

The Quilt Shop Offers Customers Abundant Stock Of Craft Supplies

BY SHARON SCHUSTER
Maryland Correspondent

LITTLESTOWN — In 1979, Kitty Hillard cooked up a good idea in the 11-by-15 summer kitchen of her Littlestown, Pa. home. It was the start of The Quilt Patch, which is now regarded as one of the best sources of quilting supplies and unique gifts in the area.

At first, Kitty sold fabric gifts exclusively. In 1982, the business outgrew the summer kitchen, and her husband, Lewis, built an 18-by-24 addition. With about 35 bolts of calico fabric, The Quilt Patch was really cookin'.

But that was five years ago. In 1985, the business was growing so fast that it was bursting at the seams, and Lew constructed a 30-by-60 bank barn to house their successful enterprise.

"This was just supposed to be something to keep me out of trouble," said Kitty. "It has really mushroomed."

Now about 700 bolts of calico fabric fill the upper level of the barn while the lower level boasts handcrafted gifts from all over the country and from Europe. Kitty said the shop is frequented by "a lot of do-it yourselves." At the

Quilt Patch customers can view quilts, pillows, and other items on the lower level, then purchase the materials to make the very same items from the supplies upstairs.

The lower level of the shop is a treat for those looking for fine country crafts. "We are both from Lancaster County," explained Lew. "We both graduated from Upper Leacock High School. We have an advantage having lived in Lancaster County," he said. Specifically, Lew was referring to their contacts with the Amish community and other fine craftsmen from the area.

The focal point of the gift shop area is the display of quilts that are for sale. It is perhaps best described by one customer who exclaimed, "I have died and gone to heaven!" The exquisite covers are beautiful in every detail. Patterns range from floral designs to geometric patterns to Grandma's patchwork quilt, and the colors are taken right from the rainbow.

The quilts are "sought out" by the Hillards on their trips through Pennsylvania. "A good many come from Lancaster County," said Kitty. "Guy and Edythe



Lew and Kitty Hillard and 'Pal' pose in the gift shop area.



Kitty Hillard displays some of the quilts in her shop. Here she holds the Lancaster County rose design. On the rack in front is the Momosa Tea Leaf. To the left is the Double Wedding Ring. A Spring Flower quilt is partially visible at right.

Martin from Goodville, who are well-known in quilting circles, make some of the quilt tops," she explained.

Some of the designs that were on display are Double Wedding Ring, Log Cabin, Lancaster County Rose, Distlefink, Spring Flowers, Grandma's Fan, Mimosa Tea Leaf, and Lone Star. While there is a great selection of quilts at the shop, custom orders for design, colors, and size will be taken. The cost of the completed quilts starts at \$375.

For those who wish to enjoy the beauty of a quilt, but don't want to actually sleep on it, wall hangings may be the answer. The quilted hangings feature one full block of a particular quilt pattern, and the cost, at \$135, is considerably less than a full sized quilt.

Difficult as it is to leave the quilt corner of the shop, other display areas demand equal time for viewing unique handcrafted items. Lew singled out the perpetual calendars as one of the most popular items in the shop. "They are all hand done. They will last you a lifetime," he said. Kitty said the potpourri and potpourri burners are a year round favorite also.

It pays to walk around the shop very slowly in order to take in all the details. Most of the outside wall is covered with framed prints and pictures. Look carefully at the



Vicki Gilbert makes most of the stuffed items, including the Amish dolls she holds on her lap.

collection of small color prints near the picture window. Each picture has a quilt worked into the theme in some way. The intricate designs of the scherenschnitte (paper cutting) designs stand out from their backgrounds to form ornate silhouettes. Of the various designs offered, Lew said "Life is a Patch is very popular."

Reaching over to the barn door chimes, Lew gently lifted the three balls suspended on each guitar-like

instrument and let them drop against the strings. The sound they made was a delightful chime, each one different from the other.

"Can't find this anyplace else," said Lew of the pictures formed from tobacco laths from Leola, Pa. The wooden strips that were once used to dry tobacco leaves are placed together within a frame and painted, to make a simple barnyard design. Stuffed Amish dolls

(Turn to Page B4)



Lew Hillard admires the Dickens Village made of porcelain. He runs the gift shop area in a barn which he built.

Homestead Notes