

Empire Newsletter



January 2012



President's Message

The holidays we long prepared for are over. I was so pleased see the bears, stockings and other adorable toys ready to be distributed to the various shelters. The membership of Empire Quilters really outdid themselves this year. We have a long and proud history of holiday gift making. Our terrific charity co-chairs Jennifer Bigelow and Marilyn Korn took over in lightning speed when Denise Walsh Horowitz needed to step back a bit. Kudos to all three of them, as well as my sincere thanks to those who just pitched in and worked whenever they were asked.

As we begin the New Year there are some interesting workshops coming up and the February meeting "Members Teaching Members" has eight classes planned. There will be sign up sheets as well as instructions on what to bring as well as how many members each group can accommodate. Janet Randolph is the person to go to for questions and answers.

After a long search I am pleased to announce that we have hired Gloria Hansen of the web management team of GloDer Works to develop our new website. Many long hours were spent in this process. It is very exciting to be involved in the start up phase. Many people were involved and soon Kitty Squire will take over the running of the day-to-day operations. Kitty will need lots

of help and "eyes" in the community. We need people in all aspects of this endeavor.

I have been asked repeatedly about a show for 2013. Time has a way of slipping by - SO if YOU want to have show in 2013 you better get moving. Mindy Wexler Marks has found several places that need to be evaluated, and will bring the information back to the board. The information should be complete and realistic to our needs. Lisa Kehrlle and Jennifer Bigelow are putting together the information from the show survey sent in the December newsletter and available at the December meeting, to get a sense of what sort of show we might have in 2013. Larry Gifford and I will try to be available for some of the preliminary meetings. There is much work to be done. I look forward to helping in the early days if you need some guidance.

This spring we will need two officers for the Executive Board. Beth Pile will conclude a two year term as 2nd Vice President. Lisa Kehrlle will finish up the term of Denise Walsh Horowitz who had to leave mid-term for personal reasons. The next two year election will be in 2013. That will be for President, 1st Vice President and Treasurer. Other major chairs will also be up.

Paula Kenney – President



FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR



NEXT MEETING

Saturday
January 14, 2012

LOCATION

Church of
the Holy Apostles
296 Ninth Avenue,
(@28th St.), NY
Open 9:00 am-4:00pm

Focus Groups

10:30 am - 11:30 am
10-Min. Table Runner
12:00 pm—1:00 pm
Charity Coach and Chat
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
Elm Creek Quilters

Board Meeting

11:00 am-12:00 pm

General Meeting

1:00 pm-4:00 pm

Program

Quilts from Gee's Bend

Speaker

Maggi Gordon

Vendor

Fiber Notion

Quilter of the Month

Joan Goodsell

Block of The Month

Classic String Quilt

Scrap Table: Open
Show & Tell: Open
Library: Open

Guest Fee: \$10

Maggi Gordon and Her Gee's Bend Quilt Collection.



Maggi Gordon was born and brought up in Mississippi, at a time and in a place where sewing was an everyday activity. She learned embroidery at the age of 8 in an after-school class taught by a friend's mother, and by

the age of 12, she had learned simple dressmaking techniques from her mother and from the Singer sponsored classes she attended during her summer vacations. She carried those skills, and her sewing machine, to New York when she left college, but left both behind when she moved to London in 1972.

She was brought back to sewing, when she was making curtains for the first home her and her husband purchased. It was during this time that she began a long run in an adult embroidery class, which focused on the history of the craft as well as teaching technical skills. Patchwork and quilt making followed in the natural progression as she decided that she needed a more challenging pastime. After several years of editing craft books, she found herself in another natural progression, writing about quilts and their history. The merging of the two overwhelming interests in her professional life has led her on this fascinating journey.



Women from Gee's Bend work on a quilt during the 2005 ONB Magic City Art Connection in Birmingham, Alabama's Linn Park, April 23, 2005 taken by Andre Natta. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License.



Mega Star.

Maker Ida Jackson, *Gee's Bend, AL. c. 2000*



Cabin in the cotton Housetop quilt.

Maker Annie B. Pettway (1930-2003), *Gee's Bend Alabama.*



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Treasurer's Report



January 2012

Guild	Month	YTD Total
Beginning Balance	\$ 74,003.62	\$ 57,090.66
Income	\$ 4,844.20	\$ 33,893.25
Expenses	\$ 5,655.20	\$ 17,618.46
Ending Balance	\$ 73,192.62	\$ 73,365.45
Show Income		\$ 25.00
Show Expenses		\$ 197.83
Grand Total	\$ 73,192.62	\$ 73,192.62

A detailed version of the report is available by contacting Anna Krassy, quilterme@gmail.com (or at 212) 243 3253 to have a copy mailed to you.



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These topics on Thursdays from 3 to 4 pm:

January 12, Twin Needle

February 9, Needle Felting Attachment

March 8, Teflon Foot

April 12, Pintuck Foot

Happy New Year From Charity Coach and Chat!!!

For the 2011 holiday season the Empire Quilters out did themselves. The generosity of our members is matched only by the gratitude of the organizations and families who received the gifts. Truly there are too many people who made donations to name - over 100 of our members made donations of handmade stockings, stuffed animals, toys, clothing, jewelry, toiletries and even over-the-counter reading glasses. We had 2 Charity "workshops" this season. The first was in November at City Quilter to make toys and stockings. We are so grateful for the support of Cathy and Dale at City Quilter for all our charity work. Our second workshop was the day after our December meeting to stuff the stockings. At each workshop we had about 18 people. Many hands make light work - and some of you know I had doubts if I could fit all the stuff in my car. Gladly, Susan Louis and Judy Isaacs volunteered to take some of the gifts and deliver them. I'm so grateful to my Charity partners Marilyn Korn and Tina Barth for their help, and we are all so grateful for the support of the members.

We had a wonderful abundance - over 300 stockings or drawstring bags, and even more handmade stuffed animals of delightful variety. And each stocking was able to hold many items given all the extras we had. We were able to donate to two different organizations. [Camp AmeriKids](#) was created in 1995 with the mission of enhancing the lives of children affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS through a traditional camp experience at no cost to the families. They hold a holiday party for those children and their siblings, and we donated 100 stockings there. They

were so delighted when I dropped off the gifts. I'll be speaking with them about quilt donations for their camp - so we may want some slightly larger quilts in March.

Our largest donation went to Metro Family Residence in Woodside, Queens. We have worked with them for several years. That residence has over 75 homeless families, and the social worker supports another residence as well. What was donated to Metro was shared with the other shelter as well. Over 200 gifts were delivered in stockings, and more items were presented loose. Food was donated to support their party.

Charity Coach and Chat will resume in January. Janet Randolph will demonstrate a simple way to make pillow cases. It would be a special treat if we could donate some pillow cases to go with the quilts in March. If you have fabric to donate to make charity quilts, you can start bringing it in January. If you need fabric to make quilts, or patterns, please stop by the charity tables. Now that the holidays are winding down, I hope you'll consider making a small quilt for March. Try your hand at simple machine quilting and finish it if you can. We hope to schedule a charity workshop on another Saturday night in February to make tops and to demonstrate easy machine quilting or finishing. That will be in the next newsletter.

Thanks again to all. Jennifer Bigelow (with Marilyn Korn and Tina Barth)

Joan Goodsell, Empire's Quilter of the Month

Joan Goodsell learned to sew at an early age, mostly by watching her mom make clothes for the family. Joan started hand and then machine stitching clothes for her dolls and graduated to clothes. She liked sewing so much that her parents gave her a sewing machine as a college graduation gift. That faithful Singer and her fabric stash followed Joan from Connecticut, to Puerto Rico and back to New York. Along the way Joan added knitting, crocheting, and counted cross stitch to her list of crafts, along with the ever-growing stash associated with each craft.

However, Joan always wanted to learn to quilt. So, about 12 years ago, she took the plunge and signed up for the beginners quilt class with Judy Doenias. In the eight weeks it took to finish the class, Joan was hooked. She has continued to take classes and learn new techniques. Furthermore, Joan's fabric stash has now grown until it probably exceeds those of her other crafts. Joan likes playing with colors as she decides on a pattern and she expects to be learning and sewing for a long time to come.

December in Review, by Kitty Squire

Our December meeting this year was filled with fun, food, and charity. Those who attended had a wonderful time. The holiday quilt auction netted \$1815 and the bake sale over \$200. We had 23 items to auction off from 22 different members and included holidays from Valentine's Day to Sukkott. I would like to thank all those who contributed quilts as well as baked goods.

I am pleased to announce that after many meetings and conference calls, we have chosen GloDerWorks to update our website. They are in the midst of doing the design work and we are hoping it will be up and running by some time in February. Once it is up, we will need every member's help to keep it up and accurate. I will be the point person for collecting and updating the web and will be calling on all of you for your help with news and quilting events.



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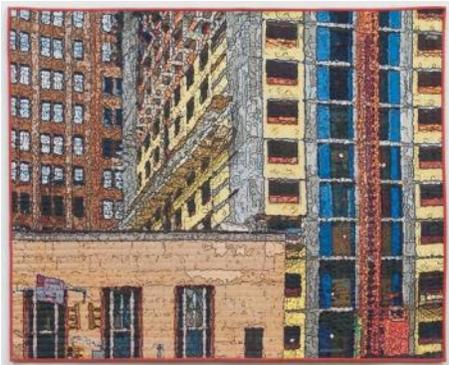
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Around Town...



CROSSING LINES: The Many Faces of Fiber

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Timeless Treasures Seeks First International Stitch Star!

Timeless Treasures is taking applications for their first international challenge, featuring two categories, Quilting and Lifestyle/Sewing Projects.

Timeless Treasures wants to see YOUR star power! Join talented artists worldwide and enter your original Quilt or Lifestyle/Sewing Project in our first international sewing challenge. Design your project with pieces from two stunning fabric collections, [Plume](#) and [Orange Crush](#), and “[Stitch Star Complement](#)” fabrics.

Timeless Treasures, based here in New York City, has been a generous donor to Empire Quilters, and it would be wonderful if some of our members take up this challenge. Applications to enter are due by February 28, 2012. Project submissions (photos and descriptions of the project) are due by June 1, and judging is complete by June 15. Winning projects must be available for promotional exhibits from July 2012 through July 2013.

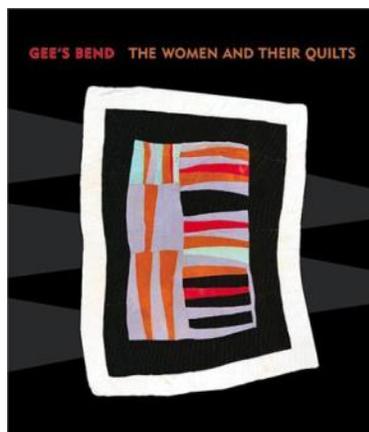
For more information and entry instructions please go to the [Timeless Stitch Star](#) site.

Library Notes....

The library will again be open during the January meeting, which features quilt historian Maggi McCormick Gordon talking about the colorful Gee's Bend quilts. The following books might be of interest.

- Gee's Bend: the Women and their Quilts.
- Quilt Africa
- Quilt Inspiration from Africa
- Scrap Quilts from the Depression
- The Quilt: a History and Celebration

If you would like to borrow any of these, or other books listed in the Library's collection, please email either Mary Cargill (Cargill@columbia.edu) or Lisa Belle (lmbinnyc@yahoo.com) before January 8th.



February Members Teaching Members

Our February program will consist of 9 mini workshops led by guild members. Four are sit and sew and five are lecture/demo. Members need to register for any of these workshops. Registration will close at 30 participants, and all who register will be guaranteed any printed directions for that particular workshop. Registration begins at the January meeting at a table in the front of the church. Workshops are as follows:

- CATHEDRAL WINDOW: Pauline and Paulette Myers, Leaders. Sit and Sew. Supplies: hand sewing needle, light blue thread, straight pins, scissors.
- BASIC EMBROIDERY STITCHES: Beth Pile, Leader. Sit and Sew. Supply list available at registration.
- FAST TURN WALL QUILTS: Cathy Anderson, Leader. Sit and Sew. Supplies: hand needle, beige or white thread, straight pins, scissors.
- ACCESSORY CASE: Arline Rubin, leader. Lecture. Bring paper and pen for notes.
- FOLDED FLOWERS: Judith Hoffman Corwin, Leader. Sit and Sew. Supplies: quilting thread, needle, straight pins, fabric scraps, buttons for center.
- REVERSE APPLIQUE: Maggie Gordon, Leader. Lecture. Bring paper and pen for notes.
- SWEATSHIRT APPLIQUE: Janet Randolph, Leader. Lecture. Bring paper and pen for notes.
- BINDING: Aleeda Crawley, Leader. Lecture. Bring paper and pen for notes.
- HOW TO PREPARE YOUR QUILT FOR LONGARM QUILTING: Sue Clayton, Leader. Lecture. Bring paper and pen for notes.

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Gee's Bend, A Look Back Into History, by Earamichia Brown

I thought it would be fitting to delve into the history of Gee's Bend, Alabama since we have Ms. Gordon coming to speak to us in January about her collection of quilts from this amazing region of our country. I am new to the historical nature of quilting and have recently begun a historical journey into quilts.

This fascination with the history of quilts started earlier this year when I discovered "eBay" and the surplus of "vintage" and "antique" quilts that are now available, thanks to the "pickers". (I discovered that show this year as well.) I made a bid on my first antique blocks from the 1930s, then discovered feed sack fabric. That discovery can take up three pages by itself, with all that I learned about it. Oh so where was I, yes, history and Gee's Bend.

I never heard of a Gee's Bend, nor had I ever seen any of the quilts from this region. One would think as an African-American woman quilter, I should have known about these gems. Nope. Didn't have a clue. I knew about Faith Reingold and some recent discoveries, but nothing rooted in the history of this country or of people. So, I heard about an artist retreat in Gee's Bend, then I heard about our speaker, and did what anyone named "Encyclopedia Brown" would do. I started to research it.

The history was fascinating. To think that there was this 7 square mile region that began as a plantation, remained isolated, and as such hid some of the most amazing women in the history of quilts. "Art quilts" as they are now known. As I researched this region, I was amazed to discover that Mr. Joseph Gee, a planter from Halifax, North Carolina, went there in 1816, with 18 slaves, and started the plantation. He called it Gee's Bend. In 1845, Mark Pettway later bought the 10,000 acre plantation for \$29,000 to settle a debt from his relatives Sterling and Charles Gee (Joseph's nephews). A year later, Pettway, his family, and a caravan of over 100 slaves settled there. (Of course all the slaves walked from North Carolina, except for one, their cook.) Although Pettway retained the name Gee's, all the slaves he had with him became Pettway. After slavery was abolished, many of the Pettway's remained as sharecroppers.

The white Pettway family owned the property till 1895 when they sold it to Van de Graaff, a lawyer from Tuscaloosa, who operated it as an absentee landlord. The land was eventually sold to the Resettlement Administration and they in turn rented the land to the residents. In 1947 a program was developed to allow them to purchase the land from the government. Many people left during the 1950s and 1960s. However, others stayed and continued to make the best of their situation, especially since they were owners

Gee's Bend became an important part of the mid-1960s Freedom Quilting Bee, which was an offshoot of the Civil Rights movement. It was designed to boost family income and foster community development by selling handcrafts to outsiders. When large numbers of residents began taking the only ferry that allowed them east access to the county seat of Camden, where they went to try to register to vote, local authorities reacted by eliminating ferry service in 1962. The lack of ferry service forced the residents of the community to drive more than an hour in order to conduct business in Camden. The people of Gee's Bend would be without a ferry service for forty-four years, until September 2006.

In 1969, columnist Calvin Trillin, wrote a piece in *The New Yorker* about the opening of the community's new sewing center that was paid for with quilting bee revenues. In 1983 Rothstein's photographs from 1937 was featured in an exhibit sponsored by Alabama Humanities Foundations.

In 2002, there was an exhibition of the Gee's Bend Quilting Bee at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, TX. This was organized by the Tinwood Alliance. From here the show went to the Whitney in New York and was hailed as some of the most miraculous work of art America had produced. From then on, the word was out to a much larger audience. Many of the quilters became well known, have traveled extensively, and now have real incomes for the first time. There was even a ten sheet of commemorative stamps in 2006, that featured images of Gee's Bend quilts that were sewn between c.1940 and 2001.

What I found most intriguing was the reason why they quilted. They took all that they had, fabric bits and pieces, and used many of the quilts to insulate their cabins/homes. They used newspaper and any other items that could be placed on the walls to prevent the wind and cold from coming into the cabins. From this tradition, art form, and history the magic of the Gee's Bend Quilters was born.

I went through the library of congress and found these images from Gee's Bend in the late 1930s. The black and white photos come from the Arthur Rothenstein Collection for the Farm Security Administration at the Library of Congress, and any other photos I have the rights to reproduce. (P.S. I can reprint them in this newsletter for this purpose. Smiles) I hope you take the time and learn more about these amazing women and how they kept their community warm.

For more information, www.quiltsofgeesbend.com.



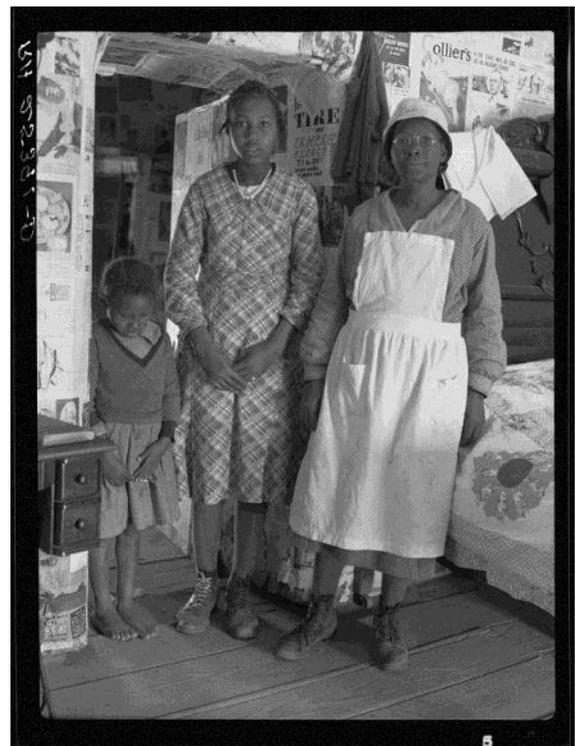
LC-USF34-025363-D, Rothstein, Arthur, Apr. 1937. Sewing a quilt. Gee's Bend, Alabama. Jennie Pettway and another girl with quilter Jorena Pettway. *Above.*



LC-USF34-025385-D, Rothstein, Arthur, Apr. 1937. Pettway family group. Gee's Bend, Alabama. *Above.*

LC-USF34-025356-D, Rothstein, Arthur, Feb. 1937. Gee's Bend, Alabama. Descendants of slaves of the Pettway plantation. They are still living very primitively on the plantation. *Below.*

LC-USF34-025391-D, Rothstein, Arthur, Apr. 1937. Gee's Bend, Alabama. Inhabitants. *Below.*



LC-USF34-025359-D, Rothstein, Arthur, Apr. 1937. Girl at Gee's Bend, Alabama. *Left.*

The quilt that is on the bed that they are sitting on is one of the infamous Gee's Bend quilts. I love that they have on their "good clothes" in February and again in April.

On the Road....

Behind the Scenes Visit to Parsons Meares Costume Shop

Eighteen guild members signed up for our studio visit to Parsons Meares on January 17th at 4:30pm. The studio is located at 519 Eighth Avenue (36th Street), 11th Floor. There is still room for a few more members, so see me at the January meeting if you are interested in joining us. We will have a lecture and guided tour of this design facility where we will have an opportunity to see how costumes are produced from initial design sketch to final fitting. This studio produces costumes for stage, film, dance and opera. The cost for this tour is \$25. We are limited to 20-25 individuals. Please let me know if you want to join us. mindyvexlermarks@yahoo.com.

March Trip Beginning to Take Shape

The next trip in March will visit the Antonio Ratti Textile Center at Metropolitan Museum of Art. This will be a lecture and tour of the Museum's conservation facilities, focusing on quilts and their restoration and storage. It will be a fascinating look at a behind the scenes facility that contains approximately 3,000 books and journals devoted to the history, science and technical study of textiles. The Museum's textile collection, numbering more than 36,000 objects is remarkably diverse and ranges in date from 3000 BC to the present. Basic descriptive information and images of the collection have been added to an image database that is accessible to the public on four computer workstations located in the center's reading area.



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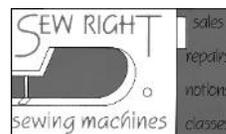
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## Things to Remember....

### Quilters of the Month Needed

We are looking for volunteers to be Quilter of the Month. What is Quilter of the Month? It's a short (10 minute) presentation of your work that you present at the monthly guild meeting. Typically we do the presentation after the guest speaker or after Show & Tell. Presenting 10 - 15 pieces works best. They do not have to be finished -- tops are fine. You can show a range of your work or a group of themed pieces. The work can be quilts or quilting/sewing related. We aim to have five Quilter of the Month presentations this year and are looking for volunteers. There are openings in 2012. If interested, please contact Debra Levin at [deblevin@verizon.net](mailto:deblevin@verizon.net)

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#### Classified: Fabric Wanted

If you have any of the Timeless Treasures Dotty Fabric packs that were sold at the guild meeting earlier this year and would like to sell or swap them, please contact Diane Paul at [funnylady93@nyc.rr.com](mailto:funnylady93@nyc.rr.com) or 718-625-6449.

#### Classified:

**Quilt Frame Available** (8' X 3' X 31" high)  
Easy to store and assemble. You will need to pick it up. Contact Barbara Silver at [barsilver@verizon.net](mailto:barsilver@verizon.net) (put quilt frame in the subject) or call 212 254-0745.

## Empire's Block of the Month, Classic String Quilt

We had such a good time making string blocks in November, let's do it again! But this time we'll use scraps of: red, pink, orange, yellow. Any or all! Whatever you have in your scrap pile. The huge variety of fabrics will be wonderful. The photo, on the right, is just for a reminder. To see the directions, scroll down to November. The strip widths are random (about 2").



**For Advertising Contact Us at:  
[advertising@empirequilters.net](mailto:advertising@empirequilters.net)**

**2011-2012 Calendar**

**January 14, 2012**  
*Karen Gibbs*

**February 11, 2012**  
*Members Teaching Members*

**March 10, 2012**  
*Charity Work Day*

**April 14, 2012**  
*Rayna Gillman*

**May 12, 2012**  
*Rami Kim*

**June 9, 2012**  
*Linda Warren*

**January Newsletter Deadlines**

Ads: **January 24, 2011**  
Article Submission: **January 26, 2011**

Empire Quilters encourages members to write articles about quilt related subjects — even to toot their own horn if they've taken part in a show — and to send them to the Editor: [newsletter@empirequilters.net](mailto:newsletter@empirequilters.net)

**Questions? Contact Us at:  
[Info@empirequilters.net](mailto:Info@empirequilters.net)**

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