

Favorite quotes from the Dowager Countess of Downton Abbey:

"One can't go to pieces at the death of every foreigner; we'd all be in a state of collapse whenever we opened a newspaper."



February 14, 2014

It's been a busy week, what with all the Olympic coverage. I find it exciting, but there are only so many snowboarders doing flips off ramps that I can watch. And never watch speed skating at 11 p.m. Before going to bed. You'll be up all night.

Now, I'm not a winter sports kind of person. Never learned the skills as a kid. When I tried cross country skiing after moving to Wyoming, on my first venture, I never got out of the parking lot. I'm more of a summer sport person - swimming, tennis, a little gymnastics, cycling (fat tires, not skinny), water polo, diving - although the summer I dove was just so my brother, who managed the club team, didn't lose points at swim meets. And I ride horses - not at Olympic level, but enough to understand the discipline.

And these sports, for the most part are safe sports. You don't break legs or get concussions while swimming. Although I thought I broke my nose once when I misjudged the end of the pool. And you can knock yourself out if you hit the platform when diving. But those are exceptions. Winter sports are a whole other matter.

Becca-you remember Becca, my mini Aussie who enjoyed watching the summer Olympics because horses got to compete? She could relate to that sport. Although to be truthful she was more intrigued by the tack boxes that carried treats and the luxury accommodations on airplanes for the horses. Not that she's ever been on a plane. But she's barked at lots of them that fly by a little too close to the ground.

Anyway, Becca thinks that just about everybody that competes in the winter Olympics is nuts. She thinks that any woman who would deliberately slide feet first down an icy chute at some outrageous mph has got to be certifiable. She's seen me go feet first on the backyard sidewalk and it wasn't a pretty picture. Although she almost got a treat out of it because the pizza went flying when I hit the ground. But the pizza stayed in the box, and I stayed on the ground - I couldn't stand back up 'cause my feet kept sliding out from underneath me. Becca thought that was hilarious. And she pointed out that Shaun White can stand back up when he falls and his feet are strapped onto a board. I had to butt scoot over to the steps, pull a lawn chair over for leverage and grab onto the door handle before I could get my feet underneath me because of the ice. Shaun White doesn't need lawn chairs to get back on his feet.

And then you've got kids who ski 85 mph down a 3,000 foot slope - its really a mountain, but let's not squabble about words, after all in Wyoming a 30 mph wind is called a breeze

and 65 mph winds are gusts. And these kids aren't particularly healthy, either. One down hill (not down mountain - euphemisms again) racer has had 9 surgeries on her knees. That's 4 more than me. And I can barely make it from the sidewalk to my car these days because of the ice in the parking lot. And I'm parked right next to the curb.

And then you've got a half pipe that is slushy instead of icy. The boarders just can't get the speed they need to flip upside down half a dozen times in the air 17+ feet above the edge of the pipe. Not the bottom, the edge. And they're complaining. Like I said, Becca thinks they are all crazy.

So she hasn't found a winter Olympic sport yet that she really likes. But because there are no animal competitors you can't really trust her opinion. She is rooting for the American women's hockey team and she does like figure skating, but who doesn't. And it at least has music. But hockey and figure skating also involve sharp blades and hard falls. So I wouldn't call them safe sports.

Really, there is no a single winter sport that's not fraught with danger. Well maybe one. Curling. Becca laughed at me when I suggested that maybe that was a winter sport I could do. She's right, she's seen me on ice.

Curling is interesting, though, and it can suck you right in and 4 hours later you realize you've just watched a bunch of people shove weights (stones) down the icy track while sweeping brooms in front of the stones. Think shuffle board on ice. As one friend pointed out it's the only Olympic sport that you can do while smoking cigarettes. Or drinking beer, kinda like bowling. Now don't start sending me letters. I can accept curling and bowling as sports just as much as I think golf is a sport. But Becca does think that with a little practice I might have some skill for curling. She has seen me try to sweep snow of the sidewalk, after all.

But I know she's just laughing at me.

Cotton Rainbow Kits Are In!!

Kits for the March Monday Morning Quilt, the Rainbow quilt hanging in the window, are in! We have 10, so supplies are limited.



DOWNTON ABBEY RETREAT! MARCH 21-23 NAGEL WARREN MANSION

We are set for Friday March 21 through Sunday March 23. You will be able to check in mid afternoon on Friday and we will plan to leave Sunday mid afternoon. We have 8 king bed rooms reserved. Cost is based upon double occupancy. If you prefer a single room, you will need to let me know very quickly so I can look into booking a different room. Reservations will be made through me and you can secure your spot with a down payment of half the cost. The rest will

be due by March 15.

If you need to cancel, I will need to know 30 days in advance. But if something comes up, please talk to me because we might be able to work something out.

We will be sewing in the conference rooms in the basement. There are 3 rooms that can accommodate about 16 sewers. We will be cozy, but I think it will work. I will set up separate tables for cutting and will plan on having 2 irons/boards. If you just want to come to sew, and go home at night to your own bed, I might be able to accommodate that. However, I don't want to get more than 16 sewers. If you are interested in this option, let me know and I'll see what I can work out.

At the retreat, you may sew on any project that you like -- it does not have to be a Downton Abbey Quilt. For those of you sewing your Downton Abbey quilts, though, I will provide instruction for the horizontal quilt (quilt blocks are the ones already on line) plus you will get a set of patterns for the second quilt (the on point quilt with the green alternate blocks).

During the retreat, we will play some games, win some door prizes, watch some episodes of Downton Abbey, take High Tea on Saturday, and sew our socks off!

Included in the cost:

2 nights (2 per room) at the Nagel Warren Mansion (such a treat!)
Sat & Sun breakfast
High tea on Saturday
Set of patterns for second quilt
Door prizes
Lots of Fun !!!

Lunch and dinners are on our own. There are plenty of fun restaurants downtown. You can also check out what is playing at the Lincoln Center and go to a movie.

Cost per person = \$175. A \$90 deposit will secure your room.

Blocks for the first quilt are posted on line at www.aroundtheblockquilts.com Three blocks are currently posted. I will get 3 more out as soon as I can.

You can find the blocks under the "What's New" tab. Fabric requirements for the quilt are also given. These blocks will stay posted for a limited time and we'll have them in the store. Price to buy in store is \$1 for one page or \$2 for 2 pages -- to help me cover the costs of the ink.

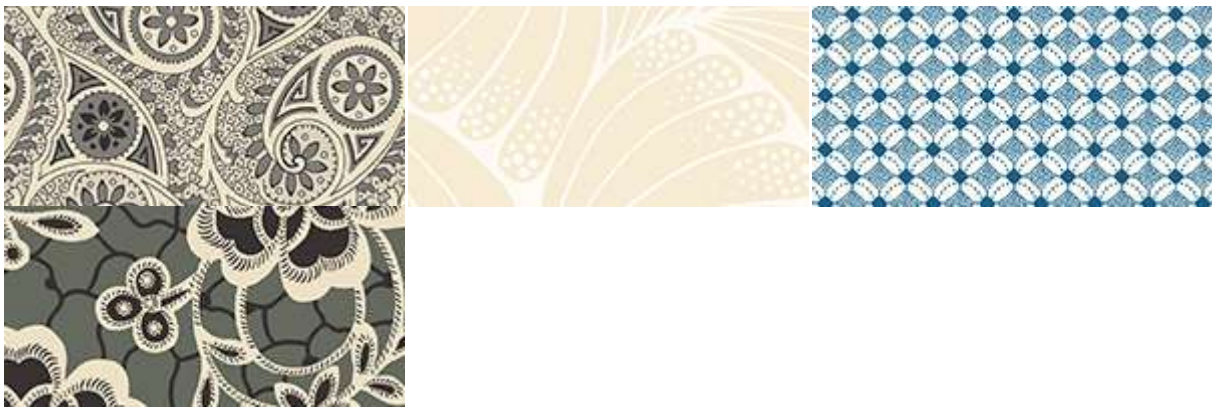
First Quilt/horizontal

Second quilt/on point



WHAT'S NEW!!

Limited shipment from Andover for the Downton Abbey collection. I have 27 yards of the background cream.



From Moda -- and we got "hexies" in -- precuts in the shape of a hexagon:





Marcus Brothers





February Classes & Special Events

Ruffles & Ruffles Quilt Sat. Feb. 15, 2-6 (New Time) \$20 Barb Boyer

Just think cute! Sew ruffle upon ruffle upon ruffle until you have a cute girl's quilt, all in pink, white & black - or any colors you choose. The sample quilt features volleyball, softball, basketball and softball fabrics.

Jelly Roll Race Mon. Feb. 17 10:30-5 \$20 Barb Boyer

Ready, Set, Stitch! Well, you don't have to race if you don't want to. This is a quick & easy quilt made from 2 ½" strips - you can either purchase ready cut strips or cut your own. And that's all you use, just strips (unless you want to add a few accent pieces). If you haven't made a Jelly Roll Race quilt, they are lots of fun and we have lots of fun 2½" strip precuts just waiting to be used.

Beyond the Basics: Inset Seams-Attic Windows

Thurs. Feb. 20, 1-3, \$20 Barb Boyer

From attic windows, to mitered borders to lone star quilts, inset seams are a must to master. Learn the basics of inseting seams, the "Y" seam construction, while making a small attic window block.

Hand Applique Club

Thursday Feb. 20 6-8:30 free

Every 3rd Thursday, we're getting together to practice our hand applique skills. The Club is open to all skill levels. We want to share what we've learned, find new patterns, and simply just sit and sew. More and more patterns are showing applique work, and while sometimes you can just fuse it down, learning how to hand applique is a wonderful skill that can be carried anywhere you go.

Design Challenge Sat. Feb. 22, 10:30-5 \$25 Barb Boyer

What would happen if I did this??? Working with just one block, you will discover all the various ways to turn & twist the block to create exciting quilt designs. You can either work from graph paper or experiment with the E-Quilt software. If you have a laptop and the E-Quilt software, I will help you design your quilt on your computer. I will also demonstrate how to design using the software on my computer. After your quilt is designed, then you will choose your fabric and start cutting & stitching. Once your quilts are done we will display the finished quilts in the classroom (probably sometime this summer). If you've ever wanted to design your own quilts, this is a perfect way to begin!

Beyond the Basics: Flying Geese

Thurs. Feb. 27, 1-3, \$20 Barb Boyer

Using the Flying Geese Ruler, learn to make 4 flying geese at the same time. If you've ever wanted to put a flying geese border on a quilt, but thought it was too much work, learn to use this ruler and it will make flying geese constructions a snap!

Friday Nighters Fri. Feb. 28, 5:30-9 \$10 (one time fee for year)

This class will help you get organized for Christmas 2014 -- or just help you get things done. You give me a list of your "to dos" or unfinished projects you want to finish and then each month I check off what you've completed. Trust me. If you need incentive to stay on track, this is it. You can bring your sewing machine or do hand work.

February 2014						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 BOM 10:30-11:30 Make it Do 1-2 Monthly Minis 4-6

2 Closed	3 Monday Morning Quilts 10-2	4	5 Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	6 Beyond Basics: Paper Piecing 1-3 Back Basting 6-8:30	7 Open Sew1-4	8 Embroidery Club 10-noon Cabin in the Woods Rag Quilt 1-5
9 Beginning Quilt 1-4	10 Learn to Twist- Knit a Cowl 1:30-3:30 OR 6- 8:30	11	12 Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	13 Beyond Basics: Bias Half Square Triangles 1-3 Knit Pickers' Club 6-8:30	14 Valentine's Day FullMoon	15 Ruffle Quilt 10:30-5
16 Beginning Quilt 1-4	17 Jelly Roll Race 10:30-5 Presidents' Day	18	19 Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	20 Beyond Basics: Inset Seams 1- 3 Hand Applique Club 6- 8:30	21 Open Sew1-4	22 Design Challenge 10:30- 5
23 Beginning Quilt 1-4	24	25	26 Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	27 Beyond Basics: Flying Geese 1-3	28 Friday Nighters 5:30 -?	