

The Capitol Quilt Show

July 29-Oct 10, 2013

Review – prepared by Shelley Young

History and mission of the show:

The Capitol Quilt Show has been taking place in the Colorado Capitol Building since 1988 with the exception of one missed show due to Capitol remodel. The Colorado Quilt Council, (CQC) is the sponsor and planner of this show. The mission of the CQC is to have open access to display the work of Coloradans or quilts owned by Coloradans. In addition, the goal is to expose Coloradans and people outside the state to the artistic talent from all ages in the form of quilting.

How the quilts are chosen:

The quilt show entry dates are advertised in the CQC newsletter and in Colorado quilt shops with emails and flyers. Quilts are accepted once the opening of registration begins. Quilts are not judged or juried to gain entrance into the show. This show I used an online registration company which proved disastrous. It is easier to accept entries by mail with a postmark date of the starting entry date, and record all entry information on an Excel spreadsheet. With weeks of recreating the spreadsheets and calling quilters for information lost by the company hired, registration became a long, frustrating process.

Who pays for the quilt show:

The quilts are fully insured through the policy carried by CQC. All expenses are paid by CQC such as union crew for installation and dismantle, marketing, advertising, registration expenses, show programs, rented moving truck, etc.

How the show happens:

CQC plans and executes the show through the power of many volunteers. I worked non-stop for 10 months on the show before it ever started, starting in October 2012. I interviewed and hired a new union company, Coast to Coast, to install and dismantle the show in February 2012. Budgets were made and approved by the CQC Board. Marketing and advertising plans were made and started to proceed. I recruited a list of quilt shops all over the state where quilts were to be dropped off. I then had people that help collect the quilts, sort and number them, and then organize a photo shoot day which takes place the day before the installation day. The photo shoot was held at a church gym on July 25th. The quilts were brought in laundry carts in a rented moving truck. Each quilt is placed on a stand to be photographed and the CD of all quilt photos is filed with CQC insurance. We call this day "Sort and Shoot." It's a long day of hard work and the quilts are reloaded into the carts by numbers, to be put back on the rental truck. The next day we all head to the Capitol Building early in the morning.

Installation:

The day after the Sort and Shoot, Friday, July 26th was the installation of the quilt show. This requires a long list of installation day volunteers, the hired crew, and staff at the Capitol. We start at 7:30 AM and have finished by 6:30 PM or later, depending on the speed of the crew and other issues. This year we had 2 accidents while installing the show. The first was on the first floor when a ladder knocked off the round cap of the security camera. I have not heard a current report on any repairs needed or replacement of parts. The second accident was on the first floor, when a few people carrying a ladder hit the curved protrusion of a marble piece on the wall with the end of the ladder. The marble shattered into many chunks and dust. Rick Lee was able to get a company to rebuild the piece at a cost of \$750 which is covered by the insurance company from the installation company, Coast to Coast. It was an amazing repair job; unnoticeable when examined up close. We finished at 9:15 PM due to a lift not being present on the 3rd floor early in the day.

Volunteers were recruited for docents who were present off and on throughout the show in the building, another list for dismantle volunteers, and several who drove the quilts all over the state to be returned to quilt shops.

The Capitol Quilt Show was spectacular!

The 242 quilts that were on display this year were collected from various cities throughout Colorado. Some quilts are vintage, family heirlooms, and many have been created recently by Colorado quilters, some from difficult patterns taking 5 years to create. Our youngest quilter was 7 years old, as well as a group of children that learned to quilt from a sewing teacher. Our "most life experienced" quilter is over 90 years old.

There was a meeting held in the Colorado Capitol Building that hosted Senators and /or Representatives from many other states in October. The comments made were those of being in awe, of wanting their Capitol building in their home state to have something this wonderful. They asked questions about the quilts, about how to have a show, and expressed their amazement at the creativity of showcasing Colorado art.

Since this show went into fall and thus, into the start of the session, the Senators, Representatives and their staff were able to enjoy the show. Their comments were all positive and they were relaying the overwhelming beauty of the building decked out in quilts, all from Colorado. There were comments about a sense of pride that comes when walking in the building and being surrounded by the beauty of this art form.

This show is so popular that CQC gets calls and emails year-round, asking when the next show is so they can plan their vacation around attending the quilt show. Many try to attend every show, every other year. For those that quilt, it's an honor to say, "My quilt was shown in the Colorado Capitol Building." People work on their quilts for years and register the second that the registration is open.

Who attended the show:

People from 37 countries signed the comment book, as did people from 44 states in the U. S. We had a total of 1513 comments. 865 comments came from Coloradans. We used well over 5,000 programs.

2013 attendance:

August 16,346

September 16,465

October (1-15) 7,772

for comparison in a non-quilt show year

2012 attendance:

August 14,575

September 13, 628

October (1-15) 6,881

I received a lot of email and a few calls that said they were disappointed they live in Colorado and couldn't see the show because the Capitol is closed on the weekend. These people work Monday through Friday. CQC is concerned that the people we most want to see the show are not able to view it. We hope future shows might allow for a half day Saturday opening of the building.

Dismantle:

The actual dismantle on Friday, Oct 11 2:30-8:00 PM went GREAT! No accidents, finished on time, tons of volunteer help, quilts going out in cars all over the state. But leading up to this perfect night I had a lot of turmoil, rearranging of almost 300 people and quilt driving, quilt deliveries, and scheduling problems before this perfect night. This was due to 3 weeks before the dismantle that I was told that instead of starting the dismantle at 7:30 AM on Oct 11, CQC volunteers and hired crew wouldn't be allowed to dismantle the show until 2:30 PM. This meant that my list of older volunteers could no longer work into the night due to the inability to drive home long distances at night, or they feared being downtown and driving away at night. I lost 35 volunteers and my right-hand organizer for the dismantle when the news came to us. The other problem was that now volunteers had to pile quilts in their car, drive home to sleep, and wake up and drive quilts all over the state. Now the insurance had to cover quilts being outside of one persons' house or the Capitol. I also had to find new drivers to meet up with people that took quilts the night before. These drivers weren't able to work on Friday. I'm still working on returning quilts. This is unacceptable to have a major schedule change weeks before dismantle.

The reason for the change of time for the dismantle was valid; safety of the public. The other reason for the sudden change was complaints from the Governor's office about the installation. This is one day that happens every other year. I was able to have the beeping turned off of the lifts and the crew and volunteers were told to work quietly during installation. There were minimal poles and quilts present which meant minimal items on the floor. I'm asking to see the complaints to be reviewed by CQC and the hired company, Coast to Coast. To get a smoother working relationship with the people in the Capitol we need to know what is upsetting them.

Future Capitol Quilt Shows:

CQC understands that there can be damage made to the building when installing or dismantling the show. We love our Capitol Building and do not intend to do any harm to this historic work of art that houses our political workers. We ask that we work together to create a plan for success for future shows. I think we should discuss at a future meeting the risks to damage, possible alterations for size of quilt shows, and reviewing the temperament of the building staff. CQC doesn't want a quilt show to be pleasing to thousands but it upsets staff or damages the building.

I'm available to attend future meetings to keep the Capitol Quilt Show on the schedule for 2015 and keep a good working plan for success for the sanctity of the building.

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