

Wishing Star is Shawano County's 244th Barn Quilt

Shawano County's 244th barn quilt, called Wishing Star, is on a beautifully restored barn at W4774 County Road BE, Bonduel. It is owned by Joan Rueden. Joan and her husband Basil, who died four years ago, purchased the 200-acre farm in 1998 from Jerry Lee and Nancy Yoder. At the time, the house had gas lights and no electricity. Basil and Joan had electricity put in, added a new septic system and cleaned up the grounds. They also renovated the barn in 2011.

The original land patent for the farm was purchased by Friedrich Born from the government in 1882. The next year he sold it to William Zastrow, who owned it until selling it to Edward Seering in 1918. The barn was built in 1920. Throughout the years the farm was operated as a dairy farm.

In the 1970s, the farm was owned by Daniel Lemhouse. In 1976 and 1977, the barn was one of more than a dozen barns around the State of Wisconsin that was decorated with a colorful mural under the direction of the Wisconsin Arts Board. The objective of the project, called "Dairyland Graphics," was to beautify heavily-traveled highways throughout America's dairyland. The National Endowment for the Arts helped fund the program and local businesses in the communities donated materials.

Jerry Lee and Nancy Yoder purchased the farm from Jim Nolan in 1992. When the Yoders lived on the farm, there was only one door that led to the upstairs in the house and passed through the master bedroom. With three teenage sons passing through the bedroom numerous times during the day and night, it was not an ideal situation. Jerry Lee kept promising Nancy he'd make another door to the upstairs, but never seemed to get around to it. So one day Nancy took matters into her own hands, taking a chainsaw and cutting a huge hole in the living room wall leading to the upstairs. Problem solved!

Joan Rueden's daughter, Lynn Kujava, said her mother is very pleased with the barn quilt and plans to have three more put up on other farms she owns. On the day the quilt was put up by LeRoy and Keith Raddant of Raddant Electric in Shawano, Joan exclaimed "I love it! I just love it!" The quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee.

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 at 715-524-2139 or by email at tourism@shawano.com. A link on the Shawano Chamber Web site includes photos and information on every barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.

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