

Westerville's Everal Barn to host barn workshop and conference

On February 21 (Presidents Day), OSU Extension, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and Friends of Ohio Barns will be hosting a Barn Again! workshop at the Everal Barn in Westerville. This truly remarkable barn, listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with the brick farmhouse, has been converted into a state-of-the-art conference and community center by the City of Westerville.

The day-long program will follow the standard program format, with slide/PowerPoint presentations, contractor discussions and exhibits by barn contractors, interest groups, booksellers and barn organizations. An afternoon tour to a nearby barn is being explored.

What makes the February program a departure from previous workshops is that the workshop will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the National Barn Alliance, which will be held the following day, February 22, at the Everal Barn. The 10-year-old Alliance [NBA] is a consortium of State Historic Preservation offices, University Extension offices, and statewide barn organizations that formed to help foster a greater awareness of America's historic barns and serve as a clearinghouse for barn preservation information. The NBA has no staff. Committee work is done via quarterly teleconference calls and the annual meeting held every February. This will be the first year the annual meeting will be held outside Chicago, and if all goes well, the intent is to have state hosts each year. The annual meeting is primarily a business meeting, and while it will likely be open to the public, the day's program will be devoted to NBA business.

The two days promise to be an exciting time for barn people and a great way to showcase Ohio barns.

To register for the February 21 workshop, please call OSU, Carol Moody, at 614-292-1851 or check the Friends of Ohio Barns website.

— Steve Gordon



FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs

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The Old BARN POST

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Lorain County threshing barn saved

Turn around and they're gone. A Mail Pouch barn is blown down in high winds. Another barn burns on a bitter cold night. Yet another is pushed over to make room for yet one more gas station. The city of Franklin, Ohio has one up for grabs on E-bay. They are disappearing faster with each passing year.

But there are some people trying to beat the odds. It ain't easy and it ain't cheap. However, some folks think it's well worth the extra cost and the extra effort to make a piece of the past a part of their future.

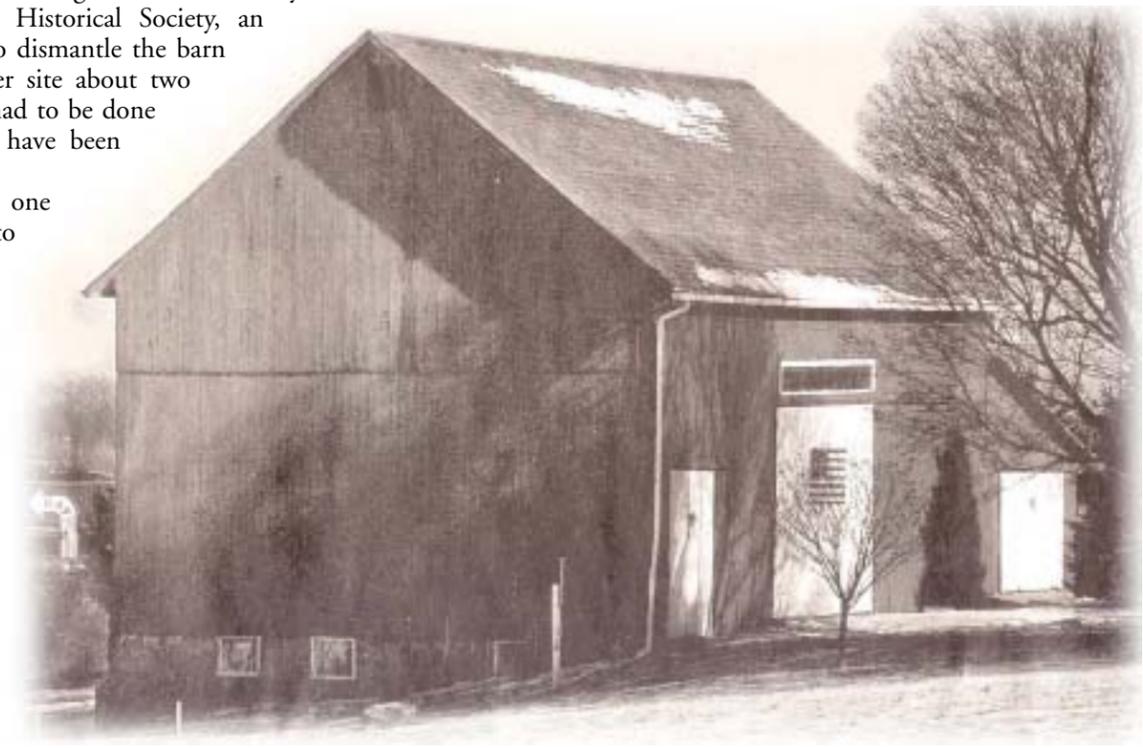
A three-bay threshing barn with a slate roof from the mid-1800s, one of the oldest farm buildings in Lorain County, is being given a new lease on life. In harm's way on a busy and growing thoroughfare near Sheffield, Ohio, the barn is on a site that is soon to be a new Nissan dealership.

Through the combined efforts of the barn owner, a local entrepreneur, the Sheffield Village Historical Society and the Lorain County Historical Society, an agreement was hatched to dismantle the barn and relocate it to another site about two miles distant. And it all had to be done right quick or it would have been torn down.

Like many barns, this one had to find a new use to keep it standing into the

This Lorain County barn will be moved from Detroit Road to French Creek Road, where the new owner looks forward to welcoming barn enthusiasts and others who wish to explore the structure, which dates back to the mid-1800s

Photo by Scott Shaw,
Cleveland Plain Dealer



next century. Once an integral part of a working family farm, it seems that for a while it will be used to store old cars. Many would agree that would be a perfectly fine alternative to one more pole barn or vinyl sided garage put up for that purpose. If all goes as planned the barn may even be open periodically for public visitation.

The gratitude of many goes out to barn owner Arch Abraham; Ron Krystowski, the proud soon-to-be new owner; Charles Herdendorf of the Sheffield Village Historical Society; Bill Bird of the Lorain County Historical Society; Tom Hoerrle of Lorain County Metro Parks; Jim Skeeles of the Ohio State University Extension; and all the others who have leant a hand on behalf of this old hay storage building. It does take a village to save a barn!

— Tom O'Grady



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Champaign County barns featured in calendar

Champaign County will be celebrating its Bicentennial in 2005 and volunteers are working on several projects for future citizens looking back to have an idea of "what it was like." One project is to photograph and document barns and significant outbuildings beyond 50 years of age.

A handful of volunteers using digital cameras paired up and over several months covered their selected townships. Mainly the initial focus was on photogenic barns for use on a very nice color calendar. Champaign County has 12 townships — one for each month. Each month's page features four barns from a given township.

Creating the calendar in itself was quite time consuming — finding advertising sponsors plus additional contributors plus page layout plus proof reading plus fact checking plus prepaid sales and finally accounting. But the volunteers stayed at it, raising enough money to have 5,000 calendars printed.

They were delivered just in time to have sales in a tent at the Oktoberfest. A tent had also been set up at the county fair two months earlier to inform the public about the project. The calendars gained exposure through an article in "Country Living," a magazine put out by Pioneer Rural Electric; two newspaper articles; and several advertisements regarding calendar sales.

Proceeds from additional calendar sales will go toward funding the completion of



This dairy barn, located in Salem Township, Champaign County, is a bow-roof, side drive, Yankee hay barn with numerous additional sheds. The decorative painted arches and trim are typical of turn of the century barns on the Indiana/Ohio border.

the photography project. Champaign County has about 1,000 barns of interest and the goal is to photograph and document all of them for a permanent record in the local museum. But just as headlights don't show all of the night, photographs don't do justice to barns. You don't get the smells, all good in their own way; or the sounds of wind blowing around a corner or a wooden door being slid open; or the sight of glowing dust dancing in sunlight squeezing through old siding.



Champaign County dairy barn

Being in most of the barns, the volunteers got to sample all of this.

Furthermore, since interesting structures and interesting people tend to go together, they heard a lot of local lore from the barn owners; stories not in history books. Like the man pointing out a flail and rake that had been laying in the same place as far back as his memory went, about 1920; or the woman telling of how bad flies were; or why a fence line is in a certain place. This gave a little better sense of the place of barns in our heritage.

Another way to gain further understanding of barns is through knowledge of their construction. Plans are under way to expand the photography project to include a seminar on barn construction to be held this winter. Members of the Geuy family, builders continuously since the post and beam era, will make a presentation describing the unique features and methods of building their beautiful barns. This is sure to be worthwhile to anyone interested in barns.

The barn photography project, while time consuming and at times trying, has been very satisfying. It proves again the adage that you can travel far and deep and never leave your county.

— Bob Kiser

For more information about the calendars, call Joan Zerkle at 937-652-0010; or send \$10 plus \$2 shipping per calendar to Barns, P.O. Box 24, Westville, Ohio 43083.

The Old BARN Q&A

By Rudy Christian

Q. When repairing old stone foundations, is "modern day" cement mortar OK?

A. Probably not. Most barn foundations in Ohio were built with sandstone or limestone. The walls were constructed of very large stones which created very thick walls. The process of laying up these walls involved a process called "bedding" which was done primarily with hydrated lime and sand. Since the sand was rarely cleaned or sifted like modern day mason's sand, small stones or river gravel are often found in lime bedding as well. Lime bedding worked very well for stone foundations because the mortar was softer than the stones and the bedding could "heal" itself if the foundation shifted.

Today, masonry walls are most often thin wall construction of block or brick which require cement mortar to give them enough strength to work correctly. This mortar is made with Portland cement and sand. It is very strong but also very hard - harder in fact than the limestone, sandstone and clay brick used in early foundations. Using mortar that is harder than the foundation stone can cause the edges and faces of the stone to split off when it freezes and thaws. It can also break stones in half when the foundation shifts, and the fact that the cement is usually tucked into the face of the wall can actually cause the wall to fail faster than if it were left alone. In short, use lime mortar (<http://www.virginialimeworks.com>) to fix lime mortared walls.

Q. Is it OK to remove some pieces of my barn frame so my equipment can fit in?

A. Yes and no. Timber framed barns in particular are built with a complex system of wooden members connected by the use of wooden pegs and sometimes large cut nails securing the framework serve different purposes, but most of them are structural and cannot be removed without accounting for the job they were meant to do in some other way. One exception is the beam that is running horizontally about three feet up from the barn floor between the posts on each side of the drive bay or threshing floor if you have a bank barn. These are called "waste" or mow girts and were part of the short wall that kept the hay in the loft and the grain on the threshing floor. If your barn still has these timbers intact, the purpose for which they were intended is no longer part of how your barn is used and they could be removed, but doing so will of course mean part of your barn's history will be removed along with them.

The best approach would be to find someone familiar with how timber frames in old barns work and get a good professional opinion. These kinds of consulting services are available and will save much more in potential repairs than they cost. Even if nothing happens initially when a timber is removed, if its job is to help hold up a big load of snow on the roof or to keep your barn true and square in a big wind-storm, you may find that out after the damage is done.

Mark your calendar

Barn Workshop
February 21, Everal Barn, Westerville, Ohio

The National Barn Alliance is hosting a one-day workshop and barn tour on February 21 in Westerville. To register, please call Carol Moody at 614-292-1851 or check the Friends of Ohio Barns website. Please see the back page of this newsletter for more information.

National Barn Alliance Annual Meeting
February 22, Everal Barn, Westerville, Ohio

The annual meeting is primarily a business meeting, and while it will likely be open to the public, the day's program will be devoted to NBA business.

Michigan Barn Conference
March 11, 12

Michigan Barn Preservation Network Annual Conference, March 11 and 12; www.mibarn.net.

Ohio Barn Conference VI
March 18, 19, 20, Guernsey County

Ohio Barn Conference VI, sponsored by Friends of Ohio Barns and TTRAG, March 18, 19 and 20. Please see newsletter insert for more information.

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"He knows every pin and nail in his barn. If another linter is to be floored he lets no hired man rob him of that amusement — but he goes slowly to the woods and at his leisure selects a pitch pine tree cuts it and hauls it or gets it hauled to the mill and so he knows the history of his barn-floor.

... His barn floor is fastened down with oak pins and he prefers them to iron spikes, which he says will rust and give way ..."

— Henry David Thoreau
Oct. 4, 1851, *Journal* 4:116-18