

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 2 – Issue 10 November 2010

Letter from the Editor:

I don't know about you, but I can't get accustomed to seeing Halloween and Christmas decorations in the stores at the same time. Truly, Thanksgiving has taken a back seat. At the very best it officially ushers in the Christmas Holidays. What happened to 'Over the river and through the woods, to Grandmothers' house we go' for Thanksgiving turkey? It seems as though now we go from candy corn to candy canes overnight. Must be my age! So...As you receive this newsletter, you must be clearing the cobwebs and hiding candy from the wee ones. Save some sugar for Christmas!!!

I would like to take this Thanksgiving month to thank you, our valued customers, for the loyalty and trust you have extended Bear Threads, Ltd over the past 28 years. It began with my love of fine needlework and sharing this love through teaching. With the love and support of my husband, Jim, it has grown to be the source of all things fine in imported fabrics, laces and trimmings.

We are fortunate to have Gail Williams back with us as office manager. Many of you remember her friendly voice and laughter from the nineties. Tami Litton, while no longer answering the phone, is still with us producing our monthly newsletter and ads – our IT Princess!!! For both of these ladies we are extremely THANKFUL.

In this issue we begin another new column, "Meet the Designer". We will periodically feature a designer, shop owner, or teacher with their story of how they began their sewing career (habit!). The first designer to be featured is Janis Shelton, who has given us the most adorable Toddler Coat this issue. Thank You, Janis!

In closing, we wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving and leave you with the following:

'If the only prayer you said in your whole life was "Thank You ", that would suffice.' – Meister Eckhart

Happy Stitching,

Sheila

Meet the Designer

Janis Shelton

Through the years sewing has brought me so much pleasure. Some of my earliest memories are sitting at my mother's treadle sewing machine, so I guess that tells something about my age! Many times I have given my mother credit for my sewing passion because *she let me sew*. My mother sewed to clothe her family, but she let me do anything I wanted to on her sewing machine. I remember making paper 'tickets' for plays. All of my teddy bears and dolls had clothes I made. Sometimes I even made clothes for my dog; although I am not sure he enjoyed them!

With a background in drafting and graphic design I am intrigued with fitting and patterns. I started Bonnie Blue Designs because I saw a need for classic style patterns with detailed instructions. In my generation we learned sewing skills in school, but not always so today. So many young mothers today want to sew for their children, but need more instructions than many patterns provide. I actually like to write the instructions!

More than anything else, I love to see what can be created with just fabric, needle and thread. I used to think I could make everything I wanted to, but I then realized there is not enough time in one lifetime! So now I enjoy seeing what everyone else is sewing. How they put the fabrics and trims together, the changes they make and the projects on their 'to do' list!

The website for Bonnie Blue Designs is at long last up and running. www.BonnieBlueDesigns.com All of the patterns and books are shown and plans are under way to include the pattern backs, too. Trunk show garments are being photographed and included in the website and I encourage everyone to send in their pictures as well. I love to see the children in my patterns.



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Heirloom Baby Coat

How do you select your next sewing project?

Sometimes I find a pattern that catches my eye, maybe I want to make something for an individual, but many times I find a beautiful fabric or trim and then fit it into my sewing schedule!



The fabrics selected for the baby coat are Bear Threads Swiss flannel and Bearissima Swiss batiste. The Swiss flannel is a beautiful flannel that is ideal for baby day gowns when the weather is cooler. It is not the heavy weight you may imagine, but rather a very finely woven flannel. This baby coat is not only a winter covering for baby, but also a good selection for spring when the days are still cool. The Swiss batiste is used as a lining for the coat.

The Swiss netting I selected is one of my favorite trims! It absolutely beautiful! For this project, I selected the trim first, then the fabrics. Three types of netting were used: the narrow edging around the collar, the insertion was used on the sleeves and the lower edge of the baby coat, and the wide netting was used on the lower edge of the coat.

The pattern is "Zoe and Zachary Baby Coats" from Bonnie Blue Designs. The sizes are Premie, Newborn to 3 months and 6 months. The coat can be made as short jacket, full length coat and a longer Christening gown length coat. This coat makes a beautiful keepsake for your special baby. First a brief over of the techniques used on this project. Usually an insertion is stitched to the fabric and then the fabric under the insertion is trimmed away. However, in this project the fabric is NOT trim from under the insertion. I'll explain this completely as we discuss the steps involved. Follow the instructions in the pattern and I'll note where the trims were applied.



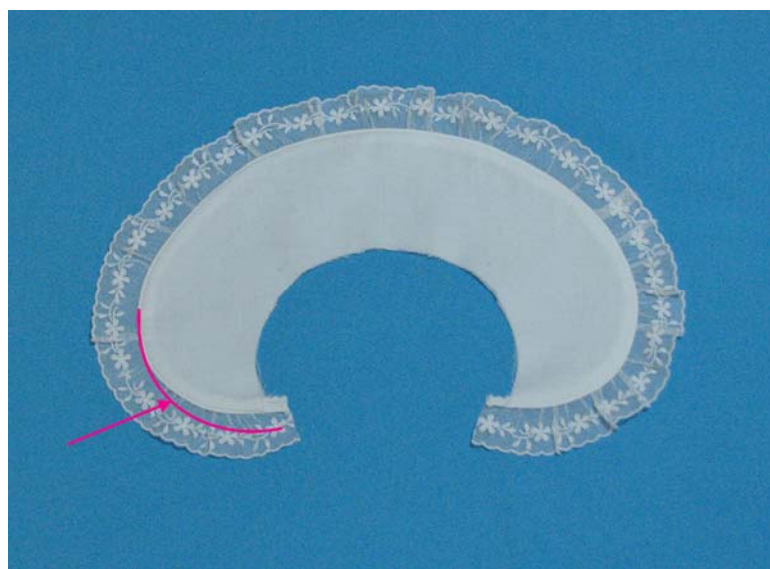
It is very important to pre-shrink the trims you are using including the entredeux and netting. I moisten the entredeux in my hand under running water and then smooth it out and let it air dry. The netting is delicate and care must be taken not to stretch or distort it. Lay it out on a clean surface and spray with water to saturate it well. Let it air dry. Using a warm, not hot iron, press the entredeux and netting. Take care not to stretch the netting, but just lightly press.

Collar:

When a trim is added to the collar you must remove the width of the trim from the edge of the collar in order for the collar to properly fit the coat. However, I wanted to maintain the size of the collar so I removed about half of the width of the narrow netting from the front portion of the collar. The red line in the picture indicates the original seam line placement.

Piping was made from the Swiss flannel and inserted into the collar along with the netting. A lengthened stitch was sewn on the netting to lightly gather the netting before it was applied to the collar.

Note: Take care not to gather netting or laces too much. I like to see the designs in them and not just lots of gathered lace.





Sleeves:

Use the heirloom sewing technique of applying fabric to entredeux to make the insertion band for the sleeves. Place the entredeux and netting right sides together with the edges aligned. With the entredeux on the top side, straight stitch close to the holes in the entredeux. Trim the seam allowance leaving about 1/8" of the entredeux fabric and netting. Use a short, wide zigzag stitch to roll and whip the seam allowance.



Press the roll and whip to the center of the band. Press the entire band well.

Trim the remaining fabric from the entredeux. Place the band on the right side of the sleeve with the right side of the band up. Zigzag stitch in the holes of the entredeux to attach the band to the sleeve. Do not trim the fabric from under the band!

Continue following the instructions in the pattern to complete the coat. The lower band of entredeux and netting is applied to the coat after the coat is completed!



Entredeux and Net Band for Lower Edge of Coat:

Note: the entredeux and net band must be at least 4 inches longer than the lower edge of the coat. The extra length is used to finish the ends of the band inside the coat.

Using the same heirloom technique previously described apply the entredeux to the sides of the insertion netting.

Lightly gather the wide net edging to apply it to the lower edge of the band. Trim the remaining fabric from the entredeux. Press the coat and lining well.



Trim the remaining fabric from the entredeux. Place the band on the right side of the coat with the right side of the band up. For this coat I chose to place the lower edge of the netting just covering the hemline of the coat.

Notice the band is pinned along the lower edge of entredeux. It is important to stitch this entredeux first because the lower edge of the coat is curved and the band must curve to lay properly.

In the lower entredeux, zigzag stitch in the holes of the entredeux to attach the band to the coat.

Pin the top entredeux to the coat and lightly steam and press the band to fit the curve of the coat. Zigzag stitch in the holes of the entredeux to attach the band to the coat.

Do not trim the fabric from under the band!



Finish the Ends of the Entredeaux and Net Edges:

Trim the edges of the band to evenly neaten the entredeux and netting and to adjust the length of the band as needed. Fold the band to the inside of the coat to determine the length. Use five-eighths inch wide silk ribbon to cover the edges. Unfold the entredeux and net band and place the ribbon right side up on the right side of the band. Trim the ribbon leaving approximately one-half inch to turn under on the top and bottom edges. Straight stitch the ribbon to the band.

Fold the ribbon and band to the inside of the coat. Fold under the ends of the ribbon. Hand stitch the ribbon and band to the coat as well as the entredeux at the top of the band.

Buttons and Button Holes:

Three button holes are stitched at the top of the coat evenly spaced three inches apart. I selected plain, but beautiful Mother-of-Pearl shank buttons. These do not distract from the beautiful netting used on the coat.

I hope you will make this coat for your baby or maybe for a baby in your future! It is truly a joy to work with the best materials and trims available!



Janis Shelton



Happy Thanksgiving



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