

# FirstCut

*Communication for the Members of the Guild of American Papercutters*

Volume ~~27~~  
28

Number 2

Spring 2013



*A Spring Tree* © Ursula Kirchner

## Please submit artwork, photos, and articles to:

Sue Throckmorton ([throckpl@gmail.com](mailto:throckpl@gmail.com))  
or Kathy Reed ([rmreed@shol.com](mailto:rmreed@shol.com))

Save photos at 300 dpi and do NOT embed them in Word files - save them separately from the text. Save your text files without extra returns at line breaks and name your article as you wish the title to appear.

Firstcut reserves the right to edit articles where necessary.

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## Paper Angels

Members and institutions contributing financial support to the Guild of American Papercutters are welcomed blessings - Paper Angels



You can be a Paper Angel by making a tax-exempt donation beyond your membership, a celebration contribution in someone else's name for a birthday or anniversary, or a memorial gift in a loved ones name. Mail a check or money order in any amount payable to

Guild of American Papercutters  
Paper Angels program  
P.O. Box 384  
214 South Harrison Ave.  
Somerset, PA 015501

Angel © 2009 Sukey Harris

**The Guild of American Papercutters** is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization dedicated to original papercutting as an art form in all its historical and contemporary styles. The Guild of American Papercutters exercises no artistic or business control over its members other than the encouragement of personal artistic growth and ethical business practices. Membership is welcomed - the Guild has no jury requirements and conducts no contests. For registration, contact Patty Kile at Guild of American Papercutters, P.O. Box 384, 214 South Harrison Avenue, Somerset, PA 15501 or email Patty at [Patty.Kile@yahoo.com](mailto:Patty.Kile@yahoo.com). Dues for new members which includes the New Member packet: Individuals \$36 US (\$46 international) and Family \$46 US (\$56 international). Renewal memberships are \$30 US (\$40 international) and Family \$40 (\$50 international). We accept credit card payments for members through the secure online service PayPal indicated on the Guild's website for a small additional charge of \$2: [www.papercutters.org](http://www.papercutters.org). All payments are made in American dollars.

**Current Executive Committee:** President - Carolyn Guest (2016); Vice President and VP Exhibits - Andrea Martin (2014); Treasurer - Dave Jenkins (2016) Secretary - Linda Peck (2013); Co - VP Membership - Patty Kile (2013); Co - VP Membership and Technical Advisor - David Dorfmueller; VP Museum - Kathy Trexel Reed (2014); Past President - Marie-Helene Grabman (2014); and Editor - FirstCut

**Current Board of Directors:** Dorothy Buchanan (2014); Nancy Shelly (2014); Trudy Kauffman (2013); Sue Throckmorton (2014); Linda Emmerson (2015); Richard Schuchman (2015); Christine Smith (2015); Charlotte Grabman (2016); Dena Levie (2016); Florine Strimel, *Historian Ad Hoc*

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#### GAP National Museum

P.O. Box 384, 214 South Harrison Ave.  
Somerset, PA 015501

Dear Fellow GAP members,

I hope our spring FirstCut finds you well and that everyone has come through the winter with lots of new papercuttings to help celebrate 25 years of The Guild of American Papercutters.

Your Board of Directors has been very busy with three major works; refining our FirstCut publication, redesigning the website, and a self examination of who we are and where are we going.

Sue Throckmorton continues to collect FirstCut content. We continue to work on rounding out our rough transition challenges. Please remember the content of FirstCut is a reflection of the articles or topics you submit or suggest. We are hoping by going back to shipping first class and not folding to the address concerns of the condition of the last mailing. This will give us a real cost comparison for budgeting purposes.

The website team has been working with a webmaster to redesign our website, to make it more current and user - friendly. We look forward to seeing major changes soon.

The third area of discussion has been a result of dwindling memberships at a time of renewed interest in the art of papercutting. We are a member-run organization. As we celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> year, it is time to revisit our goals, purpose and use of resources. Please feel free to share with me your thoughts and how you can contribute to this process.

It gives me is of great pleasure to see the increase in participation in our latest museum show "Inspired by Words". Thank you to everyone who submitted work and to Kathy and her Museum team for pulling everything together.

Collection 2014 is in need of volunteers. Please email me if you would like to help with this or if you have suggestions for location and themes.

I look forward to getting to know more of you over the coming months and hope you will be able to join us for our August 10th and October 26th meetings.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Guest

**Front Cover** - *A Spring Tree* by Ursula Kirchner

**Back Cover** - *Cows on Quilt* by Kathy Trexel Reed

#### FIRST CUT DEADLINES:

Winter - December 31

Spring - April 30

Summer - August 31

Autumn - (GAP Annual 2013); September 30



#### NEEDS YOU!

We need your:

- Letters, opinions, suggestions, exhibit announcements, etc.
- Helpful and/or new ideas about tools, papers, methods, etc.
- Anecdotes from your experience
  - Profiles about YOU & your papercutting
  - Book reviews
  - Unusual or creative links to the Internet
- News about Twitter & FaceBook contributions
- "How To....." articles
- Articles about the business of papercutting
- Ethnic and historical subjects
- Cartoons and contests
- Any other articles, photos and pictures relative to the season or to your special interest! If we don't publish it in the coming issue, WE WILL PUBLISH IT in a forthcoming issue.



*Whispering* © Alisa Lahti

#### MEMBER HOMEWORK:

**Summer:** 25th Anniversary of GAP- "Looking Back and Going Forward" (anecdotes, memories, photos relative to what we've accomplished in the last 25 years and where we would like to go in the future):

**Autumn:** GAP Annual 2013 - Theme: NATURE; can be in color or b&w. See page 22

**Winter:** Papercuts inspired by or containing words, alphabets, calligraphy, letters & monograms; articles about use of words in Jewish, Chinese & Pennsylvania Dutch papercuts, papercuts that did or didn't make the "Inspired by Words" GAP Museum Exhibit in time, making all kinds of books (tunnel, pop-up, altered, etc.).

# NEWS and VIEWS

**Dorothy Buchanan** reports from Pittsburgh: We held a meeting of papercutters in Pittsburgh on Wed., March 30, 2013, from 10:30-12:30, at the Society for Contemporary Crafts.

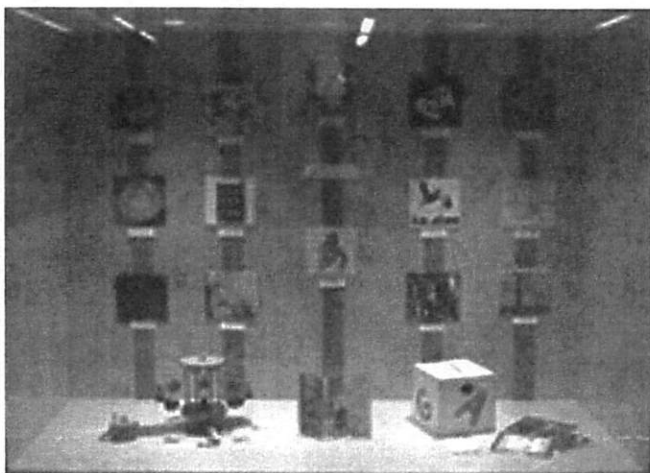
While waiting for everyone to arrive, we packed the Toy Box Exhibit. Kathy will be taking it to the Museum. Check out the photograph of the exhibit. If anyone would like to show this exhibit in your local area, please contact Andrea Martin.

The meeting began at 11:00 and was attended by Sue Neff, Gene Richards, Kathy Reed, Kathryn Carr and Dorothy Buchanan.

Dorothy gave a history of the group that has been meeting several times a year since 2007. Over the years we have been meeting in her home for either a structured activity or just sharing. Now that we have more papercutters in the area, it is time to regroup. Kathy shared with us concerns and activities of the Guild. She shared the new goals that came from the information on the survey and the challenge of building a GAP brand. She also brought us up to date about all the personnel change for FirstCut.

The next meeting is planned for Sat., Oct.26, 2013, at Laurel Arts in Somerset, PA. Watch for more information and announcements in the next FirstCut.

At this time we plan to meet a couple times a year to network and share our own work. As other events become available in the community or the Guild, information will be sent by e-mail. If you want to be added to the contact list, please let me know.



*The Toy Box Exhibit*

We received greetings from **Ursula Kirchner** in Germany, who sends her love. She is now 82 and isn't giving up. She was pleased to see "GAP is struggling on very lively." She sent us our cover image: "A Spring Tree"



*Ketubah © Dena Levie*

## Dena's "I Spy" Ketubah

Earlier this year I had the privilege of making a *ketubah*, Jewish marriage document for Tess and Evan. They found me through their party planner. I was excited to meet them and make their *ketubah* because they had very interesting ideas they wanted to incorporate. I met them one Sunday afternoon at my house and the ideas started to roll. The theme of the wedding was a book titled "A Winter's Tale". Around the Aramaic text, which I got from their Rabbi, is a quote from the book. "For what can be imagined more beautiful than the sight of a perfectly just city rejoicing in justice alone?"

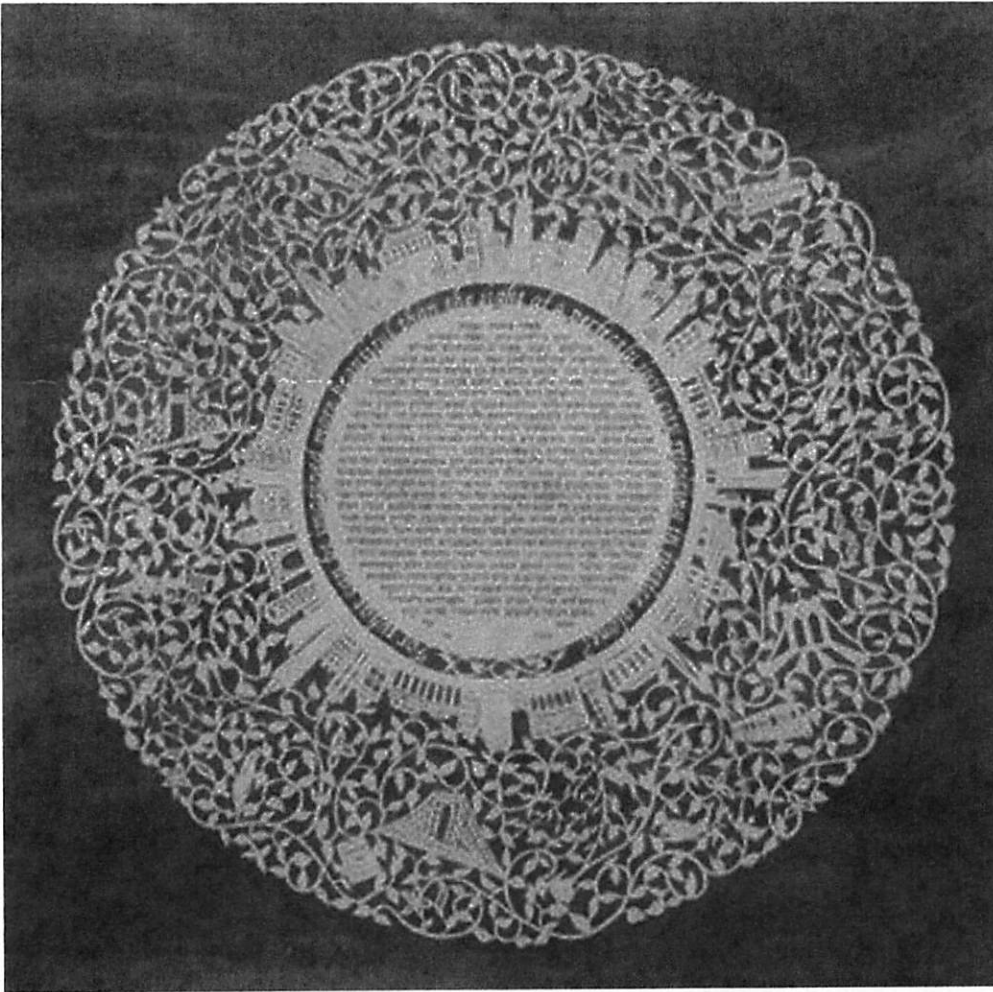
Around that is the NY Skyline. Tess named 20 different buildings she wanted in the skyline. Google Images was helpful for that! Some of the buildings included are: Grand Central Station, Old Penn Station, Empire State Building, Chrysler Building, Woolworth Building, Freedom Tower, Statue of Liberty, Guggenheim, Museum, Lincoln Center, NY Historical Society, The Hearst Building, The Pierre Hotel, Citigroup Center, The New Yorker Hotel, Met Life Building, Fraunces Tavern. I am sure I am missing a few more.

Within the vines around the skyline they wanted 4 bridges in it - George Washington, Queensboro, Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. They also wanted different trains - subways, subway token, centurion, Yankee Symbol, Bleeker Street sign, double helix, Israel Map, Manhattan Map, whale, starfish, anchor, parrots, willow leaves, flute, musical notes, computer cables and more....

It took hours to design and even more to cut but I enjoyed (almost) every minute of it. They were a lovely couple to work with. It was interesting making an ancient document with a modern twist.

**Dena Levie** is a papercut artist living in Teaneck, NJ. She has been cutting paper for 18 years and has made over 1100 pieces. She works by commission only. Visit her website [www.judaicpapercuts.com](http://www.judaicpapercuts.com) or email her at [dmlevie@aol.com](mailto:dmlevie@aol.com)





*Ketubah* © Dena Levie

## Can you spy:

*The Empire State Building?*

*The Chrysler Building?*

*The George Washington Bridge?*

*The Brooklyn Bridge?*

*The Yankee symbol?*

*Musical Notes?*

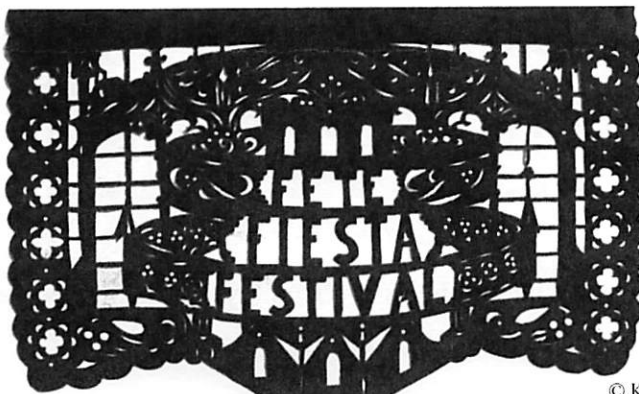
*What else can you find?*

**Kathleen Trenchard** describes her latest work as "some of my cut paper (papel picado) tissue banner designs, which were recently commissioned and installed at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio. These five works in bright colors, are strung above the new exhibit: *Fiesta, Fete, Festival*. They are inspired by some of the stage design and costume art works in the Tobin collection and on view in the new exhibit. It's all about Fiesta, which is coming in April. The exhibit ends June 9th. I also did a papel picado demo in the exhibit for their family day."

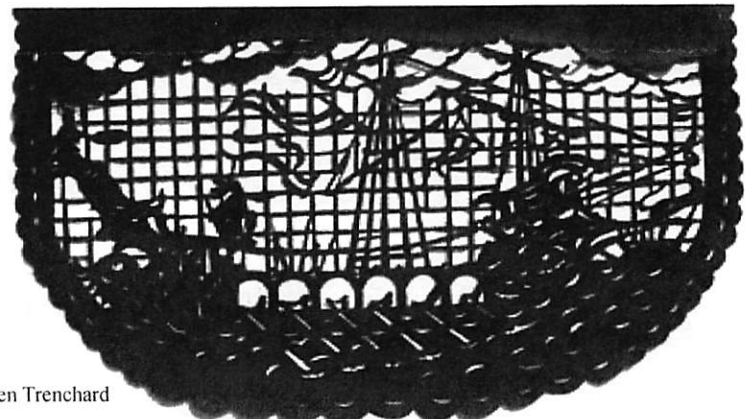
The museum's description of the exhibition reads:

"Scene and costume designs from the Tobin Collection reveal that San Antonio's own Fiesta—from NIOSA and Charreada to the Coronation of the Queen of the Order of the Alamo and Cornyation—belongs to a rich tradition of popular and court celebrations."

*"Photography courtesy of the McNay Art Museum."*



© Kathleen Trenchard



**Sr. Clarice Steinfeldt** writes:

I have a few comments from my experience that I would like to share or mention which might be helpful, at least to beginner cutters, re the article in Winter 2013 FirstCut: **The Business Side of Papercutting: What Happens After the Last Cut** by Heather Clements.

**MY EXPERIENCE:** I started paper cutting in January, 1994 and in July of 1995, and I wondered what I had done for the past year and one half, so I decided to keep a written record of my paper cutting.

These are my most recent entries:

Number	Name	Format	Size	Price	Date made	Date sold
#2119	Medicine Lake	Blk Frame	11" x 14"	\$150	12/15/12	12/17/12
#2120	To Life	Blk Frame	10" 10"	\$140	02/18/12	

1) I have made a copy of EACH papercut and have 100 pages in each book, so this present loose-leaf note book is VOLUME 21.

2) All pictures which aren't exhibited on the walls, I have in plastic small bubble wrap with the picture's number.

a. These pictures are filed in an upright file with the latest cutting in the front of the drawer, etc.

- the top drawer has holiday pictures ---

Christmas, Easter, etc.

- the next two drawers contain pictures with the newest picture in front

b. I have 3 additional storage areas:

- a trunk for bigger pieces

- a box for oversized pictures

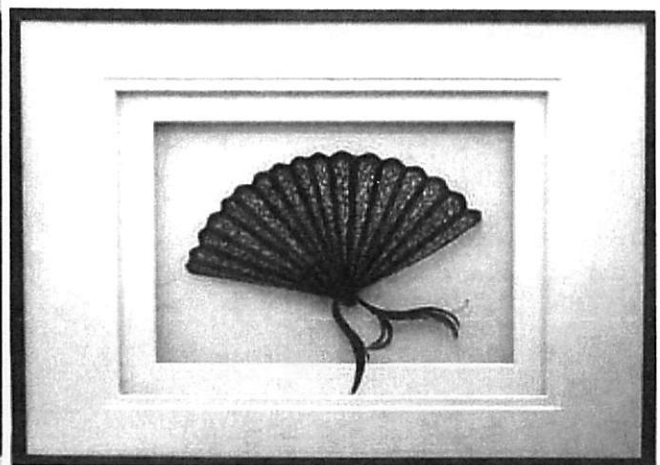
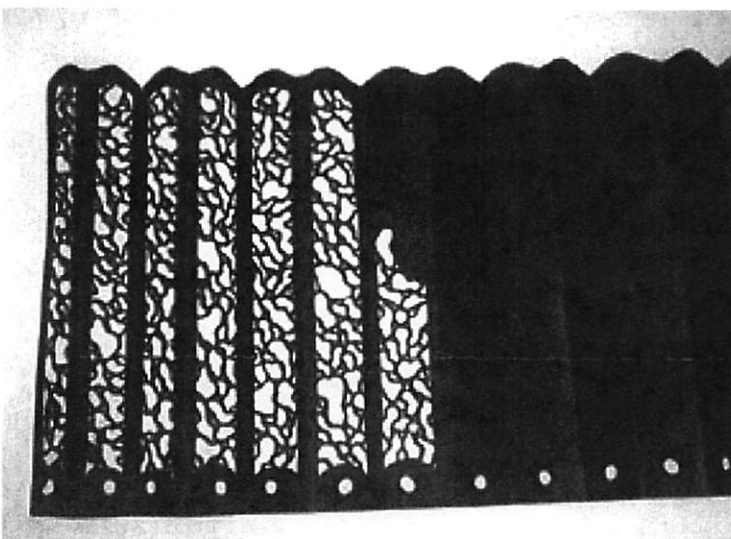
- a box for Polish papercuts

3) Just before Christmas, I began creating a computer listing of the holiday pictures in which I have a slide show of the pictures, just in case someone would like to look at those pictures. I hope to do this with the other pictures in the files and storage places.

4) I have also cross-referenced my pictures by "theme" or "topic." This enables me to find pictures of certain themes and so that I can find a picture with a certain theme if it isn't exhibited.

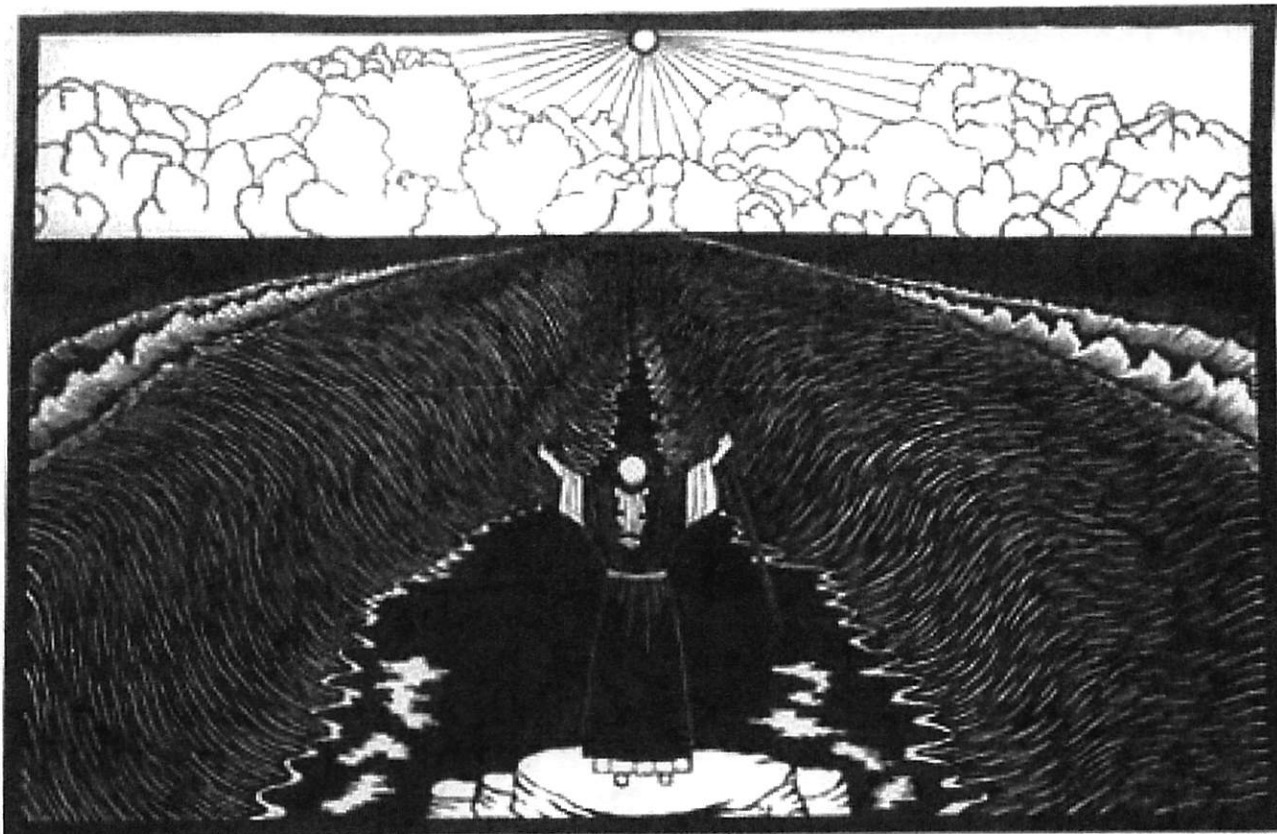


© Sr. Clarice Steinfeldt

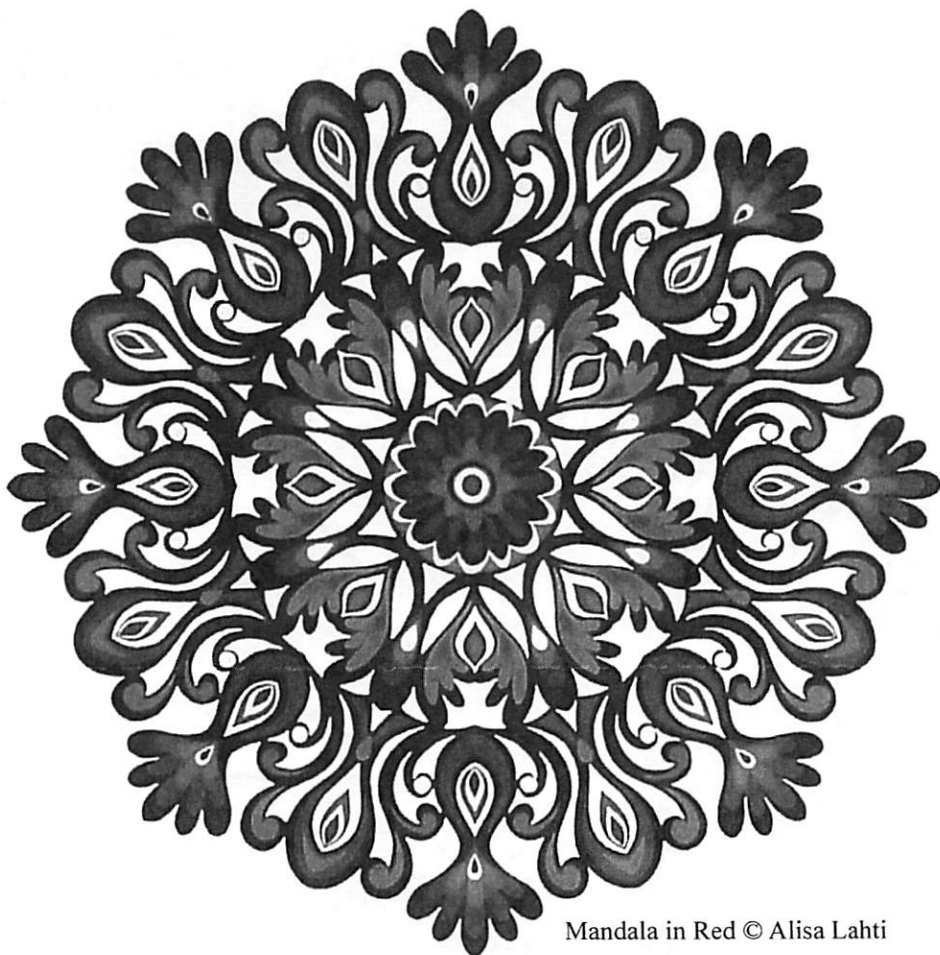


©Becky Crane

**Becky Crane** sent us these pictures of her fan in progress and the finished fan. Thank you, Becky, for sharing.



*Untitled © William Oellers*



*Mandala in Red © Alisa Lahti*

**Alisa Lahti** first posted her multicolored, multi-layered paper *gwiazda* - star on the GAP Facebook page.

Everyone loved it! To see work by Alisa and other paper artists in color, please visit the GAP Facebook photos.

## You Cut Those With What?

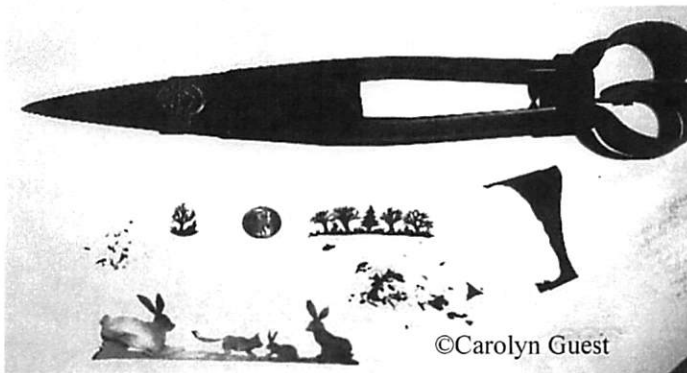
by Carolyn Guest

"Hey, come look at this, this lady cuts those little things with those big shears!" "You're telling me you cut those tiny cuts with those big things, no way...." "Why onion clippers?" "Can't you find smaller/bigger shears to cut with...."

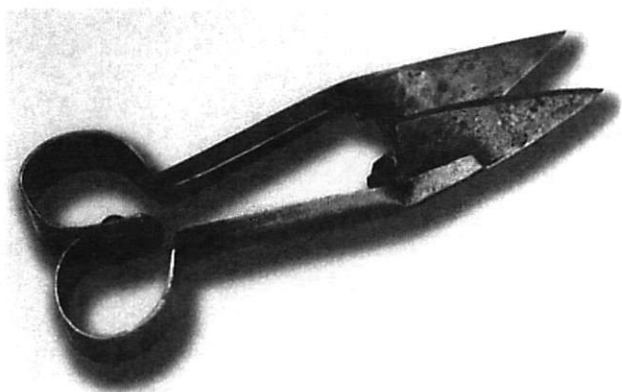
These are a few of the many comments and responses I have had over the years of using sheep shearing shears as my primary cutting tool. My favorite came from a former sheep farmer "If I still had my farm, I'd find you a smaller pair of sheep shears." I've even been called to see how much I charge for shearing sheep and told I was a liar.

Almost 30 years ago I got a pair of sheep shears to set on the table when I sold my first papercut note cards (cut with 9" kitchen scissors). I wanted to show people what the ladies in Poland use. Once I started using them, I decided to see what I could do with them in appreciation for all the years politics and economics restricted cutting tool choices in Central Europe. Despite those restrictions, styles, techniques and traditions were established. I'm still using my first pair, 13.5" shears made of quality English steel. I use my Swiss scissors for cutting silhouettes and making holes in the paper to get the tips of the sheep shears in. I'll probably continue to use them as long as my arthritic hands and poor eye sight allow.

Carolyn Guest, lives in the rural "Northeast Kingdom" of Vermont. Sheep shears fit perfectly into a heritage of "Eat it up, wear it out, make it do or do without".







Polish sheep shears being used to cut *wycinanki*.



A Polish *kodra*, a layered papercut showing sheep shearing.

# MEET AMY BIRNBAUM.....

HER CHILDREN....

AND HER SHEEP

My adventure in the world of papercutting began in my college days. While studying Interior Design, I took an art class that included one assignment that required creating a papercut from a previous drawing. There were really no directions or hints on how to create this papercut. I bought a piece of black construction paper and used my x-acto knife that I used for creating my design boards. I succeeded in making a decent and interesting paper cut of a nude model pose I had previously drawn (that was the requirement!). It was enough to spark an interest in making more papercuts. As a broke college student I found papercuts to be an inexpensive unique gift to make for others. Unfortunately, I chose to make my next two out of a very thick art paper that looked nice - but really killed the fingers!

I graduated from college, got married and started my career in interior design along with a family. Fourteen years later my family had grown to five children with one on the way, and several years earlier we had moved to the country and started raising Icelandic sheep. The housing and construction market crashed and I found myself without a job. In all this time papercutting had become a forgotten part of my life.



*Mama's Joy* © Amy Birnbaum

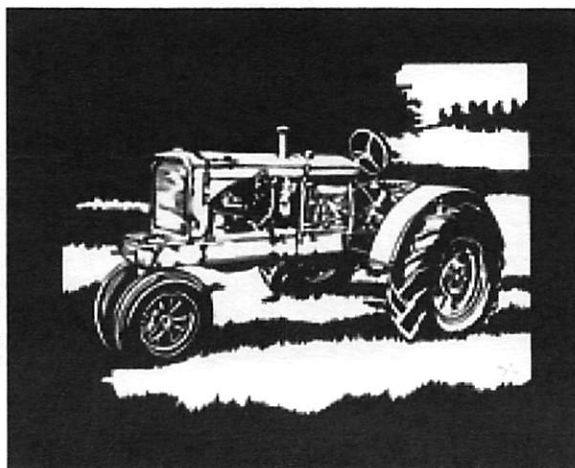
This changed one day shortly after my youngest daughter was born in 2010. Two of my older children were looking through my college art portfolio and discovered the lone papercut in amongst all the charcoal, pencil and pen drawings. They were fascinated, and my husband thought it was a unique form of art that you don't see a lot of. This intrigued me, and I tried my hand at making one again the very next day. We had lots of cute pictures of our sheep and their lambs – so I made a pattern based on one and pulled out the paper and x-acto knife I bought in college (yes I still had them). I successfully cut a paper cut of a lamb peeking out from behind its mother – and I was hooked. But I had to find new materials – there was no way I was going to get very far with painfully numb fingers! I found GAP and many of its talented members' websites which gave me a wealth of information and lots of ideas. I started experimenting with mien tints paper, cardstock and the painted silhouette paper. I also upgraded to more ergonomic knife handles.

Much of the subject matter in my paper cuts are nearby – sheep and children. One of my favorites is of our old ram named Starsky and my daughter Olivia looking through the fence at each other. This one is called “The Greeting” and was designed for a sheep festival catalog cover contest. It didn't win but was included inside the catalog. For years I have watched lambs frolic on the backs of their mothers and my husband captured one in a photo. This became “Mama's Joy.” There are others: a standing lamb, a majestic ram silhouette, a ram's head that I use for my logo, and a couple where lambs are being fed by some of my children. This expanded to other subject matter related to farming when a friend requested a papercut of her father-in-law's old tractor. I was honored to have one of these included in GAPs' German Papercut Exhibit last summer.

The subject matter for my paper cuts has become more varied and includes other wildlife mainly, people, other machines, and some religious subjects. My style of art has always been to portray my subject matter in a realistic manner – trying to get the detail but still remembering that sometimes “less is more” – that it can be a good thing to let our brains fill in the gaps. I continue to have way more ideas than time to create the papercuts. My baby is now a very busy two year old! This has slowed me down, but I don't see another 14 year void in my future! I sell my artwork through my online shop on Etsy: [www.etsy.com/shop/PaperCutReflections](http://www.etsy.com/shop/PaperCutReflections)



*The Greeting* © Amy Birnbaum



*The Old Tractor* © Amy Birnbaum

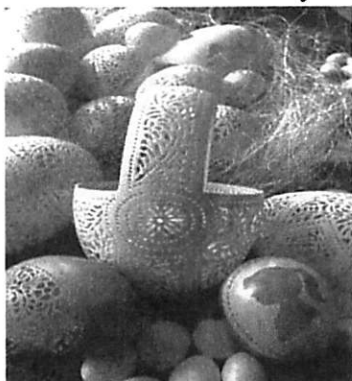
## EGGS AND PAPER CUTTING: A CONNECTION?

By Sue Throckmorton

A copy of the April issue of **O Magazine** was passed on to me, and I found there an interesting article entitled "Good Eggs, " (by Stephanie Palumbo on p. 40) with lovely pictures of beautifully carved eggs by Beth Ann Magnuson. I was interested as I also have made Polish/Ukrainian eggs with dye and bees wax.

Beth Ann's name rang a bell, and for some reason I checked the GAP membership list. There she was! What could possibly be the connection between her exquisite eggs and papercutting? I checked her website and looked at an interesting video of her work.

More than 20 years ago Beth Ann moved from NYC to Bishop Hill, IL, where she was inspired herself by the beautiful surrounding farm fields and her mother's and grandmother's wisdom imparted to her to recognize the beauty in everything around her, even in the humblest of objects. The potential of one of these objects ...eggs, was revealed to her by a local "farm gal," and she set about "doodling" as she calls her artistic skills. Her eggs are cut with a high speed dental drill and based on designs from handmade Victorian lace and 19th century floral wallpaper as well as her own original designs for customized orders. To her it may be a "doodler's art," but it is so much more as you can see here.



© Beth Ann Magnuson

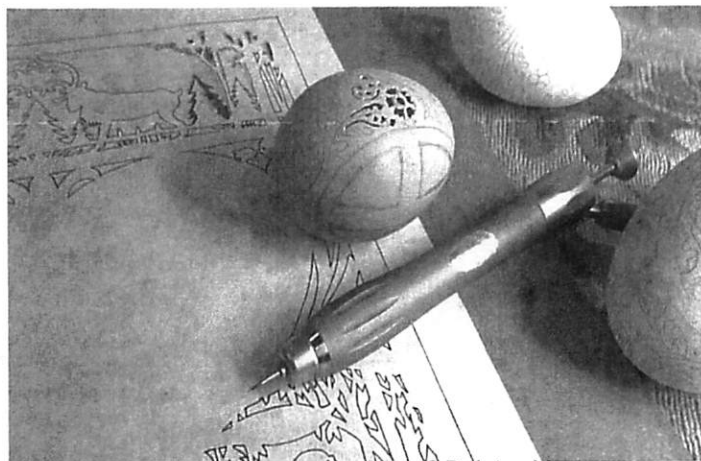
But what was the connection with GAP? In her website, I discovered that she was also a silhouette artist. She uses a camera obscura (a simple box camera) to record the likeness of her sitter which she feels allows her to draw a truer and more accurate profile of her subject. Whether in person or by photo, she cuts an "instant heirloom" from her sketch and then mounts it on the finest French silhouette paper. So she is a multi-talented artist (she also creates everlasting floral arrangements and etched and marbled eggs as well!), but was there a further connection between her egg art and

papercutting? In a lively exchange of emails with her, she finally made this admission:

"I have thought about sharing a little secret of mine with GAP members for some time but never got around to it. I know papercutting "purists" that only use scissors, some who only use blades, and a few who use both. Perhaps my techniques would be scowled upon, but I use whatever I can. In fact, few years ago, it occurred to me to employ my egg carving drill to cut fine detailed designs in paper. It's fast, precise, and allows me to cut multiple sheets at once. I am able to create perfect positive negative images and hollowcut silhouettes in this way!" So there it was : the "connection!" I told Beth Ann that publication in Oprah Winfrey's magazine had probably "made her for life," and she replied that it certainly was a "game changer" for her, and that she was doing her best "to respond to the tremendous wave of requests brought by the exposure...." She has booked orders until Easter 2015!!!

Check out why this is so at Beth Ann's website : [www.windycornerfarm.com](http://www.windycornerfarm.com)

Perhaps you'll be inspired to make similarly detailed egg papercuttings!



© Beth Ann Magnuson



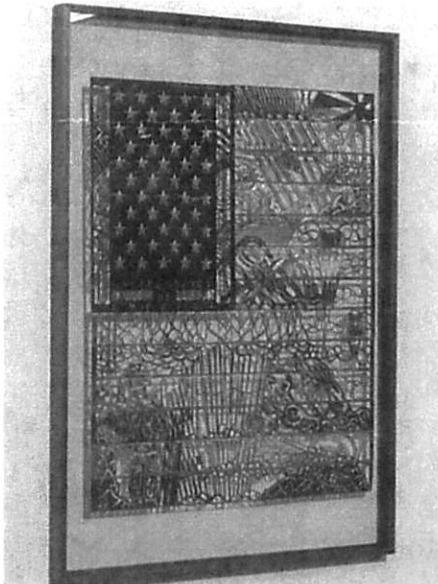
©Beth Ann Magnuson



# Papercutter Profile

Meet and greet one of new members, Dave Rogers.

Whether it is working in his studio, collaborating on public projects or curating art exhibits, Dave Rogers spends his days engulfed in his craft, often introducing himself as an artoholic. "To me an artoholic is someone that from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed, if you sleep, that can't think of anything other than making art." It wasn't always that way, Dave grew up in New York to what he refers to as an artless family, not very supportive of his abilities and believing that he would never make a living doing it. He spent his youth hanging out in Chelsea and the Lower East Side watching other artists create their works and copying what they were doing.



*200 Years in the Making* © Dave Rogers

As a way to express his experience as a soldier in what his mentor Mac Adams would call, "beautiful two and three dimensional works that talk about time and the fragility of life." After graduating from Old Westbury, Dave moved to China to teach art and study the art of papercutting.

During his time in China he sold his paintings to support his studio while teaching himself papercutting. He would often have to spy on Chinese papercutting artists because of their unwillingness to teach him. "When I was at the papercutting school I wanted so badly to learn the art so I asked the teacher if there were some books or videos I could buy to learn the Chinese way of papercutting. She replied with, "No, you must come here to study for three years." Not wanting to study for that long, I asked whether I could buy the tools to make papercuttings? "No, our students make their own and to learn you must come study for three years." So I finally agreed and asked to come there and study? "No, you are not Chinese!" I knew then the only way I was going to learn was by moving to China and watching much like I did when I was younger."

During his time in China Dave was featured in many Chinese newspapers, magazines and even on television for his work as an artist. He won several awards for his work and recognition from a professor of art from the Chinese government, the Disabled Peoples Union of China, the Museum of Art in Jiangmen, the Chinese Oil Painting Association and the Chinese Art Association. He also became the first foreigner to exhibit his work in the Wuyi area of China, and the only foreign artist to become a member of the Chinese Art Association and the Chinese Oil Painting Association in Jiangmen, China.



*Samurai* © Dave Rogers



Dave's style of papercutting is different from many others in the fact that it is not merely one style but a combination of Eastern and Western forms of papercutting. "I wanted to add the style of Western POP to my work while keeping the traditions of the Eastern papercutting style. To do that it was important that I not only searched for new ways to frame the work, but that I also kept true to the idea of what the Chinese refer to as balance or 中 in their work."

"Much of my work is made with aluminum or mirror paper to give a reflective quality and often is designed in a POP culture kind of way to give it appeal, but I also keep the pieces flat, and ensure that I follow the rules of balance to respect the ideas of Chinese papercutting. It is this and the way that I frame them in shadow box frames to give them the illusion of dimension that make my work different than most papercutting artists." For Dave this would not be an easy thing to accomplish; he would spend seven years in China perfecting his technique of paper cutting. During his first solo paper cutting exhibit in China, many papercutting artists from the area would come out to the exhibit and criticize what he had done to their ancient art.

Since his return to New York, Dave has been featured in a couple of newspapers and on television and has won the O'Malley Grant and a couple of local awards for his work in papercutting. Today Dave continues to make these unique forms of papercutting, always looking for ways to reach beyond the ideas of the art while keeping the traditional appeal. In the last year he started working with a group called Combat Paper, a group that makes paper out of old soldiers' uniforms as a way to express more about his experience in the military. He has also developed a new form of paper cutting which involves cutting paper with a plasma torch.



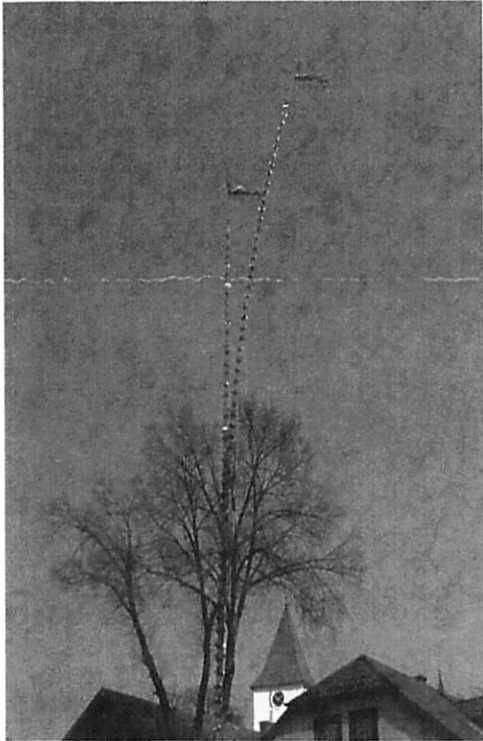
Dave at his exhibit "Stars and Stripes"



Dave at his first solo exhibit in China

# Paper Palms; Paper Heaven!

by Sue Throckmorton



Paper palms towering above the trees

Two years ago GAP members Marie-Helene Grabman and Joyce Yarbrough came to visit me in Poland, and for two weeks we followed a "paper trail" around Poland.

Unlike this time of year which is cold and still snowy, on a warm and sunny Palm Sunday then, we were on our way to Lyse, a small village in the heavily forested Kurpie area north of Warsaw. This region is known for its special palms, and each year the Lyse villagers stage a vibrant, colorful festival on Palm Sunday.

Years ago the people of Kurpie made their palms of forest plants which had remained green during the winter, such as club moss, boxwood, yew and juniper. The vegetation was twisted around stout poles or branches of pine or hazel in order to carry them to church. This meant that the palms were unusually tall, ranging anywhere from 3 to more than 30 feet. Since the sun had not yet warmed the soil enough for real flowers to grow, the village women made artificial flowers to use on the palms from the white insides of bulrushes. Later, when colored paper became popular and cheap, they were able to make beautiful and realistic flowers of all colors which they braided around the tall poles and branches, often intermingling them with the real forest plants and trails of paper ribbons.

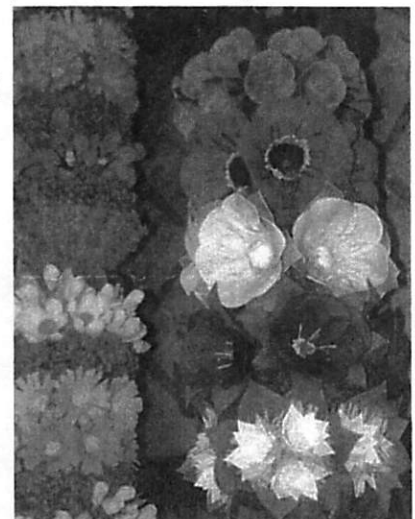
Aside from the religious importance of the palms, they were considered to protect the house from evil spirits, used to smack cows to protect their

health and pieces of them buried in fields to ensure successful crops. Often they were burned in a great bonfire on the Saturday before Easter leaving embers which women took to start a "new fire" on Easter Sunday.

This custom still continues to this day, and in Lyse it is now combined with a competition for the tallest and most beautifully decorated palms and an indoor and outdoor market of locally made foods, decorated eggs, paper flowers, papercuttings and other other crafts.

It takes months for the palms to be made, and the traditions of making the flowers and decorating the palms have been passed down from generation to generation in many families. Further proof that this day is special was again provided by the villagers as many were dressed in their regional costumes, also unique and colorful.

We arrived in Lyse in time to go inside the old, wooden church to see all the very best palms laid against the walls for viewing after the mass. Then they were carried outside, some so big that they had to be hoisted onto the shoulders of several young people. There they were blessed by the bishop, lifted upwards, and bobbing above the heads of the people and even the roofs of the houses, paraded around one of the main streets to a nearby modern church for yet another mass. Meanwhile palms and baskets and bouquets of paper flowers of all kinds and colors were being sold in front of the church. In a building to the back women were cutting and selling their papercuttings of the birds, stars, forests and trees of life so common to the Kurpie area. We were in Paper Heaven!



Paper flower detail



Carrying the palms

## A 'HARMONIC CONVERGENCE'

by Sue Throckmorton

I read with great interest Naomi Hordes' article in the Autumn 2011 issue of FirstCut entitled "*Papercut Surprise in Kaifeng, China*" (p. 13). In it she writes of her trip to Kaifeng to meet with the descendants of a small community of Chinese Jews who had first come to China about 13 centuries ago and who, although still identifying themselves as Jews, had also assimilated over the years into the indigenous Chinese population. This was evident when, to Naomi's surprise, she found papercuts there which appeared to be traditional Chinese papercuts with Jewish elements as well.

Later in the Summer 2012 issue, Judith Meyers in the Member Commentary section wrote that, coincidentally, she and her husband who had taken up reading Pearl Buck's book **Peony** found that the story takes place in the early 1800's within the very Jewish community Naomi wrote about. Judith said she saw the article and her reading as a "harmonic convergence," or "related things coming together in time and place." (p. 5)

Even more coincidentally, some time ago I received a present in the mail from Israel from my dear friend and fellow GAP member Esther Shilo. In it was a lovely copy of the Jewish **Haggadah**, the first ever published in China. **The Haggadah**, of course, is the text read during the ritual service and ceremonial dinner or seder of Passover.

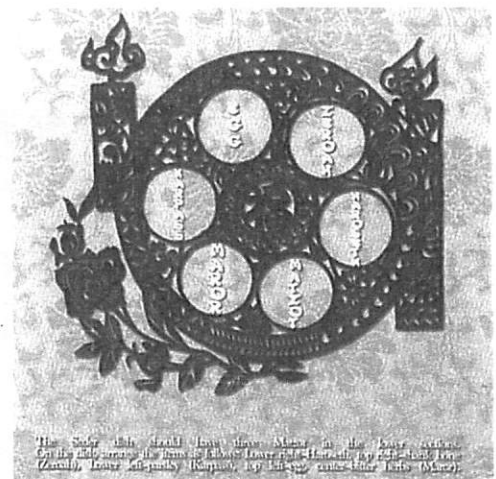
It includes an introduction by Professor Xu Xin of Nanjing University, a bilingual text in English and Hebrew with highlights in Chinese, a historical introduction to the Jewish Diaspora, or the dispersion of Jews, in China, by Dvir Bar-Gal, rare historical photographs of the Chinese Passover and lovely papercutting illustrations by Wan Qiong.

The introduction expands Naomi's telling of the Chinese Jewish story. The author writes of the original Jewish population of Persian Jewish traders being augmented by Iraqi Jewish merchants in the mid-19th century who brought the first version of the Haggadah to China. Then the Ashkenazi version was brought by Jews who escaped the Czar, anti-semitism and pogroms in Russia. The outbreak of WW II and its accompanying persecutions by the Nazis brought more Jewish refugees mostly from Poland, Austria and Germany to a safe haven in Shanghai. Kept in a ghetto there by the ruling Japanese during the war, many Jews left China once the Communist revolution had taken hold in 1949.

Now with China open to the West, this **Haggadah** is a "product, and a symbol of the rapidly growing Jewish life in the Chinese Diaspora of the early 21st century." Have we completed this "harmonic convergence?" I hope not!

**Note:** If anyone is interested in buying a copy of this book, it can be purchased for \$25 at the following website:

<http://store.thecjm.org/browse.cfm/passover-haggadah-china/4,366.html>

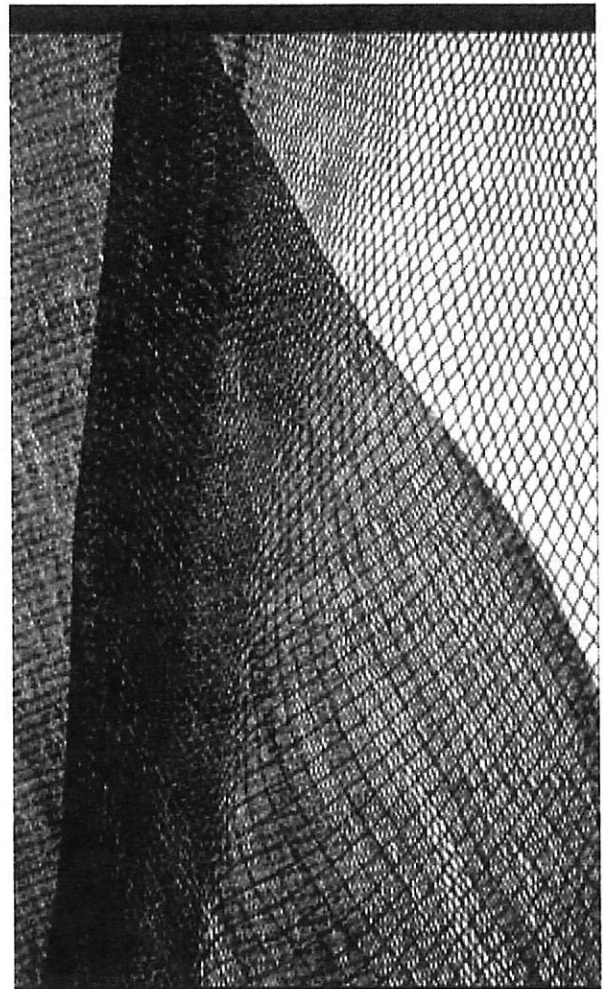




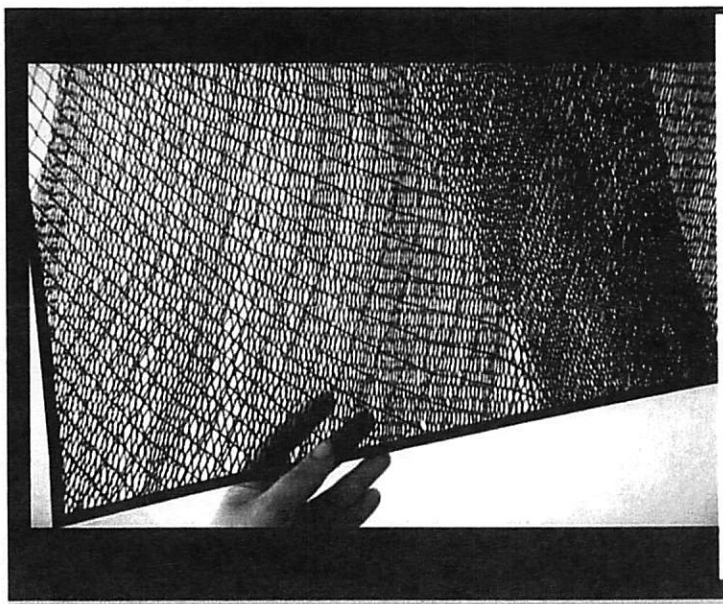
**Jessica Alpern** shared her newest papercut with viewers on the GAP FaceBook page, and Comments were unanimous in their praise: "---your expertise in papercutting is amazing; "This is mind-boggling. You must be a very patient lady with great eye sight! Congratulations on it's uniqueness and beauty!"; "totally awesome;" "WOW on WOW" ; "Don't tell me this is a papercutting!!!!;" "brilliant;" "just amazingggggggg!" "best new work I've seen in a while," "Whoa!"

Prepared for an upcoming show with two other artists at the Nahcotta Gallery in Portsmouth, NH, from April 5-28, Jessica's work is 17" x 25" made from Canson Ingres black drawing paper (originally 19 x 25) with a Fiskars handle using #11 excel blades. She said it was "the first large piece I've made and it was pretty challenging size-wise." When asked how long it took her, she said she was usually a fast cutter but that "this one slowed me down quite a bit and I completely lost track of the hours. I think around 40, but judging by how many episodes of Doctor Who I went through it may be more.....I think the trick to cutting this piece, for me....was an obsessive love of detail, a self imposed deadline and a subscription to Netflix."

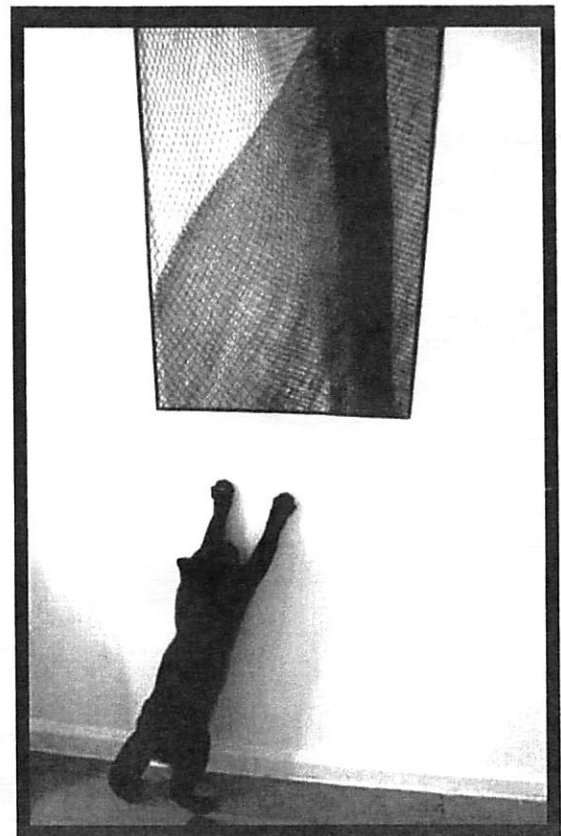
She cut most of it on her big black and green dual sided mat, but she added that "living in New York...the winters are murder on mats." She's run out of uses for all the mats warped by the steam heat and finally was forced to buy a new giant clear mat that she is "now deeply in love with." "She admits she will throw the radiator out the window before she let[s] anything happen to it."



© Jessica Alpern



© Jessica Alpern

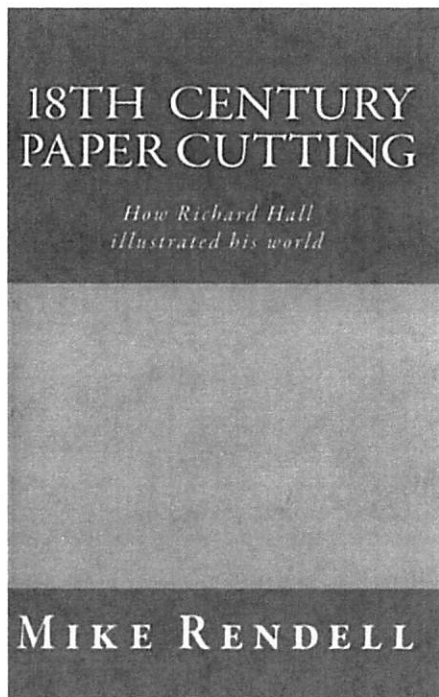


© Jessica Alpern



# THE BOOK SHELF: 18th Century Paper Cutting: How Richard Hall illustrated his world, a Book by Mike Rendell

Reviewed by Marie-Helene Grabman



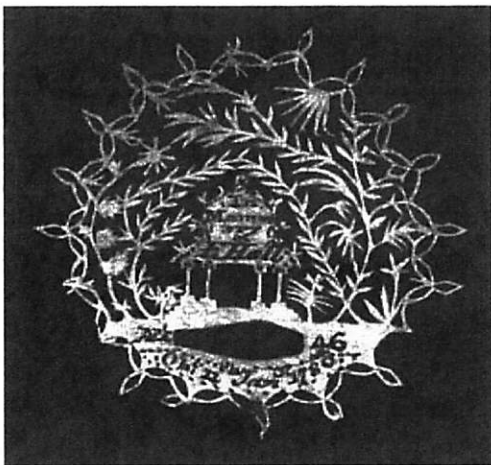
© Mike Rendell

Mike Rendell is a descendant of Richard Hall who lived in England from 1729 to 1801. Rendell found a trunk of Mr. Hall's belongings in the attic of a family home he purchased in 1970. The trunk contained the personal papers, memorabilia and books that had not been opened in over 200 years. Inside the notebooks were dozens of finely made paper cuttings depicting country scenes, travel, farming and every day life in the late 1700's.

Rendell believes his relative must have had good eye sight and a steady hand to create the cuttings due to his occupation as a hosier - the maker of embroidered silk stockings. He describes some of the cutouts as having lines "hardly wider than a human hair." None of the white paper cutouts were framed, and Rendell thinks they were cut using tiny scissors or a quill pen knife. The cuttings are printed in the negative (black) to contrast with the white background paper of the book. Rendell says the finest of all the cutouts was a memorial Hall made to commemorate the death of his first wife in 1780. In calligraphy her name and an inscription are written on a papercut that is no larger than the face of a watch! Perhaps Mr. Hall made this to carry in his time piece?

Mike Rendell says he was unaware that papercutting was still a practiced art form until he found GAP. He mentions our Guild and the National Museum in the book.

This is Mike Rendell's second book about his ancestor. The first, **The Journal of a Georgian Gentleman**, was written as a biography of Richard Hall. It also includes a few photos of the papercuts. Mike Rendell can be contacted at [info@mikerendell.com](mailto:info@mikerendell.com)



© Richard Hall



© Richard Hall



© Richard Hall



© Richard Hall

# GUILD MEMBER NAOMI SHAPIRA HONORED

In 2012 Israeli member Naomi Shapira was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Honor for illustrating **Little Miss Scissors** (Bnei-Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2011), a picture book authored by Nathalie Belhassen, and also put on the IBBY\* Honor List, a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published books, honoring writers, illustrators and translators from IBBY member countries. Important considerations in selecting the Honor List titles are that the books are representative of the best in children's literature from the country and that the books are suitable for publication throughout the world.

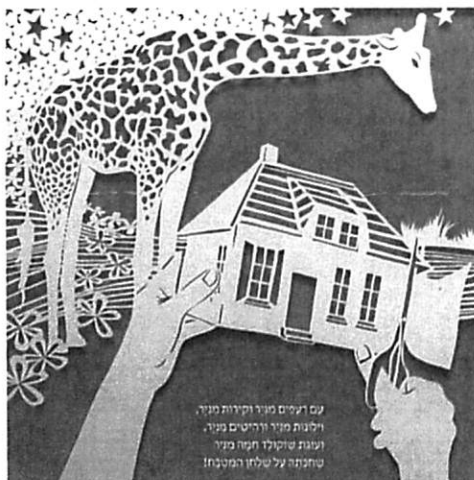


© Naomi Shapira

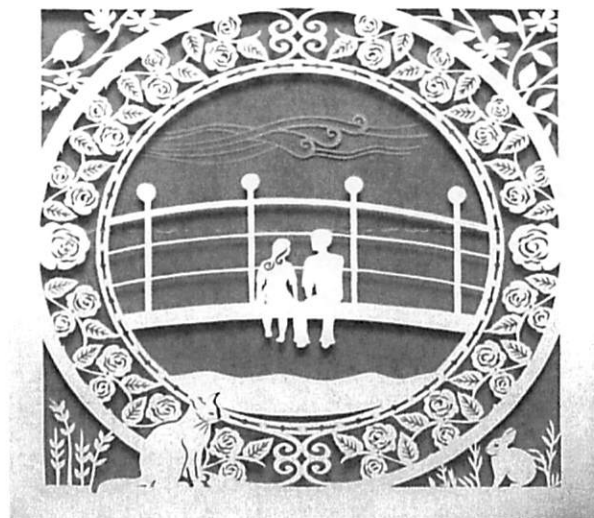
The book is a charming story about a little papercut lady who lives alone in a papercut house on a little paper hill and who uses her scissors to fulfill her dreams. Natalie Belhassen was inspired to write the book by an exhibition including beautiful papercuts which she saw in 2006. She writes: "Naomi illustrated the book with great sensitivity and dedication. The paper characters and the paper world surrounding them literally came to life with the magnificent paper-cuts.....This is my first published book, and there's no better way to start than with a book about dreams and creation, filled with love and admiration for papercutting art."

Naomi says: My favorite art is papercutting. I started cutting paper as a girl, when we made wall hanging ornaments for 'Sucot' (a Jewish holiday). Papercuts are a philosophical view for me. The more as pieces are reduced from the paper, the more rich and meaningful the picture becomes. The picture is revealed through what is missing. The game between what "is" and what "is not" reflects the spirit of the story for me: Little Miss Scissors experiences the joy in what she has (paper, dreams, fulfillment's), but also strongly feels what is missing - a close friend to share the joy with. It was a great privilege to illustrate this special book about a small lady (like me) who loves papercutting. I cut the papercuts with a cutter knife and used white acid-free paper. We photographed the papercuts by leaving space between them and the colorful backgrounds to create natural shadows which emphasize the authentic cutting. This helps people realize that the illustrations are actually cut. I wish this book will inspire children and adults to create art craft and papercuts."

\*<http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=270>



© Naomi Shapira



© Naomi Shapira



## A CHINESE "BARGAIN" *A Tale From The Past*

*In much of Asia shopping = bargaining. Sharpening one's bargaining skills is a prerequisite for "trying" to buy anything from independent sellers, marketplace vendors and shop merchants and even for purchasing many services as well. This means learning to offer half of what the seller asks for, then going up in the price as the seller comes down and sometimes even walking away, hoping the seller will come running after you.*

*Here's an anecdote from LINDA EMMERSON about her visit to China which proves that life is never predictable!*

*In 1996 we were on a brief trip inspired by the offer of a "China Cheapie," 10 days in Beijing inaugurating British Airways non-stop flight from London. Just time enough to do the Forbidden City and Great Wall, and a side trip to Xian to see the terra cotta warriors.*

There, in the lobby of our hotel, an elderly woman was cutting large intricately designed dragons from a short stack of red paper. A grim faced minder in a Mao suit stood next to her.

I, of course, was delighted and moved in for a closer look.

"No touch," he growled.

Me: "Can I buy one? How much?"

Him: Twelve Yuan." At my astonished reaction to the price (about \$8.00) he growled louder, "WE DO NOT BARGAIN."

I hastily paid and departed with a treasure.

*Maybe Linda didn't have to bargain for her new papercut, but it sounds and looks as though she certainly you got a bargain!*



# SNIPTIPS FROM THE PAST

## A good idea from veteran papercutter Paul Beal:

"I make a practice of cutting three [papercuttings] at a one time when participating in craft shows to keep a supply of cuttings on hand. They'd be original in design and hand cut, but not "one of a kind." I became aware early on by looking at Swiss cuttings that most of them are cut on a fold with some little difference on one side or the other - any part or parts of a cutting (multiples) could be reserved until later. I used that technique with Ponderosa Pines and left the bottom third undone so that I could make changes from piece to piece. Below are examples of what I'm talking about. I still have the third Ponderosa Pine cutting to do. I wonder when that will be...



PONDEROSA PINE - MIGRATION © 2000 Paul Beal



PONDEROSA PINE WITH HORSES © 2000 Paul Beal



# THE CUTTING EDGE

Check out these 5 fantastic videos on the Internet. You will be amazed!

*"The Icebook,"* by Davy and Kirsten McGuire; a miniature theater made of fragile paper cutouts and light projections which is "an intimate and immersive experience of animation, book art and performance."  
<http://vimeo.com/19348564>

*"Alchimie de Courvoisier,"* By the same artists above; an "intricate , miniature paper diorama combining paper architecture and light projection" tracing the history of Courvoisier cognac.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?V=t7HvXgdF8L4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?V=t7HvXgdF8L4)

*"Lavazza-favola-a-modo-mio,"* by the Milan-based creative studio Dadomani; an intricate paper animation video which is an ad for a Lavazza coffee maker. After the ad, scroll down to the bottom and you will see how it was made. Incredible! [stricklypaper.com/blog/2012/02/lavazza-favola-a-modo-mio/](http://stricklypaper.com/blog/2012/02/lavazza-favola-a-modo-mio/)

**Claire Bennett** of Toronto Canada is a papercut animation artist. Here are a few examples of her animation, the first in color, the second in b&w: [youtube.com/watch?v=CeVQqj-Unnk](http://youtube.com/watch?v=CeVQqj-Unnk)

*"Black Moon":* [youtube.com/watch?v=pADiW9eO0b4](http://youtube.com/watch?v=pADiW9eO0b4)



# Upcoming Meetings and Dates:

\* For FirstCut submissions dates are on page 2

\* Check OUT the GAP ANNUAL 2013 CHALLENGE on the next page

\* **Autumn GAP Meeting:** Oct 26, 2013 Business meeting and workshop following at the Guild of American Papercutters National Museum in Somerset, PA, with two optional overnights at Sequanota Conference Center...if you have not treated yourself to this weekend, please consider and join us. Reservation information is:

Welcome to Sequanota Lutheran Conference Center and Camp!  
The Guild of American Papercutters, the weekend of October 25-27, 2013.

The Enrichment Center is a motel-type building, with a large room in the center to meet and eat, along with a fireplace. To each side of it is a wing with 10 rooms each. Most of the rooms have two single beds and a full bath. There is one room with a double and single bed; one room with two singles and bunk beds; one room with 5 single beds. All rooms have full bathrooms.

We have a full kitchen in which we prepare meals. Group meals are served "family style."

We also have a room with a microwave oven and a refrigerator for your use.

The estimated cost per person for the weekend is as follows:

\$40.00 per night x 2	\$80.00	one time fee for linens	+5.00
2 breakfasts, Sat. and Sun.	+ 11.50	1 lunch on Sat.	+ 7.75
1 supper Sat.	\$9.75	<b>Total for one person</b>	<b>\$114.00</b>

*Meals only per person price is \$29.00 for weekend.*

The deadline to reserve a room is Friday, October 4, 2013.

No refunds will be given after this date except for emergencies.

We need at least 10 people to reserve rooms in order for us to keep the Center reserved for your group after September 30, 2013.

We would let you know if we do not receive this total.

To reserve a room(s), please contact Camp Sequanota @ 814-629-6627 and we will send you a reservation form.

You can look at our camp on the web @ [www.sequanota.com](http://www.sequanota.com). or email us at [contact@sequanota.com](mailto:contact@sequanota.com).

Thank you very much and we are very happy to host your group in October!

Sincerely, Ann Ferry



©Kathleen Trenchard



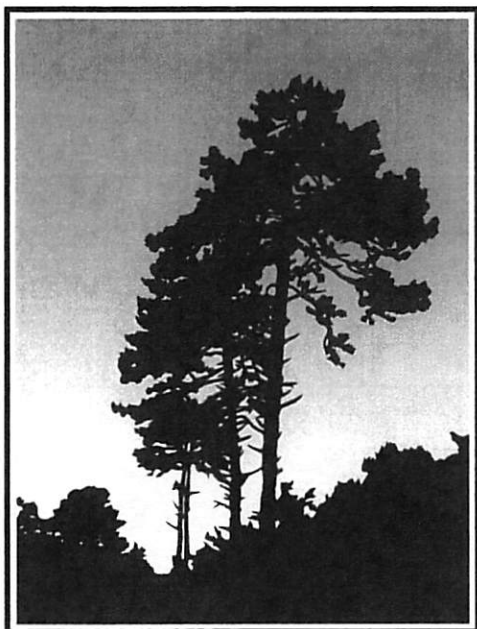
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# GAP Annual 2013

## C H A L L E N G E



*Golden Sunset by Bernie Levine*

book in color, and while your submission doesn't HAVE to be color, it CAN be, so those of you who usually only work in black and white might want to stretch out and give a chance to some colored papers, layering techniques or painting on your cutting.

Remember, this is GAP's 25th Anniversary Annual. Submit work that represents the BEST of what you've accomplished this year and challenges you've made to yourself to improve in whatever areas you feel necessary.

Submissions have been light so far. Tentative deadline is September 30th, 2013. Due to the delayed FirstCut, I may push that back a bit, but only upon request if you have something definite you're working on and want me to hold a page open.

I'd also like to thank Trudy Kaufmann answering the call and creating the cover for this year's magazine. It came out fantastic and is very fanciful and colorful! Great job, Trudy!

That's it. Stop reading and get to work!! I have deadlines, people!

The theme this year is **NATURE**, so anything you've cut recently that reflects the natural world can be submitted. Please remember the usual rules:

1. Anything submitted must be original in design and concept.
2. When saving your file, make sure it's high resolution (300 dpi) at the size it's going to print (8.5" x 11").
3. Send it to me at [m.schuchman44@comcast.net](mailto:m.schuchman44@comcast.net) and give me some info on the piece and yourself (size, other media used (such as watercolors), what your home state is, etc.) I can use to make it a little more interesting.
4. The theme is **NATURE**, and I would say to try to limit yourself to **WILD** nature, as opposed to around the yard and puppies and kittens nature. Yes, I know kittens are **VERY** wild, but we may do a Pets theme at a later time and I'd like this issue to have more of an "outdoorsy feel". That said, your art can be realistic or symbolic, simple or complex, or whatever your muse dictates.

One important change this year is making the entire



*Povodne by Iva Czyžová*



*Sandhill Cranes by Richard Schuchman*





*Cows on a quilt* © Kathy Trexel Reed

*Keep checking for upcoming changes to our GAP website  
at [www.papercutters.org](http://www.papercutters.org)*

*Don't forget GAP Facebook!*