

# QUILTERS' JOURNAL

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JINNY BEYER

Photo courtesy Ed Gross



## JINNY BEYER, MASTER QUILTMAKER

"But she's so young"... "I expected someone much older"... "They say she has only been quilting about six years, how could she quilt like that"... "The GOOD HOUSEKEEPING picture didn't do it justice,"...are the most frequently heard comments whenever Jinny Beyer and her prize-winning quilt Ray of Light appear. Jinny is young but she is quick to point out that quilting isn't just an older woman's art form. In her classes she has all ages and an equal number of young women in jeans are just as anxious to perfect their stitches as their older counterparts.

There was no one thing that decided Jinny Beyer to make her first quilt. It just evolved. She was always one to have a project going (knitting and crocheting were her thing in those days), but when she and her family were in India for two years, material for those projects became increasingly difficult to obtain.

The first quilt she ever saw was hanging in a commissary in India and she is now embarrassed to think that it then looked to her just like a design sewn upon a mattress pad. "A quilt of mine will never look like that," she vowed.

She fell in love with the beautiful prints woven in India, so when she saw a skirt made of squares displayed in a local shop window, she purchased it. Then she decided she liked the skirt so well she would make six copies for Christmas presents for members of her family at home in America. When she was finished, she had all those lovely scraps left and it seemed logical to make a quilt.

One day, while thumbing through her back issues of McCall's NEEDLEWORK AND CRAFT, she rediscovered a Stearns and Foster ad picturing a Grandmother's Flower Garden and knew "that" was her quilt. Her finished quilt (See: QUILTER'S NEWSLETTER, July 1976) is very different.

That was in 1972 and in 1977, after much hard work and study, Jinny entered her Ray of Light quilt in the GOOD

HOUSEKEEPING National Quilt Contest and won the Grand Prize.

The award was \$2500 but she feels the honor that went with it was even more important. Those who have seen the quilt do not doubt for a minute that it deserved the prize and all the honors accompanying it.

Jinny says, "I feel the stimulation, encouragement, and constructive criticism of my group in Quilter's Unlimited (the Vienna Chapter) and my exposure to the many fine quilts in the area have helped immeasurably in my quilt making."

She feels, "Quilt contests within a group may have negative aspects because quilters may be reluctant to share ideas and techniques if they are to compete with one another. However, if it encompasses a wider area, then I think it is very helpful. It exposes one to a variety of quilts and gives one a chance to compare her work against others."

"If there are cash prizes awarded, it is some compensation for the work and the risk involved in sending the quilt. Compared to tennis or golf, the prizes are usually small. Hopefully, they will get larger which would encourage more quilt artists to enter their work."

After she won the GOOD HOUSEKEEPING National Contest, Jinny thought it wouldn't be fair to continue to enter quilt contests but thinks she might be tempted if a competition were to be set up among Master Quilters (those who have won a prize or award).

Jinny met Jean Mitchell from Kansas at the Santa Rosa FESTIVAL OF QUILTS in April, and was thrilled to see her quilts. Jean is well known in quilt circles for her English-type quilts and shared them during her brief visit. Though Jinny had heard about the design and detail of these quilts, it was her first opportunity to see them. She enthused about them for the rest of the day and several times during the evening got that glassy eyed stare that quilters get when they mentally are making a new quilt. Won't it be fun to see it next year?