

I got my first Singer in 1974. She was a beauty. Two more followed after that January. They, too, were and are wonderful.

I got my first sewing machine in 1975. She was a beauty, as well. I chose her from an array of beauties in Classroom 119. The school district where we resided was upgrading the models used for teaching High School Beginning Sewing. Since I had never learned beginning sewing in my student career, I thought that this would be a great purchase. I would learn from former students' aggravation and from their triumphs. I had walked up and down the classroom isles before I said, "This is the one for me." As with each of the children, my husband was there to haul this beauty to the car and then home. We lived in harmony for a few minutes.

As since the first three singers, being my three children, could "sing" for their supper on only a high note they also could not even thread a needle. They could not assist in my learning. The first singer, however, has been conducting singers from other families for the past 25 years or more. She teaches choral tunes to kindergarteners through fifth graders. Sometimes sowing her musical ability to prompt notes from young vocal cords gains her noticeable applause from their parents. Applause for singers is blue ribbon awards to quilters for their art work shown at county and state fairs and nationwide competitions. The applause is appreciated, as are the ribbons.

Teaching myself to sew on a machine with only a thin "How to Sew" booklet at my fingertips, and without a teacher standing behind me clearing her throat at every incorrect move was impossible. My then three-month-old daughter was unhelpful. (Her singing did not really harmonize until a few years later.) And her knowledge of using that whirling machine sitting on the kitchen table did not surface until her 4-H years.

My first attempt at sewing was a humdinger. The little "Stretch and Sew" dress for an infant was supposed to be a two-hour project. A teacher friend instructed four of us friends on a summer Saturday morning. Beginning at 10 a.m. that day my dining room was our classroom. All three lady guests completed their baby dress in the allotted time. At midnight I was unsewing the neck ribbing from the sleeve component. When I finished the dress two hour later, I swore never to sew again. In the light of day, I attempted to "dress" my baby. The item was too small to get over her head.

The students who had previously taken beginning lessons on my used sewing machine must have failed the class miserably. That machine was jinxed!

My commitment never to use a sewing machine again lasted 25 years when I traded that dusty first machine for a new model in 2000. I have upgraded once. "I do not sew," I tell everyone. "I quilt." Creating and piecing quilts for those three singers in my life keeps me humming.

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