
The Barn Door

Friends of Minnesota Barns

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Special points of interest:

Upcoming double Coffee Chat

Sat. Oct. 18

Matson converted barn/house in Spring Valley (complete with pipe organ!)

Acton barn/house conversion

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Fall Barn Tour Time

The State Fair is past and the kids are back to school, its time for the annual FoMB Fall Barn Tour. This year the tour is in the Southeastern part of the state. We all know Minnesota is beautiful with a very diverse landscape from East to West and North to South. This area of the state is distinct with its combination of bluffs, valleys and streams and added to this is the contrasting colors the practice of contour farming in this area adds. Nestled into the countryside are many century farms with numerous old barns and buildings. This area of the state was settled early because of its access to rivers and waterways, plentiful game, rich farmland and forests.



Stone Barn
Chatfield, MN

In the process of setting this tour up we were exposed to a plentiful supply of Minnesota Nice, as we visited many farm families throughout the area. The farms selected have diverse settings and stories, I am sure you will enjoy the tour.

August was a very busy month with Mark Johnson putting on restoration workshops at the LeSueur and Scott-Carver Threshing Shows. At the Now Then Threshing Show an information booth was set up by the Bruentrups and Kutas displaying barn photos and old timber framing tools including an old

portable drill press used in making the mortise on the timbers in post and beam construction. There were a lot of people who stopped to talk and we signed up a couple of new members with five others requesting more information on the Fall Barn Tour.

Check out the FoMB website at www.mnbarns.org as more information and upcoming events are being posted.

On August 28th Minnesota Public Radio aired a story on FoMB Board Member Scott Tempel's project of dismantling his 1920s barn for

reuse using *Better Futures Minnesota*, an organization that helps men who have been incarcerated learn new job

skills. Since then it has been published in a couple of regional newspapers and on Saturday September 6th it was published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Watch for details of the October 18th Coffee Chat at Marilyn Matsons's organ barn in Spring Valley.

I hope you are able to attend one of the upcoming events.

Bill Bruentrup
Chairman FoMB

Chasing Barn Dreams, Part 2 by Mary Jo Youngbauer

When you are searching for your perfect barn, there seems to be a candidate every direction you turn. How do I pick one that I really want? They are all so amazing, and they all should be saved! I didn't really believe that I would be moving a barn on to my property any time soon, and so my search was more of a passive one rather than an in-depth one. And I let my mind wander, imagining what different barns would look like perched in my yard. I certainly did not bother worrying about any of the details. After all, it was just a dream, right?

I threw my idea out there to a few different barn owners at different times, never really thinking I would get serious consideration. And I didn't! Most often, the person I was talking to looked at me like I had absolutely lost mind. It was the same thing the first time I floated the idea to the man who came to fix my sewer when the pipe froze and broke two winters ago.

"You don't want that barn." That's what he told me, standing in my kitchen. In my mind, I'm shouting "Yes I do!" but I just let it go. However, I did slip a note in the envelope when I paid the bill. "I'm serious about the barn. Call me if you change your mind." No call. The next winter, my sewer woes continued and Mr. Sewer Man was back. This time my whole mound system was frozen, so we needed to pump each time the tanks got full. Which meant that Mr. Sewer Man (aka Mr. Barn Owner) was at my house frequently. Each time I mentioned the barn again. Just a little nudge. Not really believing it would go anywhere.

And then it happened. I was standing in my garage getting the latest frozen sewer report and he casually says, "So you really want that barn?" Uh, yeah. Calmly, I answered "Of course." "Well ok, you can have it." Holy smokes! Did that really just happen? Am I imagining this? All I could squeak out was "Are you serious?" He gave me the 'you're nuts' look and said, "Yeah. I don't know why you want it but if you really do, it's yours."

My mind exploded. So much to do! Was it even possible to move it? Was it in good shape? I've never even been inside of it, I've just driven by it a million times. I did not sleep that night at all. I was running through all the possibilities and trying, and failing, not to get my hopes up. After all, I had a long way to go before this barn was actually mine.

Thankfully, I have excellent resources as a Board member on the Friends of Minnesota Barns group. Fellow Board member Jay Schmidt met me at the barn. I needed to know the answer to the burning question: Can it be moved? As I first stepped inside "my" barn, I fell hopelessly in love with it. No longer could I hold back my excitement and hope. If this didn't work out, I would be heartbroken. I held my breath as I asked, "Well, what do you think Jay?"

He thought it could be done. Phew. Exhale. Jay suggested bringing in a house-mover that he knew to take a look at it and give me a better idea of cost. Right, could I possibly afford this? I'll need a new foundation, and the cost of moving it, and fixing it up...yikes, I just encountered a new hurdle that could make my plans crumble.

The hardest part all the way along was the waiting. Waiting for the next appointment, for the next answer. I went to the bank to see what I could finagle out of them. I went through a home equity line application and pre-approval, only to be denied at the last minute. I only bought my house two years ago; just not enough equity there. Hopes are crushed. But, like an angel, the banker says "You might qualify for a premium loan." Ok, what is that? In the end, I was approved and had a number in mind of what I could spend on this project.

Next up, Mr. Barn Mover. He makes the trip to the barn and meets with Jay and I. We do the walk through and I'm getting more and more discouraged. The barn was not made to be moved, he tells me. It is built differently, braced up after the fact and that makes it much more difficult. His words start to blur as I stop listening because I'm realizing it's not possible. On top of that, I heard from the electric company that they would charge me \$11,000 to move the lines between the barn and my house (a short 4 mile trip). That pretty much puts the kibosh on it.

The barn mover says he will shoot me a cost estimate in the next week or so. I set up a meeting with the electric company to find out exactly why they think it should cost so much. And then I anxiously wait, my dream barely flickering.

When I meet with Mr. Electric Company, it's evident that no one had actually been out to measure the height of the lines along the route. A couple of the "really important lines" are actually high enough to travel underneath. So, Mr. Electric Company agrees to give me a new estimate. When I get the numbers back from him and from the barn mover, I'm above my budget. I start listing the things I own that I really don't need anymore and could sell: snowboard, treadmill, scrapbooking stuff. As I'm discussing this with my partner Ben, he offers to help me make up the difference without having to liquidate my assets. I hate hate hate borrowing money, but I decide I may have to give in. After all, this is my barn we are talking about!

Ok, so what's next? Mr. Concrete. I don't even know what I need. Foundation? Slab? I go with what the experts suggest, a floating slab. Need to decide on a site, strip the sod off, get sand hauled in and spread, and then concrete. Sounds simple enough. However, I did not account for Mother Nature's sudden decision to rain buckets every other day. A little over a month later, I finally have a concrete slab.

And that's where we are as I write this. I expected to be able to wrap up my story in this second installment, but it's looking like I'll need a third article. In the next newsletter, I will hopefully be telling you about the perfect, absolutely non-stressful, and extremely smooth process of moving the barn itself. Keep your fingers crossed; I need all the help I can get.



*Moving a barn
(Not mine)*

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Upcoming Events

September 27-28 FoMB Fall Barn Tour

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