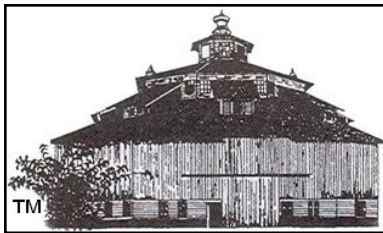


Thumb Octagon Barn News



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 2022

Executive Committee

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Marilyn Phillips

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Rose M. Putnam

Visit our website
thumboctagonbarn.org

Facebook
Thumb Octagon Barn
Agricultural Museum
989-665-0081

President's Message

From: Dennis Anderson

Greetings! I want to thank all of the Friends for your membership support. Without you the Thumb Octagon Barn would not be possible. For over 28 years it is people like you that have made this all possible. We deeply appreciate the volunteers that have stuck with us throughout the pandemic. We are forever grateful for your support. We together are moving forward. Do come and visit us. Our main concern is for the safety of our volunteers and patrons. Please use "common sense" when visiting. If you are sick, stay home. If you are unsure, get tested. We would love to see all of you.

Help Wanted for School Tours

Diane Rapson-Gabil is happy to report that as of the printing of this newsletter, there are 707 children registered for School Tours. The first meeting of the year was held at the Rawson Memorial Library in Cass City on February 7, 2022. **More volunteers are needed.** Maybe you've been thinking about it for awhile or have helped before and would like to come back. Please contact **Joan Merchant** at 989-872-3395 or 989-550-7855, or Joan's email: jrmerchant@charter.net. Thank you for your consideration.

House Repairs Begin

The Purdy Home is 100 years old this year and work has started on sanding, staining, polishing, and cleaning the floors and woodwork. Rick Murawski from Bulldog Cleaning and Tuning is pictured sanding the upstairs hallway floor. As with any older home repair, there are a

lot of challenges. The work will not be completed by Spring, but the house will be open for tours in May just in time for school tours.



More Fall Family Days Stories

Zellar Brothers



It is not often that one would see 2 young men interested in brooms. So our editor, Rose Putnam, just had to learn their story. These brooms were purchased from Henry Tschetter, the broom maker. Caleb,

on the right, is a taxidermist and is going to use his broom with the pheasant feather as a display at his business. Cody, on the left, is going to use his to sweep out his roadside stand in Lexington.

Quilts for the 2021 FFD Raffle

The quilt won by Donna Thoma of Gaylord was made by the Thumb Thimbles Quilt Guild of Kingston. **Ruth Ann Brown** made and cut the blocks for the "Infatuation Quilt". **Barb Howe, Connie Garry, Pam Lewis, Mabel Vassallo, Linda Rye** and **Sharon Phagan** all helped sew the blocks together. The queen size quilt was then machine quilted. We thank the Guild for their very generous donation. The quilt donated by **Rosemary Quinn** was made from fabric pieces cut by her mother, Anna Papp, from 1930's fabric. The pattern is "Orange Peel". The quilt was machine appliquéd and quilted. The quilt was won by Janet Muntz of Cass City. (Photo in Fall 2021 edition.) Thank you, Rosemary, for your very generous donation.

Everyone Loves A Parade

Everyone loves a parade, which is so true, especially one with tractors, steam engines and other great machines. **Corey Will**, who organizes the various entries each year, said there were anywhere from 45-55 entries again, which is about the average parade size. On the top far left is a very unique tractor. It is a 1914 Little Bull field tractor. Wow! Can you image seeing this in a corn field back in the day? Then on the bottom far left is another really interesting piece, a 1916 Case gas prairie tractor. Both of these tractors are owned by **Gary Sutherby**. To the immediate left is an orange model



G tractor used for vegetable growing. One of the crowd favorites is the steam engine in the center bottom and we cannot forget that women love to drive tractors, too. Below is a 1964 Ford.



Potatoes Donated to Local Food Pantries



During FFD this year, due to the lower number of attendees, not all of the potato digging demonstrations were held. Therefore, we had potatoes left in the field that needed picking. A decision was made to



donate the potatoes to local food pantries. On Monday, October 11th, **Louie Wehrman** drove the tractor with the one row harvester and **Terry Keinath** worked alongside to be sure all went well. Volunteers from the Thumb Octagon Barn, Revive Ministries in Cass City (**Gary Anderson**) and St. Christopher Parish in Caro (**Gary & Carol Becker, Cooper & Emmett Wasik & Pat Gettel**) came out to help. Over 800 pounds of potatoes were picked and packaged in no time with all the great help. St. Agatha Food Pantry in Gagetown, the Good Samaritan Group in Caro and St. Michael's Lutheran School in Richville were also recipients of potatoes.

New Souvenirs

Souvenir sales are a big part of fundraising during FFD. **Joan Koch**, our Treasurer and Souvenir Chair on the left, is showing our latest new bright blue T-shirt. There are many different



items to purchase all year long. On the right is **Patti Parker**, our Corresponding Secretary, helping with sales.



Potato Digging

Below from left to right are **Ron Ciesla**, and **Sandra & Terry Keinath**, who handle the potato digging, picking and sorting. Please note the sorghum crop on the left.



Shane Ross and **Dean Hutchinson** are demonstrating the extraction of honey from bee hives. The honey bees are important for the pollination of crops, on which our Thumb economy depends. Our visitors are always intrigued with this process.

The Blacksmith Shop is also a crowd favorite. The fire in the forge and the pounding of the anvil draw many visitors. **Low Martin** is chair of the shop, but is assisted with other blacksmiths during Fall Family Days. Pictured is **Shawn Baker** from Ortonville, MI.



Fall Weddings at the Barn



On Saturday, September 18, 2021, Lauren Hass and Nehemiah Messing from Bad Axe were joined in marriage at the Thumb Octagon Barn.

Pictured with the bride and groom is a cousin, Julia Howard. What a cute group of bridesmaids and flower girls!



It was a beautiful fall day at the Thumb Octagon Barn on October 2, 2021, for the wedding of Kimberly Cloud and Vic Becker. Family and friends



enjoyed the special atmosphere in the Barn. The "Friends" wish both couples many happy years together.



Lighted Float in Parades

The Thumb Octagon Barn site may be closed, but the volunteers are still busy. **Louis & Linda Wehrman, Wayne & Karen Lenton and Rebecca Allen** decorated our float for the Bad Axe Christmas parade on Saturday, November 27, 2021. Thanks to their efforts the float won the "Mayor's Choice Award".

John Lenton and Rebecca Allen pulled the float through the parade. This bright, awesome float (The black and white photo does not do it justice. It can be seen in color on our Facebook page.) was also taken to the Christmas In The Village parade in downtown Cass City on Saturday, December 4, 2021.



It's time for lunch!

It takes a lot of volunteers to feed the big crowd of people who come to FFD. **Charlie Wallace** from Cass City and eight of her friends took on the task of grilling and cooking the lunches in the Munro Building. The **Sandusky Knights of**

Columbus Council #4693

(pictured on the right is **Paul Guza** preparing an order) served up nachos and cheese and filled and served other lunch orders. They also cleared tables and kept the Munro Building neat and tidy for our visitors. All funds collected by the K of C go to charity. Thanks to all!



Host Couples Recognized

Our host couple, **Too Tall and Tammi Hensley** wanted to experience walking the Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day.



They had a great time and were so happy to be a part of this Michigan tradition. On their way back, they were following the path of the tornadoes, which were within 25-50

miles of them. Dennis Anderson was following their progress and kept in contact by phone. A special recognition was waiting for them at lunch on Wednesday when they returned. Tammi said, *"It was an honor to be recognized as decade long volunteers. We will be back next season. We love it at the Barn."*

Parking Volunteers

Ron "Too Tall" Hensley spent 90% of his time during FFD in the main parking lot across Richie Road. All went well with the help of the **Sanilac County Sheriff's Posse**. *"They were a tremendous help. I was pretty much busy most of the time solving problems."* **Tammi Hensley** was busy overseeing the student groups coming in to help. **Greg and Jill Hunter** worked in the field part of the time and then went to the handi-cap parking lot on Sunday. **Allie Tilt**, President of the Cass City FFA, worked tirelessly for two days by herself directing traffic to the fields and also helped Friday at the fish fry. **Kenny Western** also worked for three days directing traffic and helping with many other tasks as needed. Thank you, too, to those not named.

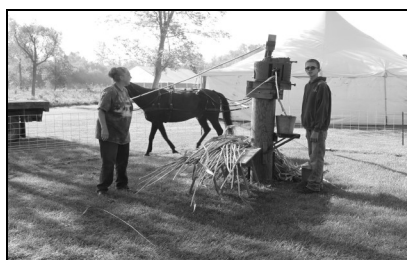
Live Demonstrations



The fields on the grounds were busy with demonstrations. Many hands are needed for the harvesting and baling of the wheat. Pictured above are **Russ & Keny Hazard & Corey Will**. Others that helped are **Walt Murawski, Dale & Kyle Will**. **RJ Henderson** ran the Rumley tractor and **Jim & Travis Albrecht** handled the steam engine necessary to operate the thrashing machine. Interestingly enough is that three of these teams are father and son teams.



The Sawmill is a very exciting place to spend some time during FFD. The huge saw blade in rotation and the sound of cutting wood are unlike any other sounds. In the background is the steam engine that is providing the energy to run the sawmill. A lot of time and effort is provided by the crew in preparation of FFD and during the weekend. Thank you, Crew!



Pictured above are **Kathy DeLong** and her grandson, **Caiden Parker**, manning the horse driven Sorghum press. The sorghum is grown on site and the crop managed by our volunteers, then cut to press. The final process is to boil the sorghum to get the syrup, which happens at the Sugar Shack.

The Apple Cider Mill is always full of activity. Pictured below is **Sheila Babcock**, wife of **Dave Babcock**, chair of the Cider Mill, who is loading apples on the elevator to the press. What a wonderful smell and then fresh cider to drink!



♪ School Days... School Days... Dear old golden rule days... ♪

The kids might not have been singing this song and doing a program on what school was like in the early 1900's but there were many memories shared during FFD 2021 of what life was like going to school in a one-room schoolhouse. Parents and grandparents were quick to point out the "board of education" and many families were surprised to learn



their elders had experienced that "dreaded board of education!" Schoolmarm, **Beth Brown**, also learned the history behind one of the carvings in a desk, when a visitor pointed to and told who carved the initial "n" and how the next year someone else tried to change it to an "a"! A map of Michigan hung on the bulletin board and attendees would "pin" where their one-room schoolhouse was located (had over 100 pins). One visitor had attended 2 one-room schoolhouses in different parts of the state.

Fall Family Days Observations

From the desk of Joan Koch, Treasurer: Sometimes you learn a lot from just listening to what is going on around you.

During Fall Family Days, I learned that our future volunteers are among us right now. So many were there with, NOT their parents, but with their Grandparents. Volunteering has seemed to have skipped a generation and will hopefully lead to a generation of very helpful young people.

The volunteer who pulled together so many Frankenmuth Credit Union workers is a Senior in high school, whose grandpa was a vendor and tractor driver.

The donuts are being made by Sharon Cummins' grandchildren (pictured on the right), with her guidance. They will be taking over in the years to come.

We lost our bean soup man, Dan Walz, just before Fall Family Days, but his family has stepped in and will take over for Dan. Because of their love of history, his children and grandchildren will carry on.

Youth volunteers brought animals into the barn and worked with them. We had 30 volunteers from local organizations: Cass City National Honor Society, Volleyball, FFA, and band; the Ugly FFA; the Unionville Sebawaing Area National Honor Society; and the Peck FFA (who had a goat that decided to take a walk-so cute!)



Some of the new members were there helping grandparents to be Vendors and Demonstrators. They are helping more than we know, assisting them with set up and sales. They are part of a more loving generation. Maybe Covid brought us all just a little closer.

A young new member signed up and said, "I just love this, I am so glad I came with my grandpa." He had a work apron on, so he had been out in the field somewhere.

The one observation I made was that the cell phones were out for taking pictures, not just for texting or scrolling on the internet.

Take a child to the children's play area, or for a ride in the barrel train. The children dug in corn and took shoes off to feel the texture of the grain. They washed clothes in a tub, and hung them to dry, pumped water into a pail, and rode on a straw bale with a saddle. They also tried out stilts, hula hoops, and crutches. The smiles are why we do what we do, with the love of the past.

Special Donations

Memorial Donation for Dan Toner and his beloved cat, Miss Kitty, from Kathy Toner of Cass City.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Anna Cooley from Tom & Liz Fritz of Gagetown.

Memorial Donation in Memory of our Faithful servant, Dan Walz, from Richard & Vera Wroblewski of Sebawaing.

Memorial Donation in Memory of James Daniel O'Rourke family from Lynne O'Rourke of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Marjorie Schwartz from Ivernia Schwartz, Michelle, Theresa, Brenda of Gagetown.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Dean Ellicott from Ivernia Schwartz, Michelle, Theresa, Brenda of Gagetown.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Yvonne Nye from Ivernia Schwartz, Michelle, Theresa, Brenda of Gagetown.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Eleanore Darmofal from Theresa Townsend of Galena, IL.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Dean Ellicott from Ron and Arloia Lutz of Sebawaing.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Dave Peyor, Sr. from Terry and Sandra Keinath, Reese.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Marjorie Schwartz from Mark and family from Shorewood, WI

Memorial Donation for Dawn J. Bauer of Bay City, daughter of Raymond E. Baur and the late Norma Baur, from Raymond E. Baur, Unionville.

Memorial Donation for Marjorie Schwartz from Richard and Barbara Taylor of Saginaw.

Memorial Donation for Marjorie Schwartz from Gerald and Suzanne Prich of Bad Axe.

In Memoriam

Our beloved former House Chair, Madelyn Skaggs, passed on December 1, 2021. Madelyn loved antiques and had a passion for the Purdy Home. She was involved with major restorations in the house. She personally designed and painted the very unique floor design in the kitchen and downstairs hallway with some help from Duaine Phillips. "Maddie" dedicated many years to the care of the house and hosted many activities there. We have great memories of Maddie working on her hands and knees cleaning and scrubbing. There was no task too big or too small for her to handle.

A memorial was received from George & Glenda Wilson, Henderson, NV in Maddie's name.



George Gray Memorial Update

Funds donated in memory of George Gray, who loved working in the sawmill, have included new LED lighting in the sawmill, a hydraulic bottle jack and a Stihl battery powered chain saw. All items were greatly appreciated by the sawmill crew.

Thinking of Margaret Sergeant

Margaret has been slowly easing back this winter from her workload. Wow, what a resource of information! She can talk forever about the history of the Thumb Octagon Barn and all the people who volunteered there. She has made a personal contact with each member over the years. We salute Margaret for her endless commitment to the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn. You may send a special greeting to Margaret at 4675 Williamson Rd., Gagetown, MI 48735.

Museum Donations

Estate of Fred Aven, Akron—Wooden wringer washer, gas stove toast maker, seed bag, kitchen scales, wooden sleeve ironing board, iron hammer and stakes & metal hangers.

Estate of Judge John Brundage—Axes, hay fork, hand tools, mallet, saws, scythe, stretcher, tool box, vice, chisel, hammer, draw knife, level, vegetable slicer, wood plane, folding ruler, hand saw & framing square. Several of the tools are the original tools used by his grandfather, John Munro, who helped build the Thumb Octagon Barn.

Leo Coascho, Pigeon—Buzz saw and side scraper

Sandra Finkbeiner, Caro—Juicer

Terry & Sandra Keinath, Reese—Washer parts

Warren Krohn, Elkton—Ontario grain drill

Bill LaFave, Applegate—Myers water pump

Everett Muter, Pt. Hope—Electric tea pot

Leslie Randall, Kingston—Potato planter, seed planter, ice pick, shoe repair kit & walk behind plow

Tom Thompson, Caro—International piano roll

Bruce Turner, Akron—Crate of misc items, hay knives, line shafts, corn planter & bagging scales

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Corner Café, Caro Display

Our traveling photo “Awakened Light” taken in 2017 has been on display since August 2021 at the Corner Café in Caro. We would like to thank the owners, **Angie & Ken Gark**, for allowing us to promote the Barn and Fall Family Days.



Next Meetings :

The Executive Committee meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month at the Purdy Bank Building in Gagetown.
School Tours meetings are scheduled at 12:30 PM on March 7, April 4, and May 2 at the Rawson Library in Cass City. All other meetings will be announced at a later date.

Newsletter

Database and Labels.....David Eichler
Editing.....Grace Janowski
Newsletter Coordinator & Layout.....Rose Putnam
Photos.....Connie Osentoski & Rose Putnam

Busy With Repairs



ways a challenge. Gerald came up the idea of a charging station for “year round” maintenance. It will save on the life of the very expensive batteries. Thank you, Gerald.

Gerald Auten has been busy this past winter. Our traveling Fall Family Days sign needed some repair work on the bed and the cover. Please look closely at the photo on the left and you will see a tarp rolled up at the end of the trailer - a very ingenious way to protect the sign. The charging of the golf carts is al-



Split Rail Fence Repair

The “Boys Day Out Crew” came up with a great idea for the badly needed repair to the split rail fence. Treated wood posts were split and painted to match the current split rails. These will certainly last a lot longer and hold up the rails more firmly. Thank you **Lee Sowden** and **Norm Parker** for all your efforts.

