



View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



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www.ne-rugsociety.org

September Meeting: Jerry Becker on Navajo Blankets By Tom Hannaher

Any rug lover who watches *Antiques Roadshow* will remember the famous moment when the Navajo first-phase “Chief’s Blanket”—which had adorned the owner’s piano for 30 years—was appraised at half a million dollars and deemed “an American treasure.” If you’ve always wondered what made one Navajo weaving worth \$50 and another \$500,000, then don’t miss the NERS meeting on September 21st at the First Parish in Lincoln. Jerry Becker, one of the country’s leading experts on southwestern weavings, will make a presentation on Navajo wearing blankets.

Jerry started Elk Creek Trading Co. in 1972 and began trading in antique American Indian art. Soon he specialized in vintage Navajo rugs and early Navajo wearing blankets. Elk Creek Trading is currently considered one of the top dealers in the world in this field. The Becker collection of Southwest textiles was started in 1985, and is considered by many to be one of the top three private collections of this type in the world. Jerry is still an avid collector. In addition, he has curated museum exhibits on Southwest weaving, and is a contributing editor for *Hali* Magazine. He is the consulting expert on Navajo textiles for Christie’s, NY, and Heritage Auction House, Dallas, TX.

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September Meeting Details

Date: Friday, September 21

Time: 7:30PM

Place: First Parish, Bedford Road, Lincoln

Note: \$5 guest fee for non-members

Directions:

From Rte. 95 (128) take the Trapelo Road West exit (#28B) in Waltham. Proceed west about 2.5 miles to a stop sign at the five-way intersection in Lincoln (there is a white planter in the middle of the intersection.) Go right on Bedford Road for 0.1 miles to Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your right. **The parish house is on your left.**

From Rte. 2 take Bedford Road, Lincoln Center exit (eastbound, turn right at light; westbound, go through light, turn right, and circle 270 degrees to cross Rte. 2 at the light.) Proceed 0.9 miles and you will see Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your left. **The parish house is on your right.**

Parking:

In back of the parish house plus along the street. It’s OK to park in front of Bemis Hall **provided the building is dark and not in use.**

October Meeting: Ann Nicholas and Richard Blumenthal on South Persian Tribal Weavings

See meeting details on page 4.

A couple of years ago, NERS members Ann Nicholas and Richard Blumenthal talked to us at the Collins Gallery in Newbury about the colorful bags woven by the South Persian nomads. On October 19 they will be back—this time at the Collins Gallery in Watertown—with another look at the same topic, but with a whole host of new historic photographs that Rich

and Ann have discovered in their searches since then, and with many interesting new insights into nomadic life in South Persia. So don’t even consider staying home because you think you’ve heard it all before!

Ann and Rich are longstanding members of NERS. Ann is on the steering committee and writes member profiles for the newsletter. Both have been interested in

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Please don’t forget to send in your membership renewal form!



September Meeting

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Jerry will discuss classic period Navajo textiles with an emphasis on three major categories: chief blankets, Serapes, and Mantas. Among other things, he will review the qualities that separate a great Navajo blanket from a good one. He will talk about the market for Navajo blankets, and will touch upon the subject of fake Navajo rugs being made in Turkey and sold as American Indian weavings. Very importantly, he will show us how to tell the difference between a fake blanket and the real deal.

Jerry will bring classic period examples from the Becker collection, including a poncho serape, a Ute style First Phase chief blanket, an early Third Phase chief blanket, and a Navajo manta. Jerry is encouraging members to bring in any items related to southwest weaving—Mexican textiles included. He will date and evaluate pieces brought in by members.

This will be a rare opportunity to learn about one of the most important weaving traditions from one of the world's leading experts in the field.



Navajo classic period poncho serape, 1840-50

Our Calendar Goofed!

We apologize to any members who might have concerns that we scheduled our first meeting for September 21, the day on which Yom Kippur begins at sundown. We had carefully checked our calendar before arranging the date and were misinformed that it began at sundown on September 22. Next year we'll check TWO calendars just to be sure.

President's Year End Review

As we enter our 23rd season, I am pleased to report that the New England Rug Society is in sound and secure health. Our membership stands at 179, an all-time high. Our finances are robust, and planning is almost complete for another year of worthy events and memorable meetings.

Perhaps the most significant news of the past season was NERS's expanded commitment to charitable giving. In the past we have budgeted approximately 10% of our revenue toward donations to worthy causes. These have included primarily the Textile Museum, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' Textile and Fashion Arts Department, and the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA).

Currently, thanks primarily to careful budgeting and the extra generosity of our Patron and Supporting mem-

bers, we are in a position to be a bit more charitable. In July, for example, we gave a \$500 grant to ALMA that NERS members **Susan and Gary Lind-Sinianian** requested in order to fund a survey to determine the curatorial needs of their rapidly growing textile collection. And as many of you will recall, we raised the sum of \$847 back in February through sales of *Hali* magazines donated by NERS member **Jo Kris Powell** and local artist Susan McCraw. This money had been earmarked to support the Josephine Powell Foundation in Istanbul, but we are still waiting for the organization's financial structure to be resolved following Josephine's death. Meanwhile we are exploring other potential gift opportunities for the society.

It was a year of well-attended and well-received

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President's Year End Review

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meetings. The NERS 06/07 season kicked off with **Wendel Swan**'s talk on oriental rugs as Islamic art. In October **Jim Blackmon** flew in from San Francisco to tell the story of one of the world's greatest examples of textile art: the Tiwanaku tunic. Nomadic band collector **Fred Mushkat** visited us in December and presented a treasure trove of his wonderful textiles. Then in February **John Collins** hosted us at his Watertown gallery and gave a comprehensive presentation on Persian rugs. **Fred Ingham** from Seattle was our March speaker, presenting us with another of the popular Good Rug/Great Rug panel discussions. And in April our own **Tom Hannaher** gave an inspirational talk on how to collect textiles valued under \$200. Finally, we closed out the season with our annual picnic and show-and-tell, this time in a new setting: **Judy Smith**'s lovely summer cottage on a small lake in Plymouth. It was an interesting and fulfilling season.

As usual, I have the pleasure of thanking that band of loyal members called the Steering Committee without whom the New England Rug Society just plain wouldn't work. The group, as ever, whirred like clockwork to make things happen: **Lloyd Kannenberg**, **Gillian Richardson**, and **Tom Hannaher** handling food and refreshments at the meetings; **Yon Bard** doing the newsletter with the able assistance of **Jim Adelson**, **Ann Nicholas** and others; **Jeff Spurr** and **Julia Bailey** helping to coordinate the speaker arrangements; **Bob Alimi** building and administering our website; and **Janet Smith** handling the logistics of mailings, nametags, and other indispensable tasks.

Others who pitched in meeting after meeting were our audio-visual team: **Buzz** and **Louise Dohanian** who managed the projector screens; and **Turgay Erturk** and **Donna Hill** who took care of our sound system. Our thanks to them as well.

Bob Alimi is continuing to shepherd the growth of the highly successful NERS website. This past year he added another online exhibition consisting of the 30 Baluch rugs from my collection that were shown at ACOR 8 in Boston. Work is now underway to add one or two more ACOR 8 exhibitions to the site in the year ahead.

Special thanks are due those 24 members who went the extra mile with Patron and Sustaining memberships. Their extra funds went a long way toward helping the NERS secure its financial health, and we warmly appreciate their generosity.

Our membership continues to be as diversified as it is enthusiastic. A breakout of our members' whereabouts follows:

Eastern Mass.	128
Western Mass.	24
Connecticut	4
Rhode Island	1
New Hampshire	5
Vermont	3
Maine	4
New York	5
Indiana	1
Illinois	1
Florida	1
California	2

Finally, many warm thanks to all the members of the NERS for such generous support over the past season, for pitching in when help was needed, and for contributing the enthusiasm and encouragement that is so vital to keeping our organization a healthy and rewarding one. We couldn't do it without you!

Mark Hopkins

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Comments/contributions/for sale ads to: Yonathan Bard, doryon@rcn.com



October Meeting

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artistic expression in utilitarian objects. About twenty years ago they became intrigued with small South Persian tribal weavings, and then a few years ago they became curious about how these weavings were used in nomadic life.

As retired biochemists, it was only natural that they adopted a scientific approach to gather information about nomadic life and use of weavings. They read the historical and ethnographic literature, interviewed people who had experience with the South Persian nomads and their weavings, and searched for photographs illustrating their way of life. They found thousands of photographs, many never published, in current, rare, and out of print books, university and museum archives, and personal collections of ethnographers. Now they search for photographs of South Persian nomadic life with almost as much enthusiasm as for their weavings!

The research confirmed many current ideas about how weavings were used by these nomadic people. However, some commonly held notions need to be re-examined, especially those about piled saddlebags. Ann and Rich recently published their findings in two *HALI* articles titled *South Persian Tribal Weavings*.

They will illustrate their talk with bags and photographs from their collections as they review South Persian nomadic life and the indispensable role that weaving and weavings have in it. After this review, they will discuss the conditions in 19th century Persia that fos-

tered the weaving of piled saddlebags and what role they might have had in nomadic life.

The talk will be accompanied by a small exhibit of a few of their bags. Members are encouraged to bring their own small South Persian weavings (limit two per person, please!).

October Meeting Details

Date: Friday, October 19

Time: 7:30PM

Place: Collins Gallery, 694 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown

Directions:

From Harvard Square take Mount Auburn street west 1.5 miles. The Collins Gallery will be on your right, just before a sign saying "Celebrity Pizza." If you get to the Arlington street intersection you've gone a little too far.

From Watertown Square take Mount Auburn street (Rte. 16) east for 1.6 miles. The Collins Gallery will be on the left, just beyond the "Celebrity Pizza" sign, soon after you cross the major Arlington street intersection.

You can also get there by taking the MBTA bus line 71 from Harvard or Watertown Square.

Parking: Parking lot in back of gallery (driveway is between the gallery and the pizzeria) and on street.

Member Profile: Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian

By Ann Nicholas

Once a year NERS has a meeting at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown. When attending meetings there, I have wondered what does ALMA have in their collections besides the rugs or photographs displayed in the meeting room? What would I learn about rugs and textiles from their holdings? Who takes care of these weavings? Recently I interviewed ALMA's curators, NERS members Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian.

ALMA was founded in 1971 by a group of people wanting to preserve Armenian books and artifacts, and in 1985 it officially opened in the basement of a Belmont

church. By 1988 the need for a larger and more permanent home became apparent, and a bank building in Watertown was bought and remodeled to house ALMA. Today ALMA has over 30,000 Armenian artifacts, including 25,000 books, 5,000 coins, 3,000 textiles, and 200 Armenian oriental rugs.

Susan, the Textile Curator and Conservator, is a bundle of energy and enthusiasm, and her excitement about textiles is utterly contagious. In addition to creating an exhibition each year, she is responsible for cataloguing and preserving the constantly growing collection

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Member Profile: Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian

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of Armenian textiles and rugs. A recognized authority on Armenian costumes, embroidery, and other textile techniques, she teaches and lectures internationally, and consults with several museums on textile conservation. In July she traveled to Karabagh to work with the newly rebuilt Shushi museum. Four days a week she teaches life skills to students at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown.

Among the various rugs and textiles, Susan's special favorites are what she calls the "smaller domestic weavings," textiles that are strongly linked with domestic life—such as bedding boxes (*mafrashs*), bread covers, blankets, *jejims*, and bundle cloths. ALMA has a number of bundle cloths (*dzrar/bohca*), textiles made to carry and cover other household items. Several are made of silk with elaborate embroidery, which are thought to be special dowry pieces used on the wedding day to carry dowry items to the bride's new home. Silk, lavish embroidery, and a dainty lace, called needle lace, adorn many of ALMA's textiles.

In college Gary studied cultural anthropology and has a strong interest in ethno-choreography, the study of folk dancing. He and Susan have worked with many older Armenians to learn and teach their folk dances. He is ALMA's Head Curator, and is especially involved with the library collections. Among the library's 25,000 holdings are a number of rare books in Armenian and English, posters, maps, calendars, and manuscripts. The library is also home to the Herbert Offen Oriental Carpet Research Library Collection, a collection of 2500 books and other literature on rugs and carpets. The holdings cover a broad range of topics, not just Armenian carpets, including some rare 19th and early 20th century books.

One of their prize holdings is Frederick Martin's 1906 book "Oriental Rugs Before 1800" which has a number of chromolithographic plates of rugs. A copy of the book was recently offered at a Sotheby's auction, but it sold for \$25,000, far more than ALMA's budget. Shortly after, a second copy was offered by an antique book dealer in London which ALMA acquired. At our April meeting at ALMA Gary proudly introduced the book to us. The Offen Collection is a great resource for

rug enthusiasts and is open to researchers and students on Fridays 10AM—1PM. If you would like a list of the Offen Collection books, contact Gary.

The current exhibition, "Out of the Vault: Highlights from the Collections," will be in the Museum's large exhibition area, Bedoukian Hall, until the end of 2007. The exhibition showcases ALMA's diverse holdings featuring textiles, inscribed rugs, coins, rare books, ceramics, religious artifacts, metalwork and maps. There are a number of beautiful objects in the exhibit, but several also tell fascinating stories. One is a very large, hand colored map of Armenia made in the 1920s in Cuba by an Armenian cartographer hoping to receive immigration papers to the US. Although he did not, a friend did and brought the map to America. Several years later his friend's wife mounted it on a window shade so it could be easily displayed or stored—the map is well preserved, so this primitive "conservation" was effective. There are a number of piled rugs exhibited (including the eagle Karabagh shown in the photograph of Gary and Susan below). One small piled rug is particularly memorable: woven in the 1920s to commemorate a dentist, the cen-

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Gary and Susan in front of eagle Karabagh rug



Member Profile: Gary and Susan Lind-Sinianian

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tral field is filled with a large molar and the slogan, “Mouth Cleanliness—Clean Teeth Never Decay.” The museum is open Thursday evenings 6-9 PM; Friday and Saturday 1-5 PM; and Sunday 10AM-2PM.

ALMA’s collection of Armenian rugs includes both piled carpets and flatwoven kilims, the majority of which were donated by the late Arthur T. Gregorian. Most are rugs from the Karabagh and Kazak regions, many inscribed with the date and occasion for their weaving. Donations of Armenian artifacts are constantly being received by ALMA, and identification, cataloguing, and conservation require much of Gary and Susan’s time with the help of many volunteers. Some donated items from the 19th century are real mysteries—understanding how they were used often requires creative detective work. Several very old layered women’s skirts with the top layer split up the front, referred to as chadors, have been donated. After some investigation it was realized that the chador was worn as a skirt inside the house, and then when the woman went outside, the top layer was lifted up and fastened at her neck to make a head cover. But the most unusual and puzzling item was a very long

candle twisted around and around into a ball shape. It seems this odd 19th century candle was an early flashlight: held in one’s hand; it was turned around as the wick burned down to light one’s path.

And then there is the puzzle of the name Lind-Sinianian. Gary, of Swedish ancestry, is the *Lind* and Susan the *Sinianian*, an Armenian name. When they married they debated how to form their married name. They briefly considered *Scandinavian*—it recognized Gary’s heritage and had the “ian” ending of many Armenian names. They settled on Lind-Sinianian because it sounded more poetic than Sinanian-Lind. But Gary confides that he has done what anthropologists should never do: he was so involved with his work that he has gone completely native. Now he is an ABC, Armenian by Choice.

Note: More help is needed with rug and textile cataloguing and conservation. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Gary or Susan by email at gary@almainc.org, susan@almainc.org, or by phone: 617-926-2562 extension 5. Even a few hours a month would be appreciated.

NERS News

We welcome the following new members: **Michael Raysson** and **Muriel Heiberger**, **Rich Larkin** and **Martha Brooks**, **Sonia Chinn**, **David Stevens** and **Marj Albright**, **Ann Norton**, **Mike Sampson** and **Christina Young**, and **Allen West**. Also a “welcome back” to **Diane Kessler** (she had dropped out for a couple of years).

Sonia Chinn is our second student member: she is a graduate student at Harvard

Textile Heirlooms from the Indus Valley: From 9/14/07 until 2/8/08, the Worcester Art Museum will be exhibiting a choice collection of traditional Indus Valley folk embroideries and clothing dating from the 19th and 20th Centuries. NERS members **Tom** and **Peggy Simons** collected most of them when living in Pakistan while Tom was the US Ambassador there (1996-8).

Tom and Peggy are hosting a gala cocktail party on October 25, from 6:30 - 9:00PM, and it will include a 45-minute musical presentation by a hugely talented North Indian flautist, Deepak Ram. **Any NERS**

members interested in attending this event should let the Simons know by emailing their name and address to pqsimons@comcast.net (that is *q* as in quilt).

At 2PM on September 16, Tom will host a session at the Museum entitled *Tales from the Indus Valley*, in which he will recall the years he and his wife spent collecting many of the treasures found in the exhibition. Having lived there as a boy and again as the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan in the 1990s, Tom will lend a unique vision to this important and rare art. Free with Museum admission.

NERSers in HALI: *The Mystery Unraveled, Part Two* by **Ann Nicholas** and **Rich Blumenthal** appeared in *HALI* 151 (Spring 2007), pp.66-73. We will hear some of the contents in Ann and Rich’s talk on October 19 (see page 1). **Lawrence Kearney’s** encomium to **Rosalie** and **Mitch Rudnick’s** collection of Caucasian carpets appeared in *HALI* 152 (Summer 2007) pp. 62-71, under the title *A Kind of Meta Art*.



April Meeting: Tom Hannaher on Budget Collecting

By Jim Adelson

On April 13th, NERS member Tom Hannaher spoke to about 40 attendees at ALMA on the subject of “Budget Collecting.” Tom started by reminding the audience that “collecting is all about having fun.” He observed that every time he thinks he’s going to make money, he has less fun, and doesn’t make any money at it. “Put your heart into it, not your calculator,” he recommended. He also introduced his yardstick for the evening—looking at pieces well below \$500, and in most cases, below the cost of an annual subscription to *HALI*, around \$190.

Tom spent a few minutes describing the different phases of his own collecting, and how he had come to his approach and philosophy on “collecting on the cheap.” He related that he, like many, had initially started collecting by getting a new house with hardwood floors. He went on to say “*HALI* magazine ruined my collecting . . . my taste in carpets quickly surpassed my ability to pay for them. . . .the rugs I wanted to buy cost \$7,000, \$10,000, \$15,000 and I didn’t have that.”

Tom then outlined what he labeled Stage Two of his collecting activity, where he focused on Shahsevan bags. These were “beautiful textiles I could afford without my wife killing me.” However, he saw the same thing starting to happen—his taste was ratcheting up. He described how one bag could sell for \$600-\$800, and another similar one for close to \$10,000, and sadly he was starting to appreciate why the second bag was so much better.

Tom’s collecting took an unexpected turn at an unexpected place. He went to see the dealer Ronnie Newman, known for top-end merchandise and prices to match. While looking at more main-stream items, he saw a piece that was unlike anything else he knew, and had immediate, visceral appeal for him—his first pre-Columbian textile, although he didn’t know what it was at the time. He didn’t buy it that day, but it carried him into a whole new realm of affordable and enjoyable textiles, and he was off and running in an area that remains his primary interest to this day.

From his experiences, Tom has formulated a 7-Point (8, really) Plan that he recommends to seekers of affordable greatness. Here are his suggestions.

1 – “The more you see, the more you learn.” Read *HALI* and books, go to dealer shops and museums, attend tribal art shows and auction previews, and visit the homes of NERS members, who are so often willing to share their treasures. In Tom’s summary, “see what other people think is great.”

2 – “Take off your blinders—there’s more to life than pile woven carpets.” With this, Tom began to show slides of a wide variety of items that he and other NERS members had acquired for \$200 or less per piece, including a Swedish Rollakhan textile, Coptic fragment, American blanket, Japanese mulberry paper screen, Kuna Indian mola, Kurdish kilim, Turkmen child’s necktie, Tibetan belt, and more.

3 – “Learn to love fragments.” Again, Tom showed a number of examples from his own and other NERS members’ collections, all acquired for under \$250, including fragments from a Bolivian coca bag, Peruvian tapestry, Coptic textile, and Shahsevan mafrash. Tom had two corollaries for this recommendation. The first was “conserve and mount.” He showed a number of pre-Columbian fragments he’d been able to acquire for under \$100 apiece, and he had gone on to spend anywhere from 18-40+ hours painstakingly assembling and mounting each one. Tom’s other note was “learn to bathe.” This enables you to restore colors that are otherwise invisible.

4 – “Try eBay.” Tom had numerous examples here, ranging from a pile chanteh acquired for the princely sum of \$11.50, to Turkmen and Central Asian weavings around \$300.

5 – “Stop watching football, and go to flea markets.” Here, Tom’s examples included a very old Ersari chival he’d acquired for \$50 at the Todd Farm Flea Market, and a Turkish Tulu rug acquired for \$180 at Brimfield.

6 – “Think small.” Tom remarked that when you buy big pieces, you pay big prices. By contrast, he showed a Baluch bagface he got for \$140, and a number of other small examples.

7 – “Try barter.” He had colorful stories about a couple of coca bags that he had exchanged, in one case

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April Meeting: Tom Hannaher on Budget Collecting

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for a DVD-VCR combo that the owner wanted badly, and in the other case for a pair of speakers that Tom could get quite inexpensively.

8 – “Develop your personal sense of inherent value.” According to Tom, with such a sense, you’re going to enjoy collecting more, and you’ll never make a mistake. As examples of this, Tom displayed a Nepalese woven reed fan that cost him \$50, some cotton coca bags, and (further afield from weaving) a Tibetan early 19th century miniature painting.

A members’ Show and Tell followed Tom’s presentation. The diversity of pieces was simply amazing, with some representatives from many parts of the globe. A number of the items were ones that Tom had shown in his visuals, including a Lakai embroidery, Huari tunic fragment, Coptic fragments, Bolivian coca bags, Kuna Indian molas, and a Turkish Tulu. There were also many examples that hadn’t been shown earlier—a mid-19th century Iranian needlepoint embroidery for \$35, Banjara pouch strap for \$110, Lakai purse for under \$200, Folly Cove designs block print, Yemeni men’s coat for \$100, Turkmen camel head cover for \$45, Sewan Kazak for \$400, and woven Zulu bags (made of colored telephone wire!).

The number of sources and the acquisition stories were almost as varied. Pieces had been garnered from on-line and conventional auctions, antique stores and high-end specialty dealers, flea markets and family hand-me-downs, and Tribal Arts fairs and collector sales.

At the end of the Show and Tell, Tom conducted a “fan favorite” voting for a preferred budget piece under the cost of a year of *HALLI*. Tom promised to reward the astute owner with a Kuna Indian mola, to be chosen from a number of such pieces in Tom’s collection. Voting was tight, but the winner was a Caucasian flatweave brought by Arthur Mahfuz and Linda Konnersman. This piece was a dollar-pinching collector’s favorite—Arthur and Linda had gotten it for nothing, as it was thrown in cavalierly with their purchase of another \$200 item.

A big round of applause for Tom for his ability and willingness to pass on his thoughts about collecting within a very limited budget. Thanks, also, to all the people who brought in their budget acquisitions, revealing their

purchase prices and sources as well as the pieces themselves, and making for a very entertaining evening.



Rare Huari interlocking tapestry fragment depicting decapitated heads with “speech bubbles”
\$50, eBay. Conservation: c. 18 hours



Baku bagface, \$123



Arthur Mahfuz with winning entry:
a Caucasian flatweave



Turkmen child’s necktie
\$45 at Essex antiques dealer



My ICOC Experience By Judy Smith

Hali will provide a detailed account of the 11th ICOC in Istanbul, but what follows is a personal journal of the sights, sounds, smells, and food.

First of all, the much anticipated conference exceeded my high expectations. The logistics—academic sessions, meals, busses to events, excursions, special venues—were comfortably managed, but more importantly we were treated to an extraordinary variety of venues and material.

The affectionately known TIEM (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art) on the Hippodrome in the old part of Istanbul displayed 15th to 18th century village and court carpets including ninety Anatolian carpets, six Safavid, and eleven large Caucasian rugs. Some were displayed in small, arched anterooms and some in enormous spaces capable of hanging two huge Persian garden carpets side by side! The TIEM also devoted space to Mehmet Cetinkaya's personal collection of sixty ikat chapans attractively draped on manikins.

Mehmet was the local organizer of the ICOC and in addition to his ikat show he and his children staffed his two shops in the Sultanahmet Arasta Bazaar, his booth in the dealer's row, and a cocktail reception.

The Josephine Powell exhibition of ninety items, including forty 18th century kilims, was hung horizontally at eye level with direct light, making the viewer feel intimate with the pieces. NERS should feel especially proud of its participation in the preservation of this important collection. Jeff Spurr was actively involved and many of our members contributed to the cleaning and mounting of the pieces. My two favorite pieces were sponsored by Beau Ryan and Mae Festa. One had stripes of orange, purple, green, sky blue, indigo, and red in wide and narrow bands ascending into a mirhab.

Josephine died a few months before the show but with her initiatives and pressure from the world rug communities, the Turkish Cultural Ministry contributed to some of the cleaning and preservation, and a wealthy Turkish family will find a home for her collection for public display. At last there seems to be an appreciation for—and a commitment to—these precious kilims.

One evening we were treated to trays of champagne and Turkish hors d'oeuvres offered by waiters in

black ties who greeted us upon arrival at a private palace where Michael Franses had organized a show of 16, 17 and 18th century Transylvanian carpets. Through friends I tagged along to this invitation-only opening reception. Each rug was displayed as a work of art occupying its own space and with direct spot lighting. One room was constructed to resemble a Transylvanian church with pews, an altar, flowers, and rugs hung in niches, similar to the places where most of these rugs were found.

At the Topkapi Palace there was a display of Ottoman, Mughal, and Moroccan pile rugs, textiles and embroideries preceded by a buffet in the courtyard, but because night had fallen and the lawn wasn't lit, no one could see what they were eating—didn't matter: it all tasted good and anyway the exhibition was well lit.

There were many more shows in palaces, museums, and in our hotel, including a yastik exhibition, a Kaitag display, pieces owned by Turkish collectors etc. . . but I was on "viewing overload" and can't remember them all. I did however enjoy our boat trip down the Bosphorus to the mouth of the Black Sea, being treated to hors d'oeuvres, seeing summer palaces along the banks, and the omnipresent tankers and freighters waiting to get to the Black Sea. We journeyed to the Sadberk Hanim Museum on the coast. This private Museum is owned by a wealthy Turkish family who are major patrons of textiles and rugs. They treated us to more good food and drink in addition to their assorted collections and wonderful gift shop!

At conference headquarters there were only 40 dealers (mostly Turkish) and only one from the US (Casey Waller from Texas). Dealers have a very difficult time taking rugs in and out of Turkey which severely discouraged them, but those who were there were apparently very successful.

I attended very few academic sessions and I gather these were less successful—trouble with translations, equipment, limited esoteric subjects, and/or weak material.

From the NERS I saw Gerard Paquin, Rosalie and Mitch Rudnick, John Clift, Gillian Richardson, Mae and

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My ICOC Experience

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Gene Festa, Peter Walker and Cornelia Montgomery.

Following the conference I took a trip to Eastern Turkey, flying about two hours and then traveling east by bus for six days. The tour included a visit to Divrigi—a World Heritage Site with a beautifully restored complex of 13th century Seljuk buildings in a mountain village. There are a few cities but basically this is a rugged, snow covered mountainous terrain, sparsely populated, primarily with sheep herders. We saw very small settlements with dung piles outside for fuel and many solar panels and satellite dishes on roofs of the simple dwellings. Towering over this was Mount Ararat, a majestic

landmark rising to 17,000 feet. As we crossed the mountains on the way to the City of Van, we were four miles from the Iranian border and our bus was boarded twice by the Turkish military who had outposts all along the mountain ridges.

Every day we had good lentil soup and kebobs and a wonderful yogurt drink called Ayran . We visited ancient medreses, mosques, tombs, caravanserais, and some museums. There were some rugs and textiles to see but primarily this trip was an Eastern Turkey experience, in sharp contract to the urbane tumult of Istanbul.

I'd be glad to share more of this Eastern Turkey experience with anyone interested.

May Meeting: Picnic, Show & Tell, and Moth Market

On May 5 those NERSers who braved the long distance enjoyed Judy Smith's hospitality at her family's lakeside compound in South Plymouth. The weather smiled on us and the moth market, picnic, and show & tell all took place outdoors under blue skies. We show here and on pages 11 and 12 a sampling of the pieces that our members brought. Interestingly, rugs were outnumbered by other textiles: is there a trend here?



Uzbek suzani



Mystery rug

Any ideas? Please contact Mark Hopkins



Picnic in bucolic surroundings



Upcoming Rug Events

Future NERS 2006/7 Meetings:

11/16: Mary Jo Otsea on the state of the market (at First Parish)

1/25/08: Dr. Ahmed Birbilir on fake Turkish rugs (at First Parish)

March: The Lind-Sinaians on Armenian textiles (at ALMA)

April: Jurg Rageth, subject to be determined (at First Parish)

May: Picnic & Show and Tell (location to be determined).

Auctions:

Schuler, Zurich, 9/12

Koller, Zurich, 9/22

Bonham's & Butterfield, San Francisco & Los Angeles, 10/9

Grogan, Dedham, 9/23 (including rugs), 12/10

Bonham's, London, 10/23

Christie's, London, 10/25

Van Ham, Cologne, 10/27

Nagel, Stuttgart, 11/5

Rippon Boswell, Wiesbaden, 9/29, 11/17

Skinner, Boston, 12/1

Christie's, New York, 12/12

Sotheby's, New York, 12/13.

Conferences:

The Collecting Passion, Textile Museum Fall Symposium, Washington, DC, 10/19-21

Volkmanntreffen, Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde, 10/26-28.2007. This annual conference will focus on the Berlin School of Carpet Scholarship. Among the lecturers will be Margareta Nockert, Eleanor Sims, Volkmar Enderlein, Ernst Grube, Jens Kröger, Friedrich Spuhler, and Michael Franses. Werner Brüggemann will present his new book *The Oriental Carpet—Insights in History and Esthetics*. More than half the talks will be given in English. For more information access the website *Volkmanntreffen* www.volkmanntreffen.de.

Exhibitions and Fairs:

New York International Carpet Fair, Armory (Lexington at 26th), New York, NY, 9/18-21

Ahead of His Time: The Collecting Vision of George Hewitt Myers, Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 9/28/07-2/17/08

Textile Heirlooms from the Indus Valley, from the collection of NERS members Tom and Peggy Simons (see page 6 for more details, including information on lecture and reception), Worcester Art Museum, 9/14/07-2/8/08.



Skirt worn by
Kuba Queen
Mother
(seen at Show &
Tell)

The New England Rug Society is an informal, non-profit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Its meetings are held six to eight times a year. Annual membership dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120, Student \$25. Membership information or renewal forms can be obtained on our website www.ne-rugsociety.org, or by writing to **New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773**, calling Mark Hopkins at 781-259-9444, or emailing him at mopkins@verizon.net.

NERS 2007/8 Steering Committee:

Mark Hopkins (President)

Jim Adelson

Robert Alimi

Julia Bailey

Yonathan Bard

Tom Hannaher

Lloyd Kannenberg

Ann Nicholas

Gillian Richardson

Janet Smith

Jeff Spurr



May Meeting: Picnic, Show & Tell, and Moth Market

Continued from page 10



Detail of unusual Yomud chuval:
note off-center secondary motif



Kuba tie-dyed man's skirt, raffia fiber



Detail of Khotan rug; painting by Tom Stocker



New England Rug Society
Post Office Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773



It's Past Time To Renew Your Membership!

Although the letters went out on July 15 with a request that your membership be renewed by September 1, we're still waiting to hear from about 30% of our membership. If you haven't done so, please send your check (\$45 for a single membership, \$65 for couples, \$90 for Supporting, and \$120 for Patron) at your earliest convenience. It's a great new season coming up and we hope you'll join with us to share it.

Checks should go to NERS, P.O. Box 582, Lincoln MA 01773, and make sure to tell us of any address changes and how you'd like to receive your newsletter (US Mail or email). Many thanks, and we look forward to seeing you at our meetings!

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