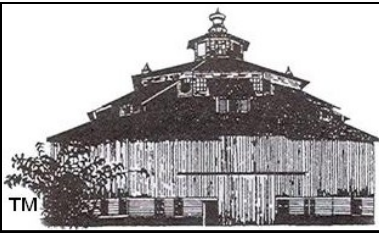


# Thumb Octagon Barn News



## 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.*

Spring 2018

### Executive Committee

**President**  
**Martin Kubacki**

**1st Vice President**  
**Dennis Anderson**

**2nd Vice President**  
**Gerald Auten**

**Past President**  
**Rose Putnam**

**Treasurer**  
**Joan Koch**

**Recording Secretary**  
**Michelle VanHorn**

**Corresponding Secretary**  
**Patti Parker**

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**Marilyn Phillips**

**Museum Chair**  
**Connie Osentoski**

**Grounds & Grain Elevator Chair**  
**Louis Wehrman**

**Barn/Float Chair**  
**Paul Deo**

**Alert Team Chair**  
**Norm Parker**

**Visit our website**  
**[thumboctagonbarn.org](http://thumboctagonbarn.org)**  
**Facebook**  
**[thumboctagonbarn](https://www.facebook.com/thumboctagonbarn)**

## New Roofs Adorn Thumb Octagon Barn, Garage, Powerhouse and Visitor Center

### Look At Me Now !! 142 Squares

People often say a picture is worth a thousand words. What you see in the attached pictures is the completed roof project of the Octagon Barn, including the garage, powerhouse and visitor center. Pictures and words are no substitute for seeing the completed project in person. So I want to invite you out to visit the Octagon Barn site and see for yourself the work that has been completed thus far.

It took 142 squares of CertainTeed Landmark Pro shingles to do the Barn. I ordered extra shingles in hope that we could do the garage. Once we were underway, we decided it was a good time to address the powerhouse leaks and roof the visitor center as well while all the equipment was on site. It took 15 squares to do the added work.

Everything came together well. We had excellent weather for working and the site did not get torn up from the heavy equipment used. There were no surprises or unexpected issues. We did replace wood trim around

the dormers, but this was expected. The roof deck was in good shape.

We placed emphasis on safety from the beginning. (see photos page 6) A special rail was designed that fastened onto the barn. An approved safety line with harness secured the workers while on the higher upper levels. It is 72 feet to the top of the Barn and it can be slippery at times. Once we got a routine down using the safety equipment it went very smoothly. We had a safe job site with no issues or close calls.

Emanuel Mullet Construction was the contractor doing the roof. They worked with us last year on the window project. We continue to be pleased with their work. You could tell they really took an interest in the Octagon Barn, knowing their name would become a part of the Barn's history. They say your work is your best advertisement and I think this is the case here. I learned later that this is a part of their philosophy. They take great pride in doing a good job.

It was a good working relationship. While it was all business

while on the roof, lunch time became a special time. We still have "Boys Day Out" on Mondays where volunteers come out to work on site. At noon a lunch is served by our host couples and we invited the construction crew to join us for lunch. This was a fun time.

One Monday the construction crew had their wives, daughters and friends prepare a special Amish lunch for the volunteers at the Barn. This was their way of saying thank you. We enjoyed the excellent food and it was a day we will remember.

The Friends of the Octagon Barn is a mix of many different people from all walks of life. There is a common core belief in hard work and working together as a team. The Barn is the central focus out here but it is the bond of friendship that holds us together. To that end we are committed to preserve this historical site. Sometimes it is not easy, there are many challenges but in the end the Barn wins.

We made new Friends on this project, new memories and new stories to share when you visit. I hope you visit soon.

**Dennis Anderson**



We thank Dennis Anderson for spearheading the roof replacement project. It took a lot of time and preplanning. The project was completed on June 29, 2018.



New roof on garage with flag flying donated by Fred Engelhart. (See donations on page 6)



We are so proud of the Powerhouse with its new roof. (More photos on page 6)

## Letter from the President

My name is **Martin Kubacki**. I am your new President. I became involved with the Barn in 1995 by volunteering with the first three Fall Family Days events. I then became co-chair of Fall Family Days with the late Bob Hirn. I still serve as co-chair of Fall Family Days and taking on this job will keep me on my toes. I have some big shoes to fill but feel ready for the challenge. I would like to thank Rose for her many years of time and leadership given to the barn. Rose will become the editor for our

newsletter. Margaret Sergeant has decided to retire as editor and we thank her for the marvelous newsletters she put together for us for so many years.

School Tours 2018 was a great success. Diane Rapson Gabil and her volunteers did a tremendous job. They broke records for attendance and it was another educational experience for our young students.

The work on the roof of the Barn has started and should be finished, weather permitting by July. *(The project was com-*

*pleted on June 29, 2018).* The house is being worked on also with new paint, some electric wiring and maintenance. These are big projects but need to be done to keep things in tip top shape.

As the years go on, I will keep you informed on other projects we are looking at. If you every have any questions or concerns, feel free to call me.

Have a safe summer.

*Martin Kubacki*

President

## Fall Family Days 2018-Featuring The Thumb: Naturally Sweet

This year's theme, The Thumb: Naturally Sweet is getting some attention! A number of groups are coming forward to display and explain all the products we grow here in the Thumb that we use to make things sweet. We plan to demonstrate how we raise and harvest sugarbeets from our demo plot, pressing and processing it into syrup, honey bees at work, etc.

On the advertising front, **Annie Simon** and **Devin Irion** have been busy getting the word out. Once again, work is being done to expand our coverage area. We continue to widen our circle of coverage and have found people are driving further to take part in our event. We use a combination of brochures, TV, Radio, FaceBook, newspapers and the website to maximize our exposure.

The next FFD meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 24 at the Munro Building starting at 7PM. Come join us in the planning and see what you might do during the event. There is a job for everyone. Join us also for the ice cream social after the meeting. Everyone is welcome. Please bring a friend.

Martin Kubacki and Lisa Geiger,  
FFD Co-Chairs

## New Event during Fall Family Days—Antique Tractor Games

This year at the 2018 Fall Family Days we will have a new event: **Antique Tractor Games**. There will be four different games

that drivers can participate and compete in. They will include: Barrel Races, Slow Race, Obstacle Course and Back-up to Hitch Game. We will be

having two events on Saturday and two events on Sunday. Times will be announced at the event. David and Mike Geiger will be the chairmen for this new event.

## School Tours 2018 a Great Success!

During the 3 day event on Wednesday, May 9, Thursday, May 10, and Friday, May 11, a record 1,426 students attended plus 399 chaperones and educators. Student participants came from Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Bay, Saginaw, St. Clair, Lapeer, and Genesee Counties. 187 volunteers came forward, including 34 new ones to make School Tours 2018 a great success!

26 different stations were offered on site. Plus support stations including foods for volunteers, bus greeter, scheduling, setup and

take down crews, and trash collection and removal.



*The Kitchen Crew (above) made and delivered 135 sandwich lunches each day. Karen Lenton (far left) drove a golf cart*

*to deliver the lunches. The golf cart got so much use that it had to be towed 3 times and even ran out of gas on Thursday.*

We also had Community Collaborations with Michigan State Extension from Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac Counties (*see story on page 4*), the Michigan Bean Commission, Michigan Sugar Company, a Regional Maple Syrup Group, and the Michigan Bee Keepers.

**Diane Rapson Gabil, School Tours Chair**



Left: Under the watchful eyes of **Karen Ouvry**, students get to experience ringing the school bell.



Above are the dulcimer players who bring their own special type of magical music.



**Margaret Sergeant** often starts out each student group with the story of the Purdy family and how the Octagon Barn came to be built. Margaret shares that during a shopping trip in Bad Axe, a young student came up to her to ask if she is the lady who told us about the banker who went to Iowa to see an octagon barn and much more of her talk. Margaret was very impressed that this young man remembered the story so well. As he went back to his family, he had a little skip to his walk.

Music was an important part of every school day in a one room country school. The Eastern Michigan Music Makers had special plans for the students this year. They made up words to country songs about sugar and sang them to the students.



The children all enjoyed singing along to "Wabash Cannonball", "This Land is Your Land", "You are My Sunshine", and "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain". The students

also participated in the "Hokey Pokey" and learned about the special instruments used by these volunteers. Photo on the left and from the left are **Craig Sorenson, Pete Headrich, Albert Griffin, Cindy Headrich and Bill Slaughter**, (who has played with the Eastern Michigan Music Makers with **Arlen Bannick**, who could not join in this year, for 31 years.) (Missing are **Brad Johnson and Jim Rabe**)

The player piano came to life under the skilled hands of **Connie Iwankovitsch**. It was wonderful to hear the music and young voices coming from the One Room Country School Museum joining in some old-fashioned sing-alongs led by Connie, who has a wonderful

voice and is very enthusiastic in sharing her love of music with the students.





## More from School Tours

Learning about lumbering is always fascinating. The sawmill is a big hit



**Wayne Lenton** is demonstrating several types of tools used. **Isabella** (on the right) is learning how to use a

with the students. The huge 52" blade is quite an impressive site as it spins to saw large logs into measured lumber. To the left,



barn beam boring machine.

**Dennis Anderson**, shanty boy, retells stories of old heard around campfires in the evening when lumberjacks were done with work. The shanty boy starts his tale of Paul Bunyan, the BIG, infamous lumberjack and "Babe, the Blue Ox." with "Did you know that Paul Bunyan



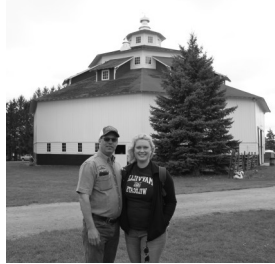
were wearing earmuffs and ducks were flying backwards."

needed 5 storks to carry him. It was so cold that year that frogs

The house was alive with many, many new visitors during school tours. **Betty Woehlert**, Cora Purdy House Crew Member, shared a story of a 4 year old young lady who came with a home school group with her 3 brothers and a sister. When she entered the house, she politely took off her shoes at the door. Betty explained that she did not have to do that here. Her brother answered "We do that at home." The young lady picked up her shoes and carried them throughout the tour and did not put them back on until she left the house. What a polite young lady! **Diane Rapson-Gabil** shared a story of a young kindergartener who got off the bus and was wandering off from his class. She asked him to rejoin his group. He said "Where is the barn?" Diane pointed to the barn. He looked up and said "Holy !\*#!" The look on his young face was priceless.

## The Thumb: Naturally Sweet

Local girl, **Alyson Alexander Dupure**, returns to the Thumb Octagon Barn. It was 2002 and 4th grader Alyson Alexander came on a field trip with the Carsonville-Pt. Sanilac School. Her dad, **Greg Alexander**, also came as a chaperone. Since that time, Greg has been involved in many ways and is now Co-Chair of the "Theme Tent" along with **Tammy Grifka**. This year Alyson Dupure, now married and a teacher of 4th grade at Mayville Schools, has returned for another school trip. This is so exciting to think that another generation of former students are coming back. Thank you proud dad and daughter for your continued support.



**Karly Creguer**, (top left) Tuscola County MSU Extension Nutrition Instructor was most impressed during her presentation on "Why Should I Eat Fruit". Karly had just shown a group of first graders five index cards with photos of different fruit. A 1st grader in the front row was quick to give an answer. "It is good for your hair and nails." Karly asked how she knew the answer. The young lady said, "The answer is on the back of your cards."

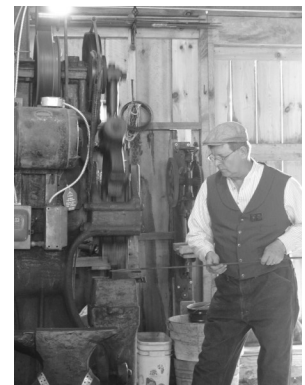


**Susan Maxbauer**, (bottom left) Sanilac County MSU Extension Nutrition Instructor, discusses many other choices of balanced nutritional items.



**Lew Martin**, blacksmith, has quite an impressive presentation. The school children are always fascinated by the fire in the forge. He asks the students to help stoke the fire by blowing on the flames. Of course, the bellows works much better, but it sure is fun watching the students try very hard.

Did you know to shape metal that it needs to heat to 1600-1800 degrees? When reaching the correct temperature, Lew uses an 1885 hammer with 30 pounds of force to make a shape. Lew had just forged a shape and asked the 2nd graders of Mrs. Dorland's class in Cass City, "What type of shape did I just make?" A young girl commented, "It's Captain Hook's hook!"



## School House and More

**Connie Klinkman**, co-chair of the One Room Schoolhouse program, writes to **Diane Rapson-Gabil**: I had a few thoughts about the recent event which I felt went exceptionally well. I also was very thankful for the lunch ladies who had our lunch delivered with smiling faces, a few laughs and very much on me. I appreciate all the work that was done by the committees in the set up. Our station was well prepared and very well maintained. A special thank you goes out to **Byron Arnold**...he was such a help, especially when the clapper of the school bell had fallen off and also aided us in rehanging the bunting on the rails ensuring that no one would cut their hands on the hard plastic ties. I just

loved his smiling demeanor and helpfulness! Of course, words cannot express my gratitude to **Jim Ware**. This man is one in a million and the way he set up the displays in the museum windows was outstanding. He is a real gem! Most importantly, I feel that you are to be thanked for pulling this event together and making sure all our needs were met. This is not a fly-by-night organization and I was overwhelmed by the professionalism of all those involved. I am proud to say that I was a part of this three day event and I LOVED it!

I look forward to the 2019 school tours and hope that you will allow both **Connie (Iwankovitsch)** and myself to continue to be a part of it!



**Connie Klinkman and Cathy Cooper** are demonstrating another favorite demonstration in the schoolhouse. Does the old, dreaded paddle bring back memories? (Photo-this was one brave volunteer.) To add insult to injury, your name was engraved on the paddle following the paddling!

## More Naturally Sweet Demonstrations

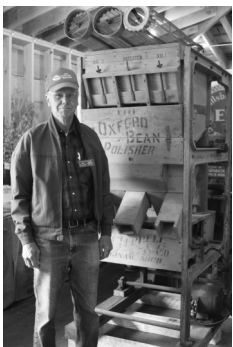
The Sugar Shack comes alive when **Mark Battel** starts talking about the processing of maple syrup. Do you know that it takes 39-50 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup? The students had a lot of questions and learned a lot.

**Emma** is demonstrating the use of a yoke to transport sap from the field.



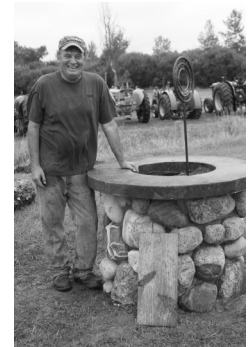
**Coulson Blair** in the Grain Elevator told the story of the many sweeteners that are made from corn and used to make Corn Flakes, corn syrup, and soda to name a few. Several students all gathered tightly on the scales to be weighed-740 pounds worth. Then came the teacher and chaperones. Their story cannot be told as there were no volunteers willing to step on the scales.

## Volunteers Are Very Important To School Tours



There is not quite enough space in the newsletter for photos of all 187 volunteers, but we do thank each and every one who helped make School Tours 2018 a great success!

Photos: Far left is **Louie Wehrman** in the grain elevator. Center are many of the volunteers from Thursday. On the right is **Frank Franzel** from Mayville telling the story of old-fashioned wells.



### Benefactors

The following made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter through June 26, 2018.

Anonymous Donor  
 Kay Ardis, Dimondale, MI  
 Paul Begick, Bay City, MI  
 Ray Christie, Freeland, MI  
 Robert & Charlotte Dennis, Davison, MI  
 Anthony & Diane Eisele, Vassar, MI  
 Foster E. & Pam Findlay, Freeland, MI  
 Russell & Carol Fisher, Caro, MI  
 Duey & Karen Holz, Filion, MI  
 Dr. Susan Hoppe & Dr. Charles Reed, Cass City, MI  
 David & Marie Jaroch, Ubly, MI  
 Tom M. & Jane S. Johnson, Williamston, MI  
 Ron & Arloia Lutz, Sebewaing, MI  
 Fran Lovejoy, Cass City, MI  
 Paul Mac Callum, Owendale, MI  
 Dolores Merchant, Ocqueac, MI  
 Jill Ogryski, Ubly, MI  
 Duane & Gail Osbourn, New Baltimore, MI  
 Chuck & Sharron Patterson, Lapeer, MI  
 Dick & Pam Roth, Caseville, MI  
 Don Rushlo, Tavares, FL  
 Ivernia Schwartz, Gagetown, MI  
 Marjorie Schwartz Gagetown, MI  
 Cheryl Corsini Smith, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA  
 Susan Walker, Caro, MI

Following is a list of **Memorial Donations** and acknowledgements.

An unidentified father from Caseville visiting during School Tours made a donation.

Rose Wunderlich, Leesburg, FL donated in memory of Charlie Busch a long time supporter of the Barn and dear friend of Bob Hirn. When Charlie and Rose moved to Florida from Michigan, they donated many wonderful pieces of farm equipment to the Thumb Agricultural Museum.

Donation in memory of Reuben Dietzel was given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI

Donation in honor of Dorothy Hafner, mother of Mary Donnally given by Donald J. Mosher, Burton, MI

Donation in memory of Eldon Dietzel given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI

Lawrence & Betty Coates, Fostoria, MI made a donation and thanked Wayne Lenton, Ubly, MI for sawing logs for them.

DJ Portable Toilets donated a portion of their bill for their services during School Tours 2018.

Donations in memory of Florence Czarnecki, Mother of Joyce Anderson were given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI

Donation in memory of Elmer Osentoski, TEC employee Debora Peruski's father, was given by Thumb Electric Cooperative.

Donation in memory of Phyllis Talaski, Greg Talaski's mother, was given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI

### Museum Donations

Don Olesko, Milford, MI-Mail Buggy(Photo on the right)  
 Light Running Rural Mail Or Parcel Post Wagon (Mail Buggy) Built By The William & Hesse & Son Manufacturing Company Of Leavenworth, Kansas .Date: Late 1800 Early 1900  
 Restored By: Victor X Olesko P.E. 1990--1993

Fred Engelhart, Caro, MI-New American Flag

Beth Brown, Sebewaing, MI-Piano Rolls

Tom Thompson, Caro, MI-Ampico Piano Rolls

Karen & Steve Hamlin of Escanaba, MI made a donation to our Museum. Karen is the granddaughter of Edith (Purdy) Fritz sister of James Purdy. Steve added, "Thank you for the Thumb Octagon Barn project. We are continually amazed at the Association's accomplishments and organization."



A HUGE hit at School Tours 2018 was the new player piano in the One Room School Museum. Pictured on the right is **Russ Hazard** who donated a wide variety of piano rolls. Accepting is **Jim Ware**, One Room School Museum Chair.

**Special Donation:** Farmer's Coop Grain Co., Cass City, MI donated 200 pounds of shelled corn for school tours.

## More roof photos continued from page one



The Visitor Center looks great with its new roof!



Safety First-Specially, designed rails kept the work crew safe.





## Volunteer Picnic and Annual Auction—June 10, 2018

The volunteer picnic this year was another great event. Thank you to the over 140 volunteers who came to share their time and stories with fellow volunteers.

It is truly amazing to see so many of you gathered together in one room. We are so often isolated in an area and don't have the opportunity to see others and what they are doing.

This brings forward the reminder that we are all working together for a common goal—the Thumb Octagon Barn and its future. (Bottom from left—**Duaine Phillips, Jack Hill & Paul Deo.**)



The annual auction is so much fun. **Marty Osentoski** was his usual enthusiastic self and what would he do without the help of his wife, **Connie** (below with **Lisa Britt**). With the assistance of his brother, **Dave Osentoski** (top right with **Dennis Anderson**),



the fun was doubled. Thank you, gentlemen, for your service. We also had a great committee come

together to be sure we were well fed and entertained. Thank you, **VOLUNTEERS**, who assisted, especially **Martin Kubaeki**. We thank all of our auction and ticket buyers who continue to give. **Betty Woehlert**, holding the cookie jar, was one of our double winners. Seated to the right are buyers, **Chuck and Patty Witkovsky**.



Special Service Awards were presented to **Louis & Linda Wehrman, Wayne & Karen Lenton, Karl & Marilyn DeSimpelare, Margaret Sergeant, Richard Stacer and Rose Putnam**.

## Michigan Sugar Festival Parade-June 16, 2018

Saturday, June 16, 2018 was the premier of the new float at the Michigan Sugar Festival in Sebewaing. **Byron Arnold** was kind enough to pull the float with his



pick up. Pictured on the left is **Tammi Hensley** and her husband **Too Tall** (not pictured), one of the host couples, handing out FFD magnets during the parade.



## Special Notice-3rd Tea Party Scheduled for August 22, 2018

Two tea parties were held in June and we all had so much fun that we are inviting you to a "Summer Picnic" Tea-Party on Wednesday, August 22, 2018 at 12:00PM. \$15.00 per person. To register, please contact Rose Putnam 989-444-9574.

## Thumb Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting-June 9, 2018

What a beautiful day for the over 700 members of Thumb Electric Cooperative to celebrate another banner year for the company on site. The day started with a special fly over by the Air Force jets in training. Louie Wenzlaff, President of the Board of Directors, and Dallas Braun, General Manager, shared amazing facts about the goals achieved and future improvements to serve their members. Did you know due to high winds in March of 2017 there were 4200

members without service for no longer than 2 days? The return to service was aided by 11 additional repair technicians. Then we had the sleet and snow storm in April that caused 4300 members to lose power for no more than 4 days. This time 54 extra repair techni-



cians were called in for service. Great job. Lots of family fun followed with bucket



rides, barrel train rides, face painting, a candy drop and of course tours of the house and site. The

barn was under construction so no tours were available.



Friends of the  
 THUMB OCTAGON BARN  
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### Beautiful Site!!



**HELP WANTED!** The Barn site looks beautiful when all the flowers are in full bloom and the beds weeded. However, we need some help to do so. Please stop out on Mondays or when you have a few minutes to help weed. You may call **Dennis Anderson** with ques-

tions. 989-550-4416.



After a five year wait, the draping spirea bushes that line the site along the roadside were beautiful when in full bloom. Check out the light and hot

pink hollyhocks on the south side of the Munro Building now in bloom.

### Special Donation

Jim and Rita Osentoski, Ubly, donated 63.2 tons of processed gravel.

**Next General Membership Meeting will be August 14, 2018 at 7PM at the Munro Building.**

### Annual FFD Raffle

**Tickets will soon be arriving by mail. Below is a list of the 12 awesome prizes this year.**

1. \$750.00 -Donated in Memory of Pat Gibbard and Green Acres Farms, Akron
2. Queen Size Quilt-Donated by Ruth Ann Brown and Thumb Thimble Quilt Guild
3. 40" Samsung Smart TV-Donated by \*FOTOB
4. \$300.00 –Donated by \* FOTOB
5. John Deere 4020 Pedal Tractor-Donated by Tri-County Equipment, Sandusky
6. Samsung Tablet-Donated by \*FOTOB
7. Case I-H Red Stake Wagon–Donated by Osentoski Farm Equipment-Pigeon and Bad Axe
8. Milwaukee Drill/Impact Tool Kit-Donated by \*FOTOB
9. \$100-Menard's Gift Certificate-Donated in Memory of Pat Gibbard and Green Acres Farms, Akron
10. Handmade Periwinkle Belly Blanket-Donated by Betty Woehlert
11. \$100.00 – Donated by \*FOTOB
12. Leather and Vera Bradley Purses-Anonymous Donor

### Newsletter

Database and labels.....Dave Eichler  
 Editing.....Margaret Sergeant  
 Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam