



President's Report 31 December 2020



Hello Everyone and Welcome

On the 15th March this year I wrote my first website communication to you all indicating that all Guild activities would be suspended due to concerns about increasing risks associated with COVID-19. Rather naively, I suspect, we hoped that this would be an interim measure. Few of us could have envisaged the impact that a pandemic could/would have on our lives for the foreseeable future. That same day I began designing the Casa Felix Mystery quilt which was launched on Facebook a few days later. I thought that maybe 20 or 30 QGSA members might wish to participate, socially engaging online during the weeks, which turned into months, that we were encouraged to stay in our homes. Unbelievably that Facebook group grew to almost 600 members - including quilters from around the world - paving the way for the digitally connected Quilt-alongs and workshops that are our new normal.

Our much-loved Lessa Siegele ran the next Facebook mystery quilt. Lessa quickly mastered the learning curve involved in hosting a Facebook page as a rare user herself, epitomising the reality of the need for quilters to become familiar with this new way of connecting and engaging with each other. Rachelle Denny, entrepreneur and quilter extraordinaire, took the third mystery quilt to new heights, raising over \$20,000 for the charity Backpacks for SA Kids.

With little to report in the local quilting world our bi-monthly Patches newsletter was put on hold. The concept of an expanded digital I-Patch was explored and yours truly found themselves taking over the editor's role. In those first 2 months I wondered what on earth I was going to be able to come up with each and every month! Kathy Rossini had initially offered to do the layout and manage the emailing process for me, but before long we became an editorial team and regular content ideas were developed. In our wildest dreams we never imagined 20+ pages going out to members and member groups each month. Thank you to our many contributors who were happy to share their life and quilting stories and I-Patch was further enhanced by Cindy Massey and Jane Polden with their roaming sewing room video interviews.

In recent weeks many have expressed their thanks to the Guild's Executive Committee for keeping you informed, entertained, engaged and community focused, but we really must extend that gratitude to quilters like Lessa and Rachelle for their role in supporting not only South Australian quilters but quilters around the world. To that list I must add Jill Clausen who has continued to coordinate the Quilts of Love program, albeit with a somewhat revised focus, along with Kay Lovell and Shirley Andrewartha who have continued to collect the many quilts that some of you have made during this COVID year for Flinders Kids. The Clayton's Committee and Southern Comforters too have continued their community quilts efforts, supporting hospices, hospitals and a major mental health facility with the gift of literally hundreds of quilts. I'd like to extend a huge thank you to each and every one involved.

When stay at home rules relaxed, our city and country quilting groups once again began to meet. Coordinators of these groups faced what must have initially seemed to be the somewhat daunting task of developing COVID Safe Plans and, later, having trained COVID Safety Marshals present. To all of these coordinators, a huge thank you from those of us who joyously packed our sewing bags to sit (socially distanced!), chat and sew with each other once again.

Our Executive Committee works brilliantly as a team and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued support of decisions, strategies and actions that I've proposed throughout the year. Under normal circumstances I would hesitate to single any one of the



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committee members out but 2020 has not been a year that has been normal in any sense so I would like to make some specific acknowledgements. Firstly to Cindy and Jane, whom we have almost cult-like followed on YouTube and Facebook as they've hit the road to drop in on South Australian quilters. What a hoot they are and what brilliant entertainers they have been. I do hope that learning the functions of a GPS is on their 'to do' list for 2021, for rumour has it that a very early trip will be an overnighter and we'd hate for them to get lost again. Or maybe not!

Along with Heather Ford this indomitable team not only re-convened our monthly Sit and Sew days as soon as we were able to, but they unhesitatingly doubled their workload and we now, due to popular demand, have two Sit and Sew Days each month. With the help of Angels Peggy Argent and Dominique Reed, Heather also very successfully had our Workshops program back up and running as soon as we were able to meet in groups. On behalf of everyone who attends/attended these events, thank you Cindy, Jane and Heather.

I cannot sufficiently describe the efforts of the Quilt Encounter Committee in hosting Quilt Encounter at Glenelg in October this year. I raise my hat to that amazing team. An incredible amount of creative thought, number crunching, what-if's, negotiations and decision making happened in the months leading up to that event. I'm not sure if Kerry had some sleepless nights, but I certainly did! What was indisputable though, was her total and unwavering conviction that if we offered quilters the opportunity to attend quilt camp they would go - regardless of changed circumstances and conditions. And they did! Border closures and tutor contracts were backed up with Plans B and C. That committee had every contingency covered and for that over 100 South Australian and interstate quilters are exceedingly grateful. Thank you Quilt Encounter Committee!

A final thanks goes to a very special member of the Guild - my co-editor of I-Patch, distributor of I-Patch, co-administrator of our numerous Facebook pages, creator of the Guild's YouTube channel and manager of the Guild's website, Kathy Rossini. Kathy's dedication to each of these roles is beyond admirable. She has a unique way of intuiting opportunities to engage and inform. She is creative in considering both content and strategy. She reminds me to do things a good President should do. Our ability as a Guild to stay connected this year has been significantly due to Kathy. From each and every member of the Guild, thank you Kathy.

Finally, though, I'd like to thank our Guild's members for their understanding of decisions that we've made, for their financial support in a year of few income opportunities but significant insurance costs, for their participation in both real and virtual Guild events and for their invaluable support of our community quilt programs. Thank you all for making this somewhat challenging year a memorable one.

2021 is on our doorstep and the Executive Committee would like to take this opportunity to invite you to attend one of our February Guild meetings. Yes, we are going to start the year on the most positive note that we can think of - we're going back to our socially distanced, COVID Safe old normal. Fingers crossed!

Wishing you all a safe, healthy and productive quilting new year. To all the grandparents, like me, who have children and grandchildren living overseas, let's hope that this too might be a year in which we can reunite and hand over all those quilts we made for them during 2020.

Chris