School Tours 2017
Diane Rapson Gabil, Chairwoman

Our first big Event of the year will be our School Tours that have grown considerably since the first year that teachers were invited to bring their students to the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum.

Carol Stoeckle, originator of the concept recently recounted her memories of that first year in 1996, "I remember being at one of our meetings and bringing up having school kids come to the Barn to get more awareness of the Barn and its plight. Some said wait a few years and I said, we can do it now, no use waiting. That first year was a much bigger success than we could have imagined. The response from local schools was great. The weather didn’t cooperate. I can still see kids arranged in groups around the leaks in the barn roof, where the rain was coming in. It was almost as wet inside as outside! That first year we had great volunteer support from Bob Hirn, Kathleen Nizzola & Norma Wallace. I brought farm animals, Jennifer Szubielak sheared sheep, Tina Hoard did wool spinning. Margaret Sergeant began her job as the barn history storyteller. She was and still is amazing. As I look back on how it all started, a small group of dedicated people who wouldn’t let that barn be torn down, to what it has grown into today, brings tears to my eyes. We were blessed with great leadership in Rose Putnam and Bob Hirn plus many, many others."

Diane Rapson Gabil, our current chairwoman, became involved with the Thumb Octagon Barn when she brought her very special students for a visit to the Barn. The Friends good fortune was that she retired at the same time that Carol was unable to continue as chairwoman of School Tours. Diane has organized and chaired School Tours since 2002 that has grown to accommodate almost 1500 students over three days in May with 28 stations for teachers to select from to visit. Diane does a beautiful job of organizing, with the scheduling expertise of Doug Monroe, the movement of students on site during their visit.

The theme for Schools Tours 2017 is “From Food to Table, Highlighting Grain Processing”. Students will learn about the production of food for people and animals in the early 1900’s, how it was attained, kept and processed for use. They will learn how the food they eat today gets from being grown on a farm, prepared and processed into other food they eat. The students will also learn about by-products of grains, beans, corn and other crops and how they are used in food for people and animals as well as in other necessary products. This theme ties directly to health, science and social studies curriculum at all grade levels.

Arlen Bannick and his fellow players have been entertaining young students during School Tours since the beginning. How delightful to hear young voices joining in and singing old favorites and even dancing at times. Arlen, 95, loves to participate and see the students having such a good time but he will be monitoring the temperature and weather to determine if it’s a good time to play. He has others lined up so that there will always be music. Entertaining from left are: Bill Slaughtor, Deford, Craig Sorenson, Cass City, Arlen Bannick, Bad Axe and Richard Wrubleski, Sebewaing who have all been playing with the Eastern Michigan Music Makers for years.
**Letter From the President**

**FRIENDS of the THUMB OCTAGON BARN**

**Rose M. Putnam**

**Dear Friends,**

2017 is here and we are busy getting ready for all the activities at the Thumb Octagon Barn. We are looking forward to creating new experiences for all those visiting. Please call Marilyn Phillips at 989-977-0025 to reserve your seat at the tea. Rose M. Putnam, President

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### 2017 Annual Volunteer Banquet and Auction

**Executive Committee**

The Annual Volunteer Banquet and Auction has been moved to Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at the Octagon Barn site. The meal will be served at 2 p.m. and the Auction will immediately follow the meal. You may start bringing auction items at 1 p.m. Due to this change, we will not have a silent auction. So please rethink the items that you are donating. We hope that those members or guests will continue to bring all the favorite homemade items. Marty Osentoski will be back as auctioneer.

Along with this change, a decision was made to also host the volunteer appreciation meal along with the annual banquet and auction. Therefore, there will not be a cost to a volunteer for the dinner. However, with that being said, we do need your reservation in order to prepare enough food. A sign up sheet will be available at our meetings but please sign up only once. If you are unable to sign up you may contact Joan Koch by leaving a message on the Octagon Barn phone at 989-665-0081 or you may contact the chairperson of your committee and sign up with them. Please help by spelling your name and leaving a phone number.

We are excited about the possibility of a great turnout for both the Annual Meeting and the new Annual Volunteer Banquet and Auction.

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### 2017 Annual Meeting

**Rose Putnam, President**

The Executive Committee has made some changes based on input from the membership for our Annual Meeting, Banquet & Auction. Therefore our Annual Meeting will be held on April 11, 2017 at 7 p.m. at the Elmwood Township Hall in downtown Saginaw. We will go over the 2016 financial report, discuss new and old business and hold the election of officers. If you are interested in helping out, the position of Recording Secretary is open for a two year term and the Corresponding Secretary position is open for a one year term. Martin Kubacki will be running again as First Vice President for a two year term. Nominations will be open on the floor the evening of the meeting for all three positions. Following the Annual Meeting, we will hold the regular membership meeting as usual.

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### Grounds/Clean up Day

**Louie Wehrman, Chairman**

Clean up day has been scheduled for Saturday, May 6 at 9:00 a.m. when volunteers will be asked to come together to help prepare the site for School Tours the following week and opening to the public for the season. There is much that needs cleaning and fixing up, so we can use all those who are willing to help. Maybe you could bring a friend with you and get them interested in becoming a Friend of our Museum and perhaps then they might volunteer at some of our Events.

Louie asks that each person who is responsible for an area take charge for getting that area ready for visitors and recommends that they bring the supplies that they will need for clean up. He also reminds folks that they will need to bring their own lunch should they be able to work into the afternoon.
Monday Work Crew
The Boys, Chairman

In 2016 James & Veronica (Stoic) Haines of Vassar donated their 1920’s red-wood tongue and groove granary to our Museum. After being moved from Vassar by the Anthes Brothers Moving to our site, it was placed on a platform that left quite a step up from the ground level. Realizing that this presented some safety issues, it was decided that a ramp would be the answer to assure a safe entrance to the granary.

One sunny, but cold Monday, found the crew on that particular day working to build a ramp for easy access to the interior of the granary. Once the ramp is in place they will work on making improvements to the inside of the granary so that folks will be able to walk into the granary and see static displays and agricultural memorabilia. Working on the project are from the left and around, Ken Western, Kingston, Byron Arnold, Unionville, Norm Parker, Cass City, Howard Gehrls, Reese, Jack Hill, Marlette, Jerry Meredith, Snover, Louie Wehrman, Reese and Paul Deo, Snover.

In Memoriam

When our very first caretakers, Ray & Betty Armstead, were no longer able to continue in that capacity due to health issues, their good friends, Arnold & Reita Maxfield assumed those responsibilities for many years. They worked as a team with Arnie cutting the grass and Reita planting and caring for the many flowers that she planted around the site. Reita had a green thumb and kept the site looking beautiful. When visitors came to see and learn about the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum, Arnie would share the stories of the Barn and Reita would talk with visitors in the Purdy Home. Arnie and Reita had been married for 65 years and you would often see them holding hands. Reita died on January 16, 2017 and it seemed that once Arnie was assured that everything was in order he died on January 22, 2017. It was Arnie’s wish that there would be a Memorial Service in the arena of the Octagon Barn for Reita this summer. Now a Memorial Service is being planned for this loving couple and wonderful caretakers and hosts of the Thumb Octagon Barn. The date for the celebration of their lives is June 4th at 1:00 p.m. Arnie and Reita are pictured by the flag pole garden and marker thanking all the volunteers who worked on the restoration of the Barn spearheaded by the late Bob Hirn. Early on the Maxfields purchased the flowers for this garden and cared for and maintained them throughout the season.
**2016 Host Couples**

As the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum grew so did our need for our Host Couples who provide a presence on the site, are available to meet and greet visitors, can help with the maintenance of the grounds including watering the flowers and most importantly provide security by their very presence on site.

This is not an easy job and we are extremely grateful to those who bring their RV and stay for several months during the summer providing the previously mentioned needs. We thank them many times over and look forward to some of the couples returning once again. If you know of any others that might be interested in becoming one of our hosts please contact Rose Putnam at Rose.Putnam@chemicalbank.com.

**Ron (Too Tall) & Tammi Hensley, Lehigh Acres, Florida**

Florida are returning for another year of many since they have been Host Couples. They feel that the Friends are their second family. They love coming and there isn’t any other place that they would rather be than with all their Friends at the Barn during the summer months. The Hensleys travel with their cat Gypsy. Last year there were several litters of kittens from across the road from the Barn who found their way right to Tammi’s heart. She thought that Gypsy might like some company so they adopted Willow who will also be returning. Tammi said “We’ll all be back the first of May and that will be here before we know it.”

**Gail & Duane Osbourn, New Baltimore, MI**

have been involved with the Barn as host couples for many years. Because of health issues they absolutely will be unable to spend any extended time at the Barn this season. In fact, Gail said that they weren’t even going to bring their RV up for only a few days because once they got up here they would be tempted to stay. As much as they would love to be here with their summer family away from home, their health will not make that possible. Hopefully they will be able to drive up for a visit during some of our Events as they will miss tremendously being here. Gail loved caring for the flowers, helping in the Purdy Home with Teas and tours and Duane loved sharing the stories of the Friends with visitors. We thank the Osbourns for all the years that they donated their time to the Thumb Agricultural Museum.

**Curtis & Mary Bell, Carthage, Missouri**

have been coming to Michigan and the Agricultural Museum for several years and are returning once again this year. Mary said, “The forecast for weather in their home town this summer is hot and humid so they are anxiously anticipating their trip north to Michigan and our wonderful weather.” The Curtis’ miss all their good Friends and are looking forward to their return. Mary added that work continues on the third Octagon Barn Cookbook and noted that they could especially use recipes for main dishes, soups and stews. Mary Bell and Tammi Hensley will be back at the Barn after May 1st so best to mail them to our P. O. Box 145, Gagetown, MI 48735. Mary ended the conversation with, “Look out, we’re a comin.”

**John & Carolyn Longmuir, Box Elder, South Dakota**

spent four summers with the Friends but because of some family plans the “grandparents” are going to be unable to find their way to the Octagon Barn this year. John said, “Our experience with the Friends has been enjoyable, enlightening and gave us a forever loving feeling for all those involved. They make you feel like family. We will hope to be back but we haven’t gotten to planning for 2018 and beyond yet.”

The old apple tree behind the Purdy Home is a wonderful place for old friends to visit and remember days gone by. Seated around the table are from the left Reita Maxfield, Arnie Maxfield, Bill Hollingsworth and Betty Armstead all who played a big part in caring for, protecting and preserving this historical site for future generations.
Music Weekend in the Barn
David Jaroch, Ron Kuenzli, Rose Putnam & Richard Wrobeski

The committee has planned our Second Music Weekend in the arena of the Barn and will include, some dancing, country music and Sunday gospel music. The arena of the Octagon Barn is a wonderful setting for these activities.

The cost for each event will be $10.00 per person with children 12 and under admitted free. These concerts are another way to raise funds that enable us to continue to fund our many construction projects especially the repairs needed to the Octagon Barn. Refreshments will be served at intermission all three days.

The schedule is as follows:

Friday, July 14th Country Dance Night with DJ Ron Kuenzli. Ron has had twenty years of experience as a DJ with the Thumb Area Dance Club. Ron sets up the sound system for the concerts, so we know that the Barn will be filled with great music. Also, the opportunity for some dance lessons will be offered in round dance and two-step waltz. Ron has hinted at perhaps a surprise guest as well. Music will start at 7 p.m. and will go as long as there are dancers.

Saturday, July 15th Jenni Lynn & the Ruckus will entertain from 7 until 9 p.m. Jenni has opened for a number of major country artists in Mid-Michigan and is popular with festivals in the area.

Sunday, July 16th Skylight Gospel Quartet – four guys out of SW Michigan. The group will present a mix of old favorites & new material.

The concert will start at 2 p.m. and go until 4 p.m.

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

The family of Robert Frank Humpert, Fairgrove, MI made a generous donation to the Agricultural Museum. Bob drove a shuttle during FFD and especially enjoyed ‘hanging out’ at the Grain Elevator Building just as was the practice years ago. Bob was a very special friend to Louie Wehrman.

Green-Gro Farms donated a share of the profit from the hay crop grown in the field used for parking during FFD.

Donation in the name of Pat Hester given by her son & daughter-in-law, Brad & Beth Kitchin, Mesa, AL.

Donation in memory of Richard Holdwick, given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI.

Donations in memory of Paul Linck given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI & Diane Rapson Gabil, Essexville, MI.

Donation in memory of Mary Jane Sweeney given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI.

Donation in honor of Bob Milligan, Lauderdale, MN who celebrated a special birthday milestone given by Jim & Judy Brown, Cass City.

$200.00 donation given towards the new barn roof given by Ken & Arlene Musser, Kawkawlin, MI. “We love all the hard work you people do.”

Dee Garety, Cass City donated a quilt for the raffle or auction, old books & an appliance.

Donation in memory of her brother-in-law, Jim Nelson, given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI.

Donations in memory of Lawrence Longuski were given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI John & Jo Ann Rutkowski, Ubly, MI, Jill Ogryski, Ubly, MI, Diane Rapson Gabil, Essexville, MI & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI. Donations in memory of Reita Maxfield, Dade City, FL given by Mary Ann Hirn, Cass City, Betty Armstead & Bill Hollingsworth, Zephyrhills, FL, George & Glenda Wilson, Gagetown, MI & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI. See picture on page 3.

Donation in memory of Arnie Maxfield, Dade City, FL given by Betty Armstead & Bill Hollingsworth, Zephyrhills, FL & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Mary Ann Hirn, Cass City, MI.


Very special thanks to Clemco Printing, Bad Axe, for collating, folding and stapling our fall newsletter at not cost to the Friends.
The Purdy Grain Elevator
Louie & Linda Wehrman, Co-Chairs

Our 2017 Theme is community Grain Elevators and will feature The Purdy Elevator in our Village. The sign in front of the building tells the story and significance of the local Elevator to the community.

Beginning in the mid to late 19th century, farmers were able to produce grain crops that exceeded the needs of their families and industries were creating a demand for the excess crops. The first facilities for receiving and storing grain were flat storage warehouses holding grain in sacks or barrels. By the beginning of the 20th century the increase in productivity and demand required new technology to handle and store large amounts of grain quickly. Grain elevators were developed to meet the demand to receive, weigh, store and transfer grain in bulk quantities. This grain elevator, though not original to the site, has been constructed by volunteers of the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn beginning in 2008 and is ongoing, in tribute to the area’s grain elevators. The building features working vintage equipment to demonstrate the operation typical of early, small town elevators. Included are vertical bucket conveyors called grain legs that “elevate” the grain in storage bins. Mills are used to remove chaff and foreign materials and clean the grain. Scales are used to determine the quantity of grain for which a farmer would be paid. It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the very valuable role grain elevators and their employees have played in the advancement of agriculture and in the lives of those dedicated farm families who have helped to make this Nation great.

Our Elevator Building has grown to be an amazing museum and wonderful addition to the Thumb Agricultural Museum thanks to all who have donated, helped build but most importantly to Louie & Linda Wehrman for their leadership and dedication to this project. It all started with just a small building donated by Ron & Brenda Brakenberry of Bad Axe. Through the years additions have been added to accommodate the equipment for demonstrations as well as provide needed display space. Louie said that they are receiving wonderful new pieces of equipment and that they are already running out of room.

Correspondence
When the Hamlins of South Haven, MI renewed their membership they added the following note and a donation too. “Karen is granddaughter of Edith Purdy, sister of James Purdy (original owner). Although we have only been able to visit the Barn once, we are enthused about its success and the expansion of the associations many activities. Your volunteers are remarkable! Good Luck and God’s Blessings to all. Karen & W. Stephen Hamlin.”

Benefactors
The following have made a donation of $10.00 or more since our last newsletter through March 17, 2017

Bob Ashmore, Owendale, MI
Carolyn Baldwin, Vassar, MI
Tom Barton, St. Clair Shores, MI
Ralph & Theresa Bielawski, Fraser, MI
Bernard & Patty Billingsley, Sanford, MI
R, Scott & Ginny Brundage, Columbia, MO
Ray Christie, Freeland, MI
Gail Cooper, Milford, MI
Bob & Linda Deeg, Sebewaing, MI
Karl & Marilyn Desimpiare
Unionville, MI
John & Pat DeWyse, Bay City, MI
Dorothy Warner Echlin, Sandusky, MI
Robert O. & Eleanor M. McDonald
Ethier, Milledgeville, GA
Russell & Carol Fisher, Caro, MI
Thomas & Elizabeth Fritz, Gagetown, MI

Louie and Linda Wehrman could not be happier that the Grain Elevator is being highlighted for all of our Events as they have been working for many years to create a Museum dedicated to the importance of the local elevator. Louie had just picked up this bean sorter built in Rhodes, Michigan. He had never seen one like this. Instead of a pedal to move the beans along, this piece had a ‘treadle’. This is one of many pieces that have recently been donated that will be highlighted in future
Hi Everyone. It’s hard to believe it’s time again to start planning for the 2017 September Event. Our Fall Family Days kick-off meeting took place on March 21st at the Elmwood Township Hall in downtown Gagetown. It was well attended and very productive. I am pleased to announce that Lisa Geiger is my new Co-Chair for FFD. With her past experiences at FFD for several years, she is ready and willing to assume this new responsibility. Lisa has taken care of the parking area for FFD, so you know she will be terrific! Thank you Lisa, for taking on this job.

The 2017 theme is Grain Elevators. Our on site elevator will be featured. We hope to get all the local and surrounding cooperative elevators involved to share their history. They would also present information on how our food supply gets from the field to the market and from there to your table. Linda & Louie Wehrman, Grain Elevator Chairs, have been involved with the elevator for many years and with the large addition put on last year it continues to get bigger and better.

We will once again have harvesting demonstrations and exhibits that are representative of earlier times on the farm as we have done in the past and also our large flea market. Of course, we will have all the delicious things to eat being prepared on site. As we get closer to September we will give you a run down of the displays and demonstrations that are planned. The Event dates for this year are Saturday and Sunday September 9th and 10th with a fish fry on September 8th.

This year’s expense budget is set around $50,000.00. As the budget gets bigger it requires more money to cover the advertising, rental of tents, porta-johns, security, insurance, supplies etc. Fall Family Days raises over 60% of our annual income and without it we could not accomplish what we have done to date.

Each year we ask for sponsorships to help cover the cost of putting on this Event. If we were to have a rainout that weekend, we would not only lose the income from the event that covers expenses for the coming year, but we would lose the cost of putting on Fall Family Days. Therefore we need your help. We have enclosed a sponsor form for your consideration and convenience.

Remember always, we need volunteers. If you want to get involved, call me. I am always open to new ideas so put on your thinking caps and share your ideas with me or at one of our meetings. Invite a friend to come along. We would love to welcome them to our group and they will enjoy themselves. FFD meeting dates for 2017 are all on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Munro Building on the following dates. May 23, July 25 and August 29. Any questions, please call me.

Martin Kubacki
989-551-0526

Fall Family Days Sponsors

Each year, as the event has grown, the cost of advertising, postage, printing, rental of porta-johns, tents, food, etc. has grown as well. A budget is developed to cover the costs for putting on this event. In 2001 our budget was $6,300 and this year is projected to be $50,000. The budget covers the cost of putting on the Event. It has been our goal over the years to obtain enough sponsorships so that, if the weather did not cooperate and attendance was down, we would not lose money. Fall Family Days has become a major fundraiser for the Barn project and we could not afford to have it cost us money.

We are including a FFD Sponsor form with this newsletter should you be interested in becoming a 2017 sponsor. Please fill out the included form and return it by May 1st to Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn, P. O. Box 145, Gagetown, MI 48735. We thank you for your continued support of the Thumb Agricultural Museum.

How the Grain Elevator Building has grown from the little building donated some years ago. Many are excited about all the activity and attention and will be ready to share the elevator stories of years gone by and remember simpler times.

Gas Station Display

In the southwest corner of the sawmill building, Wayne Lenton has arranged a gas station display of antique equipment. Once Wayne started to display some of these items others began bringing in their memorabilia that they had in their collections. Come take a look when you visit during our Events. It’ll bring back many memories.

Wayne has loaned his Mobil gas pump for the display. The price per gallon is set at 41 cents. Wayne is hoping to get the appropriate globe for the pump that he bought years ago from the county.

Lots to look at here. Many antique wrenches, oil cans and other memorabilia.
### 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.

Max Sherman, Lapeer, MI donated an A. T. Ferrell #2 fanning mill and a Bonanza Fanning mill.

Lila Arroyo, Cass City donated many antique kitchen tools, two prairie dresses, 100 lb. Burlap bean bag, 1930’s Carom board with canvas pockets and one with net pockets, an American Beauty electric iron and many other items.

Cindy Sanborn, Caro, MI donated in memory of Ernest Layer, a vintage wood level, wood saw handle, shoe stretcher, vintage sickle, wood molding plane, wood block plane and an 8” wood smoothing plane.

Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese, MI donated a 6 foot wood finish mower.

Ted Morgan Family, Snover, MI donated an 1890’s anvil.

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<td>April 11</td>
<td>Annual Mtg. Before General Membership Meeting</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
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<td>May 10-12</td>
<td>School Tours by appointment only</td>
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<td>June 11</td>
<td>Annual Volunteer Banquet &amp; Auction in Munro Bldg.</td>
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<td>July 27</td>
<td>Tea “Greens &amp; Grains”</td>
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<td>July 14-16</td>
<td>Music Weekend in the Barn</td>
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<td>July 29-30</td>
<td>Open House Weekend featuring our grain elevator</td>
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<td>September 8</td>
<td>Fish Fry 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 9-10</td>
<td>Fall Family Days 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
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### 2017 Upcoming Events

**General Membership Newsletters**

- Newsletters that have a membership form with **RENEWAL** written in **RED** are either past due or will be due before our next newsletter. If **FINAL NOTICE** is stamped on the form this means that this will be your **LAST REMINDER** to renew your membership before being **removed** from our mailing list. The levels of membership are:  
  - Associate Membership - $5.00 and brings you our quarterly newsletter.  
  - General Membership - $10.00 for an individual and $15.00 for a family, which along with receipt of the newsletter gives you the right and opportunity to hold office. A membership form can be obtained from our website at thumboctagonbarn.org. Also, when you receive notice that your membership needs to be renewed, please feel free to renew for more than one year and know that our records will reflect your wishes. It is important that you indicate how the money included is to be distributed and the total matches the amount of your check.

Importance notice – If you have a new address or a seasonal change of address, it is important that you let us know, as bulk mail is NOT forwarded.

During school tours the students have the opportunity to sit in the arena of the Barn and look around. Imagine how this makes them feel as they look up at the enormity and beauty of the Barn.