



A Trip Down Memory Lane

Timeless Stitches – Quilt Capital of Kansas

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As Maple Leaf Festival approaches, the Maple Leaf Quilters Guild is abuzz with preparations for the Quilt Show. This is the 51st Quilt Show marking 50 years of quilting since the very first show! This is the oldest quilt show in the state of Kansas and, if I may say so, one of the very best! We usually have around one hundred quilts on display during the show made by very skilled quilters in the Baldwin City area.

A few years ago, the quilt show committee decided to have a Featured Quilter each year. This year I (Sharon) was selected to be their Featured Quilter. That means that I must sort through the quilts that I have made over the years and select some to display. That would be easier if I had not been an active quilter for about 61 years. Which ones to choose! Well, the first one I made is out—some of the fabrics are in shreds. And besides, it wasn't my best work by a long shot! My second quilt was a flannel baby quilt that I made for Laura. I gave it to her several years ago, and it wouldn't impress anybody, but it did keep a baby warm. My third quilt was a green, blue and gold Rob Peter to Pay Paul that's ok, but I think I can come up with some nicer quilts than that. The next several I made have found new homes outside of my house, such as the Colorado Log Cabin that went to Leanne since she now lives in Colorado, etc. I decided the only thing to do was to sort through the quilts that I still have and make my selections.

There were a few that I was pretty sure that I wanted to include, but some of them didn't make the cut because I found others that trumped them for one reason or another. The one quilt that I really wanted to include was Flowers in the Snow, an English Paper Pieced bed-sized quilt that is made of 358 blocks containing about 4570 pieces. It took me thirteen years to make it and it is promised to someone after the quilt show. I also wanted to include Star in the Middle, a pattern designed by Judy Niemeyer that I started in a guild workshop. I finished it just in time for last year's Maple Leaf show, so I decided to leave it out even though the judge at the Douglas County Fair said that it was a "show stopper."

I found a quilt that I had totally forgotten about that was Quilters' Paradise's quilt for the 2012 Kansas City Area Shop Hop. It is made of 30's reproduction fabrics, a few blocks with hand-embroidered baskets, and an appliqued Sunbonnet Sue in the center. I had cancer surgery a week or two before the shop hop, so I didn't get the top quilted in time for the hop. I did eventually get it quilted and finished it in 2015 and will display Sue's Baskets for the first time at the show.

Then there is the Mickey Mouse reverse applique wall hanging that I made as a challenge in the Kaw Valley Quilt Guild in 1995. The challenge was to make something black and white and red all over. Of course, I thought of Mickey! His distinguishing feature is a dimensional red satin bow tie!

Around that same time, I taught Beginning Quilting at the shop. My class sample was a peach and aqua Lemoyne Star. It was hand pieced and hand quilted. When I found it in its storage tub, I decided it should be in the show in contrast to the quilts that I make now.

I'm not going to go down the list of all I plan to put in the show. I want to encourage you all to come see the quilts yourself. We have many talented quilters in the community, and I think you will enjoy the show. Since it is the 51st show there will be a section of Vintage Quilts made before 2000. Also, to remember the past, we will have a featherweight sewing machine on display—a very popular machine in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's. And if my Grandma's treadle machine can thumb a ride to the show, I will demonstrate how we sewed before we had electricity.