



# View from the Fringe

## Newsletter of the New England Rug Society



Vol. XII, No. 3 February 2005

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

### February Meeting: Sumru Krody on Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets: Origins and Influences

Anatolian carpets constitute perhaps the oldest and richest carpet-weaving tradition. They form a highly diverse body of art, almost seven centuries old and immensely varied in technique, design, symbolism, and function.

Because there is a significant number of surviving examples in hand today, Anatolian carpets present us with a body of art that can be easily and coherently organized both chronologically and by design, although we still know relatively little about the provenance. Sumru Belger Krody's lecture will focus on ideas presented in the Textile Museum's highly successful exhibition *The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets* that was curated by Walter Denny and coordinated by Sumru.

A large proportion of carpets, dated with some confidence to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, trace their common origins to a few small and easily defined

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#### February Meeting Details

**Date:** Friday, February 25

**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 (left turn if coming from the Pike). 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!

### March Meeting: Diana Myers on Bhutanese Textiles

Bhutanese textiles are among the last of the major arts of Asia to gain recognition in the West. Bhutan's textiles, especially the intricate brocades and complex supplementary-warp patterns, are unmatched anywhere in the world. This art, with a steadily growing and devoted following in the West and Japan, has become Bhutan's most powerful emblem abroad, and will be the subject of Diana Myers's talk.

Textiles are integrated into all aspects of life in this Himalayan kingdom—fashioned into clothing and various kinds of containers and covers. Wild silk, cotton, nettle, wool, and yak hair are the fibers basic to the region. Gifts of cloth mark important social transitions such as career promotions and marriages. Textiles are critical for the practice of Buddhist ritual, providing images of deities and markers and adornments for sacred spaces. Textiles are emblems of prestige, commodity, wealth, forms of payment, and capital, as well as expressions of religious devotion. Weavers, always

women, are esteemed as artists for their highly skilled mastery of color, pattern, and composition. Men, often monks, embroider and appliqué religious images and assemble shrine furnishings with great skill.

Diana K. Myers has been studying Himalayan textiles since the 1970s. She was curator of the 1984-85 exhibition *Temple, Household, and Horseback* of Tibetan carpets at The Textile Museum, Washington, D.C. and author of its catalog. During the past decade she

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#### March Meeting Details

**Date:** Friday, March 18

**Time:** 7:30PM

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

**Note:** \$5 guest fee for non-members

**Directions:** See page 8



## February Meeting

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groups dating to the 15th and 16th centuries. These early pieces help us define a classical style for the later carpets. During the presentation she will discuss the profound debt owed by many generations of Anatolian weavers to this classical past that helped define the general artistic parameters under which many later Anatolian carpets were woven.

Sumru Belger Krody is Associate Curator for Eastern Hemisphere Collections at The Textile Museum where she has worked since 1994. She is also Managing Editor of *The Textile Museum Journal*. She has coordinated and/or curated several Textile Museum exhibitions, including *Floral Perspectives in Carpet Design* (2004), *Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2000), *Baluch Rugs from the Boucher Collection* (1996), *Oriental Carpet Classics: A Tribute to Charles Grant Ellis* (1997) and *Royal*

*Raffias: Designs of the Bushong of Central Africa* (1998). Sumru's early research has focused on carpet samplers to explore methods of design transfer in carpet weaving. She conducted field research in Taspinar, central Turkey.

Born in Izmir, Turkey, Ms. Krody earned a B.A. from Istanbul University and an M.A. in Classical Archaeology from the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1998, her research has also focused on embroidery traditions of cultures along the Mediterranean rim with further focus on the role of textiles as exchange medium, especially in trade. She is currently preparing an exhibition and catalog of Greek Islands and Epirus Embroidery, scheduled for March 2006. She was a contributing editor to *The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets* (2002) and author of *Flowers of Silk & Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2000), as well as of several papers.

## March Meeting

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has concentrated on the textiles of Bhutan. Ms. Myers works in international development and has a degree from Princeton University. She co-curated the 1994 exhibition of Bhutanese textiles at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem which many of our members remember with fondness. The accompanying book *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon*, edited by Diana Myers and Susan Bean, covers all aspects of Bhutan's textile

and weaving heritage, from the central role of women—more than 80 percent of Bhutanese women contribute to their households' income by weaving—to fibers, dyes, and looms, to the functioning of beautiful cloth as an item of trade, and as an indicator of historical change and social identity.

Please bring any Bhutanese textiles you have for show and tell!



First Parish on morning of November Seminar



Mark Gilbert, Laney Balkin, Mendy Balkin, Len Soltzberg, and Sharon Soltzberg—poised to learn structural analysis

More Pictures from Val Arbab Seminar (see next page)



## Last Meeting: Val Arbab Seminar on Structural Analysis

By Yon Bard

On a Saturday morning in November, twenty four of the twenty five registrants braved an unseasonably early snow storm to attend Val Arbab's seminar on the structural analysis of pile rugs. After taking our places, we each received a small piece of oriental rug as a learning piece. Soon we were telling the warps from the wefts, identifying Z and S directions of ply and twist, as well as counting the number of fibers plied together to make the yarns that constitute the rug's foundation and pile. We then learned to recognize such structural factors as the degree of warp depression (none, partial, or complete); knot types (symmetric and asymmetric open to the left or right), weaving direction (bottom to top or vice versa), knot density, end and side finishes, etc.

In addition to personally helping each of us learn how to perform these tasks, Val discussed many other factors that can help identify and date rugs. These include the designs and dyes used to create the rugs, and the rugs' shapes and dimensions.

As an example of rugs where many of these factors come into play, Val cited Tabriz rugs. Pre-1880 Tabrizes used natural dyes and had the elongated shape

typically favored in the Middle East. Around 1880 the weavers adopted the 12x9 and similar sizes popular in the West, and started using chemical dyes. Production essentially ceased under Russian occupation during WWII. Modern production is characterized by paler colors; the weave is coarse but becomes finer after 1970. The moral is that you cannot simply identify a rug as "Tabriz:" you need to qualify that by estimating the period in which it was created.

Needless to say there exists a huge variety of oriental rugs with a wide range of structural characteristics, and a four-hour session can teach us only a small fraction of what there is to know. Yet, by the end of the session many of us had gained a greater understanding of how to perform a structural analysis, and how it can be used to help identify and date a rug.

The session ended with a display of several "mystery" rugs brought by attendees. While most of these could be identified with some certainty, they also demonstrated that there will always be some mavericks that depart in design, color, or structure from the norm for their types.



Left: Val Arbab and Mark Hopkins, with Lloyd Kannenberg's unusual Kazak  
Center: Many heads are better than one! (Andre Hashem, Lloyd Kannenberg, Alex Gibber, Turgay Erturk, Donna Hill, Val Arbab)  
Right: Val Arbab and Andre Hashem  
[More pictures on previous page]



## Short Profiles of NERS Members

By Ann Nicholas

In the last fifteen years our New England Rug Society newsletter has profiled many members. As our membership has continued to grow and change, we have decided to include in this year's newsletters short profiles of some long-time members who have been previously profiled. We let the members speak in their own words.

### Judy Smith

Judy, one of our founding members, has been instrumental in compiling a hard-copy version of the NERS on-line exhibition *To Have and to Hold: Art and Function in Transport and Storage Bags*. Besides her fine rug collection, she often shows pieces from her wide-ranging textile collection at our meetings.

"I seem to have many lives: full time consultant with a global executive search firm, competitive tennis player, four-time grandmother, and, of course, rug/textile enthusiast.

"As co-founders of the New England Rug Society, Rosalie Rudnick and I are thrilled that this is such a dynamic organization with so many passionate and knowledgeable members. We had hoped to create a community of aficionados and to promote interest in woven objects, but our expectations have been exceeded.

"My personal interests began with Caucasian rugs but I've since been 'distracted' by Central Asian/Lakai cross-stitched and/or embroidered pieces, beaded 'aprons' from the Cameroons, tiny Tutsi basketry, cotton banjara pieces from the gypsies in India, some South Seas baskets, a Turkmen tent band, a Kuba raffia rectangle from Africa, a Nasca bird fringe and a wonderful Afshar pile rug."

### Tom Stocker

Tom is unique among our members in that he creates his own rugs. He is a well-known New England artist who makes carpet-like paintings.

"I'm an artist who makes paintings in acrylic on canvas or linen of actual carpets from museums and private collections. I also paint subjects which are imaginary compositions, blending traditional textile design with

contemporary events and culture. This Fall I had a retrospective of my work from 1991 through the present at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. The 28 paintings represent all phases of my work: realistic examples of antique rugs; imaginary carpets riffing on cultural icons; and minimalist textile-like paintings.

"As an artist who has taken a vow of poverty, I cannot afford to collect the rugs I like, so I paint them instead. That makes me an enthusiast. When I choose a subject for a realistic painting, naive village weavings from the Caucasus and Turkey interest me the most because of their color and bold, imperfect drawing and eccentricities. But I look at many types of rugs and tapestries for inspiration when I paint imaginary subjects. Lately, I've been looking for ways to capture in iridescent paints that elusive reflective quality that pile has when viewed from different angles.

"It was a chance visit in 1993 to a now gone rug shop across from the Boston Public Library on Boylston Street that I was informed by Arthur Mahfuz about the New Boston Rug Society and *HALI* Magazine. I thought that I had entered the shop to inquire about any current books on rugs that the library was lacking, but as it turns out, I had entered a whole new world."



Tom Stocker



## Virtually Perfect

*Editor's note: The following article appeared on page 81 of HALI 137 (11-12/04). We reproduce it here with HALI's permission. Richard Purdon is a noted British antique-rug dealer, now located in Gocek, Turkey. See his website at [www.purdon.com](http://www.purdon.com).*

The New England Rug Society's second online exhibition, "To Have and to Hold," is a permanent addition to the society's website, [www.ne-rugsociety.org](http://www.ne-rugsociety.org), and thereby potentially delivering the largest ever audience for an exhibition of transport and storage bags. Richard Purdon reports on this worthy addition to the world wide rug web and wonders if less might have been more.

This is a knowledgeable, even academic, exhibition of 42 utilitarian bags from almost every area of the rug-weaving world. The pieces have been chosen and presented with great discrimination, and reflect both the good taste of the exhibition's curator as well as the society's members. Yet I could not help but feel that the scope of the showing is too large, and a more focused exhibit may have been better. Although the web does not limit the size of an exhibition, this must be counter-balanced with the knowledge that many people do not find it easy or comfortable to read a lot of material via the web. So it is good that there is a limited edition catalogue of the exhibition, and the combination of the two are a good introduction to the subject area.

Almost all the exhibits date from the 19th century, although dates of manufacture, presumably considered to be controversial, are not included in the refreshingly accurate and gobbledygook-free captions to each piece. These also contain a structural analysis, a commentary as well as additional detailed images of the back and front. Any curious viewer coming to the site, would leave feeling informed and stimulated, and hopefully as I was, eager for more.

The first seven examples are flatwoven chuvals or grain sacks mostly from Anatolia, and while the designs are simple, the quality of the weaving and the colour clearly define these as remarkably fine examples of the genre. My own notes marked many of the subsequent weavings to be interesting and noteworthy, not just to someone with a deep knowledge of the field but also simply by virtue of design and aesthetic appeal.

An excellent reverse sumakh khorjin half (no. 14) well illustrates how this technique produces a robust texture reminiscent of embroidery, and although many such bags are invariably very well woven this example rises above the norm by virtue of the strength of its colour. Heinrich Jacoby refers to these as "Lenkoran soumaks," which is probably not far from the truth since I believe them to be nomadic production from the Moghan steppe. Another Azarbayjani sumakh is a beautiful scissors bag (no. 18), which has a pretty and unusual design and is rare since I suspect that small items such as this were seldom sold and were mostly allowed to wear out with use.

The enigma of the exhibition is a southwest Persian khorjin half (no. 28, see below), with a design of multi-coloured squares which is painterly in its conception and brings to mind a small gabbeh; its brocaded fastenings do not prevent suggesting a Luri origin. Another very pretty southern Persian bag is attributed to the Afshar (no. 30), but I believe this to be more likely Khamseh, especially since it has symmetric knots.

There are a number of good Central Asian bags including Turkmen pieces including an outstanding Eagle göl Yomut Turkmen (no. 35), remarkable through the luminosity of its colour and design, a Yomut felt bokche (no. 36), which shows the importance of bread in daily life as well as the marriage rituals. Three Uzbek embroideries (no. 40) are especially charming, and look like they might potentially be the nucleus of a collection – something that I expect the owner has thought of already.

The work and detail that has gone into the exhibition deserves to be seen for its own sake, and show what can be achieved on the net with appropriate application. Yet I would urge a visit to this exhibition not simply because the erudition of the contributors is at the forefront of current knowledge, but because it is replete with delightful examples of the genre.



**Khorjin half, SW Persia  
To Have and to Hold  
no. 28**



## Robert Pinner

*On November 21 we received the following email message from our friend and colleague in Washington DC, Wendel Swan, president of the International Hajji Baba Society and an ICOC officer:*

Dear Friends,

With a sense of deep personal loss, I must report that Robert Pinner passed away peacefully at his home in Twickenham last night. As the founder of ICOC, the co-founder of *HALI* and as a tireless energy behind both until just recently, his influence on the world of carpets and textiles has been enormous. Those of us who worked with him became infected by his en-

thusiasm and benefited from his generosity. We also endured, from time to time, the wrath of his extraordinarily keen mind. That was his nature. That is why we loved him. We have lost a dear friend.

Wendel

*We share Wendel's sentiments entirely. Robert was a friend to many of us over the years, and was a guest speaker for our Society during a visit to the States in 1998. His contributions to our field of interest were immeasurable, and we will miss him greatly.*

Mark Hopkins

## NERS News

### New Members

We welcome new members: *Shahin & Anne Afshin-Kia, Alex Gibber.*

### NERSers in *HALI*

In addition to its review of our on-line bag exhibition, *HALI* 137 contains (page 166) a profile of Jeff Spurr by Carl Strock. Both are NERS members.

### Results of NERS Survey

This year's NERS membership renewal mailing included a survey form to determine our members' interests. Here is a summary of the 68 forms that were returned.

*What subjects are you particularly interested in having us cover in future NERS speaker program?*

#### Rugs/Flatweaves

Caucasian	47
Turkish	39
Turkmen	38
NW Persian	37
Baluch	37
South Persian	32
C. Asian Non Turkmen	32
Chinese	20
Early/Classical	20
Tibetan	19

Indian	16
European	15

#### Other Types of Textiles

Turkmen/Central Asian	30
Caucasian	27
Turkish	26
South American	22
Baluch	21
South Persian	20
NW Persian	19
Indian	18
Central American	18
Amer. Folk	17
Native N. American	16
China/Japan/Korea	14
African	14
Mainland SE Asia	13
Pacific Island	13
European	12

#### Other Related Subjects

Rug ID/Structure	35
Rug care	26
Dyes/Dyeing	21

*What best describes your involvement with rugs and textiles?*

Enthusiast	33
Collector	23

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## Upcoming Rug Events

### Future NERS 2004/5 Meetings:

**April 17:** Ann Nicholas & Richard Blumenthal on South Persian weavings—a hands-on survey

**May 21:** Picnic and show & tell.

### Auctions:

**Rippon Boswell**, Wiesbaden, 3/12, 5/28, 9/24, 11/19

**Butterfields**, Los Angeles & San Francisco, 3/15

**Bonham's**, London, 4/26

**Sotheby's**, London, 4/27

**Christie's**, London, 4/28

**Nagel**, Stuttgart, 5/31

**Sotheby's**, New York, 6/3

**Christie's**, New York, 6/22.

### Conferences:

**ACOR 8:** Boston, MA, 4/20-23/06.

**World Batik Conference:** Boston, Mass. College of Arts, 6/7-15/05. Visit [www.massart.edu/batik](http://www.massart.edu/batik) for more information

**11th ICOC:** Istanbul, 4/19-22/07. The following ICOC will be held in St. Petersburg in 2009.

### Exhibitions and Fairs:

**Islamic Art, the Calderwood Collection:** Sackler Museum, Cambridge, until 3/13/05

**Floral Perspectives in Carpet Design:** Textile Museum, Washington, until 2/6/05

**Carpets from the Vodstrcil Collection:** Textile Museum of Canada, Toronto, until 5/1/05.

**Imazighen!** features an extensive collection of cultural artifacts made by the Berber peoples of North Africa in the early to mid-twentieth century. Elegant etched and cloisonné jewelry, punched and embroidered leatherwork, inlaid metal and wood saddles, and glazed pottery highlight a sophisticated artisan culture that has received little attention even within the context of Islamic world arts. Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, until 8/30/06.

## Hard Copy Version of Bag Exhibit

You can now have a printed version of the fabulous NERS on-line bag exhibit *To Have and to Hold*. Each of the 47 bags is depicted in color—front, back, and close up views, accompanied by a scholarly essay

and a full technical analysis.

To order a copy, send an e-mail to Judy Smith at [jasmith@heidrick.com](mailto:jasmith@heidrick.com) or call her at 617-330-2171. The price is \$43.00 plus postage.

Newsletter contributors and helpers: Yon Bard (editor), Jim Adelson, Dora Bard, Mark Hopkins, Ann Nicholas, 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@comcast.net](mailto:mopkins@comcast.net).

### **NERS 2003/4 Steering Committee:**

Mark Hopkins (President)

Jim Adelson

Robert Alimi

Julia Bailey

Yonathan Bard

John Clift

Tom Hannaher

Jo Kris

Gillian Richardson

Janet Smith

Jeff Spurr



## NERS News

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Dealer	9
Appraiser	1

*In April of 2006, the NERS will host the Eighth American Conference on Oriental Rugs (ACOR 8), a 3-day event, at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston. Do you think you'll attend?*

Definitely	55
Maybe	9
No	1

*At ACOR 8 we will need NERS member volunteers to assist us in preparing for the event. Do you think you might be interested in helping out?*

Definitely	25
Maybe	30
No	10

## March Meeting Directions

### 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 parish house 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 parish house is on your right.**

### Parking:

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



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



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