

# The First Decade

by Dorothy Hoffmann



LET'S ALL PUT DOWN OUR NEEDLEWORK and get out our party hats and noisemakers. We're going to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of The Embroiderers' Guild of America!

Our large and prestigious organization had a somewhat humble beginning. Much of the credit for establishing EGA goes to three dedicated embroiderers—Dorothy Doubleday Babcock (Mrs. F. Huntington Babcock), Margaret Thorne Parshall (Mrs. Daryl Parshall) and Sally Behr (Mrs. Samuel Pettit). Through their efforts and inspiration, today we are able to belong to a dynamic organization where we can meet, study, and above all, share our love for embroidery.

## Organizing

Dorothy Babcock's early passion for needlework continued throughout her life. Margaret Parshall was considered an expert in the art of embroidery. She organized the Middlebrook Guild in the early 1950s and brought in Erica Wilson from the Royal School of Needlework to teach classes. Sally Behr was an interior decorator, and she also developed a keen interest in needlework design and instruction. These three women had one other thing in common—they were members of the London Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild of the United Kingdom (EG-London).

These three ladies and the EG-London wished to have closer ties between EG-London and the twenty-seven members in the U.S. Mrs. MacPherson, a U.K. resident and member, traveled across the Atlantic in 1957 to the U.S. to meet and discuss with

U.S. members ways in which closer ties could be accomplished. Dorothy Babcock arranged a tea for the visitor in her New York City apartment, and invitations were extended to Margaret Parshall, Sally Behr, and Erica Wilson. What emerged from their conversations was the realization that embroidery was becoming a lost art in this young country. They resolved to change this trend. Through continued communications it was agreed to form an American Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild of the United Kingdom. This event occurred in late December 1958, and the twenty-seven stateside members were then transferred to this new entity.

A certificate of incorporation was issued in 1959, and a board of directors was elected. Dorothy Babcock became the first chairman, and Sally Behr became secretary and treasurer. Margaret Parshall served on the executive committee. Others on the executive committee were Rosina O. Bateson, Katherine E. Bull, and Edith P. Martin.

Their next major step was to apply for federal tax exemption, which was initially refused. The purpose of the organization as originally stated was "to set and maintain high standards of design, color, and workmanship in all kinds of embroidery and canvas work." By changing the organization's objectives to charitable and educational purposes, the application was approved in late 1960. The same tax exemption applies to EGA today. Two other formal needs were accomplished, which were the adoption of



bylaws in 1959 and an exemption from the New York State sales tax in 1961.

The London guild's privileges for the American Branch members included being able to purchase leaflets and instruction booklets and to rent portfolios and slides. Annual dues were \$3. A subscription to the EG-London quarterly magazine, *Embroidery*, could be obtained for an extra \$3.

## Building Membership

The first national membership brochure was introduced in 1959 using the identical blue and white colors still being used today. Later these colors were officially acknowledged as the colors of EGA in the *Policies and Procedures* manual. The national brochure became part of a membership campaign whereby embroiderers were provided table space from which to disburse leaflets from the London Guild at the Amateur Needlework of Today exhibit.

The American Branch grew from the original 27 members to over 300 in the first three

*Margaret Parshall (above) organized the Middlebrook Guild in the 1950s and was a member of the London Branch of Embroiderers' Guild of the United Kingdom.*

*Dorothy Babcock (p. 28) hosted an organization tea in her New York apartment, where the seed for the development of EGA was planted. She served as the first chairman of EGA. Many years later, the EGA library was named in her honor.*



Margaret Parsball, one of the founders of EGA, served on the first executive committee and eventually served as president in 1961. The main EGA gallery was later named in her honor.

years. By 1963 the membership numbered over 1,000 in thirty-eight states, Hawaii, and Canada. This number increased to almost 2,500 members by 1967.

Communication with members was important. In the beginning a four-page newsletter was published called *The Report*, which later changed to *The Bulletin*. These publications were mailed out three times a year until 1970 when *Needle Arts* was introduced.

### First National Headquarters

Throughout the formative stages, meetings followed by teas were held at Dorothy Babcock's apartment. Many of the administrative duties were performed by Sally Behr at her mother's apartment.

In 1961, with Mrs. Babcock remaining as chairman, Margaret Parsball became the first president, and a board of directors was formed. The directors decided to find a separate location and hire staff to administer to the needs of this growing organization. They found a rental property at 767 Lexington Avenue in New York City. Room 403 served as the guild's first national headquarters. A paid secretary was hired to oversee the day-to-day operations.

Over the next fourteen years, the increased growth in activities resulted in the need for progressively larger office spaces. The head-

quarters were moved to East 60th Street, then to East 56th Street, and finally to East 45th Street, all in New York City.

### Miss 'O'

Educated in art and design in her native Estonia, Linda Ormesson became part of the professional staff as a resident textile design consultant in 1966. She shared her vast knowledge, organizational skills, and research talents during the eighteen years she remained with EGA. Everyone knew her as Miss 'O'. She designed the EGA logo, and her collection of designs is part of the EGA Collection.

### Chapters

Inquiries were received in the first decade by groups of embroiderers wanting to know how they could become a part of the organization. No provisions were written in the bylaws for affiliated groups, known today as chapters. These requests increased to the point that a plan was structured to allow these embroidery groups to become incorporated into the framework of the American Branch.

The Delaware Valley Chapter of Philadelphia with its two-hundred members became the first affiliated group of the American Branch in 1964. It later became known as the Philadelphia Area Chapter. Its chair, Babe Lovering (Mrs. Joseph S. Lovering, Jr.), later became the first national chapter coordinator and in 1969 was elected the American Branch's president. The following year three more chapters were approved—Bay Colony Chapter in Boston, Colorado Chapter in Denver, and Connecticut River Valley Chapter in Farmington.

### Education

A cornerstone of EGA is education. Early in the organization's history, classes were conducted at headquarters by Muriel Bishop, Erica Wilson, and Mildred Davis. Eight correspondence courses were advertised.

In 1960, Dorothy Babcock organized the professional standards committee to develop a testing program for certifying member teachers, and Muriel Bishop was named as chair. This committee developed a test and program to oversee its examinations. The test was developed for beginning students in

crewel and canvas. By 1965, twenty certificates had been issued. In 1965, a second examination was offered covering four types of advanced needlework.

Many services were provided to members during this first decade. Portfolios containing designs and samples of stitchery were loaned to chapters and their members for study. Four sets of thirty-six slides became available in 1967. The booklet, *20 Contemporary Designs for Embroidery and Needlework*, advertised in the 1966 *Bulletin*, was authored and donated by board member Edith P. Martin. Other publications were *Primer of New England Embroidery* by Catherine Hedland and *American Crewelwork Stitches of the 17th and 18th Centuries* by Mary T. Landon. In 1967, the Christmas Card Competition was begun. The prize-winning embroideries for this competition are all part of the EGA Collection.

A reference library was established, and a photograph collection was begun. Patterns, charts, and booklets were made available for sale. Eventually items from the embroidery collection were offered on loan.

### National Exhibits

In 1962 the first biennial National Exhibit was held in New York City. The attendees were able to view over a hundred displayed embroideries, including crewel work with colonial, contemporary, and modern themes stitched by members. There were also demonstrations on the art of embroidery. This exhibit lasted four days and attracted 4,347 viewers.

The second exhibit, held in New York City in 1964, focused not only on technique, but also on creativity. There were three competitions: design and technique, floral designs, and a general category. This eighteen-day exhibit drew more than 13,000 visitors and more than 100 new members.

The 1966 exhibit was a non-competitive event that attracted 114 entries from fifteen states with 3,000 persons attending. The highlight of this event was a five-part needlework screen embroidered by members for Gracie Mansion, the residence of the New York City mayor.

The fourth exhibit in 1968 was billed as *The First International Exhibit*. There were 281 embroideries hung, with 33 coming from twelve countries other than the U.S. The exhibit included works by children. It was

surprising to see unusual items used for embellishment, such as diamonds and corks. This exhibit continued for eleven days.

### Seminars

The first seminar was held September 23–24, 1963, in Salisbury, Connecticut, at the White Horse Inn. Organizer Babe Lovering invited four teachers—Josephine Jardine, Gillian McKinzie, Sheila Small, and Erica Wilson—to offer classes. All class assignments were allotted by a drawing. Nineteen persons are known to have attended, including two future EGA presidents: Babe Lovering (elected in 1969) and Bobby Pilling (elected in 1974).

### Finances

In the early years the guild was sustained through financial donations and membership dues. Solicited donations were important because dues provided only about half the monies needed to support the organization. While all members were asked for a contribution, the majority of the additional funding came primarily from twelve donors. An Endowment Fund was created in 1963 with contributions of \$25,000 from the directors. By the fall of the following year, the fund increased to over \$55,000 and provided income from the interest earned on the principal for the organization's operations.

### Conclusion

The first decade was highlighted by the inspiration of our early leaders, a strong organizational framework, and the birth of a fine educational program that we enjoy today.

#### END NOTE

The information in this article was compiled from historical documents in the Dorothy Babcock Library. If you have additional details that you would like to share, please forward them to Dorothy Hoffmann in care of EGA.



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*In the December 2007 Needle Arts, Dorothy Hoffman will tell us about EGA's second decade in this five-part series.*



## The Second Decade

by Dorothy Hoffmann

*When EGA became independent from the Embroiderers' Guild U.K., a competition was held to design a new logo. Linda Ormesson won the competition. Patterns of her logos were available to all chapters and several took advantage of that opportunity to stitch logos for their chapters. The above cutwork was stitched by Paula Heckmann and is based on Linda Ormesson's design.*

IN EGA'S FIRST DECADE, we saw the first stitches being embroidered into the intricate needlework that we all know today as our national organization. These stitches established a firm foundation upon which today's national organization was built. During this period, we saw the beginnings of educational opportunities and exhibits, expansion from the early nucleus in New York City to other locations in the U.S., the creation of chapters, and a remarkable membership growth.

Guild headquarters wasn't only an information center for its members, it was also a school for embroidery. Small classes in canvaswork, crewel, and creative stitchery were taught by highly-qualified embroiderers.

### Organization

The Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc., became a reality in 1970. Previously, the guild was the American Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild of the United Kingdom. The board, under the direction of President Eleanor "Babe" Lovering, decided to dissolve the American Branch in 1970 and form a new independent guild. Hence, EGA was born.

A new and unique logo was needed to identify the new organization. In 1971 a competition to design a logo was announced to members. The winning logo, the one that still identifies our association today, was submitted by Linda Ormesson, who was originally from Estonia. In 1971, she was employed as the resident textile design consultant at EGA. She was affectionately known to EGA members as "Miss O." The embroidery logo design was drafted by Mrs. Georgiana Brown Harbeson, an early member of the board of directors, who was a teacher and designer. She also held various positions, including chairman of the Christmas Card Competition. The logo was executed by Mrs. Edith Park Martin, a gifted embroiderer.

### Education

As we moved into the second decade, education opportunities expanded. These were administered under various names, including the Education Committee, the Department of Amplification, and the Department of Education. When the Department of



FIVE DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

Education was formally recognized in 1976, Anne Norton from Southington, Connecticut, became its first director.

An initiative in 1968 for personal in-depth studies by correspondence ushered in the 1969 program, Correspondence Courses. Initially, each course had six lessons, with three weeks allowed for completion of each lesson by students. Cost to members was \$35. The courses included Crewel Work with Julie Pitney and Muriel Baker, Metal Thread with Josephine Jardine, Creative Stitchery with Lisbeth Ranjo Perrone, Pulled Work or Drawn Fabric with Gillian Mackenzie, Blackwork with Marion Scoular, Whitework with Muriel Bishop, and Design for Embroidery with Georgiana Brown Harbeson. These teachers wrote and taught their individual classes.

This program evolved into the Individual Correspondence Courses (ICC) program as we know it today. By the end of the decade the fee was \$65. Nine different courses were offered, each of which had to be completed within one year. In 1978, the staff teaching the ICC classes included Chottie Alderson,

Rosemary Cornelius, Gillian MacKenzie, Shay Pendray, Julie Pitney, Marion Scoular, Muriel Baker, Bill and Wilanna Bristow, Linda Labis, Posy McMillen, and Minna Sturcke.

The concept of Group Correspondence Courses (GCC) developed in 1976 while Anne Norton was Director of Education. A chapter requested the use of an ICC course for their group embroidery class. Three years later, the first GCC, The Binding Stitch, had been created by Joan Young for use by EGA chapters. The cost for the course was \$65 for the group with materials and postage costs added. It was to be completed in three months.

The concept of establishing a Teachers' Certification Program was expressed at the December 1960 board meeting. The minutes read in part "there was a need for . . . judges . . . to pass on work of people who wish to teach professionally." The objectives of this certification plan were to assess a candidate's "technical skills and . . . ability to communicate ideas, skills, and information in a classroom situation."

The Professional Standards Committee

*Left to right: Cecile Carver, President Eleanor D. Lovering, and Sybil Golden. Mesdames Carver and Golden were co-chairmen for the Fifth Biennial Exhibit, April 15 to May 1, 1970, in New York City. Cecile Carver served as the eighth EGA president (1976-1978) and was a certified teacher and author of several individual correspondence courses. Sybil Golden was an "indefatigable" worker for EGA, serving the organization in many capacities, including vice president (1972-1974).*



The first EGA seminar took place in Williamsburg in 1969 while EGA was still the American Branch of the Embroiderers' Guild. The second seminar was held in Vermont, and the faculty were (left to right) Josephine Jardine, Lisbeth Perrone, Muriel Bishop, Julie Pitney, and Nellie Bergh. In 1971 the first seminar of the newly incorporated EGA was held in Wilmington, Delaware.

EGA is looking for early photographs of EGA events and officers. If you have photographs, please contact EGA or Dorothy Hoffmann (dphoffmann@netexpress.net).

had the responsibility of writing and administering the Teacher Certification Program test which included a proctored examination and the submission of two embroideries in either crewel or canvas. A more advanced examination was developed in 1965, and it appears that Bucky King was the only person to receive this certification. Ten years later, the practical and theoretical teachers' exam was revised and expanded. This six-part test was written by Cynthia Tribelhorn, chairman of the Teacher Certification Committee and future president (1985-1987). Crewel embroidery, canvaswork, blackwork, pulled thread, stumpwork, and silk and metal threads were offered, with quilting and contemporary embroidery being added at a later time.

To further the Teacher Certification Program, the first Teachers' Seminar was conducted in 1976 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Later, it was followed by a teachers' seminar in Los Angeles. At headquarters, Cynthia Tribelhorn presented two one-day workshops in 1978. They were titled Introduction to Teacher Training. The fee was \$7.50, and each class was limited to twenty persons.

The Master Craftsman Program, known today for its technical excellence, was announced in 1975. The concept was attributed to Muriel Baker who was chairman of the Master Craftsman Program in 1977 and had previously written the *ABC's of Canvas Embroidery*. The program was modeled after the Connecticut River Valley Chapter's A Awards Program. Within the first three months of its inception, over five hundred applications were received. From a program initially offering only canvas, it was quickly expanded to include crewel and counted thread. Six awards could be earned: Green

Star, Red Star, Blue Star, Silver Star, Gold Star and Master Craftsman Certificate.

The Work Evaluation Program was created in 1978. For \$5, members received answers to their questions about techniques or other problems with their needlework. It was specifically noted that this program was not a pre-evaluation service for the Master Craftsman Award Program.

Other educational benefits during this period included varied classes at headquarters with instructors from the United States and other countries. Occasionally, a special teacher, such as Joan Edwards from London, would be invited to teach. She gave a three-day class in 1971.

Members could purchase embroidery booklets, beginner crewel kits, and designs for iron-on transfers from the collection. Library books, slides, and portfolios were available for rental. The portfolio selection was extensive and included examples of crewel, canvas, bargello, cross stitch, ecclesiastical embroidery, embroidery stitches, smocking, quilting, patchwork, appliqué, and blackwork.

### EGA Seminars

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, was the site of the 1969 two-day seminar. Eighty attendees from twelve states studied crewel with Erica Wilson, blackwork and metal thread with Marion Scoular, canvaswork with Muriel Baker, and design with Joan Edwards. These teachers volunteered to teach without pay. After two-hour classes in the mornings, attendees were free to attend afternoon tours. In the evening, there were lectures and show-and-tell.

The following year, ninety embroiderers went to Vergennes, Vermont, for one-and-a-half days of classes taught by Nellie Bergh, Muriel Bishop, Josephine Jardine, Lisbeth Perrone, and Julie Pitney. The registration fee covering class materials and one registration was \$25. Again, tours, evening lectures, and show-and-tell augmented the schedule.

After EGA's withdrawal from the Embroiderers' Guild of the U.K. in 1970, Wilmington, Delaware, became the site of the first EGA-hosted national seminar in 1971. Five teachers taught morning classes while the afternoons were reserved for tours and the evenings for lectures. For a

registration fee of \$35, members were offered classes taught by Sheila Ashby, Frances Talbot, Joan Edwards, Mary Taylor Landon, and Pauline Fischer. This seminar also housed the first EGA boutique and a bookstore.

The 1972 EGA seminar held in Dearborn, Michigan, was the first not to be held on the East Coast. The four-day annual gathering garnered an attendance of 123 embroiderers who came together to study with Chottie Alderson, Muriel Baker, Georgine Carlson, Virginia Curtin, Audrey Francini, and Dorrit Gutterson. The schedule included the first chapter presidents' roundtable discussion. The successful morning classes and evening lectures were continued. Registrants received class materials, two lunches, and a banquet for their \$50 registration fees.

The following year, the Southern California Chapter hosted the seminar in Pasadena. The event was expanded to five days, and more than three hundred embroiderers came together to study with Muriel Baker, Anne Dyer from England, Jacqueline Enthoven, Olga Faust, Audrey Francini, Bill Johnson, Lisbeth Perrone, and Peg Lunt. This seminar initiated the first pre-registration, and 250 members signed up for the 1974 seminar in New Hampshire.

Wentworth-by-the-Sea, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was the site of the 1974 seminar, hosted by the Connecticut River Valley Chapter. The number of embroiderers attending grew to 446. They were offered classes from eighteen instructors, including such noted teachers as Chottie Alderson, Moira McNeill from England, Marion Scoular, Elsa Williams, and Joan Petrakis. A pre-registration fee of \$20 guaranteed a place in a class for the following seminar but not a specific class itself. The first-day registration postmark date was inaugurated, goodie bags were distributed, and everyone had the opportunity to participate in the first merchandise night.

The Georgia Chapter hosted the 1975 seminar at Pine Mountain, Georgia. Twenty-three teachers taught twenty-eight classes with a limit of eighteen students per class. This seminar's theme and logo was the Georgia Peach. There were free Wednesday tours and special programs. A "home room" was made available for evening stitchers, and teacher-training classes were conducted.

In 1976, the Houston Embroiderers' Guild hosted the meeting in Houston, Texas, for 452 embroiderers. The faculty expanded to twenty-five instructors and included Chottie Alderson, Muriel Baker, Wilanna Bristow, Audrey Francini, Josephine Jardine, Anne Norton, Marion Scoular, Shay Pendray, Barbara Smith, and Joan Young. More than sixty chapter presidents from across the nation attended. The registration fee was \$85, and attendees were charged for kits (at cost, if possible). The hotel rate was \$28 for double occupancy.

Climb Every Mountain was the theme for the 1977 seminar in Denver, Colorado. Four chapters co-hosted the event: Colorado, Centennial, Foothills, and Pikes Peak. More than 550 attended this six-day event. Four-day classes were offered for the first time. An added feature was an exercise class called Wiggle and Giggle Time. In addition, it was commonplace to see embroiderers jogging around the capital and through the park . . . if one was up at 6:45 in the morning.

The next seminar, which was held in New York, was a time for reminiscing about EGA's extraordinary twenty-year history. Both Eleanor "Babe" Lovering, past president from 1969 to 1972, and Erica Wilson, designer, teacher and writer, shared fond recollections at the opening banquet. The Manhattan Chapter hosted this homecoming to more than five hundred embroiderers and thirty teachers. Among the special classes offered were quilting, needlelace, smocking, doll-making, and French hand sewing.

### EGA Exhibits

Exhibits have always been considered valuable public-outreach tools. The first eight exhibits (1962-1976) were held in New York City. Each exhibit, except for the fourth exhibit in 1968, was billed as a biennial exhibit while the fourth was promoted as the first international exhibit.

These events were truly popular with the public. For example, the juried biennial program expanded to the point that, in 1972, in excess of 30,000 viewers saw the 485 embroideries from the United States and Puerto Rico. Of those displayed, about 70 percent of them were original designs by stitchers.

Two years later, at the next exhibit, more than 240 of the 288 embroideries shown were

*From 1969 to 1980, there were six EGA presidents: Eleanor Lovering (1969 to 1972), Barbara Coggeshall (1972 to 1974), Barbara Pilling (1974 to 1976), Cecile Carver (1976 to 1978), and Virginia Lefferdink (1978 to 1979).*

**In 1973 six EGA regions were formed: Northeast, East Coast, Southeast, Great Lakes, Mid-west, and West Coast. A year later, the first region seminar was hosted by the Great Lakes Region in Dearborn, Michigan.**

creations of the stitcher. Included in this exhibit were Margaret Parshall's retrospective pieces. Also exhibited were a men's section and ecclesiastical embroideries.

The highlight of the 181 embroideries shown at the Eighth Biennial Exhibit (1976) were thirty-five embroideries from Georgiana Brown Harbeson's collection. The pieces spanned from 1918 to the current year. Georgiana was a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and author of *American Needlework*. At noon each day of the exhibit, a variety of embroidery styles from Hardanger to shisha work were demonstrated. An estimated 10,000 viewers attended.

The Ninth Biennial Exhibit was held in 1978 at the Carlyle House, an historic landmark in Alexandria, Virginia, and was sponsored by the Washington DC Chapter. Nearly 260 embroideries representing thirty-nine states were on display. Again, several firsts occurred. This was the first time that a chapter, rather than the national board of directors, hosted a national exhibit. Never before had an EGA exhibit received a matching fund grant from the National Council on the Arts and \$600 from the Washington Forest Foundation. Finally, the EGA Education Department initiated a series of exhibits from correspondence courses, master craftsman programs, and teacher certification materials.

### Growth

The second decade continued the phenomenal chapter and membership growth seen in EGA's first ten years. Chapters began to spring up across the nation, and membership grew at a fast pace. Statistics vary from source to source because of the differences in the timing of the reports within a given year. One fact, however, remained: there was a strong upward trend in the expansion of EGA. Virginia P. Lefferdink wrote in her president's letter, published in the fall 1979 *Needle Arts*, "The steady growth of the Guild is possible only through the sustained dedication and hard work of embroiderers all over the country."

The increase in the number of chapters established nationwide is an example of the movement's popularity. Twelve chapters existed in 1971, and these swelled to 17 in the following year, 45 in 1974, 92 by 1976, and more than 140 chapters by 1978.

Along with this rapid growth in the number of chapters, membership expanded. In 1974 the organization had over 7,000 members residing in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. That number increased to more than 10,000 members by 1976 and grew to more than 11,000 within the next year. By the end of the second decade there were more than 16,000 members in EGA.

### EGA Regions

The concept of regionalization was first discussed in 1973. The national board recognized that interaction between chapters on a more local basis could provide additional opportunities for members and chapters. Six geographic regions were suggested. The chapters within each region could nominate candidates for Region Coordinator, a title later changed to Region Director. Then, the members of the region would make the final selection. The initial plan provided that the original six regions could be subdivided into smaller units at a later date.

Regionalization was approved and enacted in 1974. The regions were

- Northeast: New York, Connecticut;
- East Coast: Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C.;
- Southeast: Georgia, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Florida;
- Great Lakes: Ohio, Indiana, Michigan;
- Mid-west: Iowa, Colorado, Texas;
- West Coast: California.

This action created another new concept for EGA—the region seminar. In 1975 the Great Lakes Region hosted the first region seminar in Dearborn, Michigan. Registration was opened first to members who lived within the region. Then, any openings remaining could be filled by members not in the Great Lakes Region. The registration fee was \$85 which included classes, four dinners, and three luncheons.

### Communication

One of the keys to a successful organization is communication with its members. This important fact was recognized as early as 1958. In the fall of that year the *Report*, a four-page publication, was initially sent to all the members and thereafter, it was sent three

times a year. The name of this newsletter was later changed to the *Bulletin*. This was truly a product by and for members. Embroiderers from around the country volunteered articles. The staff at headquarters molded the input into a publication, and had it printed and mailed to the membership. Issue number 27, the last *Bulletin*, was published in 1969. This made way for a new, improved communication tool, a magazine called *Needle Arts*.

The first edition of *Needle Arts* magazine appeared in winter 1970 with Catherine Fennelly volunteering her talents as editor-in-chief. This quarterly magazine included articles for needleworkers, news from headquarters and chapters, and advertisements. As time passed, the publication continued to be upgraded. In 1974, the size of the magazine was standardized to twenty pages. Four years later, in autumn 1978, EGA celebrated its twentieth anniversary. To commemorate this event, eight pages were added. The traditional EGA blue and white colors were used on the front and back covers.

### Headquarters

As EGA continued to grow, expansion into larger offices was needed to meet additional operational demands. EGA moved to three

different leased offices in New York City during this decade. From 1964 to 1970, two rooms were used on East 60th Street. For the next five years, the move to an office with three-and-one-half rooms on East 56th Street satisfied the need for space. By 1975, more space was required, so a new office on 45th Street was leased which was almost twice the size of the East 56th Street office.

### Conclusion

The second decade saw the birth of The Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc., the expansion of many educational opportunities for members, and tremendous chapter and membership growth. The composition of EGA's intricate needlework design had been sketched, the ground fabric chosen, and the threads selected. During this decade, stitching continued on the tapestry known as EGA.

Dorothy Hoffmann is EGA director of budgets. She is Heartland Region's immediate past region director. She is a primary member of the Coulee Country Chapter, La Crosse, Wisconsin, and a plural member of the Mississippi River Valley Chapter, Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois, and the Fleur de Lis Chapter, Dubuque, Iowa. She and her husband live in Galena, Illinois.

*Exhibits began in 1962. In 1970, the Fifth Biennial Exhibition (photograph below) was held at The Union Carbide in New York City with 270 entries and an attendance of more than fifteen thousand. The co-chairmen were Cecile Carver and Sybil Golden. The youngest exhibitor (Leslie Carver) was nine years old. First prize in the Moon Competition was won by Mrs. Alastair B. Martin of Katonah, New York. This prize was awarded to a work that represented the Apollo 11 flight emblem or an original design based on the moon voyage.*



# The Third Decade: 1979-1988

by Dorothy Hoffmann



Linda Ormesson, who became familiarly known as Miss O, designed this emblem for The Embroiderers' Guild of America.

IN TWO PREVIOUS articles we have seen that EGA's humble beginnings stemmed from the hard work of three dedicated embroiderers. Mrs. Dorothy Doubleday Babcock, Mrs. Margaret Parshall, and Miss Sally Behr were the nucleus that created and established a national organization for embroiderers residing in the United States and abroad. For the first twelve years, the organization's main office was in London, England, at the headquarters of The Embroiderers' Guild formed in Great Britain. In 1970, these ties were dissolved, and The Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc. (EGA) came into existence.

## ORGANIZATION

EGA's growth continued in its third decade as it had during the first two decades. The number of chapters across the country increased to 220 by 1981, and the number of members exceeded 16,000. EGA was represented in every state as well as in Mexico, Canada, and other foreign countries. EGA kept expanding, and six years later, EGA had 307 chapters and over 25,000 members.

In 1979, EGA reorganized into ten regions: Great Lakes, Metropolitan, Mid-Atlantic, Sun, Tennessee, Iowa, Northern California, Southern California, New England, and Texas. The continued rapid growth necessitated increasing the number of regions to thirteen in 1982. This reorganization resulted in the following regions: Carolina, Great Lakes, Heartland, Metropolitan, Mid-Atlantic, New England, New York/Pennsylvania, Northern California, Rocky Mountain, Southern California, Sun, Tennessee Valley and Texas. Within a year, the Southern California region changed its name to Pacific Southwestern and included southern California, Arizona, and southern Nevada.

The structure of the national board also changed during this period. As of 1964, all chapter presidents and EGA officers were members of the National Board of Directors. In 1978, the region chairmen also became board members. Three years later, chapter presidents no longer held positions on the Board. Instead, chapters and members were represented by the thirteen region chairmen. The title Region Chairman was later changed to Region Director.



Class in progress at the New York City headquarters, with Muriel Bishop, instructor.

In 1984, the terms for elected officials were expanded from one-year to two-year terms.

The national board also established several new committees. In 1980, EGA formed the Restoration and Conservation Committee. A year later, the Community Outreach Committee and the Future Planning Committee were established. The Planning Committee later became a standing committee on the national board. The Gallery Committee came into existence in 1985.

A solid financial position is critical to maintain a strong organization. In the early years, just as they do today, membership dues covered only a portion of the guild's expenses. To ease the shortfall, the 1963 Board of Directors personally contributed \$25,000. Then in 1964, under the guidance of the guild's treasurer, Oakleigh B. Thorne, EGA embarked on a new fundraising initiative. EGA appealed to the general membership for contributions to the Endowment Fund. By the fall of 1964, an additional amount of over \$55,000 had been donated. During the third decade, the Development Committee continued to strengthen the financial position of EGA through various fundraising events.

Individual members voted for national officers in the early years through proxy included in *Needle Arts*. The 1981 bylaw revision changed this procedure. By vote, members of each chapter directed their officers to cast their votes via chapter proxy which was submitted to national.

From late 1979 to late 1989 there were five EGA presidents.

Helen Sterling Montgomery	1979-1982
Roberta L. Johnson	1982-1983
Jo S. Vincent	1983-1985
Cynthia Tribelhorn	1985-1987
Suzanne Jones	1988-1989



Treasurer Oakleigh B. Thorne



Manhattan Chapter Banner, Collection #00476, stitched by Manhattan Chapter members. Ilona Simon Tar spent two years designing the banner, which uses numerous techniques to illustrate several New York landmarks such as the World Trade Center, the Metropolitan Opera House, and the Empire State Building. Stitched primarily in 1988, the banner was donated to the EGA collection after the headquarters moved to Louisville.

(From left) Past Presidents Margaret Parshall (1963-1964), and Babe Lovering (1969-1971), meet with Peg Lunt, EGA teacher, author, and accomplished needleartist, best known for her instruction on *Deerfield's Society of Blue and White Needlework*.





(From left) Sally Behr Pettit, EGA's first elected secretary on the national board, visits with Helen Giammettei and Ann Harris, teachers, authors, and accomplished needleartists.



Bobby Pilling, past president (1974-1976), 1983 national seminar chair. A prestigious EGA award carries her name for an original piece of needlework that goes outside the lines.

EGA is looking for early photographs of EGA events and officers. If you have photographs, please contact EGA or Dorothy Hoffmann at (dphoffmann@netexpress.net).

## EDUCATION

Education in the art of embroidery was and remains the main focal point for EGA. Because of the great interest in hand embroidery during the early decades, the organization developed educational programs that were held at headquarters and at seminars. EGA also mounted exhibits and provided special services to the membership. These benefits became strong incentives for embroiderers to join this growing and prominent organization.

As the organization grew and the educational opportunities expanded, specialized leadership was needed for EGA's education programs. In 1984, two new positions were created to serve on the Board of Directors: Director of Educational Programs and Director of Educational Services.

Individual Correspondence Courses (ICCs), in-depth study programs implemented in 1971, became the prototype for later correspondence courses. The success of the ICC program gave birth to the Group Correspondence Course (GCC) program, which was initiated in 1979. Joan Young taught the first course, *The Binding Stitch*. The GCC programs became very popular and, in a few short years, EGA members completed 157 correspondence courses.

New publications were introduced in the third decade. The *Educational Supplement* was included as part of the 1981 *Needle Arts* magazine and evolved into a separate publication in 1987. In 1981, the Education Department also circulated a newsheet to the regions called the *mEGaphone*. The first issue of *Apprize*, a forum for teachers and those members seeking teacher certification, was published in 1984. Martha Ann Bisceglia, a certified teacher, was the first editor of *Apprize*. Another publication, *New Kid on the Block*, was distributed in 1985 to each chapter. It was a guide for involving members new to needlework. It included two lessons created for children, one in counted thread and the other in tent stitch.

By Seminar 1985, EGA had approved the Judging Certification Program that Bucky King conceived and chaired. Ten candidates had matriculated into the program by the following year. Elizabeth Nowell became EGA's first certified judge in 1987.

Other innovative programs were unveiled in 1987. The first installment of the widely popular *Materials Notebook* was distributed to chapters. New ICCs were offered including Introductory Free Machine Embroidery by Pam Godderis, Hems and Hemstitching by Eleanore Bockheim, Jacobean Crewel Embroidery by Mary-Dick Digges, Essentials of Blackwork by Alice England, and Florentine and Four-Way Pattern by Rachel Atkinson.

A slide show entitled Teach Me! came with complete instructions and a commentary on how to start a program for teaching children.

Also in 1987, EGA ushered in the School for Advanced Study and offered classes at headquarters.

Audrey Francini taught a class in the elements and processes of needlework design. Elizabeth Stears taught Folk Ethnic Embroideries. The Artist in Residence Series, which came under the umbrella of the School for Advanced Study, hosted several prominent teachers in 1987, including Audrey Francini (crewel), Sheila Ashby (contemporary, abstract surface stitchery), Elizabeth Stears (folk ethnic embroideries), and Susan Hewitt (research, writing and publishing).

In 1988, Pam Godderis taught Expanding Horizons in Louisville. During this four-day teachers' workshop, participants explored a wide range of topics including creative processes, motivational techniques, workshop structures, lesson planning, and evaluation. The Teacher Certification program, which had been created twenty-five years before, certified 170 teachers by 1987. Seventeen more candidates were working towards certification.



Elizabeth Stears' Folk Ethnic Embroideries, held in August 1987, was one of the offerings of the School for Advanced Study, the precursor of the Extended Study Program.



Adam and Eve Sampler, worked in 1789 by Margaret Ramsey, is part of EGA's collection.



This crewel hanging, shown on a cover of Needle Arts, was donated to the collection in 1986 by Mr. & Mrs. Hyman Meyerson.

**EGA SEMINARS**

EGA continued to hold national seminars all across the country. San Francisco's Sheraton Palace Hotel was the site for the 1979 EGA nationally sponsored seminar. Twenty-seven teachers taught classes ranging from Preservation by Estelle Horowitz to Battenberg and Point Lace by Kaethe Kliot to Kogin (Japanese counted thread embroidery) by Diane Kajikuri. EGA's annual meeting included the first national board elections held away from headquarters.

A year later, the national seminar, A Lone Star Stitch-In, was held in Dallas, Texas, and attracted six hundred participants. Teachers introduced new techniques such as Brazilian needlework on canvas, Japanese dye resist, and Or Nué (shaded goldwork). EGA brought in a special guest teacher from the Danish Handcraft Guild, Baroness Marianne Latzbeck.

Shay Pendray chaired the 1981 national seminar, A Renaissance in Stitching, which took place in Dearborn, Michigan. Among the thirty-six teachers were Sybil Rampen from Canada and Constance Howard from England. Fumiko Ozaki from Tokyo and veteran-teacher Maggie Backman taught a class on Japanese Rozashi. Bea Keeber conducted a mini-class on Shashiko and Kogin embroideries. Shuji Tamura, master of the Kurenai-Kai School of Embroidery, led a class on Japanese silk embroidery.

The Central Florida Chapter hosted the 1982 national seminar in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. There were two new faces among the thirty-three teachers, Ilse Altherr and Mary-Dick Digges. Five hundred embroiderers from the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Japan participated.

The Philadelphia Area Chapter hosted the 1983 Seminar. Bobby Pilling, an EGA past President (1974–1976), was Seminar Chair. Thirty-seven teachers provided classes for six hundred participants. New faculty included Mary Burton (rug hooking), Lisbeth Perrone from Sweden, and Setsu Maeda from Japan (Kogin embroidery).



The Collections Committee examines a piece.



(From left) Past Presidents Babe Lovering (1969–1971), Cease Carver (1976–1978), and Bobby Pilling (1974–1976) share a moment together at Seminar 1986 in Atlanta.

In 1984, a forum replaced the annual national seminar in St. Louis, Missouri. At the EGA business and annual meeting, a decision was made to move headquarters from New York City to Louisville. The 124 EGA members who attended represented all thirteen regions.

National seminars resumed in 1985 with A Fiesta in Stitchery, which was held in San Antonio, Texas. Among the thirty-one teachers were new names such as Margaret Fleming, Judy Jeroy, Moyra McNeill from England, Gay Ann Rogers, Pat Rozendal, Ann Strite-Kurz, and Helen Von Rosenstiel from Conservation Techniques.

Atlanta, Georgia was the location for the following year's seminar, Southern Reflections. There were 553 attendees and thirty-six teachers. Notable events included a tea with the first lady of Georgia and a tour of the governor's mansion. A round-table discussion was held for chapter and region treasurers.

In 1987, the Metropolitan Region hosted Autumn Splendor. The seminar, held in Parsippany, New Jersey, attracted 650 participants studying with thirty-two teachers. The Passport Tour, honoring each of EGA's thirteen regions, displayed banners and needlework from each region. This was the first year since 1973 that Needle Arts included a seminar brochure.

EGA celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in Louisville, Kentucky, in conjunction with the 1988 EGA Seminar. Sponsored by the National Board of Directors, this event attracted 580 participants and thirty-seven teachers. Many special events were planned including seven Service Through Leadership workshops, special lectures, and an exhibit of embroideries from the thirteen regions as well as embroideries by past biennial exhibit winners. Nationally known teachers donated approximately twenty embroideries to the silent auction. A Nifty Fifties Party, complete with hamburgers and Coke, ended the week.

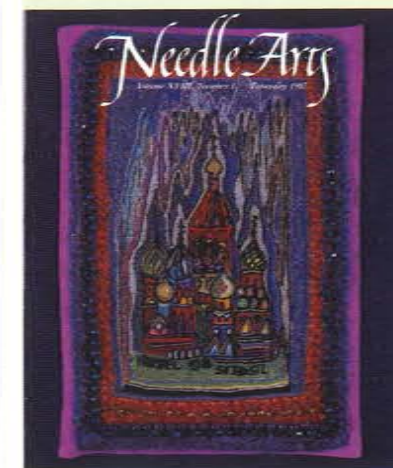


Martha Davenport's Listen—the Wind was included in EGA's Tenth Biennial Exhibit.

**COMMUNICATION**

The first release of the EGA Officers' Notebook was distributed in 1980. The initial distribution went to all members of the Board of Directors, region chairs, and chapter presidents.

Publishers Press of Louisville became the publisher of Needle Arts in 1986 when EGA moved its headquarters to Louisville. Prior to this time, Graphic Printing Corporation of Philadelphia and Enterprise Press, Inc., of New York published the magazine.



Helen Rumpel's Meditation at St. Basil's Ikon In Russia was featured on the cover of Needle Arts in February 1987.





This image was used to promote the Twelfth National Exhibit. Patricia Wagner stitched a small portion of this vibrant silk floss tree blossom.



Carolyn Ambuter's Needleweaving Sampler was displayed in the Tenth Biennial Exhibition.



Connie Brooks' Gold Butterfly was part of the Silk & Metal Threads Exhibit from October 1987 through January 1988.

### EGA EXHIBITS

Three national exhibits were held in the third decade. The juried Tenth National Biennial Exhibit was mounted at the Abigail Adams Smith Museum in New York City in 1982. The EGA Board of Directors sponsored the event. There were 170 entries from thirty-two states, Canada, and Japan. In addition to the juried exhibit, nineteen fiber artists were invited to be part of a Special Invitational Exhibit. Embroideries from the EGA collection were also exhibited, and Mayor Edward Koch loaned the Gracie Mansion Screen for display. EGA members had embroidered it and presented it to New York City in 1966.

Of 149 submissions to the Eleventh National Biennial Exhibit in 1984 at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, only forty were accepted. The Indianapolis Chapter hosted the exhibit. It was the first time that an EGA exhibit was held in a major art museum and the first time EGA awarded cash prizes.

The Pacific Southwestern Region sponsored the Twelfth National Exhibit in 1988 in the Fullerton Museum Center in California. Sixty-two embroideries were displayed. Antique pieces of needlework from the EGA collection were also displayed as well as antique needlework tools from Gay Ann Rogers' collection.

### HEADQUARTERS

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the operational duties were performed by Miss Sally Behr, who served as executive secretary. In 1962, Miss Behr left New York, and Miss Rawlins was hired as the new executive secretary. During the remainder of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the workload steadily increased. By the early eighties, five employees plus volunteers were required to handle operational and publication needs. In 1982, Virginia Otto became the first executive director of EGA.



The Collection Committee unpacks.



Library Committee at work.

As membership continued to grow, headquarters needed more space. The lease in New York City was coming to an end, and it was expected that the cost for the new lease would double. In 1984, after much deliberation, a decision was made to move EGA headquarters. The Relocation Committee conducted a search for a site where EGA could have more space at lower costs. Ellen Carlson chaired the committee, which sent a questionnaire to all chapters and invited members to submit suggestions for a new location. By September 1984, many suggestions for locations had been received. It was decided to move to the Historic Norton Building in Louisville, Kentucky. The November 1987 issue of *Needle Arts* put it this way: "After 28 years . . . in New York City, EGA packed its bags, boxes and thimbles."

The Norton Building was built in 1913 and was on the National Register of Historic Places. The fifth floor provided adequate space for the needs of EGA at the time. Known as the Educational Resource Center, it housed the library, gallery, collection, offices, and reception area. By 1987, the third floor was also leased for administration, publications, and a boardroom. Local members from the Louisville Chapter, the Bluegrass Chapter of Lexington, Kentucky, and the White River Chapter of Seymour, Indiana, volunteered in various capacities to make EGA headquarters hum.

### CONCLUSION

Innovative concepts and strong growth characterized EGA's third decade. With the move to Louisville, a new era had begun. ■



The Norton Building at 200 Fourth Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky.

*Dorothy Hoffmann is EGA's Director of Budgets and Heartland Region's immediate past Region Director. She is a primary member of the Coulee Country Chapter, La Crosse, Wisconsin and a plural member of the Mississippi River Valley Chapter, Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois and the Fleur de Lis Chapter, Dubuque, Iowa. She and her husband live in Galena, Illinois. They have four children and twelve grandchildren.*

# The Fourth Decade: 1989–1998

by Dorothy Hoffmann

**IN THREE PREVIOUS** articles, we have seen how The Embroiderers' Guild of America has blossomed since its infancy in 1958 when three gifted and hard working women, Dorothy Doubleday Babcock, Margaret Parshall, and Sally Behr Pettit founded the organization. Because of their work and the work of many others, EGA has become a premier embroidery organization.

During its fourth decade, 1989–1998, EGA introduced new and exciting programs at region and national seminars, local chapters, headquarters, and museums.

**New programs, classes, and events created opportunities for stitchers across the continent.**

After three decades of constant growth, expansion and innovation, The Embroiderers' Guild of America continued to build on the foundation that had been laid by the founders and other dedicated members. New programs, classes, and events created opportunities for stitchers across the continent.

## ORGANIZATION

The EGA Board was restructured in 1991. The makeup of the board was modified to include a president, vice president of operations, secretary, treasurer, director of budgets, director of bylaws, and director of education as well as a region director from each of the thirteen regions. The structure remains unchanged today.

The beautiful EGA podium banner we see at various official functions was displayed for the first time in 1990 at the National Board of Directors' meeting and the annual meeting. The banner was designed by Judy Jeroy and embroidered by Carol Algie Higginbotham.

## GROWTH

By October 1988, EGA had 21,865 members. Membership remained relatively stable over the next few years. However, near the end of the fourth decade, membership declined to about 19,800. Nevertheless, the number of chapters continued to grow from 337 in 1991 to 354 chapters in 1997.



*EGA National Officers at Seminar 1992 (left to right): Karulyynn Koelliker, Pat Grappe, Jeanette Lovensheimer, Judy Jeroy, Carole Rinard, Kathy Herman, and Janet Hill. Jeroy was president at the time; Koelliker and Lovensheimer would go on to succeed her.*

## EDUCATION

Challenge was introduced in 1985 as a personal test of a stitcher's ability; it was not a competition as the name implies. A yearly theme guides members in their choice of subject matter. The stitcher selects the technique, colors, and materials and creates a design. After a piece is completed, a nationally-recognized consultant evaluates the effort. The theme for the first year was Metamorphosis.

Challenge with a Twist was introduced in 1989. The twist is that students may send the design to a consultant during the design phase before beginning to stitch. This addition to the original Challenge supports stitchers by allowing them access to helpful suggestions from the beginning of their projects.

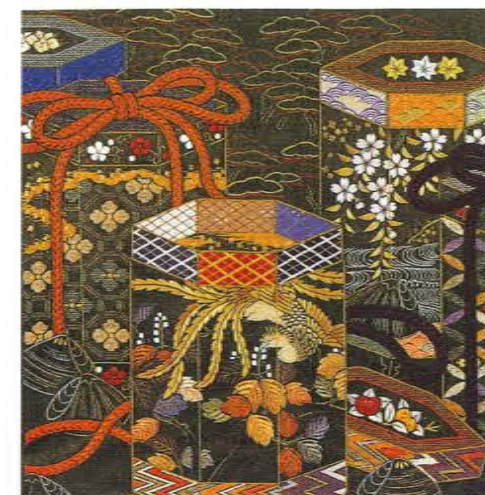
The professional training program that EGA initiated in the early 1960s evolved into the Certified Teacher Graduate Program in 1990. The following year, the EGA Research Fellowship Awards were established. The awards promoted research in embroidery and the allied textile arts.

In 1991, twenty-nine charter members founded the National Advanced Study Group. Their purpose was to exhibit original and exceptional works of embroidery and to encourage the recognition of embroidered pieces as works of art. One year later, the group changed its name to Fiber Forum. Three Fiber Forum retreats were organized during EGA's fourth decade. They were held in San Diego, California, in 1994, Chester, Nova Scotia, in 1996, and Coupeville, Washington, in 1998.

In 1993, the School of Advanced Study (SAS) hosted Wilanna Bristow who taught *The Dallas/Paris Connection: Haute Couture and Embroidery Embellishment*. It was so popular that it was quickly oversubscribed. Two short years later, Bristow conducted a study retreat, *French Connection to France*. SAS later became the Extended Study Program (ESP).

### FROM LATE 1989 TO LATE 1999, THERE WERE FIVE EGA PRESIDENTS.

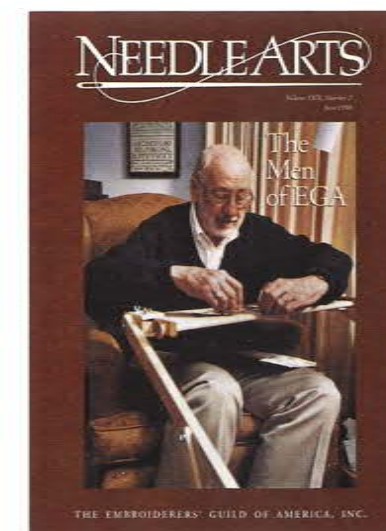
Rosemary Cornelius	1989–1991
Judy Jeroy	1991–1993
Jeanette Lovensheimer	1993–1995
Karulyynn Koelliker	1995–1997
Deanna Powell	1997–1999



*The last work designed by Iwao Saito who taught a number of EGA teachers.*



*Barbara Rice recalled her mother-in-law's home to fulfill the 1998 Challenge with a Twist.*



*A Needle Arts article showed us what the men of EGA could do.*



Seminar 1992 logo.



Seminar 1994 logo.



Seminar 1995 logo.

In 1993, the Department of Education funded the class Teach a Child and See the Future, taught by Barbara Herring. Each region selected a scholarship recipient to attend this class.

EGA continued to develop its education programs throughout the fourth decade. In 1995, EGA marketed its first reproduction sampler, charted from a piece in its collection. The following year eight new Group Correspondence Courses (GCC) were introduced and Angie Shuh was recognized as the first Master Craftsman in Design.

### SEMINARS

Newport Beach, California, was the site of Pacific Jewels, the 1989 seminar. The Pacific Southwestern Region hosted the event with 575 participants and thirty-two teachers in attendance. The Education Exhibit, which included 103 items, and the Education Forum were highly popular.

The National Board of Directors hosted seminar in Nashville in 1990. For the first time, the Education Department displayed the following year's teaching pieces. A combination of fluorescent and incandescent lighting in the convention center closely resembled daylight conditions, delighting stitchers.

The 1991 Seminar took place in Greensboro, North Carolina. A new fund-raising event honored the outgoing national president, and shop owners participated in a roundtable discussion.

Attendees in Indianapolis, Indiana, at the 1992 seminar could travel to headquarters in Louisville to view the Thirteenth National Exhibit. The Sunday lectures included Jan Beaney's "Developing Stitch Images"; "Winning Ways," sponsored by the EGA Judges Certification Program; and Harold Mailand's "Textile Conservation: Giving the Past a Future." For the first time, seminar offered Studio Time, where students could work on their choice of unfinished projects with the guidance of a qualified teacher.



The 1992 seminar committee stopped working long enough to pose for a picture.

HeartLand affair, the 1993 seminar, was held in Des Moines, Iowa. The special attraction on Wednesday evening was a dinner theater event, *A Celebration of Past and Present*. Among the seminar teachers were Ilse Altherr, Audrey Francini, Vima deMarchi Micheli, Barbara Pilling, and Shuji Tamura. Tamura also lectured on Japanese Embroidery.

In 1994 attendees traveled to Williamsburg, Virginia, for two major events: the EGA Seminar and the first International Embroidery Conference (IEC). The conference, which was held immediately prior to the seminar, attracted eighty people who worked with four teachers. More than eight hundred attended seminar. The teachers included Audrey Francini, Nan Tyson Euler, Joan Masterson, Deanna H. Powell, Marion Scoular, Shuji Tamura, and Jane Zimmerman. At Wednesday evening's dinner, Sally Behr Pettit, one of EGA's three founding members, was honored with a life membership.

Denver, Colorado, was the venue selected by the Rocky Mountain Region for the 1995 seminar, Rocky Mountain Rendezvous. Roberta Chase, Nan Tyson Euler, Jette Roy Finlay, Audrey Francini, Pat Grappe, Vima deMarchi Micheli, Marion Scoular, Ann Strite-Kurz, and Joan Thomasson were among the teachers. Those who attended will never forget the Monday classes without lighting, the snowfall on Wednesday, and the fire drill on Thursday.

The Greater Pacific Region welcomed attendees to the 1996 seminar in San Francisco, over Labor Day weekend. Of the 810 in attendance, 274 lived in California. There were forty-one teachers, including Dorothy Leshner, Betty Chen Louis, Barbara Loftus, Janice Love, Jane Nicholas, Gay Ann Rogers, Ulla von Schoeler, Kay Stanis, and Jane Zimmerman. The Wednesday night event was a trip to Club Fugazi to see *Beach Blanket Babylon*, a musical spoof of pop culture.

Stitchin' & All That Jazz was the theme for the 1997 seminar in New Orleans, Louisiana. The South Central Region chose a hotel close to the French Quarter which was perfect for the Mardi Gras opening banquet with a live jazz band. No wonder over seven hundred members came to take classes from such teachers as Jonalene T. Gutwein, Judy Jeroy, Shay Pendray, and Michele Roberts.

In 1998, EGA commemorated its fortieth anniversary during the national seminar at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky. The theme was Celebrate! 1958-1998. The Fifteenth National Exhibit was held during the seminar and the International Embroidery Conference convened the prior weekend. Studio Time was taught by Bobby Pilling, an EGA past president who had served in many capacities throughout the years. She had even helped run EGA's first seminar in 1969 in Williamsburg.

These pieces were winners in the Fourteenth National Exhibit held in 1995.



Deanna Powell won the Diana Grossman Merit Award for Red Hot Materialism.



Helenn Rumpel won a merit award for her Window to the East—Russian Fantasy.



Sarah Douglas won the Diana Grossman Merit Award for School Picnic.



*Out of My Hands, by Molly Elkind, was exhibited in the Fifteenth National Exhibit. Her work evokes the color and geometry of Amish quilts.*



*Detail of a screen stitched by Margaret Barnes Glaser. It is part of EGA's collection.*



*Ian Lloyd-Jones' miniature inn.*



**EXHIBITS**

Rotating exhibits have been on view in the gallery at headquarters since 1989. In 1991, the gallery was named the Margaret Parshall Gallery in honor of one of the founders of EGA. A year later the National Board of Directors sponsored an exhibit there. In 1994, an exhibit highlighted work by graduates of the Teacher Certification Program. During 1997, the exhibits included works by members of a fiber arts class from the University of Louisville, Marlene Bloomberg's embroideries, a display of works by the members of Fiber Forum, and embroideries from the Metropolitan and Carolinas regions.

National exhibits continued. The Fullerton Museum Center in Fullerton, California, housed for the Twelfth National Exhibit in 1988. Twenty antique needlework pieces from the museum's collection and a private collection of antique needlework tools were also displayed. Students in EGA's education programs had the opportunity to show their pieces in the exhibit.

In 1992, 156 embroidery pieces were entered in the Thirteenth National Exhibit. Barbara Bush, the former first lady of the United States, loaned an original embroidery, *Raggedy Ann and Andy*, and Christmas tree ornaments for the show.

The Fourteenth National Exhibit was hung in 1995 at the Museum of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

In 1998, the Fifteenth National Exhibit opened at the Margaret Parshall Gallery in conjunction with EGA's fortieth anniversary celebration.



*Barbara Bush (left) receives Dottie Stevens, then president of the Buffalo Chapter, at the White House after receiving Stevens' and two other chapter members' canvaswork animals for the 1991 Christmas tree in the Blue Room of the White House.*



*The Brown Hotel lobby lent an elegant ambience outside of headquarters when EGA was housed in the hotel.*

**COMMUNICATION**

EGA underwrote five half-hour television programs in 1990. They were produced and distributed by WKPC-TV in Louisville, Kentucky, and were aired on the public television network.

Outreach extended all the way to the White House in 1995 and 1996, when members stitched more than one hundred ornaments for the Blue Room Christmas tree. The theme for the season was "T'was the night before Christmas, when all through the house. . . ."

Another notable achievement was the creation of a website in 1997.

In 1998, EGA entered into a joint venture with Ian Lloyd-Jones, owner of The Brown Hotel in Louisville. EGA provided embroideries for The Camberley Inn, a miniature inn that Lloyd-Jones displayed at his various hotels as a promotional venture for EGA.

In 1993, EGA published and sold a new booklet, *EGA Designer Series Book II*. In 1995, EGA produced the video, *Embroidery: The Legacy of Needle Arts*. And in 1998, Communications Concepts, Inc., presented EGA with the Apex Award for publishing excellence

*Dorothy Hoffmann is EGA's director of budgets and Heartland Region's immediate past region director. She is a primary member of the Coulee Country Chapter, La Crosse, Wisconsin, and a plural member of the Mississippi River Valley Chapter, Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois, and the Fleur de Lis Chapter, Dubuque, Iowa. She and her husband live in Galena, Illinois. They have four children and twelve grandchildren.*

for EGA's *Needle Arts* magazine. The American Crafts Council presented EGA with an award of distinction.

**HEADQUARTERS**

In 1989, EGA headquarters relocated from the Norton Building to The Brown Hotel.

Audrey Francini and Judy Jeroy designed and executed two exquisite crewel-embroidered bench covers. The benches now reside in the new Embroidery Museum and Resource Center. Members of the Mid-Atlantic Region contributed \$1,000, which covered the cost of the cherry benches built by Zane Folk of York, Pennsylvania, and the finishing and mounting of the crewel embroideries. This project, originally proposed in 1985, took seven years to complete.

**CONCLUSION**

The fourth decade witnessed continued growth in many facets of the organization. These changes provided a solid base for the achievements to come in EGA's fifth decade, 1999–2008, when it reached a half century of service. ■



*Two crewel embroidered benches at the EMRC.*



*Details from the crewel bench covers.*

# The Fifth Decade: 1999–2008

by Dorothy Hoffmann



The entrance to EGA's Embroidery Museum and Resource Center

For articles on the first four decades, please see the following *Needle Arts* issues:

- THE FIRST DECADE  
September 2007, pp. 28–31
- THE SECOND DECADE  
December 2007, pp. 32–37
- THE THIRD DECADE  
March 2008, pp. 8–15
- THE FOURTH DECADE  
June 2008, pp. 38–43

The creation of the needlework that began in New York City in the 1950s with an idea, a design, and a few stitches has become a dynamic and coordinated embroidery piece. A wide spectrum of embellishments has been applied to this ground fabric over the last fifty years. We have celebrated this great creation, otherwise known as The Embroiderers' Guild of America, at the Golden Gala, this year's EGA national seminar in Louisville.

## THE EMBROIDERY MUSEUM AND RESOURCE CENTER

EGA has seen changes and improvements during its fifth decade, which spans from 1999 to 2008. Moving headquarters in 2006 from Louisville's historic The Brown Hotel to its present location at 426 West Jefferson Street was an important step for EGA. Not only is the new location an improved site but the facility is larger as well. The new name for headquarters, the Embroidery Museum and Resource Center (EMRC), underscores the mission of the organization: to stimulate appreciation for and celebrate the heritage of embroidery by advancing the highest standards of excellence in its practice through education, exhibition, preservation, collection, and research.

A tour of the EMRC is rewarding. The staff is welcoming and gracious. In the foyer, a banner of thirty-six distinctive embroideries of the EGA logo, each stitched by an EGA member, sets the tone for a visit. The exhibits in the galleries constantly change. The library features a wonderful collection of books on embroidery and art. The EMRC houses the EGA collection and provides space for offices, classrooms, a board room, and storage.



Heading to the library at the EMRC

## EDUCATION

Education in the art of embroidery has always been and continues to be EGA's focal point. To let members know what education programs were being offered, EGA created the *Education Department Supplement* in 1981. The supplement described EGA's Group Correspondence Courses (GCC), Individual Correspondence Courses (ICC), and the programs offered by the School of Advanced Study (SAS). Descriptions were accompanied by black and white photographs of the courses. The supplement included an index of the video library, Fiber Forum activities, and more. The *Education Department Supplement* was followed by a full-color catalog in 1998 and was appropriately renamed the *Education Department Catalog*.

Challenge and Challenge with a Twist encourage members to focus on a theme and stretch their artistic creativity. Over the years, the themes for these two programs have included Metamorphosis, Choices, New Directions, Treasures, Habitats, All That Glitters, Circles of Life, and Flight.

Another education program, Competing Needles, was a judged competition. Stitchers used their ingenuity and imagination to design, develop, and finish embroideries, then enter Competing Needles. The Education Department created interesting annual themes such as Sign of the Seasons, Say It—Stitch It, The Mystery of Love, Commemorating the Millennium, and Stitches That Sing. The program ended in 2004.

The Extended Study Program (ESP), formerly known as the School of Advanced Study (SAS), continued throughout this decade. In 2002, the program featured Glee Krueger, a well-known authority on American samplers, and Maureen King, whose designs are inspired by a medieval manor house in Cornwall, England. Another program offered was Textile Design for the Liturgical Space taught by Marylyn H. Doyle.

From late 1999 to the present,  
there have been five EGA presidents.

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mary Lou Storrs 1999–2001 | Karen L. Wojahn 2005–2007 |
| Marie Campbell 2001–2003  | Carol Peao Dam 2007–2009  |
| Armida Taylor 2003–2005   |                           |



Kim Griffin won first place in the adaptation category of the 2002 *Competing Needles* for Violin and Guitar.



A gentleman's elegant coat from the collection



The Islamic Calendar, the oldest piece in EGA's collection



A detail of an embroidered scene in the collection



Nigina Usamanova's Statue of Liberty, housed in the EGA collection, was created to express Uzbekistan's support of the United States after 9/11.

The EMRC houses an extensive collection of embroideries of many types, techniques, sizes, and values. It includes ecclesiastical artworks, Japanese pieces, Italian needlework, and Spanish embroideries. Fortunately, people continue to donate pieces to the collection. In 1996, a collection database was developed by the Collection Committee chaired by Jeanette Lovensheimer, a past president who had begun cataloging the pieces. A few years later, in 2002, Armida Taylor, then Collection Committee Chair, continued cataloging the collection and moved it into the Access database. To date, information on 841 embroideries has been entered into the database. The collection's oldest accession is *Islamic Calendar*, a seventh- to eighth-century embroidery that has a provenance of Asia Minor. Another notable work is a gold representation of the Statue of Liberty, *Lady Liberty* by Nigina Usamanova of Uzbekistan.

At a 2001 board meeting, Judy Jeroy, a past president, proposed the creation of a national tapestry. The proposal received enthusiastic approval. Jeroy designed *America the Beautiful* and Kay Haley became National Tapestry Chair. Five panels, each two feet wide by four feet high, represent sections of the United States. (See pages 8–11 of this issue for more on the tapestry.)

Fiber Forum, an adjunct of EGA, provides another avenue for promoting artwork incorporating embroidery. Juried pieces are displayed on a biennial basis in museums, galleries, and art centers. Members of the group meet annually at exciting Fiber Forum retreats. Past retreats have been held in Chicago, Illinois; Mt. Dora, Florida; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Annapolis, Maryland; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and San Antonio, Texas.



The collection storage room at the EMRC



The EMRC is a great place to take a class.

Other educational opportunities continued to evolve during the fifth decade. The GCC program had a banner year in 1999: 2,450 students enrolled. For the first time that year, GCC online classes were offered on EGA's website. In 2001, ninety-three candidates enrolled in the Master Craftsman Program. The program expanded in 2002 when a specialization in beading was added.

Educating our youth is an important component of the Education Department's programs. The Children's Program was renamed the Youth Program. Its ongoing mission is to educate the next generation in the art of embroidery.

### SEMINARS

Danvers, Massachusetts, was the location for A New England Sampling, the 1999 seminar. The New England Region hosted this event and offered a pre-seminar teacher's workshop, Teaching Needlework as a Process. Thirty-five seminar classes featured teachers such as Jane Zimmerman, Nan Tyson Euler, Judy Jeroy, Betty Chen Louis, Michele Roberts, and Joan Thomasson.

The 2000 national seminar, *Stitching into a New Century*, was hosted by the Sun Region at the Wyndham Palace Resort and Spa in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, with 562 attending. Classes included an Elizabethan embroidery class with Jane Zimmerman; a pulled-thread, needlelace, and blackwork class with Joan Masterson; a silk class with Kay Stanis; and a whitework, buttonhole, and Hardanger class with Ilse Altherr.

A *Stitching Odyssey* in Newport Beach, California, was hosted by the Pacific Southwestern Region in 2001. The faculty of fifty-seven included Margaret Fleming, Catherine Jordan, Vima de Marchi Micheli, Pat Rozendal, and Caela Conn Tyler. A visit to Mission San Juan Capistrano topped off this event.



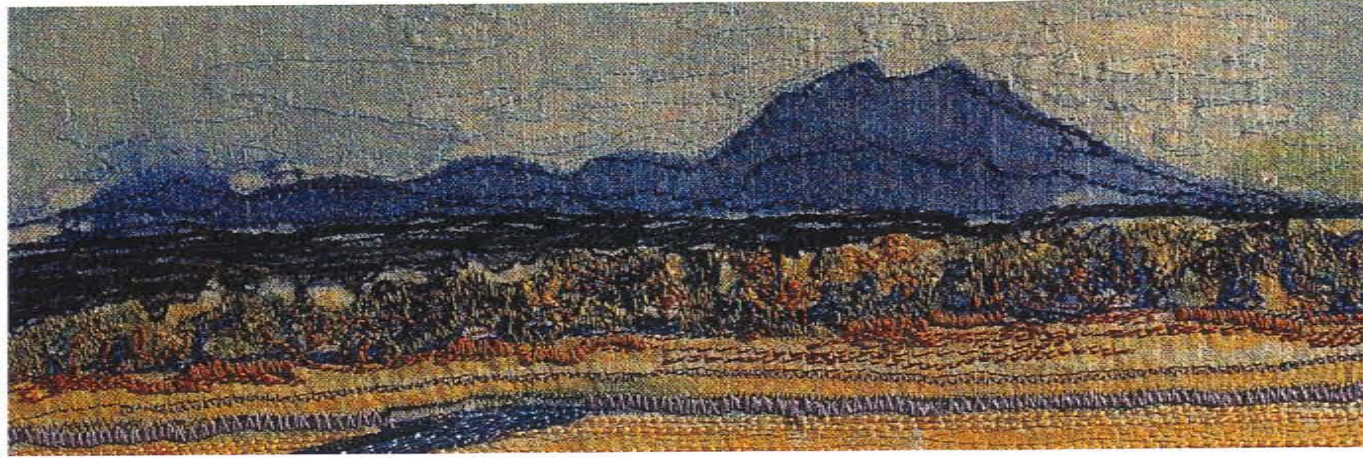
This Chinese rank badge is housed in the collection.



Ethnic embroideries are part of the collection.



The collection also includes clothing, such as this colorful mola blouse.



*Karen Schueler's November Cornfields was displayed in the Margaret Parshall Gallery in 2004 for the Eighteenth National Exhibit.*



*A detail from Peggy Moulton's Cataclysm, shown in the Eighteenth National Exhibit*

In 2002, seven hundred stitchers attended Moonlight and Magnolias, hosted by the Carolinas Region, in beautiful Hilton Head, South Carolina. The Wednesday evening event featured Dottie Moore, a Carolina fiber artist who spoke about the process of creative expression and its ability to transform lives. Instructors included Jette Roy Finlay, Barbara Loftus, and Barbara L. Rakosnik. For those interested in sightseeing, tours went to Savannah, Beaufort, Charleston, and Hilton Head Island.

The 2003 seminar was attended by 560 participants in the lovely setting of Rye Brook, New York. Stitchers in the Rye was hosted by the Metropolitan Region with instructors that included Roberta Chase, Carole H. Lake, and Marion Scoular. One of the highlights was a fun bus trip to Times Square to see *The Lion King*.

Heartland Harvest in 2004 was hosted by Heartland Region in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among the outstanding teachers were Tanja Berlin, a new teacher to EGA seminars, Jonalene T. Gutwein, Susan Goodman, and Judith Logan. The Swedish multi-course smorgasbord dinner, entertainment, and tour of the American Swedish Institute castle was a sold-out event.

In 2005, Tennessee Valley Region hosted Stitching Southern Style, which convened in Atlanta, Georgia. The instructors included Deanna Powell, a former EGA national president, Kay Stanis, and Ilse Altherr. Tours explored six prominent destinations in Atlanta and Roswell.

The 2006 seminar, Gentle Pursuits, hosted by the Mid-Atlantic Region, was held in Richmond, Virginia. Sixty-eight classes were taught by teachers including Joyce Lukomski, Marsha Papay-Gomola, and Elizabeth M. Kurella. The bonus events were a tour to historic colonial Williamsburg and the Sunday evening Dress Red Banquet.

The Great Lakes Region hosted the 2007 seminar, That Needlin' Town—Chicago. The seminar's venue was on the Magnificent Mile of Chicago's famous Michigan Avenue, a beautiful location as well as a shopping mecca. More than six hundred attendees were taught by such notables as Jane Nicholas, Lois Kershner, June Moes, and Debbie Stiehler. Tours included sightseeing trips on a Chicago River cruise boat and a visit to the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio.

**EDITOR'S CORRECTION:**

In the June 2008 issue on page 40, the San Francisco seminar logo is incorrectly labeled as 1995. The seminar was held in 1996.



*Ekaterine Kiknadze's The Wheat Field was displayed in the Sixteenth National Exhibit*

This year the national seminar celebrated EGA's fiftieth anniversary. The seminar was hosted by the national board and held in Louisville, Kentucky, and forty teachers were scheduled to teach fifty-one classes. Classes were held in Louisville's Convention Center and at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, close to the EMRC. Many members toured EGA's new home. Tours included visits to an Amish community; Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby; and a dinner cruise on the Ohio River.

**EXHIBITS**

EGA mounts exhibits in various public venues around the United States, giving members and the general public an opportunity to view both traditional and contemporary embroideries.

The Margaret Parshall Gallery and Leslie Durst Gallery are housed at the EMRC in Louisville. Exhibits change throughout the year. The works are provided by EGA regions, members, fiber artists, and the EGA national exhibits. It takes a great deal of effort by many people to mount a show. In 2006, the Louisville Chapter was honored by the Board for their past work in the gallery and their continuing work at headquarters. The EGA staff now coordinates activities in the museum galleries.



*Molly Elkind's Monoculture Trees was part of the Green Mountain Chapter exhibit displayed in the Margaret Parshall Gallery in 2000.*

EGA is seeking early photographs of EGA events and officers. If you have photographs, please contact EGA or Dorothy Hoffmann at [dphoffmann@netexpress.net](mailto:dphoffmann@netexpress.net).



Pat Reynolds' amulet bag was displayed in the Margaret Parshall Gallery in the 2004 Mid-Atlantic Region's exhibit.



A viewer enjoys a recent exhibit at the EMRC.

Several regions have loaned entire exhibits to the galleries including Great Lakes, Heartland, Metropolitan, Mid-Atlantic, New England, Pacific Southwestern, Sun, and Tennessee Valley.

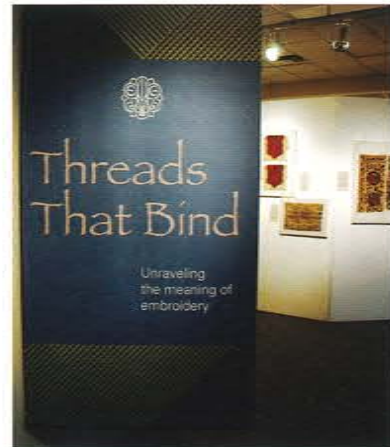
Chapters such as the Omaha Needle Arts Chapter of Omaha, Nebraska, and the Green Mountain Chapter of Burlington, Vermont, have loaned works to be exhibited.

An exchange exhibition from the Loveland Museum in Loveland, Colorado, *Men of the Cloth*, was featured in 2001. During the same year, Ekaterine Kiknadze displayed her Ukrainian embroideries.

In 2002, EGA began preparing exhibitions of embroideries created by young people between the ages of five and eighteen. They have submitted innovative and challenging pieces.

In 2003, EGA encouraged certified and graduate teachers and judges to exhibit their pieces. A spectacular exhibit in 2005 was *Audrey Francini's One-Woman Show*. In 2006, Diana Snyder and Jonalene Gutwein presented *VERSA-tility*.

EGA's national exhibits, known as *Through the Needle's Eye*, travel throughout the United States. The exhibit's mission is to display needlework as an art form. The Sixteenth National Exhibit premiered in the Orange County Region History Center in Orlando, Florida, in 2000. Two years later, the Mid-Atlantic Region opened the Seventeenth National Exhibit at the Fine Arts Center in Newport News, Virginia. EGA's Eighteenth National Exhibit was installed in 2004 at the Art Center at Fuller Lodge, Los Alamos, New Mexico. The Nineteenth National Exhibit premiered in Louisville at the Golden Gala seminar.



A 2006 exhibit at the EMRC

**MEMBERSHIP**

By 2001, EGA had more than 18,000 members. In 2007, EGA membership numbered just under 13,000. For several years during this decade, EGA provided a \$200 grant for activities focusing on membership, recruitment and retention. EGA remains firm in its mission and continues to educate its members and the public. New and expanded services are constantly introduced.

**COMMUNICATION**

In 1999, EGA inaugurated its website, [www.egausa.org](http://www.egausa.org). By the end of the year, the Yahoo discussion list, an on-line forum for members, had been established. Between 2001 and 2006, the website expanded from about three hundred pages to more than four thousand pages. Recently, EGA added a blog to its online services.

In 2000, CyberStitchers, an online chapter, was chartered with one hundred members. It has become an active, popular chapter.

The lending library houses approximately 2,800 embroidery and art books. The Library Catalog can be easily found on the EGA website. Study boxes, slide programs, DVDs, and videos are also available.

In 1999, the Camberley Inn, a miniature house, was completed through the diligent efforts of EGA members who furnished the rooms and embroidered the accessories. The inn was presented to Ian Lloyd-Jones, former owner of the Camberley Hotel chain. The Brown Hotel, one of the hotels of the chain, served as EGA headquarters for many years. The miniature house was displayed at the 1999 seminar in Danvers.

The Storr House, another miniature house, was built and presented at headquarters in 2001. Each region furnished one room, and the completed Storr House now is a lovely display in the EMRC.

EGA became a sponsor of the PBS program, *Needle Arts Studio with Shay Pendray*.

The National Outreach Project for EGA is the American Heart Association. Since its inception, the project has received enthusiastic participation and support by members. Through this program, EGA has raised more than \$20,000 in funds for the AHA.

**CONCLUSION**

Fifty years of embellishing our tapestry demonstrates the love EGA members have for their organization. Today EGA is the premier embroidery organization for volunteers in the United States. It has grown from small beginnings in the 1950s to the current multifaceted organization. Given EGA's committed and strong leadership in the past and present, EGA's future appears bright. ■

*Dorothy Hoffmann is EGA's Director of Budgets and Heartland Region's immediate past Region Director. She is a primary member of the Coulee Country Chapter, in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and a plural member of the Mississippi River Valley Chapter, Quad Cities, Iowa/Illinois, and the Fleur de Lis Chapter, Dubuque, Iowa. She and her husband live in Galena, Illinois. They have four children and twelve grandchildren.*

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I wish to thank Rosemary Cornelius for her contribution of excellent and in-depth studies of EGA's history. Her series of articles, *Down EGA's Memory Lane*, printed in *Needle Arts*, were invaluable. Information was also gathered from many additional sources: *Needle Arts* articles, features in the *Bulletin* (a publication which preceded *Needle Arts*), reports from the *Education Department Supplement* and *Education Department Catalog*, minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, seminar brochures, and EGA members and staff. My sincere thanks to all.

*Dorothy P. Hoffmann*



From then to now, the Embroiderers' Guild of America