

INSPIRED TO  
*Sew*

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



# *Coping with the Pandemic*



Get the scoop on Rhonda's garden dress made during the pandemic:  
<https://sewmorestitches.com/blog/f/dress-done>

Nobody is weathering the pandemic storm better than people that sew. We know how to make the best of situations. We certainly stepped up to serve our families & communities with masks. In addition to making masks, I was inspired to finish UFO's (unfinished objects) that seasoned up to 17 years. On SCHMETZneedles Facebook LIVE, on Wednesdays during May & June, I shared multiple newly completed projects. That lead me to wonder how other industry professionals are using this unusual gift of time. Emails were sent to 24 sewing celebrities asking for a snapshot of how they spent their time. Were they sewing, resting, crafting, cooking? Everyone was asked to submit one pic with a paragraph describing their pandemic time. Fourteen responses were received. Luckily, everyone is healthy. You will enjoy reading the responses as their dedication to our industry thrives. Sew SCHMETZ & Grabbit® Too!

*Rhonda*

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**Featured Sewing Celebrities**

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# *Coping with the Pandemic*



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from past issues.**

Click image to view on [www.issuu.com](http://www.issuu.com).



### *Frieda Anderson*

Because I have so many things I love to do, this isolation hasn't been a hard thing for me. But I miss meeting people for lunch and HUGGING!

I have been working on a big quilt to be entered in shows in the upcoming year. I have also been working on several scrap quilts. I needed to have one of my scrap projects right next to my sewing machine, so I devised a make-shift design board that is portable, CHEAP, and easy to make. I took a large box, taped it flat, placed a crib size batting on it that I also taped down, and now I have a great design board that I can move around without the pieces falling off.

You can see it in my picture above with TWO scrap projects. Both of those projects will finish with 1 inch squares. I intend to make them into bed quilts, so they're long term projects.

I have also been knitting. When I travel I look for fabric and yarn shops. These are nice memories to have of any trip. I mostly knit socks, using a very simple pattern by Ann Norling called Adult Basic Sock. Socks are easy to knit and make nice gifts. I now have three Christmas gifts already. The socks pictured in the foreground are ones I have made this season from yarn bought around the world.

If you are interested in visiting my website and seeing some of my work OR shopping, I am currently cleaning out stock and have all my patterns on SALE. Enter the code **STAYHOME** to get the discount. <http://www.friestyle.com>

I hope everyone is staying busy making wonderful things!

## *Rob Appell*

I know folks are really suffering out there, but my life has been blessed beyond belief the past few months. Although, at first, when we were told here in California, that we would be sheltering in place for about thirty days, I did panic.

My travel schedule for April and May was booked solid with live trunk shows all over the USA. Overnight, everything was postponed. I was heartbroken and overwhelmed.

But, soon I realized I had everything I needed within reach. My wife and two teenagers were also home, and we would all be together. I am the sales Manager for Michael Miller Fabrics, so I have a job I can do from home, (that comes with fabric as a perk). I have my YouTube studio in my house. And I have all new machines, Thanks to JUKI!

When I get nervous, I make stuff. I needed to process my emotions, so I made a lot of stuff! And I filmed everything. Because I was in one place long enough to focus, it became a truly creative journey.

Challenged to create something for the Virtual Quilt Market and School House, I made a short film highlighting the Michael Miller Basic fabrics that I love to use. My folks live in the country next door to a vineyard. I went there and set up all the fabrics just right and waited for the light. I spent about two and half days filming outside, in the garden, at a Farmers Market (wearing a mask, of course) at sunset and sunrise, and it really came together in the end. I had the best time, working creatively outside with my quilts, cameras, and my family.

[www.robappell.com](http://www.robappell.com)





## *Marianne Fons*

I made masks, but not nearly as many as other people did, and also started a new quilt. My husband and I are moving soon from our current home to a cool storefront/apartment just off the Winterset town square, a distance of a block and a half, so I spent A LOT of time sorting through household belongings, a worthwhile process though sometimes painful.

A unique thing I did was help hang a new exhibit at the Iowa Quilt Museum here in Winterset, Iowa, on April 20, when the museum was, of course, closed. The exhibit, titled "Man Made," was curated by Tony Jacobson, a talented designer in his own right, manager of Piece Works quilt shop, and a member of the IQM Board of Directors. Museum director Megan Barrett, Tony, and I did it in one day, keeping our distance (which is pretty easy when one person is on a ladder!). From then until June 1, when we reopened (with restrictions) IQM hosted several online interviews with the makers, all of them wonderful. The show continues through July 5. For more information, visit [www.iowaquiltmuseum.org](http://www.iowaquiltmuseum.org).

[www.mariannefons.com](http://www.mariannefons.com)



### *Judy Kessinger*

I found my bread machine, I am sorry to say. I had no idea how much I still enjoy making bread. Since the calories added up, walking was the next “step” in my quarantined life. We moved to a new development last year and it has been fun to see the transformation up close.

Zoom has become a big part of my personal and teaching life. Just learning to adapt from standing in front of ladies to doing demonstrations online has been a challenge. Ladies are loving the new instructions or reviewing what they learned before. This is one part of quarantine I will keep.

I have enjoyed hearing so many fantastic comments from ladies that could never attend one of my classes in person. I figured out how to do my “one lady fashion show” and that was always my favorite part.

During this time, I was able to start on Book Three!

My husband and I got to bond with our new grand-baby because my son, Matt, does Good-Morning and Good-Night Facetimes with us. I really think she knows our voices and faces.

We are blessed!

[www.fitnicesystem.com](http://www.fitnicesystem.com)

Issue #79





## *Kenneth D. King*

Being lock-downed in New York City found me doing many different things:

- Teaching online to finish up classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology,
- Recording episodes of my podcast,
- Writing an article on the flange shoulder for **Threads Magazine**,
- Making myself a copy of a jacket I had loved and lost,
- Preparing video lessons for my fall classes at FIT.

But most importantly, it showed me the value of having an assistant. (if you follow Kenneth, you know his assistant is a Barbie doll). My assistant has been working by remote video with my customers, creating the couture they need. Our circle of customers and friends have been going on with their lives while social distancing. I watch their activities with enjoyment. For those who don't watch my Instagram account ([kennethdking](https://www.instagram.com/kennethdking)), I sew couture Barbie clothes to stave off panic attacks. Focusing on a tiny garment allows me to tune out all of the mayhem that surrounds me.

[www.kennethdking.com](http://www.kennethdking.com)





## *Mary Mulari*

After Rhonda Pierce described this Life Shift as a “gift of time,” I thought about one thing I like to do when I have free time. It used to be on a long plane flight when I’d take out a note-card or two to write to a friend or family member. Now I have TIME to write to lots of people while seated at my table at home!

It’s a pleasure to have nice note-cards, paper, and postcards and a smooth flowing pen. My personal philosophy is that a handwritten note sent in the mail is ALWAYS welcome, and often a wonderful surprise because we just don’t receive them very often anymore. And, handwritten thank you notes are the best way to be positively memorable in the mind of the recipient. (If I was asked to give a graduation speech, that’s what I’d share.)

So I’ve written to most of the people in my address book. A letter or note is a gift and shouldn’t be sent with any expectations, but I have happily received a few letters in return. In fact, if you write to me, I’ll send you a note in return on a card from my vast collection of stationery. Box 87, Aurora MN 55705.

[www.marymulari.com](http://www.marymulari.com)

Issue #79





### *Pati Palmer*

My COVID experience was a bit unusual. Paul and I went to Mexico in early March. My daughter, Melissa Watson, asked if she and her husband could get out of NYC and stay in our Portland condo while we were gone. Of course! We wanted them to be safe. After a month, our resort closed and we flew home. But, we were homeless, as Melissa and Roland now occupied our one-bedroom condo. My friend Marta Alto gave us the keys to her Cannon Beach cabin where we were for nearly two months.

So what to do when you have no sewing supplies or machines? Paul was reading a book called *How Not to Die* and decided he wanted to try being a vegetarian. I ordered three vegetarian cookbooks from Amazon and started sorting out how to do that. I've never wanted to eat this way nor try. But, when you have prostate cancer, (that is, my husband), you take a doctor's advice and give a plant-based diet a chance. What I learned is that you can make the tastiest and most colorful meals on earth using only plants.

After three months, Paul and I are back home, Melissa and Roland are back in New York City. I discovered a nearby New Seasons grocery, which is now my go-to store for organics and vegan products.

[www.palmerpletsch.com](http://www.palmerpletsch.com)



## Heidi Proffetty

When our world came to a screeching halt, I naively thought this can't go on for long. So I decided to tackle a few of those dreaded projects from my To Do list.

We've lived in our house for 22 plus years and you can imagine the STUFF we've accumulated. So this became my quiet mission for more than two weeks. I cleaned, purged and organized. I found tears and joy as I went through my daughters' baby clothes, toys, school papers, and gymnastics photos.

Next, my husband (whose business also came to a sudden stop) and I joined forces just like we did 22 years ago when we first built our home together. Each day we started with coffee and conversation and turned our focus to fixing up the outside of our house. We planted 35 small trees, put in our garden, painted the exterior siding and trim, stained the deck and rebuilt the side stairs. We also installed our new bees into our two bee hives.

As I look at how nice our home looks again, right down to the pretty flowers in the flower boxes, it makes me smile. My husband and I feel pleased.

But we had an even more important job to focus on and that was our kids. Our girls are teenagers and with no school except for virtual classes, no friends, no prom and no gymnastics, they were feeling the impact. We let their normal routines slide. They slept more during the day and stayed up late at night talking to their friends on social media. We let them find their happiness where they could. If that meant a bowl of cereal in the bedroom or repainting the walls of their bathroom, or giving dad a much-needed haircut, we were okay with it.

As far as quilting, well, I finally got back in the swing of things. With my teaching jobs canceled, I had free time to play with my embroidery machine. I learned a new digitizing program and created some beautiful designs. I gave my first Facebook Live presentation for Janome Sewing Machines. It was exciting to take part in this opportunity and admittedly it felt great getting dressed up and putting makeup on again.

I also completed another in my series of Moroccan mosaic quilts. It took almost five months to finish it, but as I look at it I feel again that sense of happiness and accomplishment.

Most recently, I took an 11 hour road trip south with my daughters and two of their friends. We visited a great spot, the Outer Banks of North Carolina. The days were filled with lots of laughs from my kids which made my heart happy and I spent a few days of much needed relaxation on a long stretch of gorgeous beach. During these trying times, I did not ignore the sadness going on out there but I did turn inward to care for and appreciate my family. I feel very blessed to say my family is my rock and I am theirs.





### *Pat Sloan*

On March 1st, I started doing daily **Quilt Challenge** videos and I created a project calendar for everyone. It's been wonderful to have a focus on our quilting each day and super fun to see everyone participating. I also have been involved in several collaborations doing trunk shows and the most recent is a group of us did a studio tour. My new fabric line had just arrived from Benartex. Great timing for my tours!

Watch and then tour the other studios at <https://blog.patsloan.com/2020/05/friday-fun-june-calendar-and-studio-tours.html>

If you'd like to join my daily challenge, June is devoted to quilting your own quilt. Get the info at <https://www.ilovetomakequilts.com/quilt-your-own-quilt-june-2020.html>





## *Deanna Springer*

Beginning in early March, here at NZP (Nancy Zieman Productions) in Wisconsin, our office went on lock-down to visitors and we implemented no-contact deliveries. We began ramping up cleaning commonly touched surfaces—including every rotary cutter, ruler, marking pen, and sewing notion in our sewing room and studio. Our team meetings moved from the conference room to our large sewing room, with Dana, Denise, Sarah, and me located in separate corners of the room.

On March 17, 2020, our small but mighty team packed up and began working remotely from home. I've carried on and continued to head into the office every day. Solo. My daily routine hasn't changed much as I still dress for work, make my lunch salads, order groceries online for local pickup, prep dinner, and catch up on email before heading to the office to work on our many new projects and manage a team remotely. Dana and Sarah rotate days picking, packing, and shipping NZP orders. Denise continues to work from home on our new patterns, books, and rulers. In May, I recorded the final three episodes of the 100 Series of *Stitch it! Sisters*. I was solo on camera—with a scaled back production crew.

I haven't yet experienced wearing casual sweats or PJ's. However, I have noticed M&Ms often found their way into my grocery orders. They're the M&Ms with almonds in the middle, so these are a healthy snack, right? Unexpectedly, I've not had a haircut for over three months and I now have the Farah Faucet hairdo I tried so hard to achieve in my youth. Who knew all I had to do was wash and blow dry? There was no need to put products and efforts into achieving this iconic look! Charlie is that you calling?

Also, unexpectedly, my hubs, Dennis, and I had to temporarily close our family campground in Wisconsin's Northwoods. We typically enjoy gathering with family and friends, beginning summer with our annual Memorial Day Weekend camp out and potluck picnic. We toast the beginning of summer (and a grateful wave good bye to winter)! But not this year. I miss my daughter, parents, family, and friends, but I know we'll be spending time together someday soon.

Our full work schedule has shifted to accommodate plans for taking The Great Wisconsin Quilt Show online, to a new and exciting digital experience. Stay tuned!

[www.nancyzieman.com/blog/stitch-it-sisters/](http://www.nancyzieman.com/blog/stitch-it-sisters/)



## *Annie Unrein*

In late March, Utah authorities encouraged everyone to work from home, if possible, and told all high-risk individuals (including those over 60, me!) to "avoid contact with any other person." Having watched as my daughter-in-law's family in Spain dealt with hospitalizations and deaths, I was definitely ready to self-isolate. I was also confident that I would be SO much more productive and that I would really get ahead of the game. Assuming that we might be in isolation for about a month, I made a tentative schedule:

- Week 1: Finalize all five new/updated patterns, making at least one model of each to ensure testing is complete.
- Week 2: Write scripts for add-on and marketing videos for those five new patterns.
- Week 3: Sew step-outs for filming for all videos.
- Week 4: Begin filming (if allowed back to work) or begin work on new patterns for Fall Market.

It is now 10 weeks later and I am still working primarily from home. Progress on my schedule? I've mostly completed the Week 1 and Week 2 projects. We did begin filming a couple of weeks ago, but are only about half way through that process. Not only am I a very-overly-optimistic judge of how long something will take, but I was also surprised by how much time went to dealing with effects of the shutdown: reviewing regulations and programs, communicating with staff who were working in several places, trying to make sense of all the news, and working to make good decisions when everything was so unsettled around us.

Fortunately, I also added a few fun things to my list. Most enjoyable was participating in several Facebook Live events with stores and companies who were also dealing with shutdowns. For example, I presented a five-week series with FreeSpirit Fabrics which focused on projects we've made using their fabrics. <https://www.facebook.com/freespiritfabrics/videos/894994557683611/>

We shared tips and techniques for bag making, from choosing fabrics and coordinates, to making smooth, wrinkle-free bindings. Preparing for those events each week took MUCH more time than I'd expected (no surprise there), but feedback and engagement made it all worthwhile. Being able to connect with makers around the world, even when we were all stuck at home, was definitely a highlight of the shutdown for me!

[www.byannie.com](http://www.byannie.com)



## *Cathy Wiggins*

Though the stay-at-home order has been detrimental to a small business like mine with the cancellation of teaching gigs and the loss of revenue from shows and classes, it has been a true blessing for my creative soul.

For almost a year, I've had signed contracts for two new books, but no time to work on them due to my travel schedule. In working on the books now, one on cosplay/costuming and the other on home décor, I've gotten to explore new areas of leather crafting and figure out how to combine multiple techniques to achieve different looks. I've discovered ways to create three-dimensional leather art forms that can be easily done at home with only a few special tools.

For the home décor book, I've made quilted Christmas stockings and tree skirts, leather vessels, masks, pine-cones, flowers, and more.

My goal is to use quilting as a way to introduce leather to the home sewer, then guide them to all the new possibilities leather crafting can bring. This pandemic, despite all the negative effects on my business, has given me the opportunity to take another step forward in achieving that goal by getting a good chunk of my first book done.

[www.gypsywoodleathers.com](http://www.gypsywoodleathers.com)



## *Angela Wolf*

Being home for the past few months has been a huge lifestyle change; going from traveling every other week for events to working out of my studio and staying home. Ironically, I have come to cherish this time. Not traveling has allowed so much more time, time to write music and play the piano again (although I really wish I had the thing tuned before the quarantine). I gave a try at cooking, but I think I will leave that to Winn for now!

Thanks to today's technology, I was able to continue working, hosting daily live Facebook and YouTube shows and virtual classes to stay connected with friends and fans. Although the reason for the quarantine is a tragedy, the time I was able to spend with my husband, enjoying coffee in the morning, dinner at home, and walks in the evening will be forever cherished.

[www.angelawolfpatterns.com](http://www.angelawolfpatterns.com)







## *Gail Yellen*

After a February serger workshop for the Sarasota, FL ASG Chapter, the whole country shut down. Like thousands of sewists around the world, I made masks (between 150–200). My husband and I did a quilt themed jigsaw puzzle.

Then I decided it was time to get back to work. I did a couple of new YouTube Serger Tip Clips, but, due to social distancing, without my terrific videographer. It was quite a challenge!

Zoom has been a great tool for sewists to keep learning and stay connected. On Memorial Day weekend, I did a Zoom mini serger workshop “Decode the Stitch.” Here’s a link if you haven’t seen it yet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRH4c6iXGtY&t=1051s>. I also did a Zoom interview and demo for the Plano, TX ASG and have a couple more scheduled for ASG National and the Chicago Chapter.

I’ve been trying to exercise daily and get in a bit of gardening along with sewing/serging adventures.

Hope everyone stays well and that we can get together in-person when safe!

[www.gailpatrice.com](http://www.gailpatrice.com)



# Needle Points with Rhonda



*Frieda Anderson says:*



*Remember to change your needles often. For the big quilt I'm working on, I have changed the needle multiple times and used three different needles: **Microtex** for piecing, **Quilting** for quilting with cotton thread, and **Embroidery** for quilting with rayon and silk thread. I always use the right type needle for the right type job.*



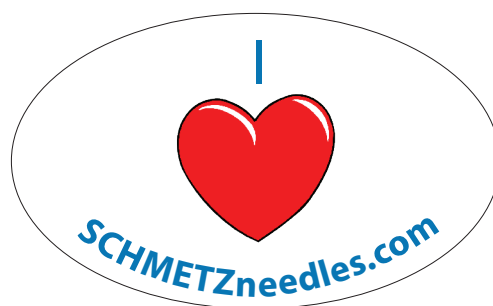
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