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THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

December 2007

From the Presidents' Corner -- This is a time of the year when it is natural to reflect on all that we are so fortunate to have and to give thanks for our many blessings. Here is our list of Guild blessings – We are thankful for:

- . our talented members who share and inspire us
- . our volunteers who bring refreshments
- . our officers and chairs who give so much of their time and energy to HCRAG
- . our members who share their enthusiasm and give their time to demonstrate rug hooking
- . our members, guests and vendors who made our hook-in a success
- . our members who teach at our monthly meetings
- . our camp instructors who share their knowledge and enthusiasm with us
- . our members who loan their creative works for our exhibits
- . our members who made our first retreat a success
- . our opportunity to be involved with the wonderful world of rug hooking
- . Hunterdon County for providing our meeting and camp facilities
- . the thrift shops that support us by providing recycled wool garments

The common denominator is our talented and sharing membership. Yes, we are indeed blessed!

Happy Holidays to all -- Heidi and Weezie

December Meeting – December 14, 2007 -- Please note that the meeting will be held in our normal location at the Hunterdon County Complex and that **it will start at 11:00, an hour later than usual.**

Our highly anticipated holiday potluck luncheon will take place at our December meeting. As in the past, the menu is not planned. Each member is asked to bring her/his favorite dish – salad, appetizer, hot dish, cold dish, dessert or whatever. Each year we joke (worry?) about ending up with 50 salads, but it always works out with a wonderful diversity of culinary delights. Beverages will be provided by the Guild. HCRAG members are not only renowned for being excellent rug hookers, but great cooks as well! This is a meeting not to be missed.

Guild Program -- Kim Kagan has offered to share with us an easy way to make a shawl that she learned about at a recent rug hooking workshop. If you want to participate, the fabric needs to be prepared before the meeting. You will need two and one half yards, washed, dried, with selvage removed. Tear the wool lengthwise down the center. This will allow you to make two shawls. Kim will show us how to fringe it. Maybe some of the members making the shawl will want to trade one of the pieces to have two different shawls. Or two people could share one length of wool. Contact Kim at 215-766-3707 or kim.kagan@verizon.net if you have any questions.

Show & Tell – The December meeting is an ideal time to share with the Guild your rugs or mats with holiday or winter themes. Of course, we are always interested in seeing current projects or recently completed rugs. Bring something to share with your Guild.

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“Pot Luck” Mats -- At our October meeting, Sharon Ballard launched a holiday project by showing us how to prepare a mat with the wording “Pot Luck” in the center. The design is based on a country style sign hanging in her kitchen. Each mat was to be personalized with a border of our design. Those who wanted to participate had two months to complete their mat. It is now time to share your creations with the Guild. Please bring your mats to the meeting for everyone to see. Sharon will be presenting 1st, 2nd and 3rd award prizes.

Shoe Box Surprise– The “shoe box surprise” was a big success at the June picnic and is back by popular demand. For those who want to participate, bring a sealed and wrapped shoe box with hooking related item(s) or any other item (s) rug hookers will enjoy. Sharon Ballard has a fun way to exchange them.

Lots of Wool Available -- An enormous amount of recycled wool clothing (10 bags!) will be available at the meeting for those who use “as is” wool in their hooking or dye pot.

Hospitality –We thank all the volunteers who have added to the enjoyment of our meetings by bringing refreshments throughout 2007. The treats and snacks help make our meetings special and provide a way to support the Guild. A special “thank you” to Ingrid Cosmen who chaired the Hospitality function for most of the year.

Membership – We welcome four new members to the guild – Charlotte Kosa, Jana Laidlaw, Linda Reitz and Tony Townsend. Charlotte met Guild members who were demonstrating at the Holcombe-Jimison Farming Celebration. Jana attended our Beginners’ Workshop at camp and Linda the one at our Hook-in. Tony was introduced to the Guild by Connie Coleman.

Charlotte Kosa
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Stockton NJ 08559
609-397-2289
(no email)

Linda Reitz
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(no email)

Jana Laidlaw
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Anthony (Tony) M. Townsend
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215-766-7131
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Marilyn Robinson has a new email address – marerobins@gmail.com. The correct email address for **Joan Lucas** is joadon@embarqmail.com. **Eileen Mahler** has a new email address – eamahler@verizon.net. The correct email address for **Carol Kindt** is ck-rk@patmedia.net. **Tina Martin** has a new email address – tnbmartin@embarqmail.com.

Please update your membership list for these additions and changes.

Let the Sun Shine – Our heartfelt condolences go to Trish Becker whose brother passed away after a long illness.

December Birthdays – Birthday wishes go to Madeline Brightbill (12/23), Helen Buchanan (12/21), Nancy Carman (12/16), Karl Gimber (12/19), Patty Mahaffey (12/8), Carol Orlove

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(12/29), Agnes Wooden (12/2) and Karen Worthington (12/13). We hope you all have a wonderful day!

Guild Exhibits at Doylestown Library -- “Home for the Holidays” is the theme of the Guild’s exhibit at the Doylestown Library (150 S. Pine Street). Items hooked by Guild members will be on display during the entire month of December. The Michener Art Museum is adjacent to the Library and the Mercer Museum is across the street. It is an ideal destination for an outing.

Mertcer County Hookers to Demonstrate -- On Saturday, December 1, 2007, the Mercer County Hookers will demonstrate rug hooking at the Hopewell Township Branch of the Mercer County Public Library. This is to thank the Library for the use of their room during the year. The Library is located on West Delaware Street, next to HoVal Central High School. Guild members are welcome to participate or to stop by to say “hello”. Contact Weezie for more information.

Officer and Committee Positions – We are thankful for those Guild members who have volunteered to fill the new positions established with our recent by-law changes. However, we still need someone to fill the position of Vice President from now to April at which time the Vice President becomes President of the Guild. This is an important position. With the current momentum and strong team who have volunteered to fill the other positions, the VP/President’s role should be a fulfilling one. Please contact Heidi and/or Weezie if you need additional insights into what is involved.

Guild Members Head to Vermont -- Our Guild was actively represented at “Hooked in the Mountains XII” - the annual hooked rug exhibit and workshops sponsored by the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont.. While we may not have a full list of HCRAG member involvement, we know that Susan Atwater, Gail Ferdinando, Weezie Huntington, Roberta Smith and Debbie Walsh attended workshops. Susan took Judith Dallegret’s class (Drawing and Design for Rug Hookers) and reported that she was the “best rug hooking instructor I’d ever studied with.” Weezie and Roberta took Jule Marie Smith’s class (For People in Love with Hooked Art) that Weezie noted was “wonderful.” Participants had a large selection of diverse workshops and instructors with whom to work including Guild member, Trish Becker, and past HCRAG camp instructors Elizabeth Black, Norma Batastini, Susan Feller, Rae Harrell and Jule Marie Smith.

Over 500 hooked rugs were hung in the Round Barn at the Shelburne Museum. The number was very manageable and the rugs were well displayed. Weezie took photos of all the rugs and will have them available at our meeting. Several members exhibited their work including Susan Atwater, Claudia Casebolt, Linda Rae Coughlin, Nancy Culton, Karl Gimber, Mary Jo Gimber, LeeAnn Metropoulos and Kitty Platt. Some were in the special exhibit of three dimensional pieces and corresponding mats developed in Rae Harrell’s class at our 2007 Camp.

The 10 day event also attracted Guild members who made the journey north to see the exhibit, visit with friends and shop the vendors Claudia Casebolt, Kim Kagan, and Lisa Mims were among HCRAG members who enjoyed the trip to New England and the Green Mountain Exhibit.

If you participated in the Green Mountain activities and were not mentioned, please let us know.

2008 HCRAG Rug Hooking Camp (August 11- 15, 2008) – Interest in our 12th annual rug hooking camp has been strong. Gail Dufresne and Anne-Marie Littenberg have several openings. Jayne Hester’s class is filled. A paid waiting list will be established when the classes are filled.

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Last summer we had several cancellations leading up to camp week, so openings may well develop.

The camp fee is \$150 for those who were Guild members as of November 2, 2008. The non-member fee of \$225 will apply to all others. To register, a nonrefundable \$25 deposit is required with the balance due by the April Guild meeting. Cancellations will be accepted until June 1, 2008. Registration will be opened to non-members on January 1, 2008.

The Camps and Workshops column in the January/February 2008 issue of Rug Hooking Magazine will feature our camp.

2009 HCRAg Rug Hooking Camp -- Weezie Huntington is well along in planning for our rug hooking camp in 2009. The dates (August 10-14, 2009) are set and the location (ESC School) confirmed. Most importantly, three outstanding instructors – Sandra Brown, Judy Quintman and Abby Vakay – have accepted our invitation to participate in our 13th annual camp. Judy, who is the step-mother of our twins - Gail Ferdinando and Debbie Walsh - will be a participant at our 2008 camp.

www.hcrag.com – Laurie Rubineti's goal is to have our website up and running by January. She is still collecting photographs of members' rugs for the Gallery page. Weezie and Laurie are bringing their cameras to the December meeting and will be taking photos of any rug you want to have included. Each member is encouraged to display a rug.

You can submit a photo or CD directly to Laurie. If using email, send jpeg images no larger than 2 mb to Lrubinet@ptdprolog.net. If using regular mail, send to Laurie Rubineti, 320 Mt. Joy Road, Milford, NJ 08848. Include a SASE and your photo or disc will be returned. Note your name and name of the rug on the photo or CD. If you want to submit a photo but do not wish to have your name on the website just let Laurie know when you submit the photo. Laurie recommends taking the photos straight on in order to get the best images.

Rug Hooking Retreat – January 11-13, 2008 – Our second annual rug hooking retreat at the Flemington Hampton Inn is a month away! After a hectic holiday what better way to recover than to spend a relaxing week-end with rug hooking friends. There are two spots remaining. Members who have already registered and want to stay overnight should call the Hampton Inn at (908- 284-9427) by December 11th. A block of rooms has been set aside at a special rate of \$110 (double occupancy). Contact Dee Rosebrock or Kitty Platt to register as soon as possible. We expect this to be another sold out event.

Meet Our Member – Lydia Brenner -- Lydia was born in Baghdad, Iraq where her father worked as a civil engineer specializing in highway design and construction. She recalls little of her early childhood other than seeing pictures of her as a very blond little girl with camels in the background. Most of Lydia's childhood was spent in Holland. At age 11, her family moved to northern Virginia when her father accepted a transfer with the World Bank. Lydia became a U.S. citizen in the mid 1980s. She attended nursing school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville where she met her future husband, John, who was in law school at the time. Lydia's professional career started with a nursing position at the University of Virginia Medical Center. After relocating to New Jersey, Lydia joined the Visiting Nurses Service before working in public health clinics for women. For the past seven years, Lydia has worked as a nurse at a medical dermatology office that has an exceptional reputation for treating patients with skin cancers. Today, John Brenner is a product liability attorney working in Princeton for a

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Philadelphia law firm. Lydia and John have three daughters – Meredith, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania is a student at Temple’s Tyler School of Art, Corinne a senior at Cornell and Elise, a high school junior. The Brenners live in Fair Haven, NJ along with their West Highland Terrier, Callum (“Cal”).

About 10 years ago, Lydia was introduced to rug hooking by a friend who was taking classes with Patsy Becker who lived 15 minutes away in an old sea captain’s house. Lydia was immediately struck by pleasant and somewhat “old fashion” nature of the summer hooking sessions at Patsy’s home. It reminded her of an old quilting bee. People brought their lunch and sat in Patsy’s yard. Patsy would come around to each person and offer advice and suggestions. Her dye pot sat on an old burner in the yard and as the wool pieces came out, Patsy would throw them onto the pine trees to dry. Sadly, those pleasant gatherings ended when Patsy moved to Cape Cod.

Lydia believes that her style is still evolving. She prefers to work with fine cuts (nothing bigger than a #6 cut) since it allows her to achieve the level of detail that she likes. She enjoys mixed media projects, working with various beads and yarns. Lydia is a self professed perfectionist and acknowledges that this has good news and bad news dimensions. The good news is that she is normally pleased with the work when it is finished. The bad news is that it takes her a long time to complete a rug and as a result she has few completed ones and too many “works in progress”.

When Patsy Becker relocated, Lydia felt a void. At the time, there were few local rug hooking instructors around. She learned of the Highlands and started to attend their workshops on a regular basis. Lydia recalls taking several classes with Nancy Blood and Helen Johnson, who was then considered “the animal person” much as Elizabeth Black is today. She also began making the journey to Gail Dufresne’s studio. It was there that she met Gail Schmidt who lived in the bordering town. They soon became good friends and try to hook together each month although their busy lives sometimes make that difficult.

Gail Dufresne introduced Lydia to the Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild about four or five years ago. She soon brought Gail Schmidt along with her. Even though it takes her more than an hour to get to our meetings, she attends every one she can. Lydia enjoys the camaraderie of being with people who share her interest in rug hooking. The talent within the Guild and the sharing nature of our members has been an attraction from her first meeting. For the past two years, Lydia was Co-Chair of Hospitality and was responsible for organizing refreshments at our 2007 Camp.

Lydia’s work schedule along with family and community commitments leave precious little time for sitting down at her hooking frame on a regular basis. She looks forward to her monthly get together with Gail Schmidt and HCRAG meetings as a time to hook. When it comes to dyeing wool, time constraints are again a problem. Lydia found all the dyeing equipment at a local garage sale and has taken classes on wool dyeing. So with the equipment and know-how, all that is missing is time.

In addition to rug hooking, Lydia enjoys antiquing and has an extensive collection of old butter molds (over 50!). She also collects delft, an interest from her Dutch heritage.

We are privileged to have Lydia as a member of our Guild.

Guild Members Attend Brandywine Rug Hooking Guild Hook-in -- It was raining and nasty outside, but warm and friendly inside the Harrisburg Area Community College, the site of Brandywine Guild’s hook-in on October 27, 2007. Several HCRAG members (June Bennett,

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Rebecca Buckwalter, Mary Jo & Karl Gimber, Cyndi Lott, Carol Orlove, and Joanne McIlmurray) journeyed to Lebanon, PA for this special event and were not disappointed. The vendors included new faces and old favorites like Norma Batastini, Rebecca Erb, Susan Feller and Kay Levan. They were busy all day. A mat swap, participants' rug exhibit, door prizes and great refreshments added to the enjoyment of visiting with friends (old and new) and hooking. Some hooking did actually get done! The Brandywine Guild is to be congratulated for another successful hook-in. We thank them for all they do to foster interest in traditional rug hooking.

Guild Demonstrates at "Thanksgiving in the Country" – Guild volunteers supported The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia by demonstrating rug hooking at "Thanksgiving in the Country" on November 3 and 4. The funds generated by the event go to the Cleft Palate Unit of the Hospital. Joyce Combs, who coordinated our involvement, reported that "We had a wonderful weekend with many people expressing interest in the Guild and in rug hooking in general. Our Guild volunteers did a great job as well."

Margaret Brightbill, Janet Bosshart, Claudia Casebolt, Joyce Combs, Phyllis Hamel, Carol Kindt, Brigitte Levine, Barbara Lugg and Roberta Smith represented the Guild at this important community service event. Janet Williams and Marion Michel were both sick and unable to come but were there in spirit! We thank them all.

Mounting a Rug with Velcro -- There are often questions on how to prepare a rug that is going to be hung in a show. One way is to use Velcro. The following information is from the Fall 2007 newsletter of the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild.

"This technique reduces the amount of stress on a rug when it is hanging, because it distributes the weight of the rug across the width of the rug. Cut a piece of 1 ½" Velcro tape (both hook and loop sides) 1" shorter than the finished width of the rug. Cut a strip of cloth 3" wide and 1" longer than the Velcro. Center the loop side of the Velcro on the cloth and fold under a ½" hem along all four sides of the strip, creating a ¼" cloth border around the edges of the Velcro. Machine-sew the Velcro strip to the cloth along all four sides. Position the mounted Velcro strip on the back of the rug ½" below the top edge. Sew the top and bottom edge of tube to rug by HAND using small (1/4") running stitch with a double strand of thread. Make sure the stitches go through the backing and sit between the hooked loops. Attach the hook side of the Velcro to the loop side."

Used Cutter and Frame Needed -- Charlotte Kosa is not only new to the Guild, but new to rug hooking. She is interested in buying a used cutter and frame so that she can get started learning rug hooking. If you have used equipment for sale, please contact Charlotte (see Membership article for contact information).

Guild Name Badges – If you want to order a Guild name badge, just send a check for \$6.75 made payable to HCRAAG to Karl Gimber. Include a note that shows exactly how your name should appear.

Hooking Events and Related Activities

Rags to Rugs: Pennsylvania Hooked and Handsewn Rugs Exhibition – November 17, 2007 to December 31, 2008 at the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum. For more information contact Kim Fortney, VP, Heritage Center of Lancaster County at 717-299-6440 or kfortney@lancasterheritage.com.

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A Celebration of Art and Farming – December 1, 2007. Guild member, Linda Czeck, is hosting a holiday open house which will feature paintings on canvas and wood and felted wall hangings by Linda Jean Czeck, hand-spun yarn and roving by Andrea Holladay, custom-dyed wool for rug-hooking by Trish Becker, hand-crocheted afghans by Judy Van Doren and rug-hooking and spinning demonstrations from 10am-5pm at Wildflowers Gallery & Farm, 506 Goritz Road, Alexandria Twp. For more information contact Linda at (908) 479-1049 or www.wildflowersgallery.com

"Snarl Bag Workshop" by Artist Eric Sandberg – January 28-30, 2008. Michele Micharelli is hosting a three-day workshop in her home in New Haven, CT. Eric Sandberg will help you design a small piece and then teach you how to hook an amazing and fun to do item right from your bag of strips. Come and create the most fun item you have ever hooked. Space is limited. Call Michelle at 203-387-8690 for more information or to make a reservation.

Fraktur Motifs Explored in Hooked Rugs Exhibit – February 2, 2008 to March 1, 2008. The Mennonite Heritage Center in Harleysville, PA is hosting an exhibit curated by Susan Feller featuring contemporary rug artisans. There is an opening reception on February 2, 2008. For more information contact the Heritage Center at 215-256-3020. Their website, www.mhep.org, provides more information on the Heritage Center including directions.

Design a Rug with a Fraktur Flair Workshops – Two one-day workshops by Susan Feller will be offered on February 2 and March 1, 2008 at the Mennonite Heritage Center in conjunction with their hooked rug exhibit (see above announcement). To register or for more information contact the Heritage Center.

Virginia Rugfest will celebrate its 6th year! April 5, 2008, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Mechanicsville, VA from 9am- 3:30pm. Guest Speaker: Ginny Stimmel, Editor, Rug Hooking magazine. Featured Artist is Sarah Province plus hook-in, rug show, vendors, and beginners' class. Loads of door prizes and a hooked rug will be raffled off! Contact: HCRAG member, Mary Henck, hookrug@comcast.net, 804-740-6511 or www.geocities.com/varugfest/

FIBERFEST 2008 -- August 9, 2008 in Yellow Spring, WV, sponsored by the Mountain State Fiber Artists. Contact Susan Feller for pre-registration and program information at rugs2w@yahoo.com. Lunch included with registration fee. There will be vendors as well as hooking and fiber artists.

The Mercer Hookers meet on the first Thursday of every month from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Mercer County Library in Pennington, NJ. It would be a good idea to contact Weezie Huntington (weezie.huntington@verizon.net) if you are coming for the first time. The hook-in is open to anyone sharing an interest in rug hooking. Bring your lunch. **They will not be meeting in December.**

HCRAG Calendar of Events

December 1-31 – HCRAG Exhibit – Doylestown Library

December 14 – Holiday Luncheon/ Shoe Box Surprise*

January 11, 2008 – Monthly meeting – Auction and White Elephant Sale *

January 11-13, 2008 – Rug Hooking Retreat – Hampton Inn, Flemington, NJ

February 8, 2008 – Monthly Meeting – Valentines' Day Hook-in/ Trade hooked Valentines/ Show rugs or hooked items with hearts, angels, candy, bow & arrows, flowers, diamonds, red ribbons, etc.*

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March 14, 2008 – Monthly Meeting -- How Do You Design Your Own Rug? (Panel) *

April 11, 2008 – Monthly Meeting -- What Do Judges Look For? / Rug Critique*

May 9, 2008 – Monthly Meeting -- Featured Rug Hookers*

June 13, 2008 – Monthly meeting – Annual Picnic

August 11 – 15, 2008 – 12th Annual HCRAAG Rug Hooking Camp featuring
Gail Dufresne, Jayne Hester and Anne-Marie Littenberg

* Unless otherwise noted, our meetings run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the County Administration Building, which is part of the Hunterdon County Complex on Route 12, Flemington, NJ. As you turn off Route 12 onto the road leading into the Complex, it is the first building on the right.

Guild Officers -- Our officers are anxious to hear from you on ideas and suggestions on how we can make the Guild responsive to your needs. Feel free to contact them with your thoughts.

Co-Presidents – Heidi Blair -- 732-942-3743 or jenyjump@optonline.net
Weezie Huntington -- 609-466-1882 or weezie.huntington@verizon.net

Fund Raising – Sharon Ballard – 908-236-7410

Historian – Marion Michel – 609-397-3425 or marionmichel@earthlink.net

Hospitality – Helen Buchanan – 908-284-0749

Lydia Brenner -- 732-741-9313 or lbrenuva@comcast.net

Barbara Lugg – 908-996-2562

Librarian – Kathy Donovan – 908-755-1670 or frejja@optonline.net

Programs – Mary Jo Gimber -- 215-297-0803 or mjg12@nni.com

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Web-Master – Laurie Rubineti -- 908-995-4030 or Lrubinet@ptdprolog.net

Guild's Email List Policy - The HCRAAG Email list is not for commercial purposes, internally, or externally. The Guild does not make the list available to vendors outside the guild, and asks that vendors within the group not solicit the membership as a whole.

The Loop is the newsletter of the Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAAG). It is published monthly (September through June). Articles, suggestions or ideas for the newsletter can be submitted to Karl Gimber at P. O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 or by email to karlg@nni.com by the 20th of the month. For more information, go to the Guild's website -- www.hcrag.com.

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