

METRICS FOR WEAVERS

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by Peggy Dokka

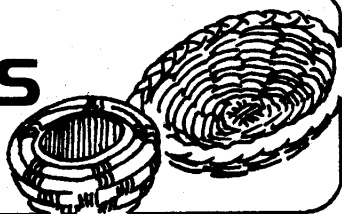
It is not necessary to invest in totally new equipment to "turn metric" in your weaving. For instance, if you happen to own a 40-inch loom, why not start thinking of it as one meter wide? Of course, your finished cloth will be somewhat narrower, but we seldom weave the maximum width of the loom anyway. If your present loom is 45-inches wide, you can weave "all wool and a meter wide" if you choose.

Your present warping board may be one that is a yard across and three inches or so between pegs vertically. Should you want to convert to metrics for short warps, drop down one peg for each pass of the yarn across the board, and you can still count each pass as one unit. Or you can make a guide thread to the metric length desired, exactly as you do now for odd lengths in yards.

Where you are most likely to really need understanding of the metric system, however, is in ordering equipment, especially reeds, from foreign sources. To help in this case, remember the numbers 40, 50, and 60. These are the approximate equivalents of our 10, 14, and 15 dent reeds. In other words, metric reeds are sized by the number of dents per 10 centimeters (which is just about 4 inches). The 50 dents per cm. reed is slightly finer than our 12 dent—actually it is close to 12½, but one can often order in other dent sizes as well, if a very exact measurement is necessary.

Next month this column will discuss "how many makes what"—basic measurements in metric useful to the textile worker.

OF BASKETS



by Cathy Ingebretsen

"Baskets are the Indian Woman's poems; the shaping of them her sculpture. They wove into them the story of their life and love."¹

When I speak of baskets, I speak of other types of weaving as well. When I speak of collectors, I speak of anyone that loves baskets and values them for other than their monetary worth; regardless of whether they can afford to have a collection or not. I have no desire to be exclusive, only to share with you some thoughts to answer the question, "Why do we weave?"

When we no longer have to weave from a utilitarian point of view, why do we spend our days laboring, straining our minds and backs, our eyes? Is it for money? Is it for fame?

Few people can tell you of their monetary wealth gained from their weaving. Most people will agree that you would be better off working a 9-5 office job with regular hours, paid vacations and benefits, if you are seeking only monetary gain.

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Fame? Perhaps. There are opportunities for good professional art or interior weavers, designers or teachers to be recognized and appreciated by a small section of the population.

But for most weavers, money and fame have little to do with why they weave. I believe that most weavers weave to satisfy their emotional and aesthetic needs; to feel the life force of creation alive within themselves; to feel a closeness with their earth or their god(s); to have a means of self expression and communication. They weave of the beauty they find in life; they weave of the sorrow. They weave to share.

"She is weaving herself into the world."² (Navajo Weaver)

¹ Navajo School of Indian Basketry, *Indian Basket Weaving*, (Whedon & Spreng Co., Los Angeles, 1903), preface. (Reissued by Dover Publications Inc., 1971, New York.)

² Newman, Sandra Corrie, *Indian Basketweaving*, (Northland Press, Flagstaff, 1974), p. 69.

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