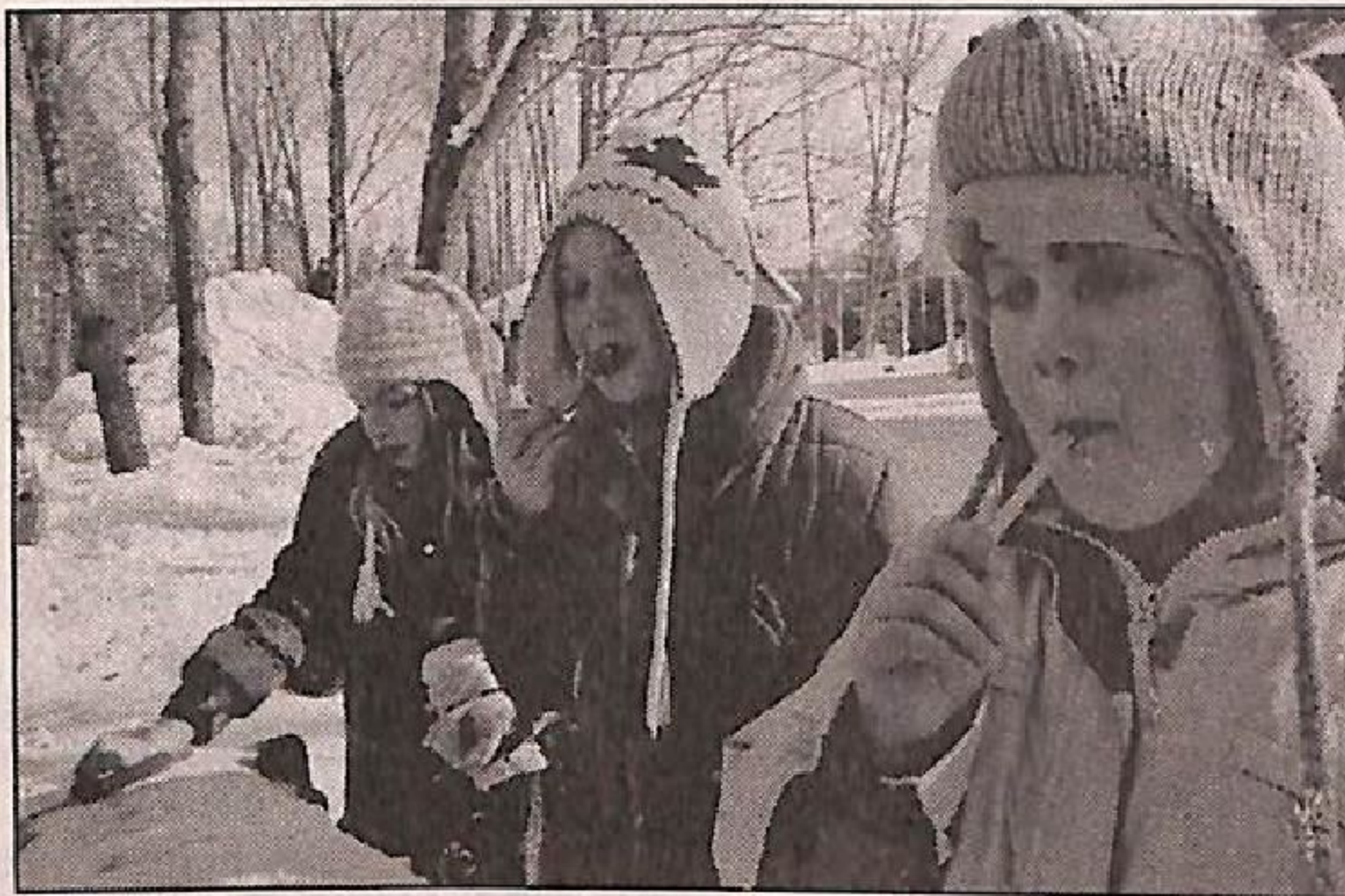


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■ **IN THE BUSH:** Treats include pancakes, music and carriage rides

NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY Feb. 17/11



(From left) Tessa Harkema, Marilee Archer and Jackie Barraclough try their tastebuds on some snow-hardened maple syrup.



Volunteer Linda Thain passes out pancakes to Percy Centennial School Grade 3 students during the annual media day at the Sandy Flat Sugar Bush.



Alice and George Potter have been hosting the Warkworth annual festival pancake breakfast at their Sandy Flat Sugar Bush for 30 years.



George Potter takes the students on a ride through the sugar bush.

# Sandy Flat has sweet plans for Maple Syrup Festival

**TED AMSDEN**

Northumberland Today

WARKWORTH — The 25th annual Warkworth Maple Syrup Festival is coming March 12 and 13.

Thanks to a \$17,200 grant from the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage Program, there will be a couple of neat events in addition to the usual long list of family activities this year.

One of the main events will be the Sandy Flat Sugar Bush, where everybody and their mother usually drops by at least once during the weekend.

Nestled in amongst a lot of maple trees is the house where the sap is cooked, while outside there are areas for taffy tasting on snow, sleigh rides behind one of five big friendly horse teams, log

sawing contests, plank races, snowshoeing and the always-well-used hill of snow for children who like to slide without a sled.

For those who like to loosen up their belts while eating, inside the main building in the dining room there will be an endless supply of sausages, beans and world-famous maple syrup served by some of the 200 volunteers in Warkworth who make the weekend happen.

Alice Potter, who, with her husband George, has been coaxing sweet syrup out of their sugar bush for over 30 years, will be making toe-tapping music, as will George, and overseeing thousands of festival-goers at their postcard-perfect setting deep in the woods.

In the village of Warkworth there will be the 11th annual juried art and photography show and sale, the 21st annual Warkworth Antiques and Nostalgia show and sale, an artisan jewelry show and sale, a festival craft show and sale, petting farm, indoor mini golf and, at the seniors centre, a white elephant sale and gingerbread tea.

This year, thanks to the grant, there will be illustrated talks by artists on why they do what they do. Gary Mulcahey will talk about taking pictures, hand felt fibre artist Maureen Harding will shed some light on her creative life, and landscape painter Harry Stooshinoff will delve into the subtleties of catching the spirit of the hills — which, incidentally, is the sponsor

in this case. Of course, they prefer to have the title capitalized as Spirit of the Hills.

Finally, a play has been written and it takes sweet inspiration from the area. It is called *How Sweet It Is*. Written and directed by Michael Nitsch, it is a musical comedy drama with a 20-member cast, the Westben Chorus and even square dancers. The tag line that is promoting the play captures the spirit of the play: it's all about The Potters, The Music and The Maples.

The play takes place at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

For all the details go to [www.warkworthmaplesyrupfestival.com](http://www.warkworthmaplesyrupfestival.com).

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