

Maple Sugaring Course Set for Belfast Senior College

David Greeley, who has been tapping trees for more than 50 years, is offering a hands-on course in “Making Maple” at Belfast Senior College beginning Feb. 17. The four-week course on consecutive Thursday mornings will take place at Greeley’s 450-acres of sugarbush, forest, gardens, silvapasture and fields in Jackson. “Making Maple” takes its students from tapping to comfortable greenhouse sugar shack, from evaporator to quarts of medium amber syrup.

“This is a just for the fun of it,” Dave Greeley said. “It’s a course for anyone who wants to get outside in the spring and you don’t need to have done it before. You’ll just want to wear your snowshoes out in the sugarbush or borrow a pair from me and be willing to get your hands sticky.” To become a member of Belfast Senior College and register for “Making Maple” and other winter semester courses, go to belfastseniorcollege.org.

Greeley taps more than 400 maples, and his more than two miles of tubing bring the sap from tree to sugar shack through a vacuum system, eliminating the need to carry buckets. He plans to turn more than 2,000 gallons of the sweet liquid into at least 50 gallons of syrup this year. “We will be tapping when there is more sun, and when daytime temperature goes above freezing and it drops below freezing at night. That means the time around Presidents Weekend is usually just about right, but it all depends on the weather.”

Greeley has been a Senior College student for more than ten years and he currently serves on the group’s Curriculum Committee. “Making Maple” is just his second course with the organization. The first was a pub style quiz class on Maine history for the recent bicentennial. Now retired from his work with Maine child protective services, Greeley and his wife, well known landscape artist Janice Anthony, raise angus beef cattle, tend their extensive gardens and produce cider from their apple orchard as well as make maple syrup.

University of Maine Hutchinson Center provides Zoom services for Belfast Senior College, which is an independent all-volunteer non-profit organization now in its 20th year providing stimulation, knowledge, social interaction and fun for people age 50 and up and members’ spouses and partners of any age also welcome to join. The membership fee for the full year is

\$25 and course fees this semester are \$27 or \$37. All classes except field courses are currently available by Zoom.

Picture(s):

Dave Greeley in his sugaring green house at Hill Farm in Jackson

