

Brenda Arnold - CQG #060, 061

Brenda is the quintessential quilt top producer. At a trunk show in April 2025, she showed over 30 "flimsies" waiting to be quilted. Each was of a different pattern and for each she shared the pattern source or online access details. Her vast source of free patterns makes her a perfect convenor of the "*Worker Bee Wednesday*" (#048) group, a job that she took over in 2021. One fun and quick pattern/technique she introduced for community quilts and donated fabric is the 'three yard quilt' - a design of Donna Robertson and her daughter Fran Morgan of *Fabric Cafe*.¹ These tops are made with only three coordinating yards of fabric and the site boast more than 70 free designs that sew up quickly and look inviting.

Brenda joined the guild in 2017, essentially to meet local quilters. She had recently returned to Cranbrook after 40 years away. She really started quilting in 1994 when she wanted a "stress reliever". Prior to that, in 1981 (age 22) when she wanted a hobby she took a course at the college in Lethbridge. She knew of quilt-making of course as her grandmother was a quilter. Her quilts were utility in style, made from old clothes and even fortrel. It took Brenda a few years to become 'addicted', but she now says "Quilting is my life; I do it everyday." Brenda's first quilt was a sampler - "it's still not completed". The block patches were cut with scissors using hand-drawn templates, and one of the fabrics was 'eyelet'.

Brenda loves any "star block" and has a fondness for 'purple'. She has completed 20+ quilts. She has 75-100 quilt tops made. She loves to bring patterns together and piece the tops; she's not so keen on doing the machine quilting. Like most quilters, her pieces are for home use, gifts and charity, and she does make small lap quilts, table-runners, bags, placemats and the like. She uses most of her basement for quilting and has a very extensive collection of books and fabric. Her fabric stash has its origins in quilt shops in Brooks, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, the Cranbrook shops, and "Joann's" in the Kalispell area plus a useful online site: *Connecting Threads*. She recalls Joann's wall of fabrics and loading a grocery cart! Brenda is drawn to the bright colours of Kaffe Fassett and batiks. Pre-washing fabrics is no longer on her agenda. With the crazy prices now, she is paying "some" attention to the cost.

Brenda sews on a *Pfaff Tiptronic* or *Ambition* - both cost her about \$1,000. If she machine quilts a piece, the pattern is usually stitch-in-the-ditch done on one of her domestic machines. Most finished quilts have been quilted by a longarmer - Barkley's mother in Three Hills and Brenda Augustine locally for a cost around \$200/quilt.

Living in the Brooks/Tilley area of Alberta where she taught school, Brenda set-up the Brooks *Prairie Patches Quilt Guild*. And she offered the students quilting as an elective/optional course - the project was a "rag quilt" - a style that has exposed raw edge seams on the front and often made of flannel or 'old blue jeans' with the seams clipped at intervals to encourage fraying when washed. Brenda also offered a beginner course to adults, and a bargello quilt class.

Since joining the Cranbrook guild, she took care of the Membership List from 2017 to 2021 and was a piecer with the *Worker Bee Wednesday* group before becoming the coordinator. For the guild's two in-house auctions, Brenda has been the capable banker - about \$1,000 changes hands in a few hours! In 2023 she was one of the organizers of the guild's "I QUILT" exhibit at the local *1401 Gallery* (articulatemag.ca). Here art piece - "I QUILT" - was chosen as the exhibit's signature. Since September 2024, she has helped with the quilt documentation part

¹ Donna Robertson and Fran Morgan - *Fabric Cafe: Putting the Fun Back in Quilting* - fabriccafe.com. See *3-Yard Quilts: The Revolutionary Way to Quilt*, ~2008 and many other titles.

of the guild's History Project. Brenda is 'interested' in machine quilting on a mid-arm and meets with a small group of members with frame set-ups, "The Long-Armers".

Quiltmaker	Brenda Arnold
Date and place of birth	August 7, 1959 Regina, Saskatchewan
Father Occupation Birthplace	Henry Arnold Glazier Germany
Mother Occupation Birthplace	Phyllis Arnold (Nee KinVig) Receptionist Regina, SK
Quiltmaker Occupation	Teacher
Education of Quiltmaker	Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Science
Where quiltmaker lived	Regina, SK; Cranbrook, BC; Lethbridge, AB; Tilley, AB; Cranbrook, BC
Ethnic/Ancestry Background	German, Isle of Man

CQG #060 - 50th Wedding Anniversary Commemorative Quilt

Quiltmaker: Brenda Arnold

Owner: Phyllis Arnold, quiltmaker's mother

It took Brenda about a year to make this piece for her parents. The signatures are of the family and friends who attended the 50th anniversary celebration. Brenda used colours that her mother loves. She will "inherit" the quilt from her mom.

Pattern	Unknown - common signature quilt block, style and layout
Subject	Anniversary Signature Quilt
Date	Specific date: 2008
Size	L 60½" x W 73½"
Overall style	Finished quilt Medallion Repeated blocks Appliqué

Medallion	L 20" x W 20" Appliqué Frame 1 & 2 : W 1¼", multi fabrics, straight Colour: brown, rust, orange, yellow
Frame	W 12½" 3 rows of Signature blocks Blocks: L 4½" x 4½", square Spacing: side-by-side Brackman # 3250 (The Xquisite) Number of blocks: 108
Border	Border 1: W 6⅜", straight, appliquéd Feature colour: off-white Border 2 & 3: W 2", straight, multi-fabrics Feature colours: brown, rust, burgundy/red, orange, yellow, green
Edge finishing	Binding: W 1", straight, machine front & back Colour: brown
Batting	80/20. low loft
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Feature colours: brown, rust, burgundy/red, orange, yellow, green, gold, off-white/cream Motif: flowers, geometric, plain/solid Background colour: off-white
Top piecing method	Machine piecing Hand Appliqué
Embellishment	Signatures - hand written in pen
Appliqué	Motif: Flowers, bow, numbers (50) Method: turned edge
Backing	One fabric, Cotton, Plain weave Feature colour: cream Motif: plain, solid
Quilting	Mid/Longarm Machine Thread: cotton, cream Pattern: Custom - flowers, loops, fine stipple
Condition	Unused

Brenda's love of the colour purple shines through in this quilt. She used over 100 different fabrics so it is fitting of her descriptor "scrappy batiks". She was drawn to the pattern because of the stars.

Judy Martin's sample was the on the cover of the Fons and Porter Quilting Magazine in 2005.

Pattern	<i>Jewel of the Prairies</i> by Judy Martin (judymartin.com) ~ 2005
Date	Specific date: 2012
Size	L 94½" x W 94½"
Overall Style	Finished Quilt Repeated blocks, Varied Blocks Scrappy
Block	On-point Block: L 11½" x 11 ½", square Spacing: side-by-side Brackman #2138a (Evening Star), #2091 Snail's Trail Setting squares & triangles
Border or Frame	W 2½", straight, multiple fabrics
Edge finishing	Binding: W¾", straight, machine front/hand back Colour: purple
Batting	80/20, medium loft
Top fabric	Cotton, plain weave Motif: batik Feature colour: yellow, turquoise, teal, orange, purple, mauve, lavender, indigo, green gold, fuchsia, cream, blue, brown Background: varied colours
Top piecing method	Machine piecing
Backing	Vertical pieced Cotton, plain weave Feature colour: purple Motif: dots
Quilting	Mid/Longarm Machine Thread: purple, polyester Pattern: edge-to-edge pantograph
Condition	Unused
Comment	<i>This quilt won at the Cranbrook Quilters Guild Quilt Shows in 2017 - Professionally Quilted Judges 3rd Choice</i>