

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S
GOLDEN
NEEDLE
AWARDS™

And the Winners Are...

You voted - and the results are in for our inaugural *Stitches* Golden Needle Awards for embroidery and digitizing.

BY NICOLE ROLLENDER, KATHERINE SCHNEIDER
AND MAURIN WALCHAK

This year, *Stitches* is happy to launch the annual Golden Needle Awards for excellence in embroidery and digitizing. We asked embroiderers and digitizers to enter their best corporate and fashion designs that display either their technical or artistic abilities.

We received nearly 100 entries that were entered in embroidery and digitizing categories. We sent your digitizing entries to *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board members Jerilee Auclair, owner of Black Eagle Designs and *Busyheadcreations.com*, and Bonnie Landsberger, owner of Moonlight Design. Both judges received each digitizing entry via disk and ran each design in their own shops. They rated the entries on a scale of one to 10 and each was judged in the following categories: overall sewing quality including thread breaks, proper use of underlay, proper punching and registration; use of pathing, trims and color changes; and artistic merit, including overall artistic design and overall artistic appeal.

Embroidery designs were also evaluated by an equally qualified group of *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board members, including Brian Greul, president of Texas Shirt Co. (*asi/343253*); Anna Johnson, owner of Super Embroidery and Screen Printing; Jimmy Lamb, manager of marketing and education at Hirsch International; Jennifer Lasky, sales rep at Melco Embroidery Systems; Bob and Sally Richards, owners of Along Memory Lane; and Michael Savoia, owner of Villa Savoia Inc., who narrowed down the field to a few deserving finalists.

Once submitted to our judges, all the top-rated designs went out to *Stitches* readers - we received more than 19,000 votes for our embroidery and digitizing nominees. The entries ranged in difficulty and design from corporate logos to framed art to full fashion jacket backs.

EDITORS' CHOICE, P. 36



EMBROIDERY,
ARTISTIC, CORPORATE, P. 37



EMBROIDERY, BEST MULTIMEDIA,
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DIGITIZING, ARTISTIC,
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STITCHES EDITORS' CHOICE

"The Music Master," Reene Mock, The Cocoon Room, Homer City, PA

Stitches Golden Needle Awards 2008 Winners

EMBROIDERY AWARDS

Stitches Editors' Pick, \$500 gift certificate from PAS store, sponsored by Brother International

Winner: Reene Mock, The Cocoon Room, for "The Music Master"

DESIGN OF THE YEAR

Artistic, Corporate, \$200 gift certificate, sponsored by Dri Duck Traders Inc. (asi/50835)

Winner: John Sleeper, SJS Enterprises, for "Malt Shop Waitress"

Artistic, Fashion, \$500 gift certificate, sponsored by Bodek and Rhodes (asi/40835)

Winner: Reene Mock, The Cocoon Room, for "The Music Master"

Technical, Corporate, \$250 gift certificate, sponsored by Signatures (asi/88005)

Winner: John Sleeper, SJS Enterprises, for "Kellee"

Technical, Fashion, \$500 gift certificate, sponsored by Anvil Knitwear (asi/36350)

Winner: Ivan Berzak, Embroidery Services Inc., for "The Big Five"

Best Use of Stock Design, \$500 gift certificate, sponsored by China Imprint (asi/43016)

Winner: Margi Miller, Mpres-sions (Embroidery and Gifts), for "Kitten Trio"

Best Multimedia Design, Corporate and Fashion, \$250 gift certificates, sponsored by SanMar (asi/84863)

Winner, Corporate: Timberly Kremer, Rambow Inc., for "Arpin Racing"

Winner, Fashion: Peggy Severt, Pegboard Crafts, for "Autumn Leaves on Jacket"

Accessories, Fashion and Home, \$500 gift certificates, sponsored by Harbour Glen Global Uniforms Inc. (asi/59675)

Winner, Fashion: Allison Showgren, Impressions Embroidery, for "Navajo Grass Dancer Costume"

Winner, Home: Robert Young, Volant Technologies, for "Christ in the Garden"

Single-Color Design, \$100 sample prize pack, sponsored by LAT Sportswear (asi/65948)

Winner: Erich Campbell, Black Duck Inc., for "Dion's Pizza"



This design was digitized from an old calendar picture from the J.M. Stewart Hardware Co., which is now being used on sweatshirts for the Jimmy Stewart Museum in Indiana, PA.

Comprised of more than 55,000 stitches, this piece took Reene Mock, owner of The Cocoon Room, more than a week to digitize. "I did several runs before I got it where I wanted it," she says. "I had to tweak this, and move that, before the design gave me the same feeling that the actual picture did." It's this extra work, including the use of color, texture and the amount of detail in the fills, that garnered Mock the overall grand prize, chosen from all the top winners.

"I fell in love with this picture the minute the manager of the museum showed it to me," Mock says. "I love the dreamy look on the little boy's face as he creates the music and the intensity with which the little girl and the dog are listening. Their body language mirrors their delight in this personal performance."

EMBROIDERY DESIGN OF THE YEAR

ARTISTIC, CORPORATE

"Malt Shop Waitress," John Sleeper, SJS Enterprises, Cripple Creek, CO



SECOND PLACE

"Karters," Mike Fellows, InMotion, Sonoma, CA

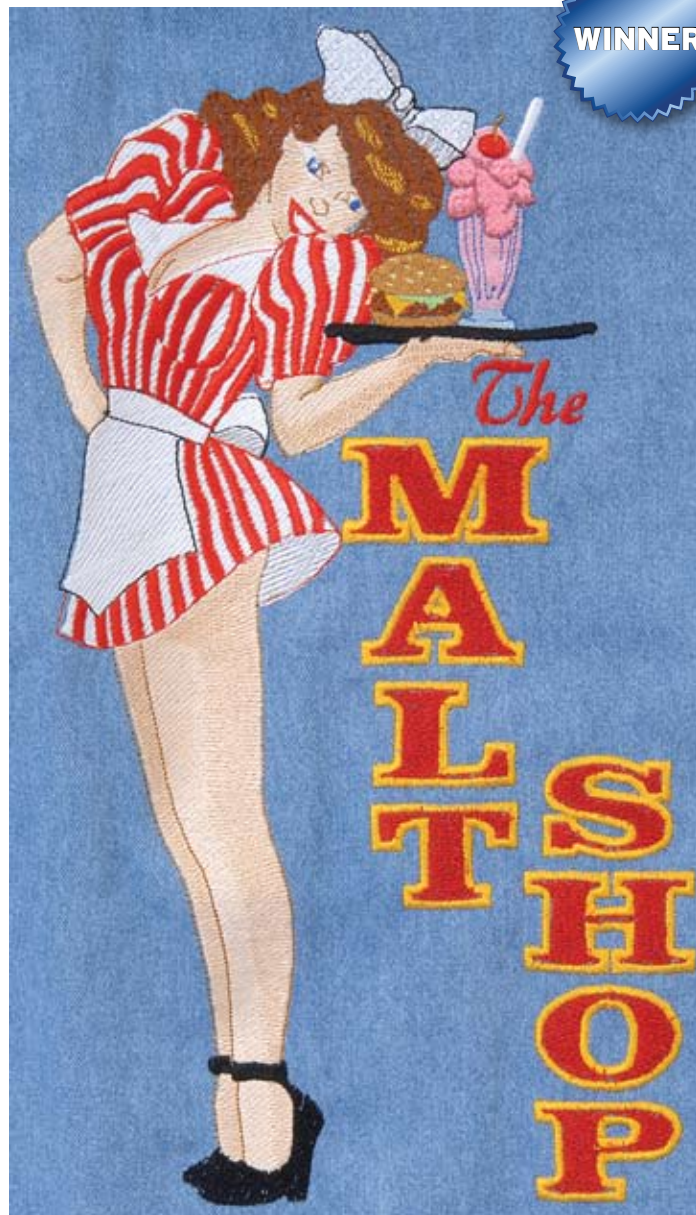
The original design and digitizing was done by Cool Digitizing. This jacket was designed for two board members of the Northern California Karters for their 20-plus years of great service.



THIRD PLACE

"Ridgefield Winery," Rich Medcraft, Stitchwise Embroidery Design, Vancouver, WA

The Ridgefield Winery logo features a full-color cinnamon teal duck, which was digitized from a color photograph.



The Malt Shop waitress design contains a number of custom fill stitches to accentuate the design's details, including the hair and bow, ice cream and the meat patty in the hamburger.

This elaborate design was inspired by a 1930s tin sign used at a soda fountain. SJS Enterprises owner John Sleeper's wife wore the Malt Shop Waitress to celebrate July 4 at a local steakhouse where she was a server. "The group she worked with was very fun-loving and always did something special for various holidays," Sleeper says.

Sleeper used a lot of programmed fill stitches to add depth to the design; for a 3-D quality, he employed a loop pile stitch with a gold border in the lettering to mimic lettering on a high school letterman's jacket. "This lettering style along with the overall look adds to the 1930s look I was trying for," he says.

EMBROIDERY DESIGN OF THE YEAR ARTISTIC, FASHION

"The Music Master," Reene Mock, The Cocoon Room, Homer City, PA



Reene Mock, owner of The Cocoon Room, credits the symmetry between the three main characters, as well as the colors, with making the design a work of art. The biggest challenge, she says, was just completing the design. "There's a lot of detail in this picture, and it took many, many struggling hours to get it just right," she says. "The background was especially worrisome for me. I wanted to keep the look of the old barn, but without adding another 1 million stitches. I opted for a light fill done in layers, as if I was painting the picture. This allowed me to use fewer actual colors and still have the look of many different shades of thread."

SECOND PLACE

"Quilted Jacket," Nancy Sedar, Nancy Sedar Designs, Denver, CO

This original-design reversible quilted jacket with two sides features embroidery and appliqué. Pomegranates and wheat decorate the jacket back; olives and olive branches circle the shawl collar and extend onto the front of the jacket.



THIRD PLACE

"Black Denim Jacket," Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany

This black denim jacket with a full jacket back design, including rays, rope, a heart with sequins and appliquéd wings, is also embellished on the sleeves, collar and pockets. All design work is original.



EMBROIDERY DESIGN OF THE YEAR TECHNICAL, CORPORATE

"Kellee," John Sleeper, SJS Enterprises, Cripple Creek, CO



WINNER

"Kellee is a likeness of a very talented artist I know," says John Sleeper, owner of SJS Enterprises. "I was attempting to get her to draw for me on a couple of projects a number of years back. She had this self-portrait on her Web site, which I thought was very unique. So, to entice her to work for me, I digitized her portrait for the design on the back of the green jacket."

In this design, Sleeper wanted to achieve depth and texture. For example, he used a loop-pile stitch for the arm warmers and the lettering instead of a standard satin stitch; he also used a custom fill stitch to create wavy hair.



SECOND PLACE

"Karters," Mike Fellows, InMotion, Sonoma, CA

The original design and digitizing was done by Cool Digitizing. This jacket was designed for two board members of the Northern California Karters for their 20-plus years of great service.



EMBROIDERY DESIGN OF THE YEAR TECHNICAL, FASHION

"The Big Five," Ivan Berzak, Embroidery Services Inc., Atlanta. Digitizing by Tamara Holmes at estitch

Ivan Berzak, owner of Embroidery Services Inc., faced some initial challenges with this design. "Essentially, the five big game animals posed a problem of balanced size, stitch density and a dimensional look," he says. However, Berzak concentrated on the stitch direction and stitch effects that created the dimensional look of the fur and skin. "I sewed the sample in many variations of thread color choices to ultimately arrive at the final presentation," he says.



WINNER

SECOND PLACE

"Black Denim Jacket," Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany



This black denim jacket with a full jacket back design, including rays, rope, a heart with sequins and appliquéd wings, is also embellished on the sleeves, collar and pockets. All design work is original.

THIRD PLACE

"Butterflies," Thomas L. Moore Jr., Sandy Graefser, Jennifer Creamer, Kathy Buckman and Lisa Klutho, Strawberry Stitch Co., St. Louis



These delicate butterflies were embroidered on jeans.

EMBROIDERY

BEST USE OF STOCK DESIGN

"Kitten Trio," Margi Miller, Mpressions, Union Mills, NC

WINNER



This cool stock design was embroidered on a fine jersey V-neck T-shirt with $\frac{3}{4}$ -length sleeves.

Mpressions owner Margi Miller submitted this kitten trio stock design on matching blue camouflage. What makes this design unique, Miller says, is how the design blends with the shirt's pattern. "When I wear the kitten trio design on the blue camo shirt, the compliments are endless and the requests for me to duplicate this shirt have been numerous," Miller says. Since the design was such a fun project for her, Miller says the only challenge she encountered was finding the right backing for the lightweight shirt: She eventually used a nylon mesh made of soft, sheer, translucent embossed nylon. The kitten trio (11003) design is from the Embroidery Library.

SECOND PLACE

"White Jacket With Peacock Design," Jeanette Jansch, Mini More Stitches, Houston



This design is on a White Chaps jacket using peacock feather designs from Embroidery Library and a peacock tote design on the sleeve cuffs from Secrets of Embroidery. The jacket is enhanced with Swarovski crystals from Design By Dawn. "This jacket was created as a raffle prize for a 10-year-old girl's benefit. She has leukemia, and this jacket will be used for either a raffle or silent auction to raise money for a bone marrow transplant," Jeanette Jansch says.

THIRD PLACE

"Western-Style Jacket," Garold and Sue Dodds, Sew Fun! Embroidery, Hemet, CA



Stock designs were used to decorate this Western-style jacket. The back features a chuck wagon, and the front-breast pocket has an outline of a longhorn. There are also horse-shoes and a saddle on the sleeves.

EMBROIDERY, BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN CORPORATE

"Arpin Racing," Timberly Kremer, Rambow Inc., New London, MN

WINNER



Created by Timberly Kremer, graphic designer at Rambow Inc., this embroidery appliqué logo design on a black sweatshirt was a project for client Arpin Racing. What makes this design unique, Kremer says, is the use of color. "The orange outline thread around the gold appliqué gives the appliqué an orange tint," she says. This logo design, made up of 28,251 stitches, flows technically and creatively.

Kremer's goal in creating the original design was to offer "simplified, yet stylish, embroidery of the company's logo," she says. "Several gradients and outlines were eliminated to make the logo less busy and to keep the stitch count down."

SECOND PLACE

"Monticello Baseball,"
Timberly Kremer,
Rambow Inc.,
New London, MN



This red hooded sweatshirt features a front embroidery appliqué design.

EMBROIDERY, BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN FASHION

"Autumn Leaves on a Jacket," Peggy Severt, Pegboard Crafts, Coldwater, OH



WINNER

Peggy Severt, owner, digitizer and embroiderer of Pegboard Crafts, decorated this ready-made jacket with appliquéd autumn leaves. Each leaf and floral element began as a single design; they were combined to create this stunning design following the jacket's princess lines. Hot-fix Swarovski crystals replace some of the embroidered flowers to give the design a little bling. All of this design's elements were created from the entrant's own original artwork.

SECOND PLACE

"Black Denim Jacket," Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany



This black denim jacket with a full jacket back design, including rays, rope, a heart with sequins and appliquéd wings, is also embellished on the sleeves, collar and pockets. All design work is original.

EMBROIDERY BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN ACCESSORIES, FASHION

"Navajo Grass Dancer Costume," Allison Showgren, Impressions Embroidery, Spanish Fork, UT



WINNER

Sewn for a friend's son who was going into his first year of Native American grass dancing, Allison Showgren, owner of Impressions Embroidery, put much of herself into this design. "I was so grateful to have the opportunity to do this for him," she says. For a popular dance that's full of color and movement, the shawl is an integral part of a dancer's costume.

The embroidery design, which incorporated stock designs from Great Notions, the grass dancer is very typical of traditional Navajo costumes, Showgren says. The most challenging aspect of the design was the thin fill the design offered. To finesse the design, "the best information I gathered was by just testing stitch-outs," she says.

EMBROIDERY, BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN ACCESSORIES, HOME

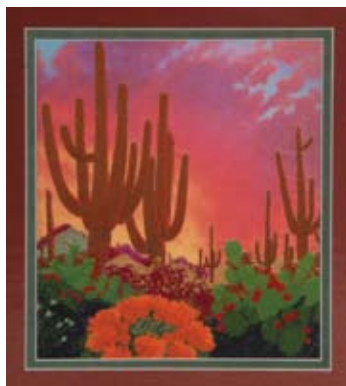
"Christ in the Garden," Robert Young, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX

WINNER



This framed piece of more than 500,000 stitches represents Christ before he was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane; it was designed from a photograph taken of a 400-year-old stained glass window in the Vatican in Rome.

Robert Young, owner of Volant Technologies, who digitized and embroidered this design, describes it as the anchor piece in the religious section in Volant's Embroidered Art Studio/Gallery. Varied stitch directions give the design dimension, Young says, "such as in Christ's robe and the entire sky," he says. Young's biggest challenge was in creating the design from a photograph. "Many digitizers say that the finished product can only be as good as the art provided usually," he says.



SECOND PLACE

"Embroidery Over a Canvas," Justin Armenta, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX

This multimedia framed artwork has embroidery superimposed on a printed canvas. This is the entrant's original design.

THIRD PLACE

"L'innocence," James Snoke, Snazzy New One of a Kind Embroidery, Rawlings, VA

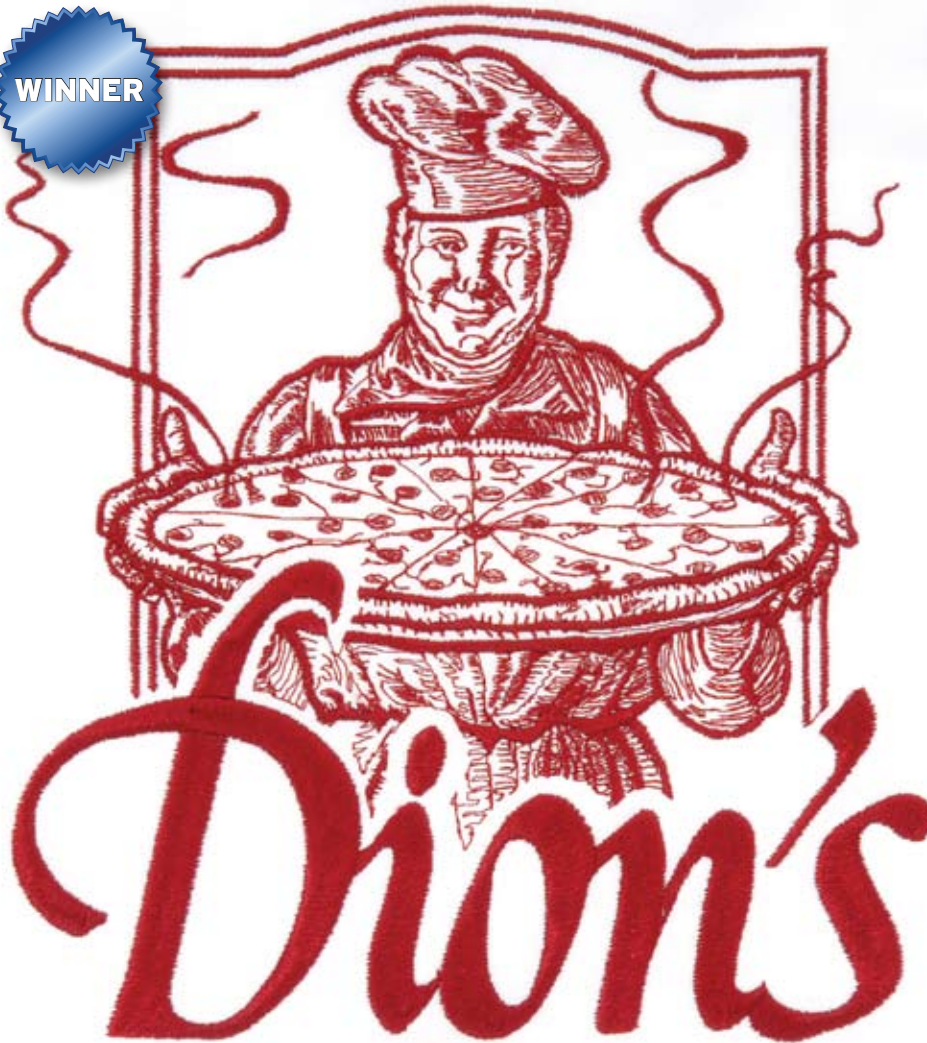
"I wanted the threads to appear more as brush strokes, so it would be more like art than the typical digitized design," James Snoke says. The artwork measures 9.93 inches by 5.14 inches and contains 86,516 stitches and 16 colors. This digitized artwork is inspired by the painting "L'innocence" by William-Adolphe Bouguereau.



EMBROIDERY, BEST SINGLE COLOR CORPORATE

"Dion's Pizza," Erich Campbell, Black Duck Inc., Albuquerque, NM

WINNER



For client Dion's Pizza, Erich Campbell, embroidery digitizer/designer and e-commerce administrator at Black Duck Inc., ensured the design had a craftsman-made quality by digitizing all of the stitches in the central figure manually. "Being that Dion's Pizza was basing all of the décor in its new shops on this artwork, I knew the embroidery had to be impeccable and it had to capture the hand-tooled, engraving-like quality of the original without losing its warm and inviting tone," Campbell says.

Each stitch, he says, with the exception of the satin borders and the split-satin text was placed individually. "Maintaining good stitch values while dealing with a very detailed piece of art and having to be limited by screen real estate as to how much of the art could be viewed at once meant that the pathing was an exercise for my memory, as well as my creativity and ability, to interpret art into stitches," Campbell says.

SECOND PLACE

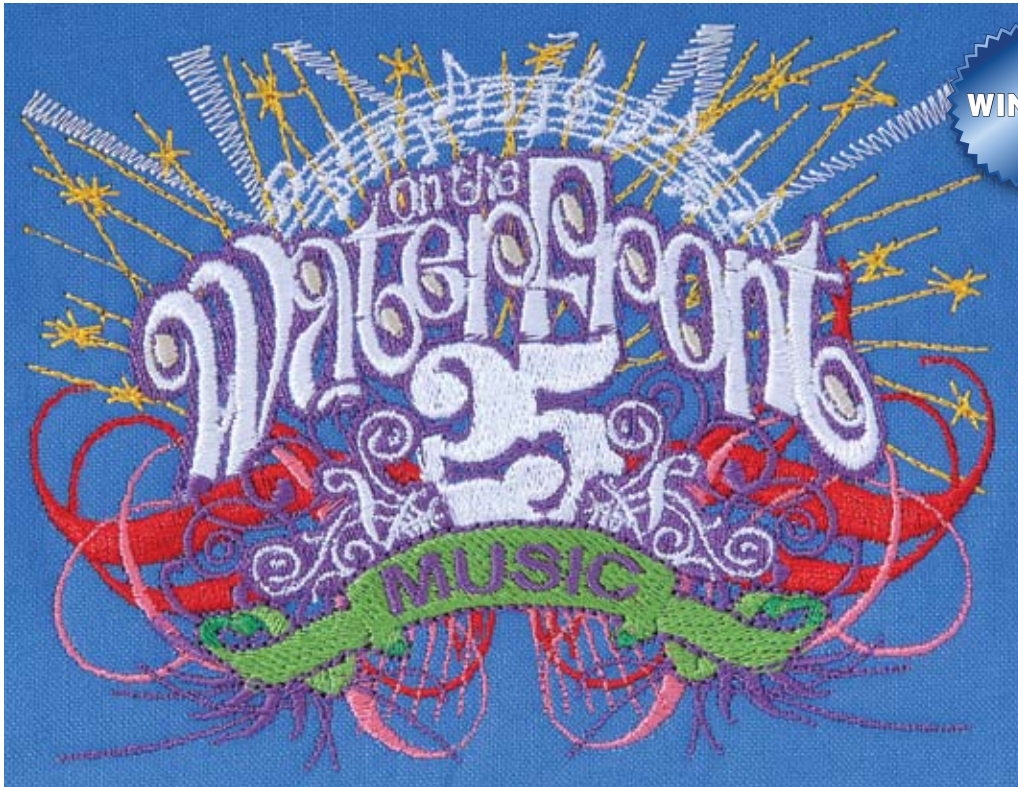
"Culinary Catering" logo design, Brock Canfield, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX



Digitizing judge's comments: "Well done! I rate this design a nine." Designs were rated overall from 1-10 (with 10 being the best).

DIGITIZING, ARTISTIC CORPORATE

"On the Waterfront," Robert Young, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX



WINNER

Stitches Golden Needle Awards 2008 Winners

DIGITIZING AWARDS
Artistic, Corporate and
Fashion, \$500 gift certi-
ficates, sponsored by NYNE
(asi/43778)

Winner, Corporate: Robert
Young, Volant Technologies,
for "On the Waterfront"

Winner, Fashion: John
Gentile, Volant Technologies,
for "Bulldog"

**Technical, Corporate and
Fashion,** prizes worth \$250
in each category: Outer
Banks rolling bags filled
with Outer Banks products,
sponsored by Hanes/Outer
Banks (asi/59528)

Winner Corporate: Barbara
Stuemer, TexDesign, for
"Stanley Cap"

Winner, Fashion: Barbara
Stuemer, TexDesign, for
"Black Denim Jacket"

**Best Multimedia Design,
Fashion,** \$500 gift certi-
ficate, sponsored by Hartleigh
Creations (asi/60104)

Winner: Barbara Stuemer,
TexDesign, for "Black Denim
Jacket"

**Best Home Accessories
Design,** \$500 gift certificate,
sponsored by Fersten World-
wide Inc. (asi/53974)

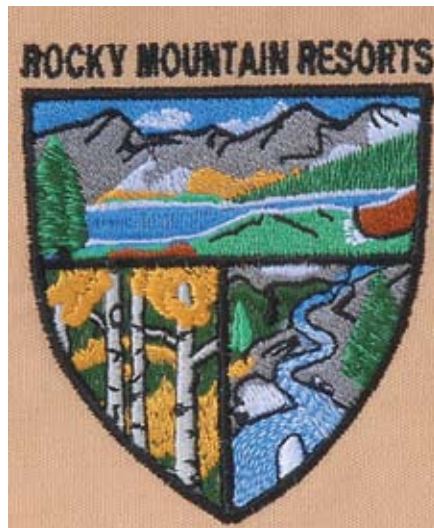
Winner: Terri Hanson, Ter-
radon Embroidery, for "Jack
Russell Terrier"

Robert Young, owner of Volant Technologies, was doing regular work for clients when he embroidered this ready-made jacket with "On the Waterfront." Taking individual leaf and floral element designs and combining them to create this larger piece, Young used a variety of color changes. He attributes the additional colors to allowing most operators, regardless of skill or machine ability, to still produce a quality product.

SECOND PLACE

"Rocky Mountain Resorts"
logo, Nancy Sedar
Sherman, Nancy Sedar
Designs, Estes Park, CO

This logo was digitized as a left-chest design to go on employee uniforms. The artwork was a sew-out the customer had supplied, since it had been digitized before. Digitizing judge's comments: "Loved the water accents and the runs over the water - very effective and eye-catching. The lettering has very small openings, but just enough to let the garment peek through. I rate this design an eight." Designs were rated overall from 1-10 (with 10 being the best).



THIRD PLACE

"Stanley Cap," Barbara Stuemer,
TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany

Digitizing judge's
comments: "Excel-
lent execution
overall. The satin
work in the middle
is excellent, as is the
background fill. I rate
it a 9.8. It's a tight
design." Designs
were rated overall
from 1-10 (with 10
being the best).



DIGITIZING, ARTISTIC FASHION

"Bulldog," John Gentile, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX



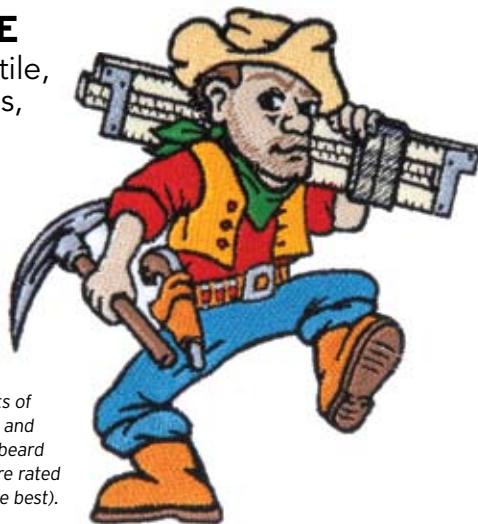
Our digitizing judge rated this design a 10 for the use of special effects: 'The technique to raise satin columns makes it almost appear as if foam had been used.'

Created by John Gentile, digitizer at Volant Technologies, this bulldog design measures 2.5 inches by 2.5 inches and has a total of 16,431 stitches. "Since every design can be digitized a countless number of ways, this is what makes each design in its own right artistic," he says. "The way you make a design sew-out and create its own depth with thread laying over thread is an artistic skill, not something that can be placed into a program and automatically generated."

Beginning with the design outline, Gentile adjusted thickness and curvature to provide extra detail in his design when coming back through with the satin fill areas. He eliminated the need to stop for manual or automatic trimming by covering up any travel stitches. "Once I felt comfortable with the outline, I layered the satin fill areas to create depth in the eyes, ears nose, areas of the chin, cheeks, lips and body," he says.

SECOND PLACE

"Miner," John Gentile, Volant Technologies, San Antonio, TX



Digitizing judge's comments: "Lots of attention to detail on the buttons and tools; there's a nice blend on the beard area. I rate it an 8.5." Designs were rated overall from 1-10 (with 10 being the best).

THIRD PLACE

"Quail Design on Camo Fabric," Teri Laux, Promotional Designs Inc., Green Bay, WI



The digitizing judge rated this design a 10 for use of special techniques and for use of stitch angles and types and special fills. Overall, this design was rated a nine.

DIGITIZING, TECHNICAL CORPORATE

“Stanley Cap,” Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany

ASI AWARDS ESP ONLINE TO WINNERS

ASI is pleased to offer all *Stitches* Golden Needle Awards top winners one year of the decorator version of ESP Online.

The all-new ESP Online for decorators includes:

- ✓ Access to top promotional product and wearables suppliers
- ✓ Virtual sample capability
- ✓ Customizable presentations

For a complete list of embroidery and digitizing winners, go to pages 36 and 46. For more information about ESP Online, contact Tamara Reckard at (215) 953-3046.

Created by Barbara Stuemmer, owner of TexDesign, the Stanley lettering and image taken from a customer's steam car booklet is embroidered on a heavy, brushed-cotton, low-profile unstructured cap. Stuemmer's translation of the flat stock car image into a more dimensional image with color choices and stitch types is what classifies this design as a work of art.

In working with an unstructured cap, Stuemmer had to make sure the angle of the cap was always correct, to prevent bunching and to maintain an even design layout. “I angled the left and right side to the baseline,” she says. Another challenge was really working the design's multiple color elements. “I wanted to make the design come alive,” she says.



DIGITIZING, TECHNICAL FASHION

“Black Denim Jacket,” Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany



Barbara Stuemmer, owner of TexDesign, used more than 90,000 stitches to create the design work on this black denim jacket. Working with 40 and 30 weight rayon thread, 60 weight polyester thread, and needle numbers ranging from 60 through 90, Stuemmer used various fabrics including appliqué materials to achieve her unique design look.

“This design is very artistic because of how it was imagined,” Stuemmer says. Inspired by a clip-art design, she added her own elements to the design.

SECOND PLACE

“Samoan Athlete's Jacket,”
Marv Ruddell, Westway Marketing,
Murrieta, CA



The design was originally 141,000 stitches, but was reduced for this competition, and was sewn on a letterman's jacket back. It was for a Samoan student who lettered in wrestling, track (discus) and football; the three images depict the student in these sports.

DIGITIZING, BEST MULTIMEDIA DESIGN FASHION

"Black Denim Jacket," Barbara Stuemmer, TexDesign, Tornesch, Germany

Created by Barbara Stuemmer, owner of TexDesign, this vibrant digitized design incorporates a variety of bright color hues. Created for a trade show last year, she wanted to show multiple techniques, such as sequin applications and appliqué, in one garment. Inspired by a clip-art image, she wanted to add her own unique touches to this design. Using appliqué material in the wings of the design, she stitched the wings using a polyester thread and plastic foil.

"Mixing different materials at once was challenging," Stuemmer says. "I adjusted my machine tension to make sure the tensions were correct for all of the different threads." She also changed needle sizes to correlate with the various threads, of which she used eight different types in total. To make the corners of the collar stand out, Stuemmer used a reverse appliqué and stuffed it so that it popped out from the jacket.

"This really is an airy design - a very unique use of the corneli lace look," our digitizing judge says.



WINNER

DIGITIZING BEST HOME ACCESSORIES DESIGN

"Jack Russell Terrier," Terri Hanson, Terradon Embroidery, Brooklyn Park, MN

SECOND PLACE

"Spirit of Santa," Teriann Shrum, Kitty Kitty Designs and La Femme Rose, Conway, AR.

Shrum designed and manually digitized this design for release for the December 2008 Christmas season.



WINNER

"This is an excellent representation of the dog as compared to the photo. Excellent hair and run stitch work," our digitizing judge says.

Created by Terri Hanson, owner of Terradon Embroidery, this digitized design was a project for an embroiderer customer's dog owner. What makes this design unique, Hanson says, is her technique that simulates a real fur look on this Jack Russell Terrier named Reggie.

NICOLE ROLLENDER is editor of *Stitches*; KATHERINE SCHNEIDER is a PA-based writer; and MAURIN WALCHAK is an editorial intern for *Stitches*.