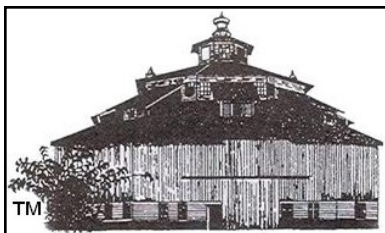


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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.

Winter 2021

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

Past President
Rose M. Putnam

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

SO WHAT NOW?

Letter from the Acting President,
Dennis Anderson.

It has been nine months since the pandemic forced the cancelation of events at the Thumb Octagon Barn. Our concern was the health and safety of our volunteers and patrons. This was and remains our number one goal. We closed knowing full well that we would face a major loss of revenue. We had to RESET OUR THINKING.

We were just completing a 3 year maintenance project which completed the Octagon Barn and 10 other buildings on site and suddenly the rug was pulled out from under us. Like many of the small business owners in our community we had to find a new way to survive through this pandemic. Ironically, looking back we learned from experience to "take care of the Octagon Barn and save the Friends". I did not fully grasp those words at the time, but I fully understand the meaning now.

We reorganized our thinking with the introduction of the motto, "We Together Moving Forward" based on the Masimo Commercial narrated by Morgan Freeman. This focused our attention in one direction like it was in the very beginning of our history as an organization. Everyone had to be on the same page, pulling in the same direction. I don't know if history repeats itself but it sure does rhyme. Our founders, a group of volunteers, had no money, but they had a dream and they found a way forward.

One of the first things we did was to form a Response Team to monitor all the Executive Orders and recommendations coming out of Lansing and forward their recommendations to our Executive Board. MI Safe Start, a plan to re-engage Michigan's Economy set us on a path with "scenario" planning. Because of our strong affiliations with the school community we aligned our thinking to the MI Safe Schools Roadmap. School Tours is a big event for us. We have many former educators who are members of the Friends and we know the challenges our schools are facing right now. We stand in solidarity with our school community and support them.

From the beginning our attention shifted to the budget. We proposed the "Stabilize & Thrive Concept" which is a multilevel initiative we developed to secure the budget and begin looking to alternative revenue sources.

While we are cutting costs to essential expenditures, we are looking to future revenue sources to sustain the organization. We are very capable of playing small ball as we did in the early days of the Friends. We have written successful grants to build the "tool box concept" which contains all the supplies we will need to reopen. From signage to hand wash stations, to cleaning supplies we are poised to meet the protocols required by the Health Department.

(Continued on page 2)

SAD NEWS BUT GOOD NEWS

Dennis Anderson, Acting President reports:

The sad news for the Friends is that Martin & Luci Kubacki and Lisa Geiger have stepped down from their leadership role on the Fall Family Days Committee. The good news is that their resignation is not due to health reasons. They want to spend time with family and do a little traveling when they can. Amen for that. We accept their decision with regrets and certainly understand and we wish them well.

We send a special salute to Martin for the many years of service he has dedicated to the

Friends. Martin started driving tractors in 1998 and became co-chair with Bob Hirn in 2000. He has worked tirelessly. During his leadership tenure, he carried on the mission of the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn to a record breaking year in 2019. It is with sincere appreciation that we thank you for "flying point" on the Fall Family Days Committee. An awesome job! We honor you for putting family first and we want you to know that you are always welcome here. Do come and enjoy what you have worked so hard to achieve.

So What Now? Continued from page 1

We introduced the "Friday Letter" to improve our communication with our Executive Board and the chairs of our committees. The goal is to stay connected and informed with what is going on at the Thumb Octagon Barn.

Our newsletter, Facebook page and website are continuing forward. We have people thinking outside of the box and how we can communicate to the public.

Over the last nine months we have laid the foundation to develop our reopening plans. Upon this foundation

we, (the Executive Board, committee Chairs and committee members) will find a path forward. While the situation remains very fluid and it is uncertain what scenario we will be in, we will move forward.

Most importantly we have members and our members have renewed their memberships very generously. This has been a real "battery charger" for the Friends. Just knowing you are out there and continue to support our efforts is deeply appreciated. Thank you members for your support. "We Together Moving Forward."

Visitor Awareness Initiatives

Since visitors are unable to visit on site at this time, a new initiative is underway to keep our members and website/Facebook page visitors interested in what we are doing. We are starting by adding computer generated puzzles of photos taken on site. This

is a fun way to discover our buildings inside and out. It also provides a little stimulus, which is needed for many people who are homebound. This project should be completed within the next 30 days. We are also looking to provide on-line touring

video experiences that will be available to the general public and may also be available to teachers for school room use. This project will take more time to complete and we may need to request grants to cover the cost. Stay tuned.

False Alarm at the Thumb Octagon Barn

As told by Rose Putnam:

My home telephone rang at 3:23 AM on Saturday, November 7, 2020. This is usually not a good thing. It was the security alarm company calling to say that an alarm was going off in the parlor in the Purdy Home at the Thumb Octagon Barn site and that fire trucks were dispatched to respond. Wow!

I quickly dressed and drove to the Barn site. When I arrived, there were 3 fire trucks from the Elmwood Township and Gagetown Fire Departments. There was no sign of smoke or fire as I arrived. Whew. The firemen were walking the perimeter of the house with flashlights. I unlocked the house and we all went in. Fortunately, there was no smell or signs of a fire. Every part of the house was searched and no signs of either fire or smoke were

found. A group of firemen had also went out to the Barn to check it just in case. The Barn was fine. The alarm display in the house then said smoke detected in the West Stairway. The house was thoroughly checked and all agreed there was no signs or smell of smoke. The house was locked and everyone left just after 4:00 AM.

Glen Guilds, fire chief of Elmwood Township said they were happy to respond even if it was a false alarm because no one wanted to find anything in danger at the Thumb Octagon Barn site since it is such an important historical site in our area.

We are happy to report that the security system may not be perfect but we know that it works and that we have the support of the wonderful volunteer fire departments in our area.



THANK YOU GENTLEMEN AND LADY FIRE FIGHTERS FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Photo taken at Gagetown Fire Department of the crew that responded following the false alarm. From Left: Carrie Ewald, Jacob Warack, Trace Lopez, Jake Wismer, Rob Coryell, Paul Lopez.

Fall Photos 2020



Back view of Sugar Shack, Blacksmith Shop, Cider Mill & Grain Elevator



It was a beautiful fall day on November 20th. Dave Jaroch and his daughter, Marjo, stopped for a visit. Marjo captured true autumn colors. Here are a few of her absolutely gorgeous pictures. Please visit our Facebook to see them in color.

Museum Donations

In July of 2020, Laura Zimmerman, North Branch, MI donated a very interesting antique egg incubator.



In the Spring 2020 edition of the Thumb Octagon Barn News on page 8 was an article regarding the repair of the flat bed rack wagon. This item was donated by Gerald Auten. Thank you, Gerald!

2020 Project List Updates

- Complete Barn loft displays (ongoing) As time and social distancing permits, volunteers are reinstalling equipment on the loft beams.
- Barn vertical siding painted and replaced ✓
- New Barn doors-front and back ✓
- Finish Rail Fence and reseed grass in front ditch ✓
- New gates-driveway of Barn and house (one gate arrived and second gate reordered)
- Finish signage on museum items (ongoing)
- Finish wood siding on Munro inner wall (not completed)
- New aesthetic roof over kitchen serving area ✓
- Repair leaks on Munro Building roof ✓
- Entrance light on Munro Building ✓
- Entrance light on Sawmill Building and interior lights added ✓
- Repaint souvenir trailer ✓
- Install LED lights all over the site ✓

✓ Indicates a completed job

More from the Acting President

Normally we develop a project list at this time of year and we will do so again under the title of Essential Project List for 2021. All projects will be received but time lines will be determined pending future revenues. I do not need to remind you that we are deeply impacted by the pandemic closures. Projects submitted should include who is responsible and the estimated cost.

We completed the application for the rental of the DNR 10 acres we use for parking. Again this year, we mow the field after August 15th. The agreement has not changed from prior years.

Our 26 acres is under lease and will be planted to oats and clover this year. This is a form of crop rotation for one year. The oats will be harvested; the clover will remain on

which we can park again this year. The following year Randy Elenbaum will plant the "good stuff" for the dairy farms. Randy has been doing a good job and is always available if we need help.

Our campground permit has been submitted and accepted for 2021. We do a water test in the spring and should be set.

Winter Maintenance

Louie Wehrman has reported that the water lines have been drained in all the buildings. He also checks the "trap lines" in several buildings. So far the count is 5 mice and 2 squirrels.

Bill Shagene has once again agreed to keep the site clear of snow as needed.

Byron Arnold is checking all batteries on a regular basis in the security systems on site.

Two trees fell during a recent wind storm along the ditch line and a pear tree near the Powerhouse. **Norm Parker** cut them up and removed the wood.

Individuals are stopping by on a regular basis to check grounds.

A recent report from **Dennis Anderson**: This past week I took the liberty to do a self-guided tour of the grounds. Very calm, very peaceful, very relaxing. The buildings look good. The Barn popped right out.

Benefactors

The following have made a donation of \$10.00 and more since our last newsletter through January 13, 2021. The list is long and reflective of the amazing support our organization has and continues to have. We thank you one and all.

Raymond Abraham, Chesterfield, MI
Clark Alcock, Lambertville, MI
Robert & Patricia Anspaugh, Essexville, MI
Raymond Baur, Unionville, MI
Carl & Lisa Bednarski, Pigeon, MI
Paul Begick, Bay City, MI
Curtis & Mary Bell, Carthage, MO
Jack & Terri Beith, Linden, MI
Gerald L. Booms, Ubly, MI
Mary Brauer, Clawson, MI
Michael & Janet Bryant, Cass City, MI
John & Suzi Brundage, Marshall, MI
Donna Burke, Perrysburg, OH
Barbara Chambers, Troy, MI
Ray Christie, Freeland, MI
Bonnie & Russ Coones, Unionville, MI
Edward & Janalee Cooper, South Lyon, MI
Rich & Lori Corl, Denver, CO
Dan & Jean Creyts, Charlotte, MI
Janet Cummings, Mt. Pleasant, MI
Paul & Sandy Deo, Snover, MI
Gayla Eagle, Sandusky, MI
Tony & Diane Eisele, Vassar, MI
Sally Elston, Sebewaing, MI
Daniel & Marlene Erla, Cass City, MI
Louis & Deborah Fehner, Bad Axe, MI
Foster E. & Pamela S. Findlay, Freeland, MI
Maris & Judy Fravel, Bainbridge Island, WA
Thomas & Elizabeth Fritz, Gagetown, MI
Delores Garety, Cass City, MI
Mike & Lisa Geiger, Harbor Beach, MI
Mike & Paula Green, Mayfield, MI
Susan Gremel, Sebewaing, MI
Gro Green Farms, Owendale, MI
Tobin & Kathy Guinn, Decker, MI
Walter & Ann Hagen, Bay City, MI
Robert W. Harcourt, Alger, MI
Dr. Susan Hoppe & Dr. Charles Reed, Cass City, MI
Susan Ignasiak, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI
David & Marie Jaroch, Ubly, MI
Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese, MI
Ruth Leen, Carsonville, MI

Peter M. & Marilyn A. Leiterman, Gagetown, MI
Mary Lou MacNeil, Kawkawlin, MI
Mark & Betsy McKelvey, Chicago, IL
Don & Carla McKimmy, Bad Axe, MI
Bill & Mary McLean, Croswell, MI
Joan Merchant, Cass City, MI
Bonnie & Ronnie Miller, Elkton, MI
Janet Muntz, Cass City, MI
Jill Ogryski, Ubly, MI
Lynne O'Rourke, Lincoln, NE
Duane & Gail Osbourn, Macomb, MI
Wayne A. & Linda L. Patterson, Attica, MI
Tom & Denise Patrick, Fostoria, MI
Beverly Perry, Cass City, MI
William & Deborah Posak, China, MI
Donald Ramaut, Clinton Twp, MI
Robert Rolston, Gagetown, MI
Gerald Schember, Goodells, MI
Mary Ellen Schley, Dearborn Heights, MI
Marjorie Schwartz, Gagetown, MI
Susan Scott, Saginaw, MI
Rebecca Scovill, Lansing, MI
Saginaw River Marine Historical Society, Bay City, MI
Sanilac County Historical Society, Port Sanilac, MI
Greg & Jerri Sierocki, Saginaw, MI
Mary Sloan & Jeff Lichty, Clarkston, MI
Bill & Marlene Stewart, Caro, MI
Richard & Nancy Sylvester, Fairgrove, MI
Laurel Sytsma, White Cloud, MI
David & Penny Turner, Mayville, MI
Willa J. Vargas, Bellevue, NE
Richard & Norma Wallace, Cass City, MI
Rosalie Walsh, Ubly, MI
Kenneth & Margaret Watson, New Hudson, MI
Karen Weaver, Standish, MI
Andrew & Ashleigh Witucki, Bay City, MI
Richard & Vera Wroblewski, Sebewaing, MI
Molly S. Wildman, Gagetown, MI
Bruce & Linda Walz, West Chicago, IL

Superior Oil Well Engine

The 25Hp Superior Oil Well Engine was donated to the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn by **Gary Sutherby** of Leonard, MI on September 16, 2019. Gary decided that he did not want to take on the task of repair and donated it to the "Friends". This engine was used to operate oil wells in Oil City, Michigan.

The next task was to get it from Leonard to Gagetown. **Jerry Bartnik** of Bartnik Service donated his time and equipment. A pay loader was used to lift the engine onto the flat bed trailer. When Jerry arrived at the Thumb Octagon Barn, he used his wrecker to set the engine on the cart made by **Wayne Lenton** and **Jerry Meredith**. (story below*)

This engine was made in Springfield, OH, around 1925. These were made until around 1956 when the Superior Engine Company sold out and then the company was sold again in 1969. This engine could run up to 2 dozen oil wells at one time.

We were fortunate that **Dave Babcock** located a booklet on this particular engine which helped with the restoration project.

Gerald Auten, who spearheaded this project, was asked "Why do we want one of these engines at the Thumb Octagon Barn?" Gerald responded that there are very few of these oil engines still around and very few people in the United States who have the skill and knowledge to restore them. The engine will be able to operate some of our larger equipment such as the Veneer Mill."

*Work started on this project in the spring of 2020. Wayne Lenton and Jerry Meredith took axles out of an old threshing machine to make the cart to move the engine, as it weighs around 5,000 pounds. Wayne painted the cart when it was completed and made a puller for the fly wheel. With the help of Wayne, **Jack Hill**, **Norm Parker** and Gerald and a day's work, the fly wheel was off the wheel which is 1000 to 1200 pounds. (See photo on left.)

The next job was to remove the gear. A puller was made to remove the gear. That done, Gerald went to Valley Gear in Bad Axe to get a bid, which was \$1000 to make a new gear. A decision was made to repair the gear ourselves, which brought the cost to \$150.

Ron Coltson, **Mark Battel** and **Paul Deo** also helped on this project. (Ron Coltson and Wayne Lenton in photo on right.) We are so very fortunate to have such a gifted crew! Thank you one and all.

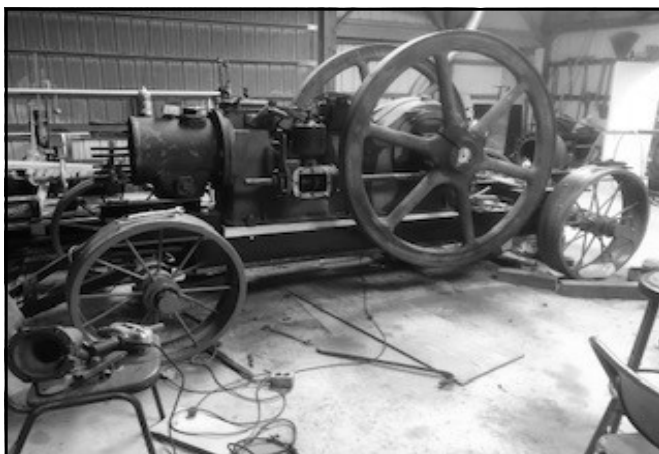
Gerald Auten explained "We put hours and hours and hours into this project. When this engine runs, it is awesome! There is a true sense of accomplishment working on this project."

Wayne Lenton said it was "A fun project to work on, but everything was heavier than most other projects. It was an interesting experience."

Jerry Bartnik said "It is a pleasure to always help the Thumb Octagon Barn. I've been helping since the very first year when the barn roof was repaired."

Gary Sutherby has donated his Rumley Steam Engine for many years to operate the sawmill during School Tours and Fall Family Days.

Please visit our website for a more detailed report of the repairs along with additional photos.



Special Donations

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

Donations in memory of Daniel J. Toner were given by his sister, Ivernia Schwartz, Gagetown, MI & his sister, Willa Vargas, Bellevue, NE, daughter, Danielle Toner Smith, Lapeer, MI, Beverly J. Perry, Cass City, MI, Mark & Diane Battel, Cass City, MI, Jim & Judy Brown, Cass City, MI, Dottie Scollon, Cass City, MI, Linda K. Davis, Inkom, ID, Ena Reintjes, St. Clair Shores, MI, Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown, MI and Kitten Little Smith, Dan's beloved cat and FFD Sponsor for many years.

Donation in memory of Nancy J. Kendall given by her husband, Pat Kendall, Bay City, MI

Donation in memory of Norma Rabideau given by Joan Kuhne

Donations in memory of Sherryl Seeley given by Alex Paladi, Deford, MI & Ralph & Patricia Zinnecker, Deford, MI

Donations in memory of Bud & Jeanette McDonald of Owendale, MI & Allen McDonald of Cass City, MI given by Robert and Eleanore Ethier of Milledgeville, GA

Donation from Ginny Brundage, wife of the late R. Scott Brundage, grandson of John Munro, builder of the Octagon Barn with his brother George Munro. Ginny wrote "Scott was a great admirer of the "Friends" especially the volunteerism that allows the Barn to be a success."

Dave & Julie DeSimpelare made a donation in memory of Dad, John DeSimpelare of Unionville, MI. He died Dec. 6, 2019 at age 90. He attended FFD every year until his health no longer allowed. He thoroughly enjoyed those times.

Donation in memory of Esther Block Bedford & James Ricker given by Owendale class of 1953.

Donation in memory of Arthur Trombley given by Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese, MI

Donation in memory of Pat Hester given by her son and daughter-in-law Brad & Beth Kitchin of Meza, AZ. Pat will always be remembered as our volunteer who read all of Cora Purdy's diaries. What an amazing accomplishment and so helpful in documenting the history of the Octagon Barn and the Purdy Family.

Donation in honor of Mark Q. Thornton was given by Darla S. Wynn, Port Austin who wrote that Mark appreciates the importance of preserving history and values the buildings that keep history alive. The "Friends" do an outstanding job of achieving this.

Donation in memory of Ron Stange given by Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese, MI

Donations in memory of John Leiterman were given by Joan Koch, Cass City, MI, the Debb Leasher Family, the Rabideau Family and Donna Burke and Family. John was a WW II veteran and at one time ran a successful business for 18 years, The Oxhorn Tavern in Bach. John enjoyed attending FFD and his favorite was watching the Tractor Parade. John is the father of the late Clyde Leiterman, talented musician of the area.

Friends of the
THUMB OCTAGON BARN
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GAGETOWN, MI 48735-0145
989-665-0081

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Advice from a Barn

Build a strong foundation

Think lofty thoughts

Keep stable

Stand the test of time

Make hay while the sun shines

Hold your horses

Don't leave the barn door open!

Next Meeting :

The Executive Committee meetings will be held as designated by the Executive Committee.

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 & Rose Putnam

From Our Museum—What is it?

Please visit the Sawmill, the Grain Elevator and Barn to locate and learn about these items!



1. Splitter Sampler 2. Capstan
3. Horse Drawn Potato Lifter

