

Newsletters in January 2013

Road to California and other tid bits

January 31, 2013

Good morning,

We are home from the NOT so sunny state of California. I have moss growing between my toes from slogging through rain for 3 months now. The Road show was a blast though. My workshops were packed and my students awesome. I got to teach my **Dancing Crane pattern**. It is for intermediate applique students. So often venues want us to teach more beginning classes. While one of my joys in teaching is seeing students light up with confidence and embracing their inner artist, it is also nice to be in a classroom with an "inner hum". It is so relaxing when students are not struggling to learn new techniques in a classroom with 2 feet of table space. In this class we review techniques quickly, how the sections go together and then start sewing. Everyone visits as they sew. One of the things that I got great feedback on was using my video shorts to demonstrate techniques or the next step forward. Twenty Six students can all see what you are doing that way on the big screen. That was wonderful in my landscape class too.



Our judging team was so cohesive. *I am always so grateful that there are three of us to make these incredible weighty decisions.* With 270 quilts to look at in 12 hours, it is a hard job. In every category we pick out 4 quilts who are contenders for 1st, 2nd, 3rd. A fourth is chosen because the top one could move up to a special award. In categories with 25 -40 quilts it is really hard. If you are juried in, please **embrace** that we loved your quilt and knew many would want to see it. They only make it in because they are wonderful quilts. These shows would not be as inspirational and fun if you only got to see ten lucky ribbon winners. Best of Show was a new Claudia Clark Meyers and Marilyn Badger creation.

Great reviews on my "*Multiple Ways to Applique*" DVD. AQS is going to start carrying them and featuring them in their catalogue. That makes me so happy.

<http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/shop/item/multiple-ways-applique-dvd/>

Latest and greatest Gadgets that were not, in my opinion.

The rage in one of my classes was the EZ fold pen for quilters. *A friend of one of my students was using them in their class.* The booth sold out and Bruce got me the last one to try for you. I don't love it. It is a pen that has a small amount of some mysterious liquid mixed with lots of water. You draw along side a ruler and the liquid creates a line. Its a fat line with lots of puddles of bleeding as you have to keep pressing the pen down to release more solution. The only thing I found, after extensive google searches, was that it is something that weakens the fibers along the line, allowing them to relax and fold more easily?? That sounds frightening. Who knows what it will look like in 6 years. It says it washes out completely with water. I tried it around the edge of a freezer paper template. It did not hold its fold on a curve well at all. A little Sizing sprayed on your fabric is so much easier and holds the fold so much better. So thumbs down on that one.

Other Raves that have come and gone.

Invisible thread- Not so invisible with the sheen it creates. Difficult to use unless you adjust your tension. *60 weight threads with a neutral or matching color are better in my opinion for machine applique. It leaves less of a visual line for me.*

Rayon thread- Everyone loved its sheen. It is NOT colorfast, very weak and no longer allowed to be produced in the US because of the toxic process involved in making it. *Tribolene polyester threads have a lovely sheen, are color fast and durable.*

Friction pens- nice thin marking line. Caution: the marks can return with cold. Now I know you don't all keep your quilts in the refrigerator, but some of us do ship them across the country to family or shows. The belly of those FEDEX planes are cold. So that x-ed that one of my list too. *I use 9mm chalk mechanical pencils for marking on dark fabrics and the disappearing blue pencils on lights. (Even then I pray that I don't zone out and get it near the iron before realizing that I just heat set it)*

www.amazon.com/Sewline-Mechanical-Fabric-Pencil-Pink/dp/B003FC6KUO/ref=sr_1_fkmr0_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1359645290&sr=8-2-fkmr0&keywords=sewline+mechanical+chalk+9mm+pencil



On the home front, our puppies are becoming best buddies.

I wish Sassy and I were better friends!

Remember she came home last May. My \$5000 + (husband reads this) new Bernina 820. While I love the extra room to push a big quilt "under the hood", she is far too controlling for me. I get buzzed over everything. She likes it done her way, in a certain order, and has no tolerance for my spontaneity. Symmetry is something that I marvel over in others, but terrifies me as a concept and as a goal. Do it again, exactly like you did it last time??? I never put the salt shaker back in the same place twice, let alone load the bobbin, thread the machine, and choose exactly the next right button to push. We have come to a truce. She is my cranky old aunt with amazing talents and I the whimsical youth with brilliant ideas. (At least I come off young and smart that way.)

Keep safe, warm and dry everyone. Spring will come someday.

hugs Kathy

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Happy New Years

January 5, 2013

Happy 2013!!

I am on my New Year's diet; hoping to last two weeks till I start teaching at Road to California. *We do a lot of bending over as teachers.* My daily walk has faded into the mist with the constant rain. If only free motion quilting consumed more calories!

My year started with a wonderful snow vacation with my grand daughters. Our 3 yr. old learned to cross country ski with Bapa. The two year old wanted nothing to do with the snow but fell in love with the horses who took us on a sleigh ride. On the way home we picked up my long awaited Shichon puppy "Piper." Three pounds of irresistible fun. She keeps me laughing most of the day.



Which is a blessing because I lost someone close to my heart this Christmas Season. An irreplaceable father figure and dear, dear friend. A month after his passing, I asked his wife whether he had come a haunting, or if she felt touched by him. Her answer, "He never left." That seems a profound statement of inspiration and grace. Something to hold on to all year.

Flash News to Quilt Artists- *We are getting recognition outside our quilting community.* Flekman Art, a tile mural company specializing in reproducing custom art, contacted me about making my images available to their customers. www.flekmanart.com I will begin uploading images to them soon. Yes, we get royalties. *Now I really have grown up.*

"Audubon's Christmas" pattern - AQS notified me that it is in its second printing. That is so very exciting. I can't wait to see what people do to make this quilt their own. If you are working on it, please plan to send me a picture when you are done. *I will not expect them before next year. Seriously, I know!*

Monthly Tip - a new free video. I am a very visual learner and suspect most of you are too. If I can't be next to you in a classroom, video is the next best thing. The focus is on free motion quilting the "Audubon's Christmas" quilt. Of course, some of the material is generic for any pictorial quilt. [Just click here for the Youtube link](#)

My new quilt is done! I made the deadline for entry into AQS, Paducah which is always way too close to the Holiday Season. Titled "My Venetian", it was inspired by our trip to Venice last year. That city is magical. It brought some romance to our 42 year old marriage!



I love those visually dynamic stripes for interior borders.

It is thrilling and terrifying to be one of the judges for the Road to California show. Beautiful quilts from all over the world. I will do my best to celebrate the maker of each one. All my best wishes to you in the New Year.

hugs Kathy

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