



The art behind Common Ground

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

UNITY — A praying mantis on a pumpkin patch. A rooster letting it rip. A team of draft bulls dressed to impress. Each year a new design is chosen to represent the Common Ground Country Fair. And like a concert T-shirt, the original artwork is a coveted keepsake emblazoned on posters, shirts and even onesies. They sell out fast.

When the agricultural celebration opens for the 39th year on Friday, a frolicsome goat munching on wheat and clover will wink at passers-by from all corners. The fair's organizer, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, selects one design from scores of entries that captures the rural magic of Maine. Though hard to determine a single image for the wide-ranging fest, "we look for something that conveys that good feeling," said fair director April Boucher.

This year, winning artist Arika von Edler, a College of the Atlantic alum, drew from experience. She worked on organic farms in Maine for years and based the painting on a goat she encountered on a friend's dairy farm — Udder View in Columbia.

A portrait painter by trade, the 27-year-old turned her attention to an animal for the first time.

"I painted the entire thing with one paint brush," said von Edler, which helped create a fuzzy, furry look via acrylics.

Reached in San Francisco, where she lives, she couldn't be more thrilled that the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association went gaga for her goat.

"It's so exciting. I have been looking at these posters my whole life," said the Rhode Island native, who examined art from the fair's humble beginnings and detected a pattern: "They are either vegetables and fruit, plants or animals."

The annual contest is open to all members of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and Maine residents. Every year, 35 to 65 entries are received and voted on by a steering committee.

"It's quite the intense process, people are very passionate," said Boucher. "We try to let artists let their creative sides blossom. What does [Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association] mean to them? What do they think is a great image?"

Before the fair even opened, See Art, Page C2



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

With Amelia Poole's eco-printed textiles, she uses a process that transfers the pigment from leaves or flowers onto textile or paper.

Unlocking nature's secrets

Maine artist uses local plants for 'eco-printing'

BY SHELBY HARTIN
BDN STAFF

With nature as her muse, she never runs out of inspiration.

Eco-printing, a method of adding color, pattern and texture to cloth using local plant materials, is Amelia Poole's "niche," as she likes to call it.

Silver maple, flat-topped aster and bracken fern are only a few of the many trees, plants and flowers Poole uses to create unique prints. She prints on silk scarves and a variety of textiles, including linen, hemp and organic cotton, which she designs and sews.

Her process begins by layering prepared silk and linen with local plants and flowers. The cloth and leaves are bundled together, bound and steamed, resulting in a permanent transfer of pigment from plant material to cloth. When the bundles are opened, a work of art is revealed.

"It's like opening presents," Poole said.

The cloth is filled with pattern and colors, from the delicate veins of tree leaves to individual flower petals. All colors and patterns come naturally from the materials Poole uses, making it an eco-friendly practice, free of artificial dyes or paints.

"It's one of my tenets, to use only plants that I've gathered myself, where I am, at that time," Poole said. "Plants are here.



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Amelia Poole (right) talks about her eco-printed textiles with Astrig Tanguay, the artistic leader of the Fiber College of Maine, at the Searsport Shores Ocean Park/Campground. Poole uses a process that transfers the pigment from leaves or flowers onto textile or paper.

They're available. It's my connection to where I live, and I love all the individual shapes and learning through this process more and more about these plants."

Poole derived her own inspiration from India Flint of South Australia, who developed and popularized eco-printing, but her artistic inclinations began when she was only a child.

Raised by parents who were scientists, Poole had an innate appreciation for nature. She remembers weaving crowns of daisies as a child and playing with the sheep her family raised. Her mother taught her how to sew before she was 7 years old, and her love for creating only grew from there.

Poole, who grew up on a tree farm in Massachusetts, attended the Surrey Institute of Art and Design in Farnham, Surrey, United Kingdom, where she received a Master of Fine Arts in textile design and construction. Her studies led to an education in the nature and processes of textiles, not necessarily "textile art." But after looking at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts catalog one day, a

class about "eco-printing" caught her eye. She knew she wouldn't be able to attend, as her daughter was only 1½ years old at the time, but she was intrigued by the concept and decided to try it.

She now has her own space, Ecouture Textile Studio in Brooksville, where she creates unique pieces of clothing and works with indigo, rust printing and nuno felting — which is important, given the seasonal nature of her eco-printing practice that requires fresh materials.

Perhaps most rewarding is how her artistic practice has impacted her personal life and that of her young daughter, who loves identifying local plants and opening bundles of fabric to reveal the art inside — and takes every chance to tell her friends her mom is an artist.

Poole will exhibit her work at the Common Ground Fair on Sept. 25-27. Her studio is open by appointment or chance for the rest of the season. For more examples of Poole's work, visit ecouture-textilestudio.com.

No kilts needed in WWI heroics

Bradley author's new book shines

BY JOHN HOLYOKE
BDN STAFF

Denis "Dee" Dauphinee's fascination with a place called Vimy Ridge began back in 1988, when he stood at a World War I memorial site in Belgium and saw his own last name etched among the thousands of those who died on the site.

A thoughtful local asked if he knew what had taken place on that sacred ground. Dauphinee didn't. And the old man began to tell the tale.

He told a story of a battlefield covered with bones, and the brave Canadians — young Dauphinee among them — who had finally done what no one else could.

That started Dee Dauphinee, who now lives in Bradley, on a journey of discovery that culminated earlier this year with his latest book, "Highlanders Without Kilts."

"When I started researching who the kid was, the research led me to great ideas for a story, or at least the story became obvious to me," Dauphinee said. "The story was there. I just had to write it."

"Highlanders Without Kilts," which was released in May, tells the story of a Canadian work battalion — they hadn't even been issued the standard uniform kilts — and their heroics during World War I.

That battalion, historians say, helped turn the tide of the war during a battle at Vimy Ridge, a seemingly impenetrable German stronghold where a series of offensives had failed. The 85th Battalion's efforts are a matter of great Canadian and Nova Scotia pride.

But rather than treat the Battle of Vimy Ridge as a straight history text — others have done that — Dauphinee decided to take some liberties and treat the event as a launching point for some powerful fiction.

He succeeded. Dauphinee introduces readers to a family in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the boys it sends to war. And he spends time exploring how that deployment affects the family left behind, as well as the sons who learn that war is, in fact, hell. Or worse.

In researching the book, he ended up talking to all the living descendants of the Dauphinees, and learned that despite the nearly 100 years that has passed since the battle, the stories and emotions are still fresh in Nova Scotia.

"They still remember [their ancestors]. And they still talk about their uncles and their boys, and losing Stanley [Dauphinee] and how hard it was [on the family]," Dauphinee said. "Listening to these grandchildren, who are much older than me, with tears in their eyes telling me about their losses kind of puts you there. It kind of puts you in the family's story."

So although the book is technically fictitious — Dauphinee invented some characters and renamed others — "Highlanders" still ends up reflecting the shared experience of a city and province that suffered during the war.

And the more he learned during his interviews, the more powerful the book became. During conversations, he said, there were "carrots in front of my nose" that

See Book, Page C2

More wines coming from Maine-grown vines

BY ABIGAIL CURTIS
BDN STAFF

UNION — The grapes were plump, deep purple and bursting with flavor — all of which bodes well for the 2015 harvest, according to Elmer Savage, co-owner of the Savage Oakes Vineyard and Winery in Union.

The 3½ acres on a sunny, south-facing slope planted with about 2,000 vines were ready for harvest, with the grapes destined to be turned into the award-winning selection of white, red, rose and blush wines that are sourced nearly completely from the Barrett Hill Road vineyard. That fact makes Savage and his wife, Holly Oakes Savage, fairly unusual in the state

of Maine, where only a handful of winemakers make wine from grapes they grow on their own farms.

"Wines taste like where they're grown," he said on Sunday. "Producing something that's made right here is what we wanted to do. The wines are unique to Maine, and there's the pride that you've grown them right here."

Not many years ago, drinking wine made from Maine-grown grapes was not really an option. Maine wineries were noted for wines made from blueberries, apples, cranberries — even honey — but not from grapes. Conventional wisdom had it that our harsh winters and short growing seasons

See Wine, Page C2



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Elmer Savage dumps grapes into the crusher in preparation for making a variety of red wine called Barn Red at the Savage Oakes Vineyard and Winery in Union on Tuesday morning.

We need to tell you something (and you're going to love it!):

In two weeks, this section of your Bangor Daily News will become **Outdoors**.

Outdoors is consolidating to a single section on Fridays. Whether planning a weekend hike or getting ready to hunt, writers John Holyoke and Aislinn Sarnacki will continue to show you the best of what Maine's wilderness has to offer.

