

Stitchers Hideaway!

2008 Alumni Retreat Fun Report

In February 2008 the very first Stitcher's Hideaway Alumni Retreat was held in Mystic, CT. What a great time!! We were a small but very happy group.

Now you might think that during the New England winter, the majority of the stitchers might be from Connecticut, but that wasn't the case!! This group came from MA, NH, ME, NY, CT -- and, get this - - Idaho and Florida!! And what is even funnier is that the Florida stitcher was Dawn Fisher of Morning Glory Needleworks who had such bizarre travel problems when she came to teach at the February 2007 Stitcher's Hideaway Retreat! LOL!!



Linda, who had been looking forward to escaping from Maine with its record snowfall this year, arrived in time for the one real snow storm of the season for Connecticut! Where she lives, they average 73 inches of snow, but this year received 121 inches. We had all been keeping an eye on the weather situation because a storm was predicted for Friday morning -- but almost everyone planned to arrive on Thursday afternoon anyway so we were all snug and cozy at the hotel when the storm arrived on Friday morning.

The ever-talented Linda demonstrated how powerful her stitching magnets are when applied to the ears! Here they are holding up her scissors fob!

The night before the retreat most of us went to a Japanese restaurant for a hibachi dinner -- where they cook your food on a huge grill that is part of your table. This is done with a great flourish -- knives tossed in the air, etc. It was a lot of fun and gave us time to just unwind from our work week.

The next morning, we had the hotel's great complimentary breakfast and then gathered in our meeting room. Since we were a small group, we were set up in a big U-shape so that we could all see each other.

Remember how I said there wouldn't be Fun Packs at this retreat? Well, I lied. Heh-heh! They were such pretty bags, too. Very girly and spring-like -- and filled with springy-kind of things -- in defiance of the snow storm outside. (I could see my little VW Beetle outside the meeting room window slowly getting buried!) These Fun Packs weren't like the usual from Stitcher's Hideaway. They didn't contain stash, since our focus was to complete projects we had already started. They were instead filled with pretties, outstanding chocolates, and other eatables. We did receive something cool from The Gift of Stitching, however. It was a beautiful chart and a code to enter to receive a back issue of their on-line magazine! Someone brought the December issue to show us at the retreat and it was filled with some really great Christmas ornament charts.

So, there we were -- happy, snug, and cozy inside with all our stitching toys and projects to work on! Two glorious days and nights of just stitching and stitching, chatting, giggling, eating, and shopping!

Chris from Chris's Collection made it up on Friday morning from Massachusetts with no travel problems, and she set up shop for us. She had just returned from the Nashville Needlework Show and had loads of new designs and goodies for us to see! That was so much fun! Whenever we needed a break from our stitching, we just got up and shopped -- all right there in the same room! We ate our delicious catered meals in the hotel's beautiful lobby, and they were yummy.

As you can imagine, we did a *lot* of talking during our 2 days together. It was great because we got to learn things about each other that we hadn't known. We found that many of us have had some shared experiences -- dealing with aging parents, raising children, divorce, life and death issues -- and it was kind of healing to know that we have shared journeys. I think I learned something from everyone. And it seemed that no subject was taboo, which led to some pretty funny discussions! LOL!!



Deb surrounded by her stitching toys



Jeannette as most of the world sees her.



Jeannette in Alien Head Gear showing us her Mermaid Masterpiece.

A few of us spent time working on the same project -- the Bay State Sampler by Jeannette Douglas from the Sturbridge 2007 retreat. There was a lot of variety in other pieces that we worked on as well. Dawn was working on 3 new teaching designs and so we had a great sneak peek and even got to give her our input on the new designs! That was cool!



Bev working on the Mystic 2007 Project



Chris working on the Sturbridge 2007 Project



So "Popular" Dawn



Sharon decorated in floss

Sharon from NY was actually new to Stitcher's Hideaway. She is going to attend her first Stitcher's Hideaway this July in Sturbridge and asked if she could come to the Alumni Retreat -- and, of course, we were more than happy to have her! She was a great addition, and it seemed after a short time that we had always known her somehow! She was a lot of fun and a totally addicted stitcher.

We were a very casual group. Some of us had quite the outfits on! With the storm going on, it felt like we had the hotel to ourselves so I started wearing my pajamas! By day two, I was no longer wearing makeup. Oh, what a babe I was!



Sue models the glamorous dishevelment of the static-electricity-in-pajamas look.



Joanne in her just-back-from-my-workout disheveled look.

But perhaps Joanne was the most total babe among us. She relaxed in her sweats and then workout clothes after using the hotel's gym. Her hair became more and more interesting...until finally I proclaimed her disheveled, which caused us to note many other things that were disheveled and created a lot of laughter.



Joanne models classic 1950's bee-hive doo -- um, slightly disheveled



Juana, without sister Elsa to defend herself, declares herself the “Good One.”



Friends don't let friends stitch drunk



Laurel was unable to get to the retreat until Saturday due to her work schedule, and when she showed up, she was really needing some down time! A little wine helped her along her way...heh-heh.

Laurel is a “finishing” queen. She somehow has that gift of turning stitching into art forms. I think I need her help!



Juana models the latest in alien head gear.

Our “Show and Tell” pretty much occurred throughout our time together. It was fun to see all the different designs we were working on and to see each other’s stitching toys.

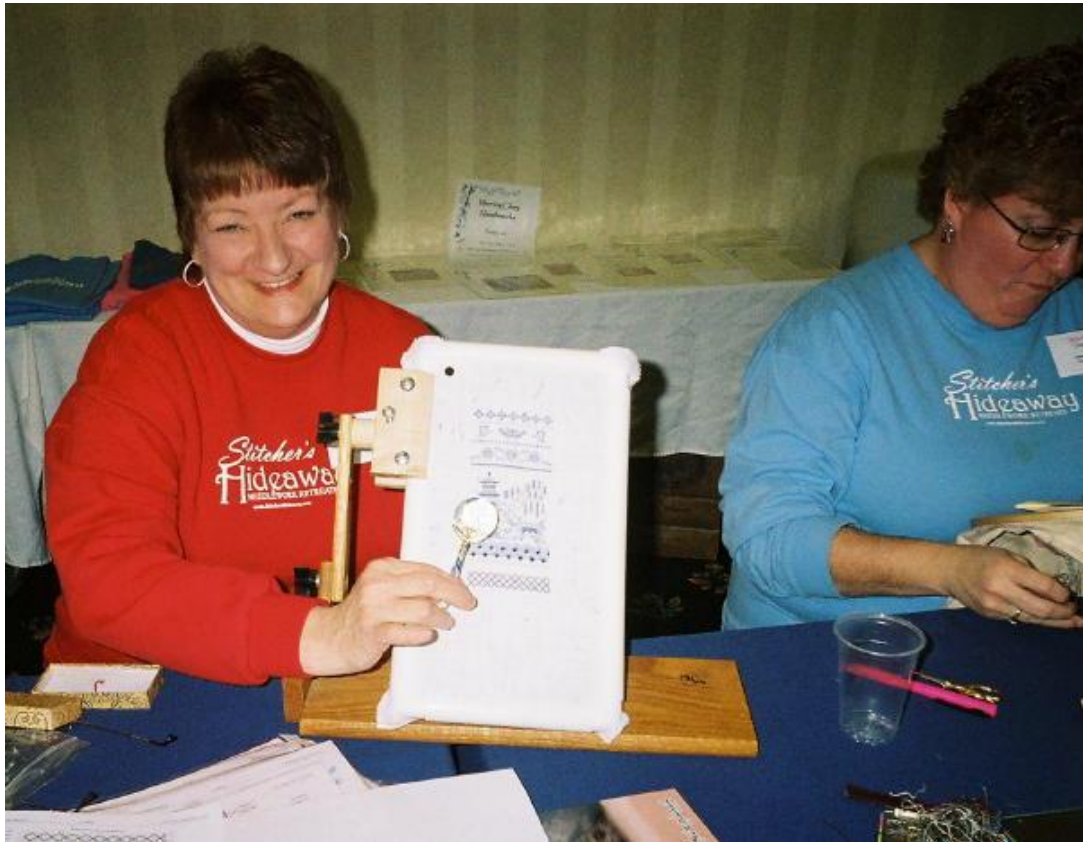
Well, I’m not sure where the time goes at these gatherings, but it flew by as usual. It was a very pleasant and relaxing time of not only stitching -- but of sharing our lives. I really must do this again!!

Sue

“Made it home safe and sound! As a matter of fact, by noon I was stitching in my apartment! I had a wonderful time. You can enter me as a life member! I look forward to Sturbridge.....it can not come soon enough. Hope all is well with you. Keep in touch!” ~ Sharon

“I had a wonderful time. Thank you for making it all possible! Looking forward to seeing all the pictures.”~ Joanne

“Just want to thank you once again for a wonderful weekend! Stitchers, food, and lots of laughs made it a great weekend to get caught up on unfinished projects and to stitch with stitching friends!! Many finished one or more projects which was a great accomplishment. It was fun to see the different projects everyone was working on and to get valuable stitching tips and techniques from everyone. Let's do it again!!” ~ Linda



We loved a WIP Linda was working on that included a magnifier. It was the “Oriental Tool Pocket” designed by Denise Harrington Pratt of Amaryllis Artworks. It was gorgeous!

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