

ALBUM

Anniversary



Tash 60th Anniversary

DEDHAM - Donald and Lois (Trudy) Tash celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 21, 2016.

Don and Lois were married in Waterville, Maine at Getchell Street Baptist Church. Donald retired from New England Telephone Company while Lois retired from nursing. Since, travels took them to memorable places such as Tehran, Iran, Montserrat and Antigua in the British West Indies.

They enjoy spending time with their family and are active in their great grandchildren's lives, Averi and Rees. The couple have two children, Charles Tash, Denver, CO and Janice Noble and husband, Cary, of Loveland, CO; three granddaughters and one grandson, Sarah Nichols, Dedham, ME, Bethany Nichols, Greensboro, NC, Kaylee Noble, Loveland, CO, and Zachery Nichols, Boulder, CO.

When asked what makes their marriage blessed, "respect and unconditional love." The love they share exemplifies enduring love and commitment.

Notice

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Engagement



Mallory Curran
Justin Dellaire

MERRIMACK, NH - Mr. Dennis Curran and Ms. Robin Curran have announced the engagement of their daughter Mallory J. Curran to Justin J. Dellaire, son of Ms. Annette Dellaire of Litchfield, NH and Randy R. Dellaire of Dunedin, FL.

Mallory graduated from Bangor High School and the University of Maine. She works as a registered nurse at a medical practice in Manchester, NH.

Justin graduated from Campbell High School of Litchfield, NH and the University of Maine. He works at BAE Systems in Hudson, NH as a computer and electrical engineer.

The couple plan a September 10, 2016 wedding.



Shannon Zolper
Justin Pierce

BANGOR - Dr. William Benjamin and Mrs. Catherine Sharon Zolper of Bangor, Maine are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Shannon Alberta Zolper, to Justin Douglas Pierce, son of Douglas Arthur and Ann Loretta Pierce of Parma, Ohio.

The future bride graduated from Boston University with a B.S. in business administration. Ms. Zolper is employed as an events marketing manager, at SmashFly Technologies in Concord, Ma.

The future groom graduated from Kent State University with a B.B.A. in finance. Mr. Pierce is employed as a senior associate at Harvard Management Company.

A July 2016 wedding is planned in Newport, Rhode Island and the couple will live in Boston, Ma.



dition, contact Rick Kersbergen at 342-5971 or richard.kersbergen@maine.edu.

Boy Scouts spaghetti supper in Hampden

HAMPDEN — Boy Scout Troop 41 of Hampden will host a spaghetti supper 4-7 p.m. Saturday, April 30, at the Kiwanis Club, 55 Main Road North. The Scouts will cook and serve spaghetti with meatballs, shepherd's pie, vegetables and Dutch oven desserts. Salads and other home-cooked desserts also will be on the menu. The cost is \$7, \$4 children. For information, call Susan Coxson at 862-0037.

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LINDA COAN O'KRESIK | BDN

Arie van der Giessen is the head grower at Backyard Farms in Madison. The tomato company produces three varieties of tomatoes year-round in 42 acres of greenhouses.

Tomato

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not for nothing. "There are a lot of electrical parts in a greenhouse, so that's helped me a lot."

Rising like Emerald City in the mythical Land of Oz, Backyard Farms' glimmering greenhouses, covering 42 acres, are a point of pride for this small town that's about to lose its longtime paper mill. When Madison Paper closes in May, Backyard Farms will be the town's leading employer.

The awesome enterprise owned by a private investment firm affiliated with the parent company of Fidelity Investments serves one purpose: to grow succulent, ripe tomatoes year-round.

"You are growing great tomatoes at a time when you can't get great tomatoes," Darroch said. "It's magic."

Magic backed by an attentive workforce.

Of the company's 240 employees, 215 work in the greenhouse. They are pickers and handle crop care, pest management and maintenance. Several are empowered to oversee as many as 10 rows of tomatoes, or 6,000 plants. Signs bearing their

name hang above the rows indicating ownership. To van der Giessen, this is the real hocus pocus.

"If you don't have the right people, you can't do the job. You can have the most beautiful plants in the world, but you are only as strong as your weakest link in the chain," he said. "With farming and natural growing, everything is dependant on each other. It's a combination of people, teaching, weather, growing strategy — but you can still lose it. Everything is time sensitive."

At 58 he's probably in better shape than most midlifers. He walks from greenhouse to greenhouse, 6 to 11 miles a day, to assure his plants behave. His Apple Watch tracks his steps.

He could do it differently. There are high-end computers and sensors behind the scenes keeping this investment flush. But they only detect so much. Like a cop or reporter, he likes to walk this beat and check in with his subjects, always looking for information. "A computer can't measure everything. You have to feel what's going on," he said.

This time of year his goal is to keep plants strong enough to transition into

the warm weather months. They need to "have enough energy." He tests this by examining fruit loads and "developing a strategy to increase plant density," he explains.

Despite being with the company off and on since its 2006 inception, he's always wondering, "how do you maintain the right temperature to let it grow? It can't be too cold or too warm." This time of year, the greenhouse must average 68 degrees 24 hours a day.

Out of earshot Darroch calls him "a rockstar, like Steve Jobs." But in person, van der Giessen is un-Job's like in his approach. More like Mr. Roarke on Fantasy Island, he implores his employees to smile. "It's good for the plants," he says.

A retention pond on site supplies Backyard Farms with 98 percent of the water needed to grow the plants. New clusters are ripe every eight weeks. "We are in constant production," van der Giessen said.

Orchestrating this year-round symphony in the largest single-roof structure in Maine could make anyone sweat. But Madison's tomato whisperer exudes confidence and pride.

"There is always pressure.

You need to deal with it. You need to be realistic and positive. You need to feel confident but not too confident," he said, admitting there is "always something that can go wrong, you need to also look at the bright side. You can't be happy with an unhappy crop. It's how you deal with it. I like to do it. I love it so much."

To stay on top of indoor farming breakthroughs, he often travels to other greenhouses to learn from peers. When he's in Madison, van der Giessen remains in constant contact with leaders in the field.

"We have a group on WhatsApp," he said referring to the mobile messaging app. "We ask each other questions, send pictures, talk about tomatoes and plants and growing. There is a lot of communication. Networking with colleagues is very important. Sometimes you need someone else to talk to."

After all, plants can only say so much.

And he's discovered the more he knows, the more he wants to learn. "I have so many questions," he said. "You need to love what you do. It's not a job from 9 to 5," he said with a laugh. "It's my hobby."

Pigs

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they're foraging and digging."

He said that he checks out would-be Mangalitsa farmers to make sure they can provide what the pigs need before he will deliver them. The pigs don't require a lot of infrastructure, in part because their fleece keeps them warm in the winter, Baker said, adding that they do need at least half an acre each.

"If it's a factory farm operation, we can't help them," Mark Baker said. "If the meat has that Mangalitsa stamp, chefs are expecting something special."

In December, the Bakers brought 48 pigs to 10 different farms in Maine. This time around, they were making deliveries of 22 pigs to different Maine farms, and they will come back in October to run a couple of nose-to-tail workshops to butcher Mangalitsas and process the meat.

After Jerry Ireland backed the pig trailer up to the enclosure and let his new Mangalitsas out, they rolled ecstatically in a pile of potatoes and trotted around to explore their new home.

"Although this just looks like grass to you, which it is, they'll turn it into high quality pork," Mark Baker said. "It's a magic animal."

Ireland said that he is happy to add the Mangalitsas to his 82-acre diversified farm, which was started three and a half years ago on land that his wife's family gave them. Ireland is a U.S. Army veteran, and he is the executive director of the Maine Farmer Veteran Coalition. He said that the uncommon Mangalitsas should be a good match for his farm, and that he would like to see others in the Farmer Veteran Coalition raise them, too. There are 142 veteran-owned farms in the state.

"One of the critical things that veterans bring to the table is out-of-the-box thinking," Ireland said, adding that he is looking forward to providing regular Mainers with high-quality pork from the new pigs. "I think they're a very durable pig, and we have an awesome agricultural opportunity here."

Where in the Woods?



Trail Identification Contest!

BDN
Aislinn Sarnacki
Bangor Daily News reporter for Outdoors

Online, visit:
actoutwithaislinn.bangordailynews.com
Guess where Aislinn took her latest hike, submit your guess by 7am, Tuesday, for a chance to win an LLBean Gift Card!

Good luck!

Prize

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Free cover crop walk at Stonyvale Farm

EXETER — University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will sponsor a free cover crop field walk Tuesday, April 26, at Stonyvale Farm. Those who want to take part are asked to meet at 1 p.m. at the Exeter Town Office, 1220 Stetson Road, to carpool to the farm.

Stonyvale Farm has used cover crops for years and experimented with tools and techniques to establish effective cover crops and improve soil health. The walk will include different fields to observe rooting depth and soil qualities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of experiments to improve sustainability of cropping systems.

For information, or to request a disability accommo-