

The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue 12 • November, 1996



Quilting with a Twist

Give the kaleidoscope in your mind's eye a good shake and check out these innovative and expressive quilts by Rosie Lee Tompkins and other "put-together quilters" in this issue of the Virtual Quilt.

[No Two Alike](#)

"Untitled," 1985. Put together technique. Velvet, satin.

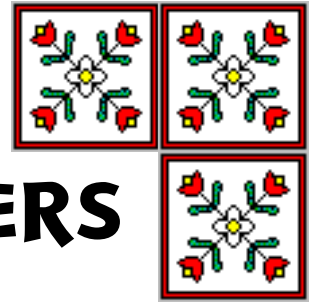
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Quilter Profile



THE REYNOLDSTOWN QUILTERS

As much as all of us love our computer quilting, sometimes we need to get away from our cyber-everything and treat ourselves to a bracing dose of what has sometimes been referred to as “real life.”

It was such a need that led me last month to venture away from my computer and into one of Atlanta’s poorer Black neighborhoods just east of the city, where the Reynoldstown Quilters make their home.

They are not a large group, with only five members. They do not teach classes, except occasionally to school children, and they do not own large publishing empires or mail order catalogue companies. They don’t even particularly like to design quilts. They own no computers, get no e-mail, and have only the vaguest notion of what the internet might be. What they do like to do is

seventy years old to their mid-eighties.

Annie Heard, Mary, and Pearl were there the day I visited, as Mamie’s husband was in the hospital. All three of these women had been born and raised in various parts of rural Georgia. Pearl had never left the state, but Annie had spent more than 30 years in Chicago, only to return to Georgia upon the death of her husband.



Mamie Hughley of the Reynoldstown Quilters works on a quilt at “Quilt Family Day” at the High Museum’s folk art gallery.



sit around a big frame, talk, and take stitches. Lest we idealize them TOO much, there’s also a TV in their quilting room, and [Jerry Springer](#) was blaring from it when I arrived at their meeting place, the Reynoldstown community center.

Mamie Hughley, Annie Heard, Mary E. Ingram, Pearl Walker and Annie Parks, meet with passing regularity at the community center three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Though Pearl let it be known that she is there **every** day, working at the frame, and Annie Parks is in the hospital recovering from a recent stroke. They get there about 10, and leave by early afternoon, and their time is split between quilting and helping with the other activities of the community center, including distributing donated bread to senior citizens in the local neighborhood. They have been quilting together for five or six years, and range in age from

Asked about how they got started quilting, Annie spoke up first: “Oh, I’ve been quilting ever since I wasn’t tall enough to sit down to quilt. I had to stand up to quilt,” she said. “My mother’d quilt, and she’d let me quilt. Sometimes, you know, it’d be just child work, but she would let us work and encourage us, and tell us ‘that’s fine!’” Annie’s grandmother had also quilted, and Pearl also got started as a child at her mother’s frame.

Annie said that after she left home and the rural areas she quit quilting. It wasn’t until she married that

she first saw a blanket, and without the necessity to make bedcovers it didn't occur to her to quilt for recreational purposes until she returned to Georgia many years later.

Quilting materials were, as tradition everywhere informs the craft, old clothing and feedsacks. "Pants,"



Annie Heard, Mamie Hughley, and Mary Ingram meet three times a week at the Reynoldstown Community Center to work on their quilts.

said Pearl. "Old pants. When you couldn't wear them any more she'd tear them apart and make quilts of them." Annie pointed out that almost all fabric in those days was cotton, and Mary looked up from her stitching and said her mother used to make a lot of quilts out of wool. I asked what they stuffed the quilts with and they said cotton, from the fields. "It was ginned cotton," Annie said. "You know, when they didn't have enough left over to make another bale. That was what we used to fill the quilts. And sometimes, you know not all the bolls open at the same time, so we would go out and get the ones that opened late, and whip 'em. Whipped the seeds out of them."

Talk of the cotton fields and the necessity to make their own bed coverings caused the women's minds to contemplate the other hardships of their childhood. Pearl said, "I never had a coat as a child. Never did." And she recalled what else she might sometimes find in the fields: "A potato. And that potato wasn't for playin'. It was for eatin'."

The women spoke of another familiar tradition, which was as much a part of the culture in rural Georgia as elsewhere in America, the quilting bee. "They used

to have quilting bees," Annie said. "They'd make so many tops, and they'd get the linings ready. When they had enough the women would come to my mother's house and they would quilt for a day, maybe two days. Then they would move on to the next person's house, and that way all of them got their quilts made. This was in the winter months, you know, when you couldn't work on the farm."

The room in which the Reynoldstown Quilters work in the community center contains two large home-made frames, constructed from two-by-fours and large dowels. I asked if their mothers used frames and they said yes, they had large frames. "But they was hanging," Pearl said, "from the ceiling." Annie elaborated, "they had things made into the ceiling with strings, and they tied a string here, and there, and over there, [indicating the corners of the frame] and then they rolled it up, rolled it up to the ceiling." I had seen a similar frame with a quilt in it tied up near the ceiling of an old Alabama farmhouse. "Then they would roll 'em down when they were ready to work on them; sometimes they would have two or three rolled up that way."

I asked the women how they decided on the design of their tops. There were several quilts hanging around the room on the walls, all of basically simple designs and colors. "We just do our own things," Annie said. "We just make up our own design, whatever design we want," Mary added. I asked who had made the top they were quilting, which was multi-colored square patches. "Nobody," Annie said. And I looked more closely at it



Pearl Walker, like others in the group, quilted as a child but gave it up as an adult and didn't resume until after she had retired. The group has been quilting together for about 6 years.

and discovered it was what is colloquially known as “cheater cloth.” Annie took me over to a quilt of her own design hanging on the wall, a series of long strips sewn together vertically in yellows, oranges, and greens. The strips were not uniform in size or squarely cut, and I asked her how she cut them. “With scissors,” she said. Neither she nor the other two quilters had ever used a rotary cutter. “We just do it the old-fashioned way,” Annie said.

The women openly professed to having little interest in design, but were more absorbed by the “stitchin’ part.” And the “stitchin’ part” is something they are not in any hurry to complete. When I asked how long it takes them to quilt a top, they said they didn’t keep track. They quilted as long as they felt like it, then quit, and a quilt would sit in the frame for several weeks as each worked on a corner of it. Neither are they overly concerned about their quilting stitches. Characteristically sturdy and somewhat large stitches on a top drawn very tight, they could best be described as utility quilting. But they are consistent with the overall rustic, untutored quality of the quilts.



The women work on home-made quilting frames and their quilting patterns are simple and straightforward.

The Reynoldstown Quilters are in demand in the community. They are regularly invited to local Atlanta city schools to teach third graders about quilting and its part in their culture. They have won an award from the Apple Corps, and have had work — both quilting and other crafts — in a folk art exhibit which made at stop at the [Smithsonian Institution](#), among other venues. They recently gave a demonstration at “Quilt Family Day” in conjunction with [Atlanta’s High Museum of Art](#)’s exhibition of Afro-American improvisational quilts (see review elsewhere in this issue.)

Before I left them, I asked if they would permit me to take a few stitches on their quilt. They gave me a large needle and a spool of green thread, and asked if I used a thimble. I said yes, but that I liked a leather one I have, and they all expressed great interest in the idea of a leather thimble. They admired my relatively small, straight stitches as I did two or three rows in one of the squares, until I broke my needle. “Too many stitches on it,” Pearl said, and I agreed. “That’s when it’s time to quit, when you break your needle,” she said. Besides, she and Annie and Mary were anxious to go out and help get the bread together.



Pearl Walker says old pants were one of the favored sources of fabric for quilts, which were used for warmth since the family did not have blankets.



*The
Virtual Quilt*

PROFILE:

AMERICAN QUILT STUDY GROUP

SCHOLARLY GATHERING "UNCOVERS" MURDER AND MAYHEM

by Merry May

The 200+ attendees at this year's seminar of the American Quilt Study Group in Scottsdale, Arizona, (hosted by Southwest Fiber Arts) learned that the study of quilts can be as juicy as a [tabloid](#).

The [American Quilt Study Group](#) was founded in 1980 in Mill Valley, California by the late Sally Garoutte. Together with a few close friends, Sally was concerned about the accuracy of information on quilt history. In particular, the group was disturbed by "a reliance on the erroneous assumptions proposed by early writers and repeatedly quoted as fact by later authors." (Laurel Horton, *Quilting in America: Beyond the Myths*, Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 1994). They therefore set out to debunk the myths and raise the standards of quilt research through scholarly documentation, the results of which are shared in an annual journal, appropriately named *Uncoverings*.

AQSG seminars are designed for people with busy schedules. However, attendees with a little flexibility may choose to arrive a day early on Thursday to participate in several pre-conference Study Centers, or take off on a day trip with another group of members. This year's Study Center choices included: a Fabric Study Center with Terry Clothier Thompson; a Pattern Collecting study with Barbara Brackman; and a mini-workshop on conducting oral interviews with Laurel Horton. Day trip destinations included: The Heard Museum, Phoenix Art Museum, and Laurene Sinema's The Quilted Apple quilt shop; or a trip to Taliesin West (personal residence and architectural school of Frank Lloyd Wright), and a tour of Marla Hattabaugh's in-home studio (Marla is one of the select individuals who quilts for Nancy Crow).

With Thursday evening free, my roommate, Lynn Thomas, and I decided to try some of the local cuisine. The Old Town Tortilla Factory is on a corner adjacent to the Ramada Valley Hotel, where the conference was centered. Now, don't jump to conclusions about the menu! It was definitely "southwest," but did not have the expected prevalence of "Mexican-style" food. If you're ever in Scottsdale, be sure to visit this eatery on West Main Street, and try their Crab Quesadilla. It's a

bit unusual, but your taste buds will love you for it!

The official opening reception of the conference began on Friday afternoon in the hotel lobby. After dinner under the stars in the hotel's center courtyard, we all moved indoors where AQSG President Sara Dillow greeted us with a "warm" welcome - not surprising when daytime temperatures hovered around 99 degrees!

Following introductions of Local Planning Chair Stacie Seeger and several others, five recipients received this year's Scholarship Awards. Scholarships, contributed by private donors, cover the conference fees and are awarded to individuals who show potential for making a future contribution to original quilt research.

After this, Imelda Gatton DeGraw, our keynote speaker, took the podium. Curator of Textiles and Cos-



tumes at the [Denver Art Museum](#) for 27 years, she was responsible for the first catalog of the museum's collection of quilts in 1963. During her presentation, DeGraw shared some of her knowledge of the museum world, the work involved in maintaining a collection, how collecting priorities and administrative policies have changed over the years, and some of the difficulties of obtaining the funding to support a department within a museum. She also shared slides of some of the outstanding quilts in the Denver Art Museum collection.

Most conference attendees would think the evening's events were over with the conclusion of the keynote speech. But not here! The next event was a lively auction of donated goods (including a sewing machine from Bernina of America!)

Saturday's schedule included presentations of four original research papers, beginning with one entitled,

“The Murder Quilt: A Multimethod Investigation” by Dr. Elizabeth Hoffman of Corvallis, Oregon. If you think quilt history can’t possibly involve murder, intrigue and an early twentieth century trial of a woman and her alleged lover for the death of her husband, you’d better get a copy of this year’s Uncoverings and read Dr. Hoffman’s findings for yourself!

Other topics on Saturday included: “Quilts, Quiltmaking, and Landscape” by Rebecca Ries of Eugene, Oregon; “Charm Quilts: Characteristics and Variations, 1860s-1990s” by Pat L. Nickols from San Diego, California; and “Nancy Riddick’s Quilts: Autobiographical Statements” by Dr. Cassandra Stancil Gunkel of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Sunday morning brought the final three presentations whose topics included: “Carlie Sexton and Her Quilt Pattern Business,” by Susan Price Miller of Pella, Iowa; “Quilt Imagery in the Writings of Rachel Field,” by Tracy W. Barron of Concord, Massachusetts; and “Ruby Short McKim: The Formative Years,” by Jill Sutton Filo of Akron, Ohio. By the way, this was Jill’s first research project which she began before she even knew that AQSG existed! A chance meeting with Ricky Clark set Jill on the path to this year’s seminar.

I’m sure you can tell from this brief description of AQSG’s 17th Annual Seminar that this event was anything but boring! On the contrary, we sometimes weren’t

quite sure where to go next, for fear of missing something! But even with the busy schedule, we still found time to do some shopping, Lynn “caught some rays” by several of the hotel swimming pools, and we all had ample opportunity to mingle and network with one another in a relaxed and sharing atmosphere, all at a very affordable price, too, I might add.

Next year’s seminar will be held on October 10-12 in Lawrence, Kansas, home town of Barbara Brackman and Terry Clothier Thompson. I hope you’ll join us for another exciting learning experience into the world of quilt history - and so much more.

Find out about AQSG by joining us! Basic memberships start at \$35 per year (\$25 for Seniors and full-time Students), and include: the quarterly newsletter Blanket Statements, an annual Membership Roster (to help you delve into the world of networking - this year’s roster even includes e-mail addresses!), as well as opportunities to attend the annual seminar, the annual journal Uncoverings, a library and research facility, a series of Technical Guides (ask for a Publications List when you contact them), and much more.

**For more information, contact AQSG at:
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PCQUILT FOR WINDOWS

PCQuilt for Windows is now available! The new program includes all the features that have made PCQuilt easy and fun to use plus yardage estimation, printed templates and the friendly Windows interface with easy-to-use toolbars. PCQuilt lets you design your block and quilt on the same screen. Make a change in the block and see the results instantly in the quilt! Use quick keys to instantly cycle through borders and pallettes. The program is easy to learn and easy to use and comes with a fully illustrated user’s guide including a sampling of blocks from the library. The program is designed by a quiltmaker for quiltmakers. Special introductory price, \$75. Visa and MC accepted. Call or write Nina Antze, 7061-TVQ Lynch Rd, Sebastopol, CA 95472, (707) 823-8494.

IS YOUR QUILT WORTH MORE THAN A BLANKET?

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT QUILT APPRAISAL BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE TO ASK!

by Deborah Roberts

Are you considering having a quilt, quilted textile or garment appraised, or whether it even warrants appraisal? If not, imagine yourself in this quilt teacher/lecturer's shoes:

This woman (nameless to protect her privacy) shipped four quilts she used as class samples to the next location where she would be teaching. She properly insured them with the shipping company for a value that she had determined. The quilts never turned up at the teaching location, so she filed a claim against the shipper. In order to validate the value she claimed, the shipper's insurance company wanted verification of the value of the quilts. She didn't have anything to back her up, except for the cost of her materials, and that is what she was reimbursed for!

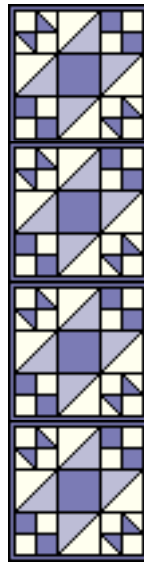
In many cases like this, an insurance company views the quilt as a 'blanket' and will reimburse the cost of replacing a 'blanket' (around \$50.00). This is an unfortunate situation, and is avoidable if the value is substantiated with a written appraisal by an AQS-certified quilt appraiser.

Before seeking the opinion of a certified quilt appraiser, it's helpful to do a little homework. One thing you should know is the purpose of the appraisal. There are 3 types of quilt appraisals: insurance value, fair market value and donation value.

The most common reason for quilt appraisal is for insurance coverage. It is often difficult to recover from loss or damage to a quilt unless it is insured, and, as we saw above, there is independent verification of its value. Rarely is value doubted when an insurance agent is presented a written appraisal by a certified quilt appraiser.

The value given a quilt for insurance purposes is a 'replacement' value, based upon how much it would cost to replace the lost quilt with one of 'like and kind'. If you are having a quilt or garment insured, there are some questions you should ask your agent to ensure that you

are sufficiently covered.



- 1. Does my homeowners policy provide 100% replacement value?**
- 2. Are my quilts or quilted textiles covered while loaned, traveling to a conference, or during shipping, from both damage and loss?**
- 3. Will my auto insurance cover my quilt and quilted textile while I am traveling?**
- 4. Do I need a special rider to cover any of the above?**

I would also suggest that you get all of your answers in writing.

Appraisals are also done for fair market value. This is the amount a willing buyer would pay a willing seller, both having knowledge. People wishing to sell a quilt will seek this kind of an appraisal. AQS-certified quilt appraisers stay current with the market including auction, gallery and private sales, to the best of their ability. It is important to remember that the fair market appraisal is an opinion and not a guarantee.

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Tax donation appraisals are written for clients who desire to donate a piece for any reason to any type of organization, or to establish a value for an estate, often after a death.

The AQS appraisal is a written two-part form. One copy is for the client and the other is kept in the appraiser's files for not less than three years. The appraisal contains a description of the quilt, quilted textile or wearable art garment and includes pertinent information. The appraisal becomes the sole property of the item's owner and the information in it is confidential and cannot be revealed or used by the appraiser without specific and written consent of the client.

It is important to remember that economics and geography can affect an item's value, as can overall condition, quality of workmanship, repairs or restoration embellishments or enhancements, the item's history (also

known as "provenance"), awards or publications.

In some instances, should a quilt or other quilted item be damaged or lost without an appraisal, a certified appraiser may provide an expert opinion regarding general value ranges of such quilts, based on verification of the item and the maker. This opinion may help in seeking compensation from an insurance company, but the general value range is usually less than the value of a quilt appraised prior to loss.

If you think of your quilts as more than blankets, you may want to make sure your insurance company sees it that way, too!

Deborah Roberts is a quilt appraiser certified by the American Quilters Society. You can reach her at QuiltAppraiser@wow.com or visit her website at <http://quilt.com/appraiser>.



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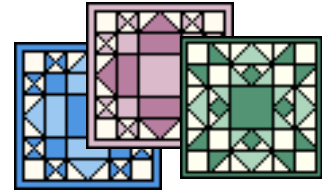
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Visa, MasterCard, and Discover are all welcome. PineTree is online to answer questions about quilting products at aardvark@ime.net.

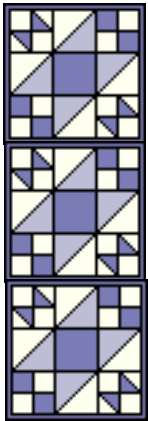
QUILT SHOW REVIEW: NO TWO ALIKE



This show, which is one of the most visually exciting and satisfying to come my way in a very long time, is one in which none of the quilters follow the “rules of modern quilting.”

their own rules, and they convey a dazzling impression of color, texture, and luminescence.

The quilts, by 21 quiltmakers, are drawn from the folk art collection of scholar Eli Leon, and divided into four groups highlighting aspects of this tradition. The first group, entitled “Square Within a Square,” focusses on this group’s improvisational variations on a widely used quilt pattern, which includes the old favorite log cabin. “High Contrast,” the second section, features mostly black and white quilts based in the African-American aesthetic notion of “showing up,” i.e. standing out through the use of large patterns, bold colors, and strong contrasts. The third section features the quilts of a single African American improvisational quilter, Rosie Lee Tompkins, and the fourth the work of four

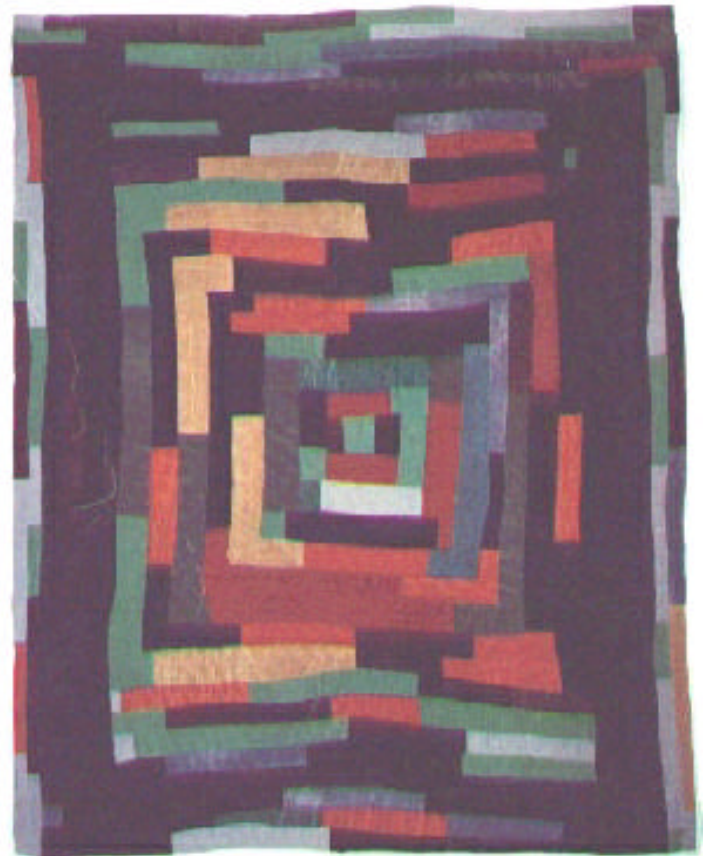


No Two Alike:
African-American
Improvisational Quilts
The High Museum of Art, Folk
Art and Photography Galleries
Atlanta, Georgia
Show continues through
February 1, 1997
Admission Free

These quilts are not made with the latest high-grade cotton from Hoffman or Benartex. There are few points which match, and the quilting stitches are neither small nor uniform. The quilts are not symmetrical nor are their corners square. On the other end of the spectrum of modern quilting rules, these quilts have little surface embellishment — no beads, buttons, paint or metallic thread.

These quilts come out of a very different tradition than what I sometimes call the “quilt shop syndrome,” in which expectations of precision, neatness, and order prevail. As the show’s title implies, these are quilts created out of the spontaneous impulses and found materials of African-American women (and men) whose credo is best summed up by one of their number, Laverne Brackens: “If you piece them all where they hit right together, every quilt you piece is going to look just alike, and if you twist it up a little bit you will make the quilt look different. I just like to take a simple quilt and give it a different look.”

These quilts are all different from what you might see at the average guild show, or in a national competition. Informed by a long folk tradition in which spontaneity and improvisation are valued, they make, and break,



“Untitled Square in a Square,” Sherry Byrd, California (b. 1951), quilt made 1989. Strip quilted with corduroy.

generations of women in one quilting family.

I have now visited this quilt show twice, and will probably go back before it closes on February 1. The main impressions I bring away from it are its vitality and a quality of light that emanates from all of the quilts. This is no doubt due to the predominant use of bright, often primary, colors, and the variety of materials used in the quilts' making. If you examine these quilts closely you will see every possible kind of fabric in them, from velvet to satin to wool, even synthetic knits and corduroy, but very little cotton. One quilt, a brightly colored strip quilt by Sherry Byrd (b. 1951) is a ramshackle square-in-a-square variation made entirely of corduroy. This gives a unique texture to the surface and an extra dimension as the light plays along the ribs in the fabric, some of which is cut across the grain and some with it.

Despite the spontaneity stressed in this show, these quilters display that they are very much aware of traditional quilting patterns and very often they play off against them. Two of the most striking quilts are in the "High Contrast" section. Louisa Fight produced a very dramatic log cabin quilt made of only four VERY large blocks, in black and white with four small blue patches

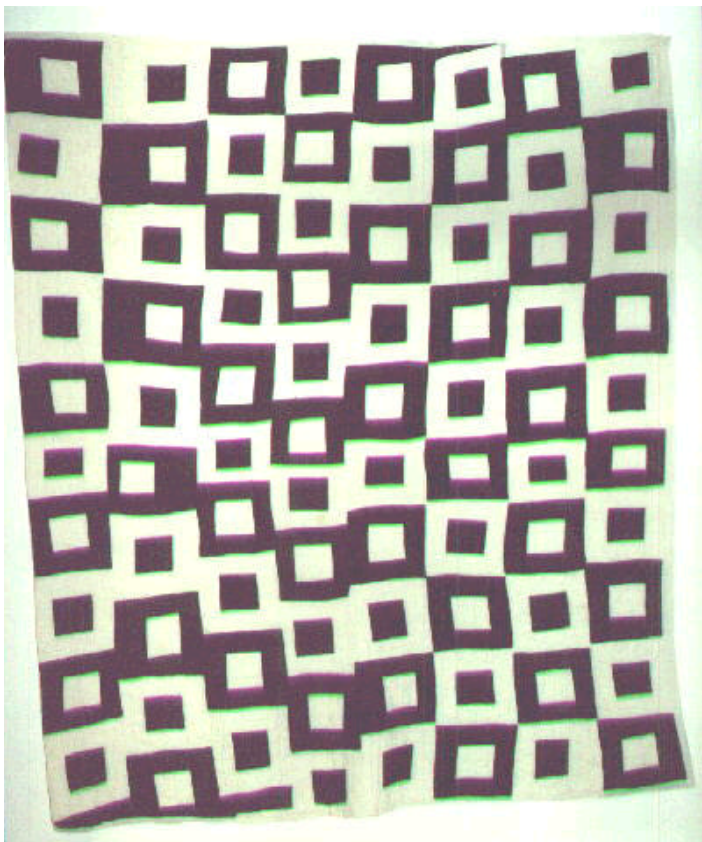


"Love Knot," Minnie Lee Metcalf, Louisiana (b. 1912). Based on a design taught to the quilter by her grandmother. The

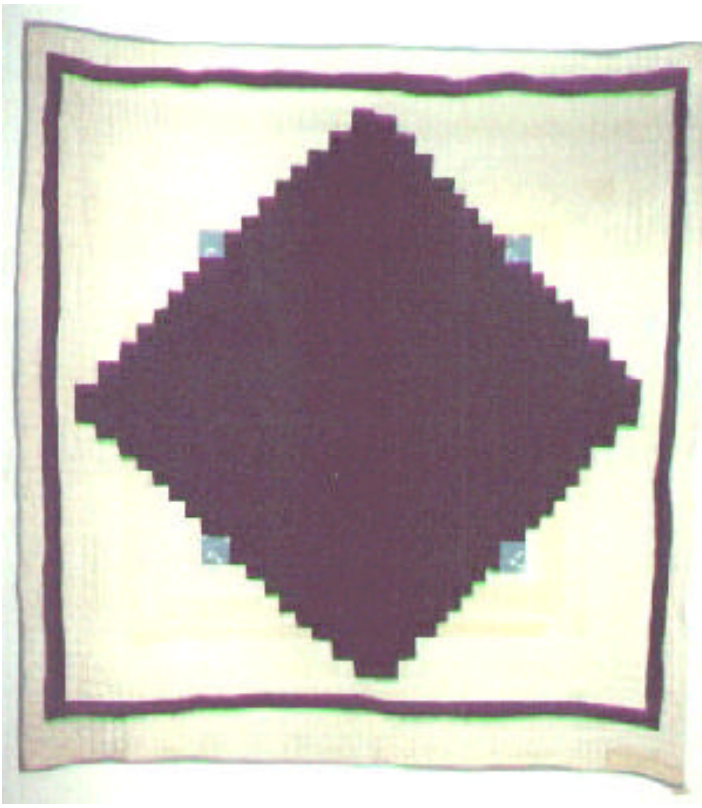
strategically placed at the center of each block. Minnie Lee Metcalf of Louisiana (b. 1912) also worked in black and white to produce a quilt with a large "love knot" design as its predominant medallion. The density of the design is augmented by very close quilting.

Another favorite of mine is a quilt by Arbie Williams (b. 1916) entitled "Banana Split." Done in bright yellow, red, blue, and white strips, it gives a very fresh twist to what is at base an Amish design.

The section of the show devoted to the work of four generations of quilters in a single family is striking both for the liveliness of the quilts and for the influences that play back and forth among the quilters. Gladys Henry, the matriarch of the family, died earlier this year at the age of 96, and the show is dedicated in her honor. Her daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter have learned from her relatively simple designs and each generation has seemed to get bolder in use of color and complexity of design. A 1993 untitled medallion quilt by



"Untitled Square in a Square," Kitty Jones, Mississippi, (1900-1974). Quilt made before 1973.



"Untitled Log Cabin," Louisa Fite, Texas, (1900-1976), made before 1970.

Gladys's great-granddaughter Bara Byrd (b. 1976) is the boldest of the lot, making use of prints and solids in pink, blue, green, white, black, yellow and a spattering of other colors. This quilt, like most of this show, is both orderly and disorderly, unafraid to improvise on a basic geometric design and not worry too much about symmetry or uniformity.

My favorite part of this show is the gallery which features the work of a single quilter, Rosie Lee Tompkins of northern California. Rosie begins with an unexpected twist (something she specializes in), as the gallery text tells us her name is pseudonym, taken to protect her privacy. She puts aside the notion of artist as special individual and states that her quilt-making is a gift from God and a form of spiritual worship.

The title of the first of her quilts one encounters is "Half-Squares and Hit and Miss Variations," and it sums up her aesthetic quite nicely. Her multi-colored quilts give the impression of great complexity and variety, yet if you examine them closely they are made completely out of regular geometric shapes — triangles, squares, parallelograms and rectangles. This quilt was made with leftovers from previous quilts, yet it has a remarkable unity. It is made almost entirely of velvet, irregularly

pieced and wildly chaotic yet orderly at the same time. She has taken the regular forms of traditional quilting and through her "hit and miss" abandon made something entirely new and wonderful.

Another striking quilt is an untitled 1986 piece done in the "hit and miss" style, is a checkerboard done in deep greens and black. The checkerboard squares are all approximately but not perfectly the same size, and the irregularities this creates make the quilt feel like a live, writhing thing, inviting you to abandon yourself to its deep green mysteries. The light that comes off the velvet and satin surface makes it look almost like it's lit from behind.

Besides these luxurious fabrics, Rosie Lee Tompkins makes good creative use of wool, flannel, and even some fake fur pieces in various others of her quilts. In addition to her striking "hit and miss" aesthetic, she adapts other traditions from African-American quilting, particularly strip quilting. According to the museum text, this technique "alternates narrow unfigured strips with wider pieced strips. In Tompkins's hands the stripping changes directions as it moves from one section of the quilt to another. Such idiosyncratic constructions of miscellaneous patchwork are often called 'put-togethers.'"




"String," by Rosie Lee Tompkins, 1985. Full-sized quilt made of velvet strips.

Tompkins' strip-quilting technique is shown at its most dramatic in a 1985 piece called "String," a vertically striped velvet quilt (the museum text makes note of the fact that Tompkins is allergic to velvet, but prefers it anyway) with a definite swing to the right as your eye flows from the top to the bottom of the quilt. The strips are pieced irregularly, of different widths and lengths and colors. Looking at this quilt you have something of the same feeling as watching a large river roll past you through the landscape. Light and motion are everywhere in these quilts.

The quilts in this show are hung beautifully, as you would expect of a major metropolitan art museum. Actually, this show is displayed at the High Museum's Folk Art and Photography outpost in the Georgia Pacific headquarters building on Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta. The galleries are roomy but not overwhelming, and the selection of quilts and their arrangement are done with great intelligence and grace.

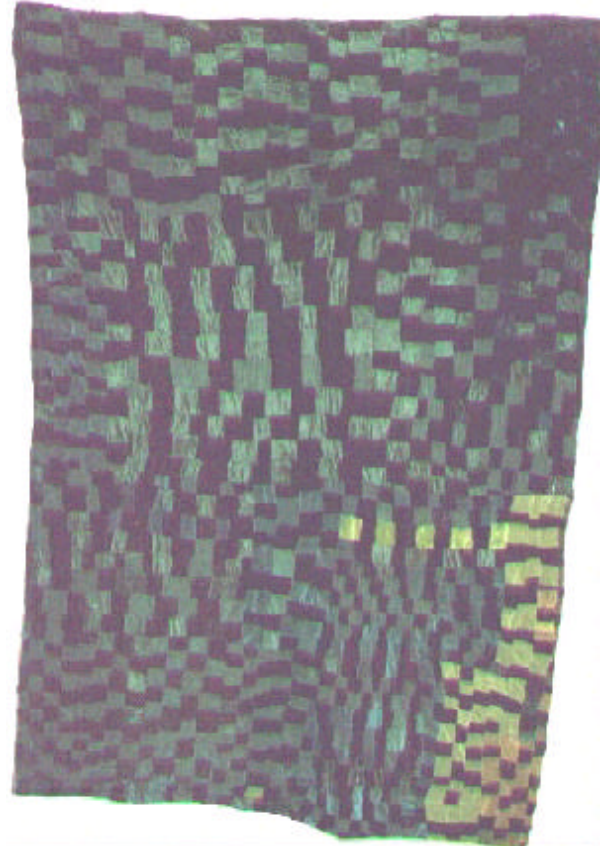
The simple and simply-named techniques and attitudes — "hit and miss," "put-together," "showing up" — are expressive of a style of quilting not much seen in

the quilting mainstream, but we could all learn something from them. We could learn that geometric shapes can be used in wildly asymmetrical designs; we could learn that quilter's cotton, fresh from the bolt, is not the only material at hand; we could learn that the color palette is as large as the spectrum; we could learn that artistic order is not the same thing as neatness or regularity; we could learn that spontaneity is not synonymous with surface embellishment. I know having experienced this show that I will never look at quilting in quite the same way again.

End note: While I was at the museum taking photographs for this article (they are displayed in the web and Acrobat versions of this issue of TVQ), a film crew from the [TBS Superstation](#) was also there filming for a documentary to be aired sometime in the next two or three weeks. As soon as I find out the date and time of its airing, I will e-mail all of you with the information. If you are in Atlanta, the show is open 10 a.m to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free. For more information call (404) 577-6940. To see more show photos, [see the galleries at Planet Patchwork.](#) 



"Half-squares and Hit and Miss Variations," 1992. Satin and velvet. Incorporating odds and ends from previous quilts to create unexpected color combinations.



"Untitled" by Rosie Lee Tompkins, 1986. Hit and miss technique, velvets in black and shades of green.



BOOK REVIEWS

Five Books on Quilting Design and Quilting Stitches

by Addy Harkavy (aardvark@ime.net)



Quilting with Style: Principles for Great Pattern Design

Gwen Marston & Joe Cunningham
AQS 1993 Paducah, KY
\$24.95

A really exciting book about quilting design for hand quilters, *Quilting With Style* can be taken on any number of levels. A quilting scheme for two small quilts had been eluding me. My style of quilting is closely spaced, and I tend to draw my own quilting designs. I knew what these two pieces wanted in theory, but I was the creative equivalent of speechless. The answer was there, but I couldn't get it out. Rather than overwork the problem, I was ignoring it when the AQS' most recent book catalog arrived at my home. *Quilting with Style* by Gwen Marston and Joe Cunningham jumped out at me, and I ordered it right away. I didn't expect a major jolt, but I hoped it would help lift me from my what felt like a creative void. Even though the AQS ships promptly, I felt as though I waited forever for the book. It was worth the wait. The book did a lot more for me than I had dared to hope.

Quilting with Style gently reinforced everything I knew about quilting designs and put it together for me in new ways. It opened doors for exploration, and before I knew it, I was sketching solutions for the two small quilts!

The book's not a "how to quilt" (nothing on quilting stitches), and it really isn't a how-to manual so much as it is a discussion of quilting design. It does, however, have explicit, easy-to-follow drafting and marking suggestions, and it shows quilters how to make an angle keeper for keeping line widths and angles in angulated design. As Kathy Wilson, who also owns the book, commented, *Quilting with Style* teaches you to view every quilting book as two books! First for patterns and tech-

niques, then for the quilting patterns. Readers will need a magnifying glass for this exercise, and all quilts photographed in books won't yield good images of the quilting, but it's definitely instructive to examine each quilt you see first for design, then for quilting scheme.

The chapters cover straight-line design, circle designs, fan designs, cables, feathers, symmetrical and asymmetrical designs, tools and marking ... and more, with lots of four-color photos of new and old quilts to show what the authors mean.

If I could have only one book about quilting patterns, this'd be the one. Of all the books I have so far read on the subject, this one spoke to me the most eloquently. This one seems good for those who want to stick with the tried-and-true but could use help in applying it, or for those like me who futz till they get things the way they want them.



Quilting Makes the Quilt

Lee Cleland
That Patchwork Place 1994
\$21.95

Another inspiring quilting design book, *Quilting Makes the Quilt* seems geared to machine quilting but is easily as applicable to hand work. An initial section discusses filler designs, including straight grids, clamshell and wineglass, echo and stipple quilting. It goes on to cover motif and block designs, followed by allover designs and border designs. Readers will find comments on border corners and sides — supplemented by tips on putting it all together — particularly helpful.

To me, the most exciting thing about this book is the fact that each quilt given is shown in as many as five different quilting schemes, each of which gives the each pieced top a distinctly different personality from its identical counterparts.

Filled with practical advice on quilting design, as well as color photographs that show quilting lines in great

detail, the book concludes with instructions for making the Thousand Pyramids, Square in a Square, Double Irish Chain, Ohio Star, Le Moyne Star, Swedish Ships, Fans, Scrap Star, Strippy Bars, Strippy on Point, Single Wedding Ring and Log Cabin quilts that served as cases in point for quilting designs. The back of the book has full-size removable quilting patterns.

Quilting Design Sourcebook

Dorothy Osler

That Patchwork Place 1996

\$22.95

Dorothy Osler has produced a truly wonderful handbook on quilting patterns and how to make them! Beginning with discussions of quilting design that includes pattern, color, symmetry, space, and style, Osler moves forward to tell readers about reorienting, enlarging and reducing, varying, adapting, and combining quilting patterns. From there, she provides a pattern library of stars and circles; feathers, fans, and ferns; leaves and flowers; and what she calls miscellany, which some might describe as Celtic in feeling. A section on pattern groups shows how to group patterns together and how to expand upon existing patterns by adding harmonious elements. A final section that covers quilting supplies and techniques — marking, batting, basting, hand quilting, and machine quilting provides practical information. This book certainly merits a place in any serious quilter's reference library.

The Ins and Outs: Perfecting the Quilting Stitch

Patricia J. Morris

AQS, Paducah, KY 1990

\$9.95

I found the title of this book a bit misleading. It's more than a book about quilting stitch technique; rather, it covers quilting design, templates and stencils, fabric, fabric preparation, pressing, marking tools, batting and backing, assembly of the sandwich, basting, working methods, thread and needles, working with the quilting design ... phew! And then, somewhere around the middle of the book, it gets down and dirty and talks about the quilting stitch. This section is followed by quilting exer-

cises, other quilting stitches, unbasting, variables, diagnosing problems, and finishing. Phew, again!

Line drawings and clear explanations make all instructions easy to follow. The quilting exercises are logical and straightforward and are sure to help quilters to improve their technique. The information I found the most interesting was on quilting direction, and on planning which lines to quilt when. But the book's full of great tips; all in all, readers will find this book a really complete handbook on every aspect of the actual completion of a quilt.

How to Improve Your Quilting Stitch

Ami Simms

Mallery Press Flint, MI

\$7.95

This book has always been one of my favorites. Don't be fooled by its 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" size; *How to Improve Your Quilting Stitch* has great tips for all quilters. Beginners will find just the advice they need to get started; advanced quilters may find tips that help them improve greatly, with just a little practice. A classic in its own time, *How to Improve Your Quilting Stitch* provides really clear instructions with helpful line drawings.



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Quilting on the Web

BUSINESS & PLEASURE?

The major conundrum about the internet for commercial interests is a basic one. How do you make money using this new medium, particularly the World Wide Web? It is widely agreed among marketing experts that you do not do it by constructing an electronic billboard and letting it go at that. Unless you have something which will draw traffic to the site, web travelers are not going to drive down a lonely country road to look at your sign.

This issue's "Quilting on the Web" will look at three new sites for quilters which attempt to mix content with commercial purpose, and do it with various degrees of success.

[Quilters.com](#)

Quilters.com is a relatively new site with an ambitious agenda — to list every possible quilt shop it can at its site and make this information available to the computer-savvy quilting public. They propose to do it by enticing busy quilt shop owners into placing ads with them and enlisting their services in setting up a web presence. Recognizing rightly that most quilt shops don't have the desire or wherewithall to set up their own website (or have a high-priced firm do it for them), quilters.com offers a package deal at a site they hope will draw quilters because of its specialized content.

While rates are not posted at the site, quilters.com offers a variety of options for display advertisements and/or web pages for quilt shops.

So what's the draw for quilters? Well, the first is a way to find quilt shops in any part of the North American continent through a state (province)-by-state listing. The only problem is that this information is widely available elsewhere on the 'net at such sites as the [World Wide Quilting Page](#) and various maillist FAQs, and besides, there are no listings here. All the squares say "Future Home of a Featured Quilt Shop." If these folks think they're going to attract enough paid participation, at least in the early stages, to give them a meaningful database, I think they're going to be disappointed. They'd be better off to offer free listings to attract interest and work

their way up from there.

Another angle quilters.com is working is that of the "Quilter's Widow." Through this effort they hope to attract ads from such male-interest sites as skeet ranges, fly-fishing shops and the like, located near quilt shops, by having their participating quilt shops give them leads. This seems like a long shot to me, or at least one that will take a long lead time and a lot of old-fashioned leg-work.

Searching the site for some true content, I clicked on the "Teacher Profile" icon, but was greeted by a notice that this page was "under construction." Frankly I don't know why they've put this site out on the web in such an undeveloped state. They're bound to simply alienate their potential audience.

The one large commercial quilting presence they have (or will have) at the site is Lemay Publications, which publishes Quilters Newsletter Magazine. But this, too, is under construction and we're left to speculate what it might eventually look like.

In addition quilters.com says it will offer a "fabric search library," and advertisements for pattern companies, sites with mystery quilts, a "wish list" service," and various other features. So far, though, there's not much there, and the site doesn't appear to have added much in the several weeks since I first visited.

Overall the site's presentation is slick but slow, with lots of graphic mapping and frames that move glacially even on a T-1 connection. The graphics tend to be cute but somewhat condescending.

Rating: One star



[QuiltGallery](#)

A far better implementation of the mix of content and commerce is the new online quilters' magazine at QuiltGallery (<http://www.quiltgallery.com>). Unlike quilters.com, the initial focus of this site is one content, and the quality of their information is very high.

Created by Debra Weiss, who manages the Stitch Forum at the [Microsoft Network](#), QuiltGallery is an online magazine aimed mainly at art quilters. It states its purpose as two-fold, to provide “solid information designed to inspire and intrigue,” and, through its gallery, provide a marketplace for buyers and sellers of contemporary quilts. The site is also selling classified and display ads along with quilt sale listings, and hopes to be a source for other quilting supplies. Prices listed are reasonable.

The inaugural issue contains a well-written feature on Caryl Bryer Fallert, with excellent scans of her work. Under techniques, Debra has written an excellent article about foundation piecing, complete with some paper-piecing templates from Linda Schiffer. Addy Harkavy has contributed a provocative essay on design called “Expecting the Unexpected,” and there is a review of the Electric Quilt 3 software. There is also a form to enter free show listings into an online database.

The appearance of the site overall is exquisite. It makes use of frames and the graphics are both quick-loading and sophisticated. If I have to make one criticism, it's that the site is fairly static. It is a translation of a high-style quilting magazine into the web medium, but there is little that is interactive or “fun” at the site. I don't know what the frequency of the magazine will be, but it seems to me that the analogy of the printed periodical is not always the best one for the web. Instead a kaleidoscope of changing content would attract more visitors, more frequently.

Rating: Three-and-a-half stars



[The Electric Quilt Company](#)

My award for creativity and fun at a commercial site this issue goes to [The Electric Quilt Company](#), which has recently erected a suite of pages in support of it's market-leading quilt design software.

Instead of a boring recitation of the virtues of EQ3 and BlockBase, however, this site has some neat features which display the characteristic McMorris sense of humor and playfulness that can be seen in their software tutorials and elsewhere.

First we are introduced to the webmaster, EQ the Mouse, a cutesy concept to be sure, but it seems to work here. EQ admits his initial horror at being given the title

“Webmaster,” but promises us lots of good things to come at the page, on a monthly basis.

There are of course links to descriptions of the company's products with lots of information on what the software does and how to order it. But interspersed with this information (which is appealingly presented) there are clever features that show you how to use their software to do such unconventional things as make “Martha Stewart's Patchwork Cookies.” Presented in a puckish manner, this section is complete with real recipes for sugar cookies and frosting and instructions for how to use the software to make templates for patchwork cookies.

Mystery quilts of course have a perennial appeal, and this site has given a new twist to that old chestnut by devising a mystery quilt the clues to which are discovered through the use of the company's software programs. Scheduled to take place over a year's time, this elaborate invention is complete with “secret passages” and detailed instructions for designing the quilt in question on EQ3.

The site's style isn't fancy, but the fonts and backgrounds are varied and small gifs speckle the pages. Well done, EQ the Mouse!

Rating: Four stars



While here talking about the web, you might like to know of some new features at Planet Patchwork, TVQ's own contribution to the genre.

Recently we have added an interactive [web-based bulletin board](#) especially aimed at quilting businesses. This board is a place for those in any aspect of quilting as a business to share ideas, ask questions, and carry on a dialogue with other business-people and customers.

Merry May (Inspector Cluesew) has provided Planet Patchwork visitors with a new four-part “[Merry Mystery](#)” for the holidays, designed to be completed quickly. And speaking of the holidays, you can register your desires for quilting-related holiday gifts in Planet Patchwork's new Holiday Gift Registry at <http://planetpatchwork.com/registry.htm> and have them sent by e-mail to the primary gift-giver(s) in your life.

If you haven't landed on The Planet lately, come on around for a visit!

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Hats off to Nicholas Holland (age 17)
alias "computer whiz" for his work on the
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Heidi Wurst - DESIGN PLUS - "labels designed
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We'd like news of new classes starting up to teach quilt design on computers, or new approaches to that teaching. New products, maillists, World Wide Web pages, etc., are all fair game, and we'd appreciate any tips you can provide. Send your tips by e-mail to rholland@atlanta.com.

If you have a comment about an article, a complaint or a correction, we're glad to hear that, too, and may publish some comments as letters to the editor. Again, these may be sent to rholland@atlanta.com.



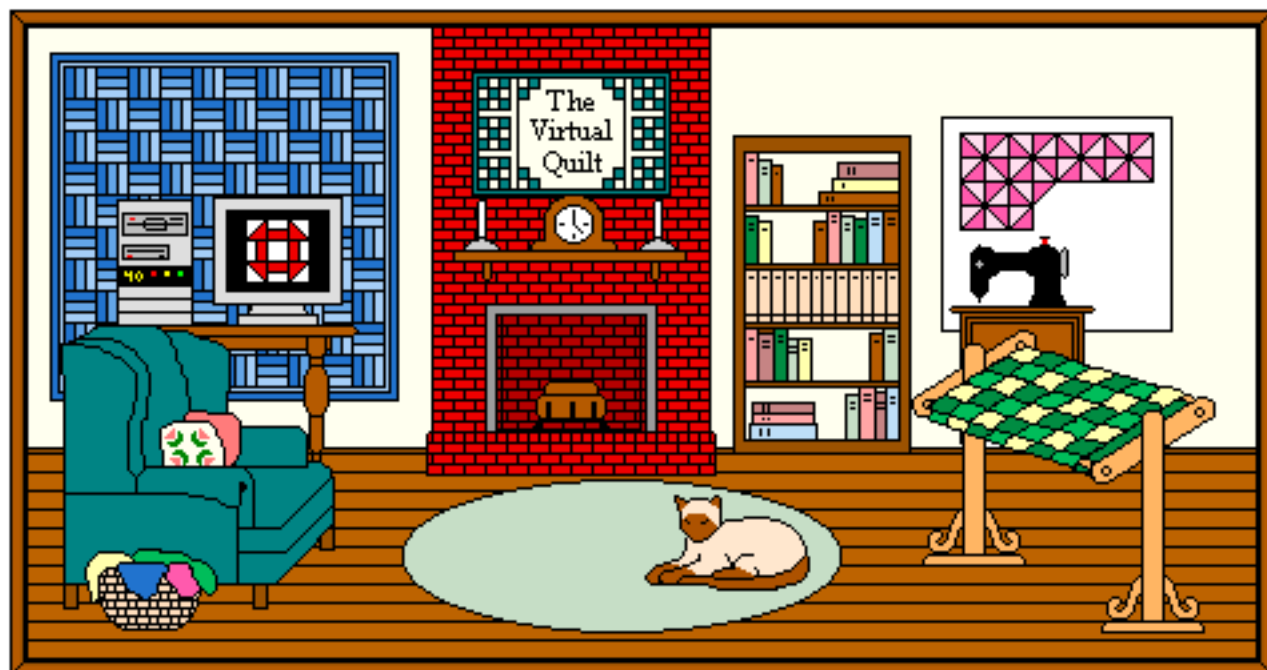
The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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TVQ is also available to subscribers on the World Wide Web. The graphically enhanced web version can be seen at <http://quilt.com/VirtualQuilt/tvq.html>. Future issues will also be converted into Adobe Acrobat format.

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