

A Heart of Roses quilt, done in Norma Grove's favorite shades of mauves and blues, makes an elegant bedcovering. At left, the unusual colors and style of this quilt was an inspiration for the one she made for the recent state Holstein Convention fund-raiser sale, which generated \$1,300 towards youth programs.

## Quilter's Artistic Talent Covers Her World With Beauty

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GREENCastle (Franklin Co.) — Eight years or so ago, Norma Grove took an applique quilting class. After about six sessions, the Franklin County dairy woman had completed a floral wall hanging which incorporated features including stuffed and padded roses, folded rose buds and "ruching," a method of gathering fabric into a puffed, circular shape.

By the end of the class, Norma understood that applique, much like painting, demanded the artisan carefully plan the design, put in the background, then add features such as stems and leaves before finishing with key focal points, like blossoms. She also learned that even a "goof" can be creatively used.

"One day I found this spot on the fabric and could not get it out. My sister looked at it and suggested I applique a spider over the spot," she says with a grin. Since the pattern of the quilting was a web design, the diminutive spider added the perfect, whimsical touch to the framed piece which now hangs in the Grove's family room.

And, she had decided, "I think I like this."

Forty or so quilts later, Norma Grove still likes this both artistic and useful skill. She enjoys it so much that a basket of quilting materials is always ready and waiting by the door, ready to be taken along as she goes out the door, especially if she knows she'll have to spend a few moments somewhere waiting. She enjoys it so much that their two children and four grandchildren all have their own quilts, personalized to their individual tastes. And she enjoys it so much that there are always at least two or three ideas stirring in the back of her creative mind, just waiting for time to be tackled.

One of her most recent designs was a headliner at the annual Pennsylvania Holstein Convention fundraiser auction. When the bid-shouting finally settled, the quilt had generated \$1,300 toward state Holstein youth programs from buyer Laszlo Mozes, Greenville. And the quilt, featuring numerous pieces of "cow" fabrics, was on its way across the state, an in-

tended gift for Mozes' son's upcoming wedding.

After much thought, Norma had designed her original quilt for the Holstein youth fundraiser after a throw-sized sample one she had made in a class taken earlier. While she usually favors shades of rose, mauve and blue, set against white or light backgrounds, the sample quilt was done in a rainbow of primary colors. Scattered plentifully throughout the squares of designs were patches of red and green "cow" fabric, with the bright hues stunningly set off by a background of charcoal color.

While Norma still takes an occasional class to learn special techniques, most of her extensive quilting expertise has been developed through trial, error, experience—and even some occasional ripping.

"I can't just sit and do nothing," admits this busy farm wife, who until recently raised the calves on the Grove's dairy and crops farm, as well as helped with milking chores when needed. Her husband, Robert, and son, Keith, and his family, operate their Greencastle farm in partnership. Their daughter, Kim, and her family live just a mile away.

Norma learned to sew as a child and got her own sewing machine when she was just 14. For many years she sewed for not only her own family, but others as well, until she finally became "sort of tired of it." She dabbled with quilting, first trying a "cheater's piece," squares designed with pre-stamped quilt pieces in the fabric. But it was the applique technique which really grabbed her interest.

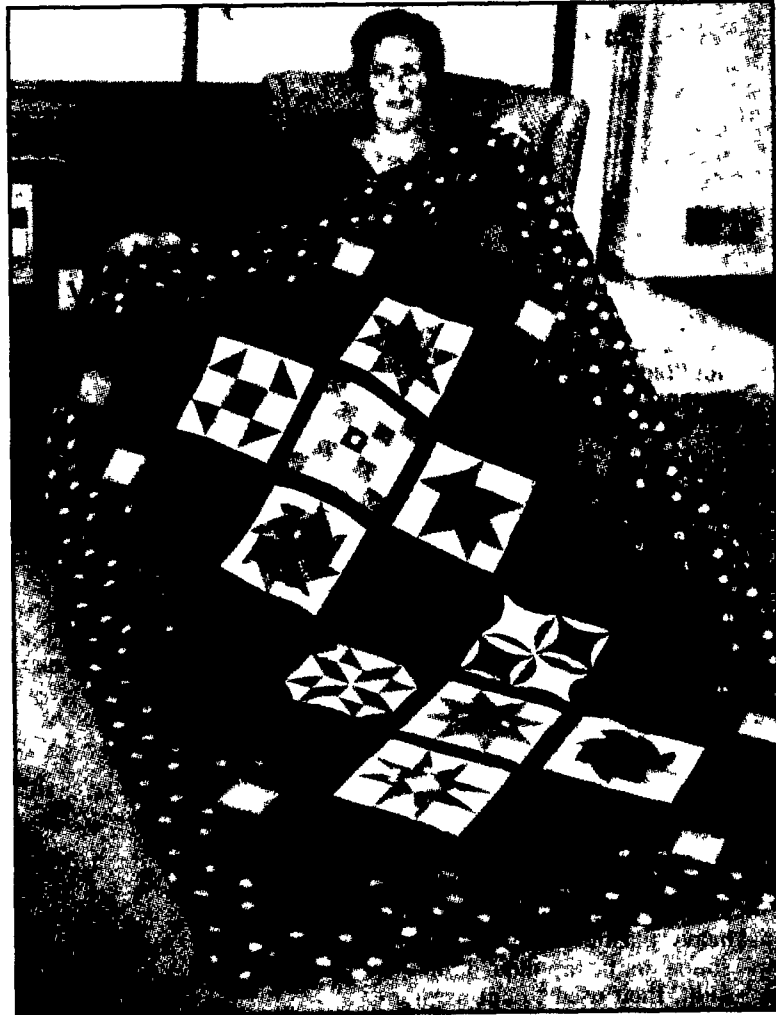
"My first choice is applique, and the second is pieced quilts," says this avid fabric artist. For awhile, she focused on cross-stitched designs and completed several of those. "They fell out of favor; any maybe someday I'll burn out on doing these."

While her stitching is tiny and even, giving her finished quilts a beautifully-crafted finish, Norma claims she has absolutely no eye for matching colors. Instead, when she has a quilt design idea, Norma teams with her sisters, Debbie Stayman and Judy Lebo, both avid quilters. She credits Deb with having the "eye" of finding just the right colors to complement and set-off one another so that the shades blend, rather than "fight" with each other.

At least twice a year, the trio



Bob Grove takes great pride in and is very supportive of his wife, Norma's quilting talents.



of quilting sisters make a fabric-buying trip to favorite fabric retailers. It is not unusual for them to spend a day in a single store, matching fabrics and colors for several projects they each have planned, a year or more in advance. Often, they share or trade patterns.

Norma is especially adamant about buying the best quality fabrics she can find for her quilting projects, with a main criteria being that each piece is of pure, "100%" cotton.

"That's very important," she stresses. "It works much nicer for applique." To meet her exacting specifications, the fabric must not be too slippery or thin, but must "have body."

"You must buy the focal point fabric first," she adds, a portion of which will be included in each patch of the quilt, sort of the "theme fabric" of the finished product. For the country series of patterns she has favored, Norma generally selects a printed focal fabric, often in florals.

After the fabrics for a quilt are selected, often between 10 to 20 different fabrics per quilt, Norma snips a small swatch of each. She then fastens all the swatches to a piece of paper, labeling the intended use in the planned quilt pattern for each one. Since she may buy fabric a year of more in advance to start-

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OMESTEAD NOTES



Norma Grove's first quilting project was a wall-hanging featuring several different methods of applique quilting. When an unremovable spot developed on the finished piece, she added a sprightly spider to cover it, blending perfectly with the web-quilting design already on the piece.