

# Quilting group opens 'electrified' quilt show



Shirley Woods talks about her quilt, "Evergreen." Other works will be showcased at "Electrified Needles: A Collection," which will be open through Oct. 6.

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## Free Spirit Fiber Artists' annual show transforms World of Energy

BY ANDREA KELLEY  
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The World of Energy has been transformed from its typical blue tones into a festival of color. Bursts of bright pink, royal purples and vibrant greens all weave together into the joyful tapestry that is the Free Spirit Fiber Artists' annual show.

"Electrified Needles: A Collection" will be on display through Oct. 6, showcasing the members' trademark bright works. An opening reception was held on Friday.

Member Carolyn Harris said Duke Energy is celebrating 50 years in Oconee County, so the quilters decided to tie in with their celebration — thus the "electrified" theme.

The Free Spirit Fiber Artists, which is a small group within the larger Lake and Mountain Quilters Guild, have been together for 13 years, Harris said. She and member Shirley Woods have been involved since the beginning.



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"I think we're the only small group from the guild that from the beginning of small groups has managed to hang together," Woods said. "That's an accomplishment, I think."

She owed that to the 12 members' compatibility and shared love for bright colors.

"We started out with a focus on one fabric designer's fabrics, and then the production of his fabrics was sold to another company that had a lot of other designers that we liked, so then we kind of branched out from there," Woods explained. "A few years ago, we said, 'You know, I like this fabric, but I also like this and it comes from a different designer, so we're just going to change our name from Kaffe Fassett Quilting to Free Spirit Quilting.'"

The group also got rid of quilting challenges because it was "limiting," she said, so those two changes "opened up the door" to more options.

"We stopped having challenges and we just said, 'Just do what you want to do,'" Woods said. "We get together once a month for breakfast and say, 'Okay, what are you working on? Did you see anything new? Any great ideas that you want to share?' And that's kind of what we do."

## QUILTS BIG AND SMALL

Though sewing and quilting run in Woods' family, she didn't get into it herself until she was living in New England during the 70s.

"In New England during the Bicentennial quilting was big, not like here where the towns weren't that old," she said. "Every town that we had lived in was older than the Revolutionary War."

Over time Woods has experimented with both small quilts and bedspreads.

"There is a designer who has been around for many, many years called George Siciliana — his wife is a beautiful hand quilter," she said. "He started quilting because there was a quilt he liked and his wife said, 'If you like it, make it,' and he made a big quilt, but then he had to ask her to quilt it. So he kept getting his smaller and smaller and smaller because then he could quilt them on his home sewing machine.



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**Carolyn Harris adjusts a quilt while setting up the show. The show this year looks forward to showcasing even more adventurous pieces and techniques.**

"I'd like to think I could be like George and keep getting smaller so I could quilt them," she added. "At the moment I seem to be working on three big ones. So much for that theory."

## 'HAVE FUN'

This year's show promises an even more eclectic mix of pieces and techniques.

"Because we broadened our focus, you're going to get a lot more variety. ... Up until a couple of years ago, you will not have seen pieces done in wool and that kind of thing," Woods said. "Because we've opened the door to what we were doing with no challenges, if you want to applique you can applique, if you want to do English paper piecing, you can do English paper piecing, you can work with wool.

"Have fun," she added. "Essentially, that's what we do, we have fun."



**The World of Energy has been transformed by the quilts into a festival of color.**