

Hand-Weaving Proves Fascinating Art

Evening School Offers Expert Instruction

By Margaret Koch

"Once bitten by the weaving bug, you just don't get over it," is the way Mrs. Mildred E. Brown explains her love of the hand art which she teaches three days a week under the adult education program of the Santa Cruz Evening school.

The increase in leisure time has been a tremendous boost to the craft, she pointed out when she was interviewed at one of her class sessions Wednesday night.

A petite, gray-haired woman, she moves quickly and surely among the small forest of looms in the weaving room at Branciforte elementary school. That evening she was wearing a handsome maroon plaid suit, a product of her own loom.

In addition to instructing a class on Wednesdays and Fridays from 7 to 10 p.m., Mrs. Brown also has a day-time class which meets each Monday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Now to this business of weaving! We stood, looking around the crowded room feeling a little bewildered.

There was a woman busy threading her loom with what looked like hundreds of threads. How could she ever keep them all straight?

Others were seated at looms, pressing pedals called "treadles" with their feet, and passing thread called the "weft" through those other hundreds of threads which are called the "warp."

If you have never observed hand weaving in action you can have no idea of how intricate and fascinating it is.

Mrs. Brown went on to explain that new pupils start by weaving "tabby," which is a plain technique for beginners. She also stressed that the basic principles of weaving are simple and easily understood, and it is possible for beginners to complete many attractive and useful articles.

The first project is usually table mats woven in two colors and white, using rug cotton which is easier to work.

The woman working with the hundreds of threads was putting the permanent warp on her loom. Every 100 threads is marked with one of a different color.

This permanent warp must be measured out first on a warping reel, which is another wooden tool of the trade.

Two types of shuttles are used, Mrs. Brown explained. The throw shuttle is used when making drapery fabric or suiting yardage. But detail work, such as the double-weave pickup technique used in the hangings in the accompanying picture, demands the use of the stick shuttle.



Mrs. Mildred E. Brown, center, instructor for the Santa Cruz Evening school weaving classes, advises Miss Myrtle Chandler on the difficult "summer and winter" technique while another of her advanced pupils, Miss Elisabeth Barnes, works on an adjoining loom. Hanging on

the wall are samples of the complicated "double-weave pickup" technique. Miss Chandler, a registered nurse, and Miss Barnes, a city librarian, are among the many business and professional people in Mrs. Brown's classes who enjoy weaving as a fascinating "change of pace."

This double-weave pickup is an extremely complicated technique with which a double fabric is woven, and the most difficult designs can be worked out.

Designs, by the way, may be taken from books or may be the original creations of the weaver. They are worked out on graph paper and taped to the wooden frame of the loom for handy reference.

"Summer and winter" is another weaving technique being used by one of the students.

There are two types of looms in use at present: the Jacks loom which has a rising shed, and the Counterbalance loom with a sinking shed. The school furnishes 12 looms for beginners. The rest of them are privately owned, usually by advanced students.

Materials used in weaving? "Just about everything," according to Mrs. Brown. "Cottons, wools, silks, linen, nylon, orlon, chenille, metallics, nylon tricot, jute, hemp, ramie." Boxes of these rainbow-hued materials come from all over the world.

Who are these weavers? And what do they do when they aren't sitting at a loom?

There was a Santa Cruz high school biology teacher working busily in one corner; two librarians at looms in another spot. Housewives outnumbered everyone, and it was a bit surprising to see a man working a loom, but Mrs. Brown waved it off nonchalantly.

"Men weave, too, and weave well," she said. "Many of our best fabric designers are men. On hand looms they design the fabrics which are later woven commercially on power looms."

Mrs. Brown went on to explain that during the rest of the semester, the class hopes to do American, Swedish and Italian bound weaving, as well as Jaemlandtvaev. That last is more commonly known as "crackle," because hardly anyone can pronounce the word. It was named "crackle" by Mrs. Mary Atwater in 1928 because it reminded her of the crackle glaze on pottery dishes.

Mrs. Atwater was one of the people instrumental in reviving interest in hand weaving in the west, and also the organizer of the Shuttlecraft guild, according to Mrs. Brown.

About two years ago, the Santa Cruz Handweavers guild, of which Mrs. Malcolm Sinclair is president, was organized by members of Mrs. Brown's classes. The guild, which meets once a month

to compare notes, also sponsors traveling exhibits. The 30 members are all working on weaving projects, and Mrs. Sinclair is actually using some bamboo from her garden in her work.

Color is an important part of weaving, too. Hanging on the wall in Mrs. Brown's classroom is a large multi-colored piece of fabric called a color blanket, or "gamp." (There are quite a few Swedish words used in connection with weaving.) The gamp is there to show weaving students what different colors do to each other when they are woven through each other, an important factor in choice of colors.

Italian-American Groups Announce Program Theme

"Romance on the Isle of Capri," is the theme chosen for the second annual program and dance to be given March 16 at the civic auditorium by the local Italian-American lodges and clubs.

Featured on the 8 p.m. entertainment bill will be several vocalists including Miss Patricia McNulty, Miss Antoinette Modolo, Kenneth Ferguson, Miss Marie Zolezzi and Miss Geannie Stagnaro. Mrs. Lee Shaffer will perform an authentic Spanish dance, Robert Pori will play violin selections and the Arion Singing society will perform.

Acting as master of ceremonies will be Dave Ferrari.

Dancing will follow the program with Fred Fullride leading the orchestra which is being provided by Santa Cruz Local 346, American Federation of Musicians, through a grant from the trust fund of the recording industries.

Serving on the committees for arrangements are Ralph Grossi, Sisto Rapalli, Louis Lippi and John Pini, refreshments; Mrs. Lloyd Sherman and Gino Giudici entertainment; Mrs. Steve Giudici and Attilio Varbella, prizes; Mr. and Mrs. Louis Dolfini and Enrico Trincherio, refreshments, tickets; Miss Modolo and Mrs. Peter Crescini, flag presentation, and Roland Pori, publicity.

Both the program and the dance are open to the public without charge.

WWI AUXILIARY TO MEET TOMORROW

The auxiliary to World War I Veterans will meet tomorrow at 8 p.m. at Veteran Memorial building with President Harriet Husmann presiding for the first time since her installation. Also meeting at the same time will be the Santa Cruz barracks, WWI Veterans.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
No. 15,521

In the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the County of Santa Cruz.

In the Matter of the Estate of EDITH HARREL, Deceased.

Notice Is Hereby Given by the Undersigned, ROBERT L. HARRIS, Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Edith Harrel, deceased, to the creditors of, and all persons having claims against the said deceased, or said estate, to file them, with the necessary vouchers, in the office of the Clerk of the above named Court (which said office is situate in the Court House in the City of Santa Cruz in said County and State), within six months after the first publication of this notice made on the 23rd day of February 1958, or present and exhibit them, with the necessary vouchers, within said period, to the said Executor at the office of J. FRANK MURPHY and EUGENE J. ADAMS in the City of Santa Cruz, County of Santa Cruz, State of California, which said last named office, the undersigned selects as the place of business in all matters connected with said estate.

ROBERT L. HARRIS
Executor of the Last Will and Testament of said deceased.

Dated February 21, 1958.
J. FRANK MURPHY and
EUGENE J. ADAMS
Attorneys for said Executor
Feb. 23; March 2, 9, 16

No. 6

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