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# Quiltmaker goes into business for herself



Bonnie Field cuts ties that hold the three pieces of material in her quilt together, working on the kitchen table of her Genoa Township home.  
Photo by GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS



Genoa Township resident Bonnie Field ties threads which bind together three layers of fabric to make one of her quilts.  
Photo by GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

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By Arla McPeck  
Ass't Niche Editor

If you spend much time in Brighton,  
you've probably driven by the sign many

times. It's the stenciled one across from the  
high school on Brighton Road that says,  
"Hand-made quilts for sale."  
After ten years of making tied quilts for



her family's use and to give as gifts, Bonnie Field of Brighton decided to go into business selling them. Her home-based business has hand-made quilts for any occasion and all ages. Her inventory includes hunting- and fishing-themed quilts, quilts for children, U of M or MSU quilts, floral quilts, holiday quilts and more. A sunny enclosed porch serves as her showroom.

Field learned how to make tied quilts from her friend, Mary Towles of Pinckney. Field would go to Towles' house and they would work on them together.

"She says 'I've created a monster,'" Field said with a laugh.

Before she began making tied quilts, Field made appliqué quilts. However, she said those are too time-consuming to be practical for her business. As it is, she spends about ten hours on each full-sized quilt.

"The only thing that is done by machine is sewing on the border," Field said. "Everything else is done by hand, including the marking, the tying and the hemming."

Field makes her quilts using fabrics that are fun and unusual.

"I look for something that's unique, that you don't normally see other places," she said. "It has to be something that catches my eye. Not very many do. It has to make me say, 'This will make a nice quilt.' For example, I had one that was nothing but high-top tennis shoes. I try to find fun stuff that's unique. I mostly find fabric at shops around Brighton; I don't find many online."

She has a few pieces of advice for people contemplating starting a home-based business.

Field said she relies upon her Web page, Facebook, YouTube and Etsy, in addition to traffic brought in by her sign and word-of-mouth advertising.

"Friends and family are a great way to advertise," she said.

Also, Field advised putting some thought into what makes your product unique and appealing, and using that in your marketing.

"Don't just say, 'I have a chess set,'" Field said. "Say 'I have a hand-crafted chess set.'"

Finally, Field said to give your business time to establish itself.

"Don't expect to be a booming business overnight," she said. "It takes time to build a business."

She said she doesn't have a lot of trouble separating work and leisure even though she works from home. She said she only sells the quilts on Fridays and Saturdays, so "during the week is the time I have to do whatever else."

"I also babysit my two granddaughters, so I plan for days of 'Today I'm doing this with the quilts, and today I'm doing that,'" Field said. "I fit it in with whatever else I'm doing, so it doesn't feel overwhelming."

Field keeps an inventory of about 80 finished quilts in two sizes. The larger size fits twin or double beds. The smaller size works as a lap quilt for adults and is also suitable for babies and toddlers. Prices are



On any given Friday and Saturday, Bonnie Field opens up her Genoa Township home to those interested in purchasing her homemade quilts.

Photo by GILLIS BENEDICT/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

\$80 and \$160. She also makes custom quilts.

To view some of Field's quilts or contact her, visit her website at [www.quiltsbybonnie.net](http://www.quiltsbybonnie.net)

or look for her sign on Fridays and Saturdays.

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