

# The Virtual Quilt


A Newsletter for Online Quilters

Issue 32 • May 1999



## "A SUBTLE BALANCING ACT OF ORDER AND CHAOS"

The Traveling Quilter: [Houston Quilt Shops](#)  
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The rotary cutter brings you back here! 

# THE TRAVELING QUILTER: TWO HOUSTON QUILT SHOPS (AND A BONUS)

By Lynn Holland

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

Well, when one store is named Great Expectations what else can you do but look for some connections to Charles Dickens? To be truthful, it turned out to be a tale of two quilt stores, but that's not how it started. So I'll start at the beginning.

I was visiting in Texas, and my mother's lifelong friend was in the hospital in Houston. So what could a dutiful daughter do but volunteer to make the three-hour

drive with my parents? After all, my parents' needs are very important, not to mention that Houston is the home of Quilt International and has lots of good stuff for quilters. As luck would have it, the hospital was located in the northwest quadrant of town, which is also the home of several great quilt stores. I

was particularly excited by the idea of visiting both Great Expectations, the Mother of All Quilt stores in Houston and also Front Porch Quilts, which had just been selected to appear in the annual Quilt Sampler magazine published by Better Homes & Gardens. Plus another shop was listed in the Quilter's Traveling Companion - happy camping ahead! (As a brief aside, the QTC is beyond essential if you travel so you can plan ahead. Many of the shops now include maps in their QTC entries and it makes life much simpler once you hit some of these towns.)

My first stop was at Front Porch Quilts, soon to be of Quilt Sampler fame. This honor was announced on hand-lettered poster board, proudly mounted on the door of the strip mall shop. The front window was hand-

painted with wisteria, and the basic entry to the store did indeed resemble a front porch.

This store has a friendly, "new-kid-on-the-block" persona. Wares are creatively displayed, partly from inventiveness and partly from necessity. There is a truly wonderful side of the shop that displays the samples of their mind- and eye-boggling selection of block-of-the-month opportunities, plus original quilt designs and other class samples. When I asked, I was told that there are twelve block-of-the-month opportunities at Front Porch. My favorite is the Embroidery Angel by The Basketcase and Needlework Therapy that features primitive embroi-

dery and button embellishment, but I was also fascinated by Backyard Fantasy by Sew Be It which combines embroidery and Crayola crayons -- I kid you not. For those of you who want to see these blocks with your own eyes, Front Porch has posted the majority of them on their website ([http://](http://www.frontporchquilts.com)

[www.frontporchquilts.com](http://www.frontporchquilts.com)) along with most of their quarterly newsletter.

On the same side of the store is the in-house Gammill machine, where you can have your quilt top expertly finished by the Front Porch staff. A large kiosk houses a giant book selection and there are two huge comfy couches where you (or someone from your bolt-weary family) can plop down and peruse current and back issues of quilt-oriented magazines. Another sign of their Texas-style hospitality is the coffee and cookie table at the back of the store. There are doll patterns, too, lots of wearables and interesting Texas-type designs, all hung along a wall. Clothes for American Girl dolls are for sale as well as many quilt-related gift items and wool for penny rug making.



And, if you can stand any more input after going through that half of the store, the other side is fabric and more fabric. Special events at Front Porch include the Annual Ugly Fabric Contest, which culminates with the crowning of the Queen of Ugly Fabric to a kazoo serenade. This year the store was part of the First Annual Quilt Shop Hop in the Houston area, a three-day event that included nine Texas stores. There are a number of groups that use the store space for their meetings and the store does a "Front Porch Strippers" monthly fabric offering of new fabrics in (of course) strip format.

Front Porch was so wonderful that I was concerned that a visit in the same day to Great Expectations, the Houston matriarch, might put me into fabriholic overload. But not to worry. I have a strong constitution, plus I had consumed a super lunch of skewered seafood at Pappadeux's near Front Porch Quilts. Taking a deep breath and performing a few stretching exercises, we drove to Great Expectations. Located in an upscale strip mall in a store that looked like a former Ethan Allen location, the door of GE had a child's sandal hanging from it. A patron's child had lost it earlier in the day, and one of the sales staff wanted to make retrieval easy.

Other than the hanging sandal, the first thing I noticed was a display of snazzy reading glasses, something I can't recall seeing for sale in a quilt shop before. However, the reading glasses at the front counter are somehow indicative of the "grande dame" status of this store in Houston, which opened some 25 years ago. This shop's owner, Karey Bresenham, is the founder of Quilt International and has helped shape the quilting community in and out of Texas. The store has a maturity and graciousness that make it a pleasure to visit even if you're not a quilter. In some ways reminiscent of the family department stores of yesteryear, Great Expectations has

beautiful display cabinets, ideal lighting, perfectly hung class samples, and everything you've ever heard of in the world of quilting. Even the ladies' room is perfectly done, right down to the painted wisteria of the faux garden wall. (And while we're on the topic, is wisteria the official flower of Texas quilters or something?)

Although I was unable to obtain a copy of the newsletter because they were between issues, judging from the class samples and the two large classrooms, this store offers a good range of classes, including folk art painting. There is a wall full of wearable patterns and samples. Vintage quilts are offered for sale, or if you prefer, reproduction fabric to make your own heirlooms. The inventory is vast and varied, and everything is obviously "top drawer." The day I was there, several Hinterburg quilt frames were on display. In most quilt stores, these are special order items due to their pricey nature.

There was a good selection of felts and faux furs (so essential to those of us who make Santas and bears) and many regional patterns and goodies. I bought some Linen wash produced in Arlington Texas that was packaged like a vintage sachet. The staff is knowledgeable and friendly, and they obviously know their customers. There is a coffee pot near the back of the store, and if you're in search of food, brochures from local restaurants that sounded so absolutely fabulous I was sorry I couldn't hang around until dinner. Simply put, Great Expectations is a fabulous store that has all the plusses of being long established in the area. Quilters in this area certainly have two wonderful stores, both distinctive yet different. All I can say after visiting them both is that if Madame Defarge had lived, she wouldn't have been knitting. She'd be quilting instead.

Yes, we did visit my mother's friend, who is doing much better, thank you, but back to my Dickensian



**Kimonos, one of the patterns offered by Front Porch Quilts.**

thread. Why was it a tale two quilt stores, not three? As we pulled up to the shopping center where Quilter's Quarters was located (according to my book), the shop stood empty. Other than the storefront sign, the only indicator that a quilt shop had been there was a lone double wedding ring quilt lying in a heap on the floor. No sign told of a new location, so I can only guess that the Quilter's Quarters has closed.

Before I leave Texas, let me add this short post-script: My sixteen-year-old son claims that I could find a quilt store "in the middle of nowhere." Although we were not exactly nowhere, while attending a family wedding in Harlingen, Texas this winter, I managed to slip away from the festivities just long enough to find the local quilt store.

Just to give you an idea of the size of Harlingen, there is an airport, but Scaief's is the only fabric store in town. Although there is a sizeable mall, a chain craft

store and several well known restaurant chains, apparently the national "biggies" in the fabric world have yet to invade this location.

Since they are called upon to meet all the fabric needs of the local population, Scaief's is not just a quilt store. They carry a nice selection of ultrasuede and special occasion fabric. While I was there on a Saturday afternoon during the New Year's weekend, several women were receiving instruction in the use of their new machines, some in English and some in Spanish.

There is a nice variety of classes, especially when you consider the size of Harlingen. The proximity to the border seems to be a plus. The store was planning TWO trips to Mexico for a quilt retreat with. So if you find yourself in Harlingen, be sure to check out this shop. Although the neighborhood cuisine is limited to fast food and cafeteria fare, the offerings at Scaief's are strictly for the fabric gourmet.



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# THE CRAFT CONNECTION

The Craft Connection (<http://www.craftconn.com/>) is the most exciting place on the Internet if you want to make or sell handcrafts. We sell quality cotton fabric, Mettler and Sulky thread, and quilting notions, all at a discount. Fabrics are linked to coordinating fabrics, so you know your choices will look great together. We try to find fabrics you won't see anywhere else. And we'll package them into packets of fat eighths, fat quarters, or 5" squares, so you can get a good variety without a big cash outlay. Among our fabric categories are florals, pictorials, and guy stuff, and you should see the new Lost Fabrics of Atlantis collection.

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Check out our Free Stuff. Each month we offer a new pattern and a new lesson. We also have a Calendar of upcoming Quilt Shows. Come by our website at <http://www.craftconn.com>.

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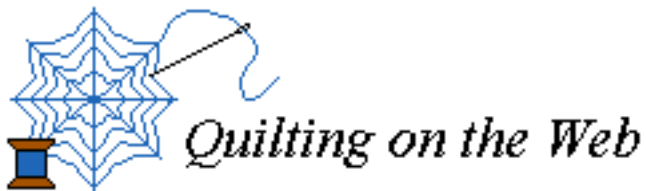
## *Greenhaven Enterprises - Quilt Retreats on the Olympic Peninsula*

Visit Washington State and stay with a quilter, and her cat Oliver.

The Herbolds live just outside of Sunny Sequim. Their home, set in the tall trees, is warm, pleasant, and affordable. Norma can direct you to quilt shops in the area, plus the natural wonders located on the Olympic Peninsula. For those in the Northwest, Norma can also plan a personal retreat for you and three quilting friends.

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. The address is: <http://www.olyphen.com/normah>

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



# FIVE UNIQUE QUILTING WEBSITES

By Christina Holland

There appears to be no end to the number and variety of quilting related sites on the web. This is an attempt to showcase some of the sites that caught my eye recently. There's no particular theme holding these together this time, so there should be something new and cool for everyone.

**Quiltaholics** (<http://www.quiltaholics.com>) is a fun site for anyone who ever felt a twinge of guilt for indulging in quilting at the expense of work and/or family.

It appears that quiltaholics is just getting started. The site is regularly updated, and currently offers both a mystery quilt and a block of the month. There is also a "Paper-Pieced Blocks" section. So far it contains only two patterns, but it is to be hoped that the collection will grow.

Similarly, under the "Simple Quilts" heading in the "Projects" section, there is only one project. However, for that one project, a lengthy explanation, instructions, color pictures, and fabric cutting measurements are all provided.



This is a well laid out site, and has much to offer. There is also a section providing names and addresses (and links, where available) for quilt stores in 42 states and seven other countries, a useful database for traveling quilters.

The real reason to visit this site, though, is the "Confessions" page. There you will find confessions of quilt obsession from Debby, the proprietor of quiltaholics, and many of her visitors. You can also add your own story of addiction.

**Rating: 3 1/2 stars (out of 5).** ★★☆☆☆

## Quilts over Kosovo

(<http://www.globaldevelopment.org/quilts.htm>) is well worth a visit in the next couple of weeks. They are currently soliciting quilts of all varieties, as well as financial donations, for the refugees from Kosovo.



The deadline has been extended until the end of May, so if you think you might be interested in donation either a quilt or money, this is the time to visit.

The site includes background on the program, and shipping instructions for the quilts, as well as information on what non-quilters can do to help. There is also a small photo gallery of some of the quilts so far and the people involved.

**Rating: 4 stars.** ★★★★★

If you can't make the May deadline, or if you'd rather send a child's quilt to Kosovo, then visit the **ABCQuilts** (<http://www.jbu.edu/ABCQuilts/>) site.

ABCQuilts specializes in getting quilts to at-risk kids in all sorts of situations. They started in 1998, to deliver quilts to HIV/AIDS infected babies. Since then, they have delivered over 390,000 quilts.

This is an established site, and one with which you may already be familiar. It's not an extensive site, but it is interesting and informative.

**Rating: 4 stars.** ★★★★★

I was disappointed by the website for the **New England Quilt Museum** (<http://NEQuiltMuseum.org/>). The site is dominated by text; in the entire site, I found only three pictures of quilts and one graphic (used repeatedly). It's also a bit of a cobweb site; it was last modified in November of 1998.

It is a fairly good site for those who are in the area and only want information before visiting the museum, though. It includes admission prices, driving directions, and listings of current exhibitions and workshops, classes and lectures.

I'll be sure to visit this museum the next time I'm in or near Lowell, Massachusetts. It sounds like a very interesting place. You can also read more about it in the **Boston Insider** (<http://www.theinsider.com/Boston/museums/1quilts.htm>).

However, the site did not measure up in terms of online browsing usefulness or enjoyment.

**Rating: 2 stars.** ★★

If you're looking for inspiration of a different sort, then **Math Quilt** (<http://members.aol.com/MathQuilt/>) may be the site for you.

Math Quilt is a small site. Some of the text is formatted as if for links, but is not yet linked anywhere. Hopefully, that's just a sign of a growing site. It is updated daily, as evidenced by the "Math Quilt Quote of the Day" and the "Quilts every Day". Also on the site are an online bookstore (through Amazon.com) and a reference department. My favorite section is the gallery, though, with pictures of quilts relating to geometry, topology, and irrational numbers, and more.

**Rating: 3 stars.** ★★★

You can visit Christina's own quilting website at: <http://pauhana.marine.usf.edu/~munch/>



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## My Favorite Thimble

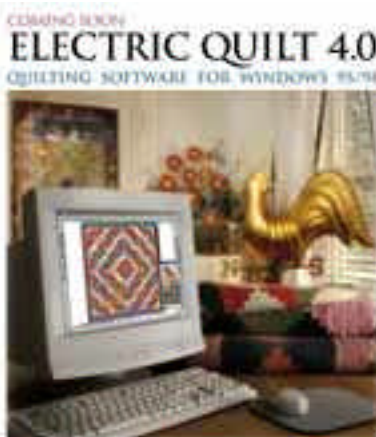
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The folks at Schoolhouse Enterprises and Planet Patchwork search for items for quilters (and friends of quilters) which are unique and often overlooked by other catalogs you might connect with. Check out their on-line catalog, which offers such interesting items as Photos-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 EQ4 design software, and Sew Precise! and Sew Precise with Shirley Liby. **RIGHT NOW THEY'RE OFFERING A SPECIAL LIMITED TIME DISCOUNT ON EQ 4 OF MORE THAN \$20 OFF RETAIL.**

They also offer a large selection of INSPECTOR CLUESEW's Mystery Quilts. If you missed any of the Cases which were previously online, you'll find them here!

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## BOOK REVIEWS:

# PERSPECTIVES ON QUILT DESIGN



### *Design Your Own Quilts: One-of-a-Kind Quilts*

by Judy Hopkins

That Patchwork Place, 1998

96 pages, \$23.95

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1564772101/planetpatchworkA/>

### *Surprising Designs*

#### *from Traditional Quilt Blocks*

by Carol M. Fure

That Patchwork Place, 1998

\$19.95

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1564771555/planetpatchworkA/>

### Reviewed by Christina Holland

I've been curious recently about quilt design. My first full size quilt was a field of stars of varied types and sizes. I designed that quilt on paper at least five separate times, and then the final result used still a different layout. I've stuck to traditional projects since then, partially as training, and partially because I haven't been sure I could successfully replicate that flying-by-the-seat-of-your-pants technique to quilt design.

Honestly, when I picked up these books, I thought it'd be difficult for books to impart much practical wisdom on the creative process. In these two books, Judy Hopkins' 'Design Your Own Quilts' and Carol Fure's 'Surprising Designs from Traditional Quilt Blocks,' I found a structure within which one can create original projects.

'Design Your Own Quilts' is a very structured approach to creativity. This can lend confidence to those of us who are just beginning. It's sort of like the art classes I took as a kid. The assignments were always very specific. Yet, within the framework of, for instance, a one panel cartoon drawn in pencil only, I could draw whatever I wanted. It's the same way with quilts.

The author, Judy Hopkins, provides blueprints for quilt layouts. The idea is that 25% of the quilt's surface area be filled with "theme" blocks. These can be almost

any kind of block you can imagine. The rest of the quilt is filled with your choice of simple background blocks which are chosen to accentuate, not compete with, your theme block or blocks. She often reminds us, though, that there are many more possibilities for blueprints and themes than those shown. Then, you are encouraged to audition different layouts of the quilt on a design wall.

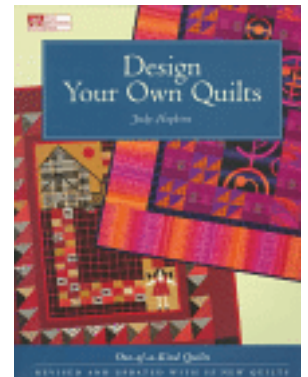
The text of 'Design Your Own Quilts' is very carefully and precisely written. It is a very text-based book; it'll be thirty-two pages before you see the first color photo. But then, her focus is on inspiration, not on providing designs for us to copy. A step-by-step description is provided for one project, "White Hemstitch," but it's really more of a play-by-play narrative of how the thought process works.

The recurring theme in this book is flexibility amid structure. As the author says, "Be flexible. If your quilt calls for a twenty-square theme area and your theme refuses to cover more than eighteen squares or insists on covering twenty-two, bend the rules to fit the quilt."

Judy Hopkins writes about creating a quilt the same way I've read novelists describe the process of devising a new character. The quilt is in control, not you. "By this time, the quilt may be totally out of your control. It may leave you no choice but to complete it with a particular Row 2 block, crafted from particular colors or fabrics. If it is very strong-willed, it might insist that you abandon your original plan."

She also recommends buying unusual fabrics whenever they catch your eye (as if we needed to be told that) but that "A 1/4-yard or 1/2-yard cut is plenty; I rarely buy more than 1/2 yard of any fabric. If you limit your purchases to small cuts, you can build a fabric collection that is rich in variety and both stimulating and challenging in its potential."

Twelve quilt blueprints are provided, with basic directions for each. For every blueprint, at least four sug-

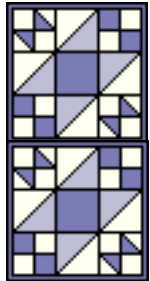


gested layouts of theme and background blocks are included. One example of each is shown, with a full page color photo and notes on the fabric and block choices made.

Following the blueprints are several pages discussing variations in design techniques, and then the gallery. Forty-two separate projects (in addition to the twelve previously used as blueprint examples) are showcased in large color photographs. Accompanying each is a short note on the blocks and fabrics used.

There is no shortage of inspiration here.

In contrast to 'Design Your Own Quilts,' 'Surprising Designs from Traditional Quilt Blocks' starts with a chapter on "Planning a Quilt." The layout is planned from



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**The key is to be flexible. Even the things that are held fixed at first may need to be modified. In reality, nothing is fixed; we can do whatever you want in our quilts.**

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the start; now it's the blocks that provide the flexibility. In this chapter, specific instructions and measurements are provided for borders and sashing and setting on point.

The next chapter is "Designing a Quilt," which invites the reader to choose from general types of block patterns. We haven't chosen a block to work with yet, but she has categorized types of block patterns that tend to arise from permutations on any on the blocks. Block patterns are variations on a traditional block made by moving and exchanging fabrics from the same basic set within the block.

Now it's time to choose a block. The author provides ten 12" square blocks, each containing between sixty and seventy-two pieces. We are told to cut enough of each fabric for every piece, and then just play with the combinations. As Carol M. Fure remarks, "the first step in learning to create is learning to play."

Eleven layouts of light, medium, and dark fabrics are provided as examples for each block. Of course, "These block patterns are not exhaustive. I hope that they will show you that there are many surprising possibili-

ties for quilt designs that use only one kind of block." It sounds like fun to me.

There is a lovely gallery with color photos. Along with each photo is a brief discussion and a diagram of the original plan, and if different, the final plan. For example, Lissa's Pool (pages 58-59), started with a "strippy" pattern. The final quilt uses "center" (stand alone) fishy blocks. As the author says, "This quilt shows that plans are just that: 'plans', subject to change."

I like the tone of this book. She's clearly trying to get us to think creatively for ourselves. In the introduction to the gallery, she asks "Which design do you like best? What would you do differently?"

These two books provide very different approaches to quilt design. In 'Design Your Own Quilts,' we can vary the layout, given a theme and several simpler background blocks. Of course, once we get the layout the way we want it, we may end up having to change the theme blocks to make it work, as Judy Hopkins points out. In 'Surprising Designs from Traditional Quilt Blocks,' we keep a set layout and one specific block, and vary the fabric combinations. Again, Carol M. Fure reminds us that we may need to change the quilt layout at the end, as she did in Lissa's Pool.

So in both the key is to be flexible. Even the things that are held fixed at first may need to be modified. In reality, nothing is fixed; we can do whatever you want in our quilts. I think it helps, though, to deal with one thing at a time. If we tell ourselves the layout is fixed, then we can be totally free with the blocks without feeling overwhelmed. Or we can work the other way around.

I don't want to recommend either one of these books over the other. They are both excellent, well written and helpful without limiting the reader. Which you choose will depend on which approach appeals more to you personally.

Imagine the possibilities: work with one approach or the other, whichever suits your thinking best. Or make the possibilities endless by combining them!



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Look for the latest fabrics from Hoffman, RJR, Marcus Bros., Maywood, Clothworks, Hi Fashion, Timeless Treasures, Fit to Print, Rose & Hubble, Northcott, Benartex, Moda, Peter Pan, and more, all at 20% off retail prices.

Go to [www.pinetree.quiltworks.com](http://www.pinetree.quiltworks.com). When the main page comes up, click on Virtual Fabric Store, then select your fabric viewing options!

## THE QUILTBROKER

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# PERFECT SQUARE

PERFECT SQUARE and PERFECT TRIANGLE are tools that help quilters make quiltpieces more easily and accurately. Patterns have been written especially for PERFECT SQUARE and the necessary sheets to make the quilt are included in the pattern.

The PERFECT SQUARE website has been updated to include information on all products and patterns complete with pictures. Credit cards are accepted.

Also included are pictures of Monica's art quilts and links to really cool quilt sites.

<http://www.webworldinc.com/perfectsquare>  
for details.

## 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 see what we have to offer at our website. We have a great sale page.

<http://www.sierratel.com/thequiltblock/salepage1.htm>

Or e-mail for more information to  
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# CHARMS & SCHNIBBLES: NEWS NOTES FROM ALL OVER

KOSOVAR REFUGEES ARRIVE IN NEW JERSEY -- QUILTS NEEDED!

Kosovar refugees began arriving at Fort Dix on May 5th. They are expecting 2000 women and children per week, fresh from the horrors of the war zone and the overcrowding of the refugee camps in Albania and Montenegro. We can do something to brighten their lives and let them know we care. We need quilts! Bright colorful quilts!

Does your local quilt guild have charity quilts made up and ready to go where they are desperately needed? Do you have UFOs, uglies, fabric or batting you can donate to make up tied quilts for these people? If you have quilts that are ready to go or if your local guild has quilts ready to go...please call the phone number below to arrange to ship the quilts to Fort Dix. Or you can call your local National Guard to ask if they have any shipments of goods going to Fort Dix in the near future.

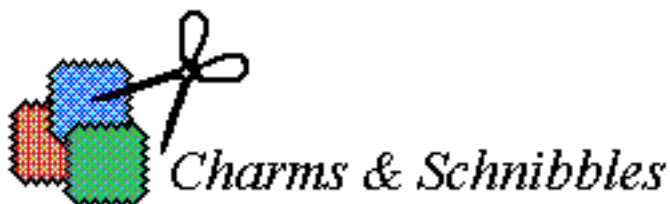
Fort Dix Coordinator:  
Sgt. Karen Cianfrano  
Emergency Operations Center  
National Guard Building  
Fort Dix, NJ  
(609) 562-0808

Although the effort to provide quilts for the Kosovar refugees is just beginning, there are a number of guilds who have already made contributions (see the list below). So far, most are from New Jersey, but the Heritage Quilters of the Hudson Palisades are from New York. We would like to thank all of them for their outstanding efforts to date, and welcome any other guilds or individuals who wish to help us in this effort.

So far, those participating are: The State Quilt Guild of NJ, South Shore Stitchers, Moorestown Area Quilters, Brownstone Quilters, Garden State Quilters, Rebecca's Reel Quilters, Turtle Creek Quilters, Pieceful Valley Quilt Guild, Woodbridge Heritage Quilters, and the Heritage Quilters of the Hudson Palisades.

We would like to know who else out there is working on this endeavor. Please visit the web site of the State

Quilt Guild of NJ at: <http://www.njquilts.org> or you may email Melanie Normann, the President of the State Quilt Guild of New Jersey, at [QuilterNJ@aol.com](mailto:QuilterNJ@aol.com).



## 1,000 QUILTS FOR OKLAHOMA

And lest we forget our own in need, The Quilt Heritage Foundation is asking quilters around the country to make and donate quilts for the victims of the Oklahoma tornadoes. "Our goal is 1000 quilts for Oklahoma," said Nancy Kirk, President, "because the news reports have estimated 1000 homes were completely destroyed. Of course we can use more, because many of those families have both adults and children who will be rebuilding their lives starting with nothing."

Non-quilters can support the project by sending donations to help cover the costs of buying supplies for volunteer groups who will meet in old-fashioned quilting bees. One has already been scheduled for the National Quilting Association convention in Omaha where the thousands of quilters attending will be asked to stop by the "1000 Quilts for Oklahoma" booth to help stitch on a quilt while they are in town.

"Quilters are some of the most generous people in the world." says Ms. Kirk. "For years quilt guilds have supplied quilts for hospitals, nursing homes, veterans hospitals, AIDS hospices and shelters for abused women and children. This project is a natural extension of this tradition of providing warmth and comfort -- the very definition of quilting."

Details of the project are on the Quilt Heritage Foundation web site at [www.quiltheritage.com](http://www.quiltheritage.com). The site includes the guidelines for the quilts, a printable flyer

for visitors to print and post at their local quilt and sewing shops and an option for making a donation by credit card on a secure server.

\* \* \*

### AMISTAD QUILT PROJECT

Mary Staley of Montgomery College in Maryland is spearheading a community effort to produce 24 quilts to adorn the bunks of the historic slave ship Amistad on its inaugural voyage next year.



The Amistad is currently under construction at Mystic Seaport in Mystic, Connecticut. It will sail from New York on July 4, stopping along the eastern seaboard and eventually sailing to Havana, where Cinque first boarded the ship in 1839.

According to the project's website (<http://www.mc.cc.md.us/Departments/amistad/>), quilt blocks will be created and contributed by individuals from around the world, then assembled. Each quilt will have 24 blocks, which will be documented. The quilts will be on public display prior to their donation to the Amistad project.

For more information you can reach Mary Staley at <mailto:mstaley@mc.cc.md.us>.

\* \* \*

### 1999 INTERNATIONAL QUILT WEEK YOKOHAMA CONTEST

The International Quilt Week Yokohama '99 will be held from November 11 - 13 at Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall. This event is organized by the Quilt Week Executive Committee.

This annual quilt show and contest, one of Japan's largest, is open to quilters from around the world. It offers a grand prize of 500,000 yen (more than \$4,000US), with category prizes of 200,000 yen in six categories.

Initial deadline for entries is July 15, 1999. For complete entry information and forms, e-mail Atsuko Ohta at [a\\_ohta@viq.com](mailto:a_ohta@viq.com). A miniature quilt contest is also held as part of the Yokohama quilt festivities.

\* \* \*

### SUMMER COVERLET INSTITUTE

A summer coverlet institute will be held at the Thistle Hill Weavers textile mill in upstate New York, August 17th through 19th. Rabbit Goody, a textile historian and owner of Thistle Hill Weavers will teach antique dealers, collectors, and museum professionals how to identify, date and value woven coverlets produced in

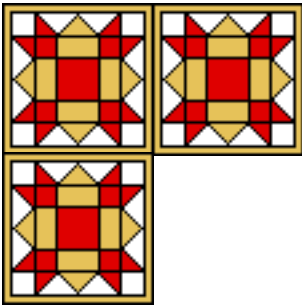


rural America in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The institute will tour the collections at the New York State Historical Association and the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown. The working textile mill provides an excellent backdrop for this seminar as questions concerning coverlet weaving can be explored, showing hand and power loom techniques.

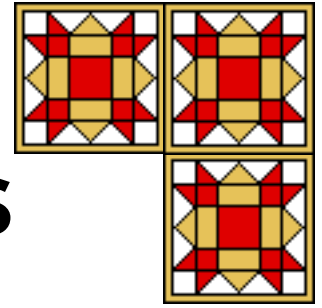
Contact Rabbit Goody at 518 284 2729 or [rabbitg@albany.net](mailto:rabbitg@albany.net) for further details.





# QUILTER PROFILE

## JO & JOS HINDRIKS



When Jo and Jos Hindriks arrived in the U.S. from the Netherlands, their first acquaintance was quilting. Jos (the male component of this quilting couple) writes: "In early 1994 we arrived in Washington D.C., where Jo had accepted a job as an economist. That summer, we decided to spend our vacation up north in Maine, for we both like to hike in the woods and mountains. Our first night was spent at a Bed & Breakfast hotel in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where we had planned to receive a first-hand impression of the Amish and Mennonite communities. Our interest, however, proved to be somewhat more than casual.

So we stayed another night, and another.... In short, we never reached Maine that year. That trip was a veritable 'quilt-immersion.' We both fell for the geometrical designs and the striking color combinations. It was in the small town of Intercourse, right in the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch Country, that we bought our first quilting supplies:

a cutting mat, a rotary cutter, a ruler, quilting thread, fabrics. On the porch of our Bed & Breakfast hotel we drafted our first project, a single Log Cabin bedcover in Amish purples. We still have that quilt and sometimes use it to stay warm on the couch.

"A lot has happened since then. Our current home has a separate sewing room in the basement and there are so many needles all over the house that we hereby recommend everyone who enters to keep their shoes on."

Some five years later Jo and Jos bill themselves on their website (<http://www.dutdes.com>) as "The Dutch

Quilting Couple in America." Having become quilters themselves and great admirers and students of the quilter's craft, they have begun to make their own original contributions.

Neither of them had a quilter in the family, though Jo says that her mother did do some sewing: "I was brought up in a family in which my mother made all of our clothes when we were young. While she has a degree in dressmaking, she never engaged in quilting. She taught me much of the sewing basics. I picked up the needle again after my interest in quilts was aroused,

in the U.S. The term 'quilt' was new to me when we arrived there."

Jos was introduced to the terminology, if not the practice, somewhat earlier: "The English word 'patchwork' entered my vocabulary when I was nearly ten years old, somewhere in the late Sixties. In those days, textile crafts were hot again and my mother read in a magazine about a technique to cut



little hexagons out of old postcards and use these as templates, nowadays often referred to as 'English Paper Piecing.' Only much later did I hear stories about American quilting bees, where ladies would sit around a frame and sing together while stitching the sandwich."

Of quilting in Dutch culture, Jos goes on to observe: "We were born in an age when quilted bedcovers and jackets were generally known as end-products of the textile industry and patchwork was frowned upon as a sign of poverty. How quickly we had forgotten that, until not so long ago, stitched textiles used to be prized

possessions in the wealthy families of Western Europe and that both quilting and patchwork can be traced back along the Silk Route, all the way to ancient China. Our "Flying Geese" have come a long way indeed.

"As to the less fortunate social strata throughout the history of our society, we can only regret that hardly any quilts or data on them have been preserved. We think that this lack of evidence has to be ascribed to the logical fact that such quilts were made to be 'used up,' as well as to the scarcity of inventory lists of poor households. Therefore, it is no surprise that, to denote their workpieces, contemporary Dutch quilters use the English loan word 'quilt' and have forgotten the old Dutch word 'culte,' which is directly related to it and carried the meaning of either 'mattress' or 'stitched bedcover.' Nor is it too strange that both of us became more closely familiar with the craft only after we had moved to the United States, where quilting has never vanished altogether from everyday life."

Jo and Jos do not like to put labels on their own style of quilting. "Labels like 'traditional,' 'innovative,' 'art' and 'craft' mean little to us. We draw our inspiration from everything that captures our attention, both inside and outside the realm of quilting. Our creativity is stirred by visits to art museums, walks in the forest, encounters with friends. We have come across many antique quilts of which the design, as quilt historian Jonathan Holstein points out in his writings, anticipate twentieth-century artistic currents like Cubism, Constructivism and Op Art. Classifying designs into categories inhibits the creative process and induces copycatting. We believe that our own designs, which are nothing but new discoveries of age-old principles, can find a happy home in any quilt."

One primary source of inspiration for the couple is

puzzles, which have had a fascination for Jos going back to his childhood. "When I was a young boy, my father got a little puzzle for his birthday. It looked like a jig saw puzzle, with the main differences that it did not have a picture on it and that the pieces could fit into the case in more than one way. I took delight in finding solutions with the geometrical forms and soon the collection expanded with similar puzzles (called Polyforms). They have been with me ever since. Sometimes I forgot them for a while, then picked them up again.

"In more recent years, I started pondering their

decorative value. Being a subtle balancing act of order and chaos, they kept on captivating my eye. I pictured their solutions as stained-glass windows, tile floors and the like. During the very night after our return from our first American vacation, I suddenly saw my puzzles before me as quilt tops and discussed the concept with Jo. I realized that they could bring a fresh, new design element which is, at the same time, readily accessible to the average quilter as to sewing techniques and choice of fabrics. Selecting a set of colors for a puzzle quilt and sewing the solutions requires essentially the same approach as select-



ing a set of colors for a block sampler and assembling the different blocks: the intriguing interplay of order and chaos is apparent in both. In fact, the puzzle solutions quite naturally fit into what are described as traditional quilt designs."

In developing his ideas, Jos uses a computer design program, but not dedicated quilt design software. "My designs usually start their careers as ideas. As they are transferred to the computer, their evolution is still in progress and I often make adjustments on the screen. I usually draw my patterns in AutoCAD LT, a very precise program primarily targeted to engineers and archi-

fects. Those who are interested in what AutoCAD can do for quilters are welcome to read my introductory article "Quilting and AutoCAD LT Drafting Software", hosted by the Computer Quilting Made Easy website (at <http://softexpressions.com/help/newsletters/apr99autocad.html>).

Jo picked up on Jos's ideas and began to bring some of them into reality: "From the very beginning I was intrigued with applying the puzzles to quilt designs. I started with a very simple pillow cover, to experiment with the sewing techniques. This pillow we later gave to an Amish family whom we had befriended during our stays in Lancaster County, PA. The more designs Jos made, the more I became fascinated with both the design aspect and the piecing techniques. I experimented with traditional and new piecing and applique techniques and came to realize how easy his designs can be done by just applying simple sewing basics: no curves, straight lines, with an occasional inset piece."

The Hindriks' began to share their puzzle and quilt ideas with the rest of the world through their website and e-mail newsletter. "We got hooked up to the Internet in early 1997 and met fellow quilters online. Soon after that, we had our first 'Uncle Jaws' Mystery Quilt (with a mystery story) hosted by the Quilttalk website (<http://www.quilttalk.com>). Acknowledging the powers of the Internet, we put up our own Dutchman Designs page (currently at <http://www.dutdes.com>) a few months after signing on. There, we shared our design concepts with the quilting public. Our site now features three 'Uncle Jaws' Mysteries, including that first one, as well as a growing number of other designs."



Eventually, with the collaboration of his internet acquaintances, Jos evolved his puzzle patterns into a business: "Through ample feedback from visitors, I was able to hone my pattern writing skills. The pattern business, formally established in January of this year, has evolved from the website in a natural way. Jo's invaluable skills as an economist have helped overcome many of the practical hurdles. Dutchman Designs is a bipartite website now, with a cost-free section and a commercial section. My first three printed patterns for sale are of the 'Puzzling Patterns' type, meaning that they are based on solutions of the aforementioned puzzles. Our latest title is 'Checkered Copycats,' based on the same

design of tessellated (interlocking) cats as the outcome of our last Mystery, 'Uncle Jaws and the Escapee.'

"We both are quite active on the Internet. We participate in some mailing lists and visit chatrooms on IRC. The Internet has given us ways of communication that a regular storefront cannot provide, especially in our field of creativity: pattern writing. In our vision, one of the major boons of the Internet is the direct availability of communication to iso-

lated people. Many individuals who have, for some reason or other, previously been unable to go out often and meet others, now actively exchange ideas and build new friendships."

Despite their mention of isolation, Jo and Jos are not hermits, and participate actively in quilting activities in their Virginia neighborhood. "We are members of the Burke Chapter of Quilters Unlimited (QU, located at <http://www.clark.net/pub/quilters>), a guild based in Northern Virginia and counting about twelve hundred

souls. Our annual quilt show in early Spring is well worth visiting, the more so because it is non-competitive. Instead of feeling compelled to measure their skills with others, the quilters can freely share their experiences and appreciate the fruits of everyone's labor. Occasionally, we enter projects of ours in the QU show."

Although the Hindriks' are now thoroughly acculturated in the U.S., they are often asked about the connections between American and Dutch quilting traditions. As Jos puts it "There are striking parallels between Dutch, English and American quilting traditions. Some mid-nineteenth-century patchwork 'Log Cabin' quilts from Holland could easily be taken for pre-Civil-War pieces and Pinwheel-like motifs are known in our home country as 'Dutch Triangles.' The American quilting boom of the last few decades has greatly contributed to bridging the generations by renewing the interest in the centuries-old craft in Holland.

"Although we are not deeply involved in specifically Dutch quilting circles or cross-cultural activities, we do have regular contact with individual Dutch quilters. Through them we discovered that the Dutch tradition has preserved some distinctive traits, such as certain fabric designs. A number of textile industries are now reproducing calico prints that were popular in the Netherlands during the heyday of Dutch trade and culture: the Seventeenth Century."

Gregarious and generous, Jo and Jos Hindriks are anxious to share their ideas, their patterns, and their love of quilting with anyone who is interested. From their unique cross-cultural perspective, they are able to bring together elements of the decorative tradition which have not been combined in quite these ways before. And with the internet, they have the ideal platform from which to share their insights with the rest of us.



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## BABY PLAY QUILT

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Send check or money order along with your order (USA only) to:

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## HICKORY HILL QUILTS

The next QHL conference TEXTILES AND THEIR PLACE IN HISTORY will be held August 4-7 at the Hollowbrook Lodge in Greenville, New York. Learn while you relax in the Catskills. Comprehensive seminars from Rabbit Goody (wovens), Cindy Brick (Crazies), Jane Clark Stapel (feedsacks), Merikay Waldvogel (fabrics), more. Appraisals, behind scenes at Farmers Museum and more. For more information, see

<http://www.quilthistory.com/1999.htm>.

# COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, NEWS, IDEAS, BRICKBATS?

Like any news publication, TVQ is always hungry for information about new developments in the area we are trying to cover. If you have an idea for a story, or want to tell the world about something you are doing which relates to computers and quilting, we'd like to hear about it.

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](mailto: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](mailto:rholland@atlanta.com).



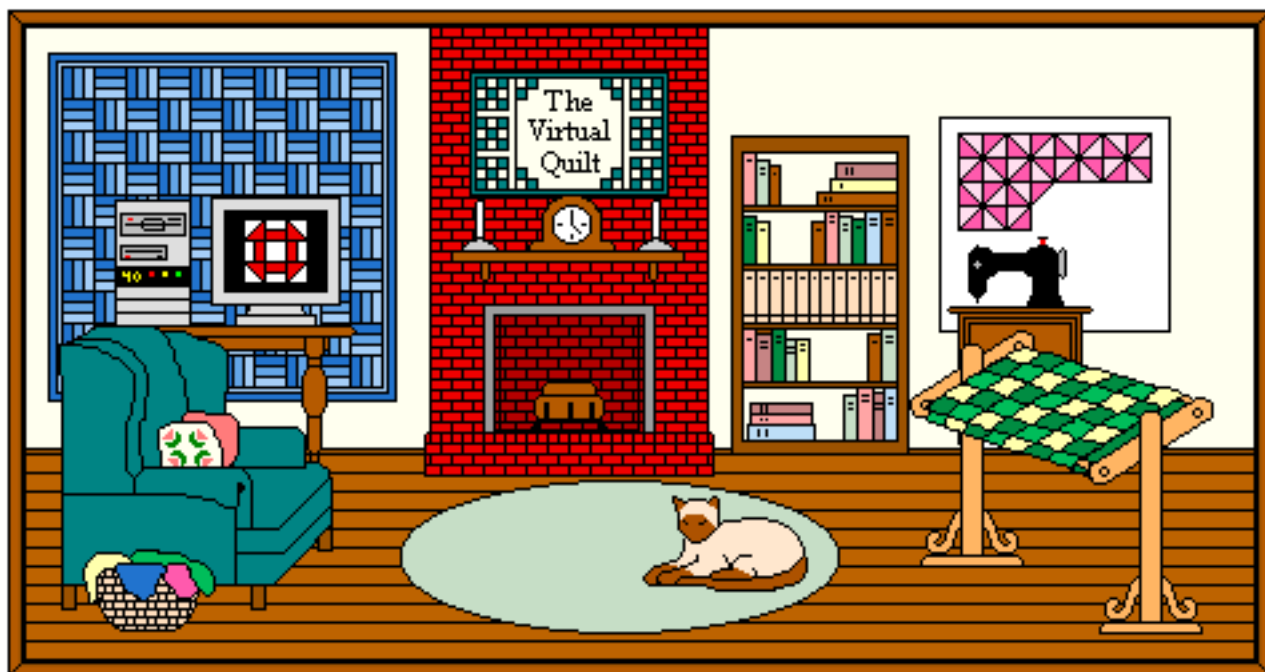
## The Virtual Quilt

A Newsletter for  
Computing Quilters

Editor and Publisher: Robert Holland, Decatur, GA

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