

Notes from the Chair...

Dear MWA members,

I bring you the disappointing news that the Midwest Weavers Association will not be holding our biannual conference in 2021. As I informed you at the general meeting in Grinnell, no guild had stepped forward to host, although one group was attempting to put together a leadership group at that time. They were, however, not successful. When the MWA board met in early September, we agreed to explore the possibility of managing a modified conference ourselves and communicated that news to you via email.

Now, after two months of research into potential locations and further analysis of the level of work associated with producing the conference, the Board has decided that we lack both the necessary time and human resources to provide our members with a quality conference experience. Just to share a single consideration: We could not begin to solicit teaching proposals until a site has been contracted and dates selected, while competing regional conferences are already in the process of winnowing proposals and sending out contracts. Our members have come to expect a stellar roster of instructors, and to disappoint you would not encourage future attendance at our conferences.

The Board also feels constrained by our bylaws which state that the Conference will “be planned, organized, and conducted by a local handweavers’ guild” who “will work closely with the

Board of Directors.” Current board members agreed to this supportive role when first agreeing to allow their names to be placed in nomination.

Finding host guilds for our conferences has been a recurring challenge for at least 20 years, and some of the reasons for that are addressed on p.5 of this newsletter. The current Board of Directors feels that our proper responsibility lies not in hosting a conference but rather in effecting institutional changes that will provide the substantial organizational support that host committees seem to be seeking.

To that end and in compliance with our by-laws, the Board of Directors will be convening one or more special committees to consider revisions to our by-laws and organizational structure, adjustments

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Awards from 2019 Conference

MEMBERS' EXHIBIT

Home Decor

1. Lee Ann Wille
2. Jane Glidden
3. Anna Alexander & Louise French

Linens

1. Peggy Baldwin
2. Lucy Hansen
3. Mary Glock

Wearable Accessories

1. Sandra Niggemann
2. Barb Van Loeuen & Julie McClure
3. Deborah Zeitler

Handspun

1. Sue Meissner
2. Mary Boulet
3. Linda Bergquist

Popular Choice

1. Linda Arndt

Elsie Bell Award - excellence in handspinning

- ♦ John Mullarkey

Libbie Crawford Award - loom controlled handweaving

- ♦ Liz Spear

Ila Roberts Award - handwoven table linens

- ♦ Linda Bergquist

HGA Award - certificate of accomplishment

- ♦ Linda Arndt

Complex Weavers Award

- ♦ Louise French

Treenway Best Use of Silk

- ♦ Heather Winslow

GUILD EXHIBITS

Margaret O'Shaughnessy Award

- ♦ Wisconsin Handweavers

Popular Choice

- ♦ Weavers' Guild of St Louis

FASHION SHOW

1. Heather Winslow
2. Kayla Exworthy
3. Debbie Schluckebier

Best Garment Construction

- ♦ Liz Spear

Best Runway Appearance

- ♦ Neal Howard

Best Use of Uncommon Fiber

- ♦ Sandra Niggemann

Best Use of Weave Structure for Clothing

- ♦ Vicki Tardy

Popular Choice

- ♦ Heather Winslow

Margaret Grant Memorial Award—elegant handwoven fashion fabric on no more than 4 shafts

- ♦ Alie Thompson

Jeanette Bauer Award - innovative use of color

- ♦ Neal Howard

FIBER ARTISTS OF DISTINCTION

Congratulations to Louise French and Heather Winslow for achieving Fiber Artist of Distinction!

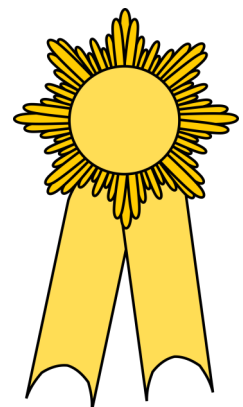
You, too, could become a Fiber Artist of Distinction by entering items into the member's exhibit and fashion show.

First place and a named award is worth 3 points, second place is 2 points, and third place is 1 point.

Accumulate 24 points and you become a Fiber Artist of Distinction

Fiber Artists of Distinction:

- Vicki Tardy—2015
- Louise French—2019
- Heather Winslow—2019



Congratulations to all the award winners on their beautiful work!

Minutes of the MWA General Meeting

The general meeting of the Midwest Weavers Association was held at 7:30 p.m. in the Harris Center at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.

The meeting was called to order by Betty Huttner, chairman. Betty thanked the conference committee for all of their work on the conference.

Carolyn Hart read the minutes from the last meeting. Betty asked for a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Bobbie Humphrey-Stephens gave the treasurer's report. Receipts for the past year were \$2,047.77, disbursements were \$16,043.75, which leaves a balance of \$94,271.59. Bobbi reiterated again the reason for having this balance is for conference losses, emergencies and scholarships. Betty asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Emily Say gave the Scholarship report. The scholarships given were the Jack Baker scholarship, two comprehensive scholarships, four registration scholarships and one person that won the door prize at the last conference.

There were two Board positions up for election. The nominating committee was Barb Say of Emporia, Kansas, Sheryl Streeper of Maquoketa, Iowa and Mary Jo Towle of St. Louis, Missouri.

The nominee to fill the board seat being vacated by Linda Ryden was presented by Barb Say. The nominee was Vicki Frazier from St. James, Mo. Betty asked for nominations from the floor. Betty asked for a motion to accept the nomination. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Bobbie Humphrey-Stephens was up for reelection as treasurer. Mary Jo Towle nominated Bobbi to stay on the Board. Betty asked for nomination for the floor. Betty asked for a motion to accept the nominations. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Old business

The MWA Board held a planning forum on Thursday in which only 12 members participated.

The discussion centered on the questions:

- Why don't guilds come forward to host?
- How might we change the conference model to make it more attractive to hosts and attendees?
- Would moving the conference to a conference center with no meals and housing be a remedy?
- Would combining preconference with conference over a shorter timeframe work?
- What about "a la carte" pricing?
- Should we hire an event coordinator who would receive assistance from a local guild?

A survey will be sent out to everyone after the conference addressing these issues.

This brings us back to what happens in 2021?

There is currently no host for 2021. There has been some preliminary discussions with potential hosts for 2023 and 2025. The board will meet in September to decide what to do. The membership will be informed by newsletter in late November.

Peg Dawson asked to be recognized from the floor. She had several questions regarding the conference structure that she wanted to discuss such as lack of communication between hosts and membership, not being able to sign up at the conference, not being able to take a fourth class.

Betty reminded her that these were not Board decisions; they were decisions made by the organizing committee.

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Please feel free to contact a Board member at any time to share your thoughts and ideas regarding MWA. Contact information is on page 2 of this newsletter and on our webpage.

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Cathy Willoughby, Chair of the conference, said she would meet with Peg after the General Meeting to discuss her concerns. Bobbi Humphrey-Stephens, Treasurer, agreed to join the meeting.

Emily Say held the drawing for the door prize of free registration for the next conference.

The names drawn were:

- * Miriam Timmons of Vergennes, IL
- * Charla Pearce of Hartley, IA.

Betty thanked Linda Ryden for her service on the board.

Betty thanked the host committee and gave them a gift for their hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

MWA is an organization of volunteers.

Do you have a talent to share with the MWA membership?

Please contact a Board member to offer your services.

MWA Board Members and Database & Website Managers

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Letter from a concerned member

We received this email inquiry just before the conference at Grinnell and thought perhaps other MWA members have some of the same questions would be interested in the Board's response:

Good morning,

I am not sure if you are the correct person to contact, but I was wondering what is happening to the Midwest Weavers Conference. I was very surprised when I saw the very small list of vendors that are going to be there. Are vendors simply not interested any more?

I was also curious as to why the conference gets smaller and shorter year after year. Are we going to see the death of Midwest? Are there too many other conferences?

I had one class already cancelled because of lack of enrollment, and I leaned that "class full waiting list available" could mean other classes have been cancelled as well.

I am concerned about driving from _____ and getting to a location where not much is happening.

I realize that since I joined Midwest in the early 80's that things have changed, that nothing last forever, but what is our bottom line?

Thank you for your time,

MWA Member

Dear MWA Member

I'm sorry to hear that one of your conference workshops was cancelled due to low enrollment.

This is a situation that occurs during each conference because it is not cost effective to pay a teacher's fee as well as transportation, housing, and meal expenses for a class that will only serve a few attendees.

I know that the 2019 committee found it necessary to cancel only a handful of classes, each having either zero, one, two, or three registrants. The total number of attendees who were impacted by these cancellations was under 20.

Nevertheless, the host committee and the MWA board share your disappointment that any cancellations were necessary.

Regarding your comment that the conference gets "smaller and shorter year after year," I can only state that for the past two decades the format of the conference has remained constant: a three-day preconference from Monday to Wednesday, with the conference opening on Thursday evening and running through Sunday breakfast.

The total number of the classes offered has also remained mostly stable.

Attendance at the conferences does fluctuate from year to year, which we attribute largely to location and the varying population density of the host city.

The lower number of vendors this year is partly attributable to another regional conference being held at the same time. But much like attendance, location affects the number of vendors. Many of our vendors are regional small businesses, so a conference venue in a state with a very active fiber arts scene will see more vendors.

The same can be said for conference associated events. A big-city venue and host committee will find it much easier to provide attendees with opportunities for gallery and museum visits.

Also, please remember that the conferences are organized and run by small groups of volunteers who pour hundreds of hours into planning all the details. The MWA encourages those host committees to put their own spin on the conference--reflect their locale.

So, you ask what the bottom line is? Financially, we're fine.

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However, I've been reporting at the past two conferences that we have no host committee for 2021. Our membership is aging, and many who have hosted previous conferences no longer have the will or energy to take on another one. As a result, it is highly likely that our next conference will have a different format from previous ones.

MWA was fortunate that core members of the Iowa group that organized the conference in 2009 were willing again to take on this year's conference. When you arrive in Grinnell in June, I think you will find that there will be plenty to do, just not necessarily the same things as in the past.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Betty Huttner, Chair, MWA Board

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR continued

(Continued from page 1)

to our dues structure, and more robust administrative support for conference host committees. As we pursue this transformative work, we are committed to frequent communication with our members via email messages, the newsletter, and our soon-to-be improved website.

I do want to end this message on a positive note. The Weavers Guild of St. Louis has agreed to host the MWA Conference in 2025 to coincide with its centennial celebration. Now, what we need is a willing guild to take on 2023. Could that be your guild? The Board stands ready to help you make that conference a memorable one.

Betty Huttner

Board of Directors Chair

MWA Scholarship Recipients

Jack Baker Scholarship (Registration, Housing, and Meals):

- ◆ Yvonne Olinger of Nashville, IN

Comprehensive MWA Scholarships (Registration, Housing, and Meals):

- ◆ Suzanne Meissner of Nauvoo, IL
- ◆ Kendra Musmaker of Coralville, IA

MWA Registration Scholarships:

- ◆ Linda Arndt of Maple Park, IL
- ◆ Jan Eitel of Topeka, KS
- ◆ Nancy Garden of Richland Center, WI
- ◆ Kelly Jarnes-Schott of Gladbrook, IA

**The Board
welcomes
scholarship
applications.
Please contact
Emily Say for
additional
information.**

These dues are for 2020-2021. Dues are collected the first of January every even-numbered year and run through the end of the next/odd-numbered year.

MWA Membership Dues for 2020 and 2021

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to "Midwest Weavers Association".....\$10.00

Please send this form and your check to:

Amy Norris

8742 Teasdale Avenue

St. Louis, MO 63124

☐ Please do not include my name, city, and state on the on-line membership list.

Membership Dues

Membership dues are collected on a biennial basis. The dues cover the period beginning in January of even-numbered years and carry you through the end of the next odd-numbered year, which is also the year of the MWA conference. These dues help defray the cost of conference scholarships, newsletter mailings, and web site maintenance. Benefits of being a member of MWA include the opportunity to attend biennial conferences, receiving MWA annual newsletters and automatically receiving a free registration booklet for the next MWA conference.

To facilitate networking between fellow fiber enthusiasts, we'll be including MWA's membership list on our web site. The list will only include a person's name, city, and state, and will not include any personal contact information. We'll automatically include your information on the web site unless you opt out now or sometime in the future.

Please complete the form above and return it with your check for \$10. These dues are for 2020 and 2021.

Address Changes

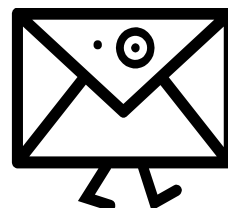
If you move, please let us know by sending your new mailing information to:

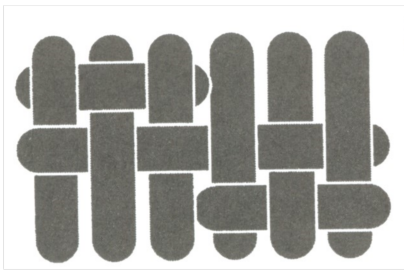
Amy Norris

8742 Teasdale Avenue

St. Louis, MO 63124

or send her an e-mail at: amy@amyfibre.com. Thank you!





Midwest Weavers
ASSOCIATION, INC.

Midwest Weavers Assn.

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Support for Conference Organizers

How does the MWA Board support conference organizers?

- One member of the Board is a dedicated liaison with the conference committee and is available to answer questions at any time.
 - There is a robust set of “Conference Guidelines” available on our website. These Guidelines include suggestions/information on: conference planning timeline, possible sub-committees, facility considerations, registration and website assistant, budget outline as well as the treasurer’s report from the conference immediately prior, and sample contracts for teachers, vendors, and keynote speakers. The guidelines can be found at:
 - <http://www.midwestweavers.org/MWAConferenceGuidelines.pdf>
 - The Board holds reports submitted by each conference organizing committee after their conference is finished. These reports are available as reference material.
 - Website — the Board pays the cost of hosting the conference website. In addition, the conference committee only has to provide the information. The updates are done by someone on or associated with the Board.
 - Registration — because the Board requires an online registration option, we also provide the labor for setting up the online registration site as well as in-person training for the conference registrar in how to utilize the site. In addition, all technical support for the online registration portal is handled by someone on or associated with the Board.
- This is the support that the Board currently provides conference organizers, but we are actively considering what else would be helpful.
- Please let us know? You can email any Board member with your suggestions.