay Lowry

Members of the Clever Clovers Club and the Boltin’ Colts Club shared a community service opportunity ringing the bell for the Salvation Army. Gathering at a local grocery store, they took turns covering an eight hour shift.

Thanks for the great work Mercer County 4-Hers!
The **Hot Shots** hosted an event with the Ocean County Bow Benders. The clubs enjoyed making new friends and learning from each other. Everyone enjoyed this Halloween-themed event during which members got to shoot pumpkins using archery bows and eventually with shotguns.

By: Emily Dallas

**BEFORE** and **AFTER**

Members of the **Clever Clovers Club** gathered at the Von Thun farm on October 31st to pick or “glean” the last of the fall vegetables from the field. The club members turned this job into a community service event as they donated the food to “Farmers Against Hunger.”

**Way to go Clever Clovers!**
4-Leaf Clover Club members show off their talent and community spirit making ornaments to give to local nursing homes. They also serve the community by wrapping plastic ware for TASK (Trenton Area Soup Kitchen) donations!

The Backyard Farmer Club emphasizes that anyone can be a farmer, whether you live in an apartment or on 100 acres! Learn to be stewards of soil, water, animals and plants in a fun and interesting way.

Acting Club President, Maggie Emley brings the first meeting of the Backyard Farmer’s Club to order. The new club meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at the Groveville Fire House in Hamilton from 6-8 pm.

Come on out and join the fun!
NEW CLUBS

“Treasuring the Trash” leader and founding member discuss all that 4-H has to offer during a local community event.

Following the event, the club quickly organized and have already had their first planning meeting!

If you are interested in helping the environment as well as learning about and teaching the importance of composting, this club is for you!

Look for details about club location, dates and meeting times coming soon. If you have questions, please call the 4-H office.

The 4-H Cooking Club got off to a yummy start last month, just in time to enjoy some holiday treats! The club uses the new kitchen at the Mercer County Extension Building on the second Wednesday of each month from 6:30 - 8:00 pm. The club is accepting members in 2nd - 7th grade.

Come check it out!

Reading the recipe is the first step.

Cooking Club leaders assist members as they whip up something tasty!
Website Calendar Reminder

Please visit our websites for more information on upcoming events.

mercer.njaes.rutgers.edu & nj4h.rutgers.edu

When searching the calendar, be sure to make selections for both county and statewide pages. Most animal related events are listed on the statewide calendar.

Submissions for the 4-H Forum Newsletter

Please forward articles that you would like included in the Club Updates section of the newsletter. You may e-mail submissions to me at: bejgrowicz@njaes.rutgers.edu or call me at the office number given above.

Upcoming Events

State 4-H Animal Event - “Safe & Sound” ~ Jan. 22 ~ Burlington Cty Special Srvs School District

Teen Winter Camp ~ Jan. 27 - 29 ~ Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp ~ 8th grade & up

SJTC (South Jersey Teen Conference) ~ March 2 - 4 ~ Swedesboro, NJ ~ 8th grade & up

NJ Junior Breeder Livestock Symposium ~ March 31 ~ Campus Farm

State 4-H Horse Bowl ~ February 25 ~ Monmouth County AG Building

Rutgers Day ~ April 28 ~ Rutgers Campus Wide Event ~ check out the website for details: rutgersday.rutgers.edu.

4-H Staff

Chad Ripberger, County 4-H Agent
Miss Harmon, Program Associate
LouAnn Mastromarino, Program Assistant

Sharon Gore, Program Associate
Altaira Bejgrowicz, Program Assistant
Adele Dinges, Secretary