

Newsletters in April 2013

Jingle Bells

April 30, 2013

Hello my friends,

Twenty more gray hairs, 5 bags of Cheetos, dark bags under my eyes.... but hey I DID IT!!. I made my goal. "Jingle Bells" is done and entered into the IQA show this year. *These deadlines are called that for a reason.*



Now for the backstory. We always take a family Christmas vacation. This year we went to a lodge in Eastern WA. They had an old fashioned sleigh ride. Over the river and thru the woods to a tent for dinner. The drover looked like he had been doing this for the last hundred years. Beat up cowboy hat, oilskin coat down to his boots, beard, and a gruff weathered look to his face. My grand daughters were the only kids on the sleigh. He turned to my petite little 4 yr old and asked her what she got for Christmas. "A bow and arrow", she replied. He did a double take and said, " Really, a bow and arrow? What are you going to shoot?" "Bears", she replied. At that he let out a big belly laugh. "Bears?" "Well, just the mean ones", she said. That old red neck was roped and tied in seconds by my little mighty mite. "Do you want to drive the horses little missy, he asked?" "Well yes sir I do". He obviously was not familiar with Disney's newest Princess - Merida.



Thread Embellishments. Thank you to Carol Stocking for the great idea to do Sea Fans with thread. I apologize for not recognizing you last month. Love that idea! Check out the several new student project photos in my student gallery this month too.

Border choices. The majority of you chose our Rooster with the stripes all around. Laura, (the artist and I) choose the dark strip on the left side. Competition with the main subject of the quilt was my problem with the stripes. They are so visually powerful. I felt like your eye went there first, instead of the Rooster. On Jingle Bells, I chose a dark colored border to frame in the dark horses. The lettering was done with machine embroidery on two pieces of tear away stabilizer behind the border fabric. I did that prior to the quilting. There are real jingle bells attached to the little holly berry flourish.

News from Walrus Designs-

More than a Memory won an Honorable Mention at this years show in Paducah.

"Quilter's World" magazine has asked me to make a 18 inch block pattern for them.

It will be coming out this fall with an article on my "Multiple Ways to Applique" approach to quilting. AQS has asked me to partner with them in publishing two more patterns. One is the "Dancing Cranes" pattern. I am pushing for a CD to accompany it with directions and photos, as it's a complex pattern. The other is "Greeting the Golden Grandchild".

I am sometimes asked about how it works when you want to write a book or sell your patterns?

Did you know that it is standard for authors to receive 5% royalty on each pattern or book sold? *It is not a great way to become rich.* Most of us do it out of our love for teaching and sharing our work with others. It often takes an author a year of work to make a book with all of the requisite samples and photos. Books generally cost \$28.00. You do the math. Authors and designers have to buy back our own books and patterns at the whole sale price, just like any quilt shop. If you want to thank teachers for writing books or making patterns, - buy your books or patterns directly from them instead of the publishers. That way they will make a little more.

Great Gadgets.

Combining pieced skies with the more curvo-linear shapes found in nature is a easy way to add interest to your quilts. The contrast between techniques also adds a dynamic touch. It is a great way to change the color and brightness across the sky section. Use half triangles, or diamonds.

2.5 inch squares set on point look great. *They need to be square!* If you are a little off on one, you will be a lot of by the time you have sewn 75 together. I like this new ruler. **Loc bloc**. It has a groove in it. The seam allowance slides into that groove and then there is no rocking when cutting. The square can be firmly held down to your cutting mat. Sew them together in strips. Sew two strips together. Then another two. Sew the pairs together. If you just keep adding more strips to the side, the whole section becomes stretched and out of square.

Here's the link.

<http://shop.blocloc.com/Bloc-Loc-HST-Square-up-Ruler-25-BL-HST-25.htm>



Puffin pattern is available in my shop.



Take me there. 63 x 50 sold.

Tips for trapunto -



My favorite batting for trapunto work is Quilters Dream cotton. It cuts so easily and cleanly. No little feather tufts ! I use blue water dissolvable markers to mark my designs. The first layer of basting thread is lite weight dissolvable thread by Superior. Get the Vanish light weight!

www.superiorthreads.com/shop/product/vanish-lite-300-yds/

Heres the tricky part. Use only cold water to remove the blue marking lines. Hot water removes the thread better but you do not want to "heat set" those marking lines. Make sure they are totally gone before washing the remaining thread away in hotter water. If you want a faux trapunto look - (without the work of cutting away the extra layer of batting) - Use 100% wool batting. It inherently puffs better than cotton.

Remember to nurture your personal creative self this Spring too.

hugs Kathy.

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Spring Borders

April 1, 2013

Happy Spring everyone.

I hope it has finally arrived at your house too. Yesterday we had perfect weather for the egg hunt. The flowers were blooming and so were the smiles on those precious faces.



I have been killing myself the last two weeks, working 12-14 hour days to finish my new quilt in time for the Houston deadline. Yesterday morning I decided I had to give it up for this year. Spending time with the grands was more important than making the April 20th deadline. I reluctantly found the paper work to throw it all away. (I knew I needed to get my little death spiral over with before the kids came).

One last look **ROCKED** me out of my socks. The dead line is May 30th. Where my old brain got mixed up, I do not know. OMG, I had an extra 4 weeks!!! [The happy dance was not for public viewing!!](#) A sneak peak at " Jingle Bells"



My favorite comment, after a lecture is ... I inspired someone in their own quilting journey. I want to tell you two stories from this last month's visit to two guilds that *inspired me*. The guild president was in the hospital after a successful heart transplant. She had been volunteering right up to the incredibly quick and unexpected call that her heart was available. Of course, as soon as the guild members knew that she had been put on the list, they began prayers and a Friendship Quilt. They all made blocks and signed their names. Within a month the quilt was bound and finished. Amazingly, they had it done and rushed it to her at the hospital in time to be at her side. Every one of them holding her in their quilt, as she went thru this huge door into her future.

At my next workshop, I learned about the [Rita Rooks Quilt Legacy Project](#). Vickie Rooks lost her mother very quickly to renal cancer. Her mother Rita, had been one of the founding members of that guild. When she was cleaning out and packing her mother's sewing room, she decided to finish all her mothers unfinished quilts. Last year she finished 10 of them. "My definition of "finishing" a quilt is, it must have a label and a hanging sleeve in addition to being quilted and bound. I am documenting these quilts and preparing for a giant reveal celebration. I have four sisters. None of them quilt, but they all appreciate the work needed to make a quilt. When every bag and every box is emptied, it will be time to divide up these treasures. As of now, I am planning on producing a book for my sisters with pictures of each of the quilts and background information." Click on the link above to read more about her project. What an incredible way to stay connected to her mom and to give an amazing gift to her family.

I love Quilters so much and this is the most inspiring job in the world. Thank you all!

Border Decisions. I am almost to that point with "Jingle Bells". It is one of the more important quilting decisions we all make. A common judging comment for improvement goes like this - "The border overwhelms or detracts from the main focus of the quilt".

Borders should only be added, if they add to the visual impact of the quilt!

Will it provide a definite visual frame that sends your eye right back into the composition? Can you add a color, print or texture on all 4 sides that will add movement around the composition? Will the border add to the story line with elements that escape over the border? Would an asymmetrical border add visual weight to one side to balance the composition? Thanks to my friend and student Laura Tawney we have some samples from her most recent project to look at. I love this feisty rooster. He is bold and dramatic. He needs a bold border that does not take away from him being the focal point. Pick your favorite and if you want, let Laura know.

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4. Imagine them with the binding on.

Notice how the strong visual lines in the border prints interact with the piecing lines in the quilt top. What is most visually pleasing to you? Borders should be auditioned. It is the only way to make the decision. Just repeating a fabric that was in the quilt top doesn't do it. Another common mistake is using the focal fabric that you chose to help pick your color palette. It is often used as a nice wide border. It can work. Sometimes though it is the focal fabric for a reason. It becomes the focal point! We choose them for the very reason that they are such a beautiful and dynamic print. In that case, a nice 3 inch border instead of a 6 inch border may work better for you.

Remember that I am teaching Dynamic Design for every Quilt Style August 22nd at the Tacoma, WA, APWQ show. My goal for that workshop is to help you find out more about what is visually appealing to you and why.

Then you can incorporate that into your own work!

<http://www.apwq.org/quiltshow> click here to register.

Take care my friends.

Hugs Kathy

www.kathymcneilquilts.com