



Newsletter – April /May 2009 Issue

Spring is here! Hope everyone is waking up from their winter hibernation and are ready to get excited about weaving. For natural basket folks, now is the time to strip bark. This is the first year I tried it on my own and I was both humbled and amazed. It takes a lot of work removing the outer bark in order for you to have nice clean bark when you pull it off the tree, but when you pull that first strip from the log, “it is like giving birth” to quote Pat White. I agree! It is so cool to have the bark just slip right off the log, leaving a clean wet log behind and a big strip of bark in your hand. Anyone who is interested in learning to peel bark, there is a local expert, Martha Younkin who gives workshops. Visit www.naturalfiberbaskets.com to see Martha’s baskets and contact her.

Carol

Weaver Spotlight – Sandy Hertel

Our weaver’s spotlight for this month is Sandy Hertel. Sandy is from the St. Charles county area of Missouri.

Sandy’s interest in basket weaving started at work around February 2007. A co-worker asked if they would like to make a simple basket during lunch hours. After that first one, they started looking around to find where classes were being held in the St. Louis/St. Charles area. Sandy’s first class was in Warrenton, Missouri. She then started going to St. Louis Basketry and has attended several classes there.

Sandy considers basket weaving a hobby and does it for enjoyment. She makes baskets for Christmas gifts and also for herself. Sandy says “I have had a couple of friends over to work on baskets at my house in the past. It helps to work with others. It is an opportunity to learn different techniques and helpful hints, but I still have a lot to learn.”

What Sandy enjoys most about basket weaving is that it is relaxing. “Even though I get frustrated when I run into something new, it gets my mind off of work and everyday problems. I can get lost in my basement for hours. It’s amazing how fast the time goes when working on baskets.” shares Sandy.

When asked if there is any area of basketry that especially interests her, Sandy commented that she has never made a Nantucket basket, but hopefully will in the future, and she has only made one antler basket, but she thinks they are very interesting. “It takes a lot of patience to weave an antler basket, but the end result is worth it. I look forward to making



more.” says Sandy. Sandy shared that she would also like to make more oak baskets. “Working with Betty Curry was fantastic!” exclaims Sandy. Over the past year Sandy has woven 14 baskets. Aside from the antler and oak baskets, she has made several reed baskets, some with solid wood bases and others with woven bottoms.

As far as my favorite basketry tool goes, Sandy believes she uses her small bent tip packer the most. “It can be used for many things. My husband made a lashing tool for me that has also come in handy several times. It is not as fancy as the ones you can buy on some of the sites, but it works just as well.” notes Sandy.

For a technique or helpful hint that she discovered, Sandy shares that she has found that she prefers to wait until her baskets are completely dry before adding the rims. “I can pack each row and make sure the basket is shaped correctly. If I add the rim immediately there is nothing else I can do with the basket. It takes more time, but it is worth it”, observes Sandy.

When asked about her favorite source for basketry supplies Sandy shared that she has bought most of her reed from St. Louis Basketry, and she always checks there for tools before ordering online. “I have bought tools from other web sites, but not enough to really have a favorite.” says Sandy.

Sandy also likes taking classes from a variety of instructors. “It’s a great way to learn several different techniques and hints. It’s great the way everyone I have been in contact with about baskets is always ready to share and help.” says Sandy.

If you would like (or wouldn’t mine) to be in the Weaver’s Spotlight, let me know.

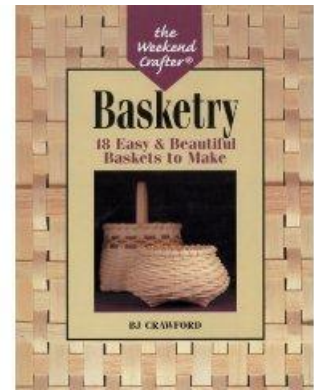
Weaving Hint – Basket Weaving Books, What a Deal!

Basket Weaving books are an inexpensive way to experience basketry. I know a number of basket weavers who have taken many basket weaving classes over the years and have a drawer full of patterns, but not a basket weaving book to their name. I know people weave for different reasons, but I wanted to let people know that I have found basket weaving books have a lot to offer for a little investment.

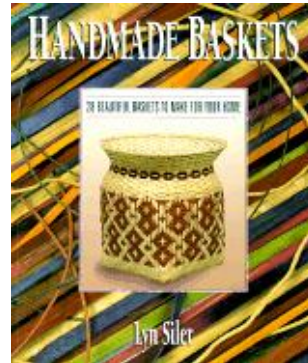
My first basket weaving experience was through a class offered at the local public school. It was pretty much “cross that over that”, “put that behind there”, “cut that off”, and “let me do that for your”, then off I went back home after 3 hours, basket in hand, thinking, “I will never be able to do that again”. I didn’t know where to even start to weave baskets on my own. But, the first thing I did was to checkout every basket weaving book the local library had to offer. I was lucky that our library had a good selection of Lyn Siler books and some other great books. With the help of those books, I was able to put on a rim, lash a handle, do twining, and cut and tuck on my own. They not only helped me with the basics, they also helped, and still do help, me with advance techniques; French randing, 3-rod wales, step ups, rib basket lashings, Cherokee wheels, twills, etc. I usually open a basket weaving book before I go to sleep each evening and am still picking up helpful hints.

I purchased my first few books new, but then discovered the used book market. You can get many of the popular basket weaving books used for about \$10-\$15 (including shipping). You probably spend that much in gas driving to and from a basket weaving class. Used books are often in very good condition. Amazon.com is a great place to start.

My favorite book is published by the Weekend Crafter and is authored by BJ Crawford. It covers a variety of techniques and provides good details. If you only had one book, I would recommend this one.



Another favorite is Lyn Siler's early book, "Handmade Baskets", with lots of good illustrations and some very interesting basket patterns. She takes you step by step through making each of the baskets.



Hope this has inspired you to explore the world of basketry books!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Location
May 31 st *	May Free Weaving Evening 5-9pm (Sunday)	St. Charles, Missouri
May 9th	Hickory Hollow class at St. Louis Basketry	St. Louis, Missouri
May 30th	Harvest Bowl class at St. Louis Basketry	St. Louis, Missouri
June 13th	Hickory Hollow class at St. Louis Basketry	St. Louis, Missouri
tbd	June Free Weaving 6-9pm.	St. Charles, Missouri

* Tentative dates.

Contact Information

Cell Phone: 573-721-6710

Email: carol@prairiespiritbaskets.com

Web Page: www.prairiespiritbaskets.com