

finished and began unraveling our grene, and the camera lights would flash as we proudly displayed our beautiful weavings.

by Mary Erikson

WEAVING A NORWEGIAN STYLE BÅTRYA

Winding along a Norwegian coastal highway I had time to gather my memories of the four previous days impressions. My awareness and spirit of adventure were heightened by doing something I had never done before and seeing things I had never seen before. Traveling with 28 other textile enthusiasts was more of a treat than I had imagined. There was always much to appreciate and share. Among us no thread was left untouched. We were thrilled with each sighting of sheep, opportunities to visit museums containing unexpected textile treasures, checking out local Husflidens, listening to fishermen's songs, walking up a trail to see Rock Art, seeing the amazing ground vegetation (including lichens), and experiencing the growing sense of camaraderie.



Above: Sally Scott, Lila Nelson, Solfrid Aune,
Lucetta Walker, June Hanson, Elizabeth Holinaty
In front: Janet Meany, Kay Larson, Betty Johannesen

The Vågan Folk High School was surrounded by towering pointed mountains. The place had a

pristine beauty. There were wild flowers, many trees, boulders, walking paths, rag rugs hanging over porches, blooming strawberry gardens, a seaport, and classic Scandinavian homes. It was truly beautiful. Everything was a photographic opportunity and in front of us. It provided an ideal setting for work, play, and thought.

On the fifth day I was ready to meet my Båtrya teacher, Solfrid Steigen Aune and warp up a loom. I was eager for weaving; being well fortified with at least four "traditional Norwegian meals." Solfrid's handouts included a short history of rugs, instructions with drawings and diagrams and a color photograph of one of her rugs. We had piles of Kunst yarns from which to choose, experienced classmates, plenty of coffee/tea and baked goods, working looms, and enough time to produce a good-sized rya.

The rya I wove looks like a bit of Norge to me. Each row of knots became a line of thought with an overall plan in mind. I included a special surprise colored knot representing each rya-weaver as a memento of that person. I wove the myth of the flailing fisherman who said, "Save the rya first, I can swim" into my rya. I imagined how warm and life sustaining a rya would be wrapped around a fisherman inside an unheated boat bobbing through a foggy cold night.

One outcome of weaving a Båtrya Norge style rug for me has been to open up design possibilities, using the top side as well as the knotted side on which I had previously concentrated. I can easily imagine the wives of fishermen or village women preparing, carding the wool, spinning, weaving and working hours on knotting colorful or drab rags, fleece, and/or handspun yarns into these precious life warmers. Each rya tells a heroic story, a mark of achievement that made life itself enduring. Now I am intrigued by ways in which to display and use both sides of the Båtrya and tell that story.

By the 23rd day I needed to return to my new prairie home for I was missed and missing loved ones. By the 23rd day I figured that I had eaten at least 30 "Norwegian traditional meals." This was my third Atlantic crossing but a first to Norge. This sojourn was literally a dream come true.

by Sally Scott

BAND WEAVING CLASS AT KABELVÅG, JULY 1999

Our Sami teacher, Oliva Nilsen from Manndalen, did not speak English, but as the days passed, we did enjoy a few good laughs as we tried to communicate. Several of us had some Norwegian words, but when a real problem arose, Kay Larson would come in to translate.



Above: Vera Larson, Katheryn McKenney, Carol Koscik, Sue Henrikson, Tui Hedstrom, Oliva Nilsen, Susan Ramsey
In front: Donna Duke, Barbara Stam

Oliva brought many of her bands for us to copy. It was a bit disappointing to find no pick-up patterning, but she doesn't do pick-up.

So we began, first choosing a band to copy, and the colors in Rauma 3-ply yarn. Color choices were red, black, gold, white, yellow green, 2 shades of blue, light gray and dark gray. Oliva measured the warp length from "nose to outstretched arm", approximately 2 ½ yards. Janet Kroyer discovered we could make a warp on the

legs of the overturned benches, keeping better warp order and making warps as long as we desired. We were each provided with a 10-inch wooden rigid heddle, and began to warp. We worked in a woodworking classroom, and soon found a vise was a good place to hold the heddle board as we threaded. Tui Hedstrom had a long metal threader that some of us borrowed, it saved a lot of time, and otherwise we used a large eye needle.

When we were ready to weave, our first laugh came as Oliva showed us how to fasten the warp on a birch stick, (She had brought each of us an 8-inch stick.) wrap the warp around and tie it to the stick, then lift up your shirt and tuck the stick into your waistband! Shirley Butterfield commented, "I came this many miles and paid this much money to learn to put a stick into my waistband??" We tied the other end of the warp to a table, desk, chair, bench or whatever was handy and were ready to weave. Then a surprise to most of us! We wove with the rigid heddle next to our body, and the woven part towards the tied end. Most of us who had woven bands had been accustomed to having the woven part next to the waist, but we had come to learn the Sami way.

Kathryn McKenny was the first to finish a band. We all gathered around to learn a wrap and stitch technique, using 2 of the warp ends. What a beautiful finish for a band. A very traditional stitch, we saw this on old bands at the Sami Exhibits at the museum in Tromsø. Soon, Barbara Stam's band was woven and we learned (tried to learn) the next step, an 8 strand flat braid. I can report, at the end of the week, most of us had mastered this braid. Carol Koscik, our novice weaver, was ready for the small tassel. Now we were making progress! Tassels are really easy! Then came the 4 end round braid... What a challenge, but so attractive a finish. Donna Duke was the first to put that braided finish into her band. 1 2 3 4, red-blue-gold blue. Not so easy! She finally had to go and take a nap!