

How the Coastal Quilters Guild Began

20th Anniversary

2008

Back in 1986 there was a quilt store in Goleta called H&H Country Store. It was a quilt store that offered classes and lots of quilting fabric and notions. One year they had a little quilt show out in the parking lot (kind of where Farmer's Market is held now). I wasn't a quilter then, but was drawn to the show by these beautiful and colorful quilts flowing in the breeze. While I was walking around the show, I came across a simple cardboard box sitting at the end of the aisle. Written across the box top was this message: "Interested in forming a quilting group? Please put your name and phone number in here." Well, so I did.

A few weeks later I received a phone call that we were to have our first meeting. I had one child in school, but the other was still a toddler, so she came with me. Much to my surprise there were other kids there too. Six women showed up to the first meeting and four of us brought kids that played and raced around us while we tried to talk of quilting and maybe put in a few stitches. Suzanne Swanson and Mary Jorgensen were the ones who organized this first meeting. They had enticed four other ladies to join them. Along with me, Zetta Hanna, Janet Berlin and Audrey Ziegler attended. So, just six at the first meeting! Suzanne and Audrey soon moved from Goleta, but the other four continued with the guild for many years. We had so much fun at the first meeting that we agreed to meet again. After a few of our monthly meetings "with kids", we thought we'd try a night meeting "without kids". So we arranged to meet at the Goleta Library. Word

had gotten out and our group had grown to about 12 then. We sat in a circle and shared our work and ideas. It was just terrific! The next month we had 20 people and the next about 30. Arranging our chairs in a circle just wasn't going to work, so we started sitting in rows and when someone talked they stood up in the front. It was at about this time that I voiced an opinion (I still haven't learned to stay quiet!). I suggested we elect officers and pay dues and hey, have guests! So started the official beginning of the guild.

Our first efforts were to come up with an official name other than "that cute little guild in Goleta"! Oh, what a night that was. The names! One very shy quiet lady suggested: The Easy Piecers! We settled for a nice safe name and so the name "The Coastal Quilters of Goleta and Santa Barbara" became official. We next needed by-laws. So, with several other guilds' bylaws in front of me (and my kids dancing about me), I wrote the first bylaws. Now, I'm no lawyer and English was never my favorite subject, so you must know this was a real chore for me!

We had our first election in 1988. Gee, guess who they elected President? What had I gotten myself into?! Our second year of elections, no one would volunteer to be president, so I once again took the reins. So began our guild's tradition of a two-term president. I actually have old files on my computer of all those original officers, but they are so old I don't have software that will open them! I do remember that Zetta Hanna, Jan Inouye, Laurie Ball and Janet Berlin were some of the first officers.

We've had a dozen presidents so far:

Marty Frolli in 1988 and 1989

Carol Boyce in 1990 and 1991

Barbara Maxwell in 1992 and 1993

Judy Gorrindo in 1994 and 1995

Maggie Godwin in 1996

Norah McMeeking in 1997 and 1998

Ranell Hansen in 1999 and 2000

Diane Eardley in 2001 and 2002

Susan West in 2003 and 2004

Betty Kelley in 2005 and 2006

Karin Cooper in 2007 and Jan 2008 to June 2008

Darilyn Kisch in July 2008 is our current President.

So we collected dues and we were ready for some of our first speakers. We dove right in and had some fantastic local/California quilters, such as Judy Mathieson, Sharyn Craig, Marlene Peterman, Christal Carter and Margaret Miller. Oh boy, now we were big time! Suddenly we were graced with other quilters from the area who decided we were not just "that cute little group in Goleta"! The guild really began to grow and we eventually outgrew the Goleta Library. We met at a number of other places in town, including Samarkand Retirement Home and have settled in now to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

We were asked to participate in the Goleta Valley Days Celebration in 1989. (This is now called the Lemon Festival.) So, we put on our first quilt show at the Goleta Valley Community Center. We organized, collected quilts and hung the show in a few days. (What a concept!) The show was such a success that we repeated it in 1990 and 1991.

We were also asked to join the July celebration at the Stow House in Goleta. We had an exhibit of quilts and a members boutique there in 1988, 1989 and 1990.

We also had a quilt exhibit at the Brinkerhoff Sale and Exhibits at Brinkerhoff Avenue in Santa Barbara in 1991,

We had numerous other exhibits around town including: Fantaseas at the Sea Center Santa Barbara in 1994, From Traditional to Contemporary in 1991 at the Santa Barbara Library and Quilts and Children's Stories in 1992 at the Goleta Library.

Somewhere along the line, as the guild grew in size, it was suggested that we become incorporated. The bylaws were written and the guild name changed to: Coastal Quilters Guild of Goleta and Santa Barbara, Inc.!

Our first really big show was in 1991. Natural Impressions was a juried show at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. This first show coincided with the Museum's 75th Anniversary Celebration. Our guild made a quilt depicting history and exhibits of the museum. This quilt hung at the show and after at the museum. This show was organized by Norah McMeeking and Jan Inouye. In 1995 we had the second Natural Impressions show at the museum. Once again, this was a juried show. This year in 2008, we held our 6th quilt show at the Earl Warren Showgrounds. This member's showcase has been a very popular quilt show for the guild and for the community and is held every two years.

Submitted by:

Marty Frolli

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