

HERE COME THE JUDGES

The Tucson Quilt Fiesta is the largest annual quilt show in the state. It's a huge undertaking and all the Guild members who participate can take great pride in the show's success. For those of us who enter our quilts, the show provides a wonderful opportunity to share our creations and our love of quilting with others.

So...you've worked hard on your latest quilt and you're proud of what you've made. The members of your bee have oohed and aaahed. Your family members are arguing over who should get this one. If you plan to enter your quilt in the show this year, you have the choice of whether to have your show entry judged or not. Are you wondering why you should pay the \$5 fee to have your entry judged?

The Guild has decided to have our annual show professionally judged as a benefit to Guild members who want to improve their quilting skills. Lynne Erbach of the National Quilting Association explains that judges' critiques can "be a positive learning experience for the entrant by acknowledging successful design and workmanship, and recognizing areas that need improvement".

You can expect the judges to look at (and comment on) some of the following: the design of each quilt including color, fabric choices, balance, quilting designs and the quality of workmanship including piecing, applique, quilting and finishing. Sometimes the judges' remarks can be cryptic as they have only a few minutes to study each entry, but taken in the right spirit, their written comments can provide some very important feedback to quilters. The judges will recognize the best features of each quilt. They'll also offer some suggestions for how each quilter could improve specific aspects of construction and design. This impartial and useful information can inform us so that the next quilts we make will be better quilts.

Who are these people who spend long hours in the judging room for very little pay as they examine the seams, borders and bindings of our quilts? They are people who love quilts. They are people who have studied quilts and who are devoted to the art of quilting.

We'd like to introduce you to the two individuals who judged the 2011 Quilt Fiesta: Christine Brown and Sally Hatfield. Both women have judged our show in the past and both are certified by the National Quilting Association.

Certification of NQA judges is an exhaustive process which can last up to five years from enrollment through accreditation. Candidates in the program must meet certain entry requirements including having been active on a judging room floor (in a variety of

capacities which may include judge, holder, scribe, etc.). In addition, they must serve as a judge's aide at two different NQA annual quilt shows.

Some of the paperwork required during their enrollment requires practical and academic study of quilting skills and techniques. They must demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of quilt evaluation criteria and show judging.

NQA judges must undergo a panel review and, once certified, they must continue their education in quilting, submit a current resume every 3 years to the NQA and must abide by the NQA Judges' Code of Ethics in their professional lives.

Christine N. Brown has been a quilter for over 32 years and a quilt judge for 15 years. Christine answers the call to both innovative and traditional quilting, and has appreciation for all techniques and styles being used by today's fiber artists. Her own quilts have won awards in national and regional competitions, and she has contributed to numerous magazines and quilt books. Since April 2005, Christine has served as editor-in-chief of *American Quilter* magazine, published by the American Quilter's Society in Paducah, KY. She resides in Castle Rock, Colorado.

Sally L. Hatfield began her love affair with quilting in 1974. As a certified judge, she is proud to honor the art of quilting by motivating show participants through ethical and impartial judging. Sally is active in several national, regional and local quilting organizations including the Arizona Quilters Hall of Fame. She exhibits her work and has received numerous awards in local, national and international competitions and is still working toward that elusive Best of Show award. Sally resides in Globe, Arizona with her husband Paul and two very spoiled but loveable cats.

Curious about how the judging is done at our quilt show? In next month's installment we'll provide a step by step description of what goes on in the judging room.

VERY IMPORTANT: In December, we'll tackle the issue of readying your quilt to turn in for the show. **QUILTS THAT ARE NOT IN SHOW CONDITION AND QUILTS WHICH ARE NOT PROPERLY LABELED AND PACKAGED WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR JUDGING THIS YEAR.** Everything you need to know will be spelled out in your acceptance letter. This column will help you get your quilt into perfect show condition before you turn it in at the January meeting.