



## 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

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](mailto: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.

## 2021 KCHS Donors

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 Village Printing, Kidron  
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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 Neuschwander  
 Clarence & Esther Neuschwander  
 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 Fieltz  
 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  
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 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  
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 Rocky Favia  
 Drew Fisher  
 Alex Miller  
 Nathan Stjernholm

Businesses/Organizations  
 88 Keys Piano Tuning  
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 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 Neuschwander, 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



## 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.

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.



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**  
**P.O. Box 234**  
**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 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	<i>Bit o' Vit</i> 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