



HIBISCUS QUILT GUILD GAZETTE

GUILD LIFE SECTION & OTHER FUN INFO

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SEPTEMBER 2025 EDITOR: Jan Smirnow, PHOTOS: Christine Burtch, Cheryl Petenbrink





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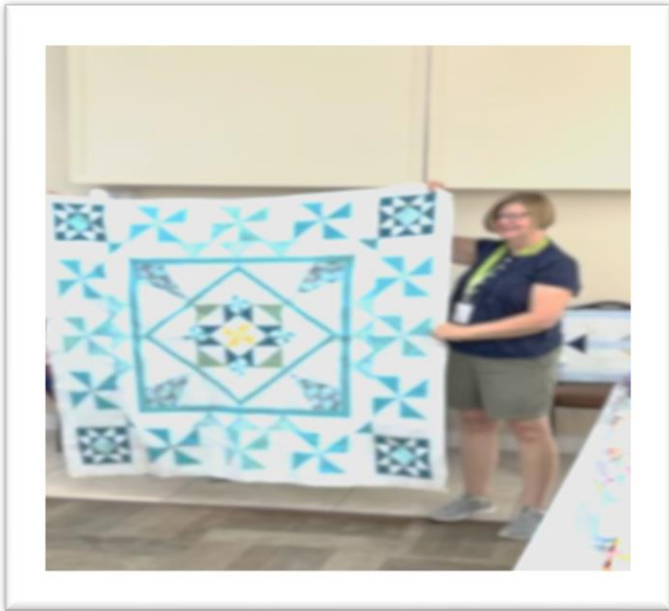
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CUTTING ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE KAYE





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Quilt a Bit

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Hours: Mon-Fri 10am to 5pm
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FULL SERVICE QUILT SHOP
• Quality Cotton, Beautiful Batiks,
Wool, Fat Quarters, Kits, Patterns,
Books, Notions
• Longarm Quilting Services Available
• Classes in our Large Classroom



why cotton threads differ from polyester threads. Both fibers have excellent utility as threads.

A: It ultimately comes down to the way the fibers are made and how they absorb dye. Cotton is a spun thread which means many tiny strands (cotton staples) of fiber are twisted together to create a single thread. These fibers have a natural matte finish and tiny "hairs" along their surface, which uniquely reflect light. Even with deep-colored dyes, cotton tends to produce colors that

are more subdued and have a softer, natural look. Learn more about [our cotton quilting threads](#).

Polyester is more of a chameleon. Polyester threads can be made to mimic the cozy, matte appearance of cotton, such as [QuiltMaker](#) (poly-wrapped poly core), or take on the glossy luster of silk, like our [Elite](#) thread (made from high-sheen trilobal polyester). Alternatively, they can land somewhere in between, as seen in [Perfection](#) or [Precision](#) threads (multi-filament polyester). Due to its smooth surface and the way it interacts with dye, polyester can achieve a color saturation that's difficult to match with cotton. For example, a high-sheen polyester could be dyed in a hundred distinct shades of blue, each crisp and vibrant, while cotton would naturally soften those same blues into fewer distinguishable colors.

Both fibers have their place, and it comes down to user preference when to use cotton or polyester. We love both fibers. Most quilters will say that cotton threads offer a timeless, natural beauty, while polyester threads open the door to bold, eye-catching color possibilities. The right choice depends on the desired look and feel for your project.

Two New Educational Articles: [Learn about Cotton Staples and Tension](#)



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Discover why the length of a cotton fiber (cotton staples) can make all the difference in your quilting. From piecing to machine quilting to handwork, choosing high-quality cotton threads results in smoother stitches, stronger seams, and less lint in your machine. Learn how to choose the perfect cotton quilting thread for your project and see why extra-long staple cotton is every quilter's best friend.

Mastering balanced tension is the key to achieving smooth, even stitches that give your quilts a professional look and feel. In this educational article, we review how to troubleshoot tension problems, match threads and needles, and fine-tune settings when stitching with cotton, polyester, and nylon threads. With a few simple adjustments, you can prevent looping, puckers, and breakage.

Q: I've tried using invisible thread for appliqué on my home machine and for stitch-in-the-ditch on my longarm. I'm fairly new to longarm quilting but feel confident with my home machine. Still, my monofilament thread keeps breaking, and I know others use it without trouble. What am I doing wrong?

A: You're not alone. Many quilters experience similar frustrations when they start using invisible threads, especially across different machines. The good news is

that the fix often comes down to a few simple adjustments.

First, lower your top tension more than you might think. On your home machine, set it to about 1.0. On your longarm, skip two of the three holes in the three-hole thread guide and loosen the tensioner. The tension should be sufficiently loose that you can pull the thread through the needle with little resistance. A loose tension helps the thread pass smoothly without extra stress. It's easier to start with loose tension and gradually increase it to achieve a balanced stitch than to begin with tight top tension, make a small adjustment to loosen it, only to have the thread break and be forced to restart the process multiple times until it is sufficiently loose.

Second, use the correct needle. A [Topstitch #70/10](#) is ideal for home machines. For longarms, use a #14 (3.0). The larger eye allows the thread to move easily without rubbing or breaking.

Third, think about the thread itself. Monofilament threads don't follow the same weight system as most threads, like 50 wt., 60 wt., etc. They are

measured in thousandths of an inch. Our [Wonder Invisible Nylon](#) is loved for its flexibility and measures 4/1000 inch in thickness (*for reference, human hair typically ranges from 3 to 6/1000ths of an inch*).



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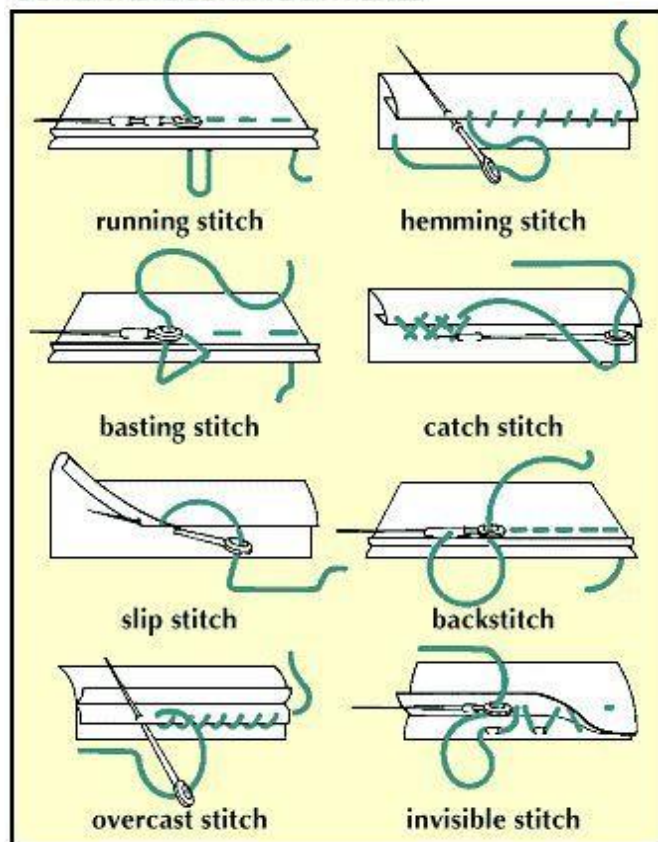
Last year, we introduced a new monofilament thread called [Invisible Thread Poly](#). It's slightly thicker at 5/1000ths of an inch, but quite a bit stronger, and is a favorite of longarm quilters. In fact, this extra 1/1000th inch boosts its tensile strength (ability to resist breaking) by ~50%. The thread is nearly invisible but much easier to work with on your machine.

With the right needle and proper tension adjustments, quilting with invisible thread becomes a much more enjoyable experience.

BOB PURCELL



SOME BASIC SEWING STITCHES



Thanks Debbie for keeping us

UP TO DATE

QUILTFEST – September 18-20th

QuiltFest Jacksonville will be hosting its 38th annual show: Color Our World on September 18-20th, 2025, and we would love to show your quilts!

Our show has thirteen different categories from pieced, to applique, or Art and Modern. Please share with your members! The quilt registration fee is \$30 for non-members of the seven hosting guilds, and we do accept shipped quilts! Each category offers monetary prizes for the first three places as well as Honorable Mentions and Judges Recognition ribbons. The deadline is fast approaching on July 25th, and you can find all the information to register your quilt here:

[QUILT REGISTRATION FORM | QuiltFest Jacksonville](#)



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How to use Quilting Rulers

<https://pin.it/1flx5ybvy>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/2322237293183603/>

“BEHIND EVERY QUILTER IS A B I G STASH”

“A MESSY HOUSE IS THE SIGN OF A HAPPY QUILTER”

“IT’S NOT A MESS, IT’S IDEAS LYING AROUND EVERYWHERE”

“HAPPINESS IS A FULL BOBBIN”

“MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE”

If you have any questions and/or need additional information, please let me know. I can be reached at 561-790-5245 or by e-mail at lorie@southfloridafair.com. I look forward to seeing your creations.

Lorie Stinson, CFE

Exhibits & Special Events Manager

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HOW TO USE QUILT RULERS

<https://pin.it/1flx5ybvy>

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Upcoming 2026 South Florida Fair will be here before we know it! The dates are January 16 - February 1, 2026. Our theme will be “**Party with the Pirates**”. We value your participation and hope you will enter your favorite categories. Enter a few different items and tell your friends to enter also. This is a fun way to show off your work and get some bragging rights!

For your convenience, the rules, regulations, classes, and divisions can be downloaded from the South Florida Fair’s web site www.southfloridafair.com.

