

© 1995 Judith Meyers

## BATS, PUMPKINS AND PAPER CUTS

by Judith Meyers

I have heard lots of different uses for papercuts and so have you, no doubt. They embellish walls of Polish cottages, festoon Mexican streets at Christmas, decorate holiday trees and tables, and provide patterns for elaborate silk embroidery on Chinese garments. But I had never heard of using a papercut as a basis for carving a Halloween pumpkin.

That is until I got a call from Barry Brown last summer. He wanted to cut my papercut "Witch Tree" design into a pumpkin for a Halloween exhibit in Denver. I was very skeptical remembering the difficulties long ago of carving pumpkins with a kitchen knife for my children. Even the simple triangular eyes were a challenge, let alone the teeth, in that thick, tough orange rind.

Barry explained that he worked for Pumpkin Masters TM, a Denver-based company that markets special pumpkin carving tools—delicate, precise, strong. He sent me these clever tools, and I sent him a Xerox of the tree design, still skeptical that my scissor cut paper design could be cut into a pumpkin.

But the day arrived, a week before

Halloween, that the exhibition opened in a bank plaza in downtown Denver. There it was, along with 40 or so others, my Witch Tree silhouetted delicately against the orange glow from inside the pumpkin—a marvelous testament to this young man's skill with Pumpkin Masters TM tools. It is wonderful what you can create with a well-designed cutting tool, as all papercutters know.

Now, as to the bats—I discovered on my China trip that bats were frequently used as decorative motifs on embroideries, especially on children's clothing and in papercuts. The Chinese word for bat is "fu" which also means good fortune. Therefore, images of bats came to symbolize luck, good fortune.

The symmetrical design of a bat is a natural for cutting on a fold so I tried it out, using a Chinese papercut as a point of departure, working out some variations on the idea.

Checking out how a real bat looks also helped. For this I used the encyclopedia. Then I made a hanging bat ornament using the same system as the tree ornaments described in First Cut last Christmas. Cut in black and orange, the bat ornaments are fun for Halloween.



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For your own pleasure of creative gift-giving: a new book of original designs in Wycinanki (Polish paper cuts) by folk artist Leona Wojcik Barthle. Hard cover, 9" x 11", 115 pages, over 50 color illustrations, b/w graphics with patterns and instructions for artworks and cards. \$29.95 plus \$2.50 p&h to:  
Leona Wojcik Barthle  
909 N. Spring  
Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
Phone: 605-338-1904



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Ellen Mischo, Pamela Dalton and Sukey Harris were exhibitors in the Early American Life magazine Festival of Traditional American Arts, July 21-23, 1995 at the Rytown Hilton, Rye Brook, NY.

\*\*\*\*\*

Shelagh Ryan, Coup member from Australia and her sister Alysson spent two exciting hours talking about papercutting, sources and books when they visited recently. I wish everyone in the Guild could have met these enthusiastic, delightful people and I regret they could not have stayed longer. It is good to know that we have a cluster of papercutters "down under."

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Robert Ambrose received first place in Scherenschnitte and second prize in Silhouettes at the Long Island Fair. The Long Island Fair is the official Country Fair for the counties of Nassau, Suffolk and Queens. It has been held continuously since 1843. It is held at Old Bethpage Village, a restored 1800's village in the style of that period. It is held annually on Columbus Day Weekend and the following weekend.

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Faye Du Plessis's Noah's Ark Scherenschnitte is pictured on page 71 of December issue of Early American Life Magazine.

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Nancy Cook's paper sculpture was presented the prestigious Juror's Choice award at the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen Dana Gallery Show at the 49th State Craft Fair at Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA.

## Make a Valentine

Here's an opportunity for you, each member, to enrich your First Cut newsletter Winter issue. Cut your valentine from a square of paper, send to:

GAP Newsletter  
514 E. Main Street  
Annville, PA 17003.





by Steven Woodbury  
*Christmas Ornaments*  
from *Better Homes and  
Gardens* contains several  
cut-out ornaments,  
including an angel paper  
sculpture on the front  
cover by Linda  
Emmerson. Also includ-

ed, with patterns, are cut-out animals by Nancy Reames and Bonnie Wedge, and pop-up cards by Deborah Pappenheimer. [Des Moines, IA, 1991, ISBN 0-696-01923-X.]

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#### *Discoveries from the Collector's Corner*

I've always been interested in how people learned papercutting. So my collection has grown to include a number of instruction books for students or for teachers. I've recently added two books to this shelf.

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*The Christmas Alphabet* is a wonderful mechanical book you won't want to miss. Each 2-page spread contain four colored cards which open to a white pop-up paper sculpture representing a letter of the alphabet. "A" is an angel, who flies up and opens her wings. "B" is a bell, swinging in the belfry. "C" is a candle with a spinning halo. An on through the alphabet. . . Robert Sabuda has created a gem; treat yourself to this book! [Orchard Books, New York, 1994, ISBN 0-531-06857-9, \$19.95.]

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*The Scissors Mother Goose* by Burt Barnes offers colored pages with simple white cut-outs of familiar Mother Goose rhymes. [12" x 9"; Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1910.]

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*Scissor Pictures: A Work Book and a Picture Book for Children in the Home and School*, by Ethel Elaine Barr is illustrated in black on white, with a wider range of subjects, and somewhat more detail than above. [12" x 9"; Rand McNally & Co., Chicago, 1906.] Barr's advice is still sound, for children or for any beginner. A few excerpts:

When Mary sees her mother or teacher cut a simple object from paper, even though it is roughly done, if there is a resemblance to the object in mind, the child is pleased, and with encouragement will try to do likewise, and very soon is able to cut alone.

All seasons, songs, poems, stories bring simple mind pictures: Perhaps it is

© Fritz Griebel  
"Herbst"

Discoveries from the Collector's Corner

© Fritz Griebel  
"Winter"



Christmas, if it be suggested that we cut a stocking—the simple thing first—we will probably get results. If we should ask for the eight reindeer, the sleigh and Santa Claus himself, we will not succeed, and then think that such work as free cutting is impossible, when the cause is within ourselves. Ask for something that can be done first, and the children will take care of the rest.

Large cuttings, in which a free sweep of the scissors may be used, should be encouraged, and small cramped designs discouraged.

Have children use scissors that are good and that would not discourage older people.

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Part of the joy of collecting books with papercut illustrations is that new discoveries always await.

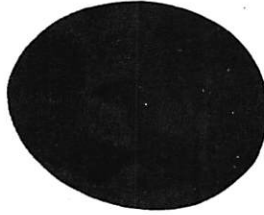
For example, sitting on a book dealer's table recently was a book open to a striking black and white design. Of course it caught my eye; and yes, it was a papercut. Fritz Griebel's *Scherenschnitte* was published in Germany in the midst of the Second World War. It contains full-page plates of 21 different cuttings, subjects include houses with trees and a bird's nest, flowers, allegorical figures of the seasons, and many more. [L. Staackmann Verlag, Leipzig, 1943.]

# Scissors Pictures

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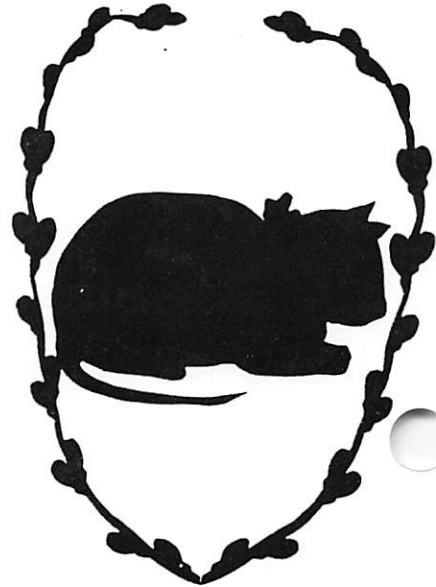
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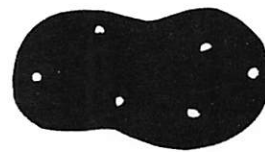


reduced by 50%



This is the cat that killed the rat.

reduced by 50%



reduced by 50%



reduced by 50%



The Traveling Show is presently hanging at From the Heart, a gallery/art and craft shop north of Somerset where I had a show two years ago and will remain there

until September 16. On the evening of the 16th I will move it to the Dressler Center and re-hang it there in the two galleries for an opening the next day, Sunday. It will remain at the Dressler Center until October 20th. This is a slight change of plan as it was originally scheduled to go to the Allegheny Fine Arts Center in Hollidaysburg, PA after From the Heart but the Fine Arts Center closed its doors. Fortunately Laurel Arts had an opening. Laurel Arts (the Dressler Center) has three downstairs galleries and the GAP show will only need two so I volunteered to hang a show of mine in the third gallery to help increase the possible income from commissions and to make a more complete papercutting exhibit.

As it looks now I probably cannot make the meeting. We had an opening reception Sunday afternoon which was very well attended and sold Roma Starczewska's rooster and three of the cuttings from my show. There was great interest from the visitors. I took several small groups on tour and gave them what background I could on each of the cutters and what I knew about their style and method of cutting. I continued the practice that Leslie Miller started and have a short explanation, artists name and price of cutting mounted on foam core and displayed with each piece. Most everyone made a special note of telling me how much they liked the idea.

I had a letter from Judith Meyers, Greeley, CO. She has had correspondence from Elzbieta and Dan Paulos who both said they are unable to find a gallery in their area that is willing to host this show, but she, Judith, has it confirmed for showing in Greeley in February. Now I must contact Barbara Rudolph, St. Louis, MO., to see if she can handle it there in a gallery she had once contacted for some time between the Bloomington, Ill. (Nov. 10 to 17) show that Nancy Cook has arranged and the Greeley opening.

Nancy Cook has arranged to have the exhibit in the atrium of the National Headquarters of State Farm Insurance in Bloomington, Ill. It will hang there from November 10-17. After the show closes here she and I will have to make

## Poet's Corner



When I Am Blue  
 When I am blue  
 and I don't know what to do  
 I wipe away my tears  
 and get my paper shears.  
 Cutting out a tree  
 can make your troubles flee  
 working on an animal  
 makes your troubles minimal.  
 Creating a bird  
 makes it all absurd.  
 You start smiling before you know it,  
 and by gosh, you've turned into a poet.  
 ©Jessie Sweeney 1995

some kind of arrangements to get it to her. Looks like at this point that I will be making a trip somewhere between here and Bloomington to meet Nancy for a transfer.

\*\*\*\*\*

Joan Stern, a watercolorist from Roaring Spring, PA, has asked me to help her with a touring show of Japanese and American watercolors—since I have so much experience with traveling shows. . . I have just this morning completed the dummy for the catalogue cover. The exhibit will open with a reception Sunday, October 22, from 2:00 to 4:00 with at least ten of the Japanese artists in attendance. There will be 35 pieces from the Japanese and 35 pieces from artists of the four county area where the show will travel and be shown. We have picked the artists from here based on the expertise of their ability to handle watercolor. We are all very excited about this international endeavor. the premier opening will be at the Dressler Center following our GAP show and then each month move to a prescheduled gallery in each of the other three counties. I am sure it will be worth the trip for GAP members to visit us.

## LATE BULLETIN

- Shear Variety II will be exhibited from 11/25 to 1/15/96 at the Andrew Co. Museum in Savannah, MO. If you have any brochures, pamphlets, hand-outs or other information you would like displayed at this time, please send them to me as soon as possible. Thanks.
- Barbara Rudolph, 208 South 1st, Savannah, Missouri 64485.





Sorry that there has been No opportunity to get together with you all recently. The demands of retail shop ownership are over-

whelming, especially when you're nice like me and let one of your two employees have the whole summer off. (What a dope I am!)

I participated in a show at the Keiserman Main Line branch "Y" in February, an exhibit of Ketubot (Jewish wedding contracts). Mine were the only papercuts (as usual) but it was a wonderful show with all my fellow ketubot-makers involved. The results of this show have kept me busy beyond my imagination with nine back-to-back commissions, custom designed major pieces that normally take 4-6 weeks each. I've now got down to 2-3 weeks! (HELP!) It's very gratifying but I'm not much fun with my family or (former) friends.

I had the travelling show here at my Calligraphics Gallery in mid-May thru June. Unfortunately, it wasn't very successful. I had put two nice display-ads in the "neighbor" section of the city newspaper (Philadelphia Inquirer) and an ad in a local suburban newspaper. Got a few calls for information and directions, fewer viewers and no sales. I'm sorry to disappoint all you participants. Everything looked very nice hanging together on the gallery wall.

I still feel very much like a member of GAP, just not a very active one presently. Please let me know of there's anything I can do in the future.

I've also enclosed some photos of recent work. I'm still cutting my little heart out! I doubt these will reproduce well in black and white, but you should know I'm still here, working hard and spreading the joy of paper-cutting to all whom I see.

I wish all of you well and hope to see at least some of you at a meeting very soon!

Karen Shain Scholss

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It was a delight for us to be with so many papercutters in Towson. Thanks to Sukey for your beautiful cut I won in the raffle. We love it! Thank you for your sharing. We are so busy with Christmas orders for cuts. So many wish

to give unique gifts. It's fun to please! Thanks again for a great time in Towson.

Walter Jurkiewicz

P.S. We, of course love the Spring Issue of our publication. Our students think we are something to be so generously featured. Thank You!

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I want to be a member! My sister Janice Harrell let me read her newsletters. They are wonderful. She and I learned papercutting from Polly Mitchell of Carbondale, IL. (She is also a member.) We met her at an historical event put on by the State of Illinois, where she demonstrates scherenschnitte. We used to stare at her work for hours at a time, until one day she said we would have to get to work if we wanted to stay in her booth. She handed Janice a pair of scissors and some paper. We protested that we wouldn't be able to do it, but she insisted we could. I ran off, but Janice gave it a try.

About three months later, Janice handed a pair of scissors and some paper to me and said, "If I can do it, you can do it." I didn't have her confidence, but I tried anyway. It's a good thing I was pleased with my first attempt or I may never have tried again. Enclosed is a copy of that first cutting (done in putrid yellow. . . my sister didn't want to give me any really good paper in case it didn't turn out). It was made in 1983. I've also enclosed a copy of the cutting I used for my son's birth announcements in 1994.

My favorite topics to cut are forest scenes, Bible stories, and cats. I'm looking forward to receiving my first newsletter from you. If my check is not the right amount, please let me know as soon as possible.

Barbara J. Mattes



© Barbara J. Mattes



## How to Make

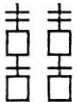
# "Double Happiness" Chinese Character

by Judith Meyers

It was "double happiness" for me to be at Gathering '95 in June, to be with so many papercutters and to share some things I had learned about China and Chinese papercutting. My face is red, however, about the fiasco of thinking I could teach everyone in that "Tiny Tips" session how to cut "Double Happiness." Disaster! I cut in from the wrong side. So I want to redeem my reputation by setting forth here the correct instructions for cutting "Double Happiness." In Chinese the character for "happy" is



If you want to express the idea of "very happy" you just write "happy" twice, so



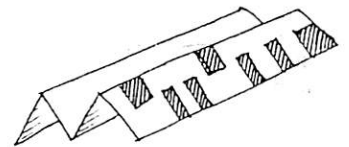
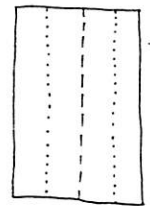
means really happy! I saw this double happiness character many places in China—on walls, doors, windows, cut out of paper, always red paper. Red is the most lucky color! So get some red paper and give this a try.

1. Use a rectangle about half as high as it is wide—2" x 3" or 4" x 6".
2. Fold it lengthwise in half and then fold the long edges back to the fold so you have an accordion fold, two of them actually



3. The follow the diagram cutting away the shaded shapes.
4. Lastly cut off a very narrow sliver as in this diagram.
5. Open it up, flatten down the folds and you have "Double Happiness."

One of my traveling companions on the China trip, a Chinese-American woman, who was our leader and translator, Grace Hsu by name, said that she had seen people cut long strings of double happiness to decorate for weddings—using red tissue paper probably. You're on your own to figure that one out.



# GAP Meeting Minutes

The Guild of American Papercutters met at Towson State University, Towson, MD on Sunday, June 25 following a weekend gathering of approximately 40 members. President Paul Trattner called the meeting to order and introduced a brochure on the history of silhouettes by Dr. William Guyton, a collector and author and our first speaker for the weekend "Collection." The brochure is now out of print, but Dr. Guyton has offered it to GAP for reproduction and distribution. The board of directors recommended that it would be a means of educating the public about silhouettes as a form of papercutting and about our organization, since we could add a page about our guild in the booklet. It could be sent to libraries and museums as well as distributed through members. We could use the book to satisfy our mission as a non-profit organization, not necessarily to sell for a profit, Paul reported that 1,000 copies could be printed for \$1.00 to \$1.50 each. There was a motion on the floor that we follow through with this and a discussion followed. Steve Woodbury suggested that we contact silhouette cutters about the book. The motion was passed that GAP go ahead with the publication.

the second item of business was the by-laws, which have been drawn up but have never been ratified. Since we cannot operate or elect new officers or a board without the by-laws, it is imperative that when they are sent to members, the accompanying stamped postcard/ballot be returned. The bylaws were sent out some time ago, but not enough members responded to pass them.

A motion was introduced for an award to be presented to individuals who contribute to furthering papercutting in America. In the discussion that followed, nomination forms were suggested. The award would not necessarily be given every year and might be in the form of a plaque with our logo and an honorary membership in GAP. The suggested name was the Harris Award, in honor of Sukey and Richard Harris, who started the Guild. Ed Hopf volunteered to chair a committee to research nominees. Kerch McConlogue made the motion and it was seconded by Sharon Schaich. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

Neil Haring gave the treasurer's report as of June 20, 1995 and again requested a check account rather than paying bills by money order as he has done in the past. He also stated that it is important that his books be audited on a regular basis. (See report attached.)

The last newsletter was sent to 440 members at a cost of just over \$1,000 without postage. The newsletter is our most important expense because it is the only contact the majority of our members have with GAP.

Sharon Schaich asked to hear from members who might be interested in going to Switzerland to meet with Swiss cutters in 1996. At this time, we are considering a one week trip in June at a cost of approximately \$200 per day for lodging and meals. We are in touch with a small travel agency in Basel who could provide a guide, transportation and reservations for lodging and meals, but the cost would be \$75 per person per day for her services alone. We may decide to use a Swissrail pass and get around by public transportation. GAP members would make their own plane reservations to Switzerland. Unfortunately, the Swiss national show that was our primary reason for going will not be held until November or December, and we do not want to deal with winter travel.

All attending introduced themselves and told about their cutting.

There was a suggestion that we begin a Guild collection of cuttings, that we donate to an apprentice program, and that we compile a collection of cutting and framing

tips in a book. Each of these projects needs one thing—an enthusiastic volunteer to develop it.

Paul Beale reported that the traveling exhibit has most recently been hanging in Karen Schloss' gallery in the Philadelphia area, and plans are that it will go either to Virginia or Indiana. Leslie Miller is again organizing a GAP exhibit to be hung in Symphony Hall, Boston, MA. She will need the pieces by Mid-September and the exhibit will hang 11/6 - 12/8. The pieces should be shipped in reusable, returnable, pre-addressed cartons with a short description of the work and return postage to P.O. Box 3503, Framingham, MA 01701. Paul also proposed that we do an international exchange of cutting with the Dutch Guild.

After thanking Kerch for her organization of the weekend and presenting her with a book of cuttings from all who were present, the meeting was adjourned.

Sharon Schaich

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The Guild of American papercutters met at First Presbyterian Church in Newark, DE. Paul Trattner called the meeting to order. The minutes were read. Faye DuPlessis moved and Ed Hopf seconded that the minutes be accepted as read. Motion carried. Due to the absence of the treasurer, there was no report. Neal would like an audit of the treasurer's books.

## Committee Reports

**By-Laws.** Dick Harris reported that the board of directors passed a motion authorizing Dick and Sukey to consult with a local attorney and account who are familiar with working with art groups concerning the incorporation of GAP as a non-profit organization. Although a set of by-laws was prepared for us, it was felt by the directors and the attorney that they could be streamlined for easier implementation. Also it may be possible for the board of directors to become the corporation and thus the voting body of GAP. The board of directors would elect the officers. Now the total membership is the voting body and this is sometimes too cumbersome for conducting business (example, voting on the by-laws).

**Membership.** The goal for 1995 was to have 500 members. To date we have 446 members. In 1995, 65 new members joined. There are 31 non-USA members. A membership form will be sent with the next dues billing so members can copy the form to distribute to interested people.

**Dr. Guyton Project.** Ed Hopf will need to contact the Renfrew Museum to clear any issues concerning the copyright and reprinting laws.

**Swiss Tour 1996.** Sharon reported that the trip will be planned for September rather than June because of the weather conditions. The trip will be one week at a cost of about \$200 per day for the room and board. Air fare will be extra. If interested, call Sharon Schaich.

**Collection 1996.** Judith Meyers expressed interest in having the annual meeting in Colorado. Sharon suggested that if we do meet in Colorado, then we should have a regular June meeting in the East.

**Tenth Anniversary.** Sukey would like to see us have a Gala Exhibit to celebrate our tenth anniversary in 1998. Those present expressed a positive interest. Volunteers are needed. Possible site would again be the Washington County Fine Arts Museum in Hagerstown, MD. Interested volunteers should contact Paul Trattner.

Sukey introduced Yael Hoz from Israel. Yael has been researching and documenting papercutters world wide for several years. She discussed the compilation of a papercutter's dictionary. She would like to see GAP become involved in this project. Bernie DuPlessis suggest-



ed that the board of directors take this project under consideration. Yael will share a standard form that can be used.

Several members shared material and information about papercutting. Steve Woodbury discussed meeting several papercutters in Charlestown, SC. He played a folk song composed by Clay Rice about his grandfather Carew Rice who started papercutting in the 1930s. Carew cut silhouettes, scenes of plantation life, and life in the Carlonia countryside. He traveled extensively doing cuttings and telling stories and jokes.

Dick Harris closed the meeting with a Pennsylvania Dutch joke which had a papercutter's twist to it.

Our program was presented by Nancy Chinn, a church artist for Oakland, CA. Nancy does not consider herself a papercutter. She calls her creations paper lace. She uses her art form to take people into a greater spiritual depth. Her love of paper and its possibilities began in the eighth grade. She is a lay theologian and has also received a degree in fiber arts. Her paper lace is inspiring, powerful and overwhelming in its size and message.

Nancy works with photographic backdrop paper which comes on a roll 9 feet by 36 feet. To work large is intuitive to her as is working in the vertical form. So that the cutting hangs correctly and follows the fiber structure of the paper, most of the cut work is done vertically. She travels

all over the country to do commissions. Her largest pieces were displayed in a basketball coliseum. She created a Tree of Life which was four stories high. Her paper lace cutting are suspended on conduit pipe.

When she received a commission she gets as much input from the group as possible. She feels most artists create from their own need of expression themselves; whereas she creates from the input of others. Her interest in the creative process is finding a way to empower others to do the work. She designs the flow of the work. She does not draw from her head, but extrapolates from various pictorial sources. She determines the length of each piece and lightly sketches the design in pencil. She then invites a group from the commission group to help cut the work. A one inch utility knife is used to do the cutting. Some projects can take as long as ten months from design stage to display stage. The two pieces we saw were based on the theme of hunger, both spiritual and physical. There were from 4-12 people involved in the cutting each day. They spent about 45 hours cutting the pieces. The group process stimulates spiritual conversations which is one of her goals. The two beautiful and inspiring hangings were 14 feet each. As we studied the pieces we also found ourselves involved in a dialogue with one another. We also were fulfilling her goal.

## Editorial

Black and white copy of my birthday card by our daughter Elizabeth Owen. Can you imagine the joy and exuberance I felt when opening this tiny paperdoll cutting? Three men cut first, then four happy women overlaid. The background and log house watercolored in pastel shades, and sun, moon, star and heart are applied cutouts. It is a sweet reward to see the younger generation enjoy the creation of a papercutting. . . . the baton is passed and the beat goes on. . .

Sukey



actual size  
© Elizabeth Owen

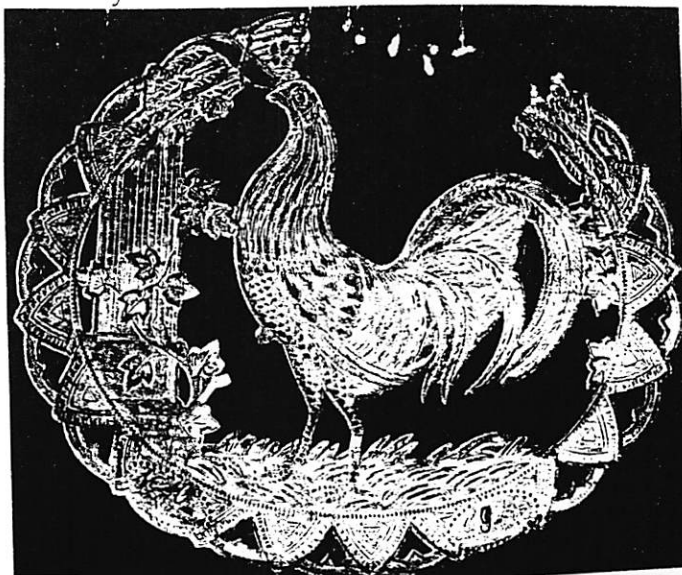
## INSPIRATIONS

### *Die Cut Rooster in Silver*

Mechanically Embossed and pierced lightweight card stock. (A piece of the border is missing at the top.)

My mother as a six year old, pasted this "scrap" onto the fly leaf of her Bible. "Scrap" is a term commonly used to describe the multi-faceted small pieces of die cut paper pictures often lithographed in color, embossed on a glazed light card stock. They were frequently glued into "scrap" books which in those days were similar to the modern day "stickers" that kids collect.

Sukey



# Papercutters' Profile

## ELDA SCHIESSER Alpine Papercuttings

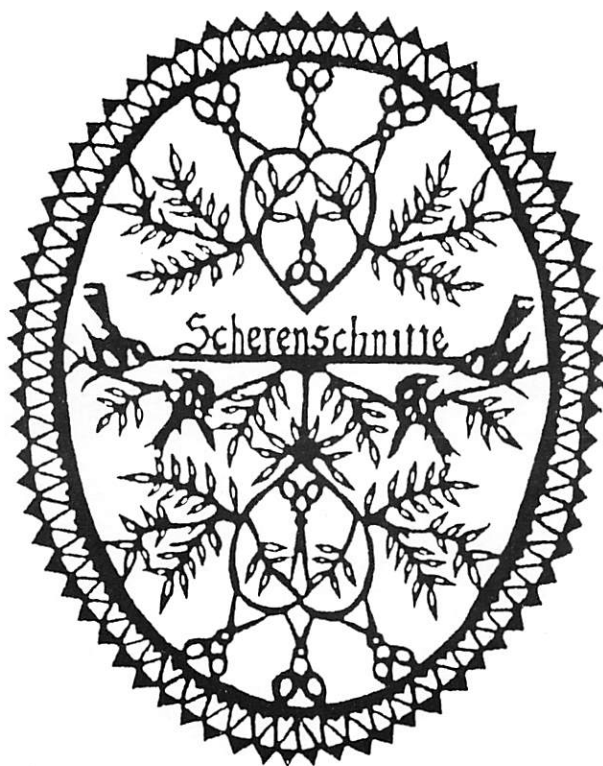
Elda Schiesser was born on a farm new New Glarus, Wisconsin. Her interests have been varied but her Swiss heritage has always been a strong influence. As an active member in many organizations, she has always used a creative approach.

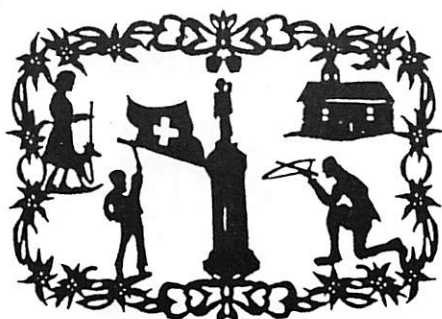
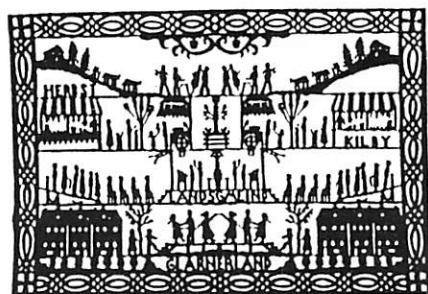
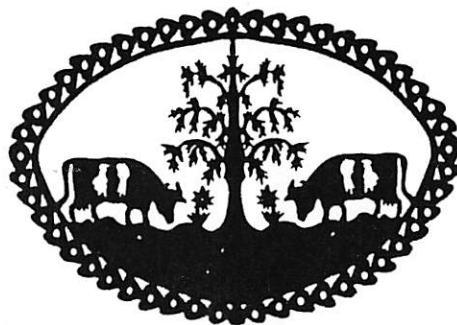
Her interest in scherenschnitte began in 1962 with the purchase of a Walter Von Guten cutting. After viewing many old cuttings in museums during a 1985 visit to Switzerland, her interest resurfaced. She purchased a German paperback book and the special scissor.

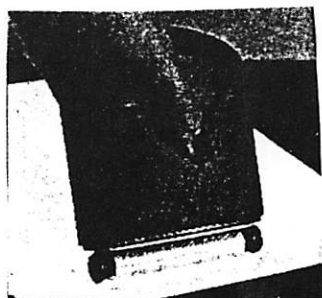
With a definite commitment to continue this folk art, she worked on her designs. Elda first exhibited her work at the 1985 Wilhelm Tell Art Fair in New Glarus, WI. Receiving many encouraging comments, she has continued to develop this folk art in a Swiss community.

Teaching herself to develop this art has given her great pleasure. Each design is created and cut to express a message, which at times has been challenging.

Elda is a member of the Guild of American Papercutters, WI Alliance of Artists and WI Regional Artist Association.







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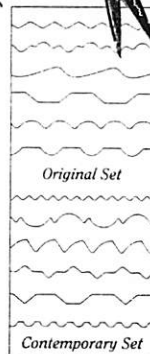
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Wanda Ricketts



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571-008A Hardcover

\$27.95



## Wedding Candelabra

Antique Wedding  
Candelabra Cuttings

Mary Hare Massenburg  
(Ne Pretlow)

married

Samuel Darden Winborne

May 30, 1850

These cuts were on the candelabra on the wedding table and were handmade by her sisters Betty and Ann (Pretlow) from Como, NC (just below the VA Border). Bride's family was from VA.

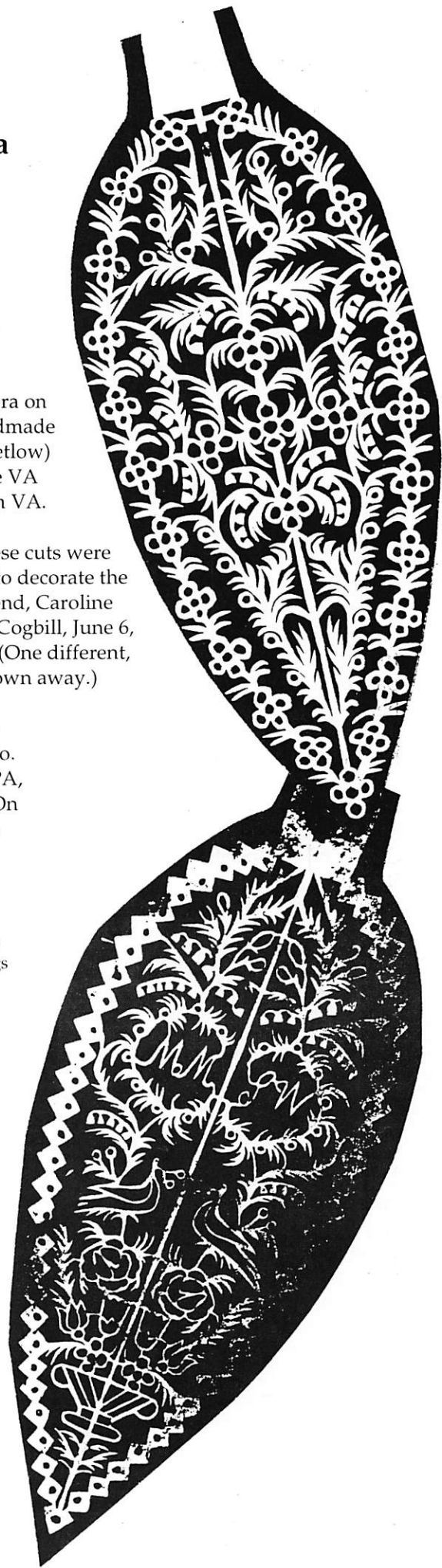
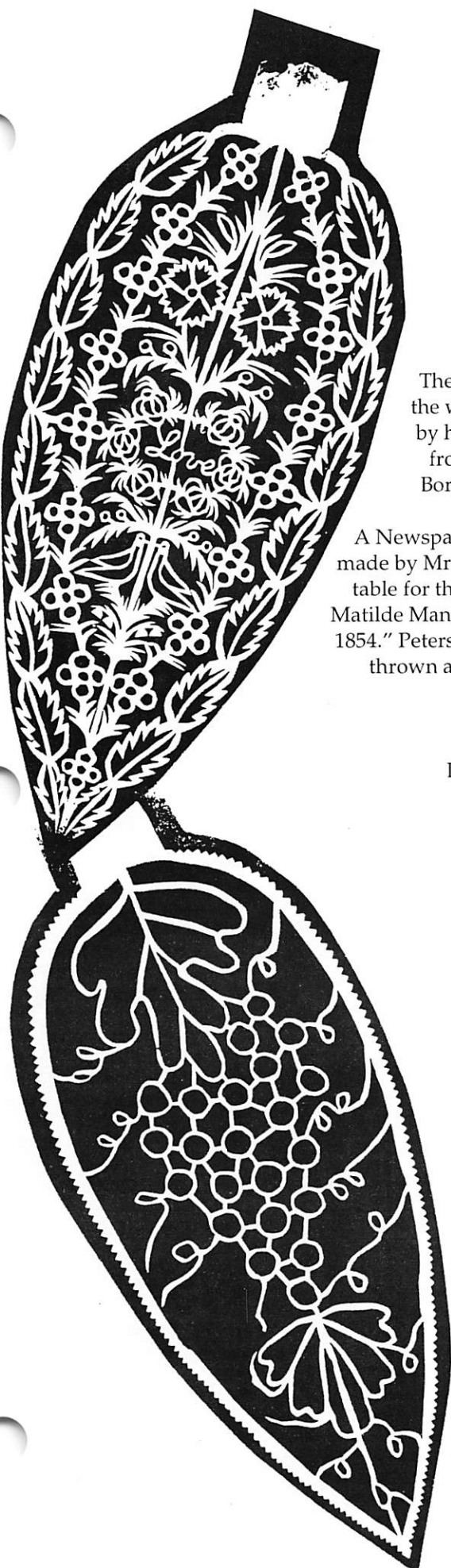
A Newspaper Ad from 1993 read: "These cuts were made by Mrs. George B. Jones and used to decorate the table for the wedding supper of her friend, Caroline Matilde Manson, who married Peter Fitz Cogbill, June 6, 1854." Petersburg, VA. Cutouts 9" x 5.5" (One different, thrown away. One stuck to glass, thrown away.)

"Flames" came from PA—  
bought at flea market in Ohio.  
Dealer said they came from PA,  
Myrna Newgent, Gary, IN. On  
lined paper, four different  
designs.

Reduced 50%

Actual size 9.5" x 4.5"

Submitted by Mrs. Lee Winborne  
On card on back of framed cuttings





# Collection Recollections

by Sandra Abram Stice

"Remembering the Past for Future Generations" is one of my mottos in life.

To do the remembering may be somewhat of a challenge for many of us. After all, it's been said that there are three "go" phases to getting older or maturing, as we like to have it said. The first to go is the memory. . . and I can't remember the other two! And to laugh helps us remain young at heart.

It all started for me at an arts and craft show in Florence, South Carolina where this past Spring I met Helen Heilemann. I was so impressed with her Scherenschnitte cuttings. They were unique and very different from some I had done over the past years. She told me that she belonged to a special group of papercutters called GAP. Since I had never heard of it my enthusiasm grew stronger. Through her kindness in sharing, she sent me the information on the GAP Collection '95. The minute it came I sent it in. I really had something to look forward-and with much anticipated excitement. As the days grew closer, my supplies ready and my bags all packed, I could not wait for it to start. For a first-timer, I really didn't know what to expect.

The drive up to Towson State University was beautiful and my room was really nice. To think, at my age, becoming a campus student even for a few days! It was something I had looked forward to—sort of a milestone since I'd never had the opportunity to live on any college campus while I went. (I was one of those commuters.) I was disappointed that my roommate never showed up, but my next door neighbor was super.

With notebooks, pencils, pens, paper, camera, film and an umbrella, I headed off for

the informal meeting on Friday night to meet the other papercutters from all around the USA. We had a great time talking before dinner at a nice restaurant nearby. (Of course my supplies went back to the room first.)

During the gathering time of the papercutters, I met many more interesting people. The more people I met, the more I learned about their love, their all consuming love for the craft. As they say, to each his/her own. Well, each one's cuttings were very unique. Each distinctive cutter had their own style and type of cutting materials. I guess the one I found most unusual was a cutter I met that evening by the name of Carolyn Guest. To take sheep shears and do cuttings with them absolutely fascinated me. Such big shears for such small cuttings. (That is my next challenge, Wycinanki folk art.)

The choosing of the classes was hard. If the others were like me, they also wanted to take all the classes. (A good idea for next year-round robin sessions. Or a video of each class for all to continually look at and learn by.)

## SESSION I

Saturday started off with a fabulous breakfast. I know we all enjoyed it from the way we walked (waddled) to class.

With back packs, carry-alls, and arms laden with our supplies we headed out for our first session "The History of American Silhouettes" lead by Dr. William Guyton-a former surgeon. (Guess we can see how his skill as a surgeon came in handy for papercutting and silhouettes.) We learned about Edwin Humphries who was an aide to George Washington in the American Revolution, and how there were cutouts, funeral

patches, and silhouettes of the habits, dress and customs of prior lives.

Silhouette was "born" in 1709 and became the Minister of Finance to Madam Pompadore. His resignation in 1759 brought a new idea out. Augustine Edouart changed the name from shadow box pictures to the now known silhouettes. The blackwork soon became a family record. Four methods were used:

1. Hollow Fill which was cut from the center of the paper and mounted on contrasting paper.
2. Cut and Paste the center piece on contrasting paper. Some were done in the fashion, shown below. In 1759-1791, as a graduate of Harvard, Nathan Reid worked on this type of cutting. Isaac Todd in 181 worked in Baltimore and did 2 - 4x cuts, centers out-quadrupled. Hollow cuts were an actual physiograph. The shadow was traced with a stylus and a lighted shadow. The face tracings were done with a stylus. The "camera obscura" style dates back from the Middle Ages and was used by Leonardo DiVinci. It was a black box with a convex lens and it showed upside down. Crude silhouette was done by freehand cutters. No mechanical devices were used. The more famous of the free hand cutters was William King. No dark-rooms were used and the faces were not scraped by such mechanical devices as the stylus.
3. Painted silhouettes were done on with paper, ivory, vellum, mirror, reverse

painting, cement, etc. The "Super Silhouettes" were actually painted on over a black silhouette area so the painted portion was the major one while the black silhouette became the shadow.

The reverse paintings on glass also incorporated the inks with the gold leaf.

4. Printed, Engraved or Etched Silhouettes soon became quite common—although today may be a rare find for collectors. Samuel Medford from Newport, Rhode Island in 1805, used magazine cutouts and different heads were applied to each. In some areas, the gold or silver leaf of display and silhouettes were showing through as the blackwork. The 1780s frames were for sale and the Chapman sales in the 1800s fetched a whopping 50 cents to one dollar. To distinguish some of the Chapmans profiles, as the one in 1802, sealing wax was used as its mark for excellence.

In those days money came by way of different means. These included circulars, newspaper ads, Tavern signs, hats and buckles. Almost as it is today with one exception, the beautiful hand cuttings have been replaced in most areas by the wonderful era of the computer.

I'll take the old fashioned ways doing things—at least that way you would have an original that is truly an artform.

Papercutters came in all shapes and sizes and some even overcame major handicaps. For instance, Miss Mary Ann Honeywell in 1787 in Lemster, New Hampshire was born without hands and only 3 toes on one foot. Did that stop

her? No! She learned how to hold the scissors in her mouth and the paper in her toes and made beautiful cuttings for just 25 cents for adults and 12 cents for children—although she did charge a little extra for the gold embellishing.

Sally Rogers of New York City was another prodigy, she was another armless papercutter. Nothing seemed to stop her either.

Surenders KG Nellis was another armless papercutter in 1836 from Massachusetts. With scissors and her toes, she cut Valentines. Her paperfly box was a true love style for this artist. With pen in toes, she would do pictures of animals, birds and fish. This unique person could also play a viola, cello and sing and dance and do comic sonnet songs.

And we sometimes feel that we cannot do things. Look at all they had to overcome, yet they were highly successful in their field of endeavors.

Look at William Henry Brown, born in 1808 and died 85 years later. At age 22 he became an accurate papercutter with every crisp cutting, he would sometimes embellish with gold or white. He also had a photographic memory. (Now that is a real plus.)

In 1853 Thomas Hutchins did a cutting combining letters and scenes of a city.

The DeWitt Clinton Locomotive cutting featured a fuel car and a passenger car on wood. It is 6 feet in length and is at the New Haven, Connecticut Historical Society. There is also a 25 foot piece that was done of the St. Louis Fire.

Others who played parts in this unique style of cuttings were Bache, Wm., Henry Harrison, Samuel Folwell, and Major John Aundre. The one who has done the most cuttings

seems to be Armond Fidril Edward who in 1789 in Dunkirk, France was there during the Neapolianic Wars. In 1835 he became a well-known silhouette cutter and in 1839 he came to the USA. In 10 years he did 10,000 profiles—all in duplicate with the names, dates, ages, height, weight of each customer. At one time he was shipwrecked, but the cuttings were saved and at the age of 72 he died.

Charles Wilson Peal in his lifetime did thousands of portraits. He did photography tracings which was 8 cents with services for help. He made 8,000 portraits during his first year.

Others we heard about were: Ramsey Peale, American Indian Cuts

Tician

J.H. Witcome, bust curve

Martin Greifin, steeplecutter, papercutter, shoemaker

J. Hanks, master hands

Wm. James Hubbard, freehand cutter.

Even this style of art has it's fakes and forgeries... and many of these had never even seen the real piece. What you don't see is what you don't get.

We can all learn from everyone. By learning, doing, and practicing, we may someday—and maybe not even in this century or lifetime—become as great as these other historical papercutters were, and still are.

to be continued...



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Washington, DC 20071

Dear Ms. Grisco:

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I am writing to request permission to reprint an article and accompanying illustration which I believe appeared in the summer of 1992:

"In Shanghai, Riding the Cutting Edge All the Way to the Top," by Valerie Strauss

I would like to reprint the article in an upcoming issue of "First Cut," the quarterly newsletter of the Guild of American Papercutters.

The Guild of American Papercutters is a non-profit organization. Its 300 members include amateur and professional papercutters. Some cut in traditional styles from Pennsylvania German, Jewish, Polish or Chinese traditions; others explore modern interpretations; some cut portrait silhouettes.

We are united by an interest in papercutting in all its forms, around the world; I am sure that many of our members would be interested in the story of Mr. Wang, and how he became a master papercutter.

We would, of course, include a copyright notice and credit line in the form you stipulate.

I am enclosing for your reference a copy of the Strauss article, as well as several pages from the most recent issue of "First Cut." Please call me at 202 586-4371 if you have any questions.

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*Letter to the Editor (reprinted with permission)*  
*Washington Post Foreign Series*  
by Valerie Strauss

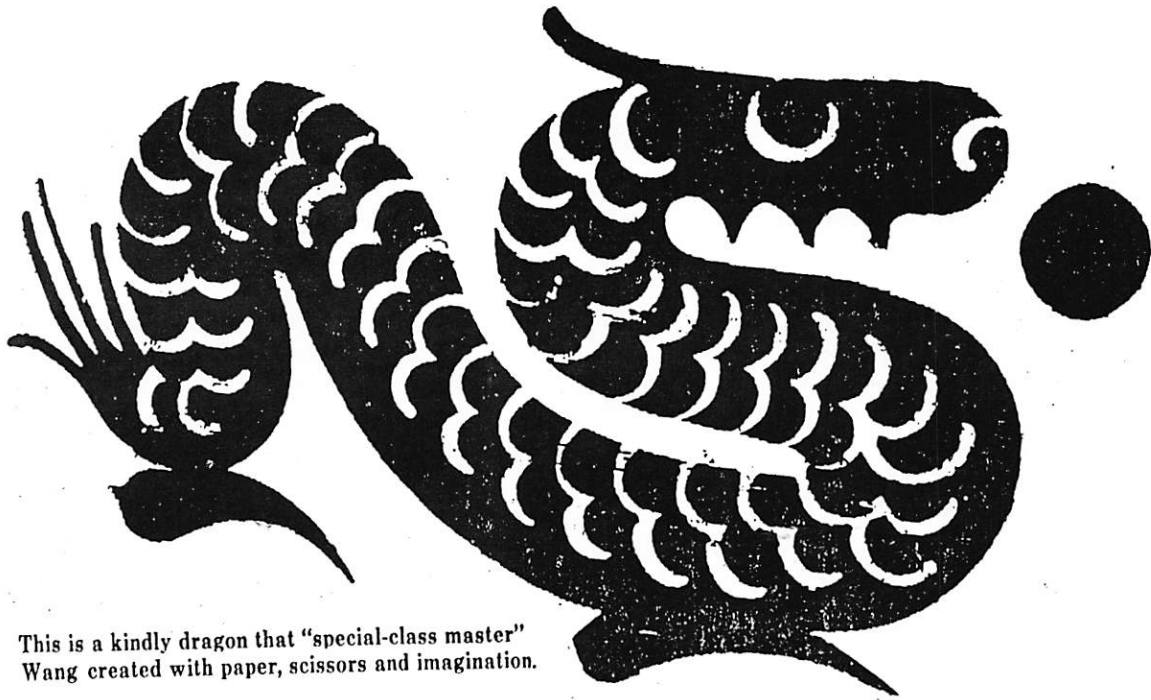
## **"In Shanghai, Riding the Cutting Edge All the Way to the Top"**

Sitting on a stark wooden chair in a cramped corner of an art shop here, Wang Zigan takes a 5 by 4 inch piece of blank red paper in his left hand, an old pair of scissors in his right hand and begins to cut.

"special-class master."

Paper cutting is a folk art involving simple tool and everyday materials—stone, wood and paper. The artform dates back to 105 B.C., when the first true paper is believed to have been invented.

"My mind works like a computer but even better; I have all the forms stored up, but then I can override the computer by using creativity," Wang said one afternoon as he worked at a tiny, cluttered desk in the back of a shop on the grounds of an elaborate stone house built by a Ming Dynasty official in



This is a kindly dragon that "special-class master" Wang created with paper, scissors and imagination.

With the assurance and precision he has developed over six decades, Wang maneuvers the paper between the blades, snipping and turning and slicing until a dragon emerges with a winding, scaly tail and rounded horns and claws.

Then he picks up more paper, this time black, and within minutes, a panda munching on bamboo appears. Then comes a legendary phoenix (a sign of beauty and female power), an ox (representing hard work and devotion) and a crane (for longevity), and, in an hour, Wang has transformed a pile of paper into a silent zoo of paper animals—all without the benefit of designs or drawings to guide him.

Received by Chinese leaders and elected a delegate to the national legislature, Wang, 72, may be China's best known practitioner of the ancient art of paper cutting—in 1986, the government declared him the country's only

1459.

Wang began cutting paper into animals, flowers and other forms at the age of 12 after his poor, rural parents sent him to bustling Shanghai to earn money.

It was common for poor families to send their young children—usually boys—away with a sponsor who would help them secure work as errand runners, cart pullers or servants.

Wang's patron did not have the connections to get him a job in a bank or other institution so Wang decided to enter an uncommon field. In 1932, he began learning from a master cutter and performed on the streets, turning the practice into a profession.

After the Communists took power in 1949, Wang found work in a government handicrafts institute, performing for foreign groups, and his reputation for proficiency

and creativity grew.

Then disaster struck, in the form of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. Like millions of other Chinese, Wang was persecuted as Moa Zedong's Red Guards effectively turned parts of the country into torture chambers and proscribed any non-revolutionary art. Fierce dragons, for example, represented imperial China and were politically incorrect. In a period in which traditional things were officially hated, even cutting paper figures was considered counterrevolutionary.

"They told me I couldn't do it anymore," he said as he threw his head back, laughed and shook his right index finger. "They said it was wrong to cut animals and other objects that I cut. I said it was the right thing to do and I argued with them. They beat me and took me away, and they forced me to clean dishes in restaurants and drive a pedicab."

Still, when he went home, Wang said, he practiced his art, hoping no one would find out. When the Cultural Revolution ended, he returned to his job at the handicrafts institute, working there until retiring in 1987. Since then, he has continued paper cutting, giving the proceeds from his sales to government projects. And he often performs at official functions.

His instruments are simple and few: a pair of scissors with wide handles; colored paper for cutting and white paper on which he fixes the design. Wang takes a traditional Chinese seal bearing his name, dips it in red paint and stamps his final product.

Wang's works are marked by their clarity. On a dragon, he cut 34 separate scales on a three inch tail in just a few minutes; his crane's beak has a super-thin cut that makes the paper appear rigid, a design that took years to perfect.

While his paper figures often are of traditional subjects, Wang tries to vary his designs. "People like tradition but they get tired of it; so you must have something to catch up with the changing times," he said.

In line with this effort, he has given up making imperial dragons, preferring friendly ones instead. His monkeys no longer have a mischievous look; they seem sedate. His pandas—though the real ones can be fierce—are playful. "Art copies from nature, but recreates it," Wang said.

In 1990, during the Asian Games in Beijing, Wang was sent to the capital to perform as a representative of Shanghai, and several leaders stopped by and asked for paper figures. Among them was Zhu Rongji, the reformist vice premier who many analysts say could eventually become a top leader in china.

Zhu, as most people do, asked for the animal associated with the year of his birth. It was a dragon—"a nice one, not a fierce dragon," Wang said.

## Ise-Katagami

(Engraved paper sheet for printing)

This, Ise-katagami, is used for printing textiles for Kimono, Yukata and personalized crest.

This technique was established late in A.D. 780's.

In Edo period, it gained wide popularity throughout Japan.

Also the method was far-advanced under the patrons of Kishyu.

To make the base paper, place three layers of Japanese paper with persimmon tannin, and dried it, smoked it. Repeat this process twice.

It takes almost one month to complete.

The engraving technique requires not only highly skilled craftsmanship but also remarkable fidelity, the beauty and delicacy of the hand movement.

In A.D. 1955, the six skilled craftsmen were recognized as living national treasures by the state office.

Today, Ise-Katagami is gaining wide popularity as the work of art.



Submitted by Yael Hoz.



# Journal of Holland and Germany Trip

by Ed Schaich... The Fifth in a Series

The Netherlands, April 26, 1994

Awake to bright sunshine on the 26th, beaming through our second floor window overlooks the blooming gardens of spring. Sharon and I take a short walk around the quaint neighborhood before breakfast. Kids riding bikes to school with mothers peddling along with them carrying babies in rear baskets. Sharon hails postman on bike to mail her stack of postcards.

Our next stop is Oreden, Germany to see Herr Gebing's amazing collection of, perhaps, 15,000 cuttings. We are totally overwhelmed as he begins to pull them out from his catalogued listing. He swings large panels that open to 12-feet with cuttings on each side. More are stored in vertical racks and cabinets consuming his basement. He maintains quite an alarm system.

We attend Sothy and Christie auctions to purchase 17th and 18th century pieces. Most amazing, and there are many, is one of a wedding announcement surrounded by leaves and vines-dated 1850. I am introduced to the outstanding cuttings from the Swiss artist, Uli Hofer, and it blows my mind at how precise and intricate his work truly is-I am overwhelmed with admiration. I even go so far as saying how incredible they are over any work that I have as yet seen, or will ever see again.

Herr Gebing treats us to a steak lunch, again with spargles (asparagus) and plenty of good wine. We agree that he will most likely be the best contact to generate a German Guild to be brought into a world tour. He was so gracious, and so patient in translating his exuberant German. We practically went away dizzy from all the diverse styles of paper cuttings we had been privileged to look so closely upon. What could possibly lay ahead of us on this high road to discovery-this enlightening pathway of creativity?

Need we have gone much beyond. In Warburg, Germany the combined talents of the Holtgreave family-80 year old Heinrich and his son, Alfons-suddenly brought us into the private lives of these two generations of artists. We had come to see the contemporary cut paper works of the noted illustrator, Alfons, but were first treated to his father's marvelous portraits, beautiful watercolors, and outstanding pages of calligraphy.

A small town nestled in the land of Beethoven, Mozart, and Goethe-where on a pleasantly warm spring night we all exchanged thoughts on art, sipping Warburg lager as the Holtgreave's spun some brief history of their hometown. Soon the medieval town hall bustled with chatter, and I thought about knights and rogues who once tipped their own froth-filled steins in the soft glow of candlelight.

Heinrich's enduring smile beamed across the table while his sons spoke proudly of him. They related their travels, and how they especially liked Italy and its lovely Tuscany region. The one son, Christian, collects puppets and has quite an array of them hanging in his studio on the third floor of their huge 13th century home.

During World War II they put up a Jewish family who were eventually found by the Gestapo and dragged into the streets. Warburg was spared much of the Allied bombing, so the Holtgreave's managed to have as many as 42 people living together at one time in their four-story home.

On the morning of April 27th, following Mass in the church that was built in 1925, Christian took us on a short tour of the town. We returned for lunch prepared by Alfons, before finally seeing his studio and getting the chance to watch him do one of his cuttings. He started with a medium blue board and rubbed a clear shoe polish onto its surface. He then asked Dick what he'd like to see designed. Dick asked for a bull-and within minutes, Alfons had a stylized bull being pushed by a man-and without ever doing a pencil layout. He merely started cutting with an exacto knife, then went on to do another cutting for Sharon and me of a biker.

It was one of the most surprising demonstrations we had ever seen, and one in which we will surely never forget. He went on to show us the many featured write-ups that have been done about him and his work, as well as the commercial usage of his exciting designs. The international magazine, *Graphis*, did a special article on him in 1989 and had an array of his graphic cuttings on the cover of that issue. His whole studio is an expression of his talent, along with the books and magazines that he has collected over many years. And, for me, it was the high-point on our itinerary of artists to meet. Upon leaving their home, Heinrich generously handed us four bottles of wine taken from his stock of nearly 1,200 from which they annually gather from the vineyards they own in southern Germany. We follow Alfons and his wife, Anita, to the small town of Arolsen to have a final stroll through Schloss and its surrounding gardens. We invite him to call on us the next time he gets to New York.



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**OCTOBER 10**

**NEXT MEETING**

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1996**

**ANTIQUÉ PAPERCUT**

**VALENTINES**

**BY NANCY ROSIN**

**OFFICER MEETING 1:00 PM**

**BUSINESS MEETING 1:30 PM**

**PROGRAM 2:00 PM**

**Winter GAP Meeting**

**February 25, 1996**

**1:00 PM**

Directions to the Home of Nancy and Henry Rosin  
1059 Dogwood Trail, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

**From the South:**

Take Garden State Parkway to the first exit after the Saddle Brook tollbooth (Exit #160). At the light at the end of the exit ramp, turn left, then continue up over the highway, making a clover-leaf, turning right onto Route 4 West. Stay on Route 4 and drive to the right side, follow signs for Route 208 North-Oakland. Proceed on 208 for eight miles, to the third exit in Franklin Lakes "Colonial Road." Turn left at end of ramp and follow Colonial Road up hill 1.4 miles. Dogwood Trail is a left turn and 1059, marked only on a tree, is the Tudor house on the left, the first house after the corner. There is a circular drive or you may park on the street.

From the NJ Turnpike, exit at Route 3 West, The Meadowlands (Exit 16 W) and follow 3 West to 17 North to 4 West, and follow above directions.

Route 287 now has an exit in Franklin Lakes, but I don't know the number... you can exit from 287 North or 287 South, at Franklin Lakes, and then to Route 208 South.

The first exit is Franklin Lakes and you turn right at the ramp exit, go a short distance, and at the stop sign turn left, up the Colonial Road hill as described earlier, then go from there.

Phone number, if there is a problem, or if further directions are needed, call 201-337-5834.



GAP Harris  
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Annnville, PA 17003