

The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm

Photo by Jim Mulvany

Spring has Sprung

We hope all Michigan barn enthusiasts are healthy and safe during the continuing Covid-19 crisis. With vaccinations proceeding and some social distancing protocols still in place, it seems only a matter of time until we are once again free to gather and network. In the meantime, the MBPN continues to work around the pandemic's limits—by utilizing tools like Zoom, webinars, social media, e-newsletters, and other approaches. The e-newsletter (which comes out between print newsletters) is available for anyone who signs up for it on our website at: <https://mibarn.net/resources/newsletters>. The e-news is a great way to stay on top of developments and online activities of interest. Many thanks to Julie, our MBPN vice president, who makes the e-news shine each time! MBPN webmaster Marcia Danner also deserves kudos for keeping our website content fresh and up to date with information of all kinds. Check it out at: www.mibarn.net.

While we would like to have an in-person event this fall, uncertainty about the pandemic and what safety measures will be in place at that time means that, for the moment, our plans are on hold. Rest assured that we will continue to plan behind the scenes for a "Comeback Conference," most likely in the spring of 2022—perhaps at our "tried-and-true" location in the Kellogg Center at MSU.

The expression "spring has sprung" means that, all of a sudden, it has stopped snowing, the days are warmer, the grass is green, the trees are blossoming, and everything seems to have new life. It is a time of renewed hope after a bleak, cold winter. Be safe, and we hope to see you in person soon!

Jim Mulvany: On the Road Again

The image above was taken by intrepid barn historian, MBPN board member, and Calendar Chair Jim Mulvany, who is "on the road again!" Recently, Jim spent the day getting to **The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm**. The barns and buildings at the museum have been repaired, some are sided, and all are newly-roofed with Blue Label, Red Cedar shingles.

Dr. Sarah Van Hoosen Jones became world-renowned for breeding dairy cattle in the mid-20th century, and she gave the farm to MSU in 1952. The farm is now a museum under the Parks of Rochester Hills, and it is worthy of a visit, particularly since the museum embraces barn preservation in virtually all forms: barn maintenance, rehabilitation, preservation, reconstruction, and adaptive use. No matter what the season, visitors will see evidence of renewal and unique features: new roofs and doors, tile silos, Michigan stones—used in the extraordinary cobblestone-over-boulder wall above. This might be the best stone wall in Michigan! Come see for yourself; you won't be disappointed...

—Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor

p.s. For more from The Rochester Hills Museum, see the article on its Equipment Barn on page 3.

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President's Message

The Retirement Nest Egg



Tom Irrer

While some people aim to spend all of their retirement savings, most of us are reluctant to take such drastic action. We like to save for unforeseen circumstances and realize that once these assets are spent they cannot be recovered. Having reserves to fall back on makes us feel secure. Another thing that promotes security is to enjoy our rural landscape and especially the old barns and farmsteads.

About twenty five years ago, a group of visionaries made an effort to save our rural heritage and organized the Michigan Barn Preservation Network. Their actions gave them a sense of accomplishment and have provided enjoyment and appreciation for the rural way of life to countless others.

Our founders were visionaries. As early as 2006, a committee was established to investigate an endowment and to make recommendations as to how we might help finance our activities over the long-term. In April of 2018, as a tribute to the staying power of this organization and a look to the future, we established an endowment with \$25,000 obtained from Cupola Lifetime Memberships. We have since built on that investment. The endowment fund is held as an Agency Fund within the Capital Region Community Fund, which currently manages more than 450 funds with a total value of over \$100 million. Currently our endowment fund has grown to over \$90,000, and we are on a mission to grow this nest egg even more.

We have all seen the great pride and satisfaction from those who have preserved a barn. This same type of satisfaction can come to those who contribute to a well-structured endowment held by a well-managed foundation. The Michigan Barn Preservation Network is committed to promoting the appreciation, preservation, and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, farmsteads, and rural communities. With your help, we hope to see our endowment fund grow and become a key piece of our efforts to preserve a way of life and our heritage for the grandchildren of our grandchildren.

—Tom Irrer

Membership and Endowment Update

During 2020, our Endowment Fund more than doubled! 2021 is starting out nicely, as well. Since our last quarterly reports to the Board, our MBPN Endowment Fund has increased to a current total of more than \$90,000!

After each newsletter this year, the MBPN has received at least one new Cupola/lifetime membership; these are the foundation of our Endowment! We are also seeing a regular increase in small donations and 'endowment' dedicated contributions!

If you haven't already renewed your membership for this year, please do so today! 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.

www.mibarn.net



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



Steve Stier Talks Barns

On April 22nd, MBPNs Steve Stier made a presentation on barn preservation to the Historical Society of Michigan's "Michigan History Alliance Group" (a group of Michigan history-focused organizations brought together by HSM.) The session was designed to focus on "barn preservation issues, including the causes of deterioration specific to possible funding sources for rehabilitation and for contractors skilled in barn restoration and adaptive re-use strategies."

Steve, who serves as MBPN technical committee chair, expanded on his acclaimed Barn School Talk in this webinar. He started out with the basics: barn definitions, roof shapes, and materials. Then he expanded the presentation to include adaptive reuse, grants, and a question-and-answer period.

Some highlights of the presentation:

For adaptive re-use, it is certainly nice to keep a barn a barn, but sometimes circumstances can change. It could be development, changing agricultural practices, or even the change in our society from sustainable agriculture to the 21st century approach where more people work off the farm. When changing the use of a barn, there are many things to consider. Is the use allowed in your area? Do you have enough money? For example, if you are considering an event barn, your first step should be to talk with the local planning, building, and health department officials to find out if the use is allowed and what steps you need to take to get it approved.

Very often, MBPN is asked whether there are grants available to repair barns, and the answer is basically no. However, there may be a Community Foundation that will take an application. They usually do not give money to privately owned buildings. There are Federal Tax Credits but only for structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Unless it is part of a historic district, very few Michigan barns will qualify. Michigan State Historic Tax Credits were signed into law this year, however the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is working out procedures and policies to implement the program. The good news is that properties that have Michigan State Historic Markers will be eligible for these 25% credits when applications are available. Though getting a State Historic Marker is not "piece of cake" it is the best chance for barns or whole farmsteads to be able to apply for State Credits. To find more details use a search engine to find The Michigan History Center, then click on Historic Marker Program.

Steve was one of the folks instrumental in the founding of the MBPN back in 1996, and a lot has happened in the last 25 years. We have lost barns, saved barns, and continue to bring public awareness about agricultural buildings. Presentations like Steve's are invaluable when it comes to the MBPN fulfilling its mission: "to promote appreciation preservation and rehabilitation of Michigan barns, related farmsteads, and rural communities."

—Tammis Donaldson



Photos by Pat McKay

The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm Equipment Barn 'before' and 'after'

Preservation Also Means Reconstruction

The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm's Director Pat McKay shared with us some details regarding a fascinating structure at the Museum—the "new" Equipment Barn. "It was originally called many things - the 'Truck Garage,' 'Equipment Storage,' and 'Equipment Barn.' The rebuild is a \$1 million project. We are building it on the exact spot and to the exact dimensions of the original - requiring permission to build in the road right of way and with a variance from the City of Rochester Height ordinance. While owned by Rochester Hills, our barns are across the street in the City of Rochester.

The rebuilt barn includes a small heated workshop on the upper level, requiring a sink, which means we need heat, sewer, and water, a sump pump, and loads of foundation drain lines... And yes, we demolished the original building, however it was in deplorable condition and the concrete had completely failed."

The end result is a beautiful, functional structure that harkens back to the original and that proves that barn preservation takes many forms, including reconstruction. Visit the Museum and see this and more!

September Barn Programs and Tour in Hadley, MI

You are invited to attend these September programs co-sponsored by the MBPN and the Hadley Township Historical Society.

Farms, Barns, and Yarns

- Date: Thursday, September 2, 2021 at 7:00pm (doors open at 6:30pm)
- Location: Hadley Township Offices 4293 Pratt Road, Hadley, MI
- Presented by "Barn-man" Jim Mulvaney

Come learn about various architectural features that identify and time-date Michigan barns and how changing agricultural practices over the years have guided farmers to adapt their barns' useful purpose. Every barn has a story to tell, so be prepared to laugh and treasure the interesting lives of our ancestors who worked so hard and loved the land so much.

Hadley Homestead Harvest Day - Farm Hop and Festival

- Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 from 10:00am - 5:00pm
- Location: Tour starts at the Hadley Mill Museum, 3633 S. Hadley Road, Hadley MI
- Tickets will be available this summer (*Discounted tickets for Hadley Township Historical Society Members)

This event is designed for families, history buffs, and those who simply want to revisit old America.

Equipped with a map, guests on this self-guided tour will enjoy an engaging perspective of several area properties integral to farming in this region. Highlights include a scavenger hunt, demonstrations, and the Barn-Rockin' Fall Festival. Come get an up-close look at the local barns and farms that hold stories of this community's past.

For more information on both events, please call 810-797-4026. Museum admission is FREE during events.

2021 Barn of the Year Winners Announced

This cycle, there was again a three-month period for accepting applications, beginning on November 1, 2020. As reported in the last newsletter, the media in various locations recognized the process this year, with the Barn of the Year Call for Submissions being covered in the *Traverse City Record Eagle*, *Adrian Daily Telegraph*, *Holland Sentinel*, *Macomb Daily*, *Ionia Sentinel Standard*, *Michigan Farm News*, *Oakland Press*, *Sturgis Journal*, and *Tuscola Today*, among others.

February 1st was the deadline for this year's Barn of the Year applications, and the MBPN Awards Committee spent several weeks thereafter evaluating the submissions for the 2021 awards. Many thanks to the 2021 Barn of the Year Committee:

Mara Braspenninx: Grand Rapids

Ida Hanel-Gerdenich: Ann Arbor

Keith Kehlbeck: Marshall and White Stone, VA

Tom Nehil: Kalamazoo

Rose Putnam: Cass City

Nichole VanBlaricum: Ypsilanti

Allen and Virginia Langenderfer (2020 Awardees): Adrian

Each year, Michigan barns and their owners have been recognized for their efforts in preserving icons of our state's agricultural heritage. The barns these individuals have saved inspire others throughout the state to also become barn stewards, and we thank all of those who participated in this year's Barn of the Year program.

We are pleased to announce the five (5) barns that will be receiving the prestigious award this year. The following recipient profiles demonstrate a wonderful cross-section of historic Michigan barns. Current plans call for a formal presentation this fall at our planned Conference and Tour (see information later in the newsletter), but in the meantime, we want to recognize these exceptional examples of barn preservation. In the coming weeks, Board member and photography maven Jim Mulvany will undertake an effort to travel to each recipient barn and create new photographs for display and media distribution.

—Keith Anderson, MBPN Awards Committee Chair



Profiling the Five Barns Awarded Barn of the Year—2021

Concordia Hills Barn—Farwell, MI (Isabella County)

Concordia Hills is a one hundred 133-acre Centennial Farm located in Farwell, Michigan. The farm has been in the family since the original land grant was awarded in 1876. Today, the farm is under the stewardship of Jeffrey and Michelle Thompson.

The Concordia Hills Barn is an L-shaped English-style bank barn with a gable roof. Its larger portion has three bays; its smaller portion has two bays. Built in 1884, the barn immediately captures your attention with the weathered patina of its original exterior sheathing and its dressed field stone foundation. Inside, you are struck by its hand-hewn timber framing throughout, its 3-bay granary, and roof rafters of small diameter logs.

Barn rehabilitation efforts over the years included replacing the original wood shingles with galvanized steel, replacing doors throughout as deterioration claimed them, and pretty extensive repair of the fieldstone foundation. The entire area around the barn is clean and neatly landscaped.

The barn has been part of the family for nearly its entire 140-year history. The Thompsons have owned the farm since 2015, and they are currently working to use the barn for “agri-tainment” purposes—opening at times for visitors during fall apple cider season and the spring maple syrup season. It also is used to house the hay taken off the farm.

The Thompsons are proud of the family and community history their barn represents. They wish it to remain a focal point for their family—both this generation and the next.





Eisenmann Party Barn—Palmyra MI (Lenawee County)

This is a fine example of a well-maintained barn, and credit must be given to the two generations of Eisenmanns who have owned the farmstead and its barn for the past 72 years. The family's early use of the barn included a teacher milking cows while still teaching school, later switching to beef cattle and then to raising hogs. Current generation owners, Tom and Kathy Eisenmann, have lovingly maintained the barn over the years since it stopped housing animals and started housing equipment and becoming a place for get-togethers and family reunions.

This unique barn with its arched, curved rafter roof sporting two dormers is in a picturesque setting with several outbuildings including a horse barn, a granary, and a tool shed that have been preserved and restored as needed. With its 150-year-old farm house included, the property is a complete farmstead.

The original barn consists of five bays. The interior is made up of hand-hewn beams with mortise and tenon joinery. (Side note: An 1874 County Historical Atlas has a pencil sketch of the barn which at the time sported a simple gable roof. That early roof was removed and replaced by the unique rounded roof we see today.) Lending an additional allure to the barn is its asphalt shingle roof covering. A major change to the original barn occurred 60 years ago when a lean-to addition was attached to the back side. Visible from the sides and rear, the huge shed addition leaves the front view of the barn unobstructed.

Tom and Kathy Eisenmann are justly proud of their farm and homestead. Whether hosting family reunions, housing tractors and lawnmowers, working with Tom's tools or having a place for grandchildren to play in the well-landscaped yard, the barn and surrounding farmstead is a great testament to barn preservation and celebrating our agricultural past.



Yellow Horse Farms Barn—Pellston, MI (Emmet County)

You can't help but love stories that begin with such phrases as "The barn was in rough shape," or it was a "lost cause," but continues with other phrases such as "a diamond in the rough," a "man who dreams big," and "he sees something that most people would consider a lost cause and sees the opportunity in it." Such is the story of the "Yellow Horse" Barn and the man behind its restoration, Perry Neuman, the father of our barn's current owners, Tonya and Gus Boeing.

This 70 x 45 ft. gambrel-roofed barn has a split fieldstone foundation and vertical wood siding; the inside hand-made beams are mostly original. Its date of origin is unknown, but in 2015, when Perry Neuman purchased it, it suffered from chronic neglect. Though Perry was thought of by folks who saw the barn as perhaps a "little crazy," he "had a light in his eye" when he spoke of the barn. He had a vision for it.

The "rehab of this barn was truly a task," says daughter Tonya. In addition to substantial cleaning, patching, and repairing, perhaps the greatest effort and the greatest story involves the replacement of the basement beams needed to shore up and level the upper floor. In order to keep with the original aesthetic, the family made new beams—cutting poplar trees from the property, hand-hewing the beams with a broad axe, dragging the beams into the lower barn and putting them into place—all without the use of heavy equipment.

Most of the rest of the work needed to restore this gem was done through what Tonya calls "sweat equity." Cutting in windows, moving the staircase, setting a new floor with rough-sawn planks, spending a weekend painting the exterior with a sprayer and a lift truck, and the crowning touch, putting the giant American flag on the exterior wall—all were done directly by the family.

After countless hours and weekends rehabbing the barn, Tonya and Gus were married there in 2018. Future plans are to use the barn for ag once again—raising cattle and having horses. For now, it is used for special events and storage.

Tonya says, "I know it's just an old barn, but to me this barn means a lot more. I cherish the memories I made with my dad and husband." And as for the name of the farm—Yellow Horse....well, she says you'll have to ask her dad for that story.

Photos provided by Keith Anderson

Dickerson Barn—Plymouth, MI (Washtenaw County)

The first American settlers of Salem Township, near Ann Arbor in Washtenaw County, were the Dickersons—John, Joseph, and Amy. The year was 1825 (13 years before statehood for the Michigan Territory). Though the very first buildings were rudimentary log structures, in 1830 John Dickerson constructed the area's first frame barn to store his equipment and hay. The story of that barn, its history, and its survival to today, is an inspiration to its community and all who value preserving our agricultural heritage. The owners' mission is to "preserve, archive, and inform others on the history of Salem Township" and to "Preserve the Past for the Future."

The Dickerson Barn is the oldest surviving barn in Washtenaw County (well documented to be 190-plus years old). As with all old barns, it went through challenging and changing times. Over the years, the barn was covered with metal and converted to office and storage space. In 1999, the Township approved a permit to level the barn, which was said to no longer be useful and was in the way of expanding development. Thankfully, the owner was willing to work with a local non-profit, The Salem Area Historical Society (SAHS) to save the barn. Volunteers painstakingly dismantled the barn and stored it safely, while a six-year effort to secure funds for its relocation and re-assembly was undertaken. Beginning in 2007, the barn was re-assembled on the site of the non-profit Society's Old Stone School property in Plymouth.

This 32 x 42-foot barn has a Swing Beam, which is somewhat rare in Michigan. There are double swing doors in both the front and back walls, which originally allowed for horse drawn hay wagons to drive entirely through the barn. The original beam frame is now sided with new 12-inch white pine, the roof is red cedar shingles, and local ash



trees were cut and used for flooring in the loft.

Today, the property that includes the Old Stone School and the Dickerson Barn has been designated a state historic site. A four-paneled barn mural was erected in 2015. The panels depict the Salem Train Depot, the Salem Hotel, the Salem Churches and Schools and the Dickerson Barn. In 2016, the barn got a fresh coat of paint.

A heroic effort in dismantling, storing and reassembly, the barn now is used in interpreting other farms' stories. The Salem Area Historical Society and its president Terry Cwik are justly proud of their success in saving and restoring this historic building.



Leelanau County Poor Farm Barn—Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society (Maple City)

As with many county governments at the turn of the century, Leelanau County established a farm in 1901 to house residents who could not care for themselves and to provide them the opportunity to engage in meaningful work—both agricultural and domestic. These farms became known as "poor farms" in reference to the social status of their residents. The Leelanau County "Poor Farm" operated for more than 60 years—ending during the mid-60s.

The "Poor Farm" Barn which is now the sole-survivor of the 120 acre farm and its several buildings was built in 1911. Its survival, however, was never assured, and after 60 years of neglect following the closing of the farm, the county published a call in 2017 for bids to demolish and remove the barn. That move by the county also stimulated a move by interested residents to object to the proposed course of action and instead to call for efforts to repair and find uses for this barn. Eventually, a nonprofit community and educational organization, The Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society, was formed and after substantial negotiations, it was granted a 25-year lease to save the barn and to provide for its future use.

Designed by an architect, the sturdily-built barn used "new" construction technology for its time, featuring a poured concrete foundation, plank framing (as opposed to traditional timber framing), a gambrel roof, and a Shawver-type truss system. The original siding is ten-inch wide hemlock and pine boards and two-inch wide batten. It was originally painted red, but at a later unknown date the barn was painted white—the color the newly-restored barn now sports.

Since 2018, repairs have been made to the foundation and the earthen ramp's retaining wall. Door tracks and rollers have been replaced, and repairs have been made to the ends of rotted trusses and floor joists. Other improvements include floor board replacement and, of course, scraping and repainting the barn's white exterior. All windows have been repaired or rebuilt.

Today, the Poor Farm Barn stands ready to fulfill its new role as a symbol of both our culture's social history and the area's important agricultural heritage. It sits as a lone sentinel to recall how the community responded in times of dire need. The Myles Kimmerly Recreation Park in which the barn sits draws visitors during the season for educational and civic events. It once again has become an asset to Leelanau County—and an exceptional preservation story.

Celebrating Great Michigan Barns—Certificates of Appreciation

Through our Barn of the Year program, our search process highlights again and again how rich we are in proud barns that survive and thrive. We are rich in barns and equally rich in barn stories. Every barn has a story—fascinating tales of tradition, of family, determination, rugged work ethic, diversity, and pride in our past. While all barns are part of our great agricultural heritage, we find great diversity today in how they look and what they are used for. Generally, they are either still used for what they were originally intended—agriculture—or, increasingly so, they've been adapted to other uses.

While not every barn that is submitted receives the Barn of the Year award, all nominees are deserving of recognition for their unique characteristics and history. In this issue of our newsletter, we also recognize a number of those “runner-up” barns that are nevertheless



meritorious enough to receive Certificates of Appreciation for their contributions to the Michigan barn preservation pantheon:

- Trails End Barn (Kalkaska)
- Applegate Barn (Grand Blanc)
- DeYoung Barn (Hudsonville)
- Lazy J Ranch Barn (Milford)
- Hattie & Emmet McCrumb Barn (Portland)
- Valdez Barn (Ann Arbor)

These six barns, though not selected for Barn of the Year award, will receive framed Certificates of Appreciation. MBPN Board Members will be enlisted to help personally deliver the Certificates during their travels this summer.

In addition to having their barns designated as *Great Michigan Barns*, the owners will receive membership in MBPN and an invitation to attend the fall conference, along with our logoed hat.

In newsletters spanning the upcoming year, these barns and their stories will also be featured.

Thanks to all for your vital role in support of the Barn of the Year program.

- Keith Anderson, Awards Chair
- Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor

Quick Takes



Maple Bay Barn, prior to restoration

Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Maple Bay Barn To Be Repaired and Maintained

Steve Stier recently reported that the Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Commission has unanimously voted to allocate \$10,000 to the repair and maintenance of the exterior of the county-owned Maple Bay Barn. In addition, \$2,000 per year will be allocated until the barn is full rehabilitated for a new use. The barn is located near the northern county line on the east side of US 31. This is exciting news—and a testament to Steve's efforts at saving one barn at a time. Some time ago, he had traveled to Traverse City (before moving to the area) and spoke to the Commission about this property. In the interim, he worked with various stakeholders in what was a long-lived effort to preserve and improve the barn. Thanks, Steve!



Photo courtesy of Ella Sharp Museum

Barn exhibit will be available through July 25th

Ella Sharp Museum Showcases Barns

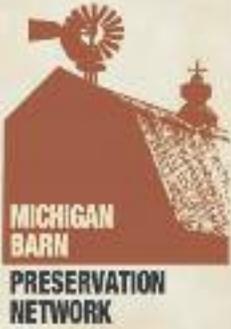
Just a reminder that from December 12, 2020 through July 25, 2021, the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, Michigan is hosting an exhibit entitled, “Barns: Preserving Agricultural Heritage.”

This exhibition highlights some of the organizations, artists, and methods focused on capturing the unique beauty and history of these agricultural icons.

The museum's Hours of Operation are:

- Mon – Tues: Closed
- Wed – Sat: 10am – 5pm
- Sun: 12pm – 5pm
- *Wed – Sat: closed 12 – 12:30 for cleaning

For more information, visit the museum's website:
<https://ellasharpmuseum.org>



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Tom Nehil Presents in MHPN Webinar

On May 6th, Tom Nehil, longtime MBPN stalwart and Principal Emeritus of Nehil-Sivak Structural Engineers, participated in a Michigan Historic Preservation Network webinar titled “A Better Way to Access the Capacity of our Wooden Built Heritage: Guide to the Structural Evaluation of Existing Timber Structures.” The free webinar—presented through Zoom—discussed the findings of the 2019 Guide to Evaluation of Existing Timber Structures created by the Timber Frame Engineering Council and the Timber Farmers Guild.

Tom served on the committee that created the Guide, along with Jim DeStefano, Ron Anthony, and Jaret Lynch.

As the Guide notes, When restoring or renovating an older timber structure, or when adapting it to a new use, it is often necessary to evaluate the structural integrity and load carrying capacity of the timbers.” The document is intended to provide guidance to engineers performing structural evaluations of timber structures. It is also directly applicable to evaluating reclaimed timbers that have been salvaged from older timber structures.

The webinar session was intended to benefit engineers and investigators directly involved in structural assessments as well as owners, architects, and builders wishing to understand the process better and hire the work done well.

Given our Network’s commitment to preserving and adapting historic timber structures, Tom’s presentation—and the Guide—are timely additions to the scholarship of barn preservation. For more information, and to see this and other MHPN workshop recordings, visit: <https://www.mhpn.org/workshop-recordings/>

—Keith Kehlbeck, Newsletter Editor and Communications Chair

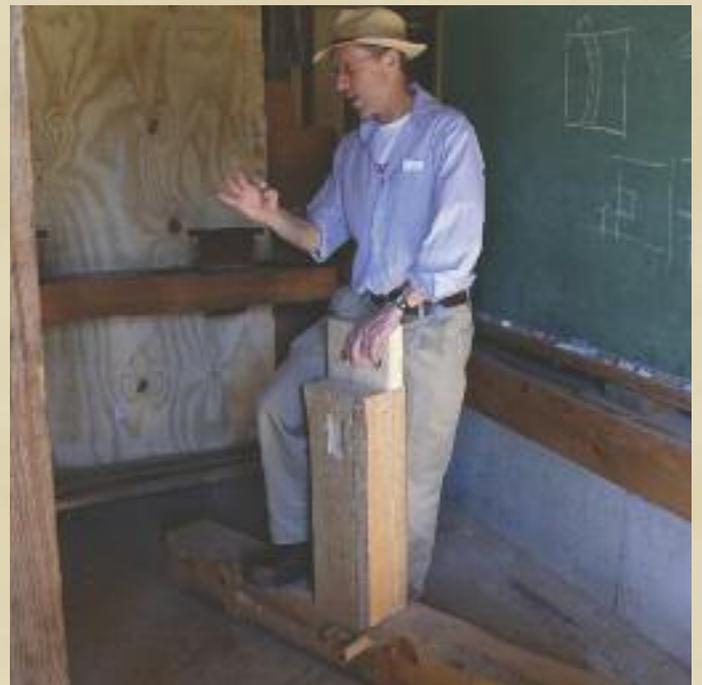


Photo by Tammis Donaldson

Tom Nehil expounds on barn structure at the 2011 Fall MBPN Conference at Tillers.