

Multi-talented artist enjoys hand embroidery

By Jodi Schneider McNamee
Correspondent

Linda Hespe is an artist who is as diverse in her crafts as she is prolific. From oils to woodcraft to designing her own quilts, you never know what will sprout from her creative mind next.

Hespe designed her first hand-embroidered quilt when she and her husband, Tom, retired to Sisters from Michigan in 2009.

“We were returning Oregonians after my husband’s career had moved us around the country for many years,” Hespe said.

Hespe has sewn all her life, beginning with hand embroidery with her grandmother and learning basic sewing from her mother.

“My mother was a skilled seamstress and made everything from tiny doll clothes to men’s tailoring and draperies,” she noted. “And I made all my clothes through high school and continued making my own clothes for years.”

But it wasn’t until the relocation to Sisters that she found her real passion in handwork, both embroidery and applique.

“When we moved to Sisters, I knew I could sew but wanted to quilt, and being in Sisters, well, I couldn’t let the opportunity of learning to quilt go by. I took some classes on hand embroidery and that’s when it really came all together for me,” she said. “Nothing is more relaxing and rewarding to me than to just enjoy guiding my needle and thread in and out of the fabric, watching simple stitches create a work of art. I cannot count my day complete till needle, thread and fabric meet.”

Hespe generally works on three to four quilts at a time and completes a couple each year.

“My style is traditional both in design and fabric choices,

and I enjoy working with cottons and wools,” she said.

Hespe also launched a small quilting group in her home, “The Sew N So Sisters,” where they meet monthly. And she attends weekly open stitch groups.

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“Linda does a wide variety of quilt techniques and is quite accomplished. She won first place in our annual Quilt Block Contest (2015),” said Jeanette Pilak, executive director of Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show (SOQS). “We keep hearing from individuals, small quilt groups, and the local East of the Cascade Quilters about her fabulous work.

“We love for the public to understand that quilters are diverse, interesting, and artists on many levels,” Pilak added.

As far as Hespe’s other artistic endeavors; she’s painted Victorian houses in oils on canvas, another passion, and has also dabbled in tole painting after taking lessons for years.

“I love old Victorian homes and was lucky enough to live in one in Portland back in the 1970s and ’80s. In recent years I have been working with watercolors, and also love to transform old furniture pieces with paint, maybe with a clump of grapes painted on a table top or roses twined across a seat back. And I enjoy making jewelry for myself and friends.”

One stunning piece of

woodworking that has a prominent place in her craft room is a huge mansard roof Victorian dollhouse that she pieced together herself.

“I guess I was fulfilling my childhood dream of having one. It took me over four Michigan winters to finish,” she told *The Nugget*. “I made some of the faux wicker pieces inside, put it all together, cut and painted the shingles and wired it myself and made all the tiny decorations.”

Hespe enters two to three quilts in SOQS each year since 2009. This year she is entering three: “My Bunnies Love Chocolate,” “Welcome to the Village of Black Raven’s Rest,” and “My Vases of Flowers.”

The Hespes enjoy volunteering in Sisters in different ways. Her husband is a Kiwanis board member who is responsible for oversight of the Sisters Kiwanis Food Bank operation. And she volunteers at the Sisters Habitat Thrift Store.

“We enjoy our roles in giving back to the Sisters community,” she said.



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Linda Hespe displays one of her quilts, titled “My Bunnies Love Chocolate.”

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