

. quilting prisoners

Enough with all the jokes about Quilt Police. Have you heard the one about the "quilt warden?"

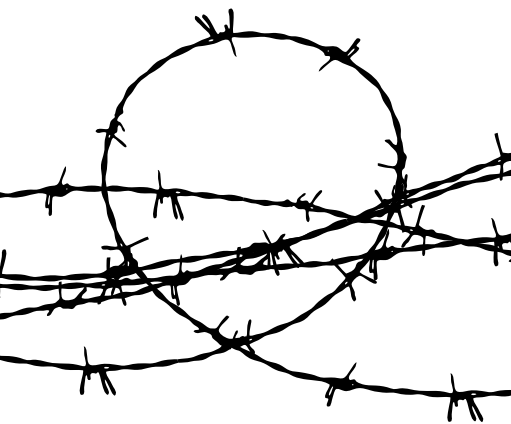
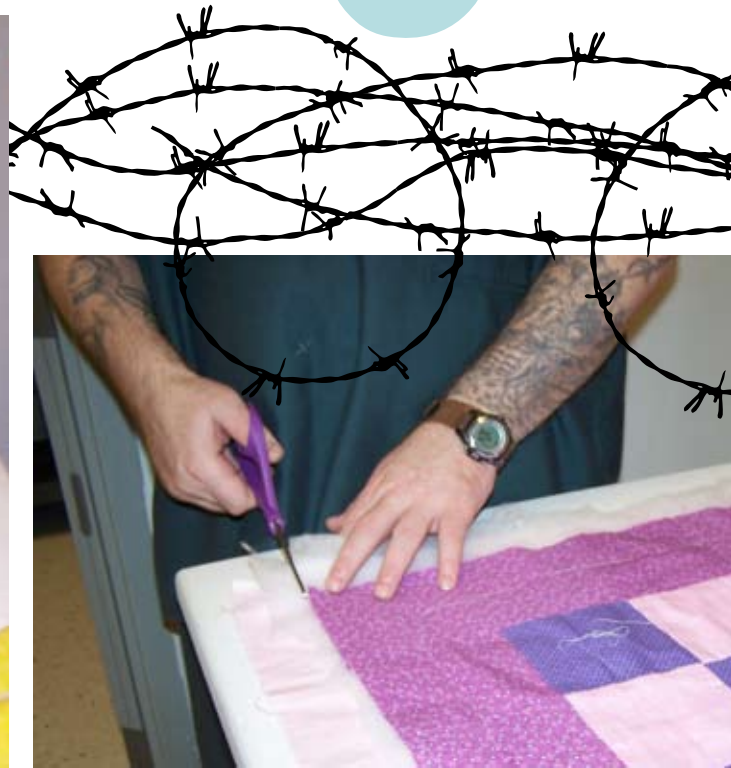


Katherine Mills (above) is director of the quilting program which employs about 200 inmates at the Lea County Correctional Facility in Hobbs, New Mexico. Her "techs" hand piece and hand quilt about 1,000 quilts a year, all of which are donated to charity.





A staff of production managers in the quilting program help Mills cut fabric and assemble kits for LCCF quilt techs.



Production managers also machine stitch the first step of all bindings, but all other work is done by hand.





Being a quilt tech is a sought-after job at LCCF. Inmates can earn up to 50 cents per hour (production managers earn slightly more), and unlike other prison jobs, they have the option of working through lock-downs because their work can be done in their housing units.



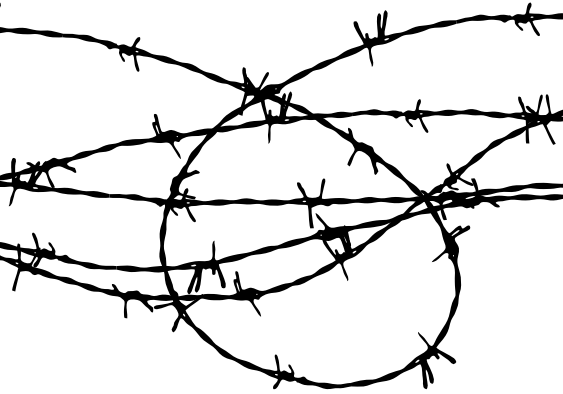


Mills' quilt techs produce a variety of patterns, including Carpenter's Wheel and Card Trick, but they've also created a few original variations.

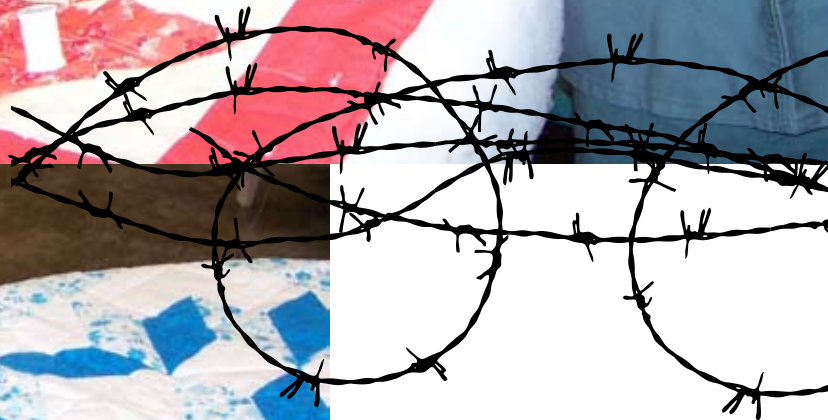


Quilt techs produce
a 40"-square quilt
about every 6 weeks.



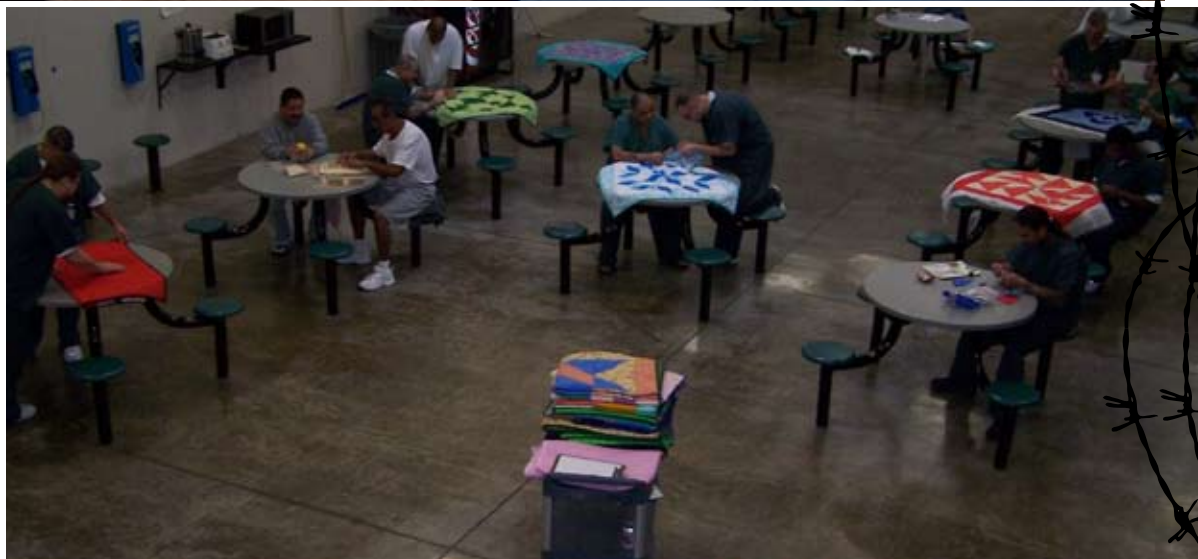


Competition is high between techs to produce the best quilts, says Mills. Their work has been hung several times in a Hobbs area quilt show.





The LCCF quilting program brings a touch of color to an otherwise muted environment it, and provides a welcome service for the many organizations that receive its handmade quilts.



Read more in the February/March 2011 issue of *Quilter's Home* magazine.