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The Kidron Community Historical Society Newsletter

Kidron Auction Established in 1923 by Cy Sprunger



Buyers and sellers at the Kidron Auction in 1936.

“Seven-hundred and fifty? I have seven-hundred. Seven-fifty? Once, twice.” The gavel bangs on the edge of the auction box. “Sold! \$700. Next lot #87.” So goes the chant at a typical sale on the Kidron Auction grounds, whether it be for livestock in the original auction ring in the barn, hay and straw, or estate and fundraising auctions in the comfortable Sprunger Building.

The Kidron Auction, established in 1923 by Silas “Cy” Sprunger, is considered to be Ohio’s oldest auction, and has been an integral contributor to the Kidron economy for 100 years. The Sprunger family promoted the building of the softball field north of the square, headed the construction of pool on the auction grounds for water to be used for fire protection, constructed a lounge on the auction grounds for small community events, and sponsored machinery sales to benefit the Kidron Volunteer Fire Department.

According to kidronauction.com, “In 1918 a group of local farmers and businessmen held their first auction at the Jacob Moser barn located on the square in Kidron. These monthly sales were not as successful as had been hoped, so in late 1923 they offered to sell the “Company” to a young local

auctioneer named S.C. “Cy” Sprunger. Cy told them he didn’t have much money to invest; they asked him if \$5 would be too much for the auction box and all the goodwill that went with it. They made a deal, and thus Cy always said that he bought the business for a five dollar bill and built it into a multimillion dollar business serving Ohio farmers with the best in competitive livestock marketing service.”

In 1938, when the Moser barn and open outdoor pens were no longer large enough to accommodate the growing auction, Cy designed and built a large sale pavilion. It allowed the sale to be inside and featured an efficient layout that included a scale so livestock could be sold by weight rather than by the head. Buyers who continue to congregate weekly on the pavilion’s tiered seating for Thursday auctions can see a large painting of Cy’s beloved stallion, St. Mark, hanging honorably over the auctioneer’s box.

Cy was well known for his bid-calling skill. On June 15, 1933, he set a world’s record, selling 101 calves in 17 minutes and 15 seconds—an average of one calf in a bit more than 10 seconds. Buyers continue to congregate weekly on the pavilion’s wooden deep-tiered seating for the Thursday auctions.

After Cy’s passing in 1956, the auction was managed by Earl Sprunger, Cy’s brother and also an auctioneer, and Russ Beals, Cy’s long-time office manager. In 1973, John and Janet Sprunger took ownership of the Kidron Auction, and gradually added more land and buildings and created a premier facility for the local and state-wide auction community. John acknowledges, “I didn’t know the nitty-gritty of a sale, but did a fast learn with good mentors.” John continues as owner and operator of the auction. During the past 50 years, he has found ways to grow the business, including the addition of hay and straw auctions on Thursdays, and building the Sprunger Building, a comfortable facility for benefit and contracted auctions.



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Kidron Auction: continued from pg 1

In 1993 John and Janet generously donated land and the former Lehman Auto Service structure along Emerson Road to the Kidron Community Historical Society where the Heritage Center museum and Roger N. Geiser Family History Library are located.

John and Janet raised their family of three children in Kidron, and are treasured for their care and contributions to the growth and improvement of our small community in southeast Wayne County.

The Kidron Auction held a 100th anniversary auction and celebration on June 15. Among the many past and present employees the Sprungers honored was one who has been with the auction for over 60 years, and others nearly as long as John's 50 years.

While John remains the boss, 44 employees answer to him. John either spends time at the auction or converses by phone and acknowledges that with the many long-standing employees, the auction runs smoothly even when he is not on the grounds. John said, "Without the Amish crew, it would be hard to continue to operate. They are available and efficient in handling livestock, in part due to having grown up on farms and learning how to properly manage livestock."



John and Janet's children, Jedd, Janell and Janeen, joined with 250-300 people in celebrating Kidron Auction's 100th anniversary.



A Thursday livestock auction in progress in the Sale Pavilion.

John has been described as "one of a kind. One of the friendliest people you could ever meet! He goes above and beyond for his community here in Kidron. Anyone that knows him knows how kind and genuine this man is."

The Sprungers are looking forward to passing on the auction gavel, as it were, while appreciating the opportunity to be involved in celebrating the Kidron Auction's 100 years in the Kidron-Sonnenberg community. Congratulations, John, Janet and the Kidron Auction company for your commitment and vision for a successful livestock auction located in the heart of Kidron.

Visit the Kidron Celebrates display at the Heritage Center to learn more about the Kidron Auction, the Kidron Merchants softball team championships, and to view quilts and other memorabilia significant to the Kidron-Sonnenberg community.

Sonnenberg Children's Theatre Production | August 10 and 11

Recess!

Sonnenberg Children's Theatre will present a one-act musical comedy titled *Recess!* by Keith Jackson and adapted by Christa Wolf. Set in a one-room school house, a substitute teacher is called in to finish out the school year with a group of ornery students who are doing their best to avoid being promoted to the next grade. Can the new teacher inspire them before the final exam? Come and see!

Thursday, August 10 and Friday August 11 at 7:00 pm. \$5 per person, children under 5 are free.

KCHS Annual Meeting Held

The annual meeting was held in conjunction with the members's banquet on May 9 at the Kidron Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. After brief KCHS annual reports by Board President Art Neuenschwander, Heritage Center Director Dick Wolf, Secretary Gloria Kaufmann and Treasurer Joan Nussbaum, the Central Christian School Varsity Singers presented a short program. The new Kidron Celebrates display at the Heritage Center was open following the conclusion of the banquet.

UPCOMING SONNENBERG VILLAGE EVENTS

JULY 25 | 7:00

Sonnenberg Village

WCHS Community Band Lawn Concert

Bring lawn chairs or blankets

AUGUST 10 & 11 | 7:00

Sonnenberg Children's Theater presents *Recess!*

AUGUST 12 | 9:00 - 3:00

Sonnenberg Village Homecoming

OCTOBER 21 | 9:00 - 2:00

Beef Festival

Sonnenberg Village Homecoming

Thursday August 10

7:00 pm Sonnenberg Children's Theatre present's Recess!

Friday August 11

7:00 pm Sonnenberg Children's Theatre present's Recess!

Saturday August 12

9:00 am Buildings open for tours and food vendors open

10:00 am Schantz Organ Company's 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Tschantz immigration history and the Schantz Organ Company in the Nussbaum/Gerber Barn

11:00 am Schantz Organ Hymn Sing in the Nussbaum/Gerber Barn

12:00 noon Orrville Community Band in the Welcome Center

1:00 pm Old-time baseball game between the Smithville Stars and the Kidron Nine

3:00 pm All events close

All of the homecoming events will take place on the grounds of Sonnenberg Village. Check our website and social media sites for further details.

July 25 | 7:00 pm

Community Band Concert

The Wayne County Historical Society Community Band will perform at a lawn concert at Sonnenberg Village on Tuesday, July 25, 7:00 pm. The band's selections will include marches, show tunes and more. Bring a chair or blanket to the "rain or shine" event. In case of rain, the concert will be held in the Welcome Center.



The Nussbaum Summer House was successfully moved from the Junior and Kristi Nussbaum farm on Nussbaum Road to Sonnenberg Village. It will be set on the original stone foundation.



The Bixler House has been retrofitted to accommodate Hope's House. A dedication of the venture was held in June. Hope's House, managed by Julie Kerby and her group of volunteers, stores a wide variety of items to outfit children being taken into foster homes.



Reed Organ Festival

Celebrating our Musical Heritage at the Sonnenberg Village Homecoming

Join us as we showcase the Schantz Organ Company's history, legacy, and music to commemorate 150 years in business.

Saturday, August 12, 2023, from 10 am-1 pm

The Barn at Sonnenberg Village, 13497 Hackett Road, Kidron, OH 44606



Annual Beet Festival | October 21

How Are Your Beets Growing?

9:00 am Contest Entries Open

All Buildings Open

11:00 - 1:00 Music

11:00 Entries close for judging

12:00 Winners announced, prizes awarded

2:00 pm Buildings close

BEET CONTEST CATEGORIES

- largest Lutz beet
- largest organic Lutz beet
- most luscious Lutz beet
- best heirloom beet
- best beet appetizer/side
- best beet salad
- best beet dessert



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

330-857-9111

kidronheritagecenter@gmail.com

www.kidronhistoricalsociety.org

Address Service Requested

SUMMER 2023



Nonprofit
Organization
Postage Paid
Wooster, Ohio
44691
Permit No. 228

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 March, 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.....	Joan 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