



Hall County Quilt Guild  
January 2020

# CHURN DASH

*News*

## What's Happening

### Jan 6 Terry Powers

-Bag trunk show

Jan 20 Project day

### Feb 3 Installation of officers

Feb 11-14 Guild Retreat

Feb 17 Project day

### Mar 2 Shannon Armstrong

Mar 3 Workshop

Mar 16 Project day

### Apr 6 Audrey Hiers

Feedacks & the American  
Quilter

### May 4 Nancy Mahoney

Scrap quilts lecture & trunk  
show

June 1 Picnic

July 6 Jennie Weaver of Sassy  
Stitch N Quilt -T-shirt quilt  
trunk show

Aug 3 Sylvia Schaefer of Parrot  
Quilts -Lecture & trunk show

Sept 14.....pending

Oct 5 Vendor Day  
Variety of vendors plus  
scissor guy

Nov 2.....pending  
Dec 7 Holiday party

### Election of New Officers for Hall County Quilt Guild

The following slate of officers has been nominated for 2020-21:

Co-Presidents: Joyce Pinson and Margaret Johnson

Co-Vice Presidents and Programs: Peggy Johnson and Jenny Thomas

Secretary: Trisha Brisbois

Treasurer: Jenny Grandfield

The 2020-21 Budget has been posted on our website, in the members only section.

Voting will take place at the January Guild meeting, and the officers will be installed at the February meeting and begin their term in



### Severe weather plan

In case of wintery weather please check for school closings. We will cancel our meetings or project day if Hall County schools cancels school. We do this for two reasons; first if the roads are too icy for the buses to drive safe, its too icy for our members to drive, also the church also closes when the school district closes, so we won't have access to the building.

You can listen to WSB TV for school closings, or go to Hallco.com. We will also make every effort to post on HCQG.com and our Facebook page if we cancel a meeting.



HCQG.org

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Please share Happy Birthday greetings with the following:

- 1/1 Carol Johnson
- 1/5 Denise Ulrich
- 1/9 Deborah Landress
- 1/11 Mary Clendeninn
- 1/13 Chris Anderson
- 1/20 Ronda Rose
- 1/22 Cathy Ethridge
- 1/24 Jane Kesler
- 1/24 Christine Pierson
- 1/28 Joan Cunningham
- 1/30 Barbara Coates
- 1/31 Julie Monroe

**Connie Murphy**  
Birthday Raffle Coordinator



<https://www.amazon.com/Its-Sew-Emma-Vintage-Christ/dp/0998983853>



**58 out of 72 - 80.5%**

Just a few quick tips this month. Please try to press your seams open on the Eagle Ranch quilts. Also, square your blocks as you go to make a straight quilt. Our goal is flat and straight! Your Longarmer will love you for it.

Return your patterns with your quilts (we recycle), read your directions and try to keep your quilt 60" x 72".

**Jenny G, Jenny T and Peggy J.**

**Thank you to those who will be bringing refreshments for our next meeting**



Paula Johnson  
Margaret Johnson  
Carol Johnson  
Sue Dunn  
Sharon Weir  
Patti Wright  
Becky Bicknell  
Clara Larson

**Rose King**

# A Lifelong Quilter Died Before Completing Gorgeous U.S. Map Project. Now, Hundreds Of Chicago Crafters Are Finishing the Job To Honor Her

*More than 1,000 people have volunteered to help embroiderer Shannon Downey finish the quilt in honor of Rita Smith.*

CHICAGO — A Rogers Park woman has brought together dozens of volunteers to finish a large, extremely detailed quilt left behind by a woman who died earlier this year.

Shannon Downey, who has been stitching since she was a kid and is known for mixing embroidery with activism, stumbled upon the unfinished quilt in September but has gained more attention for it this week after writing about it on Twitter.

Thousands of people have shared Downey's story of coming across the quilt, learning about the woman who was making it and enlisting volunteers to finish it and honor the memory of its maker.

Downey frequently goes to estate sales to find vintage and antique textiles, and in early September she went to a home in suburban Mount Prospect for a sale. She walked in and quickly came across an embroidered map of the United States framed and hung on the wall.



The map was in "perfect shape" and just \$5, so Downey bought it. That's when the cashier mentioned, "Oh, there's a box of fabric in that bedroom if you're looking for stitching stuff."

Downey went to the room to investigate and found a Tupperware container full of plans and materials for a quilt the homeowner had never been able to complete.

"I have an annoying habit of having to purchase and finish unfinished projects if I think that the person has passed on ... but usually I'm just buying a half-done pillow that needs half an hour's worth of stitching and then it's done," Downey said. "But this one was massive and it just felt really significant for some reason. And so I bought it."

The quilt was supposed to fit a queen-sized bed and would feature a map of the United States surrounded by hexagons representing the individual states. Each hexagon would have an outline of the state, the state flower and bird and stitched writing noting when the state entered the union.

The quilt was also supposed to feature 50 stars, one for each state, and be bordered in a red, white and blue quote.



Once Downey started going through the plans, she realized the quilt would be an enormous undertaking — one that would take her years to finish alone, especially since she doesn't know how to quilt.



So Downey shared her story of the quilt on Instagram, thinking a few people would be interested and would help her. Maybe she'd get enough people to each do a state and star or two, she hoped.

Instead, more than 1,000 people volunteered to help within 24 hours of the Instagram post going up.

“Which was amazing and wildly overwhelming,” Downey said.



[View More on Instagram](#)



13,388 likes

badasscrossstitch

A short story and request for stitching help. You know my love of estate sales and the fact that I cannot handle stumbling upon unfinished projects. I just know that the person who passed can't possibly rest easy with an unfinished project out there. I buy them and finish them as tribute. Well yesterday, fate brought me to Mount Prospect Illinois to the home of Rita Smith. Rita was clearly an astounding stitcher with a love for the US and state flowers. She was 99 when she passed according to my online research. I bought this AMAZING completed embroidery map with state flowers. It's breathtaking. I went upstairs and came across a box full of fabric. What I discovered is that Rita had just begun an epic quilting project (I mentioned she was 99 right?!). Well I went through the box and Rita had prepped, cut, all the squares and started transferring the designs onto the squares. She started stitching New Jersey. Obviously I bought the whole box. I cannot possibly stitch all this myself with all the rest of my stuff but I'm wondering if we can crowd stitch/ crowd finish this project for Rita?! Like if I mail you a square will you stitch it and send it back to me and then I will host a quilting bee to finish the thing? Anyone interested in helping me help Rita rest in craft peace! \_\_\_\_\_

help Rita rest in craft peace??

UPDATE: thank you all so much for your generosity of spirit in offering up your help! This is astounding. All of the pieces have been assigned and are in progress. But if you are still inspired and looking to participate in a meaningful project I would love to have you all involved in [@badassherstory](#)

!!!  
#badasscrossstitch #craftivism #craftivist #feminism #feminist #crafting  
#quilting #quilt #usa #fiberart #womenhelpingwomen #communityquilt  
#estatestalefinds #handembroidery #RitasQuilt

[View all 1,410 comments](#)

Another 30 quilters in Chicago also reached out saying they'd help put together the pieces once the embroidery was done.

With so many people trying to help, Downey built spreadsheets and got contact and mailing information for the volunteers to keep everything organized. She also decided she wouldn't embroider any of the state hexagons so more volunteers would be able to join in.

Downey's sizable audience on social media didn't just stop at volunteering, though. They also started to look for more information about Rita Smith, the woman who had planned to make the quilt before her death.

What they found brought even more meaning to the project: Smith was a Mount Prospect woman who had once been a nurse and recently died at 99 years old.

Downey was able to connect with Smith's son, William Smith, who said he was surprised at the attention — but confirmed his mother had been a "monster crafter." She'd frequently reupholstered furniture and was constantly sewing and stitching.

But William Smith suspects his mother hadn't been able to work on the quilt in 15 or 20 years, as she'd dedicated the last years of her life to caring for her husband.

"It was just really cool to learn a little bit more about her as a person and to be able to share that with the group" of volunteers, Downey said. "We've become very close to her through our studying of her embroidery and the research we've done, so it was neat to get some additional context and know that she was a lovely human who was deeply loved."

Downey shipped out the plans to her volunteers, and in doing so she realized Rita Smith had actually finished hexagons for two of the states. She wept at seeing her fellow embroiderer's work.

Those states will be incorporated into the quilt, and the volunteers are studying Smith's stitching style so they can mimic it in tribute to her.



Shannon "Badass Cross Stitch" Downey  
@ShannonDowney

I made a massive spreadsheet and collected mailing addresses. I started preparing the squares to ship out to my new team. As I did, I discovered Rita had stitched 2 of the states already! What a grand surprise. I'm not saying I cried but I'm not saying I didn't.



7,123 10:20 AM - Oct 23, 2019



"She's a really talented stitcher," Downey said. "Everyone feels incredible pressure to up their game."

One characteristic of Smith's work: She "clearly loved" French knots, which are hit-or-miss among other stitchers because they're quite challenging, Downey said. But every volunteer is going to try to incorporate at least one French knot in each hexagon or star, and some people are even filling in their stars entirely with French knots in honor of Smith.

"It's really neat and special to see the different ways people are incorporating that into their pieces," Downey said.

Everyone is supposed to send back their finished stitchwork by Nov. 15. Then, Downey will move on to quilting. She thinks the project will require four or five "sewing bees" where everyone will work together over several hours.

Downey first thought she'd also have to embroider the map of the United States that goes at the center of the quilt — but she's realized she can instead use the framed map she bought at Smith's home. That will be another way she can incorporate Smith's work into the project and honor her, she said.

“... Now Rita’s hand will be in the center,” Downey said. “Her presence is going to be seen throughout [the quilt], which is really, really neat.”

And while normally Downey gives away the work she finishes from estate sales, she has special plans for Smith's quilt.

“We’ve sort of collectively agreed that we’d love for it to go to a quilting museum for their collection so Rita’s work … and the work of all these people can sort of be a testament to community and [how] social media can actually be used for good and how we can come together around something and work together to create something really



Rita Smith (right) died before being able to finish a large, detailed quilt, so embroiderer Shannon Downey has enlisted volunteers to help finish it.



### **For more information about Rita's Quilt**

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2019/10/25/rogers-park-woman-bought-hugely-detailed-but-unfinished-quilt-from-an-estate-sale-and-will-finish-it-to-honor-its-maker/>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ritas-quilt-thousands-of-instagram-followers-offer-to-help-artist-complete-quilt-she-found-at-an-estate-sale/>

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/surprising-complexity-unfinished-american-quilt>

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/ritasquilt/>



**HCQG meetings** are on the FIRST Monday of each month (unless that day is a holiday then the meeting would be on the second Monday of the month)  
Social Hour is at 9:30 a.m. and the meeting starts at 10:00.

**Project Day** is held on the THIRD Monday of each month at the church at 10:00 a.m.  
Bring anything you are working on as well as a dish to share (or just bring your own lunch if that works better for you).



### **Are you new to the Hall County Quilters Guild?**

Check out our website at [HCQG.org](http://HCQG.org) for valuable information like how to make a name badge, our policies and procedures, how to make a quilt for Eagle Ranch and even photos of quilts that our members have made.