



Volume 24, Number 1 - Spring 2017

Preserving Zapotec Weaving Traditions

Steve Cspike and Ann Schunior; photos by Ann Schunior

In many traditional cultures, if you are born into a weaving family in a weaving community, you grow up seeing and learning about textiles and your culture, acquiring skills and knowledge, and eventually become a weaver or spinner or natural dyer. In this manner, traditional ways are passed from generation to



Porfirio Gutiérrez

generation. But as families start to use commercial dyes and markets change, this knowledge is in danger of being lost. Porfirio Gutiérrez and his family are working against this trend to preserve their Zapotec textile traditions.

Porfirio, the ninth of eleven children, recalls, "As kids we would play around my father's big loom and watch as a new design would emerge. He would tell us about the symbols he was weaving and our Zapotec heritage." Porfirio's mother carded wool and spun yarn. Porfirio's parents learned from



A rug on the loom

their grandparents, and so it went as far back as anyone in the family can remember.

The Zapotec culture started about 10,000 years ago in the Oaxaca Valley of



Porfirio explains that the motif on top and bottom rows represent Walk of the Serpent, also called Shape of the River; the motif in the middle is Sacred Necklace, made of seeds from plants that are considered sacred foods.

southwest Mexico (now part of the modern state of Oaxaca). The Zapotecs originally were backstrap weavers using local cotton. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish introduced sheep, floor looms, and spinning



Master dyer Juana Gutiérrez Contreras, Porfirio's sister, using the cochineal metate, with baskets of dyestuffs in the background.

Creating A Connected Textile Community

MISSION

To foster a global network of enthusiasts who value the importance of textiles to grassroots economies

PURPOSE

Exchange information

Raise awareness of the importance of textile traditions to grassroots economies

Mobilize textile enthusiasts

Create conversations that result in action

CORE VALUES

Textiles are an important component of the human experience.

Networking and sharing information creates an environment for constructive action.

Making connections between textile artisans worldwide promotes positive social change.

Interacting with people who have similar values enriches our lives.

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corrections to:

info@weavearealpeace.org

or mail to

Weave a Real Peace
c/o 6182 Pollard Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823

The deadline for
contributions to the
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Send articles and
correspondence for
the newsletter to:

Linda Temple
1230 NE 70

Oklahoma City, OK 73111
lgtempleok@gmail.com
405/478-4936 (phone)

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New Markets for Njabini Wool Crafters

Janice Knausenberger

A group of motivated Kenyans are transforming their lives by adding value to wool from sheep raised sustainably in native grasslands where endemic and endangered birds, including the Sharpe's Long-claw, live. The Njabini Wool Crafters Cooperative, dedicated to improving livelihoods and raising public awareness, officially was formed in 2012. This cooperative grew from a few members of the conservation group



Friends of Kinangop Plateau, who, in 2004, had loosely formed to promote weaving and spinning since employment is a challenge in this remote area of the Aberdares Mountains. In addition, the members educate the public on environmental issues and work with local sheep farmers to conserve the birds and promote improvement of sheep breeds and farming practices.

The major focus of my visit in Njabini in May 2016 was to work with them to produce handspun woolen throws of high quality and light weight. We worked intensively to improve each step of production. Precision in all areas, from washing to spinning to weaving, was a necessity. They blended wool, spun various novelty and standard types of yarn, and experimented with new designs. By the end of three weeks, two throws of different designs were

beautifully woven. At one kilo or barely two pounds, each throw measured approximately 51 inches wide by 72 inches long, with additional generous fringes.

I returned with the two throws to the US, where a designer I know commissioned more throws, including new designs. Through the use of Fiberworks PCW (weaving software), the team in Njabini and I could work together. It has also been a boon to have internet calls for free where challenges and changes can be easily discussed.

The production of their first international order was a learning process. Njabini now has a better grasp of production time and supplies needed. They are working on attaining more looms and smaller pieces of equipment that will speed production.



The throws shown are either in natural colors of black and white or with a tan from a natural dye. Since that first order, Njabini has produced more pieces, modified some designs, woven new designs, and used other natural and/or commercial dyes.

Njabini Wool Crafters Cooperative is now working on accessing local high end markets. Their goal is to become sustainable in the near future. In the past year, they moved into their new workshop and are currently training more spinners and weavers to meet the demands for their processed wool. They have come a long way since 2004 when they only wove rugs on nail looms attached to the walls.

Janice consults with weaving groups in Kenya, particularly addressing technique, design, and efficiency. Her personal expression in fibers comes by incorporating her experiences and loves in life in complex, often pectoral, weavings of painted and dyed threads. She can be reached at jgknausen@gmail.com



WARP Governing Board

Philis Alvic
Lexington, KY
philis@philisalvic.info
Term expires 2018

Teena Jennings
Granville, OH
tj9@uakron.edu
Term expires 2017

Judi Jetson
Weaverville, NC
judi@judijetson.com
Term expires 2019

Cindy Lair
Boulder, CO
laircowgirl@msn.com
Term expires 2017

Sara Lamb
Grass Valley, CA
lambspin@gmail.com
Term expires 2019

Judy Newland
Longmont, CO
newland.judy@gmail.com
Term expires 2018

Karen Searle
St. Paul, MN
ksearleart@gmail.com
Term expires 2018

Susan Weltman
Brooklyn, NY
sweltwoman@gmail.com
Term expires 2019

Rita Chapman
Administrative Coordinator
info@weavearealpeace.org

From the WARP Office

Rita Chapman

I draw your attention to a list of very special WARP members on page 6. These individuals and groups have given donations that help WARP not only to maintain



our organization, but also to meet our mission, to "Create a Connected Textile Community".

In addition to WARP's General Operating Fund, which funds the day-to-day expenses of the organization, you have seen reference to the Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship, the Endowment Fund, and Operating Reserve. What are these? The numbers are in the annual budget report every year, provided in the first newsletter after the annual meeting. The details behind the several Funds are below, along with information about how to help WARP enable more members, artisans, and textile enthusiasts to be part of our annual meeting.

First, be sure to read this year's announcement of the Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship 2017 application process (page 8). The Scholarship Committee will select two students to receive scholarships to attend the meeting. (Please share the article and website with interested friends!) The WARP Board approved funds to cover room and board for two worthy scholarship recipients.

In addition, this year the board designated up to \$2,000 from the General Operating Fund to assist members who could not otherwise attend (page 6). This is also available to artisans who would benefit from the experience. You'll find

the criteria for applying for this new assistance in this newsletter also.

If you wish, you can donate to help pay for these stipends using PayPal and our email address info@weavearealpeace.org, or by going to our website at <http://weavearealpeace.org>. You may also mail a check made out to WARP, c/o 6182 Pol-lard Avenue, East Lansing, MI 48823, and indicate in the memo that your donation is to be used to help fund the scholarships. The more funds available, the more people we can help get to the meeting.

In addition to the Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship Fund, WARP has two other funds to help cover expenses of the organization. First, the Endowment Fund was created to help WARP to meet our mission, and to grow the organization going into the future. Next is our Operating Reserve, available in case of financial emergency, to cover day to day expenses if it were ever required. Luckily WARP has not needed to tap the Operating Reserve!

When you donate to WARP above the cost of your annual membership, you can designate which fund you prefer to support, should you desire. You can also simply allow the Board the flexibility to assign funds within the budget as required from year to year. As a designated non-profit under the IRS code, your donations beyond the cost of the \$50 membership may be deductible (consult with your tax advisor).

If you have questions about any of these funds and how you can help WARP help others, please contact me at info@weavearealpeace.org.



Great Opportunity to be More Involved with WARP

Nominate yourself or another member to become a WARP board member in 2017. Consider the possibility of working with other dedicated members, giving yourself the opportunity to thrive under the common WARP mission and goals, as

well as giving back to the WARP organization.

If you have questions and/or would like to put your name or someone else's forward, please contact Teena Jennings, by email tj9@uakron.edu or by phone 519/565-4047



Member Profile

Susan Schaefer Davis: A Lifelong Love of Morocco

Gloria Miller

After finishing college in her native Minnesota, Susan volunteered with the Peace Corps in 1965 and was soon living near the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, where she learned Arabic and worked with women teaching home economics skills. Those two years evolved into lifelong friendships, academic work, and a deep appreciation of the textiles of the local area. While Susan was in Morocco, her husband Douglas went to India as an exchange student and after their graduate studies they went together to Morocco where they worked on their dissertations.



Susan began as a psychology major with a desire to help other people and found her way to anthropology, which provided her with skills to assist those who are healthy rather than focus on pathology. During her time in the Peace Corps she came to know and appreciate the strength of the women in Morocco and focused on them in her doctoral studies. Her dissertation *Patience and Power* argues that women in Morocco do have power in ways different than Western eyes might see. It was published in 1983 and is still a respected resource. She and Douglas collaborated on a related book *Adolescence in a Moroccan Town*.

Susan started to collect Moroccan rugs to bring back for friends and this project evolved into a 1994 website which was a very early version of online sales. It still

features the work of women in two villages and displays pictures of the artisans along with their work. <http://www.marrakeshexpress.org/weaversoverview.html>. She has since been trying to make sales more self-sustaining and learned of a younger Peace Corps volunteer who works with artisans to sell directly to international customers from their cell phones using a shared site: <http://www.theanou.com>

Over the years Susan has been involved in teaching and research in the US and Morocco as well as consulting for various national and international agencies. She has facilitated rich cross-cultural encounters by leading tours focused on people and arts of Morocco. Her current project is a book on the textiles of Morocco and their makers which will be published next year by Thrums Books. She brings a wealth of knowledge to this project and more importantly, deep personal connections, including an adopted Moroccan daughter.

Susan's connection with WARP began when she met Alice Brown at a Quaker meeting in Haverford, PA, where Susan lives. Alice introduced her to Deborah Chandler, then working with Pueblo to People. She soon after became a board member and has continued as an active member and regular donor of textiles to the annual auction. She is happy to connect with other WARP members at sdavis@uslink.net; <http://www.marrakeshexpress.org/>

Gloria Miller is a Sister of Mercy and has been working with a knitting group in Peru for many years. She became connected with WARP when she started weaving in 2006 and continues to enjoy weaving and her weaving connections all over the world. She can be reached at gmillerrsm@gmail.com

Susan's LAST Public Tour to Morocco Forming Now

Susan Schaefer Davis writes: "Many of you know I lead tours to Morocco every spring. Well, I have some big news this year.

If you have told yourself for years that you'll take one of my trips "someday" - the time is NOW! While I love showing people Morocco, finding those who want to go is too time-consuming. So this is the LAST year I'll be offering my trips open to the general public. In addition to the usual sights, my introductions to local people in their homes and villages make these trips unique and memorable experiences not available elsewhere.

I will still offer trips for groups that gather participants themselves, like museums or WARP or family groups, but the trip below is the last of my open-to-everyone trips. Let me know if you'd like to come ASAP, to be sure you get a spot.

[<sdavis@uslink.net>](mailto:sdavis@uslink.net)

This link is to my last general tour, focused on textiles but seeing many other sights in iconic Fes and Marrakesh, this May 27 to June 5 or 8 [with an extension to Essaouira].

<http://www.noblejourneys.com/morocco-tours.php>"

2017 Newsletter Copy Deadlines

V24N2 - Summer 2017- May 5

V24N3 - Fall 2017 - July 28

V24N4 - Winter - October 27

Save these dates and send your contributions to the Newsletter!

Contact me at lgtempleok@gmail.com if you have questions. Thanks!



WARP Board Crafts Strategic Plan for 2017-2019

Judi Jetson

In early February, the WARP Board held a strategic planning retreat facilitated by Liz Gipson, a well-known writer, weaving teacher, and fiber activist. We began with an SWOT analysis, reviewing our organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats which led to choosing strategic directions for 2017-2019. We re-affirmed our mission to foster a global network of enthusiasts who value the importance of textiles to grassroots economies, and our role as a networking and education organization. Three committees are now being formed to advance this work over the next three years:

- **Evaluate Structure** to clarify roles and improve internal processes.
- **Foster Public Conversations** to create more dialog in public forums and among members.
- **Advance Leadership** within WARP and between like-minded organizations.

Each committee will seek participation from WARP members, as it's vital to our organization that members become actively involved. If you're interested in stepping up, let me know your preference (judi@judijetson.com) and I'll forward it to the right person.



Special Scholarships Available to Attend WARP Annual Meeting

Judi Jetson

Dear fellow WARP members - We're looking forward to seeing many of you at the annual meeting in Oaxaca June 8-11, and want to do everything we can to make sure that our "simple living" members can attend. We've designated up to \$2,000 from our General Operating Fund to pay for scholarships for members who could not otherwise afford to attend. This is also available to artisans working in your country, that you recommend, who would benefit from the experience.

The process is simple; each applicant needs to write a letter (or email) explaining why you would like to attend, how your attendance would help advance WARP's mission, and the amount needed. Generally, we hope to subsidize the registration fee and perhaps a portion of the lodging for those in need, and encourage you to find a way to pay for your transportation. But ask for what you need and we will do our best. If selected for assistance, the applicant will be asked to provide a

few hours of help with tasks associated with the meeting. A small committee of 3-4 current and former Board members will review all applications received by April 15th and let you know what we can do no later than April 22nd. Write as soon as you can; your letter should be addressed to judi@judijetson.com or you can mail it to Judi Jetson, 3 High Bluff Drive, Weaverville, NC 28787

WARP members have a long tradition of privately providing this assistance to one another, and we also encourage anyone who is willing and able to add to the funds available for this scholarship to send a contribution, which will help our monies go farther. Your contribution can be sent via Paypal to info@weavearealpeace.org or you can send a check if you prefer. Designate it to 2017 meeting scholarship.

Thanks, and let me know if you have any questions.

There wasn't room in this issue for more **Books You Want to Know About**—which turns out to be publications in all formats by WARP members—and look forward to the continuation of this feature in an upcoming issue. LT

Thanks to WARP Donors....

Patrons

Susan Abouhalkah

Helen Brotherton

Sandy Cahill
Kansas City Fiber &
Weavers Guild

Maggie Leininger

Missoula Weavers Guild

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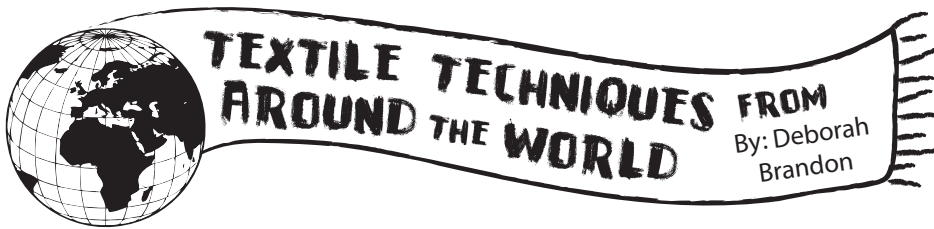
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Susan Weltman





Scotland: A Waulking Tradition

"Hill ù ill ù ill è hó

Horó 's tù mo chuachag

(Horo, you are my darling)

Hill ù ill ù ill è hó

Gur muldach tha mi (Sad am I)

'S mi air àirigh Ghlinn Cuaicheadh

(At the shieling of Glen Cuaich)

Mi cur rif' air an osan

(Putting a reef in the hose)

Dol a chrosadh Ghlinn Cuaicheadh

(About to cross Glen Cuaich)"

Ten women sat around the table, pounding the handwoven blanket on the table to the rhythm of the waulking song. Pound and pass, pound and pass. Following tradition, they passed it on to their neighbor on the left, sunwise. Pound and pass. The meaningless refrain "Hill ù ill ù ill è hó" kept them thumping the cloth in sync. It also lightened the work. Pound and pass.

A textile straight off the loom is stiff and a bit loose. These days, many weavers soften and thicken woolen fabric by submerging it in the bathtub and swishing it around vigorously. (Some stomp on it.) I prefer to agitate it in my washing machine. Every so often, I check the progress to ensure that the cloth doesn't felt and shrink too much, to the point where it cannot function as I intended.

Waulking is an old Scottish method of fulling handwoven fabric. The technique causes the blanket to soften and make it waterproof. First, the weaver sews the ends together to form a circle. The waulkers then wet the fabric with a solution of soap and water. (In the past, as depicted in the TV series "Outlander," instead of soap and water, the women used stale urine, which made the dye fast.) Once they arranged the wet fabric around the table, it was time to waulk it.

Though hard work, waulkings were fun occasions, providing opportunities for socialization. One woman sang a one or two line verse and the rest of the women sang the refrain. If the cloth needed. If the cloth needed a touch more fulling, the leader added verses, and to raise a laugh, she interjected gossip into her verses.

My favorite waulking experience took place at Chautauqua, NY, where Norman Kennedy was running a weaving workshop. Norman, a traditional weaver born in Aberdeen, Scotland, was dedicated to preserving Scottish textile traditions.

Uninterested in the workshop, I sneaked in just for the waulking. I suspect the only reason I got away with it was that my daughter was with me. A little girl at the time, too shy to sing with the adults, she stood on a chair to pound and pass the cloth in sync with the rest of us.

Pound and pass.

Resources:

From Wool To Waulking With Norman Kennedy, DVD, 2012

"Warp, Woof and Waulk: Shrinking the Tweeds in Vermont," by Marialisa Calta, ***New York Times: Home & Garden***, March 16, 1989 (<https://tinyurl.com/h9jnt6g>)

Norman Kennedy—Master of Traditional Arts (<https://tinyurl.com/zp3wzbc>)

Sgioba Luaidh Inbhirchluaidh (Inverclyde Waulking Group) <http://www.waulk.org/>

The House of Scotland

(<http://www.houseofscotland.org/waulking.html>)

Deborah Brandon is a multi-talented mathematician and former board member. She can be reached at 412/963-7416 or at

brandon@andrew.cmu.edu

Textile Tour to Bhutan in 2017

Wendy Garrity writes: "I'd like to share with other WARP members the release of a specialized textile tour to Bhutan **November 23 – December 9, 2017**. This year we are joined by Patrizia Franceschinis, who has lived in Bhutan since 1982. Married to a Bhutanese, Patrizia is an enthusiastic collector of textile art and handwoven textiles from south Asia-Southeast Asia. Patrizia applies 21 years' work in women's development with international and non-governmental organizations with a life-long interest in textile design and hand-weaving.

"We will travel as a small group of 11 guests, with two guides. I will also accompany the group to provide expertise on weaving *kushutara* (the intricate supplementary weft brocade used for women's festival dress). We will cover all the major sights as well as providing unique experiences through our local contacts, along with hands-on dyeing and weaving opportunities.

Further information and a link to request an itinerary can be found at <http://textiletrails.com.au/2016/12/09/2017-textile-tour-of-bhutan/>



Alice Brown Memorial Scholarships To Be Awarded for Annual Meeting in Oaxaca

WARP on the Web - <http://www.weavearealpeace.org> features WARP history, annual meeting information, member access to the directory, and past newsletters. You can join or renew your membership online.

“Like” WARP on **Facebook** – Find ‘Weave A Real Peace’ in the search bar on your personal Facebook account to follow what WARP members share and to make posts to the page. Click ‘Invite Friends to Follow’ to promote WARP to other Facebook friends.

WARP Blog - To subscribe to receive an email when a new article has been posted, click on ‘Blog’ in the main menu at <http://weavearealpeace.org>. Enter your email address where you see ‘Subscribe to the WARP Blog Via Email!’ To contribute an article to the blog, please email info@weavearealpeace.org

Google - You are invited to join our Google Group. If you want to join please email Rita at info@weavearealpeace.org to be added.

Katie Simmons also maintains a WARP presence on ravelry.com, the knitting networking site; and on Weavevolution, <http://www.weavevolution.com>. Please send her information at ktd26@hotmail.com.

Alice Brown was a generous WARP member who donated the funds to establish an ongoing scholarship program. Each year, WARP offers scholarships for students and fiber artists 35 years or younger to attend our annual meeting. This is a great opportunity for early career individuals to be impacted by what WARP has to offer.

Offering the scholarship each year is a way for WARP to expand the membership while offering a huge opportunity to a person early-on in their career in textiles. Alice Brown’s original donation was the seed, but the fund now relies upon the ongoing generosity of WARP members.

Please consider helping to sustain the fund by making a donation this year.

This year the scholarship will cover the costs of attending our meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico from June 8 to 11. The scholarship covers conference registration and housing fees. Please help spread the word about the scholarship to interested young people and professors.

The scholarship application is now fully online at http://www.weavearealpeace.org/warp_scholarship/ and the deadline is March 31. Applicants are encouraged to contact Kelsey Wiskirchen with any questions at kelsey.viola.wiskirchen@gmail.com.



WARP Goes to MAFA

The MidAtlantic Fiber Association (MAFA, <http://www.mafafiber.org>), a consortium of approximately 50 fiber guilds from eight states and the District of Columbia, is holding their biannual conference July 20-23 at Millersville University, PA. WARP member Carol Ireland attended the WARP annual meeting in Santa Fe and was inspired to help further the goals of WARP by including a WARP gathering at the MAFA conference. The conference committee has agreed to schedule a WARP presentation during breakfast on Friday, July 21. This will be a chance for WARP members attending the conference to connect with each other, and for others to learn more about WARP.

If you’re attending the MAFA conference, please come to the WARP presentation. If you’re looking for a summer workshop opportunity, check out the many wonderful workshops being offered at the conference at <http://www.mafa-conference-2017.org>. If you’re participating in a different regional workshop, consider working with the workshop coordinators to add a WARP information session to help “spread the word”.

The session will include introductions of WARP members, a showing of the YouTube video “The World of WARP” (find it on the WARP website), and a discussion of what WARP has to offer its members.

As mentioned above, WARP is on YouTube! You can learn more about WARP by viewing our two wonderful YouTube videos. One is a two minute version of WARP’s fascinating work, background on our mission, and how we network together, *What is WARP?* The second is a longer, nine minute version suitable for sharing at gatherings, called *The World of WARP*. Both feature beautiful imagery, and may be used to educate your friends and family. Both videos are available on WARP’s main website, <http://www.weavearealpeace.org>



Third Tinkuy in Peru Celebrates Textile Traditions

submitted by Marilyn Murphy

Tinkuy 2017 is a celebration of the wealth and diversity of textile traditions from around the world. Tinkuy, which means 'gathering' in Quechua, is the third Tinkuy sponsored by Centro de Textiles Tradicionales del Cusco (CTTC) and Andean Textile Arts. For four days, from November 8-11, textile artists and enthusiasts, anthropologists, art historians, and many others will gather to share traditions, techniques, and fellowship.

Beginning with a festive parade of artisans and a blessing by Q'ero shamans and Elders of the weaving communities, Tinkuy 2017 continues with three days of presentations including keynote speakers and workshops, cultural performances, a fashion show, a movie night, and spinning competitions. Throughout the gathering, presentations and demonstrations by visiting weavers will display the wealth and diversity of textile traditions of the Americas and beyond.

Workshops for textile enthusiasts include basic and advanced backstrap weaving, spinning, Qhurpus (bobble) knitting,

and Chichilla tubular border weaving. An optional post-gathering workshop on natural dyeing will be conducted in Chinchero.

Location: Tinkuy takes place in Cusco, Peru, the capital of the ancient Inca Empire, and a World Heritage site. It is a gateway to Machu Picchu and other important archaeological sites, and enjoys a dramatic setting at 11,200 feet in the Andes. A blending of ancient Inca stonework and Colonial architecture, important cultural museums, and a vibrant artisan culture make this a compelling destination for visitors. The Tinkuy events will be held in the Cusco Convention Center in the heart of the old city.

Registration: For programming details, visit <http://www.tinkuy2017.textilescusco.org>. Registration packages are available plus an early bird discount until April 30. Andean Textile Arts http://andeantextilearts.org/tinkuy_2017 is taking registration for North American participants. For registration in Latin America, email: tinkuy2017@gmail.com or visit <http://www.tinkuy2017.textilescusco.org>.



Irmgard Weitlaner-Johnson

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natural dye sources such as cochineal, indigo, and others, began to be replaced with synthetic dyes.

Shifts were also seen from brocade woven designs (supplementary weft) to embroidered designs, as well as the use of commercial white cloth, such as muslin, versus hand-woven white cloth in plain and gauze weave.

No place fascinated Irmgard more than the Chinantec and Mazatec region of Oaxaca, where she took copious notes on weaving techniques and design motifs. "For the rest of her life, the handwoven dress of la Chinantla became a source of inspiration and happiness for Irmgard, a place she would return to on numerous occasions to document the weaving techniques," Kirsten Johnson, in *Saberes Enlazados*.

Irmgard observed and documented changes in La Chinantla. She noted that elderly women were still wearing traditional huipiles, yet few knew how to weave them.

She observed more embroidery and less brocade weave for the huipil panels, and commercial cotton was predominantly used. The deeper she traveled into more



Irmgard taking field notes. Photo: Guy StresserPéan, Irmgard W. Johnson Collection, Biblioteca Juan de Córdova

remote regions of La Chinantla, weavers were still hand spinning cotton, but were combining it with the industrial variant. She observed great fusions of materials, designs, embellishments and communities (wearing each other's huipil designs). Change and evolution seem inevitable.

Stephanie Schneiderman can be reached at info@tiastephanietours.com

New Members

Ellen Benson

Sheri Brautigam
Living Textiles of Mexico
Santa Fe, NM

Nancy Brown
Cookeville, TN

Barbara Cohen
Narberth, PA

Lynette Glass
Lynette Glass Tapestries
Amity, AR

Jacki Gordon
Oaxaca Craft Retreats
Oaxaca de Juarez
Oaxaca, Mexico

Porfirio Gutiérrez
Porfirio Gutiérrez y Familia
Teotitlan del Valle
Oaxaca, Mexico

Devin Helmen
St Louis Park, MN

Kathryn Hill
Lexington, VA

Mirrah Johnson
Smithville, TN

Ines Metzner
Missoula Weavers Guild
Missoula, MT

New York Guild of
Handweavers
New York, NY

Connie Peterson
Storden, MN

Suzanne Puckett
Mattawan, MI



Preserving Zapotec Weaving Traditions

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wheels. Today, many Zapotec textile families live in Teotitlán del Valle, a town of about 6,000, with around 70% of the population engaged in some aspect of making textiles.

Gutiérrez family rugs start as raw wool, shorn yearly from local Churro sheep. Family members wash the fleece in a nearby river. The wool is then carded and readied for spinning.

Juana, Porfirio's sister, with her cooking area next to the dyeing vats in her courtyard, uses local vegetable materials, minerals, and cochineal to dye their yarn. (Over 90% of local weavers have switched to chemical dyes, which can affect their health as well as the environment.) The family harvests some dye materials like pomegranates or zapote negro from their own gardens or purchases them from neighbors and farmers. Indigo comes from one of only three farms still growing the traditional crop. Cochineal insects are also farmed (including by Porfirio's brother-in-law) on prickly pear cactus pads. Some of the wool is left undyed, to be woven into rugs using natural shades ranging from white to dark brown (the rarest color).

Meanwhile, a weaver is thinking about the rug's design. Design elements can reflect cultural motifs such as those on nearby ancient Zapotec ruins, or from stories told by his elders about cultural myths, the Zapotec way of life in the past and present, and the value of nature.

Weavers use a two-harness floor loom, managing many shuttles with individual colors to build up a design. After doing simple tasks like cleaning wool, winding bobbins, and finishing rugs, Porfirio started weaving at 12. As is customary, his father gave Porfirio his own loom, made by a local carpenter, when he got married and set up his own studio.

When the rug is cut from the loom, the warp ends are finished, and the rug is washed and blocked, getting it ready to be sold.

While earlier generations of Zapotec weavers produced blankets for their homes

and local markets, today the Gutiérrez family creates rugs and runners to be used on floors or hung on walls, as well smaller items like placemats and mug mats (coasters) for fairs and tourists.

Porfirio fears his generation might be the last one that has learned the old ways. Selected to participate in the National Museum of the American Indian's Artist Leadership Program in 2016, Porfirio sums up the dilemma: "In our town, other components of our Zapotec legacy are about to vanish forever. My parents speak Zapoteco, my siblings and I speak Zapoteco and Spanish, but our children speak mostly Spanish. The same pattern is true with our art; my parents spin, dye, and weave. My siblings and I have these skills to some degree, but some of us have had to find outside work in other fields to sustain our families."

To preserve their Zapotec heritage, the Gutiérrez family is using new approaches like fairs, talks, and exhibitions, and a web site. Buying their rugs is supporting not only the extended family but also many other families from neighboring towns, like sheep ranchers and farmers – and thus also supporting the preservation and passing on of traditional Zapotec culture for future generations.

Visit the Gutiérrez family's website at <http://porfiriogutierrez.com/> for many short essays, pictures, and videos about their culture and process. Or visit the family in their studio in Teotitlán del Valle, a short distance outside Oaxaca (see their website for details).

After a traditional apprenticeship with Dorothy and Allen Fannin, Steve Csipke (kentestevebos-ton@hotmail.com) had a production silk weaving studio in the 1970s. Although no longer at the loom, his current interests are West African strip-woven kente and indigo-dyed textiles, researched on trips to Ghana, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

Ann Schunior (ann@schunior.org; <http://www.AnnPottery.com>) is a production potter with a keen interest in textiles. She's travelled extensively in the Americas, West Africa and Uzbekistan, meeting with potters and weavers who still work in traditional ways.

More New Members

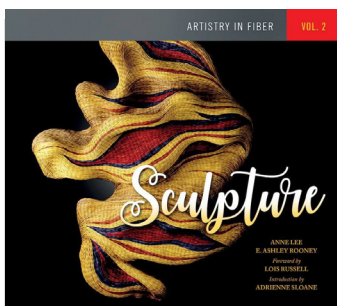
Shanna Robinson
Boyne City, MI

Shannon Sheppard
Oaxaca de Juárez
Oaxaca, Mexico

Laura Srygley
Austin, TX

Elaine Todd
Pacific Textile Arts
Fort Bragg, CA

Jackie Wollenberg
Pacific Textile Arts
Mendocino, CA



WARP Board Member Karen Searle's work is included in a new book, available this summer from Schiffer Publishing. *Artistry in Fiber: Sculpture*, by Ann Lee and E. Ashley Rooney, features nearly 500 photos of artwork showing the tremendously broad range of possibilities that working in three dimensions can offer.



Irmgard Weitlaner-Johnson: A Student of Changes in Indigenous Oaxacan Culture

Stephanie Schneiderman

Born in Philadelphia in 1914 to Austrian parents, Irmgard arrived in Mexico in 1922 at the age of eight. Her father Robert had



Irmgard wearing huipil "diario" from San Lucas Ojitlan. Photo: Collection, Biblioteca Juan de Córdova

a keen interest in studying native languages and cultures of the Americas and moved the family to Mexico, where he began his ethnographic and linguistic study of Mexico's indigenous people. From an early age, Irmgard accompanied her father on weekends and holidays to

indigenous communities around Mexico City, and later to Mexico's Chinantec and Mazatec region of Oaxaca. Along with anthropologist and linguist Bernard Bevan and her father, she ventured into remote regions of "La Chinantla" on expeditions that would shape her life.

According to Kirsten Johnson, Irmgard's daughter, her mother witnessed a massive



Chinantec woman from San Felipe Usila
Photo by Stephanie Schneiderman

shift from 1935 to 1975, where methods, use of materials and processes for internal consumption and local trade gave way to industrial materials and processes for an

external market for textiles. Commercial threads (cottons and synthetics), dyes, and the tourist market became significant factors resulting in major shifts in the material



Huipil detail, Rancho Grande, Valle Nacional; brocade and embroidery
Photo by Stephanie Schneiderman

culture and economy of local, indigenous communities throughout Mexico. Clothing was no longer solely a cultural expression, but also became a commercial commodity. Income vs. cultural identity became a driving force and motivator.

This radical transformation compelled Irmgard to meticulously document and collect what she saw, in an effort to preserve. Upon completion of her studies in cultural anthropology and ethnographic textiles at UC Berkeley, she began her systematic work in 1951. With the support of various cultural institutions, such as the National Museum of Anthropology, where she later was curator of textiles, she amassed a vast collection of Mexico's ethnographic textiles. She studied and documented weaving structures, and took extensive field notes, photos, and sketches from ethnographic communities throughout Mexico.

Perhaps the biggest change she observed was in the use and processing of fibers, such as plant fibers from agave, yucca, and others, as well as hand spun cotton and native silk, giving way to commercial cottons and synthetic fibers. Also,

continued on page 9

Pre-Meeting Tour to Visit La Chinantla

Stephanie Schneiderman (Tia Stephanie Tours) invites WARP members to join a Pre-Meeting Trip to La Chinantla, prior to the WARP Annual Meeting in Oaxaca, to continue observations of the region begun by Irmgard W. Johnson. One community, Rancho Grande, Valle Nacional, has embarked on a revival initiative to include the teaching of plain and gauze weave, and most recently, brocade weave (supplementary weft). Two of the elderly women of the community taught the next generation, who are now teaching the next. Contact Stephanie at www.tiastephanietours.com for more information





Weave a Real Peace
c/o 6182 Pollard Avenue
East Lansing, MI 48823

It's Not Too Late - Register Now for the Annual Meeting in Oaxaca!

Chiapan Weavers to Attend WARP Annual Meeting

Christine Eber

Celia Arias Pérez and Claudia Pérez Pérez, two weavers in Tsobol Antsetik (Women United) in San Pedro Chenalhó, Chiapas, Mexico will represent their group in Oaxaca at the WARP meeting. This will be the first time that the two young women will leave their homeland in the highlands of Chiapas and it promises to be a life-changing experience for them. I will have the pleasure of accompanying them. Celia and Claudia speak Tsotsil, a Mayan language, and Spanish. Celia is unmarried and one of three representatives of Tsobol Antsetik.



Celia Arias Pérez

She and the other representatives do this service without remuneration. Claudia is a single mother living with her parents. She weaves to support her five year old son. She is also a liaison between Tsobol Antsetik and Weaving for Justice. We will bring some textiles with us to sell. We hope to see you in Oaxaca!

Christine Eber is an anthropologist and co-founder of Weaving for Justice. She can be reached at ceber@nmsu.edu



Claudia Pérez Pérez,

There are still a few spots open for the 2017 Annual Meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico from June 8-11! A spectacular line-up of presenters on Friday and Natural Dye, Weaving, and Textile tours on Saturday (see page 3) promise the trip of a lifetime. Go to WARP's website (<http://www.weavearealpeace.org>) to sign up now. Pre- and post-meeting tours are being offered by Tia Stephanie Tours (<http://tiastephanietours.com/>), Eric Mindling of Traditions Mexico (<http://traditionsmexico.com/>), and Norma Schafer of Oaxaca Cultural Navigator (<http://oaxacaculture.com/>).

