

# HOOSIER BARN CHRONICLE

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Summer, 2019

## 6th Annual IBF Barn Tour Comes to LaPorte and Porter Counties in Northwest Indiana

by Carolyn Meyer Rahe

“This barn’s like an old sailing ship. It squeaks and moans when the wind blows, but it never yields,” Roy Burcham says of his 1905 barn. On September 28th Roy and his wife Ruth, along with other barn owners and this preservation-minded community, will welcome visitors to enjoy a first-hand look inside some of the county’s historic landmarks.

Indiana Barn Foundation will host its sixth annual barn tour on September 28th from 10am to 4pm Central Time in LaPorte and Porter Counties. Advance tickets are available now on our website at [www.indianabarns.org/](http://www.indianabarns.org/) events.

Each year hundreds of visitors enjoy a close-up look at some of Indiana’s most majestic barns, and have the opportunity to meet the owners and caretakers of their beloved barns. The tours offer the opportunity to ask questions, to learn, and even to photograph these iconic structures.

Barn tours support IBF’s mission of saving Indiana’s heritage barns in a number of ways. The barn tours are typically IBF’s only annual fundraisers, and for a small price of just \$10 per person, we are able to raise money to help fund the barn grants that are in great demand. Seeing what others have done to save their barns also inspires people to value their own barns and to make the leap to rehab, rather than tear down their endangered barns.

This year’s tour will take you on a self-guided, driving tour with visits to five barns, as well as other



*LaPorte County Farm Barn graces the skyline of the town of LaPorte*

points of interest along the way. The tour headquarters and registration will be at the LaPorte County Historical Society Museum, where maps with driving directions will be provided, and IBF merchandise available. From the museum parking lot, a path leads to an observation area where the famous nine-sided Door Prairie Barn can be viewed.

The next stop on the tour is the recently-restored 1855 Dinwiddie barn in the town of LaPorte, where two other turn-of-the-century outbuildings are also being renovated by owners Michael and Debbie Ault. Here you will see the work that the renowned timber framers of Trillium Dell have completed on the barn.

Next on the tour, the LaPorte County Farm Dairy Barn is a landmark that graces the skyline of LaPorte as visitors enter the

city on State Rd. 2. Its restoration was completed in 2018 through the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers. The barn is part of the LaPorte County ‘Poor Farm’ that was established in 1886. Tractor enthusiasts may also visit the Rumely Allis-Chalmers LaPorte Heritage Center which is on the north side of SR 2.

The third stop on the route is the Forrester Farm, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a beautiful farmstead established in 1856, built by Irish immigrant James Forrester and restored by current owners Mark Kurth

*continued on page 2*

## **Barn Tour** *(continued from page 1)*

and Shelby Moravec.

On the route to our two Porter county barns, be sure to stop at Garwood Orchards, Indiana's largest orchard, for a chance to stretch your legs and visit their farm store with locally grown produce, a bakery and refreshing treats. Thank you Garwood Orchards for sponsoring our barn tour!

The historic 1872 Carmel Church, also en route to the next barn, will also be staffed by volunteers to welcome barn tour participants.

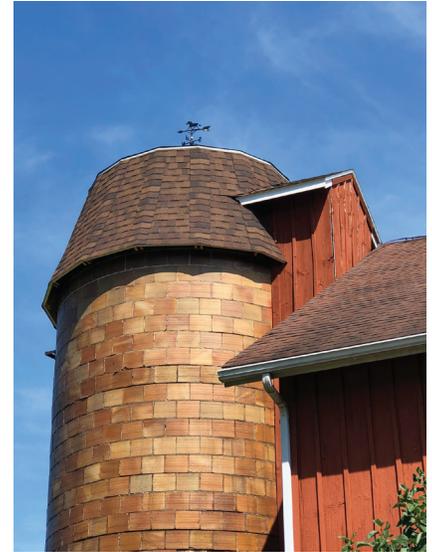
The last two barns are a short drive away in Chesterton, Porter County. Here you will visit a recipient of one of IBF's 2019 barn grants, and learn about the Carlsons' plans to restore their barn at Ledgemere Farm.

The Kosmatka Barn, designated as one of Indiana's top Bicentennial Barns, is beautifully maintained by the Burchams.

Perhaps Roy Burcham best sums up the feelings that he and the other barn owners have about the barns in their care. "I never dreamed anything like this would happen. Every day I'd go to work and decide in my mind what I wanted to do that day. I had a lot of time to think. When I got home all I had to do was put my work

clothes on and get busy. It's not work when you enjoy it. I still love to look at that barn every single day."

Reserve your spot now to visit these five historic LaPorte & Porter County Barns as well as four other points of interest along the route. The event will be held rain or shine, September 28 from 10am to 4pm Central Time, starting at the LaPorte County Historical Society Museum. Tickets may be purchased online at [www.indianabarns.org/events](http://www.indianabarns.org/events) or by mailing \$10 per adult age 14 and older to IBF, PO Box 1946, Elkhart, IN 46516 with BARN TOUR in the memo. Call Carolyn Rahe at 574-209-1443, Gwen Gutwein at 260-437-7800, or email [info@indianabarns.org](mailto:info@indianabarns.org) for more information.



*Glazed tile block silo of the Kosmatka Barn*



*The Forrester Farm, listed on the National Register of Historic Places*

## **LaPorte/Porter County Barn Tour - September 28, 2019**

RAIN OR SHINE

10:00 - 4:00 CENTRAL TIME

Registration [www.indianabarns.org/events](http://www.indianabarns.org/events)

\$10/person for adults 14 and over

Call 574-209-1443 or 260-437-7800 with questions

## **Special Thanks to our Barn Tour Sponsors**



# Grant Recipients

by *Duncan Campbell*

The Indiana Barn Foundation officially recognized the 2019 Mauri Williamson Barn Preservation Grant Fund recipients at its annual meeting in July. The Foundation annually awards two matching grants for \$2500 each, obligating the recipients to match that amount from their own funds, funds from another source, or in-kind labor. This year, however, IBF announced grant awards for three recipients, since one applicant did not request funding for the full \$2500 available. He only asked for the \$1000 needed to complete his barn repairs.

Anna Chambliss received a grant for \$2500, to continue with repairs on her family's barn in Scottsburg, Indiana. Jessica House, of Ridgeville, whose barn is located in Economy, Indiana, received a grant for \$1500, and Brian Carlson, from Ft. Wayne, (barn is in Chesterton), received \$1000.

Anna Chambliss' family moved to the farm where she lives when she was six, and she believes that the previous owner constructed the barn around 1936 for the purpose of curing and storing tobacco. Anna's son currently farms the property, and together they have been working in recent years to put the barn back in use.

The barn is transverse in style, with the primary openings on the gable end, a style often referred to as a Midwestern Barn, or Midwestern Three Portal Barn. Although constructed to assist with tobacco production, it is not a tobacco barn per se. Tobacco barns are two stories tall, long and rectangular in plan, and display an assortment of ventilation devices on the long elevations necessary for the curing of tobacco.

In order to return her barn to farm use, Anna and her son took the sagging and leaning barn and pulled the walls back together to straighten them. They also jacked up one side of the barn and completed foundation and siding repairs. A new floor was installed in the room that had been used to strip tobacco, and broken windows and a door were replaced. The grant application requested funds necessary to replace a failing roof that was pierced with countless holes, and once this work, estimated at just under \$5000, is completed Anna and her son's barn will be ready for many more years of service.

The Barn Foundation's second grant recipient, Jessica House, has returned to the family farm in recent years to not only help her parents with the chores, but to reestablish her grandfather's farm as a permanent home for herself. Together with her partner, Seth, Jessica purchased Grandpa's 7.5 acres from an uncle. The purchase included a 19th century two-story farmhouse, a mobile home, a garage that was once a carriage house, a pond, and a large three-story bank barn. They have since undertaken major renovations to the mobile home, the house, and the property, and established a camping business around the pond. Seth makes his living doing electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work, which has been indispensable to the makeover.

Remarkably, Jessica tells us that most of this work has been accomplished in the last 20 months! Now they have aspirations to renovate the milking barn, which is a

bank barn in the English style, with a loft above. The barn has seen additions over the years, and like most barns, has suffered the wear and tear of work and weather. Her family used the barn for livestock and storage, but it was previously used as a milking facility. The concrete block milk house has partially caved in, and earlier alterations are also failing; much of the main entry has rotted away, and the support system has seen better days. Although the barn still stands tall, there are lots of areas that need attention, and Jessica and Seth are up to the task.

IBF was impressed by Jessica's enthusiasm and can-do attitude: In her words, "We may not be professional carpenters or possess historical preservation knowledge, but we do possess the drive to revitalize this property so it may live to see another 100 years." If the past 20 months is any indication, Jessica's barn is about to get a facelift.

Our third grant recipient is Brian Carlson, who has also been hard at work on his barn in Chesterton. Brian applied for last year's grant round as well; so his perseverance paid off with his second try this year. The Carlson barn is part of the infrastructure of Ledgemere Farm, which is beautifully described in a history narrated by David Carlson, who lived on the property from 1906 until 2001, and typed by Mabel Carlson, who lived there from 1934 to 2009.

The 30' by 50' bank barn was constructed in 1916 during the tenure of David Carlson. The 12' long board and batten siding is notable, and the large hayloft is wrapped in a gambrel roof. Brian and his family have been steadily making repairs to the barn's foundation as well as other areas, and are now planning to complete the weatherproofing and animal proofing by finishing up work on the window and door openings. In the effort to prevent water infiltration—crucial to all barn preservation—Brian's application requested just the \$1000 it would take to replace two windows, a large door, and two smaller entry doors, as well as significant siding and batten replacement to further seal out the weather.

The Foundation's Grant Committee felt it was important this year to support applicants who had already made significant progress toward rehabilitating their barns by adding that small additional money that could help them complete their projects. This was certainly the example set by Anna and Brian. And although Jessica is only beginning to attack her barn, her enthusiasm for her family's farm legacy, as well as her capacity to bring her grandfather's farm back to life persuaded the committee to at least provide her with some incentive funds to begin the barn work.

IBF received 19 applications this year, about the same as last year, and our hope is to raise enough money in the future to fund more than two or three projects a year, and hopefully to provide more money per project. In the last decade or so we have lost nearly 30% of our state's barns, which is much better than the national toll of 60%, but still not good enough. That is the challenge we face. Join us.

# IBF's 2019 Barn Forum and Annual Meeting

by Danielle Bachant-Bell

With a name change to reflect our always informative and inspiring format, this year the IBF Annual Meeting became the 'Forum' and Annual Meeting and ventured to Oakwood Retreat Center on a farm near Selma in Delaware County. Despite the intense heat the weekend of July 20th, participants enjoyed learning about barn preservation and Practical Geometry amid good food and fellowship.

This year a pre-meeting dinner and workshop on Friday evening kicked off the event. Taught by our keynote speaker, architect Jane Griswold Radocchia from Bennington, Vermont, the workshop provided participants with hands-on instruction in the history and uses of the traditional building tool of Practical Geometry. Of particular note is Ms. Radocchia's knowledge and working understanding of the daisy wheel

his engaging power point presentation on a repair and reuse strategy that most barn owners can relate to—and accomplish—using his own barn as the example. Through detailed before, during, and after photographs and straight-forward how-to explanation, barn owners were able to see how they too can accomplish their own barn rehabilitation project. And add solar panels as a crowning touch!

Taking the floor again, Duncan Campbell introduced the 2019 Mauri L. Williamson Barn Preservation Grant recipients. Thrillingly, one of the recipients immediately volunteered to be part of this year's upcoming barn tour. (See related articles.)

The business of the IBF annual meeting followed including the election of new board members. New to the board are Cory Harris, Dean Jackson, Jill McDevitt, D. Michael Thompson, and Laura Weston. Re-elected for a three-year term are Duncan Campbell, Mac Williams, and Kent Yeager.

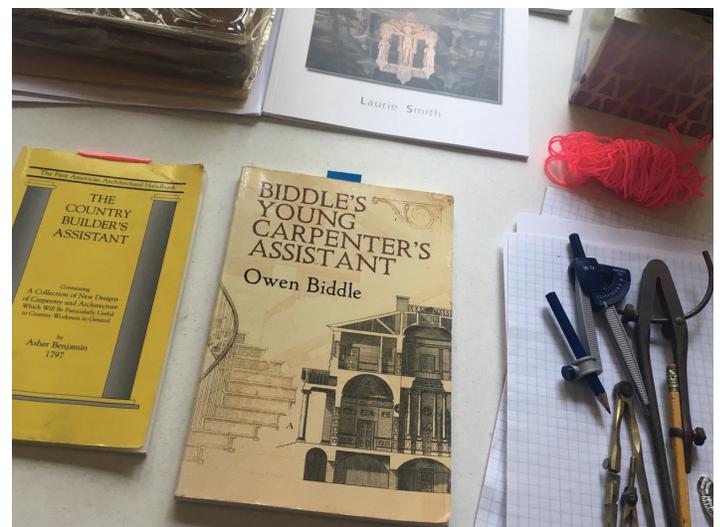
After a delicious lunch of locally sourced ingredients, Ms. Radocchia rounded out the day with her keynote presentation "Practical Geometry: Designing and Framing Barns with Geometry Before 1900." Funding for the talk was provided by the Cornelius O'Brien Lecture Series through the National Council on Public History.



which was used extensively by barn builders and craftspeople to determine basic geometry of traditional construction.

On Saturday, Janet Ayres, IBF president, helped set the tone for the day of fellowship and fun with around-the-room introductions followed by a brief welcome by Ted Blodgett, executive director of Oakwood Retreat Center.

The microphone was then turned over to IBF board member, Duncan Campbell, who shared



# Five New Members Bring Additional Talents to IBF Board

*by Janet Ayres, past president*

Gwen Gutwein served as Chair of the Nominating Committee and did a fabulous job in recruiting five new board members who will bring additional experiences and talents to the board. They were elected at the annual meeting in July.

Cory Harris is a Public Affairs Manager for the Indiana Soybean Alliance and is well networked with the agricultural community. Cory is from Randolph County.

Dean Jackson from Fort Wayne has years of experience in print, broadcast, and Internet media reporting and newsgathering.

Jill McDevitt Is a project manager in the Cultural Resources Department of RESCOM

Environmental Corporation. Her expertise covers historic properties. Jill lives in Columbia City.

D. Michael Thompson is an Associate Director of Development at Indiana University-Kelley School of Business and lives in Indianapolis.

Laura Weston is an Administrator and Office Manager for ARCH, an organization focused on architectural preservation in Fort Wayne.

Re-elected to the board for another three-year term were Duncan Campbell, Kent Yeager and Mac Williams.

The board welcomes its new members and looks forward to moving in new directions.

## New IBF Leadership

The IBF board of directors met on August 17 in Indianapolis. One item of business was the election of officers. Nominating Chair Gwen Gutwein put forth a slate of officers. Kent Yeager was elected president; Janet Ayres, vice president; Tommy Kleckner, secretary; and Tim Sheets, treasurer.

## Letter from the President

*by Kent Yeager*

Greetings, I'm Kent Yeager, the new president of the Indiana Barn Foundation. I am excited to serve in this leadership role, but I must also say it is a daunting task. Any success we might have depends on help from each of you. I am so thankful that Janet Ayres, president the past two years, has agreed to be Vice President. I look forward to working with Janet and the rest of our extraordinary board as we work to help preserve historic barns in Indiana.

These classic old structures represent such an important piece of Indiana's heritage. Just a few decades ago we saw these majestic buildings standing nearly everywhere in rural Indiana. I was slow to recognize just what these barns meant to us and our heritage. I took them for granted. As many of them began to deteriorate or disappear entirely, I finally began to truly appreciate them, both for what they are and what they represent.

We are grateful for you being an IBF member. We

know you probably feel as strongly about the important task of preserving this piece of Indiana's history as those of us on the board. I want to encourage you to visit our website: [www.indianabarns.org/](http://www.indianabarns.org/) for information on how you can help with our important mission. You can take an active role by talking to people about IBF and the importance of preserving this part of our heritage. An easy but critical step is to ask others to become a member, they can do it on the website. If we all work together, we can make sure that we are not the last generation to have historic barns still standing to appreciate.



# Don't Miss Another Hoosier Barn Chronicle!

We appreciate your support of Indiana Barn Foundation, and want to remind you to renew your membership if you have not yet done so this year. IBF's quarterly newsletter comes delivered to your home as a benefit of membership. We know renewals sometimes slip our minds, so we are including past members in this important issue. We don't want you to miss learning about the changes at IBF, or our exciting Coming Events such as the LaPorte-Porter County Barn Tour to be held September 28th. If you have not yet renewed, you can do so on our website at [www.indianabarns.org/join](http://www.indianabarns.org/join) or by mail at: IBF, PO Box 1946, Elkhart, IN 46516. Memberships are just \$20 for individuals and \$30 for families.

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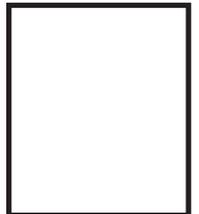
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