

# 2007 Barn Conference

Friends of Ohio Barns' 2007 Barn Conference will be held March 30, 31, and April 1 at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Mansfield with the theme "Ohio Barns Built by the Trades."

Friday will be the annual barn tour, starting with the 2006 barn of the year for adaptive use. The rest of the tour will feature many historic barns, a trip through a historic town, and lunch at a greenhouse.

Saturday will feature speakers and demonstrations. Trades people will give demonstrations and answer restoration questions.

Saturday night will be filled with a silent auction and entertainment.

Sunday morning will be a trip to Malabar Farms, where we will tour three barns. Ashland County Barns and Rural Heritage Society will have a display of the 1,400-plus barns they have surveyed.

See the inside of this newsletter for a more complete conference schedule, and watch formore conference information and registration forms in the Barn Post toward the end of January.

Photo by Bob Rowland



FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs  
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# The Old BARN POST

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## Champaign County holds barn quilt tour

The first annual Champaign County Barn Quilt Tour was held on Saturday, September 16. Organized by the Chamber of Commerce and many faithful volunteers, the event was blessed with a day of sunshine and loads of fun. Sixteen barns throughout the county, covering over 80 miles of rural territory, sported vinyl quilt patterns that dressed each barn with a new flair.

Five barns on the driving tour were open to visitor, each with a different theme. Barn restoration was the theme at a thrashing barn built in 1850. A dodecagon (12-sided) barn was added in 1896. Dan Troth of Friends of Ohio Barns was the guest speaker at this barn. He entertained the audiences throughout the day with his knowledge of barn structure along with his humor and suggestions

for preserving  
b a r n s  
either

in their existing space or moving and using them for another function. The interest he received was encouraging proof that barn owners are interested in preserving their own barns, if possible. This event opened some eyes to the possibilities and reasons for saving these structures.

A 1950 Gothic arch barn beautifully displayed over 150 quilts. The Quilter's Guild and the barn's owner organized the quilts within the feeding troughs, up the stairway to the mow, and throughout the mow in a dazzling display. The quilts and lighting introduced a spectacular view of the interior of the Gothic arch.

A stately 1900 gambrel-roofed barn with a stone foundation was the center of an art display, courtesy of the Arts Council. Several artists exhibited their talents and had works of art on display and for sale. A local artisan demonstrated her technique for dyeing silk scarves.

Another 1900 barn with a gable roof houses its owners' antique tractor and tool collection. Visitors reminisced about a different era as they viewed antique tools, bicycles, tractors, cars, and farm equipment.

At the north end of the county, a 1913 gambrel-roofed barn was home to children's activities, including a petting zoo, ice cream making, and other farm-related activities.

This event brought together what would normally be thought of as two completely different subjects and married them into something to be remembered. It stirred up an interest in barn owners to take a new look at their barns and dream of the possibilities. Some even expressed an interest in fixing their barns so that they too could proudly sport a quilt pattern.

Over 600 tickets were sold the day of the event.

A 2007 Champaign County Barn Quilt Calendar and driving tour map are available for \$10 by calling the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau at 937-653-5764.

— Joan Zerkle



**FOB board member Dan Troth demonstrates hole drilling for mortise and tenons for Champaign County tour participants.**



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## 2007 conference schedule

### Friday, March 30

Barn Tour

### Saturday, March 31

- 7:15 a.m. Registration opens; continental breakfast
- 8:15-8:30 Welcome, opening remarks
- 8:30-9:30 Featured Speaker (Rudy Christian)
- 9:30-10:15 Photographing barns for pleasure and preservation (Dan Troth & Larry Sulzer)
- 10:15-10:45 Morning break (wood identification, bookstore, and exhibits)
- 10:45-12:15 Breakout sessions
  - Tom Ambrose (barn restoration through historic preservation project)
  - Fred Cannon—Agricultural easements
  - Extension Office representative—Tax incentives for barn repair
  - Bob Gibbs—Political support for barns
- 12:15-1:45 Lunch—Annual meeting, officer election, FOB year in review, next year's conference location and theme
- 1:45-3:30 Breakout sessions
  - Jim Scott—Roofer
  - John Fredericks—Lime mortar
  - Keith Sommer—Stonemason
- 3:30-4:00 Afternoon break (submit wood identification forms, bookstore and exhibits)
- 4:00-4:45 Barn Detectives
- 4:45-5:30?? Barn Repair panel (trades people and board members)
- 6:30-Dinner Silent auction, Barn of the Year Award, live music

### Sunday, April 1

- 8 a.m. Breakfast at Malabar Farms (award for wood identification contest, lifetime member plaques)
- 9:00-9:45 Tim Anderson
- 9:45-noon Rotating tour of Malabar barns (Rudy on restoration, Nancy and Bob on barn surveys, and Louie Andres on Malabar)

## Trades specialists, consultants, and contractors sought

I hope that all of you are having a great winter and enjoying this holiday season!

As your newly appointed president, I am charged with continuing the tremendous work of my predecessors. Most people assigned a new job are flooded with ideas for carrying on, and I am no different.

As a board member of Friends, I was (and still am) in charge of developing a consultant and contractor list for Ohio. I have struggled with this task, and I have my excuses, lame though they may be. I think the elder craftsman of this great state don't advertise much, and don't utilize the computer age possibilities. I think we have devalued their importance by looking for quick fixes to our barn problems instead of thinking in the long term like our ancestors. I think our cost-versus-value rationale has prevented us from utilizing these masters of their craft to their full potential, to the detriment of our barns and us.

Returning recently from a Timber Framers Guild conference in Roanoke, Virginia, my head was swimming with ideas for uniting tradesman with barn stewards in hopes that both would carry on the responsibility of preservation and conservation. That is, after all, the theme of this year's Ohio Barn Conference in Mansfield—"Ohio Barns Built by the Trades." And it is giving me an idea for hopefully increasing our trades list.

Another idea is that we will look at posting our trades list on the Friends website and providing copies of the list at our conferences. A big part of our list will come from the Ohio Historical Society's list of consultants and contractors. Like the society, "no endorsement is expressed or intended and none should be implied" regarding people on the list. You should consider which person is best qualified for your specific project.

My next immediate idea is to personally invite all trades-related people to attend our upcoming conference so we can put a name to a face and maybe get some specific questions answered. You can be a big help to me by letting your trades neighbor know about the conference. Let them know that we have some terrific fellow tradesmen presenting at the conference and that it would be a great place to network with barn stewards, as well as a great place to share their wealth of knowledge.

More ideas will be flooding my brain in the coming issues, and I look forward to sharing them with you.

Thanks!

— Ric Beck



## Can this old barn be fixed?

Having been a part of Friends of Ohio Barns for a few years now, I have been witness to some pretty great icons of agriculture. Across this state, people have opened their barns and hearts to us. I am often surprised to see how a barn is put together, how it has been modified over its lifespan, and in some cases, what the structure was originally intended to be.

When touring a barn, the owner will invariably begin to discuss family memories of time spent in the barn, how it was changed, and when it started falling into disrepair. Then they will express regret as to how expensive it would be to fix. Granted, some barns are very expensive to repair, and some are just too far gone. But in many cases, the owner can fix barns economically, or can at least prevent further damage to it until qualified craftsmen can perform permanent repairs.

Here is an example of just such a barn. Its owner called me last spring to come out and look at his barn, and he showed me this quaint, ivy covered storage barn ... or so I thought. Turns out it was an old school house, built in the late 1800s. An interior view showed massive timbers in the loft system (compared to the rest of the frame) as well as complex joinery in the rest of the structure. It is truly a unique timber frame, and well worth saving ... but how?

As we walked around inside and out we saw that one gable end of the frame was sinking into the ground. Its sill plate, a horizontal beam often laid on foundation stones that the frame's post sits on, was rotten and partially gone from where the hillside ran down against the barn floor and, because the gutters were rotten, allowed water and dirt to accumulate over time.

The owner wanted to repair the frame, raise it, and put a basement under it to make a workshop for his car hobby. He intended to use the

main floor as storage and showcase for his vehicles. He had contacted a few repairmen, but so far had no luck with restoration.

I told him he had a couple of options. He could leave it alone and hope to find a qualified repairman, digging a ditch to channel water away from the frame (which wouldn't help the rotten sill and sagging roof), or he could stabilize the post on the toed-in corner, raise it out of the dirt, and stop further erosion of the frame until permanent help could be found.

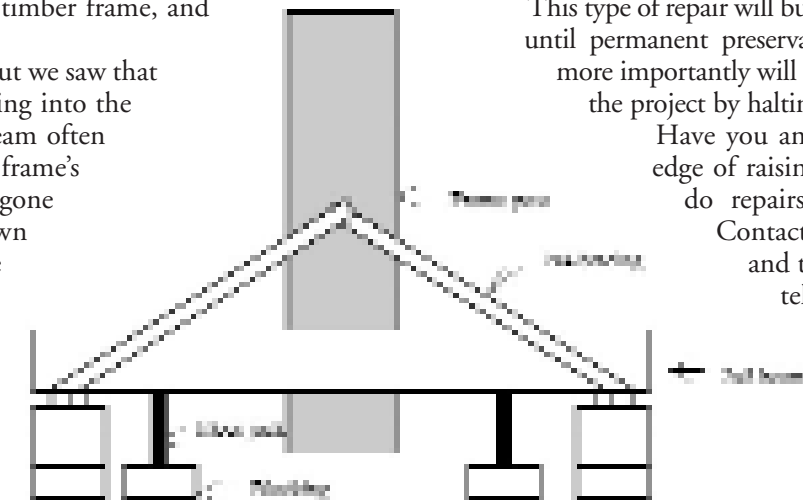
One way to raise the post, which would straighten the frame and halt further damage, is to use a floor jack and some 2 x 8 material. Lag bolt some 2 x 8s to the post approximately two feet above ground. Have a solid surface to put the jack on and place it one foot away from post. Nail 2 x 4 bracing to the post and beam to stabilize the 2 x 8, and then place some scrap wood material under the 2 x 8 and slowly jack the post up.

As you begin to raise the corner, place something solid (like concrete blocks) under the beam. In this example, the owner won't need to raise the corner much. He can block it, and then maybe figure out a way to channel water away from the corner ... then it's time to work on his shop plans.

This type of repair will buy several months of time until permanent preservation can be done, and more importantly will reduce the overall cost of the project by halting any further damage.

Have you any experience or knowledge of raising a corner of a barn to do repairs? If so, let us know! Contact Friends of Ohio Barns and tell us your story ... and tell us who did the repair work. We are always interested in adding good craftsmen to our list!

— Ric Beck



## Pushing for barn awareness at Malabar Farm

Denny and Judy Hendershot, Bob and Nancy Rowland, Paul Knoebel, and Jim and Kendal Taylor went to Malabar Farm September 24 to man the FOB booth and campaign for old barns across Ohio.

What a great day! It was sunny, with individuals in vintage costumes, butter being churned, quilts quilted, mountain men in camps, wagons pulled by huge draft horses, antique tractors, and, everywhere you looked, barns being used.

Most of the individuals we talked to were from Ashland County and very interested in FOB's spring conference. Everyone had a story to tell about a barn. Their neighbor had one in disrepair or they grew up with one. One man had a barn with three one-piece beams each 72 feet long. He said he knows one beam is wild cherry because the bark is still on it. Another man said he is a farmer with three old bank barns, but he cannot afford to work on them unless the state helps with tax credits. Another fellow said he salvages barns for a living and is becoming more and more concerned about the reuse of parts.

We met a woman who is the director of the Ashland Community Center, where she would like to put information from FOB on display.

What a great attraction Paul Knoebel's display barn is for young and old. On this particular day it was built in the morning by some enthusiastic boys and again in the afternoon by some well-organized young ladies. But our favorite participant was Paul, who handles youngsters and their parents so easily. He is not only skilled but has the authority of an experienced Boy Scout leader. Paul directed, the kids built, and the parents admired.

Thank you to the members of FOB who carted materials, helped, or organized our participation at Heritage Days at Malabar Farm. We couldn't wait to be part of the next event, so Denny, Jim, and Paul were off to the Algonquin Mill Festival in Carrollton, which was equally successful.

— Kendal Taylor

## Friends of Ohio Barns Board of Directors

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# Friends of Ohio Barns display a success at annual Algonquin Mill festival

“Busy, busy, busy” best describes our FOB presence at the Algonquin Mill Festival October 13-15. This annual event takes place at the site of the Carroll County Historical Society’s 1820s operating grist mill in Perrysburg, Ohio, four miles south of Carrollton. The festival, which is always held the second full weekend in October, has been called one of Ohio’s best-kept secrets. The weather cooperated this year and thousands of visitors came to see the activities and beautiful hill country fall colors.

Friday was, as usual, kids day for local and not-so-local schools. At one time over 35 school buses graced the parking lot.

The FOB staffed display area consisted of our typical display board, handouts, and sale items including hats and Ashland County barn calendars. Paul Knoebel’s timber framed mini-barn was raised by different kids five times throughout the long weekend. Each participating child received a real monogrammed peg for their hour-long effort.

It has now survived 40 such raisings and continues to be a great attention-getter for our display as well as an educational tool for children and adult onlookers.

Our regular FOB display site is perfectly located. It and the sauerkraut house across the way create a 20-foot-wide pathway through which the thousands of visitors must pass to tour the complete complex. Our out-

door layout is also backed up against the end of the Mill’s well maintained typical three-bay German bank barn. As such we can readily suggest to the display visitors interested in seeing typical barn construction, repairs, and maintenance that they visit the entire open barn. During the festival, the upper floor/mow area is completely dedicated to a large local art show and the lower to a country store. We suggest that they look up as well as straight ahead so they can also see the large identification signs we have placed on typical barn components.

FOB volunteers Denny Hendershot and Jim Taylor of Summit County, as well as Holly and George Ferich of Stark County, were kept very busy throughout the three-day event. Thanks to them, we were able to distribute lots of literature and field a vast array of barn-related questions.

Hopefully next year we can have more FOB volunteers from around the area. That way all the helpers have more opportunity to break away from the display to see and enjoy the rest of the many interesting activities, such as the bread house, where over 1,800 loaves are made on site, the belching steam-powered traction engines sawing logs or making shingles, the eight tons of cabbage used to make sauerkraut, and the steam-powered grist mill where three burr mills simultaneously grind wheat, corn, and buckwheat into flour for sale on site. Visitors may also purchase apple butter and cookies. Over a thousand dozen are made at the Mill complex in the weeks preceding the festival.

The more volunteers we have at these types of activities, the more we all get to enjoy them.

— Paul Knoebel



**Algonquin Mill, located in Perrysburg, just south of Carrollton, hosts an annual festival in which FOB participates. Those attending the festival were introduced to a historic barn with key features labeled. Children and their parents learned about these structures by helping raise a timber-framed mini-barn.**

## Wayne County Farm Tour

Friends of Ohio Barns was invited to take part in Wayne County’s fall farm tour. I was asked by my neighbor Matt Peart, of Canaan Creek Farm, to set up a display and talk to folks about barns, our efforts to encourage surveys of our historic barns, and our organization in general.

The tour took place the weekend of October 14-15 and focused on farmsteads in the northern section of Wayne County. It was a windy but beautiful weekend, perfect for a driving tour. I was in good company. In addition to our barn display, Eden Foods was handing out samples of their organic canned goods and containers of soy milk. OARDC set up their Forestry Program display, Doebler Seed featured their organic seeds, and, most tempting of all, homemade ice cream churned by a sweet little steam engine. On display down at the barn were the new calves and beef herd all kept in order by Jack the donkey and Bess the draft mare.

I’m sure many of you have taken the opportunity to drive a county farm tour. If you have not you are missing a great time. I was amazed that so many folks drove in from Akron, Barberton, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Sandusky, and points north. Obviously the connection to rural life and farms is hard to break even when you live in the city.

Friends members Nancy and Bob Rowland brought photos of the Ashland County Barns and Beryl Becket helped with handouts and explanations of the photo displays. Bob was great with guiding the children on the use of the peg pounding bench. As we talked together during a quiet time we came to realize that of the nine stops on the tour, we were at one of two historic barns on the tour, and that Matt’s farm, Cannan Creek, was the only organic farm to visit. Nine stops — two historic barns. Think about it friends. What type of buildings will our grandchildren see when they go on a farm tour in the future?

— Laura Saeger



## Vocational students practice timber framing techniques

Two local high school industrial arts teachers saw our FOB display at the recent Algonquin Mill Festival and asked me if I could do the mini-barn raising at their schools for their older student wood-working class.

I made the mistake of inviting the local Manchester teacher over to my “almost completed” (but wood heated) timber frame workshop to discuss just how we would do that with a class of 22 older high school kids. While here, I guess he got bit by the timber frame bug, so I wound up putting on a three-and-a-half-hour marathon session on the barn floor of my friend’s local five-bay German bank barn. Fortunately, FOBers Denny Hendershot and Jim Taylor answered my call as backup for the enthusiastic bunch.

I wanted to have the kids use a boring machine to make some holes and mortise/tenons, but only had on site some two-year-old hard, dry white oak tim-

bers. So I went across the way and cut out a log from a fallen cherry tree and practiced some hewing on half of it the night before. I did some more on it for the kids, then let them do their thing on the hewn surfaces. The amateurish hewing demo gave (I hope) the kids a better understanding of just how good a craftsman the guy was who cut the barn they were standing in.

We toured the big operating horse-boarding barn and discussed old farming methods that necessitated there being such a structure. The last 45 minutes were dedicated to the mini-barn raising. The teacher, my two helpers, and I were all pleasantly surprised at how well the class participated and behaved. I guess it was all so new to them that it held their interest even though there were limited hands-on opportunities. I know I was bushed by day’s end. I spent three days rounding up all my old, semi-old, and corded timber frame related stuff for a large chronologically

laid out timber frame tool display. We took another day to again squirrel the stuff away, all except for the mini-barn. Thanks to the generous barn owner, its permanent storage site is and has always been right there in one corner of the middle barn floor.

Twenty-two boys and one teacher got to see what that big old white barn in their neighborhood really is. Somehow, we need to get our message to more of these kids. More hands-on stuff is needed. Fortunately, the owner here wasn’t the type to get all bent out of shape on insurance/liability issues. They have five young children themselves, and it is a real working farm despite the fact that it is on only eight remaining acres right in the middle of suburbia. Who knows, down the road it may be the influence of these boys that helps this family preserve this fine edifice for others to see.

— Paul Knoebel

## Barn Affinity luncheon report: National Trust Conference

The National Trust for Historic Preservation holds a conference each year. For the last 12 years in conjunction with the conference there has been a Barn Affinity breakfast or luncheon which offers organizations, individuals, and state and local parties who have an interest in conserving what is left of our rural farm heritage an opportunity to meet and talk. This year, for the third time, I attended the Pittsburgh convention and luncheon with Rudy Christian.

The Barn Again! program, jointly sponsored by the Smithsonian and the Trust, was responsible for bringing barns and rural properties into the picture for most preservation philosophers. From the beginning, cooperative Extension educators were involved. Previously, rural properties and in particular barns were notably absent from the preservation radar screen. Bill Kimble, retired from Extension Service at Michigan State University and one of the founding members of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network and the National Barn Alliance, has always been involved at this level with the Trust.

The National Barn Alliance has been mentioned in articles in our newsletter, but what is it? This information is taken directly from their handout:

preservation programs at the national, state, and local levels, ... supporting the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Barn Again! program,

... generating and disseminating new information on technical, economic, and cultural aspects of barns and their continued or adaptive use,

... helping people understand that preserving a barn is an important step in developing an appreciation of the larger rural heritage—the farmstead, the neighborhood, the community, and the rural culture.

Now, after ten years of being an informal network, the National Barn Alliance is changing and becoming a true 501c3 organization. The incorporation papers have been filed in Ohio, partly because Friends of Ohio Barns along with Ann Christy of The Ohio State University have been involved with and supportive of National Barn Alliance initiatives, partly based on the success of the Ashland County historic barn survey, and due in part to the generosity of attorney Ron Holtman, who also helped Friends of Ohio Barns file for non-profit status.

The barn surveys are key to providing data to support our claims that historic barns are disappearing at an alarming rate and that funds are needed to help save our barns. National Barn Alliance members agreed this past April that in order to be most effective in supporting the historic surveys in all states and barn preservation on a national level they needed to become a more recognizable non-profit organization. The intent is to see the National Barn Alliance become an umbrella organization bringing together and networking with other like-minded groups to form a more cohesive effort to save barns and farmsteads.

Grassroots organizations like ours are springing up in many states, including Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Iowa. All of these efforts take time and a great deal of effort, but I feel confident that with so many folks working so hard and larger organizations like the National Trust paying more attention we will continue to raise awareness of the problem and move toward obtaining financial support for barn conservation.

— Laura Saeger

## Barn of the Year nominations accepted

Nominations are being accepted for the annual Friends of Ohio Barns Barn of the Year Award.

Nominations will be judged in two categories: agricultural use and adaptive use (non-agricultural). Nominations should include photos, current owner's name, location of the barn, current use of the barn, history of the barn including age and builder if known, and information on repairs and those who made them.

A news release and photos of both winning nominations will be made available to the news media with a feature story in "The Old Barn Post."

For more information contact Dan Troth at dtroth@columbus.rr.com.

Nominations may be mailed to Dan Troth, 7591 Perry Road, Delaware, Ohio 43015. Deadline is March 15.

### *The Old Church*

*Behind our new church, on the hill,  
The old church used to stand,  
As grim and rough as an old-time saint,  
Stained by age, but never by paint,  
With a willow on either hand.  
A traveller, passing by that way,  
As he looked the edifice o'er,  
With a sense not quite so devout as keen,  
Is said to have murmured, "God's house I've seen,  
But never His barn before!"*

— William Byron Forbush

## Re-Barn! Licking County barn given new life

I thought you all might like to read about an Ohio barn that was saved from decay and possible demolition. It is a barn that has been repaired and restored with materials from another barn on the property that was too far gone to save. It is a barn from the pre-civil war days, probably 1830s, with all hand-hewn timbers and sash-sawn braces. It is a barn unique in its design in that the center bay is open with no post support—that came from the wind and down bracing at all the corners. The door track, rollers, and door handles were salvaged and are being used again. It is a barn with board-and-batten siding and a metal roof ... just like the original.

It is a barn who's adaptive re-use will be a woodworking shop. It will first be used to perform repairs on yet



**Above: This finished workshop was reconstructed from a Licking County barn and moved to its new home in Morrow County. It will be painted barn red with white trim. Below: The original Licking County barn was 20 by 30 feet with a shed addition on the back. Part of that shed was used to make a new shed for tractor storage.**



another barn that was dismantled in order to have a new life ... as a house.

It is a barn that cost about the same as the well-known pole barns being built in the state, but with oh so much more character and style. It was built by true craftsmen, and restored by someone who wanted more than a pole barn. It took about six months of the owner's sweat equity to carefully dismantle, restore, and rebuild this barn.

It is a barn with history ... rich Ohio history. It is a barn that will invite people to relax, and recollect. It is my barn, and I am very proud to be its new caretaker.

— Ric Beck



**Left: Construction on the new barn took its owner about six months.**

**Right: Much of that six months was spent carefully dismantling the Licking County barn. The task was only partially completed when this picture was taken.**

