



## A final note from Erica...



April 15, 1974 ~ June 2, 2018

### **Yes, we've closed our store.**

I've heard several rumors about why we're closing, and want to dispel them. No, we aren't bankrupt. None of us died, or are ill. **Our kids, Cathy and Bill, have been invaluable over the last decades.** Without them, we wouldn't have had the success we had. We have been so fortunate to have them with us, and we love them so much. Yes, our new website was a disaster, but then again, retail has changed so much in 44 years, and it's just time. We will miss all the friends we've made, both in the store and on the internet.

**I want to personally thank everyone who wished my family and me well** on Facebook and in emails, and recognized our store in a personal way. (A very sweet lady from Portage who came in the day of my last Mystery Quilt Club at the store wanted to wish us well even though she had never met me ~ she even wore purple!) You have warmed my heart and made us feel good about all the people we touched over 44 years. Many of you have become close friends.

I also want to thank many people who mentioned a next chapter, because I have used it in my new email address, and my wonderful granddaughter, Brianna, incorporated those words into my new/old logo above.

**We want to thank all the people who have worked with us at Erica's.** You're wonderful people and we enjoyed getting to know you. A special "thank you" to Darleen Davis and Nancy Koski who were with us since we were in the "old" building, more than 23 years ago. "My other Cathy," was officially my daughter Cathy's assistant, but she was always there for me too. Cindy Foley was wonderful as our Shipping Department Manager, efficient and dedicated to our customers beyond what we might have hoped for. Her assistant, Chris Cencelewski, pulled orders and shipped and was also invaluable to the department. Kimmy Thompson, our repair technician, was excellent and loved by everybody. (She's enjoying being mother to her brand-new baby girl now!) Mary Ann Lienhart-Cross has been with me in Sewing Club for 34 years! She was as much a part of Erica's as anyone and a dear friend. I could go on and on, and apologize to those I haven't mentioned personally, but you're all definitely very positive parts of our lives. Thank you more than I can say.

**Though I'm officially retiring,** I'm not leaving quilting and have lots of projects, old and new, to work on, and I plan to continue teaching at some point. I'll also stay active with Quilts of Valor an organization I feel strongly about.

At the urging of Sewing Club members, we've set up a private **Facebook Page, Next Chapter Now,** for Sewing Club members and other sewing and quilting friends, so we can keep up with each other and our projects, meetings, etc. I haven't had time to send out invitations, but if you search for that group, you can request to join and I can add you. My friend, Charleen Wozniak, and I (Erica Lynn) are going to manage it, but everyone can contribute, and I hope you will! I'm really excited about staying in touch with you this way.

In the meantime, **not sure of what exactly my next chapter will be,** I'm going to take some time to leisurely work on projects and sit in my newly rediscovered La-Z Boy with a cat in my lap.

*Erica*



2

## A love letter to Erica's Creative Sewing Club members...



**We had our last meetings last Tuesday night and Wednesday morning.** We made it a celebration of our 34 years of Sewing Club. I discovered that many of you are not only talented sew-ers, but also chefs and bakers! Thank you. It was all delicious and I can't even pick out a favorite, because I couldn't possibly try all of it. And I was there both times, so it was a challenge!

We shared tears and hugs and love and best wishes. **I tried to tell you how much you've meant to me over the years.** I've learned as much from you as you have from me. You've touched my heart as I'm privileged to have been able to touch yours, and appreciate having been able to share a part of your lives.

**Those who couldn't be with us,** you are not left out of my thoughts. Over all these years there have been so many people we've been able to share the excitement of new sewing, embroidery, and quilting machines with. I feel it's a special bond we've had and I treasure that. Many have come and gone, and many have been with us through this whole journey!

Some of you brought **projects from years ago** or had stories about what our shop has meant to you. Thank you. And thanks to those who said little, but gave hugs.

Thank you to the over 50 people who gave me email addresses to contact if I start teaching again. If you join our private **Facebook page, Next Chapter Now,** I can also keep you up to date that way.

**Let's keep this going!**

*Erica*



# January Sew-ers of the Month



**Barb Arnold**, Granger, IN, finished her fantastic *Labyrinth* quilt! (I have mine cut out but it's purple! One of my projects to finish!) It got everyone's attention and was 1st place in the evening.

**Barbara Brack**, (Hamlet, IN) named her poor quilt *Nightmare*! But it's beautiful and completely worth the pain, and first place in the daytime group.

## Runners-up



**Cookie De Laurelle**, Mishawaka, made this pastel star wallhanging and used rulers from our Ruler Club to do the quilting on her Handi Quilter.  
**Jennifer Kisrow**, Elkhart, made this fun "pie" and was the joint runner-up in the evening.

**Linda Eilers** finished her Mystery Quilt from last year and calls it *Tommy's quilt*. It's a beauty! She's from Valparaiso and came to the morning meeting.



## February Sew-ers of the Month



This month **Cookie De Laurelle** was Sew-er of the Month! She made this professional looking wallet from the new cork fabric.

Her mother hand embroidered the car blocks and **Susan Hanna**, Goshen, IN, made them into the quilt you see here. I just love the border! Susan won the morning title.

## Runners-up



**Ann Littleton**, South Bend, made the beautiful lace angel and Santa, free-standing machine embroidery. It wowed the group and she was runner-up in the evening.

**Glenda Lamont**, also from South Bend, finished up a beautiful block-of-the-month to be runner-up in the morning session.



## March Sew-ers of the Month



**Mary Rotruck**, South Bend, made this cute Halloween Block-of-the-Month and was not only Sew-er of-the-month, but look at those ribbons it won! She has her Baby Lock dream machine now, too!

In Rolling Prairie, IN, **Kathy Passwater** made this fun hedgehog duet. Every hedgehog needs his own pillow! Kathy's also a member of our *Quilts of Valor* group and loves quilting with her new Handi Quilter. (We can always use more longarmers!)

## Runners-up



**Sylvia Rhine** from Chesterton, IN, showed us this fun 2-block quilt that she calls "My Patch Quilt." I love how the accent squares make a diagonal chain.

What's better than Balis and butterflies? **Sue Collins** used them both to make her lovely butterfly quilt. Sue's from Plymouth, IN.

April



# Sew-ers of the Month



**Steve Wietstock**, our sole male Sewing Club member, is not only a talented quilter. He's also a professor of chemistry and biochemistry, among other skills. This quilt was made totally from chemistry-related fabrics! He quilted it with his Handi Quilter and Anne Bright's Chemistry pattern, with beakers, flasks, test tubes, etc. It's going to a lucky couple who are both chemists, as a baby gift.

This huge totally machine embroiderer *Sewn Seeds* quilt was made in our *Hoop-It-All* club. The embroidered quilting was designed by *Sharon Shamber* and is amazing. So is the finished quilt, by **Joyce Becker** from Elkhart, IN. Of course it was first place in our daytime group.

## Runners-up



**Jennifer Kisrow** from Elkhart, IN, made the **Harley Davidson** quilt for her husband. Funny, he kept missing t-shirts from his closet, and even Jennifer didn't know where they were, until the quilt was finished!

**Lisa Huston**, Niles, MI, quilted many of our store models, but this one is all hers. And it's all applique! Amazing!

May



# Sew-ers of the Month



We couldn't have had two more different Sew-ers of the Month projects than we had last month! **Sandy Fawley**, from Elkhart, IN, pieced these adorable dachshunds all dressed in their fancy coats for her lucky granddaughter. They're so life like!

**Beth Parvu** told us how many pieces there were in her amazing *Dear Jane Quilt*, but I can't remember that high! The history is almost as interesting as this quilt. It's no wonder it was an overwhelming entry! Beth is from South Bend.

## Runners-up



**Mary Ann Mostaert**, South Bend, can be so proud of this quilt! As she should be of the many others she's made.

**Nancy Wenstrand**, Sawyer, MI, embroidered this bird song picture



**Betty Pflugshaupt** made the sparkly star quilt for her granddaughter. The stars almost twinkle! Betty has been my "volunteer" ever since I first chose her many years ago to write names as we do show and share to get our Sew-er-of-the-Month many years ago. I've always admired that she and her friends came all the way from Hamlet, IN, to our meetings.



## ~ Quilts of Valor ~

The mission of the *Quilts of Valor Foundation* is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing *Quilts of Valor*.

Over 187,065 quilts have been presented!

You can honor your special vet or one of our other wonderful vets anywhere in this way.



### In the Bend Quilters

We meet at the First Presbyterian Church, 401 Lincolnway East, Mishawaka

Thursday, June 14 and Saturday, June 16 9:30 to 2:30 Salad bar available

Thursday, July 12 & Saturday, July 14 9:30 to 2:30 Bring a sack lunch

No meetings in August

Bring your sewing machine and your project, start one here, or work on squares we have cut and ready to sew. There are other things to do if you don't want to sew.

### Special Event

at Yoder's Department Store in Shipshewanna

"Support our Veterans" Sit-n-Sew and Award Presentation

June 22, 2018 - 8:00am - 5:00pm

In the Bend QOV Quilters and String-A-Long Stars & Stripes will be sewing blocks with anyone who would like to help.

A Quilt of Valor presentation to local veterans is scheduled for 1:30 pm.



# Sharing in this newsletter for the last time...



**Sherry Barnes** and **Suzy Bishop** love their Accu Quilt Cutters and show projects they made using it to quickly cut out all their pieces. Suzy was coming to us all the way from Knox, IN.



**Sally Hanson**, left, and **Mary Nordstrom** are both very prolific! Sally makes wonderful quilts at a rapid pace, and has been a great Mystery Quilter for several years.

Mary embroiders her little heart out, and no small projects, either! Her last one was the *Last Supper!*



**Jo Ellen Jongkind** has been with us a long time and this is just one of her beautiful Club projects.

**Kay House Clark** seldom makes one of anything. Here are a few of her Margo purses, but she's also done a lot of embroidery, like her little bunnies last month.

Kay's also made amazing Mystery Quilts.



## A little more Sharing...



I've only known **Susan Hanna** a short time unfortunately, but I already know she's a very creative person. I will still see her as we finish this year's Mystery Quilt. On the other hand, I've known **Sue Marsh** since her daughter was our high school cleaning girl around 40 years ago. It's been a pleasure. Here's her fun big *Zippy Strippy Quilt*.



Two more ladies I haven't known long but admire their work are **Linda Lizenby** and **Andrea Bonarigo**. Thank you for coming to our Sewing Club meetings.

Linda's bow tie quilt blocks were made by her grandmother and her sister. A nice tribute to finish them up. Andrea enhanced this jacket beautifully. You can't see the back but it's even more attractive.



I've been fortunate to have been able to get to know **Marilee Bolenbough** well enough to know she's a very kind and thoughtful person, as well as a good sew-er, as evidenced in the vest she made.

**Diane James** was first a customer and friend, then a very valuable sewing consultant and friend, and now a valuable friend. She never does small projects!



## So many more..

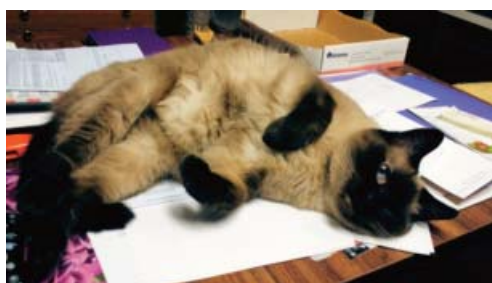
So many more projects over the years, and so many wonderful stories, but I can't share them all here because I'd never stop. Through tears, now, I say it was a fantastic run. And thank you to everyone who joined me. Please join me on our *Facebook Page*, **Next Chapter Now**.

# I Can't Leave Out the Crafter Kitties!



Almost since we began doing newsletters, we have been honored to highlight Crafter Kitties from all over the world. (We do love all animals, but we happen to have cats so that's how it started.) Our cats seem to be a major part of many of our sewing and quilting lives, and we love to take pictures. Thanks to everyone who sent photos. As I got those emails, they always brightened my day.

Unfortunately, in my last newsletter, I have to write a memorial to my lovely blue-eyed Siamese girl who was with me, supervising every step of every project. We lost her in February and she's finally at peace, not battling sinus problems any more, but we miss her every day.



Thank you, Lacy!



These are my current helpers. **Cagney**, Bernie ( Bernstein) in the back, and Remmy (Rembrandt.) Pooch (Puccini) couldn't care less.  
Thanks to animals around the world who add so much to our lives.