

President's Message

Lately, I have been caught up in the Elm Creek Quilters series by Jennifer Chiaverini. I enjoy the characters, the techniques discussed, and their reasons for making their quilts. I am looking forward to the newest book in the series, *The Wedding Quilt*. Ironically, I have been working on a wedding quilt for my son and his bride to be. I purchased the fabric in Vermont this summer while on a getaway weekend. Part of it was a Hoffman shop hop challenge fabric sold only in Vermont quilt shops this spring. I decided that it would be perfect because the couple had met at the University of Vermont.

All of this has me thinking about how quilts link us to the past and to the future. Recently, I read an anthology of poems and short stories about quilting by Mary Tatem. I would like to share a quote from her book, *The Quilt of Life*, which expresses how I feel about quilting.

“A quilt bridges the generation gap by connecting people from the past with people yet to come. Perhaps that longing to participate in the future gives quilting its strong appeal. A quilt represents a reach for immortality. We stitch hoping our lives, our personalities, our struggles, and our joys will find a place of remembrance in the minds and emotions of others.”

When you think of it, when we as quilters create a piece, whether for a wedding, a child, a friend suffering from a disease, a comfort quilt for a stranger, or whatever the reason, we too hope it will be cherished and perhaps handed down through the generations.

Laurel DeCastro

Meeting Reminder

Our next meeting will be on the second Saturday in December. Because we usually end up with too much food at these special gatherings, it is requested that only those members whose last names begin with the letters **A - L** bring the food for this meeting. The second half of the alphabet will provide food for the final meeting in the spring. Remember also that each member is requested to sign up for one additional month throughout the course of the year.

In the spirit of the holidays, we will also be collecting **canned goods** to donate to local food pantries.

Quilts for Veterans

On October 24th, Laurel DeCastro and her husband Bob delivered our red, white, and blue comfort quilts to some patients at the West Roxbury VA. Here is Laurel with Mikey and Alice of the Volunteer Services.



One quilt was delivered to Jim Bannon, a Vietnam veteran. Another recipient was Alice Horan, a career Marine who served in Vietnam and several other places including Munich, Germany.



Our guild received this thank you note.

“On behalf of the West Roxbury VA patients and staff, we would like to extend our appreciation to you for your donation of quilts for our veterans. Your thoughtfulness reflects the concern that you feel for our veterans and for the service they provided to all of us while in service to our country.

Without your support, we could not provide for the smaller niceties that make hospitalization more bearable. Thank you for your continued support.”

Sincerely,

Ralph Marche, Chief of Voluntary Service

We Didn't Suffer, Thanks to Those Quilts the Folks Sent Us

Christine Moriarty sent word about a special program to be held at the Thomas Crane Public Library in Quincy on December 8th from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM. This program is part of the library's Civil War 150 series. The presenter will be Lynne Zacek Bassett, an award-winning scholar who specializes in New England's historic costumes and textiles.

Here is an overview of the program from the library's website. . .

“Hear stories from behind Civil War battle lines as told through the period's quilts in this illustrated lecture. Issues of patriotism and the challenges in outfitting soldiers will be explored, as well as the herculean efforts of women on the homefront to keep their fighting men clothed, warm, and assured that their presence was missed and their sacrifice honored. Quilts from both the North and the South will be presented.”

The Thomas Crane Public Library is located at 40 Washington Street in Quincy.

New England Quilt Museum

Diane Willson, our representative to the museum, recently attended a meeting there and sent along information about some current and future programs. An exhibit, ***Patience to Raise the Sun - Art Quilts from Haiti & Their Power to Change Women's Lives***, will be on display through December 31, 2011. This exhibit is sponsored by PEACEQUILTS, a non-profit humanitarian organization founded to alleviate poverty by teaching quilting and business skills to women in Haiti.

The Quilt Museum will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2012 and special events will take place throughout the year. The first exhibit for the year, *Campaigns & Commemoratives: Quilts for Presidents*, will open January 19, 2012.

For more information about these and other programs, visit the museum's website, <http://nequiltmuseum.org/> and for those who like to plan ahead, mark your calendars for August 9-11, 2012, for the Lowell Quilt Festival, a Citywide Celebration of Quilts.

Quilt Cruises

Susan Bernard graciously agreed to answer my question about her experiences with quilt cruises.

1. How many quilt cruises have you been on, and why do you find them so enjoyable?

I have been on five quilt cruises thus far. Quilt cruises are great because you get to take classes with national/international teachers and visit great places all at once.

2. Where have you cruised? Are there any particular destinations that you would recommend?

Four of the cruises were to the Caribbean and one was to Maine and Nova Scotia during foliage season. In the Caribbean, I've been to San Juan, St. Thomas (a favorite), St. Maartin (nice beach, good shopping, Tortola (very nice), St. Kitts, Turks and Caicos (great beach) and the Dominican Republic (another favorite). St. Kitts was nice because we went on an excursion to a batik factory. Usually, I take at least one excursion per port. I couldn't resist the Maine/Nova Scotia cruise because it left from Boston--no trying to coordinate flights during the winter months to Florida. When taking a cruise from Florida, I try to avoid Miami as it's not the safest place. Ft. Lauderdale seems to coordinate things well between the airport and cruise terminal.

3. Which cruise lines or companies would you recommend?

My favorite cruise line is Carnival which owns nine lines including: *Princess*, *Celebrity* and *Costa*. Carnival has the largest staterooms and offers the most amenities in the rooms. They also have the best food and the nicest staff by far. The notion that it is a "Party Ship" is something that is left over from the 70's. I

have cruised on Royal Caribbean and Norwegian and found the food and staff to be very inconsistent and the rooms significantly smaller.

I have only booked quilt cruises through *Sew Many Places*, (<http://sewmanyplaces.com>) . I can't say enough good things about Jim West and his staff. They are wonderful; it's like being with old friends. Every detail is taken care of. He usually offers a great hotel price to arrive one day earlier in Florida which I usually take advantage of in case of inclement weather.

I have looked into other quilt cruises with other companies and never booked because the cost listed doesn't include the fabric packet or the port charges and taxes, etc. With Sew Many Places the cost listed is it, except for personal purchases on the ship or items being vended by the teachers.

The itinerary is great, and you never feel rushed or pressured. Classes are held while the ship is at sea.

4. Who were some of your favorite instructors?

I have enjoyed each instructor and have had great experiences with them all. My first cruise was with Klaudeen Hanson, Kimberly Einmo, Pat Sloan and Anita Shackleford. I have since had one other with Kimberly Einmo and three other cruises with Pat Sloan and four with Joan Shay. They were all wonderful instructors and brought plenty of goodies for purchase.

5. What are some things a person new to the quilt cruising experience should know?

If you're new to quilt cruising, prepare to have fun. Everything is taken care of for you. All you have to do is show up to class with a minimal amount of your own tools. The quilters are usually seated together for dinner in the dining room, but if you choose, there are plenty of other options if you'd rather not. There is plenty of time in the evenings to sit and stitch in the classroom. Also they usually have the room open when the ship is in port in case you don't want to go ashore.

6. How much equipment do you need to bring with you?

Brand new sewing machines are always provided. I have been on cruises with mostly Janome but also Brother and Singer machines. The owner and another employee from the sewing machine dealership, Citrus Sew and Vac in Ocala, Florida, go on every cruise and are in every class. They also offer a very large

discount if you want to purchase a machine and usually have a couple of other models with them for sale. On most cruises they have a raffle and give away one or two machines. I have purchased a Janome 6600 and a Gem Gold for half the retail price.

7. *Please tell about a favorite cruise and/or about the friendships you have made through cruising.*

I don't know if I have a favorite cruise but I met Kimberly Einmo and her husband Kent on my first cruise and have stayed friends with them and see them at the AQS Des Moines show and talk with them often. I have also become good friends with Joan and Tony Shay and visit them often either in Florida or the Cape. I have also stayed friends with Sue Walsh (Citrus Sew and Vac) and Annie Kistenfeger (Sew Many Places). Joan and I get together with Sue and Annie when I visit Florida. On the same cruise I met Joan and Tony, I met Faith and Joe Bratton from Panora, Iowa, and we have been friends ever since.

Note from your editor: I don't know about you, but I'm ready to back my bags and set sail for the tropics!

Reflections on the Houston International Quilt Festival

In November, Laurel DeCastro and I headed to Houston. Nothing can prepare one for the sheer size of this quilt show. The venue itself is equal to seven football fields in length. There were over 1,500 amazing quilts on display and hundreds of vendors. (Yes, we did our best to help the economy!)

We also bumped into a familiar face. Here's Penny Myles next to her group's magnificent quilt, *Copley Square*, which received an Honorable Mention.



Laurel and I had initially been a bit disappointed to get into only one class that we had requested until we learned that there were 5,400 other preregistered quilters attending the show. We were, however, able to attend a number of interesting lectures and three “sample” sessions. Let me explain how those worked. Each session was held in a large ballroom, and there were on average thirty teachers at each session. The teachers were set up at various locations throughout the ballroom, and you could move about from one spot to another based on your interests. Someone said it was a bit like speed dating for quilters. Each teacher would give a presentation lasting anywhere from fifteen to thirty minutes. By the end of the two hours, one’s head was truly spinning, but you had picked up all sorts of interesting tips, techniques, and ideas. I would strongly suggest that if you go to this quilt festival that you attend at least one of these sessions.

It was a very busy week which for us came to a close on Saturday night with a wonderful concert by Ricky Tims and a Texas barbecue after the show. If you get the chance, don’t hesitate to attend this Texas-sized quilt festival. You, too, will enjoy every minute of it.

Janice Smith

Quilting Sites to Check Out. . .

The Free Motion Quilting Project <http://www.daystyledesigns.com/365project.htm> offers 300+ free motion quilting designs

If you enjoy paper piecing, **Carol Doak** offers some wonderful, free quilt patterns @<http://www.caroldoak.com/free-quilt-patterns.php>

The **Moda Bake Shop** <http://www.modabakeshop.com/p/recipes.html> features “recipes” (instructions) for all kinds of quilting projects.

Do you have a favorite quilt-related website? If so, please send it along.

To submit ideas, information, or articles for this newsletter, please email me at jesmith28@comcast.net or snail mail it to Janice Smith, 28 Webb Street, Weymouth, MA 02188.

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