

HISTORY OF THE BLUEWATER QUILTERS GUILD

The Bluewater Quilters Guild was formed in April 1987 by Sylvia Harvey, Noreen Smale and Carol Seaman. On our 1st Anniversary we had 32 members from Grey & Bruce Counties, meeting at Lee Manor to learn more about the art of Quilting. During that first year we had Rosemary Machan, from the Oakville guild, speak at a meeting and had a workshop on appliqué which was well attended. Lu Farnell and Willi Powell also visited in the spring to talk about their quilting shop in London (Hyde Park) and did a workshop on Trip around the World which was also well attended. Our first raffle quilt was a Clay's Choice block pattern and we have successfully raffled several beautiful quilts since.

An Open House in November 1988 and a Show and Sale in conjunction with the Owen Sound Fall Fair in 1990 saw a big increase in our membership and a wide variety of experienced quilters ready to share what they knew. Our meetings were interesting and informative. A newsletter was started to keep everyone informed and it continues to be a vital part of our guild. A library was begun and is still an important feature for our members. Our first books were donated by the Halton Quilters Guild in Oakville, where Noreen had been a member, prior to retiring to Owen Sound. Our guild made several raffle quilts for the Local Hospital Auxiliary and also made numerous crib quilts for the Women's Centre and Salvation Army in Grey & Bruce Counties. We once staged a Quilt-In at the Grey County Mall and put a Log Cabin quilt together in a day – Cable TV did a short coverage of this activity and many stopped in to see what we were doing.

By 1990, we had outgrown Lee Manor's auditorium and moved to our present location at the Bayshore Community Centre. Participation in a winter quilt show at the Bruce County Museum kept members busy quilting. Bev White organized a Challenge in conjunction with this show and soon quilters were creating quilts alongside potters, painters, photographers and other craftsmen! Many enjoyed these challenges and the results were enjoyed by many. Our membership reached 100 and we put on our first Quilt show for our 10th Anniversary "Bedthreads and Other Masterpieces" was the name of our show for 10 years!

Our 25th Anniversary was in 2012 and we had over 150 members. We celebrated with a sit down dinner of past and present members and listened to Jane Burke of the Mississauga guild talk about her journey as a quilter. We enjoyed seeing her many quilts hung around the room and were inspired.

Our quilt shows became known as “Quilts by the Bay” and remains a much anticipated event in the area. An opportunity to display our quilts in the “Fruits of our Labour” quilt show, in conjunction with the Owen Sound Fall Fair has been a yearly tradition for some time now. This show draws quilts from all over Ontario and it is always great to see what others are doing.

We are still creating beautiful quilts. Our Community quilts and Program committees have continued to inspire us with challenges and ideas for quilts for our community groups in Grey and Bruce. When the opportunity to rent a store front on main street was presented, we decided to move our “stash” into the store front and do our quilting from there. In 2015, when Pauline McCutcheon passed away from cancer, it was decided to name this space “Pauline’s Place” as she had been instrumental in getting our Outreach group organized and making quilts from our stash (the guild’s stash is donations of fabric from the community and members).

Pauline’s Place is now used for executive meetings, committee meetings, workshops, beginner quilting classes and we had an Open House to let the general public know what was going on there! We continue to make quilts for many groups. Some example include Habitat for Humanity, the Oncology unit at the hospital, the Neonatal unit at the hospital, Keystone, Baby Love Baskets, Quilts of Valour and our local veterans, Victim Services, the Salvation Army, and articles for Meals on Wheels, Children’s Aid, United Way. A few years ago, fire destroyed a group of houses in Owen Sound. Over 20 quilts were needed for those left with nothing. With a little help from our neighbouring guilds we managed to supply everyone with a quilt. We continue to learn new techniques and share these with guild members and the community.

While Covid 19 has changed our regular routines, we are thankful for those who have embraced technology and been able to bring us our meetings via Zoom. It

has been wonderful to still hear a speaker and learn about what's going on in the quilting world via Zoom. Quilt alongs are possible and Zoom has opened a new way of learning. While members have kept busy making quilts for Community quilts, we are looking forward to meeting again in person and actually visiting and seeing each other. A big Thanks to Ellen, Shirley, Jane and Marianne for keeping things at Pauline's Place available to members and the community when needed.

In the last 34 years we have many people to Thank for their leadership in our guild: Sylvia Harvey, June Sparling, Isobelle Underwood, Carol Craig, Debbie Winn, Carol Seaman, Kim Allerton, Trudi Wiley, Janet Price, Diane McLean, Daphne Alevan, Carol Banks, Glayds Pennacchiotti, Maria Beckberger, Sue Cole, Ann Sanders, Joanne Harris, Sharon Hayes, Ruthann Carson, Lera Ryan, Joy Johnson, Debi Gill, Judy Chalmers, Mary Gunson, Sue Benjamin, Mary Ellen McLean, Theresa Stafford, Karen Murray, Kim Clark and Catherine Petch. We appreciate the time and effort they gave to keep us growing and learning more about this creative craft – quilting. We continue to look forward to the years ahead and what the Quilting industry will make available to us. There seems to always be something new to try!

We hope you have many fond memories of years gone by and enjoy the friendships made and continue to enjoy the benefits of being a member of the Bluewater Quilters Guild.

Prepared by Carol Seaman. December 2021