

Packing the Light Fantastic

by Gail Sirna

Okay, you've made the decision to enter the Exemplary this year, and maybe you've even sent in your Entry Form. Now it's time to pack up your beautiful, well loved embroidered pieces and ship them to Kansas City. It's always a little traumatic to do this. Take it from someone--a certified teacher working the circuit--who knows. I, and my colleagues, mail our pieces several times a year--at least once for every seminar for which we have a contract for the following year, and often for exhibits and shows like the Exemplary. It's a little like sending your child off to kindergarten. And it's not easy, I know only too well. Just finding an appropriate box can be a real challenge.

And there are rules. For the Exemplary they are published in the Assembly Booklet, and also on line at the NAN website (www.needleart.org -- click on exemplary). There are only 10 of them:

First of all, **you can only enter your own work**--in the judged part of the exhibit anyway. You can certainly enter your grandmother's hand embroidered tablecloth, but that goes in the Needlework on Loan portion. Your entry must be embroidery--created with a needle with an eye. It can't have been in one of our past shows. It has to be of a reasonable size. It has to be finished. It has to be equipped with some kind of hanging device or stand.

There are two more rules which give both entrants and committee the fits. The first is **glass**--no pieces behind glass can be shipped. . I personally know some judges--not NAN certified--who disqualify anything with glass on the front, Personally, I will do my best to give any piece with glass equal consideration, but, in truth, it is harder to get a good look at the stitching when it is behind glass. But the committee dislikes glass because of shipping problems. In one infamous incident the glass on a piece was broken in transit. The person unpacking did not know this, and she reached in to remove the piece and cut herself quite badly. Of course she bled, and the blood got on the stitching. It is incidents like this that motivate committees to rule out glass on shipped pieces. So if your best work is behind glass, enter it anyway, and hand deliver it. If you don't live in Kansas City and aren't coming to Assembly ship it to a friend and ask her to hand deliver it.

Now the other bugaboo is **packing peanuts!** These are the curse of any exhibit committee. Please do not use them; they are a mess. And I'm sure you know that. You certainly must have received something during the Christmas season that was padded with peanuts, and maybe like me, you're still sweeping them up or finding them stuck behind a cabinet. Or clinging to your silk pants. Just imagine the Exemplary committee with its 40 or 50 boxes, all with peanuts. Instead, you can make air pillows with zip loc bags: blow them up and seal them and they become excellent, and tidy padding.

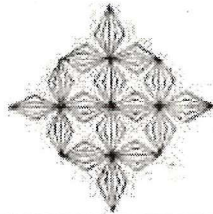
I think the problem is that some entrants take their pieces to a packing store and leave the item to be packed and shipped to the Exemplary. Then when you are not looking the packing store uses peanuts, thinking you will never know. But then our committee opens the box and sees peanuts !!! Your box is closed up and returned to you, and your lovely pieces remain unseen, unjudged and unloved.

So no peanuts!

The best system for wrapping your pieces is to make an envelope out of the small bubble wrap. I use packing tape and whatever bubble wrap I have on hand. Don't make the envelope fit exactly; make it about an inch larger all the way around, because if it's too tight, or even just right, it's too difficult to remove, and then repack the piece. Do NOT tape the envelope shut--this requires the committee to use scissors and you really don't want anyone with sharp objects near your stitching. Then put some kind of label on the envelope, and put on your name and address and phone number, and maybe the name of the piece, too. This will help the workers when repacking, and you, the next time you want to use the envelope.

Lay the pieces in an appropriately sized box, with another layer of bubble wrap between the pieces. Put rolls of bubble wrap along the outside between the pieces and the outside of the box, or use the air pillows described above. Or twisted up cleaners' bags. More bubble wrap on top, and you're ready to seal up a neat and easy to work with package. (Ed. Note: Also it can be replaced and securely packed in the same box for its return trip. This is not possible with peanuts.)

Looking forward to the Exemplary . . .



Things to Do That We Can Walk to In Kansas City

By Anita McIntyre

1. See the Art on the Plaza Those who have traveled overseas might do a double take when they stroll past the statue of Sir Winston Churchill. Just steps away two of Spain's landmarks--the Giralda Tower and the Seville Light -- tower majestically on the horizon. Down the street in a quiet courtyard sits an original bronze of Pomona by Italian sculptor Donatello Gabrielli. Is this England, or maybe Spain, or could it be Italy? What a surprise to the traveler to find these magnificent European works of art in the heart of the Midwest -- on Kansas City's famed Country Club Plaza. (From <http://www.countryclubplaza.com/plaza>.)

2. Shopping on the Plaza The Plaza has wonderful shopping. It there is St. Johns, Brooks Brothers, Brighton, Coach, and other local boutiques and jewelry stores, on the high end. J Crew, Chico's, Gap, Talbot's, and other more modest familiar names are all there too. Stitchers especially like the fabric store and the Paper Source. Your pooch will like the gifts from the Three Dog Bakery and your husband from Sharper Image.

3. Food on the Plaza 'Whether you have a craving for Mexican or Italian, American or Chinese, the 30 Plaza restaurants are sure to suit your fancy. Some are bistros, others are grills, some specialize in daily seafood where other's trademark is guacamole made right at your table.' (www.countryclubplaza.com)