

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAAG) Newsletter

January 2017

Presidents' Letter – HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! Another year has flown by, and what do we have to show for it? What did we accomplish? Did we finish any pieces? Did we start more than one new one? Did we learn anything new? Did we accomplish our dreaded resolutions?

I think the only thing I am resolving this year is to learn something new. Everything else will fall into place if I learn one new thing. If I learn a new dye technique, I will need to experiment with it until I am satisfied I understand how to do it, and in the process, I will have dyed a lot of different wools—some usable as they came out, some for which I do not yet have a project, but none of them mistakes. If I learn something about designing, I will need to experiment with it until I understand why it works or what I am fighting to make it work. If I finally learn parts of Photoshop, I will feel as if I have conquered the world, and I will need to practice until it becomes second nature. (And what better way to practice than to have an influx of new pictures to work on!! Sigh. I can only wish sometimes.)

After holidays filled with shopping, eating, family, visitors, frigid temperatures, and general busy-ness, it will be good to settle into a winter of hooking. This should be our most productive time of year—no competition from the garden, or long walks on warm afternoons, or lingering over a beautiful sunset. Set yourself a specific time of day to hook—maybe first thing in the morning while you listen to the news (or not—this should be a pleasant time), or while you have afternoon tea. If you schedule yourself one hour a day, you will find that you end up doing more than that because you get excited to see how your piece is coming together, or you only have a small bit left in this one section, so finish it now, etc. You will be surprised at how much you can get done.

I am really looking forward to our January retreat (always a favorite of mine). I expect to get a lot more done on my rug from last summer's rug school. This is usually a time for me to start a new piece, but I have promised myself I will work on my trees. It is a good rug to be social -- no major decisions to be made, and not so exciting that it would keep me from joining in conversations and laughter.

May your year be filled with love, laughter, and loops.

Yours in wool, Weezie, Jan, and Fred

January Meeting – Friday, January 13, 2017 – Our January meeting will be at our alternate site – The Court Room within the Police Station at the Raritan Township Municipal Complex. The Complex is by the Rt. 12 and Rt. 523 traffic circle just outside Flemington. The address for a GPS is 1 Municipal Drive, Flemington, NJ 08822-3446. The meeting runs from 10-2. Guests are always welcome.

Program – Mystery surrounds the program. Ellen DiClemente has teasingly provided a few clues:

- A surprise speaker that everyone will enjoy

- Not rug hooking related
- Historically related

Guild members are encouraged to bring spouses and children about 9 years and up. Ellen will need volunteers for set up at 9am and for breakdown after the program.

Show & Tell – Please bring and share your current projects.

Hospitality – We thank in advance the following members who have volunteered to bring snacks and treats to the meeting – Susan Atwater, Joyce Combs, Tracy Fetzer, Barb Perry, Dee Rosebrock, and Martha Thieling. Our meetings are enhanced by their contributions!

January Birthdays -- Birthday wishes go to members celebrating their special day this month – Jane Anderson (1/9), Cindy Boults (1/14), Anndee Byers (1/27), Teri Dabrowski (1/11), Ellen Dolmetsch (1/15), Lois Grieves (1/14), Donna Kolznak (1/16), Annie Lee (1/15), Pat Levin (1/3), Linda Meier (1/16), Anne Penkal (1/28), and Brenda Smith (1/3). We wish them all the happiest birthdays. Enjoy your day!

Membership – We welcome Diane Keweshan and Loretta Turner to our Guild. Their contact information is shown below.

Diane Keweshan
990 Harmony Station Road
Harmony, NJ 08865
908-454-0117
dckeweshan@hotmail.com

Loretta Turner
114 Preston Drive
North Wales, PA 19454
215-393-9958
lorettaturn@msn.com

Barb Perry has a new email address – braysgemstone@gmail.com.

The membership renewal form is available on our website – www.hcrag.com.

Sunshine – Inform our Sunshine Chair Gail Ferdinando (908-735-6720 or thebrownieexpress@embarqmail.com) of any member who is ill or in need of a note of cheer.

Guild News & Events

Guild Guidelines on Selling at Meetings -- It was brought to our attention at the December meeting that there were questions and concerns about who gets to sell what at our meetings. During the administration of Therese Shick and Cindy Boults, it was decided to invite and encourage our professional vendors (those with a tax ID) to make their wool and backings available at our meetings. The items they provide are essential to our craft, and they are providing us a great service, rather than having to drive a great distance, or purchase via mail order.

The HCRA Board has had a discussion of this situation, and we have come up with the following guidelines for selling items at our meetings. We recognize that members would like the opportunity to make a little money (or a lot of money) from their efforts, and that members would like the opportunity to own creations by another member. The difference is that the items being sold are not essential to our craft, they are finished products. Lovely finished products. (Our entire policy is subject to the rules of use of the county building. If we find out that we cannot do this, obviously we will need to change things).

Guidelines

Our commercial vendors (must have a license or tax ID) are encouraged to bring wool and other items necessary to our craft, to sell at the general meetings, to our members, every month.

We will offer our general members the opportunity to sell their handmade or hooking related items: at the November meeting each year, provided it does not violate any county policy prohibiting such activity; at various retreats (no instructor present) sponsored by the Guild; monthly through the classified section of the LOOP; at a Guild sponsored hook-in which is open to others where members can sell their items at a Guild table. Items that are covered by this part would include wool they want to "move", items they have made (any craft, but member must have made them), hooking items, such as frames and stands, made by a family member.

For 2017, we will also have a flea market in March, since this was already advertised to the members, and we will assess how this goes. This portion is subject to change after March.

We will investigate adding a Hooked Items for Sale page as an addition to the website. Members wishing to sell hooked items through this page would either pay a fee to list the items, or pay a commission when the items sell. This part of the plan will still need work, but it needs to be added here, "under construction," as they say.

We will track who wants to sell items, and what kind of items, and if this policy needs amending, we will review it.

Members Open Hearts and Pocketbooks for Victims of Domestic Violence – Each December the Consignment Shop of Flemington coordinates a clothing drive to support victims of domestic violence in Hunterdon County. Many of those who seek refuge at the Safe House arrive without basic items such as slippers, socks, sweat suits and pajamas. It has become a Guild tradition to support the holiday clothing drive. This is our eighth year!

An additional \$327 was generated by raffling highly desirable items created and donated by the following generous and creative members:

- Jan & Fred Cole (wool)
- Marian Hall (wool and basket)
- Weezie Huntington (wool and container)
- Lydia Brenner (Snowman)
- Mary Passerello (handmade basket containing lavender and a bottle of wine)
- Barbara Lugg (Christmas ornaments)
- Therese Shick (hooked mat and wall ornament)

Chris Vogel, Manager of the Consignment Shop, thanked the Guild and noted that “The pajamas and slippers, etc. were sent to the Safe House for the women upon their arrival into the house; many come in with nothing except the clothing they are wearing, and are so appreciative of a cozy robe or pair of slippers. So many times they pack for their children but not for themselves. The money raised from the raffle was designated to also go the Safe House. Thank you again for your generosity.”

All the proceeds from the Consignment Shop support programs and services for individuals and families touched by domestic violence and sexual assault in Hunterdon County. The Consignment Shop donates their surplus wool garments to the Guild which in turn are offered to members for our hooking projects.

2017 Rug Hooking School Memorial Scholarship Winner Announced – Kathy Donovan was the winner of HCRAAG Memorial Scholarship.

Several worthy candidates were nominated. Kathy was chosen in recognition of her significant contribution to the Guild as our Librarian and her willingness to try new things and experiment, always trying to learn more. Congratulations Kathy!

All Guild members registered to attend our 2017 Rug Hooking School will be eligible for the Teri Dabrowski Scholarship that will be awarded based on a random drawing at a later date.

Guild’s 2017 Demonstration Schedule -- Educating and informing the public about traditional rug hooking is one of the objectives of our Guild. Demonstrating rug hooking at local events is the major way in which we fulfill this objective. Our participation not only helps promote rug hooking and our Guild, but also helps support local organizations and historical sites. The current schedule for 2017 is shown below.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Coordinator</u> |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| April 22 | Peter Wentz Farmstead (Worcester, PA) | Pat McDonnell |
| May 6 | Howell Living Farm (Lambertville, NJ) | Karl Gimber |
| July 29 & 30 | Mercer County 4-H Fair (Howell Living Farm) | Karl Gimber |
| August * | Hunterdon County 4-H Fair (Ringoes, NJ) | Mary Passerello |
| September 9&10 | Sheep & Fiber Festival (Ringoes, NJ) | Amy Korengut |
| September 16 | Historical Fall Festival (Hilltown, PA) | Karl Gimber |
| October 7 | Apple Butter Frolic (Mennonite Heritage Center) | Pat McDonnell |
| October 7 | Quilt Day at Howell Farm (Lambertville, NJ) | Carol Kindt |
| October * | Colonial Market Day (Newtown, PA) | Lydia Lewis |
| Nov. 25 & 26 | Colonial Christmas (Vanderveer House Bedminster, NJ) | Therese. Shick |

* Date not yet confirmed

Inform Jan Cole or Weezie Huntington if you have ideas or suggested additions to our schedule.

January Retreat Follows Guild Meeting (January 13-15, 2017) -- Our popular rug hooking retreat is this month at the Hampton Inn in Flemington, NJ. After our monthly meeting on January 13, 2017, retreaters will move to the Hampton Inn for a weekend of hooking and fun.

Retreat Coordinator, Weezie Huntington, has the following final announcements and requests:

- We usually end late Sunday afternoon, but can stay until 10 PM, if we choose.
- There are no openings right now, but there is a waiting list in case anyone needs to cancel. Please let her know as soon as you know that you cannot attend, so she can let the others know.

- Everyone is encouraged to bring snacks--some healthy and some not.
- Our favorite masseuse, Joy Andrews, is set to come on Saturday. She is bringing her full table, so if you want a total body massage, that will also be available. Please let Weezie know if you intend to sign up for a massage (and a rough idea of how long) so we can give Joy a start time.
- A gourmet pizza night is planned for Saturday dinner for those who want to participate.
- Bring your favorite ceramic mug if you do not want to drink from papers cups – and water bottles. Stay hydrated.
- Those who want to sell wool at the retreat should contact Weezie.

All Guild members are invited to stop by during the weekend and enjoy a cup of coffee.

Any questions? Give Weezie a call at 609-477-4339 or send her an email message at weezie711@gmail.com.

Guild's 21st Rug Hooking School (August 7-11,2017) – Instructors *Maggie Bonanomi, Cammie Bruce, Capri Boyle Jones, and Cindy Irwin* follow in the Guild's tradition of inviting highly regarded and sought after teachers who will spend the week with us. Rug School will begin on Monday, August 7, 2017 and run to Friday, August 11, 2017. Workshop descriptions, teacher bios, and registration information are available on our website (www.hcrag.com.)

At the present time there are openings in Cammie Bruce's and Cindy Irwin's workshops.

Still an Opportunity to Attend Rug School Free – Housing is currently only needed for one of our instructors. Anyone housing a teacher will get to attend rug school for free and will get the teacher of their choice as long as an opening still exists in that class. All that is required is to provide housing (private room and bath), breakfast and dinner for the week. Lunch is provided by the Guild. You are not expected to entertain the instructors. They are tired at the end of the day and need time to relax, reflect on the day and prepare for the next day. If you have questions or interest in providing housing for an instructor, let Rug School Directors Lydia Brenner or Debbie Walsh know.

Spring Fling and Hooking Retreat (April 21-23, 2017) -- Plans are underway for a special rug hooking weekend event held at the Hampton Inn in Flemington, NJ during the weekend of April 21-23, 2017. One of the meeting rooms will be used for our regular retreat and the other for a Spring Fling Workshop on "Standing Wool" conducted by fiber artist Mary DeLano.

Hooking Retreat (April 21-23, 2017) – The retreat will follow our normal format. We will gather at the Hampton Inn in Flemington, NJ following our April meeting on Friday April 21, 2017 and work on our hooking projects until Sunday afternoon. Additional information available shortly.

Standing Wool Rugs Workshop (April 22 & 23, 2017)

About the Instructor -- Mary DeLano is a multi-lingual fiber artist who loves color, texture, and recycling. Mary devotes most of her time to making wool rugs and embroidered wool applique pieces, and continually learns new techniques to integrate

into her work. She mixes techniques and materials across the fiber arts to create magnificent, one-of-a-kind pieces that make a statement! Mary has a “what if” perspective that gives her the freedom to venture into uncharted territories and she takes her students along for the ride. She also enjoys knitting and creating wool applique with lots of embellishment. Some of her standing wool pieces will be included in Tracy Jamar’s new book Coils, Folds, Twists and Turns: Contemporary Techniques in Fiber.

About the Workshop -- “Everything old is new again.” Not only is the “old” technique known as standing wool regaining popularity, it is also a great way to recycle old wool clothes into new rugs and mats.

The standing wool technique was developed before the industrial revolution when thrifty homemakers tried to get the last bit of use out of cloth that was so time-consuming and labor intensive to produce. By standing bits of wool on edge, and sewing them together with a long needle and strong thread, beautiful pieces could be created out of clothing that was too worn to be passed down. Standing wool rugs, or quillies as they are sometimes called (because they resemble paper quilling) are enjoying a renaissance. New pieces are regularly posted on Facebook and Pinterest and creativity and complexity abound.

This class will explore the three basic techniques incorporated into most standing wool rugs: beading, center shirring and faux shirring. Students will gain familiarity with and control over the techniques by making a mug rug the first morning. Then, they will design and begin sewing their own chair pad or rug. Students who know how to knit may bring double pointed size 8 needles and worsted or bulky yarn to incorporate into their piece. Long strips of knitting add interesting texture to a standing wool rug.

Program Fee: \$150 plus \$10 materials fee (payable to the instructor) for two long needles, a needle threader, and thread. Payment includes non-class hours of the retreat. There is a \$50 deposit which Amy Korengut will be collecting at the January meeting.

What to Bring: Students should bring a bagful of wool that has been machine washed and dried. This is a great opportunity to use up braiding wool that has been gifted to you or wool that is otherwise not suitable for hooking. Students will be asked to contribute a portion of their wool to a table for everyone to share. Recycled wool will also be available for sale. If you have a cutter with a size 10 or larger blade (or a braiding cutter like the Rigby B model) please bring it to class. Also bring a small scissors for snipping strips of wool and cutting thread.

Amy Korengut is our event coordinator for the Spring Fling. Contact her at 908-221-9061 or akorengut@gmail.com with questions or to register.

May 2017 Meeting – Felted Appliqué & Pictorial Hand Embroidery – Jeanne Surdi has arranged for Debora Konchinsky of Critter Pattern Works (www.critterpat.com) to present a three hour workshop on felted applique and embroidery at our May 12, 2017 meeting. Felting tools will be required that you can bring or buy via the Guild or from Debora. A 12-inch square New Flock of Sheep kit incorporating felted applique and embroidery can be purchased for \$25. Money for kits and felting tools is due by Feb 10, 2017.

The kits include:

1. Two baggies of wool rovings in different colors for sheep and backgrounds and textures.
2. Four or more pieces of wool fabrics sewn together in a 12"x12" square for backgrounds and scraps for appliques.
3. Beads for eyes

Guild members should bring the following supplies or they may purchase from the teacher (see below):

1. Pins
2. Small scissors to cut out appliques
3. A felting tool (Debora recommends Clover #8901, needles are close together for detail work). Jeanne found the Clover felting tool #8901 on Amazon for \$8.88.
4. Piece of felting foam (6"x8"x2")
5. Embroidery pearl cotton #8 thread (DMC Floss is fine too) in the following colors: *natural outdoor colors of greens, browns, grays, flower colors.*
6. Embroidery needles (a variety pack of embroidery needles will work just fine.) The threads need to navigate the hole easily.

If there is sufficient need, the Guild will purchase size 40 standard felting needles in bulk (which will provide three needles per person) as well as one size 9x6 needle felting pad per person. The Guild would offer these two items to participants for a total of \$8.00. Please advise Jeanne as soon as possible if you need three standard needles and a needle felting pad.

Debora will carry the following supplies for purchase if Guild members do not have them at home:

1. Felting Tool - \$14.50
2. Felting Foam - \$4.00 - 6" x 8" x 2"
3. Embroidery Thread (pearl cotton or floss). Debora carries 50 colors of Presencia size #8 to sell.

Please contact Jeanne at 908-995-2142 or jsurdi2013@gmail.com if you are interested in signing up, want her to order needles or if you have questions.

Guild's Demonstrations Conclude for the Year -- For the second year, HCRAG was represented at the Jacobus Vanderveer Colonial Days. Therese Shick coordinated our participation and provided the following report:

“The house was the winter home of General Henry Knox and his family. It has been restored (by the Friends of Jacobus Vanderveer house which is a nonprofit group) to much of its original state.

‘The house is famous as being the winter residence for General Henry Knox during the winter of 1778-1779 while he was commanding the Continental Army Artillery Cantonment and what is now known as America's first military training academy, the forerunner to the United States Military Academy at West Point. What was then known as the Pluckemin Continental Artillery Cantonment Site is near the Vanderveer/Knox house, which happens to be the only remaining original structure on the fringe of the cantonment.’ (Source: Wikipedia)

“We had a great weekend with lots of interest and had about 13 people sign in as potential beginner class participants! Some items were sold, but mostly we taught visitors about rug hooking in colonial days as well as today.

“Many thanks to Ellen DiClemente, Lucy Walsh, Kathy Kane, Cindy Boults and Sharon Ballard for participating in the weekend. The Alice Beatty Chapter of ATHA was at the Vanderveer House the weekend of December 3-4 participating as we did.”

Mentoring Program Experience -- The Guild’s Mentoring Program was created as a way to facilitate a new member’s introduction to our Guild and to rug hooking. Under the program a member is hooked up with a mentor who can provide advice and suggestions on hooking issues or help explain Guild programs, events or activities.

Jeanne Surdi participated in the program and has shared her experience with us.

“I would sincerely like to recommend the HCRAG mentorship program to any new Guild member. In 2013 I attended the Hooked Rug Festival and was inspired to venture into this new craft. Cheryl Halliday taught the Beginner's Class that I took at School in August 2014, and in early 2015, Donna Kolznak welcomed me into the Mentor Program. She introduced me to Amy Korengut, my new mentor.

“Amy's experience, expertise and knowledge were invaluable to me. She was amazingly generous when sharing her own learning and development. I felt we developed a partnership between someone who is truly a sage of rug hooking knowledge and someone who wanted to learn.

“Our informal communication during this period of time was primarily via email with photos attached. This was very convenient for both of us since we do not live near each other. Our face-to-face catch-ups were at the monthly Guild meetings. We began by discussing Basic Rug Hooking by Stackpole Books, the additional print resources for beginners, Gene Shepherd's mini videos on hooking points and circles, and Cindi Gay's various topic coverages as well as the Guild library managed by Kathy Donovan. We progressed to step by step guidance through the process, “holidays,” finishing (difficulty binding around corners) with lots of tips that helped me develop and refine my skills. Amy threw in some advice and guidance on shoulder rotator cuff surgery which we both experienced while I was her mentee.

“My confidence and comfort level have grown as a direct result of the Guild's Mentoring Program. I have a better understanding of these new skills and techniques and their historical relationship. Everything stops now when either the Rug Hooking Magazine or ATHA Magazine arrives, one must have her priorities – thank you so much Amy!”

Amy Korengut now coordinates our Mentoring Program. Anyone interested in having a mentor just needs to let Amy know. Her contact information can be found under the Officer/ Chair listing at the end of the newsletter.

HCRAG Library – Kathy Donovan brings a selection of books to each meeting. A listing of the resources available to members from the Guild’s library can be found on our website (www.hcrag.com). If there is a specific item you want from our library, contact Kathy by 12:00 noon on the day before our meeting and she will bring it to the meeting. Kathy can be reached at 908-755-1670 or frejja2@verizon.net.

Members who borrow books are reminded that they need to be returned in a timely manner, so that the books will be available for other members.

HCRAG Website -- Our Guild’s website (www.hcrag.com) is an important source of Guild and rug hooking information. The site includes a wealth of information for rug hookers that is updated monthly.

In order to have a rug added to the site, send a photograph to Karl Gimber at karlg12@verizon.net. The photo needs to be well focused and identified with your name and the name of the rug

A Yankee Rug Designer – The August 1940 issue of The Magazine Antiques included an article by William Winthrop Kent entitled “A Yankee Rug Designer” that explores the life of Edward Sands Frost, the first commercial designer of hooked rug patterns. A portion of the article is reproduced below:

“Returning home to Biddeford, Maine, in February 1863, a frail Union soldier of Company E, First Maine Cavalry, went to work as a machinist for the Saco Power Company. Poor health, which had necessitated his leaving the field of battle, forced him in 1864 to give up his job. On the advice of his physician he turned to peddling tinware, an occupation which, with its mild but varied adventure on the open road, provided reasonable profits and improved health. A popular man, picturesque in his dress, a good story teller, he achieved contentment and considerable fame. To this tin peddler all collectors and makers of hooked rugs are indebted, for he became the first commercial designer of rug patterns,

“Edward Sands Frost was born in Lyman, Maine, in 1843. He married Ellen Whitehouse, and lived on the corner of South and Green Streets in Biddeford. Mrs. Ella Jordan Mason of Saco, Maine, tells of being fascinated, as a child by the peddler’s cart which Frost kept in his basement. ‘It had so many interesting things in it – tinware, rugs and rug patterns, calicos, and everything.’ In 1876 Frost retired, was carried on a stretcher to Pasadena, California, regained his health, invested \$3,000 in land, sold it as a profit, revisited Biddeford, and in May 1894 died in his California home, a wealthy man.

“These are the bare facts known about Edward S. Frost, but between 1864 when he started peddling and 1876 when he retired, there were eight years during which he made his contribution to the craft of rug making. His own story of that period appeared in the *Biddeford Times* in 1888, while Frost was visiting his old friends, and was reprinted in *The Dreams Beneath Design* (1939) by Pearl K. McGown. Frost related that in the winter of ’68 his wife decided to work rags he had collected into a rug. A cousin marked out a pattern for her on burlap; she adjusted it to her quilting frame and began to work with a hook made from a nail or old gimlet.”

The story continues in the next issue of [The Loop](#).

Featured Member – Aggie Harris -- Aggie Harris is relatively new to rug hooking but those who know her attest that she is a true artisan who more than makes up for lack of experience with her enthusiasm and desire to learn all aspects of rug hooking. She grew up in a Pennsylvania German home where she developed a keen interest in Bucks County and its history. Her family may have had handmade rugs although Aggie is not sure where she first saw hooked rugs. Learning to work with fabric and to appreciate the feel of wool was an early experience. Her mother taught her to sew and both of them made clothing for the family. Aggie wanted to do traditional rug hooking for years but working and caring for the family prevented her from getting started.

While attending the 2013 Hooked Rug Festival at Prallsville Mills, Aggie pulled her first loops and was hooked. “This is what I want to do,” she recalls saying. Her interest was reinforced shortly thereafter when she visited Shelburne Museum and saw their collection of rugs. Her interest grew as Aggie continued to observe hooked rugs during other museum visits. In 2015 she bought a hooking book by Kris Miller and found a YouTube video by Gene Sheppard. During a trip to Middletown, Maryland with her mother and sister, she bought a Hartman hook at a local shop.

Aggie was attracted to a proddy sheep project she found in Kris Miller’s book. Using her Hartman hook, she started her first hooking project not realizing that a special proddy hook was needed. Aggie brought her proddy sheep project and Hartman hook to the 2015 Hooked Rug Festival and someone told her “You cannot do that.” “But I did!” she beams! At the Festival Aggie learned about the Wool Whisperers ATHA Chapter and attended their November meeting where she met Deb Leshner and Sue Schultz. “Everyone was so helpful,” she recalls. Her experience confirmed that “This is what I wanted to do.”

When Aggie first learned about the Hunterdon Guild, she thought that Flemington was too far to go for meetings, but was encouraged by Deb and Sue to go to a meeting. Her experience was similar to that at the Wool Whisperers. “The hooking community is so welcoming, encouraging and sharing,” she notes. “There are many different styles and color palettes in this art form. Each is as good as the other. No one is better than another.”

Aggie continued to develop her technique by reading several “how to books” but learns best by hands on experience. Hooking at meetings and the informal tutelage she found there was most helpful. Formal programs such as the HCRAG presentation by Jan and Fred Cole on blending wool colors added to her knowledge base. She now attends Cherry Halliday’s classes on alternate Thursdays. In addition, she took a program by Betsy Reed on wide cut hooking. Last August Aggie worked with Norman Batastini at the HCRAG Rug School where she found “everyone there to be helpful.” She also attends the hooking retreats offered by the Wool Whisperers and our Guild. An art class on the color wheel that was sponsored by the Michener Museum in Doylestown was enormously helpful in giving her grounding on color theory. Susan Feller’s presentation to the Guild at our trip to the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center last May added to her foundation of knowledge. These various workshops and presentations confirmed Aggie’s appreciation that “rug hooking is an art form.”

By experimenting, Aggie has found that she is most comfortable hooking with #4 and #6 cuts. She loves what she calls “primitive motifs” but does not like to hook with wide cuts. While Aggie is moving toward more detail in her work, she does not see herself doing traditional McGown style hooking. Pennsylvania fraktur and subjects reflecting local history are especially appealing when Aggie looks for images for her rugs. She also prefers muted colors when doing the color planning.

Recycled wool from garments that she finds at local thrift stores and deconstructs provide most of the wool in Aggie’s rugs, although she does take advantage of the beautiful wool available from Jan and Fred Cole. Aggie is experienced in using natural dyeing materials such as various teas, beets, inkberry, and onion skins. She recalls that when her son, John, participated in the reenactment of the Battle of Yorktown at Colonial Williamsburg, she sewed all his clothing and dyed the fabric using natural dyes. That know-how is now applied to the wool used in her hooked rugs. “I love to over-dye old clothing,” she notes.

Aggie prefers to take a pattern and modify or adapt it for her rugs. Her first project came from a small proddy sheep mat in a book by Kris Miller. The pattern was enlarged four times to give her the size she wanted. “I prefer rug size projects to smaller mats.” Her next project was a rug with two cats that she modified by adding a border and adding stars using yarn. Ribbon embellishment was also included. A Pennsylvania Dutch motif of two birds inspired the pattern that she designed for her third rug. A Bucks County fraktur found in a museum collection was the source for the latest rug. “There are a lot of ideas in my head that want to get out,” she says with a grin. In the planning stage is a rug featuring an eagle that will be gift for a friend.

The best time for Aggie to hook depends on what she is working on. “I get easily distracted so if close attention is required, hooking at a retreat works best for me. If it is straight hooking, I can do that watching TV. I hook whenever there is an opportunity.”

Aggie learned many of the needle arts at an early age. “My grandparents lost everything during the Depression, so my mother grew up in a household where the women made their own clothing.” Those skills were passed on to Aggie. In addition to sewing, Aggie has done quilting, crocheting, knitting, counted cross stitch and crewel work. She found making cross stitch museum reproductions very satisfying.

Aggie and her husband, John, live in Doylestown, PA with their English Pointer, Iris, and 15 year old Tuxedo cat, Porcia, Both are rescue animals. Their son, John III, is a retired Marine Major who is working on a master’s degree in history in preparation for teaching in college. John and his wife, Leann, live in North Carolina with their two daughters – Shannon and Brigit. Shannon is working on her certificate in music production. Brigit attends the University of South Carolina, Charleston majoring in music therapy. Before retiring John II was a Program Manager for a major defense contractor. His work required relocating multiple times; he and Aggie moved 17 times in 25 years! During this time Aggie had numerous administrative jobs also in the defense industry. John is a major supporter of the National Park Service and devotes two or three months a year serving as a volunteer “Camp Host.” He sees it as “a way of giving back.”

Our Guild has already benefited from Aggie’s membership. In addition to adding to our meetings, she has joined our faithful group of demonstration volunteers and contributed items for the newsletter. Aggie participated in our Mentoring Program and acknowledges the helpful role that Laura Robinson played in helping her become integrated into the Guild.

Visit the Featured Member page of our website (www.hcrag.com) to see images of Aggie’s rugs.

Hooking Information & Techniques

From Nina's Notebook – Happy New Year! -- A Time for Beginnings and Celebrations of Times to Come. W.H. Auden, the poet said of the season, "and the Time Being to be redeemed from insignificance."

How do we redeem the "Time Being" in our own lives in these times of turmoil and upheaval? For many of us, our art, rug hooking is our redemption. The act of creation, the design, the color planning, the gathering of materials, the hooking, the finishing certainly "redeems the Time Being from insignificance."

This year as we redeem the "Time Being," let us all resolve to be our most creative selves. "Artists are not born, they are made...curiosity, experimentation, fearlessness are required" says Deanne Fitzpatrick.

At our HCRAAG meetings we have an opportunity to hear and see examples of these characteristics. Weezie talks about elements of design. Show and Tell is a showcase of experiments with various materials and stitches. There are times when we need to talk ourselves into stretching out of our comfort zones and go forward.

I often close my Notebook blog with the admonition to claim the artist that lives within each one of us. We are all artists. Our works may not hang within a famous museum or be acknowledged by Celebrations Magazine or may be in a style which does not appeal to some of our fellow artists, but it is art. Let us honor our hooked pieces and ourselves - the artists who create them. Above all, we are members of Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild and the important word is artisans. Happy New Year! Nina Seaman.

From Aggie Harris' Dye Pot – Let Your True Color Show or Black Might Just Be the New Orange -- If you have an adventurous nature, like I do, this may be an interesting experiment which might just yield some new and exciting colors for your wool stash.

As a new rug hooker, I often frequent thrift stores in search of that perfect garment to deconstruct and incorporate into my next project. I must admit, at this time I have enough deconstructed wool to bequeath in my will – no matter how long I live!!! I was not aware that primitive rugs did not have a true black. So, I purchased numerous black jackets. In an attempt to "tone down" the black, I boiled one piece to leach some dye into the pot to dye a light gray color. Imagine my surprise when my dye pot turned RED! I took a different garment, deconstructed it, and boiled the wool and the dye pot turned BLUE!

I spoke to one of my expert hooking friends who provided the key to this mystery. She informed me that black is sometimes a "mistake" and might be dyed black to cover the unwanted color. I did some research on line and what do you know, an article on a website entitled, "*threads*" provided additional information. Black is dyed in multiple dye applications using a variety of "undercolors." It could start with green, blue, red, brown, or any other color.

If you have an interest in experimenting (like this former Science teacher), find some old black wool and boil it down to dye any number of interesting colors.

To paraphrase the line from the movie “Forest Gump”: Black is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re going to get!

Tips from Heloise – Wormwood as a Moth Repellant and Deodorizer -- Hooked rug restorer Cindy Comly mentioned during her presentation at our November meeting that she uses Wormwood as a moth repellant. Heloise recalled that Cindy’s use of Wormwood was first mentioned in the December 2012 issue of The Loop. That article is presented again for those not familiar with this ancient herb.

According to Rodale’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Herbs, “Wormwood (*Artemisia Absinthium*) is an ancient herb and may be best known as an active ingredient in the alcoholic drink absinthe. It is among the most bitter of all herbs and not used much in cooking for obvious reasons, but is useful in many other ways. For centuries Wormwood was used as a worming medicine for men and animals. It was also used as an antiseptic, antispasmodic, sedative, tonic and stimulant. It has been given to those suffering from poor circulation, rheumatism, fever, colds, and jaundice, and to women in labor.”

Fortunately for rug hookers, Wormwood is also an effective natural insect repellant and can be used to keep moths away. Cindy Comly discovered that it is a natural deodorizer too. She had an old quilt that had a musty smell. Cindy placed fresh springs of Wormwood on the quilt, rolled up the quilt, wrapped it with a sheet and let sit for two weeks after which the musty odor was gone. Cindy hangs springs of fresh Wormwood around her wool to repel moths. After the Wormwood dries, like most herbs, it begins to crumble. Cindy then wraps the dried herb into hankies forming a sachet and then places them in her wool stash.

Heloise is grateful to Cindy for sharing these tips with us.

Recipes – Jane Anderson’s Cranberry Salad – The spread at our holiday luncheon was beyond belief! One of the favorite dishes was a Cranberry Salad prepared by Jane Anderson. We thank her for sharing her recipe with us.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (10 oz.) bag fresh whole cranberries (about 3 cups)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pulse the cranberries in a food processor until fine and no large pieces remain. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and stir in the sugar. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
2. Drain any accumulated juices from the cranberries and reserve for another use, and then mix in the marshmallows and drained pineapple. Set aside.
3. Whip the heavy cream in a large mixing bowl (using a stand mixer with the whisk attachment or hand held mixer) until it begins to thicken, about 1 minute, and then beat in the powdered sugar and vanilla until soft peaks form, about 3 to 5 minutes.

- Gently fold the whipped cream into the cranberry mixture, one third at a time, until fully incorporated. Transfer to an 8-by-8-inch baking dish.
4. Refrigerate or freeze for about 2 hours. Right before serving, top with the pomegranate seeds.

NOTES -- This can be made ahead and stored in the fridge for 1-2 days. Serves: 8-10.
Recipe from <http://lovetobeinthekitchen.com/2013/11/19/cranberry-salad/>.

Rug Hooking Events and Related Activities

Hooked Rug Exhibit – “Tavern Signs: Contemporary Hooked Rugs and the Stories They Tell” -- (November 19, 2016 to February 18, 2017) – An exhibit at the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center in Pennsburg, PA will feature the tavern sign rugs designed by Guild members Karl and Mary Jo Gimber. Many of the rugs exhibited are included in the recently published book by the Gimers. For more information, call 215-679-3103 or visit www.schwenkfelder.org.

A Riot of Color: Quilts from the Community – Quilt Exhibit (November 19, 2016 -- March 2, 2017) -- The Mennonite Heritage Center, 565 Yoder Road, Harleysville, PA invites the public to view the new exhibit: “A Riot of Color: Quilts from the Community”. The exhibit features numerous colorful pattern and scrap quilts from the Mennonite communities of Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Enjoy the variety of patterns and riotous color combinations that reflect the Pennsylvania Dutch culture of early to mid-twentieth century southeastern Pennsylvania Mennonite women. The Mennonite Heritage Center is open from 10 am to 5 pm from Tuesday through Friday and 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday. For information about the Mennonite Heritage Center exhibits and programs, see mhep.org.

Pennsylvania German *Putz* Tradition on Display (November 19, 2016 – March 4, 2017) – *Putz* visiting was a popular holiday activity in Lehigh and northern Montgomery Counties and other areas in the early 20th century. *Putz* makers would construct elaborate Christmas gardens in the homes, often with automated features, and would open their doors for the general public to visit. The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center in Pennsburg, PA has an extensive collection of *Putz* that will be on display until March 4, 2017. For more information, call 215-679-3103 or visit www.schwenkfelder.org.

“Exploring the Tarot – 23 Artists Hook the Major Arcana” -- A hooked rug exhibit organized by Michelle Micarelli and Loretta Scena will be on display in Woodbridge, NJ at the Barron Arts Center from February 4-26, 2017. To view the newsletter listing this event go to website link <http://twp.woodbridge.nj.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1339> and for directions and hours of the Barron Arts Center go to link <http://www.twp.woodbridge.nj.us/150/Barron-Arts-Center>

Penn Dry Goods Market – Antique and Vintage Textiles Show & Sale (May 19 & 20, 2017) – Last May, the Guild took a bus trip to the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center. The Heritage Center is again sponsoring the Penn Dry Goods Market – a special antiques show and sale featuring antique and vintage needlework, quilts, buttons, linens, clothing, and Americana. A series of textile history lectures are offered as well. Admission to show and sale is \$6.00. For additional information call the Heritage Center at 215-679-3103 or visit its website at www.schwenkfelder.com.

Rug Hooking Week at Sauder Village (August 14-19, 2017) – This major rug hooking event in Archbold, Ohio includes a hooking retreat, workshops, vendors and multiple exhibits. To get the latest information go to www.saudervillage.org/rughookingweek or call 800-590-9755.

Alice Beatty ATHA Chapter normally meets the first Wednesday of each month (September to June) at the Vermeule Center, 614 Greenbrook Road, North Plainfield, NJ at 10:00 a.m. For more information contact Janet Santaniello at 908-754-6787 or flowjans@hotmail.com.

Lamb Yankees ATHA Chapter normally meets the first Saturday of the month (October to June) at the South Branch Reformed Church, Hillsborough, NJ. For more information or to verify meeting dates, contact Barbara Boyko at 267-544-0371 or boykobarbara@yahoo.com. Visit the Lamb Yankees website at www.lambyankees.weebly.com.

Spring Lake ATHA Chapter meets the second Monday of every month from September through May at St. Andrews Methodist Church, 907 Fourth Ave., Spring Lake, NJ 07762 from 10 to 2. For more information visit its website – www.springlakenjatha.org – or contact Julienne Stewart at 732-503-4286 or jls7952@gmail.com.

Informal Rug Hooking Groups – Informal gatherings allow those who cannot attend Guild meetings to be with friends with similar interests. The groups listed below are open to anyone who wants to attend. Some require a small donation to cover the cost of the meeting site.

- Mercer Hookers meet on the first Thursday of every month from 10:00 to 3:00 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.
- A “Gathering” of rug hookers meet at Historic Longstreet Farm, Holmdel, NJ every Tuesday from 10-3. The hook-in is open to rug hookers of all levels. For more information, call the Farm at 732-946-3758.
- Woolkeepers meet at the Tewksbury Township Library in Oldwick, NJ each Tuesday at 10:00. All interested in rug hooking are invited regardless of experience. Contact Linda Reitz for details at 908-534-2659 or lindarz16@gmail.com.
- Midland Park Rug Hooking meets the 2nd Saturday of each month from September to June at the Midland Park Library (Bergen County) from 10:00 to 3:00 or later. The cost is \$50 if paid in September or \$10 a session to cover the cost of insurance required by the library. Everyone is invited. For additional information, contact Chris Coslet at 973-962-1884 or chris622@optonline.net.

HCRAG Calendar of Events --

January 13, 2017 – Monthly Meeting – Surprise Speaker **

January 13-15, 2017 – Annual January Retreat – Hampton Inn, Flemington, NJ

February 10, 2017 – Monthly Meeting -- Annual HCRAG Auction -- Location TBD

March 10, 2017 – Monthly Meeting – Annual Hook-in -- Location TBD

April 21, 2017 – Monthly Meeting – Proddy Flowers (Jan Cole) – Location TBD

April 21-23, 2017 – Spring Fling & Hooking Retreat – Hampton Inn, Flemington, NJ

April 22, 2017 – Hooking Demonstration (Peter Wentz Farmstead, Worcester, PA)

May 6, 2017 – Hooking Demonstration (Sheep Shearing at Howell Living Farm, Lambertville, NJ)

May 12, 2017 – Monthly Meeting – Felted Applique & Pictorial Hand Embroidery (Debora Konchinsky – Location TBD)

June 9, 2017 – Monthly Meeting – Summer Luncheon & Show & Tell Gift Drawing - Location TBD

July 29 & 30, 2017 – Hooking Demonstration (Mercer County 4-H Fair, Howell Living Farm)

Guild's Email List Policy -- The HCRAE 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 (HCRAE). It is published monthly (September through June). Articles, suggestions or ideas for the newsletter can be submitted to Karl Gimber, P. O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 or karlg12@verizon.net by the 20th of the month.

HCRAE CLASSIFIEDS



Please submit any items to be included on the Classified Section of "The Loop" to Mary Passerello at mpassere@comcast.net or 908-782-1765 by the 20th of the month prior to when you want the item included. The classified section is refreshed monthly so please resubmit repeat ads. The following information must be included with each submission:

- **Description of Item for Sale or Wanted**
- **Asking Price for sale items**
- **Contact Information**