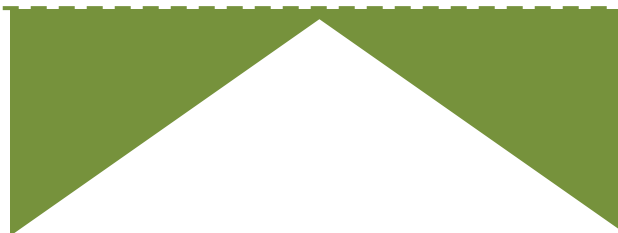




How To Make An Embroidered Banner

By Sheila M. Iskin



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Dear Stitchers,

This really should be titled "How To Turn One Of Mary Corbet's Books Into A Banner!"

In 2009, as a brand new member of the Embroiderers' Guild of America (EGA), I stumbled across Mary Corbet's website, www.needlethread.com. I learned more from Mary's free stitching videos, than any other resource I was able to find. The fact that she answered all the questions I was afraid to ask out loud, and answered the questions I didn't know I needed to be asking, made all the difference when it came to staying in the EGA. I did and have continued learning, and it is due entirely to how Mary Corbet teaches and makes embroidery accessible to every skill level, experienced or not, EGA member or not.

Earlier this year, when our Embroiderers' Guild of America chapter, Valley Quail, was looking for a monthly program, I proposed using the instructions from Mary Corbet's "Stitch Sampler Alphabet" as the basis for a banner. Many of our members are avid readers of Mary's blog. We also have new members who are beginners, and I know from past experience that Mary's instructions are very thorough. This group project was undertaken with the hope that our purchases of her book would help support all the good work that she does through her blog for the home embroiderer and other stitchers to make their own sampler banner.



These Banner instructions will walk you through the process of how we took a finished embroidery and turn it into a finished pennant, and from a set of pennants, to a finished banner. While this banner says, "Peace, Love & Joy", for more ideas you could use: Happy Birthday! Congratulations! Happy Anniversary! Just Married! or Welcome Baby! Or you could make up your own elements. Christy Baty and I used the general instructions on stitch combinations to embroider hearts and an ampersand. You could even use some of Mary's other e-books for inspiration. Wouldn't her Little Things make a great Spring banner? Whether you're making a banner for personal reasons, or for an Outreach project, banners are simply fun to make.

The letters used on this banner are from Mary Corbet's "Stitch Sampler Alphabet". You can purchase that book in order to stitch the letters used in this banner. Her instructions are excellent and thorough! We loved making this banner, and hope you will find the finishing instructions helpful when you make your own.

With many thanks to the Valley Quail Chapter, EGA for their lovely stitching, to Christy Baty of Relics In Situ for donating her editing assistance and expertise (all errors are mine), Mary Corbet for permission to use the letters from her book "Stitch Sampler Alphabet", and to you, stitchers, for keeping the craft so lively!

Sheila Iskin and the Valley Quail Chapter, EGA

Materials used:

- Mary Corbet's "*Stitch Sampler Alphabet*"
- Twill-enough to cut an 8"x 8" square for each letter
DMC Floche No. 16:
Medium Blue (#334)
Light Green (#3348),
Medium Green (#3347)
Yellow (#743)
Orange (# 741)
Pink (#602)
Red (#321)
- Tapestry needle #22 and
crewel needle # 22
- Double Bias tape
- 6" Embroidery hoop
- Tracing tool: pencil, or
water soluble pen
- Pellon light to medium wt.
interfacing (enough for
back all your letters)
- Backing material (enough
to fit all your letters)
- Orvus, or gentle soap
- Cold water
- 9"x 13" Pyrex glass dish
- Clean white dish towel or
pressing cloth to absorb
excess water, but thin
enough to iron through
- Paper-cutting scissors to
cut out template
- Embroidery scissors
- Rotary cutter or pinking
shears
- Metal ruler
- Self healing cutting mat
- Sewing machine
- Chopsticks or knitting
needle
- Iron
- Ironing board
- Pins for pinning binding to
letters before sewing

Letter Set Up:

1. Choose the word or words for your banner and cut enough 8" x 8" squares of twill to account for all the letters.
2. Reduce alphabet from Mary Corbet's *Stitch Sampler Alphabet* to 80%
3. Align the fabric squares so that they are all in the same direction and mark with an arrow ↑ in the upper right corner to ensure that all the letters are traced in the same direction. Twill has a strongly visible directional line to it.
4. Place letters to be traced underneath the fabric, using either a light box or a window with the sun shining through it.
5. Trace the letters in the center of the fabric in pencil, water soluble pen, or favorite transfer medium.
6. Using the directions from *Stitch Sampler Alphabet*, embroider letters.

Banner Assembly Overview:

1. Wash and dry the embroidered letters
2. Trim loose threads on the back of the embroidery
3. Iron on light to medium weight Pellon interfacing to the wrong side of the letter
4. Cut out the template on page 10
5. Trim to the template size (see notes about centering)
6. Assemble all of your materials for finishing work: Sewing machine, binding tape, threads, scissors, etc.
7. Trim the pennant bottom for sewing
8. Sew seams that join fronts and backs together
9. Trim the excess seams off near the bottom of both points
10. Turn inside out using chopsticks or knitting needle
11. Poke the points out
12. Iron pennant
13. Trim the top of the pennants so that they are all the same size
14. Place binding against the letters and pin in place. (Leave a 2 foot allowance of extra binding on each side of the pennant banner for hanging/tying)
15. Sew the bottom of the binding in place
16. Sew the top of the binding in place
17. Complete one last pressing to remove any wrinkles
18. Last check for loose threads

Banner Making Photo Tutorial

Embroider Your Letter

Have some fun! Experiment and play around. Christy, shown here (Figure 1), is using the stitches that Mary teaches in *Stitch Sampler Alphabet* to design a heart. Your letters don't have to look the same as what is shown in Mary's book. They are great techniques to play with!

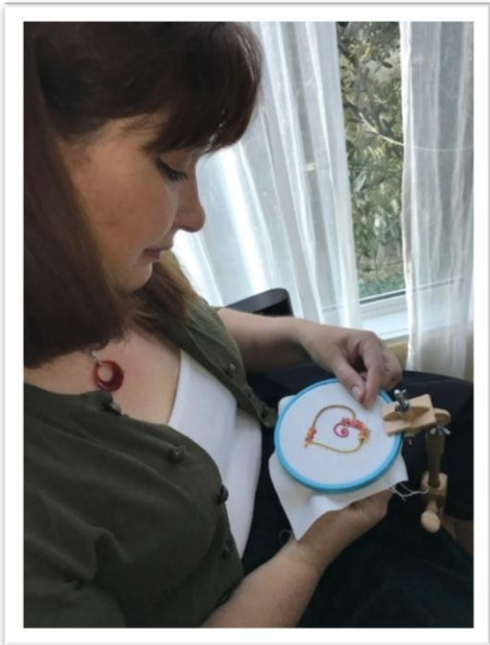


Figure 1 Embroider A Letter (or Heart!)

Note: Sew One Test Pennant Before Cutting Anything

Before you start working with your finished letters, you may find it easier to make up one blank pennant to test the process and directions. (You can also use extra pennant between words. Use an extra piece of blank twill, some extra interfacing, and an extra piece of backing to become familiar with the finishing steps to practice and be comfortable without fear of ruining your work.

Step 1. Wash Embroidery & Trim

Fill glass pyrex dish with 1 tbsp of Orvus and cold water (Figure 2) and soak embroidery to remove hoop marks and dirt. Remove from water and lay flat between a dry soft white dish towel. Keep embroidery face down on ironing board and iron flat while damp. Don't squeeze the towel as this just sets in more wrinkles. (Ironing did smooch some of the embroidery flat.) Hoop marks mostly disappeared, though some were still slightly visible when a smaller than 6" hoop was used on the twill. This is a good time to block your work with pins if you choose.



Figure 2: Letters prior to washing

Step 2. Trim Threads

Before adding interfacing, check the back of the work (Figure 3) to see if there are any long, loose threads that might be visible from the front if they are left floating. Trim close to the back without cutting any knotting. If you add interfacing, it will seal the thread to the ground. Generally, the twill is thick enough to prevent shadowing, but if you

choose a different, thinner or more sheer ground fabric, this may be a concern.



Figure 3: Trim any long, loose threads on back

Step 3. *Add Interfacing

*You can skip this step, but using interfacing reduces wrinkling and ghosting of white seams against the dark green backing, and creates a neater finish overall.

Iron interfacing over the back of the letter (Figure 4) before cutting out the template size.



Figure 4: Iron interfacing to back of letter

Step 4. Cut Out The Template

Cut out square 3"x 3" box window from pennant cutting template on Page 10 (Figure 5). See notes for Step 5 about cutting fabric.



Figure 5: Centering letter in Pennant Template

Don't forget that these letters are traced at 80% of the templates in the book. If you use the letters at 100%, you will need to adjust the size of the pennant template.

Step 5. Trim To Template Size

Align the bottom of the letter to the bottom and center of the template box (Figure 5).

Cut 15 finished embroidery and 15 back pieces.

15 - (4 1/2" x 6 1/4") embroidered letter fronts

15 - (4 1/2" x 6 1/4") rectangles of backing material

The unfinished size of the pennant includes a 1/4" seam allowance (Figure 6). Don't trim the bottom triangle yet.



Figure 6: Trim to 4.5" x 6.25" rectangle

**Don't cut out the bottom triangle of the pennant yet. It's better to do this at Step 7.

Step 6. Assemble Materials

While most of the letters were assembled one at a time, this could be simplified by making an assembly line production first. The photo below shows the materials ready to go if you choose this route instead (Figure 7).

Match up each letter with a backing, placing the letter right sides together.

Since this was other people's embroidery, the pennants were made up one at a time so that the same mistake didn't wreck the project. Assembly line processing would have cut down the time it took to do the finishing work.



Figure 7: Assembly line for letters, interfacing and backing

Step 7. Trim Bottom For Sewing

Place backing and letter together facing side in. Place template over the letter and trim out the pennant triangle. Afterwards your letter and backing should be the exact same size and ready for sewing the seams on a sewing machine. (Figure 8)

Step 8. Sew Seams

DO NOT SEW THE TOP CLOSED - You need to be able to turn the pennant inside out. 😊

Sew 1/4" seams around the sides and bottom of the pennant. Start at the top of the bottom triangle (Figure 9) and sew down to one point, and up the side (Figure 10). Cut the thread. Flip the pennant over, and starting at the top of the bottom triangle again, sew down to the other point and up the other side. (Figure 11). This gives a sharper point after turning the pennant right side out and pressing seams, than if the seams are sewn in one continuous line.



Figure 8: Trim out bottom triangle of pennant



Figure 10: One side completed



Figure 9: Start seams at the top of the bottom point



Figure 11: Starting the second seam on back side

Step 9. Trim Excess Seams

Cut off the extra fabric near the bottom point seams (taking care not to cut the actual points!) (Figure 12). This will make it easier to shape the points, after turning. Otherwise the bulk rounds the points.



Figure 12: Trim off excess seam around bottom points

Step 10. Turn Pennant Inside Out

Reach inside the resulting pocket and pinch the tip of a point with your fingers and pull inside out.

The fabric will feel quite wrinkled, but that is normal. You'll press it back out on Step 12.



Figure 13: Turn pennant right side out

Step 11. Poke the Points Out

Getting the points sharp can be tricky. Insert the fat end of a chopstick and push most of the points out. Then turn the chopstick around and continue poking the fabric to get more of the point to poke out. Finally, but CAREFULLY, use something small and very pointed, such as a Size 7 Knitting Needle, to wiggle the last bit of the point out, focusing mainly on the twill and interfacing side, and not the cotton side. (Figure 14)

The sharper tip of the knitting needle tends to function as an awl, and will easily go through the cotton backing, leaving you with a hole if you are not careful during this process.



Figure 14: Pointy Tools

Step 12. Press Pennant Flat

Place the pennant letter side down (Figure 15), cover with a damp pressing cloth and steam press with a hot iron. (Figure 16).



Figure 15: Iron pennant flat



Figure 16: Use a damp Pressing Cloth to help create steam.

Step 13. Trim Pennant Top

After pressing, trim the top of the pennants so that they are all the same dimension to your sewing. (Figure 17).

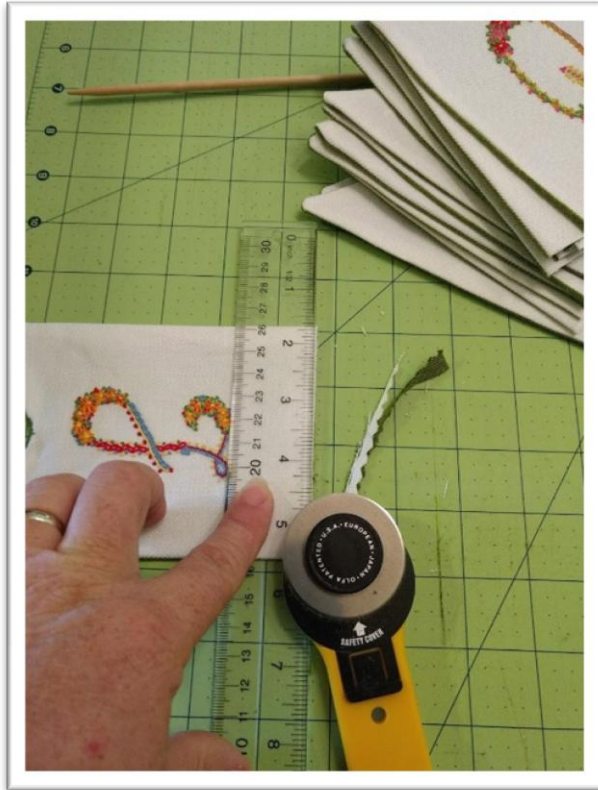


Figure 17: Trim off the top of pennants to same length

Step 14. Pin Binding in Place

Lay out the pennants and pin to your binding. Leave 2 feet of empty binding on each side for tying the banner. Decide how much space you want to leave between the letters. I recommend a minimum of 1/2 to 1" to allow the banner to curve and drape.

In lieu of using a blank pennant between the words, the space was doubled to 1.5" - 2".

Step 15. Sew Bottom Binding

Sew the pennant to the bottom of the bias tape. (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Sew pennant to bottom of bias tape

Step 16. Sew Top Binding

Fold the top of the bias tape over the front of the pennant and sew it down.

Step 17. Sign Your Work

You just never know where this banner will end up! Make sure you sign your work for posterity.

Whether it's a group project, a personal labor of love, or a gift to celebrate a special occasion, some options for signing include:

- Sign the backing before you sew the pennants so that the ink doesn't bleed through.
- If someone owns an embroidery machine, have names machine embroidered.
- Hand Embroider the Name and year



From left to right: members of VQ EGA who stitched this banner:

This is their work: November 2017

Karen Siverson, Merle Ritchie, Shirley Wilson, Sara Angle,
Patty Howard, Christy Baty, Sheila Iskin

(missing from this picture: Yvonne Howard, Kathy Ferrell,
Judy Feifarek, Marge McMahon)



Embroidery from generation to generation: Patty Howard (who stitched the
"P") and daughter, Yvonne Howard (who stitched the "Y").

(And a funny photobomber!)

Pennant Cutting Template

