



DECEMBER

*FRIENDS OF THE*  
**SAXONIA HOUSE**

2025

WELCOME TO OUR

# *Newsletter*



## Happy Holidays!

Happy holidays from the  
Friends of the Saxonia House.

Read until the end to find  
important tax information  
and tips useful for next year.

## The Annual Update

It has been a wonderful year for Saxonia House. So many new things have come to fruition from the help of our volunteers, partners, and members like you. Thank you for a wonderful year!

## Add to your calendar:

### **Friends of Saxonia House Inc.**

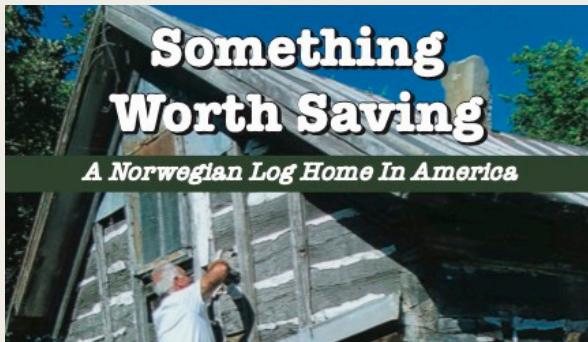
**ANNUAL MEETING:** Monday, January 19, 2026 at 6 pm on ZOOM platform. Please see your membership letter for the link.

### **Other 2026 dates (subject to change)**

Workdays: Apr 18, May 16, June 20, July 18, Aug 15, Oct 17

Sunday Open Houses ALL SUMMER 2026!

Annual Oktoberfest: Sat. Sept 19, 2026



## 'Something Worth Saving'

Alan Pape, President of the Friends of the Saxonia House, discovered a near twin of the Bale House (Norway) in Norway Grove, WI. It was on the verge of being torn down when Alan acquired the house, hoping to preserve its history.

The cabin is identical to the famous house that inspired artists in Norway, but this house also has its own story to tell--stories of its time and of America at the time.

Book by **Dr. Michael Besch**  
for sale NOW! Email us at  
[saxonia.house.wi@gmail.com](mailto:saxonia.house.wi@gmail.com)



## Norwegian Log Cabin

**AN UPDATE BY JON SCOTT**

The Nelson-Bailey Log Cabin (featured in the new book **Something Worth Saving.**) has come a long way. Since the last newsletter, the eastern, northern and western walls have been reinforced with 2"x4" boards spaced in order to serve as furring boards for adding wooden siding in the spring. The southern side will not have siding but will have the exposed logs with a porch attached.

While the intern restoration carpenters, Eric Fassbender and David Sayas, have moved on to other construction work, Stanley Steinert, Saxonia House's next-door neighbor joins the construction team. Stanley was in charge of making the stone and mortar foundation.

The roof will be completed by John Peterson when planks arrive sometime in December.

**Any volunteers interested in assisting would be greatly appreciated.**

Unfortunately, a finishing date is not set as Saxonia House is \$30,000 short in completing the project. Consider donating today. See page 4 for tax information.



Delegates from  
Senator Ron Johnson's  
office

VISITED SAXONIA HOUSE  
THIS FALL.



## **Beer Cave**

One of our greatest assets is our intact 19<sup>th</sup> century beer cave. Volunteers worked to remove damaging brush from the entrance and roof at a 2025 work day. Stay tuned for upcoming events involving the beer cave in 2026.



Johann Andreas Klessig, his son Ernst, and the immigrant builders who raised the Saxonia House in 1855 chose Tamarack wood to use as beams, some being as long as 35'. Tamarack trees, native to Wisconsin, grow in boggy areas and are strong, durable, and resistant to rot, decay, and insects. They are in part why the house still stands! We estimate that 1/3 of the beams need to be replaced. Tamarack is not a wood found in lumberyards today. Thus, when Fred Klessig discovered a logger who has and can log Tamarack trees, we all became excited! Please help us restore the Saxonia House by contributing one or more replacement beams to the Tamarack Beam Bank on our website.



## **Oktoberfest 2025**

### **A RECAP BY RHONDA HARE**

The rain held off for our third annual Oktoberfest on Sept 20, 2025. It was very special this year because it was the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening and dedication of Saxonia House as a gathering place for fellowship and gemutlichkeit. This year, due to new electric service, and we're able to serve a fun german meal and beer to our guests. Attendees also enjoyed tours of the house, new cabin, and beer cave. Fred Luft and his band sang many great german folksongs and the original dedication song. Dont miss Oktoberfest in September 2026!



## **Saxony Tour Survey**

BY GREG ZAHN  
Have you ever wanted to visit Saxony Germany, and see the history behind the Saxonia House and other Wisconsin landmarks? A group tour is being organized. Please email us at [saxonia.house.wi@gmail.com](mailto:saxonia.house.wi@gmail.com) for more information.



Repairing the Poultry Barn Door



Combined Tour of Saxonia House with Lutze Housebarn

## Tax Deduction Opportunities

### **SAVE BIG BY DONATING** BY ATTORNEY EDWARD RITGER

New next year is an opportunity to donate to your favorite charities and get a tax deduction without needing to itemize. Effective for 2026 there will be a \$1,000.00 (\$2,000.00 for a married couple) donation deduction that will be available to all taxpayers and will directly reduce their taxable income.

Not new this year, but widely unknown, is a special tax strategy for persons over 72 years of age who are required to take

retirement money out of their IRA Investments. If the taxpayer has the IRA distribution paid directly to the charity, those funds are eligible for a qualified charitable deduction (QCD).

I encourage any seniors who are getting mandatory retirement distributions to consider having some of that retirement distribution not be taxed, instead being paid directly to a qualified charity like Friends of Saxonia House.



2025



**BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW MEMBERSHIP!**

**Click here or go to [saxoniahouse.org](http://saxoniahouse.org)**