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LAKE CHAMPLAIN WEEKLY

VOLUME 21 | ISSUE 43
MAY 5 - MAY 11, 2021



HAPPY *Mother's Day*

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LAKE CHAMPLAIN WEEKLY • MAY 5, 2021



Love Birds by Luvie Tuller

WINDOWS INTO THE *Heart*

By Mataeo Smith

THE ART OF QUILTING requires precision.

If one were to use too little fabric, the patterns and shapes of the quilt would become unbalanced; too much fabric would cause the quilt to stretch the patterns too thin and erode its meaning.

Quilters must value patience while honing their craft in order to create a masterpiece that originated from the bottom of their heart. While the fabrics of a quilt are meant to keep its possessor warm from the world's cold embrace, its true purpose is to rely on a message from its creator—a message that speaks to the creator's truth and virtue. The quilters of today rely on machines to create their messages; however, a few still believe a true quilt must be done the traditional way.

Luvie Tuller spent 28 years teaching young children about the world in her classrooms. The Peru native loved building bonds with primary school children as their minds were so pure and curious. As time went on, she moved from kindergarteners to 2nd graders. While their minds were not as pure as the young ones from her kindergarten days, she had much to teach them. A wonderful novelty came about weeks later as the principle announced the commencement of parent volunteers within the classrooms. Tuller didn't need help with her 2nd graders but asked herself, "Why pass up an opportunity to connect with her student's families?"

She treated the children with kindness and respect despite whichever mood she was

in. Punishments for misbehavior were kept reasonable, and the perpetrator was always taught a lesson. Tuller's kindness was also contagious. She was able to change the minds of other parents who spent decades raising their children in a certain way.

These traits were those of a quilter — one who has the patience to pour their heart and soul into the pieces of fabric and let it slowly seep into the fibers until the two entities are one.

One parent noticed how gentle Tuller was and approached Tuller with her quilting suggestion as a hobby. Being a painter, Tuller was intrigued by the mysterious craft and wanted to take the parent up on her offer. The two met one weekend and began their first quilt together. The parent did not believe in using a machine for her creations. Acceptable quilts can come only from the deepest fathoms of one's heart. It must symbolize its creator's truest feeling and desires in order to be passed on to another. Tuller's patience was tested that day. She learned just how much patience it took to create a quilt worth gifting to another.

The two started slowly and made small individual quilt blocks depicting tiny shapes. Tuller noticed how quick and precise her parent volunteer was while crafting her block. The fabrics had to be 12 ½ inches exactly — no more, no less. Tuller presented her work and was met with utter dismay by her parent volunteer.

"It's bigger by a few inches, but it's ok," Tuller told the parent.

"No, it's not," The parent replied. "You have to quilt with precision and patience."

Patience is the pillar to quilting. Without it, the entire endeavor is fruitless. Those words stayed with Tuller as she started again and again until the block was 12 ½ inches.

"That was my first big lesson," Tuller says. "Quilting is very exact."

The parent volunteer opened up a new world of art that Tuller had never seen before. Quilts were not just warm fabrics for the cold, but they were a window of one's soul. Gifting one with a quilt became an invitation for one to peer into its creator's heart.

Tuller continued teaching her class while quilting as a hobby. She was eventually able to hone her skills in quilting to create masterpieces that symbolized her views and feelings toward the world and loved ones.

Tuller decided to share her creations in the Tahawus Center Windows Gallery's exhibit titled *Warmth and Beauty*. The exhibit not only showcases exquisite quilts by five local artists, but it educates viewers on the history and meaning behind the craft — exposing participants to the creativity of quilting that goes much deeper than one expects.

Tuller had searched for quilts to send in and decided to select the quilts that serve as a guidebook through her life.

For instance, *Love Birds* is one of Tuller's favorite



The Adirondacks by Luvie Tuller

creations during her marriage. Unfortunately, the angels had guided her husband away and widowed her in a cold fashion. She shielded her heart from the cruel, frigid gale with a quilt symbolizing her love for him. The quilt is made from white fabric to symbolize the holiness of marriage. The roses symbolized the intense love of the couple who loved seeing them bloom during the summertime. She duplicated the same block of two birds, colored in three different hues of blue, five times on the quilt that represents the couple's enjoyment of the outdoors. Flowers were always such a delight when the two weren't busy.

Tuller wanted her quilts to mean something. She kept the lessons from her former parent volunteer near and dear. The quilt — *The Adirondacks* — required Tuller to put what she had learned to the test. The fabrics symbolized her time learning how to perfectly quilt her adventures from teaching. A large bird resides on the corner of the fabric representing the great outdoors. Tuller took her students outside whenever she had a chance. The black bear trotting at the bottom pays homage to her favorite animal as a child and young adult. The fabric serves as a mirror of Tuller's life.

"It's almost like the quilts I make represent my life flashing before my eyes."

The Tahawus Center Windows Gallery in Au Sable Forks is presenting "Warmth and Beauty" every Saturday in May from noon to 1:30 p.m. For more information or to schedule a 30-minute appointment, email tahawus-center@gmail.com or visit tahawuscenter.wixsite.com/warmthandbeauty.