

## Covington Quilt Guild Survey Results 2023

Reported by Kathy McClung

*The survey was intended to give members the opportunity to express their thoughts on the future of the Quilt Guild. The past few years has impacted our programs and have put pressure on our ability to generate funding. It has also forced us to think more creatively about how to raise money. Fortunately, the Guild has retained most of its membership and has gained new members.*

*The results of this survey can make us better or divide us. Members feel strongly about some changes they would like to see or changes they do not want to see. My hope is that we can respect each other's viewpoints and can resolve these issues amicably.*

*There are many ideas generated by this survey. We know we can improve the Guild for our members and to achieve our Mission. But, with new ideas, come responsibility. Speakers, workshops, parties are all great to have but they cost money and members must be willing to work on the fundraising to generate the funds. Each of us has talents to offer but we also may have limitations to how much time we can contribute. Each of us must make that decision for ourselves. I invite our members to "stretch" yourself. Try something new, don't be afraid, we will help you.*

### **RESULTS:**

Forty-four members responded to the survey results. Of those, 15 were members less than 5 years, 12 had been members between 6-10 years, 11 were members between 11-20 years and 6 were members over 21 years.

### **Why did members join the Guild?**

The most prominent reason people joined the Guild is to have fellowship with quilters. This was almost unanimous. Working on charity quilts and improving quilting skills was split fairly evenly for another reason to join the guild. Other reasons to join were:

- To hear educational speakers at meetings and workshops. (6 members)
- Support and uphold quilt making now and for the future.
- To admire and support members work-(2 members)
- Looking for people to sew with.
- Be part of a meaningful quilt group.

### **What the Guild does well**

The membership had a wide variety of answers to what the Guild does well. The most popular was Hugs charity quilts with the quilt show being second. Other answers were :

- Friendships/fellowship/, share ideas-8
- Small sewing groups—5
- Committed to the community-3

- \* Bazaar and fabric sales-2
- \* Retreats-2
- \* Show and tell-2
- \* When there is a need, people step up-2
- \* Parties-2

Single answers were:

- Good relationship with other guilds
- Pitching in for a common goal
- Supporting its membership
- Inspiration
- Recognizing guests
- Meeting location
- Bobbie's upbeat approach
- The newsletter
- Officers and Chairs giving of their time.
- Orientation
- Wide variety of things to be involved in
- Answers questions
- Hanging in there through Co-vid
- Having a democratic method of voting for officers is key to the success of our guild.

### **Budget-**

There was a lot to say about the budget and how resources are spent. Members are missing the educational component of the guild, specifically the speakers and workshops that we have had in the past. Two consistent messages are 1) that people are concerned about not having a quilt show to raise funds and 2) feel that Hugs has a disproportionate amount of funds compared to the rest of the guild responsibilities and opportunities.

- Some members would like to see less parties and less prizes.
- Fund raising ideas:
- Fabric sales at meetings including members own sales with a percentage going to the Guild or a flat fee for a table.
- Auctions
- Monthly drawing
- Small quilt raffle at Food and gift show. Add other items to sell like bags, pillowcases, etc.
- Raffle off classes or retreats to members.
- Charge a fee for an event like teaching basic sewing or quilting.
- Raise raffle tickets to \$1.50.
- Raise dues.
- Plant sales like hanging baskets in summer, poinsettias in winter.
- Holiday bazaar
- Have the tea room proceeds go to the guild rather than HUGS. (Tea room proceeds do go to the Guild.)
- We could all donate \$50-100.00.

## **Distribution of Resources**

There is some confusion about donations to the Guild and I realize now that I should have worded the question differently on the survey. Prior to Co-vid, all donated resources went to HUGS with few exceptions. This included funding from corporations that compensated the Guild for work that their employees did for charitable work and fabric and other related goods from a variety of sources.

When asked if the distribution of donations should be changed, 10 thought there should not be a change, 20 thought there should be a split and 2 thought it should all go to the Guild. Newer members didn't feel comfortable answering the question.

The bigger question raised by 4 members is if a split is even possible legally. If the 501c3 rules do not permit some portion of cash donations to go to the Guild, it is a done deal. But does this also include the donations of fabric and other goods?

There are a handful of people who questioned whether people understand when they are donating that there is a choice between HUGS and the Guild funds. The Guild gets several donations of fabric and goods through our website and in the past, those went directly to HUGS. The fabric that was usable for the HUGS quilts was kept and everything else was sold with the funds remaining in the HUGS budget.

***RECOMMENDATION: More research needs to be done before any decisions can be made about this issue. If 501c3 regulations only allow monetary donations to go to the charity part of the Guild and not any administration, then the discussion is over. If it does not apply to goods, then that can be discussed. In any case, donations should be handled with more clarification of what the funds generated will be used for, so the donor has the choice.***

## **HUGS-**

Members are very proud of what the HUGS program accomplishes for the community. There are a very large number of members who take part in the production and support of this program.

Members would like to see a more complete accounting of quilts needed, quilt tops complete but not quilted, quilts completed but not delivered and expenses.

## **Membership-**

The Guild has a healthy number of members and should retain the membership, encourage new members through outreach and involvement, and recruit new and especially "younger" members.

- Encourage new members to be involved. More ways to get to know each other.
- A buddy type system so each new member has someone to explain things.
- Recognize people making a difference e.g., Marta Fuller Sullivan.

- Feature a person in the newsletter so we can get to know them better. Introduce them at the next meeting. A pictorial directory was also suggested.
- \* One member expressed her disappointment that when she joined, others did not speak to her and she was asked by a member to change her seat because “that is where she always sits”.
- \* Have a handbook that describes all the activities of the Guild like small groups, retreats, etc.
- \* The sound system does not work that well and it is hard to hear, especially if audience members are talking.

### Quilt Show-

The quilt show is a source of pride for our members. Not only is it a great money maker, but it gives members an opportunity to show their work to the community and generate new ideas for future projects. The teamwork required to put on the show is also a great way for members to get to know each other.

Ideas submitted for having a quilt show without the current venue are:

- Share a venue with another Guild.
- Church or church school
- Find ways to display for public viewing.
- High school /other schools
- A crossover event with a non-quilting group might draw more people and open a door of opportunity.
- Grange Hall on Kent Kangley, Neuwaukum Hall, Maple Valley Community Center, Grace Hansen in Ravensdale.
- Auburn Community Center

Ideas for quilt show themes included celebrating 50 years since the bi-centennial by having activities that show how much we have changed over 50 years, highlighting the teachers from the 70’s and 80’s and naming it “Semiquincentennial”. Other ideas for themes were “When times get tough, just keep on stichin” and” Love made visible with every stitch”.

***Recommendation: When will the school district have an answer for us regarding whether we can use the facility? That answer is crucial to moving forward. In the mean time information should be gathered about the availability and cost of other venues. It would be great to complete this before the end of the year so the guild can move forward.***

### Administration-

I have added this section because there were a number of comments that were intended to improve the Guild meetings and help the members have a clearer understanding of what is going on.

Budget- Before the budget presentation, send out the proposal to members through email so they have an opportunity to review it before a vote. Have enough copies for everyone to view at the meeting. An overhead screen would also be helpful.

### Meetings-

- Conduct business meetings like business meetings. When they aren't it adds to the chaos and trivializes the purpose of the meeting and the work of the Board.
- Publish board meeting agendas ahead of the board meetings and publish the minutes of that meeting.
- Provide more complete meeting minutes. This is one way that members can stay informed if they miss a meeting.

Communication-

- Make sure that the website is up to date. Share with new members how information is sent. Meeting information about the program is sent through email. If you are not getting emails from the guild contact Joan Calvary to resolve the problem.
- Update the bylaws- They are out of date.
- Support participation from our membership by asking for suggestions and listen during business meetings.

***Moving forward: There are a few key points that need immediate attention:***

***1. The budget- Make this a focus for the next two months and make sure that information is available to the members well in advance of having to vote. I would also suggest there be a clear explanation of the legal requirements that the guild has as it impacts the budget. There is confusion about how we can have so much money in the bank but can't spend it.***

***2. When is the School District deciding on the use of the school? This is key to planning a quilt show.***

***3. Requirements on the 501©3 requirements. Can the Guild keep a portion of monetary donations to HUGS for "administration"? Do the same rules apply to fabric and other goods? In any case, we can do a better job at explaining to donors that their donations can go to either to the Guild or HUGS.***

***There are many ideas that the Board should consider. The Board can take on all or part of the solutions or the membership can participate in the decision making. One idea is to use a meeting (maybe January) to "make resolutions". You could mix up the membership maybe based on years as members and have them work on solutions and suggestions on a particular topic like: retaining membership; ideas for workshops, community outreach, party planning. Etc. This could also serve to connect new people with seasoned members. Ideas could be sorted into timeframes for completion.***