

Lessons learned from quilting

Several weekends ago my husband and I went to Manna House of Prayer again. I went to a quilting retreat, and he went to see his spiritual director and spend time in prayer. I had been looking forward to this particular weekend for 11 months. Last February I attended my first quilting retreat there and saw a quilt made with a pattern that fascinated me. Our instructor said she would be having another retreat weekend during which she would teach this pattern, Four Patch Posies. I decided I would attend.

But I got impatient (a character defect of mine), so I talked to my quilting mentor and asked if she was familiar with this pattern. She was not only familiar with the pattern, but had fabric she thought was ideal for this pattern. Plus she offered to order the pattern for me.

I received the fabric and eventually the pattern. I laid out the fabric and decided not to follow the instructions as they were presented in the pattern. I wanted to save fabric. I did that, but, as you can guess, the pattern didn't work. I called my mentor and asked if she had any more fabric. She had a little bit that I would be able to use. So this time I followed the directions, but I had to make some four-patch blocks and then use solid color blocks. I was not satisfied with the four-patch blocks, and was disappointed in myself. I finished the quilt top but decided to do nothing more until the retreat was scheduled. I did find some material that I believed would be right for the pattern, but I brought it home and put it away.

The quilting retreat began, and our instructor talked about the pattern and showed us how to lay it out and then cut it. Knowing what I was doing made a huge difference! The fabric worked up beautifully, I found additional yardage so I could make a queen-sized quilt, and it is now about half put together.

This experience taught me some important lessons. Probably the first is that when I am doing a new project, it is important to follow the directions! I may have a certain level of skill, but that doesn't mean I can "outsmart" the designer. Next is that I haven't conquered my impatience. It is one of those traits I haven't eradicated. I have improved during my adult years, but I still have a ways to go. Finally I learned, again, how important it is to forgive myself. I am especially careful with my current project because I remember my earlier disaster, and I am so pleased with how it looks.

I have made another discovery in the past year; quilting has become a spiritual exercise for me. That's a growing awareness, and I will share more about that in another column.

Life is Good
Rita Speer



Abreast on the latest trends

Spring is in the air. One of the first indicators is the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue is out.

I saw the cover online and there was a debate among those who viewed it: Are they real? If you wish to view the photo you can try "Google" on your computer and google away!

I don't blame SI for doing what they do: it sells magazines; rather the point if you are in publishing. SI is not Psychology Today or Mensa. It's entertainment. We'll do most anything to be entertained.

Me---I'm no longer amused. I don't really care if people have breast augmentation. I just think they should be required to have that information tattooed above the cleavage. Something like: "Ladies: Do not feel intimidated. These are not real. Do not beat yourself up. There is nothing wrong with you." For the men: "It's fine to look. If I didn't want you to look I would have stayed a B cup. Just don't judge other women by these."

Some women are naturally very well endowed. Recently I heard two women, who are what many would aspire to be, discuss the trials of their situation. Both were in their early 60's, developed early, were teased a lot, and to this day carry scars from the attention they received just because of the size of their chests.

Then there are the "little sisters". They would give anything to have those problems. In a family I know one cousin had breast reduction and another asked if it was possible to have a transplant. Perhaps the genetic make up was similar enough rejection would not be a problem! It was a joke,

This Too Shall Pass
Nancy Hagman



sort of. Laughter can cover a lot of pain.

Breast enhancement (indeed all plastic surgery) has become commonplace among movie stars and models. Young girls see the photos, movies and music videos all day long and think: this is normal. The boys wonder: why don't the girls I know look like that?

Old movies are rather instructional for girls worrying about this. The older the movie the more real the bodies are. Marilyn Monroe by today's standards is short, almost tiny. By today's standards she was voluptuous (eek---she had fat thighs!). I believe in evolution from looking at pin up photos from the 50's. Women today are taller, even thin girls do not have waistlines. What happened? We have selected what we consider sexy, and it's not Grandpa's version!

In the seventies there was Farrah Fawcett in the red bathing suit. Fawcett was not particularly well endowed. She did her own hair and makeup before the shoot. The poster sold more than 12 million copies. She retained control of her image and made millions off the sale of the poster alone. Fawcett's life was far from care free but I submit her business moxy makes her an excellent role model for girls!

It's hard to find reliable statistics about breast enhancement. In 2007 some 340,000 women had breast augmentation; that figure was down 12 percent from the previous year because the economy was beginning to falter. About 20 percent of women having this surgery are breast cancer patients or those with a physiological reason for the surgery.

Women who have breast implants for purely cosmetic reasons are more likely to have self esteem issues, receiving some sort of psychological counseling before surgery. Initially self esteem issues tend to resolve after surgery. But as time passes these women are more likely to be further treated for mental illness including self esteem. Suicide rates are significantly higher as are alcohol and drug related illnesses and deaths.

Who knows what that means? Would these women have self esteem issues no matter their cup size? Do women who have breast implants work in entertainment venues where they are more likely to be exposed to alcohol and drugs?

There is a show called: How to Look Good Naked! I've never watched it so I may be off base but I think along with a fitness and diet aspect it has a lot to do with self acceptance and confidence.

Being on the cover of Sports Illustrated is a feat few women ever attain. However we all deserve to be confident of our beauty and worth. It sure would be easier to achieve this if we were comparing ourselves to reality rather than the results of a surgeon's scalpel and airbrushed images.

Technology dependent youth of today

Last fall a concerned teacher passed on an article questioning young people's dependence on technology. Are we in fact enhancing their lives or are we creating a generation lacking imagination and basic understanding of simple tasks? As an example, it referred to plastic ice cube trays versus the refrigerator ice machine...I can go you even one better. Remember the old metal ones with the handle you pulled back? The author voiced concern over a youngster's inability and even unwillingness to try to grasp these simple mechanisms.

Most of us have had the experience of trying to get change at the store when an electronic cash register failed. Or perhaps worse yet is the clerk who has inadvertently punched in the wrong numbers and alas the responding change is incorrect. When you try to correct the clerk, you are met with "but the cash register says so".

However my response to the "technology dependence", as highlighted in the particular article, rests not with the presence of technology, but rather with the absence of parents. Technology,

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



as with everything, requires balance, something which parents must provide. For instance, a recent survey found 78% of 12 and 13 year olds who own cell phones go to bed with them; of those 14 and older, 86%. Now you may ask how many 12 year olds actually have a phone, nationally approximately one-half; 72% of 14 year olds and 85% of 16 year olds. Once again however the presence of the cell phone is not the issue. Parents need to set boundaries.

Technology can certainly enhance a young person's life. Do they research papers in the same way? No, but do they ask more questions when the answers are at their fingertips. When our children were small and asked a question I always said, "Let's look it up." And off to the

Encyclopedia Britannica, the heavy book ones. Now I urge the grandchildren to look it up on the Internet. It provides the perfect time to discover legitimate sights, use one's skills in reading and apply the information to our particular question. Last year, after a ride out to the State Park, I wanted to know why pelicans swim in a row. The Internet provided the instant answer.

Children are inquisitive by nature, but it must be fueled by parents. Technology can provide the same level of imagination if, and only if, parents teach basic problem solving skills. Does your child know survival skills without a cell phone or how to entertain oneself without a game boy? Must you have a GPS to navigate your way to University of Kansas or have you taught them how to read a map? As the ad says, you are your child's first and most important teacher. No matter the other adults in a child's life, you will be the number one teacher and mentor, but not their best friend. mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net



Dear Sir:

On January 20, 2011, Dr. Kermit Gosnell, of Philadelphia, PA., was arraigned and indicted for eight counts of murder. The first count was a charge of third degree murder for the death of a woman on whom he had operated. The seven other counts are first degree murder charges for the deaths of seven babies delivered live and then killed by severing their spinal cords, in his abortion clinic.

Dr. Gosnell had not been visited by a medical examiner for 17 years. No one in more than 30 years had questioned his activities. State and local agencies had "looked the other way" even though there had been complaints.

The Grand Jury investigating Dr. Gosnell estimated that Dr. Gosnell was bringing in nearly \$1.8 million a year. Make no mistake, abortion is a genuine big business in the United States. However, it is America's Holocaust.

How many more of these houses of horror would be exposed, if the proper regulatory agencies were, in fact, doing their jobs? Are the directors of these agencies just as liable for these crimes as Dr. Gosnell?

It is time to target the facilities where it gets their attention. It is time to stop ALL state and federal funding or any and all abortions, and that includes the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Planned Parenthood had 797 clinics in the United States and performs more than 324,000 abortions a year. That is nearly one third of all reported abortions per year. Planned Parenthood receives \$363 million per year in taxpayers funds. Planned Parenthood officials receive tidy salaries, as well. Their president receives \$385,000 and eight other officers receive \$190,000 each annually.

Congressman Mike Pence has introduced HR. 217, a bill to "end taxpayer funding for Planned Parenthood". House speaker John Boehner joined Rep. Christopher Smith, N.J., in introducing HR 3, a bill that would outlaw all forms of federal subsidy for abortion. These bills, if passed and signed by the President, would free American tax payers from the burden and guilt of bankrolling this sordid industry.

It's a sad day in America when public health officials put more effort into inspecting beauty and nail salons, than abortion clinics.

Write and call your Representative and Senators asking them to support HR. 217 and HR. 3 for passage. Also, write the President, asking him to sign these bills into law. Then, and only then, will we begin to see respect for all human life, from conception to natural death.

Sincerely, Gilbert C. Otter, Barber

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Thumbs Up to Amy McKinney (Northern Valley School) for taking us through memory lane to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Northern Valley boys and coaches on the 1st State Basketball Championship, 1986. A job well done and a fun Saturday night in the Valley. Thanks. Emailed in.

Thumbs up to Norton County for the appreciation lunch you held for your employees. Great meal and great people to visit with. Emailed in.