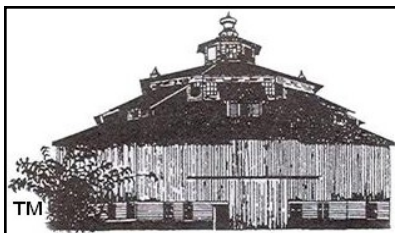


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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.

Summer 2020

Executive Committee

Acting 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)

COVID-19 VIRUS TEMPORARILY CLOSES THUMB OCTAGON BARN

Dennis Anderson, Acting President Message

At the Executive Committee Meeting on June 9, 2020, a decision was made to cancel all events for 2020. The following press release was sent to local newspapers and posted to our Facebook Page:

With much regret, Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn Executive Committee has made the decision to cancel Fall Family Days for this year, and all other scheduled events. The Site will be Closed until further notice.

Our first priority is the safety of our Members, Vendors, Exhibitors, and Patrons. After many discussions with Health Officials, our Insurance Agency, and other organizations, it has become clear that large public events cannot be safely carried out.

Please know this was a very difficult decision that we did not take lightly and we appreciate each of you for your understanding.

As this situation with the Covid-19 is very fluid, please look for current information on our website or Facebook page.

Interestingly enough there were many local people who thought that we were closing permanently. Action was then taken to contact the local news agencies to fully explain that this was not the case. WLEW radio made an announcement to correct any misconceptions and our website and Facebook pages were updated to help clarify our position.

At our July 7, 2020, Executive Committee Meeting, we started with opening comments based on a TV commercial narrated by **Morgan Freeman**. The commercial sets the tone of our thinking as we deal with this crisis.

"This is nothing new. Throughout our history any time something bad has happened, we have recovered. Every time. We fall, we rise, we break, we rebuild, we stumble, we learn, we come together, we work together, we innovate and create. We meet up and get to work. We find our way forward. Every time. This has been the key to our survival. The key to our growth. Whenever we thought we were at our weakest, this is when we became the strongest and became the best version of ourselves and found our way home together. Every time."

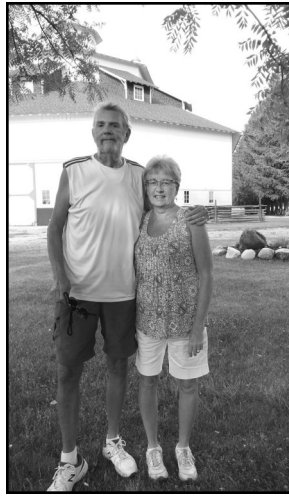
One of the first things we did when we knew we were going to be involved in some difficult decisions was to create a Special Response Committee that would gather all the available information in preparation for a recommendation to our board members and events chair people. This committee is still monitoring the executive orders and guidelines so we are compliant with what is being asked of us to do.

Out in the saw mill we share many stories from our past. One such story is based on the longest public service campaign that began in 1944 and continues yet today. The campaign was born out of a time of national crisis. It is the story of **Smokey Bear**. What is the lesson of Smokey Bear? It would be "to do your part". This is what we are doing. We are doing our part. In fact back in March Senator Doug Jones from Alabama suggested that Smokey Bear come aboard with the slogan "Only You Can Stop the Spread" and "Do Your Part". History has a way of repeating itself.

In conclusion we leave you with this thought "**All is well**" at the Thumb Octagon Barn. We are moving forward doing our part. There are opportunities for us to move forward with "chores" that can be done. We are monitoring and keeping up with the rapid flow of information and we are being safe. There are many requirements per the Governor's orders that will need to be met before we are able to safely open to the public. A decision was made to continue the closure of the site.

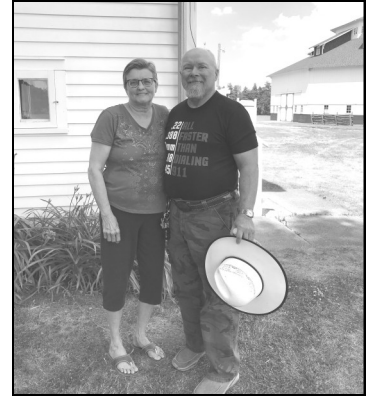
Welcome Back To Our Host Couples!

We are happy to once again welcome back **Ron “Too Tall” and Tammi Hensley** who arrived on site on June 24th. They are always happy to return to Michigan to cool off from the hot weather in Florida. Well, they were in for a surprise this year as the temperatures have been averaging in the 90’s since their arrival. We are so pleased to have them on site to provide much needed security during this trying time with so much limited activity.



(Above-Too Tall and Tammi)

Shortly after their arrival, **John and Carolyn Longmuir**, originally from New Jersey and now traveling nationwide, returned to assist. They were last here in 2016. John and Carolyn have been busy caring for their newborn grandson. They are happy to be back.



Spring Clean Up

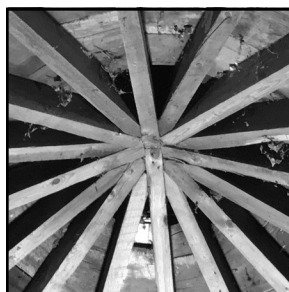
Spring clean up started a little early this year. On April 6, 2020, **Martin and Luci Kubacki, Norm Parker and Jack Hill** worked for 5 hours raking the lawn and cleaning flower beds. They gathered 2 pickup loads of debris. Then on April 27th, Luci cleaned out more of the flower beds and Martin prepared the field to plant potatoes. Martin also organized the Monday crew to clean the loft in the barn to prepare for the siding replacement project, which is still scheduled to begin this summer. The Monday crew is back to mowing to keep our site maintained and in good condition.

MARTIN KUBACKI CHOOSES NOT TO SEEK RE-ELECTION AS PRESIDENT

We would like to thank **Martin Kubacki** for serving as President for the past two years. Under Martin’s leadership, many, many projects have been completed on site. Also, under his leadership as Co-Chair of Fall Family Days, we’ve continued to see the number of activities grow along with greater visitor counts. Martin is a valued member as he continues to volunteer his time as indicated in the Spring Clean Up article and as Co-Chair of FFD. Thank you, Martin!

Round Granary Gets New Roof

If you have not had the opportunity to visit our Round Granary, which is located next to the Grain Elevator, we hope that you will do so when we re-open. This is quite a fascinating structure with its round shape and interior rafter system that has 16 points. The experienced Amish crew of Emanuel



Mullet found it quite a challenge as they replaced some rotted boards and re-shingled the roof. It looks great! The project was completed on May 25, 2020. Please check out all the wonderful related vintage articles in the building. We thank **Louis Wehrman** for spearheading this project.

Benefactors

The following made a donation to the Thumb Agricultural Museum since our last newsletter through 6/29/20.

Carolyn Baldwin, Vassar, MI
 Tom Barton, St. Clair Shores, MI
 Ralph & Theresa Bielawski, Fraser, MI
 Bernard & Patty Billingsley, Sanford, MI
 Karen Boomer, Lapeer, MI
 Sally Brauer, Troy, MI
 Kim & Cindy Brown, Columbiaville, MI
 Dale & Patricia Churchill, Deford, MI
 Sheryl Cleland, Saginaw, MI
 Carol Daugherty, Applegate, MI
 Linda Devine, Cass City, MI
 Russell & Carol Ann Fisher, Caro, MI
 Harold & Diana Frye, Mayville, MI
 Janet M. Garrett, Troy, MI
 Joe & Beth Greene, Caro, MI
 Neal J. Hentschl, Harbor Beach, MI
 Duey & Karen Holz, Filion, MI
 Elizabeth Lambert, Kingston, MI

Edward & Cindy Maciejewski, Romeo, MI
 David & Lesley Markle, Matawan, MI
 Becky McGaethy, Caseville, MI
 Daryle & Lori (Arroyo) Meyer, Bay City, MI
 Hurd Nickerson Reunion
 Mike & Drucilla Pisarek, Cass City, MI
 Nicholas Posak, Saint Clair, MI
 James & Barbara Prill, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI
 Bill & Rose Putnam, Cass City, MI
 Robert Rolston, Gagetown, MI
 Patrick & Susan Ross, Waterford, MI
 LeRoy Schluckebier, Frankenmuth, MI
 Tom Thompson, Caro, MI
 John Tyson & Sue Beck, Lenox, MI
 David Urban, Sebewaing, MI
 Ramon & Mary Ann Waltz, Mason, MI
 Barbara A. & Jerry G. Weber, Winter Park, FL
 Mark Thornton & Darla Wynn, Port Austin, MI

Donations

Caro Rental
 Kohl Farms Agritourism
 Dan Toner
 Jim and Judy Brown
 Diana Kausch
 Osentoski Equipment Inc.
 Mike and Drucilla Pisarek
 Gerald Booms
 Drs. Susan Hoppe & Charles Reed
 Russ & Gerry Leavitt
 Miss Kitty Smith
 Kenneth Sweeney
 Tenbush TV & Appliances LLC

Following is a list of memorial donations, acknowledgements and items to be used on site:

- Dale Will, donated through DTE's Community Foundation for Southeast MI matching gift program .
- Donation in memory of Scott Hutchinson, 53, son of Dean & Nancy Hutchinson given by Margaret Sergeant, Ena Reintjes & R & R Concrete & Supply. Scott worked with his Dad during School Tours and FFD explaining about bees and their hive activity.
- Donations in memory of Theresa Ann Bielawski given by Ralph A. Bielawski, Fraser, Patricia Nadine Stonehouse, Roseville, Gregory & Nancy Bielawski, Wheaton, IL, Gretta Archer-Cole, Ocala, FL. Ralph & Theresa have been following the Barn since 1997. They were impressed with the organization and the volunteers who worked so well together to accomplish their goal. Ralph would love to attend a Tea in the beautifully restored Purdy Home and be surrounded by all the history of that period.
- Donation in memory of James Rachwal, Plymouth formerly of Gagetown, given by Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI & Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI
- Ed Tresco was a devoted Friend of the Barn. Each year he would donate to the Barn during FFD based on the success of his farming. He missed 2019 with his yearly donation and sadly the family has informed us that Ed has passed away.
- Diana Kausch, Sanford, MI made a charitable donation to the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum.
- Robert Garner, Cadillac, MI donated a picture for our auction.

In Memoriam

Kitty Sampson passed on June 19 followed by Bill Sampson on June 20, of Maplewood Farms of Kinde, who came to our rescue in the Spring of 2003 when Carol Stoeckle was no longer able to bring her farm animals for School Tours. Since that time, they have hauled various types of farm animals to the Thumb Octagon Barn for both School Tours and Fall Family Days. They would stay for the whole time to feed and care for their animals during these events. They also raised Ruby, a potbelly pig, that was our first and only mascot. They retired in 2018 due to ill health. They will certainly be missed by the "Friends" and all the local children who enjoyed petting their animals.



Memorials:

Donations in memory of Rose Ann Stewart given by Bonnie Gaeth, Don Dorsch & Joan Koch.
 Donation in memory of Victor Woehlert given by Terry & Sandra Keinath & Duane & Gail Osbourn.
 Donation in memory of George Gray given by Marilyn & Gilbert Zacharian, Gaylord, MI
 Donations in memory of Dale Mellendorf & Gerry Edler given by the Owendale Class of 1953.
 Donation in memory of Harland Murdick given by his wife Grace Murdick, Caro, MI
 Donation in memory of Jim Wallace given by Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI

Friends of the
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Flat Rack Wagon & Grain Wagon Repair

Gerald Auten, who seems to have the magic touch to repair machinery has been busy repairing and painting the wagon, with some help from Wayne Lenton. The flack rack wagon is used for spelt during FFD demonstrations.



Gerald then went to work on making a new 10' x 20' awning for the grain wagon to protect the spelt (relic type of wheat still used by the Amish) from bad weather during FFD.

These wagons both look so great. Thank you, Gerald and Wayne!



The Purdy Home is in need of cleaning to keep the building maintained. Marilyn Phillips and Betty Woehlert need some help to get things done on Monday mornings starting at 9:30 AM. All COVID-19 guidelines will be met for workers. Please bring your own mask. Sorry, no lunch will be provided.

Next Meeting : Yet To Be Determined

Newsletter

Database and Labels.....Dave Eichler

Editing & Mailing.....Margaret Sergeant

Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam

Photos.....Connie Osentoski & Rose Putnam

Souvenir Trailer Gets a New Face & Rides in a Parade

As we looked at improvements for the operation and maintenance of the souvenir trailer, a decision was made to give it a new, fresh look. With the help of **Larsen Graphics, Inc.** in Vassar, a new design was made and wrapped on the trailer along with new rims and tires. **Larsen's donated \$1,500 of labor and material to complete the repairs.** As you can see from the photo, it sure looks great and visitors will definitely know where to find our souvenirs. Gagetown Hillside Community Church chose to have a 4th of July parade with social distancing and outside viewing. The theme was "Freedom Isn't Free". The Thumb Octagon Barn was well represented as **Ray & Carol Caverly** lead the Parade, and

were surprised to find their military grandson waiting for them under the stop light, as he had just gotten out of the service. Next in line was **Marilyn & Duaine Phillips** representing the veterans. **Doug & Ardis Monroe** were in the antique car section in their Ford Fairlane, along with volunteers **Gene & Rita Kaake** in a 1949 Hudson and **Ron & Mae Hoffman** in their 1931 Model A representing the Cass City Antique Car Club. **Marty & Connie Osentoski** pulled our newly wrapped trailer, which was one of over 25 units. Church member & Village Clerk, **Joan Koch** put the parade line up into action, and brought up "The End" in her favorite ride, a John Deere Gator.

