



2022 Fall barn tour participants get a close look at a featured barn interior

Photo by Julie Avery

Barn and Fall Color Tour a Great Success

After several years without a barn tour because of you know what, this fall we finally pulled off another great gathering and tour in northeast Michigan.

Because MBPN covers the whole state of Michigan, we try to locate our events in different regions of the state. This year's barn tour took us to the "sunrise side" of Michigan, also known as the "Other Up North." The all-day barn and fall color tour by bus took place on Oct. 15, 2022 and featured seven barns in three counties bordering Lake Huron — Alcona, Alpena, and Presque Isle.

That region was picked for an event when Don LaBarre from the Alpena County Library contacted us on December 28, 2021. Don was looking for interesting presentations for their Friday night series of educational meetings. Showing the movie *The Barn Raisers* (first introduced to the Network in our Summer 2017 newsletter No. 80, available on our website, www.mibarn.net under "Store.") seemed the perfect thing for the evening's kick-off to our fall tour. Planning for this twice got shot down because of the pandemic before we got a break in June of 2022, when the MBPN

board backed a showing of *The Barn Raisers* and a barn and fall color tour in the area during October.

Planning for the weekend of events continued through the summer and early fall and was completed just in time for the Friday evening movie showing and the Saturday barn and color tour. During the tour, special attention was placed on barn education, and efforts were made to point out and name barn parts and features.

The tour was a complete success with only a small threat of rain. The 50 participants were in good spirits and got to see a total of seven barns: five timber framed barns, one round roof barn, and one rare "heavy composite frame." A primary feature of the tour was seeing how two repair techniques addressed two very common problems with bank and ramped barns and curved rafter barns.

Special thanks are in order for Don LaBarre and the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library as partners for the weekend, as well as sponsor Bob Griffin, owner of Griffin Beverage Company. Descriptions and images of the barns on the tour follow. —Steve Stier, MBPN Technical Committee Chair and Past President

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President's Message

It's the People!

The thing that I enjoy most about my involvement with the MBPN is the opportunity to meet active people who are passionate about our rural heritage and the beautiful barns that dot the rural landscape.

Our recent barn tour in the Alpena area, organized by Steve Stier, gave us the opportunity to observe the pride of barn owners at seven stops that showcased a total of eight barns. Although barn construction methods varied, each owner did their best to keep their part of rural history alive with the resources they had. All realized that our general population is appreciative of seeing these historic treasures.

My highlight stop was the Elowsky Mill just southwest of Posen. It is a registered Michigan Historic Site that was built during the 1870-1885 time frame. Over time, its owners upgraded to include the best millstone imported from France. Underwater turbines replaced the less efficient overshot waterwheel that tended to freeze up in winter. Thomas Edison helped install an electric lighting system about 20 years before the availability of commercial electricity. This allowed lighting without using an open flame that could cause explosions in the dusty environment.

Advances in technology and transportation made this mill uncompetitive, but it continued to operate on a part-time basis until the dam washed out in 1963. The Hemlock Hills on Mill Pond group recently purchased the property, conducted significant restoration and, more importantly, preserved a unique piece of local rural history.

From individual barn restoration projects to the massive undertaking at Hemlock Hills on Mill Pond, all of our tour stops showcased successful preservation projects. More importantly, all of our hosts were willing to share their accomplishments. It is people who save our history! Take a look around to see what you can save. Contact any of us at the MBPN for answers to your questions.

—Tom Irrer, MBPN President



Tom Irrer

Save the Date



The MBPN values the personal connection that comes from gatherings of like-minded barn preservationists. We hope that you will be able to join us on future barn tours and at our **spring Annual Meeting and Conference in East Lansing, Michigan, at the Kellogg Center on Saturday, March 4, 2023.** Stay tuned for details on the Annual Meeting!

2023 Barn of the Year: The Search for the "Second One Hundred"

The response to our invitation for submissions for Barn of the Year has been very positive, but in order to avoid getting lost in the Holiday Hustle and Bustle, and allow ample time for all those interested in getting into the mix for the 2023 award, we've extended the deadline by a couple of weeks. The **NEW APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15, 2023.** *There's still time. Go for it!*

Calling all barn owners!! The Michigan Barn Preservation Network is requesting submissions for its 2023 Michigan Barn of the Year Awards, which are presented annually to honor barn owners who have made the extra effort to maintain or restore historic barns. The program honors existing Michigan barns and supports our ongoing mission to preserve our agricultural heritage.

This is the 27th year the Network has presented Barn of the Year Awards. Over the past quarter century, a total of more than 100 barns from across Michigan have been recognized for their unique qualities and/or preservation efforts. We are now looking for nominees to begin honoring our "second one hundred" exceptional barns.

Nominated barns must be in-use, either for continued agricultural use or adapted for other uses. Barns must retain their overall appearance—both in their 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 or farmsteads in use for:

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

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 one-page application form
- A written narrative of the barns' history and restoration efforts
- Photographs
- A completed Michigan Barn & Farmstead Inventory

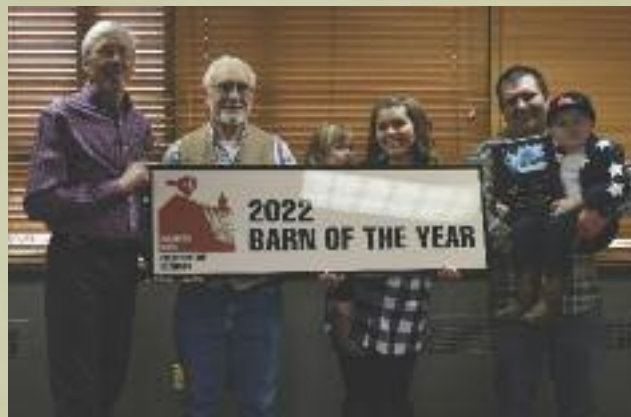
The process will remain similar to that of the recent past, with modifications to this year's award process:

- The Barn & Farmstead Inventory is a simplified one-page document.
- All application materials must be submitted by email or thumb drive—thus eliminating hard copy forms or photos.
- We reaffirm that all applicants are worthy of recognition, so those not selected for the award will be designated as "Great Michigan Barns" and receive a framed Certificate of Appreciation and a complimentary one-year membership in MBPN.
- Depending on the nature of the applications, we may again designate a "Farmstead Preservation Award" rather than "Barn of the Year," as was the case in 2022.

Applications may be reviewed and printed from our website, www.mibarn.net, or a hard copy may be requested by contacting Keith Anderson. E-mail: klanderson42@gmail.com or Mobile: 616-540-6701. Nominations must be postmarked or emailed by January 15, 2023.

The barn you saved can be an inspiration to others throughout the state to also become barn stewards when it is announced and published next spring as MBPN's Barn of the Year for 2023!

—Keith Anderson, MBPN Awards Committee Chair



American Boy Barn BoY Award Winners 2022

2022 Barn of the Year Winners

American Boy Farms (Continuing Agriculture Use – Family)

- Owners – Toni & Josh Johnson, of Cheboygan, and
- Perry Neuman, barn restorer

Weisberg Barn (Adapted to New Use – Family)

- Owners – Matthew & Joan Weisberg, of Milford, and
- Dean Sutton, JDS Historical Preservation & Restoration

Olde Stone Porch Wedding Venue (Adapted to New Use – Commercial)

- Owners – Warren, Sharon and Kiel Conley, of Ionia

Griffin Barn at Ogemaw County Fairgrounds (Adapted for Public Uses - Non-Profit)

- Donor – Bob Griffin, Jr. and Family

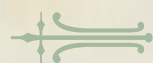
2022 Historic Farmstead Preservation Awards

Maxwell Farms & Stony Creek Veterinary Hospital

- Owners: Drs. Case & Peg Hoonhout, of Washington Twp.
- Category: Farmstead Adapted to New Uses – Commercial and Family

Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm

- Museum Manager: Patrick McKay
- Category: Farmstead Adapted to New Use – Non-Profit



Fall Barn and Color Tour Stops



Somers Barn, Alcona County

Leo and Sharon Somers' centennial farmstead is now in the fourth generation of Somers family. You can tell the family has been here a long time as it is on Somers Road!

The property is exceptionally well maintained, and the buildings have extensive use of fieldstones in their construction. The 1914 gambrel-roofed barn has a fieldstone foundation with an attached fieldstone silo built in 1939. The timber-framed barn has an unusually strong bracing system.

In years past it has suffered from the ramp-side basement wall bowing that caused the opposite wall to lean. This typical ramped basement barn issue is caused by pressure from the ramp. The Somers have devised and implemented an effective method to restrain the foundation from moving any further.

This Michigan Centennial Farm is a showplace on the Alcona County Quilt Barn Trail.



Purple Wild Farm Barn, Alcona County

In 2021 Barbara Halazon and Marge Cappone bought this farm with the barn and the house in poor condition. They are determined to turn the farmstead around to raise and show their Nubian goats and Highland cattle.

The farm has a large round-roof barn with bent or "sprung" rafters setting upon an eight-foot concrete block foundation. As with many curved rafter barns, some of the laminated and nailed rafters had failed leaving the roof with sagging areas. The sagging eventually allowed water to enter and weaken the roof framing and rot the loft flooring.

Barbara and Marge hired barn contractor Roger Bateson of RJ's Complete Barns Service in Prescott to devise a repair plan. Where nails



in the rafters had allowed the laminations to separate, Roger pulled them back together with structural screws and devised a method to strengthen and stabilize the roof.



James Bruski Barn, Presque Isle County

The Bruski farmstead will reach Sesquicentennial status in 2025, recognizing 150 years of ownership by the same family. The farm was originally two hundred acres but is now divided up between several siblings. This area of northeast Michigan settled by Poles and Germans in the 1870s, remains known for its potato harvest.

Most recently Jim's barn was used for dairy, milking 28 to 30 cows with Surge milkers. Production was upgraded to Grade A Milk in the 1950s.

The structure is an on-grade (ground) T-shaped barn, with a gambrel roof and timber framing. It appears that the ell was built with the original barn. The post and beams are slightly larger than normal, with canted purlin posts braced to the outside.



Elowsky Mill, Presque Isle County

A historic grist mill and two barns of interest are among the buildings on the property of Hemlock Hills at Mill Pond event venue.

Around 1870 Michael Elowsky and John Miller developed the mill site on the North Branch of the Thunder Bay River. It was originally water wheel-driven but the partners soon invested in two Leffel Turbines which dramatically improved efficiency.

Michael Elowsky's son Emil met a young Thomas Edison, and together they created a water-powered generator and full electric lighting for the mill. The Elowsky Grist Mill had electric lighting for the mill which extended business hours — 20 years before the nearby cities were able to add their own electricity. Elowsky operated the mill into the 1950s, and then part-time until 1963.

The west barn has been adapted as a pavilion and holds an exhibit about the preservation of the Mill. The east barn, adapted as a wedding and event space, is a rare "heavy composite" framed barn built using 2" planks nailed together to resemble a timber frame.

Pleasant View Ranch, Presque Isle County

This barn was honored as "Barn of the Year" by the Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) in 2016. Owner Sharon Wyman raises national championship Hereford cattle on her Pleasant View Ranch. Over the years, the barn has been home to countless prize-winning Herefords that were exhibited across the country, bringing back awards that now hang across its weathered beams.

Maintaining the originality of the barn has always been important to the Wyman family. When Sharon and her late husband purchased the property in 1983, they knew it would require some extra care along the way, but they also knew it was worth it!

"This old northern Michigan gem has been serving its original purpose of housing cattle for over 100 years," Sharon says. "We have done our best to preserve this part of Michigan's heritage."

Many repairs and improvements have been made such as all new windows with wire cages inside and out to prevent curious horses and cattle from poking through the glass, and new wiring and electrical service for safety purposes.



Dwayne Coffman Barn, Alcona County

The Coffman Barn has an exceptionally large T-shape gambrel roof on grade (also called a "ground barn"). It has an original corrugated metal roof with lightning rods. It seems that this was originally designed as a "mid-century modern" dairy barn with huge hay storage capacity, a well-designed stanchion milking area and large attached concrete block milk house.

There are several unusual and confusing construction features within this barn. Guesses are that this is a very late dairy barn built in the 1930s or 1940s. It has pole rafters and a hay track in both the main and ell parts of the barn. It has a very rare "wind" bracing system in one part of the barn.

Local rumors say that Michigan State University had something to do with the design and building of this barn. Support posts in the loft in one part of the barn have two-inch bored holes that may be called "raising holes."

AJ's Berry Farm Market, Alpena County

AJ's Berry Farm is a U-Pick farm, where customers get an up-close, personal taste of a working farm. AJ's has been in operation since 1997 when at 14, he discovered a passion for farming. AJ started out with a quarter acre of strawberries and a lot of faith. Since then, the farm has expanded to include raspberries, saskatoons, pumpkins, squash, a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables, and an onsite farm market.

In 2006, AJ and Amy were married and in 2008 they began a family with twin girls. Now they have a total of five sweet girls, who can often be found helping out in the fields and the store!



The barn at AJ's is at the heart of the farm and houses the farm market and store. It is a good example of a very appropriate adaptive use for barns. It is a three-bay gambrel roof timber frame basement barn.



Time to Renew: 2023 MBPN Membership

Join Us and Support the MBPN's Mission!



The new year is almost upon us, and the work of the MBPN goes on. We need your monetary support in order to continue the Network's work. If you haven't already renewed your membership for the coming 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 also supports our information-rich website and our quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to hundreds of 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/Lifetime Membership or gift to the MBPN 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.

Thank you in advance for your support!

The MBPN Board of Directors

Michigan Barn Preservation Network Membership and Donation Form

Fieldstone	Annual/one person	\$40	\$ _____
Mortar	Annual/family	\$50	\$ _____
Cupola	Lifetime/two people	\$1000	\$ _____

Non-profit Affiliate
(Annual/two representatives, website listing) \$50 \$ _____

Contractor/Business
(Annual/two representatives, website listing) \$100 \$ _____

Endowment Fund donation \$ _____

Company or Non-profit Name _____

Membership Names _____

Donation _____

Donation Amount \$ _____

Donor Name _____

Specify donation use or leave blank _____

Check enclosed for \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

If you are giving a membership or making a gift in someone's honor, please provide the name and mailing address of the honoree so we can tell them of your thoughtfulness. If you are making a gift in memory of someone, please let us know who we should inform and, if you wish, tell us about this person's love for barns, farms, and rural life.

Send completed form and check or money order to:
MBPN, P.O. Box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614
www.mibarn.net



Flyer highlights MBPN mission

We designed an MBPN flyer to use as a handout at the annual State Farm meeting. This one-pager perfectly captures our mission and priorities!



2023 Calendars Available

With the loss of Jim Mulvaney earlier this year, board member Kristine Ranger from Clinton County was appointed as Chair of the MBPN Calendar Committee. Rising to the task, she coordinated the selection of barn pictures, solicitation of advertising, and other responsibilities associated with completing the annual calendar, which has become a valued marketing piece for the organization.

Paid members of the MBPN receive a complimentary copy of the calendar, and additional copies are available—and they make great Christmas gifts! To purchase a calendar with PayPal or credit card, visit our website at www.mibarn.net or send a check for \$15 (\$12 for members) to MBPN, P.O. Box 614, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0614.

The 2023 calendar is dedicated to the late Jim Mulvaney, who spearheaded the calendar project for a number of years. Jim is missed, but his spirit and enthusiasm for Michigan barns live on in the MBPN calendar!



Endowment Update: Preserving our Heritage – Investing in our Future

Pledge Chair Clare Koenigsnecht reports that the Endowment Drive for MBPN has finally started. The drive had been delayed for a couple of years due to Covid, but now we are beginning to contact our patiently waiting donors. The committee and board will be contacting 30-plus lead donors this month, and we will appeal to all members soon. At this time we have raised \$106,500 of our \$500K goal.

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!

Please think about your own interests in supporting MBPN through your memberships and our Endowment! 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.

—Clare Koenigsnecht and Julie Avery,
MBPN Endowment Committee Co-Chairs

A New Arrival: the Newest Barn Enthusiast!

Steve Rademacher has reported that his stepdaughter and our board member Danielle Schrader has announced the birth of a son, Arlan Memphis Schrader, weighing in at seven pounds and healthy. *Congratulations!*

Teamwork & Timbers

On Monday November 8th, MBPN President Tom Irrer took the T&T barn to the Masonic Temple in Detroit for the Association for Preservation Technology annual meeting. Tom Nehil, Steve Stier, and Richard Harvey showed the barn to a group of students who had entered a timber frame design contest.



Left to right Brenda Griffin, Bob Griffin, Jr., Kristine Ranger, MBPN Board

Griffin Barn Receives its 2022 Barn of the Year Plaque

Bob Griffin, Jr. was not available last March to be on hand to receive his family's Barn of the Year Award during the Annual MBPN Conference at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. He'd had a previous commitment to spend that week in Costa Rica, where the sun is always shining and the temperature was about 50 degrees warmer than in East Lansing that weekend. Under the circumstances, he was forgiven the absence.

He was delighted, however, when MBPN Board Member Kristine Ranger arranged to meet Bob and his wife Brenda at their

home in West Branch this past summer to present the award and the barn sign.

The story of the Griffin Barn involves both an inspirational story of a son dedicating the family's preserved and relocated barn to his recently-deceased father, as well as a heart-warming story for barn lovers of a barn saved for future generations. The restored Griffin Barn is now located on the grounds of the Ogemaw County Fairgrounds in West Branch.





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Get To Know Your MBPN Board: Leadership Profiles

From time to time, we have highlighted the dedicated volunteers who comprise the MBPN Board of Directors. In this issue, we would like to recognize two of our board—each of whom brings a unique perspective and talents to our leadership cadre.



Keith Anderson

Born into a dairy farming family in West Michigan with 15 brothers and sisters in the early '40s, Keith Anderson learned and appreciated the importance of our agricultural heritage as he was growing up. After graduating from Central Michigan University with bachelor and master's degrees in education and American History, he first taught high school before carving out a

career in Human Resources Management. Following several years raising two children as a widower, he was fortunate to return to life on a farm with his marriage to his wife Linda, owner of one of the largest dairy operations in Kent County. Having restored two barns on their home farm, Keith and Linda joined MBPN in 2009. Each of their restored barns has been the recipient of the Barn of the Year Award. Both adapted to alternate uses, the larger barn an Agricultural Heritage Museum, the smaller barn a family gathering space.

Keith is in his second three-year term on the MBPN Board. He

chairs the Awards Committee and oversees its highly-regarded "Barn of the Year Award" Program.

Together, Keith and Linda are busy with their six children and ten grandchildren. They are also active in their church's ministries and with their small collections of antique cars and tractors.



Clare Koenigsknecht

Clare Koenigsknecht was born and raised on a dairy farm. He worked in the auto industry for six years, and owned and operated a farm and commercial building repair company for 40 years. This experience has proven invaluable to the Network, as he is often consulted when inquiries on barn repair come to the MBPN.

Clare has been a board member of the MBPN for 14 years, serving as Past President and (currently) as Treasurer. He currently is Pledge Chair for the organization's ambitious Endowment project. See also a brief report in "Quick Takes" on page 7 of this newsletter.

Stay tuned in future issues to see bios and stories from other MBPN Board Members!

—Keith Kehlbeck, MBPN Communications Chair and Newsletter Editor