

Only a little later but the Nasties are blooming.

By [Kathe Todd-Hooker](#) | August 8, 2012, July 1, 2023 (Please note everything in blue is an update to the present.) Chapter 1

So much has changed, but nothing has changed. So, I have decided to update the past with the present. I believe in my weaving with exception that perhaps I have learned more, absorbed more, and listened to those around me and of course researched more. So, these new words are the things I need to add.

I am having such a great summer. I usually do! I love summers because Spencer and I get to travel usually get to travel and explore later then I should be in writing my blog. **But** I have a great excuse-For once it wasn't my problem or procrastination. My husband, Spencer, had a rather



sudden burning desire to go see his brother Mike in Great Falls. So, we did! Didn't bother me in the least. I love talking to Maggie(sister-in-law), Lolo pass and 4th of July pass, the emptiness and wildness. So, we



went for a **long** weekend.

I Love Great Falls



in the summer, because it reminds me of my childhood summers in College Place. But, not so much in the winter. I am fascinated by the turn of the century brick buildings, wide streets and old houses, Art Deco Fair buildings, and weird finned swimming buffaloes **AND**, of course, we went to the State Fair. I was able to keep to my goal of learning how to use the camera effectively on my I-phone. Still keep cutting off heads with



it. **So**, I have some great pictures to work into tapestries-if I ever finish the piece I am working on. **We really need**

to go back. Covid sort of stole our summer

trips back to Montana and they

have not really come back.



Being on the edge of

Nowhere

and looking out towards

the dry grass and wheat lands. The sky really is bigger and brighter there. Oops, also saw a forest fire near Rogers Pass. Summer has its own particular smells. I hate it in the winter- cold **AND SNOW**—come to think

about it I didn't much like College Place in the winter-either. It's a trip we used to make in a day-each way-now we make it in 2 days. We always brought home Walla Walla Sweets for onion soup and Gramma's Lakota pot au feu that goes on for days, to eat with blackberries for cobbler and fry bread with honey. And Antique metal work frills for the remodel that I hope to be done with by the last of September. Which has become a habit whenever possible that has been instilled with my silver work when I get a chance to work with metal. So, bits and pieces from everywhere.

Unfortunately, reality eventually has to bite. Reality meant that I lost 5 days of weaving and will lose another 4 days to what was to be my reward for finishing “..and HE...” and 4 days of intermediate level silversmithing classes with Don Norris, but I am not such a glutton for punishment that I'll deny myself the pleasure of the classes just because I missed a deadline. I'll just work a few more hours every

day weaving- **“right,”** she said

sarcastically to whomever would listen. **Wow, some things still never change.**

So, I'll need to add another 5 days to my schedule. I think after I finish



the lettering I'll be about 90% of the way finished. Which means I am still not finished with “...And HE...” This is the piece that I was going to do 5 feet wide 6.5 feet tall on my large Shannock. **Also, the biggest sewing thread tapestry I have ever done to this day a bit over**

10 years later. The design seems to have gone on forever. It has/was on the loom for 3-4 years until I had an epiphany about needing to weave it



in sewing thread and no wool. It lead to me selling my large Shannock. It just needs to be done!! I keep asking myself if I could have broken the design into smaller pieces or a series of small format pieces. Second guessing doesn't seem to help it go any quicker. **Never does-too many rabbit holes. Somewhere one needs to say this it. Just do it. Armchair quarterback later.** I don't think it could have been. It's definitely not a decorative piece. It tells a story. It has a narrative. Something I need to say to myself. There was a time that I thought I could have broken the piece in half and still had a beautiful floral piece, but it would have lost all/ most of its impact, power and meaning. This quote keeps running through my head and journal and today it showed up on face book. - **"Until you make the unconscious conscious it will direct your life and you will call it fate.** Carl Jung, "It" keeps being. Stubbornly not wanting to give up on it. See what I mean? Could have, would have, should have! Wins again, but hours and hours later lost in the swamp with Jabberwocky.

So, what's new in the piece. I have started the scroll and am

using linen thread to give it a different texture then the sewing and embroidery threads. I have started the gold soumack arabesque on the right side of the scroll. Gold threads can be a tad difficult to deal with, especially those done in the style



of aurum filatum. The weft bundles wear very easily, because it is generally a paper or gold foil

The **arabesque** is a form of artistic decoration consisting of “surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils” or plain lines, often combined with other elements. - def. liberated from Wikipedia

wrapped around a core of line cotton or polyester. It seems to be best not to use a bobbin tip or beat down too hard on the weft soumack twiner because it takes very little to wear through and unspin the gold. I am using 6–8-inch lengths of weft. I am also knotting the weft



every 3-4 inches with an overhand knot to help keep it under control when doing the soumack twists. I have now switched to using mostly Sulky and Medeiros metallics. They are easier to work with

The letters are much easier. They are vertical soumack done in the smaller perle cotton. The up rights are one warp wide.

Ridges in tapestry.

There are two different types of ridging in tapestry- one good and one not so good...

1. The ridge structure is actually a rib structure that is created by



changing the shed and weaving multiple passes one on top of another. The valleys between the higher part of the rib is

caused when the weft passes to the back of the warp. The

rib or hill is created when the weft passes in front. The rib

and valley structure run up the length of the warps. Rib structure and size is controlled by the size of warp, the size of the weft and the

distance between two warps. Please note in this example the rib structure is woven at both 10epi and 5 epi by doubling up the warps to change the rib structure.

Rib structure can be changed by single, doubling, tripling or more the warps you go over and under. This can be done in plain weave and easily done by picking the warps, So the different warp sets can be counted anyway you wish. As long as they follow an over under pattern. They can even be made to mimic twills by offsetting the rows above as weave the next half pass. Double weave can also be used to length the amount of light that is reflected back when using monofilaments such as silk. I particularly use this at smaller warp setts so more of the silk is floating on the surface of the weaving, so the silk does not look dull or kind of grassy.

Generally, tapestry is considered to be an unbalanced weave structure more weft shows than warp. In a perfect world the warp size equals the distance between two warps and warps equals the size of the weft bundles-sort of. In a perfect world the warp size equals the distance between two warps and warps equals the size of the weft bundles-sort of which all equal. So, weft bundles =the ditch between= the warp=The Perfect tapestry.

There are reasons you might wish to unbalance one of the elements. To give an example-If you are weaving at 10 epi you can generally use a 12/6 or a 12/9 cotton seine twine with a bundle of 4 needlepoint yarns or paternayan.,5-6 Norwegian Elv yarns or Australian 20/2 wool. 12/6 will generally accept more passes in an inch allowing for more turns or hatches or hachures than 12/9. Because a 12/6 is smaller and there is slightly more weft in an inch of weaving the tapestry is more drapeable.

The 12/9 because it is larger and thicker will take fewer passes and be stiffer. The hand of the fabric is less drapable.

You could work 2 warps together as one to change the weft and warp structure for texture or to allow a larger weft bundle with many more elements in the weft bundle. The hand of the fabric will be softer when it is woven at 10 epi.

Another reason to unbalance the weft bundle is suppose you are working in a very detailed area you may need more passes in a given a space for detail or may need to have more hatches or hachures in a given area. Note eyelashes, chin and collar for very small hatches that were less than half the weft bundle in order to double the amount of hatches in a given area. **More passes equal more possible variations.** By making the weft bundle smaller you can get more passes of the weft bundle in a given area.



The rib structure can be and often is flattened by pressing with a damp cloth, **but not everyone likes the loss of the visual rib structure.** I prefer to not mess with the rib structure because in doing so you mess with the natural properties of inter-inflection and reflection of the light and colour that is inherent in the wools and fibers used to create tapestry that give a sort of inner glow as the light is captured in the hairy properties of the weft and the rib structure of the tapestry. So, this type of ridging or rib structure is a good thing.

The second type of ridging or organ pipes is caused by adding too much weft in a pass or half pass



Notice the organ pipes in the grey background. On the right. I now know that all I would have had to do to get rid of the pipes would have been to use less weft in the bubble and tighten my warp so the piece would



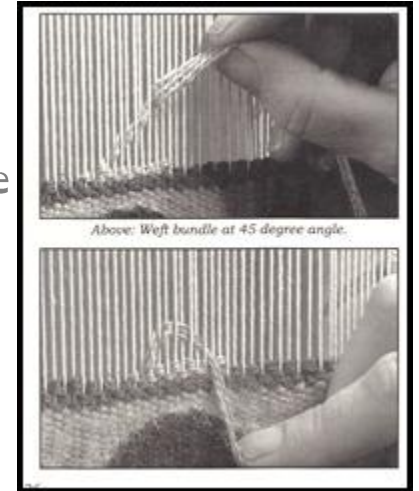
have woven without the wefts shifting into organ pipes. They were named organ pipes by Gobelin weavers because they look like the set together or the grouping of organ pipes in old cathedrals. Often times tapestry weavers will tend to add more weft or a larger weft bubble going in a specific direction creating pipes. If you know you do this, you can always watch that particular half pass closer and correct as you go. *The correction would be a smaller bubble weft or perhaps none at all. And, a larger bubble of weft to either side too maybe move the wefts back into position.*



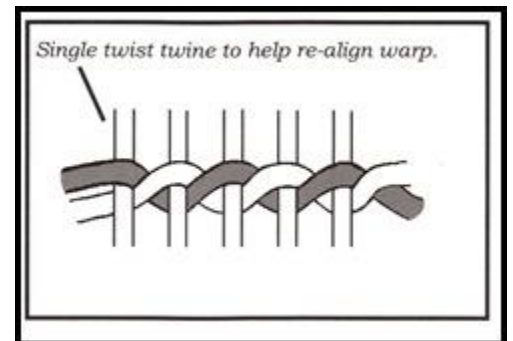
Hopefully, by looking closely you can see that there are 2 distinct areas of pipes on this piece to the left. The first set is just basically organ pipes caused from using too much weft in the sleeve or cape above the hand. This could have easily been cured by using less weft in

my bubble.

In the upper right-hand corner is a type of organ pipe that is caused by weaving close to the top bar that had been warped in a figure 8 pattern. As the warps or shed became further apart it takes more weft to cover the warps because they were pulled further apart by the open shed. Closing the sheds at the top of the loom with a another small, bar, batten or lea stick and tying the bars...gets rid of the problem. Getting or weaving to close to the bar in a closed shed may require the last part of the weaving to be done with a large sacking needle.



There is a fairly easy solution that I didn't understand when I wove this piece. Completely loosen the warp, twine from side right above the fell line. Use a fork to pick the twining up and move it to the top of the loom right under the cross bar. You could also pick a shed and place a stick or batten in the closed shed under the twining and push the twining up to the top bar of the loom-effectively keeping the shed closed. Retighten the warp and weave the tapestry to the top. On a small loom you may need to needle weave the last passes.



A small aside- This piece did pull-in because about halfway up. I tried to weave it from side to side with one bobbin. If I had broken up the area into several smaller areas and wove them in the same colour using hatches or lazy lines, the tapestry would not have woven in. Adding bobbins in a plain colour area shoves the woven areas out as the turns

place more weft in a smaller area rather than pulling in.

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Guess that's all for now.
Hopefully in 2 weeks I can say, and he is finished.
Cheers,
kathe
PS. These are wild
Hollyhocks and usually stand
6-7 feet tall but have
decided to creep along the
edge of my new herb garden,

who would have guessed.

Double PS. And, it was finished. See the finished tapestry and FULL tittle. "And he who tale will have to tell a lie." A quote from Gramm who had never heard of Peter, Paul and Mary and did not own record player, or a radio, or have electricity. To this day I have no idea of how correlate or she knew.

Cheers and all, kathe