

THE GOOD HOUSEKEEPING CONTEST
AND TRAGEDY

By this time most Quilters' Journal readers have heard about the results of the Good Housekeeping Quilt Contest and the tragic aftermath of the fire.

Your Editor has just completed a phone conference with Ms. Cecelia Toth, Editorial Director of the Good Housekeeping Needlecraft Magazine and Needlework Editor of the magazine's monthly publication. The following are excerpts from the conversation.

The contest was put on by Good Housekeeping in conjunction with the U.S. Historical Society of Richmond, Va., and the American Folk Art Museum. The preparation and planning of the contest took many hours and months of work, work mainly handled by the magazine's regular staff, plus their duties on the monthly publication.

The contest received 9,953 entries, far more than they expected. The staff feels the contest was most successful. It was exciting for quilters and it is felt the contest has brought a lot of attention to quilting.

Everyone worked, according to Ms. Toth, double and triple time, but many good friends have been made and Good Housekeeping hopes to use much of the valuable materials they have gained in future publications and an exhibit.

Winners were announced in the March issue of Good Housekeeping. National winner Jinny Beyer of Fairfax, Va., won the Grand Prize of \$2,500. Each of the 50 state winners receives a silver medal, a set of limited edition patriot plates valued at \$450.00 and an embossed certificate. The 500 finalists will receive a bronze medal and a citation. It has not been decided as of this date where and how the award will be made.

Ms. Toth, when asked about the fire which consumed some of the entries, stated that they felt heartsick about the tragic happening but it was a very small part of a very big thing with only 18 to 20 quilts being destroyed and 40 or so damaged.

The fire broke out after the Grand Winner and State Winners had gone to the photographers and the remainder were in warehouses ready to be packed to be returned to their owners. Some were burned totally, and, when the sprinkler went off, many were water or smoke damaged with some "running"

Ms. Toth feels it would be a dreadful shame for quilters to be fearful of entering other contests or exhibitions throughout the country due to this fire as such a tragedy has happened so very rarely in the history of contests and exhibits. Ms. Toth finds quilting such an exciting world full of creativity, and a contest or exhibition helps quilters develop their creativity learning from each other and sharing ideas. There is much to be learned about what's happening in quilting, from the old designs and from new designs and the direction they are taking. It would be a shame for quilters to be deterred from this marvelous form of exchange.

Appraisers are checking damaged quilts and are working out arrangements with owners. Excellent files were maintained during contest preparation and good photographs were available of entries. Of course, never can the quilts themselves be replaced as many hours of time and effort went into their making and the staff of Good Housekeeping is well aware of this. When asked how people reacted upon notification of quilt destruction or damage, Ms. Toth said there were those who were marvelous and others who were extremely upset. One 75 year old lady said, "I don't want you to worry. No one was hurt physically in the fire and I already am collecting scraps to make another one." Ms. Toth hopes all quilters have this same attitude and will continue their fabulous heritage passed down from generation to generation.

NEW POST CARD

A new full color post card of the Jacksonville Oregon, Bicentennial Quilt, designed by local artists Ann and Bruce Butte is now available.. write the Jacksonville Boosters Club.
