

## Shawano County Installs Milestone 300<sup>th</sup> Barn Quilt

In sports like baseball and bowling, the number 300 has special meaning. If a hitter has a batting average over .300, he is considered to be among the elite hitters in the game. If he has a lifetime batting average over .300, more than likely he'll end up in the Baseball Hall of Fame, like Henry Aaron, whose lifetime average was .305. Also in baseball, if a pitcher wins 300 or saves 300 or more games in his career, again he will likely end up in the Hall of Fame. In bowling, if you roll 12 strikes in a row, your score is a perfect 300.

In the short history, about 15 years, of barn quilt trails across the country, Shawano County has literally put itself in the history books with the installation of its 300<sup>th</sup> barn quilt. ***No county in the United States has more 8-foot x 8-foot barn quilts on barns than Shawano County.***

The 300<sup>th</sup> Shawano County quilt is displayed on a barn on a farm owned by Chuck and Mary Lou Kugel at W5924 Porter Road, Shawano. "Chuck and I are humbled and honored to have been selected as the host farm for Shawano County's 300<sup>th</sup> barn quilt," Mary Lou said. "It is a wonderful way to share our agricultural heritage and history of our farm, which our ancestors homesteaded in the late 1800s."

Chuck and Mary Lou, and their daughter, Kathryn, painted the quilt, called Patchwork Stars. "The three stars in the quilt represent our three children, Megan, Aaron and Kathryn," Mary Lou said. "The earth tone colors represent farmers and our belief that we are protectors of the soil and practice conservation tilling and harvesting." The quilt was sponsored by Jim and Irene Leuenberger, who started the Shawano County barn quilt project in June 2010.

### Farm History

The original patent for the Kugel farm was issued to John Wilber in 1851. Frank and Annie Zeman obtained title to the home 80 acres in 1910 from F.W. Boettcher. The barn was built in the early 1900s. The Zemans sold the farm to Clarence Kugel in 1947. Francis and Alice (Cecilia) Kugel, Chuck's parents, purchased the home 80 acres from Clarence, Francis' brother, in 1954.

Chuck and Mary Lou purchased 118 acres and the farm buildings from Chuck's parents in July 1987. Later that year, they purchased another adjoining 40 acres from Chuck's brother, Frank. The farm was always a dairy farm until Chuck and Mary Lou dispersed the herd in May 2014, at which time they were milking 50 Holstein cows.

Mary Lou's ag appraisal business sponsored two barn quilts and the 4-H club she is the general leader for also sponsored and painted two barn quilts. "This whole project has been nothing short of amazing," Mary Lou said. "Each barn quilt has its own special story that preserves an ancestral history and is destined to provide a legacy into the future. The project overall is responsible for preserving many barns in the county and has provided a great new resource for our area's tourism."

Patti Peterson, tourism manager at the Shawano Country Chamber of Commerce, said, "The barn quilts have become a major attraction for residents and visitors coming to our area because they can be enjoyed in all four seasons. The quilts have wide appeal as well," Peterson said, "from people who enjoy quilting, agriculture, folk art and history, or who just enjoy taking a scenic drive."

Suzi Parron, author of the book “Barn Quilt Trails Across America,” published in 2012, is considered the foremost authority on barn quilt trails. She said, “Shawano County’s achievement of having the largest single-county quilt trail in the nation is even more amazing when you consider that most of the quilts were painted by just two people, Jim and Irene Leuenberger, and all are 8 feet by 8 feet in size.” Parron is currently working on her second barn quilt trail book, which will be out in early 2016 and will include a major section on the Shawano barn quilt trail. “The milestone of 300 barn quilts has set the bar very high for counties in other states who enjoy the friendly rivalry among quilt trails,” Parron added.

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

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