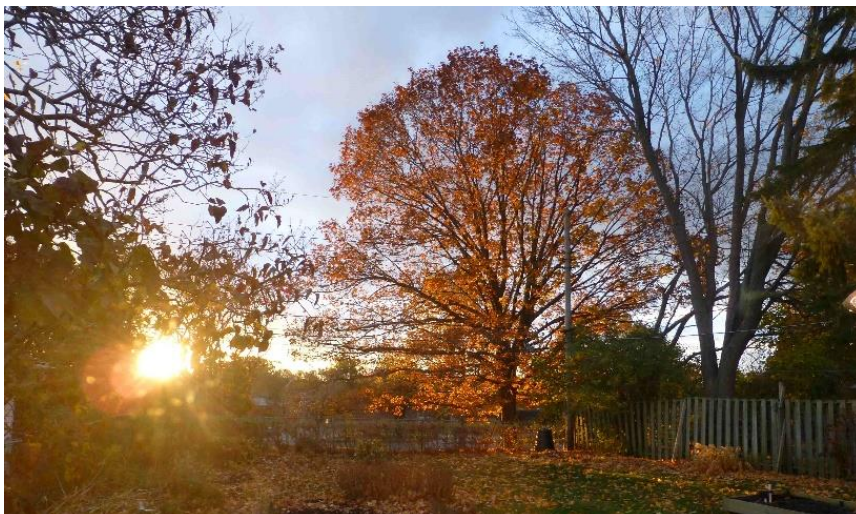


## President's Message

The temperature is dropping as I write this, dropping into negative double digits! Winter is here, fighting, telling the fall to go away. I hope the fall can hear my whispers ... "Stay, stay as long as you want, fall!" The leaves were certainly beautiful this year.

Talking about leaves – we have all been stitching leaves this fall with our Learn-A-Stitch project. Our projects are as varied in placement as they are in size. You name it, and someone is probably doing it. They are stitched in different fabrics, wools and/or threads, and in many techniques. We've learnt how to shade our leaves, colour them with beads, use bullion knots, and incorporate other surface stitches like the buttonhole stitch. And then we were shown Crewel Leaves, which included a variety of stitches including chain, detached chains, backstitch, blanket



### Gilding the Needle

VOLUME 23 Issue 2,  
WINTER, 2024

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stitches, whipped stitches, and the trellis stitch, to name a few. So many ways to depict a leaf! I hope you've been having as much fun as I have. I know a few members were reluctant to begin in September and now can hardly wait to work on their piece.

And there is more coming in the New Year. We expect the 2025 offerings to be even more exciting than what we've done. So be sure to start another project if yours is almost done.



Don't forget to read the reviews of some of our members' fav books. Beth M has also written an interesting article on diopters. What's that, you say, and what does it have to do with embroidery? Have we got your attention? Read on to find out!

And I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and all the Best in the New Year! To those celebrating in other ways, I say Happy Holidays! I look forward to seeing you all at our Christmas Potluck, that is also a Holiday Potluck!

Let's go stitch!

*Donna*

EAC/ACB's Annual General Meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2025 via Zoom at noon our time. All members can attend, learn what others are concerned about, and have a say. You do have to register; a notice and a link for registration will be e-mailed to all members in January.



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**CGNA Administrative Committee 2024 - 25**

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*Vice-President:* Katherine/Diane R.  
*Past President:* Diane D.  
*Secretary:* Kristeen/ Beth A.  
*Treasurer:* Lyn M.

**Standing Committee Chairs**  
*Programme:* Anajli  
*Communications:* Beth M.  
*Library:* Ellen, Mary Ann  
*Hospitality:* Nancy/Janet/Francine  
*Membership:* Lynn P.  
*Special Events:* Tina, Ruth Ann

## CGNA's Workshop at the Library

*Katherine*

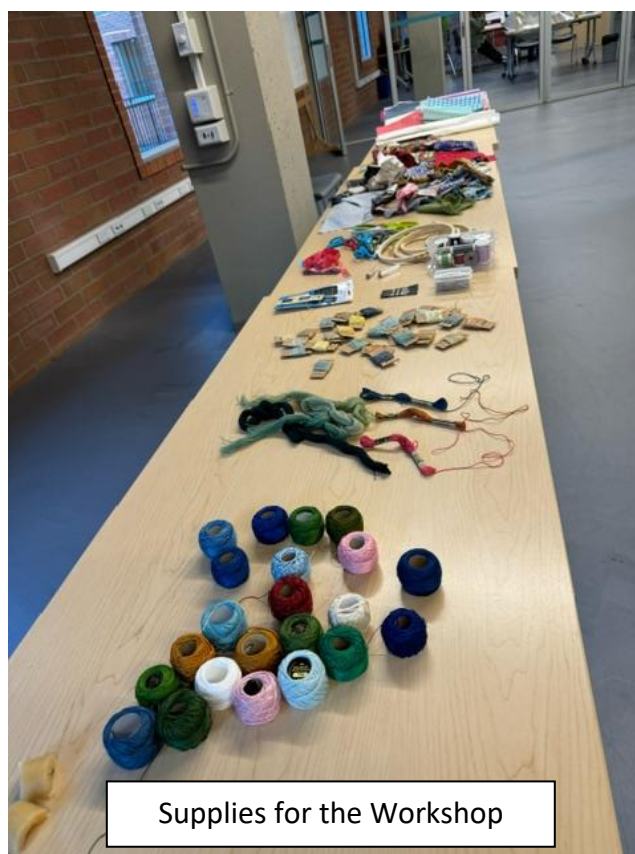


Creative Mending Samples

On October 10, Anjali and I conducted a "Creative Mending and Upcycling" workshop at the Central Branch of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library. We focused on the mending and upcycling that can be done with simple running stitches, the kind of work that is inspired by the Kantha, Boro, and Sashiko traditions. Sometimes running stitches alone can provide the reinforcement needed on thinning fabric, and for more serious mending needs (rips and holes), running stitches hold patches to the garment.

Upcycling fabric pieces into new fabric simply requires stitching a layer of them onto a base fabric (usually creating a thick, sturdy fabric, good for bags or jackets).

We had five participants, all with different kinds of sewing experience. A number of samples were displayed (thank you, Diane R, for your jean manifesto!), showing the real range of stitches possible--long and short, organic or geometric, thin, thick. Everyone seemed to enjoy the stitching. At the end of the session, there was some talk of possible ways that mending could continue to be a practice taught through the library. People were also interested in learning more types of mending, including darning. This might be one of a range of ways we connect with the public in the future. Mending (creative, visible, embroidered mending as well as traditional mending) might be one way for us to continue to share our needle arts with public groups.



Supplies for the Workshop

Word seems to be getting around! At our Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, a gentleman wandered in with a beloved jacket that had acquired a couple of small holes from flying ashes. He didn't want them covered with stumpwork butterflies – he just wanted to hire someone to do some invisible mending, and someone had suggested that he try us. Diane D. cadged a spool of black thread from Lyn and went to work pulling the edges of the holes together and weaving a few strands to cover the holes. He did seem immensely pleased with the result!

## EAC/ACB Speaker Events

*Kristeen*

### October: Narrative Embroidery

The topic for the October EAC/ACB Speaker Series was Narrative Embroidery by Rosemary Marchand. I was not sure exactly what "narrative embroidery" was. Rosemary told us that several projects that we refer to as tapestries, such as the Bayeux Tapestry, are in fact not actual "tapestries". A tapestry is woven not stitched. Hence, the name "narrative embroidery" is used to cover pictorial story-telling. Narrative embroideries usually have some historical content.



Rosemary divided narrative embroideries into nine categories, including war, places, a person, celebration, and travel. Some embroideries fall into more than one category, such as the Toronto embroidery to celebrate a Toronto anniversary. She provided pictures as examples in each of her categories, including, if available, Canadian examples. She also divided the embroideries by size (five categories including "like a movie", separate panels, large/small panels, and on clothing), again with examples.

Rosemary mentioned the Quilt of Belonging which was worked on by some quilters and embroiderers from the Kingston area. The EAC/ACB panels created for Canada's 150th anniversary were brought to her attention. Parts of these two panels were stitched by CGNA members.

It was a very informative and interesting talk by a very knowledgeable speaker.



### November: How to Approach Korean Embroidery

I had registered for "Introduction to Korean Embroidery" but when the talk was actually delivered, it was called "How to Approach Korean Embroidery". Heehwa Jo is a professional embroiderer originally from Korea but now living and working in England. In Korea she had a studio where she could also teach embroidery but in England she is not able to do much teaching. She is not particularly fond of stitch samplers so instead she created a scene with about 20 stitches which she would teach when she worked in Korea. There was no mention of the possibility of online classes. Most of her embroidery is done with silk cloth and silk threads, a bit stiffer than what we can get here. Usually Korean

manufacturers/retail outlets are not willing to ship to Canada because of the high shipping costs. No wool was used in traditional Korean embroidery and no cotton threads although cotton threads are used in some Korean embroidery presently.



*Baegaet Ma, Pillow End*

There is a long history of embroidery in Korea. Embroidery was probably brought to Korea through India and China.

Heewha looks at embroidery from four different aspects. Except for the first category, most of her examples were Korean museum pieces. She made comparisons noting similarities and differences. In her talk she compared embroidery from the East and West; from an Arts versus a Craft perspective; Hand versus Machine embroidery; and, lastly, Meticulous versus Carefree. Some of her comparisons were surprising to me. In the last category, she compared badges that civil servants used to wear on their clothing to denote position. There was a beautiful photo of a badge done by a very meticulous stitcher and then another one not done by a professional. Heewha explained that she actually preferred the more carefree badge

because of the exuberance of the colour scheme.

It was not until the question-and-answer section that we actually got to see some of her own beautiful stitching, which combines traditional Korean embroidery with more innovative stitching.

Another fascinating talk about embroidery offered for free as part of our membership.

The next EAC/ACB Speaker Series talk will be held on February 22, 2025. The topic is Embroidery on Cosplay by Maral Agnerian. Maral is a Canadian costumer. I had to look up "cosplay": It is a blend of costume and play. According to one computer definition, it is "the practice of dressing up as a character from a movie, book or video game."

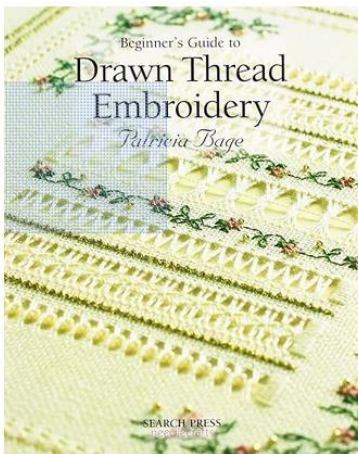
## Library Book Review:

### The Books that We Couldn't Let Get Away

CGNA boasts an impressive library, but almost all of our members also maintain their own personal collections of books. Moreover, sometimes a member purchases a book even though she knows that a copy already exists in the CGNA cupboard. Surely we don't really worry that we might need that book at 3 a.m. some day and just can't wait for a guild meeting? So why do we choose to spend funds in this way? Here are reviews of three books by members whom I know have indulged themselves this way.

#### Beginner's Guide to Drawn Thread Embroidery (by Patricia Bage)

*Leola*

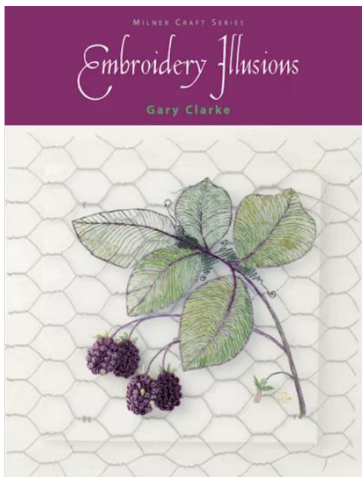


This 64-page book has large diagrams showing each step involved in cutting threads and completing basic drawn-thread embroidery stitches. The first 40 pages contain reference material, and the last section includes complete directions for four projects.

I purchased the book in the fall of 2017, at the same time as the guild were practising drawn-thread work for Learn-A-Stitch. (Donna and Beth M. also bought copies.) I had completed Teresa Wentzler's "English Garden Sampler" with a coral knot border that spring and was intrigued by other Teresa Wentzler patterns which incorporated drawn-thread elements. Upon receiving the book, I completed the "Rosebud Trellis" sampler, p. 58-63, to hone my technique. This book was especially useful in completing several other projects during the Covid lockdowns.

#### Embroidery Illusions (by Gary Clarke)

*Diane R.*



Gary Clarke has perfected a two-layer approach to creating needlework that really is intriguing.

The bottom layer can be made with a solid colour of fabric, a water-colour, a favorite print or even an old piece of needlework or lace which has been stretched over foam core.

The top layer is organza, preferably silk, which has been embroidered with a complementary image using very basic stitches. The running stitch, satin stitch, and French knots are just a few. Because organza is sheer, both the front and back of the embroidery show at the same time. The result is a piece of work that relies on the shadows created. Finishing is done by

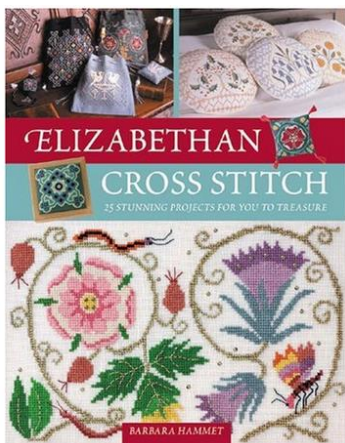
stretching the organza on a frame the same size as the background. Both pieces are mounted, one on top of the other, for a very interesting, subtle, three-dimensional effect.

I found some of the directions in the book a bit difficult to understand, so ended up doing a bit of trial-and-error. It was worth the bother. I'm definitely using this process in an upcoming show.

## Elizabethan Cross-Stitch (by Barbara Hammet)

*Beth M.*

One of the perks of being librarian is the opportunity – nay, the obligation – to peruse each of the books in the CGNA library. We possess three of Barbara Hammet's cross-stitch collections, each including a series of designs related to a given theme or style. Elizabethan Cross Stitch has so many designs that appealed to me that I felt I had to invest in my own copy. For example, there's a stunning tree of life, a fruit-and-floral bellpull/cushion, and a sampler that includes striking blackwork and whitework bands as well as cross-stitch motifs and an alphabet. I can also see myself using several of the small designs in the "Motif Library". But, oddly enough, the pattern from this book that sits highest on my to-do list is not cross-stitch; rather it is the blackwork version of the Tudor Garden Box.



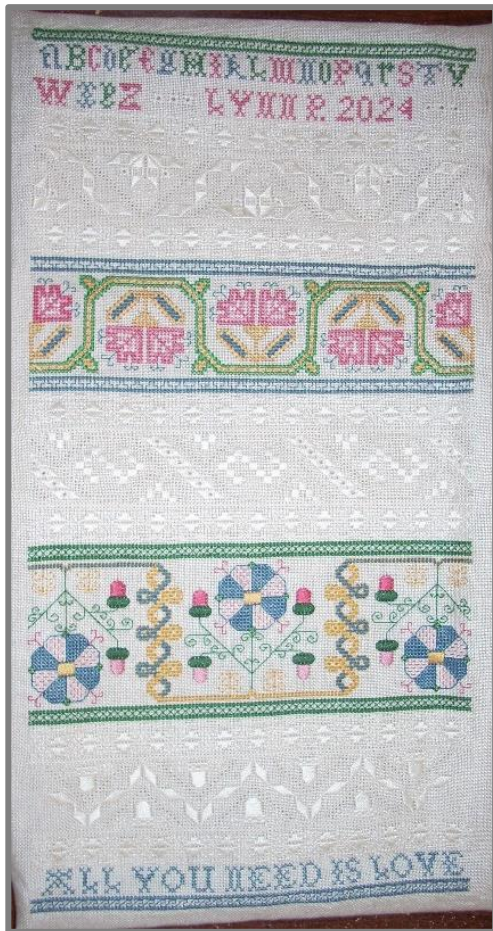
Even if I stitch only a greeting card from this book, the hours I have spent paging through it have given me such pleasure that I consider my purchase of this book to be a good investment.

## Show and Share



Gabrielle has been busy stitching Donna Kooler's flowers-of-the-month series. The flowers are cross-stitched, but require considerable back-stitching to really come alive. Gabrielle noted that it was very satisfying to complete a flower in about 10 hours.

Kooler, of course, designed 12 flowers, but Gabrielle only stitched 11 of them. Kooler's flower for July was larkspur. Gabrielle (who had a July baby) was sure it should be water lily. Out came the graph paper, pencils and eraser. What is most impressive is that Gabrielle's design has captured Kooler's style – her water lily fits in perfectly!



Lynn P. began stitching her exquisite “English Heritage Sampler” (design by D. O’Steen) in our 2023 focus group, but wisely stitched 2024 as the date of completion. The threads are the prescribed silks – the white on off-white must have been quite the challenge! She did change the lettering at the bottom to read, “All you need is love”. I don’t know if this piece is destined for someone she loves, or is a testament to her love of stitching. Maybe both!

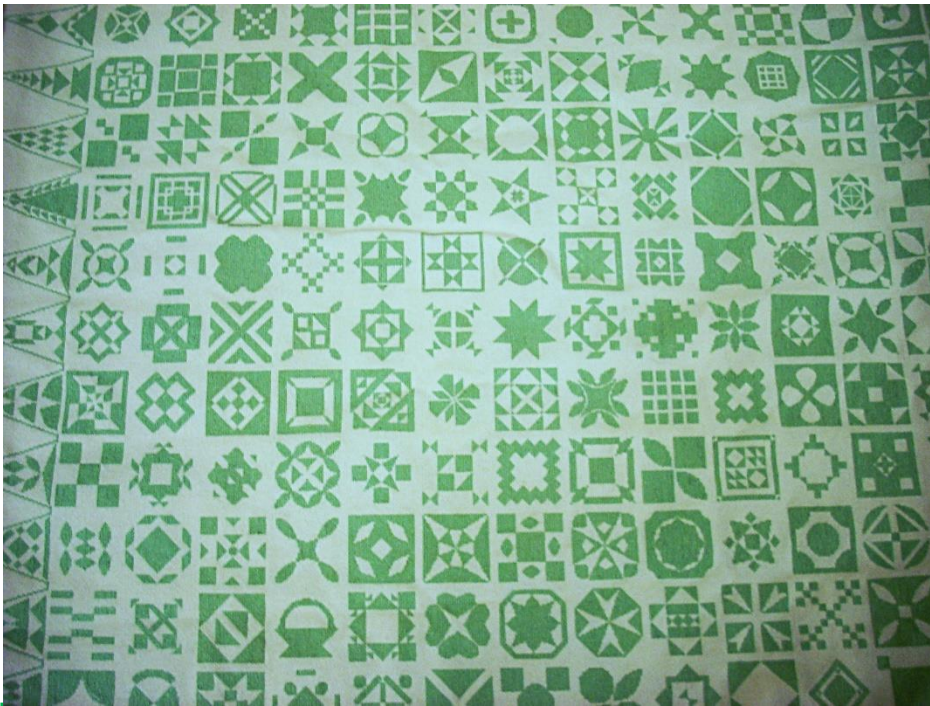
Lynn also completed the delicate mauve mandala shown to the right.



One of our most active and faithful members, Maureen Byer, passed away in Sept., 2017. She left her stitching stash to guild, and we all had a chance to choose a piece or two to remember her by. Anjali chose a Sashiko WIP, which she has now completed with her own stitching. A wonderful way to remember a wonderful friend.



In 2017, our Learn-A-Stitch was drawn-thread work. Donna got interested and bought herself a copy of Patricia Bage’s book – the one reviewed by Leola (page 6). Seven years later, she finished her version of the Rosebud Trellis sampler and was so pleased with it that she entered it in the Kingston Fall Fair. Good idea, Donna – it deservedly took first in the Needlework Wall Hanging category. Donna also won Best Article in Needlework with her Hardanger pillow from the 2021 EAC/ACB online class.



In 2014, Kristeen found the pattern for a cross-stitched version of the Dear Jane quilt (<https://cross-stitch.craftgossip.com/freebie-dear-jane/2014/05/19/>); she began stitching it in 2016. “Dear Jane” is one of the most famous quilts in the world. It was created during the Civil War by Jane Stickle and was a prize-winner at the Bennington County Fair in 1863. It is, periodically, on display at the Bennington Museum in Vermont. There are a number of books and patterns available so that quilters can produce replicas, so perhaps it was only natural that stitchers should get their own version. Kristeen has been plugging away at this, diligently completing the 225 blocks on her own careful time schedule. The finished piece is amazing. Congratulations, Kristeen!!



Kristeen’s blackwork project is based on the same concept as her quilt – a block at a time – but on a much smaller scale!! It was designed by Clare Bradshaw of The Steady Thread and it’s called **100 Days of Tiny 2023**. Kristeen notes that it is really 126 tiny blocks, not 100.



Beth M. couldn’t get to the Quinte Guild’s fabric sale, but placed an order via a friend. When Beth and her chauffeur got to Brighton a week later, her friend had not only her order of half-price fabrics for her, but also these embroidered felt ornaments as a “thank you”. The birds’ crests made from bugle beads are just adorable! That exchange was surely a win-win.



Leola brought in this WIP of Northern Expressions’ **Twisted Sampler** to show us. It is not her stitching, nor her daughter’s; it’s being stitched by Heinz! It seems that the strong hands that can toss lumber about and build CGNA a library cupboard can also wield a needle. The piece is a sampler of counted-thread stitches in rainbow colours, and already Heinz is getting ideas about changing it up with blended threads. Can’t wait to see this one finished!

## Lights and Magnifiers

Beth M.

My grandmother was an expert smocker. When her eyesight started to fail, she invested in a magnifying lamp, a circle of metal with a glass lens surrounded by a tube-shaped incandescent light. It was heavy, awkward, and looked like something from a hospital examining room. And, it kept her smocking well into her nineties. The family – all of us dismally myopic – refer to this style of lamp as a “Grandma Light”. Some Grandma Lights have been kept in repair and passed down through two generations; others are more recent purchases which exploit modern technology.

So, what has my experience taught me about stitching with a magnifying lamp and what advice do I have for stitchers?

**How does magnification work?** Before I offer my view of the current market, there is one caveat: the science of optics has not changed! Magnification is achieved by bending light with a curved lens. Curvature is measured in diopters, with one diopter defined as the amount of curvature required to focus an object at a distance of one meter. The rough formula for degree of magnification is  $(\text{no. of diopters})/4 + 1$ . That is, a 3-diopter lens will blow up images to 175% (slightly less than double) their original size, a 5-diopter lens to 225% (slightly more than double) the original size. You will not find magnifiers stronger than 5 diopters in the hobby market.

I offer two notes of caution related to optics. Although you can find magnifiers which claim “5X” or even “10X” magnification at Amazon or Michael’s, they certainly don’t blow up an image to 5 or 10 times its original size. To get that level of magnification, you’d need a jeweller’s loupe. Labelling in the hobby market appears to be unregulated, so BEWARE. Secondly, you wouldn’t want that level of magnification even if you could get it. As the strength of magnification increases, the distance from the lens to the point of focus decreases. Massive magnification would require holding the embroidery work less than an inch from the (very thick) lens. And the enlarged area would be pathetically small. You could see it, but you couldn’t work on it.

**What are modern magnifiers made of?** Many of us are old enough to remember when eyeglasses were made of glass. Only football players wore glasses with plastic lenses, the lower risk of injury outweighing the blurry vision. The last few decades have seen an enormous development in the manufacture of acrylics. Today, virtually all eyewear is acrylic. Acrylics don’t shatter like glass (a safety feature), they are no longer grossly thick, and they are much, much lighter than glass (a comfort feature). So, it is not surprising that modern magnifiers are frequently acrylic. But, remember that acrylics vary in quality. The \$8 plastic magnifier that you buy in the dollar store will offer a misty and distorted view. Glass remains the gold standard.

**LED Lights.** The development of LED lights has swept the market. I don’t think you can buy a new magnifier-light these days that doesn’t use LEDs. LEDs are cool, long-lasting, dimmable, and easily adjusted for colour temperature. LED lights require so little energy that they are easily powered by a battery (or a computer). That makes devices with LEDs very portable – you can take your light to a class

or a stitch-in without dragging along an extension cord (remembering that cords are sometimes banned because they create a tripping hazard).

**“Wearable” magnifiers.** The use of acrylic lenses and battery-operated LEDs has encouraged the popularity of devices that can be worn. A very old style of a wearable magnifier is one that hangs from a cord around your neck. I find these hard to position; once positioned, they have a tendency to wiggle around and unposition themselves. I have never seen anyone stitch for any length of time with such a device, but they’re so inexpensive that you might want to try one out.

By contrast, one can buy magnifiers that clip onto your regular (or reading) glasses. These range from plastic gadgets available in hobby stores to high-quality lenses dispensed and fitted by opticians. I have one that gives excellent magnification, but my hands need to be so close to my nose that it isn’t really comfortable for stitching. (You might need a lower level of magnification and not find this to be a problem.) I do like this particular device for machine sewing, so it was not a bad investment.



Headbands with lenses are probably the most popular style of wearable magnifier. The range in quality is immense – from dollar store acrylics to devices with lights and exchangeable lenses. Optical quality improves with price. Lee Valley are a local outlet where you can purchase an excellent version of this device. I have never figured out why I don’t use mine more frequently, although it can get rather heavy.

My “snake” is one of my favourite “wearables”. It is a coil of tubing with a flashlight at one end and a lit magnifier at the other, both battery-powered. The coil works like a gooseneck lamp, so I can drape this device around my neck and shoulders and get it really comfortable. My snake has a rather small, low-powered magnifying lens, so it’s not great for stitching, but it’s lovely for teaching and getting a close-up look at other people’s work.

**Table and Floor Lamps.** Although wearables are great for stitching in social situations, most of us crave a mag-light that will allow us to sit in a comfy chair and stitch for hours at a stretch. That means a Grandma Light – the design of a circular lens surrounded by light has not been bested, though the lights are now rings of LEDs. (Lamps with a light and a magnifier on different goosenecks seem promising, but I find them surprisingly difficult to position – I keep seeing the reflection of my face in the lens, instead of my embroidery.) Grandma Lights can be mounted on a base that sits on the table, or on the floor, or into a clamp. Many manufacturers offer this as an option: the lamp comes with alternate ways of mounting.

Two “modern” features deserve note. The first is that most modern lights include a flip-down cover. This is not just a dust cover, it is a sunlight cover. Magnifiers can and do start fires. If your magnifier doesn’t have a cover, make or find one for it. My snake lives in an old oven mitt. Secondly, many lenses now incorporate a high-powered “spot lens” – a circle less than an inch across containing a magnifier of around 12 diopters. I think these are great, not just for threading needles, but for trouble-shooting. Others dislike them, finding they clutter the visual field and are always just where you don’t want them.

I have several magnifier table lamps about the house – necessary for reading instructions, recipes, laundry tags and the like. The only one that I consistently use for stitching is the Daylight (Halo Go) model which I bring to guild meetings. It was purchased from Kim Mather (Kimat Designs) at our last fair, and, without it, I would have given up coming to guild. It is extraordinarily easy to manipulate – it flexes into any posture you need without toppling over. The optical quality of the lens is high. The light is bright but a less bright setting is available. And, best of all, it runs off a rechargeable battery. (It is, of course, more than four times the price of Lee Valley’s quite excellent magnifying table lamp.)



After a couple of hours of stitching with the Halo Go at guild, I can't wait to get home and do some REAL stitching under my floor model Grandma Light. It was made by Dainolite (based in Montreal) and purchased through the C.N.I.B. about 30 years ago. It came with a 5-diopter lens; when I realized I might need more magnification, I purchased an auxiliary 8-diopter lens that can be clipped on as needed. Unfortunately, I don't know of anyone who currently offers such auxiliary lenses. I stitch in a recliner chair, elbows on the arms of the chair, lighted lens in front of my face, hands just behind the lens. It's a posture that's easy on the back and shoulders as well as the eyes. I can literally stay there for hours at a stretch, and I get up not because I'm tired but because there is something else I have to do.

A Grandma Light like mine is a big investment. I paid over \$200 for it 30 years ago, with an additional \$80 for the second lens. This week, I browsed the internet in search of modern equivalents. They are not sold in hobby stores – they are high precision devices, intended for (1) low-vision patients and (2) professionals in microelectronics, gemology, surgery, dentistry, and the like. They may look the same as the Ott-lites and Daylight models, but the lenses are much higher in quality. (Think of how precise the grinding of lenses for eyeglasses is – that's the level we're talking about here.) So far, I have found an 11-diopter Dazor, priced at \$728.00 U.S. I have already been told that anyone who needs that much help with vision in order to stitch should find a different hobby. I'd rather find another lamp. And, if one is vigilant and very, very lucky, sometimes one does find one in a garage or estate sale. Watch for the brands Dainolite, Dazor, Luxo, and Eschenbach.

**Test Drive.** With all of the options involved in modern mag-lights, you clearly need to try it out before making a major purchase. Thirty years ago, that was the practice at C.N.I.B, but it's hard to get a loaner from any commercial establishment. You might have to borrow a friend's device for a couple of weeks. (I have loaned out lamps to a couple of guild members, one of whom suggested that I write this article.) And, don't expect it to transform your stitching experience the first time you use it. New glasses often require a few days of adaptation; these lenses are the same. Experiment with different postures and settings and learn what it can and can't do for you. I am surprised by how few people use magnifiers at guild; I fear it's because they haven't taken the time to learn how to get the benefits of one. A magnifying light can't fix your failing eyesight, but it might let you keep on stitching. I intend to be using mine into my nineties!

## Dec. 10: Party Day!!!

After our regular business meeting and coffee break (coffee is FREE on party day!), we will have a visit via Zoom with EAC's Chapter Director, Cynthia MacDougall and EAC's president, Terri Briggs. They will be discussing what EAC offers us. You can submit your questions to Donna beforehand, but microphones will be set up so that you can also ask questions directly in the meeting.

Potluck Lunch – Dec. 10 will be the occasion for our first full potluck lunch since we moved to St. John's Church. Please bring a dish to share, along with your own plate, cutlery, dessert plate and mug. Nancy will be mixing up a batch of CGNA punch. Please be respectful of kitchen space – expect to be taking home leftovers, dirty dishes, etc.

In the afternoon, we will re-convene for our Town Hall Meeting. The morning's contact with EAC personnel is likely to lead to ideas, questions, and opinions – this is your chance to air these. We hope for a thoughtful and amiable discussion of what our guild can and should be.

Then, PLAYTIME! If you want to participate, bring an item for the gift exchange – Something Small and Silly! Katherine will be organizing the game. Come dressed in a Fashion that's Fun and Festive!

We will also be collecting donations (cash and non-perishable food items) for the church's basket for the local food bank.

## Learn-A-Stitch Leaves



Tricia is the first to finish her leafy project – a “mug mat” – with six leaves in different styles of embroidery

### LAS Teaching Schedule Winter, 2025

Jan 14	Kim H
Jan 28	Donna H
Feb 11	Ros H
Feb 25	Anjali S

In the winter of 2025, we will continue with our “Leaves” projects. A new stitch, suitable for including on a leaf, will be taught each meeting, according to the schedule on the left.



On the leaves of my Learn-a-Stitch, there will have to be:

- 12 lazy daisies
- 11 Smyrna crosses
- 10 lines of couching
- 9 satin stitches
- 8 diamond eyelets
- 7 bullion picots
- 6 bands of lattice
- 5 Kloster blocks
- 4 woven wheels
- 3 French knots
- 2 Rhodes hearts
- On the boughs of a back-stitched oak tree.