

# MINER MATTERS

FALL 2009

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Oct. 1 marked the start of the 2009-10 NHL hockey season! Go Habs Go!**
- **In June, Steve Kramer and Ralph LaBombard both marked 15 years at Miner Institute. Congrats, Steve and Ralph!**
- **In December, Kelly Snide will celebrate his 15th anniversary. Congrats, Kelly!**
- **April marked the 5-year anniversary for Heather Dann; June marked 5 years for Neil LaCount. Congratulations!**

## FALL IS IN THE AIR

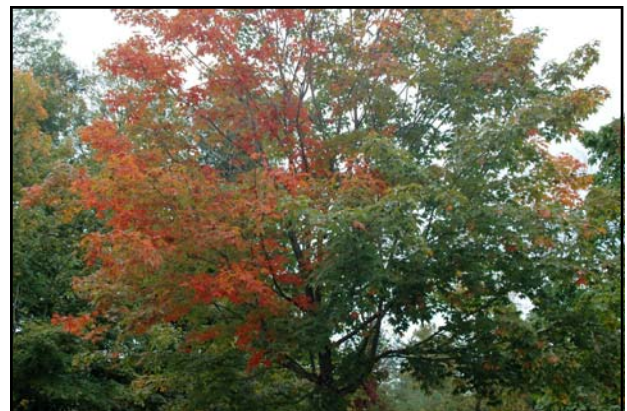
Crisp (ok downright cold) mornings, red leaves along Ridge Road, and students scurrying toward classes leave little doubt that fall is here at Miner.

Ironically, just as nature is beginning to wind down for the dead winter months, Miner gears up into overdrive every fall. Most obviously there are the AESP students around the Farm and Flat Rock and if you walk by the Library quietly, you may even catch a glimpse of the elusive studious student!

Research continues unabated, and this fall the group is busier than usual as humans and cows learn how to use newly installed Calan doors in the dry cow barn.

The dairy cows in the Miner herd continue to be overachievers — attaining nearly 31,000 pounds of milk production.

Clearly, behind every successful herd is an overachieving dairy crew. Following a whirlwind summer of research and educational activities, the equine folks can breathe a sigh of relief. Dairy Day 2009 is being planned as well as other fall meetings, and so the winter meeting season is fairly underway.



**ABOVE:** The leaves are taking on new shades in front of Shadow Lawn. **BELOW:** Some leaves have already fallen off the trees, signaling that winter will soon be here.



As you all bustle about making the Institute the tremendously successful place it is, be sure to slow down for a moment or two to enjoy the beautiful grounds and buildings we are so lucky to have at Miner.

— Rick Grant



**THE SKY'S THE LIMIT**

The Miner Institute website has undergone numerous changes over the past couple of months. I have also been poking around the farm with my camera taking photos.

Although the tour of the manure lagoon, the corn fields, horse pastures, and dry cow barn were all fascinating, I would be lying if I said that the photo I took of the dairy barn was the least exciting.

Because of the behemoth nature of the barn, it was

necessary to take the photo from an elevated height. I am a bit of a chicken, I must say, so climbing to the top of the horse barn or the maintenance building seemed like more than I could handle without severely injuring myself.

Steve Fessette kindly offered to give me a lift with the bucket truck. I gladly accepted. On a sunny Friday morning, with my camera in hand, I bravely walked over

to take my ride. I was greeted by a grinning Jared Ashline, who was going to be my guide. I felt a bit unsure, but figured it must be safe if I was getting paid to do it. The mission was successful, and actually a lot of fun.

I am grateful that Jared didn't kill me. Check out the



**View from the bucket:** To get a photograph of the dairy barn that includes the entire barn, I had to take a ride in the farm's bucket truck.

photo on our home page, [www.whminer.org](http://www.whminer.org).

— Rachel Dutil

**Feedback needed!**

[www.whminer.org](http://www.whminer.org)

- What do you like?
- What do you think should be changed? What are your ideas for additions?
- Email [dutil@whminer.com](mailto:dutil@whminer.com), call ext. 115, or drop by the Farm Office.

**HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST**



Wear a creative costume on Friday, Oct. 30 and cast a ballot for your favorite get-up in the lunchroom. May the best costume win!

**LEFT:** A look back at last year's contestants.

**FORMER MINER MORGANS COMPETE AT WALNUT HILL**

Three former Miner Institute Morgan horses — HD Speculator, HD Harkness, and HD Plumbrook — recently competed at the Walnut Hill Carriage Driving Competition in Pittsford, NY. The five-day event is hosted by the Pittsford Carriage Association. The competition is more than 30 years old and is touted as a “celebration of the art and sport of traditional driving.”

All three horses placed in several events — a true testament to the hard work and dedication of equine manager Karen Lassell in her early training and work with all the horses at Miner Institute. We congratulate Karen as well as Laurie Neubauer, who owns HD Speculator; Mary Chris Foxworthy, who owns HD Harkness; and Nancy Murphy, who owns HD Plumbrook.



HD Plumbrook at the Walnut Hill Driving Championship held Aug. 12 through 16 in Pittsford, NY.

## WELCOME 2009 AESP STUDENTS!

Late August saw the start of the 38th annual Applied Environmental Science Program at Miner Institute.

Senior environmental science majors from SUNY Plattsburgh are taking field courses including Agriculture and the Environment, Soil Science, Wildlife Ecology and Management, Forest Ecology and Management, and Water Quality Modeling. All of these courses take advantage of

the agricultural fields, forest lands, aquatic and human resources of Miner Institute to enhance learning and produce environmental scientists with real-world skills.

Carolyn Strauss, an on-campus student this semester at Miner, says that she “barely” feels like she’s in class. “We spend most of our time wading through the Saranac River to take water samples, hiking mountains

to look at soil pits, or visiting Lake Champlain to go birding. So far, everything has been great,” Strauss said.

All the best to the 2009 class!



Fall 2009 AESP students.

## IN SEARCH OF GOOD SIGNS

In an effort to make our Heritage Exhibit as great as possible, some Miner staff — Katie Ballard, Rachel Dutil, Amy Bedard, and Steve Fessette, along with Joe and Joan Burke recently took a field trip to the UVM Morgan Horse Farm in Waybridge, Vermont and Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, Vermont to see how these places handle visitors and how they deal with sign-

age around their facilities.

The trip was a bit long, but we were fortunate to be traveling with some delicious cookies and apples from the cafeteria.

We arrived back at our farm with a new appreciation for our exhibit and some good ideas about how to make it a bit more visible and less confusing to visitors.



Welcome sign at Shelburne Farms. We hope to create something similar for the Heritage Exhibit.

## THE ELUSIVE JAKE ASHLINE

Jake Ashline has been working at Miner Institute since 1998. Jake is a lifelong dairy farmer. He grew up on his family’s farm in Champlain, took it over, and farmed there until just before he started at Miner.

Although Jake is not *the crops dude*, he is the crops supervisor

here. Jake still lives in Champlain, where he enjoys spending time with his family — his wife Jenny, his children, Jake, Jen, Janine, and Jared. He has one granddaughter, Cassie, who fondly refers to him as G-pa.

Jake is a good natured guy, but can be a bit hard to track down at

times; when you find him, though, he will likely have a smile on his face.

A true North Countryman, Jake enjoys ice-cold Labatt Blue Light.



## STAFF MEETING OVERVIEW

In an effort to improve communication, a new format has been implemented for staff meetings to include all Institute staff. Here is a recap of the Sept. 30 meeting:

### Hunting:

- Employees with a valid hunting license can get a permit to hunt Miner property.
- Children of employees who have a valid hunting license are permitted to hunt with the employee, while they attend school.
- If the child does not have a hunting license, he or she may accompany the employee, but are not permitted to carry or shoot any firearms.
- Sign-in and Sign-out sheets are located at the Dairy Barn and in a black mailbox at the entrance to the Flat Rock. Sign in and out when you plan to hunt.
- Hunting is only permitted

after 4 p.m. on weekdays and anytime on weekends and holidays during hunting season.

- The general public must have a permit to use the property for any purpose. Only employees are permitted to hunt on the property.
- It is recommended that you wear blaze orange clothing if you are on the property during hunting hours.
- We have a zero tolerance policy for illegal hunting or failing to follow guidelines established for hunting at Miner Institute. At a minimum, your hunting privilege will be terminated.
- There is a hunting contest! See Kirk to join, get your hunting permit, or if you have any other hunting-related questions.

### Workplace Accidents/Injuries:

- Employee should notify su-

ervisor of any work-related injury, even if it seems minor.

- Supervisor must notify Kirk with the details of the incident within 48 hours so that our worker's compensation carrier can be informed of the injury and any appropriate medical expenses will be covered.

### Energy Conservation:

- The Institute spends more than \$355,000 per year in energy costs; this makes up 6 to 7 percent of the annual budget.
- Everyone should take an active role in reducing energy use and lowering costs.
- Used compact fluorescent light bulbs and batteries can be brought to Miner Center for proper disposal.

### Miscellaneous:

- Employees can obtain a

wood-cutting permit. The permit applies to downed trees only and is for the employees use only.

- Employees, who would like to use Miner Institute property or facilities outside of work should ask if a permit is necessary and/or if there are any special instructions that need to be followed.
- The facilities request form has been altered to include "after-hours coverage" to ensure that someone is available for late meetings in the case of an emergency.
- The employee Christmas party has been scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 19.
- Department budget requests will be sent in October. Employees should let their supervisor know of any possible items or repairs they feel are needed.

## AROUND THE INSTITUTE



**ABOVE:** Karen Lassell wraps the leg of Odin, a foal with contracted tendons. His bones are growing too fast for his muscles and tendons to keep up with.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Adam LaCount puts milkers on cows during afternoon milking.



**ABOVE FAR RIGHT:** Eric Young and Steve Kramer identify a weed while walking in a corn field with a group of AESP students.



**ABOVE:** Steve Fessette and his guys work to unload five large feed bins from a flat-bed truck. **LEFT:** Shawn Bechard hauls corn silage from the field to the roll-over pile.

**UP NORTH IN ALASKA**

As many of you are aware, I graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Fairbanks is in interior Alaska; it's about 360 miles north of Anchorage. I lived there for two-and-a-half years. It was without a doubt an experience of a lifetime.

I arrived in Alaska as a 19-year-old college student; I took a three-day train ride across Canada and then flew into Fairbanks from Vancouver. I arrived in late August and, at nearly midnight, the sky was a dusty rose color. I was blown away.

The experiences I had in Alaska were unlike anything I could have gotten anywhere else. In my second year at UAF, I was given a media pass that gave me access to the 2003 Iditarod Sled Dog Race. The race had to be restarted in Fairbanks because of poor snow conditions further south. The Iditarod is known as the longest sled dog race in the world. It is more than 1,000 miles and most mushers, as the racers are known, take close to two weeks to finish. The race takes place every year in early March.

Watching the mushers interact with their dogs, feed them, and gear up, was very touching. The love between mushers and their dogs is really incredible.

Even since moving back to "the lower 48" as the contiguous United States is known to Alaskans, I still take a keen interest every year in the Iditarod and



**ABOVE:** Sign at the start of the 2003 Iditarod Sled Dog Race in Fairbanks, AK. **BELOW:** View of the Turnagain Arm of Cook Inlet and the Chugach Mountains in Girdwood, Alaska.



the Yukon Quest, which is considered the toughest sled dog race – it is run over intensely rugged terrain and takes place in February, when temperatures on the course often dip to 30 or 40 degrees below zero.

I learned many valuable life lessons while in Alaska. I learned to appreciate running water after living six months through a frigid Fairbanks winter without indoor plumbing. I learned that in Fairbanks, func-

tion is always better than fashion. And, as a young female in a state with a nine to one male – female ratio, I learned that you don't have to pay for many drinks.

I absolutely loved Fairbanks, even with all its quirks. As an optimistic person, I found ways to be upbeat even in the dead of winter, when the temperatures were colder than minus 20 or 30 for weeks at a time and the sun was only out for three or four hours a day. For me, at least, the benefits far outweighed the detriments. It is fair to say that Alaska, and Fairbanks in particular, is not for the faint of heart, but I highly recommend it as a vacation destination.

Don't base your opinions of Alaska on stereotypes. The state is not full of Eskimos and it does not snow all year round. I actually got sunburn in Fairbanks. Take a trip to Alaska. It will leave you breathless.

– Rachel Dutil



**ABOVE:** Mount McKinley, the highest mountain peak in North America. It is approximately 20,320 feet tall.

## RESEARCH ROUNDUP

The research staff has been busy this summer conducting dairy and equine nutrition trials, crop and nutrient management studies. The tiestalls in the dairy barn have been active most of this year through the end of September with various nutrition studies overseen by our post-doc, Dr. Sarah Boucher and Dr. Heather Dann. Research technicians, Laura and Lisa Klaiber, and Roxanne Clark have become masters at operating the Data Ranger for feeding the cows.

Many of you may have noticed or took part in the installation of the white Calan bins in the new transition cow barn. The Calan system is designed to give us the ability to feed freestall-housed cows separately. Hopefully this will give us the flexibility to feed more cows individually and be a little less hassle for our dairy farm crew than cows managed in the tiestalls. Maggie Carter, Dr. Heather Dann, and graduate student, Bron Nelson, have been working with the cows to train them to use their individual bins for a trial that is currently underway. Many of us are surprised that the cows adapt fairly quickly. Maggie is quite proud to report that so far, all of Miner's cows have been trainable to the system. Earlier this year, we conducted a study in our freestall barn which was supported by a USDA grant.

Graduate student, Peter Krawczel, is currently summarizing this data which will complete his graduate work evaluating the effect of stocking density of dairy cows on animal productivity and well-being.

We didn't let our new agronomist, Dr. Eric Young, get too comfortable at his desk before dragging him out into the field to oversee various crop and nutrient management studies this summer. Eric is working with Steve Kramer and colleagues from Cornell and SUNY Plattsburgh to evaluate management of nutrients applied to fields to maximize their availability to crops grown on the field. Structures have been installed in one of our tile drained fields which will allow us to manage water flow from the field's tile drains. This research will continue for the next few years.

Our forage lab is almost at the point where it needs to run around the clock with the number of samples from the various research projects increasing. Kurt and Jeff have adjusted their schedules to maximize the number of samples that we can put through the lab in a day. Robert is processing samples for collaborative studies we've been conducting with Cornell University.

Our Morgan horses took part

in a collaborative nutrition trial conducted with Penn State and Cornell University this summer. From the information we collected, we hope to have contributed to the development of a method to identify pre-laminitic inflammatory changes that could be used to help treat horses before they become lame from feed changes. Other horse research we've conducted this year includes a collaboration with Texas A & M where we've been traveling to an equine slaughter facility in Quebec to obtain ovaries for research conducted at that university. Texas A & M's equine reproductive research program is actively working with in vitro fertilization and cloning. We are working together to optimize the quality of

oocytes (eggs) shipped to Texas for their research work.

Many of the research staff attended and presented results of the research conducted at Miner Institute at scientific meetings this summer. As always, research couldn't be conducted without the cooperation of all other departments at Miner Institute. Thank you all for your help.

Soon, we will be losing our Master scheduler and organizer, Heather Gauthier, for a couple of months, after she delivers her daughter (?...got fooled on this once before...so we'll see). Thankfully, Heather will be coming back later in the year. Don't know what we'd do without her!

— Katie Ballard

## LINDSAY'S BACK!

Welcome back Lindsay Perry, as a member of the research staff, who is filling in part time in the horse barn as well.

Lindsay just finished up a year-long internship with Kentucky Equine Research, helping facilitate nutrition studies at their research farm in Versailles, Kentucky. Lindsay adapted well to life in Kentucky, taking up fiddle playing and fancying the good bourbon produced there.

Lindsay will be working with the research staff for the next



Lindsay Perry

6 months and will then pursue a graduate degree working in the area of equine nutrition.

**FOLLOW ME: CAN 140 CHARACTERS FOSTER MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION?**

No doubt, you've heard the phrase "Follow me on Twitter" but what does it mean? Twitter is an Internet social networking tool that allows micro-blogging updates to each site for your follower to read. Each "tweet" or message is limited to 140 characters — about the length of this sentence. Think of Twitter as the Facebook status updates without the other Facebook features, but why use Twitter and not Facebook?

The most successful Twitter users stick to a few topics they know well and provide useful information in their updates to stimulate logical conversations. They follow other Twitter users who share their interests. My interests lie primarily in libraries, history, rural life, agriculture, and travel. So when I tweet, I share websites and software, news articles, or ask for suggestions on these topics. Occasionally, I tweet about an interesting event I'm attending or share a photo I took. A message posted on Twitter will look like this: "@littlestbee From Inside High Ed, "Libraries of the Future" will be "sparsely staffed, highly



decentralized": [www.bitly.com/1243](http://www.bitly.com/1243)". Twitter also has a direct message option which allows me to send private messages to friends around the world — gratis international text messaging fees since messages are routed through Twitter and back to my phone.

The impact of Twitter is growing. It is an incredibly fast way to share news as it is happening.

In June, the US State Department asked Twitter to postpone scheduled updates because having the micro-blogging site running was crucial to the Iranian election. Still, as Twitter's importance grows, so will its controversy. Some businesses have embraced Twitter — I've seen requests to submit resume via Twitter — others have moved to restrict Twitter use or have implemented bans on any use by employees. The NFL has

banned Twitter use 90 minutes before a game until 90 minutes after the game by anyone connected with the game, including family and friends. In September, a rookie belittled booing fans on his Twitter account after a game. He may not have violated NFL rules on Twittering, but clearly he's not going to win any new fans.

Despite occasional mistweets by users, Twitter clearly has a solid

place in today's world. Users need to keep in mind that tweets are permanent and public, and unless you are Emeril, no one cares what's for dinner. But its interface enables users to quickly disseminate news and spark thought provoking conversations. And just so you know, this article is equivalent to 18 tweets.

— Amy Bedard



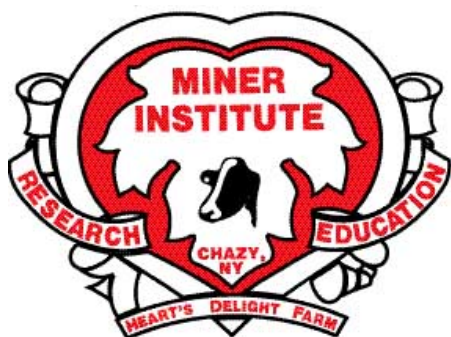
Would it kill you to update your Twitter status if you're going to stay out so late?

**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **Nov. 10** — Dairy Day
- **Nov. 26–27** — Thanksgiving holiday, offices closed.
- **Dec. 13** — Last day of hunting season.
- **Dec. 19** — Company Christmas Party. Laurie Miller will provide additional details as the date approaches.
- **Dec. 21** — Winter Solstice, shortest day of year.
- **Dec. 24–Jan. 3** — Christmas holiday. The offices will close at noon on Thursday, Dec. 24 and re-open Monday, Jan. 4. Have a happy and safe holiday!

**DAIRY DEDICATION**

On Aug. 18, the dairy facility was dedicated to Dr. Charlie Sniffen; he served as president of the Institute from 1992 to 2002.



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## Upcoming Birthdays

### October:

Kristup Kalvaitis – Oct. 1  
 Steve Couture – Oct. 3  
 Peter Krawczel – Oct. 11  
 Heather Dann – Oct. 27  
 Henry Meseck – Oct. 27

### November:

Wanda Emerich – Nov. 8  
 Mark Gonyo – Nov. 15  
 Hope LaForest – Nov. 15  
 Rachel Dutil – Nov. 18  
 Jessica Kalvaitis – Nov. 21

### December:

Shawn Bechard – Dec. 5  
 Adam LaCount – Dec. 5  
 Bron Nelson – Dec. 20  
 Kirk Beattie – Dec. 31

## CURRIED BUTTERNUT SQUASH BISQUE

Recipe from eatingwell.com

### Yield

8 servings, about 1 cup each

**Active Time:** 30 minutes

**Total Time:** 1 hour

### Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth

- 1 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup white rice
- 2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cubed (about 6 cups)
- 1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons nonfat milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste

### Preparation

- Heat oil in a Dutch oven or heavy soup pot over medium heat. Add onions and garlic; cook, stirring, until slightly softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in curry and cumin and cook for 1 minute. Add broth, cider, rice and squash; bring to a boil. Reduce heat



season with salt and pepper.

To serve, stir yogurt and milk in a small bowl. Ladle

the soup into bowls and add a dollop of the yogurt mixture.

- Pour the mixture through a strainer set over a large bowl. Puree the solids in a food processor or blender until very smooth. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.) Return the puree and liquid to the pot. Heat the soup gently and

### Nutrition

- Per serving: 153 calories; 2 g fat (1 g sat, 1 g mono); 4 mg cholesterol; 30 g carbohydrates; 6 g protein; 4 g fiber; 267 mg sodium; 356 mg potassium.