

Compu Stitch Designs Farm Logos With Pizzazz

GAY N. BROWNLEE
Somerset Co. Correspondent
SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) —

A lined crew jacket in rich green satin hangs in a dominant place by the entrance. Embroidered in the center of the upper back is a snazzy, eye-catching tractor, the creation of "Compu Stitch," a computerized custom embroidery business started last spring by Cindy Newman.

Spread over a rectangular display table is a tablecloth embroidered with designs illustrating some of what Compu Stitch can do. Monogrammed towels and washcloths, placemat and napkin sets, sweatshirts and even a customized leather jacket reveal the scope of choices for personalized embroidery.

"We're still trying to figure it out," she said about how the whole affair began.

She says her husband, Roger Newman, first realized there is a good market for logo embroidery when he paid \$18 for a hat at the Beef Expo. The only embroidery on it was a small Simmental and a farm name. This gave Newman, a businessman himself, something to consider.

The proverbial light bulb lit up inside his head. He thought it was just the business for his wife who was a former instructor at a local sewing center.

But despite her sewing skill and experience Cindy said she knew nothing about operating a direct embroidery machine. Her other experiences dealt with milking cows from the days when, with her late, first husband, Jim Mostoller, she operated a dairy herd of 65 registered Holsteins.

No embroidery experience was only a minor drawback. The Newmans found a direct embroidery machine for sale from a local

woman who was also willing to teach Cindy how to use it. A professional technician from Harrisburg also gave Cindy instruction.

Purchasing such an expensive computerized piece meant that she needed to find clients fast. Newman also spread the word among his farm machine customers.

"I went out and started pounding the pavement," says the constantly moving Cindy. "I said (to potential clients) that I was the new embroiderer in town," she said, laughing.

"The majority of embroidery business is farm machines and incorporating farm names," she said, adding that besides custom logos she offers numerous stock designs.

She suggested choosing one from the big book to demonstrate the process. To herald the upcoming holiday season, something Christmas was chosen. Cindy punched the stock information from the book into her office computer. The picture came up on the screen.

She proceeded to select choices about how she wanted the design to be embroidered. Then the computer figured how many stitches would be used for the chosen design.

Depending on the selected size, the required number of stitches also changes. And what's a computer if you can't vary the style of lettering. Plain, fancy, or something in between? Should it be centered, or off to one side? All pertinent information is filed before being read by the direct embroidery machine across the hall in the compact workroom.

So when ordering an embroidered logo or design, just remember that the stitch count determines your cost, according to Cindy.

The direct embroidery machine uses hooping, where the needles



Cindy Newman, owner of Compu Stitch, northeast of Somerset on Route 281, stands with her display of computerized embroidery items. She's holding a Simmental pillow. On the jacket back is an embroidered tractor. There are towels and washcloths, placemat and napkin sets.

go straight up and down while the table moves around to embroider the taut material held in the flat hoops. For hat embroidery special hat hoops are used.

Cindy's Japanese-made machine can do the same design simultaneously on six pieces, using as many as six thread colors while doing it. However, a right to left order is used instead of the American left to right method. That can be tricky for an amateur.

But Cindy and Patricia Pritts — the only employee and an experienced sewer — seem comfortable with the equipment.

"My husband is the brains behind the business," says Cindy, "but I know what sells and the colors and threads to use." Rayon is

the thread choice because its sheen reflects the light. Metallic thread tends to get kinky but using a mesh-type sock prevents it, said Cindy.

As the women changed thread colors, Cindy said time is saved by tying the thread ends in a square knot then pulling it on through the needle's eye.

Cutaway or tearaway backing is always placed on the material before the embroidery process begins, said Cindy. Solvy is used for knits and naps similar to terrycloth.

"I do like the specialty work where I can sell everything," Cindy said, (meaning the towels, sweatshirts, etc. included with the embroidery). But individual custom requests are filled, too, such as the leather jacket Cindy did with great fear and quaking for one

gentleman. To her great relief, it turned out fine.

Compu Stitch embroidery also offers applique choices Cindy said.

With their sons, Justin and Ryan Mostoller, ages 12 and 9, the Newmans live at "Eldora," a farm of 400 acres situated near Friedens. They raise Simmentals and Belted Galloways which also make dandy embroider designs.

In fact, their Simmentals recently took top honors at the Keystone International Livestock Exposition by winning the Pa. Capital Futurity for Simmentals. The boys belong to the Junior Simmental Association.

Compu Stitch fronts the Wheeler Industrial Supply building along Route 281 northeast of Somerset, just off the Friedens exit of Route 219.



Cindy Newman, foreground, and Patricia Pritts change thread colors. To save needle threading time the thread ends are tied in a square knot and pulled through the needle.



Cindy Newman, foreground, and Patricia Pritts, assistant, secure the backing material in the hooping process of computerized embroidery at Compu Stitch.

**Homestead
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