



HANDS ALL AROUND

Quilters United in Learning Together – Schenectady
MARCH 2010

Meetings on First Thursdays at 7 PM (Doors open at 6:30)
First Unitarian Society, Schenectady – 1221 Wendell Avenue
<http://www.quiltschenectady.org>

FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

As I'm sitting here watching this week's unending snow, I keep reminding myself that Spring will be here soon. The coming of Spring means the end of our guild year is right around the corner. While we do have a handful of meetings left, it's time to look back to evaluate our meetings & activities to assist with future plans. Our Program Committee (Kathie & Kathleen) had pulled together wonderful programs for the current year. We've had some interesting and entertaining speakers. The extended-hour Sew-In (with pizza!) was a huge success as was the First Annual Winter Blues Sit N' Sew. Though it will be difficult to come up with a program that will beat our Annual Holiday Party, Kathie & Kathleen are working off our successes and your suggestions and are well on their way with planning the 2010-2011 guild year.

While the Program Committee is important, I do not want to take the spot light away from any of our Officers or Committees who contribute to the smooth running and success of our meetings. Nor do I want to take the spot light away from any of our members and their contributions to the guild with their monthly infusion of inspiration through Show & Tell and donation of comfort quilts for both North East Parent & Child and the Quilts for Injured Soldiers project, which gave our guild national exposure through CNN's "Giving in Focus" program which aired over the holidays.

The next few months will be busy ones with members putting the finishing touches on the Mystery Quilts and the Geometric Challenge Quilts for the June meeting, along with working on their quilts for Autumn Inspirations 2010 coming in October. With all that, please don't lose sight of the continued need for comfort quilts for Northeast Kids and the injured soldiers.

Yours in stitches...

Kathy Wagner



*We'd like to extend a warm welcome to new members
Linda Cary and Sharon Nicpon*

SPRING SCHEDULE

MARCH 25, 2010 IS REALLY THE APRIL MEETING:

Because our regular meeting time would have fallen during Holy Week of the Christian calendar and our speaker is able to accommodate us, our April meeting will be held on Thursday, March 25. The Unitarian Church could not accommodate us on the new/moved dates, so the meeting place has also changed. There will be a guest fee of \$10.00.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE!!! Both the Thursday evening monthly meeting and the Friday workshop will be held in the Education Center of Proctor's. This is the area at the bottom of the stairs between the Muddy Cup and the Proctor's Box Office. There is also nearby elevator access.

PARKING: Surface lots off either side of Jay Street, street and garage parking are all free after 5 pm, so Thursday night should not cost anything. (*Note that the surface lot behind Proctor's accessed from Clinton Street will charge fees since there is a show at Proctor's that evening.*) Lots and garage are convenient and well lighted. Friday workshop participants will incur parking fees.

Pam Druhen is a well-known quilter and designer who hales from Northfield, Vermont. Many of you have probably seen her work at the Vermont Quilt Fest over the years. Her work reflects her closeness to the Vermont countryside and she specializes in landscapes. You can see her work at her website, www.pameladruhenthreadscapes.com Her lecture on Thursday evening will be a trunk show of her current work and lecture about process and technique. On Friday we are offering her workshop, Vermont Windows. You will learn some basic landscape development techniques while creating a beautiful wall hanging that looks like you are looking out a window. You will be able to choose the season you want to focus on and Pam will guide your creation using her pattern. Registration for the workshop will begin at our December meeting. Be sure to sign up early to reserve your seat. After February, if there are still openings, we will open up registration to other area guilds.

Also remember to bring...

- Your hand-sewn name tag
- **Donation to Boutique Bounty Bag**
- Show and Tell projects
- Quilts for Northeast kids
- A friend or new member
- Fat Quarter – "Yellow Sunshine"

MAY 6, 2010:

The program for the May meeting will be presented by a special group of local quilters. The Capital Region Textile Artists is a group of art quilters from the Capital District who have been meeting regularly for several years. We will have the opportunity to see the two "slice quilts" members of CRTA made this winter and several of them will be at our meeting to talk about techniques used, share their stories of how the quilts were conceived and made, and to do a trunk show of some of their other work. It will be a great program even if you aren't "into" art quilts. If you would like, bring an art quilt or small piece you've been working on for Show and Share. The guest fee for the evening will be \$5.00.

Remember to Bring:

- Your hand-sewn name tag
- "Show and Tell" projects
- **Donation to Boutique Bounty**
- A friend or new member
- Quilts for Northeast kids
- Fat Quarter – Lavender-Blue

JUNE 3, 2010 - COME EARLY FOR DINNER

In June we will share our traditional end of year potluck dinner. We'll have a chance to show what we have been working on all year and be inspired by each other's ideas if we've been too busy to create.

Please arrive by 6 pm with your food offerings and place settings. The "Show and Tell" for the Mystery Quilts, the Geometry Quilt Challenge, and raffle drawings will be enjoyed after dinner.

As in the past, we would like to suggest categories of food for everyone to bring, so if your last name begins with the following groups of letters, please bring something from the category listed to the right.

Last names beginning with **A-H..... please bring salad**
 I-P..... please bring main dish
 Q-Z Please bring dessert

Also remember to bring...

- Food for dinner, plate, fork, drink
- Your hand-sewn name tag
- **Donation to Boutique Bounty Bag**
- Quilts for Northeast kids
- Quilts for Soldiers
- Your "Mystery" Quilt
- Geometry Quilt Challenge Quilt
- "Show and Tell" projects
- A friend or new member
- Fat Quarter – Summer Pink/Rose

BOUTIQUE BOUNTY

Thanks again to all Guild members for your past donations to the Boutique. The Bounty Bag will continue to appear at guild meetings through June. We can still use fabric, magazines, patterns, quilt books, sewing notions, etc.

Just a reminder: We will stop collecting in June so that everything will get sorted, packaged, priced and inventoried for the October show.

If you have small cuts of quilt fabric, we would like to try selling "layer cakes" (10-inch squares), so we would appreciate any 10" square donations (it would be helpful if they are already cut to that exact measurement).

We can still use fat quarters and any larger cuts, such as 1/4 yard and larger sizes. We also have had success with your leftovers cut into 4", 5" and 6" squares.

We are still looking for someone or a friendship group to volunteer to be in charge of the 2012 Boutique. Please call **Peg Palange** at 371-5036 or e-mail at ppalange@gmail.com if you would consider this rewarding opportunity. You are also welcome to come to my home any time if you would like to see how we do it....

Thanks again for all your generous donations.

Peg Palange



Autumn Inspirations 2010



Planning for Autumn Inspirations 2010 is in full swing as our show committee chairs are busy preparing for the October 2nd and 3rd event. Again, the show will be held at Proctor's GE Theatre. We listened to our members and visitors' comments from the 2008 show and have made some changes which will give us more room to display our quilts and give the Guild Boutique and the Vendors more space to spread out and sell even more merchandise. As it was so popular in 2008, we will again have a quilt tying demonstration table. There will be a unique Members' Challenge this year and a more visible Injured Soldier quilt booth. Crickett Sweet is our Featured Quilter.

We'd love to have an exhibit with children's quilts – that is, quilts made by children under 17. So, get your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews inspired to start quilting so they can have their quilts displayed in the show.

There are new categories for judging quilts such as “Best Hand Quilted”, “Best Machine Quilted” and “Best Applique” just to name a few. The Quilt Registration form has been totally overhauled and should be much clearer and simpler to fill out.

Beginning with the May guild meeting, raffle tickets will go on sale and volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted. Every member's help in selling raffle tickets and volunteering to work (i.e. judging, setup, activities during the show, takedown) is critical to the success of the show. Many other plans are in the works right now that will be shared with you in the coming months' newsletters, at the guild meetings and on our website. See write-ups below regarding the Boutique, Members' Challenge and Raffle Quilt.

This is going to be our best show yet!

Kathy Hermance, Show Chair

HELP WANTED

The Membership Committee needs one or two additional members to assist with their tasks at the front desk. It's a little busy as members begin to arrive, and you could really make a difference here. Please speak to Denise Duncan or Lynn Morhous at the table.

The Program Committee also needs some additional members to assist with putting together and organizing future guild programs. Kathie and Kathleen are doing a fantastic job for us, but would like to have help with ideas and logistics. Fun is a guaranteed side effect with Kathleen Morris and Kathie Greenwold. Please talk to them; you won't be sorry.

CNN VISITS Q.U.I.L.T.S.

BY Christina Powell

“This is my stash!” Sound familiar? I’ve probably watched myself say that 40 or 50 times now and yet I’m still compelled to watch it again. It still brings tears to my eyes. If you don’t know what “it” is, I’m referring to the Q.U.I.L.T.S.-inspired video piece that I participated in that was aired on CNN during this past December. This is the link: <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/living/2009/12/11/gif2.soldier.quilt.project.cnn?iref=allsearch>

It all started when I got an email from Lois Bena telling me that her son, John, a photo-journalist with CNN, wanted to do a piece on the quilts we (the guild) make for wounded soldiers, and would I like to be the focus quilter. I have supported this effort since it was first introduced to the guild several years ago. *(To date Chris has made and donated 28 soldier quilts.)* I said “yes”.

The outline for the piece was still sketchy, but one thing I would need was a soldier quilt that I had made. I didn’t have one on hand that was completed or even near completion, but what I did have was the center of a “round robin”, just barely started. Lois, being the marvelous quilter that she is, offered to help me get that quilt moving towards completion. And so we began. Oh, and did I say that we had about a week to finish it?



With Lois’ help and guidance (my brain went mushy at times), we designed and I added row after row until the quilt top and then the backing were done. Sometimes I sat at her machine, others at my own. We tried out blocks (some didn’t work); we measured (oh, how we measured), cut, pinned, stitched, pressed, etc. We had some long days and nights but we had some good laughs, too.

Now that the top and backing were ready, my sewing room was next. For the few days I had left, I spent many hours on the floor sorting fabrics to arrange neatly in my cabinets. I moved bins of fabric, a table, cabinet, etc. to “de-clutter” the room. No, my room doesn’t usually look as neat as it was portrayed, but this was national TV, folks! Then it was what to wear, cancel the haircut, my nails were a mess, you know, details, details.



John and Lois arrived on Friday morning in an unmarked van (no CNN for the neighbors to see ☺), and after introductions and equipment moving, we began. John didn’t have a script and I had only thought about some questions he might ask, but we somehow got into a rhythm and flow. John’s very calm manner helped relax me and that got us started. He actually guided me through the interview, he didn’t really direct me. However, the one question I wasn’t expecting was, “So, how do you make a quilt?” I was tongue-tied for a moment, but eventually began to describe the process. He wanted to know about the “tools” used in quilting, hence my remark, “this is my machine!” My comment about my stash in the very beginning of the piece was actually made almost at the end as he was taking pictures of everything “quilt” around my house.

When John felt confident that the interview was complete in my sewing room, we all (Kathy Hermance and Lois were in the hallway watching/listening) moved, lock, stock and barrel, to Lois' house where several



women from our two friendship groups were waiting to “tie” the soldier quilt. We took over the lead (John was background) and after a brief show and tell, we sat around the large table and proceeded to tie. It was very relaxed and candid even as the camera was rolling.



When that shoot was done, it was up to me again to finish the quilt before morning when the “packing” segment



would be shot. So, at 5:00 p.m. I returned home, inhaled a piece of pizza and began the process of trimming and binding the quilt. By 10:00 p.m. I was exhausted, decided to get some sleep and finish in the morning. By 2:00 a.m. I was still awake, as was my husband, so I sat up, turned on the light, grabbed the quilt and finished the hand sewing in bed. In the morning I added the label and the Mickey Mouse. (I add Mickey to my soldier quilts because Mickey



is as American as it gets, and because finding a Mickey unexpectedly might just bring a smile to someone when smiles aren't easy to come by.) Now, it was off to Pat Terry's house for our final shoot of packing and preparing for shipping. By this time, I was pretty relaxed and thoroughly enjoying the process.

The rest is history. The Story is such a good one because what we are all doing by donating these quilts is saying thanks and bringing comfort and encouragement to our servicemen and women who paid a very personal price for our freedom and beliefs. For me personally, it was an incredible experience and I was honored and privileged to have been chosen for this project. John Bena is an exceptional young photo-journalist (and very good looking!). Our piece was featured several times during December on CNN TV, and with others on Christmas Day on a one-hour special entitled “Focus on Giving”. It was also the lead story for several hours on CNN.com on the Sunday prior to Christmas (bumped to #2 by a snow storm!). AND, this piece (our story!) was chosen for the special “Focus Favorites” aired in early January, being voted by the staff at CNN as one of the 12 best pieces—out of ~85 pieces filmed throughout 2009! Congrats, John.



There is a PS to this quilt story: I have been in email contact with Jonathan Winker, the soldier who received my quilt, and he is home in Wisconsin, doing well, waiting for surgery and then rehab. He is a delightful young man, married to his childhood sweetheart and they just recently bought their first home. I think about how fortunate I am to know where my quilt found a home. I think about Jonathan often, and I am bound and determined to some day meet him in person. He promised we would!

★★★ Judging Study Group Report ★★★

The world of quilting has grown and broadened immensely in the last 20 years. New techniques and styles are always emerging while, others have gained new acceptance. (For example, in the mid-1980s, you couldn't show a machine-quilted quilt at a show.) Along with this, we've noticed a few things. First, there is much debate about some of these new trends and how they affect judging. Second, some of us watched the judges at the last show struggle when applying the criteria on the existing Q.U.I.L.T.S. judging form to the wide variety of quilts entered. Finally, some guild members, particularly new members or those who have not had a quilt judged before, may not be informed about the judging process and the criteria used. Therefore, since our judging form hadn't been reviewed in a few years, it seemed a good opportunity to take a fresh look at it and make sure it continues to reflect the goals and values of our guild and our view of quilting while being consistent with what we know judges are looking for now.

Who was involved?

Lynn Makrin, Chair. Committee Members: Cathy Gruyters, Nancy Finelli, Chris Kaczynski, Kathie Lutz, Anita Paul, and Lois Bena. Kathy Greenwold served as a judging consultant. This group was truly a cross-section of voices in our guild representing different quilting experiences, quilting styles, length of time in the guild, personal preferences, and finally, a variety of experiences with other guilds, shows, and judging. The discussion was definitely lively.

The Process:

- First, we reviewed, researched, discussed, and proposed by looking at the scoring systems and criteria for 5 shows: Vermont Quilt Festival, Delmar Q.U.I.L.T., Wings Falls, Empire QuiltFest and our own.
- We discussed many of the areas that affect judging in the quilting arts, including the following: Machine vs. hand work (quilting, piecing, etc.), Professional quilting vs. quilting done by quilt maker, Use of patterns and kits (which could be thought of as professional design).
- We wrestled with (1) how to draw the line within these differences and (2) how to best elicit the relevant information about the quilt so that any distinctions were fairly applied.
- We discussed how to best evaluate quilts if we created more distinctions and how easy or cumbersome that would be for the judges.

Conclusions:

When all was said and done, we ultimately made two basic changes to the existing judging process – the wording on the judging form and the addition of special judges' awards to recognize achievement in specific areas. The result will make the judging process more equitable across a wider variety of quilts.

We defined judging as the process to do the following:

- Evaluate a quilt as to how visually effective (usually this means how pretty it is, but not always) and how well the chosen techniques are implemented
- Evaluate the quilt for both the top design and the quilting methods
- Judge against a scale of excellence
- Provide both recognition and feedback on the quilt
- It is important to remember that the process is about evaluating the quilt, not the quilter.

In keeping with this, we chose to continue with the point system to allow each quilt to be judged on its own merit against excellence.

Changes to the judging form

The basic change to the judging form was to simplify the language describing the criteria so it would apply equally to many types of quilts, without having to generate multiple forms.

Special Awards

A topic of much discussion was how to handle newer techniques and technologies, specifically, machine-quilted quilts and professionally-quilted quilts. We determined that we would not exclude them from judging or use different criteria for them. If we do, then we open a whole can of worms: Is use of a pattern considered a “professionally designed” quilt? What about hand-piecing vs. machine piecing, hand vs. machine appliqué, etc? What about the next technique or issue that we haven’t even thought about yet?

We determined that the better approach would be to add several awards for special merit, in addition to the standard Best of Show. These would recognize specific aspects of the quilting process and include the following list which the judges would award: Best Appliqué, Best Pieced, Best Hand Quilting, Best Machine Quilting – traditional sewing machine, Best Machine Quilting – long arm machine, Best Use of Color and finally Judge’s Choice.

Next Steps

The conclusions of the Judging Study Group have been accepted and will be implemented for the next show. A copy of the new judging form is available on the website. The registration information including a revised registration form for the next show will be forthcoming from the Show Committee.

★ Thank you from the Guild to all who participated in this successful study. ★

REPEAT MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER:

Jan Huston wants to let us know that there is a letter/receipt for tax purposes for people who have donated a quilt or supplies to Northeast or to our guild.

Please see Jan or call or email her if you need this letter.

For Quilt Show

We also have a new form for those members who must make purchases for the Quilt Show. It is called Quilt Show Expense Report/Reimbursement Request. In addition, Kathy Hermance has created an Expense Tracker form for use when keeping track of individual Quilt Show expenses. See Kathy Hermance if you do not have these forms.