

Sweet story

Students learn to tap sugar maples

By Casey Hans
staff writer

BOB AND NORMA Sarver were teaching Gill Elementary students a sweet lesson during these waning winter weeks.

Norma was showing students how to tap sugar maples for sap, while Bob was busy tending a open fire where he demonstrated the cooking and evaporating of sap in birch-bark boxes eventually turning it to maple sugar.

The practice dates back to the days of the early American Indians, who collected the sap for both eating and trading, and called their collection and processing area a "sugar bush."

"A lot of them (students) had never tapped a tree and couldn't dream of how to do it," Norma said, between teaching her outdoor classroom lessons.

RETIRED EDUCATORS from the Livonia school system, the Farmington Hills couple has made the woods due west of Gill and Power Middle School near Nine Mile and Gill everyone's to enjoy. Although their home is about one mile from Gill and Power where their own children attended school, they are pleased the area has stayed natural and that parents from Gill have invited them to be part of forming a nature area for the school.

Avid naturalists and nature photographers, they have marked many of



Kinney Patel, a first-grader at Gill Elementary School, looks at sap frozen to the bottom of a jar.

the 25 species of trees for nature study, and encourage people to keep an eye out for the cardinals, chickadees and nuthatches and other birds which call the woods their home.

In a few weeks, they said, wildflowers including trilliums, spring beauties, marsh marigolds and jacks-in-the-pulpit will be "abundant" in the school woods. "They could really do a great nature lesson on the wildflowers," Norma said.

But this time of year, the focus is

on the sugar maples in the woods, and it's being used as a lesson in outdoor education for Gill pupils.

Students took a short walk through the woods where various tree types were pointed out. They took turns visiting a demonstration "sugar bush" set up by the Sarvers back in the woods, where they were shown examples of how maple sugar has been made over the years.

NORMA SHOWED students how Indians used the hollows of sugar twigs to tap sap from the trees and how today's sap is harvested with metal spiles through plastic tubing to metal buckets. The south side of trees are tapped, she said, because that's where the sun hits and gets the sap running.

Over at the fire, Bob was busy explaining to another class that "you've probably heard it takes a lot of sap to make sugar — well, it takes almost 40 pounds of sap to make a pound of maple sugar," he said.

The birch bark he used as containers for the sap bubbled over the open flames, just high enough to keep them from catching fire. Much of the bark had to be placed with spruce sap where insects had chewed through.

He explained that Indians from various tribes including the Ottawa, Ottawa and Potawatomi used sugar making as a social activity. Indian families separated for months during winter hunting trips together to celebrate the near end of winter at the "sugar bush."



PHOTOS BY SHARON LAMPE FOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bob Sarver explains to the children how the sweet substance is purified.



Norma Sarver hands over a bucket of just-tapped sap.

Missing man found 'OK' in Kentucky

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Steven James Hamberg of Farmington, who left home March 4 without saying goodbye, was found in Covington, Ky., near Cincinnati, in good condition, Farmington police said Wednesday.

Police and family members had been diligently looking for the 23-year-old Hamberg.

"He was found alive and well Tuesday morning by the Fort Mitchell police department in the Covington, Ky., area," said Commander Charles Lee, special operations commander for Farmington police. He was not injured and there was no foul play.

His father, Philip Hamberg, contacted police with the good news before quickly departing to meet his son, Lee said.

Lee said that no further explanation

was provided about what Hamberg left so abruptly last week.

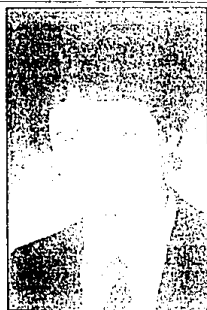
The 1993 Farmington High School graduate had recently returned from a two-week vacation in Hawaii.

HIS FATHER had printed 100 photos with colored photos of his son and a picture of a two-tone navy blue 1992 Ford Ranger with a super cab and a roll bar, a truck similar to the one his son drives.

Philip Hamberg distributed the flyers to the border patrol as well as rest stops along I-75.

Steven Hamberg, a designer, was laid off March 2 by DGE, a Livonia subsidiary of Chrysler Corp., where he had worked for two years, Lee said.

He was supposed to sign up for unemployment benefits on Tuesday, March 5, but we learned from the MEPS (Michigan Employment Security Commission) office that he didn't," Lee said.



Steven James Hamberg

Officers are re-elected to Farmington's DDA

Current officers of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority were re-elected to their posts for another year March 5.

Ron Ton Shoppe owner Harry Wingender was re-elected board president, Civic Theatre owner Greg Holder vice president and city manager Robert Deadman secretary.

The DDA board also approved budget amendments for 1991 and a proposed budget for 1992 which will be considered by the city council

during its annual budget process. The proposed budget is for \$374,973, using a \$158,681 surplus from the current year. Last year's budget was \$333,367.

MOST OF THE money comes from captured property tax increases in the DDA district, and most is spent on the capital portion of the downtown rejuvenation project. Money is also spent on DDA operations, promotions, repairs and maintenance, and salaries of the DDA staff.

Under the plan, the city will provide for the DDA's operating costs, while the city will provide for the DDA's capital costs.

During the coming year, the DDA is expected to coordinate a new downtown revitalization project, including more aggressive promotional program.



THE ART OF TAILORING IN PURE WOOL

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