

ALBUM

Engagement



Hannah Davis
Evan Sposato

SOLON - Sarah and Andrew Davis of Solon, and Trudy Ferland and Royce Sposato of Pittsfield, are pleased to announce the engagement of their children, Hannah Katherine Davis and Evan Ferland Sposato.

Hannah is a 2010 graduate of The Conservatory of Theatre Arts at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. She is employed as the Costume Shop Manager at Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook, Illinois. Evan is a 2003 graduate of Harvard University and is employed as the Technical Director at Drury Lane Theatre in Oakbrook, Illinois.

A Maine October wedding is planned.

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Wood

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“A lot of times it doesn’t look like much — dirty, unusable wood,” Deane said. “Once you take the skim off it, you can get a finished, cleaned up and oiled look.”

Deane finds choice, salvageable specimens of lumber and combines them effectively in harmonious environments. To him, old wood is better wood.

“These houses are 200 years old. Someone decided it’s not worthwhile to renovate it because of the cost as a whole. But these buildings are still straight and standing and tall. That says something about craftsmanship.”

Don’t call it a tiny house

“When I hear the term tiny house, I think of the houses that are on wheels or can be movable,” he said outside his upcycled cabin,

which he hopes will trigger demand.

“In terms of limitations and width, I don’t feel 8 feet [by] 6 inches is livable,” he said. “Going with a touch different footprint, an extra few feet changes the feel. But micro homes are phenomenal. For me, they are just a little too small.”

Compelled by his love and appreciation of quality wood, the craftsman hopes his not-so-tiny, 100 percent local, Maine-foraged homes take off.

On a tour of his cabin, the salvage maestro does some quick math. “Some of this wood withstood 200 Maine winters,” Deane said, estimating the walls, counters, ceilings, loft and stairs came from a half-dozen places. His chunky amber stairs were once rafters from the old Brunswick Police Department building.

The steps leading to his deck came from the library down the street. A chair rail in his yard might become cabinets.



KATHLEEN PIERCE | BDN

“Everything about it is custom. It’s truly a mix that

culminates different projects I’ve worked on through

the years,” he said. “Each piece has its own history.”

Chickens

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Twomey said the birds, which can and do fly, evolved to be good meat and egg producers — albeit not outstanding at either, as they lay fewer eggs than other breeds and do not attain large size for big meat production.

They also are expert foragers and do a good job of keeping themselves well fed on his farm when there is no snow on the ground.

“They are a flighty bird,” he said. “They react to loud noises and sudden movements, so you have to be calm around them, but they tend to be a very well-mannered bird.”

One hen can lay 180 eggs per year, which is about half of what the newer, hybridized chicken breeds produce.

Roosters, which do end up in Twomey and Norcott’s stew pot from time to time, grow to be between 6 and 8 pounds and, they said, make an excellent base for a meat and vegetable soup.

The hens tip the scales at 4 pounds.

“They are about three-quarters the size of most other chickens,” Twomey said. “But they lay a nice sized, white egg. We are

never without eggs.”

The eggs, he said, are prized by Belgian chefs, who have been known to refuse to use any other kind in baking competitions. Campines will lay those eggs almost year-long, even during the winter with no heat lamp in their insulated coop.

The birds also are somewhat precocious, according to Norcott.

“They start laying eggs young, at about 6 months,” she said. “The roosters start crowing when they are 5 weeks old, but it sounds more like a squeak at first.”

Looking very much the same at birth, it takes a few weeks to tell the boys from the girls based on size, presence of a head comb on the males and listening to which ones start crowing.

“You can start to tell by the time they are 5 weeks old, but you start theorizing at 3 weeks,” Twomey said. “Quite honestly, we have yet to develop a totally reliable guide for determining the sex of these chickens. Often times each of us makes a count, and then we go back and forth defending our decisions to one another. [It’s] great fun.”

Twomey and Norcott breed the birds and have new hatchlings every other year. Last week they welcomed 25 Golden Campine chicks into the world and set up a poul-

try nursery using an old wooden crate in their sunny living room.

“I bring them treats every morning and spend time to bond with them,” Norcott said. “I bring them clover, grass clippings and dirt with worms in it, so they will know what to eat when they start going outside. They associate getting treats with us and good things happening.”

While not a super friendly bird — they tend to walk around with a distinctive “you’re not the boss of me” attitude — spending time with the chicks does forge a relationship with them, Twomey said.

“Sometimes when we are sitting outside the hens will come and perch on the arms of the chairs with us,” he said. “And Leigh and I can recognize their individual ‘voices’ and squawks.”

When they are bit older, the chicks will move into the barn with the older birds and be turned loose every afternoon to forage around the farm, which Twomey said is a blessing and a curse.

“We have our garden away from the house, hoping the chickens won’t get into

it,” he said with a laugh. “But the damn things have gone up there twice.”

The 1,900-square-foot garden produces almost all of the vegetables the couple eats, so it is in their best interest to keep the free-ranging birds from ranging that far.

“When we do see them head up there, we run out swinging towels over our heads to scare them away,” Norcott said. “We make it an unhappy experience for them.”

The entire farm is off the grid and powered by a bank of 24 solar panels. Heat comes from a wood stove, with a propane furnace as backup. Two ponds supply an abundant supply of trout, and the couple spends time in the summer fishing for alewives and mackerel in the nearby Sebasticook River.

They’ve planted and grafted hundreds of oak and heirloom apple trees for themselves and to provide food for wildlife. Even in early June the cupboards in their tidy basement are still full of homemade preserves, pickles, salsa, sauerkraut, tomatoes, dried apples and potatoes.

A freezer is stuffed full of last season’s fish and chicken.

“We only leave the farm every eight days or so,” Twomey said. “Sometimes we look at each other and ask, ‘When was the last time we were in town?’”

Twomey — who has written the book “Retiring To, Not From,” describing their homesteading life — hopes to inspire others to pursue a similar lifestyle.

“I want to encourage people to conserve and protect our farmland and wildlife,” he said. “I am doing this for the next generations. I wrote the book so my grandkids can know a little bit more about this ‘twisted’ old man and what he does.”

The two spend about two to three hours per day working in the gardens or on the property and take the rest of time to walk and observe what is going on in their natural setting. Chickens, vegetables or land management, Twomey said there is really no secret to the farm’s success.

“You just need to know what to do, how to do it and when to do it,” he said. “Then just do it.”

Learn how to grow food in containers

BAR HARBOR — Dr. Mark Hutton will present information about the best varieties and practices for growing edibles in small spaces 4-5 p.m. Monday, June 13, at Garland Farm, 475 Bay View Drive. Hutton, of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, has spent his career breeding and growing vegetables. He works at Highmoor Farm in Monmouth, which has been an active farm for more than a century. The talk will be hosted by the Beatrix Farrand Society, which honors the work of one of the most renowned landscape architects in the United States. Farrand lived and worked in Maine. The cost of the program is \$10 for Beatrix Farrand Society members, \$20 others. Proceeds will benefit

the Beatrix Farrand Society. Register in advance at programs@beatrixfarrand.org.

Military veteran farm field day slated

GORHAM — U.S. Army veteran Ben Hartwell, owner and operator of Sebago Lake Ranch, will host a free military veteran farm field day 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, June 18, at 39 Hardy Bridge Road.

Hartwell raises grass-fed beef cattle. The purpose of the field day is for current and prospective farmers to gain knowledge and build skills related to beef cattle handling and fencing. The Farmer Veteran Coalition of Maine and Maine AgrAbility are sponsoring the event.

For information or to request a disability accommodation, contact Lani Carlson at 944-1533 or leilani.carlson@maine.edu. More infor-

mation also is available at extension.umaine.edu/agrability/news-events.

Tour Rockport farm, picnic included

ROCKPORT — Maine Coast Heritage Trust will host a picnic lunch and tour of Aldermere Farm, 70 Russell Ave., 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, June 18. The day will include a guided tour of the historic farm established in the early 1800s, a demonstration of the internationally award-winning herd of Belted Galloway cattle, and a short walk on the farm’s trails after lunch. Members of the local 4-H group, the Aldermere Achievers, will show their animals and answer questions. The cost is \$20, \$10 for children and members of Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Lunch is included. Advance registration is required at mcht.org/trips-events.



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