

# Maple syrup is the reward

## Youth finds wonder of nature's spring delicacy

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

When the nights are cold and the days are warm, Tom Crabill, 13, works from the time he comes home from school until late evening tending his maple trees.



After drawing the sap from the trees, Tom Crabill pours it through the evaporator in the process which will transform the sap into the much vaunted maple syrup. (Staff photo)

In his Farmington Hills home surrounded by trees, Tom often begins his days by lugging a bucket of sap to the evaporator so the liquid will boil into maple syrup.

What began as a father and son experimenting with coaxing maple sap into buckets matured into a small business for Tom.

Four years ago, Tom and his father, Ben Crabill, an industrial realtor, took their first attempts at cultivating sap.

"I had one bucket, a 'V' cut into the tree, a nail in the tree and the sap dripped off the nail and into the bucket," said Tom, an eighth-grade student at Power Junior High School.

Now Tom owns \$200 worth of equipment and sells his product to friends and neighbors.

"MY DAD, got me started. I think he was just trying to get me out of trouble," said Tom.

After a couple of years of hit-and-miss sap collecting, the Crabills met Al Bean, who taps sap on his Gill road property. Bean showed Tom the fine points of the craft.

"The next thing I knew, there were all these buckets," he said, in mock shock.

Bean was about to convert from using the buckets to gather the sap to a system involving tubing. The tubing system allows the sap to drip into the evaporating area all the time. The project with its heavy lugging and demanding hours is seen by Tom's mother, Carol, as a good learning experience for her son.

In spite of the work, Tom doesn't mind watching the trees yield their sap each year.

"I like doing it. It's better than just bumming around the neighborhood."

"It's lots of hard work," he admitted.

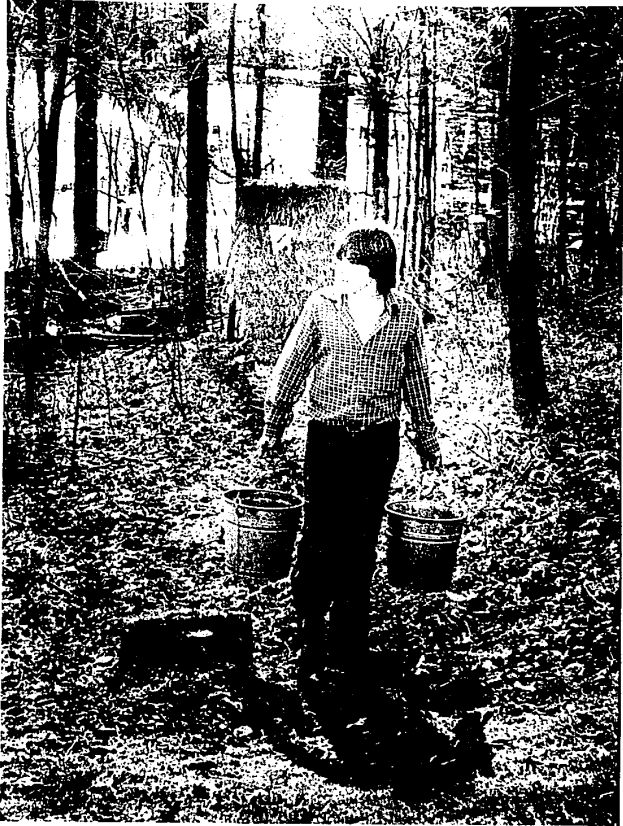
"Sometimes I wonder if it's worth it." After his father bought the eight buckets and Tom promised to repay him for the equipment, the young man thought that the going would be comparably easy.

HE DIDN'T COUNT on staying up late at night to watch the sap as it boiled into syrup in the family's fireplace. Sap must be watched to keep it from burning or turning to sugar.

One late night, his father helped him watch the sap and throw logs on the fire. Tom nodded asleep while his father took the watch.

Finally, both of them were sleeping

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One of the spring traditions is gathering sap which is made into maple syrup. Farmington Hills resident Tom Crabill has discovered the wonders of nature's offering and has turned it into a yearly quest. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

### THE INSIDE \* ANGLE

**AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT** needs a little help. Inside Angle, long a patron of the arts (but short on money) listened to the story of Farmington High School senior Wendy Williams the other day. Ms. Williams decided that her class should have a senior class play. She decided to take the project to the hallways, so to speak. She already has written a parody of Romeo and Juliet and has had the script printed. Now, all the ambitious writer-producer has to do is raise enough money to rent the auditorium on the weekends. That's \$300. In addition, the troupe wants to be properly costumed. But that might cost another \$400. IA would love to help but is still casing in old cola bottles so it can see the latest Big Flick at the theater. Still, Angles wonders if anyone out there would be interested in helping the ambitious project.

**THE THEATRE, THE THEATRE** must be on a lot of minds, lately. The Farmington Schools PTA area council is sponsoring a benefit movie presentation from 1:30-3:15 p.m. March 30 at the Civic Theater on Grand River near Farmington Road. Proceeds will go toward the PTA Council's projects and their annual scholarship award program for college-bound students from each of the three high schools. March 30 is an elementary school half day with classes ending at noon due to a scheduled afternoon teachers' work day. The movie to be shown is "Digby, the Biggest Dog in the World." Tickets are \$1.25. The movie is about the adventures of an English sheepdog. Tickets will be sold in each of the nine sponsoring PTA elementary schools on March 27, 28, 29. Remaining tickets may be purchased at the Civic Theater box office on the day of the movie.

**MICHAEL G. WEDDLE**, son of Arthur and Amelia Weddle of Farmington Hills has made the University of Michigan honors list for the second semester in the row. Weddle, a 1973 graduate of Farmington High School, is studying engineering.

**QUICK, LIKE A FOX** enroll in spring-summer employment programs being offered through Farmington, Farmington Hills and the school district if you're looking for a part time summer job. Deadline is March 30. Persons who live in the cities or within the school district will be given priority in hiring. The following positions are being considered: recreation center leaders, recreation center assistants, swim instructors, lifeguards, park maintenance workers, therapeutic recreation counselors, softball scorekeepers, softball umpires, tennis golf instructors and golf course starters.

Dependent upon qualifications, employment interests and scheduling, certain positions are available immediately. Pay is considered an hourly wage and is dependent upon the position. For further information contact the Farmington Hills Park and

Recreation Department office at 474-6115 before March 30.

**ALAMEDA ELEMENTARY** School students were given a chance to check out stamp collecting as a hobby Friday afternoon. The Dearborn Heights postmaster was imported to tell to the students about the hobby. Seems Farmington Postmaster Ken Harris became a student too, learning to tell others about the program.

**ANOTHER SIGN OF SPRING** in Farmington is the annual opening of the local drive-in. As with most drive-ins the fare is the other side of low budget. One of the opening movies is "Slithis" which does more with snakes than National Geographic ever cared to do.

**ANGLES IS PLEASED** to see that the site of old Waackes' Bar on Grand River near Middle Belt is leveled. (It's about time.)

**ROBERT AUTEN**, 27500 Springvalley, Farmington, was recently honored by the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co. at its annual president's club business conference in Florida. He qualified for membership in the club through outstanding sales.

**OAKWAY SYMPHONY** is sponsoring for the first time, a Young Artist Contest. The event, underwritten by a \$3,000 grant from the Michigan Foundation for the Arts, is aimed at talented musicians who are residents of Wayne or Oakland counties. It features competition in the area of piano, voice or orchestra instruments.

Competitors must be under 25 years old at the time of the award presentation on May 19. Competition will be open to high school students as well as students previously or currently enrolled in either degree or private work at colleges, universities or conservatories. Winners will appear as soloists with the Oakway Symphony on its Young Adult Concert, at 8 p.m., May 19, at Madonna College. First prize would be \$1,000 with \$750 each for the second and third place prizes and \$500 for fourth place. For additional information, write to the symphony, PO Box 171, Farmington, or call 476-6544. Deadline for applying is March 31. Auditions will be scheduled during the week of April 9.

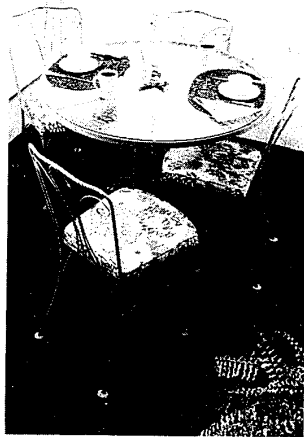
**SPEAKING OF VETS**, Kathleen M. Murphy of Farmington Hills has earned her doctor of veterinary medicine degree from Michigan State University. She is the daughter of John and Mary Murphy of 30024 Woodbrook.

#### DEADLINE

Material submitted for the Inside Angles, 23352 Farmington Road, Farmington, 48024, should include the name and phone number of the sender and should be typed if possible. Items should be received at least one week before publication and photographs can't be used.

### 20% off summer furniture in our Motor City Sale

Beautiful wrought iron dining or seating groups by Lyon-Shaw, both painted in a sand finish. Chairs have boxed seats in a tan/gray floral print. In Patio Furniture, all stores but Grand Rapids and Saginaw.



sale \$249

Reg. \$319. Five-piece dining set, with 42" round glass top table and four side chairs. Priced separately: table, regularly \$127, sale \$97; chair, regularly \$48, sale \$38. 60 units.\*



sale \$399

Reg. \$499. Four-piece seating group, with a 3-cushion sofa, chair and two 16x24" end tables. Separately: sofa, reg. \$286, sale \$229. Chair, reg. \$117, sale \$94. Table, reg. \$48, sale \$38. 60 units.\*

\*Total units available at Metropolitan Detroit Hudson's stores while quantities last.

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