



Ottawa Valley Weavers' & Spinners' Guild

November 2009 Newsletter

Message from your President

By Shirley Browsky

I drive a Toyota Corolla, my third one. I received my chatty magazine from Club Toyota telling me how great they are. In the middle of all the marketing hype I found an article called "The Legacy of the Loom-Maker". Now, this piqued my interest.

Now you might think that manufacturing cars and textile looms have little in common but in the case of Toyota, they are entwined. The commonality is Sakichi Toyoda – a prolific inventor born in 1867. His father was a poor carpenter, his mother a weaver, and he combined their skills by inventing numerous wooden devices to automate weaving, including the first wooden hand loom, patented in 1890, and devices for reeling and winding yarn (1894) following it up over the next decade with several other significant inventions in the field of spinning and weaving that revolutionized Japan's textile industry including a circular loom invented in 1906.

After years of experimentation, with the help of his son Kiichiro, Toyoda fulfilled his lifelong dream of building an automatic loom in 1924 with non-stop shuttle change motion, and the ability to replenish thread supplies without even slowing its weaving speed. He then established the Toyoda Automatic Loom Works and in 1929 just a year before his death, he sold the patent rights for his groundbreaking automatic loom to a British firm for a reported 1 million pounds. With that money and the support of the Japanese government, the company embarked on a path that ultimately led to the automobile business.

*"Club Toyota" the magazine for Toyota Owners
Fall/Winter 2009*

This led me to another search. AVL derives its heritage from the designs and inspiration of Jim

Ahrens (1906-2000). Mr. Ahrens, originally a mechanical engineer by trade, started designing looms in the 1930s. After World War II, along with his first wife, he became a production hand-weaver and owner-operator of a weaving school, contract weaving shop and retail establishment in Oakland, California.

Later, in the early 50s, Jim worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the textile research laboratory in Livermore, CA. In the mid-1960s, he began designing a radically different loom that combined the best parts of handweaving with the knowledge he had gained during his years working in the industry.

In 1977, he joined forces with Jon Violette, a cabinet maker to form a new company called Ahrens & Violette Looms. The rest, as they say, is history.

The A & V Dobby Loom was an instant hit. Indeed, the entire notion of a "production" hand loom was a good idea whose time had come.

<http://www.avlusa.com/index/about/history/>

Then on to more searching closer to home.

In 1906, Léonius Leclerc, named Nilus Leclerc (1875 - 1961) built a factory in l'Islet Québec, which was 120 feet long by 40 feet wide. The first floor was used for the workshop and the office, while the second and the third floors were the family home. The factory produced house and church furniture, doors and windows as well as all-wood weaving looms that measured 6' x 6'. After 1920 they produced mostly handweaving looms while still producing some church furniture.

In 1924, they started to produce a new, more compact handweaving loom made to fit inside a normal house. This new loom received the approval of the Québec government

and they started a teaching program in all regions of the province.

The loom cost was \$45 for a 27", \$50 for a 36" and \$51 for a 45". In 1936, Robert Leclerc started working full time at the factory as a Loom assembler and salesman.

When the second World War began in September 1939, handweaving looms in Canada were considered to be part of farm equipment. Nilus had the same priority of supply and labour as agriculture machinery.

In 1942 the company started producing specially designed exercise looms for returning soldiers. Nilus Leclerc's loom was still considered to be a luxury item in the US and Europe. With the assistance of the Department of National Defense, it became part of the recovery therapy program in hospitals in Great Britain, the United States and Canada.

The company's production increased dramatically. It can be safely said that among other factors, Robert Leclerc is directly responsible for the great revival of the weaving craft both in Canada and outside - not only because the "Nilus Leclerc Inc" satisfied millions of handweavers, but also because of his unquestionable devotion to handweaving and its development in our over-industrialized civilization.

In 1944 the company incorporated under the name of Nilus Leclerc Inc. Nilus retired from the active business while remaining president of the company. He kept busy by making furniture for his newly built house, 500' from the factory.
http://www.leclerclooms.com/histo/N_B_HISTORY_01.htm

So you never know just where the ideas come from and where they end up. All these companies started somewhere and ended up somewhere else as the demands of society changed. Hmmmmm.

Now I MUST get back to weaving to honour all those who made my hobby that much more enjoyable.

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Next Meeting: Monday, Nov. 2nd

The next OVWSG meeting is Monday, Nov. 2nd at 7:30 pm at the Gallery in Heartwood House at 153 Chapel Street, Ottawa.

Program:

Fibres at November's meeting.

Start setting aside your 'once-loved items' for a second chance at the Christmas Chinese Auction in December.

Our next meeting is Monday, December 7th!

General Announcements

Basket Making Mentor – John Toft

In the last Newsletter, I am listed as a contact person for group chats and discussions about basket-making. Let me know if you are interested in meeting to discuss techniques, sales strategies, integration with other weaving and spinning projects, e-commerce etc. I will welcome interested people to my home and studio in Kanata in the New Year for these discussions. By then my basement studio should be operational once more. The infamous Glen Cairn Flood of July 24th drove me out of the basement. Renovations are well under way now and should be completed before the end of November.

Contact me in person, by phone at 613 836 3782 or email me at anne.toft@sympatico.ca.

Rose Haven Farm Store

Linda of Rose Haven Farm Store just wants to remind Guild members that she will be at the guild sale in The Glebe at the end of October. She has 7-8 abu wool crêpe overtwists. Please call or email her if there is something specific you would like brought to Ottawa as that will save on shipping. Or let her know if there is something you are looking for. You never know!

Linda, Rose Haven Farm Store, Picton
613-476-9092 www.rosehavenfarm.net

Resource Centre - Library

Library and In Depth Study Open House night for November (Second Wednesday of month)

This event was a success for October and therefore we will try it again. The intent is to offer research material in a library setting on a NON meeting

night. This will eliminate the cacophony of noise and excitement on meeting nights, so you can relax and peruse the shelves in relative peace and comfort.

November 11, 2009 4 pm to 8 pm.

December - no library night (will skip for the Christmas season)

January 13, 2010 4 pm to 8 pm

Note: If the evenings are successful we will continue to host them

Laurie Harkin-Chiasson

Heartwood House

Heartwood House Christmas Pot Luck Lucheon

Thurs. Dec. 17, 2009. noon to 1:30 with caroling to follow the lunch. Moe brings her guitar to accompany everyone in the caroling. She is very good and a delight to hear. All are welcome.

OC Transpo Unclaimed Items Sale at Heartwood House

Come out and grab some bargains.
Sat. Oct. 31, 2009, noon to 2 pm

Exhibition & Sale Update

By Nancy Ingram

This newsletter comes to you on the eve of the annual Exhibition and Sale. You would be cheating yourself if you did not attend this "fibre art feast". There will be top notch exhibitions, demonstrations and fundraisers, selling cards, raffle tickets and gifts from members and vendors to raise funds for the Resource Centre. The vendors will be selling and demonstrating a wide variety of fibre items which will inspire you in your own work. Also, you may want to consider a little early Christmas shopping.

For those of you who contributed to the organization and promotion of the event, I want to extend my sincere appreciation for your time and your efforts. Thank you, and I will see you at the Exhibition and Sale.

Join the Guild Information Table at the Ex. and Sale

Laurie is setting up the table on Friday. She is looking for guild members to drop by and take a turn assisting in manning the table. You just need to talk to people about the guild, what we are all about, what we can offer etc. Just share your passion! You can bring along a drop spindle or something small to work on, which will attract people to the table and strike up a conversation.

There will be workshop brochures, information sheets on the guild meetings/location etc., Membership forms, Programs and workshops suggestions sheet. Also the photo frame electronic display will be running with photos of the guild, in action, over the years.

Membership

Just a bit of trivia. We have 117 members to date for the 2009-10 membership year.

Workshops and Courses

We have had a great response so far, some workshops have been full, and all have enough students to run as scheduled, if there is a workshop you are interested in sign up soon so as not to be disappointed - see the website for the schedule and registration forms. The schedule for February to June should be ready by mid November.

We are considering holding intensive workshops this summer of up to 1 week in length. These would be offered during the day. If you would like to either take or teach a workshop on a particular topic please let me know. I would like to have this planned by the end of January.

All Courses and workshops are held in our Resource Centre at Heartwood House, 153 Chapel Street (at Rideau), Ottawa, ON. Contact our website www.ovwsg.com or Elizabeth Watt for more information at 613-692-6115 or workshops@ovwsg.com.

Other Upcoming Events

Costume Society of Ontario - Eastern Branch presents Ruth's Grand European Tour

Saturday, November 7, 2 - 4:30 p.m.

Richelieu-Vanier Community Centre

300 Des Pères-Blancs Avenue, Ottawa

Ruth Mills, Ruth Mills Milliner, a noted maker of contemporary and historical hats, teacher and award winning embroidery artist will speak, with slides, of her exploration of the costume sites of Europe with highlights from the International Colloquium's tribute to Janet Arnold.

Refreshments will be served. This talk is open to all interested in costume. Bring a friend or two.

Guild Meeting Minutes – Oct. 5th, 2009

Gallery, Heartwood House

(Written & Recorded by Marilyn Mulligan)

Meeting brought to order by Shirley Browsky at 7:30

Announcements

Warp Painting on Oct 4 went very well

Nancy Ingram- We have a great selection of vendors for our ex and sale, Elizabeth Watt will control the co-op booth, the Guild takes 10-15% we must have a pst Number.

Minutes Correction from June meeting

Let the records show that the minutes of the June Meeting printed in the September newsletter should be corrected from reading "significant increase in booth fees for 2010 to read that a booth increase in 2010 ex and sale should reflect the rising costs ". Vendors would also be able to express their views on the 2009 comment sheet to suggest what they feel would be a fair increase.

Elizabeth Watt- anyone willing to teach a class or workshop advise Elizabeth.

We need a treasurer.

Card Making – Ann Jackson to hold another session Tuesday Oct 20.

Raffle tickets – see Sue Quinn or Mary Morrison.

Show and Tell

Elizabeth Watt has another rigid Heddle loom and has created some articles from recycled materials

Debra Turnbull is selling shepherds crooks finished by her father.

Jan Scott had yarn painted during last warp painting class, yarn of silk and merino, coloured and fibres blended and then spun, sample of donkey hair and some spun into yarn.

-hand spun yarn from hand dyed bats, knitted socks and some yarn spun from combed top -tapestry loom with sample

Mary Bowring – hand spun quiviot and silk blend woven into a scarf,

Amanda Carrigan – hand spun sock yarn, many colours all natural dyes.

Alison – hand spun mohair and leister blend

Shirley Browsky – created another woven jacket

Judy Kavangh has made some drop spindles and are for sale

Adjourned at 8:05

Program

Maggie McGovern : Paper Maker and Book binder
Everyone had great time fishing in the tubs of water and pulp with a screened frame and creating all sorts of objects with the paper they were able to make.

Marketplace

Members can now advertise for free!

The Marketplace portion of the OVWSG Newsletter is used to promote and assist its members. Current members of the OVWSG can advertise at no charge. Some restrictions may apply as to space availability and file restrictions.

Shepperd's Crooks

- solid wood

- hand sanded

- sealed with Tung oil

\$30.00 each

Contact Debra Turnbull - hummingbird5246@gmail.com