



THE INDIAN CRAFT SHOP

Department of the Interior • 1849 C Street, NW • Washington, DC 20240 • (202) 208-4056
 Open Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. email address: indiancrafts@erols.com
 Representing American Indian Arts and Crafts Since 1938

AMERICAN INDIAN BASKETRY SHOW: MARCH 13-31 ARTIST DEMONSTRATIONS AND BOOK SIGNING: MARCH 23 AND 24

Open until 8:00 p.m. Thursday, March 23

- ◆ **Guest Artists: Joann and Ramona Johnson** (Navajo) and **Gerald Barnes** (Passamaquoddy)
- ◆ **Guest Authors: Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh** and **William Turnbaugh**. The Turnbaughs will be signing their books Indian Baskets and Basket Tales of the Grandmothers (see book review on page 2)
- ◆ **Demonstrations and signings** will be:
 Thursday, March 23rd, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
 Friday, March 24th, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Indian Craft Shop will host an American Indian Basketry Show March 13-31, 2000 with special guests on March 23 and 24. Joining our guest artists and authors will also be Georgiana Kennedy Simpson, a third generation trader and expert on basketry representing numerous basket makers of the Southwest. She has had a long time passion for basketry and has authored articles and conducted educational seminars on this subject. Over twenty groups will be represented, including Athabascan, Cherokee, Coushatta, Hopi, Inupiaq, Me-Wuk, Micmac, Mohawk, Navajo, Nisqually, Paiute, Passamaquoddy, San Juan, Seminole, Tohono O'Odham, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Washoe, and Yup'ik.

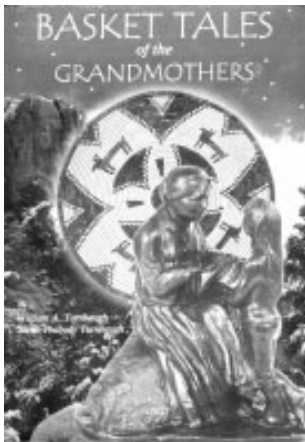
Basketry is one of the oldest arts in the world, predating even pottery. In North America, fiber containers have been found in the Southwest that date back to about 6000

BC. The containers were made for utilitarian purposes, such as gathering, storing, transporting or cooking, and for ceremonial activities. Materials used range from birch bark, grasses, yucca leaves and split wood, to baleen from the bowhead whale. Today they can also be found ranging in size from ¼ inch horsehair miniatures to 3 feet wide ceremonial baskets.



Joann Johnson with her Dusk to Dawn series

Despite the wide array of materials and forms, the techniques used for construction can be broadly classified into three categories; *Twining*, *Plaiting* and *Coiling*. Understanding the difference between the *warp* and the *welt* can help in distinguishing the three techniques. The *warp* of a basket can be thought of as its skeleton; it is rigid, and does not move during the construction of the basket, while the *welt* is what is woven over or around the warp. There are variations of these techniques, of course, and many baskets are constructed using a combination of methods.
(continued on page 2)



BASKET TALES OF THE GRANDMOTHERS

BOOK SIGNING: MEET THE AUTHORS!

March 23rd 11a.m. – 2p.m. and 6p.m. – 8p.m. & March 24th 11a.m. – 2p.m.

The manufacture of baskets is one of the oldest creative endeavors still practiced today, and is an integral part of many American Indian cultures. In their new book, Basket Tales of the Grandmothers: American Indian Baskets in Myth and Legend (Thornbrook, 1999), authors William Turnbaugh and Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh create a comprehensive survey of North American stories relating to baskets and their role in the lives of American Indian people throughout history. Drawing on legends, folktales, religious myths and individuals' personal stories, they explore the role baskets played in the daily life of people and the greater role basket themes played in Native culture and lifeways. Much of the book is made up of excerpts from these stories, culled from accounts of missionaries, explorers, traders, early anthropologists, and Native informants. The Turnbaughs provide a framework and commentary that places these accounts into their context as part of American Indian culture. The chapter which provides an overview of the various materials and techniques used to make baskets, for example, is filled with the legends which tell how the first people originally learned to make baskets in the mythic past. Also included are creation stories such as the Passamaquoddy story of humans being created from the bark of the ash tree, whose wood is used to weave baskets.

(continued from page 1)

Twining is the name of the technique that involves flexible weft material being woven in and out of less flexible warp material. It can be a relatively simple over and under weaving, or a more complex wrapping of the weft all the way around each warp element. There are many variations of the twining technique, but the distinctive feature of twined construction is that the warps are fixed, and the wefts are what are actually manipulated in the weaving of the basket. Hopi wicker plaques and Apache burden baskets are both examples of twined construction.



Plaiting is a weaving technique in which there are neither warps nor wefts. The material is prepared into thin strips that are woven into each other in a flat over and under fashion. There are neither warps nor wefts because all the pieces of material are manipulated, and more material can be added in any direction, so there is no "skeleton" upon which material is woven. Hopi sifter trays are plaited baskets, as are Cherokee and Chitimacha river cane baskets.



Coiling is the third major technique, in which material is sewn over a foundation that spirals around itself to create a round or oval form. The foundation can be bunched grass, a group of rods from vine or branch, or a single rod. The sewn material is usually finely split plant material, and is stitched into the preceding rows to hold the rows close to one another and create the shape of the basket. Tohono O'Odham and Navajo trays and bowls are examples of coiled basketry.



The role of baskets in American Indian communities has changed significantly over the last 150 years. Historically, baskets were produced for every day use within communities, but modern technologies have largely replaced these baskets. Interest in native handcrafts provided a ready market for basketry as early as the first years of the 1900s. Demand from collectors provided incentive for people to continue producing basketry forms that were no longer being used for their original functions. Collectors' tastes also had a significant influence on basketry styles, especially the patterns and decoration used to embellish baskets, and many familiar designs and motifs emerged.

As with many other native craft forms, baskets have evolved from everyday use items to objects that are expressions of artistry and culture. The work of Passamaquoddy basket maker Gerald Barnes illustrates this history well. The Passamaquoddy of Maine have long constructed baskets of finely split brown ash splints for a variety of purposes. By the late nineteenth century, much of the northeastern basketry for sale was for curios to the fashionable New Englanders of the day. Learning from his mother, Angela Barnes, and teaching his daughter Carey Nicholas-Barnes, Gerald carries an ancient tradition with him through the modern world.

Navajo sisters Joann and Ramona Johnson are also carrying on a tradition that was passed down to them for innovative and modern designs. Joann Johnson completed a series of mosaic baskets whose designs are comprised of interlocking geometric shapes of bright bold colors, as well as a basket based on the American flag. They are also noted for depictions from legends.

Basketry is a vibrant living art among today's American Indian cultures. Once traditional, innovative, and contemporary, American Indian basket art is an expression of culture and value unique in today's world.





Hands on basket


ARTIST OF THE MONTH PROGRAM


Our *Artist of the Month* program showcases an individual artist from a different tribal area each month, giving you a chance to appreciate the wide variety of artistic expressions and traditions found in our country today. While there is a special highlight and larger selection during the month an artist is featured, we have work available from all of our *Artists of the Month*. *Artist of the Month* bio sheets are available on each artist.


Artists of the Month January – June, 2000

 January 2000 – **George “Shukata” Willis** (Choctaw) – George is an artist who produces wonderfully innovative and original jewelry. He uses a wide variety of materials and techniques in his designs, and was chosen as the Indian Arts and Crafts Association Artist of the Year for 2000.


 February 2000 – **Terrill O’Brien** (Mohawk) – Terry is a contemporary beadworker who makes pouch necklaces entirely from beads that are stitched together. Terry decorates her pouches with both geometric designs and pictorial motifs.

 March 2000 – **Levi Tetpon** (Yupik) – Levi is a carver from Shaktoolik, working mainly in ivory. He is well known for his evocative shamans, drummers and transformation figures. Carving since he was a young boy, when he learned from his father, Eric Tetpon Sr., Levi is an innovative carver whose work is always evolving.

 April 2000 – **Arlene Caesar** (Kiowa) – Arlene, wife of renowned Pawnee jeweler Bruce Caesar, is well known for her ribbon work and dance regalia. She also beads elaborate necklaces, as well as earrings, pouches and cedar bag pins.

 May 2000 – **Charlene “Charlyn” Reano** (Santo Domingo) Working in jewelry, Charlyn is noted for her tufa

casting and “marriage of metals,” creating original jewelry with both a contemporary and classic appeal.

 June 2000 – **Eddie Morrison** (Cherokee) – Eddie specializes in wood and stone sculpture and is known for his animals and caped figures. While his favorite wood is cedar (with its great variation in colors), Eddie also uses black walnut and cherry wood. His favorite stone is Kansas limestone, often with fossils present.

Artists of the Month 1999

June 1999 – **Michael Garcia** “Na Na Ping” (Pascua Yaqui) Jewelry

July 1999 – **Maxine Malone** (Onondaga) Beadwork

August 1999 – **Bob “Wabnimkee” Bellows** (Ottawa/Chippewa) Flutes

September 1999 – **Anna Mitchell** (Cherokee) Pottery

October 1999 – **Micah “Sallawish” Vogel** (Makah) Wood Carving

November 1999 – **Stephanie Rhoades** “Snowflake Flower” (Cochiti) Storytellers

December 1999 – **Orville Tsinnie** (Navajo) Jewelry

THE INDIAN CRAFT SHOP AND DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR MUSEUM OPEN THE THIRD SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH

The Indian Craft Shop and the Department of the Interior Museum will continue to be open the third Saturday of each month. Come visit the shop from 10a.m. to 4p.m., and catch the latest exhibits at the museum from 1-4p.m. “Land of the Fragile Giants: The Loess Hills of Western Iowa,” an exhibit of paintings, sculpture, and photographs by artists of the region, is on view at the Museum through April 28, 2000. In June of this year, the museum will present an exhibit featuring a large, rare Navajo rug created by Bull Snake Springs Woman and acquired in the 1930’s by the Department of the Interior from the Hubbell Trading Post. Entitled “Sandpainting of the Arrow People,” the rug depicts a scene based on a watercolor by Miguelito. Handicap access is at the E Street entrance and can be arranged for Saturday hours by calling (202) 208 7814 in advance.

ANNUAL SALE APRIL 10 - 21

Our anxiously awaited Annual Sale is coming! Mark your calendars now with the sale dates April 10 to 21. We will be open late on Thursday April 13th, till 8p.m. and Saturday from 10a.m. to 4p.m., on April 15. Once you have sent off your tax returns, come treat yourself with special savings!

OUR PICK IN BOOKS

- *"NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE: DOLLS AND HUMAN FIGURINES IN ALASKA NATIVE CULTURES,"* edited by Molly C. Lee. 1999, University of Alaska Museum. 73 pages, \$17.95.
- *"NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN ART,"* by Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips. Oxford University Press, 1998. 290 pages, \$16.95.
- *"FIBERS AND FORMS: NATIVE AMERICAN BASKETRY OF THE WEST,"* by Ken Hedges. San Diego Museum of Man, 1997. 78 pages, \$19.95.
- *"THE LEGACY OF A MASTER POTTER: NAMPEYO AND HER DESCENDANTS,"* by Mary Ellen and Lawrence Blair. Treasure Chest Books, 1999. 305 pages, \$29.95.
- *"COLLECTING AUTHENTIC INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS,"* compiled by the Indian Arts & Crafts Association and the Council for Indigenous Arts & Cultures. Book Publishing Company, 1999. 127 pages, \$16.95.
- *"LEGACY: SOUTHWEST INDIAN ART AT THE SCHOOL OF AMERICAN RESEARCH,"* edited by Duane Anderson. School of American Research, 1999. 224 pages, \$100.
- *"ALL THAT GLITTERS: THE EMERGENCE OF NATIVE AMERICAN MICACEOUS ART POTTERY IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO,"* by Duane Anderson, with foreword by Lonnie Vigil. School of American Research Press, 1999. 216 pages, cloth \$55, paper \$27.50.

YOUNG ARTIST CORNER

Children are the links to the continuation of the arts. In response to the enthusiasm generated by our *Young Artist Show* last September, we will dedicate a permanent space in The Indian Craft Shop to endeavors of young budding artists, aged 17 and under. Often starting as observers, many children gradually become more involved with assisting and later are able and excited to do work on their own. They often surprise us with the creativity and quality of their work and we will enjoy showcasing it on a regular basis. Be sure to look for the "Young Artist Corner" when you visit the shop so we can share our latest finds with you!

D.O.I. Museum hours: 1p.m. - 4p.m., Shop hours: 10a.m. - 4p.m.
Handicap Access is at the E Street entrance and can be arranged by calling (202) 208-7814 in advance.



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