

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

June 2008

From the President's Corner – Norma Batastini's presentation at the May meeting was one of those not to be missed programs. Her theme "Backgrounds – Don't Leave Them for Last" reinforced Karen Kahle's observation that "if you treat them as nothing, they will be nothing". Norma reviewed years of research using photos of over 50 contemporary rugs and explained how their backgrounds worked with the patterns to enhance the rugs. The rugs illustrated were completed by former students, other nationally recognized instructors as well as Norma's rugs. Norma brought many of her own creations for us to see, touch and examine. Several members have already commented on how they have used Norma's information in making decisions on current projects. (Norma's 15 page handout that includes notes and color photos of all the rugs discussed is available from her for the cost of reproduction.)

Our June meeting is the last one for our program year. We hope all will come to the "picnic meeting" (see details below) and celebrate our successful year. Bring your hooking equipment.

Have an enjoyable summer and keep on hooking! -- Weezie

June Meeting – June 13, 2008 – Our last meeting of the program year will be our traditional potluck picnic luncheon at our normal location – the Hunterdon County Complex. **Please note that the meeting will begin an hour later at 11:00.** For those who have not attended in the past, this is an inside picnic held at our regular location. It is a potluck affair and all members are requested to bring their favorite appetizer, entrée, salad or dessert. HCRAG members are known for their exceptional cooking skills as well as their rug hooking. The food is wonderful!!

The "shoe box exchange" will be back by popular demand. For those who want to participate, bring a sealed shoe box with hooking related items or other items hookers will enjoy. Sharon has a fun way to exchange them.

The desire to get to know each other better was one of the items listed when the sheet requesting program ideas was recently circulated at a meeting. The informal nature of the picnic presents an excellent opportunity to do this and Sharon is working on creative ways to bring this about.

The inspirational "show and tell" portion of the meeting will feature summer time and pictorial rugs as well as any current projects. The important thing is to bring a rug to share with everyone.

Bring your hooking equipment and use the time to work on your current project.

Membership – The email addresses of some members will change due to Comcast's recent acquisition of Patmedia. Please let Karl Gimber know if your email address has changed so that our records can be kept up to date. The following changes have been reported: Carol Kindt's new email address is ck-rk@comcast.net and Sharon Ballard's is cliffballard2@comcast.net.

Let the Sun Shine – Weezie learned that former Guild member Joan Harkins is suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and now living at Chandler Hall in Newtown, PA. She is not doing well. Karl Gimber had a stent inserted in an artery and is doing fine. Helen Johnson, the admired fine

cut instructor and artist, passed away in May. She taught and inspired many rug hookers in the area including HCRAG members.

June Birthdays – This month the following members celebrate birthdays – June Bennett (6/24), Lydia Brenner (6/4), Janet Bosshard (6/14), Gail Ferdinando (6/6), Jackie Lee (6/24), Barbara Lugg (6/15) and Debbie Walsh (6/6). We wish them all the best.

July Birthdays -- The Loop will not be issued in July, so we want to take this opportunity to extend birthday wishes to members who will celebrate birthdays next month. They are Sharon Bennett (7/9), Margaret Brightbill (7/11), Connie Coleman (7/19), Linda Czeck (7/13), Weezie Huntington (7/11), Kim Kagan (7/17), Nina Seaman (7/20), Virginia Sutton (7/14) and Susan Woodworth (7/12).

HCRAG Bus Trip to Lancaster Heritage Center – On May 28, 2008, the Guild renewed its practice of sponsoring bus trips to sights of interest. Our destination was the Rags to Rugs Exhibit of hooked rugs at the Lancaster Heritage Center in Lancaster, PA. Kitty Platt, Special Events Coordinator, noted that “54 individuals registered for the trip including members, spouses, family members friends and guests.” A thunderstorm the night before pushed the humidity out of the area, so the weather for the trip was delightful. We thank Kitty for planning the trip, Gisele Meader for taking care of the financial matters and Connie Coleman for overseeing the details during the day. It was a fun day!

2008 HCRAG Rug Hooking Camp (August 11- 15, 2008) – If you have not yet signed up for camp or have a friend who may have interest, there is still time to take advantage of openings that have just developed. Under normal circumstances, the HCRAG Camp is a real bargain. By reading the advertisements for other camps that appear in Rug Hooking Magazine and the ATHA Newsletter you will see that the fee for our camp is significantly lower. With gas prices soaring, our camp presents a special opportunity to work with nationally known instructors without the expense of driving a great distance. There are openings with Jayne Hester and Anne-Marie Littenberg. Tell your rug hooking friends! Contact Karl Gimber (215-297-0803 or karlg@nni.com) or Weezie Huntington (609-466-1882 or weezie711@gmail.com) for details.

The Old Barn Rug Hooking Guild Hosts Hook-in on August 16, 2008 -- The Blue Heron Art Gallery in Wyalusing, PA is the site for a hook-in sponsored by the Old Barn Rug Hooking Guild on Saturday, August 16, 2008. Visit their website, www.blueheronart.org, for the MapQuest link. The event starts at 9:30 AM and concludes at 4:00 PM. The cost is \$10 with pre-registration by June 1st and \$12 at the door. There will be vendors, prizes and complimentary refreshments. For more information contact Guild President, Janet Schleeter at 570-928-9190 or jschleeter@epix.net.

Jersey Girls Project Expanding -- The dates for the exhibit have been set for Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25, 2009. The show will be held at the beautiful firehouse complex in Oldwick, NJ. The show will be comprised of 1) the “Jersey Girls”- new rugs with a New Jersey theme, 2) “Jersey Real Estate”-houses, homes, farms, etc. and 3) all other rugs hooked after 2000. There has been a bit of confusion with some people thinking that the show would only be the “Jersey Girls” theme rugs. All rugs hooked since 2000 can be exhibited. The exception to this is the “Jersey Real Estate” section where rugs hooked prior to 2000 will also be accepted. If you have any questions, please contact Norma Batastini, Janet Santaniello or Sharon Ballard.

4th Annual Brandywine Hook-in on October 25, 2008 -- The highly successful and popular hook-in hosted by the Brandywine Rug Hooking Guild is moving to a new venue on Saturday, October 25, 2008. The new, larger facility is Volunteer's Hall at the Wagontown Fire Company in Wagontown, PA (northwest of Coatesville, PA on Rt. 340). Sally D'Albora will be the featured artist with an exhibit of her work. There will also be an exhibit of hooked rugs from The Hooked Rug Project of Las Rancheritas from Agustin Gonzales in central Mexico. As in past years, there will be door prizes, a rug show and 11 popular vendors. The cost for non-members is \$12 (advance) or \$14 at the door. More information is available from Marian Hall at mariangh@aol.com.

Guild Members Demonstrate at The New Jersey History Fair -- In spite of cold and damp weather, Joyce Combs Dee Rosebrock and Roberta Smith joined Margaret Brightbill on Saturday May 3, 2008 at the Spirit of New Jersey History Fair at Washington Crossing Park in Titusville, NJ. They demonstrated traditional rug hooking and spoke with visitors who ventured over to the Johnson Ferry House. Husbands Cliff Ballard and "Skeet" Combs stopped by to say hello. We thank our dedicated members for braving the weather to represent the Guild.

Camp Scholarship Awarded -- Laurie Rubinetti is the first recipient of the scholarship established in memory of Madeline Brightbill. The Scholarship Committee met after the May meeting to review and nominations that were submitted. Laurie was selected in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the Guild in creating and maintaining our website. She has chosen to participate in Jayne Hester's workshop. Congratulations Laurie!

Guild Member Tony Townsend Featured -- The May 8, 2008 issue of the Bucks County Herald features Tony Townsend in an article entitled "10,000 Costumes in Pipersville." (See page 14.) Since Tony is a relatively new member, many may not know that for decades he has provided costumes for Broadway shows and Hollywood stars. Tony has been on the stage as an actor, dancer and singer since the age of 13. He became a costumer in 1962 and now has about 10,000 costumes in the 1740 barn on his property in Pipersville, PA.

Phyllis Hamel Relocating -- Long time Guild member Phyllis Hamel and her husband Jake are relocating to Oregon where they will be close to their daughter and grandchildren. Their home in Princeton has sold and they will be moving sometime in July. Members had a chance to say to say good-bye to our talented friend at the May meeting.

Name Badges -- Now is the time to order a name badge if you want to have it in time for camp or our meetings in the fall. All you need to do is send a check for \$6.75 made payable to HCRAAG to Karl Gimber at P.O. Box 16, Carversville, PA, 18913. Include a note with the exact spelling of the name you want on the badge. An order is about to be placed.

Meet Our Member – Janet Bosshard -- Janet Bosshard grew up on a farm in Hunterdon County in the 1950s. At that time, there were fewer people living in the area and children had to find ways to entertain themselves. Encouraged by her mother, Janet was attracted to handwork and learned knitting, counted cross-stitch and needlepoint. This attraction to creative work done by hand stayed with her. In 2001, Janet signed up for a beginners' workshop with Gail Dufresne sponsored by the Hunterdon County Adult Education Program. Before the workshop started, Janet saw an article in the Hunterdon Democrat about Susan Feller and her Church Door Gallery in Califon, NJ. Hooked rugs were mentioned in the article, so Janet decided to visit the gallery to see what hooked rugs looked like and to find out what she got herself into with Gail's workshop. She loved the rugs Susan hooked. At the time Susan was not teaching, but had wonderful things

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to say about Gail and encouraged her to take the class. That is how it all started.

The first class with Gail was held at the ESC School, but the participants agreed to meet at Gail's home for future sessions, which was ideal because they could see all the different styles and projects in Gail's home/studio. It opened up a whole new world. Looking back, Janet found Gail to be the ideal teacher for someone new to rug hooking because of her wealth of experience that she eagerly shared.

In October 2002, Janet along with her daughter went to the ATHA Biennial Exhibit held at the Valley Forge Convention Center. The vast display of rugs hooked in diverse styles and techniques stimulated her to want to do more and learn more. By chance, Janet met Helen Johnson at the exhibit. Helen was one of the top fine cut hookers in the area. Janet's daughter was admiring a McGown rug and was encouraging Janet to buy the pattern and hook the piece. Helen overheard the conversation and mentioned that she was the instructor for that pattern. Initially, Janet was unsure that she could hook the complicated leaf pattern, but Helen assured her it could be done. Following the exhibit, Janet contacted Helen and arrangements were made for her to take lessons. She learned jar dyeing using Cushing Dyes and dyed all the wool for the rug, which was completed in a #4 cut. It is still among Janet's favorite pieces.

Janet hooks in anything from a #3 cut to a #8 cut. The cut depends on the pattern and for whom the rug is intended. Janet has found that her children like rugs with detailing that calls for narrow cuts. Rugs completed for her grandchildren are normally done with wider cuts since the patterns have less detail. Each project is approached with flexibility. Janet wants the rug to be personal and something the individual will like. Janet is very generous with her rugs. Most are done for others. She has completed a rug for each of her three children and six grandchildren. Actually, the rug for her youngest grandchild, Harry, is not yet completed.

Participation in workshops and camps assures that Janet continues to grow as a rug hooking artisan. In 2003, she travelled to Virginia to work with Sally Kallin who describes her style as "impressionistic primitive". Arline Bechtoldt, Bev Conway, Sherri Heiber-Day, Jayne Hester and Helen Wolfel are instructors with whom she has studied. The workshops were sponsored by HCRAAG, the Everittstown Group or local classes. Most of the projects Janet has completed were patterns she purchased or were designed by her instructors. However, she is starting to develop her own designs. Janet wants to design her own pattern for the rug entered into the "Jersey Girls" Exhibit. A current rug for the Longstreet Farm challenge will be mostly of her own creation. Janet is still attracted to McGown patterns even though the shading associated with McGown style hooking is less popular than it once was.

Janet works with both recycled wool and new wool purchased from her instructors and other vendors like Rebecca Erb. At first, she went to a lot of garage sales and purchased recycled garments. When it became clear that her interest in hooking rugs was going to be long term, Janet decided to improve the consistency of the wool in her rugs and started to purchase more new wool. Janet notes that she "became more fussy" as her skills improved. Currently, she uses recycled wool from her stash together with new wool. Janet likes to incorporate wool purchased from her instructor when working on a project started at a workshop.

She has taken dyeing classes with Gail Dufresne and Arline Bechtoldt and enjoys dyeing her wool. Normally, Janet will dye her wool at the time she is starting a new project. The biggest obstacle is pulling out all the equipment and making a mess in the kitchen. Without a dedicated place for dyeing wool, the dye pots and equipment must be put away after each dyeing session. When her husband is away on a trip, Janet often sets up for several days of dyeing.

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Janet finds that the winter months (January to March) are her most productive for hooking. When it is bleak outside, it is so satisfying to sit and hook. When the weather is better, there is just less time available. Janet's enthusiasm for rug hooking is demonstrated by her active involvement in several guilds and hooking groups. She has been Corresponding Secretary of the Alice Beatty ATHA Chapter for the last four years, she demonstrates rug hooking at HCRAG community events and hooks with the Longstreet Farm and Everittstown groups. Gail Dufresne was responsible for introducing Janet to our Guild. She recalls the enthusiasm of our members and the wide range of projects. Janet remembers that at one end of the spectrum Barbara Lugg was creating wonderful pins and at the other end, Margaret Lutz was working on a room size rug! The friendships formed, the sharing and the enthusiasm are what bring her back.

Janet's husband, Steve, is a Captain who has flown with United Parcel Service (UPS) for 20 years. He recently was assigned to fly the Boeing 747. Unfortunately, most of his flights will originate in Anchorage, Alaska. The schedule will call for flying for two weeks followed by two weeks off. Janet and Steve plan to try to make the arrangement work with him coming home every two weeks and her flying out to join him when she can. Steve loves to fly and is eagerly looking forward to learning to fly a new airplane.

Up until last year Janet and Steve lived in an old farm house which they renovated over the last 20 years. They moved to Monmouth County to be closer to their daughter and so that Janet could help with baby sitting the youngest child. Their home was sold to their niece who also grew up on a farm and will lovingly care for the farmstead.

The Bosshards have three children and six grandchildren. Their oldest son, Henry, his wife, Gail, and children - Grace, Margaret and Harry - live in Allentown, PA. Their son Mike and his wife, Laurie, live in Maryland with their son Matthew. Daughter Ali lives in Monmouth County with her husband Chuck and their children Brooke and Tyler.

When she is not hooking rugs or caring for her grandchildren, Janet enjoys gardening, antiquing and going to garage sales. She continues the hand work learned as a young girl and often knits scarfs for friends.

Janet Bosshard is someone who is generous with the rugs she creates giving most of them to family or friends. She is generous with her time as she finds ways to support her rug hooking groups. Most importantly, she is selflessly provides time to support her children and family. We are fortunate to have her as a friend and member of our Guild.

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.
Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild Summer Hook-in (popularly known as "the Cortinia") – August 1 and 2, 2008 at the Holiday Inn, Rutland, VT. Contact Lisa Mims at 908-713-0108 for more information.

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.

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The Old Barn Rug Hooking Guild Hook-In -- Saturday, August 16, 2008, at The Blue Heron Art Gallery in Wyalusing, PA. Vendors, coffee and snacks along with several charming places for lunch located in Wyalusing. Pre-registration is \$10.00. Contact ATHA Guild President, Janet Schleeter at jschleeter@epix.net for details.

Summer Workshop with Gail Dufresne – August 20 -24, 2008 at the Goat Hill Studio, Lambertville, NJ. For more information contact Gail at gailduf@aol.com.

Rugs by the Sea – The 21st traditional rug hooking school will be held in Cape May, NJ from September 14-25, 2008. The instructors for the first week are Bev Conway, Gail Dufresne, Cindy Gay and Nancy Miller Quigley. The second week features Bev Conway Lucille Festa, Judy Quintman and Abby Vakay. For more information contact Norma Batastini at G_Batastini@email.msn.com.

7th Annual Newtown Hooked Rug Show – Saturday October 4, 2008 at the Reed Intermediate School, 3 Trades Lane, Newtown, CT. Admission \$10. Full program offered - speaker (June Myles), workshop (Trish Becker), juried and non-juried show and 35 vendors. For more information visit website www.newtownhookedrugshow.com or email nmh1792@hotmail.com or call 203-270-8293.

4th Annual Brandywine Hook-In -- Saturday, October 25, 2008 at the Wagontown Fire Company in Wagontown, PA (northwest of Coatesville on Rt. 340). Vendors, rug show, door prizes and special raffle. Advance registration is \$12 (\$14 at the door) for non-members. For more information contact Marian Hall at mariangh@aol.com.

Hooked in the Mountains XIII –November 8-16, 2008. The annual show and workshops sponsored by the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild will be at the Shelburne Museum. For more information go to the guild's web site – www.greenmountainrughookingguild.org.

Jersey Girls Hooked Rug Exhibit – April 24 & 25, 2009 at the Firehouse in Oldwick, NJ.

The Mercer Hookers meet on the first Thursday of every month from 10:00 AM to 3:00 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.

Visit the Guild Website at www.hcrag.com to find out what is happening with the Guild. Use it to check on membership information, the schedule of programs and to connect with other rug hooking links. There are also photos from recent meetings and a gallery of rugs hooked by HCRAAG members. Laurie Rubinetti updates the site monthly. Take a look!

HCRAAG Calendar of Events

June 13, 2008 – Monthly Meeting – Annual Picnic

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

September 12, 2008 – Monthly Meeting -- Program TBD*

October 4-30, 2008 -- HCRAAG Rug Exhibit at Lebanon Township Museum

October 10, 2008 – Monthly Meeting – Program TBD*

November 14, 2008 – Monthly Meeting – Program TBD*

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December 12, 2008 -- 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.

President – Weezie Huntington -- 609-466-1882 or weezie711@gmail.com

Vice President – Nina Seaman – 609-785-5705 or bonal@comcast.net

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

Hospitality – Helen Buchanan – 908-284-0749

Barbara Lugg – 908-996-2562

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

Programs – Sharon Ballard – 908-236-7410 or cliffballard2@comcast.net

Public Relations/Newsletter -- Karl Gimber -- 215-297-0803 or karlg@nni.com

Secretary – Joyce Combs -- 609-737-9281 or fjcombs@verizon.net

Special Events -- Kitty Platt – 908-782-8985 or kitty_platt@hotmail.com

Gail Ferdinando – 908-735-6720 or thebrownieexpress@att.net

Debbie Walsh – 908-272-7012 or debywalsh@yahoo.com

Sunshine – Lib Ryman -- 908-604-9459 or libr21226@aol.com

Treasurer – Gisele Meader -- 609-737-3123 or g.meader@att.net

Margaret Brightbill (Asst. Treasurer) – 215-968-2711 or katie4rose@aol.com

Webmaster – Laurie Rubinetti -- 908-995-4030 or Lrubinet@ptdprolog.net

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

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

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