

ALBUM

Anniversary



Chaffee 60th Anniversary

OAKLAND - Mr. and Mrs. A.W. Chaffee of Messalonskee Lake in Oakland celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 7, 2016, at the Village Inn in Belgrade Lakes with family and extended family. They were married on May 4, 1956, at the Methodist Church, Rutland, Vt.

After owning and operating their businesses for more than 40 years, they recently sold A.W. Chaffee and A&S Inc. They are looking forward to spending time with their children and grandchildren in Maine and Massachusetts.

The couple have two children, Albert Timothy Chaffee and daughter-in-law, Joan Chaffee of Clinton and Amy Chaffee Pekock and son-in-law, Steve Pekock of Andover, Mass. They also have two grandchildren, Lincoln and Channing.

Engagement



Cassandra White Ryan Parsons

MOUNT VERNON - William and Rinda White of Scarborough are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Cassandra White to Ryan Parsons, both of Mount Vernon. Ryan is the son of Ralph and Tammy Parsons of Farmington.

Cassandra graduated from Hermon High School in 2006 and graduated magna cum laude from Albany College of Pharmacy in New York where she earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree with a concentration in economics. Dr. White is a dual board-certified pharmacist and an Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice for Husson University School of Pharmacy.

Ryan graduated from Mt. Blue High School in 2002 and the University of Maine in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering technology. He is a professional engineer for RLC Engineering, an engineering firm in Hallowell.

The couple met through a mutual friend in 2012. This past January, Ryan proposed to Cassandra on a beach in Costa Rica. The couple is planning a September 2016 wedding and reception at Maple Hill Farm Inn in Hallowell.



Notice

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Waste

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Another key tool is the USDA's new food storage app, The FoodKeeper, which lets you know how long your food is good for and provides cooking and storage tips.

All panelists spoke out passionately about "ugly," "inglorious" fruit. Consumers can increase demand by asking their grocers to sell it instead of tossing it.

"Apples with bruises have more nutrients," Semler told the amazed crowd.

Institutions and restaurants need to do their part

"College kids are wasting food by the truckload. One solution is, don't give students a tray in the cafeteria. It cuts down food waste because they don't take as much," said Sereta, adding that both Bowdoin and Unity colleges don't offer trays.

Tracking companies like Lean Path give restaurateurs a real-time food waste prevention system so ingredients don't spoil from shift to shift. Teaching chefs better knife skills (so they learn to slice all parts of a strawberry, for example) and organizing walk-in refrigerator closets so more food can be saved helps. Healthy Acadia is running a pilot project with restaurants, hospitals and schools in Greater Ellsworth to diminish food waste.

The topic has caught on with startups. The MIT-born Spoiler Alert recovers food before spoilage occurs

through an online collaboration platform. Food-SpoilerAlert.com coordinates real-time donations from farms and food producers, notifying nonprofits of the available bounty.

Chief product officer Emily Malina told the group how Spoiler Alert was recently used.

"We were contacted by a produce distributor who said they had 800 pounds of browning bananas. It was a shame to waste. We were able to connect them with a baker, who turned the bananas into banana bread," said Malina.

Currently Spoiler Alert is being piloted in Maine, where a dozen farms and nonprofits are using the platform. Increased participation is pending.

A \$500,000 grant submitted by the Greater Portland Council of Governments could create a virtual wholesale marketplace for agricultural and fishery surplus.

"It will accelerate our growth of a more robust network of food businesses, farms and nonprofits in the Greater Portland area," said Malina.

Despite the technology potential, improvements in Maine's rural farm areas will make the biggest difference, but they won't happen overnight.

"If the solution doesn't come from a rural setting, it's not going to be a solution," said Semler. "As long as we watch Spoiler Alert concept with a distribution network that can support the movement of food across different areas of Maine, the only problem will be the capacity of farms to adapt to that growth."

Organic

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any issues that must first be dealt with.

"We want to work with the producers," she said. "There can be a lot of back and forth with them to get them to the point of certification, which is what we all want."

The process, she said, can take up to six months.

"We just had our inspection three days ago," Devin said. "This farm was certified [organic] prior to us buying, and that certainly helped."

Getting certified organic in Maine is as much about paperwork as it is about what goes in the ground, Devin said.

"The rules are fairly restrictive," he said. "You need to be able to prove that the land was chemical- and pesticide-free for the immediate past three years, so that means you need really good record-keeping and documentation."

The previous owner of Chase Stream Farm kept very good records, Devin said, and they were able to use them in their application process. Newkirk's staff has inspected 24 farms so far this year and has another 23 waiting for inspection leading up to the June 30 application deadline. In all, she

said there are 500 MOFGA-certified farms and processors in the state, and she believes that label carries a certain amount of economic and social benefits.

According to a report released earlier this month by the USDA, the organic food sector is one of the fastest growing parts of the country's food industry. The study looked at organic food trends from 2004-2010 and showed the growth in the organic food market continued even during the recession of 2007-2009, even though people pay — on average — more than 20 percent higher prices for an organic product versus the non-organic product.

Through some market research, Devin has determined people in Maine are willing to pony up that extra cost if it means they are getting a certified organic product.

"People absolutely want organic food," Jim Gerritsen of Wood Prairie Farm in Bridgewater said. "Organic food is the hottest thing going."

Gerritsen's farm has been certified organic for 32 years, and he's spent 20 years as a volunteer inspector with MOFGA.

"The number of farmers and acres that are [certified] organic are increasing in this country," he said. "The certification system gives people the assurance that

what they are getting is bona fide organic."

Annual sales of organic food in this country hit \$40 billion last year, according to Ted Quaday, executive director of MOFGA.

"At present there is more demand for organic products in the U.S. than there is supply," Quaday said. "This supply gap suggests there is a tremendous opportunity for farmers interested in growing organic food. The MOFGA-certified organic label helps farmers secure market premiums by guaranteeing to consumers the food they are buying is grown in a way that produces healthful food while protecting the environment."

As important as that certification may be, not every organic farmer in Maine feels the need to have it.

Bradley Theriault, who operates Theriault All Natural Farms in Fort Kent with Aurora Jerkins, said he decided not to renew their MOFGA certification this year.

"We were certified in 2013 and stayed with it two years," Theriault said. "At the time we were able to get some help with funding for the certification process, and we were already farming organically."

Jerkins said their customer base in northern Maine increasingly is attracted to locally sourced and grown food but are not concerned

whether it is organically raised or not. The couple remains committed to growing organic vegetables but decided the cost of renewing and maintaining the MOFGA certification was not worth it.

"People up here really do not want to pay us more for vegetables just because it's certified organic," Jerkins said. "So we decided it was not worth the work or expense."

Devin said he found the on-the-farm inspection and the MOFGA application process in general to be quite helpful.

"The inspector was here for about two hours, and we really spent the time talking about the farm and my plan," he said. "There were some really good suggestions, and I learned a lot."

Devin hopes to hear back within a few weeks.

Once he has the certification in hand, the farm will be inspected by MOFGA annually to make sure he's sticking to his organic plans and practices.

"You know, the whole application process has been a really pleasant experience," he said. "MOFGA is here to help us, and they really want us to succeed [and] will do whatever they can to make sure we do. There is a customer base in Maine for whom being certified is a pretty big deal. For us to be competitive, we really need to have it."

Farm

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Bill Thayer said that although many 79-year-olds would like to retire, he doesn't.

"But I do want to slow down. Steve and Liz are perfect for allowing that process to take place," he said. "The goal is for Steve and Liz to own the farm, and for us to live out our years here."

Although no legal contracts have been signed yet, Eaton said that for his family, finding Darthia Farm and the Thayers is more than they had imagined. They'd been living and working in Long Island, New York, before moving to Maine, and ran into "a lot of dead ends" in New York when they searched for a way to obtain a farm of their own. They signed up for Farm-Link last summer and began searching through the listings.

"We didn't have any money and we didn't want to take out a huge loan mortgage to buy something. We have two children and felt it would be really difficult to start from scratch," Eaton said. "That first night we saw the listing for Darthia Farm, and it sounded like the Thayers were just really interested in figuring something out."

Eaton and Moran drove to the farm to look around. They met the Thayers, saw the animals, went for a swim on the property — and pinched themselves.

"I kind of couldn't believe where we were," Eaton said.

After another visit and some conversations, they worked out a plan with the Thayers to come to the farm in 2016 and be the farm managers. Next year, if all continues to go well, the Thayers and Eaton and Moran will start the legal process to become full partners in the business. That partnership will mean the Thayers can be involved in the farm as much as they want yet relax in the knowledge that the younger farmers have responsibility for its success, too.

"The joint goal is that Cynthia and Bill can flourish here for the rest of their lives and we can grow our life here and evolve with the farm," Eaton said.

Darthia Farm is special to the Thayers, who came here to try the back-to-the-land life after Bill Thayer had worked for many years in the insurance industry. When he started farming at age 39, he was hardly a young hippie "who had copped out on society."

"I didn't used to admit I was in the insurance business," he joked. "But I can't really knock it. The fact that I have that busi-

ness background helps me here."

But the farm, which has hosted more than 270 apprentices over the decades, also is special to many others who have participated in its community supported agriculture program, shopped at its farm store, visited its booth at the Winter Harbor farmers market and gone on wagon and sleigh rides hosted by Bill Thayer. The fact that many people care about Darthia Farm became very apparent after the 2012 fire, when the help started soon after the flames were extinguished and lasted until the new barn was raised. People from all over donated nearly

\$100,000 to the Thayers to help them rebuild, and also gave them new chickens, piglets, feed, tools, lumber, labor and more.

"We feel blessed that the community here has been so kind to us," Bill Thayer said. "I have a list of names here of people who donate money or work or time helping us. It's over a thousand names, and it's people from all over the country."

He said that he was surprised, and very heartened, by all the support. He's also gladdened by the way things are working out with the new farm family.

"They'll make a number of changes — but we'll be

able to live out our lives in a place that we love," Bill Thayer said. "It's a good thing to do, but selfishly I think it's a good thing for us."

Eaton said that he believes that similar nontraditional tenure agreements could help other farmers, both old and young, around the state.

"I think there's probably a lot of people my age who are having trouble figuring out how they can make farming a lifelong pursuit," he said. "And I think there's probably other people who feel similarly to Cynthia and Bill. I hope that more people consider this as a really viable option for the future."

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