



RI Sewing Network

May 2021 Newsletter

RISN Meetings

ZOOM MEETINGS
Spring 2021

Pamela's "Pattern Hacking"
May 4, 2021
7:00 PM

Hope to be back to the
Greenwich Club Fall 2021
for regular monthly
meetings

GREENWICH CLUB
5426 Post Road
East Greenwich, RI
02818

First Tuesday of the Month
@ 7:00 pm



Zoom Again!

Sewing Treasures....

After being away from one another for so long, it was a pleasure to see so many faces on the Zoom session last month! What fun it was to hear Pamela Leggett talk about her career journey and her wonderful collection of custom patterns. She offered so many inspirational ways to use her patterns to create numerous looks. And Mary Jo did a great job as host and even managed to keep the RISN raffle tradition going virtually! Congratulations to the winners!

We are fortunate to be able to host Pamela Leggett again, May 4 7PM, for another Zoom session titled "Pattern Hacking". 'This class is guaranteed to get your "inner designer" inspired!' Zoom details are in the newsletter.

The theme for the month of May is Sewing Treasures. And again, you will find three interesting contributions from our members describing a treasure sewn with purpose and determination. Rory tells us about her makeover of her Chanel jacket. For the life of me, I can't imagine tackling that project once, never mind twice! And Mary Jo shares a story about a garment her mother made and treasured every Saturday night. Lastly, I described the making of a wool suit for my husband and share some history about the Greystone worsted wool mill formerly in Centerdale RI.

This is the last newsletter until September. Please keep in touch through FaceBook and continue to share your sewing projects and inspirations. And if anyone has an idea for a future meeting, improvements for the coming year, and potential speakers, please pass it along! It is great to get business cards from artists you run across at artisan shows. Also, members are welcome to join the volunteer committee. We will meet late June for the 2021-2022 season. We'd love to hear your ideas.

HAPPY SEWING!

RISN Executive Board
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Mary Jo Hines
(401-785-9001)

maryjo.hines@gmail.com

**TREASURER &
REGISTRATIONS**

Ann Pericolo
(508-846-5456)

AnnPericolo@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER

Susan Berlam
(860-912-5879)

scberlam@berlamnet.com

PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON

Diane Martin
(401-439-5376)

dianemartin426@gmail.com

**SPECIAL EVENTS &
NAME TAGS**

Susann Walter
860-885-9859

Sueann301@yahoo.com

**REFRESHMENTS
CHAIRPERSON**

Nancy Spirito
(401-965-6556)

bridalfinerydesign@gmail.com

WEB ADMINISTRATOR

Maureen Rozes
(401-855-5885)

maureenrozes@gmail.com

FACEBOOK ADMINISTRATORS

Susann Walter
860-885-9859

Sueann301@yahoo.com

Mary Morse
401-821-7467

memorse@yahoo.com

Newsletter Guide

Newsletter Guide 2

1. *Membership Information for 2020/2021* 3

2. *May Zoom Meeting with Pamela Leggett* 3

3. *Sewing Treasures*..... 5

4. *Facebook Sharing and Other News* 11

5. *RISN Website* 12

6. *Sell, Buy, or Services* 12

7. *Chuckle of the Month* 13

8. *Tutorial of the Month* 13

2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION..... 14

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 summer. See the last page of the newsletter for details and a member application.

2. May Zoom Meeting with Pamela Leggett



Meet Pamela Leggett and mark your calendars for the second exciting RISN ZOOM session learning “Pattern Hacking” techniques!

Last month we had the pleasure of hosting Pamela in our first Zoom meeting. Thanks for the support and advice of many Network members the Zoom session worked out great. We listened to Pamela as she shared her varied and exciting career path. She told us all about her product line, her favorite sources for fabrics, and showed us an impressive lineup of garments made from her pattern line. One pattern can produce countless looks! And the fitting tips were endless. Those interested in sewing with Pamela should check out her website for the numerous opportunities to join one of her classes and see the events that will feature her incredible talent.

Congratulations to all the RISN Raffle Winners attending the Zoom session. Mary Jo came up with a clever idea to keep that fun event going, even over the internet!

As you prepare for the next Zoom meeting with Pamela, May 4 “Pattern Hacking”, take a minute to look back at the April 2021 Newsletter to see her interview and go to her website to learn more.

<https://pamelaspatterns.com/>
email pamela@pamelaspatterns.com

Also, on Facebook and Instagram



May 4 - Pamela's Patterns "Pattern Hacking"

This class is for those who are interested in design. Pamela's method of teaching is to use an existing pattern to learn the design principals that are easy to learn and master. A perfect way to learn with instant gratification! Working from Pamela's Patterns, you will see how simple changes can make these patterns do double and triple duty! You will see how to create pattern pieces and get instructions to make many variations. This class is guaranteed to get your "inner designer" inspired!

Join "Pattern Hacking" via Zoom on May 4 at 7:00 – 8:00PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83426737175?pwd=ZGt1eGtLdUNoQkM5K1pqUjdUTVZZUT09>

Meeting ID: 834 2673 7175

Passcode: 284705

3. Sewing Treasures.....

Chanel Jacket Makeover

By Rory Contin

I took the URI Master Seamstress II Chanel Jacket class in the spring of 2018. Our teacher, Jane Headley, was great—very experienced, organized, patient, and helpful. As you may know, Chanel jackets are constructed in a rather unique way. The lining is quilted to the fashion fabric in vertical lines about 1” apart before the jacket pieces are sewn together. This lining method is why Chanel jackets are typically made using a fashion fabric with loft, like bouclé, so the quilting stitches sink into it and are not visible on the right side of the jacket. Rather than bouclé, I used a loosely woven cotton and mixed fiber fashion fabric that turned out to be difficult to work with. It had very distinct vertical and horizontal lines, which required pattern matching in two directions, and the loose weave added another level of complexity because the fabric tended to shift while cutting it. My lining was silk charmeuse. Knowing what I know now, a solid bouclé would have been a better choice of fashion fabric for a first Chanel jacket project.



Characteristic quilted lining of Chanel jacket

Those of you who have taken this class know there are many time-consuming and sometimes daunting steps involved in making this jacket, including lots of hand stitching. For example, the sleeves are stitched to the jacket by hand, the lining seams are closed by hand, the trim and hem chain are attached by hand, the pockets are lined and attached to the jacket by hand, and then there are the coat hooks and eyes, the decorative buttons, etc. Making a Chanel jacket is quite an undertaking. Unfortunately, though, after finishing my jacket, I realized that the sleeves looked too wide in the bicep area and the sleeve caps were puffy (think 1980s look). You see, early in the construction process, the fashion fabric and lining pieces are cut with very generous seam allowances (about 2”). While the wide seam allowances are helpful for fitting adjustments, their bulkiness inside the sleeves and at the shoulders made it difficult to assess the fit in this area. It wasn’t until after I trimmed the seam allowances and closed the lining that I knew the sleeves and sleeve caps didn’t have the tailored look of a traditional Chanel jacket. Somewhat discouraged, and not able to face the prospect



Wide sleeves and puffy sleeve caps

of altering the garment I had just painstakingly finished, I set the jacket aside and never wore it.

Then, in the spring of 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown, when I had more free time than usual, I decided to take apart my Chanel jacket. I told myself there was no deadline and to proceed at a leisurely pace. Think of it as a learning opportunity, I thought. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.



Sleeves and sleeve caps after alteration

I carefully made notes as I opened up the armscye lining and picked out the small backstitches that attached the sleeve to the jacket. I opened up the sleeve lining and took in the upper sleeve seam about 1”, gradually tapering it back to the original seam below the elbow. I evaluated the fit of one sleeve before adjusting the other one and made sure I tapered the seams exactly the same way. The narrower sleeve fixed the puffy sleeve cap problem and made the sleeve go into the armscye more easily than before. I didn’t have to work so hard this time to get the horizontal lines of the sleeve fabric to line up with the horizontal lines of the jacket fabric. Many hours and hand stitches later, I had a new, improved Chanel jacket. And I have to admit that I felt rather pleased with myself.



New, improved Chanel jacket

Saturday Night Dancing

By Mary Jo Hines

My parents had a weekly standing date to go dancing with their friends on Saturday nights. Once a year, the dancing night was a Luau-themed event. This is a skirt my mother made and enhanced with sequins around the leaves at the bottom of the skirt. It was accompanied by a frilly white shirt and a flower in her hair. It was always my job to help her get ready for the dancing night. While looking closely to the reverse side of the skirt, the stitches for the sequins around the leaves are nearly invisible. This material is polyester and was considered to be a 'miracle fabric' in the late 1960's to 1970's. The memories of my parents are stitched into the fabric of my childhood much like the sequins are stitched to this skirt. Here's to the by-gone days of Saturday night dancing!



Suit for Hubby

By Susan Berlam

Those that are “old enough to remember” when high quality worsted wool was available from the mills of RI and MA, you might enjoy the linked article below. Back in the mid 80-90’s I remember purchasing gorgeous designer wools from a mill in Centerdale RI, the Greystone Mill, for a few dollars a yard. That was a time when many people wore wool suits to work, so for literally a few dollars you could make an entire suit. You can read more about the mill and the wool industry below.

In the mid 80s I was starting to take my sewing skills and interest much more seriously and began sewing with the instructor, LaVonne Ford. LaVonne operated a sewing school in a room over her garage, hosting daily and evening classes 8 weeks at a time. I thought I died and had gone to heaven when I was sewing with her and her many students. After a few 8-week sessions, and having completed several suits for women, I decided to make my husband a wool suit (Bill Blass, Vogue 2585). It was July and very hot (air conditioning, what’s that!). I purchased wool from Greystone for less than \$10, lining from the Fabric Place (probably more than \$10) and set out to sew the 75+ pattern pieces into a suit for my new hubby.



Eight weeks and dozens of fittings later, the suit was done. He complained every time I had him put it on for yet, another fitting. Not long after completion he wore that suit to a company function and one of the company leaders asked him, “how much do we pay you, such that you are able to afford a custom-made suit?” I think hubby smiled with a bit of pride and forgot about those sweaty August fittings. And the suit lives on. One of my sons ended up wearing it around 2008ish for some event, long forgotten.

My “sewing treasure” still hangs in the back of a closet and will remain there for years to come.



Greystone Mill – A little history...

The mill closed in 1999 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Park Service has a lengthy description of the mill with a bit of history if interested ([Greystone Mill Historic Building](#)). Below I share a few interesting bits from the information on-line.

“..the district possess important historical associations with Rhode Island’s worsted wool industry during the twentieth century. Construction for the firm Joseph Benn & Sons, the mill is representative of a significant trend in the history of woolen mill development during the period in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and is an example of mill developed by English woolen manufacturers who sought to improve their competitive position in the U.S. woolen trade by manufacturing locally. Taken over by the Worcester Textile Co. just before World War II, the mill was one of the last and largest full production worsted plants in New England when it closed in 1999.

Just after the turn of the twentieth century, Joseph Benn & Sons Company, a woolen manufacturer founded in 1860 at Bradford, Yorkshire, England sought to establish a branch manufacturing facility in the U.S. The move was part of a trend in British woolen production as a number of similar firms constructed branch plants in the U.S. during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to avoid high tariffs on freight woolen goods and enable the companies to better compete in the U.S. markets... Examples of other British firms that established plants in the U.S. include the Bradford Company, which relocated to Barre, Massachusetts, and several others that relocated to Lowell and Lawrence, MA. Closer to Greystone Mill, the Lister family’s Centerdale Worsted Mills operated

plants at Stillwater in Smithfield, Centerdale and Allendale in North Providence, and Olneyville in Providence, RI.....

Along with the mill, Joseph Benn & Sons Company developed a mill village to accommodate some 1,500 workers, mostly woolen industry workers recruited from Yorkshire and Lancashire. The village was completed in 1912 and included several different types of attached and unattached row housing, a social club, and a church. Joseph Benn & Sons Company was typically paternalistic, and supplied its workers homes with electricity, collected the garbage, painted, and repaired their houses, shoveled the snow, and charged them very low rents.

The company was first listed as a comber, spinner, weaver and dyer of alpaca and mohair in 1906... The mill closed in 1938. About 1940 a small portion of the mill was used for flax and processing for linen fiber.

In 1939 the Worcester Textile Company purchased the Greystone Mill and commenced making fine worsted fabrics for menswear..... Although the period of significance for the Greystone Mill ended in 1953, the Worcester Textile Company continued to produce fine worsted yarns and fabrics until 1999... The looms were sold to a company in Pakistan. When it closed in September 1999 the Worcester Textile Company's Greystone Mill was the largest full-production, vertically integrated worsted mill in New England."

If interested, on page 31 of the long article you will find a detailed discussion of worsted wool processing, beginning with the shearing from the animal. The article continues with a history of the wool industry in US and reveals that at one point RI was had the highest textile wages in the US.

4. Facebook Sharing and Other News

FaceBook activity continues to be high and is filled with sewing advice and fun links This is just a few of many great posts.

Mary Jo Hines –
Finished my new Press Cloth wardrobe using
Threads Magazine article by the same title in
April/May 2011 issue. Left to right....flannel,
organza, muslin, shirting.



Donna Gablinske shared several cool
ideas on upcycling. How to turn an old
T-Shirt into a reusable bag or restyle it
into an adorable off the shoulder top.
And this link to more fun
transformations.

[Transforming Dowdy Thrift Store
Dresses into Fashion](#)



Naomi Lipsky posted -

I wanted to let everyone know that I will be moving to Falls Church, Virginia on May 10. I have loved getting to know all of you and learn from you. The Master Seamstress program, and the new Master Sewing program, are priceless. Stay well, everyone.

RISN will miss you, Naomi. You've been a creative inspiration to many of us. We wish you well and hope you will stay in touch with us and continue to share your works of art!

Other News and Interests

Sew Seeds of Love – Update from Mary Jo Hines

Mary Jo intends to start back up in September 2021 with a regular schedule of community charitable sewing projects. Sewing at the library may still not be feasible, but she is hoping that handmade donations will, once again, be accepted. Stay Tuned!

“Sew Connected” – Zoom sewing forum the Hope Library in Scituate, RI

The Hope Library in Scituate, Rhode Island has formed a virtual sewing group! Join the monthly meeting and get connected with other sewers! No matter what your skill level, everyone is invited. Ask questions, discuss current projects, or learn about sewing - we're a group dedicated to encouraging others to sew and to share our knowledge. Beginners are always welcome! The meeting is facilitated by the Hope Library Director, Paula DiBiase, who is a Master Seamstress graduate. The Zoom link is posted 1 hour prior to start time on the Hope Library Facebook page. The next meeting is on Wednesday, May 26 at 2pm.

5. RISN Website

Check the RISN website [HERE](#) for archived newsletters, updates and events.

6. Sell, Buy, or Services

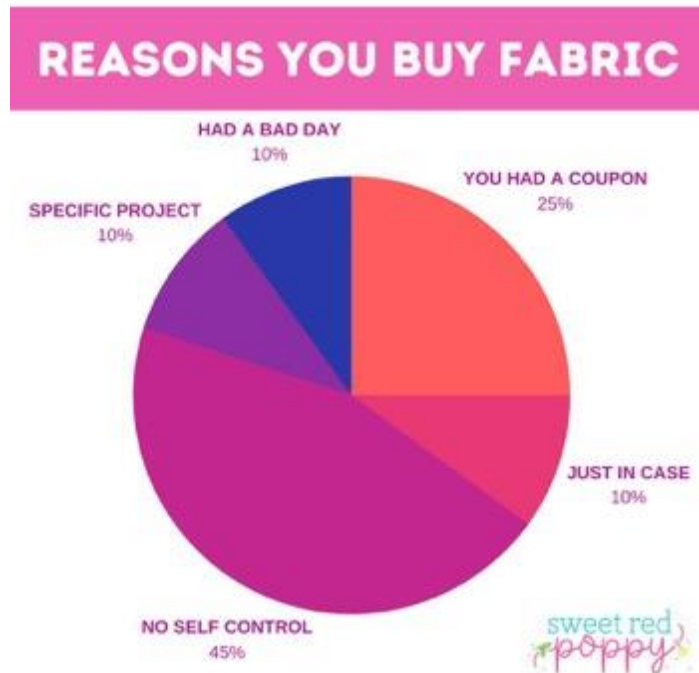
Urge to Purge? Members who have sewing/craft items for sale are invited to set up a table at our meetings. You need to bring home what you do not sell. We do not have the space to store extra fabric, etc. Do you have a sewing/craft related business? Why not consider showcasing/selling your items at a 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.

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

7. Chuckle of the Month



Thank you, Donna G.

8. Tutorial of the Month

Check out Pamela Leggett's tutorials in time for her Pattern Hacking presentation May 4!

<https://pamelaspatterns.com/pages/sewing-tips>

Melly Sews – you might see something interesting here, especially for the new sewist.

<https://mellysews.com/tutorials/>

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) _____