

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

May, 2007

From the Presidents' Corner – Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who worked so hard to make our hook-in an unqualified success! All the feedback (formal and informal) was consistently positive. It is not possible to mention each person who helped without running the risk of overlooking someone. However, several members do need to be acknowledged – Dee Rosebrock and Mary Jo Gimber for co-chairing the event and providing the planning, coordination and leadership, Evelyn Lawrence for providing the stunning Magdalena Briner Rugs, Connie Coleman for suggesting the church, Ingrid Cosmen for overseeing refreshments, Bonnie Rusch for conducting the Beginners' Workshop, Sharon Ballard for collecting and distributing the door prizes and the husbands (Frank Cosmen, Alan Powell and Tom Wooden) and Pastor Steve for providing the strong backs for set-up and take down. In addition, there were those who provided the marvelous refreshments and door prizes, the hard working crew who served lunch, those who handled registration, vendor support and the mat swap, the vendors for bringing their beautiful wool and equipment, those who worked on the friendship rug donated to the church, the crew who cleaned up at the end of the day and the Gimbels for B&B for the Erbs, Lucille Festa, and Evelyn Lawrence. Of course, there was Yak M. Clown (a.k.a. Kay Weeks) who set the stage for a wonderful day. It is hard to appreciate all the hours of work that go into a successful event such as our hook-in. Without everyone working together, this could not have been achieved. The Guild is indebted to all.

The minutes from the April meeting follow the newsletter.

Happy hooking! -- Heidi and Weezie

May Meeting – May 11, 2007 from 10:00 to 2:00. **Please note that the location of our May meeting has changed to the Meeting Room at the Hunterdon County Library.** The Library is in the Hunterdon County Complex (same Complex where we normally meet) on Rt.12, outside of Flemington, NJ.

Guild Program – Hooking Trees - Traditional to Primitive. Bernice Smith will share information on hooking trees. In order to make this a great program, we ask you to bring rugs and other items with hooked trees on them. We are going to try to arrange to have all of the rugs with trees that you bring for show and tell in the center of the room for observation while we hook and learn. If time permits, we have a great video to inspire you.

Show & Tell – Bring anything hooked with trees (traditional or primitive). And definitely bring whatever else you want to show, too.

For those who ordered handles for the tote (Lydia Brenner, Linda Czeck and Phyllis Hammel), we will have them at the meeting along with the pattern and instructions.

Hospitality – We are so thankful to Guild members who bring refreshments to our meetings. This month we say “thank you” in advance to Barbara Calvo, Ingrid Cosmen, Georgeann Faller,

Barbara Lugg and Gail Schmidt for providing the refreshments for the May meeting. We also want to acknowledge Joanne McIlmurray for the delicious mini cheesecakes she brought to the April meeting.

June Meeting – Advance Information -- The June 8 (rain date - June 15) meeting will be a joint fundraiser with the Alice Beatty ATHA chapter at Sharon Ballard's home in Lebanon, NJ. The proceeds from the suggested \$10 donation will be equally divided between the two Guilds. The festivities include: 1) pot luck 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, 4) rug show – bring your latest rug and 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. For those who want to participate in the mat swap, hook a 10" x 10" mat with any subject. Members are encouraged to car pool whenever possible and to bring a little extra food. A sign up sheet and directions will be available at the May meeting.

Hook-In Report –It was a great success thanks to the entire Guild's efforts. More information to follow at the meeting.

2007 Rug Hooking Camp – Three registrants have not yet paid the remaining balance due, so we may have openings. If openings do develop, it appears that they can be filled from our waiting list.

The list of class participants will be sent to the instructors during the first week in June. 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.

We have an urgent need to identify someone to teach the half-day beginners' class on Thursday, August 16. Bonnie Rusch has a family commitment that prevents her from doing it again this year. The revenue from the beginners' workshop helps underwrite our camp expenses.

Membership – We welcome Frances Artigliere, Mary Henck, Annie Lee, Jacqueline Lee, and Pat McDonnell to the Guild.

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Georgeann Faller's telephone number shown on the Membership List is incorrect. The correct number is (908) 996- 3335.

Mary Schenck has a new address. It is 65 Country Rd. #627, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865 and new telephone number is 908-995-2495.

Let the Sun Shine -- Our sincere condolences to Eileen Mahler whose mother, Ann Swenkopf, passed away Saturday, April 21. She was 99 years old. Our condolences also go to Roberta Smith who lost her mother this month. Our prayers and thoughts go to Brigette Levine and her husband, Peter, who recently suffered a heart attack. Brigette reports that he is doing well and on the mend.

May Birthdays – Birthday wishes go to Cathy Heilferty (5/9), Barbara Lugg (5/21) and Donna Brandt (5/22) who celebrate birthdays this month.

Meet Our Twins – Gail Ferdinando & Debbie Walsh -- Gail Ferdinando and Debbie Walsh got their creative genes and interest in rug hooking from their family. The twin sisters (Debbie is the oldest by 8 minutes) became interested in rug hooking from observing their stepmother, Judy Quintman, who is an accomplished rug hooker. Judy is a McGowan certified teacher whose work has been in Celebrations. She teaches locally in North Carolina where she now lives and has taught at Cape May. The twins' father, Larry, is a very talented artist who ran an advertising agency before retiring. He now devotes most of his time to his varied artistic endeavors that include painting, woodcarving, sculpting, and woodworking.

Debbie and Gail were intrigued by watching Judy create hooked rugs and in 2000 during a visit to Vermont where their parents were living at the time, they asked for help learning how to get started. Judy created a beginner's kit which they both completed overnight! Their interest in hooking rugs was clearly demonstrated.

Both sisters started hooking with a # 6 cut, but recently started working with a # 8 cut that they find is very suitable to the primitive style rugs they enjoy creating. Gail's schedule does not leave time for dyeing wool, so she buys wool from local vendors and works with "as is" wool too. Debbie has done some dyeing after taking classes with Norma Batastini and her stepmother, but generally finds it more convenient to purchase wool for each project. She would like to do more wool dyeing. Initially they purchased patterns and worked on rugs designed by their stepmother. Recently, both have ventured into designing her own patterns through Judy's encouragement. Debbie undertook the challenge of working from a photograph of her children when she hooked a rug for her husband using a # 4 cut of wool. Working in a narrow cut is something she would like to do again.

Three years ago, Debbie, Gail and Judy began the tradition of meeting once a year in Princeton, NJ for a weekend of rug hooking. The three of them share a room in a hotel and spend the weekend enjoying each other's company, learning and working on their rugs. Last year Judy challenged the twins to come to their hook-in with a rug pattern of their own design. Both enjoyed the challenge and look forward to designing more of their rugs. The challenge for next year's gathering is to design a rug using the colors of red, white and blue.

In the last few years, the sisters have taken classes at Shelburne and the Green Mountain Rug School where they have had the opportunity to work with several major instructors such as Patsy Becker, Elizabeth Black, George Kahnle, Dick La Barge and Marianne Lincoln. Locally they have studied with Gail Dufresne. Debbie takes advantage of living close to Norma Batastini by attending classes and her open studio.

Both Debbie and Gail lament that raising three children each and working part time jobs leaves precious little time for rug hooking. Debbie works part-time as an aide with autistic children. Her

educational background – Masters Degree in psychology (Seton Hall), MBA (Fairleigh Dickinson) and BA (Douglass College) – prepared her well. While it is hard work, she “loves it.” Gail graduated from Trenton State (now the College of NJ) with a degree in graphic arts and initially worked in an ad agency. Today she operates “The Brownie Express” from her home. The brownies are baked in the Bronx, NY where they are picked up weekly. The gift-wrapping and shipping are done at home. Many of her clients are car dealerships and realtors who want to send a unique high-end gift to new customers and companies who use her products for holiday and birthday gifts. Because of the demands of families and jobs, Debbie and Gail profess to be “binge hookers.” They look for opportunities where they can hook for several days at a time, such as their Princeton hook-in with Judy, Easter break when the families head to North Carolina for four days of rug hooking and the Cortina Hook-in sponsored by the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild.

Besides their passion for rug hooking, the sisters have other creative interests. Gail has been taking pottery lessons for the last year and is learning to knit as well. Debbie has done needlepoint for many years.

In spite of all the demands on their time, the sisters find the time to give back to their communities. For several years, Debbie and her husband, Dave, have sponsored foster children both on a long and short-term basis. She has also been involved with “Rainbows” which is an organization that works with children who have suffered a loss. Gail is a “Meals on Wheels” volunteer and a Girl Scout Leader in her daughter’s troop. For the last six years, Gail and her husband, Ken, have sponsored Fresh Air Kids at their home for two weeks during the summer. Gail and Debbie have supported marathons and walk-a-thons to raise funds for fighting breast cancer.

Debbie and Gail have been members of HCRAG for three years. They learned of the Guild through a friend and saw a meeting announcement in the newspaper. Both enjoy the camaraderie with people all with an interest in rug hooking. They attended the Guild’s hooking retreat in January and appreciated the chance to get to know better the others who were there.

Gail’s daughter, Abby, age 10, has already expressed an interest in rug hooking. She has hooked three small mats and has designed several Christmas tree ornaments. Abby represents the fourth generation of rug hookers in the family that includes Judy Quintman’s mother. The Guild is the benefactor of having such talented sisters and family associated with HCRAG.

Guild to Demonstrate Rug Hooking - Spirit of the Jerseys (State History Fair) May 5th, Washington Crossing State Park, Titusville, NJ. The Guild will return to the Johnson Ferry House grounds in Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, NJ on May 5 to demonstrate traditional rug hooking from 11 to 5. On this day, the Park comes alive with living history demonstrations, period music, games and special historical performances and activities. Admission and parking are free. Guild members who have participated in the past have found this a rewarding day spending time with other members and telling the public about rug hooking. Please contact Margaret Brightbill (215-968-2711 or katie4rose@aol.com) if you want to participate or need more information.

Guild Members Take to the Road -- Linda Rae Coughlin will be speaking at the American Folk Art Museum in New York City on June 2, 2007. Her presentation is in conjunction with the museum's antique hooked rug exhibit. Also speaking will be Emily Robertson, Kei Kobayashi, Linda Friedman Schmidt, Rosemary Levin, and Alice Rudell.

Karl Gimber will be a guest of the Mason-Dixon ATHA Chapter on May 15, 2007. He will be discussing and showing his tavern and trade sign rugs.

Request from our Historian -- Marion Michel is updating the Guild's Scrapbook and is looking for photos of several recent events. She is specifically looking for photos from (1) our Summer Rug Hooking Camp for 2006 – ideally showing instructors, (2) our exhibit and hook-in at the Schwenkfelder Library and Heritage Center last year and (3) our 2007 Hook-in. If you have extra photos, please bring them to the May meeting. Marion can make photocopies and return the originals, if you need the originals back.

More on Blocking Rugs – In response to the article in the April issue of The Loop, Weezie Huntington reported that she has often used her dry cleaners to block her work. Craft Cleaners in Princeton has a very large steam table, which pushes steam through 10,000 holes, into the work. They press with an iron-shaped weight, smoothing and 'shaping' until it looks flat and square, and then they suck the moisture out of the rug with the same 10,000 holes. According to Weezie, "the process is fascinating to watch, and does a great job." The cost of steaming a rug varies by size beginning around \$7.50. For example, Weezie expects the Guild's house rug to cost about \$16 and feels it is "worth every penny and only takes about 10 minutes total."

Volunteer Needed -- Are you looking for a way to get more involved with the Guild? How about serving as Assistant Secretary? Gail Schmidt, HCRA Secretary, needs someone to serve as Assistant Secretary. The assistant will be responsible for taking and preparing the meeting minutes for the occasional meeting that Gail is not able to attend. Anyone interested should contact Gail.

Rhapsody in Rugs -- "Rhapsody in Rugs" is an annual, national juried hooked rug show featuring hooked rugs created by artists from across the United States and Canada. Sanctioned by the Association of Traditional Hooking Artists (ATHA), the exhibit is juried by highly respected rug hooking instructors and artists: The only exhibit of its kind for this region, "Rhapsody in Rugs" is co-sponsored by Cat House Rugs and the Carnegie Center, Inc.

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 will be reproduced in its entirety in The Loop over the next few issues. Part One follows.

"Hooked rugs," they are generally called today, and some well-meaning person has applied to them the term "American Tapestries." But for the love and respect we cherish for the early American mother, and for what we know of her struggle to make the home beautiful, some of us treasure the name she first gave specimens of her handiwork, namely, "rug mats."

To be the possessor of several of these rug mats, designed and made by my Grandmother, is my good fortune. I remember her, a very old lady, working on these mats when I was a child. I recall my mother's saying, as she passed me a small paper bag containing bits of bright woolen

goods, "Run down through the yard and take these bits of wool to your Grandmother, she is making a hooked mat, and it will please her to have them."

To me, it hardly seemed worth while to give such small scraps of cloth to anybody; and, though I sometimes felt tempted to throw the bag away, in the end I did as I was told. I recall my Grandmother's saying as I passed her the bag, "O, I'm glad to have these bits of bright clean wool! They are just what I need to finish this pattern."

To be continued next month

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 have already been approached to participate in the following festivals:

- . New Jersey History Fair (Washington Crossing Park, NJ) – Saturday, May 5. 11 am to 5pm. (Margaret Brightbill is our coordinator)
- . Hunterdon County 4-H Fair (Hunterdon County Fair Grounds)- August 22-26
- . Holcombe- Jimison Farmstead Farming Festival (Lambertville)– September 8 & 9
- . Garden State Sheep and Fiber Festival (Hunterdon County Fair Grounds) – September 15 & 16
- . Market Day (Newtown, PA) – Saturday, September 15

Many of the festivals are held in September, so it will be a busy time for us. 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 18th through mid 20th Centuries. There is a special opening on June 2 at which Guild member, Linda Rae Coughlin, will be speaking (see earlier article).

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.

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 or 304-496-8073

Rugs by the Sea, a traditional rug hooking school in Cape May, NJ, invites you to join them for their 20th 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 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.

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.

Trish Becker's studio, The Woolery, is open 7 days a week by appointment. Trish has open studio time on the first and third Fridays of the month. A three-day workshop with Sherri Hieber Day is planned for this spring. For details, contact Trish at 908-454-5518 or at thewoolery@earthlink.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

May 11 – Monthly Meeting – Hooking Trees (Bernice Smith)**

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 -- (program TBD)*

October 13 – Monthly Meeting

November 2 – Monthly Meeting – Hooked Brick Doorstop (Kim Kagan)* – note meeting is a week earlier

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.

** Meeting at Hunterdon County Library in County Complex on Rt. 12.

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

Co-Presidents – Heidi Blair -- 732-942-3743 or jenyjump@optonline.net

Weezie Huntington -- 609-466-1882 or weezie.huntington@verizon.net

Fund Raising – Sharon Ballard – 908-236-7410 or cballard@patmedia.net

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

Hospitality – Ingrid Cosmen – 908-832-2215 or woodglen1@earthlink.net

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

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

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

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Secretary – Gail Schmidt – 732-741-6620 or gks001@aol.com

Sunshine – Dee Rosebrock – 609-771-0596 or uncoolfred@aol.com

Treasurer – Susan Atwater –908-439-3473 or susanatwater@earthlink.com

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.

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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 should be submitted to Karl Gimber at P. O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 or by email to karlg@nni.com.