



FROM THE EDITOR | Madelyn van der Hoogt

There's a lot in this issue about our history—that is, the history of the twentieth-century revival of handweaving in the United States. I became a weaver in the 1980s, after the revival was well on its way. I didn't know anything about that, of course; I thought weaving had always been there. It didn't strike me as miraculous that in my nearby town of 60,000 in the middle of rural Missouri, I could visit a store called The Weavers' Store—full of weaving books, all kinds of looms, and shelves and shelves of yarn. Frequent workshops by famous weavers from afar were held there (in tapestry, drawlooms, transparencies, rugs, block weaves, and more). New books, looms, yarns, and classes were added almost weekly. You had to visit often or you'd miss something.

I didn't know when I went to my first guild meeting (of what is now the Columbia Weavers and Spinners Guild) that I'd still be in touch with many of its members twenty-five years later, no matter where I moved. A weavers' guild is like a family. Your home guild is your family of origin.

I loved the stories they told of their early meetings. Established in 1947 on a weaver's front porch, the Columbia guild met monthly in members' homes. The membership had to be limited to fit in them, so they had requirements for joining. As I remember, you had to actually weave something. You showed them your stuff and were then admitted (or not?) by secret ballot.

They served tea in silver tea sets and dressed up for meetings (dresses, stockings, heels; see "When We Wore Pearls," pages 66–67). They were all women. You had to commit to a weaving project at the start of each new year, and during it, you presented a program about your project. You could rent a loom for twenty-five cents a week. As early as the 1950s, they demonstrated at the county fair and entered their work in exhibits there. In guild minutes from the late 1950s, in fact, one member reports that other organizations "are complaining that too many blue ribbons at the Boone County Fair are going to weavers." By the end of the 1950s, guild membership reached eighteen and the guild had outgrown weavers' homes.

In the 1980s, there were 100 members and they met in a church rec hall. The weaving requirement had been eliminated along with the secret ballots. You only needed an interest in weaving to join. That was lucky for me because that was all I had—a sudden, passionate interest. From my first meeting, guild members were my teachers and friends. Much of the revival of handweaving is owed to weavers' guilds.

Madelyn

Handwoven®

VOLUME XXVIII

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

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Handwoven (ISSN 0198-8212) is published bi-monthly except July/August (five issues per year) by Interweave Press LLC, 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655, (970) 669-7672. USPS #129-210. Periodicals postage paid at Loveland, CO 80538 and additional mailing offices. All contents of this issue of *Handwoven* are copyrighted by Interweave Press LLC, 2007. All rights reserved. Projects and information are for inspiration and personal use only. *Handwoven* does not recommend, approve or endorse any of the advertisers, products, services or views advertised in *Handwoven*. Nor does *Handwoven* evaluate the advertisers' claims in any way. You should, therefore, use your own judgment in evaluating the advertisers, products, services and views advertised in *Handwoven*. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited, except by permission of the publisher. Subscription rate is \$31.95/year in the U.S., \$35.95 in Canada, and \$38.95 in other international countries (surface delivery). Printed in the U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Handwoven*, PO Box 469106, Escondido, CA 92046-9106.

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January/February 2008: *Weft- and Warp-faced Weaves (rugs, runners, tapestry, more).*

March/April 2008: *Spring is for Lace (Bronson, huck, and Swedish lace; canvas weaves; spaced threads; bright spring colors; linen, silk, and cotton; iridescence).*

May/June 2008: *Fabrics for Interiors (coordinated textiles to decorate a room; Fabric Forecast fabric designs; announcing Synchronized Swatches contest winners).*

September/October 2008: *Weaving Worldwide (projects inspired by weaving around the world—Japan, Scandinavia, Latin America, India, Africa, Turkey, and more).*

November/December 2008: *Fulling and Felting (fulled fabrics, fabrics with holes that don't ravel, fabrics with waves and bumps—the magic that happens with wet finishing).*