

BARN LIGHTS

Quarterly Newsletter

APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE

VOL. 5 No. 1 Spring 2018

Barn Inspires Famous Song

Our old mountain barns have great appeal for most of us. They evoke memories of a past that was simpler, where life had purpose and made sense. The family barn was rich with sounds and smells, honest work and joyful play, and the passing of seasons. It was often a refuge where a person could get away from the clamor of a large family, and rest in the quiet of wood and leather and animals whose names were etched above their stall doors. It was this quality of refuge, perhaps, that drew Lloyd Chandler one frigid night in the Burton Cove, to stumble from a three-day drunken spree into the sanctuary of a neighbor's log barn. From the accounts passed down from family and neighbors, we learn of a mystical story of redemption, death, and life.

Lloyd suffered through his teenage years with a violent and self-destructive nature, casting fear among family members and neighbors. On this one night in 1916, as the stories describe, Lloyd lay shivering in his drunken stupor when he suddenly sensed a terrifying presence. From the cold darkness came a haunting voice, "Oh I am Death, none can excel!" We can imagine his terror as Lloyd engaged in a desperate conversation with Death, bargaining and pleading for his life. When he finally emerged from this encounter, heart yet beating, he made his way home, a changed man. Lloyd Chandler became an inspired, and inspiring, traveling preacher for the remainder of his life, preaching throughout the mountains and beyond, challenging the unbelievers, and singing the haunting rendition of his "Conversation with Death."

Lloyd's song became known far and wide. Versions of it have been recorded in the Ozarks, the deep South, and the Georgia Sea Islands of Bessie Jones, yet it was rarely known beyond rural church communities, a handful of folklorists, and of course, Lloyd's extended family of traditional singers in Sodom Laurel.

It wasn't until the Cohen brothers' movie "Oh Brother Where Art Thou?" was released in 2000 that the world at large would be awestruck by this remarkable song, sung by the internationally famous Ralph Stanley himself. What may have begun as a terrifying vision in a Madison County barn, became a mountain song heard by millions. And like the many thousands of barns in the mountains, the barn of Lloyd's vision now stands silent, haunted by past lives well-lived.



The barn is a simple 19th century flue-cured tobacco log barn, with 20th century shed roof additions for hanging burley tobacco. Photo by Earthsong Photography, Don McGowan

Saturday, May 19—5th Annual Barn Day

Because this is our 5th Annual Barn Day, we are combining a bit of the 1st with some new discoveries in our current year. Beginning at 1:30pm guests will go on a bus tour narrated by Taylor Barnhill and stopping at the Anderson Barns in Beech Glen and the Woods Ammons monitor-roof barns in the Mars Hill township. Other barns along the route are examples of the stories of our heritage. Food and fun awaits you for the remainder of the evening at our "party barn" (closing at 7pm). We welcome back the Bailey Mountain Cloggers for a performance at 5pm. Following their performance, the cloggers will teach willing participants some square dances. There will be a few unique items available at the Silent Auction table and you can purchase raffle tickets for a beautiful quilt handmade by Judy Ricker. (Raffle drawing will take place on June 10 at the Bluff Mountain Festival.) Look for details about ticket sales on our website.



Queen-size Handmade Quilt Raffle Tickets during May

The President's Letter



All of those on the Appalachian Barn Alliance Board look forward to another year of preserving our heritage. We have already begun the planning for the events of the year. In the summer months, we will be offering our Third Annual Farm to Table dinner at The Farmers' Hands and will welcome back Susi Gott with Marty & Don Lewis (the Sons of Ralph) for a concert. But our spring concert will have a new face. I "discovered" Ben Phan when having dinner at Blue Mountain Pizza. His soft sounds are reminiscent of the folk songs of the 1970s which I still love. I am pleased that he agreed to a benefit concert for us. For Barn Month in May, we will keep the tried-and-true events and experiment with some new ideas. I invite you to patronize the restaurant partners throughout the county on the days they have chosen to share a portion of their profits with us. Also, we are excited to launch our effort to collect stories about barns and farms as we partner with The Depot on the second Friday of each month beginning in May. We look forward to a fabulous 2018 as we expand our creativity to find new ways to help preserve our agricultural heritage.

Sandy Stevenson

"Welcome Spring" Concert with Ben Phan



You are in for a treat as you join us to Welcome Spring at a benefit concert on Sunday, March 25 at 3pm. Again we are grateful to the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit for providing a beautiful setting for the music. This year we are delighted to introduce you to Ben Phan, an Asheville guitarist, singer and songwriter. His music has been described as a "blend of gypsy jazz, bluegrass, classical, and folk music. A beautiful merging of fiery instrumentals and expertly crafted songwriting." If you haven't heard him, check out one of his original pieces on You Tube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMnWq7-aLmE>.

Tickets are just \$10 reserved and \$15 at the door. To make reservations for a "Will Call" hold, email info@appalachianbarns.org or call Sandy at 828 380-9146.

Proceeds benefit the Appalachian Barn Alliance (<https://appalachianbarns.org/>) and a portion goes to the Village Initiative program of the church.

Time: 3 p.m. on Sunday, March 25 at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, 433 Bone Camp Road—just 2.4 miles from Mars Hill off Rt. 213

2018 Barn Month Events

See Page 1 for May 19 Barn Day Tour Info

Barns of Madison County Exhibit at Madison County Arts Council

Who doesn't love the sight of a barn on a beautiful hill when driving through the rural countryside? Those with a photographic eye or artistic talent will have their work on exhibit at the Madison County Arts Council Gallery at 152 N Main Street in downtown Marshall from Friday May 4 through the end of the month. Mingle with the artists and photographers at the Opening Reception on Friday, May 4 from 5:30 to 7pm or drop in Monday through Friday, May 7 through 31 from 10am to 4pm. Work displayed is available for purchase. FREE

Story Gathering Inaugural Event at The Depot

The Appalachian Barn Alliance researcher has been collecting oral histories as he documents the historic barns throughout the county. But, we are trying a new approach to recording these stories by setting up at The Depot at 282 S Main Street in downtown Marshall one Friday each month. The inaugural "Story Gathering" will take place on Friday, May 11 from 5pm to 7pm. The Depot is the perfect location as it is the place where residents and tourists come to listen to traditional Americana music. If you have a barn story or farm history story to tell, drop by The Depot the second Friday of each month from May through October and look for the Appalachian Barn Alliance sign.

Evolution of Barn Architecture Exhibit At Zuma Coffee

Once again Zuma Coffee will have the exhibit which traces the architectural changes in barn-building. These large panels also tell the story of the agricultural changes in the southern Appalachians. Drop by Zuma at 7 N Main Street in downtown Marshall during business hours (closed on Sunday) to view this FREE exhibit.

Barn Month "eve"—Barn Photo Workshop—April 27-29

Don McGowan is offering his expertise to benefit both the Appalachian Barn Alliance and photographers looking to perfect their skills. Go out on a weekend to Madison County barns and have Don show you how to get the best photos. Details are available from the home page of the organization's website (appalachianbarns.org). \$150 or \$125 for members.

"Nourish our Appalachian Barn Heritage"

Throughout Barn Month, when you patronize one of the five participating restaurants, the owners will donate a portion of the profits that day to the Appalachian Barn Alliance. This is a chance for you to enjoy a meal and to support our organization. Be sure to tell the staff that you are there because you want to thank them for supporting our work. Here's which day each of the following will welcome our supporters: **Smoky Mountain Diner** in Hot Springs on Wednesday, May 2; **Papa Nick's** in Mars Hill on Sunday, May 6; **Trust General Store & Café** in Trust on Thursday, May 17; **Stackhouse** in Mars Hill on Wednesday, May 23; and **Bonnie & Clyde's** on the bypass in Marshall on Tuesday, May 29.

Thanks to these wonderful supporters!

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