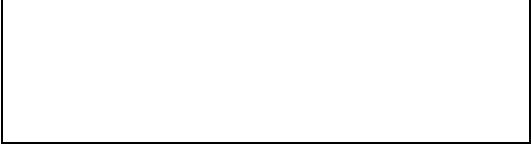


BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The current exhibit at the CoBACH Center in downtown Brighton, next to the Millpond, is a display of quilts. We hope you enjoy this story and will visit CoBACH to see these beautiful quilts. Hours for CoBACH are found on the front page.

Casual Quilters — Part One

In 1981, Jackie Chenoweth opened a fabric store at 428 W. Main Street called "Quilts, Etc." The store was located where the Dandelion Bookstore is currently. Women had been gathering at the fabric shop for sewing classes and getting together to sew. In 1991, as Jackie Chenoweth was set to close the fabric shop, Ruth Spangler and Kellie Perrault approached Jackie and asked if they could place a clipboard on her counter for people to sign up that would like to continue meeting in the evening and form a quilt guild after the shop closed. Quilts, Etc. closed in July 1991. A list of 50 women signed the clipboard.

The first two meetings were held at the Methodist church on Grand River. They then met in the Miller School kindergarten room for several months. Then they moved over to St. Paul's church basement. Due to the parking issues in town, in 2008 they moved to St. Pats, meeting in the basement there. This is where they meet currently.

The ladies chose the name of Casual Quilters, because that is what they wanted the group to be, *Casual*. Some already belonged to the Ann Arbor guild group and did not want to be that structured, taking up meeting times to have a business meeting. They just wanted a friendly, comfortable setting to sit and stitch and enjoy each other's company. They met on the first Monday of each month, and that has not changed since the inception of the group.

Quilters came a long distance to join, such as West Bloomfield, Livonia, Redford, Fowlerville etc. since Brighton was one of the few guilds to join at that time. In the beginning the group met only in Spring and Fall. There were no summer meetings. Now they meet year round.

Some of the early participants included: Ruth Spangler, Kellie Perrault, Deb Gough, Lynn Sandula, Gayle Ode, Lou Prine, Jan Nibble, Nancy DeAngelis, Jane Bak, Pat LaForest, Mary Nabozny, Denise Smith and her mother Marlene Visger. One of the members, Beverly Braun, has a

quilt in the Smithsonian. Another quilt member, Clare Long, was a costume designer in Hollywood.

Somewhere along the way, quilting retreats began to form. A trip to Shipshewana, Indiana was the first. Followed by the Howell Nature Center, and then more retreats began. Shopping and mystery trips formed. Always something to gather the individuals together in a common bond.

The group has been supportive of many community projects. They made annual raffle quilts for St. Paul's Church, in exchange for rent, and LACASA. The group stills makes an annual quilt for LACASA for their raffle. They made a quilt for a substance abuse children's group that hung on the wall at Maplegrove in West Bloomfield, a part of the Henry Ford Hospital, for 25 years. Quilts were also made for Kosovo & Habitat for Humanity.

To Be Continued in our April issue...

(Thanks to Mindy Kinsey, Ruth Spangler, Deb Gough, Gayle Ode and Andrea Michaels for their input to this story)



Front Row—L to R: Deb Gough, Jan Nibble, Randee Scholz, ??, Gayle Ode. Second Row —L to R: Barb Anderson, Barb Petersen, Helen Van Blarcum, Jackie Chenoweth, Catherine Cosineau. Back Row —L to R: Nancy DeAngelis, Mary Nabozny, June Darrow, Lynne Sandula, ??, Ruth Spangler, Kathleen Goebel, Marlene Visger.