



GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Steve Lemieux (left) checks the fire in the evaporator. Sap boils away (right) at The Old Sugarhouse in Fairfield. Steve Lemieux uses traditional methods such as hoses and buckets instead of motorized vehicles and plastic tubing to collect the sap.

Sugaring

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te des Eleveurs de Chevaux Canadiens, a group dedicated to the breed, has been successful in promoting its return, and today there are an estimated 2,000 Canadian horses alive. Lemieux owns four of them: Ti-Noir, Hector, Mac and Zie. His horses are all trained to recognize voice commands, one of which means “walk” in French. “In French we have a saying: a good horse is worth a good man,” Lemieux said, giving his horse Mac a pat. “I personally think a good horse is worth more than a good man. A horse never complains, he always shows up for work, and he never asks for a raise,” he said with a laugh. Lemieux grew up in Quebec where his father bred Canadian horses. He can’t remember a time when he didn’t love working with horses. “I had a team of Shetland ponies when I was a kid,” Lemieux said. “My father had a little sugarbush, and I used to go around with my team of Shetland ponies and gather sap.” He was 12 or 13 at the time, he said. “In the little town where I come from in Quebec, everybody taps trees. It’s a way of life,” Lemieux said.

According to the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, Canada produces 71 percent of the world’s pure maple syrup, 91 percent of which is produced in Quebec. “The country’s Amerindian peoples taught the early settlers how to harvest sap and boil it to make maple syrup,” the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers reports. “Today, Canadian maple syrup is exported to approximately 50 countries, including the U.S., which is the primary importer. In 2007, Canada produced 67.6 million pounds of maple syrup yet exported 67.7 to the U.S. using reserve supply from previous years to support the growing exportation demand.” Lemieux uses a team of horses in his sugarbush to help collect sap from the trees tapped along the trails. After collecting the sap he pulls up to the sugar house he built that sits below a stone-walled bank he constructed by hand and siphons the sap out. The sap is siphoned into antique holding tanks in the sugar house and then fed into an evaporator. His end product is the direct result of hours of labor and long days spent filling the evaporator with wood he cuts and splits on his property. “If you figure out the man hours — if you figure it all out, I’m probably working for minimum wage, if I’m lucky,” Lemieux said. Lemieux sugars for many reasons, one of which is because he has free time on his hands before

he starts his masonry work again, which he only does from mid-April to Thanksgiving. He doesn’t like being idle, and he has taken advantage of his property and experience with horses to offer the public both maple syrup during sugaring season and sleigh rides during the winter through his business Maine Horse Drawn Services. Sugaring season came early this year for Lemieux. “Last year, I didn’t boil for the first time until Maple Sunday. This year, I’m almost halfway through my wood — half way through the season and we hadn’t even started last year at this time,” he said. The sugaring season is entirely dependent on mother nature, as Lemieux said, and after a mild winter, the sap ran early. Maple sugaring has gone through many changes in Lemieux’s lifetime. Lemieux, 52, can recall when his neighbors gathered sap with horses like he does today. As a teenager of 15 or 16 years old, he remembers the first guy in town who started using a tubing system. “It was the talk of the town,” Lemieux said. “Now, you go back to that same town, and you have a hard time finding a guy doing this with horses. It’s changed a lot.” Lemieux moved to Massachusetts when he was 21 years old and started a masonry business, P.S. Masonry, before moving to Maine in 2000. He now offers masonry and other services out of

his Fairfield home. “I didn’t like the suburbs or the city, so I moved here,” Lemieux said. “Now I’m living a little redneck, hillbilly country life, and I love it.” He decided to stick to his roots and start sugaring, but the sugarbush on his property needed a lot of work. He produced 73 gallons during sugaring season in 2015 and is aiming for about 80 this year, which will be his third season. Lemieux said his operation is small, especially compared to others like his neighbors in Skowhegan at Strawberry Hill Farm, who tap thousands of trees. He sells his product at his sugar house and by Steve and Marilyn Meyerhans, who own The Apple Farm in Fairfield and Lakeside Orchards and Farm Market in Readfield. “In the industry, 600 taps like what I have here is considered a backyard hobbyist,” Lemieux said. But he has no desire to grow into a large operation. “A bigger operation than this — I wouldn’t be interested in. I grew up doing it small with the horses — this is what intrigues me.” This year, Lemieux will entertain visitors at his sugar house from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 26, and on Maine Maple Sunday, the annual statewide event featuring sugar houses around the state. The event is in its 33rd year and is scheduled to take place on March 27. Mark Cooper of the Maine



Steve Lemieux

Maple Producers Association said that there are easily 50,000 visitors to sugar houses around the state each year on Maine Maple Sunday. There are nearly 100 sugar houses from southern York county all the way to central Aroostook county participating this year. “It gives the public a chance to see who makes maple syrup and how it’s made,” Cooper said. Cooper uses a tubing system in his own sugaring operation and said that Lemieux’s way of gathering sap is definitely “old school.” Though gathering sap with buckets is becoming less common, Cooper said, “there’s certainly a lot of homeowners and small producers who use buckets and consumers like to see it. It’s nostalgic.”

Secrets

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ident Harry Truman in 1947 and converted it to the Current Intelligence Bulletin in 1951. President Dwight Eisenhower read a similar daily product, the Central Intelligence Bulletin, which featured a section in 1958 labeled “Daily Brief.” But the election of President John F. Kennedy in 1960 forced considerable changes to CIA’s routine. The 1961 Bay of Pigs disaster forced Kennedy to revamp how intelligence and diplomatic developments reached the White House. He created the Situation Room to ensure State Department, Pentagon and intelligence reports reached the West Wing in a timely fashion. CIA responded to Kennedy’s voracious appetite for information, especially written — he could read much faster than aides could talk — with a new product: The President’s Intelligence Checklist, or PICL. Insiders called it the “pickle.” Kennedy read it at various times of the day and valued the short, punchy text. President Lyndon B. Johnson was slow to adapt to the Checklist and showed irregular interest in daily intelligence updates. The CIA changed its product and introduced the PDB in December 1964, which the president warmed to. The PDB correctly predicted the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War and suggested it would last only a week. President Richard Nixon was CIA’s most difficult consumer. National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger acted as a conduit for the PDB and folded its contents into his larger daily brief to

Nixon. Nixon distrusted the CIA, which he viewed as dominated by Ivy League liberals. But in contrast to 1967, the PDB failed to forecast the 1973 Yom Kippur War. With little intelligence experience, President Gerald Ford elected to have a CIA briefer, Dave Peterson, present the PDB to him early every morning. Peterson walked Ford through the articles, answered questions and provided feedback to the PDB staff. President Ronald Reagan, despite reports of his inattention to details, was an avid reader of the PDB. The Situation Room staff placed the document in a red leather folder, along with the Sit Room’s daily summary and the State Department report. Reagan’s national security adviser gave the folder to Reagan at a set time every morning. George H. W. Bush, a former CIA director, proved to be the most active and interested Oval Office consumer of the PDB, citing that reading it was “one of [his] favorite times of the day.” Bush’s enthusiasm and warm demeanor allowed the CIA to attempt a bit of humor in the spring of 1989. CIA director William Webster and the PDB briefer entered the Oval Office with a woman, ostensibly a CIA courier. She was really Joanna Goesser, who had created a highly classified disguise system for use by CIA case officers overseas, and was wearing one. Bush picked up on the gambit, but when Webster had Goesser remove the disguise, everyone else on the room was quite startled. “She did it very well,” Webster said later. “The president got a big kick out of it.” President Bill Clinton’s

early disinterest in intelligence matters frustrated his first director of central intelligence, James Woolsey. When a pilot crashed a small plane on the White House South Lawn in 1994, Washington insiders claimed it was Woolsey trying to get an appointment with the president. Clinton’s interest in the PDB varied widely — and his famous inability to stay on his daily schedule inhibited regular meetings with his CIA briefer. He most often read the document by himself and found intelligence on foreign leaders to be helpful. Clinton fell for a couple of bogus PDB editions on April Fools’ Day and had a good laugh. “They tried to convince me the world had gone to hell in a handbasket just in 24 hours,” Clinton told Priess. “And it was all my fault!” George W. Bush proved to be just as energetic as his father in receiving the PDB and briefer. He posed probing questions, asked for more details and relished deep dives into complex intelligence, especially in extended weekly sessions he called Terrorism Tuesdays. After 9/11, CIA added a new PDB supplement called the Threat Matrix that Bush read eagerly. It was a joint FBI-CIA spreadsheet that earlier might have connected some dots on al-Qaida’s plans before September 2001. Despite Bush’s enthusiasm, the PDB process during his administration was seriously disrupted by the 9/11 Commission investigation, as well as examinations of the intelligence surrounding the nonexistent Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. President Barack Obama has read the PDB daily, but

he has met with his briefer less regularly. Ever the tech-savvy president, Obama first read the PDB on an iPad on Jan. 31, 2012, and the White House released an image of the milestone. CIA and the director of national intelligence dropped the paper PDB and switched to a digital version in 2014. The author has written an authoritative yet easily read book about an important part of the president’s daily routine. He has successfully enlivened the work with myriad first-person accounts from former presidents down to the folks who have written the PDB articles. A CIA review of the manuscript ensured that classified material was not included, but Priess gives the reader plenty of substance to go with details of the process. As a result, “The President’s Book of Secrets” offers a previously untold story about one of those closely guarded, “eyes-only” facets of the intelligence world. Michael K. Bohn is a former director of the White House Situation Room and writer of two books about White House crisis management.

Boxer

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Arthur Daigle, the boxer’s father, was a woodcutter and raised hogs and horses, Lavoie said. He recalled Daigle had a sister named Althena, who later married an Ayotte, and a brother named Robert. “His sister taught me in school,” Lavoie recalled. He also said he had seen Daigle fight in person back then, but did not know where Daigle had gone later in life, as Lavoie moved to the eastern shore of Virginia and Georgia for several years and lost track of him.

“He was tall, a nice-looking man,” Lavoie said. He said Daigle is likely buried in Madawaska. Sharon Ouellette, an office administrator at the Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Parish office, looked up Daigle’s history on Friday morning using his family information, and found that there is indeed a Lionel Daigle, son of Arthur J. Daigle, buried in the St. Thomas Aquinas Cemetery. His date of birth is listed as July 4, 1915, and his date of death is listed as January 31, 1951. A note in the parish records indicates that Daigle died in a logging accident in Lille, she said.

Pulitzer

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lic Library from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 24. Nutt was awarded the Pulitzer in feature writing in 2011 for her series “The Wreck of the Lady Mary.” Kathleen Kingsbury, deputy managing editor at the Boston Globe, will visit the library from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 29. She was awarded a Pulitzer in 2015

for a series of pieces about restaurant labor. Jim Sheeler of Case Western Reserve University and writer of “Final Salute” will visit the Bangor Public Library from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30. He won a Pulitzer in 2006 for feature writing while he was reporting for the Rocky Mountain News. Make sure to stop by the Bangor Public Library for one or all of these events. They’re free and open to the public.

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