

Past Meets Present at Quilt Clubs

In 1983, when my first child was born, I took a three-year sabbatical from the workforce to stay home and be a full-time mom. It was wonderful. All the things I'd heard about being bored could not have been further from reality. Life at home with my son was glorious and he certainly never gave me time to be bored. However, I did sometimes miss the casual conversations and companionships of other adults.

It was to this end that I joined the quilting club in the little community of Beattie where I lived. It was an experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Although I already knew the lovely and sweet women who quilted there, by being a member of the club, I got to know them intimately and also to learn a craft that, at the time, seemed to be quickly becoming a dying art among the women of our country. I remained a member of the club until I had to return to the workforce three years later.

I recently had the opportunity to go back to Beattie and visit with the quilting club again. It was a Tuesday morning, the sky was clear, the birds were chirping, and the temperature was just right for a trip to the country. I had contacted the ladies of the Beattie Quilting Club a week before and they had told me to come on out, visit, quilt and have lunch with them.

I arrived early—not all the members had arrived. Apparently they were still home working on the scrumptious meal

that they all had a hand in. You know the kind of meal I'm talking about: those delicious fresh vegetables out of the garden, hot homemade rolls and chocolate cake. Not to mention that Southern delicacy, fried chicken.

One by one, they began to trickle in. Some of the names and faces had changed, some remained the same. But the camaraderie and the family-type love that existed 20 years ago still exists today. I took pictures of this diverse group of women, and felt that their story should be shared.

In the course of the conversation, I found that some of the women belonged to more than one group. The next morning, while looking through the newspapers of several of the towns and communities that we serve, I came across an article about a quilting club in Pioneer and contacted them also. I looked for other quilting clubs in Comanche Electric Cooperative's service area, to no avail. If you belong to a club, or know of a club that is not listed, it is simply because I could not find you. The Beattie Quilting Club will have the guest spot this month, followed by Pioneer next month.

I hope you enjoy this little journey into the past as much as I enjoyed the journeys I took to compose the following information. A special thank you goes out to the Comanche Public Library for all the assistance they gave me in the research of the history of these communities.

show and they are all beautiful handmade creations: aprons, pillow cases, baby blankets, embroidered towels, placemats and various crocheted items. They will also be selling chances to win one of their handmade quilts, and will have baked goods for sale as well.

The ladies try to have at least three quilts going at all times: one belonging to a club member, one for the public, and a baby quilt. The proceeds from these public quilts and fundraisers, however, don't all go to upkeep and expenses. These ladies' hearts are as big as the projects they attempt. In 1989 they made their first quilt for West Texas Rehab, and have continued to do so every year since then. They have made donations to the Ronald McDonald house in Temple, an organization that is near and dear to me since we were offered a room at the one in Fort Worth when our premature daughter was in intensive care. They make and deliver Christmas gift sacks for the elderly and shut-ins in the community, and for the nursing homes.

The building that they have so painstakingly remodeled is also used for reunions and parties, weddings, funeral meals, and was even used for a hunting lodge one weekend when hunters were forced to find shelter from a storm. The Red Hat Ladies meet there on a regular basis, as well as the fibromyalgia group.

The group has changed over the years and continues to change. People come and people go, but they never forget the love and companionship



Standing: Nell Bingham, Dorothy Goates, Sue Bingham, Elsie Jo Welch, Nita Choate, Sarah Brown, Jo Crouch, Carol Richmond. Seated: Nancy Robinson, Lorraine Woolsey, Billie Butler, Bertha Thornton.

they have found there. The current membership consists of 13 women: Nancy Robinson, Lorraine Woolsey, Sue Bingham, Florence Jo Welch, Linda Jeffries, Pat Auvenshine, Sue Smith, Nita Choate, Judy Bingham, Phyllis Rachels, Ruby Hoot, Billie Butler and Dorothy Goates.

The group meets every Tuesday from about 10 a.m. until whatever time they all finally filter out to go home. They bring food for lunch, and the men and children and grandchildren come in from the field, or wherever they happen to be that day, and join in the meal.

The one thing I heard from everyone the day I was there was the one thing I already knew from my past experience there:

You can always count on someone to be there for you no matter what you are going through. It is more than a club, it is a family of brothers and sisters who care for each other and support each other through thick and thin. And they will do the same for you. If you have time on a Tuesday, go see them. Bring a dish, or don't. There will be plenty food for all and you will never regret the experience.



Member Dorothy Goates is pictured with a Double Irish Chain quilt pieced by Nancy Robinson. This quilt was donated to West Texas Rehab in Abilene. It brought \$470 to benefit the Rehab.

ARE YOU READY FOR HUNTING SEASON?



Dove season in Central Texas begins on September 1 and is quickly followed by quail, turkey and deer seasons. Comanche Electric Cooperative serves approximately 500 hunting camp meters, and each year as the hunting seasons begin, we're inundated with calls at the last minute for service to hunting camps.

If you will be needing new service built to a hunting camp, or even needing your existing camp upgraded or connected, please contact Comanche Electric Cooperative as soon as possible. To build new service to a hunting camp will likely take several weeks, and in some cases can take months.

Help us to help you be comfortable on your lease by giving us plenty of time to prepare your service for the hunting season.



Be sure to contact the co-op early to have power connected to your hunting cabin.

Comanche Electric Cooperative Hosts Area Fire Meeting

On July 13, 2006, Comanche Electric Cooperative hosted a meeting for all volunteer fire departments within their service area. The purpose of the meeting was to help all volunteer fire departments become better informed about the grants and loans that are available to them. Seventeen firefighters were in attendance, representing 13 fire departments: Proctor, Priddy, Comanche, Desdemona, Olden, May, Cross Plains, Rising Star, Gustine, Bangs, Promontory Park, Sipe Springs and North Lake Brownwood. A representative from Comanche County Emergency Management was also in attendance.

Nick Harrison with the Texas Forest Service presented a slide presentation informing the firefighters of the grant options that were available through them. The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program was created by the Texas Legislature as House Bill 2604 in 2001 and became effective on September 1, 2002. It provides cost-share grants to rural volunteer fire departments for the acquisition of equipment and firefighter training. Volunteer fire departments and part-paid/part-volunteer fire departments with no more than 20 paid members are eligible to apply. The department must be operated by its members on a not-for-profit basis, be chartered, and have a federal tax identification number. In every case, a VFD must submit an Application for Rural Fire Defense Assistance in advance of purchasing equipment or attending a training course. Equipment or training acquired before a grant approval date will not be eligible for grant assistance. To find out more about the requirements for approval of these grants, and a more detailed list of items covered, visit the Texas Forest Service website at ww.txforestservice.tamu.edu.



Larry Jones and Patricia Butler of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development spoke on the loans and grants available through their organization. The size of their grants will vary depending on the size of the area requesting the grants. Grants through USDA range from 0 percent to 75 percent of the project, with a maximum of \$50,000. Should the department not have the remaining percentage in hand, they can apply for a low-interest loan through USDA to cover the balance. There are very few restriction on these loans and grants. They can be applied for to cover any equipment that the department needs. Further information can be accessed through their website at www.rurdev.usda.gov.

These are by no means the only grants available. Comanche Electric Cooperative will be happy to assist our fire departments in locating and obtaining other grants as well as the ones that were discussed in the meeting.

Comanche Electric Cooperative is proud of the work our local fire departments have done this year. We realize that the everyday workings of a volunteer fire department can be extremely costly, and many of our vol-

unteer fire departments are suffering financially. It is to this end that we have hosted this meeting, and are offering our service in any way we can. For questions or assistance on any of these programs contact Shirley at (325) 356-2533 or sdukes@ceca.coop.



**Comanche Electric
Cooperative will be
CLOSED
Monday, September 4,
for Labor Day.**



Pictured with some of their quilts are members Florence Jo Welch, Nancy Robinson, Sue Bingham, Judy Bingham, Lorraine Woolsey, Linda Jeffries and Pat Auvenshine.

Beattie Quilting Club Keeps on Stitchin’

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Harland Moore, in an article titled “Remembering Beattie, Texas,” said, “Columbus discovered America in 1492, but I discovered Beattie in July of 1936.” I think that was a very apt comment. Beattie is truly a place that bears “discovering.” I discovered it in 1973 when I began dating the man who is now my husband. Although I had lived in this area all my life, I never had a reason to go to the little community where his mother owned the only grocery store/gas station. It soon had a permanent place reserved in my heart, where it still resides today.

Beattie is located 12 miles north of Comanche on FM 588, just off Highway 36. It was founded by and named after Charles F. Beatty, who settled there in 1892. Through his efforts, a post office was established and named in honor of him. However, they dropped the “y” for an unknown reason, and changed it to “ie.” At one time the community boasted a barber-shop, blacksmith, telephone exchange,

drug store, cotton gin, grocery store and two mercantile stores. The old grocery store still remains, vacant and overgrown.

The only remaining church is the Broken Bronc Cowboy Church, which meets three times per week: Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. The church is host to approximately 50 members, and they are in the process of building a new church building. The building that currently houses the church was originally a Church of Christ and was built in 1908.

There is still an active feed lot, and a peanut processing plant stands where the old schoolhouse once stood. The once-thriving Baptist church building has been transformed into a community center where countless activities take place. It is here that the Beattie Quilting Club meets every Tuesday.

Founded in the 1970s, the quilting club members first met in each other’s homes. The original membership consisted of eight women: Leona Wright, Bertha Thornton, Matilda Emmert,

Elsie Jo Welch, Florence Jo Welch, Dorothy Goates, Sue Bingham and Nell Bingham. Of those eight original members, three have been lost to death: Leona Wright, Matilda Emmert and Elsie Jo Welch.

Sometime in the late 1970s, the Baptist church building was donated to the community and the club members began making repairs and remodeling the building to suit the needs of the club and the community. A restroom has been added and a kitchen area has been updated and outfitted.

The club members usually have several projects going at any given time. They quilt not only for themselves and for charitable organizations, but also for the general public. Some of the quilts they make are sold or raffled off to help with the upkeep of the building. They have an annual stew and chili supper, and a craft and quilt show, which is held the first weekend in October (the perfect place to do your Christmas shopping). They showed me some of the items that have already been completed for this year’s craft