

# DRAPERY & DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

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Serving the Custom Home Furnishings Industry since 1993





Michele Williams  
Communications Director  
CHF Academy

# From the Editor

**H**ello, Summer! I totally love the slower pace of summer. There are no major carpool, no homework to check for my boys, no craft projects made out of sticks and yarn! Summer is a great time to relax, rejuvenate and revive — not only ourselves, but our businesses.

Recently on the CHF Forum, someone asked, “Do you ever feel as if a job is just beating up on you?” Can’t we all relate? Some projects seem to go bad at every turn. Ann K. Johnson gave the following advice:

“I have established a routine to get out of mistake mode immediately and get back in control. When I make my third costly mistake in a row (it might be over a one- to two-week period), I realize I am in mistake mode and I put down my tools and walk away from the workroom for the rest of the day — regardless of my deadlines or workload. I read or walk or play in the garden. I do something completely nonwork related that brings me pleasure.

The next day, I sleep in, start a pot of coffee and sit at my desk. I pull all the folders of jobs in progress — those I am waiting on materials for, those in the workroom at the time, and those awaiting installation. I slowly and meticulously review every detail of every job. It is surprising the number of notes I’ll take when following up on orders, double-checking measures and details, etc. Once I have reviewed all the current jobs and done any necessary follow-up work, I’ll go play for the rest of the day.

The next day, I return to the workroom rested and totally in control. The loss of a workday is completely negated because I move forward so efficiently. It is an amazing transformation.

The key to remember is that once you make a mistake, you start to run harder in place because now you’ve got to fix the mistake, yet keep the rest of the work moving along. With the second mistake, you begin to go into panic mode — even more potential for mistakes. You begin to feel as if everything is out of control — you don’t know what to work on next. Your efficiency drops dramatically. By stepping away, giving yourself a day to quietly review all your jobs, then play and relax, you come back to the workroom completely focused with your tasks all lined up in your head. You literally make up that lost day’s hours very, very quickly.

Mistakes cost us twice. Not only do we have to spend the \$\$ and time to fix a mistake, but we are not working on a job that will bring in more income. Don’t let mistake mode send you into a tailspin. You can control it. It is soooooo very hard to walk away — especially the first time. But once you see the benefits, you’ll have the confidence to walk away now and then to rest and rejuvenate.”

Even if you’re not in “mistake mode,” make time this summer to take care of yourself and take a break. It will pay off! ☺





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# Making a Feather Seat Cushion Insert

## Part 2: Evaluating Stuffing Options and Materials

Liz Cox  
Hampshire, England

In the last issue I discussed how to make a cushion template for a feathered seat cushion insert (Volume 2011, Issue 3, Page 47). Continuing on in this second part, I'll discuss the various decisions you have to make regarding the cushion filling and the options available to you. In Part 3 next issue, I'll show you how to construct the cushion insert.

Now that we have made our template, we need to consider which filling to use. There are a number of feather filling options on the market, and when making your selection you need to consider how, where and how often the cushions will be used, the available budget, and the overall desired feel of the cushions.

Below is a list and discussion of several fillings, but I don't want to mislead you that this is an exhaustive list; it isn't. I'm sure you will find suppliers who will offer different ratios of feather and down or feather and fiber fillings, etc., but once you understand the differences, you should be able to evaluate whatever filling composition you are offered.

### Feather Filling Options

#### 100 Percent Pure Eiderdown

Eiderdown is thought to be the absolute best in filling options. The down comes from the eider duck. Iceland is the home of the eider duck where around 250 farmers have looked after eider settlements for generations. The delicate down is the molt collected from the female in two lots: before the eggs hatch and again when they leave the nest. Only 17g (about 9.5 ounces) of down is usually collected from each nest, so you can see why it's so valued. As the eider



Eiderdown

can live for 30 years, a strong bond usually develops between the duck and the farmer.

Daily plumping of the cushion is required to retain comfort.

#### 100 Percent Goose Down



White Goose Feather

The ultimate goose down is Siberian goose down. This is a very high-quality, luxurious down. Down is the soft, fluffy cluster taken from the undercoating of geese or ducks, which are very soft, light and have no quill. Cushions made from down are very light and luxurious.

Daily plumping of the cushion is required to retain comfort.

Both 100 percent eiderdown and goose down are best suited for back cushions as they tend to bottom out if used for seating since there are no feathers to provide the support needed for seating.

#### 100 Percent Pure White China Duck Down

Luxurious pure 100 percent duck down is a premier filling for cushions and pillows. The fantastic lofting properties enhance its fullness, therefore offering a fantastic look to sheer covers such as satins and silk fabrics, in particular. Down also has a natural abil-



ity to retain heat, which is ideal for those situations when you want cushions or pillows to have a soft and cozy feel. Duck cushions are soft and supportive, allowing the body to nestle into the cushion. They are soft and plump and have that lived-in look.

Daily plumping of the cushion is required to retain comfort.

### **51/49 Down/Feathers**

This luxurious mixed filling with an almost 50/50 down and feather has the fantastic lofting and heat retention characteristics of pure down. The feathers have curled properties; this gives weight and support to the cushions or pillows, thus preventing the cushion from bottoming out. This is an excellent filling and is a traditional filling often found in antique furniture.



Daily plumping of the cushion is required to retain comfort.

### **80/20 or 85/15 Feather/Down**

Using 15 percent or 20 percent of pure down in this mix provides a more noticeable bounce and fullness to the appearance of cushions and pillows than would be achieved by using an all-feather filling. These cushions start to become more luxurious as more down is introduced to the blend. They have a high loft and recovery rate, are soft and sumptuous, and are well worth the extra cost over 100 percent feather.

Daily plumping of the cushion is required to retain comfort.

### **New Curled White Feathers**

Cushions and pillows filled with curled feathers are noticeably different from those filled with a standard feather filling. This is a result of the process that curls the feather. The method used removes most of the feather quill, which makes it significantly more comfortable. Curled feathers also have greater lofting properties than a standard feather, making your cushions and pillows seem alluring and glamorous.

### **New Gray Duck Feathers**

Gray duck feathers are non-curved feathers that are still processed in the same way as other natural filling, but they don't go through the curling process. This results in very little lofting properties. This filling is aimed at the more economical range of cushions or pillows.

### **Poultry Feathers**

Chicken feathers usually constitute this filling. The feather is very flat with almost no loft. The quills



Grey Duck Feather



Chicken Feather

tend to be long and stiff, and the filling has a greasy feel.

### **Hollow Fiber**

This light and wonderful synthetic filling is created to bring luxury to those who prefer a man-made filling for its hypoallergenic properties in particular. Hollow fiber also has tremendous lofting properties and provides the ultimate in warmth and comfort.

### **Price Comparison**

The cost of these fillings also tends to flow in the same order as the above list. That is, 100 percent eiderdown and 100 percent goose down are the most expensive, and hollow fiber is likely to be the least. There is a very large jump in price from 100 percent pure white China duck down to 100 percent eiderdown or goose down, with the latter being about four times the price.

Here in the UK, the fillings are often sold in quantities of 500 g, 1 kg or 25 kg sacks. Interestingly, feathers are inherently fire-retardant (FR).



## Materials of the Inserts

The role of the material covering the feathers is to keep the filling in a contained place. Feathers, unlike foam, have a tendency to work their way through the cover if they can. This movement is called "migration." To stop this from happening, you need to use either a glazed cambric or a feather-proof ticking.

### Glazed Cambric

This fabric is available in three finishes:

1. Non-FR — approximate 122 cm / 48 inches wide
2. FR — approximately 152 cm / 60 inches wide, and
3. Waterproof Lining — approximately 152 cm / 60 inches wide.

The cambric is glazed by friction calendering. This means that it is passed through heated rollers to give a glossy finish. When you use this fabric, you want the glazed side to be against the feathers, which serves as a barrier to help reduce feather migration.

### Ticking and Drill

Ticking and drill fabrics are available as:

1. 100 percent Unbleached Cotton Non-FR — approximately 155 cm / 61 inches wide

2. Half-Bleached Herringbone FR — approximately 142 cm / 56 inches wide
3. Black and White available as both FR and Non-FR — approximately 142 cm / 56 inches wide
4. White Twill Non-FR — approximately 160 cm / 63 inches wide.
5. Drill Non-FR — approximately 148 cm / 58 inches wide.

Ticking and drill are more effective than cambric at containing feathers because of their tighter twill weave.

### Price Comparison

The FR cambric is slightly more expensive than the non-FR cambric, while the ticking is more expensive. The white twill is about twice the price of the cambric, and the black and white ticking is about three times the price.

The FR cambric is available as a 50 m roll, as are both tickings, while the non-FR and the waterproof are available as 100 m rolls. If you don't need a full roll, you can also buy cut lengths; suppliers tend to charge a premium for these lengths, however. ↵

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# Meet The Writers



**Terri Booser** owns An Interior Stitch, a wholesale drapery workroom in Wattsburg, PA, established in 1990. She has been a CHF Instructor since 2005, respected for her encouraging, organized and patient approach. In 2010, she joined the team as the Curriculum Development Manager. Terri is the Construction Zone Coordinator for the Vision International Window Coverings Expo and is a founding officer of the WCAA Virtual Chapter.



**Michele Williams** is the Communications Director of the CHF Academy and the 2011 Drapery & Design Professional magazine Editor-In-Chief. She owns The Scarlet Thread, a retail drapery workroom in Alpharetta, GA, which she launched in 2000, after a successful career in financial software design. Michele also serves on the WCAA National Board of Directors and as past president of the Atlanta Chapter.



**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.



**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).



**Maureen Sliwinski** owns and operates The Clever Stitch, a drapery workroom in Massachusetts devoted to creating exquisite custom draperies, shades, bedding and cushions for both retail and wholesale clients. She has decades of design experience, and has been a member of the WCAA since 2005. Her portfolio is at [www.thecleverstitch.com](http://www.thecleverstitch.com).



**Jenna Abbott** is the sole proprietor of Sew Elegant by Jenna, a to-the-trade workroom founded in 2001 and located in Sacramento California. She is a founding member of the Northern California Chapter of the WCAA, the Executive Director of the National WCAA and a proud alumnus of the Custom Home Furnishings Academy.





**Laurie Medford** is the Business Development Manager / Expert Services for Rowley Company, the leading supplier in the interior design industry. Before joining Rowley, Medford owned Centsible Creations, a professional Design, Fabrication and Installation Company for both wholesale and retail customers. Medford is an instructor for Custom Home Furnishings Academy and is member of WCAA and WFCP.



**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 specialises 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.



**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.



**Ann K. Johnson** opened her wholesale/retail workroom in 1992. Her publishing company, Sew Easy Windows offers the swag drafting tool Square it Up!, *The Professional Workroom Handbooks of Swags*, and the 2nd edition of Kitty Stein's *Price Your Work With Confidence!* Ann is a respected speaker, a specialty teacher for CHF Academy and a rep for dreamDraper software.



**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.



**Vanessa Downs**, owner of Window Accents, has been in business since 1998 serving retail and wholesale clients in the Chattanooga, TN area. Vanessa began sewing window treatments for her home, then for neighbors, and Window Accents was born! She is married to Joe and has three children, the last of which heads to college this fall.



**Judi Turner** started her business while in Germany from 1991-1992. It began with a client base of expatriates who wanted the American style of window treatments for their German homes. Upon relocating state-side, Judi chose to remain in the home décor field and now, 17 years later, works with clients in several states and 3 countries.

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