

## **THE LOOP**

### **The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter**

June, 2007

**From the Presidents' Corner** -- We take a certain amount of pride in keeping the business portion of our monthly meetings to a minimum so that more time is available for the subject we like best – rug hooking. Last month was an exception to the rule. With the dramatic increase in Guild activities and the growth in our membership in the past year, the Guild has come to a point where we need to look at possible changes to our organizational structure. In the last year, we have had an extraordinary increase in activities and programs that included a weekend rug hooking retreat, a rug exhibit and hook-in at the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center, an exhibit and rug hooking demonstrations at the Flemington 4-H Fair, a successful regional hook-in and demonstrations at several local historical sites. This is in addition to creative monthly programs and our annual summer rug hooking camp.

Under our current by-laws, responsibility for most of these events is with the VP - Program Director. This structure is clearly not practical if we want to continue with this enhanced level of programming activity. Therefore, a group of members has been asked to study the issue and report on possible organizational changes that would distribute the responsibilities on a more practical basis. Another group has volunteered to study summer camp fees. We hope to have their recommendations by the September meeting, which marks the beginning of our program year. It is important for members to attend the September meeting when the recommendations are presented.

Have a relaxing, fruitful summer and keep on hooking! -- Heidi and Weezie

**June Picnic Meeting – June 8, 2007** from 10:00 to 2:00. The last meeting of the season is our traditional potluck picnic meeting. This year Sharon Ballard has invited us to her beautiful home in Lebanon, NJ for a joint meeting with the Alice Beatty ATHA Chapter. This will be a fund raising event too with a voluntary \$10 contribution. The proceeds will be shared equally between the two guilds. In case of inclement weather, the rain date is June 15. Members, who attended our December meeting at Cliff and Sharon's unique home, know how special this meeting will be. In such elegant surroundings, this is really not a picnic in the traditional sense.

The festivities include:

- 1) Potluck luncheon and refreshments
- 2) Drawing on a footstool designed by Cliff Ballard and hooked by Sharon
- 3) Mat exchange to include HCRAAG members who did not finish one in time for the Christmas Luncheon. For those who want to participate in the mat swap, hook a 10" x 10" mat with any subject.
- 4) Rug show – bring your latest rug
- 5) Shoe box surprise. For those who want to participate, bring a sealed shoe box with a hooking related item(s) or any other item(s) rug hookers would enjoy. Sharon has a fun way to exchange the shoeboxes.

Members are encouraged to car pool whenever possible and to bring a little extra food.

Directions to Sharon Ballard's home are attached to [The Loop](#).

**Hospitality** – We are so thankful for Guild volunteers who enhance our meetings throughout the year with the refreshments they bring to share. As our program year ends, a special salute to all of Ingrid's "baking elves"—

Susan Atwater	Joyce Combs	Brigitte Levine	Janet Santaniello
Cindy Boults	Nancy Culton	Barbara Lugg	Gail Schmidt
Madeline Brightbill	Ingrid Cosmen	Margaret Lutz	Bernice Smith
Margaret Brightbill	Kathy Donovan	Gisele Meader	Roberta Smith
Lydia Brenner	Cathy Edwards	Joanne McIlmurray	Kay Weeks
Helen Buchanan	Georgeann Faller	Marion Michel	
Barbara Calvo	Gail Ferdinando	Dee Rosebrock	
Connie Coleman	Phyllis Hamel	Bonnie Rusch	

**2007 Rug Hooking Camp** – Camp classes remain fully booked. The list of class participants will be sent to the instructors this month. At that point, we are committed to the instructors for the number of registrants on the lists, so no refunds will be made unless there is a replacement from the paid waiting list.

Janet Williams has offered to teach the half-day beginners' class on Thursday, August 16. Thank you Janet! Let her know if you can help get the kits ready or to help teach. The revenue from the beginners' workshop helps underwrite our camp expenses.

In an effort to reduce camp expenses, we are looking for nine Guild members who will provide lunch for one of our three instructors on the Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of camp. Please let Karl Gimber know if you are in a position to make this contribution.

A sign-up sheet for bringing camp refreshments will be circulated at the picnic meeting.

**Membership** – We welcome new member Susan Woodworth to the Guild. An updated membership list is attached, so that you have the complete list for the summer. It includes Susan Woodworth and a new email address for Linda Czeck (lindaczeck@embarqmail.com). Our membership grew to 89 during this program year.

**Let the Sun Shine** – Kay Weeks' mother has been hospitalized. Kay will be with her mother in Virginia and will miss our picnic.

**June Birthdays** – Birthday wishes go to June Bennett (6/24), Lydia Brenner (6/4), Janet Bosshard (6/14), Gail Ferdinando (6/6), Jackie Lee (6/26), Barbara Lugg (6/15) and Debbie Walsh (6/6) who celebrate birthdays this month. Belated birthday wishes to Margaret Lutz who celebrated a birthday in May. Her name was inadvertently omitted last month.

**July Birthdays** – There will not be a July issue of The Loop; therefore, we need to recognize members who will celebrate a birthday next month. Advance birthday wishes go to Margaret Brightbill (7/11), Yvette Calvo (7/26), Connie Coleman (7/19), Linda Czeck (7/13), Jennifer Gerlach (7/9), Weezie Huntington (7/11), Kim Kagan and Virginia Sutton (7/14).

**Meet Our Member – Bonnie Rusch** -- Bonnie Rusch grew up exposed to early American history. Her parents enjoyed visiting historical sites, travelling from the East Coast to the Yukon. When she was 16, Bonnie fondly recalls meeting Pearl McGowan who was demonstrating rug hooking in one of the houses in Sturbridge Village. Pearl introduced her to the basics of rug hooking and gave her a hook that Bonnie still has and cherishes. Her first project was a pansy pattern in the same color scheme as Bonnie later had in her first home.

Bonnie was born and raised in Clark, NJ. She graduated high school with Jennifer Ham, the daughter of Marion Ham of Quail Hill Designs. At the time, Bonnie did not know that Mrs. Ham was a rug hooker or she would have continued to learn under her guidance. It was not until 1993 in a refresher class in Clinton, NJ with Linda Rae Coughlin that Bonnie got back into rug hooking.

In 1996, Bonnie came down with a serious case of Lyme Disease from which she lost her ability to walk and experienced painful hours of therapy. She turned to rug hooking and quilting as therapy to help get her through this difficult period.

Bonnie is proud that she is basically self taught although she has attended some classes along the way. In 1999 and 2000 she traveled to Vermont with Pat Quick to attend the Green Mountain Rug Hooking School. She worked with Jackie Hansen and did a rooster rug using the Waldoboro method on part of the rooster. Canadian rug hooker, Germaine James, exposed Bonnie to hooking with plaids and tweeds when working on lifelike animals. At Cape May she worked with Abby Vekay and learned using different mediums and working “outside of the box”.

When discussing her rug hooking style, Bonnie is unsure how to characterize what she does. While she has done fine cut hooking, Bonnie prefers to hook with # 6 and #7 cuts. She does not see herself as a “modern person”. Bonnie likes to make “colonial things and old fashion stuff”. She is also a wild life enthusiastic and works to attract birds and other animals to the back yard of their four-acre property in Asbury, NJ. Not surprising, her next project at Hooking By the Sea Rug Camp will be a Lib Calloway whale and ship pattern purchased from Margaret Lutz.

Bonnie is attracted to Karen Kahle’s style. She is “hooked” on Karen’s DVD which she has watched at least four times. Bonnie likes to dye her wool and uses various formulas including Karen Kahle’s book on dyeing as a reference. During the summer, Bonnie enjoys dyeing wool with friends. She works on the front porch so she does not “stink up the house.” Bonnie augments her own wool dyeing by buying wool from vendors if they have special colored wools.

Submitting her rugs to for competitive judging is not something that appeals to Bonnie. Someday she may enter a hooked piece in a local county fair. Bonnie just enjoys making things for her home and for gifts.

Bonnie finds that hooking on weekends best fits her schedule. Her husband, Doug, is often away on business or fishing in the summer months, so she has lots of time to devote to rug hooking while she is home with her labs, Bow and Joy. She also has a sun porch that is a delightful place to work on her rugs in the morning and watch birds at the feeder.

In 1994, Bonnie saw an ad in the paper for a HCRAG meeting and has been a member ever since. This was a time when she was recovering from surgery and had time to attend meetings. When she recovered from surgery, Bonnie used vacation days to attend Guild meetings. She recalls that the Guild met at the "little yellow house" by a medical center in Flemington and then moved next door to a bank building that was a shared facility with a knitting and painting group. From there, the Guild moved to the Hunterdon County Library. Bonnie also joined the Alice Beatty Chapter ATHA. She continues to participate in both guilds because of the camaraderie with other rug hookers and the opportunity to learn new things. She fondly recalls attending HCRAG summer camps with Claire De Roos and Helen Wolfel. Bonnie joined the Everittstown rug-hooking group in 1996.

When she is not hooking rugs, Bonnie is busy with her other interests. She is a quilter, a knitter and gardener. She also likes to refinish and paint furniture and small items like footstools that she acquires at auctions and thrift stores. Her friend and Guild member, Georgeann Faller, introduced her to the thrill of shopping at thrift stores. Now she is addicted! Learning to spin wool is on her "to do list".

Bonnie is a natural teacher. She has taught the Guild's Beginners' Workshop at our summer camp and recent hook-in. Bonnie recently taught her niece's first grade students the art of flower pounding for a mother's day gift. The class made book marks and seed strips to surprise their moms. Bonnie has also been a perennial instructor at Guild monthly meetings where she shares her knowledge and enthusiasm for rug hooking projects.

Bonnie and her husband, Doug, share a passion for fishing. Doug designs and sells fishing equipment for Smimano American. Bonnie has been fishing since she the age of four. While Bonnie prefers fresh water fishing in the mountain regions and Doug salt water fishing, they have found a way to blend their common interests. Bonnie and Doug have fly fished in the Big Horn Mountains of Montana and Wyoming and down to the Baja's for marlin, tuna and dolphin. They tag and release, sport fishing as they go. In the summer months, Bonnie can be seen heading out the Manasquan Inlet off the New Jersey coast on their boat the Fin-Fun for a family day of fishing. Bonnie often sits up in the tuna tower of the boat for a better look.

Another common interest is their dogs. When Doug's favorite hunting dog, Brooke, recently passed away, they replaced her with Chocolate Labs, Bow and Joy, which is a comfort to Bonnie while Doug's work takes him away from home. Bow turned a year old and joyful Joy is turning eight months old. House breaking is in check and very little chew damage. No matter where Bonnie is in the house, Bow is never far behind.

Bonnie Rusch contributes to our Guild in many ways. We are fortunate to have this multi-talented artisan as a member.

**Hunterdon County 4-H Fair – August 22-26, 2007** -- We have been invited to participate once again in the Hunterdon County 4-H Agricultural Fair that will be held from August 22nd to 26th. This is a wonderful opportunity for our Guild to share the art of rug hooking with the public by displaying our hooked items and by demonstrating our craft. We hope you will participate. Dee Rosebrock is coordinating our efforts. Additional information will be sent to all members shortly.

**Guild Demonstrates Rug Hooking** -- The weather was picture perfect for Guild members who sat on the grounds of the Johnson Ferry House at Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, NJ for the Spirit of the Jerseys State History Fair on May 5. Margaret Brightbill, Joyce Combs, Tracy Fetzer, Karl Gimber, Marion Michel, Kitty Platt and Dee Rosebrock spent a delightful day demonstrating traditional rug hooking while interested visitors observed, asked questions and shared fond memories of family members who also hooked rugs. The younger visitors seemed especially intrigued by the process. Several visitors took the Guild's brochure home. During the day, Joyce's son and daughter-in-law, Jeff and Betsy, and her granddaughter, Clara, stopped by. Kitty's daughter and son-in-law, Nita and Jerry, visited as well and enjoyed the Fair. "Skeet" Combs brought their dog, Jack, along for a walk in the Park. In another location, Madeline Brightbill entertained with her hammered dulcimer playing. We thank Margaret Brightbill for coordinating HCRAG's participation at the State History Fair and for members who represented the Guild so well.

**A Memory of Grandmother's Mats** -- The June 1925 issue of Antiques Magazine includes an article entitled "A Memory of Grandmother's Mats" by Gertrude DeWagner. That article is being reproduced in its entirety in The Loop. The second segment follows.

"The designs on Grandmother's rugs were never outlined in black, and never did she weave the colors in straight lines, but, always, she worked diagonally and in wavy lines over her canvas, being careful not to work the pattern so closely as to give the mat a harsh and ugly quality. Never were the wools, which she wrought back and forth, up and under, in long strips, but always in short lengths of not more than four or five inches. These strips had been previously cut, and were kept, close at hand, in small pasteboard boxes, one color to a box.

At times, I would find Grandmother busy in the back yard dipping pieces of woolen goods in dyes which she had made from vegetables, flowers, and minerals. Sometimes two colors would come from the same dye pot. This seemed to me wonderful, to the point of magic, until Grandmother explained that the white wool dipped in yellow made from copperas, saffron or onion peel, would come out yellow; while darker goods – blue, black or brown – would become green.

The pieces of goods, none very large, were first wrung out of water before being thrown into the dyes. As only a few pieces were dipped at a time the dyes would very gradually become lighter in color, so the last pieces dipped were of a more delicate tint than the first."...to be continued.

**Quilters Test Wool** -- Apparently quilters also have an interest in determining whether a fabric is wool or a synthetic. A posting on the Quilter's Digest for May 20, 2007 provides a "wool burning test – smolders as nears flame; small, slow flickering flame; sizzles and curls; ceases flaming when removed. Crisp, dark ash, irregular shape, crushes easily; burning hair or feather odor. Wool will also dissolve in chlorine bleach."

**Rug Hooking Demonstrations** -- Educating the public about rug hooking is one of the objectives of the Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild. Demonstrating rug hooking at local festivals and fairs is an excellent way to do this and have an enjoyable time too. We are scheduled to participate in the following festivals:

- . Hunterdon County 4-H Fair (Hunterdon County Fair Grounds)- August 22-26 (Dee Rosebrock is our coordinator)
- . Holcombe- Jimison Farmstead Farming Festival (Lambertville)– September 8 & 9 (Karl Gimber is our coordinator)
- . Garden State Sheep and Fiber Festival (Hunterdon County Fair Grounds) – September 15 & 16
- . Market Day (Newtown, PA) – Saturday, September 15 (Karl Gimber is our coordinator)

Please plan to support the Guild in our rug hooking demonstrations.

### **Rug Hooking Events and Related Activities**

The Great Cover-up: American Rugs on Beds, Tables and Floors Exhibit will be at the American Folk Art Museum in New York City from June 5 through September 16, 2007. The exhibit includes rugs from the Kopp book, American Hooked and Sewn Rugs: Folk Art Under Foot and 65 rugs from the 18<sup>th</sup> through mid 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. There is a special opening on June 2 at which Guild member, Linda Rae Coughlin, will be speaking.

The Art Rugs Playing Cards organized by Linda Rae Coughlin will be on exhibit at the Slater Museum in Norwich, CT from June 10 to September 3, 2007. There will also be 45-50 other original rugs on display. The opening for the exhibit is on June 10, 2007 from 1:00 to 3:00.

Can This Rug Be Saved? – June 20, 2007, a lecture by Tracy Jamar at the American Folk Art Museum, 1:30 P.M. 45 West 53<sup>rd</sup> St., NY, NY. Attendees are invited to bring their rugs for Tracy's scrutiny and comments.

FiberFest 2007 hosted by the Mountain State Fiber Artist ATHA Chapter will be held on Saturday, August 11 from 9:30 to 4:00. The event will be at the Capon Valley Ruritan Building located in Yellow Spring West Virginia. Registration is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. For additional information contact Susan Feller [rugs2wv@yahoo.com](mailto:rugs2wv@yahoo.com) or 304-496-8073

Rugs by the Sea, a traditional rug hooking school in Cape May, NJ, invites you to join them for their 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration during the weeks of September 16 to 28. The instructors for the first week are Beverly Conway, Lucille Festa, Cindi Gay and Nancy Miller. The instructors for the second week are Elizabeth Black, Beverly Conway, Gail Dufresne and Abby Vakay. Contact Norma Batastini at 973-746-5361 or [g\\_batastini@msn.com](mailto:g_batastini@msn.com) for details.

The Third Annual Brandywine Guild Hook-in – October 27, 2007 from 9:30 to 4:00 at the Harrisburg Area Community College, Lebanon Campus, Lebanon, PA. Maggie's Hat Challenge and Fall Swap. For more information call 610-273-1213 or [marylynnelan@aol.com](mailto:marylynnelan@aol.com).

The Highland School of Rug Hooking Workshop features Norma Batastini, Susan Feller and Marie Sugar on November 2-4, 2007. For details contact Vicki Calu- at 215-249-0790 or [vcalu@verizon.net](mailto:vcalu@verizon.net).

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.

### **HCRAG Calendar of Events**

**June 8** – HCRAG/ATHA Picnic (Sharon Ballard’s home)

**August 13-17** – HCRAG Rug Hooking Camp, ESC School, West Amwell, NJ

**September** – HCRAG Exhibit –Flemington Library

**September 14** – Monthly Meeting\*

**October 13** – Monthly Meeting

**November 2** – Monthly Meeting – Hooked Brick Doorstop (Kim Kagan)\* – note meeting is a week earlier just in case you are planning to attend the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild show.

**December** – HCRAG Exhibit – Doylestown Library

**December 14** – Holiday Luncheon

\* 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](mailto:jenyjump@optonline.net)

Weezie Huntington -- 609-466-1882 or [weezie.huntington@verizon.net](mailto:weezie.huntington@verizon.net)

**Fund Raising** – Sharon Ballard – 908-236-7410 or [cballard@patmedia.net](mailto:cballard@patmedia.net)

**Historian** – Marion Michel – 609-397-3425 or [marionmichel@earthlink.net](mailto:marionmichel@earthlink.net)

**Hospitality** – Ingrid Cosmen – 908-832-2215 or [woodglen1@earthlink.net](mailto:woodglen1@earthlink.net)

Lydia Brenner -- 732-741-9313 or [lbrenuva@comcast.net](mailto:lbrenuva@comcast.net)

**Librarian** – Kathy Donovan – 908-755-1670 or [frejja@optonline.net](mailto:frejja@optonline.net)

**Programs** – Mary Jo Gimber -- 215-297-0803 or [mjg12@nni.com](mailto:mjg12@nni.com)

**Public Relations** -- Karl Gimber -- 215-297-0803 or [karlg@nni.com](mailto:karlg@nni.com)

**Secretary** – Gail Schmidt – 732-741-6620 or [gks001@aol.com](mailto:gks001@aol.com)

**Sunshine** – Dee Rosebrock – 609-771-0596 or [uncoolfred@aol.com](mailto:uncoolfred@aol.com)

**Treasurer** – Susan Atwater –908-439-3473 or [susanatwater@earthlink.com](mailto:susanatwater@earthlink.com)

**Guild’s Email List Policy** - The HCRAG 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.

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The Loop is the newsletter of the Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG). It is published monthly (September through June). Articles, suggestions or ideas for the newsletter should be submitted to Karl Gimber at P. O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 or by email to [karlg@nni.com](mailto:karlg@nni.com).