

# A sign of Spring

(by Audrey Hepburn)

A sure sign of spring in our community is the sight of buckets hanging from dripping spiles on all the maple trees. The sap is running and syrup is being made to serve on the pancakes at our annual Maple Syrup Festival. We are glad you didn't let the cool wind on Saturday keep you from being one of the over 1400 people who attended to make this year's festival one of the best yet. If you had a long way to walk, Ralph McLean was ready with his tractor and wagon to give you a free ride to the main gate. Once inside, you were free to browse through all the craft booths set up.

Homebaking was on sale and hot dogs were being made to order by Margaret and her helpers just inside the door. Wiarton Centennial had a display with some of Mr. Last's best photography. If you wished, you could stop and chat with Barbara about spinning and wool. Outside there were booths with fresh fruit, spices, leather goods, maple syrup and mouth watering fudge. If you came early, as some did, you didn't get in the long line waiting for pancakes. We in the kitchen, worked as fast as we could to see you got your serving of pancakes hot and dripping with butter and maple syrup. Home-made slices of pie, pop and coffee were being served at several different points.

Did your children see the baby chicks and the pen full of rabbits? Or have a ride on one of Gail's ponies?

Doug Thompson boiled down sap and had a gallon of maple syrup made at the end of the day. It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup and if you aren't careful you could have taffy instead. Thanks for watching over the evaporator Doug.

Skeet shooting attracts a lot of nimrods, ladies as well as men.

Six teams competed and at the end of the day, North Grey-Bruce Rod and Gun Club won with a score of nineteen. Team members were Bill McNeil, Terry Sprung, Mervin Solomon, Bud Sprung and Jack Wallace. Norm Hepburn won the trophy for single high points. The ladies team which competed had a score of nine hits.

Ball throwing and log sawing were in progress all afternoon.

The bell ringer was not rung as often as it should have been. Perhaps you had never seen one before. When we were young, there was always a bell ringer at the fall fairs. The young gentlemen tried to impress their lady friends by ringing the bell as often as they could. Who do you think the ladies who were giving it a whirl on Saturday were trying to impress?

It's now one thirty and we are still busy in the kitchen flipping pancakes. Hepworth band is on the stage playing for your pleasure. The talent show is about to begin. Master of Ceremonies, Garth Keays calls for all entrants to be ready. The judges, Mrs. Irene Akiwenzie, Mrs. Sheila Gatis and Mr. Walter Sunahara are waiting to chose the winners. The winners were: first in the 12 and under class, Polly West, Windsor and Carrie Campbell, Welland singing a duet. Trevor Gilbert was second with his recitation about the cow. Bettyann Bray of Lion's Head played her guitar and sang to win first in the under 18 class. Hepworth band won second. Connie Cook tied for third with Joanne Zevenbergen and Ann McCulloch of Hepworth. Those over eighteen who competed were Joanne Damm, Shallow Lake winning first and Robin Campbell, Welland second.

A special comedy group called Edna's Androids won first in their division. The judges task

was a difficult one, we thank them for coming. Wiarton Public School band is now performing their best and the music sounds very nice in the spring air.

The M.C. next announces there will be a quart of maple syrup given to the oldest person in attendance. Joe Slack, 92, of Wiarton claimed this prize. Jens Alsing an exchange student from Denmark came the farthest. Jens is staying with Mr. and Mrs. Russ Davis at Oxenden. We hope he takes good memories of the Purple Valley Maple Syrup Festival home to Denmark.

The Thomas' eight month old baby boy was the youngest one at the festival. Six members of the Beaton family, Wiarton made up the largest family.

To renew our energy and make us forget our tired feet, we have a little sing song in the kitchen accompanied by Connie Cook on the guitar.

Press reporters are busy taking pictures and writing down how many pancakes we have made and how much maple syrup we have poured on them today.

Soon the line of traffic is heading home and no one appears at the windows for their helping of pancakes so we prepare to scrape the grills and wash the beaters. Without the guidance of our kitchen boss and all the outside helpers we have, we would never be able to have a festival with pancakes and maple syrup.

Now it's home to get ready for the dance as the J.B.'s from Allenford will soon be setting up their musical instruments.

And that is my version of 1980's maple syrup festival as I saw it while mixing those 5,000 pancakes.