



# The Ngurunit Basket Weavers: A Story of Revival and World Connections

Laura Lemunyete

Ngurunit, located in Samburu North Sub-county in Northern Kenya, is home to Samburu and Rendille pastoralists. In 2001, basket weaving was a dying art in Ngurunit with few women making the traditional doum palm camel milking



*Gutoyia Lemago with a weaver's tool in her hair (photo by Brigitte Kaufmann)*

baskets. This changed when Gutoyia Lemago gave a basket to Laura Lemunyete, manager of PEAR Innovations, asking her to sell it (see page eight for more info about PEAR). Laura quickly sold the basket. Being asked for more led her to recognize that basket weaving could generate income for pastoralist women, while also saving a dying art. Many Ngurunit women learned the traditional weaving style, adding Samburu designs and beads to make them a usable art form. Laura facilitated market access and WARP member Janice Knaußenburger, a professional weaver living in Nairobi, gave advice on improving design and quality for wider market appeal. This led to establishing the Ngurunit Basket Weavers Group in 2003.

These women continued to go from strength to strength, creating a beneficial enterprise to help members increase income generating power, supported by

many connections around the world. In 2005 the group was selected as one of



*Early marketing (photo by Nancy Stills)*



*From left to right: Lilian Lekadaa, Nkerisaba Lewano, Ntomulan Lesainia, Nkarin Lepitiling, Laura Lemunyete, Nankaya Lepitiling (photo by Laura Lemunyete)*

12 finalists for the Shell/Newsweek/BBC World Challenge as a community-based business that makes a positive difference. The group also connected to Swahilli Imports of Eugene, OR, a socially conscious

*continued on page 8*

## Creating A Connected Textile Community

### MISSION

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

### PURPOSE

Exchange information

Raise awareness of the importance of textile traditions to grassroots economies

Mobilize textile enthusiasts

Create conversations that result in action

### CORE VALUES

Textiles are an important component of the human experience.

Networking and sharing information creates an environment for constructive action.

Making connections between textile artisans worldwide promotes positive social change.

Interacting with people who have similar values enriches our lives.





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The deadline for  
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Spring issue of the WARP  
newsletter is  
March 27, 2015

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## WomenWeave and the Handloom School: An Update

*Sarah Saulson*

Recently, I had the opportunity to travel to India. As a handweaver and avid lover of ethnic textiles, I was eager to interact with weavers during my trip. WARP members helped me make the contact that led to a fascinating and deeply rewarding visit to WomenWeave and the Handloom School in Maheshwar, in central India (see page 10 for previous newsletter article about WomenWeave). Maheshwar is a historic, pic-



*The students at the Handloom School*

turesque handweaving center whose temples and palaces hug the shores of the peaceful Narmada River. There are several thousand weavers in Maheshwari. As I walked down the narrow streets of the town, I saw and heard the rhythmic beat of weaving in almost every home. Masheshwar is famous for sheer silk cloth for summerwear, often with subtle striping in the warp. American handweavers would be astounded at the fineness of the yarns that these remarkably skillful weavers employ to create such gossamer fabrics.

Through the WARP Listserve, I learned about Sally Holkar. Originally from the US, she moved to Maheshwar as a young woman and has been working to preserve handweaving in Maheshwar for decades. In 2003, Sally founded WomenWeave to help give women a sustainable income while at the same time helping to keep Maheshwar's textile tradition alive.

She also attracted the ever-cheerful and energetic Hemendra Sharma, a specialist in rural economic development

to WomenWeave. He explained to me that he wanted to work in the handloom world because of its potential to provide income throughout India. It is estimated



*A weaver at work at WomenWeave*

that there are 4.5 million handweavers throughout India, the second largest form of employment in rural India after agricul-



*Folding saris at WomenWeave*

ture! WomenWeave is a busy, happy place. Dozens of weavers are at work, creating a rich variety of cloths of silk and cotton. When I had earlier visited sari shops, I had wondered how all the stacks and stacks of saris had been folded so neatly. I got my answer at WomenWeave, where I saw two people, working together, carefully and lovingly fold each finished sari perfectly. To me, they epitomized the attention to detail and pride in handwork that I found throughout India.

I was also fascinated with WomenWeave's Gudi Mudi Khadi project. They use locally grown organic cotton, which is then handspun and woven. I purchased a Gudi Mudi scarf hand-dyed with indigo at WomenWeave's small shop in Maheshwar. Later in my trip, I drove past a roadside

*continued on page 10*



# Artisan Textile Resource Guide Available Electronically

The first WARP Artisan Textile Resource Guide has been published. The long development process began when Board member Jackie Abrams stood up at the 2013 WARP meeting in NH and voiced a desire to help our international members sell their work. Philis Alvic, Mary Joan Ferrara-Marsland, and Marilyn Murphy volunteered to help her explore possibilities. After discussing many approaches to connecting sellers with buyers, the guide format was chosen that provides information about producers of goods and services.

Members responded by joining the effort with information and images of their operations and products. The WARP Board agreed to hire professionals to make this publication appealing and to publicize it widely. Early on, a product that could be offered electronically had the most possibilities. So, the Resource Guide is available in a PDF or in a flip book that simulates a magazine with pages that turn. Each company has a page where they outline their activities, give contact information, and illustrate what they do with beautiful photographs.

Now, what has been done to get the word out about this new valuable venture and how can you help? A press release has gone out, notices have been placed on social media outlets, and WARP members have received an e-mail with links to the guide. At least one article has been started for a national magazine with others to follow. Publicity postcards have

been sent to all of the establishments in the guide for them to distribute. As a WARP member you may request postcards to share with your friends and your guild or other groups. The best publicity is always getting a recommendation from someone you know. So, WARP members, get out the word through your personal networks. Encourage everyone you know to go to <http://weavearealpeace.org/resourceGuide.html>. Or if they are not connected, print out a copy and hand it to them.

The ultimate success is for lots of people to purchase items and services listed in the guide. Who do you know who would appreciate an international textile gift? Maybe you deserve a textile-oriented tour to some wonderful part of the world?

Resource Guide Committee – Jackie Abrams, Philis Alvic, Mary Joan Ferrara-Marsland, and Marilyn Murphy with help from Liz Gipson.



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If you would like some of the beautiful, new WARP postcards to distribute, contact Judy Allen at [judyallen@rifkin.com](mailto:judyallen@rifkin.com) See photos in the Fall issue of the newsletter.

## Weave A Real Peace Membership Information

[www.weavearealpeace.org](http://www.weavearealpeace.org)

### 2015 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 access to all publications for the year joined.

Members have access to annual Membership Directory through a secure members only section of the web site, a quarterly newsletter, and can participate in the WARP Yahoo Discussion Group.

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, telephone number, and email address with appropriate check, money order, or Paypal information in US funds payable to WARP to:

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

or join online at <http://www.weavearealpeace.org>



# 2015 WARP Annual Meeting - May 29-31, 2015 in California

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2015's Annual Meeting will be held at the beautiful Mercy Center Burlingame, an internationally known conference and retreat center sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and located on a 40-acre site 15 miles south of San Francisco, CA. Mercy Center boasts a serene setting, perfect for WARP conversations.

This year, the Annual Meeting elicited a formal Call for Presentations, including a process for blind review, which was sent out to the membership and beyond. The result is a comprehensive program that not only demonstrates WARP's mission very well but also provides a global perspective, with presentations originating in South and Central America as well as Asia. That being said, we will hear about projects with US origins as well.

Being situated in the San Francisco area, WARP will also tap into the wonderful happenings of the area, looking at the

doings that have special significance for WARP attendees.

The Marketplace will once again be the hub of the meeting, attracting many buyers to a wonderful collection of textiles from around the world, many representing the culmination of cooperative and fair trade projects. An auction will be held on Saturday evening, rife with pomp and hilarity, a time that textiles form the centerpiece of fundraising

While in the area, you must not forget to take advantage of some of the textile highlights, which include among others: the Fine Arts Museums of SF (deYoung and Legion of Honor) – "High Style: The Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection" will be showing at the Legion (March 14-July 19, 2015); San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles; Lacin in Berkeley, which is actually a store and a museum--an amazing place. Perhaps plan to stay for a few extra days.



## Rugmark founder receives Nobel Peace Prize

Indian Kailash Satyarthi, 60, along with Pakistani Malala Yousafzai, were awarded the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize in October, for "their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

Satyarthi is a children's rights activist who has dedicated his life to helping the millions of youth in India and around the world that have been forced into slavery. A former electrical engineer, Satyarthi has participated in countless peaceful demonstrations and protests against the

exploitation of children. He has mounted raids on factories where children were forced to work, and helped free and rehabilitate thousands. Satyarthi also established Rugmark (now known as Goodweave), a group that aims to "stop child labor in the carpet industry and to replicate its market-based approach in other sectors," and currently heads the Global March Against Child Labor, a conglomeration of 2,000 social-minded organizations and trade unions in 140 countries.

### 2015 Newsletter Deadlines

Volume 22: Anticipated deadlines for receipt of copy:

V22N1 - Spring 2015 - March 27

V22N2 - Summer 2015 - June 19

V22N3 - Fall 2015 - September 11

V22N4 - Winter 2015 - November 13

Contact Linda Temple, lgtemple@juno.com, for publication guidelines



## Member Profile

### *Susie Strauss: Working with Fiber Enhances Self-Esteem*

*Candy Meacham*

Susie Strauss was drawn to weaving and fiber arts from childhood, starting when she saw her mother's friend sitting under a beach umbrella, knitting without looking at her hands. She decided then she wanted to be able to do that too. She learned to knit as a 10 year old and much later went on to own and operate a knit shop for several years. Before she learned to weave, Susie would sit at looms she encountered in stores and historical villages imagining herself weaving.

Eight years ago Susie traveled to Guatemala to attend a Spanish language school where her teacher was a weaver. She was exposed to the rich textile culture of the country and returned home determined, finally, to learn to weave. Susie's weaving is functional art and includes shawls, scarves, dishtowels and placemats using all natural fibers. She thinks of her weaving as painting with colors, combining them intuitively to design and produce textiles for the home.

In 2011 Susie Strauss and friend Nancee Neel returned from another visit to Guatemala determined to start a new socially conscious business selling functional home textiles. Their business, Nansuhome, "created beautiful, unique home textile products that are healthy for our

growers and dyers, our weavers, and our consumers." Building on Susie's designs and Nancee's experience with weaving cooperatives they began to work with artisans to dye and weave their fair trade products.



Fast forward to Fall 2014 and a major change in emphasis. Nansuhome has closed its doors allowing Susie to devote more time and energy to pursue her own weaving as well as her work as a life coach.

Philosophically she believes that working with fiber can enhance self-esteem and self worth when you see what you can create with your own hands. Personally fiber arts have nourished Susie during the learning and creating process and enhanced her commitment to help others better their lives.

Now a devoted member of WARP, Susie was originally gifted a membership. She now belongs because she likes the idea of being a part of an organization that is about love of fiber and bettering lives across the country and around the world.

Susie, who lives in Birmingham, AL, would love to hear from other WARP members. Her email is [susie.strauss1@gmail.com](mailto:susie.strauss1@gmail.com)

*Candy Meacham is an educator, a weaver, and a former WARP board member. She can be reached at [candy.meacham@earthlink.net](mailto:candy.meacham@earthlink.net)*

## New Members

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[www.redpersimmon.net](http://www.redpersimmon.net)

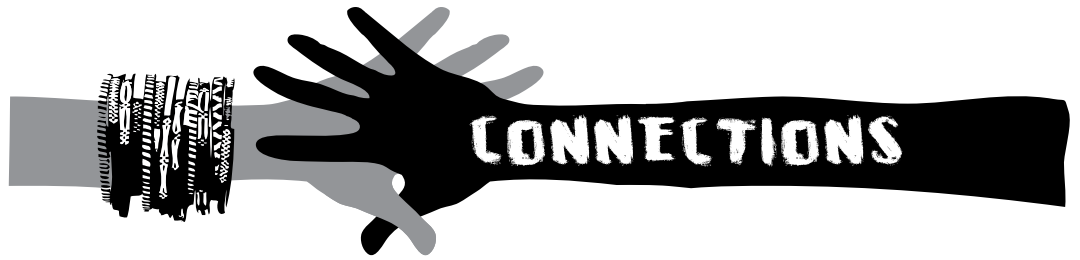
Rinzin Wangmo  
Bhutan Leki Textiles  
Dekiling, Bumthang  
Bhutan  
00975-17172095 (h)  
00975-3-631231 (w)  
[textilesbhutan@yahoo.com](mailto:textilesbhutan@yahoo.com)  
[www.bhutanweavingstudio.com](http://www.bhutanweavingstudio.com)

## WARP on the Web - <http://www.weavearealpeace.org>

features WARP history, annual meeting information, member access to the directory, and past newsletters. You can join or renew your membership online, and sign up for WARP's ListServ.

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





Reminder: WARP's membership year comes to an end 12/31. Keep an eye on your inbox/mailbox for your renewal. WARP is in the process of changing its membership management program and we ask that all renewing members fill out their membership directory information anew as our member categories have changed. Thanks!

Registration is open for the 2015 Fair Trade Federation Conference  
Del Mar, CA  
March 24-26

For more information, go to <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/ftfconference/>

## Spinning Competition Builds International Bridges

*Katie Simmons and Kelsey Wiskirchen*

Casual conversations often have powerful results if they happen in the right context. Irene Schmolter of Cotton Clouds and Dorinda Dutcher of PAZA, a cooperative in Bolivia, roomed together at the 2014 WARP annual meeting. In passing, Irene mentioned a spinning competition called Spinzilla that she was part of in 2013. Irene suggested that Dorinda and the spinners of PAZA, participate.

Liz Gipson, one of the organizers of Spinzilla, also happened to be attending the meeting. Dorinda approached her and Liz enthusiastically explained how the event worked.

Spinzilla is both a competition and a celebration of making yarn by hand with the underlying goal to encourage spinners to spin more and to raise awareness about handspinning. Teams of twenty-five spinners spin as much yarn as they can during Spinning and Weaving week, the first full week of October. Whoever spins the most yarn, wins.

Spinzilla is organized by The National NeedleArts Association's Spinning and Weaving Group (TNNA/SWG), an advocacy organization for spinning and weaving within a larger trade association that supports independent needlearts businesses. To host a team, you need a sponsor who is a member of TNNA/SWG.

Liz and Dorinda needed only walk to the Marketplace at the WARP meeting to ask Marilyn Murphy of ClothRoads, who is a member of TNNA/SWG and a past president of the organization, if she would be interested in sponsoring the team from Bolivia. With support firmly in hand, Dorinda was able to take the idea back to the Bolivian handspunners, explaining to them that they had to raise money for the entry fee, which is donated to the NeedleArts Mentoring Program. However, other WARP

members donated the funds for the Bolivians to participate so they didn't incur that expense.

The end result: "Spinzilla Week was INCREDIBLE. Team Warmis Phuskadoras ranked 19 out of 56, which is amazing considering there were no spinning wheels involved. The 66,071 yards was all spun on



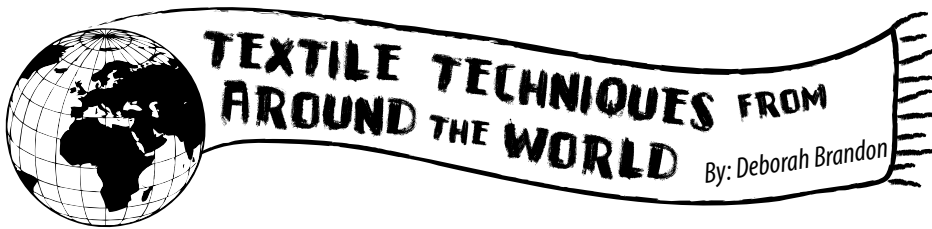
*Team Capatin Doña Máxima and other members of Team Warmis Phuskadoras spinning during Spinzilla (photo by Jonathan McCarthy)*

drop spindles. Of the 15 countries represented, the team put Bolivia on the map by ranking 3rd!" said Dorinda. The team was captained by Doña Máxima, and many of the Bolivian spinners were astonished to learn there were so many spinners in other countries, creating the kinds of connections on which WARP was founded.

Jonathan McCarthy made a beautiful video of the the Bolivia spinners' Spinzilla experience. To see it, go to <http://goo.gl/qZGfnM>. To learn more about Spinzilla, visit [www.spinzilla.org](http://www.spinzilla.org). To read a few blog posts about the PAZA's Spinzilla experience, visit [www.pazaboliviablog.com](http://www.pazaboliviablog.com). To purchase handspun, naturally-dyed pouches made by the women of PAZA, visit [www.clothroads.com](http://www.clothroads.com) and click on Bolivia under Shop By Country.

*If you would like to share your WARP connection story, please email Kelsey at [kelsey.viola.wiskirchen@gmail.com](mailto:kelsey.viola.wiskirchen@gmail.com) or Katie at [ktd26@hotmail.com](mailto:ktd26@hotmail.com).*





## Scotland - Kilt Hose

Watching the TV series "Outlander," a show about a woman who travels back in time from 1945 to 1743 Scotland, I was drawn to the costumes, both woven and knitted. Unfortunately, because all the men wore knee-high boots, I couldn't get a good look at their kilt hose. Were they woven or knitted?

The original leg coverings worn with kilts were leggings made of woven fabric, often cut from the same cloth as the tartan kilt. The leggings were bound at the knees with garters, as are the knitted hose of today.

By the late- to mid-1700s, knitting was widespread in Scotland. In particular, knitters in the Aberdeen area in the northeast of Scotland specialized in knitting stockings. But in the Highlands, knitting didn't take hold until the mid-1800s, when many women took up the craft to supplement their meager incomes during a famine. Until then, the Highlanders preferred hose cut and sewn from woven tartans.

To replace the woven tartan hose, knitters developed two types of patterns similar in appearance to the tartans—Argyle and diced hose.

Argyle patterns are characterized by diamond-shaped blocks of alternating colors, typically with an overlay of diagonal lines that cross inside the solid diamonds. In standard Argyle, knitters use two colors for the diamonds. But hose knitters often use more than two colors to emulate the woven tartans more effectively.

Due to the complexity and of the pattern and the difficulty in executing it, Argyle hose are expensive. Diced hose,

being simpler to knit, are less expensive and therefore more common. Diced hose have the appearance of a simple two color woven tartan, with no overlay.

Because Argyle and diced hose require a relatively labor intensive patterning, many knitters confine the patterns to the turned-down cuff. For similar reasons, many hand-knit kilt hose today are single colored with knit-purl patterning, often with patterning on the cuff only. Nowadays, as to be expected, the vast majority of kilt hose are factory made, though sometimes hand-finished.

A Scottish friend of mine, like all other Scotsmen I know, owns a single kilt, which to my knowledge, he has only worn twice. The first time was to his wedding in Glasgow. The second time was shortly after he got back to the US—he wore it to a party to show it off to his American friends. By the end of the night, quite inebriated, he demonstrated the freedom of motion afforded him by the kilt by dancing on a table.

I am sorry to report that his hose are factory made, and have no patterning whatsoever.

### Resources:

Bush, Nancy, *Folk Socks: the History & Techniques of Handknitted Footwear*, 2011, Interweave Press, LLC.

Nargi, Lela, *Knitting Around the World: A Multistranded History of a Time-Honored Tradition*, 2011, Voyageur Press.

*Deborah Brandon is a multi-talented mathematician and former board member. She can be reached at 412/963-7416 or at brandon@andrew.cmu.edu*

Please consider making an end-of-year donation to Weave A Real Peace. WARP is designated a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service, and all donations are tax deductible in the US. If you wish, you can designate your donation be added to the Scholarship Fund, the Endowment Fund, or the General Fund. Mail donations to WARP 3102 Classen Blvd. PMB 249 Oklahoma City, OK 73118



# Help Fund Scholarships for Annual Meeting

## PEAR Innovations

(Participatory Education, Awareness and Resource Innovations) was started as a Community Based Organization (CBO) called PEAR Group by Laura Lemunyete and her husband Reuben around 1998. It was upgraded it to a non-profit organization in 2006 as PEAR Innovations. It was started to act as a linking organization between the pastoralist communities and outside organizations and individuals in order to help improve livelihoods.

Laura met her Kenyan husband, Reuben Lemunyete, when they were both studying at the University of Edinburgh for Masters in Tropical Animal Production and Health in 1993/94. Laura went to Kenya to visit him in December 1994 and never left. She has lived in Kenya for 20 years this Christmas. She is originally from WI. Laura can be reached at [lemunyete@wananchi.com](mailto:lemunyete@wananchi.com). Visit the PEAR Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PEARInnovations>

Each year WARP awards the Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship for students and fiber artists 35 years or younger to attend our annual meeting. Alice Brown was a generous WARP member who had the foresight to donate the funds to establish the scholarship. Now, our membership is helping to make the fund both sustainable and greater in scope

Those of you who have attended meetings know how much these special young people have added to the event, and indeed now, to the WARP organization. Many of them have commented that the meeting has been a life-changing experience. This is our opportunity to share our values with young people at a time in their lives when it can really make a true and lasting impact. This year's application deadline is March 15, 2015.

In order to offer two full scholarships in 2015, we need your help. Alice Brown's original donation was the seed, but the

fund relies upon continuing donations. Please consider donating to the scholarship fund when you send your annual dues. There is also an opportunity to donate on the annual meeting registration form (page 9). Your generosity can really make a difference in the lives of very deserving young people.

You can also help by spreading the word about the scholarship to interested young people and professors, especially in northern California and the West Coast, because our meeting will be held outside of San Francisco from May 29-31, 2015.

If you have any questions about our wonderful scholarship program, please contact Sarah Saulson at [sfsaulson@twcny.rr.com](mailto:sfsaulson@twcny.rr.com) or 315/449-9423. I would also appreciate hearing from you if you know professors or non-profit professionals in the region whom I can contact to can help spread the word.

--Sarah Saulson



## Ngurunit Basket Weavers

*continued from page 1*

business giving Ngurunit Basket Weavers regular orders and assistance for exporting baskets to the US. From 2008 to 2010, USAID supported an alternative livelihoods project which constructed the group's Basket Design House in Ngurunit as their base for storing and selling baskets. In 2009, American Peace Corps Volunteer Grover Ainsworth was posted with PEAR Innovations (see box at left). He helped the basket group, now over 200 members, to organize into quality control units under selected Master Weavers. In 2011, six women traveled to Washington DC, for the Smithsonian Folk Festival as part of the Peace Corps 50th year anniversary exhibit. They proudly showcased their basket weaving skills and taught many people about their society and the revived camel milk basket weaving style. In 2012, a partnership with Electric Aid Ireland allowed the Ngurunit Basket Weavers to aim towards more efficient management and inventory systems. The

most recent international connection has come from the continued support of Janice, now living near Washington DC, when she introduced WARP to the Ngurunit Basket Weavers (Fall 2009 WARP News). This resulted in gaining a WARP sister membership from the San Juan Weaver's Guild, based in CO. This sister relationship has continued into 2014 and blossomed into wonderful benefits and interactions for all involved.

It has been an amazing journey so far for the Ngurunit Basket Weavers and those walking with them along their path, from an obscure skill in 2001 to a mainstream income generating activity in 2014. Basket weaving by the women of Ngurunit community is an empowering and life changing activity that continues with great promise for the future, thanks to the efforts of the women and all the connections that have been made over the years. And the journey continues...





# 2015 WARP Annual Meeting

May 29-31, 2015

Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame, CA, 94010

Registration Form with payment due to WARP by March 2, 2015  
(Registrations will be accepted after March 2 until April 18 with a \$50 late fee)

Registration includes single room, all meals, as well as all presentations and activities.  
Arrival at Mercy Center is scheduled for Fri. May 29, 2015 from noon until 2:00pm.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ YES, sign me up for the 2015 WARP ANNUAL MEETING for \$375 registration fee.

\_\_\_ YES, I plan to participate in the Marketplace, with 10% of earnings paid to WARP.

\_\_\_ YES, I would like to contribute to WARP's Alice Brown Memorial Scholarship Fund to help pay for students to attend the meeting.

\_\_\_ I cannot attend the entire meeting, but would like to take part in the Saturday program for \$65 fee, which includes lunch, dinner, presentations, activities and auction.

Special dietary needs: \_\_\_\_\_

Cancellation Policy – Prior to the registration deadline, 100% of the registration fee is refundable. Until April, 2015, 50% will be refunded. After April 1st, there will be no refund.

Questions? Please email Teena Jennings: [tj9@uakron.edu](mailto:tj9@uakron.edu)

Complete this form and send it with your check or money order (US Funds) made out to WARP to:

Teena Jennings  
226 West Elm St.  
Granville, OH, 43023



# WomenWeave: An Update

*continued from page 2*

*from the Spring 2008 issue of  
WARP News:*

*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, major projects in hand are:*

*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; and 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](http://www.womenweavers.org).*

billboard where the model was wearing the same scarf!

The most recent spin-off of WomenWeave is the Handloom School, a work-study educational institution for young people who come from traditional handweaving families and want to make handweaving their occupation. Although many are still in their teens, they are already excellent weavers. The school aims to prepare them for a global marketplace. They learn about market-

ing, computer skills, English language, and have opportunities to attend trade shows. I spent two days with these eager and enthusiastic young people, learning and sharing. I was able to visit their homes and workplaces as well as share information about western textile and fashion trends. They were most fascinated by the software on my laptop for designing handwovens.

*Sarah Saulson is a teacher and a weaver living in Syracuse, NY. She can be reached at [sfsaulson@twcny.rr.com](mailto:sfsaulson@twcny.rr.com) or 315/449-9423.*



## Travel Opportunities

**Andean Textile Arts Cultural Tour  
Cusco and the Sacred Valley of Peru  
November 4-16, 2015**

Visit remote weaving villages with author, filmmaker and Andean textile expert Andrea Heckman and internationally renowned Quechua weaver Nilda Callañaupa. Included are a backstrap-weaving workshop at the Center for Traditional Textiles and a natural dye workshop in Nilda's hometown of Chinchero, as well as exploration of Machu Picchu and the great sites of the Incan Empire. The tour benefits CTTC and its weavers. For more information contact Pam Art at 413/441-6248 or email [pam.art@icloud.com](mailto:pam.art@icloud.com)

**Textile Travels with Noble Journeys**

Experiential, educational, fun and delicious tours for small groups & individuals!

**Inside Morocco**

May 16-30, 2015, led by Dr. Susan Davis

**Textile Arts of Morocco**

May 30-June 12, 2015, led by Dr. Susan Davis

*Both of these sold out for 2014!*

Contact Noble Journeys, [www.noblejourneys.com](http://www.noblejourneys.com), [joan@noblejourneys.com](mailto:joan@noblejourneys.com), 800/566-9228

**International Folk Art Alliance – Passport to Folk Art Trips**

India – January 2015

Guatemala – March 2015

Cuba – April 2015

Namibia and Botswana – July 2015

South Africa – August 2015

Mexico – November 2015

For more information, go to <http://www.folkartalliance.org/travel/>



# Travels in India

Susan Weltman

This was my fifth trip to India (and also to Nepal) and the best - though I always say that! On this trip we visited Kolkata and Delhi and also spent time in less frequently visited states: Assam and Meghalaya are in the northeast of the country bordering Bangladesh. We also visited Odisha (formerly Orissa), south of Kolkata.



*On the trail in Nepal*

Kolkata is a fascinating city; we stayed in a neighborhood where we were comfortable walking in the early morning and in the evening; lots of families out on the streets all the time. I fell in love with the Kantha cloth stitching on natural dyed handwoven silk. This skill is originally from eastern Bengal, in what is now Bangladesh, and was brought to Kolkata at the time of Partition.

We visited a wonderful natural dye exhibit at the Tagore Center on Ho Chi Minh Sarani. The exhibit included a display of the Thomas Wardle documents, 3,500 natural dye plants indigenous to India. Three copies were made; the display was the only remaining copy.

From Kolkata we flew to Guwahati, Assam where we spent a week at a tea plantation and a national park. Assam is known for its silk. When our guide understood that I was interested in weaving he took us to meet a local weaver in Tezpur. There we learned that we were visiting his niece who has a business weaving, designing and running a small workshop in the family garage. (She was the only weaver we met who was NOT working for or running a not-for-profit.) Her customers are local women and Indians employed at a nearby Air Force base. I bought a white scarf woven in Eri or Endi silk which is the product of domesticated silk worms and produced only in Assam. It is thicker and rougher than other silk.

Our next destination was Kaziranga National Park, known for its one-horned rhinos, wild elephants and - with luck - tigers. We were very lucky and were able to see (briefly) a tiger. They are fast! I was thrilled to see a demonstration of weaving at our hotel and later visited the weaver in her home. Rupjyoti Saikia Gagoi lives in Kaziranga with her husband and children. She started an NGO several years ago; she and her mother teach weaving to local women, including some "tribals" who have not generally been involved in the local economy.



*Mitha Laxmi Borah in Tezpur, Assam*

Then to Odisha, which is rightly known for its wonderful weavings. We were fortunate to have an introduction to Gunjan Jain (one of our newest WARP members and hopefully a speaker at our next meeting). She trained as a textile designer and works with weavers and dyers who live throughout the State. She is designing saris and dupattas that can compete on the highest national level (selling in the major Indian cities) while also making saris that appeal to local women both in style and price. Gunjan, like the other women in textiles we met, is very concerned with local tradition while bringing knowledge of natural dyes. I purchased the most beautiful cloth I've ever seen (and that's saying a lot!) - naturally dyed, ikat woven.



*"Tree of life" pattern from Odisha*

Sadly, it was stolen as was my backpack in Kathmandu. But I was able to have a similar one delivered to me in Delhi. It is now hanging in my living room!

I must mention Sally Holkar of Women Weave (see Sarah Saulson's article on page 2). Sally's life is devoted to the health and vitality of handloom production in India. For a more complete account of this trip please visit my website at [susanweltman.com](http://susanweltman.com) And, anyone interested in visiting India, just let me know!

*Susan Weltman is a hand weaver based in Brooklyn, NY. She is an enthusiastic hiker, world traveler, and collector of textiles. She can be reached at [sweltman@gmail.com](mailto:sweltman@gmail.com)*





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In This Issue: Register now for 2015 Annual Meeting!

## Shop Your Values This Holiday Season

*Suzanne Cotter, Marketing and Branding Manager, Fair Trade Federation*

In the midst of the biggest shopping season of the year, we're again reminded of the main reason our purchases matter and do make a difference: people.



By design, many food, clothing, home decor, and accessories brands have put a great distance between shoppers and the actual farmers, garment workers, and artisans who grow and make products. Yet the lives of these growers and artisans are directly affected by our purchasing choices—often in ways that impact entire families and communities.

It's up to us to reconnect with people as we shop. Even small changes to our shopping priorities and decisions about who we support financially can greatly change the lives of others.

Gift-seekers can always be proactive about finding fair trade, ethically-made, and green alternatives. First, follow organizations that can advocate for products and businesses (like the Fair Trade Federation, the Fair World Project, Green America, and labeling organizations like Fairtrade America, just



*Mbare.com*

to name a few). Learn about brands you can conveniently purchase from online or find in your local grocery store. Research gift fairs and sales coming to your local church, school, or community center that have fair trade vendors. You might be surprised to discover lots more opportunities for ethical shopping.

Contrary to popular belief, supporting communities overseas and supporting your own community are values that can go hand-in-hand. Find a fair trade store in your area! If you can't find one close-by, many of the local-



*globalcrafts.org*



*upavimcrafts.org*

ly-owned cafes, gift shops, museum stores, and boutiques in your neighborhood will likely carry fair trade items and treats that make perfect gifts. Not only will you spend less time traveling, you'll connect with and support the small business owners in your region who share your values.

Looking for some inspiration? The Fair Trade Federation has put together a handy Holiday Guide to help you find fair trade items for everyone on your list. Visit <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/holiday-gift-guide-2014/>.

