

National magazine honors Hampshire artisan

AUGUSTA — Susan Feller of Augusta has won the highest award as a traditional artisan in this year's Directory of Traditional American Crafts, and her work is showcased in the 2012 August issue of *Early American Life* magazine.

Feller ranks top in her field, according to a panel of national experts convened by the magazine.

The experts—curators from such prestigious institutions as the American Folk Art Museum, Frontier Culture Museum, George Washington's Mount Vernon, Hancock Shaker Village and Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, the National Trust, Old Sturbridge Village, Southern Highland Craft Guild, Strawberry Banke Museum, and Winterthur Museum as well as antiques dealers, independent scholars, and professional instructors, selected the top craftspeople working with traditional tools and techniques for the magazine's 27th annual Directory of Traditional American Crafts.

Feller's handcraft showed mastery of the art form, heritage techniques, and workmanship, according to the judges.

Feller is a self-taught textile artist. Since 1994 she has developed Susan Feller Designs at Ruckman Mill Farm in Augusta. She has created a full line of hooked rug patterns, hand-dyed wools and supplies for rug makers, and finished works for sale.

She is the author of "Design



Susan Feller's hooked rugs have earned her recognition in *Early American Life* magazine.

Basics for Rug Hookers," published by Stackpole Books in 2011, and created *Design in a Box-Frakturs*, a tool for artists to design their own decorative compositions.

"Working with fibers connects me with generations of artisans' spirits," Feller said.

The Directory of Traditional American Crafts is a special listing that appears in the August 2012 issue of *Early American Life*, a national mag-

azine focusing on architecture, decorative arts, period style, and social history from Colonial times through the mid-19th Century. The Directory has been used for nearly three decades by curators at living history museums, owners of traditional homes, and motion picture producers to find artisans to make period-appropriate furnishings and accessories for displays, collections and use.

"The judges look for authentic design and workmanship, whether the piece is a faithful reproduction or the artisan's interpretation of period style," said Tess Rosch, publisher of *Early American Life*. "Scholarship, as well as use of period tools and techniques, is particularly valued in this competition."

One goal of the Directory is to help preserve traditional handcrafts, part of our culture that is rapidly being lost in the digital age. Many of these skills were passed down from master to apprentice for hundreds of years, but now few new people choose to learn and master them. "If our traditional arts are lost, we have forgotten a part of who we are as Americans," Rosch said.

The August 2012 issue of *Early American Life*, on newsstands in June, lists all artisans selected for the Directory as well as contact information for those wanting to own their work. The Directory layout features lush color photos of many of these artworks photographed at Renfrew Museum and Park in Waynesboro, Pa.

"The Directory is a source for collectors and historic museums eager to own fine, handcrafted, period-accurate objects and also a means of supporting those who perpetuate the art forms that are such an important part of our nation's heritage," Rosch said. To learn more about *Early American Life*, for subscription information, or to purchase a copy, visit www.EarlyAmericanLife.com.