

# Karen Ratto-Whooley, CGOA Secretary

By Gwen Blakley Kinsler

At the direction of the president, the Past Presidents Nominating Committee searches for and screens candidates, using guidelines that foster characteristics of a strong board. A passion for crochet and all it means to the individual is transitioned to a passion for leadership and business management when a volunteer is selected to become a CGOA board member.

In this series, I bring my personal chats with each and every CGOA board member to you, the members. One by one, you will get to know them as they convey their personal mission to you.

## **It is my pleasure to introduce Karen Ratto-Whooley!**

A board member since January 2010, Karen says she is enjoying working as a team member of the CGOA board very much. "Everyone is open to new ideas; the ideas are discussed and not shot down," she explains. "I am open-minded about ideas and think outside the box."

Karen recalls that at one time she and her grandmother were the only crocheters in her "world." "CGOA really opened my eyes and brought a new world of crochet to me," she recalls. Being a longtime member of the CGOA professional and member lists was how she met so many crocheters and started to learn what they are interested in. "The Internet opened me up to crochet, and CGOA has made my career." Karen is a crochet designer and teacher, and attended her first CGOA conference in 2004 as a presenter on "Self-Publishing" at Professional Development Day.

Believing that CGOA chapters are one of our most powerful assets, Karen explains, "I would like to see a more positive image of CGOA. I want us to be a bigger force on Ravelry, so we can attract more young crocheters. They are hungry to learn crochet and really enjoy crocheting with patterns. If we can get them into the fold, we will build the future of CGOA."

Another positive issue Karen sees from the board standpoint is that they are determined to be "transparent" to the members. "I am approachable and am interested in hearing from members. I am very open-minded to any ideas, and if I don't have answers to members' questions, I will find them! I think it is important to use volunteers where they are best suited."

As far as the reputation of crochet/CGOA in the yarn craft industry, Karen feels we have established great rapport and support from the "Big Box" stores and manufacturers. She goes on to say, "I would like to see more crochet involvement in local yarn stores. Crocheters just need to be more assertive and approach their local stores to show their work and offer to teach classes. Join 'knit nights' and begin to show that it can be more than knitting. These stores are great places for CGOA chapters to hold their meetings, as well."

Karen is an asset to our board and a friend to crocheters. Give her a shout-out and show your support by volunteering to help or by sending your ideas of what would make up your perfect CGOA!