 Quilting may be a casual hobby for some people, but recently Barbara Holtzman of Holyoke took her hobby to the next level. She wrote the step-by-step instruction book entitled “Quilts in My Cubicle.”

 The book is designed for people who love to quilt, but who may not have a lot of time to devote to a project. It features small, square quilts no larger than 14 inches wide that can be made in six to 12 hours.

 Holtzman notes the quilts are the perfect size to hang in a cubicle, but they can also be used for fun gifts or multiple blocks can be pieced together to make full-sized quilts. She explored the idea of making small quilts because women with limited free time can handle a small project and still use quilting as a creative outlet in their lives.

 There are 12 projects, a different quilt for each month of the year. For example, “Crazy Love” is February’s quilt, and “Butterflies Are Free To Fly” is featured in May.

 The book includes directions for basic techniques such as paper piecing, freezer-paper piecing and mitered corners. Project sections for each of the 12 quilts include a picture of the quilt, cutting and sewing directions, a full-size pattern that can be copied or traced and tips for extra help.

 As a child, Holtzman and her sisters learned how to sew from their mother. She began quilting regularly in 2000. While she sometimes uses patterns for her quilts, she also likes to get creative with quilting. Holtzman kept an idea book for several years, compiling her quilting designs. Finally she said, “Well, maybe I can make a book out of this.”

 She submitted her book idea through the American Quilting Society’s website. To her surprise, they accepted her idea. The organization paid for all the publishing costs; now Holtzman just needed to write the book.

 She gave herself a timeline with a January 2008 deadline, just five months to complete the writing aspect of the book. The quilts themselves needed to be finished by March 2008 for photographs for the book.

 Holtzman said the process went smoothly and the American Quilting Society was very good to her, making great suggestions. She worked with her editor, Andi Milam Reynolds, mainly through emails.

 With more ideas brewing in her head, Holtzman said there might be more book ideas in the future, and she would like to have more involvement in the publishing process next time.

 The 12 projects in the book are all original ideas or the tweaking of a traditional pattern. Holtzman enjoys using quilting as a creative outlet and likes to put her own personal touch on a quilt. In advice for quilters, she said, “Look for your own style.” She has discovered that quilters develop their own style, even if they don’t know it, through the types of colors and patterns they choose.

 In her book, Holtzman encourages quilters to get creative. While the quilts are simple enough for beginners, more advanced quilters are challenged to customize each quilt to their own style. Each project has a “Make It Your Own” section with tips for making the quilts unique.

 These quilting ideas are not Holtzman’s first to be published. In contests sponsored by the American Quilting Society, Holtzman’s quilts have been featured in books three times as

recognition for being a finalist in the competitions. Holtzman loves how it allows her to be competitive, and the new theme each year challenges her to come up with new ideas.