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every PATCH of FABRIC TELLS A STORY

A North Wales quilter's work will be featured in a newly released book and as part of an international traveling exhibit.

By LIZ JOHNSON
CORRESPONDENT

For Christine Webb of North Wales, quilting is more than a hobby.

It's a way of telling her story.

Each piece of fabric says something about her — whether it's the African- or Asian-themed prints that represent her heritage, or a side trip she took to Japan while visiting her daughter, who was teaching English in South Korea, or the pieces that have musical notes imprinted on them, demonstrating her love of music and desire to relearn piano in retirement.

When she was pregnant with her daughter, she made another quilt in the shape of a lion's head. That one got handed down to her granddaughter two years ago. Now, she's making an alphabet quilt for the toddler.

"I have a running theme of colorful fabrics," she said. "One of my hobbies is hitting the fabric stores."

She is drawn to African- and Asian-themed fabrics, animal prints and color, color, color.

Webb is part of the North Penn Art Alliance and the Valley Forge Homestead Quilters.

In 2012, her "Striped Ambitions" quilt won an award from the North Penn Art Alliance. It's a traditional quilt pattern called "Flying Geese," which is a series of triangles that alternate direction. Webb said during slavery, the quilt would be hung to indicate which direction slaves seeking freedom should head.

Her work has been juried by Lisa Tremper Hanover, the James A. Michener Art Museum's director and CEO, and the Bucks County Chapter of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen.

She's even had a series of notecards made depicting individual quilts, which she sells via her website, cwebbdesigns.com, and at area museums, such as the Woodmere Art Museum in Chestnut Hill.

Still, her husband thought she deserved more recognition and suggested she answer Sterling Lark Publishing's call for quilt

submissions for its upcoming book.

She applied two years ago. In April, she was told her "Broken Dishes" quilt had been selected. In addition, the work will be part of an exhibit at a Texas quilt museum, then will travel around the U.S. as part of an international quilt show.

"It's a good feeling to be appreciated on an international level," she said.

Webb said she can make a quilt in as little as a week or as long as a month. There are a few she's been working on for years, but that's because she's still working out the design in her head, "so I've pushed it aside."

Some she's sewn entirely by hand, but most are sewn with a machine and only minor handstitching, she said.

"Now I'm writing my own book with all my quilts in it," she said.

She's hired an editor and put together a proposal.

"Quilting," she said, "is a way of keeping my sanity."

There are patches that tell of her husband Julius' obsession with Coca-Cola, her daughter's graduation from the University of Pittsburgh, her love of books and desire to travel — all captured in individual squares of fabric tightly sewn together to represent the body of her life.

"I create my own designs rather than looking at a pattern and duplicating it. I like to start with a traditional pattern, then branch off and do my own thing," said the Philadelphia special education teacher, who retired last year.

An award-winning quilter, Webb's "Broken Dishes" quilt from her Colorful World Collection is featured in the book "500 Traditional Quilts," published by Sterling Larks Publishing Co., a subsidiary of Barnes & Noble, which will be released Tuesday.

"I've been sewing since I was so young," she said. Her mother taught Webb and her twin sister to sew when they were in fourth grade. Webb kept at it, making clothes for her dolls into her early-teens.

When she got to college, "clothes were so inexpensive to buy" that instead of making her own, she would embellish the ones she bought.

"Jeans were never plain — there were always rhinestones," she said.

She first dabbled in quilt making while in college as a way to personalize her dorm room, she said. She read in a magazine how to make one by tying the fabric off in knots. Her first one was yellow butterflies on one side, green bamboo on the other.

"It was a fabulous quilt. And it lasted for years," she said.



A panel on the quilt "Me, My Family and I," depicting the children Christine Webb taught in her many years as a teacher



Video online

PHOTOS BY
ART GENTILE

Webb stitches a quilt.

Area musicals score 9 Barrymore nominations

By GWEN SHRIFT
STAFF WRITER

The Bristol Riverside Theatre snared five nominations for the Barrymore Award for Excellence in Theatre, the Philadelphia area's top professional stage honor, all for its recent musical "Little Shop of Horrors."

Ambler's Laura Giknis, described by the newspaper's critic as "a revelation" for her portrayal of Audrey in "Little Shop," was nominated as outstanding lead actress in a musical.

Castmates Carl Clemons-Hopkins, who played the voice of Audrey 2, and

Candace Thomas, as one of the Skid Row singers, also were named for their work — Clemons-Hopkins as outstanding supporting actor in a musical and Thomas as outstanding supporting actress in a musical.

The production also earned nods for Stephen Casey for outstanding choreography/movement and Ryan Touhey for outstanding music direction.

The Montgomery Theater of Souderton's "The Musical of Musicals (The Musical!)" earned nominations for outstanding overall production of a musical, outstanding direction of a

musical and outstanding ensemble in a musical.

Act II Playhouse of Ambler's Aaron Cromie was nominated for outstanding direction of a musical for the theater's production of "Man of La Mancha."

Winners get their awards Oct. 27 at the Merriam Theater in Philadelphia. Tickets for the event go on sale Tuesday. Information: www.theatrephiladelphia.org.

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Puppeteer Nate Golden in the guise of Audrey II at the Bristol Riverside