Nye Hill Farm is Popping
Growing, Brewing, Llamas, and more...

I recently visited the Nye farm on Mid-
dletown Road and spoke to Alyson Lush, the farm manager, to see what new things might be happening there. Currently they have 4 potbelly pigs, a 700 lb Hampshire sow named Cheyenne, 7 goats, 2 horses, 5 llamas, additional chickens, 13 sheep and several dogs. Pastures were cleared, a new barn was constructed for the llamas, goats and sheep, and a shelter for the horses, as well as a lovely chicken coop. Many of these animals have come to the farm as rescues and have found a happy home where they can work to keep open space, help with tilling the soil, and contribute to the fertility of the gardens and pastures. Three shearings worth of wool from the sheep were sent off to MacAusland’s Woolen Mills in Prince Edward Island to be made into blankets. 13 sheep + 1 1/2 years (and a lot of loving care) = 13 queen sized blankets!

Maple sugaring continues, having been developed and enhanced by Robert Dellonna, a Roxbury resident, who contributes creative talent to almost all aspects of the farm from animal husbandry to fine woodworking. He has set up tapholes and expanded them this season by about 30 percent.

(Continued on page 4)
Roxbury Conservation Commission Gets Going
Natural Resources Inventory is first project

Last autumn, in its first year of existence, the Roxbury Conservation Commission picked as its first task the job of surveying the town’s natural attributes and conditions -- including its wildlife, its streams, its soils and lands. The effort is in the development stage now, meaning that the scope of what’s commonly known as a natural resources inventory has not yet been decided. But it is understood that the final product, whatever final form and shape it takes, will shed light on our town’s natural state and therefore be informative to residents and town boards and commissions. The project will comply with New Hampshire’s Planning and Land Use Regulation RSA 36-A:2, which requires town conservation commissions to keep an index of all open space and natural, aesthetic, and ecological areas within a community. In many cases that also includes a roster of the types of birdlife, mammals, amphibians, reptiles. The commission’s members have been interviewing people who are experienced in such survey work, including staff at the Monadnock Conservancy and the Southwest Region Planning Commission, in addition to conservation commission officials in other towns who have already put together such inventories. In some large communities, such natural resource inventories constitute more than a snapshot of current conditions and go so far as to identify parcels of land that the town government should consider acquiring for conservation purposes. No such land-acquisition ambition is included in the Roxbury project. Rather, the contemplated natural resources inventory is expected to be just that -- essentially a listing of existing natural attributes.

It’s expected that the project will take more than a few months and also a lot of effort. Toward that end, the commission is exploring possible sources of grant funding. The commission also is likely to seek volunteer help from town residents to collect information for the project and perhaps contribute information and photos to the final printed report.

Michelle Drogue, who’s the chairman of the commission, deserves credit for leading the effort to survey the natural surroundings and wildlife populations in town.
Notes from the Selectmen

*Here’s a brief summary of what’s happening as of March, 2017:* Roxbury’s selectmen were busy in 2016 on many fronts. Administrative-ly, they schooled themselves in the use of a new state-designed system for online filing of budget and other in-formation with the Department of Revenue Administration and, follow-ing the departure of the town’s part-time administrative assistant, they themselves took on the functions of that position.

***
In terms of policy, the selectmen con-ducted hearings and votes toward the adoption of (a) an expanded and de-tailed permit policy for certain special events on private property in town and (b) an expanded rental policy for the private use of Town Hall. They also revised the fee schedule for services provided by the town and added solar equipment installation to the town’s building permit checklist.

***
Separately, under the direction of Se-lectman Tim O’Brien the selectmen worked with department heads to compile an inventory of town-owned equipment and related property.

***
Other important events during the year included the formation of the Roxbury Conservation Commission and the organization of a community clean-up day for the upper cemetery on Middletown Road.

***
The year also brought a number of improvements to Town Hall, most visibly the paving of the parking area near the front door to help accommodate access by wheel chairs and the installation of a window in the front door, the latter idea having been suggested from the floor at last year’s Town Meeting. Internally, the main floor and stairway were sanded. Fi-nally, under the direction of former selectman Chip Drogue, a fully-equipped kitchen was installed on the first floor as part of an effort to qualify the Town Hall as a Red Cross Emergency Shelter.

***
Another internal enhancement result-ed from a gift of a painting to the town by Sandy (Fifield) Tacy. The painting, which is a faithful image of the former Town Hall in Roxbury Center by artist Jane (Russell Street-er) Capone, is displayed in a promi-nent spot on the main floor of Town Hall.

***
Among personnel changes during the year, Tim O’Brien succeeded Karen Cota as selectman; Chip Drogue suc-ceded Fred White as Emergency Management Director; and Tim Mason succeeded Allan LaPlante as Fire Chief.

***
In other business, the selectmen were approached by representatives of the city of Keene for police patrol services on its watershed lands in town. A formal agreement was worked out and will be implemented in 2017.

***
Jacob Johnson, a Roxbury resident who’s a member of Boy Scout Troop 311 conducted a litter pick-up sweep of the Davis Road, and he was thanked for his services. The selectmen were also heartened by citizen initiative behind the organization of the second annual Halloween Party in Town Hall.

***
The Selectmen accepted the terms of an Emergency Management Performance Grant in the amount of $15,657 to be used toward the purchase of emergency communications and com-puter-related equipment.

Your Selectmen: Gerry Davis
Tim O’Brien
Jim Rousmaniere

---

Don’t miss the

**POTLUCK SUPPER**

immediately before the Town Meeting

**TUESDAY, MARCH 14 at 5 PM**

*Bring a plate, utensils and a dish to share.*
He also has prepared a site for a second high tunnel greenhouse. This one will have plantings directly in the ground (as opposed to raised beds) which ideally will require less watering. The drought this past summer made irrigation difficult so measures are being taken to make more use of existing ground water rather than have complete dependence on the well water.

It was a great year, weather-wise, for grapes -- 100 pounds were harvested and sent off to Summit Winery in Westmoreland to be processed into wine. The berries did well but it was too dry for a second crop. Three new rows totaling 60 blueberry bushes were added. Also added: a new strawberry patch behind fencing to prevent the family dogs from eating all the tasty berries! Bees have not fared so well but they will keep trying.

The farm stand at our Town Hall was a great success this past summer, helped by the consistency of open hours on Tuesday afternoons, the sign at the 4-corners, information on the Town website, and word of mouth as well as sunny weather. More customers than in the previous summer came looking for vegetables and goodies as well as conversation. The staff plans to be there again starting about the second week in June through mid-October, with the hours changing a bit as the day-length shortens.

The Nye Farm Brewery is up and running! AND, a great success. Last July, at the 2nd annual Wyman Tavern Brewfest on Main Street in Keene, Brewmeister Sue Benik took 1st place with NyePA Old Gent and 2nd place with Honey Peach Blonde, 17 other vendors competing. In October the Brewery was featured in New Hampshire Magazine. On February, along with nine other brewers,
(Continued from page 4)
Nye Farm was scheduled to be at Elm City Brewery’s Brewfest showcasing Maple Homestead made with pure maple syrup from Hank Kenney’s Homestead Farm in Marlborough. Many of the brews include local ingredients.
Spent grain is fed to the pigs and also made into dog biscuits. Their signature ale, Bonfire Ale, is on tap at Fireworks, while both Harlow’s Pub in Peterborough and the Fitzwilliam Inn have Nye Farm dedicated taps. Brewtopia, Hannah Grimes and the Monadnock Co-op all sell 22 oz bottles whose labels feature local artists’ works such as Favreau, featured this past fall with a painting by Marlborough artist Mary Iselin of her husband, George, shoeing a horse. Production now is at one barrel or 31 gallons each week. The plan is to increase that to two barrels per week to keep up with demand. Sue anticipates that the taproom at the farm will be open to the public by early summer with specific hours for tastings.
As the brewery evolves creative solutions are needed to increase the ease of various steps in the preparation. Sue showed me how she uses the beer trolley to hoist and move the heavy 1/6 barrel kegs in the cooler, set up for her by Robert.
An open farm/ open studio/ beer tasting event featuring local artists is planned for early October. Even now, anyone is welcome to visit the farm to see what is going on. Sue says, “The community has been so supportive! Everyone has been behind us — it is overwhelming and great!”
The farm website is: http://nyehillfarm.com, and you can also find them on Facebook.
Last Fall our Fire Chief, Alan Laplante, retired from his position in order to move South. Our Deputy Fire Chief, Timothy Mason, stepped up to fill the void. He has had extensive experience with 38 years in the Keene Fire Department, rising to the rank of lieutenant and is still on the roster. Tim and his girlfriend Tanya live on Middletown Road. He has lived in Roxbury for 23 years, raised his daughter Alison and now his grandson Gabe.

Tim has served as our deputy fire chief for 15 years. He has also been our fire warden, a position for which he was recommended by the selectmen and then appointed to by the state. Tim says that one of his goals is to meet all of Roxbury’s residents, learn exactly where all building and residences are located and get to know them. He is happy to teach us what the rules and regulations are for fire safety and why they are important -- reasons for which are not always obvious. In that spirit he emphasizes that having a working smoke detector in every house is extremely important. “I can’t push this enough!” he says.

Tim comes by this passion naturally. His late father was also in the Keene Fire Department. Tim’s dad was a captain in the Keene Steam Fire Engine Hose Company and Tim was involved from an early age. Years ago, before the Fire Department had full-time staff and sleeping quarters there were organizations called “Call Companies”. Three existed in Keene: the Keene Steam Fire Engine Hose Company, the Washington Hook and Ladders, and the Deluge Hose Company. Each dealt exclusively with its own specialty. The Deluge handled all the hoses, the Washington maintained and employed the ladders and the Keene Steam managed the steam engine pump, to pump the water needed to put out fires. All companies were called to a fire emergency. Nowadays, all of the firefighters are prepared to handle all of the equipment. Some of the fires we burn are necessary and Tim would like us to know some of the regulations regarding these. Burning brush without a permit is allowed only when there is complete snow cover. If it is raining but there is no snow cover a brush fire still requires a written permit. Campfires are required to have written permits and there are 2 types: a 2-foot circumference fire is considered a cookfire and can be lit during the day to cook meals. A 4-foot circumference campfire can only be lit between the hours of 5-9PM. This is because the size of the fire can become more dangerous with the added heat of the sun. Permits can be for one day or seasonal and they can be gotten, if the conditions are favorable, by contacting Tim (352-8843) or his deputies, Gary Lafreniere (313-4059) and Buddy Matson (790-0319). Please do not hesitate to call Tim with any questions you might have.
School Board Report

The community-led non-profit group Impact Monadnock held a public screening of the film “Raising New Hampshire” at the high school. From their website:

“Impact Monadnock targets all children in the Monadnock Region, from birth to age five, and their families. It was created in response to research indicating that early childhood development is one of the most critical factors determining the future of all citizens of the Monadnock Region — because what happens to our youngest residents will have a powerful impact on our community’s future success and prosperity.”

Adding to this, it has been shown that once a child reaches school age, the progress they make in literacy during the first four years (K-3) sets the pace and potential for that child’s future learning. This is the point when students need to read in order to learn — not just learn to read.

In early November the SAU 93 staff presented their proposed 2017-2018 budget to the School Board, Budget Committee, and general public. A long discussion which included a number of the district town’s selectmen was also held on the following topics:

“How can the towns and schools work together to meet early childhood needs in our community?”

“How can the Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD) ensure graduating seniors are college and/or career ready?”

These critical questions generated a lot of comments, but one notable response was that the second goal is largely dependent upon the first for a substantial number of our children. MRSD has elementary schools where 40% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch — the primary indicator for poverty. We also have a significant number of students categorized as homeless.

As district revenue from adequacy, catastrophic aid, and stabilization grants continue to decline from the state of New Hampshire, we are in a position where towns are seeing increased taxes to make up the difference. Over the past few years the SAU 93 administration has buffered us from the full extent of these revenue losses through cutting costs, increased efficiency, and deferred building maintenance. As a town, we have also successfully fought for a more equitable method of taxation. Moving forward, residents will need to weigh higher taxes against significant changes to the organization of the district and the quality of education our children receive. Current contingencies for handling a budget reduction include a combination of higher student to teacher ratios (larger class sizes), reduction in district support staff, mixed-grade classrooms, restructuring the southern schools, and closing of the Gilsum STEAM Academy.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Mosher
Town of Roxbury Representative to the SAU 93 School Board

---

Roxbury NH Scholarship Fund Form

Each year the citizens of Roxbury award financial recognition to graduating seniors at Monadnock High School.

Please use this form if you would like to contribute for next year.

Name: ___________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________
Town, State, Zip: ___________________________________

Enclosed is my donation of $10.00
Enclosed is my spouse’s donation of $10.00
Enclosed is an additional donation of: $_____
Total enclosed: $_____

Please make checks payable to: Roxbury Scholarship Fund.
And mail to: Roxbury Scholarship Fund, c/o Carol White, 8 Middletown Rd, Roxbury, NH 03431
Community Cleanup

Fred White joined in on a community clean-up of the upper cemetery on Middletown Road during the summer of 2016. Among others who took part in the betterment project were Shane Ellis, Ed Ellis, Raymond Forbes, Jacob Forbes, Devon Forbes, Gale Russell, Fred White, Beth Castagna, Tim Mason, Gerry Davis, Joy Richards, Tyler Arlen, Ken Buffum and grandson, and Jim Rousmaniere.

Town Hall Painting

The selectmen thanked Sandy (Fifield) Tacy for the gift of a painting of the former town hall in Roxbury Center. The painting, by Jane (Russell Streeter) Capone, now hangs on the wall on the main floor of Town Hall.

Help Wanted

The Roxbury Report is looking for volunteer writers and photographers to contribute to our town newsletter. If you would like to be a part of this community effort – or if you have news to share – please contact Sharon at editor@RoxburyReport.com.

Maple Sugaring Workshop

Spring is in the air and it’s maple syrup time in New England! To help celebrate this spring tradition Steve Roberge, Cheshire County Extension For ester, is offering a workshop on small-scale maple syrup production. The workshop will take place at Distant Hill Gardens’ sugarhouse in Walpole NH. Learn how they collect the sweet sap from 150 sugar maple trees using a gravity tubing system. Michael Nerrie of Distant Hill will fire up the wood-fired evaporator so you can experience the sweet smell of sap being boiled down to produce the ‘Liquid Gold’ we call maple syrup. All ages are welcome to this free event. It is a short and easy walk to the sugarhouse. Please dress for the weather. Snowshoes are not required but feel free to bring a pair to explore the sugar bush.

Ghosts and Goblins Come to Visit

Roxbury’s Annual Halloween Party was held for the town’s children this past October. The organizers were: Marcy White, Karen Schwindt, Michelle White, and Kristen Amends. The pictures below show what awaited the children in Town Hall.

Roxbury Goes Digital

During the last 12 months, the Town of Roxbury Web site has been getting increased use. Content includes the display of minutes of government meetings in town and also the posting of public notices of meetings and projects to bid. The principal day-to-day posting is handled by Josh Hicks. Learn more at: www.roxburynh.org.