

The Weld Observer

May 2025 -6th Edition

Choose Your Hard



Madelyn (with her chicken, Battikens), Louise, Beatrix, and Josephine, Mary and Miles Merwin's children.

by Mary Merwin

I've heard it said that we get to "choose our hard." There are many times I find myself questioning why I am choosing a path that seems so difficult, but when I stop to weigh my choice against the alternatives, my hard choice seems worth it. Most recently, I have found this to be true in our decision to homeschool our children. Homeschooling is hard!

When I was in college studying to become a teacher, I was under the illusion that it would be a great career to have while also being able to raise children of my own one day. I never gave much thought to homeschooling.

That is until I had kids of my own and had seen first-hand how things work in the school system. Don't get me wrong, I am super grateful for our school system. There are amazing teachers out there loving on America's kids and doing an outstanding job preparing the next generation. I am grateful that education is available and accessible for everyone. I think sending kids to school is absolutely the best choice for some families, but for now, homeschool is the right choice for us. Here are a few of the reasons why.

Opportunities for Relationships:
One of the most common concerns I

hear is that homeschooled kids will not be "socialized" enough. Any time I hear that I just chuckle and think back to my own classroom experience and hearing teachers say, "We are not here to socialize!" as they desperately tried to rein in a bunch of kids who just wanted to chat. I would venture to say that my children get far more opportunities for real connection than their peers. Homeschooling can certainly be isolating but it doesn't have to be! Our children get plenty of opportunities for peer interaction.

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What's Up Outside – April 2025



Red-winged Blackbird

by Lise Bofinger

My last column spoke of the vernal equinox and the coming of Spring. The ice has gone from the lake, the vernal pools have indeed just come back to life, and every day, we are met by a new bird song in the woods, a delightful symphony of nature. One of my favorite spring activities is visiting a wetland to observe red-winged blackbirds. They are a common bird here in the northeast, easy to identify, and were a part of my high school animal behavior class, which I taught in Concord, New Hampshire. It was great to have an easy-to-find species readily available and close to the high school. These were easy birds

to get high schoolers interested in for several reasons.

1. They (at least the males) were easy to identify both by their call “conk-la-ree” and visually by their black color and bright red and yellow epaulets.

2. They are somewhat unique in the bird world in that they are polygamous.

3. What high school student doesn't love a field trip?

The male red-winged blackbirds are one of our early returners. They beat their mates back to the northeast to establish and then defend a territory in order to attract the most females. The females remain in the south, where there are more high-protein insect food sources that they will need to be ready for breeding when

they make it north for the breeding season. This behavior can be likened to the boys strutting around the cafeteria to get the best tables, an analogy that worked very well in my classroom. In my past life, I would challenge my students to try to map out our local wetlands, identifying the territory of individual male red-winged blackbirds. I challenge you to do the same. In the morning or evening, visit a local wetland, sit quietly, and observe. If you are patient, you are likely to see multiple red-winged blackbirds, and if you are observant enough, you should be able to identify their territories. The more we observe and ask questions about our local environment, the more we feel part of it and will work to protect it for our children.

Mason Tyler, YAP Extraordinaire

by Ina Toth

I had the privilege of sitting and chatting with an outstanding young man this spring, Mason Tyler. Born and raised in Weld, Mason has already left his mark and he's only 16!

Mason is one of the Young Adult Patrollers (YAP) at Saddleback Mountain in Rangeley, Maine. This past season, Mason had been tasked with skiing down a trail at the end of the day and checking to see if it was clear of skiers. He came upon a 12-year-old girl who had crashed and injured her neck. Mason initiated a rescue mission! Saddleback recognized his efforts and awarded Mason the Young Adult Patroller of the year for 2024-25.

Mason began skiing early on, at some of the local mountains and landed at Rangeley at the suggestion of a family friend. Mason quickly acclimated to the tasks at hand and learned the duties of the Young Adult Patrol. To become a YAP, Outdoor Emergency Care certification by the National Ski Patrol is required. There is testing before each ski season begins and the testing is similar to Emergency Medical Technician training. Each YAP has a Red Jacket, a radio, and a required helmet, along with many carabiners and ancillary items.

Mason gave me a 'tour' of the Red Jacket which encompasses about eight zippered areas and various pockets which house very specific things, from band aids and slings to an Oropharyngeal Airway (OPA) to help keep someone's airway open should they fall unconscious. He remarked



Alision Potito, Michelle Cuva, Mason Tyler, and Mike Potito at Saddleback.

that the compartment that houses the OPA is called the 'Oh S***'. A sigh of relief came after talking about this and Mason said that gratefully, he has never had to use one.

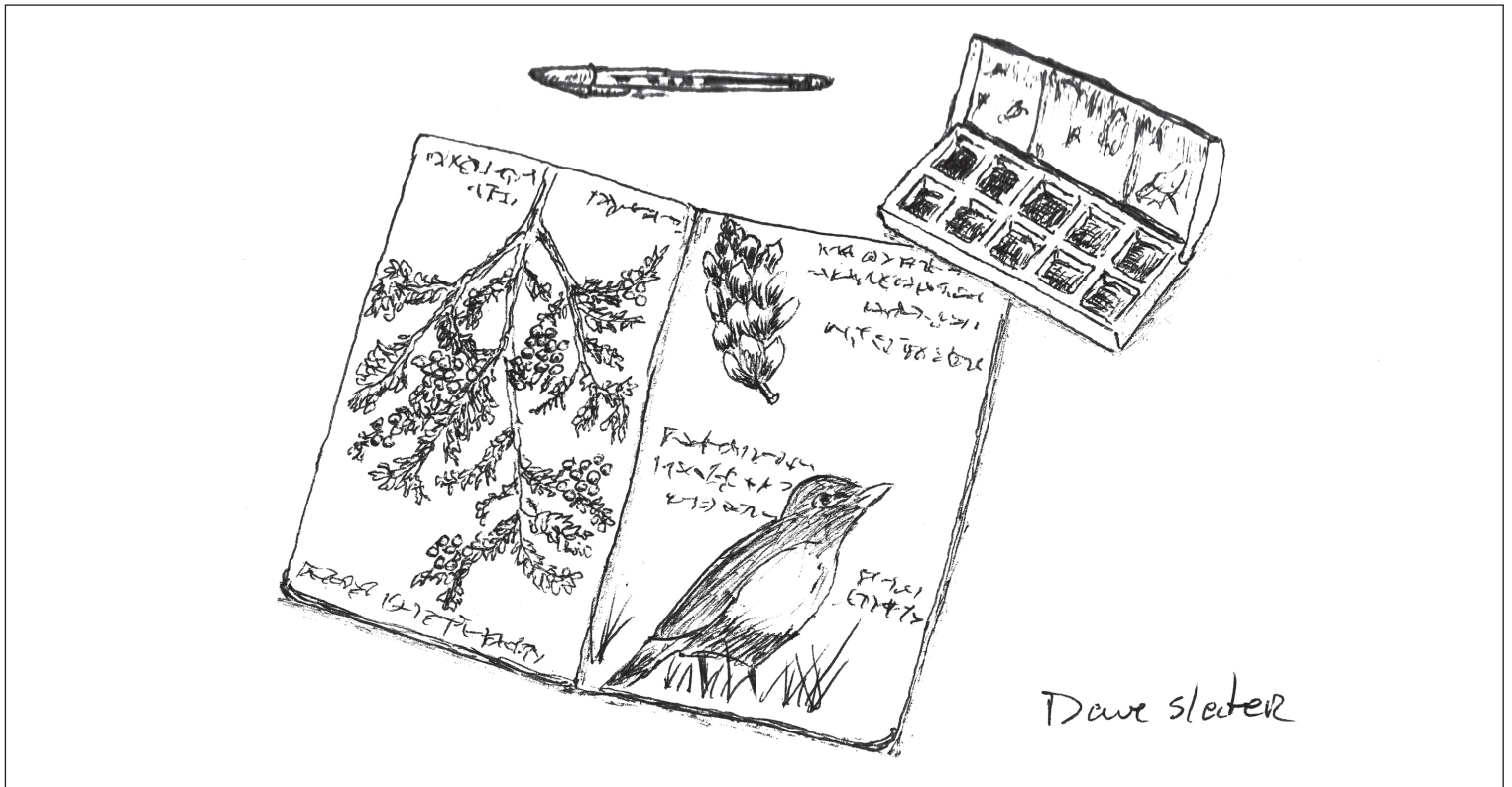
Mason is one of the few local YAPs. Most of his peers come from the Portland area or from New Hampshire and Massachusetts, as their families own properties in the area. Mason likes to stay busy, owning his own landscaping company in Weld. He makes the 35-mile-trek one-way to

Rangeley on the weekends and during vacations in the winter. It gives him great satisfaction knowing he is helping people stay safe so they can enjoy the beautiful surrounding area. He would rather live rurally than in the big city!

As a YAP, Mason tends to the trails by opening and closing them, running fencing for safety and events, putting up signage and more.

Mason Tyler

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Journal, by David Slater

Italian Penne

by David Law

David was raised eating good meals at home prepared by his mother. His dad, whose poem *Time* is included in this issue, had a few recipes of his own and loved to make homemade pasta noodles. David has created this one through experimentation in the kitchen.

Bake in a 9x13 inch dish, or split in two. Serves about eight people.

- 1 pound ground sausage (I use sweet but hot is okay if you like things spicy)
- 1 pound of Penne pasta
- 1 cup of diced onion
- ½ cup diced green pepper
- ½ cup diced red pepper (not the hot type)
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes (not spiced)
- 1 14.5 ounce can stewed tomatoes

- 8 ounces extra sharp Cheddar cheese (I buy the block and shred)
- 8 ounces Pepper Jack cheese (this won't make it too hot)
- 1/3 cup Asiago cheese (better) or Parmesan cheese, grated to finish top
- 4 to 5 cloves of fresh garlic minced (not powder). Don't skimp here.
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons fennel (I use seed and grind or crush for better flavor. If using powder, cut it back to 1 teaspoon)
- 2 tablespoons Olive Oil

Add oil to pan, brown sausage and break apart until cooked. Add fennel and crushed garlic and cook for another minute or two.

Remove meat with slotted spoon and transfer to stock pot. Add pepper and onion to remaining oil and cook (al dente), add to meat.

Add the tomatoes, basil and oregano

to the sauce base. You could use a couple of heaping teaspoons of Italian Seasoning here, if that's all you have. Spicing this dish is definitely your preference. Salt/pepper to taste.

Cook Penne pasta in salted water until (VERY Al dente). Don't be afraid to under cook it. The Penne will finish cooking in the oven. Rinse with cold water to stop cooking and drain well.

Now add Penne to sauce and mix—don't cook anymore. Add both grated cheeses to the pot and mix well. I save a cup or so to add to the Parmesan or Asiago cheese to finish the top.

Transfer the whole business to a baking dish and cook uncovered in a 350-degree oven for 30 minutes. Remove and turn oven to 400 degrees. Add finish cheeses to top. When temperature is at 400 degrees, return dish to oven for 10-to-15 minutes. Remove from oven and let sit for 20-to-30 minutes to set up. Enjoy!

Sunshine

*collaboratively written
by the Toth family*

The sun is shining silently up in the sky,
never disturbing the birds that fly high
or the clouds inching toward it when
rain is coming.

It sneakily creeps away when it's the moon's
turn to shine
making the sky burn with colors
known also as the horizon.

It keeps you warm throughout the day
and streaks into your windows,
with a happy feeling filling your heart,
like a nice card on Valentine's Day.
All throughout the day the sun
will be shining high in the sky.

The sun, no matter where it is,
Will Always be watching over You.
And on the days when it needs a rest,
the moon will be up to that test.

Remember that we will Always look up,
See the Sun and its family of the Stars and the Moon,
the Clouds and
the whispers of Constellations
that all surround you like a
Great Big Hug!

The World isn't so huge and
far away
when you gaze into the rays of light
and the stars at night.

No matter where you are or go,
We will Always Look Up and
You will Always know that you are Loved!

Time

*by James T. Law (1919-2002),
father of David Law*

The years of the young are many,
The years of the old are few
And the fruits of this life, if any,
Are based upon what we do.

The harvest we reap from this garden,
In a strange and mysterious way,
Cause our joys and our sorrows to harden
And move to another day.

But hail to the quiet wonder
In this lovely vale of tears
The gift of time stays with us
To heal the trying years.

For time is the great elixir,
The never-ending span
The blessed painless fixer
Of all the ills of man.

Weld Community Pantry

***Take what you need.
Give what you can.***

Started many years ago by the late
Barbara Baker Smith and local residents
as a way to help neighbors. Volunteers stock
the pantry with dry and canned goods.
Donations are always welcome!

Located outside the Weld Free Public Library
on Church Street. For more info,
phone Deb Smith at (207) 585-2587

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Even more importantly, they have the benefit of so many intergenerational relationships that just couldn't be prioritized in the same way if they were spending most of their waking hours exclusively with people their own age. In a world where young people are increasingly influenced by their peers and basing their morals on popular culture, I am grateful for more time spent with parents, grandparents, and other positive role models.

Teaching That Aligns with Our Worldview: I do not want our girls to grow up in a bubble. I want them to be exposed to all sorts of ideas and ways of thinking. For us, it is important that these things be taught through the lens of a Christian worldview.

Freedom to Explore: I love that homeschooling gives us the freedom to do so much more experiential

learning than could ever be possible if we had to spend seven hours a day inside a classroom. We can easily go on day trips, spend hours at the library, dedicate more time to music lessons, explore nature, and just play.

A Simple Life: People today are so busy. As homeschoolers, we are certainly not exempt from getting pulled into the rat race, but it is easier to be intentionally less busy. The value of a quiet life is vastly underestimated.

Every single day I am made aware of how much our children benefit from not being rushed from one thing to the next, but instead have the time and space to be creative, to think, to discover, and to work alongside us.

Redeem Wasted Time: After one frustrating day as a substitute teacher, I came home and said, "We just did an hour and a half of work in seven hours"! It is astounding how little can be accomplished in a day when so much time is spent dealing

with behavioral issues, lining up for transitions, and all the other mundane tasks that are necessary when managing a group of 20+ kids. The advanced students had spent the day bored out of their minds and the struggling students were frustrated to tears or had just checked out entirely. Do I deal with meltdowns and behavioral problems as a homeschool mom? For sure! Do we still waste time? Yes. But I can tailor each lesson to my child's individual needs. I can make sure they are being challenged appropriately. We can get lessons done in a couple of hours and spend the rest of the day doing other things that matter.

Are you considering homeschooling or are you a homeschool family looking for more support? Weld is a great place for you! We have a rich and growing community of families that explore and learn together. Let's get to know each other. I can't say it will always be easy, but I am certain it is worth it.

My Spider Friends!

by Barbara Hardenbrook

As I write this it is snowing, sleeting and freezing rain, all at once it seems. Soon though I will be sitting on my porch at camp and listening to the loons as I drink my morning coffee. My friends with me, my spider friends!

If your camp or house has a porch with a roof, then you invariably have the same spiders. I have always just called them porch spiders, I guess for lack of a better name. They seem harmless! Just happy to make their webs and catch an

insect for a tasty meal!

Last summer I became a bit more curious about the spiders that invade my porch ceiling, webs between posts and sometimes in my face as I walk down my stairs to the lake. I learned that these big brown spiders are called orb-weaver spiders and are harmless. I have taken the time to just sit quietly and watch as a web is being woven. With patience and fortitude, a very intricate web begins to take shape. Some early mornings when there is a lot of dew in the air a web will have droplets hanging to each strand. A beautiful sight!

So, this summer I ask each of you



to please take some time to admire the orb-weaver and not be like my son-in-law who takes a broom and destroys all their webs when I am not looking. The harmless spider is creating beauty while enjoying a meal of mosquitoes and black flies! They are makers of art for all of us to enjoy.

Municipal Literacy Corner: Q&A with a Municipal Officer

by Dina Walker

Why are there only three Selectboard members? If the Weld population expanded, would additional Members be added?

Three members to a Selectboard is the basic requirement set by Maine law. A municipality can change the number of members (typically an increase to another odd number like five or seven by “charter” (a document to be voted upon at Town Meeting much like the Warrant). The Town of Weld currently does not have a charter.

How long is each Selectboard Member’s term? Can you be a member for more than two terms?

Maine law has set the basic requirement of a Selectboard member’s term of office as a minimum of one year. The Town of Weld has historically required the term of a Selectman to be three years. Yes, a Selectman can serve multiple terms, consecutive or otherwise, both under Maine law and Weld’s historical practice.

Who should speak at Selectboard meetings?

The primary purpose of a Selectboard meeting is for the Selectboard to deliberate and decide (vote) on

municipal matters that have come before them. The public has a right to attend and observe the meeting under the Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) without interfering with the orderly conduct of the meeting. The invitation to a member of the public to speak is at the discretion of the Selectboard as a whole.

What is the best way for the public to communicate with the Selectboard?

There are many ways for the public to communicate with the Selectboard. A good way to communicate with the board is to attend a scheduled Selectboard meeting. Our Selectboard meetings are held regularly every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, at 5:30PM in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Town Office.

Once all the agenda items have been deliberated upon by the Selectboard, we have an “open comment period” where the Selectboard members will hear questions and comments from the public. If you’d prefer instead to connect with the Selectboard through email or phone about your concerns, our contact information is listed on the Town’s website (www.weld-maine.org) under “Town Information”/ “Selectboard.”

Which roads does the Town of Weld Public Works Department maintain?

Town Roads include: Buker Road to the bridge, Cushman Road, Plummer Road, Temple Road, Center Hill Road, (dirt portion only), Byron Road, Maxwell Road and Westbrook Road.

Winter Road Maintenance

In addition to the roads listed above, the Town maintains:

Rt. 156 (Perkins Township to the intersection of Mill Street, Church Street, and Center Hill Road) (“Weld Center”) to Rt. 142 at the top of the hill in Philipps;

Rt. 142 from Weld Center to Carthage town line; and Back Road.

For removal of trees, debris or road repair on Town roads, please call the Road Commissioner, Robert Jackson, at (207) 491-9691. For removal of trees, debris, etc. or road repair on State Roads, please call (207) 562-4228.

Do you have a question for the Municipal Corner about how our municipal government works?

Send an email to weldrecnews@weld-maine.org. You can also submit questions on paper by dropping them in the Business Box in front of the Town Office, 23 Mill Street.

Mason Tyler

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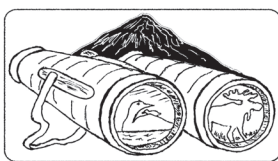
The YAPs house themselves in a hut near the top of the mountain where they get their instructions. They are not allowed to tend to any Black Diamond (advanced ski level)

calls handled by regular ski patrol members.

Mason reflected that if there is a call and someone is injured or needs help, it is rewarding to hear how they made out afterwards. This season, a man had a lower back sprain from a fall, the YAPs “packaged” him up

(secured him on a toboggan and brought him down the mountain) and the man returned the next day in a sling to thank the crew and report on his condition. “That’s the best part of the job,” says Mason, “when we know that someone we rescued recovered well!”

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN



The Weld Observer

We invite you to contribute content: articles, letters, drawings, cartoons, photographs, and other materials of interest.

We publish in black and white. Captions and descriptive information are helpful.

Please provide your contact information with your submission.

Via e-mail: weldrecnews@weld-maine.org

or drop your submission in the Weld business box

in front of the **Weld Town Office** located at **23 Mill Street in Weld.**

Attention: **Weld Recreation Department**