

# Barn Lights

*Remembering the barns and farms of Madison County's heritage*

Quarterly Newsletter

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## *Barn Day Tickets*

## *Going Fast!!*

The response has been outstanding! Only 30 tickets are left for Madison County Barn Day on Sept. 13. It will begin with a bus tour of several significant and photogenic barns in the county. The tour will be narrated by Taylor Barnhill, and participants will have the opportunity to take pictures, ask questions and enjoy a close-up look at these rural icons. The tour will end at the Mars Hill party barn owned by Reese & Lynn Steen, a bright red structure sitting against a long-range, picturesque background of Appalachian peaks. Participants will enjoy a cocktail hour and a country barbecue dinner, followed by a live auction featuring works by some of Madison County's most acclaimed artists: a painting of the party barn and surrounding mountains by popular watercolor artist Polly Gott (inset, above), pottery pieces by Jim and Shirl Parmentier and Alex Matisse, a gourd lamp by Robin Carter, and a wood sculpture by Dennis Ruane. Following the auction, the world-champion Bailey Mountain Cloggers of Mars Hill University will perform -- and conduct a clogging and square-dancing class for any interested participants. "We have tried to include something for everyone in what we hope will become our signature annual event," says Alliance Chair Sandy Stevenson. "With the barn tour, the dinner, the auction and entertainment, we think we will have a unique event that includes all the best of our mountain culture."

Advance reservations are \$35 per person, \$60 per couple; at the door, the price will be \$45 per person, \$70 per couple. Although, the Alliance offers a word of caution: Order your tickets NOW! At the rate of early reservations, the event is likely to be sold out. For reservations, call (828) 380-9146.

## Photo Contest Deadline Nears

The deadline is getting closer for the third annual Historic Barns photo contest sponsored by the Madison County Tourism Development Association for the Appalachian Barn Alliance.

Check your photo files for those great barn pictures you took this summer, and send them into the Barn Alliance before Sept. 22--the rules are explained both on our website and in the Madison County Fair booklet. Entries will be displayed at the Madison County Fair, and cash prizes will be awarded at a ceremony in October.

The contest is divided into two categories: Youth (4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and adult. Prizes in each division are \$100 for first place, \$75 for second and \$50 for third.

"We have been really pleased with both the turnout and the quality of the photos in the first two years of this contest," said Alliance President Sandy Stevenson. "We're looking forward to a contest that's both bigger and better this year."

"We began the photo contest two years ago to illustrate just how important and attractive the barns are in Madison County," Sandy said. "And it has lived up to our greatest hopes. We invite anyone with a camera and a desire to take a pretty picture to enter."

## Spring Creek Barn Tour Coming Soon

The third brochure in the Barn Alliance series of driving tours is set for release by the end of September. This latest installment includes as many as 10 historically significant barns in the Spring Creek, Bluff and Meadow Fork communities.

The chosen barns include some rare 19<sup>th</sup> Century examples, as Taylor Barnhill explains in the introduction to the brochure.

"While very few barns of the 1800's have survived, an important exception is the now rare, flue-cured tobacco barn. Mountain subsistence farming changed dramatically when flue-cured tobacco was introduced in 1870. The first commercial cash crop in the mountains, it was called flue-cured because it required a heated barn built of logs sealed with mud chinking. Several of these very old log barns are visible from the road, retrofitted later for hanging burley tobacco and other uses."

The driving tours are a continuing Barn Alliance project dedicated to increasing public recognition of the integral role barns have played in the development of Madison County. Compiled and annotated by architect Taylor Barnhill, the series will eventually include 11 brochures, each containing a picture and description of the barns and a map pointing out their locations.



## Barn Memories...

(Standing in the top level and looking at the rafters), "I can remember as a kid—climbing up there and jumping down into the hay. I was up there many, many times."

Carson King of the family barn in Shelton Laurel

# Photo Workshop

Renowned photographer Don McGowan will conduct one of his popular photo workshops exclusively for the Barn Alliance in November. Don's professional workshops are highly regarded by professional and experienced amateur photographers. They draw participants from across the country.

He has become a supporter of the Barn Alliance, and offered to conduct a weekend workshop for local residents who have an interest in photography.

The workshop will take place on the weekend of Nov. 14 - 16. It will begin on Friday evening with an introductory session and an opening instructional program. On Saturday, the group will leave at 8 a.m. to photograph barns in Beech Glen, Grapevine and Laurel. Taylor Barnhill, the Barn Alliance's resident history buff, will accompany the group to the pre-selected barns and will give a history of each of the barns. Don McGowan will offer the photographers individual coaching and professional tips about how to get the best shot in outdoor surroundings. On Sunday afternoon, the weekend will conclude with another instructional program and a critique of participants' images.

The Barn Alliance is grateful to Don for donating his time and talents to this unique project. Thanks to his generosity the Alliance is able to offer the entire weekend workshop for a fee of \$150. And for members of the Alliance who have paid their \$25 dues for 2014, the fee will be reduced to \$125.

In order to promote interest in photographing the barns of Madison County, the Alliance will offer a limited number of partial scholarships. For registration and scholarship information, call 828-380-9146.

To assure that each participant can receive ample personal instruction, Don wants to limit the event to 10 participants. So if you're interested in taking better pictures and having a good time while you learn, don't hesitate. It promises to be a rewarding weekend.

## From our President...

I know that it's not even near Thanksgiving season but it is the Appalachian Barn Alliance's "busy season." And so, when I have a minute to stop and reflect, I think about how grateful our organization is for the help we have received from the many people who contribute to our growing success. First, of course, are those of you who have supported us with your donations and time. In applying for grants, I feel confident that we rank up there with the bigger organizations because of that support. Also, there are the property owners who are so open and welcoming to Taylor Barnhill as he gathers the information that forms the heart of our mission. Taylor shared with the board members that he was given a pint jar of blackberry jam—an act that you would think should come from us, not from those he visits! We are also grateful for the support of musicians Laura Boosinger and Joe Penland for their time in making our benefit concert such a success. And, the gratitude we feel extends beyond the boundaries of Madison County as we have been blessed by two artists: A renowned photographer who lives in the Asheville area—Don McGowan—has "fallen in love" with our project and contributed his time to hold a benefit photo workshop; and an architect and sketch artist who lives in Brevard—Richard Caldwell—has been a loyal supporter since reading an article about our organization in The Laurel of Asheville. Richard has contributed barn sketches that we can auction and that we hope to use to create greeting and note cards. It is so wonderful to be part of an organization in which we feel blessed with the support provided instead of overwhelmed with the tasks involved.



## Concert Celebrates Heritage

The August 24 Joe Penland & Laura Boosinger concert was the perfect mix of those who value Madison County's heritage. Laura told the story of how Bascom Lamar Lunsford traveled around collecting the songs of our musical heritage. Joe told how he learned those songs as a young boy so that they would not be lost. And, Joe said it best when he told the audience that "we all thought that our farms would be with us forever and the Barn Alliance is working to save those memories." That, in a nutshell, is what our mission is—to preserve our agricultural heritage in the same way the musical heritage has been preserved by those who care about its importance to future generations.

Only two years ago, we stood on that same stage—that time with Laura and Josh Goforth—explaining the idea we had to "preserve" our agricultural heritage. This time, we had a description and a display of our accomplishments in doing just that. We had almost double the number of audience members who helped in celebrating the grand reopening of the Ebbs Chapel Performing Arts Center and helped raise money for the Appalachian Barn Alliance to continue its mission. The doors of the historic rock school building opened to show off the auditorium which provided a great venue for a performance. And, of course, the two hours were filled with stories and beautiful ballads by two wonderful performers who are treasured by the people of Madison County. Our thanks to Laura Boosinger, Joe Penland, and Cathy Arrowood for the contribution of their time. A perfect Sunday afternoon for all.



### Annual Meeting: Good Time, Good News

Mark the date, November 2, for the annual meeting of the Appalachian Barn Alliance. Highlights will include a brief report on the busy and successful activities of the past 12 months, election of officers for the next year, a financial report and an update by Taylor Barnhill on his project to identify and detail the significant barns of Madison County.

The business part of the meeting will be brief, allowing time for socializing over snacks and liquid refreshments.

The meeting will take place at the Madison County Agricultural Extension Office beginning at 4:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you there.