

Newsletters in September 2014

[Newsletter from Kathy/ Fall Frenzy](#)

September 28, 2014

Greetings everyone,

Fall is here. The brown spots on my hands are appearing as fast as the ones on the leaves. Oh well, I hope I will become more colorful the older I get too. When I was younger, I used to snicker about old people going on and on about history. Funny thing, history fascinates me now too. I learned so much American History on this last trip to South Carolina. Houses in Charleston have been there since the 1600s. It is the second best preserved city in the world (Rome comes in first). Rice plantations, (not just cotton and tobacco) flourished along the coast in the 1800's making South Carolina the richest state in the nation. The Gullah community of run away and freed slaves hid out in the low country islands for a hundred years. They preserved their African culture and language. There are Live Oak trees over 1000 years old. This is the Angel Oak tree about 20 minutes from Charleston. It literally breathes calm into your soul when you stand beneath it. Thank you to all my new dear friends from Charleston, Myrtle Beach, and Hilton Head. It was a trip of a lifetime!



Speaking of all things southern, did you know Elvis was not accepted into his Glee Club at school? His sound didn't blend. We all know to what great heights they went onto without his unconventional sound. Being yourself, always works out best.

News from Walrus Designs -

Look for the article I wrote for [American Quilter Magazine](#) on Double Fluff batting this winter. Remember that I reported on that to you guys first in my newsletter!

[Quilt Life Magazine](#) is now on the stands, so I can tell you *the rest of the story* about finding a home for "Color Wheel" my 65th baby. Here is Jane Lovett's response when she got the box without any prior knowledge.

Jane Lovett's turn-

When the Fed-Ex truck arrived with the box, I thought my husband had ordered some belting or machinery, but this box was lightweight and very large. What a thrill to open it and find such a beautiful quilt. We called Kathy right away to thank her and find out the story of her amazing talent and why she had chosen to share it with our museum. We were honored by the gift and decided to make it a focal point in the weaving room and to feature it as the last stop on the guided tour. Everyone has admired this work of art and loves the story.

Giving is always the best way to receive. My new friendship with Janie is the most wonderful part of this story. We are looking forward to her invitation to stay at their bed and breakfast at Falls Mill, Belvidere, TN, next year. <http://fallsmill.com>

New appliquick tools. The excitement over them has been amazing. We couldn't keep up with the orders and have restocked twice. I used to sweat bullets when I taught my "Audubon Christmas" quilt workshop. "Audubon" has seriously small complex shapes of feathers and little heads. Students would get frustrated and my blood pressure would soar just trying to help them. The gals using the appliquick tools and stabilizer took to those little feathers like baby ducks to water. With thrilled looks on their faces, they told me they were going to pull out UFO's they had given up on long ago. Cardinals were flying all over that room. Some were going to be machine appliquéd to the background fabric and some by hand. We are going to keep the Combi packs on sale until the New Year.

We now have the glue pens and refills too!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B4kh1L_dbg video on Appliquick

<http://www.kathymcneilquilts.com/shop/item/combi-pack/> On line store.

AQS has invited me to come film two on-line workshops in Nashville in November. One workshop will be on Creating Your Own Audubon Quilt. The other will be Photo inspired Landscape Quilts. If you have wanted to attend these workshops but I've never been in your area... we can now get together. It makes me so happy. In between teaching at the La Conner Quilt Festival this week and a fun trip to the Coastal Quilters in Newport, OR, I am going to be putting the petal to the metal trying to complete all the stages to these two on-line classes. We will update you later with the links to sign up!

Maybe I should go get a new haircut for the show? I've had this one for 20 years. Since I have such limp, fine hair there really isn't much to work with. A wig might be best. Curly, thick and blond. My fraudulent golden locks and my wrinkled apple doll face together might be a bit schizophrenic though. What to do, What to do?

Tips -

One of the reasons my show quilts are all hand appliquéd is the loft and dimension created when shapes are not fused down. Another big reason is the ease with which one can rip stuff out. My recent Koi pond quilt "Reflections" has been driving me crazy. It was inspired by a real photo of a Koi pond with a nice rock and lily pads in the center. Still, after it was completed and the binding done, it just frustrated me. I finally figured out that the balance was off. The rock was too big and competed with the lantern for attention.

Balance is all about the visual weight of things in your composition.

Here are a list of some things that can increase the visual weight of an object.

1. Bright warm colors like yellow, red, or oranges. Even tints of those in other colors will carry more weight. A reddish brown tree trunk as compared to a greenish brown.
2. More texture. Either in the print itself or in the quilting in that area. Think thread play.
3. Action poses. Kitties sleeping have less visual weight than a cat ready to pounce.
4. High contrast. If the object blends into the surroundings it will visually recede. If it has a lot of contrast in value or color it will come forward.
5. Size of objects. Obviously, my rock was just taking up too much room and was too close in size to the lantern.



I love hand appliqué for many reasons, but being able to rip out the quilting, rip out the rock, and put it all back together in a day is awesome. Elements of design do make a difference. Is it really necessary to rip until you achieve perfection? Absolutely not!!!! This quilt is far from perfect but it is wonderful to analyze your quilts for design elements that can lead to an improved "visual impact." Every quilt will have its own balance depending on the fabrics, colors, line, and shapes you are using. Frankly, sometimes it all just comes together better than others.

"If you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative."
Woody Allen.

hugs,

Kathy