

## SUZANNE RAMSEY

"HELP WANTED --- Seeking enthusiastic and talented new member for our team. Must be self-starter, independent thinker, but work well with others. Good organizational and leadership skills required; high energy and positive attitude a must."

Versions of this ad can be found in the employment section of any newspaper, as personnel managers dream about their ideal worker. The person they are all looking for is Suzanne Ramsey. And if they want the worker to perform without accolades, Suzanne does that too.

Several of Suzanne's contemporaries in the guild point to her as the person mainly responsible for giving the guild its present organizational form. In the mid '70s, the guild existed only as an informal group of spinners that ran on common interests and goodwill, meeting in members' houses. One of the spinners taught the others to weave. More spinners and weavers joined the group in the late '70s, one of them being Suzanne, who admits to being 'one of the several new people who knew Roberts' Rules of Order', and that sort of thing'. In 1983 Suzanne became the group's third leader, when membership was at about 40. She led the group through the decision to organize formally and the subsequent writing of constitution and by-laws, which were accepted early in 1987. The new Whidbey Weavers Guild elected its first officers, and obtained non-profit tax status, in spring of 1987.

Presently the guild's treasurer, Suzanne is also actively involved in guild projects, even serving at the drop of a hat as substitute auctioneer when her 'older twin' Mary Black fell ill. Presently she is taking a particular interest in organizing weaving workshops for the beginning weavers who have joined the guild in the last year or two. A staunch supporter of all guild activities, she even, though she doesn't particularly like spinning, spins once a year at Spin-In, which she says she enjoys enormously for the fellowship.

She believes strongly in the guild as a fellowship or community, where members have equal acceptance no matter what their level of technical skill and where all benefit from free exchange of ideas and knowledge (**"We should NEVER give up Show and Tell"**). She is pleased that the Whidbey guild has remained slower-paced than some, to allow the development of person-to-person connections, and also that the organization has maintained a continuity, due in part, she feels, to the two-year presidency.

Suzanne's loft studio is as busy as her organizational schedule, with several works in progress: a tapestry in shades of green, obviously inspired by the trees and mountains that surround us; an interesting textural piece using chenille in a rag pattern (a four-block weave on seven shafts), a piece of upholstery fabric in swivel weave, derived from a Crazy Eights study; and other projects in design and sampling stages. Her house is decorated and her closet crammed with completed projects. For years she has woven and sewn a coat a year; though now that the closet is full, she is, she says, slowing down that line of work. Her particular interest is hand-manipulated weaves ("I have no ambition to sit at a computer loom and watch the shuttle go back and forth..."). The current tapestry, a pulpit fall, is her third ceremonial piece for her church. An altar cloth and a stole for the minister's vestment are already in use. Her designs for the altar cloth and pulpit fall were drawn from the mountains and trees that surround us. The stole, however, is decorated with a scrolling vine and flowers in a style derived from the Norwegian rose painting that Suzanne did in earlier years – like many weavers, she is multi-talented.

Her Norwegian heritage shows up in other weaving interests. Krokbragd, for example, is a three-harness technique (or two harnesses and one pick-up) that

appeals to Suzanne's love of bright and multitudinous colors. It also satisfies her reluctance to let any scrap of yarn go to waste! These techniques keep her in touch with her Norwegian heritage, literally as well as artistically. Some of them she learned from an elderly woman in Iowa who is acquainted with her relatives in Norway. She has also traveled extensively in Scandinavia and the Baltics, collecting samples of indigenous weaves as she goes. Further travels have taken her to Russia, China, France, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand, each trip adding to her collection of textiles, which have enriched many a Show and Tell

----Shirley Owen - 1998