

INSPIRED TO
Sew

*A glimpse into the creative heart of today's
most talented sewing & quilting artists.*



What's in Your Bag?

Annie Unrein



Preparing for SCHMETZ Classes,
2017 Shipshewana Quilt Festival, Schoolhouse

Who's dream are you living? Annie Unrein, our featured creator and entrepreneur, asked herself this poignant question several years ago. As you will learn, her response was life changing. Checking in with yourself seems to be a constant activity, but asking this simple and powerful question is daring if you respond authentically.

I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Annie, but that day is coming. Her story of adventure, family and being true to herself is inspirational. Plus, her favorite quote is similar to one of mine by Henry Ford, "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you are right."

Whose dream are you living? Dare to answer for yourself and let the creativity flow.

Sew SCHMETZ & Grabbit Tool!

Rhonda

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In this Issue:

Sewing Star: Annie Unrein
Page 3

Needle Points: SCHMETZ® Chrome Stretch Needle
Page 14

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What Inspires
YOU to Sew?



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There's an App for That!



Sewing
Star

Annie Unrein

by **annie.com**TM

...what's in your bag?

Issue 43





Annie is so “Craftsy.”

Annie Unrein

Annie Unrein’s (pronounced: “UN-rine”) ByAnnie.com and Patterns by Annie have been called the Vera Bradley of the sewing world. Well known for her purse/bag patterns, Annie’s patterns appeal to sewists of all ages and levels.

Annie is also the creator of ByAnnie’s Soft and Stable®, an innovative product that adds body, stability and a professional finish to purses, bags, home dec items, and more. For anybody who likes to sew purses or totes, Soft and Stable® is the secret ingredient. It makes the finished bag look like high-end retail.

<http://www.ByAnnie.com/shop/category/ByAnnies-soft-and-stable/>

A popular instructor, Annie teaches online and also travels worldwide to teach. She loves sharing techniques which make sewing bags and purses easier while yielding professional results.

Starting in 2000 with only three patterns, Annie now has over 150 patterns for purses, bags, quilts, fashion accessories, and organizational items. She invented and manufactures the original sew-in stabilizer, Soft and Stable®, as well as her own Lightweight Mesh which is available in twelve fun colors. After seeing a need for sturdy zippers suitable for bag construction,

WHY SETTLE FOR FLOPPY?

ByAnnie's Soft and Stable® provides body and stability to help your projects stand up and hold their shape.



ByAnnie.com 2016 Catalog

she also sourced a collection of 48 colors of handbag zippers in four sizes, including the hard-to-find-double pull zippers.

When asked, **“How did this all start?”**, Annie replied:

I was actually working as a scrapbooking consultant when I accidentally wrote my first pattern — and it wasn't for a quilt or a purse!

I offered regular workshops in my home and needed a way to display all the stickers and scissors and doo-dads that scrapbookers use, so I'd designed an organizer with lots of clear pockets to hang on the door. One of my customers wanted to put

a picture of my organizer in Memory Makers magazine. I said, “Tell them I have a pattern! It costs \$10.”

Shortly after, we learned that my youngest sister's husband had cancer. He died a short while later and she was left with two small children. I was in Colorado helping her get things in order when my husband called, “I don't know what you've done, but you're getting all kinds of mail. And they all have \$10 checks enclosed.”

I'd completely forgotten about the pattern! I called/wrote/emailed everyone to explain the brief delay and then got busy writing the pattern. That was the beginning of my pattern adventure.



2016 Road to California Bag Ch

I had always enjoyed writing and working on the computer. We had an inn in Alaska and I worked with a graphic designer to design brochures and advertising material, so had a general idea of desktop publishing.

Wait ... you had an inn in Alaska? Let's back up for a minute ...how did you go from Alaska to Utah?

I married Al, my high-school sweetheart, on my 20th birthday and then we both finished college at the University of Northern Colorado.

When we graduated, Al was offered a teaching job in Hoonah, Alaska. I took a job as assistant bookkeeper at the school district.

The next year we moved to Ketchikan where Al again taught and I worked as a CPA. At that time in Alaska (the early 1980's), there was very little land in public ownership. Alaska opened up land for lottery sale. Included in the sale were a number of recreational parcels, home sites, and five agricultural homesteads in Gustavus, the Glacier Bay area of Southeastern Alaska.

This was a lottery sale which meant you paid \$10 for the chance to put your name in the hat. If your name was drawn, you had the "right" to buy the property. Al and I each applied for all of the



challenge sponsored ByAnnie.com.

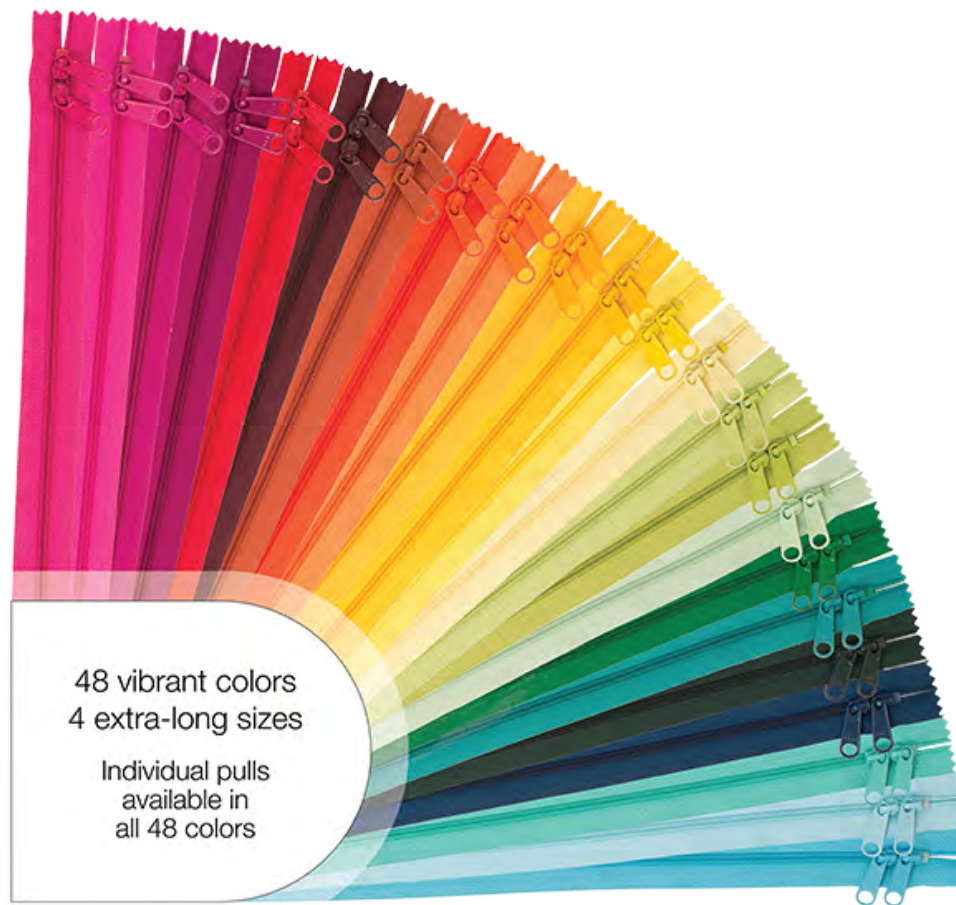
parcels in Gustavus and then began to practice the art of positive thinking. Our conversations began, “WHEN we get the land in Gustavus, we will do this . . .” or “WHEN we move to Glacier Bay, we will need . . .” And, wouldn’t you know — when the drawing was held, each of our names were drawn! I won the right to buy a 10-acre home site and Al got a 160-acre agricultural homestead.

The power of positive thinking is probably one of the most important lessons that I learned during my years in Alaska. One of my favorite sayings is “If you think you can, you can. If you think you can’t, you can’t.”

The homesteading years were definitely a life shift. We went from comfortable jobs with good, steady salaries and benefits

— including retirement plans and summers off! — to living without running water or electricity and having to build roads and bridges to be able to access the land. We built our own home using lumber that we milled from trees we cut on our own land. Getting pregnant a month after we moved there was definitely NOT in the plan. I was on the roof hammering shingles the day before our daughter was born (six weeks early)!

Through it all, we learned to depend on each other, to work hard, and to adapt. When it became apparent that farming in southeast Alaska was NOT going to pay the bills, we began looking at other options. After Mt. McKinley and Denali Park, Glacier Bay was the most-visited tourist attraction in the state,



48 vibrant colors
4 extra-long sizes

Individual pulls
available in
all 48 colors

Double Slide Handbag Zippers

and at the time there were only two options for lodging in the area. When my husband suggested that we open an inn, my first response was "No way! I don't mind taking reservations and scrubbing toilets, but there is no way I am cooking if people are paying for it!" He said, "Well, we'd have to hire help. We could hire a chef and you wouldn't have to cook all summer." That sounded great to me, so we started building!

Annie and her husband Al were always entrepreneurs — only working three or four years for others. Al loved to buy and develop property — eventually developing and owning land in eight states, as well as Canada. Annie had her own accounting business, managed the reservations and staff

for the Inn, became a scrapbooking consultant, and saw a real opportunity to combine her creative interests with her business interests when that first \$10 pattern was such a hit.

In 1990 Annie and Al began spending the winters in Utah. After almost 20 years in Alaska, they were ready for sunshine! Annie became an active member of her local quilt guild, holding almost every office in the guild. There she met Heather Purcell, who started Superior Threads with her husband Bob.

Annie worked at shows with Superior for several years, gaining great exposure for her budding pattern business. When Superior introduced Texture Magic, Annie wrote patterns,

What's in Your Bag?



ByAnnie's Soft and Stable™ gives body and stability to purses, bags, placemats, table runners and more. Easy to sew, it is light weight yet maintains its shape and gives a professional finish to your project. You'll make projects that look like you bought them, not like you made them.

ByAnnie's
Soft and
STABLE
... For Bags and Beyond!

created demonstrations, and participated in the marketing for that product. As she wrote more patterns for purses and bags, she recognized a need for a stabilizer that could give stability to those items. Home sewists needed a firm and resilient foam that would make their bags look like they came from Sak's Fifth Avenue.

After months of research, she found a U.S. manufacturer. Taking a giant leap of faith, and using her own money to finance it, she ordered her first run of Soft and Stable® — 1,000 yards! The rolls were dropped off on a loading dock across town. Her little Isuzu pickup could only haul four rolls at a time, so it took many trips (in 105 degree heat) to transport all the Soft and Stable® to her garage. She hired her hairdresser's

son to help carry it upstairs to her cutting table where they cut and packaged it into precut pieces.

Within a month, Annie sold that entire first run!

Although Soft and Stable® was a big hit in the market place, Annie's husband, Al, was ready to retire and, though supportive of her business, wanted her to slow down. Annie was running her business out of their garage, with the help of two part-time employees. Al wanted to buy a camper and hit the road.



Annie in the classroom.

Then, life threw the Unrein family a curve ball. Al passed away suddenly of a heart attack at age 60.

<http://www.ByAnnie.com/newsletter/detail/168/>

During this incredibly sad time, Annie realized she had been following Al, and his dreams, for decades. Now it was her turn. Their son, Casey, was working as Chief of Staff to the president of a university in California. He'd recently received his MBA and he told his mother he wanted to go somewhere where he could grow a small business. Annie said, *"I have a small business you can grow!"*

Casey and his wife Gloria joined the ByAnnie team in early 2014 and created a seismic shift in the business. Within a few months, ByAnnie moved from Annie's garage into a rented warehouse. After only a year they out-grew the first one and moved to a building three times the size. At the same time they opened a distribution center in Europe.

The days of Annie and her little Isuzu pick-up truck were long gone. Fifty-eight foot tractor trailers pull up to their loading dock regularly, filled with Soft and Stable®, mesh, zippers and all the other products they sell. ByAnnie.com has 10 full-time staff and another 15 independent contractors that support specific needs.



Montana calls from the Rugged Horizon.

Vending at major shows and teaching Craftsy classes exposed Annie's patterns and products to an international audience. Annie now has almost 40,000 students in her four Craftsy classes and says, "Craftsy has been such a wonderful way to share my love of bag making with students. Never in my lifetime could I have imagined teaching that many students from all over the world!"

That entrepreneurial spirit runs in the family. Annie's daughter, Havila (named after the youngest daughter in Fiddler on the Roof) is an attorney in Montana where she and her husband also built and operate an event center called Rugged Horizon.

<http://www.ruggedhorizon.com/>

Years ago, Annie's husband bought this property with his daughter in mind. Growing up, one of Havila's favorite movie quotes was from *A River Runs Through It*: "The world is full of bastards, the number increasing rapidly the further one gets from Missoula, Montana." Now she is only 46 miles away from Missoula.

Another big life change took place last year when Annie's youngest sister, Alicia, needed a change, moved in with Annie, and came to work for ByAnnie. "Although I enjoy time alone, it's nice to have somebody else in the house, somebody to eat a meal with, or share the joys and frustrations of the day. Alicia makes me laugh —and she loves to shop. It's great to have someone to run



Annie & Alicia.


errands or pick up groceries when things are busy. As much as we seemed to argue as children, I think we've both been surprised at how well living together has worked out!

I feel like I've lived six different lives — growing up, homesteading, inn keeping, parenting, my early business years, and the changes with growth. Each has been wonderful and I have learned so much. The incredible growth ByAnnie has experienced since Casey and Gloria came on board has given me something positive

to focus on since Al's death. It's good to wake up every morning and have something to be excited about. The big added bonus is that I get to enjoy special times with my first grandchild, Liam. He is the sunshine in my life!

I am a big believer in NOT dwelling on the negative. Find the silver lining in the clouds and get on with living! Life is short and precious. Make it count.

www.ByAnnie.com

 — written by Rita Farro



Annie's Family Life





Needle Points with Rhonda



Two-color card identifies needle type & size using the SCHMETZ Color Chart.



Power Quilters & Stitch Mavens



SCHMETZ Chrome!

SCHMETZ® Chrome Stretch Needles

The Stretch needle has a medium ball point. The short and narrow eye and deep scarf are specifically designed to prevent skipped stitches. SCHMETZ® Stretch performs well on stretchy fabrics with elastic, Lycra® and Spandex®. PS: Did you know that Spandex® is an anagram for expands?

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- Less friction on thread passing through eye. ●
- Penetrates fabric with less resistance. ●
- Smoother stitch creation. ●
- Resists heat for improved durability & performance. ●
- A premium needle not available in big box stores. ●

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