

BARN LIGHTS

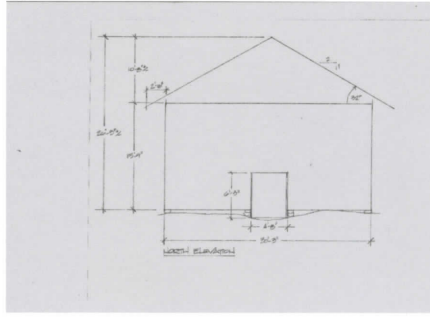
APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE

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ABA Awarded Major Grant

In what may be the biggest development in its short history, the Appalachian Barn Alliance was awarded a \$10,000.00 grant in November to support its goal of "preserving the memory of Appalachian barns."



Samples of the documentation done for the historic barns includes the barn photo, details of construction, and architectural drawings. This documentation along with narratives and oral histories will be the researchable archives produced by the Appalachian Barn Alliance.

"We were keeping our fingers crossed for this one," said Barn Alliance President Sandy Stevenson. "It recognizes our early efforts and gives us the opportunity to expand on those efforts."

The grant was awarded by the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation, which provides financial support to groups that promote historic preservation in North Carolina. The grant funds will enable the Alliance to continue its documentation of local barns. Taylor Barnhill was hired to survey the historic barns in the county and has completed research on fourteen barns in the Beech Glen Township. His research will be provided to the Liston B. Ramsey Archive at Mars Hill University and will also be available on the Alliance's website (appalachianbarns.org). Barnhill is now working on a representative barn from each of the county's eleven townships and will be able to move on to other worthy barns in each township.

"Another benefit of the grant is that, even as a relatively new organization, it recognizes that we have been effective in our early efforts," Sandy said. "It marks us as a legitimate force in North Carolina's historic preservation. Diane did a great job in making it happen."

Sandy was referring to Diane C. Van Helden, the Barn Alliance treasurer and local attorney. The Alliance was incorporated as a NC non-profit in September of 2012. It took almost a year to be accorded the Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. The tax-exempt designation was pivotal in receiving the grant, and it allows the Barn Alliance to pursue further foundation financing. The 501(c)(3) will also enhance local fund-raising, giving supporters the opportunity to list contributions as deductible items on their income tax returns.

Even before the tax-exemption was approved, the Board was working on the application to the Covington Foundation, summarizing the Alliance goals and achievements in its early efforts. The Alliance plans to use most of the grant money to pursue a strategy that has already begun. "We want to move ahead with more of our Historic Barn Tour brochures," Sandy said. "The response to our first one has been wonderful, and we want to get more of them out as soon as possible." (For more on the Barn Tour brochures, see related story.)

A Letter from Our President

For the inaugural issue of our newsletter, we have much to celebrate. It is a tribute to the commitment of the residents of Madison County in the effort to preserve our rural heritage that we have come so far and accomplished so much in just a little over one year. After meeting with community members for several months, the Appalachian Barn Alliance was officially formed in August of 2012 and set out on its goal to "Remember the Barns and Farms of Madison County's Heritage." The Board has grown from the initial five to a current number of eight. And, of course, membership and business supporters grew over the year. When we had our Annual Meeting of the membership in October, we were able to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year. Raising funds

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A Letter from our President *continued*

through two benefit concerts and a yard sale, donations, business supporters, memberships, and grants from the Tourism Development Authority and the Chamber of Commerce, we were able to hire a Lead Researcher—Taylor Barnhill—who completed “step #1.”

Taylor documented the historic barns of the township of Beech Glen and created a self-guided driving tour of nine of those barns. We are now on our way to our goal of documenting the historically significant barns of the other ten townships as we raise the money to do so. The best news of the year is that (at the beginning of November) we were awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation to finance this effort. Our effort is recognized as unique in the state of North Carolina and the excitement continues to grow. We will build on that excitement and in the coming months will pursue other fundraising opportunities and other grants in line with our mission. Please continue your support and spread the word about what Appalachian Barn Alliance is doing to help preserve the rural heritage of our county.

Sandy Stevenson, President, Appalachian Barn Alliance



A few of the barns whose stories have appeared in the News-Record & Sentinel: the Carter & Annis Metcalf barn; the Roberts barn; the Ramsey barn; the Wild barn

First Barn Tour Brochure Explores Beech Glen Barns

Among the achievements of the Barn Alliance in its first year is the publication of its initial Historic Barn Tour brochure, featuring nine significant barns in the Beech Glen area. Eleven more brochures will follow, featuring the barns of each individual township and an overall county tour.

The brochures will feature photographs of each barn as well as a short description explaining its significance and a map that indicates the location of the barns.

The Barn Alliance decided on the brochures as one of its earliest ventures based on a survey conducted by the State Department of Tourism. Barn Alliance President Sandy Stevenson explains: “The survey revealed that the Number One reason tourists visit the mountains of Western North Carolina is to enjoy the rural scenery. We realized we could help tourists enjoy that scenery by guiding them to the most photogenic man-made element of that scenery: our barns.”

Architect Taylor Barnhill has researched the barns to choose the ones featured in the brochures. He cites several criteria, including, first and foremost, “It must be safe. It must be located in a place where a driver can pull off the road without creating a traffic hazard. We’ll also consider a barn’s age. The older the better. And we certainly want to feature older barns that might be at risk. We look at the design. Does it have any unique features? And is there any documentation or oral history that reveals the barn as part of the agricultural heritage of Madison County?”

Taylor is currently working on the second brochure in the series. This one, expected by next spring, will offer an overview of the historic barns countywide. It will feature as many as a dozen barns, including at least one from each of the eleven townships.

To download the Beech Glen Barn Tour Brochure, please go to www.appalachianbarns.org and click on the Our Barns tab

Our Business Sponsors include: **Mars Hill University** **Buffalo Ridge Beef** **Carolina Farm Credit** **The News-Record and Sentinel** **Bucky Parker - Woodworker** **RIVERDANCE** **FIDDLESTIX** **Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival** **MADISON COUNTY TDA** **Mountain Meadows** **Kraft-Made Gift Baskets** **Metco Tire & Auto Service**

Barns Look Great in ABA Historic Barns Photo Contest

The second annual Barn Alliance photo contest produced a gallery of inviting images representing barns from Mars Hill to Shelton Laurel. It also produced a windfall of cash prizes for the winners.

The judges, Connie Toops, Sarah Harnden and Dale Herman, agreed that it was hard to choose the winners among so many beautiful entries. They said the photography was excellent, and of course the barns provide a wonderful subject.

Regina Fowler won the \$100 prize in the adult category for a shot of a barn on Hazel Brook Lane in Mars Hill with a rainbow streaming overhead. Regina attributed the shot to pure luck. "I was in the right place at the right time."

Aren Windham took first prize in the teen category with his photo of a barn on Big Pine Road in Marshall. And the top youth award went to Brianna Mace for a picture of her family's barn on Gardner Road in Mars Hill.

"We began the photo contest last year to illustrate just how important and attractive the barns are in Madison County," said Barn Alliance President Sandy Stevenson. "And it has lived up to our greatest hopes. We will certainly continue the contest and we invite anyone with a camera and a desire to take a pretty picture to enter next year."



From upper right: the First Place Adult photo by Regina Fowler; the First Place Youth Photo by Brianna Mace; the First Place Youth photo by Aren Winham; all the winners at the ceremony where the prizes were awarded.

A Busy Agenda --With More on Tap in 2014

The Appalachian Barn Alliance wasted no time getting down to business. Fifteen Madison County residents interested in preserving the agricultural heritage of rural Appalachia got together for an informal meeting in January, 2012. A few months later, they decided to organize a non-profit organization, choose a name, elect a board of directors, and raise some money to support the documentation of historic barns in Madison County.

Events quickly snowballed into a concert featuring Josh Goforth and Laura Boosinger, press notices in the Sentinel and the Laurel of Asheville, a springtime yard sale that raised \$1000, a concert by Balsam Range, one-on-one fund raising efforts with both the business community and private citizens of Madison County, appearances at community events, such as the Bascom Lamar Festival at Mars Hill University and Art on the Island in Marshall, publication of the first Historic Barns Tour brochure -- and finally the efforts to win designation as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, and award of a Marion Stedman Covington historic preservation grant.

More events, more fund-raising, more venues to promote the historic and photographic significance of the thousands of barns in Madison County will be coming. Watch for announcements of upcoming events, and join us to protect our past as we move toward the future.



Barn Memories ...

Hanging from my arms on tier poles and “skinning the cat”, tunneling under towers of hay bales, searching for well-hidden chicken nests, finding sleepy kittens freshly washed by their mom and snuggling them to my nose to inhale that one-of-a-kind smell of newly washed kitten and dry orchard grass, those are the memories which come to mind when I think of our old barn.

-Nancy Anders, Beech Glen



She remembers the years of growing up there and her memories of the barn are both about chores and about fun. She and her three brothers and one sister, like all farm family children, had to begin and end their day with chores—before and after school. Jo Ann’s best memories of the barn were the fun she and her siblings had on weekends when their “city” cousins from Knoxville visited. They would play in the barn, but her dad didn’t like it since he kept the barn as clean as their house!

-JoAnn Ramsey, Revere

Send us your barn memories at info@appalachianbarns.org



**APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE
P. O. BOX 1441
MARS HILL, NC 28754**

Do you appreciate the barns in Madison County? If so, please join us now.

I want to become a member: \$ 10 student \$20 individual \$ 30 family

I want to be a Supporter: \$ 100 Business; \$ 100 Gold Individual

I want to volunteer: Name and email address: _____

I have a barn that you need to document: _____

Please send to: **ABA, P. O. Box 1441, Mars Hill, NC 28754**