

## **Learning From Our Quilt Show Judge** by Sue Berry

During our last quilt show, I wrote down all the comments our judge, Scott Murkin, made about the quilts entered for judging. This was quite an experience! I have often been a scribe for a part of the judging, but I have never been in the judging room for the entire process. I learned a lot from hearing all the comments.

I did not write down the name or number of each quilt. So, I do not know from my notes which comment relates to which quilt. The show committee always strives to maintain *complete* confidentiality surrounding the judge's comments. Persons in the judging room are not aware of whose quilt is being judged unless, of course, by chance, their own quilt or a friend's is being judged.

The positive comments that Scott made about the quilts were unique to each quilt. Thus, it would be difficult to generally summarize the positive comments. However, each quilt entered had positive comments made about it. Although, in my opinion, the judge reacted positively to those quilts in which the actual quilting enhanced the design of the quilt top. If you remember, this is the same general comment that Neva Hart, who judged the challenge quilts made: the quilt design should enhance the design of the quilt top.

Following is a general summary of items that could be improved:

### **Piecing/Applique/Labels**

- More consistency needed in knife-edge piecing
- Visible piecing threads distracting
- Long seams and edges need to be straight
- Sashing should be straight and consistent width and line up across the top
- Square quilt at each stage of construction
- More consistency needed in cutting same-sized applique pieces
- More care needed in density and spacing of applique stitches; take care to avoid slanted stitches
- Shorter stitch length would make it easier to achieve smoother curves
- Fraying noted in smaller applique pieces
- Label application on back of quilt causing distortion on quilt top

### **Quilting**

- Remove markings for quilting before entering for judging
- Quilting should be in scale to overall size of piece
- Different quilting and/or thread choice would enhance the attractiveness of the quilt top
- Quilting should stay within the intended design areas; also it should fill the designated space
- Strive for consistent stitch length in machine quilting; care needed in changing direction of quilting
- More precision needed in starts and stops of machine quilting; starts and stops should be secure
- More consistency in machine tension needs to be achieved
- Additional quilting would add to the stability and durability of the quilt
- Some skipped stitches noted in quilting
- More care needed in repeating shapes of the quilting motifs
- More consistency needed in spacing of parallel lines
- More consistency in machine retracing of quilting lines
- Additional quilting could minimize surface distortion
- Quilting has caused puckers on borders
- Strive for consistent stitch length in hand-quilting

### **Binding**

- Binding should not cut off points of piecwork or encroach on border quilting
- Corners should be mitered, not rounded
- Miters of binding should align with miters of borders
- Binding should be consistent width on the front and back of the quilt and filled completely with batting
- Binding stitches should be tighter and closer on back of quilt and not come through to front of quilt
- Flange should be consistent width
- More care needed in applying split binding
- Facing fabric should not show on front