

Join us for “TITANIC FASHIONS” at the Fairfield County Heritage Association Spring Dinner Meeting

Featuring a preview of the Twin Cities Tour of Homes
& a silent auction of Fairfield County
barn paintings & more!

Thursday, April 11, 6~9pm
Knights of Columbus Hall, 343 E. Walnut, Lancaster
\$35 per person * Reservations due by April 1

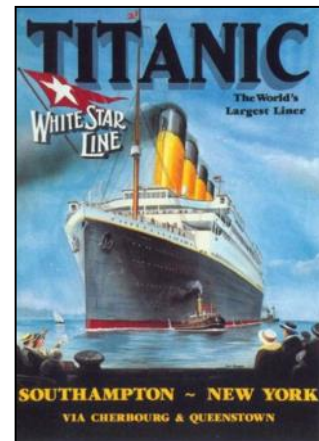


Heritage members and guests can step back into time to enjoy music, fashion, and fun. To set the atmosphere, guests will be entertained on arrival by The Harmonics, a local string quartet that will play a variety of music including that of the early 1900's. The Harmonics are part of the acclaimed Fairfield Strings & Keyboards.

After a delicious dinner, the program “Titanic Fashions” will be presented by Loraine Dawley, who has given talks at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island for their *Titanic* and *Some-where in Time* weekends.

Loraine is a dance costume designer and began to reproduce 1912-era clothing after attending events at the Grand Hotel. She has spent many hours searching for antique accessories to go along with the vintage dresses and suits, and as a talented hair stylist has been able to recreate the ladies' updo that was so popular at the time.

Loraine will have a wonderful slide video showing the many changes of clothing needed each day for a first-class passenger, male and female, on the *Titanic*.



Bring home a historic barn from Fairfield County

Artist Robert Kroeger is on a mission: paint at least one historic barn in each of Ohio's 88 counties and write about every one. He then donates many of his paintings to local nonprofits, to raise funds for their work.

Fortunately for Heritage, he has donated nine paintings from Fairfield County. Four will be offered via silent auction at the Spring Meeting. The rest will be sold at the Oktoberfest.

Gift baskets from My Favorite Things, the Frame Shop and others will also be up for bid.

An act of preservation

Robert reached out last fall to Tammy Drobina, Heritage's executive director, to connect him with someone who knows the county's barns. Tammy brought in Nate Stitzlein, a true barn expert. He and his family have restored and even moved barns to the family farm near Baltimore.

Robert Kroeger sees his paintings as a way of "preserving American history ... one old barn at a time."

"Many old barns, too expensive to restore, are falling apart and, with them, a bit of Ohio history dies," Robert writes on his website devoted to the barn project. (<https://barnart.weebly.com/>)

But of all the historic buildings he could paint, why barns?

"Barns represent the heart of America, and the old ones are bleeding," he says. "So many barns, so little time."

Robert began his Ohio barn project in 2010 and as of February, he has painted barns in 48 of Ohio's 88 counties. The pictures are completed in one or two sittings. "I use palette knives to paint in the oil impasto technique — on canvas or Masonite — and I frame the paintings in the barn's own wood" when possible.

Each painting also comes with an essay. Some share the history of the barn and its builders or current owners. Some focus more on Ohio history.

Here are the four barn paintings that will be auctioned as well as excerpts from Robert's essays about them.

The Masterpiece

John Stitzlein seems to be as passionate about old barns as I am, and his passion gleams in this 1884 barn, one that his sons Nate and Matthew and he restored in the late 1980's. He said that the owner's name, H. Poff, an emigrant from Switzerland, was on the slate roof. Inside, the major beams are hand-hewn but most of the other boards were saw-cut beech.

John wanted this one badly enough to move it, piece by piece, from four miles away. Today, as the red barn, it houses equipment and tools. Later, we visited a third barn, now a workshop for John, whose metal sculptures pop up here and there, and classrooms where his wife, a fiber artist, teaches quilting students. In addition



to these three, John also owns two more barns, which I didn't see. One of his neighbors, realizing that John liked to store a lot of stuff, once remarked, "John, you have five barns but you can't put hay in any of them."

Going, Going, Gone

You have to love auctioneers, those silver-tongued fellows who can spew out words faster than my brain can process them. Robert Troup, barn owner, and his dad Rich are both live auctioneers. They have my respect. In addition to auctioneering, Robert also makes fine custom furniture, a jack of all trades. He showed us one of his pieces.

Despite the overcast day, the scene was a good composition — a large hardwood tree in the fore-



ground with leaves hanging down, a gravel road curving around, leading to the barn, and, on its flank, a field of golden soybeans, ripe for harvest. I wish I could have added the hand-hewn granary to the painting, but it was taken down three years ago.

Robert told me that the farmhouse and original barn trace back to 1870 and that the farm has been in his family for 118 years. However, this is not the original barn but rather the third, dating to

1903, only a “century” ago. And, with three sons, he can rest assured it will continue in family hands. Hopefully the barn will never hear the words, going, going, gone.



Target

Edna Shreyer and her three sons Matt, Tom, and Mike greeted barn scout Nate and me when we arrived. The rain had ended, allowing a vibrant field of yellow to highlight this red barn against a gray sky. I decided the composition needed a bit of color and added a sunrise.

The family farm goes back to Jacob Shreyer who built the barn in the 1880's, using wood from nearby trees and five courses of sandstone block – as shown on an old family photo. Workers posed nonchalantly, perched high on the barn's rafters, showing no signs of acrophobia and obviously proud of their work. Another photo, taken in 1917, shows a plain red barn. The circular target-shaped images came later, though no one knows their significance. An Amish sign?

Inside the family showed me more treasures – an antique corn bin and a weighing scale called “Fairbanks,” which came from a city of the same name in Vermont. Structurally, the barn's in good shape and should be around for a long while, since it still serves a useful function – hay storage and housing for equipment.

Mother Edna and her late husband Bill raised cattle, pigs, and chickens on these 300 acres – from 1955 to 1995. Today it's soybeans and corn. When I saw the large chicken barn, I asked Edna about how many chickens she raised. “Eleven thousand,” she said. She also told me, with a sly grin, “Dumb farm girls marry farmers, but smart farm girls marry city boys.” Regardless, she seemed to have had a good life, her three boys at her side. ...

As we were leaving, they showed me another piece of Americana that they have preserved – a covered bridge built circa 1900. The boys told me that they moved the bridge, rather than seeing it destroyed, onto their property, rekindling memories of when, as youngsters, they had weenie roasts and hay rides through the bridge. Good stewards of the land, they've preserved Ohio history, as this essay will do, along with the painting framed in wood from this barn.



Young Blood

Most old barns are owned by veteran farmers, many whose family ownership of the farm traces back to the 1800's. This one is the exception to the rule. Owned by a Columbus-based attorney and his general surgeon wife – who purchased the farm in 2009 – the barn dates to 1918 and has seen only three owners, including Paul Darling the original farmer. But a lawyer and a doctor?

Justin Ristau, originally from Delaware County, told us that he's always been an outdoors guy, the kind that *Outside* magazine writes about – backpacking in the woods and seeking adventure in remote places. Here in rural Hocking Township they're obviously quite content to live in the country and work occasionally in the city.

Fortunately, Justin is able to do most of his legal business at home and his wife works in a local hospital. So they don't have to deal with the hassle of Columbus traffic, nor the keep-up-with-the-Joneses mentality of suburban living. Instead, they can enjoy this century-old barn with its Dutch gambrel roof, teach their four children the value of working a farm, and raise their donkeys, pigs, horses, and goats. Just the kind of young blood that Ohio needs to preserve its heritage.

About the artist

Robert F. Kroeger is a retired dentist based in Cincinnati. He was born and raised in Youngstown, earned his BS and DDS from the Ohio State University and served four years in the Navy. For 30 years, he had a private dental practice in Cincinnati, where he and his late wife raised five children. After his wife died, he started a foundation and the Bashful Ostrich 5K to help survivors of sexual abuse.



In 2005, he began running marathons. When he retired in 2010, he became a certified personal trainer, created a wellness program called LifeNuts and founded a marathon on Scotland's Isle of Islay. He has also written books on a variety of subjects.

He has remarried and spends his time running marathons, playing golf, writing, painting and playing with his grandchildren.

Our schedule for the evening

6:00-6:30pm

Social time & cash bar
Period music & more by The Harmonics
Silent Auction begins

6:30pm

Buffet dinner
Baked steak with gravy
Chicken & noodles
Mashed potatoes
Mixed vegetables
Tossed salad
Assorted desserts
Tea & coffee

7:30pm

Silent Auction ends
Preview of 2019 Twin Cities Home Tour
Program: "Titanic Fashions"
Lorraine Dawley



Cost: \$35 per person * Reservations due by April 1

Buy tickets online at www.fairfieldheritage.com, call 740-654-9923 or use the form below.

FCHA Spring Dinner

Number attending at \$35 per person _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Check enclosed _____ (*payable to FCHA*)

Charge my: VISA _____ MasterCard _____ Discover _____

Credit card no. _____

Expiration Date _____ Security Code (last 3 digits on back) _____

Signature _____



Mail to FCHA, 105 E. Wheeling Street, Lancaster, Ohio 431130