Weare’s Maple Sugar Houses
Are A Sweet Business

By Alyssa Small

In 1781, Isaac Grant, a Scottish blacksmith and farmer, married Tamar Hadley, whose father fought in the Battle of Bennington in the Revolutionary War. Together they began the story of Grant Family Farms in Weare.

Their descendant, Hiram (Al) Grant, was the first of the family to turn to sugaring in the early 1900s. He built a sugarhouse from locally milled trees and scraps of lumber, some from a demolished town bridge, on Mount Dearborn Road. He hauled sap by buckets to a sled that was pulled by oxen. His wife, Jessie, would boil the finished syrup further to make sugar cakes. They packaged their syrup and sugar in wooden boxes made by Al and sent them on the train down to Boston where they were sold at market. The income from the maple production paid the Grant Family’s taxes.

Hiram’s son, Leon, took over the tradition and continued the syrup production using buckets, tractors, and pull carts until 1937. He made 200-300 gallons of syrup a year.

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2020 Invention Convention Winners Announced For Upper Elementary and Middle School

Weare Middle and Center Woods Upper Elementary Schools held their Invention Convention the first week in March. The Invention Convention is part of The Young Inventor’s Program, a K-12 project-based learning program that provides a hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) educational enrichment opportunity to budding youth inventors.

“Selecting the winners to compete at the Regional Convention on March 31 at Southern New Hampshire University was difficult...as all of the projects showed such creativity,” said WMS/CWUES Principal Shawne Hillard.

Students moving on to regionals from the Weare Middle and Center Woods Upper Elementary Schools are:

- **Judge’s Choice:** Cameron DeNapoli and the Playful Puppy Bed, a dog bed that uses air to push toys to your pup so he can play while you’re away.
- **Practical and Useful:** Grace Meisser and the De-ice-inator which first squirts an alcohol and water solution on your windshield and features a squeegee to remove the melting ice.
- **Original and Unique:** Claire McCallum and the Super Secure Solar Shredder, a solar operated junk mail shredder located outside next to your mailbox.
- **Environmental:** Molly Heath’s The Crusher 3000, which crushes plastic into smaller pieces to recycle easier.
- **Medical:** Sadie McCallum and the ATOM (Automatic Therapy Orthopedic Machine). The ATOM helps people stay in proper form in physical therapy.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many public events in the town of Weare are cancelled. Please check with the organization sponsoring your event to see if it is still taking place.
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For several decades, Grant Family maple syrup production stopped and the sugarhouse lay dormant. Then in the 1970s, a group of Grant cousins and friends came together to resume syrup production, using the methods they knew with buckets and tractors and pull carts.

In 2000, the Grant cousins lamented the disrepair of the sugarhouse. They called friends and family together to tear down the original sugarhouse and rebuild an exact replica. Once the foundation for the new building was laid, a call to the community went out for willing workers and, with an overwhelming response from the town, the walls went up in just 48 hours.

Today, Dave Richards, the great grandson of Hiram Grant, is the family member currently taking the lead in maple syrup production. Instead of buckets, he uses an extensive tubing system to collect sap from around 1,400 Grant trees. He has also outfitted the sugarhouse with state-of-the art equipment to make the process more efficient. Nevertheless, it is still a lot of work. “It’s a labor of love”, says Dave’s cousin, Terry Knowles.

Terry Knowles has lived within walking distance of the family sugarhouse since she was 2 years old. She grew up on the Hiram Grant homestead and then moved across the road when she married. She pitched in when the cousins resumed syrup production in the 70s while she was in college. Up until a few years ago, Terry made 600 boxes of maple candy in her kitchen each year in preparation for Maple Weekend. Terry is also a civically minded expert on preservation.

She was the first selectwoman in Weare, serving from 1991-1994, and recently retired from her position as the Assistant Director of Charitable Trusts at the State Attorney General’s Office. Terry is invested in the family history and has used her expertise to protect what she loves. With Terry’s help, the 78 acres of Grant Family Farms is conservation land that will always remain under the family’s stewardship. That is good news for Grants past, present, and future, and for the little sugarhouse, perched next to the pond, awaiting the arrival of hungry locals looking for something sweet.

Grant Family Farms, located at 224 Mount Dearborn Road, celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the rebuilt sugarhouse this year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the previously scheduled open house will be rescheduled to May 30th and 31st, though the farmstand will still be open. You can visit them at 58 Mount Dearborn Road.

Another maple producer in town is Kaison’s Maple Sugarhouse on Forest Road.

Growing up, Mike Lafleur enjoyed making maple syrup with his uncle in Vermont. That interest was reawakened in 2000, when a fellow Weare volunteer firefighter asked Mike to help tear down and rebuild the old sugarhouse on his family farm. Mike gladly jumped at the chance to assist with the building project and with his friend’s maple business.

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Over the next ten years, Mike was extremely busy – working as a full-time Nashua firefighter, raising a young family with his wife, Laurie, and growing the production of maple syrup. He decided something had to give, so he left his friend’s enterprise in order to have more time with family. Mike still wanted to make maple syrup, though, so with the help of friends and family, he built a sugarhouse on his property in 2011. Unfortunately, and ironically, Mike only has two sugar maples on his six acres of land. Thus, he had to search for trees to tap. In a short time, he was able to purchase maple equipment from an estate sale and work out an arrangement to tap about 1,000 trees off of Route 149.

In 2012, Mike started producing his own syrup under the Kaison’s Sugar House label. Kaison’s is named after Mike’s daughters, Kaitlyn and Madison. Kaison’s produces about 150 gallons of syrup each year.

The process involves many trips back and forth between the sugarbush (grove of maple-producing trees) and the sugarhouse - emptying tanks, inspecting lines for vacuum leaks and squirrel chews, boiling sap in the evaporators, and so much more. Anyone visiting the sugarhouse will note that Mike also spends significant time cleaning. “It takes a lot of work, but it’s passion,” he explains.

Mike prides himself on the care he takes to produce a natural, local product, using a mixture of traditional and modern methods. For example, he fuels his evaporators with wood that he splits himself (sometimes in the heat of summer under a beach umbrella) and transfers sap in antique stainless steel milk cans, but also excitedly demonstrates his shiny state-of-the-art filtration system housed in its own room.

According to Mike, maple producers are a cooperative community, lending a hand to help each other out when the need arises. As he expresses it, “Appreciate what you’ve got, do what you can.”

This philosophy also extends to Mike’s current production situation, which is at a turning point. The land where he has been tapping his trees is going up for sale. Mike isn’t sure if he will be able to work out an arrangement with the new owners or if he’ll need to find a new sugarbush. What is certain, however, is that Mike loves producing maple syrup and will continue, no matter the scale.

Weare In The World Continues With New Staff

By Karen Lovett

A “news desert.”

That’s how Michael Sullivan once described the reporting landscape in Weare, an observation he made after becoming the town’s library director in 2016.

Weare Community News had shuttered after two years in print, and the lack of a central news hub in this town of nearly 9,000 residents, Sullivan said, made it “hard to get a sense of community going.”

It was his call to action.

In March 2017, Sullivan published the first edition of Weare in the World, which started as a weekly, single-page newsletter featuring just the goings-on in this town. The inaugural issue featured articles on town voting results; a middle school concert; a scholarship fundraiser, and a rabies clinic.

By April, the publication had gained traction and grew to four pages. Sullivan soon found himself pouring eight hours a week into gathering news, assembling, printing (with library staff help), and finally distributing some 300 copies to dozens of locations in Weare, dropping them off himself in his small blue hatchback.

Many came to appreciate Weare in the World for its particular brand of local flavor. It lists current town, school and club events; covers local government issues; highlights student ingenuity; reawakens Weare history; and seems to have a knack for introducing readers to their neighbors. In crediting the little newsletter that could, Sullivan and others observed more robust attendance at local events, such as the Christmas party and Old Home Day.

People outside town lines took notice, too. Sullivan was interviewed by a handful of New Hampshire media outlets, and then by a Boston television station; the Poynter Institute, a prestigious media studies organization in Florida; and Editor and Publisher Magazine.

When Sullivan died unexpectedly in December, a small group of residents -- including some from the Weare Area Writers Guild, a group in which Sullivan participated -- stepped forward to figure out a way to keep the newsletter going. Marge Burke, a Guild member and newsletter contributor, said Sullivan had already tapped
some members to pen articles and help in other ways, since he “knew of our skills.”

“Weare is geographically huge,” said Sharon Czarnecki, a fellow Guild member who is serving as secretary in the new newsletter group. “Michael’s wonderful paper... has made it as small and comfy as the kitchen table. I am honored to try and keep us all connected that way.”

The group produced a memorial issue for Sullivan in early February, and it has met several times to discuss individual roles, plan content, imagine a publishing schedule and decide how it might swing production costs. Since Weare in the World is no longer a library-sponsored publication, new funding sources are now needed to keep it in print. It costs about $20 to produce a full set of four-page issues.

As the group seeks a way forward, more than once, it has marveled at the work required to produce Weare in the World, which Sullivan handled nearly singlehandedly each week for a remarkable 139 issues.

“I don’t think any of us realized how intense it is putting this together,” said editor Rachel Cisto. “It constantly amazes me that it takes at least six of us to do what Michael used to do on his own!”

The current staff of Weare in the World is Marge Burke, Rachel Cisto, Tom Clow, Sharon Czarnecki, Karen Lovett and Alyssa Small.

This issue has been generously funded by Terry Knowles of Grant Family Farms. Interested sponsors may contact Sharon Czarnecki at czar5@comcast.net. Contributions or articles may be sent to weareintheworldnews@gmail.com.

School News Briefs

JSR Student Qualifies for Math Exam: John Stark Regional High School Junior Nathan Chasse has qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME) based on his performance in the American Mathematics Competition. To qualify for the AIME, Nathan needed to score in the top 5% in the American Mathematics Competition. Nathan will take the American Invitational Mathematics Examination in mid-March. The exam is a 15-question, 3-hour test and the use of calculators is not allowed. Concepts typically covered on the AIME include topics in elementary algebra, geometry, trigonometry, as well as number theory, probability, and combinatorics.

The AIME is also used to determine qualification for the United States Mathematical Olympiad.

CWES Kids Make Fidget Cubes: Second-graders at Center Woods were given the opportunity to sign up for a recess workshop to make their own sensory fidget cube with counselor Ashley O’Keefe. While they were creating them, O’Keefe spoke about how the fidget cube is not a toy, but a tool to help students in class self-regulate and concentrate. The cube is a 2-inch wood cube that the students painted in their favorite color and then glued different textures on each side, like fabric, metal, ribbon, gems, and stones. Since there are five second-grade classes at Center Woods, Ms. O’Keefe held five workshops.

Teacher Uses Music To Get Kids Engaged: "Every day is better with music," said CWES teacher Robert Kozol - who always has two ukeleles and often a guitar with him at school. Mr. Kozol uses music as a way to teach letter sounds during literacy groups. During math lessons, he uses music as a background rhythm for counting exercises. "I love music, and music is often a pathway to connecting with students," he said.
Town and School Budgets Rejected By Voters
By Tom Clow

The Town of Weare and the Weare School District Operating Budgets were both defeated at the polls on March 10 despite having the backing of their respective boards and being recommended by a majority of Finance Committee members. Both the town and schools must now limit their spending to their default budgets for their respective fiscal years. A default budget is equal to the previous year’s approved budget with certain exceptions such as contractual obligations and state mandates. The 2020-21 John Stark budget was approved by voters in both Weare and Henniker. There were 1,626 votes cast in the election out of 6,349 registered voters.

Most of the seats for town and school offices were uncontested. The exceptions on the Town ballot were Town Moderator, where Eileen Meaney defeated Howard Kaloogian 816 to 612, and the Board of Fire Wards (Non-Member) where Leah Cushman won over Ricky Houde 632 to 621. According to the Town Clerk’s Office, Houde has filed for a recount, which will be held on March 18.

For the Weare School Board, only one candidate filed for two openings. Rochelle Kelly ran as a write-in and will join Christine Heath, who was on the ballot, as the two new board members. Amanda Gunter won as a write-in candidate for School District Clerk, and Naomi Bolton was re-elected as District Treasurer. There were no contested positions on the John Stark Ballot.

Voters approved a three-year collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Selectmen and the Union for Police Department Employees as well as raises for non-union town and library employees.

There were also warrant articles approved that will add one full-time employee to the Department of Public Works and two full-time Firefighters/EMTs to the Fire Department. Also approved was an article that will allow one part-time position at the library to be made full-time and provide additional part-time staff hours.

The Department of Public Works received strong support for its capital improvement requests with voters approving a new plow truck and a medium-duty 6-wheel dump truck. Both are replacements for aging vehicles. An article to fund road reconstruction and another to add money to a capital reserve fund for bridge repair and replacement also received voter approval.

Voters said no to the purchase of two Chevrolet Tahoe Police Pursuit Vehicles. One would have replaced a Ford Explorer, which was to be reassigned to the Animal Control Officer, who is presently using her personal vehicle. The second would have replaced the one remaining Ford Crown Victoria in the fleet.

Also rejected was a proposal to establish a Radio Communication Fund for the town’s emergency services, two articles requesting funds for the repair and maintenance of town buildings, and money for fireworks at the Weare Patriotic Celebration. A breakdown of the voting on these and all other warrant articles is posted on the Town of Weare Website.

Both the Weare and John Stark School Districts will receive one-time adequate education grants from the state in the 2020-21 fiscal year. In both districts, voters approved establishing Capital Improvement Capital Reserve Funds for this money so it will not all have to be spent during one fiscal year. A request on the Weare School ballot to fund a space needs assessment for $75,000 was defeated.

What & When in Weare:

Please Check Websites For Cancellations

Wednesday, March 18
11:00 am – 1:00 pm Breaking Bread Senior Café - TAKEOUT ONLY
4:30 pm-7:00 pm Weare Food Pantry Open, Town Offices
7:00 pm Weare Historical Society Library Sawyer Room

Thursday, March 19
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall

Saturday, March 21
7:00 Bingo Osborne Hall

Monday, March 23
5 pm – Board of Fire Wards
6:30 pm – Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, March 24
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall
1:30 pm – Caregiver Support Group, Holy Cross Church
7:00 pm South Weare Improvement Society Osborne Hall
7:00 pm School Board Meeting Weare Middle School
Library

Wednesday, March 25
11:00 am – 1:00 pm Breaking Bread Senior Café - TAKEOUT ONLY
4:30 pm-7:00 pm – Weare Food Pantry Open, Town Offices

Thursday, March 26
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall
7:00 pm – Planning Board, Town Offices

Monday, March 30
6:30 pm – Board of Selectmen, Town Offices

Tuesday, March 31
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall

Wednesday, April 1
11:00 am – 1:00 pm Breaking Bread Senior Café - TAKEOUT ONLY
4:30 pm-7:00 pm – Weare Food Pantry Open, Town Offices

Thursday, April 2
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall
7:00 pm – Planning Board, Town Offices
7:00 pm – Library Trustees, Weare Library

Monday, April 6
6:30 pm – Board of Selectmen

Tuesday, April 7
8:30 am – Seniorcise, Old Town Hall
7:30 pm - Zoning Board, Town Offices

LOCATIONS
Senior Café
33 N. Stark Highway
Osborne Hall
19 Deering Center Road

SENIORS

Breaking Bread Senior Café
CAFE CLOSED - WEDNESDAY LUNCH IS TAKEOUT ONLY
Free Wi-Fi, Hot Beverages
Game Day is Wednesday
Menu at Hand in Hand Ministries on Facebook

GOFSTOWN, WEARE ROTARY CLUB
Tuesdays 7:30 am - Free Light Breakfast - Village Trestle, 25 Main Street, Goffstown
March 31: Todd Fahey – Director AARP for State of NH
April 7: No Meeting
April 8: 6 pm Monthly Meeting, location TBD

BOY SCOUT TROOPS
Troop 24 – to join contact Scoutmaster Marc Hallee
Wearetroop24@gmail.com
Events listed at: sites.google.com/site/wearetroop24/
Troop 529 - to join contact Scoutmaster Marc Payeur 529-8888

JOHN STARK GENERALS FOOTBALL BOOSTER CLUB
Offer your support.  Come to a meeting – 3rd Tue 6:30pm Room 192 at JSRHS – Our goal is to boost morale and buy equipment.  Already purchased are a brand new scoreboard, & cold weather capes. Next up new gear bags. Our dream – install lights so we can join the other teams in our league with “Friday Night Lights” games.

WEARE LIBRARY
The library is following the same closing schedule as the schools. All programs are cancelled until further notice. Meeting rooms are not accessible, and staff asks you not to return items to the library book drop until the building re-opens.

CANCELLATIONS
Boy Scout Spaghetti Dinner

POSTPONED
If: Gathering at Christ Community Church
John Stark Musical “Legally Blonde”

Weare in the World
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