

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 3 – Issue 3 March

## From The Editor

I am happy to report that the new website is finally up and running. Most of you received a mailing inviting you to visit the site a couple of weeks ago. I hope you have done so, and find it refreshing, faster and easier to navigate. If you have not done so, please visit us at [www.bearthreadsltd.com](http://www.bearthreadsltd.com). And don't forget to 'create an account' to allow you to use the Wish List.

We plan for this to be a continuous work in progress allowing us to add and delete items to keep you up to date with our products. We will also have the ability to have multiple albums in our photo gallery so we can share all of our wonderful model garments with you and your customers.

No prices are on the website so that you can encourage your customers to visit us as well. However, if you need a current price list just give us a call. The price list is also new and improved and promises to be easier to read.

As you continue with your Easter sewing classes and custom sewing, remember we are THE source for the last minute items such as ribbon and buttons. Our buttons are also photographed on the website and include both shank and flats in a variety of sizes and designs.

As for this issue....I just don't think I can give Gail Doane, our guest, the proper introduction and thanks that she deserves. I am always amazed with how creative you all are each in a different direction. This is a wonderful, practical and clever idea and I know you will all enjoy the beautiful clothing she has sewn with this technique.

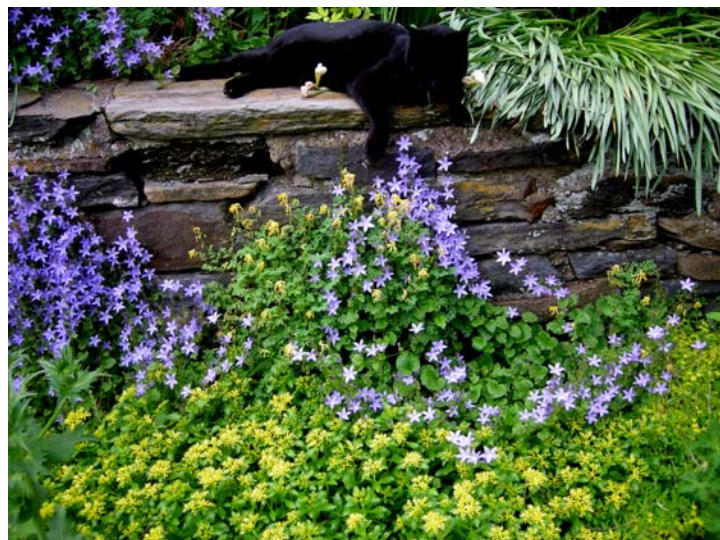
And so, without further ado...enjoy!

Sheila



*A cat improves the garden wall in sunshine,  
and the hearth in foul weather.*

*—Judith Merkle Riley*





# Meet Gail Doane

Hello everyone, my name is Gail Doane and I have the opportunity to be the guest writer for this month's Bear in Mind newsletter. The concept and subsequent projects I have chosen to highlight is the process of sewing together all types of laces onto a silk organza background to form blocks of fabric. Once these blocks of fabric are created they can be cut and constructed into any type of garment.



The first project shown is a Swiss voile sleeveless dress featuring way too many pintucks on the bodice and fancy band of the skirt. I am very partial to the Swiss voile as it seems to have a nice spring to the weave and is very wrinkle resistant. It is also a fabric that behaves beautifully with all French sewing by machine techniques.



The coordinating jacket is a variety of Swiss and French laces stitched together over blocks of silk organza. The process goes like this:

1. Cut or tear an on grain rectangle of silk organza at least 2" larger in length and width than your required pattern piece. Silk organza is a beautifully sheer stable base fabric that comes in true white, ivory, pastels, and dark shades. I usually use the true white if I am working with all white laces and the ivory if I am working with ivory or ecru laces.
2. Using a regular tip washout marker trace around the outside of the pattern piece taking care to position the pattern piece on the grain of the silk organza. I prefer to use a washout marker for the original tracing as the organza will shift and draw up a bit with the application of all the laces. Once the laces have been applied the pattern piece is then redrawn on the surface disregarding the original tracing lines.



3. For the example of a jacket back I would start with the strip of lace that is positioned right over the center back of the jacket. Cut the lace approximately 2" longer than the finished distance. Right sides up lay the lace, in this example a piece of Swiss embroidered insertion, with the batiste seam allowances trimmed away right over the center back line and zig-zag both edges



in place. Adjust the width (usually 1.5 – 2.5) of the zig-zag as necessary to accommodate the headings or entredeux edges of the individual laces. The length setting of the zig-zag should stay at 1.0. Extend the lace 1” beyond the top and the bottom edges of the jacket back. The next strip of lace is zig-zagged in place right over the heading threads or the entredeux edge of the previous strip of lace. The goal is to make both adjacent headings or entredeux edges pull together and look as one. Work the laces in a mirror image on the left and the right side of the jacket back. Press well in between each lace strip addition taking care to keep the silk organza base square and on grain. It is important to use #80 weight (very fine) thread and a #70 sewing machine needle.

4. Once the entire surface has been covered with laces reposition the jacket back pattern piece matching up center back lines and cut to shape disregarding the original washout marker tracing lines.



5. Once all the required pattern pieces have been made up in lace/silk organza they are treated as a single layer of fabric and the project is constructed.

I have used this process to make up several different styles of jackets to go over smocked or heirloom style dresses. It adds a nice touch and extends the wear of a sleeveless summer dress well into the cooler months. The concept will also

work well with collars, yokes, pockets, sleeves, etc. I have included some photos of finished projects featuring this technique and a brief description of the garment.

### Project #1 (April in Paris)



This dress and lace jacket was on the cover of Australian Smocking and Embroidery issue #80. The smocked dress is blue Bear Threads Bearissima II and the jacket is constructed from ivory laces. The jacket buttons down the back and is cut up in the front to showcase the smocking which is worked in Marlitt (rayon) thread.

## Project #2 (Cranberry Silk Lacy Sailor Dress)



The dress is made from cranberry silk dupioni and features a collar, front inset, and belt made from strips of ecru laces worked over ivory silk organza.



## Project #3 (Eloise)



This might be my all-time favorite dress I have ever made. It was on the cover of Australian and Smocking Issue #87. The dress is smocked and constructed from a tropical weight 100% wool men's suiting (very lightweight). My granddaughter could probably have slept in this dress and it would not have wrinkled. The collar is constructed entirely from Bear Threads ivory laces which are shaped and zig-zagged over ivory silk organza.



### Project #4 (Heirloom Lacy Wrap Dress)



This dress combines an all lace wrap bodice with a double layer skirt of blue cotton batiste under silk organza.



### Project #5 and #6 (Heirloom Christening Gowns and Lace Jackets)



The first dress is called 'Grace' and was featured in the book 'Embroidered Christening Gowns' published in 2005 by Country Bumpkin Publications. The gown is ivory silk organza pleated and smocked over a layer of Bear Threads ivory Bearissima II. The all lace jacket is made entirely from Bear Threads ivory French laces.



The second gown is constructed from white Swiss voile and coordinates with a white insertion and beading all lace jacket.



I hope the projects shown have given you some inspiration to try this concept on one of your future heirloom sewing endeavors. I teach classes all over the United States and internationally covering many aspects of smocking, embroidery, and construction of fine children's garments. You can reach me at:

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[www.gaildoane.com](http://www.gaildoane.com) (blog),  
 or [www.etsy.com/shop/gaildoane](http://www.etsy.com/shop/gaildoane)  
 (Etsy site for project kits)

- Daffodils are members of the Narcissus family.
- Daffodils originated in south west Europe.
- These days, the majority of daffodils are grown in the Channel Islands, Great Britain, Holland and the Isles of Scilly.
- There are over 25,000 varieties of daffodils and they come in yellow, white, orange and even a peach/pink shade.
- All parts of the daffodil are poisonous.
- The sap of daffodils can be damaging to other flowers. If you've picked them to display in a vase with other flowers, then it's best to leave them in water on their own for at least 12 hours, before mixing them together.
- The emblem of Wales is the daffodil. People often wear daffodils on St. David's Day.
- In New York, nearly 2,500,000 daffodils are grown each year.
- The Victorians thought daffodils acted as a symbol of regard.
- Prince Charles, from the British Royal Family, is annually given one daffodil to act as a form of rent for land on the Isles of Scilly.
- Daffodil bulbs contain a substance called galanthine, which has medicinal properties. In fact, it's sometimes used in treatments for Alzheimer's.
- In Australia, they have an annual Daffodil Day to help raise awareness about cancer. The daffodil is also used as a symbol by Marie Curie Cancer Care in the UK.





## ORGANDY vs. ORGANZA

Another confusing question often asked by sewers around the globe is the difference between Organdy and Organza. The similarity of their names exacerbates the confusion. Of course there is nothing more wonderful than the fine Swiss Organdy. But as the saying goes, *'there is a place for everything, and everything has its' place'*. So, let's study these two fabrics.

Both organdy and organza are sheer, crisp, plain-weave fabrics. Organdy is a cotton fabric constructed from long staple fibers which have been created by spinning short fibers to create one long, continuous thread. These are called spun yarns. The crispness comes from a chemical finish which is permanent. After weaving, the fabric is stretched on a frame, not unlike the quilting frames your grandmother might have once had. The fabric is immersed into a chemical bath with the frame constantly in motion. This is how the 'water' marks of organdy are created. Only one true organdy is produced in the world and that is the Swiss organdy. This is because there is only one fabric finishing company in the world that can produce this permanent chemical finish, and they are located in Eastern Switzerland. Consequently, Italian organdy is non-existent. It may be cotton organza or something similar, but it is not *Organdy!* Swiss organdy does wrinkle considerably, but can easily be smoothed with a hot steam iron.

Conversely, organza is made of filament yarn, which is made of very long fibers, such as silk. Filament yarn is most often made of synthetic fibers in modern times, so most modern organza is synthetic, such as polyester; however silk organza

can still be purchased. Organza is washable, but the crispness only lasts through a few washings and only if laundered in cold water. It must be ironed wet.

I spoke to Gail Doane, our guest this month, about this and here is what she had to say:

"I use silk organza in many projects. I use it extensively as an interfacing, sometimes as an interlining, and sometimes as an outer layer on a project. It does require a good steam iron to get the wrinkles out after washing, but nothing worse than many other types of cotton or linens would require. In the case of the jackets or collars where the silk organza is the base for all the laces, I have found it to be very stable and actually quite wrinkle resistant. The organza is really held down in so many places with all the lace stitching, that it does not have the choice to shrink or wrinkle!"

As I stated above *"there is a place for everything, and everything has its' place"*. Gail has found the absolute perfect place for silk organza in Heirloom Sewing. Kudos to you, Gail.



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