

People & Places

Marin County farmer an organic pioneer

Peter Martinelli established one of first certified farms in California

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

BOLINAS, Calif. — Organic grower Peter Martinelli admits it took him about 10 years to discover his love of the land was a career.

“When I attended college at the University of California-Berkeley I was discouraged to go into agriculture,” he said. “I worked at a local farm after leaving Cal and learned most of the regulations regarding organic farming. So I convinced my grandmother that ag was not such a bad occupation.”

The timing was perfect. His family owned 20 acres of rich bottomland in Marin County and the organic movement was just taking off. His farm was one of the first certified organic operations in California.

Martinelli discovered quickly that farming is a tough business, and he had to figure out the marketing to make money. The farm, which is about one hour from San Francisco, sells to high-end restaurants there, in Berkeley and in Marin County.

“There is a robust tourist trade here and a huge demand for organic products on the coast, so I don’t have trouble selling,” he said. “The rules for growing organic are simple — no herbicides or toxic substances and I think the most important is maintaining a living soil for healthy plants that are suitable for this zone.”

Compost is the key to his successful operation. He collects



Courtesy of Michael Woolsey

Peter Martinelli started one of the first certified organic farms in California. He sells to high-end restaurants and specialty stores.

Western Innovator

Peter Martinelli

Occupation: Organic grower

Education: University of California-Berkeley

Hometown: Kentfield, Calif.

Quote: “I look forward to each day on the farm. Within a day I’ll often encounter a problem I’ve never seen before, celebrate some sort of triumph and learn something new in the process.”



waste from local horse ranches, adds yard and garden waste for “green manure” and plows under his cover crops in the spring for added nitrogen.

“I grow tomatoes, which is almost unheard of on the coast, but the farm is protected by

large trees that create a warmer climate,” he said.

He also grows other, more unusual plants.

“I bought 100-year-old daffodil bulbs from a Northern California farm to sell as cut flowers,” he said. “They produce

varieties that are not seen in this century.”

Martinelli also harvests wild nettle that he sells to a local cheese creamery. The nettle is part of an ancient method of curing cheese. He saves most of his crop seed that does not cross pollinate in the field.

“For example, the squash family is very promiscuous,” he said. “A pumpkin can cross with a zucchini and you have no idea what you will get.”

Jamison Watts, executive director of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, said Martinelli is a pioneer in organic farming.

“Peter has a true understanding and appreciation for the art and science of producing food

in balance with nature,” he said. “He owns and operates one of California’s oldest certified organic farms.”

Martinelli’s Fresh Run Farm has recently been protected with an agricultural conservation easement from MALT.

“Peter is also an active caretaker of the land that supports his farm,” Watts said. “He and his family have worked extensively with the National Park Service and other agencies to protect the coho and steelhead in Pine Gulch Creek, which runs through the farm.”

Martinelli has been on MALT’s board of directors since 2008, and currently chairs its stewardship committee.

Hair and gone: Taking the challenge, supporting a friend

By RYAN M. TAYLOR
For the Capital Press

TOWNER, N.D. — I’ve always kept my hair pretty short. I was even born with short hair. Well, there was that one period of time, immortalized in my second grade school photo, when I let my hair grow so long that it went over my ears. Hey, it was the ’70s. Wild times.

Actually, I didn’t start life with short hair. When I look at baby photos, I’d say I was plain old bald. While my hair has been growing as best it can for the last 44 years, it’s a safe bet to make that I’ll return to my original baldness at some point in the future.

As of last week, I gave baldness a try with the help of a friend and a hair clipper. Not

Cowboy Logic
Ryan Taylor



long before that, I went to a barber and got my usual cut with the half-inch guard and the extra care it takes to leave a little something on my forehead to part and comb off to the side. So going down to the scalp was only a half-inch trip, plus chopping off that cow lick that dangled off my widow’s peak.

Clipper time

I went from the half-inch trim to a zero-inch buzz to support a friend and accept a challenge within a circle of mutual friends who want her to know we’re there to help her through the chemotherapy she is taking

for stage four melanoma.

Our children thought it was pretty entertaining when they got a look at my new hairless-do. Our six-year-old daughter, never at a loss for words, says, “I think those tiny little hairs on the back of your head look nice . . . and I’m sure you’ll get a lot of compliments on your humongous forehead!” She really emphasized “humongous,” waited for me to laugh, then giggled uncontrollably and worked “humongous forehead” into the conversation three or four more times while we drove home from town.

She asked if I had my hair cut for the “Locks of Love” program that she had heard about from a friend in school. I told her that the hair they cut off of my head was probably too short and had too much gray in it for

the children who are helped by Locks of Love. “But maybe some old, bald guy would like to have it,” she countered. OK, maybe. Ouch.

Bilateral baldness

My sons came up with some new names for the bilateral bareness that defines the widow’s peak on my humongous forehead (now she’s got me saying it). My eight-year-old said, “I can really see that ‘tipi’ on your head now, Dad.” Tagging on to the theme of ancient lodging on the plains and the tools of the people who built them, my 10-year-old came up with, “Yeah, it kind of looks like an arrowhead.”

While the kids have had some fun with my new look, I remind them, and everyone,

it’s not about me or my hair, it’s about our friend, Ashley, and the battle she is waging against a serious and aggressive cancer. We’re “Cheering for Ashley,” which happens to be the name of the Facebook page we use to support her, if you want to give it a “like.”

I saw Ashley at church last Sunday with her family, and she smiled and said, “I like your hairdo, Ryan!” I told her I liked hers, too, but mostly I liked seeing her smile.

As her brother has told all of us, the four things that will get his sister through this challenge are love, support, prayer and laughter. Our family is offering up the first three every day, and if my haircut will add something to the fourth, I’m glad to add my subtracted hair as a means to help.

First lady says ‘cheese dust is not food’

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Michelle Obama says she dropped boxed macaroni and cheese from her family’s diet after her daughter couldn’t turn a block of cheese into cheese powder.

In an interview in the March issue of Cooking Light magazine, Mrs. Obama says Sam Kass, the family’s former personal chef, had taken a stand against the boxed variety, which includes processed cheese powder among the ingredients.

“He said there’s nothing wrong with mac and cheese,

but it’s got to be real food,” she said, crediting him with helping to eliminate processed food from their diet.

Kass gave her daughter Malia, who was about 8 years old at the time, a block of cheese and challenged her to turn the fresh cheese into powder.

“She sat there for 30 minutes trying to pulverize a block of cheese into dust,” Mrs. Obama says. “She was really focused on it and it just didn’t work, so she had to give up. And from then on, we stopped eating macaroni and cheese out of a box because cheese dust is not food, as was the moral of the story.”

As she marks the fifth anniversary of her anti-childhood-obesity initiative, the first lady says it feels like there’s “a new norm” in how families think about food and what’s healthy.

Because food is personal and people are obsessed with it, Mrs. Obama said she’s trying to deliver “a message of change” that doesn’t assign blame but provides information needed to make better choices. “And starting with kids has been an important first step because, as I’ve always said, parents will do for their kids what they won’t do for themselves.”

She plans to spend time

this year encouraging people to prepare and eat more of their meals at home.

“What we do know is that the food you cook is healthier, and it can be more affordable, but it takes some skills,” such as learning how to cut a chicken into its parts, Mrs. Obama said.

The first lady said her initiative and her husband’s health care law will, in the long run, save the country money by improving people’s health.

“You don’t have to be an Olympic athlete to be healthy, but you do need to walk your dog or take your kids to the park periodically and throw a football around,” she said.

Her goal as an 80- or

90-year-old is to still be mobile.

“I want to be able to walk up a temple or a ruin on my own and see the world. And I can only do that if I’ve been investing in my health now,” the first lady said. “And just imagine, if we’ve got kids 20, 30, 40 years younger than we are doing that now, they’re going to be some of the strongest 80- and 90-year-olds we’ve ever seen. And that’s our dream.”

The magazine features Mrs. Obama on the cover, the first time in the publication’s 28-year history that food was not the cover subject. The issue is due on newsstands Friday.

Calendar

FEBRUARY NATIONAL

Feb. 19-20 — Family Farm Alliance annual meeting, Monte Carlo Resort and Casino, Las Vegas, 707-998-9487 or fframeeting@aol.com

Feb. 23-26 — Potato D.C. Fly-In, sponsored by the National Potato Council, Mayflower Renaissance Hotel, 1127 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., www.nationalpotatocouncil.org

OREGON

Feb. 19-21 — Oregon Logging Conference, Lane County Fairgrounds and Convention Center, Eugene, 541-686-9191, www.oregonloggingconference.com

Feb. 24-25 — Oregon Dairy Farmers Annual Convention, Salem Conference Center, www.dairyfarmers.com/101-convention-general

CALIFORNIA
Feb. 25 — Sutter-Yuba-Columbia-Yolo-Solano-Sacramento Walnut Day, Veterans Hall, Yuba City, 530-822-7515, http://cesutter.ucanr.edu

IDAHO

Feb. 26-27 — Idaho Hay and Forage Conference, Best Western Burley Inn, www.idahohay.com, 208-888-0988 or cindy@amgidaho.com

Feb. 27 — Drones for Forestry workshop, 1:15-4:30 p.m., University of Idaho Extension, 1808 N. Third Ave.,

Coeur d’Alene, \$15, 208-446-1680

MARCH OREGON

March 16-17 — Oregon State University Blueberry School, LaSells Stewart Center and CH2M Hill Alumni Center, OSU campus, Corvallis, http://osublueberryschool.org/

March 20-23 — Oregon FFA State Convention, Silverton, www.oregonffa.com

March 20-22 — Northwest Horse Fair & Expo, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, www.equinepromotions.net

CALIFORNIA

March 3 — Walnut (7-year-olds)

No Pruning-Pruning Comparison Field Meeting, morning, Nickels Soil Lab, Arbuckle, 530-822-7515, http://cesutter.ucanr.edu

March 3 — Walnut (2-year-olds) No Pruning-Pruning Comparison Field Meeting, afternoon, Nickels Soil Lab, Arbuckle, 530-822-7515, http://cesutter.ucanr.edu

March 17-18 — Fruit Ripening & Retail Handling Workshop, University of California-Davis, http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Education/fruitripening/

March 22-24 — California Fresh Fruit Association Annual Meeting, The Grand Del Mar, San Diego, www.CAFreshFruit.com

APRIL OREGON

April 18 — Oregon Women for Agriculture Auction and Dinner, Linn County Fair and Expo Center, Albany, 503-243-FARM (3276), http://owaonline.org/

CALIFORNIA

April 18-21 — California State FFA Conference, Selland Arena, Fresno, www.calaged.org/stateconvention

IDAHO

April 8-11 — State FFA Leadership Conference, College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, www.idffaoundation.org/

Capital Press

Established 1928
Board of directors
Mike ForresterPresident
Steve Forrester
Kathryn Brown
Sid Freeman Outside director
Mike Omeg Outside director

Corporate officer
John Perry
Chief operating officer

Capital Press Managers
Mike O’BrienPublisher
Joe Beach Editor
Elizabeth Yutzie Sell Advertising Director
Carl Sampson Managing Editor
Barbara Nipp Production Manager
Samantha McLaren Circulation Manager
Hannah Brause Audience Development

Entire contents copyright © 2015
EO Media Group
dba Capital Press

An independent newspaper
published every Friday.

Capital Press (ISSN 0740-3704) is published weekly by EO Media Group, 1400 Broadway St. NE, Salem OR 97301.

Periodicals postage paid at Portland, OR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Capital Press, P.O. Box 2048 Salem, OR 97308-2048.

To Reach Us

Toll free 800-882-6789
Main line 503-364-4431
Fax 503-370-4383
Advertising Fax 503-364-2692

News Staff

N. California
Tim Hearnden 530-605-3072

E Idaho
John O’Connell 208-421-4347

Idaho
Carol Ryan Dumas 208-860-3898

Boise
Sean Ellis 208-914-8264

Central Washington
Dan Wheat 509-699-9099

E Washington
Matthew Weaver 509-688-9923

Oregon
Eric Mortenson 503-412-8846
Mateusz Perkowski 800-882-6789

Graphic artist
Alan Kenaga 800-882-6789

To Place Classified Ads

Ad fax 503-364-2692
or 503-370-4383
Telephone (toll free) 866-435-2965
Online www.capitalpress.com/classifieds

Subscriptions

Mail rates paid in advance
Easy Pay U.S. \$3.75/month (direct withdrawal from bank or credit card account)
1 year U.S. \$49.49
2 years U.S. \$89.89
1 year Canada \$275
1 year other countries call for quote
1 year Internet only \$49
1 year 4-H, FFA students and teachers ... \$30
9 months 4-H, FFA students & teachers ... \$25
Visa and Mastercard accepted

To get information published

Mailing address:
Capital Press
P.O. Box 2048
Salem, OR 97308-2048

News: Contact the main office or news staff member closest to you, send the information to newsroom@capitalpress.com or mail it to “Newsroom,” c/o Capital Press. Include a contact telephone number.

Letters to the Editor: Send your comments on agriculture-related public issues to opinions@capitalpress.com, or mail your letter to “Opinion,” c/o Capital Press. Letters should be limited to 300 words. Deadline: Noon Monday.

Capital Press ag media

www.capitalpress.com
www.FarmSeller.com
www.AgDirectoryWest.com
www.OnlyAg.com
www.facebook.com/capitalpress
www.facebook.com/farmseller
www.facebook.com/onlyAGdotcom
twitter.com/capitalpress
www.youtube.com/capitalpressvideo
www.blogiculture.com

Index

California 9
Dairy 14
Idaho 10
Livestock 14
Opinion 6
Oregon 8
Washington 11

Correction policy

Accuracy is important to Capital Press staff and to our readers.

If you see a misstatement, omission or factual error in a headline, story or photo caption, please call the Capital Press news department at 503-364-4431, or send email to newsroom@capitalpress.com.

We want to publish corrections to set the record straight.