

# Bear in Mind

An electronic newsletter from Bear Threads Ltd.

Volume 11 – Issue 6/7 June/July 2019

## From The Editor –

End of school parties, graduations, weddings, vacations and Memorial Day BBQ's have probably taken up your calendar the past few weeks. But I hope you have found some time to plan your summer sewing projects, whether for the car, beach, poolside or mountains. As I have reminded you in the past, I shall once again – be very careful when leaving sewing projects in the sun or hot car. Dark fabrics can bleed when subjected to heat and humidity and it is very difficult or impossible to remove this 'over dye'. This is also true for dark colors of embroidery floss or yarn. In addition, if you are a fan of beeswax it can melt in a short time when exposed to heat!

Remember that our Creative Sewing Market is in early September, Sunday September 8 to be exact. It will be at the Marriott Hotel in Birmingham as usual, and you may contact McCarn Enterprises for more information and to register.

From all of us at Bear Threads, have a wonderful and safe summer, enjoy some summer stitching and see you in August!

Happy Stitching,

*Sheila*



# **AND NOW YOU KNOW!!!**

## **TO PREWASH OR NOT TO PREWASH!**

**And**

### **RIGHT OR WRONG?**

By now you know this column addresses those questions that come through our office during the span of a month or so...they never end as our customers are ever so curious. This month we address to 'prewash or not to prewash', and 'right or wrong'.

#### To Prewash or Not to Prewash!

I have seen too many sewers make serious mistakes in thinking they were caring for their fabrics when in fact they were ruining the integrity and beauty thereof!

While not to sound as a snob, one big consideration to this long running question of prewashing is the quality of fabric. There is truth to the old adage of 'you get what you pay for'! Many fabric manufacturers are running such massive amounts of fabric they could not possibly follow the many steps the Swiss do in their weaving process. Most all fabrics are woven from threads that are much coarser and not as finely processed as the fine Swiss and French threads. The fabric is then stamped with the pattern, also known as screen printing. The design may be woven into the fabric, but again, the threads contain a lot of what is termed *over dye* and this results in the strong smell you often get from printed garment and quilting fabrics.

The process of the manufacture of Swiss fabrics and embroideries, as well as French laces is so intense there is no need to be concerned with any other treatment. There are many washing and bleaching processes during the manufacturer of Swiss Fabrics that far exceed what you might think needs to be done at home.

First of all, the Swiss Fabrics are loomed from threads that have been highly processed and combed. After the fabric is woven, it is bleached, and then dyed, if needed, to the required color.

If the fabric is to be used for embroideries, after it is removed from the loom it is bleached and sent to the embroidery house. It may be embroidered in white, or a color. In industries other than our Heirloom Sewing, it may then be dyed so that the fabric and embroidery are all one color.

Bear Threads fabrics then receive a finish called a *super silk finish*. This gives our fabrics the wonderful sheen and hand that we all love. By prewashing these fabrics in hot water you run the risk of removing this finish and jeopardizing the beauty you have paid for. The *super silk finish* will last the life of the garment IF cared for properly by washing in cold water with a mild soap. Unfortunately, those sewers who subscribe to the theory of prewashing intentionally think they should wash the fabric in hot water to induce shrinkage – which if any occurred, it was many, many steps ago in a mill in Switzerland!!!

French laces are stitched on a loom which uses graphite (as in your pencil lead) as a lubricant. After the laces are woven they are then bleached in a hot water bath to remove the excess graphite. This process is quite sufficient for these laces.

#### Right or Wrong!

Again a lot of this determination has to do with the quality of the fabrics! I have heard and read of many factors one can use to come to a conclusion on this subject, but there are flaws in most of these theories. The selvedge cannot be a determining factor as the holes left from the fabrics' attachment to the loom may be too small for the naked eye. Also, many fabrics are woven and later embroidered which means the fabric is removed from one loom and put onto another resulting in

several sets of holes! Any printing on the selvedge cannot be a determining factor as most mills charge extra for printing on the selvedge such as 'Made in Switzerland'! Generally speaking, Bear Threads, chooses not to spend that extra money which must be passed along to the buyer and ultimately the home sewer. Many fabrics such as damasks are not finished and have reverse patterns on the flip side. Either side then may be used as the 'right' side but one must be VERY CAREFUL to be consistent in the construction of a garment. Printed fabrics are easy to determine while fabrics with a woven pattern are more difficult. Some fabrics have a finish applied on the right side while others such as organdy are totally submerged in a bath so that the finish is throughout.

So I am sorry to say this is not a black and white answer. Only your experience and preference are the final determinate!

Copyright 2019  
Sheila T. Nicol Designs

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

As you know, we combine the June and July issues of *Bear In Mind*, knowing that many of you are on Holiday Vacations to various corners of the earth. All of us here at Bear Threads, Ltd. join our bears Ted and Tish, in wishing you safe travels whether you are boating, yachting, camping or sightseeing. As you embark on your summer journey keep this quote in mind.

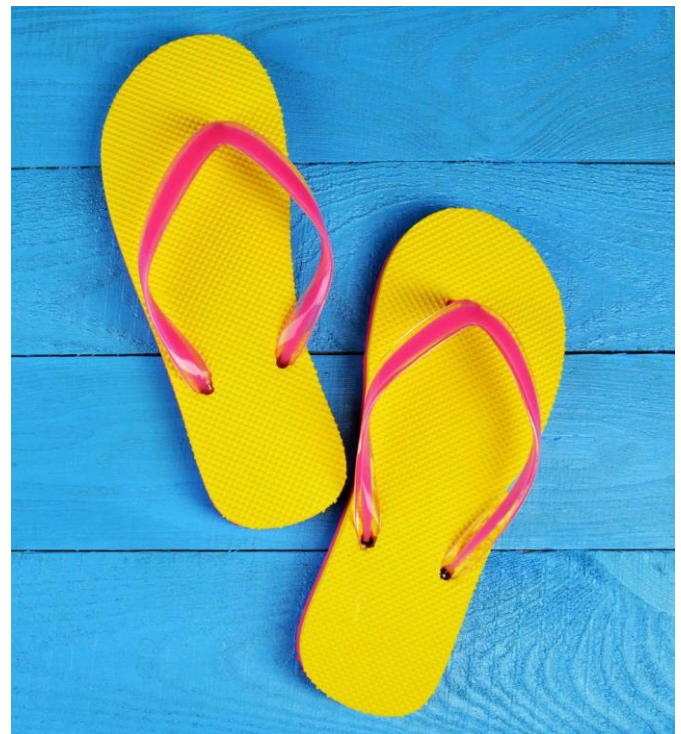
“One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.”

- Henry Miller



## 20 Fun Facts about Summer:

1. The first modern Olympic Games were held in the summer in 1896 in Athens, Greece.
2. The first day of summer is between June 20th and June 22nd every year. The first day of summer is called the summer solstice, and the day varies due to the Earth's rotation not exactly reflecting our calendar year.
3. The last day of summer is September 20th.
4. Watermelon is one of summer's best summer treats. Did you know that watermelons are not a fruit, but a vegetable instead? They belong to the cucumber family of vegetables.
5. The Eiffel tower actually grows in the heat of the summer. Due to the iron expanding, the tower grows about 6 inches every summer.
6. If you love ice cream, the summer season should be your favorite. July is national ice cream month.
7. Another interesting fact about summer is that television shows used to only be reruns during the summer months. The idea being that everyone was outside enjoying the weather.
8. A June fun fact is that the month of June is named after the Roman goddess Juno.
9. The first women's bathing suit was created in the 1800's. It came with a pair of bloomers.
10. The "dog days of summer" refer to the dates from July 3rd to August 11th. They are named so after the Sirius the Dog Star. This star is located in the constellation of Canis Major.
11. Frisbees, invented in the 1870's as a pie plate, but in the 1940's, college students began throwing them around. They have since stopped being used for pie plates and are now a summertime staple.
12. For a July fun fact, Roman general Marc Antony named the month of July after Julius Caesar.
13. July is national blueberry month.
14. The longest day of the year is on the summer solstice.
15. Mosquitos are most prevalent during summer months. Mosquitos have been on earth for more than 30 million years.
16. Most theme and water parks are on a summer seasonal schedule. Most amusement parks have a full time season from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
17. August was named after Julius Caesar's nephew. He had received the title of "Augustus" which means "reverend".
18. The first National Spelling Bee was held on June 17th, 1825.
19. More thunderstorms occur during summer than any other time of year. They are also take place more commonly in the south east of England.
20. Ice pops were invented in 1905 by an 11-year-old boy.



Visit us on the web at [www.bearthreadsltd.com](http://www.bearthreadsltd.com)

To place an order contact us at 404-255-5083 or 404-255-4001 fax

"Bear in Mind" articles are available on our website. Encourage your customers to check out our website for information and inspiration.