NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to provide new members with information on the West Houston Quilter's Guild (WHQG). It will provide you with a basic understanding of what it means to be a member, our community service obligation, programs, workshops and some of the fun things that go on in this guild. We hope that this handbook will encourage you to become involved in the many activities and take full advantage of the many things this guild has to offer.

The West Houston Quilter's Guild is a non-profit organization founded in 1993 with the purpose of developing and nurturing appreciation for the art of quilting and its history. Simply put, we are a group of people who love quilts!

WHQG meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm. We are currently at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church located at 3785 Barker Cypress Rd, Houston, TX 77084
In general, our meetings follow the schedule outlined below:
6:15pm Social Time: sign in, and sign up for Show and Tell and other activities.
6:30pm Meeting begins with President's welcome and announcements, followed by reports from Board and Committee Members on areas of their responsibilities as needed
7:00pm Guest Speaker's Presentation
TBD Break - 10 minutes. Allow members to sign up for activities, turn in charity/donation quilts, etc.
TBD Show and Tell - members "show off' their latest creation and "tell" us about what inspired them to do so. Then, final announcements and door prizes.
Meeting ends at 9:00 PM.

PROGRAMS

Each Guild meeting will include some kind of program. One of the favorite types of Programs held at Guild is a guest speaker. We are very fortunate to be able to work closely with other guilds in our area to bring in Internationally known personalities who present a program of some type, previously selected by the Program Chairman and Board. Most speakers also bring quilts along to add visual impact in the demonstration of their program. Our speakers vary from the traditional to modern art quilts.

At times the Guild will have a Demo Night/Technique Tour as a program. Experienced Guild members will demonstrate a technique of general interest. Several Stations will be set up in the seating area of the meeting room, and members will rotate among the stations to observe the skill or technique shown. An informative handout usually accompanies the demo.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops are generally, though not always, held in conjunction with a guest speaker's visit. One of the greatest benefits of Guild membership is the opportunity to participate in workshops presented by some of the best-known names in the contemporary quilt world. This is a chance to work one-on-one with an expert to learn new techniques, to ask questions, and get their opinions. A workshop fee is nominal to Guild members because the cost is underwritten by the Guild.

SHOW AND TELL

At every meeting, everyone is invited to take a turn in the spotlight to SHOW their finished project(s) and TELL us all about it. We want to hear your name, and we would like to know something about the project: your inspiration for making it, perhaps, or the occasion for which it was made, or just who is the lucky person to be the owner of it - even if it is yourself. Show And Tell is not limited to quilts, many members show jackets, vests, purses, table runners, etc. Sometimes even "found treasure" from an attic, estate sale, even Goodwill.

Many Members think Show and Tell is reason enough to join our Guild. Make sure to sign up at the Membership table when you have something to show. The Sign-up sheet has a place for your name, the name of your item, and for your permission to put your pictures on our Guild website.

BEES

We currently have 11 Bees. A Bee is a smaller group of quilters (typically 10-15 people) that meets to provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other, learn new skills and share quality quilting time.

Although we thoroughly enjoy our monthly Guild meeting, smaller groups, or Bees, extend our acquaintance within the larger Guild, and are a great forum for exchanging ideas, learning new skills, and making new friends. Activities in Bees range from working on your own projects, doing a block swap, making comfort quilts, doing round robins, gathering to go to quilt shows, shop hops, and retreats and so much more. Check out the monthly newsletter to see some of their activities and contact information of the Beekeepers. When you join a Bee your knowledge of quilting increases as does the fun and friendships. Fill out a Bee Interest Form, available at the membership table or the website (www.whqg.org). This will be passed to the head Beekeeper, who will assist you in finding the right group for you.

Our Guild is fortunate to have a Bee devoted totally to the creation of Charity Quilts. Their name is the Comfort Quilters and they meet every Thursday (10am-3pm) at the Steve Radack Community Center located at 18650 Clay Rd, Houston, TX 77084. All Members are invited to join the Bee, even if you are already a member of another one. Please ask any Community Service Committee member for more information. Remember that when you work on comfort quilts or any other type of donation at a Bee meeting or at home, record your hours spent working when you sign in at the Membership table at the Guild meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Listed on the website and in each newsletter; the Board of Directors guides us through our quilting year. The Board meets on a monthly basis and you are welcome to attend any of the meetings. Minutes of the meetings are posted on the website in the Members Only section. Elections are held bi-annually in October and the newly elected Board assumes leadership in January. Do consider becoming involved with the Board; it is a wonderful way to extend your acquaintance with other members, and will enhance your sense of belonging.

MEMBERSHIP TABLE

The Membership table is the place to go first when you come to a Meeting. At each meeting there will be a sign-in Attendance sheet. Please be sure to put your name on the sheet and complete the section for the number of your volunteer hours for the past month. Whether you volunteer through being part of a committee, making comfort quilts, or teaching, please record your hours. One box for Guild hours, another if you volunteered somewhere else. These hours are part of our record keeping to maintain the Guild's non-profit status. The Show and Tell sign in sheet is also there; and if you don't have a name tag you can order one, or wear a stick on badge. We need all Members to wear a name tag.

You can also renew your annual membership at the table if you choose not to renew online. There will be renewal forms at the table and you can pay with check or cash. Annual dues are $30. You can also fill out and leave your Bee Interest form at this table.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Because different size quilts/blankets are required depending on the location's needs, all sizes created for donation to our Community Service Committee are considered "comfort quilts". This is the part that makes our members feel proud to be known as a quilter and allow us to share with our community. We all know how nice it is to get under a quilt when you are sick or having a bad time, and to know that our love of quilts and quilt making can bring a little sunshine to someone in need is undeniably a special feeling. You'll see at our Show-n-Tell that our members are very generous supplying these beautiful quilts. Check our website (www.whqg.org) for size guidelines and pattern ideas.

An important part of our guild activities is outreach to the community through our quilting skills. We donate comfort quilts designed for every age group: babies, toddlers, young children, teens and adults. Our Community Service Chairperson stays in contact with many nursing homes, children's charities, and missionary groups to be able to know when and where to take our donations.

Each year every guild member is encouraged to create at least one quilt for the elderly and one for the children's charity. Keep track of the time you spend on making the Comfort Quilts and record the hours on the sign-in sheet at the monthly meetings. Contact a Community Service Committee member if you are interested in joining our charity bee.

Check out the Community Services table during the meeting for available kits and other project ideas. You are always welcome to turn in more than the suggested 2.

DIRECTORY

The roster is published on-line in the Members-only area of the website. The on-line roster is updated several times during the year. It contains useful information including name, address, phone numbers, e-mail address and birthday (not year, please!) of all members, a list of the board of directors, and a listing of affiliated bees. It is not printed for distribution, but is available through the website. The web mistress will provide the log in and password necessary to view the roster.

NEWSLETTER

Our newsletter "Sew On and Sew On" is available on the website, (www.whqg.org) for all to view. We encourage everyone to read the newsletter online to keep up with what is happening. Personal member information is never revealed in our newsletter.

Advertisements may be placed in our newsletter by anyone. Check with the Ways and Means Chairperson to learn current costs.

BI-ANNUAL QUILT SHOW

Since 1999 the West Houston Quilters' Guild has held a quilt show every 2 years featuring quilts, wall-hangings, clothing, etc. made by members of the Guild. Members can choose to have their entries judged, ribbons are awarded, and individual evaluations are given by the judges. The show also invites numerous vendors to bring the newest in quilting fabrics, tools, gadgets, antiques and other items dear to a quilter's heart. Members are also encouraged to sign up to be a part of the quilt show committee that produces this event. There are a variety of opportunities for members to help before, during, and after the show. The location changes as is necessary. The Quilt Show Chairperson and the Committee meet monthly for most of the two years in between shows, and work very hard to put on an event that will be enjoyable to quilters and non-quilters alike.

DONATION QUILT

A committee within the Guild creates an outstanding bed-size quilt as a fundraiser in conjunction with our bi-annual quilt show. This is one of the Guild's primary fund raisers. Here's an opportunity to join in with others; the need for volunteers is great. This effort begins about 16 months before the next show. Whether you are a novice or an expert you'll be welcome to join the Committee.

BOUTIQUE

A feature at our bi-annual quilt show is the Guild Boutique . This booth is stocked with member made items from the Guild's bees as well as individual members, and are offered for sale.

BASKET BONANZA/RAFFLE

Another Guild feature is the Basket Bonanza. It is also stocked with items donated by Guild members, bees, and some retailers. They are packaged in baskets for display, each having a theme such as Batik fabric, cutting tools, etc. Each basket is numbered and has a container with a corresponding number nearby. Tickets can be purchased $1 each or 6 for $5, and you will enter your contact info (name and phone)on a sign sheet so you can be contacted if you are a winner. Late in the afternoon of the last day of the show, drawings are held to announce the winners of the various items. One does not have to be present to win.

GRANDMOTHER'S ATTIC

Grandmother's Attic is a quilter's dream of a garage sale. They have almost anything a sewing enthusiast could want, fabric, tools, books, magazines, and more all for a discounted price. Items are donated by Guild members and from the community.

WEBSITE

Our website is www.whqg.org Check it out for everything you need to know about our Guild. There is a lot of information available there, including the current and past newsletters, a brief description of our Bees, a Calendar of Events, and some Frequently Asked Questions (with answers). There is also a secure "Members Only" section. To gain access, you will be prompted to send an email for the password.

QUILT ANGEL

Selecting a Quilt Angel is one of the final items of business for the year. Anyone can nominate a Member to be considered for this honor. The criteria for selecting the year's Angel is their amount of service to the Guild during the current year. A recipient can not be a previous winner nor a current board member. Final selection will be made by Board vote.

IN CONCLUSION

The West Houston Quilter's Guild is a busy organization and we are so fortunate to have lots of willing hands to keep our Guild activities giving to our community. The best way to meet people and get the most out of your membership is to be part of the action. Join a bee, tell a board member you'll lend a helping hand, go to the Comfort Quilter's meeting, or ask questions of members at the meetings. Soon you'll feel right at home! And we are glad to have you.

As you can see, our guild is about many things. We are in the "business" of giving, education, sharing and fun. Giving of our talent to those less fortunate, to the community and to each other, learning from our speakers, workshops and challenges and sharing with our friends and family our love of quilts. Fun is in the center of everything, the giving, the learning and the sharing.

Your membership is the key to enriching your love of quilting. Take full advantage of the activities in your guild.

