

# Ohio Barn Conference IV

April 24, 25 and 26

Ross County Fairgrounds, Chillicothe, Ohio

It seems only natural that the 2003 Ohio Barn Conference be held in the location of Ohio's first capitol in conjunction with the state's Bicentennial celebration. Friends of Ohio Barns is partnering with OSU Extension to establish an agenda complete with presentations, demonstrations, barn tours and entertainment. Maybe even a barn raising if things work out. Join us at this year's Ohio Barn Conference and bring a photograph and some information about your barn (approximate date of construction, size, roof material, and whether timbers were hewn or sawn). Members will be on hand to help you discover a few new things you might not have known about the barn you are caring for. Friends of Ohio Barns is hoping to begin a county register of Ohio's barns. No doubt this will require considerable help from a volunteer force. If you were wondering what you can do to help FOB, consider heading up this task force in your county.

*Speaking of volunteers, the FOB board of directors needs help. We would like to have FOB represented by members throughout Ohio. As volunteers we are unable to cover 88 counties. Please consider volunteering to man booths at fairs or local events; maybe even give presentations. FOB will supply you with information and brochures.*

The Ross County Fairgrounds are located on State Route 104 in Chillicothe. Friends of Ohio Barns will be working with representatives of Ohio University Extension and the Ohio Bicentennial Commission to organize and present the 2003 Ohio Barn Conference. FOB will be partnering with Barn Again! Ohio and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. For more information, log onto our website, contact members of the board of Friends of Ohio Barns. Questions may also be directed to Ray Wells, Ross County Extension, 740-702-3200; Don Davis, Hocking County Extension, 740-385-3222; or Deanna Tribe, Community Development Specialist, 740-286-2177.

**Join us at the 2003 Ohio Barn Conference in Ohio's first capitol!**

*Background: This bank barn with an overhanging forebay indicates German heritage and settlement by Pennsylvania Dutch pioneers.*

*All photos by Tom O'Grady unless otherwise noted*



**FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs**

P.O. Box 203  
Burbank, Ohio 44214



# The Old BARN POST

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## *It takes a community to protect a barn*

Most Ohioans don't own a barn. Most of us live in sprawling cities with hundreds or thousands of nearby neighbors. Why should non-barn owners be concerned with the declining number of Ohio barns? What concern is it of theirs whether barns survive into the next century?

Any time Ohioans left town to travel they passed what seemed like an endless string of barns between cities and towns. These large structures have long been a part of the landscape that we have taken for granted. They are an important part of Ohio's heritage, and one of the most notable characteristics of the Ohio countryside. Barns are a part of our experience and they help define our sense of place.

The early farmers who built these timber framed structures believed they would receive the maintenance and upkeep needed to keep them useful parts of a growing agricultural economy. As a result of their resourcefulness and hard work, agricultural output

increased until Ohio eventually led the nation. But innovation, specialization and rapidly transforming farm practices have resulted in changing needs, often leaving the barn standing idly by. Larger equipment, consolidation of many smaller farms into fewer mega-farms and a host of other factors have resulted in the declining use of the traditional American barn. All too often the barn stands as the centerpiece of an entire community of outbuildings falling into disrepair.

Today's barn owners are the current caretakers of structures built more than a century ago with tools, techniques, materials and skills that have also been declining. With the best of intentions, some owners hire contractors who don't understand the architecture and the results often increase the rate of deterioration. Those who have the skills are fewer and need greater compensation for the time they invested learning the trade.

Barns are big. They are expensive to repair. People skilled in a variety of trades are needed to do the work. With so many barns a work force needs to be trained. Ohio is presented with a great opportunity to train workers, create jobs and embark on a restoration economy that will preserve these treasures of Ohio's heritage. Such efforts are very compatible with the state's investment in tourism and travel. But many more people and more resources will be needed to pull this off. The conservation of barns and farmsteads is an enormous undertaking and will require the help of many hands. Such is the goal of Friends of Ohio Barns.

— Tom O'Grady



**Many barns have slate roofs in need of work. Some barn roofs are adorned with names and dates requiring a skilled craftsman for repairs. This Fairfield County barn roof boasts a slate horse, two names, and the year 1888.**



**A split post in a corner joint weakens the integrity of a barn. Not everyone knows how to approach such a repair job.**

# Friends of Ohio Barns plays role in National Preservation Conference

For the first time in 17 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation chose Cleveland, Ohio for its annual conference on historic preservation. The Renaissance Hotel on Public Square hosted the conference registration, resource center and numerous presentations.

Friends of Ohio Barns Board members Laura Saeger, Ric Beck, Tom O'Grady, Larry Sulzer, Gary Wechter and chairman Rudy Christian represented Friends in the resource center booth. The booth, which also included information about the Timber Framers Guild and the Preservation Trades Network, was well received by conference attendees.

The conference theme "Cities, Suburbs and Countryside" generated a diverse cross section of discussion topics, workshops and tours. The tour of the iron bridges over the Cuyahoga River sold out very early, as did the tours of Cleveland's restored neighborhoods and theater district.

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway Excursion, sponsored by the Cuyahoga Valley National Park System, was a trip to remember as it took conference goers to visit the Historic Canal city of Akron and the farmsteads that are being put back into use by the Cuyahoga Valley Conservancy. This program will provide stewardship for these historic farmsteads by leasing them to young families with an interest in "progressive" farming programs. Anyone with an interest in saving old timber framed barns should be grateful for the development of this cutting edge program.

## FOB leads barn tour

Another highlight of the conference was the historic Barn Tour, a first for the National Trust. Friends chairman Rudy Christian and treasurer Laura Saeger organized and managed the tour, and barn detective Larry Sulzer answered questions along the tour that covered nearly 100 miles of countryside in Geauga County, the closest eastern neighbor to Cuyahoga County.

Fifty-five people signed up for the sold-out tour that included timber frame barns from the very early 1800s and more modern barns built as late as the 1923. Half of the barns visited were still being used as barns, while the rest have been converted to alternative uses.

Lunch was taken at Mary Yoder's Amish Kitchen and included presentations by Jennifer Smyzer of the Farmland



Photo by Rudy Christian

Twin tile silos dwarf tour participants at Geauga County's Wisconsin Dairy Barn, currently under the stewardship of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Trust, who provided up-to-date information on state and national farmstead preservation programs, and Rudy Christian who discussed saving our barns from the perspective of realizing their historic importance while showing slides of ancient barns from recent trips to Europe.

The week's conference festivities also included many receptions and plenary sessions held at locations that are considered some of Cleveland's greatest architectural treasures. The opening reception, which included a speech by Cleveland's Mayor Jane Campbell, was held at the recently restored Severance Hall. The National Preservation Awards ceremony

for 2002 was held at Cleveland's magnificent Severance Hall.

The closing plenary session included presentations by Ohio Senator Mike DeWine and folklorist and author Henry Glasie, and was held at the beautifully restored Ohio Theatre in Playhouse Square. The grand finale was the closing party held at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

Cleveland rolled out the red carpet and preservationists from across the country had a chance to network, learn and enjoy the revitalization of its great urban and suburban landscape.

— Rudy R. Christian

## Help build a barn contractors list

FOB board member Ric Beck is working with Steve Gordon of the Ohio Office of Historic Preservation to update the existing Barn Contractors and Consultants list. He has sent out letters requesting information on services available and corrections to contact information on the existing list. He has also combed the classifieds looking for contractors interested in doing barn repairs. If you have had repairs done, you can help by sharing your successful barn repair stories. Write or call Ric so he can add your contractor to the list.

# What about the Goll Woods Barn?

What's happening with the Goll Woods Barn?

That's the most frequently asked question by participants of the OBC III. If you did not attend the conference, or are just joining Friends of Ohio Barns, let me bring you up to speed. Goll Woods Barn, a rare triple jetty outshot barn in Fulton County, is owned by The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (ODNR/DNAP).

Located on Goll Woods State Nature Preserve, this magnificent structure is in need of some repair. A local group (Friends of Goll Homestead) has been formed to oversee the repairs and management of the barn and other structures around the Goll homestead. FOB was hoping to organize a community action program in August to help stabilize the foundation of the barn.

Now for the update. The Friends of Goll Homestead has applied for their 501c3 non-profit status, and once that is



Visitors at the 2002 Ohio Barn Conference tour the Goll Woods Barn.

in place they will be able to enter into a management agreement with ODNR/DNAP to participate in the restoration and upkeep of the homestead. When the agreement is in place Friends of Ohio Barns will be in a position to help

organize the restoration project.

When do we expect all of the pieces of the puzzle to fall into place? Stay tuned to *The Old Barn Post* and we will update you as we have more information to pass along.

— Tim Mason

## Friends of Ohio Barns Board of Directors

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*"The degree of civilization and knowledge prevailing in a community is always clearly designated by its works of art, and by none more than by its architecture ..."*

Remarks of the Ohio Statehouse Commissioners, 1838

## Members' update

*Or what the heck's been goin' on all summer and autumn and ...?*

It's been just over one year since we officially formed Friends of Ohio Barns in September, 2001. In that time a great deal has happened. We have been accepted as partners with Barn Again! in Ohio, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and the National Barn Alliance, and we were invited by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to lead a barn tour of Geauga County as part of the National Preservation Conference in Cleveland. As a result we are now recognized nationwide!

Over the summer, your board members spent many hours representing our organization at events such as Ohio Power Show, AG Day — Main Street Wooster, Farm Science Review, Malabar Farm Heritage Days, Ohio Hill Country Heritage Area Annual Gathering, Country Living Field Days, Malabar School Days, the National Trust Conference, the Algonquin Mill and Forest Heritage Days. Some members have assisted the board by manning booths, creating display boards and, most important, just taking the time to talk to folks.

Creating an e-mail list of our members to communicate what and where "Friends" are, and what we're doing each month is a goal. A database we could search by county would be great! We've been very busy. The recognition of the intrinsic value of our barns is increasing. If you'd like to assist in any way, or have ideas you would like to see implemented, please let us know. Feel free to contact any of the board members directly; their names and phone numbers are listed in this issue.

None of this would be possible without you.

Your member dues support the work of "Friends." Congratulations and thank you.

— Laura Saeger