

Quilter's Guild set to celebrate 20th anniversary

Story by Patti Post
Photos by Ted Brown

Stitching in the ditch may not sound like fun to most, but there are few places quilters would rather be.

A 'ditch' is a seam, joining pieces of fabric in a design, and the finest designs in quilting will be revealed at the Halton Hills Quilters Guild (HHQG), 20th anniversary Show and Sale at the Croation Community Centre in Norval on October 14.

If busy hands make a happy heart, it's no wonder this group of ladies is happiest when they're quilting, and even more so when they can share the love of their craft with like-minded friends.

Since the original eight women members gathered at The Hobby Horse Quilt Shoppe in Georgetown for the Guild's first meeting, quilting has become recognized as an art form and the tools are more sophisticated, but the underlying strength of this enduring sisterhood is in the bonds they form with one another and with the community to which they give so much.

The HHQG is a dedicated group of women whose outreach program has brought beauty and warmth to many people's lives in our community and throughout the world.

A verse in one of their newsletters expresses their philosophy on the importance of 'giving back.'

'It's not what you gather, but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived.'

Local nursing homes, shelters, and international relief

efforts, like the one for Japan's earthquake victims in March, have all benefited from these quilters' creative industry. They make, pack and send quilts in response to many requests.

"Wherever there's a need, quilters step up," says Judy Mackinson, president, who has been with the Guild since its early days.

For Mackinson, it's not just a sideline, it's her passion. She rises at 4 a.m. to get some quilting done before leaving for work as a buyer for a food company, and then returns to her projects when she's home at night.

"My mother was a sewer, as was her mother," she says. "I watched my mother, and couldn't wait to use the sewing machine. I was allowed to use the machine when my feet touched the floor. Well, my feet never did touch the floor, because I'm short," she laughs. "But thank goodness for knee pedals."

Although Mackinson could turn her hand to several crafts, including stained glass, knitting and crocheting, she chose to focus on the medium she loves most at around the time the Halton Hills Quilting Guild was formed 20 years ago.

Being a Guild member provides opportunities to learn from other quilters, whether it's traditional quilting, hand sewing, or fibre art. Through sharing, they get a chance to appreciate their diversity.

One popular project is the Block of the Month, when a member initiates a theme, such as stars, wild flowers or Canada. She creates a block (square,) and puts it in a cookie tin with extra fabric for the next person to create another block in keeping with the theme. The cookie tin and pieces of fabric get passed on to anyone who wants to be included until a quilt is made and returned



Mary Stewart of Halton Hills Quilting Guild works on a rabbit wall hanging.



Blessed are the pi

to the initiator, who doesn't see the work until it is completed. A quilt.

"It's wonderful to see what everyone creates from your idea," says Joanne Lovegrove, who has through working together on a project."

That is what members like Joanne Lovegrove appreciate.

"We bounce things off one another and get suggestions."

Lovegrove says she had quilted very little before joining the Guild with her granddaughters, ages 9 and 10, teaching them to quilt.



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