

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

With the cooler days ahead and the children back in school, most of us are looking forward to the holidays and thinking ahead toward Christmas.....and that means Christmas sewing. These next three issues of *Bear In Mind* will include many ideas for Holiday gifts you can make. A handmade gift, whether it is elaborate or simple, is always a welcome and treasured surprise.

This month we showcase one of our newer Alabama shops. Patsy Smith from The Sewing Room in Birmingham, AL shares her dream come true and her customer driven business philosophy.

And we welcome back Margaret Pierce who is no stranger to any of us. Margaret's beautiful handwork has been the standard to which we all would like to aspire, for many years. She is a true lover of fine HAND work. For those of you, who might not have had the chance to meet or study with her, know that you have missed seeing some exquisite embroidery. Her book 'Heirloom Sewing II' is available to inspire and share with you her love of shadow work. Ask your local shop for a copy of all four of her fabulous books.

Enjoy reading and, as always,

Happy Stitching,

Sheila

Back to School Memory

In the fall of 1997 my daughter, Garrett, started First Grade. I had started a tradition of a "Back-to-School" dress when she started 3-year old Preschool. Each year I made her a special dress to wear on her first day. And each dress had an apple on it somewhere. I am a planner, so I had decided on the dress early in the spring so I would have lots of time to finish before the big day.

But the best laid plans as you know can often go awry. My mother lost her battle with cancer that summer and I went into a tail spin. Even as I grieved I knew that life goes on. I worked to finish the dress that featured Shadow Embroidered apples on the front and back of the collar. I was running out of time and beginning to panic. A dear friend of mine, June Currier, offered



to do the embroidery. I hesitated. Wasn't my daughter supposed to have a dress done completely by her mother? Being older and wiser than me, June just patted my hand and took the collar home to embroider the apples. When she returned it to me two days later she smiled and said, "Now you tell everybody that you did this because I know you can, I'll keep the secret". I finished the dress and the first day of school was a success. June kept the secret and I was Super Mom.

A couple of years later June passed away. She never told anyone that she had helped me that year. I finished many other Back to School dresses for my daughter, complete with the traditional apple motif.

After reading Sheila's article about Shadow Embroidery my thoughts went back to that dress and my friend, June. It is a sweet and happy memory. I believe that is the blessing for anyone who sews. Each stitch holds a memory.

Plan early and ask for help when you need it.
Tami

BLACK IS BACK

AND BACKS ARE IMPORTANT, TOO!

ACTUALLY 'BLACK' HAS NEVER BEEN OUT OF STYLE. IT HAS FOREVER BEEN THE GO TO NEUTRAL THAT TRAVELS FROM CASUAL TO OFFICE TO THE MOST FORMAL OCCASIONS. AND BLACK IS EQUALLY BASIC IN CHILDREN'S WEAR, AS IT LOOKS GOOD ON ALMOST EVERY CHILD AND IS A FABULOUS SELECTION FOR FORMAL PORTRAITS. NOTHING IS AS STUNNING AS A LOVELY HEIRLOOM LACE COLLAR OVER A BLACK DRESS.

HERE WE SHOW TWO EXAMPLES OF BLACK ACCENTUATED WITH OUR E-56 WHITE SWISS ORGANDY TRIM. I CHOOSE THESE PARTICULAR PATTERNS BECAUSE THEY HAVE SOME INTEREST IN THE BACK OF THE GARMENT. LET'S FACE IT - CHILDREN ARE SEEN AS MUCH FROM THE BACK AS THE FRONT, SO WHY LEAVE THE BACK PLAIN! BOTH OF THESE PATTERNS FEATURE MOTHER OF PEARL SHANK BUTTONS IN THE BACK FOR INTEREST.

CHILDREN'S CORNER '*RENEE*' IS PERFECT FOR THIS ORGANDY RUFFLE AND THE SWEET SWISS PRINT FLORAL FABRIC ADDS A VERY FEMININE TOUCH. TRISHA'S TREASURES *MAKENZIE* IS ELEGANCE PERSONIFIED IN OUR SWISS NOBLEESE WITH THE ORGANDY TRIM PLEATED RATHER THAN RUFFLED. NOBLEESE IS A VERY DRESSY FABRIC SIMILAR TO FAILLE, BUT WITH THE RIBBING BEING SLIGHTLY LARGER.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND SAMPLES OF THESE LOVELY FABRICS, PLEASE CALL: BEAR THREADS, LTD @ 404-255-5083





THE SHADOW OF YOUR EMBROIDERY

Shadow Work has always been one of my favorite embroidery mediums. I love the play on color whether you are working with pastels or stronger palettes. And I particularly love mixing rich, dark colors of fabrics such as velvet, corduroy or woollens with Shadow embroidery, which in turn, softens the heavy colors and fibers. Shadow work is defined as a type of embroidery worked on sheer fabric so that the thread color from the back appears as a 'shadow' of color on the front. Generally, we think in terms of batiste or organdy, but linen and piques work well also. In particular our Swiss lined pique is a fabulous fabric for shadow work, as you can use the 'lines' of the pique to measure your stitches so that they are consistent and even! One thing for sure in this type of embroidery - you must be very neat, as, just as the colored thread shows, so will knots and other boo-boos!!! As always, practice makes perfect.

The 21st Century has provided us with sewing machine technology that allows us to work many embroidery mediums quicker. Ann Birchalls' precious daygown using Joy Welsh's (Appliqué for Kids) duck design is a lovely example. There is also shadow appliqué and shadow quilting. Not as well known, shadow quilting is a multi step process in which colored shapes of fabric are inserted between a foundation and a sheer top fabric. They are temporarily held in place with an adhesive while running or quilting stitches are sewn around the inserted fabric design pieces to permanently hold them. Then that entire piece is quilted with a backing and batting.

Another of my favorites is Madeira embroidery. Using a sheer fabric over a heavier fabric or darker color creates this shadow as well. Frankly nothing is more elegant than tone on tone, especially white on white, Madeira work using linen with fine Swiss Batiste or Swiss organdy. And, (a personal cringe!) Madeira work can be similarly created on the sewing machine or your hemstitching machine. Whatever your method, try one of these wonderful and beautiful mediums of embroidery on your next project. I promise you will be smitten with the results!

September Fun Facts

September is the 9th month of the year and marks the beginning of autumn in the Northern hemisphere and the start of spring in the Southern hemisphere.

The name September comes from the Latin *septem* for seven, since this was the seventh month of the Roman calendar. The month was named during a time when the calendar year began with March, which is why its name no longer corresponds with its placement in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. September starts on the same day of the week as December each year, but does not end on the same day of the week as any other month in the year.

September has three birth flowers: the forget-me-not, the morning glory and the aster. Forget-me-nots represent love and memories, asters represent love as well, and the morning glory represents unrequited love. These are all very passionate flowers.

The birth stone for the month is the sapphire. The sapphire represents clarity of thought, intuition, and peacefulness. In traditional medicine it is used to treat fevers and reduce inflammation. Sapphire reduces anxiety and procrastination and gives the wearer luck.

September 9th is National Teddy Bear Day



SHADOW WORK

by Margaret Pierce

Shadow work is a delicate embroidery usually worked on a sheer fabric. The stitching can be done from the front or back with a closed herringbone stitch. The criss-crossing of threads on the underside creates the look of an appliqué or "shadow" with back stitching surrounding the design on the top side. The use of an embroidery hoop is optional. However, the hoop helps to maintain an even tension.

The FABRICS used could be a 100% cotton such as organdy, batiste, lightweight linen, or silk. These are natural fiber fabrics which are preferred. The reason being is that as the needle penetrates the fabric, the fabric stays in place as the next stitch is worked to go back in the same hole. If synthetic or synthetic blends are used, the threads in the fabric remember to "pop" back in their original position and make it more difficult to see the hole for the next stitch.

Various NEEDLES can be used depending on your own choice and on the fabric you are using. A #10 embroidery crewel needle and a #7 between are popular choices as well as a #26 or #28 tapestry needle. Why a tapestry needle? With the blunt point, it is easy to separate the threads in the fabric when going back in the hole of the previous stitch.

THREADS which are effective are one strand of embroidery floss, one strand of embroidery floche (#16 or smaller), or one strand of silk embroidery thread.

TRACING THE DESIGN-

Useful marking tools to trace the design are a washable chalk pencil or a washable marking pen with a fine point.

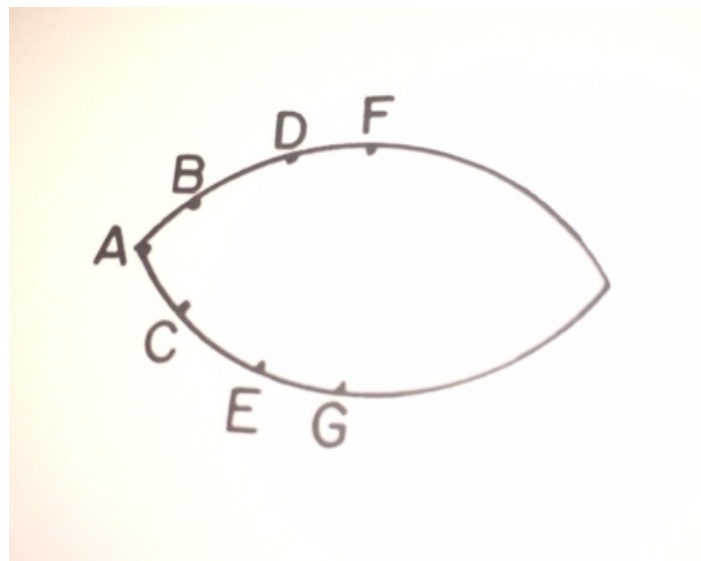
If stitching the design from the front, trace the design on the front. If stitching from the back side, trace the design on the back. HOWEVER, remember that the design will be reversed on the top side! This is particularly important if the design has a right and left side such as a monogram. The design can be completed stitching the remainder of the embroidery stitches on the front.

TO BEGIN STITCHING (from the back) –

Start with about an 18" length of thread in the needle with no knot. The stitches and tension should be even for a successful design.

Note: If right handed, the needle will always be pointed to the left with each stitch.

If left handed, the needle will always be pointed to the right with each stitch.



Following the diagram, stitch from B to A (needle goes in at B and emerges at A) with a stitch about 1/16" long. Leave a tail about an inch long.

Holding the tail down, stitch from C to A (exactly in the same hole-A). On the upper side, stitch from D to B, alternating from E to C and F to D.

Note: When working the first few stitches, hold the tail so it lies under those stitches to secure it. While stitching on the top side, the thread is held up above the needle. While stitching on the lower side, the thread is held down below the needle.

TO FINISH STITCHING-

To finish, weave the tail of the thread under the stitches close to the edge for about an inch to secure the thread in place.



helping those who enter our doors. I want this to be a soft place for women to land; a happy place. My employees share my vision. I truly believe this business was God-breathed, and we don't forget the opportunity and responsibility we have to serve women here."

Club meetings are held each Wednesday at no charge. The Sewing Room has an Embroidery Club, the Birmingham Chapter of the Smocking Arts Guild of America, a Serger Club, and a Quilt Club. Women come for refreshments and a demonstration of a new technique, a particular Baby Lock machine foot, or answers to questions they may have on projects they are working on. And on Mondays a growing group of enthusiastic heirloom sewers meets for a Sit and Sew.

The Sewing Room at Inverness Corners is approaching its third anniversary, and has quickly become the largest and most complete heirloom and children's store in the greater Birmingham, Alabama area. It is a purveyor of fine Swiss fabrics, French and Swiss laces and designer print fabrics, as well as classic and contemporary patterns for children. The Sewing Room is known for the number and the quality of its classes...ranging from authentic French hand sewing, smocking, tatting, garment construction by machine and by serger, machine appliqué and embroidery, and unique children's quilts designed by an on-staff designer. They also make custom garments and specialize in antique restoration, Christening gowns, Easter clothing, and children's wedding attire

Master teachers come to the store for teaching events. Wendy Schoen has been a popular teacher for embroidery enthusiasts, and many have learned the skills needed for authentic shadow work from her. Shadow work by machine has also been taught at The Sewing Room, and the response has been enthusiastic. Patsy's go-to designs for this type of embroidery have come from Appliqué for Kids (Joy Welsh), and each of those designs is sent with instructions to show you just how easy it is to accomplish a beautiful heirloom look with your embroidery machine in a fraction of the time required to complete this by hand.

Patsy Smith opened the store to satisfy the desire she had always had to own an heirloom shop, and to fulfill the need for a friendly, helpful store with quality products in her neighborhood. Now, with over 6500 friends on Facebook and a healthy following on its website, The Sewing Room is a bustling place serving a more global community. Patsy says, "The first thing Cyrethea, my floor manager, does every morning is check and fill the web orders. " Still," she says, "we aim to keep that neighborhood feel. I want this to be a place where women come for inspiration, knowledge, and friendship. I am blessed with the friendliest, most knowledgeable, professional staff of women who genuinely care about

Check out Patsy's shop online at www.patsyssewingroom.net on Facebook at The Sewing Room at Inverness Corners, or go by and visit with them in person at 1040 Inverness Corners, Hoover, AL 35242.



Visit us on the web at www.bearthreadslltd.com

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