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Guild Golden Anniversary: “Looking Towards the Next Fifty Years”

By Eleanor Roberts, chair, 50th Anniversary committee

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Celebrations come daily, weekly, yearly, but a Fiftieth Anniversary is so special it calls for great celebration. The Burlington Guild is celebrating fifty years of existence in 2008 and we intend to party!!

Our official history blames our founding on the Ontario government. It says weaving classes were started in Burlington in 1954 under the auspices of the Recreation Department. Then in 1957 a consultant for Community Programs for the Department of Education for Ontario attended a class to talk about the advantages of forming a guild: such things as exposure to other weavers, workshop and conference opportunities. The class must have thought the idea had merit because a guild was founded in January of 1958. Fifty years later, many moves and much more equipment to its name, the Burlington Handweavers and Spinners Guild is celebrating its FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

The guild spent twenty years in various city-owned buildings, accumulating looms and equipment as time went on. By the time I signed up for a class with Frances Forstner, in the early 1970's, they were at “the Pines” on Guelph Line. They had so many looms stuffed in there you had to turn sideways to walk between some of them. At least that's how I remember the studio. (But my Guild will tell you my memory is fading.)

The year of our Twentieth Anniversary, 1978, we moved into a studio in the Burlington Arts Centre. (Then called the Burlington Cultural Centre.) The Studio, a gift from the members who worked so hard to make the centre a reality, has become a haven for the current members, a place to be treasured and cherished.

1988 was our thirtieth anniversary and the Burlington Arts Centre tenth. The guild members spent much time and effort that year producing two wall hangings, which are exhibited in the entrance lobby off the parking lot. We always seem to find some way to mark each tenth year Anniversary!!

Our fiftieth year as a guild will be no exception. A committee was formed early this year and has been very busy with plans for 2008. The ideas for our celebration evolved over months. The main event calls for a “Luncheon and Lecture” series spread over the year, a splashy reception at the opening of our biennial juried show in June and an attempt at writing memoirs of the guild. We would like to leave a picture of our guild as we are in 2008 for future members to read.

The luncheon and lecture series will feature, as speakers, Sally Melville on March 2, William Hodge on June 1st and Arthur Greenblatt on November 2nd. All of the events will be at the Burlington Art Centre on a Sunday afternoon. Tickets will be available through the guild as of December 1, 2007. Please think of us next year and, if you are coming this way during that time, join us for one of our celebratory events.