

Teresa Ballard, Quilting Biography

I have been sewing most of my life. I learned on my mother's treadle machine then used her electric one. I sewed most of my own clothes, doll clothes and clothes for friends. I got my first real sewing machine for high school graduation-a Kenmore.

I did very little quilting until after I retired in 2008. I took a class prior to retirement and this quilt was one of the first quilts I finished -after retirement!

I used to follow the patterns exactly, but gradually, I've started to change the patterns a little. I use patterns for ideas to design my own quilts. As a member of Syncopated Threads, I am learning to play with the process. Following a pattern, especially if it is the same block over and over is too repetitive for me. I like to do Blocks of the Month that are all different or more complicated patterns. Designing my own quilts is something I am learning about now.

My favorite part of the quilting process is piecing the quilt and then, if appropriate, embellishing the quilt. I like to see the quilt come together. Embellishment is so fun! It is relaxing and creative too.

I have 2 favorite quilts right now. The first one is called *That Town and Country* from Gourmet Quilter in New Zealand. It was a block of the day. The pattern came weekly by email. It took me more than 3 years to finish.

The second favorite is designed by Sarah Fielke from Australia called *Rainy Days and Sun Rays*. This quilt was pieced and had a lot more applique than I expected. But with the videos provided, I learned to do needle-turn applique and find that I enjoy doing it.

I am registered for another quilt block of the month from Sarah Fielke called *Stodki*. This quilt uses more solid fabrics than I usually use with both piecing and applique and has a slight Polish flavor. I am only 3 months behind!

I have expanded my sewing into bag making. I have learned most of my techniques from participating in classes and forums on line. I especially enjoy making bags with cork fabric. I use cork because it is sustainable, vegan, durable and biodegradable. Cork fabric is sometimes called cork leather because it wears like leather. Cork and cotton make bags that are attractive and durable.