

The Old House Guild of Sandusky

SUMMER 2026 NEWS FOR MEMBERS



Ever Changing Gardens . . .

Story Inside⇒

2026 Summer Garden Tour Review Sunday, June 28

Garden Tour Committee

Mary Truka
Suzanne Stuck
Linda Howell

After months of preparation our Garden Tour went off without a hitch. The Events Committee would like to thank the host property owners for making this year so successful:

Robert Weaver	608 52 nd Street
Scott Schnell & Wendy Kromer	714 Wayne Street
Charles & Michelle Murray	616 Wayne Street
Dick & Linda Howell	1124 Wayne Street
Bob & Jeanne Lawrence	511 Fulton Street
Judy Pfileger	322 Hancock Street
City of Sandusky Greenhouse	601 Franklin Street

The generous help from volunteers who assisted as guides, ticket sellers, and workers at the table for this event made this event not only possible but quite enjoyable for the community. In addition, Friends of the Greenhouse and the Sandusky City Greenhouse were instrumental in providing a perfect location for our Welcome Center. Tour participants were afforded opportunities to purchase plants grown by volunteers by making voluntary donations.

Garden hosts and volunteers were treated by a Friday evening reception at the home of David & Suzie Stuck followed by a pre-tour of the host gardens. In addition, a party was hosted at the home of Tim and Betsy Berkey after the Sunday tour to celebrate and thank hosts and volunteers.

Tour participants registered for door prizes of pairs of tickets for the upcoming Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes in December. The names of Vickie Pletcher, Mary Werner, Jim Shickley and Alexis Pitcher were drawn.

We received numerous positive comments that inspired us to continue this event in years to come. We ask that as we plan for next year you will consider volunteering and/or encouraging to do the same. If you now of someone who is interested in placing their property on the 2027 tour, please let us know.



Do You Have or Know of . .

A

Secret Garden?

Join us

For the 2027

OHG Garden Tour!



Message from OHG Board President

Dr. Timothy Berkey



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.

How to support the Old House Guild

It's always nice to see our members each year and get reacquainted. We live busy lives and don't always get to connect in between these annual dinners. That is why we make an extended effort to provide you with quarterly newsletters that keep you updated on our projects as well as provide you with historical information regarding the significant structures, sites and artifacts of our city.

So, if you have limited time to engage in our projects and activities, you can still support the Old House Guild in other ways:

1. **Keep an eye out for properties** within the city that are undergoing exterior preservation/restoration work and let us know the location. Send Mary Truka an email or call her: mary.truka@oldhouseguild.org.

2. **Help us locate potential homes for the annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes.** Got a property you want us to consider? Contact Ed Stout: ed.stout@oldhouseguild.org.
3. **Tell us about a special garden that you think should be on our annual garden tour.** Contact Suzanne Stuck: suzi.stuck@oldhouseguild.org.
4. **Join us for special events that are announced via your email.** Our events committee is constantly looking for special opportunities such as the recent tour of the Sandusky State Theatre.
5. **Provide us with feedback** that will help us improve including the newsletter, website, membership, and event offerings.
6. **Inform others about our work.** We need to keep bringing in new members to keep our organization moving forward. Invite someone new in the neighborhood to come to one of our events.
7. **Let us know about historical houses, sites, and objects that need our attention.** This helps us engage the necessary people and resources in critical work before it becomes too late.

If you have any other suggestions to help our organization continue to focus on our mission please reach out to us. The contact information of all of our board members is listed on the last page of the newsletter. Thank you for your continued support.

Check out our ongoing gallery of pictures from recent OHG events on our expanded website:

<https://www.oldhouseguild.org/events/>

Events Committee

Linda Howell

Mary Truka

Suzanne Stuck

Highlights of the OHG Annual Dinner



Beautiful evening, perfect venue, and interesting program were the only way to describe our recent banquet. The dinner took place on May 14th at the Sandusky Yacht Club. The evening began with a social hour for members and guests to visit and enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres. The SYC staff presented us with a delicious buffet dinner. No one should have left hungry.

The program portion of the evening began with a welcome and opening remarks by President Dr. Timothy Berkey. Members of our Board of Trustees were introduced and thanked for their ongoing contributions. Mary Truka, Chair of our Preservation Committee began the awards program with this year's theme, "Preserving Our History." She reviewed the categories of awards by providing the audience with visual representations of each. A special feature of this year's program included a bird's eye view via drone photography by Tom Horsman allowing the audience to "fly over the rooftops" of each winning property. Mary provided a summary of each property followed by property owners being presented with a framed watercolor and set of notecards.

The 2026 winners were as follows:

- Charlie & Michelle Murray: 616 Wayne Street
- Larry & Mary Aaron: 514 Wayne Street
- Andy Weber & Christine Parthemore: 414 Wayne Street
- Andy Weber & Christine Parthemore: 227 E. Washington Street
- Kyle Wright of Wischart Wright Co. LPA: 502 W. Washington Street

Everyone enjoyed the evening as evidenced by the large number of people who lingered for a good bit after the awards. For those of you who have not attended one of our annual dinners, you are missing something very special. Join us next May for this wonderful gathering.

Sandusky State Theatre is Alive & Well



Thirty-two members and guests of the Old House Guild were privileged to get a front row view of the restoration progress of the State Theatre. The staff welcomed everyone and provided first class tours for each half of the split audience. This allowed participants to get close to the work being provided.

Tour guides shared facts of what the facilities looked like before the 2020 storm that took down a major portion of the building. The contractors are making modifications for a more friendly user facility while also respecting and restoring many of the original features dating back to 1928. As the tour moved about the guides refreshed our memories on how the structure looked and the changes needed to make a more pleasant experience for future theatre goers.

The big question that was on everyone's mind was when they predicted the project would be completed. While it is still on a timeline they want to adhere to, the target is to reopen sometime in the fall of 2027. They are confident enough to begin bookings for that timeline. It is anticipated that traveling Broadway shows and musicals will make their stop in future Sandusky years. When the curtain eventually rises for opening night it will truly be a breath of fresh air for Sandusky's thirst for the arts.

Note: If you enjoy visiting local properties in the process of restoration or just completed, please let one of the board members know and we will continue to pursue opportunities like this.

From the Editor . . .

Betsy Berkey

Sandusky's Floral Clock
Washington Row/West Washington Street



How many of us race past one of the most iconic features of Washington Park without taking in the beauty of our Floral Clock. Nor do we understand the hours involved in changing the calendar date, maintaining the mechanical clock and of course, tending to the beautiful vegetation that requires a good deal of TLC.

The original design was created by Christ Brandstrup, the city superintendent and the work was completed by Park Supervisor Christ Goeltz with help from Fred Greene and other park employees. Completed in June of 1955, the clock contained 11,000 small multicolored plants each set individually by hand. The clock is 22 feet in diameter and the minute and hour hands are 10 feet and eight feet long, respectively. The hands were originally set at twenty minutes past 9 o'clock representing the time of President Lincoln's death on the evening of April 14, 1865. Years later it was decided to add electrical parts to enable the clock to keep current time. The massive timepiece was funded by a \$20,000 bequest from the Sidney Frohman Foundation and installed in 1972.

Preservation Committee

Mary Truka, Chair

Tim Berkey

Betsy Berkey

The underlying mission of the Old House Guild is “to promote historic preservation and the restoration of significant buildings, houses, sites, and objects in the Sandusky, Ohio area.” Therefore, each year the Guild recognizes the owners of buildings and homes with a Preservation Award for the efforts made in maintaining Sandusky's architectural heritage. The following 2026 Old House Guild Preservation Awards were presented at the annual dinner meeting in May:

***Charlie and Michelle Murray** bought their house at 616 Wayne Street in 2023 and have worked tirelessly to restore the house exterior and establish an eco-friendly garden space. The original portion of this home was built around 1838.



***Andy Weber and Christine Parthemore** purchased the J.O. Moss House at 414 Wayne Street in 2023 and began work restoring the exterior and also focusing on reclaiming the landscaping by planting native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers. Jay Moss built this home around 1872; he was in the banking business as well as the railroad and Sandusky Street Railway. Mrs. Moss was one of a group of ladies who worked to secure a public library for Sandusky. She was a personal acquaintance of Andrew Carnegie.



***The home of Andy Weber and Christine Parthemore** at 227 East Washington Street received the Preservation Award for their work on this house built around 1908. They consulted the historic color palette available on the City of Sandusky's website and solicited input from their neighbors for suggestions on the base and trim color.



***Larry and Mary Aaron** purchased the James Marshall House in 1998. James Marshall built the house in 1875 and this house was the first to be connected to the new water line in Sandusky. James Marshall came from England as a boy. He was an executive of both the Sandusky Wheel and Sandusky Tool Company. His wife worked to establish the library and the YMCA. The Aarons have maintained this exquisite house by continuing to have it painted.



***The Preservation Award** for restoration and renovation went to **Wisehart Wright** law firm located at 502 Washington Street. This building was built in 1901 and is also an example of adaptive reuse as it was originally a home and has transitioned into what is now a law firm. Extensive work was done, including new siding, roof, windows, landscaping, and restoring the wraparound porch.



Sandusky boasts a unique history and it is the Old House Guild's pleasure to celebrate all that embrace this history by maintaining our architecturally and or culturally significant buildings. Congratulations to this year's Preservation Award winners.

Special Report from Mary Truka

On June 15th, the Mad River brick block in the 1000 block of West Adams Street suffered a fire affecting five of the nine units. No lives were lost but the five houses were condemned displacing those families. In addition to the fire damage, all of the units have water damage throughout as the pumper trucks fought the attic fire from above.



This 177 year-old row house has a deep historical connection to the early growth of Sandusky. It was built in 1849 as housing for the laborers of Ohio's first railroad, the Mad River & Lake Erie Railroad. Therefore, it is often referred to as the Mad River Brick Block. A founding member of the Old House Guild, Nanette Guss, recently told me that her ancestor Levi Till was the architect who designed the row houses. When Till died in 1901, the Sandusky Register stated: "Many of the best buildings in Sandusky stand as worthy monuments of the professional skill of the deceased." This building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 but no marker designating such has ever been erected.

Two of the homes were featured on Sandusky's first summer homes tours (1976 & 1979) sponsored by American Field Service Intercultural Programs and the Old House Guild. As of this writing, the five houses remain condemned but work is slowly beginning in some units. It is anybody's guess if and when the Mad River Block will be restored.

What you can do to help us with historic preservation

Be our eyes and ears in the community! If you see a historic structure or artifact in need of preservation, let us know! Sometimes these can go unnoticed by us, the city, or other property owners. Call us or email us and we will take it from there: preservation@oldhouseguild.org

2026 Candlelight Tour of Homes



Ed Stout
Chair

Laurie Hille

Suzanne Stuck

Betsy Berkey

It may be just August but it is not too early to save the date and mark your calendars for the *2026 Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes*. This year's tour will be presented on Sunday, December 6th from 3:30 pm to 8:30 pm. You will note the change from a two-day event to a one-day event with longer hours to complete viewing all the homes featured. This also provides some daylight time for those requesting a portion be non-dark hours.

This year's event will be utilizing 414 Wayne Street, the former Jay Osborne Moss home (owned by Andy Weber and Christine Parthemore) to serve as our base location. It is here that you will be able to purchase tickets on the day of the

tour, along with chances for our different raffles. New this year will be the addition of holiday dining packages to our raffle opportunities. Look for more details in our fall newsletter.

History of the Moss Home

The home was built in 1872 on land that was offered by his father, Augustus Hitchcock Moss, from a north portion of his property at 428 Wayne Street and a southern portion purchased from Oran Follett's home at 404 Wayne Street. It remained in the Moss family until 1917 when Herbert Ferrell purchased the home for his residence. He, in turn, sold the home in 1926 to the Sandusky Business Women's Club. The organization maintained the home by renting five sleeping rooms to single business women on the upper floor, the carriage or coach house to the Harlequins Theater and the lower floor for civic club meetings, service groups, wedding receptions, dinners and other civic events.

When the cost of maintaining the home and increasing taxes made it unfeasible, the Women's Club sold the home to the Harlequins in 1970 for a sacrificial price, stipulating the Harlequins continue civic use for the home for three years. After three years the home was sold in 1973 to George Gilbert who secured a 99 year lease on the coach house for the theater. Gilbert used the main portion of the home as his residence and while providing three rental apartments in the rear wing. He sold the home in 1984. It was then owned by Wickens Herer Panza as a law office until 2023 when Andy Weber and Christine Parthemore purchased the property. They have plans to use the home for events.

We hope everyone can join us in December for the tour.



Funding Our Work**Laurie Hille - Treasurer**

This year's Garden Tour was wonderful. The weather was beautiful and cooler bringing out quite a few folks. Attendance improved over last year. It was another profitable venture as we continue to build our efforts to bring engaging activities to our community.

Below is a financial summary of the event:

\$2202.00 - Receipts from ticket sales and donations (201 tickets sold)

(\$226.73) - Expenses

\$1793.27 - Total Profit

Net profit from 2025 was \$727.99

Membership**Tracy Hille, Membership Chair**

Here is an updated summary of our 2026 membership drive.

As of: 8-5-26

Total Members = 123

Lifetime Members = 43

Dual Memberships = 26

Members that have not renewed yet this year = 9

Memberships from 6 different states

Sandusky Population = 23,716 people

Want to Donate to the Old House Guild?



Very easy to do! Use your phone and scan our QR code at the left. It is also located on our website. Or you can also write a check made out to the Old House Guild. You can also use a credit card. Thank you for your generous contributions!

From the Editor

Betsy Berkey Editor

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.

Not Getting Your Newsletter?

If you have not been receiving your newsletter or hear from a fellow member who states the same please do the following before you contact us:

Iphone/Apple users - check your Junk file, open up an email from the Guild and you will be now able to get our messages and news. Android users - check your Spam file, open up an email from the Guild and you will now be able to get our messages and news.

Don't forget to send us your new email address when/if it changes!



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 15, 2026

Contact: Tom Horsman
Communications Manager
419-627-5929
THorsman@CityofSandusky.com

City of Sandusky Launches Exterior Paint Program as Part of Neighborhood Investment Efforts

Sandusky, Ohio -- The City of Sandusky is now accepting applications for its 2026 Exterior Paint Program, a new pilot initiative that provides up to \$2,000 in paint and supplies to qualifying homeowners.

The program is designed to help owner-occupied homes get a fresh exterior, covering the main structure, garage, porches, decks, and window and door trim. Labor is not included; homeowners are responsible for completing the painting work themselves or hiring a contractor.

"This is about helping homeowners invest in their homes," said Debi Eversole, Housing Development Specialist for the City of Sandusky. "Beautifying a single home ultimately benefits the block it is on, and can cause a ripple effect of investment in the whole neighborhood."

The Exterior Paint Program launches alongside the city's existing Housing Development & Beautification (HDB) program, which is also currently accepting applications. The HDB program provides grants for home purchase assistance, exterior repairs, and substantial redevelopment projects. Together, the programs give Sandusky homeowners more ways to maintain and improve their properties.

Eligibility requirements for the Exterior Paint Program include:

- Must own and occupy the home as a primary, full-time residence
- Home must be titled to the applicant for at least one year
- Home must be valued at \$260,000 or less per Erie County Auditor records
- No outstanding delinquencies with the city or state
- Home cannot be in active foreclosure
- Painting must be completed between April 1 and October 31, 2026

Applicants must submit an itemized estimate of paint and supplies with their application. Applicants should not purchase paint before receiving approval. Processing takes approximately 2–4 weeks.

Information about both programs, including applications and eligibility requirements, is available at www.cityofsandusky.com/housing. Residents can also schedule an appointment with Debi Eversole for one-on-one help with either application.



Have a Sandusky
neighbor or friend in
need of having their
home painted but lack
the funds?

Volunteer with the Old House Guild

Opportunities

Tour Guide	Fundraising	Event Helper
Committee Volunteer	Historic Research	Sign Painter
Historic Inventory	Holiday Decorating	Mailings
Candlelight Tour Helper	Annual Dinner Helper	Membership

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.

How to Contact Us

Board of Trustee Members:

President - Timothy Berkey	timothy.berkey@oldhouseguild.org
Vice President - Rick Keller	rick.keller@oldhouseguild.org
Secretary - Linda Howell	linda.howell@oldhouseguild.org
Treasurer - Laurie Hille	laurie.hille@oldhouseguild.org
Preservation - Mary Truka	mary.truka@oldhouseguild.org
Candlelight Tour - Ed Stout	ed.stout@oldhouseguild.org
Membership - Tracy Hille	tracy.hille@oldhouseguild.org
Newsletter - Betsy Berkey	betsy.berkey@oldhouseguild.org
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