

The Virtual Quilt

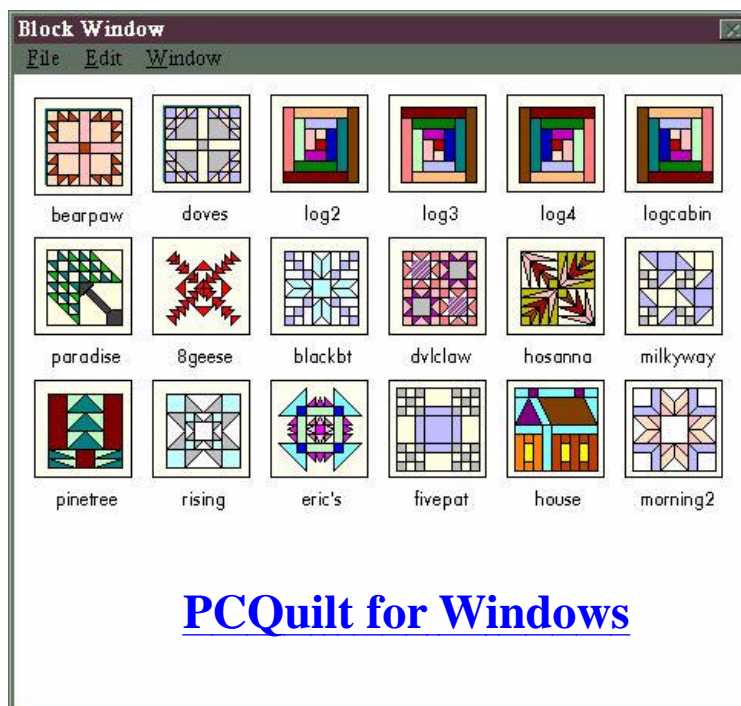
A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue 14 • February, 1997

Making a Comeback

PCQuilt, one of the first quilt design programs ever, attempts a comeback, making the transition from DOS to Windows. Will it succeed?

Find out in our software review this month.



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Also inside this issue:

- [Book Reviews: Stars & Kaleidoscopes](#)
- [Quilting on the Web](#)
- [Multimedia Review: Figuring It Out](#)
- [Pretty Postings](#)
- [Charms & Schnibbles: News Notes from All Over](#)



BOOK REVIEW: STARS AND KALEIDOSCOPIES

Simply Stars: Quilts That Sparkle By Alex Anderson
C&T Publishing, 1996 96 Pages,
\$21.95

Kaleidoscopes & Quilts By Paula Nadelstern
C&T Publishing, 1996 144 Pages,
\$24.95

Certain shapes have a perennial appeal. They have their origins in nature, but through human imaginings are transformed: simplified, embellished, regularized, concatenated, recolored, shaped and molded, until they become something nature never dreamed of, and find their way into our quilts.

These two books, Alex Anderson's *Simply Stars* and Paula Nadelstern's *Kaleidoscopes & Quilts*, both take wing from one of these families of shapes, the stars that blink at us from far galaxies. Despite their common inspirations, the approaches of these two quilters to design and technique are very different. The similarity is they both produce stunning quilts.

Alex Anderson's *Simply Stars* is probably the definitive text on making star blocks and quilts. It is organized, conveniently, according to construction method, including chapters on "Stars Made of Squares and Triangles," "Stars Made of an Isosceles Triangle in a Square," and "Stars Made of Diamonds and Y Seams." If these sound a little complicated, they become more familiar as the star blocks take on names: sawtooth, double sawtooth, Martha Washington, Le Moyne, 54-40 or Fight, and so on.

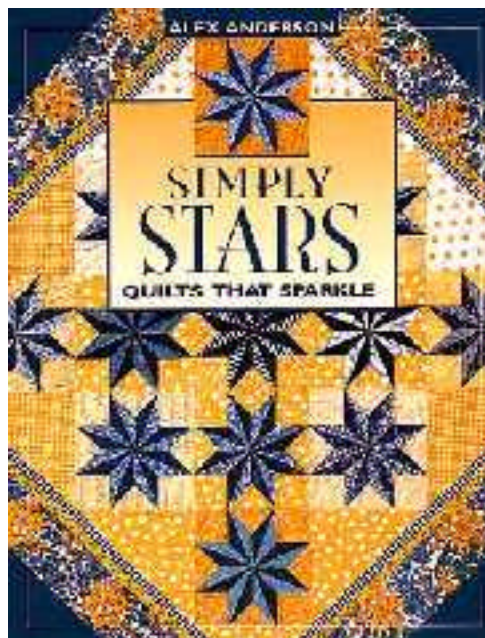
But before she gets into the nitty details, Alex gives us an introduction and some general instructions which

are among the best I've seen in a quilting book. In her introduction, for example, she presents all in one place the "magic (cutting) numbers which we all hear and then promptly forget. How much do you add to the finished size when you're cutting half-square triangles? How much is it for quarter-squares? It's all right here, methodically laid out, with diagrams.

Following this, she gives the reader an excellent section on fabric and color choice. Knowing that fabric selection for a quilt is often the most difficult part for quilters, she cites a story about herself: "I once had a teacher who stopped me in my tracks when I was complaining about the use of different colors. She said, 'To say you hate a color tells me you are ignorant of its use.' Needless to say, that was a life-changing experience for me. Now I treat every bolt of fabric in every color family as a potential candidate."

To underscore this general observation, she then takes us through a series of potential star quilts in different color and fabric schemes — holiday, focus, neutrals, theme, historical, monochromatic, solid, scrap, etc. Each of her examples, accompanied by color photographs, adds to our understanding of the infinite possibilities that color affords.

One of my favorite things about contemporary quilt books is the color gallery of quilts they contain. The quality of C&T's photography and printing is always superb, and the quilts in this gallery, made by Alex, her students, and others, are simply stunning. One of the most interesting design techniques in these star quilts is



the use of different sized stars and unusual settings to break up the lockstep monotony that is the risk in traditional quilts.

The bulk of the book contains detailed instructions on making a variety of star blocks and quilts out of those blocks. Alex considerably provides instructions for quilters who like templates (template patterns are provided in the book) and for those who use quick-cutting techniques.

The book is rounded out with a “Stellar Ending,” in which setting, borders, backing, quilting, and binding are all considered. Her observations and advice in these sections are as insightful and helpful as everywhere else in the book. At the end she also offers a 4-week course outline based on the Simply Stars text.

If you feel like you’ve lured into a world of dense design complexity among Alex’s stars, Paula Nadelstern’s *Kaleidoscopes and Quilts* will draw you even deeper into the forest with her very demanding yet explosively colorful quilts based on kaleidoscope designs.

Paula is a very engaging writer, and she draws you into her life from the start with a description of her New York City neighborhood: “I make my quilts on the same block in the Bronx where I grew up. The view from our ninth-floor window is one of the most northern exposures in New York City, showcasing acres of tree-filled park and empty sky. My daughter Ariel is the third generation of my family to live in this neighborhood that prides itself on a sense of community and cooperative spirit. She grew up with the expectation that she might bump into either set of grandparents when she walked down the street.”

She makes her quilts on a small table, using some templates and a Singer Featherweight sewing machine, yet out of this very cramped urban setting emerge some of the most exotic flowers of contemporary quilting. These are generously presented in the book’s gallery, which dramatically sets Paula’s quilts against mostly black backgrounds.

The quilts are gorgeous — rich, vibrantly colorful, complex, surprising. Making them, however, is not for sissies!

You begin to get a clue when among the tools that Paula recommends is “a protractor with notations for both whole and half degrees.” She also warns that pencils must be well-sharpened, with ample erasers, “because lines have not only length but also width.” These are indicators of the high degree of precision and patience involved in creating this type of design. Kaleidoscope patterns are among the most intricate symmetries known to human art, and require not only tight control of point and angle, but an in-depth knowledge of fabric design types and color.

Intricacy of design requires intricacy of technique, but Paula seems fully up to the task of teaching the rest of us how to do this. And she does it with humor, too! She covers all the bases of measurement, cutting, fabric selection (with an illuminating analysis of different fabric pattern types). She even gives a tutorial in “how to piece itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny pieces.”

If kaleidoscopes require more precision than other types of quilts, they also paradoxically require more spontaneity: “Designing a kaleidoscope block is basically visual invention,” Paula says. “There is no ‘correct’ way to continue the piece in progress.” In fact, working with this type of design requires us to unlearn certain basic quilting practices. Sometimes cutting off the points or flipping the piece around to make new combinations is the difference between a ho-hum and a sparkling design.

Readers will also find Paula’s discussions of design sensibility (unity, focal point, balance, rhythm, line), color value and contrast, and fabric types interesting and valuable no matter what type of quilt you are making.

Because of its focus on a very particular type of quilt design and construction, *Kaleidoscopes & Quilts* doesn’t try to be a comprehensive quilting book, or a text for beginners. Instead of a final section on bindings, there is instead a discussion of real kaleidoscopes and the current renaissance in kaleidoscope-making, including interviews with kaleidoscope makers.

Whether you decide you have the inclination, time, patience, or moxie to make one of these quilts, this book is a rich source of inspiration, and a thing of beauty.





PCQUILT MAKES A COMEBACK WITH PCQUILT FOR WINDOWS

In 1987, Nina Antze published the first significant quilt design program, [PCQuilt](#) for the MS-DOS operating system. For four years PCQuilt had the field to itself, but its position in the market was to be eclipsed by a series of new entrants, beginning with The Electric Quilt and later joined by VQuilt, QuiltSOFT, and Quilt-Pro, the latter two of which were written for Windows.

Despite this competition, and the ascendancy of the Windows operating environment, PCQuilt remained largely unchanged for the next ten years. It didn't support the use of a mouse, remained rooted in DOS, and many found its methods of manipulating the elements of cyber-quilts to be awkward at best.

Now Ms. Antze has finally answered the challenge of her competition with a new Windows version of PCQuilt, released late in 1996. PCQuilt for Windows and for WIN95 is a compact, elegant program that makes use of all the tools available to Windows programmers — sophisticated toolbars, extensive, context-sensitive help, and full use of the mouse, including WIN95's right-click capabilities. It's clear the author has learned her Windows lessons well.

So how does the program stack up to its competition?

The first thing of note in this new program is the basic interface screens. In all other programs on the market, the user toggles between two basic screens — one for block design and the other for design of the quilt. In PCQuilt, these two screens are combined. There is a block

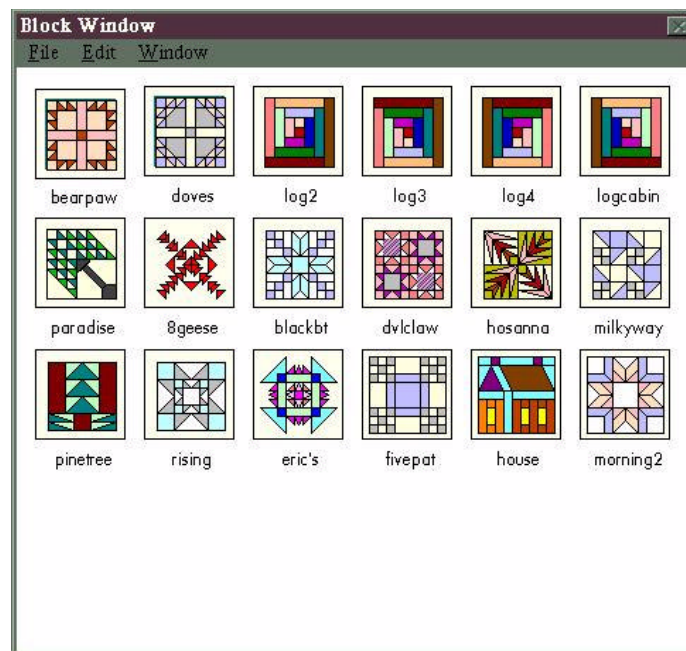
design box in the upper left, with a second block display box below it, and on the right is a larger box for display of the whole quilt.

The two boxes are so closely integrated that as you design a block, adding triangles, squares or other shapes, you immediately see the results in the quilt next door. This

is both satisfying and a little bit disconcerting, because a quilt made up of partial blocks can look kind of funny. The insight you gain from this incremental display of the quilt may or may not be very helpful in making design decisions. The other drawback to this arrangement is that you are limited to a smaller display of the quilt than you are in a program which has a separate quilt screen. Nevertheless it makes working back and forth between blocks and the quilt less awkward than with the screen toggling required by other programs.

At the top of the screen there are three toolbars. The top one includes the tools for doing the basic functions of the program — laying out blocks, coloring patches, measuring yardage, adding borders, etc. My only complaint here is the lack of automatic help bubbles to aid the user in remembering the meaning of the icons.

The second and third toolbars are for color and pattern fill (“fabric”) selection respectively. The color bar provides a selection of palettes in different colorways that expand and help define your color choices. The small selection of fabrics, or pattern fills, can be edited, or new patterns can be created from scratch to add more, but there



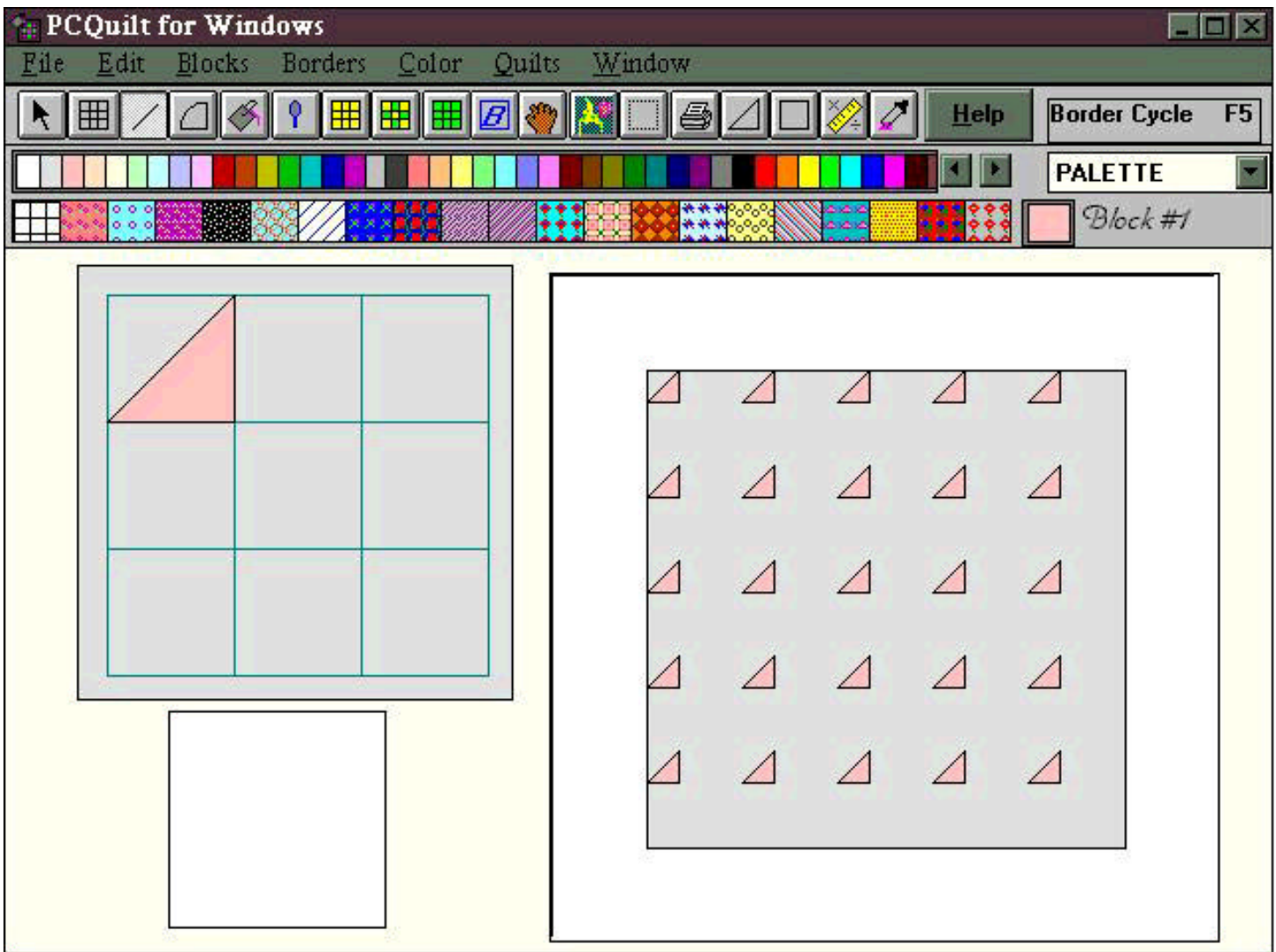
are no large fabric collections based on actual designer lines, such as you will find in other major programs. Whether or not this is a big drawback depends on how you use a quilt design program.

The program's block module has a variety of features and is very flexible. You can choose between drawing quilt patches using lines or using pre-drawn shapes, such as triangles and squares. You begin the block design process by selecting a grid design for the block window (anything from 1 X 1 to 9 X 9), which defines your basic type of block and provides guides and "snap-to-grid" features to assist in drawing the block. You can create shapes, flip, rotate and mirror them. While the program lacks "bezier curve" capability for drawing applique patterns or other curves, it does have what it calls the "drunkard's path" tool which allows for limited curved shapes for that particular block design. The toolbar at the top of the screen is supplemented by a "portable" toolbar which is invoked by pressing the right mouse button while your cursor is over the design screen. This "quick tools" feature con-

tains more shapes than the main toolbar and is a handy convenience.

If you're not into designing your own blocks, the program comes with about 250 pre-designed blocks that can be pulled up from the block library into the block design area and into your quilt. Numerous blocks can also be pulled up from the library and placed in a temporary storage area called the "block window." I say temporary because this window is cleared every time you close the program. You are not able, as you are in *The Electric Quilt*, to save a group of blocks, borders, palettes, etc. in a project file along with any quilts you've designed, to be opened later. You can, however, save groups of blocks separate from the quilt in "library files" which can be retrieved and placed together in the block window. There is a limitation (albeit a generous one) to the number of blocks that can be stored at one time in the block window.

The tools for designing quilts are equally robust. You can easily design a quilt made of a single block or two alternating blocks (simply by selecting the blocks and



pushing a toolbar button) or you can lay out a sampler by placing blocks individually on the quilt grid. Of course you can adjust the size of the quilt and the number of blocks across and down, up to a limit of 42 blocks in any given quilt. You can with a click on a button view the current block on point in the quilt. The program also features a medallion quilt tool which allows for the design of quilts with a central motif. The way this works is that the quilt design screen is display as a grid on which you may design with various lines and shapes as you would in the block design module. There is a selection of pre-drawn

can also design your own borders using the same drawing tools available for block design. The only problem here is that the grid on which you draw a border is along the edge of the quilt design window, and involves tedious placement of shapes.

Placement of sashing in the quilt is also very easy and automated. You can adjust its size and color it as you wish, including corner keystones.

The program's printing and fabric measurement capabilities also appear to work well. It gave me no problems in printing out templates for a large block, though it printed out the template for EVERY patch, even though some were mirror images of others, and it did clip off the end of one piece that was at the bottom of the page. It put the appropriate quarter-inch seam allowance around the pieces (this is adjustable).

The documentation for this program is a modest yet thorough spiral-bound booklet of 82 pages. Well-written and orderly, it familiarizes you with the program's many features in a logical way and provides helpful tips along the way which point out shortcuts or more advanced features for those who have mastered the basics. It contains a hard-copy catalogue of the program's quilt blocks, a good index, and a quick-reference appendix which identifies the various toolbar buttons and menu and hot-key shortcuts.

So how does it stack up with the giants of the industry? Well, it doesn't have a bazillion quilt blocks or fancy fabrics from Jinny Beyer. On the other hand, you shouldn't have problems with printer compatibilities as some programs still rooted in DOS do, and you don't have to worry about having more than one mouse driver.

It also doesn't have the ability to draw sophisticated curved applique pieces, or to overlay a quilting design on top of the quilt.

On the other hand, this program is more modestly priced than most others on the market — at \$75 about 30-40% cheaper than other "full-featured" programs. And it is a pleasure to use. It doesn't hog a lot of disk space and its screens repaint quickly, even on older computers with less than the latest Pentium MMX processors.

If you're looking for a well-designed Windows-based program in which to test out your quilt design ideas, PCQuilt should get your serious consideration.

PCQuilt for Windows, v. 1.0 7061 Lynch Road Sebastopol, CA 95472 (707) 823-8494 Web: <http://www.pcquilt.com> E-mail: antze@nbn.com



PCQuilt is a pleasure to use. It doesn't hog a lot of disk space and its screens repaint quickly, even on older computers.

quilts available in the quilt library, which is available in the same window as the block and border libraries.

Recoloring your quilt blocks is also easy. You can color and recolor in both the block design and quilt design windows, but they do slightly different things. If you recolor in the block, all the blocks in the quilt change at the same time. If you recolor a patch on the quilt, it changes the color of only that patch in that block. This allows a great deal of flexibility in the manipulation of color in your quilt and experimentation.

Placing borders on the quilt is accomplished in a couple of ways. There is a group of "default" borders, those commonly used, which can be toggled through from the main screen. There is also a larger group of borders available in the border library. I ran into a problem when I tried to use a couple of these library borders. When I applied one to the quilt it overran the quilt edge all the way to the edge of the design window, in both the horizontal and vertical directions. I was able to delete the extra horizontal border (though this was somewhat tedious, as you have to delete the patches individually) but the vertical appendage stubbornly refused to respond to my clickings. I never did figure out how to remove it. It also doesn't appear to be possible to place more than one border on a quilt, but there are ways of creating interesting borders, including placing blocks you have designed there. You

CHARMS & SCHNIBBLES

NEW SERVICE FOR ONLINE QUILTERS

Hickory Hill Antique Quilts now has a book page where they will list your used quilt books for sale. They also offer new quilting books at a 20% discount. If you would like to list your book for sale, e-mail oldquilt@albany.net. Used books are listed at no charge to the seller with a link directly to them and sales are arranged between buyer and seller. If you are interested in buying either a new or used book, visit <http://www.albany.net/~oldquilt/books.htm>

UPCOMING QUILT SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD

YOKOHAMA. The International Quilt Week Yokohama '97 will be held from November 6 to 8 at Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall. This event is organized by the Quilt Week Executive Committee consisting of 8 quilt-related companies.

With this event, the Quilt Week competition is annually held and it's open to quilters from around the world. Total prizes are worth 3 million yen. To enter the competition, send two slides of a quilt (maximum size is 2.5m x 2.5m), one showing the whole quilt and the other showing detail, and an entry form. The deadline is the end of June, 1997. Those who pass the first judging will be notified to send their quilts for the final judgment with the entry fee of 5000 yen which includes the return shipping.

The miniature quilt competition will be held at the same time. To enter this, send a quilt no larger than 50cm x 50cm, an entry form and the entry fee of 2000 yen including the return shipping, by the end of September.

The winning quilts will be exhibited at the International Quilt Week Yokohama from November 6 to 8, 1997.

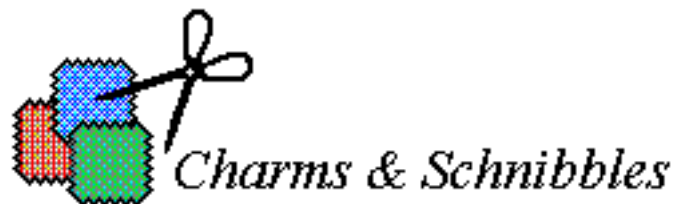
To get an entry form, please write to Quilt Week Competition '97 c/o Patchwork Tsushin Co., Ltd. 5-28-3 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113 Japan Fax:+81-3-3816-4467, 3815-7662 or 3816-5530. e-mail:tsushin@viq.com or patchwork@viq.com

To enter the quilt competition, please send the slides and the entry form to the above, and to enter the miniature quilt competition, send your miniature quilt to the same address.

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI. A Communion of the Spirits: African-American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories, [Mississippi Museum of Art](#), Jackson. This exhibition is associated with the publication by Rutledge Hill Press of Nashville of a book by Roland Freeman of the same title. The book reports the results of Freeman's national survey of African-American quilts and his own quilt odyssey as folklorist, documentor, and collector of quilts. The project results are also being made available through this exhibition produced by The Group for Cultural Documentation. A selection of the photographs and surveyed quilts, interpretive panels, and other artwork related to the quilters opened last month at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson and will tour for three years following its run there.

PADUCAH. 20th Century Quilts, 1900-1970: Women Make Their Mark. [Museum of American Quilter's Society](#) Paducah, KY — Mar 22-Jun 28. By Joyce Gross and Cuesta Benberry, Curators. The exhibition sponsored by MAQS opens March 22. In conjunction with the exhibition, a three-day quilt seminar will be held June 27-29, also at MAQS.

Approximately 35 quilts constructed between 1900-1970 will be mounted to illustrate two themes of the



exhibition. One objective is to explore how the enormous 1970s to 1990s quilt revival came into existence. The curators will demonstrate that a long evolutionary process of quilt development during the early 20th century preceded the current quilt resurgence and that it is the culmination of that process and not mere happenstance.

A second objective is to contrast the roles of women in the 19th century and those in the 20th century, showing the effects of these radical changes on quilts, on the extent of quilt production, on how quilts were regarded in the culture, and on what new quilt-connected endeavors women participated in.

Prestigious museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum, NY; the Shelburne Museum, VT; the Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN; the Birmingham Museum of Art, AL; the Spencer Museum, KS, the Denver Museum, CO; and many of the nation's most notable private collectors have loaned exceptional and rare quilts to the exhibition. Represented will be celebrated works of persons already recognized as historical 20th century quiltmakers, such as Marie Webster, Bertha Stenge, Rose Kretsinger, Florence Peto, Marion Cheever Whiteside, Dr. Jeannette Dean Throckmorton, Grace Snyder, Hannah Haynes Headlee, Charlotte Jane Whitehill, Jean Ray Laury, Marguerite Ickis, and Mary Schafer. Other quilts, made by less famous names but which display distinctly 20th century concepts, will round out the exhibit. A broad array of supplementary archival quilt material will also be installed at the exhibit site.

The seminar will include lectures, panel discussion, break-out sessions, guided gallery walks, show and tell, and a chronological "round robin" discussion of 20th century quilt history, specifically the 1900-1970s period. Dedicated quilt historians will comprise the seminar faculty.

KITCHENER, ONTARIO. Tokyo Kaleidoscopes: the Quilts of Setsuko Obi. [Joseph Schneider Haus Museum](#) Kitchener, Ontario Apr 10-Sep 1. This is a solo exhibit by Obi, winner of the inaugural Ontario Juried Quilt Show.

2nd Annual Ontario Juried Quilt Show, [Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery](#), Kitchener, Ontario May 15-Jun 29. This show has quickly become a major event with nearly \$5,000 in prizes plus a Purchase Award. This is only one of several exhibits during the Waterloo County and Area Quilt Festival at multiple venues, May 16-May 31. Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area exhibits, events, workshops, Mennonite Quilting Bee JSHM, May 17, 18, 19. Winners announced JSHM "Green Theme" 1997 Quilt Block Contest, May 19. Also vintage quilted clothing & preview of quilts for Mennonite Relief Sale and Quilt Auction. For further details on any of the above contact JSH Museum, 466 Queen St. S., Kitchener, ON N2G 1W7, 519/742-7752

NEW AND UPCOMING AT PLANET PATCHWORK

Planet Patchwork, TVQ's parent website, continues to develop and evolve in ways we hope you will find exciting. Recently we have established a gateway through Planet Patchwork to the quilting forums and chat rooms of our sister site, Quiltropolis. Point your browser to <http://planetpatchwork.com/chat.htm> to get more details. We hope to be doing more collaborative things with Quiltropolis in the future.

Kris Driessen of Hickory Hill Antique Quilts has agreed to take on editorship of a major new suite of pages at Planet Patchwork to be called "The Quiltmaker's Legacy: Our Quilt and Textile Heritage." This new area will include articles and information about historical quilts, quilt restoration, quilt appraisal, the historical context of quilting, and other related subjects from some of the major writers in the field. Look for announcement of its launch in the next few weeks.

We also welcome to Planet Patchwork Nancy Armstrong, chair of the Canadian Quilt Study Group, who has agreed to write book reviews and other articles for Planet Patchwork. She is currently working on a major feature for TVQ on Quilting in Canada. Look for it in an upcoming issue. Also on the drawing boards are pages that feature foundation paper piecing, crazy quilting, and other subjects of interest to quilters. We appreciate your continuing support of Planet Patchwork through your visits and your subscription to TVQ. Got an idea? Want to contribute? E-mail us at rholland@atlanta.com

[Editor's note: TVQ thanks Kris Driessen, Atsuko Ohta and Nancy Armstrong for much of the information in this issue's Charms & Schnibbles]



Quilting on the Web

PLANET PATCHWORK'S WEB EXCELLENCE AWARDS AND OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

As with so many things in life, change seems to be the only constant on the Web. The last couple of years have seen an explosion of new sites, with quilting well-represented in that number. By some counts, there are between 300 and 400 quilting or textile-related sites now on the web, with more coming online every day.

Unfortunately not all change has been for the better, and it is with great regret in the web quilting community that we mark the passing of one of the best sites, Turtle's Quilting Playground. A casualty of busy lives and other demands, the page, created and maintained by Bob and Karen Nick of Huntsville, Alabama, has shut its doors. The hallmark of the page was its monthly virtual shows of the quilts of internet quilters, and fortunately these have not been lost. They will be taken over by the National Online Quilters Page (<http://www.nogers.org/>). Hopefully when their lives are a little less hectic, Turtle and Bob will find time again to share their passion for quilting with the web community.

The closing of Turtle's and other changes on the web have caused us at TVQ and Planet Patchwork to reassess our long-standing "Top Ten Quilting Websites," (<http://planetpatchwork.com/topten.htm>) and make a few changes of our own. Beginning in January, Planet Patchwork began sponsoring the "Planet Patchwork Web Excellence Awards." We know there is a proliferation of awards on the World Wide Web, and questioned whether another was really needed. But we decided that quilting websites often get lost in the shuffle and deserve recognition of their own.

In our search for award recipients we found that many of our former "Top Ten" were still worthy of recognition, but also discovered many fine new sites to place in the top ranks of quilting sites on the web.



[The Cozy Homepage](#)

One of the most charming new sites we found was "The Cozy Homepage," maintained by fiber artist Cozy Bendesky and her husband Robert, of Gwynedd, Pennsylvania. The site, at <http://www.erols.com/cozy/> is elegantly and yet at the same time playfully presented. It begins with a picture and brief biography of the artist, but you quickly know that she doesn't take herself too seriously. For instance, you are invited to "Visit Her Studio," but are immediately admonished to "bring a broom." I will leave it to you to find out what happens when you click on the studio link.

Cozy's gallery of quilts reveals an artist with a wide range of interests, from Amish simplicity to highly embellished surfaces of silk and hand-stamped fabrics. She also has a flair for names, such as "Pumping Water on Sunday," which takes its theme from personal memories. The only disappointment in the gallery is that there are so few quilts here.



Of greatest interest to fabric aficionados will be the complete tutorial provided at the site on shibori fabric dying. This Japanese technique is presented step-by-step, with [photos of the artist](#) struggling with a tall pole of fabric and asking us puckishly at the end of the process: "Can you believe I did this more than once?"

There are other amusing and/or illuminating features at Cozy's page, and the graphics and layout are stunning in their style and simplicity. Cozy also teaches

and writes about fiber arts, though there is little direct information here about her classes. You can ask for more information when you sign her guestbook.



Rating: Four-and-a-half stars

[PC Piecers Cyber-home](#)

The PC Piecers Cyber-home (<http://bankswith.apollotrust.com/~larryb/PCPiecers.htm>) is a festive place, greeting us as it does with a confetti background, a twirling globe gif, and an animated sparkling Welcome sign on its front page. The enthusiasm and energy reflected in this page is evident throughout the site, which is maintained by Mary Ann Beattie, and updated on an almost daily basis.

As its name implies, the page is devoted to the technique of foundation paper piecing, now widely popular in quilting circles. The page features several downloadable patterns for foundation piecing, in a variety of common sizes, which you can print out right from your browser. They include a pineapple block, a star, a bowtie, and several others. I printed the 6-inch pineapple block and found its dimensions to be very accurate.

In addition the PC Piecers page contains links to other quilting sites on the web which feature paper piecing patterns, including some by Carol Doak and from Quilt Magazine and The Foundation Piecer magazine. They also feature links to statements by their various visitors, who share their enthusiasm from foundation piecing.

My only complaint about this page is that it appears to be on a slow server which makes you wait quite a while sometimes for it to load. But this is only a slight annoyance, because what you get when the page finally loads is fun, useful, and charmingly presented.



Rating: Four Stars

[A Quilter By Design](#)

Debby Kratovil's "A Quilter by Design" homepage (<http://www.his.com/~queenb/>) is a very content-rich

site, as well as a friendly place for quilters to visit. Debby writes for [Quilt Magazine](#), and much of the material here is "recycled" from Quilt, a worthy endeavor since it is well worth republication!

Debby includes paper piecing patterns, step-by-step lessons on how to make specific quilts, quilting poetry, book reviews (her own and others'), and a generous gallery of jpegs of her own quilts as well as some done through cyber-collaboration as progressive or group quilts. The gallery and her other pages are laced with interesting observations and studded with links to other sites.

One of the most interesting of her site's pages is that which tells the story of her quilting friendship with a Hungarian woman named Klara Farkas. Klara's one-year visit to the U.S. turned into a quilting odyssey with Debby's help, and the story demonstrates once again the power of quilting to bring people of diverse backgrounds together.

Debby's site is rounded out by a nice set of annotated quilting links.

Quilters will find "Quilter by Design" to be a delightful place to visit not only for its practical quilting advice but for its warmth and enthusiasm.



Rating: Four stars

[The Florida State Quilt Collection](#)

The Florida State Museum has erected a very nice display of its historical quilt collection under the name "The Florida State Quilt Collection" (<http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dostate/dhr/museum/quilts/>). The collection is a relatively small one as state museums go, of about 50 quilts, but it contains some very old and fine examples of a variety of techniques and styles, going back into the early 19th century.

Half of the museum's collection (26 quilts) are presented chronologically on one long page with a well-lit photo of each and a brief description of its origin, technique and significance. There is often a great deal known about these quilts, despite their age, as in this description of a Monticello, Florida quilt from 1892: "Album quilt, 1892 Completed by members of the Andrew Denham family in Monticello, Florida; includes seven

blocks made in 1851 by family members in Scotland. Dimensions (w x l): 86 1/2 x 86 in. Composed of 16 signed blocks, separated by printed sashing; printed cotton border Cotton, including chintz fabrics used for applique; one block consists of a commemorative chintz, depicting the Crystal Palace in London; hand-appliqued; embroidered; hand-quilted in fan pattern; quilted in fan pattern.”

This pleasant and colorful page is a great example of how the web can bring previously inaccessible historical collections and information to a much larger audience. Kudos to the state of Florida.



Rating: Four Stars

[Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum](#)

Another quilt museum which is just getting a start on the web is the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden, Colorado (<http://www.arrowweb.com/rmqm/>).

This private museum, begun with the donation of 100 quilts from the private collection of Eugenia Mitchell, is run almost entirely by volunteers. The front page, somewhat haphazardly decorated with images of quilts, gives background on the museum and its purpose and history, and other pages provide summaries of up-

coming shows, a map to the museum, and other tourist attractions in the Golden area.

The museum’s efforts, both on and off the web, should be applauded and encouraged, and if you want to be a member the website will oblige you with an application. The website needs a little more work before it becomes an attraction in itself, however.



Rating: Two-and-a-half stars



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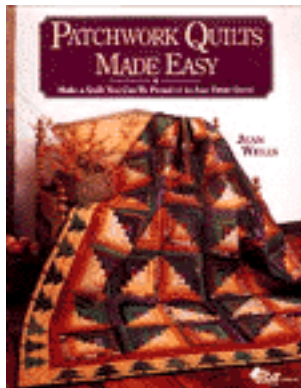
MULTIMEDIA REVIEW: FIGURING IT OUT



Patchwork Quilts Made Easy With Jean Wells C&T Publishing, 1996 \$19.95 Running Time: 60 minutes

TVQ subscribers have read my grouplings previously on these pages about quilting videos. Even taking into account the fact that quilting teachers are not trained performers, videos and television shows made for quilters are often among the dullest of the dull. Production companies faced with the task of producing an instructional video seem to forget that entertainment values may be even more important than they are in presenting less detailed and specialized subject matter.

It is with some pleasure, then, that I am able to report that somebody making these videos has begun to figure this out. The new release from C&T, “Patchwork Quilts Made Easy,” a video aimed at beginning quilters, has taken a fresh approach to the teaching of basic skills and has made a varied, colorful, informative and inspiring film about quilting. It can be enjoyed by beginners and veterans alike, and strikes a nice balance between the detailed and specific need for instruction and an impressionistic collage of quilt images that awaken our imaginations.



At the center of the video is Jean Wells, owner of The Stitchin' Post quilt store in Sisters, Oregon, a town famous for its annual outdoor quilt show. Jean is animated and has a relaxed manner which makes her quite at ease in front of a camera. She is preceded by some imaginative camera work and lively theme music which acts as a unifying element throughout the video, and as a consistent transition from section to section.

The producers have also avoided another deadly mistake, sitting the quilter down behind a sewing machine. When we first see Jean, she is standing up in front

of colorful racks of fabric in her store, as she takes us through an excellent introduction to fabric selection. She stands up throughout, even when she is sewing, and this simple technique helps counteract the static feel that usually pervades quilting videos.

The tutorial on color starts with bolts of fabric and then moves on to look at several quilts with an analysis of how each one uses color and how the fabrics work together in the overall design. This portion of the video would be especially helpful to someone who has the technical skills necessary for quilting but lacks confidence in color and fabric selection.

The video then moves on to a section called “Tools,” which runs through the basic tools for quilting, including rotary cutter, ruler, and self-healing mat.

At the heart of the video is the construction of a four-block sampler quilt which teaches many of the basic techniques of cutting and piecing. A little bit more variety is introduced in this section by bringing Laurie Thorne, Jean’s store manager, onto the screen to assist in demonstrating these techniques. It’s only too bad that they don’t let poor Laurie say a word. We could use a break from Jean’s somewhat nasal voice.

Throughout the demonstrations, the video retains a homey quality, and mistakes made by the quilters are allowed to stay in and become a part of the teaching, just as they would in a real classroom. The demonstration focuses on basic strip construction, rotary cutting technique, and chain-piecing to make simple blocks including 9-patches, log cabins, and the ultimate use of these blocks to construct a whole top with sashing and borders.

Again paying attention to production values, the video producers don’t spend a lot of time on the detail of the particular blocks. Instead they provide the viewer all the particulars of how many patches of what size are needed, and how they fit together, in a quick visual overview at the end of the demonstration. The instructions are printed on the screen and the viewer is encouraged to use her pause button to stop the video and copy it all

down.

After this intensive instructional section, the video returns to look at some quilts, as Jean talks about a variety of issues using samplers in a variety of styles and colors. We are then transported through the magic of television to Jean's home, where she shows us some of her personal quilt collection. These are among the most interesting quilts in the video, including a fan sampler quilt set on point, an elegant beige and white log cabin, a "sculpted" quilt, and a large velvet log cabin. Some of her family's legacy quilts are also displayed.

The video concludes by showing scenes from some of the quilting classes given at The Stitchin' Post and a final collage of colorful splashes of quilts and fabrics, along with a few plugs from Jean for the store and for her companion book, also entitled Patchwork Quilts Made Easy.

This video would make an excellent addition to any guild library or a gift for an aspiring quilter. It the advantages of actual classroom style demonstration along with the ability to hit the rewind and go back over the parts you might not have understood.

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PRODUCT REVIEW:

PRETTY POSTINGS

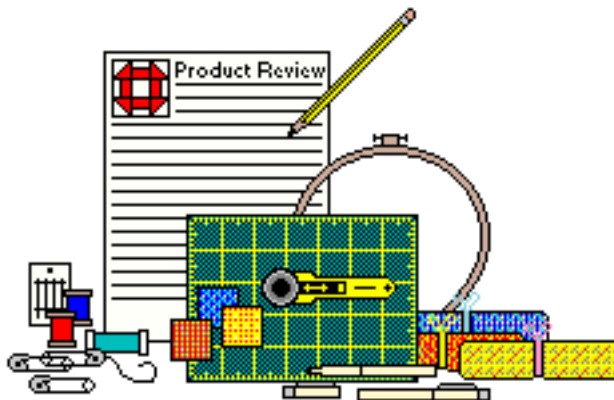
Recently C&T's Fox Hill Workshop, its subsidiary unit which publishes their line of stationery, sent us a selection of notecards based on the company's quilt photography. We haven't paid much attention to these in the past, having as we do a seeming glut of notepapers that never quite get used up in this e-mail-centric age.

But having them actually in our hands, these notecards blew us away. Two sets of them are based on the Simply Stars and Kaleidoscope books reviewed elsewhere in this issue, and they are stunning. Each box contains four each of four designs, and the quality of the photography and printing is top-notch, just as it is in the books.

The other two sets of cards are based on Candace Kling's Ribbon Flowers and Judith Montano's Victorian Family, and these more feminine lacy designs have a rich warmth.

These blank notecards are great for small gifts or to share with your friends who still use "snail mail" the pretty quilts that inspire you.

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Now, as for our February Monthly Special. . . .

Once upon a time, we said we'd put our "Button Buttons" on sale when pigs fly....but when COWS fly, that's another matter entirely! Check out THIS story.... February 18 marks the anniversary (from 1930) when Elm Farm Ollie became the first cow to fly in an airplane. Not only that, but during the flight, which was attended by reporters, she was milked and the milk was sealed in paper containers and parachuted over St. Louis, Missouri. So, in honor of Elm Farm Ollie Day in Wisconsin, our February Special is that our "Button Buttons" are on sale..... Regular price is \$4.95 per set. For orders phoned, faxed and/or postmarked during the month of February, we'll offer you the incredible price of only \$7.95 for any two sets of "Button Buttons!" This offer is only good on orders received or postmarked during the month of February, so don't delay! After all, cows don't fly every day!

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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.



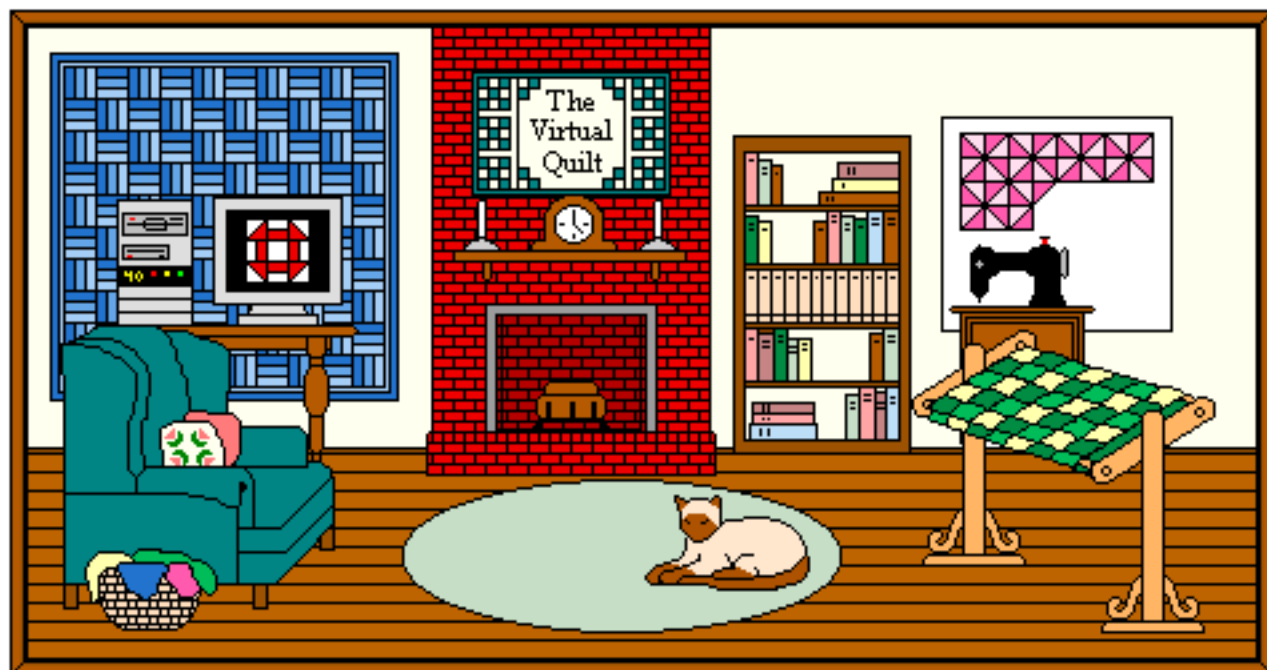
The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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