

**April 19, 2013**

**Focus Group: Chapter Presidents**

All 14 Chapter Presidents were invited to attend; encouraged to send a representative in their place if that was not possible; 12 Chapters were represented.

**Introductions**

**Discussion Guidelines**

**Objective Guidelines**

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## **What is your vision for the Guild's future?**

**Location** – Guild will have a space to call its own, whether rented or owned, to include: good lighting and enough electricity as well as room for:

- Education, large spaces for workshops, classes and bees
- Library for books and rulers
- Long-arm machine (or two) with teachers
- Rooms to display quilts and hold meetings
- A shop or boutique for members' goods
- Storage space large enough for programs and showcase

**Communication** – Prompt, clear and with ample time for Chapters to respond; more intermingling of members; regional-based activities because sister-chapters are not always easy either (requires lots of scheduling and extra work)

**Programs** – Continuous; keep costs low; famous speakers (Alex Anderson, Mary Ellen Hopkins, etc.)

**Guild Quilt Show to rival Paducah**

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## **What issues, problems, breakdowns are facing your Chapter and the Guild right now?**

**Guild sprawled out** – makes it difficult to get together to share, to intermingle with members from other chapters; size hampers sense of community

**Too many meetings** – Chapters have a difficult time finding sufficient numbers of volunteers to commit to the number of committees needed; members don't want another job, they just want to have fun

**Guild Executive Board meeting** – Tuesday afternoon is a conflict for Allamanda and Bradenton representatives; just as daytime meetings are difficult for Patchwork Garden

**Regular Guild meeting** – All night time meetings means some members will never attend one; need daytime events; Chapters sit in groups and don't mingle

**Communication and Interactions** – New Chapters do not have a clear understanding of what the Guild does for them; what in-house resources are available, how to get them and why; there is a disconnect between the Guild and Chapters

**Money** – Need clarification for how much money a Chapter may have or the Guild may have and still be in compliance with our not-for-profit status [MJP: *this question was asked and answered toward the end of Beth Bender's term as Guild Treasurer so this speaks to the need to capture certain types of information to pass along to new Chapters and new officers when elected*]

Some members cannot afford to participate on the level of some others: not just the \$5 dues, but the workshop fees are often \$25 plus a hefty kit fee

New Chapters get \$250 start up but then money is deducted for copying of the materials in the New Chapter Packet, most of which is accessible electronically from the website; cannot get a checking account without a \$500 set-aside and that takes months to reach that level – **NO: Turns out that BB&T does not require \$500 set-aside!** [MJP: another example of poor communication even among Chapter Presidents]

**New to Quilting** – Every year, new members join to learn quilting; this puts a strain on every Chapter to provide time and resources over and over

**Established Chapters** – Average age of members may have started at 55-60, but now it is closer to 72 for many; they are less likely to have members with technical skills needed to do things like work on the website; more likely to have members who have already served on lots of committees over the past 20 years

**New Chapters** – Need to know what the Guild does for them and what their members' responsibilities are to the Guild; need history of the Guild; (*see also, Money*); need a revised Start-Up Package to better outline what the Guild and Chapter responsibilities are to members and for members toward their Chapter and the Guild

**Chapter Personality** – Each Chapter has its own personality and the Guild should be careful to honor the uniqueness of chapters

**Charity** – Why do Chapters have to report charity to the Guild? Is it true that every member must do one charity quilt a year? Chapters need clarity regarding charitable giving; why does Guild sponsor large charity efforts when Chapters also do charity work

**Facilities** – In-House Classes and Bees are great but room is way too small; different types of recreation facilities have different constraints about everything from number of electrical outlets to lighting and lack of storage; big difference in amount of free photocopying that can be done at recreation centers; even whether there is coffee, or not.

**Volunteer members** – There is no succession planning for volunteers who often take on major jobs for the Guild and for Chapters; what happens if Webmaster takes a sudden turn for the worse? What does a Chapter do when a long-term Chapter librarian moves north and no one else will step up to take on that role? There are many scheduling and

training issues for volunteer participation as new members join and as new activities are added; even some members may be an issue in a community such as The Villages

**Snowbirds** – Question: How do other Chapters deal with snowbirds; people who rent for one or more months but without a permanent Villages address? Points to the issue of uniform, consistent policy on membership ... What about those who come in to meetings in November every other year to join a Chapter, just to put quilts in the Showcase?

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## **What do you need NOW from the Guild?**

**More tables for Allamanda**

**Replacement plan for Webmaster** [MJP: Didn't know I looked that sickly :<]

**New Chapter Information Package:**

Bank (BB&T doesn't require \$500 set-aside)

Expectations for Chapters and for the Guild

Explanation of Programs

Costs, amount of charity work required to comply with 504(c)(4) status

**Method to encourage member input to Guild**

**Snowbird/Renter Membership:** Guild policy

**Waiting List for Members:** Stop printing "capacity" on website and instructing new people to look through 14 Chapter pages; give them a one-stop response [MJP: Obviously new people who are computer savvy read the website because that is where the "some people like" to visit (check out) Chapters comes from. That was a suggestion but it also points people to MEMBERSHIP (Joy Lynch), who keeps tabs of which Chapters have space.]

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## **Any "Ah, ha!" moments today?**

That a boutique could be part of the 'dream house' for a Guild facility.

Ruler library ... great idea!

Today was the first time Chapter Presidents could sit together and just talk and share ... first time to get to know who they are and what they need.

## Focus Group Feedback Questionnaire: Chapter Presidents

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
1. The agenda was clear			1	11
2. The objectives were appropriate			3	9
3. The location of the meeting			3	9
4. The amount of information shared			1	11
5. The opportunities for participation and sharing			1	11

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### Was the focus group worth your time?

Yes (9)

- It helped to identify and air problems
- Organizational skills were discussed
- Kept on topic. Facilitator was excellent.
- I expect great things in the future
- Definitely; got several ideas
- Good interaction w/fellow Chapter Presidents; got to know them better. Wonderful exchange of ideas that can be shared within Chapter
- It was interesting but it didn't help the problems in our Group
- Very much so! Just getting to know other Presidents was so valuable. It helped me, as a new President, to think more about the overall picture and overall concerns of the Guild

### What went well in this focus group?

- The interaction between members
- Things I “forgot” when brainstorming, others mentioned. Many great concerns, issues expressed
- Everyone shared
- Excellent facilitation techniques; skills!
- Facilitator was great by keeping us on the topic
- Hearing everyone's ideas but I feel many of the ideas were not realistic
- Sharing information
- People seemed to share openly. Lots of good ideas. Thank you! Esther is a wonderful facilitator
- Great facilitator – we stayed pretty much on task.
- The amount of participation was excellent; the way Esther managed to guide the discussion

### What could have gone better?

- For the initial meeting, it went well
- Received agenda ahead of meeting
- Can't think of any
- Longer time
- We weren't looking for solutions and too many were given
- We kept getting off track between vision and issues – and for that matter, solutions. When people start brainstorming, it's hard to hold them back 😊
- I think it was fine – I was surprised about the “us-them” mentality in regard to Chapters and Guild. An eye opener!
- ?? The name signs were a great idea!