

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Founding Members**Jeanne Allen**

My quilt journey had a rough start. With the help of these ladies I continued my journey and consider myself a quilting fanatic.

Back in 1975 as a new mom, I decided that my little boy needed a quilt. With "Aunt Martha's" help, I cut up a sheet, transferred the images of sombreros, cacti, little burros and scraps to the sheet and then hand embroidered my blocks. When it came time to set the squares together I could not find the solid color fabrics that I wanted but did find cotton duck fabric, which I used. Then I got the fattest quilt batt I could find and layered it with another sheet and attempted to tie that quilt with yarn. My fingers soon hurt and I learned that you should not choose the heaviest fabric available for a quilt. Needless to say, It soon went into the closet, *never to be seen again*.

My next foray into quilting came a few years later. I used cereal box templates, ink pen and scissors to cut out a "bajillion" diamond shapes out of yellow, red, blue and green calicos. My grandmother told me that was too big of a project to start out with and it would never be finished. She was right. I learned not to bite off more than I could chew. That box of pieces soon went into the closet as well.

But the road became smoother. My mother showed me this wonderful new quilting book that she found: Eleanor Burns, Log Cabin Quilts. We tore strips of pink and purple and I learned about quarter-inch seam allowances. My daughter soon had a quilt for her bed. Thank you, Mom and Eleanor! That quilt started my real love affair with quilting.

My family and I moved to Wyoming in 1985 and my mom sent me quilt pieces to keep me busy as she heard that winters were long and cold here. I hibernated that first winter and worked on my quilt pieces. Soon thereafter I happened upon the local fabric store, Threads'n Things. Twila Christensen was teaching a sampler quilt class and I chose peach and green cotton AND polyester blend fabrics. Lesson learned: Do not mix blends and cottons. Also, if the block is too big, do not cut it down to size. You will lose your points. Thank you Twila for not laughing. I still have that quilt ...it's in the closet.

A few years later some ladies that love quilting got together and wondered what would happen if we started a club? Would anyone be interested? I am pleased to tell you that our local quilt club, *Sweetwater Piecemakers* will celebrate our 25th Anniversary next year. We have one meeting a month

and three Rippit Saturdays. I learned not be afraid to try something new.

After the quilt club idea worked out, a few friends decided to try a new venture. Twila, Bonny Stonemark, Nancy Vase and myself thought it would be a good idea to start a newsletter to connect with other quilters in the state. We pooled our money (less than \$30) and proceeded to beg, borrow and bribe anyone within ear shot to help us on our way. Well, I'll be darned if that didn't work out as well. The lesson I learned here was that *anything is possible if you just put your mind to it*, along with the help of others. Soon, we heard from fellow quilters across the state and the crazy idea of actually forming a state guild became a reality. I served as Southwest Representative for two terms and enjoyed it a lot. You know the rest of the story....

Many lessons learned. Thank you to all of the ladies, Aunt Martha, Granny Davis, Mom, Twila, Bonny and so many others. Quilters really ARE the best people. My biggest Thank You goes to my Bestie, Nancy Vase. Together, she and I have attended every Quilt Wyoming held, from the beginning, AND we are still speaking to each other! That is a blessing!

Jeanne Allen

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