



Monthly Newsletter - January 2009 Issue

Happy New Year! Hope everyone survived the holidays and your gifts of handmade baskets were well received. I did find some time to recharge after Christmas, though I didn't get nearly the projects done that I had hoped to. I hope you were more productive!

Carol

Student Showcase

Pat White shared this photo of the antler basket she made in the April 2008 class. Very nice!



Weaving Hint – The What and Why of Reed Selection for Stakes

One thing that you can do to improve your chances of success in shaping is to pay attention to the stiffness of the materials that you are using for your stakes or spokes

What: When weaving a basket that has a combination of corners and straight sides, place your stiffer spokes on the corners, and your less stiff spokes on the straight sides.

Why: A weaver which curves around a stake, like on the corner of a basket, will exert more force on the stake than a weaver that is woven straight across a set of stakes, like on the straight sides of a basket. Just ask any physics majors in the family. Because of the additional force, the stakes on the corners will have more of a tendency to move inward, but if they are stiffer, they will be more resistant to that additional force. So, by using stiffer material for your stakes or spoke on the curved part of your basket and less stiff material for the stakes along the sides you will have a better chance of success at having corners that don't lean in and sides that don't lean out, and avoid the infamous "peanut-shaped" basket.

Basket Sales – Any Impact from the Slow Economy?

When I meet weavers who sell their baskets whether it be at farmer's markets, craft shows, or art fairs, I'm interested in what is selling. Last summer I heard sales were slow and smaller, less expensive baskets were selling. However, recently, it seems that the demand for larger baskets has increased. Marlene Meyer a basket weaver and instructor from Wisconsin commented that she had a demand for "useful art", baskets that looked nice sitting in your home, but could also be grabbed to tote things around. Some have commented that they are seeing people going back to handmade gifts as a result of a desire to be more self-sufficient in this unpredictable economy. That could be one explanation for brisker basket sales of late. Another weaving friend who had a booth at a craft show before

Christmas in Paris (Missouri, not France) commented that the first two baskets she sold were antler baskets. Was that a fluke? She also found that her larger baskets sold better. Another basket maker who sold baskets at Silver Dollar City commented that the Silver Dollar City crowd was buying the more expensive baskets and another basket maker with more expensive baskets was very successful at Shaw Nature Reserve Art Sale. The bottom line is to try to judge the buyers at your events; some events will attract buyers looking for higher-end baskets, while others are looking for less-expensive items. So, if possible, have a variety of baskets in size and price range to maximize your sales.

Report from Kristkindl Markt in Hermann Dec 13/14

I had the opportunity to demonstrate Antler Baskets in Hermann this past December at the Kristkindl Markt. The most fun was surprise meeting with friends. If you ever have an opportunity to attend, I highly recommend it. There were some very unique craftsmen and artist represented. I also realized a benefit I didn't expect. My husband Dave went with me so while I was demonstrating he was doing my Christmas shopping. The result was some very unique and neat Christmas gifts. My favorite was a set of copper wine glass holders that you stake in the ground for picnics. (I already tried those out a few times. ;-)

Upcoming Class

Osage Jewel class is planned for Saturday, January 17th at St. Louis Basketry.

I also have Antler Pouch basket that I will be adding to my teaching schedule in February. The antler pouch and pocket (not as fat as the pouch) designs are a little tricky but have a very interesting look and since they are hanging baskets, they work great for keys for the smaller baskets and even mail for the larger baskets. This antler pouch is a medium-sized basket that would work for either. Its embellishment features porcupine quills I collected.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Location
January 2009	The Margaret Harwell Art Museum www.mham.org will be hosting an exhibit of baskets. A few of my antler baskets will be included.	Poplar Bluff, Missouri
January 17 th	Osage Jewel Class at St. Louis Basketry	St. Louis, Missouri
January 22 nd	January Free Weaving 6-9 pm. (Thursday)	St. Charles, Missouri
February 18 th *	February Free Weaving 6-9pm. (Wednesday)	St. Charles, Missouri

* Tentative dates.

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