

Barn

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at the door the night of the event.

"We normally raise \$3,000 to \$4,500 and it's usually a really fun event. There's something for everybody," said committee member Jeff Parry.

In addition to the five paintings he's donating to the auction, Kroeger will be selling his other Highland County barn paintings. It will be the first time he's sold any.

The paintings are framed, usually with original wood from the barn pictured, and each comes with an essay on that particular barn.

In an essay called "Hunting Mushrooms" that he wrote on Mother's Day in early May of last year, Kroeger wrote, "I met Sandy Shoemaker through the Highland County Historical Society. Both a barn owner and former USDA employee, Sandy's job involved issuing permits for waterway construction on farmland. So, after three decades of this, she came to know most of the farms, farmers, and barns in this rural county, about an hour east of Cincinnati. Were it not for Sandy and her husband Tim, I might not have kept going with this Ohio Barn Project."

Kroeger wrote that his wife and he "arrived early in the morning and spent most of the day touring the northern half of the county, talking with barn owners. I took photos and made sketches. Sandy gave us the history and told me she could show many more. But, after all, it was Mother's Day and Sandy and my wife deserved some personal time.

"The first barn was a beauty, a formidable gray one, framed by huge spreading trees in front of a built-up bank leading to the entrance. Sandy and Tim co-own it with Howard Grabill, whose family name graces the road alongside it. Originally unnamed and called 'West Road' by locals, it officially became Grabill Road in the 1970s when the state introduced 911 and mandated names for all public roads."

Kroeger wrote that as they sat on the porch of the 1912 farmhouse, "Sandy told me that Howard Grabill was born here. Sort of. In 1945, when Howard's mom felt strong labor pains, Howard's dad was nowhere to be found: he was hunting mushrooms deep in the woods. For you Millennials, in those days there were no cell phones. So grandpa took Howard's mom in his truck and sped to the hospital. But they never made it. Howard was born in the truck. In farm life everyone pitches in.

"The farm is named 'Millstone Creek Farm,' in reference to the many mills that lined the nearby Clear Creek. Several large millstones greet visitors on the driveway as does a big brass bell that Howard got from a West Virginia steam engine. If you ring it, Howard, a railroad aficionado, will answer with a toot-toot-toot from his horn."

Kroeger wrote that he and Howard "both served in the Vietnam era, he in an Army re-con unit in Vietnam and me in the Navy. In those days our military personnel weren't on pedestals, as Howard and I can attest. But times have changed, fortunately.

"A farmer built the

barn in the 1880s, a time when Ohio pioneers still knew the properties of wood and how to make a barn last – as this one has. In those days, Ohio was primarily a farming state. But, further west, Indians still roamed the plains. And one of the Grabill family was there to document those days. John C.H. Grabill was a photographer of the Great Plains and, in 1886, he opened a studio in Sturgis, Dakota Territory. He took photos of the Wild West: mining, stagecoaches, the Devil's

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Robert Kroeger
painter

Tower (now a national monument), and cowboys including the famous Buffalo Bill. But his most memorable work, now in the Library of Congress, showed the aftermath of the massacre at Wounded Knee in January of 1891, a tragedy that happened in the unforgiving Dakota winter. All this while his Ohio relatives were building barns and farming. John was an adventurer."

Kroeger wrote that Howard's grandfather, the one who provided his truck for Howard's delivery, "had farmed for decades in Highland county before he purchased this farm in 1944. Much earlier, when Howard's grandmother was a child, an old freed slave named Manny took care of her. They called her husband, also a freed slave, 'Uncle' Oliver. In return, the Grabills took care of them when they grew old. Highland County was one of numerous Ohio counties that helped slaves escape through the

Underground Railroad. "In 1960, a tractor loaded with hay fell through the floor, but the barn survived. It was repaired. A few years later, Howard explained, his parents spent \$5,000, a considerable sum then, to level the barn with railroad ties and steel beams since it was 17 inches "out of plumb," as Howard put it. He said that's why many barns fail: lack of support."

During his later years, wrote Kroeger, "Howard's grandpa still owned the farm, but allowed Howard's family to live upstairs in the farmhouse. That changed when Howard began making too much noise. So grandpa, tired of Howard's bouncing on the ceiling, moved

upstairs. He died in 1953. "And, the other owners of this wonderful barn, Sandy and Tim, grew up on Highland county farms as well. Sandy's parents raised dairy cows; so Sandy spent a lot of time milking. 'We had 100 cows and I had to milk them. But my dad sold them the year I left for college. He could have done that a lot sooner,' Sandy told me. Tim also grew up on a farm, one in the southern part of the county where his parents and grandparents had been farmers. But Tim decided to spend his career working in a hospital – until 10 years ago when they bought into this farm. Even though retired from their jobs, they work the farm, raising cattle and crops."

Kroeger concluded, "Who knows what the future holds for this Highland county barn? Maybe another father will be out hunting mushrooms at delivery time. Maybe."

Reach Jeff Gilliland at 937-402-2522 or on Twitter @13gillilandj.

NCB donates to seniors



Submitted photo

NCB recently donated \$1,500 to the Highland County Senior Citizens Center. The money will be used for the center's Meals-On-Wheels Program that provides hand-prepared, hot, appetizing and nutritious meals on a daily basis to the homes of individuals, who are senior citizens and/or persons with disabilities within the community, to assist them with their basic needs of nutrition.

Calendar

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dom Group, open discussion, First Presbyterian Church, 457 Jefferson St., Greenfield.

ReaLife Church, "Real Hope for Real People," come as you are, non-judgmental. Pastor Anthony "Skip" Skipworth, Lead Pastor, 230 W. South St., Hillsboro. Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Al-Anon, 8 p.m., Presbyterian Church, 457 Jefferson St., Greenfield, church basement.

Monday, Feb. 8

Highland County Veterans Service Commission, 5 p.m., Highland County Veterans Service Office, Hi-Tech Center, 1575 North High St., Hillsboro.

Save the Lake Association, 7:30 p.m., Rocky Fork Activity Center.

Greenfield Fraternal Order of Eagles Ladies Auxiliary 1325, 7:30 p.m., at the lodge.

Southern Ohio Power Boat Association, 6 p.m., Rocky Fork Activity Center.

Rocky Fork Decorative Artists, 6 p.m., Administration Building base-

ment, Governor Foraker Place, Hillsboro.

Pieceful Stitchers Quilt Club, 7 p.m., Lynchburg Public Library.

Greenfield Fraternal Order of Eagles Auxiliary, 7:30 p.m.

Order of Eastern Star #441, 7:30 p.m., Masonic Temple, North High Street, Hillsboro.

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), 5:30 p.m., St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 234 North High St., Hillsboro.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 6:30 p.m., HOYPAA Group, open discussion, FRS Counseling Inc., 313 Chillicothe Ave. (U.S. 50 East), Hillsboro (use door 4).

Alcoholics Anonymous, 8 p.m., TWMI Group, open lead, First Baptist Church, 125 N. Washington St., Greenfield.

Dodson Township Trustees Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Dodson Township Building.

Lynchburg Lions Club, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Highland Amateur Radio Association, 7 p.m., basement meeting room of the Highland County Administration Building, social time with refreshments follows meeting and program.

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<p>118 JOSIE AVENUE, HILLSBORO Nice brick ranch home in established subdivision. 3 BR, 1 Bath, attach garage, covered front porch, wood floors, appliances included, immediate possession, Hillsboro City SD. \$69,000 * #153 * MLS#1476649</p>	<p>9566 WALLACE ROAD, RUSSELLVILLE Nice country home on 16.45 acres just minutes from SR 32. 4 BR, 2 1/2 Bath, central air, full basement, 2 car att garage, 38 x 45 bldg, with 26 x 39 shed, small lake, Eastern Local SD. \$229,000 * #175 * MLS#1450636</p>
<p>11487 DUNDEE DRIVE, HILLSBORO Manufactured home on lot at Rocky Fork Lake. 3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, central air, 2 car detached garage, appliances included, Hillsboro City SD. \$39,000 * #111 * MLS#1464770</p>	<p>101 1/2 WILLETSVILLE PIKE, HILLSBORO 3 BR, 1 Bath brick ranch on nice lot and in good condition. Home features eat in kitchen wood cabinets, pantry, large LR, walk out basement & built-in garage, Hillsboro City SD. \$74,900 * #106 * MLS#1478526</p>
<p>298 MAIN STREET, LYNCHBURG Corner lot, ideal for business, formerly a gas station, this property offers BT parking, building has central air and restroom, additional building for storage. \$84,900 * #810 * MLS#1433060</p>	<p>511 KIMBERLY STREET, LEEBSBURG BRAND NEW HOME! Nice open floor plan, kitchen w/wood cabinets, pantry, lazy susan, utility room w/cabinets, ample supply of closets & storage, 3 BR, 2 Bath, covered front porch, rear patio, Fairfield Local SD. \$134,900 * #105 * MLS#1475735</p>

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