



BURLINGTON
HANDWEAVERS
& SPINNERS
GUILD



Warped Perspective

Issue 18

May 2008

President's Message:



We're scarcely a third of the way through 2008 and already the Guild is marking a number of changes and events. On a sad note, **Gerda Steenkist** an excellent spinner and enthusiastic guild member passed away in February. This summer we will lose **Ingrid Boesel** to the west coast as she and **Bob** look forward to retirement in their new home. We will miss her extensive knowledge, her willingness to share and the interesting fibre items and books she always

brings back from her travels. On a celebratory note we congratulate **Helen Amos** on her 90th birthday! Helen has been an active guild member for over 35 years and is still a regular attendee at meetings and the Thursday group. We are also marking the Guild's 50th anniversary with a lecture series and a memory book culled from the archives and members' recollections. We are working hard on items for the Juried Show in June, planning two workshops, and welcoming several new members to the Guild. Three current and former members – **Frances Forstner** (posthumous), **Dr Elizabeth Jarvis** and **Diane Woods** have been honoured by the Burlington Art Centre with a Pearl Award for their extensive volunteer activities over the past 30 years. All in all, the world is unfolding as it should with growth and development balancing sadness and loss.

Lois Wyndham - President

Dates to Remember!

June 2/08 - Juror's comments – from our Juried show – 'In the Garden' and a Celebration of **Helen Amos'** 90th Birthday along with our finger foods pot luck.
Sept. 8/08 - Show & Tell - what we did in the summer.

Special Dates:

May/June/08 – Juried Show – Wednesday, May 21 from 1-3 in the afternoon or 6:30 to 8:30 in the evening, take-in for entries for the Juried Show 'In the Garden', in the Textile Studio. More info - see Jan.'s Issue 17, Newsletter.

Sept. 20/08 - Five Counties Display - theme 'Anniversaries' - our guild's 50th. Incorporate Gold in the items you are working on - for our guild display. - weaving/spinning/basketry/felting etc.

<http://www.ohs.on.ca/>

Workshop Registration -1) **Silk** from Cocoon to Yarn with Harriet Boon & Barbara Scott, June 21 & 22.
2) **Peruvian Braids** with Rodrick Owen, October 4 & 5. For more information contact Joyce Newman.

Luncheon and Lecture Series:

June 1/08 - William Hodge - *Future of Fibre Arts*
Nov. 1/08 - Arthur Greenblatt - *The Unpopular Image of the artist in the Popular Culture*

Meetings General: 7:15 pm, the first Monday of Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May. Dec. and June meetings start at 6:30 pm. Sept. meeting on the second Monday. No meetings in July and August. Wednesday group and Thursday group meet at 12:30 pm each week.

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<http://www.weavingworld.ca/bwg.htm>

More Dates To Remember:

May 23-25, 2008 - WASOON, hosted by the Gateway Guild and the Trillium Handspinners and Weavers, presents "*The Path to Creativity*" at Canadore College, North Bay with **Lorraine Smith** as the Keynote Speaker.

June 1, 2008 - Luncheon and Lecture Series: Part Two: **William Hodge** speaks on *The Future of Fibre Arts*. Lunch at 12:30 pm, at the Burlington Arts Centre. Contact **Eleanor Roberts** at 905-6537-1788 for tickets.

June 6-8, 2008 - Ontario Handspinning Seminar, in Barrie, Ontario. For info visit:
<http://www.ontariohandspinningseminar.ca>

June 22-28, 2008 - HGA's Convergence 2008, will be held in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Visit: <http://www.weavespindye.org>

June 28-July 2, 2008 - Complex Weavers Seminars - keynote speaker, "*In the Eye of the Heddle*", **Peter Collingwood**.

Visit: <http://www.complex-weavers.org/seminar.htm>

Mark your Calendar - May 1-3, 2009 - 2009 OHS Conference: "Fibre Unleashed": "Pushing the Limits" to be held at the Nottawasaga Inn near Alliston.

Members News:

From *Diane Woods*: **THANK YOU!** I would like to thank the Guild for nominating me to receive a Pearl Award on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the BAC. I am deeply touched and honoured to represent the Guild in this way.

Congratulations to Diane Woods, Jennifer Earle and Joanne Van der Linden for their winning articles in Kaleidoscope. Sorry, I haven't got pictures of Diane's or Joanne's; this is Jennifer's Shawl.

We will miss *Joan Lidkie* as she starts a new part of her life with her daughter in the USA.

The **Study Group, Colour & Weave**, is meeting the 2nd Monday in the month. That's May 12 this month. Come and see what's happening!



What's The Perfect Scarf For You?

The Sales team is looking forward to the Christmas Sale, and lots more items for sale. In order to assist you in creating the most saleable items, we conducted a short survey at Kaleidoscope.

We designed an easy, 8 question survey which was extended to every visitor to the Studio during the weekend. Thirty-six people (31 of them women) responded, and this is what we learned:

Length: Everyone indicated that long scarves were preferred. Long enough to wrap around the neck doubled, or knotted and to the waist.

Fibre: Most popular was silk (19) with wool and cotton close seconds, both with 15 votes. The low showing of tencel and acrylics may have something to do with the buyer's knowledge of fibres. Note that many respondents checked more than one.

Ease of Care: Although five people indicated that ease of care was not at all important, most scored from 3 to 5, when 5 was Very Important and one was Not At All.

Colour Preference: This was a pretty even split, although Brights (jewel tones) were highest (14), with Pastels at 12 and Neutrals at 9.

Purpose: Again an even split between Comfort (20) and Fashion (21). Perhaps our third option, Duty, was too vague.

The other interesting question asked what else they were looking for but did not find.

One respondent suggested there were not enough handwoven goods available.

Dresser scarves were requested, as were place mats. One person indicated that she preferred shorter fringes, and another suggested we use inkle bands to create watchbands, bracelets, and brooches. Two people were looking for goods woven by specific weavers. One of these weavers did not have items for sale.

Armed with this knowledge, we trust that the Christmas Sale will see lots more scarves. Long ones, in your choice of colour or fibre, woven for comfort or fashion. There are lots of summer days to dream about big pre-Christmas income, but only if we have it for sale. Let's get weaving!

Submitted by *Ruth Thoen & Jennifer Earle*

Guild Golden Anniversary: "Looking Towards the Next Fifty Years".

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, 2008, *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.

Eleanor Roberts, chair 50th Anniversary committee.

We're 50 years old!

Founded in 1958, the Burlington Handweavers and Spinners Guild are the oldest guild in the BAC. Weaving and Spinning are both ancient crafts, but they're also evolving. Spinning wheels have become smaller and lighter for portability, and spinners are spinning new fibre. The bigger changes have been in handweaving. In a time where commercial fabrics have become plainer, changes in materials and equipment have allowed Handweavers to create cloth that is far more complex.

Helen Amos has been a member of our guild since 1968, but learned to weave in 1958. I've been weaving since 1981, but have inherited samples and other treasures from the 50's from Victoria Wipper of St. Catherines. "Aunt Vic" was a close family friend, and my inspiration to become a weaver.

What's changed? Let's look at 25-year snapshots, from **1958**, **1983**, and **2008**.

What are we weaving?

1958 - Placemats, inkle loom belts, and woolly scarves for sale; blankets if you had access to a wide loom; yardage for special family clothing. I have a sample of wool tweed that Aunt Vic wove for a jacket for her husband. The fabric has 24 ends (warp threads) per inch, crossed by 20-doubled weft thread per inch. Helen ordered silk from Ireland to weave a wool and silk sports jacket fabric. But what Helen calls the "California Influence" was starting - bright, chunky yarns replacing fine threads.

1983 - Helen's "California Influence" had created a trend for big chunky wall hanging. Mohawk College's weaving program required starting with 2 semesters of Off-Loom weaving, but that prerequisite was dropped about 1983. Placemats were still the biggest seller at guild sales, and we were still weaving woolly scarves, throws, and shawls. 8 to 12 threads per inch in each direction were common, and everything over 15 was considered "fine" weaving. Some weavers wove fabric for clothing, but the heavier, more loosely woven fabric was not suitable for tailored, shaped garments. Weavers wore loose square cut garments, inspired by traditional ethnic designs.

2008 - Placemats are less popular, but kitchen towels have become a decor item. Tea towels are our big seller these days. Most buyers don't want to care for wool, so throws and baby blankets are made with cotton or acrylic. Handwoven scarves are fashion accessories, often in silk or tencel at 24 to 30 threads per inch each way. Many of us are also using hand dyeing techniques for unique pieces, and some of us still make one-of-a-kind garments.

Supplies & Suppliers

1958 - Helen remembers weaving primarily with cotton or wool, and buying most supplies from South Landing Craft Centre in Queenston, owned by Rie Bannister. Linen came from Fawcett's in Boston, finer wool from Scotland. You ordered from snippets of yarn taped to a sheet of paper, and the quality (or the lack thereof!) wasn't always evident. She also remembers a Winnipeg supplier, who's samples and 1958 price list I found in my treasure box. 2/8 cotton (the size we still use for tea towels) ranged from \$1.60 to \$2.55 a lb. (\$12 to \$19 in today's \$), depending on the colour. Lots of fine threads, some novelty yarns, including chenille, described as "silky type" - looks like today's rayon chenille, 4 colours, white, beige baby pink, and baby blue, \$2.35 per lb. From that price list "please DO NOT SEND POSTAGE STAMPS! IT MAKES OUR ACCOUNTANT VERY UNHAPPY."

1983 - South Landing Craft Centre in Queenston was still a major supplier, but we also had Handicraft Wools, north of Oakville, and mail order from Maurice Brassard et Fils in Quebec. Cotton and wool were still the main fibres available. That "California Influence" meant many of the finer yarn had disappeared, but we had lots of texture - yarns with lumps, bumps, loops, and fuzz.

2008 - Ted Carson of Handicraft Wool and Bill Bannister of South Landing (son of Rie Bannister) have both retired. With the decline of local knitting shops, and with Internet sale, Ontario's several mail order suppliers are now catering to knitters as well as weavers and spinners. Free trade has meant easier access to yarns from the US, some through those local suppliers, others by ordering them direct. We still use cotton and wool, but have so much more available - mercerized cotton, silk, and many beautiful new fibres like tencel, soy silk, corn silk, and bamboo with a great range of yarn sizes. What has remained from the "California Influence" is the wonderful colour selection.

Looms and Techniques

In it's simplest form, a loom is a frame to keep the warp threads in order and under even tension. For longer pieces of fabric, a roller with brakes is added to store a longer warp and the woven cloth. To speed up the weaving, each warp thread goes through a heddle. The heddles are suspended in shaft frames, so all the threads on the same shaft move together. The weaver can now throw a shuttle between the raised and lowered threads. 2 shafts allow the raising and lowering of alternating warp threads, for plain weave. 4 shafts mean you can move 1, 2, or 3 shafts together for more complex fabrics.

1958 - Leclerc has been making looms in Quebec since 1901, and their 4-shaft counterbalance loom dominates the market. Most of the looms in the guild studio are Leclerc counterbalance - they're the ones with paired shaft hanging from rollers. Shafts are tied to treadles. Pressing the treadle pulls down the tied shaft(s) and raises the partner(s). The counterbalance means light treading, but treading an odd number of shafts may be a problem. Members wove twills and twill variations (fabrics with diagonal lines, herringbone, various diamond patterns), overshot (think - colonial coverlets), lace weaves, and more. Pattern books were available, or the weaver could design her own, filling in squares on graph paper to get a weave structure schematic.

1983 - Leclerc is now producing the jack loom. Levers (jacks) under each shaft are tied to the treadles and pressing the treadle lifts the corresponding shaft(s) - a little heavier treading, but independent shaft movement. They're also making looms with more than 4 shafts, and a couple of guild members now have 8 shafts. 4 shaft allow only 14 possible lift combinations, but moving up to a loom with 8 shafts means 254 combinations - the patterning potential has just exploded. There aren't many 8-shaft books out, and designing is still done with graph paper and a pencil.

2008 - Leclerc looms still predominate in Ontario but guild members now own looms from Louet (Holland), Glimakra (Sweden), Schact (Colorado), Macomber (Maine), and AVL (California). Fiberworks PCW is a computer design program introduced in 1988 by guild member Ingrid Boesel and her husband Bob. Weavers on every continent (other than Antarctica) use it to create original designs. The newest loom in the guild studio is a dobby loom from Louet. Think - player piano. With the increase in possible combinations with 8 (or more) shafts, the weaver quickly runs out of space and leg reach. The loom has a loop of wooden bars, one for each throw in the pattern repeat. Pegs in the bars press the keys to lift the shafts, eliminating the physical design restrictions. Several members also have looms in their studios with a computer-controlled dobby - instead of having to insert peg in bar, the computer design program fires solenoid pins to press the keys that lift the shafts. Those looms have 16, 24, or even 32 shafts. 2 members have drawdown for damask weaving. And looms for handweavers continue to evolve. Ingrid has now taken several workshops on a Jacquard loom that allow each warp thread to lifted individually for pictorial fabrics.

So where are the fibre arts going? Come and hear **William Hodge**, weaver and fibre artist, instructor at the Ontario College of Craft and Design, at our luncheon and lecture on June 1, 2008.

Submitted by **Joyce Newman**

An Adventure of a New Guild Member:

Your editor asked if I'd write about my Adventure. I said, "It's not even about weaving!" She said, "It doesn't matter. It's something different". "Okay!" I said.

For four days in the month of March 2008, my husband and I went dogsledding. He and I stood on the back of a sled and let five Canadian Inuit sled dogs (reestablished breed) pull us over frozen lakes and swamps, through the woods, and up and over beaver ponds and damns in Northern Minnesota.



The best part of this trip was the dogs. They are bred to want to pull and enjoy people. They are always glad to see you and always are ready to pull the sled. In fact the problem is trying to get them to stop. It took two people (my husband and I) both with our feet on the sled brakes to get them to stop. Even when stopped they are barking and jumping against their harnesses trying to (rip the sled from your grasp) move the sled forward. The warning to all mushers is to "never let go of the sled". If you do let go the dogs will just keep on running. It'll be a long walk home!!!

The dogs pulled the sleds 12 to 15 miles each day of our trip. We helped push the sleds up the hills and slowed the sleds on the fast downhill runs. At the end of each day we returned to the kennel, fed, and watered the dogs. Afterwards we would walk to the lodge for a meal prepared by a 4 star chef who gave up the big city life so that he could live where the fishing is great! Every night's sleep was preceded by a hot shower (or sauna for the achy bones, tired legs etc). It was a great trip with a good combination of fresh air, roughing it, and comfort.

The DOGS REALLY WERE THE BEST PART! You really got to know the personalities. You got time to spend listening to the sounds of the deep woods as they pulled you and your partner silently, with only the close of the sled runners on the snow beneath you. Where you could hear other trekkers talking and encouraging their dog team on. But, when all was finished, when we looked back, packed our stuff in our cars to leave, we would love to do it again. You know you can't help but take a little of those dogs with you.

Submitted by **Sarah Schmidt**

Ed Note: We all hope we'll see Sarah again, she is such fun! We wish her well with her new loom and new weaving skills.

Paper, Metal & Stitch: Creating Surfaces with Color & Texture

By Maggie Grey and Jane Wild - 128 pp. Interweave Press, Loveland, CO, 2005 ISBN 1-931499-97-7 \$33.95 CDN

Paper, Metal & Stitch is a do-it-yourself guide to mixed media textiles by forming, cutting, tearing, embossing, and stitching paper and metal. Its abundant photographs and easy-to-follow directions provide plenty of inspiration for those who want to explore paper and metal either on their own or in conjunction with fibre textiles and basketry.

The book is divided into two parts – paper and metal- with each part focusing on basic techniques suited to the particular medium, and then combines both media with stitching.

Part One: *Paper* - looks at paper texturing by cutting, tearing, burning, crumpling, creasing, ruching, piercing – the list seems endless. Think of all the things you do just before you throw away a piece of paper (like crunching it into a ball and tossing in into the recycling bin) and it's probably covered as a paper texturing technique. It also covers methods of etching paper and creating your own paper. Embedding and embossing paper (and the appropriate tools you may find around the house to do this) rounds out this chapter. The chapter on paper shaping provides many inspiring photographs along with detailed instructions for creating your own molds and calligraphy from a wide variety of materials, as well as utilizing everyday household objects or purchased molds.

For colour and metal effects on paper, the book covers sealed and non-sealed surfaces using paint, dye, bronze and luster powders, metal leaf (e.g., gold leaf) gilding wax, transfer foil and embossing powders. While many of these effects are used in stamping and scrap booking, the ideas and combinations presented here raise these effects from everyday to art.

Stitching paper I was used to; stitching 'tear away' lines on penny sale tickets was something I did for high school fundraisers! *Paper Metal & Stitch* covers both



hand stitching and machine stitching of paper, including reinforcing the paper, creating structural links between pieces of paper, as well as the use of fusible thread and soluble films. It also covers the weaving and beading of paper, though is a more rudimentary fashion.

Part Two: *Metal* - looks at colouring and shaping methods for metal that are similar to those for paper. But the stitching of metal is what really revved my creative engine! The idea of machine stitching metal started me worrying about my faithful old sewing machine. However, once I viewed the large scale, close-up photographs I was convinced!

A fine sheet metal available in art stores, called shim, is a flexible soft metal ideally suited for embossing, shaping, and stitching. For those who want to get started at a lesser expense, the book recommends collecting empty (used) flexible metal tubes from tomato paste or onion or garlic purée. Hand stitching can be used to fix metal wires and coils in place and beading can be added for further texture and brilliance. The book also includes techniques for working with heavier copper enameling blanks.

All the new ideas can be a bit overwhelming if you devour this book in one sitting as I did! However, the sections on combining techniques really are the "show stoppers". I immediately thought of ways to apply paper and metals as details in my handwoven baskets. My fingers itched to embellish a scarf with embossed and stitched metal shim details and beads. Now that I think of it, there's that scarf that just didn't work that I'm dying to experiment on and there used to be a partly used tube of olive paste in the fridge! Both a visual and instructional delight, *Paper Metal & Stitch* provides many jumping-off points for experimentation by the fibre artist.

Reviewed by **Pat Hood**

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance.

Hot Websites:

The Needle Emporium, Ancaster, ON. Julie Schilthuis love to play with colours and assist customers.

<http://www.needleemporium.com>

Elann.com has four exciting Spring/Summer yarns coming your way in May! For a preview of what's to come, we've placed all of these upcoming yarns on our Sneak Peek page.

<http://www.elann.com>

Syne Mitchell has launched her new on-line weaving magazine.

<http://www.weavezine.com>

The Thread Project: One World, One Cloth began in 2001. Since then, seven world cloths, representing the seven continents, *materialized* from the individual threads gathered worldwide.

“Some say our world is hanging by a thread. I say – a thread is all we need.” – Terry Helwig, Founder

<http://www.threadproject.com/asp/default.asp>

Smart Flix: Spinning & Weaving: All kinds of interesting things on this website!

<http://smartflix.com/store/category/101/Spinning-Weaving>

York Sett Arts and Crafts: blog by Laritza M. Taft

<http://www.yorksett.blogspot.com/>

Here's a link for spinners that Sharon Gowland shared with Pat Hood: Look at the crazy fibre combinations in the yarns and the prices they sell for!

<http://www.pluckyfluff.com/>

From: Joanne Hall <joanne@glimakrausa.com>
I have instructions for making paper quills (and lots of tips) in my FAQ at:

<http://www.glimakrausa.com/faq.html#WeavingTemple>

Diné (Navajo) weaver puts a whole new spin on Spiderman and how he got the loom.

<http://www.dinewoven.com/>

Bergdala Spinnhus: handwoven, sewn - clothing, home furnishings - academic dress. Kerstin Fröberg. I opened Spinnhuset in 1999. I work with textiles in many ways. Sometimes I spin, often I weave, or sew, or mangle...

http://www.bergdalaspinnhus.com/index_eng.html

Burlington Handweavers and Spinners 2008 Executive

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