

Winter 2017 - No. 78

MI BARN

PROMOTING APPRECIATION, PRESERVATION, AND REHABILITATION OF MICHIGAN BARNS, FARMSTEADS, AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Delights of the Fall Barn & Color Tour

On Saturday, October 8th, Michigan Barn aficionados gathered at the Evergreen Resort in Cadillac, Michigan to participate in the annual fall barn tour (and to enjoy some typical Michigan autumn splendor).

This year's tour was hosted by Ruth Stahl and our friends up north. Ruth and her husband Ivan have been members of the MBPN for six years and have attended conferences and tours. The Stahls were awarded the 2016 Michigan Barn Preservation Network Barn of the Year Award for Commercial Agricultural Adaptive Use for their event barn, which was one of the stops on the tour. Ruth did admirable 'double-duty' as conference organizer and the on-board bus tour guide, and she and Ivan hosted us for refreshments when we stopped at the Stahl Event Barn.

This year's program began with a Friday evening dinner and social event at the Resort, followed by a wonderful presentation by Michigan's Quilt Barn Trails expert and proponent, Elsie Vredenburg. Elsie captivated the audience with her stories of how she became involved with creating barn quilt blocks and as conference organizer and the on-board bus tour guide, to promote quilt barn trails (see article on page 3). On Saturday morning, the barn tour bus departed from Evergreen Resort to visit eight barns at seven sites throughout Osceola, Missaukee, and Wexford Counties. The tour contained many highlights and the following barns:

The Venema's barn is an Osceola County landmark for travelers along M115. A nearby cemetery has a field-stone headstone shaped as an ogee roof suggesting that "Pioneer and Master Barn Builder" Andrew Holligbaugh built a number of this area's ogee roof barns.



Photos by Keith Kehlbeck

The tour group gathers by Floral Hall. Note the quilt block on the building.

Geers Farm is an agri-tourism destination where we visited two barns. This farm has a year-round custom sawmill and seasonal pumpkin patch, as well as a visitor-favorite: an apple cannon!

Clam River Farm's gambrel roof barn was built in 1928 to replace an 1874 structure that burned. This barn was one of the first in the area to be constructed of dimensional lumber. Owner Rich Herweyer remembers watching the barn being built as a boy. The quilt block installed on this barn copied Rich's mother's quilt.

The BARN "Born Again & Raised New" is the name given to Keith and Becky Dick's Barn which was built from a previous barn on their land that had to be taken down due to condition and location. The BARN was created from the older structure with a goal of building a place of "fun, fellowship and relational healing." A nourishing lunch (and a friendly fireplace) added a special ambience to the stop.

Springhill Farm was established in 1899, and the original barn was built in 1901. It was destroyed by a spontaneous combustion hay fire in 1936, and the barn we visited was immediately begun with the help of the community.

Stahl Event Barn is a part of a Centennial farm owned and operated by 4th & 5th generation Stahl family members. The barn, built in 1901, began conversion to an events site in 2012. Two weddings were held there in 2013; nearly 30 events will be held in 2016.

continued on page 2



Ruth Stahl addressing participants on Saturday's tour bus.

continued from page 1

"Floral Hall", the Octagonal Building at the Northern District Fairgrounds. This building was perhaps one of the most intriguing stops, given its ongoing preservation challenges. Floral Hall is an area landmark built in 1908 to provide room for exhibitions of "mechanical and mercantile displays."

One of only two such buildings left in Michigan (the other is on the Calhoun County Fairgrounds in Marshall), Floral Hall was originally built in 1908 for the opening of the first fair in Cadillac. The building is considered remarkable when one considers the degree of engineering that was needed to build it. Rumors abound that Ephraim Shay - the inventor of another local landmark, the Shay Locomotive - designed the building. In 2006, there was concern that the building would not last, since the amount of money needed to restore it to a usable condition was more than the Fair Association had been able to raise. Various "patches" over the years were giving out, and the entire building was starting to lean. Thanks to the efforts of the Fair Board, an article was printed in the Cadillac News regarding its plight. Over the summers of 2007 and 2008 members of the Northwest Home Builders Association worked to replace the aged and rotting beams, roof, windows, and whatever else needed fixing. It was completed in time to use it once again for the 100th Fair in 2008. Work continues to occur to restore the inside of the building and volunteers are always welcome. Additional monies are being raised to help preserve the structure, and we hope that effort is successful, particularly since it is one of the few remaining historic buildings in the area and a unique example of rural architecture.

These sites were picked because of the history of the homesteads, visual appeal of the barn or homestead, and how the barn has been adapted to use today. It is the adapted use that is significant to insuring continuing care and a future life for these barns. Thanks again to all who attended and for the organizers, who made the event so special!

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Chair



A quilt block shows prominently on a tour barn. *Photos by Keith Kehlbeck*



Refreshments were served at the Stahl Event Barn.



Lunch was served at the BARN – "Born Again & Raised New."



Clam River Farm was a popular stop.



Need cutline

Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

Quilt Blocks, Quilt Trails, and an “agri-tourism phenomenon”

On Friday, October 7th, attendees at the annual fall barn tour’s Friday evening social event at the Evergreen Resort were treated to a special presentation by one of Michigan’s Quilt Barn Trail pioneers, Elsie Vrendenburg.

“In 2009, a friend and I went to Paducah, Kentucky to a large quilt show. Lunch time is very crowded down there, and we were forced to sit with someone else at a table that we didn’t know. This lady reached over and handed me a business card. She was involved with a quilt trail. I believe she was from Adams County, Ohio. It was interesting. We talked a little bit. Then when I went over to the book store, I happened to see a little book that was something about Kentucky quilt trails. It was just a little thin booklet, so I bought that and brought it home. It just wouldn’t leave me alone, so a friend and I approached an arts group that we were members of in Osceola County. Would they take us on as a 501(c)(3)? They did. We spent about three years and put up over 90 quilt blocks. They’re not all on barns. They’re public buildings, homes ... any place that wanted one.”

“They (quilt blocks) celebrate rural heritage, provide opportunities for community involvement, and encourage tourism. Some people call it a public art movement. It is not the high end art that only seems to appeal to some people. Quilts are something that most people can relate to, especially rural people, because you had mothers and grandmothers who quilted. There are lots of different ways to get started. When we started in Michigan, there were only two other quilt trails. The first one was in Alcona County, and the second one was on Old Mission Peninsula. Osceola County was the third one. Each quilt trail has its own government, its own process of getting started. Some of them are run by arts groups. Some of them are run by individuals. Some of them are run by a chamber of commerce. Most of them, but not all, try to do some kind of 501(c)(3) nonprofit so that they have the possibility of getting grants to help with some of the financing.”

For more information, visit our archived newsletters (under “Resources”) on our website, [www.mibarn.net](http://mibarn.net). In the Fall/Winter 2014 issue, Elsie’s article, “Quilt Trails: a growing agri-tourism phenomenon,” explores the origins of the “trail” experience that began about 13 years ago in Ohio. Also on our website, is a section with important information about how to build a Quilt Square. You can also download the Quilt Trails brochure and learn about the economic benefits of quilt trails.

<http://mibarn.net/quilt-barn-trails/>

—Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor

President’s Message

The landscape is changing. Barns are falling down due to neglect, but more people are realizing these magnificent structures are a national treasure. This new awareness is causing a problem—more people want to preserve barns, but we have a shortage of contractors and consultants to do the work.

Our board is working to attract contractors and consultants to fill this void. Steve Stier has conducted a barn stone foundation, hands-on workshop and a workshop to train consultants to evaluate two barns in the Oxford area. A timber frame building was disassembled and reassembled at the latter. Each event involved at least 15 MBPN members or guests. These events are a part of our network’s plan to attract new contractors and consultants to fill the requests we receive to preserve barns.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, Ruth, Ivan Stahl and their family organized a memorable fall barn tour in the Cadillac area. The tour bus stopped at seven different, unique structures. One barn was reconstructed for organization and family events. A surprise awaited all who visited the loft: The loft was home to several beds with bed posts constructed using 8"x8" barn timbers!

On November 12th Tom Irrer was the chairman of the MSU AutumnFest committee for MBPN. This event is the Homecoming for MSU Football game. The MSU Pavilion is filled with booths, displays and MSU football fans. Our booth promotes our MBPN with literature, barn calendars, banners, timber frame tool demonstrations and friendly faces. Members helping were Tom, Dan Creyts, Steve Rademacher, Bill & Clare Koenigsknecht.

Yours,
Clare Koenigsknecht



Clare Koenigsknecht

The new year is upon us, and it’s again time for our annual membership drive.

Thanks to the hard work and support of many individuals, the MBPN is recognized nationally as a premier barn preservation organization. The board of directors continues to follow an updated strategic plan that keeps barn preservation in the public eye through awareness and hands-on education for youth and adults. Your membership supports our quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to over 500 people with each printing.

Let’s work together this coming year to increase our coverage in the state. Consider a gift membership this holiday season.

\$30 Fieldstone – 1 person
\$40 Mortar – 2 people
\$1000 Cupola – lifetime
\$50 – Affiliate – nonprofit
\$100 – Contractor/business

If you haven’t already done so, please choose the membership level that suits you best, and mail your payment to:

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

Thank you in advance for your support!
Best Wishes for the New Year!
The MBPN Board of Directors



Introducing your MBPN Leadership Team



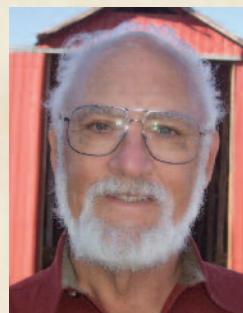
Sometimes, we take for granted the “cast of characters” who make an organization like the MBPN run so efficiently. For those who haven’t yet met or gotten to know our current board and standing committee

members, here are their bios (and pictures, so you can put a face to a name at the next Network event you attend).

—Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor



The Network’s current president is **Clare Koenigsknecht**. Clare has been a member of the MBPN for 19 years and involved on the board for the past four years. He was born and raised on a dairy farm and has milked cows for 35 years! During the past 40 years he has also been involved in barn restoration and commercial roof construction. Clare and wife Judy live in Fowler, have five grown children. His hobbies are working on anything mechanical, reading, and visiting family.



Tom Irrer has been on the MBPN board for three years and was elected treasurer last spring. After graduating from MSU and Purdue, he returned to the family farm and developed it into the largest mint farm in Michigan. Tom and Marilyn’s son Doug owns and operates the farm business now. Currently, Tom balances his time between the MBPN, the St. Johns Area Community Fund, doing odd jobs around the farm and goofing off.



Steve Stier is a founding member of the MBPN and has served in various capacities since 1995. He is a preservationist and has studied and worked on older buildings his entire career. For the 20 years before retirement, he has worked on barn rehabilitation. Steve organizes and teaches workshops dealing with traditional buildings and consults with owners of elderly buildings. Currently, he serves as MBPN vice president and Technical Committee Chair and fields most inquiries that come to MBPN.



MBPN secretary **Wendy Shank** is a stay-at-home mom of 14 children, ages 2 months to 22 years (having homeschooled all of them). Her oldest daughter’s first day of school was her first day of college. Wendy manages the family’s rental houses and her small farm, milking her cow, Ethel, and caring for the rest of her small bovine family, Fred, Lucy and Ricky. There isn’t much Wendy can’t do, and what she doesn’t know she will find a way to learn. Her newest accomplishment has been learning how to butcher chickens; her best time to date is 1 min 48 seconds...not too shabby for a newbie! Restoring their family’s 1872 home and carriage barn is a passion. Currently restoring the old windows and building new storms is a top priority for her. A beam in the old carriage house broke this past year, so repairing that is next on the to-do list. Before the Shanks bought their historic home, Wendy had been a city commissioner and mayor pro-tem and sitting mayor in Three Rivers.



Tammis Donaldson has been a MBPN board member since 2010. Tammis has served on the technical committee (currently serving as Technical Chair) and also contributes to the Teamwork and Timbers program, several workshops, and the new barn school program. As a licensed architect and founder of the firm Ekocite Architecture, Tammis has been interested in residential and vernacular architecture. The firm was the architect of record for the Meadow Brook barn rehabilitation, the carriage barn reconstruction, and the Best View Farm barn stabilization project. Additionally, she was the on-site architect for the relocation of the Ellis barn. Tammis is an avid small boat sailor, cross-country skier, and mountain biker. She is also on the lookout for new MBPN members!



Communications Coordinator **Julie Avery** has been involved with MBPN since its inception and has served on the board for the last six years. Julie is a retired historian, museum curator, and Extension specialist for cultural economic development. She assisted in the development and design of MBPN’s first newsletter and coordinated the 2015 Fall Barn Tour in Leelanau County. In her recent retirement, she is working to focus on her arts — pastel painting and found-object sculptures. Julie and husband Steve Stier (also a board member) live in Empire, MI with their family of three cats and a dog.



Vera Wiltse is a founding member of the MBPN and is retired from Isabella County (4-H program) MSU Extension. She lives on a farm in Coleman and is active in the community and in her church. She has served in many capacities for the MBPN and is currently the Program Committee chair.



Those of you who have attended one of our barn tours will recognize longtime MBPN supporter and activist **Dan Creyts**. Dan serves as Barn Tour Chair and also chairs the Pride of Ownership Committee. He also supervises the annual MBPN Calendar. Dan has lived on the same farm for 74 years, and he ran a dairy farm there until 1990. For more than 25 years, he raised pure-bred Belgian horses and served as Chairman of the Michigan Great Lakes International Draft Horse Show. He joined the MBPN board in the late 1990s.



Past-president **Tim Wiles** remains on the board. A skilled barn wright, Tim lends his considerable expertise to the Technical Committee and the Teamwork & Timbers project.



Keith Anderson was born into a dairy farming family in West Michigan with 15 brothers and sisters in the early '40s, Keith Anderson learned and appreciated the importance of our agricultural heritage as he was growing up. After graduating from Central Michigan University with bachelor and master's degrees in education and American History, he taught high school in the Detroit-area suburbs before returning to Grand Rapids and pursuing a career in Human Resources Management. Following several years raising two children as a widower, he was fortunate to return to life on a farm with his marriage to his wife Linda, owner of one of the largest dairy operations in Kent County. Having restored two barns on their home farm, Keith and Linda joined MBPN in 2009. Each of their restored barns has been the recipient of the Barn of the Year Award. Keith is in the first year of a 3-year term on the MBPN Board and has been chosen to chair the Barn of the Year Awards committee. Together, Keith and Linda are busy with their six children and 10 grandchildren. They are also active in their church's ministries and with their small collections of antique cars and tractors.



Steve Rademacher lives in Fowler, MI with his wife, Courtney, and one of his four children, Olivia. He grew up on a farm and has worked 20 years as a union carpenter. As the economy slowed, he turned his attention to barns. He has a strong appreciation of the heritage they represent, their construction, and the effort that went into building them. Steve has been mentored in barn repair by Claire Koenigsknecht and has been working steadily at barn repair. He currently serves as Nominations Chair for the organization.



MBPN Newsletter Editor **Keith Kehlbeck** is a writer, historian, and consultant who has edited our newsletter for the past four years. Keith's passion is for history, and he has written and published an acclaimed nonfiction Civil War book, *Gone to God: A Civil War Family's Ultimate Sacrifice*. His 'real' job is as a director for Southwest Michigan First, a Kalamazoo-based economic development firm. He and his wife, Ali, live in historic Marshall, MI, but he enjoys traveling throughout the state to learn more about America's rural heritage. In 2015, Keith joined the board, and he continues to work with the other members of the Communications Committee to connect with members and to educate the public on the mission of the MBPN.



As a member of the MBPN Communications Committee (and webmaster for the Network), **Chuck Saputo** is responsible for the technical aspects of our public image. Website maintenance is his primary function. Chuck began a technical career of more than 45 years as a programmer, systems analyst and database designer as an independent contractor in the automotive industry. In 1985, Chuck founded Business Technologies, Inc., focusing on the personal computer industry. The company transitioned from hardware to sales and support of administrative business solutions software, and finally to website design and support. In retirement, Chuck and his wife Janine have permanently relocated to Harbor Springs, MI, and are enjoying the outdoors and staying involved in preservation projects.



A typical barn setting in the Emmet/Charlevoix County region. Note another quilt block!

Photo by Janine Saputo

MHPN 2017 Preservation Conference, Petoskey Michigan MBPN Barn and Farmstead Tour

Visiting Petoskey up north on Little Traverse Bay brings to mind beach time on Lake Michigan and enjoying one of the best resort downtowns in the nation. Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) plans to celebrate historic Petoskey and the scenic Emmet/Charlevoix County regions at its annual statewide preservation conference in May of 2017. The MBPN is set to participate by showcasing rural preservation with a unique bus tour along Lake Michigan's scenic coastline. Dairy, cattle and fruit farming in a resort heritage area with lake effect weather has produced some unique farms and barns you may never have noticed on your 'up north' vacation.

We plan to visit a country club, a winery, vineyards and a working farm (and, yes, they all have noteworthy barns) in some fantastic scenery. Mark Wednesday May 17th to join us, and stay for the MHPN conference and a Petoskey weekend to enjoy it all on May 17

through May 21. Watch www.mhpn.org and www.mibarn.net for more information.

—Janine Saputo

Save the Date!

The spring MBPN Barn and Farmstead Conference and Tour will be held on May 4-6, 2017 in southwest Michigan. Stay tuned for details on our website (www.mibarn.net), and in upcoming Constant Contact and social media postings, as well as in the next newsletter!

AutumnFest 2016

On November 12th, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network once again had a booth at this event sponsored by the MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Since 1989 AutumnFest has raised over \$250,000 for scholarships, student activities, and alumni programming. It has been a great place to connect with like minded people who share a connection to our agricultural past and desire to strengthen our future.

This year's booth was staffed by our President Clare Koenigsknecht, his brother Bill, Board Member Steve Rademacher, his daughter Olivia and Treasurer Tom Irrer.

It was great talking to some of our members, answering barn questions, and explaining MBPN to prospective members.

—Julie Avery, Communications Coordinator



Our volunteers at MSU Autumn Fest 2016.

Photo by Julie Avery

Communications...

an essential part of the MBPN

As barn enthusiasts (and in this modern world in which we live), we often take for granted the ways in which organizations like the MBPN stay in touch with interested parties. For those who don't realize what is entailed, here are a few "behind the scenes" descriptions of the avenues we use to communicate with our members and the public.

Inquiries to MBPN are received through various media. Between our MBPN website and Facebook, members and others have multiple ways to communicate with MBPN:

- completed Web "Contact Forms" are directed to Tammis Donaldson, who answers or relays questions to others on the board for answering
- phone number posted on the website goes directly to Steve Stier
- messages posted on Facebook are answered by Tammis Donaldson

Web Presence. The website contact pages are an extension of the public forum; messages include questions such as "Can my barn be saved?" "I'm looking for contractors." "Are there any grants for barn repair?" Some askquilt tour questions and some other odds and ends. Most of the contacts are from Michigan, but we do occasionally get questions from places ranging from Kentucky to Saskatchewan Canada!

Input from the board and members. Board members contribute to our communications platforms, and provide summary information on activities and programs that they lead. We encourage anyone to write articles, as well.

Newsletter. Our goal is to have four annual issues of the newsletter with a variety of articles about MBPN, as well as highlighting preservation and education successes.

Facebook & Constant Contact. On Facebook we have 1,600 "likes." Like other social media, Facebook is a good forum for posting photos, workshops, events, barns for sale, messages, and anything to do with farmsteads.

Constant Contacts are 'designed e-messages' that go to all on the membership list who have provided us with an email address.

Design & Promotion Assistance. The Communications Team assisted promotions of MBPN activities through press releases, and postings on the Web, Facebook and Constant Contact. Press releases were handled for the Barn of the Year winners and the Fall Barn tour. Design work was done two workshop flyers and the October 2016 Fall Barn Tour handout booklet. The Communications Team also contribute to proofing for the newsletter and Conference and Tour handout booklets.

Thanks to all on the Communications Team for the work they do to keep our members connected and informed!

Meet your Communications Team:

Chuck Saputo, Webmaster & Technology Wizard

Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor

Tammis Donaldson, Facebook Co-coordinator

Vera Wiltse, Program Committee Connection

Janine Saputo, Consultant

Julie Avery, Coordinator, Facebook Co-coordinator, Constant Contact messaging

Olivia Schrader, Youth Outreach

—Julie Avery, Communications Coordinator

Officers

Clare Koenigsknecht, President
clarek13@gmail.com
(989) 593-2351
Fowler

Tom Irrer, Treasurer
tomirrer@mintcity.com
(989) 640-1868
St. Johns

Steve Stier, Vice President
stephenstier@gmail.com
(517) 648-2933
Empire

Wendy Shank
Secretary
shankamuffin@gmail.com
(810) 957-0194
Coldwater

Board

Julie Avery
Communications Chair
averyj@msu.edu
(517) 927-1958
Empire

Steve Rademacher
Nominations Chair
rademachersteve22@yahoo.com
(517) 202-1443
Fowler

Dan Creyts
Barn Tour Chair
Pride of Ownership Committee Chair
(517) 322-0315
Charlotte

Tim Wiles, Past President
eus1@sbcglobal.net
(810) 599-8822
Howell

Vera Wiltse
Program Chair
vera@wiltse.com
(989) 465-1216
Coleman

Chuck Saputo
Webmaster
cjsaputo@comcast.net
Oakland

Tammis Donaldson
Technical Chair
tammis@ekocite.com
www.ekocite.com
(248) 561-4248
Royal Oak

Keith Kehlbeck
MIBARN Editor/Coordinator
keith@k2consulting.net
(269) 317-3771
Marshall

Keith Anderson
BoY Awards Chair
klanderson42@gmail.com
(616) 540-6701
Sparta

Robert Slocum
Newsletter Design
Designworks
bob.designworks@gmail.com
(269) 425-0486
Battle Creek

www.mibarn.net



Scan our QR code with your smart phone and visit the MBPN website!



MICHIGAN
BARN
PRESERVATION
NETWORK

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

Winter 2017 – No. 78

www.mibarn.net

Share, reuse, recycle this newsletter

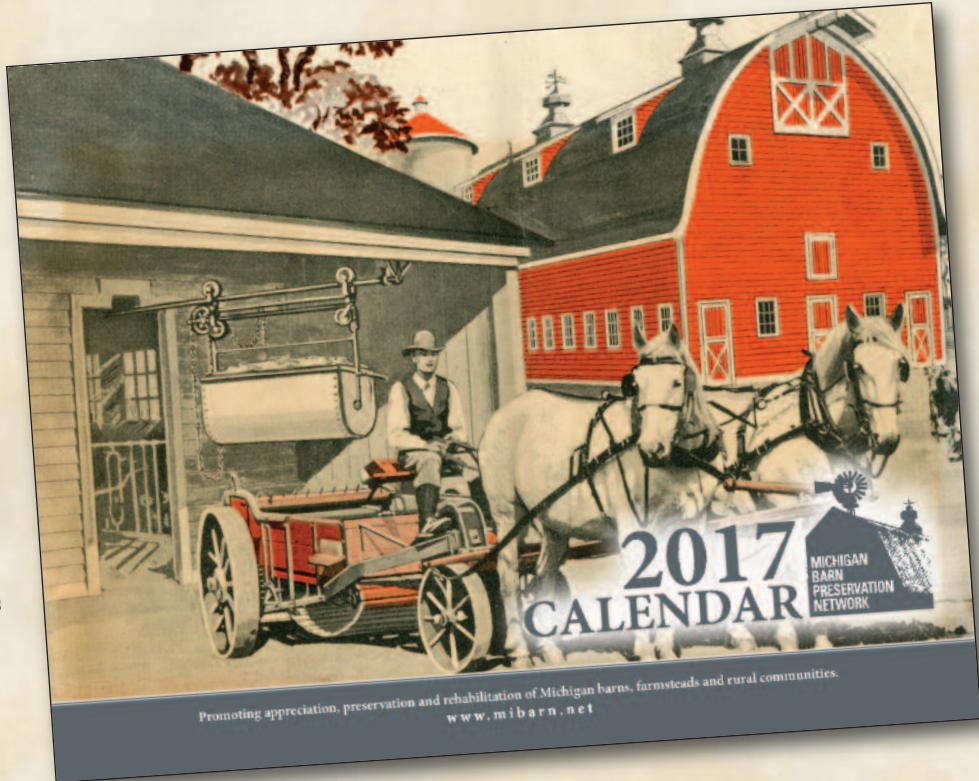
2017 MBPN Calendars Now Available

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network's 2017 calendars can be ordered by mail. There is no cost for the calendar, however there is a charge of \$5.00 for each calendar mailed, which allows us to cover the cost of postage and the mailer. Checks can be made out to MBPN and sent to:

Dan Creys,
7775 Davis Highway
Charlotte, MI 48813

The MBPN Board of Directors wish to thank the sponsors for their support in making the 2016 calendar possible. We are also grateful to those individuals who allowed us to use a photo of their barn for each of the months. If you should meet a sponsor or barn owner, please say thank you, as well.

—Dan Creys



Promoting appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads and rural communities.
www.mibarn.net