

# Thumb Octagon Barn News



## Home of the Thumb Agricultural Museum

*Our mission is to maintain a volunteer group of Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn involved in the restoration and preservation of the Barn Complex as an educational tool preserving our rural and agricultural history for the benefit of our visitors.*

FALL 2014

## Fall Family Days 2014 – *The Biggest Crowd Ever*

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**Rose Putnam**

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**  
**Martin Kubacki**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**  
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**Ardis Monroe**

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**Grounds Chairman**  
**Louis Wehrman**

Contributions to the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn, a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit organization, are tax deductible according to the IRS guidelines.

**Web Site**  
[www.thumboctagonbarn.org](http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org)

Hi Friends,

With Fall Family Days 2014 now in the history books, we are thrilled with its success and the fact that all previous records were broken. There were more than 16,000 visitors, exhibitors, vendors and volunteers present during the two day event which also included the fish fry on Friday night. We had a large number of new people in all of the above groups which is always a positive.

Friday night's storm held the crowd down somewhat, but still about 1,000 brave souls came out for a great fish fry. The Farmer's Breakfast was a huge success and kept the pancake flippers very busy! Apple pie a la mode was new this year and what a treat! A ton of pies were sold and over 30 churns of ice cream were cranked out. Over 6,000 tasty donuts kept visitors happily waiting for that first hot tasty bite-yum! And the list of goodies goes on and on; I'm sure no one went away hungry.

There were a lot of positive comments about this year's theme: Michigan Apples. The feature tent provided lots of things to see and do all relating to apples. It was both educational and entertaining for all ages, especially because it was also fall apple harvest time.

The advertising money was well spent with extensive coverage on TV 5, in local newspapers and on radio spots. It brought folks from all over the Thumb and beyond, including first time FFD visitors. We hope they returned home to tell all their friends and neighbors about the wonderful time they had which is sure to bring more people next year.

With all the activities, shopping,

etc., the earnings from this year's show were up from 2013 and after expenses brought in the greatest income we have ever had. We had the usual unforeseen expenses that hit this year and created some cost overruns in the budget but many of those were one time expenses with materials to be reused again and again.

Each year as our Event has grown so does the need for more volunteers. This year prior to the show, we had a larger turnout of people to help set up and more than 400 volunteers were in place to make everything go well during the event. Included are more than 75 volunteers for the fish fry, 48 tractor drivers, 36 traffic directors, 50 admission people, and the many other folks who help with activities and it is easy to see the need for so many volunteers. If you have never helped, you are NEEDED! Please consider it for 2015.

I, as your Chairman, wish to extend a very special, sincere thank you to each and everyone of you who helped and also to all who visited the barn during Fall Family Days. Without you, we would not move forward and just think of all the fun we'd miss!

God Bless,  
Martin

**The story of 2014 Fall Family Days  
continues on Pages 4 & 5.**

### **WANTED by Martin Kubacki**

- ❖ Hay wagon running gear 6 or 8 ton to be used for a people mover
- ❖ Someone who could help answer the many phone calls that come into Martin regarding FFD
- ❖ Anyone able to help out, please call Martin at 989-551-0526.



**Sharada Seurnyck** from Gagetown opened our 2014 Fall Family Days by impressively singing the National Anthem a cappella. Sharada said, "It is my privilege to be asked to sing the National Anthem and open this wonderful Event that is happening right here in Gagetown."



**Keny Hazard**, Leesburg, FL is receiving his plaque for our 2014 FFD and at the same time he became our first 2015 FFD sponsor. Keny remembers our first FFD in 1996 when **Loren Stein**, who demonstrates the shingle mill and forge, was not feeling well and Keny and his Dad, **Russell Hazard**, stepped in and helped out. They cut the shingles and branded them with the Octagon Barn and the date.

### *Letter From the President* **FRIENDS of the THUMB OCTAGON BARN** **Rose M. Putnam**

Dear Friends:

There is a lot of great information in this newsletter about the most recent activities. I understand it was quite a challenge to get all the stories and pictures in this edition. As you'll read from Martin Kubacki's message, we had a very successful Fall Family Days. Yes, we had a storm Friday night just as the Fish Fry started, but people in the Thumb are resilient and came anyway. It was amazing. Our newest partner, the Caro Knights of Columbus, came forward, for a second year, to prepare the terrific Farmer's breakfast and even took time to bake some apple pies. I am so proud of all the volunteers who worked so diligently to give our visitors a great experience all weekend long, even as they grew tired. As I take surveys during the weekend, I hear so many wonderful comments about how nice people are here! That is a great compliment to you! I cannot thank you enough for your continued support of Fall Family Days and the Thumb Octagon Barn project all year long.

We are winding down from activities for the year, but that does not stop the planning process. Budgets are due in December and the list of projects are created by need or want. It appears that we may be looking at a new roof for the Barn already. It's been 15 years since our last roof was put on. I remember when a shingled roof would last 30 years! Museum Committee Chairman, Doug Monroe mentioned a new display in the north loft of the barn. See page 7 for the story. The one room country school building is done, but needs exterior repainting, repairs are being made in the cider mill and the list goes on. We encourage your suggestions for improvements or new ideas. Please feel free to contact any executive committee member.

It's that time of year to appreciate and be thankful for all of our blessings and we received many. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to say "Thank You" for a great 2014. We wish to pass along a message for you and your loved ones to enjoy many blessings in 2015.

*Your Friend and President,*  
**Rose**

## ***A Bit of History and a Wedding Too!***

In 1960 when the owners of the Mud Lake Estate, **Michael & Stella Pisarek**, decided to sell the property, they sold the Huron County 440 acres separately from the 80 acres in Tuscola County. The 80 acres were sold to **John & Felicia Lelonek** of Pigeon who lived on site during the summer months. The family thought of the Farm as a cottage according to **Felicia Geiger**, their daughter who was around seven years old at the time. "We had horses, loved blueberry picking and had parties under the big trees in front of the Barn."

Well the family once again had a big party when the great grandson of John Lelonek was married at the Octagon Barn on August 23, 2014. **Adam**, the son of Daniel Block & Felicia's daughter Brenda Block, married **Samantha Terry**. It was a beautiful wedding and the weather could not have been better.

## ***Annual Meeting/Dinner & Benefit Auction***

**Nancy Hrabcak, Chairperson**

Our 2015 Annual Meeting will be held **Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at the V.F.W. Hall in Cass City**. The evening will begin with a social hour at 5:00 p.m. and Dinner served at 5:45 p.m. Following a short business meeting our Auction will be conducted by the **Osentoski Brothers**.

A reservation form will be included with our Winter Newsletter that will be mailed in late February. Any questions about the Annual Meeting can be answered by **Nancy Hrabcak, Plain & Fancy Decorating, 989-551-6495**.

## ***School Tours 2015***

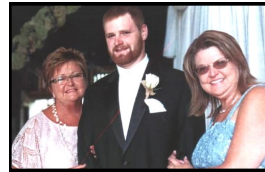
**Diane Rapson Gabil, Chairperson**

**School Tours 2015 are scheduled for Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> & Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> during the school day and will begin each day at 8:30 a.m. every half hour until 1:00 p.m.**

Tours are already being scheduled and Friday is completely full. Those interested can use Diane's email address at [drapsongabil@charter.net](mailto:drapsongabil@charter.net) or use our website at [www.thumboctagonbarn.org](http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org). Diane encourages teachers to schedule their visit to the Thumb Octagon Barn as quickly as possible as we can accommodate only so many students each day. This is an exceptional educational experience for students in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Diane is always looking for new volunteers and if able to help, please contact her. There is much planning that goes into welcoming well over a thousand students to our Agricultural Museum. Therefore, Diane has arranged for the following planning meetings at Rawson Memorial Library in Cass City at 12:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. on **Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, February 18<sup>th</sup>, March 18<sup>th</sup> & April 29<sup>th</sup>**. **Our 2015 Theme is Trees Are Our Friends.**

**Ardis Monroe** and **Paula Gardner** stopped painting for a picture with their very beautiful quilt block. You'll have to come by and see the completed square. Recently an individual who had followed the trail to nine locations remarked that the square at the Octagon Barn was the most "beautifullest" and that the colors are striking. Drive by and see for yourself.



Before the wedding the three generations of the Lelonek family posed for a picture. From the left are **Felicia Lelonek Geiger**, the groom **Adam Block** and his mother **Brenda Geiger Block**.



Felicia shared this picture that is of her father John Lelonek holding his great grandson Adam who was a toddler at the time. John Lelonek was known by everyone as **Honest John Lelonek** because he was highly respected in the community and very helpful to those in need. John died in 1997.

## ***Wedding Coordinator***

**Carolyn Sorenson, Chairperson**

We had six weddings at the Thumb Octagon Barn this year and each one was very different. The coordinator has to be present at the rehearsal and of course for the wedding several hours before the ceremony. We already have a number of weddings scheduled for 2015 and they require quite a lot of time to meet all the needs of the brides. Therefore, Carolyn is looking for someone to work with her to take care of all the details that each wedding requires. If interested please give Carolyn a call at **989-912-0449**.



The Block wedding party created this beautiful heart out of hydrangea blossoms. It was awesome and showcased the beauty of the interior of the Barn. Each bride has their own idea of decorating the Barn for their very special day.



**Samantha Terry** and her Father, **David Terry**, are making the walk over to the Barn from the Purdy Home for the walk down the aisle. Soon she will be **Mrs. Samantha Block**.

## ***Thumb Quilt Trail***

The Thumb Quilt Trail was established to promote tourism, to promote the appreciation of barns, to tell the story of a small agricultural community and to promote the art, craft and legacy of quilt making in the Thumb Region. A Barn Quilt is an 8' by 8' framed, wooden quilt block that has been carefully painted in a particular pattern. **Ardis Monroe**, Gagetown and **Paula Gardner**, Cass City spent hours carefully painting their assigned quilt block pattern, **Michigan Royal Star**. The completed quilt square is mounted on a frame in the front yard and attached to the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum sign. It is visible from the road. Thank you to **Richard Stacer**, **Wayne Lenton**, **Jack Hill** and **Lew Martin** for the installation. Also, **Dale Will**, **DTE Energy**, for setting the new poles.



## Teas in the Purdy Home

*Tori Pine, Chairperson*

There were three Teas held in the Purdy Home and they were lovely and as usual filled up quickly. All of the Teas this year were Dessert Teas rather than the Tea/Luncheons of past years. Following are pictures from the Teas.

Tori has taken on a new roll for 2015 and feels that she would therefore not be able to Chair and schedule the Teas next year. Therefore we are in need of a new chairperson. (See want ad in lower right corner of this page.)

### June Tea

The June 21<sup>st</sup> Dessert Tea was hosted by **Tori Pine** of Unionville, MI who prepared a table full of tasty treats. Tori was assisted by **Jean Tobias** also from Unionville who had never been involved in a Tea before and so enjoyed the experience. They had everything ready for their guests and were able to pause for a picture.



**Tammie Kosters** is pictured with the Marxophone, a folk instrument that was made to imitate a more complicated instrument, the mandolin. The instrument is more than one hundred years old and was the predecessor to the auto harp.



The weather was beautiful so Tori set some tables up on the big front porch of the Purdy Home and it was perfect. Seated from the left are **Tammie Koster**, Caro, invited to entertain the guests during the Tea, Tori's sisters **Ann Russell** from Akron, **Yvonne McNeil** of Unionville and Tori's niece **Tara Schlegel**.

### Project RED

**Genevieve Hecht**, Project RED coordinator shared the following information about the 10th Anniversary event held at the Thumb Octagon Barn. **Project RED** stands for **Rural Education Day** and their goal is to educate youth about where their food comes from and what is going on in their backyards. 150 volunteers helped with this Event.

In September, 345 Tuscola County third graders from 14 different classrooms came together to visit 15 different stations designed to meet the goal of Project RED. Some of the stations were: sugar beets, honeybees, bike safety, farm safety, maple syrup, natural resources, wheat & soybeans. They rotated through the different stations and received a snack at some of them. Each child left with a goody bag filled with various agricultural materials that were donated by local businesses, various commodity organizations, livestock associations and our local representatives. Each child also went home with a bike helmet thanks to Betaseed.

Genevieve would like to thank the Thumb Octagon Barn for allowing Project RED to have their Event on the site. They would also like to thank the Host Couples and Mark Battel for their help in setting up and answering questions.



Each volunteer was quickly recognized as they were wearing bright red shirts with their logo proudly displayed on the back of the shirt.

### July Tea



What a beautiful picture as the tables in the parlor are ready for the guests to arrive. The china, crystal and table clothes are so elegant.



The hostesses invited **Tom Krause** of Caro and **Vicki Vader** from Akron to entertain during the Tea and what a treat it was to fill the Purdy Home with music. They are in the sitting room and the melodic sounds will reach all in the parlor and dining room. Music was very important to the Purdy family as daughter Florence was an accomplished pianist and Carolyn played the organ at the Methodist Church in Gagetown.



Project RED provided a First Aid station in the Purdy Garage manned by three medical care technicians from Caro Community Hospital to handle any medical emergencies. From the left they are **Kelly Whittaker**, **Tammy Gugel** & **Matt Hill**.

### August Tea



The August 16<sup>th</sup> Tea was hosted by **Chris Allen** of Cass City who was assisted by **Marilyn Phillips**, Gagetown, **Barb Lutzky**, Cass City and **Paula Gardner** of Cass City. Barb had on an apron that she had made from a bed sheet. It was clever and very beautiful.



Chris invited **Gail Smith**, Cass City to the Tea. Gail has been an Antique Dealer and Appraiser since 1970. Gail was very excited about a plate that she recently came across. It was a Bavarian Hand painted plate but the best part was the tag on the back of the plate that read "Shower Gift from Agnes, 1917".



**Jean Hessling** of Caro who attended the July Tea enjoyed it so much that she wanted to come to the August Tea. Jean was lucky enough to get the very last seat available and she was delighted.

### Site Donation Box in the Barn

*Ray & Carol Caverly, Chairmen*

We have a donation box in the Barn and welcome donations from visitors as this is one of the ways that we are able to further the development of the Thumb Agricultural Museum. **Ray & Carol Caverly** have been collecting the donations that are given by our visitors since 2004. The grand total for all donations that have been collected through the years is \$44,403.53. Now that is impressive and certainly has contributed to the expansion of our Museum. We thank Ray & Carol for collecting the donations through the years. The totals are as follows:

2004 \$3,492.75	2010 \$3,127.31
2005 \$2,747.39	2011 \$5,464.07
2006 \$2,812.10	2012 \$5,669.95
2007 \$3,690.31	2013 \$5,396.20
2008 \$3,102.58	2014 \$4,871.28
2009 \$4,029.59	

### Wanted Tea Party Chairman

Do you love to throw parties? Now is your chance! The duties include arranging to host three parties during the summer months. The chairman may organize each party or ask willing volunteers to host. A generous budget is available. The tea parties may be as simple as desserts or a full luncheon. We ask that each party has a theme and a lesson in topics from antiques to gardening, to old-time fashion, to music, or just something fun and entertaining. Some dishes and tableware in the house are available for use. Contact Marilyn Phillips at 989-665-0210 or Rose Putnam 959-550-0693 if you are interested.



# 19<sup>th</sup> FALL FAMILY DAYS - The Best Ever!!!

(Continued from page 1.)

We had the greatest number of attendees ever come to visit the Thumb Octagon Barn during our 19<sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days held September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2014. An estimated sixteen thousand folks came from far and near to experience our rural heritage and what life was like in the 1920's for the people who lived in this area and those who farmed. How very impressive for this small town in Michigan's Thumb. We have a mission

and goal and it is very important that we keep our mission always in our planning efforts.

**Our mission is to maintain a volunteer group of Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn involved in the restoration and preservation of the Barn Complex as an educational tool preserving our rural and agricultural history for the benefit of our visitors.**

## EDUCATE



In 2002 Bob Him & Doug Monroe purchased a No. 11 SORGHUM PRESS in Tennessee for the Thumb Agricultural Museum. It was felt that it would provide a wonderful demonstration during our Events. The No. 11 press was made by the Chattanooga Plow Co. that was later sold to International Harvester. **Mark Battel** as chairman of the Sugar Shack demonstrates sorghum extraction during FFD and maple syrup extraction during School Tours. Sorghum is a tropical grass that has a stalk filed with a sweet watery juice for syrup and the stalk for fodder or silage. For the past two years a horse named Clyde has been hitched to the pole attached to the press that someone feeds the sorghum stalks into. The horse goes around and around and the juice is squeezed out and eventually boiled to make syrup. The sorghum is grown at **Ray Caverly's** home as the muck soil at the Barn does not grow good sorghum.



What a grand time **Jerry Auten** had at the new Cider Mill Building when the commercial cider press donated by Jim Hunter & Roy Reinke from Port Hope was operational after all these years. It is a hydraulic press, probably used at orchards and runs off line shafts to some kind of engine. It is from the period of 1910 to the 30's and hasn't been used for possibly 75 years. Dave Babcock was delighted that Jerry could operate the press because he had worked so tirelessly to get it operational for FFD. For hours there was a steady line of young children who took great delight in feeding the apples into the press and then getting a small cup of cider to taste.



Our Blacksmith Shop was constructed in 2010 and designed to house a Bradley Compact Power Hammer dating back to 1885-1888. It is line shaft driven with the weight of the hammer at 30 pounds. The hammer was converted to electric by Miles Machinery Company of Saginaw and installed in the shop in 2013. The Shop has been set up with two blacksmith stations complete with coal burning forges and blowers, anvils and various blacksmithing equipment. Years ago, the blacksmiths were an essential person in the community because they made and fit horse-shoes. **Lew Martin**, chairman and our blacksmith, demonstrates how a blacksmith works with metal, heats it up and bends it to whatever shape is



spots into the shape of the State of Michigan. The cow is called Earlene.

In the dairy display visitors learn how milk gets from the cow to your glass using this very realistically reproduced replica of a cow. The cow was originally used for Project RED in Huron County. The late **Earl Schadd** of Filion made the cow and even made some



In 2006 John Herzog donated a doweling machine for the Thumb Agricultural Museum. It was made by the W. S. Hawker MFG. Company in Dayton Ohio. It is driven by a flat belt with a three step pulley to vary the speed of the cutter and advance the material and is used to make wooden dowels of various diameters. It was originally owned by John's Great Grandfather Henry Herzog and used at their saw mill located on Mud Creek in McKinley Township of Huron County. **Tony Grifka** and Bruce Brown demonstrated making dowels that are stamped with Thumb Octagon Barn and the year.



**Loren Stein** has been participating in FFD since the very first year, 1996. He uses a shingle mill to cut cedar shingles. Then using a **blacksmith forge** he heats up the **branding irons** that he has crafted with commemorative pictures and the year to brand the shingle. Loren and his son are branding the shingles in the picture. Many people have the entire collection and look forward to observing the process and getting their shingle each year.



In August of 2011 the Friends had an opportunity to purchase a **Veneer Mill** from the Richmond Antique Engine & Threshing Assoc. for demonstrating during FFD. It was a good investment as visitors love watching the Mill operate when a thin layer of fine quality wood is shaved off and then this can be laid over a base of common material. Buskert Lumber, Sandusky, owned the mill originally until a fire at the Buskert Mill burned it down. There were a number of owners through the years but now it has found a home at the Thumb Agricultural Museum. There are only three veneer mills in Michigan.



Our 2014 Theme was Michigan Apples and **Greg Alexander** and **Tammy Grifka** managed the Theme tent. They were pressing apples for cider and planned on showing the process of pollination to processing. However, **Dean Hutchinson** was fearful that his bees were getting out of control with the smell of the pressed apples in the Theme Tent. So Dean moved his honey extraction demonstration into the Barn and he was relieved. Greg had made arrangements for the 1<sup>st</sup> runner up of the 2014 Michigan Apple Queen Contest, **Emily Webster**, to appear during FFD. Emily shared some interesting apple facts. Did you know - Archaeologists have found that people have been eating apples since at least 6500 B.C. Apple varieties brought as seeds from Europe were spread along Native American trade routes and cultivated on Colonial Farms. By the 1600s there were about 60 varieties of apples. John Chapman, (a.k.a Johnny Appleseed) really did exist and is one of the reasons that we have so many apples today. Thanks to **David Jaroch** we knew that.

Fall Family Days gives us an opportunity to demonstrate that we are meeting our goals. The following pictures only partially tell the story of FFD as it isn't possible to cover everything that goes on during this outstanding Event. We **EDUCATE**, **ENTERTAIN** and provide good **EATING**.



This **Oliver Red River Special** was donated by the family of **Delos & Dorothy Prime** in 2002 and has been in our harvesting demonstrations threshing at every FFD. Nicols & Shepard Co. Battle Creek, MI had its beginnings in 1848 building small vibrator threshers. They were an immediate success and probably did more to revolutionize thresher design. In 1906 they introduced the Red River Special that originally was an all wood machine and in 1920 they introduced an all steel machine. In 1929 a merger formed the Oliver Farm Equipment Co. and they continued building the Red River Special. This thresher is in beautiful condition and we thank the Prime family for donating this gem to the Thumb Agricultural Museum. In the picture the Oliver Red River Special is threshing speltz, a primitive species of wheat with grains that do not thresh free of chaff. The Amish use this grain to feed their animals because it is a high energy feed and very beneficial for their horses that they use for plowing and transportation.

James Purdy was aware that lights glowed in every major city across the country, but electrical power to rural areas was non-existent. Exactly what Mr. Purdy had in mind when he purchased land that included Mud Lake enriched with peat, visited a peat fired plant in Canada and eventually built a small powerhouse for his farm is not clear. **Byron Arnold & Karl DeSimpelare** have displays and even some bricks made out of peat that Mr. Purdy tried to use to power a generator to produce electricity as well as a 32 volt DC Delco light system. The building was originally built somewhere around 1919 and in 2007 this structure was in very poor condition and therefore was completely torn down and rebuilt.



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**Louie Wehrman** is outside the **Purdy Elevator Company** and is inviting folks to come in and experience what a grain elevator would have looked like in the twenties. Parts of this building were built in 2008 and it is ongoing. The building features working vintage equipment to demonstrate the operation typical of early small town elevators. Included are vertical bucket conveyors called grain legs which "elevate" the grain to storage bins. Mills are used to remove all chaff and foreign materials and clean

the grain. Scales are used to determine the quantity of grain for which the farmer would be paid. **Louie and Linda Wehrman** have worked tirelessly to create this Museum to acknowledge the very valuable role grain elevators have played in the advancement of agriculture.



# 19<sup>th</sup> FALL FAMILY DAYS - The Best Ever!!!

## ENTERTAIN



Patriotic programs were scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday with a group of Cass City students, a home school group and a Caro student group performing. These programs are exceptional and it is a shame that only the small number of visitors that fit into the schoolhouse can appreciate their efforts. Johnny Appleseed (**David Jaroch**) was able to be a part of their performance sharing Johnny's very interesting story. David became Johnny during School Tours and stayed in character throughout our 2014 Events. We thank David and understand that we should be looking for a character to go with our 2015 Theme – **Trees Are Our Friends**.



**Joyce Anderson**, Cass City is playing the dulcimer in the parlor of the house. There were a number of players scheduled during the two day Event so that the Purdy Home was always filled with the beautiful, peaceful sounds of the dulcimer. Joyce finds playing the dulcimer very relaxing.



**Tori Pine**, Unionville, arranged a fashion show featuring **Aprons at Work** during FFD each day before the parade of antique tractors. Tori borrowed Aprons and their stories from **Dorothy Watt** a member of the Vassar Historical Society. Tori's sister **Paula Link** of Unionville is wearing Cora Purdy's apron. James & Cora Purdy were the original owners of the Mud Lake Estate and we are so grateful that George Wilson, their grandson preserved so many items from his grandparents. Did you know that men were actually the first to wear aprons in the eighteen hundreds and that the "Cobbler Apron" was the most practical because of its many uses from a hot pad to carrying gathered eggs or vegetables?



The Children's Activity Area had a wide variety of activities for our young visitors to participate in from bean sorting to digging for coins, to trying their luck on stilts or playing checkers with Dad. It was a fun place to be.



**Kylie Ogryski**, Ubyly found a cozy spot to share one of her favorite stories with our young visitors during FFD. Kylie loves the story of **Squeaky the Mouse – A Home for the Winter** because it is about the Thumb Octagon Barn.



**Linda Bailey**, Cass City has been coming to FFD almost from the very beginning conducting craft workshops for interested participants. The most popular workshop through the years has been corn husk dolls and this year she added three workshops that featured apples since our theme was Michigan Apples. They were apple prints, carved apple head dolls and dried apple ornaments. She is already planning activities related to our theme for 2015 "Trees are Our Friends".

Please note a great big thank you to Rose Putnam for all the wonderful pictures that she has been taking and many of them have been used in this newsletter which she also assisted in editing.

## EATING



**Walther Potato Farms** planted many rows of potatoes and at FFD folks had a grand time filling their bags with the freshly dug potatoes that they purchased for \$2.00. Walther's planted Yukon Gold potatoes and they were so delicious.



Right next to those delicious donuts you could purchase a hot cup of coffee or a tasty glass of cider. **Peggy Hellwig**, Owendale, pictured in the middle, said that sales were great and that they sold out each day of FFD. Peggy was assisted by volunteers **Deein Irion**, from the Owendale area & **Jonathon (JJ) Brown** from Elkton.



**Karen Lenton**, Ubyly, MI takes care of feeding all the many volunteers who work before FFD and after the Event. She might have anywhere from 50 or more folks who have worked hard and are ready to sit a bit and enjoy a meal. Karen does a great job of planning and preparing a super lunch for all the workers. Thank you.



The **Caro Knights of Columbus #3224** partnered with the Friends to provide the Farmer's Breakfast that by all accounts was delicious as well as generous. This year in keeping with our theme the Knights also made apple pies to go with the homemade ice cream. What a hit that was. On Saturday they quickly sold out and had to return to Caro and make some pies for Sunday. The Knights are wonderful pie bakers. Thank you for all your efforts.



Those delicious donuts take a lot of people to keep up with the demand. **Sharon Cummins**, of Gagetown, and her family work together as a team and have an excellent system. They are aware that sometimes the line is very long and the wait perhaps a half an hour but they are working as fast as possible. Last year the Health Department recommended that a 'sneeze guard' be put in place over the donuts. Sharon complied with their request and, assisted by **Ena Reintjes** & **Paul Foster**, she designed an excellent sneeze guard and the Health Department inspector was impressed.

Have you ever had hog kettle popcorn? Well the **Caverly** family (shown at right) has been making popcorn at FFD for years and it is especially delicious. **Northstar Bank** donated the popcorn, seasoning and bags to the Friends.



The Munro Building is a wonderful place for visitors to gather for the Fish Fry, the Farmer's Breakfast and Food prepared and served by McDonald's Food & Family Center throughout FFD.





## Boys Day Out

The Boys are back at work most Mondays and always welcome new folks to join the group. Of course things are slowing down a bit as winter sets in so a call might be wise before starting out. You can call Wayne Lenton to see if folks will be working 989-553-3348. During FFD it was so nice to see the storage room on the southeast corner of the

Munro Building closed in. The new enclosed storage room gave a neat look to the building used for dining guests during the Fish Fry and FFD. This was a project that **Richard Stacer** initiated and now he is working with a team to finish off the north wall of the Munro building so that it will give a better presentation.

## Modern Woodmen of America

Once again the **Modern Woodmen of America** chose the Fish Fry at the Octagon Barn for their partner by matching a percentage of our profits for the Event. The Modern Woodmen of America is an old insurance company established in the 1800's and has over a million members across the country. They are a non-profit organization and therefore feel a need to give back to the community by supporting organizations worthy of their support. As to how they became aware of the Thumb Octagon Barn and their yearly Fall Family Days Event, we have to thank **Louie and Linda Wehrman** long time members of the Barn and neighbors of **David Janson**, Financial Representative of the Woodmen. Last year the Tuscola County chapter partnered with the Friends and this year the Huron County Chapter matched a percentage of our profits from the Fish Fry held Friday night. They presented the Friends with a check for \$2,500.00. Isn't that fabulous!



David Janson from the Modern Woodmen of America is encouraging Greg Talaski the famous, expert fish fryer from Kinde to keep those delicious fish coming as the lines are long and the folks are very hungry.

## Chemical Bank Cares

On Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> over 1700 Bankers volunteered in communities across the State to participate in 240 different initiatives. Nineteen Chemical Bank employees joined seventeen of our Boys & Gals Day Out Crew to accomplish many tasks needing attention on the Thumb Octagon Barn site. This was the second annual Chemical Bank Cares Day.



These Chemical Bank employees are trying to gather up the final batch of leaves by the Powerhouse. It had been a windy, drizzly day and it was hard to keep ahead of the leaves. From the left raking are **Jen Wymore**, Mayville and **Cindy Mellendorf** from Gagetown.

One of the volunteers was our President, **Rose Putnam**, who was so happy that all these projects were being tended to on the grounds and in the Barn, House and Munro Building.

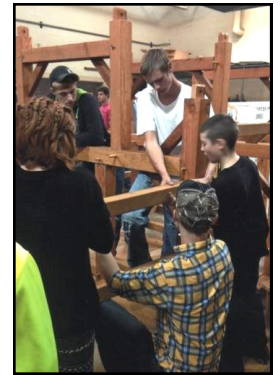


The Boys Day Out Crew is working on the north wall of the Munro Building. They are from the left: **Richard Stacer**, Ubly, MI, **Jack Hill**, Marlette, MI, **Terry Keinath**, Reese, MI, **Jerry Auten**, Cass City, MI and **George Wilson**, Gagetown, MI.

## Teamwork & Timbers

On October 14, 2014, 116 sixth grade students from the Caro Schools participated in the Teamwork and Timbers project. The traveling 1/4 size model of a 19<sup>th</sup> century timber framed barn is owned by the National Barn Alliance funded by a grant from the Arnesby-Russ Mawby Fund of the Battle Creek Community Foundation and is on loan to the Michigan Barn Preservation Network. **Bob Dice**, construction teacher at the Tuscola Technology Center, organized his class of construction trade students to teach the sixth graders how to assemble the barn. **Tom Irrer**, board member of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network, taught the children in a class setting about the tools of the barn builders. The tools were on loan from the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn, who co-sponsored the project again this year. The children also had an

opportunity to compare the construction methods from timber framing to modern construction at the Tech Center by viewing a new home under construction.



The sixth grade Caro students and the construction trade students from the Tuscola Technology Center are working together to construct the timber framed barn. It was special to see the students working together cooperatively.

## Souvenirs

Joan Koch, Chairperson

Joan is excited with all the new folks who purchased our clothing items with the Thumb Octagon Barn logo on them during FFD. This is as Joan always says, our very best advertising vehicle that we have. Sales were very good during Fall Family Days and now Joan has a couple of requests. She is asking folks to save their **clean, plastic handle bags** that she uses to manage student purchases during School Tours when sometimes it's hard to tell who has paid for an item or not. Also, Joan is asking if folks would save their **used ink cartridges** and she will turn them in to Staples for credit toward her purchases for the Friends of the Octagon Barn.



All the volunteers were treated to a luncheon featuring homemade soup made by **Janice Winter** with help from **Marilyn DeSimpelare**. They all really enjoyed the fellowship of the Friends. Some volunteers also made cookies for the workers. The workers have been fed and they are back working so now Marilyn and Janice are enjoying lunch.



These Chemical Bank employees are working to clean out the flower beds next to the Octagon Barn. **Lila Arroyo** our special gardener has given them some directions as to what needs to be done. The workers are **Melissa Richardson**, Snover who is shoveling, **Chery Wilder**, Unionville, MI is raking and **Kimberly Karr**, Fairgrove, MI is doing some hoeing.

## Museum Committee

*Doug Monroe, Chairman*

We are delighted that **Dennis Anderson** has developed a display on the north mow that depicts the winter sport of ice fishing. He tells the history of ice fishing and has some very attractive display boards and highlights the ice shanty that was donated many years ago. Enjoy the following thoughts from Denny about his display and check it out the next time you visit the Thumb Agricultural Museum.

When I joined the Friends I was surprised when I saw the ice shanty up in the Octagon Barn. I am thankful that someone had the foresight to save this historical artifact. Yes, it has nothing to do with agricultural history, but I do not know if Mr. Purdy indulged in ice fishing, but this is a unique piece of history from this area. I think it's a story that should be shared.

The ice shanty was donated to the Octagon Barn by **Eva Harrington** in honor of her parents. Her father **Frank Achenbach** from Akron Michigan built the shanty in 1917. It's what is called a Russian humpback dark house ice shanty complete with a cot and little stove. I have also heard the term camelback to describe the shanty. They were commonly made from orange crates, tar paper, over a wood frame with a square hole in the floor with a pop up cover. After cutting a

hole in the ice with your ice spud, one would slide the shanty over the hole and when the door is closed it's like viewing a TV screen of life below the ice. Using a jig stick and line attached to a hand carved wooden fish decoy you wait for that monster pike to come in and up to your decoy.

An ice fisherman's spear is his most favorite possession. Back in the day they were homemade in the blacksmith shop, attached to a wood handle with a tie line affixed to the end. The spear was usually weighted and you could simply drop it from above. Many in this area were excellent spear makers and the art has survived as many still make their own spears today.

Equally important to the ice fisherman were his array of decoys, hand carved from wood with lead poured in the middle for weight. The decoys were painted various colors and patterns. Today fish decoys are also considered pieces of art to be appreciated not just for their ability to attract live fish. You will find a few different fish decoys in our display. Again there are many notable decoy carvers in this area.

Other gear, all of which was usually handmade, were: the ice sled, the ice spud, a fish gaff, the dipper and the jig with line to control the decoy as well

as ice fishing poles and small lures with hooks. When I was much younger I remember my neighbor making Russian hooks used to catch perch through the ice.

Our hope with the ice shanty display is to learn and share with others a little of the history in our area. I enjoy the people and the stories as much, if not more, than spearing a big one. Stop by and see our display sometime. I am always working on making it better.



On the left in this photo you can see the ice shanty and on the right the board with the hand made by local fisherman who enjoy making their own fish decoys, jig sticks, ice fishing poles and spears as much as they do spearing a prize winning fish on Saginaw Bay.



It took **Anthony (Tony) Nowicki** from Novi, two years to restore the **1939 Farmall "A" tractor** that had been sitting along side a roadway for years. Once the tractor was restored Tony wanted to find a good home for it. He knew of the Barn and **Martin Kubacki** invited Tony and his wife Connie to come to Fall Family Days. They were impressed and the donation occurred.

When asked why the donation, Tony replied, "I/we wanted to preserve a bit of agricultural history for future generations to learn and enjoy. While I took personal satisfaction in owning this little piece of history, the tractor would have served little purpose collecting dust in my pole barn, or being part of another's private collection."

We thank Tony & Connie Nowicki for their donation to the Thumb Agricultural Museum. The Tractor was picked up by **Martin Kubacki** and **Richard Stacer** both from Uby.

## FFD Recycling Report

**Rose Putnam**, President has been an avid promoter of recycling during FFD. After several FFD she became aware of all the materials that were being discarded and eventually sent off to a landfill. The first recycling efforts resulted in 10 lbs. of cardboard and a full size pickup bed of tin, plastic and cardboard. She is pleased to report that this year the final totals are impressive. They are: 160 lbs. of cardboard, 72 lbs. of plastic, 67 lbs. of metal and aluminum cans and 4 lbs. of glass. Rose especially thanked **Ron Hoffman**, **Bad Axe** who gathers the trash throughout FFD and sees that those items that can be recycled are.

## MUSEUM DONATIONS

*Gerald Auten, Museum Records*

**PLEASE NOTE: When donating items for our museum, please be sure to fill out a Museum Donation Form so that we will have the item in our records and can acknowledge your gift in our newsletter.**

Greg Lange, Saginaw, MI donated a walking plow.

Leon Graham, Caro, MI donated a fish decoy, an ice fishing pole, an ice fishing sled and an ice fishing spud.

Dennis Anderson, Cass City, MI donated a wooden carved perch, homemade pickerel spear, home made pike spear and a sucker spear.

These items are on display North loft of the Barn at the winter sports display.

Jane Good, Harbor Beach, donated an Oliver #2 hay loader,

original wooden tongue farm tool, and an 1881 Era steel wagon.

Francis & Dorothy Cottrell, Caro, MI donated a wheel barrow seeder.

Donald Brockriede, Columbiaville, MI donated a Baxter Whitney wood planer.

Rita Jeric, Sand Point, MI donated 5 crocheted 1930 doilies and a cotton handkerchief.

Scott Wood, Caro, MI donated a 30 inch wood planer.

Faye Ballagh, Cass City, MI donated many items for the Purdy Home Museum.

A few of these are: a night gown, cloth bag with Monitor Sugar logo, doilies, women's night shirt, men's grey wool spats and a man's old fashion style collar.

Anthony & Contance Nowicki, Novi, MI donated a beautifully restored 1939 Farmall A Tractor and a number of farm implements.

Toni Ventline, Cass City, donated several books for the One Room Country School, How to Organize, Classify and Teach a Country School-Michigan Edition published by William Welch, April 4, 1884 & a Barnes' National Reader Number 5.

Karen Schriber from Caro loaned four dolls to the Purdy Home Museum for display.

The dolls are 28" Mama Doll, 17" Effandbee Patsy Joan Doll, 16" Bye-Lo-Baby and 6" all bisque baby.

Mary M. Downing, Gagetown, MI donated three 1919 Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue books for the One Room County School.

## A Very Special Thank You

The following businesses made a special donation for Fall Family Days that enabled the Friends to save considerably on expenses. Many have been donating for many years and we appreciate their continued support through the years.

**Michigan Milk Producers, Dave Wittkop**, donated two 55 lb. boxes of butter used for the Fish Fry and the Farmer's Breakfast.

**Cass City Oil & Gas** donated 80 gallons of LP gas to fill 20 propane tanks used in food preparation.

**Pigeon Cooperative Elevator** donated 300 pounds of beans used for the bean soup.

**Country Fresh through Bruce Hartman** donated 270 quarts of half and half used to make the homemade ice cream.

**Hampton Potato Growers** donated 2500 pounds of potatoes used for the Fish Fry,

Farmer's Breakfast and the Fries to go with the Chicken strips.

**McDonald's Family & Food Center, Bad Axe** gave special pricing on purchased items.

**Michigan Sugar** donated 50 lbs. of brown sugar and 265 lbs. of white sugar used for the homemade ice cream, donuts and cotton candy.

**Northstar Bank, Huron & Tuscola Counties** donated 150 lbs. of popcorn, popcorn bags and seasoning.

**MMR (Mobile Medical Response)** supervisor, Scott Smeader, Saginaw arranged for their services to be available both Saturday and Sunday of Fall Family Days for any emergencies.

The following businesses donated items to be put in bags given to Exhibitors and Vendors during FFD. Contributing businesses are: **Thumb National Bank, Chemical Bank, Knight's Insurance, Hills & Dales Hospital and Pat Curtis Chevrolet & Cadillac.**

**Walther Farms** planted, cared for and partially dug potatoes that the public could gather during FFD. Folks paid \$2.00 for a huge bag of potatoes and this resulted in \$800.00 being raised for the Barn and it was a lot of fun.



**Friends of the  
THUMB OCTAGON BARN  
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GAGETOWN MI 48735**

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### We're on the Web!

<http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org>  
**George Pettinger,**  
*Web Manager*

### FUTURE MEETINGS

General membership meetings will be held the second Tuesday, every other month, at 7 p.m. at the Gagetown Village Hall.

**Feb., April, Oct. & Dec.**

**The June & August meetings will be held in the Munro Building on site.**

### 2015 Upcoming Events

*Additional information about all of these events and reservation deadlines can be found throughout the newsletter or can be obtained from our web site at [www.thumboctagonbarn.org](http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org)*

April 11	Annual Meeting/Banquet & Auction
May 6, 7 & 8	School Tours by reservation only
September 11	Fish Fry
September 12 & 13	20 <sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days
Dates for Teas and Concert not yet determined.	

### Octagon Barn in Top 5

In August, just prior to FFD, WNEM TV5 had a challenge on the Top 5 for 5 for the Best Museum in the Mid-Michigan area. The Thumb Octagon Barn received enough nominations to be on the list. With the help of many of our members, friends, and visitors we earned the number 3 spot. Our biggest challengers were the Saginaw Children's Museum and Midland Center for the Arts. This was wonderful news. Our little museum in the middle of the Thumb is having a positive impact in our area.



More than fifty years ago a couple of students met at Central Michigan University while taking a course titled "Comparative Anatomy" a required course

that both needed in their chosen fields. On August 22, 1964 the city boy from Redford Township married the country girl from Reese and this year was the celebration of **Bob & Mary Ann Hirn's 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.** Congratulations.

### SPECIAL DONATIONS:

*Following is a list of memorial donations, acknowledgements and items donated for use on the site.*

Donation in memory of my sister-in-law, Creeda Nelson given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI  
Donation in memory of Mardell Volz given by Mr. & Mrs. Ron Lutz, Sebewaing, MI  
Memorial donation in honor of my parents, Clarence & Joan Sageman given by Shelley Corsini, Bad Axe, MI  
Keny & Laura Hazard, Leesburg, FL are once again our first 2015 FFD Sponsors.  
Donation in memory of Eilene Fiebig given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI  
Donation in memory of Aaron Davis, Marshall, MI given by Betty Armstead & Bill Hollingsworth, Zephyrhills, FL  
Huron Medical Center employees donated \$100.00 from "Dress Down Days for a Cause" and thanked the Friends for their contribution to the residents of our community.  
Ruth Ann Brown, Kingston, MI made & donated six bright orange safety vests to the Friends.  
2014 FFD Sponsors not previously listed, Bronze Sponsors, Dick & Barb Prime, Fairgrove, MI & Gold Sponsor Weiss Equipment, Frankenmuth, MI  
Donation in memory of Clarence Hagerl given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI

Donations in memory of Amasa Ott Anthes, Jr. 95, Joan Koch's Father, given by Michele Allen, Millington, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, Ami & Peg Ondrajka, Unionville, MI, Pat Holland, Sebewaing, MI, Janet Muntz, Cass City, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Rose Putnam, Cass City, MI, Earl & Doris Schember, Gagetown, MI & Diane Rapson Gabil, Unionville, MI  
Vinton Allen, Cass City, MI donated the funds to cover all the expenses from his wife Chris Allen's Dessert Tea.  
Ruby Boyse, Birch Run, MI made a donation in memory of her husband, Harold Boyse, who would have been 92. As a retired carpenter he would say, "I wish we lived closer."

**Bob & Mary Ann celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary and the following made donations in their honor:** Barb Merchant, Cass City, MI, Matt & Karianne Isard, Spring Lake, MI, Margo Donahue, Pigeon, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, Dick & Norma Wallace, Cass City, MI, Jim & Judy Brown, Cass City, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Donald E. Weber, Frankenmuth, MI, Dan & Marlene Erla, Cass City, MI & Jim & Shirley Tuckey, Cass City, MI

**BENEFACTORS:** *The following have made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter through November 20, 2014.*

Kay Ardis, Dimondale, MI  
Curtis & Mary Bell, Carthage, MO  
Dorothy Bills, Cass City, MI  
Bruce & Char Bollinger, Oscoda, MI  
Raymond & Linda Borowicz, Alma, MI  
Sally Brauer, Troy, MI  
Donna Burke, Perrysburg, OH  
Bruce & Marjorie Coleman, Rochester Hills, MI  
Sue Collins, Saginaw, MI  
Rich & Lori Corl, Colorado Springs, CO  
Jack & Carol DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI  
Arthur Dittenber, Hope, MI

Robert O. & Eleanor McDonald Ethier, Milledgeville, GA  
Jane M. Good, Bay City, MI  
Robert W. Harcourt, Alger, MI  
Nile L. & Ruth E. Hayden, Sand Lake, MI  
Gary & Debra Heberling, Carsonville, MI  
Rosanne Heme, Bay City, MI  
Carolyn Jackson, Dearborn Heights, MI  
Deloris Jensen, St. Clair Shores, MI  
Carolyn Craves Johnson, Saginaw, MI  
Fran Kanaby, Bad Axe, MI  
Patrick & Nancy Kendall, Bay City, MI  
Pat Kuxhaus, Northville, MI

James Mackay, Kalamazoo, MI  
Vera Miiz, Troy, MI  
Elizabeth A. Nicol, Saginaw, MI  
Tom & Denise Patrick, Fostoria, MI  
William & Deborah Posak, China, MI  
Jerry & Mary Ellen Schley, Dearborn Heights, MI  
Marjorie Schwartz, Gagetown, MI  
Cheryl Corsini Smith, Sausalito, CA  
Robert & Barbara Stickle, Cass City, MI  
Maryann Tenczer, Gagetown, MI  
Gloria Thorsby, Colorado Springs, CO  
Edward & Tonya Tresco, Clio, MI

David & Penny Turner, Mayville, MI  
Larry & Suzanne Wegner, Pigeon, MI  
Marv & Mary Wilcox, Clifford, MI  
Richard & Vera Wroblewski, Sebewaing, MI  
Beverly Zelis, Cottonwood, CA

### Newsletter

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