

Lynn Lerner is "Yours Truly Needlepoint"

By Helene Nathanson

Lynn Lerner runs a highly successful business, but will never see a penny of profit. Bad bookkeeping? Crooked partners? Not at all. The profits from Lynn's needlepoint shop, Yours Truly, go to charitable causes.

The shop is operated out of her home at Columbine Circle on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed in June, July and August.

Not only do all of its proceeds go to various charities, but the shop itself offers Charlotte's widest and most unique array of needlepoint materials and services.

It all started ten years ago, when Sam Lerner, Lynn's husband, was Treasurer of the Hebrew Academy and needed a way to raise funds for the school. Lynn and Carol Weiner went to the Gift Show to gather materials for a needlepoint project that would support the Academy.

The first year, they were able to fund a set of Encyclopedia Judaica, other books, as well as over \$2,000 in cash for the school.

The project proved to be so successful from the outset, that a permanent shop was established. The concept of turning over all profits to charity persisted.

Since that time, Lynn has donated the proceeds from Yours Truly to many local organizations. When she sees a need in the community, Lynn responds to it.

A few years ago, several men suffered heart attacks at the JCC. Lynn sprung into action, donating over \$400 for life-saving and medical emergency equipment.

Other projects have included a sound system and projector for Temple Israel; a kiln and a sound system for the JCC, electronic stopwatches for its swim team, and various cash contributions.

Recipients of Lynn's generosity have also been in the larger community such as the Mint Museum, Charlotte Symphony, The Heart Fund, The American Cancer Society, and numerous others.

"In the past two years, I've earmarked all of the money for a special project at the Foundation. We have not yet determined what that project is, but we have over \$10,000 in that fund now," said Lynn in a recent interview.

The ambience at Yours Truly is unique. Because this is also Lynn's home, a visitor is greeted with a warm welcome and hot coffee. "Having this shop is a fun way to be able to help others. I've met so many wonderful people I would not have been able to meet otherwise," said Lynn.

A lot of newcomers like to come to Yours Truly to meet new people. "On one day, we had women from Scotland, England, Puerto Rico and Israel. It's been very interesting," adds Lynn.

In running the shop, Lynn receives valuable assistance from Arlene Karp, Mary Woj-



Lynn Lerner

nowich, Carol Weiner, Jean Finkelstein, Lynn Cojac and Louise Bernstein.

There are two needlepoint professionals at Yours Truly who are happy to give free instruction to beginners and teach new stitches and techniques to the more experienced.

On a recent Thursday, Linda Goldsmith visited the shop and commented, "I enjoy coming here because there is a friendly atmosphere and I get lots of help on my canvases. It's comfortable and warm. I like to sit and needlepoint while customers come in. Sometimes I even meet my mother here. I come when I have a lot of time."

Linda, who is pregnant, is working on a brightly colored balloon design — the first decoration for her baby's nursery.

Helen Van Hoy, a customer and neighbor enjoys visiting Yours Truly. "Lynn is so accommodating. She has time to help me and has such good color sense. Even though she's young enough to be my daughter, I feel that Lynn's a good friend."

Diane Laird, a realtor, was

delighted to discuss her experiences at Yours Truly. "I first heard about this shop when I was taking a CPCC course. They recommended Yours Truly as a store with a complete selection of needlepoint items at competitive prices. You get the personal approach here, which I like. It's one on one help."

"When I moved to Charlotte, I didn't know anybody," said Lottie Goldman, another customer. "I received a notice about Lynn's shop and came over. I was terribly impressed. My first project was this bell pull and I haven't stopped since I met Lynn. I love coming by to visit with the girls in the neighborhood. Of course, I still have a lot to learn."

Lynn described some of Yours Truly's merchandise. "We have kits — four or five designs color-coordinated and ready to pick up. We carry travel bags with a needlepoint monogram or design, travel kits, backpacks, child's garment bags, luggage bags, tote bags and many lucite items — like picture frames. There are items here that cannot be found in other needlepoint shops in Charlotte. When I go to out-of-town shows, I purchase specific canvases for certain customers. They are delighted with this personal service. Yours Truly can have any picture copied onto a canvas. We have somebody who will personally design canvases to complement a customer's fabric."

At the age of five, Lynn was taught to needlepoint by her mother. Lynn has instructed many groups including the Florence Crittendon Home, the Girl Scouts, Newcomers and the Needlepoint Guild.

Yours Truly holds an unusual sale at the end of the year. Lynn explains, "We have an annual sale in the beginning of May. It starts with a 10-20% discount on all of our painted items and progresses to 50% by the end of the month. It enables us to clear out the year's inventory and the women appreciate the discounts."

Looking back to the time of the formation of Yours Truly, Lynn reflects, "I worried a lot in the beginning that the customers wouldn't come, that it wouldn't be a success. Now, I really look forward to Thursday. It's my favorite day of the week."



Lottie Goldman and her custom-mounted bell pull.

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