



## Fairbanks Weavers & Spinners Guild

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### Volume 41 Issue 3 November 2020

#### President's Letter

Hello Everyone!

Sorry it has taken awhile to get the newsletter out. As we move forward it becomes more and more apparent how much Penny did for the guild. We miss Penny a great deal and we are slowly putting the pieces back together - one step at a time.

The board has worked on some cost saving measures as we currently have no income. The studio phone has been changed to a message phone only. We are checking those messages frequently and will get back with you as soon as possible.

The board is looking to the future of the guild and mulling over ideas. We sure miss Penny and her boundless energy and creativity, but we have members who are committed to a successful future. We know the Spinners' and Weavers' Guild will have a bright future! Stay tuned!

One very positive note is that Susan Willsrud of Calypso Farm and Ecology Center has offered to consult with us and help with a vision plan for the guild. We know that this plan involves all members. As soon as a questionnaire/survey is done, we will send that out and get input. Please be thinking about ideas you have such as workshop, classes, collaborations, etc.

Currently the board is going through the studio and cleaning. Books are being categorized and sorted. We will inventory items after we have organized a bit. It will be very helpful if you have an item in the studio to make arrangements to come and pick it up. This will help us as we inventory what belongs to the guild.

As we sort through years of items in the studio, it has become apparent how many classes and workshops took place in the studio under Penny. Penny was an artist and an educator. She loved what she did! She told me once that someone said to her "Penny, why don't you get a life?" She replied back "this is my life!". Aren't we thankful for Penny! Stay safe! Looking forward to seeing as we move forward.

Buffy

#### Officers & Board Slate for 2020 – 2021

President:	Buffy York Dewitt 347-5370
Vice President:	Maureen English 488-4784
Secretary:	Pat Costello 457-7033
Treasurer:	Terry Roberts 455-8450
Historian:	Bonni Brooks

#### Board of Directors:

Barbara Ebbesson 479-0440  
Kate Hedstrom 590-1420  
Sherrill Peterson 218-626-5435  
Chris Waigl 699-9943

Librarian:	Barbara Ebbesson 479-0440
Hospitality:	OPEN
Newsletter:	OPEN
Fair Supervisor:	Moxie Pender 479-8443
Workshops:	OPEN
Dye Garden:	Gail Mayo 479-2954
Spinning Group:	Alice Stickney 479-3425
Busy Bees:	Jodi Gouwens 474-9144

#### GUILD MEETING: Date TBD

With the Covid-19 health concerns, we are unable to hold in person guild meetings. In addition, with Penny's passing, we've been busy organizing things at the studio in preparation for moving the guild equipment to another location that is more affordable. One thought for future guild meetings is to host them via a ZOOM meeting where everyone can join in from home. Feel free to email the board members at [fairbanksweavers@gmail.com](mailto:fairbanksweavers@gmail.com) if you have any suggestions for meeting topics or if you'd like to do a presentation at a virtual guild meeting.

#### Fairbanks Fiber Festival

The 2021 Fairbanks Fiber Festival is taking place **the whole month of November**. Please see the <https://www.fairbanksfiberfestival.com/> website and the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/FairbanksFiberFest/> for details, online vending, workshops, schedule and all information.

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Patsy Zawistoski – Downy Fibers: Dealing with Downright Daunting, Expensive, Undercoat Fibers

Saturday, November 14, 2020, 10am-12:30pm and

Sunday, November 15, 2020, 10am-12:30pm

From Patsy's website:

*"Take control of your daunting precious fibers. Buffalo, cashmere and cashgora from goats, angora bunny, yak and camel down are downright daring after you paid the price. They can be spun with relative ease after learning how to properly tune-up your wheel, improve your preparation techniques and execute correct drafting styles. Learn which expensive fibers you like best. Add tussah silk for the final luxurious note."*

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### The Guild Bookshelf by Bonni Brooks

*"Fill your house with stacks of books, in all the crannies and all the nooks."*

~Dr. Seuss

Hello fellow spinners and weavers! In our efforts to clean and organize the studio, I've taken on the task of going through our guild library. The most challenging part of the task is finding enough discipline not to flip through every single volume – our library is literally full of treasures! As I found myself for the umpteenth time browsing through a volume on natural dyeing or a gorgeously illustrated book on tapestry or twill, I realized that this is a perfect opportunity to share with my fellow guild members.

Let me start by saying that you can borrow books and magazines from the library now, even while access to the studio is limited due to the pandemic. Want a pile of old *Handwoven* or *Shuttle, Spindle and Dyepot* for inspiration? We can do that! A book of drafts or a particular technique? Absolutely! Do you have a particular title in mind, a favorite you want to revisit? Easy-peasy! To borrow books, just reach out to me at [bonontherun@gmail.com](mailto:bonontherun@gmail.com) and we will arrange for a safe social distanced pick up of the materials you request.

For this volume of the newsletter, I'd like to feature a favorite of mine, Women's Work: Textile Art from the Bauhaus by Sigrid Wortmann Weltge. Many of us are familiar with the influence of The Bauhaus on modern design and as weavers and textile enthusiasts, we may be familiar with Anni Albers and her deep and lasting influence blurring the lines between traditional craft and art. We do, by the way, have copies of both On Weaving and On Designing by Anni Albers available for loan.

Women's Work is a wonderful jumping off place for understanding the influence of the Bauhaus weaving

workshop. The book starts with a brief and helpful background of The Bauhaus. It deals with the gender issue in weaving, covers the unexpected rising popularity and influence of the textile studio, talks about the profound influence of Bauhaus on the growing commercial textile industry and looks at individual artists and the legacy of Bauhaus in the United States. This wonderful book reads more easily than you might expect. Each chapter covers a different topic, allowing for bedtime reading or jumping around the lovely illustrations while reading snippets here and there.

In January, I had the opportunity to visit a special exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago on *Weaving beyond the Bauhaus*. It was, of course, amazing – work by Anni Albers and Marli Ehrman as well as the next generation including Lenore Tawney and Claire Zeisler. Visiting that exhibition solidified my love of fiber arts and catapulted my understanding of what is possible into another dimension. It was a pivotal experience. While nothing is quite like seeing weaving in person, browsing through Women's Work is almost that powerful – a journey not just into weaving but into history, art, education and commerce during a pivotal time. If you have a copy on your shelf at home, I hope this inspires you to thumb through it. If you don't have your own copy, this is your chance to check out the Guild copy.

Happy reading and happy weaving!

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### Susan Willsrud Spinning Class

Susan will be teaching a virtual spinning class! The focus is color in spinning - working with complementary colors, complement gradients and different techniques for creating color effects. It will involve creating knitted swatches using several spinning techniques and then choosing one of the techniques for creating a beautiful cowl highlighting the use of complementary colors. Register for the class here:

<https://folk.school/events/event/spinning-in-color-fiber-fest-online/>

Instructional video and materials pick-up (at the Folk School) will be available November 1<sup>st</sup>. (Out of town - materials can be sent to you ahead of time).

1st Zoom Meeting - November 8th 4-5pm: Meet one another, share samples, questions and talk about the cowl project

2nd Zoom Meeting - share projects with one another

Cost of the class:

Materials: \$50 - hand dyed wool roving in four different colors - enough for three large sample swatches as well as a finished cowl

Cost for Class: \$30 - included video, zoom sessions and any email or phone consultations needed.

Let me know if you have any questions or if you need to rent a wheel!

I hope you'll want to join!

~ Susan



### Swatch of the month: October Mystery Swatch

Here is this month's Mystery Swatch. It was found in one of the rooms at the Weaving Studio and was probably collected by Penny. Can you identify the structure and pattern name? Let's jog our brains and have some fun.

Send your comments to [slpeterson2@alaska.edu](mailto:slpeterson2@alaska.edu) and we'll print them in the next newsletter.

annual gift show and sale which ran until 1998. She taught weaving at UAF for students and community hobby weavers from 2000 until the present.

In 1990, Penny was involved in creating a summer fiber art program for youth which is still in existence. This program through the Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild influenced the lives of over 6,000 young people through the teaching of arts and crafts. She has also exhibited her fiber artwork at art venues throughout Alaska and in other parts of the country for the past 30 years.

Penny began teaching duplicate bridge in 1996 for the Farthest North Bridge Club and was an active bridge player at the Fairbanks Senior Center.

Penny was preceded in death by her parents, Berlyn and Agnes Wakefield, and sister-in-law, Sylvia Wakefield. She is survived by her husband, Kenneth T. Alt; brothers, Rod Wakefield (partner Joan), Pierre Wakefield (Kathryn) and Randy Wakefield (Janet); nephew, Daniel Wakefield (Nancy) and children, Charlie, Liam and Hallie; and niece, Angela Cerny (Craig) and children, Sylvia and Elana.

Weaving was Penny's love. She has requested that people support the arts (Fairbanks Arts Association) and enjoy outdoor Alaska



### Penny Wakefield

February 7, 1940

— August 16, 2020

Dannetta "Penny" Wakefield died peacefully at home on Aug. 16 from ovarian cancer. She was born Feb. 7, 1940, in Lemmon, South Dakota, to Berlyn and

Agnes (Frisvold) Wakefield. She graduated in 1958 from Faulkton High School in Faulkton, South Dakota and in 1962 from South Dakota State College. She attained a degree in physical therapy at the University of Iowa in 1964. For two years, Penny worked at Younkers Rehabilitation Center in Des Moines, Iowa.

In 1966, Penny went to Yellowstone National Park to work with students from Rexburg, Idaho in melodrama theatre. She returned to Iowa to set up a physical therapy department at the local medical center in Harlan. She then worked for the Americana Rehabilitation Center setting up centers in midwestern states. She headed west to Sun Valley, Idaho to work in the skiing industry and later traveled to Santa Cruz, California, to work in a physical therapy private practice.

In 1973, she came to Alaska and met the love of her life, Kenneth Alt. She set up the physical therapy department at Fairbanks Medical and Dental Arts and also worked as a relief therapist in Fairbanks. She retired in 1987.

At the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) in 1975, Penny took weaving classes and joined the Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild as well as the Fairbanks Arts Association. She and other artisans formed the Fiber Cooperative at Alaskaland that operated from 1978 until the early 1990s. She then helped form the Interior Artisans

### In Memory of Penny

As I write this through tears, I'm thinking about the many times I talked to Penny about so badly wanting to learn weaving from her... while that did not happen, I am so grateful that she has been in my life the last 8 years. -Jess

Shana and I were one of the last people that Penny taught to weave. Even with the pandemic going on she never thought of herself and was always concerned about us and so excited to teach. I feel so lucky to have had this opportunity. She will be missed. -Dwayne and Shana

Thank you for passing on the message that the world has lost a passionate weaver, mentor, and friend. My daughter took classes as a child during the summer and I completed my last two general education courses at UAF by taking weaving classes. What a treasure she was. -Felicia

With a joyous smile set off by a lovely hat. She will be missed by all the Arts Community. -Marcella

Always weaving creativity and enthusiasm into the tapestry of so many lives! -Katherine

I personally will always remember Penny as someone full of energy, with a zest for life and an amazing sense of humor. Shortly after I arrived here 10 years ago from England, she tried teaching my husband and I Bridge but unfortunately we were not good students. But immediately I knew what an intelligent, energetic, funny and vibrant person she was. Even up until a couple of years ago she could race up and down ladders to set lighting in our Bear Gallery, which I certainly wasn't able to do at my younger age. She was indeed an amazing person and will be missed by so many.

-Angela

I have some wonderful memories of Penny in Fairbanks when she and Ken hosted my weaving group of handweavers in the 1980s from NZ and Australia. Also, at Convergence San Jose 1990 and Vancouver 2002. Now almost 90 years of age (the last chapter of my life) I have written a book "From Tragedy to Success" I have Penny featuring in this book with great pride. God Bless.

-Barbara in New Zealand

Penny helps an organization to function on a level that demonstrates humanity in its most generous form ... giving to the entire community, expecting only the joy on the faces of others when they experience the special sharing of artistic endeavors that bring us all closer together as a community.

Her list of achievements is impressive, as is her desire to share with her community. Truly thousands of people have received the benefit of her work and her sharing through artistic expression. This generous sharing of her knowledge has brought immeasurable exponential benefits that will add to the ultimate success of our entire community for generations to come.

She was such a light in so many lives, especially for the children that she "turned on" to fiber arts. Her essence will be with us always.

-June

I knew Penny for close to forty years, and after a few years, we discovered we were born on the same day a year apart. Since our daughter and family live in Fairbanks, I visit there often, and remember attending Penny's 70th birthday with the guild, and we were at many Convergences. About ten years ago I was in Fairbanks for a month taking care of my grandsons, and while they were in school I had extra time, so I threaded one of Penny's looms for her, and she called me her "warping fairy" after that. Belonging to the Anchorage Weavers & Spinners Guild, we had many interactions with Penny and the Fairbanks Weavers & Spinners Guild, including the statewide fiber conference held in Fairbanks in 1987 and in Anchorage in 1989. Penny was always such a bundle of energy. I will miss my weaving buddy and birthday sister very much.

-Annita

I first met Penny in 1975 or 76. Having learned to weave as a child I was inspired by Ava Hessler to start weaving again in 1958. In 1975 or 76 I found that classes in weaving at the University might be dropped for lack of class numbers. I signed up for classes to make up the numbers. Penny was a beginner in that class. I introduced her to the original Fairbanks Guild. At that time the guild meetings were afternoon tea and chat with a minimum of weaving discussion. There were a number of younger weavers who would have liked more up to date inspiring meetings. There came the day when the roads were icy and enough younger weavers braved the weather to form a voting quorum. We moved the meetings to the evenings. I don't remember if Penny was at that meeting. From then on weaving was the topic, not tea. Penny and I planned the shop in summer at Alaskaland. It took a lot of work and we had the help of a lawyer that Penny knew. I arranged the first workshop with a weaver from outside, Nell Znamierowski. I was called away for a changed meeting date so missed the workshop. I am not sure who promised to take over on the days of the workshop but it was probably Penny. There were many projects outside the guild that Penny and I worked on. I missed the move to Second Avenue and the setup of the teaching. For the years that we were in England I was in the Hampshire Guild. Now I am involved in a multicraft group in Wingham, New South Wales. Still starting new weavers. I am very pleased that there are now two who are competent to take on the beginners, as I shall be 94 the day after the election. I wish that there were a bit more spark and a little less interest in pre-planned projects on line. When you are old complaining is allowed. Of all the people I have ever worked with Penny was a great spark, stimulating, a great joy to be with and moreover always reliable.

-Marjorie

It was last year at the Tanana Valley State fair that we last saw Penny, we have always enjoyed visiting with her and viewing the beautiful projects every year.

When we first heard of Penny's passing my heart just ached, Penny has been a constant in our lives and our kids have basically grown up at Fairbanks Weavers. Our children Ashley, Samantha, and David have taken art, clay, beading, rock art, looming and of course sewing. I have always been so grateful to Penny her positive energy, enthusiasm and skills that have been passed on to our children today. My children took Penny's class from 7 years old to as far as into highschool their sophomore year. Samantha my 17 year old can fix or make any outfit today.

I attached a picture and a video to share with you earlier but that email did not go through, Penny would have the kids do a fashion show at the end of the week to show of their work and boost the kids confidence. Penny was such a kind spirit and really a true gem. We will miss her.

-Rachel