



Rwandan Knits Provides Income and Support for Refugee Women

submitted by Lynda Winslow

Rwanda is a rural country with about 90% of the population engaged in subsistence agriculture. It is landlocked with few natural resources and minimal industry and is one of the smallest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, about the size of Maryland. Primary exports are coffee and tea. Tourism is a growing sector, notably ecotourism. Rwanda has a low gross national product; the International Monetary Fund has identified it as a Heavily Indebted Poor Country. The World Food Program estimates that 60% of Rwandans live below the poverty line and that 10-12% suffer from food insecurity each year. In 1994, Rwanda suffered a massive genocide of the Tutsis and moderate Hutus, wiping out 800,000 of its people. In 2005, its encouraging economic performance and governance achievements prompted International Funding Institutions to cancel nearly all its debts.



Teaching the Teachers: Cari Clement demonstrates use of the knitting machine

Rwanda's people, especially the women, are determined to overcome adversity. Begun in 2003, Rwanda Knits provides low-income women hand-operated, American-made knitting machines, technical assistance, and business training to Rwandan and Congolese refugee women living in Rwanda. This partnership has enabled them to increase their incomes through economically sustainable knitting cooperatives, producing garments for both the domestic and, in the future, export markets.

Through a USAID grant to their sister Rwanda-based NGO, Rwandans and Americans in Partnership (RAP), Rwanda Knits has helped the women earn a living by making and selling their knitted goods. The project is one of the most successful for USAID Rwanda.

History: Cari Clement partnered to start a knitting machine company (Bond America/CC Products) in 1991. She later sold the company to Caron International, a yarn manufacturer in NC. But first, she sent a letter to a three organizations offering a donation of 60 Ultimate Sweater[®] machines to help set up a women's economic collective somewhere in the world. In

Mission Statement

To facilitate self-empowerment and betterment of women and communities-in-need through textile arts.

Goals

To foster dialogue and support within the organization

To serve as a clearinghouse for information, resources, and technical assistance within the international textile community

To provide cross-cultural education and support within the textile community

To provide guidance in the realities of appropriate assistance

To promote appreciation of textiles which reflect a community's culture

To enrich the lives of individuals in the global textile community through cross-cultural exchange

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Governing
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From the WARP Office....

Cheryl Musch, Administrative Coordinator

I am excited that Ann Rubin will be taking over the position of WARP's Administrative Coordinator. We've worked out a plan for the transition this summer. Meanwhile, as you can see from this newsletter, the board will be doing some long-range strategic planning in Boston. Membership directories are not yet available. Expect yours in the mail in late May or early June.

Send Pictures NOW for Slideshow Update

I have begun work on revising the WARP slide show. There are some of you (and you know who you are!) who promised slides, photos, or CD's. Please send them NOW if you want them included. The more variety we have, the more interesting the slide show will be. Remember - please send images to Carole Pierce, 200 Peach Bloom Hill, Berea, KY 40403. Thanks.

Fair Trade Federation 2007 Conference

Information about the Fair Trade Federation's 2007 Conference, *Changing Hands: The Work of Fair Trade*, to be held June 1-3 in Washington, D.C., is now available online at www.FairTradeFederation.org. FTF members, partners, colleagues, and friends with a hand in positively changing the lives of those in poverty are invited to attend.

Textile Society of America's 11th Biennial Symposium – Call for Papers

Papers are being solicited for the Eleventh Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, to be held in Honolulu, Hawai'i, September 24-27, 2008. *Textiles as Cultural Expressions* is the symposium theme.

All submissions must be postmarked no later than October 1, 2007. Faxes and email will not be accepted. Send title page, one-page resume, and six copies of abstract(s), without staples, unfolded, in a large mailing envelope to:

Tom Klobe, TSA Symposium Program Coordinator; University of Hawai'i Department of Art & Art History; 2535 McCarthy Mall; Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822, USA

Visit the tsa website for complete instructions - <http://www.textilesociety.org>

WARP on the Web

<http://www.weavearealpeace.org>

WARP's ListServ

Go to Main Page of the listserv on the Internet at

<http://www.yahoogleroups.com/list/WeaveAREalPeace> and complete the requested information to register for YahooGroups. Don't forget your password! 'Bookmark' the site, or add it to your favorites.

Important: We Need Your Input

WARP's Board of Directors will gather June 22-24 for a strategic planning meeting. We want input from all members and have put together a short survey (see the nine questions below). You can provide feedback in one of several ways:

- Go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=600613816257> and take the survey online;
- Respond to the email that will be sent via the listserv (send email comments to the entire listserv or to Linda Temple at lgtemple@juno.com, or click on the direct link to the survey); or
- Mail your responses to Linda Temple, 1230 NE 70, Oklahoma City, OK 73111.

We hope you will take a few minutes to let us know what you think.

1. Are WARP's mission and goals understandable and relevant?
2. If you think WARP should consider pursuing a different and/or expanded mission, what might that be? (be specific)
3. What has WARP done well in the past?
4. How has WARP been of benefit to you?
5. What would you like to see WARP do in the future?
6. Is there anything else you'd like us to consider or that we should be aware of regarding the future direction of WARP?

Please provide us with some background information.

1. How long have you been a member of WARP?
2. Where do you live?
3. What age range are you in?

Ann Rubin Hired as WARP's Administrative Coordinator

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Ann Rubin has been hired to replace Cheryl Musch as WARP's Administrative Coordinator. To ensure a smooth staff transition, Ann will assume the position following a face-to-face meeting with Cheryl in July.



Ann is the founder of and continues to manage the afghans for Afghans project (www.afghansforafghans.org/) from San Francisco. She has extensive experience in the non-profit sector in the areas of marketing, fundraising, business planning, managing online communities, working with volunteers, and more. Ann has an MBA from the University of California at Berkeley and a BA from Claremont Men's College in Claremont, CA.

In 2006, Ann received the Knitters Magazine's Knitter of the Year award for making the world a better place through knitting.

Ann expresses a "great affinity for textiles and the arts and their producers and has always enjoyed working alongside those in the creative fields." You will be hearing more about Ann in future newsletters. She can be contacted at AnnWARP@aol.com.

You can help WARP by

...providing financial support for the:

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

...volunteering to:

- Host an UPAVIM/ Mayan Hands sale to benefit WARP
- Show the WARP slideshow in your community
- Write an article for the newsletter
- Help with annual meetings
- Index WARP newsletters
- 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 Cheryl Musch at info@weavearealpeace.org



WARP Newsletter

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Editor: Linda Temple

Send address corrections to:
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3102 Classen Boulevard
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Oklahoma City, OK 73118

The deadline for
contributions to the Fall
2007 WARP newsletter is
August 17, 2007.

Send articles and
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the newsletter to:
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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

Pegi Bevins:

Self-Portrait of a Passionate Weaver

Pegi Bevins

Hello, WARP members! Since I wasn't able to attend the Annual Meeting this year and meet you in person, I decided to "profile" myself this time, so you can meet the person who writes the member profiles.

My passion for the fiber arts started many years ago. As a kid, I made my mom a lifetime supply—and then some—of potholders on my Straits Adjustable Loom, which I still have. In my teens and twenties, I learned to knit and crochet. Knitting and crocheting served me well for many years, but with both, I reached a "topped out" stage. During those years, I was sub-consciously drawn to weaving. I studied the fabrics I wore and those that covered my furniture. I noticed the angle of the weaves and the variations in structures. Then one day Martha Stewart featured a weaver on her show, and I realized that *that* was what I wanted to do.

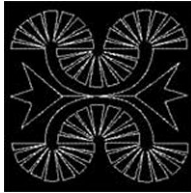
At the end of my first weaving lesson, I walked out feeling as if I had found something I had been looking for all my life. I was thrilled to find out that in June, the Midwest Weavers Conference is being held in Blair, Nebraska, which is only about four hours from where I live in central Iowa. I applied for a scholarship to attend the conference—and was selected! I'm looking forward to meeting other weavers and to attending two workshops on crackle weave given by Susan Wilson.

In addition to my passion for weaving, however, I do have to make a living. After teaching high school language arts for five years, I became an editor for an educational publishing company. For the next six years, I wrote or edited products for language arts classrooms. In 2000, I decided to go it alone and came home to freelance. I now create classroom materials for companies all over the United States. In addition, I am the author of two children's books aimed at encouraging non-disabled kids to accept those with disabilities. I also have created and am marketing three lines of language arts products of my own. All can be seen on my web site (which I'm currently in the process of updating): www.funwaytoteach.com.

I have enjoyed working with WARP and getting to know the members I have profiled thus far. I joined WARP because I am a passionate advocate of women's rights and of tolerance of others—both of which I think WARP promotes.

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 (email). Visit her website at www.funwaytoteach.com.

Sashiko is a simple form of hand sewing using a running stitch in repeating or interlocking patterns. Japanese peasants used sashiko to quilt together several layers of fabric for warmth and durability or to reinforce a single layer of fabric. Originally, the thread used was the same fiber and color as the fabric. However, in time, sashiko became characterized by the contrast between the simple geometric designs sewn with white cotton thread (heavier than quilting thread) on indigo dyed fabric.



The oldest surviving sashiko stitched garment is from the Asuka period (A.D. 552 to 710). In the early years, the most common fibers available were paper mulberry, wisteria, hemp, and linen. However, in the 1700s, when cotton became readily available, it was adopted as the fiber of choice for both the thread and the fabric due to its absorbency, warmth, and texture. By the 1800s, with cotton being plentiful, sashiko was still used for practical purposes, but also for its decorative qualities. Industrialization in the early 1900s caused a decline in sashiko stitching, but since the 1970s there has been a resurgence in interest in sashiko as a hobby.

When the thread used was the same color as the fabric the designs were primarily utilitarian. However, once the stitching contrasted with the fabric, more elaborate designs began to emerge, and once cotton (which was easier to work with) was easily accessible, the designs became even more detailed. Traditional Japanese patterns and motifs were incorporated into sashiko stitching. The designs are geometric in nature and are formed by counting warp and weft threads in the fabric. Sashiko patterns are simplified representations of plants, birds, animals, clouds, tools, swords, written characters, etc. A number of patterns are influenced by Chinese designs, and some are derived from Buddhist symbols.

Resources:

Japanese Country Quilting: Sashiko Patterns and Projects for Beginners, by Karen Kim Matsunaga, Kodansha International.

Sashiko: Easy & Elegant Designs for Decorative Machine Embroidery, by Mary Parker, Lark Books.

<http://www.bettegant.com/sashiko.html>
<http://quilt.com/FAQS/SashikoFAQ.html>

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

Weave A Real Peace

Membership Information

2007 Annual Dues

\$30 (group/supporting)
(strongly encouraged!)

\$10 (simple living)

\$20 (U.S. and Canada)

\$25 (international;
 sister memberships)

\$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 with information on members' interests and activities, and a quarterly newsletter.

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 U.S. funds payable to **WARP** to:

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

Scaling Up: An Update on The Backstrap Weaver's Ergonomic Bench

by Karen Piegorsch

The *Backstrap Weaver's Ergonomic Bench* helps indigenous women artisans increase their ability to earn a living through enhanced productivity and improved product quality. Concurrently, the women are able to prevent cumulative damage to their bodies and preserve important aspects of their indigenous culture. The bench rocks with the rhythm of the weaver's body, and its interlocking foot-rest provides stability and leverage.



A tremendously successful pilot project (introduced in WARP's Winter 2005 newsletter) was conducted by Synergo and Oxlajuj B'atz' (OB) from May 2005 through February 2007. More than 140 women in nine Guatemalan communities have acquired the bench thus far, and all of them are still using it. Here are some of their comments: "What used to take me three days to weave now takes two;" "I used to be able to weave for 30 minutes, then had to quit for the pain; now I can weave for three hours with no pain." And from their daughters: "I want a bench like my mother has now, so that my body won't get the years of abuse and pain that hers has."

The Tech Museum of Innovation's prestigious Award Program for Technology Benefiting Humanity named Synergo a 2006 Tech Laureate for the Accenture Economic Development Award, for designing the bench and delivering it with an educational program to help Mayan women empower their economic wellbeing and quality of life.

While OB continues to implement the project with the 300 Mayan women it serves, Synergo is scaling up to make the bench and training package available across Guatemala, in a locally sustainable way. This involves, for example, refining the manufacturing process in order to produce the bench with reliably high quality at the lowest possible cost; producing a multilingual educational DVD; and continuing to develop expertise within OB for delivery of the training package. We are committed to making this ergonomic bench available under a micro-enterprise system (social entrepreneurship model) that empowers local carpenters and communities within Guatemala, and that can be adapted, eventually, to other countries. As an aid to expanding our ergonomics work with artisans in the developing world, Synergo is preparing to seek 501(c)(3) status.

We are grateful for the participation of WARP members in this project. Cindy Lair is refining the manufacturing process; Caroline Villa is helping with the educational program by advising on cultural competency and Spanish language translation; and Anne Dunham is sharing her expertise in the design and management of non-profit organizations.

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African textile workshops in Ghana

Cross Cultural Collaborative is offering two trips this summer:
July 28 - August 6, 2007 or
August 6-15, 2007

Take workshops from indigenous artisans in Adinkra-Kente-Tie&Dye-Batik-Asafo Flag Applique

If interested contact:
Ellie Schimelman
aba@culturalcollaborative.org
<http://www.culturalcollaborative.org>

Natural Dye Workshop in Oaxaca, November 16-24, 2007

Members of a weaving coop in Teotitlan del Valle, a Zapotec community in the Oaxaca Valley, will lead a three day hands-on workshop to learn about natural dyes.

The trip will include visiting the Botanical Gardens in Oaxaca City, touring a cochineal production enterprise, seeing how paper is made, and visiting numerous artisan communities.

For more information, please contact Tia Stephanie Tours at 734/769-7839, or visit www.tiastephanietours.com

Special Section: 2006 Annual Report/ 2007 Annual Meeting



2006: The Year in Review...

Membership - WARP membership in 2006 was 334 members, up from 321 in 2005.

Sister Memberships - WARP's 2006 membership included 11 Sister Members, from India, East Timor, Bolivia, Pakistan, Kenya, Thailand, Lesotho, and Peru. Sister Memberships for 2007 are currently being received.

WARP Board - Cheryl Musch's board term expired in 2006, and Susan Shaefer Davis was elected to fill that position. Her term will expire in 2009. Melinda Lowrey, whose term was scheduled to expire in 2007, submitted her resignation. Because of timing issues, it was decided to postpone the filling of this position until 2007.

Annual Meeting - The 2006 Annual Meeting was held May 19-21 at Dunrovin Retreat Center in Marine On St. Croix, Minnesota. Thirty one members attended. A tour of the Textile Center in Minneapolis was followed by a visit to WARP member Karen Searle's studio. Elisha Renne was the keynote speaker, providing information about Queen Amina Embroidery of Nigeria. A stimulating panel discussion about Fair Trade and brief presentations about a wide variety of national and international textile programs rounded out the schedule. The Marketplace was open throughout the weekend, while a new feature--a Silent Auction of gently used ethnic clothing--netted WARP over \$800.

Newsletter - Four newsletters were published in 2006, thanks to outstanding contributions from many WARP members. Special appreciation goes to regular columnists Pegi Bevins and Deborah Brandon.

UPAVIM/Mayan Hands Sales - Thanks to members who have had UPAVIM/Mayan Hands sales, and appreciation to Mary Joan Ferrara-Marsland who graciously makes these sales possible. In 2006, WARP netted \$2,371 from UPAVIM/Mayan Hands sales.

Convergence - WARP was again represented with a booth at Convergence, with nine vendors selling over \$6,000 in product. A special interest meeting was also held to provide information about WARP to Convergence attendees.

Web Site - Thanks to Joan Fernbach who continued to update WARP's website as needed.

Fred's Threads - Beth Davis maintained WARP's active elist. Thanks!

Slide Show - Thanks to Carole Pierce for coordinating slide show presentations--it was shown 17 times in the US and Canada.

Scholarship Fund - Thanks to generous donations from Alice Brown, WARP now has a Scholarship Fund to provide assistance to those wanting to attend Annual Meetings. The Board will finalize scholarship criteria at the 2007 Board Meeting.

Other Fundraising - WARP t-shirts were printed and sold during 2006, and Deb Brandon continued to donate lovely hand-dyed silk scarves discharged with the WARP logo for purchase. Total product sales were \$130.00

Special Section: 2006 Annual Report/
2007 Annual Meeting



Weave A Real Peace
Financial Report - 2006

WARP Checking Account - 2006

1/1/2006 - 12/31/2006

Income

2006 Dues	\$5,915.00
2007 & 2008 Dues	625.00
2006 Meeting Fees	5,260.00
Annual Meeting Vendor Income	201.00
Auction at Annual Meeting	826.00
2007 Annual Meeting Registration	20,960.00
Convergence Sales	6,458.00
Donations - general	2,330.00
Donations - Scholarship Fund	2,000.00
Donations - Newsletter Underwriting	750.00
Donations - Annual Meeting Travel	475.00
UPAVIM/Mayan Hands sales	2,371.00
Product sales	130.00
Interest income	59.00
Total Income	\$48,360.00

Expenses

2006 Annual Meeting	\$3,461.00
2006 Board Meeting	1,690.00
2007 Annual Meeting	2,000.00
Staff salary	7,280.00
Convergence Sales Payments	5,258.00
Member Directory (reprints)	272.00
Newsletter	2,498.00
Office supplies	115.00
Postage	601.00
Slide show	143.00
Copies	63.00
HGA Membership	45.00
Gifts	69.00
Tax preparation	200.00
T-shirts	231.00
10% 2005 Dues to Endowment Fund.....	600.00*
Total Expenses	\$24,526.00

Checking Total

Income vs. Expenses	\$23,834.00**
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Summary of Credit Union Accounts

1/1/06 Balance	\$20,932.51
Checking Income vs. Expenses	\$23,834.19
Money Manager Interest	78.00
CD Interest	274.64
12/31/06 Balance	\$45,119.34**

Account Balances 12/31/2006

Checking	32,807.00
Money manager	5,952.81
CD (matures 11/11/07)	6,334.53
Savings	25.00

Total Account Balance \$45,119.34**

WARP Endowment Fund

1/1/06-12/31/06

Income

Interest earned	963.67
Deposit.....	600.00*
Net Income	\$1,563.67

1/1/06 Balance

Net Income

12/31/06 Balance \$19,003.77

Cumulative Totals for FY2006

Account balances 12/31/06

Endowment balance 12/31/06

Total cash on hand 12/31/06 \$64,123.11**

*Ten percent of all membership dues are contributed the Endowment Fund.

**Income/Expense variance due to 2007 Annual Meeting costs not dispersed prior to 12/2006.

Special Section: 2006 Annual Report/ 2007 Annual Meeting



WARP Annual Meeting Minutes, March 4, 2007

Panajachel, Guatemala

Meeting called to order by Adrienne Sloane at 5:00 p.m.

Review of Minutes from 2006 Annual Meeting. Call for corrections or additions. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded; the minutes were unanimously approved.

Review of 2006 programs and activities (from 2006 Year in Review, page 7) by Deborah Brandon.

Report on Board Meeting by Linda Temple

Annual Meeting Scholarship Fund – Thanks to a second generous donation from Alice Brown, WARP has a robust scholarship fund. The goal is to provide registration costs for up to two students to attend an annual meeting. Sarah Saulson and Adrienne Sloane will develop a scholarship selection process.

Job Search – A process has been set for reviewing applications for the Administrative Coordinator position. Sarah Saulson is coordinating the process and the board hopes to have the position filled by the end of April. The new Coordinator will spend time with Cheryl, to ensure a smooth transition.

Newsletter – Members continue to support the newsletter and see it as a key activity of WARP. Following much discussion, it was decided that the newsletter will continue to be printed and mailed, as well as being available electronically.

Convergence – Because of decreasing sales, and the vast amount of work involved, WARP does not plan to have a booth at Convergence 2008. It is hoped that WARP will have a presence via workshops.

Member Directory – to be published this spring, and in the future in June or July.

Regional Conference presence – WARP will send brochures to several of the 2007 regional conferences. Any WARP member attending a regional conference is encouraged to show the slide show or provide information about WARP.

Website – The board wants to use the website to increase networking and to make it more interactive.

Dues – The board recommends new annual membership dues for 2008: Individual, \$35; Supporting Individual, \$50; International, \$40; Simple Living, personal choice; Organization/Group, \$50; Patron, \$100+. Donations will always be encouraged. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the recommended dues structure. The motion was approved.

UPAVIM/Mayan Hands Sales – These sales provide WARP with a significant portion of our budget, and we are grateful to Mary Joan Ferrara-Marsland for this wonderful opportunity. A sign up sheet was distributed for those interested in doing a sale during the coming year.

Board Planning Meeting – The board will have a strategic planning meeting in June to discuss several major issues, including future direction and long-term goals. Member input is encouraged (see page 3).

Deficit budget – For the first time, the WARP board has approved a deficit budget, due in part to the cost of the planning meeting and staff transition costs. The board feels it is important to have the planning meeting at this pivotal point in our history, as board members will explore funding options and future directions. WARP has adequate funds to meet this deficit.

Review of 2005 Financial Report - Cheryl Musch (complete report at left)

Election of Board Members – Cheryl Musch has been nominated for the board by the nominating committee (Carole Pierce). Linda called for nominations from the floor. Sara Goodman motioned to accept the nominating committee's candidate; motion seconded and approved.

2008 Annual Meeting – Several options were discussed, including the Pacific Northwest. More information will be forthcoming.

Thanks were expressed to Deb Brandon for coordinating registrations, and thanks and gifts of appreciation were given to Deborah Chandler, for organizing this fantastic meeting, and to Cheryl Musch, who has so ably served as WARP's Administrative Coordinator for the past seven years. Their value is beyond expression!

Meeting adjourned by Adrienne Sloane at 8:30 p.m.

Mapula: An Embroidery Project in South Africa

Brenda Schmahmann

One of the most productive and important community art projects in South Africa is the Mapula Embroidery Project in the Winterveld. Set up by the international women's organisation Soroptomists International, the Sisters of Mercy, and staff at the University of South Africa, Mapula took its name from the Tsonga word for 'mother of rain.' Comprised of about ten participants when it was founded in 1991, the project now offers support to about 150 women who rely on it for monies to sustain themselves and their children. In addition to providing an essential income to women who are the sole breadwinners in their families, Mapula has produced outstanding works. Dazzling in colour and inventive in design, the embroideries engage compellingly with social and political histories that have shaped the lives of their makers.



The Mapula Embroidery Project is in an area of South Africa called the Winterveld, about 45 kilometres (28 miles) northwest of Pretoria. Prior to the First Democratic Election in South Africa in 1994, the Winterveld was part of Bophuthatswana, one of the so-called 'homelands' set up by the apartheid government – in this instance for Tswana speakers. Eighty or ninety percent of the Winterveld population were not in fact Tswana, however, and, while being denied right of abode in South Africa, they were also subject to harassment by Lucas Mangope, Bophuthatswana's leader. While they gained political rights in 1994, people in the region still have few opportunities to find formal employment and the Winterveld remains underdeveloped.

Early Mapula embroideries tended to focus on animals or flowers. Shortly after the First Democratic Election in 1994, however, embroiderers began referring to contemporary events, often using imagery which spoke of South Africa's newly developed symbols of, and conceptions about, its nationhood. South African leaders – most especially Nelson Mandela – began to feature as subject matter, as did the new South African flag. While animals continue to be embroidered by a number of women, so too now do popular icons, sports events, local grassroots educational campaigns and local advertising. Cushion covers were given focus in the early years of the project but a key output since 1996 has been cloths which buyers display as wall hangings. Normally three or four feet in height or width, cloths cater for members' interest in developing complex and detailed treatment of subject matter.

Mapula works, which are sold through craft shops in South Africa, have also featured in a number of art exhibitions. The winner of prestigious South African awards such as the FNB

India For Textile Lovers & Artists - A 20-day tour—February 2008

Discover the unique culture of India as expressed through its distinctive textiles during an affordable 20-day tour. The journey will begin in the glorious Caves of Ajanta and sculptures in Ellora. Participants will take part in hands-on craft workshops in Kerala, Maharashtra, and Orissa given by award-winning weavers, block printers, palm etchers, and expert natural dyers. Visits to private collections, museums, and markets.

Global textile designer Barbara Arlen will lead the tour. Well-informed local guides will accompany the group during visits to India's vibrant urban and rural areas.

For details, please call Barbara Arlen at 212/628-1289 or email b.arlen@mac.com with your interests and questions. The tour is limited to 15 participants.

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The Basket Women of Bolgatanga

Jackie Abrams

In January 2007, I traveled to northern Ghana with Steve Csipke, Ann Schunior, and my daughter Dani. We met the basket women of Bolgatanga.

The baskets probably look familiar to you – usually round and brightly colored, twined with twisted straws, often with handles of wrapped leather. Here in Brattleboro (Vermont) they are sold at our food co-op, and are often seen in use at the local farmers market. They are made in Bolgatanga, a region in northern Ghana, West Africa, near the border of Burkina Faso.

The Sherigu Atie-Taaba Women's Association is located in Sherigu, just outside of Bolga. *Atie-taaba* means to push each other up. Over 70 women gather daily, except during farming season, to sing, to learn and teach, and to make baskets.



Abubakari Akologo has provided this special place for the women. Abu's mother was a basketmaker in this village, where the skills have been passed down for generations, from mother to daughter. Starting at age 10, Abu collected the straw that would be used to make his mother's baskets. In 1991, Abu rented a stall at the Art Centre in Accra, a destination of most tourists visiting Ghana - a day's drive from Bolga. He started to buy the baskets from the makers to bring them down to Accra to sell. In 2000, he provided a gathering spot for these basketmakers.

The women have established a bank account, with each woman putting in 2000 cedis (about 25 cents) per month. The members are given loans, as needed, to buy more straw. The straw, their traditional material, is only locally available during the rainy season. There is more rain in Kumasi (a 7 ½ hour car ride), with straw available year-round. People journey to there to buy bundles to sell at the Bolga Market. Three bundles, costing 4-5,000 cedis per bundle, will make one medium-sized basket.

To prepare the materials, the straw is split once, then plied, using a technique called "mia" (pronounced mEa). The basket is twined, started with a split ply base. The dyes are from Nigeria and Germany. When I asked about natural dyes, the answer is "the old people did that" – e.g., they used the bark of the mahogany trees. Once the materials are prepped, it takes two days to weave and finish the basket. The handles are sometimes wrapped with goat leather.

Abubakari buys the finished baskets, and proudly sells them at his booth at the Art Centre. His best customers are German and American tourists. He ships them overseas as well.

Tourists rarely visit this small basket community in Sherigu. Our arrival was a special event. We were greeted by over 50 women, dancing and singing for us, clad in their special yellow shirts.

Jackie Abrams can be reached at jackieabrams@verizon.net.

Next issue: Steve Csipke will write about a side trip to Daboya, a traditional weaving and indigo-dyeing village in northern Ghana.

Jobs...

Co-worker in Textiles.

Seeking enthusiastic fiber artist interested in exploring craft in alternative setting, living and working with people with special needs. As a member of our intentional community, you would assist in the development of the weaving and fiber arts program and manage the Weavery.

For more information contact

Nell Hazinski

Camphill Village

Kimberton Hills

www.camphillkimberton.org

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Fiber Friendships Cross Cultural Boundaries at 2007 Annual Meeting

Gloria Miller

The international flavor so central to WARP took a literal as well as figurative leap in the choice to hold the 2007 annual meeting in Guatemala. This gathering moved us from the level of rich sharing of samples, pictures and stories of fabrics and their crafters to the opportunity to visit some of these gifted people in their own homes and villages. Because of the incredible hospitality extended to us by many WARP members and organizations, we were privileged to travel as visitors and not merely as tourists.

The energy in the group was electric. Rich conversations filled the vans as we traversed highways as well as winding dirt roads into the campos. Because of the size of the group and the many choices of places to visit, we would often find ourselves next to someone we had not met before. Delays on the highways because of repairs following the hurricanes gave us added time to reflect together on our experience as well as share our own personal connections to WARP and with fiber artists in other countries.

Most of us have long admired the colors and textures that are so identified with Guatemala and it was a special gift to visit and speak with some of the people who have kept the arts alive and thriving despite many years of conquest, war and natural disasters. Indeed in some places, the fiber arts have taken a different turn because of some of these events and new strategies have been developed to produce and market the fine Mayan handwork.

Despite improvements in the production and moving of craft items with a more just compensation, extreme poverty is ever

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Pre-Columbian Textile Workshop

January 9-10, 2008

Museum Textile Services will sponsor the 2008 Pre-Columbian Textile Workshop from January 9-10 in Lima and Yarinacocha, Peru. The theme of the workshop is "Cotton." Participants will document, conserve, and mount pre-Columbian textiles and participate in an exhibition celebrating the fifth anniversary of our collaboration with the Huaca Malena Museum. To be placed on the mailing list contact Camille Myers Breeze at museumtextiles@gmail.com. Applications will begin in September 2007.

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.

Eight days in Bali - learn about the weaving traditions of Bali and eastern Indonesia; experience hands-on ikat tie-dyeing, backstrap loom weaving, batik, and dyeing with natural indigo-blue and Morinda-red. In Bali, and four days in central Flores, meet members of the weavers' cooperatives supported by Threads of Life.

The tour is based on a minimum group of 10 paying participants, and a maximum of 14 paying participants. Tour fee includes scheduled domestic airfares and domestic airport taxes, breakfast and either lunch or dinner each day, two evening performances in Bali, lectures and classes, scheduled local transport and airport transfers. Tour leaders are WARP members Jean Howe and Sara Goodman.

For more information about Threads of Life, <http://www.threadsoflife.com>. For more information about the tour, contact Sara Goodman at sara.goodman@valley.nets

Rwandan Knits

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2002 she received a “Yes, we would love that!” reply from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Rwanda, and the Rwanda Knits project began. In 2003, she traveled to the Kiziba refugee camp in Kibuye, Rwanda, to teach the women how to use the machines.

In 2004 Cari committed to have the Kiziba knitters make 500 scarves, 250 for an order that was going into the bags handed out at the Grammy awards that year and 250 that were being sold through an online catalog company. They filled the scarf order, which helped fund the Women’s Center. The refugees (who don’t own the Center’s land or building) elected to use some of the money to help fix the dirt floor and the leaking roof—and helped do the work themselves.

When Madame Kagame (First Lady of Rwanda) heard about the knitting project and the rebuilding of the Women’s Center., she contacted Cari asking “What about those Rwandan women?” and the project really took off.

Each machine is used by at least two women; a total of 630 machines serve 17 cooperatives, about 1200 women in all. The knitters who have learned to use the machines and are filling the orders are survivors of devastation created by the 1994 genocide, survivors of HIV/AIDS, and survivors of the refugee camps. The project empowers students and teachers to learn new skills.

Future: Rwanda Knits’ seven traveling teachers have trained over 1200 knitters using yarn donated by Caron International. Since their training in the spring and summer of 2006, a significant number of orders have been secured by the project. Rwanda Knits is now trying to raise money to fund a “yarn bank” that will be owned and managed by the knitters themselves from which the knitters can “draw down” yarn to fill orders. They need to raise \$20,000 in the upcoming year to cover gaps between grants, complete their yarn order, do additional business training and continue to pay the teachers and the Rwanda Knits project manager

Rwanda Knits has applied for the African Growth and Opportunity (AGO) visa, which will allow for the export of Rwandan goods. The women of the Rwanda Knits cooperatives are ready to move forward and make this next step to achieve economic self-sufficiency. They need your help and support to make their dreams a reality.

What WARP members can do to help:

- Donate toward the \$20K they are trying to raise for the Yarn Bank.
- Spread the word about their hard work and success.
- Buy their products at fair trade outlets, and ask for their products if they are not offered.

More information about Rwandan Knits is available at <http://www.rwandaknits.org/> or <http://www.fiberandcraft.org/>

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2007 WARP Annual Meeting

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present. When we met with the groups from Vasconcelos/Morales, we were especially touched to meet a woman and her beautiful three year old daughter who has cerebral palsy. The mother carries the little girl everywhere along very rugged terrain and has been making long trips three times a week to take her to physical therapy, yet she was unable to buy the vitamins they recommend.

The heart of the trip was the opportunity to visit with the women's groups and to have the experience of conversation, albeit doubly translated—from Quiché or Katchikél to Spanish to English and back. It was truly impressive to hear how the groups developed and have been nurtured by leadership from within. The cooperatives have not only been a means of selling their art but also of developing strength and identity as a group of women who want a better life for their families, especially their children. It was truly impressive to see the commitment of the young staff members from Mayan Hands who have had opportunities for education and choose to use that education to help people in their villages improve their lives.

We left Guatemala greatly enriched by the sharing of our hosts and many expressed a renewed desire to do more to promote the mission of WARP remembering the faces and stories that produce the exquisite art.

WARP Members Comment...

There is something so very powerful about being able to leap the cultural divide and have a real conversation, no matter how brief, in another language, in this case, Spanish. I was able to do that many times during the trip to Guatemala. Beyond just chatting about the weather I was able to talk with people about weaving, the role of women in the family, politics, and other topics with several people.

I think the Guatemalans were predisposed to trust us and be patient with our language skills because we were there under the wing of the women from the States (Deb, Brenda, etc.) that they trusted. The high point of this for me was playing in the pool in Panajachel, with the Mayan girls. I will never forget how happy and open they were with us. Cheers, Sara Goodman

I'm one of the fortunate WARP members who enjoyed the wonderful trip to Guatemala - including the trip to El Salvador - and didn't get ill. Of course that meant that I could enjoy every day of the trip. Although I've been a member of WARP for several years, this was only the second annual meeting I've attended. In addition to the wonderful memories of the many people we met, I was so impressed by the WARP members I met. What a fascinating group of people we are! One of the

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More New Members

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Mapula Embroideries

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Vita Craft Gold Award in 2000, Mapula embroideries are included in public and private collections in South Africa and abroad.

Brenda Schmahmann is Professor and Head of the Fine Art Department at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. For more information about Mapula, please refer to her book Mapula: Embroidery and Empowerment in the Winterveld (Johannesburg: David Krut Publishing, 2006). Details for ordering a copy can be obtained from the website www.davidkrutpublishing.com. Copies are also available from the office of David Krut Projects in New York, 526 West 26th Street; 212/255-3094.

Update on Ergonomic Bench

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Here are some of the many ways that you can help:

- Share your expertise in fundraising (write or review our grant proposals; send ideas for sources of funding to which we can apply);
- Donate frequent flier miles (especially on Continental Airlines);
- Make financial contributions (not only in support of our specific projects, but also to develop a sustainable Ergonomics Education Foundation for the Empowerment of Artisans).

For more information, please contact Karen Piegorsch, at 520/400-1017 or karen@bewellworkbetter.com, and visit the Synergo website, www.bewellworkbetter.com.

Members Comment...

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things I appreciated was the effort everyone in this large group made to meet new people; it would have been easy to separate into cliques but I really felt that people went out of their way to meet and welcome members they hadn't known. I really look forward to the next WARP meeting and continuing my involvement with the group. Susan Weltman

I was most touched by visiting the weavers in the villages and learning something of their difficult lives, lives that they fill with courage and beauty every day. It was also wonderful to travel with fellow weavers; there was always someone interesting to talk to. Barbara Meyers

The most recent issue of Janet Rodina's beautiful Silk Moon newsletter has a eloquent article about her experiences at the WARP annual meeting. She is now carrying Mayan Hands and UPAVIM products in her Sebastopol, California gallery. For more information about Silk Moon, visit Janet's website at www.silkmoon.org

**Thanks to the
following members
for their generous
donations to WARP.**

Marcia Bellas
Peggy Coffey
Greater Lansing Weavers
Guild
Susan Markle
Portland Handweavers
Guild

Welcome Back!

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Please respond to WARP Survey - see page 3

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