

Stitchers Hideaway!

200 Minnetonka, MN Fun Report

with
Thea Dueck of The Victoria Sampler

Oh, I love those Minnesota Stitchers!! What a wonderful time I had with them!! What a great retreat!

I arrived in MN early so that I could visit some friends and play. Vicki stopped by to unload all the boxes filled with door prizes, Fun Packs, and class materials that I had shipped to her. Vicki showed amazing restraint and didn't even peek! She took me out to a great place where I purchased some take out supper and then returned me to the hotel where I relaxed for a while before leaving to pick up instructor Thea Dueck of The Victoria Sampler at the airport.



Thea and Sue

Now picking up Thea was an adventure in itself! Her plane was due to arrive at 9:30 p.m. but was delayed until 10:30 p.m. I guzzled coffee in preparation for our drive to the hotel. Thea arrived in good shape and it was so good to see her in person after all the emails we had exchanged! Following printed directions, we then headed for the hotel. Turns out the instructions were not right and so we spent some time wandering back roads and seeing the same signs over and over again. I was beginning to feel pretty tired and silly, and even went the wrong way down a one-way street, but by then it was about midnight and no one in their right mind was out on the roads -- um, except us. Thea might have been in her right mind, but I'm not sure about me! It was feeling like 1 a.m. to this east coast body. Thea said to head for the lights and that seemed like a better idea than the dark back streets, so that's what we did and suddenly we were at our destination. In one piece. Whew!



The next day Thea visited the area with her internet friend Linda and had a tour of the city. I hooked up with Vicki (left) for most of the day. She took me on a wonderful drive around Lake Minnetonka -- WOW, it's BIG! We ate at Antiquity Rose -- a combination restaurant and antique shop -- obviously popular with the locals for the wonderful food. We then went to Stitchville USA where I lightened my wallet and had a fantastic time playing in the linens and threads, picking out materials for a design I had in my head. Next stop was the Minnetonka General Store for a fun shopping spree. Afterwards we picked up Thea and joined several other stitchers for dinner at Dave's Famous Barbeque -- oh, MAN, those ribs are so good! It was fun to see some of the stitchers I'd met at last year's retreat and to meet some new ones, too. After dinner we just couldn't help ourselves. We had to go to Stitchville again! Then we headed for the hotel for a good night's sleep before the retreat began.

Early the next morning, Deb from Stitchville and I did last minute set up in the classroom and then the excited stitchers began to arrive. Thea joined us in greeting them. They had a great time stash enhancing, going through their Fun Packs, greeting each other, and drinking coffee, tea, and nibbling on muffins. Their Fun Packs contained items from Brightneedle, Brittercup Designs, Elizabeth's Designs, Finger Work, Grateful Hearts, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Kreinik, M Designs, MonsterBubbles, Piecework Magazine, Rosewood Manor, Scandinavian Stitches, Sue Hillis Designs, The Prairie Schooler, The Victoria Sampler, Udder Cream, Weeks Dye Works, With My Needle, and, of course, Stitcher's Hideaway. In two of the Fun Packs were unusual items that identified the recipients as winners of special door prizes! The attendees were from SD, FL, WI, MN, NE, CA, and MO. Kathy Moore from California was given special gifts, including a stuffed Minnesota moose, for being the person who traveled the farthest.



Deb from Stitchville

We were all so thrilled to be able to learn from Thea and couldn't wait for class to begin! The great majority of us had never tried hardanger or had very little experience with it. Thea had a big job ahead of her, and she was more than up to the challenge! We had all done some prework on our project so that we could concentrate in class on learning the more complex techniques. Our prework consisted of basting and stitching kloster blocks, the foundation for the hardanger portion of our Friends in Stitches project. We had our choice of a pink or blue colorway. The kloster blocks were worked in caron watercolours in Rose Quartz or Silver Blue depending on our colorway. This thread was variegated so each of our pieces looked somewhat different from the others.



Thea expertly led us through creating Algerian Eyelets, cutting threads, needleweaving, Dove's Eyes, Partial Greek Crosses and beading. She gave us excellent tips for cutting threads consistently and neatly, and walked about helping us as needed. When she came to me, I had my scissors in position and she urged me to cut my threads. I kept looking at my threads -- was I about to remove the correct ones? Go ahead, she said, cut them. My mind said do it, but my hand wouldn't move. Finally, I confessed that I was frozen! But she assured me that the threads were the right ones and so I went for it! It wasn't so hard after all!! Ha-ha!! What a wimp I had been!! Diane, who was sitting next to me, managed to cut a wrong thread. "Ah, a learning experience!" proclaimed Thea, who came to the rescue and explained to us all how to easily repair the boo-boo. That was very reassuring! "Hey, Diane -- thanks for messing up," I said. We decided to blame the error on Dawn from Florida, who wasn't even at this particular retreat, but since she's usually around when stitching mishaps occur, we figured she ought to get credit! (Hi, Dawn!)



Kathy & Gwen (daughter and mother) and Rosie

Throughout the retreat there were drawings for more and more doorprizes. They were from Brightneedle, Brittercup Designs, Calico Crossroads, Finger Work, Glory Bee, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Just One More, Ladybug Lane Designs, Nordic Needle, Rosewood Manor, Stitcher's Hideaway, Stitchy Kitty, The MonkeyWorks, and Wichelt Imports, Inc. Thea also gave us each a wonderful gift -- Buttercups, one of her Beyond Cross Stitch Learning Collections that features loop stitch done in silk ribbon!

Our meals were so delicious! What a great chef! And what deadly desserts! MM-m-m-m-m!!!! On Friday evening after yet another ful-FILLING meal, the stitchers gathered in the classroom to find out what the surprise was that I had for them. They had been taunted and teased about this surprise for quite some time and tried to get hints out of me, but nope...I wouldn't budge!

This was their surprise. I designed "Lacis in Lavender" for them and taught them how to do lacis! Weeks Dye Works donated beautiful threads for this project: Periwinkle, Ultraviolet, Sugar Plum, and Cadet. It was stitched on 28 count Cashel Lavender Bliss.



There are some times when the sewing method is better to use than the “poke and stab” method, and needleweaving in laces is definitely one of those times. I gave everyone a live needleweaving demonstration showing both methods and using stitchers for wrapped bars! My guess is that they’ll all remember how to needleweave!! Ha!!



After a hearty breakfast the next morning we eagerly went back to class with Thea. Oh, she was a delight! We learned SO much from her! Throughout the day we learned to make Chrysanthemum flowers, foliage stitch, three-sided eyelet (really cool looking!), modified smyrna crosses, scotch stitch, nun stitch, blanket stitching, and even hemstitching! It was all made simple with the help of Thea. When she introduced new techniques to us, we gathered in groups around her for a demonstration. She also came around to help us individually whenever we needed it.



Whenever we had breaks, we were able to poke through all the stash from Stitchville. I purchased a tweezer-sort of thing to remove threads that looked a bit like stork scissors, but for some reason reminded me of a pterodactyl. I discovered when I opened and closed its “mouth” that it made a little squeaking noise if I held it just right. Pity the poor stitchers who sat next to me once I got a bit tired and silly, because I had my pterodactyl sneaking up on them, squeaking in their ears and then attempting to nip them! Beware stitchers everywhere -- sit next to me at a retreat at your own risk!! Heh-heh-heh!!



During one of those moments that required a bit of extra assistance from Thea, we could hear LuAnne whimpering “H-h-hold me” as she tried out some of the new techniques. Being ever so sympathetic, I brought my pterodactyl over to pay her a visit. It made him very happy. {giggle} Some of the stitchers were heartbroken that I had purchased the last available pterodactyl.

On Saturday afternoon, guess who joined us!! Karen Kluba of [Rosewood Manor!](#) She was in the area visiting her daughter and so she and her daughter came in and set up Karen’s trunk show! There is nothing quite like seeing stitched models. They were fantastic! We were very impressed! She had some of her designs on sale and stitchers really went to town purchasing those and others. It was a great opportunity to meet Karen in person! Karen has regularly donated items for Fun Packs and Door Prizes. Since she was there, she was able to personally give out a door prize. That lucky recipient received a gift certificate for her designs and was thrilled!



Karen Kluba of Rosewood Manor

In the evening we had a wonderful Show and Tell. This is a retreat tradition and one I look forward to so very much. I am always amazed at the creativity and skill of the stitchers and just love looking at their work.



Many of us shared stories about our work, and we placed the items on a table so that we could come up and admire them all afterwards. Someone brought in their completed "Heirloom Christmas" -- a design by Thea. It was so incredible and I felt so confident that I could do the work after learning so much from Thea that I purchased the chart and thread pack at the retreat! I found out that a few others are all working on this beautiful design together.



The one thing that I just don't like about any of these retreats is that they eventually have to come to an end. It was obvious that many of the stitchers felt the same way I did as they came up to thank me and got so choked up, they had trouble speaking! I had the same big lump in my throat. I just want everyone to stay and just stitch and eat and shop together forever!! But our other lives beckon us back home, where we return freshly inspired to stitch on our own until we can meet again!



To Thea I offer a HUGE thank you for traveling so far to be with us and for being so patient as we learned from her. She is just so knowledgeable and I know we all left enriched from our time with her. Mystic stitchers -- get ready! Your turn with Thea is coming in November!!

Sue



Anna classed up her Stitcher's Hideaway t-shirt with a jacket!

“Thank you for the wonderful weekend. The new friends we made, you and Thea all made for a very special time. My only complaint is that time went way too fast. Sure hope I’m able to attend another one – would love to go to one of your retreats in Connecticut. Hope to see you in 2006. ~ Lois”

“I had the best time at the Stitcher’s Hideaway in Minnesota and hope to join many more. I want to thank you for all your hard work and effort. You made it look easy which I’m sure it’s not – so you did a spectacular job! Thank you also for all the nice gifts in the bags of goodies. I won one of the Sudberry boxes from you and can’t wait to find the perfect pattern for it. Maybe even your Lacis Butterfly (we’ll see how badly I murder the pattern –never done it before). Thanks for the great time! ~ Linda



Oooo! Could LuAnne have just been nipped by the pterodactyl!?!?

“I have been working on the Minnetonka project and have thoroughly enjoyed stitching on this piece. Thea suggested I go on line and use her animated techniques for cutting and then stitching the hemstitching band. The animations were so helpful. Because I am left-handed, I had to switch the hemstitching around a bit, but it worked out great. I love this project. ~ Karen”



Sisters Kenne and Mary



Stacy playing in her stash in her hotel room

I just wanted to tell you I had a great time at your retreat – a time I will never forget! And you are just sooo cool! I loved hearing about your story – you are just a cool chick! Till next time....Happy Stitching – Stacy



“The retreat was fun, even for an "old fogey" like me. Kathy and I always enjoy going to stitching events together, and Thea was a great lure. We love her designs and have lots of them in the stash mostly just waiting to be done. You did a very good job of organizing the events. Thanks again. ~ Gwen”

“We had a great time last weekend. It was hard getting back to reality. (A 3-hour nap on Sunday afternoon helped!) And we're already looking forward to next year! Thanks for all your hard work. You're doing a great job! ~ Kathy”



Those wild and wacky Minnesota stitchers!!
Look at their beautiful t-shirts!!! What babes!!

[Read more Fun Reports](#)

[Return to Home Page](#)