

Stitchers Hideaway!

2008 Winter Escape in Mystic, CT

Fun Report



I first met instructor Dawn Fisher at the 2003 Stitcher's Hideaway retreat in Kissimmee, FL. We had a great time together, and even took in a little Downtown Disney the night before the retreat. If you've read some of the other Fun Reports, you've seen that Dawn was an attendee at many of them -- *and* that she was frequently blamed for any mishaps that ever occurred -- *even* when she wasn't an attendee! LOL!!

At one of the retreats, Dawn said she had something to show me. She pulled out what was to become "The Alphabet of Stitches", our retreat project for the Mystic Winter Escape. Unbeknownst to me, Dawn had previously designed and taught classes. She took a break from that while earning her degree and was just starting to get back into the swing of things. Since I only became addicted to needlework in 1998, I didn't know Dawn was a designer or that she had her own company, Morning Glory Needleworks. What she showed me was the first four rows of the design. I about flipped! It was awesome! I asked her to let me know when she had completed

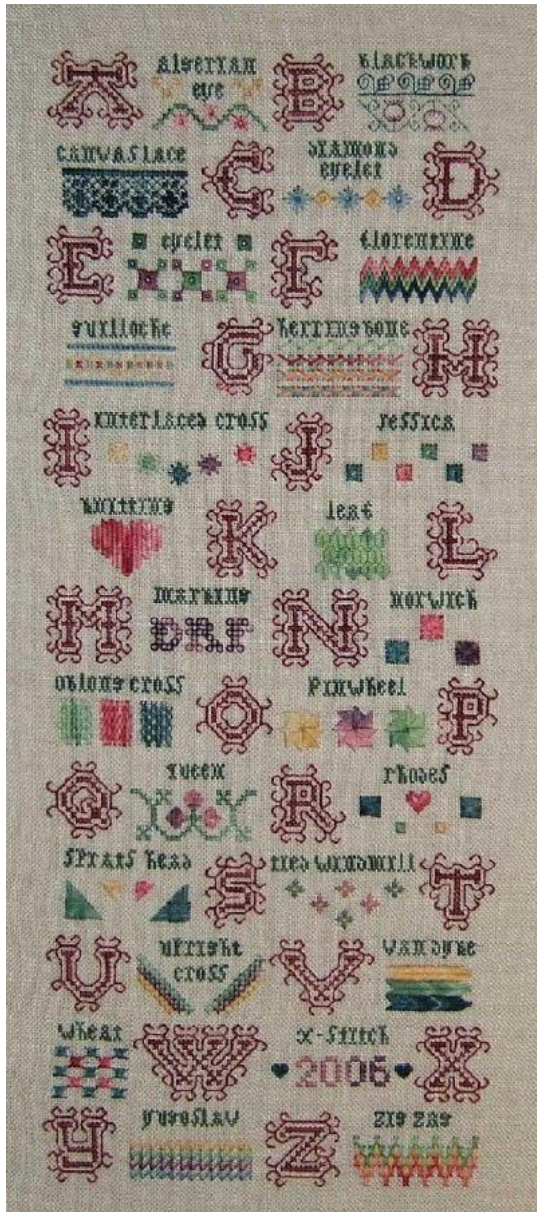
it because I thought it would make a great retreat project. She did, and the rest is now history.

Now about those mishaps that somehow occurred at past retreats when Dawn was an attendee....you don't think that would in any way impact *this* retreat, do you? Well.....lemme tell 'ya....

Up until the Wednesday before the Mystic Winter Escape Retreat in Mystic, CT was to begin, it had been looking like the mildest winter Connecticut had experienced for years. Dawn and her friend Connie excitedly booked flights from Florida to get them to Connecticut 2 days before the retreat so that they could spend some time in the area. Well, wouldn't you know -- good ol' New England weather struck! Their original flight was cancelled, and then a second flight. It became clear they could not fly out on Wednesday, so they booked a Thursday morning flight which brought them to Newark, NJ. Then their connecting flight to Providence was cancelled! There was the possibility of a late-night flight for them, but the concern was whether or not that one might also end up being cancelled. We exchanged numerous cell phone calls trying to decide what to do. They thought it would be best to rent a car and drive to Mystic, but when they asked about a rental, they were told it would cost \$600! Cars were in hot demand because of all the flight cancellations. After standing in many lines, and then finding out on top of it all that their luggage was somehow lost, they became a little punchy! I could hear them both laughing hysterically and expressing deep longings to find a bar somewhere. I was beginning to think I was going to need to drive to NJ and bring them to CT myself when they finally found a rental car at a reasonable cost.



They finally arrived in Mystic around midnight. Since they did not have their belongings, I had gone up to their room before they arrived, turned on the heat, and put out nightshirts for them to wear -- a Hop into Bed and a Despurrate Housewives from the Stitcher's Hideaway shop.



During all this, some of the stitchers -- Peggy, Arleen, Nancy, Deb and I -- went to a Japanese Hibachi restaurant that night. (Dawn and Connie were supposed to go -- but ended up with airport pizza instead!) It was a great meal -- prepared for us on a grill attached to our table. It was fun to be with some stitchers the night before the retreat. We enjoyed a Barber Shop Quartet that came by to serenade someone in a party being held there. That was an extra treat!

The next morning Dawn and Connie went on a quick shopping trip to pick up some necessities to get them by until their luggage resurfaced. Fortunately for us all, Dawn had carried all the class kits and her laptop with her on the plane, so thankfully the retreat could begin without a hitch. But oh, what an experience they went through! And it wasn't over yet!!

All the attendees were very eager to get started on Dawn's beautiful project -- *The Alphabet of Stitches*. We were a small group -- just 17 -- who were brave enough to take a chance on winter weather. We came from NJ, MA, SC, CT, NH and FL. Connie, the stitcher from FL, received special goodies for traveling the farthest (which included some socks covered with frogs -- just what she needed, LOL!), and everyone received Fun Packs with fun items from generous designers and companies -- Brittercup Designs, Calico Crossroads, Chris's Collection, Elizabeth's Designs, The Gift of Stitching, Glory Bee, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Just Nan, Little House Needleworks, Morning Glory Needleworks, Rosewood Manor, Stitchy Kitty, Sue Hillis Designs, The Prairie Schooler, Victoria Sampler, Weeks Dye Works and Zweigart.

Chris & Pam from Chris's Collection set up shop for us and we got to see loads of new releases straight from the recent Nashville Needlework Market. That was great! Their enthusiasm and kindness are always appreciated. We each received a set of magnets to use while stitching and a needle holder from Chris's Collection.

What a surprise we all had when we opened up our Alphabet of Stitches kits to discover that Dawn had basted a good portion of our linen for us so that we could jump right into our stitching! Dawn laughed and told us she has often been called an over-achiever! Well, that was just fine with us! It was a great way to get started, for there was much to learn.

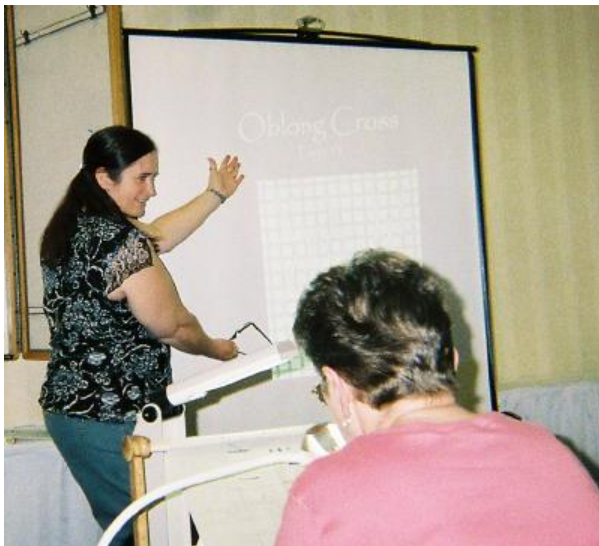
Our basting broke the piece up into 26 rectangles, one for each letter of the alphabet. This made it easy to jump from one specialty stitch to another as Dawn guided us through each one. Some of us opted to listen to the instructions and look over the written instructions as we stitched each section completely before moving on to

the next. Others jumped from section to section to try out each stitch and to have Dawn's help as needed along the way. As usual at these retreats, different levels of experience were represented in the class. A couple of stitchers were new to stitching on linen, while others were old hands at it. Dawn was there for us all, helping each one of us as needed.

Dawn noted that some stitches are known by other names as well, but she chose the name that best worked with her alphabet.

One stitcher wondered how all these different stitches came to be. Dawn talked about how young ladies once used a variety of stitches in samplers to show off their skills and to attract a husband. However, Dawn stated that it hadn't worked for her!

Dawn's instructions were outstanding. The written instructions in our kits were so detailed, complete with large stitch illustrations, that there was no doubt that we would all be able to easily follow them and finish the project at home after the retreat. Her PowerPoint illustrations during class were perfect. But, as an over-achiever, she had also stitched each stitch in yarn on large plastic canvas so that we



could have yet another great visual aid. I should mention that she referred to this plastic canvas a few times on Friday saying that it would be very helpful to look at it and we would be able to do so -- if it wasn't lost with her luggage! We also heard of some freebies she had for us -- that were in her missing luggage. It became a running joke during our first day together that this or that was "in the missing luggage!"

The missing luggage was finally located in Hartford and was delivered to Dawn and Connie on Saturday morning. Here she is with the plastic canvas she used as a teaching tool.

Dawn presenting the Oblong Cross!

At this retreat both Pam & Chris (back row) from Chris's Collection joined us in class. In the second row are Beverley and Roberta, and up front is Deb Milvae. Deb and I both work at UConn, just down the hall from each other. When one sneezes, the other can hear and responds "God bless you!" LOL!! We have shared a good many adventures together over the years through our love of stitching and much more.



I like to design something for each retreat, a little remembrance of our time together. I usually just get a sudden inspiration and whatever it is, that's what everyone gets! For this retreat, I thought it would be nice to have something very simple since we would be working on so many different stitches in class. With that thought and my good friend Deb in mind, I came up with *Friends are Flakes!* LOL!! I presented it to Deb before giving kits out to everyone. I enjoyed surprising her, and giving everyone a quick-stitch project that they could pass on to their friends. I made up little tuck pillows for everyone, too. It was my first time making them and I thought I was just so cool!! Weeks Dye Works donated thread for this little freebie.



Oh -- what wonderful meals we had!!!! Everything was prepared by Mystic Market Catering. We had lunch boxes on Friday that went way beyond the ordinary. And for dinner on Friday night we had an entree choice of either crab cakes or filet mignon. We ate like queens! Everything was delicious!



Chow Line!

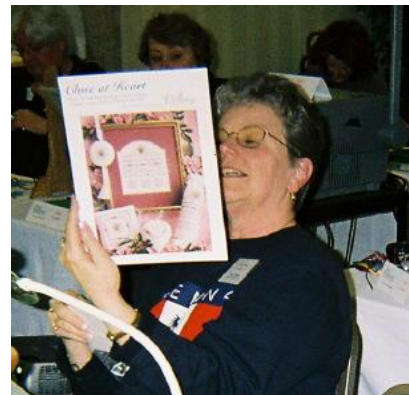
Oh! And there were doorprizes and doorprizes! They were donated by Brittercup Designs, Chris's Collection, Earth Threads, Elizabeth's Designs, The Gift of Stitching, Glory Bee, It's Fine-ally Finished, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Kreinik, Lavender Wings, M Designs, Rosewood Manor, Stitcher's Hideaway, Stitchy Kitty, The Victoria Sampler and With My Needle.



Peggy with Sudbury box from Stitcher's Hideaway



Jeannette with doorprize from Lavender Wings



Becky with doorprize from Victoria Sampler

Among the stitchers was Nancy Boyarsky of Glory Bee. It was great to have her with us! Nancy designed a chart for us as a keepsake from the retreat, and she presented it completely stitched to Dawn, who had just received a Sudbury Box from Stitcher's Hideaway and the stitching was the perfect size for it! Dawn was thrilled! There's Nancy below -- backrow, right. Thanks, Nancy!



Front Row: Jeanne, Jeannette. Middle Row: Peggy, Arleen. Back Row: Joanne, Nancy.



Here's what Nancy designed for us!

Jeannette found something different in her Fun Pack and received a stuffed frog that sings "What a Wonderful World!" After the retreat, Jeanne and Jeannette mailed me a ceramic frog, which I have displayed on a window ledge in my office at work! They wrote, "Jeannette and I wanted to thank you for all the hard work we know you did to create a wonderful weekend getaway for us all. Hope this little guy makes you smile." That little guy most certainly does make me smile -- especially because it reminds me of the two of you! Thanks so much!



Here's Connie, me, and Cynthia -- intently listening to instructions. What good little students we are!

Show and Tell is always wonderful! It's so inspiring to see the work of other stitchers. We saw some amazing needlework and heard some great stories behind some of the pieces, too.

This beautiful piece is stump work done by Becky. It was absolutely stunning.



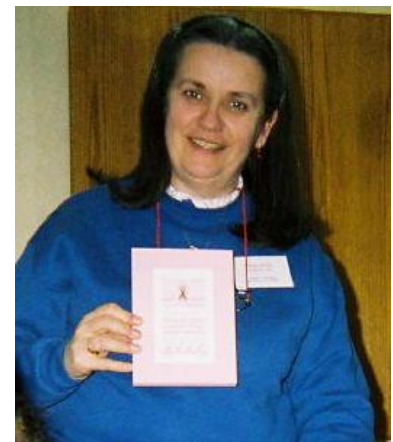
Becky with another work of art



Here's me with *H is for Hydrangea*, designed by Sue Stokes and taught at the very first Stitcher's Hideaway Retreat



Joanne finished up her Noel Samper designed by Betsy Stinner and taught at the November 2006 Stitcher's Hideaway.



Peggy stitched this piece for a friend dealing with breast cancer.



Here's Cynthia with a hardanger masterpiece she made for her mother! She only took up hardanger recently and has really mastered it! (My camera was being evil here -- Cynthia really is a total babe with an awesome complexion!)

Oh, I wish I had more Show 'n Tell pictures to show you -- but I ran out of film!! We saw so many works of art. One person brought in a quilt that she made!

During the retreat I could see that some new friendships were formed. That just pleases me to no end! There's nothing quite like having a stitching buddy, and a retreat is a great place to find one. We had a great time at the retreat and learned a lot. When stitchers get together you're sure to hear tips you can use to make stitching easier or to make your stitching look better. It seems there is always something new to learn.



Beverly has been to many Stitcher's Hideaway Retreats!



Jeanne & Jeannette in their Alien Eyewear

Now, about the rest of Dawn & Connie's adventure. They still had to get back home to Florida. The return leg of their trip was to take them from Providence, RI around 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, bring them through Newark again, and then back home. So, they got up early on Sunday to try and take in a little of Mystic Seaport, then rushed to Providence, checked in their rental car, and went to check in.....*only* to find that when they didn't complete the first part of their trip (Newark to Providence), the rest had been cancelled and their seats sold! After all the time they had spent in Newark trying to work things out you would have thought this would have been mentioned to them, no? LOL!! SO....the airline paid for them to spend the night in the airport Sheraton and arranged for them to fly out the next day. Dawn called later on to let me know of their continuing adventure. By that time they had both visited an airport bar, were making plans to go to others, and were having the beginning of a grand old time!! Well, at least they didn't have to drive!!

Dawn, we are all grateful that you made it to the retreat, and so very thankful for your excellent instruction, encouragement, and sense of humor. We enjoyed your teaching so very much, and hope you will come back to teach at another retreat ----- um....in the SUMMER. Heh-heh!

Sue



"I had a great time at the retreat and will look forward to more in the future. I still can't get over how well you had everything organized. (I've been to other retreats that were much more chaotic). I've been working on the piece. I have all my colours set now--picked a nice rich dark brown for the stitch names. I've finished through F. Such fun! Thanks again, and give my regards to Dawn if you are in touch." ~ Elizabeth



Chris



Becky

"Once again a terrific retreat. People really missed out on this one but for those of us that were there, it was so great. The intimate size of the retreat really let us enjoy each other and enabled Dawn to give us each more individual attention." ~ Peggy



Elizabeth



Cynthia

"I had a fantastic time at the winter getaway. Dawn was a great instructor and a good sport considering all the trouble she had with travel arrangements. I loved the projects, but frankly I would come just to stitch for 2 days

and eat the wonderful food you provide. This was a wonderful group of stitchers and I hope to see them again in the future!” ~ Joanne



“Thank you so much for hosting another great weekend. As always, I had an absolute wonderful time and everything was magnificent - the food, stash shopping, goodie bag, stories, Show and Tell, door prizes...and so much more. You are the best hostess. I just can't wait for Sturbridge.” ~ Cynthia

“I had a great time at my first Stitcher's Hideaway retreat, and it won't be my last! Just wish you guys weren't so far from South Carolina! It was loads of fun, both the instruction and learning new stitches, and also the fellowship and sharing info and ideas with one another. Thanks again for a great weekend!” ~ Becky



FROM DAWN: “I am still in recovery! I think a few more drinks should help!! I had such a great time at the retreat. That Dawn is the best instructor ever!!! Really Sue, thank you so much for having faith in my teaching abilities. As for the retreat itself - the hotel was great! The staff was friendly and helpful when our luggage was traveling without us - and when it finally showed up. The food was excellent! I still drool when I think of the great meals we had. Chris's Collection had a wide variety of items for "stash enhancement" (which I took full advantage of). And of course, all the stitchers were wonderful and understanding when some of my teaching tools were off with my luggage! What a great time!!! I am attaching some pictures I took before my camera pooped out plus the scan of Nancy's piece. She was so sweet to give that to me! She also emailed me a couple of websites with graveyards and tombstones (I know, I'm weird). Thanks again, Dawn”



Mystic Seaport

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