



# ARTS IN HAND NEWS

## Sheep to Shawl Expo a Great Success!

The Sheep to Shawl Expo on Saturday, Sept. 20, at Arts in Hand Gallery on Walnut Street in Spooner was a great success. Exhibitors and vendors displaying all types of fiber art were showcased during the event. Attendees were able to watch the processes of shearing fiber from animals, skirting the fiber, picking, carding, dyeing, spinning, weaving, and knitting.

Ruth Skeie, owner and quilter of The Cottage Collection and a board member of the Wisconsin's Northwest heritage Passage (WNHP) was pleased with the turnout for the first Sheep to Shawl Expo. Various art demonstrations are held at the gallery throughout the year, she said.

The Expo was made possible because of a Creative Communities grant through the Wisconsin Arts Board written by Carmella Crandell.

Karen Schnell of Clayton, owner of Diana's Dream, was on hand with Bugs, a French Angora rabbit. Bugs sat quietly on Schnell's lap while she gently plucked the rabbit's fur and transferred it directly onto a spinning wheel.

Toby Langham of Stone Lake with Rollingwood Alpacas had a mother and daughter pair of alpacas at the event. Langham sells the alpacas' fleece to artists, spinners, and weavers.

The Cook family of Spooner displayed two of approximately 45 llamas they raise on their land, 4C Llama Ranch.



Several other vendors showed their artistry with displays of hats, shawls, blankets, and more.

Northwind Book & Fiber, located down the street, displayed a fiber art-themed trunk show as part of the Sheep to Shawl Expo.

The event was hosted by Arts in Hand Gallery and sponsored by the Wisconsin Northwest Heritage Passage and the Wisconsin Arts Board.



Weaving was one of the many fiber crafts demonstrated during the Expo.

Please remember to send in your membership dues. The benefits to you are many. A new Passage book is in the works, as well as a new gallery. It is a great way to connect with the public and other artists in our 13 county area. Dues are a low \$35 for a year. Send to WNHP, PO Box 454, Spooner, WI 54801.

## Message from the President:

Jerry Boucher

Happy Holidays,

I hope 2014 has been good for you and 2015 will be even better. Heritage passage has had a pretty good year. The first full year the Arts in Hand Gallery was successful. We are coming out in the black and had good participation from our member artists. Our name has been changed to Arts in Hand to clear up some of the some of the confusion concerning what we are about. Officially we are now Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage doing business as Arts in Hand. 2015 promises to be an interesting year. We have recent learned that the gallery must be relocated by the end of January. Negotiations are going on for a new location that will give the gallery more exposure.



Work on production of the second edition of the Wisconsin Passage book begins in January. The first edition has been successful and was even featured in *Midwest Living* Magazine. For the Second edition the board members anticipate a good number of new listings in the book. Anyone in the first edition will be receiving information in January and the book committee will be aggressively seeking out new artists who could and should be included in the book. We ask that anyone who knows of artists who were not in the first edition of the Wisconsin Passage let the Arts in Hand (Heritage Passage) office know about them.

Have a happy and prosperous 2015.

### 2015 Arts in Hand Board Members

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### *Our Vision*

Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage is a regional advocate, catalyst and connector that builds and supports sustainable, vibrant communities through education, promotion, and celebration of creative arts, culture and heritage.

### *The mission of WNHP is to*

- celebrate and showcase northwest Wisconsin's heritage and artisan products that are handmade and homegrown.
- educate the public about the contribution of the creative community to the quality of life in northwest Wisconsin.
- promote and foster growth in northwest Wisconsin's creative industry.

"Great things get done by a series of small things brought together." Vincent Van Gogh

# *Artist Feature: LeAnn Johnson*

by Diane Dryden



LeAnn shows a purse she created inspired by her trip to Guatemala.

LeAnn Johnson grew up hearing the soft click of knitting needles and watched the slip-sliding of crochet hooks by the women closest to her, her mom and aunts. Happily she inherited the talent and the knowledge they had to give and she too entered into the creative world of working with yarns and fabrics.

Born in southern Minnesota, she continued her handcraft knowledge as she eventually spent 17 years in Grantsburg and then 15 years in Spooner, where she lives today.

She spent much of her career working in early childhood special education from birth to three years old. It was in the early years of a child's life where the goal was to intervene in their young lives teaching them life skills. Some accepted the concept and went on to make a success of their lives; others didn't. Most often the contacts were lost and LeAnn never knew how many eventually slipped through the cracks.

"I suppose that's one of the reasons I enjoyed hand work, you always get results you can see. You can tell at a glance if a piece was wrong so you can correct it."

After a visit to Guatemala she came home brimming with ideas to replicate the intriguing patterns and colors of their beautiful hand-crafted items, especially the purses. In fact, when you visit Spooner's Northwind Book and Fiber you can see her work that varies between her felted mittens to her crocheted tapestry purses. They are all signature pieces with no two patterns or colors repeated. She uses special yarn that will shrink for her mittens. They start out very large, but after they're washed and agitated in hot water, they shrink down nicely and become super warm.

This winter her work will appear at Arts in Hands gallery just down the block from Northwind where she will feature her mittens and maybe scarves.

"We seem to be having a handcraft revival and I love it because it's something that I've always done for pleasure. One thing I have learned though is to stay away from Pinterest. There are so many wonderful ideas on the site that I want to drop everything else in my life just to make them all!"

# *Artist Feature:* *Mitzi Golden*

by Diane Dryden

The next time you're in Spooner's Art in Hand shop you'll see Mitzi Golden's beautiful watercolors gracing its walls, reflecting the years she was born and raised in a suburb of Tokyo, Japan.

"Japan has always had a high population and even worse is that 85 percent of the country is mountainous. Which means the population squeezed together on what land they could."

Her father raised bonsai trees and loved nature and this family of six children was no exception to taking long walks in the mountains to appreciate the quiet, simple solitude of nature. This uncomplicated view of the mountains around them is reflected in much of the national art; watercolors of chrysanthemums, sparrows, flowing streams in their simple, but tranquil houses.

She met her husband while they were both working for the Federal Aviation Administration. They married and eventually moved to Menomonie where they had three children.

Mitzi knew from a child that she had an artistic bend, winning second place in a national poster contest about fire prevention. "I used lots of black and orange." So it was quite dramatic. She also worked in clay where she learned to make a beautiful teapot and tray.

After the kids grew up, she was in the real estate business for 15 years, and then retirement finally came and she knew that at age 60 she needed to choose one medium so she could learn it, and learn it well.

She chose watercolor. By this time the couple was living in Rice Lake and she found workshops to attend. Pretty soon they were spending part of their winters in Florida where she also found watercolor workshops.

Loving nature as much as she does, she and a friend are often seen photographing plants and flowers and God's world at its finest. She uses these photos as inspiration of her art and paints almost one picture a month. She lives with a river in her backyard and is fascinated by the mysterious movement in the water and how the colors and mood is constantly changing.

In Florida she belongs to the Appleton Museum of Art where art from the world is displayed for several weeks until it's moved to its next location. She's also a member of the Wisconsin Regional Artists Association.

She is happy to report that one of her seven grandchildren is showing a strong art bend and she is encouraging her.

Mitzi reflects her past in her graceful art and continues to rely on God's guidance for her future. "In Japan they believe in the golden rule, you know, do unto others like you would like them to do unto you. But once I learned about God's amazing grace, my life changed."

For a novice Mitzi is going full speed in her quest to perfect her watercolor. She recently won the Wisconsin regional art division for her watercolors and now it's on to Madison for the state competition in 2015.



Mitzi displays one of her winter watercolors at the Arts in hand gallery.

## Big Changes at Arts in Hand

Many exciting changes are taking place for our organization this year. The board has appointed a committee to update the Heritage Passage book. This will be the 2nd edition and will contain new galleries, studios, farmers' markets' and many other artistic venues. This will be quite an undertaking considering our organization covers 13 counties. Please contact us with any questions you may have regarding the new book.

We will be changing the name Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage to Arts in Hand. Hopefully, this will clear up any confusion in the purpose of the organization. Arts in Hand will be our working name while Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage will be retained for legal purposes.

Another big change is the move for the Arts in Hand office and gallery. We will be closing the present gallery the end of January. The new offices and gallery will be located on Walnut Street (the main street) in Spooner. This new location will be more "shopper-friendly". This is a great improvement and the board is excited to have this building.

Members will be notified when we will have the grand opening. Please come visit us in our new location. We look forward to seeing you.

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### **A Reminder:**

If you haven't paid your membership dues, please do so. Operation expenses are paid from your annual dues. Volunteers run the Spooner office, produce the newsletter, stage events and are currently working to update and publish the 2nd edition of the Passages guidebook. As a member you get your art out to the public through our extensive marketing.

Individual memberships range from \$25 to \$35. These dues are tax deductible!

Visit our website Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage and click on membership for details and the form. Email us at [winhp@centurytel.com](mailto:winhp@centurytel.com) or call at 715-635-9303 if you have any questions.

Remember that our organization depends on your support. Thank you.

### **Arts in Hand Newsletter**

The WNHP Arts in Hand newsletter is published four times a year. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information concerning the WNHP organization, introduce artists from the 13 county area served by WNHP and announce events of interest. Your contributions and comments are always welcomed.

Contact Pat Ginther at [paginther@hotmail.com](mailto:paginther@hotmail.com). The deadlines for upcoming issues are the following:

**March 25, May 27, August 26, and November 25.** Please send us your art news.



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