

Part 1, 1970 – 1982 **by Fay Shirley**

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Editor's Note: The American Needlepoint Guild is a strong and viable national organization dedicated to the art of needlepoint. At present we have 5,340 members, 182 life members and 98 chapters! Many of you have written and asked about the early beginnings and history of ANG; thanks to Fay Shirley of Birmingham, Alabama for compiling this account.

In May of 1970 a group of interested needlers met at the Episcopal Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama. Their plan was to needlepoint kneelers for the church and this was later accomplished. This group decided to organize ... thus The American Needlepoint Guild was born.

Carolyn Sloss of Birmingham served as its first president. She dreamed of a "United Nations Peace Rug" which would depict, in needlepoint, the crest of each member nation of the United Nations. Mona Spoor and Associates was chosen as the designer and the first major project of the guild was underway.

The aims and purposes of the American Needlepoint Guild were set forth. The guild is open to every lover of needlepoint: professional, amateur or rank beginner. It is an educational, non-profit, non-political organization whose main purpose is to stimulate interest in all aspects of needlepoint. The guild encourages the practice and appreciation of needlepoint as an art form; restores historic land marks and places of worship in needlepoint; locates antique works and places them in museums for future generations; sponsors exhibits, workshops, meetings, conventions and tours to provide information and to stimulate the exchange of ideas and inspirations; provides a framework for the enjoyment of friendships which this mutual interest engenders.

The first annual convention of ANG was held on St. Simon Island, Georgia in August of 1972 with Carolyn Sloss serving as president. On September 6, 1972, the Declaration of Incorporation was signed.

On May 9, 1973, the guild held an exhibit at the Washington Cathedral in Washington, D.C. The 1973 convention was held in May at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel in New York City with Carolyn Sloss national president. The United Nations Peace Rug was in the process of being designed and squares assigned to members; Fay Shirley of Birmingham, Alabama was chairman of this project. The convention closed with a luncheon honoring Ambassador and Mrs. John Scali, United States Ambassador to the United Nations.

On May 14, 1973 a group directed by Pat Trexler left for a tour of Europe. An exhibit was held in London at the Royal Society of Arts. The group then went to Monaco for its first

visit. Princess Grace attended and chose the first "Princess Grace Award" which was presented to Margaret Lukens of West Covina, California.

In 1974, the annual convention was held in November at the Continental Plaza Hotel in Chicago, Illinois with Carolyn Sloss national president. The exhibit was staged at Bonwit-Teller.

In February of 1975 there was a tour to the Caribbean and in May, 1975, another tour visited Monaco, Switzerland and Vienna. On October 23, 1975, the United Nations Peace Rug was presented to the United Nations at a formal unveiling and reception in the United Nation's General Assembly Hall where it remains today. Approximately 150 members attended this ceremony. Also in attendance were: Dr. Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, the Honorable Patrick Moynihan, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Miss Mary Martin.

The "Fall Festival" of 1975 was held in November at the Sir Frances Drake in San Francisco, California. Pat Trexler was elected national president. There was a "Book Shop" for the first time. Chottie Alderson designed and presented our official tartan "The Rainbow Plaid" as a gift to the guild.

In May of 1976 the guild sponsored a tour to Monaco for an International Exhibit; Princess Grace exhibited a beautiful rug that she had made and ladies of Monaco exhibited their work for the first time. The tour continued on to England and needlework classes were taught by Mary Gostelow and Anna Pearson.

The 1976 "Fall Festival" was held in New Orleans, Louisiana at the Royal Sonesta Hotel. The first combined "Book Shop" and boutique was staged. Marty Pugh was elected new national president. Erica Wilson, Anna Pearson, Mary Gostelow, Chottie Alderson and Fleur Cowles were named to the newly formed consultation board.

In May of 1977 the guild sponsored a tour to Monaco and the Scandinavian countries. The Fall Festival of 1977 was held in Boston, Massachusetts at the Copley Plaza Hotel in October with Marty Pugh serving as president. The State Seal Rug, inspired by Jeanne Roth of Erie, Pennsylvania, was completed and ready to tour. This 8 X 12' rug features 52 square, 16" X 16" each with seals of each state.

The spring tour of 1978 was again in Monaco with Princess Grace opening the International Exhibit. The group then toured England. In 1978 the first correspondence course, Phase I of "Discovery of Excellence" was designed and taught by Nita Grace of Arvada, Colorado to pursue excellence in needlepoint.

In October of 1978 the Fall Festival "Fiesta del Otona" was held at the Hilton Inn in Santa Fe, New Mexico with Marty Pugh serving as president.

The 1979 spring tour left New York for a Greek Island cruise and an International Exhibit at Milton Manor in honor of the new ANG chapter in Great Britain. The Fall Festival "Low Country Levee" was held in October of 1979 at the historic Mills Hyatt House in Charleston, South Carolina. Myrl Good was elected new national president.

In January of 1980 Marty Pugh led a tour for a Caribbean cruise and in May of 1980 the guild sponsored a tour to Monaco, Ireland and southern England. The 1980 Fall Festival "Colorado Gold" was held in October in Denver, Colorado at the Plaza Cosmopolitan Hotel with Myrl Good serving as president. Chottie Alderson was appointed by the board to organize a Teacher Certification Program.

A tour of Mexico was held in March of 1981. The Fall Festival of 1981 "Windy City Whirl" was held in Chicago, Illinois in September at the Ramada Inn O'Hare. Sue Strause was elected national president. The Bird and Flower Rug was presented to the Chicago Botanic Garden Library.

The 1982 spring tour went again to Monaco and sponsored our first "Invitational Exhibit". The group then traveled on to northern Italy. The 1982 Fall Festival "Texas Tenth" was held in October at the Westin Galleria in Houston Texas with Sue Strause serving as national president.

We now have 5,340 members, 182 life members and 98 chapters of the American Needlepoint Guild. We offer a Teacher Certification Program and correspondence courses in many areas of needlepoint. We publish a quarterly magazine with educational articles for all of our members. We offer a slide library for the use of our members and maintain a national shop for stationery and jewelry items. We have a brand new look with a handsome logo. We are hard at work on projects for the future and plans for the next Fall Festival in Williamsburg. We have only just begun!