



The Men of MQS

The one image I still have in my head is of him laying his head down on the podium while I read Claudia Pfeil's novel, er, I mean description of her quilt! Too funny!

Bob Ketcham is one of the owners of APQS, along with **Jim Langland** and **Jim Kaldenberg** since 2002, when the three of them bought the company. The three worked together for a company that manufactured scrap metal processing equipment in an industry that is mostly dominated by men,

Audacious Auction for Education 2009

By Linda M. Thielfoldt
The Quilted Goose

Wow! What a night. Many of you attended the **Auction for Education** during the 2009 MQS® and hopefully enjoyed yourselves as much as I did. I know I left the hall that night with my sides hurting from all the laughter!

If you did attend, perhaps you were aware of the fact that just a few minutes before we were to start the auction we learned that our auctioneer was not able to make it to the event. What you may not be aware of is the sheer panic that overtook my normally "calm before a crowd" body and the fact that I was willing to do just about anything to get one of the "Men of MQS®" to help me auction the amazing quilts so many of our teachers, members, and grant recipients had donated for the event. We had some quick but serious discussion about how to handle the predicament we found ourselves in and I recall that there was much volunteering on the part of the men – mostly volunteering each other – that coupled with a little begging on my part and somehow we talked **Mark Caraher** from APQS into being our auctioneer for the night. As we walked toward the podium Mark leaned over and quietly said, "Well Linda if we really mess this up they won't ask us back." We laughed and I know both of us felt a little out of our league since neither of us had ever done anything like that before. But we pressed on.

After the event wrapped up I realized that we had seen a side of one of our "men" that we did not know was there and that got me to thinking....what else don't we know about these guys that we see year after year?....So me being me, I asked them! And I am happy to share some things about the "Men of MQS®" that you might not have otherwise known.

As for **Mark Caraher**, who has been with APQS for 19 years, the biggest thing I was surprised to learn was that he has been singing *Barbershop* for 28 years and has been in the group "Voice Exchange" for 18 years. The name comes from the fact that the group is made up of three bases and a baritone, three out of the four switch parts to make four part harmony, which is rather unusual. Mark taught himself to play base guitar and says that the group "likes to entertain the people and have fun." I think he proved that to all of us who attended the auction this year! My thanks go to the auctioneer who could not make it, because from all accounts Mark now has a new job relative to the auction – he was WONDERFUL and so funny!

which Bob said is the "polar opposite of the quilting industry." Bob went on to say that people might be surprised to learn that he learned to fly airplanes in high school and was a professional pilot for 5 years for *United Express*. He has 3 kids, loves to golf, and has been married for 15 years. He and his wife are opposites – he is into quilting and his wife is a former touch football player. Bob shared that Jim Langland is quite a prankster and at one quilt show Bob thought he had lost yet another pair of pricey sunglasses. After doing some dumpster diving out back of the show hall he came back in only to find Jim wearing them on his head and laughing at what he had to go through in order to find them. Along with being a funny man, Bob said Jim is a fabulous pianist and a former college football player – he played in the Big 10 conference for the University of Iowa.

Tony O'Tool who has been with APQS for 15 years, played basketball in college for a small school in Iowa and still loves to play both football and basketball. Tony and his wife have two children with a baby due in early December (that will probably be born before this magazine hits the streets). Tony shares that the craziest thing he has ever done is paragliding – which is just like skydiving except for the fact that you basically jump off a cliff in the mountains versus out of a plane. That might not seem so crazy to some of you until you learn that Tony is very afraid of heights. Tony comes from a large family, eight boys and one girl. Four of his brothers have all worked for APQS part time while in high school. They all went on to college



and other careers.

Charlie Pressler of Prodigy Machine Corporation says that he is just a regular guy but there are two things he is passionate about and they both involve kids. He teaches children the bible as part of BSF (Bible Study Fellowship) which is an interdenominational organization with classes about the Bible that are held in cities across the United States. The second thing is supporting his wife in an early intervention clinic with kids with autism that she opened called *Chrysalis Autism Center*. Charlie says he is grateful that his company allows him to support this very important work. Next time you see Charlie you may not recognize him, as of this writing he has lost 55 pounds. By the 2010 MQS®, he hopes to be at his goal weight. Charlie has been a commercial pilot since he was 16 and one summer he got the bright idea to “flour bomb” a buddy’s boat that was always kept in the water. I was not familiar with the term “flour bomb” so Charlie explained that it involves dropping a 5 pound bag of flour from the plane going 185 mph or so – it destroyed his buddy’s boat and he said he spent the whole summer undoing the damage he did. Charlie was 16 years old and as such, advocates that no one under the age of 50 should be able to fly.

Darren Denning, Chief Operating and Financial Officer with Handi Quilter, has four children: Danielle, 13; Dakota, 11; Dallin, 8; and Dessa, 6 – girl, boy, boy, girl. He is coach of his boys’ football and basketball teams and last year during a major quilt show spent an hour and a half on the phone listening to his wife give him the play by play of his son’s football game that he was missing.

Jim Simons, President of Quilter’s Rule Inc., calls himself a gentlemen’s farmer; he raises hay for horses and has a penchant for old tractors. Jim owns a New Holland Tractor and a 1947 John Deere Baler which he puts to good use each year when he harvests his hay crop. For the past twelve years, Jim has been the *Town Chairman* (which is kind of like being mayor) of the town where he resides in Wisconsin.

The Thread Doctor, **Bob Purcell** of Superior Threads, is a funny guy and oh, the stories I could tell...I told Bob

that I would have to make something up as I couldn’t print his response to my question “*tell me something people would not know about you but find interesting or funny.*”

The two Dan’s from Nolting Manufacturing both had to think about my question and both said they did not have anything exciting or funny to share. **Dan Terrill** used to work in the steel industry and also owned a body building gym. The joke in his house is that his wife Lisa, “who did not even know he was alive in high school”, stalked him and joined his gym just so she could get him to ask her out. They have two children, Dallas and Luke, and Dan says he has had some interesting things happen while driving to and from quilt shows and this past year he was away from home for 17 weekends! One time he was on the phone helping his son do compound fractions while driving on the interstate in a downpour during rush hour traffic! (Whew, any one of those things is enough, let alone all of them at once!) Dan says he is grateful his wife is not a quilter as he doubts he could afford it! **Dan Novak** says he loves fixing things and used to be a *Diesel Mechanic*. He and his wife of 23 years have two boys aged 20 and 7, he says the second one was a big surprise but a happy one! He loves to hunt and spend time outdoors and that the number one question he gets while manning the tech support phone line is “how to get correct tension”.

When I asked **Ron Parker** and **Michael Hinton** of Gammill Quilting Machine Company to tell me something people would be surprised to learn about them, no one was more surprised than me to learn that Ron was formerly a *Municipal Judge* in the State of Missouri for three years, a *Volunteer Fireman* and an *EMT* in Ohio, and a former *Steelworker* and *Missouri Teamster* member. **Michael Hinton** collects *Presidential* and *Sports Autographs*. Recently, he has started to collect *Antique Tractors* which he keeps in his garage for fear that they might get dirty! He owns a 1949 Farmall Cub and a 1942 Farmall H with a loader and is looking forward to the day he has a barn.

Now that you have read some interesting things about the “Men of MQS®” I thought I would share something that you might not know about me, your

“Audacious Auction MC”. My husband Devan is a farm kid from Nebraska and when he proposed to me in Michigan he did so on a white horse, wearing a full suit of armor in the town where I lived. I was having a garage sale (my first and last) when he came riding up my driveway with half the neighborhood in tow. He got down on one knee with the horse whinnying the whole time, I said, “Yes!”, and a year or so later drove a 1959 John Deere 530 tractor (my first time ever) on the day of our wedding reception in Nebraska. The tractor now sits in our garage in Michigan and all my city friends who made the trip back to Nebraska still talk about how much fun it was to drive all his tractors and see all those cute little pigs – he just laughs and says, “Yep, I married a city girl!”

I hope you enjoyed getting to know the “Men of MQS®” just a little better. We will all be back again in 2010 and I encourage you to consider making a quilt for the auction. Please fill out the entry form and get it to me as soon as you can so I can prepare the commentary. The money raised will help others learn and improve their longarm skills. And, if you have never attended the live Audacious Auction for Education, you don’t want to miss what promises to be another entertaining night at MQS® 2010. You might even be lucky enough to take home a special quilt!

Linda Thielholdt learned to sew at an early age and made her first skirt at age 9 and her first quilt at 12. She has been quilting for over 35 years and has won blue ribbons at many national shows for her machine quilting and wearable art. Linda has been teaching quilting for over 15 years and loves to share her knowledge. Her classes are taught in a no-rules fun and lively style that will provide inspiration and new ideas on how to improve your machine quilting. She is the featured guest teacher at Accomplish Quilting a Gammill/Statler dealer in Michigan and specializes in teaching feathers and being fearless with your quilting. Linda owns and operates The Quilted Goose in her hometown of Troy, Michigan and her machine quilting skills are in demand by quilters from all over the United States.



Interview With a Winner

Marilyn Badger Shares Tips and Insight, Tools of the Trade Category

Interviewed By Martha S. Heimbaugh
Photos by Marilyn Karper

Marilyn Badger won First Place in the 2009 MQS® Tools of the Trade Category with her quilt *Bali Hai*. This quilt, along with another quilt—*Filigree* (which will be entered into the 2010 MQS®), was featured on her latest taping with Fons & Porter at the Iowa Public Television Station this past Fall. This was Marilyn's 12th year of taping and she said, "My how time flies when you're having fun! It was a show about using tools and creating a separate dimension with quilting. It should be up for airing by January 2010." Since winning at MQS®, *Bali Hai* has traveled to "Quilt Odyssey" in Hershey, Pennsylvania where it won "Best Artistry in Longarm Quilting" and more recently won "Best Longarm Workmanship" at the AQS show in Des Moines, Iowa. Marilyn shared some wonderful tips and insights with me about her winning quilt. Read on to see what she had to say.

Q: In your description of *Bali Hai* you stated that you used a variety of tools—Hartley Fence Circlemaker, Hand held guides—Off the Edge Rulers, Quilter's Rule, and Gadget Girls, Hartley Fence Micro-Drive for ditching, outlining and micro-stippling, and the Hartley Fence Base Extender & Guide. How do you become familiar with working with a new tool and discovering all the things it can do for you?

A: "I don't usually have a lot of play time other than in the APQS booth at shows. Usually I am working on a specific quilt and need something to help me achieve the quilting that I have in mind. Recently it was my good fortune to win a gift certificate from



Quilter's Rule and I purchased a variety of guides that I thought would come in handy in the future. *Off the Edge* makes a wonderful little straight guide called "Itty Bitty" which I use daily. On *Bali Hai*, I used the "tear-drop set" from *Gadget Girls* as well as a set of *Hartley Stencils* to create the curved stitching in the centers of the blocks. That's the nice thing about having an engineer in the house, I can ask Hartley to make whatever I need and he does it. That is how the Micro-Drive came into being. I could never quilt around appliqué or get the accuracy I wanted when stitching marked designs with my hands up off the surface of the quilt. In my opinion the

Micro-Drive is the most important thing that has happened to longarm quilting since the stitch regulator came along and we all know how important that was!! My advice to beginners would be to take it slow when working with guides. They can slip on you and jump over the hopping foot and under the needle in a flash. Beginners will have an easier time of it if they limit themselves to smaller guides so they have more control. Remember, slower is better - no need to quilt at break neck speed, especially when you have a stitch regulator."

Q: This quilt included considerable piping in the piecing and I wondered

if you encountered any problems either with making and inserting the piping or with quilting the quilt after construction was complete? Did the piping cause you any problems with keeping the quilt square?

A: “Actually, the center and all four corner sections of the quilt were pieced together separately then the piping was added and each section was appliquéd to the background fabric. I had all the blocks made and seamed together before deciding on what background fabric to use. I was auditioning fabrics when Claudia Pfeil arrived for a visit. We went down to *Scrap Apple Quilts* here in St. George where Claudia was teaching a class and found the background fabric. It was a perfect background and I used it from selvage to selvage which helped it stay square. It must have been meant to be!”



Q: The quilting on this quilt really added a new dimension to the overall design. How did you choose thread colors for this quilt? And what made you decide to create the dense areas of design over the top of the quilt design? Were you experimenting or was there something in particular you were thinking?

A: “This quilt is the second in a series of quilts I have done where the quilting is a separate entity and stands on its own. The first one was *Greensleeves* which was designed, pieced and appliquéd by Claudia Myers and now resides at the National Quilt Museum in Paducah, having won the Gammill Longarm Quilting Award (the first purchase

award for longarm quilting) at AQS in Paducah. The third one is called *Filigree* (another solo piece) and will be at MQS® in 2010. Most of the quilts that Claudia and I make feature many different fabrics. I believe the more variety in fabrics used, the more interesting the quilt. However, quilting doesn’t show up as well on all those different fabrics. Claudia has inked and painted the quilting on some of our quilts which really helped the quilting stand out. So, with that in mind, I thought why not fill in the quilting designs with thread. Even after doing just that on *Bali Hai*, I still didn’t feel that my quilting showed as well as it could, so I went back and outlined all the designs three times to make the outlines thicker in order to stand out more. This would not have been possible without the use of my Micro-Drive. I used contrasting thread colors in each section, for example, in the orange blocks I used turquoise thread, in the turquoise blocks I used gold thread and in the green blocks I used bronze thread.”

Q: Did you encounter any problems while making or quilting this quilt? And if so, how did you solve them?

A: “The only problem I had was with the turquoise thread. I found this certain color in my thread stash and it was perfect (I don’t know what brand it was). However, it wouldn’t cooperate with me or my machine because of the kind of spool it was on and the way it was wound. I eventually had to hand wind all of it on a small spool and put it on my horizontal thread holder. I don’t know how many yards of turquoise thread I used but all together the quilt has about 10,000 yards of metallic stitched into it. The turquoise probably represents around one third of that total amount. You can see that I am possessed when I work on a quilt!”

Q: What is your best advice to someone who is just learning how to use tools? How do you even begin to purchase them with so many on the market?

A: “You are so right, there are many

tools on the market today. And isn’t that great! When I started quilting we did pantographs. That was it! Meandering came along later. There were no tools whatsoever - we used a big pointer stylus and thought everything was great! Hartley came up with the Fence and Circlemaker in 1996 and that opened an exciting quilting world for me and many others. Today tools are essential to longarm quilting but I don’t believe it’s necessary to own everything out there. There are many tools for beginners that will never be used again once that beginner has progressed and gained confidence. I can tell you the most important tools for me are the Circlemaker, the Base Expander and Guides, the Stitch Regulator, and the Micro-Drive. As far as specialty guides go, I love Judy Allen’s Judilators for curved-crosshatching. Without these tools I would not be doing the quilting I am doing today. It would be impossible!!”

Q: What advice would you give to someone considering making and entering a “Tools of the Trade” quilt at MQS® for the first time?

A: “As with anything, just do the best you can do. If you have a passion for what you are doing it will be reflected in the finished product. Don’t worry if you get sick and tired of working on a quilt and start to wondering if it is any good or not. We all get in that frame of mind now and then. That’s good - it keeps us grounded. After three months of stitching on *Bali Hai*, I felt that way too.” 

