

County's 315th Barn Quilt is a "Thank You" Surprise

Shawano County's 315th barn quilt, now on display on a barn owned by Bruce and Connie Kunze, N4528 Stony Hill Road, Marion, was given to Bruce as a surprise "thank you" gift. Kelsie Schroeder, who rents a house just down the road from Bruce and Connie, wanted to give them something for all the things they have done for her and her boyfriend Dalton. "A pan a brownies just didn't seem to show my gratitude as much as I wanted," Kelsie said. "But one day while I was out driving, I went past several barn quilts and I knew that was what I wanted to do."

About that same time, John Lettau, who lives in California but has family connections in Shawano County, heard about the Shawano County barn quilt project and contacted project coordinator Jim Leuenberger about sponsoring a quilt. "I admire creative people and creative projects," Lettau said, "and the Shawano County barn quilt project is very creative. It is certainly one of the best community projects I have seen. Jim and Irene Leuenberger have given the area something to be very proud of."

Lettau has been creating geometric designs since the 1960s and has developed several books teachers can use for art lessons. Over the years, he has also taught local quilt clubs the art of creating quilt designs. "I told Jim I wanted to sponsor a barn quilt to help promote and continue what he and his wife have given the area."

Farm History

The original 120-acre farm where the quilt is displayed was on the south side of the road. It was purchased by Michael and Catherine List in 1909. After Michael died in 1915, the farm was purchased from Catherine by Charles and Lydia List in 1922. Charles died in 1953.

In the early 1950s, Matt List purchased the farm from Lydia. He also purchased the adjoining farm, bringing the total acreage to 240 acres. After Matt died in 1986, his wife, Irene, and their son, Karl, continued to operate the farm until 1989 when they sold the dairy herd. The farm was cropped for a number of years, but then was rented out.

After Irene died in 2005, the estate was converted to List Hill Farm LLC, which is now owned by Karl List, Gail Jung, and half-brothers Jerry and Bruce Kunze. Bruce and his wife, Connie, live on the farm. Karl and his wife, Lori, also live on land from the farm.

Bruce and Connie were very surprised when they found out they were getting a barn quilt. "It really is nice," Bruce said, "and we are very thankful to Kelsie for thinking of us."

"I really want to thank Mr. Lettau for paying for the quilt," Kelsie said. "And I also want to thank Jim Leuenberger for the beautiful job he did painting it. I just love it."

The Kunze quilt, called Stars and Triangles, was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy and Rich Raddant of Raddant Electric in Shawano.