

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

January 2008

From the Presidents' Corner -- The year ended with our wonderful potluck holiday luncheon and, as expected, the food was superb. The feared 50 salads did not appear. Instead, we were treated to diverse appetizers, casseroles, salads, warm and cold entrees and, of course, the desserts. Oh, the desserts! Decorations provided by Helen Buchanan and her Hospitality Committee added a cheerful festive touch. Thank you to all who made the luncheon so special. We were delighted that Jo Knobloch could join us. Jo was instrumental in the founding of our Guild 30 years ago, so it was nice that she could celebrate with us and see that "her baby" is doing well.

Sharon Ballard organized the voting for the "pot luck" mats and our congratulations go to Cindy Boults (1st prize), Mary Jo Gimber (2nd prize) and Kathy Donovan (3rd prize). Our thanks also go to Sharon for creatively organizing the project and for providing the prizes. The shoe box exchange, also under Sharon's direction, was a success. Everyone seemed delighted with the surprises in their boxes. Kim Kagan shared how easy it is to make a wool shawl - an excellent project for this time of the year. Thank you Kim! (See the featured member article to learn more about this very talented member.)

Kim Kagan has volunteered to fill the Guild's Vice President role until May at which time the Vice President becomes President of the Guild. All major positions are now filled.

We want to encourage more members to bring lunch and their current hooking project to work on at each meeting. One of our objectives is to grow friendships and hooking together is a natural way to do that. It is also a good time to share ideas and feedback on Guild activities. For some members, this is one of the few times they have to hook during the month.

As the calendar moves to 2008, it is time for our New Year's resolutions. Do not forget to include the Guild and rug hooking resolutions. Consider ideas that will allow you to grow and develop as a rug hooking artisan. Some thoughts for consideration ----

- bring lunch and hooking equipment to each meeting
- learn a new rug hooking technique
- experiment with a wider or narrower cut than you normally use
- attend a special workshop or camp
- volunteer to teach a class at a Guild meeting – alone or with a friend
- design your own pattern
- bring a friend to a HCRAG meeting
- invite a friend/Guild member to hook at your home
- demonstrate rug hooking at a Guild event, or any other appropriate event
- join a Guild committee
- participate in the "show and tell" each month

Happy Hooking -- Heidi and Weezie

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January Meeting – January 11, 2008 -- Our meeting will be at the normal location in the Hunterdon County Complex from 10:00 to 2:00.

Guild Program – Our annual White Elephant Sale and Auction is a major fundraiser for the Guild. Bring whatever you are willing to donate and remember that this is your chance to regift those lovely but unwanted gifts that you have received. The items you bring do not have to be related to rug hooking. Of course, bring your check books so that you will be prepared and able to bid and buy enthusiastically. Sharon Ballard and Roberta Smith will serve as our auctioneers, so you know it will be a fun and lively event. Part of the auction will be silent and part loud and raucous. Your participation is a great way to support our Guild - by recycling your want-nots – by bidding and buying – and cheering on the bidders.

Show & Tell – Bring rugs/mats with a winter theme, your current project or something you completed in 2007. Members often comment on the inspiration they receive from seeing the work being done by others in the Guild. The “show & tell” portion of the meeting is important, so please share your work with the Guild.

Wool Available -- Several new bags of wool clothing have been donated to the Guild and will be available.

Hospitality – We thank in advance Gisele Meader, Marion Michel, Gail Schmidt and Bernice Smith who volunteered to provide refreshments for the January meeting.

Membership – We welcome Carole Cossa as a new Guild member. Her contact information follows.

Carole Cossa
201 Mulberry Place
Douglassville, PA 19518
610-385-4968
ccossa@ptd.net

Also, note several email address changes –

- Sharon Ballard -- cballard2@patmedia.net
- Weezie Huntington – weezie711@gmail.com
- Amy Korengut – gutvet@verizon.net
- Brigitte Levine – brigittelevine@verizon.net

Please update your membership list.

Let the Sun Shine – Our condolences to Connie Coleman and her husband, Alan, whose father passed away in December after a long illness. Wishes for a speedy recovery to Agnes Wooden’s husband, Tom, who underwent cataract surgery. Tom and Alan were among the husbands who provided “the muscle” needed for setting up our hook-in.

January Birthdays – Birthday wishes go to Sandy Barkman (1/17), Trish Becker (1/24), Joyce Combs (1/15), Mary Jo Gimber (1/30), Lois Grieves (1/14), Janet Kovach (1/19), Annie Lee (1/15) and Kitty Platt (1/9). We hope you all have a wonderful day!

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Rug Hooking Retreat – January 11-13, 2008 – After our January meeting, retreat participants will move to the Flemington Hampton Inn for the week-end. Susan and Bill Atwater have once again invited participants to their home Saturday night for wine, cheese and a light dinner. Bill offered to do the cooking! Our Co-President, Weezie Huntington, who is also an aquatics instructor at a local “Y”, will be providing relaxing exercises in the pool, so bring your bathing suits. Joy Andrews, the masseuse from camp, will be there on Saturday to help soothe our stiff muscles. Dee Rosebrock and Kitty Platt have arranged a fun weekend of hooking rugs, sharing ideas and getting to know each other better. There is still one opening, so contact Dee or Kitty if you want to take advantage of this opportunity.

Guild Members Participate in Hooked in the Mountains XII -- In addition to those mentioned last month, Guild members Kathy Donovan, Amy Korengut and Eileen Mahler participated in the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild’s events in November. They attended the Braiding Borders workshop conducted by Kris McDermet, which Eileen said “was intense – we learned to braid a border and much, much more.” Eileen also had three of her rugs in the exhibit including her Celebrations rug – Ketchikan Dream. Cyndi Lott, Patty Mahaffey and Joanne McIlmurray participated in the evening workshop on making a Pennsylvania German feather tree out of wool strips. Weezie took over 200 photos of the rugs in the exhibit. To view them go to www.kodakgallery.com/weezie711photos.

Rags to Rugs: Pennsylvania Hooked and Handsewn Rugs – “A colorful display of hooked and handsewn rugs created by makers in Pennsylvania, which has a rich history of rug making, celebrates the reopening of the Lancaster Quilt and Textile Museum.

The exhibition Rags to Rugs: Pennsylvania Hooked and Handsewn Rugs, tells the stories of some of the makers, including those in the Amish and Mennonite communities who have passed their skills down through generations. Their stories, curated by textile scholar Dr. Patricia T. Herr and the Honorable Judge Leslie Gorbey, are interwoven through the themes of commerce, social interaction, and personal expression. Other sections of the exhibition focus on how rugs are made – with displays of tools used in fabric dyeing, stripping, and construction – and how the rugs function within the home.

The museum is housed in a grand 1912 Beaux Arts building, site of a once prosperous community bank that failed during the Great Depression. The building, which stood empty most of its life, reopened as a museum in 2004. It has been expanded to provide larger exhibition areas, a larger lobby, and additional storage space.” The above appeared in the December 2007 issue of Early American Life Magazine.

An added component to the exhibition is the juried show of rugs made by 15 contemporary artists from southeastern Pennsylvania. Rugs with an animal theme are featured in the first segment of the juried show that runs until April 26, 2008. Guild members Rebecca Buckwalter and Karl Gimber have rugs in this initial segment.

For information, call the museum at 717-299-6440 or visit the web site at www.quiltandtextilemuseum.com

2008 HCRA Rug Hooking Camp (August 11- 15, 2008) – Currently there are three places available with Gail Dufresne. Jayne Hester’s and Anne-Marie Littenberg’s classes are filled. Registration from non-members will be accepted beginning January 1, 2008. A paid waiting list is being established. Last summer we had several cancellations, so openings may

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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.

Guild Members Featured in Rug Hooking Magazine -- The January/February 2008 issue of Rug Hooking Magazine is a special issue since it once again features the work of HCRAAG members. The "Teacher Feature" article on Faith Williston was written by member Mary Henck. We do not see Mary as often as we would like since she lives in Virginia. However, she was at our camp last August and helped Janet Williams get ready for the Beginners' Workshop. Past camp instructor and honorary member, Susan Feller, wrote the article "The Color Purple" reporting results of the project initiated last year by the Art-Fiber International Independent Fiber Study Group. The diverse range of creativity and skills within the Guild was in full evidence with "The Color Fur Pull" by Linda Rae Coughlin and "Washington's Crossing" by Margaret Brightbill. The "Camps and Workshops" column article featured our 2008 Camp with a photo of Gail Schmidt and her welcoming smile. We are proud of our talented members!

Library Exhibit Attracts Attention – The talents of our Guild members were on full display at the Doylestown Library in December. Rugs, mats, Christmas tree ornaments, pins, Santas and framed miniatures were featured. with various hooking techniques - traditional, proddy, punch-needle and miniature punch-needle. According to the Library staff, our exhibit "... was the best they have had ... wish it stayed up all year." We thank Mary Jo Gimber for the creative installation and Guild members who provided pieces for the exhibit. The items on loan will be returned at the January meeting.

Meet Our Member – Kim Kagan – Kim was living in Ohio when she first observed rugs being hooked at a local folk festival similar to the Mercer Folk Fest. She was disappointed that the rugs were not for sale, but purchased a kit with a small heart image. Kim was still working full time and not being aware of local instructors or hooking groups, the kit was put away for a later time. At the time, she was also involved with basket weaving, tole painting and water colors.

In 1999, Kim moved from Ohio to Doylestown. She did not plan to return to work and, therefore, had time to finally pursue rug hooking. She saw an article about a local rug hooker, Edith Prundeanu, who was teaching at the Mercer Museum. The classes were full, but Edith told her about the Bux-Mont Guild that met at the Doylestown Library. Kim went to the October meeting and sat next to Hildegard von Tenspolde who inspired her. The following month, Kim brought the kit she bought in Ohio and the Guild members helped her get started. She soon learned of Vicki Calu who lived near-by and completed a chair pad kit with Vicki's guidance. By then, Kim "had fallen in love with rug hooking" and decided upon a more ambitious project – a large rug. She selected a "Whispering Pines" pattern that reflected a woodlands theme with pinecones. Vicki helped with the dyeing of the wool and the color planning, but it was apparent that Kim had found her art form and was a natural talent. That first rug was accepted for recognition in "Celebrations XI". (We wonder how many, if any, other first rugs have been included in Celebrations.) After the rug was completed, Vicki shared that pine cones are among the most difficult images to hook properly, so Kim is especially proud of the end result.

Those who admire Kim's wide cut primitive rugs may be surprised to learn that she started as a fine cut hooker doing realistic florals with traditional shading. At the time, she did not know

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about primitive style rug hooking. After hooking for about one or one and a half years, Kim met two women at Vicki Calu's studio who hooked primitive style rugs. She was immediately attracted to wide cut hooking. Shortly thereafter, Kim bought a crow pattern kit along with the wool from Rebecca Erb and changed course. As someone who is serious about rug hooking, Kim admires all hooking styles and wants to be experienced in all aspects of the art form. However, wide cut primitive rugs are her passion.

Kim is dedicated to her development as a rug hooking artisan. She has taken classes "up and down the east coast and mid-west". The workshops, camps and instructors are purposefully selected to help her learn and round out her hooking experiences. Kim sets goals for her continuing development. Becoming proficient in hooking portraits and landscapes are on her agenda. To say that Kim enjoys attending workshops is an understatement. One year she attended seven! In a typical year, Kim participates in three or four camps/workshops. Each one is selected with a specific purpose or a specific instructor in mind. She attempts to work with and learn from all the major instructors. Elizabeth Black, Nancy Blood, Barb Carroll, Gail Dufresne, Dick LaBarge, Emmy Lou Lais, George Kahnle and Helen Wolfel and are just a few who come to mind.

Kim speaks of Penny Hayes with particular fondness and sees Penny as her mentor. They met at a camp in Maine and soon were vacationing together where they spent their time dyeing wool and hooking rugs. According to Kim, "Penny is hooking the antiques of tomorrow." Penny, who now lives in Tennessee, is one of the founding members of HCRAG.

Large rugs appeal to Kim more than smaller ones. Since a new project is typically started at each workshop, Kim normally has several rugs going at the same time. When she first started hooking, Kim stayed with one rug until it was completed. However, she found that she "got sloppy when she became bored with the rug". With three or four rugs under development, she can switch to another rug when she tires of doing background on one. Kim disciplines herself by setting deadlines, but acknowledges that she still has her share of unfinished projects.

Kim describes herself as "a novice wool dyer". She has taken classes and knows what to do, but tends to buy the wool she needs for a rug. When she dyes, it is more to add to her stash rather than for a project. She likes to hook more than dye and is always anxious to get started on the next project. When it comes to her stash, she has an entire room dedicated to her wool with floor to ceiling shelves and plastic tubs. Kim confesses that her wool "is spilling over to another room." When Kim first started hooking, she used recycled wool almost exclusively and visited the local thrift stores on a regular basis. Today, she relies more on suppliers for her wool. In addition to collecting wool, Kim collects patterns and ideas for rugs. She has a sketch book where she records notes for rug ideas. She is comfortable and confident in enhancing a pattern by making changes that better reflect what she wants.

The hooking frame and favorite chair are always in view. Kim likes and tries to hook every day, but there are times when weeks go by without pulling a loop. More often than not, she "gets into a rhythm" and works steadily on the current project. With large rugs, she approaches them in sections and normally sets a goal for herself when she sits down to hook. "That way it is not overwhelming."

Madeline and Margaret Brightbill are responsible for introducing Kim to HCRAG about four years ago. At the time they were members of the Bux-Mont Guild where Kim served as president for two years. In addition, Kim has participated in the hooking group at the Highlands as well as several open studios and community rug hooking groups in the area. She is inspired by HCRAG

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members and by the rugs shared during the “show and tell” portion of the meeting. Kim admires the wide range of rug hooking styles displayed by Guild members and their sharing nature.

Kim grew up in Plaistow, NH where she was one of five daughters and the youngest twin (by three minutes). After high school, she married and had two children. Kim divorced in 1980 and devoted the next 10 years working as a single mother raising her children. She was living in Westford, MA when she met her future husband, Michael, who was an engineering manager. In 1992, they moved to Ohio when Michael was promoted and then to Doylestown, PA in 1999 with a promotion to VP of Engineering and Operations for a bio-tech company. Her son, Joshua, lives in Tennessee and her daughter, Melinda, lives in Ohio. Kim has four grandchildren. Kim and Michael have two Boston Terriers – Max and Maya -- and a log house in Maine where they go several times a year. Their New England home is an ideal showcase for Kim’s primitive rugs. Kim volunteers at a thrift store that supports the Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA) and enjoys antiquing. Michael is an accomplished woodcarver, turner and sculptor who shows and sells his work at several shows. He is also active in several carving clubs.

Learning and improving her technique is important to Kim. Equally important is sharing what she has learned with others as demonstrated by her recent Guild meeting programs. Kim Kagan contributes to our Guild in many ways. She is a real HCRA asset.

“More About Hooked Rugs” – The November 1922 issue of The Magazine Antiques includes an article by Leonard F. Burbank entitled “More About Hooked Rugs”. The article will be presented in segments in this and subsequent issues of The Loop. Segment 1 follows.

“Among the household furnishings of the past, for which there is modern demand, the drawn-in, or hooked, rug has perhaps come into favor quite as much as any other article. We may think it strange that we can trace the birth and earliest history of pottery or glass in America, whereas of the useful but lowly rug of New England we know virtually nothing as to either its beginnings or its development. But when we consider that a piece of china, or of glass, is necessarily a factory product, and that the hooked rug was never anything but of home make, we may more easily understand the difficulty of securing accurate data.

Wallace Nutting says of hooked rugs simply that they were known before 1700. It would be interesting more fully to learn the source of his information. In default of it, we shall have to seek other authority. We do know that, in the earliest days of New England, floors were sanded, or were covered with freshly gathered rushes. As time went on and some degree of leisure gained, and comfort, even luxury, was more thought about, the houses of our ancestors began to tell the story of their aspirations. England was a long way off, general factories were unknown, hence the things of daily use were usually turned out to meet the requirements of the maker or of his family. The men folk usually attended to making the tables, benches, chairs, and other furniture, while the women applied their evenings to the textile fitments of the household, and incidentally, to floor coverings.

There is reason for believing that early floor coverings were of leather or tanned hides. Before rugs were accumulated, home carpets were quite likely to have been scarcely different from coarse blanketing. Whether the first rag rugs were braided or woven constitutes an interesting question for study. On the basis of probability the case might be argued either way. In some ways the braided rug appears to offer the simplest and most obvious utilization of rags for carpets. The more familiar hit-or-miss rag carpet, woven of rags on a warp of cotton or linen thread, required a loom for its making. But it enabled the production of carpeting in pieces of convenient length which could be sewn together to cover a floor of any size. There seems no

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good reason to doubt that the woven rag carpet was the normal and usual floor covering of many homes. Rags were cut into strips, knotted together, and wound into huge balls, which were utilized either on the family loom, or on that of a neighbor.

Such rag carpets would have availability on draughty floors far beyond that of any braided or hooked mat, which in the nature of the case, would be somewhat limited in size. A 'mat' is primarily either a foot wipe or a foot rest. In the latter case it usually implies a well finished floor, painted or carpeted. With carpets, indeed a well-adjusted mat may cover premature signs of wear and tear or the marks of ink injudiciously spilled. Mats have served, too, to soften the spot where tired feet must stand in front of the wash-tubs or perennial dish-pans. Such mats are not likely to be decorative. For that purpose the soft, braided type is best."

Hooking Events and Related Activities

Rags to Rugs: Pennsylvania Hooked and Handsewn Rugs Exhibition – Through 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.

"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: HCRAAG 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 (weezie711@gmail.com) if you are coming for the first time. The hook-in is open to anyone sharing an interest in rug hooking. Bring your lunch.

HCRAAG Calendar of Events

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- 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.*
- 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 HCRA 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 weezie711@gmail.com
- Vice President** – Kim Kagan – 215-766-3707 or kim.kagan@verizon.net
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Guild's Email List Policy - The HCRA 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 (HCRA). 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 than the 20th of the month. For more information, go to the Guild's website -- www.hcrag.com.

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