



THE SEWING GAZETTE

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The Glories of Summer



The temperatures are finally rising. School is letting out. It's time for picnics and days at the pool. The lazy days of summer have arrived. Who wants to think about quilts and covering up when it's 80+ degrees outside?

This time of year, my sewing switches from quilts to smaller projects like placemats and table runners. I prefer not to get buried in fabric as the mercury rises. Just the thought of sewing on a

binding in the heat gives me nightmares. This is also planning season for me. Well, that's my excuse anyway. I still have time to plan grandiose gift projects for Christmas and all those luscious fabrics are hitting the stores in July. I should have enough time to make those bed size quilts don't I? I can at least buy the fabric to get them started. That way I can work on them at 2:00am. if I get the urge.

This is the time of year to Shop Hop and visit all my favorite stores that are more than 5 minutes from my house. Beautiful days for rides down the back country roads with a fabric shop or quilt shop as my destination. I organize my own private trips and attend the organized shop

hops. I have to make sure I have enough fabric to make it through the long snowy winter. Never mind that I already have enough to make it through 10 winters. All that fabric has all added to my stash already.

Enjoy the sunny days. Dream of quilts to make when the temperature starts to cool. Go visit those shops that are a little farther away from home. Make a day of it and take your best quilting friend. You will talk about that day all winter long.

Julie Peri

Editor

Thread Moments in History

How carefully do you consider the thread that holds your garments and projects together? Thread has been made from every imaginable fiber at one point or another. Early man used leather and twine. Later we started using wool, silk and cotton. Egyptians used wool and hair from domestic animals to spin into thread. The Phoenicians used plant matter to create dyes for their thread.

Silk thread became popular as silk fabrics became popular. Napoleon helped accelerate the decline of silk in England by

blockading the country and preventing the ships laden with silk fabrics and thread from entering the ports. Cotton, however, was readily available.

Patrick Clark invented a way to twist cotton fibers to make thread. This new thread was much stronger and smoother than previous threads. The Clark & Co. factory was opened in 1812 in Paisley, Scotland. Patrick Clark's Son opened The Coats Factory a few years later. The two companies had combined by 1890.

Early cotton thread was typically made from 3

strands and designed for hand sewing. It had an uneven texture that would break under the tension of the sewing machine. Around 1850, Coats & Clarke developed a 6 strand thread that would hold up to the tension of the sewing machine.



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Cool Tools

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thread \ˈθred\ n

1 a: a filament, a group of filaments twisted together, or a filamentous length formed by spinning and twisting short textile fibers into a continuous strand b: a piece of thread

2 a: any of various natural filaments <the *threads* of a spiderweb> b: a slender stream (as of water) c: a projecting helical rib (as in a fitting or on a pipe) by which parts can be screwed together : [screw thread](#)

3: something continuous or drawn out: as a: a line of reasoning or train of thought that connects the parts in a sequence (as of ideas or events) <lost the *thread* of the story> b: a continuing element <a *thread* of melancholy marked all his writing> c: a series of newsgroup messages following a single topic

4: a tenuous or feeble support <hung on by a *thread*>

5: plural : [clothing](#)

[From Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary](#)

When was the last time you had your scissors sharpened? Be honest with yourself. If you are like me, you know it has been too long. My scissors are my best sewing friend. I have a favorite brand and a favorite pair. I should take better care of them. Scissors can become dull through

regular use. When you purchase a good pair of scissors the first thing to remember is to use them solely for their intended use. Do not cut paper with fabric scissors. Cutting paper will dull the blades and they won't work quite as well the next time you go to cut fabric. Keep your scissors dry and dust free by wiping them with a soft cloth after using. Storing your scissors closed will help protect the blades and the points.

Do your scissors need sharpening? The main reason mine don't get sharpened frequently enough? I'm afraid of the sharpener. What if they don't do it right? What if my favorite scissors come back and won't cut at all? A little extreme? Probably, but when is fear rational? Scissor sharpening is an art form.

So how do you find a sharpener

you can trust? The best way is to ask around. You have sewing friends or ask at your next guild meeting. How do others get their scissors sharpened? Ask at your local quilt shop, fabric shop or hairdresser. They also have scissors that need sharpening. Don't be afraid to send your scissors out to a good sharpener. Some manufacturer's, like Gingher, will sharpen their own products. You will have to send your scissors out to them and pay a nominal fee. When they return your scissors though, the cutting blades will be like a new pair. Scissors, like knives, need sharpening often. They perform better when they are sharp. You become more accurate as a result.

Worth the Money?.

I have learned over the years to appreciate good quality fabric. If you ask at your local quilt shop, they will surely explain the



differences to you. A good quality fabric holds color better and wears longer. Check the print on better fabric and you'll see the registration lines up cleaner.

What I have realized recently is the same reasoning applies to thread. I knew I should be using good thread, but how can you tell? A very smart friend of mine helped me out.

Without getting into the fine details, the higher end threads use better materials and manufacturing

processes. What does that mean to you and I? Fewer tangles, less breakage, better consistency in weight and thickness. I've learned my lesson. I am now using and recommending Aurifil and Superior Threads for piecing and quilting. There are other good brands but these two are readily available and have been marvelous to work with. Check this link for more information about quality threads. <http://sewing.about.com/library/>

Thread Tangles?

There are so many colors, so many choices. Do you like the solid colors? Variegated colors? Match your quilt top? Cotton? Polyester? Silk? Accent your quilt top? Should your stitching fade into the background or stand on it's own? Whatever your preferences, there are many sources to choose from. Check your local quilt or fabric shop first. They always have a

great selection of thread and can often guide you through all the varieties.

If you are craving more information or you don't have a local shop, here are a few links you can use to educate yourself. Thread companies have a wealth of information about their products. Many also have newsletters to keep you up to date on the advancements in

technology.

Aurifil Thread
<http://www.aurifil.com/>

Superior Thread
<http://www.superiorthread.com>

Robinson Anton
<http://www.robison-anton.com>

Appliqué with Freezer Paper and Starch

Have you tried this appliqué method yet? The results are wonderful.

Supplies:

1. Freezer paper
2. Starch or sizing
3. Small saucer
4. Cotton swap or paintbrush
5. Stiletto or seam ripper
6. Mini iron (I've used a regular iron and burnt my fingers)

Trace your appliqué shapes on the dull side of the freezer

paper. Cut out paper shapes along the sewing line. Place your shapes on the wrong side of your fabric with the shiny side down. Press into place. Cut out your fabric shapes, leaving about 1/4" around the paper. Spray a small amount of starch into the saucer. Dip your cotton swab or paintbrush in the starch. Wet the seam allowance on your fabric shape with the starch. Try not to soak

the fabric. Turn your seam allowance to the wrong side of your shape and press with the mini iron. You may choose to use a seam ripper or a stiletto to hold the seam allowance while you press. The iron will dry the starch and press the seam allowance. If you are unhappy with the way the shape has turned out just rewet the seam allowance and press again.

TRY THIS
APPLIQUÉ
METHOD FOR
PERFECT
SHAPES
EVERY TIME!

Timtex

What is the story of Timtex? What is Timtex for that matter and is it still available?

What is it? Timtex is a very stiff 100% polyester, non-fusible interfacing produced by [C&T Publishing](#).

How is it used? Timtex is used for shaping in many purses, bags and other dimensional items. You will find it in fabric bowls, boxes and vases. It is also used for hat brims. It provides a firm texture to help shape any fabric project.

What was all the fuss?

Timtex was unavailable for a period of time from late 2007 until December, 2008. The manufacturer of the product closed without warning, claiming it was a result of the high costs of production. They could no longer be competitive.

Now What? C&T Publishing has come to the rescue! After an extensive search worldwide, C&T Publishing has found a new source to produce the Timtex interfacing to their

satisfaction. There are alternatives available if you cannot find Timtex, but they are not the same. Here are a few alternatives:

Peltex 70 is firm and flexible, but not as heavy as Timtex.

Fast3Fuse is made by C&T as well. It has fusible on both sides

Flexifirm has fusible on one side and is very similar to Timtex.

The best news? Timtex is back. Ask for it at your local fabric store.

TIMTEX IS
BACK!

Sew Tasty!

Berry, Berry Summer Shortcakes

A good friend of mine believes that a strawberry or a berry shortcake contains all the required ingredients for a well rounded meal fruit, dairy and grains. I am inclined to agree.

You can substitute store bought biscuits for this, or just serve the berries over ice cream. I have also been known to have a bowl of berries without any biscuit or ice cream. I have also added a peach to the berry mixture and love it.

Triple Berry Sauce

1 1/4 c. blueberries
1 1/4 c. blackberries
1 lb. pkg. strawberries
2/3 c. sugar
Cut strawberries into bite size pieces. Combine berries in a bowl. Add sugar and set aside. This berry mixture will create it's own sauce as it sits.

Biscuits

1 c. flour
1 1/4 t. baking powder
1/2 t. salt
4 T. butter
1/2 c. skim milk

Mix together flour baking powder and salt. Combine butter with dry ingredients with a pastry blender. Stir in milk. Fill muffin tins 2/3 full. Makes 10 biscuits. Top with berry mixture and whipped cream or ice cream.



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How long have you been sewing/quilting and what got you started?

I started quilting in the early 80's. I was working and had to find things to do on my lunch hour. One day I walked into a little quilt shop and knew right then that I'd found something I really wanted to do! I took classes – everything was done by hand: tracing around templates, adding the quarter inch, cutting on the outside line, hand stitching on the inside line. At some point, I began piecing by machine but still hand quilted and then later ended up machine quilting, so now all my piecing and quilting is done by machine. I'm glad I learned to piece and quilt by hand but I'm thrilled that we can do it all by machine now.

Why did you decide to start designing and selling your patterns?

As I would show friends some of the quilts I had made, they would ask me to jot down the instructions. I did and then a shop asked if they could sell one of my patterns. I agreed and that's how I got started.

What is your favorite part of designing?

I like it all. Some days just putting the blocks together is exciting; other days designing the borders is the most exciting part. Truly the best part though is when I write the instructions, make the top and find that all the instructions were correct! Borders excite me. It seems as though many of my quilts have seven borders. I love using pieced borders. Sometimes I

think of a border first and have to design the center of a quilt just to go with a specific border

What are your favorite techniques and why?

Something that is new to me and I love is finishing the binding by machine. I can't believe it's taken me all these years to finish bindings by machine but I'm so happy with the way my bindings look and at how quickly I can finish the process.

What is your "I can't work without it." sewing tool?

There are so many tools that I love. I suppose if I had to pick one, it would be the perfect 1/4" foot for my sewing machine. I also love having a nice, sharp rotary cutter and very accurate rulers

How did you come to write your first book?

The story about my first book: In 2005 I was hosting a quilting retreat at a state park in Paducah, KY. Bonnie Browning was writing her book, *Borders & Finishing Touches 2* and she had asked to use one of my quilts in the book. When she called to ask if I could send the quilt, I explained to her that I would be coming to Paducah in a week or two for the retreat and asked if I could bring the quilt to the AQS office when I got to town. That was fine so when I took the quilt in, I talked with Bonnie for a minute and asked her to drop by the retreat and meet some of the ladies if she had time. She lives not too far from where we were meeting. She did come by and had a nice visit with us. Several of the ladies were making quilts

from some of my patterns and Bonnie asked me if I had other designs. She went back with me to my room and I showed her several other quilts I had designed and she encouraged me to submit a book proposal to AQS. I did and because I was afraid I would be turned down, I didn't tell anyone I had done it . . . not even my husband! Imagine my surprise when I was contacted by AQS and told that my proposal had been accepted. Nine Patch Extravaganza was on its way to becoming a reality.

What else would you like us to know about you?

I love working with bright colors. Almost all the fabric in my stash is tone on tone with a few stripes thrown in. I find it very difficult to get thrilled about making a top that is in colors that don't thrill me. Designing a new quilt is very exciting. Making tops is fun. Quilting, binding and labeling the quilts is where I have to exercise lots of self-discipline. I believe that as quilters, we can do anything we want to do. If you want to design quilts, do it! If you want to be a longarm quilter, do it! Time's a wastin'! Do what makes you happy!

Look for Judy's new book coming out in the spring of 2010!

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