

November article for website

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS... YOUR STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO SHOW JUDGING

Every January, the Guild takes custody of over 300 precious quilts and it is a huge undertaking. An army of volunteers is required. We do our very best to respect and protect your handiwork...each quilt show volunteer takes their responsibility seriously. **YOU CAN HELP US BY FOLLOWING THE SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.** All the information you'll need on how to label and package your entry will be included in your acceptance letter.

Why is the Guild so picky about labels & pillowcases & such? Once you turn in your entry in January, here is the journey it will take: Your quilt will be transported to one of several residences for secure storage. Judging takes place the following week so your quilt must be moved again to the judging venue. It may be needed at the judging location for only one day or returned for a second day to be considered for further recognition. When judging is complete, your quilt will be returned to one of several residences for safekeeping until it is delivered to the show venue for hanging.

UNIFORMLY APPLIED LABELS ALLOW THE VOLUNTEERS TO HANDLE ALL THE ENTRIES EFFICIENTLY. A PROPERLY SIZED PILLOWCASE HELPS KEEP YOUR QUILT CLEAN AND NEATLY FOLDED DURING TRANSPORT.

Note to art quilters: If you believe that your quilt cannot be folded into a pillowcase or that it will require special handling, you must obtain permission from the Judging Committee **BEFORE** you submit your entry in January. Our manpower and resources to handle these exceptions are limited.

Have you ever wondered how show quilts are judged? Sometimes, the quilts are judged **AFTER THE SHOW IS HUNG**. Some shows prefer this, believing that this approach allows the judges a better opportunity to appreciate the overall design and visual impact of each quilt. At other shows, including the Tucson Quilt Fiesta, the judges evaluate the quilts **BEFORE THE SHOW IS HUNG**. Many feel this method provides the judges a better opportunity to study and comment on the workmanship

demonstrated in each quilt...those Guild members who want to improve their quilting skills are eager for the judges' specific feedback.

During the 2 – 3 days of judging, each quilt is moved to the venue and stacked with other quilts in the same category. At the appropriate time, volunteers carefully unfold each quilt for judging. After the category has been judged, the quilts are repacked into their cases for transport again. Obviously the quilts receive a great deal of handling before they ever reach the TCC!

The atmosphere in the judging room is serious and respectful. Quilts are identified by title and entry number only...the quilters' names are kept secret from the volunteers and the judges to ensure impartial critique. Those assisting with the judging process have the opportunity to receive a wonderful education in better quilting by listening carefully to the judges' remarks, however, a poker face is required. Volunteers must keep silent and must refrain from showing any reaction to the quilts or to the judges' comments.

Why do we ask you to turn in a quilt that is clean and free of odors or pet hair? As each category is presented for judging, **up to 25 quilts are spread out on tables one on top of the next.** IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT EVERY QUILT BEING JUDGED IS CLEAN SO THAT DIRT, ODORS OR HAIRS DO NOT TRANSFER TO THE ADJACENT QUILTS. In years past, volunteers separated 'contaminated' quilts from the others by placing clean sheets in between the quilts. IF THE VOLUNTEERS DETERMINE THAT YOUR ENTRY IS DIRTY, SMELLY OR HAIRY, IT WILL **NOT** BE STACKED WITH THE OTHERS. It will be returned to its pillowcase immediately and rejected from the judging process. We are unable to refund your \$5 judging fee so please take this seriously. If your vision is not good or you don't have a keen sense of smell, ask someone else to check your quilt for these issues.

The \$5 judging fee helps defray the cost of bringing in trained & certified judges. These individuals work very hard. They award most of the show ribbons and more importantly, they offer educated and impartial feedback to show entrants. If we keep the judging room running efficiently, the judges have approximately 3 – 4 minutes to examine each entry and to provide its maker with specific comments intended to be instructive and encouraging. The two judges work as a team, examining all aspects of each entry's design

and workmanship. Volunteer scribes record the judges' ratings and remarks on a critique form provided by the Guild. That form is returned to each quilter, along with their quilt, at the show's end.

As each category is presented, the judges determine which quilts to 'release' and which to 'hold'. Released quilts are refolded and placed back in their pillowcases. After all the quilts in the category have been individually reviewed, all the quilts that have been 'held' are displayed again, side by side. At the judges' discretion, they may award a First, Second, and Third place ribbon in each category. They may also choose to award up to 2 Honorable Mention ribbons for additional quilts which deserve recognition. The judges may also decide not to confer some of these ribbons in any given category.

As the judges work through the categories, they also set aside candidates for Special Ribbons (Use of Color, Excellence in Quilting, Judge's Choice etc.). Once the judging of all categories is complete, the quilts which have been 'held' for special consideration are displayed again so that the judges can award the Special Ribbons.

Don't forget that you too will have the power to award ribbons to deserving quilts... Guild members vote on the Betty Hayden award at the January meetings and the Ed Seright award at the quilt show... our ballots also help select the recipients of the coveted Viewers' Choice ribbons.

Please refer to this column next month for tips on applying labels, making a competition sleeve, and some tips for turning in a clean and odor-free entry.