

# The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue 29 • January 1999



"Sewing? Why are we *sewing*?"  
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Camp for Girls](#)

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# QUILTING AND THE OCEANOGRAPHY CAMP FOR GIRLS

by Christina Holland

This summer, sixty teenage girls went off to camp to learn all about ocean science: dolphins, waves, beaches and ... quilting.

I know that sounds a little strange. I'm a graduate student of marine science at the University of South Florida, and I'm a fledgling quilter. So when I walked into the marine science building one day and saw two colorful quilts hanging in the lobby, I was understandably intrigued.

They were two gorgeous quilts. One was a star pattern, with golden stars on a dark blue background. The background fabric, with whales swimming next to the moon and the stars, betrayed the quilt's oceanic origins. The second quilt was home to bright red, blue and even zebra-striped fish.

Then I read the sheet of paper pinned to one of the quilts, and found out two things. First, that these quilts had both been made by campers in our summer Oceanography Camp for Girls - thirteen and fourteen year-old girls with little or no prior quilting experience. Second, the quilts were being raffled off to benefit the camp.

I wanted to win that fish quilt!

All of this began as a fund-raising project for the camp. The [Oceanography Camp for Girls](#) is a three week program run out of the University of South Florida's marine science department. I first heard about the camp last summer, my first one here at USF. My friend Jyotika Virmani asked me to cover for her on one of the camp

field trips. I soon found myself up to my waist in seawater, helping as a gaggle of teenage girls injected green glowing dye (it must've looked like we were dumping toxic waste) into the water to measure the speed of the long-shore currents. It was a blast! I was soon more involved, going out with the girls for a day taking measurements at sea, and working with them in the lab.

I wish there had been a camp like this around when I was a kid!

These girls are not necessarily sold on the idea of

science before the camp. They are chosen on the basis of their educational, economic and cultural diversity. According to Teresa Greely, USF's Educational Outreach Coordinator, about a third of the girls are those considered to be gifted math and science students. Another third might be described as "at risk" in some way. The rest of the girls fill out the spectrum. To avoid favoritism, the camp counselors don't know which girls fall into which category. The program is free to the campers and their families.

The camp is open only to girls because while they compete very successfully at younger ages, thirteen- and fourteen- year-old girls often start to struggle and then to lose interest in math and science.

Throughout high school and college, fewer and fewer girls opt to take elective math and science classes.

At camp, the girls participate in field activities designed to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the marine sciences - physics, geology, biology, and chemistry. They gain some valuable hands-on experience both in the field and in the labs, working alongside graduate



students like myself and Jyotika. The aim of the camp is to show girls that science can be fun, that scientists are just people too, and finally to show by example that women can and do become scientists. By the way, you can find out more about the camp on the web at <http://www.marine.usf.edu/girlscamp>.



The campers seem to have a good time. I think they might even learn a little, in direct defiance of the ancient kids' code ("Thou shalt not learn or educate thyself for the duration of summer vacation"). Former camper Kellie Hyde says "I've learned more in three weeks than I will ever learn in one school year. Also I've met many great people." Christy Valdes thinks that "this program was a wonderful experience for me, and I feel (it was) very beneficial in helping me overcome my blocks against science and math."

The only real requirement of the camp is that each girl have completed the eighth grade within Pinellas County, Florida, and be about to enter the ninth grade, also in Pinellas. The camp has always been a community-based program. It began in 1991 with state funding. That funding evaporated two years later, and since then the camp has survived through a combination of national (National Science Foundation) funding and local community support. Now the national funding is about to disappear as well, but fortunately local donations have been used to establish and build up a set of endowments to carry the camp forward. The quilts made by the campers, camp staff and Suncoast Quilting Circle guild members this year brought in enough money - nearly \$6000 - to complete all of the endowments.

When Peter Betzer, the chairman of the department of marine science here at USF, saw that the national funding was going to dry up, he alerted the community. Ann Puffer, of The Sewing Circle quilt store in St. Petersburg, already knew about the camp. A neighbor's daughter had attended a few years before, and Ann had her eye on the camp for her own daughter, who was almost old enough. As she relates, "Peter wrote an outreach letter to women in business, to recruit support for the program. So I called him and told him that I just had a little quilt shop, but that maybe we'd be interested in doing something, maybe a quilt or something like that."

The idea of involving the campers in the quilting evolved over time. The first year, summer of 1997, it all came together a little bit late to actively include the girls. Ann and the camp staff had a great time making the first oceanography quilts, though. And it was successful as a fund-raiser, so everyone wanted to do it again this year.

I need to digress for a while, to tell you more about The Sewing Circle shop. It's only a couple of miles from my apartment, so I drove by it probably dozens of times before I finally went in. I should've come in sooner.

The shop has been at the same location (408 33rd Avenue N., St. Petersburg, Florida) since the 1970s, when Ann's mother ran it as an all-purpose fabric store. As Ann grew up and became more involved with the family business, it changed more and more into a quilting store, reflecting her interests.

The fact that this is a quilters' store is immediately apparent. The walls are covered with bolts of fabric, of



**Ann Puffer shows one of the campers how to keep the piecing accurate.**

course, but the center of the main room is devoted to a couple of tables, around which to sit and talk and quilt. There are sewing machines set up nearby. It's a cozy atmosphere, perfect for sewing alone or with friends. When I went there to talk to Ann for this article, I wasn't too surprised to see two staff members of the marine science department there before me, playing hooky and quilting on a weekday afternoon.

That's just the main room. There's also a good-sized and well-equipped classroom. Their business seems to revolve around the classes. Next week they're offering a "fish stocking" class. I'm extremely curious about that, but unfortunately I'll be out of town that week.

The fabric selection is wide. The prices are higher than you'll find at the big chain fabric stores, but the quality of the fabrics is also much better. Just a few minutes of browsing is sure to lead you to several "must have" fabrics.

If you come to the Tampa Bay area, definitely stop by The Sewing Circle.

It's right off of 4th Street, next to the Hungry Bear cafe.

Ann Puffer designed both of the campers' quilts and selected the fabrics. She chose patterns that would work well with a group of novices; "We used a technique called fast triangle paper piecing. It's very accurate, because you actually layer paper on top of your fabric layers and literally sew on the lines, and then cut away. And for people who don't sew a lot, it's comforting to have a straight line to sew along. It worked out real well."

The girls caught on surprisingly well. Paper piecing may be a beginner-friendly technique, but it does require a certain amount of accuracy. Ann and the camp counselors showed examples of what the finished blocks should look like. They also advised the girls on the importance of making the intersections line up properly

and showed them how to pin the layers together, but then "the girls really just took off with it."

Of course, these girls didn't come to camp to learn how to sew; they came to dissect fish and peer into microscopes and stuff like that. Ann's daughter was in the camp this summer, and reported to her mom that on the

way to the shop for their first evening of quilting, "they were kind of like 'Sewing? Why are we sewing?' And on the way back, she said everyone wanted to come back the next night and do some more because she said they really had a good time."

The girls weren't the only ones learning new skills. In addition to the two campers' quilts, which were given away by raffle (I didn't win, unfortunately), several others were sold in an auction, all to benefit the camp.

The camp counselors started making appliqued fish blocks for one quilt. They got a little carried away with the fun of it, though, and soon they had way too many fish for the quilt. Linda Kelbaugh,

who works in the marine science department, couldn't bear to see them go to waste, so she assembled the extras into a second quilt, one which is actually one of my favorites. The fish are framed in a "split rail" pattern (at The Sewing Circle's suggestion) with vibrant purple and yellow sashing reminiscent of waves.

The counselors and the USF staff actually made yet another fish quilt, this time using paper piecing. As Ann Puffer comments, "It worked so well the first time that we felt like, well, why change it?" This quilt contains three different fish designs: moderately easy, tricky, and very, very tricky. Tracy Christner, one of the USF quilters, pointed out that the quilt quickly filled up with the easy fish, a few medium fish, and only four of the hard ones. I think the resulting balance is stunning,



though.

Tracy Christner got her first chance to make an entire quilt by herself this summer. She made a USF spirit quilt, which was also sold off at the auction. It's all done in white, green and yellow, the University's school colors. Some of the blocks are from USF T-shirts, and some are collages of newspaper clippings, tickets to the very first ever USF football game (this past year), and other memorabilia. Talking to Tracy, it's apparent that she really enjoyed the process. To make the collages, she first grouped the items and photocopied them onto transparency sheets, like one uses with overhead projectors. She used them



instead of paper so that only the collage images, and not the color of the paper, would appear on the fabric. Then she was able to have the designs put onto "transfer sheets" at the closest copy store. At that point they can be ironed onto the fabric, but she found the results were more uniform when the fabric transfer was done at the copy store on a machine designed for the purpose.

Tracy loved the quilt when it was finished, and says she would like to do more, if only she can find the time - "I had fun; it's kind of a neat experience to sit around in a relaxed atmosphere with other people and you can actually work on something and talk at the same time. It's just a really nice way to make new friends."

In addition, the local guild, the Suncoast Quilting Circle, got in on the action. They donated two exquisite full-size quilts for the auction. The first, a field of purple flowers on a white background, brought in \$500 at the auction. The other one I really wanted to take home. It was a pattern of interlocking rings in rich colors against a white background fabric. Both were finely made and were wonderful additions to the program.

All in all, everybody came out of the summer of oceanography and quilting a little richer for the experience. The camp, of course, made enough money to guarantee the future salaries for graduate students working with the campers as mentors. The girls learned new skills

and found new, and possibly unexpected, interests. Ann Puffer got some great exposure for her shop and infected a few innocent future customers with the quilting bug. Everyone in the camp and at the Sewing Circle raves about the experience. As Ann Puffer says, "it's a real win-win situation."



# QUILT SHOW REVIEW: THE ART OF THE QUILT

By Carol Miller

What a pleasure it was to discover the Art of the Quilt, a local invitational quilt show, held October 16-November 30 in Martinsville, VA. Award winning machine quilter, Linda Fielder, organized the show, inviting quilt artists she admired to submit their works. The result was a tiny jewel, set in the Piedmont Arts Association building where quilts were treated like the finest works of art.

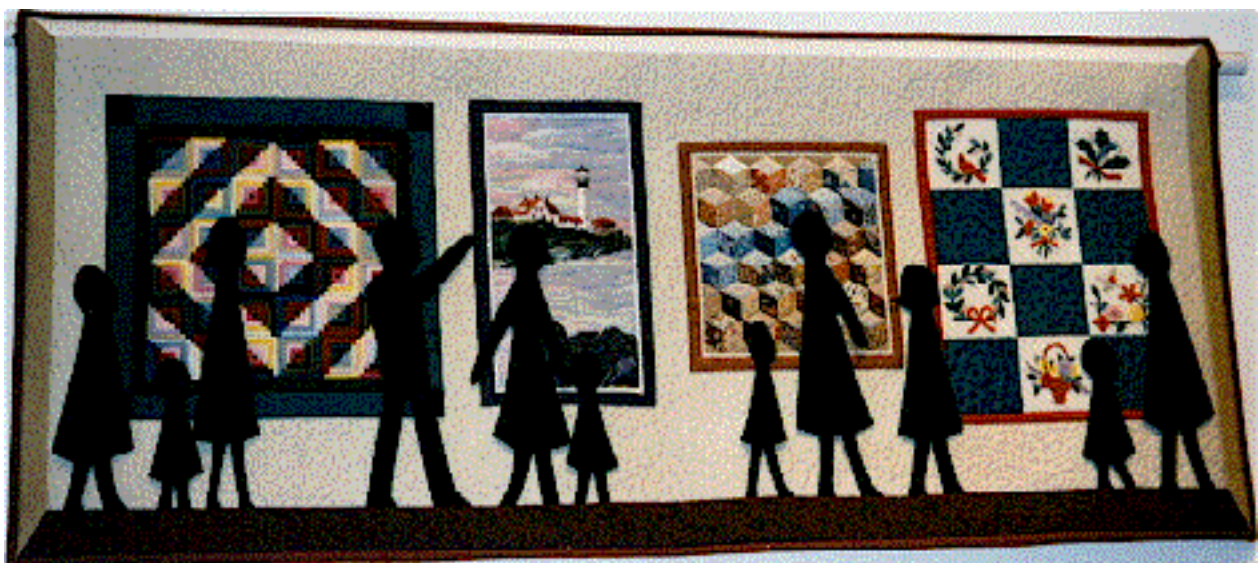
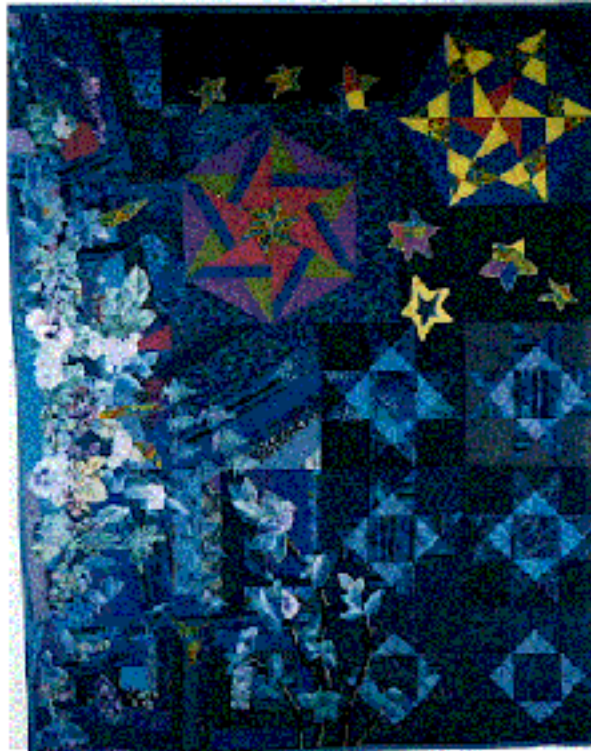
As guest curator, Linda was asked to include representations of all the quilting forms - from traditional to contemporary. She also included some stunning pieces of wearable art, not the least of which was her coat covered with her trademark thread painted flowers. Displayed to stunning advantage on a mannikin, the temptation to try it on was al-

most overwhelming.

The quilts ranged from a Christmas sampler containing both pieced and appliqued blocks, through traditional applique samplers, pictorial quilts, totally freeform creations, pieces with hand-dyed fabrics, pieces with snippets sewed on or voile laid over them all the way to a stunning optical illusion quilt by Karen Combs.

The 41 artists represented were limited to the Southeastern States and included such well known names as Georgia Bonesteel, Susan Brittingham, Carol Britt, Marge Edie, Lois Smith and Darra Williamson.

Did I love them all? No, I have to admit that some of the more modern ones left me wondering what the artist had been thinking. Other pieces left me simply breathless in admiration. But the real joy was seeing quilts displayed as art, well hung, well lit and even



launched on their way with a catered affair complete with wine. A large crowd attended and was suitably impressed, even though they were **NOT** quilters.

Hooray for Martinsville, a tiny town in a depressed part of our state that had the courage to build a wonderful community gallery and then to invite Linda to stage the first Biennial Invitational Quilt Show! Mark your calendar for the fall of 2000 - they're going to do it again.

*Carol Miller is an occasional contributor to TVQ. She is webmistress of the Virginia Consortium of Quilters and can be reached at [webmistress@vcq.org](mailto:webmistress@vcq.org).*



## **SCHOOLHOUSE ENTERPRISES**

### **IN ASSOCIATION WITH PLANET PATCHWORK**

**Gridded Geese(c)** is a unique paper foundation method for mass-producing Flying Geese units up to 24 at once (no kidding!). Schoolhouse Enterprises, inventors and manufacturers of this revolutionary product, offers both a printed version of their catalog, and an on-line (<http://www.planetpatchwork.com/store/index.cfm?DID=21>) shopping cart service in conjunction with Planet Patchwork. You can safely order online through Planet Patchwork's secure server with your credit card!

The folks at Schoolhouse Enterprises and Planet Patchwork search for items for quilters (and friends of quilters) which are unique and often overlooked by other catalogs you might connect with. Check out their on-line catalog, which offers such interesting items as Photo-to-Fabric(tm) photo transfer paper, Ott Lights, beautiful embossed note cards, kaleidoscope pendants, and much more! And while you're visiting, be sure to check out the current Monthly Special!!

Schoolhouse has recently begun carrying the complete line of Electric Quilt products, including EQ3 design software, and Sew Precise! and Sew Precise with Shirley Liby. Schoolhouse is offering free shipping on these items now through Christmas!

If you're not able to access the web page, just e-mail Schoolhouse Enterprises (<mailto:gridgees@algorithms.com>) with your "snail mail" (post office) address for your **FREE CATALOG** and Sample of Gridded Geese(c)! (Sorry, but Samples are only available in the printed catalogs.)



# BOOK REVIEW: RIVA

*RIVA: If ya wanna look good honey,  
your feet gotta hurt...*

Ruth Reynolds

C&T Publishing, 1998

64 pages

MSRP: \$16.95

[Available at a discount from Planet Patchwork](#)

## Reviewed by Christina Holland

In 'RIVA', Ruth Reynolds brings us a new friend. Riva is outspoken, has questionable fashion sense, smokes and has a tattoo. She's also a housewife who laments the chaos of the Campbell's Soup aisle at the grocery store. She doesn't understand quilting - "who in their right mind would waste so much time cutting up tiny slips of fabric just to sew them back together"? And yet, Riva lives inside of quilts, a character devised by a quilter.

I guess you'd have to categorize Ruth Reynolds' work as art quilts. Yet her Riva quilts are totally different from most art quilts. This book is also very different from most art quilt books, at least the ones I've picked up. Except for the introduction, written in Ms. Reynolds' own voice, the entire text is written from Riva's point of view. She explains her opinions on any subject that pops into her head - from her motorcycle to housework, and from grocery shopping to the age-old question of

whether or not to wear panties with pantyhose.

As both Ruth and Riva are careful to explain, they are not the same person. Many of the things that happen in Riva's life may have also happened to her quilting friend Ruth, but their reactions to the events may be very different.

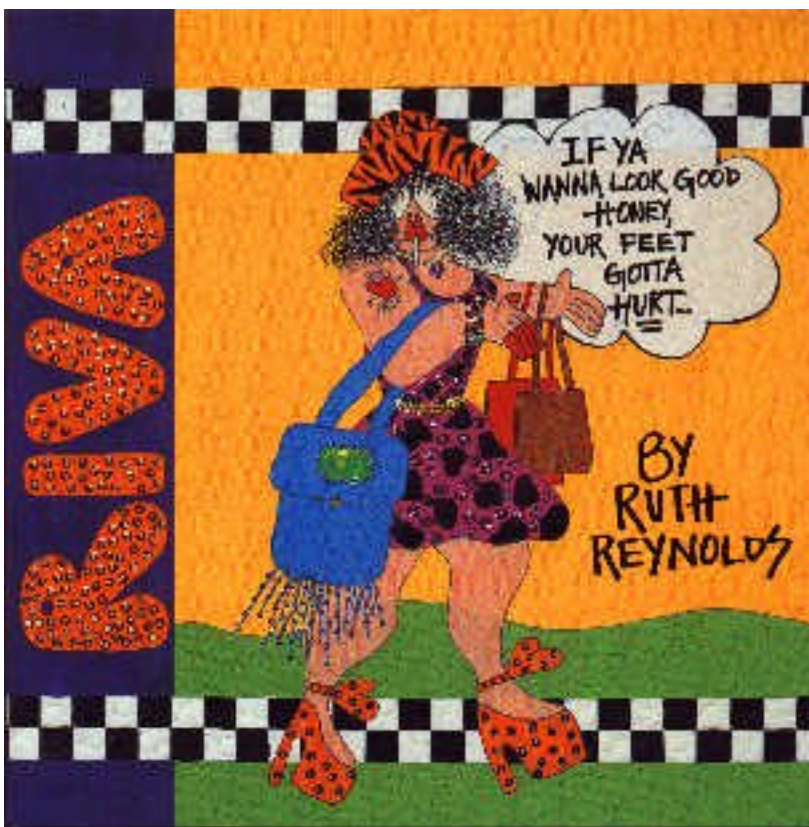
I suppose I'm biased towards this book. I've always loved cartoons and animation, since long before I was exposed to quilting. The Riva quilts showcased in this collection are essentially cartoons. But while the cartoons of an impatient person like myself consist of quick sketches and caricatures, mostly done while I should be working, Ruth Reynolds' cartoons of Riva are painstakingly committed to fabric. I may not understand that kind of dedication to a project, but I can't help but admire it.

The quilts themselves are quite worth seeing. The fabric choices alone are priceless.

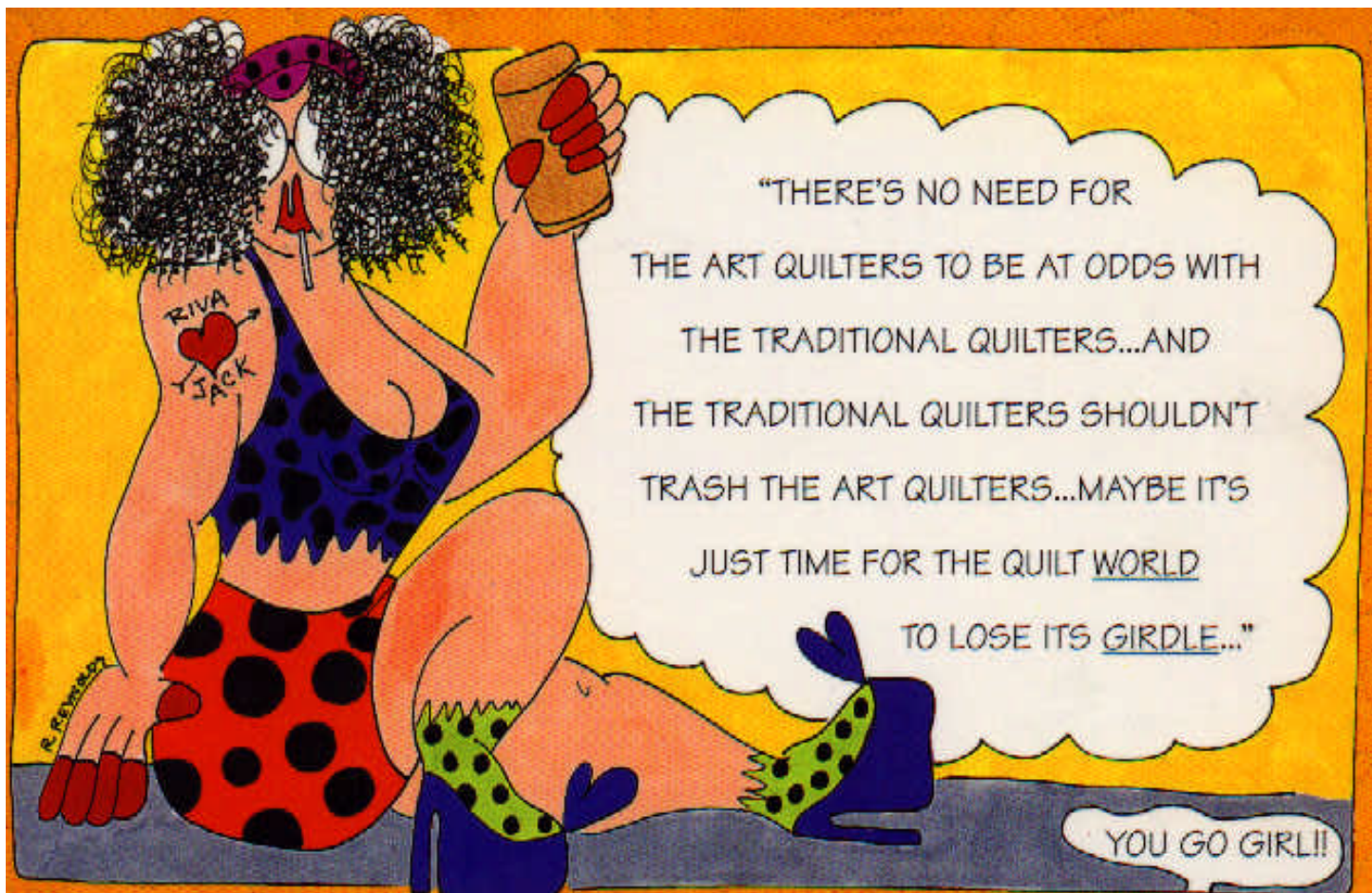
I guess the best way to describe them is to quote Riva:

"Now between you and me, Ruth was no 'normal' quilter. She didn't make four-fou bed quilts, with all sorts of little pieces sewn together like the quilts I've seen in magazines. Oh, no. She made **ART**, or at

least that is what **SHE** called it. She used some of the goofiest fabrics you have ever seen - like leopard skin, and tiger prints, and lames, and brocades, and vinyls,



least that is what **SHE** called it. She used some of the goofiest fabrics you have ever seen - like leopard skin, and tiger prints, and lames, and brocades, and vinyls,



and altho I too liked these types of fabrics, I was not sure how they worked as materials in a quilt. And if all these nutty fabrics weren't enuf - Ruth referred to them as alternative fabrics, I think, because she just wanted to be 'trendy' - she used tons of sequins and beads to further still junk up the quilts. She remarked that it all just added to the 'tacky factor' she wanted to achieve with her work."

If you're like me, you'll spend a fair amount of time with the quilt pictures about one inch from your eye, muttering "how, exactly, did she do this, right here"? Luckily, at least some of those questions are answered by the ever helpful Riva.

The attention to detail makes the quilts more fun. For instance, one quilt features a shelf stocked with Campbell's soup. You may not notice, but as Riva points

out, every single variety of Campbell's soup currently on the market is present. The other thing I noticed is that the cans don't all face the front. They are rotated to varying degrees so that some of the labels cannot be entirely read, making the whole effect more realistic.

The subject matter of the quilts is varied, although all revolve around some aspect of Riva's life. One of my favorites is the "Baltimore Album quilt," although it takes a tongue in cheek approach that may offend some traditionalists. I'm also quite fond of the mammogram quilt, made for the "Yes Ma'm" quilt contest for breast cancer prevention. It won first prize.

Riva has plenty to say, and she says it in a humorous and irreverent way. RIVA is an unusual sort of quilt book, but it's loads of fun to read, and I heartily recommend it.



### PERFECT SQUARE

Perfect Square's mother is pregnant and about to have a new product. Perfect Triangle is due any day now. Perfect Triangle is also a REUSABLE iron-on design but it will make quarter square triangles instead of half-square triangles.

Perfect Square is growing up now and has gotten a job at a creative quilt pattern company and is doing quite well. In fact, patterns are being written exclusively for Perfect Square. See the Perfect Square web site at <http://www.webworldinc.com/perfectsquare> for details.

## THE QUILTBROKER

Look forward to this year's 12 new original patterns!

1999 -QuiltBroker Block of the Month Program.

This year will continue in the fine tradition of half-square triangle patterns that you have enjoyed this past year.

Everyone who joins our '99-QBQM Program will get a free bonus pattern called the Christmas Box.

<http://www.quiltbroker.com>

Have a Happy New Year!

Heidi Wurst, owner

<mailto:lv2quilt@frii.com>

## SILVER DOLLAR SHEEP STATION

The MINI DUST-IT. Genuine sheepskin duster on a 6" stick that is perfect for picking up dust and lint from your sewing machine and serger. Soft, beautiful sheepskin won't scratch polished surfaces. Picks up the lint and tiny threads; doesn't spread them around. Prevents lint build-up. Inexpensive way to protect expensive sewing machines and sergers. Fun and handy to use. Also works great on the computer.

Price: \$3.50 each including mailing.

To order send check to

Silver Dollar Sheep Station 5020 Winding Way  
Sacramento, CA 95841. 800-887-8742. E-mail:  
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**SPECIAL LIMITED TIME OFFER:** Because we manufacture the Mini Dust-it to a very high standard, we currently have a supply of imperfections. They may be thinner and not as pretty or have some other defect, but they still work great!

And best of all we offer these to you for just \$1, including postage. You can order them at the address above and enjoy this wonderful product at a bargain price!

## DESERT THREADS

Custom Embroidery and Screenprinting

Want to make a splash at the next guild meeting or quilt show? We embroider Ocean Waves, Jacob's Ladder, Shoo-fly and three other popular quilt designs on t-shirts, sweatshirts, and large zippered tote bags. Available in a variety of colors on six different colored garments, these designs will be the envy of your quilting friends.

We also specialize in custom logos for quilt guilds and businesses. Also available are quality embroidered custom labels for quilt backs. No minimum quantity is required and vendor inquiries are welcome.

E-mail us for more information at <mailto:bob@desertthreads.sparks.nv.us> or visit our website at <http://www.greatbasin.net/~deserthr>. You can take a look at our designs and order online using our automated form.

Desert Threads 195 Regier Springs Drive Sparks,  
NV 89436 (702) 425-2726

## THE QUILT BLOCK

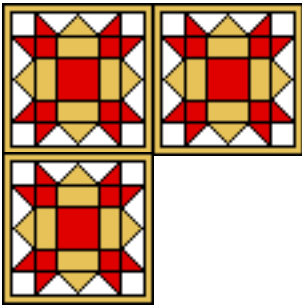
We are a cottage industry located just outside of Yosemite National Park. We specialize in clothing and patterns for quilters and for people who love quilts.

We offer t-shirts and sweatshirts in sizes from medium to xxx-large. All of our quilts are machine pieced. Most of our patterns are easy enough for beginning quilters. Come to the web site to see our watercolor sweatshirt called "Kristie's Watercolor." There are 361 pieces in the quilt. Come see what else we have to offer at our website at <http://www.sierratel.com/thequiltblock!>

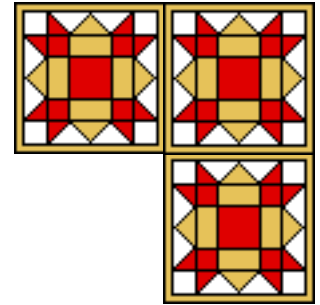
Or e-mail for more information to <mailto:gastinc@sierratel.com>

The Quilt Block P.O. Box 127 Midpines, CA 95345

(209) 742-5418 Fax: (209) 742-7662



# QUILTER PROFILE DAWN DUPERAULT



Dawn Duperault says she wishes she knew more about her family's quilting traditions, but she actually knows quite a bit, and it was clearly instrumental in her becoming a quilter. "I learned to sew from my mother about the time I stopped putting things in my mouth and could safely hold a needle," she says. "She made a very few quilts as I was growing up, and I really learned about the craft from my maternal grandmother. It was the '70s, you see, and quilting wasn't a hobby that modern women indulged in. :) My grandmother had all this wonderful cut out fabric, templates, and the big old-fashioned frame set up in the livingroom. I learned later that she would make quilts to sell in the area to supplement the farming income. She's had to give that up because of failing eyesight, but one of my aunts has taken up the job now. I'm told my great-grandmother also quilted, and beautifully, but that all her quilts were burned in the stove when they became too old and worn out to be used.

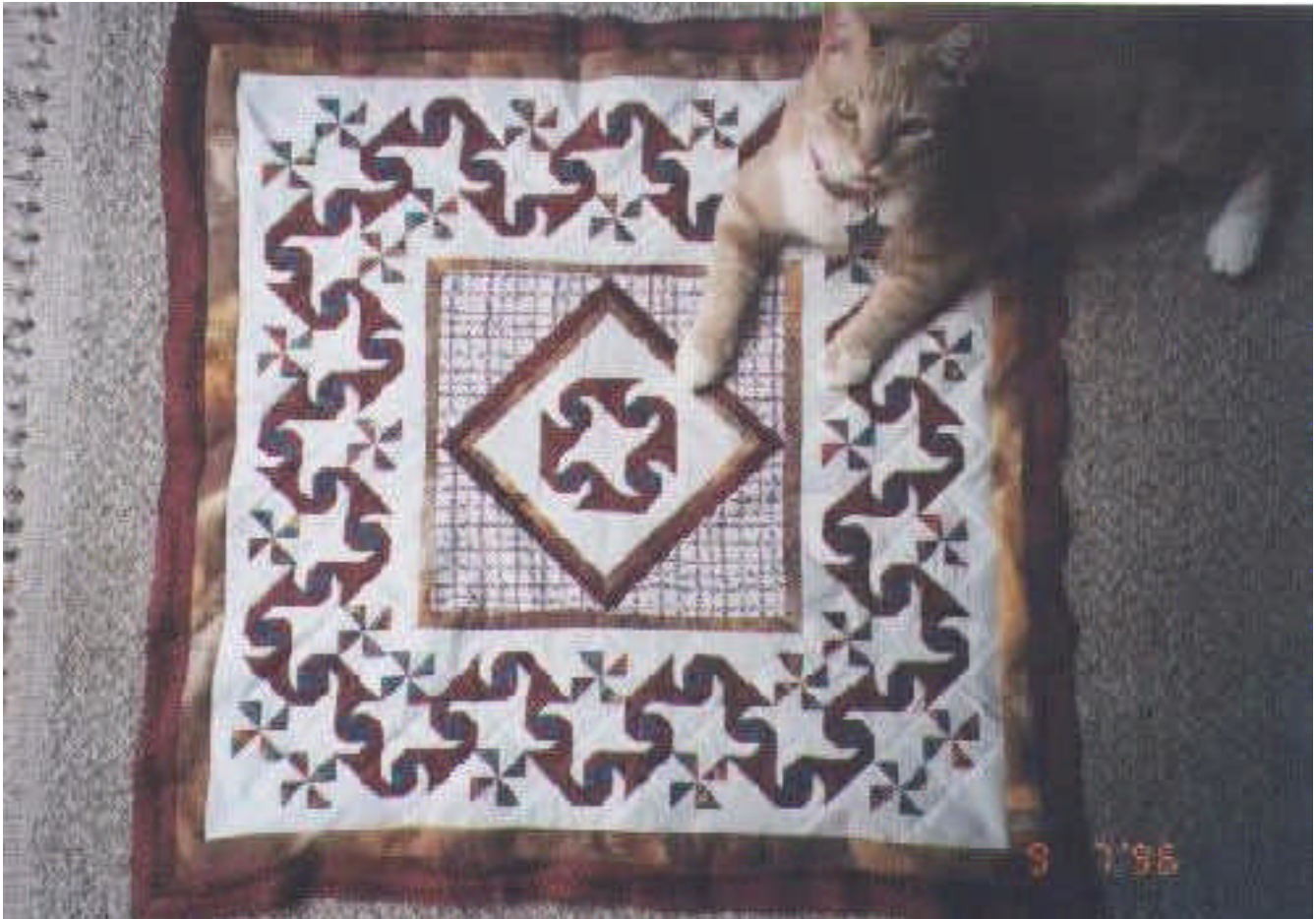
"My grandmother made me two quilts when I was growing up, and I still have them. One is the worse for wear and washings. I made a few attempts at doll quilts when I was much younger, but was more interested in making doll clothes and stuffed animals. I made a baby quilt when I was in high school, from all the wonderful dressmaking scraps from my mother's sewing projects. It's made from red, orange, pink, brown and grey doubleknit polyester squares. It was supposed to be a checkerboard pattern, but the squares stretched so much when they were sewn into strips that it's pretty badly skewed. It's got a light blue backing, and the binding is finished in red embroidery floss in a herringbone stitch. I tied it with fluorescent blue floss. The scary part was



Dawn reclining in one of her costumes.

that I didn't finish it until a few years ago, and I was able to match the blue floss to colors still in the stores. Needless to say, there's no picture of *THAT* one on my web site!"

As she grew up, Dawn's impetus for quilting was similar to her foremothers' in another way -- she was poor. "I got interested in larger projects when I was in college. Like most students I was broke. Really, really, broke, not just lacking in beer and pizza money. I couldn't afford a warm blanket for our New England winters, but I could buy small pieces of fabric as they went on sale in the department store I was working in. After a few months I had collected enough 1/8 yards to start a queen-sized 9-patch in pink and blue bunny prints. I worked



**30x30" Pinwheels and Virginia Reels. "A wallhanging made for a Keepsake Challenge competition. Each Virginia Reel block is made of 16 pieces and measures 2.5 inches across. They were not foundation-pieced. This picture shows the top before it was bound and quilted. I was not able to get Tiger off it long enough to take a picture."**

on that periodically, on the flea-market sewing machine my boyfriend brought home one weekend. It's still not finished, by the way. I'm hand quilting that one, and it's the one that turned me off the whole idea of hand quilting."

Dawn's quilts are in a traditional style, influenced by her family, but she has added a modern twist. "I learned to imitate the style I saw in my grandmother's house. That side of the family is one of the many German immigrant families who settled in Pennsylvania, and while not Amish, that influence is (or was) prevalent in the area. So I picked up on the wide borders and the traditional designs, but using calico scraps instead of solids.

"I'm still partial to the traditional patterns. I see so much potential with the new fabrics, where the colors and designs could be really stunning. I think too many people give up on the traditional patterns because they can only imagine them in drab calico. Most of the de-

signs can be rotary cut and strip-pieced, and I really like that convenience."

Dawn has recently moved from Dallas, Texas to Kansas City, but she retains ties to her quilt guild in Dallas. "I joined the Dallas guild fairly recently, less than two years ago, because they have wonderful speakers every month who come and talk and show slides. I like to see what other people do, and hear why they do it. This is my first and only involvement with a group like that. I used to join the guild 'friendship group' in my neighborhood for weekly sewing and socializing, but had to give that up when I went to work full-time. Most of my quilting has been done in 'solitary,' away from the presence of other quilters."

Dawn has written sometimes lengthy reviews of these monthly speakers' presentations at her website, which you can find at <http://ares.redsword.com/dduperault/qsource.htm>. She also manages the website for the Dallas quilt guild. Dawn has had a long, abiding

interest in the web since its earliest days, and has over the years built her site into one of the most interesting and information-packed quilting sites anywhere. "I got interested in computers way back in the dark ages of technology when there was only one Phone Company and computers were big room-filling things owned by governments and cold-war scientists. I fiddled around with some Basic programming in high school, and learned enough in college to be able to use the engineering lab to do my English homework, though I didn't actually take any computer courses until grad school. Computers have always just sort of been there in my life. I'm a librarian by training, but currently working as a business analyst and web applications developer. We make business applications that work over the internet, specifically the WWW, as compared to static web pages.

"I'd known about the WWW when it first became available, but didn't see much use for it. When browsers started supporting images and it got easy to use I saw the potential for creating a more interactive resource for textile fanatics. At the time, the summer of '94, there was no good source for quilting or costuming information. There were web pages, sure, but they were almost always lists of all the other web pages, and you

could hop from list to list and never find any actual content. I initially wanted to do the costuming information, but had limitations on the graphics that would be required. The programs I needed to do the artwork were still expensive, and not many people had graphical browsers. So I started putting together a text-based FAQ

site for quilting. I announced it in the usenet group and got a few responses along the lines of 'good idea,' but received zero content contributions. I kept plugging away at it over the years, and have received wonderful feedback from visitors.

"In fact, the traffic has been steadily increasing, to the point where it is causing problems with my host. Most of that is the costume section of my site. I put up about 6 pages of costume info last year, and in 4 months it accounted for half of the traffic through my site. That surprised me, since it took 150+ quilting pages to make up the other half. This year I was a featured site in Infoseek's halloween costume listing, and it really strained the server. The quilting was popular, but the response for the costuming has been incredible, and I'm trying to concentrate my efforts there at the moment."

Asked how her quilting and interest in costumes are related, Dawn says they are simply different creative



**John's Office Quilt, 14x18 inches. This started as an experiment with paper foundation patterns, in miniature, two things I had not done before. I pulled the brightest fabrics from my stash, many of them are pieces from online charm swaps. It hangs now in his cube at work and he gets asked "Where did you find the neat poster?"**

avenues for her interest in textiles. "I look at quilting and costuming as offshoots of being able to sew. Both contain skill subsets of the latter. My interest switches between the two, and into fashion and home dec sewing as well. I did some theatre in high school and college, and played SCA for a while, too. I discovered after a while that I liked making the outfits more than the politicking that goes with the various rec-creation groups, so I've drifted away from active participation, but I still enjoy the creative part.

"Aside from the skills required, the connection between the two is the creativity involved. I like making things. I enjoy spending my time designing, creating, and having a tangible result of my effort to show when I'm done. I also craft miniature furniture and dollhouses. In many ways the web site is also an expression of creativity for me, from the articles I write to selecting the images that will be used for the look of the page."

In spite of her long experience with computers, Dawn doesn't use a computer quilt design program. "I looked at them when they became available and didn't see anything I could use them for," she says. "Since my sewing area is distinct from my computer work space, I'd have been going back and forth between the two, which is lousy for designing. I also tend to do a lot of scrap quilts, starting with a handful of fabrics and sort of faking it as I go along. The software doesn't (or didn't) support the use of multiple colors, and the fill patterns used for fabrics were terrible. There's one out now that uses 'real' fabric scans, but I'd be spending a lot of time making a computer quilt instead of the real one, so I skip it. There is also no current software for the Windows NT platform, which is what I use. I do my design either in my head, or on graph paper if it's complicated."

Likewise, Dawn takes a pragmatic view of the

internet. She isn't deeply involved in any online group and tends to use the net as a resource. "I think the internet has really become a valuable tool for new quilters or costumers to use when looking for information and others who share the interest. To someone who is willing to take the time to learn to use it there is a wide variety of information available. Unfortunately, in my experience most quilters are afraid of their computers and have the silly idea that they'll never be able to figure the thing out. These are the same people who can work magic

with multi-stitch sewing machines, navigate the intricacies of bobbins and thread winding, and plan out the use of 50 different fabrics in an intricate graphical design. Yet they can't manipulate a web browser or use a search engine. It's time for women to get over that and give themselves credit for having a brain.

"I haven't seen much computer influence on quilting. The programs enable us to do the same design we've been doing for centuries, maybe faster, maybe with a new tool, but hasn't changed how we do the work or the out-

put of that effort. Where it has helped is with the communication, though the same could be said of any hobby. We have more books, more clip art for our newsletters, and tons of internet related material. We can print text to iron on, scan images of our quilts, and keep records of the fabric we bought and how the antiques came to be in our possession, but we still have to cut the fabric out and sew it. Computers don't do that, we do."

Dawn has a clear idea of where her computing ends and her quilting begins. But she has been one of the early leaders in making quilting knowledge widely and freely available through the web. Obviously a labor of love, her website is a rich resource that computing quilters would be loath to do without. And you can also see her quilts there!



**Circle Patchwork Sampler. "I made this as an exercise to see if circle patchwork is really as easy as it looks. It was. The fabrics came from Fastrax. This piece is about 18" across. I think the next time I do this I will limit myself to one fabric for the centers."**



# MY FAVORITE THIMBLE

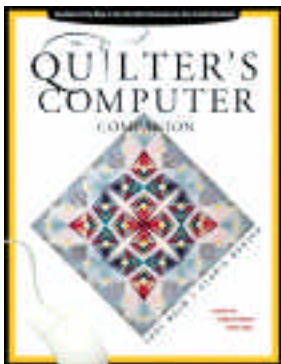
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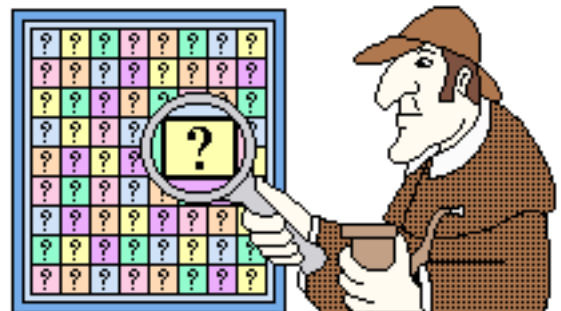
Norma can direct you to quilt shops in the area, plus the natural wonders located on the Olympic Peninsula. She can also plan a personal retreat for you and three quilting friends, or cross stitch buddies, or rubber stampers! You name it.

You are invited to visit the website for Greenhaven Enterprises, Quilt Retreats on the Olympic Peninsula, where you can check out Norma's quilts, learn more about Sequim, and of course, see Oliver. <http://www.olyopen.com/normah>

You may email Norma at [normah@olyopen.com](mailto:normah@olyopen.com) or call 360-681-0364 for more information.

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The Feedsack Club is delighted to announce that it will once again hold a conference concurrently with the Quilters Heritage Celebration in Lancaster PA on April 8 - 10 1999.

The conference continues to grow in size each year and has moved to the Holiday Inn at 521 Greenfield Rd, Lancaster PA, just down the street from the Quilters Heritage Celebration and across from the Tourist Bureau. The additional room at the new location means even MORE exhibits, lectures and demonstrations.

Lectures and classes are planned, including new products demonstrations - come and learn about Gridded Geese & Thangles. Events include the Show & Share, Raffles, a quilt contest, an auction, and, of course, vendors! Throughout the convention, look for buying, selling and trading of feedsacks and other fun stuff as well as door prizes. For more information, E-mail [baglady111@aol.com](mailto:baglady111@aol.com).

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## The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for  
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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