

Penn- Jersey Basketry Guild

Our 36th Year



FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

pennjerseybasketryguild.org

HANDS ON HISTORY



OAK SPLINT BASKETS

The Southern Berks News 31 May 2017

By Robert L. Wood

(Reprinted with permission from Robert Wood)

Sturdy and inexpensive, oak-splint baskets were used in almost every kitchen and barn on the old homesteads. Prized now by collectors, these plain, undecorated, utilitarian forms tended to fall by the wayside in the twentieth century when inexpensive imported baskets, commercially made bushel and “peach” baskets, and all sorts of other containers came on the market.

The Pennsylvania Germans brought with them the ancient European craft of “karreb” (basket) making.

They wove plenty of coiled rye straw bread baskets and other rye straw containers of all sizes from bee skeps to sewing baskets. But the oak-splint was the basket
(Continued on page 4)



GUILD OPEN HOUSE FEBRUARY 10, 2024 12 NOON-3PM

Please join your fellow guild members by ringing in 2024 at our Annual Guild Open House on February 10, 2024! Cyndi Lawrence will be our hostess in North Wales, PA. Festivities start at noon.

Please come with something sweet or savory to share with fellow guild members. Paper products will be supplied by the guild.

In lieu of our gift exchange please bring a food donation for a local food bank.

Hope to see you at the Open House! Cyndi Lawrence’s home is located at 106 Bayhill Drive, North Wales, PA 19454. Her phone number is 610-283-2346.

INSIDE...

Hands On History	1
Annual Open House	1
PJBG Board	2
President’s Message	3
Hands On History (continued)	4-6
Wrapped Wreath Workshop	7
Basket Chatter	8
Festival of Trees 2023	9
Lois Macknik Obituary	9
Class Photos	10-12
World Wicker Festival	13
Basket Happenings	14
Advertisers	15-16
PJBG Calendar of Events	17
Membership Form	18

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Mary May, Barbara Ann Mueller and
Karen Wychock for
contributing to this newsletter!

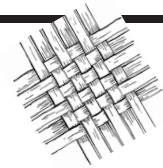
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Martha Costain
Barbara Henckler
Connie O'Connell

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings PJBG Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying time with family and friends this holiday season. Hopefully you can put your feet up and take a few minutes to read through the newsletter. Cyndi Lawrence has graciously invited us to her home for our Annual Open House set for February 10. Please come with something sweet or savory to share with fellow guild members. Paper products will be supplied by the guild. In lieu of our gift exchange please bring a food donation for a local food bank. It's a great time to spend with fellow PJBG members. We will take time to discuss our Calendar of Events and brain storm some ideas for future classes. Please come with your ideas.

The PJBG Board is working to fill our Calendar of Events. Each year it gets more challenging. Please think about offering a workshop for your fellow basket buddies. We have very talented members.

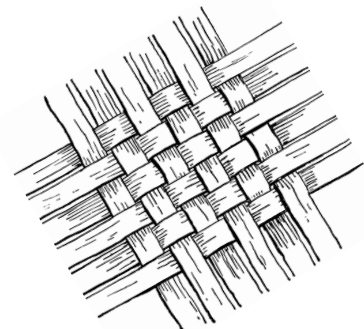
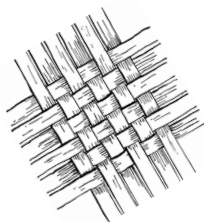
At my last craft show I met Nan Krauss. She was selling her handmade woolen mittens across from me. She started telling me about her husband's Uncle Howard from Kraussdale, PA. Howard made white oak baskets. My ears immediately perked up since I was unaware of any oak basket makers in our area. Nan continued to share her family's basket history with me throughout the two day show. I will be meeting with her husband after the holidays. Look for Howard Krauss's story in the next newsletter.

In researching Howard Krauss I came across an article on two other brothers, Frank and Milton Krause. Their names were spelled differently but they were living in the same general area. They were all white oak basket makers living in the same general area near Gilbertsville, PA. I received permission from Robert Wood to reprint his article in our newsletter. Enjoy the read!

Finally, I would like to say "thank you" to all of the companies that have supported the PJBG this past year! Their donations to our Annual meeting were greatly appreciated.

Angie at Country Seat
Beth at Basket Makers Catalog
Suzanne at Suzanne Moore
Jen at Basket of Blessings
Mary at Royalwood
Sandy at Sandy Atkinsons
Dave at D.E.L.s

Weave On!
Karen



(Continued from page 1)
work-horse in field and garden.

Perhaps because it's somewhat akin to weaving cloth, which was exclusively a male occupation, oak splint basket weavers were usually men. But more likely the reason basket making was a men's craft was because preparing the splints and ribs required the axe, splitting wedges, and "schnitzelbank" — all men's domain. The majority of basket makers were farmers or tradesmen who practiced their craft part time in the off season or when the weather was bad.

Not only plaiting the baskets but preparing the splints and ribs from a piece of white oak took strong hands and considerable skill. The Germans were very particular about selecting the tree to be used. It had to be a sapling no larger than ten inches in diameter, perfectly straight and free of knots or branches for the first eight or ten feet. It needed to be cut before the sap went down in the fall. After it was felled and carried home it was kept moist until ready for use.



To prepare the splints and ribs for basket making, first the bark was stripped off. Then the log was split in half, then quartered and then the quarters were again quartered and so on until they had pieces about stave size [an inch or two wide]. A pocket knife was then inserted into the end between growth rings and strips peeled away that were about an eighth of an inch thick and up to eight feet long. Green white oak has the quality of "delaminating" at the growth rings, so each strip is one year's growth. The resulting strips could easily be split to the desired width.

While seated at the "schnitzelbank" the basket maker smoothed the long, thin strips with a razor sharp draw knife. Splints were usually a quarter to a half inch wide while the ribs were as much as two inches wide in the middle but they gradually tapered to a point at each end. These points were tucked into the weavings where the handle joined the rim. The splints were then

laced around these ribs so that when dried the whole construction was bound together. White oak being an exceptionally tough, hard wood when dried, these baskets lasted for decades of rough usage: gathering potatoes, corn and other field crops, carrying silage and feed to barn animals, carrying produce to market and so on.

Commonly, oak splint baskets were made with or without handles. The more common handle type started with a frame made of two long, more or less round, strips of oak which were tapered at each end. These were bent into circles and the tapered ends overlapped and tacked together providing two equal size hoops. These hoops were assembled at right angles to each other and tacked at the joint. The one hoop made the basket rim, the other the handle and center frame for the plaiting.

Basket making was so common and unremarkable that little record of makers was kept. But locally we know of two brothers who lived on Grebe Road and made oak splint baskets until the early 1950's. Grebe Road is at the end of Faust Road near Fagleysville. The Limerick Township history "Limerick Township: A Journey Through Time" by Muriel Lichtenwalner notes that: "Frank Krause and his brother Milton, who lived along Swamp Creek in Neiffer, were basket makers. ...In the community of Neiffer these baskets were known as the 'Speck Annie's'. They traded at the Roth store in Neiffer and were a familiar sight, walking back and forth for supplies. They would buy a slab of bacon, put it in a burlap bag and sling it over their backs. The grease would come out on their clothes. [the Pennsylvania German word for fat is "speck"]. Frank Krause made sixteen different styles of splint baskets. These splint baskets, from the 16 quart size down to the pint size, have arched handles that span the basket from side to side and reach as high above the rim as the woven work extends below the rim."

"Frank and Milton Krause could be seen regularly carrying their baskets along the roads toward Saratoga to board the trolley to Pottstown. There they sold the baskets on the street for a small fee. On Saturday afternoons they walked or accepted rides to the Gilbertsville Sale to sell their baskets. Both Frank and Milton died in 1953 and were buried in the Herstein Chapel burying ground."

Anyone interested in pursuing the basket making craft today would have trouble, I fear, in finding good white oak saplings to use. I've lately observed the oak trees in our immediate region are more or less affected with oak decline or oak dieback. Due apparently to diseases and fungi as well as environmental stresses brought on by drought and soil acidification, the trees become blighted and die over a period of two to five years. However in areas where there is good limestone soil the trees seem healthier.



Bob Wood holding a beautiful oak bread basket found in the Red Men's Hall, near the corner of Rt 29 and 63 in Green Lane, PA. Red Men's Hall is home to the Goschenhoppen Historians. Originally a fraternal lodge, built by the Improved Order of Red Men in 1907, it now houses several specialty museums, the Folk Life

Library, and the offices of the Historians. The restored auditorium is used for their monthly meetings, symposiums and annual Christmas Market.

This large rectangular bread basket was woven locally for a baker. It was woven in the early 20th century. The four runners along the bottom of the basket added support for fresh baked breads.



Bee Skeps made prior to 1850 in Berks or Montgomery County, PA



Bob Wood holding an oak splint wash basket. This basket was woven by the Kraus Brothers, Frank and Daniel, who made baskets in Lower Frederick Township. Daniel was the main basket maker; he was a very poor man who subsided on fatty, cheap meat so the local people recognized him as the "Der Schpeck Denny." Speck is German for pickled pork fat. Interestingly, the local people recognized him as the main basket maker. The two brothers were collectively known as "Der Schpeck Dennies," ignoring the lesser skilled brother by name.

SCHNITZELBANK OR SHAVE HORSE?

The PA Germans commonly referred to a shave horse as a “schnitzelbank.” One is on display at the The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center in Pennsburg, PA. The Heritage Center is a not-for-profit historical library, archive, and museum located in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. Its mission is to “protect, preserve and interpret books, manuscripts and artifacts of the Schwenkfelders.

“Schwenkfelder” is the term used since the very early 1700s to identify people who study and follow the ideas and teachings of Caspar Schwenckfeld. Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489/90–1561) was a radical-Protestant, spiritual reformer. Born a mem-



ber of the lower nobility, Schwenckfeld lived in Silesia (at that time an area on the eastern border of Germany; today southwestern Poland) from the time of his birth in 1489/90 until 1529 when

he was exiled as a heretic. He spent most of the rest of his life constantly moving incognito around a broad area of southern Germany, hiding in the homes of his friends and fellow believers as well as monasteries.

As a spiritualist, Schwenckfeld never intended to establish or to build a separate, physical church. Worship during Schwenckfeld’s lifetime was in the form of individual devotions. Public worship in a church was not an option.



Rye Straw Basket
“Backkarreb” Baking Basket
Bread dough would be allowed to rise on linen cloth before being baked.

BAKING FOR THE FAMILY

In the areas of German settlement in PA, the outdoor bake oven was an essential part of rural life. Unlike their European ancestors who had community bake ovens in their villages, each family usually had an oven. And for a busy family with parents, children, hired hands, and possibly grandparents, a roomy oven was a necessity.

Friday was baking day. Farm women prepared dough for bread, using rye flour for daily use and wheat flour for special occasions. After the dough rose in baskets or the dough trough, the women inserted it into the back of the oven. Pies, cakes and cookies, all vital parts of the family diet, would be placed toward the front of the oven, sometimes while the bread was baking. A family would need as many as two dozen loaves of bread weekly and any number of pies baked in earthenware pie plates.

WOVEN WREATH WITH EMBELLISHMENTS

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2023

10 AM - 4 PM

CLASS & TEACHER FEE: \$55

LOCATION: KAREN'S STUDIO

108 LYRIC WAY, WARRINGTON, PA 18976



The Peapod Weavers (Gretchen and Robin) will be offering a wrapped wreath workshop on Friday, May 17, 2023. We will be working with a 14" styrofoam core. Once we weave the wreath with reed, we will embellish it. Shells will be provided but you can choose to embellish it with anything you want. Examples to the right are shown to give you ideas for alternate embellishments. Please bring a hot glue gun if you have one.

The workshop will be held at Karen Wychock's Studio in Warrington, PA. We hope that you can join us for this fun workshop.

(Tear here and return bottom portion) Send this completed form and your check for the teacher fee to:
Karen Wychock 108 Lyric Way, Warrington, PA 18976

WRAPPED WREATH CLASS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ Email: _____

CLASS FEE: _____ Check No. _____

BASKET CHATTER

Do you have an interesting photo, article, or basket tidbit that you would like to share with fellow members? Here is your opportunity to share. Simply email your information to kwychock@verizon.net. The following items were submitted by Gretchen Birdsall, Robin Godonis, Mary May and Karen Wychock.



Gretchen Birdsall gifted Karen a beautiful lap quilt with a basket pattern! It's beautiful and greatly appreciated! Gretchen, you're a very talented lady!

The sewing basket pieces above belonged to Emily Ziegler Miller. Emily was Robin Godonis and Gretchen Birdsall's grandmother. She attended Bucknell University and became a teacher.

The rug beater was part of their grandmother's summer house in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. They remember beating the rugs with it when they visited her. They believe it dates back to the 1920s.



September 23-24, 2023
Duck and Decoy Show
Tuckerton Seaport
Thank you ladies for your efforts! The rain couldn't keep you away!



Somerset County Park Commission

45TH FESTIVAL OF TREES

Thank you to Barbara Ann Mueller for setting up the PJBG tree this year at the Somerset County Park Commission's 45th Festival of Trees. It showcases all of the baskets that our guild collected from most of our 50 states. Barbara Ann added her own touch by adding vintage puzzle pieces from a 50 States Puzzle. She punched holes in the pieces and hung them along side the baskets. How creative!

Thank you Barbra Ann! The tree looks very festive!



OBITUARY OF LOIS MACKNIK

Lois, age 89, of Annandale, NJ, passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, October 23, 2023. Born on June 29, 1934, in Philadelphia, PA, Lois was the daughter of the late William Nones Boehm and the late Marie Clara (née Bauer) Boehm.

Lois was a graduate of Temple University earning a BS in Elementary Education and in 1960 she earned a MA in Reading and Clinical Psychology. She worked as a Learning Disability Consultant for the Hanover Township School District for twenty-eight years. Lois married the love of her life, Joel Masland, on April 15, 2013.

Lois was passionate about weaving and fiber arts. In 1972, Lois began weaving when she started attending craft shows with her mother. After attending a 1981 Mid-Atlantic Fiber Conference and participating in the Overshot Sample Exchange, Lois was recruited as one of the first members of guild for the Jockey Hollow Weavers. Lois was an active member of the guild. She held many positions throughout the years, including Recording Secretary, President, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. Lois also spent a lot of time researching information and learning new techniques in regards to weaving and fiber crafts to create educational programs for the Jockey Hollow Weavers. Her dedication was steadfast as she also kept busy making many items for the guild's annual Show and Sale. She enjoyed sharing her knowledge on her craft, often demonstrating weaving at the guild shows, New Jersey historical sites, as well as county fairs. She was a true inspiration to new and experienced weavers.

Lois Macknik was a long time member of PJBG and the Handweavers of Bucks County. Lois volunteered as a workshop leader and tour guide for the Red Mill Museum. She enjoyed listening to classical music and often went to local music concerts. Lois truly enjoyed being a part of her community. She will be greatly missed among her weaving peers as well as the friends she had made during her contributions to the town of Clinton.

Lois is predeceased by her beloved husband, Joel Masland.



*Class
With
Mary Price
June 10, 2023*





*Class
With
Mary Price
June 10, 2023*





*Open
Weave
At
Walnford*





5th World Wicker and Weaving Festival Poznań 2023

The 5th World Wicker Festival took place in Poland in August 2023. The USA Team consisted of Anne Bowers, Annetta Kraayeveld, Penelope Coles and Bob Gleason-Moore. The goal of the Competition is to cultivate weaving traditions, protect and popularize the unique trade of basketry – weaver, promotion of artists and weaving works, including folk, traditional and artistic trends, setting up contacts and exchange of ideas among weavers from all around the world in spheres of: design, weaving techniques, used materials (traditional and new), as well as confrontation of existing trends in the industry with the consumer requirements.



Basket weavers from at least 60 countries took part in the competition. Anne has a multitude of photos on her Facebook page, It was great following her during the competition. You can also check out the NBO website for information. How about a road trip to the next festival?

Congratulations to all of the participants! The Penn-Jersey Basketry Guild is so proud of you!



Congratulations to Bob Gleason-Moore. He received an honorable mention at the World Wicker and Weaving Festival (Festiwal Wikliny i Plecionkarstwa) held in Poland in August 2023.

BASKET HAPPENINGS!



2024 Weaving in the Sunshine State
January 30th - February 1st, 2024
Fort Myers, Florida

Basket Weaving Retreat
 (plus many other fun weaving projects)
www.WeavingInTheSunshineState.com

BASKET

"Basket Therapy"
2024 Convention
March 14-17, 2024

THERAPY

2024 WEAVING ODYSSEY
September 19-22, 2024
Gettysburg, PA

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 Pam Hermann (fka Talsky)
 Karen Kotecki • Peggy McCarson
 Billy Owens • Marilyn Parr
 Mary Price • Eric Jon Taylor**

Classes and cabins are filling fast!
 To register & sign up for classes visit:
www.basketweavingcruise.com
 Like & follow our Facebook page!
Facebook.com/BasketWeavingCruise

Basket cruise 2024

Association of Michigan Basketmakers
Annual Convention 2024
October 16-20, 2024 at the Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport Hotel and Conference Center in Grand Rapids

facebook



You've joined the Penn-Jersey Basketry Guild, so why not join the group on Facebook? Keep up with all of our members latest happenings! **STAY CONNECTED!**

To join the Facebook group, simply log onto Facebook and in the search box, type "Penn-Jersey Basketry Guild." When the group shows up in the search results, click on it. You'll be brought to the guild's Facebook page. Then, under the header image, click "Join." You're in! It's an open group, so no approval is needed. We hope to see you on Facebook!

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Editorial Information

Please e-mail text submissions as Microsoft Word attachments; Photos as high-resolution jpegs or tiffs (200-300 dpi) to:

kwychock@verizon.net

or mail to: Karen Wychock
108 Lyric Way
Warrington, PA 18976

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**Submission deadline for the
Spring Edition is
March 1, 2024**

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FREE CATALOG AVAILABLE

EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

2024 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 10 (SATURDAY)

Guild Open House
12 Noon - 3 PM
Cyndi Lawrence's Home
106 Bayhill Drive
North Wales, PA 19454
610-283-2346

MARCH 2 (SATURDAY)

PJBG Spring Meeting
10 AM - 3 PM
Pine Needle Crafting and Baskets with Mary Slater
\$25

We will be exploring pineneedle work with a hands-on practice of pine needle weaving through the eye of Susan Slater. Susan began making baskets a year ago. Her work is beautiful.

We will be using local pine needles!
Yes, there are NJ short pine needles....

Final details to follow.

MAY 17 (FRIDAY)

Wrapped Wreath with Embellishments
Peapod Weavers
10 AM - 4 PM
Karen's Studio, Warrington, PA

JUNE

Annual Meeting
Details to follow

SEPTEMBER 28-29

Duck and Decoy Show
Tuckerton Seaport
Demonstration

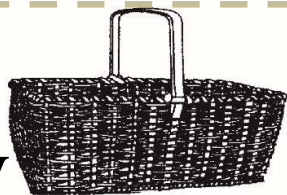
NOVEMBER 8-10

Class with Pam Wilson
Details to follow

Kathy Petronzio Class
Details to follow

Your dues help us to pay for our insurance, newsletter, renting class sites and for our website. Please feel free to notify the guild if you have a financial hardship which would cause you not to rejoin our group.

Penn- Jersey Basketry Guild



2023-2024

Membership Application

The PJBG membership year runs from May 1 through the following April 30.

Our annual dues are \$25 per person or \$35 for a family/couple membership.

PLEASE PRINT

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (C) _____

*Email: _____

* For Guild information only; no solicitations.

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

\$25 Individual Membership

New Member

\$35 Family/couple Membership

Renewing Member

New to the Guild? How did you hear about us? _____

I consider myself: Beginner Intermediate Advanced Basket Weaver

Style of weaving / Materials most often used: _____

Basketry Interests: Weaver Collector Teacher Supplier

Suggestions for Workshops / Teachers: _____

I will contribute to the Guild by: _____

If you are included in a picture that was taken at a basketry event, would you allow your picture to be uploaded to the PJBG Facebook page? Yes No

An electronic (PDF) newsletter will be sent via email saving extra printing and postage costs for the Guild.

**Please make check payable to PJBG and mail along with the Membership Form to:
Carol Pollock ■ 133 Wooley Run ■ Newtown, PA 18940-9672**