



Spring 2024

The Tapline

Newsletter of the Indiana Maple Syrup Association

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Board Members & Officers

Dan Winger, President	J.R. Elrod, Board Member
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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



Maple Syrup Weekend Fills Indiana Sugarshacks

By J.R. Elrod

The late winter rain made parking a bit soggy for Maple Syrup Weekend, but still the crowds came. Fifteen sugarbushes threw open their doors and brought the magic of sugarmaking to Hoosiers throughout the state.

Maple Syrup Weekend is our way of bringing the public inside to see how it's really done. It's always the second weekend in March. This has become a great tradition for families to visit a local sugarbush each spring.

For the third and final year, the Purdue ACER grant funded the marketing of the event, including billboards, like the one pictured above.

(cont. on page 4)



CANNING DAY

May 11, 2024 8:30 a.m.



Message from the President by Dan Winger

Greetings to all Syrup Makers. We hope all had a good year. We know it came earlier than normal and was a little short on production. It seemed the big question was, "Is it time to tap yet???"

I have been collecting information for hosting a future annual meeting of the North American Maple Syrup Council here in Indiana. There is a lot of interest in trying to host it.

We have not looked at venues yet, due to some health issues with some who are working with me on this. We plan to tour some places this spring.

It is my understanding that Maple Weekend was well-attended again this year. There were large groups at several places this year. I appreciate all the work these producers put into maple weekend.

The NAMSC annual conference this year is in Portland, Maine, October 21-24.

I would like to learn from IMSA members what the topics would be of interest for our IMSA annual meeting in December. Please contact a Board member and let them know.

The canning / acquiring committee met on Saturday, March 30th to sample syrup for IMSA. It was directed by Canning Committee Chair Andy Hochstedler. Some syrup was disqualified because of density and flavor. They don't know for sure what happened. Those syrup makers plan to be more careful next year. A big thanks to Andy and his crew for doing the sampling and grading.

You can always find me at:

(260) 578-7382

imsa.dwinger@gmail.com

Canning Day will be May 11th at Winger's Sugarbush and Supplies. All are welcome. This is a very enjoyable day to help bottle syrup for the Sugar Shack at the State Fair Pioneer Village and visit with other Sugarmakers.

Canning Day Coming Soon by Andy Hochstedler

Canning Day will be May 11, 2024, at:

Winger's Sugarbush & Supplies
11571 N. Ogden Road
North Manchester, Indiana.

Bottling will get underway at 8:30 a.m., so plan on arriving about 8:00 a.m.

This is a wonderful event. There is a role for everyone, young and old, amateurs and pros: loading the bulk tank, manning the finishers and filter presses, filling bottles, rinsing, drying, boxing, and lots of runners to keep the assembly line going.

The highlight is the potluck meal at midday. The main entrée, drinks, plates, and utensils will be provided. Please contribute a salad, side dish, or dessert. Also, bring your own lawn chairs.

Canning will continue into the afternoon, and those who help till the end will receive a surprise!

This event provides a great opportunity for IMSA members to visit with each other and the Board. For newer sugarmakers, it is also a way to become familiar with some of the finishing, filtering, and bottling equipment and learn a few tricks of the trade. Working side-by-side with a veteran is the best time to ask lots of questions.

No matter where you live, it will be well worth the drive to be a part of this event. Don't miss this great opportunity to contribute to IMSA's biggest fundraiser, the Sugar Shack at the Pioneer Village, and to visit with each other and the IMSA Board.

Questions? Contact Dan or Ruth Winger at (260) 578-7382.

What do you call a sugarmaker who always loses at cards?
A sapsucker

Susie Kuhns 1963-2024

The IMSA community is saddened to learn of the passing of Susie Kuhns, wife of John Kuhns of Sunrise Metals.

Susie Irene Kuhns, 60, of LaGrange, (district: 12), died at 7:30 am on Friday, April 12 at her residence, following a brief battle with cancer.

Susie was a homemaker and a member of the Old Order Amish Church.

She was born on July 3, 1963, in LaGrange, to Melvin E. and Edna Ellen (Miller) Shrock. On October 7, 1982, in LaGrange, she married John Albert Kuhns.

Survivors in addition to her husband are three daughters, Edna Fern (Leland) Miller of Topeka, Marilyn Sue Kuhns of LaGrange, Doris Ann (Lavon) Eash of Topeka; four sons, Devon (Inez) Kuhns, Delmar (Maria) Kuhns, Steven

(Malinda) Kuhns, Galen (Naomi) Kuhns all of LaGrange; and 28 grandchildren.

Also surviving her are step-mother, Mary Esther (Miller) Shrock of LaGrange; seven sisters, Carolyn (Levi) Schrock of Wolcottville, Mary Etta (Daniel) Bontrager of Markesan, WI, Katie (Mervin) Miller of LaGrange, Ida Anna (Dewayne) Miller of Topeka, Luella (Sherman) Miller of LaGrange, Ruby (Lonnie) Yoder of Shipshewana, Edna Ellen (Wyman) Miller of Middlebury; and five brothers, Marvin (Leanna) Shrock, Mervin (Joanna) Shrock, Marion (Ruby) Shrock, Elmer (Emma) Shrock, Ernest (Esther) Shrock all of LaGrange. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of the Kuhn Family.

Sign Up for Pioneer Village

by John Smith, Chair of the Pioneer Village Committee

We need IMSA members to sign up for shifts at the Pioneer Village. This is our premiere fundraiser and outreach to the public.

- 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 17: IMSA hosting Pioneer Village meals
- June 30: Pioneer Village Picnic and training

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.

Right now, weekend sign-ups are particularly light, and also August 13-15.

Call John & Delores Smith at (260) 413-7886 and make a shift at the Pioneer Village part of your summer plans.



Every syrup season is unique.

In central Indiana, most will remember 2024 as early, short, and warm. The sap volume was low, and the syrup color was dark.

Volume seemed to be down everywhere. I have heard that buckets and gravity-fed taps were particularly below-average. One sugarmaker near me bottled only 40% of a typical year. A first-timer expressed how frustrating it was for him, having read up on how much to expect from each tree, to find a much lower yield.

I went from buckets to tubing, and single batch to continuous flow this season. It felt like I spent my winter making an unending series of silly mistakes.

As I headed to five of the Maple Weekend sugarshacks, I could only think of all of the cleaning and packing up I had to do back at my own sugarbush.

But at each stop, I could step back and enjoy it all. We have great people here doing great things. The world really is a bit sweeter with maple syrup.

—J.R.E.—

Maple Syrup Weekend (cont.

from page 1)

Participating Sugarbushes this year included:

- Beachler's Sugar Bush, Claypool
- Firm Root Farm, Muncie
- Harris Sugarbush, Greencastle
- Hinkle-Garton Farmstead, Bloomington
- J&A Farms, Nappanee
- Joe's Sugar Shack, Peru
- Kreider Creations Sugar Shack, South Whitley
- Maple Creations, Coatsville
- Miller Family Sugarbush, Shippshewana
- Rutherford Sugar Camp, New Castle
- Stenger's Sugar Camp, Brookville
- Treehugger Maple Syrup, Laurel
- Zimmerman Sugar Bush, Argos

It is great business for the producers, unloading a lot of syrup right at the end of the season. And it is a wonderful way to celebrate the first crop of the season and the end of winter.



Memories are always made at Rutherford's Sugar Camp, with the original log cabin sugarshack.





Cars lined the drive at Firm Root Farm, with young Grace greeting many of the guests. Kelci Wright reports:

We had 250-300 people. We gave woods tours and offered ice cream cups and syrup samples, as well as maple cotton candy. People started showing up right at 10am when we opened, and it wasn't long before the sugarhouse was full. This year Seth strapped a maple log to the side of the sugarhouse so that we could do tapping demonstrations. The children that visited enjoyed pulling out the spiles and tapping them back in.



Maplewood Farms buzzed with new energy, with Kevin's daughter Samantha who has big plans for the operation



Stenger's Sugar Shack had multiple vendors and even a coffee truck. Though Alan spent most of the day on the tractor pulling cars out of the muddy field.



Treehugger Maple Syrup had a wonderful speaker, Wahsnoday Pamp of the Pottawatomie Tribe, displaying and explaining traditional sugaring implements.



ACER Purdue Grant Update by Amy Thompson

The ACER Grant team at Purdue worked hard to promote Maple Syrup weekend with IMSA members on the marketing committee. The plan for promotion included radio spots, billboards, and even TV: WFYI – public radio/tv out of Indianapolis. It was a lot of work, but the results were simply perfect.

Additionally we shared promotional info with the convention and visitor bureaus in counties that were hosting sugar camps and did promotion on Facebook.

IMSA also did social media promotion and sent reminders to their email lists.

These promotion efforts proved successful in driving folks to the participating sugar camps and also raised the profile of Indiana Maple Syrup production with the public.

More to come on ACER activities next issue.



Member Spotlight: Harris Sugar Bush

Harris Sugar Bush is located at Greencastle, IN and is owned and operated by Arthur and Rebecca Harris

The first sugar camp on their farm was started in the late 1800's. The sap was stored in an underground cistern on the top of a hill that fed a pipe into the sugar house down below. The cistern has since been filled in but Arthur remembers, as a little boy, looking down in there and seeing all the old rusty equipment sitting in the bottom. Many old timers recalled this operation and told him about it when he was young.

Arthur and Rebecca started their sugar camp 30 years ago and have built it into a very successful business. They had around 800 buckets out and even though both had full time jobs at that point emptied them every day. They later moved to a tubing system and each year have added more trees. They have also added vacuum system.

Arthur started designing and building vacuum system for the maple industry and has sold over 1000 units. He sold the business a few years ago.

They currently have 7500 taps on tubing and vacuum. They run 9 vacuum systems. They specialize in many secondary products such as maple sugar, maple cream and maple candy. They have a beautiful retail store on the farm.

They have a large internet business where they ship their products almost daily. They have shipped their products to many other countries as well.

They have worked to help the maple industry in Indiana and hope to see it continue to grow. Over the years they have done many educational programs for various groups. They have been active with the IMSA for many years.



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

- **Canning Day May 11, 2024, 8:00 a.m.**
Winger's Sugarbush & Supplies,
11571 N. Ogden Road,
North Manchester, Indiana.
- State Fair Set-Up Day, August 1, 2024
- State Fair Pioneer Village, August, 2-18, 2024 (closed Mondays)
- 2024 Annual Meeting December 7, 2024



“The trees of the Lord are full of sap”

Psalm 104:16 KJV