



Sue Hausmann



Sue Hausmann's influence reaches far beyond America Sews. She captured and spread the love of sewing worldwide. Sue's impressive career rose through established priorities, tenacity, and service to others mixed with the love of sewing. There's no question Sue has always been a champion for independent women. Rita Farro captures an insightful glimpse into one of our most beloved leaders to rock the sewing world. Although now retired, Sue's influence continues through the love of sewing shared through countless teachers, machine dealers and students.

Wishing you health, safety and creative stitches in the new year. Happy New Year!
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Sue Hausmann



Presenting the History of Husqvarna Viking at a Sew and Quilt with Sue program.

Sue Hausmann

Note from Rita Farro: In 1988, I was a greenhorn Viking sewing machine dealer attending my first national convention. In my mind, Sue Hausmann was an icon because everybody was buzzing about her innovative approach to sewing machine sales. Her classes were packed with dealers eager to learn from her. I waited for two days to get a chair in the room where Sue was explaining her approach to sewing machine demonstrations. Sue said, *A customer comes into your store because she wants to buy a sewing machine. Your job is to help her do what she wants. Ask questions; find out what kind of sewing she does; pat the chair beside you; invite her to sit in front of the machine. LISTEN to what she's telling you. You are not doing something TO her, you are doing something FOR her.*

Meeting Sue Hausmann and adopting her form of *Edutainment* was the single best thing I learned in any class or national convention I ever attended. Every dealer wanted to take a little piece of Sue Hausmann back to their store. But here's the shocker, as I was writing this story, 30+ years later, I realized that when I met her at that first convention, Sue was almost as new to the company as I was.

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Sue's philosophy has always been to *Keep America Sewing*, and she believes there is no ONE RIGHT WAY to sew. The right way is what works for you and for your project. It would be impossible to evaluate Sue's influence on our sewing world. But it's pretty easy to list a few of her accomplishments:



Sue and Herb at a Sewing Show.

- She changed the paradigm of how sewing machines are sold.
- She simplified the language and format of sewing machine instruction manuals.
- She was the host and producer of the PBS show, *America Sews with Sue Hausmann*, which ran for 19 years and was aired in 90 million homes and she produced two additional PBS series.
- She wrote 30+ *America Sews* books.
- She became a sought-after "A" list speaker at the biggest sewing shows in the country.
- As an Executive Vice President, she was the first and only woman in senior management of one of the largest sewing machine companies in the world.

Sue is quick to say she didn't accomplish any of this on her own. None of it would have been possible without her supportive family. Her husband, Herb, became a sewing celebrity in his own rite, traveling around the world with Sue on Husqvarna Viking business. She had a wonderful team of co-workers, and a terrific boss in Bengt Gerborg (longtime President of Husqvarna Viking USA).

Although Sue Hausmann's *Edutainment* method hit the Husqvarna Viking Education Department like a meteor from space, her story isn't one of overnight, sudden success. As a matter of fact, she took a circuitous route to sewing stardom and it was not actually the destination she sought.





Hausmann Family circa 1970. Sue made seersucker sailor dresses, polyester double knit vests, and Herb's sports jacket, ties, and shirts.

Like many of us, Sue learned to sew and give step-by-step demonstrations as a member of 4-H. Growing up, her career goal was to get married and have a family. If that didn't work out, she figured she could be a nurse or a teacher.

As it happened, it DID work out. Sue and Herb got married very young and had four children. *That was my first career -- and I was very blessed to be able to stay home and raise our children to adulthood.* Sue enjoyed sewing clothes for her family, she took pride in sewing every stitch of clothing her family wore. Money was tight and *back then* it was frugal to sew clothes. In the early days she sold Tupperware (becoming a manager after only six months), then did alterations for a local dress shop, then worked part time selling sewing machines, and taught sewing at a local community college.

Sue's star began to rise in the 1980's when she started working for Finn's Fabrics in Barrington, Illinois. The sewing machines were in a corner of the store and Sue set up some free classes. She loved to show people what they could do with their machines. Her classes were soon drawing over 100 people a week. Within six months, Finn's Fabrics was the #1 Viking dealer in the State of Illinois and in that first year, fabric sales increased incredibly. The Vice President of Viking came to the store to see what was happening. Sue told him, *We teach people what they can do with an exciting new computerized sewing machine, and they buy them.* He asked Sue to become a traveling *trainer* for the company.



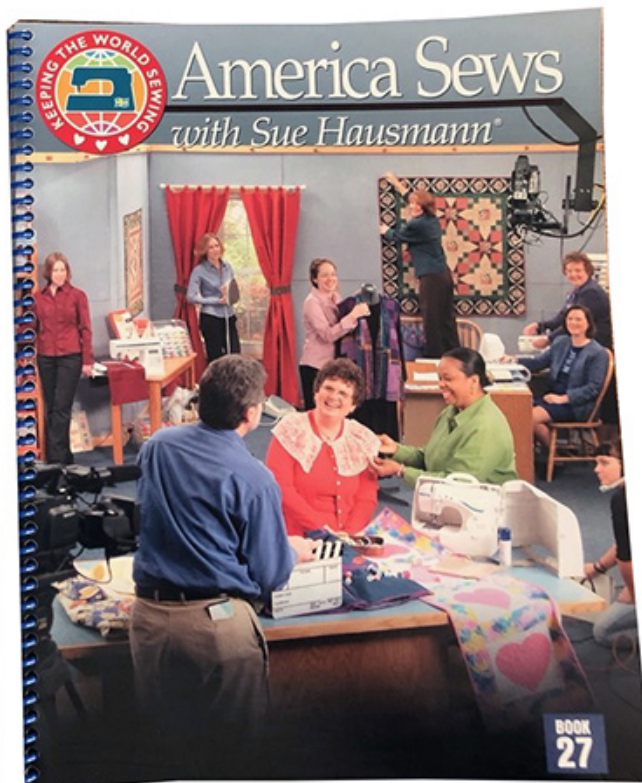
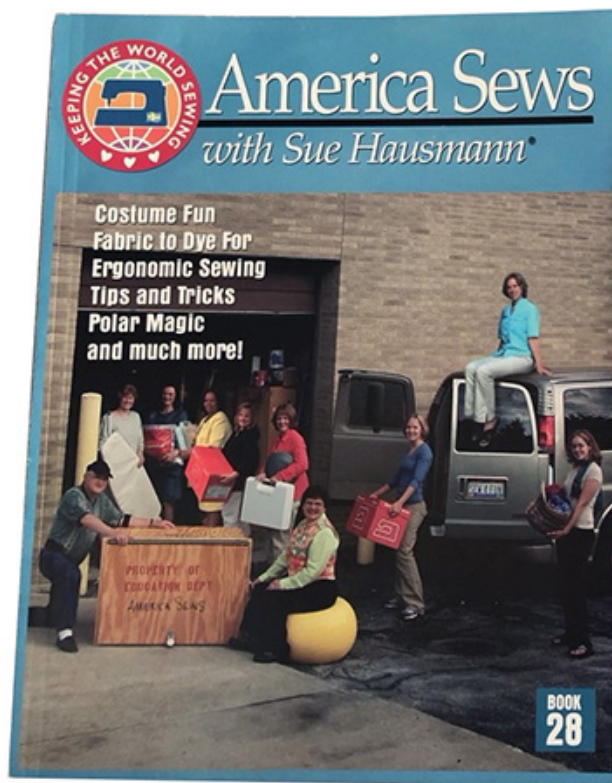
Program guest inspects Sue's embroidery.

But Sue still had a 15-year old son at home. *He didn't think he needed a mother, but I believed he deserved one. I also had a wonderful husband at home who needed me!* So, she initially passed on that dream job offer.

Sue grew up on land north of Chicago purchased by her grandfather in the 1920's. Herb and Sue raised their family there and thought their children would also build a house on the pond. However, Herb and Sue's life motto has become **LIFE CHANGES!** Two years later, Sue's parents moved to Arizona, and her children were doing well, moving to Seattle, Minneapolis, California, and Arizona. Sue felt her *job* (raising a family) was over. Herb suggested the time was right and Sue should try that *traveling job* for a year. Before too long, they were traveling together sharing the joy of sewing and the joy of selling. What a blessing to turn your favorite life-skill into your dream job!

Sue's genuine enthusiasm and contagious spirit opened doors to opportunities beyond her wildest dreams. She and Herb spent the next 28 years teaching and sharing the joy of sewing as she traveled the world for Husqvarna Viking. But that journey wasn't without its obstacles. Sue has always believed *you don't get respect, you earn it*. In her first year with the company, Viking was sending four educators to the National Home Economics Association Convention. The scheduler suggested Sue not go to the convention because if people realized she didn't have a college education, it would be an embarrassment to the company. Sue simply kept on traveling, training, and spreading the joy of sewing. The second year, the same scheduler told Sue she must be one of the educators working the convention. The third year, Sue was a keynote speaker at the convention.





It "takes a village of educators and Herb to produce America Sews!"

Sue officially became the face of Husqvarna Viking when she hosted **America Sews with Sue Hausmann** on Public Television. The show ran for 19 years and was aired in 90 million households. Sue says, *It was my greatest privilege and joy to produce America Sews, but I certainly didn't do it alone! I was surrounded by a wonderful team of inspirational guests and Viking educators. It was my privilege to learn about their best techniques and tools from the greatest sewing stars in the industry! I was simply the facilitator. America Sews was an incredible training ground for our educators. They took each 'Quick Project' from conception to completion and perfected their presentation skills. America Sews was only one of many opportunities for me to put my life goal into action, TO GROW PEOPLE!*

The first year Sue taught at the Sewing & Stitchery Expo in Puyallup, Washington (the largest consumer sewing show in the world). She started on the humble free stage. However, she soon became one of Expo's biggest draws. A few years later, Sue was asked to headline their special evening event, *Friday Night LIVE*.

According to Joanne Ross, Founder and Director of Sew Expo, *Sue Hausmann was one of the most dynamic speakers we ever had. Sue is so personable and she related to audiences in such a way that everyone knew they could do whatever she was teaching. Sue was always positive and her creative thinking helped the Expo offer some of the best classes we ever had.*





Educator Jody Hooker, Quiltsmart owner Mattie Rhoades, and Sue on set.

*What I loved about Sue was her flexibility and her incredible depth of knowledge. If I told her we needed a pant class, it was done! She developed many classes exclusively for Expo. I think her authenticity was the key to her success. Sue really did love to sew and she wore her creations every single day. She walked the walk and talked the talk.*

*My husband Ron and I were fortunate enough to travel with Sue and Herb to Sweden (along with eight other sewists) to the Husqvarna Viking factory. Sue and Herb were our escorts and they made sure it was the experience of a lifetime. As a result of that trip, Sue convinced the company 'brass' to come to the Expo a year later. Husqvarna Viking began to sponsor an elegant sit-*

*down dinner at a local restaurant for the Expo speakers, and every sewing machine brand was represented. A wonderful time of networking including a presentation on 'the state of the industry' by Bengt Gerborg followed by Q&A and suggestions for the industry from the attendees. Those annual Sewing Star dinners were an example of Sue's genuine passion for the sewing industry and everybody in it. I will always be grateful to Sue for her support of me and the Expo.*

Even though Sue *retired* ten years ago, she's never stopped teaching, and she certainly didn't stop sewing! After her career with Husqvarna Viking, she's been doing freelance teaching. She did two classes for Craftsby, Sew Quick, Quicker Quickest and



Demonstrating how a stitch is formed, Herb is the bobbin, Sue the SCHMETZ needle, and Theresa Robinson the thread spool.

*Finishing Techniques for Savvy Sewers.* She also did a series of videos for Sulky and traveled all over the country presenting *hands on* Sulky programs. She teaches classes locally at Cathey's Sew and Vac. Donny and Janis Cathey have three stores in the Tucson, AZ area and the store just two miles from Sue has a wonderful classroom. She also presents programs for her American Sewing Guild Chapter and her quilt guild.

Sue has always said this job is *our career*. Herb continues to travel with her and his business card says, Herb Hausmann, CEO, Carry Everything Out.

Sue enjoys sewing now more than ever. She has always said she doesn't accept money when people ask her to sew. She only sews for people she loves and her church. However, she

would rather teach them to sew for themselves! Recently, a young person from her church asked her to make a T-shirt quilt and Sue instead helped her to make it!

With four children, ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren, that's a lot of sewing! Quilts, curtains, Halloween costumes, wedding dresses, bassinets, and sew much more! Six-year-old Gabriel recently said, *Great Grandma, I have this idea. Dad made a raised bunk bed for me. I have the giraffe quilt and the ship quilt you made for me. Could we make curtains so underneath the bunk would be a fort for me?*

Sue took him shopping for tension rods and fabric. Gabriel then pushed on the foot control as Sue *steered*, so he can proudly say he sewed his own fort.





Great-grandchildren Gabe and Charlotte enjoy Gabe's fort he sewed with Sue.

*I have been blessed beyond measure with both of my careers. Being a wife and mother was all I ever wanted. My goal, then and now, was always to spend as much time as possible enjoying our four children, ten grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren! Our family is all over the country. This year, our Christmas began in California during Halloween week with granddaughter and family. We continued Christmas in Ohio on Thanksgiving, then to Hawaii to celebrate with grandson and family stationed on Oahu. We will spend Christmas in Texas and celebrate entering the New Year in Atlanta! We call it 'Progressive Christmas' with our families (like a progressive dinner). We are blessed to be able to enjoy our family even though 'Life Changes'! Life is good! God is great!*

And for Sue, enjoyment has always included sewing something special for somebody special! Sue encourages everyone to GIVE THE GIFT OF SEWING!

*Create and give handmade gifts to those you love! Give the gift of sewing by sharing your skills as you teach others to sew and quilt! Finally, give the gift of sewing to yourself. Create something today for you to enjoy!*

*Until next time. .... Happy Sewing!*

— written by Rita Farro





# Needle Points with Rhonda



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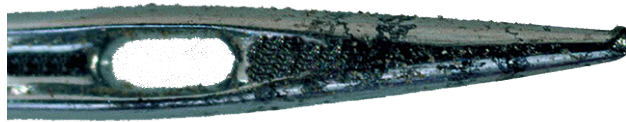
**Pfaff**

**Kenmore**

**Viking**

**Juki**

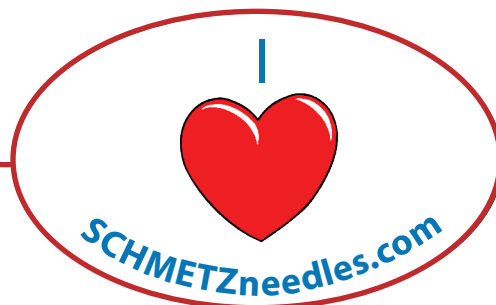
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