Welcome to the SAGA Mystery Ornament Smock-Along! Below is a list of materials and preparation instructions. Gather your materials, pleat your fabric and get set to go! On November 3rd and each Monday thereafter, a clue will be posted to our website and Facebook page. Follow along and by mid-December, you will have an ornament finished and ready to hang on your tree. The choice of fabric, thread and color is up to you, so everyone’s ornament will be different! The ornament design will only use the basic smocking stitches and so is suitable for a beginner, plus there will be step by step photos on our blog to help you along. If you are an advanced smocker, please join us and take this opportunity to try your hand at an unusual fabric, perhaps velvet or corduroy. Try a new thread, metallic or silk. Finally, please join our facebook group at [https://www.facebook.com/groups/1554532568114047/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1554532568114047/) and post pictures as you go! I will be monitoring the facebook group page and will answer questions and post my progress as we go along. So gather up your materials, join the facebook group and post a picture of what you will be using! If you are not on facebook, you can still participate - the clues will all be posted on our website each Monday starting November 3rd!

**Materials Needed:**

- Ornament Fabric - 5 ½” x 44”
- 3 inch Styrofoam ball
- Floss
- Ribbon or lace to finish ends
- Preferred Smocking Needle such as a 7 Darner or 8 Crewel.

**Preparation:**

Pleat fabric with 11 full space rows. Rows 1 and 11 will be used to assist with construction. The thread will remain in the ornament so it should match the fabric, and preferably be quilting cotton. If your pleater has ½ space rows, pleat row 1 ½ and row 10 ½ as well. Pull up your threads and count your pleats. Our pattern has a 16 pleat repeat. I am using 144 pleats. If you are using a thicker fabric, you can have 128 pleats or 112 pleats, but it needs to be a multiple of 16. Block your pleats to 9 inches, not including seam allowances. Check back on November 3rd for your first clue!
General Information:

Rows 1 and 11 are holding rows. We will smock Rows 2-10. You might have chosen to pleat some $\frac{1}{2}$ space rows, those are not included in the count. The ornament is symmetrical to the extent that affects your color or thread choice.

Clue Number One:

Beginning on Row 4, with the first pleat, and keeping your stitches just below the pleating thread, stitch an up cable. Continue to cable across the row.

Beginning on Row 8, with the first pleat, and keeping your stitches just above the pleating thread, stitch a down cable. Continue to cable across the row. Row 8 is a mirror image of Row 4.

Clue Number Two:

We are going to add some Three Cable Crowns to our Base Rows on Row 4 and Row 8. On Row 4, starting with the first pleat, and keeping your stitches just above the pleating thread, stitch a down cable, up cable, down cable combination. Take your thread to the back, skip 5 pleats, and come up ready to stitch on the 6th pleat. You can just carry the fabric across back, or stitch outline stitches on the back of the fabric to get into position to stitch the next Triple Crown. Repeat the sequence across the row. I think it is easier to count the cable stitches from the base row rather than pleats. The pattern is a Three Cable Crown, skip two up cable stitches from the base row, and then stitch the next Three Cable Crown.

Return to Row 8 and stitch a mirror image of Row 4. Beginning on the first pleat, just below the pleating thread, stitch an up cable, down cable, up cable. Skip two down cable stitches from the Base stitching (5 pleats) and repeat the sequence across the row.

You may use the same color or a difference color from what you used in Clue 1. This is also your first opportunity to add beads. You may bead the entire Three Cable Crown, or just the middle stitch of each Crown.
Clue Number Three:

We are going to stitch a Cable/Trellis Combination. Starting on Row 3, with the first pleat, stitch an up cable, down cable, up cable. Travel down to Row 3 ¼ and take a stitch, travel down to Row 3 ½ and take a stitch, down cable, travel up to Row 3 ¼ and take a stitch, travel back up to Row 3 and take a stitch. Repeat across the Row (8 stitch repeat).

Stitch a mirror image beginning on Row 9 with the first pleat. Down cable, up cable, down cable, travel up to Row 8 ¼, travel up to Row 8 ½, take a horizontal stitch (up cable), travel down to Row 8 ¾, travel down to Row 9. Repeat across the Row.

The Triple Crowns should line up with each other and the horizontal stitches on Rows 3 ½ and 8 ½ should be centered between the Triple Crowns.

Step by Step pictures are over on the Blog.

Beading options: You have two choices this time around. First you can bead the horizontal stitches on Rows 3 ½ and 8 ½. Alternatively, you can bead every other Triple Crown beginning with the first Triple Crown on pleat 1. Remember this is a 16 stitch repeat, so you do not want to bead all the Triple Crowns on these two rows - just every other. (That is a hint for what is to come next week!).

Clue Number 4:

We are going to stitch a Trellis/Wave Combination this week. Beginning on Row 3, Pleat 2, that is not a mistake - begin on Pleat 2! Stitch a down cable (see you just formed a flowerette from the stitches from clue 3), travel up to Row 2 2/3, travel up to 2 1/3, travel up to Row 2, up cable, down to 2 1/3, down cable, up to 2, up cable, down to 2 1/3, down cable, up to Row 2, up cable, down to 2 1/3, down to 2 2/3, down to Row 3 - 16 stitches. Your next stitch begins the sequence again and will complete the flowerette. Stitch the sequence across the Row, but do not tie off your thread. Leave the floss at the end. After seaming your ornament, you can thread up your needle and stitch across the seam to complete the sequence by stitching the final stitch on Pleat 1.

Stitch a mirror image beginning on Row 9 with pleat 2, stitch an up cable, travel down to row 9 1/3, travel down to 9 2/3, travel down to row 10, down cable, up to 9 2/3, up cable, down to 10, down cable, up to 9 2/3, up cable, down to 10, down cable,
up to 9 2/3, up to 9 1/3, up to 9. Continue across the row. Again do not tie off, but save some thread to stitch pleat 1 after the seam is sewed.

Beads: If you beaded every other Triple Crown in clue 3, bead the first stitch on rows 3 and 9 so the entire flowerette is beaded. If you beaded the horizontal stitches on Rows 3 ½ and 8 ½ in Clue 3, bead the horizontal stitches on rows 2 and 10.

Bonus Optional Clue:

Add a wave in the middle of the open spaces on rows 2 1/3 and 9 2/3. On row 2/1/3, stitch an up cable up against the bottom of the wave from Clue 4, travel down to row 2 2/3, down cable (I added a bead) travel up to 2 1/3, up cable. Take your thread to the back and cable or outline stitch on the back to the next wave on row 2 1/3.

Stitch a mirror image starting on row 9 2/3, stitch a down cable, travel up to 9 1/3, up cable (I added a bead), travel down to 9 2/3, down cable, take the thread to the back. Continue across the row.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Clue Number 5:

We are stitching a cable, trellis combination this week. Starting on Row 6, pleat 1, stitch a down cable, up cable, down cable, travel up to row 5 2/3, travel up to row 5 1/3, travel up to row 5. Stitch 7 cable stitches on row 5 starting and ending with an up cable, travel down to 5 1/3, travel down to 5 2/3, travel down to row 6 (16 stitches), continue sequence across row.

Stitch a mirror image again starting on Row 6, pleat 1. Stitch an up cable, down cable, up cable, travel down to 6 1/3, travel down to 6 2/3, travel down to row 7. Stitch 7 cable stitches, starting and ending with a down cable, travel up to 6 2/3, travel up to 6 1/3, travel up to row 6, continue sequence across row.

Beads - you can bead the double flowerettes formed on Row 6 at the beginning of the sequence.

One more smocking clue next week and then we will be constructing our ornament!
Clue Number 6:

Make the ornament uniquely yours! After finishing clue 5, there are some nice open spaces between rows 5-7. I have several suggestions on how you can fill that space, and over on the blog you can see what I did, but the final clue is to exercise your creativity and make this ornament uniquely yours!

So here are my suggestions:
- Flowerette – beaded or not.
- Holly or Mistletoe – 3 French knots, lazy daisy leaves
- Silk Ribbon Poinsettia
- Mother of Pearl Buttons
- Repeat clue 5 with a different color, beginning 8 pleats to the right (don’t try to count the pleats - just line up with the Triple Crowns - see picture on blog.)

Next week there will be detailed instructions on constructing and finishing your ornament!

Finishing your Ornament!

We are finally here – it is time to construct your ornament. On the SAGA blog you will find step by step pictures!

1. Right sides together, sew the seam joining the two short ends of your ornament. I did this by hand. Ideally the seam falls in the valley between the first and the last pleat, so you want to stitch it right up against those pleats.
2. Turn your ornament right side out, thread your needle with the floss that was left at the end of rows 3 and 9, and finish the row by stitching across the seam and stitching the last stitch of the sequence through pleat 1. This helps pull those pleats together.
3. You can pull the pleats together by taking some additional compensating stitches on the cable rows, or by pinching the pleats together from the wrong side and taking a few stitches on the back with your sewing thread.
4. Remove the pleating threads from rows 3-9. Don’t remove them from rows 1, 2, 10 or 11 yet!
5. Insert your ball – see how elastic the smocking is – no problem with inserting that ball! Get it positioned in the middle and insert a pin or two to hold it while you work on the ends.
6. Starting at one end, pull on the pleating threads to gather the ends. Smooth, pin and pull. Don’t be afraid to trim the fabric. Pull, pin and trim some more. Keep pulling, pinning and trimming until it all lies flat.

7. With a strand of floss that matches your background fabric, go around the top of the ornament in a circle, pushing your needle through the pleats as if you were adding an additional pleating row at the very top. Pull some more. Then take a few stitches back and forth across the very top. If a little of the ball shows at the top, that is no problem, it will be covered. You want to get everything to lie as flat as possible. Remove the pleating threads if they show.

8. Repeat at the other end of the ball.

9. Now comes the fun part – how are you going to finish your ends – there are lots of options. Again pictures will be on facebook and the SAGA blog.
   a. Bead finding – check your bead store or bead section of the craft store. Push the bead finding out flat to fit the ball
   b. Buttons
   c. Loops of ribbon
   d. Fabric yoyo
   e. Spider web rose
   f. Tatting, lace or ribbon gathered along one long side and formed into a circle.

Congratulations! You finished! Take a picture to share with us, and then go hang your ornament on the tree!

Merry Christmas!