

**BOTTI FRUIT FARM
and CIDER MILL**

★ 5 VARIETIES OF APPLES ★ VEGETABLES
★ SWEET APPLE CIDER ★ PUMPKINS ★ MUMS
★ GRAPES ★ PEARS

LOOK — FREE RABBITS!

260 Bush Hill Rd., Manchester
(To The Rear) **OPEN DAILY 10 to 6**

before 1985

1987

For a taste of New England
Come to

Botti's Fruit Farm

Fresh Sweet Apple Cider made on premises
Also try the Mulled Cider

10 varieties of apple, pears, honey, jams, maple syrup and candies, nuts, pies, squash and Green Mountain potatoes, vinegars and soups from Wild Tyne Herb Farm, Granville Cheddar cheese, bird seed and feeders and gifts and much, much more!

Just a Country Place To Be
Come say Hi!
to Linda & Steven

330 Bush Hill Rd., Manchester
Off Kenney Street and Hilltown Rd.

Open 7 Days A Week
to January
9:00 A.M. to 6 P.M.




**BOTTI'S
FRUIT FARM**

Now Open 9-6 Daily

**FRESH
APPLES, PEARS & CIDER**

Now located at the **NEW BARN**
on Bush Hill Road
Manchester

1987



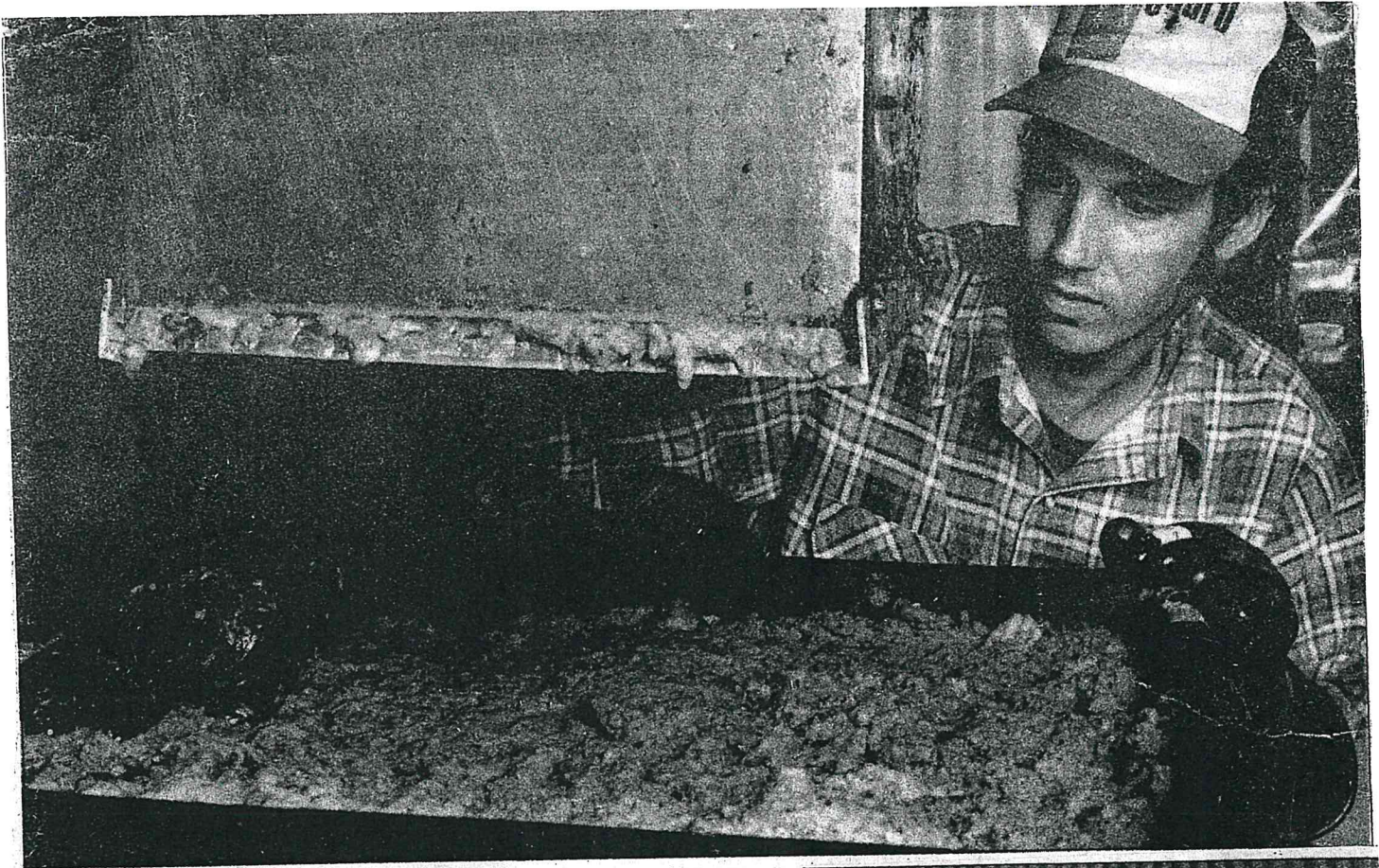
Herald photo by Tarquinio

It's harvest time

Herald 1982

Keeney Street School PTA is having its annual apple and pumpkin sale Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on school grounds. Doing a little advance sampling are (from left)

Meghan Lodge, Corey Wry and Lindsay Wooldridge. The trio went to Botti's Fruit Farm on Bush Hill Road for the sample session.

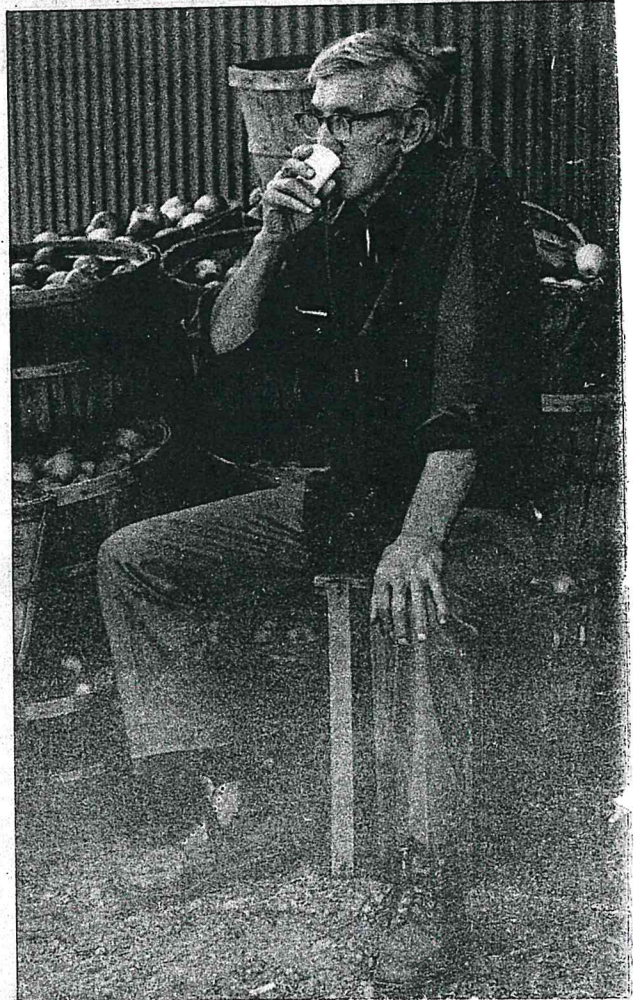
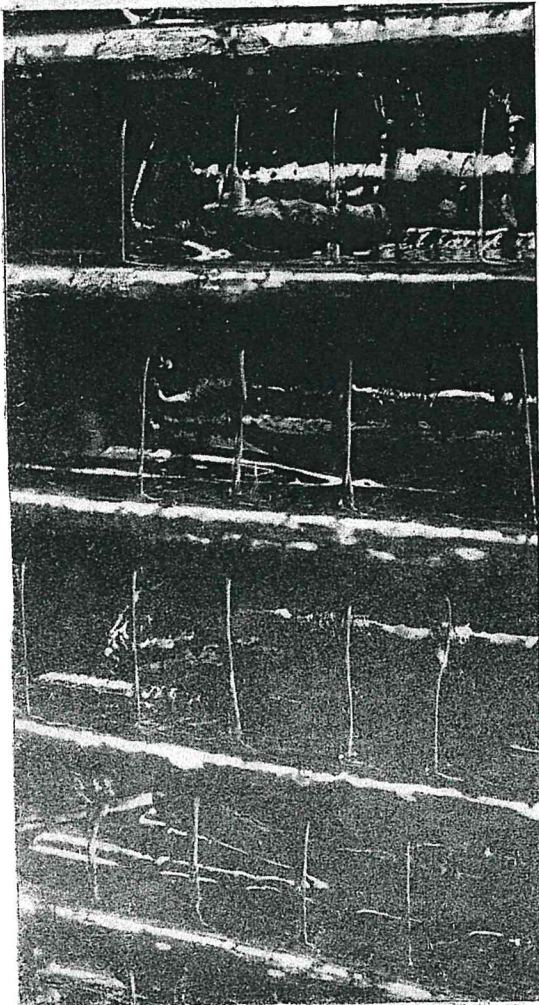


10/28/1984

Fruits of labor

Activities involved in making cider at Botti orchard in Manchester include Steve Botti, opposite page, putting apples into hopper to be shuttled by conveyor into the cider mill. Above, Botti smooths out mashed apple material onto layers of nylon cloth. The layers are pressed to extract juice, with the accordion-like press being shown in action at left. The end result is worth waiting for as shown at bottom right where Steve's father, Louis Botti samples a cup of his son's handiwork.

JI PHOTOS BY DREW PERINE



Fire sets back farm family son's return to land

By TINKER READY
Staff Writer

MANCHESTER — It took Steve Botti nine years to build up his Bush Hill Road orchard to the point that he could devote himself to full-time farming.

It took only one spark and a few minutes to send him back to his job as a mechanic.

A fire Jan. 9 leveled one of Botti's two barns, and his limited fire insurance will cover only a fraction of the cost of replacing the farming equipment that burned to ashes in the inferno.

But while the blaze destroyed Steve and Linda Botti's two tractors, their apple inventory and their farm stand, it has not destroyed their spirit.

"I don't have a place to sell or store the apples, but I've still got the trees to produce," Steve Botti, 37, said, declaring his intention to clean up and start again. How he will do that, he doesn't know.

Since 1918, when Botti's grandfather bought the site, which was then a lumber mill, the Botti Farm has been a family operation. His father raised sheep, cows and chickens and began planting an orchard. Today, the 26-acre farm produces primarily apples, but also bears plenty of peaches, pears, nectarines, apricots, blueberries and strawberries.

After the fire hit, Steven Botti's uncles, cousins and father gathered daily at the farm to help clean up the blackened mess that was once a storage area and a farm stand. Last week a group of about six Botti men loaded a dump truck with pieces of metal sheeting and cleared away piles of burned wood mixed with charred oranges and apples.

Inside the farmhouse, the smell of spaghetti filled the home as Linda Botti set her kitchen table for six and prepared to feed the cold workers.

Heat of fire melted ladders

Linda was the first person to notice the fire — she said she knew something was wrong when one of her Yorkshire terriers began acting nervous. The building was just starting to burn when she looked out her back window and saw the flames.

The barn was old and the wood even older; the building was built from lumber taken from a barn demolished in the 1938 hurricane. By the time the fire department arrived, it was too late. The fire was so hot that it melted the aluminum picking ladders, Botti said.

One week after the fire, on a lunch break from cleaning up the barn, Steve Botti wiped his forehead and lit a cigarette as he listed an inventory of the destroyed equipment: a re-



JI PHOTO BY MICHAEL KODAS

Steve Botti amidst the charred ruins of his Manchester farm's barn.

cently purchased 1981 van that served as a family car, a pickup truck, two tractors, boxes and bushels used to pack apples, scales and refrigerator equipment, picking ladders, 2,000 bushels of apples, 50 bags of potatoes, oranges and cider containers.

The fire effectively put an end to the Botti's cider business for the year, but it also destroyed some family treasures that will never be replaced, including his grandparents' upright piano, an antique brass cash register and a 100-year-old horse-drawn sled.

Although apple boxes and peach baskets wouldn't seem to have much value, costing between 35 and 73 cents each, the amount adds up when several hundred of containers must be replaced. Botti has yet to determine the full value of his loss, but he knows it far exceeds the \$15,000 worth of insurance he has to cover the barn.

Support from neighbors

One saving grace was a decision over the

past few years against moving the cider press into the barn that burned to consolidate the operation.

Another has been the community's response to the tragedy, Botti said.

"We've gotten a lot of support from both farmers and neighbors," he said. "You know people, but you don't know how good they can be until something like this. You find they're not just a customer, they're friends, too."

And those friends have offered to lend the Bottis trucks, bulldozers and other equipment to help them clean up the mess.

But the family lost a major source of income with the loss of the apple inventory, so Steve Botti has returned to his job as mechanic.

The question the Bottis must answer now is not whether they will reopen their fruit business in the spring, but how.

Bush Hill Road is lined with single-family homes, and a subdivision has been built on a site abutting the back of their orchard. While Botti has had offers for the land in the past and can probably expect a few more once

word gets out about his fire, he has no intention of selling the land to a developer.

'I'd rather farm'

"When they ask, I say, 'If you want to buy it, give me \$6 million.' I know it's not feasible, and they walk off and say, 'Looney tune farmers,'" he said.

Steve Botti said his parents discouraged him from going into farming, so he went to trade school and became a mechanic. But the farm kept calling him back, and he finally returned for good.

"I just decided that I'd rather farm," he said. "Something gets into your blood."

And despite early frosts, endless hours, bad crops, unpredictable weather, and now the fire, Botti has no desire to leave the farming life or to encourage his children to do so.

His 6-year-old son is becoming quite a tiller, Botti said. The boy planted and tended 250 tomato plants last summer.

"I think it's in his blood, too," Botti said with a grin.

Profile



Name Steven A. Botti
Age 37
Born June 14, 1948
Occupation farmer, mechanic
Favorite restaurant Vito's
Favorite food veal parmesan
Favorite beverage coffee
Idea of a good vacation camping in New Hamp
What you do to relax talk with friends
Kind of entertainment preferred a good movie
Favorite magazine Neil Diamond
Favorite store in Manchester Mechanix Illustrated
Pet K-Mart
Favorite spot in Manchester four dogs
Car Case Mountain falls
Favorite color Ford
Favorite quote green
Pet peeve "Waste not, want not"
Best thing about Manchester lazy people
Worst thing about Manchester has a little bit
of everything
some of its roads

Sept. 1985
Manchester Herald