

Vermont Weavers Guild Member Studio Tours

1. Basic information

Name : Becky Jensen

Location : Peacham, VT

Length of Vermont Weavers Guild membership : off and on for 25 years?

Other Guild memberships : Braid Society, Complex Weavers

Looms and how they are used :

- AVL, 60", 16H, Compu-dobby – in storage, intended for coverlets, tartan weaving
- Lerclerc, 36" 4H – towels, rugs, blankets in double weave
- Schacht Baby Wolf, 27" 8H – towels, yardage
- Louet Kombi, 17", 8H – placemats, bands, mug rugs
- Baby Takadai – simple takadai braids
- Muradai – homemade, simple kumihimo braids
- Octo-plate – kumihimo braids
- Grip fids – ply splitting



2. Path to weaving including significant teachers, mentors, classes, certifications, study groups, etc.

Like many kids, I started weaving on an “easy looper” metal frame. But it wasn’t until my husband bought me a ridged heddle loom that I actually started to weave. That loom lasted one project with all the wrong yarn and way too much tension; I did not enjoy weaving on that loom. Fortunately, I inherited a loom shortly after and things took off from there. I was able to visit Convergence in Dallas in the early 80’s and fell in love with the AVL concept and computerized weaving. This spurred me to weave more to justify the purchase of an AVL loom.

More recently I have become interested in off-loom weaving techniques including ply-split braiding and kumihimo (ok, kumihomo does have equipment, but not like the standard looms we are all used to). The advantage of these techniques is their portability, something that I can grab and go. I credit much of my recent ability to analyze and willingness to unweave and re-weave to my work with ply-splitting. Weaving, to me, is very structured, very zen like in its process. Ply-splitting is very free form and creative. My ply-splitting pieces “speak” to me, directing me as I move towards a final project.

My early mentors were members of the Houston Weavers Guild, including Tracy Kaestner and DeeDee Woodbury. More recently my mentors have been Barbara Hurley and members of a small group of weavers who met at Vavstuga and now gather once a year to weave, talk and eat. I have taken classes from Norman Kennedy, Tom Knisley, Ute Bergmann, Becky Ashenden, Julie Hedges, Rodrick Owens, Giovanna Imperia, Masumi Tada, and Makiko Tada.

3. My “studio”.

I would not say I have a studio. I have equipment spread around. Looms are in different rooms, and the braiding equipment on different tables, but right at hand. Every house we buy has to have a room large enough for the AVL, but even so, the looms end up spread around the house.

4. Favorite weaving materials, weave structures, suppliers, and/or weaving equipment.

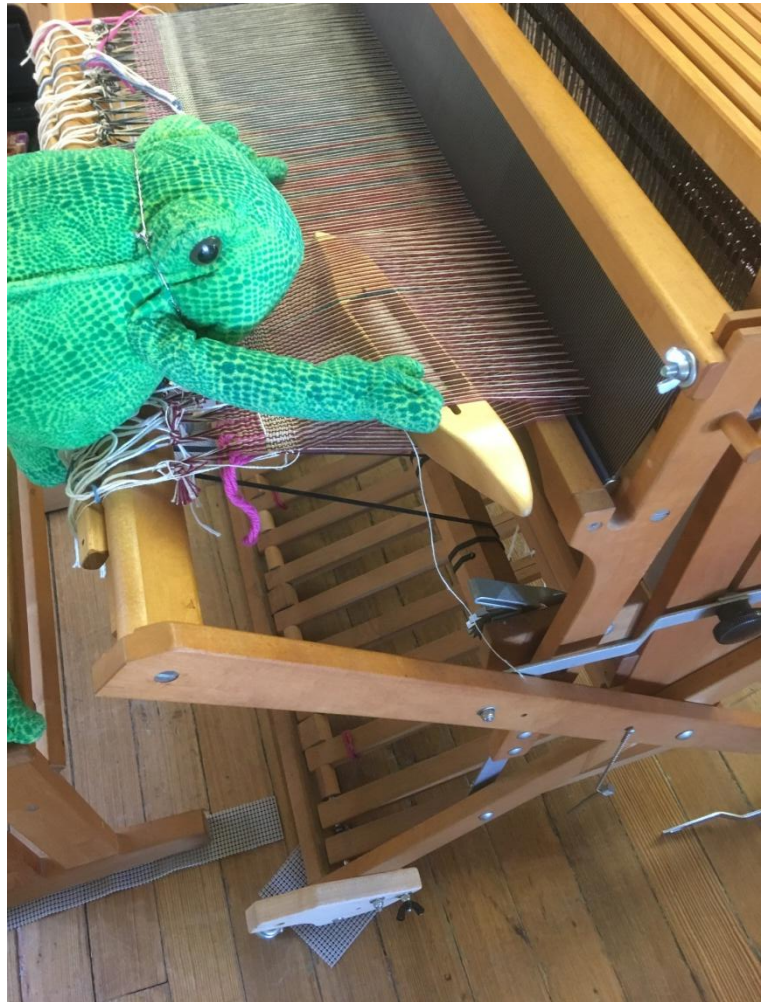
I like natural fibers, particularly cotton and linen. I have recently been experimenting with paper yarns for ply-splitting and wire cored yarns for kumihimo.

My favorite suppliers vary depending on the project. I use Halcyon for their rug wool and UKI perle cotton; Lunatic Fringe for their Tubular Spectrum and American Maid cotton yarns; and Eugene Textile for their sales!

5. What I have gained from weaving.

The biggest thing I have learned, thanks to Barbara Hurley, is patience and to slow down. Weaving takes a lot of time to set up but is often quickly over once the weaving starts. But if we take time during the weaving the weaving improves. This same concept applies to much in our lives – slow down and enjoy the process and the results.

I have also met, through my weaving adventures, an amazing group of people. A vast majority of them seem to have a background in science or math, so are similar minded. Most are interested in sharing their work and talking to others about how things are done. I've gone to events and pulled out my ply-splitting and been thronged by kids wanting to know what I'm doing. I have gone to weaving (and spinning though I don't spin) groups around the world and have always been welcomed. All it takes is putting yourself out there and a willingness to be in the moment.



6. Describe what I am looking forward to in 2021.

A friend of mine is making weaving a daily, intentional practice, trying to weave for 15 minutes every day. I am not so disciplined. But the concept of doing something weaving related every day is important. Weaving brings peace to the day.

In addition to daily weaving (or drafting, or winding, or reading, or talking), I have enjoyed the increased number of weaving related meetings that have been made available by the pandemic. Many groups have moved to virtual meetings and meet ups. Many have started free classes and sharing. The amount of camaraderie within the weaving world has been wonderful. Gatherings, both on-line and in-person will be important in 2021.

