

Is it the KOEHNEN HOUSE or the KAREN HOUSE?

The Koehnen House is the original name of the house located at 111000 Bavaria Road. It was named after the Koehnen family. It has been known as the "Karen House" for some time now, as the name is associated with Karen Hyde Baker, who was the Jonathan Association Executive Director for a 15-year segment some years ago. Though the historic name is "Koehnen House", the house is most often known as the "Karen House" for the vast majority of Jonathan residents and citizens of Chaska.



HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The Karen House has a long history and contributes greatly to the City of Chaska's history. John Koehnen, Laketown farmer and former legislator, bought this farm to be operated by three sons in 1904 and built this house. One son, Matt, took over the farm and started raising his family. This was one of the farms acquired by the Jonathan Development Corporation. It was to be Lot One in Village Three. At that time it had been the Worm Farm, with a barn, which was remodeled and became the Worm Barn Summer Theatre (photo at right). The barn burned in 1989 and was not replaced (photos below).



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The attempt to rebuild the Worm Barn in 2002 was very unpopular and the proposed financing plan violated the Association's governing documents, thus shutting down the effort. This issue also played an important role in the initial election of Board members from the "Jonathan Research Group", a vocal minority which tried to dismantle Jonathan during 2003-2008.



The Worm Barn burning - 1989



The Worm Barn burned down (Karen House in the background) - 1989