Orchard owners turn hobby into family-run business

BY JULIA HANSEN

Steve and Cindy Weiler opened West Orchards, a couple of years ago, to realize a dream of having their own orchard. The orchard covers about 10 acres and produces a variety of apples, including Jonagold, Gala, and Fuji. Although Steve owns and manages West Orchards, with his wife Mary, Dan West's hobby used to be growing apples, but obviously after a couple of years it became family-run.

"We are making wine as we speak back in our winery right now. It is our most productive season to date, so we are really working hard to make the best wine possible," West said.

"We are already doing jams and jellies and apple fritters. We will be doing pies and more items out of apple in the near future," West said.

"My son and daughter-in-law’s project was to open a winery and live music. We are in the process of fermenting and we’re getting close. We are already doing jams and jellies and apple fritters. We will be doing pies and more items out of apple in the near future," West said.

Although the orchard itself will be producing other apple products, West said he especially wants to do jams and jellies. "I’m going to use my own vineyard to grow apple juice," West said.

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away, but if you eat two or three you really don’t have to worry very much," West said.

"We do not have an exact number of students that weren’t in the organization who heard about [the trip] and ECO members were interested in going apple picking," Frey said.

"It is considered an educational farm and students come out to gain knowledge about how it’s grown," Frey said.

"We did a ‘Vote 2008’ maze this year and we had some candidates come through Bloomfield and Ottumwa, Iowa, the organization traveled to West Orchards to enjoy the pleasant orchard and learn about some of the things we wanted to do." Frey said.