

December Program by Ellen Alderson

In December our program will be a talk by the owner of Spring Too Fibers in Elizabeth, Andrew MacArthur. Mr. MacArthur processes raw fiber into yarns. In October, I had the opportunity to visit Spring Too and see all their marvelous machinery! Fiber comes from the “growers;” alpaca, llama, wool, even dog hair, and is cleaned, carded, occasionally blended and spun into yarns; one, two, or three plies. Mr. MacArthur will show us the whole process and perhaps bring some of his lovely product to share. For the small herd owner the cottage industry fiber processing business creates a salable product from the fleece they produce. It is a fascinating journey. We hope you will enjoy learning where and how the lovely yarns we work with are created.

Following our program we can celebrate the holidays with our annual Stash Sale and a potluck luncheon. (See related articles about these events.) Also to honor the season and share our personal good fortune, remember to bring some canned goods to replenish the church’s food pantry. Happy Holidays all!

December Weaving Sample by Cozy Swickard

Weave Structure: Crackle (“Jamtlandsväv”)

Source: Strickler’s 8-shaft Pattern Book pp133-136; *Weavers* #27 pp 32-36; *Handwoven* Sept/Oct '94 pp 36-46 especially Suzanne De Atley’s scarf

This project was the culmination of a three-month Learning Exchange program coordinated through the Handweavers Guild of America; weavers from around the country focus on a technique, enjoy access to an expert teacher and exchange samples at the end of the study. Colorado’s Susan Wilson, COE in Weaving, lead this exchange in Crackle. Susan is an excellent teacher, beautiful weaver and lucky for us in this area, a valuable local resource.

Because this was a formal learning exchange, I devoted a serious amount of time to sampling, experimenting and documenting, work that produced an extensive record with lots of samples and notes. After starting with a four-shaft crackle threading, I wove thick-and-thin wefts, polychrome and single, contrasting warp-weight wefts. I experimented with different tie-ups and treadling and went through the weft options again. Then, moving to eight shafts, these variables were repeated producing considerably more combinations. (For threading Crackle and the use of ‘incidentals’ that produce the plain weave “ground”, see references above.)

This is a case where sampling really taught me how to understand and control a structure to produce the design I wanted: curves on a plain weave background.

The documentation for crackle is confusing in places (“tabby” is used to describe the “ground” of this structure but in fact “ground” in other cases can be plain weave, twill, or satin. In this case “ground” is anything that is not “pattern”.) Usually Crackle offers a warp and “ground” weft of the same weight and a heavier, pattern weft. I found the best way to make crackle’s pattern blocks, reverses, half-and-quarter tones curve was to use highly-contrasting warp and weft in equal weights and to make short columns, or blocks. I chose 5/2 white and grey because that’s what I had on hand although using heavy threads required effort to maintain even tension as the warp advanced. One shuttle made the weaving go fast, too. The equally weighted fibers made the columns and half tones appear to nestle up against each other at 90 degrees; I liked that. Treadling sequence controlled the curves’ directions so I could produce snaky swirls, big circles and rounded shapes throughout my piece using just eight shafts. (Continued on next page)