

## **Klaudeen Hansen Tells What a Judge Looks For** **By Gina Nania**

Published in the Black Hills Quilters Guild Newsletter, *Newspatch*, July/August 2017

Klaudeen Hansen knows quilts. In many years as a nationally certified judge, she has written evaluations for more than 38,600 quilts. She has made hundreds of quilts, taught quilting, and lectured across the country, traveling all over from Sun Prairie, Wis.

She began judging our show in 2008 and has focused her expert eye on close to 1,000 of our quilts. Her takeaway: "There are many pieces of quality here, so many I want to put a ribbon on every one. You do better applique here than Paducah."

Klaudeen and a team of volunteer scribes spent five hours on Thursday before the show opened judging 94 of our quilts. As the first demo of the show, on Friday, Klaudeen shared "What a Judge Looks For." Here are some notes from the lecture.

First, a quilt must be entered in the right category, or it does not win. If it has both piecing and applique, the maker has to decide which is dominant. Ask friends, read the category descriptions, or talk to the show committee.

As she makes her way through the quilts (which do not have the maker's name visible), a judge looks for the same things every viewer does, starting with, is the quilt pretty?

"I judge them the way we make them," Klaudeen said. "Overall impression, techniques on the top, borders, quilting, and binding or edge."

Our quilts are hung for judging, while at other shows they are laid flat on tables. Either way, Klaudeen said, things like loose applique pieces, an odor, pet hair, or long threads still attached send a clear signal. It tells her "the maker didn't like it well enough to go over it and make it show-ready."

On the main top of the quilt, overall scale is important. The border should frame the quilt like a picture on a wall. Small blocks may not work with a wide border. The fabrics should play together nicely in color, shade, and intensity. The viewer's eye should have a place to rest, too.

In piecing, strive for good seam intersections, corners, and points. Seam allowances can be pressed open or to one side, but never twisted. The goal is to have no lumpiness, including in the binding. In hand applique, take small, tight stitches, especially on curves and inside corners, which are the "hard parts" that get special attention. And remember that the judge touches the quilts.

Edge finishes can be a traditional hand-finished binding, prairie points, the back turned to the front, the self-piped magic binding, or anything the maker wants. The same goes for the quilting itself. Just be certain it is done well.

"The technique is up to you," Klaudeen said. "You choose the method; I judge your execution."

It can be a challenge to get everything straight and square: the quilt center, sashing, borders, outside edge. "There are lots of places to make mistakes or to achieve perfection," Klaudeen said. Make it a habit to measure and straighten before adding the next layer.

Judging is "partly fun and partly work" for Klaudeen. It can be difficult to award prizes, especially in smaller categories. Sometimes she won't give a first but go right to second place, or skip another award. "You get a feel for the show, where the excellence is," she said.

Another of Klaudeen's jobs while she judges or teaches is looking for quilts that might be published in the AQS Quilt Art Engagement Calendar. The 2018 edition, available now, features eight quilts by BHQG members, including Rebecca Belsaas' on the book cover.

There are many quilts of excellence being shown at the Black Hills event, Klaudeen said, and we should anticipate seeing some of this year's entries in coming editions of Quilt Art.