

"We should put one up," Jim told Ranah on the way home from that quilt show. "We've got a perfect spot on Highway 19." They often put up a large Christmas display because their house can be seen from the Highway. Ranah kept that idea in her head and didn't think much about it until two years later when they had their granary re-sided.

"I thought, you know what, if we had those barn quilts ready, we could have them put the barn quilts up," Ranah said. She quickly went to work, designing and painting two 4' by 4' barn quilts in five days. Those two barn quilts went up in 2011 during their barn's re-siding process, where they still hang today.

After Sample's barn quilts were erected, she wondered how she could be included on a barn quilt trail. She contacted Suzi Parron, author of the book *Barn Quilts and the American Quilt Trail Movement* for assistance. Parron asked Sample to send her website address, which she hasn't quite gotten set up yet. Instead, Sample then started to log barn quilts on her own and has since created a video slideshow program of the quilts. In her logging process, along with the quilt owner's name and address, she includes two pictures of the quilt: a close-up picture and a location picture of what it is on.

When Sample would visit to log a barn quilt, that owner would tell her about other ones and soon she was receiving texts and phone calls about barn quilts around the area. She has so far logged over 75 barn quilts in Clay and Union counties and a couple in Lincoln County. She plans to head toward the Yankton area soon, already knowing where some are located because of a previous barn quilt tour put on by the Dakota Prairie Quilt Guild.

Sample explained to me how the barn quilt tradition has evolved over the years. What once began as a size requirement of 8' by 8' and a location requirement of being displayed on an old barn located on a hard surfaced road has gone to limitless size and location requirements today. Sample has seen many unique barn quilts in many sizes, the smallest one located on a birdhouse to the largest being the traditional 8' by 8'. She's logged barn quilts not only displayed on barns but also on garages, mailboxes, birdhouses, in flower gardens and on fences.

Sample and I hopped in her truck and she took me on a small quilt tour near her home. We saw various beautiful pieces of art in many sizes and colors, and she explained to me that the quilts can use the same patterns used on a fabric quilt, taking on a traditional pattern or a special unique pattern. Ohio Star is the most common

pattern Sample has seen so far. As I gawked up at a massive 8'x 8' barn quilt, I realized how challenging it would be to design and paint a perfect pattern on two huge pieces of plywood, then hanging those incredibly heavy pieces, side by side lining them up just perfectly.

We visited a set of 4' by 4' barn quilts hung on a church sign and Sample explained to me that she created both of them. She had asked the Pleasant Valley Church Council if she could create a barn quilt for their sign and they said as long as it was biblically based. She did some research on patterns that she could use and ended up with "David & Goliath" and "Job's Tears" for their sign.

Sample gave her first presentation about two years ago at Rhubarb Days at the W.H. Over Museum in Vermillion and has given it several times since then. She enjoys giving the presentation, explaining, "I would be delighted to continue to do that to extension groups, gardening clubs, quilting groups, when they need a program, for a nominal fee."

Last fall, Sample took her love of barn quilts to teaching classes about them. She has been teaching classes for OLLI-Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which has a site in Vermillion, Brookings and Sioux Falls. OLLI has a wide variety of classes available to partake in. She also gives barn quilt tours through the OLLI program and has recently started teaching classes on how to design and paint your own barn quilt. There's been discussion about her instructing another class on creating barn quilts class next fall.

As Sample showed me an example of the beginning stages of creating a 2' by 2' barn quilt, I was amazed at the graphing and detail involved in each piece. She said that the most crucial part in creating a durable barn quilt is the type of wood that it is painted on. The board used should be MDO board, which is a high quality plywood, and should be primed well. There is a difference in opinion of quilt designers in the paint used, some prefer oil-based while some prefer latex paint.

Sample would love to share her barn quilt presentation with your group or take you on a barn quilt tour. Call Ranah at 605-360-4269 or email her at ranahs@valyousat.net.

If you ever feel the urge to go on a road trip, in search of something new to see, why not seek out a barn quilt tour and take in all of its beauty?

❖ By Julie Eickhoff

References: www.barnquiltinfo.com, <http://www.barnquilts.com/sac-county-quilt-a-fair.html>



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