

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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Letter from the Editor:



Alas fall is in the air. Schedules are again filled with car pools, lessons, football games and tailgate picnics. As you pack away beachwear and pull out sweaters, think about pulling out a needlework project that you tossed aside last winter or spring. You would be surprised at how much can be accomplished in 10 minutes waiting for the children at school, another 15 minutes at the Dr. office, etc. I challenge you to this, and let me know what you finish by the end of the year. I have finished two pieces of needlepoint this year just stitching in the car!

If you missed Birmingham market, you missed seeing our new fabrics. They are photographed elsewhere in the newsletter. The prints are selling fast so call soon. The Baby Dimity is now available in pale pink and pale blue. Everyone loves this sweet Swiss cotton.

My quote for October: *"As Ye Sew, So Shall Ye Rip"*
Author Unknown

However when I was teaching, I preferred to give my

students a more positive approach to the inevitable: "We Don't Rip, We Simply Reverse Stitch" Sheila Nicol

Keep Stitching, Sheila



New Fabrics – Mini Houndstooth and Black Leaf Print are a classic combination for Fall or Holiday sewing. Add a Guipure Collar to dress things up. Quantities are limited; call now before these new fabrics are gone.

MOTHER OF PEARL BUTTONS

Part 2

Pearls are harvested from the Western Cape region of South Africa, throughout the South Pacific, Asia, the Philippines and Australia. Many are not aware that during the first half of the 20th century, mussels dug from tributaries of the Mississippi –the Fox, Illinois and Ohio rivers – were the basis of a mother-of-pearl industry that was centered near the Mississippi River along the Illinois-Iowa border. These clams provided the raw material. Blanks were cut in several towns within the region, and most of the marketed buttons were finished in Muscatine, Iowa.

Historical photographs provide insight into a town in which one half of the work force, including many children, contributed to the button industry. Men and women worked along the banks of the rivers in camps heating the water used to open the shells. Hundreds of men worked in cutting shops cutting blanks – the basic shape of the button – from the inner surface of the shells. Others operated machinery that carved designs on the blanks and drilled holes. Leftover shells were used for street surfacing, fertilizer, stucco and gravel for fishbowls!

Muscatine was once known as the '**Pearl Button Capital of the World**', and Ronald Regan chose the Pearl Button Queen one year. The industry apparently prospered until the late 1940's when plastic buttons and zippers took over the market.

In last month's article, I mentioned that the designation mother-of-pearl came into English early in the 16th century, via a translation of the Middle Latin mater perlarum. It is also interesting to note that the English word pearl originated (via French perle) from the Latin word perla. The English name Margaret originated from the Greek word for pearl, Mapyapitapi pronounced mar-gar-ee-tace.

Pearl – By Webster a pearl is defined as a smooth, rounded nacreous body formed around an irritant, usually produced by oysters and valued as a gem.

The key word here is 'irritant'. Here is the difference: A pearl is a hard object produced within the soft tissue

(specifically the mantle) of a living shelled mollusk. Let's say oyster. Just like the shell of a mollusk, (remember this is where the 'mother-of-pearl' comes from), a pearl is made up of calcium carbonate in minute crystalline form, which has been deposited in concentric layers. Pearls are formed inside the shell of certain mollusks as a defense mechanism to a potentially threatening irritant such as a parasite inside its shell, or an attack from outside, injuring the mantle tissue. . The mollusk creates a pearl sac to seal off the irritation, and this is where the deposits of calcium carbonate begin layering to form the pearl.

Manmade pearls, or cultured pearls, occur when humans provide the irritant or intervention, allowing the mollusk to form the sac where the calcium carbonate will begin layering to form a pearl.

I hope I have solved some mysteries you might have had regarding Pearls and Mother-Of-Pearl from these articles. If you are looking to add something new and unique to your shop, consider that Grace Kelly, Princess of Monaco, had real pearls for buttons on her wedding dress! It is on display in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Sheila T. Nicol



New Fabric – "Silk Soft" Stripe and Chambray Solid



The next time there will be a full moon on Halloween is 2020.

Classic Dress & Coat

By Karen Faylor

What could be a nicer way to welcome fall than with a new coat for your special girl. I've used the Girl's Coat and Muff pattern from The Karen Faylor Company for the coat and muff and made it extra special by adding a matching dress. (Ellis from The Karen Faylor Company.)

Beautiful wool/poly blend challis was used for it all in oatmeal and black and Bearissima II for lining finished it off.

Girl's Coat and Muff pattern is our newest pattern and is due to ship in late September. This is a revised and updated version of Toddler Coat and Bonnet and is available in sizes 5-8 with the added fun of a muff to keep little hands warm and a pocket for bringing little treasures along.

We've added small bows to the front of the coat in this version and a larger bow in back.

To make bows cut a strip of fabric 3" wide. Stitch long edges together and turn. Press. Cut a 6" length for the bow and whip short, raw ends together to form a ring. Cut a shorter piece for the bow center. Wrap this shorter piece around the ring to form ring into bow shape. Stitch raw ends together. Attach bows to the coat front at the ends of the pleats.

The dress is created using our Ellis pattern. This is a girl's A-Line dress in sizes 3-10. The dress pattern doesn't include a pleated front option but we wanted to echo the pleats on the front of the coat – so we added them. As sewers, aren't we lucky we can do this? We didn't use the pattern piece for the front skirt but cut a rectangle of fabric the correct length and wider than the bodice to allow for the pleats. Find the center front of your block (the new front skirt). Measure out 3" to the left. Mark. Measure again 4-3/4" from the first mark. Mark again. Bring these two marks together to form the pleat. Baste across the top of the pleat to hold in place.

Press. Repeat to the right of center front. Use the Ellis



skirt front pattern piece to shape the top of your pleated skirt front so that it fits perfectly into the bodice front. Attach a bow to the top of each pleat.

Karen's patterns are available at www.karenfaylor.com



New Fabric – Black/White Plaid & Cranberry/White Stripe



Our sweet Pumpkin Bear loves fall colors and this selection of our Vintage Ribbon Collection is just what he's looking for.
What a treat!

OCTOBER SPECIALS

Our fabulous Swiss Poly/Wool Challis has the same 'hand' and weight as the 100% Wool from Switzerland

Try the Poly/Wool in Karen's dress and coat at a great discount:

55% Poly/ 45% Wool

Red, Navy, Oatmeal and Black

Don't Forget the Details!

Sheila's antique button counter (circa 1920) is pictured on our Oatmeal Poly/Wool Linen (the same fabric that Karen used in her Coat and Dress). Our mother-of-pearl buttons are a classic favorite. Check our website for the complete listing of styles and sizes. The lovely pillow in the background is a combination of Velvet Picot ribbon and embroidered ribbon. What a fabulous idea to use that special ribbon that you've been saving. Call us for a list of available colors in our wide selection of Velvet and Velvet Picot ribbons.



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