

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

October 2011

Presidents' Letter – We're sorry that we had to cancel the September meeting but thankful that our normal meeting place was offered to assist those affected by flooding in the county. For those Guild members who incurred storm damage, we hope that you are doing better and that things are returning to normal.

We are happy to be back from our summer recess and are looking forward to seeing everyone. We can't wait to hear about the workshops and camps that you attended and to see the wonderful rugs that you've hooked.

The upcoming year for the Guild is shaping up to be an outstanding one. We have a great line-up of activities, events and monthly programs planned thanks to our members. As always, we are interested in your input and welcome any ideas you may have to make our Guild stronger.

We have a full agenda for the October meeting and hope that you will be able to join us.

Dee and Joyce

October Meeting – Friday, October 14, 2011 -- Since our September meeting was cancelled due to the severe flooding in the area, our October meeting will be the kick off for the new program year. We will meet at our normal location – the Administration Building (Building #1), which is part of the Hunterdon County Complex, on Rt. 12 outside of Flemington. The street address of the Complex is 314 State Highway 12, Flemington, NJ 08822 although that does not appear on the road. The meeting runs from 10-2. Guests are always welcome.

Guild Program – Adirondack Braided Wool Basket – This program will be a demonstration by Joyce Combs on how to braid wool material into simple baskets or bowls. It is another way we can use up our excess wool. The baskets can be used to hold our supplies or give as gifts.

Show & Tell – A combined Show & Tell will include September and October themes.

September: Worms, worms, worms – they seem to multiply – both real and wool. We are looking forward to seeing all the Summer Challenge rugs this month. Hope you were able to eliminate bags/boxes of your worms for this project! We also want to see all those rug camp projects and any other rugs started or finished during the summer.

October is a month of unusual food holidays. There is pizza day, cookie day, apple jack day, National angel food day, dessert day, eat country ham day, world pasta day, popcorn day, pumpkin and chocolate day and bologna day! So any rugs with a food theme would be good for show and tell. Also, we can not leave out fire prevention week. Any fire trucks on rugs?

Remember there is a raffle ticket for those who show and tell, with a chance to win one of our many prizes. Any member donations for raffle prizes are greatly appreciated. If you could send Cheryl, Gisele or Lydia an email or call to let them know you are bringing a prize, it will be helpful in planning the quantity of prizes at any one meeting. We thank you for your support!

Recycled Wool – A considerable amount of recycled wool clothing has been collected during the summer and will be available at the meeting for a donation to the Guild. This will be an opportunity to stock up on wool for your fall projects.

Hospitality – Our hospitality volunteers for October are Helen Buchanan, Gail Ferdinando, Dee Rosebrock, Therese Shick and Martha Theiling. We thank them in advance for making our meetings more enjoyable by bringing snacks and treats.

October Birthdays -- Birthday wishes go to members celebrating their special day this month – Catherine Basich (10/26), Margie Briggs (10/13), Annie Edwards (10/3), Jana Laidlaw (10/27), Gisele Meader (10/25), Judy Quintman (10/3) and Bernice Smith (10/10). We wish them all the happiest birthdays.

Membership – We welcome Pat Levin and Susan Schultz to our Guild. Susan attended our hook-in at the Mennonite Heritage Center. The contact information for Pat and Susan is shown below.

Pat Levin
1034 Lampeter Road
Lancaster, PA 17602
717-464-5716
patfolk@comcast.net

Susan Schultz
40 Woodview Lane
North Wales, PA 19454
215-760-0911
dragonfly7136@verizon.net

Margie Briggs' email address is warnermrb@hotmail.com.

This is the time to renew your membership. The renewal form is attached.

Sunshine – Gisele Meader broke her upper left arm in a fall. The arm is not in a cast, but is tightly bound. Physical therapy will follow before she will be able to get back to her hooking, quilting and all she does.

Guild News & Events

Long Awaited ATHA Biennial Is Here! – October 19-22, 2011 – After two years of planning, the Lancaster Biennial is upon us. It will be held at the Eden Resort & Suites in Lancaster from October 19-22, 2011.

ATHA Guilds in Region 2, which includes New Jersey and Pennsylvania, are responsible for planning and running this event. Several HCRAAG members and friends from the local rug hooking community have played an active role in working on the Biennial. Great workshops, talented teachers, favorite vendors, local tours, mini-lectures, an international rug exhibit and banquets are all part of this special event that will be the largest Biennial ever held. About 700 rug hookers from all corners of the country, Canada, Britain, and Japan are expected.

A Day Pass will be available for \$10 and will allow guests to see the rug exhibit and shop the vendors. To register for the Biennial or for more information, go to the ATHA website -- www.atharugs.com – and click on "Biennials".

Bargain of the Year -- Hooking Retreat Set for January 13-15, 2012 -- Our popular hooking retreat will be on January 13-15 at the Flemington Hampton Inn. After our monthly meeting, participants will move over to the Hampton Inn where we will hunker down for a weekend of hooking and fun from Friday afternoon until Sunday at 4:00. Participants can commute or stay overnight. We will try to get a special room rate for overnight stays but do not have the information at this time.

The fee for the entire weekend is only \$35 – the bargain of the year! Space is limited to the first 26 who sign up and pay. Checks made payable to HCRAG can be sent to Joyce Combs 1576 Harbourton-Rocktown Rd, Lambertville, NJ 08530. The fee is non refundable unless there is a replacement from the waiting list or from your efforts.

A gourmet pizza night is planned for Saturday dinner for those who want to participate. Let Joyce know of any other ideas you may have for adding to the fun of the weekend.

March Madness Workshops With Cyndy Duade and Angela Foote – March 23-25, 2012 – Two exciting workshops (The Magic of Masquerade and Exploring Color & Hooking) will be held at the Flemington Hampton Inn on Friday, March 23, 2012 to Sunday March 25, 2012. The registration details are still being worked out, but the program information is provided below. Mark the dates on your calendar!

The Magic of Masquerade with Cyndy Duade -- Let your imagination go out to play! Create your own magical mask to wear or be a wall display. Class includes a kit with the basic mask pattern, eye ribbon, and soft backing for the mask (\$15). You can embellish the basic pattern as drawn or transform it to your own creation. Combine wool, yarn, fabric, beads, feathers, and bling. Hook, sculpt, proddy, or embellish.

Class will cover mask design, choosing materials and embellishments, attaching special effects, backing application, finishing edges, and mounting for wall display. Lots of colorful wool, fabric, and embellishments will be available. Bring your imagination and creativity to this fun class and you can wear your mask home on Sunday!

Cyndy Duade lives in Springfield NH near lakes and mountains. She is an accredited McGown Teacher and attends Teachers' Workshop for continuing education. She has been teaching rug hooking for 12 years and enthusiastically embraces all styles of rug hooking.

Exploring Color & Hooking with Angela Foote -- Let the knowledge of color stimulate you to step outside your color box. Use your favorite color in a new way. Explore a variety of dyed wools, spots, dips, and sparkling marbleized wools, swirling with color to enliven your rugs. Bring your love of color and hooking to class. Students may start a new project or spark up an existing project. All styles of hooking are welcome!

Students are contacted prior to class to discuss rug patterns, custom designs, color choices and any other hooking needs. Wools can be custom dyed for your project or as an addition to your wool stash. Angela travels with a large assortment of beautiful dyed wools.

Angela Foote is a passionate creative rug hooker who loves to work with color. She is well known for her beautifully dyed wools and unique wool garments. Whether over the dye pot, teaching classes, lecturing on color, or creating in her studio, Angela's 30 years of experience is evident in her works of art. She is a certified McGown teacher, member of ATHA and enjoys hooking in both fine shading and primitive styles. She has regular classes in her studio and teaches at guild meetings and workshops across New England. FABRICFOOTE is her hooking and dying business.

If you have questions, direct them to Cindy Boultz at cboultz@gmail.com or 908-730-0146.

Hook-in at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, PA – April 21, 2012 -- The Guild's hook-in at the Mennonite Heritage Center last spring was a big success, so we are returning again on April 21, 2012. Jan and Fred Cole (Wool'n Gardner), Kay Leisey (Homespun) and Jeannine Happe/Karen Worthington (American Color Woolens) have already agreed to vend at the hook-in. Karl Gimber is looking for a group of volunteers who can help plan and conduct the hook-in. Please let him know if you can help by contacting him at karlg12@verizon.net or 215-297-0803.

Plans for Camp 2012 Underway --Our Guild's 16th annual rug hooking camp will be held from August 13, 2012 though August 17, 2012. In keeping with our tradition, nationally recognized instructors – Arline Bechtoldt, Jeanne Benjamin and Lucille Festa – will provide a stimulating, educational and fun camp experience. Our great team of camp directors from this year – Gail Ferdinando, Judy Quintman and Debbie Walsh – will again run camp in 2012.

Our Teachers -- Arline Bechtoldt specializes in fine shading but she enjoys working with students in any style. She will work on technique, color planning, and finishing, and will custom dye wool and discuss any topics of interest to her students. Arline will be speaking and showing her rugs at the October Alice Betty ATHA meeting in Plainfield, NJ. Guild members are welcome to come as guests if they are interested in "checking out" Arline. Details on the meeting are found in the Hooking Events and Related Activities Section of the newsletter.

Jeanne Benjamin works in many different styles and can work on any design that students bring to camp. She has worked with primitives, pictorials, folk art and Orientals. One of her oriental rugs can be seen in the most recent issue of Celebrations.

Lucille Festa specializes in old colors, textures, and wide cut wools. She incorporates folk art and American history into her original designs.

Fuller workshop descriptions will appear in a subsequent issue of The Loop.

Registration/Instructional Fees – Registration will begin at our October meeting on October 7, 2011. The fee for camp is \$175 for Guild members who have paid their dues by December 31, 2011. For all others, the fee is \$250. A

non-refundable deposit of \$25 is required to make a reservation for camp. The balance of the fee is due by May 30, 2012. For all reservations received after May 30th, the camp fee must be paid in full at the time of registration. Checks made payable to HCRAG can be sent to Debbie Walsh at 51 Spruce Street, Cranford, NJ 07016.

Refund Policy –For cancellations received on or before June 10, 2012, the camp fee less the \$25 non-refundable deposit will be made. For cancellations received after June 10th, no refunds will be made unless the camp vacancy is filled and paid in full.

For more information, contact Debbie Walsh at 908-272-7012 or debywalsh@yahoo.com or Gail Ferdinando at 908-735-6720 or thebrownieexpress@embarqmail.com.

Rug Hooking Traditions with Magdalena Briner Eby -- Evelyn Lawrence and Kathy Wright have collaborated on an exciting new book -- Rug Hooking Traditions with Magdalena Briner Eby. Evelyn has hooked over two dozen rug designs attributed to Magdalena Briner, many of which she exhibited at our 2007 Hook-in. Kathy is the Director of Rug Hooking Week at Sauder Village.

Magdalena Briner Eby (1832-1915) lived in Perry County, Pennsylvania. The rugs she hooked throughout her lifetime are regarded as exceptional examples of American folk art and can be found in some of the most distinguished private collections as well as seen in prestigious antique shops and auction catalogs throughout the country.

Evelyn Lawrence and Kathy Wright have gathered over ten years of research to tell the story of Magdalena's family and what life was like in Perry County, Pennsylvania after the Civil War. They studied and tracked the rugs attributed to Magdalena and take a closer look at the materials, designs, and colors of those rugs as well as the story of how the rugs came to market.

Photos of the rugs attributed to Magdalena are accompanied by their interesting provenances as they moved from one private collector to another through antique dealers and auction houses. Evelyn's rugs are also pictured.

The book is priced at \$24.95 plus \$3.55 for book rate shipping (no tax if shipped outside of Kentucky) and can be ordered by sending a check to Traditions by Wright & Co., 588 Flanagan Station Rd., Winchester, KY 40391

A copy of Rug Hooking Traditions with Magdalena Briner Eby will be available for perusal at our October meeting.

Guild Volunteers Busy Demonstrating Last Month -- Our volunteers had an active September demonstrating rug hooking at the Hilltown Historical Fall Festival and the Celebration of Farming Festival at the Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead.

Juliana Kapusta and Patty Mahaffey represented the Guild at the Hilltown Festival and found a receptive crowd. They were set up in the circa 1840 Hartzel-Strassburger Homestead, so the weather was not an issue. It did rain for a little while, but that did not deter the visitors who came in larger numbers than last year. Several guests expressed interest in learning how to hook and were told of the beginners' workshop that will be

part of our April hook-in. Another interested visitor was someone Patty knew and may work with her.

The Celebration of Farming Festival held at the Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead (Lambertville, NJ) is a popular local event that attracts many visitors who are interested in old time crafts. The recycling aspect of rug hooking has special appeal. Overcast skies and the threat of rain did limit the turnout in the morning.. Joyce Combs, Karl Gimber, Jana Laidlaw and Betsy Warner represented the Guild. The air conditioned Administration Building is a comfortable location from which to tell the public about rug hooking. The coffee and doughnuts provided by the Farmstead are always appreciated. Gisele Meader was our coordinator for this event.

Upcoming Demonstration Schedule – October is another busy month. Please support the Guild in our community education efforts. Contact the coordinators shown below for more information.

- October 1 – Colonial Market Day (Newtown, PA) – Karl Gimber
- October 1 – Apple Butter Frolic (Harleysville, PA) – Joanne McIllmurray
- October 8 – Quilting Day at Howell Living Farm (Lambertville, NJ) Carol Kindt/Karl Gimber *
- November 5 & 6 – Thanksgiving in the Country (Stockton, NJ) – Joyce Combs *

* Volunteers needed for these events.

Remembering Connie Coleman -- Connie Coleman passed away on August 23, 2011 after a courageous battle with cancer. This month we pause to remember Connie and the positive mark she made on all who knew her.

Memorial Service -- The memorial service for Connie will be Saturday October 22, 2011 at 4pm. at Trinity Buckingham Episcopal Church located east of Doylestown, PA at Rt.202 & Rt. 413. The service will consist of a concert by Rolly Brown, a national flat picking champion of the United States. A dinner will follow afterward put on by the Episcopal Church Women and neighbors. In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made to Discovery Service Projects and the Code Blue Project - addressing homeless in Bucks County through Trinity Episcopal Church.

Guild Members' Remembrances

Nina Seaman -- Connie and her husband, Alan came to Nova Scotia to visit me in August 2010. Each day we would walk along the sandy beach at the local provincial park. Some days we would find sand dollars and pick them up to save for the days in NJ when there was no beach to walk. Other days we would see three little foxes playing in the sand. They seemed unafraid of humans and would roll in the sand and scamper about among the grasses.

We enjoyed the beauty of the beach, the bright sunshine and the sight of these small animals. This summer on Connie's birthday, July 19, I was walking on the same beach and found my first sand dollar of the summer. When I called to wish her happy birthday, I told her I was bringing her special sand dollar home to NJ for her to enjoy. Now it will be special to Alan. On the day after she died, one of

the little foxes from this season of foxes, came out on the beach and walked a bit of it with me. It was as if Connie was there to comfort and reassure me.

I cherish the time that she and Alan spent with me and my husband, Bob, here in Nova Scotia. Alan presented us with a beautiful painting of Connie on the beach with us which he had made. I will treasure that painting and the beautiful memories that I have of Connie.

Lydia Lewis -- I appreciated Connie's advice on color coordination in my rugs. She always had an idea and could solve a difficult problem. I did not always agree with her opinions but I always was thankful for her input. Her artistry will always be admired. She was a very special person and a good friend.

Roberta Smith -- I will be entering the rug that Connie drew/designed for me in this year's Shelburne show.

Anne Edwards -- I am sending a photo. Loved that beautiful woman. (See website for Anne's beautiful photo of Connie helping someone at our hook-in last year.)

Joyce Combs -- In 2010 at the HCRAG Summer Camp Beginner's class, I was a co-teacher with Connie. I was able to watch her teaching style and the way she treated each student. I learned a lot from her that summer and hope to use it to continue to teach rug hooking to beginners.

Connie was an interesting woman with strong opinions and a great sense of humor. Always the teacher, she taught us so much, not only in the fiber arts but in life. Connie taught me how to be positive when life throws hurdles in your path. She was a fighter with a positive attitude and didn't give in to her illness until she had no other choice. As part of our Thursday group, Hooksome and Chatmore, Connie will be missed by all of us, but will live on in our memories.

Dee Rosebrock -- Everyone who knew Connie Coleman through our Hooksome Chatmore Thursday hooking group thought of her as a good friend, and a generous person who was always willing to give of her time and energy in support of the group.

When I went with some other hookers to keep her company as her health declined, I was impressed by how many people from various parts of her life spontaneously arrived or contacted Connie to help give her comfort in any way they could. This included people from her job and her church, plus former colleagues and students at the school where she and her husband had taught. People from her quilting group, the Grange and other friends also provided support. They coordinated amongst themselves to make sure she had constant companionship to give her husband respite. It was clear that these people were genuinely concerned about Connie, and it was striking to see how many people Connie had touched throughout her life. To be surrounded by people who care for you is as much as anyone can hope for, and to have such a wide and diverse circle of friends is a strong testament to the way Connie had lived her life.

Karl Gimber -- Connie called after seeing an article about the Guild in the Bucks County Herald. Mary Jo and I met her for coffee at a local restaurant to tell her

more about the Guild and rug hooking. It was a slow part of the day, so we were able to sit in a corner and spread a few rugs on the floor. It was clear from Connie's comments and observations that she had a solid grasp of design and color concepts. We learned about her involvement with the quilting group at the Plumstead Grange and her enthusiasm for handwork. Connie joined the Guild shortly thereafter and played a meaningful role right from the beginning.

It is often said that in most organizations, "20% of the members do 80% of the work". Connie was clearly in the 20% group! She helped at hook-ins, conducted beginners' workshops, demonstrated rug hooking, and played an active role at our meetings. She gave eagerly of her time and knowledge.

Connie had a strong sense of community and believed that organizations such as our Guild had a responsibility to be involved and to give back to the community. She supported our holiday collections for the Women's Crisis Services (SAFE in Hunterdon) and encouraged us to do more. Connie will be missed.

Workshop in Honor of Connie -- Connie's husband, Alan, has given her rug hooking equipment and supplies to the Guild with a request that they be sold and the proceeds used to conduct a program in Connie's name. The sale will take place at the October meeting with the details on the program to be determined at a later date. What a wonderful gesture!

Featured Member (December 2008) – Connie was our Featured Member in December 2008. We repeat that article below.

Connie grew up in a "Rhode Island Yankee household" where handiwork was the custom. Both her mother and father were very creative. Her father was a professional photographer and took many photographs of her mother hooking. She worked with a group instructed by Dot Galey. Many in that group worked with recycled wool garments that were over dyed. As was common in the 1950s, most of the rugs were done in a narrow cut with beautiful shading. Connie fondly remembers her mother's hooking frame being up all the time and cutting wool for her projects. Her bedroom was decorated around a rug designed and hooked by her mother. Using a frame made by her father, Connie tried hooking a chair seat mat, but never completed the project.

Making all her own clothing during high school inspired Connie to attend design school. She wanted to be an artist but received little encouragement from her guidance counselor. This was a time when academic emphasis was placed on the sciences to support the new space program and the arts were not considered of value. However, her parents sent her to Saturday classes at the Rhode Island School of Design. Connie later attended the Boston Museum School for her freshman year and then transferred to the Textile Program at the Rhode Island School of Design. When she graduated in 1970 there were few jobs, so she started working as a production handweaver using a floor loom given to her as a graduation present from her parents.

Connie became involved with the Rhode Island Craftsman's Guild where she was one of three professional weavers in the state. She also started teaching at Rhode Island College as a "fiber artist" - a new term at the time. That work led to being hired as a designer for a major manufacturer of knit fabrics working in their sampling plant. She worked as a Jacquard designer and "loved the challenge of the intricate patterns." The American craft

movement was underway and Connie's personal work was accepted in major juried shows throughout New England giving her a lot of exposure. She started giving workshops and helped establish the first Rhode Island Craftsman's Fair. Her weavings sold, but did not generate sufficient income. Connie decided to teach and returned to Rhode Island School of Design where she earned her Masters Degree. From 1974-1976 she was the Rhode Island Arts Council's Craftsman in Residence under a NEA grant where she conducted workshops from kindergarten age up through senior citizens. Her work also took her to Rhode Island prisons. "This work is where I really learned how to teach", says Connie.

Connie met her future husband, Alan, at Rhode Island School of Design. He was one of the first to get involved with the newly emerging field of video, although he initially wanted to be a sculptor. Connie started to work with Alan when they conducted professional workshops and honed their teaching skills. After they married, they moved to Philadelphia and bought a "shell of an old brownstone building in the art museum area". Connie spent the next nine years renovating it! She also came to the conclusion that it would be too difficult economically to be a textile artist. She joined forces with Alan forming Coleman and Powell, a video/media firm. For the last 20 years, Connie has taught at the University of the Arts (formerly the Philadelphia College of Arts and Design) where she is a Professor of Computer Animation. She also teaches in the Communications Program at Arcadia University where Alan is an Associate Professor.

In 2006 Connie responded to an article on the HCRAG Camp in the Bucks County Herald. Although she had not hooked in many years, her extensive textile experience and an afternoon reviewing the basics with Mary Jo and Karl Gimber prepared her for her first rug hooking camp. Connie saw this "as an opportunity to return to something from my childhood."

Her rugs do not fit into the commonly described styles. The rug design determines how it will be hooked. Not surprisingly considering her background, Connie enjoys designing her rugs, finding the right garments/wool and figuring it all out. She "loves the challenge of designing." Connie follows in the footsteps of her favorite conceptual artist – Hans Haacke – who "takes an idea and finds an appropriate medium and way in which to articulate it." Central and South American textiles have a great deal of appeal as well and are a source of inspiration for her. She is currently working on the first in a series of prayer rugs and a portrait/memorial rug of her cat, George.

The recycling aspect of rug hooking has a lot of appeal. She works almost exclusively with recycled garments. Connie kept the dye pots from her weaving days and uses them to over-dye her wool. She is still using her mother's Cushing dyes!

Her work schedule does not allow time to attend many workshops or classes. Since she has the summers off, Connie has attended each of the three HCRAG summer camps since joining the Guild. "This is necessary for me to learn technique" she says. At camp she has worked with Norma Batastini, Susan Feller and Gail Dufresne. Connie also credits Guild members for helping her learn by sharing their knowledge and rugs.

Returning to rug hooking was not done without overcoming pain and physical issues with her hands. She has suffered from debilitating osteoarthritis for which she recently underwent surgery on her right hand. The hand is healing and Connie is optimistic about being able to hook without the extreme discomfort she had to endure in the past.

During the time Connie spent as a weaver, she understood how lonely a profession it was. She came to value the importance of community and the need for association with others. Fostering the need for community is one reason why Connie actively supports the Plumsteadville Grange. She is involved with the Grange quilting group where she designs quilts that are raffled to support their Farmers' Market. Both she and Alan help with the Grange's breakfast and dinner fundraisers.

Connie is "a voracious reader and not necessarily of high-brow books." She also enjoys cooking and gardening. After many years living in center city Philadelphia, she "loves living in the country". Connie and Alan live in rural Pipersville, PA with their miniature Poodle BJ -- a rescue dog who is now blind.

As a teacher of creative people, Connie has special insights into what is needed to nurture the creative process. She observes that "There are lots of creative people who never have the opportunity to find constructive support. Our Guild provides creative energy and support. You can feel it at our meetings, camp and workshops."

Immediately upon joining the Guild, Connie found ways to get involved. She helped locate the facility we used for our hook-in and worked throughout the day of that event. Connie helped to coordinate our bus trip to Lancaster and is playing a similar role with the upcoming trip to Winterthur. She will be sharing her knowledge at the May meeting with her program on Computer Assisted Design for Rugs.

Connie Coleman is an example of our diverse, talented and supportive membership. She helps makes our Guild special.

Request from Iris Simpson -- Iris Simpson would love to have photos of the completed camp rugs from the students in her workshop. Please send them to her at ins@bell.net. Margie Briggs has already sent hers!

Guild Name Badges – A name badge order will be placed this month. They are a convenient way to remember members and to introduce new members to the Guild. You can order one by sending your check for \$7.00 made payable to HCRAAG to Karl Gimber at P.O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913. Include a printed note spelling out exactly how you want your name to appear.

HCRAAG Library – A sometime underutilized member benefit is our growing library of rug hooking books. Librarian, Kathy Donovan, brings a selection of books to each meeting. If there is a specific item you want from our library, contact her 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.

Meet Our Member – Barbara Kimbrough – Barbara Kimborough was familiar with hooked rugs from her childhood. Her mother was an antiques collector, so Barbara grew up with hooked rugs and other old things in the house. She always thought of hooked rugs as antiques. While in college in Virginia, Barbara attended a folk art exhibit at the Richmond Museum and

“was blown away by the fabulous rugs made by women who took a feed sack and old clothing and produced works of art.” In the late 1960s, Barbara’s sister married and her mother-in-law, Elaine Russell, was a rug hooker. Elaine Russell did it the old way. She drew her patterns on burlap and hooked with old clothing. It was then that Barbara realized that hooking rugs was a craft still performed by contemporary artisans.

While clearly attracted to hooked rugs, the demands of raising a son and a career just did not permit time to get engaged with hooking. However, Barbara did start collecting hooking items that she found at auctions, flea markets and farm sales. The hooks, frames and various cutter pieces were put away in a wooden box for a later time. When Barbara retired in 2006, her elderly parents needed her help and attention. Three years ago, Barbara saw information on the Longstreet Farm Gathering of rug hookers in a Monmouth County Parks brochure. She attended the next meeting and walked in with her box of collected hooking items. She recalls going through each item in the box with the Longstreet Farm hookers saying “you can use this, not this” and “what is this?”

At the time Barbara had no idea about where to get patterns or wool. Her first pillow was a sunflower pattern drawn on monk’s cloth and hooked in a 5 cut because that was the only blade she had. The women who are part of the Longstreet Farm Gathering were a big help in getting her started. “They are a welcoming group who gave a lot of their time and experience to support and educate me.” Barbara notes.

When it comes to a preferred hooking style, Barbara “wants to do it all and to learn it all”. Her first couple of pillows were hooked in a 5 cut. She was exposed to hooking in an 8 cut on a Patsy Becker pattern in a Cynthia Norwood workshop at Gail Dufresne’s Goat Hill Studio. “Cynthia Norwood is a great teacher and inspired me to view primitive rugs with a new eye. I liked the speed of hooking with a wide cut.” Barbara recalls. Now she goes back and forth with cuts and often uses several cuts in a piece.

The Gathering also introduced her to the names of teachers and various rug hooking camps. While the Gathering was very positive about her work, Barbara feared that “They were being too kind.” and wanted a critical review of her work. She learned about Gail Dufresne and soon started to attend her open studio sessions. “I have learned a lot from Gail, especially about creativity and the importance of values to color planning.” Barbara says. “Gail makes it clear that rules are needed, like starting to hook in the middle, but always open to each individual’s interpretation.” Barbara has also learned from Arline Bechtoldt who “has a wonderful eye and lots of wisdom about rug hooking” and Jan Levit who loves color. Last year’s camp at Longstreet was with Judy Quintman. “I have been fortunate to work with great teachers and have learned from them all. They are creative, supportive, forgiving and non-judgmental.” Deanne Fitzpatrick whose blog Barbara follows each day has been an influence as well.

Barbara works with both new and recycled wool. She selects the wool based on the look she wants to achieve. Barbara has accumulated a significant amount of wool in three years along with roving, sari silk and specialty yarns. “Any could turn up in a rug at any time if it achieves the look I want.” Barbara looks for pleated skirts and kilts at thrift stores, but “I do not take sport coats or blazers apart”, she notes. Most of her new wool comes from Gail Dufresne or Rebecca Erb.

As she grows as a hooking artisan, Barbara is now undertaking learning how to dye wool. At first she observed what Gail Dufresne was doing during her open studio sessions. Barbara subsequently found several books to be especially helpful – Dyeing Wool by Karen Schellinger, Beautiful Wool by Laurice Heath, Hand Dyed Wools by Jane Halliwell Green and the SPENA

Dye Formulas by Sharon Townsend. Guild member Janet Bosshard invited Barbara to her home for an impromptu jar dyeing session and Margaret Dickerson has been a wonderful mentor.

Barbara works with both commercial patterns and her own. “More and more I am designing my own patterns. People are starting to ask me for a pattern or to design one for them, so I am starting to think about my own pattern business.” she notes.

Hooking is part of Barbara’s every day life. She is an early person getting up at 5:00 – 5:30 each morning. Her routine is to sit down at her hooking frame with a cup of tea, watch the early morning news shows and work on her latest project. She returns to her hooking for an hour or so just before supper.

Guild member Janet Bosshard, who is also a participant in the Gathering at Longstreet Farm, first mentioned our Guild to Barbara and encouraged her to check out our website. As soon as she did, “I wanted to join.” Barbara recalls. “There were so many things going on; I wanted to get involved. I was fascinated by the website and all the information it contained.” Barbara recently led the effort to establish the new Spring Lake ATHA Chapter. “It came about in a weird way.” she says. The Gathering is sponsored by the Monmouth County Park System and there are times when they cannot meet due to other County events. Most of the participants were driving a long distance to attend other guild meetings in New Jersey. When gasoline prices spiked last year, Barbara raised the question whether there was any interest in establishing a new ATHA chapter locally. The response was an overwhelming “yes!” and people started to give Barbara money that day before any of the arrangements were finalized. The new chapter will augment The Gathering, not replace it. “I can’t imagine not hooking at Longstreet Farm.” Barbara states. (For more information on the Spring Lake Chapter go to its website – www.springlakenjatha.org.)

Before retiring, Barbara worked for two long term care facilities where she was responsible for the computers and software used in the billing process including teaching nurses how to use the system. Now she has the time to devote to her passions for rug hooking, antiquing, bird watching and perennial flower gardening. Barbara has signed up for the New Jersey Master Gardener’s Program and hopes to begin the process this coming year. She also participates in “Project Feederwatch” through Cornell University and is a member of the Audubon Society and the American Hemerocalis Society.

Barbara has completed about 15 hooking projects, but only has five in her possession. The others have been given to family members and friends. Each member of her family has received one of her creations. Her son Jared lives in Wall, NJ and she has a 10 year old Granddaughter, Autumn and a Papillion named Leelee.

When asked what it was about rug hooking that has captured her soul, Barbara observed that “It felt right. To take pieces of wool and make a rug is noble and beautiful. To be made by hand and to be on the floor is a noble use. They don’t have to be works of art that hang on a wall. I recall when my sister’s deceased mother-in-law was in a nursing home, the family brought her home for a special party in her honor. Every member brought a cherished rug she had created with her hands and the 25 plus pieces were hung all around the yard, on the tent canopy, the side of the barn and over the fence. It was like ‘This is Your Life Elaine Russell’. Each piece had the hooked initials EFB that stood for ‘Elaine, the Fair and Beautiful’.” This has led to one of her great grandchildren having the middle name ‘Fair’ in honor of her sense of art and whimsy. I aspire to being remembered that way.” Barbara notes. In closing Barbara says that “I wish that I had more time to hook because I have more ideas than time.”

Visit the Guild's website – www.hcrag.com – and click on “Featured Member” to see some of Barbara's rugs.

Hooking Information & Techniques

From Nina's Notebook – October is here and visions of pumpkins, witches, goblins and Halloween are dancing in my head. A recent article in Rug Hooking Magazine on dying for one dozen oranges set me to thinking about how to use that very strong color in a mat. Here are some of the ideas to set you thinking about creating an orange color mat.

One of my favorite mats is an old Lunenburg county hit or miss mat. It has a solid edge or frame and then hit or miss of various shades for the center -- very simple, but very effective. Using all 12 shades of orange would make a bright mat for the kitchen or hallway. October is also the time for leaves to turn various shades of orange and red, a mat of leaves of various shapes and sizes would be most attractive. And what about baskets of padulas in shades of orange? Or even baskets of oranges or pears, or simply squares with pears or oranges against complimentary backgrounds.

One of my Nova Scotia hooking groups has issued a challenge to create a piece 16"x16" titled "I see the world in shades of..." What if the color was orange? Happy Hooking!
Nina Seaman

Tips from Heloise – A veteran rug hooker once shared with Heloise that generating as much steam as you can is the secret to effectively blocking our finished rugs. Most instructional books suggest using a damp towel when steaming the rug. A recent article in Rug Hooking Magazine suggested using “Shamwow!”, a German product sold in grocery stores for absorbing liquid spills. Heloise tried this product and found that it holds much more water than a bath towel and produces much more steam. Also, there is little dripping.

Rug Hooking Events and Related Activities

Harvest Celebration at the Wool Studio – October 18- 23, 2011 – Rebecca Erb is hosting this special event at the new location of her studio which is half an hour north of Lancaster, PA . Participants will include Homespun (Kay Leisey), Jim Brewley (hand-turned wooden snippet bowls), Misty Pond Primitives (Pat Donoho), Wool'n Gardner (Jan Cole), Wood Crest Rug Design (Joanne Gerwig) and the Wool Studio (Rebecca Erb). Visit www.thewoolstudio.com for directions and more information.

ATHA Biennial Conference in Lancaster, PA – October 19-22, 2011 -- For more information, visit the ATHA website at www.atharugs.com.

Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild Exhibit and Workshops – November 12-20, 2011 – “All the Live Long Day” is the theme for the popular Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild's rug exhibit. After a year off, the Guild is returning to Shelburne Museum for its highly anticipated exhibit, workshops, vendors and special events. Visit the Guild's website – www.gmrhg.org – for more information.

2012 Rug Hooking Week at Sauder Village -- August 14-18, 2012 – Receive the most up-to-date information by going to www.saudervillage.org/creativity/rughooking.asp.

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.

Goat Hill ATHA Chapter normally meets the first Saturday of the month (September to May) at the South Branch Reformed Church, Hillsborough, NJ. For more information or to verify meeting dates, contact Kathleen Murray-Boyd at 908-442-0995 or kathmb@hotmail.com.

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.

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. For more information visit its website – www.springlakenjatha.org – or contact Barbara Kimbrough at 908-309-3881 or beedkay@gmail.com.

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.

HCRAG Calendar of Events

October 14, 2011 – Monthly Meeting – Adirondack Braided Wool Basket – Demonstration by Joyce Combs *

November 11, 2011 – Monthly Meeting – Rug Hooking Museum of North America – Presentation by Vicki Calu **

December 9, 2011 – Monthly Meeting – Holiday Luncheon & Snowflake Ornament Exchange – Snowflake Trunk Show *

January 13, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – White Elephant & Auction *

January 13-15, 2012 – Hooking Retreat – Flemington Hampton Inn

February 10, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – 3-D Hooked Sheep – Workshop by Therese Shick *

March 9, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Hooking in Geometrics – Lecture & Workshop by Gail Dufresne (Goat Hill Studio) *

March 23-25, 2012 – March Madness Workshop – Flemington Hampton Inn

April 13, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Round Robin – Member Led *

April 21, 2012 – Hook-in at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, PA

May 11, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Hooked Brick Covers – Workshop by Lydia Lewis *

June 8, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Annual “Picnic” & Paper Clipped Feet Chicken – Workshop by Debbie Adam *

August 13-17, 2012 – 16th Annual Rug Hooking Camp – ESC School (West Amwell, NJ)

August 14, 2012 – Beginners Workshop -- ESC School (West Amwell, NJ)

September 14, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Program TBD *

October 12, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Program TBD *

November 2012 – Guild Exhibit – Bucks County Library, Doylestown, PA.

November 9, 2012 – Monthly Meeting – Program TBD *

December 14, 2012 Monthly Meeting – Holiday Luncheon *

*Unless otherwise noted, our meetings run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Assembly Room B in 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, make the first right into the parking lot. The meeting is in the first building on the right. The street address for the Complex is 1314 State Highway 12, although that does not appear on the road.

** 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, which does not appear on the road, is 1 Municipal Drive, Flemington, NJ 08822-3446.

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** – Joyce Combs – 609-737-9281 or fjcombs@verizon.net
Dee Rosebrock – 609-771-0596 or uncoolfred@aol.com
- Vice President** – Debbie Walsh – 908- 272-7012 or debywalsh@yahoo.com
- Historian** – Sonia Force – 908-782-5716 or sojon@comcast.net
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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.



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 can be submitted to Karl Gimber, P. O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 or karlg12@verizon.net by the 20th of the month.

