

Damascus woman uses yarn for more than sweaters



APPLIED QUILT made by Mabel Westcott will go to one of her seven grandchildren. The Damascus woman has won

prizes at the Clackamas County Fair with her work.

By SUZANNE ASHMUN
People Editor

With a hank of yarn, Mabel Westcott can turn a dynamite box into an art object.

The Damascus grandmother took the box, which was made in 1946, apart and used it as a backing for a color interplay of yarns. The dovetailed ends were used to hold the warp threads in the stitchery.

She also has created three-dimensional samplers using embroidery hoops. One hanging links two hoops together at right angles for an unusual effect.

Mrs. Westcott became interested in stitchery when she retired from Clackamas County Grange Supply six years ago. Although stitchery is relatively new to her, craft projects are not.

"All my life I've known how to work with my fingers," she said.

Like most craft enthusiasts, Mrs. Westcott haunts the Salvation Army and Goodwill stores and remnant sales for materials.

"One place to get interesting yarns is to buy drapery material and then unravel it," she suggested.

The result of the unraveling is color-keyed yarns with a crimp, which she stores together on rings.

One interesting stitchery duo is "Mrs. Westcott's 'Tis and 'Taint. In one she stitched the design (called positive) and in the other the background (the negative).

The member of Damascus Extension Study Group is modest about her creative talents.

"I do quite a little ripping," she laughed. "It's hard to tell how it'll look until you get it on."

A member of the Columbia Embroidery Guild, she said finding a design idea is the most difficult part.

"We're encouraged not to copy and teachers frown on using kits," she said. "Of course we do get ideas from each other, but every person has a different way of doing it."

Ongoing project for Mrs. Westcott is making quilts for her grandchildren. She's made three and has four to go.

She believes the revived interest in crafts is related to the increase in leisure times with not as much time required for housekeeping chores.

"We're going way back to things that grandmother did," she smiled. "Take macrame, for example, which uses old, old knots. Young folks love these things."

The Westcott home is filled with evidence of Mrs. Westcott's projects, including decoupage and tole painting as well as stitchery. She also has a bottle collection and displays 70 different paper weights.

She's given away many things to her three sons, Jay of Milwaukie, Dee of Damascus and Coe of Seattle, and their families.

"After awhile your place is saturated with things you've made," she sighed. "There has to be a time to stop."

Mrs. Westcott can't quit yet. She's working on a stitchery that incorporates a cowboy boot and a horseshoe, a souvenir from Damascus Centennial Days in 1969.

"I found the boot out in the road and hung it on my mailbox for awhile. When nobody claimed it I stuck it away—my garage is full of things—for future use," she remembered.

Mrs. Westcott has added some cobwebs and other abstract stitchery designs to the picture, which she'll frame in weathered wood.



COLORFUL ARRAY of yarns were collected by Mabel Westcott who unraveled remnants of drapery and upholstery material. She holds some wooden embroidery hoops she hopes to use in a future project.

"The wood came from a house built by my grandparents (Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Elliott) in 1865," she smiled.

Perhaps the unique stitchery will find its way to the Clackamas County Fair where Mrs. Westcott has already won several prizes on her quilts and stitchery.

"I believe in busy hands," the Wildwood Garden Club member said. "I don't like to sit around and stare at the television. The people I know are a never-ending source of new ideas."

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UNIQUE STITCHERY created by Mabel Westcott features a leather cowboy boot and a horseshoe that's a souvenir of Damascus Centennial Days in 1969. Mrs.

Westcott is framing the hanging with weathered wood from a house built by her grandparents in 1865.



STITCHERY GROUPING created by Mabel Westcott includes several which use embroidery hoops as frames. The open designs are done with a method called needle weaving and one stitchery (second from top, at right), uses five different hoops creating a layered effect. The bottom stitchery has a dynamite box backing on whose dovetailed ends the warp threads were tied.

Hospital shifts visiting hours

Visiting hours have been shifted at Gresham Community Hospital.

Hours are now from 12 noon to 8 p.m. throughout the hospital except the obstetrical department where the hours are from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m.

Blue Lake color better

Blue Lake is taking on its proper color and power boats will proceed as usual following two county actions last week.

County park authorities, acting with advice from the Department of Environmental Quality, treated the lake with copper sulfate last Friday to rid the waters of a heavy algae accumulation.

"The lake is looking better," commented Tex Matsler, head of the county parks and memorials division. Matsler plans a meeting later this week with Interlachen officers, DEQ officials and other state agencies to discuss the lake's problems.

In a second action county commissioners narrowly approved permission for lakeside residents to operate power boats on Blue Lake by a vote of 3 to 2. Power boat operation, the subject of weeks of

meetings, will continue under existing regulations.

County commissioners approved a fund of \$3,500 Tuesday to be used to pump more water into the lake because it is about two feet lower than the average for September.

The water is coming from a well north of the lake, about halfway to the Columbia River. Robert Nordlander, county director of environmental services, said the lake was safe to swim in.

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If you're pulling a boat or trailer this summer, remember that Oregon law says to pull off and let faster traffic pass if things jam up behind you. That's the law...and according to the Portland Traffic Safety Commission, it makes good safety sense, too.

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