



*Mary Leahy, from Fairfield Processing, brought valuable tips on caring for quilts. Fairfield Processing has a variety of QuiltCare products that are invaluable to the quilter. From batting, and polyfil, to a whole line of quilt care soaps, acid free tissue paper and more!*



## Caring for Your Quilts

**M**ary brought a very special quilt to show the America Quilts creatively viewers. It is a Victorian style Crazy Quilt that was made by Barbara Powers to celebrate her mother's 90th Birthday. Her baby pictures dating from 1906 were printed onto fabric, as well as portraits of the parents.

The fabrics in the body of the quilt were from family wedding and bridesmaid dresses. The border was made of silk ties contributed by the men in the family. Notice her son's Notre Dame tie at the bottom center. Special family laces and doilies were used, as well as her embroidered name, Kathryn Taylor, taken from the lining of her mother's fur coat. The cream satin is from the bridal coat of her sister-in-law. It was truly a family undertaking. The quilt was machine pieced and hand embroidered. [Figure 1]



Figure 1

The quilt was machine pieced and hand embroidered. [Figure 1]

Mary shared the best tips for caring for your quilts.

### Wash Your Fabrics

There has always been a debate about the need for pre-washing fabrics for quilting. [Figure 2] Here are three reasons to pre-wash your fabrics:

1. You need to remove the sizing, which makes the fabric look pressed and pretty on the bolt, but can resist the needle for hand quilting.
2. Most fabrics shrink 2 to 3%. Some will shrink more and some less. The bottom line is – do you really want all of your pieced or appliquéd fabrics shrinking at different rates the first time your finished quilt is washed?
3. Dyes running is not as big a problem as it used to be, but it still happens on occasion. Any excess dye on the fabric is removed with the first wash. The new batiks and some of the imported fabrics may have this problem, and you want to find out before you spend a lot of time working with them.



Figure 2

### Sewing Supplies

Visit your favorite quilt store for these great quilting items:

- ✂ Quilt Journal (Quilters Journal)
- ✂ Fairfield Polyfil
- ✂ Fairfield Natural Cotton Batting
- ✂ QuiltCare (Liquid Soap)
- ✂ Storage and Gift Bag, Crib/Twin size QC3, Queen/King Size QC4
- ✂ QuiltCare Acid Free Tissue Paper by Fairfield



Here's a tip – if you get color on your hands (called “crocking”) as you are working with a fabric ... definitely pre-wash it.

Wash like colors together in cold water with a small amount of Quilt-Care liquid wash. QuiltCare is also perfect to wash your finished quilts. Remove the washed fabric from the machine, give it a gentle shake, and place it in the dryer with a dry hand towel. Mary has found that this is the perfect size towel because it absorbs the water quickly from the fabric, decreases the drying time significantly, and prevents the fabric from tying itself into a knot.

### **Wash Your Finished Quilt**

Fill the washing machine with cool water. Dissolve a teaspoon of QuiltCare liquid wash in the water flow as it fills the tub of the machine. Usually a teaspoon is sufficient. This is a case where “less is more.” You only want to be aggressive enough to remove the dirt from the quilt. Submerge the quilt in the water and let the machine go through the gentle cycle.

We love to hang our quilts outside to dry in the shade. Hang a clean sheet over the line or deck rail, then lay the quilt on the sheet for an hour on each side. Toss the quilt in the dryer to remove the last of the dampness and to “soften” it up again. It is recommended that older, or more fragile quilts be laid flat to dry. Do not dry clean your quilts. Dry cleaning chemicals may affect the integrity of color and fabric quality.

Antique quilts are another story altogether. You may not know if the fabrics were pre-washed or if any of the dyes will run when the quilt gets wet. It is always best to seek the advice of a professional before you do anything to a family antique! Many old antique quilts have some holes, or mended spots in them. Mary brought an old antique log cabin quilt. [Figure 3]

Because of the variety of fabrics used in the quilt, it is best left to the professionals to care for. She showed a spot that had over the years, been mended. [Figure 4]



Figure 3



Figure 4

The mending had a “character” of its own, with the mis-matched thread, and large stitches. It is part of the quilt’s history, and as Mary said, if you were as old as the quilt, you would have spots and holes too! Value the imperfections as part of the unique “fabric” of the historical quilts.

Mary brought a baby quilt that was a real “workhorse”. A baby quilt is washed regularly, and if you use the QuiltCare liquid wash, it will retain its beauty through regular washings. [Figure 5]



Figure 5

The Fairfield Storage and Gift bags are both practical and can be pretty! Instead of just filling out the information on the card that goes in the see-through pocket, embroider a label and insert it in the pocket. You can use shapes from your embroidery software, or decorative stitches from your machine. Either way it will be pretty! HP Quilt Label Kit is also a good way to make a quilt label which you can then print on printer fabric. [Figure 6]



Figure 6

Another fun way to include an extensive history is to place a decorative pocket on the back of the quilt. This is what Barbara Powers did on the wonderful crazy quilt. In the pocket is the written history of the quilt, including who it was made for, and all the pertinent information. [Figure 7]

Mary shared information which is posted on the website for America Quilts creatively viewers. Go to [www.americaquiltscreatively.com](http://www.americaquiltscreatively.com) for information on making a lined pocket for hanging your quilts.

Mary also has a beautiful black velvet quilt hanger that is designed to protect your antique quilts from wear, as they are hung. The instructions are at [www.americaquiltscreatively.com](http://www.americaquiltscreatively.com).

Other valuable information that is on the web site is how to pre-shrink cotton batting. Be sure to go to [www.poly-fil.com](http://www.poly-fil.com), for more tips from Fairfield to make your quilting more fun and easy.



Figure 7



## *Creating a Photo Montage*

A photo montage is always fun. You can do it in several different ways. One is to take printed copies of your photos, and manually cut and paste them into a montage or collage. This is a fun way to preserve a number of photos of family, friends or a special occasion or vacation. You then can scan it or copy it with your HP all in one onto printer fabric.

You can do it a little more quickly in a computer program. Most programs, can crop photos and allow you to combine them into a digital montage, ready to print on fabric.

ArcSoft Software Company ([www.arcsoft.com](http://www.arcsoft.com)) has a neat program called Photo Montage. It's the coolest way to present and share your pictures. You use thousands of photos to create a larger, single image. The samples that Joe and Shauna brought were absolutely fascinating! ■



## *What's New to Do!*

### **Twin Needle Quilting**

Jenny Haskins showed a great quilting technique using a twin needle. Insert a twin needle into your sewing machine. If your machine has a “twin needle safety”, engage it, and enter the size of twin needle you are using. If you want to do a decorative stitch, stay with a twin needle no wider than 2.5mm distance between the two needles. Because the twin needle extends on each side, the width of the stitch also needs to be limited.

On the Pfaff 2144, just touch the twin needle icon, and specify the size of needle you are using. The width is limited automatically. If you are quilting a garment, it is better to do your twin needle quilting on your fabric before you cut out the garment. On a quilt, expect a little “shrinkage” from the quilting.

Thread with sewing or decorative thread on top and sewing thread in the bobbin. Follow the instructions for threading a twin needle in your instruction manual. Slide on the Pfaff Edge Guide/Quilting Guide #820251096. Set it for 1-1/2” or whatever distance you would like between your rows of twin needle quilting.

Jenny stitched a grid, using stitch #46 in one direction and a small zig zag in the other. The quilting adds a nice dimension and texture to your fabric.

