



# Bits and Pieces

**Brazos Bluebonnet Quilt Guild Newsletter**

**Volume 43. Number 5**

**Bonnie Piernot, Editor**  
**Chris Deppe, Editor**

## **From the President...in Quarantine...**

What an absolute unusual time these past weeks have been. From posts that I have been able to catch, it looks like everyone has been at their sewing machines. Whether you are completing projects or enjoying new projects it is great to see all the pictures. Please continue to post your pictures on Facebook and tag BBQG Facebook page. Or post on Groupworks. There has been a lot of communication through Groupworks.

A big bunch of thank yous to our membership who have been making care quilts, masks and other requested items. Brazos Hospice included BBQG in a thank you posting of several in our community who have been a big help. For the untold help that you may have given, you know it was appreciated by the receiver. Also a Big, Big appreciation for our members who are working in the hospitals and with essential services. All of you have touched many lives in these past few weeks.

The BBQG Board of Directors have been keeping in touch with each other. Decisions are made by the board and keeping the health and wellness of everyone in our guild in mind.

The May guild meeting and workshop have been cancelled. Seems so odd not getting together. As long as our Mayors continue COVID-19 mitigation procedures that will not allow meetings, we will continue to cancel each guild meeting until our Mayors give the all clear.

When we finally do get back together it will be fun to see everyone wearing their homemade mask!

Stay well and happy.

*Denise*

## **Treasurer's Report...**

For the Month of March 2020

### **Checking**

Beginning Balance - Checking  
per bank

Deposits Made

Checks Cleared

Ending Balance per Bank

Less Outstanding Checks

Ending Balance - Checking per Register

Total Cash Balance

**Savings**

Beginning Balance - Savings per Bank

Interest Received

Transfers to Checking

Ending Balance - Savings

\* Outstanding checks

01/17/2020 ck #1710 Sharon Braunagel

03/03/2020 ck #1736 Laura North

Total

Submitted by Susan Beasley, Treasurer

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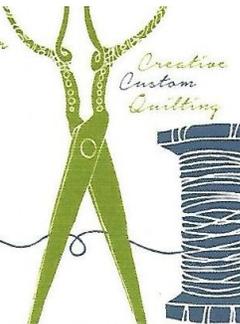
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## April Program...

Thanks to Norma Reel, our presenter for the April Meeting, who first volunteered to provide some Show N Tell pictures for the newsletter. And then agreed to put her presentation into text and pictures so that we don't miss out on the information she had planned to share. While there is no opportunity for interaction and verbal oohs and aahs of her quilts, I think you will enjoy a new way of looking at curved piecing...a quilting technique dreaded by some almost as much as hand appliqué.

So here's Norma Reel, one of our own to present: **"For the Love of Curves."**

Hey, Hey – Norma Reel here checking in. First let me tell you a little about me. I have been in the Brazos Bluebonnet Guild since I moved to Texas from Michigan about 10 years. My background includes getting kicked out of Home Economics in high school. Now how many of you can claim that honor. But it helped me to battle the odds and soar into the quilting world in 2001. And I mean soar...I have had three long arm machines, I've traded up my sewing machine 6 times and I've added a 10-Needle embroidery machine as well. I own and operate a successful Long Arm Quilting Business.



But let's take one step back. How did I even learn that I was born to be a quilter. Around 2001, I was visiting my sister-in-law's house and I saw this basket of quilts. I was mesmerized. I immediately wanted to know how to do that? She told me "I needed a sewing machine" and that it was best to enroll in a class. Well "me and sewing machines" don't get along - but I enrolled in my first class in 2001 at a Joann's Store. I started piecing with a \$79 Kenmore sewing machine that my mother-in-law had purchased for my husband so he could repair his own jeans. (Remember I don't sew). I hand quilted my first two quilts and it took me one year to do each one. That was way too long! So then I started buying machines- embroidery, sewing and quilting. Basically my "crazy woman" mode was now full speed ahead. And I haven't looked back.

Long arm quilting and teaching are my specialties. Teaching others about quilting and helping each person gain new skills are probably my most favorite activities of all that I do. I teach about 35-40 piecing/technique classes per year for Lone Star Quillworks and other organizations upon request. I love "My JOB" every day and I'm excited to share with others.

When I was asked to be a local speaker for BBQG, Sharon asked me to pick a topic in which I felt proficient and that I felt the guild members would enjoy. Well it didn't take me long to decide that! We would talk about one of my favorite techniques called "Sewing on the Curve." So, my presentation was named appropriately "FOR THE LOVE OF CURVES"



Now...don't tune me out just because you have not had a good experience sewing curves, or because your curves look more like some winding mountain road, or because you think you can't do it. My goal is to give you confidence in sewing a curve and help you become a "curves" lover. You can do this...and we all have lots of practice time while we are quarantine. Yes...that picture on the left looks like a double wedding ring but it was not paper pieced or made in the traditional way of most double wedding rings.

So let's get started. You still sew a quarter inch seam and the method that I

like there is no pinning. Like most of the techniques that we use in quilting, it's all about learning a technique that works best for you. And in some cases that technique involves a tool that someone designed to take the "heartburn" out of the process.

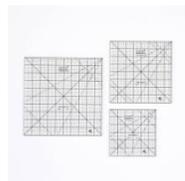
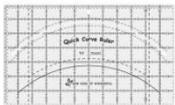
The company that presents the most patterns with the best instructions and rulers for sewing curves, as far as I'm concerned, is "Sew Kind of Wonderful" (<https://sewkindofwonderful.com/>). Around 2014 I was in the class room at Lone Star. I was looking at new class ideas and Terry was telling me about these sisters that had this curve-sewing method. I had to check it out. I did the Urban Pods Table Runner first and then Urban pods quilt. I really enjoyed doing their patterns because they had a modern twist and a special flare along with a challenge. And now 32 quilts later here I am.

I started making their patterns and introducing this technique to my students at the same time. Trust me! When I first saw one of their patterns and all those curves, it made me scared too. "That's a lot of curves". For most people it is a challenge (and maybe a few frustrations) to make them look even, to blend them into the design and to make them look good in the quilt. It is not like a straight line which is easy to see and easy to line up the seams perfectly.

When incorporating curves into your quilt it is all about the visual look and not stressing over perfection. Some of my anal people will not handle this well but Sew Kind of Wonderful patterns give you plenty of room to square up your block and get the accuracy you want to make your curves look great.

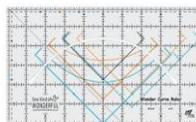
Recently they came out with some square-up rulers for additional help which I absolutely love and the rulers will tell you which patterns you can use them on. This is a list of rulers made by Sew Kind of Wonderful that allow you to make Quilts with Curves:

### Quick Curve or Quick Curve Mini Ruler



### Sew Square 6, 8 or 10

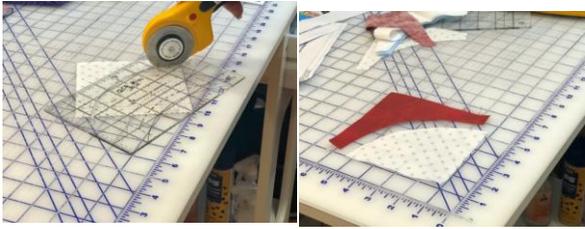
### Wonder Curve



### Ruler

Now to construct a block or single element of the quilt design. To start let's take a square (or rectangle) of fabric – for instance a 5" x 5" piece. Then we cut it on the curve using the curve ruler of your choice for that pattern.





Every cut will give you two sections which you can mix and match with other pieces of fabric cut with the same curve.

Now for the sewing part.

Most blocks will have two to three pieces that you will need to sew together. That is where it gets tricky and it is not like regular seam sewing so it is a bit uncomfortable at first. In my classes I always bring scrap fabric for you to try this on first before you start working the fabric for your actual quilt.

It starts with placing the correct piece is on top and the other on the bottom. The convex curve is always on the bottom and the concave curve is always on the top. Now for sewing...it's all about how where you and how you hold the fabric! There is no pinning. You hold one piece of fabric in one hand and the other piece in your other



and the concave holding and place your hands is absolutely no fabric in one hand but always



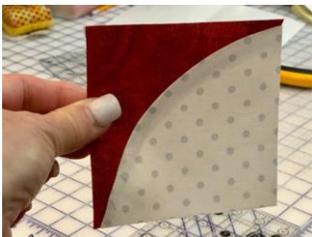
with your EYES ON THAT NEEDLE AND MAKE SURE YOU STAY AT ¼". You will always sew into the curve.



It is awkward at first and then after about the tenth block you make you feel like a SUPER STAR!

What next? Press it the way the pattern instructs you to.

Then you have this block that is all distorted and odd shaped because you have fabric on both sides just hanging there and you think to yourself "This Thing is Ugly". Never fear because the curve is laying nice and flat now after pressing and it actually is a pretty curve and we can square it up into a beautiful "swan looking" block.



Now we just need to combine all our curves into our quilt top.

And that my friends is how I have made over 30 Sew Kind of Wonderful quilts that have been fun, creative, interesting and different than a traditional quilt. There are so many fun quilts you can do along with new patterns every day that allow you to use the curve method.



I'm always working on a new Curved class but my absolute favorite is the "Metro Rings" quilt that duplicates the look of the Double Wedding Ring. Also, I have become very proficient at quilting these beautiful tops.



I hope you enjoyed the process I go through to make those fabulous curve quilts and hopefully when we can get together again I can show you some of these quilts in person.

In addition to some other questions I asked Norma what she considered her greatest success as a teacher and a long armer. Here's her answer...



"Well that has just happened to me on both accounts within the last few months....**Long Arm Success** — I was asked recently by the President of MQX (Machine Quilters Festival, [www.mqxshow.com](http://www.mqxshow.com)) to enter a quilt into their quilt show that is held in New England. Over 1000 quilts were submitted and they selected 248 for the show including two of my quilts. And then it got cancelled. That was such an honor to be asked first off and then to be selected. The show was actually the same week I was speaking at the guild and I was so torn because I wanted to see my quilts on display nationally. And then everything got cancelled.

**Teacher Success** —On Thursday, April 9, I received an e-mail that I had been selected to teach piecing classes at the VQS (Virtual Quilt Show). It is to be held from April 27th - May 3rd. They have not announced the educators yet but here is the website ([www.virtualquiltshow.com](http://www.virtualquiltshow.com)). This is the first Quilt Show to be totally done on the internet and they have had over 1000 people interested in taking classes. The badges are what they send you so that you can do social media advertising.



I will be all over the internet soon as I will be teaching 6 classes and three of those are SKW. All my classes will be taught from my quilt studio and I have been doing lots of videotaping trying to get ready and prepare my classes.....my living room is now a film and sewing studio complete with lights, camera on a tripod and sewing machine. So I'm technically all of a sudden a National Teacher! This is A HUGE HONOR AND ACCOMPLISHMENT — I'M SO EXCITED."

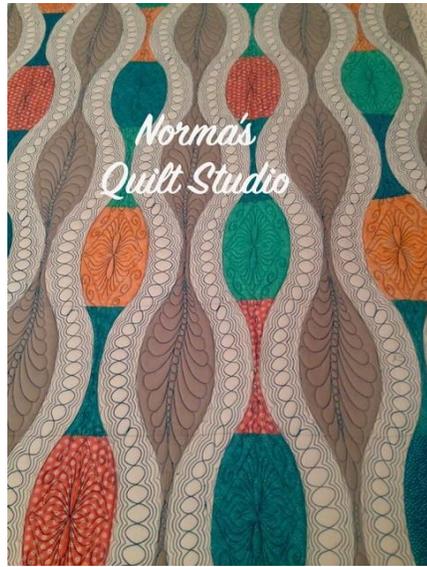
**And NOW...for the Norma Reel trunk show...**







Urban Pods



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Quilt Studio



Urban Pods  
Table Runner



Wonder Flutters



Wonder Flutters  
Table Runners

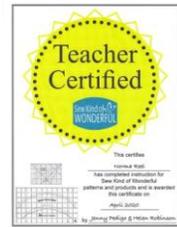


Norma's Quilt Studio  
Norma Pool

## Special Announcements!!!!

On the day Norma was to give her presentation to BBQG she received notice that she is Sew Kind of Wonderful certified teacher. In fact her name was posted on the SKW before Norma finished reading the official certificate that she had received in the mail.

**Congratulations Norma.**



now a  
website

***Editor's Note: My sincere thanks to Norma for taking time to put her presentation into text and pictures. She was the only one who responded to my request for pictures (or anything) to put in the newsletter after the announcement of no April meeting. Without Norma this would have been a one page newsletter that included the President's Message, a Treasurer's Report and our special advertisers. Be sure to let Norma know you appreciate her effort.***

That said, there is another newsletter to be written in the absence of a meeting. I welcome your suggestions, pictures, story or whatever you think might be of interest to the membership. Copy is due by May 20 or before. Thanks.