

'Star within a star'

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Contributed photo/Karen Donato

JEAN KERVIN, left and Jennifer Metzger, members of the Friends and Needles Quilt Guild along with Peggy Crane and Toni Eppley, not pictured, completed this 8- by 8-foot wooden quilt block that has been mounted on the outside of the Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum in Littleton.

By Karen Donato

Special to the Pioneer Times

The Northern Maine Quilt Trail has added another barn quilt block with the "Star within a star" mounted on the Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum in Littleton.

Jennifer Metzger, Jean Kervin, Toni Eppley and Peggy Crane completed the 8- by 8-foot quilt block with the colors of navy, cornflower blue and burgundy to complement the museum buildings. These four crafters are members of the Friends and Needles Quilt Guild of Houlton and have completed several other blocks now located throughout the greater Houlton area and beyond.

The Guild started the trail at the Rather-B-Quilting shop owned by Crane at 224 B Road in Houlton in 2013. She designed her own block of "Flying Geese" around the center "Churn Dash" and hence came the name "Churning Geese". She chose batik fabrics from her shop and then duplicated it in the actual wooden quilt block.





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STAR within a star located at the Southern Aroostook Agricultural Museum in Littleton.

The original idea of quilt barn blocks started in Adams County, Ohio with Donna Sue Groves. She wanted to honor her mother, Maxine, and her Appalachian heritage by having a painted quilt block hung on her barn. Groves worked with the Ohio Arts Council and other community organizations and was inspired to change her plan from a single block to a "sampler" of 20 quilt squares that could be created along a driving trail that would invite visitors to travel through the Ohio countryside.



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CHURNING GEESE located on the B Road in Houlton.

The volunteers that helped develop the concept put up the first square in October 2001. It was from this first block that other groups of quilters started their own projects. Groves worked with organizations in Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky and now the trail has extended to more than 40 states and several Canadian provinces. These blocks are an art movement to promote tourism and to honor those men and women and their contributions to agriculture. More than 3,000 quilts are part of the organized trails, with dozens more scattered through the countryside.



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AMERICAN FLAG located on the Ludlow Road.

Groves said that the quilt barn trails honor what she calls “the backbone of America.”

“We, who live in rural America are just blessed with wonderful attributes and opportunities,” she said.



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SCHOOLHOUSE located at corner of Military and Kendall streets.

It is because of Groves' idea that others have been inspired to join what has become the largest grassroots public arts movement in our nation's history. Other quilt blocks in the area are “Schoolhouse Block” located at the University of Maine Higher Education Center facing Kendall Street; “Mariners Compass” mounted on a potato house near the Walker Road; “Americana Flag” on a potato house on the Ludlow Road just beyond Wal-mart; “Bear Paw”, Main Street in Mars Hill and the most recent, “Hodgdon High School's hawk mascot made with half square triangles by members of the high school art class. There are also some in the Sherman area.



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HODGDON HAWK at Hodgdon High School created by the high school art class.

To locate the trail across America visit the website: www.barnquiltinfo.com and click on each state to locate the quilt blocks. As quilt blocks are placed in Maine there will be a trail through Maine as well.





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MARINER located on the Bangor Road.

To see local quilt blocks visit the www.friendsandneedles.org website.