



# View from the Fringe

## Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



Vol. X, No. 3 January 15, 2003

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

### Next Meeting: Bethany Mendenhall and Charles Lave: “Out of the Cedar Chest”

At their talk on February 7, NERS members Charles Lave and Bethany Mendenhall will reflect on the enterprise of collecting, illustrating their thoughts with items from their collections. Charles will pursue ideas about the fun of fragments: the attraction of asymmetry and the passion for the primitive. This leads to two concomitant questions: where is the dividing line between “art” and “inept”? And which side does his collection represent? Bethany will talk about the interplay of the rational and the emotional in acquisition decisions—“head pieces” vs. “heart pieces.” **And there will be lots of beautiful—probably Anatolian—rugs to see and feel!**

Charles is a Professor of Economics at the University of California, Irvine. Retired from teaching, he still does research and participates in the life of the university. Bethany was a career art librarian before retiring from the Getty Research Institute five years ago. Charles and Bethany have been collecting since the early 1980s. Though married and sharing the same wall space, they maintain separate collections. They have participated in ACOR since its inception, and are currently managing the Carpet Fair

#### Next Meeting Details

**Date:** Friday, February 7

**Time:** 7:30PM

**Place:** Armenian Library and Museum,  
65 Main Street, Watertown

**Directions:**

Go to Watertown Square (out-of-towners, get off the Mass Pike at exit 17 and follow the signs.) Take Main Street (Rte. 20) westbound. The second light is Church Street, and the Museum is on the righthand corner.

**Parking:**

Go right on Church Street and into the municipal lot on the right. Most meters are free after 6PM, but check to make sure!

for the Washington ICOC in April. Frequent travelers to Turkey, they have been working for Josephine Powell’s Anatolian Cultural Heritage Center in Istanbul, and developed the Adopt-a-Kilim project which NERS has supported.

### March Meeting: Tom Hannaher on “The Enigmatic Art of Ancient South American Textiles”

*See meeting details on page 2. Please note new venue!*

NERS member Tom Hannaher is a consumer electronics marketing executive who has been collecting rugs and textiles since 1983. In recent years, he has focused on ancient textiles from South America. Tom is known for his substantial collection of figurative pre-Columbian coca bags from Peru, Chile and Bolivia.

Why should a talk on Pre-Columbian textiles be of interest to a society of oriental rug collectors? We asked Tom Hannaher that very question, and this was his response:

In my opinion, the best oriental rugs in the world have four things in common:

- 1) They feature bizarre, archaic imagery—often mythological beasts of some type.
- 2) They have richly saturated, wonderful colors.
- 3) They are very, very old—mid nineteenth century or earlier.
- 4) I cannot afford them. I can’t even afford a small fragment of one.

For years I had a lot of fun hunting for small rugs and saddlebags with interesting imagery. But I simply couldn’t collect the rugs I loved the most. In

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## Following Meeting

### Continued from page 1

the summer of 1996, while I was visiting prominent rug dealer Ronnie Newman at his home in Vermont, I happened to notice a small textile fragment with bizarre imagery and great colors. I asked Ronnie what it was and he said, "I don't know. It's pre-Columbian. I got it as a gift from a rug dealer I know." That 4" x 12" tapestry fragment from the Chimu culture of northern Peru was wild and wonderful and it cost \$800, not \$8,000. I almost bought it, but hesitated because I knew nothing about the subject. But it was the pivotal point in a dramatic left turn in my collecting. I have mostly collected pre-Columbian textiles since that time. Most recently I've focused my collection on ancient coca leaf bags.

Ancient South American cultures lacked written languages, so there is a tremendous amount of speculation regarding the exact meaning of these ancient images. In my presentation I will review the materials and techniques of South American weaving and discuss the major weaving cultures and time periods. I will focus on a wide variety of designs, especially those relating to shamanism and apparently supernatural beings. In particular, I will highlight the images on ancient coca bags or "ch'uspas"—woven pouches that have played a ritual role in Andean society for over 2000 years.

The presentation will be accompanied by an exhibit of over 30 decorated pre-conquest coca bags—one of the largest displays of ch'uspas ever presented outside of Peru. Other pre-Columbian textile examples, dating from c. 700 BC to 1500 AD will also be on display.

The dry coastal deserts of Peru have yielded more well-preserved ancient textiles than any other area on earth. The Inca people who were conquered by Pizarro in 1532 were only the last in a series of cultures that dominated the Andean altiplano. Textiles decorated with dramatic images of supernatural beings have been carbon-dated to c. 2000 BC. Andean weavers used virtually every known weaving technique, including one—discontinuous warp and weft—unknown anywhere else. Cotton and camelid wool of the alpaca and vicuña, dyed with a cornucopia of

natural dyestuffs, created more than 150 distinct color shades.

Although well-known for their sophisticated weaving techniques and rich color palette, ancient Andean weavers are particularly renowned for their dramatic designs, both abstract and figurative. Of particular interest is a pantheon of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic images generally presumed to relate to afterlife transformation, hallucinogens, and a shamanism. Other figural themes include dualism, trophy heads, and beings-within-beings.

**You are encouraged to bring examples of pre-Columbian weavings for "show and tell."**

### March Meeting Details

**Date:** Friday, March 14

**Time:** 7:30PM

**Place:** **First Parish Church**, Bedford Road, Lincoln, **across the street from Bemis Hall**

**Note:** \$10 guest fee for non-members

**Directions:**

From Rte. 95 (128) take the Trapelo Road West exit (#28B) in Waltham. Proceed west about 2.5 miles to a stop sign at the five-way intersection in Lincoln (there is a white planter in the middle of the intersection.) Go right on Bedford Road for 0.1 miles to Bemis Hall, a large brick building on your right. **The church is on your left.**

From Rte. 2 take Bedford Road, Lincoln Center exit (eastbound, turn right at light; westbound, go through light, turn right, and circle 270 degrees to cross Rte. 2 at the light.) Proceed 0.9 miles and you will see Bemis Hall, a large brick building, on your left.. **The church is on your right.**

**Parking:**

In back of the church plus along the street It's OK to park in front of Bemis Hall **provided the building is dark and not in use.**



## Last Meeting: Tour of Sackler Prayer Rug Exhibition By Jim Adelson

On Saturday, December 6th, 40 NERSers happily convened for a “sold-out” guided tour of the exhibit *The Best Workmanship, The Finest Materials: Prayer Carpets from the Islamic World* at Harvard’s Sackler Museum. It has been a number of years since the last carpet-focused exhibit at the Sackler, so all the NERS members welcomed this opportunity.

Jeff Spurr, Julia Bailey, and Mike Tschebull provided the commentary, individually leading the discussion on some themes, and at other times offering thoughts in round-robin format. Jeff noted the complementary nature of the selections in the exhibit compared with the pieces in the on-line NERS prayer rug and textile exhibit ([www.nersociety.org/gallery.htm](http://www.nersociety.org/gallery.htm)). In general, the two exhibits focus on weavings from different areas; for example, the Sackler exhibit has more classical Anatolian carpets which were not represented in the on-line exhibit, while the on-line exhibit has Belouch prayer rugs absent from the Sackler. Anatolian village weaving is the most prominent area of overlap, with each exhibit having several pieces from this region, albeit differing in character.

Julia started with a description of prayer rugs, while also recommending Jeff’s introductory essay in the on-line exhibit. Prayer rugs are united by a certain format—the design is asymmetrical, with a prayer niche or mihrab—but even this basic principle is not always clear. Julia continued with the comment “I’m going to talk about the rugs that no one else will defend,” and went on to the classical Anatolian carpets in the exhibit.

The first example was a typical prayer rug from the Ladik area, with a stepped niche and stylized flowers above it. The piece had an in-woven date of 1794; Julia observed that the inclusion of dates was a common practice in the period from 1770 to 1801. Ladik was located on a popular pilgrimage route to Mecca; the Ladik prayer rugs may commemorate donations to mosques, and include the date to document the pilgrimage. The Ladik rugs were produced

in a cottage industry setting.

Julia moved on to Anatolian examples from Ghiordes and Kula. Both of these examples had stepped mihrabs, mimicking the vaulted mosque architecture. This architecturally realistic depiction contrasted with coupled-column prayer rugs, such as those from Ladik, which represent an architectural style not typical of Turkey. Both the Ghiordes and Kula examples were very skilled in their implementation of small design elements, and showed a large vocabulary of design variations among the small elements. However, these small, repeated patterns and a generally duller color palette have contributed to a decline in popularity and collector interest in these rugs. Once upon a time, these were among the most prized collector pieces, but recent decades have seen a marked decline in collector focus on these pieces, and it’s even more striking to recognize that, fifty to one hundred years ago, these pieces were seen as the artful rugs to collect.

By contrast, Anatolian village rugs have grown significantly in collecting popularity, even though they often have cruder interpretations of designs that are found in workshop rugs as well. The workshop rugs sometimes were seen by weavers at the local mosque, or when a wealthy person in the town bought one, which is probably how these designs came to village weavers.

Mike Tschebull talked about the Anatolian village weavings in the exhibit. His first selection was a piece from the Sivas area. According to Mike, one of the singular qualities of this piece was the presence of cochineal-type dye. Mike indicated that this dye arrived in Turkey and the Caucasus in the 1850s, and was used very sparingly initially, but more prominently later. The particular Sivas piece was very colorful, and had two dates corresponding to 1854 to 1856. The variation in dates could be a mistake by the weaver, or it could reflect the lengthy time needed to finish the rug and more accurately document the start date and finish date of the rug.

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## Last Meeting: Tour of Sackler Prayer Rug Exhibition

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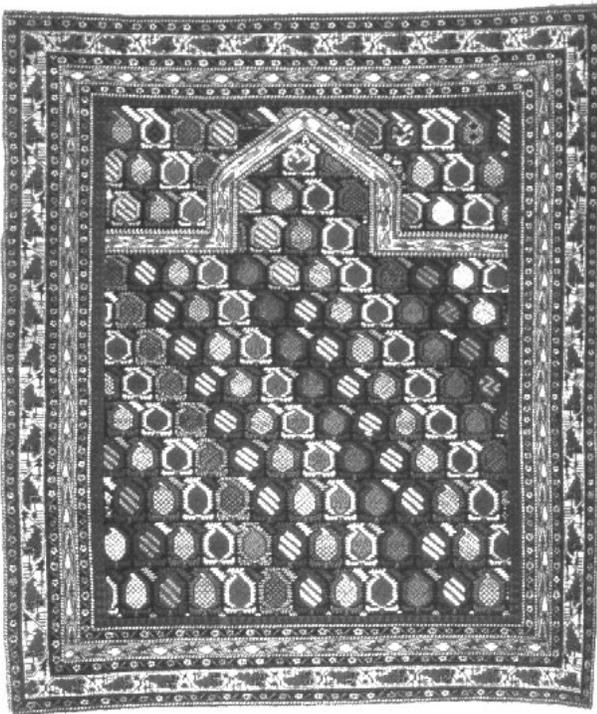
Mike turned next to a Yuntag piece. He observed that it was very similar to a piece from the Joseph McMullan collection. The colors of the piece on exhibit at the Sackler were just a little faded, but still quite strong. He proceeded to a mixed-technique piece from Western Anatolia (end of the 19th century); this one had mostly slit-weave tapestry kilim structure, but some eccentric wefting and some supplementary brocade. The piece had been somewhat damaged by a corrosive indigo-sulphonic dye.

A Melas weaving came next. Mike commented on the presence of several elements that were stylized village interpretations of Ottoman traditions. This piece was likely made for commerce, but even with a commercial intent, the weaver had included a couple of amulets that probably reflected local weaving tradition. Mike concluded the review of the Turkish pieces with the remark that he felt many Turkish village rugs are “overdated,” and have been woven more recently than thought. Export of such rugs to

Europe was documented in European paintings from the 1860s onward, and this export popularity spurred a lot more weaving, so many village rugs presumably date from the last third of the 19th century, rather than earlier.

Mike then focused on the only Persian pile weaving in the exhibit—a Kerman prayer rug. He observed that prayer rugs are actually very uncommon in Iran/Persia, particularly in the poorer areas where people could not afford them for local use. This piece was woven with undyed wool, on a cotton foundation. Mike commented that Kerman had been a leader in textiles, but British imports destroyed the market for Kerman textiles, and so the weavers switched to rugs. The exhibit caption for this piece mentioned that Kerman’s position on caravan routes to and from India also led to the use of Mughal and other eastern motifs.

The exhibit included two Caucasian prayer rugs. First, Mike offered some general remarks about Caucasian prayer rugs, asserting that there are no known Caucasian prayer rugs prior to around 1800. He then spoke about a well-known group of prayer rugs from the area of Marasa, whose name was corrupted to the term ‘Marasali’ used today for these rugs. Mike believes that the Marasali rugs trace their design heritage back to slit-weave tapestry kilims, and the rugs have to be seen in that context. There are both finer and coarser rugs using the Marasali design. There was considerable discussion about the so-called “black Marasali” that stood at the entrance to the exhibit (see illustration at left). This particular piece had an in-woven date of 1908. Despite having a relatively late date of creation, the piece had only natural dyes. It was also stiffer and more regular than the greatest of the black Marasalis, but there were a number of examples of weaver inventiveness. The piece was very finely woven, and in extremely good condition, suggesting that it was woven for export, and perhaps even as a prestige production piece. The collector who donated the piece to the Sackler had acquired it prior to 1920. The piece had some design features reflecting its late date, such as an addi-



Marasali prayer rug  
Sackler Museum

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## Last Meeting: Tour of Sackler Prayer Rug Exhibition

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tional main border. Jeff Spurr chimed in with a generalization that, at the end of a design's tradition, things tend to get either very coarse or hyper-refined.

Mike led the group on to a stunning late Mughal (Indian) example. This particular piece was woven of pashmina, probably in Srinagar. The piece was likely made in a very advanced workshop, woven from a designer's cartoon. Mike remarked upon the intensely floral Mughal tradition that started in the second quarter of the 17th century. This particular piece had paradisiacal imagery, including a vase and tray seen in Kashmir shawls as well as pile weavings. The piece also included cypress trees on both sides, where you would see columns in Turkish examples. The cypress was a very common and important element in Mughal and Persianate design—the tree was commonly used in gardens, given its ability to grow in the water-limited environment, and it was also commonly used in cemeteries, so it evokes mental images of the afterlife. Mughal pieces such as this were woven for a wealthy local clientele; a very well-developed manufacturing structure evolved to serve this market.

Adjacent to the Mughal example was a Persian piece that was constructed in Iran in the mid-19th century from earlier Kashmir materials (see illustration on right). Kashmir shawls are seen in paintings going back to the 16th and 17th centuries, so they were well known and highly prized. According to the caption for this particular piece, there was also a tradition in Iran of piecing together items from existing textiles, as was the case with this prayer panel likely made for a wealthy Iranian. A lot of the materials utilized in this piece were also used in garments, where striped materials on the bias were quite popular.

The last piece in the exhibit was a central Asian suzani (embroidery). It follows some of the "rules" of the prayer format, with the presence of the arch form and the extensive use of floral motifs, but was not, in all likelihood, actually used as a prayer item. The suzani was probably woven as a dowry piece, and likely spent its life as a decorative item, rather

than as a functional part of daily prayer.

In the concluding discussion, Jeff commented on the challenge of naming any exhibit, but felt it particularly ironic that this exhibit's title referred to the best workmanship and the finest materials, since the discussion of the pieces assembled here placed these weavings in the context of all weaving activity in their respective regions, and revealed that both the materials and workmanship were generally consistent with other weaving activity. The standards for prayer rugs were neither higher nor lower than those used for other weaving. However, the NERS group was very grateful to the Sackler for organizing and presenting the exhibit, and particularly appreciative for the leadership of our three docents—Julia, Mike, and Jeff—who definitely were way above average!

From the Sackler, some of us crossed the street to the Fogg Museum of Art, where Jeff Spurr led us through an exhibition of African art. Jeff spent most of the time showing us some spectacular examples of Kuba textiles, mostly princely garments for both adults and children.



**At Sackler Museum, from left:  
Persian-Kashmir piece, Natalia Nekrassova (our  
November speaker), Jeff Spurr, and Yon Bard  
(taken on 11/2/02)**



## London's Victoria and Albert Museum: A Special Resource for Oriental Rug and Textile Lovers

By Ann Nicolas

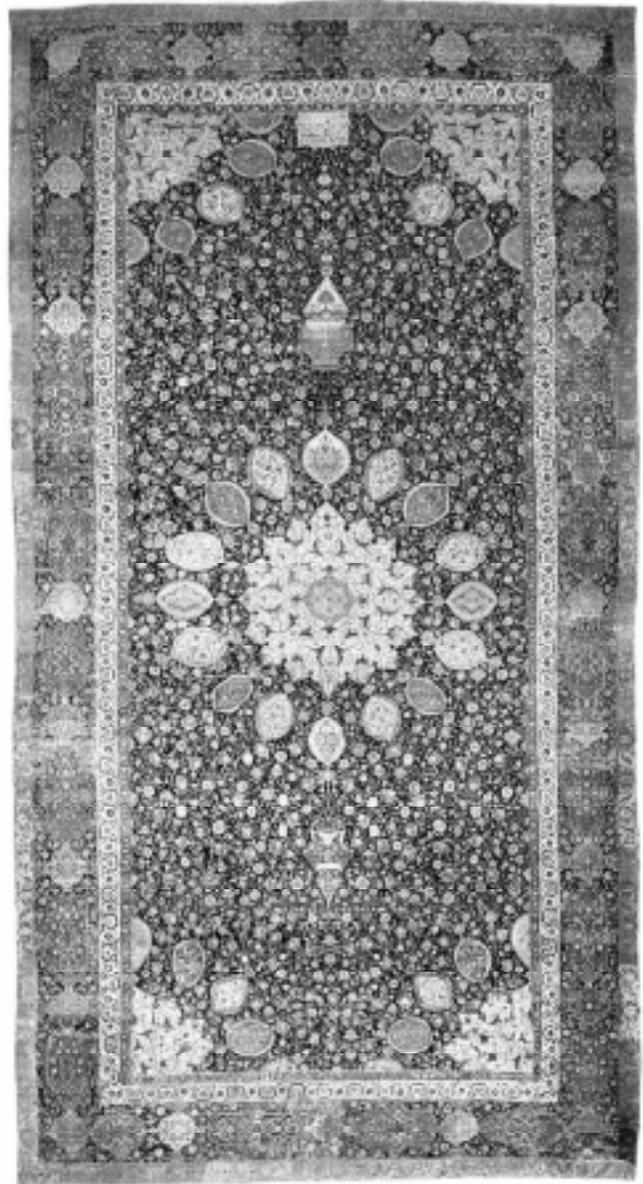
All of England is a special place for lovers of oriental rugs and textiles—there are many old castles and museums to visit with pieces displayed on the floors, walls, and even in old paintings. But arguably the most special place is the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. There are really incredible things on display there, and the study rooms with their carefully catalogued examples offer an unparalleled learning experience. Each article is labeled with information about its origin, structure, and provenance prior to coming into the collection. Richard and I spent an afternoon there a few years ago in the study collection of Persian tribal rugs. Feeling them and studying the structure and design was an incredible learning experience. We have visited London a number of times since, and this remains one of our London highlights.

The Victoria and Albert Museum, informally known as the V&A, began in the mid-nineteenth century as the repository of art and design pieces from the Great Exhibition of 1851. It is considered by many to have the world's greatest collection of decorative arts, including textiles and carpets beautifully displayed across a seven-mile four-story maze of halls and corridors. For example, the Islamic gallery is a dramatic gathering of vivid blue tiles and carved wooden screens dominated by the sixteenth century Ardabil carpet, surely the most fantastic Persian carpet that I have ever seen. Woven for the mosque at Ardabil—the family shrine of the Safavid dynasty—this masterly-designed huge carpet has a center medallion and a field covered with coiling stems bearing countless blossoms. The gallery includes another dozen or so outstanding carpets, each of which would be a special treasure in most museums.

The textile collections include vast numbers of European tapestries, embroideries, and silks. For an overview of several outstanding V&A holdings of European and Coptic origin, see the article *Magic in the Web* in the November/December 1999 issue of

*Hali*. Donald King, a former textile curator at the V&A, discusses the history, origin, and structure of 28 pieces, including the Ardabil carpet. But the textile collections don't stop there—the V&A has the National Collection of East Asian textiles; some

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**Ardabil Carpet, Persia, dated 1539-40  
13'5" x 23'11"  
Victoria and Albert Museum**



## Miscellaneous Stuff Compiled by Yon Bard

**Gremlins at work:** our last issue was beset with problems that we believe are now resolved:

- The illustrations on pages 8 and 9 had horizontal white lines running through them, indicating that my printer's nozzles needed a cleaning. Unfortunately, I didn't notice until it was too late.
- On page 8 we promised to reveal Tom Stocker's website address on page 9, but we failed to deliver. Well, the address is [www.tomstocker.com](http://www.tomstocker.com). Though Tom's exhibition is long closed, the paintings can still be seen on the website.
- Some electronic recipients have experienced difficulties when printing the Newsletter. It's got something to do with fonts. I think we've fixed the problem and this Newsletter should print OK. Please let me know if it doesn't.
- I lost many files when my hard disk crashed in October, including Alex Malcolm's obituary. Fortunately we managed to recoup the file and publish the obituary somewhat belatedly in this issue.

We apologize for these glitches and hope to avoid them in the future.

**NERS makes it big in HALI:** NERS members appear to dominate *HALI* 125, the November-December 2002 issue. The following citations and contributions are included:

- *Julia Bailey's* and *Gerard Paquin's* contributions to the Textile Museum's conference on 'The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets' are cited in the Editorial (p. 11)
- *Raoul (Mike) Tschebull* reviews the Sackler prayer rug exhibition (pp. 108-109)
- *Rosalie & Mitch Rudnick* are profiled by *Carl Strock* (p. 173).

Is *HALI* trying to usurp the functions of this Newsletter?

**NERS on-line prayer rug exhibition:** our exhibition continues to attract visitors (see the statistics provided by Bob Alimi on page 8) and excite comments. Noted West-Coast dealer Jim Blackmon cited

one of the exhibition's rugs as a reference for a piece he was offering for sale on [www.cloudband.com](http://www.cloudband.com), and a discussion of prayer rugs on [www.turkotek.com](http://www.turkotek.com) starts out by mentioning the exhibition as one of its inspirations.

While we are talking of the website exhibition, it is not too early to start discussing the next one. Although we don't expect to mount another exhibition before next fall, we would like to solicit suggestions for its theme. **If you have any ideas, please send them to us at the address on page 8**, or talk directly to one of the exhibition committee members (Jim Adelson, Bob Alimi, Yon Bard, or Jeff Spurr).

**Recommended book:** Rosalie Rudnick has sent us a warm recommendation for a book she has been reading. She writes that the title of the book is *The Carpet Wars: From Kabul to Baghdad: A Ten Year Journey Along Ancient Trade Routes*, written by Christopher Kremmer and published by Harper Collins' (2002; \$29.95 hardcover). This book is "an edge-of-the-chair memoir." According to the jacket blurb, "With their countries decimated, cultures pulverized, and families scattered, they flee, carrying what is often the only portable asset they own—their carpets. For those who remain, the carpet business is one of the only functioning industries left. And when the shooting stops and the bazaar springs back to life as if nothing happened, you can lose yourself there, where carpet dealers recline on bolsters, retailing conversation outside time (*sic*)." Mr. Kremmer has spent the past decade exploring Asia and writing about it for print and broadcast media. He is also a rug collector.

**NERS speakers at ICOC:** Among scheduled speakers at the next ICOC in Washington, DC, are Tad Runge on *The Growth of the Rug Industry in Persia in the Late 19th Century* and Yours Truly on *Pattern Irregularities in Turkmen Rugs*. The latter is substantially the same as the talk I gave to NERS on 10/20/2000.



## NERES Website Trivia

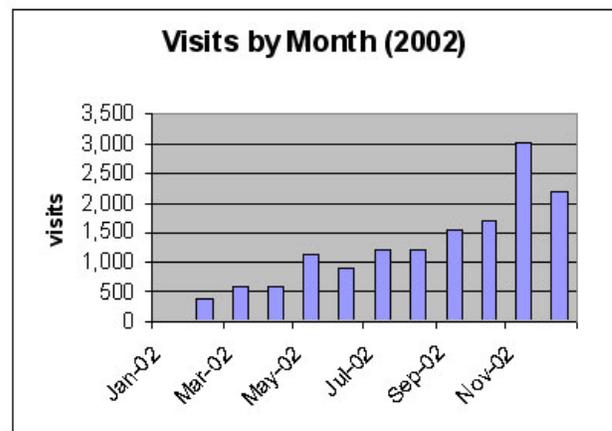
By Bob Alimi

The NERS website has been online since January 27, 2002. Visitor count has continued to climb throughout the past year as NERS web pages have become more heavily indexed by search engines around the globe. On average, about 50% of our visitors come to the NERS site directly as the result of making a query on a search site. The remaining visitors come either by clicking on a link at an external site (TurkoTek, ACOR, etc) or by utilizing a bookmark saved within their local browser. On a typical day, we receive an average of 70 distinct visitor sessions. This past November (after the debut of the NERS online exhibit) we peaked at an average of more than 100 visitor sessions a day.

The website currently includes more than 200 pages of HTML and more than 500 image files. The total website content consumes 72.5 MB of disk space on our hosting server. The NERS hosting server is a PC that runs the Linux operating system, with an Apache web server. The server hosts a large

number of websites in addition to NERS, including two other rug-related websites: TurkoTek and ICOC.

The website has a minimal impact on the NERS budget, with hosting services costing \$12 per month including the annual domain name registration fees. And several of this year's new members discovered and joined us through the website!



**We welcome the following new NERS members:** Ann Juel, Constance O'Dea, Lorraine Snell, and Carol Ann Wlodkoski.

Newsletter contributors and helpers: Yon Bard (editor), Jim Adelson, Bob Alimi, Dora Bard, Mark Hopkins, Ann Nicholas, Rosalie Rudnick, Janet Smith

Comments/contributions/for sale ads to: Yonathan Bard, e-mail [doryon@rcn.com](mailto:doryon@rcn.com)

**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. Its meetings are held six to eight times a year. Annual membership dues are: Single \$45, Couple \$65, Supporting \$90, Patron \$120. Membership information or renewal forms can be obtained on our website [www.newenglandrugsociety.org](http://www.newenglandrugsociety.org), or by writing to **New England Rug Society, P.O. Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773**, calling Mark Hopkins at 781-259-9444, or emailing him at [mopkins@netway.com](mailto:mopkins@netway.com).

### NERES 2002/3 Steering Committee:

Mark Hopkins (President)

Jim Adelson

Robert Alimi

Julia Bailey

Yonathan Bard

John Clift

Tom Hannaher

Sheryl Read

Gillian Richardson

Janet Smith

Jeff Spurr



## Upcoming Rug Events

### NERS 2002/3 Meetings:

**February 7:** Bethany Mendenhall and Charles Lave  
“*Out of the Cedar Chest*”

**March 14:** Tom Hannaher on “*The Enigmatic Art of Ancient South American Textiles*”

**April 4:** Bertram Frauenknecht “*Collecting Through the Eyes of a Dealer*,” joint meeting with Skinner

**May 10:** Picnic and Show & Tell.

### Auctions:

**Christie’s**, London, 2/19, 4/9, 5/1, 6/11

**Sotheby’s**, New York, 4/2

**Skinner**, Boston, 4/5/03

**Sotheby’s**, London, 4/30

**Nagel**, Stuttgart, 5/27, 11/4

**Christie’s**, New York, 6/19.

### Conferences:

Tenth **ICOC**, Washington DC, Omni-Shoreham Hotel, 4/17-21. This is the major international rug-world event that is held every three years. Just as important as its academic sessions are its many exhibitions of rugs and textiles, its lavish Carpet Fair, and its optional tour of NY private collections on 4/22-23. Visit [www.icoc-orientalrugs.org](http://www.icoc-orientalrugs.org) or call 317-635-4755 for registration information.

### Exhibitions:

**The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets**, Textile Museum in Washington DC, until 2/11.

**Winter Antiques Show**, New York, NY, 1/17-26. Seventh Regiment Armory, 67th St. and Park Avenue. For information phone 718-292-7392 or visit [www.winterantiquesshow.com](http://www.winterantiquesshow.com).

**End of the Silk Road**, New York, NY, until 2/8. An exhibition of paintings by Valerie Hird and rugs from Peter Pap. Representing the coming together of two worlds, the textile culture of the east and western techniques of painting. For information contact Nohra Haime Gallery, 41 East 57th St., New York, 212-888-3550.

**New York International Tribal Arts Show: 5/17-19**, Seventh Regiment Armory, New York.

### Tours:

**Kathy Green** of the Toronto Textile Museum is organizing the following Asian tours that might be of interest to textile lovers. The destinations are as follows:

**Bhutan, Sikkim & Darjeeling**, late November-mid December

**Central Asia: Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan**, 4/25-5/17, led by Natalia Nekrassova, our November meeting speaker

**Exotic India: Northern Highlights and Festivals**, 1/30-2/21.

For details, call 905-471-7381 or email to [102377.1463@compuserve.com](mailto:102377.1463@compuserve.com).

### Courses and Lectures:

**The Oriental Rug Workshop**, Boston Learning Society, 1089 Great Plain Ave., Needham, MA. **Mark Hopkins** is the instructor. An introductory slide lecture on oriental rugs for beginners, capped with a show-and-tell. Tuesday, 2/11, 7-9PM, \$39 fee. For more information call 800-432-5520 or visit [www.bostonlearningsociety.com](http://www.bostonlearningsociety.com).

## Alex Malcolm

We regret to announce the death of NERS member Alex Malcolm, who passed away in Boston on August 24 at age 73.

Alex and his wife Terry were among our most appreciative members, seldom missing a meeting and always enthusiastic about their discoveries. A resident of Natick, Alex served as technology man-

ager for John Hancock and was an adjunct professor of technology management at Suffolk University. He was both an outdoorsman and an accomplished pianist.

We send our condolences to Terry Malcolm, whom we hope to see at many of our forthcoming meetings.



## London's Victoria and Albert Museum

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10,000 textiles from India and South East Asia; as well as a substantial number of important Middle Eastern weavings and embroideries. It is enough to overdose even the most ardent carpet and textile enthusiast!

There are study rooms for the carpets, Indian and South East Asian textiles, and Chinese textiles. To visit most of the study rooms, an appointment needs to be made several weeks in advance. To inquire about the carpet study collection, email [j.wearden@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.wearden@vam.ac.uk) or [middle.east@vam.ac.uk](mailto:middle.east@vam.ac.uk), or you can phone 011 44 20 7942 2677. Currently they are scheduling visits six to eight weeks in advance for the carpet rooms. For the Indian and South East Asian study room call 011 44 20 7942 2323 or email [india.southeastasia@vam.ac.uk](mailto:india.southeastasia@vam.ac.uk). The V&A also has a website at [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) with information about other study collections. Do not despair if you cannot get into a study collection: the general exhibits

are marvelous in their own right! Several important textiles and the Ardabil carpet are included in the frequent guided orientation tours.

Oh yes, a word of advice for when you visit one of the carpet study collections: the provenance also seems to include the rug's dirt and dust collected over the centuries. Be sure to bring plenty of tissues!



**Hephaestus forging armor for Achilles; tapestry-woven panel, Egypt, 4th-5th c. V&A Museum**



**New England Rug Society**  
Post Office Box 582, Lincoln, MA 01773

