

Meanderings

Custom Longarm Quilting and Design by Judy and Ed Gucker
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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Judy is writing this before the TV on Inaugural Day. January, this year, doesn't just offer the usual new beginning; our new President offers us, as a nation, a new beginning. May we all join in to help him restore and strengthen America both at home and abroad. This is a proud day for our nation.

It's taken Judy several weeks getting around to write this, as there are so many topics she wants to discuss and has found it difficult to make a choice. She chose hot topics for helping you to improve your quilts: choosing batting, fabric care, sources for determining yardage, setting triangles, and making flying geese and using neutral colors. Have fun!

THE ULTIMATE BATTING CHART

For the November 2008 and January 2009 issues of *Unlimited Possibilities*, a magazine for machine quilters, Marcia Stevens, the founder of the magazine, and Debbie Trevino, the "Consumer Reporter of Battings" and owner of Village Quiltworks in Richland, WA, wrote a two-part article (to be continued) of their very comprehensive batting study.

They began their first article, "Batting is an important component in a quilt. Without it, there is no quilt. All too often, quilters pay little attention to the batting they use and may base their choice on price or advertising. That decision has a profound effect on the finished product and possibly the environment. Whether batting is purchased by the roll, by the package, wholesale, retail or with a 50% off coupon, make sure you know what you are buying. Is it the right batting for the project?" This article discussed batting terminology, the production and characteristics of polyester, cotton, wool, alpaca, silk and bamboo, and their method for developing the "The Ultimate Batting Chart." You can download this chart at www.villagequiltworks.com. Click on "Information" then on "Ultimate Batting Chart (657kb PDF) (Last updated 11/10/2008)." As they continue their studies, they will be updating this chart.

The production of any of these materials is an eye opener of just one industry's impact on our environment. Although some aspects of fiber production 'may' be 'green,' some are downright dangerous. We wish we could say to you, this batting is the best for our environment but each has its issues. As our personal New Year's resolution is to begin steps toward Going Green, we will discontinue carrying 100% polyester batting (on sale – see below). Whereas polyester adds loft to our quilts, is resilient, dries quickly, resists mold and mildew and washes easily, it is a petroleum product, is flammable, is derived

from non-renewable resources, its production involves hazardous chemicals, it releases pollutants and CO₂, and is a major landfill pollutant.

Their second article detailed information on corn and soy battings. They closed this article with, "Once the batting is 'hidden,' how will future generations know how the product should be cared for? Eco-friendly fibers encourage eco-friendly laundering care. Based on our...tests of all the different battings, we know that care must be considered and will likely determine how long the quilt can be used. With that in mind, perhaps the fabric label, which we are all encouraged to attach to our quilts, should include the fiber content and care instructions of the batting along with the historical information ..."

SALE!!!

Quilter's Dream Poly Select 93"

Silky fine denier microfibers

Color: white

No scrim, resins or binders

High wicking, soft, breathable

Was: .145 per linear inch

NOW: .109 per linear inch or \$3.92/yard

Feel free to call (637-3579) to purchase some while it lasts.

In March, we will be offering Fairfield 50% Bamboo & 50% Organic Cotton Blend Batting, 81-inch x 96-inch (available in packages only). It is very soft, produces a nice vintage scrunch and lies very flat. The carton contains five packages; we will be reserving one for us to test and will be selling the other four *at our cost* for you to try. Unfortunately, this batting rivals the price of wool; they will sell for approximately \$19.00 plus tax. Call (637-3579) to have one reserved for you if you would like an opportunity to try this new fiber.

TO WASH OR NOT TO WASH

There has always been and will always be debate about whether fabric should be pre-washed. We know master quilters who say, "No." Still we disagree:

- Natural fibers shrink, some more than others. Ask yourself, do you want the fabrics in your pieced and appliquéd quilts to shrink at different rates when your quilts are washed?
- Dye running is not a huge issue today with the use of Synthrapol as it keeps loose dye particles suspended in the wash water so dyes don't bleed into other areas. However, new batiks, imported fabrics and many dark fabrics may continue to bleed following a simple wash.

HOW TO WASH COTTON FABRICS

- Individually machine-wash each color of fabric using ¼ cup of Synthrapol in warm water per washing machine load. **We sell 4 oz. bottles of Synthrapol for \$2.50 plus tax.** Unless your fabric is one piece, don't wash more than five or six yards per load.
- Rinse in cool water until it rinses clear. Spin out as much water as possible.
- Hang to dry or dry in a cool to warm dryer.

TIP: To prevent large pieces of fabric from tangling, unfold the yardage. Then, at one of the selvage edge, fan fold, back and forth, in about 18-inch widths. Using large safety pins (diaper pins work well if you still have them), pin every 6-inches at the selvage. After washing, shake out holding the pinned edge, shake out again after drying and smooth the fabric. You will suffer no tangles and twists.

THE QUILTER'S POCKET REFERENCE – An Easy Guide to Yardage and More
By Peggy Scholly

For years we have kept a copy of this book by our sewing machine. In fact Judy has given copies of this book to many of her quilting friends. In the November/December 2008 issue of *Quilter's Home*, Mark Lipinski said, "I have copies of this gem in my office, sewing area, quilting travel case, and car! Couldn't live without it."

Contents include: yardage equivalents; how to calculate cost, yardage for quilt backs, blocks, rectangles, diamonds, borders and bindings; how to cut half square triangles, quarter square triangles, diamonds and equilateral triangles; types of binding; reduction/enlargement percentages; and hanging sleeves. 33 pages. We have three on order; it retails at \$8.95 plus tax. It's a small price for a heavy-duty tool.

DOES SETTING BLOCKS ON-POINT INTIMIDATE YOU?

When you diagonally set blocks, it is called "on-point." Quilters are often intimidated by determining the size and putting triangles around the edge. The most important rule is that the bias edges of triangles should *NEVER* go along the outside edge. For a simple and "Quick Cutting Method For Setting & Corner Triangles" go to www.patchpieces.com/quiltsettings.html.

DO YOU FLEE FROM MAKING FLYING GEESE?

Flee no more, for easy instructions that include the formula for making any size go to, www.patchpieces.com/Flyinggeese.html.

ALLOW NEUTRAL COLOR FABRICS TO WORK IN YOUR QUILTS

Gray, black and white are familiar and easy to use. Light neutrals: tan, beige and cream, give the eye a place to rest in one-color and in multi-color quilts. They reduce competition between colors and add contrast.

You may have noticed that brown is not on the color wheel? That is because it is really a shade (pure color mixed with black) of several different pure hues; the more black, the less the intensity of the color. In other words, black neutralizes color. Mixing all three primary colors can also make brown. Therefore, neutralizing violet (red and blue) with either black or yellow can make brown.

This is one example of mixing complimentary colors, colors that lie directly across from each other on the color wheel, to make a neutral color. Because neutrals can be derived from so many colors, take care to determine the root color so you do not end up with unplanned disappointments. Brown can be used as a contrast or as a transitional color. It represent earthiness, conveys warmth and wholesomeness.

WEBSITE UPDATES

We are currently updating our website: www.frontiernet.net/~meanderings/. Unfortunately Ed has been often quilting for minimum wage. If we include the cost of our longarm, tools and teaching devices, overhead and the time it takes to run the business, we aren't making money. Therefore, we are slightly raising some of our rates. We are also updating the information in much of the site. Take a look and keep checking.

Remember, it's not a quilt until it's quilted!

Judy and Ed Gucker