Welcome to the Beechwood Hall
(formerly the Beechwood School)

2010 - 2014

(Bell Tower Restored July, 2013)
The Beechwood Historical Society
A “Virtual” Tour of Our Home

- The Beechwood Hall was a one-room schoolhouse from 1914 – 1933
- Iron River Township leased the former-school from 1938-1957
- On July 29, 1957, the property was deeded over to Iron River Township
- In mid-2008 the Beechwood Hall was closed due to code violations; the Township could not afford to repair the structure
The “Friends of Beechwood Hall” decide to form the Beechwood Historical Society.

Meeting outside the closed Beechwood Hall, July 10, 2010 (the first “sit-in” in Beechwood??)
- In September, 2008, the Friends of Beechwood Hall formed and began to petition the Township to re-open the Hall

- In July, 2010, the Beechwood Historical Society was formed (informally) following talks with the Township who was willing to donate the BH to a “group”

- On October 18, 2010, the BHS incorporated a non-profit.

- On May 31, 2011, the BHS paid the Township $1.00 for the BH and 1-acre site; the Township also gave the BHS $12,500 to begin the task of restoring the building.
THE BEECHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY — some of the members that were present 5/21/2011 voting to accept the deed for the property from Iron River Township.
Beechwood School – Beechwood, MI

1914 - 1933

Beechwood Historical Society
The Beechwood Hall (right) and the Bethany Lutheran Church (left, which is on the Historic Register); aerial photo circa early 1970’s. At that time the Beechwood Hall was used as a Voting Precinct and Community Center (note baseball field, basketball hoop, and ice skating rink. It was the local AmVets Post, home to several 4-H groups, and the “Friendly Neighbors” local service group.
The Beechwood Hall was closed to the public by the Iron River Township Board in 2008, due to Code and safety violations.

Galvanized pipe handrails not to Code, damage to concrete steps, 10/3/2008
9/11/2011 – Pipe stair rails removed and replaced with wooden rails that meet safety code requirements, Constructed by BHS members.

9/17/2011 – Following repair to the concrete steps and cleaning, the stairs were painted with a light gray, oil based concrete sealer.
There was no safe, secondary exit from the rear of the building. An accessible opening was cut out the back of the building through the southeast closet and through the back of the building to tie into a handicap ramp and parking; 7/18 – 21/2011.

Note the frame of a window that had been covered in the closet at some point in time in the closet.
Two additional attic vents were installed and 12 inches of fiberglass insulation was added in the attic, 7/22/2011

(Below) Condition of foundation, 10/3/2008, mortar is disintegrating and stones are loose or have fallen out of the wall – Northeast corner of the building.

(Above) West wall of the foundation, large stone has fallen out. Original window openings were filled with concrete block without ventilation.

(Left) Original foundation – is approx. 24 inches thick and is an example of an intact fieldstone foundation of historic buildings of the era.
Former window openings; above opening on southeast corner of building, once used to shovel coal into the basement when there was a coal-fired furnace in the basement. Recently, the opening was used to allow access to the fuel oil tank in the basement. This opening allowed water into the basement, the ground-level at location was also sunken. Inside of this opening shown upper right photo. Photo lower right is along the west wall of the foundation. 10/3/2008
Inside the basement; arrow pointing to band-joist insulation installed 7/22/2011. There was little to none remaining allowing direct contact of the foundation with the joists & moisture wicking up the walls of the structure. Old cinder blocks were removed from the original window openings, the inside of the foundation sealed, new blocks installed with glass windows & vents installed to allow the basement to dry out. Field stone was added to the new installation to tie it into the original foundation walls. (8/2011)
Old mortar was removed from the entire outside of the foundation, stones replaced, and tuck-pointed. Soil was landscaped against the foundation to shed water away. Sealant was applied to the new mortar. July-Sept, 2011.
BHS members cut & remove the brush that had overgrown the old ice-skating rink. Stumps & roots are grubbed. The old broken, uneven asphalt parking lot is peeled up to convert the parking lot back to gravel & add the ice-rink area to the parking lot. Aug/Sept, 2011.
Re-building the parking lot. all equipment, gravel hauling, and operator time donated. Sept, 2011.
Repairing the front walk, installing new sidewalk to parking lot and basement door. Late Sept, 2011
Odds & ends – door closure, repair outdoor grill, handrails, changing the locks, replacing the floor...Summer, 2011.
All electrical brought up to code and approved 9/20/2011. Night-time light installed on back door for safety.

Certificate of Occupancy and Compliance Issued 9/30/2011 by Iron County Construction Code Office!
(Left) Old fuel oil tank to new propane tank (right).

(Left) Old furnace to new high efficiency propane furnace (right) ...just in time for the Halloween Party!

...An unexpected expense. As we turned on the old furnace, it was discovered the chimney was no longer functional & cost prohibitive to replace... so we bit the bullet & replaced the furnace this year rather than in the future. 10/29/2011
Events.... **Memorial Day**, May 30, 2011...in the Hall for the first time in 3 Years. A one-day insurance Policy was secured & the Hall was closed again for Renovation.

(Left) Lorraine Groth and Walter Anderson – 2 former students of the Beechwood School and members of the Beechwood Historical Society.
Halloween Party
October 31, 2011

Our first event open to the Public since we started renovations! traditional games like musical chairs and a pinata candy scramble were held...with parents & friends watching from the side and visiting....
Developing a Business Plan...1st meeting went 4 hours! Of course there had to be a potluck...this was the first of many meetings to develop a 3-year Business Plan and budget. 7/16/2011.
Ceiling Repairs – competed January, 2012
In April, 2012 the kitchen was re-modeled to make it more user-friendly.
“Some” people really get into their work! This is a temporary fix until the kitchen can be replaced.
Clearing the yard: April - June, 2012 (firewood was sold as a “fund-raiser)
The “classroom” lights are replaced with replica lights traditionally found in a Schoolhouse – May 3, 2012.
It had been over 30 years(?) since the exterior had been painted. Most of the paint was chipping & there was mold and rotten boards in places. The building was scraped, clapboards replaced, primed, and the 1st coat of paint was done from May – through August, 2012.
The Beechwood Historical Society will be holding the original play (written by Marcia Bernhardt) “The Stealing of the Bell – The Return of the Beechwood Schoolbell.”

WHERE: Iron County Museum

DATE: July 28, 2012 (Saturday afternoon)

TIME: 1:00 – 2:30 PM followed by a reception at 3:15 – 4:00 PM. Guests may tour the Museum grounds during the intermission.

ADMISSION: $8.00 per person

There will be refreshments, a silent auction, and mementos.
The Beechwood School Bell was donated to the Iron County Museum by Mr. & Mrs. Harold Saxon after its journey of ~60 years away. The Beechwood Historical Society has been restoring the Beechwood Hall (the Beechwood School from 1914 – 1933) for the last year for use as a community center and museum. This will include rebuilding the Bell Tower by 2014 for the 100th Anniversary of the Beechwood School. Come join in the celebration! The School Bell will be on permanent loan from the Iron County Museum. Actors in the play are local members of the Society...fun to be had by all.
Cast and crew...a fun day was had by all!
Back home, just a few feet below where it used to ring for the school children.
Memorial Day - 2013 in Beechwood, Michigan – honor...
...AND community.
Memorial Day – May 26, 2013: Our Veterans
Restoring the Bell Tower to the Beechwood School/Hall – July, 2013
The Tower goes for a ride through town before going back on the roof!
The big day! July 23, 2013
The building is whole again.
The BHS does not have enough $$ to replace all of The windows at one time. We are replacing each as Funds become available and replicating the original double-hung windows (but with energy efficient glass).

New window, installed July 31, 2013

Frost patterns are pretty...but...
Annual Apple Festival – last Saturday in September!
With LOTS of food (apple recipes of course), Crafts and Flea Market on the grounds.
Refinishing the floors of the classroom in the Beechwood Hall...Thanksgiving, 2013
Repairing the basement floor and walls
During the winter 2013 - 2014
Seems like a lot of work days are the same day as Friendly Neighbors and some good food! These guys sure are good at fixing up this place.
The Beechwood Hall is our Community Center:

- Beechwood Historical Society

- AmVets Post 436

- Beechwood Friendly Neighbors

- Neighborhood Potlucks, fund-raisers
Family Game Night...
Hobbies & Crafts – knitting group, hand quilting a raffle quilt....