

Norden's Needleworkers – Volume #1 – 05/30/2012

FEATURED DESIGNER -



LITTLE HOUSE NEEDLEWORKS

Q: What are my favorite design themes?

A: At Little House we know no such thing as a favorite theme! As you can see by looking at our web site, we are all over the place. I like to say there is something here for everyone. But if the question were, "Which designs do you put on the walls of my own home", I would name specifically *The Family Sampler*, *Thirteen Colonies*, *The Coffee Menu*, *Simple Joys*, *Melicent Turner*, and a few others. I live in a home with a lot of open space and too few walls making it difficult to choose which go up and which go into closets.

Q: Which design is my favorite?

A: Of of all of the designs we have published, *Thirteen Colonies* is my favorite. And what makes it more special is that my mom stitched it.

Q: Do I use model stitchers?

A: Yes I do and I LOVE them! Our model stitchers are the backbone of the company. Without them we'd have to fold up shop. Carol (my mom), Evie, Milly, Renee, Rita and Vonna (in alphabetical order) have been a huge blessing to me for many years and I cherish their support and friendship as well.

Q: Has my style changed over time and how do I feel about my older designs?

A: As a designer I have evolved over time but I am still true to my roots. Who I am as a designer is embedded in me. Even without a name on a pattern a stitcher can see an LHN pattern in an instant. I can say that about other designers as well. Once the style is established it transfers to every design I do regardless of the theme. I feel my older designs are still relevant today. I like to believe my style is time resistant and won't show age decades from now. Our earliest patterns, *America* and *Home of a Needleworker* are still two of our most popular patterns.

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Q: Who has influenced me most in my personal life?

A: My mom and dad. My parents gave me a good foundation for living which has stayed with me all my years. My mom enjoys being a part of the LHN family and I am happy to share it with her. My only true sadness comes when I am reminded that my dad never saw it happen as he left us the year before the business began in 2002.

Thank you all for the way in which you have embraced our ornaments series. As a way of saying “thank you”, we are offering you this complimentary pattern to add to your collection.

Diane Williams
Little House Needleworks

FEATURED SHOP -
In Stitches - Alexandria, VA



In Stitches Needlework
Dedicated to Serving Our Many Customers' Needs



How long have you been a stitcher and how did you first learn about stitching?

I joined 4-H when I was 9 and did all kinds of hand and machine sewing. I started with counted cross stitch in 1972 (oh my goodness, that is 40 years ago) and progressed to needlepoint and knitting in 1998.

What are some of the biggest changes in the industry you've seen since you've been in business?

The computer age followed by I-phone and I-pad have changed the way we all do business. Customers follow blogs and seem to know before I do, when a hot new product or line or design is coming out. It keeps me on my toes and constantly checking websites, both wholesale and retail. I used to sit with various reps and talk about what was new in between markets. Now there are very few reps (except knitting) and we rely heavily on the computer.

How important is social media in the cross-stitch industry and how do you make use of it for your company?

In today's world, the only way to stay even with the pack is to have a website and an extensive e-mail newsletter following. Having a blog is helpful and I do have someone who writes one for us. I do not have a shopping cart on my website and at this point I am comfortable with that decision.

Website: www.institchesneedlework.com

blog: www.institchesshopblog.blogspot.com

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Have you ever attended a TNNA trade show, and if so what are your thoughts on it?

Since I bought In Stitches in 1995, I have attended at least 3 trade shows each year. Some years that number stretched to

4. I believe trade shows are one of my most valuable tools for staying connected. They are not only an avenue to see new products showcased, but also a time to strengthen ties with vendors and other shop owners. As the economy tightened over the last few years, I have searched for ways to keep my costs lower when attending markets. I am fortunate to have friends who live in some of the cities that host TNNA shows and I stay with them when possible.

Is there an event or promotion that you offer that you feel is incredibly successful that you'd like to share?

We do several sales during the course of the year, Super Bowl, Christmas in July and the "you buy it, we don't have to count it" after Christmas sale. We tie trunk shows to these sale events. The most successful thing we do is to have "Lock-Ins" 3 or 4 times a year. We advertise the night; have folks call in and register (and pay) about 2 weeks before the night and remind them to bring a stitching project with them. We serve a great dinner, have wonderful door prizes and sell like crazy. We have only had one so far in 2012 and we are getting lobbied heavily for the next one. We can only take 30 so registration fills quickly.

On a Personal Note -

Besides stitching and running your business, what are a few things you enjoy in your free time?

I enjoy traveling with my family, shopping with a couple of friends and playing board games with family or friends. Managing my time is always the tricky part.

Would you share a little about your family?

Husband Dan, we have been married for 34 years. He works as a consultant in DC. 3 children, Katie is 26 and works on Capitol Hill for a Congressman from Minnesota, (and is getting married in April 2013), son, Andrew is 24 and finishing his Finance Major at George Mason University and son, Ben who is 20 and just finished his second year as an Engineering Major at the University of Virginia. Oh and one black lab, Sadie, almost 13 who keeps us on our toes.

Would you like to share a favorite recipe?

My family thinks I make the best potato salad in the world. It is very simple and does not have too many ingredients. Boil 5 pounds of red potatoes and let them cool. Peel and chop and put them in a large bowl. Mix 1-1.5 cups of Hellman's Real Mayo (no substitutes will do) with 2 TBSP of Dijon mustard, 1 TBSP of coarse ground black pepper and as much garlic as you would like (I usually use 3 TBSP of chopped). Add salt to taste, usually about 1 TBSP. Pour this mixture over the cooled potatoes and mix gently. Cover tightly and refrigerate overnight. Great on the first day, even better the second. IF it seems dry, stir in just a little more mayo. Sometimes the red potatoes suck up more mayo than I expect.



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