

TEXTILES



Dawn Heefner, left, appraises quilts Friday at the Lancaster-Lebanon Quilt Show, including this nine-patch quilt made by a great-great aunt of Kathy Martin of Marysville. For more photos, see the article on LancasterOnline.com.

QUILT DETECTIVE

Certified appraiser shares value, unravels secrets of treasured quilts

ERIN NEGLEY | ENEGLEY@LNPNEWS.COM

At last week's Lancaster-Lebanon Quilt Show, Wayne Kern carried two family heirloom quilts past the art quilts, the quilted sneaker kits and the \$10,000 sewing machines.

One quilt was lightweight, white with circles formed by strips in many patterns. The other quilt was smaller, a crazy patchwork of dark fabrics joined with elaborate stitches.

Both were handmade by his mother. Dawn Heefner to share what they are and what they're worth, in hopes of finding a worthy home rather than a trash can. As a quilt detective, Heefner used things like color, pattern, material and prints to date the quilts. While most of the blankets were priceless to their owners, she shared their market value.

Facts about most of the quilts Heefner evaluated at the Lebanon Expo Center were few. Stories of their makers were more threadbare than the quilts. Read on for her insights on four quilts.

Gemstone quilt

Most of the quilts Heefner evaluated were at least 100 years old. Joanne Reiser's was the most modern by style and by date. Finished last year, her gemstone quilt is a 6.75-carat diamond, blown up to become 10 feet of fabric facets.



The Victorian-era crazy quilt trend was inspired partially by Japanese silk screens at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition.

TAKE THE QUILT QUIZ
Can you guess how much these quilts are worth? Take the quiz at lanc.news/quiltquiz.

It took more than a year to draft and draw the pattern, transfer it to paper, pick colors, cut fabric, assemble, sew and quilt. "I named it 'Balancing Act,'" says Reiser, of Barryville, New York. "Hung from this end, it's balancing on its point but it could be hung with the point up."

Heefner asked about Reiser's sewing credentials and awards, which can add value to a quilt. Reiser's diamond is her

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QUILT CARE

Dawn Heefner suggests keeping quilts as if you were your grandmother: on beds or in living spaces, not in attics or basements, which have wider temperature and humidity swings.

For stains or cleaning, test a small section of fabric with a wet cloth to see if it bleeds. Orvus quilt soap is gentle. Color catcher sheets are also helpful when washing.

For tears, stabilize by sewing lightweight, breathable tulle around the area.

To hang quilts, add prewashed muslin tabs to hold a dowel or rod.



Kathy Martin of Marysville brought pictures of her great-great aunt Sally Ann Baker, who likely made the quilt around 1910, Heefner says.



Ken and Lisa Haines unfold an 1889 crazy quilt Lisa Haines' parents bought in the 1970s. Heefner praised the quilt for its size, condition and the elaborate stitching and embroidery.



Peas, spinach, radish and beets are best grown from seed.



LOIS MIKLAS
MASTER GARDENER

Tips for sowing seeds, transplanting various vegetables

The time to plant summer vegetables is so close you can almost taste it! Seed displays and racks of luscious transplants at garden centers are both tempting. Which method of growing veggies should you choose?

Vegetables seeds to sow by the end of April

Peas, spinach, radish and beets are best grown from seed. The optimal soil temperature is 50 F to 65 F. Spinach needs to be harvested before it bolts (goes to seed) in the summer heat and peas will stop setting blossoms when temperatures reach 85 F.

Leaf lettuce can also be sown beginning in April, but you can continue to sow a succession, based on variety, until Aug. 1.

Vegetable seeds to sow in late spring

Beans, carrots and corn are best grown from seed sown directly in the garden after danger of frost has passed. In fact, you would be hard pressed to find these vegetables as transplants. The soil should have warmed to 65 F to 85 F. Though not necessarily popular in Pennsylvania, okra can also be easily started from seed outdoors. Okra displays beautiful, hibiscus-like flowers before forming pods.

Warm-season vegetables to grow from transplants

Look for healthy transplants of cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, squash and tomatoes to plant outdoors after danger of frost is past.

You should only plan to start these veggies from seeds if you have grow lights and can start them inside four to six weeks before planting. Melons also fall into this category.

Seed-sowing tips

Let the seed packet be your guide when it comes the depth and spacing when sowing seeds. Generally, seeds should be planted twice as deep as they are wide. If your garden soil is particularly clay-like, cover the seeds with compost or vermiculite. Keep in mind that rabbits love young, tender growth, so consider a barrier of chicken wire to protect the sprouts until they become more mature and less appetizing.

Transplanting tips

Check to see if the transplants have been hardened off before planting outdoors. Hardening off is a process of gradual exposure to outdoor conditions that toughens the plant. If they have not been hardened, place them in a protected outdoor area for an increased amount of time every day for at least a week.

Pick a day that is not extremely sunny or windy to transplant them in the garden. Plant them slightly deeper than they were in the container. Tomatoes can be planted even deeper, leaving two or three sets of leaves exposed.

Water the soil around the base of the plant immediately after transplanting and continue to make sure the transplants stay well-watered.

Plant sale

Please join us for our Master Gardener Plant Sale, from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 4, at the Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, where you will find a fantastic selection of tomato, pepper and herb transplants, in addition to perennials and shrubs chosen specifically for Lancaster County gardens.

For questions about the plant sale or your garden, please contact our Garden Hotline: LancasterMG@psu.edu or 717-394-6851.

Lois Miklas is a Penn State Master Gardener for Lancaster County, and a former area Master Gardener coordinator.

Quilts

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biggest art quilt but hasn't won a prize.

Still, Heefner noted the quality of the quilt, appraising it at \$2,000 to \$2,500. She suggested a written appraisal, a more detailed evaluation valid for insurance.

"I'm ecstatic," Reiser says before rolling up what she calls a labor of love.

Double wedding ring quilt

Sisters Charyl Dommel and Carol Ludwig wanted to know the age of one of their family quilts and whether it should be insured.

The exact details have been lost but they thought the double wedding ring-pattern quilt was a gift for their grandparents wedding in 1909. Heefner quickly pointed out lavender fabric plus buttery yellow and Nile green. These colors were popular in the late 1920s and early 1930s, so the quilt wouldn't have been a wedding present.

"Every quilt has a story and sometimes it's not the story you think you know," Heefner says.

Another sign comes from quilt's small size, more likely to cover a young woman's twin bed. Perhaps it was made for Dommel and Ludwig's mother in the 1930s or 1940s before styles started shifting to red, white and

blue with flag, stars and patriotic themes as war approached.

The sisters ask about one of the quilt's edges. The last row repeats the ring pattern but with different fabric, something Heefner's never seen. The extra piece was probably made separately to cover pillows. Maybe it became a pain to keep the two pieces tidy so they were sewn together, she suggests.

The quilt's in good condition and unusual with the extra row, yet double wedding quilts are common. Heefner valued it at \$75 to \$125, lower than the \$250 threshold she suggests for insurance. Still, the sisters are happy with what they've learned.

"I'm glad we figured it out," says Ludwig, of Manheim.

The quilt is now a conversation piece, Dommel says, worthy to take out of storage and onto the wall in the stairway of her home in East Petersburg.

Modern schoolhouse quilt

Nancy Van Schoick loves the sense of accomplishment when finishing a quilt. She also enjoys each work of art and that you can use it too, she says. When her son became disabled about 10 years ago, Van Schoick had less time to quilt. Buying quilts is her way to enjoy the craft and share her finds with family.

Around the holidays, she bought a modern quilt and



ANDY BLACKBURN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Clockwise from above, Carol Ludwig, of Manheim, looks at the hand sewing on a family heirloom quilt with appraiser Dawn Heefner; the floral embroidery on a crazy quilt is detailed and elaborate, suggesting the maker was a seamstress, Heefner says; a closer look at Joanne Reiser's gemstone quilt; and Heefner photographs a Baltimore Album-style quilt.



ERIN NEGLEY | STAFF WRITER



ANDY BLACKBURN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Crazy quilt

It's not common to know the name of the women who made these antique quilts.

Lisa and Ken Haines' giant crazy quilt has its creator's name stitched in the center, accented by floral embroidery. "Francis Zeavola Hasler McGill; Her quilt 1889." The Haines searched online but turned to Heefner for insight.

"Finally we get a name and we can't find it," Heefner says. "Francis, please talk to us."

Lisa Haines' parents bought the quilt in an auction in the 1970s in upstate New York. The Haineses were of Aaronsburg, Centre County, and Heefner guessed Francis has Italian, German and Scottish last names. That could point to work in the garment industry along with the quilt's skilled needlework. The floral embroidery is detailed and elaborate. The stitching between the patches has patterns Heefner's never seen.



ERIN NEGLEY | STAFF WRITER

Finding matching prints, plaids or stripes in different colors are a good sign the fabric came from a clothing factory. Maybe the sewer worked there or bought a bag of scraps from a local factory. Heefner looked for edges on the thinnest strips of silk. With edges, fabric becomes ribbon, suggesting the quilt-maker may be a milliner or

seamstress. But no edges are found.

Measuring 91 inches by 92 inches, the quilt is huge for something made not for a bed but to decorate a couch or parlor chair, Heefner says.

"I wonder if this wasn't just a tour de force," she says. "She made it just so she could make it."

Heefner appraised the quilt at \$1,600 and suggested padding the folds to prevent crimps as it's stored. The couple tucked the folded blanket back into a black trash bag and went on their way.

Kerns' quilts

The first appointment of the day, Wayne Kern and his wife Terry, of Annville, learned the Dresden plate quilt was valued at \$50 to \$75 and the crazy quilt \$75 to \$100. They learned about the fabrics Wayne's mother and possibly grandmother used, the stitches, patterns and colors and how these quilts are connected to things like King Tut's tomb, curbside trash collection and the 1876 Centennial Exposition. They also left with some advice on helping the quilts find the right home.

"Display it on the back of your sofa or chair," Heefner says. "Maybe nobody in the family is interested in it now. If you have it out a little bit, you'd be surprised by how many people will ask, 'what's that about?'"

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