

“Bear in Mind” May 2010

From the Editor:

With the blossoming of spring, comes the pollen. The experts say this is one of the worst years for pollen, partly due to the harsh cold winter, and partly to the lack of rain. If you suffer from pollen allergies, you may have chosen to stay indoors the past couple of weeks and sew.

This issue has a couple of great studies to entice you to spring sewing. Vaune Pierce has shared her ‘oh so sweet’ baby daygown featuring pintucks. Bear Threads Voile Stripe is the perfect fabric for this study in pintucks made easy. Cheryl Davidson of *Heirloom Originals @ A Frayed Knot* has shared her secrets for the ‘perfect placket’, something we have all fussed over at one time or another. Refer to last months’ newsletter for the beginning of Cheryl’s dress instructions.

Also in this issue is the conclusion of my series on St. Gallen and Its’ Embroideries.

When the pollen has finished and you tear yourself away from needle and thread for some spring cleaning, think on these quotes:

“I keep my end tables full of needlework and quilting so I don’t have to dust them.” Author Unknown

“Asking a seamstress to mend is like asking Michelangelo to paint your garage.” Author Unknown

If you have an idea or technique you would like to share, just let us know. We would love to have your participation.

Sheila Nicol

Bear Threads, Ltd.

St. Gallen and Its’ Embroidery Today

Although embroidery no longer has the meaning for the region as at the beginning of the last century, it is still an economic factor. Specialist embroidery machine constructing companies such as Benninger AG are among the larger employers in the region. All the big fashion houses in Europe work with embroidery from St. Gallen.

Today St. Gallen is as diversified as its roots. St. Gallen’s population is nearly 75,000, of which about one third are foreign nationals. Of the foreign population, they come from Germany, Italy, ex-Yugoslavian countries, Austria and Turkey. There are four Swiss national languages:

German, Italian, French and Romansh. (This is the only place known, where there is a language spoken that comes directly from Latin.)

In and around St. Gallen there are 28 sites that are listed as Swiss heritage sites of national significance. There are also six museums. For those especially interested in fabrics and embroidery, the Museum of Arts and Trades is a must. It contains Coptic needlework from the early Middle Ages, Italian lace from the Renaissance, embroidered church robes, archaic looms, antique sewing machines and many other treasures. There is also a vast collection of literature on the textile industry.



In the city of St. Gallen you will not want to miss the Altstadt (Old Town). There you will find the great Cathedral, not only Switzerland's best example of Baroque architecture, but one of the finest on the continent. Its uniqueness was not realized until it was restored in 1961-1966, when the original colors were found to be quite unusual, bright and gay. Next door is the Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen (the Abbey Library), attached to the Benedictine monastery. The main room is the most perfect Rococco interior in Switzerland. You must put on thick felt slippers over your shoes as the floor is a precious mosaic of pinewood inlaid with cherry. The slender pillars are inlaid with cypress roots and support the graceful balcony that hangs, like a garland, along the four walls. The bookcases cover the walls from floor to ceiling and their doors have gilt trellises instead of glass! The librarian took us to one of the showcases, rolled away the velvet curtain, and there lay ivory-carved, jewel-encrusted gospels, with letters illuminated with powdered gold and lapis lazuli!! Unbelievable!!!

If you are planning a visit to Eastern Switzerland, you will find a charming hotel in the town of Abtwil, just west of St. Gallen. It is called the Santisblick Hotel, because its view of Santis Mountain is breathtaking. Spend the afternoon relaxing on your balcony, listening to the alpine bells of the grazing dairy cows and viewing Santis Peak across the valley. Their superb restaurant enhances the reputation of the Swiss chefs, and you will surely find bratwurst, geschneitztes (creamed pieces of veal) and rosti (fine-cut and oven roasted potatoes) on the menu.

For a provincial town, St. Gall has a remarkable number of night spots, but the night life ends around 2AM....The embroidery capital likes to start business early in the morning!

Finally, don't be disappointed if your shopping excursion does not yield the lovely trims we see here in the United States. Remember that their work is 95% exported.

Sheila Nicol

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Mary Ann Day Gown

by Vaune Pierce

I made this dress from Bear Threads pink on pink Voile Stripe. The center of the bodice has an oval insert of pink Swiss Voile that is pinstitched and has a bullion rose embroidered in the center. Lace edge (L-39) is gathered around the bias on the neck and sleeve. Lace edge (L-139) is rolled and whipped on the bottom edge of the dress.



Altering pattern:

Measure the width of the light strip (the light stripe will 'disappear' into the whipped tucks). In Bear Threads' pink on pink Voile Stripe, the light stripe is just over 1/16 of an inch wide.

On the pattern piece draw a line across the bodice, about 3 or 4 inches down from the neckline. (This is a reference line to help align the pattern after it has been cut apart). At the center shoulder point, draw a parallel line to Center Front and cut the pattern piece on the line from shoulder to hem.

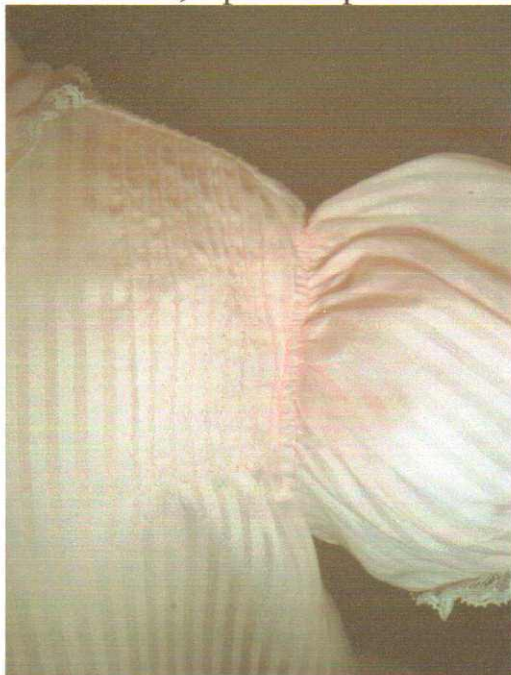
On a separate piece of pattern paper, draw 2 parallel lines that are 3/4 inch apart.

Pin the 2 halves of the slashed pattern piece to the pattern paper, one on each line. Make sure the 2 halves are even with the reference line. Using a French curve, redraw the hem. Using a ruler, redraw the shoulder.

About an inch from the neck, mark the first tuck line. Measure down from the top of the shoulder 3 and 1/2 inches. This is the bottom of the whipped tuck (all of the tucks will come down to this level). Fold a light pink strip together and whip over the edge, making a whipped tuck.

Stitch 8 more, moving toward the arm. Repeat with the other side of the bodice.

For the back, repeat the process of enlarging the back.





Making the dress:

When tracing the back on the fabric, check the front to see where the tucks line up on the bodice.

Lay the back pattern piece on the fabric so that the tucks on the front will match up with the tucks on the back.

Once the whipped tucks are sewn, construct the dress. Whip gathered lace to the bias binding on the neckline and the sleeves. Roll and whip the wider lace edging on the bottom of the dress.



Vaune Pierce - 2010

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Making a Skirt Placket the Easy Way

By Cheryl R. Davidson

Heirloom Originals At A Frayed Knot



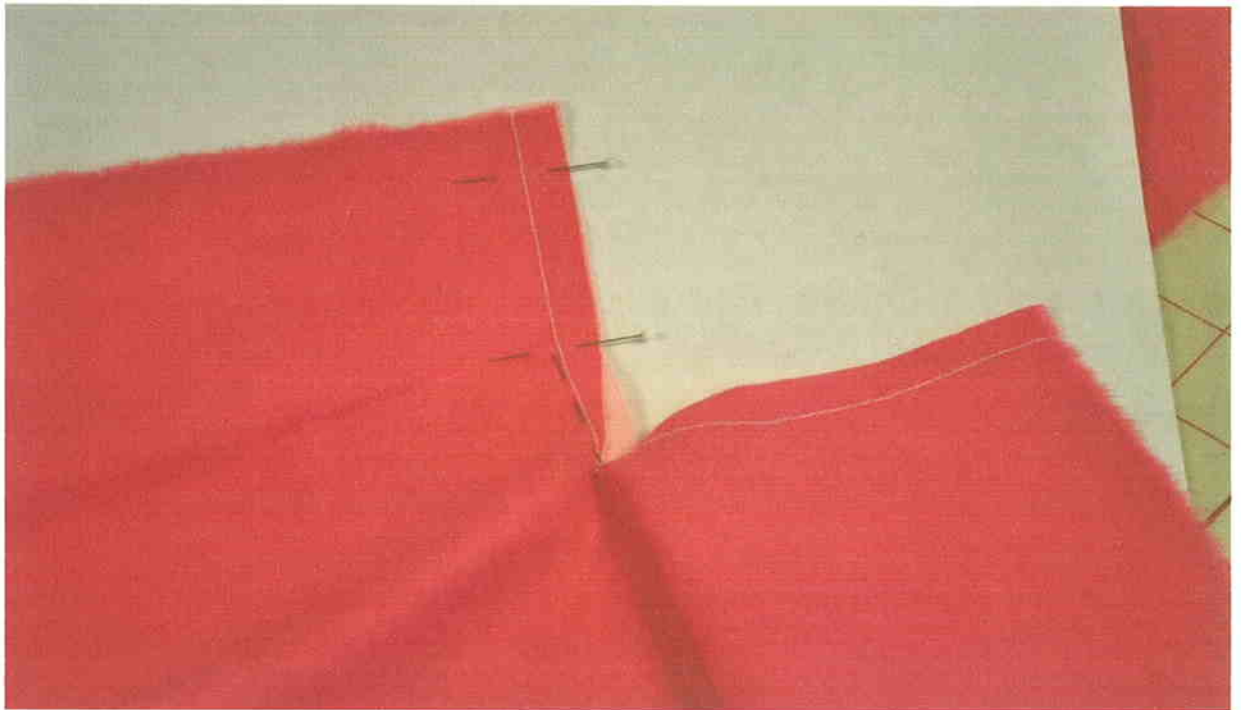
Draw placket down C.B. Stitch down the drawn line to dot, pivot and stitch back to top edge of fabric.



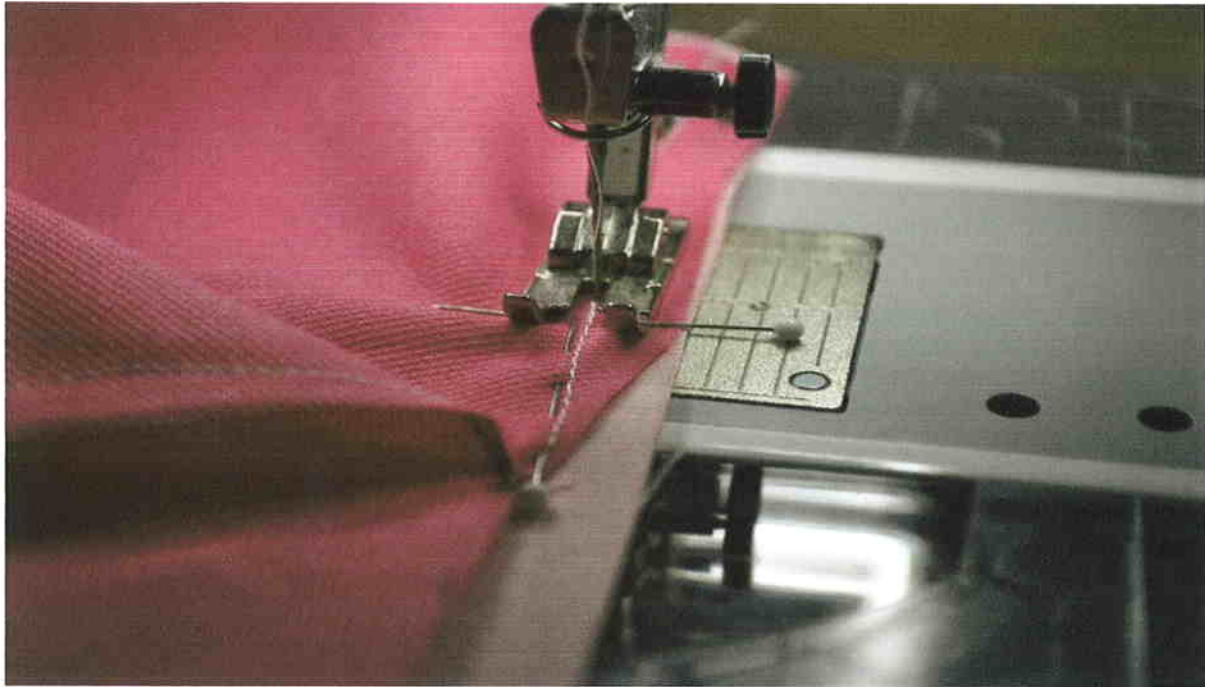
Cut down the center line to, but not through the dot



Cut a fabric strip 1 ½ in wide x twice the placket opening.



Place the right side of the fabric strip to the right side of the skirt placket fabric, and pin. Starting at the top, have edges even. At the dot point, pull the skirt fabric 3/8 in. away from the placket edge. Pin down to the dot. Have the fabric strip against the sewing machine to begin sewing.



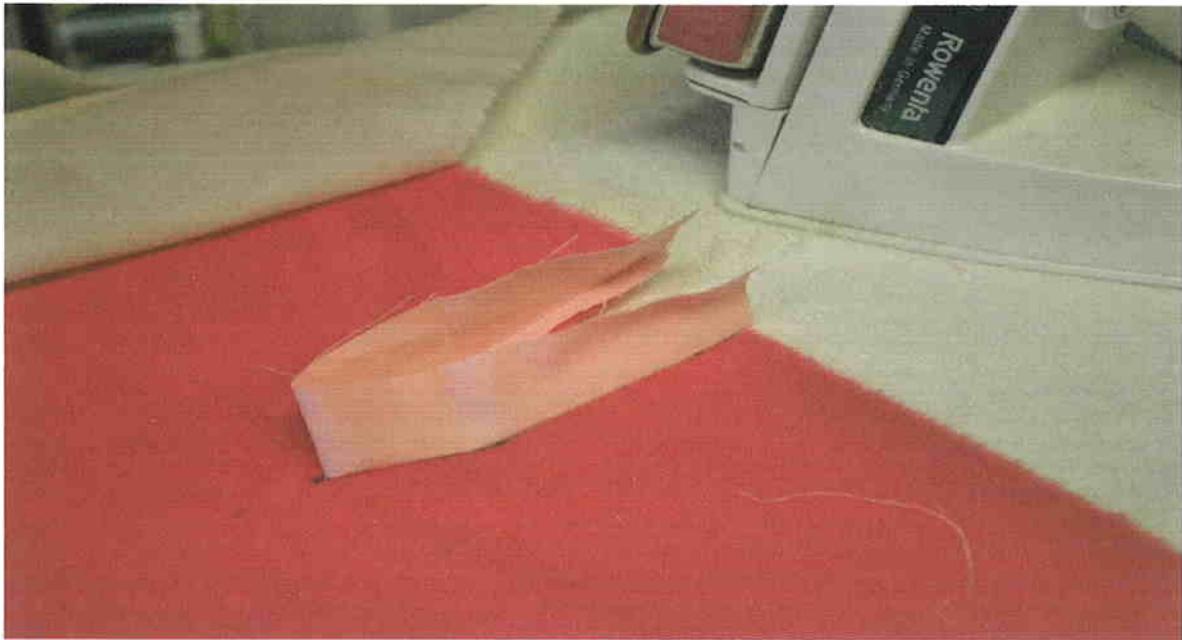
Use the first sewing line as your stitching guide.



Stitch to the dot, leaving the needle in the fabric. Pull the skirt fabric over and back to have the raw edges of the placket strip and the skirt even. First pin, and then stitch up the other side to the top edge of the placket.



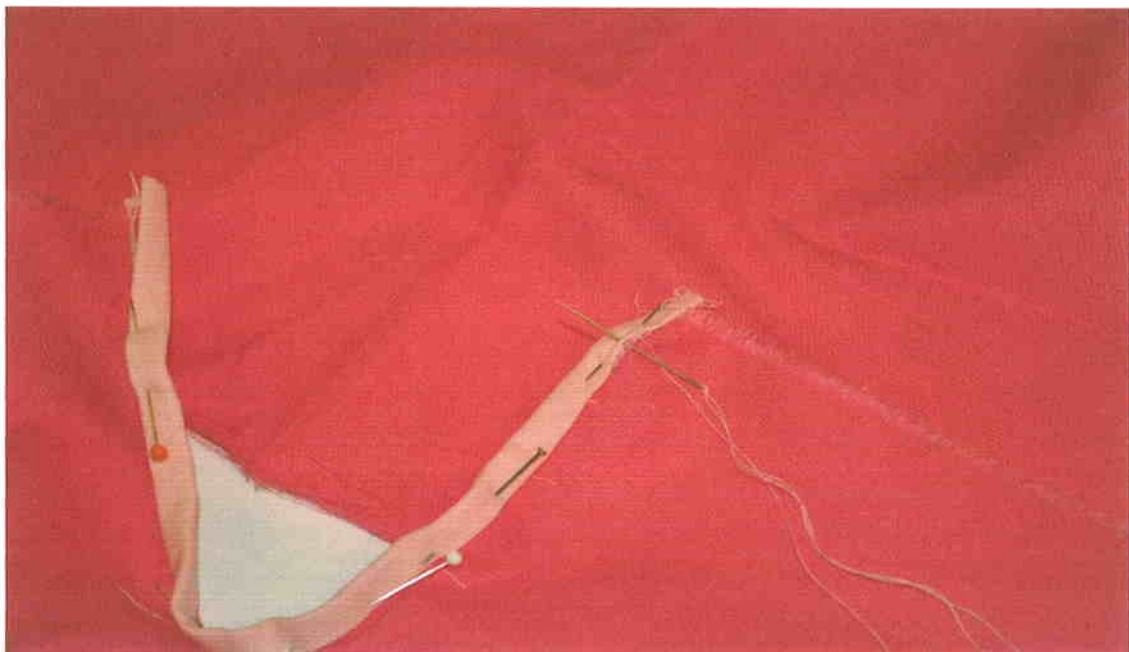
Trim half the seam allowance bulk away.



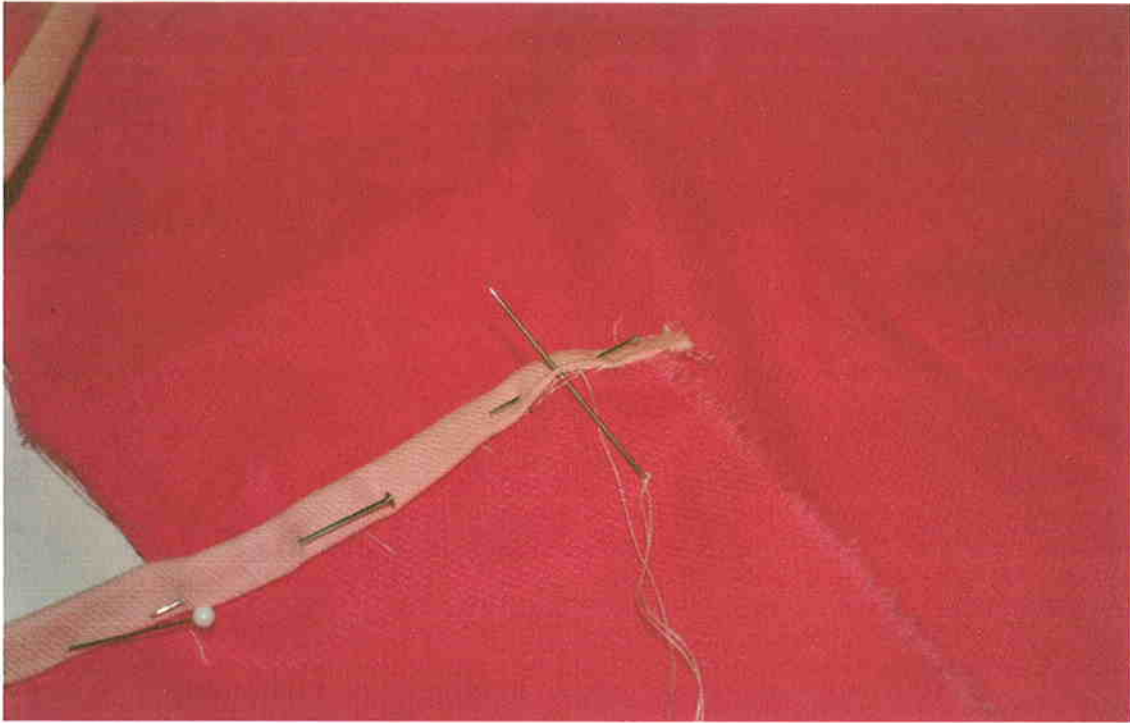
Press the seam allowance away from the skirt.



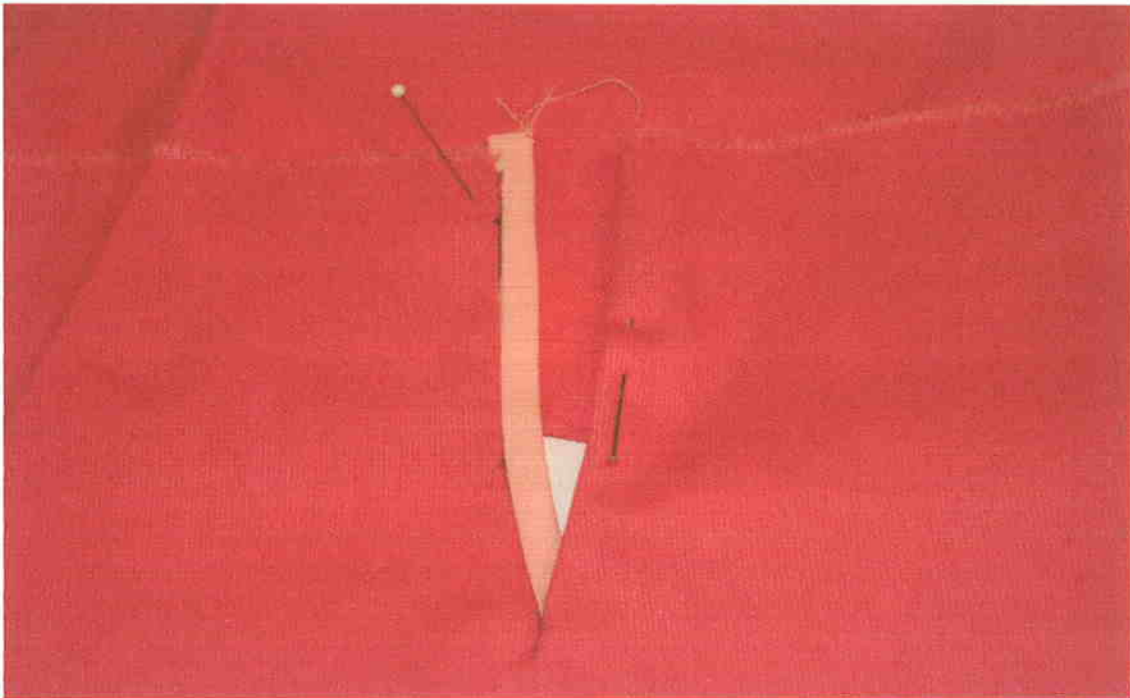
Press the seam edge of the fabric strip back toward the seam. Bring the fold over to the stitching line of the placket and pin the fold to the stitching line.



Sew the fabric strip to the skirt placket. Take the needle under the thread of the stitching line, and then take a small bit of the fabric along the fold.



Make a small stitch.



Turn the right side of the fabric strip to the wrong side.

Press.