

Raffle Prize Becomes County's 332nd Barn Quilt

Earlier this year, author Suzi Parron, the foremost authority on barn quilt trails across America, was in Shawano promoting her second barn quilt book, which features the Shawano County barn quilt trail. As part of the event, the Shawano County Barn Quilt committee held a drawing for an 8' x 8' foot barn quilt. The winner of the quilt was Jim Starks of Shawano, who had sponsored a barn quilt a few years ago.

Jim's longtime friend, Pat Greetan, said, "We have no barn, so we had to decide on a barn owner we could ask." One day, while driving on County E east of Shawano, Jim and Pat drove past the farm of Bruce and Peggy Weisnicht. "I said to Jim, why don't we ask Bruce if we could put the quilt on his barn? The property and buildings are always kept up so wonderfully, a quilt would look great there," Pat said.

Pat, a longtime friend of the Weisnichts, introduced them to Jim and they have been family friends ever since. So, when Jim asked Bruce and Peggy if they would be interested in having a quilt displayed on their barn, they didn't hesitate to say yes.

Bruce and Peggy met with Shawano County barn quilt project coordinator Jim Leuenberger and picked out a patriotic pattern with a "W" in the center. The pattern is called Passing Time and is Shawano County's 322nd quilt to be put on display, more than any other county in the U.S. "I think they chose a great pattern," Jim Starks said. "I hope they enjoy the quilt for a long time."

The original farm, at W4550 County E, was homesteaded in the late 1880s and was purchased in 1915 by Bruce's grandfather, Otto Weisnicht from Albert Bleck. In 1952, the barn burned, so the frame from a barn 2-3 miles away was moved to its present location. The barn was finished later that year.

Bruce's dad, Louis, purchased the farm in 1958. After his death in 1976, his wife, Bernice, took over and continued to farm with Bruce. She retired in 1980, when Bruce married Peggy Przybylski. They purchased the farm from her and she moved just down the road on land she owned. The farm was always a dairy farm and Bruce had a milking herd of 34 Holstein cows, which he dispersed in 2008. Just recently Bruce had a new metal roof put on the barn, which will help preserve it for many years to come.

Now, Bruce and his son, Brad, do carpentry work. "If you need something done, big or small, Bruce and Brad are the ones to call," Jim Starks said.

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

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