

From the Skin Out
Autumn AS XXXVJJJ

Upcoming Competitions and Displays

September Crown - Chamber wear
12th Night 94 - Full Court Costume

Arachnids Web Competitions

September Crown - Tatted Lace
12th Night - Bobbin Lace

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Please send FTSO subscriptions to the Guild Administrator Eduardo (David S. McDonald) 2648 B Laukala Pl. Enumclaw, WA 98022

From the Editor

Welcome to the fall issue of FTSO. This is my second - to- the-last issue so people better start thinking about what they are going to do to make sure that a May Crown issue is printed because I have exhausted my technical advisors and I am going back to school. You will notice that the only articles in this issue were written by myself because I received nothing in the mail. Get with it guys or we will need to consider whether we really need a costumers newsletter. It has been suggested that perhaps a yearly Arts and Sciences publication including all the Guilds such as Costumers and Black Kettle to contribute. Think about it. In the meantime, I am planning a lovely last issue even if I don't get anything from anyone, and you all will just have to read my lousy articles. Hope your summer was productive, pleasurable, and pleasant!!!!!!
In Service to An Tir and Costumers everywhere,

Baroness Anastasia Alexandrovna Andreeva

From the Administrator

[no minutes available this issue]

As always,
Master Eduardo Francesco Maria Lucrezia

Workshop Weekend in Appledore

The shire of Appledore invites you to a weekend of workshops, merrymaking and relaxation, September 18 and 19, 1993.

Members of the Costumers Guild will be leading hands-on classes in basic weaving, spinning with drop-spindle and spinning wheel, and dyeing with natural dyes. Malcolm of Lamont, noted tourney chef, will be teaching a session on tourney cooking, and the class will prepare a tourney feast for Saturday night. For the active sorts, we are offering sessions on fencing and archery.

This event is designed to be a relaxed, come-and-hang-out-and-learn-something-you-have-always-wanted-to-know-more-about weekend. Last year's fall workshop was described as "a seriously good time," so be prepared.

The site is the manorial holdings of Malcolm of Lamont and Olwen Pen Aur, a ten-acre farm in Oliver,

B.C., twelve miles north of the Canada-US border in the Okanagan Valley. The site offers plenty of room for camping, outdoor hot tubs, lovely wildlife, and lots of peace and quiet.

Directions:

From north or south, follow highway 97 to Oliver. At the Chevron-Dairy-Queen corner, turn onto 348th (left from the north, right from the south.) At the bottom of the hill, turn right onto 91st and continue about two blocks. Opposite the carwash (on your left) and just before the "60kmh" sign, turn right onto a gravel road. The site is the first house on your left, at the bottom of the hill.

Site fee will be \$10 Canadian (\$8 us) per person, \$7 for children taking classes, and half-price for children if they are not taking classes. Site fee includes the feast on Saturday night and class materials. Bring note-taking materials, archery and fencing equipment if you have it.



Beads and Byzantium

By Baroness Anastasia
Alexandrovna Andreeva

Glassworks along the East Coast of the Mediterranean and within the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires continued to produce finely crafted and styled beads, providing a link between Rome and the Islamic era, the last great period of ancient glass beadmaking.

Beads of gold and precious or semi-precious stones were worn by the Byzantine nobility. Clay, amber, stone, and glass beads were worn by migratory and settled tribal people and by common folk of the indigenous population.

A wealth of materials, including gold, garnets, rubies, emeralds, sapphire and pearls and ivory flowed into Constantinople from India, Burma, Southern Russia and Africa.

Art and jewelry of the period reflected 2 major styles- one based on the classical Greek and Roman legacy, formal elegance, the other was more abstract, two-dimensional form of western Asia and the far east. Neither style dominated but co-existed and re-emerged into something uniquely Byzantine. There is no clear separation in technique between late Roman and

early Byzantine jewelry beadmaking following the division of the Empire in 395.

Polychrome jewelry continued to be popular. Beads made from precious stones, such as sapphires and amethysts were cut in cabochon shapes and strung on gold links with naturally cut emerald crystals and pearls. Beads of metal or glass were frequently used as spacers to separate gold coins that had been mounted as pendants. Filigree and granulation techniques used by the Romans, continued to be practised.

Byzantine jewelry was worn primarily by the elite, and most jewelry was designed for a sedentary lifestyle, using precious metals and stones, rarely using complete syntheses of Christian symbols and eastern forms. The cross had become a popular motif.

After the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire, the influence of Byzantine jewelers continued only in pockets of the former empire. Namely Greece and Southern Russia. Byzantine traditions did not entirely die out, a necklace made in 16th century Venice (currently at the Museo Poldi-Pezzoli in Milan), is composed of enameled gold and filigree beads and shows that



Byzantine practises were continued in Europe. Pearls were greatly used sometimes encrusting helmets and garments.

Many shapes including round, square, rectangle, tear drop and melon.

An Overview of Linen

By Baroness Anastasia Alexandrovna Andreeva

The native country of the flax plant is lost in antiquity, it has been around for almost 60 centuries but it is possible that it originated in the Caucasus in an area between the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, and the Black Sea.

Flax was used in its wild state for over 3,000 years and was then cultivated in Egypt for over 5000 years. The cultivated flax plant is a member of the order Linaceae and bears the Botanical name of *Linum Usitatisimum* ("most used"). This species of flax plant was the one known in Egypt, Phoenician Mesopotamia, and later in Greece and Rome and appears to be the same plant that is cultivated today. It was just one of more than 5 varieties scattered over the ancient world and grouped in the bast family of fibers; of which hemp, jute, and ramie are less important members. It is thought that this fiber is several centuries older than either cotton or silk.

Although the tough bast fiber of the flax plant was extremely difficult for primitive people to prepare for use, linen fiber was cool and this was an excellent quality for the warmer climates. It was the chosen textile of man for a long time. For many centuries flax has been cultivated on the steppes of central Russia and hundreds of years in Northern Ireland. It has been successfully grown in Egypt, Syria and other countries of the Torrid Zone. Flax is an annual plant and can grow from 18 to 30 inches tall. Between the cylindrical woody center and the outer bark of the flax stem, running in symmetrical layers all the way from root to blossom, clings the tough flax fiber, which is the true raw linen. While the stem is still green, flax stalks are pulled from the ground by their roots, for the fibers beneath the green stem are soft and free enough from gum to be spun into very fine threads capable of being bleached white. When the stalk has turned from green to yellow the gum is practically insoluble, and the flax fiber is used to make the strong linen necessary for working clothes. When the stalks were not pulled until dead ripe with seeds fully developed, the fiber was too tough to be used for anything but ropes, mats, "coarse linen tow for sacks and garments of slaves". The flax stems were always pulled from the ground and never cut down. If they were harvested like barley and wheat then the inner fibers would become stained and could not be bleached clean enough to be converted to white cloth.

After the stalks had been collected from the field they were sorted according to size and the best seeds removed and dried for future plantings. The plants were then stripped of leaves and blossoms by drawing through the teeth of a comb-like tool or series of upright forks, in a process called rippling and were tied in loose bundles to ripen in the sun. When this had been completed, the bundles of flax were subjected to retting, a process of decomposition, which were really

fermentation carried out in little square, artificial pools of stagnant water, kept filled by slaves who transported water in jars from the nearest spring or river. The hot Egyptian sun often sucked up the water as fast as the slaves poured it into the pools, but the bundles had to be constantly covered with water. The stagnant, warm water thoroughly soaks and rots the hard wood stalk of the flax plant, so that the essential fibers can be easily extracted, dried and combed out preparing for spinning.

Weaving cloth on a loom is also very old, at least the 4th millennium BC.

The Egyptians wove very fine linen cloth and a great deal was produced. More closely woven linen cloth was worn by the Phoenicians as armor, since its toughness acted as protection from the dangers of war and hunting, yet gave greater mobility than chain mail.

With the expansion of the Roman empire linen products reached many parts of Europe. Pliny writes of the fineness of the linen made in Spain. He also praises the linen made in Italy and in Germany he says linen made the most beautiful dress material. Throughout Europe until the 18th Century the cultivation of flax and making of linen was a wide spread domestic occupation each household growing sufficient flax for its own need. Often rents and tithes were paid with bolts of linen cloth. One of the oldest and deep rooted traditions is the making of a chest full of linen for the bride's dowry. Only the best the family could produce was good enough. Hand spun, hand woven sheets often had the initials of the bride, the groom and sometimes the date embroidered along one edge.

The shirt, shift, sark, chemise, or smock were names given to body garments worn next to the skin and for this reason they were usually made of linen. They were worn by both sexes. Linen was used extensively particularly by women for covering the head through successive periods of fashion. Accessories such as handkerchiefs were made of fine linen. The early Bobbin lace was made with fine linen thread and linen clothes of different weights were used as a base for all types of embroidery.

An important part of making linen is the bleaching process. The easiest way to bleach linen was oxidation from the atmosphere and energy from the sun. White linen was more highly prized than colored cloth in Egyptian times.

There were basically 3 processes in bleaching, the processes were continually repeated until the desired whiteness was achieved. The linen went through "bucking" - boiling the cloth in lye - "grassing or crofting" - laying the cloth out on fields to expose it to air, sun and dew. "Souring" soaking the cloth in weak solution of acid to act as a neutralizer in some methods souring was a final process only. Alkalis that were used included woodash from various sources, fern and seaweed ash (kelp) though this last was inclined to leave a yellowish tinge.

Lime was used extensively for bleaching. Soap and soda were also used for the

lye. Souring as done with buttermilk, sourmilk, water fermented with bran or rye meal, vitriol and weak sulphuric acid. This could damage the cloth if not completely rinsed away.

The cloth, when laid out on the bleach green, was kept damp all the time so the lye could take effect but not damage the cloth. The length of time it was varied from 2 to 14 days.

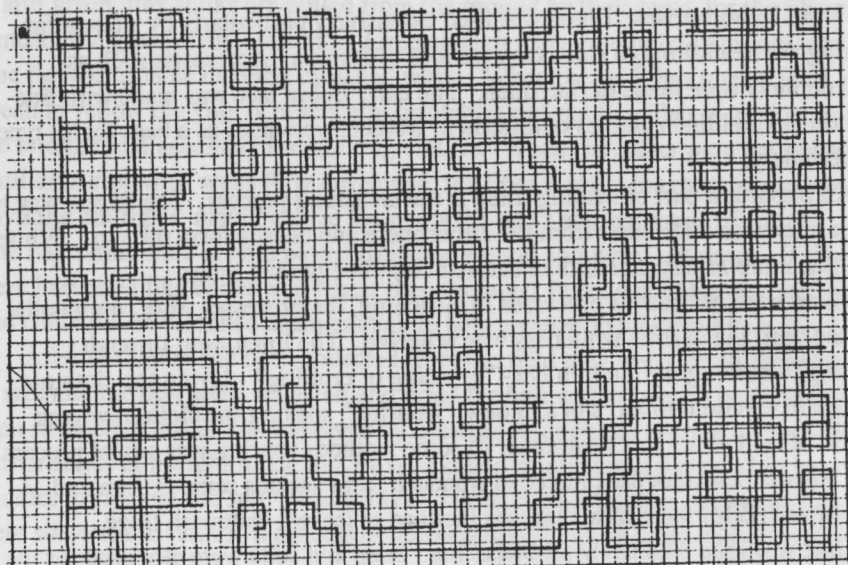
dying linen takes place after bleaching and has always been difficult. The hardness of the fiber resists penetration. Only the strongest of the natural water-soluble dyes, such as madder for shades of pink and red, weld for yellows and logwood for blacks and greys are satisfactory for linen. With frequent washing they gradually fade. Vat dyes are the best for linen and the most frequently used natural dye is indigo, giving various shades of blue.

The laundering of linen was similar to the finishing processes after the clothes came off the loom but not so vigorous. The hard sheen was produced by the use of starch, which also protected it from dirt. Goffering irons and crimping rollers were used to put frills and pleats back in after washing.

Linen was stored in chests to keep it clean and free of dust.

Bibliography

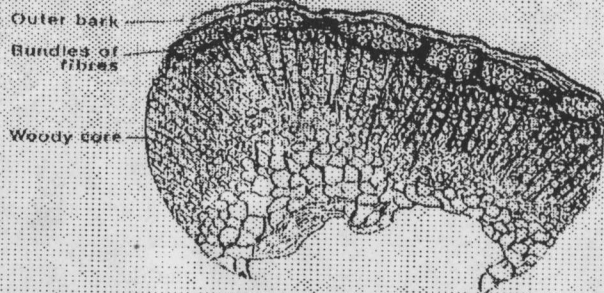
1. Ancient decorative textiles by Violetta Thurstan
2. The story of Linen by William F. Liggett
3. Embroidered Textiles by Sheila Payne
4. Black work Embroidery by Margaret Pascoe
5. Flax and Linen by Patricia Baines Shire Album # 133



(8) From the Skin Out

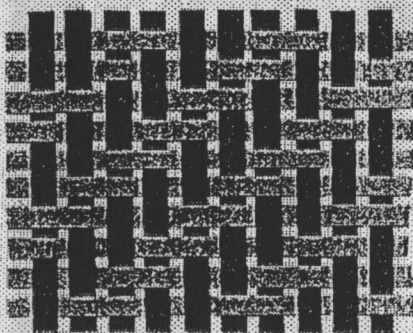


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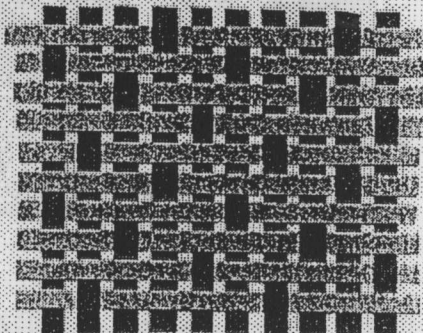


ABOVE: A cross section of a flax stem showing the tight bundles of fibres lying just beneath the outer bark; there are between about 15 fibres and 1000 bundles (with a similar number of fibres per bundle) in each stem.

LEFT: The plant *Linum usitatissimum* has narrow pointed leaves and a five-petal blue or white flower. The wild form of flax, *Linum catharticum*, is a common weed in the Mediterranean area and may have derived from the cultivated type. There are a number of wild varieties (including *Linum angustifolium*) to be found in Britain. Ornamental garden varieties of flax should not be confused with the weep variety and are not suitable for processing.

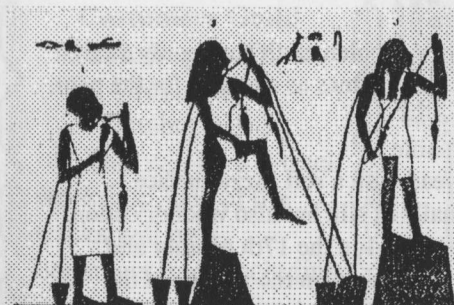
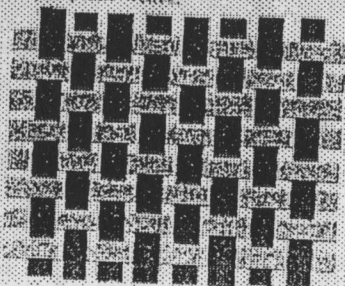


The interlacing of threads for twill weave.

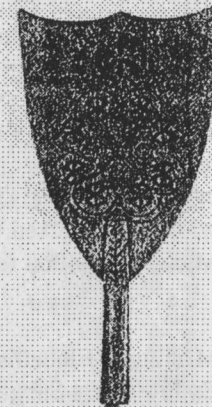


The interlacing of threads for satin weave. The ground weave for damask requires five shafts and avoids the diagonal line of twill.

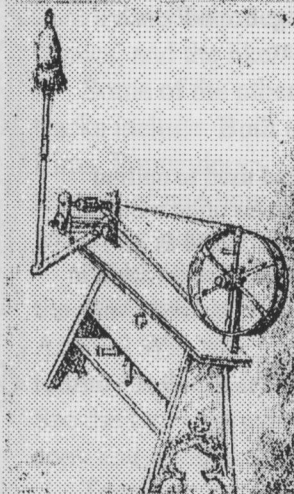
BELOW: The interlacing of threads for plain weave.



LEFT: A town painting at Brno (Moravia) depicts a woman spinning. In the past, women could use two spindles simultaneously. The prepared fibres or hanks were rolled into balls and placed in a bucket or behind the spinner. The spindle was worked by rolling the shaft along the hip; the rotating spindle was then tossed into the air, suspended by the yarn. By standing on a platform, long lengths of yarn were spun before dropping to wind on.



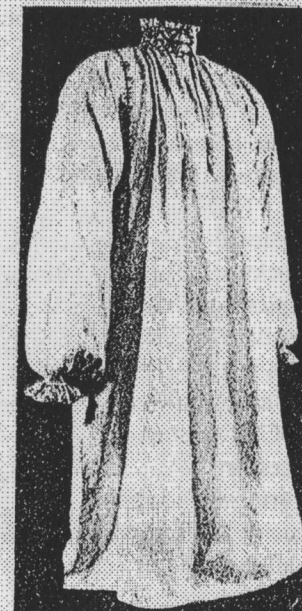
A German 'Netzwinkelblau'. In many parts of Europe tools used in flax dressing, as in spinning wheels and distaffs, were fine wedding presents, often beautifully decorated or carved.



Five-spindle wheel from the 'Mittelalterliches Hammbuch' (about 1480), the earliest pictorial evidence of this type of wheel. The U-shaped flyer guides the spun yarn on to the bobbin after the twist has been given to the fibres within the hollow centre of the spindle.



A detail from the centre of a Flemish linen damask cloth in the Victoria and Albert Museum dating from the end of the sixteenth century, depicting the sacrifice of Isaac. The earliest linen damask designs imitated those used in the silk industry but biblical scenes (Isaac being an oil-pressing influence) were popular in the sixteenth century, the patterns apparently being derived from wood cuts.



A tunic of the sixteenth century, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, made of very fine, smooth linen and embroidered at the cuffs and neck with silk.

Janet Arnold is coming to Vancouver Community College September 14th and 15th.

she will be doing 3 lectures. supporting features are: Rich and Fantastical cavalier dress and Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe unlocked.

More information forthcoming.

Meeting of Embellishers and Embroiderers Subguild, directly following Costumers Guild meeting Shirin's address in Crier is incorrect, has tried repeatedly to correct it - because of this, has been receiving nothing from the South, has been unable to respond.

Applications and information sheets with correct address handed out previously, had to be member of Costumers to be member of E&E, now is just recommended - \$5.00 membership for guild - Shirin told of suggestion earlier that \$5.00 members receive buyers, but not FTSO- sounds great Contests - July Coronation ; Blackwork trim on costume September Crown - needlework Sampler 12th Night - Embellishment, not necessarily embroidery, on Court costume or accessory.

Shirin wants regional reps to receive applications and Bulk mail them to her - contact her if interested Meeting adjourned.



Costuming Terms

Bure

Coarse woolen cloth commonly used in Medieval times as clothing for the poor.

Chenille

Thread with a soft fuzzy surface. Usually of silk but also wool or cotton. Introduced in the 17th century and often couched on the surface of the material, woven into rich silk brocades or sued for fringing. From French chenille=caterpillar.

Cordonnet

Thicker gimp thread used to outline bobbin and needlelaces often with raised effect. Can be picote as in Alencon where it is stiffened with crin (horsehair), or part of the fabric as in Brussels laces.

Costumers Guild Workshop in Three Mountains.

October 2 & 3

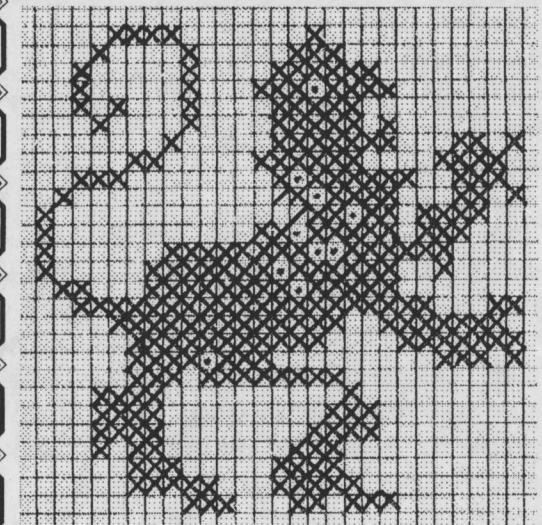
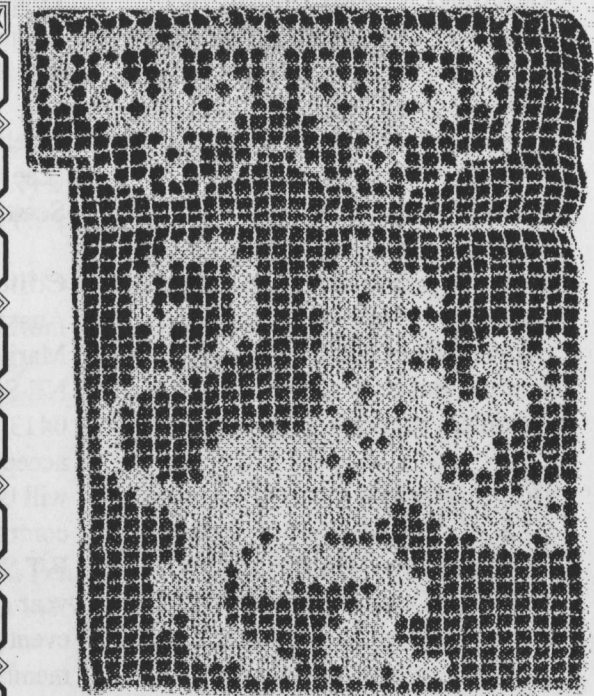
This will be a 4-track workshop, one of the tracks will be a beginners track including such classes as : The History of Costume, T-Tunics, and the like.

Some of the other tracks include: Built up trims, Pomanders: History of and how to, and many many more.

This is being held on the same weekend as the Acorn 5 War and tourney at the War's site. See the Crier for event copy and directions.

Teachers: for more information on teaching facilities, please contact the Costumer's Guild Education Coordinator.

For catalogs and more information please contact Alessandra Assante at 743-3318 in Madrone She is the Education Coordinator for the Kingdom Costumers Guild.



Costumer's Guild Directory

The Guild offers a buying service, library, information exchange and guild ranking.

Guild Membership is 12.00/year and includes a subscription to the F.T.S.O., and a discount at the Drapers. You must be a member in good standing to challenge the guild rankings. All are welcome to participate in Guild workshops, contests and other activities regardless of membership status.

Administrator: Eduardo Lucrezia (D.S. McDonald) 2648 B Laukala Pl., Enumclaw, WA 98022 (206) 825-3218 Contact Administrator for any information regarding the Guild. Send all new or re-renewal memberships to the administrator.

Librarian: Girard de Beauchamp (Gary Brock) 1102 NW 73rd ST., Seattle, WA 98117 (206) 782-2549 Contact Librarian for book list and loaning policy.

Education Coordinator/Contest Deputy: Isolde de la Vielle-a-Roue (Alessandra Assante) 3624 Serene Way, Lynnwood, WA 98037 (206) 743-3318 Contact Education Coordinator regarding workshops and classes. Contact Contest Deputy regarding all Guild contests or for a copy of the guild judging form.

Drapers Inventory: Koressa (Foggy Bell) 3634 NE 19th Ave., Portland, OR 97212 Contact

Drapers inventory for fabric, findings and other textile related goodies.

Exhibitor: Lee of the Lowland (Lee Humason) 14346 20th NE Seattle, WA 98125 (206) 365-0413

Editor of the From the Skin Out : Anastasia Alexandrovna Andreeva (Marilee G. Humason) 14346 20th NE Seattle, WA 98125 (206) 365-0413 Submissions gratefully accepted. An extension of one issue will be added to your membership for contributing to the FTSO The F.T.S.O. is published four times a year and comes out at each Crown event. Send all new or re-renewal memberships to the administrator.

Contact your regional representatives for local activities or sources in your area.

Alvael : (Temporary Representative) Eirika Pacchioni from Montengarde (Janett Anderson) #-2039 34th Ave., Calgary AB T2T 2C4 Canada (403) 246-8976

Inlands: Nikita van Dantzig from Wealdsmere (Lynda Petty) E 4327 Princeton, Spokane WA. 99207 (509) 483-1570

Northern : Sine ni Guinne from Ramsguard (Janis M. Cliffe) 1615 Slater Ave., Kamloops, B.C. V2B 4K3 Canada (604) 3765243

Rivers: Karena di Falco from Coeur du Val (Alison Kondo) P.O. Box 3004-245, Corvallis, OR 97339

Summits: Rosemary Craftwise from Myrtleholt (April Stockley) 252 SW Rogue River Ave. Grants Pass , OR 97526

Western: Murkami Tsuruko from Dragon's Laire (Deborah Strub) 7205 Thasos AVE. NE Bremerton , WA 98310 (206) 692-5885

Deputies

Deputy Administrator/
Recording Secretary: Olwen Pen Aur (Jo Ann Turner) P.O. Box 1475 Oliver, B.C V0H 1T0 Canada

Deputy Administrator: Alena Maria Magdalena d'Firenze (Sharon Burrows) 2621 St George ST., Vancouver, B.C. V5T 3R5 Canada

Embellisher's Sub-Guild:
Administrator : Shirin al Hasan (Leanne Folger) #49-9960 Wilson Rd., RR #7, Misson B.C. V2V 6H5 Canada

Wearer's Sub-Guild:
Administrator: Colleen Campbell (Samantha Will) 851 NE Ainsworth, Portland OR 97211 (503) 288-0838

