



Threads of Thought

We're
42 years old!

A Quilter's Exchange

Richmond Quilters' Guild, Richmond, Va.

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A Few Words From Sherry

This has been an interesting, if uncharted time for most organizations, RQG included. While we are not currently holding full membership meetings, a few of the chapters are finding inventive ways to gather while following health mandates

Our web page has had increasing activity as circumstances prompt quilters/sewists to declutter or downsize. I'd like to share the story of one such contact.

A young (working) mother wrote to ask about donating her mother's extensive fabric collection to RQG. Her mother died unexpectedly from a toxic reaction to a medical treatment that she was receiving. This young woman had cleaned her mother's sewing room in preparation for moving her dad to join her family. I contacted her and we arranged for me to meet her husband and her on a Sunday afternoon to collect about 13 very large cartons – mostly fabric and primarily cottons. Fortunately, I drive a minivan, because even the passenger seat was loaded! I offloaded most of the cartons into "my side" of our garage, planning to divide the contents between some of the chapters that I attend for use in making charity quilts. That "dividing" turned into more loads of laundry than I could track. Yes, I am one of those people who pre-washes her fabric.

And this is where the bonding began with a woman whom I had never met. As she washed, measured and folded stacks of fabric began to cover counters and tables, I was struck with the joyful designs and cheerful colors. This was a woman that I wish I had known and created with! Visiting her fabrics was like watching her grow as a creative person with an increasing appreciation for fabric design and quality. Working with a few of her coordinating fabrics was joyful as I make a couple of quilt tops for charity. It soothed me to think that even when we can no longer speak for ourselves, the fabrics and supplies that have brought us creative happiness can speak to others when we are no longer able to speak with them ourselves.

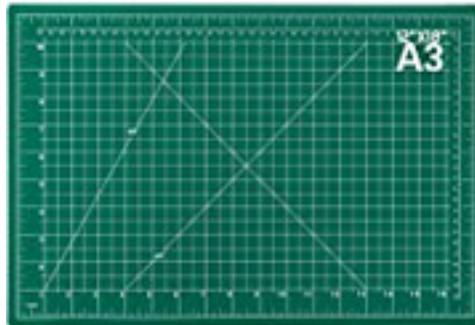
Sherry

Editor's Note: Sherry sent a copy of this message to the lady who gave us the fabric, and I thought you all might be inspired and touched by her reply which was sent to me as well as Sherry:

Thank you so much for sharing this with me! My mother was a truly loving, nutting [sic] and wonderful person. She taught me how to be such a great mother and person to my own child and others. I hope I can be at least as half as wonderful as my mother. I really appreciate you sharing this letter with me as it truly warms my heart let me shed some tears of joy for once as many people are appreciating everything and noticing how great my mother was. I am so happy that I have been able to help in a way I never thought I could. It has been a difficult year for most and I know my family is not the only one going through this. We have all had a difficult time with the grieving process and still not able to have a memorial for my mother however this whole experience has been bringing me some much needed closure even though it can be difficult at times. I really appreciate you taking the time to write such a beautiful and sentimental piece like this. Thank you all so much and I hope you all continue to create wonderful and beautiful works of art!

Recycling Old Cutting Mats

During the isolation of the pandemic you may have been using your cutting mat more than usual and it could be showing wear in a variety of ways. These mats are expensive and we shrink from just throwing them away, but I ran across an old article that has several good ideas of how to make use of damaged cutting mats.



My mat has actually got some split places in it, and some of you may have warped mats. You can cut off such damaged areas and use the “good” parts as smaller cutting mats. Keep next to your sewing machine or ironing board for quick trim jobs. Or create a travel cutting set... make a quilted folded “book” with a slot in one side for your little mat and have the other side well-padded to be a pressing board to carry with you. You could also create a pocket in it for your rotary cutter.

Use old mats for cutting batting, thus keeping your good mats fuzz-free.

Repurpose old mats into templates. Cut the size/shape you want and write any information about the template on it with a permanent marker.

Use strips of old mats at bottom supports for tote bags or hand bags. You could cover a piece of trimmed down mat with lining fabric to serve as a removable base for several bags.

Give your old trimmed down mats to your children or grand-children to use as craft mats, or to your husband for his workshop. The article notes “The table you save may be your own!”



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Editor's Note

The deadline for the Feb/ March issue of TOT is January 11. This is the issue which should contain the slate of officers for the coming year. In these unusual times, if your chapter officers will continue in office, please state that fact.

Chapter News

Crazy Quilters

Crazy Quilters is meeting, appropriately masked and socially distanced, back at Mechanicsville Presbyterian, after a summer of outdoor meetings at Broadus Baptist. Our November meeting was well attended with a program by Maryethel Miller on Baltimore Album and storybook quilts.



In October, a small group undertook a cutting and packaging of charity fabric session, creating bundles for members to sew into charity quilts with donated fabric.

In lieu of our regular December "eating meeting"/ Holiday Party, Crazy Quilters brainstormed about fun activities which will allow us to enjoy each other's company and still be safe. We are planning on quilter's bingo, with the squares destined for charity quilts, as well as crazy sweaters, masks and earrings to get into the spirit!

Jennifer Plate Johnson

Bits and Pieces

Hellooooo and hope all are well! Bits and Pieces met in October at Laurel Hill church under COVID guidelines and planning to meet in December. We have been keeping in touch with updates via emails and continued various block challenges to create quilt kits for donation to the Richmond Quilt Show sale booth. December meeting is our annual baby quilt collection for donation to the VCU NICU unit. We continue to collect and distribute fabric and pillowcases for donation to children's hospital. We are having discussions for upcoming year based on COVID outcome but are hopeful and looking forward to everyone meeting in person again!



Anna Williams

James River Heritage

Our November meeting was a beautiful Trunk Show by our own Cindy Lyles and her 20 years of Hoffman Challenge entries. 15 ladies were in attendance and they had logged 231 volunteer hours for the month.



We will meet in on December 1, first Tuesday of the month, from 6:30 - 8:30pm, at Bon Air Christian Church on Buford Rd in the big room. We are required to wear masks inside the church. Please bring your own beverage and snack if desired as we will not be having refreshments. The church has asked that you take your personal trash home with you. This meeting will NOT be our annual potluck due to COVID and church restrictions. It is our final turn-in of ASK quilts for the year. We want to see your Show N Tell! Quilts, finished or in progress and any gift ideas you'd like to share.

January 5th meeting? If the church allows us to meet our program will be about using water soluble film. Diana Vourron will teach us how she's used it to create beautiful items with fabric and I will show you how to make a thread bowl using all your throw away threads. Happy quilting, *Frances Engesser*

Hospitality



WE Quilt

Dianne Finnegan, Program Chair



Chapter News

Piecemakers

Piecemakers Chapter met in October on a beautiful day and enjoyed the pavilion that was built by the church for its members. We had 16 quilts given for the charities and Carolyn Lee held the winning ticket and won 19 selvage blocks made by those who participated in the challenge. I'm sure she'll make something special with all of them.



We had a member, Geneva Herod, that passed and her family has donated many items for us to have a yard sale, this process is ongoing and will let all chapters know when this event will be held. There was a quilt Geneva didn't finish for her son, and our member, Mary Mills donated her time and long-armed it while Noreen Deyo did the binding and presented it to Geneva's son.

We had a wonderful time showing and telling about the quilts each member has made since our last meeting. We are scheduled to meet on November 11 and Alice Sandridge will present her version of the "Ugly" quilt and a lesson on how to give away the ugly fabrics in your stash with a smile! Keep smiling - that way no one knows what you're up to! ;)

Peace and love to you, *Alice Sandridge*



News From the VA Quilt Museum

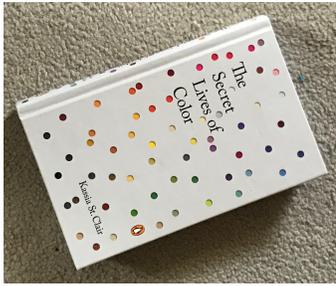
It's a good idea to regularly look at the website of the Virginia Quilt Museum, as things are often changing there. This month there are some classes being offered on-site. At the end of October a new exhibit, "Worldwide Threads- Eastern Asia," opened. It offers a chance to see some of the differing cultures through art. This collection is the first in a series of global art scrolls, and will be on display until the Museum closes for the winter on December 19. There are a number of other exhibits in a wide variety of themes. Perhaps you will be inspired to take an afternoon's drive up to Harrisonburg and see these quilts while they are still available.

An email I received from the Museum touted a new video telling of the archeology of the Warren Sipe House, home of the museum. When I clicked on it I got only a message on the YouTube site saying it was a "private video" and I needed a password to see it. I also tried to watch it by going to the museum's website and tracking down the video there; again...no luck. So I e-mailed the Museum and told them of the problem. I received a nice reply the next saying that when some editing had been done it changed the url. She sent me the new link and I watched the video. It was quilt interesting, although very little of it deals with quilts. As the title states, in the video you learn what archeology is, how archeologists work, and then an extensive presentation of the artifacts which have been found on the museum's site.

There is also a "virtual house tour link" which consists of several pages of illustrated house history. It is quite complete and very interesting. Here are the links to both of these sites..

Here is the new link for the archeology video : <https://youtu.be/UnVAU8htgXA> , and the house tour link:

<https://www.vaquiltmuseum.org/history-of-the-house-virtual-tour>



Tidbits About Colors

From *The Secret Lives of Color*.



Black - II

It somehow seems fitting in this difficult and sometimes sad 2020 year-end that I am winding up this series on color based on the book *The Secret Lives of Color* by Kassia St.Clair with some remaining information about the color black. The first color article in May 2019 was on white, and we have described a veritable rainbow since then. I hope you have enjoyed these stories as much as I have enjoyed preparing them for you.

I was familiar with the word **obsidian** and knew vaguely that it had something to do with volcanoes. It is a glass formed when molten lava comes into contact with ice or snow and thus rapidly cools. It is hard, glossy, brittle, and can be either black or a dark bronze-green. If some gas bubbles get trapped in when cooling, it can also have a golden iridescent sheen. A small, highly polished obsidian disk with a looped handle can be seen at the British Museum in London. It was a mirror made by the Aztecs in honor of their god, Tezcatlipoca, meaning “smoking mirror,” and was brought in the middle 1500’s from the New World after Cortez’s conquest of the area now known as Mexico. Sir Horace Walpole somehow acquired it in 1771 and attached a note to it saying “The Black Stone into which Dr. Dee used to call his spirits.” None of us likely are familiar with Dr. John Dee; I read he was the foremost mathematician, astrologer and natural philosopher in Elizabethan England. He was a graduate of Cambridge and became the Queen’s advisor. He was a strong believer in and student of the occult, and “spent many years talking to angels...” He came to a sad end however, dying in 1608 or 1609 disgraced and in poverty. In this era the Catholic Church was investigating accusations of witchcraft and ready to ask Dr. Dee about his involvement in it. If they had discovered his black obsidian mirror it might have been a ticket to the rack or the pyre. They pictured the devil as black and hairy, and anything black was disturbing. Obsidian, having sprung from the fiery bowels of the earth, was naturally suspect. Obsidian still has eerie uses even today. In 1990 women of the Santa Clara pueblo in New Mexico dressed in black and carried long obsidian blades in their right hands during some witch-destruction ceremonies.

We all are familiar with **charcoal**; we use it to barbecue and sometimes to draw; vast quantities were used during the Industrial Revolution as an energy source. Charcoal is the carbon-rich by-product of organic matter (usually wood) and fire. Limiting the amount of oxygen available yields the purest and least-ashy charcoal. This, together with ocher, used by prehistoric men to create the incredibly artistic depictions of bison, lions, horses, etc. in many caves. Produced around 14,000 BC the drawings in caves in Altamira, Spain were at first thought to be forgeries... no savages could have created them. But using the charred sticks remaining from their fires, those “savages” left their marks for us to marvel over and enjoy. In 2018 I saw a marvelous recreation of such cave drawings in a museum in Bordeaux, France.

Melanin is a dark brown/black pigment found in the hair, skin and iris of the eye in people and animals, but never in plants. There are two types of melanin with long scientific names; their varying levels determine our skin color and the color of fur and feathers as well. High concentrations of melanin leads to dark skin which helps to protect from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. Descendants of dark skinned groups who migrated from Africa throughout the world gradually developed paler skin which was an advantage in northern regions

(Color article, continued) with less light. The greatest black creature is thought by some to be the raven. They are visually striking and known for their intelligence. In AD 751 the Pope wanted to overcome pagan Germanic tribal customs and ban the eating of certain animals. Using the book of Leviticus as a guide he listed as first to be banned crows and ravens. There it is written that the raven “is the bird which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten.” Metaphorical black animals are often used to describe depression. Even Winston Churchill who suffered bouts of dejection heard of a doctor with success curing depression, and wrote to his wife Clementine, “I think this man might be useful to me—if my black dog returns.”

And finally, **pitch black**. This is the most fearsome kind of darkness, described in Genesis thus, “the earth was without form and void; darkness was on the face of the deep.” In the dark we are more aware of our own limitations. Our senses of smell and hearing are not as powerful as those of many/most animals, and without being able to see we are extremely vulnerable. We sometimes describe the night as pitch black when it really isn't. What with the moon, stars, fire, and electricity we are almost never able to be in a space so dark that we can see nothing. We are afraid of darkness, and the thought of endless darkness is equated with death. Many cultures wear black as a sign of mourning. The Latin word for the darkest matte black is *ater* which led to the Latin words for ugly, sad, and dirty and is the etymological root for the English word atrocious. St. Clair ends her section on black with the following paragraph: “The most eloquent expression of humanity’s fear of pitch black is one of the oldest... the Egyptian funerary text the *Book of the Dead* in which Osiris describes the underworld thusly: ‘What manner of land is this into which I have come? It hath not water, it hath not air; it is deep unfathomable, it is black as the blackest night, and men wander helplessly therein.’ ”

And with this somewhat depressing thought, this color series is complete. But do not despair: the wide world of color is always available to us as quilters. Rejoice, and use them all!

Black II post script

I had this issue of TOT just about complete and ready to send out to everyone. This evening I was reading my copy of the Nov. 7-13 issue of *The Economist* magazine and when I came to the Books & Arts section what should I see but an article entitled “Paint It Black.” Since I had just written my little part two review of the color black as found in Kassia St. Clair’s book my interest was immediately piqued. What would lead to an article about the color black in a current major news magazine?

The (un-named journalist) began with a story about the funeral of Claude Monet, that when former French prime minister, Georges Clemenceau came to Monet’s funeral and saw the coffin draped in black he protested, saying, “No! No black for Monet!” And the black was replaced with an old piece of floral cretonne in greens and lavenders. He continues with the same information we have already had about the historic beliefs about the color black, how black is really not a color at all but the absence of color, how charcoal was used by the cave painters, how a “real black” pigment was so difficult to create, etc., etc. Before pointing out that the latest artistic efforts to use black in art come from Anish Kapoor, a British-Indian artist who is using Vantablack, “the blackest black ever created, the writer delves at length into how a wide variety of past artists have used black in their works.

He concludes the article describing Kapoor’s work and what he says he is intending in it...asking, “What is real? What’s a trick?” The pigment he is using... Vantablack...is not really a paint, but is a dense coating which does not reflect light, but traps it almost completely. It was developed to help hide satellites in space. Mr. Kapoor’s works seem to have no shape or contours. In contrast to Renaissance artists who used their paints to create three dimensional portrayals, Kapoor and his modern Vantablack works seem to remove the pictured object altogether. The article ends with this comment: “For the viewer as for the artist, these works are another stop in the quest for the meaning of black.”