



Our Old Bookcase, March 30, 2017. Former New Idea Employees' Tour

Photo caption: Former New Idea Employees and families toured the Sycamore Group, the former New Idea Building on September 17, 2016. L. to R.: Don Kremer, Ben Hartings, Ed Prenger, Deb Bruns, Dale Bruns, Lynn Woeste, Ken Woeste, Al Berning, and Art Harris were among the 180 some guests.

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

By Joyce L. Alig, President, Mercer County Historical Society

Dan Bruns, Vice President, Sycamore Group, 123 West Sycamore St., Coldwater, welcomed the former New Idea Employees and their families on September 17, 2016 to tour the former New Idea building. Over 180 guests toured the former New Idea building, that Saturday. Vernon Wynn worked with Dan Bruns as they planned the route through the building, and met with current business representatives in the building. They scheduled the guests to tour the plant in golf carts, on loan from local citizens and driven by volunteers.

Last summer, Howard May called our New Idea Historic Preservation Committee and asked if we would have some of the old New Idea farm equipment on display in the building that day. The NIHP Members who helped with this display that day included Lester Bensman, Bob Stelzer, Frank Mohlman, Orville Kunk, Don Muhlenkamp, Lavern Heuing, Ollie Wendel, and Alvin Alig.

One highlight of this tour of the former New Idea building was that so many former New Idea employees stated that this was their first time back in this building, since the day New Idea closed its door in

December 1999. Every person who stopped at our NI exhibit commented about what a good time they were having on the tour. They expressed how much they appreciated seeing former NI employees. One comment which touched my heart was the stories which the former employees told what a sad event it was when the Company told the employees that the Company was closing the plant. So many employees just did not see this happening and were devastated that the place where they had worked most of their adult lives, was really closing.

Now, these former employees conversed about how they had moved on with their lives. The thought that impressed me the most was how people talked that Mercer Countians are not people to sit around and wait for someone else to take care of them. They were proud that Mercer Countians created new ideas and planned and implemented new projects, and found alternative employment following those years at New Idea. New ideas were used by the Bruns Family in re-purposing the former New Idea building with a variety of business enterprises. Mercer Countians are creative people and work hard to achieve their goals.

As the tour members were traveling through the building on golf carts, they stopped at our NIHP Committee's display. I photographed each group. In fact, I have 36 photographs of these tour groups, which totaled over 180 guests.

These photographs of the former New Idea Employees and their families on the September 17 tour will be on exhibit at the Mercer County Historical Museum on Sunday afternoon, April 2, 1:00 – 4:00.

The NIHP Committee members will also be hosting an exhibit of New Idea History in the first room, that Sunday afternoon, April 2nd. Burkettsville Citizens will have old photographs of Burkettsville on exhibit in the second room that afternoon. The public is invited to the Mercer County Historical Museum, at 130 East Market, a block east of the Mercer County Courthouse, on Sunday, April 2, 1:00 – 4:00.

Mercer County Historical Society President Joyce Alig, may be contacted at 3054 Burk-St. Henry Road, Saint Henry, OH 45883, or hystalig@bright.net or 419-678-2614.]