



# Thimbles & Friends Quilt Guild Newsletter

Volume 26 • Issue 6 February 2025

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**Programming Coordinators:**  
Wendy Moore, Wendy Foley

**Principal Officer:** Wendy Moore

**Guild Website:**  
<http://www.thimblesandfriendsquiltguild.org>

**Newsletter Note:** Click on any  
picture or the blue hyperlinks to see  
the Web page sources.

## We would love to hear from you!

All guild members are invited to submit articles for this newsletter. Please write your own articles and e-mail them to us no later than the 20th of the month to allow us time to process each article before distribution by the 25th. If there is no newsletter any month, we will save your article for a future publication.

- *Taryen & Wendy F.*

## 2024-2025 Meeting Dates

The Guild meeting dates have been confirmed for 2024 at The Abington Public Library. Meetings are scheduled from 10:15 AM to 2:00PM:

Retreat Feb 6-9, 2025 (No Feb meeting)	<b>RETREAT!!!</b>
March 1, 2025	<b>Janet Elia Spiffy Binding</b>
April 5, 2025	<b>Video Presentation: Why Quilts Matter – What is Art?</b>
May 3, 2025	<b>Annual Tea Party</b>



**From the Chair**

How many days are left before we enter the great room of our retreat?

Some things I am happy for:

Julia, the theme is perfect for me as I tend to stress over what I'm bringing. I have several Unfinished Objects ready to go. Some might be older than my cat.

Rooming with a new member, which means we'll be besties when the retreat is over. I'm very much looking forward to this, but I never room and tell.

I've discovered a delicious popcorn that I'm bringing might even make Wendy's popped crack jealous.

I wondered if there will be any Pizzelles on the food table?

I am sure each of us are looking forward to our wonderful time together. Just remember to bring your happy face and underwear.

Wendy M. thank you for your work in getting this planned.

- *Janice*

**Programming**

March meeting is a workshop on **Spiffy Bindings** by Janet Elia.

Here is a note from Janet.

"The Thimbles & Friends Q.G. is scheduled for my Spiffy Bindings workshop on March 1st at 10am.

Attached please find the supply list each member needs for the workshop.

If you could let me know roughly how many members you have attending that would help me prepare enough kits for the workshop!

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me!

Happy New Year and Happy Quilting!

Janet"

Wendy M, will need to know how many will be attending.

Attached to this email is the handout with the supply list if you plan on participating. We hope everyone participates.

- *Wendy M. and Wendy F.*

## Retreat 2024 --- 11 more days!!

Our February retreat is right around the corner!! Remember to bring a UFO to finish or at least work on. On Saturday night we'll have a show and tell to show off your progress. You may win a prize for your efforts!

Please bring your nametag lanyard if you have one from previous retreats. If you don't have one, don't worry, we'll make you one!

### Games

All games are optional.

Chocolate Swap – Bring a quality piece of chocolate (bar or larger) in a paper bag to swap

LRC Game: there will be three games. To play, bring three each:

Two-dollar scratch tickets

Fat quarters: red, white, and blue (any combo)

Dollar bills

### Vendor

Christine at Quilter's Corner in Sandwich will come on Friday at 2:00. Please allow her to set up completely before approaching.

### Food

Feel free to bring snacks and beverages to share. No alcohol is allowed on the snack table.

There will be pizza ordered on Friday night for those who wish to participate (cost will be approximately \$6-7)

Lunch on Saturday and brunch on Sunday will be provided.

### Other Stuff

A schedule of events will be provided.

Swap/freecycle table: bring sewing items you no longer need for people to take. Remember that you must take back anything that remains.

Janice will do a Rope Bowl demo on Saturday morning at 10:30! See her article for more information.

*Julia Blanchard*



## Rope Bowl Tutorial at retreat

You must provide your own materials, I will not provide any supplies.

Sewing needles size denim 16

Zig zag function on machine

3/16" clothes line rope. This can be purchases at Ocean State Job Lot or Walmart

Mountain Thread company. <https://www.themountainthreadcompany.com>

If you forget or can't get any rope by our retreat I will contact Christine our vendor if you let me know on Thursday.

I found that cotton works best but but para cord can be used

Thread of your choice.

Small strips of fabric 1"

I will have a great book for reference and some bowls that I've made.

Looking forward to this fun time, but I must caution you that bowl making can be addictive.

- *Janice*

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I've been feeling a bit helpless lately watching the devastating news about the California wildfires. I began researching how I could help as a quilter and I found this website: [www.KennelQuilts.com](http://www.KennelQuilts.com). They are a volunteer organization that is available when disaster strikes. Making and donating Kennel Quilts for pet carriers is a way to provide aid to our animal friends in times of need. The website gives specific guidelines so be sure to check the website before starting these 12" x 18" small quilts.

I recently made and sent 16 Kennel Quilts to San Diego Humane Society in California. Unfortunately, I missed this shipping info when I sent my quilts and could have put a few more in the box. The website says the you can fit about 7 in a flat rate padded envelope and 25 in a medium flat rate box. The site has specific Humane Society addresses for those areas accepting incoming displaced animals so you can ship direct to the places in need.

This is a great way to use leftover blocks and scraps and also help our furry friends! Happy Quilting!

Thanks!

- *Joyce Hochstrasser*

## ***Fiber and fabric Sale***

Friends of the Wareham free library will be sponsoring a Fiber and Fabric sale Friday, February 28 9:30-3:00 and Saturday, March 1 9:30-1:00.

Wareham Library, 59 Marion Rd, Wareham, MA



- Submitted by Wendy F.

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# **The Importance of an Unobstructed Thread Path**

Plus a word on Sewing Machine Ontology

CALE SCHOENBERG

JAN 20



[READ IN APP](#) ↗

A phrase that keeps popping up in my mind is “**sewing machine ontology.**”



Ontology is defined as a set of concepts and categories in a subject area or domain that shows their properties and the relations between them. Therefore, we can think of sewing machine ontology as a set of concepts and categories in the domain of sewing machines that shows properties of sewing machines and the relations between them.

Personally, my understanding of sewing machines deepened tenfold when I was able to wrap my head around bedrock sewing machine concepts, rather than simply memorizing specific information. Instead of encountering a problem and trying to think of another time when I encountered that same specific problem, I began to see a problem and trace my steps back toward the overarching sewing machine concept that the problem is tied to.

With that said, this edition of **The Sewing Machine Newsletter** is dedicated to the concept of the unobstructed thread path. Obstructions to either the upper thread path or lower thread path will absolutely sink your stitch quality, whether it be skipped stitches, thread looping, or thread breakage. It's an important concept to understand because thread path obstructions can manifest in a relatively wide variety of variations.

## **Review: How a Stitch is Made**

A stitch is essentially a knot that gets tied between two sources of thread—the bobbin thread and the needle thread. The knot is formed below the needle plate, when the needle reaches its bottommost position and begins its trajectory upward. As it begins to move upward, the thread forms a loop at the eye of the needle (on the backside of the needle).

Now, this entire time the machine's sewing hook has been rotating around the bobbin case and bobbin. The position of the hook point is timed with the position of the needle, so that the hook passes behind the needle (just above the needle eye) when the needle has risen approximately 2-2.5 millimeters above bottom dead center (the needle's bottommost position).

This precise timing allows the hook point to pass through (or catch) the thread loop as it is formed. After catching the upper thread loop, the hook continues its rotation around the bobbin case, taking the [needle] thread along for the ride. During "the ride", the needle thread and bobbin thread form a loose knot with each other near the top of the bobbin case.

At this point, the stitch is essentially done being made—all it needs now is to be cinched up into the fabric by the take-up lever, then get properly positioned in the middle of the fabric by way of the upper thread tension and bobbin case tension. It's an ingenious process that

requires precision, without much room for error. In turn, it can all be derailed if either thread path is obstructed.

Whether it be the upper thread source (needle thread) or bobbin thread source, the thread must flow freely from the thread source as your sewing machine sews and makes stitches. There are many different points along the thread path where obstructions can occur and prevent the thread from flowing freely. We've actually published quite a few articles on the specifics of these obstructions already, so I will link you to those relevant articles when appropriate. Hopefully, by putting all these examples of thread path obstructions here in one place, we can hammer the concept home.

## Spool Cap

Your spool cap ought to be slightly larger than thread spool itself. If the spool cap is smaller than the thread spool, then the thread is susceptible to getting snagged on the rough plastic of the spool. If it's much larger than the thread spool, then the thread can still get snagged.

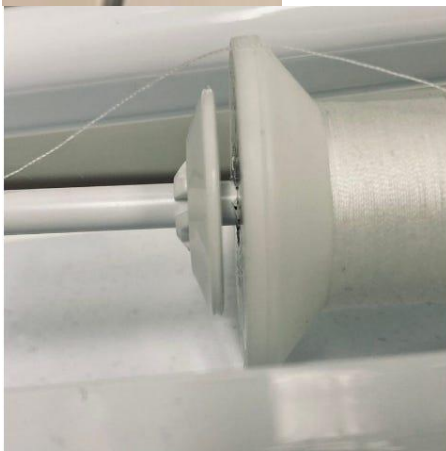
A snag serves as an obstruction to the upper thread flowing freely. It can prevent the thread loop from being formed at the eye of the needle, which results in skipped stitches.



### Spool Caps

[CALE SCHOENBERG](#) · OCTOBER 13, 2024

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too small; too big; perfect

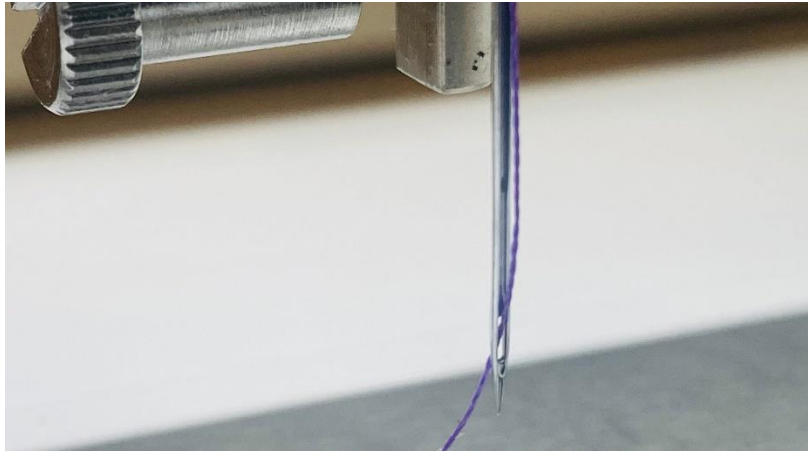
## Needle Eye Too Small or Thread Too Thick

The thread has to flow freely throughout the stitch-making process. One point where this is tested is at the needle eye.

Thread shredding often occurs because the needle eye is too small for the thread to pass through it freely. There are two potential reasons for this.

1. The needle eye could be too small (e.g. using a size 65/9 needle with normal 40/50 weight thread).
2. The thread could be too thick (e.g. using 12 weight thread with a universal 80/12 needle)

Either way, an inharmonious combination of needle eye size and thread weight serves as a thread path obstruction. The needle and thread must be compatible with each other.

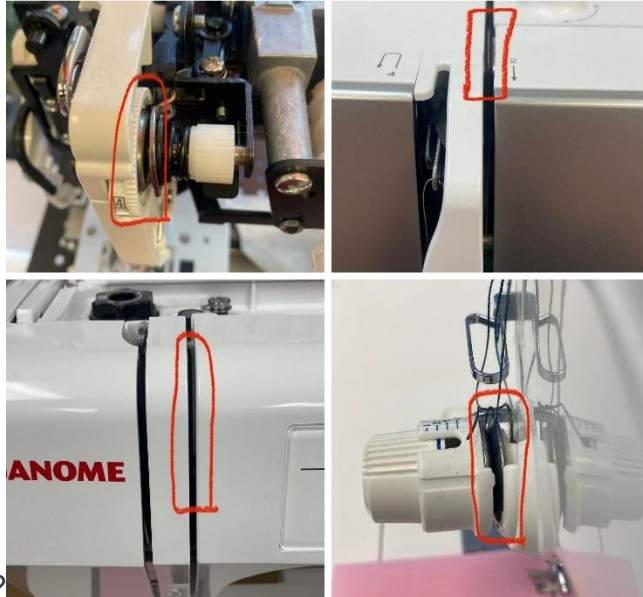


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## Compacted Lint in the Tension Discs

If compacted lint and/or shredded thread becomes wedged between a sewing machine's upper tension discs, then the tension discs will not be able to close properly. If the tension discs don't close onto the thread properly, your upper thread will have zero tension.





Where are your upper tension discs?

The thread must pass through closed tension discs in order for a successful stitch to get made. Otherwise, you will get small loops on the underside of your fabric.



## **Compacted Lint & Shredded Thread: 5 Key Areas of your Sewing Machine to Focus on Cleaning**

[CALE SCHOENBERG](#) · JUNE 24, 2024

[Read full story](#)

## **The Pull Test**

The Pull Test is a troubleshooting test invented by my dad, and it might be the most helpful information I could give a sewist in regard to troubleshooting their machine.



## **The Pull Test**

[CALE SCHOENBERG](#) · MAY 15, 2024

[Read full story](#)

Performing the pull test will tell you whether or not your upper thread is under a zero tension condition. When you pull the thread with the presser foot raised, the thread should pull freely. When you pull the thread with the presser foot lowered, you should feel tension. If you pull the thread with the presser foot lowered and you feel no tension, then your tension discs are not closing on the thread all the way for some reason and you have a problem that needs to be solved.

Another useful aspect of the pull test is that it can indicate other thread path obstruction beyond the tension discs. As I said before, when you pull the thread with the presser foot raised, the thread should pull freely. But what if it's not pulling freely? What if you feel a snag somewhere?

Such situations have arisen numerous times when I've troubleshooted sewing machines. It means there is an upper thread path obstruction somewhere that needs to be cleared. It could be the spool cap is too big, too small, or is damaged with a nick that keeps catching the thread. It could be that there is a nick in the plastic shell of the machine that the thread is getting caught on. It could be compacted lint or shredded thread stuck somewhere other than between the tension discs. Either way, the pull test is one of the first things you should do when experiencing stitch quality issues like thread looping or skipped stitches.

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## Lint/Thread Between the Bobbin Case Tension Discs

Just like the upper thread path needs to be clear of obstruction, so does the bobbin thread. And, just like compacted lint can obstruct the upper tension discs from closing properly, it can cause the same issue with the bobbin case tension discs (circled in red below).



If compacted lint and thread gets stuck between those discs, the discs will not close properly. If the discs don't close properly, then the bobbin thread will have zero tension and get sucked up

to the top of the fabric, manifesting as small loops (a.k.a. eyelashes). If you ever get these small loops on the topside of your fabric, clear out any obstruction between these discs by using canned air or something thin like a pin or needle.

## Needle Strikes on the Needle Plate & Bobbin Case

Needle strikes on the needle plate, bobbin case, and presser foot can serve as thread path obstructions.



Similar to the spool cap, all of these parts are designed to be extremely smooth because the thread slides over across their surfaces during the stitch-making process. Sharp burrs born from needle strikes (as seen in the photos above) can create all sorts of problems, such as thread breakage or unwanted thread loops.



### What Causes Needle Strikes?

[CALE SCHOENBERG](#) · MAY 26, 2024

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## Poorly Wound Bobbin

As strange as it sounds, a poorly wound bobbin is an obstruction the bobbin thread itself.





You want the thread to flow freely from the bobbin. There is a portion of the bobbin thread that is “next up” in the sense that it is the next portion of the bobbin thread that will be used to make a stitch. When you wind a good bobbin where the thread is tight and even, the portion of the bobbin thread that is “next up” should flow freely from the bobbin as it partakes in the stitch-making process. However, if you wind a loose sloppy bobbin (as seen in the photo above), the thread that is “next up” may be buried underneath other loose threads due to the bobbin being wound sloppy and uneven. Therefore, the thread that is “next up” has to pass through the thread it is buried under, which essentially acts as an obstruction in the bobbin thread path.



## The Key to Winding a Good Bobbin

CALE SCHOENBERG

AUGUST 28, 2024

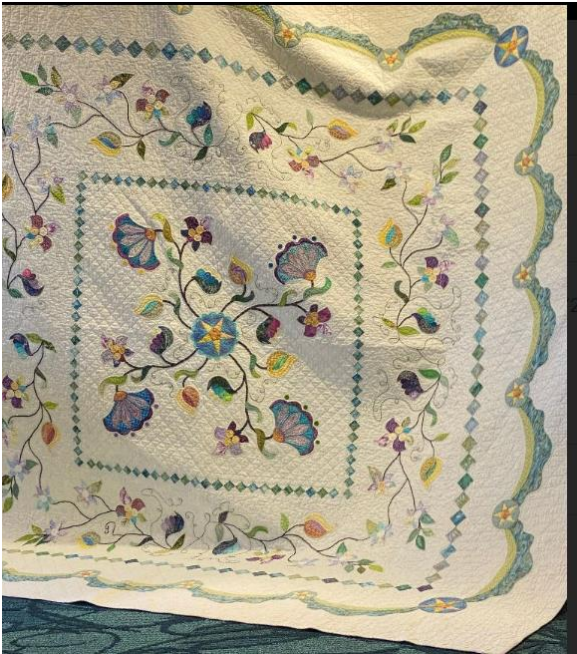
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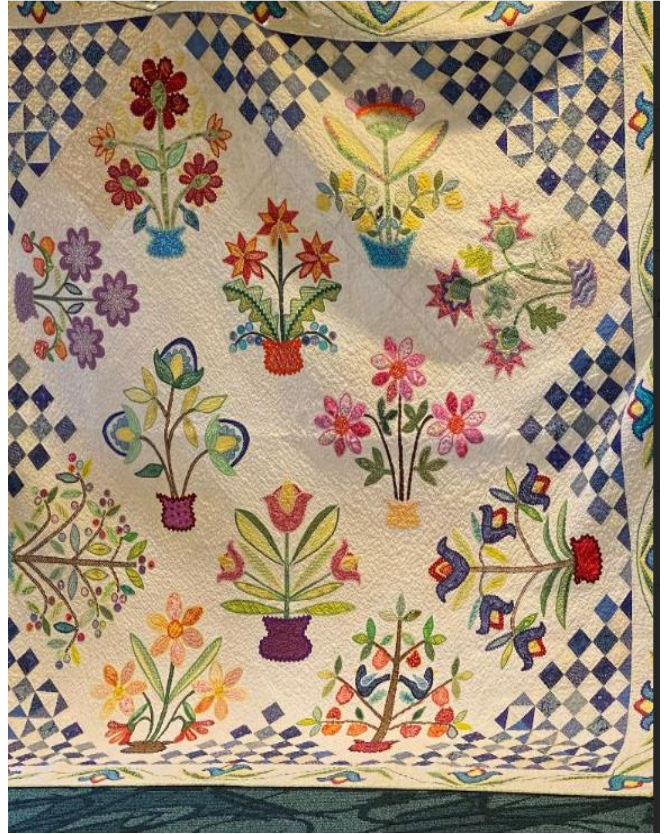
*-Submitted by Wendy M*



**Pictures from Mary Cannizzaro trunk show.**







- Submitted by Claudia Cummings

### **Quilt Fair information**

Quilted Jewels quilt and Craft show in Carver, MA—April 12, 2025  
United Parish of Carver, 115 Main St, Carver, MA

Bayberry Quilters of Cape Cod quilt show- July 30-August 1  
Cape Cod Regional Technical High School 351 Pleasant Lake Ave. Harwich MA



New England  
Quilt Museum

**[New England Quilt Museum](#)**

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## Fierce Planets

A SAQA AND JOHNS HOPKINS WAVELENGTHS GLOBAL EXHIBITION

On View January 14 through May 3, 2025



## Just Wanna Copyright for Makers

On View January 14 through March 29, 2025



## Maker Unknown

SELECTIONS FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

On View January 14 through March 29, 2025

