



Farm To Table

75 Years of Bounty and “True Comradeship”



The great advantage of situating a school within a farm is the experience of learning where food comes from. Students have been there alongside the adult farmers from day one, planting, weeding, harvesting, feeding, and milking. No one graduates without at least one trimester of this experience. Some participate much more. And nobody graduates without a tour of duty in the kitchen. And we all eat together—farm to table and all points in between.

The Providers

Ed Gray (with bell), Carol “Hutch” Maynard (with calf), and Clyde Hulett (driving horses) were among the first to tend the fields and husband the animals of Elm Lea Farm. Back then we had a two-horsepower hay rake and a bell made from a train track instead of e-mail.

Something to Be Festive About

Haying is much more mechanized today, but the vegetables still need picking. Before there was Harvest Festival, there was the harvest. And every day there are milk and eggs to be gathered. Growing food is a miracle worth celebrating—especially when there’s a lot of it around all of a sudden.



1983

President Reagan proposes laser-based anti-ballistic missile system, popularly known as Star Wars.

Shuttle Challenger physicist, Sally Ride, becomes first American woman in space.

Howard Gardner (husband of Ellen Winner '65) publishes *Frames of Mind* outlining his theory of multiple intelligences.

Mrs. Hinton dies, is later buried in cemetery at Lower Farm.

Service for Mrs. Hinton is held in the KDU; Barbara Barnes '41 is first speaker.

Small group of students, faculty and trustees formed to try to rehabilitate and use now decrepit Cape Breton property.

1984

Former Vice President Walter Mondale selects first woman, lawyer Geraldine Ferraro of New York, as presidential running mate.

Bill Koch '73, Willie Carow '76, Tim Caldwell '72 compete in 1984 Sarajevo Winter Olympics with mixed results.

Board of trustees appoints Barbara Barnes '41 fifth director. Bici Binger Pettit '48 elected board chair.

1985

Dairy herd cut in half, as school takes steps toward more self-sufficiency and milk prices drop.

Jeff Campbell dies, teacher of English, ethics and morality since 1951. Minority memorial scholarship fund initiated.



Madeline Kunin, first female governor, begins six years as Vermont governor.

Live-Aid concerts in England and Philadelphia raise \$50 million for African famine relief.

School dairy operation acquires herd of registered jerseys; milk has high butterfat content suitable for value-added retail products.

The Putney Special: Fishes and Loaves



Legend has it that Mabel Gray (pictured, left) looked at the shelves one day during WWII and saw cans of stewed tomatoes, some aging bread, and tubs of peanut butter—and the Putney Special was born.

Current executive chef, Marty Brennan-Sawyer, commemorates the occasion every year in assembly as a passion play, followed by steaming plates of the original recipe at lunch.



Students in the Kitchen

There have always been a lot of mouths to feed here, so students pitch in with the cleaning, cooking, and serving of food. The menu hasn't always been stellar—at least one alumna from the late '70s recalls cigar ash in her Friday night frozen fish sticks and soggy French fries—but today's kitchen staff serves vegetarian and vegan options alongside fresh, hot offerings from the newly completed, wood-fired oven.



March of the Turkeys



In 2004 Executive Chef Marty Brennan-Sawyer resurrected the Thanksgiving

feast tradition, based on an old program he found. Festivities begin with a welcome followed by the March of the Fruits and Nuts, March of the Turkeys, and March of the Carcasses (complete with dirge). Between marches there is much eating and musical entertainment by the school's various performing groups. Each new phase of the feast is commenced with a wave of a color-coded paddle.



Sugaring

Nothing's what it used to be, but it still takes about 40 gallons of sap to make one of syrup. Instead of hours of slogging through March corn snow on snowshoes and cross-country skis to empty sap buckets by hand, hydraulic lines collect the sap in tanks that are loaded behind the tractor and hauled to the sugar shack. But that fire doesn't stoke itself, so there's still enough work to keep three crews of students busy through much of what would have been their March break. Complaints are rare and quickly squelched with a shot glass full of warm Grade A Amber.



1986

Bread and Puppet Theater, led by Peter and Elka Scott '53 Schumann, enlists 50 Putney students for a performance at Putney's 50th Harvest Festival.

About 100 attend Thanksgiving celebration at Putney, patterned after traditional event.

Shuttle Challenger explodes just after liftoff, killing all seven astronauts aboard including Christa McAuliffe, first teacher in space.

World's worst nuclear accident begins at Chernobyl power station, 100 kilometers north of Kiev, Ukraine, releasing large amounts of radioactive material.

Much-loved but decrepit and archaic rope tow closed forever as climate shifts and tow struggles against skiers' expectations.

Ruth Hodgdon, staff person at Putney since 1935 (her entire working life), retires.

Putney hosts "The Maturing of Progressive Education" conference to mark 50th anniversary.

Class of '86 becomes first to exceed 30% attrition, next 10 years from 27–42% attrition.

Putney approves adoption of a new constitution, its fourth, replacing the 1973 version.

1987

Colonel Oliver North testifies before House and Senate committees about arms-for-hostages deal.

Stock market plunges 508 points in one day, wiping out more than \$500 billion in stock equity.

Sue McIntosh Lloyd '52 book, *The Putney School: A Progressive Experiment*, published.

Sugar House near top of ski tow burns.

Putney commits 14% of operating budget to financial aid, twice the average of NAIS schools.

Harriet Crosby '64, founder, Institute for Soviet-American Relations, graduation speaker.

Road through campus eliminated; center of campus re-designed.

Putney trustees begin discussing a school policy on AIDS.

First spring reunions: Classes of '47, '62, and '77.