

# Minnesota Maple News

Newsletter of the Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association

First Quarter

<http://www.mnmaple.org>

March 2014



## From the Prez

*Stu Peterson, President*

The other day, I received a call from a couple of neighboring MMSPA members who wanted to know if they could stop by and “pick my brain” regarding the way we use gravity sap lines in our operation. Without hesitation I said, “*Come on over, but bring your snowshoes...the snow is deep out in the woods.*” They arrived the following Saturday morning, snowshoes in hand, and we spent a great morning sharing information, walking the woods and talking maple. I showed them how we install our lines each spring, how we take them down at the end of the season and described how we clean and store the lines. It was all with the disclaimer that I could not assure them that our methods were right or wrong, only that it worked for us in our operation. We had a great morning and I hope they picked up information and ideas they can use in their own operation.

Just the week before, I called another MMSPA producer asking if I could visit their sugarhouse and get some pointers (and take pictures) of how they connected, plumbed, and wired their R.O. machine. We just completed construction of our new sugarhouse and took the plunge into the mysterious world of reverse osmosis technology. They were the “experts” with a two-year old R.O. machine and we were novices with a two-week old machine still protected by stretch wrap. We had not a clue about which tube went to which widget and where valves were required.

Two weeks later, after countless referrals to my notes and pictures, and way too many trips to too many suppliers I am confident that we now have all the tubing, PVC pipe and fittings going to all the right places. The only additional item required now is sap to run through it. Oh yes, and to return all those “extra” parts I bought that were not the right ones!

The point? Friends helping friends . . . that is what makes the MMSPA special! Mentoring, sharing ideas, offering answers to questions and getting to know your fellow producers are among the many benefits of active membership in the MMSPA.

In May at our Spring Meeting, we will all have another chance to talk maple, share ideas and report on the 2014 season. There will be an opportunity to tour a very impressive, MMSPA-member syrup operation, one of the largest in the state. Elsewhere in this issue are the details of our meeting scheduled for Saturday, May 17 in Waseca (MN). We should all be able to head home on Saturday afternoon with one or more good ideas to be implemented in our own sugaring operation, large or small. You just can’t learn this stuff from a book or catalog!

The Board of Directors most recently met in March in Little Falls. We decided that we would no longer print the detailed Board meeting minutes in the newsletter, but rather just a summary of highlights and actions. We hope this will provide more useful information and reduce duplication of information in each issue. For those interested in the full minutes from each board meeting – all is not lost. We plan to post the approved minutes on the web site.

## Calendar of Events

May 17	MMSPA Spring Meeting, SROC, Waseca (MN)
Sept 27 or Oct 4	MMSPA Fall Meeting (northern Minnesota). Date TBA
Oct 21-24	(2019) IMSI / NAMSC Meeting – Duluth, MN; hosted by MMSPA

Here is wishing you a productive and safe harvest season – “May your buckets be full, your vacuum lines not leak, your sugar content be high and your season be long.” See you in May. Bring an idea to share or a maple problem to solve. We will do our best!



## MMSPA Spring Meeting

May 16 (Fri) – May 17 (Sat.), 2014  
University of Minnesota – Southern Research  
Outreach Center  
35838 120th Street, Waseca, MN 56093

**Friday, May 16, 2014** (*Optional Friday Gathering*)  
Join other MMSPA members at the Boat House Bar and Grill, 406 9th Street NE, Waseca (MN). We will have a private room and people can order off the menu if desired. Time: 5:00PM to whenever. No program, just an informal opportunity to gather.

**Motel:** Crossings Inn and Suites (2201 State Street North Waseca, MN 56093; (507) 835 – 0022). A small block of rooms for Friday night are being held through April 21 at a rate of approximately \$85. Ask for the MN Maple Association rate. Members who want a room should contact the hotel sooner rather than later. The motel is approximately 1 – 2 miles from the Boat House Bar and Grill.

### **Saturday, May 17, 2014** – *Spring Membership Meeting*

8:30 AM Registration  
9:00 AM Meeting begins. Program includes, reports, election, syrup and photo contests (*see article later in this issue*), crop reports from members, maple panel, and so much more.  
12:00 PM Catered Lunch  
1:00 PM Adjourn and depart for Tour

**Tour:** Sugarhouse tour at *Hering Maple Syrup* about 13 miles north of Waseca (14142 490th

Street, Waterville). This is a 15,000 tap operation, gravity and vacuum, new sugarhouse, and they recently became a CDL maple equipment dealer. Map to be provided.

**Meeting Fee:** Approximately \$12 per person (*just enough to cover meeting room fee and catered lunch*).

**Travel Distances:** From Bloomington, MN (airport area) to Waseca is approximately 65 miles and a bit over an hour according to MapQuest. Travel from the meeting (U of M SROC) to Hering’s is about 15 miles (20-25 minutes).



## MMSPA Board Meeting Highlights

March 2, 2014  
Little Falls, MN

**Spring Meeting** – The MMSPA spring meeting was approved for Saturday, May 17 at the University of Minnesota Southern Research Outreach Center (SROC), Waseca MN. There will be an optional Friday night gathering, catered lunch on Saturday, business meeting and program, maple syrup and photo contest, and tour of the Hering Maple Syrup operation. Stu Peterson and Andy Peacock are working on finalizing details. Mark Waletzko and Laurie Reddie will chair the syrup and photo contest committees, respectively. Mark suggested adding a “confectionary” class to the syrup contest, at least as a demonstration category for 2014.

**2019 Convention** – Plans for hosting the NAMSC / IMSI convention October 21-24, 2019 in Duluth were discussed. Contracts with the Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center (DECC), Canal Park Lodge, and the Inn on Lake Superior were approved. Much work lies ahead, but we have sufficient time, people and resources.

**IMSI Membership** – An invitation for the MMSPA to become a member of the International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) was discussed. No action was taken.

**Audit Committee** – Butch Fidely, Andy Peacock, Jerry Jacobson and Mark Waletzko were appointed to review the 2013 financial records.

**Nominating Committee** – Jerry Jacobson, Laurie Reddie and Andy Peacock were appointed to identify willing and qualified candidates for the MMSPA board. The terms of Stu Peterson, Shelly Carlson and Chris Ransom expire in 2014.

**Maple Proclamation** – Chris Ransom shared Governor Mark Dayton’s Proclamation that March and April are official maple syrup months in Minnesota.

**MMSPA Web Site** ([www.mnmaple.org](http://www.mnmaple.org)) – Updated pictures in the “Photos” section are needed. Past issues of our newsletter, *Minnesota Maple News*, may be archived on the web site. The Bulletin Board is functioning well; activity is expected to pick up as we enter the sap harvest season. Several members have utilized the new “Pay Pal” option to pay MMSPA dues on-line.

**Membership** – Chris Ransom will send membership renewal notices to members in the next couple of weeks. Dues are payable by May 17, 2014. Stu Peterson will follow-up with prior members who have not maintained their membership in the last couple of years.

**Newsletter** – The format, cost of mailing, and contents were discussed. Color printing and postage costs are increasing. Paper copies of the newsletter will continue to be available by U.S.P.S., but they will be printed in B/W. Electronic copies will be produced in color.

**Fall 2014 Meeting** – The meeting will likely be held on Saturday, September 27 or October 4. Several possible venues in northern Minnesota were suggested. No action was taken.

## Maple Month

On Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Gov. Mark Dayton proclaimed the months of March and April 2014 as official “Maple Syrup Months.” The proclamation read:

**WHEREAS:** The annual spring ritual of tapping maple trees and producing pure maple syrup marks nature’s transition from winter to spring in Minnesota’s hardwood forests, and producers throughout Minnesota have been busy preparing for the March and April sap runs; and

**WHEREAS:** Maple syrup is produced throughout Minnesota, with many communities organizing maple syrup festivals in the weeks surrounding the annual sap runs; and

**WHEREAS:** Minnesota is one of 19 states that produce pure maple syrup and is the western-most producing state in the United States, and

**WHEREAS:** Producers from Minnesota have won state, national and international awards for the quality of their maple syrup; and

**WHEREAS:** Maple syrup is a natural agricultural product; and

**WHEREAS:** Maple syrup is a food, in its simplest and purest form;

**NOW THEREFORE, I, MARK DAYTON**, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim the months of March and April as Maple Syrup Months.



## For Sale

*(MMSPA members are welcome to submit items)*

**Pump for Sale** – Clean, vintage (probably 1950’s) Co-op dairy vacuum pump for sale. \$100.00. For more information, contact Terry Schwartz; 651-724-7410; [puremaplesyrup@outlook.com](mailto:puremaplesyrup@outlook.com).

## Board Members Wanted

Three of our board members' terms will end this spring. As in the past, we encourage MMSPA members to consider running for the Board. It is only a three-year commitment and you will learn so much about our organization. We need people who would like to see our organization move forward and to help prepare for the 2019 annual meeting of the North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) and the International Maple Syrup Institute (IMSI) which will be hosted here in Minnesota. If you would like to know more about this opportunity please contact Jerry Jacobson, Laurie Reddy or Andy Peacock.



## Question Corner

**Q. I love making maple syrup. I add taps every year, and I now have more than my family and friends can use. I think I'd like to sell to the public. Do I need a state license to do that? How do I obtain a license?**

A. Generally speaking, a license from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is required to legally sell maple syrup to the public unless all sap is obtained from trees on your own land and no other "off farm" inputs are used in your operation (*i.e.* sap from neighbors). However, all maple operations selling to the public are subject to inspections by the MDA, though the enforcement of that provision cannot be confirmed. The best advice we can give is to contact your local MDA inspector by calling them at 651-201-6315 or email at LIS.Info@state.mn.us. There are many rules and regulations regarding licensing and the types of licenses that may be required depending on your operation. Your inspector can listen to your plans and your specific circumstances and tell you what is and what is not required (*from the MMSPA web site*).

**Q. What is the required information on labels for maple syrup produced and sold in Minnesota to the public?**

A. According to an MDA official who spoke to our membership at the spring meeting at St. Olaf College in 2008, the minimum requirements for labeling include 1) the identity of the product (*i.e.* pure maple syrup), 2) the size of the container (*i.e.* 8 ounce, 12 ounce, 16 ounce, etc.) and 3) the identity and address of the producer. Use of the respective USDA grades is optional (not required) for maple syrup produced and sold in Minnesota. However, if grades are displayed, the "grades" of syrup must meet USDA minimum standards for each grade displayed. (*MMSPA web site*).

**Q. I would like to show my grandchildren how sap is obtained from the trees. Is there a place in Minnesota that allows the public to see the process?**

A. There are many Minnesota sugarhouse operations that are open to the public. I suggest you visit our website ([www.mnmaple.org](http://www.mnmaple.org)) and navigate to the member "Sugar House Directory" to locate the MMSPA member operations near you. The contact information for each producer should indicate which ones are open for tours. Many are. Also, there are several state and county parks or and local nature centers that have small maple demonstration programs during the season. The U of M Arboretum has a program especially for kids in the west-metro area of the Twin Cities.

**Q. I am looking to buy wholesale Minnesota maple syrup. Could you direct me to a few wholesales?**

A. The best bet might be to check the MN Maple Association "Sugar House Directory" on the website ([www.mmmple.com](http://www.mmmple.com)) and look for commercial producers in your area. You can search by county for member producers, contact info and type of operations are listed. Alternatively, check stores in

your area that carry LOCALLY produced maple syrup and see which producers are distributing to your area. Good luck and thanks for your interest in MN maple syrup.

**Q. Are signs with the MMSPA logo available?**

A. The Board is working with a potential supplier to produce "driveway" signs for members based on our MMSPA logo and colors. We hope to have the details ready for a presentation at our May 17 membership meeting in Waseca.

**Q. Apparently the maple syrup producers in Vermont have pancake breakfasts offered to the public on weekends during peak season. I was wondering if you knew of anything like that happening in Minnesota?**

A. We don't know of any similar event in Minnesota but this is a great idea. Perhaps this is something MMSPA can organize in the future.



## MMSPA Fall 2013 Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

**Location:** Lemire's Sugarbush, Aitkin, MN

**Date:** October 5, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 AM by Stu Peterson, President, with 51 attendees. Stu started the meeting with a welcome and by thanking the Lemire's for allowing us to use their facility for this meeting and for setting up the cooking demo and tours. Stu then discussed the general agenda for the rest of the meeting.

George Lemire gave a short history of his operation, which was followed by introductions of all members and guests present.

Chris Ransom, Secretary, gave an update on the new website and some of its features – including

the ability to register and renew online and to pay online using PayPal. The bulletin board will continue to function as it has. A 3-year membership is being considered as well.

Shelly Carlson gave a membership report – up to 100 memberships for the year.

At this point the group took a break for a cooking demonstration by Chef Royal.

After the demonstration, Jerry Jacobson, Vice President, gave an update on the State Fair MN Grown booth participation and invited anyone interested in staffing the booth next year to sign up.

Andy Peacock, Director, gave an update on the State Fair Maple Syrup contest winner – Riley Sugarbush in Eden Prairie, MN. They won first place in all categories and the best in show. Congrats to them!

Stu Peterson gave a short presentation on some pre-planning activities for the 2019 NAMSC/IMSI Convention to be held in Minnesota. The board met in Duluth on September 7 and had a presentation from the Duluth Convention Bureau, which highlighted their abilities to accommodate such a meeting.

At this point the group took a lunch break to enjoy the food prepared by Chef Royal.

After lunch, a panel was convened for the fourth annual Talking Maple "Stump the Chumps" forum. Member Lowell Pittack, and directors Mark Waletzko, Laurie Reddie, and Butch Fideldy comprised the panel and they took questions that included reverse osmosis system sizing, milky syrup, dead spots/sun scald on trees, black spots on maple leaves, crystallized syrup, how to know when your maple hobby has gotten out of hand, and what are those white spots on my maple trees.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 PM and was followed by a tour of a wild-rice operation.



## MMSPA Contest at the Spring Meeting

At the spring meeting in Waseca (*see p. 2*), MMSPA will host our traditional maple syrup contest. This year there will be two new categories – “Best in Show” and “Maple Confections.”

The **Best in Show** award will be given to the best overall product that is entered in the contest. This one is worth major bragging rights!

The **Maple Confection** award will be given to the best maple product such as maple cream, maple candy, and maple sugar. These products are produced by further cooking and stirring the syrup under proper conditions. There is both art and science involved in the production of these delicious maple products.

To make maple sugar, the syrup is heated to 36 degrees above the boiling point, removed from the heat and stirred. Maple cream is prepared by heating syrup to 22 – 24 degrees above the boiling point and then cooling it quickly and stirring. Molded maple candy is made by heating the syrup to 32 to 34 degrees above boiling, cooling to 160 – 200 and then stirring.

Our first Maple Confection contest will be designed as a learning experience for everyone. We encourage members to submit confections to be judged. Then, everyone will do a blind public tasting of the products so that we can learn how to evaluate the differences in the various products. Then, at future contests we will be able to more accurately judge these products.

Everyone is encouraged to make some maple confections and bring them to the meeting for judging.

## MMSPA in the News

**Riley Sugarbush**, winner of “Best of Show” at the Minnesota State Fair, was featured in the December 2013 issue of *Maple Digest*.

**Bob and Carmen Maschler** were featured in the February 2014 edition of the *Maple Digest*.

## Producer Profile

### Hering’s Maple Syrup

The featured maple syrup operation in this issue is Hering’s Maple Syrup located in Waterville (MN). The operation is run by the Hering family including Tanner, Tyler, Trent and Terry Hering (*family portrait below*).



Making syrup is a Hering family tradition. They have been at it since 1895!

Not only have the Hering’s been making syrup for nearly 120 years, but they do it in a big way! They have 20,000 taps and are continuing to add more. With all those taps they use tubing with vacuum (*see image below*), but also have some buckets and bags.



To cook all the sap they collect, the Hering's have a 4 x 14 foot evaporator (*image above*). It uses diesel fuel. To increase efficiency they use a reverse osmosis machine (*image below*). In addition, their evaporator also has a pre-heater unit.



Considering the large numbers of taps, it is not surprising that the Hering's make thousands of gallons of syrup! They bottle their syrup and sell

bulk. They have a store at their location (14142 490<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterville) and can supply anything you might need for making maple syrup or satisfying your sweet tooth.

To learn more about Hering's Maple Syrup, visit their website at [www.heringsmaplesyrup.com](http://www.heringsmaplesyrup.com). Or, join MMSPA at the Spring Meeting when we will have an opportunity to tour this spectacular operation!



## Tubing Sanitation Survey

The University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center and the Cornell University Maple Program are conducting a joint, research and education project investigating the effects of spout and tubing sanitation strategies (replacement and/or cleaning) on sap yield and profits. As a part of this project they are requesting producers complete a survey at <http://alturl.com/5birp>. No personal information is collected in this survey, and it will take only a few minutes to complete. Only current maple producer should complete this survey. Questions may be directed to [Timothy.Perkins@uvm.edu](mailto:Timothy.Perkins@uvm.edu).



*Thanks to the editorial committee (Ben Carlson, D.Mae Ceryes, and Stu Peterson) for all their help. Please submit items for the June newsletter to me by May 15<sup>th</sup>.*



**Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers' Association - Board of Directors (term expiration)**

**Shelley Carlson** (2014), *Treasurer*  
15946 County Road 51  
St. Joseph, MN 56374  
320-363-7784

**Stu Peterson** (2014), *President*  
31494 395<sup>th</sup> Street  
Dent, MN 56528  
218-758-2796

**Andy Peacock** (2016)  
5445 Pompano Dr.  
Minnetonka, MN 56343

**Butch Fidely** (2015)  
38563 County Road 469  
Cohasset, MN 55721  
218-326-0614

**Chris Ransom** (2014), *Secretary*  
603 Bear Avenue North  
Vadnais Heights, MN 55127  
651-429-8777

**Jerry Jacobson** (2016)  
48983 County Hwy 31  
Vergas, MN 56587  
218-863-2508

**Laurie Reddie** (2015)  
1904 Eagle Place  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
763-682-1674

**Bob Maschler** (2016)  
3878 230<sup>th</sup> Street  
Randall, MN 56475  
320-749-2232

**Mark Waletzko** (2015)  
15540 400<sup>th</sup> Street  
North Branch, MN 55056  
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