



MI BARN

PROMOTING APPRECIATION, PRESERVATION, AND REHABILITATION OF MICHIGAN BARNs, FARMSTEADs, AND RURAL COMMUNITIEs



Photo by Thomas Baumann

Good night moon, good night barn...

Where do your back roads take you? Wherever you wander in Michigan, you're likely to come across historic barns—beautiful examples of rural architecture and culture that inspire no matter what the season, time or place.

This issue of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network newsletter focuses on Barn Tours. From the annual conference barn tour to tours and events in communities throughout the state, MBPN is helping to promote events that recognize and promote Michigan's rich rural heritage. We hope to see you at a tour during the coming year!

Taken September 2011 in McBain, MI, during the DALMAC (Dick Allen Lansing to Mackinaw) bike tour, which draws more than 2,000 cyclists and campers each year! Photo courtesy of Thomas Baumann, Physicist, National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory, Michigan State University.



Photos by Julie Avery

Spring Hill Barn, for which Tillers received a Barn of the Year Award.



Volunteers installing roof rafters, boards, and the timber frame on the Spring Hill site stone spring house.

MBPN Gathers for Fall Event at Tillers International

The MBPN October board meeting and fall event was held at Tillers International, in Scotts, Michigan. Tillers is a nonprofit organization for international rural development, specializing in farming with oxen. Its mission is to preserve, study and exchange low-capital technologies that increase the sustainability and productivity of people in rural communities. In addition to preservation, Tillers encourages an attitude of experimentation to produce more local food with less global fuel. The site provided a wonderful 500-acre environment for a productive quarterly board meeting and allowed Board members and guests to explore the grounds, and facilities,

while familiarizing themselves with the organization's goals.

Tillers provides annual timber frame workshops where students and interns build a timber frame for a particular need on their site or for a client. Structures have been agricultural buildings, workshops, and even homes. This Tiller's workshop project created, raised and installed roof rafters and boards and the timber frame to support the overhang of the Spring Hill site stone spring house. This building is reminiscent of the spring house that was at the original location of the Spring Hill farm, near Grand Rapids. Tillers received a

Continued on page 3

DAR Presents National Preservation Award to MBPN Board Member Evelyn Johnson



Photo by Carl Johnson

Evelyn Johnson (center) is presented the national DAR Preservation Medal.

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) have presented MBPN Board member Evelyn Johnson with a national historic preservation award for her work to preserve the barns of Old Mission Peninsula.

The national DAR Preservation Medal was presented to Evie by historian Grace Downer Travis on October 15th during a meeting of the Job Winslow Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Noted in the ceremony were Evelyn's research and publication of *Barns of Old Mission Peninsula and Their Stories* (2006), a landmark book that also has received the State History Award from the Historical Society of Michigan. In addition, the DAR also cited her work on the Quilt Barn Trail of Old Mission Peninsula, which she inspired and coordinated.

The DAR, founded in 1890 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit, non-political volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children.

The DAR Historic Preservation Award can be awarded to any individual with a distinguished record in historic preservation. Criteria for issuance include: outstanding efforts in establishing a historic district or preserving a local landmark; restoration or preservation of objects of historic cultural significance; establishing or long-term participation in oral history projects; youth leadership; education on the college, secondary, or elementary level as it pertains to historic preservation.

Steve Stier, MBPN President, in his nomination support letter noted: "We are pleased to have Evelyn serve on our board of directors, where she plays an active role in helping educate the public to the importance of preserving Michigan's traditional barns for the beauty they impart to the rural landscape and for the living symbol of our agricultural past."

Congratulations Evie!

– Julie Avery, Secretary

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speeches, advising on Social Media approaches and handling major marketing communications. Keith is active in his home town of Marshall, where his involvements with the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Council, Marshall Historical Society and the Heritage Route Steering Committee have many connections to the work of MBPN.

Keith has extensive experience as a writer, as well as within the printing and publishing industries. His own book on the American Civil War, *A Civil War Legacy—Gone to God: One Family's Ultimate Sacrifice*, is being finalized for a publication date of early next year.

WELCOME Keith!

Continued on page 3



Keith Kehlbeck

Our New Newsletter Coordinator

We are proud that Keith Kehlbeck has joined the Michigan Barn Preservation Network as our new newsletter coordinator/editor.

Through his business, K2 Consulting, Keith works with a variety of corporate and nonprofit clients coordinating projects, writing

Continued from page 1



Photo by Janine Saputo

Oxen spreading manure on the field at Tillers International; barns in background.

Barn of the Year award for the Spring Hill barn which was dismantled, moved, repaired, and re-erected at their property.

Eight participants sat in on Steve Stier's timber framing tools demonstration and had lots of questions and conversation. Attendees went on a Tillers barn tour through the grounds, visited the workshop 'raising' at the Spring Hill spring house, toured the Spring Hill barn and worked with the MBPN Teamwork and Timbers youth education project.

- Julie Avery, Secretary



Photos by Julie Avery

Friends Rose and Noel Hartwick (Jamestown, MI) and Cheryl and Don Swierenga (Holland, MI) planned a day of fun together and met at MBPN's Fall gathering at Tillers International in Scotts. Rose and Noel run a bed and breakfast at Twining Farm, their family farmstead. Preservation work on their barn is just beginning.

Continued from page 2

A 'barn-related' excerpt from *Gone to God*:

Behind Union lines, Robert sought a place to hide, and, as day was breaking, the young Confederate scout decided to hide in Mr. Cooper's barn, expecting to stay only a short while until he could analyze the situation and determine the location of nearby Union cavalry. That night, he hoped to make it safely to the woods, where he would hide during the day. Exhaustion set in, however, and Robert soon unintentionally fell asleep in the loft.

The next morning, Robert found the barn surrounded by nearly twenty Union soldiers, ready for him with rifles raised. Climbing back into the loft, he hid one of his pistols in the wheat, along with a dozen leaves out of his pocketbook. When the Union captain threatened to burn down the barn, Robert concluded it was time to surrender. Throwing his remaining pistol down before the assembled Union soldiers, Robert stepped forward. The resulting celebration seemed out of proportion to the young rebel. "Then such crowing was heard, one would have supposed they had General Lee," he noted ruefully.

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Barn Tours

Increasingly, the agricultural heritage of old barns is being showcased in barn tours throughout the state. Observers are also noting how barn tours spur tourism activity—a noteworthy collateral benefit for an important mission. Celebrating our rural lifestyle and historic barns—through locally-organized tours, annual events, quilt barn trails, and other venues—an activity of MBPN which focuses on promoting the rehabilitation of old farm buildings for agricultural and other uses. Preserving historic barns does more than maintain the beauty of the state's rural landscape—it promotes economic benefits through non-traditional re-use, creates new businesses and jobs, and encourages agri-tourism. And, of course, it helps that barn owners are so passionate about their properties and barns.

- Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Coordinator

Tips for Tour Organizers

Interested in organizing a barn tour in your "neck of the woods?" Here are a few hints for tour planners:

- Choose a committee that knows the community.
- Identify barns early so owners can prepare.
- Spring is a good time for a tour, since barns on working farms are more apt to be empty of stored feed.
- Include barns on working farms and with animals present, if possible.
- Let people know that they will be able to go inside of the barns.
- Make sure that the barns and the yards around the barns are safe.
- Work with an organization that can provide event insurance.
- Advertise widely and have a budget for advertising (use Social Media, too!).
- Find sponsors to help cover the advertising costs.
- Be sure to have a photographer (volunteer or otherwise) who will take high-resolution (at least 300 dpi) images for publicity; include shots of people, as well as structures.
- Include knowledgeable guides or hosts who can talk about the building structure and uses.

- Vera Wiltse, MBPN Board Member

Barns on the Internet

How about a 'virtual' barn tour on the Internet? Check out Pure Michigan's "barn hunt" via the *Pure Michigan* Travel and Tourism Connect blog on Facebook and the "Michigan Barns" thumbnails on Flickr.

<http://www.puremichiganblog.org/outdoors/beaches/end-of-summer-inspiration/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/puremichigan/sets/72157627223505975/>

The cache of barn photos on Flickr are stunning, and, although billed as an "End of Summer, Last Minute Michigan Road Trip," the Pure Michigan barn itinerary on Facebook is a treat in any season!

- Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Coordinator

Conference Barn Tour

The 16th annual Michigan Barn Preservation Network Annual Conference—sponsored by MBPN, the MSU Museum, and MSU Extension—took place during Agricultural and Natural Resources Week (ANR Week) at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing on March 11-12, 2011. The conference, themed “Heritage Barns for the Next Generation,” was packed with an exhibit/vendor showroom, networking time, informative sessions, statewide awards and the famous

annual barn tour by bus. The 2011 Conference Annual Barn Tour of nearby barns was a great success with nearly 100 people taking the tour. The Barn Tour Committee of Dan Creyts, Bill Kimball, Jack Worthington, Steve Stier, Tim Wiles, Tammis Donaldson, and Stephanie White sends a special “thanks” to all of the barn owners for allowing 2011 Conference attendees to visit their premises. Be sure to join us for the 2012 Conference Tour!

– Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Coordinator



All photos by Tom Nehil



Omega Farms Barn (Williamston, MI). Omega Farms was established in 1966 by Steven and Ruth Simmons on 3800 acres in the gentle rolling farmland of south central Michigan. Today, their son, Clifford H. Simmons II, along with his wife Jennifer and their family continue to operate Omega Farms, which is comprised of an Angus cattle ranch and hunting preserve. There are a couple dozen barns on the property; nearly half of them have been restored to a farm use level. The farm is currently in the process of restoring all of their heritage buildings.

Sovis Farm Barn (Ovid, MI). Built in 1889 by Dennis Snyder, the barn was originally designed for horses, but later housed cattle, as well. After years of damage and deterioration, the current owners decided to restore the barn using remnants of an old photograph to insure accuracy.



Zeeb Farms Barn (Bath, MI). Built in 1928 by Neller, the 36 foot by 60 foot barn housed a dairy herd, with six horse stalls, later converted to a chicken coop in the late 1940s. The barn was also used for hay and straw storage. In 1994, the barn became used for general storage and currently houses antique farm machinery and tools.



Alicandro Farm Barns (Howell, MI). Built in 1910, the Alicandro Farm includes barns for calving, horses, and dairy. The calving barn has pens still intact. The original box stalls are in excellent condition in the horse barn, and the dairy barn has a unique grain handling system on the upper level and an annual square dance is now held in the mown hay.

Damon House/Barn (Howell, MI). Built in the 1850s by Indiana-based Amish builders, the barn has been moved 600 feet from its original location and turned into an energy efficient house. Mainly used for storage, the barn was originally 30 feet by 40 feet with a gable roof and was expanded in 1903 with the addition of a gambrel roof.



Green Meadow Farms Barn (Middlebury Township, MI). Built in 1912-1913 by William Cummings, the barn was used to house all livestock, feed and equipment for Hubbard's dairy, hog, and horse business. The basement had cow stanchions, horse stalls, and hog pens, with a barnyard in the center. At grade level, the barn had storage for hay, straw, corn fodder and a granary with feed shoots in all eight corners.

Other Recent Tours

Metamora Hunt Country Stable Tour (Lapeer County)

The Metamora Hunt Country Stable Tour occurred on Sunday, August 21st and featured six showcased stables never open to the public. The self-guided tour started at the Metamora Hunt Kennels in Metamora. The tour was a perfect way to see the rolling green pastures and beautiful barns dotting this historic horse community. Proceeds help preserve bridle paths throughout the 100-square-mile area of Metamora Hunt Country.



Photo by Janine Saputo

Metamora Hunt Country Stable: Old meets new and the horses live like kings.

Barns & Byways Tour (Ludington)

The annual Barns & Byways tour, organized by the Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce, was again held in October. The tour is a wonderful opportunity for locals and visitors to get in the car, drive the back roads of Mason County and take in the glorious colors of the fall. The tour also celebrates the proud agricultural heritage of Mason County. With the crispness in the air, it was a perfect time to visit the past and honor local farms. The first Barns & Byways tour took place in 2008, and each year welcomes hundreds of people to view the historic landmarks of the county's beautiful country roads. The barns are open to the public and still in use by families whose ancestors date back nearly a century. <http://www.pureludington.com/barns-byways-tour-93/>



Photos from 2011 Frankenmuth Corn Maze Barn Raising.



Photos taken by young participants, courtesy of Joanmarie Weiss

Teamwork and Timbers: Frankenmuth

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN)'s educational initiative, Teamwork and Timbers, is aimed at teaching timber frame construction methods to everyone, in particular Michigan school students. The National Barn Alliance contracted with Trillium Dell Timberworks of Illinois to design and build a quarter-size model barn frame for educational programs in the Midwest. The MBPN educational program involves youth at various venues during 2011.

MBPN's youth barn raising is a one-of-a-kind learning opportunity that provides information, exposure, and experience through a traditional community barn raising common in Michigan communities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Barn raising, like quilting bees and husking bees, brought people together to share work and pride in community. You can see it all happen raising this model. The barn frame was first raised at the MBPN annual confer-

ence in March this year. Among its many stops was MSU's Ag Expo this summer where Roger and Joanmarie Weiss first saw it. They invited MBPN to bring the barn to Frankenmuth and the Weiss Centennial Farm on Saturday, October 15th, and hosted MBPN and local youth at this barn raising. All hands were on deck to construct a barn frame without hammers and nails in true timber frame style...in one day no less. No construction experience was needed. The barn model, once erected, was available for public viewing throughout the day. As the sun set over the corn maze, young people and the adults who also participated dismantled the barn frame and sent it on its way to the next location. Check out more photos from the event on Facebook by searching for "Frankenmuth Corn Maze."

- Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Coordinator

Do you have an historic barn? Here's how to obtain information about the history of your barn...

When researching historic properties, the information comes from a variety of sources and usually takes time and patience. If the barn was on property that includes your house and other buildings and/or a farmstead, start by locating your property PIN number or Sidwell number—it's on your property tax bill. (Your property tax record is on file with your township and may be online as well, with dates, information, and photos.) Keep this number with you...it is key to research property deeds, transactions, owners and check maps, both online and in files.

- Get a copy of your township map that shows property lines and keep this handy as well.
- Ask your township offices if they have any information on zoning or an address map.
- Get to the closest history society and area libraries and ask as well.
- Photos...locate and keep any...and date them. Check Google maps, Bing maps, and county tax information by PIN which may also provide photos of the buildings online.
- Ask former owners and your neighbors, as well, particularly if they predate your property ownership.
- Deed research can be done by you, or others. Usually start at the local township offices, then the county register of deeds, then the state...
- The Michigan Historical Center and the state archives include rural farm surveys done by CCC workers in the 1930s. If your county was surveyed, there will be information on your farm on file. Some of these records could be online by now as well.

These approaches will get you started. It will create the story of your property and your barn(s) as well. Have a photo? Send it to us, and MBPN experts might be able to tell you a bit about it as well.

- Janine Saputo, Communications Committee Chair

President's Message

Boy! oh Boy! Where did the summer go? And fall is also well underway, with the beans and corn already harvested and Thanksgiving upon us. How long can it be until we're caught up in another cold Michigan winter?

The year has been extremely busy for MBPN, its Board, committee members, and volunteers. Beginning with our March Annual Conference, the late spring, summer, and early fall have been a whirlwind of activity.

A major accomplishment this cycle has been bringing on a new newsletter coordinator/editor. I am very pleased to introduce and welcome Keith Kehlbeck to the position. He was selected from a pool of more than 10 candidates who sent applications. Keith has lots of good journalism experience, and with his involvement in this issue, we hope it's the beginning of a long and mutually rewarding partnership.

Late in 2010, the National Barn Alliance placed on loan with the MBPN a quarter-size Timber Frame Barn frame. The Alliance had this model constructed with a vision that it would be a vehicle to expose our agricultural history to young people and to remind them that barns are the living examples of that heritage. When staged today, in miniature for participating school-age folks, an Historic Barn Raising, being an iconic 19th century community event, becomes a powerful learning experience that will live in the students' memories for a very long time.

Beginning in April with a 4th grade barn raising at the Sycamore Elementary School in Hopkins MI, the Teamwork and Timbers project traveled to over twenty different sites and exposed more than 500 young and older folks to barn construction and preservation. The National Barn Alliance project here in Michigan has been a huge success, and is backed by an enormous volunteer effort. So much so that we have requested and received permission to extend the loan till the end of June 2012.

Also since April, we have sponsored or co-sponsored four educational barn rehabilitation workshops, in Dimondale, Lapeer, Waterford Oaks Park in Oakland County, and South Manitou Island. Subjects ranged from barn condition assessment to stone foundation repair.

In all, it's been a tremendously busy summer and fall, but no slowing down now. We're in the midst of planning for the March 9th and 10th annual conference. I'll look forward to seeing you then.

All the Best,
Steve Stier, MBPN President



Steve Stier

Membership Matters

With the new year almost upon us, please take a moment to renew your membership in MBPN for 2012. We value your participation and support, which makes our programs possible. Know a friend who might be interested? Let us know, and we'll contact them!

Traditional barns, some more than 200 years old, are being lost each and every day for a multitude of reasons-urban/commercial/highway development, neglect, lack of maintenance, of alternative uses or adaptability, changing agricultural practices, severe weather, and competing demands on scarce financial resources.

Make a difference by getting involved, wherever and however you can-as a member, a volunteer, and an advocate for a barn near and dear to your heart. Give a membership or gift that demonstrates your love for barns or for someone special to you. Sponsor awards, speakers, signage, communications tools, and donate items, or make purchases at, the annual conference auctions. Lead a survey to document remaining barns and farmsteads.

MBPN members are often asked how many barns are left in Michigan, where certain types of barns might be found, where to go to get inside a 'real' barn, and even where to find a barn in which to hold a wedding or to move to a new location. Adaptive reuse can be critical to giving new life to an old barn. Become a barn advocate. Help save Michigan's irreplaceable heritage.

Membership/Renewal Honors/Memorials

Fieldstone	Annual/one person	\$30	\$ _____
Mortar	Annual/two people	\$40	\$ _____
Cupola	Lifetime/two people	\$1000	\$ _____

Non-profit Affiliate
Annual/two representatives, website listing \$50 \$ _____

Contractor/Business
Annual/two representatives, website listing \$100 \$ _____

Company or Non-profit Name

Membership Names

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

If you are giving a membership or making a gift in someone's honor, please provide the name and mailing address of the honoree so we can tell them of your thoughtfulness. If you are making a gift in memory of someone, please let us know who we should inform and, if you wish, tell us about this person's love for barns, farms, and rural life.

Send form and check or money order to:

MBPN, P.O. Box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614

www.mibarn.net

The Perfect Gift

Give someone who loves barns a perfect gift - a membership in the MBPN. For as little as \$30 for one person up to \$1,000 for a lifetime membership, your gift delivers benefits to the barn lover and Michigan's heritage barns. A gift to the MBPN in honor or memory of someone special is also a fine way to show that you care. For more information, visit www.mibarn.net or call any member of the board. We'll be happy to talk with you.

Coming Events, Promotions, and Products

Annual Conference and Meeting March 9 & 10, 2012

Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Michigan State University

Hold the dates and get ready for the annual event that everyone is already eagerly anticipating. "Barns in a Changing World" is the theme of the 2012 Annual Conference, on March 9-10, 2012 in East Lansing.

The preliminary itinerary includes a bus barn tour on March 9th. That evening is the awards banquet at Kellogg Center, where we will recognize the Barn of the Year winners. March 10th begins with the MBPN annual meeting, followed by educational

sessions and exhibits, which will be ongoing throughout the day.

Don't miss this opportunity to talk to contractors and fellow barn huggers (or whatever word you want to use to convey enthusiasm). Prices will remain the same as last year.

Stay tuned for more updates on what will undoubtedly be a great conference!

- Vera Wiltse, MBPN Board Member

2012 Barn of the Year Award Nominations Requested.

Nominations for the Barn of the Year Award are due by December 31, 2011. For more information, including information on nominations, past recipients, and the application form, visit our website at: <http://www.mibarn.net/Recognition.htm>

2012 Barn Calendar Offer

The 2012 calendar *Barns of Michigan* is now available for the low price of \$5.00 including postage. This high quality calendar of full color photographs depicts some of Michigan's outstanding examples of barns that are currently in use. The calendar is a joint effort between MBPN and Michigan Farm Bureau Insurance. Requests for calendars, including payment, can be mailed to Dan Creyts, 7775 Davis Highway, Charlotte, MI 48813. The calendars are also available on the MIBARN website: <http://www.mibarn.net/Products.htm>.



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Fall/Winter 2011 - No. 60