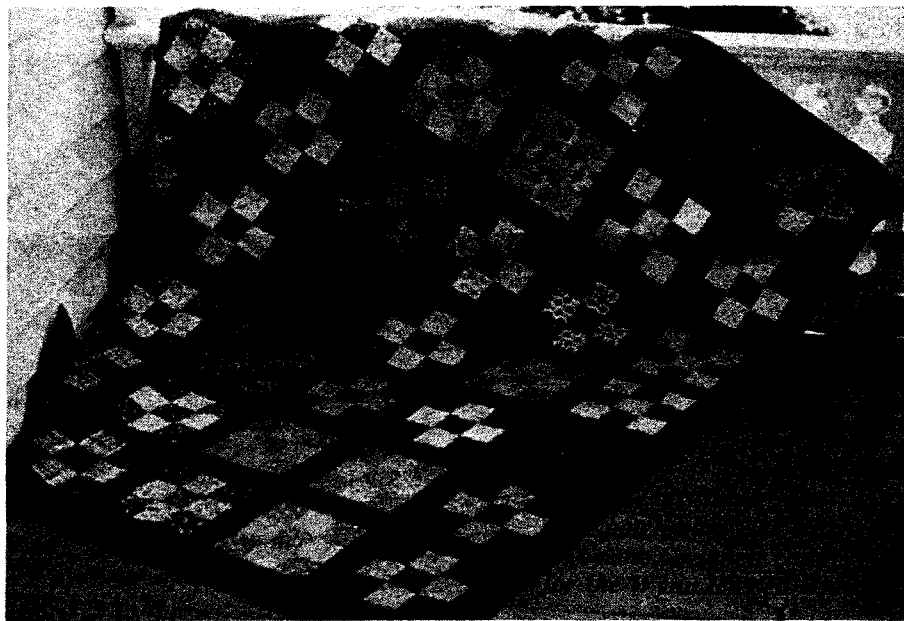


# QUILTING Together

 With the Gwinnett Quilters 



**W**hen Barbara Swenson moved from Kansas to Georgia, she had no idea that she would be the moving force behind the formation of what is now a large active group of quilters. Not long after arriving in Lilburn (on the edges of Atlanta),

Barbara approached Liz Parham, the owner of Sew Easy Fabric Shop, about the possibility of teaching sampler quilt classes in the shop. When the classes were started, they brought together many people interested in quilting. From the classes came the

desire for an organization where the growing interest in quilting could continue to be shared.

The first meeting of the Gwinnett Quilters Guild was held in 1980 at the Lilburn City Hall. There were nine people present, giving an opportunity for every founding member to serve on the executive committee of the Guild. A logo contest was held, and won by Chick Clark—hers was the only entry! Several programs were held, which was quite a feat considering the near empty treasury. This first year also saw the founding of stitch-ins, first for daytime quilters and then in the evening as well.

The first year also saw the first fund raising project—these active quilters needed to increase the size of the treasury so they could expand their activities. They made a raffle quilt from a top donated by Liz Parham in a scrap star pattern. A quilt frame was set up

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*Members of the Gwinnett Quilters are busily stitching on this year's raffle quilt.*

1988. There is also a natural desire to explore new design ideas whilst building on the hard-won traditional skills. Of course there is the danger that a plethora of wattle and koalas (they are not bears) may become hackneyed from overuse, but at the moment it is all very new and exciting.

By the way, one fundamental difference is in terminology. To us "calico" is what you call unbleached muslin, muslin is a cheesecloth material of no use to quilters, and what YOU call calico I'd just describe as a small floral print. You can just imagine the confusion when an Aussie picks up her first U.S. magazine.

Contrary to anything you may have read about Australian quilters a few years back, we are now very well off for supplies. Through our quilt shops we have access to the best of U.S. fabrics and notions along with Liberty and Laura Ashley from England. We do pay horrendous prices, particularly for books and magazines—how would you like to pay nearly \$7.00 for QUILT? But doesn't everyone complain about prices these days—anyway we all have our vices.

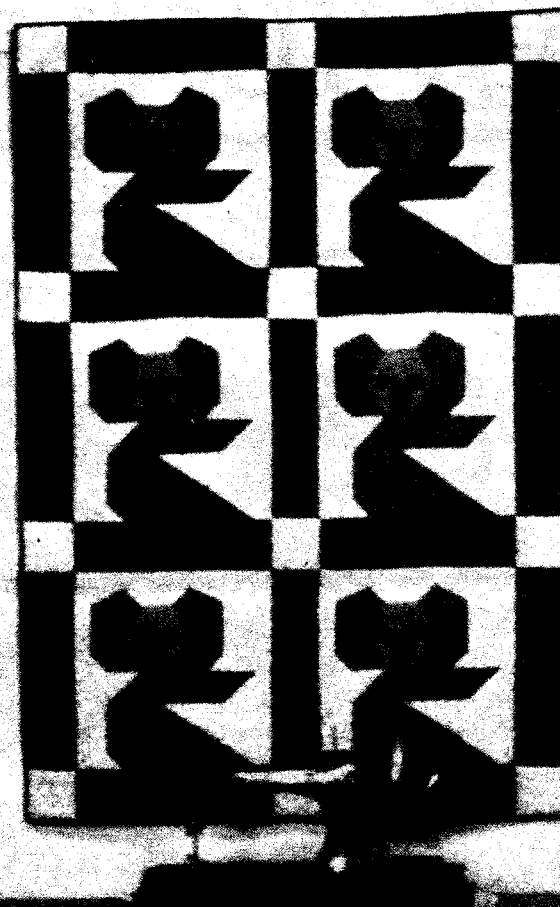
In writing this, I appealed to an American quilter who has recently returned to America after two years "down under." Linda French of Dayton, Ohio became friends during that time and here are some of her experiences and impressions of quilting in Australia.—*Susan Iacuone*.

"When my husband came home and informed me that we were moving to Australia my mind was full of excitement and anticipation. The next morning I was reading through QUILT and saw a notice for a quilt show in Mount Waverly, a suburb of Melbourne where I would soon be. I contacted the president and received information about the group. She said to call when I arrived. I felt as though my adventure had begun before I even boarded the first flight.

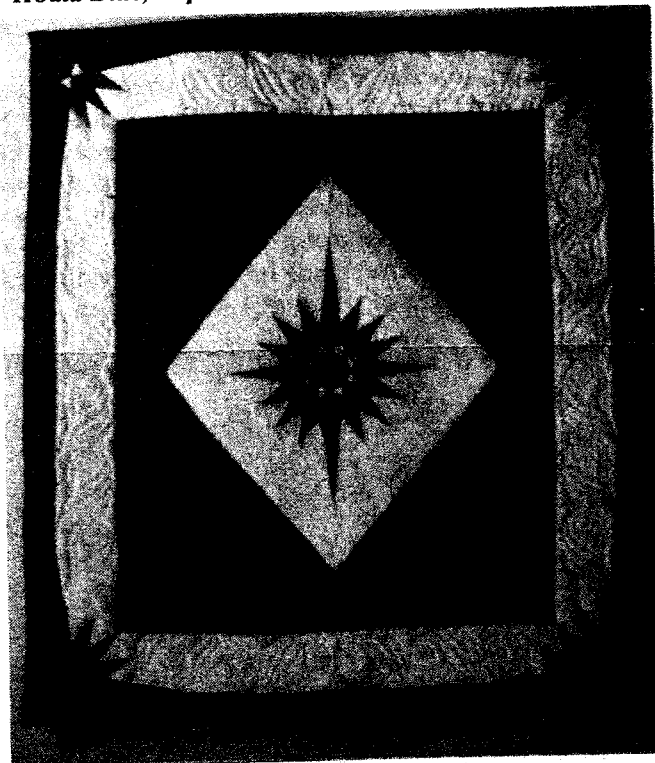
Within three weeks I was at my first meeting of the Patchworkers of Waverley. Everyone was very friendly and it was at this meeting that I met one of the best friends I'll ever have, Susan Iacuone. She called me every week to see if she could help with our adapting to life in a foreign country. Her help was invaluable because that task was harder than we expected.

I was very interested in Australian quilting and soon started visiting quilt shows. My first impression of the quilts was that there was a splitting of interests. There was a strong English patchwork influence and the growing popularity

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*Koala Blue, a quilted wall hanging by Susan Iacuone.*



*Susan's Diamond Medallion by Linda French.*

## THE GWINNETT QUILTERS

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at Sew Easy and the quilting was done there. The quilt was raffled at Lilburn Daze in October and has become an annual event. These ambitious quilters now take their raffle quilt and frame to various malls during the summer months and sell tickets while giving quilting demonstrations to the public.

The guild was soon invited to quilt in the annex building of the Clayton House in Stone Mountain Park. They held day stitch-ins and had the exciting opportunity to share quilting with the many people who visited the park. It was at Stone Mountain that the first quilts were basted and the first mini-workshops were held. The guild had two other opportunities to share its love for quilting when they were asked to demonstrate quilting at the Pickneyville Arts and Crafts Fair in Norcross, Georgia. They were also invited to show quilts at the Neva Lomason Memorial Library in Carrollton, Georgia. Approximately twenty-five quilts were on display for a month and the show was very popular with library patrons.

The stitch-ins were moved to the Wynn Russle house, a historic farmhouse in Lilburn during its second year. Mini-workshops and stitch-ins continue to be held at this location. This lovely old farmhouse, built in 1826, provides ample room for the members to enjoy their quilting endeavors while a large upstairs bedroom holds their large quilting frame with the raffle quilt. The house is owned by the City of Lilburn which purchased it in 1977. In a great state of disrepair, the house was restored as the result of thousands of hours of dedicated work on the part of the residents of Lilburn.

The guild has participated in over Atlanta area quilting events. They also joined the North Geor-

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gia Quilt Council and is participating in the Council's activities. It has also begun holding workshops taught by teachers of national reputation. All in all, it is amazing to see what a determined group of women with shared interest can accomplish in just six short years. The Gwinnett quilters are a wonderful example of the many quilting guilds that are meeting all over America to promote quilting and share friendship.

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Quilt Magazine  
Winter  
1986