

# *With My Needle and Pen*

November 2, 2013

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*Dear Sampler Friends,*

It's hard to believe, but I began publishing my internet sampler newsletter 17 years ago. There were no blogs, Mark Zuckerberg (of Facebook fame) was 12 years old, and I was using a dial-up connection. Today, with so many choices for sharing information, the text-based newsletter is losing its appeal. Therefore, I've decided to take a hiatus from publishing the newsletter. I'm not sure if this will be permanent, but I'm guessing that it will be because of the numerous other and more-effective options available today for needleworkers to share information.

The newsletter, originally called *The Sampler Band*, began in 1997 when a dozen or so of us were interested in doing a stitch-along of Barbara Jackson's *Pineapple Bellpull*. We wanted to share a suggested stitching schedule and provide a forum for exchanging information. Before long, the group members began sharing news of what else they were stitching and news of sampler exhibits, books, and seminars. The word quickly spread about the wealth of information being shared, and by the end of 1997 the group had grown to 100 readers. I eventually changed the name of the newsletter to *With My Needle and Pen*.

Now, 17 years later, there are over 2200 readers worldwide. They include needleworkers, designers, needlework teachers, sampler historians, authors, and museum curators. For many years the newsletter was the place to read about what was happening in the world of samplers. We were among the first to know about exhibitions, seminars, and sampler books. Also, every year there were at least two stitch-alongs. You can see a complete list of the stitch-alongs [here](#).

The newsletter has always primarily consisted of reader submissions. In 1997 I published a newsletter nearly every week. As submissions became fewer and fewer, I reduced the publication frequency to twice a month, and then several years ago I cut back to once a month. As readership has continued to increase, submissions have continued to decrease, and often there is hardly anything sent in other than the monthly stitch-along schedules.

I'll continue my [blog](#) and my [With My Needle Facebook page](#), and I'm always happy to share photos and news.

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the newsletter over the past 17 years, and thanks to all the devoted readers. I've made friends worldwide, and I've been able to see some incredible sampler collections. I'm eternally grateful to all of you for your friendship!

*Ellen*

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