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WINTER 2011 PASSION ~ ARTISTRY ~ BUSINESS

A Special Report on

ONLINE EDUCATION

Fresh Ideas!

Featured Quilt Pattern:
Jellystone Park

Tales from the

customer TRENCHES

MQS® Tools of the Trade Award

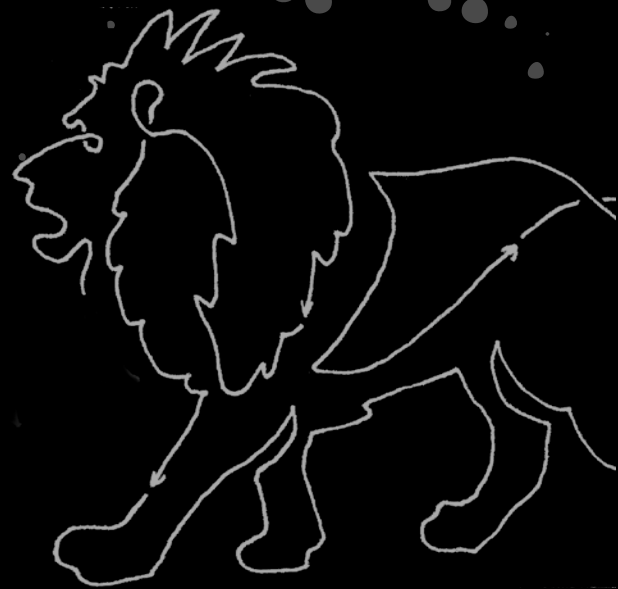
Licorice & Lace

Quilted by Birgit Schueller

By Judy Lyon

Making a Show Quilt
in **ONLY** **3** **Weeks!**

The Story Behind,
A Safari Night



Rush, rush, rush! For me, life seems a never ending cycle of goals and deadlines filled with “want to” and “have to” goals. I am a person who is always trying to do a little more than is humanly possible. Thank heaven for quilting machines to give us more time!

In 2006, while browsing quilt show websites, I realized I had overlooked the theme for HMQS – “In to Africa”. I was dismayed to think I had missed this opportunity since I have several machine quilting designs which reflect Africa – its animals, rhythms, and so on. Oh the angst! In my mind I heard the words, “Maybe I could do it.” But I had only three weeks before the show entry deadline! I talked to Angela Meadows, my business partner. She said to me, “It’s not possible!” I cried on the shoulder of my husband. He agreed and said to me, “It’s too much for 3 weeks.” ►



That night in a sleepless bed my mind busily planned an “easy” quilt. The design seemed so simple, and simple is good. The quilt top would be quite plain, because the motifs of my continuous-line patterns would provide plenty of variety. Well, almost plain – as plain as a quilt could be with a very involved center piece. I was thinking a paper pieced animal border and “discharged” background fabric would be very nice. I’d throw in some strip pieced sashing and then be ready to quilt. Maybe this *could* work after all. I mean, I had the inspiration didn’t I?

The next morning I called my friend Pat Brown of Creative Layouts and Design. What did she think about doing a rush quilting job? Her answer was just what I wanted to hear, she said, “Go for it! I’ll arrange things to be free as soon as you have the top ready to quilt.” Luckily she had a Statler and I had Statler versions of my patterns already digitized. (These patterns are sold through Todd Brown of legacyquilting.com.)

I was committed. (Don’t we always want to take the advice we like.) I pulled out a box of things I had started as a quilt for my son a few years before. (I’m sure no one else has quilts that didn’t work out, half-

buried in a closet somewhere.) They’re like a gift that your kids give you – you can never throw them away. In the box was a large pieced lion (which I had long ago ripped apart because I was dissatisfied with it), ten smaller paper pieced lions, tigers, and leopards, and some odds and ends of piecing. Also, in the box were a few scraps of the bleached, black, background fabric. Yes, I said, bleached.

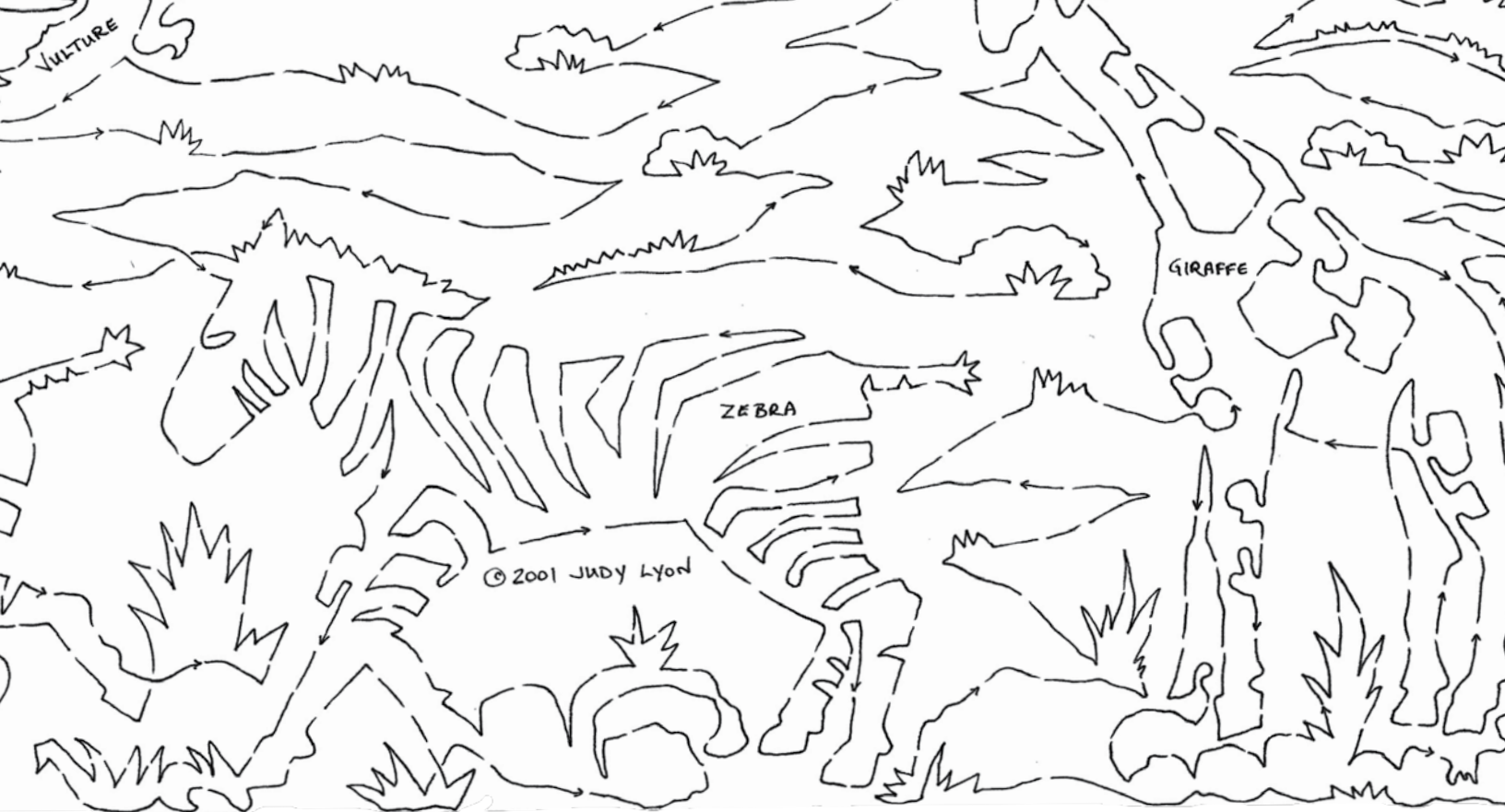
Two years before, I had determined that plain black fabric was too static for my likes. So I had spread this black fabric out for cosmetic surgery on my sturdy, paper covered work table otherwise known as the chest freezer in my garage. I found an old broken comb (lots of teeth missing), dipped it in bleach, and pounced it randomly over the black fabric. With a few spatters of bleach from a toothbrush, I created the Milky Way. Within minutes the spots had become a palomino color. I had then quickly neutralized the bleach in the washing machine.

Now I needed more of that same fabric! Amazingly, the comb was still in the laundry room drawer (poor housekeeping skills). I tried it on some black fabric I had on hand, but the spots were turning gray instead of palomino. So I went back

to the store where I had purchased the original fabric and found the identical fabric still on the shelf. And I still had the same work table (freezer). Can you see how things were falling into place? This had to be fate!

The biggest challenge I now faced was revising the lion out of the formerly cut pieces, and adding a curling mane of Snail’s Trail blocks. For once in my life, I didn’t have time to agonize over two dozen trial runs before settling on a design. A zigzag of animal skin fabrics went above and below the lion. All of this was eventually quilted with MeadowLyon’s “Safari” Pictogram with white thread on the black background and over the pieced lion. After quilting, the African Savannah with all its wildlife sprang to life over the panel.

A few more paper pieced animals, replete with upholstery fringe tails and three-dimensional ears completed the inner border. (This was something I adapted from Margaret Rolfe’s, *A Quilter’s Ark*.) Then came two more borders of my starry black discharged fabric, separated by a wonderful and easy sashing. The sashing was made of bright African colors, skin prints, and gold gilded fabrics. I created

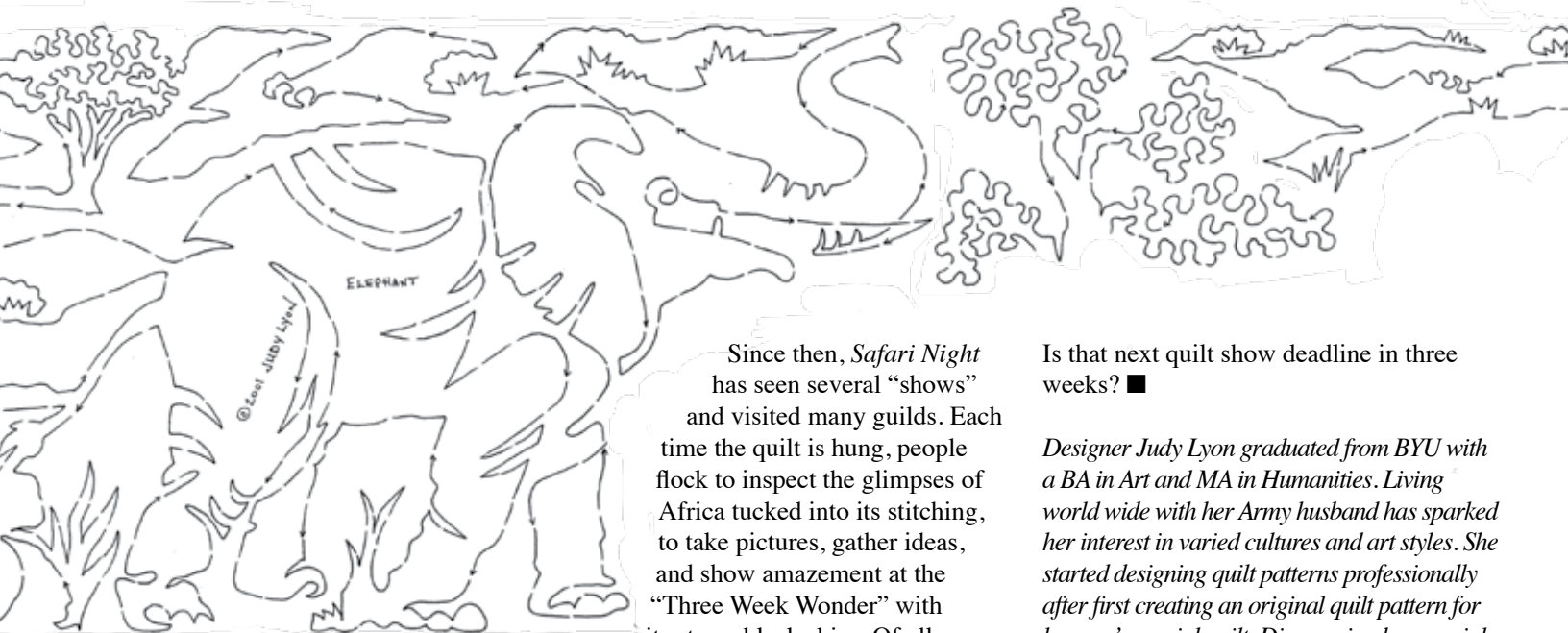


it by sewing two inch strips together and then cutting diagonally across the strip pieced “yardage” for a very effective spark of color.

Several years earlier a woman from Australia had contacted me asking for a line of elephants, marching, as she had seen them in a visit to Africa. She wanted to stitch them encircling her quilt. (Many of my design ideas for patterns come about in this way – from quilters with requests.) This was the beginning of my “Nature on the Run” patterns. Now, in the inner borders of my quilt, I would place the running zebras, lions, giraffes, and cheetahs, while elephants marched around the large outer border.

Pat Brown slipped the *Safari Night* quilt on her machine in-between other customers, designed a geometric pattern for the sashing, and finished the quilting in only two days. We had made it! This was a magnificent Theme quilt.

I called the Show Director to let her know my quilt was on its way! We had completed it with no time to spare, but that was the perfect timing for me! Well, after relating this story to you, you’re no doubt thinking I must have won the Grand Prize, right? I ▶



Since then, *Safari Night* has seen several “shows” and visited many guilds. Each time the quilt is hung, people flock to inspect the glimpses of Africa tucked into its stitching, to take pictures, gather ideas, and show amazement at the “Three Week Wonder” with its starry black skies. Of all my

quilts, this one brings me the strongest feelings of fulfillment. This quilt wasn’t perfect, but perhaps by doing it quickly, I didn’t drag the decision making out to the point of misery. There was no time for the rearranging and alternative decisions through which I usually suffer. Maybe the joy was in accomplishing “the impossible”. Or maybe it really was inspiration that night. I think a lot of creativity is just that!

Is that next quilt show deadline in three weeks? ■

Designer Judy Lyon graduated from BYU with a BA in Art and MA in Humanities. Living world wide with her Army husband has sparked her interest in varied cultures and art styles. She started designing quilt patterns professionally after first creating an original quilt pattern for her son’s special quilt. Discovering her special gift, she has loved designing patterns ever since. MeadowLyon offers a wide variety of non-repeating “Pictograms” as well as pantos, borders, and blocks.

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would have wished for that. Ah, but alas, no ribbons. However, I received ample commendations – enough to make that smile of satisfaction expand across my face and my heart. Each of us who had participated in this wild adventure gleaned that soul satisfying feeling of accomplishment that so many of us experience when we’ve finished a job well and can see and enjoy the fruits of our labors.

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