

County's 176th Barn Quilt has Special Meaning for Matyska Family

Chuck and Marti Matyska are transplants from the south side of Chicago who moved to their 40-acre farm at 5055 County V north of Cecil in 1970. Recently they contacted Jim Leuenberger, coordinator of Shawano County's barn quilt project, about getting a quilt for their century-old barn.

The design they chose for their quilt, which is the County's 176th, is a classic four patch in a pinwheel motif. "The Matyska family makes quilts for family weddings and other events," Marti said, "and this pinwheel design has special meaning as it was used previously to make a quilt for my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Now, when I look out my kitchen window and see the quilt on our barn, it makes me so happy to be part of this project. It's just beautiful."

Chuck and Marti are only the second family to occupy this farm, which had been pioneered by a German-American family, the Knacks. In the 1930s, a train ran through the edge of the property, going from Gillett to Shawano. There are still remnants of the original trestle over the trout stream that meanders through the farm. When the Matyskas had Registered Arabian horses, they also registered their farm as Trestle Creek Farm.

The century-old barn on which the quilt is displayed is a rough hewed gabled roof building with two sets of threshing doors, typical of northeast Wisconsin. It still has the original names of the long-gone dairy cows over the stanchions...Annette, May, Fanny, Dime, Penny and Dusty.

The Matyska daughters enjoyed the barn too, with Mary practicing basketball and Kate raising bunnies in the building. Besides the horses and rabbits, the barn also housed chickens, turkeys, ducks and beef cattle over the years.

The Matyska barn quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee and was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Bruce Teetzen of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

Anyone who would like to participate in Shawano County's barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or by email at jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce. Just call 715-524-2139 or email to 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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