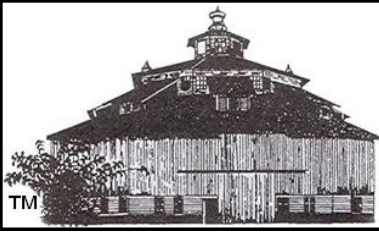


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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 2021

Executive Committee

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Dennis Anderson

2nd Vice President
Gerald Auten

Treasurer
Joan Koch

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
Thumb Octagon Barn
Agricultural Museum
989-665-0081

President's Message

Message from Dennis Anderson

At an early age growing up we were taught to be thankful for what we had and to those that volunteered to help in time of need. The Executive Board at the Thumb Octagon Barn is very thankful for the year we had and to the hundreds of volunteers that made it possible. In spite of the pandemic we were able to open and move forward together and we were especially thankful we could host Fall Family Days once again.

Looking back this year has been like no other in our history. It was most definitely not a normal year nor did we expect it to be so. I am often asked, "How did you do at Fall Family Days this year?" My initial thought is 100% better than last year when we had to cancel the event. The answer kicks the can down the road, but we are indeed thankful for just being able to offer the event.

We had a very good year and a very good Fall Family Days event but the pandemic did and still continues to impact the Thumb Octagon Barn. Like other businesses in our community we are recovering from the pandemic but we feel we are moving in a positive direction.

We cancelled School Tours for 2021 but we were able to open our Daily Tours Program in May and our number of visitors increased this year by 38.5%. Our tour guides were busy with daily tours, weddings and clubs coming to visit the site (related stories on pages 2 & 3). Our early projections for Fall Family Days were high but this fell back with the arrival of the Delta variant. The Fish Fry (story on page 5) was well attended with 964 served. This is down slightly from our average of 1,000 served yearly. Saturday was our best day but Sunday was down probably due to the threat of rain. Overall combining both days we were down 20% from the record year in 2019.

Again we are thankful for the volunteers and patrons that came all year and at Fall Family Days. We often compare our operation to be like farming in that you have to have a little help from Mother Nature. Rain at the right time is good, at the wrong time not so good. Every year you give it your best shot and that is all you can do. We will take what we got and are thankful to be moving in a positive direction.

Getting Ready for FFD

As Dennis Anderson mentions above, Mother Nature plays a vital role for our FFD event. On Monday, Labor Day, September 6th, a hard working crew spent most of the day putting up all of our tents. On Tuesday, we had a storm come through the Thumb with high winds and all the tents were blown down. Wednesday was a busy day doing the job once again.



Summer Activities at the Barn

Our **Open House Weekend** was held on Saturday, July 24 & Sunday, July 25. All buildings were open on site for our visitors to enjoy. We had a very active turn out, as a lot of tourists were out and about looking for something to do. Don Beavers from the Sanilac Petroglyphs has been sending guests our way and we also recommend that our visitors visit the Petroglyphs. We thank all of our volunteers who were on site to help.

We were privileged to have the **Michigan Jamboree of Model T's** event organized by the **Model T-Ford Club International** with its 39th tour visit on August 26th. This was the first time the group has visited the Thumb of Michigan. 94 cars were registered for the three day event. Tim Juhl of Forester Township organized the event. The majority of the group were from Michigan with 25% coming from 11 other states. The group found that the people in the Thumb are the friendliest people and local folks stepped in to help when a car needed repairs. They found the Thumb Octagon Barn to be a "very remarkable Barn" and enjoyed all the exhibits on the grounds. Of all the stops during the three day tour, the Thumb Octagon Barn was rated at the top of the list. Our volunteers were privileged to have the opportunity to see and experience all the exquisite cars on the tour. Thank you for choosing to tour the Barn.



Thumb Easy Riders

Not everyone arrives at the Barn in a vehicle. On August 11, 2021, the Thumb Easy Riders bicycle group of 16 members made their way to the Barn. This group meets every Wednesday from June 1st until the end of August to ride to a predetermined destination. They started riding in Cass City and then rode back for lunch, which was an 18 mile trip. **Too Tall** gave a tour of the Barn and then did a little entertaining and joking around, too. The group also enjoyed a tour of the Purdy Home given by **Tammi**.



Buick Car Club Tour

On September 15, 2021, the Buick Car Club of Bricktown, MI Chapter of the BCA from Flint visited the barn. 22 people were present for the Barn tour given by Too Tall-Ron Hensley. Cars in the club range from 1908 to present, and there are approximately 120 members. The weather was rainy and cool, but a great time was had by all that attended. Jane Pindar, Asst. Director planned the tour.



New Gate for Purdy Home Drive



Plans for a new gate at the Purdy Home drive have been ongoing for several years. The gates arrived in 2020 with a few missing parts, so Plan B went into place. Work was started on August 16, 2021 by Faber Masonry of Sebawaing, MI who began digging and pouring the forms for the foundation. On August 20, 2021, the Faber Masonry crew returned to install the gates just in time for Fall Family Days.

(Pictured standing behind the gate is **Gerald Auten** and next to the gate on the right is **Too Tall**.)



Special Donations

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

Donation of six vintage feed sacks donated by Christine Miller, St. Clair, MI

Donation in memory of Henry Gies—Owendale Class of 1953.

Donation in memory of Linda Shaw given by Evelyn Schadd, Fillion.

Nancy Liverance noted that she was at FFD with her daughter and son-in-law, their first visit and they loved it. "My John was known as the "Potato Man. "

Donation of a new 10 pound B C Fire Extinguisher donated by Holloway Fire Protection, Inc., Caro

Marty & Connie Osentoski donated a box of old (1940's & 50's) magazines.

Wendy & Sam Leppert, Kranz Funeral Home donated a mower deck.

Osentoski Dairy Farm donated for the purchase of hay.

Donation in memory of Robert (Bobby) Kelley given by the Kelly Reunion for the Purdy Home.

John & Deb Forshee, Caro, wrote that they had a wonderful time with our boys and grandchildren. Everyone enjoyed the wide variety of activities. Something for all ages.

Donation in memory of Al & Pearl Nowak, of Gaylord , MI, given by daughter and son-in-law, Connie & Conrad Latuszek of Midland.

Donation in memory of Jack Montney given by the Owendale Class of 1953.

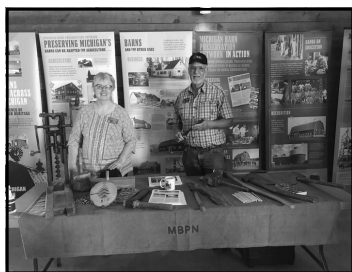
Donation in memory of Georga Brauers (Munro) given by Sally Brauers.



Teamwork and Timbers

On Saturday, August 28, 2021, the Teamwork and Timbers project was held at the Thumb Octagon Barn. Thank you, **Paul Deo** and **Jared Sorenson**, our teachers, and **Craig Sorenson** and **Carl Cox** for helping. The finished project was on display during FFD. Boys and girls and dads or moms, please join us when we will host this event again on August 27, 2022.

Contact Rose Putnam 989-444-9574



Michigan Barn Preservation Network

MBPN president Tom Irrer (on right) and program director Vera Wiltse (on left) were at the Thumb Octagon Barn during Family Days. They were here to share the mission of the MBPN to save barns in Michigan. The display included tool examples used to build timber framed barns. Children are taught how to use these tools during the Teamwork and Timbers project. The banners tell the stories of awards given for the Barn of the Year, categories include: **Adapted to**

Other Uses-Family/Private/Non-Profit/Commercial & Continuing Agricultural Use -Family/Private/Non-Profit. Please consider nominating your barn. Visit mibarn.net for more information.

It Was A Great Year!-Look for more articles in our next edition

Something new and exciting was the group of puppeteers from Mullin Entertainment. Troy Mullin, owner from Caro, (center) has performed many



times at the Thumb Octagon Barn. He started as a student in the School-house programs and worked his

way up to the teacher's position. His group featured the Michigan State tree, bird and stone. Both children and adults loved the performance learning all about our State mascots.

Food is a very important component of Fall Family Days. The **Caro Knights of Columbus** are one of our many partners who help provide great food options for our visitors. Below is a photo of the Caro KofC who



served just over 1500 people at the Farmer's Breakfast. A joint effort by the **Caro KofC** and the **Thumb Antique Car Club**, featured in the photo to the left, served 100 homemade apple pies and 65 gallons of homemade ice cream. One of the crowd favorites every year.

Fall Family Days Preparations

It was a hot, dry summer and a lot of water was needed to keep our pickle, potato and sorghum crops healthy. Please see the related article in the Summer 2021 edition showing Terry Keinath's watering system. Stella Scarecrow is visiting Stretch and Crow here at The Thumb Octagon Barn to keep out all the deer and raccoons from raiding our crops.



Jerry Bartnik made several trips to pick up and deliver 3 of

the 5 steam engines and 14 gas powered tractors on steel wheels on site during Fall Family Days. Thank you Jerry, and thank you, **Gary Sutherby** for the loan of your steam engines and tractors. We also thank, **Travis Albrecht** helped by **Hogan Hennesey** and friends, who worked on getting Gary's tractors running for the parade.



Preparing for the Saw Mill Demonstrations



Wayne Lenton and **Louie Wehrman** in the photo on the left are off loading logs to be used for the sawmill demonstrations. **Jason Kappen** along with daughter, **Isabelle**, and son, **Rylan**, delivered a dump truck load of dried wood donated by **Kappen Tree Service** which was used for building steam in the steam engines that power the sawmill.



School Tours 2022 at the Thumb Octagon Barn, Gagetown

School Tours is an educational field trip for students, preschool through 8th grade, plus classes from high school/Intermediate School District Tech programs - will be held during the school day on Wednesday, May 11th, Thursday, May 12th, and Friday, May 13th. Cost is \$2.00 donation fee for each student and each chaperone attending. There will be over 25 stations available for learning/exploration.



Theme for 2022 is 'The House-100 Years Old!' The House is the actual building and The Home is the place where family lives. At the Thumb Octagon Barn site, The House was completed in 1922 - 100 years ago! Students will be able to see and learn how The House was built in 1922 and how it became The Home. With the extensive restoration of The House done over the last twenty-five years,

today it is like walking into The Home - built for James and Cora Purdy and two daughters in the early 1920's!

School Tours 2022 is back after an interruption for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 'Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn' will continue to follow the policies of the local health department to uphold the needed practices for the health of the visitors and volunteers. Plus, we have taken the 'Pure Michigan Pledge' to be safe. In September 2021, the 'Friends' held Fall Family Days 2021, which proved to be safe and successful.

Parents/grandparents: Please urge educators to register today on the website: thumboctagon-barn.org; click on '2022 School Tours & Registration,' fill out registration form and submit. Contact **Diane Rapson Gabil**, chairperson, to answer any questions/concerns you may have. (989-392-1080; email: drapsongabil@chartermi.net)

Successful Fish Fry

We would like to thank **Tammi Hensley** who took the bull by the horns and organized the Fish Fry this year with the help of many new volunteers. We served 964 meals, which was down somewhat from the usual 1,000 served. Tammi Hensley is pictured in the photo on the top right in the center. In this photo on Thursday evening, the crew was cutting and preparing the potatoes for the Fish Fry and the Farmer's Breakfast. The Munro Building was busy on Friday with the Fish Fry crowd. A lot of compliments were paid to the cooks for the good food. The success of the Fish Fry was on the shoulders of



plies. We appreciate all of our visitors for returning to support our Fish Fry.

all who volunteered in a small or a big way. We would also like to thank **Tammy Grifka** who played a huge role in helping with the ordering of food sup-





In Memoriam: Dan Walz

Daniel R. Walz, age 70, of Sebewaing, passed away peacefully Monday, September 6, 2021, with his family by his side.

Over the years I knew Dan Walz as the chairman of Bean Soup at Fall Family Days. Dan was at every meeting to report to the committee that all was well again this year. He was always positive and there was never a problem that he could not handle. One could depend on Dan and that the soup would be ready.

Bean Soup is a big attraction at Fall Family Days. People come a long way to have a bowl of Dan's homemade bean soup. It is good. Normally I work in the sawmill and we would sneak out during the parade and head for the soup, hoping some would be left. It became a tradition that one had to have to

make the day complete.

This year was different, Dan passed away just before Fall Family Days. Before we could blink, the Walz family contacted us and said we are coming and soup will be served in Dan's honor. And that is exactly what happened. Beth and the family were here sharing Dan's Bean Soup.

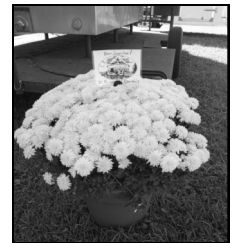
We pay tribute to Dan for his Bean Soup and his support of the Thumb Octagon Barn for many years but nothing can surpass the



tribute given by Beth and the family in honor of Dan. Your coming here during this difficult time has touched many people at the Thumb Octagon Barn. I am glad I had the opportunity to talk with you folks. Thank you for sharing this time with us. (Walz family pictured to the left.)

Yellow is the color of the sun, symbolic of smiling faces and friendship. Beth, there will be a yellow mum in Dan's name each year for you to pick up at the corner of Munro and Bean Soup. No obligations, no commitments, just a tribute to all that Dan and the family have done already for the Friends.

Thank you, Denny Anderson



Donations given in memory of Dan Walz, the best bean soup cooker,

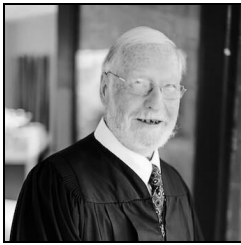
for FFD given by Martin & Luci Kubacki, Mary Ann Hirn, Joan Koch & Gerald Auten. Dan

had pre-ordered many of the ingredients for his soup so Dan & Beth Walz's family came together to make sure that Dan's delicious bean soup was prepared and served during FFD. What a wonderful tribute to Dan and so enjoyed by those attending.

Benefactors-The following made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter through and including October 21, 2021.

Kay Ardis, Diamondale, MI
 Bob Ashmore, Owendale, MI
 Ralph Bielawski, Fraser, MI
 Mary Brauer, Clawson, MI
 Julie Bills, Frankenmuth, MI
 Lisa Britt & Jerry Bartnik, Cass City
 Bruce Brown, Ubly, MI
 Kim & Cindy Brown, Columbiaville, MI
 Louise Buehrly & George Kuruzovich, Palmetto, FL
 Robert V. & Petra F. Chisholm, Caro, MI
 Dale & Patty Churchill, Deford, MI
 Sheryl Cleland, Saginaw, MI
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Cooper, South Lyon, MI
 Karen Diamond, Lapeer, MI
 Deb Forshee, Caro, MI
 Janet M. Garrett, Troy, MI
 Mike & Paula Green, Mayville, MI

Tobin & Kathryn Guinn, Decker, MI
 Marie Hobart & William Kadish Worcester, MA
 Greg & Jill Hunter, Livingston, TX
 Carolyn Longmuir, Box Elder, SD
 Donald & Carla McKimmy, Bad Axe, MI
 Ken & Theresa Micklash, South Lyon, MI
 Thomas Muto, Midland, MI
 Cheri Nitz, Sebewaing, MI
 Duane & Gail Osbourn, Macomb, MI
 Jim & Barbara Prill, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI
 R. & G. Bityk, Metamora, MI
 Robert Rolston, Gagetown, MI
 Dick Roth, Caseville, MI
 Ivernia Schwartz, Gagetown, MI
 Jo Ann Smith, Frankenmuth, MI
 Richard & Nancy Sylvester, Fairgrove, MI
 John Tyson & Sue Beck, Lenox, MI
 Thomas & Carol Upleger, Brockway, MI
 Raman Waltz, Mason, MI
 Barbara A. Weber, Winter Park, FL



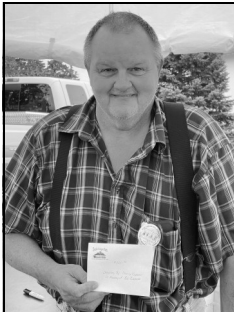
In Memoriam: The Honorable Judge John Marshall Brundage passed on April 17, 2021 at the age of 89. John was the grandson of John Munro, one of the two brothers who built the Thumb Octagon

Barn. John has been a very generous donor over the years and was instrumental in providing funding for the move of the Mast One Room School from Sebewaing in July of 2005. In June 2021, John's wife, Suzie donated several items including original tools used by John Munro.



In Memoriam: Curtis Bell formerly of Carthage, MO and recently, Maryville, TN, passed on August 22, 2021. Curtis and his wife, Mary, were host couples for many years starting in 2012 when they saw an ad in the Highway magazine and decided to come to a cooler location during the summer months. Curtis was an early riser and would open the Barn in the mornings. He loved to greet our visitors on the golf cart. It is important to have security on site, which was also an important component of their stay. Curtis and Mary loved to sit by a campfire at night and cook dinner and S'mores. We will certainly miss Curtis.

Donation in memory of Curtis Bell, one of our Host Couples given by George & Glenda Wilson. The Bells could always be seen walking hand in hand.



CONGRATULATIONS!! 2021 Raffle Prize Winners

1. \$500.00 Cash-Donated by Sherry Kappen in memory of Pat Gibbard-Winner-Dave McAlpine
2. Handmade Queen Size Quilt-Thumb Thimbles Quilt Guild Winner-Donna Thoma, Gaylord
3. John Deere 8320-R Pedal Tractor-Tri-County Equipment Winner-Bonnie Zeidler, Cass City
4. Handmade Full Size Quilt-Rosemary Quinn Winner-Janet Muntz, Cass City (bottom photo on left)
5. Case I-H Red Stake Wagon-Osentoski Farm Equipment, Bad Axe Winner-Sharon Whatling-Port Hope (bottom photo on right)
6. 31 Products-\$150.00 value-In memory of Tammy Bliss Winner-Mary Gray, Vassar
7. Ducks Unlimited Lawn Chairs-DU of Caro Winner-John Longmuir-Box Elder, SD
8. \$50.00 Cash-Vollmar Farms



- Winner-Tom Thompson, Caro
9. \$50.00 Cash-Stephanie Adams, Caro Winner-Arthur Spies, Imlay City
 10. Handmade Afghan-Donna Witkovsky Winner-Brenda Osentoski, Ubly



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Thumb Electric Cooperative Notice

We are happy to report that Thumb Electric Cooperative has tentatively planned their annual meeting on Saturday, June 11, 2022 at the Thumb Octagon Barn. We will need volunteers on site to help with a few minor details. Save the Date!

Annual Volunteer Picnic & Auction

The Annual Volunteer Picnic and Auction is scheduled for Sunday, June 12, 2022.

More information will follow at a later date on our FaceBook Page and Website.

Next Meeting :

The Executive Committee meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month at the Purdy Bank Building beginning in November 2021. Please check your e-mail for notices for School Tours, Regular Monthly or FFD Meetings.

Newsletter

Database and Labels.....David Eichler

Editing & Mailing.....Margaret Sergeant

Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam

Photos.....Connie Osentoski & Rose Putnam

Float at the Bean Festival Parade

Labor Day weekend was a busy time for everyone as we prepared for Fall Family Days. However, Jerry Bartnik and his two daughters, Jenna & Joslyn Bartnik along with Richard Britt took time to take our float, which was pulled by the Bartnik wrecker, to the Michigan Bean Festival Parade on Monday, September 6, 2021. It was a perfect day for the spectators to enjoy the parade and other activities in Fairgrove.

2022 Events

Open House Weekend will be held Saturday, July 30th and Sunday, July 31st. The Purdy Home will be featured for its 100th Birthday.

Tea Parties will be held in June, July and August. The dates will be announced at a later date on our website.

A Music Weekend with dancing is planned for July 16th & 17th. More details to follow on our website and next newsletter.