



# Whitefield News

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## Shepherds Craft Farm: From California to Maine

by Tony Marple

In April, Laurel and Josh Banks and their son, Brandon, moved to Whitefield from their 100 acre farm in Mendocino County, Northern California. Josh and Laurel moved to Maine in part due to the drought and forest fires in California. Laurel grew up in Mendocino, and Josh grew up outside of Boston. They met during Laurel's senior year in high school; while Josh was building a house with one of Laurel's classmates. She built a cabin for her senior project.

Asked how they feel about living in Maine, Laurel said she's "stoked", a term she learned from the "old hippies" living near their California farm. She does find the culture here a little "chillier" than that of California. Josh loves Maine, though he retains ties to California where he still manages a "word of mouth" business renovating and servicing farms, so he travels back and forth to California often. Their young son, Brandon, is clearly "stoked" to be in town and has been seen riding the rocking elephant at Sheepscot General.



*The Banks Family*

In their search for a new farm, the Banks looked in Oregon, Seabrook, Pittston, Gorham, Waldoboro and Warren, among other locations.

Josh had heard good things about Whitefield from friends and when they saw the farm, then owned by Austin Moore's daughter, Rebecca, they knew immediately that they wanted to own it.

The farm includes Gotland, Teeswater, and Merino sheep; totaling 130. The Banks plan to grow the flock to 200-300. The sheep are usually rotated twice a day to different grazing areas to the benefit of grass and sheep and to the detriment of parasites. They are building a 65x150 foot clear span half circle barn to house their flock.

Photo by Tony Marple

They also have laying hens; primarily for their own use. They sell wool, meat, milk, and pelts.

A visit to their website will give you a lot more information about their farm and their sustainable farming practices: [www.shepherdscraftfarm.com](http://www.shepherdscraftfarm.com)

The family is hard working, enthusiastic, and accessible. They want to become active in town activities once their barn is built. We can all look forward to that.

## Forest Harvest

by Dan Joslyn

Summer is soon ending and all things to be picked, pulled, mowed, or otherwise harvested are on man's conveyor belt, or will be by October. During a drive around Whitefield, gardens can be observed lush with summer's bounty. Kitchens have canning jars. Hayfields are smoothly shaven and a joy for children to run through again.

There is one crop, however, that generally cannot be so easily observed...wild mushrooms! Yes, it's that scary fungi that many folks care not to harvest, and that is just fine for those of us who do partake. Fear is a reasonable emotion. It makes us cautious; keeps us on our toes, but it shouldn't deter us from enjoying one of Maine's most enjoyable crops.

With ample knowledge, one can pick safely. "Our" first picking started after taking a class from Greg Marley offered by the



*Black Trumpets* Photo by Cheryle Joslyn

Maine Mycological Association several years ago: [www.mainelymushrooms.org](http://www.mainelymushrooms.org). One needs to be a member to access all of their information. We also purchased the *National Audubon Society Field Guide To American Mushrooms*. This guide is very helpful. There are lots of other books and instructors out there, too.

Over twenty folks were in our first class. We learned about many types of fungi; both edible and poisonous. There were so many types; it was overwhelming at first (sort of like watching a scary movie on TV), but also exciting and empowering. We learned how to pick four safe mushrooms. "Safe" because those four have no poisonous look-alikes at all. Pictures of two of our favorite types are included with this article; Maitake (Hen of the Woods) and Black Trumpets. Both can be found during September and October before the first heavy frost.

As a beginner, you should learn from an expert and stay with the easily identifiable types. These are delicious. Maitake are called the "yelling mushroom" because when you find your first, you are likely to jump up and down and yell. They grow up to forty pounds and will provide a winter's supply for soups and stews. Trumpets are dainty, but grow in clusters on the forest floor. They are cooked in a variety of ways.

**Continued on Page 2**



### Harvest Continued from Pg. 1

Never pick with only a book as your guide. Never throw varied species in one basket or bag. Never eat multiple species at one time. Never, never, be untrained, and once you know the safe mushrooms, you can pick with abandon. Leave the others for another year, when you have attended classes and gone on forays with experts. For us, we've stuck with four safe mushrooms, but enjoy finding others.

We buy farm-raised mushrooms when wild are not available, but this time of year gets us yearning to start gathering our own. These wild edibles are enjoyed in some of the best restaurants in the country. Their flavors far exceed what you get from farm-raised varieties. They're great in soups, stews, with scrambled eggs, or simply sautéed in oil or butter. Get creative!

In season, Sheepscot General sells several wild varieties. Give them a call or stop in: 549-5185 or [sheepscotgeneral.com](http://sheepscotgeneral.com) to see what they have. Oyster Creek Mushroom in Damariscotta also sells a wide variety:

[OysterCreekMushroom.com](http://OysterCreekMushroom.com)

Greg Marley from Rockland teaches classes for the Maine Mycological Association and for many others. He also has a display at the Common Ground Fair. Stop by his booth this Fall and learn what he has to teach you about medicinal uses of mushrooms: "Maine is home to some of the tastiest wild mushrooms available. Some of the best edible mushrooms also are among the best-researched medicinal mushrooms," says Marley.

There are a bunch of cautions that you'd be wise to follow, so go to the website previously mentioned, and join the Maine Mycological Society. Everyone should take a class (such as the one you can read about on page 3 of this edition). Join the Maine Mycological Association for ten bucks or twelve for a couple. Welcome to the club and enjoy a safe harvest! (P.S: Don't forget your tick spray!)



Maitake (Hen of the Woods) by Dan Joslyn

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## Please Tell Us

The Whitefield News group welcomes suggestions for topics to include in the monthly newsletter. If you have an interesting idea for a topic to share with the community, we would like to hear from you. Please contact [whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com](mailto:whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com) or call Debbie at 549-3491

## Wild September in Whitefield: Goldenrod and Raptors

by Kit Pfeiffer

Day by day, month by month, the wild world around us is changing here in Whitefield. During September, be looking for some natural sights that are especially obvious signs of fall approaching.

### Abundant Goldenrod:

*Canada goldenrod*

Did you know there are at least 20 species of goldenrod in Maine? The most common is Canada goldenrod, growing thickly in fields and roadsides. When I first see its familiar tall plume of yellow in August, it reminds me that summer is speeding by and will soon turn to fall. Other common goldenrods have descriptive names such as flat-top, hairy, downy and bog goldenrod. Next time you see a goldenrod, take a closer look. Is it tall and feathery, or does it have tighter clusters that form a flat top? Is the stem covered with stiff hairs or softer down? You may see two or more kinds of goldenrod clustered together, and that makes it easier to see the differences.

Don't worry about sneezing when you inspect the flowers, either. Goldenrod is not the culprit for hay fever this time of year. The pollen that causes the most trouble is ragweed, which blooms at the same time as goldenrod. The ragweed's pollen is blown around by the wind (and into your nose and eyes!), but goldenrod pollen is too heavy and sticky for that. It is mostly pollinated by insects.

### Migrating raptors:

It's the time of year to look up in the sky over our beautiful open fields around Whitefield.

The raptors are restless and on their

way south. If you're lucky, you may see a "hawk happening" called kettling. The broad-winged hawks like to gather in large numbers (50 or more, up to 1,000!) to make their journey together. You may see a big black clump high in the sky, as the hawks circle in the wind currents, forming a kettle shape. One by one, they will shoot out of the formation and fly off. They are headed to Central and South America for the winter, returning in April.

Easier to see are the raptors who soar over cut hayfields or perch on wires along our roads. One beauty is the American kestrel, Maine's smallest falcon, about the size of a crow. (It used to be called the sparrow hawk.) It will perch and peer around with its large eyes (a falcon can see up to 8 times more clearly than a human). Then it will strike out with strong, rapid wing-strokes to snare the rodent or insect it spied in the grass.

Good luck spotting the migrating raptors and the different species of goldenrod this month. Please let me know what you discover by writing to [kit\\_pfeiffer@yahoo.com](mailto:kit_pfeiffer@yahoo.com)



American Kestrel © Christopher L. Wood





This team of 4 white-faced oxen and steers with a load of pressed hay on a platform wagon has stopped in front of the grain building next to the former Roger Glidden house on Main Street in Coopers Mills, early 1900s. The teamster is believed to be Roger's uncle, Clarence Glidden. The grain building was used as storage for bags of grain to be sold at the Achorn Bros. Store. *The small black rectangle on the upper left side of the barn near the eaves contained pigeon holes to allow them access to the barn. The pigeons cleaned up spilled grain and helped to keep down the rat population.* This building is no longer

## Open House/Annual Meeting Event

(by Cheryle Joslyn)

The Kings Mills Union Hall and the Kings Mills Volunteer Fire Department Association invite you to an Open House Sunday, September 27 from 2:00-5:00 pm. Refreshments will be served, members and volunteers will be available



to share information about the Fire Department and the Union Hall, and will be eager to acquaint you with the work and efforts that each organization plans for the upcoming year. The Union Hall will also hold its annual meeting. The Whitefield Historical Society volunteers also plan to be available to answer questions about the Society. This is a chance to learn about what each group has accomplished



this past year and their plans for the upcoming year. Please join in our community event. We hope to see you there.



## Introduction to Mushroom Foraging

Join Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC) and noted mushroom enthusiast David Spahr for an "Introduction to Mushroom Foraging" workshop at HVNC in Jefferson on Saturday, September 19, 9am to 1pm.

Mushrooms are revered in many other cultures for their medicinal and nutritional properties, as well as their essential and fascinating role in local ecologies. In the U.S. mushrooms are just beginning to get the widespread respect and attention they deserve.



Local mushrooms. Photo by David Spahr.

David Spahr has been an active member in this transformation. He has collected countless amounts of wild mushrooms for restaurants across the state; he leads regular workshops about growing, identifying, and cooking mushrooms; and he is the author of *Edible and Medicinal Mushrooms of New England and Eastern Canada* available in many bookstores and libraries in Maine and online.

Participants will get an introduction to mushroom ecology and the basics of foraging during a short presentation. Following the presentation David will lead the group on a foray into HVNC's forest on the hunt for local mushroom treasure. Past forays have turned up many noteworthy species, some edible, and some just really fascinating.

Pre-registration is required for this workshop and is available online at: <http://hvnc.org/registration/>. Tuition is \$45 for HVNC, PWA, SVCA, SWLA, and DLWA members; \$55 for all others.

For more information about HVNC's events, or to find out how you can support HVNC visit [www.hvnc.org](http://www.hvnc.org), write to [info@hvnc.org](mailto:info@hvnc.org), or call 207-200-8840.

## Arlington Grange Farmers/Flea Market

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## SEPTEMBER 2015 Community EVENTS CALENDAR

- 1st** **Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm  
**Laughing Yoga with Karen Stultz** Join us and discover the fast and easy way to reduce stress, and have fun doing it. Sheepscot General, 6:30 pm  
**Kings Mills Union Hall board** meeting, public welcome, 7 pm
- 2nd** **Arlington Grange Meeting**, Potluck Dinner 6 pm, meeting 7 pm - All are welcome  
**Whitefield Historical Society** meeting 6:30 pm
- 3rd** **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 4th** **Whitefield Food Pantry**, St. Denis Hall, 1-3 pm
- 7th** **Coopers Mills Fire Dept.**, All are welcome. No obligation. 7 pm  
**Kings Mills Fire Dept.**, 7 pm
- 8th** **Women of Whitefield**, Sheepscot General, 10 am  
**Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 10th** **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscot General, 10 am  
**RSU School Board Meeting** Chelsea School, 6:30 pm
- 12th** **Make a Traditional Gathering Basket at Hidden Valley Nature Ctr.** you're invited to learn to make your own gathering basket at Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC) in Jefferson. Join instructor Wanda Garland and HVNC for a full day (8-4pm) For more information: [www.hvnc.org](http://www.hvnc.org), [info@hvnc.org](mailto:info@hvnc.org), or 207-200-8840.  
**SVCA's Champagne on the Sheepscot fundraiser** Saturday, September 12, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m. Westport Island
- 13th** **Whitefield Athletic Association (WAA)**, Whitefield School, 6 pm
- 14th** **Whitefield Municipal Fire Dept.**, Fire Station, 7 pm
- 15th** **Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 16th** **Planning Board**, Fire Station, 6-8 pm
- 17th** **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 18th** **Open-Mic Night**, Sheepscot General, 7-9 pm
- 19th** **Farmers Market—Flea Market—Arlington Grange** Join local farmers and neighbors and see what is available for produce, flowers, crafts, and collectibles!! Food as well. Join us for a grilled hot dog lunch. 9-1 pm  
**Introduction to Mushroom Foraging**, see article on Page 3  
**DRUMMING CIRCLE**, Sheepscot General, 6:30 pm, Open to the public, all ages welcome
- 22nd** **Women of Whitefield**, Sheepscot General, 10 am  
**Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 24th** **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 27th** **Annual Meeting/Open House—** The Kings Mills Union Hall, the Kings Mills Volunteer Fire Department Association and Whitefield Historical Society invite you to an Open House Sunday, September 27 from 2:00-5:00 pm.
- 29th** **Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 30th** **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscot General, 10 am

*Do you have an event? Contact [whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com](mailto:whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com)*

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



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## Harvest Time



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