

# The Country Register™

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## Memory Quilts

The old phrase "Every Cloud has a Silver Lining" holds true in the best possible way with one of our province's most optimistic, positive people: Rita Crawford, owner of Kootenay Custom Quilting.

Rita discovered her "silver lining" a few years ago during a devastating, tragic time. While out on a family bike ride, her fiancé's young son, just two weeks shy of his 8th birthday, was accidentally struck and killed by a dump truck.

Sewing had always been a therapeutic outlet for Rita; countless hours at her sewing machine now helped her cope with her grief. The idea of a memory quilt came about as a possible way for Rita to help her fiancé honour his child. Friends and family members, moved by the exquisite, lovingly crafted quilt that framed treasured photographic prints of the young lad, made requests for their own. Rita willingly obliged and before long, quilts commemorating pets and loved ones, as well as celebrations of births, weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations, held places of honour in homes throughout Canada. Rita had become a master memory quilt maker and Kootenay Custom Quilting was born just over a year ago.

Rita has grown her business of photo quilts, pillows, and quilt services to genuine accolades from customers and business associations alike. She has been nominated by Kootenay Business Magazine as Young Entrepreneur of the Year, and by Castlegar and Districts Chamber of Commerce for New Business of the Year and their Customer Service Excellence Award - recognition of Rita's commitment to her customers. Her Kootenay Custom Quilting website, [www.kcquilting.com](http://www.kcquilting.com), offers a customer feedback page - and their enthusiastic appreciation is abundantly clear. Notes Rita, "Since opening my business a year ago, I have increased my website from 4 to 10 pages. I constantly add to and change it - just check the date of the last update on my homepage - and I invite everyone to visit often!"

Some of the updates for Kootenay Custom Quilting include quilting services and the on-line sale of quilted items created by Rita. "I am happy to quilt a customer's pieced quilt top for them," she explains, "sometimes customers just don't have the time, interest, or the confidence, to finish their work, but I would love to do it!"

This master memory quilt maker also continues to add happy memories of her own: Rita and her beloved fiancé Kris Sheloff will celebrate their commitment to each other with a wedding this June and, to add to their joy, a baby in November. "This is a very, very happy and exciting moment in our lives!" smiles Rita, "We feel very blessed!"

You can reach Rita by phone, (250) 365-2006 or email, at [quiltingqueen@shaw.ca](mailto:quiltingqueen@shaw.ca). By Karen Emmond

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