



ONN-*Line*

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER of the
ONTARIO NETWORK OF NEEDLEWORKERS

VOLUME 43 | ISSUE 4 | APRIL 2026

Its Springtime ...

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Happy Spring Stitching !

Canadian Embroiderers' Guild, London
Toronto Guild of Stitchery
Canadian Embroiderers' Guild, Kitchener-Waterloo
Association of Whitework Embroiderers
Scarborough Needle Arts Guild
Canadian Embroiderers' Guild, Guelph
Oakville Stitchery Guild
Northumberland Hills Stitchery Guild
Trillium Embroidery Guild
Embroiderers' Guild of Peterborough
Norfolk's Own Needle Arts Guild
Sudbury District Quilting and Stitchery Guild
Brant Needle Arts Guild
Quinte Needlearts Guild

CANADIAN EMBROIDERERS' GUILD, LONDON

Submitted by Jennifer Meister, Past-President

This winter CEG, London has run nine classes including topics such as Boro, Painting with Shiva Sticks and “The Altered Page” – a mixed media technique class where students create a journal they can use. In late January we escaped the bitter winter weather with an Inspiration Day where member Rita Bonora led us through a day painting, printing and stamping artist trading cards.



Inspiration Day trading cards



Boro class work



Each third Thursday afternoon we hosted an internationally acclaimed speaker via Zoom. January's speaker was from Haliburton School of the Arts – letting us know about all their great textile art offerings. February's speaker was Swapna Namboodiri – a multidisciplinary artist whose talk, titled "Beauty in the Breakdown: Post Consumer Plastic as a Creative Medium", inspired us to do something magnificent with materials we may otherwise discard. Our speaker in March was Harriett Riddell, who takes her sewing machine on the road (literally), creating free motion portraits of the scenes she encounters from England to India.

Outreach is an important part of CEG, London's mission. On March 6, a group of CEG, London members ran a workshop for the London Children's Museum. Fourteen children stitched stuffed key chains.



Be sure to see the incredible work of CEG, London members at our Textile Showcase – April 24 and 25, 2026. The event will be held at Westmount Presbyterian Church, 521 Village Green Avenue, London. Hours are Friday, April 24 2 to 8 pm and Saturday, April 25 10 am to 4 pm.

There is still time to register for CEG, London's Summer Workshop June 1 to 6. Summer Workshop is a highlight for the fabric arts community with attendees coming from as far away as Newfoundland. This year's instructors are Susan Purney Mark of Pender Island, British Columbia teaching "Cloth to Codex" - creating book art with movement and texture, and Alice Vander Vennen of Cobourg, Ontario teaching "Mixed Media Textile Assemblage" where participants will juxtapose fibre art with natural materials to create a framed, stitched, three-dimensional textile assemblage. Information and registration materials can be found at: <https://ceglondon.com/programs/workshops.php>

Submitted by Audrey Chaput, ONN Rep

This very long snowy winter season has been a busy one with both regular TGS and 50th Anniversary Celebration activities.

The first meeting of the month includes an activity created by the Programme Committee such as a guest speaker or a workshop where we can learn a new stitch or two. In January members made small **silk ribbon embroidery brooches**. In March we learned how to do **canvas pattern darning**. But in February, members were given excellent insight into the **Embroidery Association of Canada's annual Seminar** where several of our members are instructors. Toronto Guild of Stitchery membership includes EAC membership. Although the trip to Seminar is expensive, many of us agree that it is a great way to learn new techniques from excellent instructors, to peak new interests and meet / make new friends across Canada. Some members shared their finished seminar projects which were quite inspiring.



Stitch in Pub: January 10th: We had a great turn out in January at the Duke of York Pub in the Annex! Casual pub fare, perhaps a pint followed by time to stitch. What good way to spend a wintery Saturday.

Annual Stitch Day and Stash Sale: February 21st.

Once a year, members cull their stashes of unfinished, not started, or not going to be used stitching kits and supplies to donate them to TGS' Annual Stash Sale. Many TGS members volunteer setting up for the sale, greeting guests, floating, managing the cash desk, cleaning up, and directing groups from the stitching room to the sale room. Entry in The Viewer's Choice Award is offered to all members. They can enter one or more completed pieces that they had purchased at a previous Stash Sale.

This year's winner is Iris Weverman for her entry: Teatime



Not only is Stitch Day and Stash Sale a much-anticipated fun-filled day, it is also a great fundraiser!

In February, one of our members, Lorna Anderson, presented TGS's Historical Embroidery panel which was started in 1977 and was completed and presented to the City of Toronto in March 1984. The project was designed by Barbara Gordon, an Ontario College of Art student. Over 140 stitchers took 11,000hrs to complete a 24 foot long, 6 feet high panel frieze depicting the history and growth of Toronto.

We were lucky to have Catherine Duncan, one of the stitchers who participated in creating the piece join our daytime meeting. If you have not seen it, it is located in the basement at Toronto City Hall.



View more photos here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/7482479@N02/48932757773/in/photostream/>

Iryna Varabei, a TGS member originally from Belarus

shared with us her piece that illustrates a story about a poem: The Song of the Zubr that dates back to 1522. Iryna stated that the Zubr is Belarusian name for an animal like American bison, but quite bigger. It has been preserved only in Belarus. She included in her design the solar signs of ancestors and male valor at the left upper corner.



Kinga Senzi shared with us a very meaningful Hungarian Linen embroidery piece from Kalocsa, Hungary. Her parents purchased it for her when she was a teenager. The fabric isn't easily found today. Kinga said she learned how to do the embroidery on her own. She is using perle cotton.

TGS continues to celebrate 50 years with Speaker and Stitch-in Days

In **January**, Katy Emck, Founding Director of Fine Cell Work in the United Kingdom joined us via Zoom for a presentation

Katie shared how this charity and social enterprise sends volunteers into prisons to provide rehabilitation opportunities by teaching inmates how to embroider. They are transforming the lives of prisoners one stitch at a time.

We heard how so many prisoners have experienced marginalization throughout their lives that puts them in a vicious cycle of reoffending. To break the cycle, the charity provides support by training and paying the prisoners to create beautiful needlework pieces for sale. This creates the opportunity for professional employment and money earned and saved to allow the inmates the dignity and self belief to become a productive and crime free member of society upon release.



Prisoners create exquisite hand made products for sale and are paid for their pieces. Many luxury pieces are custom designed and commissioned. The prisoners benefit from gaining the belief that their lives can be different.

Their website states "Our unique process boosts our stitcher's self-worth, instills accountability, and fosters hope. Hope that transformation is possible - for our stitchers, for our communities, and for our society as a whole."

We learned that embroidery provides a meaning for many lives. What an eye-opening presentation.

In **March**, TGS members attended a zoom presentation with British artist; Kristy McLeod, creator of **The Red Dress** Kristy shared that what began as an idea sketched on a napkin in 2009, has grown into a world wide collaborative. The dress was completed in 2023.

The Red Dress project amplifies and unites women's voices across the world's stories; it illustrates the human condition through their universal language of embroidery. Panels were sent by mail to stitchers who created an embroidery that articulated an element of their diverse identities and cultures. Kristy shared she chose the colour blood red specifically because it is a powerful colour associated with anger, rage,



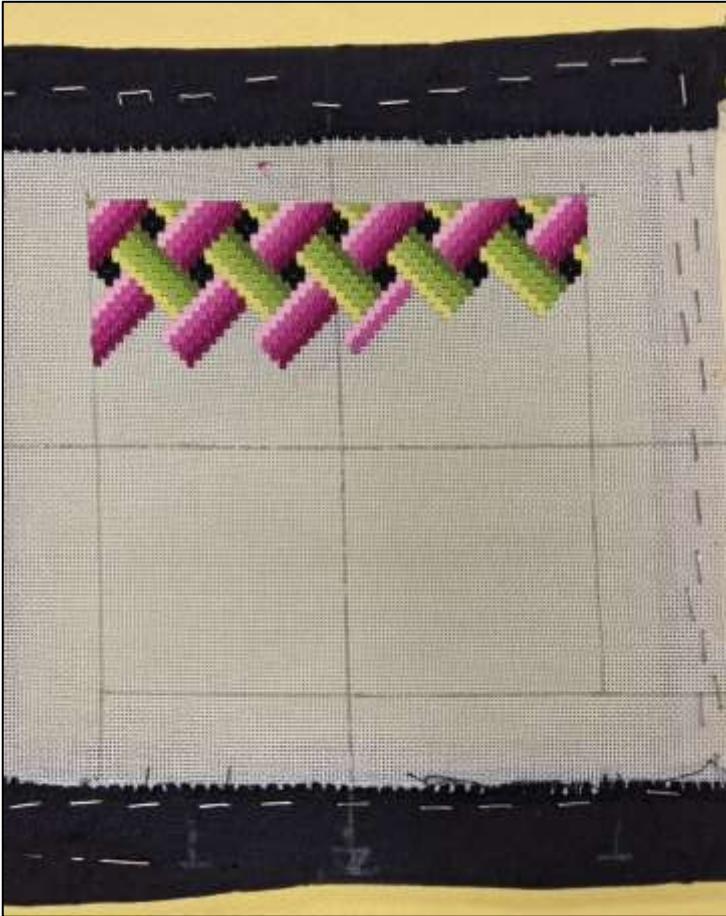
love, passion, women's cycles of blood, and danger. A total of 380 embroiderers from 51 countries stitched on the dress. The dress is in two parts: the bodice is separated from the skirt; it weighs 6.8kg and is not meant to be walked in. It's more of a sculpture. The only people allowed to wear the dress are the embroiderers.

We highly recommend reviewing the website and following:

EXHIBITIONS - The Red Dress as there is planning in the works for The Red Dress to come to Canada for future exhibition.

Submitted by M J Alexander, ONN Rep

We've had a lot of big changes at the KW Embroiderers' Guild in the past few months. Our guild continues to grow and as of March 3rd we now have 36 paid members including 3 gentlemen. Sadly our vice-president and ONN rep has had to step away from guild due to work commitments.



We were to have a thread painting class with her. Those 3 nights have been given to the bargello class and the hardanger class.

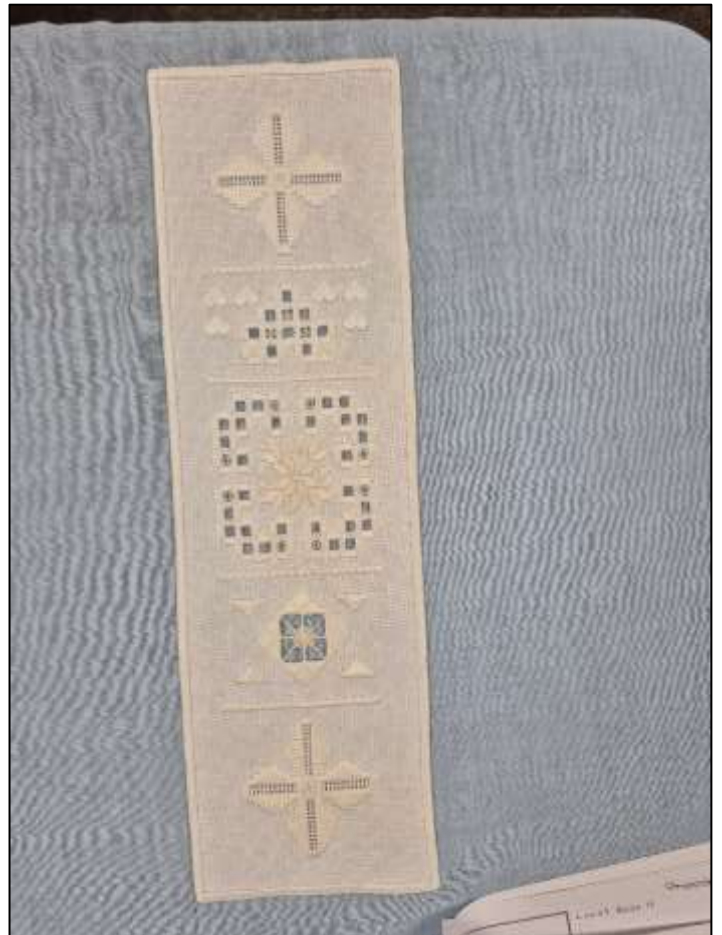
We spent two classes trying our hand at bargello. The projects were an interesting mix with some on larger canvas with thick yarn and others on higher count canvas using floss. Now that we have the hang of it we can finish the project as we have time.

Bargello Embroidery by Drew O'Brien

We have had one Hardanger class where we reviewed the different types of stitches required supplies. We started with a small practice project and will move on to the bigger project during the next two classes.

We will take advantage of the last few meetings this year to work on our own projects and finish any class projects we still have on the go. Our annual meeting will be held in May with plans to appoint a new President, Vice President and ONN Rep

Hardanger Embroidery by Drew O'Brien



Several of our members have been busy with projects outside of the current class schedule. Hilary Geddy has been working on a project depicting the Silk Road, Drew O'Brien has been working on surface embroidery and Maria Smit recently completed a new Christmas ornament.



Silk Road embroidery by Hilary Geddy



Back side of a piece of surface embroidery by Drew O'Brien



Christmas ornament in-progress by Maria Smit

On March 17 we lost one of our long-time guild members, Enid Emery. She was a longtime guild member and a valued member of our community. She will be missed dearly



Submitted by Mavis Brown, Guelph

So far 2026 has been a busy and productive year. Classes have been busy and interesting and the afternoon programme has kept everyone interested.



The classes have been busy and popular. We have six classes plus an independent group. The classes include; Beetle Brooch...stumpwork; The Rabbits Perfect Picnic...a beautifully dressed bunny; Needle Lace Elements and surface embroidery; Shisha Embroidery; Fantasy Flower Pincushion and Notebook...felt and beadwork; and Forgotten Treasures...finishing off UFO's!



Our afternoon programme has been equally successful. For Valentines we enjoyed **Tea and Sweet**



Treats and making a **Friendship Card**. This involved a **Palen-tine stitch** and a quote and then an exchange of cards. We had a lesson on making the **Hole-y cards** we use as our chief fund raiser.

Lizzie Costello introduced us to **Fabric Envelopes** which can actually be sent through the mail. Great for re-cycling leftover fabric.

We had Judy Eckhardt do a fascinating demonstration of the myriad varieties and applications of backgrounds with **Transfer Foil**.

Our guest speaker was Lauren Wright Vartanian. She showed us her **embroidered alphabet highlighting Stitch in Science** which she had reproduced as a children's book.



Our final presenter for this term is Jennifer James who is a weaver and textile artist. She will present her journey through creating pieces for challenges she has done very successfully.

We are coming to our annual Open House and everyone is invited to come see what our group has accomplished this year.



Submitted by Carol Ward, ONN Rep

To spring or not to spring, that is the question! The weather outside may still be a little iffy, but it makes for a good excuse to stay inside and stitch.



When you only meet twice a month, it can really play havoc with scheduled workshops when bad weather hits and a whole meeting has to be cancelled. Fortunately, we were able to squeeze a few of them in.

The first was a workshop the art of Shisha, also known as mirror embroidery or abhla bharat, taught by our own Iran Y. It involves attaching small mirrors or reflective metal to

fabric using decorative embroidery stitches. Shisha is both unique and easier to do than it looks.

We received the final pattern for the blackwork stitch-a-long several of us started in the fall. And as challenging as this project was, the finished product made it worth the work. These are the results of only about half of those who took the challenge. The rest of us are still doggedly keeping at it.



In the fall Susan C. asked us to make a list of some of the stitches we'd like to learn, which we did.

Then of course we promptly forgot all about it until it was time to start Embroidery Bingo. We received a template of a bingo card to trace onto a piece of fabric. There were 28 stitches to choose from, many we'd never heard of before. We were to choose our favorites to place at random on our bingo cards, with the center square being a free square. Then a picture was taken to keep us honest.

Each week we receive three different stitches. If they're on our card, we get to stitch them on our fabric bingo card. The rest of the rules are the same as regular bingo – five squares in any direction is a win. So far, we've only had one winner. But I'm sure by the time this newsletter is sent out there will be more. What fun!



On March 10 we welcomed Jennifer Trefiak, who ran the first of two beading workshops. There was a lot of interest for this within the group and we made a good start on a maple leaf brooch. She'll be back to show us how to finish it.



Going forward, we'll continue with our Embroidery Bingo, and in April we'll be welcoming Barbara Kershaw back for another of her thrilling whitework workshops. We also have a mini learn-a-long of chain stitch variations to look forward to. It's always interesting to see the different ways stitchers do these samplers. Until next time, happy stitching!

Submitted by Mary-K. Hardy, ONN rep

At our December Saturday Stitch Day, member Geri Inglis taught our member's how to do punch needle. The students made a poinsettia that could be worn as a brooch or displayed as an ornament. At our December general meeting, two of the members [Marilyn & Cathy] wore their completed craft with their teacher, Geri.



**Marilyn, Geri & Cathy
Wearing their poinsettia brooches**

And then it snowed! For the first time in memory, both our January and February general meetings had to be cancelled due to the weather.

For our February Saturday Stitch Day, to tease and tantalize our membership to participate in our annual stitching competition – of which the theme this year is ‘smalls’ – a plethora of different pincushions were shown.



All the different types of fills that could be used was discussed; from walnut shells (best price is at Princess Auto – who knew?) to nylons! Jeanette Craig displayed her assortment of pincushions as well.



Jeanette's pincushions

For our March general meeting, Poppy Bleau shared a presentation detailing her Great Japan Adventure that she went on with her friend Cathy from the Northumberland Guild.

This textile tour was organized by the Toronto Guild and happened in November 2024. This very interesting trip included going to the Yokohama International Quilt Show where there were more than 100 vendors, the Kubota Itchiku (textile) Museum, Saskiko Museum and the Kyoto Museum of Traditional Crafts. As well there were amazing opportunities to try out indigo dyeing and to make a Temari ball. Poppy's enthusiasm on all the interesting aspects of this trip was definitely felt.



Poppy's trip to Japan

Starting in March, TEG will be hosting a drop-in and stitch event at the Newcastle Public Library on the fourth Thursday evening of the month. We are excited to share our love of stitching with members of our community.

Submitted by Heather Hollands, ONN Rep

The 2026 year brought many cancellations for our meetings, due to snow, freezing rain etc, however, our members continued to work on their own projects, with examples of some completed pieces shown below.

We ended last year with our business meeting being a dinner meeting at the Blue Elephant. At that time our treasurer Grace Smith resigned after many years of dedicated service. In appreciation we presented her with a handmade pottery mug and plate in her favourite colour with butterflies, her favourite design. Also, at this meeting it was decided that our business meeting will be moved to the second Wednesday afternoon of the month, rather than in the evening. We will try this and see how it works out. We still meet every Monday, weather permitting for our stitch ins.



Grace Smith with her gift for dedicated service



Cho Mon, a Japanese butterfly shaped crest stitched by Cori Angus, designed by Jane Nicolas for Inspirations



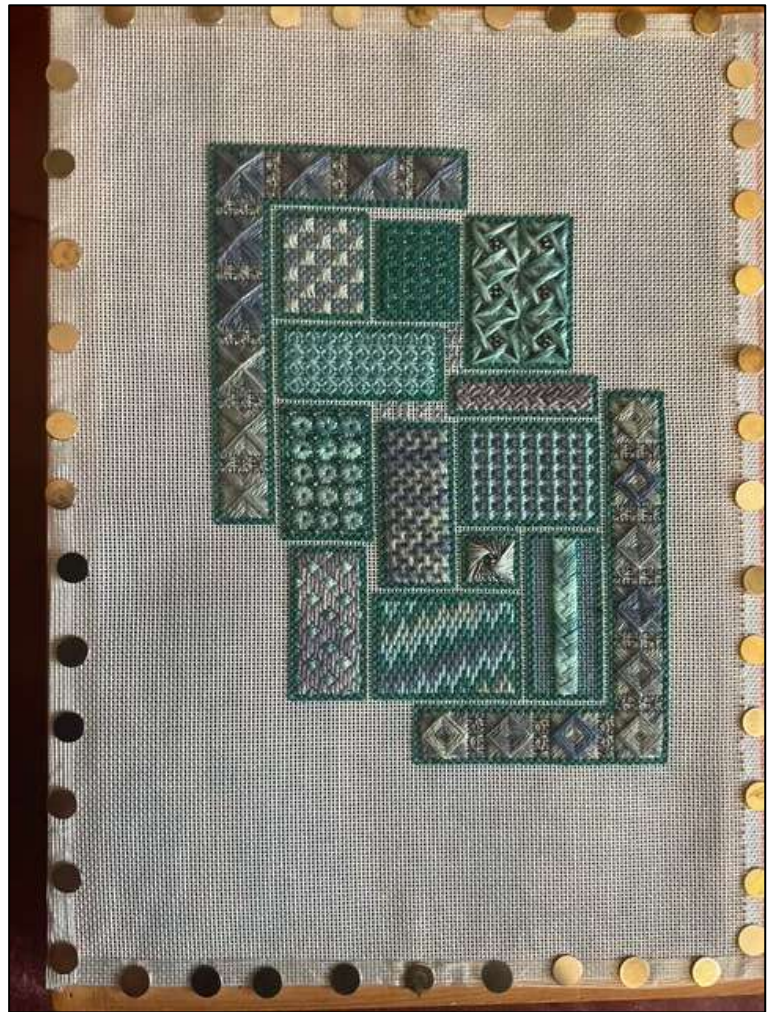
Spring cross stitch design stitched by Kim Smith



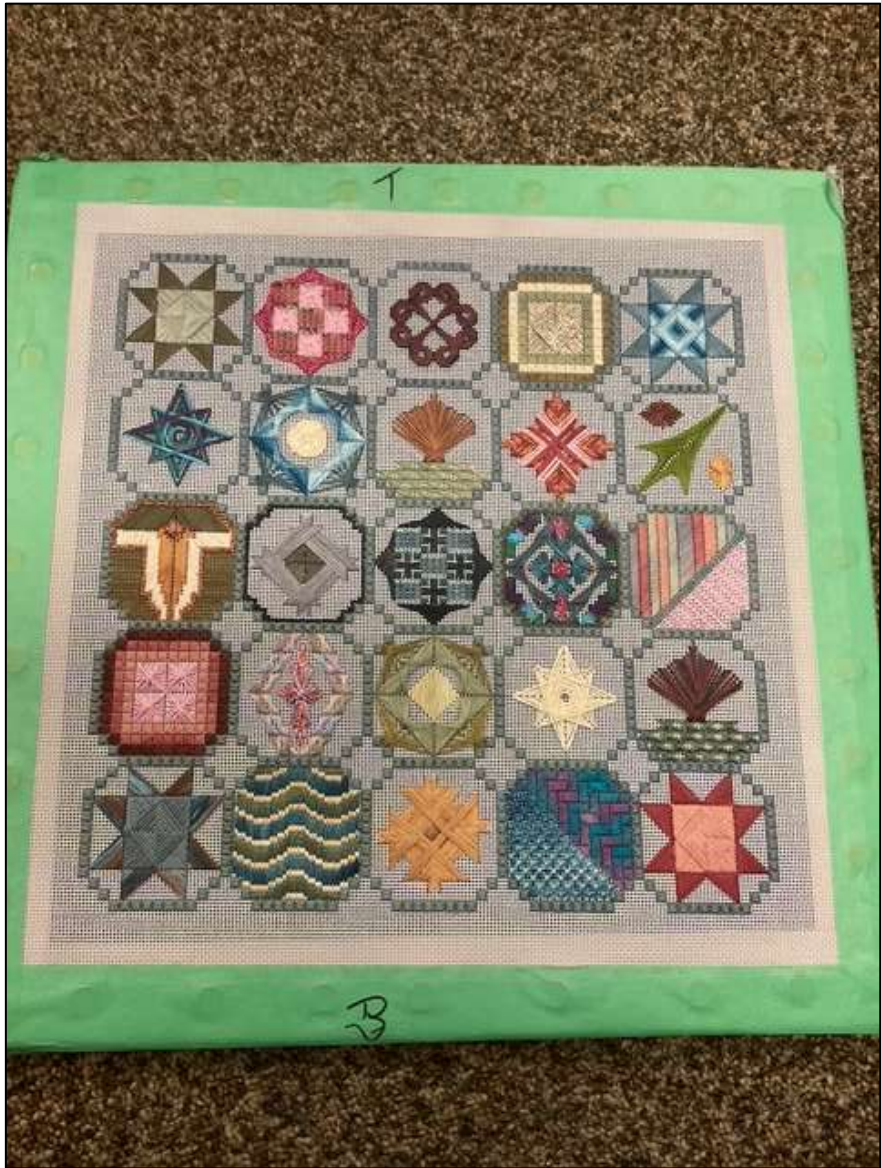
Thread painting amaryllis stitched by Lotte Von Wuerzen from inspirations magazine



Top constructed by Lorraine Unett by Nuno felting, a technique that bonds wool and silk fibers using water and friction to create this fabric.



Canvaswork design stitched by Heather Hollands



Pieces of Eight canvas design stitched by Debbie



**Baby monkey cross stitch done by Lee Hamilton
for her son**



We are also preparing for our display and sales booth at the **Peterborough Fibre Festival Sale to be held on April 11 at the Peterborough Wellness Centre**. For those within easy driving distance of Peterborough it's a wonderful event for anyone interested in the textile arts. As stitchers we are always happy to have the opportunity to shop at the Kimat Design and Olive Sparrow booths!

As part of the promotion for the Fibre Festival, we participated in the **Peterborough First Friday Art Crawl** on March 6 at the site being hosted by the Artisan Centre in the lower atrium of Peterborough Square. In addition to the display, Wenda, Kathy, Norah, Kristi and Fiona brought along their stitching so we could demonstrate what we do. **Wenda's circle project**, the inspiration for her workshop with us, is shown in the centre of the picture below.



Submitted by Jane Bermingham, ONN Rep

Last time I wrote a report for the newsletter I commented on the fact that it was snowing. Well, we still have snow on the ground although it is not actually snowing. It seems the days have been dull and deary this winter, which makes handling and looking at many coloured threads a pleasure.

As a guild we have been lucky, because we have not actually had to cancel any of our meetings. However, they have been poorly attended because of the unpredictable weather and a reluctance to drive by many of our senior members.

January was a free stitching meeting for our members. Plus we connected by Zoom with EAC's educational person Heather, who walked us through the website and told us what is available to us as members of EAC. In February and March one of our members taught Needle Felting and Wet Felting using some felting supplies we had donated to us. In April another member of the guild will teach Boro mending. We are planning to attending Gathering in The County again this year we have already booked our table. The event takes place on June 13th at the Crystal Palace in Picton.

We have also started to plan some summer stitch-ins with, we hope, a short workshop included.



Needle Felting by Joanne



Wet Felting by Joan



Wet Felting by Sue



Boro samples by Shirley

Left corner bird hanging designed and stitched by Allie
Dragon crocheted by Allie
Blackwork and strawberry stitched by Tina



ONN Website

The ONN website can be found at onnguuilds.ca. The main page is set up in a blog form so that notices and articles of interest can be found easily by members.

Submissions of articles, photos and events are welcomed and encouraged! Suggestions include:

- ✓ book and exhibition reviews
- ✓ tips and hints learned at a workshop information about a shop
- ✓ research about techniques, designs or materials

Your reports are posted on the website under "Member Pages". The newsletter editor will gather them all together and get them to you in a newsletter format, which you can distribute to your members. If you have something to report between newsletters, your report can be posted on the website at any time. If you have news of an open workshop, trip or the like, the news can be posted to our blog at any time.

We do appreciate it if you can also send the photos as separate images. Otherwise, we have to pull each one out of your MSWord or PDF document individually. The report will show us where to insert each photo into the website page.

ONN Contact Information

Webmaster	Judy McMullan	CEG Guelph	ontarionetworkofneedleworkers@gmail.com
Newsletter	Savita Patkar	Toronto Guild of Stitchery	savita_patkar@yahoo.com

DEADLINE DATES

Issue #1 by 25 July - for August – Next newsletter submission

Issue #2 by 25 September - for October

Issue #3 by 15 December - for January

Issue #4 by 25 March - for April

MEMBERSHIP YEAR

The ONN membership year runs from June 1 to May 31.