

Stitchers Hidzaway!

2008 Sturbridge Retreat Fun Report

With Jackie Du Plessis



Any stitcher can appreciate how excited we were to finally arrive at the Publick House for the retreat -- to walk into the classroom to see Chris's Collection set up for our stash enhancement, to see our Fun Packs, to meet Jackie and see our project kits! It's so much fun to see old friends and meet new stitching buddies! Two glorious days together in our own little world of stitching -- what bliss!

Our time together was intimate and cozy, and filled with learning, sharing, laughing, stitching, shopping, fine dining and pampering. We came from CA, CT, TX, NH, NY, NJ, MA, ME, PA and VT. We had a very enjoyable and memorable weekend together. It was clear that several new friendships were begun.

Jackie du Plessis of It's Fine-ally Finished was our instructor (pictured at left). She is such a sweetie! We enjoyed her so much! In addition to our retreat project, she brought along many of her design models for us to drool over -- with some kits we could also purchase. Her designs are exquisite! We were fascinated with each creation and all its many details. We wondered how on earth she figures out how to turn her ideas into such beautiful finished objects. Jackie shared that she grew up in South Africa, and there learned to sew all her own clothing. That background certainly has given her the ability to work out a design in her head when most of us would be unable to begin imagining the construction! We are so blessed that she is able to share her creations with us!

The gorgeous project she taught at our retreat was "Buttons a Bounty" -- a combination necessaire and silk button box. The box slides in and out of the acorn stitched Necessaire. (In my case, my button box will also be holding a cool acorn thimble holder given to me by the Brightneedle ladies!)





The first thing we did in class was to construct the silk box. I think we were all wondering if it was going to be difficult, but it really wasn't! It was actually surprising simple. We had some cutting and ironing prep work to do, and then were able to whip stitch the box together.



To master the stitches used in the design, which included the Queen, Brick, and Hedebo Ribbon stitches, we worked on a cute little scissors fob that Jackie designed for us. That was a nice little extra piece!



As is typical of Jackie's designs, Buttons a Bounty called for only the best of materials, including hand dyed silk fibers and ribbons in rich New England fall colors, carved mother of pearl buttons, skirtex, iron-on interfacing, heat resistant MYLAR, needle page linens - hand dyed 48ct Dower linen, buttons to start our collection, waxer, stitching instructions with diagrams and graphs, and detailed finishing instructions with pictures. Her attention to detail is a stitcher's delight. Inside the nécessaire, the silk taffeta interior shows a tiny fabric acorn needle page, storage section of needle work tools as well as a pocket to store scissors. We had the option of purchasing various scrimshaw pieces. They were adorable!



Jackie helping Mary as Ivy looks on



Denise with Jackie

The pace of our retreat was very relaxing, with plenty of time for us to work, ask questions, get help, and visit with one another. During our first day, especially, we were probably out of our seats as much as we were in them! We were working on the ironing and cutting prep work in different spots around the classroom, helping each other along, and chatting away happily



Our classroom was incredible. The high ceiling and antiques throughout the room created a great atmosphere.

We had our meals in an adjoining room, and they were wonderful! Our dinners were 5 course events and we felt quite pampered as we worked our way through each course and enjoyed each other's company.



LOL!! Isn't Elizabeth just so photogenic?!? Ha! Several people sent me photos of the retreat and she just keeps popping up in delightful poses!

What's really cool is that Elizabeth attended the retreat with her Mom, Sharon, and her grandmother, Ruth! Here's the three of them below. Ruth, an addicted knitter, had just received a door prize of a big knitting bag filled with yarns and other goodies! She was delighted!!





Speaking of door prizes, I have got to tell you about the many special door prizes at this retreat! One of the attendees, Karen (pictured left), a Stitcher's Hideaway Alum, donated amazing items from her mother's stash. Karen and her mother, Dolores Schissel, frequently attended seminars together and so very often had the same projects. When Dolores passed away at age 73, she left behind some amazing stash that she just did not have enough days on earth to complete. As a way to honor her mother and to bless other stitchers, Karen donated many projects from her mother's stash, including her mother's unfinished Needlework Casket, along with a hardcover Sampler & Antique Needlework book with a design to be stitched for the casket, and the linen and most of the threads to complete it. The casket is a reproduction of a seventeenth-century piece found in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



Karen and I wanted to be sure that each item went to a stitcher that would truly want and appreciate it, so what I did was put about 20 of the items on display with a cup by each item so that anyone who wanted particular items could put their name in for a drawing. Let me tell you, there were some happy recipients!! Jackie helped by drawing the names. Sharon Verbos won the Needlework Casket!





Cyndi received the basket and chart for “My Favorite Things Stitching Basket”, designed by Ellen Chester of With My Needle,



Denise won The Embroideress with all the silk threads!

In addition to the many big door prizes, charts that Karen donated were put in the Fun Packs. It was an amazing amount of stash, let me tell you! Karen’s Mom had great taste! I would have enjoyed getting to know her! Karen says that she was a very passionate person -- about everything! She appreciated creativity and handwork and all the color, texture, and design of needlework. She also enjoyed painting and knitting. She painted beautiful watercolors and did tole painting. She was a skilled knitter and was kept busy with knitting for fifteen grandchildren. She was a great grandmother and was so encouraging to her grandkids in whatever they were interested in at the time. She always found the strength or the good or something that was important in each of her grandchildren. She would spend hours doing crafts with them. Another hobby Dolores was really into was stamping and cardmaking, and she had a room finished in her basement that was filled with only stamping and cardmaking supplies -- like being in a retail store. She would spend hours down there with grandkids stamping, cutting, marking, hot glue gunning, crimping, and using every gadget that went with that craft. Dolores loved beautiful things and was a fun person. She had a great sense of humor and all her friends loved her. She was one of those people who really LIVED life; the kind of person that you could never forget. It is heartwarming to know that her memory will live on in the many donated projects that have gone to very fortunate stitchers.



Cathy won Just Nan’s Barnabee’s Quest series, complete with pullware!



Edie won a limited-edition piece from Historic Needlework Guild called

Victorian Pocket Purse by Tricia Wilson
Nguyen

Those of you who know Stitcher's Hideaway know that there were even more door prizes and goodies!! Door prizes were from Brightneedle, Chris's Collection, Earth Threads, Elizabeth's Designs, It's Fine-ally Finished, The Gift of Stitching, Jeannette Douglas Designs, Kreinik, Legacy Designs, Morning Glory Needleworks, Nordic Needle, Rosewood Manor and Stitchy Kitty.



Cathy, Denise, Edie, Mary, Cyndi and Karen all received charts from Stitchy Kitty



Elizabeth with a door prize from Legacy Designs



Ivy with a door prize from Jeannette Douglas Designs

Fun Pack goodies came from Calico Crossroads, Chris's Collection, Elizabeth's Designs, The Gift of Stitching, Glory Bee, Karen Capello, Legacy Designs, Little House Needleworks, Morning Glory Needleworks, Rosewood Manor, The Prairie Schooler, Victoria Sampler, Weeks Dye Works and Zweigart. Thank you, Donors!

As a part of the retreat, Jean Contino, Coordinator of Crafts and Households, and Rebecca Nourse, Collections Manager at Old Sturbridge Village presented "Out of the Woods: Textile Designs Inspired by Nature," a talk about artifacts from the Village collection which feature design elements inspired by



nature. They did a fantastic job!! Wow, we really enjoyed seeing the many antique sewing tools, stencils, factory printed fabrics, quilts, stuffed work, and embroidery!

At left is Jean showing us a very fascinating quilt with numerous embroidered insects and animals. Interestingly, another quilt was discovered in England that is almost a duplicate of this unusual piece. The more we looked at it, the more embroidered critters we found.



The various insects and animals were those you would find in many different countries, which made it all the more intriguing.





Here's Rebecca holding up a gorgeous antique quilt. We were all fascinated with the brilliant colors in the fabrics. Jean & Rebecca showed us an old catalog with samples of different cloths, dating around the late 1800's. The samples were a surprise to most of us, as we just didn't think of fabrics from that time period as being as intricate or brilliantly colored.



We also saw some great needlecases, etuis, and needlework tools, and learned about their use.



We saw beautiful examples of white work and learned how the various designs were produced from drawing to embroidery.

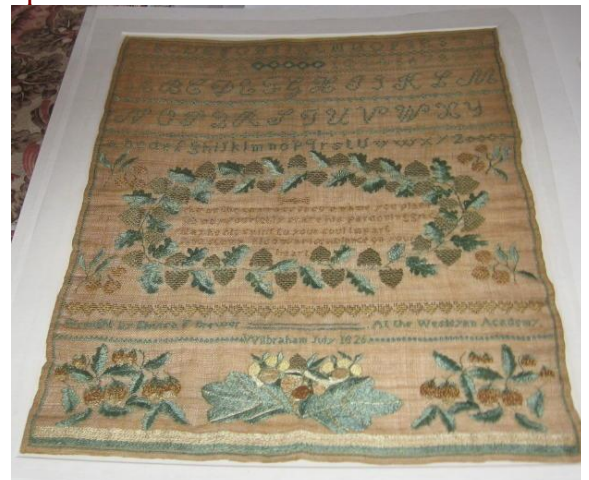




Since our retreat project featured Jackie's acorn design, Jean and Rebecca brought with them many samples of the use of acorns and oak leaves in fabric and embroidery. Acorns were frequently featured as a symbol of our country – "from a little acorn a mighty tree grew....from our original 13 states a mighty nation grew."



We also saw some great sampler work!



It was a fantastic presentation!!! Thank you, Jean and Rebecca!!!!



Jean & Rebecca from Old Sturbridge Village loved seeing Jackie's creations -- and so did we!!!

After another five-course feast on Friday night, we waddled back into our classroom for some more stitching and Show 'n Tell. Here's a sampling of what we brought in to show each other.

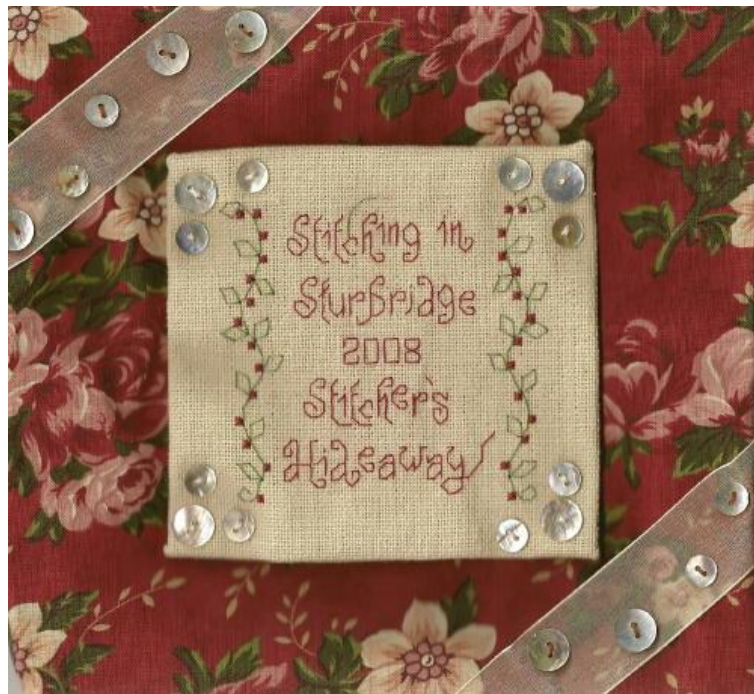






It's always fun to see what everyone else is working on, isn't it? There are just SO many incredible designers!! In fact, one of the attendees, Denise from California, also designs! She has made some gorgeous needle point designs for her local guild and donated some as door prizes at the retreat! Denise was also the stitcher that traveled the farthest, and so among other goodies she received a tote that said "Needlepoint Goddess" - LOL!

Speaking of designs!! I almost forgot! This little pillow is what I designed especially for this group of stitchers. The fabric came from some of Karen's mother's stash, and each person picked out a front and back fabric for their pillow.



I really wanted to do something special for Karen for giving so much to all of us at this retreat...but didn't want it to be something she would need to stitch. I wanted her to have something to enjoy immediately! So, what I did was pay a visit to an antique shop where I found a gorgeous piece of needlework. We all enjoyed looking at it and trying to figure out what techniques were used in it.



This was a very special time together for all the attendees. It happened to be a smaller group, which allowed us to get to know each other better. The project was outstanding, and so was our instructor. We learned so much! The door prizes were phenomenal. The food was delicious. The location was perfect. The lecture by Jean & Rebecca was fascinating. We had a fantastic time!

I'll close this report with some more pictures and some comments from attendees.

See you at a retreat soon!

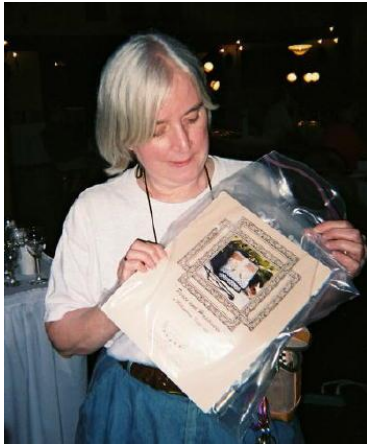
Sue



Linda with Door prize from Nordic Needle

“You've done it again Sue! Another fun and relaxing retreat in Sturbridge. Jackie was wonderful, as usual, and her Buttons a Bounty project was such a fun design to stitch! The food was scrumptious and the company of the stitchers was great. It's always nice to see familiar faces as well as to meet new stitchers. The presentation by Rebecca from Old Sturbridge Village was very interesting and informative. Thanks to Chris and Pam for bringing all of the stitching goodies! Special thanks to Karen for sharing wonderful stitching projects with all of us from her Mom's stash. I'm sure her Mom would be happy to see that her projects went to stitchers who share her love of needlework.”

~ Linda, Maine



Paula with a door prize from Legacy Designs



Teddy with a door prize from Elizabeth's Designs



Chris & Pam from Chris's Collection



Mary, Jackie, Sue, Ivy, Denise

“Thanks for creating and planning the Stitcher’s Hideaway. I got some of “ME” back instead of being a wife and a mommy, which is part of my daily life. I sure needed the break!” ~ Ivy



Chris, Linda, Teddy, Cathy



Sharon stitchin' and a grinnin'



Cyndi with Earth Threads Door Prize



Denise & Chris in coordinating outfits

“I just wanted you to know that I can't wait for the Mystic retreat next year. I attended the class in Sturbridge alone this year but came home with lots of new friends -- ones I can't wait to see next year in Mystic, CT. Again, you outdid yourself. The door prizes were to die for, especially the stitching box. I was very lucky to have won the The Stitching Empress kit that one stitcher had donated. I can't wait to dive into that one. The other goodies were great. I especially want to thank you for the long-distance door prize. Who knew flying all the way from CA I would get such a nice door prize for living in CA??? Loved the shirt and bags! Thank you.

Now for the Sturbridge Publick House. What can I say about that!?!? Beautiful place, very relaxing and they make you feel like a Queen. The food is just wonderful. A girl could get used to that place very easily. Instructor Jackie was just wonderful. I really enjoyed working with her on her project. I finished the box and scissor fob and am just waiting for the cold weather here in CA to start the stitching of the main piece and put together. It is a beautiful piece. Thank you, Jackie!!

The lecture from The Old Sturbridge Village was just magnificent. Looking at all the pieces they brought was a sheer joy and treat. I felt privileged to have been able to view such pieces. Makes you hope someone takes interest in some of our stitching in the future. Looking at the quilt that was done in the 1800's was amazing. Very humbling.

Thank you to Chris for the shopping as well. I found a few things to bring home and stitch, much to my husband's dismay! It was the only place I went to shop for stitching. He couldn't believe that we had a shop right at the retreat. To my fellow stitchers, what a great group of fantastic stitchers!! Very talented and witty. I loved our time together. It's hard to believe that in 2 days you can make friends for a lifetime. Keep in touch!!

I finished out our time in New England with my Daughter Megan and friend Tabatha going to Salem and Boston. Megan got to help Sue set up the room for the retreat and was sworn to secrecy about the goodies and all. Darn! I really tried to get her to tattle but no go. Megan and I are going to try and go back to Sturbridge next summer. We have fallen in love with the area. I look forward to the next adventure in Mystic, CT. I have always wanted to go there.

Again Sue, thank you for everything!!”

~ Denise, Berkeley, CA



Megan at Salem



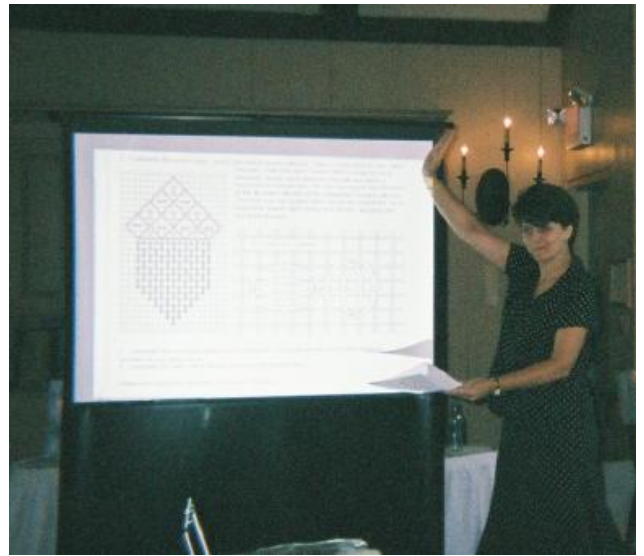
The Hop into Bed nightshirt!



Jackie -- unafraid of the frogs!



Mary with Rosewood Manor Door Prize



Jackie Strikes a Pose

“Why is it the time between our get togethers seems to drag, but our time on retreats is over in the blink of an eye?” ~ Mary



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