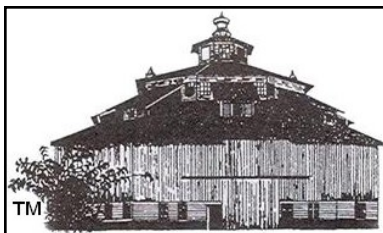


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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 2020

Executive Committee

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thumboctagonbarn.org

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Siding Project Completed-Wow!!



Progress reports from Dennis Anderson:

Wednesday, August 4, 2020, it was raining, but that did not deter the Emanuel Mullet crew from starting on replacing the siding. 10 boards were removed and then 10 boards put up (Page 2 photo on left) which continued until completion. The boards are a 16' foot span from top to bottom. The crew worked very hard to place each board so it would fit. It did take more time, but was well worth it. The new cedar boards look great from the inside too (Page 2 center photo).

Working around the REA building on the loft on the south side of the Barn was a challenge as the building butted right up to the siding (Page 2 photo on far right).

The original boards on the northeast corner of the Barn were also preserved to continue to tell the story of the original building material. The boards are now mounted on the inside of the new siding. Take a look!

Week of August 10th a crack was discovered in the foundation in the granary area on the west side of the Barn. 3 options for repair were discussed and a ce-

ment compound was used to fill in the crack.

Week of September 7th, the big Barn doors are being built.

Week of September 14th. The wind slowed down the outside painting this week but the crew went to work on the 4 big doors and we found the north side small door needed to be rebuilt. Moisture is the number 1 enemy to the Octagon Barn. The project is going well.

Did you know that it took 100 gallons to prime and paint four coats of stain on the barn? The Amish did the painting.

Wednesday, September 23, 2020. Project completed! (Barn photo courtesy of Teka Pix.)

We cannot thank Dennis Anderson enough for all his efforts for the past three years to get the windows replaced or repaired, a new roof put on, and now the siding replaced. He worked on the planning stages, acquiring materials and working with the Amish crews to completion. The barn looks awesome!

Thank you, Thank you!!

Acting President's Message

Bob Vila closes his TV home improvement show with "And it's been so good to have you home again. This is a wrap for now". It always amazes me how much they accomplish in so short a time period and they are off to the next project. Well folks the Thumb Octagon Barn repair project is a wrap for now and my wife says it will be good to have me home again. The 3 phase preservation project at the Thumb Octagon Barn has been completed. It has been a three year journey to this point.

The goal from the beginning was to preserve the condition of the barn doing needed maintenance and repairs keeping the barn as it was restored in 1997 as an agricultural museum. There have been a few changes to the barn since the time Mr. Purdy built it in 1924 and I doubt he envisioned its purpose today.

In 2017 phase 1 was the window project. There are 64 windows in the barn and we replaced 11 windows and refurbished 53 with new sills, jams, trim, glazing and painting. At this time we repaired the cupola, ventilation system, fascia trim and painted the entire upper levels of the Barn.

Next in 2018 we replaced the asphalt roof with new CertainTeed Landmark Pro shingles. The remaining fascia and dormer trim was replaced as needed and then painted. Now we have a uniform match with most of our white buildings on the site.

Phase 3 in 2019 involved replacing the vertical ship lap siding and the drip cap on the barn. The drip cap at some point had been caulked tight and water could not get away from the barn and it wicked up (term indicates intrusion of water) and deteriorated the siding. We had a number of barn restoration people investigate and help us determine the best course to follow in making this repair. Again it was important to keep the barn looking like we have been accustomed to seeing it and to the specifications of how it was built in the beginning. The solution was to replace the ship lap siding with western red cedar which was shipped from Oregon to the **Evergreen Moulding and**

Millworks in Decker and **Kevin Heatwole** made the ship lap for us. The drip cap looks original but we did use felt and an aluminum flashing that you cannot see to keep the moisture away from wicking up once again. We painted every cut made to the ship lap on site to seal out any moisture and you will notice the ship lap is resting just off the drip cap with no caulk and the water drips away from the barn. We looked at numerous alternatives but it always came back to this being the best solution to maintain the integrity of the barn. We used screws instead of nails in fastening the ship lap. If ever a board needs to be replaced it can be done easily. There are 4 coats of stain which further seals the wood.

Over the 3 years we did more than just the barn. We did work at 9 different locations on site as "add-ons" to the phase we were in with the barn.

Schoolhouse: roof and window repair and repainted.
 Schoolhouse Museum: resided, new trim and repainted.
 Powerhouse: new roof, new windows and repainted trim.
 Garage: new columns, new roof, new trim and repainted.
 House: chimney repair, exterior repainted.
 Visitor Center: new roof, trim and repainted.
 Munro Building: new interior siding and trim, repaired roof.
 Round Grain Elevator: new roof.
 Storage Building: lean-to addition.

As you can imagine the past few months has been a challenge. One has a very difficult time getting materials now and there are new protocols to meet to keep people safe. I would say we are done at the right time. I can't say enough about **Emanuel Mullet Construction** other than thank you. I learned you have to have a "good horse" if you want to do a good job. I will let you be the judge now. This is a wrap from the Thumb Octagon Barn. We hope you will be able to visit us soon. We are working on plans to reopen.

Dennis Anderson, Acting President

Barn Siding Project Photos



Site Improvements

The boys have been busy this summer. The first project was improving lighting on the site.

Byron Arnold (in the lift) and **Greg Hunter** (standing) in the photo below are installing new LED motion lights on the Sawmill Building. This will provide a cost savings along with better lighting and security.



Also, there are now dusk to dawn light fixtures with their own switches on the pole at the new gates leading to the Powerhouse, and all poles in the south and north parking lots plus one on the pole near the Sugar Shack for a total of nine lights. This will help greatly during Fall Family Days and when hosting meetings in the evenings.

Also, for safety purposes a light was installed above the northwest entrance door on the Munro Building. Too Tall Hensley took time to refresh the 2 west entrance doors with some bright green paint.

Next project was repairing leaks on the Munro Building roof. Some of the screws were replaced and some seams were caulked. We will see if this works before replacing any OSB boards.

Kitchen Eyebrow

Did you know we now have an eyebrow in our kitchen? This is the new lighting projection over the serving area in the kitchen of the Munro Building. It's very impressive.

This project was spearheaded by **Wayne Lenton** and **Louis**



Wehrman. Ron Colston and **Jack Hill** also helped. Work began in the early spring while decisions were being made whether we were going to open. Cedar shake shingles along the top really adds a lot of character to the projection.

Security Cameras

Much discussion was held on security on site during the closure this year due to the pandemic. A decision was made to purchase security cameras along with signage informing visitors and others. **Louis Wehrman** (photo on far right) and **Connie Osentoski** agreed to chair this project. Please look for the red blinking light. Smile!!



Host Couples

We were very fortunate to have the experienced crew of Too Tall (Ron) and Tammi Hensley back at the Barn. Even though we were not open to visitors, their presence was necessary for security purposes.

Tammi says they were busy weeding flower beds all season. The holly hocks were gorgeous this year. She also had a nice vegetable garden. They had extra zucchini which they donated to a food pantry.

They mentioned that some visitors have stopped by to see if we were open who understood our closure policy and hope to be back next year.

Tammi also indicated that she missed cooking for the boys day out crew on Mondays and the crew said they sure missed

her cooking too!

In August, Gail and Duane Osbourn, former host couples for many years, arrived for a few days and helped weed the flower beds under the quilt block.

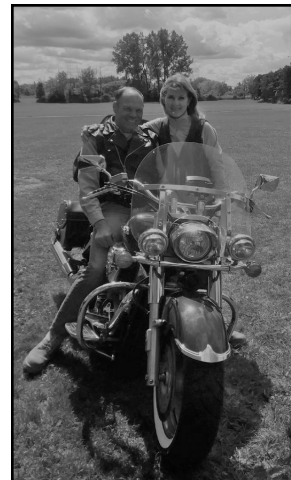
Then on July 31st, Greg and Jill Hunter arrived to assist. Greg and Jill were so happy to be back. Greg said he likes working with the Monday crew and Jill said they always find something to do to keep busy.

Please see the related story below about a painting project.

Much time was spent keeping the Barn as clean as possible during the renovations.

Their last few days were spent preparing flower beds for winter and planting grass.

"It has been a pleasure to be here to offer security" Greg and Jill.



Greg & Jill Hunter on their
2009 Honda 130 VTX

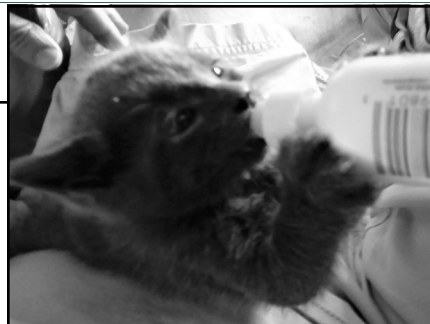
Fencing Painted

From left: Too Tall, Greg Hunter, Jill Hunter, and Tammi took up their paint brushes and painted all the white fencing that separates the south parking lot from the entrance to the Barn. This was quite a job. As Jill mentioned, they always like to find something to do to keep busy. The fresh paint really brightened up the entrance. Thank you for all you do!



Cats and Kittens

Tammi and Too Tall have big hearts. They love cats and currently own a cat that was rescued at the barn a few years ago, Willow. This year four mother cats came along with 20 kittens. Yes, there was one male, too. They were so cute and made themselves right at home. It was a delightful sight. Tammi and Too Tall were very kind and fed and cared for them all summer. A few had some injuries to deal with, too. Before they left the site in September, they were able to find homes for all the kittens, except one. Just before John and Carolyn Longmuir left, John heard something crying in a pile of tin beside the storage building. It was a kitten about four weeks old whose eyes were barely open. So, Tammi and Too Tall purchased a miniature bottle and some formula to feed this baby kitten. They named her Burrito and because she was so little, they decided to keep her. AAAYWW!



Monday Work Crew

Even though the site is closed, there is still a lot of work to be done to keep the 26 acres in tip-top shape. There is a lot of grass to cut on site. It takes the crew, which includes **Norm Parker, Jack Hill, Lee Sowden** and **Martin Kubacki** about four hours to complete the mowing. We have a new 17' cut mower which really helps get the job done more quickly. **Lew Martin** will use the trim mower to trim around the bushes and shrubs. **Martin Kubacki** can be found using the weed wacker to keep things tidy, too. A crew worked on managing the weeds in the tree line along the road.

The barrel train trail also needs to be mowed to keep its integrity.

Wayne Lenton can be found in the sawmill most of the time repairing or welding equipment that breaks down.

A little extra work will need to be done on the area near the barn where the lift used during the replacement of the siding has done some damage. And, of course, the barn needs cleaning and museum items put back in place. A few gaps were found below some doors, which are being repaired.

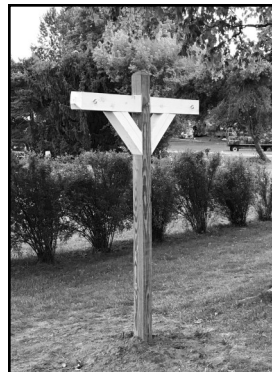
The next project will be to winterize the site. It takes a couple of weeks to get all the water out of the pipes. Outdoor benches, flower pots, museum items and miscellaneous other items need to be put inside or under cover. The Barn and other out buildings need to be readied for the long cold winter months.

Jack Hill reported on October 1st that the "yard looks immaculate".

We thank all those who work so tirelessly every week.

House Repairs

The **Emanuel Mullet** crew also did some repair work on the Purdy Home. A cap was mounted on the chimney of the house to keep out water and critters. The brick on the chimney was tucked pointed at the roof line which had deteriorated. Some trim needed painting and gutters were cleaned out. A paper wasp nest was also removed from the back porch.



Too Tall and **Greg Hunter** put in a new treated wood pole for the clothesline near the house.

Marilyn Phillips and **Betty Woehlert** have single handedly kept the house spotless all year.

Thank you for all your efforts!

Holiday Gifts

The holidays are fast approaching and I wanted to let you know that we have a good stock of souvenirs. There are a lot of camouflage ball caps. We have a new order of navy blue hoodies with the Thumb Octagon Barn logo on the front, and something for the little ones—little stuffed animals.

Memberships are also available as a gift for your children or grandchildren.

Please call to make an appointment.

989-325-0041.

Thank you, Joan Koch.

Potatoes & Pickles Grown and Donated

Back in March, there was much confusion yet about the possibility of activities being cancelled. We chose to plant our potato and pickle demonstration plots to be ready if needed. The summer months were very dry this year and a sprinkling system was set up in the plots to help keep the crops healthy. When it was time to pick the pickles, FFD had been cancelled. A decision was made to donate a good portion of the pickles to the Revive Ministry Food Pantry in Cass City.

Tammi Hensley canned quite a few jars which will be auctioned off at our next auction. Then on September 15th, a group of 25 volunteers came out to help pick and pack the potato crop. **Louis Wehrman** got out his favorite Farmall tractor and one row potato harvester to get the job started. **Terry Keinath** brought all the buckets for picking and the equipment to wash, dry and bag them. It took three hours to complete the job. It was a beautiful sunny day to work together as a team. About 1000 pounds of potatoes were donated to several local food pantries and a local parochial school. We thank all those who came to help.



Special Donation

Charles Leik from Portland, Michigan, has been a long time supporter of the Thumb Octagon Barn. He has once again been very generous and donated a load of cut and dried hardwood to be used for any purposes we choose. **Bartnik Service** drove the load up to the Barn from Portland. We thank Charles for his continued support.



In Memoriam



Sherryl Seeley, Cass City, passed on Saturday, September 26, 2020.

Sherryl was a volunteer at Fall Family Days and School Tours for many years. Her

background as a banker made her a great volunteer to collect money during FFD. She had a ready smile for all. For those that knew her well, she was a poet at heart and wrote many, many funny tributes for friends and relatives. She will be missed here at the Thumb Octagon Barn and in the Cass City community.

In Memoriam



Harlan Rabideau, Gagetown, passed on August 13, 2020.

Harlan was a volunteer very early on with the Thumb Octagon Barn project. Harlan

loved his Case tractors and would bring them for display during our events. His favorite was a Farmall Super A. Harlan also brush hogged our fields and picked up donated items. He had a great love of antiques cars and had quite a collection which he often drove through local parades. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Benefactors

The following have made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter thru 9-25-20.

Patricia Allen, Deford, MI

Bob Ashmore, Owendale, MI

Sherrill French, Reese, MI

Greg & Jill Hunter, Livingston, TX

Martin & Luci Kubacki, Ubly, MI

Ed Mantey & Sons, Inc., Fairgrove, MI

David & Janet Mirku, E. China, MI

Tuckey Engineering, Cass City, MI

Carol Upleger, Yale, MI

Special Donations

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

Donations in memory of Bill & Kitty Sampson, Maple Farms Petting Zoo, Kinde. The Sampsons filled the North side of the Barn with Farm Animals during School Tours & FFD for many years.

Donations in their memory were given by, Shelley & Bill Corsini, Bad Axe, Diane Rapson-Gabil, Essexville & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown.

Donation in memory of Margery Stange, Vassar, who worked in the potato area peeling & shredding many pounds of potatoes for FFD, given by Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese.

Donation in memory of Frank Schwartz given by his wife Ivernia Schwartz Gagetown, MI.

Donation in memory of Bob & Beryl Osbourn given by Dick & Norma Wallace, Cass City.

Donation in memory of Alton Schwark was given by his daughter, Joy Doss. Her Dad had many antique tractors that he enjoyed showing off during FFD and some would be available for sale.

The second half of the charitable gift to purchase remaining shiplap Barn siding boards was given by The Pinney Foundation.

Friends of the
THUMB OCTAGON BARN
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Value of a Volunteer

**Did you know that the average wage
of a volunteer in the United States is
\$27.20 per hour?**

**And that the average wage in Michi-
gan is \$25.79 per hour?**

**Your wage at the Thumb Octagon
Barn is INVALUABLE!**

Thank you!!!!

Next Meeting :

The Executive Committee meetings will be held
the first Tuesday of each month at the Purdy Bank
Building beginning in October 2020.
All other regular membership, FFD and School
Tours meetings are postponed until further notice.

Newsletter

Database and Labels.....David Eichler

Editing & Mailing.....Margaret Sergeant

Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam

Photos.....Connie Osentoski, Tammi Hensley & Rose Putnam

If you are not a member, why not consider becoming one or give a gift of a membership to a friend or relative?
Your options are below. We thank you for your support!

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Spouse Name _____ Last Name _____
Road/Street Address: _____
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Associate Member
() \$5.00 Per year-receive quarterly newsletter
General Member
() \$10.00 per year-Individual - (1) vote, receive quarterly newsletter and hold office
() \$15.00 per year-Family - (2) votes, receive quarterly newsletter and hold office

Mail to:

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Octagon Barn
P. O. Box 145
Gagetown, MI 48735-0145**