

Stitchers Hideaway!

2004 Kissimmee, FL Fun Report

with
Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads



What a treat it was for us to have Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads as our instructor for the Kissimmee, FL 2004 Stitcher's Hideaway! Her class instruction was excellent and her lecture on needlework history was so rich. We learned so much!!

But I'm getting ahead of myself. First let me tell you what took place before the retreat! Betsy and I were there the day before and we took a little drive in the area before checking into our hotel rooms. Betsy kept referring to Kissimmee as "Kiss-a-me" and so I told her I thought it was pronounced "ka-sem-me". She tried and tried to pronounce it differently, then finally announced that she thought Kiss-a-me was cuter! And anyway, she figured that was New York for Kissimmee! Ha!

We stopped at some very touristy shops on Rt. 92 in Kissimmee, and then ate dinner at a Japanese restaurant -- the kind where you sit with up to 8 people around a grill and the food is prepared right there for you with a very entertaining chef. Oh, it was WONDERFUL!! Then, after checking into our hotel rooms, we spent some time at Downtown Disney -- a first for Betsy. She had fun picking out some items for her grandchildren. We wisely made it back to the hotel early to get a good night's sleep before the retreat began.

The next morning Pam and Jan from [The Someday Shop](#) and Linda from Needle Craft World arrived to set up shop for the stitchers. Betsy and I got all of our things ready, too. We had lots of room and were able to set up the classroom in a U-shape. All around the U were Fun Packs at each place. And Betsy set up the Stitcher's Hideaway t-shirt display -- debuting at the Kissimmee, FL retreat. The shirts looked so pretty all lined up on the table in teal green, sage, violet, yellow haze, iris and azalea. Then there was the last minute check on food services and suddenly it was time for the stitchers to arrive -- and in they came!! Some of them had been at the last Stitcher's Hideaway in Kissimmee and already knew each other, and then there were new stitchers, too. They were all from Florida except Pat from Illinois -- so guess who won the prize for the stitcher that traveled the farthest!!



Linda, Ellen and Marge play in their Fun Packs!

Everyone loves the Fun Packs!! At this retreat there were items from Brightneedle, Finger Work, [Jeannette Douglas Designs](#), Just Nan, [Kreinik](#), Mill Hill, MonsterBubbles, [Rosewood Manor](#), The MonkeyWorks, Stitcher's Hideaway, The Prairie Schooler, [The Victoria Sampler](#), [Weeks Dye Works](#) and [With My Needle](#). We also enjoyed the Nordic Needle catalog -- which, of course, made us want more and more stash!!

After meeting each other, stash enhancing, and eating yummy sandwiches, chips & dips and cookies, we settled down for our first class with Betsy: *The Lazy Days of Summer*. It was such a cute project! It came with a little tuck-pillow and dragonfly button. We had our choice of blue or yellow, which was a very pleasant surprise. As we worked on it, we learned several of the stitches we would also need to know for the next day's larger project.



That evening we had a terrific dinner. Some chose broiled grouper and some roasted chicken breast -- both were delicious -- and there was so much!! We finished our dinner with birthday cake for Margaretjoy who was celebrating the BIG one! (You know....um...30!)

After dinner we shopped for a while. There was a great selection from the two shops, and both had some completed needlework on display. Pam from [The Someday Shop](#) loves doing one-over-one stitching, and Linda from Needle Craft World had some Victoria Sampler work on display. Both shops had fun items for the stitchers, which they received throughout the retreat. It was great!!



Left: The Birthday Girl!

Next Betsy gave her lecture on needlework history. We saw slides of needlework from different centuries and cultures and were able to ask questions to our heart's content. Betsy showed a slide of an antique needlework tool that was a real curiosity. She asked us what we thought it was and no one could guess. It had several sharp jagged pieces to it that she explained were used for ripping fabric. Attached to it was what looked like a very tiny spoon. When we found out what that was used for, we were absolutely shocked!! A collective "eww-w-w-w-w-w" could be heard throughout the room! Oh, I could tell you what it was for, but I'll let Betsy surprise you herself at one of her lectures!!!



After the lecture some of us stayed and stitched on our *Lazy Days of Summer* -- with some of us even finishing it. I think Marge and I were the last ones to head for our hotel rooms -- and even then, we did so reluctantly. Marge is a night owl (we have often exchanged silly late-night emails!), and I was just so thrilled to be able to stitch for an extended period of time.



The next morning, we gathered for a yummy breakfast and coffee, coffee, and more coffee -- and then headed off to class to begin working on *Spring Serenity*. It was great to see Betsy's stitched model -- which was far more beautiful than what I was able to show on the website. The silks in the *Spring Serenity* project were so pretty. It was fun just opening up our kits to get ready to start! As some of us began putting our linen into Q-snaps, Linda from Needle Craft World shared a great tip with us. It seems that Q-snaps can sometimes draw color out of the linen in the area where the plastic meets the linen, and sometimes Q-snaps can slide a bit. Linda told us about putting a paper napkin or towel between the linen and the plastic snap on portion. I tried it and it worked great!

There were 25 different specialty stitches in the *Spring Serenity* project, and we managed to learn them all between Friday and Saturday! Some were a breeze, and then there was....the queen stitch! Oh, that was really a challenge for some of us! But we all managed to do it, with some of us already being old hands at it. A Stitcher's Hideaway retreat is a great environment to learn new techniques because you're with the same instructor and stitchers throughout the event, and have the extended time to learn not only from the instructor, but from each other. One stitcher came alone and was pretty much a beginner at working on linen. Now she has two stitching buddies to continue helping her along!





Betsy sits contentedly after another fine meal!

Now, let's talk about Betsy a minute, shall we?!? That woman loves to eat!! About a half hour before each meal she would begin saying, "Isn't it about time to eat?" "Are they getting that food out yet?" "Don't you think we should check and see if it's ready?" Now if stitchers had heard ME saying that, they probably wouldn't have been surprised -- but little Betsy?!? Ha! But we sure did enjoy our meal times. Betsy & I both enjoyed switching to different tables and eating with different stitchers at each of our meals. It was a great way to get to know everyone better. There were cancer survivors among us, mothers, grandmothers, single women, and numerous occupations represented. Some have lived in Florida all their lives, and some were transplants. Several had family up north or had come from the north. Some were new to needlework, and some were practically born stitching. We had varying backgrounds, but our love of needlework drew us together and we sure had a great time!



During class we took some breaks to admire and buy wonderful threads, linens, charts and needlework toys from Needle Craft World and [The Someday Shop](#), and to look at each other's toys -- needlecases, fobs, boxes, and more. It's so much fun to look at what everybody else has made!!



And speaking of looking at what everyone else has made, after our final class session with Betsy and another scrumptious meal, we had Show 'n Tell!! WOW!! We saw some incredible work!! Some, like Marge and Dolly, have been stitching for many years and brought in lots of pieces for us to absolutely drool over!! We saw hardanger, pulled work, blackwork, darning, and many other techniques. There were large cross stitch projects (Betsy calls them "epic stitching") and little itty bitty etuis. There were WIPS (works-in-progress) and completely framed pieces. At left, Linda showed us her beautiful sampler work.

Dawn brought in about 10 antique samplers -- I remember one dated 1810. It made me wonder who the stitcher was and what her life was like, and also made me wonder if someone will someday wonder the same about pieces we will leave behind. It reminded me once again how important it is that we add our name or initials and dates with the full year (2003, as opposed to '03) for the benefit of those who will someday inherit our work.



Pat (left) helps Janet display two of her beautiful pieces of needlework.

That same evening, we had drawings for lots of doorprizes!! They were donated by Brightneedle, Calico Crossroads, Just One More, Nordic Needle, Stitcher's Hideaway, Stitchy Kitty, The MonkeyWorks, [The Victoria Sampler](#), and Wichelt Imports, Inc. There were also several doorprizes from Needle Craft World. Thank you, donors, for your generosity!!

As it always is when a retreat has come to an end, it is sad to say goodbye -- but wonderful to dream about the next chance we'll have to be together again. The Kissimmee stitchers were happy to hear insider news of the next Kissimmee Stitcher's Hideaway, but some just can't wait that long and are planning to come to retreats in other areas of the country! It will be wonderful to see any of them again anywhere!! Until then, stitching buddies!!

~ Sue

"Sue, what a GREAT weekend! It was really fun to meet new "sisters of the stitcherhood". Betsy Stinner was really wonderful. I have heard so very much about her as a teacher and certainly was NOT disappointed. You did a really great job organizing everything. I loved the idea that we ate right next to the stitching room so we did not have to pack up each time we left our stitching station. And we certainly did not go hungry! Thanks for all of your hard work; it really paid off. Please keep me informed of your next retreat in this area." ~ Ellen



Kitty and Dawn

“Hi Sue. I had a great time. Betsy is just amazing. I love hearing her speak - she's so knowledgeable about the history of needlework and makes it fun and interesting. Ellen said on the way home that she'd never look at a q-tip in the same way again!” ~ Linda M.

“Just wanted to let you know that I had a fantastic time this weekend. Thank you for taking the time to make this retreat so special. I hope to be able to attend another one of your events in the future.” ~ Tinka



Marge and Dolly

“I had a wonderful time at the Kissimmee retreat. Betsy is a terrific teacher and her designs are beautiful. The Friday evening "quickie" project was a great addition to the program. I was glad to have at least one completed project to take home with me. When I come home from a stitching event, friends always want to see what I did. Did you ever notice that non-stitchers look at you as if you are crazy for going to a 2-day retreat and not finishing a whole project???? I'll finish the sampler too but that will take a little more time. Sue, you do a wonderful job setting up the retreats. Everything always runs so smoothly but I know it is a lot of work for you to make it that way - even if it appears effortless to us. Can't wait for next year.” ~ Judy



Pat & Janet

“I want to say I enjoyed being there so much. What a great group of ladies and Betsy impressed me so much with her knowledge and amusing stories. It was a great success all round. Well done.” ~ Linda R.



Sharon & Margaretjoy



Pam from The Someday Shop shows us her one-over-one Rose



Sue & Dawn model the new Stitcher's Hideaway t-shirts!

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