



Photo Credit: Kacie Duncan

## Taking inspiration from Curious George; Learning About Maple Syrup

BY KACIE DUNCAN

**W**HEN I HEARD THE TERM “Maple harvesting” a few weeks ago, my immediate thought went to an episode of Curious George I remember watching with my little brother. All I really remember from the episode was the little monkey tapping a tree and serving sap, thinking that it was the same as syrup. When I saw maple harvesting as a topic for the paper, I thought it would be a great walk down memory lane to go learn a little more about maple syrup. While most maple syrup events that involved learning about tapping trees and getting to help make the syrup were already full for registration, I found an event called MapleFest being offered in Chaska. So, dedicated to this article as I am, I bribed my roommate with free coffee and pancakes to get in the car and drive forty minutes to attend MapleFest. Upon arrival at MapleFest we were greeted with signs pointing the way to the event. Down a steep hill stood friends and family learning about how maple syrup is made.

Personally, me and my roommate stepped in to hear a volunteer tell us about the evaporator and the final process in making the syrup. It was here that we learned (or perhaps got a refresher of our Curious George knowledge), that for every thirty gallons of sap, one gallon of syrup is produced. One tree alone makes on average around ten to fifteen gallons of sap, meaning that it can take between two to three trees to produce one gallon of maple syrup. All I could think about was the price of pure maple syrup and how much it made sense when taking into account this information.

After learning about the making of syrup, we hiked up the hill and made our way inside where we were served pancakes, sausage links, and of course the best of all: fresh maple syrup. I’m sure it sounds ridiculous, but I’m convinced the syrup tasted the best it ever has due to the excitement of having just learned so many fun facts about the process of syrup making! Of course after eating a delicious breakfast at one in the afternoon, I also stopped over at the gift shop to buy some pure maple syrup for my shelf at home.

When I looked around this event, I saw mostly families enjoying their time learning and eating a late breakfast together. What I gathered from this little rendezvous for information, is the maple harvesting in Minnesota is a very people oriented event. The event I went to was just one of many options around the twin cities. I’m not sure if people love learning about maple syrup because they love the taste and they’re passionate fans, or if simply perhaps it’s a fun family outing where they can enjoy the nice weather and have some time together. When in doubt, perhaps Minnesotans love maple harvest for the same reason Curious George does. I know I myself love syrup for the same reason as George. As the narration goes: “...Sunday was his favorite morning...because Sunday was pancake day!” (Rey and Rey).