



2013 Last Fling Pumpkin & Football Sling Salutes Liberty, Innovation and Diversity

Warren Reporter

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Warren County: Where can you go to partake in a fierce competition with rivaling teams hoisting 2-3-pound pumpkins in hopes of being named grand champion? Or stand alongside founding father George Washington? Or travel in Thomas Edison's tracks along the Garden State's first concrete mile while paying tribute to Super Bowl XLVIII and New Jersey's 350th birthday?

There's only one event that holds this distinction and offers such diverse opportunities. It's the 2013 Last Fling Pumpkin & Football Sling, taking place October 19 & 20 at Millbrook Farm – at the intersection of Montana and Millbrook Roads – in Harmony Township. While the main attraction will still be students putting their physics, problem-solving and team-building skills to the test, this year, organizers have incorporated several of the state's future milestones into the mix.

It's About Liberty

We love hosting visitors from neighboring New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and other parts of the state as it's our chance to show off our agrarian roots. But in 2014, New Jersey will celebrate its founding in grand style. State officials have called New Jersey 350 a once-in-a-generation chance to celebrate the myriad contributions the Garden State has made to the nation and world. Among those was the establishment of a distinguished military service during the American Revolutionary War, and serving as the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights in 1789.

To that end, Pumpkin & Football Sling organizers are helping to kick off the celebration and have contracted Sculptor Matt Long of the Travel Channel Sand Masters, to craft a sand design that incorporates NJ's big year by featuring founding father – George Washington (fondly referred to as America's first quarterback) – Jersey's own inventor Thomas Edison holding a light bulb, and of course, the Statue of Liberty!

“My plan is to create a sculpture that represents New Jersey,” Long said. “The fact that the game is coming is big. This piece is going to be involved. I plan to use 12 to 15 tons of sand.”

In addition, in honor of tourism partner Meadowlands Liberty CVB, home to Super Bowl XLVIII, we will offer our own version of the “Big Game” experience with a twist. For the first time, football slinging will be featured. Participants will be divided into three categories: man-powered, machine-powered and Rube Goldberg machine-powered. (Insider tip: the machine is an overly complex contraption, designed to accomplish the task. It uses a variety of everyday items in a creative way to create a series of chain-reaction steps to accomplish the task.)

It's About Innovation

Who can forget the night the lights suddenly went out in New Orleans as Ravens wide receiver Jacoby Jacobs ran 108 yards for the longest kickoff return in game history. And thanks to the 30-plus minutes of darkness following that play, New Jersey doesn't have to worry much about being the brunt of all the jokes. While the Feb. 2, 2014 event promises to be cold (the first Super Bowl played in a stadium without a dome), light certainly won't be a problem because New Jersey is where Edison invented the light bulb. But a lesser-known fact is he also built the state's first concrete highway in 1912 in Franklin Township.

The Edison Concrete Mile, as it is commonly referred to today, is a stone's throw from Pumpkin and Football Sling activities. Why not stop by and take in a slice of history and relive a time when Edison routinely experimented at his New Village cement plant to find new uses for concrete?

It's About Diversity

For many, New Jersey's varied culture and heritage represent a miniature sampling of the world around us. In addition, the Statue of Liberty – located on Liberty Island off the coast of Jersey City – is known as a symbol of diversity and freedom for past, present and future generations. It's also prominently featured in the logo of tourism partner and game hosts, the Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB).

And like these symbols, Harmony Township also accentuates the diversity of the Garden State. Millbrook Farms, situated on the state's 36th highest point, is along one of the many roads that lead to the top of Montana Mountain. While exploring this slice of heaven en route to the Pumpkin and Football Sling, visitors can experience a whimsical, free-spirited journey along Harmony Brass Castle Road, Fox Farm Road and Montana Road, among others. A word of caution, don't depend too heavily on that GPS because you're sure to look up and find yourself lost in the beauty that surrounds you.

And if that's not enough, other attractions include a free bus tour to local historic sites, hot-air balloon launches, paragliding demonstrations, pick-your-own farms, crafts, non-profit and food vendors, live bands and a children's tent. For a complete schedule of activities, visit pumpkinsling.com.

After all this, you're likely to be hungry and thirsty. We've got the perfect event to whet your appetite – the Big Chili & Beer Challenge. This friendly competition offers those inspired to cook with savor and spice, or brew lagers, ales, wheats and ryes a chance to shine. And those wanting to do more than just savor the flavors, you'll be able to get into the action by sampling the offerings and helping to select the "People's Choice" winners.

The 2013 Last Fling Pumpkin and Football Sling is funded by the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, which advocates to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands, and to preserve the quality and quantity of drinking water both for the 850,000 people in the Highlands, as well as the more than four million people in surrounding areas who depend on Highlands water. The events also receive support in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism, and Media Sponsor, The Star-Ledger.

For more things to see and do in our beautiful region, visit highlandstourism.org.