

# Yarns



The Newsletter of The National Museum of the American Coverlet

Volume 11, Number 1

April 2016

## A Decade of Achievement

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Reprint: A NATIONAL COVERLET MUSEUM – WE NEED ONE

### From the President's Desk

By Edward Maeder

#### TEMPUS FUGIT (“Time Flies”)

How is it possible that the museum is celebrating its **TENTH ANNIVERSARY** this year! It was back in 2004 at the Historic Deerfield Antiques show when I first met Melinda and Laszlo Zongor in their booth that was filled with the most beautiful coverlets that one could imagine. I'd been the Curator of Textiles and Curatorial Chair for four years and during that time was constantly meeting people in the world of antique textiles. I kept returning to the Zongors' booth and we chatted on and off for two days. At the time they told me of their dream to create a museum dedicated to American coverlets. Their enthusiasm was infectious and I asked them to stay in touch as their plans progressed.



Little did I know that these early dreams would become a reality and that now, twelve years later the museum, which began in one rented room, would become what it is today, The National Museum of the American Coverlet. Having been in the museum world for more than four decades, I can say with some authority that I have never been connected with a museum where the Board of Directors has been as actively involved as here at the NMAC. From a core collection, mostly

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**From the President's Desk continued:**

the fine coverlets of the Zongors themselves, to one that is now more than five hundred, (almost exclusively donations), the textile world has been given a unique gift. Although there are coverlet collections in many of the largest museums in the country, there is no other collection that is as available to visitors such as students, weavers, collectors and scholars as the one here in Bedford, Pennsylvania.

As we prepare for our FIFTH Coverlet College, I want to extend my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Melinda and Laszlo Zongor, for their total dedication to the museum; Board member Ron Walter and his wife and confidant, Kitty Bell, whose collection was our first major exhibition; to Doug Schmidt, who has been on the board since the very beginning; the late remarkable Richard Jeryan whose generosity and expertise and

that of his wife Christine enabled us to keep the highest standards in the field of historic textiles; our recent board members Mike Pasquerette and Gay McGearry and Jes Horwath and all other former board members. And finally, I would like to welcome our newest board members Ute Bargmann, Virginia Gunn and Harold Mailand.

Our supporters, donors, members and friends continue to make this museum grow and give back to the community a treasured part of our American culture. We dedicate this issue to YOU, our members who have made it possible for us to continue this dream.

*Edward Maeder*

President of the Board of Directors

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## Board News: Coverlet Museum Adds New Board Members

The National Museum of the American Coverlet is pleased to introduce three new members of the Board of Directors. The new members bring extensive talent and knowledge of technical and historic aspects of weaving and conservation. These folks are most exciting additions to the Board. We are thrilled to welcome them to the NMAC family.



**Ute Bargmann (Massachusetts)** – Ute grew up in the German Bavarian Alps and studied in Switzerland, Germany and at the Language Institute in Munich where she graduated as a translator. She met her American-German husband, Robert Bargmann and they moved to the United States in 1965. She bought a loom in 1972 and began studying weaving at the Hill Institute in Florence, MA, three years later, receiving her Master Weaver diploma in 1979.

Ute was an early member of the Early Weaving Books and Manuscripts Group for Complex Weavers and applied her considerable knowledge of German manuscript paleography as well as her lifelong interest in world history to her continuing research and study. She has translated late medieval German manuscripts from as early as the 1420s on the technical aspects of tablet weaving and has delivered papers on subjects as diverse as “the Journey of Cotton into Germany and Slovakia” to “Counterpanes” at the Handweaving Museum annual conferences in Clayton, NY.

For several decades she has been researching her special interest in the European origins of what became known as ‘colonial’ coverlets. Ute has been a member of the Weavers Guilds of Boston, New Hampshire and Vermont as well as local chapters in western Massachusetts and has spent more than forty years demonstrating weaving at guild events and fairs throughout the region.



**Board News: Coverlet Museum Adds New Board Members continued:**

**Virginia Gunn (Ohio)** - Virginia is a professor of Clothing, Textiles, and Interiors and Director of the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Akron in Ohio. She teaches courses on the history of costume and fashion, the history of interior design, and material-culture studies. She holds a B.S. in home economics education from Kansas State University, an M.S. in applied art from Syracuse University, and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Akron. She is a past president (1990 - 1993) and board member (1984 - 1994) of the American Quilt Study Group and edited *Uncoverings* from 1994 to 2003. Her publications focus on quilts, coverlets, and women's history. She has served on the board of trustees of the Wayne County Historical Society in Wooster, Ohio, where she is currently on the textile committee and served as co-chair of the Beall-Stibbs Homestead restoration project from (2003 - 2013).



**Harold F. Mailand (Indiana)** - Harold holds a Master of Arts for Teachers degree in textiles, education, and art history from Indiana University. His training in textile conservation includes internships at The Textile Museum; Smithsonian Institution; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and The Costume Institute/Metropolitan Museum of Art. His training was funded with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Museum Act and others.

Mr. Mailand was Associate Textile Conservator for the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and in 1986 he founded Textile Conservation Services, a textile conservation facility in Indianapolis, Indiana.

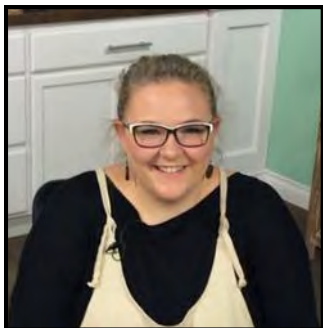
He is a Fellow in American Institute for Conservation (AIC). His most recent publication is a 1999, co-authored, 92 page text entitled, *Preserving Textiles: A Guide for the Nonspecialist*. He has lectured on preservation issues in England, Italy, Germany (in German), Canada, and throughout the United States.

In 2002, Mr. Mailand was selected as a Samuel H. Kress Conservation Publication Fellow to pursue research in the traditions of preserving textiles and costumes. Since 2002 he has also been the instructor for "Care of Textiles" at the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies. In 2011 he was awarded the Arts Council of Indianapolis Creative Renewal Arts Fellowship. The Textile Specialty Group of AIC designated him as the 2015 recipient of the award for outstanding contributions to the field of textile conservation.

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## Board News: Coverlet Museum Expands its Honorary Board

In its early days, The National Museum of the American Coverlet established an Honorary Board for the purpose of recognizing people who have made a major contribution to the world of textiles and, in particular, to education about coverlets and their importance in American History. Now, NMAC is pleased to announce the names of people recently appointed to the Honorary Board. Their support of the Coverlet Museum cannot be overstated, and we are honored to count them among our friends. With their permission, we salute them and their good work.



**Sara Bixler (Pennsylvania)** – Sara holds a Bachelor of Fine Art and a Bachelor of Science in K-12 education, although she gives full credit for the depth of her knowledge to her apprenticeship with her father, Tom Knisely. Sara is a frequent contributor to Handwoven Magazine and Weaving Today. Before its closing she was an instructor at The Mannings Handweaving School in East Berlin, Pennsylvania. She is owner of the new Red Stone Glen Fiber Arts Center in York Haven, Pennsylvania. Sara is best known for her work with color theory studies and surface embellishment in weaving.

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## Board News: Coverlet Museum Expands its Honorary Board continued:



**Betty and James Doig (Illinois)** – Jim and Betty are the immediate past co-Presidents of the Colonial Coverlet Guild of America. Their longtime love of coverlets and their many years of service to the CCGA have helped bring untold numbers of “newbies” into the fold. Their patient and tireless work ensured that each annual meeting has been an event not to be missed. Over the years, thanks to Jim and Betty, CCGA members have enjoyed behind-the-scenes visits and coverlet-related tours at numerous Museums and historic places. With their careful and seamless management, each meeting has been an exciting learning experience, all the while with an atmosphere of a friendly family reunion.

**Tom Knisely (Pennsylvania)** – For more than thirty years, Tom was the general manager and handweaving teacher, offering classes in everything from rag rug weaving to complex multi-harness shaft weaving, at The Mannings Handweaving School and Supply Center in East Berlin, Pennsylvania. He now teaches with his daughter Sara at the new Red Stone Glen Fiber Arts Center in York Haven, Pennsylvania. In addition to teaching, he weaves professionally. He is a frequent contributor to *Handwoven* and *Rug Hooking* magazines and has created design collections and instructional DVDs on looms, weaving rugs and other weaving matters. Voted *Handwoven* Teacher of the Year in 2011, Tom is renowned among his weaving students for his kindness, good humor and “seemingly infinite knowledge of the subject of weaving.”



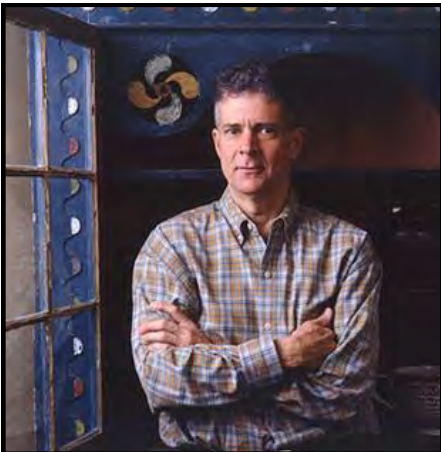
**Christine Jeryan (Michigan)** – Chris is an accomplished weaver and pro bono textile historian at The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. She cataloged the Museum’s most recent major coverlet donations, creating detailed descriptions and researching both weavers and owners of the coverlets. She also speaks frequently about American coverlets to weaving guilds and historical societies. A 30-year interest in textiles has led Chris to the study of tartan weaving, fabric finishing, collapse weaves, historic American textiles, 19th-century rugs, and more. She has spent her career in Museum Services, scientific research, writing and editing, and a myriad of special projects. She has been an independent contractor associated with the Plymouth Center for Human Development, the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Gale Group, and the Henry Ford Museum, all in Michigan. Her activities have included publishing the local Sherlock Homes Society newsletter, volunteering at Heritage Spinning and Weaving (Lake Orion, MI), and memberships in the Michigan Weavers Guild and the Handweavers Guild of America. She is co-owner with her late husband Richard of Fell’s Edge LLC, selling fiber and fine handwoven goods.

**\*Richard Jeryan (Michigan)** – Retired technical leader in vehicle design research and advanced engineering at Ford Motor Company. Richard’s extensive and varied work as a registered professional engineer included the development of fiber reinforced polymer and other lightweight materials in vehicle body and chassis structures, with particular emphasis on crashworthiness. After his retirement, his longtime commitment to textiles led to his work at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, where he studied, taught and practiced the weaving craft. There, he designed the fabrics and oversaw the weaving in the Village Weaving Shop. At The Loom Room in Staffordshire, UK, he studied the design of Jacquard fabrics and the preparation of punched cards; and he restored the Jacquard loom at Greenfield Village. Richard wove at home and at a local Detroit art center. He was co-owner of Fell’s Edge LLC, selling fiber and fine woven goods. He was particularly interested in the important role textiles played in the development of the social and technological fabric of America. At the time of his recent passing, he was President of the international Complex Weavers guild.



## Board News: Coverlet Museum Expands its Honorary Board: continued:

**Gay McGeary (Pennsylvania)** – Gay has been weaving, collecting, and researching early coverlet patterns and weave structures for over twenty-five years. While her weaving is inspired by her research, her research is enhanced by her weaving explorations of the early craftsmen. A retired accountant for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, she calls herself a "numbers person", intrigued by the complex weave structures used by the Pennsylvania Germans to craft something both useful and beautiful. By collecting and analyzing the physical techniques of early weavers, she uses their examples as inspiration for her own work. She is a juried member of the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen (Yellow Breeches Chapter) and exhibits her work at Guild-related shows, as well as local galleries. Gay shares her research as a regular contributor to various weaving periodicals, including the *Complex Weavers Journal*. She is the chair of the Complex Weavers Early American Coverlets Study Group and edits that group's newsletter. She enjoys giving workshops and lecture presentations to interest groups, including the annual Weaving History Conference at Clayton, N.Y. and at various other regional weavers' guilds. Gay is a founding member of the National Museum of the American Coverlet and has been a contributor to the annual coverlet college. She lives with her husband in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in a limestone home filled with looms, coverlets, antiques, and cats. Recently retired from the Coverlet Museum Board of Directors, she continues to support and participate in Museum activities and programs.



**Sumpter Priddy III (Virginia)** – Historian, author, and expert in the research of material culture, Sumpter is specifically interested in the relationship between architecture, history and the decorative arts. He is actively engaged in researching America's early artisans and has assembled one of the most extensive photographic libraries of regional decorative arts in private hands. His prior associations include Historic Deerfield as tutor in the Summer Fellowship Program and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation as Teaching Curator. His numerous publications include his book, *American Fancy*, which was accompanied by a major traveling exhibit, receiving rave reviews. The book received the Historic New England 2004 Book Prize for its "significant contribution to the study of American and New England Culture." The inspiration for this landmark 15-year project, was a coverlet inscribed "... FANCY WEAVER."



**John Simmermaker (Indiana)** – Longtime collector and member of this Museum, John Simmermaker first became interested in coverlets when his 99 year-old grandmother threatened to burn an old coverlet which had been her mother's. John and his wife Janet knew nothing about coverlets but managed to convince his grandmother to give hers to them instead, and soon they found themselves collecting... That was in 1972. Shortly thereafter, John and Janet met and became good friends with Pauline Montgomery, author of *Indiana Coverlet Weavers and Their Coverlets*. That friendship fueled their interest even further. Since then, with the enthusiastic support and participation of his entire family, John's passion has resulted in one of the largest and most respected private collections in the country. John has generously given talks and presentations, shown his coverlets, and shared his knowledge with numerous groups and institutions, among them Connor Prairie and the Colonial Coverlet Guild of America. Until 2004, most of his activities focused on his home state of Indiana. The landmark "Kaleidoscope" exhibition (April-November 2014) here at NMAC marked the first time his coverlets have been on display outside the Hoosier State.

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## Board News: Coverlet Museum Expands its Honorary Board: continued:



**\*Martha Jack (New York)** – The late Martha Jack was a true pioneer in coverlet stewardship. She and her loving husband John were active antiques dealers, specializing in coverlets and bird’s eye maple furniture. Martha was a founding leader of the Alling Museum in Palmyra, New York. She and John were long-time members of the Colonial Coverlet Guild of America, quietly supporting it for many years. The National Museum of the American Coverlet has long honored her many years of devoted interest in coverlets. From its earliest days, Martha was a major multi-faceted donor to the Coverlet Museum in Bedford. She was NMAC’s first Honorary Board member. Most importantly, she and John were cherished friends. They may no longer be with us, but they will be in our hearts forever.



## The Director’s Corner

By Melinda Zongor

### TEN YEARS OF GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

The year 2016 is a very special one here at NMAC. It is the tenth year since our founding, and look how far we have come! You may have

heard this story before, but for those of you who have not, here is a timeline of the Museum’s beginning and early days.

The year 2002 was a big year for coverlets. It marked the opening of the wonderful exhibition of the McCarl coverlets at Colonial Williamsburg. Two coverlet books were released that year - *American Coverlets and Their Weavers* by Clarita Anderson and *Coverlets and The Spirit of America* by yours truly. Both Foster McCarl and Joe Shein, whose collection was featured in *Coverlets and The Spirit of America* were friends of ours and we had done some work with them in building their collections.

In 2003, shortly after the close of the Williamsburg exhibition, and as we had done so often before, Laszlo and I found ourselves thinking about the future of coverlet preservation. What could/should be done next in the effort to bring coverlets to the attention of the public?

We knew from our years in the antiques business that painfully few people knew much about them. ... The long-term survival of coverlets as objects and craft

was in peril, and the situation would not get any better unless something could be done about it. To that end, I wrote an article with the less-than-scintillating title “A National Coverlet Museum – We Need One,” and it was published in the October 2003 CCGA (Colonial Coverlet Guild of America) newsletter. That article is reprinted elsewhere in this newsletter. It was the beginning of our quest for what would shortly become the start of this Museum.

In June of 2005 we presented an exhibition of coverlets at the Gilchrist Gallery in Cumberland, Maryland. The annual CCGA meeting was held there that year. Folks wanted a catalog of that exhibition, so I produced *Coverlets at the Gilchrist – American Coverlets 1771 – 1889*. The favorable response to that catalog spurred us on, and we were determined to bring a coverlet museum to reality.

In December of 2005, after looking in several different states for a location, Laszlo and I discovered that a building right here in our own town was not only available but perfect for the purpose. It met virtually all the criteria we had set. It was

- a building of the same period as the coverlets
- had a workable floorplan, offering good traffic flow, large spaces, big walls and plenty of storage space
- reasonably affordable for eventual purchase

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## The Director's Corner: TEN YEARS OF GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT continued:

- easily accessible from several major cities and close to the PA turnpike and other major routes
- centrally located in terms of historic American coverlet production
- in a historically significant town – an attractive destination in its own right that would help draw visitors to the museum.

In early January of 2006, we had a planning meeting with interested folks, all of whom said in one voice, “Go for it!” We assembled a Board of Directors who were all on the same page in terms of vision, and all of whom worked together, beautifully, to make that vision come to pass.

By February of that year, we were incorporated. At the first Board meeting we approved the Museum by-laws and logo, and we were on a roll. A room in the present building was rented and with an out-of-pocket investment of \$350 for the first month, the Museum had a home. Soon after, we were approved by the IRS as a 501©3 non-profit institution.

We called our first room the “Interim Gallery,” in which we displayed 14 coverlets, a loom and other equipment, as well as the beginning of the Museum shop. My desk sat in one corner. The space was designed to show folks what we had in mind and offer a sampling of what was to come.

We had a soft opening in May – an informal showcase with wine and cheese.

By October of that first year, we had grown to occupy most of the ground floor of the main building. We welcomed our first bus tour that month, with only two weeks’ advance notice. We had just expanded to include the two middle rooms; and in two weeks’ time, we took down chalk boards, repaired walls, painted the space and hung coverlets – finishing up the night before their tour. (Ironically, they were Australians – all 38 of them – and their visit made the front page of our local newspaper. They loved us and we loved them. ...And this coming October they are coming back for the third time!) By December of that first year, we expanded again and acquired two more rooms and my office space on the main floor.

In May of 2007 the Museum held its official Grand Opening.

By that time we had expanded yet again to include the room that is now the Museum shop, as well as space in the rear building.

In October of 2008, after nearly three years of renting, a generous donation from John and Martha Jack covered the down payment for the purchase of the Museum building. The middle two main floor exhibition galleries are dedicated to them. *continued on page 8*



The “Interim Gallery”



Bedford Mayor Bill Leibfreid, Opening Remarks  
Prior to Ribbon Cutting – May 26, 2007

## The Director's Corner: TEN YEARS OF GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT continued:



The Opening Ceremony - Laszlo and Melinda Zongor, Bedford Mayor Bill Leibfreid, Edward Maeder, Jude Fera, Jes Horwath and Mary Koval

Fast forward ...

Now, in 2016, the Museum is still open seven days a week year-round and has welcomed visitors from around the world. The collection, which started with



The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Edward Maeder, Bedford Mayor Bill Leibfreid, Laszlo and Melinda Zongor

the donation of 62 coverlets from Laszlo and me, has now grown to approximately 500 – virtually all donated by the public, and including some important donor-funded purchases.

Changing exhibitions of up to 100 coverlets each, along with early spinning and weaving equipment, showcase the materials; and each visitor is given a personal tour to answer their questions and offer background history of the weavers and their lives and times.

Several informative, full-color exhibition catalogs, now widely considered to be important permanent references, have been published.

A reference library was established and now contains a growing collection of hard-to-find and unique materials, including out-of-print books, slides and photographs, research papers and more, all available for use upon request.

Programming includes the annual Coverlet College, held each year in September. Attendees enjoy presentations, show and tell, workshops and hands-on opportunities.

Our volunteer ‘worker bees’ are experienced and indispensable. They work with staff and do an excellent job of helping in the shop (especially during big group tours) and covering for us on those rare occasions when we are out of town. They hand sew rod pockets onto coverlets for display. They climb ladders, install exhibitions and adjust exhibition lighting. They document library materials. They help in the kitchen during events. ... All that and so much more. Best of all, we have fun and enjoy each other’s company while we work!

Our Board of Directors is comprised of true team players. They are active, cheerful, enthusiastic, and generous with their time and expertise. Despite occasional personnel changes due to health issues or busy schedules, every Board member brings something to the table. It is a true pleasure to

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## The Director's Corner: TEN YEARS OF GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT continued:

work with them, and I say with sincere awe and gratitude that I personally can't imagine life here without them. In the last few weeks, we have welcomed three new Board members whose stories are described in a separate article of this newsletter.

Another recent development includes the expanded Honorary Board, established to honor people who have made significant contributions to the coverlet world, and whose support of this Museum deserves to be recognized. Their good will and good deeds are beyond compare, and we want them to know how much they are appreciated.

All in all, it has been a wild ride so far, and we can't wait to see what comes next!! Ultimately, Laszlo and I owe it all to you, our members, donors, visitors, volunteers and Board members, who have made this great endeavor possible. So join with us as we celebrate ten years of growth and achievement. With your support, we look forward to continuing the work and pursuing our mission to house, preserve, study, display and offer information about coverlets and their weavers.

*Melinda Zougor*

NMAC Director / Curator

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## New NMAC Textile Program Classes Announced

The first classes for the new NMAC textile program have been announced. Dates and descriptions are listed below. Call the Museum, follow our Facebook page or add your name to our eNotes list (left hand column of the Home page), and we will let you know as new classes are added. As this program grows, we expect to include knitting, crocheting, spinning and rug hooking as well as more advanced weaving and possibly dyeing... all in good time!

For questions and reservations, call the Museum at 814.623.1588.

### **Try Your Hand at Weaving Geometric Coverlet Patterns for Beginners – (One Day)**

This class is for anyone who wonders how looms work and how antique coverlet patterns were made. Using cotton and wool, we will be weaving a series of overshot patterns, the pretty geometric patterns that were woven at home as bed coverings many years ago. The class is round robin, so students will weave a sample from each loom. The looms are all set up and ready to go when you arrive at class. Your teacher will guide you through the process and let you go at your own speed. Expect to make up to four pattern samples by the end of the day.

This is a great way to enjoy the geometric pattern coverlets at the Museum and gain insight into how they were made. No weaving experience is required. Expect to be challenged, but there will be lots of hands-on help when you need it. Take home a bit of history and perhaps become interested in a new craft.

Class size limited to 4 - Fee: \$68 Museum members / \$75 non-members plus \$10 for materials

Dates: May 22 (Sunday)

June 26 (Sunday)

October 10 (Monday, Columbus Day)

### **Beginning Weaving – (Three Days)**

An introduction to weaving on a four shaft loom, this three day class will take you through two projects. The first day is spent weaving a small project from beginning to completion. The next two days are spent on a work sampler that is woven in squares, using perle cotton, each square showing a different color and weave combination. It is a reference project that makes a beautiful table runner or wall hanging when done.

Class size limited to 4 - Fee: \$205 Museum members / \$225 non-members plus \$25 for materials

Dates: June 5 - 6 - 7 (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday)

October 30 - 31 - November 1 (Sunday, Monday, Tuesday)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Coming Events



**Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival**  
**Saturday / Sunday, May 7-8, 2016**  
 Howard County Fairgrounds  
 West Friendship, MD



We will be at our usual location in the Main exhibition building, booth #A-2. It is the first spot on the left as you enter the building. Don't miss it! This is a fun way to spend a day or two, free admission - lots of animals and vendors. We'd love to see you. Directions and details can be found on the MD S&W website at <http://sheepandwool.org/2016-maryland-sheep-wool-festival/>



**Woolley Fox Hooked Rug Retreat**  
**Tuesday, April 26, 2016**  
 Ramada Inn  
 Ligonier, PA

You may recall that in September two years ago we partnered with our friends the Woolley Fox hooked rug studio at Ligonier, PA for a wonderful show, class and hook-in, featuring 141 hooked rugs, all here at the Museum, displayed alongside the coverlets that inspired them. (Did you know that early hooked rugs were made from loom waste?) As part of our continuing outreach efforts, we will be at their Rug Retreat in April to talk about the Museum and its collections. This is a new addition to our calendar, so details are still a bit nebulous. We'll post more on this as we firm things up.

**NMAC Tenth Anniversary Celebration**  
**Saturday, June 4, 2016**  
 At the Museum



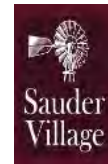
Details will be announced on our website and Facebook pages. Help us celebrate ten years of growth and achievement, and be among the first to see our next exhibition



**COVERLET COLLEGE 2016**  
**Friday / Saturday / Sunday, September 23-24-25, 2016**  
 At the Museum

This will be the fifth year for our annual Coverlet College. Great new presenters, interesting topics... Full schedule is being finalized as we speak – to be posted on the website soon.

**Fiber Arts Fest**  
**Saturday / Sunday, October 1-2, 2016**  
 Sauder Village  
 Archbold, Ohio



Another new addition to our calendar! We'll let you know more as the Sauder Village folks work out their program.



## RECENT COVERLET DONATIONS

The Coverlet Museum is the honored recipient of twenty-two textiles from the Charles and Tandy Hersh collection. The donation also included a selection of important reference books for the Museum library, as well as numerous copies of the Hersh publication *Rural Pennsylvania German Weaving 1833-1857*. The *Rural Pennsylvania German Weaving* books will be offered in the Museum Shop as a fundraiser (see more about this in the article on Shop News). Below are three geometric coverlets from the Hersh collection.



Star Work with Star and Diamond Centerfield



Overshot in Blooming Leaf Centerfield



Block Twill



Trademark Cowboy-on-a-Horse  
Squirrel, Butterfly and Bird Side Borders



Trademark Two Disks  
Squirrel, Butterfly and Bird Side Borders

“...And This Just In!” The most recent addition to the coverlet collection has cowboy-on-a-horse corner blocks. The centerfield pattern and the squirrels depicted in the side borders of this blue and white double weave coverlet are similar to those found on two coverlets that are in our current exhibition. Those are attributed to an unknown weaver in Ohio.

Ron Walter made some interesting comparisons:

“I have seen other style coverlets woven with the same side border and centerfield pattern and different bottom borders and corner trademarks, though those side and bottom borders are different from those used on this coverlet. Lyn Jackson wrote about the Jacquard attachment and card sets used by William Lowmiller of Muncy Borough, Lycoming County, PA in the *Now and Then* newsletter of the Muncy Historical Society. William Lowmiller used a group of about 90 cards to weave the bottom border and corner blocks in his coverlets. He then used another set of about 90 cards to weave the side borders and centerfield pattern. They also have his Jacquard head which matches the E. Meilly Jr., John and Samuel Mellinger patent loom attachment. This attachment could read the card set forward and backwards which the weaver did as he wove the full length of the coverlet. So the weavers could easily weave coverlets with the same side borders and centerfield patterns but different bottom borders and trademarks. Of course this is a widely used loom attachment and for now we haven’t been able to identify the specific weaver of the squirrel border coverlets but it is possible he could have been the weaver of your coverlet also.

So this is a lot of words to say I don’t know who wove the coverlet but it is important that we see examples like this. When we see another similar coverlet we can group them together and eventually make sense out of who wove these coverlets so many years ago.”

...Thanks, Ron - we can always count on you to come up with new knowledge. And special thanks to Lynne Poirier-Wilson for her generous gift of this really neat coverlet.



## Volunteer Days!



Museum friends have suggested that we schedule volunteer days. Work on projects with Museum personnel. There are myriad choices from lawn/landscape care to building maintenance/improvements to collections management and event preparation. Projects are indoors and outside – in most cases no special skills are needed. Let us know if you are interested and available! Dates can be arranged to suit your schedule.



Call 814.623.1588 or email [info@coverletmuseum.org](mailto:info@coverletmuseum.org) and thank you in advance!



## May 2016 will be NMAC's 10th Anniversary



May 2016 will mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of this Museum. It seems incredible that ten years have passed since we first opened the doors in May of 2006.

We have come a long way during our first ten years and we want to celebrate with you. An event is scheduled for June 4, 2016. Details will be announced on our website and Facebook pages as we plan for this important milestone.

### The National Museum of the American Coverlet

322 South Juliana Street  
Bedford, PA 15522 814.623.1588

[info@coverletmuseum.org](mailto:info@coverletmuseum.org)

<http://www.coverletmuseum.org>

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Newsletter Editor: Ron Walter

Contributors: Edward Maeder, Melinda Zongor,  
Gay McGeary, Ron Walter

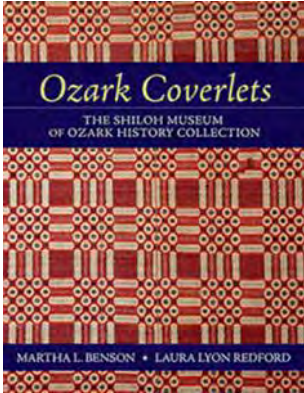
### We Need Your Email Address

If you are a member (past or present), donor, and/or event participant and are not receiving our eNotes, we do not have your current email address. Please make sure to update your contact information with us, as email is the best way for us to get you important time sensitive announcements. **FACEBOOK:** While you're at it, check out our Facebook page if you're "into" social media. We post messages there too! Yup – we're all over the place. Find us under **National Museum of the American Coverlet**.





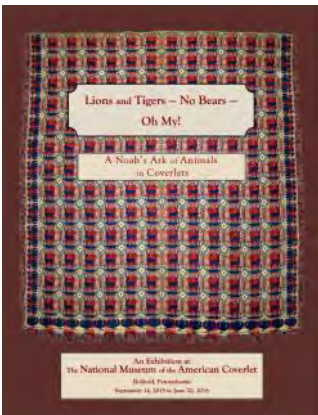
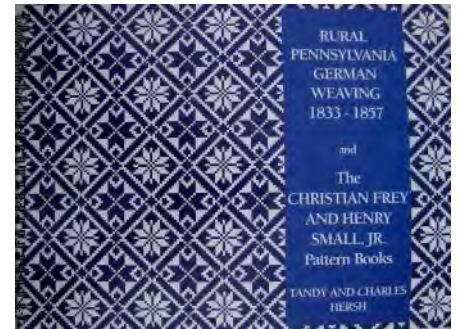
# Shop News



**New Title!** A new publication, **Ozark Coverlets – The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Collection** by Martha L. Benson and Laura Lyon Redford is now here. This 190-page book includes color photos and histories of over twenty-five coverlets and woven pieces, as well as historic weaving drafts recreated for today’s handweaver. Member price is \$31.50 (non-members \$35) plus \$3 shipping

**Coming Soon!** The Museum Shop is pleased to offer catalogs for the next exhibition, **“The First 10 Years: Highlights from the Museum Collection.”** They should be available by June 4. Information and pricing will be posted on the Museum website and Facebook pages.

**Rural Pennsylvania German Weaving 1833-1857 and The Christian Frey and Henry Small, Jr. Pattern Books** – As a Museum fundraiser, Winnie Hersh has generously donated copies of this wonderful reference by her parents Tandy and Charles Hersh. Member price is \$31.50 (non-members \$35) plus \$3 postage.



**Still available** – A few catalogs for the **“Lions and Tigers – No Bears – Oh, My!”** exhibition are still available. Member price is \$31.50 (non-members \$35) plus \$3 postage. As they say, **“Get ‘em while they last!”**

**Sold Out** – The catalogs for **“Kaleidoscope,”** the exhibition of coverlets from the Simmermaker collection, are sold out. Currently there are no plans for a reprint.


  
**COVERLET COLLEGE 2016**  
**September 23-24-25, 2016**  
**Sign Up Soon !!!**

# Membership Renewals

The National Museum of the American Coverlet is your museum.

**It is here *for you and because of you.***

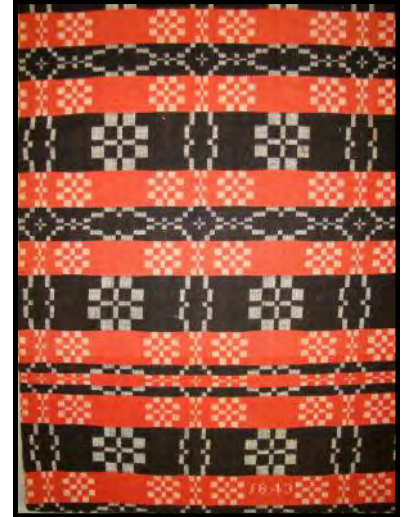
By renewing your Membership, you help this Museum continue in its mission of education, exhibition, and conservation, introducing the public to American woven coverlets.

Your membership includes

- a full year of free admission
- reduced rates for events and programs
- a 10% discount on your Museum Shop purchases
- free access to the reference library.

Take advantage of these “perks”—visit frequently and make the most of your membership. Meet and greet other people who share your (and our) interests in early textiles. Come and enjoy the beautiful town of Bedford, Pennsylvania, with all its myriad attractions.

Your continued support and membership are truly appreciated. We hope to see you often. Let us know what we can do for you.



**ShopforMuseums.com**

## Help Benefit the Museum through Your Online Shopping

ShopforMuseums.com is a fundraising website where you can shop your favorite online stores and, **at no extra cost to you**, have a portion of your purchase amount donated to the museum, park, zoo, aquarium, or other related organization of your choice.

You simply go the Shop for Museums website (<http://shopformuseums.com>), register, choose a museum partner to support (hopefully, us), then select a store and start shopping.

Two very important details:

- (1) You **MUST** go to [shopformuseums.com](http://shopformuseums.com) first and not directly to the store website, or it won't work.
- (2) In the dropdown list of Museum Partners, we are listed under the letter **N** as National Museum of the American Coverlet (The).

An amazing variety of stores is listed – yes, even eBay and Amazon are on there – and it's easy to do. So think about this great resource for all your holiday and year-round online shopping!



## Exhibition News: Last Chance to see Current Exhibition! LIONS AND TIGERS – NO BEARS – OH, MY!

A Noah's Ark of Animals in Coverlets



The closing date for our current exhibition was originally scheduled for June 20. However, because our tenth anniversary celebration is Saturday, June 4, we have decided to install the next exhibition in time for that special day. The **Lions and Tigers - No Bears - Oh My** exhibition will therefore be taken down and changed over during the week of May 25. As always, the Museum will remain open during the changeover (we find that people like to see how it's done).

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## Exhibition News: Next Exhibition Coming Soon!

### The First 10 Years: Highlights and Favorites from the Museum Collection



A new exhibition of approximately 80 coverlets will showcase highlights, favorites and most-requested coverlets that have been added to the Museum collection over the past ten years. Originally numbering 62

textiles, the collection has now grown to approximately 500 and counting.

Appropriately, the exhibition title is **The First 10 Years: Highlights and Favorites from the Museum Collection**. A catalog is currently in production, and we hope to have it available by our 10th Anniversary Celebration on June 4th.





# Heads Up for Coverlet College 2016

September 23-24-25, 2016

by Ron Walter

We are busy planning this year's coverlet college to be held at the museum September 23-25, 2016. On Friday afternoon we have a Geometric Weave Structures workshop led by Gay McGeary and an Overshot Coverlets workshop led by Pat Hilts. As usual Saturday and Sunday will be filled with interesting presentations by noted coverlet experts. Rowland Ricketts will be presenting his experience Dyeing with Indigo. Gay McGeary will present Single Geometric Coverlets which is an often misunderstood group of weave structures. Pat Hilts will discuss the Beiderwand weave structure and include a historical look as to how an ancient silk weave was used in making coverlets. Virginia Gunn will discuss how coverlet weavers were often carpet weavers and also present Mathias Heilbronn, who wove the recipient's name in the corner block of the coverlet, rather than his own name, so his work is not well known. Our Director / Curator Melinda Zongor will present Our First Ten Years, a brief history of how far the museum has grown since 2006. She will lead a tour of the current exhibition in two parts, half the first day and half the second day. The exhibition highlights coverlets from the museum collection which has grown considerably over the 10 years. Ron Walter will provide a glimpse into Christian Frey's day book from 1844 to 1852 which shows the many types of textiles he wove including coverlets and also talk about trademarks woven into coverlets and describe how they can be used to identify the weaver. Vic



Coverlet College Presentation by Board President Edward Maeder

Hilts will speak about the historical significance of the phrase "Agriculture and Manufactures are the Foundation of our Independence" which appears on early fancy coverlets and why Masonic symbols appear on these coverlets. Our Celebrated Weaver of the Year is Hannah Leathers Wilson and Donna-Belle Garvin's presentation on how she identified the weaver of New Hampshire's unique weft faced three panel coverlets will be given by Craig Evans, a noted NH weaver.

This year's detailed class schedule and registration form will be posted on our website soon so check our Facebook page often for the announcement. Be sure to sign up early and bring a friend. We will again be offering two scholarships in Memory of Richard Jeryan which will cover the registration fee. The details how to apply will be posted soon on our website.



Workshop Attendees Dyeing Wool Indigo



Coverlet College Attendees discussing Coverlets

# For Use In Our Textile Program

If you saw the article about this in the November issue of YARNS posted on the website at [www.coverletmuseum.org](http://www.coverletmuseum.org), you know that we now have a large number of contemporary floor and table looms and are putting together a program of classes.

**See the New NMAC Textile Program Classes Announced article on page 9.**

## Donation Wish List

*If you have surplus equipment, think of us!*

We have some of the following but need more:

- **Boat shuttles, large and small**
- **Bobbins**
- **Bobbin winders**
- **Swifts**
- **Metal heddles, 9" & 10-1/2"**  
Inserted eye type preferred but not required
- **Reeds – 20", 26", 44"**
- **Apron sticks**
- **Lease sticks**
- **Spinning wheels in good working condition.**

For questions and details, please call us at 814.623.1588.



# A NATIONAL COVERLET MUSEUM – WE NEED ONE

by Melinda Zongor

Article Written for the October 2003 *Colonial Coverlet Guild of America* Newsletter – Three Years Before the Founding of NMAC

Now that the excitement of the Colonial Williamsburg coverlet exhibit is dying down, it is time for us to think about what comes next. It is safe to say that there will not be another exhibit of that caliber for some time to come, and Williamsburg personnel admit that they are “coverleted out” for awhile. So what do we do now to maintain the public interest in coverlets? Laszlo and I feel that it is time to start thinking of a national museum of American coverlets. We need a centrally located facility which will be totally and exclusively devoted to coverlets – that is, to the full-time, year-round, revolving exhibition of ALL TYPES of American coverlets (geometric and figured), from all regions, and to educational projects and services such as guided tours, workshops and seminars, lectures, hands-on specialty weekends, and the sponsorship and publication of ongoing research. One of the main activities should be cooperative and exchange work with the other existing institutions in an effort to centralize education and research. There are many pieces of the research puzzle out there. Imagine how wonderful it would be to put some of them together.

Currently, unless we are overlooking someone, it seems that no one organization is doing all this. Several places are doing a great job at a few of these tasks, but no one is doing all of them; and other than the Alling Coverlet Museum in New York (which, by the way, is a must-see), there is no major independent facility devoted exclusively to coverlets.

We need a living museum where coverlets can be handled as more than just musty old artifacts of a time period before central heating. ...Where they can be studied in depth and enjoyed by the public as well as by specialists. ...Where they can be shown in the context of a period room, or discussed and researched in the context of the history and development of the state of their origin and of the country as a whole. ...Where people can be shown how to care for and use coverlets in their own homes (and we don't mean throwing them over the backs of sofas or using them for tablecloths or outdoor drop cloths for picnics). We need an establishment which is an all-encompassing, enthusiastic, friendly and knowledgeable celebration of coverlets where research, ideas and theories can be shared and discussed, both formally and informally, and

where credit is given to the people who do the work and make it possible.

In most cases, a museum's coverlet collection is handled as a sort of add-on or afterthought (if they are thought of at all) – almost a poor cousin to the main holdings of the institution. In some cases coverlets are not listed in their websites under “collections” or even in a keyword search; and if you didn't know they have coverlets, you certainly wouldn't learn it from them! There are several places which have coverlets that most people don't even know about. For example, the DAR in Washington has coverlets; but in order to see them, you need a group of at least four people and an appointment (or at least that is the way is used to be). Their last exhibit, as far as we know, was back in 1989 or so.

Understandably, and by definition, general museums must offer equal time (usually much more time) to many categories of worthy items in their holdings. They simply are not in a position to focus on coverlets or give them more than a fraction of their limited resources.

Coverlets deserve a facility all their own, not to be shared with quilts or other textiles, and not to be shown only occasionally, when space and money permit. Just about all of the major collections which have been donated to museums in recent years have been stored away after one glorious but brief exhibition, and some of them haven't been heard from again – at least not in public. In some cases, it is not even clear what happened to these collections after their initial exhibition. General museums tend to be overwhelmed with donations of far more things than they have the space and funding to exhibit. As a result, there is lots of great stuff sitting in storage areas, never to be pulled out and seen by the public.

In addition, it is not unheard of for a museum to accept a donation and then deaccession (sell) the item(s) to raise funds or to finance the purchase of items they are more interested in. Coverlets are in particular danger when the curators of a general museum do not place them high on their list of priorities, and you can be sure that is exactly the case in most places. We have discovered, to our dismay, that many curators know precious little about coverlets

*continued on page 19*

## A NATIONAL COVERLET MUSEUM – WE NEED ONE *continued:*

Article Written for the October 2003 *Colonial Coverlet Guild of America* Newsletter – Three Years Before the Founding of NMAC

and, when pressed, admit that they are usually not high on their “want” list. (Even worse yet, when approached by trusting people seeking information, advice or appraisals for their own coverlets, these same curators apparently seldom hesitate to offer totally incorrect descriptions and valuations! How many times have we seen tattered overshots offered on eBay with proud supporting text indicating that the seller had it inspected by an appraiser or museum curator who described it as a Jacquard and valued it at \$3000! The biggest victim here is sometimes the coverlet, which might well be deemed worthless when it doesn’t sell for big bucks. ...But that is the subject of a separate rant.)

Of course, no one can fix all these problems; but in order for coverlets to be safe from these practices, they need to be in a place where they will be understood, valued, and preserved – not just in storage, but in public view, and with all the supporting educational services they deserve. This is important, not just to conserve more coverlets, but to promote their awareness, study, and appreciation.

Throwing major funding at an established general museum or other institution for the creation of a coverlet museum under its auspices could be a viable compromise, but at least one attempt at this has failed. One of the biggest concerns about that idea goes back to the question of priorities of the main organization. Ideally, we need an independent national museum of American coverlets, and it will need funding and prestige in order to make a difference. Obviously this is easier said than done. The work will take years, and it needs to be started now, before we lose even more of the history and artifacts of coverlets, their weavers, and their making. When Eliza Calvert Hall walked through the Appalachians looking for “old coverlets,” some of the weavers were still living. They are gone now, and we are occasionally lucky to learn from their descendants. We need to “bang the drum loudly” and start working on securing the long-term stewardship of American coverlets, not in a haphazard way, but in an organized one. Instead of fragmenting, we need to concentrate.

Doubtless many people will say this cannot be done; but, as they say, “nothing ventured, nothing gained.” The way to make it happen is to take it one step at a time, starting at the beginning, and the rest will become clear as it unfolds. Even a marathon begins with the first step, and this article is it – the idea. Step #2 is dialog. Let us begin. Let us argue it through, dissention and all, but let us make it happen.

I wish to make one thing crystal clear: I do not wish to cast aspersions on the efforts of existing institutions, most of which are doing the best they can with the resources they have. Some of those efforts are truly heroic (I am thinking here of the Alling, for example), and they should be revered for all they have done to contribute to “The Cause.” But it is time to begin a major push toward making the most of what we know and the lessons we have learned, collectively. We need a coverlet mecca – an independent safe house for coverlets – a place for all things coverlet-related, and only coverlet-related – a place where coverlets are the ONLY priority.

Coverlet collectors, researchers and dealers alike may preserve their friendly rivalries but should not lose sight of the reasons why they got “into” coverlets in the first place. This is an opportunity to do something for the common good of the stuff.

A long time ago, Wallace Nutting started writing about early American furniture because he felt that it needed to be cataloged, understood, and revered. He was one of the first to think so, and no doubt some people thought he was crazy. Now his three-volume work is still one of the best ones available, and it is a fine reference for the student of antique American furniture. In turn, there are several good books about coverlets. Some are still in print and readily available for purchase, and we hope there will be many more. ...But, unlike some of the furniture in Nutting’s collection, let us make sure that pictures in books are not destined to become the ONLY way a person will see a coverlet in the future.

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