Bit o' Vit

Volume 34 Winter 2022 Issue 1

The Kidron Community Historical Society Newsletter

Sonnenberg Village

Where We Were and Where We Are Going

A century home and a spring house pulled southwest out of a valley, a blacksmith shop transported north through the town of Kidron, a church hauled from the east through mud and fields, along with the dismantling and reconstruction of a log cabin, buggy shop and a barn have culminated in the establishment of Sonnenberg Village. The visions and challenges were lofty, and we can expect more to come.

Sonnenberg Village was developed on a five-acre plot on Hackett Road just north of Kidron for the purpose of preserving and maintaining historical buildings unique to the Kidron-Sonnenberg community. Sustainable-living methods that feature the use of renewable energy, green building technology and sustainable gardening and landscaping techniques are practiced at the village.

When The Kidron Community Historical Society was considering ways to celebrate its 30th anniversary, the Leonard and Nada Geiser Family decided to offer the Tschantz Cabin on their farm to the society at no cost, and to donate two acres of ground on Hackett Road for its relocation.

While considering the offer, the society trustees agreed that they had more than a half-dozen available structures that would fit the vision of establishing a Sonnenberg Village: the Saurer Blacksmith Shop, the Gerber Barn, the Sonnenberg School House, the third Sonnenberg Church building, a buggy shed, the Lehman House and Spring House, and the John Bixler House (which was already in storage), After consideration of the feasibility of creating a village to hold all of these available buildings, the society approached the Geiser family who then sold three additional acres to the society.

A committee appointed by the society spent the winter of 2008 planning, obtaining permits and redesigning the flow of surface water to suit the EPA before commencing plans to relocate the Lehman House and Spring House and the Tschantz Cabin onto the grounds.

While the Tschantz Cabin was being torn down and then reconstructed, the 160-year-old Lehman House located on Goudy Road was pulled up the hill and across two roads, then the Saurer Blacksmith Shop in downtown Kidron was transported up the Kidron Road and over to the village. Next on the list of buildings to relocate was the Sonnenberg Church. After cutting a path through a woods, it was pulled across Hackett Road, through the Sonnenberg Mennonite Church parking lot, west through a field of grass and mud and then across Zuercher Road to the village.

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Annual Meeting

CANCELED

The Kidron Community Historical Society's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the Thursday, February 3 KCHS board meeting at 7:00 at the Sonnenberg Village Welcome Center. In addition to reports, officers will be affirmed. The meeting will be open to anyone wishing to attend.

The annual meeting minutes and financial report will be available to anyone submitting a request to Dick Wolf at the Heritage Center. Any questions can be sent to Dick at PO Box 234, Kidron OH 44636 or email at kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com.

Facelift for the Heritage Center

She needs a little more than soap and water. The board has recognized that the Heritage Center needs a little spiffing up to keep her in tip-top shape.

Inside the museum, the second floor ceiling needs a fresh coat of paint, and after power washing and some cosmetic repairs, the exterior is scheduled to be painted.

The 2021 year-end drive brought in $6,500 toward the facelift. Your help with the balance of $13,500 would be greatly appreciated.

Donations may be sent to KCHS, PO Box 234, Kidron OH 44636 with a note designating your contribution toward the Heritage Center facelift.

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Mabel Warfel, Orrville
Wayne & Mary Wengerd, Dalton
Harry & Meg Wilkins, Dalton
Steve & Joy Yoder, Apple Creek
Doris Zuercher, Orlando FL

Heritage Center Volunteers

Enos & Judy Amstutz
Marianne Cameron
Nancy Ganyard
Amos & Erma Geiser
Roger Geiser
Ron & LaVera Geiser
Leora Gerber
Glenn Kaufmann
Nancy King
Steve & Elaine Lehman
Ray Leisy
Wayne Liechty
Bill & Kay Medford
Diane Miller
Art Neuenschwander
Clarence & Esther Neuenschwander
Becky Oyer
Will & Sue Schloneger
Carolyn Shoup
Fritz Sprunger
Ann Troyer
Meg Wilkins
Andrew Wolf
Christa Wolf
Sharon Wolf
Carol Yoder

Sonnenberg Village Volunteers

Janet Eldridge
Jon Fielitz
Sandy Gordon
Rachel Hofstetter & Jim Swartzentruber
Jim Holzaepfel
Dakota Kerby
John Klingler
Cliff Lehman
Ray & Allyson Leisy
Nancy Lilburn
Eric Mast
Dan Miller
Walter Mullet
Merv Nolt
Ray Norr
Rick Rindchen
Vic Schantz
John Schantz
Peter Schantz
Ben Schantz
Roy Steiner
Marv & Lorie Troyer
David Tschantz
Grayden Tschantz
Christa & Andrew Wolf
Joe Wolf

Central Christian School Community Service Day
Bob Troyer
Marlin Troyer
Von Schrock
Rocky Favia
Drew Fisher
Alex Miller
Nathan Stjernholm

Businesses/Organizations
88 Keys Piano Tuning
Abe Troyer LLC
Emanuel Church
Gerber Lumber
Gerber Wood
Kidron Auction
Kidron Electric
Mast Paving
Miller Roofing
MW Robinson
P Graham Dunn
Schantz Organ Co.
Schloneger's Ice Cream
Sonnenberg Church Food Service
Trinity Church Wooster
Ventrac
Wooster Brush

New Members

Dudley Hartel, Comer GA
John & Becky Hostetler, Dalton
Bethany Lehman, West Salem
Eric L. Mast, Orrville
L. Rex & Diane Miller, Smithville
John Neuenschwander, Manheim PA

UPCOMING EVENTS

KCHS Annual Meeting: February 3, 2022, 7:00 pm

SONNENBERG VILLAGE WELCOME CENTER

Sonnenberg Village

Faithful Volunteers Show Up On Tuesdays

Ray Leisy and his crew usually take December through March off from working in Sonnenberg Village, but they didn't have that luxury this year since there is so much to do.

In the Welcome Center they fully furnished the carpenter shop in the basement and put it to good use by constructing walls to separate the shop from the rest of the basement in an effort to contain the sawdust. Another room was constructed in the basement of the Welcome Center for storage of props from the increasing number of plays. They also installed a sump pump to eliminate ground water and prevent any flooding, although this year that only happened once since measures were taken outside to decrease potential flooding. Now they are able to power-wash the floor as there is a more efficient way to drain the water.

Work has begun on the Gerber Barn. Footers have been poured and the timber framing has been raised to the barn floor with some blocking used on the sides and for the bank barn side. Work has been halted temporarily because of the snow and drifting along with the cold temperatures.

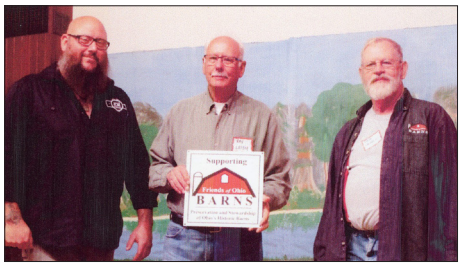
The Moser Buggy Shop is in place with a new metal roof. Further work on that building will be finished by the Tuesday work group of faithful volunteers as soon as weather permits. Thanks to Rex Raber, we have a photo of what the shop looked like when it was purchased by his father, Arnold. The objective is to restore the building to an accurate representation of the photo. On completion it will house a complete print shop.

Be sure to check "Sonnenberg Village" on our website for progress and coming events.

Moser Buggy Shop Restoration

About $10,000 is needed for Ray Leisy's Sonnenberg Village construction crew to complete the Moser Buggy Shop restoration by pouring the concrete floor, restoring window frames, and finishing the inside carpentry.

Donations may be sent to KCHS, PO Box 234, Kidron OH 44636 with a note designating your contribution toward the completion of the Moser Buggy Shop.



Friends of Ohio Barns president Caleb Miller; Ray Leisy, Sonnenberg Village project manager; and Dave Hamblin, FOB picnic coordinator, at a "thank you" presentation to Ray for hosting the FOB annual picnic October 2, 2021 at Sonnenberg Village. The plaque will be displayed in the Gerber Barn.

VILLAGE continued from pg 1

The Bixler House, which had been dismantled several years prior and kept in storage, was reconstructed in spite of a minor collapse and an attack by raccoons.

After 15 years, Sonnenberg Village was ready to celebrate the progress of the mammoth project with the completion of seven of the eight buildings originally targeted in 2008. The eighth building, the Sonnenberg School, was not available to become part of the village; it has been remodeled into a home. In addition, the Zuercher House has been added to the village.

Sonnenberg Village is not just a collection of buildings, but landscaping, gardens and an arboretum have been created to fulfill the vision of an attractive and functioning village.

Sometimes it has been said that historical societies in general support and preserve the history of everyone and everything but their own. Sonnenberg Village is truly an exception because the village is a living testament to the people of Sonnenberg, Jericho and Kidron who came before us and made this community their home.

Some projects require that we hire help to do the work because of the size and complexity of the project. We have been keeping track of our skilled volunteers who have helped on the buildings starting with Ernie Geiser and Leonard Geiser with their competing tractors, moving dirt around the grounds when we first began preparing the site. We estimate that in the last 15 years we have received over 20,000 volunteer hours in help from many people in our area and even some from far away.

In 2021 we had 52 paid village building rentals. In the summer of 2022, the blacksmiths plan not only to be in full operation in the Saurer Blacksmith Shop, but to take on small metal-working jobs to bring additional income to the village.

Looking back, it has been a short 15 years, but it is amazing to stand at the entrance on Hackett Road and look down the village driveway to the Lehman House and realize it and seven other structures live on what was a cornfield just 15 years ago.

The KCHS appreciates and thanks everyone in the Kidron-Sonnenberg area for your participation in visioning and

Kidron Community Historical Society
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Kidron, Ohio 44636

330-857-9111

kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com
www.kidronhistoricalsociety.org

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WINTER 2022

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 Vice President ..... Steve Gerber
Board Treasurer..... Richard Nussbaum
Board Secretary ..... Gloria Kaufmann
Board Member ..... Diane Miller
Board Member ..... Diane Sommer
Board Member ..... Fritz Sprunger
Heritage Center Director ..... Richard Wolf
Sonnenberg Village Project Director ..... Ray Leisy
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