



Photograph courtesy of the Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles, Berkeley, California.

Lacemaking Retreat

The Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles will host its first Urban Retreat, February 4–10, at the museum in Berkeley, California. Study bobbin lace with Louise Colgan and Maria Provencher, needle lace with Nancy Evans, knitted lace with Galina Khmeleva, and tatting with Iris Niebach. Resources from the museum's collection will allow students a glimpse of lacemaking's historical background and a tangible link with needleworkers of the past. Instructor biographies, class descriptions, accommodations and amenities in Berkeley, and a downloadable registration form are available on the museum's website.

LACIS MUSEUM OF LACE AND TEXTILES — 2982 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703; (510) 843-7290; www.lacismuseum.org/retreat.html

The Tallis Project

A tallis is a four-cornered garment worn by men during prayer services in the Jewish faith. The sisterhood (women's group) of my synagogue, the Young Israel of West Hempstead, New York, established the Tallis Project as a fundraiser: Congregants paid to have the names of their children and grandchildren embroidered in Hebrew on an extraordinarily large woolen tallis donated by Ben Saxe in memory of his wife, Eleanor. This tallis is used in a special prayer recited every year on Simchas Torah; on this holiday, all children under the age of thirteen stand around a special table on which the Torah is placed, and men hold the tallis over the children when the blessing is said.

I was asked to design the project. As a quilter, I began to think of it as a signature quilt, and after looking at many signature quilts, I decided that embroidering the names as the spokes on the Wagon Wheel pattern would be the best use of space and result in the highest visual impact. The center section of the tallis, which measures 10 by 12 feet (3.0 by 3.7 m) overall, was perfectly divisible into blocks 18 inches (45.7 cm) square; each block would have sixteen names radiating from the center. There were about 350 names, and I had to arrange the names by families.

I created a paper template and drew a wheel with sixteen spokes on it and drafted each name onto graph paper so that the letters would be all the same size. Next, I placed the graph paper under tracing paper and traced the sixteen names on the tracing paper; I repeated the process for each wheel. I then placed the tracing paper on the tallis and transferred the names. Rhonda Weiss and I embroidered the names onto the fabric, using three strands of royal blue embroidery floss. A chart and photographs of individual blocks are on display in the lobby of the synagogue to aid in locating individual names. The project has taken six months to date, but there is still room for about 250 more names on the tallis.

—Helene Kusnitz



Detail of the tallis embroidered by Helene Kusnitz and Rhonda Weiss. Young Israel Synagogue, West Hempstead, New York.

Photograph by Helene Kusnitz.



Tallis embroidered by Helene Kusnitz and Rhonda Weiss. Young Israel Synagogue, West Hempstead, New York. Photograph by Jonathan Kusnitz.

Nordic Knitting Conference

The Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle will host its second Nordic Knitting Conference, March 13–15, featuring eminent instructors, including Katarina Brieditis (Sweden), Marianne Isager (Denmark), and Nancy Bush, Beth Brown-Reinsel, Evelyn Clark, Jody Grage, Susanna Hansson, Tuulia Salmela, and Patricia Brunner (United States). An Icelandic shawl and traditional folk costumes from the museum's textile collection will serve as the basis for three of the classes. For more information, call Charlotte Lehmann at (206) 789-5707 or visit the museum's website.

NORDIC HERITAGE MUSEUM — 3014 N.W. 67th St., Seattle, WA 98117; www.nordicmuseum.org.

—Patricia Brunner



Detail of a sleeve from a Danish folk costume. Collection of the Nordic Heritage Museum. Photograph courtesy of the Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle, Washington. Photograph by Patricia Brunner.