



eNewsletter

The nation's largest sewing show, tailored for novices and experts alike!

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2018 Expo Dates - March 1-4, 2018 Puyallup, Washington

Dear Expo Goers,

As summer approaches I am sure you are in the garden rather than your sewing room. However, as you might guess, the Expo crew is hard at work on next year's Sewing and Stitchery Expo. The evaluations for 2017 have been done and it is time once again to comment on many of your concerns and questions. But first, let me thank you all that send us so many kudos and thanks. We appreciate your kind words and thoughtfulness.

Each year there are hundreds of suggestions we get from attendees and we try to address them all. Some we can do something about while others we pass on to the appropriate parties responsible. As an example, all your comments regarding specific speakers will be shared with that speaker. Your comments about facilities like ADA doors on buildings, bathroom problems, food problems, etc. will be sent to the Fairgrounds. So, I will answer what I can.

ADA Handicapped Parking

You are so right; there is never enough handicapped parking. I am not sure what can be done because we have added a lot of it and adding more will not solve the problem if it's so far back in the lot. However, the Expo team will certainly look into any possibilities that exist to improve it.

Admission/4 Day Passes

Some have commented they cannot get to 8:30 am classes on time. If you have an 8:00 am class (3-Needle only), you can get in the gates at 7:30 a.m. with an "early admission pass" that you should receive with your tickets. If you do not get that pass, please call the ticket office before coming.

Everyone else is allowed in the gates at 8:00 am and you can go to the eating areas of the Pavilion or Showplex and sit or drink coffee. Vendor booths do not open until 8:30 a.m.

Carts

This is a continual problem for everyone. If someone brings a cart they must obtain an ADA pass from the Expo office. The phone number is in the brochure. Rolling bags are not allowed unless you have an ADA pass. Please, be considerate of others. Those carts and bags are dangerous as are backpacks. I have personally been hit in the face with a backpack.

Charity Sewing

Yes, we have found new outlets for pillowcases....so if you want to make them, we will collect them. We know you love making them and we appreciate all you do.

Classrooms

Some of you have sent comments regarding Room L being, noisy, cold and less than pleasant. We are so strapped for space that is heated that we have found it necessary to use Room L (tent). We are looking into alternatives but please dress for cold. These are Fairground buildings and not exactly like hotels or convention facilities for sure. Thank you for your patience.

Door Prizes

Each day the wonderful door prizes donated by our sponsors are given away. The booth is in the Pavilion first floor at the south end by the doors. Door prize drawings are held Thursday-Saturday at 5:00 p.m. Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

Expo Newspaper Handout

We eliminated the classroom grids from this handout because it took up a lot of space and since we thought most people had it in their brochure we could use the space more wisely. So, thanks to your suggestions, we will revisit this and hopefully add those grids back in. At the very least we will add the Free Stage and Style Show schedule.

Food and Drink

Vendors have asked that food and drink not be allowed on the vendor floor. Spills only make for costly accidents and none of us want that. We know we cannot stop it but please think twice before taking beverages into vendor booths.

The Coffee House was changing hands during the Expo. It is back and you will once again enjoy lattes.

Your other comments regarding food will be forwarded to the appropriate Fairground persons.

Miscellaneous

We always get questions regarding the sales tax for out-of-state residents. Most vendors will not charge the sales tax for out-of-state buyers but they don't have to. There is no law making this enforceable.

Shuttle buses would be nice and we have looked into it. But for now the liability costs are prohibitive.

On-line Registration

We appreciate your suggestions and will pass them on to the company who manages our website/on-line registration. We hope to make it easier and more efficient. However, the first three hours of registration is very hectic because 20,000 people all want to register at the same time. Very few classes are sold out the first day. Yes, some will sell out but if they do, we will try to add another time slot if possible. So avoid the first three hours for a smoother ride through registration.

Seating

Again, there will never be enough seating but I noticed the Free Stage had many empty chairs during the days I was there. I also agree more benches outside would be good. We will see if the Fairgrounds can offer us more.

Lunch (11:00-1:00) is always very busy. If you can, bring your lunch and avoid eating at these times. We are looking for ways to alleviate this problem.

Seminar Comments

Many of you commented on specific speakers and seminars. We like that and we pass them on to the appropriate speakers. We also thank you for being specific with class numbers, etc. Your suggestions for new seminars will also be considered. Your ideas are good ones and keep them coming.

Tickets

For those people who comment about price. Prices have not changed in three years now. We will give group rates for schools or clubs that bring youth groups.

Vendors

We ask vendors to put their booth numbers in a very visible spot. But with all their decorations and displays, they do get lost. Please refer to the map in the brochure.

The larger the aisles, the less vendors that's the equation. I have said this many times, you will find it very pleasant on Saturday and Sunday. I personally don't shop until Sunday and when a vendor is out of something, they happily send it.

These are my words of wisdom for this year. I hope you have the 2018 dates on your calendar for next year, March 1-4, 2018. There will be some sweeping changes in the 2018 Expo. We know change is good and we will also try to incorporate your comments as we can.

My Dream Came True

My passion has always revolved around the world of sewing. It started when I was 8 years old and it has never ended. I learned early on to shop for good fabrics and notions and my Mother said, "You wear out \$2 in shoe leather trying to save ten cents on a yard of fabric." But it really was the fun of the hunt that I have never gotten over. My other great passion has been entrepreneurship and the Expo has been one facet of that. I have pursued several businesses in my life but the Expo allowed me to combine my passions, sewing and business, in one long 34 year venture. Never did I believe that the Expo would become what it is today when I started it and I am eternally grateful to many who helped make that possible.

First, I want to thank all the volunteers who have been the backbone of the Expo from the beginning. The Clothing and Textile Advisors were my inspiration for starting the Expo and it's to their credit that the Expo has been enjoyed by so many. They have worked tirelessly to ensure participants received the best service whether it was through processing ticket sales, hosting seminars, organizing style shows, providing assistance with door prizes, or processing 100,000 brochures. I cannot express my gratitude enough for their service and friendship.

Also, it goes without saying, if you want to succeed in business, you must surround yourself with the best people you can find. Our Expo team has been just that. Janet McLoughlin, Show Manager, has been instrumental in handling vendors and facilities; Ann Sagawa, Educational Coordinator, who works day and night with speakers, manages seminars and workshops, and is responsible for the Expo website. I must mention Rita Farro, one of our past Marketing Specialists, who I cherish as a friend today and did a lot to help us think out of the box and move us into new technologies. Then there have been a host of others who have given support to the Expo throughout the years and listing them would be impossible. As a team we did not always agree but together we did our best to come up with solutions and move forward. Thanks to all of them from the bottom of my heart!

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge our sponsors. Without those industry greats, the Expo could not provide the wide variety of events, door prizes or bags. Those most recent sponsors include: Quality Sewing, Babylock, Viking Husqvarna, Janome, Coats, McCall's, Simplicity, Brother, Pfaff, Fashion Supplies, Bernina, Elna, Schmetz, Superior Threads, and Clover. I also thank all the vendors who have so graciously donated door prizes in seminars and workshops. The vendors don't always get the recognition they deserve. They have provided the best of the best resources and expertise to attendees. And they bring the latest technologies and products to the Expo first many times before they hit the general market place. We are so fortunate! If I have left someone out, I apologize and sincerely thank all of you.

I must thank all those industry teaching icons like Sue Hausmann, Nancy Zieman, Martha Pullen, Nancy Cornwell, Sandra Betzina, Marty Michell, Kay Wood, Dana Bontrager, Connie Crawford, Peggy Sagers, Pam Damour, Rita Farro, Mary Mulari, Debra Justice, Marta Alto, Janet Pray, Linda McGhee,

Mark Lipinski, John Deer, Eleanor Burns, Linda Lee, Louise Cutting, and Kathy Ruddy, just to name a few who helped make the Expo the best in the nation. I must mention Clotilde, Lois Ericson and Margaret Islander (all deceased) who told the world about the Expo from the beginning and helped bring it national recognition. And I thank my good friend, Pati Palmer, who was my mentor when the Expo idea came into my head. Her sharing and her expertise helped me to develop my first business plan which still serves us today. We all thrive by sharing and Pati is the best example of that I know.

Thanks to all of you for supporting the Expo and making it a "Sisterhood" as Rita Farro would say. I have gained so many friends over the last 34 years and I always look forward to seeing each of you every year. It is your support and ideas that keeps the Expo going and relevant. Your charitable donations over the years including donating at the Charity Teas for victims of natural disasters such as Katrina, and more recently the Pillowcase Brigade and the Humane Society, helped many others in need. You are the best!

For many years the Expo has been a major part of my life. And I thank my husband, family, personal friends and Extension colleagues for their support and help at every turn of the way. They not only supported my efforts, they gave a helping hand when needed.

The Sewing and Stitchery Expo has been like a child to me over the years. I have watched it grow, offer participants the best in the industry, and gain national recognition. We were not without growing pains as we grew faster than we had facilities for and the computer age came along. We have even had a few challenges from Mother Nature including an earthquake, snow blizzard, closed airports and roads, etc. But with your persistence and support this child grew up and we survived most any obstacle that came along.

So the time has come for me to pursue my other "bucket list." I am proud of what I have achieved and now it is time for others to continue the Expo journey. I am so grateful for a good career with Washington State University for the past 45 years. Do the math and you know it is time for me to move on!

My advice is to follow your dreams, take calculated risks, work hard and surround yourself with the best people you can find and success will come in abundance. Opportunity is around the corner every day if we just grab it.

Thank You for Your Friendship,

Joanne Ross, Director

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Joanne Ross
Director