Meeting on the second Monday of each month, September through June, at the Arnold Mills Community House, 75 Hillside Road, Cumberland, R.I.  (Directions: Route 295 to Route 114 N, then about 2 miles to Hillside Road.)

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Yankee Friends,

Many thanks to Cindy for showing us the stitches for Debbie Glenn's pocketbook. Have you got your squares all done? This month she will show us how to put it together! Also Thank you to Kathy Dacey for the pocketbook handles!

Folks, we are still looking for a new Yankee President. I hope someone is willing to accept the job, or we are in jeopardy of losing this wonderful club that has taught me so many sewing things. I will be Vice President but cannot commit to doing the President role for another year. As it is, I feel bad with my work schedule and helping my mom at the orchard that I haven't done a good job being the President.* Please know I have given you my best that I could. I love all of you members - you are all like my family so please, please someone take the Presidency. You won't be alone! I'll be there to help you along with the Board!! Also, many thanks to all of our Board members who have done a fabulous job making Yankee a great SAGA chapter!! I couldn't have done it without you!! Also many thanks to all who have done the programs!!

We are still looking for a volunteer to head up the nominating committee, and call folks to do the rest of the different jobs we need on the board. Thank you to those who are staying on and those who volunteered for the open positions.

Hope you all are doing your spring cleaning for our yard sale items for June. I have a little pile of things! LOL 😊

See you all at the May meeting!

Sincerely,
Sandi

*Editor’s Note: Yes, you have done a good job, so stop putting yourself down! You’re our ray of Sandi sunshine!
Our May Program: Smocked Block Purse Continued

We’ll be working on the assembly and finishing of the Smocked Block Purse this month. If you haven’t kept up, that’s perfectly fine! Those of us who’ve been working on the project will cover some tips to get you going and/or finished!

Nominating Committee for 2016-2017:
At the April meeting, our Nominating Committee was discussed. Several members offered to retain their positions for next year; however, there are slots which still need volunteers. Please be receptive when someone from the Nominating Committee calls you! Many hands make the load lighter!

REMININDER: Yard Sale in June!

It’s that happy time of year again... for our Yankee Chapter yard sale! Come one, come all and bring your “stuff” (plus some cash to buy other people’s stuff too)!

We’ll be opening up the Community House and starting setup at 6:30 sharp. If you’re bringing a lot of things for the sale, please try to arrive as early as possible so that Ruthann, Donna and Karen will have plenty of time to arrange the sale items.

Any contributions are cheerfully accepted, however sewing items are always the most coveted of the goods!

So Cute!
“A Doll Quilt for Non-Quilters”

This looks like a great project to do with the kids this summer! Use fat quarters to make adorable and simple doll quilts. There are so many cute prints in fat quarters today, you may have to make several!

Find the instructions here:
http://www.pensebrox.com/doll-quilt/

Isolette Covers Needed!
Sharon Simoneau reported at the April meeting that the hospital is always in need of isolette covers for the NICU. The standard size is 40” x 40”. This would be a nice addition to our service project. If anyone would like to make the isolette covers, please feel free to do so, and bring them to the meeting so that we can get them to the hospital.

REMINDER: YANKEE CHAPTER CONVENTION BASKET
Seeking Rhode Island-themed items for our basket! Please bring to the meeting!

To all of our members who are Moms and Grandmothers… and to all of us who are Aunties too!
My Smocked Block Purse Adventure – or, That Darned Bag!
By Donna Costa

Pardon me folks, but this is going to be a LONG story, that hopefully heads toward a good outcome! You all know that I’ve been excited for months about making this Smocked Block Purse. I couldn’t wait to get my pattern (thanks Jane for ordering them). Once I received it, I read through it a few times. Although there was a lot which didn’t make sense at that point, off I went into my fabric stash to pick out some good coordinates (after deciding to make View 3). I found a bunch of really pretty cotton quilting fabrics that would make an awesome purse, in mostly orange and yellow tones with a bit of black for accent. I also have a stash of plastic and wooden purse handles that I’ve picked up in thrift shops over these many years, and I found a set that matched…hurray! And so the adventure began.

But something was just not “clicking” in my brain with the instructions. Don’t get me wrong, I am in no way criticizing Debbie’s pattern. I’ve used many of her patterns over the years and loved them all. But I just did not have a good grasp of how to do these designs. (I blame old age and knowledge overload…!) That meant it was time for a pit-stop in my library. I’ve got to have a book about fabric manipulation somewhere! I actually had three; the first was the classic book published by Lacis, Smocking & Fabric Manipulation by Jules & Kaethe Kliot. Unfortunately, that one wasn’t much help in making this particular project, although I did manage to find a ton of ideas for using this technique on clothing… but no, don’t get sidetracked! Next I found The Art of Manipulating Fabric by Collette Wolff. She covers a whole lot of territory in this book including just about every method of smocking or gathering fabric. Wolff calls this technique “North American Smocking”, and her diagrams were reasonably useful. Again, had to force myself not to be thrown off-course because of all the fabulous ideas. But the most helpful instructions came from an unlikely source — a very small leaflet by Jerry Stocks (some of you may remember her from “back in the day”) called Fabric Manipulation for Adult Clothing, published in 1988. The way she described the techniques, and her diagrams, really “spoke” to me and all of a sudden, it all made sense. I couldn’t wait to grab my fabric and get going! I draw my grids with a washout pen and completed my three separate pieces with three different designs. Aside from a couple of little “whoopsies”, they looked good. Now to soak them in water to get rid of the markings.

Cue the sad trumpet music…. Wah wah waaaaah! Once they were all washed nicely, my fabrics totally wimped out! They were sadly wrinkled, and you couldn’t even see all of my hard work! Bummer. (Ruthann pointed out that this problem could have been solved ahead of time by attaching a lightweight interfacing to the back of each piece before it was smocked. Yep, that would have worked great, if I’d thought of it!)

Back to the stash I went, to start all over again. I pulled out a bunch of fabrics and started looking for something with a lot more “body” so that my awesome smocking would show. I had a few little pieces of dupioni, but not enough and not coordinated with each other. I had a bit of crepe-backed satin which would have worked great, but again, the piece was too small. Then the brainstorm hit me – DENIM! Oh, denim, my awesome friend! After a little bit of shouting woo hoo, I gathered several pieces of denim, plus some coordinating fabric for the top part of the purse, and I was on my way. I finished up those three pieces in record time, and they looked quite nice, even after those pesky markings were eradicated! Off to Jo-Ann Fabrics to buy all the under-pinnings for the bag (Peltex, interfacing, Steam-a-Seam, etc.) plus the trims, and I was ready to put my baby together. Uh-oh…more trouble. My three smocked pieces came out a little too big compared to the pattern, and I just couldn’t bear to cut them down. No problemo! I will just enlarge the bag a little… which meant figuring out how to enlarge all the pieces, plus the lining. That took some extra time, plus a little creative re-cutting when the inevitable “oopsies” happened. Okay, done! Now for the next issue….my set of fantastic matching handles no longer bore any relationship to my fabric; totally the wrong color for my denim and the coordinating print I had chosen for the bag. Well, thank goodness for sudden brainstorms…it’s time to check the yarn closet. (Confession Time: My kitchen closet, where most people keep their pots, pans and Tupperware, is the yarn closet. Don’t judge me. 😊) Lo and behold, there was a nice skein of worsted weight in exactly the color I needed, so I took those plastic handles and crocheted right over the blasted things! Now, they matched….crisis averted (temporarily – see below!)

The actual assembly of the bag is quite the undertaking (to put it mildly). There is so much stiffening, interfacing, interlining and lining in this thing, it’s practically bullet-proof…but it certainly is sturdy. I plan to add a zipper at the top instead of the snap because although I won’t be using this as an everyday purse, I’m not a huge fan of totes that don’t have a really secure closure. My one last shining moment was the discovery that the handles I had found and creatively “revised” to match my purse would not work with the pattern (I’ll bring them to the meeting so you can see what I mean). Back to the handle stash to find (and crochet over) yet another set, which did work, thank goodness.

There have been a few more little issues (such as sewing the interior pocket in the wrong place!), but as I write this newsletter, my bag is almost finished. Fingers crossed, I will be bringing the completed bag to the meeting…send some good vibrations and wish me luck!
I finally got my hands on a copy of the new magazine Classic Sewing so that I could write an in-depth review for you all. I found the latest issue (pictured right) at Barnes & Noble; Jo-Ann Fabrics also had plenty of copies on hand.

My overall impression of the magazine – very lovely presentation. The photos are clear and vibrant; the instructions are complete and easy to understand; even the paper is high-quality. Of course, all that is certainly to be expected for a magazine that costs $25.00 a copy. Actually, what sold me on buying this particular issue was the pattern by Gail Doane that was included. The Jelly Roll Dress & Jacket are absolutely wonderful (seriously, I want an adult-sized version of that jacket for me!).

The design of the magazine has a definite sense of flow. The initial pages have a bunch of what I call “the usual” stuff – previews of new fabrics, and a small section on new-ish notions, sewing machines, and sewing furniture. Four other articles covered the legacy of Lezette Thomason of Children’s Corner; a sewing school in Virginia; the Riley Blake fabric company; and a store in Louisiana. A large section on weddings followed, which to be honest I skimmed through. The second half of the magazine was the “meat & potatoes”, as it were… a bunch of nice patterns for children, including the cover dress plus several other adorable girls’ dresses with smocking, embroidery, applique, and other techniques. Also included were two cute bubble suits. At the end of the magazine, there were a couple of small projects; a serged tissue holder, a small kiss-lock purse, and a pillow featuring machine embroidery using a product called Krinkle Magic.

I did like the magazine, but honestly I’m still smarting a bit from the loss of Sew Beautiful. That was a magazine with many years of name recognition, basically the same group of publishers on the masthead, and the same group of designers submitting content. And that magazine was about the same price for a year’s subscription as this publication is for one issue. Actually, Classic Sewing is even more “pricey” than our other dearly departed favorite, Australian Smocking & Embroidery. Yes, there are advantages (such as the included pattern), however, for a lot of people that cost is going to be an issue. But since there is much I don’t understand about the publishing industry, I’m trying to keep an open mind.

I will probably buy future issues at the store, based on the pattern and the featured designers. However, there is also an interesting twist to the subscription plan. You can subscribe for one year at the “Charter” rate of $75.00, saving you the price of one issue (25% off). They also have a “pay as you go” plan, whereby you are charged $20.00 for each magazine before it is shipped to you, a savings of 20% over buying at the store.

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**Nifty Needle Pack Organizer**

I love this idea from Nancy Zieman's blog. In just a few hours, you can make a handy organizer for all of your sewing machine needle packs. Right now mine are tossed in a plastic box, so this is definitely on my agenda of future projects! Get the full instructions here:


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**FREE PATTERN: DUFFEL BAG!**

If you're in need of a cute duffel bag, here's a nice pattern by the designer Noodlehead: [http://www.robertkaufman.com/quilting/quilts_patterns/cargo_duffle/](http://www.robertkaufman.com/quilting/quilts_patterns/cargo_duffle/)

I have personally used a different Noodlehead bag pattern, and found the instructions to be excellent. So, give this one a try if you need a nice bag for your summer travels this year!
Pat Tarpy showed a beautiful white bishop dress with blue smocking, made from a Garden of Smocking pattern. The plate came from the “Beautiful Bishops” book.

Ruthann Sisson showed her honeycomb smocked hanger; an adorable stuffed bunny with a smocked dress (modeled after our snowman project last year); a pink striped daygown; a blue floral preemie bishop gown; her completed duckie smocked egg from last month’s program; an ornament made from a Barbara Meger kit; a cute orange 18” doll dress; and a Biscornu pincushion. Ruthann also showed a beautiful Christmas-themed table runner; the kit for this project came from a previous Yankee Yard Sale – just an example of the riches to be obtained at this event! (Editor’s Note: By the way, congratulations to Ruthann who is working through her “UFOs” – you’re making the rest of us look like slackers!)

Susan Smith showed a wonderful collection of needlepoint houses, each of which she designed after a house that her family lived in through the years. What a fabulous family heirloom!

Sandi Thurston showed another Susie Gay reticule bag that she created; this one is a gift for a friend (lucky gal!). She also showed her “Beth” dress in progress (made in the recent class with Phyllis Brown at Bewitching Stitchers). Sandi also showed the Wee Care booties made as a program at Stitchers by the Sea.

Kathy Dacey showed her finished Gail Doane dress from Sewing at the Beach, as well as the Ruffled Feathers counterchange smocked dress (from an issue of AS&E Magazine), and her Phyllis Brown dress in progress. Kathy also brought a lovely trunk show of christening gowns that she had used for a demonstration at the Sewing Network, including her creation (from a pattern by Judith Adams) and additional gowns loaned by Vaune Pierce and others.

Thanks for the show-and-share! We look forward to seeing your projects in May!
**NEXT MEETING – May 9, 2016 – What to Bring:**

- Supplies needed for the Program
- Dessert/Refreshments
- Show-and-Share Items
- Service Project Items
- Donations for Door Prizes

**NOTE TO BOARD MEMBERS:**

If for any reason you are unable to attend to your assigned duty at a meeting, please do the following: (1) arrange for someone else to substitute for you, and/or (2) call our President, Sandi, to let her know so that she can in turn arrange for coverage. Thank you!

**YANKEE CHAPTER REMAINING MEETING DATES 2016**

**June 13 (Yard Sale)**

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS, DON’T FORGET TO SIGN IN AND PICK UP YOUR DOOR PRIZE TICKETS!**

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