

The Old House Guild of Sandusky

SUMMER 2024 NEWS FOR MEMBERS 419-627-0640



Guild Offers Garden Tour

Garden Tour Committee: Mary Truka, Suzanne Stuck & Linda Howell

Let us start by saying, if you didn't make it to the Garden Tour in June, you really missed seeing a high quality and variety of gardens in our community.' Our host property owners provided such wonderful variety of plants, garden types, interesting décor, plant knowledge but most of all, they made all our guests feel welcome. The statistics are as follows:

211 patrons

Representing 4 states

Ranging in age 8 months – one beautiful lady at 102 yr.

31 guests won over \$700 in donated door prizes

This year's tour consisted of Kim & Steve Thomas on Columbus Ave. with their relaxing patio that screams "let's celebrate something!" The yard continues as far as the eye can see beyond the patio to reveal beautiful plants in vibrant colors. They even had all the trees labeled so it was a real learning experience for all to enjoy.

Tim & Betsy Berkey, also on Columbus Ave. showed off their beautiful garden. It featured every color in the rainbow of plants and flowers that created a perfect pollinator butterfly garden. The landscaping was a perfect complement to their lovely 1880 Victorian Italianate home. Some guests were lucky enough to view their latest project of a 'Speakeasy' in the basement of the home.

Moving on, Joe & Sue Karis on Central Ave. made everyone feel welcome in what Sue calls their 'Zen Garden. Both are very talented and have created masterpieces of artwork to complement the plants. We are certain that when this duo entertains company in the beautiful setting they created—the guests will never want to leave.

Then there was a gentleman who we refer to as the Guild's personal plant doctor. Robert Weaver who lives on 52nd St. has taken a blank canvas of a yard and created a beautiful collection of plants and unusual pots to complement his home. Rob is a knowledgeable and experienced greenhouse expert for Corso's Garden Center. Many people took advantage by asking him questions about their own plants. With his knowledge of

horticulture and creative ideas we are sure to revisit him in a few years with a completely new look. We know this plant genius is never finished with improving his home and gardens.

John Taylor who lives on Hancock St. surprised most of the guests with his genius ideas of an 'over-the-top' way of intertwining plants with an automotive theme to create a haven of relaxation. As though he didn't have enough work to prepare for the tour, he bought the house next door, had it torn down and enlarged his area to blend in with what was already an established yard. Doesn't everyone have a fountain in their yard that is made of an antique truck with the radiator overflowing??? Quite a sight to see.

Jeff Elchert on Carr St. showcased his love for shades of green in all the beautiful plants and topiaries highlighted with accents of white flowers here and there to create a tranquil garden setting. You could only imagine using this property as a backdrop for wedding photos or an elegant cocktail party on the lawn. Jeff has a gift of grand presentation and what he has created is proof of his talents.

Last but not least were David & Suzanne Stuck on W. Adams St. Most people are challenged by having one yard to maintain but that wasn't the case for these two 'workaholics' so they bought two adjoining properties creating a wonderland of color and lots of small gathering areas. Doesn't everyone's yard have a 'Taj Mahal chicken coup', and a potting shed that looks like it should be the centerfold for 'Better Homes and Garden Magazine'? So much to look at and so little time! To top off all the work preparing for the tour Suzi had time to serve on the planning committee for this event plus she and David served as hosts for the Preview Tour two nights prior for the tour volunteers and garden hosts.

Garden Tour 2024 is now history but you may want to mark **Sunday, June 22nd, 2025** on your calendar for the next one. In August we will be visiting all the gardens people have suggested for future tours and begin our planning for next year's event. Mark your calendar so you can roam leisurely around Sandusky and enjoy more hidden gems that you would otherwise never get the opportunity to view. If you know of an outstanding garden in the Sandusky area please bring it to our attention as soon as possible. In closing we would like to extend a huge thank you to all the hosts and volunteers who without your help this would not have been possible.



Additional pictures of the 2024 OHG Garden Tour can be viewed on our website by going to Events and scrolling down <https://www.oldhouseguild.org/events/>



I would like to thank all of our 2024 Garden Tour Hosts who provided a beautiful variety of gardens for our community and members to enjoy. And of course we want to recognize the OHG Garden Tour Committee that made all of this possible:

Mary Truka, Suzanne Stuck & Linda Howell

We look forward to another Garden Tour Event in 2025!

Message from OHG President

Dr. Richard Keller

Mission of the Old House Guild

To promote historic preservation and the restoration of significant buildings, houses, sites, and objects in the Sandusky, Ohio area. To encourage the rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of such properties. To accomplish these purposes by means of meetings, publications, surveys, and tours. To act as a non-profit organization and to apply for any grants that may be appropriate to further the cause of historic preservation.

Preservation Committee

Linda Howell & Mary Truka

In 1978 the Old House Guild was founded by a group of citizens who realized that without direct action, the legacy of Sandusky's period architecture and beautiful old buildings would eventually disappear over time. The non-profit organization adopted as its mission statement a dedication to the preservation, restoration, and adaptive use of Sandusky's historic buildings, houses, sites, and objects.

One of our annual tasks is to honor the efforts of property owners that reflect our mission. We achieve this by providing yard signs and an invitation to our annual OHG membership dinner.

The Preservation Committee led by Linda Howell and Mary Truka invites you to assist in securing nominees for the 2025 awards. The first meeting will be in September with the date TBD. Please email Mary at mary.truka@oldhouseguild.org or call (615 477-0699) if you are interested in joining us in this work.

Cooke-Dorn House

Ed Stout

We have been busy with several projects to maintain the condition of the property. The enclosed side porch has been repainted so that it blends with the new stucco wall and gives a softer, more appealing appearance. The painting was done by Robert Sartor and Zach Moots. Thank you guys! The storm windows for the porch were created by Sommers Wood Craft of Monroeville. Once the newly finished storms are installed, it will signal the conclusion of the storm window project. It has taken over eight years from initial planning to completion, and at a cost of nearly \$56,000. I am happy and satisfied with the results.

Other work completed this year, include the repair of the exterior sewer line, followed by the replacement of the interior sewer line check valves, one located two feet below the concrete basement floor. Additionally, a new sump pump was installed and the main water line backflow repaired. This work totaled \$5,600.

Projects that are in the planning stages for the museum are restoring the 1894 A-1 Steinway grand piano. According to John Bailey of The Piano Works it is in poor condition. The good news is that in the 130-year history it never had rebuild or restoration work done. Thus there is nothing to be undone as all the original measurements are present. Another plus is that the keyboard boasts a perfect set of ivory and ebony keys which is incredibly rare to find on a piano of this age. The restoration cost is estimated to be around \$30,000 plus freight costs to

Michigan and back. We are working on the financing and hope to have the work completed late in 2025 or early 2026. The exterior woods including the original bench will also be refinished and restored to the original that is sun damaged. Thus we are looking at protective window treatments to safeguard the piano once returned. We also need to look into some humidification during heating months when dry air can ruin the interior parts of the piano. Once restored the value of the piano will be \$100,000 or more. It is worth the investment and will allow us to provide for recitals and other musical events at the museum. We are considering restoring the first floor hard wood floors. Furnishings on this level, window treatments, etc. would reflect the Cooke era. Dr. Berkey and I will co-chair a community task force that will determine how to create museum spaces on the second floor. Gone are the days of viewing historical artifacts as the focus. We need to understand how to adequately engage families in learning history via more hands on experiences. Through this approach we should be able to concentrate on the rich history of the Sandusky area from varying perspectives. We also will be mindful of affording visitors to engage in a self-guided manner. This will also encourage more people to volunteer as museum guides by minimizing training. Our hope is to transition the home into a museum, more in line with what Estella Dorn wanted and stated in her will in bequeathing her home. The future looks to be very different from our past and very exciting for a renewed existence.



Reminder!

We have transitioned our email system to a @oldhouseguild.org domain. New email addresses for OHG board members are listed at the end of this newsletter. We will use this format to send you membership-wide information, announcements, and our newsletter. You may experience a problem with our new system the first time we send you an email. If you are not getting messages make sure you check your **Spam File or Junk File**, depending upon the format/device you use.

Once you open the email from us (oldhouseguild.org) you should not experience this again. If you continue to have problems, please get in touch with us!

Cooke-Dorn Gardens & Grounds Committee

Betsy Berkey - Chair

Master Plan Update

The Ohio History Connection (OHC) has approved the phase-one plan for re-landscaping the front and north side of the Cooke-Dorn House. The bid was awarded to Corso's Nursery. Final plant selection was made by our committee during the last week of August. Work will begin this fall with removal of old plants, bed preparation with new soil, stone work around the window wells, and three feet of river stone to be placed against the foundation. And then you will see the new plants! We would like to express thanks to OHC for funding this part of our outdoor beautification program.

In the meantime our committee will be using a landscape architecture firm to finalize design plans for gardens on the south side of the home and all of the back yard. These include the creation of a "kitchen garden" beside the south wall of the garage, a children's garden at the rear of the property, a "sensory garden" for disabled visitors, and a pollinator garden and the conversion of the garage to a presentation space for gardening classes and related activities. The committee also would like to update and upgrade the kitchen to enable cooking classes and support for events. During the coming months we will be identifying specific costs and contractor work to enable the preparation of grant applications. A focal point of our work is to provide opportunities for underserved populations in our community as well as visitors during the tourist season. We also plan to reach out to our membership and provide opportunities to fund pieces of the project. We also welcome anyone interested in joining our committee. If you would like to do so, please contact Betsy Berkey at 440-796-2185.

Website Updates

Laurie Hille

Laurie Hille has taken over duties related to the management of our website. Please check the site regularly for updates on events, newsletters, membership and ways to volunteer. As always, if you have requests, suggestions, or ideas you wish to share please forward them to Laurie by email at laurie.hille@oldhouseguild.org. We welcome your feedback.

Funding Our Work

Laurie Hille - Treasurer

2024 Garden Tour

The June 23, 2024 revitalization of the annual Garden Tour was a lot of fun and a great success in many ways from contributions by the home owner hosts, their gardens, OHG event coordinators and volunteers! Financially speaking it was profitable as well. The funds raised will further help our future initiatives for the Old House Guild of Sandusky. Below is a summary of what we achieved:

\$2,125.00 - Receipts from Ticket Sales & Donations (211 tickets sold)
(\$850.00) - Expenditures
\$1,274.30 - Total Profit

Thank you to all participants who made the event what it was. I don't know about you, but I am looking forward to next summer's event!

Cooke-Dorn Museum Internet Access

On July 31, 2024, the Cooke-Dorn Museum was successfully setup with 500Mbps of Internet Access through Omni Fiber, LLC. We are subscribed for a business account at a monthly cost of \$100.00, which is very economical. We have also switched our telephone service to Omni Fiber as well. This will cost an additional \$20.00 per month. This will save \$18.37 monthly over the previous cell service we had with Verizon. It will also consolidate our billing and simplify our support needs through one provider.

We are pleased to now offer Internet Access for our visiting guests, volunteers, and board members to utilize for looking up information or performing duties on behalf of the museum and OHG.

From the Editor

Betsy Berkey

Thank you for the positive feedback regarding our newsletter. Our goal is to provide you with information about current Guild initiatives, upcoming activities, and most important, plans to keep us focused on our important work of preservation. Each quarter we ask the chairs and

officers to submit articles to accomplish this. In addition, I reach out to others who can contribute interesting stories that I hope you find worthy of reading.

Please know that we enjoy hearing from our members if you have something interesting about the history of the city or the Guild that you would like to share, email me if you are willing to submit an article. And even if you are uncomfortable writing, you can jot down some notes or call and story-tell. I'll take it from there and work with you on a piece that shares your story!

Betsy Berkey - betsy.w.berkey@gmail.com

440-796-2185

Note: we now post all past and present newsletters on our website so if you want to go back and read issues, they are there for your use.

Want to Donate to the Old House Guild?

Very easy to do! Use your phone and scan our QR code below. It is also located on our website. Or you can also write a check made out to the Old House Guild and designate if your donation is for the OHG account or the Cooke-Dorn. You can use a credit card or if you have your own Paypal account, that will work as well. Thank you for your generous contributions!



Volunteer with the Old House Guild

Opportunities

Cooke-Dorn Tour Guide

Fundraising Event

Grounds Helper

Historic Research

Historic Inventory

Sign Painter

Mailings

Holiday Decorating

Holiday Picking Up

Candlelight Tour

Event help

Annual Dinner

Membership Drive

Fall Cleanup

Spring planting

Garage Sale

And if you have any other talent to share in our organization, please let us know by calling or emailing us at the contacts listed below and on the following page.

How to Contact Us

Board Members	President – Richard Keller	Vice President – Timothy Berkey
	Secretary – Linda Howell	Treasurer – Laurie Hille
	Site Manager – Ed Stout	Member – Mary Truka
	Member – Tracy Hille	Member – Betsy Berkey

Summer 2024

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