Keeping Track

Time Marches On

President's Message

Well, it is March already! Where did January and February go? I must admit the early darkness and rainy days (we need more days like that!) kept me glued to my sewing house. I got quite a few things done and organized. My “hands on the fabric and off the food” mantra is working well. I am feeling better limiting “white foods” and eating less. Imagine!

Las Vegas was a wonderful road trip. Lynn was my car passenger and we took our time going and coming home. We stopped in Bakersfield and Tehachapi on the trip down. Fabric stores and antiques of course. Returning home we stopped in Clovis and prowled the antique malls and the fabric store. We each found a few treasures and had a good chat the whole way. Smock Across America was fun. I enjoyed my classes and have one thing to finish. Clever me, I also took a notebook class so, no UFO! The hotel served breakfast which was the best idea yet! Not having to look for food when you are barely awake and then have to be in class was a definite plus. Someone was thinking about that option when they booked The Embassy Suites.

The group was not large and made for fun in classes and at the banquet. There was table visiting, laughing and of course cheering for those baskets. Catherine, Ingrid and Joanne all came up with winning tickets. Because it was a small group, we knew many of the attendees and cheered them on as they won.

Thank you to everyone who stitched our favors at the January meeting. They were well received at lunch on Friday. Pam, Ingrid, Lynn and I checked out a few of the casinos. Not a nickel did we leave as we passed through to the shopping areas. Sunday afternoon we did make plans to see Cirque de Soleil, Michael Jackson One. It was good, we enjoyed the loud music and the very limber and enthusiastic dancers. The weather before we got to Las Vegas had been warm except for the one night of snow flurries. Of course we arrived to wind, clouds and by Sunday a steady rain. Good thing they have many available taxis as none of us were prepared for rain. All in all, I would say a good time was had by all.
I am making a slow recovery from the time change. My usual late nights have me up even later and the mornings …well I just don’t wake up! I hope I will be better adjusted soon as I have much to do and cannot afford to be dragging my tail feathers!

I hope you all are planning and/or in process with your ”Gloria challenge”. I have my thinking cap on and better make up my mind soon as the items are due at the April meeting. That will be a very full meeting. We will be making a Dorset button and we will have the SAGA trunk show.

Thank You to everyone for sewing Wee Care. We have already been off to a good start this year. Denise will be going to Stanford soon for a delivery of those items completed. Yay! Please remember if you love to smock and hate to finish…we have ”people” to help with that so, please just let Denise or me know.

Spring is arriving soon. Oh dear my weeds look awful but, I would rather sew! I am thinking about Chicago in July but might hold out for Pennsylvania in the Fall. June is busy for me and I might need July to recover!

The best to everyone and remember…sew, sew, and sew.

Irene

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Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to Gloria who celebrates on April 4th,
to Denise who celebrates on April 9th, and to Kathy P who celebrates on April 30th.
Happy Birthday to Lucie who celebrates on May 10th.
Happy Birthday ladies!
Wee Care
It's been a very busy winter for the Wee Care program and our inventory has grown beyond the goals we set for the first Quarter of 2015.

The January workshop was attended by Gloria, Beverly, Gladys, Lucie, Fran, Lois, and myself. As you can see from the pictures we smocked and sewed in the pleasant company of friends. We helped each other with pointers and techniques for smocking and finishing garments.

Since our last newsletter we've added 20 gowns/bonnets to our Wee care inventory. We've matched most of those up with a blanket from our inventory and I am trying to coordinate with my Stanford contact to make a delivery as soon as possible. Right now, we have 28 full layettes ready to go. Thank you to everyone for your extra effort this winter.
Irene and Ingrid also continue to bring knitted hats that have been completed by their knitting friends. Thank you so much for these little cuties. We have 71 in our inventory to include in the upcoming delivery. They are really appreciated by the Stanford team.

Congratulations to Beverly Vance - the winner of the December raffle draw which was drawn at the January meeting. Beverly has been one of our biggest contributors to the Wee Care program and we thank you for all your beautiful work.

Looking forward to seeing all who can come at the next workshop. Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 11th from 9am to 2pm. We will be working on blankets for the most part but, you are always welcome to drop in with your embroidery thread and needle ready to smock. I will have pleated gowns on hand for those who would like to smock.

Denise
A Look Back/A Look Ahead

Our chapter is very fortunate to have so many members not only creating beautiful items with smocking and fine sewing but also willing to share their expertise with the rest of us during our meetings. Over the months we will have the following:

**January:** Thank you to all the stitchers who helped with the sewing of favors at the January meeting and at other times. Margaret did a great job of co-ordinating our efforts that were well received in Las Vegas. There are a few left that I will bring to meeting.

**February:** Fran co-ordinated our needle case project. The pattern was originally from our own Carol who got it years back from a woman who taught her sewing. Thank you to both for sharing.

**March:** Lois will share her huckweaving skills as we complete a hand towel.

We'll be doing Swedish weaving on huck toweling at our March meeting. Kits will include the toweling, #3 perle cotton and directions. If you have tapestry needles sized 16-22, bring those; otherwise I will have a variety of tapestry needles available. Also bring scissors and perhaps a light source. I prefer the #3 perle cotton, but if you'd rather bring your own colors, double strands of #5 cotton or even 6 strands of embroidery floss will work too. Kit cost: $1.00.

Even after a long day, this is a totally non-threatening project to work on. Please join us!

Lois

**April:** Reba will present a workshop on Dorset buttons. The brief history of Dorset buttons, the class description, supply list and kit fee follows.

**May:** Stash Bash – measure and mark your yardage and include fabric type as well as price for each piece you wish to sell. Mark all other items as well. Proceeds go to the education fund for CCC.
June: Carol will lead and fully demonstrate the process for care and feeding for our overworked pleaters. Bring your pleater and any questions you have.

July: Ingrid will share a ribbon work project. Details to follow.

We greatly appreciate the generosity of members that share their skills and hope that other members will volunteer to help us broaden our knowledge in any area. Please contact Margaret if you wish to present a short program to start off our meetings.

Margaret

Dorset Buttons

A (Relatively) Short History

Reba Siero

Buttony is the manufacture of buttons for clothing. It can be singled out as almost a Dorset speciality. Before the 15th century, buttons were not made in England and all clothing was fastened using just a tie-string. Abraham Case was stationed in France and Belgium while in the Army and was impressed by the skill and high standard of the buttoner’s art in those countries. When he left the army, he settled in the south of England, in Shaftesbury, Dorset in 1622 and soon set up his own buttony business. It became the foremost Dorset industry by the beginning of the 18th century.
Shaftesbury is in North Dorset in the south of England.

At the peak of the industry, over 100 different types of buttons were being made, marketed and shipped abroad. It was a thriving means of earning a living for many rural dwellers, employing thousands of women and children and worth £12,000 per year. These workers would bring their buttons to their local depots on “button days” to get paid, either in barter or cash. A master buttoner could make up to 144 buttons a day and receive 3 shillings 9 pence for them.

The earliest buttons were mainly of two types called “High Tops” and “Knobs” made from the horn of Dorset rams. A disc of horn was covered with a piece of linen then worked all over with fine linen thread, creating a conical knob shape depending on the button style required. High tops were used as the buttons for gents waistcoats. It is appropriate to indicate at this point that that icon of Dorset, the sheep, not only provided the wool for woolen garments but also the backing material for the “roundels” invented to fasten them with!

There are four combinations of fabric, thread, horn and wire that went into the making of Dorset Buttons.

1. Sheep’s horn (from Dorset rams), fabric and thread were used in High Tops and Dorset Knobs.
2. Fabric and thread only were used for Birds Eyes.
3. Wire, fabric and thread were used for Singletons.
4. Wire and thread were used for Cartwheels and Crosswheels.

The finished buttons were then mounted onto cards for sale. “A-1” quality buttons were mounted onto pink cards and reserved exclusively for export. “Seconds” were put onto dark blue cards while those of
the poorest quality of all were fastened to yellow cards. All buttons other than those of the finest quality were reserved for the domestic market. Any dirty buttons were boiled in a linen bag before mounting.

The Case family grew their business through several generations, with the grandson developing the wire-ring button. At Blandford, linen shirt buttons were made, as well as the native style called the Blandford Cartwheel. The town’s Huguenot lace industry was then in decline, but the button makers found a use for the fine lace thread.

The middle of the 19th century brought machinery to manufacture buttons, virtually wiping out the Dorset button industry. It had a short revival in the early 20th century that was cut short by WWI. A second revival has been led by members of the Women’s Institute at Verwood, UK. It is based on the wire-ring button types. “Casting” is done by buttonhole stitching closely all around the ring. The buttonholed ridge is then turned to the inside. This is called “slicking”. Then “laying” creates the spokes of a wheel, which are secured at the center by a cross-stitch. “Rounding” is done in a variety of designs.

We will learn to how to make a Dorset Crosswheel button at our April 28th meeting.

A kit fee of $1.50 will provide you with all the materials and equipment to make one button. It will include one 28.5 mm (1 1/8”) plastic ring, 2.5 m (~2.5 yd) of #5 perle cotton, one size 22 tapestry needle and one size 20 chenille needle. An extra ring and length of pearl cotton will be another $0.50.

If you wish to bring your own materials, please do! Maybe you have a set of buttons in mind for a project – bring the materials along and learn to make some special buttons for it. The needles required are a blunt tip (tapestry) needle and a sharp tip needle in sizes that work with the thread or yarn that will be used. Feel free to email me at rebasiero@yahoo.com to determine what you may need to create your own buttons. These buttons can cover the range from traditional usage to art pieces.
Las Vegas Smock Across America

Red Design Show items, class with Judith Adams and smocking in the lobby at lunch break:
Las Vegas Banquet

Catherine won our basket. Ingrid won basket donated by Lynn. Joanne Paine won the SandCastle Basket that contained Ethel M chocolates from Las Vegas (and she shared them with all of us!).
Tribute to Beverley Sheldrick
Our dear friend and teacher, Beverley Sheldrick, passed away in New Zealand on December 20th, 2014. She was beloved to many among the Cable Car Cablers. Here is just a sampling of the beautiful silk ribbon embroidery and heirloom sewing that Beverley inspired us to create:
Smock Across America
Chicago - July 16-19, 2015
Valley Forge - October 8-11, 2015
See SAGA website for details
www.smocking.org

Sit & Sew in Santa Barbara
April 24-27, 2015
June 26-29,30?, 2015
http://www.vaune.com

Artisan Academy in Santa Barbara
with Vaune and Cindy
for those who plan ahead!
August 19-24 2015
August 17-22 2016

Lace Museum Sale
March 20-21, 2015
Details at:
www.thelacemuseum.org/
The current display, Lacy Beginnings,
runs through June 20 and features baby gowns
and items.

Quilt San Francisco
San Francisco Quilters Guild
March 20-21, 2015
Event Center at St. Mary’s
San Francisco, CA
http://www.sfquiltersguild.org/page.php?ID=49

High Style
Legion of Honor
The Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection
March 14-July 19, 2015
https://legionofhonor.famsf.org/highstyle

Hillsborough Antique Show
April 24-26, 2015
San Mateo, CA
http://www.hillsboroughantiqueshow.com/ dates.html

Maker Faire Bay Area
May 16-17, 2015
San Mateo County Event Center
http://makerfaire.com

San Mateo County Fair
June 6-14, 2015
Entry paperwork due May 5th.
Items delivered May 26 and 27.
CCC day at the fair is Sunday, June 7th. Email
Ingrid to be on ticket list.
https://sanmateocountyfair.com

Refreshments
March Rosemary
April Lois
May Jill
June Catherine
July Beverly
August Gloria
September Christie
October Reba
November Ingrid
December Tea Time!
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The purpose of the Smocking Arts Guild Of America is to preserve and foster the art of smocking and related needlework for future generations through education, communication and quality workmanship.