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Popular national quilt show visits Charlotte starting July 30

By Michael J. Solender

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When the [American Quilter's Society](#) brings its annual [Quilt Week](#) show and 15,000 attendees to Charlotte on Wednesday, we'll find quilting has changed mightily since grandmother's time.

What hasn't changed is the loving craftsmanship and hours of dedicated attention spent by a new generation of quilters stitching contemporary and traditional quilts certain to become tomorrow's treasured heirlooms.

"There is a huge resurgence in quilting and a definite nostalgia movement," said art quilter Karen Ponischil of Charlotte. She came to quilting in 2001 through the Charlotte Quilters' Guild, which has grown from eight members in 1977 to nearly 200.

"Quilting, sewing and crafting skipped a generation but has seen a dramatic comeback of late, especially over the past few years with the economic downturn," Ponischil said. "Many people bought sewing machines to make their own clothes and baby quilts and have discovered the pleasures of crafting that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers knew."

There are more than 21 million quilters in the United States, according to a survey by Quilting in America, an online quilting resource. They also noted that in 2010, U.S. quilters spent \$3.58 billion on supplies.

"Many are reclaiming a lost part of artistic expression around the home that was commonplace in our history," said Katherine Rabb, marketing director for the American Quilter's Society.

"Our shows feature an incredible variety of quilts from the traditional, old-fashioned hand sewn to those

- Want to go?

What: American Quilter's Society Quilt Week.

When: Wednesday-Saturday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Wednesday-Friday; 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Saturday.

Where: Charlotte Convention Center, 501 S. College St.

Admission: \$14 daily, \$35 all four days.

Details: www.quiltweek.com.

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designed and made with the help of computer programming and sophisticated sewing machines. Rather than turn away from technology, many new-generation quilters embrace it.”

Rabb said Charlotte was chosen to host this year’s national show for the first time partly because of the strength of quilters guilds in the area and for the emphasis the community places on the arts.

Show visitors will find more than 450 quilts on display, including those competing for prize money in categories including Hand Workmanship, Machine Workmanship, Modern Quilts, Wall Quilts. More than \$50,000 in cash and prizes will be awarded.

Those looking to hone their technique will find plenty of opportunity through workshops offered in such areas as appliqué, design, embroidery and embellishment, color and design, stitching with style and others.

A special display of quilts made using the appliqué style of ancient Egyptian tentmakers will be featured, along with Egyptian artists who will discuss the process.

Quilting is often a multi-generational hobby, and it is not uncommon to see grandmothers, mothers and daughters attending shows together and collaborating on projects.

“The tradition of quilting bees continues today,” said Ponischil, who has an art quilt displayed and entered into competition at the show. “One of the social aspects of the Charlotte guild is the frequent get-togethers where we all sit around and sew, exchange stories and enjoy each other’s company.”

Rabb said she often sees the love for quilting passed on from one generation to the next. “The lasting memories created are always special.”



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