



Whitefield News

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Farming in Whitefield: a model for the future

By Lucy Martin

"Up and coming," a "hub of farm activity" – these are phrases Chris Hamilton, who is associate director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), used to describe Whitefield.

With a couple of other states, Maine leads the nation in farmers under age 35. In our town alone, eight young farm families have settled here in the past five or six years, he said, and some of them are clearing woodland to make new fields. "That doesn't happen much. It's very inspiring."

Hamilton ticked off the names of several individuals, including the proprietors of Sheepscot General Store, on Townhouse Road, who have completed MOFGA's two-year Journey Person apprentice program, which trains farmers. Not only is the store an outlet for about 100 vendors to sell their goods, it also opened a deli last year and serves as a community center. It is "a shining example" of how to support a local farm economy, Hamilton said, and a "model for the future."

Hamilton lives with wife Patti in Whitefield where they raise meat animals and run a creamery. (See a list of more farms, page 2)

'Everybody worked hard on the chicken farm'

By Dot Howell

We moved to Maine from Connecticut in 1953, 61 years ago, and bought this house in Whitefield (on Townhouse Road, a stone's throw from the former Tibbetts dairy farm). I had worked at Pratt and Whitney in East Hartford, Conn. and Jay was self-employed as an insurance salesman. What else did you do in Hartford!

We needed a house we could live in and a barn we could convert. We wanted a bathroom and very few houses had them at that time. So we found this place with the bathroom and three storied barn. The barn was up by the house and is no longer there. We got right to work and pulled out all the stalls and all the hay and converted the barn to chicken space. We had wooden feeders and built a big bin above the third floor for grain. The grain was blown in up metal tubes and we had grain chutes on



Dot and Jay Howell, c. 1953, with their leghorn broilers. The gas brooder would drop down and the chicks would grow underneath the heat and light on newspapers. Time to maturity: 13 weeks. (Photo Courtesy Dot Howell)

each floor to fill our buckets for feeding the chickens. I remember with horror the day when I was filling the bucket when out came the big tail of a rat. I slapped down the **Continued Pg. 3**

Whitefield was early seedbed for 4-H

By Lucy Martin

"Fond memories" spring to mind for Barry Tibbetts about the 4-H Club he joined as a youngster in the late 1950s.

"My brother Danny and I had calves. We had a 4-H fair in town at Arlington Grange and showed calves up there, all day on Saturday. Danny was King of the Fair, and my sister Barbara was Queen," the retired dairy farmer said.

Barry's great aunt, Clara Law, who lived with husband Fred on the East River Road, organized the first 4-H Clubs for Whitefield girls and boys in 1924. It was called the "Good Workers."

With their agricultural focus, the clubs grew out of the Cooperative Extension Service created by Congress exactly 100 years ago.

Barry remembers going to Arden Nilsen's house, and then John Dancer's, in Kings Mills, as one of the Sheepscot Valley Boys. Later, the Jolly Workers formed in North Whitefield and Barry belonged to that



Clara Law started the first 4-H clubs in Whitefield in 1924. (Courtesy Whitefield Historical Society)

group.

In 1959, the total membership of the various clubs, including Lucky Leaf for girls in Coopers Mills, and the Bonnie Lassies in North Whitefield, was 54. Barry's memories include the good leadership and overnight camping trips organized by Randy Fenderson. "He liked to sing and yodel," and once, during the ride to a cheering competition at Thomaston, Fenderson created a cheer for the Jolly Workers, with the requisite "rah rah rah" and "sis-kum-bah," on the spot.

To Barry, the signal importance of belonging to 4-H was that "it was an organization outside the school. Once school closed in June, we on the farm never got out. 4-H was a chance to stay social and learn things you don't in school, like how to run a meeting. Each officer had a job. The older kids were the leaders."

Each member picked a project. His choices were dairy, learning how to take care of vegetables, entomology, and woodworking. "I always liked studying insects. I remember collecting them and putting them in the house. I'd pin each one and they'd fall apart," he said with a laugh. "I didn't know about using formaldehyde!"

4-H was a bigger organization in the 1960s and 1970s. A random glance through town reports of the period show voters supported the local club with \$100 in 1965 and \$150 in 1973. **Continued on Pg. 3**

Celebrating Whitefield Farms

Acorn Hill Farm

8 Jewett Ln.
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Vegetables, eggs, lamb and pork products for sale at Sheepscot General

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5101Email: bud1760@roadrunner.com
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Ph. (207) 441-2098 or (207) 441-2028.
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Web www.trebleridgefarm.com.
pork cuts, bacon, and a full line of gourmet ethnic sausages, strawberries from mid-July until frost, and hay for all classes of live-stock.

Just what is a CSA?

In keeping with our farming issue, we thought you would like to know just what is a CSA. CSA is an acronym for Community Supported Agriculture. Customers buy shares in the farm during the spring. This gives the farmer up-front capital to plant the season's crops or prepare other products, and in return the customer receives either a discount in price or a box share of the produce.

Help Whitefield with ice storm debris

Trying to forget the Christmas week ice storm? Well, the memory is still at our roadsides. You can help the town by removing brush and fallen trees within six feet of the road on your property. This will save the town on road maintenance money and ensure that the work is done to your satisfaction. Always make sure to use proper safety techniques and devices with chainsaws and other equipment, and never fell a damaged tree that is even remotely near a power line.

With your help our roads will be safer and the annual summer roadside mowing will proceed as usual.

Just Yesterday

On June 2, 1882, according to the *Gardiner Reporter*, "Joseph Mooney, of Whitefield, came to this city to sell some pigs. While at the New Mills his horse ran away and threw him and the pigs out, and damaged the wagon somewhat. Mr. Mooney broke a rib and received severe bruises, but after being repaired by Dr. Strout, and getting his wagon mended, he sold the rest of



Henry Waters (top) and Horace Kennedy perch on Engine #8, sometime after its derailment. (Courtesy Whitefield Historical Society)

his pigs and went home." (Courtesy Whitefield Historical Society)

On June 15, 1933, the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railway engine no. 8 derailed above Whitefield bridge, marking the end of the narrow gauge railroad. It began operating in 1895, helping farmers and lumbermen ship their products to market, and transporting students to school.

4-H Continued from Pg. 1 About the middle sixties, the clubs integrated. For about eight years, Barry's mother Bea ran the Jolly Workers, and later his wife, Elaine.

"I never realized there was so much opportunity in 4-H," Barry recalled, until he went to the University of Maine at Orono and met fellow students who'd been involved. One went on to become the current commissioner of agriculture.

In recent years, Louisa Gorill and Dolly Burns have guided the Jolly Workers. It's small, said Dolly, and emphasizes community projects, such as maintaining the veterans memorial and flowers boxes behind the town office. But a lot of the kids still show animals. "The Jolly Workers is probably one of the first clubs in the state," Dolly said. "It would be nice to research it and find all the leaders" who have served.

Today, 4-H is the largest youth development and empowerment organization in the U.S., according to the group's web site. It is more urbanized, with citizenship, healthy living, science, and technology forming the top tier of its priorities. Barry can still recite the 4-H pledge: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living for my club, my community, my country...." The phrase "my world" was added later.

Federal conservation grants available

By Tony Marple

The Augusta District of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a division of the US Dept. of Agriculture, has a variety of grants available to assist farmers and woodlot owners. NRCS gives extra points to grant applicants who are new farmers. There are a variety of grants available and the following are just a few:

Environmental Quality (EQIP) grants are for practices to improve soil quality, water, plant and animal resources. EQIP offers funds to remove invasive plants. Common invasive plants in Whitefield include Russian olive (also known as autumn olive), Japanese knot weed and Morrow's honeysuckle.

Organic farming initiatives. These include the development of pollinator habitat for wild bees, various conservation practices, soil quality improvement, the development of buffer zones for wildlife, grazing plans, crop rotation, nutrient management and high tunnel hoop houses to extend the growing season.

Farm energy audits.

My wife Marianne and I have received NRCS grants over the years for mulching blueberries with wood chips to reduce erosion, developing pollinator habitat, removing Russian olive and improving woods roads. We have found the staff in Augusta to be great to work with. The process is also very educational even if you don't get a grant.

You can reach NRCS in Augusta at 622-7847.

Howell Continued from Pt. 1
chute cover and yelled for Jay.

Anyway, we started with 10,000 baby chicks. We raised broilers first for CMT company in Winslow -Corbett, McGowan and Turner. They later became Ralston Purina. The company paid us for labor, heat and electricity... We were paid one penny a bird a week so with 10,000 birds we got \$100 a week. When we built the long new chicken house across the road in 1963-64, we had 31,000 sq. ft. and housed 45,000 birds. Then they did *not* pay by the bird but by the square foot so we got \$310 a week instead of \$450! Can't win!!! In the new building, we started with the glass water jars for baby chicks and then went to automated feeding and long stainless steel feeders. We could lift up one end of the long feeder and dump water into a pail for cleaning the feeders.

We raised chickens until 1981 when Purdue and the Delmarva area [Delaware-Maryland-Virginia] took over the chicken business. They



Don Tibbetts' hay wagon in front of the Howell home in the 1950s. (Photos courtesy Dot Howell)

raised chickens cheaper as they did not need heat in the buildings and about every house had a chicken house behind it. To cool down the buildings they would spray the roofs with a hose.

I went down to the Delmarva area several times to represent Maine in the national chicken cooking contest. [Daughter] Wendy did too. We never won big but won smaller prizes and enjoyed meeting all the other farmers from all over the U.S. The trip was paid for by the National Poultry Association....

Before our chickens came the first time, we had a Whitefield open house.... We set up tables in the barn on the new sawdust and had coffee, punch and cookies so people could see the facility. Once the chickens came it was off limits because of disease.

(The Howell family included five children, all of whom "worked hard on the farm," Dot says.)



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JUNE 2014 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

- 1st** Pancake Breakfast hosted by Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC) at the Alna Store in Alna, From 8am-10:30am
Coopers Mills Migratory Fish Day, Whitefield Lions Club, Coopers Mills 10-12 p.m.
Fuzzy Udder Creamery's Grand Opening, at their new home in Whitefield 35 Townhouse Road, 2-5 PM
- 2nd** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Coopers Mills Fire Dept. Mtg. 7 pm
Kings Mills Fire Dept. 7pm
- 3rd** Women of Whitefield, Sheepscot General. 10 am
Select Board 6pm
Kings Mills Union Hall Board Mtg. Public Welcome, 7 pm
- 4th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 5th** Senior Men's Group, Sheepscot General, 10 am
Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6pm
- 6th** Whitefield Food Bank, St. Denis Hall, 1-3pm
Art Opening of Coreysha Stone's work- "Bringing Back the Giants Of the Forest" is inspired by the American Chestnut tree- FREE 6:00 pm
- 7th** Whitefield Lions Club - Hooked on Fishing at Damariscotta Lake State Park - Info please contact Jeff Jewett 549-5657, 9am to 1pm.
- 8th** Whitefield Athletic Association (WAA) Whitefield School 6 pm
- 9th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Whitefield Municipal Fire Dept. Mtg. 7 pm
- 10th** Women of Whitefield Sheepscot General. 10 am
Guided Tour of HVNC Trails, HVNC 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Select Board 6pm
RSU Budget Validation Meeting, Whitefield Elementary, 6:30 pm
- 11th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 12th** Arlington Grange 6 pm Supper, 7 pm Meeting
Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6pm
RSU Board Mtg. Westport Island 6:30-9 pm
- 13th** Polynesian Pollination- FREE Family craft project making seed balls (seed that has been wrapped in soil materials) paired with live ukulele music 6pm-8pm
- 16th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 17th** Women of Whitefield, Sheepscot General. 10 am
Select Board 6pm
- 18th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Planning Board Meeting, Fire Station, 7-9 pm
- 19th** Senior Men's Group, Sheepscot General. 10 am
Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6pm
Chester Gillis shares memories of Whitefield, video recording by Art Mayers, Sheepscot General Store 7 p.m.
- 20th** Open Mic Night, Sheepscot General, 7-9 pm
- 21st** Farmers/Flea Market, Arlington Grange Hall, 9-1pm
Whitefield Lions Club Yard Sale at home of Donna Brooks, Route 32, Jefferson (next to County Fair Farms) Info contact Donna Brooks 549-3899
- 22nd** Paddle the Sheepscot from Head Tide to Sheepscot Village, Limit of 12 boats - Registration required by contacting SVCA, (207) 586-5616 9-12 p.m.
- 23rd** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 24th** Women of Whitefield Sheepscot General. 10 am
Select Board 6pm
- 25th** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Arlington Grange 6 pm Supper, 7 pm Meeting
- 26th** Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6pm
- 28th** YOGA, Sheepscot General, 9-10:15 am
Walk on SVCA's Palermo Preserve, Turner Ridge Road, 10-12 pm
- 30st** ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary

Do you have an event? Contact whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com

We'll add you to the town calendar website and newsletter.

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of the month. Email whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com



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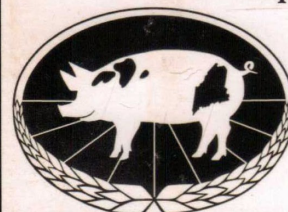
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