

FALL 2021



BARN LIGHTS

NEWSLETTER of the Appalachian Barn Alliance

A Year of Success

Annual Meeting & You're Invited

The annual meeting of the Barn Alliance will take place at **10 a.m. Nov. 9** at Bear River Lodge near the intersection of Hwy. 25/70 and Hwy. 208, 10 minutes from the center of Hot Springs.

Everyone is invited. Coffee, juice, pastries and fruit will be served.

A recap of the year will include postponements brought on by the delta variant, of course, but also success stories. A Zoom session will be available for those who ask to be connected virtually.

Our greatest accomplishment, of which we are most proud, has been has been to solidify our relationship with the town of Mars Hill to stabilize and maintain the barns at The Smith Farm Heritage Farmstead at the Bailey Mountain Preserve. In an arrangement with the town, the lower eight acres of the 86.71-acre Smith family tract will be developed and supported by our efforts, and the outcome will be a showcase for school children and the public.

Among our successes:

* Dismantling and securing for future reconstruction the distinctive Floyd Wallin barn, built between 1890 and 1910 in Shelton Laurel. Donated by Larry and Genevieve Burda, the barn had 36-foot framing logs and required 250 man hours of volunteer time to disassemble, load, transport and store. We call this crew "the heavy lifters."

* Creating an hour-long video of researcher Taylor Barnhill at the four barns of the Anderson family homestead in Beech Glen, which span two centuries. He explains how architecture changed with the economy and the availability of building materials, plus how farmers adapted their techniques to the times. Now available on the ABA YouTube channel.

* Launching "Barn Memories," three-minute photograph & audio recordings by Madison County residents who grew up on farms and featuring historic photographs of their homeplaces, livestock, hay rakes, sleds, scythes and spring houses.



Photograph of young Don and Roy Waldroup in the 1940s in Spring Creek from our "Barn Memories" recording series.

Longtime quilt collector wins October raffle



Ann Thomason of Mars Hill, won the quilt raffle Oct. 2, was "thrilled to win," especially since she focuses on collecting quilts with red in them.

The Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival was canceled Oct. 2, but we held our annual quilt raffle at 3 p.m. that afternoon.

Susan Christian, a longtime Barn Alliance supporter, had donated a 66"x66" handmade wall hanging, with a slit for a rod, for the raffle and dubbed it "Beautiful Bright Yellows and Reds."

That worked like magic for the winner, Ann Thomason, a longtime quilt collector in Mars Hill. For years, she has concentrated on obtaining quilts in reds!

She and her husband, Rick, have also have shared their barn, the Jacob Tilson structure from the late 1800s, with yearly Photo Workshop participants. (Situated at 1541 Silvers Mill Road, it's one of eight barns featured in the Barn Alliance's free brochures on a self-guided driving tour of distinctive Mars Hill barns.)

Why Preserve That Old Barn?

Is your grandparents' barn falling down?

*Excerpted from an article by Jennifer Ryall,
Architectural Historian, Kentucky Heritage Council*

It seems like an odd question, but, the truth is, fewer people than ever are likely to know the answer. More people are moving away from their 'home place'. As a result, we've grown generally more disconnected from our places and more comfortable adopting places created for us, by other people's families.



The Fidel and Laura Baker barn is located in the Walnut community. Its monitor style architecture is unique to Madison County. The small triangular strips of wood in the V-grooves of the metal roofing are very unusual. This and other detail adds credence to the speculation that this style barn was built from a set of mail-order barn plans. This remains a working barn and in good condition. See the Barns Database on our website for more about this and other barns. *ABA photo*

This disconnect has made it increasingly difficult to reach people about why they should care about the places their families came from, whether those buildings are historic or not. They don't just hold the stories of our county - they're our stories and they're being lost daily.

Families are leaving their rural communities because schools have been consolidated and stores have moved near the interstates. Grandpa's barn is falling because the grandkids have moved away and aren't around to see the plight of the small towns that made us who we are - if we could even identify them anymore.

Sadly, we are losing barns at such a high rate that many people reach for salvaging building materials as an easy solution; salvage efforts are not preservation and should be treated only as the last resort, not the first. Become aware. Understand what made us who we are. Make rural buildings part of our future, strengthen our communities, and keep our family's stories alive and tangible.

YOU can help!
call to Donate 828-380-9146
or Visit our website

APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE:

The Southern Appalachian style barn is an iconic symbol of the ingenuity of those hard-working landowners who carved out their existence in this rugged landscape.

Our Mission is to preserve the rural heritage of Madison County and surrounding areas through the documentation of the historical barn building traditions and the barns they represent.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US:

This newsletter is published four times a year and is available at the Madison County Visitors Centers and libraries in each of our 3 towns.

Sign up for our monthly newsletter:

info@appalachianbarns.org

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APPALACHIANBARN.ORG

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The Appalachian Barn Alliance
PO Box 1441 - Mars Hill, NC 28754
(828) 380-9146

GOT A STORY IDEA OR COMMENT?

info@appalachianbarns.org
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Moving Forward 2021

Notes from Sandy

After the COVID wipeout of 2020, we were dreaming of reconnecting with everyone this year, face to face. But the delta variant had other ideas, which forced us to cancel Barn Day and our Art Gala, our most successful fundraising efforts of the year.

Nevertheless, we've been busy. Our most dramatic milestone has been solidifying a working relationship with the town of Mars Hill to assist in the creation of the Smith Farm Heritage Farmstead.

The site occupies the lower eight acres, owned by the town, of the 86.71-acre Smith family expanse. It sits at the base of the Bailey Mountain Preserve.



To develop and support the endeavor, the Barn Alliance this year has been successful in being awarded five — F-I-V-E! — prestigious grants. They are:

- * \$12,000 from the Madison County Tourist Development Authority to create a parking lot and upgrade the driveway.
- * \$5,000 from the Richard J. Reynolds III and Marie M. Reynolds Foundation to help stabilize three barns on the property that were built between 1930 and 1950.
- * \$5,000, as well, from the Marion Stedman Covington Foundation, also to help stabilize the barns.
- * \$1,735 from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to create descriptive signage for each of the barns.
- * \$1,080 from the Madison County Community Foundation to build kiosks to hold the signs.

We'll unveil the signs at 11 a.m. Oct. 29. Everyone is invited!

Delivering remarks will be by **Nathan Bennett**, town manager Mars Hill;

Lee Hoffman, chair of the R. L. Hoffman Foundation, instrumental in raising money and acquiring a grant for the town to purchase the land on the south side of Bailey Mountain;

Ryan Bell, chairman of the Friends of Bailey Mountain;

Mike Foster, treasurer of the Barn Alliance who conducted deed research on the property;

Taylor Barnhill, Barn Alliance researcher who will lead tours of the barns; and **Ross Young**, director of the NC Cooperative Extension office in Marshall, who first hatched the idea of creating a Barn Alliance to document distinctive structures across Madison County.

Reserve the date and join us for this step forward in realizing a long-nurtured dream.



Sandy Stevenson
-President

Found On our Website

in the **MEDIA & NEWSLETTERS** tab are archived articles about our Madison County, NC barns which were published in regional magazines and newspapers.

Scattered throughout Madison County are historic barns which reveal the struggle of the farmers whose life was defined by their crops and livestock. Each has a different story to tell. Many of those stories appeared in the Madison County newspaper, *The News Record and Sentinel*, in a series which highlighted a local barn. The owners and family descendants provided the details revealing not only facts about use and construction but also about the ancestors who built and used these barns.

You can also find recent articles which have appeared in the *Asheville Citizen Times*, *Mountain Xpress* as well as *The Laurel of Asheville*, and the *Our State* magazines just to name a few.

The Orderliness of Chaos

photo by
Don McGowan



The tack room in one of James Roberts flue-cured tobacco barns. Just inside his main barn, this is the epitome of what it means to be a thoughtful agricultural steward. It was as if order had taken the chaos of a thousand things and transformed it into the simplicity of a well-kept room.

Don McGowan website - www.earthsongphotography.com

The Old Barn "to be preserved, and to be used as an educational tool for people to know what we are all about around here, and where we came from. That's what this barn is to me, a testament of where I came from." - Elaine Ray Thomas

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