

Quilting will be on display this weekend

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When Dusty Farrell wants to relax, he turns up the music, turns off the lights, sits down at his long-arm quilting machine and goes to work "at about 5,000 miles-an-hour."

Not everyone would think that was relaxing, he jokes; but it works for him.

Farrell calls it "Quiltin' in the Dark," and it's a technique that is garnering him a lot of attention around the quilting world. He uses UV-reactive thread and black light to create unusual and interesting effects. "I'm known for my feathers, for my spirographics and free motion designs," he says, as well as for his glow-in-the-dark quilts.

Farrell will be doing a lecture/demonstration on his quilting methods at the Home Machine Quilting Show, which will take place Thursday through Saturday, May 5-7, at the South Towne Expo Center. Farrell will also have a booth at the show and will be happy to answer any questions about venturing into the dark.

Salt Lake is one of about 25 shows Farrell and his wife, Stephanie, will do this year. They are owners of Country Stitchin, a quilt shop in Cambridge Springs, Penn. Farrell has a background in art and painting. "When we decided to open a quilt store, I wanted to find something to do there and thought my training in art could translate to quilting." He hit upon the idea of quilting in the dark at a quilt show when a thread company representative gave him a spool of thread to play around with.

Farrell's main advice for quilters is, "have fun. That's what long-arm quilting is all about. It's about having fun, not being perfect."

Quilters today, he says, are getting younger and are going off in all kinds of directions. It's a great way to find personal expression, he says, but advises quilters not to let the stress of perfection detract from the enjoyment.

He also advises them to take a chance. "I often sit down at the machine without a clue as to what I'm going to do. I just take off and go."

Marilyn Badger may be a bit more disciplined in her stitching, but has an equal amount of enjoyment in creating unusual designs. Her collaborative efforts with Claudia Clark Myers have taken top honors at prestigious quilt shows around the country.

A special display of those quilts will also be featured at HMQS this year, including "Sparkle Plenty," their first winner of the coveted Longarm Award at Paducah, Ky., in 2004, and "Awesome Blossoms," their Best of Show winner at the National Quilt Association 2010 show in Columbus, Ohio.

Badger's "journey to quilting started back in the 1970s. We lived on a houseboat, and I had to find something to do that didn't take up a lot of space." In those days, she did all her quilting by hand. But when they moved ashore and built a house, there was lots of space to fill, "so I got a longarm machine." That was in 1991, and the longarm technique was still new enough "that I was considered a pioneer. I've been at it ever since."

Badger now lives in St. George, and Myers is in Minnesota. "She does most of the piecing, and I do the stitching, but there's a lot of back-and-forth." They favor "traditional designs with a twist," she says. And every year, their goal "is to put out a quilt that the judges can't tell is ours. We've been competing so long, we don't want to do the same thing over and over. It keeps them interested, and it keeps us hopping."

Badger also has specialized in quilted garments and will have several on those on display at the show.

Her display will be one of several featuring "hundreds of gorgeous quilts," says Jennifer Pond, spokeswoman for HMQS. Other displays will feature Machine Quilting Unlimited, Irena Bluhm, City Stitchers, Maple Mountain Quilt Guild, Mini Quilts by the 12 x 12 Project, antique quilts owned by Sandra Starley and Gaye Ryon's "Monster Quilts." There will be two challenge displays: the 2011 Quilting Treasures Machine Quilting Challenge, and the SewBatik Fabric Piecing Challenge.

In all, says Pond, there will be about 20 different displays, including a judged quilt competition with nearly \$27,000 in cash awards.

There will also be classes, a Vendor Mall with 200 booths, free demonstrations, free "make and take projects" and more.

"HMQS is the premiere consumer exhibition and hands-on educational show for quilters, embroiderers and anyone who loves to sew," says Pond.

Each day and night of the show features special guests and entertainment (including a concert by Joshua Creek). On Saturday, at 12:30 p.m., a live auction of quilts produced for the 2011 Riley Blake Designs Fabric Challenge will be held, with all proceeds going to Lifting Liberia, the 2011 HMQS charity. Lifting Liberia is a local, non-profit organization dedicated to providing schools for children in sub-Saharan Africa.

HMQS show hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, with hours extended to 8 p.m. on Friday for the concert and a Shopping Fest that will offer special bargains. Tickets are \$10 daily, or \$25 for a three-day pass. Ages 13-15 are \$5; children under 12 are free. Classes and special entertainment are extra. Registration for classes that are not sold-out is available on show days.

For a complete schedule, class list and other information, visit www.hmq.com or call 801-205-4701.

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