



Summer 2024

The Tapline

Newsletter of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association

Inside this issue

Message from the President	2
Confections Academy	2
Canning Day (cont.)	3
Pioneer Village News	3
ACER Vermont Tour	4-5
Canning Day Photos	6
Member Ads	6
Member Spotlight	7
Dealer Ads	7

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Rick Bollinger, Vice President	Becky Harris, Board Member
Mike Smith, Secretary	David Hinchman, Board Member
Brent Tubbs, Treasurer	Andy Hochstedler, Board Member
Doug Mark, Public Relations	Levy Mast, Board Member
Scott Craft, Board Member	Chris Slabaugh, Jr. Board Member
Mike Czajkowski, Board Member	John Smith, Board Member

Print off a membership registration at www.indianamaplesyrup.org

2024 IMSA dues are \$25.00

Checks should be made out to IMSA and sent to:

Brent Tubbs, Treasurer
8923 W. 700 S.
Hudson, IN 46747



Many Hands Make Light Work at Canning Day

By J.R. Elrod

A beautiful blue sky welcomed Sugarmakers from all over Indiana to Winger's for Canning Day. On this day, IMSA bottles all of its syrup to sell at the Sugar Shack in the Pioneer Village of the State Fair.

The night before, the Canning Committee got everything set up with members adding to Winger's equipment by bringing additional finishers, filter presses, and canners.

About sixty members, friends, and family gathered together to fellowship and bottle almost six hundred gallons of syrup in just a few hours.

(cont. on page 3)



Sugar Shack at the State Fair

August 2-18 (closed Mondays)



Message from the President

by Dan Winger

Greetings to all!! It is hard to believe how fast this year is going by.

It was great to see several from Indiana at the equipment dealer open houses in Vermont. It is a great place to learn new things .

I would like to say thank you to all that helped or came to Canning Day. It was a huge success again. There were about 60 people that came and helped. There were several new faces this year, thanks for coming!! A special thank you to all who brought children with them!! It was great to see them helping and enjoying one another. I would like us as parents to bring our little ones along so they can learn and take over in the future.

It was great to have Jack Gaby come to Canning Day. We were not able to get enough syrup from Indiana producers this year, due to the short crop this year in Indiana. The balance of the syrup came from Michigan.

Our booth at the state fair is open from August 2nd-18th. There is still help needed. If you are interested in helping call John Smith at 260-413-7886. It is closed on Mondays.

It was announced at Canning Day that Michigan is hosting a fall tour around the Charlotte area this year. For more info call Larry Haigh at 269-967-3949. This tour is visiting several sugar houses in that area.

As mentioned in the last couple of issues of the Tapline, we have been looking into hosting the North American Maple Syrup Council in Indiana. A group met to in April and looked at 4 different venues to host it. There is one venue that will work very well. It is in the north part of the state. Hosting the NAMSC was brought up at the last board meeting and discussed and agreed upon to move forward with it. We plan on having more info for all members at the annual meeting in December. This year's NAMSC is being held in Portland ME .

At this point plans are being made for our Annual Meeting in Columbia City this year. If anyone has suggestions for topics please let one of the board members know. There is plans being made to have a syrup contest, so save one pint of syrup to enter. This is for education and learning.

Hope all have a great summer. Looking forward to seeing you all later this year.

Maple Confections Academy from the Cornell Maple Program

The Cornell Maple Program is pleased to announce a new, high-level training program for maple producers interested in developing novel maple confections and launching food manufacturing enterprises. Maple Confections Academy will take place September 9th through 11th at Cornell Agritech in Geneva, NY. This advanced training will utilize the resources of the Cornell Food Venture Center including the Food Innovation Lab and Pilot Plant to acquaint participants with large scale food manufacturing processes.

In addition, workshop sessions with Cornell experts will introduce topics in processing methodology, food safety, and shelf stability. Course participants will also have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with commercial

equipment and processes. The event includes time for networking and an introduction to food enterprise startup and business support services offered by the Cornell Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture.

Location:	Geneva, NY
When:	Monday to Wednesday, Sept. 9 to 11, 2024
Housing:	Geneva Holiday Inn Express, special rate \$139/night
Registration:	\$800

For more information visit us on the web at CornellMaple.com.

Did you know Shakespeare must have been a Sugarmaker?

“Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.”

Macbeth, Act IV, Scene i

Canning Day (cont.)

No one went hungry on Canning Day. Doughnuts, home-made confections, and coffee lasted through the morning. The pitch-in lunch was a complete feast—the chicken was worth the trip alone. And when the work was done, it was time for delicious home-made ice cream.

The only setback was a pump going out on one of the filter presses. To no one's surprise, Dan Winger had a spare in stock, and talented IMSA members had it re-wired and ready to go in a jiffy.

Thanks so much to our many volunteers, including:

Larry & Mary Haigh, Andy & Rhoda Hochstedler & family, Dan & Ruth Winger, Keith & Susie Ruble, Levi Mast,

Dave Hinchman, Scott Craft, Ethan Zimmerman, John Loucks, Gary Miller, Chris Slabaugh, Art & Becky Harris, Dan Warkentien, Wilbur & Carolyn Miller, Jennifer Seal, John & Delores Smith, Arther & Mary Ann Martin, David Whetstone, Wayne Borkholder, Harley Yoder, John Holsinger, JR Elrod & Henry, Joe Schwartz & Lyndon, Dan & Amanda Harstine, Michael Young, Mike Czajkowski, Mike Czajkowski, Jr., Micah Czajkowski, Ray Helmuth, Bill Owen, Brad Fellers, Melvin Hawks, Gary Hawks, Dave Hamilton, Rick Bolinger, Brian Walker, Doug & Julie Mark, David Mast, Jack Gaby, Brent Tubbs, and Mike Smith.

See photos on page 6.

Still Time to Sign Up for Pioneer Village

by John Smith, Chair of the Pioneer Village Committee

There is no better way to make the State Fair part of your summer plans than working at the Sugar Shack in the Pioneer Village, and volunteer at our main fundraiser.

- August 1: Set-Up Day, 9:00 a.m. start
- August 2-4, 6-11, 13-18: Sugarshack, open at 9:00 a.m. until close about 8:00 p.m. (closed Mondays)
- August 7: IMSA hosting Pioneer Village meals
- June 30: Pioneer Village Picnic and training

Right now, **our staffing is light on August 3rd, 4th, 7th, 14th and 18th.**

Call John Smith to sign up for full or half-day shifts. John will send you: a parking pass for the State Fair and a State Fair General Admission for each worker. Once there, you will also receive \$15 for a meal. If you don't receive the parking/admission beforehand, you will be reimbursed.

Call John & Delores Smith at (260) 413-7886.



Editor's Corner

On a recent trip out east, I learned that everything is bigger in Vermont. At least when it comes to all things maple. Despite the geographical size of the state, it is the largest producer of maple syrup in the United States.

Small producers in Vermont have at least a thousand taps—bigger ones have tens of thousands. But usually not in one place. Vermont Sugarmakers aren't shy about tapping remote locations on somebody else's land (with their permission). I visited a sugarshack that could handle 100,000 taps and draw off a barrel of syrup every seven minutes.

Bigger isn't necessarily better. I sampled syrup from a couple dozen Sugarmakers across Vermont. None of them, in my opinion, surpassed what I bottled at my own homestead. I bought only one bottle to bring home: a golden grade A amber that tasted like liquid sunshine. It came from Bragg Farm, which was also the only place I visited that still used buckets and no R.O.

Indiana small batch syrup might be less efficient, but the flavor of our dark and robust syrup is well worth the price. Our syrup tastes better than what you find at the grocery store. That's why its more expensive at the farmer's market, and worth it.

—J.R.E.—

Vermont Purdue ACER Grant Trip

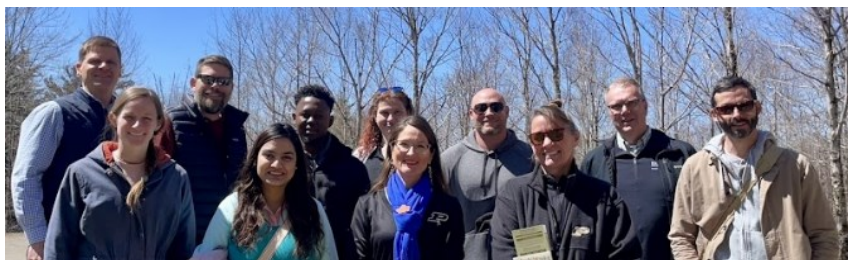
by JR Elrod

In April of 2024, a federal ACER grant awarded to Purdue University funded a tour of maple syrup facilities in Vermont during their annual open-house weekend.

The group included four Indiana sugarmakers and seven university and extension staffers. Your editor was among them.

The first stop was the Proctor maple research facility with the University of Vermont. Proctor originally labored at cultivating maples with higher sugar content. But with the advances in evaporators and reverse osmosis, the facility now focuses its research on tree health, including studying the long-term effects of high vacuum tubing.

The session at Proctor included a tasting to identify syrup with buddy, metabolism, and other off-flavors. Learning the intersection between culinary terms and concepts with maple syrup production was fascinating.



would allow the leaks to be spotted. They used CDL spin technology rather than manifolds to connect the taplines.



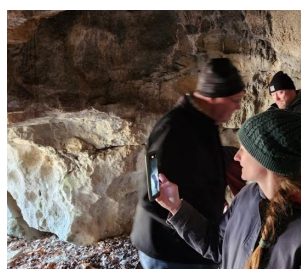
The Leader open house included tours of both the evaporator factory and the tubing machinery.



A great program at Leader explained the types of sap ladders, how frustrating they can be with the need to introduce air, and the only real solution is a small pumphouse.



The next stop was LaPierre. They had their evaporators fired up.



The Carman Brook Farm, has the most beautiful operation, with wet-dry mainlines hung with precision. The former dairy farm has 12,000 taps, some of which wrapped up a rocky hillside with a cave.



The wet-dry system on one side had been completely redone the prior summer. To maintain vacuum, laterals had only one tap or maybe two, and always 1/4" spiles. Each ball valve had a short lateral bypass, which when closed



(cont. on page 5)

Lapierre offered a seminar on going from hobby to business. With a \$70,000 investment (not including land, sugar shack or labor), a 11-12% ROI could be realized over 10 years on a 1,500 tap operation, based on retailing (no wholesale) and selling quarts for the highest margin.

Mary Douglas, IMSA member and owner of Sugarbush Supplies in Michigan, invited us to an unplanned visit to the Branon family's new facility at Shady Maples Farm.



This operation boiled sap from 85,000 taps. Only 7,000 taps were onsite, the rest of the sap was trucked in. The facility houses five 13,000 gallon holding tanks.



At full capacity, the twin evaporators can make a 55 gallon drum of syrup every 7 minutes. All of the syrup was sold wholesale to Butternut, a large bottler and distributor.



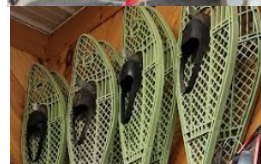
Our next stop was CDL, and they have many more options in their line of hobbyist evaporators than their competitors. Of particular interest was a demonstration of the CDL's battery operated "Spin Seal" welder that literally hot molds the fittings for the laterals on the mainline with no leaks.



As part of the St. Alban Maple Syrup festival, we hopped on a tour bus to Cold Shoulder Ridge Maple, a 12,000 tap operation with only 4 buckets on site. The rest is hauled in with a decommissioned fire department pumper truck with a hydraulic tilt. The owner has a day job and sells all of his syrup wholesale, at the going rate of about \$2.60 a pound



The next stop on the bus ride was Crossroad Maple, another small family business, with 9,000 taps onsite and 9,500 offsite—requiring a 3-hour round trip for collection. Their equipment room included snowshoes, not often required in Indiana.



Our last dealership stop was Dominion & Grimm. It had several booths, including one promoting the "SAP!" brand of maple soda and maple seltzer—both were very good. D&G had



a large selection of used equipment. The popularity of subtle flavored sodas might make a very promising market.



Our tour ended with driving out to three tourist-stop style sugarbushes and gift shops. Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks offered ice cream and coffee, but also "bring your own container" for bulk syrup: \$4.50 a pound. One local brought a pair of gallon-size mason jars on the way to a big family brunch.

Our next stop was Bragg Farm, which still used only buckets and no R.O.

They had the best golden grade A amber I ever tasted. Their prices, which are pictured here, were steeper than the grocery store, but worth every penny.

2024 Maple Syrup Prices	
Gallon	\$65.95
Half Gallon	\$38.95
Quart	\$23.95
Pint	\$13.95
Half Pint	\$8.95

Our final destination was the Sugarbush Farm, a landmark destination near Dartmouth College with a map indicating visitors from all over the world.

Heading to Vermont for the open-house weekend is an excellent way of gaining knowledge about all of your different options before you buy. A few hundred bucks for gas and a hotel might well save thousands in picking the right equipment. Comparing catalogues is much more of a crap-shoot than seeing the equipment in person—at the showrooms and in the sugarshacks.

Canning Day 2024



Member Classifieds

LARGE EVAPORATOR: \$2,000 or Best Offer

For sale: 4'x14' evaporator (4'x8' back pan, 4'x6' front pan). Soldered pan with copper pre-heating system and steam hood for back pan. Clean and ready to use. Owner downsized to a smaller system.

Jack Gaby
260-502-1035
6275 N 100 E
Wawaka, IN 46794

Tim Gaby
260-239-1992
thgfarm@gmail.com

LEADER HALF-PINT EVAPORATOR

Leader Half-Pint evaporator for sale. Complete unit on wheels with warming pan and all accessories.

Call Matt Collins at 317-694-6826



Member Spotlight: The Wallmans

Joni and Andy Wallman moved to Clayton in the spring of 2020. The homestead included five wooded acres to explore, and they found plenty of sugar maples! Late in the syrup season of 2023, Joni tapped eight trees for about 2 weeks and boiled it down on an open fire. That was enough to get the bug.

Joni knew that they had to improve on processes for the next season to save time. Over the summer, they bought a barrel stove and a flat pan with a warming pan. They made plans to add more taps and build a simple "sugar shack" from items found around the homestead.

As the new year rolled over into 2024, Joni watched the forecast for southwest Hen-

dricks County, and she gambled on tapping early. She collected 132 gallons of sap in January and February. Sugar content was low, resulting in just over 2.5 gallons of syrup to enjoy with family and friends.

The Wallmans are proud to show that size doesn't matter: you can produce a great product with simple items found around home.

Before the ambers could cool, plans for 2025 were in the works. More trees to tap have been identified, trails cleared to get to them, and hopes for a simple reverse osmosis system to "speed" up the process. Joni posts their homestead journey on the Instagram handle: Clayton Creek Homestead.



Winger's Sugarbush & Supplies

Winger's offers D&G equipment and supplies. Winger's also stocks glass jugs from Artisan Printing with the state of Indiana outlined. A large supply of containers is on hand. Marcland products are also available. Contact Dan for prices on equipment and supplies.

Dan Winger
11571 N Ogden Rd
North Manchester, IN 46962
(260) 578-7382
(260) 982-7382 (fax)



Sweet Spot Maple Supply is excited to serve you in the 2024 maple syrup season. We carry CDL equipment and supplies. Our shelves will be fully stocked to enable us to serve you better. We have all sizes of glass and plastic containers, labeled and unlabeled. We also install high vacuum tubing systems to increase your sap production.

We aim to have quality customer service, so contact us today for all your sugaring needs. We can find an answer for all your questions

Sweet Spot Maple Supply

3590 N ST RD 5

Shipshewana IN 46565

Marcus Miller

(574-364-0538)

Sweetspotmaple@outlook.com



The *Tapline* is the quarterly newsletter for members of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association (IMSA). J.R. Elrod is the editor of the *Tapline* (bluetempestllc@gmail.com). The latest IMSA information and archive of past issues is available on IMSA's website (indianamaplesyrup.org). IMSA also hosts a Facebook page: facebook.com/IndianaMapleSyrupAssociation.

The Tapline

Newsletter of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association

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We want to hear from you!

- Share a favorite picture or story from your sugarbush this season
- Ask us a question on best practices
- Let us know if you have an idea for IMSA
- Looking to buy or sell used equipment?

Upcoming Events

- **State Fair Set-Up Day**
August 1, 2024 8:30 a.m.
- **Sugar Shack at the State Fair**
9:00 a.m. to (about) 7:30 p.m.
August 2-4
August 6-11
August 13-18
(closed Mondays)
- 2024 Annual Meeting December 7, 2024



“The trees of the Lord are full of sap”

Psalm 104:16 KJV