

## SUDBURY AND DISTRICT QUILT AND STITCHERY GUILD HISTORY

### OUR FIRST YEAR 1975-1976

Prior to the initial meeting of “The Sudbury and District Quilting Guild”, Mary Conroy sent out an invitation to attend this meeting along with Notes on Forming a Quilting Guild abstracted from the National Quilting Association (USA), Some Points to Ponder about the Organization of a Quilting Guild, and the Proposed Constitution and By-Laws for the new Guild.

A meeting was held at the home of Mary Conroy, 360 Stewart Drive in Sudbury on **June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1975**. Fifty-four people attended. Mary spoke on the reasons for the meeting (see original invitation) as well as a request for a hanging for the Stearns and Foster Company board room. A short discussion was held as to whether the guild should include stitchery. Mrs. M. Ward made a motion “That a Quilting and Stitchery Guild be set up in the Sudbury and District. Seconded by Mrs. J Williamson. Carried”. Several amendments were then made to the draft constitution. A motion was made to hold general meetings, arranged by the executive, every two months.

The nominated executive was:

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|------------------------|--------------------|
| • President            | Mary Conroy        |
| • Sec/Treasurer        | Eleanor Wainwright |
| • Membership           | Marion Valiaho     |
| • Programme            | Mary Conroy        |
| • Nominations Chairman | Lynn Gainer        |
| • Interest Groups      | left until Sept.   |

Ad Hoc Chairmen

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|----------------------------|--------------------|
| • Maple Leaf Quilt         | Pat Moro           |
| • Historical Quilt         | Eleanor Wainwright |
| • Stearns and Foster Quilt | left until Sept.   |

Membership fees were set at \$3.00 per year. After coffee and refreshments, Pat Moro distributed 69 of the 80 blocks for the Madame’s Maple Leaf Quilt (valued at \$400.00) that will be worked on at the Sudbury Museum and Fine Arts Centre from November 18 to December 21st. This quilt will be raffled, the draw to be held June 8th, by the members of the Women’s Committee at the Arts Centre with the funds raised being used to purchase additions to the museum’s permanent collection and to offset speaker and film costs.

The First General Meeting of the Sudbury and District Quilting and Stitchery Guild was held on Monday, **September 22, 1975** at 8.15pm at St. Albert’s Separate School on Eyre Street. Twenty-seven ladies paid their membership fees at that time. Pat Moro was awaiting the completion of the final eleven blocks of the Maple Leaf Quilt. The Stearns and Foster hanging would be the next large project with the Historical Quilt postponed for the moment. Shirley

Challis volunteered to set up the interest groups with a beginners (*quilting?*) group to start immediately, while Marion Valiaho volunteered to be in charge of the stitchery group. A suggested meeting date prior to November 18<sup>th</sup> was set to plan the staffing of quilters for the museum quilt. A short show and tell was held, and then goodies were enjoyed by all.

On **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1975**, Marion Valiaho, sent out an invitation to members and friends informing them of the first workshop to be held by the Stitchery Interest Group. Basic stitches were going to be taught “so that everyone would be on the same level for future learning experiences and to help both beginners and experienced needlewomen improve their techniques in stitchery – and it can be applied to quilting as well”. Kits were provided at a nominal fee of 25 cents, and instructions on what personal items to bring were included. The instructor of this workshop was Mary Conroy “member of the Embroiderers’ Guild, London, England, the Canadian Embroiderers’ Association, Winnipeg, and the Embroiderers’ Guild of Canada, London, Ontario”.

“Future workshops will deal with other aspects of stitchery, e.g. petit point, needlepoint, crewel embroidery, colour co-ordination, setting your work into working frames and framing the finished product. To cover these topics and others, we hope to provide guest lecturers and talent from our own ranks. Another suggested topic was to provide histories of the various types of needlework.”

A second footnote on this invitation proudly stated that the Guild now had 47 members.

By the **November 13<sup>th</sup>** regular meeting, there were 66 paid members. It was reported that Mrs. Joyce would organize the quilting on the Maple Leaf quilt on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons from 1.30–3.30pm and evenings from 7.30-9.00pm. So far there have been 3 well attended afternoon and evening quilting sessions. Three stitchery sessions, with good attendance, have already been held on every second Thursday. A discussion ensued with regard to the Quilts and Things Show being planned for the spring. The object of this sale was to purchase a sewing machine. Newsletters were deemed to be the best way to notify members of future events.

The **January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1976** Newsletter mentions that all the quilting was yet to be completed on the Madame’s Maple Leaf quilt, as ladies were busy due to the preparation for the Christmas season. The quilt will be set up after January 27<sup>th</sup> and requests for members to come in anytime during the day/evening were made.

#### Proposed meetings

- January 29<sup>th</sup> 8pm – a work meeting –quilting on the Maple Leaf quilt
- February 12 – guild meeting – quilting on Maple Leaf quilt
- February 26 – guild meeting – quilting on Maple Leaf quilt

NB. If the quilting is completed, a stitchery workshop completing sampler #2 and moving on to sampler #3 will be held. Arrangements are being made with Nyla Gorham to give a workshop on Colour and Creativity in Stitchery in the near future.

The Guild now has a scrap materials box which you could add to or take from, 3 long folding tables, a 40 cup coffee percolator, an ironing board and irons, and the nucleus of a library. Members have been invited to donate any books, magazines or patterns to the new library.

By **March 3<sup>rd</sup>**, panic had set in with regard to the completion of the Madame's Maple Leaf quilt, as the Museum has requested its completion for the Museum's Annual Antique Sale which will be held on April 15<sup>th</sup>. The quilting was less than half completed. Members are now being asked to design original pictorial or symbolic blocks representing the history of Sudbury for the Historical Presentation Quilt. Numerous activities were planned including: an invitation to Mrs Valerie Jervais-Reid, a professional embroideress from England to conduct a 3 day workshop; a bus trip to the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale and to attend the Canadian Quilters workshop; and an invitation to Mr. Aurele Labrosse, owner of The Needle Shop on Elgin Street, to give a series of workshops in canvas work to the Guild.

On **March 11<sup>th</sup>**, Nyla Gorham, Art Consultant for the Ministry of Education presented a "very worthwhile" workshop in the Guild meeting room on Creativity in Needlework. Members were asked to bring a list of items along with their Imaginations, enthusiasm and an open mind. Marg Conibear and Shonette Haywood managed to complete their projects that night.

By **April 8<sup>th</sup>**, it was reported that the Madame's Maple Leaf Quilt "is almost ready to be taken out of the frame. Mary Conroy will check it over, trim and pin the binding to it, Karen Annis and Helen Ayers made the picot edging and someone as yet unknown will actually sew the binding in place." Mary Conroy thanked the more than 100 members who worked more than 2000 hours on the quilt and stated "surprisingly, it looks just fine." The stitchery group appears to be quite active having completed 3 samplers, while the quilting group now has Hick's Flower Basket quilt on the frame.

The final Annual Meeting, on **May 18<sup>th</sup>**, was held as a potluck at Mary Conroy's home. Reports for the year mentioned that

- The Guild had 66 members for the first year
- Guild members learned a great deal with the making of Madame's Maple Leaf Quilt – "especially the difficulties in putting it together"
- 9 stitchery workshops were held with approximately 20 attendees

The slate of officers for the year 1976-1977 were

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|-------------------|----------------|
| • President       | Marion Valiaho |
| • Sec/Treasurer   | Cookie Smith   |
| • Membership      | Joyce Brooks   |
| • Interest Groups | Pat Moro       |
| • Prog/Newsletter | Mary Conroy    |
| • Nominations     | Jean Cooke     |

On **May 28-29<sup>th</sup>**, a full bus of Guild members, spouses and friends travelled to the Mennonite Quilt Auction and the Canada Quilts session in New Hamburg. Bus cost \$15.95.

Obviously, there was much interest in the Guild, both quilting and stitchery, and many activities to keep the interest alive.

Documented by Lynn Binney, October 2010