



MI BARN

PROMOTING APPRECIATION, PRESERVATION, AND REHABILITATION OF MICHIGAN BARNs, FARMSTEDs, AND RURAL COMMUNITIES



Photo by Jim Mulvany

The Shower Family barn located in Ingham County looks warm and friendly in a new coat of early winter snow. I recall farm life in the 1940s when 110 days of sledding was somewhat looked forward to. Maybe that will prove true in 2022. Better get the snow blower started! This barn was moved across the fields to this location in the 1930s. It was likely built in the late 1920s or early 1930s, as evidenced by the use of dimensional lumber in the framing. Often called a plank frame barn, the structure exhibits a poured concrete foundation in good condition. The silo cap has withstood a good many storms over 75 years or more. The artistic work of an unknown stone mason left his mark in the barn grade wall and milk house. The beautiful home is also highlighted with the attractive boulder and cobble stone front porch wall.

—Jim Mulvany

Calling All Barn Enthusiasts!

As 2021 draws to a close, we want to take this opportunity to reflect on the challenges of the past year (with Covid-related distancing and other restrictions)—as well as celebrating the many successes the Network has had, even with those challenges. Barn of the Year plaques and Great Michigan Barn certificates were presented in person throughout the state by Board members and volunteers. Our Board met (in person and virtually), and brainstormed on many important topics. We networked with like-minded organizations (like Historic Hadley Mill Museum and the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference) and supported their efforts. Our website (www.mibarn.net) added content and depth. Our endowment grew (and now exceeds \$100,000!). Newsletters, press coverage, calendars, and social media all allowed the MBPN to be visible as we continued to provide advice and guidance to barn enthusiasts through these and other contacts.

Perhaps most importantly, we've maintained our membership base and are building for the future. We now have over 300 paid members and almost 30 Cupola Members (each having contributed \$1,000 towards our endowment). Growing membership is not an easy thing to do in a time of social distancing...but it is essential to our continued efforts.

Which brings me to an important request: As the new year approaches, **please renew your membership**—and consider adding to it by becoming a Cupola member or by sending an additional donation. If you know of a friend or relative who enjoys Michigan's rural history and barns as you do, show them this newsletter and suggest they become members. (MBPN membership makes a great Christmas gift!) Do you have a barn that is perhaps worthy of a Barn of the Year Award? Submit it! Plan to attend our next Annual Conference and Meeting in March (p. 2). And most of all, keep the faith! Our website and articles in this newsletter should provide information that suggests how you can do so, and we greatly appreciate your continued support.

Also reprinted in this newsletter (pages 4 and 5) is a two-page promotional brochure that informs about the Network's beginnings, its programs and projects, and why your support is so important. Please take time to peruse its contents and let us know what you think. **A membership renewal form is included on page 5.**

Finally, we at the MBPN wish all of you happy holidays, a blessed Christmas, and a Happy New Year! Let's make 2022 our best year yet!

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Newsletter Editor

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President's Message

Welcoming a new year...and celebrating our continuing mission through your donations.

Since our beginning in 1995, we have made it a goal to keep our annual dues low in order to promote maximum participation from barn enthusiasts throughout Michigan. With a new year soon upon us, it is once again time to show your support for our efforts to preserve Michigan's important rural heritage...and our wonderful barns.

By renewing your membership, you will receive our quarterly newsletter, a complementary barn calendar, and discounted admission to our Annual Meeting and Barn Workshops.

Thanks for your continued support. This support allows us to:

- Bring together a network of people for all to use as a resource for barn restoration information
- Showcase the preservation and rehabilitation of barns and farmsteads
- Convince barn owners to preserve their barns and their heritage

Donations of time, talent, and money help us to convince more people to save their history by preserving iconic barns on their properties. That, in turn, convinces their neighbors to do the same. Barn preservation is contagious!

I would also like to thank our Board and other volunteers for donating their time and talents to our success. Additional supporters who I would like to thank are our Cupola members and those who make additional donations over and above their annual dues. Their generosity allows us to build our endowment and to continue the important work for which the Network continues to be known. I hope that more people will likewise choose to be generous and will have the satisfaction of being a part of these important groups of donors.

I hope that we are almost past this Covid thing. Stay healthy and thankful.

—Tom Irrer, MBPN President



Tom Irrer

Save the Date!

The 2022 Annual Conference and Meeting will be held during Michigan State University's Agriculture and Natural Resources Month (formerly ANR Week), March 5-12 at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing, Michigan. On Saturday, March 5th, the Lincoln Room will once again be the focal point of interesting and informative presentations and camaraderie among MBPN members from throughout the state. Current plans call for four presentations throughout the day, the annual auction, and the 2022 Barn of the Year Awards to be presented that evening.

A block of rooms is already being held at the Kellogg Center, for those who wish to stay the night. We hope to see you on March 5th at this important membership event!

—Vera Wiltse, MBPN Program Chair

www.mibarn.net



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



2022 Barn of the Year: The Search is On!

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 participate in the Barn of the Year program.

The search for the 2022 Barn of the Year has begun, and we are in the midst of a three-month period of receiving applications (through January of 2022).

Over the past 25 years, the interest in honoring Michigan's great agricultural heritage, and the structures that were built to support that culture, has been reaffirmed time and again through the annual Barn of the Year Award. While only 95 preserved barns have been officially recognized with the distinction, literally hundreds of preserved barns have been identified as qualified candidates—proving again that barns are valued and worthy of being preserved—not only because of what they meant to those who built them and regarded them as key to their livelihoods, but also to those who today admire and honor those forebears. While we mourn the increasing loss of these important icons of the past, we rejoice at the fierce dedication of those who are determined to save a barn.

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network is dedicated to encouraging the preservation of Michigan barns and to recognizing those barn stewards who are heeding that call. We want to hear about Michigan barns that are surviving and their inspirational stories. Michigan barn owners—or those who simply know of a barn that is worthy of this recognition—are invited to nominate a barn for Barn of the Year. Applications (available online at www.mibarn.net or by request) are being accepted through January 31, 2022.

Thank you all for your on-going support of Barn of the Year.



Photo provided by Keith Anderson

The Pride of Palmyra: The Eisenmann family proudly displayed their 2021 Barn of the Year Award for all to see.

2021 was the first year we presented these awards on the site of the awarded barns—both a unique and somewhat neat idea.

Your assistance in supporting and promoting this search is greatly appreciated!

—Keith Anderson, MBPN Awards Committee Chair

Application Requirements 2022 Barn of the Year Nomination

I. NOMINATION FORM – Application information and forms are available online at www.mibarn.net.

II. WRITTEN NARRATIVE

On separate sheets, please address as much as possible of 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, 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 maintained throughout its life? Or was there a major rehabilitation project undertaken? What was the nature of the work?

III. PHOTOS

Please provide digital photos as listed below (12-24 maximum). Do not send prints. Any prints must be scanned and converted to a digital format. All photos must be provided in digital format on CD or thumb drive or e-mailed with your completed application. Provide a list identifying the photos with relevant explanations.

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.

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network

The MBPN had its beginnings in 1991 when Extension professionals organized regional barn rehabilitation workshops across Michigan to encourage people to preserve traditional barns. More than 800 people attended, some for practical reasons and others because they love barns. A group formed the Network in 1995 as a nonprofit organization. The first annual conference was held in 1996 at Michigan State University during the Annual Agriculture and National Resources Week. Quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors are held around the state, often at interesting barns. Meetings are open to fellow barn-lovers. MBPN has inspired people in other parts of the country to form similar organizations devoted to the preservation of barns in a county or state, or focused on a particular style of barn. A National Barn Alliance has also formed and hosts an annual conference and awareness-building initiatives.

Facts and Figures

- 12-member board of directors, leads the volunteer organization, 4 elected each year for a 3-year term.
- 8 standing committees: executive, awards, finance & endowment, communications, membership, nominating, programs, and technical assistance.
- Revenues come from memberships, conference registrations, sponsorships, fundraisers, and gifts



Programs and Projects

- **Annual Spring Conference** held throughout the state. Programs include a barn tour, workshops on barn repair, history, tax issues, maintenance, moving/rebuilding, adaptations, barns as art, and more. A popular exhibit area draws contractors, collectors, artists, and craftspeople. Live and silent auctions raise funds.
- **Annual Fall event** held in partnership with other groups can include a barn tour, workshop and MBPN presence at regional activities.
- **Barn of the Year Awards** presented at the annual conference recognizing exceptional work done to preserve traditional barns.
- **Contractor's List** maintained online at the mibarn.net website identifies resource people for a multitude of barn needs.
- **Newsletters** inform and educate readers with quarterly print editions and periodic complimentary electronic newsletters featuring educational articles, photos, coming events, and news for and by barn lovers on a wide variety of topics.
- **Website** offering a wealth of information and Facebook for ongoing networking.
- **Technical Assistance** provided to address best course of action for barns in need of repair. (The MBPN does not recommend specific contractors.)
- **Workshops** on-site at barns around the state give people hands-on experience in making a variety of repairs.
- **Mini-grants** (\$250) awarded to members to host a workshop, organize a barn tour, or carry out a barn-related project. (Competitive basis).
- **Speakers Bureau** participants share their knowledge of barns with groups throughout the state.
- **President's Award** honors an individual who has made an outstanding contribution toward barn preservation.
- **Traveling Exhibit** provides an eye-catching, six-panel presentation of information about MBPN with examples of barn preservation and adaptive re-use. It is available for placement at events around the state.
- **Teamwork & Timbers**, a model barn raising program, features a quarter-size model of a Midwest barn which can be raised on-site to teach timber-frame construction for career awareness, general education, and enjoyment.
- **Networking connects** those who have a barn they cannot keep and those who want a barn.
- **Barn & Farmstead Survey** work is done in collaboration with volunteers around the state to document barns and farmsteads in their area.

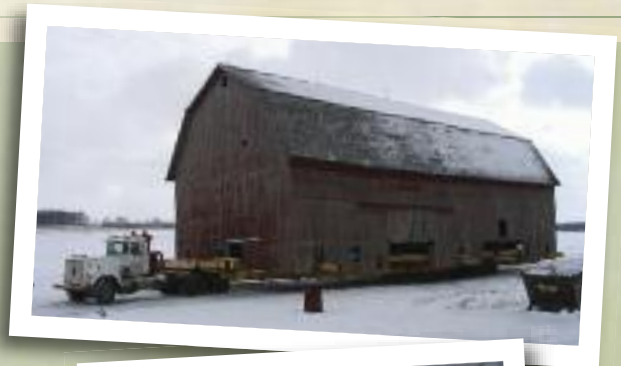


Why Your Support is SO Important

Traditional barns, some more than 200 years old, are dying each and every day for a multitude of reasons – urban/commercial/highway development, neglect, lack of maintenance, of alternative uses or adaptability, changing agricultural practices, severe weather, and competing demands on scarce financial resources.

Make a difference by getting involved, wherever and however you can – as a member, a volunteer, and an advocate for a barn near and dear to your heart. Give a membership or gift that demonstrates your love for barns or for someone special to you. Sponsor awards, speakers, signage, communications tools, and donate items to, or make purchases at, the annual conference auctions. Lead a survey to document remaining barns and farmsteads.

MBPN members are often asked how many barns are left in Michigan, where certain types of barns might be found, where to go to get inside a ‘real’ barn, and even where to find a barn in which to hold a wedding or to move to a new location. Adaptive reuse can be critical to giving new life to an old barn. Become a barn advocate. Help save Michigan's irreplaceable heritage.



Did You Know that Barns...

- ... can be moved intact, in sections, or disassembled. The technique depends on the size and condition of the barn and distance it must travel.
- ... can be adapted to fit the needs of modern agriculture.
- ... can become offices, homes, workshops, conference centers, galleries, dance/art studios, restaurants, kennels, museums, schools, churches, and much more.
- ... make a rewarding career. There is a great need nationwide for barn repair and restoration professionals.
- ...are increasingly desirable. The MBPN gets inquiries that begin, “Can you tell me where I can find property that has a good barn?”
- ...date back hundreds of years in Europe. Barns in this country date back to the 1700s and may also reflect the ethnicity of their builder or owner, intended use, local topography, and natural materials available in the area.
- ...are often regarded as being “cathedral-like” both because they are similar in design to the great cathedrals and create a feeling of being in a spiritual place.

Membership Form

Join us — with this form, or on-line at mbarn.net

Contact us through the website mbarn.net or call 517 648 2933, or any board Company or Non-profit Name

Fieldstone	Annual/one person	\$30	\$ _____
Mortar	Annual/two people	\$40	\$ _____
Cupola	Lifetime/two people	\$1000	\$ _____
Other Donation			\$ _____
Non-profit Affiliate			
	Annual/two representatives, website listing	\$50	\$ _____
Contractor/Business			
	Annual/two representatives, website listing	\$100	\$ _____

Membership Names

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

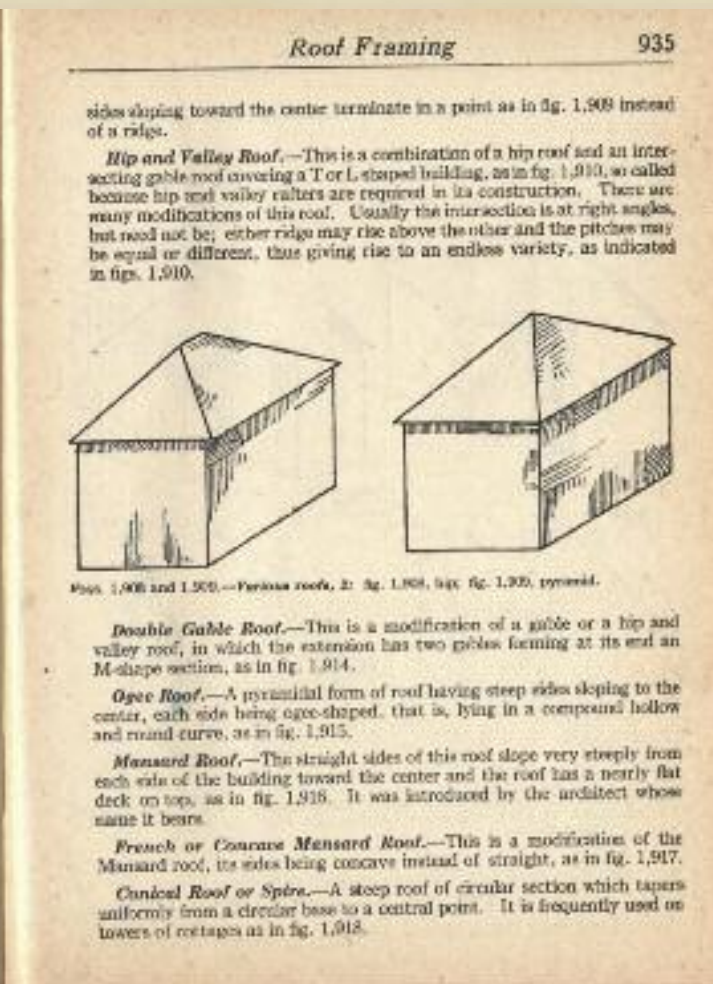
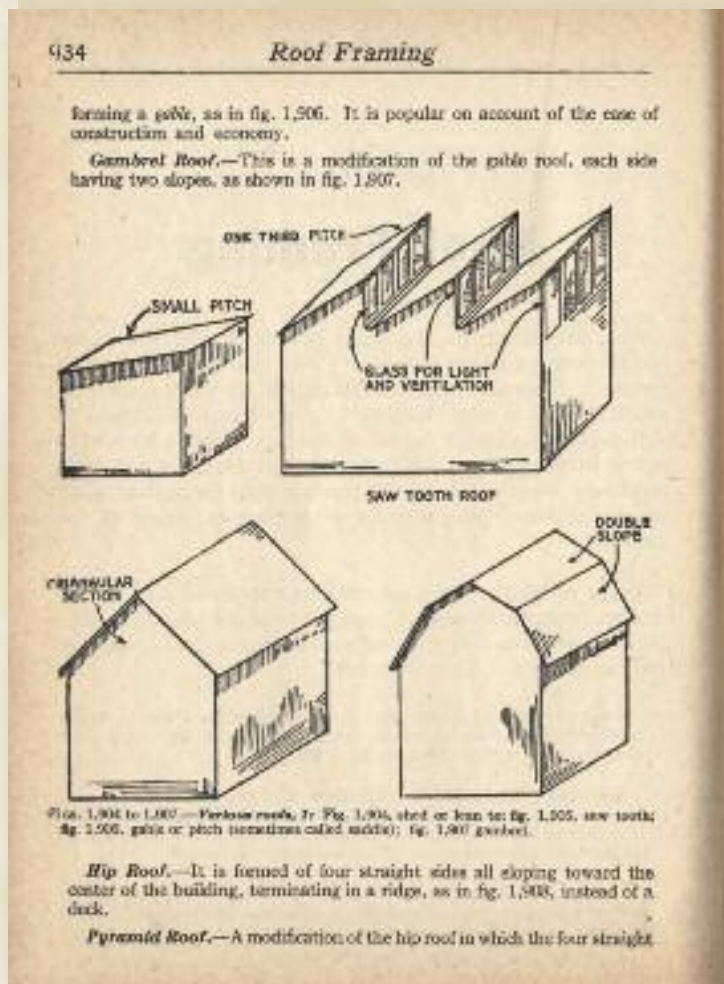
To contact any board member, visit www.mibarn.net for a listing of names and phone numbers. A copy of the newsletter may also be requested from any board member.

Send form and check or money order to:

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

What's in a Name?

You Call It a Hip Roof. I Call It a Gambrel Roof



Roof framing descriptions from *The Audel's Guides to the Building Trades*

Image provided by Tammis Donaldson

Recently, I was thinking about the term hip roof and the term gambrel roof and the confusion in definition. At first, I didn't realize there was even confusion over the matter. Did you know there is also a hipped gambrel roof?

I did a little internet research and apparently this is an age old question. From Wikipedia; "An earlier reference from the *Dictionary of Americanisms*, published in 1848, defines *gambrel* as "A hipped roof of a house, so called from the resemblance to the hind leg of a horse which by farriers is termed the *gambrel*." Webster's Dictionary also confusingly used the term *hip* in the definition of this roof."

There is no confusion in the difference of hip roof type and gambrel roof type in a physical sense. The confusion happens when people talk about it. I thought; how did this happen? It turns out to be a whole thesis paper. At this point I am not sure why it happened. But, it is a longer and deeper story than I thought.

The question has come up why do people call a gambrel roof a hip roof? That is what dad or grandpa called it. Why? Some

people say it is because it is bent like a horse hip where it joins the leg.

If you have taken the MBPN barn school, you will know that the roof shape is one of the defining elements of a building. It could be a barn, granary, machine shed, etc.

Looking in old journals and books it is clear that the definition of a hip roof and a gambrel roof are different. The hip roof has a single slope from all four sides of a building. A gambrel roof has a double slope roof on two sides.

As it is important to understand oral history, it is just as important to call things what they are. Let's call a double slope roof a gambrel roof and single slope roof on all four sides a hip roof.

We have a great resource online for building descriptions at: <https://michiganbarns.org/visualglossary.pdf>

The roof images above are taken from *The Audel's Guides to the Building Trades*. Copyright 1923 & 1939.

—Tammis Donaldson, MBPN Communications and Technical Committees



Meet Bob Griffin

Photos by Julie Avery



The Griffin Barn at the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds. Dismantled, repaired, transported, re-erected, and donated by Bob Griffin and family in honor of his father...a community building for the fairgrounds.

A Barn To Remember

This barn is dedicated to the memory of Bob Griffin. Bob and Nancy founded Griffin Beverage in 1967, and they grew the business into one of the top beverage distributors in the State of Michigan. The company remains headquartered in West Branch, with branches in Saginaw, St. Ignace, and Marquette. The company currently covers 43 counties in the State of Michigan.

Bob grew up farming, and he became a truck driver to help support his small farm. As both enterprises grew, additional farms were acquired. He remained active with both businesses until he passed away in 2019. Those who knew him would say farming was his first love and he actively managed crops and cattle.

In the 1980s, with the retirement from farming by the Gildner family, this barn joined the Griffin farm. Based on the foundation details, the barn appeared to have been moved to Gildner farm at some point. There are definitely other barn parts used in this barn construction (a common practice), and which you can often see in other local barns.

Structural data indicates the barn was likely built at the turn of the century, in the late 1890-1900s. The land abstract shows John Gildner purchased the land in 1904. Initials JG were found carved in a post after the reconstruction. Later barns developed the gambrel roof style. Most beams in this barn are 10"x10", and they are sawn from a mill. The longer ones were hand-hewn, and as I found out, the reason they are hand-hewn is that most sawmills cannot saw that length of wood. Sourcing the straight trees to create 35' beams was a challenge. Sawing 35' beams on a 20' sawmill was even harder. It was very challenging, but I did it!

The Ogemaw County Fairgrounds is arguably the best Fairgrounds in the State. Missing from the antique village has been a true timber-frame structure, however. I had thought a real timber structure would be nice to have, so I considered a couple of different scenarios. This barn was in need of repairs—the floor was bad, there was damage to the sides, and it would need a new roof. With the location of this barn, it did not make sense to incur those expenses, and so we made the decision to relocate it.

Once disassembled, it became clear the damage to the barn was greater than we first thought. The upper plates were rotted from years of unseen water damage, and a couple of the posts were weathered beyond the ability to reuse. The siding material was so worn that it only made sense to replace it all. We eventually had to replace about 25% of the beams with new ones. This was not an overwhelming task, but it still required much more time and work than anticipated, with all of the joinery details recreated to fit the original beams. All of the trees for the project came from our hunting camp, and I sawed every single board and replacement beam on my Woodmizer sawmill. This

turned out to be a couple hundred hours of work.

I became interested in wood working at a young age. Upon returning to Michigan, it was not long before I obtained my first Woodmizer sawmill. I learned to use it making various projects and by sawing all of the trim wood for my new house. The Griffin Beverage warehouse fire in 2000 and the subsequent rebuilding of the corporate office became the first of several huge sawing projects, followed by a timber frame hunting cabin, and the moving of a barn from Saginaw to West Branch (along with several over-the-top deer blinds.)

This barn rehabilitation was the largest project, as the sheathing boards from the old barn were too far worn and brittle after their 100-plus years of service to be reused. All new siding material was cut in red oak. The roof purlins are poplar. We also needed to replace a few rafters, and we used tamarack (which was the same as the originals). The lean-to portion of the barn was constructed from scratch, also in red oak. It resembles the original milk parlor, but it was modernized for use as a stage. Oversized beams were used to emphasize the look and strength of the timbers. The barn features doors on all sides, so to be very flexible in its new use as an entertainment or a wedding venue.

The project timeline and a few acknowledgements are in order. The barn disassembly began on January 19, 2021, and was completed January 21st. Garry Illig and Dan Orr did the lion's share of the barn move. Beechy Brothers of Gladwin helped Garry and Dan take the barn apart. Tom Benjamin drew up detailed plans with dimensions to ensure the rebuild went smoothly. Matt Miller began digging the foundation on March 8th, and Dan Winter had the footings in on March 10th. On April 1st, the first bent was assembled, and by April 23rd, the topping ceremony was held, with many people in attendance.

"Topping" is a tradition in timber framing in which a sapling is nailed to the highest point on a timber frame after the final peg is in place. The sapling is meant to pay homage to the trees used in the construction. There are several variations of this tradition, and it is still used even with large metal buildings, by hoisting a Christmas tree after the final structural steel beam is in place. After the topping, the slower process of placing siding, roofing, building doors, a stamped concrete floor, stonework, and landscaping all take place. The frame was just a small portion of the larger project, and much of the detail work took a lot longer. With a few starts and stops waiting on materials, the barn was essentially finished around the 4th of July. We are still waiting on lights to arrive for the project's completion.

The Griffin Barn was donated by the Griffin family in loving memory of Robert T. Griffin (1938-2019). Friend, husband, father, leader.

—Bob Griffin, Jr.



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Fall/Winter 2021 No. 95

www.mibarn.net

Share, reuse, recycle this newsletter

2022 MBPN Calendars Now Available

Perhaps one of the most popular MBPN projects in recent years has been its annual calendar. This year, we will print 4,500 copies, which will be distributed to members in good standing, to advertisers (who help underwrite the cost of the calendars), and by Board members. Geographically, the calendar reaches throughout the state and is a constant reminder throughout the year of the beauty and history embodied in Michigan barns.

The process to create the calendars is a labor of love. The most consuming parts of getting the calendar project completed are choosing great photos, writing copy, and soliciting and designing advertising (and making personal visits to get confirmation on the final advertisement).

I hope you will enjoy the new 2022 calendar and the theme of Women in Agriculture and rural leadership. As part of this theme, I spent considerable time getting information on Dr. Sarah VanHoosen Jones. Especially hard this year with both the State and MSU libraries half shut down and no access to the stacks. It was only with the help of the VanHoosen Museum at Rochester Heights, that I was able to get a copy of a 1935 Michigan Farmer Magazine that recognized her for a Master Farmer Degree.

We are always looking for help with ideas for a theme for 2023. It's not too early, as it takes time to get contacts and research. We also are looking to begin mentoring someone in the process of assembling, printing, and distributing the calendar, so it will continue to be a part of the MBPN's programming. Are you (or do you know) someone who might be interested? If so, please contact Jim Mulvany at mulvanyjamese@gmail.com.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this year's calendar!
—Jim Mulvany



One of the perks of being a dues-paying MBPN member is receiving a free calendar in the mail. To purchase a calendar with PayPal or credit card, visit our website at www.mibarn.net or send a check for \$10 to MBPN, P.O. Box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614.