

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 3 – Issue 2 February 2011

From The Editor –

I just can't believe that an entire month of 2011 is already over!! The time goes by so fast these days and the list of things I wish to do only grows longer! Perhaps the Valentine Cupid could bring me an extra week in February to 'catch up'....or better yet a week just devoted to stitching!! Would that not be the *SWEETEST* of Valentine gifts??

Whatever you are wishing from your Cupid, Bear Threads has a great gift for you and your customers. We are introducing a new embroidery design in both insertion and 2.5" edging. It is available in Pink, Blue, Ecru or Aqualine Blue on White and is the most delicate bow design for which to ask. It is due to ship from Switzerland the last week of February, in plenty of time for your Easter sewing. See the photo elsewhere in the newsletter.

I am finishing the series on Smocking and its' history this month and I urge you to think of offering a series of smocking classes this winter. Sometimes as shop owners it is easily forgotten that every five or so years we are given a completely new customer base as young girls begin their families. With this long winter before Easter there is plenty of time for learning the art of smocking and making that adorable smocked Easter dress.

In our **Meet the Designer** column this month I am happy to have Nancy Faulkenberry of Greenville, Alabama candidly share her story of becoming a shop owner and lover of all things fine in the sewing world. I can personally vouch for the motto of her shop "*where you will always be welcome*".

Many of you missed the Birmingham Creative Sewing market due to the weather, therefore missing out on our new items and sales. It is too much information for the newsletter, but you will be receiving a mailing in the next week with all that is new and on sale. Please take a close

look at it. Within this newsletter, however, is a list of Rare and Out of Print books Bear Threads has acquired. There is likely to be something for your personal collection!

Happy Valentine to each of you and I close with the following:

It takes more than lace and ribbons
And lovely verses too
To make a Valentine
That's nice enough for you
It takes a world of special thoughts
Tucked into every line
And that's exactly what you'll find
Inside this Valentine

So keep sewing,

Sheila



E-193 & E-194

Available in Blue, Pink, Ecru & Aqualine Blue on White

Old, Rare & Out-of-Print Books

Accent on Pillows
Art Nouveau Floral Designs
Aryshire & Other Whitework
Chikan Embroidery, The Floral Whitework of India
Creative Stitches
Crewel Embroidery
Design Principles & Fiber Techniques
Do You Love What You Sew
Dressmaking with Liberty (1984)
Filling Stitches
Flowers are Forever, Shadow Quilting
Here & Now Stitchery From Other Times & Places
Japanese 1
Japanese 2
Japanese 3
Japanese 4
Lighter Shades of Pale, Shadow Quilting
Linens & Lace
Lingerie Sewing, The Feminine Art
Mira Silverstein's Guide to Combination Stitches
More Needleplay
Needle Craft 9, Embroidery Design
Needle Lace & Needleweaving
Needlepainting, A Garden of Stitches
Pulled Thread Workbook
Pulled Work on Canvas & Linen (1978)
Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework
Samplers & Stitches
Shadow Quilting with Marjorie Puckett
Shisha Embroidery: Traditional Indian Mirror Work
with Instructions & Transfer Patterns
Shisha Mirror Embroidery (1978)
Stitches for Effect
The Best of Sewing with Nancy
The Complete Stitch Encyclopedia
The Needleworker's Dictionary (1976)
The Pattern Library Embroidery
The Personal Touch
The Undercover Story
Universal Stitches
Wonderful Stitches

Cross Stitch Embroidery II

Bargello

Bargello & Related Stitchery
Bargello Florentine Canvas Work
Bargello Magic, How to Design Your Own
Bargello Plus
Bargello Stars, Shells & Borders
Beautiful Bargello
Four Way Bargello

Embroidery

A World of Embroidery
Better Homes & Gardens Embroidery
Designs to Embroider (1985)
Embroider Your Clothes & Linens
Embroidery
Embroidery (1st edition, 1909)
Embroidery & Nature
Embroidery Stitches
Erica Wilson's Embroidery Book
Favorite Stitches
Guide to English Embroidery
Mary Gostelow's Embroidery Book
Practical Embroidery
The Arco Encyclopedia of Embroidery Stitches
The Complete International Book of Embroidery
The Everyday Embroidery Book (1946)
The Royal School of Needlework & Embroidery
The Scribner Book of Embroidery Designs
The Stitches of Creative Embroidery
Royal School of Needlework Embroidery
Techniques

Needlepoint, Canvas Embroidery

A New Look at Needlepoint (1972)
Canvas Embroidery
Canvas Work
Carolyn Ambuter's Complete Book of Needlepoint
Dictionary of Needlepoint Stitches
Glorious Needlepoint (1987)
Lexington Lace for Needlepoint (1975)
Mary Martin's Needlepoint
Mary Rhodes Needlepoint, the Art of Canvas
Embroidery
Needlepoint
Needlepoint Designs (1975)
Needlepoint Stitch by Stitch
Needlepoint, A Basic Manual
Patterned Backgrounds for Needlepoint
The Complete Guide to Needlework Techniques
& Materials
The Craft of Needlepoint
The Encyclopedia of Canvas Embroidery
Stitch Patterns
The Gloralilia Needlepoint Collection
The New World of Needlepoint



Call today about our Rose Embroidered Dots Fabric. Perfect for a sweet treat any little girl will love.



Meet the Designer Nancy D. Faulkenberry

I truly cannot say that I started with a love for sewing as so many others have, or that my mother taught me the art. To be honest with you, I did not even know what smocking or heirloom sewing was until my daughter was about 9 months old. I then saw my first smocked dress and I was hooked. I taught myself from the Children's Corner English Smocking Book. That was nearly 32 years ago and I haven't stopped since.

The person from the beginning who encouraged me the most was my father. Growing up in a large family, he watched his mother sew. A railroad man by profession, he would make matching outfits for

his four daughters....to perfection! It is instilled in me to do the same. I remember showing him the first dress I smocked for my daughter Erin and asked him to critique it. One of the first things he did was turn the dress inside out.

What he said was, *"Always, always make your garments as well on the inside as you do on the outside because someone is going to come along and turn that hemline up to see what kind of job you really did."*

What a pity it is to invest so much time, effort and expense in beautiful fabrics and laces only to have your garment not 'up to par' on the inside. Start from the beginning when you lay the fabric out. Cut the pattern out precisely, taking care to stay on the cutting lines. While sewing, take the time to trim the loose threads and press the seams as you go. Ironing is a major factor in heirloom sewing. You will find that your garment will lay flatter and neater and look better all around. This takes a little longer overall, but the end results are well worth the time. Let it be said that YOUR heirloom sewn garments stand out in the crowd!

I opened my store 'The Little House' in 1989, but my father never saw it as he was killed in a car accident in 1985. In the year 2000, "The Little House" was put on the back burner while my sisters and I cared for our mother in Birmingham, AL through her fight with cancer. After her passing I decided to close my store. My love for this beautiful art never left and here I am 10 years later with a new store in downtown Greenville, AL "Nancy's Heirloom Shoppe" which opened December 1, 2009 to offer fine fabrics, laces and gift items. It is through this shop that I share my love and knowledge to those who wish to come 'where you will always be welcome'!

Nancy's Heirloom Shoppe
124 West Commerce St.
Greenville, AL 36037
Tuesday – Saturday 9:00-5:00

Contact me at:
334-371-1776
e-mail @ nancysheirlooms@camelliacom.com

Or visit our website at: www.nancysheirlooms.com

SMOCKS, SMOCK FROCKS, AND SMOCKING HISTORY – PART III

The utilitarian smocks of the 16th and 17th centuries were cut very economically. All of the pieces were either squares or rectangles, though sometimes the collar was rounded. The shape of the garment came from the smocking. Absolutely nothing was wasted.

It was customary for a man to have two smocks, one for work and one for special occasions. The working smocks were tan, brown or blue – at the time blue was considered a poor man's color. The earlier working smocks were made by women who harvested the flax and made the thread and fabric. They would then gather the pleats by sight and smock the pleats. Later there were 'factories' (sometimes one or two ladies in the village), who made working smocks for the men of the village. But the special occasion smocks were made by wives or family members of much finer fabrics, usually in white. It was not unusual for a village church to have a set of matching smocks for pallbearers. This way the men could come directly from the fields and change smocks for the occasion. Most often these special occasion smocks were willed through the family for several generations.

Farmers and rural workers were known to soak their smocks in boiled linseed oil to make them waterproof. This made for a stiff, waterproof smock that was also very warm. However, this process made the smock deteriorate more quickly!!

The advent of the industrial revolution saw the decline of the workman's smock. Loose flowing smocks were too dangerous to wear while working machinery. Also, the revolution saw the increased commercial manufacture of clothing. Thirdly, from a social standpoint, folk traveling to the larger cities discarded their smocks for the newer cheaply manufactured clothes so as not to appear to 'country' or rustic.

The revival of smocking began in the late 19th Century when the world of fashion decided to take up the art

to decorate women's and children's clothes. Much of the early credit was given to Mrs. Oscar Wilde, who was an active member of the Rational Dress Society. One of the aims of the society was that corsets should be abandoned and clothes be loose and non-constrictive. She thought it the perfect garment for playing lawn tennis, with its' stretch at the waist. In addition, in 1884, Liberty, the London shop opened a costume department where dresses were designed and made up in Liberty fabrics. The children's dresses were strongly influenced by the illustrations of Kate Greenaway where the children were wearing either smocks of traditional shape or smocked dresses. In 1889 the fashion spread to France when Liberty opened a branch in Paris with a children's salon specializing in smocking and Kate Greenaway dresses.

Indeed we have come a long way! From the original smockers who gathered the pleats by eye, to templates and transfer dots that were introduced in the 19th Century, the art never completely died. In the 1940's a South African man, Mr. Read, invented a smocking pleater machine. By the 1980's several other manufacturers had introduced machines of various sizes and capacities that eliminated the need for the long, laborious method that was previously required of pleating the fabric.

Smocking is truly a unique embroidery form that was and is both practical and decorative. Other major embroidery styles of earlier days were purely decorative and represented status symbols. Smocking as an embroidery technique was used to gather fabric so that it could stretch. Before the invention of elastic, smocking was commonly used in cuffs, bodices, and necklines where buttons were undesirable. Today smocking is used in both children's and ladies clothing, as well in the decorative arts for home. Pillows, Christmas ornaments, and tissue box covers are just a few of the endless array of possibilities. Perhaps it is time to offer another series of smocking classes to your customers.

Sheila Nicol

Visit us on the web at www.bearthreadsltd.com

To place an order contact us at 404-255-5083 or 404-255-4001 fax

"Bear in Mind" articles are available on our website. Encourage your customers to check out our website for information and inspiration.