



MI BARN

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

Fall Barn Tour Covers Michigan's Scenic North

Leelanau County Barn Tour

A sold-out crowd enjoyed a variety of opportunities to explore barns of Leelanau County. We thought if folks were coming this far, we would make sure they had things to do! About 40 participated in Friday activities within the National Park. Saturday's bus tour included 66 attendees and our Sunday special showing at the Historic Barns Park in Traverse City was attended by 52. The significance of ownership and use were demonstrated by the sites visited during MBPN's 2015 Fall tour weekend. The dedication and mission of these barn owners – individual, organizational, business and government—is important to the maintenance and continuing life of the barns that we visited.

National Park – cultural history treasures

The weekend was kicked off on Friday, October 9th with a program and self-driving tour of barns and farmsteads within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Seven sites not typically open were staffed and open to exploration. The National Park Service, a governmental owner, brings attention to the preservation of our cultural history and tourism through their work preserving the barns and farmsteads of Pt. Oneida Rural Historic District, a significant rural and agricultural community from 1875 – 1945. Park staff and volunteers provided tours and information as we explored barns, outbuildings and homes.

Evening Social at the Empire Museum

Weekend participants gathered at the Empire Area Museum for an evening social and tours of this award-winning museum. Joe's Friendly Tavern in Empire catered our evening, and their home-made root-beer was a hit.



Photo by Epicure Catering, Cherry Basket Farm
The heart of Epicure Catering – their commercial kitchen – resides in the restored and adapted Hog Barn, MBPN 2014 Barn of the Year award.

Saturday's Bus Tour

On Saturday, our traditional fall bus tour visited 10 barns at six sites throughout the county. The Leelanau Conservancy's DeYoung Natural Area farmstead is being preserved with a goal to provide opportunities for small farmers. We were joined on the tour by Laura Quackenbush, regional historian and curator with the National Park Service. Laura helped to plan the route and provided us with regional history and information about the landscape, buildings, and Native American
(continued on page 4)

A Change of Venue for 2016 MBPN Tour & Conference



The 2016 MBPN Barn Tour and Conference will be held on May 6th and 7th at the Coppersville Farm Museum in Coppersville, MI, which is located on I-96 west of Grand Rapids. The barn tour will leave the museum on Friday morning and participants will travel by motor coach to visit three barns. The bus will return to the museum for lunch before heading out to visit three additional barns.

Friday evening's program starts off with a catered supper. Saturday begins with the annual member business meeting and election of officers. There will be guest speakers both before and after dinner. The live and silent auctions will again be featured, and booth space will be available for vendors and exhibits. Check out the next MBPN newsletter and visit us online at www.mibarn.net for more details.

—Dan Creyts



The Mart Egan & Sons Barn on the 2016 MBPN Tour

Photo by Dan Creyts

Time to renew your membership!

For two decades, with your strong assistance, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) has continued our mission to: *promote appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan's barns, farmsteads and rural communities.* Please renew your membership with MBPN today and consider a donation towards our programs. Membership information is available online at www.mibarn.net.

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President's Message

Just a brief note as we continue our mission to promote the appreciation, preservation, and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads and rural communities.

First and foremost—thanks to all who joined us for the recent Fall Bus Tour! The event was spectacular, with early fall colors, exceptional barns, and great company!

On a more prosaic note, sometimes the “behind the scenes” work done by enthusiasts and committees goes largely unnoticed in the day-to-day routine of an organization. I'm pleased to report, however, that we are, indeed, noticing the fine work being done to improve our online presence and our strategic thinking as we move forward in many positive ways with the MBPN. Kudos to Julie Avery, Vera Wiltse, Chuck and Janine Saputo, and Keith Kehlbeck for gathering this summer to discuss strategic planning and how to improve our online presence.

In this issue of the newsletter, we also continue our recent series of commentary on items of interest to the Network. Included is a column by Ruth Stahl on the popular topic of event barns and their family's personal experience with this phenomenon, and a piece created by Julie Avery on Joanne Westphal's Rural Property Inventories presentation made in March at our annual conference. Board member Vera Wiltse also talks about her lifelong interest in barn preservation.

Please let us hear from you if you have information or opinions to share on this topic...or any other that impacts Michigan barns.

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

God bless,
Tim Wiles



Tim Wiles



Photo by Patrick Power (MSU Museum)

Steve with family, friends, peers — including MBPN board members. . . — who gathered to help him celebrate this achievement. Great Lakes Folk Festival, East Lansing, MI.

Steve Stier Receives MTAP Award

This past August, surrounded by family, friends, and peers—including several MBPN Board members—Steve Stier was presented the prestigious Michigan Heritage Award at the Great Lakes Folk Festival in Lansing. Dr. Marsha MacDowell, director of the MI Traditional Arts Program at the MSU Museum, presented the award.

Steve, past-president of the MPBN, received the award for barn preservation and barnbuilding arts. As our organization knows, Steve is a licensed builder who focuses on historic preservation skills and practices. 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.

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

Michigan Traditional Arts Program:

What is folklife?

What is folklife?

"Folklife" or "folklore" are often used as synonyms for "traditional culture" or simply "tradition." As practiced by ethnic, regional, occupational, familial, and religious groups, folklife refers to the traditional expressions through which these communities maintain and pass on their shared sense of beauty, identity, and values.

Generally, folklife is learned by example, through imitation and repetition, rather than through formal instruction such as classes or workshops. Ordinarily, valued and authentic folk practitioners are brought up within a traditional community, learning a repertoire and style from their seniors.

Folklore tends to express the values, tastes, and standards of the cultural community that sustains it. Through a lifetime of practice, tradition bearers refine and reshape their skills, while maintaining the cultural and aesthetic values of their own communities.

Folklore is one of the more conservative aspects of culture, based on patterns, styles, and beliefs shared within specific cultural communities. Tradition bearers are motivated, through the act of creating, to preserve a traditional form that carries group identity and not necessarily to express an innovative personal vision.

Folklore, however, is also a dynamic aspect of culture.

"Folklore" describes living traditions that often change over time in response to a changing society.

A Brief History of MTAP

The Michigan State University Museum's Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MTAP), develops and implements programs "to advance cross-cultural understanding in a diverse society through the identification, documentation, preservation, and presentation of the traditional arts and cultural heritage of the state of Michigan."

Nominate individuals from your community for a Heritage Award or an Apprenticeship at the MTAP website:
www.museum.msu.edu/s-program/mtap/

See also page 2 article on Steve Stier's MTAP Award.



Photo by Janine Saputo

Granary for Sale!

The MBPN has a barn in Oakland Township, Oakland County that is now disassembled and is being offered for sale. Under the able leadership of barn wrights Tim Wiles and Steve Stier, an MBPN crew tackled the granary on October 15th and had it dismantled by the next day. The barn is estimated to be over 100 years old, is timber frame, and was moved to its recent site and used as a granary. It is 20 feet long, 20 feet wide, and about 20 feet high with a gable room and is in fair condition.

The MBPN wants to insure that the barns they remove and sell are definitely reconstructed and used by new owners who will take care of them into the future. If you are interested in purchasing this granary, please visit www.mibarn.net to submit the required information.

—Keith Kehlbeck and Janine Saputo

Barn Preservation: a mission worth the effort!

As I reflect on the past 20 years of the MBPN, I am humbled by what this volunteer organization has accomplished. When I decided to take the office of president 20 years ago, I had no idea what the future would hold, but I felt I had some skills to help the organization grow, and so I jumped in with both feet. I did not know a lot about the structures on which we would be focusing but I thought I could be a fast learner.

Since I retired from MSU Extension, I really have learned to say "no" to many volunteer opportunities. However, I remain committed to this opportunity even though I sometimes question what draws me to this cause. Sometimes I wonder why I stay on the board, since I do not own an historic barn.

One force behind my initial involvement was my fascination with history. Historic barns are iconic for anyone who grew up on a farm prior to the advent of the pole barn. Many life lessons were learned in the barn: responsibility, compassion, the rewards of hard work, and self-discipline are a few that come to mind. I learned these things and my children learned these things. But, if I want my grandchildren to learn about the heartbeat of a farm and the ethics of farmers, I cannot take

them to a museum. Barns simply don't fit inside museums! So we need to find ways to preserve this part of our agricultural history.

Another force taking me along the path of barn preservation was the diverse group of people who were willing to stand beside me with words of encouragement and who carry a similar passion in their hearts. The membership and the board are a wonderful and fun group of people to work with and to have as friends. This camaraderie keeps us all focused on our mission and brings us together for events like the recent barn tour and granary dismantling.

This winter, we will be working to update our strategic plan for MBPN. We will set goals and decide on action steps for the next five to ten years. We have been listening to our members and continue to ask for input about what we need to do to better fulfill our mission. Please help us to keep moving forward. Call or email any board member with your ideas of how this organization can preserve a bit of our history. And, please invite a friend or neighbor to attend our next event with you! See you in May!

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Chair

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Barb Winkelman as Mrs. Thoreson, providing tours and narrative at the Thoreson Farm, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

tribal settlement and activity as we drove. Barry Mazurek, our bus driver, shared his family experiences as a Leelanau County cherry farmer and his difficult decisions to give up farming.

The Reinhardt barn provided a unique structural example – supported by full tree-trunks. Jeff Reinhardt is a regional barn wright who loves the questions and challenges of finding solutions to barn problems. We lunched at Cherry Basket Farm, a 2-time MBPN Barn of the Year awardee. This farmstead is a major area events site. Epicure Catering has their home in one of the restored barns, and we dined in the other.

Great Lakes Ranch was our next stop – comprised of two renovated farmsteads repurposed for Brad and Jandy Sprouse’s award winning yak and alpaca herds. A granary on-site has been adapted to serve as a shop for yarns and fashions made of yak and alpaca wool. Finally, George Cochran’s picture-perfect red barn was dismantled and reassembled on his Three Barn Farm & Orchards to house apples.

We even sneaked in an extra stop to Douglas Racich’s barn where we saw an “art sale – in the barn” sign. Back at our starting point, the DeYoung Farm, board member Steve Stier toured participants through the farmhouse and a unique powerhouse that he is involved in restoring. Folks then had the evening on their own – with lots of suggestions about what to do.

Historic Barns Park

The weekend’s capstone activity was special access to the Cathedral Barn and the Botanical Gardens in the Commons at the old mental hospital grounds in Traverse City. Ownership here resides with a regional recreational authority and is guided by nonprofit organizations. Community is the focus for use of the barns and gardens and trails. The Cathedral Barn, one of two barns, has just opened as a major events site. Planning and fundraising is underway for the development and use of the 2nd barn. The Botanical Gardens has major plans for campus wide trails and restored gardens. Development and use of the Historic Barn’s Park is inspired by remaining barns, foundations and silos of the Commons.

A big THANKS goes to all of our barn sites for sharing with us as well as our programming partners. Special thanks go to our tour planning team that includes: MBPN’s Julie Avery, Janine Saputo, Steve Stier, and Vera Wiltse; and Laura Quackenbush and Kimberly Mann of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

Who would like to take on organizing for next year’s annual Fall Barn Tour?

—Julie Avery, MBPN Board member and Communications Coordinator.



The Reinhardt barn, with its unique structural and design solutions.



Bus tour participants explore the interior of the Reinhardt barn.



The Leelanau Conservancy’s DeYoung Natural Area farmstead.



Great Lakes Ranch—two renovated farmsteads repurposed for Brad and Jandy Sprouse’s award winning yak and alpaca herds



A “resident” of the Great Lakes Ranch.



An example of the barns and farmsteads of the Pt. Oneida Rural Historic District.



Cherry Basket Farm, a 2-time MBPN Barn of the Year award-winner.



Douglas Racich’s barn—an extra stop on this year’s tour.



Interior of the silo at the Racich barn.

Photos by Tammis Donaldson



2016 MBPN Calendars Now Available



The Michigan Barn Preservation Network's 2016 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 Creyts,
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 Creyts



The Wright Family Barn in Potterville, MI

Photo by Dan Creyts



A Little Retirement Job



I used to wonder, when I retire what I would do to fill the hours that I now spend as a Registered Nurse at our local hospital. Yes, I love to work in my flowers, garden, read, and quilt, but what else would I do?

About five to six years ago I saw a little article in the weekly Farm Bureau paper promoting the Michigan Barn Preservation Network barn tour and annual conference. My husband and I are from a dairy farm background and dairy farmed ourselves until about 20 years ago. We had already made the conscious decision to save the "vintage" barn and remove the newer dairy barns and silos as we could not afford to maintain everything.

After our first barn tour we were hooked and have been members of the Barn Preservation Network ever since. In our quest to use the barn for new purposes my husband had converted part of a wing of the barn into a wood shop. At the end of the conference barn tours, I was the one who filled out the survey sheet saying I wanted to see more repurposed barns. The seed had been planted!

Five years ago we had our son Michael's rehearsal dinner in the barn. We threw up a little lattice to cover the areas that we did not want showing and everyone enjoyed it. I cherish the picture that was taken in front of the barn with all the people who were at that rehearsal dinner.

Several years ago a friend of our oldest son was going to get married in his Dad's pole barn, but the reality of getting the pole barn emptied for a wedding sent him and his fiancée to our barn. A couple months later they were married in our barn on a chilly November evening. Another seed was planted!

Three years ago as we were landscaping the area where the dairy barns and silos had stood, we had a young local man putting a custom gazebo intended for our personal use behind the

barn. He commented that his brother was getting married in a Charlevoix barn and our barn was a lot nicer. That time the seed sprouted and we have been converting the barn to an event venue ever since.

We had the first two weddings at the Stahl Event Barn in the fall of 2013. We had a barn opening event in late July 2014 featuring Lindsay Lou and the Flat Bellies, followed by 10 weddings and a retirement party. The support we have had from our rural community has been incredible.

We have one event behind us this spring and many more to go through late October. It takes many people to make an event barn a reality. Our son Aaron does all the website and technical work for us. Our daughter Julie mows a large lawn one to two times a week. Local contractors who at first were skeptical are now asking, how many wedding this summer? Ivan loves to watch their jaws drop.

Last but not least we would not be able to have done the barn conversion without the help of Tim Wiles. He used to be the guy we saw at the barn conference once a year, to Tim "the barn guy", to Tim "our friend", who is still working on the barn.

In another week my status at the hospital will change from full time to part time. I no longer wonder what I will do when I retire because my little barn business is going to push me into retirement.

—Ruth Stahl

Ivan and Ruth Stahl are the owners of the Stahl Event Barn, located in rural McBain, Michigan. More information can be found on the Stahl Event Barn by visiting www.StahlEventBarn.com.

Calling all 2016 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 May at the Coppersville Farm Museum in Coppersville, MI.

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 April 1, 2016.**

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

—Jerry Damon

Longtime MBPN supporter Leo Fitzpatrick passed away this past summer. His story about the Fitzpatrick Barn appeared in Country Magazine and is reprinted here. We miss you, Leo!

Barn Restoration Stays in the Family Named the Michigan Barn of the Year in 2006, this family heirloom was a true restoration success.

Story by Leo Fitzpatrick Beaverton, Michigan

In 1895, when he was 52, my grandpa, Dennis Fitzpatrick Sr., had a young man's dream: to own land and build a house and barn on it. From Hubbardston, Michigan, he went north to Clare. Following the trail toward Gladwin, he went east to Harrick and north to Slabtown. North of Slabtown, there was a trail on the east side of three lakes, and about a half mile later an 80-acre property with an abandoned logging rail grade on the high ground running east and west.

There were big pine stumps everywhere, and the land was littered with treetops and abandoned logs. Grandpa walked around the property, dreaming of the day he would see green meadows, fields of grain, pastured livestock, a new home and a big barn.

How proud you were, Grandpa, in the summer of 1911, when a 4-acre field of wheat thrashed a 70-bushel yield of grain per acre. In the fall of 1914, with your ox team, you hauled stone from the fields for the foundation of the new barn. And what a barn it would be. People came from miles around to see it. After the barn was finished, the new house was started. It was modern in every way for a farmhouse at the time.

On June 20, 1925, Dennis and Sarah Fitzpatrick celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their new home with their eight children. At the age of 82, Grandpa had reached the summit of his dream, 30 years after he started.

But by the 1990s the barn was in dire need of restoration, or it would be lost. So we filled the barn with straw bales that became the scaffold onto which we set a row of car bumper jacks. We used these

to slowly jack up the timber-frame trusses and correct the 17-inch sag in the roofline. New timbers were set in place and threaded rod was used to draw the sides in. By 1996, the barn was ready for a new roof and a fresh coat of paint.

The Fitzpatrick family celebrated our centennial in 2000 with hundreds of friends and neighbors. In 2004 the barn won a National Trust for Historic Preservation award, and the next year it was chosen as the Michigan Centennial Farm of the Year. In 2006 it was named Michigan Barn of the Year. During the past 10 busy years it has seen family reunions, graduation open houses, wedding receptions, neighborhood gatherings with music and dancing, Christmas in the barn and more.

Grandpa is gone now, but his legacy is still with us. His great-grandsons farm the land that he cleared and tilled with his oxen. All seven of my children live on or within a mile of the farm. Grandpa's dream of so long ago—green meadows, fields of grain and a big barn—is now shared by his many descendants more than a century later.

Read more: <http://www.country-magazine.com/short-stories/restoration-stories/barn-restoration-stays-in-the-family/#ixzz3h7LKOL8f>

Fitzpatrick Family Farm, Beaverton. Leo Fitzpatrick spent years restoring the Fitzpatrick Family Farm Barn in Beaverton, a 1914 timber frame, curved rafter wood barn constructed by his grandfather. Among its numerous awards is the 2004 Barn Again! Farm Heritage Award.



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Fall/Winter 2015 - No. 75

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Researching Your Barn Rural Property Inventories



At the spring conference, Dr. Joanne Westphal, Professor of Landscape Architecture at Michigan State University, spoke about the Rural Property Inventories initiated in late 1935 to inventory and document 1,500,000 distinct parcels of land in the rural parts of Michigan (excluding Wayne County). This WPA project trained and employed about 2,000 unemployed workers throughout the state to inventory and prepare detailed descriptions that included lands, buildings, fences, crops woodlands, mans of communication, hat and light and legal descriptions of the land. Included here were placement, measurements, and construction materials for barns and other agricultural buildings. While this data is now obsolete, the details provided offer a sharp picture of the character of Michigan country life and specifics about barns and farmsteads that today can provide remarkable information to the barn or farmstead owner about what was there then!

Dr. Westphal has utilized this information with her students and promotes these resources as important for anyone wanting to learn more about their rural property.

Three types of records were produced through this effort

- The original inventory document – a Rural Inventory Card that provides location, description, and home description on one side and a summary of land use, crops and farm buildings on the other. Surprising detail is provided down to the availability of utilities, the construction methods of buildings and types of land and crops.
- Index maps were compiled with this detail that aid in identifying location of property and references the cards.
- Evidence exists that Ledger books were also created that compile and summarize the information.

Rural Property Inventory cards and the index maps are available at the Archives of Michigan (Lansing). (www.micjhgian.gov/archivesof-mi). It is uncertain if there are remaining ledger books and/or where they are. They might be held in small historical societies around the state. Dr. Westphal is interested in locating these. Sometimes copies of the Inventory Cards exist at the local, township or county levels at the tax office and/or in historical societies, libraries and museums.

The Archives of Michigan staff can be helpful in helping you to determine if your property is listed. Full and partial records exist at the Archives from 63 of the 83 MI Counties. More may be available at the local level that are unknown to the Archives.

Interested in more information? Visit the mibarn.net website under Resources to see further information:

- Archives of Michigan Circular # 16 – Rural Property Inventories. This provides background on the project, list of counties/townships thjat are included and descriptions of the codes that are used on the Inventory Cards.
- Examples of two Inventory Cards
- Example of an inventory map from Mission Township, Grand Traverse Co.
- “Accuracy of the Michigan Rural Property Inventory for Historic Land Use/Land Cover Determinations” – study by Dr. Westphal and others on the accuracy of the inventory
- “Treasures by the Roadside” – a published study of the use of the Inventory with Centennial Farms of the Old Mission Peninsula
—Julie Avery and Joanne Westphal, Ph.D.