



The apple storage room at Clarkdale Orchards.

been marketing since I was 10, when I asked my parents for chickens on my birthday so I could sell the eggs, and I haven't stopped since."

He seems to have a genius for it. His cheeses are selling as fast as he makes them, and they make many kinds of cheese.

"We try to have 15-20 different styles of cheese at all times," Miller says.

These styles range from the simplest Fromage Frais (a sweet, white cheese with the consistency of fresh yoghurt) to flavored Chevre, to Mont Blanc (a mold-ripened goat cheese), to cow's milk Cheddar and Reblochon (a soft, slightly pungent, washed-rind cheese).

The Millers also make soap from the goat milk and sell raw cow and goat milk, as well as fresh cream.

"We are unique because we started with a variety of cheeses," Miller says. "Most people go after one and try to perfect it before moving on, but we tried to be diverse from the start. Many years ago everyone kept diverse farms. That was just what you had to do."

Most Farmstand cheeses are French-style and made with raw milk. Raw milk means the milk is unpasteurized, and so

the cheese must age (to meet U.S. standards) for at least 60 days before it can be sold. For this purpose Miller built a cheese cave.

He is passionate about the cheese he makes, and passionate about selling it. One would think that he has to be, to do all of this pretty much on his own. He mentions, though, that he is seeking an apprentice, if anyone is interested. His passion certainly sold me. I left the little store at the farmstead with containers of plain Chevre, horseradish and chive Chevre, Fromage Frais, a pint of raw goat milk, two whole Mont Blanc cheeses, a piece of Trappiste aged goat cheese and bit of Reblochon. Yet, unlike almost all the times I have bought too much of something, I felt no regret as I drove away. I stopped at the Curtis Country Store and picked up some Gould's maple syrup from Shelburne.

Dinner that night was the best of local winter fare. Broiled sirloin steak with garlic and Fromage Frais, roasted turnips, and for dessert, sautéed apples (cooked in a little beef fat) drizzled with maple syrup and topped with fresh Chevre.

DURING TWO DAYS I logged

an estimated 150 food miles. That's one-tenth of the average for one food item bought at the supermarket. I would venture to say that the food tasted better and was healthier than



Egg case at Diemand farm.

more well traveled food would have been.

It seems, though, that the taste and healthiness had more to do with the experience than anything else.

*Editor's note: There are many more shops, purveyors, growers and farmers that offer some of the items that Max ate during his research. They all work hard to bring us the best of the West.*

## New members at Mary Lyon

SHELburne FALLS – At its annual meeting, held on Thursday, Nov. 30, the Mary Lyon Foundation Board of Directors welcomed three new members. They are Nina Coler of Ashfield, Dudley Williams of Plainfield and Heather Viens of Colrain.

The board also elected officers, extending the terms of the following people, all of whom were reelected to their posts: Pat Kerrins, treasurer; Sharon Hudson, secretary and Marion Taylor, past president.

## Tax benefits rise for land conservation

SHELburne FALLS—The Franklin Land Trust (FLT) wants western Massachusetts landowners to be aware of recent changes in federal tax law that significantly increase tax benefits related to land conservation through donations of conservation restrictions (CRs).

CRs are permanent deed restrictions placed on land to ensure that it remains open and undeveloped. The landowner continues to own the land, and may continue to use it for resource-based activities such as farming and forestry.

The recently approved Pension Protection Act of 2006 increases tax deductions for gifts of Conservation Restrictions in calendar year 2006 and 2007. This legislation raises the allowed charitable deduction from 30 percent to 50 percent of the donor's annual income. For landowners who are farmers and ranchers, it increases the allowed deduction to 100 percent of annual income. Finally, it extends the period over which deductions can be applied, from 6 years to 15 years (the year of the gift and 14 years thereafter).

"FLT is currently assisting a number of landowners in protecting their land through the gifts of CRs; landowners who are committed to ensuring that their farmland and woodland remain open and productive, while at the same time benefiting from a tax deduction," said FLT Executive Director Rich Hubbard. "This legislation creates a powerful new incentive for owners of land, in consultation with their tax advisors, to consider protecting their land through a gift of a CR. The gift must, however, be made between now and the end of 2007."

For more information call (413) 625-9151.

## Valley CDC expands small business support with grant

NORTHAMPTON -- Valley Community Development Corporation (Valley CDC), a community-based nonprofit organization providing housing and small business development support, has received a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Business and Technology. The grant will enable Valley CDC to expand the free technical assistance counseling and support it currently provides to entrepreneurs and small businesses. Valley CDC was one of only 16 nonprofit agencies statewide to qualify for an economic stimulus grant in this first round of funding.

Valley CDC offices are located at 30 Market St. For more information call (413) 529-0420, ext. 14 or email [grt@valleycdc.com](mailto:grt@valleycdc.com).

## Arts partnership gets bank grant

GREENFIELD — TD Banknorth, through the TD Banknorth Charitable Foundation, recently awarded a \$7,500 grant to the Greenfield Community College Foundation for the Fostering the Arts & Culture Partnership in Greater Franklin County project.

The Fostering the Arts & Culture Partnership is designed to increase the capacity of isolated rural artists in need to work together to strengthen the regional creative economy. The project promotes successful model business practices for struggling artists, enhancing their exposure through a coordinated marketing and branding campaign and developing sustainable collaborations between artists and area businesses.

Activities have included the development of a "creative cluster network" and a regional arts website, [www.massartandculture.org](http://www.massartandculture.org) that all artists are encouraged to visit, ongoing technical assistance workshops to increase the capacity of creative workers to succeed as a business, and the promotion of arts events to increase income to artists and impact the local economy.

# OUTDOORS AND NATURE

ON THE RIDGE BY JOE JUDD IS UNDERWRITTEN BY



## 'A Deer Hunter's Lament'

SHELburne

**B**y the time you read this the 2006 deer season will be dwindling into the twilight, and what a great season it was for so many! It goes by so quickly — sort of like Christmas. You wait for it all year long, then boom — before you know it, it's history, and you're left wondering how it all could have passed you by so fast.

Time definitely does have a way of sometimes sneaking past us without our taking notice of it. Deer hunting is a wonderful time of year to many West County folks who love the sport as much as I. And Christmas is that time-honored tradition that leaves us all inspired and enriched by the atmosphere that brings us together in the spirit of giving. In my life these two special times have always intertwined ... and they both always go by way too fast for my liking.

So I try to slow things down a bit by giving every nimrod who ever ran a ridge chasing whitetails, along with any person who has never once hunted at all, this Christmas gift: one to read and, hopefully, enjoy. And if it puts you in a Christmas frame of mind and brings a smile to your face, then this gift will have fulfilled its purpose.

With the help of Clement Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas" I give to you "A Deer Hunter's Lament"!

'Twas the last days of deer season,  
The end was drawing near,  
And it had been not a week,  
Since I'd last seen a deer.

### ON THE RIDGE

By Joe Judd  
[joe@sfindependent.net](http://joe@sfindependent.net)



I'd scouted and hunted, every day I was there. But those deer, they were hiding I just didn't know where.

I knew they were nestled, somewhere safe in their beds. With visions of springtime, dancing in their heads.

And with Mama still sleeping, I was shouldering my gun. Heading back up ridgeline, to that old familiar run.

The run I had lived on, with a bow in my hand. Yes, with two days remaining, this is where I would stand.

My vigil began about quarter past six. By ten forty-five I was chewing trail mix.

I would shift my position, sometimes standing, sometimes hunched. And it didn't help matters, that I'd forgotten my lunch.

The day passed by slowly, bitter cold made a hard wait. More than once the thought surfaced, "could I invent some deer bait!?"

Then off to my left,

There arose such a clatter, I sprang to attention, to see what was the matter.

Away went my boredom, as quick as a flash. Stood up, struck a tree, and sustained a small gash.

It was a quarter of four, I saw a hint of the moon. And I knew that I'd have to be leaving here soon.

When what to my wonderment, Aha! Change of luck. The source of disturbance, was two does and a buck!

They were a distance away, but from here I could see, that the coats which they wore, were as thick as could be.

They were fine healthy deer, with good size and big bellies. Somewhere these deer, found an awfully nice deli.

I was sure that these whitetails, had just left their bed. And it seemed by their gait, they had nothing to dread.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work.

I would try to get above them, thru the pine trees I'd lurk.

But what to my wondering eyes should appear, When I reached my destination, I'd lost sight of those deer?

And then in a twinkling, I saw I had goofed. As I heard the prancing and running of each little hoof.

Before I reached a stone wall,

I was wearing a frown. As I watched the deer fleeing, bound after bound.

I sprang up on that wall, my back hair did bristle. As away they all flew, like the down of a thistle.

But they must have heard me exclaim, as they ran through the laurel. "Have a good evening's rest, for I'll be back here tomorrow!"

May the joys of this holiday season bring you renewed happiness each and every day. And when this Christmas becomes a memory, my wish for each of you is that this memory becomes a treasure.

Good hunting, and Merry Christmas.

Joe Judd is a regular contributor to the Independent.

## Holiday Sale

SALE PRICES GOOD THROUGH SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23



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