

Karen Buckley Becomes Expert Quilter

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Buckley said that after that first quilting class, she continued taking classes while she worked. Her husband, Joe, was attending the Dickinson School of Law at the time.

After the couple were in Carlisle for a while, Joe got a job offer in Bucks County. Karen didn't want to move at first, but she said she changed her mind after Joe convinced her it would be a good place to open a quilt shop.

That idea caught her interest, so they moved and Karen did open a shop. The shop was successful and is still doing well even though the Buckleys have since moved back to this area to a federal-style farmhouse just outside Carlisle.

The entire third floor of the Buckleys' big old house is devoted to Karen's quilting studio.

Karen needs a lot of room for her craft because she enjoys all

types of quilting—hand quilting, applique, hand piecing, and machine quilting.

She displayed her love and skill at quilting in her first book, "From Basics to Binding," which is a handy and comprehensive guide to the craft. She said she also has another book that is ready to be published.

Buckley's quilting skill has been recognized many times.

For example, not too long ago she won a blue ribbon in the traditional applique category at the American International Quilt Association Show in Houston, Tex. That quilt, which she called the "Buckley Album Quilt," beat quilts entered by contestant from 10 other countries.

Her album quilt was a very personal work of art since it depicted significant events in her own life.

Her quilt, which is similar to the so-called Baltimore Album Quilts of the 1840s and 1850s, features nine blocks on an ivory background. The colors used to create pictures on the work range from rose to dark green.

Since it is an applique quilt, it is made of fabric cut into various shapes and applied to the background fabric with a series of blind stitches.

Karen said her award-winning quilt was something of a team effort since Joe did the artwork for some of the center blocks using an indelible pen.

One block depicts one of the Buckleys' favorite hobbies; visiting as many of Pennsylvania's more than 240 covered bridges as



Karen Buckley displays one of the 200 quilts that she has made in the past several years.

they can.

Another block features flowers because Joe likes to send them to her, Karen said. A large heart and love birds in another block depicts the Buckleys' love for each other.

The center block of the quilt depicts their house, another one shows a star and the dates of their birthdays, the day they met and their wedding date.

Other blocks show the law school from which Joe graduated, Lock Haven University where they met, and a picture of heart and hands to symbolize the fact that Karen and Joe are each others' best friend.

Another big victory for Buckley came when she won the Best of Show Award at the National Quilting Association annual show in Charlestown, W. Va.

At that show, her winning entry was her "Dreaming of the Tropics" applique quilt that won in a competition with more than 500 entries from throughout the nation.

That winning quilt was adapted from a 16th century Italian mosaic, Karen said. It features a display of flowers that radiate out from Hawaiian-style yellow and red center on a black background. On the back is an underwater scene that shows coral reefs.

Karen's expertise in the quilting field came in handy last year when she helped coordinate a popular quilt exhibit for the Cumberland County Historical Society.

When she isn't quilting herself, Karen is either taking or teaching a class on the subject, working with her local quilt club, lecturing on quilts, or designing her next project.

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