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C.S.C.L. ANNUAL MEETING 1979

Eighty-five members of C.S.C.L. met at the Continental Inn at Barrie, Ontario on April 20-22 for the Annual Meeting of the Society. The Barrie branch welcomed members from the six Ontario branches—Belleville, Hamilton, Norland, Toronto, Woodstock and Windsor as well as members at large from many other points, including Buffalo and Rochester, New York, U.S.A.

Arriving guests were welcomed by the Barrie President, Emma Knowles and her assistants. On Friday evening a panel of judges chosen from the Fellows of the Society judged the articles on the tables and indicated those showing a marked degree of excellence to be awarded Craftsman Ribbons. Several unique pieces were awarded special ribbons and placed on a separate Salon table.

The Annual Meeting was held on Saturday with the President of C.S.C.L., Beula Reynolds of Woodstock, presiding. During the course of the business meeting the election of the new officers and Council members for the next year was conducted by May Corbett, Past President.

Helen Wheaton, Chairwoman of the Council of Fellows, announced with regret that this year no members had obtained Associate or a Fellow status in C.S.C.L. However, Jack Meharg, Vice-President was able to announce that the group of members in the Norland, Ontario area had been accepted as a branch. Those branch members present were introduced and we were pleased to welcome this enthusiastic group to our organization.

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Mr. Jack Meharg, 36 Bailey Crescent, Scarborough

Editor: Mrs. Margaret Monteith

Reports this issue - Barrie Branch

Membership Chairman: Mrs. Kay Cloughley, R. R. #1, Hawkestone, LOL 1TO

As usual, the presentation of the Weston Trophy for the winning branch entry provided a high point at the business meeting. The keen competition among the Barrie, Hamilton, Toronto and Woodstock entries was reflected in the excellence of the articles on display for the judges. Helen Wheaton made the presentation of this trophy to Muriel McKnight, President of Hamilton Branch. She accepted it on behalf of the five members involved in the group of articles which received an average mark of 92%. The high marks fully reflect the expert workmanship, design and fine finish represented in this entry.

Four new Honourary Life Memberships were presented to members. This token of the service to the Society was bestowed on Winifred Coombs, Mae MacKinnon, Jean Newton and Fred Brown by Kay Cloughley, Membership Chairwoman.

Mrs. Clara Cavanagh, Exhibition Chairwoman, presented ribbons to members who had one or more articles accepted for display at the biennial show Leather '78. This show was on display at the Etobicoke Civic Centre during the month of November 1978.

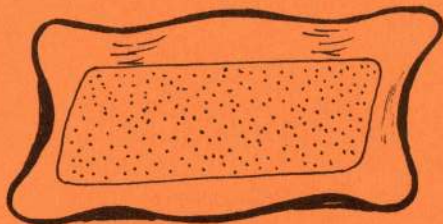
The Belleville Branch extended an invitation for the next Annual Meeting and the meeting concluded with the Question Box period. A panel of expert leathercrafters fielded problems submitted by the audience pertaining to leather.

An afternoon of demonstrations followed, with numerous craftsmen showing different techniques and construction methods. At various times during the day lucky draws for prizes were made from the tickets sold by the host branch.

The evening banquet was followed by the performance of a series of dance routines presented by the pupils of Allendale Dancing School. The after dinner speaker was Lloyd Cook of Barrie. He gave an inspiring talk on the trapping and conservation of Canada's fur bearing animals. He presented examples of the pelts of all the different animals that are harvested for their fur in Ontario. His knowledge of the methods of trapping and the habits and peculiarities of each breed held his audience entranced. He was thanked by Sherle Bottrill.

The weekend came to a close with a Sunday morning slide show of articles done by the founders and early members of the Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft. These slides form a part of the slide library of the Society and are available upon request for showing at branch meetings.

WESTON TROPHY ENTRY - HAMILTON



Continued

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome every one, to the 29th Annual Meeting of The Canadian Society for Creative Leathercraft. It has been a busy year, and with the full hearted and always good natured cooperation of members of the Executive Council, this first year as your president has been a rewarding experience. There have been six executive meetings with an average attendance of twenty members. Two of these meetings were held at Harbourfront in Toronto, and for the others we were made welcome at member's homes.

The C.N.E. display and sale was doubly successful this year. Thanks to the hard work of our set-up groups, we won one of the awards for general appearance of the booth. Of the three entries we had in the banner contest, the one by a single member achieved third place in the craft category, and also won the award from C.S.C.L. for the best entry in the leathercraft group. We have been invited to attend the C.N.E. again in 1979. It takes a lot of hard work to co-ordinate everything, see that the booth is staff adequately at all times, and to look after the books. I thank all of you who gave so generously of your time and effort.

In November we held our fifth biennial exhibition at the Etobicoke Civic Centre. Our exhibition chairperson and her helpers deserve a very special vote of thanks - everything went along smoothly and efficiently. We received many compliments on the quality and originality of the articles exhibited, and the arrangement of the display came in for much favourable comment.

We have had several meetings with the Ontario Craft Council staff, and directors this year. We are hopeful that a better understanding is being established between our two groups. In March four of our members put on a demonstration at the request of O.C.C. at the Sportsmen's Show at the Exhibition grounds in Toronto.

We have lost several of our members this year—our sincere sympathy goes to their loved ones.

We are planning a master workshop for this next year, and hope you will plan to attend. The branches were each given \$25.00 to help finance a workshop again this year. All branches have been very generous with their invitations to members-at-large and other branches to attend any of their workshops. If you haven't participated yet, ask any or all of them what they are planning this next year and join in this friendly exchange. Members-at-large, there has to be something you really want to see and do. There is certainly talent among you that could be shared with us—how about communicating?

All who have contributed to Canadian Leathercraft this last year are to be congratulated. Our editor has done excellent work in compiling the efforts and getting them out on time.

My sincerest thanks to all of you who have worked so hard for C.S.C.L. this past year, and for those who can't join in the active work due to various circumstances, your words of encouragement and warm friendly smiles make it all worth while.

Respectfully yours,
Beula Reynolds,
President.

NEW HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERSFRED BROWN

Since Fred joined C.S.C.L. in 1953 he has been actively involved. He attained his Associate standing in 1960, and became a Fellow in 1963. He was elected to the Executive Council in 1954 and served as President from 1957-61.

He has continuously worked to advance the standards of Canadian leathercraft and to promote the aims and interests of C.S.C.L. His work with groups struggling to start and maintain new branches will long be remembered and appreciated by all concerned. He has also represented C.S.C.L. at the International Assembly of Leather Craftsmen and latterly at the Ontario Crafts Council.

Fred is noted for his specialties—3D Tooling, Turned Edges and has taught classes for many years for various organizations and schools in Toronto. His work has won many Salon and Craftsman awards and his name appears on prize lists of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto and the Pacific National Exhibition at Vancouver, B.C.

Fred's interest in handicrafts is by no means limited to leather. In his capacity as Manager of the Arts, Crafts and Hobby Building at the C.N.E. he has done much to improve the interest in well made crafts at that fair. He and his wife, Phyllis, have opened their home for the C.S.C.L. Executive meetings on many occasions over the years. We look forward to his continued support and good judgement on the Council.

WINIFRED COOMBS

Winifred became a C.S.C.L. member in 1951 and is a member of the Toronto Branch. She worked on the early Executive Council and served as Membership Chairwoman from 1958 for several years.

Her quiet efficiency did much to ensure the success of those early Annual Meetings. Remember those one day meetings with a box lunch held at the Woodgreen Community Centre?

She still retains her good humor and active interest in things related to leather.

MAE MACKINNON

Mae is the widow of Don MacKinnon, a charter member of C.S.C.L. In the first years of the Canadian Leathercraft commercial advertising of products allied to the leathercraft field appeared in the pages of the bulletin. This helped to defray the cost of publishing in the days before taxes and restrictions on such publications made the practice prohibitive. Don acted as the first Advertising Manager.

Don taught at his leather studio in Toronto and is famous for his portraits in leather and figure carved pictures. Mae assisted her husband in the early formative years of C.S.C.L. and she herself to the Executive Council in 1959 and still maintains an active interest in the Society. She usually attends the Annual Meeting to renew old friendships and to keep in touch with the current trends. She was not able to be here in person this year but we wish her well and look forward to seeing her next year.

Jean also became a member of C.S.C.L. in the formative years. She attained her Associate status in 1954 and was made a Fellow in 1957. When the Toronto Branch was formed in 1952 she held the office of Vice-President. She was elected to the Executive Council becoming the third President commencing 1956.

Evidence of her dedication to the highest standards of workmanship is the regularity of the appearance of her name on the lists of prize winners at the Canadian National Exhibition and Canadian Handicraft Guild. Her work has been awarded numerous Craftsman and Salon ribbons. She has often demonstrated leather techniques for C.S.C.L. at various functions. Her knowledge and common sense are evident when she is called upon to be a part of the panel of craftspersons answering questions from the Question Box at the Annual. Her active enthusiasm and dedication are appreciated.

AN APOLOGY

"Better late than never". This is a phrase that is often heard and often true. However, I have a feeling that the editors of this and other such publications would NOT agree.

If you have noticed that you were late receiving Volume XXVII, No. 3 for Spring 79, it is not the fault of our Editor. She would have done her usual efficient duty and produced your copy—if she had received the material to work on!

As some of you may be aware, I have experienced some problems both in sending and receiving my mail. As a result, this issue is completed from the third attempt at transmitting the copy from the proverbial point A to point B.

In the same vein, memberships are due and payable on the 31st of March each year. Please check your membership card and your records. If you have mailed me a cheque to renew your membership (\$5.00) for 1979, and do not now have a card that expires 31 March 1980, please contact me again. You could also get in touch with another member of your Executive Council.

You are reminded that in order to continue receiving the Canadian Leathercraft, or to be eligible to enter articles in the Leather '80 show, you must be a member in good standing.

Mrs. Kay Cloughley,
Membership C.S.C.L.,
R. R. #1, Hawkestone, Ontario,
LOL 1T0.

OCC Communications Weekend - Holiday Inn, London,, Ontario - February 22, 1980

"HANDCRAFTED--WHAT IS IT?"

by Carol McLean, Woodstock Branch

Initially one thinks, "That's simple. It's anything you make with your hands! No problem there! It's a fairly straight forward question. Then we start probing a bit deeper and one thought leads to another. Pretty soon we find ourselves defining not only definite "yes or no-s" but also "maybes". These "maybes" (or grey areas) should prove most interesting to our discussions today.

The dictionary defines hand crafted as "work done by hand--not machine--in a skillful manner". I feel that perhaps this definition is a bit too harsh for our purposes to-day.

To me, as a craftsman, hand crafted inters "something a little extra special". This work has been done by a PERSON, with a BRAIN. FEELINGS and TALENT. Not a programmed unfeeling computerized machine. The TOUCH of the HUMAN HAND makes this article different.

I have occasionally been accused of letting crafts become a "religion and of being too much of a purist at times, and perhaps this is so. I feel a certain amount of dedication, loyalty and yes, perhaps even "love for your media" are necessary--not only to give you the inner spark of "one-ness" with your work, but to give you the determination to do your very best on each and every piece you do.

Crafts are very important to everyone in this room, or we would not be here in the first place. The craftsman are the guardians of the quality of our work. The standards we set must be very high to keep that QUALITY evident.

Our thoughts will also include the word "design" and I am sure great discussion will take place on how much importance should be placed on originality.

The stage at which the craftsman gets his supplies becomes important too. Would we as leather craftsman have to raise our own animals, tan our own hides and make our own tools? These examples could be applied to practically any craft. We have to start at some reasonable point in the raw craft material supply line--whether it be tanned hides, purchased clay or spun yarns.

Should we include tools necessary to do our own respective crafts? I'm sure there will be many varying viewpoints in this area too. Would we have to make our own tools--or for that matter build our own looms or spinning wheels?

When an article is hand crafted, you, the craftsman, must CONTROL that piece of work from its CONCEPTION to its FINISH. Quality should be kept as high as possible and the article should also fulfill the function for which it was designed. As an example, a tea pot should pour well and not drip. A change purse should hold a quantity of coins, be easy to get into and fasten securely.

There must be something that sets this article apart. If the buying public wanted a "run of the mill" work, they could readily buy the proverbial "Souvenir of Canada"--(Made in Japan) article. That is not the type of work the public thinks of when they see "Hand Crafted" on the label. They are looking for something UNIQUE,--something SPECIAL. What a heavy responsibility this places on the craftsman--but how very challenging and rewarding it is too!

They must try to keep in mind the FULL SCOPE of the ENTIRE CRAFTS PICTURE. There will be many views expressed to-day but hopefully the "betterment of hand crafts" will be foremost in our minds--because as I stated earlier we are all here because we care very much about crafts.

This is the end of the initial address I made.

Here are some pertinent thoughts that came out of the discussions of the weekend and also include further thoughts I felt important as time progressed. (These were not in the initial address)

There was a definite feeling that the work should be unique. A conception of the designer--craftsman carried through under his continuous control, keeping the standard of work as high as possible. The original designer-craftsman could employ technicians to carry out his instructions and work under his direction, but the end result must be acceptable to him, as he was its originator. The pride of the craftsman must show in his work. The following words kept reappearing as the time progressed: SKILL, DESIGN, FUNCTION and SENSITIVITY.

The general feeling of all present towards the use of tools, was that they are a necessity and that it is the skillful use of the craftsman using them to their fullest potential that makes them important.

Types of work were divided into categories being: A - one-of-a-kind, B - limited edition, C - mass produced. It was felt that there was a place for all of these in the total concept as long as the uniqueness of the article was kept in mind.

Pick up the work of a talented craftsman with a respect for his medium and the article fairly sings and comes alive with its special hidden spark. You KNOW it is hand crafted. It invites the touch, it has warmth, you feel comfortable with it and yes, even a bit excited about it. You want this work. That has been fashioned by the human hand, because it is unique it is something no machine alone can do. This does not mean that everything you do must be a "one-of-a-kind" article in total--but it should have its own spark of excitement. Its reason for BEING.

It was felt that being a craftsman, he must be in complete continuous control of his work, a kit would not fall into this category, because the control of the one craftsman was not present from the conception of the article to the finish. So many decisions had been imposed upon him in the kit that his control was severely curtailed and limited only to decoration and assembly of the article.

It was pointed out that the standards we set-as to the quality of our work are very important because "hand crafted" does not guarantee that this is good work, just because it was done by hand. There are some very poorly made "hand crafted" articles on the market. We must ensure that well executed pieces are presented to the public.

Good taste must enter into our choices as we make decisions through-out the manufacture of that article.

It was hoped that a scheme to educate the buying public as to good hand crafts could be undertaken and possibly articles could be labelled with pertinent information to aid the customer in his choice of article.

The key work of CONTROL kept reappearing through the conference and a thought that was mentioned where tools were concerned was that the "craftsman should control the machines" and not the other way around. If the second stage was reached where the machine was controlling the craftsman, then it would just become a manufactured item and not fall into the hand-crafted category.

The design of the article could either be A original, or B traditional (as in the case of quilts, etc.) and still fall into the hand crafted category.

I hope that these thoughts of mine, and the deliberations of the craftsmen at the conference will be of help to you the members of C.S.C.L.

The following are the findings of the combined conference. These deliberations will be forwarded on to the OCC Board of Directors for their consideration and hopefully future use.

HANDCRAFTED--WHAT IS IT?

It must be initiated and controlled by one person, although others may be involved. Any technology may be used provided it can be controlled and varied at each and every stage, by, or under the direction of the initiator. Labelling should be elective (except where required by law). However, the craftsman should be encouraged to mark or label their work principally as a guarantee of integrity (quality) of the materials used. The label should ideally include as appropriate information on the material (and perhaps its care), if it is a limited edition, and the origins of the design (eg traditional from Waterloo County). Education in the broadest sense is essential--of the craftsman and the public--and should start in the school--if these recommendations are to be effective.

In a legal definition we cannot include concepts of "Good" or "Bad" in an aesthetic Sense. Caveat: Different definitions may be suitable for different circumstances. This definition is not necessarily THE definition for all circumstances and all times.

* Ethnically the "others" may or may not be entitled to credit BUT one person remaining the "guarantor".

** This mark may in the course of time become a guarantee of other qualities as well dependant on the craftsman's abilities.

WESTON TROPHY

ENTRY - HAMILTON.

