

Ipswich group to recycle barn

Restoration a win for environment

By Lisa Capone
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Laura Deitz, a board member of the Cuvilly Arts and Earth Center in Ipswich, calls it "the ultimate recycling project."

The center, a facility dedicated to teaching principles of environmentalism in its preschool, summer camp and organic gardening programs, plans to resurrect a 19th-century timber-frame barn on its property this summer. The 38-by-36-foot structure will house Cuvilly's farm animals, which now live in sheds scattered around the property, requiring staff to lug buckets of water and food to multiple locations. The recycled barn will have running water and a heated infirmary for sick and newborn animals.

Reusing the 1856 post-and-beam structure, which was donated by Rebecca Kilborn of Danvers on the condition that Cuvilly take it down and move it, will cost up to \$25,000 more than building a modern barn from scratch, Deitz said. But the benefits outweigh those costs, she said.

"It ties in perfectly with Cuvilly's mission to model ecological sustainability," said Deitz.

Two weeks ago, about 20 volunteers and staff from the Timber Framers Guild, a group based in Becket, spent two days measuring Kilborn's "onion barn," disassembling it, numbering about 600 pieces (so it can be reassembled properly), and loading the wood onto two flatbed trucks. The makings of the barn are expected to arrive at Cuvilly this week.

In July, about 40 timber framers will return for an old-fashioned barn-raising. In the meantime, Cuvilly staff and volunteers are raising funds to finance the \$170,000 project. Deitz said New Balance Foundation of Boston donated a \$50,000 challenge grant in November. Cuvilly still needs to raise about \$65,000, she said.

The center, founded in 1983 by Sister Patricia Rolinger of the Sisters of Notre Dame, is also registering people who want to learn timber-framing techniques by helping to raise the barn. "It's almost like a continuing education seminar" for builders, said Bart Lawrence, a Wenham architect hired by Cuvilly to oversee the



PHOTOS/WILL BEEMER OF THE TIMBER FRAMERS GUILD

Recycling a timber frame barn in Ipswich will cost up to \$25,000 more than building a new barn.

work. "What is unique about it is we are saving a timber-frame structure that is in unusually good condition and it would have been demolished," Lawrence said. "It's a piece of New England history

we're saving. It's 150 years old and it's going to last another 150 years."

Lawrence, who said some European timber frames are 600 years old, noted that the craft is ex-

periencing a resurgence in the United States.

"The businesses that do this are doing very well and have more work than they can handle," said Will Beemer, co-director of the Timber Framers Guild. "Our membership has doubled in the last five years."

Reasons for the renaissance, Beemer said, include nostalgia, "an appreciation of wood," and new techniques that make insulating post-and-beam houses more practical.

Deitz and another board member went before the Ipswich Business Association last week to ask for help feeding Beemer's crew of up to 40 volunteer timber framers, who are expected to spend at least part of the last week of July in Ipswich repairing timbers and preparing for the barn-raising.

"We are looking for scouts, businesses and church groups to take on a meal," she said.

The deadline to register to work on the barn-raising is June 10. For information, call 978-356-4288.

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Ellen Gibson is a member of the Timber Framers Guild, which disassembled the barn and numbered about 600 pieces.