



Photo by Vera Wiltse

Fall colors are evident from the observation tower silo at the Sanford barn.



Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Tour participants gather at the Mayville Historical Museum for orientation.

❖ A Fall Tour...with color and quilts! ❖



On Saturday, October 11th, Michigan barn enthusiasts took in the vibrant Michigan fall colors as they participated in a self-driving tour visiting five sites in Michigan's Thumb area and Tuscola County.

The day began at 9:00 a.m. at the Mayville Museum, with refreshments, orientation to the tour, area history and the distribution of maps. The driving tour took participants to five locations to investigate barns and farmsteads. Sites included:

- The Thomas farm, with a double-gambrel roof, a working horse farm with purebred thoroughbreds and cross-bred Andalusians, as well as beautiful gardens and farm antiques;
- The Sanford barn—an “English” style, hand-hewn timber frame barn with an adjacent observation tower that provided a wonderful view of the countryside;
- The Hecht barn, recipient of MBPN's 2010 Barn of the Year Award;
- The Smith's alpaca farm, including a timber frame bank barn;
- The Octagon Barn—a unique preservation success story and a Michigan treasure. The barn, the agricultural museum in the

“As I had never been to the Octagon Barn before, we could have spent the whole day there...it is truly something magnificent!”

—Barbara Krueger, Hartland, MI

loft, and the adjacent historic Purdy home was open to the tour.

During the tour, we also celebrated the debut of the Thumb Quilt Trail, Michigan's newest quilt trail. Giant 8x8-foot painted quilt blocks on barns and other structures along the byways celebrate our rural heritage and traditions. Quilt trails are experienced from along our roadways and provide opportunities for exploration of the rural countryside and small communities along the way. For more information on Quilt Trails, see Elsie Vredenburg's article below.

Participant “takeaways” from the tour were extremely positive, and a common thread was the fact that many of us enjoy fall tours because of the crisp, clear weather and the fall colors.

Photographs from the tour are included elsewhere in the newsletter (and on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mibarn. Like us on Facebook and check out the posts from October, as well as newer posts of interest. Also, if you are online, take a look at a great article by Kathleen Lavey of the *Lansing State Journal*, whose article “Barns: Icons of Michigan Agriculture” was reprinted prior to the tour in the *Detroit Free Press*; in the *Free Press* paid archives at: <http://archive.freep.com/article/20140914/NEWS06/309140074>

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

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President's Message

At our last Board meeting, Tom Irrer made a great suggestion. Why not encourage more individuals to tell how they have approached different aspects of barn restoration and preservation? Having done a column in our summer newsletter himself, Tom recognized that telling our stories is an important part of what the Network can do to encourage other barn enthusiasts. We all are involved because we care about these unique symbols of our agricultural heritage, and sometimes it helps to share experiences.



Tim Wiles

Taking on the task of restoring or repurposing a barn—giving it a new life, so to speak—is often a daunting task. Talking about the “whys,” costs and values related to such efforts can help demystify a process that sometimes seems overly complicated, costly, and hopelessly out-of-reach, however. Those who have stepped up and taken on a barn project more often than not come out fully pleased, proud and glad that they did. We owe it to others who are contemplating the same path the benefit of our collective perspectives.

In this issue of the newsletter, our new recording secretary, Wendy Shank, eloquently tells how she and her family have approached restoring a barn to its original beauty—truly a labor of love from someone who understands how rewarding such efforts can be!

As author Ken Blanchard has noted, “None of us is as smart as all of us.”

I encourage each of you to share your own stories with us. My fellow board members and officers like Tom and Wendy will lead the way. Thanks for all you do to help us with our collective mission of promoting appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads and rural communities. Together, we will continue to make a difference!

God bless,
Tim



Barn Events Throughout the State

It seems safe to say that enthusiasm for “all things barn-related” is rising throughout Michigan. In addition to events described elsewhere in this newsletter, other creative barn presentations, tours, and programs are occurring each month. Do you know of a recent or upcoming “barn-worthy” event in your community? Let us know at: keith@k2consulting.net.

—Keith Kehlbeck

The Shank Family Barn: my “old barn” with character

Our family was itching to get out of the city and into the country. I searched homes on a real state website looking for ones that were built between 1800-1950. We wanted an old house with unique features and the charm that you can only get with an historic property. What we found was an Italianate-style home and carriage barn built in 1872.

The house is grand and beautiful, but would be left wanting, if it were not for the barn. The two-story carriage barn is the perfect accent to this property. Its windows mimic the eight-foot windows of the house, and the front door is a rustic version of the one on the front of the house. The beams are all hand hewn, most likely crafted from timber that once stood on the property.

My neighbor suggested tearing the barn down saying, “You can fix it, but at the end of the day you will still have an old barn.” I thought, “Exactly! At the end of the day I WANT an old barn.” The poor old thing leans to the east, and it’s fallen off its foundation on that side. The stairs are in the crux of the lean, so they are smashed and twisted. The windows have all been broken out, and some of the wood is rotten.

Even with all of its issues, however, my beautiful barn has life left in it. When we first saw it, we immediately thought what a great ice cream parlor it would make. I’ve lived here for three years now, and I’ve often thought about creating a three room living area upstairs using all the antiques I have gathered from estate sales and bargain hunting. Glamping—glamorous camping—is what actually comes to mind. It would be so romantic on a summer night!

Currently, I have a belted Galloway cow that I milk twice a day, and I spend lots of time in the barn caring for her. While I am milking, I often look at the structure and wonder how many others have sat here and milked over the years. What other animals have called this barn home? Whose names are those carved in the railing, the feeding trough, the cement foundation?

I look at the beams above and try to spot the square markings that someone made almost 150 years ago without the aid of electricity or power tools. How many hours did these individuals spend



Shank Family barn.

Photo by Wendy Shank

crafting each and every beam, each piece of wood, and each window?

Over the years, I would bet that someone who helped to build that barn often passed by, noting with pride that he had built it. It’s quite possible his grandchildren know this barn as one Grandpa built.

It would be a shame to tear down such a piece of history. So much time and energy went into building it—not just the structure, but also the art of the entire thing.

It’s my goal to restore this barn to its original beauty and to honor the ones who crafted it so many years ago. Once it’s restored, I would love to host parties, barn dances, and the occasional tour. It truly is a piece of Michigan History that is worthy of preservation.

—Wendy Shank, MBPN Recording Secretary

MBPN to exhibit at Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference

The MBPN will again be exhibiting at the upcoming Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference, which will be held at the Traverse City Resort on January 24, 2015. We have been an exhibitor for the past few years, and a number of our board, including Tammis Donaldson, Brad Brogren, and Tim Wiles, have presented workshops on adapting traditional barns. This year, Steve Stier, Vera Wiltse and I will be staffing the MBPN booth. In my MSU Extension role, I will be helping to develop a panel presentation for the conference on the development of and potential for a Northern Michigan FiberShed/FiberHub (a concept similar to FoodHub).

The Northern Michigan Small Farm site, including conference details and schedule can be found online at: <http://smallfarmconference.com>.

I hope some of you will be able to join us at the conference! For additional information, contact Julie Avery at: averyj@msu.edu
—Julie Avery, Communications Chair



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Fall Tour Scenes



A day of splendor in Michigan's Thumb!

The MBPN extends a special thanks to the barn owners and other supporters of this year's fall tour:

- Ken Hecht
- Gary Sanford
- Dick & Vivian Smith
- The Friends of the Octagon Barn
- Kathy & Bill Thomas
- The Mayville Museum & Staff
- Vera Wiltse



Photo by Vera Wiltse

The Thomas barn is unusual in having a double gambrel roof (three pitches per side).



Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Dan Creyts, Clare and Judy Koenigsknecht in front of the relocated train station at the Mayville Historical complex.



Photo by Vera Wiltse

Bullwinkle and friends in the interior of the Sanford barn.



Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Rose Putnam speaking to tour participants at Gagetown's Octagon Barn.



Photo by Vera Wiltse

The Hecht barn, one of the largest in Michigan's Thumb.



The Sanford barn.

Photo by Tammis Donaldson



The Hecht barn.

Photo by Vera Wiltse



The Octagon Barn in Gagetown, MI.

Photo by Tammis Donaldson



The Octagon Barn Powerhouse.

Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Calling all 2015 Barn of the Year Nominations!

Every year, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) wishes to honor those who make the extra effort to maintain their historic barn with integrity. It also recognizes that barns must adapt in order to survive, so it seeks as well to honor those who have modified their barns in a sensitive, creative manner to accommodate an alternative use; and that a corporation may have more resources on hand with which to do the work than an individual farmer. To reflect these variables, the MBPN has developed the following award categories:

1. Continued Family/Private Agricultural Use.
2. Family/Private Adaptive Use.
3. Non-Profit Agricultural or Adaptive Use.
4. Commercial Agricultural or Adaptive Use.

Barns will be judged for completeness of information presented

in the application, sensitivity and integrity of repairs or modification, visual appeal, creativity, thoroughness of work and effort expended to repair and maintain. The winning nominations will be presented an award at the MBPN annual conference in March at Michigan State University.

Three items are required for the submission: a written narrative, photographs, and a completed MBPN Survey form. The Application form and the Survey form can be found on the MBPN website (www.mibarn.net) under the resource tab. **Nominations must be postmarked by January 9, 2015.**

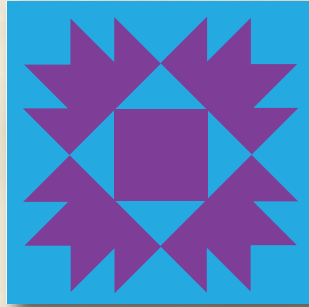
Special thanks to Ina Hanel for her excellent input for the new application!

For additional information, contact Jerry Damon, Chair, MBPN Barn of the Year Committee at (248-345-4080) or (running-buds@aol.com).

—Jerry Damon

Quilt Trails: a growing agri-tourism phenomenon

The quilt “trail” experience began about 13 years ago in Ohio, with an “ugly” tobacco barn on the property of Master Quilter Maxine Groves. Her daughter, Donna Sue Groves, who worked for the Ohio Arts Council, was looking for a way to fancy up her mother’s old barn; a painted quilt block seemed just right. It didn’t take long for Groves to imagine “an invisible clothesline of quilts across the country,” honoring traditional art and bringing with it the economic development that tourism brings to rural areas.



Since that beginning in Ohio in 2001, quilt trails have sprung up all across the country. Today, there are trails in 48 states and three Canadian provinces. More are being added on a regular basis, as people recognize the potential benefits and seek to be a part of this rural phenomenon.

Quilt trails are a recognized economic development tool that helps grow agri-tourism. Michigan now boasts seven or more such trails, and the first quilt trail in Michigan (in Alcona County) was initiated by Michigan State University to promote tourism in that area. Not only does this public art project celebrate rural life and heritage and bring in tourists off of the interstates, but it also encourages community hands-on participation in making art. A trail guide and map makes driving tours easy and accessible every day of the year.

When we first began the Osceola Quilt Trail in 2009, one of the first things that became apparent was the fact that some of the barn owners realized the need for some painting and/or repairs to their barns if they were going to be showcased with the quilt blocks. We were aware of at least six barns that got some “spiffing up” prior to the quilt block being installed.

I’m amazed that I still run into people who think actual quilts are being hung on the barns. The quilt blocks are made of plywood

or MDO signboard, and are painted before being installed on the barn. We don’t know the quilt blocks’ life expectancy, but some estimate that it may be as long as 15 to 20 years. None of the quilt trails have been in existence long enough for us to really know how long they will last, and many factors could be involved in their longevity.

Quilt trail administration/management differs from trail to trail. There is no set “national standard.” Volunteers create most trails, and each group sets its own criteria and method of trail management, although there is often some communication between them.

When we were getting started, we asked a lot of questions of other groups, and most were more than willing to share what worked and what didn’t work for them.

The administrators of the Michigan quilt trails have realized the benefits of working together, and they have been holding annual meetings to network with each other to share ideas and promotional efforts. In 2013, a rack card was produced with contact information for all of the Michigan trails, with the cost being shared by all; this rack card was distributed to Michigan Welcome Centers throughout the state. Each group also produced its own trail guide/brochure, but doing the cooperative rack card—with the costs shared by all—meant that fewer overall trail guides needed to be printed, which resulted in a big savings. Contact information for all of the Michigan quilt trails can be found online at: www.quilttrailsofmichigan.blogspot.com. As we become aware of new trails in the state, they will be added to this list. For additional information please contact Elsie Vredenburg, elf@netonecom.net. Phone: 231-825-2572.

—Elsie Vredenburg

Michigan Barns featured at latest BCHS meeting



Photo by Diane Hawkins

Board member Jack Worthington educates listeners about a boring machine, which is used to create the mortise.

Barn enthusiasts from around Barry County gathered Tuesday evening, November 4 at the Elks Lodge to hear Jack Worthington, founding member of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network talk about Michigan’s barns. In a fascinating slide show that took attendees from fence rows and windmills, through amazing pictures of silos and barns constructed of stone, cord wood, logs and lumber, Jack’s presentation traveled from the Upper Peninsula to the Lower, from the 1800s to the mid-20th century viewing barns great and small, some with cupolas and some with intricate paintings. He brought with him not only his charming wife Barbara, but also all kinds of tools used in building Michigan’s early barns.

This program was one of Barry County Historical Society’s monthly meetings. It

was followed with refreshments (four different-styled barn cookies and a gingerbread barn created by 2014 BCHS President Mary Walton) and lively discussion as participants shared photos and questions about barns near and dear to them. Sixty-two members and guests were present, even though it was general election night!

In December BCHS will gather to celebrate the holidays with a slide show presenting “Barry County Far and Wide: The Towns Past and Present and the Many Lakes that Make-Up Barry County.” For information about the Society’s next meeting look for us on our Facebook page (Barry County Historical Society) or email us at bchistory64@gmail.com.

—Randy Gladstone

Second Annual Romeo Barn Tour

Romeo, Michigan is a National Register of Historic Places village dating back to 1837. The Romeo Historical Society is famous for its annual Christmas Homes Tour, which happens each December. Last September, Historical Society members decided to transfer their tour expertise from homes to local barns and carriage houses. The result? A huge success!

This fall, the Romeo Historical Society hosted its second annual barn tour on Sept. 20, 2014. Organizers described the tour as “back by popular demand.” The self-guided tour featured seven stops, and approximately 10 farmhouses and barns throughout Romeo.

As reported by C&G News Staff Writer, Sarah Wojcik, Romeo Historical Society member Gloria Billo said that the nonprofit group was pleasantly surprised at how many residents were willing to feature their barns on the tour. “So many people living in the suburbs and children have never even seen the inside of a barn,” Billo said. “They’re such neat structures. It’s the history. It’s



Gerald and Marilyn Zaetta's contemporary pole barn houses restored museum quality carriages.



Photos by Janine Saputo

Participants at the Romeo Barn Tour, Romeo, MI 9/20/14.

the architecture. Many of the barns on the tour are from the 1800s. Keeping up a barn is very expensive — they’re so huge, and the roof and everything. There’s a lot of love and money in keeping barns up.”

The Romeo Historical Society wanted to feature barns with unusual or unique features in their tour. The result: barns at a working cattle and chicken farm, a contemporary pole barn full of “look-at-only” museum quality carriages, an 1840s Greek Revival farmhouse with modern adaptations of 20th century barns, and a brick pottery barn. This year’s tour also featured a mini theme of cemetery tombstone carving.

The tours help the nonprofit Historical Society fund three different museums in Romeo — an 1860s home, the blacksmith and tin shop, and the Romeo Arts and Archives Center.

Thanks to MBPN member Janine Saputo for reporting on the Romeo Barn Tour!

—Keith Kehlbeck

March barn tour moved to May

Notable changes for this year are being made, and you will want to be aware of them as you plan your late winter and spring activities.

March 14th, 2015 is the last day of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Week and the MBPN’s annual meeting and conference at Michigan State University. Unlike in previous years, there will not be a barn tour in conjunction with this conference. We will have a day full of speakers, the annual business meeting, our auctions full of collectible goodies, and the awards program—all in one day. We will be starting later in the morning and going through the evening with the awards program. Look for the schedule in your next (Preconference) newsletter.

There will be a spring barn tour originating and ending in Midland on May 13th. This will be a bus tour traveling to the Gladwin, Beaverton and Clare areas and will include an Amish dinner at noon. This tour is being held in conjunction with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network’s conference. People will be able to register for the Wednesday tour, the Thursday barn preservation speakers, or the total three day conference. Your spring newsletter will have all the details. We look forward to having you join us for these exciting MBPN events!

For more information on ANR Week, go online to: www.anrweek.canr.msu.edu

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Committee Chair



Photo by Denise Markley



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2015 Calendars to Celebrate Michigan Barns

MBPN calendars have become a popular annual promotional piece celebrating the diversity and preservation of Michigan's barns. In recent years, our barn calendars have been produced with help from individual, business and organizational sponsors, and this year is no exception. The 2015 calendar will feature images of iconic barns throughout the state.

There is no charge for the calendars. To order yours, send \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling for each calendar to: Dan Creyts, 7775 Davis Highway, Charlotte, MI 48813. Please make checks payable to MBPN.

Calendars are now available...the perfect stocking stuffer for friends and family!

—Dan Creyts, MBPN Board member

