

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAAG) Newsletter

April, 2007

From the Presidents' Corner – Spring is in the air! The daffodils are blooming, the robins are back and the forsythia bushes are about to flower. There is a spirit of renewal all around us. As rug artisans, this is a natural time for us to stretch and try something new as we develop our rug hooking skills. Perhaps we try hooking with a different cut from our most familiar one, or trying our hand at dyeing wool, or starting a new rug or finishing one that was put aside a while ago. This is a perfect time to sign up for a class with one of the marvelous teachers in the area.

Later this month, our Guild has the privilege of welcoming over 100 rug hookers to our hook-in. We will have guests from as far away as Massachusetts and Lancaster County joining us for a day of camaraderie, sharing and learning. What a fine way to make new friends and invigorate our spirits.

Happy spring and happy hooking! -- Heidi and Weezie

April Meeting – April 13, 2007 from 10:00 to 2:00 at our regular meeting place, the Hunterdon County Administration Building on Rt.12, outside of Flemington, NJ.

Guild Program –Kay Levan from Homespun in Hereford, Pa will be teaching us how to hook on wool. She will focus on Turnip, the bunny, by showing those of you who have purchased the kit or pattern how to hook Turnip's face and ears. Be sure to bring a hoop to secure your wool for hooking. So far, the Turnip kit has been paid for by Susan Atwater, Dee Rosebrock, Kathy Donovan, Mary Jo Gimber, Joanne McIlmurray, Cyndi Lott, Patti Mahaffey and Carol Kindt. The Turnip pattern has been paid for by Ingrid Cosmen.

Mary Jo has made a tote with flowers as a sample for those who would like to do that in the future. The tote requires a 16 x 17 inch piece of wool to use for hooking the front of the bag. Handles have been paid for by Lydia Brenner, Phyllis Hamel and Mary Jo Gimber.

If you plan to hook on your own wool for learning purposes, bring a hoop, wool for foundation backing and strips of wool with which you plan to hook.

If you simply want to observe and hook on your own project that is fine, too.

Show & Tell – 1) Bring something that you have hooked on wool, 2) a piece that you have recently finished, 3) a piece that you have recently started, 4) a UFO-unfinished object that you would like to finish and/or would like to trade or give away to another member, 5) anything that is hooking related that you would like to show the members or 6) something that you collect that is totally UNRELATED to hooking. Briefly describe why you collect it and how you started to collect it.

Door Prizes for Hook-in – *Please bring items for door prizes to the meeting for Sharon Ballard to collect.*

Hospitality – We are so thankful to Guild members who bring refreshments to our meetings. This month we say “thank you” in advance Cindy Boults, Gail Ferdinando, Margaret Lutz and Bonnie Rusch for volunteering to provide the refreshments for the April meeting.

Hook-In Update – Our hook-in is only a few weeks away. We are sold out, but encourage those not registered to shop with our vendors. There is still room in the Beginners’ Workshop (\$50 for kit and lunch).

We want to exhibit our Holiday mats that we exchanged at the December meeting at the hook-in. Please bring them to the meeting with your name and the makers name pinned onto the back of the mat. We will return them at the end of the hook-in or at the May meeting. Please give the mats to Mary Jo or Karl Gimber at the meeting. If you have made a mat to exchange at the June meeting, bring that in too.

Just in case you do not remember the job and time that you volunteered for at the hook-in, we will be sending out an email after the meeting to remind you. We can always use more volunteers and you can sign up at the April meeting.

There is still time to make a mat with a spring theme (6 x 18 inches) for the mat swap at the hook-in.

Hooking on the friendship rug designed by Weezie Huntington is almost complete. The rug will be donated to Rolling Hill United Methodist Church as payment for the use of their facility. The Church has agreed to conduct their silent auction on the friendship rug during our hook-in. That means the rug could be sold that day if the bidding exceeds the rent (\$300) for use of the facility.

2007 Rug Hooking Camp – During the month, we had a cancellation in Rae Harrell’s class. That opening has since been filled. Jule Marie Smith and Norma Batastini are also booked.

The **balance of the fee for camp (\$100) is due by April 13**—the date of our April meeting. There are no refunds after May 31, 2007 unless there is a replacement from the paid waiting list. We are accepting \$50 deposits for the waiting list. Waiting list deposit checks will be held unused and will be returned if no opening comes about. Three individuals are on the list for Jule Marie Smith.

For those who will not be at the April meeting, please send your check made payable to HCRA to Karl Gimber, P.O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913.

We need a member to teach the beginners’ class. 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.

Rug Hooking Magazine may do an article on our camp. The fact that our Guild is 30 years old, has held summer camp for many years and attracts nationally known instructors has special appeal.

Membership – We welcome new members Catherine Basich, June Bennett, Jamie Gartelmann and Carol Orlove.

Catherine Baisch

June Bennett

Jamie Gartelmann

1035 Stanton-Lebanon Rd.
Lebanon, NJ 08833
908-236-2261
ancat@earthlink.net

2385 Hailey Ct.
Fogelsville, PA 18051
610-285-4542

P. O. Box 60
Schooley's Mt, NJ 07870
908-852-7747
deerfield@goes.com

Carol Orlove
3919 Whitetail Ct.
Schnecksville, PA 18078
610-398-0950
yad50@ptd.net

Linda Czeck has a new email address – lindaczeck@earthlink.net.

April Birthdays – Birthday wishes go to Susan Atwater who will celebrate her birthday on April 15.

Meet Our Member – Margaret Lutz -- Margaret Lutz has been involved with rug hooking for 40 years. It all started in 1967 when her husband's cousin's wife (got that?) told her about Alice Beatty and the wonderful rugs she created and said, "You will like this." Margaret contacted Alice and, as it turned out, was one of the last beginners she taught. Alice's health was failing and she was cutting back on her teaching.

Alice Beatty taught Margaret all the fundamentals about primitive rug hooking and the basics of dyeing wool. When Margaret wanted to learn fine hooking too, Alice was not particularly happy. Penny Waring Hayes introduced her to the nuances of fine rug hooking. However, Margaret came back to Alice's primitive style, which she continues to prefer today. She likes to work in an #8 cut and is drawn to bright colors rather than what Alice called "dirty rags". Working in # 3 and # 4 cuts is too tedious for her and not something she enjoys doing. Margaret hooked under Alice's guidance for 17 years until she passed away in 1984. Margaret also worked with Patsy Becker and Jule Marie Smith. She remembers with fondness the "Dyeing with Friends" classes with Jule Marie where she learned advanced wool dyeing. It was "great fun" says Margaret. Jule Marie encouraged her to experiment and was a source of inspiration. Margaret likes to create the antique look in her dyeing, although she spot dyes and uses other wool dyeing techniques.

At some point Margaret's interest in rug hooking evolved into a business. It started with teaching in her home. Soon word spread and Margaret was approached to teach at the Hunterdon Art Center in Clinton, NJ, the Princeton YWCA, Newark Museum, the Lebanon Museum and the Spinnery in Branchburg, NJ. "There were not many teachers in the area at that time and demand mushroomed" recalled Margaret. Over the years, Margaret hooked patterns designed by Lib Callaway and Patsy Becker. Somewhat on a whim, she approached Lib in 1986 and inquired about purchasing her patterns, but the time was not right. Shortly thereafter, however, Lib called to see if she was still interested in purchasing her collection. A deal was soon struck and Margaret obtained the rights to 200 patterns and catalogs. She continues to add patterns to update the collection. One of the important changes Margaret brought was to offer the patterns on linen, rug warp and monk's cloth as well as on the traditional burlap. Today, Margaret offers a full range of rug hooking supplies for sale through her business, Hook Nook that is located in her home in Flemington, NJ. In 2003, Margaret authored The Secrets of Finishing Hooked Rugs published by Rug Hooking Magazine. It continues to be "the book" on the subject.

While Margaret does sell her rugs, she does not place as much emphasis on selling her work as she once did. She finds that the commission taken by the "middle man" makes it difficult to sell

through shops and other outlets. In the early years, the Yankee Doodle Dandy in San Francisco was a major source of her sales. Margaret prefers to sell her work directly to clients. Her rugs have been commissioned by buyers nationally and internationally.

In 1994 over 40 of Margaret's rugs appeared in a "one woman show" at the Princeton Medical Center. One of her rugs appeared on the front cover of the Warren Countywide Sprint telephone directory in 1999. Her room size rug, Marie Stoker, was on the cover of the March 2005 issue of the ATHA Newsletter. Margaret was honored in being chosen to judge the hooked rugs competing at the prestigious 2000 Philadelphia Flower Show as well as judging the rugs for Celebrations in March 2002. Margaret's home and rugs are displayed in the XVI issue of Celebrations.

Margaret gives of herself in many ways. She is a hospice volunteer, a volunteer at her local hospital, a religious instructor at her church and a Eucharistic Minister. Her community activities make it difficult to hook as much as she wants. Most of her rug hooking is done with two groups of friends with whom she meets on Mondays and most Wednesdays. Margaret is a strong supporter of rug hooking guilds. She is a founding member of HCRAG and an active member of the Alice Beatty ATHA Chapter. She recalls that Alice Beatty formed what was then called the Molly Pitcher ATHA Chapter and that they met in Alice's home. When Alice passed away, the Guild was appropriately renamed the Alice Beatty Chapter. Margaret routinely encourages her students to get involved with a guild.

Margaret has one son, John, and three daughters – Mary Ann, Peggy, and Patty -- and nine grandchildren. All of her children and grandchildren have her rugs, except the latest grandchild Abby who was just adopted from China. Her rug is in the planning stage.

Margaret is a real treasure. We are privileged to know her and to have her in our Guild.

Vintage Hooked Rugs for Sale -- The Guild has been approached by Nancy Morrill who has three vintage hooked rugs for sale – (1) a round floral: 4' in diameter (two edge spots need repair), (2) a small floral: approximately 2' x 3' (some repair needed) and (3) a large floral: 4' 5 ½" x 5' 6" (perfect condition). The rugs are approximately 70 years old. Best offer. For more information, please call Nancy Morrill at 215-321-8659.

More on Blocking Rugs – Several Guild members recently had the opportunity of meeting Betty Krull at the Highlands where she was a student in Susan Feller's class. Betty has been involved with rug hooking for many years and is the author of Secrets of Color in Hand-Hooked Rugs. She has not only written on the subject, but teaches and lectures as well. In a conversation on blocking rugs, she noted that in her experience three things are important – steam, pressure and time. Betty recommends using an old piece of wool that has been washed several times instead of a terrycloth towel. Wool retains more moisture and produces more steam. She uses an old skirt. She also stresses applying some pressure and not simply resting the iron on the rug. Finally, Betty says it is important to apply the steam for at least 10 seconds. She uses the technique of counting "one thousand one, one thousand two"... up to one thousand ten.

With the emphasis on steam, pressure and time, the question comes up if anyone in the Guild has ever used their local dry cleaner to block a rug? If so, what has been your experience? Please let us know.

Additions to the Guild's Library -- Susan Atwater has donated Tradition in the Making: Wool Rug Hooking – Pillow, Footstools, and Rugs by Tara Darr to our library. Trish Becker has donated Jessie Turbayne's latest book – Hooked on Rugs. We thank Susan and Trish for their generosity. Please add the books to your Library List. They can be borrowed by contacting our librarian, Kathy Donovan.

Assistant Secretary Needed -- Gail Schmidt, HCRAAG Secretary, is looking for 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.

Wool Donations – Full Circle Thrift Store recently changed their merchandise from winter to spring and summer clothing. They have donated to the Guild winter wool clothing that remained unsold after their season ending bag sale. We are very thankful for their generous support. The proceeds from Full Circle benefit A Woman's Place. The Thrift Store is located in the Towne Center Shopping Center on Rt. 202 in New Britain, PA. **There will be a considerable amount of recycled wool available at the April meeting.**

More From the Dye Pot -- Last month Bonnie Rusch reported on a wool dyeing experiment based on an old Rug Hooking Magazine article by Pat Cross from Virginia. Pat responded to the article in The Loop by noting "Tell Bonnie to try again after a long dry spell or a long wet spell. So many things can affect one's water supply." Interesting stuff! Bonnie will be bringing the results of her experiment to the April meeting for us to see.

Greetings from a Former Guild Member -- Mary Alpher – We recently heard from Mary Alpher who sent the following message to her Guild friends.

"Hello to all my rug hooking friends. Has anyone wondered where Mary Alpher-Firca disappeared? In 2005, I took a teaching position here on Midcoast Maine in a little town called Belfast, which is 3 miles from my cottage in Bayside. I'd been summering here since 1999 and love the area so I took the challenge of getting through a Maine winter in a summer cottage. I had a wonderful year teaching multiple elementary grades in one classroom and we had a mild winter. The school closed after a year due to financial difficulties and I agreed to teach some of my former students privately. So here I am getting through my second winter. Today (March 2) we had a foot or more of snow and all I need to complete the perfect picture is a rug and frame on my lap, hooking away. I plan to finish teaching in the late spring and hope to join you all next fall. Have missed our camaraderie and look forward to seeing you all again. Happy hooking, Mary Alpher"

Those interested in contacting Mary can do so by email at AcornStu@aol.com. or by writing to her at 31 Broadway, Northport, Maine 04849.

Educational Outreach – Rug Hooking in the Classroom -- Patti Ann Finch has been teaching a four-week (one hour a week) rug-hooking program to 5th graders at Allen School in Medford, NJ for the past three years.

In the first week, Patti Ann gives the history of rug hooking, shows her work and tells them about herself as a fiber artist. The students then choose a design for their project (a star, heart, flower, or flag) which is approximately 5" diameter. They outline the template on the center of their burlap then choose what color wool they would like to start outlining their design. Patti Ann gives a

demo on cutting and then shows the class how to get started with hooking their project. In the second and third weeks, the students hook their projects.

In the fourth week, students cut out their shape from the burlap, glue to a wool backing, and cut the shape from the wool backing. Any students who have not finished all of their hooking then choose wool to cut into pieces and glue into the bare spots that are unhooked. This is done in a “mosaic” technique that gives the project a more “finished” look. Students then get three strips of wool to braid and hot glue as a handle for their piece. At the end of class, Patti Ann shows her finished rugs again so that they have a better appreciation of just how much work went into such large rugs.

All of the finished pieces are shown at the annual Art Show in May where Patti Ann also demonstrates rug hooking and shows her work. She has received great feedback from the art teacher, principal, other teachers, parents, and all of the students. Through this program, Patti Ann has been a guest speaker and an “Artist in Residence” at other schools in the area as well.

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

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

American Country Rugs invites you to rug hooking workshops at Lollipop Farms, East Rupert, VT. -- Lucille Festa; May 1-3 – Gail Dufresne; July 24-26 – Jayne Hester; September 10-12 – Dick LaBarge and George Kahle. Contact Lucille Festa at 802-325-2543 or lucillefesta@hotmail.com for details.

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.

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

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

April 13 – Monthly Meeting – Hooking on Wool Workshop (Kay Levan)*

April 21 -- Guild Hook-in at Rolling Hills United Methodist Church, Pipersville, PA

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 – Clinton and Flemington Libraries

September 14 – Monthly Meeting -- (program TBD)*

October 13 – 30th Birthday Party Hook-in*

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.

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 frejja@optonline.net

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

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

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