

# Newsletters in April 2014

## Choose your Needles Ladies.

April 14, 2014

**Greetings everyone,**

Feathers are beginning to grow from under my arm pits! I have spent so much time in flight over the last month that my body is starting to assimilate. *I'm hoping they will fill in and fluff the definite drag noticed across my chest.*

What a busy and exciting month I've had since our last newsletter. I started off in Alabama with the ever gracious and talented ladies from Heritage Quilters in Huntsville. Did you know that when a sweet southern belle says to you, "Oh, bless your heart", it is **not** a compliment! More like, you have issues and we need to pray for you. :-)

My wonderful hosts took me to a 1800's replica village/museum where we watched a class prepare food in the old ways. They hung a chicken from a string suspended in front of an open fireplace. The string was twisted so that it spun slowly like a rotisserie. *The things you learn from hanging out with quilters.* What an awesome trip. Thank you Debbie, Kari, Jane and all the ladies in Huntsville. Love you guys.



One day at home and I was off to Empty Spools in beautiful Monterey CA. Five whole days of fun with a diversity of students. My experienced students get to work from photos that I have helped them photo shop and select before they ever get there. We start e-mailing back and forth early. My advanced applique group have entered shows and have won awards. It was a big luscious room full of energy, interesting projects and techniques. Towards the end of the session, students from all the workshops tour though. We had a world wide tour for them. Penguins from the Falkland isles, elephants, landscape folk art from Norway, a scene from Tuscany, Pandas, the Cascade mountains, an underwater scene and many more. My artists were amazing. What a proud mentor I am. Consider signing up early for next year. I will be slowing down my teaching commitments next year. Bruce is retired and he wants me to spend less time on the road. So next year is my last year at Empty Spools and other 5 day retreats. I will still be doing shorter workshops and trips, but if you have ever wanted to do one of these intensive workshops this is the place to come. <http://www.emptyspoolsseminars.com>

On to **Hudson River Art School**, Greenville NY.



It was a chilly transition from warm beach temperatures in CA to snow still on the ground in upstate NY. The students and staff, however, could not have been warmer. What a beautiful studio they have to work in. Great lighting and padded swivel office chairs for all. This is a bed and breakfast style inn with gourmet meals every day. My students worked so hard. This is the only class I have ever had that a student actually left with a completed quilted project. Bunky's project was small in scale but huge in heart. The day World War II ended, her mom, then 14, was grabbed and kissed by a sailor. Bunky e-mailed me before class that she wanted to base her project on the famous photo of the kiss from that day. *Knowing that working on something from your heart can propel you thru the rough spots, I agreed to let her use that photo in my landscape class.* I warned her that I do NOT teach people or portraits. With an indomitable spirit, she decided to try it. This is Bunky's first ever applique project. She had lots of experience piecing but had never done appliqué. Congratulations. It turned out amazingly. She went home and had it framed before my plane touched down in Seattle.



In ten days I will be leaving for the **AQS Paducah** Show. Find me in the author's booth on Friday and Saturday. In May we are taking an anniversary trip to France for two weeks. My web store will be open but we will have to wait and ship orders on the 23rd. No newsletter that month. I'll catch up to you in June after a 5 day landscape retreat in Alaska.

### **Tips for Choosing your Needles.**

Use the correct needle to match your thread.

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|---|--|
| a. very fine threads (60 wt. and finer) . . . #70/10 needle | b. fine threads (50 wt.) .                     |
| . . . #80/12 needle   | c. medium threads (40 wt.) . . . #90/14 needle |
| d. heavy threads (30 wt. and heavier) . . . #100/16 needle  |  |

Loosen the top tension setting when using finer weight or metallic threads. The top tension needs to be set at 1.0 to 1.5 on most machines.

If you adjust the tension so loose that the top thread loops on the underside, tighten it up slightly until you get the perfect stitch. If you cannot find this perfect “sweet spot” because the thread either breaks (top tension too tight) or loops (top tension too loose), most likely the bobbin tension is too tight. Loosen the bobbin tension screw 1/4 turn.

**English Big Eye Hand Applique needles.** My favorite number 10B English style needles with extra large eyes, easy to thread. They are imported from England. The needles are made with high quality carbon steel so that the eye can be cut larger. I have never had one snap and they stay sharp for a couple of years. *Seriously, my favorite needle.* They come ten in a little carved wooden case. I used to get them from Jean Lyle. She has retired so now I am carrying them in my shop.

<http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/shop/cart/>



***Did anyone else take the Quilters Survery for 2014?*** It's a great way for our industry to collect information about how many quilters there are and what types of products we all like. One of the multiple choice questions this year was: how many sewing machines do you own? Answer for D was 20 or more. **The first person who writes to tell me they have or had 20 or more machines and WHY???? will get a package of these hand applique needles free.**

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Check my student gallery over the next couple of months as more fabulous quilts come in from my student artists. Congratulations to Casey who won 1st Place Art Quilts for her wonderful 'Matrushka' art quilt started in my workshop. See it in the student gallery.

<http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/gallery/photo/81/>

hugs to all

Kathy.