



Gilding the Needle

the newsletter of

The Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts

“A few stitches today – an heirloom tomorrow”

CGNA is a chapter of the Embroiderers’ Association of Canada.
We meet bi-monthly at Edith Rankin Memorial Church.
Please visit our website: www.quiltskingston.org/CGNA

Note from the President

I would like to welcome a new member to our guild—
Kim H. Kim comes with a unique background in embroidery
that I’m sure she will share with us as we get to know her.
We are sorry to be losing one of our newer members—
Beverlee B. She is heading back to Marathon. Our good
wishes go with you, Bev, and we hope that you find another
stitching group when you get settled in Marathon.

Spring is just around the corner and with it sunny days.
Hopefully, no more “Snow Days” to get in our way. As a
result of snowy/icy Mondays, a few things have fallen behind
in our program. We are just really getting into our afternoon
projects—both Eva’s Ukrainian embroidery motifs and
Irene’s beginner’s blackwork project are doing well. The
Kingston Project has given all who are participating in it a
great opportunity to learn about design, colour and shading.
It is going to be great when it is finished.

It is good to see everyone engaged in the Learn-a-Stitch
program this year. People are taking this project in so many
different directions—from pillows, to picture frames, to
purses.

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Looking ahead, we will be celebrating our 15th Anniversary this June. We will try to have the Kingston Historical Costume Museum come with their display of underwear that was originally scheduled for December.

Don't forget the Canada 150 Challenge, with your original textile design on display at our Needle Arts Fair 2017. And, of course, all your wonderful embroidery work exhibited in the Needle Arts Fair for 2017. We've got a lot of stitching to do!

Sitting in a sunny spot in your home always makes the stitching a nice way to spend the morning, afternoon, well the whole day for that matter.

Until next time.....Happy stitching.

Theresa



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Guild News

Introducing our two newest members...



After working from age 18 to retirement, I decided I would like to do something with crafts. I remember as a child, aged 11 or 12, my mother introduced me to embroidery. Wanting to get started on this craft but not knowing where to begin, I happened to mention this to Janet W. Janet said, "I will introduce you to a guild who will get you on the right path with lots of help."

Here I am a member of CGNA looking forward to the many aspects of Embroidery. Who knows where this path will lead me?

Nancy H.

My introduction to embroidery came from my grade 3/4 school teacher. She stamped a cat face on a piece of yellow fabric, and my love for needlework began. Since then I have been winging it on my own. I became interested in joining the guild because I would love to learn more.

Kim H.



Congratulations... to Donna. Her Jinny Beyer "Moon Glow" quilt won First Prize at the local Kingston Fair last fall, as well as the District 3 competition, and so moved on to the provincial level competition. At the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies annual convention (Toronto, in February), it won the People's Choice Award.

Well-done, Donna!!!

The Never-Ending Stash Sale...

One woman's junk is another woman's treasure! At each meeting, there is a table set up at the southeast end of our room where members can deposit junk and seek treasures. If you are cleaning out your stash cupboard, we invite you to donate items you no longer want or have room for. Anyone who finds something on the table that she can give a good home to is welcome to take it. It's an honour system: please pay the heron whatever you think your treasures are worth. Yes, we feed our heron, where other guilds feed their pigs. Some weeks the heron has quite a feast. One request: if no-one claims the items you bring, please take them away – perhaps donate them to charity.

Ukrainian Embroidery



Many people first encounter Ukrainian embroidery on seeing folk dance costumes. The men have collars and cuffs embroidered. The women have broad bands on the sleeves of their blouses, the edging on underskirts, and also on aprons. Embroidery is also very common on altar cloths and other ‘décor’ in churches. Keeping with the religious theme, many of us decorate ‘towels’ and ‘napkins’ for lining the baskets we take to church for blessing at Easter. On the home front, tablecloths and other furniture coverings are also often embroidered.

Just as the dance costumes vary from region to region, so do the embroidery motifs and colours. As a broad generalization, in western Ukraine red and black are dominant, whereas in eastern Ukraine it’s blue and black. However, greens, yellows and

oranges are also common, especially when the motifs include flowers, plants, animals etc. My own familiarity is mostly with geometric designs. Ukrainian embroidery is essentially cross-stitch (although there are variations reminiscent of Swedish embroidery). In the Canadian context, the red most commonly used is DMC 666. Two examples are provided from Ukrainian Christmas and Easter cards. The little boy is saying the Ukrainian equivalent of Happy Easter: “Christ is risen”. And so I wish you happy stitching and Happy Easter.



Eva

Debbie sympathized with my frustrations trying to assemble all the special threads needed for commercial canvaswork patterns (Caroline Mitchell, Laura J Perin Designs, Needle Necessities, etc.) She advised me that it can take as long as a year to get all the required materials for such a piece. Fortunately, we stitchers are a patient lot!

Designing with Software

Joyce Didonato (opera star) has claimed that “the opposite of war is not peace. The opposite of war is creativity.”

Our guild includes many highly creative individuals, but I have never claimed to be one of them. I literally cannot draw a straight line. If an instructor says, “Just draw your design on the fabric and we will work on developing the right stitches for it,” I freeze. “Just draw” is not in my repertoire.

But wait! Is creativity bounded by manual dexterity? A property of the pencil, brush, or needle? Surely, creativity is a form of *mental* dexterity. Ideas I have a-plenty. What I need is a way to convert them to a physical medium.

That’s where computer software can help. Software lets you write, draw, and compose. It is excellent at drawing straight lines! Best of all, software lets you erase. Contrary to popular opinion, there is no little elf dwelling in the bowels of the computer who giggles as he tallies up how often you ~~make mistakes~~ change your mind. The power to erase frees you up to experiment, and that is surely the essence of creativity.

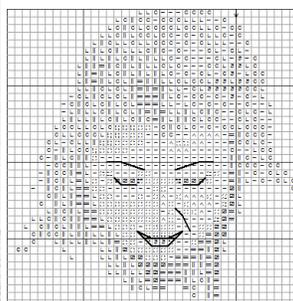


The original foot

Admittedly, my first efforts using design software had little to do with creating designs. I just needed a tidy way to ~~correct~~ change a designer’s choices. Consider the-girl-with-six-toes (a.k.a. Lanarte’s *Summertime* cross-stitch pattern). Anyone but me could probably just lop a toe off of the bare foot and fill the area in with grass. I feared, however, that this approach would yield me a girl with six toes, one of them gangrenous. I reproduced that section of the chart with my software and tried out fixes until I found one I liked.



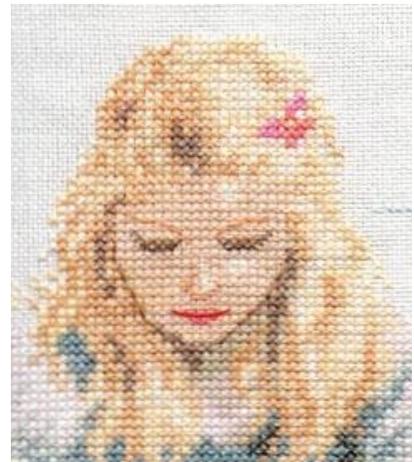
The original face



Re-charting, using PatternMaker

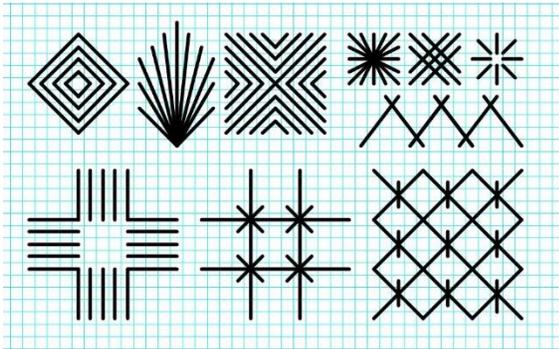
Then, I tackled a real challenge – the girl’s face. It took me a couple of weeks to re-chart it to my satisfaction. And, I realized that my feeling that I had “improved” it was entirely subjective. In

making a face that I found attractive, I had lost the style of the original, and the face does not fit into the piece as well as it should. The computer does not impose a style on the design – the style remains that of the designer.

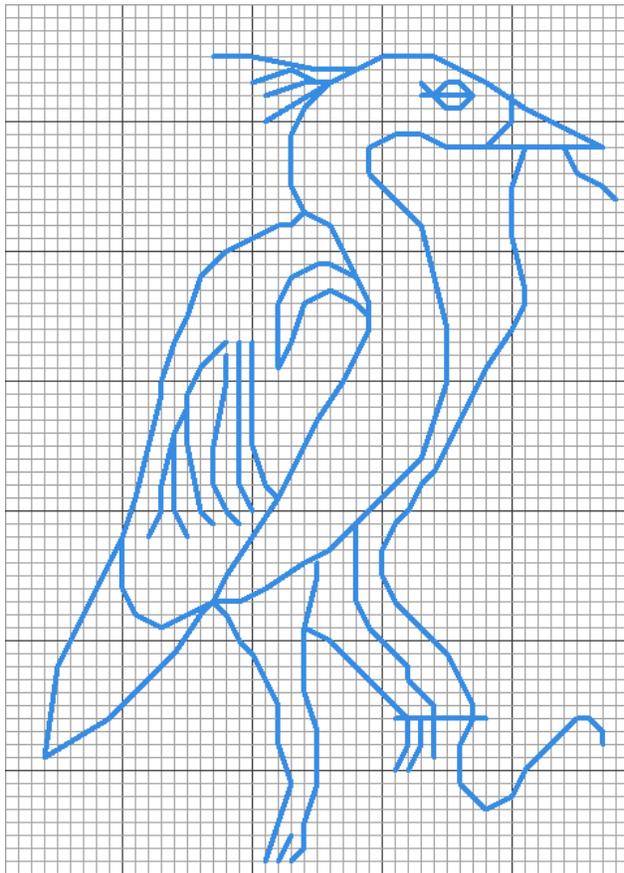


The final stitched face

So, how does a software program like PC Stitch or Hobbyware's Pattern Maker actually work? Basically, it provides you with a grid and a huge palette of colours. The colours are mapped to standard manufactured fibres – DMC, Anchor, Caron, Kreinik, etc.. You choose the colours you want for your piece, adding them as you work, and you use the mouse to draw and to fill the grid squares with colour, just as though you were drawing with coloured pencils on graph paper. If your medium is cross-stitch, you fill areas with program-supplied x's, and the software assigns a symbol for each colour that you include. Symbols for French knots and beads are also available. When finished, you can print your pattern so that it shows the colour or the symbol (or both) in each grid square. It also displays any lines that should be backstitched – a standard cross-stitch chart.



Although the software is ideal for cross-stitch, it is not limited to cross-stitch. I explored the “specialty stitches” in the current PCStitch, expecting to find Lazy Daisies and the like. To my surprise, the specialty stitches form a basic vocabulary for canvaswork or blackwork. Interestingly, they are charted to begin and end in the centres of grid squares: In blackwork and canvaswork, one is supposed to count holes, not threads, and the charts should look different for this reason.



Have you seen ads for services that will translate a cherished photo into a stitching chart? Such services rely on another aspect of the design software.

A photo or picture – from a scanner or a stored jpg file – can be “imported” into your design. One technique for doing this simply sizes the image to your requirements, places the grid on top, and allows you to trace the elements you choose. I tried this out with our blue heron emblem, creating a small design, a little bigger than the one used on the nametag.

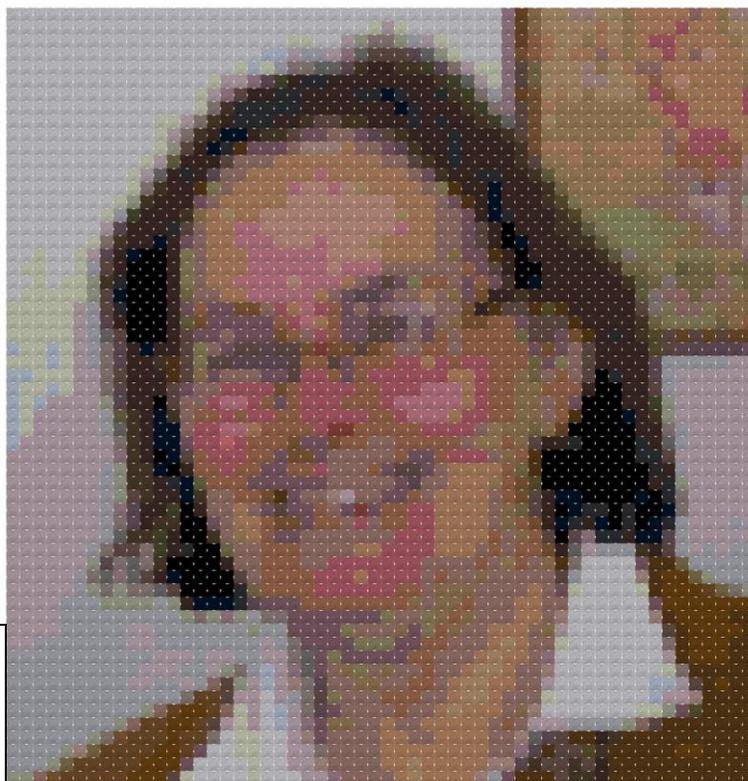
The software can also generate a full colour chart from an imported image. Essentially, it lays a grid of the size you define on top of the image. It then determines the colour of each grid square, matches that colour to a floss colour in the palette you have defined, and assigns the appropriate symbol to the square. Depending on the size of the image,

the size of the chart you require, and the number of colours you permit it to use, the result will be more or less grainy.



A familiar face

I asked PCStitch to make the chart 4 inches wide on 14-ct. fabric, using 40 colours of floss. Clearly the result needs some editing, both to define contours and to limit the palette to a more reasonable set of colours.



At this point, you, the designer, have to take over. Suppose that one of the grid squares included the contour that divides a white window frame from a black shutter.

The program knows that both black and white are required in that square, but it can only assign one colour. It will assign grey. The designer has to sharpen all the contours by re-assigning each of the relevant grid squares to be either black or white. For a strong contour, one might add back-stitching, again a manual task.

We have all heard that “the camera does not lie”. The program will produce a reasonable facsimile of the picture you give it – but that may not be the image you want to stitch. Only the designer can decide which features of an image are definitive and which can be allowed to blur. Similarly, colours on the computer screen are rarely good matches for the floss itself. The designer has to check the colours – a DMC colour card (electronic version included in PCStitch) is useful for this part of the process.

Commercially available design programs are, in short, a marvellous tool – a new kind of paintbrush – invaluable if you ~~make a lot of mistakes~~ change your mind a lot. They do not themselves control the product, but they can help you get onto paper – and ultimately, onto fabric – the design that you want to create.

Beth M

Date Day

Dave and I have a “date day” most Wednesdays. That means, no housework/chores, no grocery shopping or errands in town. It means going out and doing something interesting and fun, usually lunch and a road trip.

So this past week our road trip took us to Almonte, on the advice of Bethany, to see the current display at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum—*Colour Unboxed* by *Out of the Box*. What a terrific show it was, very inspiring. It took us a good hour and a half to see the show. There were lots of people there that day as well, which is always a good sign.

The main exhibits were a series of 12 inch squares of work done in a specific colour—all reds, blues, greens, yellows, etc. There were a dozen pieces of work done in one colour, but each square was very much the individual artist’s own design, very effective. Lots of beadwork, and felting, even some bobbin lace. Imaginative and innovative are two adjectives that spring to mind.

We quickly recognized Wendo Van Essan’s work (she is one of our NAF vendors) throughout the show, along with Mary Ann Toonder’s (a former CGNA member).

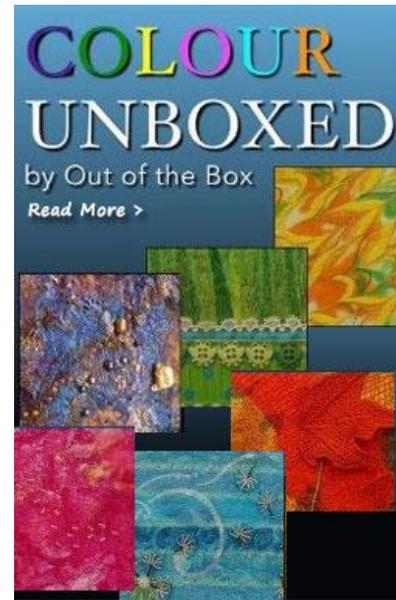
Besides the walls of specific colour there were other pieces that also inspired. Trees embroidered on felted ground, leaves and a tree embroidered onto a wire background, 3-D houses, embroidered landscapes.

As the show ended on February 25th, you missed it but if you go to the *Out of the Box* website you can see some of the pieces that were in the show and other things their members have done.

Yes, we did go out for lunch, visited two quilt shops, a beading store, a bakery, bookstore and some antique shops. Also, there was a movie being made on the main street, so who knows? we might have been picked up on camera walking down the street. It was funny to see Christmas decorations, the American flag and a welcome banner to someplace in Connecticut blazoned across the main street in Almonte. There probably wasn’t as much snow as they were anticipating, but that was okay by us.

All in all a great date day.

Theresa



Cook's Corner

Beth A's Lemon or Lime Butter (Curd)

8 well-beaten eggs
 4 cups sugar
 1 cup soft butter
 1/3 cup grated lemon or lime rind
 1 cup lemon or lime juice

Combine all ingredients in top of double boiler.
 Cook and stir over gently boiling water until smoothly thickened - this will take about 10 – 15 minutes.
 Cool and jar.
 (I keep in the freezer except for the one jar we are working on which is stored in the fridge.)

Makes about 6 cups -
 Great on Toast, English Muffins etc. Good for tiny tart shell filling, jelly roll filling or between cake layers.

Years ago, Sandra Roy (former guild member and proprietress of Handi-Arts) told me about the three grades of floss manufactured by **Anchor**. The cheapest grade is marketed under the Coats & Clark label (good for little girls' friendship bracelets). Their mid-grade is sold on pre-wound bobbins – it used to be available at Wal-Mart. The top grade is sold in skeins, like DMC, but is not presently sold in Kingston. The top two grades use the same numbering system, while the Coats & Clark floss has its own numbers. But, there is a noticeable difference between the top two grades – the bobbined floss is more likely to fray and does not have the luster of the top-grade floss. (Sandra's advice explains why some very old patterns call for Coats & Clark thread, but then apply the Anchor numbering system.)

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EAC and Us

The Embroiderers Association of Canada, Inc is a national non-profit educational organisation that encourages and promotes the practice and knowledge of embroidery

One can link to the EAC blog. The latest blog is on the 2016 Christmas ornament exchange with lots of fabulous pictures. One can either look at the blog on the EAC website or can have new blogs e-mailed directly to you. Last year there were 67 blogs.

EAC is also on Facebook and one can access it by going through Facebook or one can read posts through the EAC website.

Under *Education*, we can find out about all the courses offered through the EAC. There are usually a couple of online courses but, for an additional cost, the EAC will provide paper copies. In addition there are group courses that take 3, 4 or 12 months. A "group" can be one person. There are also individual courses which are more intense studies.

From the EAC homepage, there are also links to their Seminar and Library sections.

There is, on the right hand side of the EAC Home page, a link to a members-only login. To log on to this members-only page one must provide an e-mail address, first and last names and EAC membership number. If you cannot find your membership card, your membership number is also available on your issue of Embroidery Canada. The members-only pages include EAC policy, free projects, older issues of the EAC magazine, stitch instructions prepared by the youth section of EAC and also a section on upcoming workshops and other needlework events both in Canada and internationally.

To have eThreads, a monthly bulletin e-mailed to you, one must have joined the members only page and follow the links. eThreads is a monthly bulletin which contains the latest information about new courses and seminar. It provides information about changes in EAC and new happenings. It is possible to read archived issues of eThreads by going to the EAC homepage and under search enter eThreads. Mickie also usually circulates the eThreads bulletin by e-mail to CGNA members.

Irene shared a secret for making perfectly straight blackwork lines. On the return journey, you are putting the needle in a hole that already has a thread in it. Instead of going to one or the other side of the existing thread, try going on top of it: **Angle the needle** so that it points backward (in the direction you are coming from), and slip the stitch between the back of the fabric and the thread that is already there. Essentially, you are pulling the discontinuity between the stitches to the back of the work. Clear as mud? See Irene.

Kristeen

SPRING PROGRAMME, 2017			
DATE	LEARN-A-STITCH	SHARING	AFTERNOON PROJECTS
March 20	Canvas Work	Show & Share	IMAGES OF KINGSTON (Beth M.) HARDANGER (MaryLou W.) UFO Group
April 3	ALL-DAY WORKSHOP – FELTING – BETH A. (see below)		
April 17	Canvas Work	Show & Share FELTING	HARDANGER SEA GARDEN POUCH (Bethany G.) IMAGES OF KINGSTON UFO group
May 1	Canvas Work	Show & Share	HARDANGER SEA GARDEN POUCH IMAGES OF KINGSTON UFO group
May 15	Canvas Work	Trunk Show Jewellery (Gabrielle)	HARDANGER SEA GARDEN POUCH IMAGES OF KINGSTON UFO group

Workshop News

On April 3, the normal guild meeting will be superseded by an all-day workshop on felting with Beth A. Participants can choose a 3-colour palette in advance, and Beth has generously pledged to do the initial felting for each person's piece. In the morning, we will learn some felting techniques. By afternoon, our pieces should be dry enough that we can spend the rest of the day stitching on them. This workshop is supported by CGNA funds and costs CGNA participants only \$18 each. Spaces still available.

Sadly, Elizabeth Almond has cancelled her North American visit for this year and will not be giving her workshop originally scheduled for May. Happily, the piece she designed specifically for that workshop is ours – plans for its use are ongoing.

Photo Gallery: Show & Share



Coming Events

February 18- March 29. Quinte Fibre Artists Group presents *Evolving Traditions*. John M. Parrott Gallery One, Belleville Public Library, 254 Pinnacle Street, Belleville.

March 14 – May 20. *Blanket Statement: No shame in patches*. “A new public image for discarded blankets”. Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, Almonte.

March 18 – April 13. The Kingston Fibre Artists host Art Threads at the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning, Community Centre, Level 1. Opening reception: March 18, 2 – 5 p.m.

March 21 - 24 Beth A. and sister Barb host their annual retreat at the Odessa fairgrounds. Currently, all spaces are taken, but you can add your name to the waiting list.

April 2. Ottawa Guild of Lacemakers present their annual lace day. Clarke Room, RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive, Ottawa from noon ‘til 4. Exhibitions, demonstrations, vendors, etc.

April 23 – June 4. *ARTeFACTS*. Connections Fibre Artists “highlight the stories of Wellington County’s past and present”. Wellington County Museum, Elora.

April 30 – May 2. The Canadian Swedish Weaving Convention. For enrolment forms and more information, please contact christine@funandfastpatterns.ca

May 6 -7. Knowledge & Needles, Brighton, re-opens for the summer season with an Open House. Ann is bringing new goodies from the Nashville Fair. Come shop, stitch and visit!

June 6 – Sept. 16. *A Life Inspired – A Retrospective*. Beaded portraits and woven tapestries by William Hodge. Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, Almonte.

June 24. 2nd Annual Lansdowne Textile Festival. Exhibits, demos, vendors, etc.

July 25, August 22. Summer Stitch-ins are planned at MacPherson House in Napanee from 1-4 PM. Hope you will be able to join us as we enjoy the house and gardens of this grand old historic site.

August 15: Closing date for entries in Canada 150 competition.

September 30. Save this date for our **CGNA NEEDLEARTS FAIR**.

Mary Anne reminded me that old floss sometimes doesn't work with current patterns, and vice versa. One reason: In 1995, DMC changed their dyes, partly to meet environmental standards. The colours most affected were greys and some greens, which acquired a bluish tinge. You may see a difference in skeins of: 317, 318, 320, 413, 414, 415, 503, 504, 762, 959, 977, 991, 3363, 3799. The colour shift also affected conversion charts.

The Quiz

1. What do the letters “DMC” stand for?
 - (a) Dream, make, create
 - (b) Double mercerized cotton
 - (c) Dollfus-Mieg & Co.
 - (d) Da Most Colours
2. Which needle has no eye?
 - (a) Bodkin
 - (b) Milliner’s needle
 - (c) Trolley needle
 - (d) Double-pointed needle
3. Why does purple signify royalty?
 - (a) It hides wine stains
 - (b) It flatters all complexions
 - (c) It is the complement of gold
 - (d) Historically, purple dye was incredibly expensive
4. In stitchers’ lingo, PHD refers to
 - (a) The extent of one’s stash (Piled High and Deep)
 - (b) The celebration when one finishes a piece (Proud Happy Dance)
 - (c) Progress on an ongoing piece (Project Half Done)
 - (d) A popular pattern (Pretty Hot Design)
5. Which fabric is most suitable for a piece that commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Queen’s reign?
 - (a) 28-count cotton
 - (b) 40-count linen
 - (c) Congress cloth
 - (d) Damask Aida
6. Which is the best Canadian city in which to be a stitcher?
 - (a) Toronto, where “The Needle” is a major attraction
 - (b) Pointe La Croix, P.Q., named after cross-stitching
 - (c) Vancouver, where needles are free for addicts
 - (d) Kingston, home of the happiest guild!

ANSWERS

1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (c), but maybe the others will catch on 5. (a) Zweigart’s 28-ct. cotton is known as “Jubilee” 6. (d) Of course!