



OVER AND UNDER ACROSS OKLAHOMA

Volume 14 Issue 4

Dedicated to the preservation, promotion and education of the art of basketry.

August 2014

President's Letter

It's September and fall is nearly here! That means the Oklahoma State Fair, the Tulsa State Fair and, of course, Weavers Weekend is coming. Before I jump ahead to October, let me remind you that we encourage all members to bring their filled Positive Tomorrow's Basket to the September meeting. We will cellophane wrap them and tie raffia on them. This has been a service project for our guild since we began in 1999. Please help keep this worthy cause going.

Weavers Weekend is just around the corner. First registration is closed. Shirley will be sending out class confirmations soon. We will continue to register students right up until Weavers Weekend starts, so if you didn't get in by August 30th, you still have time to register for classes. An updated schedule will be available on our website at <http://www.okbasketweaversguild.com/WeaversWeekend.html>. I'm looking forward to seeing you at the September meeting. Hope everyone had a fantastic

September Guild Project

In the project for September we will be taught a new rim technique by Shirley Hill. You will need to bring a small 4 to 6" round or square basket woven up 3 to 5". Leave the spokes up at least 6" above the top of the weavers. The basket can have a woven bottom or a wood base.

Weaving materials for the rim will be provided. If you want to bring your own, bring 1/4" 3/16" or 11/64" flat or flat oval.

Be sure to bring your Positive Tomorrow's basket back filled with kitchen items.

Notes from the Editor: Janet Newman

Summer is over. Hopefully life will slow down. My house is finally back in shape. I settled down on the weekend to work on the newsletter and the laptop decided it was time to go belly up. It's in the shop so the newsletter has been produced at work as time permits. There is a great article inside on harvesting grasses on page 3 and another one on page 9 about native baskets woven in Alaska. It's a good time to start thinking about that if you gather natural materials to weave with. Over the next several newsletters, I will be talking about different materials to gather or weave with so be watching for them. There is a very large basket from Suzanne Moore that would be great for storing your giftwrapping papers. I've highlighted an instructor you may not be familiar with, Miriam Joy. She does a lot of work with gourds. Her website has embellishments that can be used for baskets and she has a ton of videos.

Thanks for reading. Janet

BWGOK meetings are held at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum located near I-44 and NE 63rd Street in Oklahoma City. The meetings are held the second Saturday of every odd month at 10:00AM. Meetings generally start with the business meeting followed by a basket raffle, then lunch. Everyone brings a covered dish. After lunch we work on the scheduled project or whatever you bring to weave on. We are usually done by 2-3.

Basket Weavers Guild of Oklahoma Minutes

July 12, 2014

Marcia Balleweg, President of BWGOK, called the meeting to order at 10:09 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City on July 12, 2014. There were 18 members.

March 8th minutes were approved as printed in the newsletter. (Motion – P. Horsey, 2nd F. Cates)

Pat horsey presented the treasurer report.

Primary Account: Closed May 12, 2014. Funds were transferred to the Main Account.

Main Account:

Balance as of 4-30-2014: \$11780.54

	Expenses:	Deposits
Project for May	\$176.88	113.70
	144.60	128.60
		65.00
Totals:	321.56	307.30

Balance as of June 30, 2014: \$11766.28

Discussion: Linda Tickle requested a comparison of 2012 Weavers Weekend to 2013.

Ongoing Business:

Weavers' Weekend – Shirley Hill, chair, reported 35 paid registrations have been paid. PayPal is the most secure online transaction.

Guild projects:

September – Shirley Hill is teaching the class. Bring a started basket following the guidelines that have been sent out.

November – Rena Vickery – Christmas ornament – along with elections for Vice President (Program planner) and Secretary.

New Business:

State Fair Demonstration – Tuesday, September 16, 4-8:00 p.m. Sign-up sheet was passed around.

State Fair – Deadline- Entry application - August 15

Newsletter: Articles/submissions due August 12, and October 12. Send to Janet Newman: dnjn3227@sbcglobal.net

Opportunities:

Looming Guild – Nov. 7th Paseo District – Trinity Church – 1st Friday Open House

G. Welch won the water bottle and M. Lee won the soap bottle basket kit from our Door Prize drawing.

Vivian Havenstrite won the beautiful gourd by Mary Lee.

Project: Mike Tickle – Rimming a Nantucket basket.

GATHERING WILD GRASSES

From: *Natural Basketry* by Carol and Dan Hart, 1976, Watson-Guption Press

Prepare for gathering:

Long Plastic Tub or Guttering. Used for soaking natural materials without bending them. Once dried grasses and leaves will break if bent while still dry.

Towel Knitting Needle or bone Awl Sharp Jackknife

Pliers Measuring Tape

Scissors and Pruning Shears

Knitter's "Bone" Rings. Plastic rings are used to keep the size of grass cores consistent. They come in a variety of sizes.

Glycerin. One teaspoon added to each quart of soaking water will restore flexibility.

Long Yarn Needles and Blunt Darning needles. Should be metal.

Each grass has its own color, scent, tassel, leaf, and stem form.

Grasses have hollow stems that are interrupted by nodes, leaves that are long and narrow, and the base of which ensheathes the stem and flowers that are small and borne in dense spikes or open branching clusters.

Step-by-step instructions for preparing grasses for baskets:

1. Cut in late spring, summer, or fall. The grass will have different qualities with each season. If cut green, tie the stems in bundles and hang them upside down to dry. If cut in the fall it will probably be bleached and dry. Grass with tassels should be stored in paper bags in a cool dry place.
2. Soak grasses for a half hour in cold water (warm water will wash out the color). Wrap in a towel until ready to use.
3. Hold the grass in bundles as you stitch. The grass can be sown straight or twisted in bundles. Use a bone ring to keep the bundle the same size. (You can also use a piece of straw or copper tubing).
4. If soaked well enough, grass stems can be split along one side with your thumbnail, opened up, and used for stitching.

To the right are Pictures of Oklahoma grasses.



Canadian Wild Rye



Indian Grass



Prairie Cord Grass



Ravenna Grass



HOLE SAW KIT

3/4" - 5" Diameter SET of 16 pieces
plus case, drill bits and mandrels "

NOW ON SALE

ON SALE\$34.99 per Kit

(16 Steel Pieces)

*** Simple to Use...just attach to a common Drill and start cutting your round pieces!!!**

Ever wonder how to make Round Gourd pieces? These are the Blades that do it!

(16) Pieces ~ Sharp Blades ~ Quality Steel!!

I don't endorse many products by instructors in the newsletter but this one is a keeper. Miriam

Joy is a wonderful instructor and very talented artist. She has the energy of 10 people. Just ask her husband who follows her around and mans her booth while she teaches at gourd shows all around the country. Even for the basket weaver there are many items on her website that you will find useful for embellishing baskets.

If you are a gourd enthusiast you will find so many things to help you that you will find yourself in trouble. There are so many ideas to try out you will be spell bound for weeks to come.

I first met Miriam at the Lone Star Gourd Festival several years ago. I have taught her process for using crayons on gourds. The new saw she has will be a real winner for gourd people. If you like to make jewelry out of gourd pieces, it is a must have.

Visit Miriam's website at: www.miriamjoy.com. She has made many You Tube videos. You can find more by Miriam on Facebook and



Gourd Necklace



Calendar of Guild Projects

September: Bring Positive Tomorrow's baskets back filled,

* Project—6" x 6" Basket with a new technique taught by Shirley Hill.

October: 24th-26th, 2014 Weavers Weekend Retreat

November: Christmas Ornament taught by Rena Vickery

Positive Tomorrows Project

Its time to bring your Positive Tomorrow basket to the September guild meeting. Remember to fill your basket with kitchen items. Do not put any items in that are perishable, could spill or get broken in general handling.

For more information on Positive Tomorrows check out their website:



www.positivetomorrow.org

BWGOK Officers

Elected Positions

President	Marcia Balleweg
Vice President	Rena Vickery
Treasurer	Pat Horsey
Secretary	Jo Ann Miller

Volunteer Positions

Librarian	Marcia Balleweg
Historian	Onita Lynch
Membership	Janet Newman
Newsletter	Janet Newman

Newsletter submissions can be sent to: dnjn3227@sbcglobal.net



Kris Compas of Dollhouse Miniature Furniture Tutorials shows how to make this miniature basket using crochet thread. Its very interesting how the basket is made, not regular basket weaving techniques but real close and a wonderful job. I plan to use some of her techniques in making miniatures. Check it out at:

<http://1inchminisbykris.blogspot.com/2011/07/weaving-basket-with-crochet-thread.html>. Or do a search on How to make a woven basket from crochet thread.

Nice & Neat...Hideaway Storage

This basket has many uses, but I found it perfect for storing my wrapping paper & bows.

Pattern Compliments Of:

Suzanne Moore's NC Basket Works

130 Main St. • Post Office Box 744

Vass, NC 28394-0744

910-245-3049 • 800-338-4972

Fax: 910-245-3243

Email: suzanne@ncbasketworks.com

Website: www.ncbasketworks.com

Top Diameter: 16 1/2" L x 7 1/2" W x 20 1/2" T

Materials:

5" x 16" Rectangle Base w/slit

5/8" Flat Flat—spokes

1/2" Flat Flat—weavers

1/4" Flat Flat dyed—weavers

3/8" Braided Seagrass (approx. 12")

3/8" Flat Flat—rim row

#3 Round—twining

1/2" Flat Oval—rims, corner & center

Reinforcements

Seagrass—rim filler

3/16" flat Oval—lashing

10" Leather Straps—1 pair (plain or braided)

Insta or Maxi Cure Glue

All supplies to make this basket are available at N.C. Basket

10" Leather Straps available in Light Chestnut, Dark Chestnut and Black

Cut 10 pieces of 1/2" FO each 20" long. These are the corner and center spoke reinforcements. Soak for several minutes. Flex these pieces to straighten them and set aside.

From 5/8"FF cut 36 spokes 25" long. Soak briefly. Put a light pencil mark at 8" on the wood base (which is the center of the base). Insert spoke at this center mark and one on the opposite side. You will have 13 spokes on each long side of the base and 5 on each short end. I found it extremely helpful to glue in the spokes. Twine 2 times around the base with #3R.

Upset the spokes and weave the following rows start and stop, keeping the spokes straight, as they do want to slant:

9 rows 1/2" FF - the first row must be woven behind the center spoke. After 4 rows insert your 1/2"FO reinforcements on top of each corner and center spoke.

1 row 1/4" FF dyed



Nice & Neat continued:

1 row 3/8" braided seagrass (I butted the braided seagrass inside)

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

9 rows 1/2" FF- one end of the leather strap will be woven on the 7th row in this series. On the narrow side of the basket, weave 1/2" FF through the loop. To reinforce the weaver that goes through the loop, cut a piece of 1/2" FF 3" long. Weave this piece through the loop and hide the ends behind a spoke. Then continue with 2 more rows of 1/2" FF for a total of 9 rows.

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

1 row 3/8" braided seagrass (I butted the braided seagrass inside)

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

9 rows 1/2" FF- one end of the leather strap will be woven on the 7th row in this series. On the narrow side of the basket, weave 1/2" FF through the loop. To reinforce the weaver that goes through the loop, cut a piece of 1/2" FF 3" long. Weave this piece through the loop and hide the ends behind a spoke. Then continue with 2 more rows of 1/2" FF for a total of 9 rows.

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

1 row 3/8" braided seagrass

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

9 rows 1/2" FF

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

1 row 3/8" braided seagrass

1 row 1/4" FF dyed

8 rows 1/2" FF- the other end of the leather strap is woven on the 3rd row in this series. Repeat the same reinforcement procedure as above. Continue for 5 more rows for a total of 8 rows. Cut the 1/2" FO reinforcements near the top of the basket.

1 row 3/8" FF rim row

Pack well. Cut and tuck spokes. Rim with 1/2" FO, seagrass between the rims, and double lash with 3/16" Fo.

Stain with your favorite shade of Weaver's Stain.

Pattern by and used with permission from Suzanne Moore of North Carolina Basketworks.

Grass Baskets of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska

The Yup'ik and Cup'ik People live in Western Alaska with the Yukon River to the north, the Kuskokwim River to the south and the Bering Sea to the west in an area called the Y-K Delta (YukonOKuskokwim). The grass baskets of the Aleutian Islands are so tightly woven that some are capable of holding water. Archaeological examples (from burial caves) are at most a few hundred years old. The very best baskets were made on Attu Island, which may have been the place of origin for a weaving tradition that spread across the Aleutian chain.

In traditional households, grass storage baskets held foods such as dried fish, roots, and meat. Other types were for gathering beach foods and plants. Small round baskets with lids.

The weaver carefully picks, bundles, ages, sorts, dries, and then splits the grass stems with her finger nail into strands that are suitable for use as “weavers” (vertical strands, or warp) and “weaves” (horizontal strands, or weft). Many contemporary weavers use store-bought raffia, which resembles rye grass but does not have to be prepared by the lengthy traditional methods.

All Unangax^ baskets are made by weaving or “twining” strands of grass together, rather than by coiling them. There are at least eight historically known weaving patterns, with variations across the 900 mile group of islands. Because of these distinctive local styles, the origin of any basket is obvious to a knowledgeable weaver. Large baskets are woven upside down in a counterclockwise direction, the way that Haida weavers work, whereas Tlingit baskets are woven clockwise.

Decorative designs are added to most baskets, including woven-in bands of color and overlay designs that are embroidered in dyed grass, spruce root, silk thread, or wool yarn. Old baskets from Kagamil Island were decorated with feathers from puffins, cormorants, and other birds.

With increased Western contact, fewer baskets were needed for everyday household use but more were made for sale, as highly skilled weavers created new shapes and designs. The peak of basket making may have been reached in the period after 1900, ending with the great flu epidemic of 1919. Many of the famed Attu weavers died, and only one remained alive by the late 1930s.

Rye or beach grass (*Elymus mollis*) for baskets is gathered in the summer, on coastal hillsides well above the beach because grass exposed to salt spray is too coarse and thick. It also breaks easily.

Following is a synopsis of a discussion with Maria Turnpaugh: Attu Basketweaver from the Aleutian Island of Alaska.

You say a little prayer, thanking the grass for letting us have some of it, and that we won't abuse it. You tear off the three outer leaves and throw them away. Then you cut down as far as you can, and you take that grass—sometimes it's that tall [approximately three feet]—and you get a bundle about like this [arms full], as much as you can hold, and you take it and put it in a gunnysack. You harvest the grass in the



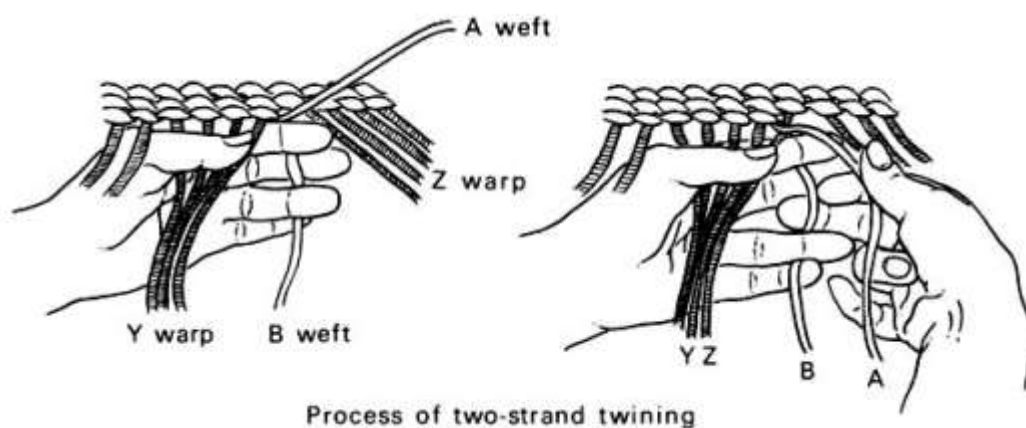
An Unangas woman splitting rye grass for basket making about 1926. (from Alaska native Collections, Sharing Knowledge. www.alaska.si.edu)



Mrs. Kanrilak (left) and a friend gather tapernaq [coarse seashore grass] in Tununak.

Photo by Larry McNeil, National Museum of the American Indian, P26512.

summertime when it's green. You put them under your porch or somewhere, and everyday look at them and turn them so they don't mold or anything. Or you can put them on a hillside and let them naturally turn. But it's not good [to leave them outside] where there's many eagles. When they're all yellow, you take more outer leaves and take one leaf that's unfurled—most of them are about eighteen inches long.



A variation of the two-strand weaving was used by Unangas women. (from Alaska native Collections, Sharing Knowledge. www.alaska.si.edu)

You clean all of that bundle, then you clean the inner ones—you'll have a bundle as big as your wrist

[of the inner blades]. By the time you've sorted it out [two blade types] and split that inner blade on the outer edges, which they use for the weavers [outer part of blade]. And then the center you use for the weaves. It's the inner blade that is not hard. Some of that grass is so nice and soft, even after it's dried. But it's hard to get any grass anymore, you have to get them out away from the sea spray, because the salt water hardens it.

After you get it all bundled up, you take it back up and wash it with Joy soap and rinse it real well. And then you can hang it out in the sun. They say if you want to bleach it more, you put it out when the sun is shining in the winter, and it bleaches grass up really good. I tried that once but it didn't work, but I guess I didn't do it right. That's a lot of work. You could use blueberries to color the grass and there's this red clay-like color, ocher. Tea and coffee are used for the browns. Iris makes a dark blue. Onion skins make a pretty yellowish color.

It's easier to weave grass it is moist. If it's not so moist, it breaks all the time. We usually keep a little glass of water to dip our fingers in. That's why I always let it soak for a while.

Then I take the grass weaver, put it around my finger. And then I take this strand [weaver], twist it, and take this [weave] and exchange it with this other one [weaver], pull that [weave] up, and then the next one [weave] I pull over and exchange the weaver. And the next one [weave] the same, until you get to this one here. And I take and turn it. I take the weave—I'm starting on my second row—and put the weaver in between the two weaves and exchange. You kind of twist your grass as you go, and you keep this finger here underneath it [flat circle of woven grass] for tension. Exchange, twist, exchange, twist, exchange, twist . . . and you've got the beginning of your little circle here [at center]. So is it the weave that increases in diameter, because you're making the bottom now? You do this for a couple of rows. When there's a space about that much [approximately 1/8 inch] between the grasses, you add one of the weavers.....now there's a space [in woven grass], so I'm going to add a weaver there. I put that in [between woven grass] about that far, couple of inches or inch or so, and weave that in with the next grass. You anchor it like that so you don't pull it out when you go around again.

I have six strands of raffia for my weavers. When teaching I use raffia because grass breaks so easily when you're first learning. You use grass for the weavers. I tie my weaver then twist as I weave. I reach in the middle and get my weaver, and I tie it around the middle [leaving a short end and a long weaver. I remember the first basket I made. I was eight years old, and I was so proud of that. When I think back on it, it looked like it had a bunch of warts on it. I gave it to my dad. But I didn't keep it up because I had thirteen kids, and you just don't have time.

From the website: <http://alaska.si.edu/record.asp?id=362>



BasketWeavers Guild
of Oklahoma
3401 Eagle Lane
Bethany, OK 73008

Phone (405)789-4540
dnjn3227@sbcglobal.net

Inside The August Issue:

President's Letter

Editor's Note

September Project

Nice & Neat...Hideaway Storage Pattern

Grass Baskets of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska