



# The Old BARN POST

*A publication of Friends of Ohio Barns • November, 2014 • Vol. XIII, Issue 3*

## Third Generation Decision to Make – Do We Keep It?

Northeast Ohio JBD team Clower, Woodall and Woodall went to the Soroka Farm in Vienna on a Sunday in early May wondering what we were going to find under the red steel siding. Justin, the grandson of Steve Soroka, is facing a dilemma – save the old barn or tear it down and replace it with a pole building – same old question, but yet another timber frame barn at risk.

However, Justin is different – He confessed that he likes history and feels that something will be lost if the old barn is demolished so his father, Dennis Soroka, called Gary and off we went to visit the family and hopefully educate them on the historic value of their old barn.

The main problem with the barn is that the foundation is buckling. Three sides of the foundation are made of old sandstone block and the east side had been redone in cement block. The barn had been raised many years ago so the work horses, Pat & Joe, could fit underneath. The lack of gutters and years of the bank wall pushing against the foundation has helped cause the whole barn to rack to the east. Steve recalls the tornado of 1947 and claims that the wind caused the barn to rack. But there are other reasons as well and we found them once we went inside the barn.

In usual fashion the straining

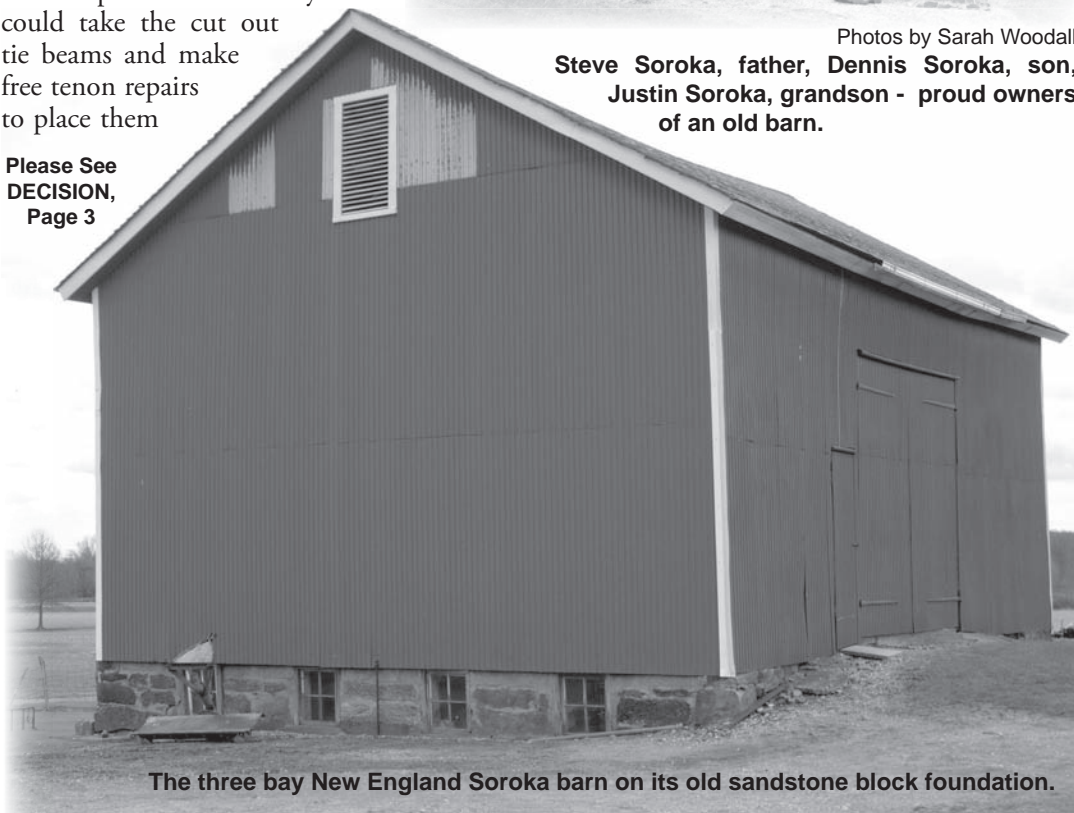
ties had been removed for the installation of the hay track. Dennis asked what could be done after John and Gary explained why removing those beams has caused structural problems. Luckily Steve had kept the straining ties (even though they had been cut out) and the braces that were not where they were supposed to be (Steve said they had fallen out during the tornado). We talked about installing cables or rods to help stabilize the frame and even explained how they could take the cut out tie beams and make free tenon repairs to place them

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Photos by Sarah Woodall

**Steve Soroka, father, Dennis Soroka, son,  
Justin Soroka, grandson - proud owners  
of an old barn.**



**The three bay New England Soroka barn on its old sandstone block foundation.**

# OLD BARNS IN HISTORY

Since the beginning of time barns have been the bellwether of agriculture. The structure of barns, being basic to a locality and culture, are a historical record of places and people. These various areas of historical cultural development can be identified with a critical assessment of barns as one travels across regions, states, and the nation.

In certain ways barns are a message from the owners. Each barn in the neighborhood was built a little larger and more ornate than the neighbor's barn. Added features through the years told their stories. The name over the big barn doors declared the name of the owner. Later an addition of the term "& Son", sometimes added as soon as the new heir to the throne was born, showed great expectations that the son would stay and help with the farm work and share in the riches. A date on the roof or the side of the barn would indicate when the farm was established or maybe when the barn was built indicating the spread of years between the purchase or land grant of the farm and the building of the all-important family barn. The closer the dates the faster the productivity of the farm provided the financial means to build the barn. The total picture shows the management ability and income of the operating farm unit.

In contrast there are areas where the barns and buildings are a shambles. They are indications of a less productive soil and therefore less financial strength. Light soils, poorly drained soils, and lack of good timber resulted in a marginal farm project. Subsistence was more important than fancy buildings. Food, shelter, and essentials for life came first.

An added dimension of the design and location of farm buildings is ethnic input. Various types of buildings followed certain nationalities of people who brought structural designs with them from the Old Country. As succeeding generations built new barns they copied "Grandpa's" barn and thus the styles continued down through the year and across neighborhoods and local regions. So we have Dutch barns, German Barns, and English barns, to name the most prolific designs that help us trace our backgrounds to the beginning of our country.

By identifying these trends in barns, trees, and woodlots one can roughly map areas of great or poor farm productivity, and ethnic population.

After the barns were built the task of maintaining them through the years was a continuing obligation, even to the present day. There are barns in Europe and England that are a thousand years old. Compare them to historic barns in our young country and one can see what stewardship and pride can accomplish. Some people were adept at maintaining or even improving their barns as time went on. Others felt that tomorrow was the time to do repair work. The old saying "drive a nail a day to save a barn" is very true. Some do and some don't.

With these thoughts in mind let us enjoy our historic old barns as we travel this great nation or local neighborhoods and be sure they are protected for the use and enjoyment of coming generations.

*This article was edited and reprinted from The Barn Consultant Newsletter by Charles W. Whitney with permission of Pamela Whitney Gray.*

# Hancock County Barn Tour Recognized by Ohio Historical Society

Fifteen outstanding projects and historic preservation achievements were recognized at the 33rd annual State Historic Preservation Office Awards Luncheon. A Public Education and Awareness Award goes to Hancock County Historical Museum for its Historic Barn Tour.

Each year, the Ohio History Connection, State Historic Preservation Office recognizes achievements in historic preservation by presenting awards in two categories: Public Education and Awareness, and Preservation Merit. The Public Education and Awareness Award is for increasing interest in historic preservation.

Hancock County's self-guided tour showcases six century-old barns in south-west Hancock County. Attendees learn about these unique structures while enjoying the sights, tastes, and sounds of Hancock County's heritage. The event included an antique plow show and demonstration, quilt show, live music, and food vendors.

"Inside a barn is a whole universe, with its own time zone and climate and ecosystem, a shadowy world of swirling dust illuminated in tiger stripes by light shining through the cracks between the boards. Old leather tack, lengths of chain, rope, and baling twine dangled from nails and rafters and draped over stall railings. Generations of pocketknives lay lost in the layers of detritus on the floor."

– Carolyn Jourdan, *Heart in the Right Place*

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Photo by Sarah Woodall

FOB reps, John Woodall and Gary Clower, inspect foundation problems with members of the Soroka family.



Photo by Gary Clower

The Soroka barn, on its new concrete block foundation, will be around for a few more generations now that the family has decided to repair it rather than replace it.

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back where they belonged. Gary also explained how the braces could be reinstalled as well. There is considerable sag in the roof as a result of the lost straining ties and the SE corner seems to have some gaps in the joinery. Justin would like to use the barn as storage so we talked about the waste walls and the ladders as to whether they could be removed or not and if they were needed for structural support.

Dennis was interested in the age of the barn so we showed them how to look for saw marks and what we found was that the timbers were cut using both sash and circular saws. The old siding was definitely sash sawn but some of the saw marks on the timbers looked like they were made with a circular saw that had a very large blade. Some of the large timbers were so smooth it looked like they were hand planed. What was atypical was the wood used for the timbers – the wood appeared to be either spruce, pine or maybe even hemlock and the barns in our area are usually built with oak, beech or poplar. We know that the house was built around 1863 and the saw marks support the date of the barn and the farm.

Times have changed on this farm. Steve started out with his work horses growing corn and wheat as well as maintaining a farm market. The Farmall H, now taking shelter in the garage, replaced Pat & Joe in 1950 and the farm mainly produces hay although now at the hands of leasers. Interestingly, back in 1877 the farm was leased to the Vienna Coal and Iron Co during the coal boom and there is still evidence of the coal mines on this farm today.

But there is still the foundation to fix and they want to know how much it will cost and is it worth it. By now Justin, his father Dennis and his Grandfather Steve, know they have special barn and have decided to proceed with at least obtaining bids on lifting the barn and replacing the foundation knowing that the bank will probably have to be fixed as well. Then there are gutters to hang, drainage issues to fix and possibly a new roof in the near future. Not to mention the repairs of the straining ties and installation of the missing braces. But.....they will have a historic barn that will outlive any pole building they could build and they know that now. We pray for a happy ending to this story.

— Sarah Woodall

## *They Kept it!* An update to the Soroka Family Barn

So Justin decided that his old barn is very important to him and his family as well as to the heritage of the community. They have contracted with Alan Fisher to raise the barn, remove the sandstone and replace it with a block foundation. They are also adding one layer of block so he can house equipment in the lower part of the barn. Not only are they doubling up on the joists but are also adding steel beam supports under the main floor. Although Justin now knows of the importance of doing traditional repairs he is also aware of the cost involved so to save money the bottom post repairs will all be done by using metal plates and he has decided to cable the barn together to secure it and hopes to eventually find someone to replace the straining ties and braces that were cut out years ago. New sills are being installed as well as a new roof, new gutters and downspouts. All told, he will be spending about as much, maybe more, as he would if he had built a very nice pole building – And he knows why he did it. He knows it will be standing there for when his grandchildren take over the farm one day.

— Sarah Woodall

# Friends Picnic on Historic Farm

The Stone Barn Farm sparkled like a diamond on a beautiful sun-kissed fall day as members arrived for the annual Friends of Ohio Barns picnic, Saturday September 20th. Over 30 members from around the state enjoyed the hospitality of Marjorie and Gary Baumberger (fifth generation) and family on this visit to the 2014 Barn of the Year winner for agricultural use.

Buckeye burgers were prepared by Dave and JoAnne Hamblin as everyone enjoyed the variety of homemade dishes and lively conversation, catching up with old friends and new.

After a leisurely lunch a tour was conducted of the stone barn by Marjorie and Gary. They shared stories and displayed tools used for quarrying and moving the huge stones into place as it was constructed in 1883 - 1884. Everyone marveled at the handmade wooden farm equipment stored in the straw shed, a wooden hay wagon used for hauling loose hay from surrounding fields, the wooden stone boat for moving the four to seven feet stones, some over two tons, a quarter mile from the quarry on the property to the building site.

The forty by sixty foot barn, built into the side of the hill, rests directly on bedrock and its buttressed walls taper from two feet thick at the base to one foot at the top of the thirty foot walls. Between each stone a space was left for ventilation and light. The four posts inside that support the roof served as gin poles with a forty foot boom during construction as each corner was laid and the walls filled in.

The upper entrance and driveway floor are 10' above the mow floor. Under the driveway is the granary that has a six inch thick half-hewn log floor. The ground floor houses the dairy operation with stanchions for milking and a manure removal system used up to the 1990s. The roof once was topped with a windmill to power small equipment.

After touring the barn Marjorie proudly showed us her goats that are an Alpine breed. From her one milker she makes goat cheese, which she served at lunch. Then we were chauffeured by family members in ATVs out to the quarry site.

Other unique items of days gone by were seen everywhere around the property. Two and three step stones used to mount a riding horse or carriage, a scythe left in a tree many years ago, a stone used for the making of lye soap, just to name a few. Inside the barn were the tongs used to lift the stones, an old stone boat, an old wagon and wagon jack, a giant log hewn out for a feeding or watering trough and a myriad other artifacts.

The stone house was built during the same time the barn was constructed. It is built into the hill above the barn. It has a monitor roof with a clerestory for natural light. The setting of the farm and the view of the farm from the house is gorgeous. The surrounds were so peaceful that it was hard to take our leave.

Thanks to the Baumberger Family for being so gracious in hosting the Friends of Ohio Barns annual picnic and sharing with us the history of their unique stone barn and home.

— Pamela Whitney Gray



Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Marjorie and Gary Baumberger, our delightful and gracious hosts, enjoy a laugh while touring the stone barn with picnickers. Marjorie holds the tongs used to lift the massive stones into place 130 years ago.**

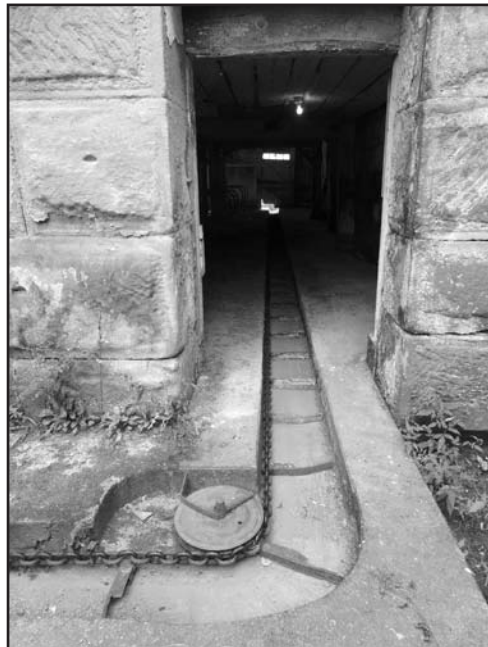


Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Automatic manure removal system in the basement of the stone barn.**



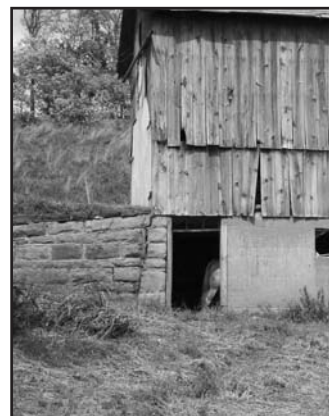
Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Keystone over the arched entrance at one end of the historic barn.**



Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Gary Wechter is carted by farmhouse, by equipment Rudy Christian, after visiting site on the farm where stones were used for the barn.**





# n in Monroe County



Tom O'Grady  
doorway at



Tom O'Grady  
back to the  
operator,  
the quarry  
was har-



**Top: Guests enter the historic Kindleberger Stone Barn in Monroe County.**

Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Above: A stone house above and stone barn below anchor the community of outbuildings that make up part of the Kindleberger/Baumberger farm. A stone water trough and extensive spring system, expansive fields, pastures, and a large walnut grove surround the farmstead.**

Photo by Tom O'Grady

**Left: One of the outbuildings on the Kindleberger/Baumberger farm was designed especially for this long horse.**

Photo by Doug Terpstra

## Junior Barn Detectives Program Changing

We are excited to announce some changes in the current JBD program! While we will continue to encourage members to be a part of the JBD'ers and assist the board with basic barn assessments, we are looking to greatly expand the idea of barn preservation in a new way.

The board is announcing a Barn Conservancy Program to replace the workshop aspect of the JBD program. We want to find and identify the top ten significant barns in Ohio (with your help of course!)

The criteria for selection will include the barn being:

1. In a high traffic area for convenient public viewing
2. Historically significant to local region or state
3. A structure of high quality craftsmanship, at least 100 years or older in its original location for at least most of its life and that provided a vital community function. Our hopes would then be to work with the owner (or community) and possibly aid in the repairs, restoration and re-purposing. FOB would look into procuring grant funding or use endowment money to perform structural repairs and maintenance up to a given dollar figure and hopefully have workshops during the restoration of the structure.

By providing this opportunity to communities or barn owners, FOB would also ask in return the following stipulations. The barn:

1. Must remain in situ for perpetuity and become part of community fabric.
2. Owners will allow FOB to inspect structure every five years for maintenance and repairs.
3. It must be made open to public access two times a year for educational opportunities.

The FOB board invites your input on this new program concept and encourages you to submit ideas for an endangered Ohio Barn!



Photos by Tom O'Grady

**Ohio Hill Country Heritage Tour crowds into round barn on Fairfield County Fairgrounds. Built in 1908, the barn features a circular seating gallery above a showing floor where cows are judged during the state's final fair of the year.**



**Fairfield County Fairgrounds Manager, Dave Benson, introduces tour participants to the Round House, an octagonal building constructed in 1865, the oldest building on the historic fairgrounds.**

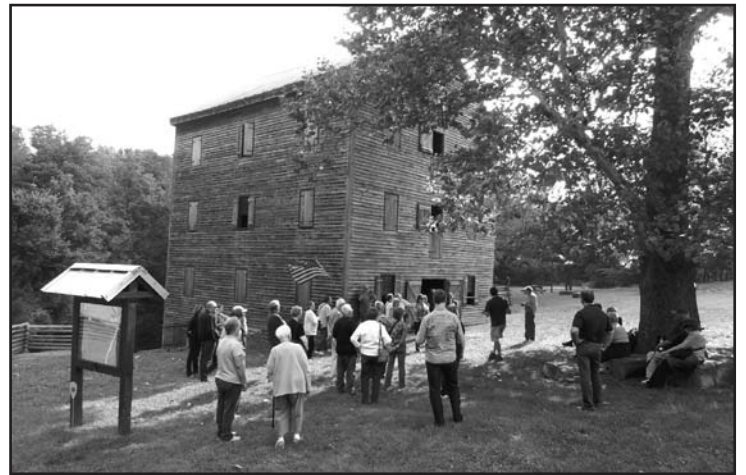
## Historic Sites Toured in Ohio's Hill Country

Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area hosted thirty participants on a two day tour through Fairfield, Athens, Perry and Muskingum counties that included historic barns, Rock Mill, and other interesting sites.

The tour was designed to introduce the historic and contemporary products of artisans, craftsmen, purveyors of specialty foods and libations from the region. The tour provided first hand contact with products and the people who create them, and explored how crafted products mark the culture of a place and how they are interrelated with the natural landscape of our region. The tour connected visitors with artisans, clay products manufacturers, a microbrewery, and other historic buildings. Sites visited included the round barn and historic buildings of the Fairfield County Fairgrounds, the restored Rock Mill and its 26 foot diameter water wheel, the nearby Rock Mill Brewery, the Ohio Glass Museum in Lancaster, Starbrick Clay, and Paper Circle in Nelsonville. Day 2 included a tour of Ludowici Tile, a plant in Perry County that has manufactured durable roofing tiles for more than a century.

Another stop at a historic farm highlighted artisans using branches from coppiced willows to make baskets, birdfeeders, garden gates and other products in a rehabilitated timber frame farm building and clay crafts and textiles in a fine New England three bay barn constructed of hand hewn timbers. The tour ended in Somerset with a tour of the original Perry County Courthouse, the oldest continuously operating public building in the Northwest Territories, and a visit to the 1809 Jacob Miller Tavern on the old Zane's Trace followed by a late dinner at the Clay Haus Restaurant in this historic Pennsylvania German settlement featuring an equestrian sculpture of hometown hero, General Philip Sheridan.

The various aspects of culture that create a sense of place, were explored as visitors roamed the hills from the glacier's edge in Fairfield and Perry Counties, to the heart of southeastern Ohio Hill Country. Participants experienced historic and contemporary crafting of iconic products while exploring their relationships to the natural environment and historical events of the place where they are found.



**Heritage Tour visits the recently restored Rock Mill, perched on a bluff above the Upper Falls of the Hockhocking River. The Fairfield County Historic Parks District recently installed a new overshot waterwheel with a 26 foot diameter, the largest size wheel known to have been built in the U.S. The Parks District plans to install two sets of bur stones and begin making flour in the near future. Historic preservation at its best.**



**This hand hewn English three bay bank barn in Muskingum County houses craft operations for ceramics, textiles and willow baskets. A fine adaptive reuse.**



# FOB Partners with TFG at Ag Days Workshop in PA

Past FOB president, Rudy Christian, applied for and received a grant from the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT). The grant amount of \$2500.00 had the stipulation that at least two non profit groups combine their efforts to develop an educational workshop. Rudy had been approached by the Pasto Museum at State College, PA to build a small timber frame for their annual Agricultural Progress Days event (think OARDC and Farm Science Review bundled together). Rather than do that as an individual business man he tried to get support for Friends to do the workshop. When faced with the request to form a partnership with another non profit, the natural choice was the Timber Framers Guild. FOB members involved in the workshop were Rudy Christian, Ric Beck, Laura Saeger, Sarah & John Woodall with TFG member Andrew Schaeffer.

Timber and materials arrived on site at the Pasto Museum on Aug 11th giving the participants one day to unload, set up and get some layout work done for Progress Days demonstrations starting Aug 12th. Our tent was strategically positioned at the top of the hill over looking the event, next



Photo by Laura Saeger  
**Ric Beck assists Pasto Museum director, Rita Graef, in "topping off" the new timber frame structure. Placing an evergreen branch at the peak for good luck and longevity is an age old tradition.**

to the Pasto Museum and adjacent to their historic barn. The white oak timber for the new frame was fresh off the mill, very heavy and remarkably square, a tribute to

the skill of the sawyer. We focused on using hand tools during Fair hours with power tools helping us to catch up and get ahead in the early mornings. We had constant support from the Museum director, Rita Graef, and her volunteers and the staff of the Agricultural Research Center. Our goal to have the frame completed for the benefit auction the afternoon of the 13th was just beyond doing, but we did set the sills and have one bent with rafters set up for display all day Wednesday. The completed frame was raised by hand with the help of attendees invited from the crowd on Thursday. The unexpected demand of 10 hour days did keep us from really experiencing the Ag Fair completely, but our interactions with the thousands of attendees was so positive it was worth it. The Centre Valley region of PA just outside State College is one of the most beautiful areas I have visited. The daily drive from our hotel took us through pristine, productive farm land. On the first morning we counted over thirty barns all worthy of our Barn of the Year Award. There is a good chance we'll be invited back for another timber framing demonstration next year; maybe some of you will join us!

— Laura Sarger

## *An update on the Carlisle Building in Chillicothe*

After the Ohio Barn Tour in Ross County in 2003, a fire broke out in the attic of the Carlisle Building out the window and across the street from the Crosskeys Tavern where members of the FOB board and conference attendees were having dinner. We watched as 5 or 6 fire departments battled the blaze over the next few hours. The building survived with significant damage. Good news: The City of Chillicothe and Adena Health Systems have retained Schooley Caldwell Associates from Columbus to plan the future of the Carlisle Building. Good move: the architects at Schooley Caldwell have done an amazing job restoring the Ohio Statehouse and the Ohio Judicial Center as well as a number of other statehouses, courthouses and important historic buildings in Ohio and across the country. They have recently been retained by Ohio University to help guide that institution into the future with the magnificent old buildings of the Athens Asylum. Also on their portfolio of historic structures are a number of county courthouses in Ohio. Those arriving a bit early to the Ohio Barn Conference and Barn Tour in 2015 will have an opportunity to see their work on the Hancock County Courthouse in Findlay, Ohio.



**Left: Scaffolding is up and finial is removed from the tower as work begins on the restoration of the historic Carlisle Building in Chillicothe.**

Image retrieved from Facebook

**Right: Firemen high on two ladders fight the blaze in the Carlisle Building in the spring of 2003.**

Photo by Tom O'Grady



## *Be a new member recruiter!*

If you are a member in good standing, we have an opportunity for you!!

Just get a friend, stranger, mere acquaintance, or even a previous member to join Friends of Ohio Barns, and get a new hat or t-shirt!

To be eligible, simply send an e-mail to secretary Sarah, treasurer Laura, or president Ric stating who the new member is. When we get a check from them, you can pick out your new gift! It's way better than a toaster!!

Thanks for keeping our membership strong...

**Right: JoAnne Hamblin wearing her new FOB cap earned by recruiting new member Phylis Miller.**



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Printed on recycled paper, of course.



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