

.sara von tresckow
.
handweaver

.interlacements

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. a b o u t m e

. a b o u t m e

Born and raised in Naperville IL. BA in English/
Education 1965. Taught 5th grade until 1968. Found
new work as mainframe programmer/analyst.

Married 1971, emigrated to Germany with German
husband, Hans.Home with children and not working
allowed me to begin spinning, then to weave fabric.

Fiber arts in Schleswig-Holstein in the 70's and 80's
flourished. Spinning classes, looms, a herd of sheep,
crops of flax, work in a museum ensued.

Emigration to Wisconsin in 1990 brought a rich
background in textiles to our new home. Continued
activity led to membership in guilds, teaching at
conferences, retail business startup and writing
completed a long career in fiber arts.

. c o n t a c t

.mail sarav@woolgatherers.com

.phone 920-929-9503

.web www.woolgatherers.com

.social facebook.com/Woolgatherers Ltd LLC
instagram/saravontresckow

p r o f i l e 4 - 5





•Osterrönfeld



• i n t r o d u c t i o n

Married in 1971, a corporate transfer first took Hans and I to Lintorf, near Düsseldorf for a few years. From there we sought employment in Northern Germany where Hans had attended some of his elementary school years. We found work for him in Rendsburg – a city in Schleswig-Holstein on the Kiel Canal that carries oceangoing vessels between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea.

We found an apartment in Osterrönfeld on the south side of the canal – necessitating a ferry crossing or using a tunnel (both auto and pedestrian were available) to reach Rendsburg.

It felt somewhat like being back in Wisconsin – the black and white Hostein dairy cows were the same – even exchanging bloodlines with Pabst Farms in Milwaukee. The gently rolling moraine landscape was similar. Lakes and rivers were in abundance, in addition to two seacoasts with lovely beaches.



.life in Osterrönfeld

Arial view of Rendsburg on the left showing the grain elevators in the harbor with Osterrönfeld in the lower right hand corner. Our home was next to the railroad trestle a little farther to the right. There is a ferry that hangs from the bridge and carries a few autos and many school children on bicycles to and from the city.

In the distance, you can see Schacht-Audorf, also on the south canal side as well as the autobahn bridge over the canal. Behind the bridge is a wind park. The harbor in Rendsburg is now busy shipping the large parts of wind turbines because it is easier on water.

At one time we had our sheep grazing one of the pastures you see between the cranes and the trestle. Sheep and chickens filled the yard, sunflowers and haystacks provided ambience, a cider press made good use of the apples, our sons enjoyed a „free range“ childhood.



Sheep and chickens..

Christmas toys and gingerbread house...



Pressing cider...

Picking apples on sheep pasture...



Hans and Henry and Peter studying home upkeep

Our „Back 40“ with haymow, stalls, pasture, washlines



Tearing down the old „Anbau“ or rear addition.

The finished replacement (still there today after 35 years)





Sara and Henry milking on the pasture



Peter with one of the ewes

Sheep on the canal pasture

Sheep in the front yard for Easter



Left: Sunflowers Right: Haystacks
Under the bridge with no Monet to
put a romantic touch to things

Lower Left: Schleswig-Holsteinische
landscape

Lower Right: Nord-Ostsee(Kiel) Canal,
Rendsburger Harbor, and Hochbrücke
- (High Bridge)



2

.fiber art beginnings

Here, in Osterrönfeld, I was gifted with the spinning wheel pictured next to Peter. The neighbor thought I might wish to plant flowers on it. Curious how a spinning wheel functioned, I bought a book, learned how to make yarn, and went to the local farmers' market to sell the yarn. Hans grew perennials in yogurt containers to complement the spinning.

When weaving entered the picture, I also founded a weavers' group together with a friend. That group still meets and demonstrated weaving in the Freilicht Museum Kiel-Molfsee – pictured in the following pages.



Peter with my first spinning wheel.



Spinning on the Rendsburger farmers market.



Selling Perennials in Yogurt Pots



Xmas Market, Lunden, near Hamburg



First floor loom - Lilqvist from Finland 8 shafts/8 treadles



Freilichtmuseum Kiel-Molfsee

Thatched Farmhouses.



More houses in Molfsee - these are long houses from the North Sea coast.

Regelmäßig klappern die Webstühle

Weber-Ausstellung stößt auf großes Interesse

Molfsee (hbr) Die alte Kunst des Webens ist nicht in Vergessenheit geraten. Wie lebendig sie in Schleswig-Holstein ist, zeigt eine Ausstellung im Freilichtmuseum „Weben im Wandel der Zeiten“. In einem historischen Hof aus Angeln, gleich neben Meierei und Apotheke, hängen kunstvoll gearbeitete Decken, Blusen oder Schürzen, und es klappern auch regelmäßig die Webstühle.

Einige Weber, die sich vor rund drei Jahren auf Initiative von Sara von Tresckow aus Osterrönfeld bei Rendsburg zu einer lockeren Gruppe zusammengeschlossen haben, arbeiten vor den Augen der Besucher, erklären ihnen die Techniken — und wer sich traut, kann bei dem ein odern anderen Stück auch einmal selbst Hand anlegen.

Eigentlich sollte die Weber-Ausstellung nur noch bis zum 31. Mai dauern. Aber das Interesse ist groß, und so haben die Weber überlegt, ob man nicht bis zum Herbst weitermachen könnte. Ganz so regelmäßig wie derzeit könnten sie allerdings nicht im Angeliter-Hof arbeiten, denn die meisten haben einem Beruf nachzugehen. „An den Wochenenden könnte am ehesten einer dasein“, meint Sara von Tresckow. Wie es nach dem 31. Mai genau weitergehen soll, kann sie aber noch nicht sagen.

Sicher ist, daß die derzeit gezeigten Ausstellungsstücke in der nächsten Woche zum größten Teil an die insgesamt 18 Aussteller zurückgehen, eventuell kommt Ersatz. Bis einschließlich Sonntag sind sie noch von 10 bis 17 Uhr zu bewundern.



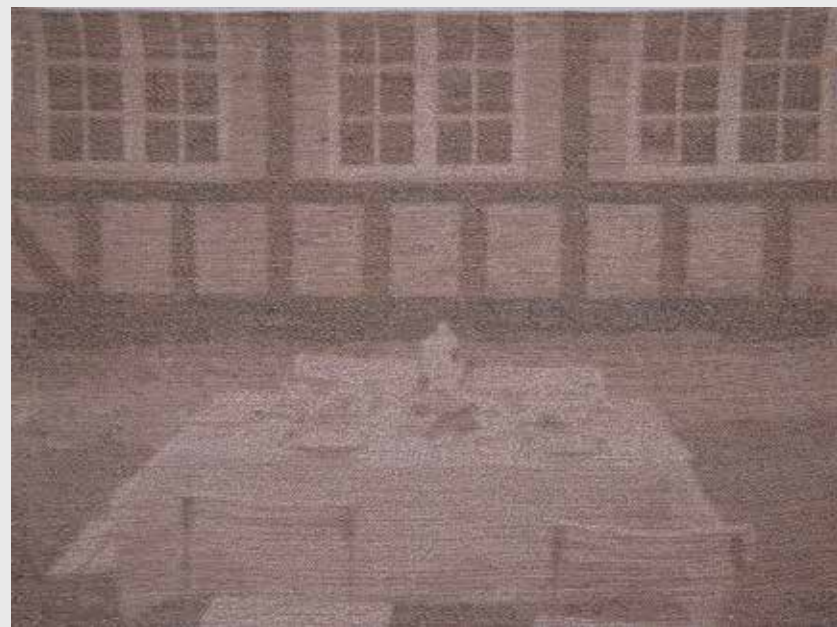
Sara von Tresckow arbeitet hier an einem rund 80 Jahre alten Webstuhl.
Foto Breer

KN

Dienstag, 26. Mai 1987 — Nr. 121



From Freilicht-Museum, tablecloth fabric fresh from loom and later Jacquard weaving from photo



. fiber art beginnings

18 - 19

Sheep Shows and Sales Stands



Small Animal Show



Milk Sheep Show



●Fond du Lac



. i n t r o d u c t i o n

In 1990, after nearly 20 years in Germany, we made the decision to emigrate – our sons wanted to study in the US, I was not finding secure permanent employment that would give me my own pension, and Wisconsin – where we met – was still calling us. Aiming to return to Milwaukee, Hans found work at Giddings & Lewis in Fond du Lac. I found returning to the IT work held prior to marriage not that difficult. Weaving and fiber arts continued on the side and we were able to plant an orchard in the front yard to match the large raised bed veggie garden in the back. Only the sheep and chickens were not replacable.



1 . r e t u r n t o w i s c o n s i n

We found a lovely home on a lot that had several areas that could be landscaped differently - fruit trees and flowers in front, a raised bed garden for veggies in the back, and in the L-shape of the back of the house a lovely patio.

Peter spent his high school years here and moved on to UW Madison and Henry studied in California where he'd been an exchange student.

Hans kept biking to work at G & L and Sara found her way back into IT jobs to put our sons through college.

Fond du Lac is a typical mid-sized city in the Midwest on Lake Winnebago - a large lake leading to the Fox River and emptying into Lake Michigan at Green Bay.

Lakeside Park on Lake Winnebago with Lighthouse



Downtown Fond du Lac – Main St.



Living Room with Fiber accents



Outdoors - Upper Left, the raised bed growing produce, Lower Left Flax Field
Upper Right, hanging woven items, Lower right, our apple orchard



2

.the woolgatherers

In 2006, Sara was downsized from her last IT job and almost immediately saw a for rent sign in a local store front on Main St. In Sept. the shop opened and has been in business since then. For nearly 10 years, the shop moved to a larger storefront a few doors away, returning to the old location after the Pandemic.

In addition to the retail shop, online sales and mail order played a large role in the business. Hans excelled at packing, shipping and finding reasonable mailing costs.

Fiber festivals and weaving conferences were yet another leg of the business. Until 2020, we attended Wisconsin Sheep and Wool and Convergence regularly as well as other venues.

Art Fairs locally and in Door County rounded out business activities.

.Fond du Lac

.the woolgatherers

28 - 29



35 N. Main St



25A N. Main St

Scenes from The Woolgatherers

Looms, Spinning Wheels, Woven Items,
Lessons, Yarn, Spinning Stools - AND the spinning
wheel repairs.



Ten spinning stools went to the Minneapolis Weaving Guild



A large collection of antique wheels needing repairs

CONFERENCES

Upper Left, Wisconsin Sheep and Wool

Lower Left, Convergence, Albuquerque

Lower right, Intermountain Weavers Conference,
Durango, CO



ART FAIRS

Upper Left - Fond du Lac, „Art in the Park“

Lower Left - Fond du Lac, „Festival of Trees“
at Christmas

Upper Right - Door County, „Townline Art Fair“
Fine Line Gallery, Ephraim



•WOVEN WORKS

. i n t r o d u c t i o n

3 4 - 3 5



. i n t r o d u c t i o n

In the course of more than 4 decades of weaving Sara has woven a wide variety of textiles. The following pages ililustrate just a few of the many pieces. Foremost has always been producing textiles for the household - clothing, rugs, curtains, towels, table linens, bedding.

There has also been production of home textiles, scarves, towels, damask art, and various fine art pieces for home use or for selling.

1 .WEARABLES



Weaving fabric for garments has always been a personal endeavor. If not for me, then the clothing was made for a member of the family. Each piece begins with a need for a clothing item. Style and materials are decided and a pattern chosen. The fabric on the loom is set up to create the width and length needed to match the pattern. Shrinkage and takeup must be planned.

From the beginning with a rigid heddle loom, garments have been for personal use and tailored to the persons who wear them. Rather than flashy artwear, they have been quietly woven and sewn to give a neat and stylish appearance. I have long been proud that in job interviews, wearing a handwoven garment tested my slightly unconventional, yet within the office dress conventions.

.WOVEN WORKS

.WEARABLES

At right is a skirt made entirely from our herd of sheep. The wool was hand combed and handspun to be used in both warp and weft

The skirt is using a Vogue pattern and lined with silk. This was part of my submission for a COE in handspinning in the early 1980's..

Below is a vest in linen, using a mix of cotton and cottolin warp threads. The pattern was found in a Swedish weaving magazine showcasing how to make good use of strikingly simple fabrics.



One of my first garments using linen, the dress at right has a cotton warp. The fabric is a simple heringbone in natural and brown.

The dress was entered in a local sewing contest – took 2nd place – but not until I could prove that having the buttons on the „wrong“ side was part of the Vogue pattern's emphasis on the „career woman“, and the German seamstress thought I had just done it incorrectly.





Above Left: Handspun pulli
w/skirt usint same grey yarn

Left: Linen dress and jacket
for son's wedding

Above: Cape of Shetland wool
felted and brushed similar to
Loden, lined with bright print



Above Left: Silk jacket

Left: Linen/cotton apron
Convergence Fashion
Show 2020

Above: corduroy jumper
trimmed with skirt border
made on Lao fuum and
vertical pattern device



Upper Left: Vest in weft faced
fabric, self lined with unspun locks
inserted with ghiordes knots

Left: Dresses for granddaughters
in turned rosepath

Above: My linen shirt

Right: Hans' linen shirt



2

. f i l l i n g t h e h o m e

Producing textile for sales is always tempting, but I chose to put a priority on making attractive pieces to showcase our home. A basic loom is capable of producing rugs, towels, runners, curtains, table linens, bedding – blankets, bedspreads, even dishcloths and mopping cloths for the kitchen floor.

Here are some scenes from our households showcasing the handwoven textiles.



1980's bedroom – handwoven curtains, cotton/linen
Handwoven coverlets, weft handwoven wool from own sheep. Rug, weft handwoven from own sheep.



Weft faced rug – Warp and weft handspun



First of many tablecloths – striped cottolin



Weaving coverlet – wearing dress woven of fine cotton.



Coverlet – cotton ground – pattern weft handspun
Wool came from our own herd of milk sheep



Left: Bathroom curtains of cotton barleycorn
Towels are linen with soumak patterning



Above and Left: Striped curtains of cotton and fine wool



Right: Two weft faced rugs wool warp and weft. Weft natural or vegetal dyed.



Above: small knotted pile rug



Left: Traditional linen towels

Lower Left: Tablecloth in cotton stripe and handspun linen weft

Lower Right: Damask tablecloth and napkins of cotton and linen



Above: Floor Pillows woven to use working near bottom of piece

Above Right: Prize winning pure linen tablecloth with hand crochet trim

Right: Patterned linen towel



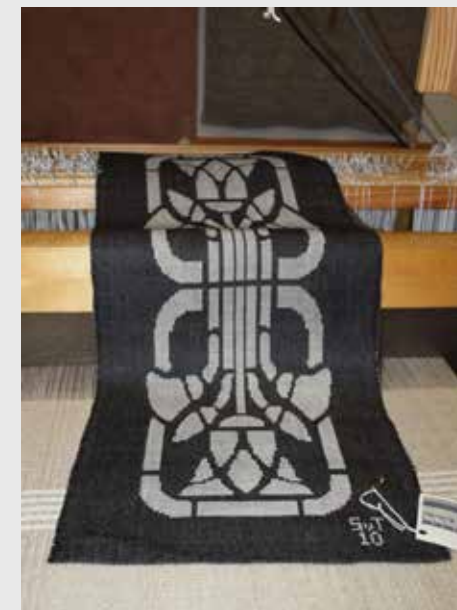
3

. drawloom / jacquard

Complex and pictorial fabric requires a more sophisticated loom than fabrics for household and garment fabrics. There are two loom types capable of exquisite patterning.

The drawloom is the older type. This is a loom going back into antiquity using a straightforward loom setup to make a basic fabric like twill or satin. A device attached to the loom using a separate set of heddles and means of raising them provides the pattern. The most common fabric produced is damask.

Around 1800, Jacquard automated the drawloom by raising the pattern threads with mechanically controlled hooks. Since then, Jacquard looms produce not only damask but many other complex fabrics not possible on the older drawlooms..



Upper Left: Linen storage bag in Opphamta technique

Upper Right: Art Deco damask runner cotton and linen



Left: Detail from damask runner



Upper Left: Dishes on damask tablecloth



Upper Right: Linen damask upholstery fabric in Asian pattern

Right: Damask Napkins linen/cotton





Soaring Sensations - damask
portrait of son's glider
CW Complexity 2022 - Knoxville



Beiderwand samples - traditional
wool/cotton

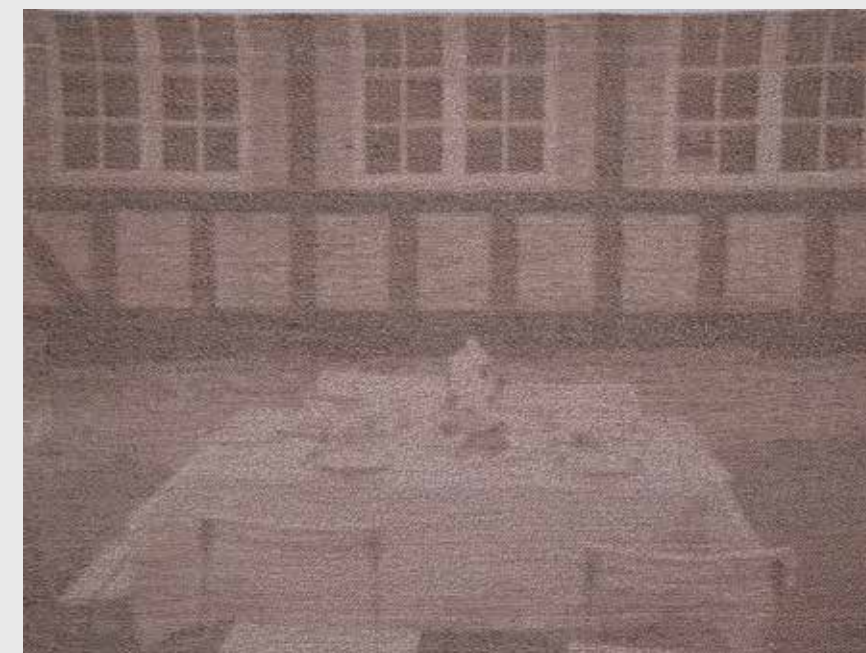


From Seed to Shirt - damask depiction
of processing flax to linen
Symphony of the Mountains - 2022
Convergence Knoxville



Left: TC-1 loom at EMU
used for classes to produce
textiles shown here

Below: First piece of Jacquard
weaving
The graphic is from one of
those Dover books with
reproducible patterns
Structure is 5-end satin
damask



Above: Woven replica of
photo showing completion of
tablecloths woven in museum
Weft handspun linen, warp
commercial linen

Right: Interpretation of Morris
design Indian Diaper.
Structure: 4-color polychrome
Samite.





Left: Jacquard loom at Oriole Mill
Hendersonville, NC
In 2010 the mill had room for
students to work on design and
weave samples.

Below:
Fabric designed first with a pencil
sketch to represent motifs found
in Acoma Pueblo pottery. Two
diamond drawings stitched
together to resemble woodcut.
Woven in two versions - natural
linen on black or red linen on black



Below: Tablecloth with square in
square design being woven.



Below: detail of poppy runner
Flower derived from photo of
own poppies



Above: Table used for show stand.



Below: Poppy runner being woven.



Above: Guild banner woven at Oriole Mill.



Jacket sewn from fabric on previous page.



In 2014, RISD offered a Jacquard class with Convergence.
This is a doubleweave design - fine cotton warp and rayon
weft.



4

. special techniques

Over the years, I have explored weaving patterned textiles where the pattern is not produced by the threading of the heddles. Instead, the patterning is free formed using various specialty tools on mostly simple looms. Included are Navajo weaving, knotted pile weaving (oriental rugs), and ikat, where either warp or weft are tied into a pattern and resealed prior to weaving. Some of these pieces are pictured here.



NAVAJO LOOM



Three pieces from the large Navajo loom above. Loom designed and made by Hans based on photos of the loom used at Hubbell Trading Post in Arizona.



Various Navajo pieces
Done on large and small
looms.
Pillows at left are for working
on the floor.
Other pieces are little
decorative ones.



Knotted Pile projects on the horizontal loom with hand tools



First small project -



Small Oriental Rug in front of hearth - traditional design



Full sized Oriental Rug - natural colors handspun from Karakul fleeces supplied by Lettie Klein and others. Colored yarns from a Karakul farm in Colorado. Design derived from a photo of paving stones.



„Preussische Bauernteppich“ - yes, in Prussia from about 1600 forward, there were medium fine knotted rugs made with traditional N. European folk patterns. Hans is Prussian - actually from a family in the Nobility there - and this is a cultural gift that bridges our life together complete with „moose and squirrel“.



IKAT - tie dying the warp or weft (or both) of a fabric produces distinctive patterning without a pattern threading - using just plain weave. For a first project, the weft bundle was purchased at Convergence 2018. Ms. Thong in Laos did the winding, tying and tying.



The weft bundle was carefully untied and wound onto weft quills in sequence and woven. It was not easy to get the pattern to line up as there was no indication of width of fabric. Guessing and researching the „standard“ width of this cloth helped.



Above: the resulting „sinh“ or traditional wrap skirt After determining the cycle of the pattern, weaving progressed well. Using some dyed blue roving, spun enough cotton to make the band needed for hem facing.
The skirt is very comfortable to wear.

Above: Photos from my recent explorations of weft ikat. Upper Left shows the untied weft on the unwinding stand with the pattern clearly showing. These first small pieces make attractive runners and placements when lined and edged with linen quilting fabric.

.tools

. i n t r o d u c t i o n

Tools play an important role in weaving. Looms can take many forms with a variety of features designed to produce specific textiles.

Warping tools, shuttles, battens, beaters, mangle, yarn, raw fiber, and yes, even computer software for designing are also part of the process.

The following pages display some of my favorite items.



Lilla Loom with Fan Reed mounted

1 . l o o m s

The loom is the basic tool needed for weaving. Simplest is the backstrap loom where the tensioned warp is kept in place by the weight of the weavers body. Beginning with a simple home built frame, graduating to a full sized rigid heddle loom and switching to a full sized countermarche loom with traditional features set my path in weaving. Since then many other looms have been added, including table looms, band looms, looms with special patterning features such as drawloom or Jacquard loom weaving.



The warmth and beauty of a room filled with looms.



First Loom
Kircher 80cm Rigid Heddle
Loom -



First Floor Loom
Lilqvist Lilba (Finland)
8 shaft/8 treadle
countermarche

Still own this loom, now
converted to Toika dobby



Ashford Table Loom
with
Fan Reed



Dutchmaster Folding Table Loom
Made by Hans
from design suggested by
Erica de Ruiter

Inkle Loom
with patterned band
in progress



Large Navajo Loom



Cactus Flower
spring loaded mini
Navajo loom



Lilla 100cm loom with Myrehed 50 pattern shaft draw system for damask



Julia loom, modified, with Lao fuum (reed/beater, pre-threaded heddles on two shafts, pre-threaded vertical pattern storage for patterning)



Original Lilqvist loom with Toika dobby mounted
computer assisted operation with foot pedal



TC-1 loom, used thankfully in course work,
but never owned

2

.weaving tools

.tools

There are many tools and accessories needed for weaving. There are tools for preparing the warp. Shuttles are needed to carry the weft. Tapestry weaving needs battens and beaters to pack the weft as firmly as needed. A „temple“ is a device to hold the fabric at the proper width so that the reed can beat properly. Reeds come in many sizes. There are even special reeds that produce waves in the warp. A mangle is a tool used to put hundredes of pounds of pressure on freshly woven cloth to give it a proper finish. Here are but a rew.....

.weaving tools

62 – 63

Shuttles come in many forms and sizes



Temples help control weaving width



Threading and reed hooks, bobbin winder, yarn sizing scale



An assortment of reeds for many fabric variations

Lao „fuum“ – insert into loom and weave.
pre-sleyed reed/beater, pre-threaded shafts, pre-threaded pattern heddles



Navajo beating combs and battens, all handmade



Storage bag for assorted Navajo weaving tools



Tools for knotted pile weaving – all hand forged
Lg and sm beaters, pile shears, hook knives for cutting knots



Back side of fuum package, with weaving sword



Tool bucket of supplies for mini Navajo loom



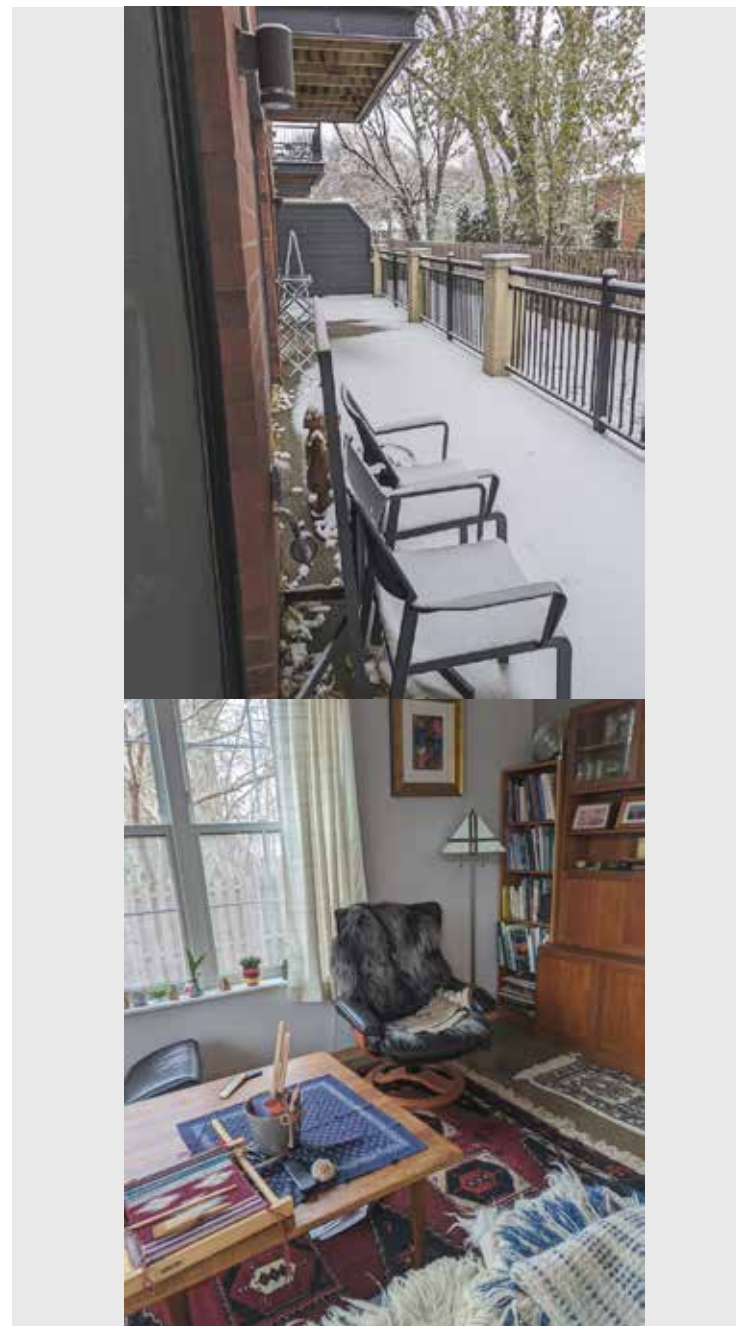
Large warping mill for making weaving warps



„Squirrel Cage“ swift for unwinding skeins



•afterword



•winding down

Time reins all of us in. In 2023, both over 80 found us with health issues and slowing down. When Hans' cancer progressed and he needed special treatments at UW Health in Madison, we made the decision to move to an apartment in Madison where we could handle the housekeeping without the stress of running a retail shop, gardening and maintaining a home, and finding time to savor our time together.

Downsizing and selecting the essence of our life was somehow rewarding – giving us a chance to sift those parts of our lives that mattered most. We are now in a lovely apartment, urban and centrally located to shops, restaurants, entertainment, bicycle trails, and good medical care.

Sara has chosen looms to continue with her dearest techniques, Hans has some tools available and continues to import looms and fan reeds from his computer.

We have found a lovely place to savor what we enjoy most.

1 . t r a n s i t i o n i n g i n M i l w a u k e e

In July, just prior to moving, we had a lovely invitation to demonstrate Scandinavian weaving techniques shown in the 2023 exhibit Scandinavian Design and the United States, 1890–1980. It was a lovely sort of retirement display and put a lovely cap on a lifetime of presenting textile topics. Being able to spend a day at the loom in the beautiful Calatrava wing was exciting.

Without a trailer and sizable vehicle, this was most likely our last joint presentation.



2

. s e t t l i n g i n M a d i s o n

In Madison, we were able to find a spacious 3 bedroom apartment on the ground floor with terrace large enough for a garden sitting group and space to hang wash and weavings. Though the address is the main road passing through Madison, we are on the back of the building where we can listen to the chatter of squirrels and chirping of birds. We are in a neighborhood full of bike routes and small commercial businesses. Nearby parks are lovely. There is even a classic, friendly dive bar just a block away with a trendy supper only two blocks distant. Shoveling snow and garden tasks seem distant and unmissed.

New Weaving Studio



Christmas Dinner



Hallway as Workroom



Homemade Quark



Christmas 2023 – a lovely fresh tree



3

. b a c k t o b a s i c s

Our most important tools and books came along. Rather than forge ahead into more complex „breakthroughs“, Sara is finding her way back to many of the techniques that provided pleasure and beauty decades ago.. Hans is continuing to provide textile artisans with special tools to enhance their work. In the comfort of our new home, we hope to continue quietly down the road that has taken us here.

New Plain Weave Curtains for Living Room



Simple Bedroom Curtains



Greeting cards with Capitol motif



Lap Loom



Bog Jacket revisited – Left new with gusset
Right from 40 years ago



Spinning Shetland on the new to me Kiwi wheel





Lampas Bedspread with New Zealand Koru motif

www.woolgatherers.com