



Betty Ives in her home surrounded by her beloved fabric. Photograph republished with the express permission of: Windsor Star, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.

MEMORIES OF 1983

by Betty Ives

The Windsor Quilter's Guild was newly formed when news arrived that a "conference and get together" would be held in Toronto, at York University, in the summer of 1981.

The goal of the gathering was to discuss whether a Canadian quilting association could be formed with enough interest from across Canada. A few of us—Dorothy McMurdie, Lorna Laymon and myself included—drove to the meeting.

Many quilters attended, along with several teachers, who held classes demonstrating their particular quilting techniques. It was very exciting!

After enthusiastic discussions, my call for someone to help organize the group was met by Ann Bird, while Dorothy McMurdie offered to be the Chairperson. The new assembly was named the Canadian Quilters' Association/Association canadienne de la courtpointe. Everyone paid \$10 in membership fees and became charter members. Dorothy held the position of Chairperson until Marilyn Walker became the first President of CQA/ACC.

How well I remember when I won my first award for my quilt, *Puttin' on the Ritz*, in 1986 at the *Quilt Canada* convention in Toronto. It was the first of many rewarding memories of quilting and being involved in CQA/ACC.

I am still a CQA/ACC charter member and continue to quilt. What fun quilting is! 🍁



QUILT CANADA '87
MONTREAL, QUEBEC



QUILT CANADA '89
VANCOUVER, B.C.



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN: QUILT CANADA '83

by Georgia Beale and Ann Bird

It seems only a short 38 years have passed since quilters got together at *Quilt Toronto '81*, co-hosted by the Etobicoke and York Heritage Quilt Guilds, when the Canadian Quilters Association/Association canadienne de la courtepointe (CQA/ACC) was founded. Ottawa quilters Ann Bird, Isabel Johnson and Joyce Legault came back home from the gathering so enthused they immediately founded the Ottawa Valley Quilters Guild (OVQG), with Ann as president. The steam continued to build as Ann attended her first CQA/ACC annual meeting in 1982. >

“Armed with my excitement in the formation of the OVQG, I offered our guild as host for *Quilt Canada '83*. Admittedly, I did this without any consultation—I just came home from the CQA/ACC’s first annual meeting and told them we were on. I was so enamoured with the notion of Canada’s Capital hosting the first annual, national quilter’s conference.”

“A blur for me now,” says Ann of the conference, held on the Carleton University campus, and preparations. She had a lot to do: act as liaison as Ontario’s Regional Representative between the CQA/ACC and the OVQG, handle being President of the host guild and teach workshops at the event. Happily, the campus offered the benefit of having everything in one location: accommodations, dining, workshops, hospitality and the quilt show itself.

Arranging the huge quilt show was taken on by Bernice Fensom. She had to make the call for, assess, collect and protect more than 100 quilts from the new CQA/ACC membership. “It was up to me to assemble the best show possible and the first question was how to address the quilters across Canada.” That’s where CQA/ACC stepped in, telling members and guilds to send Bernice a photo or slide of proposed entries.



Bernice Fensom, in the tulip apron, took on the enormous job of arranging the first *National Juried Show*.





Quilt Canada '83

QUILT BLOCK WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP

EUNICE MCLEOD STROUD, ONT	OLIVE WARREN NEPEAN, ONT	KAY PHILLIPS AGINCOURT ONT	MARY-LYNN MUIR MCMANN FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK
JEAN BOYD BROCKVILLE, ONT	*2ND MARILYN CRAWFORD AWARENCETOWN NOVA SCOTIA	PEARL WESTERN KANATA, ONT	BARBARA FRASER WEST VANCOUVER B.C.
NINA STAHL-SCHMIDT JORDAN, ONT	JOANNE GREIG OTTAWA, ONT	*1ST GEORGIA BEALE OTTAWA, ONT	ISABEL JOHNSTON OTTAWA, ONT
ALBERTA * TAFT 3RD PRIZE GENEVA, CALIF	JO LAWSON SAN FRANCISCO CA	JOHANNE MENARD HEMINGFORD QUE.	CORRINE ROBINSON WEST HILL ONT
CAROL HAMILTON HINTON, ALTA	MYRNA JACK NEPEAN, ONT	NORMA BODDY GILFORD, ONT	HEATHER SCALES OSGOODE ONT

ABOVE LEFT The first *Quilt Canada* raffle quilt designed with a spring theme.

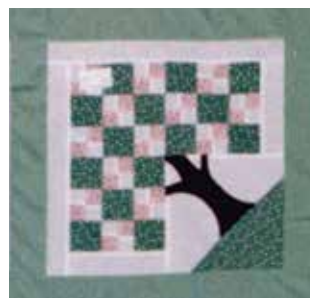
ABOVE RIGHT Handwritten list of the quilt block makers.

AT RIGHT (L-R):

First Prize went to quilter, Georgia Beale.

Second Prize went to quilter, Marilyn Crawford.

Third Prize went to quilter, Alberta Taft.



Once chosen quilts were in Bernice's home ("I had to be reassured by my insurance company that the quilts would be safely covered while stored in my spare room"), she and her committee wrestled with how to display them safely, but accessibly, when the conference's show was open to the public May 14 to 16, 1983. Commercial equipment was not feasible, being too costly to rent for a new quilt guild.

Bernice remembers, "So we came up with the idea of building wooden stands."

Enter the Husband. Bernice says, "My husband offered to make easy-to-assemble, portable stands in our garage." The stands worked. Wall hangings went on dowels to hang on the walls of Porter Hall at the university. The rest of the quilts adorned the new wooden stands. After the show,

they were bundled up, stored and rented out to other guilds, repaying their initial cost many times over.

Next, the committee wrote up a catalogue with a description of each piece, the quilt's size, owner's name and price if the quilt was offered for sale. The committee spread the word in print, radio and TV media—no Internet in those days! >



The 1983 Viewers' Choice is *Baccalaureate* by Jean Hillis.

As the conference drew nearer that spring, organizing committee members chose the tulip (an echo of the Capital's annual *Tulip Festival*) as their design logo for the aprons they would wear to designate themselves as hostesses. A raffle quilt was designed using the spring theme. Blocks were requested through the CQA/ACC newsletter. Once the blocks arrived, the quilt was assembled by the Osgoode Quilt Group. Three prizes were awarded to the top quilt block makers.

Foremost in Bernice's mind was safety for the quilt treasures on display. Many were hand stitched and quilted. "We had to hire guards and arrange for members of our guild to wear white cotton gloves to handle the quilts, so the public wouldn't touch them," she recalls.

Georgia Beale was in charge of the 13 workshops taught by Ann Bird, Stephanie Brand, Catharine Corbett, Heather Danylewich, Suzanne Elder, Polly Greene,

You do not know where you are going if you do not know where you have been.

Georgia Beale



Authors, Ann Bird and Georgia Beale, share a long-time friendship.

Betty MacGregor, Sandi Pope, Barbara Robson, Louise Smyth, Marilyn Stothers and Sheila Wintle. Workshops were received with much enthusiasm. The classrooms were up a small hill and Georgia remembers pushing ironing boards up that same hill on a wobbly cart. The ironing boards kept falling off, much to Georgia's chagrin.

Looking back, Ann says her "primary impression is of the camaraderie which grew among the committee and volunteers. I know some of those friendships continue to this day. There was such a passion for quilting among those who came to Ottawa for workshops and get-togethers and there was the awesome quality of the quilts themselves."

Enthusiastic conference visitors, including 207 delegates and over 1,000 visitors each day, chose the quilt, *Baccalaureate* by Jean Hillis, as their favourite. The closing banquet offered Marilyn Holowachuk, editor of *Canada Quilts*, as the after-dinner speaker. A fitting finale. 🍷