



MI BARN

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

Barn of the Year Award: We Can't Save Them All, But...

Everybody loves barns. We love old, dilapidated barns. We love restored barns. We love barns for the nostalgia they evoke for bygone times. We love them for the rich agricultural heritage they represent. We love them as architectural marvels. We love them for the rich beauty they bring to our countryside.

We are all saddened by the loss of these beautiful icons of yesterday. We can't help but feel sad when we pass a mass of tangled and collapsed wood and shingles, or witness majestic hand-hewn beams standing exposed to the open air. However, the reality of it is—We can't save them all! But, we *can* savor and celebrate the small victories that are represented by some of the barns that are being saved for the next generation to experience. We can admire those edifices that are still standing, and we can honor those who make the extra effort to maintain their historic barns.

That is the purpose of the "Barn of the Year" Award, and I invite fellow members of MBPN to join me in seeking out, finding and recognizing those throughout the state who have made the commitment in interest, time, and resources to preserve a Michigan barn.

Each year since 1991, we have looked to you as either barn owners—or for most of us, barn "lovers"—to reward and honor barns and barn owners through the Barn of the Year Award. Some have already submitted applications for this year's awards, but more are welcome. Over the course of the weeks ahead, each of you who are passionate about saving barns, please take notice of any barn in your area that, because of its owner's desire to preserve and maintain a gracious old barn, may be eligible to be recognized. Take some time to get to know the owner, work with him/her to complete the nominating form (available on our website), and submit it for our Barn of the Year Committee to consider. We give awards in four categories at our spring Conference. **The deadline is (March 24, 2018), so there is still time! Then join us in May in St. Johns as we celebrate barns that are being saved!**

By recognizing these barns and their saviors, we hope to inspire others to do the same. Please join us!

—Keith Anderson, Barn of the Year Awards Chair



Photo by Keith Kehlbeck

The Barn of the Year Award is the most prestigious recognition barn owners can receive.

A Tradition of Excellence

The Barn of the Year program annually honors existing Michigan barns that exemplify outstanding stewardship in our state. The Press Release on page 5 and the Application Requirements on page 6 provide an idea of what is entailed in the nomination process. **For a complete application form, visit our website at www.mibarn.net or contact Keith Anderson at klanderson42@gmail.com, 616-540-6701.** Last year at our Annual Conference and Meeting, the MBPN announced its 2017 Michigan Barns of the Year Awards. This was the 21st year the Network has presented Barn of the Year Awards. Including last year's awardees, a total of 76 barns from across Michigan have been recognized for their unique qualities and/or preservation efforts.

We have expanded our media outreach for the awards to more than 50 Michigan newspapers and over 20 radio stations, but we always count on our members to nominate the most outstanding examples of barn preservation in their area. Contact us today if you know of that perfect nominee!

Save the Date!

The spring **MBPN Barn and Farmstead Conference and Tour** will be held on May 4-5, 2018 in southwest Michigan. Friday will be the bus tour and dinner; Saturday will feature speakers, auctions, and presentations at the Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizers World Headquarters and Museum (AgroLiquid) in St. Johns, Michigan. Building on an area barn tour, the Saturday conference should be a wonderful opportunity to share information and to inspire barn preservation efforts throughout the state.

We are excited about the venue for the 2018 Annual Conference. Founded by father and son-in-law team, Douglas Cook and Troy
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AgroLiquid Headquarters and Museum in St. Johns, Michigan: site of the 2018 MBPN Barn Tour and Annual Conference, May 4-6, 2018

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

President's Message

We held our first 2018 board meeting in Mason on January 13th. Plans are well underway for our spring barn tour and MBPN Annual Conference. These events will be held in the center of our great state on May 4th & 5th in St. Johns. Save the date to tour some very special barns, meet some friendly folks and learn about barn history and preservation.



Clare Koenigs knecht

Try a barn tour with us, and it will be an emotional, memorable event that you'll want to do again in the future. Each barn has a unique history and creates stories to be repeated many times. You will see barns as the barn builder viewed them. The barn stories of former and current owners will leave an emotional lasting impression. The experience will cause you to plant seeds of preservation in conversation with other barn owners.

Our conference center will be Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizers World Headquarters and Museum. This facility overflows with agricultural history, and they teach agriculture principles to elementary school children.

As you know, preservation is central to our organization's mission. Each month, we receive many requests from barn owners with questions about whether their barn is worth saving. Our experience tells us that most barns can be fixed. I have heavy shoulders when I evaluate a barn with the barn owner. The barn stories I share with the owners will help them decide whether the barn lives or dies. Yesterday I received a call from the owner of a 40x70 barn we had evaluated. He said someone had offered to dismantle his barn at no cost to him, but he simply couldn't do that. Then our conversation changed to methods and materials to preserve the barn. My barn stories may have touched his heart strings.

Yours,
Clare Koenigs knecht

MBPN Webmaster Chuck Saputo Stepping Down

Recently, we lost MBPN stalwart, Janine Saputo, to cancer. Now, her husband, longtime MBPN Webmaster Chuck Saputo, is leaving us to focus on his health. We will miss Chuck and wish him rest and a successful and speedy recuperation. Our huge thanks for all he has done for the MBPN!

As a member of the MBPN Communications Committee (and webmaster for the Network), **Chuck Saputo** was responsible for the technical aspects of our public image. Website maintenance was 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 transition, Chuck is helping identify general needs and information necessary for the web function and has offered to be very available to a new webmaster, once that person is identified. He is also a lifetime Cupola member.

Thank you, Chuck!
—Julie Avery, Communications Chair



The MBPN Board (left to right): Vera Wiltse, Steve Stier, Julie Avery, Steve Rademacher, Clare Koenigsnecht, Keith Anderson, Tammis Donaldson, Keith Kehlbeck, Jim Mulvany; not pictured: Wendy Shank, Tom Irrer

MBPN Board Meets to Plan 2018

In January, the MBPN Board met in Mason, Michigan at the beautiful Mason United Methodist Church. The good folks at the church prepared a lovely lunch for the Board, and a day-long meeting covered a wide range of topics for the new year. Keith Anderson outlined this year's ambitious Barn of the Year outreach (see article on page 1), plans for the spring barn tour and Annual Conference were discussed, and various committee reports were brought forward. With our webmaster Chuck Saputo stepping down (see p. 2), Eric Grates provided a presentation on his web/communications services and talked with us about MBPN needs. Finally, a Finance Committee will be re-established to assess endowments and sustainable organizational funding. It's going to be a great year...stay tuned and thanks for your continued support!

—Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor

Board Observations: My Love for Barns

I've always had an interest in barns. I grew up on a farm, and where there's a farm, you're likely to find one or two barns. Barns are not just buildings. They're sentimental marks of history, too. For many of us, some of our favorite childhood memories took place in a barn. When we played hide and seek outside, where did we hide?

Somewhere in the barns. Friends hung out in the hay loft away from their parents.

Family gatherings are held in the "Big Red Barn" occasionally.

But barns aren't just for the humans. They're for our animals and companions, too. My daughter, Olivia, has two pet goats. I can guarantee that we don't keep them in the house. They stay in the barn with all of the other animals.

While barns are useful, they are also a sight for the eyes. I'll be driving along the country roads and come across a barn when the sun is hitting just right and think, "Wow! That's a neat thing to look at." When I drive by an old, neglected barn that has seen better days, I immediately picture what it might have looked like at its finest. I hate to see barns fall to the ground, because with that barn went all of its historical value and use, as well. I've done repairs to save barns when they were seemingly at the point of no return. I firmly believe that pretty much any barn can be saved with the right determination.

—Steve Rademacher, Board Member



Steve Rademacher

Calling Potential Board Members

The old adage says that "you don't need a title to be a leader." But, as with any vibrant organization, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network continues to need barn enthusiasts to step up to serve on our Board of Directors. Over the years, we've been blessed with an extraordinary list of dedicated volunteers who have charted the course resulting in a vibrant, relevant Network that remains a powerful force for preservation and innovation in Michigan's rural scene. Each year through turnover and attrition, a spot or two on the Board usually becomes available for new faces, and 2018 is no exception.

Are you interested? The responsibilities of a Board member are listed below. If you would like to spend a year or more on the board just to see what is happening, contact Steve Rademacher or Steve Stier (see Board list on p. 2 for contact information). Board member terms are three (3) years.

We look forward to another year of celebrating and promoting the preservation of Michigan's unique cultural heritage—the barns and farmsteads that are the heart and soul of our state. Thanks in advance for considering a leadership position with our Network!

Responsibilities and Expectations of MBPN Board Members:

1. Attend and participate in scheduled Board meetings on a regular basis. In the event a Board member is not able to attend a meeting, the Board member should contact the Board President.
2. Make one available in between meetings, at least by phone or email, to address unexpected issues or matters.
3. Actively participate in MBPN Committees. As a minimum, chair or become a liaison to the Board from a committee.
4. Make an effort to attend and participate in special events throughout the year related to the MBPN mission.
5. Participate in annual planning activities and retreats as scheduled.
6. Be familiar with the function and work of MBPN, including its finances, budget, organizational structure and by-laws.
7. Participate in membership growth and fundraising as warranted.
8. Help communicate and promote the MBPN and its mission.
9. Commit an average of 6-8 hours per month to Board meetings, committee work, communications and special events.
10. Be a dues paying member of MBPN.

Commitment to Serve: Agreement to fulfill the above responsibilities and expectations to your best ability in service to the MBPN membership and its mission. Inability to perform as an elected Board member shall be cause for resignation or removal.

Save the Date, continued from page 1

Bancroft, in 1983, AgroLiquid remains a family business both in its ownership and direction to this day. Troy Bancroft is now joined in corporate leadership by his three sons: Nick, Albert, and Gerrit. All three have been involved with the company from a young age. Having performed a variety of jobs over the years, they're on the track to becoming well-rounded leaders, following in the footsteps of both their father and grandfather. More importantly, they share a commitment to the innovative business practices and product lines that will make that future possible.

Stay tuned for details about the conference on our website (www.mibarn.net), in upcoming Constant Contact and social media postings, and in a special Pre-Conference Newsletter expected in March!



PRESS RELEASE

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

JANUARY 5, 2018

Contact: Keith Anderson, Chair
Barn of the Year Committee
Michigan Barn Preservation Network
Klanderson42@gmail.com

MICHIGAN BARN PRESERVATION NETWORK

Request for Submissions for 2018 Barns of the Year

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) is requesting submissions for their 2018 Michigan Barn of the Year Awards, which will be presented at the 23rd Annual conference, Spring Barn Tour and Meeting to be held Friday and Saturday, May 4 & 5, 2018 at AgroLiquid's Education Center in St. Johns.

This is the 21st year the Network has presented "Barn of the Year" Awards. Over the past two decades, a total of sixty-nine 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 either for continued agricultural use or adapted for others uses. 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.

There are four categories in which awards are presented for barns that are in use for:

- Continuing Family or Private Agricultural Use
- Family or Private Adaptive Use
- Non-Profit Agricultural or Adaptive Use
- Commercial Agricultural or Adaptive Use

Barns will judged for (1) completeness of information presented in the application, (2) sensitivity and integrity of repairs or modifications, (3) visual appeal, (4) creativity, (5) thoroughness of work and (6) effort expended to repair and maintain.

Four items are required for the submission:

- A completed application form
- A written narrative
- Photographs
- A completed Michigan Barn & Farmstead Survey

Applications may be requested by contacting the program chairman, Keith Anderson. E-mail: Klanderson42@gmail.com or Mobile: 616-540-6701. Nominations must be postmarked by March 23, 2018.

For additional information about the Michigan Barn Preservation Network, visit our website mibarn.net.

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads and rural communities.

2018 Barn of the Year Nomination

Application Requirements

(I) NOMINATION FORM—Complete the form, found on www.mibarn.net.

(II) WRITTEN NARRATIVE

Using additional sheets, please address as much as possible with the following:

1) Description.

Describe the exterior of your barn: What shape does its footprint have (include the length, width and height of the building, if known). What materials are used for the foundation, walls and roof? What kind of roof does it have— gable, gambrel (hip) or something else? Does it have an access ramp? A walkout basement level? Are there any decorations present (cupola, brackets, painted arches, etc.) that are not readily seen in the photographs? Is there an associated (paved? fenced?) barn yard? Describe any other unique features.

Describe the interior of your barn: How is it framed (logs, hand-hewn timbers, 2x4s, etc.)? How many bays does it have (a bay is the space between vertical support posts along the length of the building; most barns are three or more bays in length). Are a granary, stanchions/gutter system, or other features present? Any unique features?

2) History.

Please describe as much history of the barn and the associated farm as possible. Include date of construction, names of builder, original and subsequent owners, dates of ownership, dates and kinds of changes to the barn, past and present uses (with dates, if possible). You may tabulate some of this information if you prefer. Please also list other farm buildings present and those which have been removed.

3) Barn Rehabilitation.

Describe the work done to preserve the barn. Please be detailed. Has the barn been lovingly maintained throughout its life? Or was there a major rehabilitation project undertaken? What was the nature of the work?

(III) PHOTOS

Please provide photos as listed below (limit 24). Photographs should be high quality digital images or high resolution scans suitable for reprint, enlargement and display. Attach a description of each photograph with relevant explanations. It would also be helpful if you could provide a map depicting where the photographs were taken.

- 1) **Exterior Photos** to include: Front, Left elevation, Right elevation, Back elevation, Oblique angle, Unique features
- 2) **Interior photos** to show framing and other construction details and unique features
- 3) **“Before” and “after” photos** if applicable.
(Photos cannot be returned. Your submission indicates approval and permission for photo use by the MBPN)

(IV) MICHIGAN BARN & FARMSTEAD SURVEY

Please fill out and submit with your application. The survey is used to establish a database of information about Michigan agricultural buildings. Additional information and guidance with the survey form can be found on www.mibarn.net

Please provide your information and photos in hard copy format for display and sharing, and in electronic format on a CD or thumb drive for archiving. Please label each page with an identifying name (e.g., yours or the barn’s).



Preservation Stories



The MBPN frequently receives requests for assistance and information relative to barn preservation, and many times we are able to help in various ways. A recent example come to mind.

Last September, I had received an inquiry from a woman named Helena Kennedy from western Canada. Her online message simple, but heartfelt:

“I have just found your website. We are toying with the idea of tearing down our old barn and rebuilding a pole shed type. The more we think about it, the more we think we are doing a disservice to such a unique and antique structure. Our barn was built in 1927 on a farm in rural Saskatchewan Canada. We removed the lean-to and cupola because they were in such disrepair. Because of sentimentality, we are now considering residing and roofing it with metal. The bones are there, so why not work from there? Is it worth the cost to repair it? Some of the foundation has cracks, but we are confident that we can install new plates to uphold the structure. From your experience, is it worth the cost?”

On behalf of the MBPN, we provided information, observations, and encouragement to Ms. Kennedy. This January, I received a follow-up from her:

“I thought you might like to know we did bite the bullet and restore our old 90 year old barn. It was a challenge, certainly, but well worth it. Other than the drastic cost to our wallet, we are extremely happy we made that move. We clad it with metal siding and metal roofing, rather than paint it. There were two layers of barn board with shiplap being the outside layer. We removed all the outside shiplap and put it to the side for other purposes. Some of it we used for flooring in box stalls in the barn, and he also made frames and furniture with it. The windows we purchased from North Dakota at a third of the price of barn sash windows in Canada. They were 30.00 each compared to 150.00 here. I could go on, lol. I am going to do a digital scrapbook as soon as I organize the re-structure in chronological order.

Thank you for encouraging us to restore it. This August, on its 90th birthday, we are going to celebrate its new birth with a ‘back barn’ barbeque and invite our friends and neighbors.” Helena Kennedy

Examples like these keep the “juices flowing” for people like me! Even though the barn in question is in western Canada, I was glad to help our neighbors to the north preserve their own small piece of barn history. We look forward to continuing to help barn preservation enthusiasts wherever and whenever we can!

—Tammis Donaldson, Technical Committee



Work proceeds on the Kennedy Barn, rural Saskatchewan, Canada.

Photos by Helena Kennedy



Kennedy Barn—before



Kennedy Barn—after

MBPN Technical Committee Shares Resources & Offers Basic Advice

MBPN's Technical Committee is an essential part of our mission “to promote appreciation, preservation, and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, related farmsteads, and rural communities.” The Committee fields many of the inquiries the Network receives from the public about barn preservation and can help individuals evaluate the condition of their barns and give basic guidance on what to do next to preserve traditional barns. Another central task of the committee is to maintain a “Resources List” of folks that can help barn owners in several areas such as insurance, engineering, barn contractors, etc. The committee is continuously working to update and add to this list, especially Barn Contractors as there is much more barn work out there than barn workers to do the work.

The Committee also oversees educational workshops, which are periodically scheduled to demonstrate important barn repair skills, such as foundation and sill repairs. Look for upcoming “barn school” workshops—including one at the spring Annual Conference—that are needed to train folks to do basic barn assessments. To learn about how you might schedule a “Barn School” Please call 517-648-2933.

—Steve Stier, Vice President and Technical Committee Chair



Photos by Keith Immink

Historic photo of Immink barn raising, circa 1913



Aerial view of the Immink farmstead

A Barn Raising to Remember

In November, I had a series of Facebook exchanges with Keith Immink. With his wife, Cassy, Keith wanted to share some photos and history regarding a family barn. For those of us who watched the movie *The Barn Raisers*, this type of intel is particularly poignant and evocative. Here's the story, in Keith Immink's words:

"The original Immink homestead was established on 80 acres in 1848 in Overisel Township (Allegan County) when Gerrit Jan Immink immigrated to the United States from The Netherlands. The area was mostly forest in 1848 which required the land to be cleared before farming could begin. Tom Immink is the current owner and is the 6th generation on the property.

A log house was built along with the original barn. In 1913, the

original barn was torn down so that a larger barn could be built. The barn on the property today includes two 48' hand-hewn beams (about 12' square) from the original barn laid end-to-end to make up the 96' length (the barn is 84' wide and about 37' high). The top "hip" of the roof was replaced in 1979 with trusses after the previous winter's heavy snowfalls cracked a large number of log rafters.

Over the past 100+ years, the barn has housed draft horses (before tractors), breeding cows, feeder cattle, veal calves, sows, feeder pigs, sheep, and laying hens."

Thanks to Keith and Cassy Immink for sharing this story with us. History is among us in Michigan...and barns are a big part of that history.
—Julie Avery, Communications Chair

2018 Northern MI Small Farm Conference

MBPN was represented January 26 & 27 at the 2018 Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (Acme, MI) for the 5th time. This group and MBPN have overlapping interests as many of our small farms are using historic, farmsteads with traditional and timber frame structures. More than 800 individuals were registered for the conference and 75 organizations and businesses participated in the trade show.

Lots of folks know MBPN for our annual calendar – and came by for this year's. We hear stories of repairs and restorations as well as losses. This year Steve and Clare committed to at least 10 barn-visits to walk-through helping owners understand the condition and needs of their barns. We typically ask for a membership in return.

MBPN learned about and will help to promote a barn – already dismantled and stored—waiting for a new owner. We may have found a use (artist studio) for a wood silo that Clare dismantled and has stored at his property. We were asked for help to identify the historic value and research a historic Michigan Jewish farm. We anticipate getting newsletter articles and photos from a couple that has spent 20 years restoring a traditional Finnish farmstead and another gentleman who "did it himself" –saved and restored his family barn.

MBPN is planning to continue our connection with this annual conference of small farmers and will suggest conference presentations for next year's conference. Suggestions are welcome from read-



Photo by Julie Avery

ers for other organizations and conferences where we could present about barn preservation or take our exhibit and let other groups know about our good works.
—Julie Avery, Communications Chair

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—Julie Avery, Communications Chair



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www.mibarn.net

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Reminder: 2018 MBPN Membership

If you haven't already "re-upped" your membership for this year, please do so today! An organization like the MBPN doesn't thrive, as we have, for more than two decades without help and commitment from dedicated supporters.

The MBPN is recognized nationally as a premier barn preservation organization, thanks to the hard work and support of many individuals. 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.

Do you know a friend who would enjoy receiving our newsletter or attending our events? Encourage their membership. Are you ready to provide long-term support in the form of a Cupola Membership? We need your help to build on our endowment fund!

Your membership supports MBPN's work of promoting appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads and rural communities.

For more information, visit us online at www.mibarn.net.

- \$40 Fieldstone - 1 person
- \$50 Mortar - 2 people
- \$1000 Cupola - lifetime/two people
- \$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!
The MBPN Board of Directors

The Barn Raisers Shown in Empire

Those who attended last year's Annual Conference were introduced to the exceptional film, *The Barn Raisers*, produced by Tammy and Kelly Rundle and featuring barns throughout the Midwest, including those here in Michigan.

On November 17th, a joint MBPN and Great Lakes Community Library venture screened *The Barn Raisers* to a hometown crowd of over 130 people. The Rundles gave us permission to use the film at no charge, and as a benefit for the "Saving the Leelanau County Poor Farm Barn" project, previously reported in this newsletter. Thanks to Fourth Wall

Films and everyone who attended this great event! Haven't seen the film? The MBPN has a limited supply of the DVDs for sale to members at a special price of \$25 plus \$5 for shipping and handling. To order, send you check or money order to: MBPN, P.O. box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614. Get your copy today and celebrate the unique heritage of our Midwestern barns!

—Julie Avery, Communications Chair

