

# 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 2015

## Fall Family Days 2015

*Martin Kubacki, Chairman  
Devin Irion, Co-Chairman*

### Executive Committee

**President**  
**Rose Putnam**

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

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**  
**Gerald Auten**

**Treasurer**  
**Joan Koch**

**Recording Secretary**  
**Ardis Monroe**

**Corresponding Secretary**  
**Marilyn DeSimpelare**

**Grant Writing Chairman**  
**Dennis Anderson**

**Purdy Home Chairman**  
**Marilyn Phillips**

**Museum Committee**  
**Douglas Monroe**

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

**Special Projects**  
**Richard Stacer**

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)

Once again, another amazing Fall Family Days was held in September. We had a great turnout for the cold weather but all in all it was a very successful Event. Each year FFD grows in one or the other and the volunteers that spend so much time preparing for and carrying out their duties are to be commended. Truly we have been blessed to have such a great group of people As this Event grows, so does the demand for help and we are always looking for more people.

There were a lot of positive comments about the many demonstrations that have become a part of this Event. They certainly help us fulfill our goal of offering educational as well as entertaining activities for visitors to see during their visit.

Attendance was down a little because of the weather. The net income will come in around \$82,000.00. This money will be used to replace the Barn roof that will be a major expense along

with all the maintenance jobs needed.

The 2016 Fall Family Days theme will be "**Our Wonderful World of Water**". The Event begins Friday, September 9, 2016 with the Fish Fry and continues Saturday and Sunday, September 10 & 11. **Greg Alexander and Tammy Grifka**, Theme Co-Chairmen are working on an interesting educational display.

Finally, as you know, our friend and the FFD Chair until his retirement, Bob Hirn, passed away in October. I miss him a lot as we ran this great event together for many years. I want to leave you with one his favorite sayings: GOOD, BETTER, BEST; NEVER LET IT REST; MAKE THE GOOD BETTER AND THE BETTER BEST. We will do our best to carry on your tradition, Bob.

Have a blessed Christmas  
& Happy New Year  
Martin Kubacki, Chairman

*(See related pictures and stories about FFD on pages 4 & 5.)*



Our 20<sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days began on Saturday with the presentation of the colors followed by the singing of our National Anthem. **Cynthia and Tina Beauvais**, mother and daughter from Akron caught everyone's attention with their harmonious, acappella rendition of our Anthem. **Karl and Marilyn DeSimpelare** from Unionville made the arrangements for the Beauvais' to perform.



Whenever Smokey Bear appeared during FFD a crowd gathered and it was great fun to see the reactions of the little ones. Martin Kubacki knew how important it was for Smokey Bear to be at FFD but on Friday evening we realized that there was a problem. The Smokey costume was nowhere to be found and Martin kept thinking about the Grandfather who told him, "My grandson can't wait to see Smokey. That's why we're coming."

So Martin went into action and located the costume in Port Hope at the Fire Station and thanks to **Justin Kociba**, Lowell McDonald's grandson in-law the costume was picked up and ready to go on Saturday morning. We had a big assist from **Dean Kreh**, Owendale on Saturday and **Greg Alexander**, Carsonville on Sunday who portrayed Smokey Bear beautifully. Thanks also to **David Jaroch**, Uby and **Tammy Grifka**, Peck who were Smokey's mentors since Smokey does not speak but gives many hugs. Pictured is the late **Chuck Dorsch's** grandson receiving a high five from Smokey.

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



Dear Friends:

As we look back on 2015, it's been a spectacular year with all the activities starting with our annual meeting/dinner/auction in April, then school tours in May, followed by dinners, weddings and the county wide open house in June, two concerts and a tea party in July, more weddings and the big Cooperative Elevator celebration in August, Fall Family Days and more weddings in September and October. Wow, we've been busy. And this is just activities. Our busy as bees volunteers have also been working throughout the season keeping the buildings and the site in tip-top shape. There were many behind the scenes planning sessions as well.

All of this just doesn't happen without the help of all of our wonderful volunteers—that's you. We count you as our number one blessing. Not only do you give of your time and talent at the barn, you also offer support through difficult times. It's amazing when there is a loss in the group, whether it's a member or a member's family member, you will find one of the "friends" there offering support. I've been with this project since 1993 and I don't know what we would do without each other.

We will be replacing the barn roof as a big project in 2016, if all goes well with our planning process. The first five sections of the barn were replaced in 1997 with the remaining three sections completed in 1998. It just doesn't seem that long ago. This time around will be so much less work since we should not have to replace any beams or boards, but as with any remodeling project there always seem to be a surprise or two to handle. We invite your suggestions, concerns, or ideas as we move forward looking at several options to make a good decision. Please look for information in the newsletter or by e-mail.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for all you do and we hope to see you all in 2016. May you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God also grant you good health.

*Your Friend and president,*  
**Rose**



## In Memoriam

On October 28, 2015 Robert Joseph Hirn passed away at United Hospice of Marlette Residence Center shortly after midnight and also the arrival of his beloved daughter, Major Lisa Hirn, U. S. Army of Kentucky. Bob was surrounded by his wife, Mary Ann, son Mark, his daughter Lisa and sister Gail.

Several years ago Bob was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) that is occasionally accompanied by frontal lobe dementia. ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. This was a devastating diagnosis to have both ALS and dementia.

The Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn have lost a dear Friend who has made a lasting impression everywhere you look at the Thumb Agricultural Museum and most importantly the magnificent Barn that Bob so loved. His determination to restore this Barn became his passion and dream just as it had been in 1923 when James Purdy, the original owner, had the Octagonal Barn built designed after one he had seen while traveling in Iowa.

Bob was always concerned about, whenever possible, restoring the Barn back to its original state. He was quite surprised that the Barn was already in need of a new roof after only eighteen years. Bob's wife Mary Ann has received hundreds of expressions of sympathy and many donations. She said, "Maybe these donations could possibly provide a good start on getting some of that roof replaced." Bob would be so proud that so many appreciated his love of this most unusual octagonal Barn and his desire to maintain the integrity of the Barn.

We tend to think that the Barn was Bob's only interest, but actually he was involved in many organizations and served on several Boards for many years. Some of these are: St. Pancratius Catholic Church, Cass City/Gagetown Knights of Columbus, Cass City Gavel Club, Tuscola Medical Care Facility, Rawson Memorial Library, Pinney Foundation, Thumb 2 Cylinder Club, Thumb Antique Auto Club and the Caro Old Engine Club. Bob was greatly appreciated by all of these organizations for his dedication to their project and representing them so well. The family suggested that memorials could be given to these charities as well as to the Octagon Barn

What a wonderful expression of sympathy and respect was shown when **Uria Bender** the Amishman that worked with Bob for many days and months repairing and restoring the Barn came from Ohio to attend Bob's funeral. Bob and Uri had become very good friends thru the years and Uri and his wife Nancy knew when they heard about Bob that they had to come to Cass City to attend Bob's funeral. Uri said, "I learned so much from Bob while we worked together, so much." I'm sure that Bob would say the same about Uri. There were many unexpected problems that seemed to occur as they uncovered structural concerns in the Barn but working together they solved the problem. What a great team they were. Uria's wife Nancy writes, "Bob will always be one of Uria's 'Dads'. He was Uria's moral support while living in Michigan and away from his parents."

During our Annual Meeting in April, Dennis Anderson recognized Bob Hirn for his more than twenty years of dedicated service to the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn. Dennis said, "Bob had always reminded him of the Goose Story and Bob was the lead goose. As he watched a flock of geese heading south he saw the lead goose cut the air and land the flock for a rest. Dennis thought, 'Nature has given us a good lesson. The flock rested and moved on ...'"

*(Following is one of the letters of support that was received.)*

## Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn

Enclosed please find a small donation in memory of Mr. Bob Hirn. I suspect that the Friends will establish some permanent recognition for Mr. Bob Hirn. Please apply this small token to that endeavor.

No doubt there have been countless stories shared about Bob, his involvement in the Barn and other projects and what a dedicated and hard worker he was. That is all very true and important to recognize. However, in my humble opinion Bob was indeed a very SPECIAL person. Lots of folks can be involved and dedicate time to a project but Bob was obviously different. He cared about the project for sure but really I think he cared more about the people. Some years ago when the Road Commission assisted Bob with a small project at the Barn, Bob drove to our office in Bad Axe, offered to pay us and was genuinely appreciative of our help and donation. Then we received a follow-up thank you note from him. Then during Fall Family Days, when he was obviously very busy, he stopped when he saw me and again extolled the virtues of the Huron County Road Commission to anyone within ear-shot. Nobody does that....but Bob did. He was special.

Thank you and keep up the good work. You know Bob's watching.

*Best regards,*  
**Neal Hentschl**  
*Secretary/Manager,*  
*Huron County Road Commission*

## ***A bit of history and look back in time from Margaret Sergeant.***

I remember all too well in 1994 when Bob Hirn came on board with our organization. At the time we were floundering wondering what we should do next. Bob felt that we needed to demonstrate to the community that we were serious about restoring the Octagon Barn. So in 1997, Bob along with the Amish crew began rebuilding the southeast section of the Barn roof and applying bright, new emerald green

shingles. You could see that section from Bay City Forestville Road and the community could see that we were serious. It was a turning point. I felt that there was a reason that Bob came to us. He used to get embarrassed when I introduced him as our guardian angel. Indeed he was and I know he is still guiding & watching over the Friends and most importantly preserving the dream James Purdy had in 1923 of building an "air castle".

## ***Annual Meeting/Dinner Benefet Auction***

*Nancy Hrabcak, Chairperson*

Our 2016 Annual Meeting will be held on **Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>** at the V.F.W. Hall in Cass City. The evening will begin with a social hour at five and dinner will be served at 5:45 p.m. Prepared by McDonald's Food & Family Center in Bad Axe. Osentoski Auctioneering will once again handle our Auction.

A reservation form will be included with our winter newsletter mailed in late February. Any questions regarding our Annual Meeting can be answered by **Nancy Hrabcak, Home Decorating Center, Cass City at 989-551-6495.**



The picture at left was taken several years ago at the Tuscola Medical Care Facility where **Mildred Spiekerman** was a resident. Mildred had presented Margaret Sergeant with her very last afghan that she was able to knit. Bob made arrangements for Margaret to get a picture of Mildred and her last afghan and Mildred insisted that Bob be in the picture. Pictured are **Bob Hirn** who had a special place in his heart for Mildred, his Mother-in-law, Mary Ann's mother and **Mildred** shared that love for her son-in-law, Bob.

*See special donations on page 6 for the list of those who donated to the Thumb Octagon Barn in memory of our dear friend, Bob. The list is long but the decision was made to print the list just as we do with all Memorial donations. This show of appreciation has been overwhelming to Mary Ann as well as the total amount received at this time. Each day she still is receiving kind words of sympathy and donations. Bob indeed was a very memorable person deserving of this outpouring of affection.*

## ***Donation Box in the Barn***

*Ray & Carol Caverly, Chairmen*

**Ray & Carol Caverly** have been collecting and tracking the donations in the Barn by visitors for many years. These donations are important to us and they help to provide the funds to further our Museum goals. They report that this year's donation total is \$3,954.00. A special thank you to the Caverlys who for the past eleven years have checked this donation box daily and deposited the collected donations in our account. The grand total collected through the years is \$48,357.53. What an impressive figure!

## ***FFD 2015 Recycling Report***

Rose Putnam, President has been an advocate for recycling all that can be during FFD after observing all that was just being discarded. The very first year of recycling resulted in 10 lbs. of cardboard and a truck bed loaded with a mess of stuff. Since then, thanks to **Ron Hoffman**, Bad Axe, we are doing a much better job assuring that as much as possible we are recycling rather than sending all this 'stuff' to a landfill.

This year's totals are: 326 lbs. of cardboard, 96 lbs. of plastic, 65 lbs. of metal & aluminum cans and 3 lbs. of glass. Job well done.



**Ron Hoffman**, Bad Axe, our number one Volunteer for recycling is doing his job of sorting through a wagonload of stuff to recycle. What a job but he faithfully does it each year.

## ***Octagon Barn Cookbook***

*Mary Bell, & Tammi Hensley, Co-Chairladies*

Two of our Host Couple Ladies are putting together the third Octagon Barn Cookbook and they need your help. They know that there are a lot of very good cooks among the Friends because when we have Potluck Dinners during the summer months at the Barn, we have some very delicious food. Please share those recipes with all of us in our 3<sup>rd</sup> Thumb Octagon Barn Cookbook.

Their plan is, with your help, to be able to put together the recipes collected in May and have the Cookbook ready for sale during Fall Family Days. Feel free to enter as many recipes as you would like. Recipes should be sent to either Mary Bell or Tammi Hensley.

Mary Bell  
5140 S. Baker Blvd.  
Carthage, MO 64836

Tammi Hensley  
P. O. Box 2037  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33970-2037

## ***Made in the Thumb***

The first ever "Made in the Thumb" event sponsored by the Mayville Lions Club held at the Dom Poliski Hall in Caro was held November 14, 2015. **Rose Putnam**, president, represented the Thumb Agricultural Museum and the Thumb Quilt Trail. More than 20 vendors were invited to bring their homemade products and we were invited because of all the visitors we bring to the Thumb and the Quilt Trail efforts to bring tourists to the area. This was another effort by the Thumb Museums to bring tourists to the area along with the Museum Weekend Open House Event held in June.



**Carolyn Wymore**, Mayville Lions Club member is examining the History Book and DVD that tell the story of the Mud Lake Estate and also the quilt trail information. **Rose Putnam** our president shared information about both projects with interested visitors. The group was pleased with the attendance for a first time Event that promotes tourism in the Thumb.



## 2015 FFD Stories and Thoughts

The following pictures and stories give you just a glance of some of the activities, things to see and do and a look back at 2015 FFD. We plan our activities to meet our mission, vision and values statements. Our values statement is: **As stewards of the Octagon Barn, we embrace the diver-**

**sity within our organization and celebrate our many individual talents. We are committed to our visitors and have a passion for the Octagon Barn complex as an educational tool to share with the community our rural heritage. We take on big challenges, and pride our-**

**selves in seeing them completed. We have a responsibility to hold ourselves accountable to the legacy of the Octagon Barn as it continues to grow in the future.**



**Cass River Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol Auxiliary, USAF** presented the colors and raised the American flag during our Opening Ceremonies. Notice the lovely flowers that are around the flagpole. **Modern Woodmen of America** donated \$500.00 towards beautifying the grounds before FFD. With that gift **Dennis Anderson** purchased the many lovely mum plants and placed them around the grounds. We thank Modern Woodmen because it indeed did beautify the grounds.



**Dwaing Saling** of Cass City is attending FFD with two and a half year old **Remington**. As soon as they left the parking area and got on the people mover, Remington was so excited, the wagon was being pulled by a tractor. Then when they got on the grounds they immediately went to the tractor display and now Remington was really excited because some of the tractor owners let him sit on their tractor. Dwaing said that this was his third time visiting during FFD and "It is interesting to see how hard everything was and is so much easier today."



**Terry Mason**, Greenwood, MI & **Dan Nalepa** of Yale are delighted with the very special brooms that they bought from the broom man, **Henry Tschetter** of Rockford, MI. It is such a special treat to watch Henry make his brooms and hear about the art of creating very special brooms. The fellows said, "We're farm kids and love machinery."



**Robert W. Harcourt** of Alger remembers when he was 7 or 8 that his Dad drove him by the Octagon Barn during hunting season when they were hunting in Forestville. His father told him, "You'll never see another Barn like this." In 1998, when Robert was attending the Tractor Show in Caro, he came over to the Octagon Barn and became a member and has been ever since. He said, "My Dad was right. I haven't seen another Barn like Mr. Purdy's."

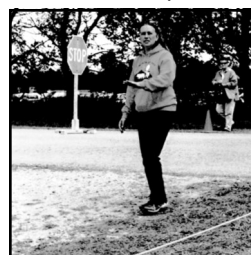


There was a new group performing in the One Room Country School this year. We welcomed the **Thumb Area Community Theatre** performers and hope they will return next year. **Katie Jackson** would love to see more new groups participate and if you have any questions or suggestions please email her at [jacksonkt30@outlook.com](mailto:jacksonkt30@outlook.com). Performing on Saturday were the Cass City Home School group and Cass City School Students. Pictured in no particular order are the Thumb Area Community Theatre group: **Brady and Natalie DeGroat, Emme Kotenko, Allison Southgate, Jake VanHove, Madison Sparkes, and director, Angie Noah, pianist, Mary Gettel and Karen Southgate, chairperson.**



**Rebecca Herzog and Brendon Garner** of Stanwood are attending **Linda Bailey's** craft workshop to learn the techniques of creating a "doll" out of ordinary corn husks. Rebecca remembers coming with her family to FFD in 2005 when she was six years old. She made a boy and girl cornhusk doll that she still has. She is also attending FFD with her Mother and all are making cornhusk dolls.

**Martin Kubacki**, Chairman FFD, was so worried about the parking but his worrying, planning and an excellent group of volunteers paid off. There was one bottleneck early on but they quickly got that resolved and things ran more smoothly. **Lisa Geiger**, shown at right, and family & many volunteers had the parking area well under control and they are already planning the improvements that need to be made for FFD 2016. It was so well organized that you would think that they were a professional team. We heard very few complaints and Martin was happy with the parking and also that they had built three additional people movers in preparation for FFD.



We were grateful for **Sanilac County Sheriff's Posse** who provided assistance in the parking area with their team of horses. This allowed the members of the sheriff's patrol greater mobility and because they were elevated they could oversee the parking area. Also, their very presence was significant. The posses from **Huron and Tuscola Counties** provided security during the night-time patrolling the grounds with four wheelers. This was very comforting.



It takes a family to make those delicious, made right before your eyes, doughnuts. **Sharon Cummins**, Gagetown brings her whole family and everyone has a job to do. They all know what their job is and they take that responsibility very seriously. Ten year old, **Autumn Roy**, Midland, MI is putting cinnamon sugar on the warm doughnuts. Ummm they sure are good and you can tell from the long lines that many others feel that way too.



Our 2015 theme was **Trees Are Our Friends** and **Greg Alexander**, Carsonville & **Tammy Grifka**, Peck, MI were Co-Chairs for the Event. There were many interesting displays inside and outside the tent. **Terry Keinath**, from Reese noticed that he had a wide variety of trees in his woods that animals and birds had deposited the seeds on his property. He decided to dig them up, label them and provide additional information in the Theme Tent in a book about Trees.



The **Miglio** family came from North Branch because they heard through 4-H that the Octagon Barn's FFD was looking for volunteers to ride on the people movers from the parking area to the grounds. The Friends wanted the young volunteers to ride on the people mover to make sure all were seated before moving and to help folks getting on and off the people mover. The family believes in volunteering and the entire family came to support Jack as he volunteered to ride on the people mover. From the left are **Will, Sheri, Jack and Darryl Miglio**.



A few years ago **Greg Talaski** was once again preparing his delicious fish for the Friday Fish Supper when he met one of our volunteers, **Margie White**. A year or so later they planned their wedding and their commitment to the Barn brought them to FFD while on their honeymoon. Some years their anniversary falls during FFD and this was one of those years. So **Martin & Luci Kubacki** planned a little celebration for the **Greg & Margie Talaski**. Congratulations!



Also, on display in the theme tent was a table that was made from a slice of a huge white oak tree that had been cut from the property of **Glenn Craig**, Elkton. Visitors could follow information provided to determine the age of the tree and the events that might have impacted the trees growth. Tammy is showing that her three foot sign is not as wide as the tree cookie that is, at its widest point, 47 inches wide. We wonder if someone could tell us the age of the tree. Jerry Auten to the rescue! The tree was cut by **Melvin Schlabach**, Amishman and Jerry had him slice off a slab that he sanded and made into a table so folks can count the rings to determine the age of the tree. Jerry has counted but we aren't going to tell you what his results were. The cookie will be found in the sawmill museum and when you have some time during FFD 2016, sit a bit and count the rings and let us know the result



Many started their day during FFD with a delicious breakfast prepared by the **Caro Knights of Columbus**. They are very organized and their many Knights makes for a very smooth operation. Not only do the Knights handle the Farmer's Breakfast but they also make apple & pumpkin pies to go with the homemade ice cream. As soon as the word gets out that the Knights of Columbus had once again made their homemade pie to go with the homemade ice cream, they couldn't sell it fast enough.



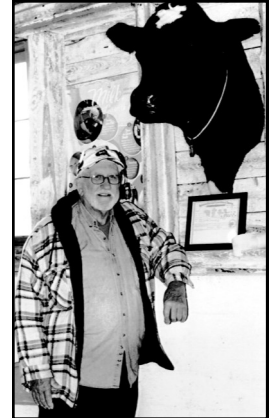
**Monica Cronin**, Carsonville, MI and **Sue Baughman**, Deford, MI provided a wonderful demonstration in the arena of the Barn. They were spinning both days and welcomed visitors to ask questions about the process. In fact just a year ago Monica had her own wheel and wanted to learn how to spin. She had been told that the best way to learn was to spend time with someone spinning and watch, observe and ask questions. Monica did that and sat right next to Sue all day Saturday and even returned on Sunday. It worked and now Monica is also spinning and demonstrating this wonderful craft. Sue has been demonstrating spinning at the Barn for School Tours and FFD for ten years.

Also, on display in the theme tent was a table that was made from a slice of a huge white oak tree that had been cut from the property of **Glenn Craig**, Elkton. Visitors could follow information provided to determine the age of the tree and the events that might have impacted the trees growth. Tammy is showing that her three foot sign is not as wide as the tree cookie that is, at its widest point, 47 inches wide. We wonder if someone could tell us the age of the tree. Jerry Auten to the rescue! The tree was cut by **Melvin Schlabach**, Amishman and Jerry had him slice off a slab that he sanded and made into a table so folks can count the rings to determine the age of the tree. Jerry has counted but we aren't going to tell you what his results were. The cookie will be found in the sawmill museum and when you have some time during FFD 2016, sit a bit and count the rings and let us know the result



**James Dale LaPratt** of Unionville is very proud of his button collection that he has from the first button that we had available and every year since. He said, "The big one is from 1996 the very first Fall Family Days." I have been coming every year. I remember when the Barn & House were for sale and I wanted to buy the property." James, we are so glad that you didn't as we don't think any individual could have afforded the cost of restoration.

**Ruth Ann Brown**, member and quilt maker for one of our Raffle prizes is asking for your help. She has a collection of our buttons and is missing the 2007 button. Anyone who might have one that they would be willing to part with can call Ruth Ann at 989-683-2637. She would be most appreciative as it would complete her collection.



**Mark Battel**, Cass City, above, one of the original creators of the dairy display in the Barn, made the arrangements for a new addition to be on display during our Events. Velvet, a Holstein was very special to the **Ron Opperman** family of Vassar because she was an exceptional milk producer. In her ten years she produced 18,345 gallons of milk. She was in a herd of over a hundred and lived from 1977 until 1987 when she died of natural causes. Daughter, **Sharon Kern** of Vassar now owns Velvet and would be willing to loan her to us during our Events. **Bud Inbody**, Snover is located in the Dairy display during our Events and said that many were impressed with her size and could almost hear her mooing.



It's a little after five on Sunday and **Martin Kubacki**, FFD Chairman, is all smiles as he thanks all who have participated in FFD making it once again a big success. Martin made a special note to thank all the many volunteers that give of their time before, during and after FFD. What would we do without them, however, we can always use more volunteers. Consider it if you are not a volunteer yet.

**SPECIAL DONATIONS:** *Following is a list of memorial donations, acknowledgements and items donated for use on the site through November 30, 2015.*

Donation in memory of Dick Prime was given by Terry & Sandra Keinath. Reese, MI  
 Keny & Laura Hazard, Leesburg, FL are once again our first 2016 FFD Sponsors followed closely by our second 2016 FFD Sponsors, Arnold & Reita Maxfield, Dade City, FL  
 Donation in memory of Norman Susalla was given by Neal J. Hentschl, Harbor Beach, MI  
 Donation in honor of Mary Ann Hirn was given by Curtis and Mary Bell, Carthage, MO  
 Donation in memory of my one and only love, Linda Harris given by her husband of fifty years, Jimmy Harris, Fostoria, MI

Donation In memory of James Purdy Wilson given by Pat Coleman, Blackfoot, ID  
 Donation of \$174.35 from Huron Medical Center employees "Dress Down Days" was given to thank the Thumb Agricultural Museum for their contribution to the Community.  
 Doug Fuller, Marlette donated trucking to pick up and deliver logs.

Nathen Brown & Cristal Quinn donated the \$250.00 charge for cutting the ten acres of hay on the State land.

Memorial gift in honor Lana Rueger given by Donald Mosher, Burton, MI.  
 Clemco Printing collated the two folded pages of the newsletter and stapled them at no expense to the Friends. We thank them, as it was most helpful.

Two matriarchs from Reese passed within a month of each other. The ladies were neighbors and the families farmed for many years. Lucille Wehrman, 95 and Mildred Spiekerman 99 were also Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn and supporters.  
 Lucille Wehrman, 95, Louis Wehrman's mother passed away September 14, 2015. Louie and Linda have been instrumental in developing the Grain Elevator Museum in our Village.

*The following donations were given in Lucille's memory:*

Tim & Kathy Howell, Fairgrove, MI, Rich & Marilyn Cottrell, Alkron, MI, Bob & Noreetta Humpert, Fairgrove, MI, Rancy & Judy Humpert, Fairgrove, MI, Karen Roehm, Merrill, MI, Dennis Hadeway Family, Fairgrove, MI, Dan & Sara Kay Dizpinski Family, Lake Orion, MI, Jim & Patty Witucki Family, Bay City, MI, Janet Schmandt Family, Vassar, MI, Jean Houghtaling, Reese, MI, Karen Goodchild, Caro, MI, Tootie Pavlawk, Fairgrove, MI, Carl & Sylvia Buetow, Richville, MI, Randy & Carleen Marklwitz, Hopkins, MI, Don & Elaine Pike, Reese, MI, Wayne & Karen Lenton, Ubly, MI, Bill & Rose Putnam, Cass City, MI, Anton & Marilyn Peters, Cass City, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Vern & Martha Gehrls Family, Fairgrove, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese, MI, Diane Rapson Gabil, Essexville, MI, & Bob & Mary Ann Hirn, Cass City, MI

Mildred Spiekerman, Mary Ann Hirn's mother passed away October 10, 2015 at 99 and she would have been one hundred in March. Mildred knitted over ten Afghans that were used for our FFD raffle until at 95 her eyesight made it impossible for her to continue. When Mildred was 83 she drove her 1928 GP John Deere tractor that she had given to her son-in-law Bob Hirn in the Parade of antique tractors.

*The following donations were made in memory of Mildred Louise Dorothea Spiekerman:*

Ruth Ann Spencer, Pickford, MI, Ware Smith, Woolever and Co. Funeral Directors, Reese, MI, Anton & Marilyn Peters, Cass City, MI, W. Jean Felske, Vassar, MI, S. Keinath & T. Keinath, Reese, MI, Scott F. Wolfington, Ann Arbor, MI, Melvin & Linda Schmidt, Reese, MI, Wayne & Karen Lenton, Ubly, MI, Doug & Ardis Monroe, Gagetown, MI, Corey Will, Mayville, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Gail Cooper & Joan Vangel, Milford, MI, Dale & Judy Janson, Reese, MI, Jim & Geri Perry, Cass City, MI, Louis & Linda Wehrman, Reese, MI, R. Mason, Caro, MI, Lorna & George Gray, Vassar, MI, Millie (Stafford) Wilett, Essexville, MI, Jim & Judy Brown, Cass City, MI, John & Grace Blair, Bad Axe, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, & William & Rose Putnam, Cass City, MI

The following donations were received in memory of Bob Hirn and total \$4,495.00 to be used at the discretion of the Friends.

Art & Carolyn Graff, Caro, MI Jim & Becky Hirn, Bad Axe, MI, Mary McClorey & Lorraine Martin, Cass City, MI, Gerald & Donna Auten, Cass City, MI, Riggs & Darlene Bedford, Centerline, MI, Ron & JulAnn Kuenzli, Deford, MI, Terry & Colleen Sweeney, Cass City, MI, Patrick & Deb Walton, Chesterfield, MI, Donald E. Weber, Frankenmuth, MI, Larry & Julie McCreedy, Caro, MI, Leon & Sue Swartzentruber, Ubly, MI, Ralph & Pat Zinnecker, Deford, MI, Thumb Two Cylinder Club, Ubly, MI, Dennis & Joyce Anderson, Cass City, MI, Joyce Simpson, Munger, MI, Mark & Diane Battel, Cass City, MI, Hans & Peggy Hellwig, Owendale, MI, Ray & Carol Caverly, Gagetown, MI, Jim & Carol Hunter, Port Hope, MI, Richard Wroblewski, Lonesome Mountain Boys, Sebawaing, MI, John & Ruth Ann Kajjala, Fairgrove, MI, Thumb Area Antique Auto Club, Elkton, MI, Earl & Doris Schember, Gagetown, MI, Don & Jean Sherman, Croswell, MI, Pauline Hulburt, Cass City, MI, Joan Merchant, Cass City, MI, Tom & Linda Herron, Cass City, MI, Byron & Jan Arnold, Unionville, MI, Loren & Nancy Wier, Caro, MI, Bud & Mary Inbody, Snover, MI, Albert & Ruthann Brown, Kingston, MI, Joan Vangel, Milford, MI, Dick & Norma Wallace, Cass City, MI, Jon & Char Fahrner, Cass City, MI, Shirley Strickland, Cass City, MI, Nicol & Sons, Inc, Cass City, MI, John & Gayle Nicol, Cass City, MI, Doug & Ardis Monroe, Gagetown, MI, John & Grace Blair, Bad Axe, MI, Howard & Donna Gehrls, Reese, MI, John Wald, Cass City, MI, Louis & Linda Wehrman, Reese, MI, Lowell & Beth McDonald, Bad Axe, MI, Diane Rapson Gabil, Essexville, MI, Fred & Nancy Ruggles, Kingston, MI, Jim & Judy Brown, Cass City, MI, Dave & Kris Milligan, Cass City, MI, Doloris Sheridan, New Baltimore, MI, Terry & Sandy Keinath, Reese, MI, Brian & Lisa Knoll, Vassar, MI, Dave & Heather Weiler, Cass City, MI, Robert & Edna McLachlan, Cass City, MI, Dan & Jennifer Kubacki, Canton, MI, Paul & Pauline Findlay, Caro, MI, Dick & Margo Donahue Isard, Ft. Meyer, FL, Dale & Patty Churchill, Deford, MI, Dean & Patricia Little, Cass City, MI, Bob & Barb Tuckey, Cass City, MI, Ron & Mae Hoffman, Bad Axe, MI, Lorraine Craig, Bad Axe, MI, Joan Koch, Cass City, MI, Chuck & Cindy Stadler, Vassar, MI, Tom & Lila Thompson, Caro, MI, Marcella Rice Sanford, Fife Lake, MI, Curtis & Mary Bell, Carthage, MO, Arnold & Reita Maxfield, Dade City, FL, Leonard & Bernie Pisarek, Gagetown, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Greg E. Talaski, Fillion, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Brad & Ann Bus, Bad Axe, MI, Neal Hentschl, Harbor Beach, MI, William & Julia Norcross, Boyne City, MI, Louise Buehrly, Palmetto, FL, Eleanor Truemner, Cass City, MI, Mike & Denise Morley, East China, MI, Newell & Lois Harris, Fountain Hills, AZ, Karl & Marilyn DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI, Dorothy Sampson, Kinde, MI, Bill & Rose Putnam, Cass City, MI, Dan & Jean Creyts, Charlotte, MI & Ryan & Darcie White, Maryville, TN, Jm & Carol Welke, Mayville.

## School Tours

### *Diane Rapson Gabil, Chairperson*

The dates for School Tours 2016 are **Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>** at the Thumb Octagon Barn in Gagetown, MI, by reservation only. Tours are scheduled to begin each day at 8:3a.m. with the last tours starting at 1 p.m.. There is a donation fee of \$2.00 per student and chaperone. There will be at least twenty-five educational stations for the students to visit and educators will choose which areas they wish their students to attend a month before attending. Shorter tours can be scheduled to meet the student's age and scheduling needs.

This is a wonderful educational experience and Diane encourages teachers to register soon by signing up on our web site thumboctagonbarn.org or contact Diane directly at drap-

songabil@chartermi.net. She already has 672 students signed up and we can only accommodate 400 students a day. Diane would encourage 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to sign up as this visit will tie in perfectly with their Science and Social Studies curriculum.

Diane has prepared the following information about this year's theme that she has sent in informational packets to teachers throughout the area. "Our Theme for 2016 is **"Our Wonderful World of Water"** when students will have the opportunity to learn about the importance of water in the lives of all people in the early 1900's, how it was attained, importance of ice for cooling and where it was gotten and how it was kept, plus how it figured into food, industry and recreation. Water displays will

also show the importance of water today in terms of wetlands, run off, purification, conservation of water and it's importance for all living things now and in the future. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, (DNR) and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will provide water information, as well as, the Soil Conservation Units in the surrounding counties.

Diane has arranged for the following planning meetings to be held at Rawson Memorial Library in Cass City. Meetings begin at 12:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. all Wednesdays. Those dates are: **February 3<sup>rd</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 6<sup>th</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>**. Please mark your 2016 calendar as all are invited and we can always use many more volunteers. We'll have a job for you to do.



## The Purdy Home

Marilyn Phillips, Chairperson

The house committee has wanted to install period appropriate storm doors for all of the doors in the Purdy Home for quite some time. There were several possible contacts in the area but they didn't materialize. So **Jerry Auten** spoke with some of the Amish families in the area. Presto! He got the name of a contractor in Middlefield, OH and Weaver Window and Woodcrafts made the storm doors with glass and screen inserts. Also, with the help of net-working by the Amish, the doors were delivered to Jerry and he is on his way to deliver them to the Purdy Home. They will be installed in the spring. Thank you, Jerry, for getting this job done.



Jerry Auten, Cass City has the storm doors and the glass and screen inserts that he has loaded up on his trailer to deliver to the Purdy Home.

## Chemical Bank Cares Day

On Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup> twelve Chemical Bank employees volunteered their time to help at the Thumb Agricultural Museum. They were joined by a number of our Boys & Gals Day-out Group. They accomplished much and we were grateful for their help. This was the third year that some have chosen to spend Columbus Day, when the banks are closed, to give of their time to the community performing tasks that need attention.

Some of the tasks that were performed at the Barn were: picked apples, peeled, cored, sliced and bagged the apples for over fifty pies, picked apples for deer feed, raked leaves, cleaned flower beds, cut plaques for FFD sponsors, prepared items in the house for the winter season and scraped and painted the lower windows on the grain elevator. We thank them for their help with these projects. We really appreciated their help.



Chemical Bank employees gathered for a group photo in front of the Thumb Octagon Barn. Wow! The Barn sure is big. The volunteers are from the left: **Rose Putnam, Josie Thompson, Tim Lyons, Connie Kruse, Pat Lapp, Sherry VanTol, Bob Wolak, Kim Stevenson, Cindy Mellendorf, Jen Wymore, Alan Luedtke and Kim Karr.**



Imagine all those apples that came from the tree between the Purdy Home and the Barn. Possibly it could have been one of the original apple trees on the Farm. Each year this tree produces a bountiful crop of apples that makes wonderful applesauce and of course, pies. Sorting the apples are: **Kim Stevenson and Friends Volunteer Marilyn Phillips, House Chairperson and bank volunteer Connie Kruse.**

## Site Committee

**Dennis Anderson, chairman**

What are we doing concerning the barn roof, you ask .....

A lot is happening! We are in the process of gathering information talking with a large number of folks about all the options. We are inviting contractors, suppliers and manufacturers to present information so the Board can make an informed decision. These meetings are open, announced and you are welcome to attend.

We know the Barn project will involve, painting, window repair and a roof so there is much to consider.

With this information the Board will make a decision and set a timetable for completion. Again I want to stress, we are looking at all the options that are presented. **Richard Stacer** will be the building specialist for this project.

Also the Grain Elevator project is progressing with the plan to complete the project during the winter months. The building materials have been ordered and some of the boards have been cut at our sawmill. **Louie Wehrman** will over-see this project.

## 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.** The following donations have been made to the Thumb Agricultural Museum since our last newsletter.

Ed Hiser, Caro, MI donated three log scales for the sawmill and the lumber museum in the sawmill building.  
Jan Hornbacher, Sebawaing donated a bean puller.  
Arther G. Nitz, Frankenmuth, MI donated a 1906 11 row grain drill.  
Dick Witkouski donated the "Old Man" drill press for the Blacksmith Shop.  
Melvin Gay, Saginaw, MI donated a hand corn husker.  
Peter Martin, Cass City, MI donated Forts Dairy pickup.  
Duaine & Marilyn Phillips, Caro, MI donated chenille full size bedspread, handmade full size crocheted bedspread, bed coverlet, oil painting with large antique frame, two antique picture frames and a Kirby vacuum cleaner with attachments and a dozen bags.

## 2015 FFD Annual Raffle

Sherry Kappen, Joan Koch & Rose Putnam

Our Raffle was a success once again and following are the lucky winners.

- ❖ Queen size quilt donated by **Ruth Ann Brown**, Kingston MI won by **Toni Ventline**, Cass City, MI
- ❖ \$300.00 cash prize donated by FOTOB\* won by **Helen Dombruski**, Clinton Township, MI
- ❖ Samsung tablet donated by FOTOB\* won by **Linda Tresco**, Clio, MI
- ❖ John Deere Pedal Tractor donated by **Tri-County Equipment** won by **Robert Kloc**, Freeland, MI
- ❖ 10" Craftsman Table Saw donated by FOTOB\* won by **Bonnie Gaeth**, Owendale, MI
- ❖ \$150.00 cash prize donated by FOTOB won by **Duane & Gail Osbourn**, Chesterfield, MI
- ❖ Case International Pedal Tractor donated by **Osentoski Farm Equipment** won by **Brenda Gainforth**, Pigeon, MI
- ❖ \$100.00 Menards Gift Card donated by **Green Acres Farms** Akron, MI won by **Cora Durga**, Bay City, MI
- ❖ Handmade afghan donated by **Dorothy Bills**, Cass City won by **Travis McKeller**, Sebawaing, MI
- ❖ \$75.00 cash prize donated by FOTOB\* won by **Kyle Will**, Caro, MI
- ❖ Handmade afghan donated by **Gwen Poole**, Essexville, MI won by **Jason McCarty**, Ubly, MI
- ❖ Basket of Books on Trees donated by **John & Carolyn Longmuir**, Box Elder, SD won by **Mari Lowe**, Cass City, MI

\*FOTOB Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn

**Friends of the  
THUMB OCTAGON BARN  
PO BOX 145  
6948 RICHIE RD.  
GAGETOWN MI 48735**

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## We're on the Web!

<http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org>

*George Pettinger,  
Web Manager*

## Souvenirs

*Joan Koch, Chairperson*

Joan was pleased with sales during FFD. Because of the unusually cold weather there was heavy demand for sweatshirts & hoodies in all sizes and colors. Joan wants to THANK all of YOU who purchased our Thumb Octagon Barn apparel, as YOU are the best advertisement that we could possibly have. Keep up the good work and again thank you. Joan still has a good supply of T-shirts, sweatshirts and stocking stuffers for all ages available and you can purchase these by calling Joan at 989-325-0041.

Also, for sale is our historical DVD telling the story of the Octagon Barn featuring **Marilyn Phillips** touring the Purdy Home, **Al Eicher**, Program Source International, producer of the DVD telling the history of the Purdy Family and the Friends efforts to Save the Octagon Barn and a wonderful, memorable tour of the Barn by the late **Bob Hirn** who devoted many

years of dedicated hard work and expertise to restoring the Octagon Barn. This is a wonderful keepsake and we especially thank **Doug Monroe** for making sure that this conversation with Bob took place.

The cost of the DVD is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 shipping charges. Our History Book is also available for \$10.00 plus \$2.00 shipping costs. Joan is offering very special pricing on the purchase of the History Book and the DVD for \$25.00 plus \$3.00 shipping charges. For those folks in the area, you can avoid shipping costs by calling Joan at 989-325-0041 and set a time for purchasing and picking up. You will also be able to thank Joan for taking care of our souvenirs since the very beginning of our organization in 1994. She is always looking for new ideas and would appreciate any input in that regard.

### 2016 Upcoming Events

April 16 Annual Meeting, Banquet & Auction  
May 11, 12, 13 School Tours  
September 9 FFD Fish Fry  
September 10 & 11 Fall Family Days

### Newsletter

Database and labels.....David Eichler  
Editing.....Rose Putnam  
Design Layout.....Lois Moslander  
Newsletter Coordinator.....Margaret Sergeant

### FUTURE MEETINGS

General membership meetings will be held the second Tuesday, every other month, at 7 p.m. at the Gagetown Fire Hall.  
**Feb., April, Oct. & Dec.**

## 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 years and we appreciate their continued support through the years.

**Michigan Milk Producers, C. Johnson** donated a cube of butter that was used at the Farmer's Breakfast and the Fish Fry.

**Cass City Oil & Gas** donated 79 gallons of LP gas used in food preparation.

**Bartnik Services** provided the equipment to get a steam engine on site.

**Country Fresh through Bruce Hartman** donated 300 quarts of half and half used to make the homemade ice cream.

**Hampton Potato Growers** donated 2400 lbs. of potatoes used for the Fish Fry, Farmer's Breakfast and the Fries that go with the Chicken Strips.

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

**DJ's Portable Toilets, Owendale** offered a reduction in billing costs.

**McDonald's Food & Family 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** donated 150 lbs. of popcorn, bags and seasoning.

**MMR (Mobile Medical Response)** Scott Smeader, Saginaw arranged for their services to be available during FFD for emergencies.

The following businesses donated items to be used in the bags given to Exhibitors and Vendors during FFD: **Knight's Insurance Agency, Thumb National Bank, Hills & Dales General Hospital** plus some previously donated items.

### Benefactors: The following have made a donation of \$10.00 or more

Edmund & June Armbruster, Sebawaing, MI  
Raymond E. Baur, Unionville, MI  
Curtis and Mary Bell, Carthage, MO  
Carol D. Beythan, Saginaw, MI  
Bruce & Charlotte Bollinger, Oscoda, MI  
Raymond & Linda Borowicz, Alma, MI  
Sally Brauer, Troy, MI  
Sue Collins, Saginaw, MI  
Rich & Lori Corl, Colorado Springs, CO  
Gerald Deeg, Sebawaing, MI  
Robert & Linda Deeg, Sebawaing, MI  
Robert & Charlotte Dennis, Davison, MI  
Jack & Carol DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI  
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Dittenber, Hope, MI

Bruce J. & Paula E. Gardner, Cass City, MI  
Walter & Ann Hagen, Bay City, MI  
Robert W. Harcourt, Alger, MI  
Nile & Ruth Hayden, Sand Lake, MI  
Rosanne D. Heme, Bay City, MI  
Orin (Bud) & Mary Inbody, Snover, MI  
Carolyn Jackson, Dearborn Hgts., MI  
Deloris Jensen, St. Clair Shores, MI  
Rita Jeric, Sand Point, MI  
Brian Klemmer, Bad Axe, MI  
Vera Milz, Troy, MI  
Thomas & Sue Muto, Midland, MI  
Dan Netzley, St. Louis, MI  
William & Deborah Posak, Clinton Twp., MI

Jerry & Mary Ellen Schley, Dearborn Hgts., MI  
Wally & Helga Schluckebier, Frankenmuth, MI  
Tim Simecki, Pigeon, MI  
Bill & Marlene Stewart, Caro, MI  
Maryann Tenczer, Gagetown, MI  
Gloria Thorsby, Colorado Springs, CO  
Betty Townley, Bad Axe, MI  
Edward Tresco, Clio, MI  
Dave & Penny Turner, Mayville, MI  
Dr. Fred & Carol Walton, Deckerville, MI  
Gary Wark, Fairgrove, MI  
Larry & Suzanne Wegner, Sand Point, MI  
Andrew & Ashleigh Witucki, Bay City, MI

**NOTE: Please be sure to provide a change of address as well as a winter address and the months that you will be gone.**