

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 2 – Issue 9 September

## From the Editor:

Surely, the heat will soon subside and I will not have to whine next month of the temperatures. Karen Faylor reminded me that she is NEVER over 75-78 degrees! Don't cha just hate that???

As you read this, college football season will have begun. It is always an exciting time of the year, for it also ushers in the changing of the leaves and the hint of the holidays to come. Speaking of leaves, if you are very quick you can snatch up some of the adorable miniature leaf printed Swiss fabric we have for fall. Enquire QUICKLY! We also have a sweet small floral in red, jade, black and navy. There is a small plaid and a great red/white stripe. And for Alabama fans, that means our black and white hounds-tooth check!

Thank you Trudy, for sharing this month your technique for sewing buttons without a knot. Our Heirloom garments that are meant to be enjoyed for future generations should have the best couture care and construction we can provide. This is a great technique.

I am often asked questions about mother-of-pearl buttons. Alas, I decided to delve into that so that you might have a better understanding of mother-of-pearl and pearls. We often hear these days the quote “just too much information”, so I have condensed the explanation and divided it into 2 parts. I hope you find it informative.

Finally, most of you know that Jim and I collect bears...duh!! Beginning with this issue I will be introducing you to some of our ‘children’, with a corner “*ALL IN THE FAMILY*”. We hope their travels and antics will bring a smile to your face.

Keep Stitching, Sheila

## ‘ALL IN THE FAMILY’



Hi! My name is ‘Miss Pearl’ and I was a gift to Mom nearly 25 years ago. She had gone to Louisville, Ky. to teach Heirloom Sewing for the Embroiderers Guild chapter there. The ladies knew she loved us bears and since I was so fussy in my lace tutu, it seemed the perfect match. A few years ago my Dad and Miss Tami decided that my tutu was a no-no and so I got a new one. The new one is very fine lace from France and is called the ‘gooseneck’ pattern. I don’t know much about geese, but that is what it is called. I spend all my time at the office but at least they talk to me sometimes. Mom said since she was talking about pearls and mother-of-pearl buttons the next couple of months, I could be the first from our family to say Hi. Of course my ‘pearls’ are not real, but dad says I am the pearl of his eye. Look for me among the piles of buttons. Bye-Bye!

## **MOTHER OF PEARL BUTTONS - Part I**

*Are they Pearl Buttons or Mother of Pearl Buttons? To understand Mother-of-Pearl let's begin by learning the definition of a couple of important words.*

**Mollusk, Mollusc** – The group of invertebrate animals having soft, unsegmented bodies usually covered with a hard shell of two or more layers such as snails, mussels, oysters, clams, and abalone.

**Nacre** –A composite material produced by some mollusks as an inner shell layer. Pearls and the inside layer of the pearl oyster and freshwater pearl mussel shells are made of nacre. But the inner layer of the great majority of mollusk shells is porcellaneous, not nacreous.

*Mother-of-pearl is the designation commonly given to the pearly inner layer of some mollusks. This layer, typically relatively thin, occurs in the shells of some but not all mollusks. This is the nacre and is secreted by the epithelial cells of the mantle tissue of various mollusks. The nacre is continuously deposited onto the inner surface of the shell, the iridescent nacreous layer, commonly known as mother-of-pearl. The nacre is what makes up pearls. It is very strong, resilient, and iridescent.*

*Mother of pearl is frequently referred to by the name of the mollusk shell from which it is derived, such as abalone or paua. The designation mother-of-pearl apparently came into English early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century via a translation of the Middle Latin mater perlarum.*

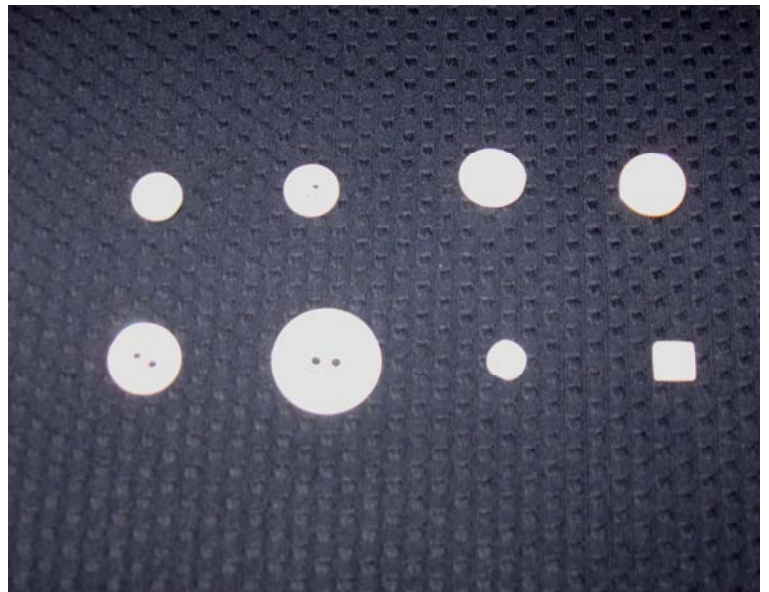
*The nacre or mother-of-pearl is used for jewelry, buttons and widely used to inlay furniture, object's d'art and musical instruments. The outer layers of the shells are removed to get to and then 'harvest' the nacreous mother-of-pearl. Once recovered, the mother-of-pearl is either used as such – which is true of most of that from paua shells – or, in the case of some of the less colorful shells, dyed. Mother-of-pearl is rather easily dyed, typically only tinting so the iridescence is not masked.*

*After harvesting, the nacre or mother-of-pearl layer, when used for buttons, will have 'blanks' cut from it. These are the buttons we see today after they have been further processed and polished. Pearl buttons are cooler than plastic, and not just because they bring a tiny*

*gleam to the dresses and shirts onto which they are stitched. If you put your pearl button up to your cheek and then do the same with a plastic one, you will notice an actual difference in temperature.*

*Next month more about Pearls in Part 2*

*Sheila T. Nicol*

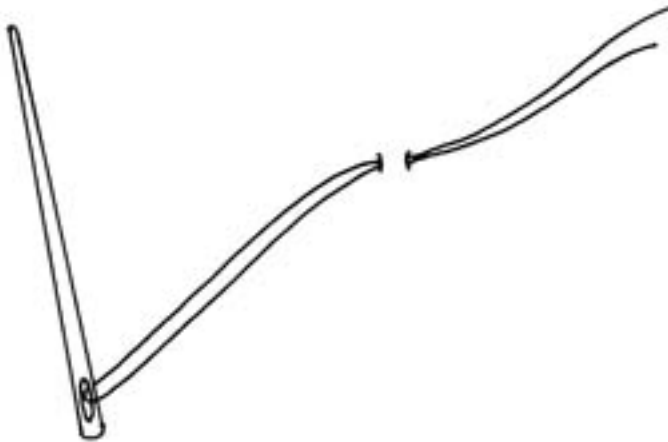


## No-Knot Buttons by Trudy Horne

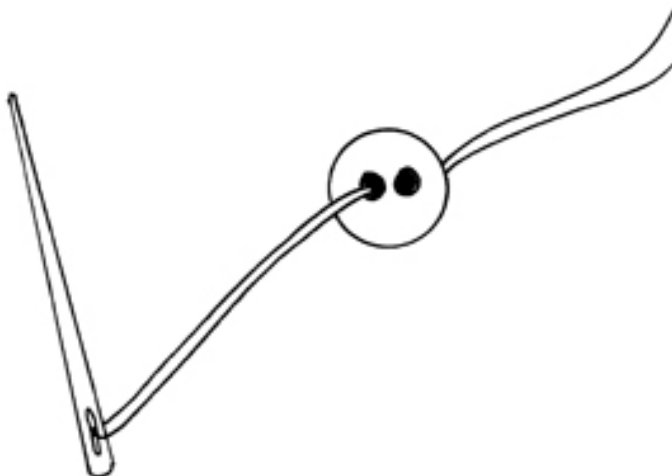
This method for sewing on a button is fast, secure and attractive, leaving no knot on the underside of the fabric. Although a couture detail that complements the materials and special treatments found in fine children's wear, this technique it is not relegated to heirloom clothing alone, and can be used whenever sewing a button.

### Instructions

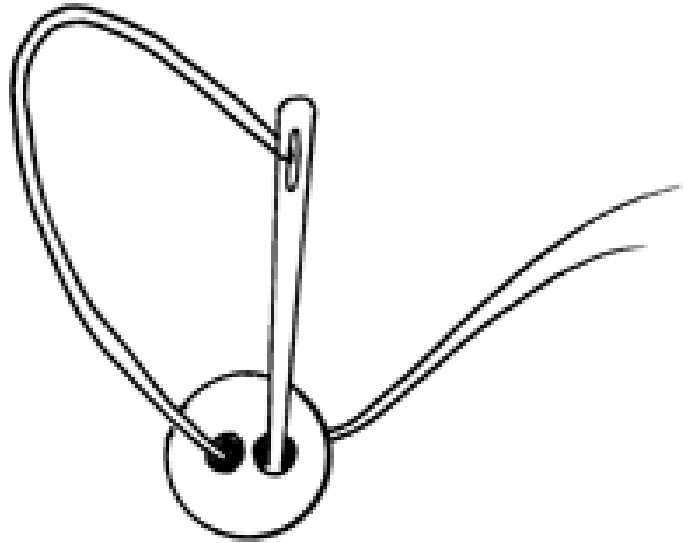
Mark button placement on the right side of the fabric. Thread one strand of thread or floss and double over. Pick up a small amount of fabric at the mark, leaving a 2 ½" tail. ILLUS. 1. If desired, another small stitch can be taken to secure the thread.



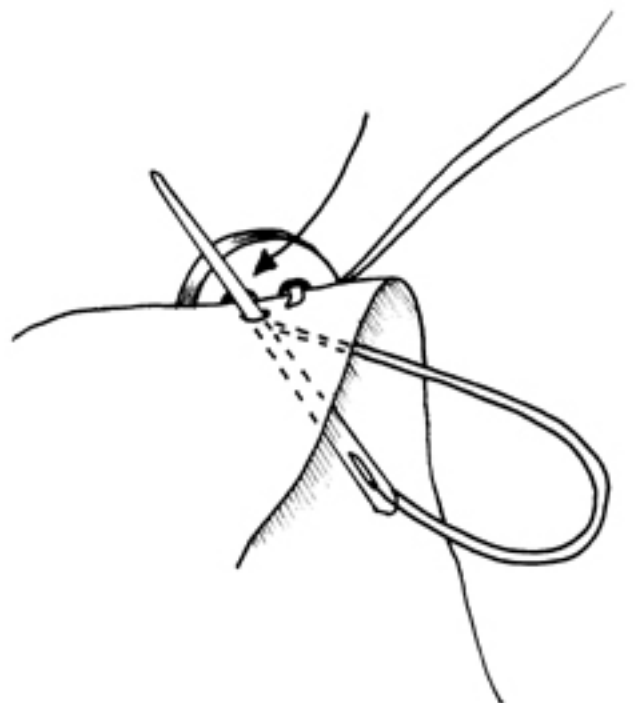
Slide button over needle and thread. ILLUS. 2.



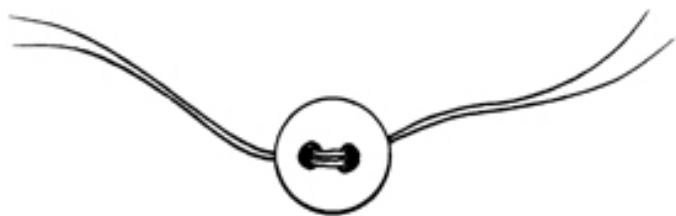
Sink needle in other buttonhole. ILLUS. 3. Come up from the wrong side in the first hole and go down again in second hole. Repeat as many times as desired. If using a four-hole button, take the same number of stitches in the other two holes. End with needle going down to the wrong side



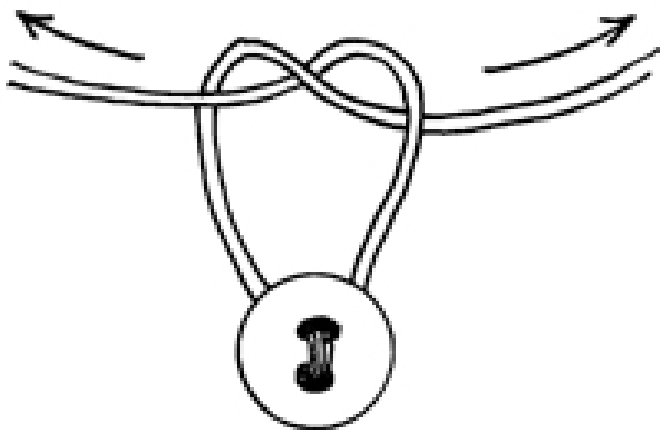
Come up from the wrong side under the button, close to the point where the tail thread emerges from fabric. Arrow indicates underside of button. ILLUS. 4.



Clip working thread to 2 ½". There are now two tail threads. ILLUS. 5.



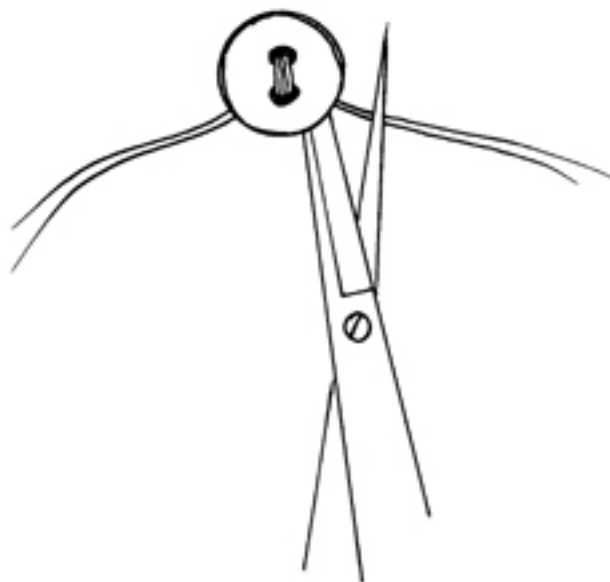
Tie a knot on one side of button, pulling ends tightly in the direction of the arrows, so that the knot fits snugly under the button. ILLUS. 6.



Bring thread tails down to the opposite side of the button and tie another knot in the same manner as first knot. ILLUS. 7.



Carefully clip thread ends underneath button, close enough so they don't show. ILLUS. 8.



Editor's Note: Trudy Horne was a longtime columnist for Creative Needle Magazine and is the owner of Collars, Etc. Pattern Company. See more of Trudy's designs, instruction and inspiration at [www.collarsetc.com](http://www.collarsetc.com)

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