

Favorite quotes from the Dowager Countess of Downton Abbey:

"It's a ridiculous idea. Because this house is not a hospital. Amputation in the dining room? Resuscitation in the pantry?"



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**January 10, 2014**

I don't like gators, but I do find them fascinating.

Like the gator that appeared at Chicago's O'Hare airport in baggage claim. In November. Remember, gators are cold blooded. They don't wander around much in winter. This gator was only 18 inches long or so, but it still had nasty big teeth.

The thinking is some guy took it to the airport, realized he couldn't take it on board a plane, and let it go. I think that's a little farfetched. I mean, really. Quilters get nervous about taking scissors on a plane. Small pocket knives can be confiscated. A live reptile, even a small one - this one was only 18 inches long or so - with numerous wicked teeth has got to be more deadly than a pair of scissors or a knitting needle. I think the guy did it on purpose.

He even took a picture of it before he let it go and the picture got posted on Twitter. What's even more hilarious is the guy holding the gator had this huge tattoo on his arm, which, of course, got captured in the photo. You've heard of bank robbers writing the "give me all your money" message on the back of their own deposit slips? Kind of the same thing. The cops think they can find him based on that tattoo alone.

Other gator stories: Did you hear about the gator that wandered up to a Walmart in Florida? He sat outside the automatic doors, watching the doors open & close, open & close, & open & close.... Well, you get the picture. I've heard of cats who learn to flush toilets just to watch the water go down the drain. Lydia, of course, doesn't do things like that. Becca, on the other hand, would think that was a cool thing to do, but she's really not tall enough to look over the edge of the toilet, let alone reach up to flip the handle. When I was in Australia, a group of college kids I was traveling with flushed the toilets at a rest stop just to watch the water swirl the other direction, counter clockwise. That's called the Coriolis effect, BTW.

But back to the gator. This gator had no intention of going into the Walmart. He just wanted to watch the doors open & close. There are days when I think that might be a delightful occupation. Eventually, though, employees locked the doors and removed the fun and the gator wandered away. Can you imagine what might have happened if the gator went inside? There's a good joke there somewhere....

And finally, did you hear about the couple, who are filming a documentary, who dive in the Nile looking for crocodiles - which are a bigger, badder form of gator. Now I don't want to hear from experts who want to tell me crocs and gators are different. They both have big teeth, they live in the water and they eat people. Close enough.

Anyway, Anderson Cooper, from 60 minutes, went diving with this couple and got up close & personal with several crocs. Close enough to cut a piece of tail fin off the croc for a dna

sample. Apparently, the crocs don't view scuba divers under water as a threat. Getting out of and into the boat is a different story - kicking legs sound and look like dinner. But once in the water, quietly swimming around, the crocs apparently don't know what to think.

And they are hard to find in the Nile muddy waters. You don't find the croc by looking for its 18 foot long body. You find it by its gleaming white teeth. When the camera lights sweep around hunting for crocs, the first thing you see are teeth. Big, scary crooked white teeth. It's truly frightening.

But if I were a croc and I had someone cut a piece of tail fin off me, it wouldn't be long before I'd figure out that scuba divers aren't just another form of crocodile. And I bet that might happen just about the time a guy sticks a video camera 4 inches away from the croc and says "smile."

## **Don't forget about the Valentine Challenge!**

**It costs \$5 to enter and you get a free fat quarter to get you started.** You must use a recognizable portion of the chosen fat in your quilt. The quilt may be any size and the top must be submitted by Valentine's Day. The catch?

You must come into the shop and choose a candy heart-whatever saying is on the candy heart is the theme your Valentine quilt! The winning quilt receives a \$25 gift certificate -- plus you'll have a quilt for Valentine's Day (only the top is needed for submission).

## **AND DON'T FORGET!**

**Make it Do (Use it Up, Wear it Out, Make it Do or Do Without) Sat. Jan. 4, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, April 5 and May 3 \$30 Barb Boyer**

You have a limited supply of fabrics: Now, how many quilts can you make? Your fabrics will be limited to 30 of the ugliest, strangest, weirdly colored fat quarters that you can find, plus 10 fats that I will provide, plus 5 yards of background fabrics. Over the next 4 months, your challenge is to make as many quilts from this supply of fabrics. At the end, in May, we will have 2 winners: The person who made the most quilts and the person who used up the most fabrics (who had the least left, in other words). Come to the first class for more details. If you're interested, join up.



## **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.

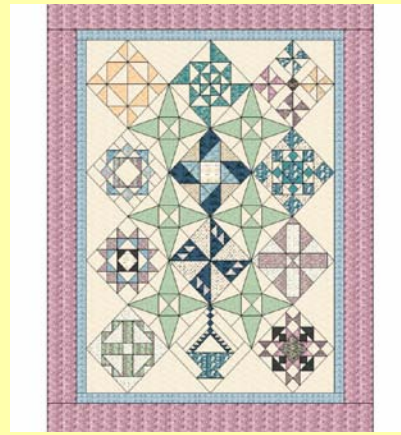
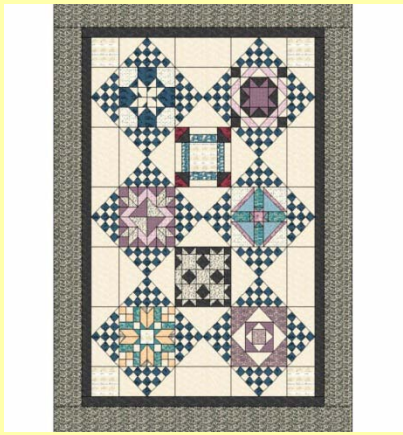
Cost per person = \$175. A \$90 deposit will secure your room.

Blocks for the first quilt are posted on line at [www.aroundtheblockquilts.com](http://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!!

From Quilting Treasures



Elle: From Quilting Treasures:



From a new company called Blend:





## January Classes & Special Events

### Valentine Challenge Thur. Jan. 2-Feb. 14 \$5 to enter

Make a Valentine quilt and you'll be entered to win a \$25 gift certificate. But there's a catch! You must come into the shop and choose a candy heart-whatever saying is on the candy heart is the theme your Valentine quilt! Then choose one (free) fat (from a sack, with your eyes closed) to use in your quilt. You must use a recognizable portion of the chosen fat in your quilt. The quilt may be any size and the top must be submitted by Valentine's Day.

### Monthly Minis First Saturday of the Month, Jan-Dec. 4-6 Barb Boyer \$20 (free if you buy the kits)

Each month we will feature a snowman, from McKenna Ryan's Snow Buds patterns. The kits will be laser cut, all ready for assembly. You can also choose to make the Snow Buds with your own fabrics. The laser kits will billed month by month. If you are interested in taking this class or buying the laser cut snowmen, please let me know ASAP so I can get them ordered.



**Monday Morning Quilts Jan. 6, Feb.3, Mar. 3, April 7 10-2**

**Free, if you buy that month's kit**

Each month we will feature quilts from the Fons & Porter Love of Quilting magazine or other fun quilts. From Fons & Porter, we will choose one of the quilts from the magazine and make limited kits. In class, we will show you how to put the quilt together and you will have time to get started. Quilts will be big or small or in between. The first quilt, just because it is January, will be Lost Socks, an easy fusible quilt. We won't completely kit this quilt, but we will have a bundle of flannel fats to get you started. February's quilt will be a kit from Moda in bright jewel tones. March will feature our first Fons & Porter quilt.

**Hand Embroidery Club Sat. Jan.11, 10-noon FREE**

**Kathy Sconce**

(Club normally meets the 2nd Sat. of each month from 10-noon)

This year we're stitching "penny squares" using simple drawings that we create! During class we will draw various designs and stitch them on 5" squares. Each month we will learn new stitches and trade designs and ideas. Then these 5" squares can be made into a sampler quilt, or stitched into a "book" of stitches. You will also make your own notebooks so you can keep your squares, ideas, floss, needles & scissors in one place. You can join anytime.

**Sidelights Sat. Jan 11, 1-5 \$20 (free if you buy the kit)**

We're featuring a flannel panel for this version of the Sidelights pattern. We have several kits available, but you can make this fun quilt with any fabrics - Ghastlies, oriental, fun novelty, peacocks.



**Beginning Quilting Sun. 1-4, Jan. 12, 19, 26; Feb. 9, 16, 23; Mar. 9, 16**

**OR**

**Wednesdays: 1-4 OR 6-8:30 Jan. 15, 22, 29; Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26; Mar. 5**

**\$65 Barb Boyer**

This comprehensive 8-week course will introduce to you almost everything you need to know about piecing a quilt top. Along the way you will learn about color, batting, thread, machines and various techniques to give you the skills to make almost any quilt.

**Learn to Read Knits & Purls Mon. Jan. 13, 1:30-3:30 OR 6-8:30 \$20**

**Carol Moler**

Does it slant to the right or to the left? Learn to read your stitches while making this fun and easy scarf.

**Hand Applique Club**

**Thursday Jan. 16 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.

**Finish Your Monthly Minis Sat. Jan. 18 Barb Boyer**

This finishing class is for everyone who participated in last year's Monthly Minis class. We will work on the appliques and choose fabrics for sashing and borders to put the blocks into a quilt.

**Dakota or Lobo or Morley or Randolph Mon. Jan 20, 10:30-5 \$20**

This is a 1) fusible 2) machine appliqued and 3) a pieced wall hanging. These make great gifts and are fun to put together. You can choose any of the patterns you want (bear, moose, reindeer, lobo, bison, horse and others) and you can use your own fabrics or buy one of our kits. The kits are good sellers and we have a hard time keeping them in stock.



**Hand Piecing Thur. Jan. 23, 1-3 \$25**

**Sandra Freeburg**

Learn to hand piece straight lines, curves & inset seams. Very portable, doesn't need electricity, can sew anywhere, and it's easy to tote. Your mothers and grandmothers pieced by hand-this is an art form we don't want to lose. Stay connected with tradition and learn to hand piece.

**Red & Black Star Quilt Sat. Jan. 25 10:30-5 \$20**

**Barb Boyer**

Strip pieced flying geese make this Star Quilt stunning - as do the polka dots. Make a wall hanging or add more blocks for a bed sized quilt.

**Friday Nighters Fri. Jan. 31 5:30-? \$10**

**Barb Boyer**

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.

**January 2014**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> Closed	<b>2</b> Valentine Challenge	<b>3</b> Open Sew 1-4	<b>4</b> BOM 10:30-11:30 Make it Do 1-3 Monthly Minis 4-6
<b>5</b> Closed	<b>6</b> Monday Morning Quilts 10-2	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Knit Pickers' Club 6-8:30	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Embroidery Club 10-noon  Sidelights Quilt 1-5
<b>12</b> Beginning Quilt 1-4	<b>13</b> Learn to Read Knits & Purls-Scarf 1:30-3:30 OR 6-8:30	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	<b>16</b> Hand Applique Club 6-8:30  Full Moon	<b>17</b> Open Sew 1-4	<b>18</b> Complete Monthly Minis (ongoing class) 10:30-5
<b>19</b> Beginning Quilt 1-4	<b>20</b> BJ Designs (animal quilts) 10:30-5  ML King Day	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Beginning Quilt 1-4 or Beginning Quilt 6-8:30	<b>23</b> Hand Piecing 1-3	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Red & Black Star Quilt 10:30-5