

Stitchers Hideaway!

2004 Storrs, CT Fun Report

with
Ann & Liz of Brightneedle



Liz Knudsen and Ann Pettit of Brightneedle

What an absolute blast we had at the Storrs retreat!! Several people said they couldn't remember the last time they laughed so much! Stitchers came from CT, NY, MA, ME, NH, and OH for two days of stitching with Ann & Liz of [Brightneedle](#) and great food, fun, and fellowship. We had two wonderful field trips and created many memories together.

The night before the retreat there was a bit of excitement. Liz & Ann were driving from NY and their car broke down in Enfield, CT. After a loooong wait in the dark on the highway, they were towed to a VW dealer and I drove out to pick them up. Their car was loaded with items for the retreat but we managed to fit the 3 of us and everything into my little VW Beetle! Whew! On the way to the hotel we had fun talking and trying not to get lost. We finally arrived around midnight and we did our best to get a good night's rest before the retreat began early in the morning.

I don't know if ANY stitcher sleeps well the night before a retreat! We're all too excited!

When the stitchers arrived in the morning they received their Fun Packs. Some immediately dove into them like kids on Christmas morning! Others somehow restrained themselves temporarily and looked at the WONDERFUL display of stitched Brightneedle designs that Ann & Liz had brought with them! Naturally we went into stash enhancement mode. What a treat it was to see the stitched designs! They are just so much more beautiful than what any picture can convey.

We had really neat things in our Fun Packs! Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads donated complete *Lazy Days of Summer* kits! Thea Dueck of [The Victoria Sampler](#) donated gorgeous thread packs for one of her free designs and Stitcher's Hideaway donated the linen to complete the project. Olde Willow Stitchery and [Weeks Dye Works](#) gave us beautiful thread samples. Jeannette Douglas of [Jeannette Douglas Designs](#) gave us charts and thread packs to complete them. We received wonderful charts from Finger Work, Just One More, monsterbubbles, [Rosewood Manor](#), [With My Needle](#), [The Monkeyworks](#), [The Prairie Schooler](#), and [Glory Bee](#). Rosemary, from Wales, who attended a retreat in 2003 also designed a chart for us! We also received a sample of Danish Flower Thread from Scandinavian Stitches, and many other goodies!

But that didn't end the freebies. Throughout the retreat more items were received, including a teaser for the mystery surprise I had prepared for everyone. It was killing me not to spill the beans, but somehow, I managed to wait until Saturday night to reveal it. But, as usual, I'm getting ahead of myself again!

There was a lot of commotion as we met each other. There were the excited greetings from those who had met before at previous retreats, and warm hellos as we all got to know each other. Some stitchers knew each other from a message board at 123Stitch.com but met in person for the first time. In fact, Marie had won a contest on this message board for free retreat registration! Marie and Linda were roomies who talked late into the night!



Linda & Marie

We settled down to begin working on our retreat project, the *Cottage Garden Needlework Set-Autumn Mums*, under the instruction of Ann & Liz. The fabric was wonderful, the threads beautiful and soft, directions clear, and we dove right into our stitching.



Our Project -- Outside View



Inside View

The time quickly flew by and suddenly it was time for lunch! We gathered in the Nathan Hale Inn's restaurant for a delicious buffet. Marianne fell in love with the chocolate covered coconut macaroons and begged for more! They were out, but they remembered her longing and brought us more the next day. Oh, they were yummy!!

After lunch we headed out for our first field trip. Now it might seem odd that a group of stitchers would want anything to do with FROGS, but that's exactly what we were headed for – although some vowed that they would not allow the frogs to see their stitching or even look at their hands just in case! (The dread of the frog comes from errors made in stitching and having to Rippit-rippit-rippit!). First, we went to the Windham Mill & Textile Museum for a tour given by Barbara the curator. It was so interesting! We learned about the history of the Willimantic Linen Company (1854-1898) and the American Thread Company which opened in 1898. We learned about how the thread was made, and the way people lived and worked during those times. We asked many questions and were so impressed with Barbara's knowledge. It was truly fascinating.

We also heard about the bullfrog battle of 1754 and saw a room devoted to frogs in the museum! We followed up our tour by driving on some of the town's roads to see the beautiful Victorian Mill Houses and then dared to visit the famed Windham Frog Bridge! The frogs on the bridge are huge. If they were stretched out, they would probably be at least 10 feet long! They sit on huge spools of thread, which is a nod to the American Thread Company! What a sight!



Around this time, Marianne's husband Garry -- Hero of the Retreat -- drove Ann & Liz out to get a rental car since they had learned their car would not be ready until Tuesday.

Next we headed back to the hotel for a delicious meal in the board room, which had a large beautiful wood table with comfy chairs that tipped back (sometimes to our surprise!), and then left for a visit to Wyndham Needleworks – a local needlework shop. Lydia had goodies waiting for us and we wandered about looking at her incredible collection of antique samplers. There were some amazingly detailed and beautifully executed samplers done by children as young as seven! There were samplers dating back to the 1600's. It was truly an amazing and inspiring collection. We also shopped for stash there.

Karen making progress on her project

The next morning, we gathered for breakfast in the board room. This was really funny! At each place there was a dish with a little danish, some fresh fruit, and a delicious coffee cake, along with hot coffee and orange juice. For most of us, that would have been plenty, but then they brought out the REAL breakfast which would have been fit for lumberjacks!! You should have seen our faces when these huge platters came out heaped with food! There was no way any of us could have eaten it all, but we gave it our best effort!

Next, we headed off to class for a glorious morning of stitching, stitching, stitching. As a group our stitching experience varied. Some had never tried one-over-one stitching or some of the other stitches. Some had never stitched on linen before either. But we quickly mastered all we needed to know. We were all impressed with how fast Lauren stitched and the unusual positions she stitched in!!

Next followed another incredible buffet lunch. I think we talked and laughed more than ate at that point as most of us were recovering from the lumberjack breakfast! And oh, did we ever laugh!

We were also able to purchase all the cool Brightneedle designs and Stitcher's Hideaway t-shirts and stash bags throughout the retreat. This group of stitchers got to see the latest color t-shirt -- a deep teal green -- a real beauty.



Lauren, aka Speedy Gonzales



Sprinkled throughout the retreat were door prize drawings from The MonkeyWorks, Brightneedle, Calico Crossroads, Glory Bee, Nordic Needle, Rosewood Manor, Stichey Kitty, The Victoria Sampler, Wichelt Imports, Inc. and, of course, Stitcher's Hideaway.

As we stitched, Liz and Ann shared with us some of the stories and inspirations behind their different designs. That was so interesting! It made the different designs even more special to us.

Lauren can even stitch laying down! She probably stitches in her sleep!!

“Sue! Get away from me with that camera!”

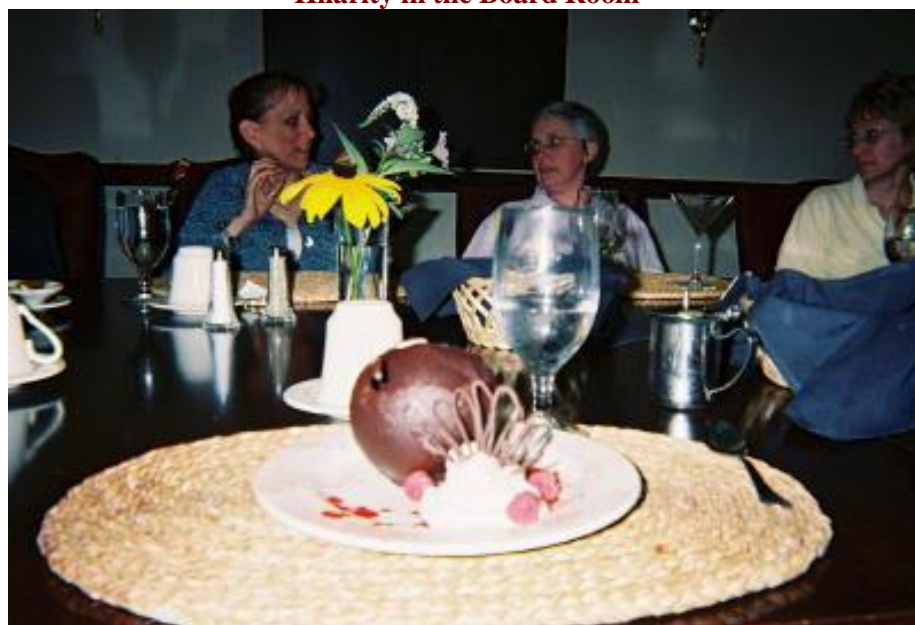


Great Friends -- Edie & Teddy

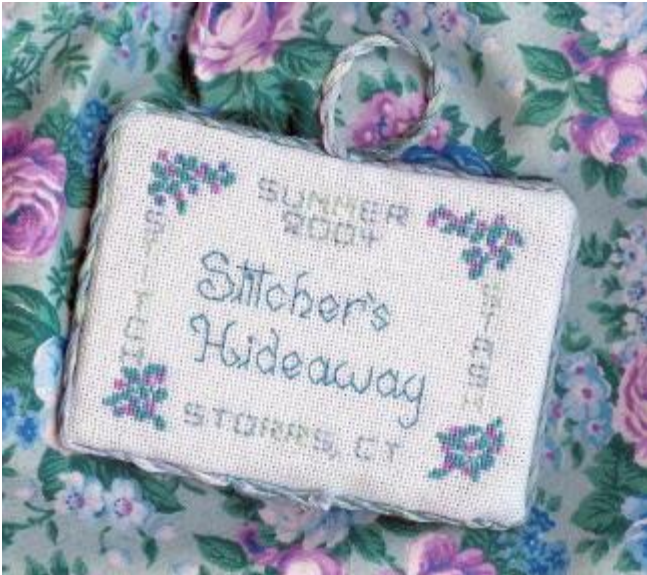
After lunch we headed back for class. It was then that we noticed Teddy disappearing and returning from the restaurant with great goblets of wine. Oh, we discovered that Teddy LOVES her wine. And after 2 glasses she is GREAT for telling stories. She had us laughing so hard at dinner that night that we had tears in our eyes! And what a dinner we had!!



Hilarity in the Board Room



All the meals were incredible, but you could only eat so much -- or so one would think. Teddy picked at her dinner of herbed grilled chicken (sampling my mushroom ravioli as well!). We were stuffed, but THEN they brought out the dessert!! You should have heard us all exclaiming when they served the first one to Garry!! It was incredible. It was a big softball-sized deadly chocolate shell with white chocolate raspberry mousse inside, with some whole raspberries. Each serving came on a plate sprinkled with cocoa, with a dollop of fresh cream, some whole raspberries, and a chocolate fan sticking out of the cream! Teddy turned to me and said, "I didn't have enough room for my chicken, but I *do* have room for THAT!"



After dinner we rolled ourselves back into the classroom with visions of chocolate still fresh in our heads. We had some more door prizes, and then I finally revealed the surprise I had been keeping from them. For the very first time I created a design all by myself like a big girl and even used a computer program to do the chart! They each received a kit to complete the design, which I named *Stitch, Stash, Storrs*. Liz and Ann gave us a cord making demonstration, which we needed to complete the project.

Next we had Show 'n Tell. We saw some great pieces of needlework! We are such awesome stitchers! There were many different styles and techniques and stories behind the projects chosen. Lauren also shared some of her beautiful handmade stamped and decorated greeting cards.

Oh, we hated to see the retreat end, and hated to say goodbye. But with all the excitement and good food, most of us were in need of a good night's sleep! So, we reluctantly parted with promises to keep in touch.

A big "hi" to all the Storrs Stitchers!

Sue



"Thanks again for a wonderful weekend!!! Everything was great as usual and I love the project! Left Storrs around 10:30 A.M. and got back home around 5:00 P.M. I didn't stop in Sturbridge but stopped at a few other places along the way...one was Yankee Cross Stitch in NH to get fabric I needed for a project plus a few other items.

Just checked out the Mystic project and boy am I glad I signed up for the class....the project is just beautiful!!!

You really did a great job in designing the project for the retreat...the colors are wonderful....Great Job!!"

- Linda



Marjorie wearing the latest in Alien EyeWear.

“I had such a wonderful time in Storrs (thanks to you) that when I got home, I immediately signed up for Mystic. Since Karen, Beth, Debbie and Karin have already signed up and will be sharing rooms, my husband will be coming with me to Mystic. He'll have fun with all the great places to visit and it's been quite a few years since we've been there. See you in November. Can hardly wait!” ~ Marjorie



Marie & Debbie

“What a wonderful time I had. This was my first time at one of your functions. I came alone but left knowing many new friends. Liz and Ann were wonderful teachers and the project is just beautiful. I had SUCH a great time. I can't remember the last time I laughed so hard!!! The food was beyond good. It was beautifully presented and absolutely delicious! I have only one regret.....that the weekend had to end. Also, thank you for the wonderful Storrs ornament that you designed and kitted for us. What a treat! I will be a repeat customer, for sure!” ~ Pam

“Sue, what a great time (Garry) and I had at the Storrs retreat!! Such wonderful fellow-stitchers, great food (groan.....), gifted instructors, and top notch accomodations. This was my first hideaway, but it will not be my last. Please send me info about your 2005 Connecticut retreats as soon as you know so I can plan my vacation time. I'm so glad I finally met you. Thank you for all the goodies. As a stitcher, you know how we horde goodies. Thanks again.” ~ Marianne (and Garry)



Marianne

“Just wanted to let you know what a great time I had at the Stitcher's Hideaway Retreat in Storrs this past July. I enjoyed meeting Ann and Liz of Brightneedle and working on the fantastic project they brought with them. It was very apparent that a lot of care and personal attention went into planning the retreat; from the goodie bag to the door prizes to the meals that were served (especially that chocolate dessert on the second night). I have made several new friends and I thank you for the opportunity to spend time with fellow stitchers. Driving from Ohio for this retreat was worth every mile and I plan to do it again next year!” ~ Marie

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