



# View from the Fringe

Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



Vol. 24 No. 1 September 2016

[www.ne-rugsociety.org](http://www.ne-rugsociety.org)

## September 16 Meeting: Wendel Swan on Swedish Textiles



### Wendel Swan with Swedish textiles.

On September 16, at First Parish, Lincoln, Wendel Swan opens the new season with a talk titled "Swedish Folk Weavings for Oriental Rug Lovers." Using PowerPoint and examples from his own collection, Wendel will present several important types of Swedish folk weavings produced between 1700 and 1850, placing them in their historical and cultural contexts in rural Swedish homes of the period. He will also compare and contrast Swedish textiles with some of their Near Eastern counterparts, considering both design and structure.

Wendel has spoken to NERS on diverse topics (his most recent talk, in 2009, addressed color theory). He is a member of the GWU Textile Museum Board of Trustees and is Chair of the Executive Committee of ICOC. He chaired the 2003 and 2015 ICOC conferences in Washington and is a past president of the two Washington rug societies.

For show and tell, members are invited to bring Scandinavian textiles or other Northern European cushions or covers.

### September 16 Meeting Details

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** First Parish, Bedford Road, Lincoln

**Directions:** From Rt. 95 (128), take exit 28B, Trapelo Road West. Proceed west about 2.5 miles to a stop sign at the five-way intersection in Lincoln (there's a white planter in the middle of the intersection). Go right on Bedford Road for 0.1 mile to Bemis Hall, a large brick building on the right. First Parish is on your left.

**From Rt. 2,** take Bedford Road, Lincoln Center exit (eastbound, turn right at the light; westbound, go through light, turn right, and circle 270° to cross Rt. 2 at the light). Proceed 0.9 mile to Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your left. First Parish is on your right.

**Parking:** Park in the lot behind the parish house, along the street, or in front of Bemis Hall if that building is dark and not in use.

**Food:** Provided by members whose names begin with **R** through **Z**. Please arrive before 6:45 to set up, and stay afterwards to clean up.



Face of a Swedish *agedyna* (carriage-cushion cover), ca. 1800–1820, twist-stitch embroidery.

## October 14 Meeting: Michael Franses on Some of the Oldest Carpets and Tapestries



**Michael Franses.**

The Pazyryk Carpet, in the Hermitage, is famously touted as the oldest extant knotted-pile carpet. But scholars have long theorized that pile and tapestry weaving predates the sophisticated Pazyryk; archaeological finds in ancient Egypt, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia have bolstered their contentions. In a 1991 *HALI* article, Udo Hirsch, surveying the examples then known, proposed that pile weaving began some 5,000 years ago.

In 2014, Friedrich Spuhler published sixteen pre-Islamic pile fragments and ten flatweaves found in northern Afghanistan, all of them in the Al-Sabah Collection in Kuwait. These fragments are nevertheless just a subset of a much more widely distributed group, numbering more than seventy. Over the last two decades, an international consortium of art historians (among them Elena Tsareva), archaeologists, and scientists have been studying the group and will publish their collective conclusions in an eventual volume. Unfortunately, an exhibition of many of these ancient textile finds, planned for Qatar in 2017, has now been canceled. But in this special talk for NERS, Michael will present current research on “the birth of the rug,” accompanied by some of his extraordinary images.

Michael Franses has spent much of his career studying ancient textiles, in particular those from China and Central Asia. With Robert Pinner, Michael cofounded ICOC and *HALI*; he is now the Chairman of *HALI* Publications. He has

### October 14 Meeting Details

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** First Parish, Bedford Road, Lincoln

**Directions and Parking:** See page 1.

**Food:** Provided by members whose names begin with **A** through **G**. Please arrive before 6:45 to set up, and stay afterwards to clean up.

*Note: Michael has stipulated that there be no photography or recording of his presentation.*

jointly organized and mounted numerous major exhibitions, including the unrivaled *Eastern Carpet in the Western World* (London, 1983) and *Glanz der Himmelssöhne: Kaiserliche Teppiche aus China 1400–1750* (Cologne, 2005). From 1972 to 2009, he ran The Textile Gallery, in London; between 1998 and 2004 he was instrumental in forming the outstanding collection of historical carpets in the Qatar Museums. Now retired from the commercial world, he lives in Florence and devotes his time to his research, to organizing his vast archives, and to completing various publications.



**Small rug with palmettes in lattice. Bactria, Central Asia, ca. 1,800–2,000 years old. Found in 1984 at no. 2 tomb, Shanpula cemetery, Luopu, Xinjiang. Wool pile and foundation, 76 x 74 cm. Xinjiang Museum, Urumqi, 84K2.1.**



# Chairman's Report for the 2015–16 Season

## Leadership

Ann Nicholas and Julia Bailey have completed their sixth and final season as Co-Chairs of NERS. This past season began a transition in leadership roles. Ann's major duties during her tenure—managing the speaker program, arranging meeting venues, and handling NERS finances—were assumed by Joel Greifinger and Jim Sampson. Julia's role of introducing speakers and running meetings was taken over by Joel and Jeff Spurr. In addition to acting as Program Chair, Joel handled the digital projection equipment. Jim Sampson managed our finances, maintained the membership rolls, and distributed newsletters and other announcements. Other Steering Committee members who kept NERS going are Lloyd Kannenberg and Louise Dohanian, who transported our amplification system and screen as well food supplies; Jim Adelson, who again ably reported on speaker presentations; and regular or occasional newsletter contributors Jeff, Ann, and Lloyd. Jeff posted upcoming NERS meetings on [RugRabbit.com](http://RugRabbit.com). Yon Bard continued as our meeting photographer. Richard Belkin brought the lighting. Richard Larkin took the minutes of our year-end planning meeting; in addition his spouse, Martha Brooks, administered the NERS website, for which she has our deep gratitude. While Julia and Ann have stepped aside from their Co-Chair roles (Ann having moved to Texas), they will both continue to serve on the Steering Committee, Julia editing and producing the newsletter, and Ann representing NERS on the board of ACOR. Joel's new title will be NERS Chairman.

## Meetings and speakers, 2015–16 (see also p. 6)

Meetings during the past season saw a mix of history, scholarship, reminiscence, collector passion, and even travel (in the form of a field trip). In September, at the Durant-Kenrick House, Heather Ecker shared her research on the history and designs of a group of early Spanish carpets. At the October meeting, at First Parish in Lincoln, we heard collecting stories from longtime members Ann Nicholas and Rich Blumenthal. In November, Kendra Weisbin led a tour of the reinstalled Islamic gallery of the George Walter Vincent Smith Museum, in Springfield. At ALMA in February, textile curator Susan Lind-Sinanian presented her work on Armenian widow and orphan textile handicrafts. The March meeting, at Skinner, included a reception and a talk by Lawrence Kearney on the social contexts of rugs. In April, at First Parish, "Good, Better, Best" featured members John Clift on Anatolian kilims, Richard Belkin on Akstafa rugs, and Yon Bard on Yomud chuvals. The May picnic, at Gore Place—held under the "big tent" due to changeable weather—concluded the season with the customary moth mart and a lively and eclectic post-lunch show and tell (see pp. 7–9).



**Former NERS Co-Chair Ann Nicholas and new Chairman Joel Greifinger, in a 2013 photo.**

## Finances and Membership

Our finances have remained sound; we ended the season once again with a budget surplus. Membership in NERS saw a decrease from 116 to 105, but we added two new members—**Mostaba Baghner Oskouei** and **Linda Waterman**. We continue to be one of the largest and most active American rug societies. True to our name, the great majority of our members hail from New England (with every state represented). But some of us are from farther away: New York (3) and Texas (4). Special acknowledgment is due to our Supporting and Patron members, whose "above and beyond" generosity has helped maintain our financial health. Supporting members for 2015–16 are **John Clift, John J. Collins, Jeremy and Hanne Grantham, Barbara Kaslow, Barbara Matheson, Ann Nicholas and Richard Blumenthal, Catherine Reurs, and Steve and Harmony Spongberg**. Patron members, who support NERS at the highest level, are **James Adelson and Debbie Sheetz, Julia and Doug Bailey, Richard Belkin, Louise and Buzz Dohanian, Lloyd and Susan Kannenberg, Mitch and Rosalie Rudnick, Beau Ryan, Julian Taibi, and Alan Varteresian**. Thank you all.

In conclusion, for the Steering Committee, I'd like to extend to every NERS member our warm thanks for your support during the past season. We hope that, during the year to come, you'll consider volunteering to help organize activities, and will continue to offer the encouragement, enthusiasm, and constructive ideas so necessary to keeping our society vital and rewarding.

*Joel Greifinger*



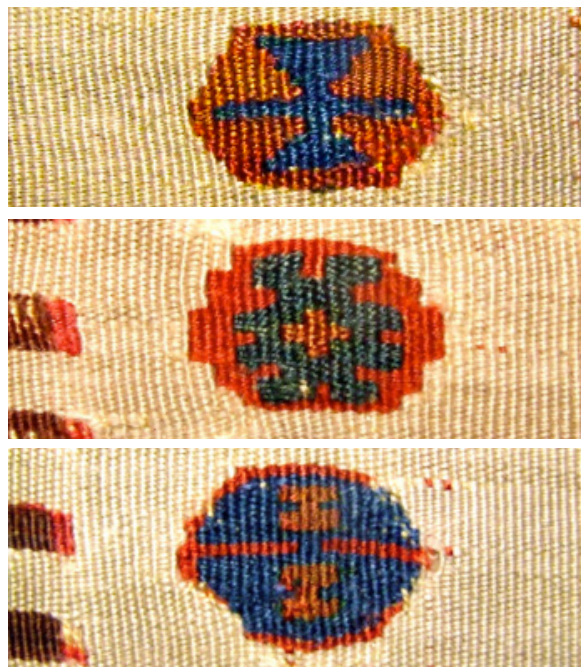
## Rocky Mountain Spotted Kilim



1. Fragmentary half of a Hakkari kilim.

The Turkish province of Hakkari lies in the rugged eastern extension of the Taurus Mountains, its eponymous capital only a few kilometers from the border with Iraq. This kilim fragment (1) is an example of the rich Kurdish weaving tradition of the region. In *An Introduction to Kurdish Rugs and Other Weavings*, William Eagleton says (p. 100), “Hakkari kilims are usually woven in two sections which together form a unified pattern in a squarish format.” Compared to Eagleton’s examples (plates 73–77), the dimensions of this piece, 78” by 28”, are consistent with its being half of one of those two-part kilims. It was definitely not “made for the trade,” but its design is striking; I have not seen its like before.

The pattern of its white ground consists of forty-six offset rows of five small medallions each. There are three medallion types, which I will call A, B, and C, distinguished by the shape of the medallion and the motif enclosed (2). A and C are flattened hexagons with sloping sides; B is definitely a stepped hexagon or octagon. A type-C medallion differs from a type A not only in its enclosed motif but also in having a border of a color different from that of its field. Each row contains only one type of medallion. The order of types, by row, is as follows: A (one row), B (three rows), A (one row), B (four rows), C (one row), B (three rows), A (one row), B (three rows), C (one row), B (three rows), A (one row), B (three rows), C (one row), B (three rows), C (one row), B (three rows), A (one row), B (three rows), C (one row), B (three rows), A (one row), B (three rows), A (one row).



2. Medallion types A (top), B (center), and C (bottom).





3. Kilim detail, showing color range.



4. Kilim detail, side.

The colors of the individual medallions and their enclosed motifs (and the borders of the type-C medallions) seem to have been randomly chosen. As for the colors themselves, besides the undyed white of the field I see the light red and yellow of the warps, the violet and red-violet of the side stripe, and in the medallions red, rusty orange, aubergine, dark blue, blue-green, and a badly corroded black. The stripes at the top and bottom are of the same red as appears in the medallions. The dyes are probably “natural,” that is, not chemically synthesized (3).

It is unclear if there was originally an outside border beyond the side stripe; I see no evidence of a selvage (4). I believe the presence of yellow warps is quite unusual. The surviving fragments of terminating stripes at the top and bottom suggest that the length of the piece has not been much reduced. The material appears to be Z2S wool throughout, and the weave is slit tapestry. The age of this kilim? I like to think third quarter of the nineteenth century at the latest, but it’s really anybody’s guess.

Lloyd Kannenberg



## Rear View Mirror: Last Season's Speaker Program

(see p. 3, **Meetings and speakers, 2015–16**, for identification)



### Rug and Textile Events

#### Auctions

Sept. 13, Stuttgart, Nagel, Rugs, Carpets and Ethnographic Art

Sept. 27, Vienna, Dorotheum, Oriental Carpets, Textiles and Tapestries

Oct. 18, London, Christie's, Oriental Rugs and Carpets

Oct. 13–Oct. 21, Boston, Skinner, Fine Oriental Rugs and Carpets Online

Oct. 23, Boston, Grogan & Company, October Auction; Asian Works of Art

Nov. 1, London, Sotheby's, Rugs and Carpets

Nov. 19, Vienna, Austria Auction Company, Antique Oriental Rugs

Nov. 20, Boston, Grogan & Company, The Rosalie and Mitchell Rudnick Collection of Caucasian Rugs

#### Symposia and Shows

Sept. 10, Wiesbaden, Rippon Boswell, Turkmen Carpets Symposium

Oct. 21–23, Berlin, Volkmanntreffen, "Crisscrossing the Mediterranean"

Oct. 21–23, San Francisco, Antique Rug & Textile Show (ARTS), Motel Capri

### Future NERS Meeting

- November 11: Mitch Rudnick, "The Making of the Rudnick Collection," Grogan & Company, Boston

### Photo Credits

**p. 1:** Wendel Swan; **p. 2:** Walter Denny (top left), Michael Franses (bottom right); **p. 3:** Rich Blumenthal; **pp. 4–5:** (1) Mark Berkovich, (2–4) Lloyd Kannenberg; **p. 6, row 1:** Heather Ecker, Julia Bailey, Julia Bailey; **p. 6, row 2:** Julia Bailey, Julia Bailey, Doug Bailey; **p. 7:** Jim Sampson; **p. 8, row 1:** Yon Bard; **p. 8, row 2:** Yon Bard, Yon Bard, Doug Bailey; **p. 8, row 3:** Doug Bailey; **p. 9, row 1:** Doug Bailey; **p. 9, row 2:** Doug Bailey, Yon Bard; **p. 9, row 3:** Julia Bailey, Yon Bard; **pp. 10–11:** (1) John Collins, (2) Rich Blumenthal, (3, 4) Antique Rug & Textile Show: ARTS, (5) Julia Bailey, (6, 7) Doug Bailey



## May 22 Meeting: Annual Picnic

Chilly winds and the threat of rain convinced 2016 picnickers to convene inside Gore Place's capacious tent, which provided room for a varied moth mart **(top)**, lunch **(center)**, and a show and tell run with dispatch by Rich Blumenthal and retiring NERS Co-Chair Ann Nicholas **(bottom)**.





**Top row:** Borjalu Kazak long rug, with outgoing co-chairs Ann Nicholas and Julia Bailey providing support; minuscule Shahsevan kilim bags, front and back. **Middle row:** Fereghan Sarouk; Caucasian kilim; Qashqa'i *wagireh* (sampler). **Bottom row:** Bakhtiari sumak-front bag; dovetailed-tapestry rug woven by member Carl Stock's mother in 1939, while she was in Norway.





**Top row:** Single length of a large, strip-woven *arkilla* (tent divider) made by Fulani weavers, Niger Bend region, Mali.

**Middle row:** Dayak woman's waist wrap with beadwork, nasa-shell pendants, and old cotton trade cloth, Borneo; beaded wedding apron, Cenderawasih (formerly Geelvink) Bay, Papua, New Guinea. **Bottom row:** Woman's ikat waist wrap, Savu, Eastern Indonesia; modernist hooked rug, USA.





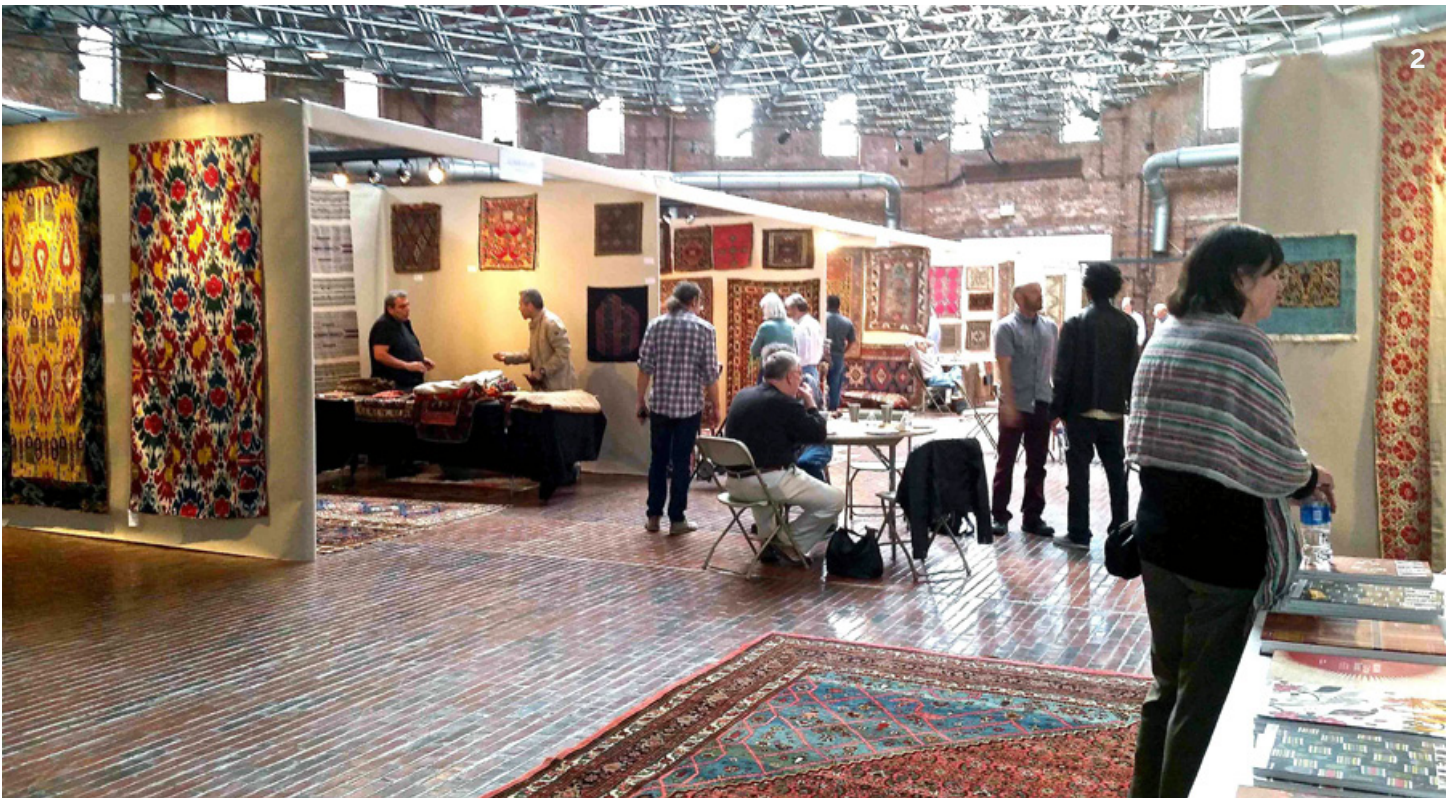
## Second ARTS East, Boston Cyclorama, June 10–12

The Antique Rug and Textile Show (ARTS) held its second East Coast event on June 10–12, 2016. This time the venue was Boston's Cyclorama, a historic domed building whose dazzling copper skylight (1) flooded the antique rugs and textiles on offer with natural light. In more than twenty years of attending rug shows, I cannot recall a better setting for displaying fine old weavings (2).

Attendance by members of the rug community from outside New England increased, although the total number of visitors was similar to that of last year's event, in Dedham.

The Boston show gave attendees the chance to browse through some of the best antique rugs and textiles on the market (3) and to mingle with fellow rug enthusiasts (4). (Discussing oriental rugs, whether with other collectors or dealers, is a special delight of attending rug shows.)

Wayne Barron, a Somerville dealer and NERS member, again capably spearheaded the ARTS East planning. This year, two-thirds of the twenty-six exhibitors were American, with the rest from Europe and Turkey. Most of the antique rugs and textiles shown were from the usual Middle Eastern



1. Copper skylight of the Cyclorama. 2. Ann Nicholas (foreground) views the show. 3. Joel Greifinger browses bags.



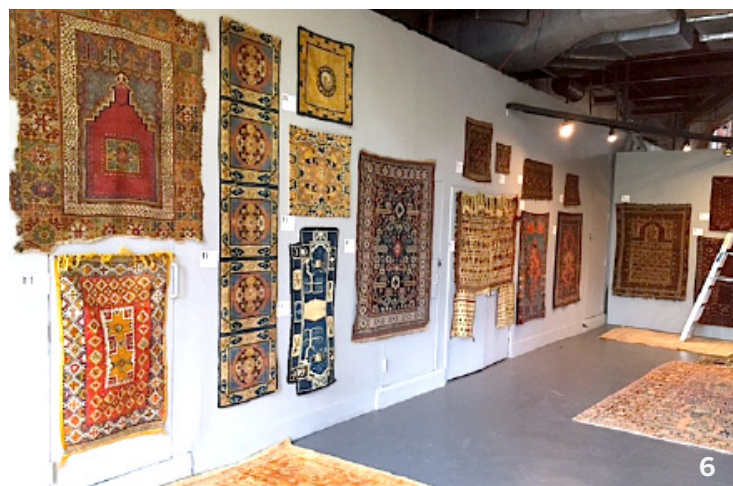
weaving areas, but there were also some beautiful Central Asian textiles and interesting Tibetan rugs. As always, the participating dealers were more than happy to educate people on matters of attribution, structure, and function (5).

In addition to his efforts in bringing about the dealer fair, Wayne organized an ambitious special exhibition, *Rugs A to Z*, drawn from several New England collections. Meant to introduce budding collectors to the wide range of available options, the seventy examples on view (all identified via hand-calligraphed labels) ranged from

decorative commercial carpets to village rugs and nomadic trappings. In keeping with the exhibition title, they were hung in alphabetical order—Afshar to Zeykhour—along the walls of the temporary gallery (6, 7).

Was this ARTS East a success? In many ways, yes: it had a wonderful venue, top-notch international dealers, and increased attendance from non-local collectors. But the real question is whether it was financially rewarding enough to repeat next year. Although right now that appears doubtful, I can only hope so.

Ann Nicholas



4. Rich Blumenthal, Linda Konnersman, and DeWitt Mallary mingle. 5. Dave Stevens admires Chicago dealer Mete Mutlu's pinwheel Kazak. 6. *Rugs A to Z*: the M-through-S wall. 7. Installation almost finished: a *wagireh* and three Yomuds get labels.



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**Distributor:** Jim Sampson

**NERS 2016–17 Steering Committee:** Joel Greifinger (Chairman), Jim Adelson, Julia Bailey, Yon Bard, Richard Belkin, Louise Dohanian, Richard Larkin, Lloyd Kannenberg, Ann Nicholas, Jim Sampson, Jeff Spurr

**If you haven't already done so, please renew your NERS membership now! You can pay online using a credit card: go to [www.ne-rugsociety.org/NERS-paypal.htm](http://www.ne-rugsociety.org/NERS-paypal.htm) and follow directions. Alternatively, you can mail your check, payable to NERS, to our Holliston address (see the box opposite).**

**The New England Rug Society** is an informal, non-profit organization of people interested in enriching their knowledge and appreciation of antique oriental rugs and textiles. Our meetings are held seven or more times a year. Membership levels and annual dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120, Student \$25. Membership information and renewal forms are available on our website, [www.ne-rugsociety.org](http://www.ne-rugsociety.org); by writing to the New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 6125, Holliston, MA 01746; or by contacting Jim Sampson at [jahome22@gmail.com](mailto:jahome22@gmail.com).



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