

by **Patty Deline, Ottawa**

I was bowled over. I can't believe how much work people put into my quilt. I started crying," effused Lorraine Campbell about the quilt top she received at the "reveal" of QUILTCO OTTAWA'S 2006-2007 Round Robin. She and eleven other of Quiltco's 30-plus members participated in this exciting part of last year's active programme.

In September, each participant placed a block, any size, along with fabric and instructions if they wished, in a brown bag marked with a personal but anonymous symbol. (Thus round robins are also known

as brown bag exchanges in our guild.) The programme committee provided an instruction booklet for each person's bag. The bags were placed in the centre of the room and each person took one, other than her or his own. The bags were brought to our meeting every two months and exchanged. At the June pot luck, each participant claimed her bag and opened it up.

"When I saw it, I was thrilled, and I am even more thrilled now that it is quilted," reported Suzie Miller, who submitted an old feed sack as her centre block. Participants picked up on the chicken theme, as well as the maple leaves and the red, white and blue colours of her block for stunning effect.

BELOW

Round robin participants with their finished quilt tops.

Front row (l-r): Lorraine Campbell, Penny Miller, Cynthia Leonard, Joanne Hefford, Maggie Rolfe with Charlene Jackson's quilt, Deirdre McQuillan, Barbara Mitchell, Suzie Miller.

Back row (l-r): Carol Michon, Nicole Lund, Diane Bush, Carole Noel-Mills.

# *The Glories of the Round Robin*



“Every time I’ve been in (a round robin), I’ve been truly amazed,” raved Deirdre McQuillan, a veteran of many. “It’s totally unexpected and wonderful.” Deirdre’s starting block was made of four log cabin squares. Her quilt included flying geese and raised appliqué flowers, resulting in a very harmonious design that she might have planned herself. Yet she included no fabric and no special instructions in her bag.

The instruction booklet in each bag was flexible enough to allow for endless creativity in how the participants added to each other’s work. It contained two columns, one of quilting elements, one of shapes. (See page 12.) Each person had to choose one element and one shape per exchange, then cross it off the list, for example, appliqué from the left column and flower from the right, or piecing triangles. Sometimes these can pose challenges, as Carole Noel-Mills discovered this time. “I hadn’t done mitred corners before, so I looked in a book. You push yourself to do something you haven’t done before. I like the discipline,” she said. Her original block was a colourful modern design she had done at a class, then didn’t know what to do with. Her fellow quilters took it and created a jazzy quilt top replete with stars and half moons on a black background. The booklet also had extra pages for participants to write messages to the owner, about the original block, where their inspiration came from or whatever.

Penny Miller, a long-time Quiltco member who has done round robins before, “signed up again because I have so much fun each time I do it. It’s great to see what each person before you has done and what the original person has done. I try to be as true as I can to what that person started with. It’s so much fun when you open your bag and see what other people have done for you,” she laughs.

At the June potluck at Suzie Miller’s farm, there was much laughter and many tears as the bags were opened for the owner and for all to see. Those who had not participated were more than a little envious as they viewed the twelve gorgeous, wildly-different quilt tops made by twelve of their fellow Quiltco members. Everyone marvelled at the

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creativity and workmanship that went into each round and at the harmonious outcomes in every case.

Quiltco was formed in 1993 by a group of passionate quilters in the Ottawa area who wanted to share their love of the art. Its small membership (currently 32) was decided to maintain an intimate format for sharing the excitement of quilting and for supporting each other as friends. The symbol of our guild is flying geese, as they work cooperatively in their V-flight formation, each one taking a turn at the hard leader's job. We hold monthly meetings, biennial retreats and in-formal weekly get-togethers. Our annual programmes and workshops include challenges, fabric and block exchanges and group work. Women's shelters, a local hospice and breast cancer research have benefited from our charitable work. This year's program includes a Mystery Quilt and a block challenge for a Sampler Quilt.

### Round Robin Instructions

ELEMENTS	SHAPES
Piecing	Flower
Piecing	Stripe
Paper Piecing	Circle
Appliqué	Triangle
Dimensional (relief)	Star
Stitchery	Curves

Choose one element from the left column and one shape from the right for each round. When you are finished, check off what you have done before passing the bag on.

