

Stitchers Hideaway!

2006 Mystic Fun Report

with
Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads



Oh, boy! What fun we had!! I just LOVE the annual Christmas theme retreat in Mystic!

Instructor Betsy Stinner of Earth Threads arrived the afternoon before the retreat began, and she and I, along with my buddy Deb, went to a Japanese hibachi restaurant for dinner. It was *delicious*! If you've never tried it, you're missing out! Hibachi is a favorite of Betsy's and I was so pleased to find a brand-new restaurant barely 5 minutes away from the hotel. You sit around a U-shaped table and in the middle of the table is a large grill. The hibachi chef prepares your meal right there on the grill in front of you, usually with great flair. Some hibachi chefs can be *very* entertaining. This one gave us quite a show with his knives and a raw egg! The food was great and we had

a lot of laughs. It was a wonderful way to relax before the retreat.

The next morning Chris and Pam from Chris's Collection arrived to set up shop for all the stitchers in need of stash enhancement. Betsy and I enjoyed taking sneak peeks as we set up our own displays.



When the stitchers arrived, they found their Fun Packs, dove into their stash, shopped, and snacked on fresh apple cider, Vermont cheddar cheese, crackers, and other goodies -- so perfect for a New England fall day. Quite a number of stitchers have returned each year to the Mystic retreat and so it has become something of a reunion. There were laughs and hugs as they greeted each other and caught up with each other's lives. There were stitchers new to Stitcher's Hideaway, too, and we had a fun time meeting them. Four ladies traveled all the way from Michigan by car to take Betsy's class. They were a great group. They all wore matching pink t-shirts that said "Michigan to Mystic 2006" on them! Here's Sandy, Janet, Chris & Meg.



But the “Pink Ladies” from Michigan weren’t the ones that traveled the farthest this time. These stitchers came from MA, CT, VT, NY, NH, RI, NJ, MD, and ID. Idaho was the farthest away and for the first time there were two that traveled the farthest! Sisters Juana and Elsa, who share a house, each received gifts for traveling the farthest! Here’s Elsa on the right, who just won a door prize from [Morning Glory Needleworks](#), and her sister Juana is next to her.



The goodies in our Fun Packs were donated from Brittercup Designs, Calico Crossroads, Chris’s Collection, [Elizabeth’s Designs](#), The Gift of Stitching, [Glory Bee](#), [Jeannette Douglas Designs](#), Knotted Tree NeedleArt, Lavender Wings, [Morning Glory Needleworks](#), Nordic Needle, [Olde Colonial Designs](#), [Rosewood Manor](#), Scandinavian Stitches, Stitchy Kitty, Sue Hillis Designs, [The Prairie Schooler](#), [The Sweetheart Tree](#), [With My Needle](#), and [Zweigart](#). Thank you so much!!!

After a bit we got set up in our classroom for class time with Betsy. Boy, she is a hoot! During the two days we spent together, we worked on two ornaments that used the same specialty stitches used in the Victorian Noel Sampler. The stitches included Double Running, Woven Spider Web, Diamond Rhodes, Triple Upright Cross, Smyrna, Bullion, Fir, Pine Cone, Algerian Eye, Diamond Ray, Ray, Modified Van Dyke, Herringbone Leaf, Flower, and Enclosed Rhodes over eight threads. Here’s a picture of the Victorian Noel Sampler.



The ornaments we worked on were a big help in learning the different stitches. Many of us completed them during the retreat. Donna from NY finished hers and sent me a scan (left). I stitched mine in different colored threads and finished them a bit differently (right). Donna and I have ours on our Christmas trees.



For most of us, the bullion stitch was new and we spent a while nailing that one down. It's what makes up the little Christmas tree. It was fun learning it together. We laughed at our own clumsy attempts! One stitcher had never done any specialty stitches and you should have seen how quickly she picked everything up! We were all so proud of her!

All throughout our class time together Betsy talked about various Christmas customs and their origins -- holly, wreaths, Christmas pickles, and so much more. It was clear that she had done a lot of research just for our class, and it was so appreciated. She also played some beautiful Christmas music in between instructions as we stitched. It was so relaxing and enjoyable to stitch while listening to the music and hearing about various customs. One of the CDs was by the Celtic Women. Wow, it was great!



It's so much fun to get together with other stitchers! We may come from tremendously diverse backgrounds, but get us together talking about our passion for needlework and all those differences disappear! Instant friends! I love seeing all the stitching toys people bring with them to class -- needle books, ORT containers, various tools and pretties. Oh, I LOVE to look at it all!

At this retreat I had the pleasure of sitting next to Gayle (right). Gayle and I both enjoy hanging out at 123stitch.com -- a message board for stitchers. It was great to meet another 123'er in person! I've been able to meet quite a few at the retreats over the years.

Here's Alda from Maryland. She had just won a doorprize from [Rosewood Manor](#). And do you see that lovely frog looking up at her doorprize? She won that at Stitcher's Hideaway, too! When you press it, its whole body moves as it sings "What a Wonderful World."



We had some very generous doorprizes donated to us for this retreat. They came from Brittercup Designs, [Cherished Stitches](#), Chris's Collection, Earth Threads, [Elizabeth's Designs](#), The Gift of Stitching, [Glory Bee](#), Jeannette Douglas Designs, [Kretnik](#), Lavender Wings, M Designs, monsterbubbles, [Morning Glory Needleworks](#), Nordic Needle, [Old Colonial Designs](#), [Praiseworthy Stitches](#), [Rosewood Manor](#), Stitcher's Hideaway, Stichey Kitty, [The Victoria Sampler](#), [With My Needle](#), and a friend of Stitcher's Hideaway who donated some wonderful stash.



These six stitchers won a chart and accessory pack from Thea Dueck of The Victoria Sampler! Lucky gals!



Some stitchers from New York have been attending the annual Mystic Stitcher's Hideaway since 2002. They are part of a group that gets together to stitch on a weekly basis. They call themselves the Stitchin' Witches. They presented Betsy with one of their t-shirts. I guess this makes Betsy an honorary Stitchin' Witch!

These same gals have handmade me gorgeous gifts throughout the years. At this retreat they presented me with a beaded scissors fob and a crocheted piece that has my last name in it! I'll have to find a way to take a picture of that to post on here. It is long and can't fit on my scanner. I think it would look awesome mounted on some deep colored velvet as a contrast. They are so thoughtful!



Here we are having a yummy lunch in the same room where Chris's Collection is set up. Right across the hall is our classroom, which is so convenient. Here's Deb, Marianne, and then Donna & Liz (Stitchin' Witches).

Six of us participated in an old-fashioned cookie exchange. That was great! We each made a batch to share and took with us some of each other's cookies. It was a nice assortment. When I got home, they went immediately into my freezer so that I could take them out for Christmas.

Betsy and I posed for many photos. We do our best to keep the paparazzi happy. If you know the two of us, you know that it is difficult for us to behave for very long. Please don't tell Santa. We have concerns about that list he keeps...



Naughty....



Nice!

On Friday night I presented everyone with a surprise! I designed a needlebook for them, which I call "Welcome Winter." I wanted to capture one of the things I love most about winter, and that is extra time spent inside stitching -- especially during snow storms!

*Welcome Winter! - Let the Winds blow!
I'll Stitch by the fire - Let it snow! Let it snow!*



The inside had a felt tree to hold needles.

The generous folks at [Weeks Dye Works](#) donated WDW Holly for this project. It was a perfect match! Thank you so much!

Liz & Donna are very rapid stitchers. Donna had her Welcome Winter started and Liz had hers almost completely by the end of the retreat! Wow, I would love to be able to stitch that fast!

Saturday passed merrily as Betsy guided us through the stitching of our ornaments as listened to music. Betsy asked us to share about some of our own Christmas customs and that was interesting. Some of our family traditions were handed down from many generations and even from other countries, while some traditions came about in later years. In between stitching, shopping, talking, laughing, and eating, we had more door prizes!



Christine with doorprize from Kreinik

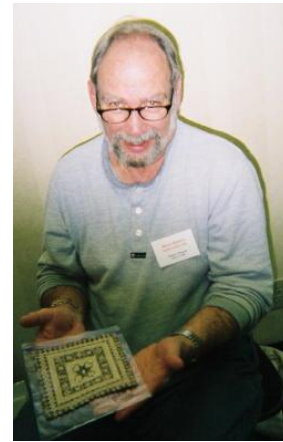


Grace with doorprize from Nordic Needle



Here's Kathy with a door prize from Lavender Wings

That evening we had a Christmas Ornament Exchange! That was fun! All those who participated stitched an ornament and gift wrapped it. We then drew numbers and one by one selected an ornament. There were many ooo's and ah's as each one was revealed. I have the one I received hanging in my office!



Kathy's husband Bruce is also a stitcher. He has come to a few retreats with her, but tends to hole up in his hotel room stitching away while watching football on the tv. He has joined us at meals and for stash enhancement, but this year he also joined us at our traditional Show 'n Tell and brought some of his stitching to show us! Wow! He's pretty amazing! These pieces he is showing are quite complex with numerous specialty stitches and even hardanger! We were quite impressed.



Betsy showed us her knitted socks



Marianne showed us her handmade purse



Admiring each other's work



Cyndi with her masterpiece



When I think back on this retreat, I think it was the most relaxing one ever. The pace of Betsy's class, the beautiful music, the stories of Christmas customs, and the stitchers themselves made it a really wonderful experience. It was wonderful to have this time together before the rush of the holiday season. I'm already looking forward to next year when Thea Dueck of The Victoria Sampler will be our instructor!

See you at a retreat soon!

Sue



"I was so sorry for the retreat to end. I had a really good time. Betsy is truly an Angel. I love the project. I enjoyed listening to the music and learning more about Christmas customs and lore. I am so glad that I attended this retreat. I have finished my 2 ornaments also. I just have to "Finish" them up!

Our surprise was wonderful, Sue!! Donna and I were talking on the ferry over to CT about a needle book. I don't have one and when I got it at the retreat, I was so happy, I was about to cry! I am going to finish my needle book tonight! I will send you a picture of it.=)

I can't wait until the next retreat that I am attending. I love seeing old friends and making new ones. Until our stitches meet again!" Stitchin' Witch, Liz



"Every time I think you couldn't possibly improve what you do with Stitcher's Hideaway, I go to another retreat and it is even more wonderful than the last one. You manage just the right level of activities and downtime, stash enhancement, and camaraderie. The group of us who have become regulars have become friends and there are always new friends to be made. And then of course there is the food--fabulous as always. (Note to self--always pack the roomy jeans for this event--I'll need them by the end of the event.) Thank you so much and keep up the good work!" Hugs, Peggy

"Sue, I can't tell you how much fun I had this weekend in Mystic. Everything a stitcher could want – all in one place. A fabulous teacher, beautiful sampler, and a great group of stitchers – just to name a few! Thank you for all of your hard work to put this all together. Crossing in Friendship, Linda Bessette"

Sandy with her color-coordinated glasses



Marjorie - pretty in pink

"Thanks for organizing another great retreat. I think this was the "funnest" one yet. I love the project and really enjoyed learning about all the Christmas traditions from around the world. I can't imagine the amount of work it took Betsy to do all the research! The food was wonderful as well, but the best was the stash enhancement and all the fellow stitchers that were there. I am looking forward to February in Mystic again. I've informed my Husband that these are no longer considered optional weekend retreats. They are required events. Thank you for making this happen." ~ Joann

"I wanted to thank you for all your work on the retreat. It was amazing fun! ~ Alda"

“Hi Sue, I miss you too, I can't wait till next time! I came home with so many goodies and 2 completed ornaments now I just have to do the finishing. I hit the motherload with the Christmas gift from Betsy, WOW!! Thanks Betsy. Enjoy your holidays! See ya' soon! Donna”

“As usual, you are the perfect hostess. Thanks for the Mystic Hideaway. That is truly your calling. Luv Ya, Grace”

“The Michigan contingent had a great time in Mystic. I agree, it was very relaxing and peaceful and once again, as always, Betsy's teaching was very interesting. We enjoyed our extra day of sightseeing before heading home too. Hope to see you again too. ~ Janet



Roberta with Rosewood Manor Gift Certificate



Linda with Lavender and Lace Doorprize

As usual, we had a wonderful time at your retreat! You always do a great job with everything (including the food!). Garry and Winston hung around Mystic while I got to meet and learn from Betsy. I agree that the pace of the class was perfect, and Betsy presented Christmas information delightfully while we stitched away. Garry and I had the privilege of driving Betsy home so we got to know her a little better. She is a special and fascinating lady. I look forward to taking another of her classes which I found challenging but not impossible for a beginner to complete! Thanks for another great retreat.” ~ Marianne



Peggy with door prize from Stitchy Kitty



Chatting during a break



Joanne won a Sudberry House Clock from Stitcher's Hideaway

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