



Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman
Scott Goodman, owner of Sewing Machine Warehouse & Kneedle.com has been servicing the sewing public since 1976.

Ask Me Anything Summer Vacay Edition



It's Summer. A time to relax, recover and rejuvenate. Your favorite dealer might be on vacation, too - taking some extra time to refresh before attending their upcoming brand convention.

Me? Sunning by the pool, streaming "Hotel Poolside" mix, sharing drinks with umbrellas, with BBQ blazing, kids splashing and giggling...

[Begin dream sequence] Why not kick back by having the industry's greatest icons and influencers ask the questions? This article could virtually write itself!

I curated a list of the most respected, trusted, and fascinating sewing industry icons. These individuals are known by their brands, technology, and knowledge, influencing products, features, and techniques that enhance your creativity.

Paul Ashworth, President BERNINA of America



Paul: How do sewing machine stores make themselves aware to the millennial consumer so they might walk through the door versus shopping online?

Great Scott!: Ask your kids. Srsly! [emoji goes here]. Millennials share a common culture and system of communication that can seem foreign to outsiders. Common channels and themes: Snapchat, Instagram, and Etsy...repurposing, boho, vintage, electro-wearables, and cosplay. They are comfortable, using YouTube and Pinterest for support and inspiration. Sometimes Millennials will trade quality, for the immediacy of Amazon. Reared in a higher-Maslow era, creativity runs strong in this culture. Engaging this ever changing moving-target is easy if you speak their language and structure events that are inclusive of their creative desires. How about a grownup Mommie & Me class that

will weave our twenty and thirty-something crowd into an activity, with their more experienced parents?

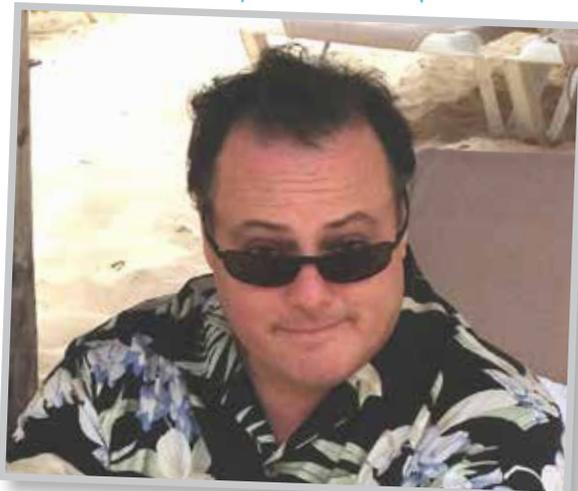
Paul: What's the ideal ski day for Great Scott?

Great Scott!: Trick question, Paul? In addition to managing my business, Great Scott wears several hats (or helmets). In the winter, I serve the public as Ski Patrol Scott, Volunteer Patrol Director at a busy Southern California ski resort, with a cadre of 80 patrollers I am responsible for their education, credentialing, scheduling, recognition and more. As medical first-responders, patrollers are first on the hill for morning setup, and last to leave after all guests are cleared, with trauma response throughout the day. The answer? Every ski day is ideal for me.

Paul: What is the next great innovation waiting to happen for embroidery machines?

Great Scott!: Like the arch-villains in Austin Powers, I can't say this word without making air quotes. Here goes... "LASERS". Lasers have been in my sights since the sixties. Industrial embroidery machines can be fitted with lasers that cut through one or more fabric layers for perfect appliqué. Other systems can age denim or etch artwork into fabric. The price of industrial-grade lasers have come down, but these systems require failsafe protection and ventilation. This integration is high on my wish list. Need inspiration? Check out Glowforge.com.

Brian Bailie, BriTon Leap Software



Brian: How did you get started in the sewing industry?

Great Scott!: I worked for many small shops as a teen; bakery (galley slave, driver), restaurant (dish washer), dry cleaners (counter clerk, presser, spotter), vacuum and sewing machine shop (technician and

sales). The vac & sew job aligned with my personal, technical and fine motor skills. I worked for several companies before opening my first retail store at age 23, my second at age 24. Anyone remember sewing machines made by White, Nelco and Morse?

Brian: You write for the industry and act as our 'Investigative journalist'. Do you have a background in writing? Is it a hobby? How did you get started?

Great Scott!: OK, this was a total fluke. My wife, Victoria and I met Eileen Roche in a taxi queue at a convention in Las Vegas. Later, the lovely Eileen, and her adorable Stitching Sister, Marie Zinno came to Los Angeles for a sewing event. We offered to guide their first visit to Hollywood. They compared hand and foot prints at Grauman's Chinese Theater, found their favorite stars on the Walk of Fame and dined at the Hollywood-Highland Center. During dinner, Eileen asked, "Why don't you write?" I submitted my first article a few weeks later. I have grown incredibly since the first article, trying to stretch with each piece. I am very grateful to be a part of the DIME family. With almost 50 years in the industry, I have leveraged my personal relationships with industry executives and visionaries to garner advanced information so my 'New Products' article is timely and fresh. I create a level playing field, treating all brands with respect and equality. My store manager, Jennifer Anderson (mother of twins) is my secret proofreader; catching many grammatical and punctuation errors with her red pencil. Thnks, Jennifer,

Brian: You are an ardent supporter of innovation and you have vision about where the industry is going with its technology. Where do you see us headed, and are there any things you would like to see?

Great Scott!: I expect to see more virtualization; software and storage in the cloud that can be accessed with any device. I hope to see more human-engineering in sewing machine design; making it harder for the end-user to mis-thread or otherwise muck up their machine.

Some manufacturers have included augmented reality within their machine. Expect further enhancements in virtual reality, pre-visualizing your projects. Virtual reality could extend to the camera in your laptop, dynamically previewing the design on your wardrobe while you are wearing it. How about integrations with social media, sharing your preview and hoping for a thumbs up.

My creative heart would like to see more media. We have embellished with roving, and rhinestones, sewn with “rope”, couched and corded with varying materials and created designs, in the hoop, with dye pens. What other tricks can we do with a stabilized, framed material? What could you do with a fusing attachment that could join vinyl and waterproof seams. There was an attachment for 1960s era Singer sewing machines that could make a one-thread chain stitch. Could we bring back this retro embroidery technique reminiscent of Disney-personalized Mickey and Donald hats from earlier times?

*Jeff Bray, National Director of Sales,
Brother International*



Jeff: What single technological or operational improvement to the sewing and embroidery industry, would be most valuable?

Great Scott!: Exposure! Sewing is fun! Machines are easier to use, and more reliable than ever. People need to know that. Let’s keep sponsoring interactive special events and share the love. How about a machine for

everyone in Ellen’s audience, with fulfillment at their local dealer. How ‘bout it, embroiderers? Let’s share our passion online and with our friends.

Jeff: Some embroiderers still have favorite designs on memory cards made for earlier models. Any advice?

Great Scott!: We have been through many forms of design storage: paper punch tape, proprietary memory cards, floppy disks, CD-Rom, and now, thumb drives. Some memory cards have outlasted machines that were originally purchased in the 1990s. While there are still some legacy devices that allow their use, digitizing artistry has become more sophisticated. Newer designs are technically better, scale larger and have a contemporary vibe. Here’s an idea. These vintage designs were retired many years ago. Hundreds of video games from the 1980s are playable for free on the internet. Why not make the older classic designs available as an artisan curated, sustainable, free download?

Steve Jeffery, President, Baby Lock USA



Steve: What do you think is going to be most important for the Independent Retailers to prepare for 3-5 years from now to ensure a secure and profitable future of their stores?

Great Scott!: Flexibility. Change is constant and the ability to stay on trend is critical. My retail store has endured over 41 years and bears little resemblance to the original retail experience. Home embroidery is not much more than 20 years old. Bigger, better, faster has been the mantra. Embroidery machines that integrate with digital cutters, quilting and creating in-the-hoop, cloud software and storage solutions. Convergences of techniques and technology will continue.

Steve: What will drive younger Creative Artists, Future Fashion Designers, Crafters, Quilters, Costume Designers, and Cosplay Enthusiasts into the Independent Retailers Stores?

Great Scott!: I have seen the future. One of my favorite dealers has re-envisioned their new location. The look is what I would call Hipster-chic; polished concrete floors, minimal fixtures, contemporary artwork and inspiration, with printed materials that look and feel like NOW. Just like the Apple Stores have a palpable creative energy, this store may portend our future. Check out Authorized Vac & Sew in Fresno, California.

Steve: What can Independent Retailers do, to be engaged, involved and an active participant in making a difference in their communities?

Great Scott!: Give back! Your most precious resource is time. Give your time, with passion, to an organization that aligns with your passion. There have been many initiatives within our industry that support the greater good. We have been ardent supporters of Be the Difference, helping to spread awareness of the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer. I have been known to recite the subtle signs and symptoms at sewing events where women congregate. We hosted and supported sewing volunteers that made scores of pillowcases, donated to Hems of Hope after a recent Serge-a-thon. Our technicians have volunteered time, servicing and repairing sewing machines at elderly facilities and organizations that lift people from the throes of poverty.

Nancy Ziemann, Ziemann Productions



Nancy: How many times a month do people say you resemble Richard Gere? (Or better yet, how many people think Richard Gere looks like you?)

Great Scott!: Ahhh, there was a time when... Nancy, I have always admired your keen sense of humor coupled with your discerning taste in handsome men.

Nancy: What's the most unusual/unique sewing machine repair you've ever had? (For example, when my oldest son was two years old, he filled the openings in the serger with Fray Check, "giving it gas." That did not make for a happy repair person.)

Great Scott!: One of my favorite customers is a collector. Many of the machines in her collection are rare specimens that are over 120 years old. Documentation is non-existent for machines that were designed by small companies in the 1890s. These museum quality machines deserve a delicate touch and threading can be a challenge.

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We have a customer that embroiders at high profile events. Tasked with providing custom on-site embroidery at the Coachella Music Festival, like "bad acid" at Woodstock, the portable generators put out bad, unconditioned power, bricking one machine and hobbling two others. Our tech heeded the call, donning a tie-dyed shirt and headband, returning from the rabbit hole after a 10-hour round trip.

Nancy: What is the question that customers should ask before they purchase a machine, but rarely do?

Great Scott!: I am a touchy-feely kind of guy. Spec sheets and internet descriptions do not tell the whole story and only speak to one sense. The selection experience should appeal to a majority of the 5 senses. What does the machine look like? Is it appropriately sized for the task or budget? Is the user interface self-evident?

What does it feel like? Is it responsive, easy to thread, does it handle fabric well?

What does it sound like? Does it sound smooth or clunky, labored or controlled?

What does it taste and smell like? Well three out of five is not bad. Maybe one day we can have machines that smell like chocolate chip cookies.

Michael Mantel, Vice-President,
SVP Worldwide - Singer Viking Pfaff Brands

Michael: Does size really matter - in a sewing machine?

Great Scott!: Absolutely! Large scale embroidery designs have great impact. Larger frames allow for a greater canvas when embroidering textural designs for a one-of-a-kind fabric effect. With bigger hoops, come bigger machines. I may start a new business: Embroidery Machine Sherpa. With one call, a highly-skilled Sherpa will porter your massive embroidery machine from home to class and back. Any investors out there?

Michael: Do I really need an expensive sewing machine?

Great Scott!: Need vs. want. Price is the admission ticket to all that is fun: size, features, ease of operation and support. Embroiderers are bursting at the seams with creativity and high-end machines will enable that flow with greater ease. That said, I have seen amazing projects that were made on entry-level machines.

Michael: With so many embroidery designs available today, why should I buy embroidery software?

Great Scott!: I have embroider-buddies that have tera-bytes of designs on their portable drives. So much to choose from in style, culture, and theme. Yet, want to make it yours? With software, you can create your own designs, edit existing ones and have total control over lettering.

Very special thanks to the industry icons that took a break from their vacay, asking thought-provoking questions, on your behalf.

Did you have a question that they missed? Ask me ANYTHING! Send your questions to: GreatScott@kneedle.com, or [Facebook.com/GreatScottSews](https://www.facebook.com/GreatScottSews)