

## The Making of a Most Expensive Quilt



*Dave and Sarah McNary with "Blue Water Moonrise" in the National Quilt Museum*

### **From the Placard at the National Quilt**

**Museum:** *Blue Water Moonrise* was inspired while crafting an original design for our 2015 Opportunity Quilt. Our goal was to represent the desert landscape of Havasu while showcasing the myriad techniques our members do including piecing, paper-piecing, applique, free-motion and computerized quilting. My version is very special as it represents the creative skills of our awesome design team (Sherri Ashford, Judy Fintz, Linda Visnaw and myself) and the friendship and artistry demonstrated by Bonnie Fryer and Judy Young who helped me with the hand applique in the eleventh hour!

### **A Penny Saved, is a Penny That Can Be Used to Buy Fabric Later...**

Like many quilters, I am fairly frugal. I save my scraps, collect my selvage strips and always remember which quilt shops give birthday week discounts. So when I was asked to make a sample quilt as part of our pattern testing process for our Guild's Opportunity Quilt, I knew I would dig through my stash and make it work. It was a sample after all, and the goal was simply to test the pattern.

### **My First Mistake...**



*Judy Fintz, Sarah McNary and Sherri Ashford with the 2015 Opportunity Quilt*

Since I was fairly new to paper-piecing I was on the "Can a Rank Beginner Understand Our Directions?" team and it turns out that the answer in my case was, "No." I thought the mountains would be easy because the pieces were big and how hard can that be? Well...as you probably know, paper-piecing is a 50/50 shot when you lay down that first piece of fabric – you either do it right or you do it backwards...so my mountains face the opposite direction from the pattern...and in a desperate attempt to rationalize my mistake and save fabric (I'm frugal, remember and didn't want to start over) I declared that I was making a moonrise rather than the sunset so it made sense that we were seeing these mountains from the other side.

### My Second Mistake...

I was asked to draw a desert primrose and a desert lily and decided that an Art Deco style would be attractive. The design would be digitized and machine embroidered on the real Opportunity Quilt so the fine detail and sharp points were no issue...except I liked the flowers so well, I thought they would look nice in the corners of my sample quilt. Now I do not own an embroidery machine but I figured I could needle turn applique them...except the tiny points of each petal were extremely challenging (and possibly the reason profanity was invented). The clock was ticking and I was out of time trying to have my sample ready before the Guild meeting. But friends, Bonnie Fryer and Judy Young, came to my rescue and each completed a corner.



*Hand Appliqued Desert Lily*



*Close Up of Center Medallion*

### Money Spent So Far? Less than \$20...

I do own a long arm and had plenty of batting on hand so quilting and binding my quilt was still affordable, which is to say, free. All I had spent was \$20 for some sashing fabric. Not too shabby all things considered.

### And the Costs Mount...

All of our sample quilts were displayed at the Guild Meeting and several members were kind enough to tell me personally that they really liked my quilt and thought I should enter it into a show. I'd never considered that possibility but grew

excited at the thought and so paid an application fee (\$25) to The Road to California Show...and I was accepted!

### Road to California...More \$\$

I really wanted to go see my quilt hanging in the show so made plans to attend. I didn't win but I was so proud to wear my name tag with my contestant ribbon, it hardly mattered. From a budget standpoint, however, this quilt was costing me big time. Hotel for 4 nights (split three ways), classes each day, and lots and lots of shopping! Grand total? \$1,200!



*My contestant ribbon!*



Arizona Quilting Hall of Fame Award

## The Arizona Quilting Hall of Fame...\$

We all displayed our sample quilts in our Guild's biannual show. It's not a juried show - just ribbons awarded for Mayor's favorite, viewer's choice and the like. Except this year, three of our accomplished quilters were selected to judge and select the quilts for an Arizona Quilting Hall of Fame winner and my Blue Water Moonrise was chosen! Cost of champagne to celebrate? \$11

## And Then Came Paducah and the National Quilt Museum...\$\$\$\$

It was late on a Thursday evening when I opened an email and learned that my quilt had been selected to be part of the Simply Southwest Exhibit at the National Quilt

Museum! I was over the moon! What an honor! Except they needed my quilt the following week so that meant expedited shipping (\$95).

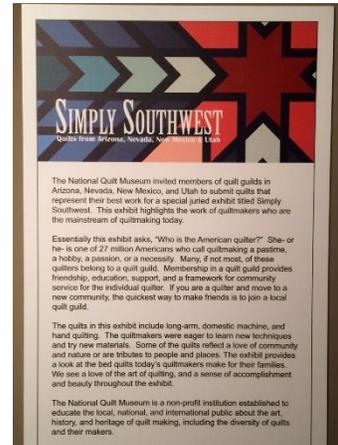


Exhibit Explanation

And then, of course, I had to go see it hanging in the museum with my

own eyes. My husband agreed that it was a once in a lifetime trip and so we flew to Nashville and then drove to the Promised Land of Paducah in Kentucky!



Outside the National Quilt Museum

We were greeted like celebrities at the museum and Curator Judy Schwender, herself, escorted us through the exhibit. The array of quilts there was awe-inspiring and humbling. I still can't believe that my sample quilt is hanging among the art that is housed in that building! If you haven't been, you must add it to your bucket list.

So for those of you with calculators, add in flights (\$550), car rental (\$85), hotel (\$600), meals (\$300), and...fabric shopping (\$202) but they did ship my purchases back home for free.

So all in all, this "stash" quilt has cost me no less than \$3,068...and the experience has been worth every penny!



Sarah McNary and Curator Judy Schwender

