

Region 1 – Gigi Thorsen

Why are you uniquely qualified to represent Region 1?

I have a commitment to bettering my community in general and my quilting community specifically, and putting in the work myself. A long-time resident of Region 1 and an MQG member since 2016, I have years of volunteer and professional experiences that go hand-in-hand with what this board position would entail.

How would you solicit input on issues from Region 1?

I'm a communicator at heart (and by education)! I am a writer, too. I've been the newsletter writer for the Salt Lake MQG for two years and enjoy getting the word out. I'd love to use those skills to communicate with/solicit input from Region 1 via email, Zoom, anything that's most effective and welcome.

What is your history of service?

- Have held a board position with the Salt Lake MQG for three years; this year I asked to have a new position created for Membership, and we now have the largest active membership since 2018, with our monthly meeting attendance doubling in size.
- QuiltCon volunteer
- 2023 Vendor Chair for the Utah Quilt Guild annual Quilt Fest
- Ambassador at the SLC airport (entails working the Info Booth).
- Pre-pandemic: volunteer usher for the Salt Lake County Arts – ushering at events at large theatre/arts/symphony venues in Salt Lake City.
- Many years volunteering with a local childhood cancer support group (Candlelighters) for families whose children were treated at our local large children's hospital. I was group president for two years and implemented programs and paid staff positions still in place today.

Describe your leadership style.

My leadership style is a combination of coaching and democratic. Fostering a supportive and empowered culture is important to me. I'm patient, I appreciate the work volunteers perform, and I love to motivate and encourage.

What other unique skills and/or perspective do you feel you would bring to the MQG board?

I've worked with many people over the years -- both volunteering and professionally -- and have an innate ability to get along with different personalities. I'm good with conflict and difficult discussions. I proofread. I can edit websites. I'm the person who won't say "I don't know how." I'm the person who will say "*I'll figure it out.*"

I'm the 2023 Vendor Chair for the Utah Quilt Guild annual Quilt Fest (in October). I've increased the number of vendor booths from 14 in 2022 to 35 in 2023, so far. I think outside the box, utilize my initiative, communication skills, and motivation to build

relationships and this is creating what's going to be a fabulous Vendor Mall. I'm confident these talents and skills can well be applied to the role as Region 1 representative.

How would you de-escalate a public situation?

1. Assess the situation and where I might be most helpful
2. Listen
3. Validate
4. Speak calmly and think logically
5. Find the simplest de-escalation path

How would you handle conflict resolution?

1. Listen to all sides
2. Validate all sides
3. Offer a solution or ask that I have time to come up with a solution
4. Invite suggestions from all toward a solution
5. Be open to negotiating compromise

How would you embrace diversity and encourage inclusivity in Region 1?

I would accomplish this partly by my voice and POV: literally, in writing, and by example. I would love to see local groups promote diverse speakers and guests, and partner with local organizations and/or educate local groups. I feel inclusivity can be a challenge in the quilting world due to its cost; finding a path to including those who wouldn't normally have the chance to make a quilt would be fabulous.

What do you love about modern quilting?

It's dynamic! Colorful! Varied! Flexible! It's becoming art as well as function!

What color do you have the least of in your stash?

Purple. I like purple, but somehow it's the least!

Which quilting book, blog, or magazine has been influential in your quilting journey and why?

The 100 Modern Quilt Blocks book by Tula Pink. When I was first curious about quilting, I signed up to do the Instagram 100 Blocks/100 Days challenge to learn and develop skills – in 2016. Never looked back!

What do you think are the next three trends in modern quilting?

- Growing inclusion of non-traditional quilting fabrics
- Increased focus on sustainability
- Expanding "modern traditionalism" featured at QuiltCon 2023, as younger people join the quilting fun!