

# Fall picnic planned in Perry County

FOB has been invited to Somerset in Perry County by Mayor Tom Johnson, who has done some pioneering work in preservation and research on Perry County barns, taverns, and log structures along the Zane's Trace. He is working with a team from the College of Wooster this summer to date pioneer structures in Perry County with the use of dendrochronology techniques.

Somerset is a classic Pennsylvania German settlement with a diamond square established in the Ohio frontier in the early 1800s. The downtown buildings are all attached in a classic German style. A log tavern was built by John Finck in 1807. The Jacob Miller Tavern, built a year or so later, was recently purchased for restoration by the Perry County Historical Society. The old Clay Haus restaurant, located in an old log and brick structure and specializing in German-American cuisine, is run today by a descendent of these early Pennsylvania German settlers.

Somerset became the seat of Perry County government in 1817, with the first Perry County Courthouse being built in 1829. It is the oldest continuously used public building in the Northwest Territory.

Somerset is the boyhood home of Civil War general Phillip Sheridan, and an equestrian statue of him occupies

the center of the town square.

FOB is working with Mayor Johnson to develop a short barn tour for the picnic, and we hope to include a round barn and the unusual Poorman barn (see article in the last *Barn Post*).

There is much to see nearby, including there's an early log tavern, a downtown cemetery with many locally carved stones (some in German), and St. Joseph's Church, the first Catholic church established west of the Alleghenies. It once had an attached seminary and still has an extensive graveyard and working farm with old barns still in use. Not far from Somerset is the Glenford Fort, a Native American earthwork—a 25-acre hilltop surrounded by a stone wall and the remains of a 15-foot-high stone mound within. It qualifies as a world heritage site.

There are three nineteenth-century working covered bridges, as well as several double crib log barns with overhanging forebays nearby. And the nation's legacy of coal mining and the formation of the labor unions can be found in the villages of Shawnee, New Straitsville, Rendville, Congo, Corning, and other small communities of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds in southern Perry County.

Come early and spend the day exploring Perry County's rich heritage.

— Tom O'Grady

**Background photo: Early postcard of Somerset Town Square with General Sheridan Monument, old Perry County Courthouse (1829), and commercial buildings, all still in use.** From Tom O'Grady's collection



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# The Old BARN POST

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## 2011 Barns of the Year announced

Barn of the Year awards were presented at the 12th annual Ohio Barn Conference held in Lancaster. Awards were presented in three categories: agricultural use, adaptive re-use, and a new category for this year, stewardship.

The agricultural use award was presented to Steve and Debbie Miller of Baltimore, Ohio (Fairfield County). Their double forebay Pennsylvania bank barn is framed primarily in beech and is 32 by 60 feet. Built circa 1850 using some recycled beams from an earlier barn and originally sided with walnut, it is now protected with painted ribbed steel sheathing. Its original wood shingle roofing was replaced with slate, and recently with new painted metal. It is the main barn on the original 150-acre land grant.

The adaptive reuse award went to Robert and Sandra Routzahn of Bucyrus, Ohio (Crawford County), who salvaged a three-bay English ground barn with a gambrel roof and converted it into a home with a couple of additions. The 100-year-old timber frame structure was dismantled in 2009, moved five miles, and reconstructed as the exposed framework of their new home.

The award for barn stewardship went to Richard Fink of Rushville, Ohio (Fairfield County). This beautiful Pennsylvania

forebay barn is 50 by 90 feet and has an unusually large 9-foot forebay or overhang. The barn has a huge sandstone foundation that was

quarried nearby. Many of the stones weigh in excess of 1,000 pounds each. Stones from the quarry were also used to build the family cemetery's stone walls. The earliest tombstone date is 1820. The barn's actual construction date is uncertain, but it was probably built between 1820 and 1840.

When we stand in these great barns and analyze the posts and beams and styles of joinery, we must never forget the people who built them and the farmers and their families who worked in them. Each has a story as rich as our own, and we must try to discover and re-tell those stories. We are who we are because of who they were, and we honor them and enrich our lives by doing so.

— Dan Troth

*FOB is now accepting nominations for Barn of the Year for 2012. Deadline for entries is October 31, 2011!*

*Nominations should include photos, the current owner's name, location of the barn, current use of the barn, history of the barn including the date you believe it was built (with supporting facts) and the barn's builder, if known, and information on repairs and who made them, if known.*

*Nomination forms are available on the FOB website, or contact Dan Troth. Nominations may be mailed to Dan Troth, 7591 Perry Road, Delaware, Ohio, 43015. The award plaques, each painstakingly handmade from antique barn siding by an FOB director, will be proudly presented at the annual Ohio Barn Conference on Saturday, April 28, 2012.*



# An FOB update

By the time you read this, summer will here, the farmers will have finally planted crops, and we all will be enjoying warm weather family activities. In short, things are happening!

## Random Thoughts

Ric Beck  
Friends of Ohio Barns president

The board members at Friends of Ohio Barns took a brief respite after another terrific conference in Lancaster (thanks again, Joe Steiger!), but are back in the planning stages for more exciting events to come. Be sure to read the newsletter thoroughly and

check the website for the latest.

We received some very good suggestions from you, the members, at the conference, and we plan to work hard to make them happen. Our summer face-to-face board meeting will hammer out the details and, of course, we will keep you informed. We truly appreciate the feedback!

A Friends of Ohio Barns Facebook page is on the horizon. I have a volunteer or two to help me get it up and running. We hope to use it as a vehicle for you to post beautiful barns in your area or barns being fixed, demolished, or adapted. We also hope that it will be a member-boosting tool!

Other board member happenings ...

We bid Rudy Christian a very happy retirement from the board at our last conference. Though he is done serving the board, he will still be very active with the organization and will still wield the microphone at the barn tours.

We are also very happy to welcome two new board members to the fold. Pam Whitney Gray and Jim Howard are bringing their many talents to Friends. Pam brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from poking around barns with her father, Charles Whitney, The Barn Doctor, as well as her skill as an accomplished writer. Jim has been instrumental in making the Wayne County barn survey a success. His enthusiasm and leadership will be welcome!

Plans are taking shape for conference 2012. Denny Hendershot has volunteered to be the local hero and help coordinate next year's spring event in Summit County. Among some of the stops in the Cuyahoga Valley park area could be the Hale Farm and Village. Way to step up, Denny! We are excited to help you make it another successful conference! Watch for more information on the website.

Personally, I will be busy with my own barn adaptation this summer, fall, and winter. My wife and I are finally going to break ground for a 30-foot by 40-foot former English ground barn to become our new home near Lexington, Ohio. Repairs are ongoing, but near completion, and I hope to raise the frame by early fall. It won't be an old-fashioned raising, but it will be a party! Drop me a line if you want to attend.

# A big 'thank you'

Laura Saeger and Sarah Woodall would personally like to thank Beryl Beckett, Judy Hendershot, and Kendal Taylor for their help organizing and running the silent auction again this year. They have stepped up to this position for many years, and it is a huge help to us. We can't tell you how much!

The silent auction was a huge success again this year, and on behalf of Friends we want to say thank you to all who donated items. There was some heated bidding because there were so many generous donations, and it looked like everyone had fun with the whole process. Again, thank you!

# Missing photo album

We are trying to find a photo album of Fairfield County barns that belongs to Vic and Mary Niday, who were so kind to bring their barn photos to show everyone at the conference in Lancaster. This album is a particular favorite of Mary's, as she spent a lot of time taking photos and gathering information about barns in Fairfield County that are no longer standing. Calls have been made to the conference center and an e-mail went out to the conference attendees. Our thoughts are that someone may have inadvertently picked up the album with their own belongings during the cleanup process. Please contact us at friendsohiobarns@gmail.com or Sarah Woodall at (330) 856-9053 if you have any information regarding this album. Mary would be overjoyed to have it in her hands again.



## Lifetime member

Matt Carter, FOB's newest lifetime member, was awarded a plaque and congratulated by FOB board member Dan Troth and president Ric Beck at the 2011 conference.

Photo by Tom O'Grady

## Friends of Ohio Barns Board of Directors

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# Barns of the Year

In addition to the Barn of the Year for adaptive reuse, featured on the front, two other barns won awards in other categories. The Steve and Debbie Miller barn (below) with its double overhang won the agricultural use award (photo by Tom O'Grady); and the Finke barn (left) won the stewardship award (photo by Dan Troth).

# Rudy Christian retires; new board members step up



Rudy Christian receives best of show medal and a framed barn tour detective photo signed by all conference attendees.

Rudy Christian, founding member and first president of Friends of Ohio Barns, is stepping down from the board after a dozen or so years of invaluable service. But he does not plan to abandon us. He is a busy guy. His quality skills and broad storehouse of knowledge is in demand widely, not only in Ohio and the U.S. but also abroad. He has spent a good deal of time out of the country over the past decade and has helped in timber frame restoration and preservation throughout the country. He will continue to guide tours through Ohio Barns as a premier barn detective in years to come. We will have access to his insights and foresights through his wife, Laura Saeger, who continues to serve as FOB's equally invaluable treasurer, etc.

Thanks you for your many years of service, Rudy! While the FOB board loses long time leader Rudy Christian, it gains two in his stead: Pamela Whitney Gray, daughter of and new incarnation of The Barn Doctor,

Charles Whitney; and Jim Howard, who has played an instrumental role in making the Wayne County Barn Survey a success. Welcome aboard. Get your boots on!

Charles Whitney; and Jim Howard, who has played an instrumental role in making the Wayne County Barn Survey a success. Welcome aboard. Get your boots on!



FOB board (left to right): Pamela Whitney Gray, Sarah Woodall, Gary Clower, Paul Knoebel, Ric Beck, Larry Sulzer, Tom O'Grady, Laura Saeger, Dan Troth, Rudy Christian, Jim Howard.