



The Old BARN POST

A publication of Friends of Ohio Barns • September, 2023 • Vol. XXII, Issue 2

Ohio Barn Tour and Conference 2023 Recap

A big thank you goes out to Local Heroes, JoAnne and Dave Hamblin, for organizing a great conference! From a Conference Chair's perspective it is imperative to have boots on the ground in the conference county. They did a fabulous job overall, including finding a large number of barns for the Barnstormers to review, organizing the Thursday events, engaging the Trinity United Methodist Church for the lunch venue on Friday's barn tour as well as finding the wonderful event venue of Flying Horse Farms for Saturday's conference. I know that there is a lot more that could be said about what they did but I hope it suffices to say that their time and efforts produced a well-planned Conference and it was all very much appreciated!

Also, the entire FOB board, with Sarah Sisser as Conference Chairperson, did an outstanding job of crossing the t's and dotting the i's again this year. Everything ran smoothly and seamlessly.

Although I did not make it to either of the Thursday events I did hear about them. I understand that Bobbi and Herb Sample's potato barn was the bomb. That is a good, cool thing. This barn was an excellent example of adaptive reuse. Several members showed pictures of their barns and there was some restoration discussion as well. Others went to Pickwick Place which has three restored horse and dairy barns. Pizza was brought in from The Purple Indian Pizza in Mt Gilead to finish out the evening.

The Barn Tour

I asked a member in the Quality Inn Hotel lobby how she was doing. Her reply? "Just ducky." That about sums it up for the weather for Friday's barn tour. Not what we ordered, but at least it wasn't a downpour all day.

Our first stop was the Lanker Barn, winner of the FOB Agricultural Use Barn of the Year Award. But, before the Barn Detectives Rudy and Dan got going, Tom O'Grady stepped up and read a declaration giving them the formal authority to serve as Barn Detectives. He then presented them with badges to be worn when acting as such. Please look for the document posted in this newsletter. (See

Please See RECAP, Page 3



Left: This strange, additional truss system in the Cox barn raised a lot of eyebrows and quite a few questions, too.

Below: FOB VP Dan Troth presenting the Barn Stewardship Award to Jan and Roger Cox.

Photos by:
Gary Clower



CALEB'S CORNER

This summer I took a vacation with my daughter to see some family in Woodbridge, CT. In preparation I reached out to a former employee who lives in Connecticut to find out if he could set up a couple locations of early colonial timber frames to visit while in the state. He came through with two locations to see, each consisting of multiple frames. The first was a beautifully restored and time period furnished house in North Branford, built in the 1780's. The current owner had gone to great pains in the work done to the house to not only preserve the historical integrity but to also make it livable. What stood out the most was the chimney and fireplace design. It was constructed in the center of the house and had four individual flu's allowing for fireplaces in each room above it. The footprint of this stone monolith was roughly 14 feet by 14 feet and contained a 4 foot tall barrel arched chamber through the center running east to west. Undoubtedly this was originally used for cold storage, but the current owner was wisely using it as a wine cellar.

The second stop was at a long time timber framer's house and workshop, owned by George Senerchia. George has been timber framing since the late 1970s and has taught timber framing classes since the late 90s. His workshop is in a 40 foot by 80 foot scribe rule barn built by Aaron Hall in 1818. It was moved onto his property in 1986. Aaron Hall was one of the enlisted soldiers with George Washington at the famous Battle of Trenton, where the Washington and his bedraggled troops crossed the Delaware River on Christmas night to defeat the Hessian soldiers encamped on the opposing bank. Within the barn and now workshop, George has many items displayed from the Hall family telling the story of the barn and the family who used it for many generations.

Attached perpendicular to the Hall barn was another barn George had moved onto his property. This was the real gem of our trip. According to the research done by George and the subsequent inspection by Jack Sobon, this smaller barn is thought to be the oldest standing barn in America — thought to be built around 1660! In classic colonial fashion it utilizes English tie joints, riven braces, and a king post rafter truss on the center bent. One of the more fascinating components of this frame is that all the mortices were bored using a spoon bit, which predates the auger style boring bits that are still used today.

Having the opportunity to explore timber frames in America that differ so greatly in style and age from the ones that dominate the landscape of Ohio is a real treat. I'm incredibly grateful for people like Brody who, after only working one summer for us, has continued building upon the basics in which he learned with us. Through that quest for knowledge he was able to meet people like George and allow others to share and experience the wonderful community of timber framers

Caleb Miller, President – Friends of Ohio Barns

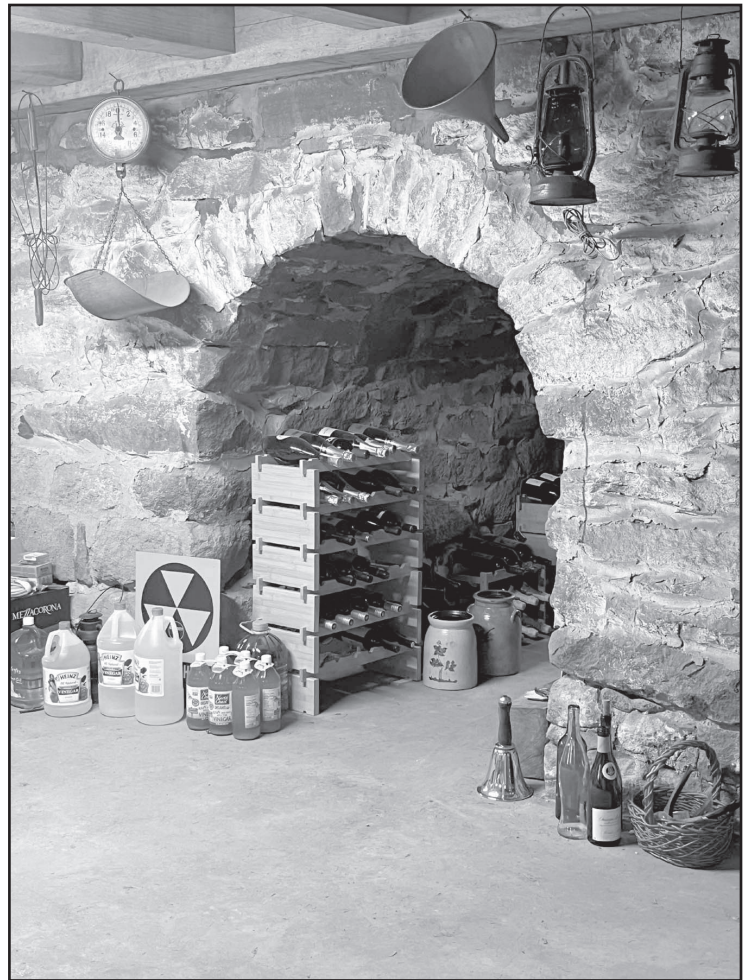


Photo by: Caleb Miller

Base of stone chimney with former cold storage site converted to wine cellar in 1780s house in Branford, Connecticut.

FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs BOARD

President

Caleb Miller Holmes County (330) 231-9042

Vice President

Dan Troth Delaware County (614) 989-1122

Secretary

Alan Walter Carroll County (330) 323-3763

Treasurer

Laura Saeger Wayne County (330) 465-7001

Newsletter

Tom O'Grady Athens County (740) 593-7552

Members

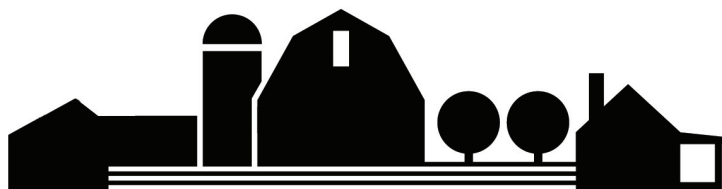
Pamela Whitney Gray Knox County (740) 263-1369

David Hamblin Morrow County (419) 947-1360

Sarah Sisser Hancock County (912) 604-5598

Lauren Etlar Hancock County (419) 889-4716

Barb Lang Holmes County (330) 464-0624



RECAP, Continued from Page 1

Back to the Lanker Barn. This Sweitzer barn had hewn members as well as sash-sawn braces. Rudy called it a “first period barn”. This was one of several barns we saw on the tour with canted purlin posts. However, because this barn was built before the Civil War, we know that it was not built this way because hay tracks had not yet been invented.

Stop two was the Watterson Barn, most likely built around 1830. We learned here that bent one is always to the left as you walk through the main door. I learn something new every year! This barn sported edge-halved bladed scarf joinery unlike the diminished scarf joinery we saw in the Lanker Barn. Rudy called this barn a true Pennsylvania standard barn. It had an interesting granary with adjustable compartments and a door that had authentic clinched nails.

Stop three was the Cox Barn, the winner of the FOB Stewardship Barn of the Year Award. This barn was built for modern farming with its unusually high walls, canted purlin system and fish belly girts that were hewn to camber. This barn had a tremendous truss system inside the barn and there was a lot of discussion as to why it had been installed. Could it be because the plate was too undersized to carry the load? After discussing this truss fix Rudy commented that it is hard to fix old barns because it is so hard to find people that have the knowledge to do the work.

After visiting the Cox Barn, our fourth stop of the day, the tour members were served a delicious hot lunch at the beautiful Trinity United Methodist Church in Mount Gilead cooked by Barb Brewer and other members. After some food and fellowship we proceeded to our next stop on the tour.

Stop five was the Shade Barn. This English threshing barn was originally 30' x 45' with three bays. Currently it is a five bent, four bay barn with a Gothic straw shed addition that had a truss-planked framing system. This barn was built around 1840 and has very nice broad axe marks as well as T-auger marks we found in open mortise pockets. It was the only barn on the tour that had a swing beam.

Stop six was the Garverick Barn which was our first gambrel roofed barn on this year's tour, though it was not originally built that way. The roof had been pushed up gable with a canted purlin system to a



Photo by: Gary Clower

Stairway going to, where exactly? A Point of confusion in the Garverick barn.

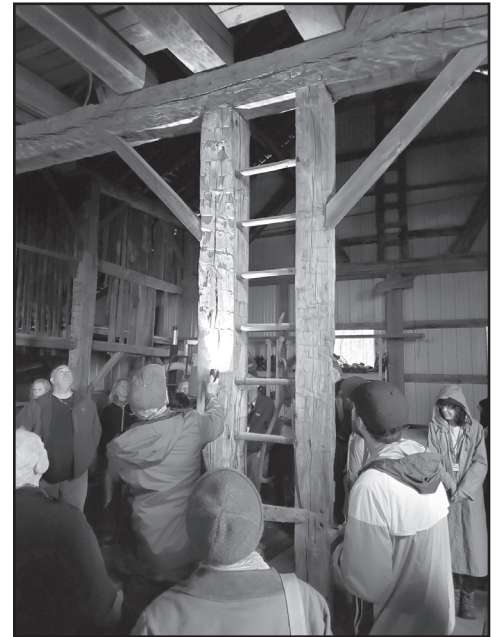


Photo by: Gary Clower

Dan Troth highlighting hewing marks with his flashlight on the barn tour.



Photo by: Dan Troth

We lost track long ago regarding how many barns FOB has visited on the annual barn tours that sported a backboard and basketball hoop. Pretty sure this is the first full court barn of the hundreds we have explored in two decades.

gambrel roof in order to accommodate the hay track. The cross ties were hand hewn and the posts were sash-sawn, clear indicators of an early barn. There were many short and tall ladders in this barn.

The Heidlebaugh Barn was the last stop. This barn was moved and converted from a ground barn to a bank barn with a full basement. This four bent, three bay barn sported some large timbers and double tie

beams with scaffold posts, which is very unusual. Why the double ties? Rudy said “I could make something up but I won't”. Why was the granary on the second floor? Nobody had a guess. It was determined that this barn was probably built in 1830 or 1832. Continuous 52' timbers made up the rafter and purlin plates. Another early Ohio treasure.

Please See RECAP, Page 4

Conference

The Saturday portion of the conference was held at the Flying Horse Farms, winner of the 2023 FOB Adaptive Re-use Barn of the Year Award. It was the perfect venue for our conference. This is an incredible place with remarkable volunteers and employees making a big impact for children with serious illnesses and their families. It is simply grand in the operation of its program. The Big Red Barn, previously owned by the Weiler family and moved to the campus, is grand as well.

Alan Miller began our conference with his talk titled “The Adventure of Uncovering the History of Your Farm”. Alan walked us through the experience of discovering the history of his family farm while gaining the Ohio Century Farm status. It is a tale for sure. He started with folders and boxes, then went to cemeteries to construct his family tree. He read books on family history and genealogy, found the recent surveys and examined the 1875 atlas. He also went to the county recorder’s office to see the deeds and conducted title searches. He did it all and uncovered many stories along the way about his family, his heritage and his farm. It was a great story and he gave plenty of advice on how to get started for anyone wanting to uncover their own family farm history. His articles on such can be found in the Columbus Monthly. Friends of Ohio Barns had David Weisenberg conduct a dendrochronology test on Alan’s barn and Dan Troth revealed that his timbers were cut in the fall of 1903. Therefore the barn was probably built in 1904. Just one more piece of information for Alan’s records!

Dave Duell followed Alan with a talk titled “A Stewardship Tale Worth Telling.” It was apparent to me that Dave had a message to deliver. Well, actually there were several messages that I took away. I believe his main point was that we all should leave a legacy of stewardship in any form that each of us sees fit and believes in passionately. For our membership that form is easy to imagine — historic barns. I believe Dave’s legacy is the forest but now he has a greater appreciation for the afterlife of the forest trees hidden in our great historic barns. His message: Leave a legacy that tells a story. Take ownership of that stewardship, take responsibility for that legacy, and hold yourself accountable



Photo by Dan Troth

True clinched nails surround the hinges on the granary door inside the Watterson barn.

to see that stewardship through and enjoy the reward of that legacy you secured.

Sadly, our third speaker of the day Stan Sipe, historian for the Morrow County Historical Society, could not make our conference due to a stroke he suffered back in February. Our thoughts go out to Stan for a speedy recovery. Mike Wilson stepped in and read Stan’s research on the history of Morrow County. It was an entertaining talk about all things Morrow County including how Mt. Gilead became the county seat, how the Victory Shaft ended up being located in the downtown area, and several other interesting facts to fill in the gaps. Mike can be heard on his weekly podcast, *Morrow-ology*.

Lunch break consisted of a tour of the Big Red Barn, sandwiches, and the Annual Members Meeting. This year we had three Barn Conservation Grant recipients including Spring Hill Granary, Auburn Acres’ (Jeff & Shari Baily) and Dan and Rachael Haas. We heard an update from Mike Wengler about last year’s grant recipient — the Oxford Museum Association. With Mike’s assistance the organization used the grant funds to repair and



Photo by: Dan Troth

Raising hole near the top of a hand hewn post. Long raising poles or pikes inserted into the holes were used to help push the bent into place. Dragging along the ground they would also act as a brake or brace to protect the work crew from the heavy timbers falling backward.

replace the straw doors on a 1840s barn at the Hueston Woods Pioneer Farm. As part of our awards presentation during lunch, FOB bestowed upon our very own Tom O’Grady the prestigious Hubert Wilhelm Award. Please see the nomination letter in this this newsletter.

After lunch Matt Stooksbury from the Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District spoke about the Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Preservation program. Interestingly, one needs a sponsor to file the application for the program. One must have at least 40 acres, be enrolled in CAUV, and be enrolled in an agricultural district. Farm land is being lost at a staggering rate and this program helps to permanently preserve Ohio’s farms in agricultural production. This is one of many programs the Ohio Department of Agriculture promotes.

Indian Signal Trees — are they for real? Tom O’Grady took on this question in his usual quizzical and humorous style. As always, in rapid fire, he sorts out what might or might not be true considering all his findings from his travels and reading. One would have thought that by the title he was convinced these trees were Indian Signal Trees and that is what he was going to discuss but instead he questions it all,

Please See RECAP, Page 5

Auction Recap 2023

Our auction held in conjunction with our annual Ohio Barn Conference has always been a big hit. There are items for everyone from interesting glimpses of the past like Ohio pottery, farm implements, books, and tools to more current items like handmade quilts, puzzles, kitchen tools and dishes, and fresh items including honey and flowers. There is something for everyone, donated by our generous members who collect and set them aside during the year in anticipation of next year's auction.

Our conferences are so full of content and opportunities to experience good times together that sometimes it is hard to truly identify and recognize all the work that makes the event appear so seamless. The auction is a prime example of that somewhat hidden expenditure of time and effort. Most realize that there is an incredible "crew" laying out the items in attractive displays, that's the fun part. But prior to that each item is listed on a sheet along with the

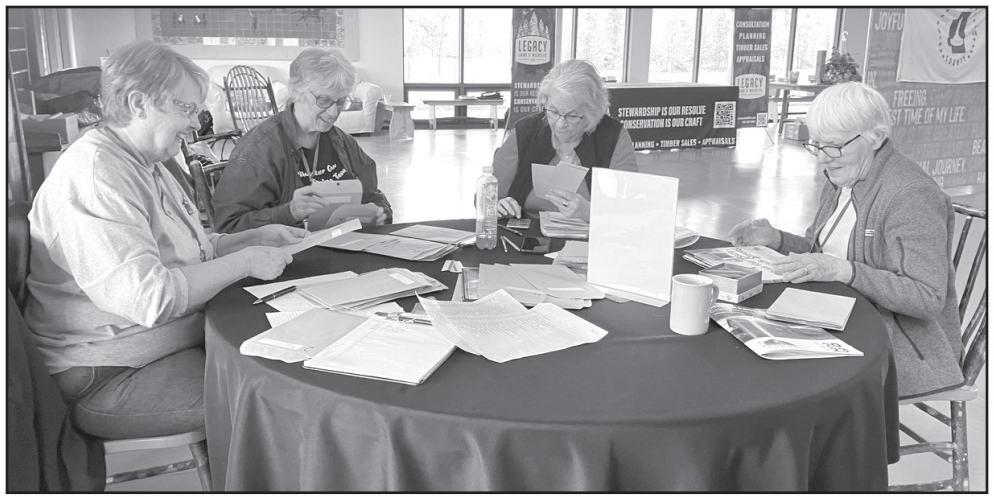


Photo by: Laura Saeger

The Auction gals tallying the bids - (left to right) Judy Hendershot, Beryl Beckett, Pam Gray, and Sue Williams. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

donor's name, then each bidder needs to sign up for a number and is assigned a correspondingly numbered envelope for items they "won" during the bidding. While we are all enjoying the final speaker, our crew is feverishly gathering bid cards and getting a tally for each and every bidder — all in hopes of having that daunting task completed by end of the scheduled session when you all want to pay up and go home!

This year our income from the auction

topped \$2000.00! For the crew it is the culmination of a 10-hour day, start to finish. Did I mention that they all have registered and paid to attend? It is an amazing donation of time and effort and it does us all good to see them, heads down but smiling as they work for Friends of Ohio Barns. Special Thanks to Beryl Beckett, Judy Hendershot, Pam Gray, and Sue Williams for another successful auction!

By: Laura Saeger

RECAP, Continued from Page 4

as he does everything. Tom can always be counted on to deliver a lively and entertaining presentation even if it isn't about barns. Maybe someday he will speak about barns, or maybe not. We will see. Anyone have any subjects for him to research? We know that is what he loves to do!

Raymond Friend, of The Barn & Cabin Friend, filled the tough spot of being last on the schedule but he caught everyone's attention by identifying the biggest barn geek in the room. Of course Dan Troth was up there which really was no surprise and although we know Rudy is too, he was being very quiet about it, unlike Dan. But, the winner was Sarah (Werling) Northrop! Then Raymond went on to talk about his business and the barns they have saved and turned into homes one being the large barn where Raymond, Nicole and their two sons reside. He presented a lot of information on how he accomplishes his work with the help of some of his former students. Although these barns are no longer standing on the ground on which they were built they have been given a new life on



Photo by: Gary Clower

2023 conference speakers at the Flying Horse Farm in Morrow County (left to right): Dave Duell – A Stewardship Story worth Telling; Alan Miller – The Adventure of Uncovering the History of Your Farm; Tom O'Grady – Indian Signal Trees; Matt Stooksbury – Farmland Preservation.

new ground with a new family to love them. I think that is a good story.

It was yet another great conference! For those of you who came we hope that you

enjoyed it all. For those of you who didn't, you should make plans to come next year and try it out in Tuscarawas County!

By: Sarah Woodall

My Nomination Letter for Tom O'Grady for the Hubert Wilhelm Award

I am not going to get far into this acknowledgement before you all figure out who I am talking about so I am going to cut to the chase, blow the surprise, and announce that the Friends of Ohio Barns Board of Directors has awarded Tom O'Grady the Wilhelm Award for 2023. You all know Tom as the FOB Newsletter Editor, the guy who writes most of the content for the Newsletter, the "go to" person to fill a slot when a speaker has bailed three days before the conference, the guy we count on to do Zoom presentations and conference talks. He is the guy who knows a lot about Ohio's canals, the guy who knows about the stars that light up the night sky, the guy who marvels about the Moundbuilders and the Barnbuilders. He shares what he knows about barns and about how they were built and who built them across the state of Ohio. He is the guy that can present Ohio's natural history in under an hour with rapid fire content, humor, and sincere appreciation and love of the things that came before him. He embraces old things, places, and people that have forever formed our history.

Tom is passionate about everything he does from recycling and sustainability to promoting the conservation of the old Athen's Asylum not to mention promoting the conservation of timber frame barns and the stories of their builders. He does this by offering talks through the Ohio Humanities Council, one of which is the Barn Builders: an Architectural Legacy in Ohio's Rural Landscape — which we have heard through the FOB's Zoom series. Read his bio in the conference booklet and you will see that he is very active in the organizations that promote conservation including the Southeast Ohio History Center and Ohio's Hill County Heritage Area. One can look at FOB's Wilhelm Award Nomination guidelines and check off every category for which this award recognizes. If you search Tom online you will find many articles about him from being involved with the opening of the Ohio University Observatory at the Athens Asylum including the addition of the refurbished Fecker telescope to clearing brush around Esther Hull's grave stone just recently, in 2021, while helping to rehabili-



By: Gary Clower

Tom O'Grady presented the Hubert Wilhelm Award at 2023 Ohio Barn Conference. Pictured (L-R) Tom O'Grady, Rudy Christian, first President of FOB, Sarah Woodall, former long-time member of FOB board, Caleb Miller, President of Friends of Ohio Barns.

tate the old Snowden Cemetery in Athens County. Did I mention that Tom often is late to our conferences and leaves early because he has "things to do and places to see" meaning he has to explore the local history and local cemeteries. Sometimes he is out with a flashlight during the night! But I digress

I would like to read a quote from an interview of Tom I found in the Athen's Messenger from June 28, 2013.

Most of my classes at Ohio University were associated with the Department of Geography. I recall standing in the hallway at Porter Hall on a number of occasions listening to Dr. Hubert Wilhelm loudly speaking with such exuberance and enthusiasm about the people who settled Ohio and the buildings they constructed and how one can learn so much about the history of this state by driving down the road. The architectural styles and material culture of early Ohio settlers remains visible in the farmsteads and small towns they built. I never heard anyone teach with so much love and pleasure and animation about their subject matter. At first I thought someone was in trouble in that classroom, but I soon found that he was just thrilled to be sharing his passion

for Ohio and its diverse landscapes and cultures. Dr. Wilhelm cared about community and sense of place and about valuing and caring for them for future generations. He had an infectious way of delivering his message to students and I remain a student of Ohio geography to this day.

I believe the last part could be said the same about Tom — Tom is thrilled to be sharing his passion for Ohio, its diverse landscapes and cultures. Tom also cares about community, sense of place, and about valuing and caring for them for future generations.

I can't begin to acknowledge all the contributions Tom has made to Friends of Ohio Barns regarding our historic barns. But maybe it's sufficient to say that he has is a proficient educator, presenter, and writer. He is a valuable leader, influencer, and organizer. He is a thought provoker, a comedian, a thinker and contemplator. I could go on and on but I will sum up by saying that since 2001 Tom has been an integral part of this organization in so many ways and is so very deserving of the Hubert Wilhelm Award. Congratulations Tom!

By: Sarah Woodall —
former FOB board member

Rusty made his mark

Professional muralist Claude Ruston (Rusty) Baker and his partner Claudia Rozuk's Legends & Music Barn in southern Holmes County was one of the six barns on the 2017 annual barn tour. Rusty and Claudia were also the recipients of the Adaptive ReUse award for the colorful and imaginative conversion of the barn siding to a canvas featuring the portraits of famous musicians including The Beatles, Elton John, Johnny Cash, and Dean Martin. The barn reflects Rusty's creative and colorful personality!

A dairy barn in its previous life, over the years Rusty transformed the ordinary building into an extraordinary space. He welcomed countless travelers from around the globe who happened to stumble by during their journey. He was a true rock star who treated his new friends as if he had known them all his life. He always had time to take you on a personal tour of his collection inside and treated you to one of his original compositions or his own spin on Hotel California expertly played on one his many guitars or the baby grand. He had boundless energy but at the same time, the coolest vibe and a knack for making you feel as if he had all the time in the world to entertain you.

Rusty amassed an impressive collection of music memorabilia and instruments. He owned at least 140 guitars, a baby grand, drum set, a sitar, and many other instruments found during his travels to 47 countries. He could play them all. Rusty never had a music lesson or any training in art for that matter.

During his career, he created over 200 murals with many in the Ohio Valley and some international. Locally he restored the lettering at Minglewood Distillery and painted three murals in Wooster. He restored a vintage advertising display in downtown Ashland. The mayor was so impressed he asked him to paint an original mural. Sadly Rusty passed before he could start the mural. His work can be seen in the schools in Holmes County and downtown Millersburg. Just this winter he restored the face of the clock in Sugarcreek.

I first met Rusty around 2012 when a fellow member of the Killbuck Valley



Photos by: Barb Lang

Mail Pouch Barn on the east side of US 30 just south of Dalton. Owned by Leonard Wenger, Rusty restored the lettering a few years ago.



Advertising sign on one of the historic storefronts in downtown Ashland restored by Rusty. One of the many projects he did in the Ashland, Holmes and Wayne County area.

Writer's Guild set up one of our meetings in his barn. She had interviewed him for an article aptly titled "Larger than Life" for a local publication.

After that meeting I was one of his thousands of friends through Facebook. I would report any mural opportunities I came across through various jobs, networking and volunteer gigs including the graphic design work I did for the Moreland Church of God. Rusty restored the

frescoes as well as painted an original mural timeline of Moreland and Franklin Township.

Pam Gray and I had lunch with Rusty and Claudia earlier this year. We talked about a barn mural for Friends of Ohio Barns. He told us he would generously donate his time if we would pay for materials. We thought he would be a great speaker at the 2024 or 2025 FOB conference.

Please See RUSTY, Page 9

Dan Troth and Rudy Christian (left), sporting new badges presented by board member, Tom O'Grady (right), making them authentic Barn Detectives after more than two decades on the job.

Photo by: Gary Clower



Barn Detectives finally legit — after all these years!

Upon entering the Lanker Barn at the first stop on the 2023 Ohio Barn Tour in Morrow County, board member Tom O'Grady stepped in and halted the performance and allocution of the Barn Detectives before they were able to go off on their scrutiny, assessment, examination, and inspection of the old ag edifice, cowshed and threshing place with the following remarks:

Excuse me — Ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief statement to make —

I was recently contacted by the Ohio Division of Factory and Building Inspection, Homeland Security, and the Ohio Department of Commerce and Liquor Control regarding the Ohio Barn Tour. I was informed that the Friends of Ohio Barns was currently in violation of state and federal law and subject to the Ohio Penal Codes — and has been violating such codes for several years — by sanctioning Rudy Christian and Daniel Troth to act without authorization and pose as so-called Barn Detectives, leading large crowds of unsuspecting citizens into barns in which they have never previously set foot, on private property all over the state of Ohio — without ever seeking proper authorization from the Governor and his many widely available and substantially compensated minions.

We, at Friends of Ohio Barns, always seek to be law abiding and strive to operate in accordance with all rules and regulations and comply, in all respects, with any and all codes and commandments of



Barn Detective real-deal badge, issuable upon the completion of twenty years of on-the-job-training.

Photo by: Dan Troth

the State of Ohio and the United States of America, and, not wishing to have its board members hauled off in handcuffs — have conferred with legal counsel and have, on advice, sought out and received proper legal permission and consent to conduct this unusual business on properties in diverse locations around the state of Ohio. On behalf of Friends of Ohio Barns, Rudy Christian and Daniel Troth have now been duly authorized, certified, legitimized, sanctified, circumcised, mobilized, lobotomized, cauterized, ostracized and recognized — from this day forward — as genuine, bona fide, authentic, real-deal Ohio Barn Detectives — if, and only if, they are in proper uniform and identified by the credentials on these authentic looking identification badges issued exclusively, for the afore-named Barn Detectives, by Cracker Jacks, Incorporated.

The Wilhelm Award

The Wilhelm Award was created in honor of Dr. Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, distinguished Professor of Cultural and Ohio Geography at Ohio University for thirty-five years. Hubert fled East Germany as a child with his mother and younger brother and eventually came to the United States after World War II. Because he had some training in English and some apprenticeship work in farm management in Bavaria he was encouraged to apply and was accepted in a rural exchange program. He was placed with a family on a several hundred acre farm in rural Illinois where he completed high school. The family sponsored his emigration to the U.S. in 1954 and he enrolled in the University of Illinois where he studied geography. He received his doctorate in Geography from the Louisiana State University where he studied under the tutelage of one of the world's leading scholars in a field known as "folk architecture," Fred Kniffen. Wilhelm joined the faculty of the Department of Geography and Geology at Ohio University in 1963 where he taught for 35 years.

In his subsequent research over those many years at the university Wilhelm visited the 88 county courthouses in Ohio and studied the 1850 Census. He tallied the origins of Ohio residents in each county and with this work helped us know who the people were that settled in the Ohio country and helped it become the great state that led the world in agriculture, industry, invention, manufacturing and trade, education, and military and political leadership for a century. Hubert helped us to know more about who we are as Ohioans than had anyone previously. He compared the settlement patterns of these groups of migrants and immigrants with the distribution of architectural features found on farmsteads and towns and industries across Ohio. Wilhelm put us in touch with the material culture characteristics of various groups of people and their geographic distribution across the Ohio landscape.

Ohio is home to migrants from the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic States and the Southeast. Immigrants came to Ohio from every country in Europe. Black people from places in the east and freedom seekers

Please See WILHELM, Page 9

Mixed bag of cultures makes S.E. Ohio a fascinating place

By DEIRDRE BAKER

Messenger student reporter Southeastern Ohioans "simply don't know where they are geographically," the featured speaker of the Citizens' Forum on the Humanities said Tuesday at the Dairy Barn.

Dr. Hubert Wilhelm, a professor of geography at Ohio University, addressed the forum and explained why he believes Southeastern Ohio has gotten a "bad rap."

"Southeastern Ohio is so hard to talk about geographically because it is so diverse. It's a mish mash," Wilhelm said.

Wilhelm described the different cultural influences in the area and gave examples of them by citing several towns whose names have derived from obviously separate sources.

"Only learned people can name this 'Athens,' 'Troy,' 'Carthage' or 'Alexander,' but we also have 'Coon Hollow,' 'Buzzard's Nest' and 'Stinking Creek,'" he said, adding that



Hubert Wilhelm

Southeastern Ohio is a "transitional area."

Although some people may view this area as good for nothing but "growing briars," Wilhelm said George Washington once said he "knows of no part of the country that he would rather be in than some part of the region."

Wilhelm said Ohio can be regionalized on the basis of the occupants and doing this will make it

clear why the areas are divided and named as they are.

"Place names stand out in Southeastern Ohio because many relate back to New England," he said.

Wilhelm added that, because of the settlers from New England, several Ohio towns were laid out like those in New England, which he said is "fascinating."

But Southeastern Ohio has been looked at negatively by those who do not know its background, he said.

"This area has gone through a lot—coal mining, land abandonment, etc. But that's not all it is. It is quite a fascinating area," he said.

Wilhelm added that one of the beauties of the area is its diversity

and different cultural backgrounds.

"It all came together here—Athens and Stinking Creek. This area is a wonderful combination of things."

After Wilhelm's presentation, the Citizens' Forum met to discuss business and the goals of the forum, which presents project ideas to the Ohio Humanities Council to qualify for funding.

The purpose of the Humanities Council is to "make the humanities a vital part of the public and private life of Ohio's citizens."

Samuel Crowl, a board member of the Ohio Humanities Council and dean of University College at OU, spoke to the forum and answered questions.

From Athens Messenger article in 1989.

from southern states all found themselves in early Ohio. Native Americans left their names on major stream valleys and settlers established their influence in the places they inhabited. One can clearly see the effects and impressions in the landscape and in place names when one knows what to look for.

Dr. Wilhelm spoke at the second Ohio Barn Conference and was on hand at the

meeting afterward in Wooster when the decision was made to formally establish a 501c3 not-for-profit organization to promote the conservation of Ohio's barn heritage. A decade later the Friends of Ohio Barns board of directors established the Wilhelm Award to recognize efforts or people involved in educating the public and preserving the heritage of these flagships of Ohio agricultural history. Dr.

Hubert Wilhelm was recognized with the first of these awards himself at the Ohio Barn Conference held in Athens County in 2013. Dr. Wilhelm passed away in the autumn of 2015.

Wilhelm Award recipients:

- Dr. Hubert Wilhelm – 2014
- Robert F. Emsminger – 2016
- Rudy R. Christian – 2019
- Tom O'Grady – 2023

RUSTY, Continued from Page 7

He had previously invited us to stay at one of their houses in the Azores but the timing for this March wasn't good. We made plans for the trip of a lifetime in March 2024, during spring break.

But life, or in this case, death steps in and makes other plans. A reminder to us all to do what we love while we can and live life to its fullest every day.

Rusty's life was one well lived. His favorite saying was, "Today is the best day of my life." Positive words we can all live by. RIP Rusty – May 8, 1958 – April 12, 2023.

His family will be celebrating his life during Killbuck Early American Days Labor Day weekend (September 2 and 3) in Killbuck. Rusty would be pleased as his family owned the Duncan Mill which manufactured White Lily Flour. The museum in Killbuck has a room dedicated to the mill so this is a fitting and final tribute to his life and hometown.

By: Barb Lang



Rusty's Legends and Music Barn in southern Holmes County. Might be rockers Janis Joplin and Joe Walsh on this side of the old dairy barn with The Beatles.

Friends of Ohio Barns strives to preserve history, state's farming roots

Debbie Ledley's family bought a farm near the Delaware County Airport in 1968, when she was just 4 years old. The farm included a big, old barn.

Her father boarded horses and was a grain farmer, Ledley said.

"So, there were gravity (grain) wagons in there. And then we would climb up the hay mow and swing from one side to the other right over the gravity wagon," Ledley recalled.

Now, with Ledley's parents in their 80s and no one to take over the farm, it was time for it to go, she said. A company purchased the land to build warehouses.

Ledley's voice cracked as she explained, "Mom and dad sold the farm, and it was just going to be destroyed."

But Ledley's husband, Chris Ledley, who also grew up on a farm, had the idea to deconstruct and move the barn to make it into their home. They're in the process of rebuilding it outside of Ostrander, about halfway between Marysville and Delaware. Recent date nights have involved pressure-washing old beams, Debbie said.

Dan Troth of GreenTech Construction, who is the contractor leading the reconstruction of the Ledley's barn, estimates that it dates to around 1870 or 1880. Standing in the barn near what would someday be the Ledley's kitchen, he pointed to the historic frame — the large posts and tie beams are all hand-hewn, while the smaller scantling was sawed.

To be sure of the barn's age, though, Troth said the Ledleys would have to have a core sample of the wood dated — through a process called dendrochronology, which can pinpoint within about three months of when a tree was felled.

A passion for barns

Troth is a longtime member of the Timber Framers Guild. He took down his first barn in 1976 and at the time was only trying to get the slate from the roof to sell, he said. Now, he has a deep appreciation for barns that stems in part from his childhood visits to the country while growing up in Ashland.

Troth said his father was an attorney who



From left, Debbie Ledley, dog Layla, Friends of Ohio Barns Vice President Dan Troth, and Chris Ledley stand in the Ledley's still-under-construction barn home in Ostrander. Debbie Ledley moved the late-1800s barn from her family's farm near the Delaware County Airport after her parents, who are octogenarians, sold the land to a company building warehouses in the area.



Dan Troth, a contractor who rebuilds timber structures and vice president of Friends of Ohio Barns, points to layout marks on a post made by a historic barn's original builders, while dog Layla looks on.

had many clients that were farmers, and on Sundays they would visit the farms.

"Whenever they had a barn, we would play in the barn. Because back in those days, we had — we called them square bales, they were actually rectangular — but you could build forts with those hay bales," Troth said. "And I just loved it."

In addition to being a contractor who works on timber structures, Troth is the vice-president of Friends of Ohio Barns, a nonprofit that encourages preservation of the state's historic barns.

The group works with other organizations, like the National Barn Alliance, to connect Ohio barn owners with repair specialists. It also hosts an annual barn conference; the 2023 conference was held in April in Morrow County and included a tour of six barns. Friends of Ohio Barns also gives three annual "Barn of the Year" awards for agricultural use, adaptive reuse and stewardship.

The organization is based in Burbank but has members all over the state. Troth



Chris and Debbie Ledley saved extra timber from Debbie Ledley's family barn.

lives in southern Delaware County in an 1828 barn that he and his wife, Robin, converted into a house.

Saving Ohio's barns

Troth rebuilds barns as they were, sometimes with structural improvements or with additions like the garage and sunroom on the Ledley's house. But he doesn't dismantle barns for parts, which he said is common.

"For the people who are selling it, it's like elephant tusks — they know they have value. But our group, Friends of Ohio Barns, we're trying to save the elephants," Troth said.

He said most barns that are repurposed have to be moved. In their new locations, they become community centers, event venues, brewpubs, and restaurants.

Ohio's historic barns were built with the trees on farmers' properties and the most common types of wood used were white oak, tulip poplar and American beech, Troth said.

Farmers felled trees in the winter when the leaves were gone, and the underbrush was subdued. If snow was on the ground,

Please See FRIENDS, Page 11



Instead of – “A huge white oak with a notch cut for felling in Tucker County, West Virginia in 1913” – the caption should read “Two men and two children posed in an undercut in an ancient California Redwood.”

Correction

In the December 2022 newsletter, in the article entitled *Ohio's Primeval Forests Still Disappearing*, the associated image of a large tree was identified as “A huge white oak with a notch cut for felling in Tucker County, West Virginia in 1913.”

Reader and FOB member, Jack Sobon, contacted me to challenge the identification of that image as that of a large oak. He thought otherwise. He pointed out two other images that were mislabeled as he indicates in the following email:

*Tom,
I enjoyed your article on Ohio's Primeval Forests in the December issue of The Old Barn Post. As an old growth forest enthusiast and an old timber framed building enthusiast, I share your point of view. However, I noticed a couple issues with the photos on page 4. First off, it appears that the captions of “A large tulip poplar cut in 1920” and “White oak cut in 1914” are likely switched. The tulip poplar shown would not be exceptional but if it was an oak, it would be.*

The photo of the “huge white oak” with the people in the notch is obviously a redwood in California. No Eastern tree species has bark that thick (nearly a foot) and a sapwood band that wide for its size (indicating rain forest growth). Even those long handled, double bit-axed axes are of a Western style. If that photo came from West Virginia, it was originally taken in California and brought back East.

I would love to see clearer, uncropped versions of these pictures.

*Thanks,
Jack*

As long time editor of The Old Barn Post I am delighted that folks actually read these articles and in some cases close enough to see where I am making stuff up. Well, I don't really make it up, but am always happy to get things corrected. I hate putting out false information.

Several of the images in the referenced article, including the ‘huge white oak’ were scanned from a book entitled *Tumult on the Mountains: Lumbering in West Virginia 1770-1920* by Roy B. Clarkson, 1964.

Jack's sleuthing turned up a piece in *Journal of Forestry* — Washington — September 2016 written by Melissa Thomas-Van Gundy and Robert Whetsell entitled *West Virginia's Big Trees: Setting the Record Straight*. In the article, specifically addressing the images in the book *Tumult on the Mountains*, Gundy and Whetsell publish a copy of the same image from the Humboldt State University archives in California. The tree as a Redwood. Kind of obvious once you look at it again with the correct caption.

While I was excitedly impressed with the size of the tree in the picture from the published book I did think it was considerably larger than any I had previously seen associated with Eastern Forests. I was maybe a bit hopeful that trees that large could have grown in early West Virginia. *Almost Heaven* West Virginia!

As someone once said, “Don't believe everything you read in the newspaper.” I guess that goes for books, too.

Thanks, Jack for keeping us to the facts!

Readers, feel free to comment on The Old Barn Post and do not hesitate to correct any fake news coming at you through this publication.

By: Tom O'Grady

FRIENDS, Continued from Page 10



Chris and Debbie Ledley's barn home is under construction in Ostrander. The Ledleys moved Debbie Ledley's family barn from near the Delaware County Airport after her parents sold the family farm.

they hooked the cut trees to an ox or horse and easily dragged them to the barn site, Troth said.

In the spring, they'd hew — or, in later years, saw — the trunks into posts. Then, in the summer, families, friends and neighbors came together to put up the barn. Troth said barn raisings were community events.

“And that sense of community has been lost to a great degree,” Troth said. But, he believes turning the barns into public places brings back that sense of community.

The barn became an official symbol of Ohio in 2019, thanks to the efforts of a few Westerville City Schools' students and a little support from the Friends of Ohio Barns.

Remembering roots

For the Ledleys, their new house will always be connected to old memories.

“So, you know, every time you walk in through the door, you just remember the blizzard of '78, what dad was doing, you know, in the barn, pulling in tractors out to plow out, the neighbors who were burning their furniture to stay warm,” Debbie Ledley said.

Troth says knowing your roots is important and in Ohio, those roots are in farming. Farmland, however, is slowly starting to disappear as big companies buy it to build or expand factories and warehouses.

“And they're, you know, moving us into the future with technology,” Troth said. “But I just think, how can we pay tribute to the farmers whose land we've bought? And I'm thinking, boy, it's a great place for a barn where the community can gather.”

By: Allie Vugrincic, Multi Media Reporter for NPR WOSU



Malabar Farm
— home of
writer Louis
Bromfield
from 1939 to
1956. Source:
smallfarmers-
journal.com

FOB Fall Picnic Saturday, October 7, 2023

Meet at noon at Malabar Farm State Park, 4050 Bromfield Road, (Richland County), Lucas 44843.

Please bring a side dish to share and your beverage; FOB will provide hamburgers, buns, condiments, tableware and water.

The picnic shelter is behind the visitor center.

After eating we will take a walk (or drive) to view the shelter FOB erected in 2019 for storage of firewood for the sugar camp.

If you are interested, optional 75-90 minute tours of Louis Bromfield's Big House are at 11 am and 2 pm; \$6 adults/\$5.40 seniors.

Please recycle this newsletter. Share it with a friend.
Printed on recycled paper, of course.



FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNS
P.O. Box 203
Burbank, Ohio 44214

