

President's Corner



I am still amazed at how sewing binds so many of us together. It's just like our smocking stitches that bind all the pieces together to create a beautiful piece of art. This smocking guild is bound together by the fabric of our lives to form a beautiful, creative group of wonderful women. I have been in a lot of organizations in my "short" life but my smocking guild is not only my favorite group

but the one where I have made lifelong friends. I think of my working experiences where someone wants the credit or someone does not want to admit an error because of their ego. That is not the case in our group. We all share our ideas. We ask for advice. We teach each other old and new techniques. We encourage each other. We make time for each other outside of our meeting times. We work out together our idiosyncrasies with each other. No one is ridiculed. We can truly be ourselves. Our "Wee Care" program has made us become more aware of our community needs. We have grown in our sewing and smocking knowledge. We end up being our own therapy group. We truly are a piece of art as

a group. We are that mosaic that is made up of many different pieces that are joined together to make the complete picture.

I have found this "camaraderie" to be true in other sewing groups, too. There is just that something that is different about sewing groups than other types of groups. I see this to with our national organization SAGA. We all are so excited about smocking and sewing. Where can you find such a group like this today? I don't know but I do know that this excitement has never waned. I hope it never does.

Keep on smocking, ladies.

Patty

Cactus Cablers' Yahoo Group



We've had a bit of a lull in the discussion group. What?? A group of ladies with nothing to discuss?? I don't believe it!

I will create some folders in the files sections with different headings (favorite websites,

etc.) Please take a moment to go to the group site and add your favorite places to shop online. If you need help, just ask me.

I will also make some folders in the Photos section where you

can upload pictures of your projects to share with everyone. Especially those who are away for the summer and who still want to keep up with us AND for you gals who are away to share your summer projects with us!

Inside this issue:

<i>Recipe Exchange</i>	2
<i>Programs</i>	2
<i>Sit & Stitch</i>	2
<i>Diagonal Stitch Game</i>	3
<i>Stitch Challenge ~ Backsmocking with the Babywave stitch</i>	4
<i>Book Reviews</i>	4, 5
<i>Sewing Tips</i>	6
<i>Getting to Know Kris Curtis</i>	7
<i>Creative Challenge ~ What Inspires You?</i>	7

OFFICERS:

- Patty Grabher, President
- Linda Richards, V. President
- Paulette Claver, Secretary
- Linda Salazar, Treasurer

Volunteers:

- Terri Kilgore, Wee Care
- Joline Albaugh, Refreshments
- Linda Salazar, Doll Raffle
- Linda Richards, Newsletter



We are lucky enough to live only an hour from the Willow Inn, a restored 1816 farmhouse in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. It has been transformed into a very special restaurant, and since there is no set menu, each meal brings surprises from soup to dessert. Once, we were especially impressed with an unusual cinnamon-scented tomato soup with delicious egg dumplings. Will proprietors Ralph Wilson and Patrick Varner part with the recipe? -- Sharon Hemmerlin, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Tomato Dumpling Soup (from Gourmet magazine, many years ago, via Paulette Claver)

8 servings

- 1 c. (2 sticks) butter
- 1 lg. onion, coarsely chopped
- 4 16-oz cans peeled tomatoes, seeded and cut into chunks (liquid reserved) (I used 5 14.5-oz cans of peeled, diced tomatoes.)
- 2 c. (or more) chicken stock (I used 2 14-oz cans of chicken stock.)
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1/2 t. salt
- pinch of freshly ground pepper
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 3 eggs
- 2 T. vegetable oil
- 1/2 medium green pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped

Melt 1/2 c. butter (1 stick) in heavy large saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and cook until transparent, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add tomatoes with liquid and cook 10 minutes. Add remaining 1/2 c. (1 stick) of butter, 2 c. chicken stock, sugar, cinnamon, salt, and pepper; bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, combine flour, baking powder, salt in medium bowl. Add eggs and oil; beat until dough is sticky. Drop dough by 1/2 teaspoonfuls into simmering soup; do not stir. Cover and simmer until dumplings are firm and cooked through, about 15 minutes. (If dumplings absorb too much liquid and soup is too thick, add more stock.) Garnish with bell pepper. Serve immediately.

(Ed. Note: Paulette served this at a Sit & Stitch and it was absolutely delicious!!)

Programs



May 18th ~ Ornaments

Terri will instruct us on how to make an ornament and how to finish the ends. She has a few clever tricks up her sleeves as usual!

Bring 1 yard of UGLY fabric to the meeting, too!

Jun, Jul, Aug ~ Summer break ~ no regular meetings

Sept. 21st ~ Ugly Fabric Projects

Bring your finished ugly fabric project to the meeting. We will discuss the challenges and creative solutions everyone encountered ~ a fun meeting!

Oct. 19th ~ Stitch Challenge project: Backsmocking use ONLY the baby wave stitch

The stitch challenge for 2011 is to create a project that incorporates the baby wave stitch as backsmocking for the main design element. Think outside of the box and challenge yourself to do something out of the ordinary or unusual!

Sit & Stitch

First Tuesday of the month
10 a.m. at the home of a volunteer
Please bring something for a potluck luncheon, each hostess will provide the beverages.

June 1st ~ Linda Richards
Porcelain doll workshop

Sit & Stitches throughout the summer will be planned on a spontaneous basis.



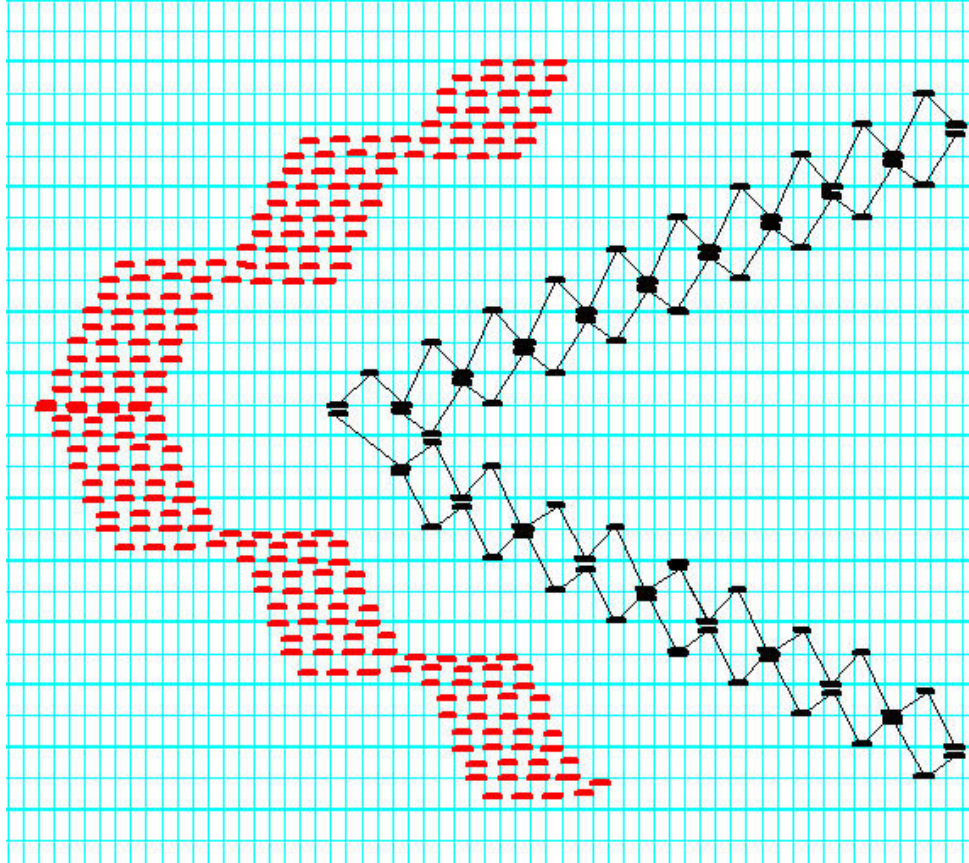
Diagonal Stitch Game

Just as a reminder, there is no “due” date for this project. Four stitches are in this newsletter and these stitches cover five new areas in the sampler. Click on the link below for a .pdf of the smocking chart with the stitches up to this point. The final three stitches and the embellishments will be in the next newsletter (April). Work at your own pace and be sure to ask for help if you need it! Then, once you are finished, please send me a picture of your finished project so we can see what you’ve done!

[Diagonal Smocking Stitch Graph](#)

Seventh Stitch: Alternating Height Baby Waves

Beginning on the **34th pleat right of the center valley** on row 11 with a down cable, work a 1/4 step baby wave up to row 10 3/4, up cable, 1/4 step baby wave back down to row 11, * down cable, 1/2 space baby wave up to row 10 1/2, up cable, 1/4 space down cable down to row 10 3/4*. Repeat instructions between * * to the side of the fabric. **NOTICE: The legs of the baby wave stitches are not equal due to the fact that you are moving at an angle instead of straight across the row.** Follow the graph as shown below and work the bottom half of the rectangles. Repeat the mirror image of this row to form the arrowhead as shown in the graph. NOTICE: The point of the arrowhead is irregular ~ this is not a mistake and will not look as distorted on your smocked sampler. Turn your sampler over and repeat a mirror image of this entire pattern on the left side of the center pleat beginning on the **34th pleat to the left of the center valley on row 11**.

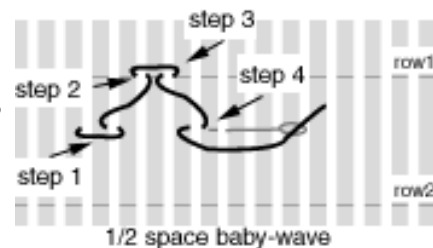




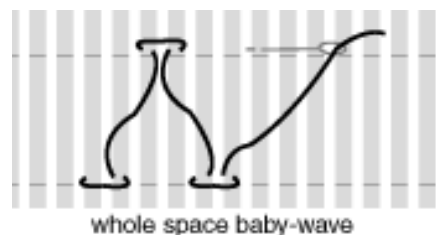
Stitch Challenge ~ Baby Wave Backsmocking

Create something over the summer and use only the baby wave stitch as backsmocking. Bring your finished project to the October meeting. This will be our program. Some suggestions might be the doll dress you are making for the 2012 Doll Raffle, something for a child to donate to the Davis Monthon Christmas project

1. Work 1 cable (thread down) half way between rows 1 and 2. (This is referred to as row 1 1/2.)
 2. With thread down, "pick up" next pleat on row 1. (Remember to keep needle level and parallel to gathering thread.)
 3. With thread up, work 1 cable.
 4. With thread up, "pick up" next pleat on row 1 1/2.
 5. With thread down, work one cable, completing one baby-wave (and beginning another).
- (A wave row can be created by repeating steps 2--5.)



The stitch described in steps 1--5 above is referred to as a 1/2 space baby-wave because it covers 1/2 space. A whole space baby-wave is worked the same except thread is carried one whole space between cable stitches. Refer to diagram on right.



General "rules" for working baby-wave

- * Thread up for top cable, thread down for bottom cable.
- * Thread down when working upward, and thread up when working downward.

Book Reviews

“SHADOW WORK – THE EASY WAY” – by Martha Pullen (1989)

Written by Patty Grabher

It's hard to believe but I found something that Martha did not know how to do. She even admitted in her Introduction that she was basically a sewing machine person, not a needle worker. Wow! You could have fooled me. The book starts with questions and answers which include the type of needles used and the type of floss. She explains about some of the ideas of Margaret Boyles, the Queen of shadow work embroidery. Margaret even has her own brand of needles. I am checking that out because the shape of her #10 crewel needle makes it easier to pull a thread through for a beautiful bullion knot.

Martha has lots of extra useful tips in this book that are very, very helpful. Like crewel needles have short eyes and pointed tips. There is a right and wrong side of hand sewing needles. She explains how to put floss on the grain. I never knew that floss had a grain. Martha uses DMC and Susan Bates floss. I never heard of Susan Bates floss either. Another interesting thing I am checking out. She has information on transferring the design, positioning the fabric, design and the hoop. And, info on how to properly rip out your mistakes. Martha's knowledge never ceases to amaze me.

In her instructions for how to do shadow work embroidery she explains Method #1 and Mildred Turner's method. Method #1 is, according to Martha, the easiest method because you work from the wrong side of the fabric using the closed herringbone stitch. She has plenty of instructional pictures which I certainly need because I am more of a visual



Book Reviews...cont'd

learner. It is so much easier than I thought it would be. I am still practicing with this method.

Mildred Turner's method of shadow work embroidery is worked from the front. Like method #1, there are lots of instructional pictures. Mildred is also the author of 2 books on heirloom sewing. Of course, these books are 20 something years old but it would be interesting to see if they are still in print. I am going to check that out too.

As I said before, Martha's knowledge amazes me. She has included a chapter explaining some embroidery stitches as well as more embroidery tips.

The last chapter is on dress designs in the Sew Beautiful issue of winter 1989 by Tina McEwen. These dresses include some shadow work embroidery. The dresses are a bit frilly and frou-frou for me but they are extremely beautiful.

At the very end, she interestingly enough has glossy pictures of many different designs that you can use to color copy. She also has black and white designs to copy including the alphabet.

You can buy this book from Martha Pullen for \$12.00. Also, she has a book of over 300 designs called "Shadow Work – Fun and Fancy" for 14.95. The latest book on shadow work is by Wendy Shoen, "Mastering Shadow Work" for \$29.95.

I would recommend this book to anyone. It certainly reflects Martha's personality and her southern charming ways. It is filled with a lot of knowledge that can only be told by someone with a lot of experience and knowledge of many different ways to use embroidery.

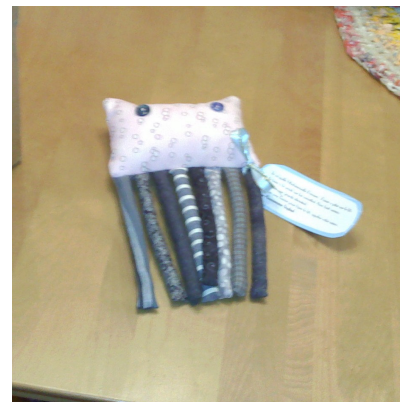


PLUSH-O-RAMA - Curious Creatures for Immature Adults by Linda Kopp (reviewed by Joline Albaugh)

I love the new plush toys and dolls. This book had to join the other books on my book shelf. Every creature has a story about itself. Being creatures there is an edge to them and their stories. I used the pattern from the book called Monsieur Octopus to make a Mademoiselle Octopus for my granddaughter's birthday.

The original M. Octopus arm's were made from old ties and his body from a solid blue grey cotton. His eyes are two different sizes of black buttons. His story follows: Monsieur Octopus lives off the coast of France. He spends most of his time trying to get the attention of Maria, a hot lady octopus; unfortunately, she is not interested. He likes baking cakes, cycling and collecting shells.

I used quilting cottons, a pink body with different greys for each tentacle. Her story is as follows: My name is Mademoiselle Octopus. I like to lounge on beds. My favorite snack is shrimp. With eight arms I give great hugs. If you need help in making the bed, ask your mother. Happy Birthday Sophie. I translated this into French with Neil's help and the internet, as Sophie is being raised bilingual.





Sewing Tips

Choosing the Proper Needle

from Bob Purcell of Superior Threads (used with permission)

<http://www.superiorthreads.com/> (Ed. Note: Superior Threads is a wonderful online resource. They publish a very good newsletter once a month)

We usually choose our needle based on the size of thread, not based on the sewing application. The majority of professionals we talk to tell us they use the Topstitch style needle on home machines for most projects because it works so well for piecing, quilting, embroidery, crafting, and almost all sewing applications. Exceptions are when sewing on a knit fabric (use a ball point needle) or a very heavy denim or leather fabric (use a specialty needle).

The Topstitch needle has three advantages:

1. Large, elongated eye puts much less stress on the thread. This is especially beneficial for delicate, decorative, and sensitive threads.
2. Light sharp point. Not razor sharp which cuts, but a light sharp point which separates the fabric fibers, then penetrates.
3. Deeper and wider groove which protects the thread.

Recommended sizes:

#70/10 for very fine threads (60 wt. and finer) such as MonoPoly, #100 silk, Bottom Line

#80/12 for fine threads. 50 wt. threads such as MasterPiece, So Fine, #50 silk

#90/14 for medium threads. 40 wt. threads such as King Tut, Rainbows, embroidery threads

#100/16 for heavier threads. 30 wt. and heavier

Titanium-coated Topstitch needles cost only 20 cents more per needle than a regular needle and last 5-8 times longer.

5-  **groove**
Pintuck foot ~ a new application for use

From Paulette Claver

Late one night, wanting to put in a hidden zipper and unable to find my hidden zipper foot, I found that the 5-groove pintuck foot works perfectly.



www.cactuscablers.org
cactuscablers@yahoo.com

Meeting Information

Where: St. Jude's Anglican Church
8245 E Seneca St., Tucson, AZ
When: Third Wednesday each month @
10:00 a.m.
Contact: Patty Grabher @ 751-9963

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Thank you.



Getting to know Kris Curtis

Kris is one of our Winter members who lives in lovely (and much cooler) Holland, MI during the rest of the year. She and her husband, Ed, have a daughter and two beautiful little granddaughters for whom Kris loves to sew and smock!

Kris is a retired administrator of the Holland Eye Surgery and Laser Clinic, she has been a seamstress for over 45 years, a SAGA member since 1979 and a Cactus Cablers' member since 2009. Kris found Cactus Cablers online and sought us out when she arrived in Tucson. We are certainly glad she took the time to find us and join in. She is a valuable asset to our chapter. Kris says the thing she loves most about Cactus Cablers is our continued focus on ideas for smocking. An avid student of sewing and smocking, Kris has taken many classes through the years from Martha Pullen, the American Sewing Guild and SAGA. Additionally, she loves quilting and beading projects and loves to teach so that she can share her talents and skills with others.

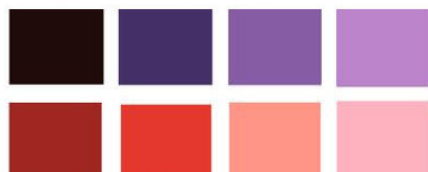
Kris loves to collect vintage pattern and has an avid interest in historical needlework. She has been published in Sew Beautiful, SAGA News and has an article forthcoming in Australian Smocking & Embroidery. Congratulations to Kris on her many successes in the sewing world!

We all look forward to Kris's return to Tucson in December and her continued participation with Cactus Cablers!

A Creative Challenge ~ What Inspires You?

in.spi.ra.tion ~ 1. the action or power of moving the intellect or emotions; 2. the act of influencing or suggesting ideas or opinions

This is an interesting topic to ponder! Where does your inspiration come from when you are contemplating a new project? Stop for just a moment and think about the last project you created. Did you make something straight from a pattern or magazine just as it was presented or did you personalize it and change things up a bit? My guess is that most of us look at "something" but see something else entirely and go from there. I know that Terri, sees designs in shapes and outlines. I also know that she may be working on a project and one little element of that particular project will send her off on a tangent to something new and creative that probably isn't even related to what she was originally working on! I get all sorts of clothing catalogs. When I'm leafing through them I'm not usually paying close attention to the real details of a garment so I often see something that isn't really there and get an idea of how I might use one element from that garment to make something else, perhaps a handbag or how I might include smocking in an area where there was none originally.



The most basic inspiration would come from our own personal color palette so we make things in the colors we like or we see a beautiful sunset or painting and take color ideas from that.

So here's the challenge: Look at the color palette shown on the left and create a project over the summer using only these colors! Who will be inspired to let their creativity flow and take the challenge?