



Northwest Basket Weavers

Sharing ideas, information and good times are some of the things that basket weavers love to do. The Northwest Basket Weavers – Vi Phillips Basketry Guild was formed for these very reasons.

Vi Phillips was one of our Northwest “living basketry treasures”, and in 1982 her students decided to make their regular gatherings to work on baskets into a more formal arrangement. The Guild was started by sixteen original charter members. Sadly, only four survive today, but we owe them a great debt for creating something wonderful. The goals of the Guild include:

- ❖ To study, share and practice weaving techniques
- ❖ To gather and use native materials
- ❖ To identify, collect and appreciate basketry
- ❖ To promote the art of basketry to the public

Our membership now numbers over 200, and includes people from throughout the Pacific Northwest, British Columbia and across the United States.

The Guild meets on the second Wednesday of each month, except July, August and December, at the Shoreline Historical Museum, 749 N. 175th Street, Seattle, with a Social Hour at 6:30 p.m. and Program at 7:30 p.m. The Board meets quarterly and is open to all interested members. To find the museum, take the 175th exit off I-5, head west, cross Highway 99, and it is on the left in an old school building.

The program portion of the meeting generally begins with announcements. The programs offer members an opportunity to learn more about the history of basketry, how to gather and prepare materials, as well as hands-on sessions on specific techniques or basket patterns. Plenty of time is allowed before and after the program for members to visit and share information. Many meetings include time for show and tell, especially after the busy summer months. The Guild’s extensive library is accessible to members before and after meetings.

Since some of the members do not live close enough to participate in the meetings, the newsletter has become an important benefit of membership in the Guild. It is published ten times a year, and incorporates business and program notes, book reviews, announcements of upcoming local and national shows, workshops and classes, as well as other articles of interest.

The Guild offers a variety of activities to the membership. Field trips may be organized to gather natural weaving materials, or to visit museums, gallery shows or collections. We hold a weekend weaving retreat every March, which is great for inspiration and fellowship. At the November meeting we enjoy a potluck and gift exchange.

Interested members may form small Study Groups offering a chance to meet together to pursue a common interest. Or, a member may decide to host an informal gathering to work on baskets. These “bring your own basket” gatherings are hosted by a different member each time and are a wonderful way to get to know one another. All members are welcome to bring a project and join the fun. Dates, times and locations are announced in the newsletter.

The Guild has also supported a variety of educational opportunities for both members and the general public. Members may apply for Study Grants. Basket Days have provided members the opportunity to take a class at little or no cost. Special workshops and lectures have featured well-known basketry artists from outside our area. During 2001 the Guild worked with the Burke Museum in conjunction with a major exhibit of its Northwest Native American Basketry collection, to provide volunteers on weekends to explain basketry techniques to children and adults. In 2003, we sponsored our first national-level basketry conference. In 2004 and 2005, the Guild sponsored a very successful booth at the NW Folklife Festival to give the public an opportunity to learn to make a basket.

Our members have some reciprocal privileges with the Columbia Basin Basketry Guild in Portland Oregon, such as attendance at retreats and sponsored workshops. This is a wonderful way to expand our circle of basket weaving contacts and make new friends. Their retreat is in September, nicely complementing our spring activity.

We are continually working to promote the art of basketry and the Guild’s objectives. Membership is open to anyone interested in baskets whether or not they are weavers. If you would like more information, or would like to join, please contact the Corresponding Secretary, Northwest Basket Weavers, PO Box 75131, Seattle, WA 98125-0131. General membership dues are \$25, or \$35 for business members.

For current information about our programs and activities, please visit our website at www.nwbasketweavers.org