



Empire Quilters Board Meeting Minutes March 8, 2008

Attendees: Jennifer Bigelow, Mary Butler, Lauren Dieterich, Lee Ebs, Anna Faustino, Véronique Milliez, Beth Pile, Rita Reid, Cindy Russell, Kitty Squire.

Board Members Absent: Tina Barth, Jane Broaddus, Nancy Castel, Betty Chen, Aleeda Crawley, Alicia Cruz, Anita Duncan, Anna Foss, Larry Gifford, Diane Harris, Joan Hellmann, Carole Hoffman, Sylvia Hughes, Linda Lee Kelly, Marilyn Korn, Anna Krassy, Claire Leffel, Gail Lefton, Debra Levin, Paula Kenney, Susan Stauber, Denise Walsh, Pamela Leonard Wexler.

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 AM by president Jennifer Bigelow. It was announced that Cindy Russell would be taking minutes in Secretary Gail Lefton's absence.

Minutes: *Lauren Dieterich moved that the minutes of the meeting of February 9, 2008 be accepted as written. The motion was seconded by Cindy Russell and passed by the Board.*

Treasurer's Report: *Cindy Russell made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as it appeared in the March, 2008 Newsletter. The motion was seconded by Lauren Dieterich and passed by the Board.*

Newsletter: Lauren Dieterich reported that the Newsletter Committee met and discussed various ways to lower the cost of the newsletter. The items they considered included (a) going from a monthly to a bi-monthly schedule; (b) establishing a surcharge for members who receive their newsletter via first class mail; and (c) alternate printing sources, among other suggestions. The committee agreed that a goal should be to have the printing costs covered by advertising revenues (which is not currently happening), leaving the mailing costs to be covered by membership dues.

Changes to the newsletter that will be put into effect immediately include:

1. Change of format making it easier to read online.
2. Eliminate the Block of the Month from the newsletter. The BOM patterns will be available on the membership table, and on the guild website.
3. Restrict the newsletter to 8 pages.

The committee will meet again before the April 12, 2008 Board meeting.

Space Rental: The rent for our meeting space at F.I.T. is once again going up, and it is a critical concern for the guild. A year or so ago the monthly rental was approximately \$500/meeting. This year it is approximately \$1,000/meeting, and next year it will be approximately \$1,400/meeting. These numbers include janitorial services. At these rates with the current a membership level of 350 members, 100% of membership dues need to be allocated to meeting space rent.

A better audio system – which has often been requested by the membership and would be great – would add an additional \$400/meeting.

It was noted that as a State University, these rates are set by the State of New York, and not F.I.T. It was also noted that while we were able to negotiate a phase-in of our rate increase for this year, the increase is still happening, and the phase-in is not helping the overall issue.

We discussed various strategies for dealing with this issue including:

1. ***Changing the meeting from a full day to a half day.*** Jennifer Bigelow will find out from F.I.T. if this is possible, and what that would cost. It was noted that if we did change to afternoon-only meetings we would need to consider the value of the services we would be losing compared to the financial savings. Whether or not to continue offering focus groups is a consideration.

The possibility of holding morning focus groups in our normal workshop location across 8th Avenue (343 Eighth Ave) was discussed. We don't know if we would be able to get those meeting room(s) for the dates we need them, and if we did, we might not save enough money to warrant the inconvenience for our members. We will re-visit this issue after more information is obtained from F.I.T. about half-day rental possibility and cost.

2. **Cutting the number of meetings** that we hold over the course of the season from ten to something else. The consensus was that we would like to avoid this if at all possible.
3. **Meeting in a different location.** Board members were asked to consider alternate spaces and to ask around about potential meeting spaces. It was acknowledged that our current space has some deficiencies (audio system and room size for example), but that its positive attributes include (a) easy access to public transportation for our members from Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut; (b) nice light and friendly atmosphere; (c) the psychological plus of meeting in an artistic environment (as opposed to a corporate or religious building's basement); and (d) a good space to hold the quilt show.

Mary Butler will check on the availability/cost of a location on 58th Street between 7th and Broadway, and Kitty Squire will ask guild member Michael Greenberg for suggestions. The Borough of Manhattan College (on Chambers Street) was suggested as a possibility, but no one is looking into that yet.

It was noted that it is much more difficult to find meeting space now than it was in the past. The reasons include: (a) due to post-9/11 security tightening, many government owned and operated buildings no longer allow non-government organizations to meet in the buildings; (b) many corporations also no longer allow outside organizations to meet in their facilities for the same security reasons; (c) the guild is much larger than it was in the past, so we need a bigger space; (d) Real estate rental costs have increased at a rate that greatly exceeds any rate increase that we could pass on to the membership via a dues increase.

4. **Limiting our membership.** While looking for other meeting space, it was discovered that some locations require membership rosters not to exceed the room fire-law capacity, regardless of how many people actually attend the meetings. We currently have about 200 people attending our meetings, which is approximately 57% of our membership roster of 350 people.
5. **Increase income from corporate matching gifts and volunteer donations.** No specific action on this topic was taken, but the board was made aware of the possibility, and we will revisit the issue again.

Jennifer Bigelow will write something about fund raising and cost-cutting endeavors for the newsletter, and we were all asked to actively consider ways to help enable the continuation of the guild.

n other business:

Get well card for Sylvia Zeveloff: Rita Reid brought in a hand-made get-well card for past guild president Sylvia Zeveloff. The board members signed it, and Rita will pass it around the meeting room today.

April 12, 2008 Meeting: It was decided to hold the regular raffles at the April meeting, even though we will also be selling the final raffle tickets for the 2008 Big Apple Quilt. Also at the April 12, 2008 meeting, Anna Faustino will be selling and signing copies of her newly-released book *Simply Stunning Woven Quilts*. The book sells for \$26.95. And Anna Faustino showed a sample of a "Mask" quilt that will be the topic of her focus group at the same meeting.

June 7, 2008 Meeting: The Member Flea Market will be held in a similar manner to the way it operated at the September 8, 2007 meeting. Small tables will be available to members for a \$10 rental fee, and larger tables for \$20. Reservations are required, and need to be submitted to Larry Gifford by May 25, 2008 in order to get the desired set-up map to F.I.T. The details of flea market procedures will appear in the April newsletter and will be posted on the guild website.

Dyckman Farmhouse Museum: Mary Butler reported that the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum wants to organize a special event to introduce the museum's new quilt and several other recent acquisitions to the public. Empire Quilters members will be invited to attend this event in appreciation for our participation in the reproduction of their quilt. We were asked if we would prefer a weekday evening event or a weekend event. The consensus was for a weekend. Mary Butler will convey this to the Susan De Vries, Director of the Museum. The event will most likely happen on the first weekend in May, 2008.

International Quilt Study Center: The International Quilt Study Center is looking for a guild sponsor from each state, and it was suggested that Empire Quilters be the New York State sponsor. Details were not available about the sponsorship process, benefits of sponsorship or the cost of sponsorship. Jennifer Bigelow will find out more from Diane Rode Schneck and will report back to the board at the April 12, 2008 meeting.

Cindy Russell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Kitty Squire and passed by the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

Submitted By: Cindy Russell
in Secretary Gail Lefton's absence