



FROM THE EDITOR | Madelyn van der Hoogt

Handwoven

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On a recent trip, I was struck by a title in the Fiction section of an airport Hudson's Booksellers: *The Knitting Circle* (by Ann Hood). Wow, I thought, knitting is the subject of a best seller! I picked up the book and read the blurb on the back. The main character, Mary, has lost her daughter very suddenly to spinal meningitis. In her grief, she is persuaded to join a knitting group that meets weekly at a local yarn shop. There, she finds comfort as the women share with each other their joys and sorrows.

Luan Gaines, a reviewer I found later on www.curledup.com, writes about the book: "Ann Hood weaves the chapters of her novel together with the authority of experience, proffering images of human loss in all its painful forms, the warp and weave of the finished piece as unique as the ladies who gather to mend their lives: In knitting you can always correct the mistakes. Always."

Hmmm. All that weaving imagery about knitting! I began to visualize myself standing in front of a rack of best sellers displaying a book called: *The Weavers' Guild Study Group*. I haven't read *The Knitting Circle*, but we weavers recognize this novel's theme. Take a weaving workshop, join a study group, go to a regional conference, and you find yourself part of a circle of friends. These friends are not in your daily life. They don't know your employer, your family, your past. You meet with them outside your lives, which gives you freedom to share your experiences and truest thoughts.

Weaving friends do share with you a passion that your family and other friends don't (their eyes, in fact, glaze over if you talk about weaving too much). You might be a doctor, a lawyer, a landscape gardener, a stay-at-home mom. You might have just gotten divorced, lost your job, or won an award. Among your weaving friends, these facts are not what's important about you. More important is whether you are going to try bamboo yarn, how many shafts there are on your new loom, or what warping method you like best. Age doesn't matter in a weaving group. A seventeen-year-old beginning weaver with good ideas is listened to with as much rapt and respectful attention as the charter guild member with fifty years weaving experience.

The knitters in *The Knitting Circle* have one advantage over us: It is easier to carry knitting needles to a weekly meeting place than it is to carry a loom. But I'm wondering if weavers can't take a page from their book. We can find new ways to get together—some of us live too far away from the nearest guild study group, and conferences don't happen often enough. How about bringing our smallest looms to a central location (yarn store? rec hall? high-school craft room?) to form local Weaving Circles? The only difference there might be between our circles and knitters' is: I'm not sure weaving mistakes can always be corrected. Weaving really is like life.

Madelyn

If you have an article idea or a project to share, send a photo or slide and a brief proposal or description to Madelyn van der Hoogt, PO Box 1228, Coupeville, WA 98239, or e-mail her at madelynv@interweave.com. Note that your submission does not have to be related to an issue theme. Themes are a focus only—if you have a great idea or an especially successful project, we'd love to share it with our readers at any time. Send submissions six months before the intended issue date. You can find author guidelines at handwovenmagazine.com.

May/June 2008: *Fabrics for Interiors* (coordinated textiles to decorate a room—bedroom, dining room, living room, bath; includes Fabric Forecast fabric designs for interiors and a gallery of Synchronized Swatches contest winners).

September/October 2008: *Weaving Worldwide* (projects inspired by weaving around the world—Japan, Scandinavia, Latin America, India, Africa, Turkey, and more).

November/December 2008: *Special Weaving Equipment Issue* (great tools for weavers—see what's out there to help you weave better, faster, and with more joy).

January/February 2009: *Fulling and Felting* (fulled fabrics, fabrics with holes that don't ravel, fabrics with waves and bumps—more of the magic that happens with wet finishing).

March/April 2009: *Get Weaving!* (resources—classes, books, projects—for learning to weave or for refreshing or improving your weaving knowledge and skills).