

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 2 – Issue 12 December 2010

## Letter from the Editor:

As you read this the 2010 Thanksgiving dinner will be another memory. And I'll bet there is some area in your home that is collecting presents, wrapping paper and ribbons. The tree is about to go up and garland is soon to be shedding on your floors....sound familiar? Don't let the Holidays be all about stress and frenzy!

This year take some time to stitch even just one gift. Someone will be so grateful for your thought and love. And you will feel a great sense of pride and self gratification for giving of yourself. A Fingertip Towel would make someone's guest bath special. (Note: The September 2009 issue has my easy and quick instructions for making a fingertip towel. If you do not have that issue contact us and we will send them to you.) Perhaps you could find a weekday morning or Saturday this month to offer a 2 hour class on this project!

Jim and I will be returning from a buying trip to Switzerland as you read this. I am sure we will have lots of goodies for you in January. I already know of some new items, but I am always on a treasure hunt when overseas!!!

I would like to leave you with the following 2 quotes:

*"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree."* Roy L. Smith

*"Anyone who believes that men are the equal of women has never seen a man trying to wrap a Christmas present!"* Anonymous

Christmas Blessing to you this Holiday Season and throughout the New Year –

Sheila



Beautiful Christmas Stockings  
from Deb Gardner at [www.theribbongardner.com](http://www.theribbongardner.com).

Woven Vintage Ribbons are the base for these elegant stockings. Add black velveteen binding and tassels to complete the rich look. In contrast, the Heirloom stocking uses small pieces of laces and embroideries combined to make an heirloom to be treasured for years. What a great way to use those leftovers from your last Heirloom project!

**Meet The Designer**  
**Toodles Dorgan**  
**Owner of Lilies and Lace**  
**Fairhope, Alabama**

At the age of thirteen my mother taught me how to embroider. I was quite proud of my accomplishment and fell in love with handwork. Shortly thereafter, I was given the opportunity to use my mothers' sewing machine. With her guidance, I sewed my first garment. Sewing became my passion at a young age.

When my children were born, the first garments they wore were smocked and hand sewn day gowns. When my daughter was eleven months old, I opened my first shop, which was called *A Stitch In Tyme*. That was twenty seven years ago and many French sewn garments later. I sold the shop eight years later to Nancy Little who took good care of it for 15 years. During that time I did all the designing and sewing of the French sewn custom orders for her. She closed the shop five years ago, and soon after I opened my current shop, Lilies and Lace. Nancy is now working with me again. Our first customers at the new shop, were my first customers at *A Stitch in Time*, twenty seven years ago. We now have another generation to sew for, as we have grandchildren. I have three granddaughters who are now wearing the beautiful heirlooms that I made for my daughter, which seems like not so many years ago.

I truly love sharing what I know about sewing, designing and making French sewn garments, as well as having a shop with beautiful fabrics and laces available for others to enjoy. I also enjoy working with old laces and antique pieces, which create unique heirlooms.

Visiting us at [www.liliesandlace.com](http://www.liliesandlace.com) is another way to visit the shop. Shopping at Lilies and Lace online will be available within the month.

Lilies and Lace  
[www.liliesandlace.com](http://www.liliesandlace.com)  
Phone 251-928-8483



I purchased my hemstitch machine 25 years ago. It was found in a factory in Atlanta, moved to this area to be reworked, and then purchased for the use in my shop, *A Stitch In Tyme*. It is old, heavy, and temperamental. The machine has two needles, two bobbins and a punch. It has only one function and that is to punch a hole in the fabric and stitch around it. It does its' best job on nice cotton and linen fabrics. I have hemstitched thousands of yards of fabric on my machine, and I can only imagine the beautiful fabrics and linens this machine has punched holes in over the past 100 years. The machine was designed for fine clothing and linens such as tablecloths, napkins, pillow shams, handkerchiefs and hand towels. They were embroidered, sometimes monogrammed, and then hemstitched. It has been a fun hunt to find and purchase some of these beautiful old pieces.

Today, we find hemstitching to be a very practical and attractive way to apply lace to clothing. Insertions of lace may be shaped and applied with a zigzag, then hemstitched. The fabric can be trimmed away on the underside as hemstitching will prevent the fabric from fraying. This application is lovely used on dresses, christening gowns, collars, and sleeves. You may hemstitch the edge of blankets, bonnets, ruffles, or sleeves and attach an edging. To apply an edging to these pieces, you only trim on the outside edge of the hemstitching and zigzag lace into each hole. Although hemstitching can be used in the place of entredeux, it does not provide the same stability as entredeux in joining lace to fabric.

You will need to be mindful of where and when you wish to use this embellishment on your garment. While researching hemstitching, I found it very interesting

that the family responsible for the invention of the hemstitch machine also invented the Bernina sewing machine. Both of these machines can be found in my sewing studio.



Karl Friedrich GeGauf discovered his passion for technology and decided to pursue an apprenticeship as a mechanic. In 1890 GeGauf opened an embroidery and mechanical workshop for the manufacturing of his own invention, the monogram embroidery machine. Together with his brother, Georg GeGauf, a salesman for the company, Karl ran the Bros. GeGauf Company. Through his involvement in the textile industry, Karl learned how laborious hemstitching was, as it was done by hand at that time. In 1893, Karl Friedrich GeGauf invented the first hemstitch machine. In 1885, the Bros. GeGauf workshop was completely destroyed by fire except for the prototype of the hemstitch machine which was the only thing that could be saved. A new workshop in an old barn was opened. The focus was no longer on the embroidery machine but now on construction of the hemstitch sewing machine. 70 people were employed in the production of the serial production machine, which was being exported abroad. The GeGauf name had become so famous, the mechanical production of hemstitching, known for its' embellishments to handkerchiefs, tablecloths, and bedspreads, was commonly referred to as "GeGaufing". In 1919, Fritz GeGauf, along with his father, Karl GeGauf, patented the Wontan Hemstitch Machine which became another international success for the company. Together with his brother Gustau, the two brothers took over their father's company after his death in 1926. During the 1930's economic crises, The GeGauf Brothers joined partners with Brutsch and Sohn. By the end of 1932, they had

developed the first household sewing machine, named Bernina. In 1937, the first Bernina zigzag machine was introduced. Since then, the company has commonly been called Bernina although its official name is Fritz GeGauf Aktiengesellschaft, Bernina, Nahmaschinenfabrik.



## SMOCKS, SMOCK FROCKS, & SMOCKING

### HISTORY – PART I

The smock did not originate as a child's garment or as an outer garment. It was from the beginning, however, a protective garment. The smock is actually the most basic of all undergarments and the one with the longest history. The work 'smock' is an old English work for a shift or chemise; hence the word 'smocking' came to be applied to the ornamental gathering of the necks of these garments. The earliest smocks were simple shirt-like garments and came into being in Anglo-Saxon times. Many European countries also used smocking on their garments. The words smock, shirt, shift, and chemise all refer to the same garment except that shirt appears to refer to a man's garment, smock and shift a woman's garment, and chemise, a French woman's. The purpose of all these is the same: to protect the rich fabrics of the upper garments from body oil and perspiration. We know from existing garments that men's and women's shirts and smocks were cut and decorated almost identically.

It is uncertain whether smock-frocks are 'frocks made like smocks' or 'smocks made like frocks' - - that is ,whether the garment evolved from the smock, the shirt or underdress of the medieval period, or from the frock, an overgarment of equally ancient origin. What is certain is that the fully-developed smock-frock resembles a melding of the two older garments.

The traditional smock-frock was made of heavy linen or wool and varied from thigh-length to mid-calf length. They were quite heavy and provided extra warmth for the wearer while protecting their

everyday clothes. Characteristic features of the smock-frock were fullness across the back, breast, and sleeves folded into 'tubes' (narrow unpressed pleats) held in place and decorated by smocking, a type of surface embroidery in a honeycomb pattern across the pleats that controlled the fullness while allowing a degree of stretch. There were three styles – the Round Smock (Frock), the Shirt Smock, and the Coat Smock.

Our study of Smocking's History continues next month.

**Sheila Nicol**



*We wish you and your family  
the Merriest Christmas  
and the Best New Year!*

*Sheila and Jim Nicol,  
Gail Williams and Tami Litton*

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