

Olympia Weavers Guild

Historical Summary

1944-1945 Grace Wilder proposed the formation of a weaving study group under the Home Economics Department of AAUW. The object of the organization “is not for social gathering but to help each other in learning and doing the art of weaving”. There were nine charter members.

1949 The group left the auspices of AAUW and became an independent group called Thurston County Weavers’ Guild. “So few belonged that the offices of president and secretary were rotated like musical chairs”.

1950 Dues were \$1, membership \$17. Later, dues became \$2 (“\$1 of this to be put in an education fund”). The Coach House rent was \$1 per meeting without use of the kitchen, \$3 with. During the early years exhibits among guilds throughout the US were exchanged for study, some charging a fee of \$5 if an exchange did not take place. Olympia received exhibits from Florida, Nebraska, Tennessee, a hat exhibit from Detroit, Ohio Valley Hobby Weavers, Topeka, an upholstery exhibit plus others. Our Olympia Guild was responsible for keeping two locked display cases filled in the museum, coordinating with other guilds throughout the state to take their turn.

1951 The name was changed to Southwest Washington Weavers’ Guild (and in 1968 to our present name). A loom was purchased from Lillian Hjert for \$30 “on time”. This loom could be rented by a member for \$.50/week or \$1.50/month. A one-day workshop “Ideas in Color” was attended by nine members, each paying \$.50 to attend.

1952 A tea and weaving display at the Coach House was held inviting nearby guilds with a notice in the newspaper with names and phone numbers of several members. It was not open to the public but people interested in weaving and allied crafts could be invited by word of mouth. Two looms were displayed with a spinning demonstration given by Garnet Fawcett Riley. By-laws were amended “so that eligibility for membership required having the use of a loom and being an active weaver”.

1953 The guild loom was warped for towels, bags, and articles which were saleable. In conjunction with a tea and demo in the Coach House, items were sold with the Guild’s share 20%. A class project within the Guild was initiated, setting up Rosepath as in Berta Fry’s book and following the book lessons. Florence Kruse and another member started a weaving program at Grand Mound Girls’ School.

1956 The Guild was invited to attend a Seattle Weavers Guild meeting to discuss a proposed "Northwest Handweavers Conference". Six members attended. The conference was held in March at the Student Union Building on the University of Washington campus, cost \$5 to attend for three days. In 1956 Grace Wilder produced the first yearbook at the cost of \$2.75 for mimeographing. There were 19 members.

1957 Joined the newly formed Washington Arts and Crafts Association. Twenty members this year. Assisted a paralyzed young man at Resthaven who used weaving to improve arm mobility.

1958 Irma Robinson gave two 3-day workshops at \$20 per day plus motel bill "and a small charge for warp" with members bringing their own warped looms. Workshop was open to the public.

1959 Possibility of getting "one-day workshop on short draft, summer & winter, Bronson and Swedish" for \$30.

1960 A very lean year with Treasury, at one point being down to \$1.04 with a member owed \$8.12 for paying a bill with her personal check. Jane Hopkins gave a program on color, later Herbi Gray and Pat Miller did one on rugs. Looms set up at handicapped center and some teaching by members plus setting up a table of student work at Kiwanis Club's Pancake Feed, with Florence Kruse and Laura Burrus as sales clerks. In November a guild project of working with "adult young people" was started. "20/2 warp from Grants cost \$16.80 and floss from Lilly \$5.49".

1963 The library had seven books with subscriptions to several periodicals.

1964 Plans to enter a booth in the 2nd NW Weaver's Conference held in the Multnomah Hotel in Portland were withdrawn because "it seemed too great an undertaking for so small a group". A delegate was sent instead. There were 19 members, including Ruth Bassett, Dorothy Fitzgerald, Blanche Schultz, Leila Hootman, Florence Kruse.

1966 A spinning demo-preparation of materials for spinning" was given by Katherine Todd.

1967 After years of meeting in various places, including the Museum at times, the Museum was agreeable to our proposal of "free use of the Coach House with free parking; locked cupboard for our library; use of all Museum facilities free". The Guild did

not participate in the 3rd NW Weavers' Conference in Spokane, but several members attended. Featured speaker was Kaye Garrett of San Francisco.

1968 Dues were raised to \$3, with the "extra dollar to be used as our contribution to the Museum". There were 29 members including Clara Chapman, Mary Esperanza, Herbi Gray, Edith Garling, Faye Holden, Jane Hopkins (President), Barbara Lindgren, Bette Merrin, Pat Miller. Marjorie Heuer later joined, making 30. Four members attended Tacoma's 3-day workshop by Hal Painter, tapestry and rug weaver from San Francisco.

1969 UW hosted the NW Weavers' Conference and Mary Pendleton was the featured speaker. Ten OWG members attended.

1972 The Association of NW Weavers' Guilds organized with a quarterly newsletter. Study Groups were started. Program Committee also did traveling loom; membership was 36.

1973 Betty Esteb continued to cover issues of Handweaver & Craftsman using material woven and donated by members. Twining study group. The 6th Pacific NW Handweavers' Conference was held in Vancouver; OWG won "Best Use of Space" ribbon, members assessed \$1 for booth expense. A member of Portland Guild was very impressed with our British Columbia display, "The Vested Interest", and requested slides and photos to be used for a program/speech for HGA Convergence in 1974. Library open on regular days in summer; club loom available to weave on. Maple Lane School for Girls, volunteers in spinning and weaving from Guild. Budget for 1973-74 of \$115.25 based on 33 members. Programs/workshops--Sylvia & Harold Tacker, Noel Hammock. 1972-73 membership was 36.

1974 June tea honoring Laura Burrus and other members with long memberships. Laura made a lifetime member. Subscriptions--S.S.&D and Handweaver Craftsman; dues \$5. Peter Collingwood in Seattle. Tacoma/Kitsap guilds wearing loom-formed garments were our guests for a "Super Giant Show 'n Tell" (quote from Dee Milne's minutes). Edith Garling reported 24" folding 4-H Jack loom kit sold for \$100 from Sunshine Loom in Lincoln City, Oregon. Bought second traveling loom, a Dorothy, for \$80. Conference cancelled because of gas shortage. Membership at 44.

1975 Hazel Pattison announced new spinning group to meet 2nd Friday at Coach House. Programs on Indigo Dyeing, Linen Spinning, Animal Fibers, Silks & Synthetics, Dog Hair. Conference in Pullman, WA. Ruth Wick announced Keep me Warm Tonight purchased in memory of Laura Burrus. Budget estimated income and expenses at \$200 for the year.

1976 Workshop by Nel Znamierowski. Members made a coverlet and sold raffle tickets. Warps were set up on looms of Zada Sigman and Florence Kruse. Mini-workshops initiated. September membership 51. Old cabinet found to hold guild looms, etc. Die Milne to make doors, all to be painted by Edith Garling. Convergence in Pittsburgh.

1977 Participated in Olympia's Bicentennial Jubilee with a display. Coverlet drawing held, profit \$615. Three members teaching at Olympia Senior Center and Morningside once per week. 1976-77 membership 50. Members approved a suggestion that in the future there be two Pacific NW Conferences held the same year, but in two different locations. A Weaver's Study Course purchased in memory of Cleo Adams. Guild donated a loom to Museum's Treasure Trunk for school demonstrations. Third traveling loom purchased. Lovely summer day at Barbara Haight's farm for a "Fleece to Rug" day. Conference in Victoria, BC; theme "Heirlooms for Handlooms". June luncheon at Mary Ann Zechmann's home, "Linens Unlimited". Members brought handwoven placemats with coordinating tableware. Carol Murphy elected Secretary of 1977-79 NW Handweavers.

1978 Important by-law addition: "that the President should serve on the Board the year prior to her term as President". Librarian, Dee Milne, started checkout system using cards attached to book cover. Standing committee for Workshops started. Dues raised to \$7.50. Workshops: Jean Scorgie, Irma Robinson. Program of note: Jan Burhen, Virginia Harvey, Clara Chapman. 1977-78 membership 68. Thurston County Fair exhibit and demonstrations.

1979 Constitution revised by Eleanor Hintz and Edith Garling. "Weaving Unlimited" there for 9th Biennial Conference at Whitman College, Spokane, co-chaired by Mary Ann Zechmann and Gail Larson. Booth received "Honorable Mention" ribbon, from among 65 entries. Newsletter started. Katherine Todd becomes Guild's 2nd Honorary Member. Carol Murphy designed new letterhead. Ruth Wick in charge of silent auction/luncheon. Workshops: Helen Richards, Nancy Hoskins, Ken Weaver (\$170 plus hotel), Ted Carson. HGA wrote "regarding objections to the Florida Convergence due to non-ratification of the ERA by that state:--ending in cancellation of that event. Entered "Sheep to Shawl" contest at Western Washington Fair, Puyallup, Shirley Thompson coordinator. In September, 67 paid members. Dues were \$7.50.

1980 Workshops were Anita Mayer, Paula Simmons, Mary Snyder, Clotilde Barrett. Program: Peg McNair. Puyallup Fair, "Sheep to Shawl" 12-hour contest. 4th place on Handwoven Article; 2nd place on Guild display; Thurston County Fair, Special Award, Outstanding Exhibit.

1981 "Weaving Ahead" NW Weavers Conference at Eugene, OR; coordinators, Mary Esperanza and Judi Weston; booth, Honorable Mention award. Workshops: Jean Wilson, Susan Snover, Co-authors of Doup Leno; Sylvia Tacker and Hella Skowronski gave a working program. Study groups were Multi-Harness, Coverlet, Garment, Spinners. NW Weavers Ass. Dues raised from \$.25 to \$1 per guild member. Dues for Guild became \$10. Gail Larson instrumental in creating OWG tote bags; Herbi Gray, OWG buttons; Bette Merrin compiled recipes of Tea Treats for continuing money raiser. Regine Berdinka, Coordinator of Fairs: Western Wash Fair at Puyallup, weaving display, 1st place; "Sheep to Shawl" Handwoven Article, 2nd place; Overall Award, 1st place; money earned bought a carder for Guild use. Thurston County Fair: Special Award, Outstanding Exhibit. First National Spinning and Weaving Week was observed.

Bibliography: OWG minutes 1947-1968; 1973-1981. Records from 1972-1973. Laura Burrus' History 1944-1966. Jane Hopkins' recollections; Florence Kruse's recollections.

Compiled by Barbara Roberts, President (1981-82)

The following section of history was compiled based on reading newsletters for the period beginning with the 1982-83 year, ending June, 2014. The section is intended to summarize significant happenings in the guild. Compiled by Ardith Hamilton, President (2009-2010 and 2013-2014), with thanks to Eleanor Hintz, who has kept all of her newsletters, beginning September 1978!

1982 Newsletters were one page; the budget for the year was \$990; and postage was \$.20. Study groups included Multiple Harness, Coverlet, Garment, Simple Sample, and Spinning.

1983-84 Members collectively wove a 14 foot rag rug for the Crosby House, Tumwater, at the request of the Daughters of the Pioneers. There were 97 members. The guild won Best Guild Effort for their booth at conference. October was the first annual guild Show and Sale, held at the South Sound Center; members paid a fee to sell at the event.

1984-85 Carol Murphy was the newsletter editor. Members spent time looking for projects that would use thrums. The 2nd annual Show and Sale grossed \$1444 in sales.

1985-86 Dues were raised to \$10. The October class was "Designing Weaving on a Computer" by Herbi Gray. The computer? A Commodore 64! Complex Weavers is mentioned.

1986-87 Members were thanked each meeting for bringing treats and a flower arrangement. Mention of the flower arrangements ceased in the fall of 1986. Workshop fees were commonly \$25 to \$35 and field trips were a regular activity. A study group called "Night Weavers" began, as did Tapestry. Night Weavers later became the "Evening" group and still later, the "Saturday" group. There is a note that the traveling loom was reinstated. Won 1st prize at the Sheep to Shawl and Spinning Exhibit at Puyallup Fair.

1988-89 The Showcase drawing was instituted with strict rules for entering (i.e. items using the same warp = one entry with an additional entry if the item was consistent with the theme of the month). Study groups for the year were Basketry, Tapestry, Weaver's Fancy, Garment Study, and the Evening Group. The newsletter appears to have been written on a computer. The Show and Sale was held at the Scottish Rite Temple and included a fashion show. Budget for the year was \$3201.55. Dues were increased to \$15 for an individual, effective the following year. Weaving related items were sold as a guild fundraiser.

1989-90 Programs for the year were presented by groups of OWG members, except for one. Newsletters became consistently more than one page. The Show and Sale was held at the Olympia Hotel on Legion Way. Members paid \$5.00 to sell, with 5% of

sale money going to the guild. Show and Share became "Showcase". There were 104 members. The guild participated in "Connecting Threads", a centennial celebration. The tradition of a "President's Column" in the newsletter began, but read a lot like a summary of meeting activities; there was a "Member of the Month" feature as well. A study group called "Support Discussion Group" was added. Hazel Pattison edited the newsletter.

1990-91 Guild meetings were held at St. John's Episcopal Church. The President's column became more "chatty", and the newsletter featured a ewe talking to her lamb. The Show and Sale grossed \$5545.

1991-92 The "Whatever" project was inaugurated, now known as "Yarn in a Bag". The grant program began and became the "Hazel Pattison Grant Fund" in 1992. The guild began working to achieve tax exempt status and incorporation and by-laws were revised, not without lively discussion and disagreement, to allow membership to anyone interested in weaving. State non-profit status was achieved in 1992. It was interesting to note a number of birth announcements for members (their children, not grandchildren).

1992-93 The library valued their collection at \$3699. Achieving break-even workshop budgets was an issue.

1993-94 A sale and luncheon was held in January as a fund raiser. Bank balances were \$2369.40 in checking/savings; \$1114.35 in the grant fund. After making further required by-laws amendments, the IRS granted 501 © (3) status, retroactive to 1992.

1994-95 The guild relocated, now holding meetings at the Gull Harbor Lutheran Church.

1995-96 Dues were increased to \$25 individually; being voluntary in 1996, becoming mandatory in 1997. A year-long study of huck lace with the traveling loom was begun. OWG hosted the COE in dyeing. In February of 1996, meetings were moved to the North Olympia Fire Station, #7, our current meeting location.

1996-97 Study groups mentioned were Color Study, Evening Group, Garments, Spinning, and Tapestry. Membership was 39 weavers, the budget was \$4200 for the year. A proposal to create a homepage for the guild was tabled. Book reviews were a regular part of the newsletter and fund raising for the grant fund a regular activity.

1997-98 OWG had an exhibit of members' work at the Coach House and an "Expert of the Month" was available to answer questions before meetings.

1998-99 The "Expert" or "Areas of Expertise" section was added to the yearbook. A partial or pro-rated dues schedule for new and partial year memberships was started

and the Grant program was expanded to include both Enhancement (\$500) and Education (up to \$200) grants.

1999-2000 At the ANWG Conference OWG received “Best Use of Conference Colors” (booth), “Best Weaving” (Erica Plotkin), and “Judges Choice”, “Best of Show” (Regine Carey) awards. Members were able to receive the newsletter via email, which contained full versions of the minutes from the meeting (versus highlights). There were 71 members; 26 participated in selling at the Show and Sale, which grossed \$4881.58.

2000-01 The Evening Study Group became the Saturday Study Group. Regine Carey won two Best of Category and a Grand Prize at the Puyallup Fair.

2001-02 At the ANWG conference in Eugene, Oregon, the OWG booth won “Best Interpretation of Theme”, 2nd in “Overall Craftsmanship”, and “Best of Show”. Regine’s book won the 2nd “Judges Award” and an HGA award. Marjorie Erickson won the Mountain Loom contest and donated her award (a Mountain Loom) to the Guild; Lana Schneider won 3rd prize in that contest, also donating her award.

2002-03 Lots of members won lots of awards at the summer fairs; Erica Plotkin’s kimono won a 1st and an HGA Award for Weaving Excellence at RAGS, 2003. The Show and Sale grossed \$9000. An article in Handwoven magazine featured Marjorie Erickson’s linen huck towels that won the Mountain Loom competition.

2003-04 This was Lana Schneider’s 10th year at the Thurston County Fair. Dues were increased to \$35 for individuals and the Show and Sale percentage to the guild increased to 15 and 20% of sale amount. Study groups included the Big Twill, Shibori, Spinning, Evening (Saturday) and Baskets. A group was teaching weaving to the Girl Scouts.

2004-05 OWG co-sponsored, with the Seattle Weavers Guild, the 2005 ANWG Conference, held in Tacoma. For our booth at the ANWG Conference, we won the “Use of Monochromatic Color” award. Lana Schneider, Marise Person, Joy Winther, and Erica Plotkin all received individual awards.

2005-06 Kate Jantz-Koprivnik won Homemaker of the Year at the Thurston County Fair. The Show and Sale was moved to the Coach House. The process of raising money to purchase new bookshelves began; a separate savings account was opened; and we began investing in CDs. The budgeting process was aligned with the fiscal year (7/1 to 6/30). There were 77 members. Study groups included Spinning, Saturday Morning, and Baskets. “Your Just Desserts”, a dessert cookbook was created as a fund raiser, Carol Murphy in charge. Non-bank account assets had a value of \$10,437.

2006-07 Lana Schneider, Kate Jantz-Koprivnik, and Marjorie Erickson won multiple awards at the Thurston County Fair; Marjorie and Kate also were big winners at the Puyullap Fair; and the Sheep to Shawl efforts netted a blue ribbon for the third year in a row. A fall exhibit was mounted at the Olympia library and a third category was added to our grant program, Educational Outreach.

2007-08 Once again, we were well represented by winners at the Puyullap Fair. Our “Yarn in a Bag” project was fun, with Betty Marcelenas’ winning entry of a doll and her wardrobe. A decision was made not to make guild donations to charities and to allow the sale of weaving-related items at regular meetings, with the guild receiving a donation of 10%. The Conference booth was recreated for display at Batdorf and Bronson’s. Lana Schneider’s art fabric was displayed at the Convergence Gallery Exchange.

2008-09 The Show and Sale was moved to the North Olympia Fire station; 25 members sold items and the gross income was \$6,494. We participated in Arts Walk with a display at Canvas Works and had a fall display at the Tumwater Library. The guild website was up and running. Our membership was 82.

2009-10 At the ANWG Conference, Marise Person won “Best Use of Color” for her jacket; Mimi Anderson won “Best of Show”; and Erica Plotkin, “Most Surprising”. Fall library exhibits included Olympia and Tumwater. With the membership renewals, members were asked to participate in a survey about the guild, utilization of programs, and recommendations for improvement. We again won first place at the Puyullap Sheep to Shawl. Open Studio tours began, with a different member’s studio open regularly throughout the year. There were 92 members and advertising on our website was offered for the first time.

2010-11 An award, “Best Interpretation of Conference Theme for our booth at the ANWG Conference. Another first at the Sheep to Shawl and fall displays in both libraries. Long-term planning for the new library shelves resulted in lovely bookcases, thanks to Michael Plotkin and Bill Green.

2011-12 The Yearbook was printed to include photos of members. Our new website was evolving; the library displays continued to occur; we won another first prize at the Sheep to Shawl. The Show and Sale was expanded to include a Friday night wine, cheese, and cookie reception and show hours on Saturday and Sunday. The Show and Sale grossed, \$11,100, the highest amount ever! Members began working to create a new banner with handwoven/crafted letters. Liability insurance, discussed over the years, became part of the yearly budget. Our fiscal books were finally on accounting software and a laptop computer was purchased for the Treasurer’s use. The ANWG and HGA representative positions were combined.

2012-13 The Show and Sale grossed \$12,726. Lana Schneider, Kate Jantz-Koprivnik, and Edith Garling won many awards at the Thurston County Fair, including Champion and Reserve Champion awards. Audrey Hoffman was honored by the Broadway Gallery in Longview for 30 years with the gallery. A fall program, “Legend Showcase” featured longtime guild members with nearly 150 years among them: Hereta Gray, Edith Garling, Dee Milne, and Eleanor Hintz. The process of digitizing historical samples began. Study groups included the following: Banding Together, Basketry, Spinning, Second Saturday, and Shelton (rigid heddle) groups. The “Yarn in a Bag” program was repeated with Marianne Hoepli creating the Yarn in a Bag Farm. Awesome!

2013-14 The Show and Sale was our 30th and it was our 20th year with a presence at the Thurston County Fair. Terry Schurke won Grand Champion with her huck lace shawl. Once again, we participated in Arts Walk. Nancy Sedlacek and Erica Plotkin organized a public presentation at the Olympia Library, “Fiber; Our Common Thread”, which included demos, a talk, and a display. Marjorie Erickson taught two classes for beginning weavers and the Creative Approach Mobile Education Loom project (CAMEL) was started by Judy Parkins. We had a display at Lakewold Gardens for the second time and received an ANWG grant for our “Partnership for Success” program which will take place in 2014-15. There were 82 members this year. The tradition of purchasing a book for the library in honor of members who have passed away continues.

Bibliography: Newsletters from 1982 through 2014.

Compiled by Ardith Hamilton

As I read through the newsletters to glean items for this history, I was struck by how, as a guild, we have participated in so many events and public appearances for so many years. The Thurston County Fair, the Sheep to Shawl event in Puyallup, the annual Show and Sale, the library displays, the every-two years ANWG conference, New Weavers classes, several workshops each year—the list is extensive. I was also struck by how often the same people are mentioned as organizing or participating in one event or another and how valuable those individuals have been to the guild.