President's Corner

This year my summer kicked off with a mid May trip to South Dakota for my niece’s high school graduation. My husband and I decided to stay at a nearby state park and take a few extra days enjoying the solitude of the early camping season. I enjoyed my first cooked-over-the-fire hot dog chased with a s'more, took leisurely walks with the dogs, went bike riding, and did a bit of fishing from shore.

Although the fact there was no WiFi in the state park was at first frustrating for me, I quickly found peace in the inability to be constantly checking emails and the internet. Looking out over a serene lake at sunset made me slow my thoughts and recharge my too busy brain. The isolation was as much mental as physical, and the warming rays and lapping waves were so relaxing that I forgot about every one of my concerns, that I hadn’t yet come up with a topic for my next president’s message, laundry to fold, meals to plan, bills to pay, or even the Thread's Challenge to work on.

Bridal and prom season can be a very hectic time of year for many in our membership. Dealing with the highly charged emotions of the bridal party with all of the time constraints placed, along with challenging fitting issues, can bring the most experienced professional to their knees! Via the ASDP discuss list, our members have helped one another through many of these challenges. I often find myself making mental
notes from the discuss list for future client requests that I know I will encounter.

By the time you read this, you will have had the opportunity to read the ASDP’s 21st Annual Educational Conference “Stitched Together Through Time” registration brochure. As usual, choices in classes and activities are varied, and will keep you very busy when you attend. “Brain overload” is a term often heard in members’ conversations by the end of conference, but this too is a type of recharging relaxation from the normal routine.

I hope that you’ve carved out a little time during this fast-fleeting summer to enjoy the season’s meditative bliss. A couple more camping trips are in my plans; perhaps I will find the time for the luxury of reading a book. Although business is often on my mind, I know that Mother Nature will serve me well with relaxation and inspiration! Sit back, relax, and enjoy what our members have written in this issue of Perspectives.

Conference!

I hope that you have had plenty of time during the month of June to peruse our brochure of our 21st Annual Conference.

As you know, each year we offer to our members an Early Bird price provided you register for conference by July 15 and I hope you have taken advantage of that already. You should also be aware that members have exclusive opportunity to register until July 31st. After that we open registration to non-members. We have no closing date for conference this year. Provided there is still space in a class (we accept a maximum of 20 per class) you may register right up until the class begins. However, we will close each class as it reaches its maximum number of attendees and we also reserve the right to cancel classes that do not reach a minimum of 12 by September 10th.

There seems to have been some confusion about what the core conference cost covers, the duration of a master class and the possibility of registering for a master class as well as the Thursday Tour. For those of us who have attended conference in the past this is probably not too confusing. If you are a new member or this is your first time to attend conference, I must apologize that I did not make this all clearer. So, to be sure that everyone understands I am writing this addendum.

Each master class is 2 days long, that is it will begin Wednesday morning and finish Thursday afternoon. If you register for a master class you will not be able to also register for the Thursday Tour.

The cost of core conference includes a one day class on Friday, 2 half day classes on Saturday and 2 half day classes on Sunday, as well as the Welcome Reception, the Keynote Speaker Luncheon, the Fashion Show, the Champagne Reception, the Banquet, the Annual Meeting Breakfast and the Last Hoorah Afternoon Tea.

You should only buy individual event tickets if you are bringing a friend with you.

Karen Gay and I are very excited about this year’s conference in Philadelphia and can’t wait to see you!!

If you have any questions please email us at conference@sewingprofessionals.org
Enrich Your Sewing and Design Education: “Stitched Together Through Time” Conference Classes

Each year it has been my priority to seek out highly talented and effective conference instructors to teach courses at our national conference in order to enrich our members’ sewing and design education, and this year is no exception! Keeping in mind member suggestions, instructor and topic requests, as well as the educational needs of members participating in affiliated certificate programs, ASDP members have a wide variety of courses to choose from while at conference in the historical city of Philadelphia. So what do you want to learn?

Are you challenged by fitting, alterations, or pattern making? The 10 Most Common Pants Fitting Issues, Alterations for Professionals, Pattern Theory, The Perfect Sleeve, and Personalized Dress Form will give you the insight and tools for success. Does your business need some maintenance or polishing? Creating a Budget, You Really are in Sales, Quick Book, and Preventing your Business from Stagnating may be the help you need for your business to revitalize, thrive, and grow. Want to feed your need for creativity? Consider Sassy Straws Symposium, Luscious Layers Silk Purse, Fashion Illustration, Haute Couture Surfaces, and Beadwork Basics with a Bend—the course titles alone promise an educational journey of epic creative proportions!

But, our course options don’t end there! Interested in aesthetics and image management? Try Sewing with Style Certainty or Achieving your Professional Image to assist with yours and your clients’ appearance and image challenges. Need fresh sewing techniques? Why not try Set-In Sleeves and Mitered Vents, Cutting Couture: Triangle Bound Buttonholes, Industrial Shortcuts, and Collars and Lapels—A New Twist on Tailoring? Or, are you ready to move your sewing and design business to the next level? Growing your Business through New Markets—International Sales, From Conception to Production, and Video Clips for your Business just may ignite the spark to propel you into the next chapter of your professional career.

With so many incredible course choices, the biggest challenge will be to choose! Courses fill fast so don’t wait or you may miss out on THE class you’ve been waiting for. Conference registration began July 1, so take stock of your educational needs and make your choices now!

Fashion Show Volunteers Needed

The ASDP 2014 Conference being held in Philly is just around the corner! We will be meeting up with old friends and making new ones and expanding our sewing knowledge by attending classes. Some will be participating in both the fashion show and the Threads Challenge, while others will choose one or the other to participate in. This year’s challenge is the “Power Suit,” and I can’t wait to see what it brings.

Every year I am more and more impressed with the talent, imagination, creativity, and fabrics along with everything else the fashion show brings forth for us to see and get inspired. Some members who participate in the fashion show can think way outside of the box while others members focus on perfect construction. It is always fascinating either way!

Now, that being said, there is a lot of planning and work behind the scenes to run a fashion show, but for me it is also fun chaos! We will need:

- 5-6 dressers who help the models get ready to walk down the cat walk
- A person who will line up the models in order
- Two people to help models enter and exit off the runway
- Someone to contact the models
- And there is the planning of the lineup to make sure models have enough time between each dress change

I will be contacting members and asking them to volunteer for the positions needed, or you can contact me and tell ME where YOU would like to volunteer! Even if you did not participate in the Threads Challenge, you can volunteer for the fashion show!
Challenge, we are always looking for garments to be entered in the General Entry category. We would love to see Dresses, pant suits, lingerie, skirts or special occasion.

Every one of us and the general public are eager to see what talent our members have. Sew, there is still time to get inspired; go through your sewing stash or head to the fabric store, get the machine running top notch, pull out that magic wand to create a garment for the General Entry part of the show!

See you in Philly!
Robin Kunzer

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**Custom-Made Chinese Scam**

Terrible fabric, roller coaster seam lines, heavy nylon underlining, uneven hemlines, gowns that look nothing like the picture, and it doesn’t come even remotely close to fitting. Sound familiar? Those of us who do alterations have no doubt seen dozens of these “custom made” online-order dresses. Everything from prom dresses to bridesmaid’s dresses and even wedding gowns. The online, overseas companies who specialize in these scams have created an epidemic of cheap, ill-fitting formalwear and they are preying on our unsuspecting clientele, who think they’re getting a great deal on a dress. Weddings and other formal events, such as proms, are expensive and in our price-slashing society, “She who saves the most on her dress, wins.”

With the rise of online commerce, more often than not, consumers are turning to the internet to try and save money for their big day. Girls surf Etsy, Ebay, and similar sites looking for an affordable dream dress. They are lured in by high quality runway and model images from companies that appear legitimate. Unfortunately, many of these overseas companies, predominantly in China, have picked up on the e-commerce trend and have jumped on the formalwear bandwagon. They often steal images from designer and custom clothier’s websites, such as what happened to ASDP member Tina Columbo. Much to her dismay, Tina discovered that an online company had stolen an image of a custom christening gown from her website, claimed it as its own work, and created a listing to sell the gown. The listing is still up even though Tina posted a comment on the business’s page to let consumers know that it was a stolen design, though she wasn’t able to do so without first making a purchase. Tina purchased the replica gown (the purple backgrounds are of the copy).
What do consumers get for their “deal”? Measurements (usually only bust, waist, and hip) are sent in with color and details selected. Then the waiting begins. Typically arriving several weeks after the promised shipping date, the gown (if you can call it that) arrives wadded up in a small plastic shipping bag, wrinkled beyond belief and often smelling so strongly of plastic that it must be aired out before being approached. The materials used can usually be described as feeling and looking like garbage bags, bed sheets, nylon backpacks, or dirty sponges. These dresses often weigh far more than a dress of the style has any right to weigh. No matter how perfect (or at least passable) a seamstress can get the fit, there is no changing the cheapness of the materials routinely used by these companies. In the best scenarios, the straps don’t fit or the wavy bagged hem isn’t the right length. More often than not, the dress will require more in alterations than the original purchase price, assuming it was the right color and style to begin with.

One of the most widely known scam companies is IZIDRESS, which has been the topic of multiple news reports on CBS, the Today Show and Good Morning America and others. Companies like InternationalOwnership.com have created Facebook pages such as IZIDRESS Victims to help spread the word about copyright infringement and counterfeit dresses and to help shut down these companies. As word gets out, the scammers change tactics. Many consumers now know to avoid websites from China. Unfortunately, these dress websites simply put up a new page listing a US address, typically in Washington or Oregon and then route the dress through that address. This is so the customer sees a US shipping label and feels more confident in their purchase, new address, and same problems.

Sadly, it may not even be salvageable and these companies certainly don’t accept returns, give refunds, correct ill fit, or replace damaged or incorrect orders.

Although the rise of these atrocities guarantees alterationists job security, there is a real danger to the field and the reputation of legitimate custom clothiers, such as many of our members. If the only experience a girl ever had with a custom gown was a hack job of a prom dress that looked nothing like what she ordered and felt like a chiffon straight jacket lined in Kevlar, what is the likelihood that she would be willing to trust her local seamstress or tailor to make her a custom wedding gown? Probably not particularly high. She’s far more likely to go to a big box bridal store where she can try on a physical dress and (at least she thinks) get a guarantee that she will be getting exactly what she sees and knows it will fit.
The American Bridal and Prom Industry Association (ABPIA) has successfully helped shut down thousands of these websites. While they’ve made great progress, uninformed consumers are still at risk.

That’s where the ASDP membership comes in. Talk to your customers, post to your Facebook page, and refer the public to the ASDP website for the standards of quality that our members follow. Consumers continue to fall victim to these scams because they don’t know any better and are simply trying to find a deal. It’s the ASDP’s obligation to help educate the consumer on the importance of knowing where their purchases come from and the value of the work that our members do.

Tina’s photos: Gail Barley (client) // Chinese: Tom Colombo

MSDP’s Newest Graduate--
Barbie McCormick

Barbie started sewing her freshman year in high school, and found she had inherited a knack for dressmaking from her mother and grandmother. After sewing for herself, her family, and her friends for several years, she started a job doing alterations on an army post, then moved to doing alterations for Macy’s in California.

Barbie moved to Idaho and officially opened her business, aptly named “Sew Good” in January of 1994, and in 1996 she became a member of the Professional Association of Custom Clothiers (now called The Association of Sewing and Design Professionals).

She has attended the yearly ASDP conferences to learn different and the latest techniques in her field and takes classes whenever she can to further her sewing abilities. She studied with Kenneth King of San Francisco/New York to learn European pattern drafting and fitting, with Sandra Ericson to learn Madeleine Vionnet methods, as well as designing techniques, with Claire Shaeffer for couture techniques, Susan Khalje of Baltimore to further enhance her couture clothing construction knowledge.

She even attended Susan’s “Couture Tour” of Paris, where she spent 11 days in Paris learning pattern draping and couture embroidery techniques.

While Barbie does all sorts of sewing, she specializes in formal, bridal, and couture clothing for both men and women. She loves all aspects of the process—from design, to pattern work, to fitting, construction, and the final details. She is truly a Jack-Of-All-Trades in sewing, and is now officially a Master of All!

Barbie also is at the beck and call of Sew Boise to teach any advanced sewing classes that they wish to offer, including French designer jackets, tailored jackets, pattern drafting, pants fitting/construction, and corsets!

Barbie lives in Nampa, Idaho with her two daughters, Jessica and Alyssa, and their two dogs, Sam and Jack.
Denise Liss - Website Management

...of D’Lissious Designs began sewing at the age of 10 in her Girl Scout troop. By the time she reached high school, she was creating garments for others by making costumes for the drama department.

Now, since fashionable clothing for women under 5’4” was (and still is) difficult to find, she decided to design cocktail dresses that actually fit them. Not really following fashion, she prefers to create it, or embellish upon what is currently out there. Some designs that we see in the stores today are designs that Denise did last year or the year before. Since she also works for a law firm during the day, much of her time is not her own. Lately it has meant that most of her business is spent doing alterations. But for her, it’s a way to get her hands on some gorgeous gowns! She loves this life.

Linda McCoy - Membership

...has had a lifelong interest in sewing and creative activities. Excited about starting something from nothing, and turning her creative abilities into a job, she’s launched three businesses at different times over the past 30 years including a retail store, a gift basket company, and most recently Snips, a custom sewing and alterations business. In conjunction with Snips, she has designed projects and written instructions for sewing publications and done product demonstration at trade events.

Linda has studied commercial art and graphic design, patternmaking, and sewing techniques with many well-known instructors. She serves as membership chair for the ASDP Wisconsin Chapter and as a Board Member/Fundraising/Events Chair for a local non-profit in her area. Linda lives with her family near Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Patricia Brinnon - Education

... has been involved with ASDP since its inception as PACC. She was one of the original founders of the Arizona Chapter. Patti received two certifications in the ‘80s - one from Phoenix Community College in Fashion Design and one from Mesa Community College for Sewing Specialist.

During her long sewing career of over 35 years, Patti has had her own sewing business, Custom Threads, in which she specialized mainly in alterations. She has taught serger classes, worked for House of Fabrics as the manager in the sewing machine department, was in charge of the embroidery department for a commercial embroidery company in Phoenix, and served on the board for the sewing certification program at Phoenix Community College.

In 2007 Patti decided to retire from her business to be with her husband who was serving in the United States Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. In 2012 Patti returned to ASDP Arizona Chapter as a retired member because she wanted to help mentor new and upcoming seamstresses as well as help the organization that she believes helped raise the status of sewing for a career to a professional level.
Vandarra Robbins - Certificate Programs

Vandarra Robbins - Certificate Programs

...is a founding member of the NJ chapter of Association of Sewing and Design Professionals and has served as President, Vice-President and evaluator for the chapter jurying committee. She spent four years as the resident sewing expert “Meg Carter” at McCall Patterns, after which she became the Creative Director at HTC, Inc (formerly Handler Textiles) and Precision Custom Coatings. She has also free lanced for Isaac Mizrahi and been a guest lecturer at FIT.

Vandarra began her business in 1993 teaching, creating custom bridal, and tailoring. In 2012 she decided to concentrate on teaching and has opened Sewphistication at The Couture Hand giving instruction in garment construction and fit. Presently she conducts garment construction and fit workshops to sewing groups in the NY, NJ and PA area.


Sewing Pros pay attention! This book by Linda Przybyszewski is a wonderful history of women and how they dressed themselves and sewed for themselves for the last 125 years. It is getting a lot of national attention with recent reviews in the New York Times, the Boston Globe, The Huffington Post, and Linda’s appearances on national radio shows like the “Dianne Rehm Show” and “Here and Now.” The book cover even features a review by our own Claire Shaeffer.

If you attended the 2011 ASDP National Educational conference in Portland, you heard Linda present excerpts of this book during her Keynote speech. Her enthusiasm for dressing well, and for the creative energy that sewing brings to the art of getting dressed, was evident as she spoke.

In her book, you can read about the history of the Home Economics movement, attitudes about dressing well, dressing for your size and appropriately for each occasion. She sings the praises of the hat in every woman’s wardrobe and laments its death while also making note of how different body types are fashionable in different eras including a discussion of the current obsession with thinness in today’s culture. There is not a topic that she misses, but too many to list in this review.

The author’s lighthearted approach shows a genuine love for the fashionable dress and how it is effected by society in this well researched book. (She is an associate professor of history at the University of Notre Dame). The more you read, the better you will become at discerning where the “history” ends and her “editorial” begins as she walks the reader through the 20th century and its dramatic swings in the economy, style, and culture and how they shaped the dressing habits of American women.

On a personal note, I serve with Linda on the MSDP board and she mentions “Catherine Stephenson of the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals” in her acknowledgements. Plus, my sewing bookshelf holds some of the books and authors she mentions, which I have picked up through the years at antique stores. It now holds this fine book as well.

Buy this through us from Amazon

Just go to the Shopping Affiliates page under Education on our website, and click on any image or the Amazon.com link. It will take you right to your Amazon.com account. We have similar arrangements with Intuit and Jo-Ann’s, too.

Have you used your University of Fashion benefit lately? Haven’t opted in? There’s still an opening for you! Visit http://www.sewingprofessionals.org/special-offers-for-members to enroll in this special program!
San Francisco Chapter Enjoys a Sewing Retreat in the Redwoods
by Christina Cary

Six members of the San Francisco chapter enjoyed the chapter’s first-ever sewing retreat in the beautiful Santa Cruz mountains in early May. The site was Presentation Center in Los Gatos, located amid a redwood forest. Barbara Kelly, Dale Webdale, Loy Tingley, Sylvie Privat, Louise Dunlop, and Christina Cary attended. They relaxed and sewed from Friday afternoon until Sunday in a large meeting room flooded with sunlight that streamed through floor-to-ceiling windows. Members helped each other fit and troubleshoot their various projects while deer and heron walked by. Meals were just a step away because the sewing room was next to the cafeteria. When the group finished sewing for the day, we retired to a private hillside cabin.

Group members shared their expertise as they worked on a variety of projects. Dale chose a classic trench coat design from Marfy patterns and helped Barbara fit a muslin that she created from a princess seamed ready-to-wear jacket. Loy hoped to complete a moulage for both a bodice and pants; she completed the bodice moulage with help fitting the muslin and went home with a better idea of how long creating a moulage takes. Sylvie reshaped and fit the sleeve of a jacket that she had entered in the Threads-ASDP “Inspired Sleeves” challenge and, with some help, hemmed a little black dress to the correct length. In addition to working on several tops to expand her wardrobe, Louise worked on a bias cut summer dress—made in a French lingerie fabric—that had languished in her project pile for some time. Barbara and Dale helped Christina fit a ruched knit top that was ultimately unsuccessful, but a great learning experience.

Our chapter has seen little activity in recent years, so Chapter President Dale Webdale, owner of The Sewing Parlour in San Francisco, intends to revitalize it. This retreat was a first step. At mealtimes, the group brainstormed ideas for interesting sewing-related places the chapter could visit or things they could do, and members volunteered to investigate and make plans.

Dale organized this retreat, publicized it, answered questions, and made the arrangements and reservations. The group enjoyed this peaceful retreat so much that we agreed on a repeat retreat next year. Many thanks to Dale for making a good idea a reality.

Chapter News

Our Chapters have been busy with some fun, inspiring, and educational activities recently. Perhaps unwittingly, there seems to be a vintage theme running through a number of them, in line with the historical theme for conference this year! All Chapters take note – there are lots of good ideas here for future programs.

On May 18, the New Jersey Chapter held a luncheon at a local bakeshop to install new officers. Jil Konopacki is their new President, with current Chapter Rep Lois Anderson adding to her responsibilities as the new First Vice President. As of June 22, however, Gail McLaughlin will be the new Chapter Rep. Following lunch, member Carol O’Brien presented a program featuring her collection of vintage undergarments dating from the Victorian Era to the 1930’s. Carol offered a wealth of knowledge of the customs, mores and technology of that time period, mostly focusing on the Victorian and the Edwardian Eras. Her collection is vast and eclectic and demonstrated to the members a “behind-the-seams” view of what life was like in those times. They got to touch and feel the fabrics and delicate laces that make up the layers-upon-layers that woman wore. Attendees were daunted by the time needed to create and maintain these garments. Some
commented that many of these “undies,” or Naughty Nickers, as Carol calls them, would be suitable for outerwear today! At this luncheon, they also made plans for their Annual Sewing Retreat.

It sounds like sewing retreats are a popular activity for our Chapters. Anyone who has ever been on one will know why! (In the next Perspectives, readers can expect an article on hosting a retreat.)

The Chicago Chapter is planning their annual summer retreat at Gini Lloyd’s cabin in the woods of Michigan at the end of June. Last month they attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s annual fashion show and reported that it was fabulous as usual. Fashion shows are always a great source of inspiration!

The Heartland Chapter is pleased to report that they are active again after a break in regular meetings. They met in March to elect officers and plan future meetings. Joyce Hittesdorf was officially elected President and Chapter Rep and Diane Frewer was renewed as the Treasurer. It was so great to be with local ASDP members again and also to meet and welcome some new members.

Our first outing in April was a great way to get reacquainted. Six of us left very early for a full day of fashion excitement in Chicago. Our first stop was at the Chicago History Museum to see the exhibit, 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair. We enjoyed more than 60 garments from icons of the fashion industry such as Yves St. Laurent, Oscar de la Renta, Pierre Cardin, Christian Lacroix, and others. This exhibit is now closed in Chicago but is touring the nation. We would highly recommend it.

No trip to Chicago would be complete without a stop to shop for fabric. We explored the three floors of Textile Discount Fabric for some time before having a late lunch. Our last event was a special treat as we viewed the inspiring film, Men of the Cloth, by Vicki Vasilopoulos. This was a onetime showing at the Chicago Cultural Center Theater. The documentary film was a portrait of three master tailors.

For our May meeting we met in Carmel, IN with Courtney Bray at Klassical Keys for a relaxing hour of hand/wrist massage. She provides this class for her piano students, other musicians and anyone who uses their hands a lot in their profession. We were all surprised about the many hand issues we were experiencing with our work when we took the time to focus on them, also, how wonderful her exercises made our hands feel! We all were amazed at the results and vowed to remember to continue using these soothing exercises.

In June our group was invited to participate in the Graduates Portfolio Show at the Art Institute of Indianapolis. It is similar to a job fair where the fashion design students display their portfolios and share their accomplishments. We were privileged to meet them, view their work, ask questions about their ideas/designs and hear about their future plans. We were also asked to vote for our favorite and comment on their presentations. It was a great opportunity for those of us who love fashion and sewing to see what influences may be in the future.

The Heartland Chapter is looking forward to a full year of exciting, fun and educational gatherings. One of our sewing social highlights is the pitch-in picnic that we have each August. [Ellen Blacketer]

The Colorado Chapter also had elections in March. In April, Karen Bengtson took over the Presidency again. Other officers elected; were Secretary – Sandi Harmon, Programs – Jan McKinley, Treasurer – Barb Elliott, and Membership – Barb Bock. At the April meeting, Karen challenged the members to finish a garment or make a new one from fabric in their stash. Their June meeting was a challenge to take an “old garment” and redesign it. Yvonne, Jan and Karen took on the challenge. At the July meeting, they will be refining their hand-worked bound buttonholes, and in August, they will be having a field trip to two of their fabric stores. They will be meeting at a new location for a year, starting in September, at Colorado Fabrics, when the new owner will be showing them behind-the-scenes operations of a fabric store.

The last three programs of the Great Plains Chapter have focused on vintage fashions. In April, they attended a fashion show/luncheon. The fashion show featured vintage and new fashions showing the similarities between the two. In May, they attended a program on ‘The Century of Fashion 1870-1970’ presented by Yesterday’s Lady, a vintage shop and museum. This past month, they took a road trip to visit Yesterday’s Lady Museum and had a wonderful time!

At a recent meeting of the Baltimore Chapter, Carey Pumo shared her experience of taking a workshop on patternmaking CAD software program from PWSStudio, with what it can do, particularly as it relates to her bra-making business. In April, Sherry Stauffer showed the members how to copy ready-to-wear with the rubbing-off technique.

Note: Correction to the previous Perspectives – The author of the article on the Shibori program held by the Baltimore Chapter was inadvertently left out. Valencia James, the Program Director for the Chapter, wrote it and supplied the photos. My apologies!
Welcome New Members!

Marcy Tilton
Marcy Tilton.com
Formal Member
Oregon Chapter
Cave Junction, OR

Claudia Arroyo
ClaSha
Formal Member
Elmhurst, IL

Elizabeth Gibson
Friend of ASDP
Baltimore Chapter
Parker, PA

Josie Scantlebury
Friend of ASDP
New Jersey Chapter
E. Orange, NJ

Carrie Jamrogowicz
Ravalli Sew & Sew LLC
Intern Member
Hamilton, MT

James Ford
Fine Line Clothiers
Formal Member
Charlotte, NC

Allyson Vermeulen
By a Thin Thread
Formal Member
Beacon, NY

Paula McKinnis
pMichele by Paula M
Intern Member
Port Murray, NJ

Harris Malkovsky
Nick of Time Textiles
Formal Member
Allentown, PA

Ixchel Carr
The Sewing Room
Formal Member
Eureka, CA

Lynda Hackney
Friend of ASDP
Nanoose Bay, BC Canada

Sandy Cole
Student Member
Douglasville, GA

Susan Kolar
Susan Kolar Couture
Formal Member
New Jersey Chapter
Easton, PA

Anne Page
Student Member
Colorado Chapter
Broomfield, CO

Stephanie Swiger
UniquelyU Patternmaker
Intern Member
Baltimore Chapter
Warfordsburg, PA

Susanne Bonfiglio
Banasch’s, Inc.
Formal Member
Cincinnati, OH

Rhonda Buss
Sewbussted
Formal Member
Chicago Chapter
Chicago, IL

Raphaella Weissgerber
Raphaella’s Dressmaking & Alterations
Intern Member
Vancouver, BC Canada
2014 Membership Challenge
Who Will You Recruit?

When I originally took the position as Vice President of Membership, I did so clarifying to the Board that I would be relying heavily on our members to be “Ambassadors” for ASDP to help with recruitment of new members. I knew going into the position that I’d need all your help as I have my own design business Deb’s Threads, I work professionally in another job, and taking recruitment on is no slight task.

We had a great year in 2013 for recruiting new members and 2014 is shaping up nicely. Once again we are challenging all of our members to help recruit new members to keep ASDP the professional and thriving organization that it is.

Here’s how the Membership Challenge works.

We have two categories:

1) The Chapter that recruits the most members

2) An individual who recruits the most members

I’ve been collecting some fabulous prizes that will be presented at our annual meeting in Philadelphia during conference. The challenge began in November 2013 and runs through the end of September 2014. At that point in time, the numbers will be tallied, so tell your friends, colleagues and neighbors about the fabulous benefits ASDP offers its members.

To whet your appetite just a bit, some of the door prizes we have for the winners this year include:

- Two Threads magazine one-year subscriptions
- Sarah Veblen: Book
- Schmetz Needles gift box
- Haberman Fabrics – three gorgeous pieces
- Susan Khalje: CD
- Carol Kimball: Fashion Sketching for Any Body CD

Many patterns, and oh so much more!

Be sure to let prospective members know that if they join ASDP, to give you credit if you helped recruit them. See you in Philadelphia, and I hope all of our new members can join us so we can put a name with a face and get to know you better.
TechTextile Trade Show (Review)

The TechTextile show is an amazing adventure for anyone in the sewing business. Geared towards the textile industry and all phases of design, development, production and sales, it can be overwhelming. The show, which takes place every other year in the World Congress Center in Atlanta Georgia runs for 3 days. It is filled with educational seminars, demonstrations, and vendors of all kinds. Tickets just to walk the floor are $25.00 (although I found out later there were also some free tickets available). I didn’t attend any of the seminars as they were mostly geared towards the fashion industry, clothing production and the latest technology in fit. I was also in a crunch for time as I had a big hiker festival to attend just a couple of days later.

I had never attended a trade show of this level – the most I can say I’ve been at is Quilt Festival in Houston, and that is geared toward a very different customer / crafter. This show is serious industry. When you arrive to check in, there is a long line of people speaking every language on the planet. There must have been 200 people in front of me, but the line moves very quickly. They scan the bar code on your receipt (mostly on smart phones) and out pops a name badge that has a bar code, so when you approach a vendor and ask for information and a follow up contact, they scan your nametag and get all your contact information.

I first went to the TechTextile show 2 years ago, just before opening my shop. I was astounded by the sheer amount of ‘stuff’ to see. I was also very intimidated, and scared that I had “NEWBIE” written all over my forehead. This year, I felt much more comfortable, like I belonged there; the show was catering to my needs. (I loved it). The show floor is divided into sections – sewing machines in one area, cutting equipment in another. One area was for German companies, one for Italian, and one area for Asian suppliers. One section had composite materials, automotive textiles, aviation related textiles, fire and safety textiles etc. There are vendors for threads – American & Efird, Coats and many others. Fabric mills from all over the world are represented as well as suppliers for hardware – plastic or metal etc.

All of the well-known machine brands are there such as Juki, Brother, Pfaff, and Merrow, but then there are also many knock off brands of machines as well. You can see buttonhole sewing machines, pocket-setting machines, molle webbing tacking machines, welding and bonding machines, automated cutting machines, machines to process your scraps for recycling. You name it – if it’s used in the textile trade, it’s there.

This year, I was interested in looking at sewing machines and have since purchased 2 new Juki 9000B single needle machines for my shop. These are fully computerized, straight stitch, drop feed machines with thread cutters and direct drive motors. The motor is housed inside the machine – so no more clutch motors mounted to the bottom of the table. I chose these machines because they have a larger opening under the head (12 inches vs the standard 8 inches), which will come in handy when working on tents. Another reason I went with Juki’s is because I already have several Juki’s and when it comes time for service and repair, it’s easier to manage spare parts for one brand only.

A number of the vendors I already use were there, people I have only ever talked to by phone or email, so it was really nice to actually meet face to face. I found new sources for some of the materials I use that will save me $0.35/yd. over the current price I pay (I buy this 1000 yds at a time) so, I also found substantial savings. I was able to speak to some of the manufactures of the equipment I already have and ask questions about problems I’ve been having – and was given very easy solutions. I was also NEVER EVER made to feel like I was that Newbie!

Some of the other interesting equipment on display had to do with testing fabrics – pilling machines- A swatch of fabric is placed on a disc, and a little rotating disc on top spins round and round. There was a machine that checked for needles and needle fragments left in finished products. There was one company touting a machine that would ‘weld’ any fabric. They showed a men’s cotton dress shirt - essentially, the seams are fused with a fusible seam tape in a 2-step process and the final seams were rather rigid and thick. I was not terribly impressed with this, though there may be appropriate products for this technology. True fabric welding is used in many waterproof products, but is a process of bonding the two fabrics to each other without a fusible medium. I did see a seam-taping machine – for waterproofing seams (look inside a rain jacket) that is within my price range, and yes, I’m lusting after it.

The best part of the trip was dinner after the show with Kathleen Fasanella of the Fashion Incubator. A number of forum members from her website met for dinner. I know there are several ASDP members that are forum members, and I got to meet Cary Pumo at dinner (well, actually I ran into her and her husband at one of the vendor booths earlier in the day). Networking and personal connections are important in any business, so I was delighted to meet many people I have known ‘on-line’ for a while.
I have a few YouTube video’s to demonstrate some of the amazing equipment that is available.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaOtX1btpUM
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00h9_Zheftl
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMrTUoiow_Y

“Texprocess Americas, formerly SPESA EXPO, is the largest North American trade show displaying Equipment and Technology for the Development, Sourcing and Production of Sewn Products.

Texprocess Americas provides a platform for leading international manufacturers to present their latest machines, plant, processing, IT systems and services for developing textiles and other flexible materials.”

Book Review: The Pink Suit
by Nicole Mary Kelby

November 1963

“There was that odd thing where he seemed to tilt to one side as if to whisper something to her, as lovers often do. Her head turned, the perfect hat still in place, and she, out of instinct, leaned in as if for a kiss.

His face softened. It took her a moment to understand.

It was then that something—gray, dark—tumbled down the back of the limo. She pushed him away and followed after it. Held it in her hands as if it were a broken wing.

The film shows this: the agent jumped onto the 1961 Lincoln and pulled her back into the seat. Unseen are the thirty-six long stemmed roses tumbling to the floor and the agent pushing her on top of her husband and then covering them both with his own body. Heartbeat upon heartbeat. Then silence. It was not a wing at all.

In the chaos of the moment, the agent focused on the suit. He knew she was crushed beneath his weight. He couldn’t help that. He knew her face was pressed into her husband’s. He couldn’t think about that. But he could focus on the pink beneath his body.”

And so begins the story (fiction based upon fact) of the suit we all would recognize as the outfit Jacqueline Kennedy wore on that fateful day in 1963. Even though her name or the name of her slain husband is never mentioned in the book, this easy read transports the reader through the commissioning and creation of that famous suit. The experience of getting permission from Chanel to make an “American copy” of the famous suit is woven through the story line as well. The reader can almost feel the fabric chosen based upon the thorough and loving description given.

The heroine is a skilled dressmaker who works at Chez Ninon, a well known New York business owned by two spinster sisters. Her name is Kate and although a fictional character, she is based upon a real Kate who had “fine fingers like delicate pieces of spun glass.” We follow her life in and out of the dressmaking workroom and her life is like most of ours, filled with sewing, fabrics, and fashion. In the end, she follows her heart but also seems to fade into the background as we all do after the client picks up her garment and embarks on one exciting event after another.

The description of the workrooms, client fittings and the personal sewing room of the heroine are easy to imagine and make the book such fun to read. It is hard to believe the author, Nicole Mary Kelby, is not a dressmaker in her own right, she is so skilled at bringing the world of sewing and design to life.

I would recommend this book as a quick read, it is enjoyable and a delight being able to go behind the scenes of the fashion world of the sixties.

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Rachel Does Alabama Chanin

If you’ve considered starting a line of clothing, it’s worth researching Natalie’s business model. Alabama Chanin clothes all have simple lines and are all made of cotton jersey. Most of the designs just skim the body and the stretch in the jersey is very forgiving. One garment can fit many customers. The designs are flattering to most figures. She buys two weights of one fabric – organic cotton jersey - and dyes them in a range of colors using natural dyes. Her overhead is simplified by having one supplier, the painters and stitchers are always using one type of fabric, and her line has the extra panache of being all organic. What sets her clothes apart visually is that most of her garments are decorated with applique or reverse applique applied to stenciled fabric, sometimes with beading. Keeping to the natural theme, most of the stenciled patterns are floral. Buttonhole thread is used for the applique work and kit customers can ask for matching or contrasting thread in a range of colors.

Living in Vermont, I’m used to the idea of generous corporations. For years Ben and Jerry’s sold their seconds in general stores, with all the money going to local charities chosen by the communities. But as far as I know they don’t share their recipe for Cherry Garcia. Natalie Chanin, of Alabama Chanin, shares her patterns in her books, shares her stencils online, teaches workshops in her techniques, sells kits to make her clothes, and hires local stitchers, mostly older women who retired from the sewing industry when the factories left the American South for cheaper facilities overseas.

A small group of ASDP members took an afternoon workshop with Natalie before the Nashville conference. Natalie taught the class herself and stayed chatting with us long past the official class time. My son was getting married in May and that seemed like a great excuse to try the techniques without a kit. I decided on reverse applique and ordered a dresden blue and a storm blue of the midweight cotton jersey from AC.

It seemed like a great idea to create a stencil of foxgloves (my business name) or blackberries (we have acres of wild ones) but there was a pattern on the website that I liked, so I downloaded it. For free. From AC. You can also buy their stencils readymade for $60-$160. I found a supplier of stencil plastic, Stencilonline.com, who had 10 mil mylar blank stencils at less than $10 each. They have lighter and heavier stock, but AC uses 10 mil and they took the time to perfect the process. I bought a few extra, allowing for mistakes or for later projects. Because I needed to match the pattern I wanted semi-transparent stencil material. If you were stenciling a smaller garment you could probably use cardstock.

A trip to Staples to enlarge the design was next. I taped the enlargement to the back of the stencil mylar and copied the pattern using a thin sharpie; it was easy to wipe off mistakes before the ink dried. I removed the paper pattern, saving it just in case of disaster, and cut out the design. Most of us have cutting mats of some type and Xacto knives, so the cutting step was easy. Keep changing blades as soon as they start to dull. Two light cuts are easier to control than one where you’re bearing down.

To avoid extra work when painting, I precut my pieces and did a basting line to show the pattern edges. I did stencil a little outside the edge in case the paint made the garment shrink. It didn’t.

At AC they have a person whose sole responsibility is air brushing the designs onto fabric. I bought pearlescent silver paint (the bride had requested “something glittery”) and a small air brush online and discovered that I had the wrong adaptor for my husband’s air compressor. It would take too long to get the correct one, so I bought three cans of compressed air, which were all that were available within a thirty minute drive of my house. I had used up all three cans before finishing the first panel of the long dress. Clearly this was not going to work. Falling back on theatre techniques, I got out my stencil brushes and sponged the paint onto the fabric through the stencil.

The next time I do this (and there will be a next time) I will get the adaptor. The sponged paint was thicker than the air brushed portions and I prefer the softer hand. I used an iron with brown paper as a pressing cloth to set the paint on the yardage.

With the pieces all stenciled, I basted the 2 layers of fabric together and packed them and the spools of
buttonhole thread for our trip to Sicily. Handwork is the perfect occupation for a long plane ride. I had experimented during our workshop and found that I was more comfortable making smaller stitches than Natalie’s recommended four per inch. You are going to be doing a lot of running stitch, and it will look better if the stitches are all the same length; do what you are comfortable with. Stitch around the outside edges of the motifs. I liked the effect so much I considered leaving the dress this way. You can also play with extra decorative effects. Some of the AC dresses feature beading and the books they sell give instructions for a number of beading techniques. You can also add pen and ink work to enhance your stenciled design. But I was out of time and liked the dress the way it was.

When the hand sewing on all the pieces was done I basted the dress together and drove up to Burlington to Kitty Daly’s studio for a fitting. Afraid I’d do hundreds of hours of work and have a dress that was too small, I’d allowed a little extra on each piece. It turned out that AC’s pattern was absolutely true to size. Hallelujah. There were just a few slight alterations for my body’s quirks. The dress was heavy with the double layer of fabric and the addition of the paint, so I decided to go ahead and cut out the individual motifs, revealing the second color underneath. Leave about ¼ inch of fabric to make sure your edges don’t unravel when you wash your garment. Motifs that are small can be left uncut. The dress flowed better, weighed less, and hugged my body better with the single layer.

Part of the cachet of the AC dresses is the way they soften with each washing and the way the edges curl. I was too afraid I’d lose all the paint on my homemade version before the wedding, so haven’t washed mine yet, but I’m dreaming up new stencils to try on a series of tops, all for me. Now back to bridal alterations.

Photos from Rachel Kurland

Painted section (left), air brushed section (right).
Flat-felled Seam - imitates industrial done with folder

Step 1. Determine width of seam allowances - you'll need two at each edge + turn of cloth (TOC)

Step 2. Offset one piece by width of one seam allowance.

Step 3. Fold over the top and stitch right at the raw edge - it's okay if sometimes you catch them, sometimes not.

Step 4. Open the underlayer as shown.

Step 5. Finger-press the sandwich of cloth as shown.


Traditional French Seam

Step 1. Determine width of seam allowances - you'll need two at each edge + turn of cloth (TOC)

Step 2. Sew (or serge), right sides together. Open out.

Step 3. Sew again to enclose raw edges.

Problem: wisps of thread stick out from the finished seam. If you serge rather than sew, you've added bulk and stiffness to the seam.

French Upholstery Seam

Step 1. Determine width of seam allowances - you'll need three at one edge, one at the other, + turn of cloth (TOC)

Step 2. Sew as above.

Step 3. Open and wrap the longer edge completely around the seam allowances. Stitch on the previous line.

These seams appear in various instructions. I learned the mock flat-fell from Margaret Islander, and first saw the French Upholstery Seam at a workshop by Claire Shaeffer. You'll need to figure out how wide you want the seam allowances, and which will be the public side of each seam (it varies).
Museum Shows & Exhibitions

“American Brides: Inspiration and Ingenuity”
Greater Denton Arts Council (Texas)
http://www.dentonarts.com/subsite2/onview.htm
Open until Oct. 24

More than 40 wedding gowns spanning from 1844 to last year are featured in this free exhibit. Most of the dresses are from the University of North Texas’ Texas Fashion Collection — which includes more than 20,000 historic clothing items, while others were loaned from private collections.

The exhibit not only shows the changing styles over the decades, but also highlights the elements that keep re-emerging. A Victor Costa-designed dress from 1993 for a wedding in Scotland with embroidered thistles features style elements from the late 1880s including a dust ruffle beneath the dress, covered buttons on the sleeves and a long train. A gown from 1982 with billowing sleeves inspired by the dress Princess Diana wore the year earlier when she married Prince Charles stands beside a Gibson Girl-inspired gown from 1894 with similarly voluminous sleeves.

The exhibit also showcases dresses that stray from the traditional white, including an 1878 dress of deep plum silk satin featuring a boned bodice. “Everyone did not get married in a white wedding gown, often it was your best dress.,” says curator Myra Walker.

Dresses from last year include a strapless Michael Faircloth gown with a bodice featuring leather and a dress designed by Nardos Iman with a skirt of ostrich feathers.

Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love
Philadelphia Museum of Art
http://www.philamuseum.org/
Open until December 7, 2014

Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love uses over eighty of Patrick Kelly’s designs to explore the meteoric rise and remarkable achievements of a 1980s legend whose clothing was worn by women of every age, from actress Bette Davis, late in her life, to singer Vanessa Williams, then in her twenties.

Kelly’s bold and bright creations stood out on urban streets, nightclubs, and fashion runways, and his remarkable talent, exceptional charisma, and branding savvy catapulted him to success. His work had a broad popular appeal, yet it was also intellectually edgy, challenging racial and cultural boundaries. Kelly’s muses ranged from his Mississippi grandmother, to the American expatriate entertainer Josephine Baker, to the couturiers Madame Grès and Elsa Schiaparelli.

What Kelly achieved during the 1980s has continuing resonance today. While the many barriers he faced remain, Kelly was always positive. His branding and self-marketing were

Rachel Kurtland by Chuck Islander

Woman’s Dress and Gloves, Fall/Winter 1988, Patrick Kelly, American (active Paris), c. 1954 – 1990,
Dress: Wool knit, acetate faille, cotton embroidery, Promised gift of Bjorn Guil Amelan and Bill T. Jones
Gloves: Wool knit, plastic, Purchased with the Costume and Textiles Revolving Fund, 2012
"Fast Fashion" includes designs that Kelly assembled quickly to sell on the streets of Paris after he moved there in 1979.

"Mississippi in Paris" features Kelly’s work that boldly addressed the designer’s upbringing in the American South. He used the concept of women dressed up in their Sunday best as a point of departure for many of his looks.

"Hot Couture" is a playful tribute to Kelly’s muses and to fashion history. Many of Kelly’s own presentations parodied fashion show traditions and riffed on the work of famed couturiers such as Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, and Madame Grès, the designer whom Kelly admired most and held in highest regard.

Kelly was the first American and the first black designer to be elected into the elite Chambre Syndicale du Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode, allowing Kelly to present his ready-to-wear collections in the tents at the Musée du Louvre. The section titled “Lisa Loves the Louvre” features designs from this Spring/Summer 1989 collection, for which Kelly fantasized that the museum’s most famous resident, Mona Lisa, invited him to show his latest designs.

In “Two Loves” is a tribute to Kelly’s loves, America and France, which were also embraced by his muse Josephine Baker. The designs in this section are from Kelly’s final Fall/Winter 1989–90 collection, and pay homage to cultural icons from both countries, including the Eiffel Tower and the cartoon character Jessica Rabbit.

The exhibition’s rousing finale is an allusion to the Casino de Paris music hall, where Baker performed during the 1920, and which Kelly transforms into the Casino de Patrick.
CHARLES JAMES: Beyond Fashion
Metropolitan Museum of Art
http://www.metmuseum.org
Open until August 10, 2014
The inaugural exhibition of the newly renovated Costume Institute examines the career of legendary twentieth-century Anglo-American couturier Charles James (1906–1978), and is presented in two locations—special exhibition galleries on the Museum’s first floor and The Costume Institute’s Anna Wintour Costume Center on the ground floor. It explores James’s design process, specifically his use of sculptural, scientific, and mathematical approaches to construct revolutionary ball gowns and innovative tailoring that continue to influence designers today. The retrospective features approximately sixty-five of the most notable designs James produced over the course of his career, from the 1920s until his death in 1978.

The first-floor special exhibition galleries spotlight and analyze the resplendent glamour and breathtaking architecture of James’s ball gowns. On view are fifteen dramatically lit, iconic James gowns including the “Clover Leaf,” “Butterfly,” “Tree,” and “Swan” from the late 1940s and early 1950s. Analytical animations, text, x-rays, and vintage images tell the story of each gown’s intricate construction and history.

The Anna Wintour Costume Center’s Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Gallery provides the technology and flexibility to dramatize James’s craft. A pathway winds around a cruciform platform where the evolution and metamorphosis of James’s day and evening wear are explored in four categories: Spirals & Wraps, Drapes & Folds, Platonic Form, and Anatomical Cut. Video animations focused on the most representative examples of his approach are shown on monitors, and live-feed cameras detailing the backs of garments are projected on the walls. The Carl and Iris Barrel Apfel Gallery displays ephemera from James’s life and work, including drawings, pattern pieces, dress forms, jewelry maquettes, scrapbooks, and accessories.

Costumes of Downton Abbey
Winterthur, Delaware
Open until January 4, 2015

Costumes of Downton Abbey is an original exhibition of exquisite designs from the award-winning television series. Forty historically inspired costumes from the television show are displayed and supplemented by photographs and vignettes inspired by the fictional program and by real life at Winterthur so visitors have the chance to step into and experience the world of Downton Abbey® and the contrasting world of Winterthur founder Henry Francis du Pont and his contemporaries in the first half of the 20th century.

In real life, costumes often look different from how they appear on screen. Television cameras have a way of changing their color and even texture. Similar to how actors are slathered with cosmetics to appear natural on screen, costumes are often embellished with details and texture to achieve more light or movement. Part of the pleasure in viewing

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Just go to the Shopping Affiliates page under Education on our website, and click on any image or the Amazon.com link. It will take you right to your Amazon.com account. We have similar arrangements with Intuit and Jo-Ann’s, too.
them up close is seeing evidence of use and construction. The intimate look that Costumes of Downton Abbey affords us reveals the vintage fragments such as lace, pleating, and beading that costumers incorporated into new fabric. Such additions are not uncommon and are meant to both add authenticity and enhance the costumes for dramatic effect on screen.

*Nonmembers are required to have timed tickets for the exhibition. Nonmembers can purchase tickets online or call 800.448.3883. Included with general admission. Members free.

Thank you to the members who have suggested upcoming exhibits. Keep those e-mails coming!

Downton Abbey, designer Susanna Buxton, cotton frocks, photo by Nick Briggs, Carnival Film and Television Limited 2010

See you in October at our convention!