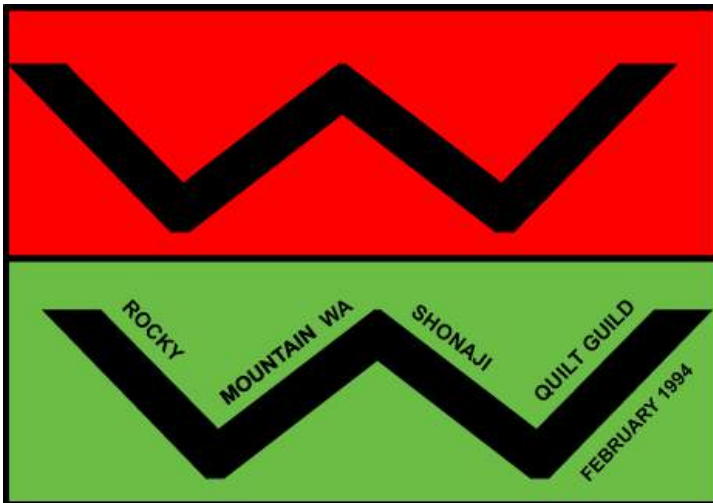


Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild

September 2021 Newsletter



Featured in this newsletter is Stephanie Hobson! Stephanie joined Wa Shonaji in 2017 and leveraged her love of sewing, doll making, and jewelry making into a love of quilting! Read about Stephanie on p. 11.

September 4 Meeting

Joette's Birthday and Backyard Quilt Celebration

Joette Bailey-Keown is inviting the Guild to a celebration at her house on September 4 from 1-5 pm. Come and enjoy quilts and other art displayed in her backyard. Quilters/artists contributing to the exhibit include Marcia, Karen, Joanne, Theresa and Joette. Lunch will be served. RSVP is requested. Call or text Joette at 303-330-2965.



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Wa Shonaji was featured in TWO magazines last month: Historically JeffCo and Colorado Arts and Crafts Society (summer edition). Cynthia Shaw, who met Elorise Hawkins at the Boettcher Mansion a few years ago, asked Wa Shonaji to participate in the venture. It is a feather in our cap to be published in these magazines. Nice job, Wa Shonaji. To quote Joanne Walton, Wa Shonaji is AWESOME!!! You can read the full article on p. 4 of [Colorado Arts and Crafts Society](#).

President's Piece

The August 2021 Guild meeting was our first attempt at a Hybrid Zoom meeting. It was not great but we learned a lot and will try to make changes in the process to make it more successful for the October meeting. We will also try to continue to have Show N Share and the Block of the Month at the October meeting. The September meeting will be a party at Joette's home, and you have received an invitation to this event.

This summer has been long and hot but Guild members have continued to produce beautiful quilts. I am excited to see some of these quilts in person at future meetings. Please stay safe and keep quilting.

- Geneva Lottie

Parliamentarian's Patch

It's almost election time for Wa Shonaji!

Article IV of our bylaws lists the guild's officers, who make up the Guild's Executive Board. They are:

- President
- Vice President - Programs
- Vice President - Membership
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Past President
- Historian
- Librarian
- Newsletter Editor
- Parliamentarian



Throw your hat in the ring and run for a Wa Shonaji office!

Earlier this month, Carolyn Somerville and Sandra Coleman volunteered to be part of the Nominating Committee, which will solicit members to run for office.

Please - consider running for office! The duties of each Guild Officer are listed in Section 7 of Article IV. Review them and, when you are contacted by the Nominating Committee, STEP UP AND VOLUNTEER to run for the office that interests you!

Don't be shy. We are all eligible to help lead and keep Wa Shonaji operating as AWESOMELY as ever.

- Edith Shelton

August Meeting Photos



In August, Wa Shonaji met in-person for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. Eighteen people attended in person plus seven more on Zoom. Let's hope we can continue to meet safely!



Secretary's Scraps

Highlights from the July Meeting

- 30 people attended the meeting via Zoom, including Mary Chopyak, a guest of Joette Bailey-Keown.
- Mary Lassiter presented "Christmas in July."
- A meeting to review the Wa Shonaji library books is still pending. It has been a challenge to find a place for the committee to meet.
- Mary Lassiter asked for suggestions for a location for the Holiday Party.
- Netta shared the Wa Shonaji Sparkler and will find a special cocktail for the August reception.
- Nanci Vaughn reported that there are 21 comfort quilts in inventory.
- The Exhibits Committee reminded everyone about submission requirements for **Things Ain't What They Used to Be**. They suggested that members consider submitting a quilt they shared during a previous Show and Share.
- Karen von Phul will try to get a spot at the Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center in Allenspark, CO for the 2022 retreat.
- 12 members are going to Houston.
- A Virtual Reception in late August will take the place of the August meeting.
- Joette Bailey-Keown will host "Birthday Backyard Quilt Exhibit" on September 4 at 2 p.m.
- July's show and share can be viewed on the [Wa Shonaji website](#).

Highlights from the August Meeting

- 25 people attended the meeting; 18 in person and 7 via Zoom.
- Mary Lassiter discussed plans for the Annual Holiday Luncheon.
- The August 24 date for the Virtual Exhibit was announced and details provided. Netta Toll asked members to look for an email she sent containing a cocktail for the reception.
- The deadline for sending items for the September newsletter was August 22nd.
- The guild will purchase Barbara Brackman's *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns*.
- Birthday wishes were sent out to Paula Clifton, Connie Turner and Moira Jackson.
- Condolences were given to Elorise Hawkins and Monica Lynn for their losses.
- Ann Worsencroft pointed out that Cassandra Sewall has been using the website forum and suggested that others take a look at it and use it as well.
- Karen von Phul still has a few quilts left from the kits that Luana Rubin donated to the Guild. The kits contain a quilt top, batting, backing and binding and we just need to finish them. The quilts should be returned to the guild when finished. Karen will store them until they are gifted to someone in need. We will need to track these quilts since they belong to the guild. If you have already gifted a quilt, please let Karen know so she can track it.
- The Guild will contribute \$150 for food and drinks for the September meeting/party at Joette Bailey-Keown's house.

On Point with the Exhibit Committee

RMWSQG Exhibit Reception was August 24, 2021!

What a FABULOUS evening it was as we viewed the quilts via Zoom for our Virtual Opening Reception Exhibit on Tuesday evening, August 24, 2021.



Our themes this year are “Faces” and “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be.”

We began the evening with Opening Remarks by our president, Geneva Lottie, who joined us from Oklahoma. We then moved forward with the festivities of the evening.

Thirty-six members and two guests attended. We had our Toast of the Evening by Mary Lassiter, the Introduction of the Exhibit by Joanne Walton, and the Viewing of the Quilts with Linda White at the helm. Marcia Walker explained the process for Voting and Prizes for Viewers’ Choice. Upcoming Programs were introduced by Mary Lassiter. We have some very exciting programs on the horizon for the remainder of 2021. We sewed it all up with a final Toast

to Guild by our Hospitality Chairperson, Netta Toll.

The Exhibit Committee sends thanks to all who participated in this exhibit. Without your creative quilts, there would not be quilts for us to view and enjoy.

Alan and Linda White: You are just an AWESOME team. Thanks for all you did and will do, to make this exhibit process so seamless and successful.

Participants in both theme categories included: Brenda Ames, Joette Bailey-Keown, Di Nyce Brooks-Gough, Camilla Edwards, Pennie Estrada, Stephanie Hobson, Chris Jacques, Artie Johnson, Mary Lassiter, Geneva Lottie, Monica Lynn, Julie Marsh, Keri Mills, Pat Moore, Susan Morrison, De Lois Powell, Edith Shelton, Rosemary Sherrell, Carolyn Somerville, Connie Turner, Nanci Vaughn, Karen von Phul, Marcia Walker, Joanne Walton, Linda White and Ann Worsencroft.

Thanks to all of the participants and to you, the members, who continue to make Wa Shonaji more than just an awesome Guild!!



The exhibit will be viewable on the Wa Shonaji website starting September 1!

PLEASE...be sure you share the information about the Virtual Exhibit with your family, friends and quilting buddies via email or other means of communication.



On Point with the Exhibits Committee

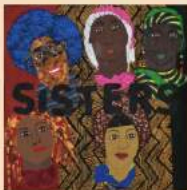


2021 Virtual Quilt Exhibit
Online at: www.washonaji.org
Themes: "Faces" and "Things Ain't What They Used to Be"

Presented by:
**Rocky Mountain
Wa Shonaji
Quilt Guild**

Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild
P.O. Box 37045
Denver, CO 80237-0405

2021
Virtual Quilt Exhibit



Themes:
"Faces" &
"Things Ain't What
They Used To Be"

www.washonaji.org

Beginning
Sept 01, 2021

Vote for Your
Favorite Quilt

Managing the Virtual Exhibit

Wa Shonaji is grateful for all the work that Linda White put into managing the quilts for the Virtual Exhibit. Keeping track of the quilts from the time they are dropped off until they are returned to their owners is a monumental task! Linda turned her house into a staging facility for keeping the “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be” quilts organized and making sure she returned the right quilts to the right people!



Table for folding the quilts.



Bags waiting for folded quilts.



Folded quilts waiting for bagging.



Bags waiting to go to the car.

Comfort Quilts

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” - Romans 12:15

If you have ever received a comfort quilt, then you already understand why the quilt was gifted to you. I wanted our newer members to understand the Guild’s practice of collecting and gifting quilts.

Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild members make and donate comfort quilts to the Guild. It is customary that members make a quilt and donate it to the Guild each year on their birthday. Yes, instead of you getting something on your birthday, you actually give something on your birthday! But by doing something for someone else, you are also sharpening your sewing, design and quilting skills. This is where my job as Comfort Quilt chairperson kicks in.

My job is to receive, store and maintain the quilts until a Guild member is in need of comfort. I also remind/solicit/encourage/remind.., – well, you get the message - members to bring in their “special day” birthday quilt so that we have a good supply on hand when the need arises. Some members are very good at donating their quilt every year, and need no reminder. They rock! [I do understand it is hard to get the quilts to me at this time.]

A comfort quilt is given to a designated Guild member who has lost an immediate family member. Immediate family means: father, mother, a child, a sibling, or a spouse. A quilt is also given at the birth of a first grandchild.

Occasionally, a member may suggest a quilt go to a person in special need. For example, a member may know someone who is having major surgery or has a long term illness. In such cases, the Board has the final decision.

The bottom line is that Wa Shonaji does care about its members.

Even with the Pandemic still raging, I’m thankful that we as a group find ways to let each other know what is going on in our lives – be it good or sad.

I hope I have answered some of our newer members’ questions about comfort quilts, and why it is important not only to donate a comfort quilt, but also to receive one.

So take care my sisters and brother in quilting, and be comforted.

- *Nanci Vaughn, Your Comfort Quilt Chairperson*

I recently received a comfort quilt from the Guild following the loss of my mother. Before receiving this heartwarming gift, I did not understand the power of a comfort quilt. I am so grateful to the Guild and whoever put their love into making this beautiful quilt. I still have good days and bad days, and when I am particularly sad I pull the quilt onto my lap and feel comforted. No one wants to be in a position to receive a comfort quilt. But when it comes, it helps. I am looking forward to contributing to this special Wa Shonaji tradition. - *Monica Lynn*



Block of the Month

Road Trip

Well, we're getting very close to the end of our Road Trip for 2021. Blocks of the month are completed, or nearly completed. Some have already been turned into quilts or wall hangings! The time seems to be moving fast. Here is the timeline for finishing the quilt:

- September: Complete block #10.
- October: Piece together the top. Use the setting instructions provided with the quilt pattern or one of your own choice.
- November: Put together the top, batting and backing and quilt all three layers.
- December: Show off your quilt - virtually or in person.

This one is done! Thanks for your participation. You've come a long way and it has really been fun! - *Artie Johnson*



Ann Worsencroft and Mary Lassiter displaying their blocks of the month at the August meeting.

Librarian's Loft

Connie Turner is purchasing Barbara Brackman's *Encyclopedia of Pieced Quilt Patterns* for the Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild's library.

Remember: The Wa Shonaji library has books available for check-out. The titles of the books can be found on the website in the Members' Area, which has a drop down list of books in [Our Library](#).

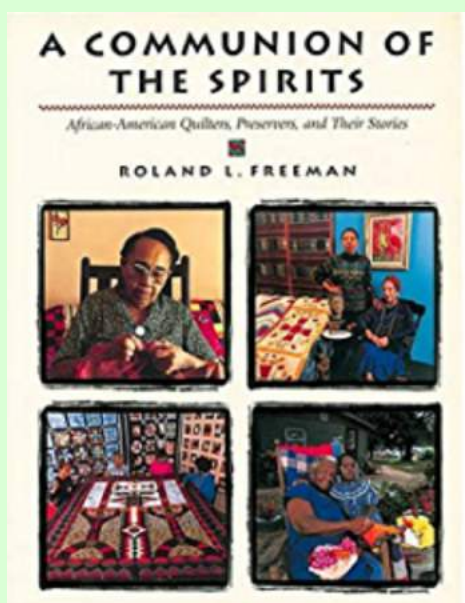
A Communion of the Spirits: African-American Quilters, Preservers, and Their Stories

By

Roland L. Freeman

Mary Lassiter has been inspired by the stories that Roland L. Freeman documented.

Roland Freeman set out to document African-American quilt making in the United States. As a child, he was influenced by the cultural traditions and magical powers of quilts. He spent years traveling around the US researching Black quilters and their stories. One reviewer calls his book "as much a historical journal as a pictorial scrapbook." His interviews include activists, artists, writers as well as the creators of masterpieces from discarded feed sacks and beaten cotton that they picked from fields to make their batting.



The Corner Library

The Corner Library is a monthly feature where members tell us about a quilting book. The book can be new or an old favorite. [Send in](#) the name of the book and a photo and tell us about it!

Consider telling us:

1. What made you purchase the book?
2. If it is an old favorite, why has the book stood the test of time?
3. Did you complete a project from it?
4. If so, did you make it exactly as instructed or did you put your own spin on it?
5. Would you recommend Wa Shonaji add this book to our library?

Mary also recommends:

Something Pertaining to God by Eli Leon. Eli Leon spent 20 assembling a collection of quilts by Rosie Lee Tompkins, whose real name was Effie May Howard. He displayed the collection at the Shelbourne Museum and this book contains the exhibit pieces.

She also enjoys perusing the works of Aminah Robinson, an American artist who presented black history through art. Aminah Robinson used paint and a LOT of buttons in her fiber art. Mary also likes using buttons!



Member Spotlight: Stephanie Hobson



“I like to sew. I like to create. I like working with Wa Shonaji!”

Stephanie Hobson, former Wa Shonaji librarian, has been a member of Wa Shonaji since 2017. Joining Wa Shonaji also coincides with the start of Stephanie’s love affair with quilting.

An only child born in New Rochelle, NY, Stephanie’s parents moved to Denver when she was 5. She used to entertain herself with quiet activities such as crocheting, knitting, and reading. When Stephanie was eight, her mother gave her a Barbet doll and Stephanie started sewing doll clothes. Her mother had a penchant for custom-made clothes and would give Stephanie left over pieces of fabric to use in her creations. After taking – and hating – home economics in high school, Stephanie lost her desire to sew. Her desire was renewed, however, when she was in college. Stephanie was a biology major at North Carolina A & T, which was close to Cone Mills. Cone Mills was a big producer of fabrics at the time and Stephanie found that she could buy 6-7 yards of fabric for \$3. Again inspired, she started making clothes. She even sewed outfits for some local musicians. “They all wore jumpsuits then – like Kool and the Gang!”

Stephanie thought she wanted to be a doctor but realized that she had a hard time dedicating herself to one thing. “I had so many interests!” she said. Instead, she started working for DuPont in 1976 as the head lab technician responsible for examining explosives for shipping. Eventually, she received an undergraduate degree in business from the University of Phoenix and a graduate degree in Environmental Policy and Management from Denver University.



Stephanie has always been interested in design and art. For a short time, she attended the Emily Griffith Technical School in Denver and became a member of the National Association of Fabric and Accessory Designers. She designed clothes and even did a show with them. She started sewing for other people, including her mother. Her mother loved to dance and would attend her sorority’s Black and White balls every year. She always wanted to display the “latest and greatest” outfit when she attended.

Around that time, Stephanie began making dolls and met Marcia Walker who was “big time into doll making.” Eventually, they saw each other less frequently at doll making events and lost touch. Stephanie’s interests expanded and she started making jewelry and miniature items and accessories or dolls and doll houses. One day, ten years after



Member Spotlight Continued

losing touch with Marcia, she was at a jewelry show with her best friend and her friend told her she had to come see this lady's quilt. The lady happened to be Marcia! Wa Shonaji had a booth at the show, invited, Stephanie believes, because of

Marcia. "As you know, Marcia puts jewelry on everything!" Marcia was showing a piece called African Princess. Stephanie thought to herself "I HAVE to do that! I have to make it myself." At the show, Stephanie and Marcia recognized each other, but it took a while for them to remember that they had once connected over dolls! Stephanie also met other Wa Shonaji members; she felt an immediate connection and decided to join the Guild!



Stephanie has learned a lot about quilting from Wa Shonaji. Before joining Wa Shonaji, Stephanie had never made a quilt so she took advantage of Wa Shonaji's classes and learned techniques from the other members. A loner by nature, Stephanie found Wa Shonaji to be a whole new group of people she enjoyed being around. "I'm so in awe of everyone and I feel so privileged to be a part of this group. I miss seeing in person what everyone has created because their work inspires me."

When she is not creating something, Stephanie likes to read or putter in her garden. She rejoices in the time she gets to spend with her husband, stepchildren, and countless grandchildren. One of her grandchildren is an artist and they like to bounce ideas off each other!



Wa Shonaji Zigs and Zags

Hey! What's Up?

Artie Johnson: "It's football season and I wanted a Denver Bronco wreath to put on my door. After searching the web, I found that the asking prices were \$100 or more. Too high for me. So I decided to make one myself. I consulted our three daughters, Robin, Reniese, and Renete, who are Bronco fans, about making a wreath of our own. They were all agreeable and excited to tackle this project. We spent several hours on a sunny morning chatting and having fun constructing the wreaths. They came out beautiful! We are all proud of our accomplishments and ready for the next group project. GO BRONCOS!"



Upcoming Wa Shonaji Programs

- September 1, 2021: Virtual Exhibit goes live on the website!
- September 4, 2021: "Birthday Backyard Quilt Exhibit" with Joette Bailey-Keown.
- October 2, 2021: Hang out and work on projects!
- November 6, 2021: "On Pins and Needles" facilitated by Joanne Walton.

Julie Marsh: "We are spending two weeks in Connecticut where we are eating pizza and seafood - and seeing a few friends! I'm quilting a quilt for a grandson, then have a kit to put together for my daughter. I also made a few more masks, which is depressing."

Mary Lassiter: "I am intent on being a finisher! I truly love quilting and I have enough ideas, UFOs and drawings to last a lifetime. In addition, there are two departments/offices at work that want me to facilitate a quilt project and I am re-working my class outline."



Dropping off "Things Ain't What They Used to Be" quilts in July. Pictured from left to right: Di Nyce Brooks-Gough, De Lois Powell, Artie Johnson, Edith Shelton, Geneva Lottie, Julie Marsh, Marcia Walker, Camilla Edwards and Linda White. Connie Turner is waving in the background. - Photo by Reniese Johnson.

Sunshines!



September Birthdays

5 September - Ann Worsencroft

6 September - Joette Bailey-Keown

12 September - Mary Sharp

19 September - Sandra Coleman

22 September - Elorise Hawkins

September Birthday Fun Facts:

The name September comes from the “septem,” the Latin word for seven, to reflect that this was the seventh month of the Roman calendar.

September birth flowers are the forget-me-not, the morning glory, and the aster (meaning “star”).

September astrological signs are Virgo (August 23-September 22) and Libra (September 23-October 22). They are both harmonious signs indicative of balanced and personable individuals.

The September birth stone is the sapphire and gives the wearer luck. Sapphire is usually envisioned as a blue stone but also comes in green, pink, purple and clear.

Monthly observances that take place in September include Labor Day, Patriots Day (9/11 Remembrance), Grandparent’s Day, National Family Day, National Voter Registration Day, Hispanic Heritage Month and National Sickle Cell Awareness Month.



October Birthdays

16 October - Reniese Johnson

21 October - Nannette Locke

25 October - DeLoise Powell

27 October - Karen von Phul

October Birthday Fun Facts:

October was originally the eighth month of the Roman calendar. It comes from the Latin word “octo,” meaning eight. Later, it became the 10th month when January and February were added to the calendar.

Lucky October babies celebrate their birthdays in one of the most gorgeous months of the year! It’s no wonder, with love-filled and charming Libra (Sept 23-Oct 22) and loyal and passionate Scorpio (Oct 22-Nov 24) ruling the month.

The October birth flower is the Calendula, which is in the marigold family. It is valued for medicinal and healing properties.

October has two birthstones—opals and tourmaline. It is said an opal will crack if worn by someone not born in October!

Folklore has it that if the deer have a gray coat in October, expect a hard winter.

Monthly observances include Breast Cancer Awareness, Down Syndrome Awareness, National Pizza, Pasta, Pork and Apple Month, and American Archives Month.

August Recipes

Netta Toll provided two yummy recipes for the Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Virtual Quilt Show Reception - one alcoholic and one virgin.

The Quilter's Hangover

Ingredients:

- 2 - 4 basil leaves
- 1 ounce freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
- 1 ounce Grand Marnier (or other orange liqueur)
- 1 slice of fresh orange
- Sparkling wine

Directions: In a cocktail shaker (a sturdy mug or other jar with a tightly fitting lid) muddle the basil leaves. Add the grapefruit juice and Grand Marnier. Shake (or stir) with ice cubes. Strain into a white wine glass. Top off with sparkling wine and garnish with a fresh slice of well-scrubbed orange.

The Quilter's Delight

Ingredients:

- 1 ounce freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
- 1 ounce freshly squeezed orange juice
- Bitters
- 1 slice of fresh orange
- Grapefruit or lime flavored seltzer

Directions: In a cocktail shaker (a sturdy mug or other jar with a tightly fitting lid), combine the grapefruit juice, orange juice and one shake of bitters (or to taste) with ice cubes. Shake and strain into a white wine glass. Top off with flavored seltzer and garnish with a fresh slice of well-scrubbed orange.

Double Tasking Quilters

Mary Lassiter has an eclectic taste in music and listens to what her mood dictates! Favorites include gospel, smooth contemporary jazz and classical piano.

Edith Shelton is a devoted Stephen King fan and recommends *Billy Summers*, a book about a hit man on his last job. She says "for all who groan and say they can't read his horror stories, I am NOT recommending a horror story!" Apparently, unknown to many, Stephen King does write "straight" stories with nothing occult or strange in them. Edith puts *Billy Summer* in the same genre as *Shawshank Redemption* and *Stand by Me*.

Edith also recommends *An American Marriage* by Tayari Jones, a New York Times and Washington Post Notable Book and Oprah's Book Club 2018 selection. Barack Obama describes the book as "a moving portrayal of the effects of a wrongful conviction on a young African-American couple."

If you missed it, you can still listen to [NPR's piece on Winfred Rembert](#), a leather and textile artist who documented his life in rural Georgia with art. The piece features interviews with his wife, Patsy Rembert, and the Tufts University professor, Erin Kelly, who worked with Rembert to turn his life into a book that was just released ([Chasing Me to My Grave](#)).

What do you listen to while you quilt? Send in your recommendations and I will share them here each month!

Quilting Threads

Upcoming Quilt Shows

[The Great Wisconsin Quilt Show](#) - a free virtual experience! September 9-11.

[Front Range Modern Quilt Guild Outdoor Show](#) - September 11 at Limbarch Park in Monument CO.

[Silver Threads Quilt Show](#). Quilting through the Ages. September 17-19. Creede, CO. Located in an historic underground mine with more than 140 new and antique quilts on display. Hosted by Silver Threads Quilt Guild.

[Quilt~a~Fair 2021](#). September 23-25. (9a-4p Thu and Fr; 9a-2p Sat). Boulder County Fairgrounds (9595 Nelson Rd., Longmont).

Best Online Quilting Classes of 2021

From the Spruce Crafts

Best Overall: [Creative Bug](#)

Best for Beginners: [Skillshare](#)

Best Variety: [iQuilt](#)

Best for YouTube: [Missouri Star Quilt Company](#)

Best for Community: [National Quilters Circle](#)

Best for Experts: [Sew on the Go](#)

Around the Neighborhood

[Columbine Quilt Guild](#). The next meeting is September 13 at 6:30 pm. Cindy Grisdela will present "Playing with Colors."

[Quaking Aspen Quilt Guild](#). Make Time for Play. Presented by [Cheryl Arkison](#). September 16, 12-3 pm.

[Colorado Quilting Council Meetings](#). Lecture by [Maria Shell](#). Patchwork to Art: The Journey of an Alaskan Quilter. October 23 at 10 am via Zoom.

[Longmont Quilt Guild](#). September 14 from 6:30 - 9 pm.. Schoolhouse Program. Presentations will be: making rugs from jelly roll strips, English paper piecing, traditional paper piecing)and doing borders correctly.

Codeswitch by Sanford Biggers

Codeswitch is the first survey of quilt-based works by the New York-based interdisciplinary artist, Sanford Biggers. It was displayed in the Bronx Museum of Arts last year. Sanford Biggers' medium is paint on antique quilts. This [video](#) shows some of his works. For more information, watch this [short interview with the artist](#) and see the [museum's description of the exhibit](#).

Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum Happenings

Current Exhibits (through October 16)

- **Here Come the Judges.** Curated works by the National Association of Certified Quilt Judges. An exhibit of works by talented quilt artists and professionally trained quilt judges.
- **Tobacco Silks Reimagined.** A solo exhibit by Greta Mikkelsen, who creates works of art using tobacco silks, antique items that tobacco companies used to promote their products.

Ongoing Events

- Every 4th Saturday from 1-3 pm. Zoom class on color and composition with Lea McComas.
- Sunday at the Museum via Zoom. September 12 at 2 pm, Greta Mikkelsen will share her story about tobacco silks and her inspiration for creating the pieces in her exhibit. Watch the website for registration link (mandatory for attendance). Free to members; \$10 for non-members.

Sister Stitcher - Gender Neutral?



Have you met Sister Stitcher? She is a mythical quilter whose quarter inch never wavers, whose bobbin never runs out, and who finishes her projects on time. She lives in a house that never needs cleaning, with a spouse who cooks and holds up quilts as requested. Her studio space measures 100x100, with lots of natural light. Oddly enough, it never needs cleaning either.

Sister is helping a loving aunty face a new trend in baby quilts.

I'm so confused, Sister. My niece is having her first baby, a little girl! Of course I'm making a quilt for the new arrival. I bought the sweetest panel for a little girl: little bunnies and ducks having a picnic. The girl ducks and bunnies are wearing little bows, the boy bunnies are wearing ties like gentlemen and the boy ducks are wearing straw hats like men used to do. There are little bluebirds fluttering around. Adorable, right?

When I showed it to Simone, she got very quiet. Then she said "Aunty, Jordan and I have decided we want only gender-neutral things for Darnell." They don't want any pink or blue around the baby, they don't want anything to do with pretty dresses, they don't want Darnell to know she's a girl!!

What is up with this "gender-neutral" business, Sister? And what kind of a name is Darnell?

Frustrated Spoiler

Frustrated, Sister hears you. You're so excited to see Simone, whose diapers you changed, become a mother herself. You can't wait to dress Darnell like a princess, maybe even in dresses you made for Simone. You got that Aunty Spoiling Machine all revved up and ready to go. And now Simone and Jordan throw this wrench into the works.

Frustrated, "gender-neutral" isn't really that new. We have made plenty of yellow and green quilts for babies. Sister suspects that Simone and Jordan aren't against pink or blue, they're against the idea that pink is only for girls and blue is only for boys. They want Darnell to have everything, and that includes colors. Beyond that, they want Darnell to know from the get-go that there are no pink jobs or blue jobs. Simone and Jordan see Darnell's future. They probably want her to know that her gender doesn't restrict her choice of profession.



Now let's talk quilts. Sister sidesteps the whole gender or color issue. Her go-to is a pattern called Simply Stripes: 6 different black flannel strips and 6 different white flannel strips, sewn together light-dark. According to child development professionals, black and white together aid in developing an infant's vision. The high contrast helps their eyes to focus, and the patterns teach them to track the difference between the values. Who is Sister to argue with [Michigan State](#)?

Sister looks for black flannels and white flannels: black background, white polka dots; white and black chevrons; cow prints and Dalmatian prints; abstracts; geometrics; houndstooth. Are you getting the idea? And Frustrated, Sister always pre-washes flannels to avoid shrinkage later. You know a baby quilt will need washing.

From each of three flannels, Sister cuts two 2.5-3" strips the width of fabric. She lays them out light-dark. She works with the light-medium-dark values, minimizes any pattern repeats, and gets Mr. Stitcher's take on the design. Then she sews the strips together. Voila! A baby quilt that is soft, washable, easy on the infant eye, and gender neutral for the modern parent. It takes Sister about an hour to get a top together. Given how quickly babies grow, that's a good thing.

For backing, Sister usually chooses a cotton fabric that relates to the season of the baby's birth, such as snowflakes. She's also partial to a plaid, an abstract design, or something else fun. A zodiac sign, Greek or Asian, will be personal to the baby. Animals always are a winner, whether they're farmyard animals or found in the wild. Sister found some tiger cub fabric that was just the thing for a Year of the Tiger baby. You can also look for fabric with the alphabet, or numbers.



Red binding adds some zing to the quilt, and it's gender-neutral. Sister has also been known to use hot pink or aqua for binding. Other high-contrast colors such as orange or lime green will work too.

About your last question, Frustrated: Darnell is a perfectly good name for any child. It doesn't sound feminine, it doesn't sound masculine. It works with a middle name so the child knows when you mean business: "Dar-NELL [MIDDLE NAME], YOU COME TO THE TABLE RIGHT NOW!" It's easy to spell. Maybe it comes from Jordan's side of the family? And it goes with sewing. Just think, you can call her to you by saying "Oh, Darn!"

Ba-bum. Moving right along.....

Frustrated, it's a sure bet that Jordan and Simone have plenty of surprises ahead. Darnell may be girly and pink-loving! If Darnell wants to wear ruffled dresses, let's hope her parents will respect that she chose them.

It's never too early to start building a child's confidence. Knowing that there are no pink or blue jobs, your Darnell will be the kind of girl who becomes a strong woman. Kamala Harris has no trouble getting respect, whether she's sporting Chucks or pumps. And isn't that our goal as a village: to raise the next generation?



Sister is looking forward to pictures of Darnell on her gender-neutral quilt!

Tips 'n Tricks

Use water-soluble glue instead of pinning, which is time consuming and sometimes unreliable. Use water-soluble glue to line up your pieces precisely and quickly and wash your quilt when you are finished. The glue will come out! - From [National Quilter's Circle](#)

[How to fold a quilt to prevent damage.](#) - From *National Quilter's Circle*

Some tips from AQS:

- Clip your threads as you go.
- Pay attention to grain line.
- Look at values, not just colors.
- Before cutting your new quilt, make a single block first.
- If the fabric is still ugly, you have not cut it small enough.
- Square up everything as you go.
- Write the date you change the rotary cutter blade on the new blade.
- Once you have learned a technique, do it your own style.

[Make fast and accurate HSTs 8-at-a-time.](#) See cutting chart below. - From *Beech Tree Lane Handmade*

Cutting Chart for Making 8 HST At One Time

Finished Size (inches)		Size to Cut Fabric (inches)	
After Sewing	After Trimming	Perfect Squares	Oversized Squares
1	1.5	4	4.25
1.5	2	5	5.25
2	2.5	6	6.25
2.5	3	7	7.25
3	3.5	8	8.25
3.5	4	9	9.25
4	4.5	10	10.25
4.5	5	11	11.25
5	5.5	12	12.25
5.5	6	13	13.25
6	6.5	14	14.25

Tips from Sister Stitchers

Read the pattern instructions before making your quilt and review them again as you work. I have made the mistake of missing key points on the construction of the blocks when I have set a pattern and blocks aside for a length of time, - From *Mary Lassiter*

You worked hard on your quilt, so why not add a "quilt care label" so others know how to care for it if they become the lucky owners? A quick search on "quilt care label" yields labels you can download for free and print onto fabric to attach to your quilt. Preprinted labels are



also available for purchase. - *Quilt label provided by Artie Johnson.*

Carolyn Somerville shared this [video](#) on how a layer cake is made. It's pretty nifty!



Do you have a favorite tip or trick? Have you come across a new one? Please [share](#) so we can all learn it!