

THREE BARN QUILTS INSTALLED ON STREI FARM RED SHED GALLERY



In August 2016, two new barn quilts joined an already-installed barn quilt (installed in 2015) on a red shed “gallery” on the Wayne Strei farm at 6434 Settlement Road, Gillett, WI. One was the “Carpenter’s Cross” block and the other was “Inside the Lines”.

Since the century-old barn (built in 1915) on the Strei property sits behind a 100 x 40 foot red metal shed constructed in 1971, Wayne has chosen to decorate the west side of the long building, facing Settlement Road, with barn quilts and perhaps other outdoor art. Last year he was gifted with a colorful barn quilt given him by New View Industries for his help with their client productions of “Wizard of Oz” and “Grease” at the Oconto Falls Performing Arts Center. This year, Wayne has purchased two new barn quilts which were installed on his red shed gallery on Monday, August 8, 2016.

The first quilt, installed late last summer, is a pattern called “Tumbling Blocks” and is offered in honor of his maternal and paternal families, the Heiers and the Streis. Next to “Tumbling Blocks” is “Inside the Lines.” This bright and mostly pastel quilt pattern is installed in memory of Wayne’s mother, Clarice (Heier) Strei, who spent over 40 years teaching elementary school in Oconto and Shawano Counties, including 28 years at the Cecil Elementary School in Cecil, WI.

The center barn quilt on the red shed gallery is entitled “Carpenter’s Cross.” It is taken from a classic quilt pattern which closely resembles a stained glass window in shades of purple, gold and gray with heavy black outlining the “window” segments. It is offered in memory of Wayne’s father, Alfred (“Alfie”) Strei, who was both a fine carpenter and a devout Christian.

William Strei (Wayne’s grandfather) homesteaded the original forty acres in 1897 and with his wife, Olga, farmed the property and raised seven children during the early twentieth century. Wayne’s parents married in 1945 and continued to farm until the mid-1970s. The farmland has been leased to area farmers since that time. In 1998 it was honored by the State of Wisconsin as a centennial farm during Wisconsin’s sesquicentennial anniversary celebration.

The barn quilts were installed by volunteers from Oconto Electric Cooperative just before the John Heier family reunion on Saturday, August 13, 2016. More than 50 family members attended, including Clarice’s five surviving siblings and members of all nine families descended from their parents, John and Beatrice Heier, and were all raised on a farm on Highway 22 just west of Oconto, WI.

The Strei farm with its three barn quilts will be a featured location for the inaugural Oconto County Barn Quilts Road Rally on Saturday, October 1, 2016.