

Crossing Threads with Becky J

Becky J Designs

Old Fashioned cross stitch the easy way

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Back from Michigan, Phoenix, Maryland and Houston Quilt Festival

I have been quite busy since the last newsletter and apologize for the delay in getting it out to my members. I was blessed with a new granddaughter August 24th and wanted to be there for the event. It was worth every minute, although I did have to weather a hurricane while there. Believe me, there is nothing like spending quality time with your grandchildren!! Right after coming home from Florida, about a week before driving to Michigan for Novi (American Sewing Expo), I fell down six brick steps while taking my dog outside in the middle of the night managing to dislocate fingers, sprain my wrist and crack several ribs. I considered myself very lucky! I did feel like I had spent several hours in a dryer full of rocks!! I was able to go to Michigan, teach twice a day and also work a booth with help. On my return several days later flew to Phoenix to do the Hands on Sewing School event for Lake Sewing which was enormously successful. I met a lot of wonderful people and worked very hard. Nita O'Keefe (Fancy That Designs) and I were able to have a short visit with Bill Cauthen in the hotel. Bill is the husband of our dear friend, Betty Cauthen of Betty's Sunset Threads whom we lost to cancer two years ago. When I returned to Virginia I traveled to Salisbury, MD to do a "Hands on Class" for Jenny's Sewing Studio but due to significant health problems was unable to teach the class. I apologize, again to all the kind people who took time out of their schedule to attend. This event has been rescheduled for the 3rd and 4th of March 2007. I hope all that would like will attend and support Jenny and her wonderful staff. After considerable consultation with my doctor I was able to attend the Houston International Quilt Festival as a vendor to fulfill my commitments and there met many new friends. That was my final show of the year so I now have time to get some actual work done. I want to do new samples as well as new designs. As always, I will be available for help with the software via email or phone. I am in the process of firming up my schedule for next year so I will let you know dates and places as soon as they are confirmed.

Thanks to Holly Pike and Nita O'Keefe for helping me manage in Houston.

There is a new site on the internet that you can actually search for a particular design and it will direct you to the actual website of reputable professional digitizers as well as a forum for new digitizers to share their work. The name of this site is **Digitizers World**. The URL is www.digitizersworld.com. Digitizers are uploading new designs as we speak. It is a very cool way to search for a specific design easily without having to search all over the internet.

What's new with Hobbyware and Pattern Maker: The last four Cross Stitch Sampler packs are in production and should be released any time. There are a total of eight available at present with another four due out any time. In case you are wondering that is a total of 1208 patterns or **Designs**. We are still waiting. No news yet. Still waiting.

***** The latest maintenance release for your Pattern Maker software is version 4.05**

How to update your software

This is a free update of the software. The easiest way to update your software is to place your Pattern Maker CD in your CD drive on your computer that is attached to the internet. Hold the Shift key on your computer down so the disk does not auto install. Open the Pattern Maker program on your computer and go to the Help menu>Search for updates. This will go to the Hobbyware website and will look at your current version to see if you need the update. If you do, it will download and install the update to your computer. It will look for a specific file on the Pattern Maker CD-ROM. If the CD is in the drive it will find the file and you are finished with the update. If the CD is not in the drive it will ask you where the file it needs is located. Just think of your Pattern Maker CD as your security device. You will only need the CD to update. As they fix glitches, add thread palettes and hoop sizes to the software they include these as maintenance releases or updates.

My "**Pattern Maker Toolbox**" 2 CD-ROM set continues to be a popular tool for people using the Pattern Maker software. This tool addresses all of the new features in the software, incorporated into my classes but not included in the tutorial CDs. Information about the Toolbox CD-ROM set is available on my website.

Questions and Answers

Let's talk about photos

1. How do I create a design from a photo? When you are creating a pattern from a photo

you have to think about your pattern in a new way. In cross stitch your stitches are your pixels. You are trying to create a cross stitch pattern from a photo that has thousands of pixels. Obviously, we have to find a happy medium between a great number of pixels and a reasonable size pattern. It is easier to create a large pattern than a small one. The smaller the count, the more pixels, therefore more resolution in the pattern. For instance, I would not do a pattern from a photo in a four inch hoop at 14 count.

2. There is a very high end graphics program built in to the Pattern Maker software so you have many tools to fine tune and create your design. You have the ability to crop the image, remove the background and highlight the area of the photo you want to concentrate on. The Importing Wizard is totally interactive so you can go back and forth between windows until you are pleased with your pattern. You have total control of the size of the pattern, size of stitches, number of colors.

3. When you create a pattern from a photo it is a very good idea to use the DMC color palette. This particular thread palette was designed for the subtle shading of cross stitch and has more colors than any other thread palette out there. This doesn't mean you have to use DMC thread but you want to use this to create the pattern. Believe me, it is much easier to fine tune a good pattern than to spend hours putting detail back into it. Let the software do the work.

4. It really doesn't matter how many colors you give the software to create the pattern. You just want to give it enough to create a good pattern. Once the pattern is created you will see that you have several colors that are almost the same. Once the any detail is added you can simply merge like colors together. In this way we are kind of fooling the software into creating a pattern that has, say 25 colors but when we are actually finished with the pattern it might only have 12 to 16. This makes the design stitch better at an embroidery machine because you have less color changes and jump stitches. Any color that touches another color in the pattern does not create a jump stitch.

Teaching Schedule and Events

- 1. Jenny's Sewing Studio Hand On Workshop, Salisbury, MD, March 3 and 4**
- 2. American Embroidery Conference, Marietta, GA, March 28-April 1**

Let us hear from you all if you are going to be at any of these events. I would love to meet you.