

PENELOPE'S NEWS



Holiday Edition 2020

The newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Weavers' and Spinners' Guild

Natalie Shumovsky *Board Chair*
Mandy Heggveit *Board Vice Chair*
Moir White *President*
Beth Briggs *Treasurer*
Brenda Bekkers *Corporate Secretary*
Laurie Harkin-Chiasson *Studio Manager*
Elizabeth Watt *Workshop Coordinator*

The Ottawa Valley Weavers' and Spinners' Guild (OVWSG) is a non-profit, incorporated organization, whose mandate is *"to encourage its membership to achieve a high aesthetic standard and technical expertise and to promote and foster the knowledge of, interest in, and appreciation for historic and contemporary weaving, spinning, and their related fibre arts."*

President's Message

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First, I hope you've all had a lovely holiday. I hope you managed to find joy in this festive season ending what I'm sure is the strangest year many of us have experienced. I'm certainly looking forward to the new year — as I suspect many of you are — and what I hope will be a return to normal sometime in 2021.

Second, this issue of our newsletter welcomes Brenda Bekkers as our new editor. Thanks so much, Brenda, for stepping forward to take over from Natalie Shumovsky. Natalie quietly and oh, so ably took over the newsletter seven years ago and has been keeping us all informed and updated since. We greatly appreciate all that you've done, Natalie.

Because it's been a long time since we've issued a newsletter, I'll try to recap 2020 before outlining our expectations for 2021.

In March, we had to suspend all our activities — classes, socials, monthly programs, library rentals, equipment rentals — as provincial and local COVID lockdowns came into force. The staff of Heartwood House ensured that our studio and classroom were checked regularly, but apart from picking up mail and taking care of bills, etc., members could not use the facilities.

Times like this always bring out the best in people. Elizabeth Watt and Beth Briggs ensured that teachers and students were notified about and reimbursed for cancelled classes. Judy Kavanagh, Ann McElroy, and Liane Thiry-Smith organized the Monday night social into weekly Zoom get-togethers that have helped members stay connected. Anita Hebert and Rebecca Cairns have also hosted.

Meeting Info

This month's Zoom meeting:
Monday, January 4th.

Program: Guest speaker
Jenna Carter, basketweaver.

The next Zoom meeting will
be Monday, February 1st,
2021.

And then when we could open rentals and the library on a limited basis, Anita Hebert, Deborah Newhook, Jan Scott, Ann McElroy, Terry Nelson, Alison James, and Lynda Beaudoin stepped in to make sure these core guild activities continued. Our yarn coordinator, Diane Dillon, and our donations coordinator, Linda Arseneau, have ensured that we continue to receive donations. We held our first-ever remote AGM in June using Zoom and were pleased with the number of people who joined.

Behind the scenes, the executive has been working to find the best ways to keep the membership engaged and creatively stimulated. We'd like to thank Ann Sunahara for providing us with advice about our constitution and by-laws during all the changes to virtual platforms.

Now to what's happening in our guild.

First, all program meetings for the remainder of our fiscal year (through to the end of April) and probably longer will be online via Zoom. Liane Thiry-Smith, Rebecca Cairns, and Joan Harrison have brought us some wonderful guest speakers and activities to interest members. In place of our usual in-person Rosepath Auction in December, the event was held online under that very capable virtual gavel of Andrea Dixon. Each session also features our usual Show & Tell so that we can all see what others have been working on. Stay tuned for more information about guests in the coming months.

Next, our workshops were cancelled through to the end of 2020 and for at least the first half of 2021. We are now planning to offer three virtual study groups in the new year — one in rug weaving hosted by Mandy Heggtveit, one in spinning hosted by Elizabeth Watt, and one in felting hosted by Jan Scott. We're also considering hosting Ask-the-Weavers or Ask-the-Spinners sessions so that members can trouble shoot with each other and share ideas, questions, and triumphs. We would be very interested in your thoughts and suggestions.

We had cautiously resumed limited in-person activities at Heartwood House in September, such as allowing up to two weavers at a time to use the studio equipment. The library and rentals teams worked to ensure that library loans and rentals continued. All members using the Studio were required to wear masks, maintain physical distancing requirements, and not share food or tools. Our primary concern remains the health and well-being of our members. All onsite activities are once again on hold for most of January due to the new province-wide lockdown.

The board decided in September that we would have to cancel our annual Exhibition and Sale, a decision that disappointed many vendors and volunteers. Social distancing and COVID safety requirements meant that we would have to limit the number of people in the venue, not allow people to touch any of the goods for sale, and to have everyone masked for the duration. That, coupled with the uncertainty about a second lockdown, led to the decision. We refunded vendors who wanted a refund and put the others' refunds towards the 2021 Exhibition and Sale. The City likewise applied our refund to 2021 without any penalty.

When members do return to the guild, they will see that we have installed two new looms in the studio — a 45-inch, 12-shaft Louet Spring and an 8-shaft Schacht Baby Wolf — and a new 100-inch loom in the Classroom upstairs! Three new spinning wheels have also arrived: a Louet Victoria, a Kiwi Spinning Wheel 3, and an e-spinner 3. We have one more electric spinning wheel to receive yet along with a ball winder.

Finally, we'd like to give a shout-out and thanks for the City of Ottawa and its Cultural Funding staff. They ensured that we received an extension to our previous grant allocation so that we could continue to operate, and they've been proactive in checking in on us during the year. They also gave us a special

5,000 COVID relief grant so that we can purchase what we need to continue moving special workshops and events online. We are very grateful.

If anyone has any questions, comments, or suggestions, please forward them to me (president@ovwsg.com) or any other member of the executive (executive@ovwsg.com). Our next executive meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 21 via Zoom. All members are welcome to attend. Please let me know if you would like to sit in, and I will send you the Zoom link.

And finally, thank you to all for maintaining your membership during this pandemic and for helping to support each other. I wish you all a wonderful 2021.

Moira White

Message from the Editor

When I took over the newsletter in 2013, I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into. I quickly found out that by being the newsletter editor I would find out about news from the executive, Heartwood House, all the items that were for sale, events, and more, before others knew about it. This was great, as I quickly learned things about the guild that made me, as a new member, aware of many things that were happening behind the scenes. It made me feel like an important part of the guild, and it was always great when members emailed me to thank me for producing the newsletter.

Seven years later, having been co-president and chair as well as newsletter editor, I've learned even more about the guild, and it has been fun. I've changed the format of the newsletter a couple of times, but it has stayed true to what it is: a vehicle to allow members to know what is going on within and outside of the guild.

I have had a lot of fun with the newsletter; however, I must now step down due to a serious health issue. Apologies to all that I wasn't able to produce the newsletter for many months. I'm grateful to Brenda Bekkers who has offered to take over the newsletter for me. Please welcome her to her new position.

Natalie

General Announcements

January Meeting Program

Our program will feature guest speaker Jenna Carter, who is a weaver, basket maker & watercolour artist from Manitoulin Island.

Jenna's work can be seen on her Facebook page Wild Island Weaving
<https://www.facebook.com/wildislandweaving/>

Memorials

Jacques Chiasson

It is with deep sadness that I must inform of the passing of Jacques Chiasson on April 25, 2020. Jacques was the husband of Laurie Harkin-Chiasson, a former system administrator at General Dynamics and a member of the OVWSG. Jacques was a weaver specializing in name drafts. He used PERL scripts (a computer language) to help him code the name drafts for overshot. He had 140 drafts in his logbook as of this week, most of which he had finished weaving. Jacques had been in frail health for some time; he was taken by non-COVID pneumonia.



Mary Bowrin

Mary's Obituary notice is here:

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/insideottawavalley/obituary.aspx?n=mary-bowrin&pid=195784147&fhid=16150>



Betty Mitchell

(1927- 2019) was a member of the OVWSG. <https://ottawacitizen.remembering.ca/obituary/elizabeth-ann-betty-mitchell-1077392204>

Updates from the Coordinators

Library Update

Dear Guild,

With the post-Christmas lockdown, there are now, new restrictions on access at Heartwood house. The guild is not being deemed essential so we cannot enter to get to our library at this time. This unfortunately means that we will likely have to postpone our library Day on Sunday the 10th of January 2021. There is still the possibility that restrictions for Ottawa will be reduced in 14 days so that Heartwood house will be able to allow us access for curbside pick-up. As soon as we know we will send out an e-blast to update you.

All for now Jan and the Librarians

Workshops

In some ways, it's been an easy year to be the Workshops Registrar, if you don't count the heartbreaking process of cancelling 3/4 of our workshops and refunding everyone. In other ways it's been hard: I miss teaching and I missed the excitement of putting together a new schedule which we usually do in August (there's a team of us and there is usually coffee, chocolate, lunch, and much chatter back and forth, some of it even about workshops!). It's taken me a while to figure out how best to work with the skills and energy that I and our instructors have, to move our Education program online at least for now. Moira White successfully applied for a grant to get us the equipment etc. that we need and a small group of us (Klara Konya, Terry Nelson, Moira White, and me) have started on figuring out what we can reasonably do. We decided to start smaller and simpler with Study Groups. It's something many in the Guild have wanted to do for a long time but we've never quite figured out the logistics. I am coming around to thinking that going online with them will make them more accessible and effective in the long run.

To this end we are proposing to run 3 pilot Study Groups starting around mid-February: 1 each in Spinning (led by me), Weaving (led by Mandy Heggteit) and Needle Felting (led by Jan Scott). Mandy has chosen Rugs as her topic. Jan is still considering but leaning towards studying armature in 3D figures. Meanwhile I have two (or more) ideas, but I need to choose just one to start (see below).

Something to remember is that a Study Group is not a Workshop. The Group Leader will facilitate and will have some knowledge of the subject but is not expected to "teach" material. Participants will be active in gathering and sharing knowledge/experience. At the start of the group the Leader will provide some background on the topic, a start on a resource list and a suggested outline of what will be explored each meeting. Groups may vary in number of scheduled meetings, and how often they meet.

For all groups, participants will:

- source their own equipment and materials as specified by the Group Leader
- have the minimum level of experience required by the Group Leader (these will not be for new beginners.)
- be available at the specified times and dates for group meetings via Zoom.
- pay a registration fee (we are still working out exactly how much that will be but around \$5 per scheduled meeting of the group).

- be expected to complete work outside the meeting time and share experiences during the meetings

I put a poll and a post on Facebook to help me decide on my topic. Here are my two choices. If you use Facebook please go find the poll in the group (I put it up Dec 27th I think, you might have to scroll a bit). If not, and you are interested, please send me an email indicating your interest/preference.

1. Work through Sarah Anderson's Spinners Book of Yarn Designs. There are 10 chapters but the first one is spinning basics which participants would be expected to know. So 9 weeks assuming we do 1 chapter per week. Participants would need:

- be able to spin a continuous yarn on a wheel and have access to a wheel for the duration.
- source fibre (a decent multipurpose medium fine wool like Corriedale ought to work for most of the yarns)
- access their own copy of the book for the duration. (Book is approximately \$30 for print, a little less for Kobo or Kindle I think. The digital version I find a bit of a pain, if we do this one I'm buying a hard copy)
- be able to do "homework" of 1-2 hours per week and actively participate in show and tell each meeting. Homework would be practicing at least some of the yarns each chapter, taking notes and reporting back experiences. Some people may venture into further research on the yarns using other sources.

2. Plan and spin a project. I would share a spreadsheet and some sampling techniques. Participants would choose a project and over about 4-6 weeks we would plan and sample and possibly start executing. I'm a little hazier so far on exactly what we would do each week, we might do 3-4 weeks sampling etc then take a break and come back having started to execute a few weeks later, then maybe a final meeting a bit later to show progress/finished. Participants would need:

- to be able to spin on a wheel or spindle suitable to the project they have in mind.
- to source appropriate fibres
- be able to do "homework" of a few hours per week and actively participate in show and tell each meeting. Homework would be doing the sampling and starting the project.

Elizabeth Watt

Workshops Registrar and Education Chair, OVWSG

workshops@ovwsg.com or workshops@wattfamily.ca

Membership

Membership renewals can be done through SECURE ONLINE PAYMENT – go to www.ovwsg.com - Tab Membership – Click Join – Follow the directions and fill in the forms. You may pay through a paypal account or a Credit card. When the paypal 'sign-in' box appears, the option to pay by credit card is at the very bottom of that box. Cheque/Snail mail: Cheques should be made out to "OVWSG". Mail to:

OVWSG
Heartwood House
404 McArthur Ave.
Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8
ATTENTION: MEMBERSHIP

Studio Update

The studio acquired two new looms and 3 new wheels.

1. A Louet Spring 12 shaft Countermarche Loom



2. A Schacht Wolf 8 shaft loom



And the new 100" loom finally arrived in October. The sectional warping portion is still to be completed but the loom is almost assembled. Many thanks to the assembly crew of Moira, Ruth and husbands.



Heartwood House news

Message from Moe Moloughney, the Exec. Director of Heartwood House

Hi everyone,

I hope you are doing well during this holiday season.

As you know, the Ontario Government's lockdown has begun. Only essential services are permitted to continue operations at Heartwood House. So, in addition to Heartwood, the following Members are permitted to work at Heartwood during the lockdown: ACORN, ALSO Cares, Benss Health, CLC, MHI and Options Bytown. Visits will continue to be by appointment only. Please send me your visitor list as no one will be permitted entry unless the person is on the list.

Members may need to pick up work materials, mail etc. during the lockdown. Can you please contact me to let me know when you are coming to the House? Please don't hesitate to let me know if you would like your mail placed in your space for pickup.

Heartwood's operating schedule this week is:

Tuesday Dec. 29th: 8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Wednesday Dec. 30th: 8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

Thursday Dec. 31st: 8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

As of Monday January 4th, Heartwood's lockdown schedule is: Monday to Friday- 8:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

When the lockdown ends, I will be in touch to inform you of operating schedule adjustments.

Best wishes for a safe and happy new year,

Moe

If you visit Heartwood House through the front entrance, use the intercom to alert staff that you have arrived. Press the black arrow then 100 and wait for reception to pick up, state your name and your purpose, and proceed when the door is unlocked. Note that you will not be allowed to enter if you are not on the list (contact Elizabeth Watt at schedule@ovwsg.com to arrange a date/time).

----- Important Elevator Instructions

It is important to NEVER hold the elevator door open. This can cause damage to the door and it is very expensive to fix it. Please simply push the door open button if you need to keep the door open.

Welcome to new members

Daniela Walker	Ruth Lee
Tasha Yovetich	Diane Leblanc
Ariane Morin	Louise Richard
Ginger Howell	Alice Banks
Alexandra Nunn	Anne Newlands
Jocelyne Best	Diane Bignell
Katie Cameron	Josee Cochrane
Alice Banks	Alexandra Nunn
Anne Newlands	Paul Merriam

****Returning after an absence****

Margaret Gouin
Lourdes Rojas
Eleanor Anderson

Events

SPRANG - Interested in learning how to do this very versatile and almost lost technique? As the instructor describes, it is “an ancient textile method, worked on a set of threads that have been arranged on a frame. Every row of work yields two rows of cloth.” You can make socks, hats, vests, baby bonnets, leggings, gloves, scarves, bags and even tablecloths from this. Basically, anything you can knit or crochet. (Ancient Egyptian socks were made using this method)

A beginning sprang class of **3 sessions will show you 1: the basic stitch, 2: a finishing technique, making a small bag or tuque, and 3: how to set up from scratch.**

The frames will be mailed to us. 3 sessions of 3 hours each (9 hours) of lessons and frames, the class will be **\$144.00 / person**. The frames will already be warped, and include shed sticks, safety strings & materials for a 2nd warp. It will be a hands-on workshop taught virtually via ZOOM.

Taught by an expert in sprang and finger weaving, Carol James, of Manitoba, has her work in the Canadian Museum of History. She teaches all over the world.

<http://www.spranglady.com/sprang.html>

Limit is 8 people for this workshop. Classes are: Thursdays, March 11, 18, 25. 2021. 6:30 – 9:30 pm EST

(Different from the Sprang-along in that it is a much smaller group, and she makes us the frames and will send them to us set-up and the last class will teach us to set them up ourselves for other projects. She also has patterns that will be available.)

If interested, please email me (recooper424@gmail.com) as soon as possible. Spaces are limited.



Flax Study Group: Harvest Day





Show & Tell from our last in person meeting – March 2020

Debora Newhook
Gamp



Ann-Marie Binet
Begining weaving and spinning



Robin Cole
Hand spun knit shawl



Kelly MacGregor
Handspun skein &
best photo



Terry Nelson
Handwoven (RH) fabric



Terry Nelson
Penguin Wheel



Show & Tell from our last in person meeting – March 2020

Ann McElroy
Wet & needle felted picture



Robert Laurin
Hat from 1st lamb born on their farm



Victoria Mestres
Felted landscape



Victoria Mestres
Nunofelted scarves



Victoria Mestres
Nunofelted scarves



Victoria Mestres
Nunofelted scarves



Laurie H-C
Pine Needle basket



Laurie H-C
Pine Needle basket



Jocelyne Ouellet
Beginning Weaving Samples



Marketplace

The Marketplace portion of the newsletter is used to promote and assist its members. Some restrictions may apply as to space availability and file restrictions. Contact Natalie at marketplace@ovwsg.com or newsletter@ovwsg.com

Kinnaird Farm – www.KinnairdFarm.ca

- Ready to spin roving in various natural colours, wool and wool-alpaca blends
- Fleece, unwashed, white (sold out for 2020)
- Sheepskin Rugs – variations of white and only two “grizzly” coloured left; new arrivals expected from the tannery soon
- two-ply mill spun, natural white yarn, fine, 100 gram skeins
- Newborn lambs expected in late April; Shearing will be in early May
- Visitors welcome by appointment – let me know when you would like to visit

Contact Kelly MacGregor for details: KinnairdFarm@gmail.com



Créations Christine

Représentante d'Ashford Dealer

Pour plus d'information – For inquiries: 819-405-2007

cgagne40@gmail.com

Christine Gagné



For Sale: Leclerc 36" 4 Harness Counter Balance Loom for Sale. Good Condition. Reed and some accessories included \$150.00. Bench not included

Contact: Laurie Harkin-Chiasson lauriehc@magma.ca



For Sale: One metre wide Normalo 4-harness counterbalance (sinking shed) folding loom birch/maple from Finland. Comes with 3 reeds, raddle, and bench. More photos and information available. **Must be sold. \$200 OBO.**

llaberge@gmail.com



December Meeting Minutes

Annual December Meeting and Auction

Monday December 7, 2020 via Zoom

- Welcome given by President Moira White
- 42 participants

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- City of Ottawa approved our request for a grant to allow for the purchase of video equipment to facilitate online courses as a result of the COVID pandemic.
- Membership coordinator updated executive at the last meeting, and membership in the guild is now back over 200 members
- Update from Program coordinator; the next two programs will feature guest speakers. In January, we will hear from a basket weaver from Manitoulin Island and February will feature a tapestry weaver with her own educational studio.

PROGRAM

- 4 games of Bingo. Rebecca Cairns was our bingo caller, and the winners were:
 - Ann McElroy, Elizabeth Watt, Diane Dillon, Terry Nelson, Bernadette Quade, Sandy Jager, Jan Scott, Nathalie Belair
- Online Auction with Andrea Dixon acting as auctioneer. A total of 13 lots were auctioned including donated yarn, fleece, a warping mill, weaving accessories, swift, ball winder, drum carder and several looms including 2 from the studio that were replaced by the new looms. Preliminary estimates of the funds generated for the guild was approximately \$2000.00.

Next Meeting - **Monday January 4, 2021** via Zoom.