

In his spare time, this mechanic, farmer and agronomist can make a nifty quilt

By John Koning

Here's some trivia for you. What do you call a male seamstress?

The answer is a tailor or a sartor. My answer is Ed Foland.

While Ed might not be a tailor - a person who fits clothing for people - he is a sartor.

The word sartor comes from the Latin word meaning "to patch" and Ed has been doing a lot of patching lately.

If you look at Ed's hands, you will notice they are not delicate hands. They are mechanic's hands, thick and strong. They are hands that heave 100 pound tractor weights and wrestle impact wrenches.

Surprisingly, they are also quilting hands.

Ed is a farm boy born and raised on 240 acres of rural Missouri. His family grew crops for sale and consumption, had a cow for milk and butter, chickens for eggs, and a few head of beef cattle to get them through the long Missouri winters.

As Ed grew, he developed an interest in anything mechanical and he was exposed to the nuts and bolts of farm life from early on.

He loved to dismantle anything that would come apart, and, most times, would manage to get them back together, with the notable exception of a pocket watch, which he inadvertently turned the inner spring into a slinky toy.

Cameras and photography were, and still are, a hobby for Ed. He bought his first camera while he was still in high school and his collection of antique cameras grew to between 40 and 50. He even lugged his camera to Vietnam while he served his country, perhaps as a way to bring some sanity to a hostile environment.

Afterward, it made sense that the Missouri farm boy, who grew into an agricultural chemical scientist, would eventually begin collecting large mechanical workhorses as he traveled from farm to farm.



Ed Foland with a quilt he made from old denim shirts.

(Photo by Dolly Foland)

If a farmer mentioned that he was selling his old tractor, Ed was there to take it off his hands. He would promptly dismantle it, repair it and give it a second life.

But, how in the world does an agronomist make the leap from restoring tractors to quilting?

The answer is, "gradually."

Ed's mother, Martha Fay, was a quilter, who was featured in Newsweek magazine.

When she passed away, Ed

and his wife, Dolly, finished several of her quilts and gave them to Martha's grandchildren.

Ed officially took up the mantle of sartor when he decided to sew a new liner to replace the worn out original in his beloved leather jacket.

With Ed's history and penchant for making "stuff," it was a natural step to begin quilting with denim, also known as redneck satin.

If you think he made the leap

on his own, think again. Ed has a highly qualified coach in his corner. Dolly is an accomplished seamstress, with hundreds of county fair ribbons awarded to her for the clothing she hand makes for her grandchildren.

Ed's quilt was finished and dated Feb. 2, 2012, to commemorate his favorite holiday - Groundhog Day.

Why, you ask?

Ed only knows!