



INSPIRED TO
Sew

*A glimpse into the creative heart of today's
most talented sewing & quilting artists.*



Eleanor Burns



Rhonda & Eleanor Burns
 Quilt in a Day Log Cabin Quilt in Background
 2019 Baby Lock Tech, St. Louis MO

This summer I had a special chat with Eleanor Burns in my SCHMETZ booth at Baby Lock Tech. I was so pleased she could see the quilt hanging in my booth. My Mom made the above quilt years ago as a Christmas present while I was living in New York City. I treasure this quilt. As my career moved me to various cities, the quilt was always nearby. I love the timeless color combination of teal, deep red, and light fabrics with just a hint of sparkles.

Rita Farro, writer extraordinaire, and I maintain a SCHMETZ profile hit list for interviews. Eleanor has been on the list for six years. Time does not diminish Eleanor's contributions, candor or star power. Once I got the above pic, Rita & I knew the time arrived to feature Eleanor. It's hard to believe Eleanor's profile in this issue completes six years of monthly **SCHMETZ Inspired to SEW** features.

Thank you Eleanor for all your contributions and inspiration to our wonderful world of quilting. We adore your stripping, humor & zest for life!
 Sew SCHMETZ & Grabbit® Too!

Rhonda

Rhonda Pierce
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*What Inspires
 YOU to Sew?*



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Sewing
Star 

Eleanor Burns
Quilt in a Day[®]

Issue #72





Eleanor Burns

Eleanor at Bear's Paw Ranch with Brian Steutel.

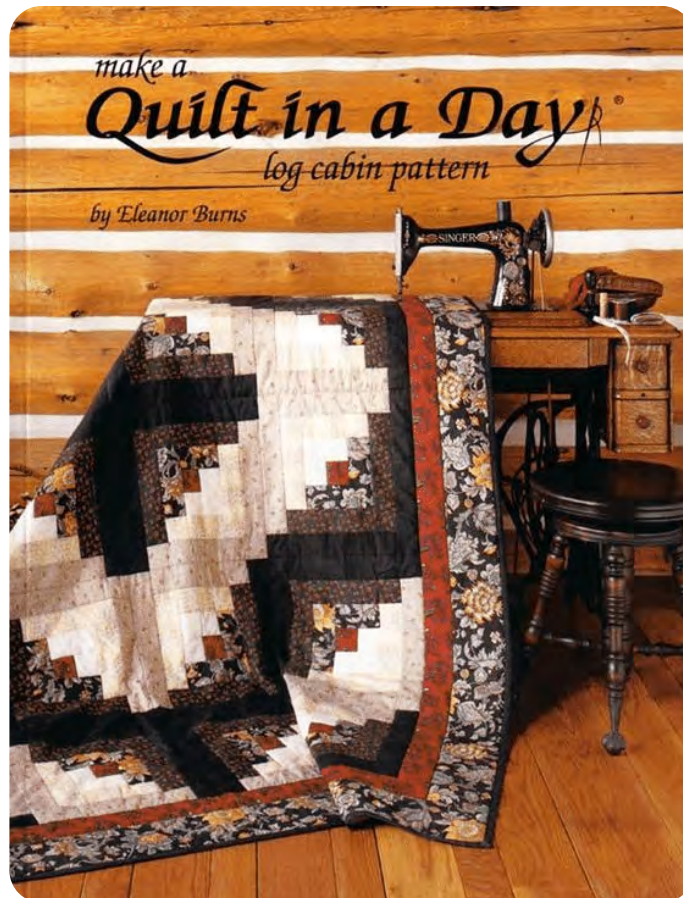
Eleanor Burns is, arguably, the most famous quilter of our time. Eleanor has taught thousands of students, written over 100 books and her unique quilting methods revolutionized the quilting industry. She has received every accolade or honor any professional quilter could hope for, including being inducted in the Quilter's Hall of Fame.

Her business, Quilt In a Day (QIAD), is an American success story ... but it didn't just happen.

After college, Eleanor became a Special Education teacher, a job she loved. She taught for six years in the Pittsburgh, PA area. She married her college sweetheart, and they moved

to California so her husband could attend law school. They had two sons, Grant and Orion. Those were some lean years, and Eleanor needed a job. She didn't have a California teaching certificate, so she went to the Parks and Recreation department and offered to teach a Stretch & Sew class.

That wasn't possible because Stretch & Sew was a trademarked business, and their techniques were proprietary. But it was 1976, and it seemed everybody wanted to make a commemorative quilt. Parks and Rec asked if she could teach a quilting class.



Eleanor eagerly said, “YES, I’D LOVE TO.” She had never actually quilted, so she immediately went home and made two pillows. That’s when Eleanor’s experience in writing Special Ed curriculum came into play. She broke the daunting, complicated quilting process down into small steps. Her directions were concise and easy to follow.

Although she didn’t know it then, Eleanor Burns was about to revolutionize the modern day quilt industry. Instead of cutting small squares or triangles and sewing tiny seams together in complicated patterns, she tore “strips” of fabric. After sewing the long strips together, she would cut, then re-align the strips to create traditional quilt patterns.

This new method wasn’t just a big time-saver, it was a GAME-CHANGER. In 1978, she wrote her first book, **Make a Quilt In a Day, Log Cabin Pattern**; her business was born. Eleanor published her first book using a new company called Kinkos. Typed on a Selectric Typewriter, with hand-drawn illustrations, the books were spiral bound and sold for \$8.95. She began to receive orders from quilt shops and newly formed quilt guilds. Her first shipping department was Orion’s changing table in her garage in Carlsbad, CA.

When Eleanor’s marriage ended in divorce, she was a single mother with two small boys and a business idea. Eleanor took a giant leap of faith and opened a store. Grant and Orion grew

Orion says it has not been difficult to work with his mother.



“I’m proud that she’s been such a leader and pioneer in the quilt industry. She taught me to not be afraid to try new things. You’ll never know if you don’t try, and if it doesn’t work out, you just try something else. And, of course, from a very early age, I learned that incredible work ethic.”

up in Quilt In a Day. Orion was 8 years old when he started “running the cash register.” He says, “We didn’t actually have a cash register, customers more or less paid on the honor system. They would hand me the money, or a check, to pay for what they bought, and I’d put it in the metal cash box. By the time I was in the 5th grade, my after-school job was to hand-type all the credit card payments for the day.”

Her sister Judy moved to California from Pennsylvania to help Eleanor raise her boys while she traveled and taught classes. Tired of leaving her sons, Eleanor rented a warehouse in 1983 where she filmed her television show. The unit included a small store, warehouse, plus a classroom. Orion became her

cameraman and for a time Grant was the treasurer of the company. Eventually, Grant started his own company to manufacture skateboards. (He has a huge plant in Mexico, with over 400 employees.)

Orion stayed on to run the company and Eleanor largely credits him for the current day success of Quilt In a Day. Eleanor said, “Orion grew up around the quilting industry, and he understood the power of the internet. He developed a great eye for trends, and he brought in so much new merchandise, we expanded our warehouse.” It made sense for the company to purchase the three unit building where the original Quilt In a Day store used to rent one space.



Showtime with Eleanor.

Eleanor Burns is gracious to a fault, and she is famous for her mega-watt smile which lights up every room she enters. But what people may not suspect is that when she has a vision, there is no quit in her. She has an inner determination and focus that could best be described as *"a will of iron."*

Eleanor's stage shows are a big element in the secret sauce of the Quilt In a Day success. For one thing, SHE IS HILARIOUS. She will go to great lengths to entertain her audience. She might come out on the stage dressed as a chicken, or as Lucy Ricardo. You never know what you're going to get or who she's going to be. During her performance, Eleanor's audience will be rolling with laughter, and by the end of the show, they realize THEY LEARNED SOMETHING NEW.

Eleanor credits her showmanship to the fact that she was raised in a family of five children. Growing up, they did backyard summer shows. They prepared them, wrote the scripts, and designed the costumes. One week they'd be clowns on stilts, the next week they'd be fortune tellers. When Eleanor became a Special Ed teacher, she noticed her students LEARNED more when they were laughing, and that lesson became a guiding light for her QIAD presentations.

Orion believes his mother is a great entertainer because, basically, she is a very shy person. *"She creates a new show every year. She writes the material, plans the costumes, and, of course, designs the quilts. When she walks out on that stage, she becomes another person. You can see the transformation taking place."*



Sisters — Judy, Eleanor, Patty

Family has always been at the center of Eleanor's life. For many years, Eleanor's sister Judy handled the wholesale business for Quilt In a Day. Judy's death left a big hole in the heart of Quilt In a Day.

Eleanor's sister Patty also moved in. She and Eleanor both traveled the country, doing lectures and shows. As a matter of fact, when Eleanor decided to curtail her travel, Patty eagerly took over.

Eleanor has been blessed with five grandchildren, ages 12, 10, 9, 8, and 7. She says, "Grant and Orion got a late start, so I was 62 years old when my first grandchild was born. I don't want to waste a minute with them."

When asked about her "happy place," Eleanor responded quickly. "Bear's Paw Ranch! I bought it 20 years ago. It's a log home on 9 acres in the mountains I share with Brian Steutel, who used to produce and direct my PBS series. Every Friday night, I leave work and drive one hour and 15 minutes on back roads. Arriving and opening that door is my perfect moment of zen. Recently, I did Halloween up there with grandkids. We had a wagon ride and carved pumpkins."

One of Eleanor's favorite things to do at Bear's Paw Ranch is picking blackberries. She said, "I AM A JAMMER. I pick every wild berry on the property." She loves to cook. Her specialty is jams, jellies, and cobblers. She often brings a blackberry cobbler



Julian Retreat

into the office on Monday mornings. For her last class, she brought in apricot, strawberry and blackberry jam.

In November, Eleanor was teaching at a retreat in Julian, CA. She's been doing quilt retreats for 30+ years. Just another example of Eleanor being YEARS ahead of the curve. The Julian Retreat is held at a church camp with bunkhouse lodging. It's very primitive, with family eating, two huge sunny classrooms where students can sew all night if they want to. There are usually around 60 attendees, and they do lots of other fun activities during the week.

Eleanor's innovative techniques have been wholeheartedly embraced by the quilt world. It might seem like she has accomplished everything she set out to do, and more. But when asked about retirement, Eleanor laughed, *"I can't say I will ever retire. A few years ago, Orion said I could work just 3 days a week. And I did take a Monday off once, but that was it. I recently counted my unfinished projects, and I have 150 UFO's in my garage."* Eleanor has more ideas than she has time. She really likes writing her books, and she still teaches at major shows. She loves to meet the customers who come into the store, especially the bus tours, and she enjoys doing webinars and the Facebook LIVE presentations from their QIAD studio.



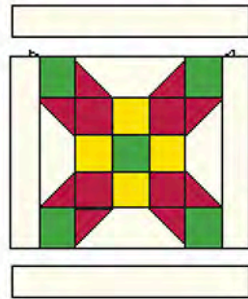
When asked what she's most proud of, Eleanor thought for a minute. Then she said,

“There are awards all over my office, but that’s not what I’m about. I love teaching. I love my students. And none of it would matter without my family.”

www.quiltinaday.com

 — written by Rita Farro

- Set seams, open, and press toward Border. Trim even with Block.

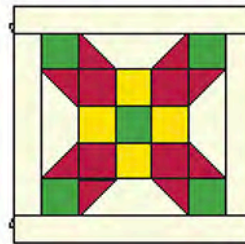


- Repeat with remaining two sides.

12" Block	6" Block
13/4" x 13"	1 1/4" x 7"

- Square block.

12" Block	6" Block
12 1/2" square	6 1/2" square



Easy Blackberry Cobbler

Every farmer's daughter knows how to whip up a delicious cobbler from freshly picked blackberries.

1/2 cup butter, melted
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
pinch salt
1 cup milk
4 cups blackberries
ground cinnamon



Ellie Burns enjoying Grandma's Blackberries – 2008

Preheat oven to 375°.

Place stick of butter in 13" x 9" x 2" baking dish. Melt butter in oven. Cool slightly.

In medium mixing bowl, combine flour, 1 cup sugar, baking powder, and salt, and mix well.

Stir in milk, mixing until just combined. Pour batter over butter but do not stir them together.

Gently stir remaining sugar with blackberries. Pour over top of batter but do not stir them together. Sprinkle cinnamon on top.

Bake in oven approximately 35 to 40 minutes or until top is golden brown. Serve warm or cold with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Needle Points with Rhonda



I MET ELEANOR
at Fall Quilt Market • Booth #1235



#AccuQuilt #QuiltInADay
@accuquilt

I love SCHMETZ!

They are the only needles I use ... for years, since the beginning of time!

Yes, I like the Universal 80/12 for my quilts!

Sometimes I am gifted different needle brands, but there is no comparison.

... Eleanor



Needles don't last forever.

Change the needle!

*Stitch quality improves &
the sewing machine performs
better with a new needle!*



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