

# DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL



Serving the Custom Home Furnishings Industry since 1993



Michele Williams  
Communications Director  
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# From the D&D Pro Network

**D**o you know it all? Of course not! Do you sometimes face the fear of starting a new project where you're challenged beyond what you've constructed before? Yes! Well, no matter how many years we've been in business, we can all have these challenges and fears. We will never know it *all*. This is custom and, as such, each job can be different and challenging.

Recently my mom asked me to re-cover an ottoman with an attached cushion. Now, I have been in business since 2000 focusing primarily on window treatments and bedding. Upholstery has never really been something I've tried (unless you count dining room chairs — and those are easy). My first thought was, *Sub it out*. My second thought was, *I can do this because there was an article in Volume 2010, Issue 1, written by Laurie Medford that provides a step-by-step process*. So, I decided to challenge myself to something new and face the fear that I might mess it up. Guess what, I did it! The directions gave me the information I needed, and where I had to improvise a little based on the ottoman I was working with I was able to do so because of my prior experiences.

Every day professionals are learning from our webinars, classroom and online Forum. Every day professionals are facing their fears — no matter how small or how large. Every day we are all accepting the challenge of a new job, and then rising to the task. Every day we learn a little something new — even if it is to try a new technique and face our fear. How cool is that?

Keep learning. You won't regret it. ↪

*Michele Williams*





# Table of Contents

Volume 2011 Issue 5

## Drapery & Design PROFESSIONAL

### *Learn*

- 16. *The Low Down on Lightbulbs* - K. Gregory
- 20. *Pendant Lampshades* - C. Collard
- 28. *Dressmaking Details Pt. 5* - D. Cash
- 43. *Triangle Tab Panels* - N. Letts
- 52. *Making a Feather Seat Cushion Insert Pt. 3* - L. Cox

### *Share*

- 6. *From the Bookshelf* - M. Nance
- 10. *Blogfest 2011* - S. Devaney-O'Neil
- 14. *Challenge - Giving an Austrian Legs* - J. Moore
- 18. *Grommet Tape* - S. Woodcock
- 34. *Vacation Inspiration - Massachusetts NE Chapter, WCAA*
- 38. *One Way to Make Expensive Treatments Less Costly* - J. Britt

### *Inspire*

- 8. *Spotlight On* - L. Hawkes
- 50. *Spotlight On* - E. Gerdes

### *Meet*

- 58. *Getting to Know your WCAA Board* - L. Principe
- 63. *Career Professionals*
- 64. *Meet the Writers*

Cover photo - Window Treatment by Elizabeth Gerdes of Stitch Above the Rest, photographed by Brandy Stoesz

# Spotlight on Elizabeth Gerdes



**E**lizabeth Gerdes lives in Woodstock, GA, where she operates Stitch Above the Rest. Her Alumni Showcase entry is *Enchanted*, which features tied back double-layered silk panels; a soft cornice with arched swags, a scarf weaving though grommets,

and a hardware crown; and lots of beaded trim. She used silk and beaded trim from Fabricut; grommets from Rowley Company; and the Evita Corazón crown from Helser Brothers. Gerdes is a member of the D&D Professional network, WCAA and WFCP, and is a CHFA Window Coverings Career Professional.

## **What inspired this treatment?**

One of Susan Kostelecky's 2009 IWCE conference classes on ideas for adding details to panel leading edges. Susan's idea was to create a removable piece within the leading edge that clients could change out if they changed room colors and/or for the holidays. During that class, I sketched out this design and put it in my idea folder, knowing that I would either sell it one day or make it as a sample.

## **Would you do anything differently if creating this treatment again?**

I would have taken more time to calculate fabric needs. I threw a lot of curveballs to Terri Booser at the last minute with the idea of making this treatment reversible. We ended up scraping together scraps for the tiebacks for this reason. These things took time away from the fabrication process.

## **Were any parts of the fabrication especially challenging?**

The scarf swag across the cornice proved to be a bit challenging. Getting the grommets in the right place, figuring out how to make it reversible with the fabric we had left, and making sure the buttons ended up in the right place were all time-consuming challenges.

## **Did you use any fabrication techniques that were new to you?**

I used Skirtex for a cornice for the first time. I also used it for the tiebacks, making their fabrication really quick and giving them the custom finished look.

## **Where do you find inspiration for creative custom window treatments?**

I find a lot of inspiration in the fabrics themselves. I also find inspiration in other people's work. I continually

buy magazines and books just to browse for ideas. Sometimes I'll sketch out designs that combine treatment ideas and make something totally different from the original concept of the two.

## **Is there a new technique that you would like to explore?**

I love to learn. I don't always know the names of techniques I'd like to try, but I'm constantly seeking information on things I don't know.

## **What piece of equipment is essential to your workroom?**

I couldn't live without my serger. Almost every project in my workroom goes through that machine at some point or another. It helps give my work a more professional look even when the serged edges can't be seen.

## **What do you offer to gain a client's loyalty?**

I try to gain their trust by showing up when I say I'm going to show up, by finishing a job when I say I'm going to finish it, by listening to their ideas and concerns, and by meeting their needs. Knowing they trust me with something they can't physically touch or see yet is a great confidence to be given. I return that loyalty with little trinkets of my appreciation: embroidered gifts, pillows and small accessories, or a gift card to a favorite restaurant.

## **What are your business goals for the next five years?**

To market my business more effectively, which I'm taking steps to make happen. Ultimately, I would like to design and sell the treatments and have someone else do the fabrication for me. I won't give up fabricating completely, but I feel that my business can increase if I focus my attention on a few specific areas.

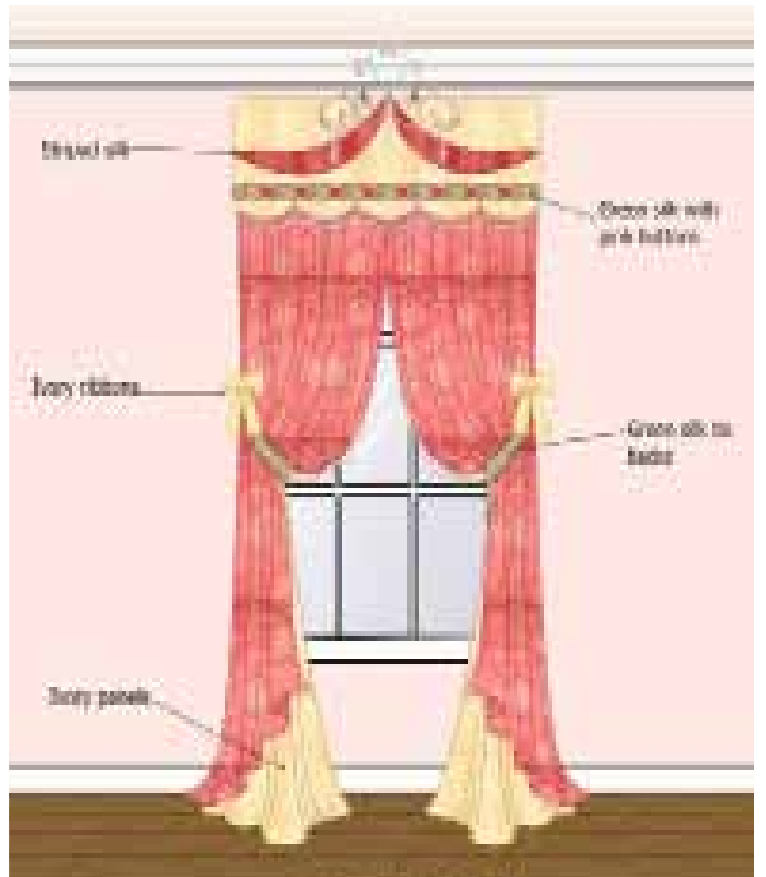
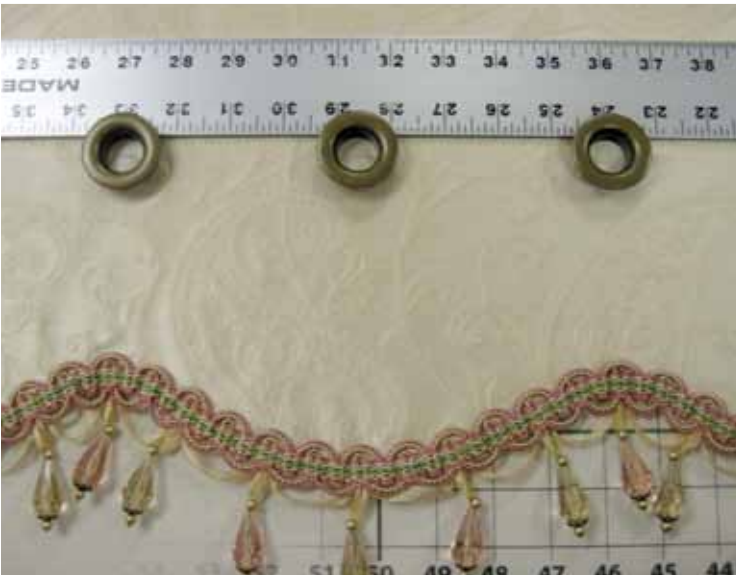
## **What are your personal goals for the next five years?**

I would like to find a good balance between work and my personal life. My goal is to be more efficient with my day so that I can have my nights and weekends with my family.

## **What are your other interests or hobbies?**

I like to redecorate and organize. When I leave things the way they are for too long, I get uninspired. Moving things around, painting, adding accessories, redoing a chair, and organizing re-inspire me to be creative. If I'm not sewing or redecorating for fun, I'm hanging out with my three kids and hubby hiking. Hiking is the most fun we have as a family and I find that being out in nature on the trails is a great way to clear the cobwebs from my brain. ☺





# Meet The Writers



**Jan Britt** is the owner of Jan Britt Interiors, located in Marietta, Georgia. She has worked in the interior design and window treatment industry for over 20 years and has worked as an instructor at Kennesaw State University, made multiple appearances on HGTV, and has written articles that were published for local newspapers and magazines. Jan specializes in window treatments, interior design, and staging.



**Liz Cox** is the owner of Signature Interiors, a custom soft furnishing and upholstery business providing bespoke service to residential and commercial customers in Bermuda and the United Kingdom. Liz specializes in the use of traditional materials and methods while also meeting the needs of the modern market. Liz is a member of the Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers.



**Donna Cash** operates a workroom in Flowery Branch, GA. She's a 20-year veteran of the window coverings industry and has an associates degree from the Art Institute of Atlanta. She's a WFCP Associate, and a member of WCAA, DraperyPro and the Designers Workroom Council in Georgia. Donna is also a certified yoga instructor.



**Sarah Devaney-O'Neil** is the owner of Storibook Designs Inc., a custom home furnishings and design business providing design and advice for both residential and commercial clients. She has 20-plus years of leadership experience, including sales training and upper management positions for two large home furnishings retailers.



**Carol Collard** Since 2005, Carol Collard, the owner of Creations by Carol located in Medway Massachusetts, has been creating custom soft furnishings including window treatments, bedding, custom slipcovers and lampshades. She is a career professional in both slipcovers and window treatments. As a WCAA member, Carol became Treasurer of her local chapter in 2010, and was recently appointed to the WCAA Board of Directors as a director at large.



**Kristine Gregory** is principal of Bedeckers Interior Effects Inc. Kristine is an Allied Member of American Society of Interior Designers, past president of the Richmond Chapter of WCAA and a WFCP Specialist. She is the only designer in the Richmond area who is an expert in both the psychology of color and personal organization. Visit her website at [www.bedeckers.com](http://www.bedeckers.com).



**Nancy Letts** is the owner of Pine House Drapery, a full service workroom started in 2001 that serves interior designers and a few retail clients in beautiful northern Michigan. Nancy and husband Rob fabricate everything from window treatments to upholstery. Nancy is a member of the D&D Pro Network, DraperyPro, WCAA, and is a CHFA Career Professional in Slipcovers.



**Linda Principe** is the owner of Linda Principe Interiors in Monroe, New Jersey, specializing in interior design and window treatments. Linda was involved in the formation of the WCAA Central NJ Chapter and is the Immediate Past President of that Chapter. Linda is currently the President of the WCAA National Board of Directors.



**Jo Moore** has operated Jo's Sewing Studio since 2004, but began specializing in home-décor fabrication in 2007. She's a CHFA Career Professional in Window Coverings and Cornices, was featured at the 2010 IWCE Alumni Showcase, made Cincinnati Magazine's Best of the City 2010 list, and serves on WCAA's Education Committee.



**Susan Woodcock** is Brand Experience Manager for Rowley Company. Prior to joining Rowley, Susan owned Tavern Hill, a professional drapery workroom founded in 1988. She is an instructor for CHF Academy and a popular industry speaker. Susan has been featured in many books, magazines and CHF Academy workroom videos. She's a member of the WCAA and a WFCP Expert.



**Margie Nance** started her workroom in 1992, then began teaching at the CHF School with Cheryl Strickland in 2000. Just five years later, she and her husband, Andy, purchased the school and moved it to its current location in Charlotte, NC as she took on the position of CEO until mid 2009. Margie is a master artisan and educator. In 2010 she received her certification training as a Life Coach and specializes in working with people in creative industries.



**Massachusetts North East Chapter, WCAA** The Massachusetts Northeast Chapter of the WCAA is a group of 35 window treatment professionals (workrooms, designers, installers, and vendors) from RI and MA who meet monthly in the Littleton, MA area. In addition to education and networking, the group has been actively involved in local and national charity projects. See [wcaa.org](http://wcaa.org) for more info.

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