

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 8 – Issue 9 October 2016

## From The Editor –

Cool nights and warm days have arrived. This always brings out our enthusiasm for sewing. There is still time for Christmas sewing, so check the woodpile, thread a needle and put on a pot of cocoa. Time to sew!

I am finishing the study on color in embroidery this issue. I have also included a 'helpful hints' for selecting threads. We forget that while many of you are proficient at sewing, we have many beginners and novices out there. Hopefully, this will help them plan their next project.

Finally, our liquidation sale continues. Many of you have visited us here in Atlanta, and know how many hundreds of items we have that are not even on the website. Of the thousands of items we offer, there are only a handful that are out of stock. Assume nothing, and give us a call or come to Atlanta – BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN APPOINTMENT – YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED!

If you need further information, please contact us.

Enjoy this issue, and beware the spooks and goblins.

Happy Halloween and Happy Stitching,

*Sheila*

## OCTOBER QUOTE

“With the qualities of cleanliness, affection, patience, dignity and courage that cats have, how many of us, I ask you, would be capable of becoming cats?”

Fernand Mery



# COLOR IN EMBROIDERY

## PART II

### “COLOR, FABRIC AND THREADS”

No amount of study or college degree in art or design can change your personal preferences. Here I am only attempting to give you some building blocks to make educated choices based on simple design questions. Today we are blessed with so many choices of embroidery fibers, not to mention the technical abilities to mix an endless array of colors from both natural and chemical sources. Embroidery fibers today consist of choices in silks, cottons, wools, gold and other manmade fibers. Sizes range from the smallest of sewing threads, to ribbons and cordonnets.

First, we begin by asking ourselves a few questions regarding our project. What is the ground of our embroidery? Is it wool, cotton, velvet, chiffon, satin, silk or any of many manmade fabrics? Is the fabric folded, layered, pleated? Is it a dark, medium or light color? What are we trying to convey - whimsical, serious, religious or contemporary art?

In answer to the above, velvets and pleated or folded fabrics create shadows, meaning you might need to brighten your embroidery color choices or fibers. Lighter weight fabrics would not support metallics or wools either in both a literal manner or by contrast. Whimsical embroidery on play clothes would not justify silk embroidery floss such as Glorianna. Silks definitely fade and bleed and are relatively quite expensive! Is your project to be hung and admired, or washed and enjoyed by your grandchildren? Be VERY CAREFUL of embroidery threads that do not wash for whatever reason!

Is this to be a monochromatic work which would rely more on the texture of the threads and the stitch for contrast, rather than the color. Below is a very useful experiment well worth the time to work and put in your reference book. Besides the color changes below, try different stitches in your design, such as buttonhole stitch, chain, and backstitch. You will be absolutely amazed with the variance of the results!

Take a very small design and stitch it in:

- 1) Bright colors
- 2) Subdued colors
- 3) All white or all black
- 4) One color only on an opposite colored ground
- 5) Tones of one color on a solid ground

Remember tones of a color are important and generally you want to keep the same ‘tone’ in all colors. In other words, don’t mix neon colors with ‘Williamsburg’ colors, etc.

Of course the old adage always comes into play: ***“Rules are made to be broken”***. Not every rule applies to every project. Remember the best recipes came from kitchens of cooks willing to experiment.

So experiment, have fun and don’t be afraid to be different....just remember the basics!

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## FYI

# Perfect thread color?

For many, like myself, much of the pleasure of a sewing project is the planning and implementation, and then, finally, that last stitch. But sometimes we become bogged down in the planning stage, trying to make sure we have made the correct decisions of design, plate, fabric, embroidery colors and yes, thread. As we talked about in the enclosed article, thread texture, depth of color, size and fiber content all contribute to the overall 'look' of the finished project. But the actual thread color used for the construction – even seams not intended to be seen – is oh so important as well. So here are some general rules to help, the next time you are backed into 'a stitching corner'.

Solid color fabric is pretty much a cinch, right? But sometimes it is just impossible to find the exact match. In that case, always choose a shade slightly darker than the fabric. The thread will sew in lighter. And consequently if you choose a lighter shade it would stand out, which is not what you wanted. Print fabrics are a tad more challenging. All print fabric has a dominant color, whether it is a background color with

a small print, or a large print with little background. Choose a color thread that matches the predominant color whether background or print.

Also, when selecting thread, choose a thread with a finish similar to the fabric of your project. For example, avoid shiny threads or those with glitter or metallic for matte cottons.

Top stitching is a different subject, as you want that to be an accent and it needs to 'pop'. In this case choose a color that will contrast to the other colors of the print or ground, and here you might choose a metallic or other texture appropriate for your project.

Finally, unlike fine wines, thread does not age well. So avoid the temptation to delve into the stash Grandma left you. Check older threads to see how easily they break, and avoid threads that are lumpy or not otherwise smooth to the fingers.

And now you know.....

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