



# RI Sewing Network

## April 2025 Newsletter

### RISN Meetings

**Warwick Center for the Arts**  
**3259 Post Rd**  
**Warwick, RI 02886**

**First Tuesday of the Month**  
**EXCEPT FOR**  
**NOVEMBER 2024 &**  
**APRIL 2025**

**SOCIAL HOUR**  
**6:00 PM**

**SEW & SHARE**  
**6:40 PM**

**SPEAKER**  
**7:00 PM**



October 1, 2024  
November 12, 2024  
December 3, 2024  
March 4, 2025  
April 2, 2025  
May 6, 2025

### Another RISN season is coming to a close!

Wow did this season go by quick! It seems like yesterday when Diane Scarponi visited us and shared her Style Falcon Pattern Company. And what about Deepika Prakash from Pattern Review and her challenge to us to find a way to reignite your passion for sewing. Remember those jaw dropping quilts from Pat Harrison and William Young's passion for draping and pattern making for theater productions. It all goes by so quick. We all need to make the most of our time and get into those sewing rooms and do what we really want to!

The April meeting, held on an "off-night", still attracted dozens of attendees and for those that attended, you saw a new "master of ceremonies" that evening. Nancy Spirito, our RISN Board Assistant, received a last-minute plea from Diane and Mary Jo to lead the meeting in their absence. Nancy didn't even flinch at the challenge and did an outstanding job running the meeting. Thank you, Nancy! You made it look so easy.

Bill Culbertson, creator of Pollywog Pond Puppets, gave a terrific presentation at the April meeting sharing his career story. His sculpting talents took him to Hasbro, Sesame Street, freelancing globally and currently as a professor at New England Tech. Bill told us that he has created and worked on more than 2500 toy patterns in his career. That's amazing! A short summary of his talk and a few photos from the evening are in the newsletter.

Sew and Share had just 2 people sharing their latest works of art. They were beautiful and both had a story to tell about the garments.

Getting back to the quick timeline, our last meeting of the season is Tuesday, May 6 when we will be welcoming Marie Karnolt from MLK Studios. Marie will share her exciting sewing and designing career with a focus on "*Sewing Techniques*". We hope to see you at the last meeting.

Before closing, I'd like to put out a request to the members for an assistant to help me with one or two newsletters next year for meetings that I am unable to attend. I will need someone to take some photos of Sew & Share and the presentation and draft a short summary of the presentation for the evening. I can incorporate that content into the final newsletter. Your assistance is very much appreciated!

Well, that's a wrap for the newsletters! The next newsletter will be coming in September with another fabulous line-up of speakers.

Happy Sewing!  
Susan

**RISN Executive Board**  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

Mary Jo Hines  
(401-785-9001)

**TREASURER &  
REGISTRATIONS**

Jo Ann Kunitz

**NEWSLETTER**

Susan Berlam

**PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON**

Diane Martin  
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**WEB ADMINISTRATOR**

Maureen Rozes

**FACEBOOK ADMINISTRATOR**

Mary Morse

**BOARD ASSISTANT**

Nancy Spirito

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## 1. April Recap – Bill Culbertson



Bill Culbertson delighted the Network with his career story of how his ‘fantasy land’ childhood shaped his life more than expected. Bill, born in California, and emersed in Disneyland from an early age, developed a love of fantasy and imagination. Very early in his years, Bill started to develop his own line of characters, yet to be named and characterized, but their completion would take a few decades to come together. His passion was art and he soon landed in RI to obtain his Master’s of Art in Art Education. After seeing some of Bill’s work, Hasbro hired him on the spot as an Industrial Designer where he excelled and advanced. Bill shared his contributions to the GI Joe franchise and Little Pony, among many other blockbuster creations. Bill spent 20 years with Sesame Street as a sculptor and he shared many stories of the successes from that experience. Bill estimated that he has created more than 2500 toy patterns over the years.

Besides working with the big organizations, Bill did a lot of freelance work that took him around the world. Some of that work was in designing “public art” including numerous monuments in parks and towns. He designed and sculpted a memorial to Jim Henson, tilted Muppet Dawn (link below). The memorial was installed in 2016 in David C. Driskell Community Part, Hyattsville, Maryland. The memorial is surrounded by benches with quotes from Henson’s work and writings.

After Sesame Street, Bill joined New England Tech as a professor in the Video Game Department. At that time digital sculpting was taking over. This new adventure offered another opportunity to go back and develop his personal line of characters that had taken a back seat in his career. Using his digital sculpting talent he brought his characters, Derb, Berb, Waddle and Weep to life in a video game. Pollywog Pond was born. This creation sparked great interest from RI PBS and they signed Bill on for 3 episodes of Pollywog Pond prompting Bill to have to sew some puppets for the show. Bill talked about how he ‘sculpted’ the puppets from foam and then layered a variety of fabrics on to get the look he was after. One character is actually clothed in fabric from a bath mat. Even though the PBS series was nominated for 2 Emmy’s, PBS didn’t sign on for additional episodes. But there’s no doubt that Bill will continue to look for other avenues to showcase his adorable characters.

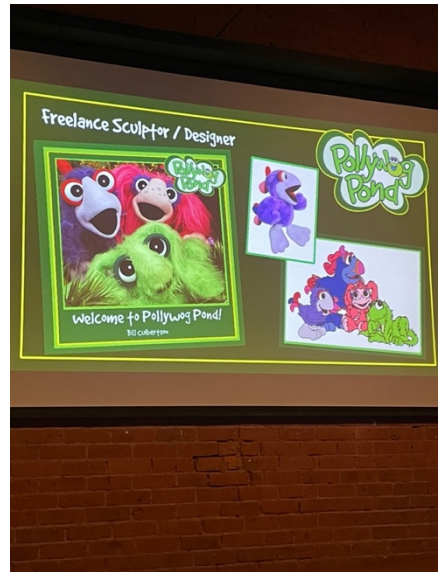
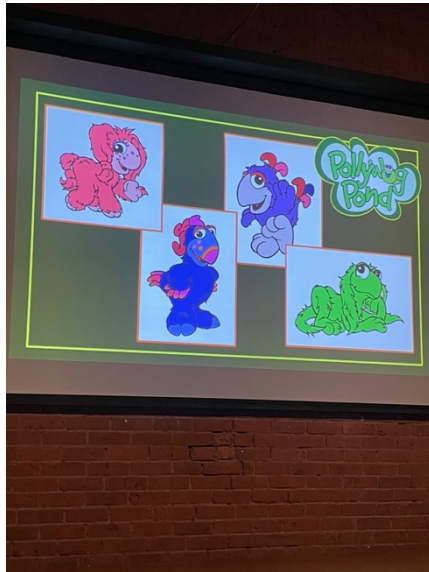
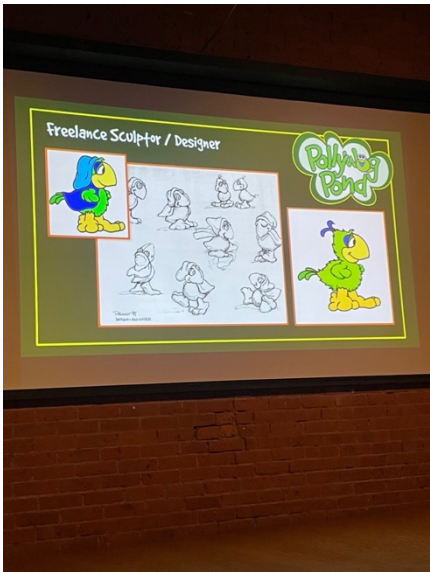
You can learn more about Bill at “A Toy Maker’s Tale. The storeis behind toys”.

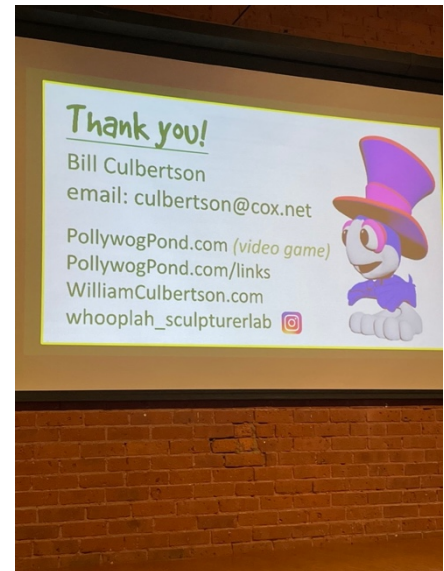
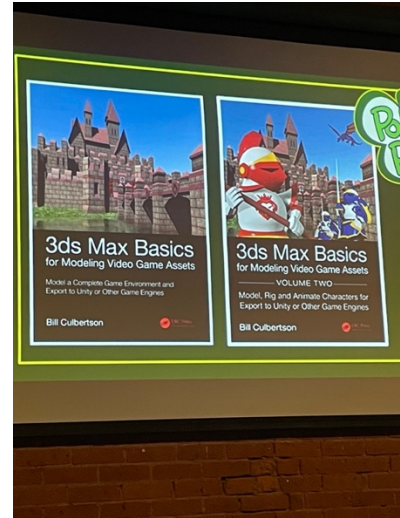
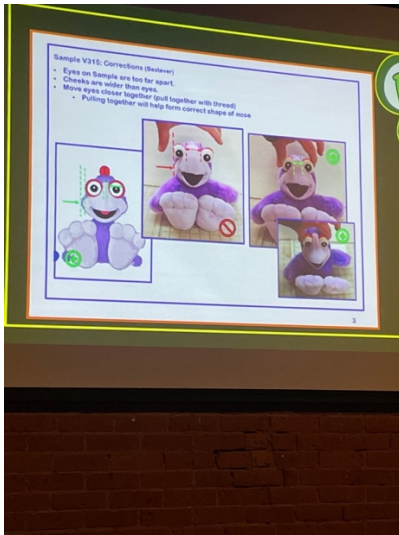
<http://www.williamculbertson.com/a-toy-makers-tale.html>

Muppet Dawn memorial to Jim Henson.

[https://muppet.fandom.com/wiki/David\\_C.\\_Driskell\\_Community\\_Park#:~:text=Driskell%20Communit y%20Park%2C%20formerly%20called,Jim%20Henson%2C%20titled%20Muppet%20Dawn.](https://muppet.fandom.com/wiki/David_C._Driskell_Community_Park#:~:text=Driskell%20Communit y%20Park%2C%20formerly%20called,Jim%20Henson%2C%20titled%20Muppet%20Dawn.)

Below are some photos from the evening.





## 2. RISN Meeting Schedule and Speaker Line-Up for 2024-2025

### RISN 2024/2025 Speakers

October 1, 2024	<b>Diane Scarponi</b>	Style Falcon Pattern Company
November 12, 2024	<b>Deepika Prakash</b>	Pattern Review - Sustainable Sewing
December 3, 2024	<b>Pat Harrison</b>	Quilts!
March 4, 2025	<b>William Young</b>	Trinity Rep Draper / Patternmaker
April 2, 2025	<b>Bill Culbertson</b>	Pollywog Pond Puppets
May 6, 2025	<b>Marie Karnolt</b>	Sewing Technique

See the September 2024 Newsletter on our website (<http://rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com/>) for more details on each of these speakers. Below is a short teaser of what we can expect in May from Marie Karnolt.

# Marie Karnolt

## *Sewing Techniques*

*May 6, 2025*

Hi there, I'm Marie Karnolt, the owner of MLK Design Studio in Manchester, CT. My small home studio is a sanctuary for fellow sewing and fiber arts enthusiasts. My background experiences include 14 years as a tailor (Marie's Tailor Shop), 30+ years as a sewing educator for several local sewing centers, and teaching workshops in tailoring/sewing techniques for the home sewers (including several for the RISN). I spent 2 years as a fashion design adjunct professor and worked as a costume designer/ creator for several theater groups, as well as school and church productions. Throughout the years my custom work included clothing, wedding gowns, christening outfits, and home dec.



Retirement from my tailoring business, in 2009, allowed me the time to blend my love of sewing techniques, my expertise as a tailor, and my background in fine arts. I have spent the past 15 years expanding my interests and developing a passion for creating my own fabrics using various surface design techniques, Indigo, Ice and Ecco dyeing, Nuno/wet felting, and fabric embellishment. I love sharing these techniques, as well as printmaking techniques on fabric and paper, via small workshops in my studio. Quality construction techniques have always been the key elements into any of my one-of-a-kind pieces, which can be “art to wear”, or fiber art for the home. At this stage of my life, I create mostly for self-enjoyment, but if asked by the right person, can still be convinced to do custom work.

I have been married to my high school sweetheart, Joel, for 47 years. He has been my staunch supporter, most honest critic and selfless helper. We were blessed with two wonderful (and now grown) children, and they in turn have blessed us with the most precious gift of all, 4 rambunctious grandsons. Our life is once again filled with watching ball games, attending music recitals and spending as much time with this new generation as we can. Official retirement has enabled us both to pursue our creative passions separately while supporting and encouraging each other.

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### 3. Sew and Share April 2025

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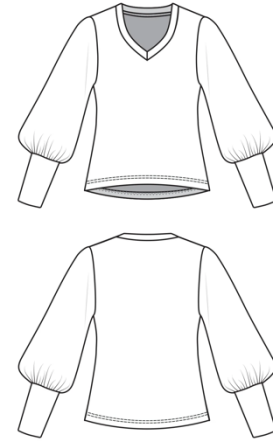
For Sew & Share, Susan Berlam, Newsletter Editor, will take your name, photo and details about your 'Share' for the Newsletter. Please be sure to “check-in” with Susan before the start of the meeting so she can get the details. Susan will have a sign-up sheet for you to jot down the details yourself to be sure she gets it right in the Newsletter.

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**Rowena Burke** shared her blouse which she made using a free pattern and fabric from the dollar table at Bedford Fabrics (located in Fall River). Rowena said the directions for creating the V-neck were exceptional. Rowena also posted this make on FaceBook.

Your top is very pretty!

Fogetmeknotpatterns.com. Vera – knit top (free PDF pattern)



**Melinda Mailhot** shows us a beautiful collection of dresses and tops made from African wax fabric she aquired while working in Central and West Africa for 10 years.

Her patterns include Butterick 6416, Exme Tunic from “Everday Style” by Cotta Jansdotter, Butterick 6182, and Merchant and Mills trapeeze dress.

Asked if the fabric could be washed, Melinda said washing and drying is acceptable though the fabric may soften somewhat.

Those are gorgeous outfits! Someday maybe we could hear more about your life and work in Africa?!?!



## 4. RISN April Raffle

If you don't go to the meetings, you are missing out on the fun and possibility of winning a thoughtful prize. All meeting attendees are handed a raffle ticket when they check-in for the meeting. Following the speaker presentation Mary Jo raffles off 5-6-10 (!) goody bags to lucky winners. Anyone that participates in the optional Sew and Share portion of the meeting will receive an extra raffle ticket.

**April RAFFLE:** Ten prize bags were raffled. We hope everyone was thrilled with their surprises packaged in those adorable bunny bags!

Thank you, Mary Jo, for putting together a terrific collection of raffle prizes!



## 5. FaceBook Sharing

All Annual and Premier members are welcome to join the RISN private FaceBook page. Access is not automatically granted with membership applications. Please be sure to request access from the FaceBook Administrators if interested. To become a member of the RISN FaceBook group go to the search bar and type in RISN Exclusive. When it brings you to our page there are two questions you need to answer. Answer those and hit submit. Once the administrators are notified by Facebook the record will be checked to make sure you are a current member, and you will be added.

There wasn't much FB activity this month but there were a number of posts about limited time sales in the area by a variety of organizations, a video on the making of cotton thread by hand, a video on sewing a perfectly lined tank top where all of the seams are hidden, and a few items posted for sale.

**Maggie Riccio**  
shared a truth and a way to put that old milk glass candy dish to work!!

### HOW I CLEAN MY SEWING ROOM

1% CLEANING 

29% COMPLAINING 

70% PLAYING WITH STUFF I JUST FOUND 



## 6. Other News and Interests

### American Red Cross, Clara Barton Gown Restoration



You might be interested in this video on the American Red Cross website that shows how they prepared the exhibit of Clara Barton's formal dress. Clara was the founder of the American Red Cross. You will need to scroll down to the section titled "Special Historical Treasure" and find the video link and then select it (Sorry I couldn't get a link to just the video here).

[American Red Cross Clara Barton](#)

"This mid-nineteenth dress constructed of expensive, imported silk brocade was worn by Clara Barton throughout the 1860s. Clara would have used the dress for special occasions, luncheons or speaking engagements. The dress was donated to the American Red Cross by Ms. Susan H. Stafford, great, great, great niece of Clara Barton and funding for its conservation and exhibition was donated by Barbara Bovender."

I came upon this video when researching who she was (it's been a long time since I was in school). I just finished reading the book "The Frozen River" by Ariel Lawhon. It's not a book about sewing but there's a connection to Clara Barton. And, by the way, it was a great read.

## **Princess Diana & The Royals: The Exhibition. Las Vegas**

This is a daytime exhibit is "permanent" at The Shops at Crystals, connected to the Aria Resort. You can see 700+ authentic royal artifacts, 7 Diana worn evening gowns and much more.

<https://www.dianalasvegas.com/>

## **Dressed in History: A Costume Collection Retrospective, Chicago History Museum, Through July 27, 2025**

What do a red sequin burlesque costume, a pair of original Air Jordan 1s, a baby's wool bathing suit, and an enormous white tulle Christian Dior gown have in common? All these wearable artifacts are preserved in the Chicago History Museum's vast costume collection, which strives to represent the many different people and stories that make up our city.

Featuring 70 rarely seen objects, from glamorous gowns and sharp suits to housedresses and sneakers, *Dressed in History: A Costume Collection Retrospective* explores how clothing captures the material, social, and changing cultural values throughout history. The exhibition celebrates 100 years of an incredible collection and the donors, curators, and staff who have shaped it.

<https://www.chicagohistory.org/exhibition/dressed-in-history-a-costume-collection-retrospective/>

## **Brooklyn Museum, Solid Gold, Through July 6, 2025**

Behold the majesty of gold in a shimmering exhibition dedicated to the element that has inspired countless works of art, fashion, film, music, and design. As a material and a color, gold has symbolized beauty, honor, joy, ritual, spirituality, success, and wealth throughout history. It has also taken on myriad forms: from millennia-old depictions of an idealized world to opulent 13th- and 14th-century Italian altarpieces and intricate Japanese screens, to contemporary artwork and haute couture marvels. With a sweeping range of objects and a global perspective, this exhibition will trace the many odysseys of the metal that has influenced cultures and legacies worldwide.

<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/solid-gold>

## **New Canaan Museum & Historical Society, Clothing & Textiles, Ongoing**

New Canaan, CT

This collection contains more than 6000 pieces from 240 years: dozens of hats, many in their original hat boxes, hundreds of pairs of shoes, more than 100 wedding dresses, many of which have photographs of the bride, military uniforms, kimonos, furs, coats, evening and day attire, jewelry and accessories, parasols, undergarments and nightgowns, plus boxes and boxes of infant and children clothing.

The textiles in the collection include dozens of quilts, including a 1987 silk cigar ribbon quilt, lace, and ribbons.

<https://nchistory.org/clothing-textiles/>

## **Paris anyone?? Fashion takes over the Louvre**

January 24, 2025 – July 21, 2025

Thus, Parisian museums are not entirely unfamiliar with fashion shows and exhibitions, but this is the first time that fashion in its broad sense has been chosen by the Louvre as the theme of one of its temporary exhibitions. Although the title of the exhibition, which will open its doors on January 24, 2025, remains a mystery, we already know that the exhibition will focus on the relationship between art and fashion, featuring 65 outfits and 30 accessories created by 40 different designers, including Karl Lagerfeld and Yohji Yamamoto. The pieces will span from the Byzantine era to the French Second Empire, yet still inspire designers worldwide today. Perhaps this is the first in a long series of fashion exhibitions at the heart of the Louvre, especially considering the richness of French culture in this field and the countless designers, both historical and emerging, who shape and sustain France's fashion legacy.

<https://www.nssmag.com/en/fashion/37816/louvre-first-fashion-exhibition-january-2025>

## **Couture Pattern Museum, Santa Barbara, CA.**

Welcome to the Couture Pattern Museum, the only dedicated fashion museum on the Central Coast of California, located on the border of the Arts District in Santa Barbara. Nestled at 1525 State Street, we are an innovative, one-of-a-kind, intimate museum dedicated to preserving the history, craft, and untold stories of haute couture and Hollywood costume design. The Couture Pattern Museum is unlike anything else in the world. We house an extraordinary collection of rare couture patterns, original designs, and costume pieces from legendary designers who have shaped fashion history.

<https://www.couturepatternmuseum.com>

## **The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY, NY**

To see the upcoming exhibits scroll down this page.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/collection-areas/the-costume-institute>

## **University of CT Historical Costume & Textiles Collection, Online**

Welcome to the UConn Historical Costume & Textile Collection. This is a powerful resource for research into the past through the vast collection of over 8000 pieces.

<http://costume-museum.usitt.org/HistoricalCollection/>

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## RISN Website

Be sure to check the RISN website for archived Newsletters, updates, and events. Use the following password to access older newsletters; **SewHappy2024**. <http://rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com/>

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## 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.

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## 7. Membership Information for 2024/2025

Attached to this Newsletter is the 2024-2025 RISN membership application form. Membership includes six issues of our Newsletter, access to the private RISN FaceBook page, plus discounts to meetings and other events as well as email news.

1. Annual Membership is \$10 and each of the six scheduled meetings is \$10 for each meeting attended.
2. The nonmember fee for meetings is \$10 per meeting (no emails or FaceBook).
3. Premiere Membership is \$40. With this Premiere Membership, the \$10 membership fee is waived and there are no additional fees for attending meetings.

The Registration form is attached to the Newsletter and on our website:  
<http://rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com/>

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## 8. Meeting Venue – Warwick Center for the Arts

### **Warwick Center for the Arts**

3259 Post Road, Warwick, RI

#### **Address for Parking:**

3273 Post Road, Warwick, RI

<https://warwickcfa.org/about-wcfa/>

For directions, we suggest you use your GPS, however, here are a few details you might find helpful.

From RT 117 go straight past the first rotary, turn right at the second rotary (Dunkin Donuts), and a short distance to the next rotary go 3/4 around onto Post Road. Immediately watch for the first driveway on the left (before the Town Hall) for parking in the back. There is also parking on the street if you passed the WCFA (Armory building).

For 2024/25 we want to strongly encourage our members to consider carpooling! We hope that by doing so, you get to know one another a little better AND bring along someone that might not want to make the drive on their own.

If you aren't sure who to ask and want to carpool or need a ride, send Diane Martin an email and she will forward the request to the Network.

## 2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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

Jo Ann Kunitz  
11 Lee Rd.  
Barrington, RI 02806

Membership includes six issues of our Newsletter, membership to RISN FaceBook page, plus discounts to meetings and other events as well as email news.

**Annual Membership:** New members will be asked to pay an Annual \$10 registration fee for the 2024-2025 season which includes the email notifications, Newsletter, and access to the private FaceBook group. For each in-person meeting, a \$10 fee will be collected at the door from Annual Members.

**Nonmembers:** The nonmember fee for meetings is \$10 per meeting. Non-members will not receive any of the additional benefits (Newsletter, emails, FaceBook, etc.).

**Premier Membership:** The Premier membership fee is \$40. With this Premiere Membership, the \$10 annual registration fee is waived and there are no additional fees for attending meetings. Premier Membership includes the email notifications, Newsletter, and access to the private FaceBook group.

For members that want to participate with the FaceBook page, they must request to be included.

To become a member of the RISN FaceBook group go to the search bar and type in RISN Exclusive. When it brings you to our page there are two questions you need to answer. Answer those and hit submit. Once the administrators are notified by FaceBook the record will be checked to make sure you are a current member, and you will be added.

The Registration form is below and on our website: <http://rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com/membership>

<b><u>RISN Membership Application 2024-2025</u></b>		
Last Name: _____		
First Name: _____		
Email: _____		
Mailing Address: _____		
Street		
_____	_____	_____
City/Town	State	Zip
Preferred Telephone Contact: _____		
<b>Please select your membership category.</b>		
Annual (\$10) _____		
Premier (\$40) _____		