



# EGA national tapestry

## PANEL THREE OF THE PROJECT



by Sandra L. Gordon

*This embroidery, Echinacea or coneflowers, was made by Sigrid Bucklin of the Northern Lights Chapter.*

**T**he dream of creating a tapestry in embroidery that depicts the beauty of the United States is becoming a reality. Panel three of the EGA tapestry project represents the center of the United States from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. If you take a North American map and draw a line from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, you will have the eastern edge of panel three. For the western rim, draw a line from Regina, Saskatchewan, to Odessa, Texas.

Although we were slow in starting work on the third panel of the project, we are making steady progress. A number of needleworkers have been and are stitching motifs that will be appliquéd to the 2 x 4 ft. painted ground canvas. Stitchers who expressed interest in working on the panel knew that they were

responsible for selecting the stitches and the type of needlework to execute. Although I supplied them with threads donated by Coats & Clark and Kreinik, some stitchers chose other threads and added beads or other embellishments. I sent each stitcher as many appropriate pictures of particular subjects as I could find from postcards, magazines, books, and the internet. Copyrighted images could not be replicated in embroidery, but they were useful in suggesting suitable colors for the animal, flower, bird, or other wildlife.

Because of travel distances involved, it was not feasible or realistic to have many stitchers come to my house in Fargo, North Dakota, on a regular schedule to work on the panel. So, concurrently with individuals in different locations who were already stitching motifs, I traveled by car and took the canvas and threads to region meetings and to individuals' homes in other states. When I was at family celebrations and reunion in the Greater St. Louis area, for example, LaMona Brown and I met in her home in Washington, Missouri. Together we sought colors and stitch patterns for the ground canvas.

LaMona, a member of Show-Me Stitchers Chapter, offered to embroider "for amber waves of grain above the fruited plain" from *America the Beautiful* for panel three. LaMona, Judy Jeroy, Druscilla Defalque, and I discussed attaching letters to the main canvas in a manner consistent with lettering on other panels. LaMona stitched the song's verse onto green organza then basted the organza into place onto the background canvas. As we continue to apply the motifs and stitch the background canvas, we will stitch through the organza and trim it as needed.

Another journey involved a 610-mile roundtrip to Sioux Center, Iowa, specifically to work with Nancy Lammers of Siouxland

Chapter. Nancy and I worked nearly four days at her home. We made photocopies of the completed stitched motifs so that we could manipulate their positions on the two-by-four foot main canvas without handling the stitched items. We also included magazine pictures as examples of proposed motifs and name cards for animals and plants currently being stitched to determine possible placements on the ground canvas. We narrowed the number of trees from eight to the required five so I could ask Casey Bradford to machine embroider them. We researched in library books and on the internet for photos and tree silhouettes to find useful examples of the chosen trees to send to Casey. We added and deleted suggestions from my list of flora and fauna. We found more pictures of our selected plants and animals, again in books, magazines, and on the internet, to give to others who were willing to stitch the additional motifs. We discussed stitches that would complement the completed motifs and which stitches would work to suggest fields, bodies of water, and the like. Besides those needleworkers who had sent their completed embroidered animals and flowers, we identified and contacted additional stitchers to help with the panel. Said differently, we engaged in "thinking time" about the components of panel three.

Gay Marquardt, a Texas member-at-large from Fort Worth, was the first embroiderer to volunteer to stitch on panel three. Gay asked to needlepoint bluebonnets. She photographed and studied bluebonnets in bloom in the fields around Fort Worth as preparation to stitch the flowers.

Fiber artist Deanna Funk surface embroidered a prairie dog that looks alive and alert to the world around it, especially as it watches from the beadwork that forms its dirt mound.

Deanna is a member of Prairie Arts Chapter in Springfield, Illinois.

Don't underestimate the power of friendship. Deanna urged Sherry Lawson Gates, a professional fiber artist, to use her master skills as a machine embroiderer to sew a goldfinch ready for flight. Sherry probably speaks for many of us when she said that she could not live without EGA. Sherry has been a member of every chapter in every locality where she has lived and currently is with the Fox Valley Chapter in Appleton, Wisconsin.

The most visible part of the swimming beaver is its tail. Susan Ritter of St. Paul Needleworkers used a weaving technique over

*The third panel's Prairie Dog was stitched by Deanna Funk, a member of the Prairie Arts Chapter.*





*Carol Ronning Kapsner from the Northern Lights Chapter undertook stitching mallard ducks (male, left).*

*The buffalo (right) was created by Rebecca Quanrud, Northern Lights Chapter.*

cardboard to make the perfect tail for the beaver. Susan now is working on a crow for the panel. After all, how can depiction of bird life in this country be complete without a crow?

Suzanne Ray Dixon of the Austin Stitchery Guild used black wool for padding that she covered with beads to show the armor of the armadillo. She also incorporated Kreinik 1/16-inch ribbon, Aarland Etoile, and Anchor floss to make the armadillo the adorable rendition that it is.

Three members of the Northern Lights Chapter, who live in Bismarck, North Dakota, each stitched a motif. Rebecca Quanrud was the right person to stitch a bison or buffalo, as it is commonly known. Becky had stitched a sacred white buffalo on her interpretation in a personal embroidery, but she stitched the more common brown buffalo with which most of us are familiar, using basketweave, continental stitches, cross-stitches, and straight stitches. Sigrid Bucklin, an avid gardener, used flowers in her garden as inspiration for the echinacea or coneflowers. Carol Ronning Kapsner chose to stitch a pair of mallards. Because the female mallard's feathers are not as distinctive as the male's, Carol found it necessary to embroider the female's feathers with two different thread colors in the needle for each stitch.

Two friends, both members of Quinsippi Needleworkers in Quincy, Illinois, stitched motifs. After Ann Bergman read about the tapestry in *Needle Arts*, she contacted me to assist with the panel. She used a combination of Anchor and DMC flosses, often blending colors of threads, to needlepoint a monarch butterfly in flight. Ann encouraged Caroline Sapp, from Hannibal, Missouri, to use her

expertise in hardanger to stitch three sand dollars to represent those found on the coast of Texas. Caroline not only used pictures of sand dollars, she also used a photocopy of an actual sand dollar that I sent to her.

Marianna Anderson's Minnesota roots were evident when she suggested that the panel needed a walleye pike. Marianna's family members and friends are supplying her with photographs of their fishing adventures to use as models. Marianna is a member of St. Paul Needleworkers.

Liane "Lee" Ohryn of Detroit, Michigan, contacted me and asked how she could help after she spoke with Judy Jeroy, the originator of the tapestry project. Because the Trumpeter Swan has special significance to Lee and her husband, Harmon I. Mickelson, she asked if she and Harmon could stitch a pair of these stately birds. They are also stitching an eagle that will soar at the top of the panel. Lee and Harmon, members-at-large, used wing-disabled American Eagles and Trumpeter Swans living at the Detroit Zoo as their models.

Nancy Lammers, a member of Siouxland, is stitching a bull, a cow, and a calf. She is relying on her observations of animals she and her husband once owned as well as using pictures as models. Other Siouxland members who are stitching animal life include Joyce Wyant, Connie Collison, and Cathy Habermann. Joyce is embroidering an American Robin, Connie a deer and a raccoon, and Cathy a pheasant.

Connie did not have to travel far to have live models for the raccoon. When she and I engaged in a phone conversation about the panel, she was watching six raccoons in her backyard vying for the family cat's food.

Lois Morkassel, Mary Baulmer, Michelle Sinkler, and Pat Otto are members of the Northern Lights Chapter in Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota. Lois's crayfish will have a suede body and copper feelers. Mary is tatting snowflakes to indicate a sign of the approaching winter. Michelle Sinkler is preparing dimensional shells to appliqué along the tapestry's Gulf of Mexico. These stitchers also will be involved in attaching the various needlework motifs and stitching the background canvas. Other needleworkers throughout different states are in the early stages of their work for panel three. If you are interested in stitching something for

panel three or you want more information about the panel, please contact Sandra Gordon at [tapestrygordon@cablone.net](mailto:tapestrygordon@cablone.net).



Sandra L Gordon, who is coordinating the stitching of the third panel of the EGA national tapestry, is a member of the Northern Lights Chapter. She has served as the chapter's president, vice president, librarian, and region representative. She chaired the Heartland 1999 seminar. At the Heartland Region level, Sandra was the region administrative assistant for two years and served two consecutive terms as region director. She is currently the national EGA secretary for 2005—2007. Sandra resides in Fargo, North Dakota.

*The monarch butterfly in flight was stitched by Ann Bergman, a member of Quinsippi Needleworkers.*

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