THE PROJECT

The Weavers' Guild of Boston, with nearly 300 members, will celebrate its 87th year this May. Sometimes referred to as rigidly traditional and staid, we realize it is time to bust out of that mold. Several beloved past Deans and two brand new members are among our many members who are surviving breast cancer. This disease has affected our lives and the lives of those we love. Through generous donations of work from our weavers, we will create a fanciful exhibit to bring attention to this disease. Doing our best to bring a smile and sense of wonder to our viewers while not offending, the WGB will organize several public viewings of an exhibit of embellished hand woven bras built on yarn cones or existing bras. The complete exhibit will then be given to a fund raising group to help fund further breast cancer research. The guild will benefit by the camaraderie of a fun and unusual group project which encourages thinking outside ourselves. We hope to bring publicity and funds to breast cancer research, attention to the guild as a caring and creative community, and to hand weaving as a modern, living, and lively art form.

INSPIRATION

Not one hand weaver needs a reminder to be aware of the graying of weaving guilds. Look at any group photo! The shrinking guild membership created as young women went back to work, speaks to both increased career opportunities for women and our wavering economy. These losses in membership contribute to a bleak picture for the future of hand weaving. Our slowly dwindling guild budget was fashioned for when the guild had many more members (800). To survive, we must bring back attention to and appreciation of the process of hand weaving textiles. Weavers' Guild of Boston has chosen to address these issues lightheartedly, poke fun at itself, and extend its creative hands in a direction to help another group to which we feel strong ties. A dozen years ago, WGB member Deb Whitmore was moved to create a wonder bra of yarn cones to celebrate the retirement of Dean (president) Barbara Herbster. Barbara returned the favor a few years later at the New England Weavers Seminar informal fashion show, surprising Jayne Flanagan, the commentator. A recent e-mail received from Jayne suggested that the quilter's bra exhibit (**http://www.quiltersofsc.org/artfullbras/artfullbras.htm)** had nothing on weavers who could produce quite a show of their own. "Think what weavers could do!" were her words. Putting this cooperative idea together with the challenge in the Handwoven Magazine, we were off and running.

PROGRESS

Permission from the WGB board was the first hurdle to be overcome. The presentation to the board in March was accompanied by hoots, tittering, and flashes of cell phone cameras as the idea was spelled out. The presenter, "Brabra" Herbster, was in full regalia showing one possibility, a collapsible yarn cone bra to celebrate the *"Bumps, Wrinkles, and Ruffles"* collapse weave class she had taught only minutes before. A segmented yarn cone was covered with hand woven fabric and collapsed when the time was right. With unanimous board approval, an original poem and inspirational photos were passed around during the general guild meeting. A handout was distributed as Barbara, again in full regalia, demonstrated the articulated bra. Staid meeting, indeed! Our guild has many members from other states that have joined to get the Bulletin sample or to do our ratings program. These members have been encouraged to participate from afar and send their contribution.

FUTURE

As described in the accompanying pages, the project has caught hold and the first unveiling will be at the annual meeting of the Weavers' Guild of Boston in May. The bras from the May meeting will be kept and exhibited to members of a free workshop (Weavers Helping Weavers)

in September. At that time, members not attending morning classes will be encouraged to join workshop leader Barbara Herbster in beginning construction of a yarn cone bra covered with handwoven fabric. With scissors, needle and thread, and hot glue gun in hand, the participants will be encouraged to be light and lively, wild and silly, creating an idea to be finished at home. In October, the participants will model their completed projects for the guild, then display them on padded hangers for all to enjoy with a weaver's handshake (it's still New England). The collection will be added to those made for the May meeting and taken for display at the annual Guild Exhibit and Sale in November for several thousand people to appreciate. Then, we will set up a traveling schedule which will include some of the venues suggested in the accompanying pages. We would be most grateful if our idea caught on and encouraged other guilds to co-operate with this or other charitable organizations.

OUT OF TOWN BACKGROUND

The true Old Bostonian is named the "Boston Brahmin". For this project we will become the "Boston BRAhmin."