

A Brief History of Beth's Creative Stitchery

Beth's Creative Stitchery had its humble beginnings in a historical office building in downtown Old Worthington. The entrance was in the rear of the walkout basement. Not exactly the most desirable place for a retail store, some might even say it was a bit risky. But 1982 was a ripe time to enter the sewing machine business! The Bernina name was not by any means a household word, but many avid sewers were catching wind of the merits of this wonderful Swiss machine.

On April 1st, 1982, Beth Schillig turned the key to her new establishment. The product line was very small. It consisted of two machines! The store had 2 small racks of cotton embroidery thread, a few books and patterns and of course, an array of Bernina presser feet and accessories. It didn't take long for Beth to outgrow the two leased rooms and by the end of 1983, she had taken over the entire basement!

For nine months, Beth worked the store by herself. She taught all the classes, sold all the machines, did all the repairs and took care of all the paperwork. In January of 1983, Beth hired Laura Pohlman. In September of 1982, both Laura and her mother, Arlene had purchased the new kid on the block, the Bernina 930. During that time, both of them attended classes, but it was Laura who really took to the machine like...as they say, "a fish to water". Part time employment turned to full time within two months. Between these two ladies, Beth's Creative Stitchery outgrew the basement (which was prone to flooding after heavy rains) and in 1987 the shop was moved to its present location at 5324 N. High St. When the rug shop next door closed its doors after one year, Beth moved fast to take over the lease and the shop expanded again!

Along with expanding the floor space, the product line exploded! It seemed like every year one or two machines were added to the line-up. In a lot of ways that was good thing...it gave time to master one machine before the next one comes out. Today, the thread volume alone, is greater than the total opening day inventory in 1982!

Garment construction with an emphasis on free hand embroidery, appliqué and special Bernina effects was always the main focus of the shop. Both Beth and Laura have entered and won first prize in the annual Bernina fashion show several times. In fact, most every day, Beth and Laura were seen in a garment they had constructed! It was the first passion of the shop. Most of the part time employees who have worked at the shop have shown a strong interest in this style of sewing.

Though garment construction and creative work is a popular sewing past time for all of Beth's employees, a wide range of knowledge exist among the staff, past and present. If ever a question is asked about quilting, home decoration, heirloom, craft, bridal or repair, an answer or reliable resource will be found.

In December of 2004, after 22 ½ years owning the shop, Beth decided to keep the promise she had made to herself 10 years earlier, and that was to retire at the age of 50. Beth, a fashion school graduate, had already had 6 years of experience in the sewing machine market before opening her own shop. She wrote a sewing column for a suburban newspaper, managed the local Bernina dealership and traveled as an educational consultant for Bernina. So, after almost 29 years, she decided to take a break. The obvious person to continue the shop's legacy was Beth's faithful employee of 22 years, Laura (Pohlman) Livingston. And on June 1st of 2005, the key changed hands.

Laura has always been a strong leader in the operations of Beth's Creative Stitchery. Though no employee ever had "titles", Laura could have been referred to as assistant management to the owner and the stores service technician. Laura is well versed in the day to day shop operation, planning and scheduling, teaching and is considered the finest Bernina service technician in the state of Ohio. Her goals for the shop are simple; continue the strong customer service that Bernina and its customers should expect....the same one the store was built upon.

The staff at Beth's has always been a small group of long time employees. With few the exceptions of employees leaving to care for aging parents, growing children, job transfers and educational demands, the faces that greet customers stay the same.

Those who have been long time customers of the shop have come to know Beth, Laura and the staff members past and present. Many have seen the shop grow and have watched it evolve to what it is today. Our collective thanks go to all who have been part of our history and a big welcome to those who will shape our future.

A Beth Schillig retirement update - Before Beth retired, many asked what she had planned. At the time, Beth had been watching her mother slowly decline from Alzheimer's. It was her strongest desire to spend as much time with her mother as possible. Beth spent all of the first year taking care of her mother, until it was decided to put her into a residential home. With a bit of free time here and there, Beth has also made several quilts, has learned to knit, took a jewelry class and is enjoying being a "free agent". After Beth's mother passed away, she discovered how much she enjoyed quilting. A blue ribbon awarded at a local quilt show started her on a path of experimenting with many techniques. To make a long story short – Beth has become quite the star in the quilting world. She has won MANY awards for her quilts, has traveled the country representing a sit-down quilt machine and teaches free motion retreats locally. To see the body of work she has created, go to www.bethschillig.com.