

the craft factor

Volume 6, Number 2

June, 1981



From Rags to Riches	1	Vibs Paulsen
Ecclesiastical Embroidery	3	Merle E. Koehler
Ukrainian Churches in Miniature	5	Orest Shasko
Newdigate Mills to Study in Edinburgh	7	Caroline Heath
Monique Cliche-Spénard — Bronfman Award Winner	8	M.A. Burrill
Glass X 4: A Review	10	David G. Miller
The Canadian Crafts Conference	11	
SCC Chairman's Report	12	Jane A. Evans

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Cover Photo: by Menno Fleguth of North Battleford. Model of St. George Cathedral (Novgorod, Russia, 1119 A.D.) by Orest Shasko. Ceramic sculpture completed 1973. Collection of Jenny Hambridge.

The Craft Factor is published quarterly by the Saskatchewan Craft Council, P.O. Box 7408, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 4J3. The Craft Factor is made possible through funding from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskSport Trust. Comment and opinion are welcome, but will be subject to editing for space and clarity. Only signed letters and submissions will be printed. The Saskatchewan Craft Council is an affiliated member of the Canadian Craft Council and the World Crafts Council.

Opinions expressed in articles appearing in The Craft Factor do not necessarily reflect those of the Saskatchewan Craft Council.

From Rags to Riches

When we first arrived in this country from Denmark, we had to start all over again. Money was scarce, and gifts definitely not included in our budget. As a result, I started making small wallhangings out of scraps of material. Little did I know what this would eventually lead to. By the time all our friends had a sample of my work and our house started resembling a gallery, I was hooked.

One Christmas I gave a wallhanging to a friend who is a Lutheran minister, and that prompted him to ask me to make a set of liturgical banners for the church. I found this new sideline of my work very fascinating and quite different. The size of the banners often made the process very cumbersome. In order for them to be seen clearly from the back of the large church they had to be 3' x 6'. Later, I had an even greater challenge when asked to make banners for two national church conventions both held at the University of Saskatchewan gym. These were 10' x 12', and, even though I decided to make them in sections, I had to move from my regular work table to the ping-pong table, and finally to the living room floor with all the furniture moved out. When they were finished, I didn't even have a wall large enough to hang them up on to see whether they hung properly.

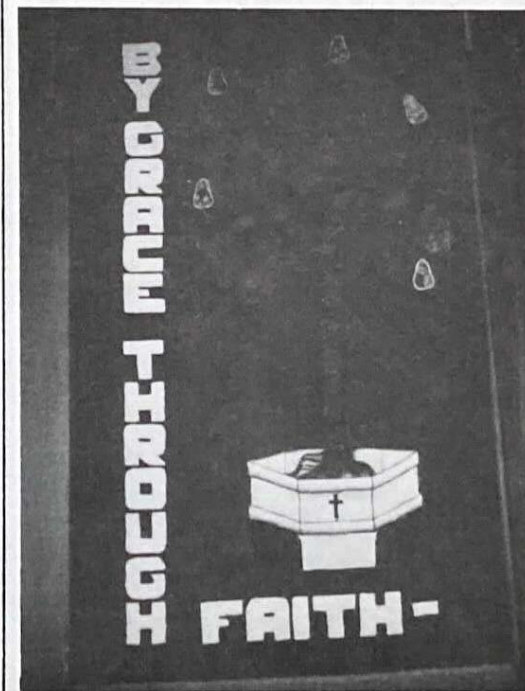
One commission led to another, and soon I was making paraments (the cloths hanging from altar, lectern and pulpit), stoles for ministers, and banners for church schools and nursing homes. My work was not for the Lutheran church only. Other denominations gave me commissions as well. I was even called to a synagogue where they were considering having a new curtain made for the Ark.

I've had to learn a lot about symbolism since I started making ecclesiastical pieces because that's what it is all about. Someone has called it "a poetic expression of thought". The banners and paraments in a church not only enhance the beauty of the sanctuary with their bright colours, but bring a message through the symbols well known to the worshipper. This message must be clear and simple, grasped at a glance; otherwise, it becomes a distraction.

The Christian church has a wealth of symbols. Many of them stem from the first century when the Christians were strongly persecuted. They were used as a secret code of communication among believers. The symbol of the fish was the most significant one. When written in Greek, each letter of the word FISH forms the initial letter of the words "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour". Imagine two men standing in the street talking, one not knowing whether the other was of "the faith", (and you didn't ask in those days). While talking, the Christian would casually trace the outline of a fish in the sand with his foot or staff. If the other man was a believer, he would notice, and contact was established. If not, it would mean nothing to him, and the Christian would not have divulged his secret.



Large convention banner now hanging in Zion Lutheran Church, Saskatoon.



Banner made for the anniversary of the Wynyard Lutheran Church. It depicts the baptismal font symbolizing the beginning of God's grace, from which grows the tree of Christian life, bearing leaves and fruit.

Today, our libraries have volumes on ecclesiastical symbols, and any craftsperson can use them in his or her work. It is advisable, though, to present your design to the clergy for approval before proceeding with work commissioned by a church, to make sure everything is in context.

Even colours have symbolic meaning in the church, and each colour is used during a certain time of the church year. White is used for Christmas and Epiphany and signifies the purity and holiness of God. Purple is for Lent and reminds us of Christ's sufferings. Red is joy; it is used at Pentecost and other festive occasions. Gold is for the bright glory of Easter Sunday. Royal blue, for the coming of the King, is used during Advent, and green means growth and is used the rest of the year.

As you can see, there are a lot of factors to take into consideration in designing ecclesiastical art. The banner shown here combines the symbols of the wheat and wafer, the grapes and chalice with the words, "Given for you", and thus conveys the message of Holy Communion. The two big convention banners I mentioned presented quite a challenge as they had to express a given convention theme.

Many churches still prefer the conventional type of symbols worked on fine brocade and silk. But with more and more modern church structures being erected, the style of worship updated, and the clerical robes changing from the sombre black to the monklike white linen alb, it seems the contemporary banners and paraments made from coarser materials fit better into the picture. I prefer working with upholstery fabric as it has a rich texture and hangs neatly without interlining. The different sections of the design are either appliqued on or fastened with fisinf pellow. I often accentuate outlines with a black cord or string of wool. On very large pieces, I use black twill tape along straight lines and bias tape on curved lines. All pieces are neatly lined and the final touch is a thorough spraying with a dirt-resistant product so your masterpiece can last for years without needing cleaning.

And now — back to my rags to gain more riches. And I don't mean money. I am talking about the rich experience we all have as craftspeople of working with our hands, doing what we love to do, using our talents to create things that bring enjoyment to ourselves and others. That's happiness!

— Vibs Paulsen, Saskatoon



Banner in Zion Lutheran Church, Saskatoon.

(Photos by V. Paulsen)



Zion Communion banner.

Ecclesiastical Embroidery

Crafts of many varieties have captivated and held my interests in past years. For me, doing handicrafts and creative living go hand-in-hand. It's a case of letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing. I find handicrafts to be a beautiful way for people to express their individual tastes and creativity. It is also a way to relax and add pleasure and enjoyment to life. While living in the United States a number of years ago, I learned a rather unique handicraft art form that has become special for me. The technical name is ecclesiastical embroidery.

The type of ecclesiastical embroidery that I am familiar with involves a wooden frame, linen cloth, fine silk threads and expensive silver or golden threads. Patience and good eyesight are important. The end result brings joy and deep satisfaction as beautiful age-old symbols and designs are re-created or new ones fashioned.

I have had the opportunity to share the skills of ecclesiastical embroidery for the last eight years with wives of theological students in Saskatoon. It is exciting to watch them design and embroider beautiful stoles for their husbands, after they have learned the various stitches on a sampler. Through this medium, Christian symbols have taken on a special and rich meaning.

Christian symbols on clerical stoles date back to the first three centuries A.D., when persecuted Christians invested pagan symbols with new meaning and came up with designs of their own to express and communicate Christian concepts. It is thought that the direct forerunner of ecclesiastical embroidery comes from early Anglo-Saxon times as an inexpensive substitute for costly woven silks from Asia and the near East. During medieval days the embroidery was produced by skilled professionals in London. Various periods of time saw various expressions. For example, stole designs in the 12th century were for the most part solemn and staid; in the 13th century they became rigid and less lifelike. After the "Black Death" and wars devastated much of England toward the end of the 14th century, ecclesiastical embroidery met its demise. It has enjoyed occasional revivals since.



This sampler of embroidered symbols was made by Lillian Hohnsbein, one of Merle Koehler's present students. Students generally complete 8 to 12 basic designs before working on an actual stole or parament.



Joan Knudson adds finishing touches to her Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) symbol. Unlike regular embroidery, ecclesiastical work is done entirely with single threads.



Merle Koehler, right, explains some detail work to Sandy Paulson, one of her students. The embroidery is done on linen stretched tightly on a hardwood frame.

One of the important reasons for wanting to learn this centuries-old art form is that it permits members of a parish to give expression to their faith as they embroider Christian symbols on altar cloths and church paraments. Creativity in design allows ecclesiastical embroidery to complement other artistic endeavour and the architectural style of the church. The tradition of designing and embroidering symbols is worthy of revival because it is an important aid to worship. Ecclesiastical embroidery becomes a meaningful way for people in the parish to dedicate their time and talents.

I indicated earlier that this art form is time-consuming. To give an example — a very simple design can be done in a couple of evenings; however, a more complex one would take 30 to 40 hours or more. Yet, I am constantly amazed at the joy and satisfaction people get from this work and their willingness to volunteer extra time toward it.

Most of our materials are obtained through companies in the U.S.A. The fabric used most often for stoles and paraments is silk damask and the threads are pure silk filo floss from England.

I teach a yearly class and have taught classes as large as 22 people. I am thrilled to think that these women are now spread across Canada and can now share this very special skill with others in the communities where they live. Ecclesiastical embroidery continues to bring meaning to people's worship as it expresses personal devotion and praise to God.

— Merle E. Koehler, Saskatoon

Ruth Gowdy McKinley Died 29 March 1981

Ruth McKinley, wife of Donald Lloyd McKinley, mother of Lauren, lost a long, hard battle with cancer on March 29, 1981. Ruth will be remembered by all who knew her as a wonderful woman, mother and craftsman, whose life was dedicated to those things which meant most to her: family, crafts, clay, love, grace and beauty.

Ruth was a woman of great serenity and calmness, which almost obscured the quiet strength of her beliefs and actions. She gave of herself unstintingly and was always there to help when needed. The crafts world has suffered an untimely loss in her death. Initially in training as a concert pianist, she switched to ceramics, and in 1949 went to New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred, New York, where she studied for six years, graduating with a Master of Fine Arts degree. After some time working as a potter in Ossipee, New Hampshire, she moved with husband Don, woodworker and furniture designer, to Wayland, New York, and set up her first pottery studio, where she was able to develop skills in the wood firing of pottery. These skills progressed and were refined over the years into some of the finest works of functional ceramics ever produced by hand methods. A purist, concerned with beauty, form, function and sophistication, her work has provided the pinnacle of craftsmanship to which many aspire, but few succeed.

In the development of her craft Ruth believed that the highest qualities and standards must be sought, and in this respect she gave much time to cementing these goals in her involvement with Ceramists Canada, an embryonic national organization, with these and other ideals and objectives, Ruth was an altruist, who with quiet dedication has changed and inspired the lives of many.

The qualities of music, balance, harmony, scale, theme and variations will live forever in the legacy of her pots, which have the qualities of vitrified music, serene, pure and delicate, those same qualities with which the person was also so wonderfully endowed.

We who knew her have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to enjoy her friendship. Ruth will be greatly missed and the crafts community has suffered a great loss. Our sympathies go out to Don and Lauren at this time of sorrow.

— Robin Hopper

Ukrainian Churches in Miniature

Rationale for making the church models:

The project began as an essay research paper in a Medieval art history class for my B.F.A. program. The study of the development of the cruciform church plan and shape of the dome of Constantinople and Greek influence was of particular interest to me. The diminished and extremely ornate Russian churches of the 17th century have an interesting comparative progression to the churches in Saskatchewan, where unique changes in the architecture of the apse, towers and other parts evolved on a miniature scale.

Perhaps the most important reason for choosing the subject is the familiarity and sentimental attachment to the Ukrainian churches of Saskatchewan. The churches represent a time when life was secure and stable. I attended and was brought up in the area of these churches in Kamsack. The towns of Wroxton and Canora are a unique part of the province where so many old-fashioned churches exist, in contrast to the Regina area. My own father, in his boyhood in the 1920s, used to occasionally attend the small Wroxton Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church on Highway 8, five miles north of Wroxton. The church is now vacant and left to deteriorate like many others of the period. This is another reason for the importance of making models of these churches. It was only last year that the Kamsack Ukraine Catholic Church was replaced by a new, uninteresting, simple architectural rendition. It replaces the old wooden model with the silver sebouillia (onion) domes. An important part of our cultural landmarks is being destroyed by the new emphasis on wanting something "better".

The reason for making the models out of clay was derived from my success with handbuilding a Model T car. The interesting ways clay will dry and fire lends to the authentic character of the model. The first church model I built was of the St. George Cathedral at Novgorod, Russia (see cover photo). It is about five times larger than our ordinary churches in Saskatchewan. The real churches of 1100 A.D. were actually gold-plated on the domes, and of course, the gold over-glaze I applied to the model's domes was an appropriate medium. I've been criticized for using clay to construct the models because of warpage and breakage. But, I've been encouraged to continue in this medium after a visit to the Toronto Museum, where I saw four-foot long building models of Oriental homes from the 6th century, constructed out of clay and perfected to being razor blade straight.

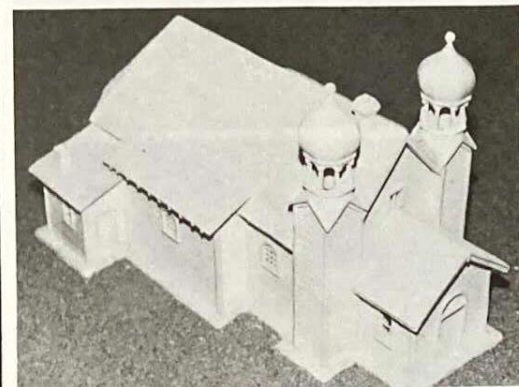
The first model of the Wroxton Ukrainian Orthodox Church that I constructed in 1975 was part of the work required to fulfill a Canada Council grant to work for three months to construct models of Saskatchewan's Ukrainian churches. The method of working with stiffened damp clay slabs is employed in all my work. Cardboard stencils were prepared from scale calculations off photos. Then slabs were rolled again over a hand-carved series of boards to give an impression of the 1" x 3" siding boards on the original church. After holes were cut for windows and doors, the windows and doors were cut out from 1/8" thick slabs, allowed to dry then slip-glued into place. Finally, the trimming was installed on each wall unit before walls were joined. Cardboard waste molds were employed for the dome construction and plaster slip-clay molds prepared for the pair of smaller domes.



Model of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Wroxton, constructed in 1975.



Original Church from which model was made.



Wroxton Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, low-fire talc body clay.

(Photos by O. Shasko)

The time required to make each model was from eight months to over a year, keeping all the slabs stored under cover. The latest model of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was a finer piece of work and the drying difficulties were overcome to arrive at a straighter model. Each shingle on the roof was carved individually with a knife to arrive at a more realistic appearance of the old cedar shingles.

The next model I plan to do is of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Wadena which has a dome and drum on each of four roof points. The highlight of church models I plan to construct is a large model of the red brick Catholic Church in Canora, where a black roof and marblized dome drums would be attempted in a variety of glazing techniques.

The extreme detail and repetitious labour involved in the building of the models is greatly overbalanced by the possession of the finished doll-house replica which can be lit from the interior to serve as a Christmas centerpiece — and all is worth it.

workshops

SCC Workshop Policy

The Saskatchewan Craft Council struck a Workshop Policy Committee of seven active members, who put together over a period of three months a workshop policy proposal. The proposal was adopted by the SCC board April 25, 1981 in Regina.

The policy sets out in some detail, guidelines for co-sponsored workshops. In the past, some SCC workshops were self-initiated by what the SCC board felt was a need in the craft community. A few of these ventures were very successful but several others were disasters in that they had to be cancelled because the membership showed little or no interest. Now, the Saskatchewan Craft Council must have in writing a request that a minimum of six persons are interested in a specific workshop. This means an individual who wants a specific workshop must research the interests of others that might also want the same workshop. A contact person is established in this group of six and will work with the SCC.

Non co-sponsored workshops will include marketing and general content of interest to the craft people of the province.

The SCC should advise the Saskatchewan Arts Board on out-of-province or out-of-country instructors and possible workshops with them, for intermediate and advanced workshops which could be held at Fort San. The SAB is willing to support this type of workshop elsewhere than Fort San, but local contact people must be found for these workshops. It is then up to that contact person to work with the SAB and SCC generally as defined under "co-sponsored" workshops.

The guidelines as set out in the policy are open to revision at any time, since they are not meant to exclude reasonable workshop activities for Saskatchewan craftspeople. Contact the Saskatchewan Craft Council office for your copy of the SCC workshop policy. The SCC board will welcome questions, criticism and suggestions on this policy!

Newdigate Mills to Study in Edinburgh

Next to the loom is a cardboard tray covered with neat piles of loosely wound wool. Ann Newdigate Mills mixes her yarns on this "palette", and on the warp as she weaves.

"I am working in a painterly manner and am no longer apologetic about it," Ann asserts.

This fall, Ann Mills begins a year of advanced study and work at the Edinburgh College of Art, made possible by a \$10,000 senior arts award from the Saskatchewan Arts Board. She chose Edinburgh because it is the focal point for instruction and work in the Gobelin method of weaving.

Gobelin, unlike multi-harness weaving, usually has a pictorial intention. Trained craftspeople, using this technique and sometimes collaborating with artists, translate paintings into tapestry. They generally use a cartoon and meticulously mark around the threads of the warp, in ink, to indicate exactly where and how the yarn is to interpret paint.

"What is unique about my use of Gobelin," Ann explains, "is that I design as I go." Because Gobelin is basically "finger weaving", as opposed to the more complex, multi-harness weaving, you can build up sections, without having to work straight across every line. Ann does not use a cartoon, though she may refer to a preliminary sketch.

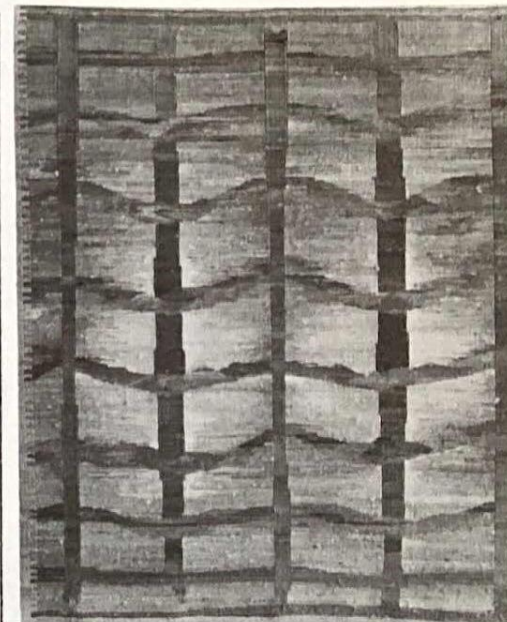
This "work as you go" approach, says Ann, is a slow process. But she is compelled by the tension between the freedom of painting and the limitations of the loom. She insists that Otto Rogers, from whom she took a painting class while doing her B.F.A., has been the strongest influence on her work. The switch from painting to weaving occurred almost by accident. She met Margreet Van Waalsem, a Prince Albert weaver, at the Saskatchewan Summer School of the Arts. Although she was not enrolled in her class, Ann was very taken by Margreet. "She became something of a role model for me: an older woman with a commitment to her art. I also discovered that I had always had a love of textiles, but hadn't realized it until I met her."

Since she began weaving ten years ago, Ann has become increasingly fascinated by the medium. "It has something to do with texture and process," she says. "Colours, textures, shapes are integrated, rather than applied. There's something constricting and exciting about the process — the modular basis of construction. And I'm intrigued by the changes in material during progressive stages of the process."

Ann used to dye her own wool, using vegetable dyes. "Now," she says laughingly, "Kate Shook dyes for me." Kate dyes the wool in the fleece, which is important to Ann, because she can then spin the wool herself. "I can make colour decisions while I'm spinning."

Colours and textures can be created at the dyeing, spinning, palette and weaving stages. Shapes are created only in the final weaving stage. In her current work, Ann is not concentrating on symmetrical pattern or recognizable image. Working within the flexibility and restrictions of the Gobelin medium, she is exploring movement and the interplay of light and dark.

One of the attractions of traditional tapestry-making, for Ann, is its link with antiquity. It goes even further back than medieval Europe, to Coptic and early Peruvian tapestries (2000 B.C.).



"Rug Cage" tapestry 1980 by Ann Newdigate Mills (38½" x 45").

(Photo by Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza)

Ann is becoming more and more aware of the disadvantages of not having a tradition. "There are certain things that you know," she says, "if your family or ancestors did this." Learning everything yourself is a slow method, and it appears to be the main one in Canada, where few institutions offer advanced instruction in Gobelin technique. Ann does, however, give credit to her instructors at the University of Saskatchewan, Stan Day, Eli Bornstein and Paul Hamilton, for encouraging her work.

Lack of recognition of the medium, in her view, has hindered the development of weavers. It has been her impression that "the commercial gallery system does not accommodate people like me." She is grateful to Wayne Morgan, curator of the Dunlop Gallery in Regina, for mounting an exhibition of her work in 1979. And she has been promised a show at the Norman Mackenzie Gallery on her return from Edinburgh.

The subject of "authentication" troubles Ann. With whom did you study/train/work/exhibit? The question invariably arises. While the serious artist always wants his work to be recognized and accepted on its own terms, he observes the authenticating effect of these associations. For Ann, the Arts Board award means that she can study in Edinburgh, and she can hold onto, for a while, the two tapestries she's just finished, and studying in Edinburgh means an opportunity to work with the world's top Gobelin weavers. But perhaps the Arts Board award — the only one given this year — and the association with STAG (Scottish Tapestry Artists Group) will also contribute to the authentication of Ann Mills' weaving.

— Caroline Heath

Monique Cliche-Spenard Bronfman Award Winner

On a recent visit to Montreal, I had the privilege of viewing Monique Cliche-Spenard's exhibition of quilted banners and standards at the "Centre des arts Visuels". These delightful pieces are alive with the nostalgic history of French pioneers in Quebec! The artist's choice of cotton prints in subtle shades of dusty greys, browns, rose and yellow with brick reds and black are very sensitively used. Most of the pieces are for architectural purposes, although a couple in the exhibit might well enhance a king-size bed in the right setting.

Monique Cliche-Spenard's subjects were inspired by her rural surroundings at St. Joseph de Beauce, where she was born. Old and new photographs of neighbouring buildings aided her work as well as a study of butter press designs and maple candy molds that were handcrafted a century ago.

Monique's home and studio is a large Victorian wood house that was built for Mr. Gosselin, a notary, in 1896, and subsequently was owned by her father, and brother, both Quebec judges, and now herself. Spacious rooms with plenty of natural light from large windows contributes to the artist's work and lifestyle. In an article in *Les Maisons du Quebec*, March-April, 1981 issue, a little is told of this grand home, its mistress and her love for collecting historical artifacts for her home in Beauce county.

Her exhibition tells a story of the Beauceronne people. The influence of the church and spiritual victory is evident in some of the pieces, i.e. *The Cross of the Road* and *Bleeding Hearts*. *The Maple Grove* depicting the sugar cabin, maple trees hung with sap buckets and an old sleigh with a vast wooden tub to collect the sap in has its own festive story. With little imagination you can hear crows heralding the advent of spring, the Chaudiere River swelling its banks with spring run-off, hear the happy activities at the sugar camp and smell the sweet vapour coming from within! Definitely my favourite piece!

Another scene of later spring has a large apple tree in bloom (embroidered in variegated pink floss) also reveals something of the artist's awareness to creation. This lovely standard creates a song in the heart of the observer!

Where colour and design were excellent, upon closer scrutiny, the techniques left a lot to be desired. The machine appliqued pieces had raw edges (some even frayed) and there was evidence of lack of machine control. The stitchery was extremely inconsistent in the actual quilting as were the embroidery articles used. Somehow, I feel Mme. Cliche-Spenard has let the quality of craftsmanship pass her by and in so doing, done an injustice to the excellence in stitchery that stitchery guilds try to maintain. This is not evident in photos of her work and her pieces photograph very well. It was extremely disappointing to make this discovery of the techniques used to create such marvellous pieces.

Monique Cliche-Spenard has begun a cottage industry of local Beauce women who come to her workshop to work at cutting, piecing and stitching quilts and standards together, reminiscent of the "crazy quilts" their Beauceronne grandmothers once made. A viable industry to Beauce county telling a story of another time.

— Margaret Ann Burrill



La Ferme Michel: quilted banner, 72" x 93" — 1m82 x 2m36. Monique Cliche-Spénard, Saint-Joseph de Beauce, Quebec, 1976.



La Grange à Cliche: Monique Cliche-Spénard, 1978. Banner 94" x 97" — 2m41 x 2m48. This barn in the concession Bord de l'Eau at Saint-Joseph de Beauce was built in 1889 by Thomas Cliche at Vital à Catoche. Note the bell-tower in good condition and the long shingled chimney which served to ventilate the stable.

(Photos by Monique Cliche-Spénard)



L'Erablière (Maple Grove): Monique Cliche-Spénard, 1978, banner 63" x 85" — 1m60 x 2m16.

A Patch in Time

Calgary Quilt Conference — *A Patch in Time* — is coming October 22 to 25, 1981!

Sponsored by Leisure Learning Services, City of Calgary Parks and Recreation, Continuing Education Department, Calgary Board of Education, this will be the first major quilt conference held in Calgary.

The conference, which will be held at the Alberta College of Art, will include lectures and practical workshops dealing with many of the exciting techniques of patchwork, quilting and applique, the use of colour, design inspiration and possibilities, historical quilts, clothing and practical aspects of publishing. In addition there will be a gala fashion show featuring designs by some resource staff and local and regional quilters.

Resource staff for this major event have been carefully chosen from across North America as representing the most exciting and inspirational designer/quilters in the field today. The lectures and workshops are designed to provide participants with wide and varied exposure to many facets of this beautiful craft.

Nominees Needed for SCC Board of Directors

Four (4) Board positions will be vacant for election at the October, 1981 Annual General Meeting. Term of office is two years of craft-oriented activities and rewards. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact the SCC office soon at Box 7408, Saskatoon S7K 4J3. Phone 653-3616.

Dunlop Gallery Assistant Curator Appointed

Gary Dufour has been appointed Assistant Curator of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina Public Library.

Gary was born in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, and educated in Regina, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with distinction in 1976 from the University of Regina. In 1979, he received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

Prior to his Dunlop appointment April 13, Gary worked as a Museum Technician and Registrar of the Collection, for the Saskatchewan Arts Board and as a lecturer with the University of Regina, Department of Visual Arts. Previously he taught sculpture classes and lectured at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, and earlier taught drawing and painting at the University of Regina. He was executive director of the SCC in 1976/77.

"Gary brings familiarity with Saskatchewan, knowledge of artistic concerns developing elsewhere in Canada and administrative ability to his new position," says Wayne Morgan, Dunlop Curator.

Juror's Report: Battleford '81

Jurying for the 1981 Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival Craft Market was in many ways a pleasurable experience: it was wonderful to see many remarkable works by Saskatchewan craftspeople, and June Jacobs, for the Saskatchewan Craft Council, made the jurying a smooth and efficient process.

However, there were two major disappointments. One was the constraining requirements of *having* to select enough people, from a somewhat limited number of entrants, to make North Battleford a financially feasible affair. (Similarly, the 1980 jurors stated, "Economic pressures required acceptance of lower standards than we would have desired.") The other was the *a priori* policy decision to exclude prints, paintings and photographs. It is hoped that in future years these two areas will be rethought.

Nonetheless, it was personally rewarding to be given the opportunity by the Saskatchewan Craft Council to participate in its ongoing efforts to make quality Saskatchewan crafts more visible and available.

— Mayo Graham
— Karen Schoonover

Glass X 4

Glass X 4, an exhibition at the Saskatoon Public Library April 14 to May 3, clearly demonstrates that Lee Brady, Diane Paterson, Myrna Tyson and Judy Wood know a lot about stained glass, and are capable of putting that knowledge to good use.

Two things about *Glass X 4* struck me during several visits to the show: first, the large number of people in the gallery and the obvious enjoyment the glass works inspired — this was a very inviting and approachable exhibition; second, the versatility of the medium and the very distinct "hand" that was visible in the work of each of the four artists.

Lee Brady seems very wrapped up in ideas, wit, concepts and the process of art. A series of postcard-panels (each incorporating a genuine Canadian postage stamp, and drawing from or commenting upon that stamp in the theme of the panel) show Brady's ability to draw out a single approach to good effect in several works. *Midnight Special* involves puns both visual and verbal and weaves intricate shapes with intricate thoughts. Only in *Canoe*, however, did I find a real exploitation of glass — a shimmering, shifting pattern of ripples and reflections that could not have been created quite like this in any other material. Much of Brady's other work in this exhibition might just as easily have been done in paint, or some other medium and perhaps might have suffered less from excessive busy-ness.

Of the four glassworkers in this exhibition, Myrna Tyson seems the most traditional artisan. Her work is not highly original, nor does it seek to explore new and dangerous territory. There is a familiar, quiet, sunny-Sunday-afternoon quality to her work. But though she may use standard motifs — flowers, butterflies, prettiness — Tyson presents them to us with such freshness and clarity that we have no sense of "Oh yeah, this again!". Everything is done with great care, but never with uncomfortable formality. *Japan Lady* is exquisite. *Summer Garden* window is one of the finest things in the show — its brilliant poppies, dark butterflies and large areas of clear glass create a magic world that can exist between the real world in a room and the real world viewed clearly outside... I want to see this window installed. Simplicity, flowing line, colour and clarity all make *Summer Garden* a complete success.

"And in the centre ring, Ladies and Gentlemen, Diane Paterson will now make three sheets of glass do a triple somersault on the high wire, forty feet above the ground, without a net!" Paterson seems to be determined to find out how far you can push stained glass, and in how many directions. Often such experimentation creates work which is of interest only to the artist or to others who are already interested in the medium which is being explored.

Paterson has steered safely clear of this trap (at least in the works exhibited here; I wonder what spectacular failures she may have gone through en route?), and created dynamic sculpture in stained glass, sculpture which draws us and fascinates us whether or not we care about glass... because the artist has cared so much and so successfully about the medium and the image, we care about the finished product. *Asai* and *Water Fairy 2* are three-dimensional works, with the central figure soaring forward and up out of the background. I don't know whether these pieces are as fragile as they seem, but I found myself nervous at even approaching too closely... perhaps a very suitable sensation when confronted with such supernatural creatures.

And lest we think these visual acrobatics are the only act in the Paterson show, she gives us *1 to 4*, a panel of hard geometric lines which uses glass in the antithesis of the usual "Oh-isn't-it-pretty, and just-look-at-the-way-the-light-comes-through-it!" style. *1 to 4* is utterly opaque, glass used in a very two-dimensional way for its colour and surface texture.

Encore, Ms. Paterson!

I have long felt that Judy Wood is one of the finest artists in the province, and her works in *Glass X 4* confirm my opinion. She has worked extensively with batik, and has more recently concentrated on glass. Frankly, I suspect she could make things out of lumps of broken coal, and still move me with the end product. In Wood's work the images are so strong and clear that the medium is almost incidental... though the glass is used beautifully, and with a full awareness of what the material can do. Witness *Saved From Invisibility by Tears*: a face all in clear glass, with a single trickle of faceted tears in glass which is just barely blue. Many of Wood's works are peopled with solitary (lonely? waiting? wishing? patient? hopeful? despairing?) women. *Saved From Invisibility*, *Inside Looking Out*, *Moon Lady With Plant*, are all haunting images, and all seem to ask more questions than they answer. There is humour and whimsy in these works, too, especially in *The Whale at the End of the Rainbow* (which is just what the title suggests), and *Crossing the Falls/The Tightrope of Life* (in which a turn-of-the-century daredevil defies gravity, death and incidentally, the frame of the picture — remember those mad pictures on the walls of *Maggie and Jiggs*?) *Dream Landscape* combines images of sleep, of knights-in-armor, of whales and more, and mixes them with a sense of humour, of sadness, of not-quite-order which is entirely appropriate. At a glance the image is too fragmented and busy; given a little more time, the fragments begin to make sense together. It's a work that needs some time and thought to be viewed completely.

Only two of Wood's works left me unsatisfied: the two circular panels depicting the Northern Lights seem to me to be "near misses". The attempt is admirable, but perhaps the enormous sweep of the aurora is too much to be captured in a circle perhaps a foot and a half in diameter.

All in all, *Glass X 4* was a fine show, the beginning, I hope, of greater exposure and interest for glass in Saskatchewan. It was unfortunate that the exhibition should be shown in the perennially under-lit Library Gallery. Those pieces which were properly mounted and lit — by the artists, I have no doubt — stood out to much better effect than those which were forced to rely on ad hoc lighting from the Gallery. The Gallery in the Frances Morrison Library has been commendable in its energetic efforts to present — and in many cases introduce — the work of Saskatchewan artists to the people of Saskatchewan. Its service to the public will be even greater when its facilities enable it to display this work properly.

— David G. Miller

The Canadian Crafts Conference

Time: September, 1982

Place: The Maritime Provinces

Theme: *Craft and Tradition in a Changing World*

During the World Craft Council Conference in Japan in 1978, the large Canadian delegation realized what they had gained by working, travelling and meeting together. Perhaps for the first time this group of over 100 craftsmen understood that they had a national identity and that the Canadian craft image had a significance in the world scene.

Many expressed regret that it was necessary to travel to Japan to discover this camaraderie, and asked why such a gathering could not be staged in Canada. There, more Canadians could participate and share in this process of self-discovery.

Under the leadership of then-CCC President Ann Mortimer, the idea was not allowed to die. At the 1979 annual general meeting in Aurora, Ontario, the Atlantic region offered to host the conference. It was felt that Canadian craftsmen should look first to their heritage and traditions. Therefore: where better than the Atlantic provinces?

An ad hoc committee was formed in the Atlantic region and a tentative plan was proposed. The main concepts were:

- That the conference be offered primarily to the practising craftsman and that time and costs be organized so there would be maximum input from this group;
- That recognition be given to traditional crafts and every effort made to facilitate a two-way learning experience between traditional and contemporary craftsmen;
- That time be allowed during sessions and travel to enable craftsmen to meet and confer informally;
- That although the Atlantic region was organizing and acting as hosts, the conference was by and for Canadian craftsmen;
- That it was essential to seek federal government funding for an event of such magnitude and significance;
- That it was vital to the success of the conference to hire a co-ordinator at least eighteen months before the event. None of the craft organizations in the Atlantic region has the staff or facilities to undertake the responsibility of such a venture.

At the 1980 CCC Annual Meeting at Fort San, Saskatchewan, the ad hoc committee was formalized and its recommendations were received with enthusiasm by the delegates. The interest was so great that the committee was asked to prepare at least tentative dates and a schedule for the representatives to take back to their various constituencies. They could then begin to plan financing to get their craftspeople to the Maritimes in 1982. Therefore, a suggestion questionnaire was prepared and circulated. Replies are being received daily by the committee chairman.

The suggested program is:

The conference be held during the third week of September, 1982.

On **Tuesday** and **Wednesday**, participants would arrive at three centres — Charlottetown, Halifax and Fredericton. Workshops with leaders, symposia amongst peers and discussion groups will be set up in the three locations. Participants go to the centre hosting the theme of their interest (e.g., porcelain might be in Halifax, stoneware in Charlottetown and primitive firing in Fredericton). New

Brunswick could offer discussion on *The Craftsman and Business Practice*, Prince Edward Island might concentrate on *Standards and Aesthetics*, Nova Scotia could deal with *Galleries and Museums*, etc. Approximately a hundred people would be accommodated in each centre. This session would last for two days.

Thursday. The three groups converge at Memramcook, New Brunswick, which is approximately equidistant from the three Maritime capitals. At Memramcook, groups of traditional craftsmen will have already been working at various techniques, i.e. basketmaking, quilting, boat building, forging, wood carving, netting and lobster pot making, etc.

Friday. Devoted to interaction between the traditional craftsmen and the other participants.

Saturday. Each province and territory presents itself and its crafts to the assembly. In the evening, the Atlantic region hosts the opening of the first Atlantic Juried Show.

Sunday. Keynote address on *Crafts and Tradition in a Changing World*. The CCC annual meeting will be held and final papers presented.

Monday. CCC Board meets after the conference participants have departed.

If you were not at Fort San, the conference planning committee urgently requires your input. Suggestions from practising craftsmen for workshops, symposia, discussion groups will be welcomed by George Fry, Chairman, Canadian Crafts Conference, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5H1.

An application has been made to the federal government for money from Loto Canada to enable the Canadian Conference of the Crafts to take place. At the time *Artisan* went to press, a response had not yet been received to this application.

— Year-end, 1980, *Artisan*

Canadian Craft Conference Call for Delegates

Do you want to be one of Saskatchewan's delegates to this event? SCC will assist a number of its active members in going. Names of interested people are hereby sought, with the resulting list to be voted on by SCC members by mail. Please contact SCC, Box 7408, Saskatoon S7K 4J3, (phone 653-3616) before December 31, 1981.

SCC Chairman's Report

"I'm a great believer in luck — the harder I work the luckier I am." That could well be said by us in the SCC, because we're very "lucky". As chairman of a super group of board members, I see about 95 percent hard work and 5 percent good fate in this year going so well for all of us in the SCC. Committees of interested members are pooling ideas and from that effort some results are: a new policy statement on workshops, an in-depth look at craft education for our province, a review of written standards used by craftsmen and juries, a survey of ideas about a shop/gallery, smoother running sales at Battleford and Wintergreen, an emerging resource centre for and about craftspeople, and a higher profile to government agencies dealing with our cultural concerns. The SCC is its members, and they are making it all tick.

We craftsmen are very "lucky" that our board members are eager, thoughtful, hard workers. It is a team effort in SCC, and we have a fine team.

One board member, Franklyn Heisler, is leaving the province for a year or so. Thank you, Franklyn, for your excellent input, and best wishes in your new appointment.

Fortunately, another interested person has come forward to serve as board member. Olesia Kowalsky of Prince Albert will complete Franklyn's term through October. She is a potter and is very interested in craft education.

SCC has evolved because craftsmen want to interact with other craftsmen and ideas about their fields. An exciting prospect for this is coming in September of 1982. A Canadian Craft Conference is planned to be held in the Maritimes. What a chance to meet and talk with people from across the whole country! Workshops, seminars, all sorts of stimulating possibilities will be there.

A fund is being budgetted to assist delegates from Saskatchewan to go. Elsewhere in this issue of *The Craft Factor* are more details. If you are interested, say so soon. The SCC is many things to many people, and now it can be of use on a national level to some of our members. They, in turn, can bring back ideas and energy for craftsmen working here in Saskatchewan. The theme of the conference is *Craft and Tradition in a Changing World*, which relates to all of us.

It is important that members of the SCC be in touch with their group's activities, especially decisions made by the board of directors. To this end, minutes from board meetings have been included in previous *Craft Factors*. To try to orient that information to our membership and not burden the general readership of *The Craft Factor* with the inner workings of our organization, the minutes will henceforth be included in SCC *Bulletins*, rather than in *The Craft Factor*. It is an experiment, and if anyone has opinions on the shift, please let us know at the office.

See you at the Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival in Battleford, July 17, 18 and 19!

— Jane A. Evans, Chairman

Letters

Contemporary Canadian Ceramics
c/o Ontario Association of Art Galleries
38 Charles Street East
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1T3

Dear Ms. MacPherson:

I have received a Canada Council grant to research a book. The working title is *Contemporary Canadian Ceramics*. I am interested in information on the subject encompassing the years from approximately 1920 to the present.

I would appreciate your mentioning this in your next newsletter, along with a request that anybody with archival material, old photos, slides, clippings, catalogues, etc. on this period please contact me at the above address. I am particularly interested in taping oral interviews with people familiar with the key individuals and happenings of the period.

Your kind assistance will be most appreciated. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Barry Morrison

Wintergreen 1981

Please note the correct dates for Wintergreen 1981. They are November 27 and 28.

Correction to Article on Wood Worker Haftor Svee:

Curious about the moving of a sod house? Due to the fact our *Craft Factor* editor received a set of slides with no titles, she chose what she considered a homesteader's home. And this sod house was Haftor's first home when he homesteaded, but then it became a playhouse, a hen house, a pig pen and finally just another building for storage. It never served as a studio.

Haftor's studio is a typical two-room frame house that has been wired for electricity but has no plumbing. Anyone out there with a sod house studio?

Share in the Craft of Saskatchewan

Share in the tradition of fine workmanship at the 8th Annual Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival.

Over 150 craftspeople from across Saskatchewan will be sharing their craft with you from July 17 to 19 in the Town of Battleford arena and auditorium.

Our province's craftspeople will be exhibiting and selling the best of their:

- Applique • Batik • Native Crafts • Crochet
- Knitting • Embroidery • Jewellery • Leatherwork
- Pottery • Quilting • Stained Glass • Spinning
- Weaving • Woodwork...and much more.

You can share in the experience of craftmaking, too. Continuous demonstrations will show you how it's made.

A Trade Fair for Some

The morning of Friday, July 17, is a special time for galleries, museums, architects, designers, and retail and wholesale shop owners. This is when people in the business can meet Saskatchewan craftspeople, view their work, and place orders.

This event will be closed to the public.

An Exhibition for Everyone

The best of the Festival will be displayed at the Juried Exhibition in the Auditorium. A panel of two in-province and one out-of-province jurors will select winning entries. Over \$2,000 in prizes will be awarded at the Opening Ceremonies, 12:30 p.m. on Friday, July 17.

Festival Hours

Friday, July 17: 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. — TRADE FAIR
(Closed to Public)

1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. — Open to Everyone

Saturday, July 18: 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. — Open to Everyone

Sunday, July 19: Noon - 6:00 p.m. — Open to Everyone

ADMISSION: \$1.00/Day for Adults
Senior Citizens and Children Free



Saskatchewan Handcraft Festival

Postage Guaranteed

Second Class Mail Registration Number 4818

Return: Saskatchewan Craft Council
Box 7408
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 4J3

Deadline for next *Craft Factor*:
August 20, 1981

Theme: *Folk Crafts in Saskatchewan*