

Salem Quilt Show draws nearly 400 quilt lovers

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**Quilters Guild
having fun while
stitching
together
works of art**

by NANCY POWERS
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Nearly 400 people viewed over 70 quilts, of both antique and modern design, during a display and sale hosted by the Salem Valley Quilters Guild on Mar. 28.

Every available space in Salem United Church was covered with hand-crafted quilts, some dating back to the mid 19th century. They were on loan from their owners for this special occasion.

It's been about seven years since Salem has hosted such an event, and this one came about after the formation of the Salem Valley Quilters Guild six months ago.

The new Guild has 12 members, and the display provided the opportunity for those interested to learn more about the art of quilting.

"We have had a great deal of interest shown in the Guild," said co-founder Cathy Galt.

The group meets every Monday night from 7-9 p.m. at the church in Salem.

According to Galt, quilts tell many stories, and recently social historians have studied quilts just as they do diaries and letters, to learn about life among

the pioneer families of early Ontario and the wilderness frontier of Canada.

"Although it is an ancient art, quilting always has had a special significance for Canadian women," said Galt. "Our goal is to teach, learn and have fun along the way."

In "The Josefina Story Quilt", Eleanor Coerr writes, "... a quilt was often the family's diary. Many patterns that are still used today, such as the wagon wheel, star over Texas, log cabin, and cactus flower, originated from wagon train living."

Among the quilts that left the building was a fan- and log-cabin combination. It wasn't for sale, but Bev Weeks, of Cobourg, was lucky enough to win it.

The pieced quilt, in shades of rose, combined two popular traditional patterns — the log cabin and the fan — and was designed and quilted by members of the Guild. It is large enough to cover a king size bed.

"We decided around Christmas time to have a quilt draw, so by the time we were started, we had under a month to finish it," said Galt.

"We nearly worked around the clock to have it done on time."

Traditionally, quilts were made to celebrate marriages, to welcome new babies and to honour friends.

Album and "friendship



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quilts" were (and still are) embroidered with names. For generations, quilts have been often mentioned in Canadian conversation, fiction, essays and poems.

"Quilting parties are still important events, and a quilt may be a record of community history or a symbol of personal remembrance," said Galt.

Cathy Roblin, a quilter of 10 years, has partnered with

Galt to form the Guild. She believes quilting is becoming increasingly more popular.

"Quilting is an art as well as a social time, and allows for personal creativity," said Roblin, who lives in Brighton.

Roblin was surprised to see her first quilting teacher at the event and quipped the teacher came to inspect her stitches.

Cathy Galt and Cathy Roblin hold a quilt that was made by the guild and won by Bev Weeks of Cobourg.

