

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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## Trip to China & Olympics Subject of FCSWCD April 3 Annual Meeting

FARMINGTON - Tom Eastler, PhD., will entertain guests at Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Meeting set for Friday, April 3 at Mt. Blue Middle School with tales of his recent trip to Beijing and the 2008 Summer Olympics.

Tom, a geology professor at the University of Maine Farmington, attended the Olympics to watch his son, Kevin compete in the racewalking. Tom will have a Powerpoint presentation full of pictures of the culture, Olympics, and more. Tom says the Chinese have an amazing use of space. For example, when you look down in an apple orchard, it will be planted full of vegetables, not open space. Capt. Kevin Eastler, from Buckley AFB, Colo., was one of four Airmen competing representing the US Air Force at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

According to the University's website, Tom is an avid outdoorsman. He and his wife live in a passive solar home on their working 150-acre farm not far from the university. He remains an active advisor to the Farmington 4-H club.

A former USA World Cup Racewalk coach, Tom has coached race walking both college and high school athletes for more than 30 years, including his son who has competed as a race walker in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. Tom was instrumental in helping to develop the race walking program in the Maine high school outdoor track and field competition schedule. Begun in 1990, the program offers the only high school girls and boys racewalking teams in the United States.

A racewalking advocate, Tom recently published a children's book, *Racewalking?! Fun?* which teaches young people, their teachers and parents about the value of racewalking.

According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, racewalking is a long-distance athletic event. Although it is a foot race, it is different from running in that one foot must appear to be in contact with the ground at all times. Stride length is reduced, so to achieve competitive speeds, racewalkers must attain cadence rates comparable to those achieved by Olympic 400-meter runners—and they must do so for hours at a time since the Olympic distances are 20 kilometers (12 miles) and 50 kilometers (31 miles).

The social gathering will be from 6 to 6:30, with FWCSWCD Chair of the Board of Supervisors doing the introductions.

Awards will be given to our 2008 Farm of the Year, Lazy W. Farms, operated by Ron and Betty Wing and their sons Ethan and Dana, Logger of the Year, Todd Ladd of Farmington and our many dedicated Earth Team and District volunteers and our 2009 District Poster Contest Winners. Light refreshments will be available. Cost is \$5.

Over the years, Lazy W Farms has undertaken a number of conservation measures, making them long overdue in being recognized, according to Paul Hersey, NRCS District Conservationist.

Ron and Betty moved to their present farm on West Mills Road, Industry, in 1954. They started their milking business about a year later, which they continued until the late 1990's. They had one of the largest dairy farms in Franklin County. After selling the dairy cows, they began raising replacement heifers.

Todd Ladd is a master certified logger, one out of 108 in Maine. Todd is being honored as logger of the year in recognition of his best management practices. These include using portable panels for temporary bridging, using hay and mulch for stabilization and filtration, using limbs and tops used in soft areas, making well planned trails, laid out on foot, and matching the season of harvest to the ground conditions.

Those who pre-register by April 1 will be eligible for the door prize. There also will be a 50/50 drawing. Light refreshments will be available. The cost is \$5. To register, contact FCSWCD at 778-4279.