

# Weavers Guild of Kalamazoo, Inc., General Meeting Minutes April 14, 2014

**Meeting was called to order** by president, Juanita Manning-Walsh at 7:00 PM. She welcomed our members, guests and Mary Underwood, our guest speaker.

## **Announcements:**

**Letty Klien announced** the guild is in need of a secretary for next year. Please contact Letty if you can help out with the vacancy.

**Karen VanderWeele** showed a skein of yarn she found when doing inventory. It was a pretty shade of light brown. She asked if anyone recognized the skein, as it is not hers. No one claimed it so she will hold on to it until the May meeting.

**Kristi Chapman, guild librarian,** reminded members to bring any outstanding books or periodicals to the May meeting, especially if they are overdue. Guild members may check out books at the May meeting and have them to use over the summer.

**She introduced two new books** purchased for the library: *Made by Hand*, a book containing directions for many hand crafted items, and Inge Dam's new *Tablet Weaving Book*.

**WFA postcards:** Kristi ordered 2,000 postcards, but she received much more than that, to discover she had ordered 20,000. She was able to cancel the order, and Kristi reported they are not going to charge us for 20,000, but rather the 2,000.

Kristi suggested if we need things printed we work with Vista Print since they treat their customers very well.

**A request** went out for a copy of the current Wafa Bylaws. Marta will make sure they get up on the Website. Jill added there will be a link to the Wafa Bylaws.

**Service Bureau:** Ellen Colston needs a replacement as she will soon be having three surgeries. Ellen has done this job for many years and the guild thanks her for a job very well done!

**MLH Report:** Cathy McCarthy reported on the MLH Board meeting held at Alma Public Library on Saturday, April 12.

**MLH Workshops will be held at Hope College, August 8, 9, and 10.**

**Instructors include:**

- **Holly Brackmann** - Dyeing Without a Dyepot: Disperse Dyes
- **Inge Dam** - Tablet Borders woven Simultaneously with Loom Weaving (**Class filled**)
- **Dawn Edwards** - Explorations in Nuno Felt and Eco-printing
- **Connie Lippert** - Wedge Weave Fundamentals
- **Wynne Matilla** - Finnish Runner/Cotton Rug Technique Workshop
- **Nancy McRay** - Foundations of Tapestry
- **Rosalie Neilson** - It's in the Warp - Color and Design in Rep Weave (**Class filled**)
- **Jenny Schu** - Beaded Leaves and Variations

**To register:** Early Registration 'til May 31 is \$275. After May 31, registration jumps to \$290. **Contact**

<http://www.mlhguild.org> to select your 2014 workshop choice.

All registration is being done online this year.

**Deadline for the MLH Biennial Fiber Show** is postmarked by April 25 for mailed entries, or drop off your entries at the home of Jennifer Gould or Priscilla Lynch. Anne Keister is the juror for this exhibit. The awards ceremony, keynote address, and reception will be held on June 29 at the Holland Area Arts Council. Artists may take their fiber creations home at the end of the reception. So far they have two entries, and one of them is from our guild!

**MLH is considering having their newsletter go out electronically.** Some discussion occurred, with concern for those who do not use computers. It was suggested we follow one of the local guilds who have members buddy up - one with computer and one without computer knowledge. The computer literate person prints off a copy of the newsletter for the person who does not do internet. For the next year it was decided to do both a printed version and an electronic one.

**MLH received a \$3375.00 estate donation.** Some discussion occurred as to how to spend this money. Two suggestions were to add it to the scholarship monies, which can only be generated from interest on a set amount of cash, and with interest rates so low, this fund is not growing as quickly as it used to grow. The second suggestion was to see what the status is of the collections of Alice Griswold and Margaret Windeknecht at MSU. This discussion was tabled to be discussed again at the next board meeting.

**MLH is looking for a site for the 2016 Biennial Fiber Show.** They would like to see it move somewhere North to a city like Traverse City, Boyne Mountain, or Petosky.

**The next MLH board meeting** will be held up at Hope College, August 8, at 8 AM in the small room right off the cafeteria. The annual meeting will be held that evening.

**Next Letty Klein introduced** the class/workshop/speakers for 2014-2015. She began by thanking her committee members: Nancy Crampton, Lestra Hazel, and Cory Zann.

- September, Workshop and Demo, and Guild speaker: Inge Dam. *Tablet Weaving for Beginners*
- October, Jeannine Glaves, one day workshop, *Have Fun While Expanding Your Spinner Creativity*

- March 7, Rosalie Nielson, REP Weave
- February 9, Amy Tyler, Show me a Miracle
- November, Rich Fitz, One Man's Journey in Weaving
- April, Su Butler, Understanding Rayon Chenille

**Business meeting closed at 7:20 PM.**

Next, Mary Underwood gave a Power Point presentation about her adventures learning to make camel saddles in Mongolia. Mary, who is a retired respiratory therapist, first began her trips to Mongolia for a 50th birthday present to herself. It takes 17 hours to get from Ann Arbor to Ulaambaatar. She went to learn about camel riding. While there she met Bodio, her camel riding teacher, and he has come to the states for a few months to learn English. Since then, there have been many trips back and forth for them and members of Bodio's family.

Mary talked about many of the customs she experienced, including throwing a ladle of goats milk out the window each morning to the god's for a safe day. She showed us a gas pump covered in thick insulation for the winter to keep it from freezing. Very ingenious, indeed. They do have access to gasoline.

She showed a few pictures of camels, females, males, sheering seasons, babies nursing, the nose piercings for the rein to attach to, explained the rein usage, and talked about the camel races. Camel races are a big event, and she shared pictures of the finery people were wearing in honor of the camel races. The silk garments, fashioned somewhat like a Chinese cheongsam, were beautiful.

She talked about camels giving birth at about five years of age, and they continue to have babies for about 25 years. Males begin breeding at 5 years of age, but they are castrated 3 or 4 years later to avoid inbreeding. When camels are taken to the slaughter house, it is like they know where they are going as they cry a very pitiful cry. Mary said camel meat is very tasty, especially when served with a very spicy garlic dipping sauce.

Sheering is done in three stages:

March - the male hairs (very long hair) is sheered and used for rope and twine

May and June - the female hair is harvested it is used for cloth  
- baby camel hair, used for fine clothing - which needs to be de-haired. It takes 40 people working in the de-hairing plant to do this job.

Camel hair makes excellent rope. They make both plys at the same time and immediately twist them together. If they want a thicker rope, they then sew two or more ropes together.

Camel hair is also used to make felt for their floor coverings, as well as warm clothing.

Camels carry loads anywhere from 300 to 600 pounds. The people are sort of nomadic, so they dismantle their houses (Called Ger, or Yurt) and the camels carry the pieces to the new location. They return to the same area once the winter, or summer, season is returning.

Camels are a sign of wealth, so the more camels one has, the more their status. The animals race up to 40 miles per hour and Camel races pull in big crowds.

Mary showed a picture of the top three camel race winners. First place prize was a motorcycle, second and third place winners received very lovely saddle blankets. More and more

the people are using motorcycles. They especially like to use them when herding their sheep. There are no roads for these people, and people do drive some trucks, as well as motorcycles. Truck drivers have to know truck mechanics, as the poor driving conditions often cause the trucks to break down - remember there are no roads, so another driver will not find a stranded trucker! Mary then showed a picture of a motor cycle, complete with its own woven saddle blanket. It looked very comfortable.

Children are schooled in two ways. Either they are home schooled, or they come to a school and stay in a dorm for 6 months before returning home.

Mary then talked about Dawa, who lived in the village of Bayanlig. She used to be a teacher in the boarding school, and is the person who worked with Mary in learning about saddle blankets. She showed several shots of her creating a small "tapestry" picture, in saddle blanket construction techniques for Mary. She generously let Mary take many pictures while she was explaining the techniques. Dawa demonstrated setting up the loom, which kind of reminded me of the Navajo looms. Then she explained the process of setting up the warp. Both loom set up and warping requires two people, so her daughter was helping her. When not in use the loom is taken apart and stored under the bed in the Ger.

The Mongolians import most of their fabrics and food from China. Their clothing is usually hand made, though.

Mary suggested we check out her blog called, "A Friend's Tour."

It was written after a huge drought in 2000, 2001. Many camels were lost as a result of no water. Thus was formed a NGO. An organization for women to become self sufficient, teaching them how to produce things for sale.

Mary ended with a quote from Bodio, "Always listen to the elders: Life is precious and very dear."

### **Mary entertained questions.**

The camels do have natural predators, the snow leopard and wolves. The people have an interesting feeling about wolves - they both fear them and hold them in high esteem.

They are still nomadic, even today.

About their clothing: Both men and women wear a long robe called a Del, or Deel. It kind of resembles a Chinese cheongsam. It opens on the right side, having a kind of interior pocket, so everything gets tucked inside this garment. Most are made from fancy silks of China, Mary said they have no distinction, though between real silk and polyesters, which are also called silk. The finer weight fabrics are used in the summer, and thicker weight fabrics are used in the winter, often having quilted layers for warmth.

Electricity only appeared two or three years ago and they also use solar panels. They do own TV's, microwaves, and computers, and it is not unusual to see a dish for TV reception. They figured out a while ago how to jerry rig a system using gasoline to create electric current prior being able to bring in electric current that they now have.

Juanita stopped further questions as we only had fifteen minutes to vacate the Portage Senior Center. A great evening!

Respectfully submitted,

*Cathy McCarthy*

Cathy McCarthy  
Secretary, Weavers Guild of Kalamazoo, Inc.