

What Goes on in an Award-Winning Stitcher's Brain?

Once again, the *Needle Pointers* staff wanted to know more about the talented stitchers who won awards in the Seminar Exhibit, so we sent another questionnaire to see what they would reveal. We got a great response. So great that we couldn't include all the answers in the Gallery this year.

This supplement is organized in the same way as the Gallery in the magazine so you can easily jump back and forth to read more about the stitcher who created the beautiful needlework piece shown. Keep in mind, not all of the award winners were able to complete and return their questionnaires in time to meet our publication deadlines.

Original Needle Art Non-Professional Category 1-NP

1st Place

104NP: Julie A. Butus, *Kilimanjaro*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

The inspiration for *Kilimanjaro* came from a promise I made my dad, Peter Butus. September 1997, he was on the ascent of Kilimanjaro and within 1500 feet from the summit when he experienced chest pains. He regretted not summiting; I promised he would summit someday. September 13, 2014, Keith Butus (my brother), MacAllister Griffiths (my son), Lisa Eldredge (friend since the third grade), and I began our adventure in Tanzania and trekking up Kilimanjaro. On September 22, 2015, Keith, Mac, and I summited. We spread some of Dad's ashes at the summit, promise fulfilled.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you "wing it"?

When I design a piece I do a line drawing, scribble in some ideas for colors and stitches for the piece, and go from there. For this piece I used some photographs and my memory of the trek. The landscape is rugged. Kilimanjaro is the tallest free-standing volcanic mountain on earth, 19,341 feet in elevation. I wanted to map out our trail. The cream-colored line near the ridge line with lots of ups and downs and switchbacks represents the trail, the French knots represent our camps, and the legend names the camps where we camped.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I wanted to be able to work in detail; the canvas is Congress cloth. For the mountain I used slanted Gobelin, the sky was a darning pattern, and for the clouds that came in daily, I needle felted the whispery cloud. We trekked during the dry season, and the landscape was not as green as I thought it might be, even in the rainforest. The rainforest was at 8,000 feet.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I looked through my stash for some of the fibers in the piece. For the rest I stood in front of the fiber wall in one of my favorite needlework shops and pulled more fibers for the piece.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

My first stitch book was Carolyn Ambuter's *ABC's of Needlepoint Stitches*. I also use Jan Eaton's *Complete Encyclopedia of Stitches*, and *Stitches To Go* along with many others.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My fibers are separated by type of fiber. While working on a project, I pull the fibers and keep them with the project until finished.

2nd Place

103NP: Lee Ann Estep, *Northern Lights*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

I had just taken a seminar class featuring this fascinating double triangle Jessica stitch. It was

such a fun piece to do that I decided to see what I could do with it in a piece of my own design. *Northern Lights* is the result.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

How I design depends on what I am designing. If I am doing a geometric, I begin with an idea for a center area, choose a color palette, and then design directly on the canvas. Once an area is finished I look at what I think should come next, stitch one or more possibilities—on a doodle canvas if I need to—and then stitch on the canvas.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I began with the double triangle Jessica center because I was curious how that would look. I loved that. I wanted to repeat the stitch in several places, but I also wanted to vary the textures in the other areas. Since I had very busy Jessicas, I chose simple stitches to complement them.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

First I chose a silk overdye thread and then added the pearl cotton. I wanted a solid-color round thread for the Jessicas to make them easier to work and clearer to follow the threads once they were stitched. Then I selected the solid-color silk and beads. These bands I wanted in very pale colors so the areas would not overwhelm the Jessicas.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

The three volumes of *Stitches for Effect* are my first stop when looking for a stitch. I have several others that I also love to “read,” very much like I can lose myself in a dictionary.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Projects are bagged in clear plastic project bags in dresser drawers with everything I will need to complete the piece. All threads that are not already in a project bag are stored in two ways. Threads on cards are stored in a small chest of many flat drawers that sits by my stitching chair. All threads on skeins are on rings or men’s tie

racks in a dark closet and all threads on balls are in plastic bins in the same closet.

3rd Place

None given

Honorable Mention

101NP: Kathy Larsen, *My Garden*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

When I look at a piece of art of any sort, I always see the colors first, whereas someone else might see the composition or the texture. We hadn’t always had a garden, just basic landscaping around the house. When we started a garden in the backyard, I was just amazed at the colors that came out of the ground; something we had created. I wanted to preserve that joy by stitching a representation of my garden.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

I’ll get an idea in my head, think about it for a while. I’ll peruse my library of books and the internet for inspiration. When I’m ready to start, I do *very* rough sketches of what I’m thinking. If I need a basic geometric shape such as the patio umbrella in this piece, I use the computer to lay out the symmetry.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I did a *lot* of stitch doodling before I started the actual design. In fact, I went to a weekend stitching retreat, and all I did the entire weekend was try stitches with different threads until I got a look I liked. I had perused my library for ideas on flowers beforehand, made a list of the pages in the books, and took along these books and lots of threads. This doodling captured the look of each flower and avoided a lot of ripping.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

First I planned the colors I wanted to use in the different flower areas of the design. Then I stitch-doodled, trying different threads to achieve a texture that I thought worked for each flower. Once I had the look and texture, I went to my stash and my shop.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I have shelves of books, some for inspiration, some for technique, and of course, some for stitch execution.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I keep most of my threads organized by color, except for DMC floss, which is organized by number. If I need to reference floss by color, I have the DMC color card book. My completed projects are put in a bin on a top shelf, my work-in-progress projects are on shelves near my desk, and designs that have not been started are stored by technique, such as painted canvas, charted needlepoint, punch needle, cross stitch, etc. However, if I have purchased threads for a project, they are put in a project bag with the design and are stored with the in-process projects even though I haven't started them. I love shopping at office supply stores for solutions.

Original Needle Art Professional Category 1-P

1st Place

Creative Inspiration Award

Judge's Choice, Carol Lynn Stratton

Best in Show

Delegates' Choice

1004P: Gail T. Stafford, *A Dusting of Snow*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

I knew I eventually wanted to stitch a winter scene because I had previously stitched scenes from other seasons. I always liked the gazebo that is located in my neighborhood in walking distance of my home. We don't have a lot of snow where I live. So whenever we have snowy weather, I head out with my camera to capture snow scenes. The photo I used for inspiration was taken more than a year before I decided that it was the picture I would work from. Last winter I attempted to get some better photos of the gazebo in the snow. The new photos with heavy snow helped me realize my earlier photo was a better image. Because there was only a dusting of snow in the earlier photo, it was more interesting. I could still see the lines on the roof, the bushes, the tree leaves, and some of the grass. So the original photograph turned out to be the source of inspiration for this needlework.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you "wing it"?

For designs of a scene such as this one, I start with an idea and then I take lots of photos. My goal is to find a best image and work from it.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I audition stitches on a doodle cloth to see if I like them before I put them on the canvas. This helps me decide if the size of the stitch will work for the desired application. Sometimes I try out one stitch and think it will be just right. Other times, I try a number of stitches and have difficulty finding one I like.

Many people have favorite stitches and they use them on every piece of needlework. I used Nobuko for the sky, and it is becoming one of my favorite stitches. I like the result when I use an overdyed thread and see the color changes appear without planning them.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I like to use overdyed threads in my work, so I first shopped in my stash and then looked for other overdyed threads that might work. When stranded embroidery cotton works, I like to use it. When I was auditioning threads and colors for the bushes at the center of the design, I could not find a green that was as dark as I wanted. I am not a big fan of blending threads, but I ended up using this technique to blend strands of dark green and black to get the desired darkness. I was pleased with the results.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

When I want to try out stitches, my first reference is always Jo Christensen's *The Needlepoint Book*. Sometimes I try a stitch and think a variation of it may work, so I "invent" that variation.

2nd Place

None given

3rd Place

None given

Honorable Mention

1003P: Catherine Jordan, *Each Ending is a New Beginning*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

The Quest theme of balance was enticing to me, and the quote, “Each ending is a new beginning,” suggested how endings and beginnings balance each other and lead to new areas in our lives.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

I have a journal that includes sayings and ideas that I think are important, significant, or inspirational. Each project is sketched out on a page of the journal to work out the design. I use computer software (Easycross) for lettering to ensure proper alignment and size of words and phrases.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I enjoy drawn thread work as well as nature and forest scenery. That began the design of the open forest; a sunrise/sunset added inspiration to the piece. I continued the design around the journal cover to include more inspirational wording as well as an interweaving ribbon.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I worked with all cotton threads on this project.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I have many reference books with pictures, poetry, and stitch diagrams for help and inspiration.

Honorable Mention

1007P: Deborah Forney, *Desert Dan*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

Originally created as a teaching piece for the ANG Seminar held in Tucson, *Desert Dan* is a whimsical tribute to my husband, Dan, who lives and breathes bluegrass music, hence the blue guitar. We have several inside jokes regarding his obsession with playing his guitar and *only playing bluegrass music with it*. One of these

jokes refers to how hard it is for me to hear the same type of music day in and day out. The closing comment to that joke is: “I know it is a prickly subject for me to criticize your constant playing of bluegrass music, since I am the one who encouraged you to start playing it in the first place!” With these thoughts in mind, I imagined the perfect place for Dan to play to his heart’s content, from sunrise to sunset, without a soul to interfere or complain. The result is my prickly cactus crooner, alone and happy in the desert!

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

Each design begins with as many sources as needed but the final composition is always a simplified line drawing, which I use to verify the integrity and cohesion of the design.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

The stitches are chosen to enhance the character of the design and limited in variety to as few as will complete the composition. Variations on a stitch type – such as crossed stitches – were featured in this project: double stitch, Smyrna cross, leviathan stitch, and cross stitch.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Thread texture and color quality are also selected to enhance the character of the design. *Desert Dan* has a recurring feature of subtly shaded overdyed threads (Gumnut Yarns) supported by the accent of color coordinated metallics.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Yes, I use Mary Thomas’s *Dictionary of Embroidery Stitches* as a technical stitch reference (the original book from the 1930s, not the new version).

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My everyday threads are organized in large clear plastic drawers by type: wool, metallics, cottons, etc. Within each drawer, the threads are stored in resealable plastic bags by manufacturer. The bags are never completely closed and each drawer has

desiccants for moisture control. High-value threads such as real metals or Japanese silks are kept in acid-free boxes.

Adaptation Non-Professional Category 2-NP

1st Place

Judge's Choice, Janet Mitchell Fishel

201NP: Arlene Cohen, *Antioch Mosaic With Needle and Thread*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

This needlework is my interpretation in thread of an ancient Roman mosaic from 350 AD, a 10' x 10' masterpiece whose geometry has intrigued me for years. The mosaic was originally the floor of a room in a villa in the ancient city of Antioch (in present day Syria) and was uncovered, along with hundreds of other mosaics (both geometric and figurative) during archeological digs during the early 1930s. This particular mosaic was given to Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, in 1936 as a gift from the expedition. Wellesley is my alma mater and this mosaic has been on display in its art museum throughout the decades. I became fascinated with it and its geometry and saw the potential for a needlework piece about seven or so years ago. It took until 2014 for the graph paper to come out and the design work to begin.

I don't think there can be another needlework project in my lifetime that will compare with this one. All the challenges I love wrapped up in a meaningful recreation — It was a priceless experience. I loved working through the geometry to translate a design from one artistic medium to another, and I loved learning the history of the mosaic and the archeological expedition that resulted in this marvelous gift to Wellesley College. There were so many "aha" moments in the planning and executing of this needlework project. They are forever memories that I will cherish.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you "wing it"?

For this piece, it began with many photographs of the mosaic as it hangs on the museum wall. It was important to me to get the scale right for my needlework and so graph paper, pencil, and some calculations were all a part of my work. Both the

planning stage and the stitching stage called for much studying of the geometry of the mosaic itself. The overall design is symmetrical, no question. Yet there are many places where there might have been symmetry in the details, but there isn't. I tried to imagine the design process of that ancient mosaic artist working 17 centuries ago. There was no way that a person working in the 3rd century AD could have imagined what this person in the 21st century was trying to do in recreating his work.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I knew the look I was aiming for: Stitches that would just melt into the background without creating a strong pattern when viewed from a distance. I had originally thought that the design would be in some respects a sampler — different stitches for every area. This thinking turned out to be completely wrong for this project. I start stitching in the center, using diagonal weave for the spokes of the wheel, framed cross stitch variation for the ecru area surrounding it, and staggered cross for the tan area that came next. As I stitched, it became obvious that I needed to abandon the sampler idea and stick with these three stitches for the main structure of the mosaic. Too many different stitches and the design would become too busy, whereas those three stitches melted into the background and allowed a hint of the congress cloth to show through — just enough to give the sense of the mosaic texture I was trying to recreate. It took many "stitch auditions" to find the right one for the diamonds in the border, one that would draw attention to the geometry, to the shapes, and not to the fact that the shapes were being created by thread. A herringbone variation did the trick.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

To mimic the slight variations of shades of the tiles of the mosaic, I chose threads that were mostly overdyed cottons, as well as Rainbow Gallery's Mandarin Floss, which I love for its matte sheen.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Not really.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Basically by project

2nd Place

None given

3rd Place

None given

**Adaptation
Professional
Category 2-P**

1st Place

None given

2nd Place

2001P: Lorene Salt, *Frozen Reflections*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

I have always been a fan of Frank Lloyd Wright. This piece was inspired by one of the unpublished *Liberty Magazine* covers that Wright designed in 1927. I liked his unconventional sense of design and wanted to stitch my own interpretation of this cover.

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

In this instance I started with a picture of the cover and then started to make it my own by adding and subtracting elements.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I wanted to develop textures in this piece, and I found that layering many of the stitch patterns helped to achieve this. I wanted stitches that showed movement, as in the ice melting in the sun. Stringing beads and crystals for icicles helped to portray the melting and freezing process at the end of a sunny day in winter.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I chose a color palette of teal, pale mauve, and soft shades of blue because I felt the desire to express the cool qualities of the icicles and the refraction of the sunlight shining through the ice bubbles. I also incorporated crystals to create the icy-cold feel of frozen water. I didn't want threads that were too thick as I was layering

many of the sections, so I used Impressions and #5, #8, and #12 pearl cotton. I also used silks and overdyes to create shine and depth.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I have two: *The Needlepoint Book* by Jo Ippolito Christensen and *Laid Fillings for Evenweave Fabrics* by Jean Taggart.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by the type of thread and the manufacturer. All silks together, all pearl cottons together, all overdyes together, etc. I store my stash in museum-quality cardboard boxes to keep the sunlight off the fibres and to help preserve the threads, as plastic is really hard on threads.

3d Place

None given

Honorable Mention

2002P: Jonathan Brown, (*Polar*) *Bear's Claw*

What inspired you to design and stitch this piece?

I have done a fair amount of quilting in the past, and I thought it would be fun to come up with a series of designs inspired by quilt blocks. Bear's claw is a traditional block pattern; (*Polar*) *Bear's Claw* is an extrapolation of that block into needlepoint. And polar bears are cute!

How do you design your needlepoint? Do you start with photos, sketches, a grid? Or do you “wing it”?

Usually a design starts from a thought inspired by a picture or something I have seen or heard. The thought becomes “what if” and then a very rough sketch. (I have all the drawing skills of a block of stone.) Sometimes color and stitches come with the initial idea; but most often, only a general color plan, usually written in pencil. After the initial sketches, which I will try to render full size, I then move to gridded paper and pencil to define the areas and emblems within the design. Once I have the design more clearly defined, I can concentrate on color and stitches. It is not unknown for both of these to change from the initial concept once the stitching starts.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I wanted to leave an impression of the softness of a quilt so I chose larger area stitches that gave some sort of woven effect (woven and Darmstadt). I decided that a couched metallic silver would make good sharp points to the claws while still retaining loft. The border needed to have a smaller, tighter looking stitch, so I chose Scotch stitch and tent stitch. I flipped the design along the diagonal to indicate the corner of a quilt and pulled the stitches round by 90 degrees to emphasize the direction of the “material.”

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Soie d’Alger is almost always my first choice, as I love working with it. I find it very forgiving if you speak nicely to it.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Jo Ippolito Christensen: *The Needlepoint Book*. It always sits by my chair when I’m designing or stitching.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

By thread, at least that’s the plan.

Independent Project Non-Professional Category 3-NP

1st Place

**303NP: Anne E. Wright, *Puzzle Purse*
*Adaptation***

Designer: Jean Hilton

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

CyberPointers Chapter of ANG was having a stitch along of Jean Hilton’s *Puzzle Purse*. I’d always wanted to stitch a Jean Hilton piece, so I purchased the book and dug in. Since I have no need for a fancy purse, I adapted the design to a framed piece, using her angled “puzzle” corners and expanding the bargello portion. In addition to the stitches in the *Puzzle Purse* book, I took stitches from other Hilton books, *Stimulating Stitches* and *Needlepoint Stitches*.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite stitches were the Hilton Jessica and Amadeus stitches. I love how they come together. The most challenging stitches were where I decided to change some of Jean Hilton’s choices and had to work up my own. The most frustrating was the section she called overlapping straight crosses — I’d call it a battlement stitch variation. Those never came out the way I expected and gave a different look than I intended.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

All the stitches were from Jean Hilton’s books, either in the original *Puzzle Purse* book or in the books mentioned above.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

They all came out of my stash. Over the years I have stitched a lot of monochromatic geometrics using gray-blue, silver, and ecru, so I had a lot of small amounts of various fibers to select from. Sometimes I had just enough to complete a small section so the *Puzzle Purse* was perfect to utilize those bits and pieces.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

For needlepoint the book I most often refer to is Jo Ippolito Christensen’s *The Needlepoint Book*. I have both the original edition and the 1999 revision and pull out whichever version comes to hand first.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I have separate drawers for cotton, wool, silk, and metallics as well as drawers for miscellaneous. Inside the drawer different color families are bagged together. When I plan a project, I pull out the threads and material for it and keep them with the directions in separate project bags. The project bags for unfinished projects and planned projects hang on hooks inside my stitching closet. I put luggage tags with the name of the project on each one to make it easy to find the next one to work on.

**2nd Place
Princess Grace Award**

301NP: Deborah Kummer, *Asian Flair Evening Bag*

Designer: Clara Wells

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I am always attracted to an Asian influence. The colors are vibrant.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I did it in my favorite stitch, continental. Using gold balger brings in the elegance to the evening bag.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I used Silk and Ivory, as I wanted the richness and it would hold up in use. As mentioned, the gold Kreinik gives it the elegance.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

It is organized by thread.

3rd Place

304NP: Colleen Greenlee, *Peacock Tales*

Designer: Orna Willis

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I was drawn by the colors of the piece and the unusual shapes and design. I like pieces that are a little out of the ordinary, plus I liked the architectural look of the peacocks.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Jessicas are always challenging for me until I get my rhythm going, so I made sure I worked them all at the same time on this piece; that also helped me keep the same tension on the Jessicas. My favorite part was counting the piece out and watching it come to life, since it wasn't drawn or painted already on the canvas.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Orna Willis wrote a wonderful stitch guide for this piece, which I followed.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Orna also picked the thread types and colors, which I was in love with and which originally drew me to the piece.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I usually refer to *Stitches to Go* by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson and *Stitches Volumes 1 & 2* by Ruth Schmuff (which I have in hard cover and on my phone).

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My thread stash is organized by color; my canvases by type (large, small, holiday, purses, etc); and then projects that are started, of which there are many, are in bags with threads and instructions/ideas if there are any. All of these are in buckets — medium for threads and large for canvases that are stored in a walk-in closet in our family office.

I also usually have three to five different projects out by my stitching seat to work on depending on my mood. I inherited my grandmother's stand, so now I have one with a clamp and one with a scroll always set up and ready to stitch.

**Independent Project
Professional
Category 3-P**

**1st Place
Hilton Stitch Award**

3004P: Kathleen Brennan, *Scott Lee*

Designer: Jean Hilton

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

Jean Hilton designs inspire me and make me want to try them with my own colors.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My biggest challenge was finding the correct thread for the stitch on a smaller ground fabric. I continue to stitch Jean Hilton designs on Congress cloth when she designed them for 18

count canvas. Some threads will not work on the smaller ground, but I want the same effect Jean Hilton originally designed.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I pretty much stitched this as Jean Hilton designed, it but with my own colors on a smaller ground fabric.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I chose my favorite colors from my thread stash that were appropriate to the ground fabric.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is quite extensive, and I file by type and then color. I should spend more time straightening out some of my threads, but it interferes with my stitching. I do marry my leftovers back into my stash so I may use them on a smaller project or when only a little thread is needed.

2nd Place

3001P: Marilyn Owen, A Different Slant

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

This piece was conceived in Sue Reed's *Design Your Own Geometric & Stitch It* class at Seminar in 2008. All but the very center of the piece was designed at home, after the class, and all stitch and thread selections were done on my own.

One of my goals was to create a geometric design that did not have the very common vertical and horizontal symmetry. I accomplished this by using 90° rotational symmetry instead, twisting the elements something other than 45°, making all the lines run at a 2:1 thread step, and overlapping the design elements.

I began the color scheme with one of my favorite overdyed threads and added multiple values of cotton flosses and a metallic braid. I repeated the design element from the center in the corners, using the same stitch but different values for all of the overlapping bands.

The biggest challenge in designing the piece was finding or inventing stitch combinations that would either fit into the somewhat wonky areas

or compensate in a pleasing manner. The second challenge was the background area. It needed to have something in it that would flow with the design elements, but not overpower it. The final touch was adding the lines of running stitch to hint at a third set of bands.

How do I feel about it now? It still continues to amaze me!

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Most challenging was finding, or in most cases inventing, stitches that would compensate nicely on the odd slant. I was especially happy finding the simple bargello pattern for the bands.

Most frustrating was figuring out something for the background that would be quiet and still be wonky. I was pleased with the result, especially adding the thin border lines to create a third faint set of bands.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Jean Hilton stitches are always a good starting point for a focus, and I began with that in the center. But only the four diamond areas within the center and the four corners were standard stitches – the rest of the stitches I modified or made up to fit the angles in the piece. My most valuable tool was my computer and lots of graph paper, trying to work out stitches that would fit.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I began with my favorite overdyed thread (Needle Necessities 183, now ThreadworX 1138) and took the rest of the colors from there, in cotton floss. I also included some metallic.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

The first place I go to for a stitch is usually my iPad and the apps thereon, but that is only because I know where to find it. Otherwise, I lose a day or two browsing in my extensive library of books and meandering down various paths that have nothing to do with what I am looking for.

Someday I would like to build my own pdf “book” with all of my favorite and “want to try them sometime” stitches. For help working with a thread, I will usually just play on a doodle canvas myself. For help with techniques and stitches, the Internet is a good way to get several options, and then I can pick the one that works for me. Mary Corbet’s needlenthread.com is most likely the first site I will try, followed by Sharon Boggon’s pintangle.com.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Mostly, it is organized by thread type, but that is getting harder with the addition of each new thread. Each unfinished project has its own bag of threads, and I try to keep them with the instructions and canvas (that is also getting more difficult with the addition of each new UFO).

3rd Place

3003P: Pamela Harding, *Classic Revisited* – from July 2015 *Needle Pointers*

Designer: Sue Reed

Honorable Mention

3002P: Pamela Harding, *Classic* – from September 1998 *Needle Pointers*

Designer: Sue Reed

Painted Design Without Stitch Guide Non-Professional Category 4-NP

1st Place

Nina M. Goerres Award

402NP: Maureen Giuffre, *François in Full Sleigh*

Designer: Elizabeth Goodrick-Dillon

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I selected this piece for the opportunity to change the Golden Retriever puppy on the painted canvas to François, the love of my life, a Portuguese Water Dog (PWD.) Enough of the puppy was showing to differentiate a PWD from most other breeds, yet the stocking still had a traditional feel. This stocking was stitched for a child, and while I would have preferred to place his name on the cuff, his mother requested a name tag (not pictured) since both her stocking

(a 2014 entry) and the child’s father’s stocking (the 2013 Nina M Goerres Award winner) had name tags.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

One area of this piece was both the most frustrating and the most challenging. In the painted canvas Santa appears to be riding in a Victorian sofa. The wooden trim of the sofa came to elaborately carved downward pointing finials over and behind both of Santa’s arms. Every attempt I made to be true to the painted canvas seemed to bring the wood trim out from behind Santa to in front of Santa. On the fourth version I removed the detail entirely and made the couching of the wooden trim seem to come to a point.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Trial and error and process of elimination. I am doing a series of stockings to serve as a reference (the good, the bad, and the ugly). It is my goal to try different stitches in most of the major areas on a typical stocking. I had never before done French knots on a stalk, so that is what I planned for the beard. Fortunately, I liked it. And while the beard may look like French knots on a stalk, it is actually random length long stitches with French knots placed where I wanted Santa’s beard to curl. Seemed easier and more precise.

Initially I planned to do three rows of Gobelin that followed the slant of the wood on the sofa; it looked awful. I then tried tent, trying two different threads. Again it looked awful. Finally, I tried couching, and even though I do not enjoy couching, it was acceptable.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Because I live on an island off the coast of Maine, for me to visit a brick-and-mortar shop requires me to overnight on the mainland. Consequently the threads I use are either in my stash, suggested by a friend from my (mainland) needlepoint group, or in the case of the reindeer, recommended by my primary online retailer. My retailer suggested I try Tulips for the body of the reindeer, and while I did not like it for the body, I used it for the manes.

I may try a few threads for a particular area before I am satisfied. The threads that do not work out simply go into my stash.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

The Needlepoint Book by Jo Ippuito Christensen.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Primarily by color, secondarily by content. For example the silks and wool silk blends of reds, greens, and blues are suspended by pins from foam boards sorted by type and color. Light to dark, left to right. Silk on top, then silk blends, then wool on the bottom. That way I can see them all at once and I can take them all at once over to the window. The pinks, browns, blacks/greys, and whites all are in separate boxes by color, except for the Kreinik, Neon Rays, and Wisper, which have dedicated boxes. If I had the space and the money, I would use a standing poster display system with each color on a different board and sorted by shade and fiber type.

2nd Place

403NP: Karla McCoy, *Historical and Current US Flags*

Designer: Sharon Heed

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I fell in love with this piece when I saw it being stitched by a friend and just had to have it. I have a great love for this country and the freedoms and blessings we enjoy as citizens. We are the fabric of this great nation. We are people with varying backgrounds woven together into one nation. We are not perfect, we have had and will have times of struggle, but we remain a strong and enduring nation. I wanted this piece to represent those feelings.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The most challenging part of the piece was the shading of the various flags. Prior to this piece I had not done a lot of shading with thread. This piece required a lot of shading. I did a lot of needle blending to enhance movement in the piece.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

All of the stitches chosen were designed to represent strong, woven fabric that will withstand the test of time – just like the country our flag represents.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Because of their depth of color and the way light reflects off of it, most of the threads chosen were silk. I wanted rich deep colors to represent the strength of our country.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I almost always carry two books with me for stitch ideas — *The Original Stitches To Go* by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson and *Sharon G's Simply Essential Needlepoint Stitch Explanations* by Sharon G. They are great resources and are small and easy to carry in my needlepoint bag.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread type. I then pull threads for individual projects as needed.

3rd Place

401NP: Maureen Giuffre, *Forest Santa*

Designer: Elizabeth Goodrick-Dillon

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

My husband picked this stocking out for himself presumably because it has a more adult sentiment.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite technique in this stocking was laying long stitches over padding for the reflective surfaces of the lantern and the bells. Both were done with a Kreinik ribbon. They were my favorite because they worked the first time and they looked like what they were supposed to be.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I use a preponderance of basketweave and tent stitches in Liz stockings in order to be as true to the shading of her designs as possible.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

The vast majority of thread in this stocking is Vineyard Silk Classic. I like Vineyard Silk because of its feel, its cover, and the large color palette. Vineyard Silk also makes up a great deal of my stash, so I can just select from what I have.

Honorable Mention

406NP: Marla Frazier, *Christmas Pop!*

Designer: Mindy

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

Honestly, I loved the chartreuse-colored silk that the pillow was made from and wanted a canvas to go with it. That, and I always love a Mindy canvas.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Favorite was learning to use the Van Dyke stitch. Most challenging was figuring out something to stitch the oddly shaped dots in the background. Most frustrating was moving the white dots around on the one flower so I wouldn't have to stitch partial circles.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Just tried to widen my stitch base with some new ones.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Since this is sort of a whimsical piece, I wanted to use more whimsical fibers.

Honorable Mention

Beth Robertson Canvas Embellishment Award

407NP: Bert Kroening, *Harbor View*

Designer: Peter Asche

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

The boats, water, and background buildings intrigued me.

I was particularly thrilled to receive any kind of ribbon and/or recognition because I had chosen this particular Peter Asche design and chosen my own stitches and colors. I would do a few areas or stitches differently now because of the constructive and encouraging critique by the judges. I hope to improve my insight by this experience in the future. And I'm truly blessed to be able to stitch at the age of 91. I am humbled yet so appreciative of this prestigious award.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The water was my favorite, using four strands of Glorianna silk, overdyed, in long and short stitches done horizontally.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I chose all the stitches on this piece myself. Woven trellis variations for the two larger boats, horizontal long and short for the water, brick for the lighthouse, and mosaic, slanted Gobelin, basketweave, and padded stitches for the rest.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I selected colors first, then chose from a variety of threads. I knew I wanted to use Boucle for large trees and small bushes in front of the buildings.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches to Go by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson (and their other three books); *Painted Canvas Embellishment* by Carole Lake and Michael Boren.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

By name first, then by number.

Painted Design Without Stitch Guide Professional Category 4-P

1st Place

Best in Show

Judge's Choice, Donna Halpin

President's Choice Award

4007P: Caren Scarbrough, *Vintage Egrets*

Designer: Melissa Shirley

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I was attracted to the subtle coloring of this piece and wanted to keep the realistic painted style.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I tried to keep the stitches simple. They are mostly variations of straight stitches, cross stitches, split stitches, and French knots. The large egret is shaded split stitch. The rock he stands on is alternating cross stitch and upright cross. The white flowers in the border are Flair over white and peach pearl cotton for shading. The butterfly and turtle are couched Kreinik braid. I stitched the background with thin threads to let the beautiful painting show through. Stem or wrapped stem was used for greenery and twigs.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I wanted many shades of thick and thin thread. I chose Silk & Ivory, Impressions, Flair, and Kreinik Braid.

2nd Place

4008P: Cynthia Thomas, *Witchy Choos*

Designer: NeedleDeeva

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I love Halloween. I liked the idea of working a set, and I like Judy's designs.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I like the challenge of working out the stitches so that they reflect the painting on the canvas. The most challenging aspect was working out backgrounds behind the heels. I wanted them to all be similar looking but with different stitches, and I didn't want them to dominate the piece.

The most frustrating part of the process was learning what different parts of the shoe are called.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Sometimes I look at a piece and instantly know what stitch I want where. Working out the trellis patterns on the shoes was probably the most challenging, since it had to incorporate the motifs on the shoe.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I start the design process by going through my extensive collection of threads and pulling any colors I think would be appropriate. Then as I work out the stitches, I add or take away threads so that I end up with the final look I want. For example, the background under the instep ended up being a darning pattern for all the shoes, which meant my thread had to be very thin or divisible.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

No. I think I have almost every stitch book written going back to the '70s. I also have several hundred stitches on my computer. When I get stuck, I start by going through the stitches on my computer, then go through all my books for inspiration, or sit down at the computer and start playing with stitch variations

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread company. I have five racks with various hanging threads, a DMC rack with DMC Floss, and numerous boxes of Kreinik and other threads on shelves.

3rd Place

4005P: Sue Haines, *Nasturtiums*

Designer: Julie Poitras

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

When I lived in San Diego years ago, many of my neighbors planted nasturtiums in place of grass as their lawns. I had never encountered this flower before and was drawn to it because of the beautiful yellow, orange, and red flowers and its exuberant nature.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The laid filling patterns used in the orange and yellow-orange flowers were very satisfying choices and lent themselves well to the petals. The yellow flower in the foreground was my biggest struggle. I was trying to create more texture in the petals that were in the foreground in order to draw the viewer's eye.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

This project took several years to complete, as I struggled with finding the right stitches and threads to enhance the beautifully painted design. Directionality of the petals was a huge stumbling block, as was maintaining the correct sense of depth in the design. I reached a point when I decided to stop ripping out and trying new things, but I have to say I was never totally satisfied with the finished project.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

As the flowers have a natural sparkle to the petals, I knew I wanted to use a little bit of glitz like Kreinik braid and Silk Lamé Braid along with stranded silk. The leaves have less shine and are stranded cotton, and the very quiet background is Impressions.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches To Go and *Amy's Cookbook for Stitchers* are my most frequently used books. For thread advice, I generally talk to the people at my local needlepoint shops.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I organize my threads by manufacturer, type, and then by color number. Wherever possible I keep them together on large binder rings. Many of the threads that are sold on cards already have a hole punched in the card, which make them perfect for this type of organizing. Stranded threads such as cotton or silk are stored in Floss Away bags and also are arranged in numerical order on binder rings. Spools of Kreinik threads, Accentuate, Trebizond, Ribbon Floss, and

similarly packaged items are separated by manufacturer and are in separate containers.

3rd Place

4010P: Cynthia Thomas, *Imelda, the Witch and Her Cat*

Designer: Brenda Stofft

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I like Halloween and I like cats so this was a perfect combination. I have always like Brenda's designs.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I think my favorite part is the cape on the cat. I developed a trellis pattern for the color and the main part of the cape that are similar but not the same. I also think the addition of the gold braid to divide up the sections of clothing on Imelda and the cat really made the piece. The most challenging part was finding the face colors for Imelda. Imelda's hair was not the most frustrating part, but I was really tired of packed outline.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I started by going through my extensive collection of stitches on my computer and picked those I thought might work.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I first go through my stash and gather all the threads that are the color of the canvas paint. I then eliminate or add to those threads, based on whether they will give me the texture and look I'm after. For example, the cat fur had to look fuzzy, so I immediately thought of a wooly thread such as Impressions or Burmilana.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I usually start by going through the stitches on my computer and pick those I think might work in a particular area. When I don't find something I like, then I start looking at one of my many stitch books going back to the 1970s to see if there is anything I like. The two books I seem to

end up with the most are Jane Zimmerman's *Canvas Work Bands and Borders* and *The Canvas Work Encyclopedia*.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread manufacturer.

Honorable Mention

4009P: Cynthia Thomas, *Halloween Cat*

Designer: Tapestry Fair

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I am a big fan of Halloween and I like cats.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I think the two main parts of her face were my biggest challenge and the most frustration. The designer painted them with specific stitches in mind, and there is a stitch guide done by her. I wanted to make sure I didn't use the same stitches or threads and put my own imprint on her. It took me several tries to find a stitch I liked that fit within the painted area.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Sometimes I just look at an area and know what I want to go there. For example, I knew when I looked at her paw with the spider web that the web and spider had to be worked on top of the background stitches, so I knew I needed a small stitch. Because the front of her paw is done with a mosaic stitch, I carried that idea on to the gray area.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I go through my extensive thread stash and start by pulling any threads that I think might work and are the color I want. From there I add or subtract threads. I also sometimes pick a thread I have not worked with before.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I think Jane Zimmerman's *Canvas Work Encyclopedia* is one of my most referred to books

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

By thread manufacturer.

Honorable Mention Wearable Art Award

4014P: Cathryn Curia, *Floral Purse – Poppies*

Designer: Elizabeth Turner Collection

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I've always admired canvas designs from Elizabeth Turner Collection. When Ridgewood Needlepoint had a trunk show, I couldn't resist taking a stab at doing one at this time. I wouldn't have been able to use it in corporate life, but as I approach retirement, I could see using a needlepoint purse more regularly.

Ridgewood Needlepoint provided the impetus with a discount on finishing if completed within one year of the trunk show. As I was recovering from hip replacement surgery, it became my mission to use the time to complete the purse.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I started off thinking that because it was a purse, it all had to be done in basketweave. When I started, I began with the leaves. After doing all of the leaves, I decided that I could safely use some other stitches.

I enjoyed using the brick stitch and diagonal mosaic the most. I decided that the fuchsia flowers would be brick and the coral flowers diagonal mosaic. As I began to work on it, I decided that I wanted the diagonal mosaic to change directions as the flower petals would. That became a challenge.

My biggest challenge/frustration, though, came as I neared the end — to put in the veins on the leaves. The painted areas were too broad for the veins, and I struggled with different weights of threads and different stitches. Finally, someone suggested that I narrow down the vein areas by stitching them as I had done the rest of the leaves. That made doing the stem stitch work in a narrower area and in a lighter weight thread.

Surprisingly all of that black background wasn't the challenge I thought it would be. I just took it

in sections and it was great to see how completing the background brought the flowers to life.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

As the fuchsia flowers were mainly upright, and I wanted a stitch to only cover a couple of threads, brick worked well. With the coral flowers having more diagonal movement in my view, I wanted something more on an angle, so diagonal mosaic worked for me there. For the stems, I thought right from the start that they should be encroaching Gobelin.

In hindsight, I've often thought that the blue leaves could have been a different stitch, but they were all completed when I started to think more outside of the basketweave box.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

First, I love working with Vineyard silks, which comprise most of the piece. I changed out the colors a bit as I'm not an orange person, so I changed the orange to coral. With this size piece, and knowing the threads on a purse could get some wear, I didn't want to be laying threads or using threads that could be snagged.

For the veins though, I needed a lighter weight thread, so I used Needlepoint Inc. silk.

And the yellow Kreinik made those areas pop.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches To Go and the *Stitches for Effect* books are my go-to resources. I travel regularly and appreciate those books that are available on the iPad. I regularly use Sandy Arthur's *Shapes I and II* — I wish the rest of her *Shapes* books were available on the iPad.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My thread stash in general is organized (that word is questionable!) by color. I use large plastic "scrapbook boxes" in which I toss threads of similar color families. My Kreiniks are all together in one box, and overdyes are in one box. That being said, I currently have a few gallon resealable plastic bags of threads that need to get into the correct bins. When I go to begin small painted canvases, or small areas on larger canvases, I shop from my stash first.

Charts and painted canvases are stored in bins and project bags around the house, hopefully soon to be consolidated when my basement is refinished into a dry work area with flat drawer space.

State Art Award

4002P: Barbara Richardson, *Porter's Stocking*
Designer: Unknown. I have tried several designers, stores and Facebook, no luck. This stocking was purchased in the early 1990. Have several people also looking for this and had sent the picture out to several and online, still no hits.

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

At the time I bought several Christmas stockings to be done when my children married and for future grandchildren. The original stocking showed a little girl with a pink hat, ruffled pink coat, and leggings, standing next to her big brother. However when it came time to stitch the stocking for our newest grandson Porter, I needed to change the little girl to a little boy. So I painted out the little girl and designed the little boy with knitted cap and scarf (done in Michigan State green and white to depict where our son had attended college). Also since I collect rocking horses, I added this to the top right window.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite stitches are random long and short, but in this particular piece it was the small split stitch to make the scarves and hat look like they had been knitted.

The most challenging was the random horizontal stitches at the bottom to make the snowpiles. The wool plus blending filament let the paint show through and gave more definition to this area.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece? How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

In looking at the different areas, laying out the threads that I would be using, and focusing on making the boys the center of this piece. I chose small split stitch for the scarves, random long/short for the holly leaves at the top. The bows were done in long padded stitch to make them raise out above the background. For the

basket it needed to look like it was woven, so I selected Rainbow Gallery's Linen thread to give it a more rustic look. I used wools for coats/pants/hats.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I use all of the *Stitches for Effect* books by Beth Robertson and Suzanne Howren, as they give lots of options and suggestions

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is by threads, and then I have color cards for Anchor/DMC/Kreinik/Medici and rings with overdyed threads/wools/impressions, etc. I have all the floss by numbers, separate boxes for the different types of wools and silks, etc. When I am ready to start a project, I can go and find the threads I am looking for with ease.

Painted Design With Stitch Guide Non-Professional Category 5-NP

1st Place

504NP: Bert Kroening, *Santa Fe Autumn*

Designer: Peter Asche

Teachers: Suzanne Howren, Meredith Willett, and Tony Minieri

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

The stucco home, purple mountains, turquoise sky, flowers, and chilis are so typical of Santa Fe (as well as some homes in Albuquerque). I just wanted to try to bring them to life on canvas.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Most challenging was the striation stitch (Kennan stitch variation) for the sky. It was done with two strands of Glorianna. Also challenging were the mountains, the Donohue two-way stitch, done with four strands of Glorianna on the left and right mountains (ANG Stitch of the Month Feb 2009). Favorite was the long and short stitch done vertically with four strands of Splendor in two shades for the stucco home.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

The teachers selected the sky, mountains, front door, gate, and sand stitches. I chose French knots, did bullion knots, used Victorian step stitch (done vertically and suggested by Meredith) for the path, then padded railings, windows, and lamp, and read wood twigs for the 10 vigas.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I enjoy stitching with silk, so I selected colors to enhance the canvas. Though I did change some parts of the original artist's color choice.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches to Go by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson (as well as their previous three books). *Painted Canvas Embellishment* by Carole Lake and Michael Boren.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Most of my stash is organized in small drawers by name, then number, e.g., Splendor - #, ThreadWorx - #, Fyre Werks - #, Balter - #, DMC - #. Some of my favorite threads are Splendor, Impressions, Accentuate, Glorianna, Pepper Pot, Overdyed Floss, DMC, and Mandarin.

2nd Place

502NP: Deborah Kummer, *Kate Molineux Tiger*

Designer: Kate Molineaux

Stitch Guide Writer: Brenda Hart

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

The tiger was painted so beautifully. I love all of the Shorebirds designs.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite technique was the plain needlepoint of the tiger. This was I was able to keep the colors the way it was painted.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Brenda Hart and I picked out stitches for the respective areas.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I knew that I wanted silk for the tiger. We used linen, balger, and beads for the background.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread.

3rd Place

507NP: Jessica Tew, Himeiji Castle Kimono

Designer: Lee Designs

Stitch Guide Writer: Robin King

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I was an exchange student to Japan when I was in high school and have remained close to my Japanese family through the years. In 2008, I was able to return to Japan with my husband, children, and parents. One of the sites we visited was Himeiji Castle, and we ate cherry blossom ice cream with almost that same view of the fortress pictured on the canvas. My mother and I saw this Lee design when we went to our very first ANG Seminar in Milwaukee as new stitchers. She bought it for me for Christmas. I was a bit intimidated by this beautiful design and years later purchased a stitch guide from Robin King. When I finally was able to sit down and stitch this project, it was such a joy!

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

I found the beading to be the most challenging of this project. There is a lot of beading in the cranes in the foreground, and it was quite time consuming. I did love how it brought the birds forward, and I was pleased with the result.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I followed the stitch guide.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Again, I followed the guide and she did a wonderful job.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I use many references. However, I am fortunate enough to proofread Carole Lake and Michael Boren's books and often use them as guides.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I keep projects together and then organize my extra threads by type/company and then grouped by type of thread (for example, cottons, silks, metallics, etc.).

Painted Design With Stitch Guide Professional Category 5-P

1st Place

5003P: Penny Boswinkle, Potluck

Designer: Charley Harper

Stitch Guide Writer: Robin King

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I love Charley Harper pieces! When I first saw it, I thought it was a snake of some kind; but I looked it up and the animal is called a coatimundi, a member of the raccoon family.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite stitch was the background wave, but the favorite technique was the beaded footprints.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

It was stitched with a stitch guide from Robin King, except for the pot where I changed the stitches. The footprints were not on the canvas. When looking up the animal, Robin found the prints and charted them for beading. We decided where to place them on the canvas.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I used a lot of Robin's selections, but we changed some as I wanted it to look fairly realistic.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

No, I use a wide variety of books.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread, unless it is a class piece where I keep the threads with the canvas until stitched.

2nd Place

5001P: Sue Haines, *Deco Heron*

Designer: Point of It All Designs

Teacher: Brenda Hart

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I picked this canvas because it was completely outside of my comfort zone. I am not drawn to the color blue, I am not a fan of the art deco style, and the heron appeared to me to have an attitude. I was taking a class with Brenda Hart, in which she got you started on parts of a canvas but did not offer a stitch guide. She began with the papyrus flowers, moved to the sky, and then the water. The rest of the stitches were my choices.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite stitch in this piece was the T-stitch for the sky using Kreinik Braid 032. I would never have thought of either this stitch or this thread, but Brenda's suggestion was perfect. The heron was the most challenging part; he needed to appear distinctly in the foreground, I wanted a certain amount of realism, and I was on my own at this point.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

When selecting the stitches for the heron, I researched leaf and feather stitches in books. There were many to choose from, so I tried several in stranded silk floss until I found ones that gave me the dimension and direction that I wanted. The beak didn't come together until I put a second layer of stitches over what I had already done, and "voila."

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Brenda Hart selected all of the threads for the papyrus flowers, the sky, and the water. I chose stranded silk for the body and wings of the heron, wool crepe and Kreinik braid for the beak, and a brushable wool for his head. The couched

Kreinik braid used for the stems gave them dimension and weight.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches To Go by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson and Amy Bunger's *Amy's Cookbook for Stitchers* are my most frequently used books. For thread advice, I generally talk to the people at my local needlepoint shops.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I organize my threads by manufacturer, type, and then color number. Wherever possible I keep them together on large binder rings. Many of the threads that are sold on cards already have a hole punched in the card, which make them perfect for this type of organizing. Stranded threads such as cotton or silk are stored in Floss Away bags and also are arranged in numerical order on binder rings. Spools of Kreinik threads, Accentuate, Trebizond, Ribbon Floss, and similarly packaged items are separated by manufacturer and are in separate containers.

3rd Place

5002P: Sue Haines, *Chicken Soup*

Designer: Annie Lane

Teacher: Meredith Willett

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

Meredith Willett was coming to a local shop for a *Canvas Enhancement* class, so I needed a canvas with large areas for fun stitches. This design and its humorous name were sure to make this a fun class.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The chicken's comb is an interesting combination of one row of basketweave and one row of French knots. It was easy, fast, and enjoyable. The most challenging part was the ladle.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I chose the bargello stitch used in the tureen because I wanted something that created a curved, dimensional look. The background stitch

is something I have used before, but I lightened up the threads so they stayed in the background. The ladle, done in a diagonal cashmere variation with Silk Lamé braid, has the glimmer of silver and owns the foreground.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Meredith Willett selected most of the threads used in this piece. I changed the thread for the ladle, as I wanted it to look like silver and have more weight.

Class Project Non-Professional Category 6-NP

1st Place

610NP: Lee Ann Estep, *Our House*

Designer: Joan Thomasson

Teacher: Joan Thomasson

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

Joan Thomasson's seminar class *Cabins, Condos and Castles* was a perfect fit for me. Each student supplied a photo of a building they wished to stitch, and Joan used computer iron-on transfer paper to put it on the canvas. She also supplied a kit of threads chosen for each individual picture. I had hoped to learn the iron-on process, but time did not allow for it in class. I have never considered myself an artist of the pencil and paper type, so when I do something representational, I often begin with a photograph I have taken and make a very crude line drawing to work from. This class offered another option.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The most frustrating part of the piece was the hip roof. I chose to use a mosaic stitch to give it some texture and because mosaic can be worked in any direction. Even so, the roof was very difficult to do. I wanted to make each plane of the roof clearly separate from the ones next to it but all part of the same unit as well.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

The house is stucco with little texture, so basketweave seemed appropriate. Joan gave us some suggestions on ways to do windows, and I

chose one of her suggestions. The driveway is a large area right up front that I didn't want to emphasize, so I chose a mosaic stitch. The landscaping stitches were chosen to get as much depth into the picture as I could. The colors are taken from the actual plants. I designed the yard to be easily taken care of by a service. I chose easily maintained plants with bright colored foliage so that there would be color in the yard all year. I chose to use lighter colors and tiny French knots for the distant bushes and larger French knots and lazy daisy for the closer ones. The tree and the dark shrub have more texture, bigger stitches, and more detail to bring them forward.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

The house colors were in my class kit and the landscaping colors came from my stash and were chosen to match the photo. The kit threads were cotton, but I prefer to work with silk anywhere I can.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

Stitches for Effect is always my first stop when looking for stitches. Threads I like to touch and lay out on the canvas together. I start with my stash and hope I don't need a trip to the needlepoint store, since the closest one is 150 miles from home.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Projects are stored in project bags with canvas, usually blank, threads, beads, string, or whatever I will need for the project. Any other threads are stored on rings or tie hangers in a dark closet. Threads on cards have their own special chest of small shallow drawers that lives beside my stitching chair.

2nd Place

604NP: Mary Williams, *Heart & Ribbons*

Designer: Toni Gerdes

Teacher: Toni Gerdes

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I liked the design.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

It was a class piece, so the stitches were from the designer.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I used Brenda Hart's books.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I organize stash by thread and by project.

3rd Place

601NP: Karla McCoy, *Beadazzled!*

Designer: Nancy Cucci

Teacher: Nancy Cucci

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I was intrigued by the number of beads on this piece. Prior to this class I was not particularly good at using beads to enhance pieces. After completing *Beadazzled*, I am no longer hesitant to consider beads for any piece I stitch. I particularly like the shading created by the beads on the left side of the heart section, and I love the way this piece sparkles in the light.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Most challenging about this piece was the overwhelming number of beads. Learning how to get beads to lay correctly and look consistent was a challenge and a test of my patience.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I used the stitches provided by Nancy Cucci's stitch guide. Nancy did encourage us to make the piece our own by changing it in some way. I added a little red to the center section by using red thread to attach the crystal beads in five of the hearts. It added just a little color to the center section and made the piece my own.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

The threads used in this piece were provided by Nancy Cucci. The threads used were #5 pearl cotton, Fyre Werks Soft Sheen, Nymo Size D Beading thread, and DMC Cotton floss.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

I almost always carry two books with me for stitch ideas: *The Original Stitches To Go* by Suzanne Howren and Beth Robertson and *Sharon G's Simply Essential Needlepoint Stitch Explanations* by Sharon G. They are great resources and are small and easy to carry in my needlepoint bag.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

My stash is organized by thread type. I then pull threads for individual projects as needed.

Honorable Mention

602NP: Diane L. Merlock, *Silk Pageantry*

Designer: Kay Cline

Teacher: Kay Cline

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I loved the geometrical aspect of it; it is very pleasing to the eye.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

This was my first canvas project, and at the time I was primarily a cross stitcher. I was just starting to learn specialty stitches, so all of the stitches were a challenge and none of them were frustrating at all.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Truthfully, I liked the design as it was pictured, so I went entirely with the designer's choices of stitches.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Well, I literally went with the title of the piece, *Silk Pageantry*. So it had to have silk, and it had to have pageantry. I'm an Army veteran, so it had to have the red, white, and blue. And it had to have the gold metallic (of a flag pole). For the background I chose to use a golden yellow to contrast the red, white, and blue.

Do you have a favorite reference book you always turn to when you run into a problem while

stitching, whether with a stitch, a technique, or a thread?

The Needlepoint Book by Jo Ippolito Christensen.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

Well, there's organization, and then there's ... not. Projects that are kitted up are put in bins by theme — Christmas, Halloween, patriotic, cats — and technique — cross stitch, needlepoint, Hardanger, etc. I have a drawer just for linens, another for Aida, and another for canvas. My threads, however, are sadly in need of major organization, most being thrown into several drawers and bins.

Honorable Mention

605NP: Faye Robinson, *Spirit*

Designer: Susan Reed

Teacher: Susan Reed

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I organize my stash by name and color, putting the threads in bags and connecting them with rings.

Founders Award

First-Time Exhibitor Award

People's Choice Award

606NP: Melody McNeill, *Moods of Arabella*

Designers: Michael Boren and Carole Lake

Teachers: Michael Boren and Carole Lake

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I stitched the original *Arabella*, which was a four-inch square with a border, fell in love with the design, but was sad that it was so small. So with Michael's permission, I made it into a large piece that I feel dignifies this beautiful design.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

My favorite stitch in *Moods of Arabella* is the Rhodes stitch. I love the way it gives depth to the design, so I added more Rhodes stitches to the border.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I followed the original design but incorporated my own ideas into the border.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I visited a number of shops, collecting Watercolours, Wildflowers, and Waterlilies. When I exhausted those possibilities, I used Internet shopping to complete the 25 squares. Each square calls for two different Watercolours, Wildflowers, and Waterlilies. After making those choices, I chose the other threads that complemented them.

How do you organize your stash? By thread, color, project, something else?

I organize my stash by threads in baggies and put on large rings. That way I can easily see the colors.

Class Project Professional Category 6-P

1st Place

6003P: Marilyn Owen, *Square Dance*

Designer: Orna Willis

Teacher: Orna Willis

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I loved the textures and the unique use of Ultrasuede®.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Most challenging were the squares where we laid Neon Rays in every channel across the square (a challenge in itself), then wove three strands of silk over and under the Neon Rays. I actually cheated and put the silk down first, weaving the Neon Rays; I found this much easier to manage.

Most frustrating was the use of more threads than there were intersections of canvas in a single square (an exaggeration, but not much of one). Finding places to end the tails of so many threads also presented its own challenges.

Favorite was the wonderful job my framer did. I brought extra pieces of Ultrasuede® with me, and she suggested that I stitch a few extra squares to scatter around the piece.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I followed the directions (for the most part).

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I began with her list of threads, but I did my own colors from my stash of Ultrasuede®. I tried to substitute the same type of thread (stranded, ribbon, metallic, etc.) and the color family from her list.

2nd Place

Sampler Award

6002P: Marilyn Owen, *Serengeti*

Designer: Pamela Harding

Teacher: Pamlea Harding

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

This was a “gotta have it” piece as soon as I saw it in the Seminar brochure. What is surprising is that I don’t even remember noticing it when it was on display at Seminar the year before. I think the geometric without being repetitive was the thing that drew me to it. It most certainly was not the color scheme, as yellow-green is at the bottom of my list.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

Favorites were the intricate stitches, where an area is made up of several smaller parts, each with its own stitch.

Challenging were the areas where I didn’t agree with her method of fitting the pattern to the area, and I changed it to suit my taste. But since one of the main goals of the class was to work out ways to fit a pattern into an existing area besides normal compensation, I thought this was allowable.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

I followed the directions.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

I used the threads from the kit, replacing only the Tiara she used with a Kreinik braid.

3rd Place

None given

Silk and Metal Award

6001P: Jonathan Brown, *Golden Endless Knot*

Designer: Michele Roberts

Teacher: Michele Roberts

What drew you to this piece and inspired you to stitch it?

I liked the Celtic inspired knot and I loved the fall of the swag. I had never done gold work except in Japanese embroidery and felt it was time I added that to my skill-set. I was also aware of Michele’s reputation as a brilliant teacher and decided to give it a shot.

Of the stitches and techniques used in this piece, what was your favorite, most challenging, or most frustrating one and why?

The most frustrating was probably the Montenegrin stitch. You would think you had mastered it, then come to a corner and it would all get mixed up again. It wasn’t too bad after about the fourth corner.

My favorite, but also the most challenging, was the parallel laying of the gold down the swag. Each piece had to be exactly the correct length and placed at the correct angle or it did not look right.

How did you select the stitches you used in this piece?

Class piece, teachers selection.

How did you go about choosing the threads you used to stitch this piece?

Class piece, teachers selection.