



Image used with permission from Nancy Mitchell, Paw Paw, Michigan

Joy of the Season and Happy New Year!

The leaves have dropped, winter is arriving, and the holidays are upon us. As 2018 comes to a close, we look forward to another year of promoting the “appreciation, preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads, and rural communities.” And 2018 has been eventful, indeed!

Incoming President Tom Irrer points out later in this newsletter that 2018 was a banner year for the organization, filled with workshops, conferences, tours, awards, presentations, and, of course, our Annual Meeting. Perhaps most importantly—and as Julie Avery explains on page 3—we established an endowment fund, which will provide long-term support for the mission and goals of the Network.

We also continue to celebrate victories, large and small, conveyed to us by dedicated volunteers, members, and contributors to this newsletter. Storytelling is an important part of any organization’s presence, and we hope that the articles within on the Ruby Ellen Farm, Catherine Hayes’ homestead, and the Herren family Isabella County barn provide inspiration for similar efforts and serve as snapshots of the productive and loving preservation work being done throughout the state.

While stories, events, and organizational efforts are important, however, we should always remember that it is *people*—volunteers, leaders, supporters, and *members*—who make our collective impact possible.

If you haven’t already “re-upped” your membership for the coming year, please do so today! Membership information is included later in the newsletter, or visit us online at www.mibarn.net. 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 invite your help to build on our endowment fund!

An organization like the MBPN doesn’t thrive, as we have, for more than two decades without help and commitment from dedicated supporters. Whatever your level of that support, we thank you and look forward to a productive 2019.

From all of us in the Network, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and the best of the New Year!

—Keith Kehlbeck, Board Member and Newsletter Editor

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President's Message

First of all, I would like to thank my fellow board members for having the confidence in me to elect me president.

Over the past few years the Michigan Barn Preservation Network has had a respectable record of accomplishments.

Educational events include our Annual Meeting, featuring educational programs and an area barn tour. We also participate in AutumnFest at MSU and in the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference (coming up in January). Our Barn of the Year pro-



Tom Irrer

gram highlights existing Michigan barns that exemplify outstanding character and inspire others by showing what can be done. We have purchased the Teamwork and Timbers model barn and its transport trailer from the National Barn Alliance, and MBPN members have taken it to about ten locations each year. As a result, students and adults have enjoyed learning and doing the basics of timber frame construction. We also conduct Barn Workshops that provide a hands-on approach to barn repair. Two years ago, we provided \$5,000 to help fund the movie "The Barn Raisers." This professionally-made movie highlights the importance of barns and is available from Fourth Wall Films, www.fourthwallfilms.com.

Our well-received annual Barn Calendar pictures a different barn each month and is displayed in thousands of homes and businesses. This year, we have decided to give all dues-paying members a calendar for the coming year as a token of appreciation for supporting the Network.

Many years ago, the MBPN board decided that money received from Cupola lifetime membership donors (\$1,000 each) would be earmarked to start an endowment fund. This past spring, we were able to establish the Michigan Barn Preservation Network Endowment Fund with a \$25,000 initial investment and have arranged for it to be professionally managed at the Capital Region Community Fund.

I hope that you can see value in the many programs of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network. I also hope that you will do what you can to help us promote appreciation, preservation, and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads, and rural communities as our Bylaws encourage. I stand ready to help and am eager to hear from you! I can be reached at: tomirrer@mintcity.com 989-640-1868

Yours, Tom



Photo by Eric Grates.

Tis the season--Red Barn; Gunn Road, Oakland Township.



End-of-Year Giving to MBPN



As noted above, the MBPN Board recently voted to establish an endowment fund. This is an important step towards safeguarding our long-term mission, and the Board is excited about embarking on this significant fiduciary venture.

What is the endowment and what is the MBPN Endowment for? This is a critical question at the basis of the effort, and we are in the process of determining what we could do through the Endowment that will make the biggest difference fulfilling our mission.

Finance Committee ideas include looking at staffing and growing the number of knowledgeable and skilled contractors to do need-ed work.

We need to not only identify what we want, but also be able to succinctly and eloquently state why we want to take certain approaches while identifying the hoped-for results. To do this and to bring individuals on-board, we need to solicit input from members, contractors, stakeholders, vocational education centers, and others. We hope to implement a member survey and convene focus groups of members and stakeholders to identify our goals.

How will it benefit you?

Because the 2017 Tax Law changes have doubled the standard deduction and limited certain itemized deductions to charitable giving, many taxpayers can no longer itemize charitable deductions on federal and state returns.

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a direct gift from your IRA – Annual Required Minimum Distribution.

While there is no charitable deduction for such a gift, you will avoid payment of tax on the amount of the required minimum distribution that you give to any nonprofit. Such a gift must come directly from your IRA administrator to the Michigan Barn Preservation Network (P.O. Box 614, Mt., Pleasant, MI 48804-0614) or another nonprofit. Talk with your tax adviser in these matters.

We have received ideas and advice from two professional fund development folks: Janet Kreger and Annie James (both MSU retired). We are organizing lists of individuals to approach in refining the purpose and goals for an endowment campaign and to inform and educate our membership. We hope to get their ideas and involvement. Groups to involve in the process include: members; Barn of the Year awardees/nominees; conference and tour attendees; workshop hosts and attendees; barn repair and preservation workers; and individuals from other organizations with whom we have worked.

The MBPN will take its time and gather information and advice. It may be a year before kicking off the public phase of a fundraising campaign (beyond our members). During that time, we will work to educate our membership about endowments through the newsletter and in other forums.

For more information:

On a direct gift to MBPN, contact our treasurer, Clare Koenigsknecht, clarek13@gmail.com or call 989-593-2351

On the MBPN Endowment, contact the Capitol Area Community Foundation (330 Marshall St, Lansing, MI 48912) or call (517) 272-2870

—Julie Avery, Board Member and Communications Chair



Join us!

Membership Supports the MBPN's Mission!

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

Cupola/Lifetime memberships enjoy the added benefit of helping to support a perpetual endowment fund to be used for education, operations, and barn stabilization. For more information on the endowment, see our report below. Contact us for questions about this opportunity and consider joining or renewing at the Cupola level. Donations may also be made in any amount to be directed towards the endowment.

Memberships support only a portion of our important work. Your additional gift will be wisely used. Thank you!

Send completed form and check or money order to: Michigan Barn Preservation Network PO Box 614 Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48804-0614

Membership/Renewal

Fieldstone	Annual/one person	\$40	\$ _____
Mortar	Annual/two people	\$50	\$ _____
Non-profit Affiliate			
	Annual/two representatives, website listing	\$50	\$ _____
Contractor/Business			
	Annual/two representatives, website listing	\$100	\$ _____
Cupola Memberships		\$1,000	\$ _____
(can be pledged and paid over 2-4 years)			

Company or Non-profit Name _____

Membership Names _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Send form and check or money order to:

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

Stories Told: Michigan Barn

Down Home on the Farm

Previous visits to “the farm” had been too short, but oh, so sweet. The summer of 2018 was the first one I spent full-time in this place—this heaven on earth.

I had seen deer here before, but the critters I saw this summer were incredible! A black bear ran in front of me when I was driving on 651. At the farm I saw deer (31 on one Saturday evening!!); a huge white owl; a six-foot tall (okay, maybe it was only four!) sand-hill crane; a skunk, and a partridge in an apple (not a pear) tree. We had birds and bees and butterflies...thanks to the new native plantings this year. Many thanks to Tom Adams, from the Conservation District, for his help. I'm learning so much about how to return this part of the world to its most natural state. The knowledgeable staff at Four Season's Nursery have all been supportive and encouraging, too!

Over the last few years, my husband Joe has been working his magic on the homestead. In the last twelve months, he redid both bathrooms, installed an outside shower, painted, stained, and polished many of the rooms and buildings on the property, including some outbuildings that had been left for dead. He has awesome

design ideas AND brings them to life at little or no cost. Repurposing old wood and materials around the farm is his specialty.
—Catherine Hayes, Cedar, Michigan Member



One of my favorite furry guest experiences this summer came in the form of a fox family making a home in the granary. Here's a picture of Mamma showing three of her four kits.



Farmstead restoration photos by Catherine Hayes



These two buildings are potential projects for next year; the log cabin and barn are original structures dating back to the late 1800s, we think...

Preservation in Action



Repaired foundation wall at Ruby Ellen Farm.



Photo by Cathy Core.

Stone Foundation Repair at the Ruby Ellen Farm

A partial foundation wall collapse at the Ruby Ellen Farm provides a classic example of problems that can occur when regular attention is not paid to insuring adequate drainage away from a barn. In many Michigan 19th century bank barn foundations, lime-mortared field stones were laid up in two layers. These walls, being around two feet thick, were constructed in the fashion of an interior wall and an exterior wall with some space in between. The inside section of the wall of the Ruby Ellen Farm barn had collapsed some time ago, but the exterior layer of the wall seemed in no danger of falling.

Coming into the barn one spring morning, however, staff were shocked to see a 15-foot section of the exterior foundation wall had collapsed into the basement. Immediate attention by staff and area barn workers organized the repair (see before and after photos). Initial clean up and preparation work of setting the jack-posts to support the floor of the hay mow above and moving the fallen stone was done by Lorin Lardie, Ruby Ellen Farm Maintenance Supervisor, and Board Member Bill Green. Area barn-wright Jeff Reinhardt (Northport) repaired a rotted section of the sill plate. The stonewall repair -- resetting the stones -- was completed by Peter Connor of Connor Land and Stone (Lake Leelanau /Suttons Bay).

Ruby Ellen Farm, a non-profit farm in Leelanau County, is dedicated to using its natural and cultural resources to educate and inspire stewardship, self-sufficiency, and balanced relationships with nature and the community. Learn more about Ruby Ellen Farm at <http://rubyellenfarm.org>

—Steve Stier, MBPN Vice-President and Technical Committee Chair

Isabella County Barn Restoration

I thought it might interest you all to know that we have recently completed the restoration of our Isabella barn that we acquired some years ago. Being a complete restoration from a new foundation, roof, siding, and interior, it took us over four years to accomplish the goal. We were able to save the wall and roof construction (bones), so from the interior it still appears to be an old barn, except the floor is all new, as it had no floor when we purchased the barn.

My wife and I know that we are not alone in enjoying the beauty of old barns, so we thought we would share. This was not the original intention, but we will celebrate the wedding of our daughter in the barn next week.

The pictures attached provide both before and after perspectives. We have many more, and we hope you enjoy them!

We now know the expense and time commitment in restoring a barn. No doubt that is why they are being so neglected across the nation.

MBPN President Tom Irrer noted, "My first impression of this barn restoration was WOW!! This is an excellent example of barn stabilization and restoration. It provides us with an example of a project to share with our membership. There are many ways to restore and reuse old structures, but the most important thing to accomplish is to prevent further deterioration of the basic structure and keep the flavor of the neighborhood. The Herren family has accomplished this, and they have received great satisfaction from their labors and their contribution to their rural neighborhood. They will continue to receive satisfaction from this project and these feelings of satisfaction need to be shared with other barn owners."

—Colin Herren, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan



Before



After

It's Not Too Early: Request for Submissions for 2019 Barns of the Year

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) is requesting submissions for their 2019 Michigan Barn of the Year Awards, which will be presented at the 24th Annual Spring Conference and Barn Tour in Washtenaw County (dates TBA).

This is the 22nd year the Network has presented "Barn of the Year" Awards. Over the past two decades, a total of seventy-four 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 other 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.

The categories in which awards are presented are for barns in use for:

- Continuing Agricultural Use
- Family (Private), Non-Profit or Commercial Use
- Adapted to Other Uses
- Family (Private), Non-Profit or Commercial Use

Barns will be 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 Inventory

Applications may be reviewed and printed from our website mibarn.net, or a hard copy 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 1, 2019.



Liezl Moser Craig accepts the Barn of the Year Award from MBPN's Past President Clare Koenigsnecht at the AgroLiquid Conference Center in St. Johns at the Michigan Barn Preservation Network's Annual Conference on May 5. Also pictured is Charles Bultman, Ann Arbor architect who engineered the barn's transformation.

As we know, barns throughout Michigan and the whole U.S. are rapidly disappearing. With few incentives to maintain and restore historic barns, and little public awareness of the importance of preserving these irreplaceable and culturally significant artifacts, the history of our rural heritage is at risk of being lost and forgotten. The Barn of the Year Award seeks to capture the public's attention by recognizing barns that have been saved and inspire others to become barn stewards.

All are encouraged to join the effort to identify and assist in submitting applications for 2019's Barn of the Year. Application Forms may be printed and handed to barn owners you know. Thank you for your participation in our search to seek and recognize Barn of the Year for 2019.

—Keith Anderson, Board Member and Barn of the Year Awards Chair

Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference: MBPN Booth, Barn School, and Teamwork & Timbers Presentation

Building on an established relationship, the MBPN will again attend the Northern Michigan Small Farms Conference, January 25th and 26th at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Michigan. We will have a booth in the trade show area, and Steve Stier and Tammi Donaldson will present 'Barn School' at the conference. Vera Wiltse will lead the Teamwork & Timbers youth program.

Teamwork & Timbers (T&T) features our quarter-sized timber frame model that can be raised and/or put on display as a tool for learning about community, traditions, barn vocabulary, techniques, and, of course, teamwork. Volunteers are able to construct a barn frame without hammers and nails in true timber frame style. No construction experience is needed. Back in 2010, the National Barn Alliance contracted Trillium Dell Timberworks (Knoxville, IL) to design and build the model. The

barn frame was first raised at the MBPN annual conference in March of that year. The Arnesby-Mawby Fund of the Battle Creek Community Foundation provided funding for construction and the development of educational approaches. MBPN member, the late Russ Mawby, mentored and assisted this project.

T&T is an important part of the MBPN's mission is education and the showpiece of the Network's educational initiatives. T&T is more relevant than ever as we move into the coming year, especially now that we have acquired the barn model from the National Barn Alliance. If you are in the Acme area in late January, come see what it's all about! For more information, visit: www.smallfarmconference.com.

—Tammi Donaldson, Technical Committee

MBPN Board Meets to Plan the Coming Year

For its October 20th meeting, the MBPN Board met in Glen Arbor at the Glen Arbor Arts Center, near the Empire home of Julie Avery and Steve Stier. Among other agenda items, the meeting focused on reviewing the 2019 budget, which was developed with direct input from committee chairs and project leads. After a productive discussion, the budget was accepted by unanimous consent.

Other topics covered by the Board included reports on the Endowment, Membership, Program, Technical, Communications, Calendar, and Awards Committees and initiatives.

The evening prior to the Board meeting, the Glen Arbor Arts Center hosted a screening and audience discussion of the acclaimed (and MBPN-supported) 2017 documentary film, "The Barn Raisers," which tells the story of barns in the Midwest by examining them through the lens of architecture. Discussion following the documentary was conducted by Steve Stier, preservation builder, barnwright, and Vice-President of the MBPN.

The film was presented as part of the Center's exhibition "agriCULTURE: Barnyards + Farmscapes," which was featured through November 1. The exhibition celebrated the artistic, social, and historic characteristics and impact of our regional agricultural landscape, found in the barnyards and farmscapes we see around us—and in the homes, fields, food production, humans and animals that are a part of the ecosystem. On display were 44 works in 2D and 3D, using clay, collage, fiber, paint, pastel, photography, and



Photo by Julie Avery

MBPN Board members gather at the Glen Arbor Arts Center for their fall meeting.

mixed mediums. MBPN Board Member Tammis Donaldson's mom had a lovely barn watercolor in the show. Way to go, Tammis' mom!

Thanks to the Glen Arbor Arts Center for its hospitality and commitment to spreading the 'good news' of Michigan's agricultural heritage!



Communications Matter(s)

Are you a Facebook "friend" of the MBPN? We continue to add "likes" to our MBPN Facebook page, and we currently have more than 2,100 followers. Recently, we received over 2,000 "likes" to our posts, and Facebook interest remains high regarding barns. We encourage you to get involved with Facebook...and to help us to comment on pertinent postings and to talk up the MBPN. If you are a Facebook user, please "friend" and repost MBPN posts on your page and other pages you follow. As an example, most counties and cities have their own Facebook pages you can join.

Between the MBPN website (www.mibarn.net) and Facebook, members and the public have multiple ways to communicate with the MBPN: Completed web contact forms, phone call-ins (the number is on the website), and Facebook messages, which we endeavor to answer promptly. Let us hear from you!

Our transition to a new website is also moving along. We are pleased to welcome Marcia Danner as a Communications Committee member, web editor, and volunteer. Marcia has experience updating and overseeing a website (and with WordPress, the software to which the MBPN website is being transitioned). Welcome Marcia!

—Tammis Donaldson, Facebook Coordinator



Okemos Barn. "Hero" photo by Julie Avery

Barn "Hero" Photos Requested

As we continue to upgrade our online presence and website, the importance of images can't be overstated. With their infinite diversity and character, Michigan barns are the perfect visual complements to the stories we tell through the MBPN. To start the new year, we are looking to collect unique barn images, particularly those that are dramatic, seasonal, or that have compelling narratives to share. Images must be in high resolution and with permission secured from the photographer for use on our website, newsletter, or annual calendar. Full attribution will be provided if the image is chosen. Possible uses include a seasonal feature posting on the website with the image and its background displayed. Don't worry...we can help polish any copy you provide with an image!

Do you have a favorite barn picture? Is there a story behind the photo? Where is it located?

Email your high-resolution image(s) to: keith@k2consulting.net. We reserve the right to choose appropriate usage on MBPN platforms from submissions received.

Stay tuned for additional information on the barn "hero" photograph project. Thanks in advance for your help in adding to our archives of iconic Michigan barn images!

—Keith Kehlbeck and Marcia Danner



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P.O. Box 614
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2019 MBPN Calendars Are Here!



MBPN calendars have become a popular annual promotional piece celebrating the diversity and preservation of Michigan's barns. In recent years, our barn calendars have been produced with help from individual, business, and organizational sponsors, and this year is no exception. The 2019 calendar will again feature images of iconic barns throughout the state.

This year, we have decided to mail a free 2019 Michigan Barn Preservation Network Barn Calendar to all who paid their MBPN dues last winter. This is our way of saying thanks for your support. We also hope that those who may have missed paying dues for a year or two will come back and join us in spreading the word about barn preservation. All who pay their 2019 dues now will receive our quarterly newsletter for the next year and the 2020 Barn Calendar delivered to your mailbox by December of next year. If you are a member who would like additional 2019 MBPN Barn Calendars (or if you did not pay last year's dues and would still like to have a calendar), they are available for \$5 postage and handling on our website, www.mibarn.net or by mail at: PO Box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614 (make checks payable to MBPN). These calendars make excellent Christmas and New Year's gifts for family, friends and business acquaintances—and they also promote the organization.

—Jim Mulvany, Board Member and Calendar Chair

