

KHWS Highlights 2022-2023

Create – Connect – Contribute – Learn – Share

These five words, gathered in our Strategic Plan and headlining all our communications, have been put into action throughout the Guild's activities in 2022-2023.

As a Guild we committed to four strategic goal areas and we have made progress in each one.

Connect and engage members with Guild operations

In our monthly programs at general membership meetings, we learned about finding natural dyes in unusual places; Preserving Textile Traditions of the Peruvian Highlands; Inuit weaving and textiles; Fibreworks PC software for weavers; and how to grow and use Woad, the Northern Blue. Members presented spinning and weaving demonstrations and competed successfully at the City of Kingston 2023 Sheep to Shawl event. The studio, the heart of the guild, was active with renewal of equipment (welcoming a new countermarch loom, and wheels for the Baby Wolf); weavers on the 100-inch loom have created beautiful catalogues with a 2000-thread warp. Open studio on Thursdays continues to draw people from near and far, in person and through the Zoom link. We had a highly successful sale in November, with 32 consignors and almost 1400 items submitted; lucrative studio window sales continued into December.

Develop a comprehensive plan for learning opportunities

In the past year, members of the Guild and wider community have participated in workshops on making felted vessels, spinning silk, sewing a jacket with handwoven fabric, weaving on table looms and floor looms, creating a painted warp, weaving a pine-needle basket, plying yarn, tapestry weaving, e-textiles, rug-weaving structures, planning a weaving project, inkle loom pick-up, making a warp, introduction to the dye-station. Three study groups are meeting regularly, with the Spinning study group having resumed after a lengthy hiatus. A group of new Canadians participated in a 5-session workshop "Woven together at the Tett"; we also welcomed a visit by grade 11 and 12 students from a francophone Catholic school in Kingston. Everyone who visited the Tett Centre in summer months was able to enjoy and learn from our dye garden at the front entrance.

Identify and implement approaches for sustainable operation

Your Board met 7 times in the year and, in addition to financial and governance oversight, served as Program committee. Financial sustainability was a key concern in 2022 as prices went up everywhere for everyone. Fortunately, the easing of COVID restrictions helped us catch a wave of interest in in-person learning events like the workshops listed above, which became a very helpful revenue stream for the Guild. We applied for, and received, two grants and one substantial sponsorship. We worked through a process for developing criteria for life memberships. We also started grappling with the new requirements for nonprofits due to the new Ontario Nonprofit Corporations Act (ONCA), and we developed job descriptions for the different roles on the board.

Identify and implement digital supports for Guild activities

The Guild has an active, up-to-date web-site with links to our “Threads of History” site, our Facebook page that has more than 2000 posts and a rating of 5/5, and our stunningly beautiful Instagram site. We have adapted to COVID times by becoming adept with Zoom technology, using it for three winter meetings each year and for all our Board meetings. For the Zoom meetings, we continued to use the Padlet upload space that we started using last year, for virtual Show and Share. We use Google groups for internal communication and through our email list we have multiple monthly e-blasts (a total of 128 pages!) with Guild news updates and links of interest. This year the Board got organized on our Google Drive so that handovers to incoming directors can be simplified (no more bankers’ boxes of paper) and all directors can have easy access to background documents and official records. We will continue to make print copies of governance documents available in the studio, and to deposit older materials with the Queen’s Archives, who are now asking that all records be digitized.

Celebrate!

Our strategic plan states our mission as “Together we contribute to celebrating and sharing the knowledge, skills and values of spinning, weaving, and related fibre arts in traditional, contemporary, and exploratory expressions.” 2023 was a time for our guild to celebrate – 75 years strong! Throughout the month of May we mounted a gorgeous display in the Tett gallery, including items from many decades of spinning and weaving, a fabric collage of contributed samples, and the entries for this year’s Guild Challenge – scarves and shawls. Activities included a spinning wheel clinic with Gord Lendrum; an elegant afternoon tea at which Life Memberships were bestowed on eight long-term members; a new-member gathering; two wool waulking events; a knitting machine exploration; spinning gatherings and demonstrations. Our May meeting was held in the Activity Room opening onto the Gallery so that we could all enjoy and discuss the items on display.

After this busy, exciting year, we gratefully accepted an invitation from a member to have a June potluck gathering at her home, relaxing and appreciating each other’s company on a sunny summer evening.