

The official voice of Vermont sugar makers

# VERMONT *Maple* SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

Committed to the promotion and protection of the branding of Vermont maple products since 1893.

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## FIRST AID, FIRST THING IN 2023

BY HEATHER WINNER, MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

As Allison and I tour the state visiting sugarhouses and participating in County Meetings I continue to be delighted by the folks around the table and just how involved they are in their communities. This includes meeting more than a few volunteer firefighters and EMS responders. Thank you all for your years of service in maple AND first response!

As a volunteer EMT myself for three rural agencies, I wanted to take a moment in our winter newsletter to share tried and true best practices for safety, and point you to resources for more information. It's the time of year where we all prepare for a busy sugaring season, so while we check in on the health of our trees and lines, let's also check in on the first aid measures we have in place for our people!

### THE BASICS:

#### » DO YOU HAVE A WELL-STOCKED FIRST AID KIT?

- » Be sure all your employees know where to find the kit in the sugarhouse.
- » Do you have a first aid kit that can be easily grabbed to take with you while working in the woods?
- » Add heat packs to your kits! It can take time to get help to you in the sugarbush and warmth is key.

#### » ARE YOUR FIRE EXTINGUISHERS WORKING PROPERLY?

- » Be sure all employees know where extinguishers are located and how/when to use them.

#### » IS YOUR PROPERTY CLEARLY MARKED WITH YOUR ADDRESS?

- » We all love the remote nature of our work, but it can make finding us hard in an emergency! Please consider ordering an E911 sign through your town or county for your properties. It can dramatically decrease response times.

2023

#### » DO YOU HOLD SAFETY TEAM MEETINGS?

- » Do your friends, family and employees understand what it means to work safely together in the woods and in the sugarhouse?
- » We recommend regular check-in meetings to highlight how to safely work with the tools of our trade that are sharp, steamy, and full of hot liquids.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We've got you covered for resources!

- 1 Please pull out that fresh North American Maple Producers Manual 3rd edition and flip to chapter 13 for everything safety related to maple! You can download this (400+ page) resource online here: <https://mapleresearch.org/pub/manual/> or you can order a printed copy for \$50 through VMSMA, just reach out to Allison.
- 2 Visit our the Maple Education page of our website for our new safety section with links to more resources! [www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences](http://www.vermontmaple.org/maple-conferences)
- 3 Visit [mapleresearch.org](https://mapleresearch.org) for tips on chainsaw safety: <https://mapleresearch.org/pub/chainsaw0621/>

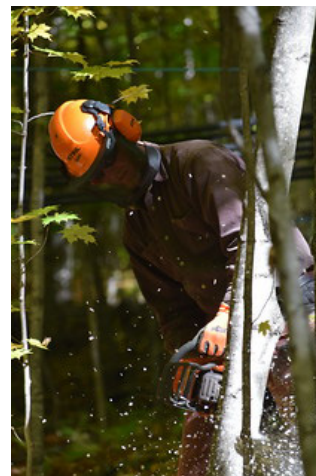


Photo: UVM Extension



## COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

# RUTLAND COUNTY

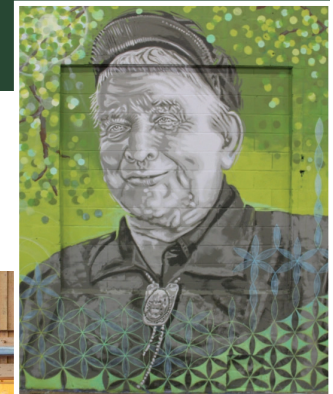
**As an ongoing series, we're highlighting Vermont's County Associations to connect sugar makers around the state. This time VMSMA Board Member Jenna Baird takes us through a look at Rutland County.**

This past year, my partner Jacob and I were making our Maple Ketchup in the certified kitchen space at the Vermont Farmer Food Center in the heart of downtown Rutland. As we walked around the corner a newly painted wall sized mural and portrait of local sugar maker Bill Clark appeared. It was sad news for many when Bill passed away last May.

Bill was a leader and mentor among sugarmakers. He was president of the Rutland County Maple Producers Association (RCMP) for 8 years, organized the first ever Maplerama, and was a long time president of the VMSMA. He deserves credit for building and nurturing a strong community of sugar makers and farmers around Rutland County. Like many other counties, Rutland County producers had a shorter crop in 2021. Some folks reported making only 50% of a crop. That made this past season that much sweeter when, for the most part, sugar makers pushed through a few warm spells to finish out with a near record crop. Like elsewhere, across Vermont, sugar makers here have been reinvesting in the sugarbush. Many folks are expanding, putting in new taps, bigger equipment and modernizing their sugarhouses. The boom in the maple industry is also seen happening right here in Rutland County. After another year with the ups and downs of the pandemic, this past season was a welcome sight to many, from folks hanging a dozen buckets to others running tens of thousands of taps.

It's not really August in Vermont until the Vermont State Fairgrounds opens up. I spoke to RCMP President Ed Baker this summer as he was busy prepping the fair's sugarhouse for another year of making cotton candy, creemees, and other maple products. Ed's been guiding the Association for many years and has been the driving force behind several new projects. "Without Ed, the county association wouldn't be possible. He puts his time and heart and soul into it" (Truman Young, RCMP Director).

While visiting with Ed, I learned that RCMP was the first ever county maple association in Vermont (formed in 1958) and they built the first ever working sugarhouse on a fairground



in Vermont and likely the country in the year of 1966. The most recent project the county group took on last summer includes a whole new vending stand on the other side of the fairgrounds. It was a group effort with a lot of folks pitching in. Everyone has affectionately started calling it "Maple 2.0." This new vendor stand sits right outside the grandstand - an ideal higher traffic spot to capture the sweet tooth of passersby. I had the pleasure of working 2.0 on its first day of the fair last year. Now it's in use during many of the events held year round at the fairgrounds. This year, we'll all be back again helping out where we can. If you get a chance visit the RCMP Sugarhouse or Maple 2.0. During my visit this past week Ed graciously gave me a pint of Frozen Maple Creemees which they started selling back in 2015. Not gonna lie, I had a spoon in the car and put a big dent in it on the way home!

Beyond the fair, the county association has continued to do good work among its producers. One of the most innovative is the Rutland County Maple Producers jug. While the VMSMA has rolled out the new Vermont label, producers in Rutland put in a lot of time and effort to make a county label. Many folks down here are using the county label especially because a portion of the jug sales go to the Foley Cancer Treatment Center at the Rutland Hospital. As of writing, the group has donated over \$25,000 through this initiative. Anyone who gathers sap knows, it all adds up. Just another way producers from Rutland County area are giving back and making a difference.

# NOTES FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



## COMING TOGETHER

BY EMMA MARVIN, VMSMA CHAIR

The craft of making maple syrup in Vermont is steeped in history and heritage. The same is true for us in how we come together as an Association to promote and protect our industry with a focus on quality, forest health, marketing and membership.

This November, we were grateful to gather the VMSMA Board in person for the first time since December 2019, where we had many thoughtful and engaged discussions about where to focus our energy. I was struck by the outcomes – and how similar they were to topics of focus of an association meeting from 100 years ago. Clearly, while our approach to the craft may have evolved over the years, our core focus has not.

The ideas of quality, environment, marketing and membership are still as core to the association's existence today as they were 100 years ago. In 2023, we're deepening this work with the addition of a federally-funded grant program for sugar makers, a new Membership Manager, updates on offering a consistent supply of VMSMA-branded containers, some opportunities to gather and learn from one another and from partner organizations. You can read about many of these association evolutions in this newsletter and we'll bring you more on these topics as the year progresses.

Thank you for your membership; it's because of you that we can achieve this collective work that benefits our entire industry. We wish you a robust season of sap runs in 2023 with some benevolence from Mother Nature and we look forward to seeing more of you this year.

[f/vermont.maple](https://www.facebook.com/vermont.maple)

[@/maplesyrupvermont](https://www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont)

## BOARD & STAFF

### Executive Committee

Chair - Emma Marvin  
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Treasurer - Jason Gagne  
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Membership Manager,  
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Peter Purinton | Huntington, VT

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Hardwick, VT

David Lane | Farm Credit East,  
Williston VT





## REMEMBRANCES

Please join us in fondly remembering friends of Vermont Maple who passed away this year and will be truly missed. If you know of someone who should be remembered in a future newsletter, please reach out to Heather Winner at VMSMA ([heather@vermontmaple.org](mailto:heather@vermontmaple.org)).



**RODNEY CROFT**  
December 2022

Rodney grew up in Chelsea, Vermont graduating from Chelsea High School in 1965. Soon after graduation he enlisted in the United State Marine Corp and very proudly served his country with two tours in Vietnam. Part of that time with the US Marine Observation Squadron (VMO-6). Semper Fi.

Rodney returned home to Vermont and married Mary VanAlstyne on January 3, 1970. In addition to starting a family with Mary, Rodney started and continued to drive trucks and equipment for many years at Adams-McNichol & Melen in White River Junction and later at Northwoods Excavation in Thetford. He also worked as a Field Enumerator with the USDA National Ag Statistic Service.

In addition to being a dedicated family man, Rodney was a lifelong member, supporter, and current Commander of the American Legion Post #24 in Woodstock, Vermont. He was also a member of the Broad Brook Volunteer Fire Department and served as Cemetery Commissioner in Barnard for many years.

Rodney enjoyed hunting and fishing as well as being involved with maple sugaring with family. He found great satisfaction in cutting, splitting, and properly stacking firewood.



**OLIVER BOLES**  
September 2022

Oliver graduated from South Royalton High School in 1973. He married the love of his life, Carol Manning in 1977. They lived in Strafford where they raised their three children, Melissa, Sarah and Mark. In 1984 he, along with his brother in law Vernon Flint, and best friend Roger Blake started the roofing business, Flint, Blake and Boles Roofing, which he continued to work in and manage for the past 38 years.

Oliver was an avid hunter and outdoorsman. He loved spending time with Carol and other friends and family every summer in Lake George, NY and at the horse races in Saratoga, NY. He enjoyed taking walks with Carol as well as hunting with family and friends, and working on any manner of project he had going on at any given time. He enjoyed making maple syrup every spring in his sugarhouse. He was always there for anyone and everyone who called on him for help. He had a joke or saying for pretty much any situation, and his laugh will be remembered by many. He loved his family with everything he had, and especially loved his time with his grandchildren, cheering them on at their games, teaching them about the great outdoors and hunting, tending his chickens, and so much else





**MARGARET DAVIES**  
**May 2022**

Margaret Davis was the co-founder & the Director of Fun for Green Mountain Maple. Along with Don Mandelkorn, Margaret’s husband, Green Mountain Maple was founded in 2010 to work with the Echo Hill Farm, Craftsbury, to sell throughout the South all of what the farm produced. Margaret, a lifelong & generational Vermonter, enjoyed Green Mountain Maple’s adventures traveling in a 1961 International Harvester Metro Van working 35 fairs, festivals, trade & consumer shows from Texas to the Carolinas.



Margaret was a 7th generation Vermonter who loved the beauty & tolerant culture of the Green Mountains of Vermont. Margaret attended public schools in Vermont graduating from South Burlington High School in 1971. After high school, Margaret became interested in working with at-risk youth & became a runaway youth worker in Miami Beach.

Margaret returned home to Vermont where she entered the Vermont Police Academy & became the 2nd female police officer in the State of Vermont working for the Burlington (VT) Police Department. In 1986, Margaret was hired as a social worker for the State of Vermont in the Barre (VT) office. During her 30 year career with the State of Vermont, Margaret worked in child protection as an investigator, a trainer & supervisor for the special investigations unit.

During her tenure with the State of Vermont, Margaret received many awards & accolades, including Social Worker of the Year. She was instrumental in creating a program called OUR House of Central Vermont, whose mission is to support children who have been abused. Margaret continued to support OUR House until her passing.

Margaret retired from state service in 2010 & moved to Asheville, North Carolina, with her longtime partner & love of her life, Don Mandelkorn, where they started a business, Green Mountain Maple, selling Vermont Maple Syrup throughout the Southeast.

Margaret earned her Bachelor’s & Master’s after her 50th birthday. She was an artist, a published author, a professional clown, named Lady Haha, performing at nursing homes, & a background artist, ie, “extra”, appearing in several TV shows & movies.



# NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR VERMONT'S SUGAR MAKERS

ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Many of you may remember that back in the summer of 2021, VMSMA applied for funding for two Congressionally Directed Spending ("CDS", aka a federal earmark) projects through Senator Leahy's office. As the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Leahy worked to restore this source of federal funding that had been banned since 2011. One of these projects, for VMSMA's Sugarhouse Certification Program, made it to the Senator's priority list. In this first year of applications since the ban, the turnaround time from application to review to the creation of priorities was a quick one. I'll skip to the good part and let you know that our funding was approved for \$637,000 for our five-year project. For a little perspective, 138 Vermont projects (totaling over \$207million) were funded in 2022 through federal earmarks, with amounts from \$46,000 to \$16.9 million and a median amount of \$600,000.

The largest portion of our CDS project will be returned to member sugar makers through a new Grant Program. Funding, from \$1,500 to \$15,000 for individual operations, will be available to support Vermont's sugar makers as part of this five-year earmark. Funding will be on a first-come, first-served basis and will be available until the funding is depleted.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Vermont sugar makers who participate in the Sugarhouse Certification Program are eligible to apply for grant funding in order to meet the requirements of their specific Certification.

There are several ways to receive funding from the Grant Program. The first step is always participation in the VMSMA Sugarhouse Certification Program. Once the onsite portion of Certification is complete, operations are either Certified or they receive a corrective action list that needs to be remedied before they are Certified.



- 1** For Sugar Makers whose onsite Certification visit occurred before January 1, 2023. Operations who complete the Certification Program, have no corrective actions to remedy before receiving their two-year Certificate, and who completed upgrades within 6 months of the onsite visit to ensure they were compliant with the Program requirements. These operations can apply for grant funding for upgrades completed (which are related to the Sugarhouse Certification Checklist) within 6 months prior to the onsite visit.
- 2** For Sugar Makers whose onsite Certification visit occurs on or after January 1, 2023.
  - A** Operations who complete the Certification Program and have no corrective actions to remedy before receiving their two-year Certification. These operations will receive free Certification at the two-year mark through this grant funding.
  - B** Operations who complete the onsite visit portion of the Certification Program and have corrective actions to remedy before receiving their two-year Certification. These operations can apply for grant funding for upgrades needed to remedy the stated corrective actions.

*Right: Donna Young and Jim Judd of Judd's Wayeeses Farms during their onsite Certification, July 2020*

*Far Right: Matt Wamsganz offers a tour of his Westford sugarhouse during his onsite Certification, August 2020*



## FUNDING & TIMING OF FUNDS

Eligible Vermont sugar makers can apply for one of the following levels of funding:

- 1** Up to \$1,500 in grant funding with no match requirements. VMSMA will grant up to \$1,500 in funding for eligible Vermont sugar makers as noted above.
- 2** \$1,501 to \$15,000 in grant funding with a 25% match requirement. For projects that are estimated to cost more than \$1,500, eligible sugar makers will need to fund 25% of the project cost and can apply for a grant for 75% of the cost. For example, if you have a project that totals \$20,000, you could apply for \$15,000 in grant funding and you would have to fund the remaining \$5,000 (or 25%).

For grants of less than \$1,500, you will need to include a reasonable project quote and VMSMA will mail a check to your business for the entire amount. See below for grant reporting requirements.

For grants of more than \$1,500, you will need to include a reasonable project quote. VMSMA will mail a check for 50% of the cost to your business. The remaining 50% will be paid upon project completion. If you would prefer that VMSMA pay your equipment dealer or similar contractor directly, please note that on your application. See below for grant reporting requirements.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

For grants of less than \$1,500: Within 30 days of the conclusion of the project, you will need to report on project completion to VMSMA via email or USPS mail, using the provided form. Appropriate completion of this form will close out your grant requirements.

For grants of more than \$1,500: Within 30 days of the conclusion of the project, you will need to report on project completion to VMSMA via email or USPS mail, using the provided form. Appropriate completion of this form will allow us to mail you the remaining 50% of your grant funding which will be based on actual costs if they are different from quoted/estimated costs.

This is an exciting opportunity to ensure that your operation is following all of the current food safety regulations and that you're third-party Certified by VMSMA. And our new grant program offers direct financial assistance to get you there!

Now that sugaring season is almost upon us, consider reviewing our Certification Checklist and comparing your Operational Manual with the templates that we have available on the VMSMA website (<https://vermontmaple.org/certification-program-details>). While you're starting up operations, boiling and cleaning up this year, double check your equipment and documentation. Are you ready for Certification this spring or summer? What do you need to update? Do you have any questions? Then, fill out and return the Certification Application to get started. Need to fix some things around the sugarhouse? Apply for the Program anyway and you may be eligible for some help with those upgrades as part of your corrective actions needed to complete Certification. Reach out to Allison, [allison@vermontmaple.org](mailto:allison@vermontmaple.org), for more information.







# FALL MAPLE OPEN HOUSE

## A NEW TIME FOR A TIME-HONORED TRADITION IN VERMONT MAPLE

HEATHER WINNER, MEMBERSHIP MANAGER

Looking to leverage a spectacular fall tourism outlook for the state, VMSMA hosted the first (of many!) Fall Maple Open Houses during the first two weekends of October. The weekends ran in conjunction with the Agency of Ag's "Maple 100", and sugar makers had the option to participate in one weekend or both.

As we anticipated, the state's peak color season coincided with this year's dates, making it a great inaugural season of fall tours and tastings. Participant producers tell us that they saw an increase in foot traffic and retail sales during one or both of the weekends. Sugar makers also told us they enjoyed hosting visitors in the fall, as it is typically a quieter time for maple projects, and easier to find friends and family to help. Several reported it gave them an opportunity to give longer tours and better explain their products and the story of maple.

As VMSMA's new Membership Manager, I toured a number of open houses and marveled at the diversity and depth of experiences tourists and locals alike get during the fall season. I was greeted with maple donuts, sent on long walks through sugarbushes, and was then sent on my way with a creemee. I spoke to a lot of visitors as I toured and all expressed delight in getting to take in the views AND treats!

The Association is already making plans to continue this new fall tradition and make it even better for 2023. But first - Spring Maple Open House!



Above: Silloway Maple, Randolph Center VT



Top Right: Darlene's Delectable Delights, Johnson VT



Right: Sterling Mountain Farm, Johnson VT





# VERMONT MAPLE RETURNS TO THE BIG E

ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After a two year COVID hiatus, we opened the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association booth in the Vermont Building at the Big E this summer. Visitors welcomed our team back with wide open arms and the fair broke several attendance records, with a total of over 1.6 million visitors in 17 days. All in all, we returned home both tired and energized - a successful fair run!

The Association adjusted booth operations to allow for fewer volunteers - making all of the maple candy and most of the cream prior to the fair and trucking it down. We are forever grateful to Mike Christian and Kenn Hastings for spending time this summer making and packing the over 1,100 containers of maple cream we sold this year! This also gave booth volunteers more time to talk with visitors, answer questions and share our love of Vermont Maple. Cream cones were a huge favorite with many visitors reminiscing about getting one every year at the fair. Our sore arms built maple muscle while making over 13,000 cream cones and spreading maple cream on over 2,200 donuts!

Vermont Day, on September 24th, brought a record number of visitors to the fair and they all got to meet our Vermont Maple Ambassadors. This year's Ambassadors, Charlie Schurman and Evan Fletcher, were in attendance along with one of our 2021 Ambassadors, Abigail Gagne. We kept them busy greeting visitors, making cream cones and throwing Vermont Maple candy in the Vermont parade.

Vermont's volunteers this year were a mix of our two Association staff, Allison and our new Membership Manager Heather, and many sugar maker members who all enjoyed talking to folks about the different grades of syrup and answering all sorts of questions. It's always amazing to be reminded how many people don't know the difference between pure maple syrup and the fake stuff! The group also had plenty of conversations about what's in maple cream and maple candy - always fun to see a look of wonder when you tell folks it's all maple syrup!

VMSMA is extremely grateful for the work and leadership of its Big E Booth Managers this year: Mike Christian, Kenn Hastings and Cody Devries. We've already had a few meetings to start getting ready for 2023. If you're interested in volunteering for the next Big E (September 15 - October 1) reach out to Allison at [allison@vermontmaple.org](mailto:allison@vermontmaple.org)!



Top L: Heather makes one of 13,000+ maple cream cones

Top R: Mike and Kenn offering the best customer service in the Vermont Building

Above L: VT Maple Ambassadors represent us on Vermont Day

Above R: Mike and Cody with some of our booth volunteers



Mike and Cody get ready for thousands of visitors to the booth





## VMSMA GRANT PROJECTS BENEFIT SUGAR MAKERS STATEWIDE

BY ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Heather and I have been traveling the state to participate in county meetings, we've shared some of the ongoing grant-funded projects that we continue to work on for our members. I've highlighted them here, but we're always available for questions if you'd like more details! These are all Specialty Crop Block Grants (USDA funding through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets).

**MAPLE MARKETING:** In 2023, we continue to work with Place Creative to market maple as a pantry staple through videos and other digital advertising. The campaign is called "Maple It Up" and is currently running on Instagram, Facebook and on ads with Spotify and similar platforms. The grant includes a survey of consumer use before and after the campaign to measure the effects of the marketing. See below for a Facebook post featuring maple in coffee as a sample of Place Creative's work on this project.



**MAPLE PASSPORT:** We were awarded a grant to create a Maple Passport to use as part of Vermont Maple's agritourism efforts. This passport idea was crafted within the Marketing Committee and is intended to encourage more year-round visits and new customers to sugarhouses around the state. We are also working with Place Creative on this project that we've named the "Maple Meander."

The passport will be foldable to fit into a wallet, and will include other bits of maple information including how to substitute pure Vermont maple for processed sugar in recipes. Heather and I were able to see the first draft in mid-January and we're excited to share the finished product with you in time for spring Maple Open House Weekends.

There will be a small registration fee for sugar makers who want to be included on the passport (sugar makers will be highlighted on our website as part of the passport program, with seasonal hours and other specifics) to help us cover the cost of printing. Folks who complete an entire passport and get it stamped by you along the way, will receive a free gift.

**CONTAINER LABELING:** Due to the ceaseless work of James Buck and the VMSMA Packaging Committee, and an amazing partnership with the Purintons, VMSMA has been ordering and labeling containers from Hillside for almost a year now. While Hillside was recently sold again, we've been told that they will not be taking orders for decorated containers until at least this summer. So we've made other plans to ensure that members have a consistent and sustainable supply of VMSMA containers. We are able to receive a truckload of blank containers around 4-8 weeks after ordering, as opposed to the historical one to two years+ for decorated containers.

As part of this work, we were awarded a grant to purchase a labeling machine that works with the various sizes of Sugarhill containers and the current VMSMA labels. We expect to receive the new machine, from Tronics America in Indiana, by mid-February. We have created a new partnership with Vermont Evaporator Company who will house the machine in their Montpelier facility and receive and label containers for the Association.



# MAPLE OPEN HOUSE

March 25-26 & April 1-2

## Register Today for Vermont's Favorite Spring Event

### Registration includes:

- Regional and statewide promotion of both weekends. **New this year!** We'll be promoting your events on Front Porch Forum, in newspapers around the state, through Vermont's rest areas and on Vermont Public, in addition to our robust online advertising;
- Increase consumer traffic to your sugarhouse where you can share your stories and Vermont Maple products;
- Claim your place on the map! We point visitors to our website where we share your specific events and all the information needed to get them to your sugarhouse;
- You'll also receive a digital toolkit to share your event participation online.

### TAP INTO THE FUN & REGISTER BY 2/20

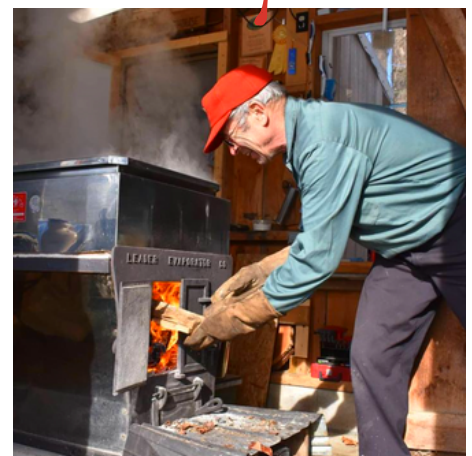


**REGISTER ONLINE HERE :  
BIT.LY/2023MOH  
(or scan the QR code to the left)**

**\$50**

**OVER 125 PARTICIPATING  
LOCATIONS AROUND THE STATE**

**AND OVER 40,000 OPEN HOUSE  
ATTENDEES EACH YEAR**







# THE BIG SUGAR

BY GARY FRYMIRE, PRESIDENT, USS VERMONT SUPPORT GROUP

USS VERMONT's nickname is "Big Sugar." It was adopted by the Vermont FRG (Family Readiness Group – the mutual support organization of the wives and families of the USS VERMONT) and became the defacto nickname used by everyone from the Commanding Officer down. Just like last year's maple syrup production, the sugar content is high when you're talking to a sailor or family member of the USS VERMONT SSN 792. The bag below was produced by the FRG for a fund raiser and marks one of the earliest uses of the Big Sugar moniker.

The USS VERMONT Support Group participates in the annual Naval Submarine League Symposium held in Crystal City Virginia each year. We have a display that includes several Vermont icons but the one that brings most people in is the raffle for a quart of Vermont Maple Syrup. It's an opportunity to tie the support of the USS VERMONT with one of the most widely known products from the brave little state of Vermont.

When the USS VERMONT SSN 792 was christened in October of 2018, Ship's Sponsor Gloria Valdez used a bottle of Putney Mountain Winery's Northern Spy Sparkling Wine to smash against the hull of the boat. At a reception following the christening, event host General Dynamics' Electric Boat provided each of the attendees with a pint of Pure Vermont Maple Syrup to honor both the boat with the ship's name on the jug, as well as the State of Vermont.

The USS VERMONT Support Group assembles "Sunshine Bags" with tastes of Vermont for incoming sailors to the USS VERMONT team. Included is a pint of Vermont Maple Syrup, a Vermont Strong license plate, and from our friends at the

VSFA, flavors like Vermont Nut Free Maple Fudge, Maple Kettle Corn and Maple Chipotle Rub from Branon Family Maple Orchards, and Maple Nut Granola from Klingers Bakery. It's both an important way to introduce sailors to Vermont, as well as to prepare them to serve on "Big Sugar."

Each year, a different VMSMA County Association supports the USS VERMONT with the donation of pints of Vermont Maple Syrup. In 2021, that was Roger Palmer from Orange County. Roger kicked it up a notch with glass jugs for the finest taste, and had a set of custom labels created with the crest of the USS VERMONT. Roger had the honor of displaying the VMSMA "Honorary Plank Owner" framed certificate in his sugar shack at Tunbridge. As a new county offers the donation in future years, the certificate honoring the VMSMA will move to the new producer's sugar shack.

The second USS VERMONT commissioned in 1907 was presented with a 14 piece silver service from Governor Fletcher Proctor. We felt it was important to have a piece of that set reside on board the USS VERMONT to preserve the heritage of Vermont's naval service. It took the assistance of Senator Patrick Leahy's staff to help us gain the Navy's exception to breaking up the silver services. We selected a silver maple syrup decanter with a gold lining which the 1907 Defense Register referred to as "the unique piece of the service representing a section of a maple tree." Big Sugar now proudly displays the maple syrup decanter in a locked presentation case on board the USS VERMONT. When the USS VERMONT SSN 792 is decommissioned in about 35 years, it will be repatriated with the rest of the set held in the State House in Vermont.





When we hosted a contingent of USS VERMONT sailors in Montpelier to participate in the July 4th parade in 2019, one of the venues the crew visited was Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks. After a briefing on sugaring, the crew was able to sample maple syrup as well as maple kettle corn. The USS VERMONT Support Group brought a dozen submariners to Vermont for a namesake visit in 2022, and repeated the visit to Burr Morse's place where our sailors sampled sugar on snow. A culinary specialist was among the crew members and returned to the base with a book of recipes using maple syrup compliments of the Burlington Rotary. We'll make sure the USS VERMONT has plenty of syrup when she begins her next deployment.

The Commissioning Ceremony for a new navy vessel normally includes the presentation of traditional gifts from the namesake state to the Commander of the boat. It's nearly impossible to come up with something unique. Working with the Chief of the Boat, we devised a twist on the "ship in a bottle" by designing a "sub in a maple syrup jug" that would be further proof of Big Sugar's adoption of all things maple. Working with Jeff White of the Bern Gallery and other artists, a proof of concept was created, and the lessons learned were applied to the finished sub-in-a-jug as it became known. It now resides in the presentation case on board the USS VERMONT next to the maple syrup decanter from the USS VERMONT BB-20.

As presented in the Spring of 2021 VMSMA Newsletter, and has been covered widely in the media, Burr Morse provided Commander Charles W. Phillips III of the USS VERMONT SSN 792 with 8 maple leaf bottles of pure Vermont Maple Syrup. The bottles traveled over 5,000 miles inside our namesake submarine and crossed the equator before being presented to the President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, during a tour of the USS VERMONT. This important port call to our newest non-NATO Ally was attended by US Ambassador



Todd Chapman who also got a taste of Vermont in a maple leaf jug to take home for himself.

In December of 2021, the VERMONT Family Readiness Group (FRG, the mutual support organization of spouses and families of USS VERMONT submariners) held a family movie night. The USS VERMONT Support Group's Santa Claus was on hand with a bag full of goodies for the kids and families compliments of the folks at Butternut Mountain Farm and Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks. There are very few crew members at this point who haven't had the opportunity to enjoy pure Vermont Maple Syrup in one form or another.

At the Platform Breakfast on the day of the USS VERMONT's Commemorative Commissioning ceremony, a surprise gift was presented to Commander Phillips by the Vermont Air National Guard's Brigadier General Henry Harder, Jr. As always, the receipt of Vermont Maple Syrup brought out smiles and a strong handshake between the officers.

In April 2021, the USS VERMONT sailors participated in the Groton Area Submarine Birthday Ball held at the Mohegan Sun Resort. Each submarine participating in the event was challenged to bring a centerpiece that represented their boat. The USS VERMONT adopted Lake Champlain's "Champ" on some of their coins and emblematics, so they created a model of the USS VERMONT SSN 792 heading toward the surface with what they call Champy wrapped around sub. Underneath the boat was a gallon of Brown Family Farm Maple Syrup to ensure there was no doubt which centerpiece represented the VERMONT. When the award was presented for best centerpiece, crew members got a standing ovation with the USS VERMONT's Executive Officer, Joshua Ludwig, hoisting the gallon jug of syrup over his head and shouting "Big Sugar." If only we had a video of this joyous moment!





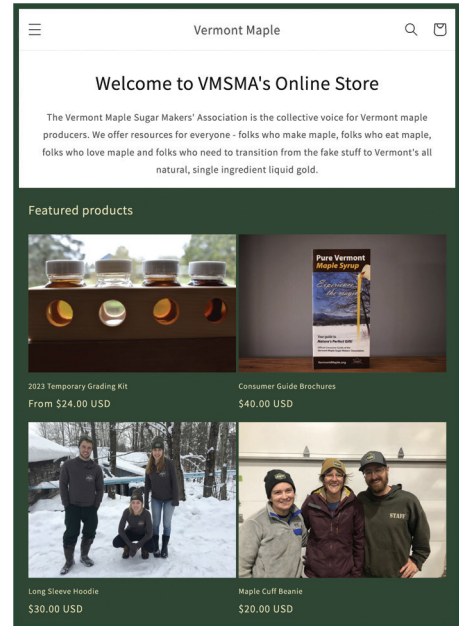
# VMSMA ONLINE STORE

**NEW AND IMPROVED!**

If you've visited our online store (<https://shop.vermontmaple.org>) to order your 2023 temporary grading kit, you may have noticed some changes. At the end of December, we moved our order fulfillment from a warehouse in Burlington to our friends at Vermont Evaporator Company in Montpelier. At the same time, we simplified the systems running in the background to make this whole online shopping experience work more efficiently for us and for you. We've transitioned to Shopify (which some of you may be using for your own online stores), which we update and maintain in-house, and then the orders get packed and shipped from the Vermont Evaporator Company facility.

We're still getting used to the new system, but over time, we plan to offer an option to pick up your items in Montpelier and have the potential for lower shipping rates. And we're always open to constructive feedback - let us know what you think and what you'd like to see for sale!

As a reminder, one great benefit of VMSMA membership is a discount code for 25% off of store items. You can find the discount code on your membership card (log in to your membership account to find yours) or by reaching out to Heather via email at [heather@vermontmaple.org](mailto:heather@vermontmaple.org).



Find these popular hats and hoodies, modeled by the Dunkleys of Westford Sugarworks, online.



# VERMONT HYDROMETER TESTING UPDATE

ALLISON HOPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Marc Paquette, Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets, Weights & Measures Section Chief & Metrologist, was generous to spend time with us at our December Conference testing hydrometers (1st time in person at our conference since 2020!). Shortly after the conference, I caught up with Henry Marckres, Vermont's retired Consumer Protection Chief and Maple Specialist, as he was testing hydrometers at the Orange County Maple Producers Association annual meeting in Chelsea. Henry noted that Vermont has moved from stamping the state approved/tested hydrometers to adding a sticker. We checked in with Marc to get an update and here's what he shared:

Vermont Maple Law and Regulation requires all new hydrometers sold in Vermont to be tested and approved by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets. If after testing the hydrometers are approved, they are so marked. This allows purchasers as well as field inspectors to confirm the approval. For many years the program stamped "Approved" with food approved ink and stamp. We were finding it more difficult to stamp them as the ink was fading or running. We explored different options to change the marking and are currently putting stickers on the hydrometers. We find the stickers to look more professional and easier for customers and inspectors to see. While the stickers state "remove before use" please remember to remove after purchase. If they are not removed, it will affect the hydrometer's accuracy. They should be easy to take off as we had tested many different types of stickers and made certain that removal was not difficult.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Vermont's Weights & Measures Metrology lab totals for 2023: The lab tolerance tested 16,500 hydrometers (a record year for this testing, with a previous record of about 11,000).



Marc Paquette tested hydrometers at the Vermont Maple Conference in December



# CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS!

As you move through the sugaring season, take time to reflect on who has made a positive impact on your operation and who has helped improve your skills and technical expertise. It's probably a pretty long list! When you have a minute, make some notes on who these folks are and then let us know.

Every summer at our Annual Meeting, VMSMA offers up three awards:



## OUTSTANDING SUGAR MAKER AWARD

- » This Award goes to a sugar maker or sugar making family that meets the following criteria:
- » Must have produced Vermont maple syrup and is a member of the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) in good standing.
- » Sets a good example for other sugar makers to follow in cleanliness and production practices.
- » Has helped the maple industry by participating in county and statewide maple promotional events.
- » Encourages and helps educate future sugar makers along with educating consumers of the benefits of using pure Vermont maple products.

## VERMONT MAPLE PERSON OF THE YEAR

This Award goes to someone in the Vermont maple community who may or may not be an active sugar maker but has stepped up to provide support (through education, partnership and collaboration, technical expertise or any number of other ways!).

## SUMNER WILLIAMS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This Award (previously called the President's Award) was renamed in January 2000 in memory of Sumner Williams, then Assistant Director of the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center. Sumner was a sugar maker, researcher and educator and a friend to anyone involved in the maple industry. At the time of his death, Sumner was serving as President of the Vermont Maple Industry Council. The Sumner Hill Williams Memorial Cup is presented each year at the Annual Meeting by the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association to honor an individual for outstanding service and dedication to the Vermont maple industry.

In past years, VMSMA Board members have made the initial nominations for each Award and then voted on winners at their spring Board meeting. We'd like to have more active participation from members and so we're looking to you (yes, you!) for nominations. You can share your nominations for one, two or all three Awards through our online form here: <https://bit.ly/MapleAwards> or by scanning the QR code below with your smartphone. You can also share your nominations by good old fashioned mail. Just write down your information, who you're nominating and why (the why is really important) and then mail it to us at VMSMA, PO Box 854, Richford VT 05476.





# RECIPES



## MAPLE PEANUT BUTTER PIE

Yields 8 Servings

- » 1-1/2 cups crushed cream-filled maple sandwich cookies (about 12 cookies)
- » 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- » 1/3 cup hot fudge ice cream topping
- » 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- » 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- » 1-1/4 cups confectioners' sugar
- » 1 carton (8 ounces) frozen whipped topping, thawed
- » 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- » 2 tablespoons maple syrup + extra for topping
- » 1/4 cup chocolate-covered peanuts, coarsely chopped

1. In a small bowl, mix crushed cookies and butter. Press onto bottom and up sides of an ungreased 9-in. pie plate. Freeze 5 minutes.
2. In a microwave, warm fudge topping 5-10 seconds or until spreadable; spread over bottom and up sides of crust. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese, peanut butter and syrup until blended. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar; fold in whipped topping. Spoon into crust, spreading evenly. Refrigerate 4 hours or until set.
3. In a small bowl, beat cream until it begins to thicken. Add additional syrup; beat until stiff peaks form. Serve with pie; top with peanuts.

*Recipe inspiration thanks to Taste of Home!*  
[www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/maple-peanut-butter-pie/](http://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/maple-peanut-butter-pie/)



## MAPLE SEA SALT HOT CHOCOLATE

Yields 2 Servings

- » 2 cups milk, any kind (dairy, nondairy, you name it)
- » 1 ounce dark chocolate
- » 3 Tbsp cocoa powder
- » 3 Tbsp pure Vermont maple syrup
- » Pinch of Himalayan sea salt

1. Heat milk in a small saucepan over medium heat.
2. When warm, add dark chocolate, cocoa powder, maple syrup, and salt. Use a whisk or hand held milk frother to mix until the cocoa powder is dissolved and combined. Continue whisking hot chocolate over medium heat until just before boiling (don't let it boil!). You want to make sure not to burn the milk, but you want the dark chocolate to melt and combine with everything.
3. Once the dark chocolate has fully melted and the hot chocolate is hot enough for your liking, serve with your favorite toppings and enjoy!

*Recipe from FitFoodieFinds.com*

We're always looking for maple recipes! We love sharing maple recipes from members in these newsletters, on social media, and online. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please send them along with photos to [heather@vermontmaple.org](mailto:heather@vermontmaple.org).

# 2023 MEMBERSHIP

Special thanks to all our members that renewed during the December renewal mailing. If you haven't gotten a chance to renew yet, it's not too late! Be sure to visit your profile page at <https://vermontmaple.org/login> and click "renew". Or simply use the form included in this newsletter and mail it with your check to VMSMA, PO Box 854, Richford VT 05476.

Membership offers many benefits! VMSMA offers discounts on insurance, supplies and fuel for all your production needs, and streamlined access to premium containers... and that's just to name a few. Visit <https://vermontmaple.org/member-benefits> and be sure you're taking advantage of all membership has to offer!

## DISCOUNTS ON SUPPLIES AND APPAREL!

**10% OFF  
REGULAR PRICED  
MERCHANDISE!**



**LENNY'S APPAREL**

BARRE, WILLSTON, ST. ALBANS

**15% DISCOUNT ON SNOW SHOES, BOOTS,  
CLOTHING, SOCKS, GLOVES**



**R&L ARCHERY**

BARRE

**15% OFF TUBING SUPPLIES; UP TO 40%  
OFF BULK CLAMPS**



**JOHNSON FARM & GARDEN**

JOHNSON

**10% OFF IN-STORE PURCHASES!**



**WALKER'S FARM & TACK**

ST. ALBANS, FORT ANN, NY

SOME EXCLUSIONS APPLY.

**10% OFF IN-STORE PURCHASES!**



**WILLISTON WORKWEAR**

WILLISTON

**20% OFF**

**WORK BOOTS & GLOVES!**

**30% OFF**

**CARHARTT & ARBORWEAR**

**FARM-WAY**

**BRADFORD**

## DISCOUNTS ON INSURANCE



**CO-OPERATIVE  
INSURANCE  
COMPANIES**

VMSMA producer-members who qualify for Co-operative Insurance Company's group discount insurance plan will be able to receive up to 10% discount on your home, mini-farm and auto insurance policies. Anyone who already has a policy with the Co-op and who qualifies will be eligible for the discount at the time of your policy renewal. For more information and a list of local Co-op agents please visit the Co-operative Insurance Company website: [www.Co-OpInsurance.com](http://www.Co-OpInsurance.com).



Farm Family Insurance offers special benefits for Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association members. VMSMA members who have paid their current dues are eligible to receive up to a 25% credit on their Special Farm Packages, which combines coverage on your home and personal property with coverage for your business property. For more information and to find an agent near you, visit [FarmFamilyVT.com](http://FarmFamilyVT.com).

## SUGARHOUSE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Members are eligible to participate in our third-party food safety certification program, created by sugar makers specifically for pure maple production. Certification is good for two years and includes a review of your documentation and an onsite visit to review your operations and setup. Find more information on the VMSMA website here: [www.vermontmaple.org/sugarhouse-certification](http://www.vermontmaple.org/sugarhouse-certification)

## STAY ON TOP OF INDUSTRY NEWS!

### VMSMA NEWSLETTER AND EMAILS & THE MAPLE DIGEST

Members receive VMSMA's quarterly printed newsletter and regular email newsletters including information on research, events, marketing and grant opportunities, industry updates and regulatory issues. In addition, members will receive the Maple Syrup Digest, published by the North American Maple Syrup Council in March, June, September and December.

### THE MAPLE NEWS

Save \$5 by subscribing to The Maple News for a discounted price as a VMSMA member! Subscription includes 10 issues per year and the Annual Maple Syrup Almanac. The Maple News is a privately owned publication that reports on maple news throughout the US and Canada.



## PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MEMBER-ONLY CONTENT ON VMSMA WEBSITE

We've updated our membership to include enhanced web listings and our holiday gift guide for all members! The web listing includes your pictures and logo, a link to your website and social media accounts, and lists the products you sell as well as certifications you have. In addition, members receive a free spot in our annual winter Holiday Gift Guide, promoted throughout November and December with paid postings and a link directly to your online store.

# VERMONT MAPLE SUGAR MAKERS' ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 854, RICHFORD, VT 05476

802-917-2032 • FOR QUESTIONS, CONTACT HEATHER WINNER • HEATHER@VERMONTMAPLE.ORG

## 2023 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

For your convenience, registration can be completed online at:

[www.vermontmaple.org](http://www.vermontmaple.org)

TYPE OF APPLICATION: RENEWAL  NEW MEMBER

NAME:

BUSINESS NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

TOWN/STATE/ZIP:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

TAP COUNT FOR 2023 SEASON:

SUGARHOUSE/  
BUSINESS ADDRESS  
(IF DIFFERENT):

### MEMBERSHIP

#### Producer Membership:

VMSMA By-Laws define a voting member as one who sets at least 100 taps and/or produces 25 gallons of maple syrup in 2 of the last 5 years.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 99 TAPS          | \$25  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 100 - 999 TAPS       | \$30  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1,000 - 1,999 TAPS   | \$40  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2,000 - 3,999 TAPS   | \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4,000 - 8,999 TAPS   | \$60  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9,000 - 14,999 TAPS  | \$80  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15,000 - 29,999 TAPS | \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30,000 + TAPS        | \$300 |



THE MAPLE NEWS:  \$28

VMSMA Members receive a discounted rate. One year subscription includes 10 issues per year & the official maple syrup almanac.

### PAYMENT

MEMBERSHIP DUES

MAPLE NEWS (\$28)

TOTAL

#### Friends of Vermont Maple Membership:

Anyone with an interest in supporting the Vermont Maple Industry. This membership level is non-voting.

FRIENDS OF VT MAPLE MEMBERSHIP \$25

### NOW INCLUDED WITH ALL MEMBERSHIP! ADVANCED WEB LISTING

Enhance your presence on the VMSMA website with pictures, logos, and links to your website and social media pages. Also includes free advertising in our Holiday Gift Guide! Share your photos and logo with us to include on your web listing.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: VMSMA • MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 854, RICHFORD, VT 05476

**VMSMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE! YOUR 2023 MEMBERSHIP WILL BE VALID 12 MONTHS FROM YOUR DATE OF PAYMENT. SINCE THIS CHANGE STARTS WITH 2023 MEMBERSHIP, IF YOU PAY IN DECEMBER, YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL BEGIN ON JANUARY 1, 2023.**



Please consider renewing your registration at [www.vermontmaple.org](http://www.vermontmaple.org). Submitting your registration online helps to save limited staff time to be dedicated to projects that directly support and benefit our Members. Thank you!

[www.vermontmaple.org](http://www.vermontmaple.org)



Vermont Maple Sugar  
Makers' Association  
PO Box 854  
Richford, VT 05476

## SAVE THE DATES

**NOFA-VT 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE**  
**FEBRUARY 18 | UVM DAVIS CENTER, BURLINGTON VT**

[nofavt.org/wc](http://nofavt.org/wc)

**VERMONT MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WEEKENDS**  
**MARCH 25 & 26 AND APRIL 1 & 2**

Register today: [bit.ly/2023MOH](http://bit.ly/2023MOH)

**VERMONT'S 56<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MAPLE FESTIVAL**  
**APRIL 28 - 30 | ST. ALBANS, VT**

[vtmaplefestival.org](http://vtmaplefestival.org)

**THE BIG E**  
**SEPT 15 - OCTOBER 1 | WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA**

[thebige.com](http://thebige.com)

Sign up to volunteer in the VMSMA booth!  
Email [allison@vermontmaple.org](mailto:allison@vermontmaple.org).

**2023 NORTH AMERICAN MAPLE CONFERENCE**  
**OCT 25 - 28 | STRUBRIDGE, MA**

[massmaple.org/2023mapleconference](http://massmaple.org/2023mapleconference)



[www.vermontmaple.org](http://www.vermontmaple.org)

 [www.facebook.com/vermont.maple](https://www.facebook.com/vermont.maple) |  [www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont](https://www.instagram.com/maplesyrupvermont)