



THE Villager

◦ NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS ◦

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LBV Visit to National Gallery of Art

Bob Schreiber

Photo by Cathy Williams



Back row, left to right: Walt Cooper, Jan Barrett, Bob Schreiber, Don Christian, Marie-France Smith.
Front row, left to right: Urmilla Khanna, Kathy Utgoff, Millie Schreiber, Andrea Fus, Linda Woodrow.

A PRIVATE TOUR GROUP OF LAKE BARCROFT VILLAGE members visited the National Gallery of Art on November 1. The special occasion was graciously offered to members of the Village by Marie-France Smith of Greentree Drive.

Marie-France is a long-time docent at the National Gallery and has ushered a number of special tours for Village members and other Barcroft residents. Her November 1st tour led the group to the recently renovated East Gallery, the unique triangular building designed by I.M. Pei. Marie-France offered a stimulating review of selected paintings and sculptures that she called “Breaking the Rules,” illustrating the revolutionary concepts by artists whose work set the trend of “modern” art within our lifetime. ■

Congressional Chorus Fall Concert

Walt Cooper



I sing with the Congressional Chorus in DC. Our fall concert will take place on Saturday, November 18 at Live! at 10th and G St., NW (945 G St, NW). The concert will journey through nature, explore societal challenges and find hope in the interconnectedness of all life. The show is entitled “What a Wonderful World.”

We’ll have two shows — one at 4 p.m. with the American Youth

Chorus and a second one at 7:30 p.m. with the Northeast Senior Singers. You can buy tickets here: <https://www.congressionalchorus.org/2023-2024-season>. I’ve arranged for friends to receive a \$10 discount on your tickets. You just need to enter WALT in the promo. So please do that if you can attend! And if you can’t, I promise to sing an excerpt from one of the concert tunes for you at an upcoming Board meeting. ■

The Village Visits a Lady Who Loves Wine, Murder Mysteries, and Making Good Trouble!

Nazir Bhagat and Marcia Grabowski

NOT THE SECRETS about longevity that LBV Board members Marcia Grabowski and Nazir Bhagat expected when they went to interview Renee Gholz in September. Their visit was in anticipation of the visit by the LBV Board on October 20th to help her celebrate her 107th birthday! Renee loves to drink Sangria, loves to read murder mysteries, especially by Agatha Christie, and, in her younger days, was used to making good trouble. More about that below.

They found Renee seated at the dining table, reading the Washington Post, along with her son, Chico, and daughter-in-law, Bobbie. Bootsie, their Chihuahua, frisked about with friendly curiosity. Because Renee is deaf, Nazir had brought along a printed list of questions for her. But she was not in a talkative mood. She read the list of questions, and Nazir heard her blow a raspberry. She then said, and emphasized with a gesture, that she had already answered these same questions, referring perhaps to the interview she gave Anne

O'Neil seven years ago when she turned 100, which was published in *The Villager* (see *The Villager*, V. 2, Issue 1, FEB2016).

Renee grew up in a Catholic family on a small farm in Bruno, Minnesota, as one of six kids. Having lost her mother to the flu epidemic after WWI at age two, the county at first parceled the children out, but they were later returned to the father; her Aunt Belle eventually became the matriarch of the family. Her father was a union leader, and part of the International Workers of the World, also known as the "Wobblies," which had a major impact on the organization of American manufacturing in the 1920s and '30s, on later social struggles, and on American culture. He also made wine out of just about any non-poisonous plant, including dandelions. Renee's taste in wine is more refined now, but her father's activism partly explains her own life choices and disposition.

Renee's favorite uncle was Frank, a Sioux Indian, who took her canoeing in Minnesota swamps in order to harvest rice and blueberries. While everyone else in the family was a poor

French farmer, Uncle Frank was "exotic."

Just 5 foot tall, Renee turned out to be a star basketball player in high school, because she was able to "duck under the arms of the other, taller, Norwegian girls." She turned down a scholarship at a university, choosing instead to go to State Teachers College in Winona MN, and become an elementary school teacher.

She met her husband, Charles, who was studying to be a musician at the State College. In trying to impress her future father-in-law, a dentist, she baked a cake, but unfortunately, she had grabbed a box of plaster of paris (used for dentures). The in-laws laughed it off, and she got happily married at a side chapel in a Catholic Church. (Her father-in-law, who'd peddled books by bicycle in order to pay his way through the University of Minnesota, lost everything when the stock market crashed.) Renee soon found that being married and a teacher was forbidden, and she stopped teaching. After her son, Chico, was born, she had an accident when tobogganing,



Back row, left to right: Nazir Bhagat, Chico Gholz, Marcia Grabowski. Front row, left to right: Renee Gholz, Bobbie Gholz.

Family photo

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and was unable to have any more children.

Her husband had become a very successful musician, playing with the Hal Leonard Band, and his dance band toured the country, first in a truck, then in a privately chartered DC3 plane. During WWII, all of the band members were drafted and posted to different locations, her husband going to Minnesota. After the Second World War, Renee and her husband went to Arizona and then El Paso. Renee, in the meantime, had completed her degree, and resumed teaching at an "Anglo" school in Nogales and then in El Paso. She and her husband called themselves "migrant laborers" because they moved so many times.

Renee was happy with teaching the poorest of kids and repeaters or slow learners in eight different states during her life, whether they were Irish, German, Navajo, Hispanic or African American. Her most joyous moments were when she heard the first sentence read to her by one of her students. But she was also a fierce fighter against bigotry. Her first job in New Orleans was teaching a mixed class under a hard-core segregationist principal, who overturned an A Renee had given to one of her Black students in Math, saying that, "N..... don't get A's in this school." Renee threatened a law suit and, as a result of a compromise, agreed to be transferred to a school in the red light district, probably the poorest section of town.

Later, in Texas, teaching migrant kids, she discovered that none of the teachers attending

a National Education Association Conference, a few blocks away, was Black. As she related to Anne O'Neil in her previous interview, she stood up, all five feet of her, and said, "I am about to leave. I will not be part of a meeting where there are no Black teachers." NEA soon passed an amendment, and that conference was the last time the NEA had a conference without Black teachers.

Looking at Renee, smiling at them across the table with a sparkle in her eyes, with delicate features and a frail frame, Nazir and Marcia realized that she was amused at the retelling by Chico, of the good troubles she had caused. She had moved to live with Chico and Bobbie in Lake Barcroft in 2004, liking the Lake and its community a lot and, up until a few years ago, she was a member of the LB Woman's Club Book Club.

As Anne's article related, Renee thought the Village was a great idea, deserving of her financial support. She joined the Village, and appreciated Village members, including Sam Rothman and India Walsh, for giving her rides to co-ed luncheons, doctors' appointments, and the Village meetings at the Mason District Governmental Center; she also appreciated Carl and Adele Neuberg, for taking her on a boat ride. Her son, Chico, is a current LBV member.

Renee considered her proudest achievement as raising Chico, who turned out to be a National Merit Scholar. After sending off Chico to MIT, she and her husband bought a sailboat and, with two of their friends, sailed the east coast, the Gulf, and the Bahamas. She enjoyed being in

control when she took her turn at the helm while the others slept.

As they were leaving, Nazir and Marcia noticed beside Renee the recent books she had read or would read. They were on animal rescue, horses, and dogs, including "First Dogs," "Chicken Soup for the Dog Lover's Soul" and "Dachshund Rules." Chico told them that the main reason Renee enjoys a long life is because she takes life easy, smiles a lot, tries not to get upset, and was a hard-working farm girl. And, the fact that Renee's sister lived to be 99 and three of her brothers made it into the eighties, indicates that she must have good genes, even though her father died in his sixties. As for her diet, Bobbie used to make sure Renee ate healthy, but now, "she can have whatever she pleases." After Nazir and Marcia were just out of the door, Bobbie called them back to say that Renee had just told her that she had forgotten to talk about her square dancing!

For a woman of her era, here is an amazing quote from Renee which partially indicates how she lived her life: "If he thinks he's better than I am, he didn't get that idea from me!" ■



The Villagers and Their Hobbies

A Bale of Turtles; a Creep of Tortoises

People often question me about my email address: catsntorts@gmail.com. They understand the “cats” part but the “torts” has them confused. Some hazard a guess that I’m an attorney—not so. The “torts” part is short for “turtles and tortoises.”

Many years ago when I lived in N.Y. I was driving on a local road when I spotted an Eastern box turtle on the pavement. I stopped my car, waved a few drivers around the turtle and then picked her up. She was injured: something had gotten at one foot and had gnawed at it. I kept her warm that night and the next day took her to the vet who kept her in an incubator for two weeks and treated the maggot-infested foot. The turtle lost a few toes. She did fine otherwise and I named her Sienna. She lived with me for many years and died a few years ago. I did a painting of her with all the foods she liked to eat.

Eastern box turtles are “of interest” to New York State so people can’t just pick them up and keep them. I really wanted to keep this turtle and realized the only way I could accomplish that was to become a wildlife rehabilitator. I studied the book provided by NYS and took the exam.

The book covered all sorts of wildlife, but I was just interested in rehabbing turtles and tortoises. To learn more about them, I took a course online from Wales, Great Britain, titled “Chelonian Husbandry.” The program had

a listserv for participants to ask questions. I wondered online whether anyone lived “on my side of the pond” and, to my surprise, I got an answer from a woman on Long Island who ran a turtle rescue, Turtle Rescue of Long Island, turtlerescues.org. We became good friends and I adopted almost all of my turtles from her. Each had its own infirmity, mostly from poor care. People would run into a problem with their “pet” and turn it over to the rescue. Turtles brought in that had been injured must be returned within a mile of where they were found. If someone finds an injured turtle and has no idea where it came from (dropped by a bird of prey, for instance) it cannot be released back into the wild.

I adopted an ornate box turtle, a three-toed box turtle, two Chinese box turtles (with pink cheeks), a Honduran wood turtle (with blue eyes), two Russian tortoises and several Eastern box turtles. At a reptile show I bought a captive-bred very young Indian Star tortoise.

One of the Eastern box turtles has to be checked frequently: he didn’t receive the proper lighting and humidity from whoever had him first; thus, his carapace (upper shell) didn’t develop into a nice rounded shape. It is flat on the top. If he falls over onto his carapace he can’t right himself. If that happens directly under his lamp he could overheat and die, so I check him several times a day.

When I built the house in Lake Barcroft I dedicated one room to

the reptiles in my life. Each has his or her own habitat, about 3' X 4'.

Moving from N.Y. to Lake Barcroft was quite an adventure. I brought the reptiles down a week before I was set to move myself and the cats. My daughter and son-in-law took care of them that week. One of the turtles wasn’t crazy about his carrier (or the ride—it’s hard to tell) and paced back and forth the entire trip. I think he walked the entire way from N.Y. to Virginia.

My cats love hanging out with the turtles/torts; the room is warm from the heat/UVB lamps which the cats relish. And yes, turtles do have distinct personalities (“chelonialities”).

Jane Guttman

My Sewing Hobby

When I was about 10 my 4-H leaders taught me how to make a simple tunic top from 2 hankies. I was hooked. Sewing has been a lifelong hobby.

I learned more about sewing in a high school home economics class and in a tailoring class I took in college. For the tailoring class I even made my own dress form.

One of my first big investments at the age of 20 was a Singer sewing machine. I considered it a great luxury because it could make zigzag stitches. That Singer has followed me everywhere, and it still works well after many years.

During my working years there wasn’t much time for sewing as

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a hobby. The Singer was used mostly for utilitarian projects like making curtains and mending or altering clothes. But after I retired I had time to do more creative things. I made stuffed animals and dolls for my granddaughters and for the church bazaar. I helped with costumes for the school plays granddaughter Olivia was in and conducted sewing classes for both granddaughters.

Granddaughter Sophia chose to document one project – making a long satin dress ala Hermione in the Harry Potter series – for an English project on how she learned a new skill. She taped a step-by-step video of our efforts, including the bloopers. She never wore the dress, but the process of making it created many great memories.

This year I decided to pull out the Singer and try making clothing for myself. I soon learned my body shape is no longer compatible with standard patterns, nor is my dress form, made for a 20-year-old, a helpful tool. I discovered a company called Sure-Fit that sells kits to help you make patterns using your unique measurements. I used the kits to create a dress pattern and a slacks pattern. Theoretically these basic patterns will be useful in creating my own clothing designs.

As part of my learning process I've purchased several commercial patterns. My goal is to mix and match these patterns and to test them against my Sure-Fit patterns to ensure they will fit me.

I've made a few simple garments to practice my skills. So far

the failure rate—that is, the percentage of garments that I would never wear—is pretty high. I'm sure I'll never be a great clothing designer but it's very satisfying to plan and execute each project, and to learn what works and what doesn't. I have moved beyond the two-hanky tunic top. My 4-H leaders would be proud!

Cathy Williams

What Have I Gotten Into?

Shortly after we, my wife, my son, his wife and I moved into our new ski cabin at Bryce, I sat staring at a large beam which supports the second story loft. It is boxed-in with drywall and presents an unbroken expanse of white 12 inches high by some 30 feet plus in length—boring. I remembered seeing some canvas-covered 8-inch disks at an art supply store. Maybe I could make a painting or two on some of these disks to relieve the monotony of the expanse—a great idea, but what sort of subject? This cabin is jointly owned and used by both our families when we are at Bryce in the winter skiing. An idea struck me. Christmas was coming and we would be spending the holiday at Bryce. I needed a gift for my kids. I could paint some subject which would have meaning to them. Why not paint a scene depicting one of



Photo by Don Christian

their trips—basically a postcard? My kids travel widely and subject matter would be easy to find. I chose a trip, painted it, labeled it and dated it. Voilà, painting done; gift made; and everyone happy.

But...the following Christmas, again a need for a gift. The first painting was a success so I did it again. Remember, they travel widely. I could easily find another subject. In short, deed done. What started as a one-time project, has become an annual requirement. I decided to create at least one painting to represent a trip taken each year of their married life. This has made my life easy when it comes to Christmas presents but my kids have been married 25 years and take multiple trips most years. We have run out of space on the beam but each year the request is the same: paint

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Photo by Don Christian



us another picture. We started displaying the paintings at the left end of the beam and have reached the right end—beam full. Now, the three most recent paintings are displayed over the door to their bedroom (on the first floor, close to the beam in question) and, as each new painting arrives, the oldest of the three is relegated to a somewhat hidden out-of-the-way space. However, the paintings do still remain in chronological order. The subject of paintings has become a matter of interest for our friends as they come to visit us at our cabin. “Where have you gone; where’s the new painting; and what trip does it depict?” I see myself condemned to do at least one new painting each year—but who cares? I enjoy doing them and everyone seems to like them.

Don Christian



Send in the Cows!

I’m not sure when the cow invasion of my home began. Perhaps it was when the cute coffee mug with the cow motif arrived. Or maybe it was when I received a Holstein patterned apron. In any case, when I was working as a nutritionist in an organization funded by the dairy industry all my friends and family seemed to think I needed many items with a cow design. I’m sure that as my friends and family were shopping and saw something with a cow motif, they immediately thought of me. That was ok, but when they went on to purchase it for me, that was not ok.

Each birthday and Christmas I knew I could expect more cow items. Pretty soon every room in my home had black and white spotted articles. That was another annoying thing. Did my gift-givers think that all cows are black and white Holsteins? There are many breeds of cows: Brown Swiss, which are actually grey; Jersey, with their cocoa-brown coats; brown and white Guernsey, and many more.

I took each gift with good humor. “Oh, this stationery with cows is so sweet.” I exclaimed. And “I know these cow socks and the t-shirt will be comfortable.” The cow-designed cups and plates were useful, but some of the gifts were a bit outrageous, like the dangling cow earrings and the cow stool. The stool even had a pink udder! Gracious!

When I moved to my next job working for Horizon Organic the cow gifts did not stop. Thankfully Amazon was not available in the late 1990s, or I would have been inundated with even more cow-

themed items. A quick online search today shows hundreds, and perhaps thousands of items with a cow motif that are for sale: blankets, key chains, pillows, purses and much more!

Finally, I transitioned to a non-cow related job and moved to another state. Many of the cow items had to go! I was not sad to part with them. However, a few things have remained—the original cow mug reminds me of a fulfilling time in my career and the well-made cow apron still gets a lot of use!

Jan Barrett

Photography

There are many hobbies I have, such as reading, hiking, swimming, ice skating, and gardening. I walk through my hallway and see the pictures I took. I know it is photography which I really enjoy.

When I was a little girl, I liked to look at pictures. I had books with drawings and etchings and paintings, but I preferred photos of the surroundings, of people and landscapes.

My father was an amateur photographer and showed me pictures he had collected in a book. I saw one I liked a lot and pointed to it; “Who is this?” “This is my little girl!” Really? I was fascinated. The light was in my hair; the little girl had a wonderful smile and seemed so happy. “Do you have more pictures, Vati?” “Yes.” Then my father came with an album and showed them. They were from his life and family which I never met.

For my seventh birthday I wished for a camera and started

to take pictures. At that time the development of them was expensive and I could not experiment very much. My father became my teacher.

First you decide what you want to take a picture of. Then you check the light the object is in, you adjust the exposure of the camera, you direct the camera to the object, you see that it is in the center and click. At that time, you were not able to check the picture and you must wait until it got developed in the store, which took a few days.

When we went on trips my father had his camera with him and took pictures. My mother always became upset that he was the last to come to the meeting place and others had to wait. I stepped behind him and watched. The photos I took were not the same as my father's. What was I missing?

You must have a foreground. To get perspective and depth, you concentrate the picture on one subject and try to view it from different angles, so you get into the best position. Hold still, click.

After our vacations we compared the pictures and tried to analyze them to see what could be improved.

My father praised my progress. Wherever I went I had two cameras around my neck, a movie camera and a camera for still pictures.

As years went by cameras changed, became lighter, had better lenses and pictures could be checked right after taking them. You could easily erase them again and take another if you did not like one.

The lens became my window into the world. Photos catch a moment in the ever-changing world of life and can get recaptured any time you want to. So, I can walk through my picture gallery and see the monks sitting in front of the ruin of Angkor Wat built during the 12th century by Hindus and preserved by Buddhists to today. I walked into Vietnam's tunnels, built during the 30s under the French, many contributing to the nightmares of our soldiers. I walked on the great wall in China, saw a sunset on the Ganges River and many more beautiful sights that will stay with me forever.

My camera became my "third eye" and grew into my soul so I could discover the world and its many secrets. The hobby of photography is part of my life.

Waltraut Nelson



Clyde Williams serving Linda Woodrow a piece of baklava at Coffee and Conversation.

Photo by Cathy Williams

Making Turkish Baklava

In the 1950s our family was in Turkey for three years. We discovered Mediterranean dishes collected and enhanced by the Ottoman Empire. Our favorite

was baklava with almond/walnut filling.

The primary ingredient, or impediment, is phyllo pastry dough sheets. A one-pound package is sold frozen; each package contains two sealed plastic envelopes of dough. Each envelope has a roll of about 20 tissue-paper-thin sheets of dough (dough is raw). The roll of phyllo in the envelope is wrapped tightly in a plastic sheet long and wide enough to cover and protect the stack of sheets when unrolled. A sheet can be easily handled for less than a minute after it is removed from the stack. A dried sheet is prone to crumble when touched, so it is imperative to get it laid in a pan and lightly brushed with butter before it can break up.

Our family's baklava recipe calls for about 36 individual buttered layers of phyllo, 12 layers each for base, filling, and cover. We mix nuts, sugar, cinnamon and allspice filling before unwrapping the phyllo, and we make the syrup either in advance or while the baklava is baking. I've created several patterns for cutting the pieces of baklava, depending on the number and size of servings needed.

Baklava Recipe:

- 1 lb. blanched almonds, coarsely chopped
- 1 lb. walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. allspice
- 1 lb. phyllo dough
- 1 lb. sweet butter, melted
- 3 dozen whole cloves

Syrup:

- 2 cups honey
- 2 cups sugar

- 2 cups water
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 tsp. orange zest, grated
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract

Here is the step-by-step process for constructing baklava:

Brush a 13×9×2 pan with butter.

For the first 12 layers, lay phyllo sheets in the pan, brushing each lightly with butter.

For the next 12 layers, brush each layer with butter and sprinkle some filling on each layer.

The last 12 layers are the same as the first 12—each layer lightly brushed with butter.

Cut the top 12 sheets of phyllo to your piece-size pattern.

Poke a whole clove in each piece to keep baking layers in place.

Bake at 350 degrees for 1–1.5 hours. Check after 1 hour.

When evenly browned, remove from oven and pour 2 cups of cool syrup all over baklava.

Cool several hours to allow stiffening (set up).

After the baklava is cool, it's ok to cut through all 36 layers. I like to drizzle more syrup in all the cut lines.

This is definitely a high calorie dessert, but it is popular in small doses at family events and our church's annual bazaar.

Clyde Williams

Knitting Peace Pal Dolls ---PULL

Knitting requires some skill and concentration, but it is fun when done in a group setting. I have several dozen friends who knit, and we meet variously in person or on Zoom. These people are creative, frequently coming up with new projects, and they are



interesting conversationalists. I'm not particularly creative, so I focus on the conversational parts of our meetings. For years and years I've been knitting just one thing: a little doll called a Peace Pal.

Peace Pals are about 7" tall and may be in the form of a little boy (wearing pants) or a little girl (wearing a skirt). I frequently make them from small balls of yarn given to me by friends who had larger projects. Peace Pals have colorful clothes. They are required, however, to have dark faces in order to match the clients most often served by the organization Women_4Women_Knitting_4Peace. These clients are in refugee camps and orphanages and schools in Africa and around the world.

The hair on a Peace Pal can be wild and crazy. Somehow the weirdest options look the most adorable. Eyes and the mouth are carefully stitched on to give each doll character. Girl dolls may get



a topknot of ribbons in their hair.

I must admit that I feel more motivated to make boy dolls. I can't provide little boys with a crocheted truck or a knitted car; what I can do is provide a little boy doll. Assuming that 50% of the kids in any locale we serve are little boys, I feel the need to over-produce boy dolls to make up for the expected overproduction of girl dolls.

Is what I do practical or artistic? Dolls aren't exactly practical, yet I can't say that there is much artistry in my little dolls. What I can say is that there are children who feel forgotten and have little to play with in the way of toys, and it is special for them to be able to choose a doll from a bag filled with unique items. Each child can feel that he or she has something that is not exactly like what someone else has.

Art has an element of uniqueness to it, and I am proud of the uniqueness of my little Peace Pals. I may conclude that indeed, I have elements of being an artist. My work is not practical. May I therefore call myself an artist?

Shirley Timashev

Music

I've had many hobbies in my adult life. I've sung, played the violin, the fiddle, hammered and lap dulcimers, and piano and have had fair success with some, namely the dulcimers and violin and fiddle, and none with guitar, which it seems anyone can play. I've gotten pretty proficient with piano and voice. After retirement in 2016, I seem to have become more creative, and have started to make my own Christmas

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Hobbies

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cards and beaded necklaces and bracelets, even joining the Lake Barcroft Art League. I used to be a long-distance runner, though I'm not sure that qualifies as a hobby. I've tried Pilates, yoga and bird watching, ballroom dancing, travel and the study of foreign languages.

While I have enjoyed each one for a certain time and with different interest levels, it always comes back to music. I have sung with some excellent choirs and have recently started teaching myself to play improv piano. Of course, I've had a few sort-of disasters over the years: like the time I unwittingly auditioned for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Chorus, not knowing I was totally out of my league and almost

backing out when I walked in and heard the singer before me auditioning. And the time in high school, when I was one of the featured pianists, and one of my new contacts popped out just as they were calling my name to come up to the stage. I proceeded to start the piece, whose initial chord was to be played very loudly... on the wrong chord.

That said, I've had much pleasure and contentment playing the wonderful piano that I bought as my retirement gift. I now like playing for people, which I didn't used to like doing. And I sing with a neighbor who plays guitar. We've actually co-written a song recently... he, the melody and I, the lyrics. I have to admit, it's a pretty good song. And one thing that comes to mind in all of this, aside

from the joy that I get from playing and singing, and that I think I give to some others by playing for them, is that I no longer feel I have to be perfect.

Marcia Grabowski



Jan Barrett had a fiber art piece accepted at the Falls Church Arts Gallery. The theme of the show was: "The Alchemy of Metal: Repurpose and Re-Use". Jan wrote: "When I saw the title I thought of some rust-dyed fabric that I have. I added some couching embroidery and a few metal buttons. The title of the piece is, 'Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?'"

Jan Barrett



Photo by Rick kercz

Marcia Grabowski at the piano

