



Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild

Newsletter - December 2020

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello EHSers,

I would like to take this chance to thank you all for the response and support you have given to the guild during this very strange time. We have supported each other in many ways, but seeing some of you weekly on our Zooms is very satisfying and helps some who are shut in continue to connect. Hopefully more of you will join us in the New Year to share projects and life moments.

I include a couple of links and passwords that you may not have.

www.librarything.com

User: EHS_library

Password: Et0b1c0ke

Houses our library collection not including magazines

If there are issues or books that you wish to borrow, let us know and we will arrange it.

www.EHSGuild.com

Our new website has a Members Only section that can be accessed with the password EHS2020

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays hoping that we will be able to meet again in person in the not too far future.

Stay well and keep tuning in.

Carolyn



Neilson Park
Creative Centre



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

INFO RE UPCOMING MEETINGS

EHS Monthly Meeting - Every month on the First Tuesday at 7 pm until Jun 1, 2021:

Jan 5, Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1, 2021, 7 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87267922600?pwd=YVpqTnhmd0FRMLZYTHpRSCtVSHh5UT09>

Meeting ID: 872 6792 2600

Passcode: 160754

EHS Fibre Wednesday - This is a recurring meeting biweekly 10:00 to noon.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88942159848?pwd=KzFuUTlEckY4R1FnM01WWXVXTGITQT09>

Meeting ID: 889 4215 9848

Passcode: 003356

EHS ZOOM and Knit - Every 2 weeks on Thursday at 7 PM until Mar 18, 2021

Jan 7, Jan 21, Feb 4, Feb 18, Mar 4, Mar 18, 2021, 7 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82364322274?pwd=NkI5SnP1Y0VCUFdtVThOZEEdsV090Zz09>

Meeting ID: 823 6432 2274

Passcode: 913489

EHS Friday Drop-in - Every week on Friday at 10 AM.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88113305378?pwd=Q0RHNFNJR3hZajlXSVNJUVUyZzkVNDz09>

Meeting ID: 881 1330 5378

Passcode: 833305

Carolyn Ramos, President and Dorothy Thomson, Treasurer

Etobicoke
Handweavers
& Spinners Guild

Member Login

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Just as textile crafters bring together individual threads to create objects which are both useful and beautiful, craft guilds draw together those makers into a community of support, learning and friendship.

The Guild has a new website!

The site now includes not only a calendar of events but a feature that allows you to send yourself a calendar item of any listing in the calendar, putting details into your personal calendar.

There are classified ads where the Guild can sell unwanted donated equipment and materials.

Most important for textile crafters is our Marketplace. You can post an image and description of hand-made crafts you produce for sale. Sales won't take actually place through the Guild, however. Rather, the site introduces potential customers to your work and provides a contact link – your own website, Etsy, or even just your email address. Products offered for sale must meet the same standards as articles offered for sale at live Guild sales.

And, of course, there's information about EHS and its history, its executive and committee chairs.

There's a special section about programs and workshops and another about how to become a member.

There's also detailed information about Guild equipment for rent with downloadable contracts.

Finally, there's a Showcase with scores of photographs and write-ups of Guild Activities.

For members only, there's a password protected area with minutes and a downloadable version of the Guild handbook and our constitution.

To see for yourself, just go to EHSGuild.com.

Sharon Rose Airhart

KNIT NIGHT STUDY GROUP NEWS

Cindy O'Malley, Knit Group Convenor

KNITmuch.com is an AWESOME knitting blog, but also a weekly giveaway, a monthly newsletter, and a quarterly magazine focused on the love and art of making beautiful knits. Best of all, it's ALL FREE from the publishers of A Needle Pulling Thread Magazine and the quilting blog counterpart, QUILTsocial.

KNITmuch features a variety of knowledgeable and impassioned guest bloggers and contributors, each bringing their own unique perspective. A recent [week's blog posts](#) by Cindy O'Malley feature projects knit with Penna, a feather light lace weight blend of suri alpaca, merino wool, and nylon.



Feature Show & Tell project by Carole Gay

Pattern: Queen Anne's
Lace

Yarn: Artfil Yarn - 70%
baby alpaca, 20% silk,
10% cashmere

*"The yarn is so soft
and luxurious, and the
pattern represents the
bark of a tree."*

SPINNING NEWS

Joan McKenzie, Spinning Convenor

Guild Challenge: The fabulous stash from Sister Mary Colette just keeps on giving! To finish it off, and clear out my living room, we have a guild challenge.

- For the spinning challenge, you get a bag filled with spin-able fibre - some lovely Corrie from New Zealand, two colours of roving, and a mystery/surprise bag or two!!
- For the other challenge - for weaving, knitting, whatever - you get a bag of mini-skeins.

Fibre bags are suitable for spinning or felting, and the yarn bags are suitable for any technique you like - knitting, weaving, embroidery, etc. A suggested item to make is in each bag, however you can choose to make something else. Feel free to add to the mix from your own stash.

Rules of the challenge: to make something! Share your pictures of your kit and your progress on our Facebook Group page and send them to Helen Skelton for our Instagram feed! And share what you made at the show and tell at the June meeting.

If you would like a fibre or yarn bag, please contact me at ehsguild@gmail.com to check availability.

Spinning equipment is available for rental during this time - pickup from me or Carolyn or delivery can be arranged. All of the equipment listed in the handbook is available - wheels, drum carder, combs, blending board, blending hackle...

Spinning workshop: There will be a workshop on Spinning Silk Bricks - likely in March or April 2021. Workshop will be either via Zoom or in studio - depending on the Covid situation. A number of you have already indicated your interest and I've set aside silk bricks for the class. Julia Lee will be teaching it - she did a Silk workshop for us a few years ago and is a fab spinner and teacher! More news about it will be available in the new year.

Dyeing: Our dye pots were very busy when we were in Studio. Thanks to Helen Skelton for the fab lobster mushrooms! Colours obtained varying the PH were phenomenal - lovely pinks and oranges.

Our garden from away (i.e. Joan's front yard) yielded many blooms of Dyer's Coreopsis - thanks to Patti Wiebe for the plants! There is still lots of dried blooms for more dye pots when we are back at NPCC, as well as seeds to plant in the NPCC garden. If you'd like some seeds for your own garden, let me know at ehsguild@gmail.com.

Dyer's Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*) is a "beautiful native ornamental that provides a full palette of color from yellows and greens to rusts and browns—and even black, depending on the combination of plant parts and mordants. Large cosmos-like flowers in combinations of yellow, mahogany and red atop 2½' erect stems flourish in full sun and make excellent cuts. Low-maintenance and rugged. Good for less cultivated areas such as open spaces, roadsides and borders, competes well with grasses and reseeds easily. Tolerates drought. Direct seed outdoors after frost. Annual." (<https://www.fedcoseeds.com/seeds/dyers-coreopsis-mix-dye-plant-5904>).

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SPINNING NEWS - CONTINUED - Joan McKenzie

High Park Llama: This year, the fleece from the Llama's was sent to Grand Valley Fibre Company for processing into YARN!!! Yaay! Dehaired, carded and spun! Three colours were produced: light brown, dark brown, and a lovely dark gray. The browns are Double Knitting weight, and the gray is a Sport tending towards a fingering weight. Tension is being checked out by Cindy - thanks!

Skeins are all 50 grams, and a kit for making headbands will be available. Single skeins are also expected to be available. Information likely available thru the FB page for Friends of High Park Zoo. (or email ehsguild@gmail.com).

WEAVING NEWS - Karen Fowler, Weaving Convenor

Between the roof repairs and a new shut down, we have been unable to go into NPCC. As a result, all of our looms have been idle. I know we are all missing the opportunity to work on them, so hopefully we will be able to do so in the New Year.

SHOWS - Karen Fowler, Show Convenor

We have booked our next hallway show for March 28th to April 17th, 2022. We should be able to mount a great show with all the work that we have produced during the lockdowns. The year 2020 has given us an opportunity to work on projects that we have always wanted to do. I think that this display will be spectacular.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS - Susan Lapell, Membership

When the world went into lockdown last March, the Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners went online. And when we heard from folks that didn't have access to the weaving, spinning, dyeing--generally the making--community, we decided to offer zoom memberships to people who are isolated right now, or perhaps live too far away to join the EHS in person.

It's been a great success, and we welcome our six zoom members to the Guild--Mary Ellen Duff, Brenda Hatcher, Deborah Livingston-Lowe, Catherine Richards, Mary Underwood and Lucia O'Neill. I'm sure they will bring an added vibrancy to our get-togethers.

COMMUNICATIONS - Joan McKenzie

It's good to have many ways of reaching out and talking to each other... After the Boro workshop, a Facebook group was set up for the workshop group to post photos and exchange ideas.

To continue the easy exchange of ideas, a Facebook group has also been set up for Guild members - it's a private group for members to post photos and share news and ideas. Perfect for showing your photos of your Challenge kits and their progress!! You should be able to find it doing a FB search for Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild Group. There is a question to answer that guild members would know. The direct link is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/305873733904163>

KNITTING PATTERN FOR A TOP DOWN HAT

Developed by Gloria Williams in 2002 - Karen Fowler persuaded her to let us share it here! Heartfelt thanks to both of you!!!

This method of knitting a hat starts all hats exactly the same - any size, any yarn. You pick yarn and the appropriate size needles and increase every second row until the desired number of stitches are on your needle.

KNITTING INSTRUCTIONS:

Working back and forth on the circular needle, cast on 8 stitches.

Increase in each stitch.....(16)

Purl 1 row.

*K1, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(24)

Purl 1 row.

*K2, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(32)

Purl 1 row.

*K3, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(40)

Purl 1 row.

*K4, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(48)

Purl 1 row.

*K5, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(56)

Purl 1 row.

*K6, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(64)

Purl 1 row.

*K7, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(72)

Purl 1 row.

*K8, increase in next stitch, repeat across row.....(80)

Continue to increase in this manner until you have enough stitches to fit your head size. You can at any time join work to knit in the round. Place a marker for the beginning of the round, and remember that in circular knitting you will knit every round. If you wish to check the size of the hat you can slip the stitches onto a long length of a contrasting yarn and try on the hat. When you have the desired length, you can cast off. This will create a rolled edge. Join the open seam at the top.

Alternatives: This hat can be knit longer and have a folded brim, or you can change to a 2 x 2 rib and have a ribbed band. These changes will require additional yarn and the need for you to experiment.

Note: More experienced knitters may wish to start with double pointed needles and knit completely in the round.

Have fun experimenting with this method of knitting a hat.

Gloria Williams, November 2002

REFLECTIONS FROM ELIZABETH EVANS - GUILD AMBASSADOR

I'd like to send out my best wishes to everyone and especially our members. To my long term weaving friends Deborah and Mary - welcome to EHS. To Jane, Brenda and Catherine - I'm looking forward to meeting you on ZOOM and learning about your interests. We have a buddy system to help orient new members to EHS. If you are interested in being paired up with a buddy, please get in touch with me and let me know about your interests and I'll see what I can do. The offer is good for long term members too.
cetkovskievans@rogers.com.

Christine Pigeon from the Ontario Science Centre joined us at our December meeting to talk about the Satellite Crocheted Coral Reef that we can all participate in.
<https://www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/science-at-home/crochet-coral-reef/ontario-satellite-reef>.

The Textile Museum is offering free sustainable teach-ins this month
<https://textilemuseum.ca/whats-on/?listingCategory=program>. They are also offering two programs in their Inside the Artwork series for a fee. Workshop materials will be provided by either mail or contactless pickup and the instruction will take place over ZOOM. Here are links to both workshops. <https://textilemuseum.ca/event/inside-the-artwork-series-printed-textiles-from-kinngait-studios/>. <https://textilemuseum.ca/event/inside-the-artwork-series-anna-torma-permanent-danger/>.

The Textile Museum also has virtual tours that can be booked for up to 20 people. Cost is \$200. There are four options. It might be fun to get a group together for a tour of one of the current exhibitions, TXTile City (the way textiles have shaped Toronto) or the Permanent Gallery. <https://textilemuseum.ca/visit/#tour>.

I highly recommend the catalogue of their current exhibition Printed Textiles from Kinngait Studios. The photographs are of good quality. Essays are written by a variety of people involved in the story including contemporary Inuit textile artists who were commissioned to produce work for the exhibition. Highly recommended.
<https://shop.textilemuseum.ca/collections/kinngait-studios-collection>.

Another catalogue I read recently is ROM's Cloth that Changed the World. The photography is superb. Essays are written by experts in a variety of disciplines from all over the world. Highly recommended. <https://shop.rom.on.ca/cloth-that-changed-world-art-fashion.html/>.

Here is a 20 minute video of former member and President of EHS, Lorraine Smith if you'd like to see what she's up to now. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTG1qCs4dk&t=919s>. It includes some of her spinning adventures, connections with trees, long distance running and her work in the regenerative economy.

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REFLECTIONS - CONTINUED

I met tapestry weaver Susan Middleton (<http://chezrouleau.com>) when she and I were weaving together on the community tapestry of Line Dufour's Fate, Destiny and Self Determination. While Susan guided me in tapestry weaving technique, I talked to her about spinning and twist and qualities of different breeds of sheep. One thing led to another and Susan went to Romni Wool, purchased quantities of Norwegian, Welsh, Blue-faced Leicester and Jacob rovings, learned to spin on a drop spindle and produced yarn for her tapestries.



Having finished these particular explorations, Susan offered me roving that was leftover from those explorations. I felt connected to that roving through our friendship and mutual learning experiences. Spinning that roving into 2-ply yarn became my ZOOM project. This is Susan's photograph of some of the yarn.

The past few months of self-isolation have brought me into closer connection with the place I live. To acknowledge that connection I decided to dye cotton with some of the plants in my place of isolation to weave cloth for pillowcases. The pillowcases haven't been sewn yet, but here is my photograph of the cloth woven in 2/16 cotton and dyed with walnut, golden rod, coreopsis and Queen Anne's lace. There is an ikat effect from the choke ties. I loved weaving this fabric spontaneously using different colours for the weft while working with the ikat effect from the choke ties.



REFLECTIONS - CONTINUED.

Finally, I have a disintegrating duvet cover. I don't think I would have considered weaving a replacement if it weren't for isolation, but that's my plan. I wound the warp this weekend. It's on my back beam ready to thread and sley. My loom is only 36" wide so my plan is to weave a long piece of cloth and find some creative way to piece it together in the New Year.

Best wishes everyone for nurturing your health and creative work.

Elizabeth Evans

SPOTTED: WRITING ABOUT WEAVING

In the early 1960s, Woman's Day - a supermarket magazine focussed on home, kids and cooking – published a book on the history of American needlework by Rose Wilder Lane, the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder and Almanzo Wilder. As an accompaniment to the book, a box of full-sized paper templates for the patterns was also published. One portfolio within the collection was "Weaving" which included drafts of coverlets, blankets, tablecloths, carpets and fabrics housed in historical collections around the country. By way of introduction, it says:

Weaving, the crisscrossing of strands together to make a fabric, began as a primary essential to civilization and a necessary toil. Today, however, it is an art, an artcraft actually, that engages and delights all of one's mind and muscles together. Every muscle, every one, moves in rhythm with the rising and falling harnesses, the crisscrossing maze of warp, the shuttle's flight to and fro. The rhythm is in your blood, a warmth spreads to the very tips of fingers and toes. A radiance, a harmony, seems to encompass everything and all's well with the world. We trust you will know this wonderful feeling of harmony as you weave coverlets or tablecloths or wall hangings or floor coverings with these drafts of patterns from pieces now in American museums.

Sharon Rose Airhart

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

Karen Bota has called our attention to the fact that there are many new on-line learning courses or short videos that we should be aware of. Here are two:

-- "Daryl Lancaster has one called the Weaver Sews. I have watched a few of them, and they are really good. I have learned a lot about what I would need to do to use my woven cloth to make clothes."

<https://www.daryllancaster.com/index.htm>

-- "I have always wanted to go to Maiwa to take a class, but had not done it yet.....Well Maiwa classes can now be taken on line."

<https://www.schooloftextiles.com/>

A WEAVER'S JOURNEY BY JENNIFER JAMES: HOLIDAYS CARDS - THE BEST LAID PLANS

Sometimes I come up with ideas that are deeply flawed - but usually even those can be rescued! In mid-summer I had the idea to weave some book marks with Snowman, Fir Tree and Santa Claus figures to use on holiday cards. I started by modifying a rosepath draft from the September/October 2001 issue of Handwoven. I planned on 5 yards of warp - leaving lots of room for sampling. And yes, that turned out to be very necessary!

With many things going on, and good weather, while the loom was warped (after I had to buy additional cords for treadle tie-up), I finally started to weave in late September. I wanted the Snowman to stand out so I thought I would use a light blue weft on the white warp with textured yarn for the snow. The first Snowman I wove was NOT what I had envisioned. The blue was taking over, I didn't like the selvages, it looked too narrow and reverse side wasn't very neat. Plus, it was going to be too thick to use as a book mark.

So I tried again. I thought I would double the warp - cramming the sett (40 epi), to fix both the selvages and the colour contrast issues. This required measuring out additional warp, winding the old warp back, adding on the new warp, re-drafting and re-sleying. Once again, the results were not stellar and there is no way this was ever going to result in a useable bookmark!



Back to the drawing board. I redrafted the designs, re-sleyed to a different draft back at 20 epi and used an off-white weft to provide the contrast. And I abandoned the bookmark idea, opting to make decorations instead. Now there was enough contrast between the snow and the ground fabric, the selvages were good, it was wider and it produced 2 figures side-by-side. This was OK - and the first one I wove was useable - but still not what I had envisaged.

So once again I redesigned using the existing threading, but needing a new tie-up to get a single figure in the centre of the warp. Eureka - this seemed to work. While I had to use a pick-up stick on some weft pattern shots due to the limitations of my 8-harness loom, this was weaving up quickly and I liked the result - sort of. But as you can guess, I decided to make some additional modifications to the design (tie-up and treadling was changed AGAIN).

To finish the snowmen, I added black seed-bead eyes and an embroidered carrot nose (bullion stitch). I doubled the fabric hand sewing the selvages together as well as the hems and added ribbon as a hanger. I have been known to cut projects off the loom when designs just don't work - but I am happy I persevered even if it meant crawling around on the floor to re-tie up headless many more times than I would have liked!

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THE BEST LAID PLANS...CONTINUED



P.S. At the start of this article I said I was going to make Snowmen, Fir Trees and Santa Clauses. I ended up making trees and snowmen, and no Santa Clauses. While the warp is off the loom, I am still adding beads to the trees, and I need to “assemble” the ornaments and put them on cards. Here is my work in progress!



P.P.S. I still plan on making bookmarks in the New Year, but with MUCH finer threads, and in a design that is fully reversible!

HOW DO YOU APPROACH DESIGN?

The articles by Elizabeth and Jennifer were so enlightening, as they gave us a window into their thinking as they followed their textile explorations. They both have so much technical and design expertise, and it's wonderful to see how their ideas get translated into real yarn and cloth that you can touch and hold!

In one weaving focused Facebook group, people often share highly technical information regarding drafts, setts, treadlings, etc. However, in a recent post, one weaver posed a question: instead of getting caught up in all the technical planning ahead of time, do you ever just enjoy throwing whatever yarn you have on the loom and playing with it, to see what happens? There were quite a number of people who clearly resonated, saying that they love playing in this unplanned, exploratory way. It made me think.

For myself, learning the technical details of different weave structures and spinning techniques gives me more options to play with. There are ideas that I would never think of on my own, if I didn't learn about the many ways to treadle a given weave structure or draft a particular fibre. But sometimes, trying to do things "correctly" shuts me down. If I have a very strong mental picture of what a weave structure or yarn is "supposed" to look like, it can be hard to step out of that mind set and imagine new possibilities. If I always work from "recipes" - such as projects and patterns from books - I never take the chance to play and discover new ideas.

It's easier to play with spinning, because I can take a handful of fibre, and see what it tells my fingers as I spin. If I don't like what I've produced, it's only one handful that I've lost - it's easy to stop doing that and do something else right away! Weaving is a different matter. It takes time and effort to warp a loom. I hate putting all that effort into something that isn't going to give me a result I love! So it's challenging to find a way to just play when weaving.

I've actually been inspired by a strategy from the quilting world, where an improvisational quilting approach encourages people to play. It actually is very similar to what we sometimes do in weaving workshops: working on small pieces rather than big projects gives the freedom to try new variations on old designs, and explore new combinations of colour, form, rhythm, and technique, without having to be totally invested in a big piece that has to be maximally functional and perfect. So I'm doing small warps on my table loom, playing with colour combinations and threadings. Once the warp is made, it is possible to play with variations to push the limits. There are some ugly swatches that come out of this, but there are also some wonderful surprises!

Elizabeth and Jennifer told us about how they refined their inspirations into beautiful finished projects. Please, if there are others who would be willing to share their experiences in future newsletters, we would love to hear how you approach the balance between technical considerations and playful exploration in your textile work.

For me, music always helps! Here is a link to one of my favourite Gordon Lightfoot songs that seems so appropriate now as we work away at our textiles through the long cozy winter nights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRlITvYp0ok>

Warm wishes for a Happy New Year, *Claudia*