

ASSOCIATION of TRADITIONAL HOOKING ARTISTS

Handbook for Chapters

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www.atharugs.com

History of ATHA

On Sunday, April 22, 1979, a group of rug hookers met in West Willington, CT, at a gathering called by Peg Hansen. Peg's vision was to form an open organization to promote the art of traditional rug hooking, while embracing the varied interests of all hookers from fine shading to folk art and primitive styles.

The following are some excerpts from Peg's original invitation to the meeting which illustrate her hopes for the organization. The letter in its entirety, as well as a photo of the attendees, can be found on the ATHA website, www.atharugs.com.

*"An Open Guild is one that is formed primarily to promote the interests of the membership. In this case Rug Hooking.....No one company or individual is singled out as soul (sic) authority or director of the group....**The guild will be open to anyone wishing to join.**"*

Within only a few short months of this historic first meeting, Peg Hansen succumbed to a serious disease but she had initiated enough interest in this new rug hooking association that the dedicated attendees continued the organizational work with enthusiasm. And today, we enjoy the fruits of their labors as members of The Association of Traditional Hooking Artists.

Goals of ATHA

The Constitution of ATHA states as the goals of the Association:

- To develop and promote interesting rug hooking
- To maintain high standards and encourage creativity in this art form
- To provide the means for an exchange of ideas and information among members
- To promote educational activities to enhance the interest in and the quality of rug hooking

It is extremely important that you keep these goals in mind as your Chapter plans its meeting and events. ATHA has been established to be an educational organization. It is through activities that promote the goals stated above that we meet our responsibilities.

Always remember that no limitations of any kind may be put on the membership. ATHA is an open organization and all are welcome to join. A chapter may not limit membership for any reason, particularly the number of members a Chapter will accept. It may, however, require adult supervision of children under a certain age.

How ATHA is Organized

The Association is guided by an elected Board of Officers consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Coordinator, Librarian, Historian and Communications Director. These

Officers are elected by the members at large to a two year term in the spring of every odd-numbered year. They are installed at the Biennial Meeting, which is held in the late summer or early fall of the same odd numbered year. An officer may only serve three consecutive terms in the same position.

The Executive council consists of the past President/Board Advisor, the Education Chairperson, Membership Chairman, Editor, Ads Manager and Webmaster as well as Regional Representatives. These individuals may attend the Board meetings and participate in the discussion but they do not vote.

Regions

The United States and Canada are divided into fourteen (14) regions. A fifteenth Region includes Great Britain and the rest of the globe. There is also a Representative in Japan. Regions are determined as membership grows. The Regions are headed by elected Regional Representatives who, with the governing Board, are installed at the Biennial Meeting.

The Regional Coordinator is the officer who communicates with the Regional Reps and with the Chapter presidents. The Regional Coordinator is also responsible for certifying the new Chapters and with completing the certification process by helping to obtain 501(c) 3 tax exempt status for new Chapters in the USA under ATHA’s Group Exemption Number with the IRS.

It is the aim of the Association to have all Regions organized and operating with a governing board consisting of the Regional Representative, a Secretary and Treasurer and all Chapter Presidents.

The model for this scenario is Region 1—the New England states. This Region has fourteen chapters (14), operates two (2) four-day rug schools, offers two (2) rug school scholarships, publishes an annual newsletter and holds two (2) board meetings each year, as well as an event in the non-biennial year.

Chapters

Chapters are the roots of the Association and it is recognized that each chapter has its own character based on the interests of its member. Depending upon the geographical location of the chapter and also upon the demographic nature of its membership there will be great diversity of all levels of skill and style preferences—from the person who loves a kit to the artist who designs, dyes and hooks their own creations.

In an effort to make the affiliation with ATHA as easy as possible, there are only a few things asked of a chapter. One requirement is to submit the **Chapter Update Form** accompanied by a complete **membership list** each year by March 1st. The second is to submit the **Officer Change Form** as soon as an election is held in order to update the website. The third requirement is to complete the IRS Filing Form 990-N E filing by March 15. All three forms should be sent as soon as possible to Regional Representative, Regional Coordinator and ATHA’s Treasurer.

How do the Regions fit into goals of ATHA?

Chapters are the ground root organizations of the association. It is here that members interact and are exposed to the educational and creative elements of the rug hooking community. Regions are the organizational entity which connects the chapters with the national organization and with each other within the geographic bounds of the specific region.

I. PURPOSE OF A REGION

A. Promote Education

1. Through Chapter Activity

- a. Maintain a list of local people with programs the chapters can engage

- b. Maintain a list of distant people with expertise the chapters can contact
 - c. Help chapters with planning of local exhibits
 - 2. Through Regional Activity
 - a. Organize a regional exhibit in the alternate year of the Biennial. Perhaps to include classes and vendors or just a hook-in.
 - b. Establish annual rug schools or periodically hold workshops
 - c. If economically possible, sponsor scholarships to schools or workshops
 - d. If economically possible, provide travel expenses to Regional Representative to attend Biennial Meeting.
- B. Communication
 - 1. Between Chapters
 - a. Hold meetings of chapter presidents
 - b. Have chapters share their newsletters and planned events with other chapters
 - c. Encourage chapters to invite other chapters to meetings or luncheons
 - d. Prepare a regional newsletter annually to inform all members of activities within the region and to maintain contact with members who many not be involved with a chapter
 - 3. Between Chapters and ATHA National
 - a. Oversee the collection of the annual Chapter Update Forms from chapters
 - b. Confirm membership lists are sent to Regional Coordinator, Regional Rep and ATHA Treasurer
 - c. Confirm that Change of Officer Report is submitted immediately after an election
 - d. Confirm completion of EIN filing

II. ORGANIZATION OF A REGION

- A. Executive Board
 - 1. Headed by regional representative—voting member
 - 2. Elect a secretary and treasurer—voting member
 - 3. All chapter presidents are voting members
 - 4. Rug School director (if applicable)—voting member
 - 5. Immediate past regional representative—non-voting
 - 6. Any national officer residing within the region—non-voting

What Chapters Need to Know

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE—This elected officer acts as the liaison between the Regional Coordinator and the Chapters and members within the Region. This communication can be accomplished through the establishment of a Regional Executive Board made up of chapter presidents or through annual or monthly regional newsletters prepared by the Regional Representative after contacting each chapter president for information to include about events, activities and news.

MEMBERSHIP IN CHAPTERS—All members in a chapter must belong to national ATHA and must be members in good standing.

MEMBERSHIP FOR OFFICERS—All officers of a chapter **MUST** be members in good standing of ATHA.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES—Please encourage your members to contribute their photos, free patterns and articles to the magazine. Catha's goal is not only to promote interest in rug hooking, but to maintain high standards and encourage creativity, provide a forum for exchange of ideas and information and to promote education. Articles on design, color planning, dyeing techniques, finishing, etc, support and encourage our members as they plan their next project.

CHAPTER UPDATE FORM—This form is due from each chapter by March 1st each year. The one page form requests officer information, meeting and event info, election frequency and date, etc. One function of this form is to record your meeting dates so there is insurance coverage for your members. Send this form by mail or email to Regional Coordinator, Regional Representative and ATHA Treasurer.

OFFICER REPORT FORM—When an election is held by your chapter the officer report form must be sent promptly to your Regional Coordinator, your Regional Representative and ATHA Treasurer. The website and directory can be updated with the new information in a timely manner. Request forms from Regional Coordinator or Regional Representative.

ELECTIONS—It is requested that chapters hold elections in the spring of the year with installation of new officers in May or June. This unification of election times aids the Regional Coordinator in effectively managing the constantly changing list of presidents.

INSURANCE—ATHA provides liability insurance to its membership when attending a regularly scheduled chapter meeting. If a chapter holds a special event a Certificate of Insurance must be requested at least one week before the event from the Insurance Liaison who is listed on website and in each issue of ATHA magazine. Information required includes date, location and description of event. Certificate will be issued to the chapter.

TAX EXEMPT STATUS—ATHA has enjoyed tax exempt status with IRS since 1981. We are a 501(c) 3 entity which is the IRS Regulation which describes our activities as an educational organization.

In 2003 ATHA applied for a Group Exemption Number (GEN) which would make it as effortless as possible for Regions and chapters to apply under ATHA's umbrellas for the desired status. Each chapter must apply for their own EIN number and file each year. Request more information from the Regional Coordinator or Regional Representative.

MENTORING PROGRAM—A program is being developed whereby ATHA works to help individuals receive training and/or support from ATHA volunteers. The Education Chair is the person to contact with questions or suggestions.

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING—Each Region and chapter is allowed a 1/6 b/w page ad of free advertising annually in the ATHA magazine. Ad can be used to promote and exhibit, workshop or other special event.

SPONSORING A BIENNIAL MEETING—A Region and its chapters or a neighboring Region may apply to host a Biennial Meeting. A Handbook is available for those interested. ATHA's vice-president acts as liaison for the event. Profits realized are shared by chapters participating.

Dissolving a Chapter

We always hope an ATHA Chapter grows and develops, but when a Chapter and its members decide it is time to dissolve, there are certain steps to take:

Either at a regularly scheduled Chapter meeting or a Special Meeting in which all members have ample notification time, there must be a majority vote of the members present to dissolve the chapter.

The secretary of the Chapter or one appointed for the meeting must have each member sign in. The sign in sheet along with the official minutes from the meeting must be submitted to the Regional Coordinator and the ATHA Treasurer in a timely manner. It is suggested at this meeting to decide how the remaining funds in the Chapter's Treasury will be disbursed and have it recorded as well. Some choose non-profit organization while some donate to ATHA treasury.

The Chapter's final bank statement needs to be submitted to the Regional Coordinator and the ATHA Treasurer indicating the remaining funds and the checks to the approved disbursement to National ATHA or another 501 (3) C nonprofit organization of the Chapter's choice.

These documents should be submitted to the Regional Coordinator and to ATHA's Executive Treasurer to ensure the EIN is cancelled.