

WARP



WEAVE A REAL PEACE

Volume 15, Number 1

Spring 2008

Lubugo: *Appreciating the Value of Ugandan Bark Cloth*

Lesli Robertson

Within the Ugandan districts of Mpigi, Masaka, and Rakai is the soul of a centuries-old process, a technique that strips stiff bark from trees and pounds it into wearable fabric. Bark cloth has the distinction of being named among the world's collective heritage by UNESCO, recognizing its role as a strong cultural tradition for many Ugandans. This unique cloth of the Baganda (Buganda) has readily found its way into the tourist markets; one only has to walk through a craft shop or observe roadside stalls to see the rich rust color of bark cloth. What sets this material apart from others is the amazing transformation the bark makes as it is pounded into the finished cloth. With a material so unique, it is unfortunate that so little is understood by the consumers about the process and history they hold in their hands.

In the small village of Kanabulemu, I met Kalongo Prophino and Paulino Lukyamuzi, two bark cloth makers whose families have been practicing this craft for generations. This unique process of changing bark into cloth begins with the removal of the outer bark of the *Mutuba* tree, exposing an underlayer of moist, fleshy trunk. Horizontal and vertical cuts are made the length of the tree allowing Kalongo to use an angled banana stalk to peel away the bark. What falls away from the tree is a narrow section of bark roughly 40 centimeters wide by 2.4 meters long. Banana leaves are cut and wrapped around the exposed trunk, keeping it moist and allowing the bark to grow back within a year. I was surprised by the next step—to deepen the rust color of the bark, dried banana leaves are placed on top of it and set on fire. Kalongo carefully brushes off the ash and wraps the bark in fresh banana leaves, keeping it moist to be worked on the next day.

The transformation of the prepared bark takes place in a thatched-roofed open structure, the *ekomagiro*. With the bark stretched out on a thin log, Kalongo begins *okukomaga*, the creation of bark cloth. *Okukomaga* has three stages, each using a different grooved mallet (*nsaamu*) for pounding. Throughout



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Mission

WARP serves as a catalyst for improving the quality of life of textile artisans in communities-in-need. We provide information and networking opportunities to individuals and organizations who value the social, cultural, historic, and artistic importance of textiles around the world.

Core Values

Textiles are an important component of the human experience.

Providing support to textile artisans from communities-in-need gives them tools to shape their own destinies.

Networking and sharing information creates an environment for constructive action.

Making connections among textile artisans worldwide promotes positive social change.

Interacting with people who have similar values enriches our lives.

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From the WARP Office...

Ann Rubin, Administrative Coordinator

Thank you, WARP members, for sending in your renewals for 2008. Your WARP membership runs from January to December and includes the four issues of this newsletter. The WARP newsletter is our primary source for sharing information on supporting fiber artisans in developing countries, traditional textile techniques, travel and tours, and your inspiring first-hand stories.

Be sure to contact us if you would like to submit an article about your own pursuits and experiences. The more, the merrier! Readers tell us they always get a boost from learning about the work of our talented, diverse, and far-flung membership. Our work can be challenging or slow or isolated, and who can't use a quarterly boost from kindred spirits!

If you have not yet renewed your WARP membership, please renew soon. Renewing now keeps you on our current mailing list for the next newsletter and keeps you subscribed to our email discussion group. If you no longer have the form we sent in December, please complete the membership form at www.WeaveaRealPeace.org—you can renew online or print the form and mail it. Rather than have us post a second round of individual reminder letters, we're reminding you here to renew—our office goal this year is to reduce paperwork to save on overhead and to save the trees overhead!

If you need to reach me, my direct email is AnnWARP@aol.com.

Revised WARP Slide Show Now Available

The revised WARP slide show has been to Colorado, California, Michigan, and is scheduled to go back to California and New York soon. The response to this newest version has been very positive. Schedule your showing of the WARP slide show now by contacting Carole Pierce at cpierce@mis.net.

The 2008 WARP Annual Meeting, to be held on Whidbey Island, Washington from March 7-9, 2008, has reached maximum attendance capacity. The Summer issue of the WARP newsletter will provide a complete report of the meeting.

WARP 2007 Annual Business Meeting - Agenda

Sunday, March 9 - *Whidbey Island, Washington*

- Presentation and request for approval of 2007 Minutes
- Discussion of year's activities
- Presentation and request for approval of 2007 Financial Report
- Election of Board Members
- Report from Special Interest Group meetings
- Plans for 2008, including next meeting
- Old Business
- New Business
- Other Business

Send additions or corrections to the Agenda to Linda Temple
(LGTemple@juno.com).

WARP Nominating Committee Presents Slate for Upcoming Board Elections

The nominating committee is pleased to submit an outstanding slate of candidates for WARP Board positions. Carole Pierce and Sarah Saulson, the nominating committee, had two tasks. The first was to find a new candidate to replace Sarah Saulson, who is leaving the board after six years, having served two terms. The second was to realign board terms.

The board currently consists of six members. Ideally, every year, two new members should join the board and two members should retire. In order to accomplish this, our three returning members have each agreed to accept staggered terms for re-election that will successfully re-establish this rotational system. Linda Temple is nominated for a second term of one year, Adrienne Sloane is nominated for a second term of two years, and Deborah Brandon is nominated for a second three-year term.

The committee is particularly excited about our new board nominee, Candy Meacham, from Bellingham, WA. She has written a brief statement that speaks to her commitment to WARP's mission. The committee is pleased with the outcome of the nominating process and hopes the membership will join them in thanking our continuing and new board members. The election for all four positions will occur at the Annual Business meeting on Sunday morning during our annual meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

Candy Meacham writes "I've been a WARP member since 1993, right around the time I went to the Canadian Arctic for three weeks to study Inuit textiles, clothing patterns, wall hangings, etc. I saw the WARP announcement in *Handwoven* and knew it was an organization that had the same values/interests that I did/do. I went to the WARP Annual Meeting the same year.

"I remain very interested in northwest Coast and Canadian Inuit art and textiles and also Mexican and Central American textiles, perhaps because they are our neighbors. In the case of Mexico and Guatemala, I am sucked in by the color. I am a color fanatic as you would see if you came to my house. (My kitchen is a combination of bubble gum pink and blotchy yellow green. Sounds horrible but looks pretty good.) I go to Mexico once or twice a year, sometimes to places like Oaxaca so I can see weavers and other artists work.

"I worked in health care as an occupational therapist for 30 years, then went back to school six years ago and got a certificate to teach English as a Second Language which is what I do now. I teach evenings at Skagit Valley College, working mostly with immigrants from Mexico. I speak Spanish, which is not a requirement, but is helpful and makes it comfortable working with Spanish speaking students.

"I am a weaver, primarily of blankets. I am about to launch a web site which will feature pictures of my work. I have sold my weaving in different venues off and on over the years, nationally and locally, and am gearing up again after a break due to chronic health issues.

"I have two adventurous sons who live here in Bellingham when they are not at work—as science technicians on an ice breaker in Antarctica."

You can help WARP by

...providing financial support for the:

- Operating fund (includes WARP publications—the newsletter, brochure, and directory)
- Scholarship fund
- Sister Memberships
- Endowment fund

...volunteering to:

- Show the WARP slideshow in your community
- Write an article for the newsletter
- Help with annual meetings
- Solicit paid ads for the newsletter and/or membership directory.
- Encourage other textile organizations and guilds to link to the WARP website

If you are interested in any of these financial or volunteer opportunities, contact Ann Rubin at [**AnnWARP@aol.com**](mailto:AnnWARP@aol.com)



WARP Newsletter

published quarterly by
Weave A Real Peace
Volume 15, Number 1
Spring 2008

Editor: Linda Temple

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The deadline for
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Summer 2008 WARP
newsletter is **May 9, 2008**.

Send articles and
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Information about an
organization or service in
this newsletter does not
constitute an endorsement
by WARP.

Submissions may be
edited or shortened at the
discretion of the editor.

Member Profile

San Juan Weavers Guild:

Celebrating Handweaving and Spinning

Pegi Bevins

Once a month the San Juan Weavers Guild, one of the newest members of WARP, meets in Montrose, CO, on the beautiful Western Slope of the Rocky Mountains. Its official purpose is to celebrate the art and craft of handweaving and spinning, but the guild actually welcomes anyone interested in textiles, from weavers and spinners to knitters and crocheters to basketmakers and quilters—any “-ers,” according to the SJWG web site. The guild has about 80 members and in 2007 celebrated its 30th year. Its activities and programs stimulate and support the creative efforts of its artisans, while providing educational opportunities for members and the community. Each November the guild holds its Show & Sale where members can display and/or sell their handcrafted creations: gifts, household items, clothing, and accessories. In an effort to educate the public and create more interest in fiber arts (as well as recruit a few more members), many of the artisans demonstrate their talents at the event. The guild has also created a connection with a local art guild to promote textiles in area art shows and provides a few demonstrators at local events.

Any creative effort takes time and sometimes a lot of it. To this end, the guild has published a cookbook entitled, *More Time to Weave*. According to the web site, *More Time to Weave* contains “a great assortment of easy and delicious recipes” so today’s busy fiber artists can get meals on the table quickly and then “get back to their spinning or weaving.” No doubt any fiber addicts could benefit from such a book. If you’re interested in spending less time in the kitchen and more time in front of your loom, spinning wheel, quilting frame, or whatever, you can purchase a copy of *More Time to Weave* from SJWG’s web site: www.sanjuanweavers.com.

In January the guild viewed the WARP slide show which was greatly enjoyed by the group. Member Cheri Bradbury is hoping that the guild’s affiliation with WARP will encourage members to broaden their interests and reach out to fiber artists in other countries, while better connecting them with the world.

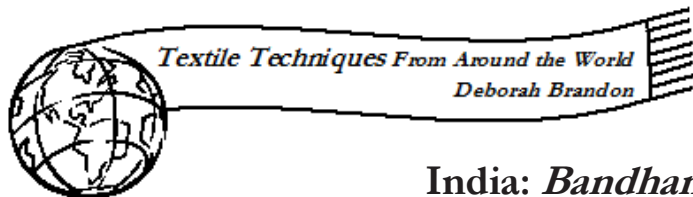
Pegi Bevins is a freelance writer and editor of products for language arts classrooms and an author of two children’s novels. She can be reached at prbevins@netins.net.

WARP on the Web

<http://www.weavearealpeace.org>

WARP’s Listserv

Go to **<http://www.yahogroups.com/list/WeaveARealPeace>**
and complete the requested information to register for YahooGroups.



India: *Bandhani*

Bandhani (i.e., tying) refers to a tie-dye technique applied primarily in Rajasthan and Gujarat, India. It is similar to the Japanese binding shibori. The Japanese version traditionally uses a single dye (indigo), whereas in India, two or more colors are often combined. The main colors used are red, black, green, yellow, and blue, and the fabrics are made of either cotton, silk, or wool. *Bandhani* textiles are used for saris, turbans, and shawls. In the most common forms of *bandhani* patterns are created by chains of dots that depict flowers, leaves, dancing girls, elephants, tigers, and birds, as well as geometric designs.



Each dot is the result of resist dyeing, where a section of the cloth (the size of a pinhead in the more intricate designs) is pinched then raised, and wrapped tightly several times with thread. Dots are usually tied in sequence without breaking the thread (i.e., they are connected), resulting in the fact that later the knots can be easily untied in one motion. Once all the dots are tied, the cloth is then immersed in one or more vats of dye and then dried. When the cloth is dried the knots are untied.

There are four main *bandhani* designs: two contrasting colors often with large central medallions and regularly spaced dots, a single colored background with white or multicolored dots, multicolored stripes on the borders and very small dots, and *laheria*. *Laheria* (i.e., waves) is a form of tie-dye where the entire length of cloth is rolled on a diagonal and bound at short intervals, then dyed to create strips of different colors. This technique creates diagonal lines or a checkered effect if the process is repeated on the other diagonal.

Resources

The Sari: Styles, Patterns, History, Techniques, by Linda Lynton. London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.

Shibori: The Inventive Art of Japanese Shaped Resist Dyeing, by Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada, Mary Kellogg Rice, and Jane Barton. NY: Kodansha International, 1983.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandhani_work

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9012132/bandhani-work>

<http://www.craftsinindia.com/products/textile/blockprint/bandhejprinting.html>

<http://crafts.indianetzone.com/bandhani.htm>

Deborah Brandon can be reached at 412/967-1578; or at brandon@andrew.cmu.edu.

Weave A Real Peace

Membership Information

2008 Annual Dues

- * \$35 - Individual, U.S. and Canada
- * \$40 - Individual, international and sister memberships
- * Simple living - Choose an amount you can live with
- * \$50 - Group/supporting
- * \$100+ - Patron/donor

All memberships are based on the calendar year and expire on December 31.

Members receive all publications for the year joined.

Members receive an annual Membership Directory, a quarterly newsletter, and can participate in the WARP listserv.

Dues are used for printing, mailing, and office expenses. Weave A Real Peace (WARP) is designated a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. All donations to WARP are tax deductible in the United States.

For membership or additional information, please send your name, address, and telephone number with appropriate check or money order in US funds payable to **WARP** to:

Weave A Real Peace
3102 Classen Boulevard
PMB 249
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

or visit the website at weavearealpeace.org

Sister Membership Sponsors Needed

WARP would like to continue to provide Sister Memberships for the groups listed below. If you would like to sponsor a Sister Member at the \$40 level, please contact Ann Rubin at AnnWARP@aol.com

- Elelloang Basali Weavers - Lesotho
- Habitat Integrated - Pakistan
- IFFAD - India
- Nanyuki Spinners & Weavers - Kenya
- Queen Amina Embroidery - Nigeria
- Ribob Village Silk Weaving Project - Japan
- Spirit of the Andes/Alma de los Andes - Bolivia
- Thai Tribal Crafts - Thailand
- WEAVE - Thailand
- Weavers Wheel - India

Baale, Uganda: The Challenge to Do More

Lesli Robertson

In 2005, I began traveling to Uganda to participate in the training of underprivileged girls in the skills of weaving. The experience opened a new world to me—one full of color, energy, vibrancy, and resilience—which eventually lead me back two more times to work and research. For four weeks in 2007, I learned a great deal about the culture, the arts, and was able to interact and develop relationships with many people. As I was traveling through the villages, meeting artisans, one group of mat makers became the catalyst that challenged me to want to do more. As I was interviewing a mat maker in the city of Masaka, I was told about a group of ten mat makers that lived 30 kilometers away in a small village called Baale. As I arrived at their home, I was welcomed into their studio—a treasure of brilliant colors of plaited mats in various stages of production. Rolls of plaited palm leaf in intricate designs were stacked four and five high waiting to be stitched together into large floor mats; the small room was literally filled with their work. Each mat was expertly designed; the artisans explained how they translated the vibrant fabrics found in the markets into plaited designs while continuing to experiment with the plaiting process. The results were mats of exceptional quality and ingenuity. They had the ability to produce up to 100 mats per month which, if sold, could provide much needed financial support to their families. They currently produced only 20 or so mats which they sold to their neighbors and at the small village market. As I left, I was able to buy a few of these beautiful mats, but felt that I left behind a greater opportunity.

As a member of this global textile community, I have the privilege to research, present, write, and create artwork based on my experiences in Uganda. But as I left the home in Baale, I was frustrated by not knowing how to do more, to provide a tangible opportunity that could have a direct result in the lives of the mat makers. As a member of WARP, I have existed on the fringes for several years, not actively participating in this community. This experience awakened in me the realization that resources are available through each member of WARP; yet, as I write this, I am not sure how to access this vast amount of experience. My question is this—how do we best network and meet those with similar interests? I desire to learn and grow, but know that I do not have the resources available. So, as I begin to become more active in WARP, I look forward to future connections who will help me answer this question that continues to challenge me—how can I do more?

Lesli Robertson can be reached at leslirobertson@yahoo.com

Lesli Robertson asks the question most WARP members do: What can we (really) do to help textile artists in developing countries? I'd like to encourage you to join a discussion among WARP members on this topic. Please send me your thoughts, experiences, and ideas. Thanks, Linda Temple, editor (lgtemple@juno.com)

Lubugo: the Value of Ugandan Bark Cloth

continued from page 1

each stage, he continuously pounds every surface of the bark, repeating the careful orchestration of turning and folding that



was shown to him by his grandfather. Each carefully placed hit leaves its grooved impression on the surface of the bark. With time, the bark slowly widens and is softened into cloth.

After five hours of constant, arduous pounding, Kalongo finishes the cloth. Just outside the *ekomagiro*, he lays it fully in the sun, pulling it tight while laying rocks around the edges. The finished piece is a staggering 2.3 x 2.5 meters, over four times the original width.



Since its beginning, bark cloth has distinguished generations of *Kabakas* (kings), buried countrymen, functioned as ritual objects, and been used for any basic need that cloth would meet—clothing, room partitions, curtains, bedding, etc. Its use for an estimated 600 years has firmly planted this material as a prominent Bagandan (Bugandan) symbol of history and culture. It is not simply a relic for tourists; it is actively used by officials, traditional healers, and contemporary designers. Becoming aware of its continued use throughout Uganda allows our appreciation of the material and its cultural importance to grow.

For now, it is my hope that when consumers purchase goods made from and with bark cloth, they will not only support local artists or take with them a mere object, but an awareness of the laborious process, unique culture, and history present in that piece of bark cloth.

Lesli Robertson is an adjunct professor of fibers at the University of North Texas. She continues to write, present, and create artwork based on her research of Ugandan cultural arts. Her website is www.leslirobertson.com and you can reach her at leslirobertson@yahoo.com

TSA Launches Publications Initiative, Funded by the Coby Foundation Ltd.

The Textile Society of America (TSA) is pleased to announce the receipt of a grant from The Coby Foundation, Ltd., to develop and undertake a survey of publication needs in the fields of textile studies.

The Coby Foundation, Ltd., the only foundation in the United States to focus solely on funding projects in textiles and needle arts, is interested in this timely initiative, prompted by two factors: 1) The recognition that textiles provide a valid and important subject of study and scholarly investigation; 2) the current prevalent attitudes of some publishers, who are reluctant to publish scholarly monographs, particularly those which require a large number of illustrations and color reproductions. The survey will be used to ascertain current needs with regard to the publication of scholarly monographs in a diverse range of textile fields.

For additional information visit the TSA website at <http://www.textilesociety.org>

2008 Microcredit Summit to be in Bali

The Microcredit Summit Campaign will partner with Gema PKM to host the Asia-Pacific Regional Microcredit Summit in Bali, Indonesia from July 28-30, 2008.

More information on the program, venue, and registration will be shared on the web site at www.microcreditsummit.org

FTF wholesalers, retailers, and producers are fully committed to

- Paying fair wages in the local context;
- Ensuring environmental sustainability;
- Supporting cooperative workplaces;
- Providing consumer education;
- Supplying financial and technical support;
- Respecting cultural identity; and
- Offering public accountability.

The FTF criteria are designed to provide a sustainable trading relationship which will lift the poor out of poverty. Members undergo a rigorous screening process to assess their commitment to these principles up and down the chain of production.

Because so many WARP members are particularly interested in the Fair Trade movement, I asked Carmen Iezzi, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Federation, if she would consider contributing on a regular basis to the WARP Newsletter. She has graciously agreed to do so. If you have any particular areas you'd like her to address, please let me know. -ed.

Five Simple Ways to Grow Fair Trade

Carmen K. Iezzi, Executive Director, Fair Trade Federation

The growth of fair trade within North America requires the efforts of many key stakeholders and takes a variety of forms. Here are five easy ways WARP members can contribute to the expansion of the movement:

- 1) Support fully committed businesses** – Organize an effort to educate local boutiques, grocery stores, and other shops about the importance of choosing fully committed fair trade organizations. Suggest that fair trade alternatives be brought in and make a commitment to buy them.
- 2) Fundraise with Fair Trade** – To enhance both WARP and the growth of fair trade, fundraise with fairly traded textiles, stationary, coffee, chocolate, or other items. You can also support a producer initiative like the SERRV Loan Fund.
- 3) Sponsor an event** – Host a fair trade home party, bake sale, movie screening, rhythm or sporting event, public forum, and other activity. Arrange a tour to visit producers.
- 4) Join a local Fair Trade Coalition** – Twenty-five coalitions across the US actively campaign for fair trade in their communities. Collaborating or volunteering with them could broaden the impact of WARP's and fair trade's messages.
- 5) Engage a national campaign around major holidays** – Global Exchange, a member of FTF since the 1990s, has reached over 40,000 households through its fair trade chocolate campaigns. Reverse-Trick-or-Treating, Easter, Passover, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and other initiatives seek to help end child slavery on cocoa farms and to demonstrate that fair trade is a positive alternative to conventional chocolate. For more information, visit www.globalexchange.org/cocoa.

The Fair Trade Federation (FTF) is an association of 270 businesses and organizations who are fully committed to fair trade. Individuals interested in the business of fair trade are encouraged to become Fair Trade Associates. For more information about membership categories, access the FTF website at www.FairTradeFederation.org

Carmen Iezzi can be reached at cki@fairtradefederation.org

The Fair Trade Federation 2008 Annual Conference

The FTF 2008 Annual Conference will be held April 4 – 6, 2008, in Austin, Texas. For more information or to register, visit the FTF website at www.fairtradefederation.org and click on 'Get Involved,' then 'Conference 2008.'

Teaching Sectional Warping To Weavers In Guatemala

Sara Goodman

Last July, Deborah Chandler and I began planning my trip to Guatemala to teach sectional warping to the weavers of Flor de Algodon, one of the Mayan Hands' groups. This group weaves table linens, putting on 50 yard warps at once. Sectional warping would seem to be a more efficient way for them to put on these long warps, but it has not been done in the past. In the fall I posted an internet message on several listserves, including WARP's, asking for donations of tension boxes and yardage counters. Within a week I had all the equipment I needed, plus \$575 in cash! Sarah Saulson offered two sets of 40" retrofit sectional beams. Jane Patrick, at Schacht, agreed to receive all the equipment and send it to Guatemala.

On the evening of January 2nd, I flew to Guatemala City. The next morning we set to work creating a sectional beam for Deborah's Harrisville loom. We used nails to make the sections. It looked like a medieval weapon, but it worked. The next day we drove four hours to Rabinal. When we arrived, we began the workshop by explaining the process of sectional warping using the photographs I had brought and the loom.

By the second day we were ready to put a warp on their big loom. Seventy-two spools were wound on their bicycle wheel winders. We squeezed two huge spool racks into the workspace, on a diagonal, so the bobbins could feed easily. We set up a yardage counter at the proper height, on top of two chairs. I stood behind the beam, ready to guide the 72 ends into the section.

Everyone was watching. People were leaning against the loom making it sway, since the beam was only lashed on with rope. The woman cranking the beam was using a lot of torque. That made the warp beam move. Looking down at the warp, the whole thing was moving from side to side, the threads jumping out of the section. "Alto! Alto!" They immediately understood the problem and figured out what to do. By the end of the third day, there were four sections left to wind, but they assured us that they could do it on their own.

Working with the weavers of Flor de Algodon was a wonderful experience. At dusk on the third day, we stood in a circle, saying our goodbyes. Many people spoke, thanking me for coming and for caring about them. Some were almost in tears. Given how inventive they are, I know they will figure out ways to use all the equipment. They think the tension boxes look like belt looms, so maybe they will devise a way to weave *cinta* with them!

Sara Goodman can be reached at Sara.Goodman@valley.net

The Weaving Cultures of Bali and Flores: A Textile Tour With *Threads of Life*

July 17-30, 2008
\$2400 per person, based on 14 travelers, not including international airfare.

Tour leaders are WARP members Jean Howe and Sara Goodman. For more information about *Threads of Life*, go to <http://www.threadsoflife.com> or contact Sara Goodman at sara.goodman@valley.net

Is your last issue of the WARP Newsletter?

If you haven't renewed for 2008, do it now!

Memberships are based on the calendar year and expire on December 31. Renew online at www.weavearealpeace.org or by mailing a check to WARP, 3102 Classen Boulevard, PMB 249, Oklahoma City, OK 73118.

Funding Connections

If you know of a textile group in need, maybe one with whom you've worked, let Cheryl Musch know specifically what they need and what it will cost, and we'll get the information into the next newsletter. Contact information for Cheryl is on page 2.

Funding Connection: VillageWorks

VillageWorks, a fair trade organization working with rural women in Cambodia, needs new floor looms for their center in Baray district. The new looms are a high priority for them, and would be 30% faster than the old ones and take up less space. The group would like to have a total of four new looms at a cost of \$220 each. SERRV International/A Greater Gift has agreed to accept tax-deductible donations on behalf of the group, with 100% of donations going directly to the new looms. You can donate online at <http://www.agreatergift.org> or send a check to SERRV International, PO Box 365, 500 Main St., New Windsor, MD 21776-0365. Please mark your contribution clearly that it is for looms in Cambodia. To learn more about VillageWorks, visit <http://www.villageworks.com>.

WomenWeave Projects in Bombay

Sally Holkar

WomenWeave is a Charitable Trust registered in Bombay, India. Its mother organization in the US is WomenWeave International Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization under the umbrella of The Dallas Foundation.

WomenWeave's mission is to bring quality design and marketing inputs to handloom units in India, with a focus on the role of women in the weaving process. Additionally, WomenWeave sponsors and runs eye diagnosis camps for remote rural weaving groups.



At present, there are three major projects in hand:

Gudi Mudi: Producing organic cotton, handspun yarn, naturally dyed, handwoven Khadi project in central India



101 Looms: Ten weaving NGO's across India collaborate



to create a centrally designed collection of scarves, shawls, sarees, and yardage designed by Elana Dickson, RCA London (a WW Board member) This collection involves exchange of yarns, dyeing, and weaving techniques to create cutting edge textiles for handloom sustainability.

Installation Textiles in one of India's leading computer science headquarters provide a new forum for textiles, a new design path for weavers.

For more information about WomenWeave, visit their website at www.womenweavers.org.

Sally Holkar can be reached at womenweavers@yahoo.com

Snapshots Along the Mekong: Handwoven Cloth In Northeast Thailand And Laos

Mary M. Flad

In June 1965, I returned to the US after two years of Peace Corps service in Thailand. I had been teaching English in Sakol Nakorn, in the northeast, not far from the Mekong River. In my spare time, I looked at and collected cloth, particularly locally woven weft-ikat (or *mat-mii*) cotton and silk. I brought home about a dozen pieces produced in the area where I lived.

My husband and I made a trip back in November 2007, and I knew that nothing was likely to be the same as it had been in 1965. Someone who had been in northeast Thailand a couple years ago had told me, sadly, "You can't find any village crafts anymore." Instead, what I found was fascinating. Tourism has become a major economic engine for Thailand, following close upon rice production and export. And Thai tourism includes craft products made by hand in village settings—in particular, handwoven textiles, made from hand-spun cotton or silk, often dyed in traditional ways (if not in traditional color ranges).

In Thailand and then in Laos, we found that locally-woven cottons and silks could be found almost everywhere, if you sought them out. In addition, a number of "silk villages" scattered throughout the northeast welcome visitors. The Thai royal family and the national tourism promotion agency have played a major part in encouraging these cottage industries.

Traditional garb—silks and brocades and weft ikats—still has some place in the costume of virtually every Thai woman. For some, the *pa sin* of dark indigo and white is still her everyday go-to-market skirt. Formal wear is made from brilliant Thai silk, or from fine specimens of local weaving.

Design traditions cannot be maintained just for the tourist trade. There must be a continuing local market as well. Halfway through our trip, we visited the school where I had taught from 1963 to 1965. Our tour guide had managed to contact some of my former students, all of them now in their mid-50s and teachers themselves. They were waiting when we arrived, bearing flowers—and pieces of cloth. One a *mat-mii* scarf, another a cotton brocade unique to a particular village, and a third a beautiful silk shawl. The cloth, as much as the flowers, underscored their welcome.

In Laos, tourism and the making and marketing of textiles takes a different shape. The Lao economy does not have the robust entrepreneurial characteristics of Thailand, but, on the other hand, the *pa sin* is much more widely worn by women on a daily basis. As Vientiane and Luang Prabang (UNESCO World Heritage sites) have become "must-visit" tourist destinations, the shops that sell cloth and clothing are doing well, but the profit may not reach the village or household of the maker. Few enterprises operate on the scale of Carol Cassidy's Lao Textiles in Vientiane, producing fabric for the international interior design trade, using materials, design motifs, and skills rooted in the past, as well as providing stable decent income for fifty weavers.

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WARP Newsletter

Ad Rates

For WARP members:
Business card - \$6/issue;
\$22 for 4 issues;
1/4 page - \$11/issue; \$40
for 4 issues;
1/2 page - \$18/issue; \$65
for 4 issues;
Full page - \$30/issue;
\$108 for 4 issues;
Classified - \$1.50 per line
for members (50 spaces)
Rates for non-WARP
members are double the
above figures.
All rates are for camera-
ready copy.
A paid ad ensures that
your information will
appear in the newsletter
exactly as you wish, exactly
when you wish. Contact
Linda Temple
(LGTemple@juno.com)

Solar Cooking + Palm Straw Weaving

Louise Meyer

Solar Africa began working in Zanzibar 10 years ago to promote sustainable harvesting and processing of fibers from the wild date palm, which they weave into hats, baskets, and mats (<http://www.solarafrica.net/moto/>). Some 200 artisan cooperative members generate income from these products, keeping traditional patterns and crafts alive. When I first communicated with Antje, the director of the Cooperative, in the late '90s, I learned that the project was using solar box cookers to dye fibers rather than burning wood, a non-renewable, precious resource. As Solar Africa's main partner, the Zanzibari government's Forest and Agricultural Ministry is very interested in reducing firewood consumption on the island.



Most recently, Terra, a Spanish NGO based in Barcelona, acquired financial support to send two experts to Zanzibar to build two large institutional sized parabolic reflectors, known as Scheffler solar reflectors, to increase the use of free solar energy—abundant sunshine is available most of the year.

During their two month stay, Marta Pahissa and Heike Hoedt gave a construction course to 15 students. Most students were mechanics from a tractor repair shop, others came from the Forest and Agricultural Ministry, and from Solar Africa. One Scheffler solar reflector was installed in Matemwe, where the women's cooperative is located. It is used for food processing (jam, jellies) and baking products for sale as income generation. It will also be used to dye the wild palm fiber. A second Scheffler solar reflector is at the tractor workshop, where it serves as reference for future construction projects. Meanwhile the staff uses it to cook their lunches.



Reflector focused on solar cooker

Solar Africa plans to build additional Scheffler solar reflectors for the cooperative to make wax batik and to dye cloth.

Louise Meyer is the co-founder of Solar Household Energy, Inc. (SHE) (www.she-inc.org) and African Craft (www.AfricanCraft.com). Louise led SHE's pilot project 'The HotPot Solar Oven Initiative' in Mexico from 2003-06. She plans to teach solar cooking in Senegal and Nepal this year. Louise can be reached at louise@she.org or louise@africancraft.com

Snapshots Along the Mekong

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Things continue to change. Air flights between Luang Prabang and Kunming (in Yunnan, China) have recently become available. This will bring more tourists, and inevitably, manufactured fabrics from China. If the *pa sin* is still widely worn a decade from now, it may be an imported polyester knock-off of a traditional design.

Mary Flad can be reached at maflad@earthlink.net

WARP T-Shirts and Scarves

WARP t-shirts, with the logo on the sleeve, \$20

Hand-dyed 100% silk scarves (8" by 54") discharged with the WARP logo, available in navy, burgundy, orange, and brown, \$20

All proceeds go to WARP.

To order, contact Deborah Brandon at 412/268-2552 or by email at brandon@andrew.cmu.edu

Motifs In Migration

Mary B. Kelly

Have you ever wondered, as you looked at symbols and motifs depicted on folk textiles—where did these designs come from?

While some motifs are part of cultures that are static, other motifs migrated across both space and time. Recently I have been researching how symbols that originated in Siberia, in the Migration Period (100 - 400 C.E.), were carried by nomadic groups along the Silk Route in Central Asia, then along the Volga River into north Russia, the Baltics, and finally into Scandinavia.



Two symbols are particularly interesting: one is the image of a horned Mother Reindeer and her daughter, who according to Siberian myth in antiquity, gave birth to humans as well as the reindeer to feed them, thus becoming symbols of fertility. The Pole stars were named after them and they are pictured on huge standing stones called “deer stones.”

The second Siberian image occurs on a large, felt hanging from 400 B.C.E. and was preserved in ice graves in the Altai Mountains. It shows a crowned and enthroned goddess holding a Tree of Life, symbolizing access to the spirit world, prophesy, and foreknowledge. As tribes moved west across Asia and into Europe, they brought these motifs with them, embedded in the rituals of fertility and prophesy. Today they can be seen on ritual cloths and clothing in the Mari, Chuvash, and Mordvin areas along the Volga as well as in Karelia, in north Russia, and in the Baltic States.



By Viking times, the two symbols can be seen on Scandinavian textiles and metal work that continued to be used in Sweden and Norway until the 19th century in folk culture. The meaning of the two motifs had now merged, associating them with fertility. It is especially prominent on large ceremonial Norwegian bridal wall hangings that show the goddess still holding up a large tree of life, and on clothing for the bride and groom that show the deer motifs.

Thus, motifs that originated far away to the east, ended up reaching as far west as the Atlantic. They were so important that they could not be left behind.

Mary B. Kelly, a former member of the WARP board, has recently devoted herself to research in Central Asia and Northern Europe. Her new book, Goddess Embroideries of the Northlands, was published this fall by Studiobooks. (www.studiobooks.homestead.com). Mary presented her findings at a conference on Motifs in Migration at the University of Oslo, Norway in January 2008. She has been invited to curate an exhibition of Norwegian folk textiles at the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, IA in 2009. Mary Kelly can be reached at 843/785-8383; kellym13@juno.com; www.marykellystudio.homestead.com

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Visit to Morocco Offers Rich Experiences

Judith Thatcher

This year I spent several weeks in the far southeastern area of Morocco which borders the Sahara Desert near a small town named Merzouga. Morocco is well known for beautiful crafts such as rugs and jewelry, and in rural area of Merzouga the hand work of the women is an integral part of their life.

I stayed near Merzouga and was impressed by the colorful rugs decorating the walls of the hotel rooms. When I asked Ali Mouni, the owner of the hotel about them, he told me his mother had made them. Ali explained the work was done mainly for personal use in their homes of the weavers and occasionally a piece might be sold. I asked about the materials such as yarns and dyes and was told weavers would prepare their own materials with fibers from sheep, goats, and camels.

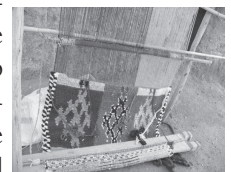
It occurred to me that weavers of the United States might like to visit with the weavers of Merzouga. The women have limited resources and work in primitive conditions but continue to provide beauty and comfort for their families through their textile skills. The trip can be beneficial in many ways. Visits with the local weavers will be a wonderful experience for the participants. The money spent by tourists helps many people in Merzouga due to the extensive kinship structure.

Ali made arrangements for me to go with Fatima, the wife of his close friend Ziad, to visit weavers nearby. Fatima and Ziad live in a beautiful home which Ziad built, a prime example of the skill and ability of Moroccans to produce something incredibly awesome from the local materials.

After lunch, Fatima secured her year and half old daughter to her back and we set out to visit weavers. We stopped at a home where Fatima demonstrated carding of camel hair and showed us the salon decorated with pillow covers and rugs made by the residents. As we moved through the village it was wonderful to be in a place with no car traffic, clear air, and silence—except for the crowing of a rooster (perhaps the one that had awakened me in the wee hours of the morning).

Another place we stopped had a loom set up outside an earthen storage building and corral. This loom was built with worn timbers and poles then strung with cording of various types and colors. We called out a greeting to a young woman nearby who was squatting down washing clothes surrounded by large plastic tubs. It turned out she was the weaver. She uncovered the loom from the plastic tarp and showed us the partially completed rug.

Later, we came upon a loom set up outside next to a line with clothes drying in the desert breeze. The practice of setting up looms outside and covering the rugs in process with a lowly plastic tarp moved me deeply as compared to the reverence toward



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Book Review...

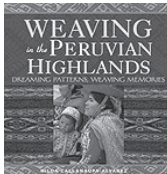
Weaving in the Peruvian Highlands: Dreaming Patterns, Weaving Memories, by Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez. Cusco, Peru: Center de Textiles Tradicionales del Cusco, 2007.

reviewed by Linda Temple

Nilda Callañaupa Alvarez, founder and director of the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco, has successfully combined her extensive knowledge of Peruvian textiles with her deep love and appreciation of the people who make them in this lovely book, edited by Linda Ligon. This is not an anthropological “study”; Callañaupa’s story is of culture that she is a part of and a tradition that is very much alive—the weavers featured in the many photos and who are quoted in the text are real people.

Callañaupa, a WARP Sister Member for many years, covers a great deal of territory in this book. An early chapter has extensive photos and descriptions of the traditional clothing of the Cusco region. The discussion of “How Textiles are Made” begins with preparing the raw fiber—sheep’s wool, llama or alpaca—and proceeds through the spinning and dyeing processes. She explains the meanings of traditional design patterns, again accompanied by many excellent photos. Most interesting to me are the textile traditions she describes that are so “deeply embedded in the culture of daily life.”

Weaving in the Peruvian Highlands is a beautiful book. The crisp text conveys the traditions of an ancient weaving people, while assuring us that those traditions are not dead. The bountiful photos are extraordinary. The publishers could have chosen to make this a large, expensive, coffee-table style book. Fortunately, they did not. ***Weaving in the Peruvian Highlands*** is available from Interweave Press (www.interweave.com) for \$19.95. All proceeds from the sale of the book benefit the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco.



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Visit to Morocco Offers Rich Experiences

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looms, equipment, and work-in-progress in the US. Of course we have the luxury of ample disposable income, leisure time, and refined resources. The women in Merzouga work to provide comfort for their families, with limited resources, but the outcome may be all the more precious.

My contact, Ali Mouni, can provide assistance in meeting weavers, visiting their homes, and sharing tea. Arrangements can be made to help with the preparation of materials and process of weaving. I am delighted to work with individuals and organizations who value the importance of fiber arts, and I am eager to share my experiences and contacts for anyone who would like to travel to Morocco, especially Merzouga.

Judith Thatcher lives in Santa Fe and is a retired elementary educator from Los Angeles. She is interested in all types of artistic expression and especially appreciates the beauty, skill, and inventiveness of handcrafted articles. She can be reached at judiththatcher@comcast.net



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