



METROPOLL EGA

Metropolitan Region of the Embroiderers' Guild of America

From the Region Director

Winter 2024

Happy New Year! Hope everyone had a great holiday.

Speaking of the new year, do you make stitching resolutions? I always start the new year thinking about what UFOs I am going to complete. I am lucky if I get one done.

We will be continuing our monthly zoom Chat with the RD.

We will be updating our website. Stay tuned for details.

I would like to congratulate our ARD Cathryn Curia, winner of the 2023 Gold Thread Award for the MET region.



I would also like to congratulate Kim Beamish of the Skyllkill Chapter. Her entry, Celebration, in the 22nd Through the Needle's Eye national exhibit was the MET Region winner.

Speaking of the national exhibit, it is a virtual exhibit and can be viewed on the website. Check it out if you have not already done so.

Happy Stitching!
Maria

TO ALL CHAPTERS

Please exchange your **CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS** with all chapters in the region via our Groups.io account. Newsletter editors, please contact Ginny Thompson at: gthompson@temarikai.com for assistance. It is nice to see what other chapters are doing.

All **Chapter Officer and Committee changes** will now be handled through the new form provided on the EGA National website under Tools for Chapters. Please plan to join the “Chat with the RD Session” on January 25, 2024, to learn how this form is used. Look for more information on this through a Groups.io message as we get closer to that date.

METROPOLL is issued two times a year

Summer: deadline is June 15

Winter: deadline is December 15

If deadlines need to be changed an email will be sent to all Region and Chapter officers and chairs.

METROPOLL is distributed to every region member. It is available on our website at www.metroega.org. All Region officers, committee chairs, and members are invited and encouraged to contribute to this newsletter. Articles should be sent to the Newsletter Editor.

Metropolitan Region Board of Directors Embroiderers' Guild of America

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Website Coordinator - Jill Williams: jill@columbia.edu

Youth Coordinator - AVAILABLE

EGA Statement of Purpose - The purpose of this organization is to inspire passion for the needle arts through education and the celebration of its heritage. (EGA By-Laws, Article II)

REPRINT PERMISSION: All EGA chapters have permission to reprint any material found here except items copyrighted which will be clearly marked.

Chapter membership shall be open to any individual interested in furthering the purpose of this organization upon payment of dues. Membership may not be limited in number or group of people and must be nondiscriminatory with regard to race, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin. (By-Laws Article III).

REGION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

NATIONAL NEWS

Strategic Planning Progress: This past year has seen intensive work by almost 50 volunteers on the various initiatives of the “Securing Our Future” project. The Board formally kicked off this important initiative at the Planning meetings during the August 2022 Board session. The various working groups began meeting on a regular basis to develop strategies to accomplish the goals of the initiatives, keeping in mind our ultimate goals: Closing the Gap (securing our financial future); Building Stronger Chapters and Member--at--Large Engagement (staving off Chapter dissolution and recruiting a broader base of membership); and Growing Our Educational Opportunities (determining the wants and needs of our modern audience and advancing our programmatic strategies to meet those wants and needs). The Planning focus at the March 2023 mid--year Board session was on the SOF initiative, with presentations from each working group and discussion with the Board at large. The teams are making great progress.

Each has accomplished significant goals, introducing new processes and programs for the membership.

These accomplishments:

- Changing to a “first come, first served” model for National Seminar registration.
- Amending the EGA bylaws to allow for “one member, one vote” voting in National elections to allow members at---large to participate.
- Introducing a new Virtual Education Course program (beginning with a virtual blackwork workshop with Carolyn Standing Webb in early 2024).
- Upgrading the Virtual Lecture Series program to allow for greater attendance for the live lectures and providing recordings of the lectures (for some of the presentations).
- Launched extensive surveys to Chapter members and members at---large (current and former) to ascertain a number of important factors, including: why one is a member; what does one renew; how does one utilize the EGA website; knowledge of EGA resources and their value to the member; knowledge and participation in selected education programs and Region offerings; and awareness of EGA’s social media presence. Results from these surveys are helping to guide plans for future EGA programs and projects.
- Introducing a new concept to National Seminars (effective at the 2024 Seminar): a retreat--style “Stitchin’ Time” offering that will be available to both traditional Seminar attendees and those new to EGA Seminars.
- Reimagining how to engage members at--large so that they have a sense of community within EGA.
- Providing the means for electronic dues collection through the National website, giving members the ability to pay digitally (beginning in 2024).
- Analyzing the needs of Regions and Chapters in order for them to grow and continue to be viable.

- Providing an easier process for Chapters to become satellites of other Chapters.
- Changing the requirement for forming a new Chapter from 15 to 10 members and eliminating the requirement that the founding members be primary members of the new Chapter.
- Reviewing the Petite Projects available to members; updating the instructions where appropriate and retiring projects that are out of date.

There are many other initiatives on which the teams will be working through 2024. There is still much to be done. Anyone who is interested in participating in this endeavor should contact Karen Hamilton at president@egausa.org.

Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures: The most impactful bylaws change undertaken by the Board of Directors was that of moving to the “one member, one vote” policy. Following the existing bylaws, Chapter representatives cast votes on behalf of their Chapters on the matter; the amendment passed by a large margin. As a result, the new “one member, one vote” process was implemented for the 2023 election of National officers. Each member was encouraged to visit the EGA website and cast their vote for the candidate slate. Being the first time that EGA had managed voting in this manner, there were a couple of issues that will be addressed for future votes. Overall, the process was a seamless one and thousands of members participated in the voting.

Our own Christene Thurston was elected to the position of EGA National Secretary.



Electronic Newsletters: The monthly e--newsletters continue to provide a mechanism for the dissemination of timely information, both to the members and to non--members through the Needlework Network version. Included in the e--newsletter to members is a short message from the president.

Seminars: The registration process has shifted to first come first served with Seminar 2024. Registration kicked off September 19, 2023, and ends May 15, 2024.

Through the Needle's Eye: is a virtual exhibit and debuted at the Boston Seminar 2023. An in--person exhibit is on display at headquarters in Louisville from July 2023 through January 2024. There were 93 initial entries for the exhibit. The judges and jurors, keeping to extremely high standards, reduced the final number to 58. One member withdrew one of her pieces as all 4 submitted had been accepted.

Education

Technical Excellence Certification (TEC) Program: Offered the first one starting June 1, 2023: Counted Thread. 13 candidates signed up in June. Two additional programs are under development: Crewel and Canvas.

Virtual Lecture Series: Since the move in January 2023 to Zoom Webinar instead of Zoom Meeting, there has been a tremendous amount of growth in the Virtual Lecture series. More EGA members may attend live lectures, more EGA members are able to view recorded lectures on-demand, and perhaps most importantly: the moderation team does not need to send out manual registration emails to registrants or manually admit participants to a live lecture. The automated registration and lecture admission procedures have saved our team (and especially Jana) a great deal of time on the back end. The Q&A feature during the live lecture has also proven to be popular and convenient: keeping questions out of Zoom chat is helpful for moderation and ensures a polished, professional experience for lecturers and attendees alike.

Help Wanted: The department welcomes designer/authors to submit proposals to publications@egausa.org with the subject line of Petite Project or Technique Basics.

- Authors who can create a project to satisfy the request for more ethnic projects are asked to submit projects.

- A volunteer true left-hander to pilot projects. Many lefties learned at a time when they adjusted to right-handed teaching so may not give the true leftie perspective.

- One or more individuals who have computer charting capability and willingness to volunteer their time and expertise in making charts and diagrams for counted thread Petite Projects professional looking. Also desired is an artist who is willing to redraw line drawings and other illustrations. This can be by hand or by computer.

- Individuals to help revise Programming -- A Handbook for Effective Planning and Presentation, first published in 1979. This is in desperate need of updating and upon revision will join the Guideline Series.

Marketing and Membership

Sponsored Podcasts: EGA sponsors one podcast: FiberTalk with Gary Parr. Gary Parr offers one sponsored podcast per month during which he promotes EGA, however in addition to the formal sponsorship he also regularly talks about current EGA events and offerings during his weekly Wednesday podcasts.

EGA Stitch-a-long Facebook Page (EGA SAL): The page continues to engage both EGA members and non-members by offering monthly free projects. Regions and Chapters recently were encouraged to advertise events on the Events tab. This page is managed entirely by three Chapter members.

Membership: Membership in May 2023 ended up 178 members higher than May 2022. Flattening of the downward trend that has been seen in recent years may be due to stepped up efforts on the part of Chapters in recruiting new members and EGA's introduction of virtual lectures. A total of 1,058 new members joined from April 2022 - March 2023. For the period April 2023 -- July 14, 2023, there were 470 new members in the three-month period. Memberships in May 2023 were 8,854 compared to 8,676 in May 2022. Chapter membership increased 1% while Memberships at Large (MALs) increased 8%.

Because our highest membership numbers occur in May of each year, it is helpful to look at our membership counts as of July, after membership renewals are processed. Our July 2023 membership is 7,737, compared to 7,507 in July 2022. These statistics also show an increase in BOTH chapter membership and MALs compared to July 2022.

Region News:

Chat with the RD: Started as an outreach to the chapter presidents in 2021. Have expanded to include region representatives and any chapter member interested. Will be expanding to include any member interested and will send out an announcement via groups.io. They are usually on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. A monthly Groups.io announcement is sent ahead of time with details on the topics to be discussed.

Website: The region website needs to be updated. We have formed a committee and will begin work shortly.

Retreat: MET held its first region retreat, MET Getaway, on March 25 to March 26, 2023. Due to the success, we had planned another retreat for April 2024. The original plans had to be canceled due to hotel renovations, but negotiations are underway with another hotel. Fingers crossed.

Region Interest Groups: Another offering the Region will be kicking off in 2024 is online interest groups. Nancy Knowles has graciously volunteered to chair this group. If anyone has any ideas or would like to chair an individual group, please contact Nancy or me.

Maria Hall
Region Director

REGION EVENTS

Stitching at the MET Gala – our Metropolitan Region 2025 Seminar

We are excited to announce that the Metropolitan Region is planning a seminar to be held in 2025 – Stitching at the MET Gala. This seminar will be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 26 and 27, 2025 at the Montvale Courtyard Marriott Hotel.

This Region Seminar will differ from those of the recent past in that we will offer three 2-day classes. A stitching room will also be offered for those of our attendees who do not want to take a class. These attendees will have the option of stitching both days or either Saturday or Sunday.

The 2-day classes that will be offered are:

- Warwick Cosmos – Katherine Diuguid
- Mrs. Sparkles – Dawn Donnelly

· Batik to Stitch – Laura Smith

Warwick Cosmos Mrs. Sparkles

Batik to Stitch



The Montvale Courtyard is less than a mile from the Garden State Parkway, exit #172 and about 3 minutes from the New York/New Jersey border, making this location very convenient for our Region members, regardless of where they live. A group rate will be offered and attendees have the option of staying at the hotel.

Early registration will be offered from April 6 – May 6, 2024. During this time period all class registrations will be treated equally. Regular registration will open May 7 and close on December 2. All registrations received during regular registration will be treated on a first come, first served basis.

Further information, including class descriptions, class options and pricing will be provided shortly.

Questions can be directed to Janice Meyers, Region Events Chair GrayceeDM@aol.com.

MEMBERSHIP

As National is changing the way members will be paying their dues, Memberships Chairs will no longer be sending me Region dues. I am waiting for more information from National as to how we will be notified about our members who have and have not paid dues. As we receive more information, I will be in touch with our chapters.

If any chapter has any questions or concerns about retaining members please contact me at ellen,saines@gmail.com.

Ellen Saines, Region Membership Chair

CHECK WASHING: A Cautionary Tale

Have you ever gotten ink from a ballpoint pen on your shirt and used hair spray to get it off?

If so, then you understand how check washing works. A fraudster gets ahold of a check you wrote and uses chemicals to remove the ink. Just like your shirt, the check is now ink-free. And the fraudster is free to write in new information. A really talented fraudster can wash your check of everything but your signature. A less talented one takes a picture of the check before washing it and then tries to forge your signature.

So . . . how do you prevent check washing? Don't use a ballpoint pen when writing checks. Use a black gel ink pen instead. The gel ink soaks into the check fibers, so it is harder for a fraudster to chemically remove it. And using black makes it even more likely for residue to be left behind. It's not impossible to wash black gel ink off a check. But it's difficult enough that most fraudsters won't bother.

How does check washing work in real life?

Well, sadly, we know because it just happened to our Chapter. Fortunately, our bank returned the stolen money to our account. But it took some effort.

And what exactly happened?

In August, I wrote a check for the deposit for our September retreat and mailed it to our Retreat Coordinator. I emailed her so she'd know to look for it. It didn't arrive, so she emailed me. I put a stop payment on the check and wrote a new one. Which I had someone hand deliver to her.

In October, I was preparing the monthly Treasurer's Report to the Board. And I saw a check on the statement for an amount that didn't match any amounts I had written. It was the missing check, with the stop payment. And an amount ten times higher than what I had originally written it for. I looked at the check image: different date, different payee, different amount. Even the signature was different.

I immediately called the bank. That was on a Monday. By that Friday, the bank had refunded us both the stolen money and the stop payment fee. ("Why didn't the stop payment work?", I hear you ask. Because the bank's computer system was looking for the check number and the original amount, not just the check number. Since the amount was different, the stop payment didn't work.)

The bank was concerned that the fraudsters now had our bank account number and the routing number, from the check they had successfully cashed. So they first put a hold on the account, preventing any withdrawals from it. Then they had us close it out and open a new one. The bank paid for the checks for the new account. So the Chapter didn't lose anything from this experience.

We have, however, gained some valuable knowledge about how to prevent check washing:

- 1) Keep tabs on checks you have written, in case one goes missing.

2) Put a stop payment on any missing checks. (Even though the stop payment didn't prevent the fraudulent check, it did help us prove that the check was fraudulent, so we got our money back faster).

3) Keep an eye on your account, especially if you have online access, so you can identify fraudulent transactions as soon as they happen.

4) And most importantly: use a black gel ink pen when writing checks.

Among the forms I filled out to get the money refunded was one authorizing the bank to investigate the fraud and, if possible, refer the case to law enforcement. But even if the fraudsters are never caught, our Chapter didn't lose any money.

Here's some additional resources about check washing:

- USPS: <https://www.uspis.gov/news/scam-article/check-washing>
- AARP: <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2023/stop-check-washers.html>
- NPR: <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/03/1077766541/usps-checks-mail-fraud-bank>

And if you have any questions about what happened, reach out to me at jennipaperman@gmail.com.

Jenni Paperman
New York Capital District Chapter Treasurer

CHAPTER NEWS

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CHAPTER started our new season with learning how to stitch Vagonite, a Brazilian embroidery technique which does not involve rayon threads or bullion knots. We made a small flower on huck fabric.

October was our Outreach meeting and spent the morning making fleece hats and card inserts with cancer ribbons. See below for more outreach info.

The November meeting was canceled but all members received a small ornament kit in the mail to work on at home.

In the new year we will start our GCC Love and laughter. We will also have a zoom lecture from the Royal School of Needlework on the Samplers in its collection.

On December 8, 2023, fifteen (15) holiday goodie bags were delivered to the Caroline House in Bridgeport, CT for their pre-school children. The bags contained a small book, stickers, a stuffed animal, and various candy treats. Caroline House is a non-profit organization which provides English language instruction for new immigrants in the area. The pre-school children attend while their parents are in language class.

Also on December 8, 2023, thirty-four (34) fleece hats which were sewn by chapter members were delivered to the Whittingham Cancer Center in Norwalk, CT. Two additional hats were

given directly to friends of chapter members who were undergoing chemotherapy. Also, twenty-two (22) cancer ribbon notecards hand embroidered by chapter members were also donated. They were done in a variety of colors representing various types of cancer.



**FLEMINGTON
STITCHERS' CIRCLE** has a new meeting place

Building One - Kitchenette side
314 NJ Rt 12
Flemington, NJ 08822
Still the first Wednesday of the month.
Meeting time is 7-9PM

A big thanks to our national organization for providing the insurance .
In August, several members and one guest entered our local Hunterdon County Fair. Carl was stitching a table runner and visited our chapter for hints and advice - he didn't need much. Encouraged to enter, he took a first place ribbon! Barb stitched a hardanger biscornu which took first place and Best in Show!!!
The chapter promoted itself with a display of stitched items on display. EGA brochures were available. Our hands-on demonstration was making a twisted cord. Visitors would hold on tightly to the knotted end and the member using a hand drill the other end. It proved very popular and a good ice breaker.



We used our education grant to purchase kits for needle felting pumpkins.



Happy Holidays from **MOHAWK VALLEY CHAPTER**.
Wishing everyone a wonderful and healthy new year 2024.

MONMOUTH CHAPTER

NEW YORK CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER

Winter is now here and brings the Capital District busy with our 6 meetings every month as well as our 7 interest group meetings. We've had a successful Stash sale in November and assisted the Ten Broeck Mansion celebrate Christmas by spending time demonstrating embroidery stitches and by displaying Chapter embroidered ornaments on the tree. We are looking forward to our Herringbone Sampler class in January and our Beaded Ribbon Scissor Case Lanyard class in March. The Chapter has also begun a sampler reproduction project from one of the Hudson River mansions near Kingston which will be a 2-year project. We wish all of our stitching family and friends a happy and healthy new year.

The **NUTMEG STITCHERS CHAPTER** enjoyed a wonderful 2023. Although we lost a few members, we gained quite a few. Our membership remains steady at 30. We had a very fun and successful group project in 2022. 16 participants completed their Azaleas by Moonlight project. We followed that up this year with Stars Spangled Sampler, the band sampler from Dawn Fischer of Morning Glory Needleworks. It is still ongoing, and many have reached the halfway point. We also have a Tuesday night zoom for everyone working on these group projects to review progress and get any needed help. Our 2024 project is in process...more to come.

We also had a Stitch in Public event. Teaming up with the Westchester (NY) EGA Chapter and ANG Needle Arts (Westchester) Chapter we met and stitched at the Greenburgh NY Public Library one Saturday afternoon. We had a wide variety of pieces on display, and everyone was very welcoming.

Finally, one of our members, Kate Festo piloted a Rozashi piece that she designed. Kate later taught that piece to over 40 people in ANG's Cyberpointers group. Looking forward to other classes.

The **POCONO MOUNTAIN CHAPTER** started with a few canceled meetings due to the random weather patterns often found in northeast PA. But we stayed in touch with emails, weekly stitch ins and newsletters.

Our various programs for the year included a Florentine Study Box from National, a felted wool basket pin cushion, a Christmas wreath for July, a Stitch-a-long Fall Leaf Sampler, a design your own Bargello pumpkin and a Bargello Christmas ornament designed by Wendy Moore.

Several Stitch In Public days were planned and our members participated at our local library, a Fiber Arts event, a Concert in the Park, a Heritage Craft Day, an autumn Train Station stop, a Harvest Festival and a church service during the Advent season.

Several field trips were planned this year; such as the Penn Dry Goods Market Antiques Show and Sale, an exhibit about the silk industry in the Lehigh Valley, and a shopping trip to Edwardian Needle in NJ to shop for workshop supplies.

To improve the accessibility for our members, we changed venues for our board meetings and weekly stitch-ins with our general membership meetings possibly coming soon.

We enjoyed our annual June luncheon and in December our Holiday Party with a wrapped ornament exchange.

To encourage our members to keep stitching and to enjoy the winter days and nights, our program co-ordinator offered a 100 day challenge to stitch every day until we meet again in March.

We are looking forward to 2024 when we will gather for the GCC course, “Love and Laughter” by Denise Harrington Pratt , “Shenandoah Twist” by Toni Gerdes and “Fiesta Blue” by Carole Lake as well as the Region retreat offered in April.

SKYLLKILL CHAPTER has had some busy months. In July the Chapter again held the Annual Needlework Flea Market - a whole church hall just full of stash enhancement! Regular meetings each month have included programs such as our traditional Mini-Workshops in August, along with various presentations, presented either in person or via Zoom. A Needle Lace class offered in the fall was well attended and enjoyed. The Evening Stitchers Fun Nights on the 2nd Monday of each month is a favorite, with members taking turns leading a small project or offering up to share about their stitching experiences (we got to learn what it's REALLY like to take classes at the Royal School of Needlework). The year wrapped up with the Annual Holiday Auction & Pot Luck Lunch - the first time we've been back to the pot luck since pre-Covid. A great time was had by all.

SUFFOLK COUNTY CHAPTER remains a strong and vital community of stitchers. At the year's end our membership was increased by two new members, both accomplished and thriving needle artists.

Our campaign to reacquaint embroiderers with embroidery or introduce the art to all patrons of our host library has completed a 15-month monthly series. Each month an open stitch-in clinic was held by members of the chapter board and visiting chapter members inviting patrons to bring a project they would like to discuss and learn more about. Lessons asked for included threading

needles, starting that first thread to exploring our National Website and a look at internet resources for supplies.

We look forward to joining our Regional at our next week-end stitch-in event. We also have a 50th anniversary nearing and discussions for a dinner celebration are in the works.

CHAPTER INFORMATION

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