



Wayne Liechty and Leora Gerber Recognized

Retiring Kidron Community Historical Society Board Members Wayne Liechty [1988-2019, 30 years as president] and Leora Gerber [1988-2020] were feted for their long-time commitments to the KCHS at a reception held at the Kidron Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall on Oct. 21. The crowd enjoyed pie and ice cream before Board President Art Neuenschwander introduced the program emcee, Bruce Detweiler Breckbill, first Heritage Center director [2000-2006].

WAYNE

Bruce stated that Wayne knows much about the Kidron-Sonnenberg community and about collecting unique items, and so perceives that since likely “No one else has as many collections, Wayne is the expert.” Wayne would say, “I have one of everything except the things I have two of.” He’s humble, and often downplays his leadership, saying, “I cannot plan between a late breakfast and an early lunch.” However, there’s no doubt he is able to get things done. Bruce appreciated Wayne’s forthright approach, and accepted sometimes being told, “You are not right.”

Prudy Steiner, past Heritage Center director [2006-2016], appreciated Wayne’s almost daily quick in-and-out stops at the Heritage Center, even as he had many “irons in the fire.” She was awed by his knowledge of the community and the people with whom he had developed relationships. Wayne’s vision for the Heritage Center and Sonnenberg Village is a continued focus and the reason many valuable artifacts are in the KCHS collection.

A long-time collector and friend of both Wayne and the KCHS, Paul Locher extolled Wayne’s leadership and surmised that many of those in attendance had their arms in slings at one time or another, due to Wayne’s ability to twist arms. Paul recalled the beginnings of the KCHS when artifacts were collected and stored in various locations as discussions began with Wayne, Paul Neuenschwander, Celia Lehman, and Ruth Moser in determining how to create a museum in Kidron.

Paul recalled Wayne’s tenacity in telling of their dismantling beams of the Bixler House in preparation for storage before reconstruction. A crane had been contracted and then a dangerous lightning storm moved in before they were finished. Paul suggested they should seek shelter. However, Wayne observed, “We got this crane and operator for a good



Leora Gerber and Wayne Liechty served a combined 63 years on the Kidron Community Historical Society’s board of directors.

price. I am afraid I will not be able to get him back if we quit!”

Wayne thanked all who have helped to ensure the success of the KCHS, board members and his Lord and Savior who providentially placed him in Kidron. He also thanked his late wife, Joanna, observing that “sometimes I stayed a little too long” in fulfilling his KCHS duties. He also thanked past and present board members who believed in the KCHS’s vision and mission, Paul Neuenschwander and Delvin Nussbaum, and the dedication of Celia Lehman and Ruth Moser in educating themselves in how to operate a proper museum.

Others he mentioned included John and Janet Sprunger for providing the land and building to establish the museum, Glenn Gerber who was first on his list to call when he needed a grunt worker or something made; Ray Leisy who he’s known since 12 years old, for his dedicated work as the Sonnenberg Village project manager; Jay Lehman for providing seed money; the Leonard and Nada Geiser family for making land available for the Sonnenberg Village; and Roger and Betty Geiser for much involvement, particularly in establishing the genealogy library at the Heritage Center.

LEORA

Prudy Steiner described Leora as a “genealogy geek” with amazing knowledge and the ability to easily tell Heritage

Swiss Speakers Interviewed



In late August, linguists from Penn State Andrew Hoffman and Robert Klosinski, returned to the Sonnenberg Village Welcome Center and along with a professor and his assistant at the University of Zurich, conducted interviews with local Swiss speakers Lloyd Lehman and Clair Bixler. Others who participated included Davey Amstutz, Amos Geiser, Ron Geiser, Wallace Gerber, Cliff Lehman, Steve Lehman, Clarence Neuenschwander, Glen Neuenschwander, Harlan Neuenschwander, Ken Neuenschwander, Virginia Shetler, Virgene Steffen, Barb Steiner, Clarence Steiner, Oren Steiner and Mel Wyss.

Pennsylvania Dutch Speakers Sought

Penn State University has contacted the KCHS for help with surveying speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch. One does not need to be Amish to take the survey, but anyone who speaks PD or even has a connection with it (e.g. parents spoke it, etc.) could provide helpful info.

Printed copies of the survey are available at the Heritage Center or may be accessed at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oIBcHgXSWt3U4sGx576g1i4ouTBr7VKt5jiDKbwQKtQ/edit>. To complete the survey online, visit https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1YNtS4yUgheMA17.

If you have any questions about this project or your participation therein, please reach out to the point of contact (Rose Fisher, raf5568@psu.edu, 814-826-9675).

Liechty, Gerber, continued

Center visitors about their ancestors, direct them to family genealogy books, and print out pedigree charts. Leora plans to continue volunteering at the Heritage Center, assisting with accessioning and aiding visitors in the use of the database to research their heritages.

Paul Locher called Leora a “real sweetheart” who’s built a large personal collection of Kidron-Sonnenberg memorabilia and became adeptly self-educated in museum work. Paul remembers when he worked in the Orrville office of *The Daily Record* that Leora would often stop by his office to tell him what the *Dalton Gazette-Kidron News* was printing and likely to check if the hand-colored fraktur she gave him was still hanging on his office wall. It was, and since his retirement, now hangs in his home office.

Bruce reminded us that Leora is a “storehouse of information, even though she did not grow up in the Kidron-Sonnenberg community, is very frugal, has many collections, maintains a deep loyalty to the KCHS, and possesses lots of tenacity in acquiring volunteers for the Heritage Center.

Leora explained that the reason she was with the KCHS for so many years was because each time she mentioned moving on, Paul Neuenschwander encouraged her to serve another three years on the board—a stretch of 32 years [1988–2020]. In Leora’s afterthoughts, she observed that a pedigree chart could be created for everyone in attendance, except for perhaps three persons, thanks to Roger Geiser and his work in establishing the Kidron database in 1995, with now over 680,000 names and continuing to grow. She added, “As long as they do not take away my keys, I’ll continue to work at the Heritage Center.”

Dick Wolf, current director of the Heritage Center since 2017, said working with both Wayne and Leora has been a pleasure. Wayne is down to earth and knowledgeable, and Leora is known for her vast knowledge of Kidron-Sonnenberg genealogy and the ins and outs of the Roger N. Geiser Family History Library. “We’re created to be in relationships with God and each other, and Wayne and Leora have exemplified these relationships.”

Art affirmed that he has seen in action the things that were pointed out by Bruce, Prudy and Paul. Wayne and Leora continue to hang out at the Heritage Center and Sonnenberg Village, as well as in the community. Both Wayne Liechty and Leora Gerber are Kidron-Sonnenberg community treasures and priceless assets to the Kidron Community Historical Society.

Local Talent On Stage

Kidron Community Historical Society in partnership with Orrville Community Theatre



(OCT) will present *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* by Joe Landry, December 10 and 11 at 7:00pm and December 12 at 2:00pm in the Welcome Center at Sonnenberg Village.

Tickets will go on sale in mid-November. Check “Events” on the KCHS webpage for details.



Christmas Hymn Sing

Sonnenberg Village will host a Christmas Hymn Sing on Friday, December 17, 2021 at 7:00pm. Soloists from The Voice Studio Singers, classically trained by Lorna Parks from Dalton, and choristers from local churches will lead us in an evening of celebrating the birth of our Lord. Please mark this special event on your calendar!

New Members

Joyce (Brubaker) Barg, Los Alamitos CA
Tom Bernard, West Jefferson OH
Gary Hofstetter, Littleton CO

UPCOMING EVENTS

SONNENBERG VILLAGE WELCOME CENTER

December 10 & 11, 7:00 pm – *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*

December 12, 2:00 pm – *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*

Dec 17, 7:00 – *Christmas Hymn Sing*

Sonnenberg Village

Work Days In the Village are Productive Days

The third quarter of 2021 has been a busy time again in the Sonnenberg Village. We began by building a workshop in the basement of the Welcome Center. Since Christa Wolf expanded the theater and music productions, we also built a props storage area in the basement.

The Tschantz/Schantz family has retained the Tschantz Cabin for us. They also provided the stain and we would like to thank Wooster Brush for donating the paint brushes.

We've built new doors for the storage shed and made general repairs throughout the village.

We welcomed teachers and students from Central Christian School for their Community Service Day. They built a porch roof for the Zuercher/Garden House. They also put up fencing around many of our smaller trees to protect them from deer this winter. The students also generally cleaned up the village in preparation for the winter.

The Moser Buggy Shop is now in place, but we need to close in the front in preparation for winter. In the spring our work group will replace and repair the areas in need on the building.

Abe Troyer is working on the Gerber Barn; we don't currently have any responsibility for work on the barn until his work is completed.

Please check our website for pictures and further information. To reach the website, use your browser to search for Sonnenberg Village. The site also contains news and information about the Heritage Center.



Tschantz family members John Schantz, Janet Eldridge, Vic Schantz, David Tschantz, Peter Schantz, Grayden Tschantz and Ben Tschantz spruced up the Tschantz Log Cabin.



A crew designated some fine fall days to work on the restoration of Moser Buggy Shop.



A service-minded group of workers from the Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, recently worked alongside Fred Hershberger and Ray Leisy in Sonnenberg Village.

BEET CONTEST WINNERS

Largest Lutz Beet: Ivan Weaver
Largest Organic Lutz Beet: Ivan Weaver
Largest Luscious Lutz Beet: Joyce Weaver
Best Heirloom Beet: Allyson Leisy

Best Appetizer/Side: Judy Amstutz
Best Salad: Beth Jones
Best Dessert: no entries



Belita Stout's Suzuki Violin Studio students performed in the Welcome Center at the Beet Festival.

Kidron Community Historical Society
P.O. Box 234
Kidron, Ohio 44636

330-857-9111

kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com

www.kidronhistoricalsociety.org

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FALL 2021



Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center

13153 Emerson Road • Kidron, Ohio

OPEN APRIL through OCTOBER • SATURDAYS • 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CLOSED NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY, and MARCH

The Heritage Center is closed November through April, but welcomes appointments to visit the museum and Sonnenberg Village.

Call and leave a message at 330-857-9111 for information or to schedule an appointment.

The Kidron Community Historical Society of Kidron, Ohio, founded in 1977, operates under the nonprofit charter granted by the State of Ohio. Your tax deductible gifts will help secure the future of the Historical Society and give you a part in preserving the heritage of this unique community.

Administration

Board President	Art Neuenschwander	Board Member	Diane Sommer
Board Vice President	Steve Gerber	Board Member	Fritz Sprunger
Board Treasurer.....	Richard Nussbaum	Heritage Center Director	Richard Wolf
Board Secretary	Gloria Kaufmann	Sonnenberg Village Project Director.....	Ray Leisy
Board Member	Diane Miller	Bit o' Vit Editor.....	Judie Nussbaum

Kidron Community Historical Society Membership

Annual memberships are due in January and expire on December 31. Contact the Heritage Center if uncertain of your membership status.

Name _____

Address _____

Type of Membership _____ New Renewal

Membership Fee \$ _____ General Donation \$ _____

Would you like a receipt? Yes No *Thank you!*

Individual Annual Member \$20

Husband and Wife Annual Member..... \$35

Organization Annual Member..... \$50

Individual Life Member \$300

Heritage Club Member \$1000 or more

Send checks to Kidron Community Historical Society • Box 234 • Kidron, OH 44636