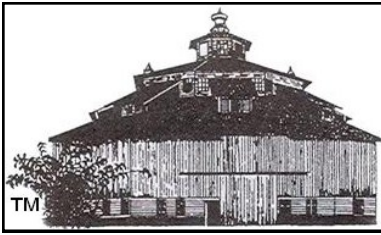


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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 2019

Executive Committee

President
Martin Kubacki

1st Vice President
Dennis Anderson

2nd Vice President
Gerald Auten

Treasurer
Joan Koch

Recording Secretary
Michelle VanHorn

Corresponding Secretary
Patti Parker

Purdy Home Chair
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
Facebook
[thumboctagonbarn](https://www.facebook.com/thumboctagonbarn)

President's Message

This has been a long, cold Michigan Winter. I have been under the weather since Christmas with my back and I recently had surgery, which has put me out of commission for awhile. But on the bright side, Spring is here and I am healing.

Our boys on Monday have been busy doing their thing repairing and restoring. The addition on the storage shed began on April 3, 2019. Please see related article on page 3.

The 2019 Budget is prepared and the project list for 2019 (see back page) looks like it will be another busy year. Plans for improvements to the Barn, School Museum, and Schoolhouse are our top priorities this year.

The School Tour Committee and Fall Family Day Committees have all had meetings with lots of enthusiasm to move forward so 2019 is well on it's way.

Our Volunteer/Sponsor Picnic/Auction will be held on Sunday, June 9th. So-

cial hour starts at noon in the Munro Building with a 1:00 pm picnic. If you were a volunteer in 2018, you and a guest are invited to enjoy a delicious meal. Please RSVP with your name and the number attending by calling Joan Koch at 989-325-0041 by June 1st. Osentoski Auctioneers will be auctioning lots of donated items at 2:00 pm. These items include new and used articles in good condition, antiques, baked goods, anything that would make a fun auction. You just never know what treasure will be there.

Another important date coming up is Saturday, May 4th, Clean Up Day at the Barn starting at 9:00 am. We need to get the grounds, Barn and all the other buildings cleaned up and ready for School Tours. There is a lot of work to be done and we need your help. The more help we have, the faster things get done. A light lunch will be provided for all volunteers.

Hope to see you all soon!

Martin Kubacki, President



Michigan Barn Preservation Network Annual Conference

Friday, May 31, 2019-Barn Tour-Ann Arbor Area

Saturday, June 1, 2019-Conference-Ypsilanti

For more information visit mibarn.net

Host Couples

Tammi and Ron “Too Tall” Hensley, who hail from Tennessee, have been coming as full time host couples to the Barn for 7 years. They enjoy coming back every season because the “Friends” have become like a second family to them and are close friends with everyone.

They did bring some family with them. Pictured on the far left corner in the window of their motor home is “Gypsy”, a feral cat that found them in Florida. Willow, another cat, was acquired from our

neighbors on Richie Road.

Even though the site is closed on Mondays, you will find **Tammi** in the kitchen of the Munro



Building cooking lunch for the “boys”. Or if other things need

to be done, they will stop what they are doing to help. The favor is also returned by the “Friends”. **Jerry Auten** was there to repair their microwave and also a canopy on the motor home when the wind did some damage.

Tammi also volunteers as our Wedding Coordinator. She says “Weddings are fun”.

They will be back in May of 2019 to start another season at the Barn.

“We like what we do”.

Curtis and Mary Bell have been host couples at the Thumb Octagon Barn for many years. They have become quite



close friends with **Tammi and Too Tall** and love to co-host with them.

Curtis is up bright and early every morning to open the Barn and the site. He is ever ready on the golf cart to greet the daily visitors. Mary loves to give tours of the Purdy Home and to share the family stories. Mary’s background as a school teacher also comes into play during School Tours as she helps guide students

and teachers throughout the site.

During our Open House weekend, Curtis and Mary were seen all over the site greeting our visitors with their ready, warm smiles and are most accommodating to any needs or requests.

Unfortunately, due to recent health issues, they will be unavailable in 2019. We wish them both warm wishes and good health until they return.

Tom and Carmen Colburn are return host couples. They retired in 2013 and in 2014 saw our ad in the “Workamper” magazine. They were here from June 15th-July 15th last year.

They enjoy being at the Thumb Octagon Barn site. “It’s very peaceful. I feel like a part of the family. I love being warmly greeted by **Jack Hill**. **Byron Arnold** is such a sweet and gentle man,” quotes **Carmen**. She loves to make a connection with our visitors and gives hugs. She has used her Spanish for various tours. She loves to tell the

stories of the Barn. **Tom** is a former educator, school administrator and counselor and loves the freedom to use his skills. He is sensitive to the needs of



other.

They like to make a connection with our visitors and find it very rewarding. They enjoy the interaction and often learn from our visitors and how they relate to a farm and an opportunity for all to reflect.

They also love when our members bring them pizza and desserts.

Tom and Carmen are very involved with hosting at sites all over the United States and plan on coming back when they are able.

Fall Family Days 2019

It seems like yesterday that we were having a wrap up meeting for last year's Fall Family Days and here we are starting the planning process all over again. Our first meeting was held on March 12th to get organized and find out what areas we need help in. This year's theme will be "The Food Industry-Past and Present." We will be looking for any and all ideas that relate to the theme.

As we speak, we are in need of a couple of persons to put together a petting zoo in the Barn. **Bill and Kitty Sampson** (see photos below) have been doing this for a long time, but because of health issues will be unable to continue. We want to give them

a sincere "Thank You" for their dedication to the Barn and the joy they brought to so many through the years. If you know of a group or person who would be willing to organize the petting zoo, please contact Lisa Geiger (989-553-6048) or myself. (Martin 989-551-0526)

It's also time to consider a sponsorship for Fall Family Days. Our event attendance is always subject to the weather. If the weather is inclement and attendance is low, your sponsorship helps pay FFD expenses that won't come out of the regular budget for the Barn. Please see the enclosed form. We certainly appreciate your continued support.

The Fall Family Day event this year will be September 7th and 8th with a Fish Fry on September 6th. It's too early to give you a preview of what to expect. We have a great group of people working to make this the best event ever. Be sure to watch your newsletters for updates as we approach Fall Family Days 2019. Better yet, if you have some ideas or would like to help on a committee, come to our next meeting, Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 7PM in the Munro Building. We would appreciate any and all help.

COME AND JOIN US!

Lisa Geiger and Martin Kubacki,
Co-Chairs

Bill and Kitty Sampson-Maplewood Farms Petting Zoo

Bill & Kitty brought the joy and excitement of watching a chicken emerge from its egg to students during school tours in an earlier year.



was also known for their horses. Above are students in 2009 enjoying petting the horses.

Pictured on the right is Kitty Sampson.

Their business, Maplewood Farms Petting Zoo



Above Bill is driving King & Queen, his team of Belgians, during FFD in 2004.

New Addition to Storage Building

The need arose to add onto the Storage Building. Each year, we move large farm equipment in and out of the Munro Building. The space is needed for events and other museum type items. Bids went out and the work went to Emanuel Mullet Construction.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019 dawned as a beautiful, sunny, but very windy

day. This did not deter the Emanuel Mullet Construction crew from setting the footings and getting the first trusses in place for the new 24' x 120"



addition to the Storage Building. The ends will be enclosed, but the sides will be open to be able to get in larger pieces of equipment more efficiently.

The photo was taken by Ray Caverly after the first day of construction.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by School Tours.

Annual Meeting 2019

On April 9, 2019, the Annual Meeting was held at the Purdy Bank in Gagetown. The annual election of officers was held and **Dennis Anderson** remains as First Vice-President, **Joan Koch** will continue as Treasurer and **Michelle VanHorn** is happy to return as Recording Secretary. Congratulations to all three officers.

Jared Sorensen spoke to the value of using Instagram to reach a greater number of the younger generation. There are plans underway to better utilize our website and advertise on Facebook. This is the new wave of communicating and advertising.

Everyone was excited to hear all about the addition on the storage building and seeing the progress

made so quickly. The addition is expected to be completed by School Tours.

Reports came in that the site only had a damaged tile in the ditch out front from the winter weather and the barn doors were frozen shut. The house did not have any squirrel damage this past winter. So work can soon begin on the project list to keep all our buildings in good shape.

The evening was capped off with everyone enjoying **Gerald Auten's** famous peanut clusters while looking through the three huge scrapbooks from 1994-2000, which were a project of **Katie Jackson**. If anyone is interested in helping update the scrapbooks, please contact **Rose Putnam**. 989-444-9574.

Benefactors

The following have made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter through April 2, 2019.

Patricia Allen, Deford, MI
 Beth Brown, Sebewaing, MI
 Louise Buehrly, Palmetto, FL
 Ray Christie, Freeland, MI
 Jack & Carol DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI
 Karl & Marilyn DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI
 Gerald F Deeg,,Sebewaing, MI
 Gayla Eagle, Sandusky, MI
 Sherril French, Reese, MI
 Melvin J Gay, Saginaw, MI
 Joe & Debra Jenness, Cass City, MI
 Stanley Knopf, Marlette, MI
 Ron Laeder, Caro, MI
 Ron & Arloia Lutz, Sebewaing, MI
 Alvin Ortner, Frankenmuth, MI
 Bryan M. Phillips & Janet M Canler, Dearborn, MI
 Barb Prime, Fairgrove
 Betty R Robinson, Jacksonville, FL
 LeRoy Schluckebier, Frankenmuth, MI
 Molly Wildman, Gagetown, MI

In Memoriam

On February 13, 2019, we lost a special Friend of the Barn. **Leo Robert "Bob" Gengler** was a very integral part of the One Room School coming to the Thumb Octagon Barn site. He was the very first chair person and served on the Executive Board from 2005-2010. Due to his efforts, we were able to fund the project. The school house was donated., but then there was the need to move it, build a foundation and then provide needed updates. Bob spent many long hours seeking donations. As co-founder of the Thumb Chapter of retired teachers, he had a lot of contacts



and recruited many of our first schoolhouse volunteers.

As a multitude of donated school room items came in, the need arose to house them. Bob then took on the challenge to raise the \$30,000

to build our One Room School Museum.

Bob, always an educator, also wrote the history of the One Room School for our history book. "The Story of the "Mud Lake Estate"...Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow."

Bob is pictured with his ever ready smile while a student opens the trap door on the mystery box to have a play mouse come jumping out.

Bob brought his love of teaching to young and old alike.

Thumb Regional Workshop

We would like to invite you to attend the Annual Thumb Regional Historical Workshop to be held at Sherwood on the Hill on April 24th from 9AM-3PM. Cost is \$15.00 per person.

This is a great opportunity to learn all about the historical museums in Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola Counties and network with their members.

This year we will hear from all three

County Community Foundations on how to apply for grants.

There is a great speaker coming to explain how to conduct oral interviews. Learning how to manage social media is also on the agenda. We know this is where we need to spend our advertising dollars to attract the younger families.

Please contact Rose Putnam 989-444-9574 for more details.. Hope to see you there.

THUMB REGIONAL HISTORICAL Workshop

Grants Valuable info Oral History

APRIL 24 9AM-3PM
\$15 PER PERSON, LUNCH INCLUDED
 Mail checks by 4/18, made to "Tuscola 2020", to
 HCHS P.O.Box 62 Bad Axe, MI 49813
 DETAILS: Thumb Regional Historical Workshop on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/events/2007867618174061>
SHERWOOD ON THE HILL
 6625 Third St. Gagetown, MI 48735

Article by **Dennis Anderson.**

A frequently asked question we hear at the Octagon Barn is, "What are those silver things on top of the barn?" My answer has been that they are cupolas. It wasn't until one of our visitors, an old timer, 20 years my senior, pulled me aside and said, "Sonny the three silver things are ventilators and the very top wooden structure is the cupola. What you have is one wooden cupola and three ventilators that are all a part of the barn's ventilation system".



The old timer knew a lot about old barns. He spoke softly with conviction and confidence. He invited me to take a tour around the barn and he shared information about old barns. He knew much more than I did for sure. Our visit ended with lunch (I bought) and he said I have something in the truck to show you. He had what looked like a book called The James Way pub-

Cupola or Ventilator? That is the question. Do you know the answer?

lished by the James Manufacturing Company in 1918. The book was more like a catalogue,



showing how to build and equip a practical up to date dairy barn. There were twenty pages, with illustrations of ventilators like the ones on the Octagon Barn. Everything you need to build a barn was to be found in the book.

I thanked the old timer for the lesson and he was on his

way. Who was this guy? He said his name was Joe. Simply Joe! I guess he did not want to share his last name. Oh yes, I was thinking all along that Joe would make a great volunteer but Joe had me pegged. He just smiled and was on his way.

So Joe, if you are out there and read this, know that I was able to get a copy of the James Way; it looks like yours, Thanks. I also found a featured article in the Michigan Barn Preservation 2018 calendar that talks about cupolas and ventilators. Using Bob Horn's book I found that he knew the difference between the cupola and ventilators but sometimes we interchange the terms and call the ventilators, cupolas. There is a difference.

I relearned a lesson that day. Old timers know what they are talking about. They were there! They lived it! My father always taught us that we should listen to old timers. You just might learn something new.

For me the Thumb Octagon Barn is a great place, but the people you meet are priceless. There is so much to see and learn about how life was like back in the day. It is a special day when an old timer comes for a visit. **Thanks Joe.**

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

Donations in memory of Marie L. Leipprandt give by Ron & Arloia Lutz, Sebewaing & Keith Leipprandt, Caseville, MI

Donation in memory of Pat Hester given by her son, Brad Kitchin and daughter-in-law, Beth, Mesa, AZ

Donations in memory of Suzanne Wehrman, daughter-in-law, of Louis & Linda Wehrman, Reese, MI, were given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Gerald Auten, Cass City, MI, Mary Ann Hirn, Cass City, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, and Diane Rapson-Gabil, Essexville, MI

Donations in memory of Leo (Bob) Gengler, Cass City, MI (See in Memoriam on Page 4.) Ron Laeder, Caro, MI, Diane Rapson-Gabil, Essexville, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Lew & Gerry Tibbits, Mason, MI, Mary Ann Hirn, Cass City, MI and Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI

Donations in memory of Don Wrobel, Rose Putnam's 97 year old Father, were given by Joan Koch, Gagetown, MI, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shore, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI, Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI, Duaine & Marilyn Phillips, Caro, MI & Gerald Auten, Cass City, MI

This and That

Donated Museum Items:

Hay Hook-Brent Hawley, Fairgrove

1940's Ironrite Mangle-John Mulrath, Cass City

Kerosene Lantern, hog pliers and rings, 6' wood finish mower-Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese

Electric Roaster-Richville Elevator

A hand written note was received by **Melvin Gay**, Saginaw, MI with his membership renewal, who has been a member since 2003. "I missed Fall Family Days this year for the first time because of my age, 90. I may not be returning in the future."

Dear Mr. Gay, Thank you for your continued support, we will certainly miss seeing you at FFD.

Spring Clean Up

Saturday, May 4, 2019

Work will begin at 9 AM. Please bring your broom, rake or cleaning supplies. Supplies will also be available on site. If you do not have an assigned job, please come to the barn and see either Rose Putnam or Dennis Anderson. We look forward to working along side you.

Friends of the
THUMB OCTAGON BARN
PO BOX 145
6948 RICHIE RD.
GAGETOWN, MI 48735
989-665-0081

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Gagetown, MI
Permit No. 3

Music Weekend in the Barn

July 13th & 14th

“Jams, Jellies and Preserves”

Themed Tea Party-July 24th

Open House Weekend

July 27th & 28th

Fish Fry-September 6th

Fall Family Days

September 7th and 8th

Next Meeting :

The general membership meeting will be held on August 13, 2019 at the Munro Building on site starting at 7:00 PM

Please Note: There will be no membership meeting in June.

Newsletter

Database and Labels.....Dave Eichler

Editing & Mailing.....Margaret Sergeant

Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam

Photos.....Connie Osentoski & Rose Putnam

2019 Project List

- Complete barn loft displays
- Schoolhouse Repairs
- School Museum repainted
- Flag pole flower bed-replace blocks with field stone
- Garage columns-repair water issues
- Barn vertical siding replaced and painted
- New barn doors –front and back
- Addition to storage building and enlarge south door
- New gate-front of house
- New electric outlets for campers
- Munro Building kitchen-replace fluorescent light bulbs