

Koehler Barn Quilt is Number 291

Shawano County's 291st barn quilt has been sponsored by the Waukechon Wildcats 4-H club, the second one the club has sponsored. It is mounted on a barn owned by Matt and Julie Koehler, W7002 Meadow Lane, Shawano. The quilt was painted by the Shawano County barn quilt committee along with Marcus and Matti Koehler, Grace Onesti, Maria, Krista and Peter Fuller, Jakobe Bumgartner, J.J. and Elsie Pyatskowitz, Kathryn Kugel and Faith and Kendra Ugoretz, members of the Waukechon Wildcats 4-H club. The name of the pattern is Grandmother's Own. The Angus head in the center represents the Angus cattle the Koehlers raise on the farm.

Matt's great grandparents, Emil and Anna Hartwig, homesteaded the farm in 1914 and owned it until 1971. The barn was built in 1919. Arnold and Elsie Koehler, Matt's grandparents, took over the farm in 1971. When his parents, Larry and Linda, took over the farm in 1984, Matt farmed with them until he took over ownership in 2002.

The farm was always a dairy farm until Matt switched to raising Angus beef in 2002. His brother, Brad, had a 50-cow dairy herd there until 1996.

Some of Matt's neighbors questioned why Matt decided to restore and save the nearly century-old barn instead of building a new one. His answer was, "Every time I walk into the barn, I can feel the presence of my grandfather, so I knew I had to keep it."

Matt and Julie live on the farm with their son, Mark, and daughter, Mattilyn.

Mary Lou Kugel, general leader of the Waukechon Wildcats, said the members enjoyed painting the quilt as well as sponsoring it. "The barn quilt project is something they can always say with pride that they were a part of," Kugel said.

The Koehler quilt was put on display by LeRoy Raddant and Keith Raddant of Raddant Electric in Shawano.

Anyone who would like to participate in the Shawano County barn quilt project can contact project coordinator Jim Leuenberger at 715-524-5685 or jamesmleuenberger@yahoo.com. You can also contact Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country 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 barn quilt on display in Shawano County. Just go to www.shawanocountry.com and click on the barn quilt icon.

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