

Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

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From The Editor –

Ghosts and Goblins Gone – Here Comes Santa Claus! What a busy fall we have had with football, fall festivals, stormy days and nights, and now preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas! If you are caught in holiday traffic (and you know you will be at some point!) start thinking of a couple of winter projects to stitch. Then while you out, pick up any needed supplies and you will be set to go when the first snow or ice storm hits. Hating to be the bearer of bad tidings, rumor has it that it is supposed to be a colder and wetter winter than last year. UGH! I already have my two major projects ready to go with a couple of back-ups just in case!



We all here at Bear Threads wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with gratefulness, and a joyous Christmas filled with its' true meaning. When the hustle and bustle begin to spoil the joy of the season, recall this Hap-Happiest song made famous by Andy Williams.

It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

*It's the most wonderful time of the year
With the kids jingle belling
And everyone telling you "Be of good
cheer"*

*It's the most wonderful time of the year
It's the hap-happiest season of all
With those holiday greetings and gay happy
meetings*

*When friends come to call
It's the hap-happiest season of all*

*There'll be parties for hosting
Marshmallows for toasting
And caroling out in the snow
There'll be scary ghost stories
And tales of the glories of
Christmases long, long ago
It's the most wonderful time of the year
There'll be much mistletoeing
And hearts will be glowing
When love ones are near
It's the most wonderful time of the year.*

Enjoy this issue full of trivia,
Happy Holidays and Happy Stitching

Sheila

Heirlooms In A Snap

Truth or Oxymoron?

This article is all about having really beautiful Heirloom clothing in a fraction of the time you might think. You know that, personally, I am all about fine handwork, however, I also subscribe to the theories of 'a time and place for everything' and 'rules are made to be broken'! So here we go...

Several of our lovely embroideries and laces come as 'fabric', meaning that they are available as 36 to 54 inch wide goods. One of these is our French lace (stock # L-308) which is woven as strips of insertion side by side. It is 33" wide and consists of 40 insertions within these 33 inches. It is the PERFECT lace to use for *Chery Williams Vintage Lace Dress*, so you don't have to sew all the lace insertions together. Simply lay your pattern out and mark the apex of the gore, cut the woven lace fabric between the insertions up to that point and proceed to zigzag the triangular fabric gore into the opening.



The same lace is also lovely as an apron or pinafore as shown in the Appenzell Pink Dress. (Note: Appenzell Pink is a peachy pink, not 'orange', and is quite popular as an alternative to peach.) The lace fabric also makes quick collars and pillows as you can see and especially effective when layered over a color. The cost is comparable to having purchased enough lace insertion yardage to sew your own fabric but you are labor free!





Our third example was found on E-bay! It is a vintage Christening gown made by a famous, now defunct Swiss company. It is completely our allover lace and lined in Swiss batiste. Note the pocket created by stitching the lining and lace together at the bottom to carry a ribbon. Clever idea, but someone did not think this through the ironing process!!! A nightmare, so I don't recommend it! But the raglan sleeves (See FYI in this issue) add interest with the lace strips meeting at an angle. I think this would be particularly appropriate for a boy gown. And, it allows the gown to be worn by babies of more varying sizes, by not limiting the shoulder width.

Another option is embroidered Swiss fabrics, which come in widths of 54". These fabrics are embroidered on our Bearissima Batiste. Our elegant yet simple white dress is made of E-686, accented with blue Swiss organdy, a sweet Maline lace and finished with a rich blue velvet sash. Again the cost factor is in line with having purchased yards and yards of entredeux and lace, and the time for labor is kept at a minimum. Besides, another theory to which I subscribe is, 'less is more', and I really like to keep designs simple and let the fabrics and laces make their individual statements. In my 35 plus years in this field, I have seen many a garment which reminded me of the interior decorator who, in one room, tried to put every idea she ever had!





Susie, our sewing bear, is showing you our Batiste with rose embroidered dots. It is sweet for Christmas, Valentine or summer beach time. Speaking of monograms elsewhere in this issue, this dress would be perfect for a monogram on the front. Bear Threads also carries a number of antique allover laces of various patterns. Note in the photo the tissue pack cover and lovely pillow. All of these gift items can be made in just a few minutes with these lovely allover fabrics.



Quick gifts can be made as we did with E-690. This particular fabric embroidered in broderie anglaise style, is a testament to our quality of embroideries. There are absolutely no 'feathers' or loose threads – just clean, beautiful embroidery. Our tissue jacket layers the broderie anglaise over a medium blue Silky Cotton to allow the embroidered fabric to show its' beauty.

SO! In conclusion, we were not speaking of an oxymoron at all, as you truly can have beautiful heirlooms in a snap, if you use the right fabrics.

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Sheila T. Nicol, Designs

- Monograms - Historically and Today

One of the oldest forms of identification, and recognized throughout the world, the monogram typically is a set of letters which are combined into a decorative mark that identifies a person or family. Of Latin origin, monogram, is derived from *mono-gramma*.



Monograms first appeared on Greek and Roman coins as early as 350BC. This was the first currency and was a transition from the barter system to the beginnings of the creation of money. Some of the earliest examples were of coins bearing the initials of the Greek cities who issued them. Later monograms developed to identify the valuable property of royalty such as silver, gold and other precious metal goods. Eventually, it became common to see an aristocrat's monogram emblazoned on a variety of items from weaponry and armor to household items, royal banners and coats of arms.

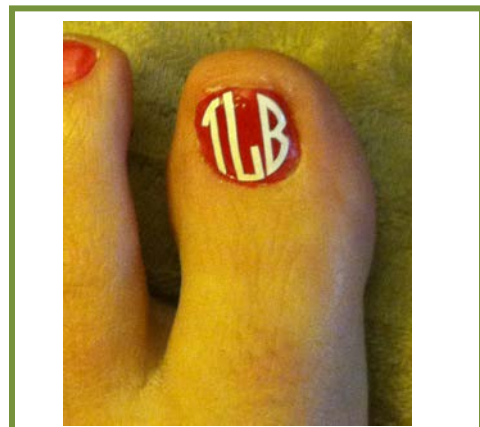
In the Middle Ages well-to-do families of Europe put their private 'mark' of ownership on their houses and possessions that went with the item to future owners. This was close to what we know today as a 'brand' that is used to mark cattle or timber. Being easier to work with, textiles enjoyed a much more artistic approach. In the middle Ages monograms took on a royal significance. Monarchs used monograms as royal signatures, identifying organizations connected to the rulers by placing their 'stamp' on such things as police badges, coins or any item they wished to be recognized as belonging to royalty. It was not uncommon for artists to use monograms on their paintings and sculptures as signatures identifying their work.

Early monograms consisted of only two initials. The three-initial monogram, which is common today, did not gain popularity until the 18th century. (See our Trivia column this month for Royal monogram update on the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge). As far back as the 18th c. it became common to mark linens with the initials of their owner, largely in order to identify them as laundering was a collective, communal task. Often you will find very old linens embroidered in red as

madder was the most common, most durable and the least expensive dye available.

Starting in the mid-19th century in the continental European countries most girls were taught at school to sew and embroider. A distinction was made in marking linens between utilitarian work made with 'point de marque' and 'white embroidery'. White embroidery or 'Whitework' was a means of not only embellishing the piece but also a manner of proving the talent, refinement and social stature of the woman. Young girls generally began their apprenticeship in sewing and embroidery at the tender age of five or six years and at the age of 14 they would begin the preparation of their 'trousseau'. At this time members of the bourgeoisie were eager to show off their success and power, and embroidered monograms became a symbol of status. These competing talents of embroideresses and the sophistication of their designs made for some true masterpieces of hand work!

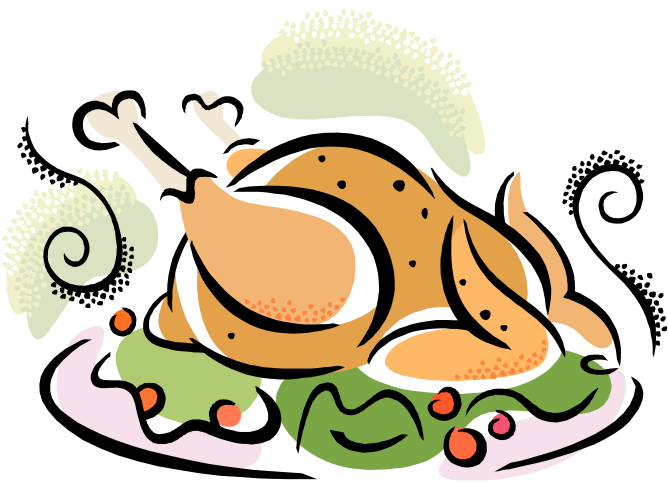
While monograms have had a long history and a close connection to royalty and other wealthy individuals, this is no longer the case. Today, everything can be monogrammed from towels, to luggage and from pens to stationary. Many folk today even drive automobiles with their monogram on the rear or side window!



**Monograms are
everywhere - even on
your toes!**

Trivia The Cambridge's Monogram

Contemporary British Royalty has now adapted a 2 letter monogram with a combination with the groom's first initial followed by the bride's first initial. Unfortunately for the Duke and Duchess, that format would have resulted in their monogram being WC, which for those of you who might not know is, in Europe, the equivalent of 'restroom' in America. It literally means 'water closet'! Because of this, souvenir makers decided to flip the initials resulting in a monogram of CW.....and now you know!



FYI

The Raglan Sleeve

The raglan sleeve has the distinguishing characteristic as to extend in one piece fully to the collar, leaving a diagonal seam from underarm to the collarbone.

However, initially, "raglan" referred to a garment, specifically an overcoat, named after Lord Raglan, a British general in the Crimea. The garment was unusual in that the sleeves continued in one piece up to the neck, producing a larger, looser armhole that suited the one-armed general.

FitzRoy James Henry Somerset, the 1st Baron Raglan, wore this style coat after the loss of his arm in the Battle of Waterloo. And now you know....

Turkey Fun Facts

- 91% of Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving
- About 280 million turkeys are sold annually for Thanksgiving, which is about 7 billion pounds of Turkey and about \$3 billion dollars in sales
- About 20% of all cranberries that are consumed in the US per year are eaten on Thanksgiving

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