

*Editor's note: The focus of this section of Notions is designed to inform members about projects, books, activities, etc. that will inspire young sewers, as well as report on chapter programs and individual efforts of ASG members that reach out to Junior Members and potential Junior Members.*

## SEW 4 FUN CAMP

by Helaine Ball Eckstein

This past summer, the Sarasota, Fla. Chapter completed our fourth year of sewing camp, partnering with Florida's Manatee County 4-H Extension. The program is offered to children ages 8 through 18, although our oldest student this summer was just 14. The group of 20 girls was divided into three levels, which was a new venture for all of us this year. It turned out to be a huge success. I'd like to share how we organized our week... and I hope it will inspire you to start something similar for your chapter!

### Days 1 and 2

Level 1 girls were students attending for the first time. Various goals for this group were to learn the correct names of the sewing machine parts, useful sewing tools and notions, how to thread and operate a sewing machine properly, stitch straight lines, pivot, backstitch, a bit of hand sewing, and community service work done in assembly-line fashion. This year Level 1 projects were a pillowcase done via the hot dog method, a hair scrunchie, and a 4-H key chain. Most were able to use the wonderful stitches on the Baby Lock Grace machines, which once again we were privileged to use, thanks to the generosity of Tacony Corporation. The girls loved using the pretty stitches on the edge of their pillowcases.

Level 2 was made up of students who had been at camp at least once



before. Their goals were to increase sewing machine skills, learn to apply fusible interfacing, stitch a curved seam as well as straight seams, cut out a headband from a pattern, use a walking foot, work with corduroy and fusible batting, and stuff a pillow. Level 2 projects were a headband and a 14" flange pillow.

Most of the Level 3 girls have been with us at least three years or came to us with previous sewing skills. The goals for them were to use a commercial pattern, learn how to read a pattern envelope and guide sheet, pre-treat fabric, understand fabric grain and bias, straighten fabric, and of course, fitting and hemming. They each made a pair of pajamas.

### Day 3

All levels went on a field trip Wednesday morning. Level 1 went to Hancock Fabrics for a scavenger hunt and lesson on how to get around a fabric store. Levels 2 and 3 went to Quilter's Haven where they were treated to a lesson on how to paper piece and given a bag of wonderful goodies to take home for practice. We returned to camp for a lunch of pizza and drinks.

### Day 4

All students were given a colorful tote bag to embellish with appliques and yo-yos. This was their hand sewing lesson. Levels 1 and 2 could make a basket of flowers or a truck with their yo-yos. Some also sewed buttons on top of the yo-yos for flower centers or hub caps. Level 3 was allowed to step out of the box and be more creative with their totes. Throughout the day, an ASG volunteer worked with each student individually on the Baby Lock embroidery machine, Sophia, helping them put their names on felt, which was then cut out and applied to the top of a recycled Altoid can filled with



**DAY 2  
LEVEL 2**



**DAY 1  
LEVEL 3**



**DAY 2  
LEVEL 3**



**DAY 3**



**DAY 4  
LEVELS 1 & 2**

sewing supplies. Each student was given their sewing kit along with their completion certificate on the last day of camp.

**Day 5**

Day 5 was a busy day trying to finish everything we had planned for the kids. It seems to me that I cut the program back each year after finding I have squeezed in too much for the allotted time. But once again we were behind. We started the day by making bookmarks out of recycled ties and a piece of felt fused to the straight end, then adding a tassel made from lightweight yarns and threads. The kids were delighted to have something to take home as a Father's Day gift.

We finished the bookmarks by 11:00 am and immediately got started on our community service project which was adult bibs. It was set up assembly-line fashion using all 20 students. Most of the sewing was done by Level 3 gals with Level 1 and 2 doing much of the pinning, pressing, and running. I never thought they would finish the 20 bib kits that chapter members had cut for the project. However, in three hours sewing time, they completed all the bibs and they look beautiful. The bibs were presented by the students to a local nursing home after camp was over.

By 3:00 pm, the sewing lab was broken down and the room looked like an auditorium once again. Family members began to gather for the Recognition and Celebration Ceremony. The many photos taken throughout the week were shown on a big screen as the families entered the building. All students stood up front and showed

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**DAY 4**



**DAY 5**



**NURSING HOME BIBS**



**COMPLETION CERTIFICATES**

## Sew Young

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the wonderful things they had made during the week. Level 3 modeled their PJs. Punch and cookies were served after the event, again by the 4-H. As a matter of fact, an afternoon snack for all was provided each day—except for the one day when they all opted to sew and forgo the popcorn. Wow, now that says a lot!

### Why Sewing Camp?

I have the greatest admiration for the ASG ladies who volunteer to work the week of camp. We had 18 volunteers to begin the week and ended the week with about 14. Not all can give their time every day. It is a lot of preparation throughout the year but the actual week of camp is exhausting, physically and mentally... especially for those of us over 60, 70, and 80! The Friday before camp all machines and supplies have to be moved out of storage, transported and set up in the 4-H building. Camp week begins each day at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. On the last day of camp, all those machines and many boxes of supplies have to go back to the ASG storage unit. Some volunteers have a 30-to-60-minute drive to and from camp each day.

I can't speak for everyone but be assured that the rewards and satisfaction I get from sewing camp outweigh the exhaustion. To see the light bulbs go on, the smiles on the kids' faces, and feel the excitement in the room is absolutely thrilling for me. I am on a high when I leave there the last day. It seems to me that each year it gets a little better and a bit more organized. Next year's curriculum is already in progress and hopefully, once again, it will be exciting for the kids.

My thanks to everyone who participated in this week of sewing camp and most especially to Tacony Corporation for the use of 20 Baby Lock Grace machines and the beautiful Sophia embroidery machine. It

has been such a pleasure to use these machines in the classroom.

*Helaine Ball Epstein is a member of the ASG Sarasota, Fla. Chapter. She learned to sew at age 10 in 4-H which is likely why she is so passionate about giving back to our youth. At her first day of home ec class in 9th grade, she knew she could earn a living doing something she loved. She went on to get a B.S. degree in vocational home economics from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, taught for 30 years, and retired from Palm Beach County School Board in 1989. She is also a doll collector and maker, and occasionally teaches classes making cloth dolls and teddy bears.*

### AN EMMY IN THEIR FUTURE?

**Los Angeles, Calif. Chapter:** Our Teen Neighborhood Group (NG) was privileged to visit the studio of Emmy Award-winning designer, Mark Zunino in early September.

Mr. Zunino started his career working with Nolan Miller, designing gowns for the television show, "Dynasty." He designs and makes beautiful couture gowns for current and past Hollywood legends such as Elizabeth Taylor, Barbra Streisand, Angelina Jolie, and Sophia Loren. His gowns can be seen on the red carpet, on "Dancing with the Stars" co-host Brook Burke, and at Kleinfeld of TV's "Say Yes to the Dress" fame. He learned his couture techniques from Paris-trained pattern makers and tailors. His passion for couture and the details is evident in his gowns, which we had the privilege of viewing and touching in his showroom.

When we arrived, the workrooms were busy with talented men and women making wedding gowns for an upcoming event. We were greeted by the gracious Domenica who introduced us to those in the workroom. One gentleman was expertly putting together a beautiful corset which is the foundation of most of Mr. Zunino's wonderful gowns. We were told that with the proper foundation,

anyone can have a waist. Another woman was putting together lace and appliqué along with some fine beading. We were shown how the beader works and her work area.



Then we went into another workroom where we got to meet the designer Mark Zunino and watch as he was pinning, designing, and embellishing a beautiful bodice for a gown. Mr. Zunino shared with us his background and inspiration for his work. The teens listened carefully and watched him work as he explained how his designs come together. Mr. Zunino reminded them that anything is possible and not to be afraid to follow their dreams and to always be creative. He said that if they wanted to get into design they should become an intern. While they might start out by cleaning drawers or organizing notions, they would be learning about what is in those drawers and the supplies and tools needed in the fashion business and that most times, starting at the bottom is the best place to start.



After visiting the workrooms, offices, and press room, we were invited into the showroom to view

dozens of gowns and garments. We saw the inner workings of the gowns, the expert stitching, the couture techniques that went into each garment, and how important foundations and corsets are to the finished look of the gowns. The ruching, pleats, embellishments, layers of fabrics, beading, buttons, hems, seams, and design details were all stunning and perfect in every garment.

I think everyone left inspired and with firsthand knowledge of how important techniques (including ironing), and some of the steps (making sure all your pleats lay in the same direction) are. Seeing those beautiful gowns and meeting the designer and the men and women who put it all together was a wonderful experience. I think there are some future designers in the Los Angeles Chapter's teen group and I can't wait to see their names in lights and visit their showrooms one day. I'm sure they will look back on this day and see it as the springboard to their creative future.

—Sue Vite, treasurer and Teen  
NG leader

## OUR RISING SEWING STAR

**Raleigh, N.C. Chapter:** The Wilmington Fashionistas NG is so excited to have 18-year-old Lucille Bruno as one of our newest members. Lucille found us when ReAnn Scott, our former NG leader, had a fabric sale in preparation for her move to Chicago. Lucille has been a vocal and active part of our meetings ever since.

The first time we met her she was preparing her entry for the SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) scholarship contest. She was hoping to secure one of the top three spots of a full scholarship with her original design dress made entirely of local oysters, beads/pearls, and shrimping net—traditional sewing fabrics and accessories not allowed! What fun we all had that day trying to help her figure out how to make her design work.

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## Sew Young

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Despite our input, she was not one of the chosen winners, but she is still planning to attend SCAD in January and is pursuing other avenues in the scholarship process.

Lucille became interested in sewing when she was 8 years old and took a Bernina class. Apparently, the rest of the class was older women who were afraid she might hurt herself, so they helped her out a lot. She went home and started sewing scraps together.

By the time she was 14, she was producing a children's clothing line called Fo\*Toe. She made silk taffeta tops and skirts—someone had given her a lot of silk scraps, so she used what she had! She admits that back then her sewing skills were not the best, but the designing bug had bit and she was having fun. By the time she was 16, someone gave her a beautiful hand-painted silk scarf. She made her first piece of clothing for herself, a silk top from the scarf, and she loved it!



She decided she needed to learn how to market herself, so she signed up for a marketing class at Cape Fear Community College to find her target market. (I don't know about you but I don't think I had ever thought about target markets when I was 16!) She also began going to fashion events and previews around town. If it was fashion, she was there watching.

Lucille gets a lot of her business through word of mouth or just by walking into a store wearing one of

her designs. Most recently she planned and organized the Cape Fear Photo Shoot. Local photographers came downtown to practice photographing live models—many wearing Lucille's designs. There were other young designers there as well. It was a great opportunity for models, photographers, and designers alike.

Lucille also uses Emu feathers from a local farmer to create stunning collars for the holidays and the Azalea Festival parties. She had a PR woman from Charleston see one of her designs at a handmade hat show and placed an order. This is when she felt like she had officially "made it."

Annette Jonkheer, another of our Wilmington ASG ladies, is Lucille's sewing assistant. Annette helps her meet all her sewing deadlines while Lucille perfects her sewing skills. They work very well together.

This summer, Lucille has been selling her version of the Carolina Beach tourist shirt at the Pleasure Island Farmers' Market. She created an original beach design and printed it on fabric, then stitched those onto T-shirts. Sales are doing well so far!

She hopes to one day have her own line of women's ready-to-wear. That is who she would enjoy designing for the most. And she wants to live locally, not in New York! She has been getting a lot of press around Wilmington lately for her design talent and has accepted a job as the new costume designer for TACT (Thalian Association Children's Theater).

Keep your eyes out for Lucille. You will be seeing more from her soon!

—Jean Werling, Wilmington  
Fashionistas NG leader

## BOOK BAG

### The Sewing Workshop—Learn to Sew with 30+ Easy, Pattern-Free Projects

by Linda Lee

Each of the more than 30 projects introduces a new skill or combination of skills to practice. The result is super fashions for the hip young sewer to

wear and some wonderful accessories to enjoy.

*Sixth & Spring Books, 128 pages, color photos and illustrations, soft cover, ISBN 978-1-93609-640-4, \$17.95*

## **I Can Sew**

by Lynn Weglarz

Designed for ages 9 and up, this book features easy-to-understand instructions and clear, step-by-step illustrations that will guide novice sewers through techniques such as straight stitches, pivot and turn, elastic casings, sewing around curves, hemming, and much more. Each lesson builds upon the skills learned in the previous lesson. Projects include a pony tail scrunchie, a digital music player carrier, a drawstring backpack, a secret pocket pillow, and an apron.

*Annie's, 32 pages, color photos and illustrations, soft cover, ISBN 978-1-59217-390-7, \$7.95*

## **SHORT STUFF**

### **Design-A-Pillow Contest**

Haan Crafts is sponsoring a contest for students enrolled in Family and Consumer Education in grades 6–12. They are looking for pillow designs that they don't currently offer. The entry should be a design of the finished pillow. It can be hand-drawn or computer-generated, and in color, but must be the original work of the entrant. One or more pillows will be selected, developed, and sold in the 2013/2014 Haan Crafts catalog. Grand prize is a \$100 Haan Crafts gift certificate; honorable mentions will each receive a \$50 Haan Crafts gift certificate. Deadline to enter is February 15, 2013.

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