

County's 154th Barn Quilt has a Cat Theme

Marc and Wendy Panaro of Milwaukee have sponsored their second Shawano County barn quilt. It is on the west end of the barn on the farm Wendy inherited from her dad, Otto Timm at W10151 State Highway 29, Shawano.

Like their first quilt on the east end of the 100+ year old barn, Marc and Wendy's second quilt has a cat theme. Designed by Marc, the pattern is called "Happy Tails to You." The quilt, Shawano County's 154th, was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee. The tail was made by Ralph Huebner, Stickman Structures, of Shawano, a friend of Marc and Wendy.

The farm, totaling 76 acres, was originally owned by Nathaniel Marston in 1854. It changed hands several times over the next 60 years until being purchased by Wendy's grandparents, Albert and Minnie Timm from Anton and Ida Egen in 1921. Wendy's dad, Otto, then owned the farm until his death, at which time Wendy inherited it.

Although Marc and Wendy live in Milwaukee, they come to their farm west of Shawano several times during the year and hope to retire there. "We still hope to have some type of a pet shelter on the farm some day," Wendy said.

Meanwhile, in Milwaukee, Wendy is active in a program called "Words for Whiskers," run by the Wisconsin Humane Society. It is a program for children from first to fifth grades who come to the public library and have the opportunity to read to a pet for 25 minutes. "It's a wonderful program that helps children improve their reading ability," Wendy said. "Obviously a cat isn't going to laugh at them if they don't know a word," Wendy added, "so not only is it non-judgmental, it can be very therapeutic and give them more self confidence as well."

One of the cats owned by Marc and Wendy is particularly special. Named Dexter, he is a Russian Blue and Siamese cross they adopted from the humane society in Milwaukee in 2008. Dexter is one of less than 200 cats in the United States that is a registered therapy cat. Wendy and Dexter form a team in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program that goes to nursing homes, hospice units, Easter Seals Camps and to individual shut-ins. It is the only national registry for cats that requires training and screening of animal-handler teams.

To qualify as a therapy pet, Dexter has to pass a series of tests for such things as temperament on a regular basis. And Wendy has to qualify regularly as well. To learn more about therapy pets, go to www.deltasociety.org. And to keep up specifically with Dexter, go to his Facebook page at [facebook.com/Dexter the Therapy cat](https://facebook.com/Dexter%20the%20Therapy%20cat).

The Panaro quilt was put up by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric in Shawano. Special thanks to Scott Breitrick who provided a lift truck to help with the installation.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or via email at jamesleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can

also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Chamber of Commerce at 715-524-2139 or tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site includes photos and information on every quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.

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