

Cactus Wren Chapter of American Needlepoint Guild

History

The Cactus Wren Chapter was formed on February 24, **1988** with the enthusiasm and guidance of Jinny Allanson and Emmalou Eaton. In Arizona, Phoenix Chapter is #1, and Green Valley is #2. There were 19 Charter Members who elected **Emmalou Eaton** the first President. The first project was a needlepoint nametag, which each member stitched. Stitch-in Groups (a social and instructive time), a Community Service Project, and Christmas tree ornaments for the tree at Great American Bank where monthly meetings were held were added. Arlyne Ehli planned the first Holiday Party. Nan Kuhn assembled packets of nametags for visiting guests as well as other projects to raise funds for the treasury.

In **1989 Helen Thompson** was President. Helen also held classes (the first of several to follow in the years ahead) for a tote bag. Many other projects were offered from ANG and more lovely ornaments were created for the tree, along with a tree skirt of antique Santas. The Chapter stitched items at Green Valley's Country Fair to increase the treasury for a future Community Project. The first Spring Luncheon was held at Tubac Country Club.

Cactus Wren grew to 48 members in **1990** with **Ann Hardy Payne** as President. An ambitious Community Project was conceived with area schools involved. (This was featured in the October/November, 1992 issue of "Needlepointers". Students drew pictures choosing their own subjects, i.e., "fun at the library", the "Santa Cruz Valley", or a favorite story. Twelve finalists were chosen and their designs were transferred to canvas. Members stitched and all twelve were framed and presented to the Green Valley Library, where they hang to this day in the children's section. The Christmas tree skirt was completed by Babs Nemecek, and along with more completed ornaments were added to the tree at the bank. The annual ANG Seminar was held in Santa Fe, MN and eleven members attended.

Babs Nemecek was President in **1991**. Projects during the year included miniature portraits, basket bands and tassels, pillows and lacing canvasses to mounting boards for framing. An auction of equipment, canvasses, threads, etc. donated by members was successful increasing our treasury for future projects. Ann Hardy Payne completed an angel to grace the top of the Christmas tree. The monthly newsletter to members was initiated and membership grew to 55.

In **1992 Wanda Cooper** was President. A very busy year was ahead because a Community Project for the Green Valley Library was started. A triptych of Madera Canyon, painted by local artist, Dot Beeson and charted by Emmalou Eaton was begun. Cactus Wren became members of the Greater Green Valley Arts Council and participated in three events: The Weaver's Guild, Rural Arts Festival and the Art Showcase. New needlework techniques were taught and learned by all, including hardanger on canvas, painting designs and background color. . The membership grew to 64. We had outgrown our meeting room at the Bank and moved to the Friends in Deed building. The highlight of the year was having an article and picture of our project for the children's section in the Library featured in "Needlepointers".

Jinny Allanson was President in **1993**. During the year, many of our members guided us through several projects: Dolores Pickell with a design for a button cover/earring ornament, Emmalou Eaton with a box top with a 4-way Bargello, Earla Swope with a drawn thread scissors case, Pat Phillips with a Christmas ball ornament, and Helen Thompson continued instruction on the tote bag. Show and Tell was added to our meetings and inspired us to expand our horizons. We had 69 members.

Pat Phillips was President in **1994**. Members continued to raise funds so the triptych project could continue under the direction of Emmalou Eaton. Mary Watkins conceived the idea of a member cookbook as a fund raising project. Never in our wildest dreams did we know just how successful this endeavor would be. Membership grew to 85.

Pat Phillips was re-elected as President in **1995**. "Needles and Pins", our cookbook was a huge success due to Mary Watkins and staff and all the contributing members. . We held the "Tour of Stitcher's Homes" as a fundraiser, which was well attended and garnered more revenue for our treasury. Programs for the year included a "Study in Threads" by Dolores Pickell, ANG program, "Foxfire" with Ann Hardy Payne as leader. "Elegant Button" was taught by Pat Phillips, silk ribbons on canvas was explained to us by Helen Crawford and a Hardanger project was taught by Babs Nemecek. Our first national teacher, Joan Thomasson came for a four day workshop, and our second national teacher, Marjorie Williams did a two day seminar. Plans were made for the first "Threaded Treasures" exhibit of member's needlework. Camp Cactus Wren was held for the first time in the summer. Our Chapter pins were designed. Plans were made for the first "Threaded Treasures" exhibit of member's needlework which was held in the Spring of 1996. Our hospitality table was set up at each meeting to greet members and guests and sell opportunity tickets. Other firsts were our Christmas Luncheon and inter-chapter bazaar. ANG Seminar was held in Seattle. Two members won prizes at the National ANG seminar. Mary Watkins captured 2nd prize in Adaptation Non-professional as well as Delegate's Choice Award. Pat Phillips took 1st prize in Painted Design Non-professional for her "Santa Marta" by Ann Speece Mills. Membership grew to 122.

Jane Browder was elected President in **1996**. The triptych started in 1992 was completed and hung in the Green Valley Library. Marnie Ritter, national teacher, came for a 2 day workshop and Diane Evans, a designer from Delaware and Gail Savage, shop owner from Scottsdale each had a one day workshop. Mary Watkins and Pat Phillips were selected to stitch an original Christmas stocking for the White house tree, a great honor. Meredith Morton won Best of Show, the Princess Grace Award, and First Place in Charted Designs at National ANG. Pat Phillips and Phyllis Richardson won Honorable mention in the Hand Painted – Without Instruction category. We held our first "Threaded Treasures" exhibit, chaired by Jane Lovat. It was decided to hold this event biannually, alternating with "Tour of Stitcher's Homes". A three day stitching retreat, held at Tubac Country Club took place in August and was officially named, "Camp Cactus Wren". The Chapter enamel pin and sterling cactus wren necklace, designed by member Barb Lapioli-Martinus were introduced. Decorating the Chamber of Commerce Christmas tree with our hand stitched ornaments will become an annual event. Membership grew to 132. We needed additional room so we moved to the Jewish Friendship Center.

In **1997**, **Phyllis Richardson** was elected President. Due to all of our fundraisers, we were able to continue our education in needlepoint by having national level teachers from ANG. Workshops were by Diane Evans, who taught us her geometric design, "Lois". We were fortunate to have national instructors, MaryEllen Searcy, Marnie Ritter, and Gail Savage. Our Chapter was again invited to participate in the White House Christmas project. Twelve of our members were stitchers of the Toyland Theme. At the ANG Seminar in Detroit, Phyllis Richardson was awarded 3rd prize for Non-professional adaptation & The Mary Fry Award for use of color. Meredith Morton's "Kashan Carpet" was featured on the cover of "Needlepointers". Again, our members did us proud!

Gretchen Helkamp was President in **1998**. Since this is our 10th anniversary, Phyllis Richardson presented all Past Presidents with a 10 year pin, a laurel wreath with a "10" in the center and a hanging gavel. Threaded Treasures II was held in March and chaired by Nancy Sour. Ethel Skowronski and Kathy Statz came up with some fun projects: "Hearts by Four" and "Santa Fe Steps" to name a couple. Cassie Prescott of Sundance Designs in Tucson spoke to us in April on her trip to Europe to visit the DMC factory as their guest. ANG National teacher, Michele Roberts of Houston, TX gave a workshop on the use of metals and metallics in her "heart" design. The ANG Seminar was held in San Diego with sixteen members attending. Meredith Morton earned 4 awards at National ANG with "Daughter of the Sun" - (Judge's Choice, People's Choice, Delegate's Choice, and 2nd place for Adaptation - non professional). She also won People's Choice Award at our own "Threaded Treasures". Meredith's "Daughter of the Sun" was on the cover of March, 1999 issue of "Needlepointers".

In **1999**, **Kathy Statz** was President. Projects for the year were planned by Margaret von Kuegelgen (Vice President) and Dolores Pickell. Dolores Pickell taught a four way Bargello project, Nancy Pfeiffer led us through the confusion of a round ornament, Ruth Deobler helped us understand the complexities of Blackwork, and Earla Swope facilitated a small Jean Hilton project. We had the pleasure of viewing slides and all the fine examples of Chinese embroidery that Marge Martin and Barb Lewis, plural members from Tucson, had acquired on their trip to China. Camp Cactus Wren was held in Phoenix for the 5th time. We hired a bus and traveled to Phoenix to visit the Monet Exhibit at the Phoenix Art Museum. Earl Pennington won 12 ribbons at two county fairs - and had everyone in stitches (no pun intended) when he showed us all the ribbons. At ANG in Atlanta, Brenda Hart won 1st Place with "The Emperor's Coat" in the Professional Category. Margaret von Kuegelgen won 3rd Place with "Kelp Forest Fish" and Honorable Mention with "Inti" in the Original Category. Judy Archambeau and Earla Swope are Threaded Treasures III co-chairs. The exhibit will be held in March. In February, we will have Mary Ellen Searcy, ANG National teacher, and our very own member teaching her "Button, Button #1" design. Several of our members also participated in the current National project of stitching the patches for each of the NASA flights. Our "Feather-in-Your-Cap" awards and the Membership book were begun. We also began our "States Name" plaques for Friends in Deed as a Community Project.

In **2000**, **Margaret von Kuegelgen** was elected President. The Board decided to hold Threaded Treasures in the winter of 2001 so that it would not be held the same year as the needlework exhibit in Phoenix at the Shermer Museum. It was a very successful exhibit with over 100 pieces and many members participating. Most of the state names for the Community Project were completed, framed, and presented to Friends in Deed. We were fortunate that the Green Valley News photographer was

there at the time and took a photograph for the paper! Camp Cactus Wren had 14 participants. Earl and Norma Pennington planned a one-day stitch retreat and luncheon so that our "Snow Bird" members would have a chance to go to a one day "camp". Mary Ellen Searcy did a one day workshop in November. Our programs included an Or Nue lecture by Margaret von Kuegelgen plus a Saturday workshop, book review day, the Great Pumpkin sale, and Phyllis Richardson did two programs on threads and stitches, the Swedish Embroidery group from Sun City gave a lecture on Swedish embroidery. Phyllis Richardson held a "Holiday Open House" for the Chapter instead of a Holiday Luncheon. We participated in "Adopt a Family" program and donated clothing and toys to a family of three, as well as giving food and necessities to older people. We designed and purchased a tote bag with the Cactus Wren logo. Standing Rules were formalized and put in several of the newsletters, a certificate of deposit was purchased, a Teacher's Bulletin Board will be available at each meeting, and the Revised Bylaws were received back from National. Several of our members were selected to exhibit pieces at Tohono Chul Fabric Arts Exhibit. Membership remained at 132.

Lynn Browning was elected President in **2001**. Highlights of the programs for the year included: Rainbow Galleries Saturday Workshop, Ribbon Embroidery video and demonstration, a lecture on Tassels, a Book Review, the Witch Lucynda Workshop, Gold and Shadows II, two one-day stitching retreats, one in Tucson and one in Nogales, a lecture, "Evaluating our Own Needlepoint Canvas" by Barbara May Grass, an eyeglass case, a lecture "ANG Seminar", a bus trip to the Shemer Needlework Show in Phoenix, and we finished our the year with a Patio Sale. During the year we also enjoyed our annual Holiday Luncheon, Spring Luncheon, and Camp Cactus Wren. In an effort to keep our budget healthy, we continued the sale of the Cactus Wren Tote Bags and "recalled" our cookbooks, "Needles and Pans: and resold them. We had a Patio Sale held at several members homes who lived on the same street. We did a very brisk business all day, with a good profit coming to the Chapter. We also initiated a collection called "Tiny Treasures" for a mini-boutique at Threaded Treasures in 2003. Members were asked to stitch Christmas ornaments and other small items to be donated to our semi-annual Threaded Treasures show. As of April 2002, we had collected about 30 items; this program will continue until January, 2003, with the show to be held in February, 2003. In the area of community service, we stitched two sided butterflies in a variety of patterns and fibers which were sewn together, stuffed and hung in the common areas of Santa Rita Care Center, and collected canned goods for the Green Valley Community Food Bank. Our Treasurer logged untold hours getting our non-profit status and tax ID information cleared through the IRS.

President for the year **2002** was **Sharon Skoczek**. Membership was 96 primary members, 25 dual members, and 3 Life Patrons for a total of 124. We continued to meet at LaPosada Community Room. The 7th Camp Cactus Wren was held at Tubac Golf Resort with 20 campers. A booklet of SouthWest designs for needlepoint and counted cross stitch created by members was developed. A P.O. Box was created for Cactus Wren. A membership brochure was created and distributed at several locations in Green Valley. The States Community project was completed and hangs at Friends in Deed. (We received national recognition in the March issue of "Needlepointers" for this project.) A monthly sign-in of upcoming projects and the social committee greeted members at the back table. Sharon had

innovative luncheons, all with a theme involved. We were invited to participate in correspondence courses, one being an adobe house motif.

President during **2003** was **Mary Ellen Searcy**. Lectures/programs included Ruth Kern Books, quilter Thelma Smith, Ruth Connors on miniatures and slide lectures by Libby Sturdy and Francye Farley. Members shared teaching Furry Stitches, Silk Ribbon Flowers, Cross Stitch, Tent Outline, stitching/finishing the SW doll Joaquin, a tool Reticule, Hardanger, Mystery dying, and stitching/finishing the Adobe House. Old books were culled from the library and new ones added. An updated Library List and Shop Resource list were published. The New Member Handout was redone. Activities included monthly stich-ins and stitch-outs at Palo Duro and Rio Rico, Camp Cactus Wren, a Christmas and March luncheon and a bus trip to the Shemer Needlework Show in Phoenix. A "Smashed Pumpkin Sale" was held. Our Chapter brochure is available around town and we had a publicity table at the fall Country Fair. National teachers were Francye Farley's Embelishing a Gemstone and Libby Sturdy who designed a Southwest Bag Lady Stitcher for us. Community projects continued with the four pieces for Casa de Esperanza's Senior Center. The stitching and framing of the letters and numbers for Casa de Los Ninos del Valle was completed. A sampler for Habitat for Humanities was presented. Earl Pennington's "Little Boy Fireman" stitched piece was donated to the Fire House. At National, members stitched miniatures for the Regional Doll House auction. We donated a sampler stitched by Dolores Pickell to the auction for 2004 Seminar. Dolores also donated a doll house to the Chapter. Members will begin stitching miniatures for the house and chances will be sold in 2006.

Susan Ettle was president in **2004**. Susan had taught textile classes in fabric dying and silk paper dying. Susan is a fiber artist and instructor. She has had her works exhibited at the national Academy of Needleart (NAN) in Virginia and Fine Art of Fabric in Chicago. She has completed a 3 year Teacher Certification program for NAN. Her final project, "Alarich's Vase" is in NAN's permanent collection. Susan holds a BA and MS in mathematics. We were honored to have Joyce Lukomski for a workshop of beading needlepoint work on a cashmere piece. Joyce was a past Editor of Needlepointers. An overview of a Friendship Sampler Band, introduced by Margaret Von Kuegelgen, was done by members who had signed up for it. Each member would stitch a band and then the next month, it was passed on to the next member in the class. Other classes during the year: Stump Work by Barbara Richardson, Ann Seese told us about the Royal School she attended in England, Earla Swope taught "scissor case", Mary Ellen Searcy taught "Humbugs – Along Came a Spider", Sherry Skoczek taught "holiday cubes". Deolores Pickell and Earla Swope taught a class using laid threads for "peonies". Embellishments on new and antique boxes was taught by Reba Ashmore. Rebecca Hays taught "blackwork", and Susan Ettle taught us how to transfer a picture of gates or doors onto canvas. Carol Lake presented "Anisazi". A field trip to the Busy Needle in Tucson included their offering refreshments for us. There were Stitch Outs at Rio Rico and Saddlebrook, and LaMariposa Resort. Twenty two members attended Camp Cactus Wren in Tubac. Threaded Treasures was a success, as was the sale of Tiny Treasures. Susan brought Cactus Wren into the modern age by putting the newsletter on the internet.

Phyllis Richardson was president during **2005** and **2006**. We had a Home Tour as well as a Patio Sale. Camp Cactus Wren was held at Sheraton Hotel in Tucson. There were Stitch Outs at Palo Duno in Nogales and at La Mariposa Resort. Mary Ellen Searcy won 3rd place in the ANG Professional category with her "Woman of the Desert". Margaret Von Kuegelgen suggested a "Chinese Auction" where we wrapped our UFOs and traded pieces. Classes included: Rainbow Galleries Threads lecture and thread guide class by Jay Patterson, Tumari by Mary Hamilton, Love Notes Needle Case by Dolores Pickell, Shading by Barbara Richardson, Dynamic Diagonal Box by Pat Phillips, Locker Hooking by Bonnie Wedekind. Carol Lake, national teacher gave a special class, and Cassie Prescott, formerly from Sundance, taught "Young Brave".

2007, Dale Miller was president. The suggestion for a recipe book of just salads and appetizers was developed. Cactus Wren t-shirts were designed and sold. Jan Sprague taught a class for a card using bargello stitches. The owner of Crescent Colors described her method of hand dying. She originally did this for cotton floss for cross stitch projects. Mary Ellen Searcy taught a 3 part class on fabric beaded pieces appliquéd on canvas to create a shamen or a pin. Donna Lou Hetler taught us hardanger and we had a class on Scissor FOBs.

2008 and 2009, Linda Nettling was president. "Wrens in the Kitchen" was a cookbook of appetizers and salads. Recipes were submitted by members, and compiled by Rosemary Johannesson and sold for a fundraiser. Margaret Bendig, National teacher, gave a workshop. A Patio Sale during February, 2009, was another fundraising event. We had a stitch out at Kristopher's. Threaded Treasures Home Tour was a combination of two events that previously were held individually. Five member's homes were open with many "treasures" on display. Two South West pillows were stitched by members and made available for tour members to purchase tickets to win a finished pillow. Classes included Framing by Frank Garcia, ANG Video "Design into Stitches", scissor pocket by Pat Phillips, and members were asked to participate in a program, bringing their "favorite things" for stitching. A Standing Rules change was approved by the membership stating that Cactus Wren will pay from their treasury funds the fees for teachers including their transportation, room and board. Members are responsible for only the cost of the kit fees.