

## THE BUZZ ON QUILTING BEES

If you've been involved in quilting for any length of time, we're sure you will agree that quilting isn't always about fabric and thread. In the process of gathering supplies for a project you're bound to meet a few people who are also interested in quilting, and perhaps some people who can't wait to see your finished project. Really, quilting is a social activity that can help you connect with other people who share your interests.

Quilting bees were historically a chance for women in a community to gather for relaxation, after chores and duties were complete. Today bees serve a similar purpose, and also offer many other opportunities. We know of quilting bees today that make charity quilts, make quilts for sale (as a means of income for women who are unable to hold traditional jobs), bees that are entirely social, and even some that offer quilting education. Whatever the purpose, bees continue to offer a way to get involved and meet others who share an interest in fabric, thread, and all the other goodies that are involved with quilting.

A simple search on the Internet will yield plenty of information about quilting bees. If you are interested in joining one check with local quilting guilds, quilt stores, and fellow class members for bee possibilities. Many bees have been in existence for years, and will take members as openings become available. Once you find a bee ask some questions to make sure it will be a good fit for you: what is the skill level of members? Does the group work on one project together or do members bring their own? Is the group focused on one style or aspect of quilting? When does the bee meet?

Having trouble finding an open bee? Why not start your own! It's relatively simple to do, and we guarantee you'll have more interest than you thought possible. The best part about starting your own bee is that you can tailor the time and topics to your interest. If you're into contemporary quilting, for example, elicit membership from people who share that interest, and who would enjoy learning more about that topic through field trips, seminars, and lectures. Schedule an initial meeting time and place, and post notices at community bulletin boards, local quilt stores, and in local guild newsletters. If you have a theme in mind (contemporary quilting, Christmas ornaments, block-exchange) make that apparent on the notice. Once you have your initial meeting any of the components can change.

In this day and age it's easy to get side-tracked with the day-to-day routine of work, school, family, etc. A quilting bee offers a wonderful departure from the mundane, and gives you an opportunity to meet many people who are just like you! If you've been searching for a way to get involved with your community, connect with women, or to try something new, check into a quilting bee. We're sure you'll come away with a new attitude and a revitalized desire for quilting!

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