

Centennial quilt highlights show at Somerset

By Corinne Abett
staff writer

The enthusiasm and interest in that truly American art form, the quilt, has almost reached a state of frenzy.

And in this part of the country, Merry Silber of Birmingham gets some of

the credit for being a catalyst for quilt appreciation.

Silber is working on the final details for her Fourth Annual Quilt Exhibit and Sale at Somerset Mall, Monday-Saturday. As in the other shows, she will have some outstanding examples of the quilt maker's art on display. This

year there will be 25 quilts, dating from 1820 to 1940, from private collections.

The highlight of exhibit will be a 25-square, applique quilt from New England that is a particular treasure because each of the squares apparently tells a story. Not only are the applique pieces in each square symbols of family interests and background, but each square contains many names written in indelible ink.

"Most friendship quilts are made for an occasion like a wedding," Silber said. "And most friendship quilts are patchwork; this is applique."

The background, other than being from New England, is vague. The piece can be dated from 1876 on a little piece of fabric in a corner. That means this may have been a centennial project. It

is particularly unusual because each person making the quilt squares was apparently encouraged to be creative rather than following a structured pattern.

In one square, for instance, there are appliques of crossed keys, an anchor, three links of a chain, a book (ship's log?), a star and a circle that could represent the sun. In another, there's a shoe, what looks like a sole for a shoe, tools, baskets and a house.

In one where there's a pipe, an attractive fan, an apple, a man's stovepipe hat and a rather prominent heart — the message of a happy marriage comes through.

The square that seems to suggest the shoemaker's family includes what could be a carpenter's level and car-

pent's square, so he could have doubled as a builder when he wasn't making shoes. Horseshoes are in several squares and appliques of figures of children cut from pictures on fabric occupy the center of one square.

Flowers, lots of hearts, baskets, ships, wheels, even a cat or two can be found as the quilters stitched the story of their lives and their community.

Silber warned that analyzing the quilt squares can become addicting. It's a puzzle made with love and skill.

The exhibit, however, is only one aspect of a comprehensive event. There will be 12 workshops featuring some of the experts in the field — Jinny Beyer, Veralyn Davee, Jean Ray Laury and Jeannie Spears.

There will be lectures by George Bird, Henry Ford Museum; Nancy

Crow, artist-quiltmaker; Julie Silber, guest curator, Oakland Museum; and Blanche Greenstein and Tom Woodward, authors of "Crib Quilts and Other Samit Wonders."

Demonstrations of quilting and related skills will be given throughout the show and 32 dealers will have more than 1,000 antique and contemporary quilts for sale plus fabrics, coverlets, supplies and books.

Eve Bolcourt of Galerie de Bolcourt will have a special booth of books on quilts and other arts and crafts.

A poster of the New England friendship quilt will be for sale.

Show hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Thursday, Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday.

Quilt exhibit events

- **MONDAY**
11 a.m. — Julie Silber, slide lecture, "Dearest Quilts"
10 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Jeannie Spears, workshop on quilt finishing
2 p.m. — Julie Silber, demonstration, "Quilt Sharing"
5-8 p.m. — Jeannie Spears, workshop, "Stars in Your Eyes"
7 p.m. — Films, "Quilts in Women's Lives," "Under the Covers"
- **TUESDAY**
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, workshop on quilting
11 a.m. — Blanche Greenstein, Tom Woodward, slide lecture, "Crib Quilts"
2 p.m. — Julie Silber, slide lecture, "Dearest Quilts"
2-6 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, workshop, "Patchwork Pattern Drafting"
- **WEDNESDAY**
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, workshop, "Medallion Quilts"
11 a.m. — George Bird, slide lecture on Henry Ford Museum quilt collection
2 p.m. — Nancy Crow, slide lecture, "Contemporary Quiltmaking: A Personal Approach"
5-7 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, workshop, "Patchwork Clothing"
- **THURSDAY**
9 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, work-

- shop, "Medallion Quilts"
2 p.m. — Jinny Beyer, lecture-demonstration, "Color and Fabric Coordination"
4 p.m. — Quilt films
5-9 p.m. — Mr. and Mrs. James Hopper, quilting demonstration
 - **FRIDAY**
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. — Veralyn Davee, workshop, "Quilting From Scratch"
11 a.m. — Christine Hopper and Friends, quilting demonstration
12:30 p.m. — Jean Ray Laury, quilting workshop
5-9 p.m. — Jean Ray Laury, workshop, "Applique for Quilts"
 - **SATURDAY**
9 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Jean Ray Laury, workshop, "Quilt Design: Modular Approach"
11 a.m. — Christine Hopper and friends, quilting demonstration
2 p.m. — Merry Silber, show and tell "Bring-Your-Own-Quilt"
Sandra Mitchell, appraisals
- There is a charge for workshops and lectures. For information on the programs, call 643-6550. Programs are being held at three locations — the lower level of the mall, main level of the mall and the second floor of Somerset Inn.

Center lists classes offered this summer

Registration opens for the summer session of classes and workshops from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 2, in Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

A choice of more than 60 leisure-time activities will be offered.

Children may choose from many crafts and activities to enrich their summer. Workshops in candlemaking, Indian finger-weaving, photo-sun prints, preschool drama, wheat weaving and coloring, as well as teen modeling, sewing, nature trail and computers, head up the roster.

Fine arts classes for adults will include landscape and oil painting.

A photography class with expert Monte Nagler and a class in picture

framing are offered.

Hartley Thornton, naturalist and environmentalist, will lead classes for nature trail-blazers on the grounds of the center.

Other wishing to pursue outdoor activities in the summer can enroll in riding classes at Haverhill Farms.

Golf classes at Top of the Tee Golf Range are offered in cooperation with the center, two sessions a week for three weeks.

CLASSES in heritage crafts continue with decorative country painting, rug braiding, weaving on a table loom and new classes in woodcarving and wood marquetry, a popular Victorian

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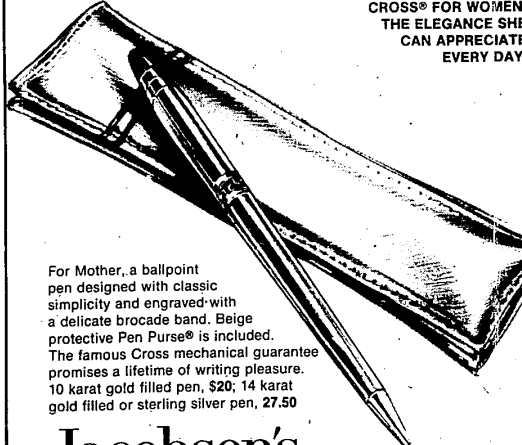
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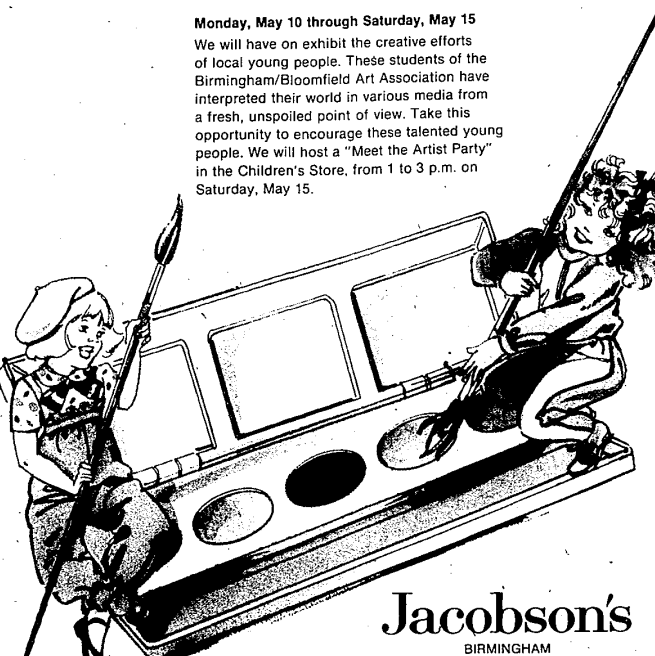
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Monday, May 10 through Saturday, May 15

We will have on exhibit the creative efforts of local young people. These students of the Birmingham/Bloomfield Art Association have interpreted their world in various media from a fresh, unspoiled point of view. Take this opportunity to encourage these talented young people. We will host a "Meet the Artist Party" in the Children's Store, from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.



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