

THE GENESIS OF WEGO
By
DEE FORD POTTER, FOUNDING MEMBER

WeGO began with the idea of creating a way for the weaving guilds of Oregon to communicate and share with each other. In 1979, Dee Ford Potter asked the Association of Northwest Weavers Guilds for help and ended up being asked to and accepting the Chairmanship of the 1981 ANWG Conference, with the condition that the guilds of Oregon would help and Kay Evans would be the Co-Chair. The various representatives of the Oregon guilds enthusiastically pledged their support and willingness to contribute and share the responsibilities of putting on a conference. At the time, we were strangers!

The Conference of 1981 was a huge success and the guilds of Oregon wanted to continue the communication, camaraderie, and connections that were created. The Conference '81 Committee voted to fund \$10,000.00 from the proceeds of the Conference for the creation of a state organization. Most of the members of the Conference '81 Committee also agreed to continue to represent their guilds and create the organization that became "Weaving Guilds of Oregon", known as WeGO.

Some of the members of the original Conference '81 Committee have continued to be involved. Since the beginning the Oregon guilds have continued to support, contribute, and reap the benefits of sharing the world of fiber arts that we love. WeGO has organized statewide workshops to bring the likes of the pre-eminent British weaver, Peter Collingwood, to Oregon for multiple workshops around the state. Touring exhibits have graced our state and shared the talents of Oregon's weavers. WeGO has also continued to support ANWG by working together to hold conferences in Oregon in 1991,

2001, and 2011. WeGO has also created scholarships for individuals to attend the ANWG Conferences.

To actually create the organization, the committee met numerous times around the state, and went through the tedious process of creating By-Laws, dealing with the state and federal regulations, and applying for non-profit status and a 501-c3. Although Dee is considered the founder of WeGO, Kay Evans became the first president/chairman. Che Mortimer did much of the research work for the legal end of the organization, with the help of Rosalie Neilson and Pat Spark. Other members that contributed their effort, expertise and energy were: Fran Stewart, Jerie Lucas, Lu Schmidt, Phyllis Schroeder, Dorothy Tainton, Evelyn Hunnicut, Barbara Nordin, Margaret Turner, Cora Wetter, Phyllis Barrett, and Betty Rae Brenner. Member of guilds around the state wanted to participate and joined the group creating WeGO. Contributing to WeGO in various degrees were: Junia Graft, Audry Anderson, John Purcell, Nadine Purcell, D'Norton, Corinne Geddes, Dorothy Anderson, and others.

I know there are several names left off of this list; the minutes of the original planning meetings may shed light on those I have inadvertently missed. For those minutes, ask the WeGO president/secretary for the archives. Rosalie Neilson, Pat Spark, or Jeri Lucas would also be good sources for remembering the WeGO start-up people and history.

Keep Weaving, Dee Ford Potter