

THE LOOP

The Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRAG) Newsletter

February, 2007

From the Presidents' Corner – The year is off to a wonderful start for our Guild. The White Elephant Sale and auction were a success and lots of fun. The turnout for the January meeting was the largest we have had in several years. Everyone who attended our first rug hooking retreat raved about it and wants to do it again. Our fund raising efforts have been successful in meeting our goal to generate funds for programs and to maintain the level of support for our summer rug hooking camp. The success we are enjoying comes from the collective efforts of our members who are responding with enthusiasm. That enthusiasm and support are needed as we prepare for our April Hook-in. As you know, interest in the hook-in is very strong. We are very close to being fully subscribed. We will be asking all Guild members to chip in and help in any way you can. We know we can count on your help and that the hook-in will be another fun and successful event for HCRAG.

The minutes for the January meeting follow the newsletter.

Happy Hooking! -- Heidi and Weezie

February Meeting – February 9, 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 - Bonnie Rusch will teach us how to complete a hooked footstool. She will demonstrate paint finishing techniques and the use of brass tacks and braiding for completing the stool. Those who want to work on a footstool after the lecture and demo will need to hook the top before the meeting. To begin, Bonnie suggests measuring the top of your stool and tracing onto a cardboard template and then tracing your template onto your backing. Hook your design inside your template area and when done check to see if it fits the top. Buy hypoallergenic foam about 1 ¾ inches thick. It can be purchased at Wal-Mart, Rag Shop and JoAnns. Buy deco braiding that is the width of the sides of your stool. Select something that covers your backing and can be used with brass tacks. Make sure you buy enough brass tacks. Bonnie will be distributing a preprinted worksheet for everyone to take home. You can always bring your footstool to a subsequent meeting and she will help you put it together if you need assistance.

HCRAG Sampler - The HCRAG sampler was originally designed by Gail Dufresne. Some changes have been made since and it will continue to change according to who is doing the hooking. You are encouraged to take what you learn and adapt it to your color plan and motifs. For instance, where there is a pumpkin, you could do any fruit or motif that you like using techniques that you have learned. One of our members collects watermelons and is planning to use beading or plaid for the rind and French knots for the seeds. So plan to make it your own and you will be happy with the results. If you like mixed media use it. The sampler is for your experimentation and mastery of new techniques and ultimately for reference when you are doing other rugs. Thank you to those who helped demonstrate last month.

Beginners' and New Members' Help Table -- For beginning rug hookers and new members who want to work on a sampler now is the time to start. Margaret Brightbill and Mary Jo Gimber will be available after the meeting and program for about a half-hour to answer questions and offer

help for new rug hookers and new members. We are asking for volunteers at the meetings to take turns helping the new ones. This can be very informal. If you can spare some time, just sit at the table with us and start hooking and we will see how this works out.

Show & Tell – Footstools and three-dimensional items or wearables.

Hospitality – We thank in advance Kathy Donovan, Marion Michel, Bernice Smith, and Dee Rosebrock who have volunteered to bring refreshments to the February meeting. Their contributions help make the meeting more enjoyable.

Ingrid's Hospitality Team for the April Hook-in now includes Kay Weeks, Janet Santaniello and Janet Bosshard who have volunteered to help with the planning and setup. Volunteers are needed, however, to bring in baked/purchased items for morning coffee treat (bagels, coffeecake, donuts, etc.) and after lunch snack (cookies, "munchies", fruit, trailmix, popcorn, chocolate) etc. Please let Ingrid know if you would be able and willing to contribute something along these lines.

White Elephant Sale & Auction Were Silent, Loud and Successful – The auction and White Elephant Sale were a success by any measure. Auctioneers Sharon Ballard and Roberta Smith were able to cajole and weasel extra bids out of an audience of almost 50 members who were eager to support the Guild. We thank everyone who generously donated items.

(There are rumors circulating throughout Hunterdon County that Sotheby's is quietly negotiating behind the scenes to recruit the Ballard/Smith duo. Calls to the Ballard and Smith homes seeking confirmation have not been returned.)

Guild Retreat a Huge Success – Following our January meeting, 26 Guild members migrated to the Flemington Hampton Inn for our first rug hooking retreat. They were greeted with a gift of wool wrapped and tied with an ornament. Rug hooking commenced and was only interrupted for a dinner break. After dinner, some hooked until 12:30 in the morning!

Saturday started with aquatic exercises in the pool led by Weezie. Hooking, raffles and conversation dominated the day. Some used the whirlpool to relax stiff back muscles. Saturday evening was special as we were invited to the beautiful home of Susan and Bill Atwater for wine, cheese and dinner. We had an opportunity to enjoy Susan's many collections (36 at last count!).

Rug hooking, warm camaraderie and raffles continued through Sunday afternoon. The only bummer was the Eagles football team loss on Saturday night. All food and prizes were donated.

The feedback sums it all up ---- "The weekend was a blast." "It was fabulous." "...fantastic weekend." "We loved it!" "Really fun to get to know everyone." "What a fabulous and fun group." "Can't wait to do it again!" "It was like going to camp without the stress of having to create a rug!"

Before the retreat, little known facts about the participants were gathered and we had a contest to see how many each could determine (see Fact Sheet at end of newsletter). Master sleuth Nancy Culton had 11 correct answers (guesses?). Can you do better?

A little bird told the program director that she is not delegating enough so if we would like to have another retreat, we need a new person to take the job. Now is the time to get on the schedule and get the best rate at the Hampton Inn. Recommendation is to schedule the other meeting room that is a bit larger and do not go over 25 people.

Guild Hook-In -- April 21, 2007 --Interest in the hook- in has been very strong. It is almost filled with 97 pre-registered participants (excluding the Beginners' Workshop). We will not be in a position to accept walk-ins. The Beginners' Workshop has three registered and we can take about seven more. Bonnie Rusch will be conducting the Beginners' Rug Hooking Class (\$50 for kit and lunch). Mary Jo Gimber and Dee Rosebrock are co-chairs.

We have a diverse group of vendors – American Country Rugs (Lucille Festa), Dump 'N Dye (Vicki Calu), Folk Art Designs (Karen Gates), Homespun (Kay Levan), Hook Nook (Margaret Lutz), The Woolery (Trish Becker) and The Wool Studio (Rebecca Erb).

Rolling Hills United Methodist Church has agreed to accept two of our rugs for their upcoming silent auction fundraiser as payment for the use of the facility. Susan Atwater has donated her Sheep rug and Weezie Huntington has designed a friendship rug and is looking for volunteers to hook one of the (6 x 6") house blocks. Please contact her if you can help. We hope to have the rug completed by the hook-in. The Church has agreed to allow silent auction bidding to begin at the hook-in.

Outreach Programs – On January 26, Karl and Mary Jo Gimber demonstrated rug hooking, mini-punch needle and maxi-punch needle for Crafts Night at the Hunterdon County Main Library. It was a great success for all the guilds and demonstrators. It included children and adults and was very well attended. The librarian will be ordering the two books that we took to the library collection and may be interested in adding more. Also, Mary Jo found that there is a free meeting room with kitchen and she will be talking about booking it in the future for small weekend hook-ins where more members might meet on a Saturday or Sunday. More news on this in a future newsletter.

4-H Fair -- We will be going back to the Fair this summer and we will be accepting rugs for display from the Guild and the public. We will have several categories - traditional, primitive, mixed media, 3-dimensional, apparel/wearables and mini-punchneedle. There will be three ribbons for each category, one best of show, and one viewers' choice. The Fair provides all the ribbons. We will need an unbiased judge who is not from our Guild. Louisa Coles, who is in charge of the Fair, will help us find one. We watched how things were done last year by the other guilds so it should be fairly easy this year. Dee Rosebrock and Giselle Meader have agreed to work on this endeavor. It is really a lot of fun to demonstrate at the Fair and there is a lot of interest in what we are doing. The Fair is a manageable size, which makes participation very pleasant. In addition, the Fair Committee loves having our Guild be part of it. It is a win/win situation.

2007 Rug Hooking Camp – Norma Batastini, Rae Harrell and Jule Marie Smith will be the instructors at our Rug Hooking Camp from August 13 to 17, 2007. We will be at the ESC School, as in the past.

The fee for members is \$150 and \$225 for non- members. The member rate is available to those who are Guild members as of the April meeting (April 13, 2007). There is a \$50 registration fee of which \$25 is non-refundable. The full fee is due on April 13, 2007. No refunds will be given after May 31, 2007 unless there is a replacement from the paid waiting list.

To register send your deposit check for \$50 made payable to HCRAAG to Karl Gimber, P.O. Box 16, Carversville, PA 18913 as soon as possible. There are four positions still available with Norma and Rae. The class with Jule Marie Smith is full.

Camp/Program Fund Reaches Goal – With the successful White Elephant Sale/Auction and Rug Hooking Retreat, we have achieved our goal of establishing a Camp/Program Fund that allows us to maintain the level of support for Camp and to establish a budget for programs. This is a significant accomplishment and all who have made this possible should be proud of this result.

Let the Sun Shine – Our heartfelt condolences go to Tracy Fetzer on the sudden and unexpected passing of her husband Albi. Please keep Tracy in your thoughts and prayers.

Guild to Display Our Work at Local Libraries -- We are planning to show Guild work at the Hunterdon County Main Library in September. Thanks to Ingrid Cosmen, we will also be showing work at the Clinton Library in September. We will show work at the Bucks County Main Library in December. A subscription to Rug Hooking Magazine has been donated by the Guild to the Hunterdon County Main Library. Karl and Mary Jo Gimber donated a subscription to the Bucks County Main Library.

Membership – We welcome new member Rebecca Buckwalter and renewing members, Laurie Rubinetti and Debbie Walsh, to the Guild. Please add them to your membership list.

Rebecca Buckwalter	Laurie Rubinetti	Debbie Walsh
331 North New St.	320 Mt. Joy Rd.	51 Spruce St.
Lititz, PA 17543	Milford, NJ 08848	Cranford, NJ 07016
717-627-1181	908-995-4030	908-272-7012
wbuckwalter@dejazzd.com	lrubinet@ptdprolog.net	debywalsh@yahoo.com

Please note that Annette D’Emidio’s email address published in the January issue of The Loop was incorrect. The correct address is acdxdy@aol.com.

Margaret Lutz’ new address is 49 Samson Dr., Flemington, NJ 08822 and her new email address – mmlutz@ptd.net. No change to the telephone number.

February Birthdays – Birthday wishes go to Sharon Ballard (2/10), Rebecca Buckwalter (2/21), Ingrid Cosmen (2/25), Ann Pietropinto (2/2), Dee Rosebrock (2/8), Lib Ryman (2/12) and Sue Weider (2/23).

Meet Our Members – Sharon Ballard -- When we think of Sharon Ballard, we think of her generous support of the Guild. She opened her home in December for our Holiday Luncheon. She donated three beautifully hooked snowmen and santas for a fund raising raffle. She donated several of her hooked mats and dummy boards for the Guild’s recent auction.

Sharon’s rug hooking journey started in 1988 when she saw an ad for a rug hooking class conducted by Guild member, Margaret Lutz. She was stimulated by the class and has been developing her technique ever since. Sharon likes the “folky look” in her rugs. She works with wide strips, normally #8 - #10 cuts. When she first learned rug hooking, Sharon used recycled wool that she bought from local thrift stores and rummage sales. Today, she buys new wool from local vendors and at classes she takes. On occasion, Sharon may dye wool for a project, but prefers to buy the wool she needs.

In 2000, Sharon and her husband, Cliff, purchased a “very run down ranch house” on 7 ½ beautiful acres in Lebanon, NJ. They hired an architect to develop plans to convert the house to have a “craftsman style” that better suited their interests in crafts, gardening, cooking and casual

entertaining. A local builder was hired to do the main demolition, leaving the interior finish remodeling for her and Cliff. This project became the focus of their life for the next six years. While there are future projects, the results are stunning, as members who attended the Holiday Luncheon will attest.

Work on the house did limit the time available for Sharon's rug hooking and classes she could attend. After starting rug-hooking Sharon developed her technique by attending workshops in Vermont, Maryland and Cape May. She especially enjoyed working with Patsy Becker. Sharon also attends the Guild's summer camp whenever possible.

In 1989, Sharon's cat rug won 1st prize at the Flemington Fair. The rug was copied and appeared in Country Living Magazine. For the most part, however, Sharon has limited interest in rug competitions. She simply likes the process of hooking rugs. With Cliff's woodworking skills and Sharon's creative rug hooking, it was natural for people to want to buy their creations. Before the house project took over their lives, Sharon and Cliff did have a business, "Wood & Wool", which they ran from their home. They sold rug-hooking stands, dummy boards, stools, and other rug hooking related items made by Cliff as well as Sharon's hooked pieces. The remodeling project made it difficult to maintain the business.

Sharon learned of HCRAAG through her instructor and mentor, Margaret Lutz. At that time the Guild met in a small room at the Hunterdon County Library that was available to local organizations. Shortly after joining, the Guild had a leadership crisis and Sharon stepped into the void by becoming president and held that position for three terms. She recalls that most members were older and self taught and that they had few formal programs or speakers. Perhaps, once a year an outside speaker came to a meeting. Sharon cherishes her Guild involvement and feels strongly on the need to support it and keep it vibrant.

Now that the bulk of work on their home is behind them, Cliff and Sharon look forward to having the time to be more creative in the wonderful home they have created.

Ask the Experts – One of the challenges many rug hookers confront is getting consistency in the height of their loops. We asked Susan Feller to share her thoughts on the subject. Susan was an instructor at our 2006 Rug Hooking Camp (she is again scheduled in 2008) and will be the speaker for our March meeting. She lives in West Virginia where she writes, develops patterns, dyes wool and teaches rug hooking at Ruckman Mill Farms. We are grateful for Susan's support of our Guild.

Q - Is it important to have consistency in the height of loops? If yes, why?

A - The importance of even height of loops depends on the project's end purpose.

If it is to be walked on, then yes, even pile is preferred for wear and visual effect. If the piece is a pillow, or work of art for the wall, the overall effect of varied heights may enhance it. However, in general, as even as you can get the loops becomes your own style. I encourage new hookers to concentrate on not twisting the loops and their own style will come eventually.

Q - What is the best way to get consistency? Is there a secret technique?

A -- Over the years, I have developed a memory in my hand as the hook pulls up the loops and the hand with the strip pulls down to determine the final height. I would suggest consciously working with both hands to come up with the height of your loop. Just remember as you are pulling the next loop up if your efforts are away from the established work, the previous loop will become shorter because of the tension.

Q -- Does it matter if you are hooking with different size cuts?

A -- When using different size cuts, work the overall piece to the height of the widest cut, or the predominate cut. The others may have to come up or be shorter, but the even pile as discussed in the first question must be taken into consideration. However for effect, if you are using a thin cut to highlight just for contrast, it could be a bit lower and become almost a shadow. It is all up to the individual.

Q -- Is there something special to do for those who hook with recycled wool that varies in consistency (like thickness)?

A -- Not that I am aware of except to work the height out perhaps to the thickest as that won't be able to be manipulated as much if too short.

We welcome other thoughts on the questions.

Rug Hooking Demonstration Opportunities -- The Guild has been invited by the Newtown (PA) Historic Association to demonstrate rug hooking at their 31st annual Market Day on Saturday September 15, 2007. Guild member, Linda Czeck, who is a member of the Garden State Sheep Breeders Association, has suggested that we demonstrate at their annual Sheep and Fiber Festival on September 15 and 16. The festival will be held at the Hunterdon County Fairgrounds in Ringoes (same location as the 4-H Fair at which we demonstrated last year). This year's opportunities to inform the public about rug hooking are already developing.

Rug Hooking Events and Related Activities

Rug Hooking on HGTV's Uncommon Threads – Monday, February 5. One of the rug hooking episodes that Anne-Marie Littenberg, Rae Harrell, Diane Phillips and Barbara Held filmed last summer will broadcast at 11:30 AM on Monday, February 5, on HGTV at 11:30 AM on a show called Uncommon Threads. That episode will feature the group showing how to hook a face. Two more episodes will broadcast eventually (dates unknown) -- one on hooking a handbag and one on using the Oxford Punch needle and strips to hook a throw pillow.

The Highland School of Rug Hooking – March 2 – 4, 2007. Bev Conway, Susan Feller, Michelle Micarelli and Sibyl Osicka are the instructors at the Highlands March workshop. Contact Vicki Calu at 215-249-0790 or threebagsfull@netcarrier.com for details.

American Country Rugs invites you to rug hooking workshops at Lollipop Farms, East Rupert, VT. -- February 27-29 – Norma Batastini; April 17-19 – 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.

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.

HCRAAG Calendar of Events

February 9 -- Monthly Meeting - Hooked Footstool Workshop (Bonnie Rusch)*

March 9 – Monthly Meeting – Design Your Own Rug (Susan Feller)*

April 13 – Monthly Meeting – Hooked Pillow 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 – Monthly Meeting – Guild Picnic at Sharon Ballard's home

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

September 14 – Monthly Meeting (Program TBD)*

October 12 – Monthly Meeting (Program TBD)*

November 8 – Monthly Meeting (Program TBD)*
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

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The Loop is the newsletter of the Hunterdon County Rug Artisans Guild (HCRA). 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.

At the retreat, master sleuth Nancy Culton had 11 correct answers (guesses?).

DID YOU KNOW? FACTS ABOUT US

Our rug hooking retreat gives us the opportunity to learn more about each other. In your conversations during the weekend, use our time together to gather the information needed to identify the Guild members associated with the facts shown below. No direct questions please (for example – Do not ask “Are you allergic to wool?” See first fact below). Guild members can be coy with their answers, but to lie is unseemly.

By noon on Sunday, insert the letter associated the Guild member next to the corresponding fact. The one with the highest correct answers wins free admission to the Guild’s Hook-in in April!

Facts About Guild Members

1. I am allergic to wool. Guild member _____
2. In school, I was usually the first to sit down during spelling bees. Guild member _____
3. I am a certified Graphoanalyst. Guild member _____
4. I have spoons and serving utensils in my kitchen that are from my Mother, Mother in law and Grandmothers and Great Grandmother who are no longer with me. When I cook I use their kitchen tools and I feel closer to them. In some way it seems to let them be part of our meals. Guild member _____
5. I walked 40 miles in Avon's Breast cancer Walk. Guild member _____
6. In the first 23 years of my life, I moved 12 times. Guild member _____
7. My grandfather was the founder of American Nudism. Guild member _____
8. My fingerprints are on record at the FBI or were. At the age of 13 or 14, I was arrested as an illegal alien. Guild member _____
9. When I was a little girl, I was bitten by a wild rat that I was trying to save from our dog to make into a pet. I still have the scar from the bite. Guild member _____
10. I was on the front page of the local newspaper twice in my bathing suit. Guild member _____
11. I ran the NYC Marathon. Guild Member _____
12. My maiden name was Fitt. I would draw chuckles in the classroom, when I introduced myself as "Miss Fitt ". Guild member _____
13. I once petted a boa constrictor. Guild member _____
14. On January 17, I will be 69. Guild member _____
15. I worked in the insurance industry for 30 years. (No wonder I have few creative juices left in me!). Guild member _____
16. The road I live on is named after my husband's family. We have lived in the same house 48 years.
17. I have nieces and nephews older than me. Guild member _____
18. I speak Hebrew fluently having lived in Israel during the 1970s. Guild member _____
19. In a family with six children, I was the only girl. Guild member _____

Guild Members

- A. Susan Atwater
- B. Sandy Barkman
- C. Claudia Casebolt
- D. Joyce Combs
- E. Nancy Culton
- F. Annette D'Emidio
- G. Gail Ferdinando
- H. Karen Gates
- I. Karl Gimber
- J. Mary Jo Gimber
- K. Lois Grieves
- L. Phyllis Hamel
- M. Weezie Huntington
- N. Amy Korengut
- O. Margaret Lutz
- P. Dee Rosebrock
- Q. Gail Schmidt
- R. Debbie Walsh
- S. Agnes Wooden

