



Ottawa Valley Guild of Stitchery
NeedleNotes
 June 2008



A Chapter of
 The
 Embroiderers'
 Association
 of Canada

The **Ottawa Valley Guild of Stitchery** meets from September to June. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month.
City View United Church, 6 Epworth Avenue, Ottawa at 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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2007 – 2008**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Doreen Riedel

Almost a year has passed since I assumed the presidency and it has been a very busy one.

The move to the church was a great change: large room, easier accesses, lots of parking, better lighting, a place for the books, a better place for coats, use of a decent kitchen.

The program, ably managed by Madelaine Basta and Mary Anne Toonders, has been very enjoyable, and promises to be equally so for next year. Experts among the membership have led sessions. Leslie Crepin has been very busy with membership increasing and with some previous members back again. Claire Todd organized two great workshops. Thanks to Elaine Tessier we have the best website we could wish for. Stacy Finkelstein is taking on the Communications chair and editorship of the NeedleNotes and Donna Edwards looking after mailing it out. The vice-presidency is in the very capable hands of Margo den Haan, and Carole Van Die is supporting us in the role of past president. With the departure of Anne Condie to Toronto, Rita Rottman has now joined Pamela Keetch in the library. Pamela Bujold and Jim Cripwell continue to do their great jobs as secretary and treasurer respectively. The archivist position has been separated from that of librarian, and this coming year Jane Boyko will be getting that task in hand.

The executive has been working on revising the outdated Constitution and By-Laws and this task should be completed by the fall. Leslie Crepin set us a good example by putting together an excellent procedural outline for the membership chair activities. With the excellent contribution made by each executive member, the roles of executive members have been clarified and formalized to make collaboration more efficient. Some of the executive jobs have been split to reduce the burden on individuals. We will soon have a set of procedural outlines to serve as a guideline for what and how things have been done in each position instead of having to depend on someone's memory. The more detailed description of each of the jobs within the guild will make it clear what any prospective member of the executive or a committee is being recruited to do. This should hopefully be ready for distribution in the fall.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has helped to make this year such a success.

Newsletter Advertising and Rates: *Needle Notes* is published four times per year: August, December, March and June. All advertisements are payable on submission either in cash or by cheque. Please make cheques payable to the Ottawa Valley Guild of Stitchery. Submission deadline for the August 2008 issue is July 25. Contact Stacy Finkelstein at editor@ovgs.ca

Advertising rates per issue: Full page- \$25.00; Half Page – \$15.00; Quarter Page – \$11.00, or Business Card – \$8.00

The Ottawa Valley Guild of Stitchery is a non-profit organization to encourage and promote the practice and knowledge of the art of embroidery in all its forms. This organization provides monthly meetings, chapter newsletters, special day and/or evening workshops, lending library within the Guild, and membership in the national organization, the *Embroiderers' Association of Canada*.

The Embroiderers' Association of Canada, founded in 1973, is the parent organization of the *Ottawa Valley Guild of Stitchery*. As a member of the OVGS one automatically becomes a member of the Embroiderers' Association of Canada, which entitles the member to the Association's book, slide and video libraries; study portfolios; books on crewel, counted thread and canvas embroidery; individual and group correspondence courses in embroidery techniques from basic to advanced levels; *Embroidery Canada* magazine, four issues yearly; workshops and seminars; and exhibitions, competitions and awards.

BOOK BITS FROM THE OVGS LIBRARY

By Pam Keetch and Rita Rottman

Summer is just around the corner (we hope!) and we would like to ask that all library books are returned at the June meeting so that our library is intact for the summer break. If you are unable to attend the meeting and have books out on loan please contact one of the librarians to make arrangements for their return. The library will be open for returns only at the June meeting.

The books reviewed below are not new, but are a sample of the great resource materials available in the OVGS library. Both are highly recommended as sources for inspiration.

"Embroidery - Traditional designs, techniques and patterns from all over the world" by Mary Gostelow. Arco Publications, 1977

This book is a comprehensive examination of embroidery techniques developed and practised in all parts of the world. Organized by geographic region, the book examines traditional embroidery forms from each area and discusses their origins, traditional uses for the embroidery, materials used, and the factors and history that influenced their development. In part a history text, it is a very interesting study of the development of regional embroidery styles. There are good diagrams of commonly used stitches and motifs as well as colour photographs of historical pieces throughout the book and project patterns are also provided in each section to allow the interested stitcher to complete items using traditional motifs and stitches. If you are interested in the history of various forms of embroidery this book is an excellent resource and a fascinating read.

"Handmade Embroidered Bags" by Jenny Rolfe. Search Press, 2005

While the author started out as a quilter, she has moved way beyond the bounds and adapted many techniques to machine embroidery. All of her techniques are well illustrated and result in bags that can be carried to the theatre or to the grocery. The techniques include free motion stitching, making your own fabric, making cords and embellishing with beads, couched threads and appliqué. The instructions are clear, illustrated with photographs and the book is in full colour. This is a real inspiration. All techniques can be adapted to other projects but this idea book is a great way to try something new with little investment in time and money or at least only as much as you are willing. But then you might get hooked and just keep going. She does start with a sewing machine on which you can lower the feed dogs or cover the plate. And then, the rest is up to you.

May your summer be enjoyable with lots of time for stitching and dreaming of new projects!

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

By Leslie Crepin

August 1st Diary Date

As we head off into the summer recess, just a friendly reminder that the next diary date for membership renewals is 1 August. I have just mailed off the renewal notices and membership forms to all those whose memberships are due. I will be at the June meeting, so you can bring your forms and cheque to our final meeting or mail them to me at my home address. If I could have everyone's submissions by the next meeting, I can update your membership before I leave on vacation. Remember please that memberships are due at EAC two months before expiry dates. This will ensure that you will receive your fall copy of Embroidery Canada magazine. Current membership in OVGS stands at 78 members.

Membership FAQ Page

If you have any questions about your membership, please do not hesitate to contact me. Don't forget that there is now a Membership Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on the OVGS web site for your convenience.

Newsletter Delivery

As you complete your membership forms, please don't forget to tell us how you prefer to receive your copies of NeedleNotes. If you have access to the Internet, and you have enough bandwidth, we request that you select the download option. This will reduce the cost of producing paper copies and mailing them out.

OUR MEMBERS

[Editor's note: This is the second in an ongoing series of articles about local stitchery artists who are present or past Guild Members.]

Margaret Vant Erve

By Lois Jensen



Margaret is a valued member of the OVGS. As well as having the outstanding qualifications noted below, she is generous with her time as a member of the guild. The guild was proud to know that one of its members achieved the Teachers' certification offered by Embroiderers' Association of Canada. When Margaret completed this, she shared some of what had been required to achieve this milestone and we were truly impressed.

Artist biography:

Margaret Vant Erve, a professional embroidery artist and teacher, lives in Ottawa, Canada. Her work depicts the Canadian rural and woodland landscapes, birds and floral studies. Margaret uses a variety of textile paint mediums and crayons to paint her fabric prior to applying hand and machine embroidery. She studied textile arts at Sheridan College, the Ontario College of Art, and with many renowned embroidery teachers. Margaret is a certified teacher with the Embroiderer's Association of Canada and gives workshops across Canada. Her book, 'Window Gardens in Bloom' (C&T Publishing) was released in 2005 and has become a best seller. Margaret's work has also appeared in international textile arts magazines such as STITCH and Workbox. Her work can be found in many private collections across North America. To find out more about Margaret, you can view her website at <http://www.cyberus.ca/~vanterve>.

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Artist's statement:

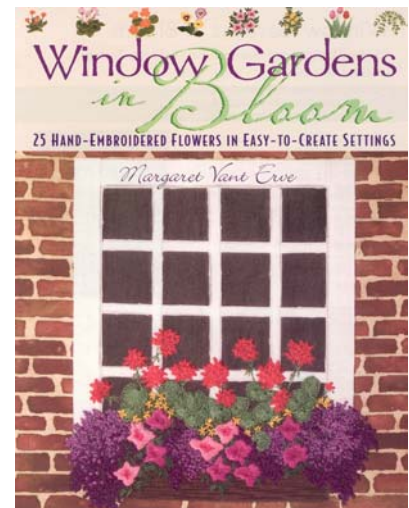
"My work is a subjective interpretation of the Canadian Landscape, particularly Ontario, where I live. I tend to work in muted colours that evoke a quiet, contemplative mood. My work is not an appeal to the intellect, but rather seeks an emotional response. I attempt to take people to a quiet center and have them feel the beauty of the place I am portraying. Some of my painted embroideries are of real places, others are compilations. Either way, they are not intended to be representational. It is the mood and the atmosphere that interest me and hopefully convey a spiritual response in the viewer."

HayBales



Window Gardens in Bloom, by Margaret Vant Erve

Purchase this beautiful and informative book directly from Margaret or from your favourite book seller. For more information, please call Margaret at 613-230-7850 or email her at vanterve@cyberus.ca.



To our Readers: We have been given permission to feature a short series of articles on photographing your needlework by Scott Dam. This series has appeared in the EGA Magazine "NeedleArts". I hope you enjoy them.

PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR NEEDLEWORK

by Scott Dam

Lights, Camera, Inaction.

In my last two articles (December and March) I discussed lights and lighting techniques and cameras. Now that we can control and capture the light, let's focus on arranging our "still life" for the picture—the *inaction*. We want all our elements to be steady, not moving, due to slow shutter speeds.

Arrangements: Use a table-top setup for 3-D pieces as shown in Photo 1. For flat work, use a wall, table top or floor. A wall works well especially for large pieces, see photo 2.

Backdrops: I usually use either white or black seamless photography paper, painted walls, or fabrics—the EGA 2007 Seminar (Chicago) photos were taken on hotel table cloths—white and black. If the background will show, as in three-dimensional art, pay attention to how the backdrop brings out the art. Colors usually detract from the art so they should be used carefully. (See photos 3 and 4.)

Tripods: For best stability I use a studio tripod with a three-way, pan tilt head with a quick release and levels.

Accessories: When starting your photography, after adjusting your white balance and exposure with the gray card, shoot a color checker card (GretagMacbeth™) to verify the colors and white balance especially when providing photos to the publisher. Use a bubble level in the hot shoe.



Photo 1. A typical arrangement for three dimensional art (Regina Madory Walter's Pedlar Doll) on a table with seamless paper backdrop, lights, and camera on tripod. Seamless paper rolls to eliminate a crease between the vertical and horizontal.



Photo 2: Swift Creek Middle School Tapestry (December 07 NeedleArts) mounted on white wall with lights and camera on tripod. Set up for close up shot. For my garage studio, I put black paper over the windows to block out the daylight and avoided light streaks on the Plexiglas framed art. Note the tripod (Bogen 3021 with a 3047 head) and the daylight fluorescent lights. Check for parallel lines in the camera. Lights set at 45° angle. Camera and tripod can move up and back for overall view or close-ups without adjusting the lighting and camera's manual exposure setting.



Photos 3 & 4: Note the effect of changing the background color. The black makes the lighter subjects "pop" out of the page. Photos of Marianna Markham's "Not Your Grandma's Sewing Kit Accessories" from the 2007 EGA National Seminar in Chicago.

I hope you enjoyed these three articles as much as I have enjoyed writing them. Next up a photo workshop at EGA Seminar 2008 in Louisville.

Scott Dam, a published professional photographer, has been photographing needlework for over twenty years for many internationally known teachers and artists. He is a member of EGA and photographed the EGA 17th National Exhibit, EGA Seminar 2007 class pieces, and EGA Seminar 2006 events in Richmond. Scott's email is scott.dam@att.net.

FROM MARGARET'S GARDEN...

By Margaret Vant Erve

Pansy

The word Pansy comes from the French word 'pensee', meaning "remembrance" or "thought"; thus when a bouquet of pansies is given to you, it means, "I'm thinking of you."

Pansy has numerous nicknames including heartsease, love in idleness, godfathers and godmothers, call me to you, jack jump up and kiss me and faces under the hood. Biblically, because of its tricolour, the pansy is often considered a symbol of the Trinity. These cheerful spring flowers are steeped in folklore. Pluck one of the upper petals, and your lover's future can be foretold by counting the veins that run through it. Four veins means there's hope; seven means forever in love; eight, a fickle lover; nine, a change of heart is on the horizon; and finally eleven (get your tissues out), an early death for the love of your life. Many other legends have been created around the pansy.

Did you know you could eat Pansies? They are beautiful tossed in a green salad if you have the heart to pluck them from your garden.

Threads: Flowers: 2 strands of floss in various colours
 Stems: 2 strands of 367 or 319

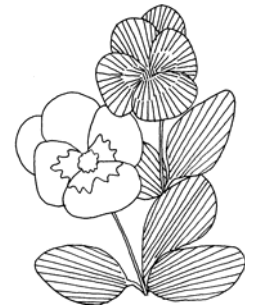
1. Lightly draw the flowers and leaves onto the fabric. Mark where the colour change occurs in multi-colour pansies.

2. Single-colour pansies are completed using radial satin stitch. Two and three-colour pansies are created using long and short stitch. Whether you are stitching a single colour or a multi-colour pansy, each petal must be stitched individually. Always stitch the foreground petal first, followed by the 2 petals directly behind it, and then the fourth and fifth petals.

Tip: When you need to switch colours temporarily, simply bring the unneeded colour to the surface of your work within the area to be stitched, and set it aside. When you are ready to stitch with that colour again, take a small pin-head stitch to secure the previous work and continue.

3. Stitch the stems in split stitch.

4. Complete the leaves of the plant in radial satin stitch.



CREWEL WORKSHOP April 26th – 27th, 2008

By Stacy Finkelstein

We were greeted the first morning with lovely kits containing linen cloth, stamped with the happiness tree pattern, complete instructions on the various stitches and crewel wool of our chosen colour palette. Beverly Wile started the class with some information on crewel work in general, and then proceeded to describe and demonstrate the first stitch, followed by our efforts to duplicate the work on our piece. As the days progressed, each stitch was covered as we made our way through the pattern.

Beverly was a very kind and patient teacher, who encouraged us to use our imagination and creativity while we learned the crewel stitches.

I wasn't able to attend the second day, but Beverly went out of her way to show me the remaining stitches after class had ended the first day. I definitely enjoyed learning new stitches and hope to have another chance to take a class from Beverly in the future.

Beverly Wile teaches workshops and sells kits and materials through her business:

Rainbow Needlecrafts

14 Leaman Drive

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3A 2K5

Telephone: (902) 469-7815



Sample stitched by Beverly Wile
(detail below)



MILITARY FAMILY KISSING PILLOWS REPORT

By Lynne Demmery and Kate Dinsmore

The Kissing Pillows Project is still underway and we now have a small, but dedicated group of people working on them. Not all of these ladies are OVGS members but, in the final analysis, what is important is that the pillows get made and they get to their intended recipients – the children of the Canadian Forces members being deployed.

At the May meeting Lynne and I were overwhelmed by the generosity of the Guild as we received several bags of stuffing, which means less to buy, and were given several cash donations, in addition to the sale of the kits.

The group had another finishing session at Hartman's Grocery Store (who so very kindly provide us with the space for free), and although only a few members came out we managed to finish approximately another 75 pillows. The wonderful thing about going to Hartman's is that each person can do one step; some stitch, some turn and some stuff and every one of us had a part we liked better than the others, so it worked out surprisingly well. This also means that we get many more pillows finished than would be possible for one person doing them one at a time. We currently have dozens of tops yet to be finished. Having said that, I am pleased that the tops are all stitched, as that is the most time-consuming part of the process. We would much rather have stitched tops waiting to be finished, than have finishing materials ready and waiting for tops to be stitched.

Because some people do not stitch with Aida, and some ladies do not have sewing machines, we have packed Baggies with pillow kits – these contain the Aida, some stuffing and a backing. The price of these kits is \$1.50 each, which gives the project a profit of twenty-five cents per baggie, and hopefully, makes it easier for the membership to make the pillows.

I have been talking with the Military Family Resource Centres and Ottawa is thrilled with the pillows and they are well established here. There are a large number of augmentees that go to Afghanistan from the NCR, so there is a steady demand from the Ottawa MFRC. Much as I would like to take the pillows into CFB Petawawa, I do not think it is possible at this time. Because an entire regiment goes from Petawawa at one time, it is more than we can handle at this time. I haven't given up on the idea of taking the pillows to Petawawa, but until we have a larger constant supply, it probably will not be possible. If and when we take the project to Petawawa, we must be able to look after all the children, and have enough pillows so that we do not run out part way through a deployment.

To finish, Lynne and I hope everyone has a wonderful summer and we challenge each and every one of you to make (or stitch the top) of one pillow for the September meeting.

MILITARY FAMILY KISSING PILLOWS THANK YOU MESSAGE

OVGS has received a thank you from a recipient of some of the pillows, a family whose father/husband was deployed to Afghanistan earlier this month.

The message reads:

I wanted to express my thanks to you for the lovely embroidered pillows we received. My husband and father to our x teenagers left two days ago for deployment to Afghanistan. Thank you for thinking of us.

Sincerely

Mrs -----

PROGRAM REPORT 2007 – 2008

By MaryAnne Toonders and Madelaine Basta

This year for program we decided to try something new to tempt members to participate in the activities. We offered six different streams as options, group Correspondence Courses co-ordinated by Catherine Phillips and an open invitation to work on the Military Pillows starting in January. We invited speakers for September and the December and June potlucks. Show and Tell was held four times in September, December, March and June.

In September Cindy Jackson spoke to us about textile art found in various places in Canada. She had slides to show some of the many pieces found in museums and art galleries. In December Ellen Boynton spoke to us about her responsibilities as Wardrobe Mistress for the Savoy Society. She described the process of selecting, finding or making and repairing costumes for each production. Ellen had on hand some examples of costumes and other bits and pieces used in the shows. Ellen then offered two tickets for a draw to the 'Pirates of Penzance' won by Carole Van Die. In June we will have Pat Caffery and Marilyn White share their journey in completing the City and Guilds in Textiles program at the Opus School of Textiles.

In our regular monthly program the 'Trip to China' was a well attended stream and had a steady following for most of the year. This group had various participants lead a discussion on an aspect of Chinese embroidery. Each month a motif and a stitch were selected and variations of the stitch applied to the motif. Sometimes examples of a particular stitch or Chinese embroideries were brought in to provide inspiration, including embroidered shoes, tapestries, and double-sided embroideries. Information prepared by the presenter was also put into binders and placed in our library for future reference. The 'Elements of Design' stream was the favoured choice for those interested in designing. Each month another element was researched and presented by various people. Often hands on exercises were completed with the intent to stimulate our creativity along with notes to include in a notebook. The 'Expanding your Stitch Vocabulary' was a small but dedicated group who explored various way to use cross stitch, hem, buttonhole, split, stem and chain stitches. The 'Sampler' group, also small and dedicated, worked on the Christmas sampler for much of the year and shared their experiences in stitching samplers. Both the 'Textile' and the 'Try Something New' streams had some options cancelled due to lack of interest or conflict of choice. In 'Try Something New' the shisha mirror class was very popular although more time would have been preferred to finish the discussion. Learning to tat interested several people; doll making and bead spinning attracted one person each. In 'Textiles' creating embroidery surface projects like brown paper and silk paper were popular, and the orts and felting classes each had three or four participants. Several correspondence groups were established in Richelieu, Crewel, Goldwork, Casalguidi, Hardanger and Schwalm, all beginner classes with some participants completing the project quickly while others are still working on them.

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the program, especially those who led classes or provided supplies or materials. We recognize that in some cases a great deal of time was spent in research in preparation for a class. We hope that as with ourselves that the research proved interesting and valuable in your own creative process. We feel that even if only one person shared a skill or technique with one other person it is a positive experience for both. We look forward to seeing completed pieces at future show and tells and continued success in our program next year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Mississippi Valley Textile Museum

www.textilemuseum.mississippimills.com

May 30th – August 15th, 2008

Fabrications By: Gayle Kells.

This exhibition brings together a body of work that has evolved over the past ten years. It focuses on female identity issues through the use of a mixture of mediums that include painting, drawing and found objects.

May 24th – August 2nd, 2008

Textiles with Meaning. Textiles with Personality By: Catherine Gutsche.

From May 15th - August 2nd, the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum (MVTM) presents Textiles with Meaning. Textiles with Personality by artist Catherine Gutsche. Artist Gutsche takes the wildest men's ties that she can find to apply them to canvases and allow their playful patterns to show their personalities. She is not timid when it comes to colour or patterns. Inspired by the ties' own colours, distinctive patterns and moods, Gutsche embellishes their themes with a painterly approach so that the sharp border of each tie is minimized. Each tie takes on its own camouflage, melting into the canvas.

Heritage House Museum

January 7th – June 29th, 2008

It's In the Bag: Part 2 – The Embroidered Handbag

Heritage House Museum in Smiths Falls is pleased to bring you this exhibit focusing on the art of embroidery and beading on handbags. Most of the purses in this exhibit are being loaned by the Embroiderers' Association of Canada. The museum will offer this exhibit from January 7th to June 29th, 2008, from: 10-30-4:30, Monday to Friday.

This exhibit highlights both styles of purses and displays bags made from the 1800s and on. For additional information call Heritage House Museum at 613-283-8560. We are located at 11 Old Slys Road, Smiths Falls.

Media Contact: Carol Miller 613-283-8560

ROM Textile Gallery

April 16th, 2008 Grand Opening

Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is proud to announce the opening of the Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume on April 16, 2008. The Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costume presents highlights from the ROM's renowned collection of over 50,000 textile and costume artifacts, in a display of approximately 200 pieces dating from the 1st millennium BC to the 21st century AD. Outstanding examples include Chinese imperial costume, late Antique and early Islamic textiles from Egypt, western fashion from the Baroque period to the present day and early Canadian coverlets. These illustrate the extensive transformations in textile design and technology throughout the past three millennia. Due to conservation considerations, the artifacts are to be changed on a regular basis.

SummerArts Program at Algonquin College

July 7th – August 1st, 2008

Algonquin College is once again hosting their Summer Academy of the Arts program from July 7th to August 1st. They have courses available in Photography, Fibre Arts, Jewellery, Fine Arts, and Mosaics.

Margaret Vant Erve will be teaching two classes:

Tell me a Story: Creating your own illustration using fabric paint, collage and embroidery, offered July 14 to 18, and

Fabric Painting Techniques for Landscape and Textural Effects, offered July 26 to 27.

For more information, go to <http://www.algonquincollege.com/summerarts> or call the college at 1-800-565-4723.

UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

Ottawa Summer Time Miniature Show and Sale

June 22nd, 2008

The Ottawa Summer Time Miniature Show and Sale will be held June 22nd, 2008 at the RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Drive, From 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. Admission is \$5.00. Door prizes will be offered.

For more information, contact Connie McIntosh at 613-829-0041.

EGA National Seminar – Golden Gala

August 31st – September 5th, 2008

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Embroiderer's Guild of America, so the EGA National Board is hosting the Golden Gala 50th Anniversary Celebration in the EGA home town of Louisville, Kentucky.

Take advantage of lectures and workshops covering all levels of expertise from basic stitches to advanced techniques that encourage exploration and activity.

For more information, go to <http://www.egausa.org/html/seminar.html> or contact Armida Taylor at fits2at@aol.com or 208-890-2694.

OVGS PROGRAM – JUNE SPEAKERS, SHOW&TELL, and POTLUCK

June Speakers: Pat Caffery and Marilyn White

At our June meeting Pat Caffery and Marilyn White will share with us some of their experiences in completing the City and Guilds in Textiles through the Opus School of Textiles.

Marilyn White only started stitching about 10 years ago. She is currently a member of OVGS, the Cataraqui Guild of Needle Arts (CGNA), Out of the Box, and Studio Inspirations. In 2006 she won the Gold Ribbon for 'Threads of Memory' at our Needlearts 2006 show.

Pat Caffery has stitched for most of her life and has been and is involved in both OVGS and CGNA, Studio Inspirations, Out of the Box, quilt guilds, rug hooking guilds and doll guilds. Pat also has taught all types of embroidery for many years, more recently canvas and mixed media techniques. She also teaches design and application to embroidery and mixed media. She will be teaching at Seminar 2009 in Kingston. Pat currently has a piece circulating with the juried Threadworks 2007 exhibit. This exhibit will be shown at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum in 2009 and in Ganonoque this year. Pat also had a piece in the "And Now For Something Different" exhibit last year as well as a piece in the "Bend, Fold, Manipulate" exhibit at the ACA Gallery this year, both in Toronto.

Pat and Marilyn have both participated in exhibits with Out of The Box, at the Ottawa School of Art with an Encaustic class (currently on display) and with Studio Inspirations in 2006. As part of Studio Inspirations they also arranged an exhibit 'Arthropoda' at the Nepean Museum several years ago. Pat and Marilyn began the City and Guilds program in 2003 and finished in 2007. In between they have created a body of work for the program, travelled to England twice, were instrumental in arranging to bring the principals of the Opus School of Textiles, Julia and Alex Caprara, to Ottawa to teach along with all their other personal and business obligations. They will share with us some of the journey and the work they created.

June Show&Tell: Please bring your works to share with everyone!

June Potluck: Please bring food and join us for a members' feast!

FLOCHE

By Doreen Riedel

It was suggested that I write about “floche” for this issue of NeedleNotes. The word is actually an alliteration of the word floss. There are several definitions to be found such as “a soft, loosely twisted thread or yarn, as of silk (floss silk) or cotton, used in embroidery” or “a soft, silky substance resembling floss, as in milkweed pods”. The French terms “filé torsion floche” and filé floche refer to loosely twisted thread.

This luxury embroidery thread imported from Europe, is made from Egyptian long-staple 100% cotton thread. Due to a high degree of mercerization it has a beautiful texture and sheen and because of its soft twist it looks and feels like silk. It is different from stranded cotton as although it is a 5-ply slightly twisted thread, it is not meant to be separated. One such strand is about the same weight as two strands of stranded cotton.

Floche is especially suited for fine embroidery on linen. It is a favourite for such techniques as cutwork, white work and openwork. Some other uses include smocking, shadow work, needlepoint, blackwork and cross stitch. It is useful for creating soft shading and surface embroidery, monogramming and Ecclesiastical embroidery. Because of its soft twist it is not recommended for Hardanger or pulled thread embroidery. Due to its better coverage fewer threads are used in the needle. It gives much better coverage than 2 ply stranded floss in shadow work because it spreads out on the wrong side of the fabric, producing a stronger "shadow" on the right side. The bullion roses that are produced with floche are superior to those with regular floss because the 5 plies untwist giving the bullions a look of many strands of fine floss with a beautiful sheen. The use of two strands is recommended for geometric smocking, three strands for picture smocking and one for shadow work and embroidery.

There are a number of useful hints on the internet about using floche. The floche is wrapped up in a big loop that has been doubled over itself. To separate it, put a thumb in each end of the loop. If you relax the tension a bit, you should be able to find the two different parts of the loop which can then be separated from each other. You should end up with a big loop of floche that is double the size of the original one, about 27" long. Look for the beginning and the end of the skein where they are knotted together and that is the place to snip. Make sure you've separated the skein correctly: the loop of the knot should go around all of the strands (lengths) of floche. Cut only one end of the loops. It is better to leave the lengths as double 27 inches until you are sure what you will be using them for. To store the floche, braid it. For example, put a ring through the uncut loop and loosely braid the thread. To use a piece, gently pull from the top of the braid (the part looped over the ring). Alternatively loosely knot it and keep it in a zip-lock bag.

DMC Floche (Art. 5238A) is a size 16 thread which is available in 20 solid colours on a 150 yard long skein. The colours of DMC Floche are the same as those of DMC Stranded cotton (Art 117). "Coton a broder" looks quite a bit like floche, but has a more firm twist and comes in a variety of weights. It is made especially for cutwork.

For those of you who have tried some of the Chinese Embroidery techniques such as the peony, this might be a good time to experiment with floche.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

By Stacy Finkelstein

Dear OVGS Readers, Contributors and Advertisers,

I'd like to begin my message by thanking Lynne Demmery for the amazing work she did as editor and for her help in making my entry into newsletter editing a smooth and easy one. Lynne definitely delivered a newsletter in which our guild can take great pride.

I thought I should also take this opportunity to introduce myself to those who may not know me. Although a relative newcomer to the guild (this has been my second year), I've been doing needlework my whole life. My grandmother taught me to knit, crochet, and lace crochet, my mother to needlepoint and cross-stitch/embroider, and my grandfather to latch hook. Over the years I've expanded that list by taking classes in beadwork, bobbin lace, quilting, machine embroidery and fabric painting. I plan to continue my needlework education – I'm especially looking forward to a course in needlelace at the EGA Seminar in September – and my participation as a member of OVGS.

Finally, I'd like to thank the various members who have contributed articles and encouragement, all of which is much appreciated. I hope you like the new layout of the newsletter, and continue to enjoy the OVGS NeedleNotes!

Thank you! Stacy

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