

"Simple Spontaneity"

The Toronto Guild of Stitchery's

"Schwalm Tablecloth Project"

The Original Addicts Are -

Mary Lunney

Yvonne Kerr

Caroline Morrison

Siobhain Doyle

Karen Doak

Marian Moorshead

Trudy Michailoff

Sylvia Wilkins

Mary Stewart

Tetje Jackovich

Susan Hawken

Barbara Kershaw

“THE TABLE CLOTH”

by

Barbara M. Kershaw

How did such a project get started? Simple spontaneity!

September 2007

Mary Lunney, one of the pilot students for my individual correspondence course on Schwalm embroidery, sent me an e-mail asking if I had any books with Schwalm borders because she was having trouble finding any information for lesson 3. I took a book called “Randabschlüsse” by Luzine Happel, which I had purchased from the Museum Der Schwalm in Germany while I was taking a course there in 2005, to the next Toronto Guild of Stitchery meeting. This book has a rather nice picture of a group of wonderful borders on the front. That picture just happens to be a corner of “**The Table Cloth**”.

Mary really liked the picture on the front and said she would love to do a table cloth like that. Yvonne, sitting next to her, said she would love to do one as well and before you knew it, six people in close proximity to Mary wanted to do the “The Table Cloth” and asked if I would show them how. Now I have to admit that although I agreed it was a beautiful border, the thought of doing a table cloth never entered my head for surely I would never have enough time or patience to finish it. To make a long story short, I did agree to lead a group and I spoke to my friend, Erma Scrimgeour in Montreal, knowing that she had done “The Table Cloth” with a group at the Lakeshore Creative Stitchery Guild. She lent me her cloth for everyone in Toronto to see.

October 2007

We asked all the members of the guild if they would like to do “The Table Cloth” and made up a list. Ten did - WOW! Each person had to buy their own book (absolutely NO copying allowed). We discussed linen and agreed we wanted to do it on German linen. I wrote to Luzine for the books and asked her where we could buy the linen. She agreed to get us the linen as well, so the order went in for both. We discussed thread and agreed we wanted to do it with Broder Spécial (Coton á Broder). The DMC suppliers were a little shocked when suddenly they had this huge demand for a thread that is little used in Canada. They now stock more of it!

Because the book is written in German, I drew up some instructions to get everyone started. But where to begin? The first decision was to decide on the width of the hem, allow 3 times the width, and baste. (I should have done what I told everyone else to do!!!)

November 2007

The addiction/snowball starts. Another member asks if she can join us and we say “Of course” – 11 in total now.

The books and linen have arrived. Everyone decides on what size cloth they will do. Marian decides to do a runner for which she would have more use. The linen is cut and surged. The thread is braided and we start. Oh boy, are we really going to manage this?

December 2007

The snowball continues - and the mistakes start

We start with the outermost border, counting very carefully and pulling threads as we go. Everyone has a good space left on all sides for their hem except “ahem” me! I am too busy getting the right number of honeycomb stitches on each side, forgetting this is not an evenweave fabric and misjudge the depth of the hem at the corner as it turns!! Voila! Not enough fabric on one side for the hem I want. How am I going to fix this? Everyone has to think about this. Consultation, discussion and ideas start to flow.

As we progressed with our embroidery and took it to guild meetings, other members became extremely curious watching our progress and admired the tablecloths. We all have trouble with the corners and compensating. We all get creative with our corners

April 2008

The snowball continues. Another member asks if she can join us and we say “Of course” – now there are 12.

Along with mistakes, there is a lot of satisfaction and a good feeling of success especially as we solve a problem.

Working on “The Table Cloth” is addictive. We can’t put them down. I had thought initially that this would take quite a long time but the progress is amazing. Yvonne Kerr and Mary Lunney are already finished! I can’t believe how much I have done!!! None of us can believe how dirty the tablecloths are getting and really want to wash them. Karen spilled red wine on hers so she now has a nice clean tablecloth to work on.

This cloth has a very humbling effect on everyone.

We have all ripped out rows and they are loo.....ong rows!

We have cut the wrong threads, cried and re-woven them in again or changed the pattern.

Each cloth is very unique as each person has made choices to use different patterns or stitches. Each cloth is very beautiful.

June and July 2008

The addiction is contagious.

Some of our members are also members of the Scarborough Needlearts Guild. While working on their cloths at the Scarborough meetings, the ladies of the SNG have become intrigued and some want to do it too. Ten more addicts are born, ten more books are ordered and they start.

September 2008

Most of the cloths are finished. My goal was to have mine finished for the November meeting when we would get all the cloths together for a group picture. I have to fix the hem though. How? I add a 9 inch strip to each side of the cloth, quite a challenge and a chore when I do not want any visible seams. I managed it and now have a 3 inch hem. Someday I will show you how.

November 2008

The pictures were taken. Most of the original group are in them along with some of the others who started in the later group. Most of the cloths finished or not, are in it. What an achievement! I am so proud of everyone and of myself because I never really thought I would get it done. It has been a tremendous year and one I would not have missed for the world.

Can you believe it; at least three people are on their second cloth! Now that is what I call addicted, but what a wonderful addiction.

What has this cloth done for our guild?

- It exemplifies the true essence of the guild – to come together to share ideas, teach and improve skills
- Spontaneity – it all began with one person’s request for border patterns and it mushroomed from there.
- Communication – Interest came from the whole guild and then spread to a second guild. Those who were initially inspired to do the cloth began gathering together to discuss the various elements, inspected each other’s progress and offered tips and hints since we were all basically working with only a picture to guide us. Those who were not working on a tablecloth came to admire the work we had done. Coming out of this, there were more conversations amongst all guild members and friendships were built and strengthened.
- Growing self confidence - Some of the people who started “The Table Cloth” did so expressing a concern that they did not have the skills to do this technique, only to discover that with help at the beginning, they were able to progress to the point where they could contribute their experience to help someone else. All members helped in discussing the problems encountered.

In a nutshell, there was a lot of sharing, laughter, joy, a wonderful sense of achievement and pride in working it out.

And where do we go from here? What now, you ask? Well, we have decided to do a Schwalm Filling Stitch Sampler which will have 49 squares with 49 different stitches and stitch combinations (hopefully!!). And we are going to strive to keep the momentum of the camaraderie that grew out of this project. It is great to see so many of us talking to each other, supporting each other’s efforts, looking forward to each and every guild meeting.

The original addicts –

Barbara Kershaw	Mary Lunney	Yvonne Kerr
Caroline Morrison	Karen Doak	Marian Moorshead
Siobhain Doyle	Trudy Michailoff	Sylvia Wilkins
Ietje Jackovich	Mary Stewart	Susan Hawken

The addiction continues

Editing assistance was provided by TGS secretary, Karen Doak

Barbara Kershaw is past president of the Toronto Guild of Stitchery, a teacher and designer. She is the author of several group and individual correspondence courses for both EAC and EGA and teaches at guilds and seminars in both Canada and the USA. Her specialty is white work.

The Addicts

Back row from left to right –

Caroline Morrison, Marian Moorshead, Sylvia Wilkins, Brenda Wilson.

Middle row – Mary Stewart, Barbara Kershaw, Siobhain Doyle, Sharon Sloan, Ietje Jackovich.

Front row – Karen Doak, Yvonne Kerr, Mary Lunney, Susan Hawken, Trudy Michailoff.









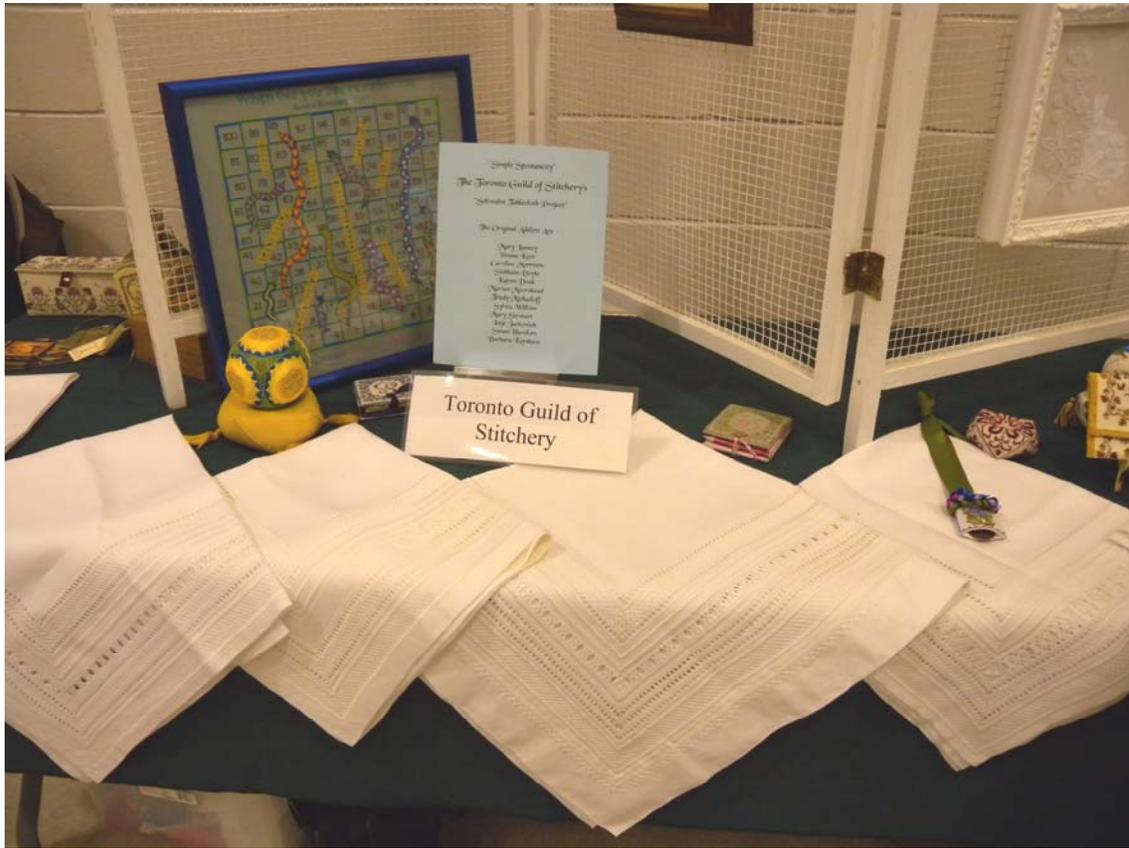
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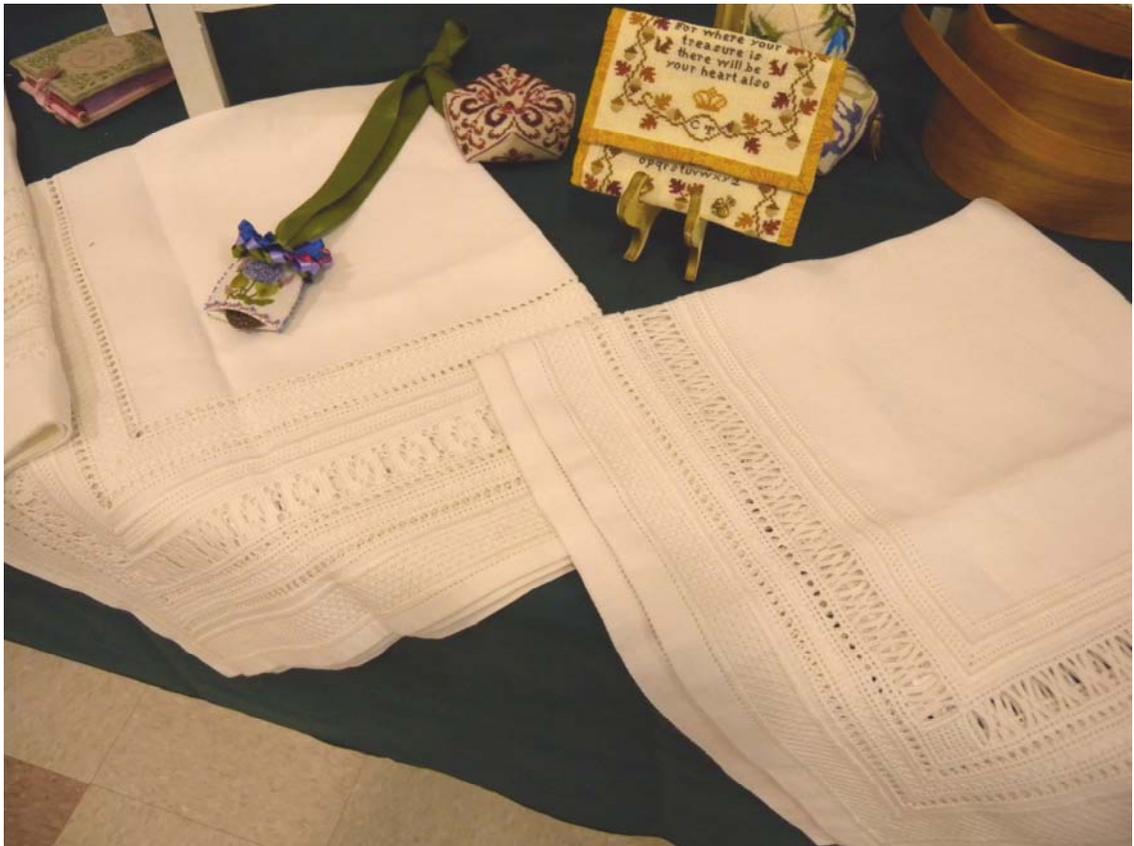




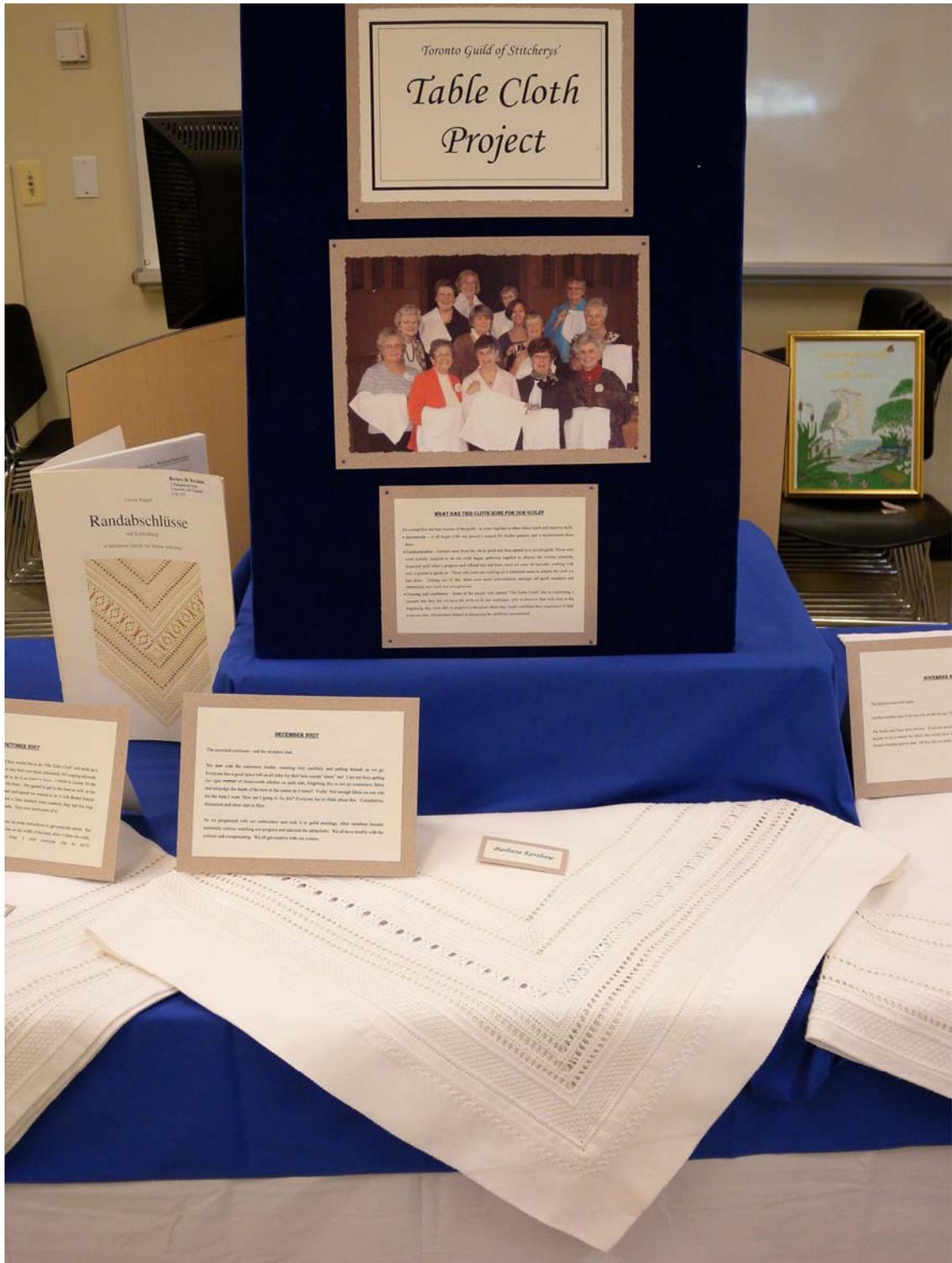
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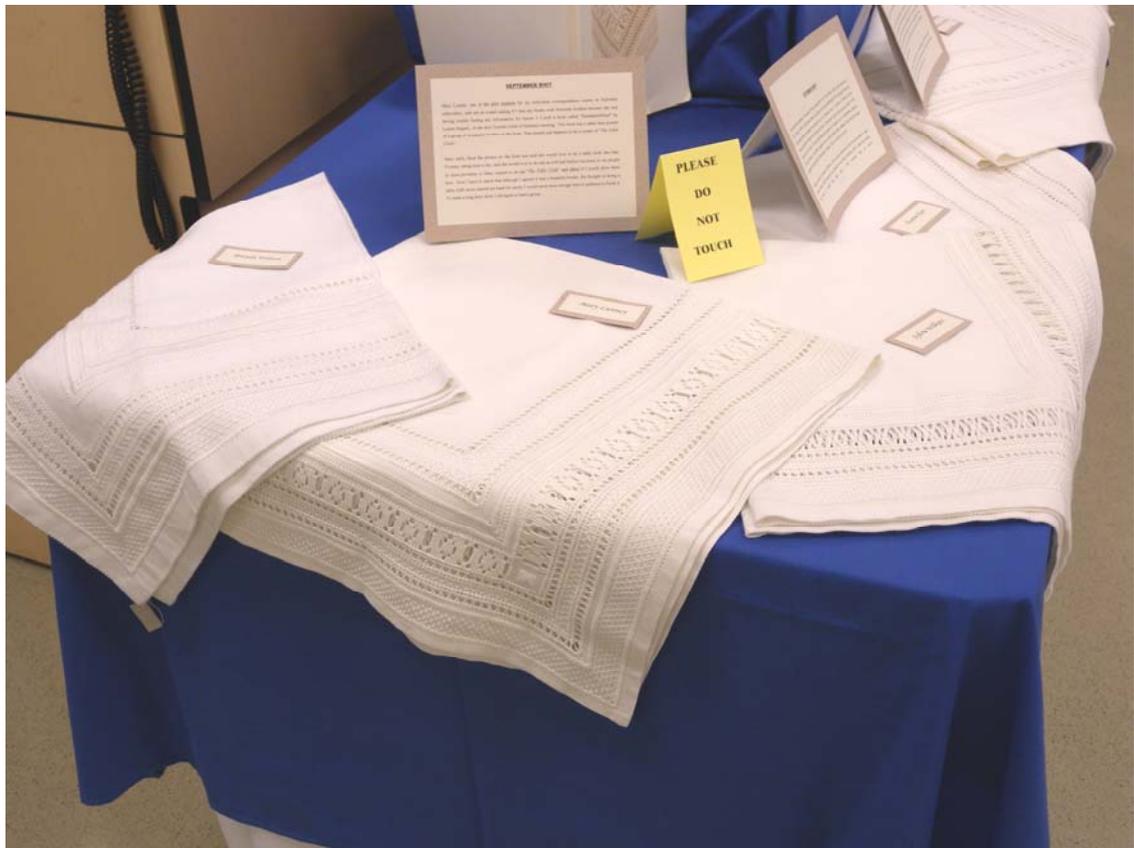
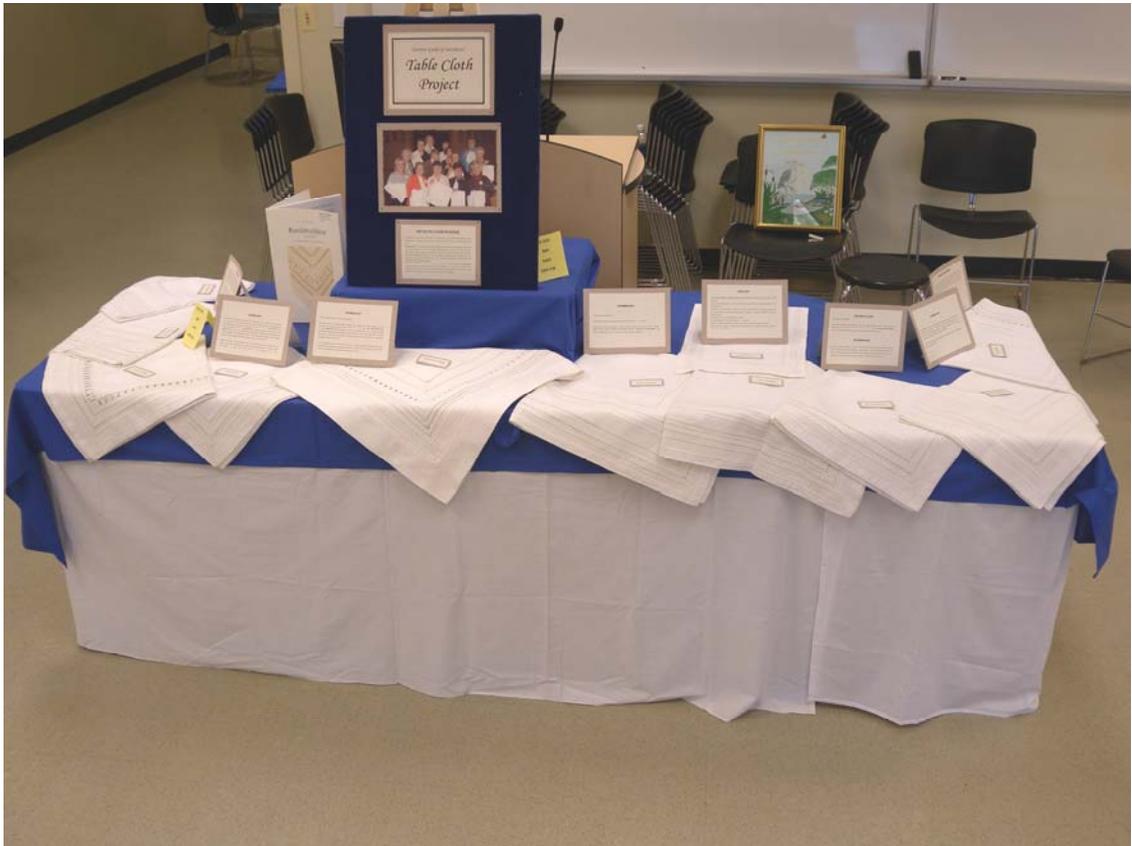


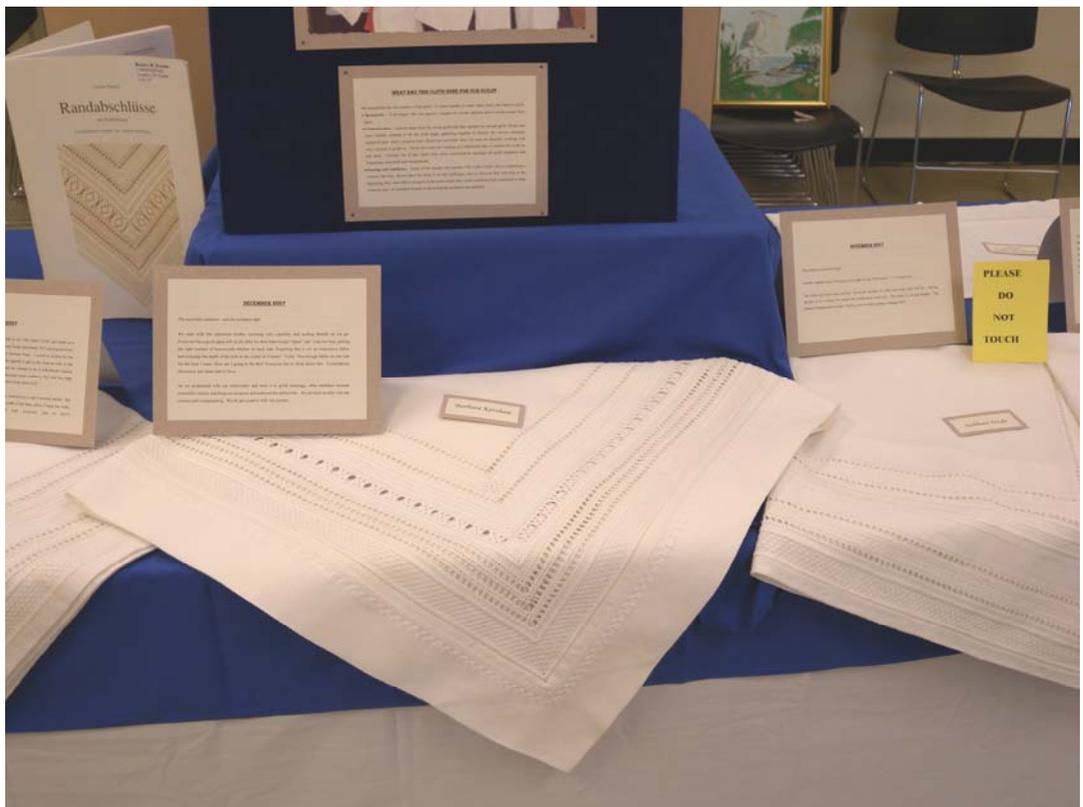
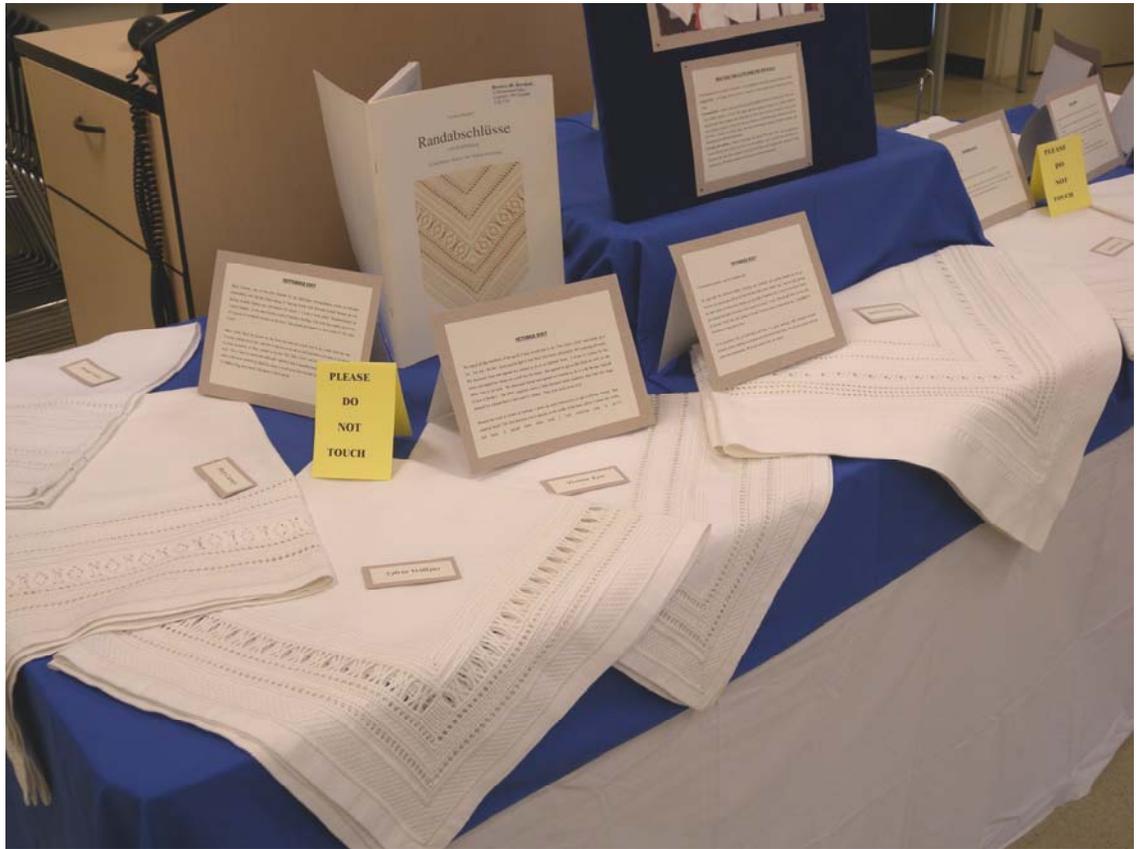


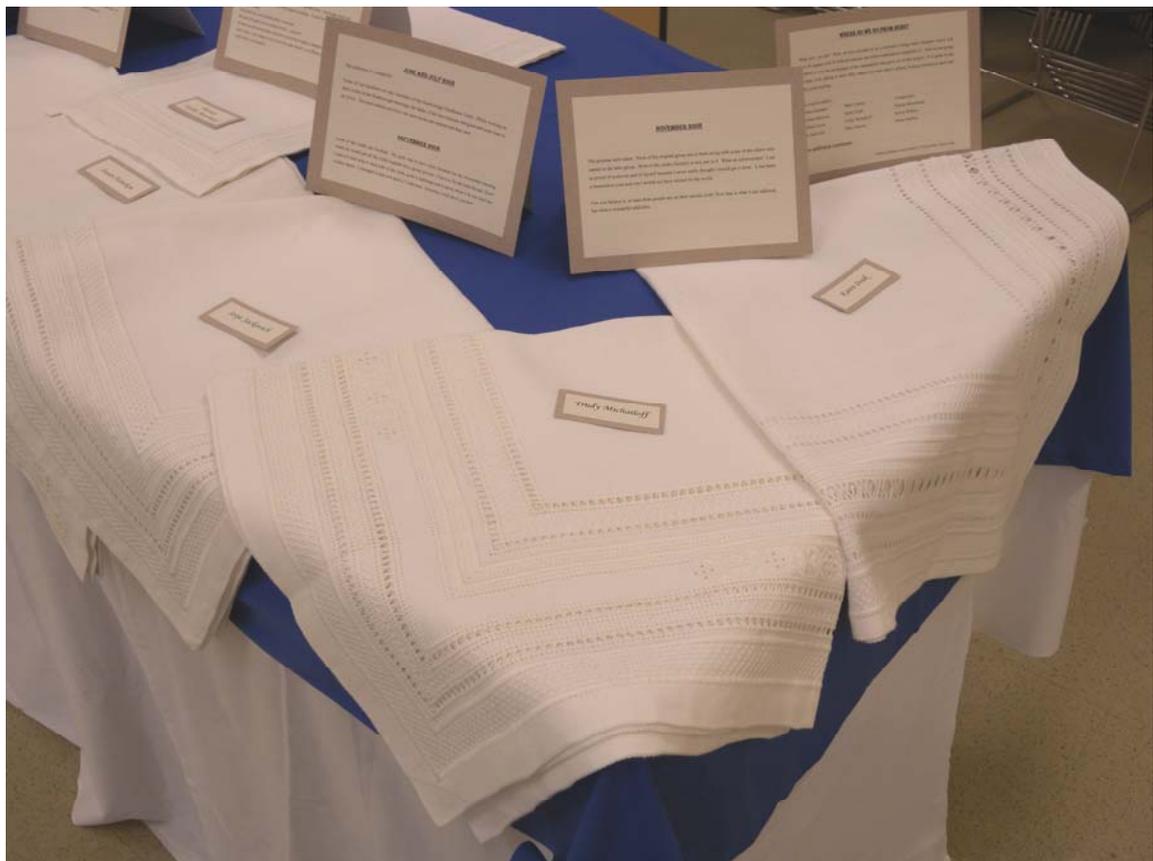
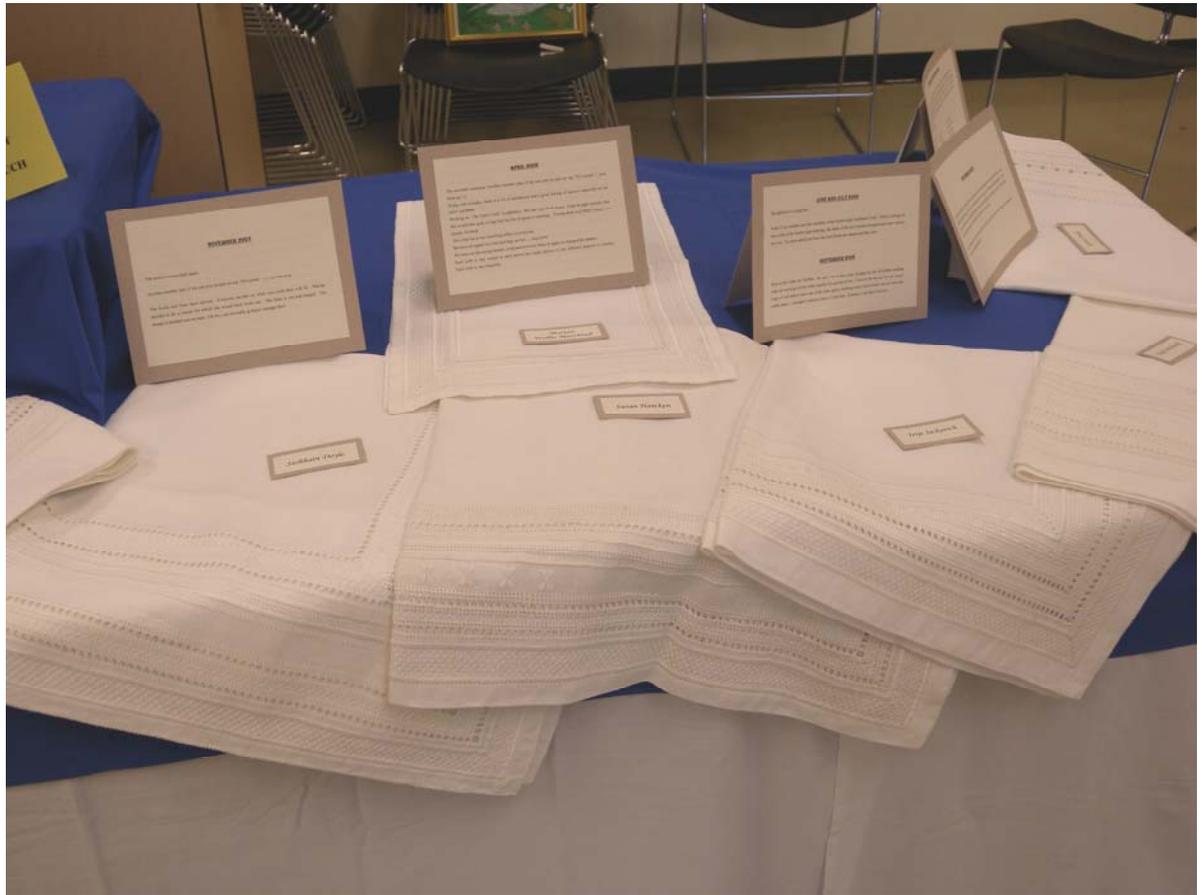
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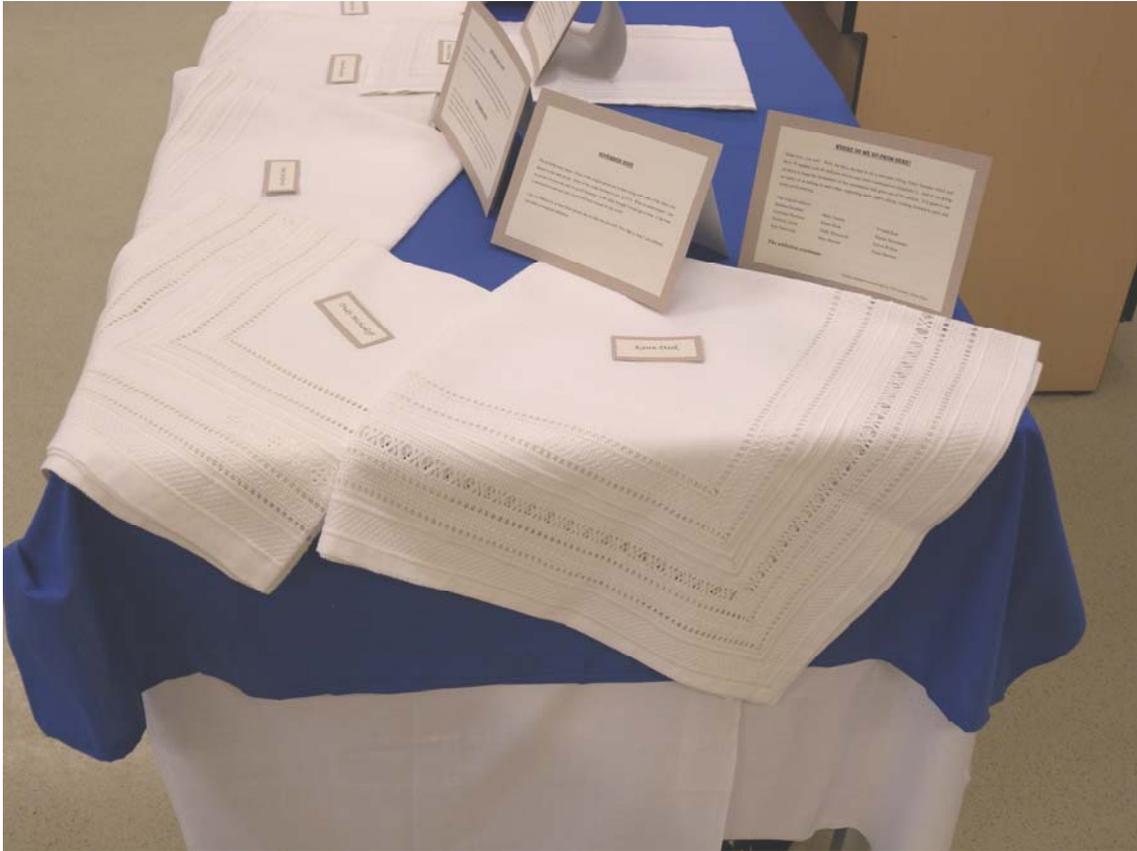












Corner Detail















