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Seventy-Five Cents

GEAUGA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Maple museum built with assistance of Amish frolic

By John Karlovec

The Amish describe a 'frolic' as a time to come together and enjoy fellowship and hard work in performing a task.

Last Saturday morning, against the beautiful panorama of Century Village in Burton, members of the county's Amish community gathered for neighborliness and assistance. Three crews of workers from Gingerich Construction, Yoder Brothers Construction and Yoder's Construction volunteered their services to begin construction of the Ohio Maple Museum. Century Village maintenance manager Bill Troyer coordinated the frolic.

"They're doing this through the goodness of their hearts," Geauga County

Historical Society President Kurt Updegraff told a group of about 30 onlookers. "And the way they're going today — they started about 7 (a.m.) or 7:30 (a.m.) — it looks like they're going to get pretty close to getting this building closed in today."

When completed, Updegraff added it will be the only museum in Ohio dedicated to maple sugaring.

The Ohio Maple Museum includes 2,500 square feet of space and will house Century Village's approximately 400- to 500-square-foot sugar house, enabling visitors to see maple syrup being made the old fashioned way, Updegraff said.

"We do make maple

syrup here at Century Village," he added, noting the historical society came in fourth place in the commercial category at the Geauga Maple Festival in April. "So, we're going to have a complete historical museum coupled with a functioning sugar house."

Most of the building will be devoted to exhibits depicting the history of maple sugaring in Ohio. Holden Arboretum is partnering with Century Village Museum by providing a permanent loan of significant maple sugaring artifacts previously on exhibit at the arboretum.

"That will go a long way toward starting us off with artifacts, but we will be collecting more artifacts to round out the exhibit," Updegraff said. "But their collection is going to be fantastic."

Paul Spector, director of education for the arboretum, attended the museum-raising frolic.

"We're happy to find a good home for our collection. We did stop our sugaring three or four years ago, so we spent almost 30 years collecting artifacts in our museum and we're happy to be able to contribute to this project."



Also in attendance was celebrated Ohio artist Florian K. Lawton, who specializes in Amish drawings and watercolor paintings.

"I've been coming out here for over 50 years," Lawton said. "I became acquainted with the Amish by chance and my first impression was they're relatively pioneers in a modern society. I like the aspect of the horse and buggy, and their way of life, and I respect the way they've stood by it and still live by it."

Lawton said he still visits Geauga County and is now friends with many Amish children whose parents he has known over the decades.

"I'll keep coming out here until I can't do it anymore. I still enjoy their company and I like their way of life," he said.

Three of Lawton's most celebrated and published works — Burton Square, Amish Frolic and Auction Barn, Burton, Ohio — have been reproduced as artist proofs and are part of a maple museum fundraiser.

Raffle tickets costing \$10 are on sale at Century Village and a drawing will be held each quarter at which the winner will receive one of the three prints. A grand-prize drawing for a set of three prints, matted and ready for framing, will be held at next year's Apple Butter Festival, set for Oct. 9, 2011.

The artist proofs have been donated to the historical society by the Florian K. Lawton Foundation to support construction of the Ohio Maple Museum, Updegraff said.

Visit www.geugamapleleaf.com to see a photo album of last Saturday's Amish frolic.

