

## Spring Conference a Great Success "Keeping it Local": MBPN celebrates 20 years



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

Fred Will demonstrates the one-twelfth model of a "split barn."

In March, MBPN members and guests gathered at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing to celebrate the Network's 20th anniversary with exhibits, breakout sessions, an auction and the annual banquet, where the 2015 Barn of the Year Awards were announced (see below).

As previously reported, the 2015 conference went back to our roots with a one-day meeting and workshops. Breakout sessions focused on local preservation and restoration stories. During one breakout session, participants listened to other barn enthusiasts reminisce about the exciting and often hilarious stories their barns would tell. The sessions also included contractor updates on recent barn repair projects, and an intriguing description of Pennsylvania "split" barns.

Fred Will, an authority on Pennsylvania barn stars, has identified 40 massive bank barns in Somerset County that were enlarged by sev-



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

MBPN President Tim Wiles recognizing Past President Steve Stier with the President's Award for 2015.

ering them down the middle, moving one section outward and "stitching" the sections back together. The National Barn Alliance's Charles Leik, a native of Portland, was so fascinated by this process that he had a one-twelfth model of a "split barn" created. Fred and Charles authored a recent article in *Timber Framing* magazine and discussed sleuthing the "Why" and "How" of this puzzling phenomenon in the breakout session. This was only one of the great presentations in March at the conference.

All in all, the event was a great success. Thanks to our members for their continued support at the conference and barn tours, which have kept the Network moving forward while educating and assisting barn owners in various ways.

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Committee Chair

## MBPN Participates in 2015 Spring MHPN Conference with a Barn Tour

This year, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network was pleased to present our annual spring barn tour in cooperation with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) during their annual conference. This tour was held as part of the MHPN conference in Midland on May 13-16, 2015. The conference, the MHPN's 35th annual statewide gathering and titled "Always Seeking Modern," was deemed a great success, with over 370 participants

gathering at Northwood University. Participants were enthusiastic about meeting in the city that was home to Alden B. Dow, Michigan's Architect Laureate, and that today offers one of the nation's most impressive concentrations of modern architecture by Dow, Francis E. "Red" Warner, Jackson B. Hallett, Robert E. Schwartz, and others.

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## New Officers Elected for MBPN Board

At the Annual Membership meeting during the spring conference, two new individuals joined the MBPN Board. With the passing of Jack Worthington and the resignation of longtime Treasurer Rob Foti, two Board spots had become available. Assuming the role of Treasurer is MBPN Newsletter Editor Keith Kehlbeck, and Recording Secretary Wendy Shank has agreed to serve on the Board and as Secretary. Congratulations to Keith and Wendy and welcome to the Board!

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## Steve Stier to Receive Michigan Heritage Award



*Steve Stier*

The Michigan Heritage Award, presented annually by the MSU Museum Traditional Arts Program (MTAP) is being given this year to our own Steve Stier, who is being honored for barn preservation and barnbuilding arts. The Michigan Heritage Awards honor master Michigan tradition-bearers who, with excellence and authenticity, continue the folk traditions of their families or communities through practice and teaching. Awards are also presented to

individuals who are recognized as outstanding community leaders in the maintenance, documentation, or presentation of traditional arts. A community can be described as a group of people who share the same ethnic or tribal heritage, language, occupation, religion, geographic area, or traditional art form. Awards are made in three categories: performance, material culture, and community leadership. Nominations are reviewed and awardees selected by an invited panel of subject specialists.

Steve is a native of Illinois who moved to Michigan in his youth and has since spent the majority of his life devoted to the building arts in the state. He holds a degree in industrial arts education from Western Michigan University and Masters degree in historic preservation from Eastern Michigan University (EMU). Steve is a licensed builder who focuses on historic preservation skills and practices. He is experienced in wooden boat rehabilitation and is a barn wright. In his nomination letter for Steve, Ted Ligibel, Ph.D., director of EMU's historic preservation Program, states, "Steve's knowledge of the built environment and traditional construction techniques is nothing short of amazing and his carpentry, masonry, and restoration skills are superior."

He has worked in and with museums in Maine and Michigan, including Michigan State University Museum where he is appointed as a research associate for traditional building craft. It is for his work, however, as a tireless preservation advocate and educator, especially in the realm of timber-framing and barn preservation, that he is being honored with the Michigan Heritage Award. Steve's contributions to the community of barn workers, preservationists, educators, and historians are unparalleled.

A longtime member of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Steve established the historic trades program at Randolph Career and Technical Center (Detroit) and developed the network's window rehabilitation training series. As adjunct faculty with EMU's Historic Preservation Program, Steve has been an instructor for over dozen field schools for hands-on preservation. He has also served as the preservation instructor on the restoration of the historic Goffar Barn in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes National Lakeshore in Leelanau County.

Steve co-developed the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey that has engaged hundreds of individuals, including many 4-H youth, throughout the state in documenting this important and often endangered aspect of Michigan's built landscape. To support this activity, in 2000 he and Vera Wiltse co-authored the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey Manual published by the MSU Museum. Steve was a founding board member and president of the MSU Museum collaborate in advancing the survey project.

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## President's Message

The year is flying by, and we've already enjoyed several opportunities to celebrate our rich Midwestern barn heritage. In March, we had an extremely successful annual conference and meeting in East Lansing. In April, some of our members traveled to Ohio for a barn conference and tour, and in May, the Network participated in the Michigan Historic Preservation Network's spring conference in Midland (with a bus tour, naturally). Committee and board meetings continue with regularity, and we are looking forward to a vibrant fall bus tour up north. All of these topics are covered in this edition of our newsletter.



Tim Wiles

A link to the fall program is included below, and our next newsletter will have additional details concerning this exciting fall bus tour that will occur in high-color season.

On a more somber note, we were all saddened to learn of the death of MBPN founding member, Jack Worthington. His cheerful and knowledgeable presence at our events will be greatly missed, as will his farm tool demonstrations that fascinated so many of us, young and old. Another missing old friend—whose passing we learned of as this issue was going to the press—is past MBPN Board member Leo Fitzpatrick. Stay tuned for a tribute to Leo in our next issue. They simply don't make 'em like Jack and Leo anymore, but we'll keep them in our memories and thoughts.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the recent Michigan Heritage Award received by my friend and predecessor, Steve Stier. His recognition is well-deserved and is a tribute to his unflagging support for all things related to our mission. Great job, Steve!

Until our next conversation, I hope to see you at an upcoming Michigan Barn event!

God bless,  
Tim Wiles

## Romeo to host 3rd Annual Barn Tour

What can you do with a barn? The folks in the Romeo area have created some great solutions, so come check it out Saturday, September 19th from 11am to 4pm. The seven sites on this year's tour include 10 barns and two house barns that were constructed between 1840 and 1940. The tour is self-guided and moves between Romeo, Bruce and Washington Townships. Maps must be picked up at the Romeo Archives Museum at 290 N. Main Street, Romeo, after 10:30am on Saturday, September 19th.

Tickets are \$15 on the day of the tour and can only be purchased at the Archives Museum. Pre-sale tickets are \$12 and can be purchased in Romeo at: Two Romeo Girls, 227 N. Main Street, phone 586-651-4290 or Connelly's Creations, 175 S. Main Street, phone 586-752-2537.

The Romeo Historical Society is a 501(c)3 charity supporting three museums which contain artifacts and records of northern Macomb County. For information, call 586-752-4111 or visit them online at: [romeohistoricalsociety.org](http://romeohistoricalsociety.org)

—Janine Saputo

## Annual Fall Bus Tour Special Fall Tour Announcement and Invitation



Your Special Invitation...to join the MBPN barn tour in beautiful fall colors and the countryside of Leelanau County. We'll visit eight barns at five sites, and an 1880s power house!

Come for the weekend and take advantage of other special opportunities.

**THE TOUR:** One of MBPN's annual fall bus barn tours will bring you to interesting area barns. Meet owners and hear of their experiences.

**A GATHERING:** Get acquainted with tour participants and MBPN board members the evening before the tour at an informal social.

**SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES:** We have arrangements for optional programs and adventures to add-on to your weekend.

**A NATIONAL TREASURE:** Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is an amazing and beautiful place filled with inland and coastal beauty. The park is preserving historic and cultural sites including barns and farmsteads dating from the mid 1800s, including Port Oneida Rural Historic District.

### Program highlights include:

#### Friday, October 9th

##### OPTIONAL

9:30 am: Program to plan your self-driving tour of our National Park barns and farmsteads;

6:00 to 8:00pm: Evening social gathering at the Empire Area Museum; meet other participants and check out this award-winning museum.

#### Saturday, October 10th

8:30 am -- 5pm

Annual Fall Bus Barn Tour

Our bus tour begins at our first site: Healing Tree Farm at the Campbell DeYoung Farmstead. We will also visit a relocated barn, two MBPN Barn of the Year award winners, a Yak and Alpaca ranch, a 1910 'experimental' barn, and will have lunch at an event farmstead.

#### Sunday, October 11th

##### OPTIONAL

Special group visit to Traverse City Commons - Cathedral Barn at the Historic Barn Park

Bus Tour Price: \$50 members; \$60 non-members; lunch included.

We would love you to join MBPN!

Other events are free.

**Please register by Sept. 20th. It is necessary to register ahead of time, and this area is a peak tourist destination, so secure your lodging now and pre-register so we can plan!**

More details and descriptions are available on our weekend activities: For more information, download the Tour Flyer and Registration form on our website at [www.mibarn.net/events](http://www.mibarn.net/events)

We hope to see you there!

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Committee Chair

# 2015 Barn of the Year Awards

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) announced their 2015 Michigan Barns of the Year Awards at the 20th Annual Conference and Meeting this year.

This is the 18th year the network has presented “Barn of the Year” awards. Including this year’s awardees, a total of 61 barns from across Michigan have been recognized for their unique qualities and/or preservation efforts.

The Barn of the Year program annually honors existing Michigan barns that exemplify outstanding character in our state. Nominated

barns must have been built before 1957 and be in-use for one of four purposes. Barns must retain their overall appearance -- both interior and exterior barn characteristics. Nominations are open to the public, reviewed and determined by MBPN Awards Committee members and awarded to the barn owners at the MBPN annual conference each spring during MSU’s ANR Week.

Thanks again for all of our nominated barns, and congratulations to this year’s award recipients!

—Jerry Damon, Awards Committee Chairman



**Continuing Family / Private Agricultural Use**  
 Schumaker Barn, Fenton, MI, Tyrone Township, Livingston County  
 Owner: Carl and Kim Schumaker



**Continuing Family / Private Agricultural Use**  
 Charles H. Katz Barn, Calhoun County, Fredonia Township, Marshall, MI.  
 Owner Scott Katz

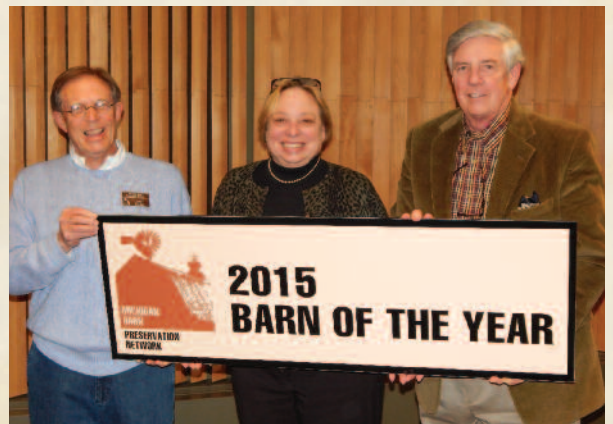




**Commercial Agricultural or Adaptive Use**  
 Zingerman's Cornman Barn, Dexter, Washtenaw County.  
 Owner: Zingerman's



**Family / Private Adaptive Ag Use**  
 Nussdorfer Barn, Ingham County, Mason MI.  
 Owner Jeff and Cindy Nussdorfer



**Family / Private Adaptive Ag Use**  
 Cherry Basket Farm (Main) Barn, Leelanau County,  
 Leelanau Township, Omena, MI.  
 Owner Tom and Marsha Buehler

*Photos by Tom Nehil*

# MBPN Loses a Founding Member



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

Jack Worthington "in his natural setting"...demonstrating and instructing on barn-related topics.

John "Jack" H. Worthington, 86, born September 15, 1928 in Sault Ste. Marie, MI, passed away March 29, 2015 in Lansing.

Once in a rare while, you meet someone who instantly becomes your friend, and who exhibits the increasingly rare traits of graciousness, humility, and a continued willingness to contribute in ways large and small towards a dream. In the case of Jack, who passed away earlier this year, I found all of the above, and more. I didn't know him as long or as well as many of the MBPN family, but I recognized immediately upon meeting him that I was dealing with a quality person and an asset to the organization. He enthusiastically embraced a "newbie" like me, and I learned more simply from listening to him than I ever thought I'd need to know about barns and rural America.

Jack was one of a handful of people who began to meet informally in the early 1990s, concerned about the dramatic loss of Michigan's heritage farm structures due to changing agricultural needs, neglect, development, sprawl and highway expansion. By 1995, the group had established its nonprofit, 501 (c) 3 designation and the Michigan Barn Preservation Network was born. Worthington was a member of the board ever since, serving as president from 1998 to 2002. He compiled an extensive collection of barn photographs, books, and other documents related to



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

Jack at this year's spring meeting, with Fred Will and Charles Leik.

barn history and architecture, and he was a popular speaker who acquired the nickname, "Old Barn." His collection of slides and barn memorabilia will become part of the MSU Museum collection of Michigan barn history. Most recently, he served as head of the Nominating Committee, and he was always on the lookout for "new blood" to become involved with the Network.

Jack was a native of Sault Ste. Marie and spent his adult life in the Lower Peninsula. Earning a degree from MSU in farm management, he taught Veterans agriculture, served in the U.S. Air Force, and was a 4-H agent. He retired in 1985 and was also active in the National Barn Alliance, Woodworker's Guild, Mid-Michigan Genealogy Society, and the Great Lakes Recreational Leaders Laboratory. He was especially proud of having developed the idea for what has become the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey, spearheaded now by the MBPN and MSU and replicated in other states.

When then-president Brad Brogren presented Jack with the MBPN's President Award in 2009, he noted simply, "Jack Worthington has been chosen as the recipient of this award because he best exemplifies the mission of the organization." He will be missed.

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

*The Jack Worthington family wishes to thank you all for your support, kind words of sympathy and most of all, your friendship and love. Like you, we will miss him dearly, but we take solace in knowing that he touched so many. Even at 86, he maintained his mischievous grin, his childlike curiosity, and his reverence for things past. Please keep him in your heart, and when you see that old barn, pause for a moment so you can both have a look.*

*Fondly,  
Barbara, Mike, Karen, David, Jamie  
and Patty.*



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

April Board meeting in Marshall at Schuler's Restaurant & Pub.



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

July: the Board goes "back to school" in Brighton.

## MBPN Board Meets Around the State— in Historic Marshall and in a One Room School House

While not exactly “the Traveling Wilburys,” the MBPN Board has put on a few miles within the state during recent meetings.

In April, the Board visited Historic Marshall, Michigan, where they met (and lunched) at the iconic family-owned Schuler's Restaurant & Pub, which has been serving guests since 1909.

On Saturday, July 11th the Board of Directors met at the Lyon School, on Buno Road near Brighton, Michigan. The Brighton Area Historical Society has an 1885 One Room School, which replaced the original 1832 log cabin that served as a school for 53 years. The

existing building served to educate local kids until 1956. From 1956 until 1984, the building served as the Brighton Township Hall. The Township Trustees generously deeded the school to the Brighton Area Historical Society by the Township Trustees. The School is a fully restored, barrier-free, air-conditioned one-room schoolhouse. The experience will bring back your school days in a very accurate restoration of an old school house.

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

## Ohio Barn Tour: Preservation, Owls and Comedy

Six Michigan MBPN members attended the April annual conference and barn tour of Friends of Ohio Barns in and around Findlay, Ohio. Sessions included: The P's of Preservation, The Barn Owl, A History of Farming and Cooperative Extension, and the annual stand-up comedy of "The Barn Doctors of Ohio" -- Rudy Christian and Dan Troth. Kelly and Tammy Rundle of 4th Wall Films talked about their film "The Barn Raisers." The Barn tour took attendees to five sites with multiple barns and showcased the diversity and craftsmanship of Ohio barns. Michigan attendees included Julie Avery, Steve Stier, Chuck and Calvin Bultman, Keith Bruder and a new member Bob Pattison.

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

*Tour participants explored a variety of barns. Shown here is a barn and its interior, with finely detailed, chamfered support posts and double diagonal braces—both highly unusual.*





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## ✦ T & T in East Lansing ✦

Each year, the MSU Museum organizes the Festival of Michigan Folklife held outside in East Lansing. This year the dates are August 8th and 9th and as part of the Festival the organizers have asked to have an exhibit by the MBPN, which will give us exposure to thousands of people. Plans call for the Teamwork &Timbers model barn to be there (under a tent), with the usual

intrepid volunteers to explain the exhibit. There is always lots of good music and interesting things to see at the Festival. If you are interested in volunteering, the commitment will be from noon to 6pm each day. If you volunteer, Dan will buy you a hot fudge sundae!

—Tammi Donaldson, MBPN Board Member

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In addition to the five tracks of sessions and tours, there were many special events. Wednesday's "Great Michigan Road Trips" provided guided travel in the region for 78 participants who either ventured into Gladwin, Clare, and Isabella Counties to study rural preservation, or around the Bay Region counties of Midland, Bay, and Saginaw to study preservation-based revitalization.

For the Network's role in the conference, our Tour Guides Vera Wiltse and Steve Stier of the MBPN board, and Frank Graham, retired second-generation barn contractor, were on the MBPN bus as presenters and resources. The tour bus took participants to Gladwin County to visit Stone Cottage Gardens and their rehabilitated barn. We also visited two barns that have been highlighted by speakers at our conference, and the tour ended in Isabella County visiting with Frank Graham at two rehabilitated, curved rafter barns. A delicious Amish lunch complemented the experience. On May 14th, speakers presented at the MHPN conference site in Midland on barn-related topics.

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Committee Chair

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Richard Roosenberg, executive director of Tillers International, a Michigan organization that Steve has assisted in educational programs and in building perhaps as many as 20 barns, states: "Steve has always known that preservation of barns and timber framing was not just the structure of the moment, but drawing in people, educating them in the uniqueness of these structures, describing the roles the buildings played in our culture, and etching the muscles needed to keep them standing tall."

Steve intimately understands the need to honor and perpetuate traditional building skills to achieve both excellence and authenticity in his construction and preservation work. As another nominator put it, "Steve, when given the opportunity to use newer high tech tools and methods to repair a barn, often opted for a more traditional way to solve a problem with excellent outcome."

Congratulations on well-deserved recognition, Steve!  
—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor and  
the MSU Museum MTAP Program