

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

“A New Year – A New Start”

Does that not sound like a great New Year’s resolution! Pretty much covers everything from the diet, to finishing projects, to increasing sales and revenues!! And that really is it in a nutshell, is it not?

“SHOP OWNERS KNOW THEY NEED NEW AND FRESH MERCHANDISE IN THEIR STORES TO DRIVE SALES.”



Here is the scene every retailer knows all too well: It’s the end of the season, and no matter the markdown, some merchandise still lingers on the shelf. What to do – you cannot toss or destroy it...But consider the option of donating to charity. I heard two stories during the recent holidays that were taken to heart. One was an individual whose friends kept her supplied with unwanted fabric (well, don’t we all have tons in our personal stash that we will never use!) She, during the course of the year, personally made over 100 blankets that

volunteers and friends delivered to those in need. Many were made of mismatched and collaged fabric pieces, but, in the end they provided warmth and comfort to many less fortunate.

The second story was an organization that accepted donations of fabrics and plastic shopping bags – i.e. grocery bags. These were loomed into blankets, purses and totes – RECYCLING, and EMPLOYING and PROVIDING. The products were sold in local stores to pay the loom operators! Personally, I was blown away from the impact these folk had.

Make contact with a local charity to see what their needs or resources may be. Make sure the local media is aware of your joint efforts. TV stations love these stories. Remember that it is important to consumers that their preferred retailer is a good citizen, as well as realizing that the charity world is a marketplace of consumers.

NOW! You have ridded your shelves of outdated prints, made a good name for yourself, brought your business to the front of, perhaps, an entire new consumer base AND in many cases there are tax write-offs associated with donating.

You are now ready to have “A New Year – A New Start” with fresh new inventory. Certainly seems to be a WIN, WIN, WIN solution to me.

Happy Stitching –

Sheila

CREATIVE SEWING MARKET

January 12 -13, 2014
GRANDVIEW MARRIOTT ON HWY 280
BIRMINGHAM, AL

**We have 11 new fabrics,
and quantities are
limited at this time so
please come early!**

AS USUAL WE WILL HAVE A WONDERFUL
ASSORTMENT
OF ANTIQUE AND UNUSUAL FINDS
FOR YOUR SEWING ENJOYMENT!
REMEMBER IT IS CASH AND CARRY ONLY
NO CREDIT CARDS!
COME EARLY AND SEE US FIRST!

Take this opportunity to visit other shops which carry similar merchandise. See how they are tempting their customers with displays and other merchandising tactics!

Do your homework –

Trade show dates are published a year and more in advance. There is no excuse not to have done an inventory, even a cursory one, before you leave home. Spend some time looking at the sales history for the past year or two. What was hot, what was not, and what did you run out of.

Keep a list at your check out station to jot down requests with a name and phone number. You might think it will be a onetime request, but often it is the beginning of a new fad that you just might wish to cash in on!

In with the new, out with the old –

When calculating your budget, allow a certain amount for 'open-to-buy'. This means aside from your basic re-ordering, you deliberately allow funds for new merchandise. One of our seasoned shop owners allows monies to add one or two new fabrics every season, as well as a new lace or embroidery set. It is simply automatic. Before you leave home have a chat with your employees to see who will be willing to sew samples. Knowing in advance, they can allot the required time. Plan a sale well before attending a market, so that you will have cleared out old 'tired' merchandise and have room for the new items you will wish to buy. You will feel better about shopping knowing that you have the space for some fresh items.

Shop every booth –

I encourage you to shop every vendor. Allow 20 to 30 percent of your floor time to shopping new vendors. One longtime customer says she always shops every vendor and rummages through everything they have. Many treasures and unknowns have been found using this method!

Be visual –

As you buy think about how you are going to set up your floor with the new products. Snap photos of the items you bought (ask permission first) so that you can talk to your sales personnel about them even before they arrive in your store.

Network and learn –

Take the initiative to introduce yourself to other shoppers. Offer to take a lunch or snack break together and compare shopping notes, as well as shop and merchandising ideas.

You will find this to provide a much more rewarding experience for you!

See you in Birmingham –

How to Benefit from a Trade Show

Many of you are overwhelmed by trade shows and find them exhausting. With the internet many of you think you can 'look up' anything you might need and save the time and money to travel to the show city. Many of you simple don't bother because you think your sales representatives have shown you everything you need to see, and the magazines will answer the rest.

I have written this article to create a new and more beneficial experience for you while attending your next trade show.

Arrive Early –

It is natural for everyone to think they will miss something if they are not at the front of the line when the opening bell rings. Arriving in advance of the doors opening will give you time to settle down, have a beverage and use the restroom. This also gives you the opportunity, while waiting, to visit with other buyers and compare notes about what the newest products and trends are. If you are visiting a city and can arrive a day in advance, this is even better.

INTRODUCING FOR 2014

We are delighted to have Londa Rohlfing with us as our guest in upcoming issues of the *Bear In Mind* newsletter this spring. In the meantime we invite you to see her new patterns below and visit her website at www.londas-sewing.com.

Londa's™ Creative Threads



Living Well
a 'talking' Pattern™

Bonus feature: talking™ Directions

Online: 107 photos accompanied with complete verbal directions & pdf pattern
Inside: Vital photos with complete written directions
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Londa's™ Creative Threads

TOP PRIORITIES

FLIRTY
FLOUNCES



Bonus feature: talking™ Directions

Online: numerous photos accompanied with complete verbal directions
Inside: vital photos with complete written directions*
www.londas-sewing.com





From the Royal Closet
Dressing Your Little Prince

While Baby Prince George, now at 5 months, is past the 'swaddling' stage, British winters are quite chilly. Whether at home or out for a carriage ride with mom, Kate, he will be cozy and comfortable tucked into any one, or variation, of these blankets.



FYI

Swaddling Blanket vs. Receiving Blanket

Swaddling is an age old practice of wrapping babies in blankets or similar cloth so that movement of the limbs is tightly restricted. Swaddling has been around for thousands of years - "Jesus was swaddled, Alexander the Great was swaddled, and the American Academy of Pediatrics' symbol is a swaddled baby. But until recently swaddling had fallen out of vogue. Modern moms are finding swaddling popular again as it is believed to reduce the risk of SIDS and also helps the infant to fall asleep and stay asleep. Modern swaddling blankets are often 'T' or 'Y' shaped allowing the blanket to fold over the shoulders, down the torso and tuck under the baby. If you choose a square version of a swaddling blanket, then technically, it is 42"x42" or larger. A receiving blanket is much smaller.

But the challenge for many is to find a soft enough cloth. Thick flannels do not fold and wrap the baby well. Bear Threads Swiss Flannel, Dimity and Plisse fabrics make for lovely, soft, and lightweight cuddling. If you want a slightly heavier blanket, choose the dimity or plissé and line it with the flannel. See the photos for ideas of beautiful baby shower gifts.

And now you know.....

DOLLY'S SLIP

In our last issue of *Bear In Mind* Cheryl Davidson of B&B Blue Prints Pattern Company shared with us the new pattern, "Dolly", which will debut this spring. Here we share the slip for 'Dolly'. Making a matching slip many times makes the dress. With fabrics being manufactured wider today, often you will have enough remaining from the garment to make a slip. Lace around the neck and armholes is not necessary, and often distracts from the yoke décor. Here is the perfect place for the beautiful, quick and easy Shell Hem Stitch. Better than any sketch I could draw for you, I invite you to visit www.oldfashionedbaby.com for Jeannie Baumeister's wonderful lesson on the Hand Shell Hem. When you arrive at her home page, click on Jeannie's Blog in the left hand column. Then scroll down and click on "Lesson on Hand Shell Hem".

Now that you have learned a new stitch, I will offer a helpful hint. At the hem of your slip, I find that entredeux and a touch of lace or embroidery is the perfect finishing touch. Not only does it provide the perfect 'peek-a-boo' for the little girl, but the entredeux (or even hemstitching) creates a little fullness for the dress skirt allowing it to stand out and not cling to the child's legs. Note that in Cheryl's Dolly slip, she also added tucks for even more body (and growth!)



"The lace hem was stitched using the wing needle and the pin stitch on my Bernina." -- Cheryl Davidson.

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