

INSPIRED TO
Sew

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



Favorite Notions



Mary Mulari, Deanna Springer, Rhonda & Rita Farro, October 2021.
Add Beaver Dam, WI as your next sewing destination.

Serendipity helped create this issue. Rita Farro & I frequently talk about favorite sewing & quilting notions. During the last SCHMETZneedles FBLive, I asked viewers, *What product or tool revolutionized your sewing & quilting?* There were many consistent replies: Rotary cutters, mats, rulers, Wonder Clips, awls, internet. Then Rita reached out to a few **SCHMETZ Inspired to SEW** alumni sewing stars asking the same question. Our surprise finding was the number of designers that modified traditional sewing tools for contemporary use.

While this issue was compiled, two things happened in Beaver Dam, WI: Nancy Zieman Sewing Studio had a grand opening, and a stunning 12 ft x 12 ft mosaic of Nancy Zieman was unveiled in her hometown. Rita & I were there along with Mary Mulari and Deanna Springer. Nancy was creative, always solving sewing issues, and inspiring others to sew. Her notions, skill, creativity, and generosity are countless. This issue wraps up with the ribbon cutting unveiling Nancy's portrait in a stunning tile mosaic. Nancy would be pleased with the love of sewing and ingenuity magnified and shared by you and each individual featured in this issue. Sew SCHMETZ & Grabbit® Too!

Rhonda

Rhonda Pierce
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Story by:	Rita Farro https://ritassewfun.blogspot.com/
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Favorite Sewing & Quilting Notions





Amy Brickman's favorite Dressmaker Guide designed by Mary Brooks Picken..

Sewing Notions

Sewing is different things to different people. For some of us, it is a necessary life skill. For others, it's a fulfilling hobby. What is sewing to your life? Is it your main business? A side-hustle? Or, is it your creative outlet? Is sewing how you express yourself? Or is it your calming, relaxing Zen activity?

Whether you sew to make money, or to unwind and relax, we all have our favorite sewing equipment. Your happy sewing place could be a 75-year old Singer Featherweight, or a brand new \$15,000 embroidery machine. We all have our favorite sewing notions and/or tools. Some were invented a hundred

years ago (can we all say "seam-ripper"?), while others are fairly new to our sewing world (imagine making a quilt without a rotary cutter).

We decided to ask some of our **SCHMETZ Inspired to Sew** sewing stars about their favorite sewing tools and/or notions. This story took an unexpected turn as we discovered that many sewing professionals felt so strongly about a particular sewing notion, they decided to re-invent or refine it in some way.



Laura Coia with her handy little thread snip.



Inspired to SEW #13

Amy Barickman

My favorite tool is the Dressmaker Guide my muse, Mary Brooks Picken, invented. This multi-use tool easily marks tucks to outlines for tracing embroidery design elements and more.

Finding Mary and her timeless pattern designs and inspiring essays lead me to write my book, **Vintage Notions: An Inspirational Guide to Needlework, Cooking, Sewing, Fashion & FUN!**

If you love vintage fabrics and notions check out Amy's new online courses at vintagemodernmakers.com. Learn more about the fairy godmother of modern sewing, Mary Brooks Picken, and Amy's journey researching her story by visiting:

<https://amybarickman.com/vintage-notions/>



Inspired to SEW #36

Laura Coia

One of my favorite notions is a very small pair of squeezers, a handy little thread snip. They fit perfectly in the palm of your hand. You can easily pick up and just squeeze them like any pair of tweezers. At the end of the tweezer, there are tiny scissor blades that cut quickly, closely, and easily.

They are specifically designed to cut only thread, and they work great. So good in fact, that I keep a pair in my sewing bag and beside every machine I have. I even keep a pair in my bedroom, to trim off those pesky tags found on new clothing. As a bonus, I use the points as a stiletto. 😊

The thread snip is a notion that I cannot live without.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/SewVeryEasy>



Marianne Fons' mother reading to her and her brothers.
*I am guessing she made the house dress she is wearing on her Featherweight.
 That's my older brother Jimmy on the left, my twin David in her lap, and of course,
 me on the right. As you can see, I have always loved stories!*



Rita Farro

The sewing tool I always have next to my machine is, unfortunately, a seam ripper. I've had dozens of them throughout my life because I break or lose them. But, I've been hanging onto my Nancy Zieman's Retractable Seam Ripper (by Clover) for the last four years, and I LOVE IT. It is retractable, which gives it a dual purpose by also making it a thread cutter. Nancy was the queen of multi-tasking, so it's no surprise she would improve and reinvent my tried-and-true seam ripper.

<http://ritassewfun.blogspot.com/>



Marianne Fons

I gave this some thought, and my nomination is the Singer Featherweight sewing machine. The one in my possession belonged to my mother, who was born in 1908. She was a single schoolteacher, a Mississippian, and used it to make her clothes. She married at 38, and by the time she was 40, she had three children (my older brother, my twin brother, and me). She made clothes for us, and later on I sewed my doll clothes on it and made costumes and clothes for myself. My love of fashion and fabric are all tied to my mother's sewing machine. I don't use it very often, but I have taken it to Quilts of Valor sew days. It makes a perfect straight stitch.

<http://www.mariannefons.com/>



Pat Sloan sewing with her Koala Table.



Pat Sloan

The best sewing invention is a table that lets your machine sit down so the bed is flat with the surface. My Koala Table is also my cutting table. It's a wonderful thing! And I must show you my oldest sewing tool that I still use, the scissors I used when I learned to sew in high school!

<https://www.patsloan.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/QuiltWithPatSloan/about>



Marti Michell

Marti and Richard Michell invented many sewing/quilting notions and tools. Although Marti didn't invent the rotary cutter, she does get credit for the lightbulb moment that brought the rotary cutter together with acrylic rulers and protective mats. It seems like a no-brainer today, but in 1979, it was revolutionary.

Rotary cutters are to quilting what software was to computers, what jet engines were to airplanes. Well, you get the idea. They are certainly high on everybody's list of "favorite sewing invention," and it's hard to imagine quilting without a rotary cutter.

<https://frommarti.com/>



Sue O'Very-Pruitt with the new yellow EZ Point & Turner tool.



Mary Mulari

In my sewing life, there has been an evolution of drawing things through a casing. Like everybody else, I started by using safety pins for this task. Next came the metal bodkin, which was a big improvement. Then, along came the Clover Clip 'n Glide Bodkin, invented by Nancy Zieman. The clip is strong and holds securely and the gliding end moves easily past seam allowances. Hooray for progress! Safety pins can now be saved to use for my preferred way to attach shank buttons.

<https://www.marymulari.com/>



Sue O'Very-Pruitt

I loved watching Sewing With Nancy on PBS, and that's where I saw a demonstration of the original point and turn tool. I LOVED IT. Shortly after I purchased one, the company stopped manufacturing them and they became very hard to find. I approached Famore Cutlery about partnering to re-imagine my favorite sewing tool. In 2019, we launched the turquoise version of the EZ Point & Turner and it quickly became a worldwide best seller. In October 2021, we launched a yellow version that is 2" taller, allowing the user to turn even longer tubes right side out.

<https://sookiesews.com/>

YouTube Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpccTY3tQbl>



ByAnnie Stiletto & Pressing Tool.



Judy Kessinger

THE BEST SEWING INVENTION of all time is the magnetic seam guide. Being a hands-on instructor I carry these with me, especially for beginners. There are some things you can "get away with" in sewing but uneven seaming is NOT one of them. If the pattern says 1/2" then that is what it needs to be. Using the magnetic seam guide allows you to guide fabric right next to the edge to keep your sewing straight. I still use mine even after all these years. Some machines come with them but those that don't, small purchase, BIG HELP!

An explanation of the magnetic seam guide: Power grip magnet adheres securely to the sewing machine metal throat plate. Run fabric against the seam guide as you stitch for perfect seams. Helps beginners practice precision sewing. Nice notion for projects needing long straight seams.

<https://fitnicesystem.com/>



Annie Unrein

Best sewing invention of all time? I'd have to say that the sewing machine, rotary cutter, and quilter's rulers are no-brainers. Where would we be without those?

Beyond that, one tool that is almost always in my hand when I am sewing is the ByAnnie Stiletto & Pressing Tool. We released this tool in 2016 and I consider it to be every bit as important as a rotary cutter! And, we hear over and over again from satisfied customers who say it's been a game changer for them. The tool is especially helpful when attaching bindings to purses, bags, quilts, and more. We spent over two years developing this precision placement tool.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtHN_8Ds2kA



Angela Wolf using her Tailor's Clapper.



Angela Wolf

The best sewing tool that I am totally addicted to is the tailor's clapper! I learned about the clapper over 20 years ago when I was learning tailoring. Thru time I have tested the clapper with knits, silks, and so many fabrics and it works like a dream for pressing seams and hems. There were a few changes I wanted from my original clapper so I began designing and manufacturing my own.

Here is a link for the larger tailors clapper:

<https://www.angelawolfpatterns.com/tailors-clapper-3/>

Here is a link for the mini tailors clapper:

<https://www.angelawolfpatterns.com/mini-tailors-clapper-1/>

Continued on page 12...



Needle Points with Rhonda



60/8	80/12	70/10	60/8
65/9	90/14	80/12	70/10
70/10	75/11	90/14	80/12
75/11	90/14	100/16	90/14
80/12	Twin	70/10	75/11
90/14	100	80/12	90/14
100/16	120	90/14	75/11
110/18	Twin	100/16	90/14
120/19	70/10	110/18	Twin
Twin	80/12	80/12	80/12
Twin	90/14	90/14	90/14
70/10	100/16	Twin	100/16
80/12	110/18		
90/14			
100/16			



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Clover 5-in-1 Sliding Guide by Nancy Zieman.



Inspired to SEW #69

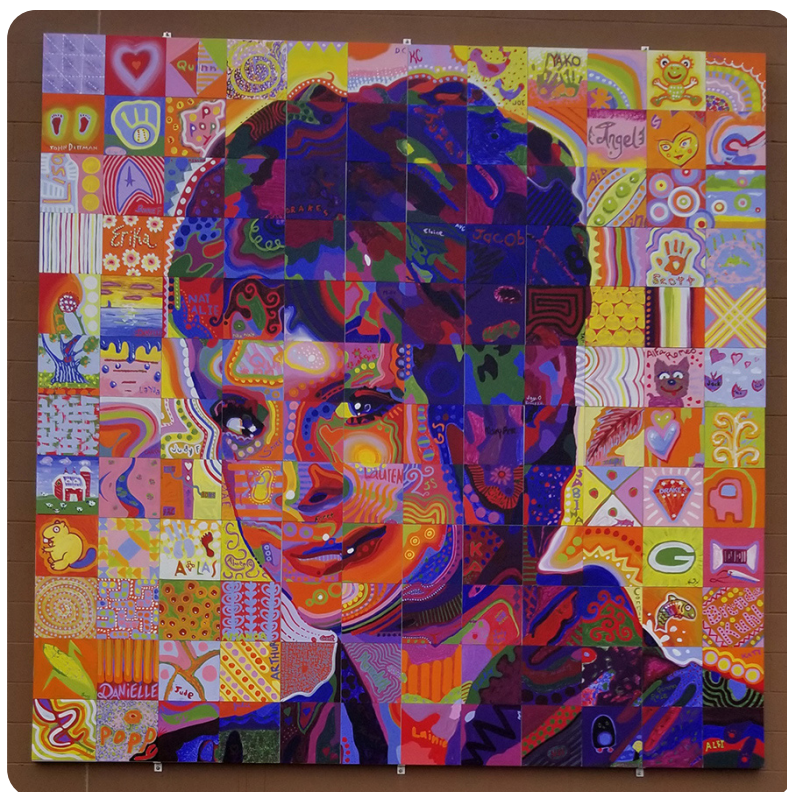
Deanna Springer

My all-time favorite notion is Clover's 5-in-1 Sliding Gauge by Nancy Zieman. The old fashioned metal 6" sewing gauge was an essential tool badly in need of an upgrade. Check out this link to see all the updates and new features of the 5-in-1 Sliding Gauge:

<https://nz-productions-llc.myshopify.com/collections/all/products/5-in-1-sliding-gauge-set>

Deanna says, *The 5-in-1 Sliding Gauges have forever changed my sewing accuracy! I have several of each size at home, at work in the sewing room, on the Stitch it! Sisters set. If you take a close look at the Stitch it! Sisters logo, you'll see I'm holding my 5-in-1 Sliding Gauge.*

It's certainly no surprise that, while writing about sewing notions, Nancy Zieman's name would come up again and again. ([SITS Issue #2](#)) Her show, "Sewing with Nancy" spent 35 years on PBS, and the mission of her company, Nancy's Notions, was to provide high quality notions and tools that solved sewing problems. If Nancy heard about a new sewing gadget or invention, she wanted it in the Nancy's Notions catalog. Over the years, she helped scores of aspiring inventors and sewing enthusiasts develop their ideas and bring their dream notions to market and build their sewing businesses.



Walk through the back door of Nancy Zieman Sewing Studio and be greeted by the Nancy Zieman mosaic installed on the Beaver Dam Area Community Theater Fine Art's Center. Artist: Stephen Bennet.

In 2007, Nancy Zieman and Jan Carr of Clover USA, began a collaboration to produce innovative, high quality sewing notions and quilting tools. Deanna Springer, Nancy's longtime friend and colleague, continues Nancy's work, creating and improving new NZP Tools. Many of Nancy's product ideas were born out of a specific need that presented itself while she was sewing a project. Find the complete line of Nancy's Sewing & Quilting Tools by Clover at ShopNZP.com.

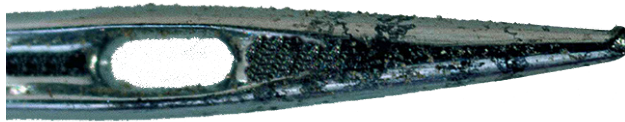
Nancy Zieman was a trail blazer in developing and improving sewing notions and tools. It is heartening to see that her

passion is being carried on by sewing enthusiasts all over the world. It seems fitting that as we focused on sewing notions for this issue, Nancy was being honored in her hometown, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, with the unveiling of a mosaic mural.

The mural is located in the parking lot behind the brand new Nancy Zieman Sewing Studio. Nancy's love of all-things sewing lives on at 120 Front Street, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, and, of course, there is a comprehensive collection of sewing notions and tools!!

Watch this short video explaining how the mosaic was created by Stephen Bennett:
[Mosaic mural of Nancy Zieman installed in Beaver Dam | Regional news | wiscnews.com](#)

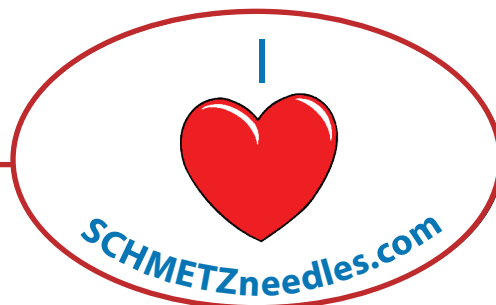
— written by Rita Farro



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