

Hands-On **QUILTING** In Abundance

Stitching For Funds

By Jessica Klein

AUBURN — How can a museum blend history, collections and creative resources into a hands-on fundraiser? Well, the Cayuga Museum accomplished just that.

Successful fundraising is an art in its own right, and the museum searched among its resources to find a unique way to both raise money for programming and promote its mission and collection. Hence, the creation of a quilt inspired by the museum's circa 1890s Tiffany Glass Co. stained-glass window. The museum co-opted one of its creative board members, Kathy DeForest, who is a noted quilting artist, to organize a quilting project with a built-in fundraiser. Chances to win the work of art cost only \$1. The quilt will be displayed at the Cayuga Museum at 203 Genesee St. in Auburn from October until Jan. 10, 1999 when the winner will be chosen.

The quilt, titled "Tiffany at Cayuga," is the creation of Kathy and Joe DeForest of Genoa. Kathy, knowing the magnitude of the task had some initial reservations, but she ultimately agreed to take on the project. Immediately, after signing-on, she began to search for a focus that was relevant to the museum and that would also tap the creative juices of the couple, who thrive on joint quilting projects. It didn't take Kathy long to seize upon the museum's Tiffany stained-glass window, knowing it would be just the right catalyst for the project.

Tiffany Celebration

February 1998 marked Louis Comfort Tiffany's 150th birthday and Auburn celebrated this artisan and world-renowned glassmaker in high style with a citywide birthday celebration.

The city is blessed with three Tiffany Studio works still in place including the entire interior decorative scheme of the Willard Memorial Chapel, the main chapel window at Westminster Presbyterian Church and a bay window which graces the Willard/Case Mansion, now the Cayuga Museum.

The Tiffany Glass Company designed the stain glass window to fit as a curving bay window. It once overlooked the estate's splendid gardens. The mansion itself is a grand example of Greek Revival architecture. The window has an extensive floral motif of cascading flowers and vines. Kathy and Joe focused on the upper window panel.

The quilt's background is a rich blend of colors that approximates the window's coloration. Through their skillful eyes and hands they adeptly captured the play of light through the glass with the choice and blending of fabrics. The feeling of light conveyed from the center of the quilt, much like the window itself, is striking. Making such a successful translation from glass



Photo Courtesy of Cayuga Museum
Kathy and Joe DeForest pose with their hand-made quilt "Tiffany at Cayuga," which will be on display at the Cayuga Museum, with an opportunity to buy a ticket to win the quilt.

to fabric is a tribute to their skill as artisans.

Following the design and patterning of the window, they then superimposed flower blossoms and vines onto the more muted background tones. It is here on the upper layer where they exercised their creative license and choose high-key colors. The sharp contrast of the two layers keeps the eyes dancing around on the surface in a very playful and pleasing manner. Thus the two layers operate in a contrapuntal manner. Their own words justly sum up their creation. "A freedom of flamboyancy of color is our trademark, whether working on traditional or innovative quilts as we explore design and themes in our work."

Quilting Team

Together, the DeForests have been quilting for 11 years. Kathy, on her own, has been developing her craft for more than 27 years. One might even say in her role as an operating room nurse that she is at home with stitching. Growing up in her parent's store, Quigley Upholster in King Ferry, fabric has always played a part of her life. On the other hand, Joe brings yet another interesting perspective to the project. As a theatrical director and designer, his sense of light and drama were well tasked for this artistic translation from glass to fabric.

For Kathy, the main challenge was how to find a compatible middle ground between their contemporary "flamboyant" style and Tiffany's more staid 19th century composition of the stained glass window. Joe's approach was much more clinical. Knowing from the start that this was going to be a raffle object, it tempered his passions. Yet, viewing the end product, he felt such a perspective allowed him to be much more objective, like his role as a theatrical director.

Surely the total blend of these artists' experiences and interaction has creat-

ed a work of art in its own right. The Cayuga Museum is extremely pleased to reap the fruits of this ambitious fundraising adventure. It is hard to imagine that for only \$1 someone will be the proud owner of this magnum opus.

The quilt required an estimated 150 hours to complete. It measures 76 inches x 51 inches making it about one and a half times life-size. It was expertly custom machine quilted by Shari Keller who has worked before with the DeForests. To convey the stained-glass window's leaded structure, Kathy chose a dense satin-stitch of black thread.

The quilt, "Tiffany at Cayuga," complements the museum's '98 exhibition titled, "Quilting: A Hands-On Tradition," a show dedicated to historic quilts. On display will be numerous outstanding quilts from the museum's collection. Together, with quilts on loan from area collectors, several other historic quilts will be featured in the exhibit. Kathy agreed to be the guest curator for the show. It will open 7 p.m. Nov. 6 with a wine and cheese public reception, and run through Jan. 10, 1999.

The exhibit will also strengthen a bridge between the Cayuga Museum and the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center (SMAC), which are next-door neighbors. Running concurrently will be SMAC's "Quilts=Art=Quilts," a juried annual contemporary quilt exhibition in its 17th year. It attracts quilting artists from across the country. The parallel exhibitions create a strong bond between the history and art of quilting which has a very long tradition in Central New York.

For information about the Tiffany inspired quilt created by the DeForests, the raffle or the exhibition, "Quilting: A Hands-On Tradition," call the Cayuga Museum at 253-8051, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Jessica Klein is educational and outreach coordinator for the Cayuga Museum.



Josh Stephenson / Staff Photographer
The Tiffany modeled quilt by Kathy and Joe DeForest hangs near the Cayuga Museum's Tiffany window for quick comparison.



Josh Stephenson / Staff Photographer
A pair of volunteer's help judge and volunteer Sharon Stroud hang quilts at the Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center for an upcoming exhibit. (At Right) The Tiffany window at the Cayuga Museum attracts a different type of visitor.



QUILTING PROSE Quilt Showcase at Phoenix Cafe

By Art Wenzel
Features Editor

AUBURN — Fancying quilts are you? There will be more quilts in Auburn during the course of the upcoming month than are in homes throughout the county. Well not exactly, but pretty close.

The Phoenix Cafe, located at the corner of South and Genesee streets, will host a showcase of work by Eugenia Barnes and Joe and Kathy DeForest titled "Quilted Prose" from Nov. 6 through 30. There will be an opening reception from 5 to 8 p.m.

Barnes, a Marcellus native, founded the first quilt guild in Central New York. She has been a professional quilt maker, teacher and lecturer on the national circuit since 1978, having travelled extensively throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and South Africa.

Barnes is currently vice president and membership chair of a professional appraisers organization, and one of the first to be certified as an appraiser. She has contributed to several quilt books and magazines and co-authored the booklet "Protecting Your Quilt."

She is noted for her traditional work and innovative variations of the tradition. She currently serves on the quilt search committee for the State of Massachusetts under the direction of the New England Quilt Museum.

Kathy DeForest began seriously quilting with her enrollment in a class taught by Eugenia Barnes. She, and her husband Joe, have teamed up for the past 11 years on quilting projects.

For further information on The Phoenix Cafe show, call 258-8681.