



# The Weaver's Bag

Mary Meigs Atwater Weaver's Guild of Utah • February 2022 • Vol. 70, No. 2

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## February Guild Meeting

**What:** "The Handweaver's Guild of America," by Suzi Ballenger

**When:** Thursday, February 10, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Zoom meeting



The Handweavers Guild of America (HGA), the umbrella organization for fiber arts guilds and artists, is much more than the Convergence conference. At our February meeting, board president Suzi Ballenger will expose all of the behind-the-scenes goings on at HGA. This organization provides

many benefits that most of us are not aware of, and our February meeting is a great opportunity to learn about and support this important organization.

Suzi Ballenger was born and raised in Indiana. She completed her BA at Keene State College in New Hampshire and her MFA in Artisanry-Fibers from UMass-Dartmouth. She has worked in New England as a weaver and teaching artist since 1996, published for *Handwoven* magazine and the Textile Society of America, and patented and trademarked specialized tools for weaving. Suzi's love of fiber stimulates her ongoing research for the fullest expression of a textile. Her curiosity has been supported by workshops at the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii, and an internship at Dieu Donn  Paper Studio in Brooklyn, New York. Suzi currently serves as President of the Board of Directors of the Handweavers Guild of America, Inc.

To join the Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2999560221?pwd=MFFybmNVRzImeU5ORTRnbExJK1VuUT09>

## President's Message

Dear Friends:

I am not really a word person, so figuring out what to write each month is kind of hard. We all have our own talents and different ways of looking at things. So what each of us create may inspire someone else to take an idea forward or even sideways to create their own masterpiece. Please share what you are working on so we can see the beauty each of us has within us, and share it with each other. I hope to see you at the Zoom meeting on February 10.  
*Beth Myrer, Guild President*

## Meetings of the Southwest Utah Weaving Branch

### February 2022 Meeting

We will be meeting at the St. George library at 5:30 pm on February 14 at 5:30 pm. The program will be a discussion of the Theo Moorman technique. More details will be coming.

## Getting to Know Ann McKane



Every interview that I do for this newsletter is fascinating to me as I get to know the wonderful members of our Guild. Every conversation is as unique as the person. I am always interested in how our conversation starts because I have found that whatever is shared at the beginning will be there at the end. That was true with my recent visit with Ann McKane.

The first words from Ann were “my cousin was just here.” I learned she was talking about Cousin Timmie. She is the cousin that shops for Ann, the one that has a keen eye and found her a beautiful quilt at the Goodwill for less than 20 dollars. Cousin Timmie is the main reason that Ann left her home near Seattle, Washington, to come to Salt Lake City five years ago. I asked her if she liked it here. She said, “Yes, and I plan to stay.”

Ann grew up on in South Carolina. On her way home from visiting her brother who was stationed in the Philippines, Ann stopped in San Francisco and that ended her time living on the East Coast. She found her way to the Seattle area and lived there for over 40 years. She bought a house there and made a willow arch to go over her

gate. A neighbor from across the street came by and told her about the Seattle Basket Weavers Guild, and that is how her weaving life began. The Guild became her friends and family, and they made her a lifetime member before she moved away.



Ann looked for a Basket Guild when she moved to Utah and found the MMAWG. "I felt so welcomed," Ann said. "The Guild is full of the most loving, generous, warm-hearted circle of people. They are passionate and supportive and they will help you with anything you could ever need, and they lift you up." She has met so many talented teachers and friends. "We have spent so much time laughing and enjoying being together."

Ann's grandmother was a champion crocheter. What made her a champion? She could do it blindfolded. She crocheted many bedspreads and tablecloths. Ann's mother was more interested in sewing and handwork. Ann loves weaving baskets. You may have seen some of her amazing baskets at our last fiber arts show. She prefers to do hand weaving and small projects. She took on a small project for her Cousin Jane's granddaughter. Ann wove a rug and wall hanging for her doll house. It connected her to a happy memory of the doll house that she had when she was young.



With a huge dose of wanderlust, Ann has traveled the world. And everywhere she went, she wanted to see their fiber arts, especially their baskets. In Ireland, she watched the weavers and enjoyed seeing how they did things. In Panama, she was in awe of their sensational baskets. She has been to Hong Kong, Peru, Mexico, and the South Pacific and found beautiful fabrics, baskets, and fiber arts in every place. But what she enjoyed the most was the connection she made with the people. "It is the people that made the difference."

When it comes to weaving, Ann loves to weave but does not like to warp. When I asked Ann what advice she would like to share with the Guild, she took a thoughtful pause and then shared this gem: "Stretch yourself. Step out of the box. And never, ever reject the offer of free fiber."

As we ended our visit, Ann talked about her cousins. They live in Oregon, California, New York, Florida, and Washington, and they mean a lot to her. She has been busy making some felt angels for those in her family who are missing a special niece that passed away. Her love of them can be summed up this way, "Because I have a cousin, I will always have a friend." *Rosemarie Deppe*



## Shuttle-Craft Bulletins: Weaving for Bags

*The Shuttle-Craft Bulletins covered in this article are from April and September 1935. These Bulletins are on the Guild website under the Bulletins tab.*

Weaving fabric for bags was popular enough in 1935 that Mary Meigs Atwater dedicated two issues of the Bulletin, April and September, to the topic. Mary Atwater wrote in the April issue that the demand for bags showed no decline, particularly with the then-current interest in knitting and the need for large workbags. She said that the trend was for fine materials using close weaves, with an interest in modern patterns and color. She considered a bag to be useful, but more importantly to be for its looks, with the only excuse for a handwoven one being its charm. A bag should not be ordinary, but unusual and amusing. She said: "Unless we can make something beautiful, we might as well not do this bit of work at all."

Her requirements for a successful bag were that the fabric be designed for the special purpose, including an appropriate color. A bag for shopping or daily commuting, for example, should not be too light in color. The style should be in harmony with the user. Here, Mary wrote, "the bag maker needs to be a psychologist." All of this makes bag making a complicated business. Mary advised to meet the challenge by weaving as freely as possible. If the fabric does not work, use it for some other purpose.



Figure 1 Straw twist yarn from Etsy vendor Sparkle Bettie

A couple of the materials suggested by Mary Atwater were unusual: straw twist yarn (a rayon yarn shown here from an Etsy vendor) or cellophane yarn, popular at the time. Maybe "plarn" would work today. She gave advice on how best to weave with the straw twist, noting that it does not gather well so the design should be simple. One design might be a large, flat, oblong shape with a zipper around two sides for a manuscript case, or a basket-shaped bag with handles of card-woven straw. These designs would work in regular weaving on the loom as well. Weave structures suggested were twill, crackle, Summer and Winter, and Ms and Os. She provided a couple of drafts in the diagram, and here is the drawdown for (d), a crackle weave interpretation of the Turkey Foot pattern

(Draft 3 in the *Shuttle-Craft Book of American Hand-Weaving*, a simple diamond and cross overshot pattern), with the normal treadling. Mary suggested that there are countless treadling variations possible.

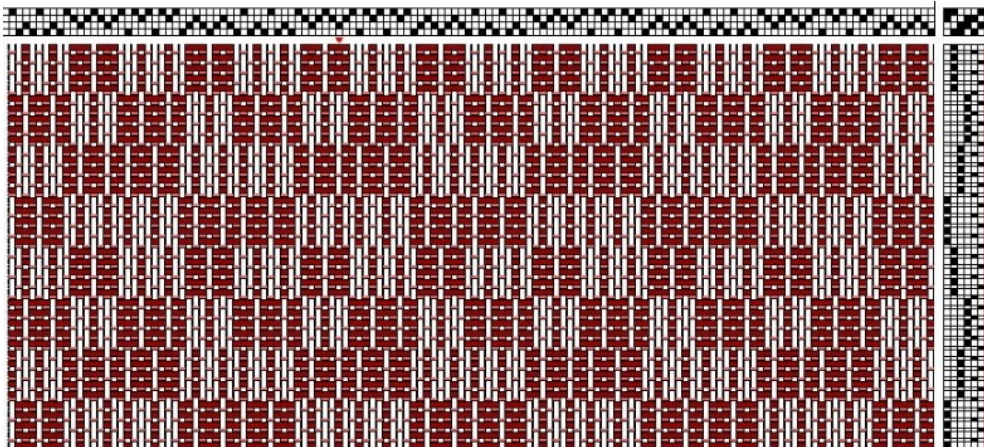


Figure 2 Crackle weave draft for Turkey Foot pattern.

Mary ended the issue with an elaborate design for a Finnweave for “important” bags. The startled stags figure was taken from an elaborate ancient weaving. The use of the smaller motifs in the figure was suggested as suitable for a small bag.

In September 1935, Mary again mentioned that knitting and crocheting were popular and that large knitting bags were in demand. She suggested weaving a fabric mounted on wood handles. These are still available today, through online options. Here is another Etsy find. These would not require any special equipment to attach to the handwoven fabric.

Mary again recommended Summer and Winter and crackle weaves, with the addition of the Bronson and Krokbragd weaves. She also suggested a braided handle as an alternative and gave two braid patterns. Also included were detailed instructions for a striped overshoot done in the Maltese Cross pattern, Krokbragd drafts, and another double weave, this time with an ancient Peruvian motif, to be made up with a braided or wood handle.



Figure 3 Bag with wood handles, Etsy vendor Crazyvintagegirl.

If you are looking for ideas for handwoven bag projects, check out the free ebook on handwoven bag projects by *Handwoven* magazine at this link:

<https://handwovenmagazine.com/free-handwoven-bag-projects-from-weaving-today/>

There are many patterns available as well to make bags from using your handwoven fabric. I saw one today that caught my eye, the Jack Tar bag from Merchant & Mills.

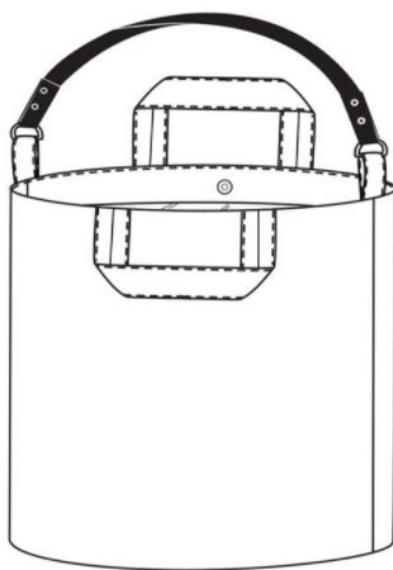


Figure 4 Jack Tar Bag from Merchant and Mills:  
<https://merchantandmills.com/store/bag-making/patterns-bag-making/the-jack-tar-pdf/>

## The Shuttle-Craft Bulletin Study Group



The 2021–2022 Guild year meeting schedule for the Shuttle–Craft Bulletin Study group is presented below. The next meeting will be on Zoom, February 16, at 7:00 p.m. The topic of discussion will be selling our handwoven goods and the Crackle Weave from the November 1928, May 1929, and June 1930 bulletins. The Zoom link will be provided through the Guild email.

The Shuttle-Craft Bulletin study group meets to discuss Mary Atwater’s work from the Shuttle-Craft Bulletins. This is an informal group – if you have not participated, try a meeting. The meetings often begin with a reading from Mary Meigs Atwater’s biography.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Bulletins</i>	<i>Meeting Date</i>
<b>Selling handwovens</b> <b>Crackle weave</b>	Nov 1928 June 1930 May 1929	Feb 2022*
<b>Twill</b>	April 1929 Oct 1936	Apr 2022
<b>Camp weaving</b> <b>Portable Weaving</b>	June 1929 June 1936	June 2022
<b>Modern art &amp; weaving</b> <b>Design</b>	July 1929 August 1946	Aug 2022
*Zoom meeting		

# Guild Calendar 2021-2022

## Mary Meigs Atwater Weaver's Guild of Utah

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**Newsletter editor:** Susan Hainsworth,  
susanhainsworth@gmail.com. The newsletter is  
published 10 times a year.

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receive the newsletter by mail) to Ping Chang,  
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### February 10, 2022 (Zoom)

The Handweaver's Guild of America  
Suzie Ballenger, HGA President

### March 10, 2022

Complementary Plain Weave  
by Ann Edington Adams

### April 14, 2022

Bow Weaving  
by Catherine Marchant

### May 12, 2022

Challenge Reveal and ReNee's Rugs  
by Juliette Lanvers and ReNee Page

### June 11, 2022

Potluck and Dye Vat  
by Maureen Wilson and Jill Dahle