

RI Sewing Network

November 2020 Newsletter

RISN Meetings

NO MEETINGS 2020
Resuming March 2021

GREENWICH CLUB
5426 Post Road
East Greenwich, RI
02818

First Tuesday of the
Month
@ 7:00 pm



DIRECTIONS TO GREENWICH CLUB

From the South: Take 95 North to exit 8A (Rt. 2 Warwick/E. Greenwich). Stay on Rt.2, go to the traffic light at the Showcase Cinema, take a left onto Division Street (Rt. 401), follow to 2nd traffic light, and take right onto Post Road/Rt. 1. The Greenwich Club, 5426 Post Road, is on your left.

From the North: Take 95 South to exit 9 (Rt. 4 South). Take the first exit which will bring you to Rt. 401 (E. Greenwich/Division St.). At the end of the exit ramp facing straight, take a right turn onto Division Street. **Continue to follow above directions once on Division Street.**

Sharing the Art of Sewing

Here it is mid-November 2020 already and yet not much has changed in the world over the last 9 months. The good news is that our sewing network remains incredibly busy and creative sharing the love of sewing despite the isolation of the pandemic.

In this newsletter, I am so happy to be able to share with you some insights from several incredible sewing instructors through a “virtual” interview. RISN members, Barbara Hendricks, Owner of Master the Art of Sewing, and Jerilyn Perry, Owner of Jerilyn’s Sewing School, both graciously agreed to be interviewed. Barbara took a step further and included three additional teachers in her interview. I’m certain you will find the interviews offer an entertaining (and challenging) perspective to teaching the art of sewing!

For November, we had hoped to get lots of Halloween costume photos, but, alas, not too many received. Having had to spend a few hours digging through old photo boxes to find some pictures, I can certainly understand the turnout 😊. I did receive a few Halloween costume photos which are sure to bring on a chuckle.

Our Facebook page was busy this month. For those that don’t spend a lot of time on FB, I copied a few of the recent posts over.

The newsletter will be back in March 2021. While we hope to be together in-person for a real meeting, I ask that you continue to engage and share your works, ideas, and questions with me so I can include your interests in future newsletters. While hiking with Rory Contin last week and hearing about her amazing vintage pieces she made over the years, I decided to set up “themes” for the newsletters next year. **The “THEME” for March is Vintage, April is Weddings, and May is TBD.** I know there are many seamstresses in our organization that have vast experiences and interests to share. Please send me your photos and a few comments or stories by early Feb 15 for the March newsletter and Mar 15 for the April newsletter.

Happy Sewing!

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1. Membership Information for 2020/2021

THANK YOU to those passing along a good word about RISN. We have a few new members and hope to continue to grow as we head into next year. See the last page of the newsletter for details and a member application.

2. 2021 Spring Meetings

We hope to resume our in-person meetings in March 2021. Early in 2021 the RISN Board will email members with a definitive decision on the 3 meetings already planned. Stay tuned. See the September 2020 Newsletter for more details on the speakers and topics.

- **March 2, 2021 - Ann Taylor & Ben Greslick - “Body Scanning to Make Dress Forms”**
- **April 6, 2021 - Beth Bentley- “Draping”**
- **May 4, 2021 - Pamela Leggett - “Pop up Store and Pattern Hacks”**

Meeting Refreshments - 2021 schedule – Stay Tuned!

Refreshments are provided at all meetings and members provide the baked goods or appetizers as well as help with setting up and cleaning up. The first letter of your last name determines the monthly meeting for which you are requested to support refreshments. Members providing refreshments will receive an additional raffle ticket for the meeting raffle. Be sure to mention this upon check-in!

Nancy Spirito is our Refreshments Chairperson and may be contacted at:

bridalfinerydesign@gmail.com

3. Member Interviews

This month I reached out to a few RISN members that are actively teaching sewing and sharing their passion to see if they would like to be “interviewed” for the newsletter. Since we can’t meet one another in-person, a paper interview is another way to get to know others in the Network. Barbara Hendricks, Owner, Master the Art of Sewing, and Jerilyn Perry, Owner Jerilyn’s Sewing School (focus on children), both graciously agreed to the interview invitation. Barbara brought in three other teachers, RISN members as well, to broaden the picture.

When I read the interviews, I could feel their joy, pride and inspiration jumping off the page. I hope you enjoy their stories as much as I did.

Barbara Hendricks, Owner, *Master the Art of Sewing*
They are Teachers Who Love to Teach

Jane Headley, Nancy Hoell, and Jen Stern are currently teaching classes for Master the Art of Sewing.

Jane is a lifelong seamstress, who also is a former physical education teacher. Jane has taught many classes for the Former URI Master Seamstress program. Nancy is also a lifelong sewer who has gained tremendous expertise about the machinery we use, through the industry. She was also a long term Instructor for URI's program.

Jen is the owner of J Stern Designs (<https://jsterndesigns.com/>), and focuses her teaching on Pattern Fitting, Sewing and Design. She is currently teaching Pants Fitting in the MAS program, while she has many additional virtual sewing related activities going on. She was also an Instructor in the Master Seamstress program

Following is a summary of some reflections on teaching experiences, as they all have a broad range of experiences in the art and the industry of sewing.

Why do they teach?

Jane teaches because she has enjoyed the ability to fashion distinctive one of a kind outfits from an early age. She naturally wanted to share this passion with others. As a former Physical Education teacher, she turned to her sewing passion in retirement, and became the Instructor of many classes for the former URI program.

Nancy teaches because her lifelong sewing career and a long background in machine sales, combine to fill an area of need - learning to use our machines to their fullest potential. She derives joy from teaching a wide variety of personalities, ages and ability levels. Nancy also taught for the former URI program.

Jen's primary goal, when she first started teaching, was to sell her pattern designs. She remembers...."But something happened along the way. As I started teaching fitting, I met women of all shapes and sizes, with a variety of fitting challenges. Working with students to help them create garments that flatter and fit well resulted in so much more than wardrobe building." Jen realizes that sewing helps women's self-confidence and can be very therapeutic for them.

How has teaching sewing changed in this time of major public health threat?

Jane: “Teaching requires learning new skills.” It always has, but never to the extent that our current situation calls for. I wanted to continue teaching and have learned new skills in order to do so. The preparation for remote teaching this year is far greater than teaching a face to face class. I am making videos of skills, e.g., bound buttonholes, that are incorporated into the class projects. I am editing my work. I am learning to provide education via Zoom meetings. This has been no easy task, but I am happy to be learning this state of the art skills, which will allow me to continue sharing my passions with those who love to sew.

Nancy: When discussions began about creating Master the Art of Sewing, I was very interested and on board with the idea immediately. I was glad to have the opportunity to continue sharing the knowledge and skills I’ve gained. Fast forward.....the business is a reality, providing the opportunity to continue teaching, but so is COVID. The choice was to teach in a remote environment (learning the skills required to do so), or not teach for a while. I chose to learn. I accepted the challenge.

I learned how to use Zoom, how to create close up, easy to view video clips (actually easier to view the detail than if we were in face to face classes), and how to share those demos in the context of Zoom classes.

Jen: My calendar was full of hands - on teaching events before the pandemic hit. Since then I’ve been building my virtual class offerings and teaching online. I teach fitting via Zoom events and I have classes on my Teachable.com platform. I also do live streams on my YouTube Channel on Friday afternoons. This has brought me an international audience of student participants!

What equipment / materials are essential to your virtual classroom?

Jane: I needed a laptop, an external camera, and some instruction to get going. But I am going, and one of the perks of the virtual teaching is that I have access to everything in my sewing room - I am not packing and lugging all required material and supplies as I did in face to face settings.

Nancy: I needed the same - the laptop, external camera, instruction and practice. I also note the benefit of remote teaching with access to all of my materials and machinery as I teach.

Jen: I am fortunate to have professional video/audio/lighting equipment for my live and recorded classes. As Jane and Nancy have said, it's all in my home studio; I have access to all of my machinery, materials and supplies.

Other Teacher Comments:

On Student Experience level: Jen says the ideal student is someone who brings a passion for the project they want to make. It doesn't matter if they have the skills required.....that's where I come in."

The Student Population: Nancy was pleased with the range of age levels she reached with her first remote class, "Know and Love your Serger," and it was especially eye opening to have a student from Alaska in her class!

Advice for anyone who wants to teach: Jane advises sewing teachers to be patient and flexible. Everyone learns differently and at a different rate. Everyone brings a different skill set with them. We need to accommodate for the differences among individuals who choose to bring their sewing skills to a new level.

The link below is a very short video clip taken from Jen's Pants Fitting class. The clip can give you a quick look at how a remote lesson can look.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gXw_RJGNdQ60rwd4yMijsjwbTGNI4Q_5/view?usp=sharing

Contributed by Barbara Hendricks, Owner, Master the Art of Sewing
(<https://mastertheartofsewing.com/>).

Jerilyn Perry, Owner Jerilyn's Sewing School, Kids Can Sew

Sewing Business Focus: Teaching beginners how to sew

What made you want to teach sewing?

I've always loved to sew. When my children became old enough to do their own homework, I was looking for something to fill my afternoons. I was reading a sewing magazine and saw this opportunity to become part of the Kids Can Sew franchise. It said "If you love to sew and you love kids, this may be an opportunity for you." And it was!

Is there a favorite topic/project that you enjoy most?

Upcycling. I love to bring in old jeans, prom dresses, curtains, etc. and ask the students to make something from them. They are so creative and always surprise me with what they are capable of.

Do you have any funny stories to tell about a teaching situation?

One always comes to mind. When I was teaching one of my 6 year olds, I told her to cut the end of her thread before she threaded her needle because it was a little frayed. The following week, when she was threading her machine needle, she said, "I have to cut this because it is afraid." It took me a while to realize what she said, but we had quite a chuckle when we figured it out. I love kids!

Tell us how you run your class/es under normal circumstances and now in the pandemic.

Normally, our classes last 1 hour and I have room for up to 6 students in each class. Now, our space limits us to 4 students and classes last only 45 minutes to allow for disinfecting of the machines and supplies. I used to let the students keep pinned projects in the studio. Now, they have to take them home (and remember to bring them in the next week). I also offer supply bags to students who prefer to use their own supplies instead of sharing what I have.

What equipment or materials are essential to your classroom?

Besides good working basic sewing machines, adequate lighting. We have big front windows that allow a lot of natural light during the day.

What was the most challenging project a student took on?

A couple of years ago, I had 2 beginner high school students who previously made a drawstring bag and maybe an easy skirt. They decided they wanted to make costumes from the musical "Hamilton", for no particular reason and with no deadline (Thank God). They took about 9 months to make with a lot of seam ripping! I have to admit, they came out incredible and they both felt extremely proud of themselves.

What advice would you offer others that might be interested in teaching?

Have a lot of patience. Don't expect perfection. And let the students make mistakes.

Provide a picture or two of your teaching studio or student project.

Sure! We have an "I Made It" wall that everyone stands in front of when they finish a project. It always generates so much happiness.



Adorable!!
Matching
outfits!



They look
so proud of
their work!



mmmm...
"should I put
my pillow in
this or use it
for Trick or
Treat?"



Studio filled with
busy seamstresses!



Apologies that the photo is a little blurry. I couldn't blow it up in the newsletter and keep the resolution.

Even blurry, these are beautiful gowns!

4. Member Contributions

Sew and Tell

Until we are able to meet in person, your latest creations can be shared through our Facebook page or through the Newsletter. For any postings, it would be helpful to share the pattern details and fabric and any learnings or recommendations you would like to share. For the meetings, please try to arrive a few minutes early so Susan Berlam can take a picture of you with your creations for the Newsletter. Then you can show it off during Sew and Tell portion of the meeting.

Halloween Costumes

Thank you to those that graciously shared their current and past Halloween custom fashions. If you are/were like me, there were many hectic days and nights just before the "day" where I was behind the 8-ball on my kids costumes. I'd like to say it was mostly their fault as they flip-flopped their mind on what they wanted to dress up as until the bitter end. But my

memory is fading and I'm sure my lack of planning and organization had much to do with the insanity of the last few hours.

I couldn't stop laughing when I opened my email and saw these great pictures from **Rose O'Koren!** You just can't get any more clever than this in 2020! Look at that fabric choice!



Susan Berlam – I do apologize that you have to be subjected to so many photos from my archives. I'm filling in the white-space for a topic that didn't get many contributions. Hopefully you can laugh a little at these.



It all started here....and yet, he still married me!

And then back when they were cute!





They did get older, but this is where I have to stop showing their photos 😊
.....Remember the Power Rangers? Harry Potter?



Truth be told – this is not anyone in the RISN. But this is one of my favorite costumes of all time! I don't think there was much sewing in this one. Perhaps a lot of glue and duct tape!

A little more recent - dress-up costumes. Cinderella, Belle from Beauty and the Beast , and Elsa from Frozen, and a Christmas Snow Queen.... Admit it; we all love girly, girl stuff!



Moving away from the Halloween foolery....

Denise Carlson shared her beautiful wall hanging and an outfit she made for the ASG September National Sewing Month Contest. Denise be sure to bring these to a future meeting. Here's what Denise wrote:

"I took Dave Sirota's online paper piecing class in August. I finally finished the wall hanging. His class is titled, "Dave Sirota's No More Tears Paper Piecing". now love paper piecing. You do not have to rip the paper off of your

pieces. If you ever get a chance to take his class, try something new. I guarantee that you will love paper piecing! You can go to quiltmavendave.com to check out his web page. The wall hanging is the Fractured Maple Leaf.”



“Kimono is Simplicity 1108--Fabric is from my stash. It's hard to describe but it's shiny and rough on the outside and the inside I didn't have to line it.
Dress is Simplicity S8871--Slinky knit fabric is from an ASG member's stash along with the belt. (I made a monetary donation at our retreat last year.) I ended up using my basic sloper to adjust the bust area and the sleeve (thanks Rose!)

I made these for the ASG September National Sewing Month contest. Needless to say, and I forgot this is what they were doing, but the winners were randomly chosen by computer!

Oh well, I have a new outfit. I probably should wear a different color shoe, but I don't want to be too monochromatic!"



EXHIBITS

‘Christian Dior, Designer of Dreams’ at the Musee des Arts Decoratifs

If you didn't get the chance to visit the spectacular *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams* exhibition at the V&A last summer, you can now experience the enchanting showcase from home. Dior has released an hour-long film available to watch for free via YouTube detailing the curation of the retrospective hosted at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, from the elaborate dress tailoring to the comprehensive exhibition construction and glamorous opening night (attended by the likes of Karlie Kloss and Jennifer Lawrence). Watch now via the *Christian Dior* [YouTube channel](#).

Don't miss the "Matel" dolls at ~ 21 minutes into the video – adorable!!! And the "slim look" at 24 minutes ☺. And of course, the end is just gorgeous as you see all of the exhibits in their final state.

#MetGalaChallenge: The Creative Journeys Behind Our Favorite DIY'd Met Gala Looks

This year, due to the global pandemic, the exhibition, *About Time: Fashion and Duration*, will open on October 29 and the date of the Gala is under discussion. In lieu of this iconic event, *Vogue* and Billy Porter started the [#MetGalaChallenge](#), inviting everyone at home to re-create their favorite red carpet looks of past galas.

[Met Gala DIY Challenge](#)

Commercial Pattern Archive

For those not aware, the largest collection of sewing patterns is maintained and archived at the University of RI. Patterns going back to 1854 can be accessed simply by registering and requesting a pattern or topic of interest. For those researching patterns, you can make an appointment to visit the archive. Take a few minutes to look over this interesting website. Perhaps it would be nice to have the archive director come to a future RISN meeting to share more details???

[URI Commercial Pattern Archive](#)

RISN Facebook

Don't forget to check out our Facebook page now and then. New topics pop in every week. If you are on our newsletter email list, you should have received a link where you can request to join.

RISN Website

Also check the RISN website [HERE](#) for updates news and events as well.

Unique Talents

Another Creative Outlook - Not anything to do with sewing, but another outstanding talent waiting to be shared! These hand decorated cookies from a local CT woman were just amazing. I think about the hours of planning and then creating these master pieces. Not unlike sewing.



5. Sell or Buy

Urge to Purge? Members who have sewing/craft items for sale are invited to set up a table at our meetings. You need to bring home what you do not sell. We do not have the space to store extra fabric, etc. Do you have a sewing/craft related business? Why not consider showcasing/selling your items at a meeting? Please limit your selling space to one table. You can also post your sale items or what you might be looking to obtain on our Facebook page.

Services and Products

Scissors and Knife Sharpening

If you would like to get your knives and scissors sharpened, download the order form and bring your items to the meeting or contact Chef's Culinary Edge directly to have your scissors sharpened at your convenience. Scissor Service Sheet 1 (pdf)[Download](#). The website is [HERE](#) and the e-mail is chefsculinaryedge@gmail.com

6. Volunteer Opportunities

Sew Seeds of Love

There is still time to lend a hand to this wonderful endeavor.

Sew Seeds of Love has arranged for the 18" dolls and handmade clothing to be donated to two organizations; Newport Women's Resource Center and Fostering Hope NE. The goal is to donate 20-25 dolls, each traveling with

three custom outfits (a dress, pants/shorts outfit, and pajamas). Monetary donations, in place of sewing, are always accepted (1 doll is about \$20). They are using the Springfield Dolls, available at Joann's and don't forget to use coupons.

If you are interested in contributing, volunteering or want to subscribe to the e-mails, please send an email to Mary Jo at ssol.sewinglove@gmail.com.

RISN members have been the most generous and supportive contributors to provide local, vulnerable, children a beautiful Christmas-time gift. A few photos from prior years are shared below. Thanks for each and every one of you who have made this possible over the last 8 years. Let's make 2020 awesome!

Sewing is our super-power,

Mary Jo Hines, Coordinator Sew Seeds of Love





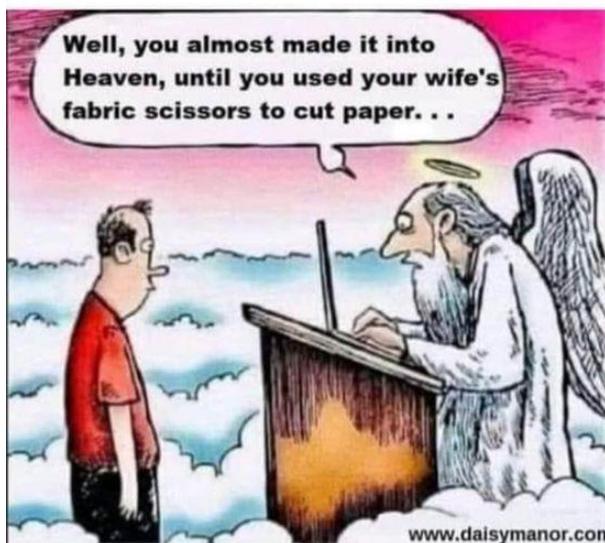
7. Chuckle of the Month



"I knew there was part of the pattern missing!"



© 2000, Bob Eckstein



8. Tutorial of the Month

Please send me any tutorials that you found helpful.

In the spirit of teaching children to sew, Hartford Stitches created two fun, free video tutorials directed toward children, "How to Sew Fabric Pumpkins" and "Sew Your Way to a Perfectly Set Table". The pumpkins will look great on the Thanksgiving table and the placemats are just awesome looking.

<https://www.hartfordstitch.com/videos>



2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Your completed application with a check made out to RI Sewing Network or RISN should be mailed directly to:

Ann Pericolo
10 Cherry Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

Membership includes six issues of our newsletter plus discounts to meetings and other events as well as email news.

Due to the pandemic and the fact that several meetings last session were cancelled, all 2019-2020 Premiere and Annual members have been extended membership through Spring 2021. No payment required!!

New members will be asked to pay an Annual \$10 registration fee for the 2020-2021 season which includes the emails notifications, newsletter, and access to the private Facebook group. For each in-person meeting, a \$5 fee will be collected at the door from new members. The nonmember fee for meetings is \$7 per meeting.

The Registration form is below and on our website:

www.rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com

RISN Membership Application 2020-2021

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street

City/Town

State

Zip

Preferred Telephone Contact: _____

Please select your membership category.

Annual (\$10) _____