

Bees

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side the fenced-in compound. Through the summer we fed the bees and looked after them in the hopes of harvesting some honey in the fall.

At the end of June, Anne and I spent a wonderful week on Star Island in the Isles of Shoals where I had been invited to give a series of talks for the National History conference week. We had a great time with over 100 “Shoalers.”

This year, the group organizing the natural history week have professor Bernd Heinrich as their speaker, and I’m sure it will be fantastic. I would heartily recommend the event for anyone with a love of nature.

Late spring and right through summer saw the usual swarming activity as colonies that were growing well in the fine weather were splitting in two to form new ones. Each year I get called to capture many swarms, but this year I saw something different. A swarm had moved into the gas tank of an old 1949 Ford pickup. It was one of my more challenging bee removals.

It was a great summer for honey production. This varied somewhat from one location to another, but my bees gave me my best harvest yet with about 1000 pounds harvested. There were honeys of all different colors and flavors depending upon the



A bee hive is stocked with packaged bees in April 2015.

PETER COWIN

flowers the bees collected nectar from.

The bees at Hampden Academy produced a small surplus, too. Though they started late, we were able to take honey from one of the two hives. This was bottled up and sold to staff and students giving the beekeeping club members a chance to learn more about running a small business. The bees also produced a small amount of beeswax, which we made into five different

flavors of lip balms. These also were sold, and in all, the students raised more than \$800, which will be used next year to start another hive and perhaps buy a few more bee suits.

Also at Hampden Academy, my club Penobscot County Beekeepers hosted the Maine State Beekeepers annual meeting and conference in November. As reported last month, it was a huge success attended by more than 260 people.

With the help of a strong El Nino this year, there is good reason to believe this winter will be very different from the last. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that the new year will bring with it lots of healthy bees!

Interested in taking a beekeeping class? I began teaching beekeeping classes three year ago, and in that time, it’s grown from 70 students to 340 in a year. Check your local adult education department for one of my classes near you; the first

of them begin in January.

Peter Cowin, aka The Bee Whisperer, is president of the Penobscot County Beekeepers Association. His activities include honey production, pollination services, beekeeping lessons, sales of bees and bee equipment, and the removal of feral bee hives from homes and other structures. Check out “The Bee Whisperer” on Facebook, email petercowin@tds.net or call 299-6948.

Burials

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“People brought the idea of green cemeteries to me right after I was elected to the Belfast City Council [in Nov. 2014],” Belfast Councilor Neal Harkness said. “There’s all these [burial] alternatives now. I think the days of only traditional cemeteries may be coming to an end, and here’s another alternative. I’m very supportive.”

Councilors talked about the idea — though took no action on it — at a regular meeting in mid-December. Cemetery Superintendent Steve Boguen told city officials then that there is not adequate room for a green cemetery at any of Belfast’s existing cemeteries. Several councilors wondered whether Belfast may be able to use a different piece of city-owned land for such a cemetery. Harkness also wondered whether a private landowner may decide to use his or her own property for a green cemetery as a commercial enterprise. Boguen also told the council that burial trends in Belfast have changed a lot in recent decades. The council has asked for more information and is expected to revisit the topic in the future.



COURTESY OF ALISON RECTOR

Rainbow’s End Natural Cemetery in Orrington.

“We’re at approximately 90 percent cremations now,” he said. “It used to be 90 percent the other way when I started in 1979, 1980.”

Belfast City Councilor Mike Hurley told the BDN he expects the aging of the baby boomer generation to change funeral practices even more.

“People have a right to do what they want to do, and probably a significant portion of people would want to do something like this,” he said. “I think for sure this is going to be something on our radar. We’ll just keep working on it.”

Rector, an active volunteer with the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Maine,

said she has started to check out natural burial areas while traveling. Some look like meadows and others have a more traditional appearance, including simple stone markers. She feels a green cemetery would fit right in for Waldo County.

“In Waldo County, we have a fair number of back-

to-the-landers and people who are growing their own food,” she said. “For them, it’s not such a weird thought. I think it would be wonderful for Waldo County to be a leader in this. If Belfast or one of the other towns decided to do this, it would be the first municipal green cemetery in the state.”

Campus

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what bonds them together,” Copeland, a 22-year-old from Biddeford, said.

To SMCC President Ron Cantor, a nourished student is a thriving student.

“The highest priority at SMCC is student success,” Cantor said. Contrary to popular belief, tuition isn’t the biggest hurdle. “Many can’t finish college or make it to classes. A companion to the complex lives they live is food insecurity.”

At nontraditional schools such as SMCC and Kaplan University in Lewiston, where a student-led food pantry has been established just as long, students are not shielded from real world problems.

“The ups and downs in the economy have had an impact,” Cantor said. “If we go back a generation or two, students went to college and finished school. In today’s world many are part time instead of full time. They have rent and food and transportation and child care. ... If they hit a bump in the road, college is the last priority on their list.”

Free nutrition in the form of beef enchiladas, bagels, soup, cereal and corn helps. Since launching, Good Shepherd says

“Most food banks have financial requirements. We are a lot different from that. We say ‘What do you need?’ not ‘How much do you make?’”

TABATHA COPELAND, THE CAPTAIN’S CUPBOARD

these two college campuses have distributed more than 59,000 meals including over 15,000 pounds of fresh produce.

Similarly in 2009, University of Maine in Orono initiated a food pantry and clothing swap called the Black Bear Exchange. Open to students and their families, as well as faculty and staff, it dispensed 5,600 food items in the last year. Local student and staff food drives support the on-campus exchange.

Food insecurity in younger students, tallied through participation in free and reduced lunch programs and food desert maps, are easier to track. Similar statistics on college students “are harder to nail down with data,” Coffin said.

But symptoms, hunger experts say, are the same across the board.

“If you are coming into school hungry, you are not able to focus,” said Madelyn Holm, a Feeding America Child Hunger Corps member working at Good Shepherd Food Bank for a two-year stint. “You’ll

have poor attention in class. If you don’t have adequate nutrition, there is the added stress of ‘Where is our food coming from? Should I be focused on class or taking shifts?’” Holm said.

Copeland, a young mother, understands this firsthand. Struggling with feeding her baby and attending class, a faculty advisor at SMCC told her about the pantry. She faced what many of her peers face: “Do I work a shift to feed our kids, or do I come to school to try and better our lives? Doing papers until midnight is really hard when you are thinking, ‘How am I going to feed my kid in the morning?’”

Good Shepherd considers The Captain’s Cupboard a model they would like to duplicate statewide. SMCC’s Brunswick campus plans to open a pantry in 2016.

“Our long-term goal is to be in every school that needs it,” Coffin said. “We want to continue to grow this, but we are a long way from reaching that.”

Farm Credit East conducting survey

Farm Credit East is conducting a brief survey to learn more about Northeast producers’ 2015 results and expectations for the year ahead. Anyone engaged in the business of agriculture, commercial fishing or forest products within the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York or Rhode Island is invited to participate.

Survey participants will be entered into a drawing to win one of four \$250 Visa gift cards.

The survey will not take more than 15 minutes to complete. Responses are mostly multiple choice — no long essay answers required.

Responses will be kept confidential and be used only for statistical purposes. At the completion of the survey, statistical results will be compiled and made available on FarmCreditEast.com.

To participate in this survey, visit FarmCreditEast.com/PulseofAg.

To be entered into the drawing for a chance to win a \$250 Visa gift, Northeast farmers, fisherman and forest product producers must complete this survey by Jan. 11, 2016.

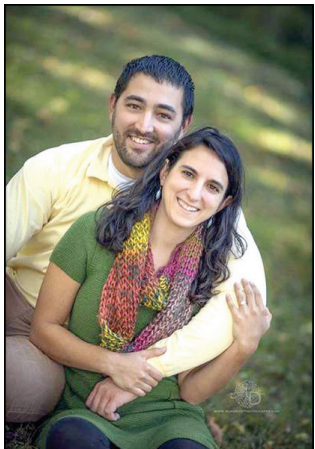
FarmStart celebrates 10th anniversary

FarmStart, an innovative Northeast program to help young people get started in farming, announced it is in its 10th year of support for beginning farmers. Farm Credit East has released a report to illustrate the program’s success through the profiles of 11 FarmStart participants.

“Farm Credit has a long-term commitment of helping individuals get started in farming, forest products and commercial fishing,” Bill Lipinski, Farm Credit East CEO, said. In line with that commitment, Farm Credit East and CoBank initiated FarmStart LLP, a program to support talented, hardworking individuals entering agriculture. Yankee Farm Credit joined the program in 2011. FarmStart has invested more \$7 million in more than 150 participants. For information, visit farmcrediteast.com/News-and-Events/News/20151228FarmStart10.aspx.

ALBUM

Engagement



Michael Trimm
Heather Ajzenman

MILFORD - Merle and Cynthia Trimm of Milford are pleased to announce the engagement of their son Michael Trimm to Heather Ajzenman. Heather is the daughter of Morris Ajzenman and the late Sandra Cohen of Woodbury, NY.

Michael is a 2011 graduate of Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston, MA. He is employed by Cisco Systems, Inc. as a Software Engineer. Heather received a doctorate degree from Washington State University with a major in Occupational Therapy. She is a pediatric occupational therapist.

A 2016 wedding is planned.

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