

Solar Power Continues to Expand in the Area

By Kenston Dearborn
For the Beacon

The Flying Goose Brew Pub and Grille in New London serves delicious food and great brews at Crockett's Corner in New London. Current owner Tom Mills has owned and operated the Flying Goose since 1993. In 1996 he gave what was originally called The Four Corners Grille a unique identity by creating a micro-brewery, serving delicious brews alongside delicious food. The Flying Goose is now managed by two of his children, Brianna and Brett.

The Flying Goose harvests the energy provided by the sun for hot water as well as electricity, and you'll see their large solar array on the lawn and on their rear roof. The original idea came about after realizing they were paying quite a bit for electricity; they wanted to reduce that monthly expense, so they put up two solar arrays.

The photovoltaic array is 180 panels and is free-standing behind the business. They also heat their water with 25 panels on the roof, using it for their restaurant and brewery hot water needs.

Two nearby schools have also recently installed large solar arrays. Both Colby-Sawyer College in New London and Proctor Academy in Andover make use of the energy provided by the sun with solar panels on the buildings of

their schools.

Steve and Gisela Darling in Andover have also decided to go solar and, like the Flying Goose, they will do so for both power and hot water. In terms of electricity, they expect to generate about 75% to 80% of their power from energy supplied by the sun.

About 30 years ago, back in the 70s, Steve realized there must be some other sources of energy besides what was readily available, such as oil and coal. So almost three years ago, Steve took it upon himself to choose a non-traditional path and began by putting up solar panels to provide hot water.

In the future, Steve plans to have ReVision Energy in Exeter harness the sun's abundant energy with a photovoltaic system to provide electricity to the Darlings' home. There will be 12 free-standing solar panels in the Darlings' backyard that face directly south and provide energy to their home. They expect to realize tremendous long-term benefits. The panels should continue to generate power for more than 25 years, all the while reducing their electric bill.

If the everyday homeowner is interested in meeting some or all of their electric or hot water needs with solar energy, they would first contact any solar company and get a solar information analysis done on their property. 

Technology Advances at AE/MS Bring Visible Improvements in Learning

Proctor has been a partner in major upgrades.

By Rosa Nanasi Haas,
Proctor Academy '13

AE/MS and its technology integrator, Heidi Unger, have received generous help with AE/MS' technology needs from Proctor Academy and its director of technology, Jim Cox. Volunteers have worked at AE/MS not only to recommend what kind of technology changes the school needed and find weaknesses in the previous systems, but also to help set up many new devices, including a SMART Board that was donated by Proctor.

These technology changes have allowed more students to get online at once, helped kids learn about programming, and allowed for more editing by peers as well as by teachers.

Proctor also made it easier for AE/MS to monitor, maintain, and manage AE/MS' network. Though there have been many improvements, as times change, technology will need to be continually updated.

One major player in the advancement of AEM/S' technology is Alec Blumenfeld, Proctor Academy '13. After taking a class in the fall about computer networks, Alec decided to complete an assessment of AE/MS' network, which AE/MS presented to the Andover School Board. This assessment would have cost the school thousands of dollars if completed by a professional.

Alec's assessment gave useful feedback to AE/MS on how to resolve many of the school's issues, including that it was necessary to expand the school's bandwidth in order for more people to connect.

Alec also helped AE/MS students learn computer programming. Jim Cox commented on the value of learning programming: "It's not just about being a geek. Programming is really about problem-solving."

Alec taught programming to students via a free program called Scratch. Scratch allows children to create their own hands-on narratives, animations, and games. Through Scratch, students

in middle school can show their work to other individuals online.

21st Century Standards

There have been many technology advancements addressed by Heidi and Jim at AE/MS. The technology at AE/MS has been updated to 21st century standards. At the suggestion of Proctor, AE/MS purchased 30 iPads; 10 of these were given to staff.

Jim also advised AE/MS on equipment to monitor AE/MS' network. This technology is less expensive in the long term, because the school won't need to bring in outside people to check their network to be sure it is up-to-date and functioning correctly.

AE/MS teachers saw significant enhancements in their teaching after the school started using Google Docs with fourth through eighth graders. Google Docs is an online service that allows students to share their assignments with teachers. Instructors can then make comments on the students' work, and the pupils get those corrections back immediately.

The kids have no excuse for losing their work, misplacing their flash drive, or crashing their computer, because all of their assignments are saved online. Because students' work is saved online in Google Docs instead of on the school's computers, kids can work anywhere, including at home.

Though AE/MS has seen many improvements in its technology, Jim Cox pointed out that iPads only last three to four years before they need to be updated. Other computers last about three to four years, possibly five. The networking hardware will be good for another ten years.

Through solving some of AE/MS' technology needs, Proctor and the local middle school have built a strong connection. Heidi Unger speaks about the school's relationship with Proctor: "I am really amazed at how supportive Proctor is. I'm very impressed with the connection."

Jim and Heidi would like to continue to keep AE/MS' technology up-to-date by working together and purchasing new equipment so students have a more productive learning experience. 



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