



THE TALE OF 29

It takes a (needlepoint) village to host a Seminar. Here's a behind the scenes look at

Shortly after the 2014 ANG Seminar in Chicago came to a close, needlepoint websites and chat rooms were all atwitter about the ribbons awarded to prize-winning exhibitors. And for good reason: The ribbons were beautiful.

Unlike traditional ribbons awarded at fairs and other competitions, ANG prize ribbons have needlepoint centers. They have been a tradition at Seminars for more than two decades. Each one is unique, beautifully stitched, and finished by dedicated ANG members. As we talked with a few of the volunteers who worked on the Chicago awards, we discovered that it truly does take a (needlepoint) village to make it all come together.

"It was a labor of love that involved a lot of dedicated Guild members," said Laura Taylor, who lives near Chicago. Taylor was the volunteer finisher for all 29 ribbons. She is a member of the Fox Chapter in Elgin, Illinois.

Overall, there were 19 special-category ribbons and 10 first-place ribbons awarded during this past Seminar. The ANG first-place ribbons each had blue ANG logos with a gold needle inserted through the center. The special awards each featured a design specific to the category or representing Chicago or Illinois. For example, the Princess Grace ribbon, with a rose in the center, was a salute to the Princess's favorite flower. The ribbon awarded for the Wearable Art category featured the Marshall Field's Clock, a Chicago icon that hangs on the corner of the flagship department store.

Lynn Deininger is the volunteer who designed all of the award ribbons, teachers' name badges, and the Seminar logo, Chicago Sampler. Deininger, who does custom needlepoint designs, has lived in the Chicago area all of her life. She is a member of the Chicago Chapter.

"I was sort of left on my own to come up with the designs," said Deininger. "I knew I wanted to create pieces with a strong

Chicago and Illinois theme, and that took some research. Some things were just obvious, like the Chicago and Illinois flags. Even though I'm a native, I didn't know that the white oak was the state tree, the monarch butterfly was the state insect, and the cardinal was the state bird. So I learned a lot while doing my research."

Each award center measures about 2½ inches across, so it was a challenge to get enough detail into the designs in such a small space.

"I started with line sketches," said Deininger. "Once those were done, I began painting Congress cloth with the designs. Selecting stitches and threads was left up to the individual stitchers."

Deininger doesn't know how many hours were spent painting and designing. "I just approached it like a task that needed to be done," she said. "I would work on it for a bit, then do other things. Then get inspired to come back to it." Overall, it took nearly a year to get everything ready to go to the stitchers. In the end, she was not able to attend the Chicago Seminar, so she was surprised to hear the praise for her design work.

"Wow," she said. "I can't tell you how pleased I am to hear that everyone enjoyed the designs so much. Of course, a lot of the credit goes to the stitchers. They really pulled it all together. And I must add that the reason the 2014 ANG Seminar, Chicago, logo turned out so beautifully was because of the stitch guide designed by Linda Corirossi, a member of the Lake County Chapter in Vernon Hills, Illinois."

A lot of people pitched in to help with the stitching. The first-place ribbons featuring the ANG logo were stitched by 10 volunteers from Illinois Prairie Chapter, in Peoria. Members of Lake County, Ridge Needlepointers, and Fox Chapter all helped with name badges and special award ribbons.

The trick to getting it all done on time was organization, said Dawn Schlarb, a member of the Fox Chapter. Schlarb was in



By Gwen Schoen

Just one piece — or 29 pieces — of the puzzle.

charge of logistics. She contacted chapters looking for volunteers and made sure everyone had what they needed to get started on the project. Then she left for Florida for the winter.

"As I left for Florida, I was really hoping that everything would fall into place by the time I got back," said Schlarb. "Not one person let me down. I got back from Florida, and everything was ready to go to Laura [Taylor] for finishing. What a great group of volunteers."

Taylor, meanwhile, had ordered miles of ribbon and was ready for delivery.

"As we opened each box of stitched pieces, it was so much fun to see the designs and the beautiful stitching that brought the designs to life," said Taylor. "Lynn [Deininger] did an amazing job of designing and painting the special-award ribbons. I felt honored to be involved with the project."

Taylor said she had never finished ribbons before volunteering to work on the Chicago awards.

"I do most of my own finishing and I help some of our Guild members. I have finished a lot of ornaments, and this was similar. Everything was done by hand, not machine. All are slightly padded. Some have cardboard backing, others have metal button forms. Each ribbon took about two hours to finish," she said. "As I worked, I developed a great appreciation for the wonderful stitching and the talent we have in ANG."

It seems as though finishing 29 ribbons all the same might get boring.

"At least they were all different colors," Taylor said with a laugh. "Actually, I worked on them gradually, so it wasn't so overwhelming. It was fun and I enjoyed being able to help out with the Seminar. That was my reward."

When asked if she would be willing to work on finishing ribbons for 2015 ANG Seminar, Myrtle Beach, she said flatly, "No." Then she laughed and left the impression her arm could be twisted.

What a great (needlepoint) village to which we all belong. 

Gwen is a freelance writer who contributes monthly columns and features to a variety of California magazines. An avid needlepointer, Gwen lives in Central California and is a member of several ANG chapters.

Special Award Ribbon Stitchers

1. Silk and Metal Award: The Picasso sculpture in Chicago's Daley Plaza, stitched by Ursula Wenk
2. President's Choice Award: Chicago Lakefront, stitched by Patti Cohen
3. Best in Show Award: Historic Chicago Water Tower, stitched by Sue Stern
4. First-Time Exhibitor Award: Represents the annual Chicago Blues Music Festival, stitched by Sue Drehe
5. Founders Award: White oak, the Illinois state tree, stitched by Marjory Corbet
6. Delegates' Choice Award: Cardinal, the Illinois state bird, stitched by Mary Ann Oresko
7. Princess Grace Award: Rose, stitched by Mary McGuire
8. Peoples' Choice Award: Chicago flag, stitched by Irene Dombroski
9. Sampler Award: Chicago's Millennium Park, stitched by Judy Antenore
10. Small Masterpiece Award: Violet, the Illinois state flower, stitched by Missy Taphorn
11. Hilton Stitch Award: represents a Jean Hilton design, stitched by Barbara Richardson
12. Nina M. Goerres Award: Poinsettia, stitched by Barbara Richardson
13. Wearable Art Award: Marshall Field's Clock, stitched by Karla McCoy
14. Judge's Choice Award: Buckingham Fountain, a Chicago landmark in Grant Park, three ribbons stitched by Gretchen Wolf
15. State 21st Century Sampler Award: Illinois state flag, stitched by Paula Fendius
16. State Award: Monarch butterfly, the Illinois state insect, stitched by Helen Hershner
17. ANG First-Place Awards: 10 ribbons stitched by members of Illinois Prairie Chapter in Peoria:

Pat Denzer	Cathy Anderson	Cindy Powell
Sue Hughes	Mason	Luann Snyder
Lynn Keefer	Helen Miles	Philippa Williams
Peggy Martiny	Barb Pitzer	
18. Creative Inspiration Award: Art Institute of Chicago lion statue, stitched by Mary Ann Schopen