



Monthly Newsletter - February 2009 Issue

Can you believe it is already February! Seems like just yesterday that I was putting Christmas decorations away (Oh, but wait. It was just yesterday. ;-). I'm thinking "Spring" and I hope you are too. I have some "English Garden" space-dyed reed with beautiful spring time colors that has been calling to me. So, this past week I got a spurt of energy and started weaving a springtime tote basket. I'm calling this one "Lilacs by the Lake". I remember every spring my grandmother picking bouquets of lilacs from her old-fashion lilac bushes, so for me, spring means lilacs. So, when I saw this beautiful reed, I thought "Grandma's Lilacs!"

Hopefully you will be taking advantage of some of the warm days like this past Saturday to dye some reed to make some colorful spring time baskets. Easter is just around the corner. Enjoy!

Carol



Free Weave Has Great Turnout

We had a full studio on the January Free Weave evening! Some weavers were starting new baskets and other finishing up old baskets. It was so interesting to have weavers working different projects. My husband commented on how industrious all of the weavers were. He seemed to think basket weaving was more of a social event. Now maybe he'll believe me when I come back from a class and talk about how beat I am. Basket weaving is hard work!

Looking forward to our next free weave evening. It is schedule for Monday, February 23rd. Watch for you invitation.

Weaver Spotlight – Pat White

Each basket weaver I meet has an interesting story and valuable knowledge to share; how they started weaving, why they weave, their favorite tool, and much more, so each month I hope to spotlight a basket weaver. Our first weaver in the spotlight is "Pat White". Here is Pat's story:

I learned basket weaving in Girl Scouts when I was about twelve years old. We lived in Morocco, in North Africa. There was no television – in fact, there were few activities at all for kids. My ten-year-old sister, Linda, and I spent a lot of time making baskets and just loved it. We would embellish them with long thin eucalyptus leaves.

Tragically, three years later, Linda died of a rare form of cancer that strikes children and young teens. Our whole family was devastated. In mid-life, I rediscovered basketry and, to my surprise, I found that while weaving, it almost seemed as though Linda was right beside me. Part of her spirit is connected to the basket making. Weaving seems to get me in touch with the happy little girl I was before she died. I think my sister would be glad to know that I have continued with this activity that gave us so much joy.



Basket weaving is a hobby for me. I am an advanced beginner, I guess. Sometimes I do try more advanced patterns. What I enjoy most about basket weaving is the sense of connectedness—not only to my sister, but to generations of women across cultures, time, and socio-economic status. I loved the second book in the “Clan of the Cave Bear” series where the main character is stuck in her cave all winter and spends her time weaving.

My favorite basket tool and the one I use most is the bent tip packing tool. However, I love the scarfing tool my husband gave me (he calls it a spoke shaver). It sure makes scarfing rims a lot easier! For helpful hints without a doubt, the use of cable ties to hold the rim on while you lash. Also, when working with a lot of reed, I put it into a black plastic garbage bag after soaking and it stays moist longer—be sure to take it out if you aren’t going to use it soon—otherwise, it will mildew in the bag.

For basketry supplies I try to check with Wendy (at St Louis Basket Supply) first to see if she has what I need. I think it’s important to support your local supplier. I like to buy kits at convention, and online I find Gratiot Lake Basketry sells real quality material.

Pat also shares; I’ve learned that some patterns are easier on the hands than others. I wish someone would write a book with tips and patterns for those with arthritis.

Thank you Pat for sharing yourself with us!

Weaving Hint – Working with Dyed Reed

I love color in my baskets, but am often hesitant to use dyed reed since the dye often bleeds onto my natural reed. I learned a great technique from Laura Lee Zanger that has helped me keep dye where it belongs, on the dyed reed.

What: When weaving with dyed reed, make sure that your dyed reed is drier than the natural reed that it will come in contact with.

Why: When the dyed reed has more moisture in it than the natural reed, the water will have a tendency to move from the dyed reed to the natural reed. The water will carry the dye with it, resulting in “bleeding” of the dye from the dyed reed to the natural reed. So, if the natural reed has more moisture in it than the dyed reed, the water will have a tendency to move from the natural reed to the dyed reed keeping the dye where it belongs, in the dyed reed.

Also, for embellishments, make sure your basket is dry and your embellishment has soaked and left to dry a few minutes so it is dry on the outside, while still maintaining its flexibility. Another thing that helps, is that when you dye your reed, rinse it a number of times to rinse away the excess dye that haven't become fixed to the reed.

Upcoming Class

Antler Basket Class

Antler Wall Pouch class is planned for Saturday, February 21st at St. Louis Basketry.

New Basket Design

I have kits available for my newest basket “**Harvest Bowl**”. This 5” tall 10 “diameter bowl-shaped basket is designed with neutral colors and will complement any décor. It has a solid wood base and medium size which makes it very versatile. Basket’s main features are the interesting rim and coordinating embellishment. This is a great complement to the Prairie Spirit “Bountiful Harvest” basket.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Location
February 21st	Antler Wall Pouch at St. Louis Basketry	St. Louis, Missouri
February 23 rd	February Free Weaving 6-9pm. (Monday)	St. Charles, Missouri
March 18 th *	March Free Weaving 6-9pm. (Wednesday)	St. Charles, Missouri

* Tentative dates.

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