



Threads of Thought

A Quilter's Exchange

We're
43 years old!

Richmond Quilters' Guild, Richmond, Va.

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New Technology Gets a Thumbs-Up

Both quilting teachers and quilting students are praising the positive features of Zoom and similar technologies which were more or less forced upon them by the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers found their income sources rapidly drying up as seminars, quilt shows, and Guild meetings were canceled. Quilters missed their monthly gatherings, and before long modern communication came to the rescue.

The teachers like not having to pack up their equipment and travel long distances, often being away from home for weeks at a time. Quilters like the fact that everyone has an equally good view of what the teacher/lecturer is showing. With on-line workshops they can use their own machines, have all of their "stash" at hand, and don't have to pack up gear to get to a meeting or workshop site. Guilds do not have to pay nationally known teachers as much (no travel costs incurred!), so are able to get talent they could never have afforded before.

A number of quilt luminaries say that the new technology is so popular they don't expect it to go away once the epidemic is behind us. Here at the RQG we are still learning how to use all this to its best advantage, but let's keep learning and not just discard it when we can also meet in person once more.

A Few Words From Sherry

It's happening! I feel as if I should jump astride a horse and ride through the streets announcing that RQG chapters are beginning to meet "IN PERSON"! Above the masks of attendees you can see the smiling eyes. And you can feel the excitement at being together again.

So far, I've been privileged to attend April meetings for Piecemakers and WE Quilt (parking lot of St Martin's Episcopal Church on a glorious day) and a May meeting of Crazy Quilters. Also, CQ held the first 3-day mini retreat in over a year.

Obviously each member must decide if "in person" is something where she feels comfortable. It is a very personal decision based on individual circumstances and health concerns. Thankfully, we can still rely on Zoom as Hospitality, our largest chapter, has been doing. There we get to see smiling mouths as well as eyes, and everyone enjoys the pre-meeting casual visit to hear what is happening in each others' lives.

If you'd like to try Zoom and have been hesitant, please contact me and we can plan a time for you and a few RQG friends to get together in a relaxed Zoom visit where you can learn a bit more about this way to visit and become more comfortable with it. RQG has a year "membership" and you should make your president earn her keep by helping you use our resources to benefit our members. I'd enjoy having a chance to visit with small groups as long as you can laugh with me about my occasional blunders.



The VQM Wants to Save Our Quilt Stories

In honor of the Va. Quilt Museum's 25th anniversary they are partnering with the Quilt Alliance (QA) in their ongoing Quilters'- Save-Our-Stories project. This is an effort for quilters to interview other quilters to document, preserve, and share our American quilt heritage.. (Editor's note: Several years ago, in connection with another organization I did this, interviewing Midge Elliott of our James River Chapter.)

The Quilt Museum is seeking input on who should be interviewed. If you know a talented quilter who should have their story saved, send to the Museum their name/phone/email contact information for consideration. They are also seeking persons to conduct these interviews, whether virtually or in person. If you are interested in helping in either way with this anniversary project, contact the Museum at vqmbboard@gmail.com.



PS from the Museum: On their website there is a new virtual tour of items from the 25 years of their collecting quilts. It's fun to watch!



Newsletter Schedule 2021-2022 Guild Year

The deadlines for the coming months:

June/July issue — May 10, 2021

Aug/Sept issue — July 12, 2021

Oct/Nov issue — Sept 13, 2021

Dec/Jan issue — Nov 8, 2021

Feb/ March issue — Jan 10, 2022

This last is the issue for slates of officers for the coming year in the chapter new if we are back to regular meetings. I love getting photos and news which would be of interest to Guild members, so send them along at any time.

Threads of Thought is published 6 times a year by the Richmond Quilters' Guild. Send news items, inquiries, advertisements and suggestions to the editor, Ann Shibut, at 804 Derby Drive, Richmond, VA 23229 or use e-mail: ashibut@comcast.net. Telephone: 741-1374 or cell, 276-591-8546. Newsletter deadline: 2nd Monday of the month. **For changes of address please notify your chapter treasurer.**

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Chapter News

James River Heritage

James River is meeting in person once again! Our May meeting had about 19 ladies present, four were visitors that we hope will become members. By a show of hands all of us had been vaccinated. We had lots of pretty Show n Tell and a little time to catch up socially, our last meeting in person was back in December.

On Wednesday, June 2, @ 6:30 pm. the program will be "Family Heirlooms, Quilts and their Historical Connections." We are also planning to meet in July this year. Our Sit n Sews on the 3rd Wednesday 10-3ish will hopefully resume this month.

We just received clue 3 of the mystery quilt, if you are participating reveal day is slated for the September meeting.

James River meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month 6:30-8:30pm at Bon Air Christian Church on Buford Rd in the 'small' room. Masks are required in the church. Happy Quilting, *Frances Engesser*



Hospitality

Hospitality had another successful Zoom meeting in May! Our program was Diane Phillips presenting an excellent trunk show entitled "Nine Patch-The Humble Workhorse". It was amazing to see the versatile and creative ways the nine patch can be made into stunning quilts.

In June, Diane will present "Five Hands Theory of Giving". this program will be about how "tossed out, found, thrifted or donated items can be made in a whole new light." Looking forward to another adventure into creative quilting! Of course we will have the usual July holiday.

Our monthly "Quilt Roundup" continues to garner many quilts for our designated charities. Thank you Hospitality for your continued beautiful work on behalf of others.

HappyQuilting, *Sandy Collins*, President



Piecemakers

Piecemakers chapter met on the second Wednesday, April 14th, at the New Bethesda Baptist Church in Mechanicsville with 33 members in attendance. The family of Geneva Herod donated items to the chapter for a yard sale for the morning which was a good way to re-acquaint our members. We had three new members; Anna Williams, Martha Uzel, and Sue Tillman, and Sherry Whitford, our RQG President, was also in attendance.

Our long time member, Margaret Jenkins, passed away on April 5th, and each of us will be making a strip quilt to be given in her memory to the Henrico Rehabilitation Center by December meeting.

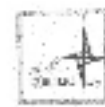
Alice Sandridge requested for the May challenge a lap quilt provided by Lori Coia and Maywood Studios pattern of "Cute As A Button" Heart quilt with the heart be either in pink, purple, or red fabric. These will be given to the Hanover Assisted Living Center for Mother's day.

The May meeting had a program presented by Ann Shibut, of the Hospitality chapter and our newsletter chair, on "How to Quilt on a domestic sewing machine."

Alice Sandridge, Program Chair

Crazy Quilters

No news from these ladies this issue.



Bits and Pieces

No news from here either..



WE Quilt

No news received from this group either, although I have heard that they have a new meeting site. (See Sherry's item on page 1)



Needlework History Notes from the TOT editor

Just about every quilter has heard of Singer sewing machines; Singer Featherweight models are prized even by those who also own the newest computerized machines of other brands. And perhaps you learned in school that the sewing machine was invented by Elias Howe. There was an even earlier sewing machine inventor, Thomas Saint in 1790, but he did not market his idea well. It was designed mainly for use on leather and canvas. A number of other men worked on various designs and features of sewing machines, but somehow Isaac Singer seems to have captured the attentions of historians as their main creator and developer. While reading *Threads of Life*, the book I introduced in the last *Threads of Thought*, I learned some surprising things about Mr. Singer. The details of his life are too many for me to give here, but I'll hit some highlights.



Isaac Singer

He was born in a small New York town to poor German immigrant parents. His interests were in engineering and showmanship. But, the book says “in moral terms his commercial rise was inglorious. . . . his story is one of ruthless betrayals — of women, friends, business partners and family — of predatory sexual liaisons with many, usually young, women, and an immoral, at times illegal contempt of patent laws.”

Evidently he lived by his wits, for he had hardly any education and was barely able to write and spell. He had a variety of occupations; after working as a pitchman in a “funfair” he became involved in theatrics. Aged 19, he married a 15 year old girl and they had two children before he joined the Baltimore Strolling Players and went on the road touring. At one point he noticed an attractive woman in the audience and made her his mistress for some 25 years, resulting in 10 children. Eventually the Players were not bringing in enough money and disbanded, so Singer concentrated on inventing. He came up with some ideas dealing with printing which caught the interest of investors, and was set up in a workshop shared with some others who were trying to make sewing machines. Their products were temperamental, unreliable, and broke down regularly. Singer declared he could create a dependable alternative. The unsuccessful inventor, a Mr. Sieber, bet him \$40 to do that and said if he succeeded they would form a company with another man to market the improved model. The three men agreed on a partnership, but Singer wasn't satisfied and wanted more than his fair share of the deal. With the help of a shady lawyer Singer bullied one partner into giving up his share and fought off law suits for patent infringement. Singer utilized marketing genius to gain unparalleled success with his machines. He introduced the first hire-purchase scheme where for \$3 a month people could take home a new machine and pay for it over years at their local Singer store. He would take trade-ins of inferior brand machines for those who wanted to buy his latest models. He sent salesmen on the road to promote Singer machines; he hired attractive young women to sit in department store windows demonstrating their use. He even set up human-against-machine sewing competitions!

In the end he became a very rich man. He did create dependability... his invention “lived up to its promise of continually sewing pieces of fabric together.” By 1906 annual sales of his machines reached the one million mark, and he built a modern factory in New York City. He displayed his prosperity by driving his family around in Central Park in a bright yellow carriage pulled by 6 black horses. But the NYC elite were not impressed; the newspapers continued to publish reports of his many legal and romantic entanglements. In 1861, aged 50, he met and married a 19 year old French beauty. He died in 1875 and was buried in accordance with his wishes, in three nested coffins. The funeral cortege was followed by “a river of mourners, 2000 or more.” He named 20 of his children in his will, leaving a fortune of over \$14 million. So, not a very nice man, but wonderful sewing machines!