

## **Board Nominee Profiles**

We asked, and you answered the call! Weavers Guild of Minnesota board elections are coming up in May. The WGM Nominating Committee has been working diligently with prospective candidates to talk about opportunities to serve our membership through Board leadership.

**Read up on your WGM Board nominees before the Annual Meeting vote on May 16.** The nominees provided a bit of information about themselves, and what skills, interests, and experience they might bring to the WGM Board if elected.

### **The Board slate is as follows:**

#### **Board Executive Committee positions: President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer**

Members will vote for one nominee per position, or provide a write-in candidate (1 write-in/position).

- The President Elect serves 3 years: The first year as President Elect, the second year as President, the third as Past President. The position starts on September 1, 2019 at the beginning of WGM's fiscal year.
- The Secretary serves 2 years, starting on September 1, 2019 at the beginning of WGM's fiscal year.
- The Treasurer serves 2 years, starting on September 1, 2019 at the beginning of WGM's fiscal year.

### **Executive Committee nominees, listed by position:**

- Linda Soranno, President Elect
- Brittany Pentek, Secretary
- Matthew Schutz, Treasurer

### **Board, At Large positions:**

Members may vote for 8 nominees from the following list of 9 candidates. Members may also provide a write-in candidate (1 write-in/position).

- At Large board members serve a term of 2 years, starting on September 1, 2019 at the beginning of WGM's fiscal year.

### **At Large Board nominees (in alphabetical order):**

- Cami Basta, Member at Large
- Carol Carter, Member at Large
- Dawn Gillette-Kircher, Member at Large
- Barbara Heath, Member at Large
- Mary Mateer, Member at Large
- Katie Oberton, Member at Large
- Elizabeth Schutz, Member at Large
- Barbara Skoglund, Member at Large
- Beth Varro, Member at Large

## **Linda Soranno, Nominee for President Elect**

I am interested in joining the WGM board so that I may do my part to support to this truly special organization. As a member of the Guild, I've had the good fortune of taking classes from gifted weavers, interacting with Guild members and having access to the vast resources the Guild offers. While I am a newer weaver and spinner (5 years in), with each passing year I become more immersed in and passionate about this truly diverse and complex craft. I am equally interested in the technical side of weaving as the artistic. The infinite possibilities presented a weaver is a wonderful puzzle to be explored. Currently, I am exploring the 3D possibilities of doubleweave cloth in wall hangings and am designing a krokbragd rug. Culturally, I'm fascinated with the Guild's rich Scandinavian history and plan to continue exploring this space. I have so much to learn and I'm thrilled about that.

In addition to bringing my passion to bear in support of the Guild's mission, I can contribute to the Board as a 30-year practicing lawyer (at General Mills) with extensive non-profit board experience including chairing the board of St. Thomas' Center for Ethical Cultures. My skills can support the Guild in managing the myriad of issues facing non-profits today – including governance, strategic planning, fiscal discipline, and member engagement. In addition, I pride myself on my ability to bring people together to leverage a team's talents, passion and gifts in tackling opportunities. Over the years, I've worked in various environments faced with diverging stakeholder interests and have helped groups get aligned in the spirit of a common purpose. I would like to deploy these skills in support of WGM's mission and would consider it a privilege to serve on the Board to further the Guild's legacy.

### **Brittany Pentek, nominee for Secretary**

Hello! I discovered WGM only a few years ago. I was 17 miles into a 20-mile run and decided to stop and check out the Fiber Fair. Upon first touch, I fell in love with roving and promptly filled out registration for beginning spinning. It was an amazing experience, open to all spinning styles, no method of messing it up- it becomes artistic flair. The professionalism and the positivity of the teachers encouraged me to share the art with my sister and friends. I continue to be captivated by the technical expertise of our current leadership. At Whorling Spinsters, one cannot ask a question without getting at least three differing opinions or tidbits of advice. Giving back to the weaving and spinning community is a goal that seems real by the opportunity to serve on the Board. By trade, I am an electrical engineer and currently work for the City of Minneapolis- PW Water Treatment and Distribution Department as an engineer and project manager. I am concise, and I like to know by who and by when a goal is to be accomplished. Both of which will be documented in the meeting minutes! Serving on the Weavers Guild Board of Directors will be my first board experience. I anticipate learning a lot in the first year both about WGM and about the other Board members and their goals for WGM. I seek to be a supportive role to the mission, to preserve and advance the arts of weaving, spinning, and dying, and to the other Board Members.

## **Matthew (Matt) Schutz, nominee for Treasurer**

After reading the 2017 Weavers Guild of Minnesota (WGM) Annual Report, there was one key statement from the President that really hit home and solidified my interest in serving as WGM's Board Treasurer.

"The transmission of knowledge is at the core of the Weavers Guild of Minnesota. We are teachers and students together. As long as we maintain this relationship, this core value, the Weavers Guild of Minnesota will grow and thrive"

From early on in my career and personal life I have continued to challenge myself. From studying for the CPA exam to helping my wife construct her first loom, I've never strayed away from a challenge. I complete the circle by always committing time to help develop others around me. It is with this ongoing passion for learning and teaching that I would be extremely honored to serve for the Guild.

### Professional Background:

I am an active certified public accountant (CPA) in the state of Minnesota with over 10 years of professional accounting experience. My expertise includes specializing in not-for-profit accounting, regulation interpretation, and financial reporting. I hold a Master's degree in Accounting and have auditing experience, working with firm Baker Tilly. I'm currently an accounting supervisor at the University of Minnesota Physicians. Related skills include budgeting, supervising, and reporting to executives, finance committees, and other stakeholders.

### Personal Background:

I have lived in Minneapolis for 3 years and own a house in near Minnehaha Falls. Outside of my professional day-to-day, I play guitar, run around the chain of lakes, read old spy novels, and hike in one of the many Minnesota state parks with my wife, Elizabeth, and dog, Jasper. Elizabeth and I continue to plant our roots here in Minneapolis and want to continue that trend by volunteering our services at an organization we love.

Thank you for your time.

## **Cami Basta, nominee for Member at Large**

My name is Cami Basta. I am a hobbyist basket weaver, hand spinner, textile weaver, historical re-enactor, and fledgling natural dyer immersed in every aspect of these crafts – from learning new skills & techniques to demonstrating the history and traditions that span generations, cross cultures and continents to connect with a common thread. I particularly enjoy raising awareness of the fiber arts through demonstration and connecting with others who share my passion for fiber arts. I find artistic exploration to be therapeutic, relaxing, and beautiful.

By profession, I am a Corrections Officer serving the State of Minnesota for the past fourteen years. My board experience includes serving as Trustee, past elected e-Board member, and current elected President of AFSCME Local 1539. I have also served on the nominating committee of the Minnesota Corrections Association and as a contract negotiations delegate for our AFSCME local 1539.

I have served extensively over several years in volunteer capacity as a Placement Coordinator, Intake Coordinator, Foster Coordinator and foster for a local area animal rescue and am a current Agent with the Minnesota Federated Humane Societies investigating reports of animal neglect and cruelty in central Minnesota.

I am excited to be considered for a position on the executive board and to offer my skills toward the advancement of interest in the fiber and textile arts, providing (and gaining) access to resources as well as broadening my network of contacts who share my passion and to explore the fascinating world of weaving with like-minded members. I have excellent organizational skills, and willing to contribute actively to a vibrant fabric of textile enthusiasts.

### **Carol Carter, nominee for Member at Large**

Carol has recently discovered a new fiber passion in weaving - thanks to the WGM - which adds to her experience knitting, crocheting, and embroidering since childhood. An enthusiastic "yarn bomber," she has been involved in planning and installing community fiber arts in the Twin Cities metro area for several years, and presently volunteers with the WGM on the Office Help team.

Carol received her MA in French Language and Literature from the University of Pennsylvania and has taught college-level language courses in France and in the US. She has also served as a university administrator in admissions and student support services. Currently, Carol enjoys connecting with high school students as a substitute teacher in the St. Paul Public Schools. With the support of its extraordinarily dedicated, skilled, and generous members, Carol believes the WGM will continue to grow as it reaches out to the broader, changing community and facilitates an even greater exchange of ideas and skills while encouraging and engaging new members.

## **Dawn Gillette-Kircher, nominee for Member at Large**

Hello Members of the Weavers Guild. I am Dawn Gillette-Kircher. I would like to volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors. I have immensely enjoyed the weaving classes I have taken as well as the staff and classmates I have met. I am excited to be more involved. It has always been one of my goals in life to participate in the community of any organization that I join such as being on committees, boards, or task groups.

I have gathered many career skills that would be of value to the Guild. I am a small business owner with a booth at the MN Renaissance Festival. I have spent many years in retail sales and management. I was an instructor in a vocational college. In my church, I chaired one major board for many years and took a turn as Vice Moderator and Moderator of the church. My current job is that of product management and customer service in a distribution company. In my career paths I have learned some wonderful craft skills: wood working, furniture building, leatherworking, chain maille, a little silversmithing, beading and miniature painting.

My love has always been working/playing with fiber and color. My fiber skills include sewing, upholstery, knitting, macramé, tatting, needlepoint, cross stitch, and now weaving.

I look forward to greater participation within the Guild. Thank-you for considering me as member to the Board of Directors.

## **Barbara Heath, nominee for Member at Large**

Serving on the Board of Directors of the WGM for me is an honor and something that all members should consider. I have served on the board in the late 80's as secretary and president. Being a rather newer member, at the time, my participation gave me the opportunity to really get to know our guild, our members and how unique our guild is. I have served as Fiber Fair chairman and been a committee member. I have also demonstrated at the State Fair and entered weavings over the years.

I spent the last 17 years of my working career as Administration/Human Resources Manager for a manufacturing company. I enjoy working with people.

I taught weaving at Depth of Field on the West Bank of Minneapolis for 20 years until their closing this past fall. Teaching is an opportunity to learn new techniques as students sometimes choose those that I have not yet tried. Nine students who have been students over the years and I are renting a studio space in the Seward neighborhood. We packed up the DOF looms and equipment and moved! Think we are all having fun learning from each other and sharing project ideas. Many of these students have become members of the guild and one even served as president. I have also taught a class or two at the guild.

Learning that the Textile Center is seriously thinking about a move brings new challenges to us. With a strong board and members we can face them.

I am looking forward to getting back into the swing of things and a volunteering mode at THE guild.



## **Mary M. Mateer, nominee for Member at Large**

I came to weaving in an unusual way. I have been a Public Defender for many years. Early on, I realized I needed a distraction to keep me sane in my highly stressful job. Whitewater kayaking became my stress reliever. I taught for many years until injuries required me to stop. I found myself needing a new passion to alleviate the stress from my job. Weaving became my new passion.

The Weavers Guild has been crucial in that journey. The Guild has connected me to some wonderful people and the very colorful world of textiles and fiber. It's impressive how far the Guild has come since it's "homeless" beginning in the 1940's. The volunteers never cease to amaze me with their dedication, creativity and generosity. Fiber Fair is one example. Think about the fact that it is all volunteer. No paid consultants, set designers or set up crew. And it runs like clockwork. Wow!

I've served on numerous law-related non-profit boards over the past 25 years. I'm familiar with the struggle non-profits have every year to make ends meet, generate and retain new membership and remain financially viable for the coming years.

At member meetings, I've wondered why there aren't more young people there. Are they just not attending meetings, or is it because we don't have many members that are younger? What can we do to generate interest in the Guild with younger people? Many colleges and universities have closed their fiber programs – is there some way we can tap into that gap? With potential moves in the future or renovation costs, financial security is a major concern that we must be vigilant of.

I certainly don't have the answers, but I'd love to be part of the discussion and hopefully some solutions.

## **Katie Oberton, nominee for Member at Large**

For the past 10 years, I have worked in social services as a clinical social worker. I have a variety of experience within the field working in mental health, with older adults, in community clinics, and in people's homes. I have worked in group settings, with individuals, and with families all from a wide diverse background. Along with practicing social work, I am an avid yoga practitioner, and co-founded Access Your Yoga a non-profit that brings yoga to people who do not have regular access to classes. For two years, I served as the Access Your Yoga board president, and stepped down last June. I have always been interested in fiber art, specifically knitting and crochet, but it wasn't until 2017 that I started weaving. I really fell in love with weaving from the moment I started due to the meditative feeling it can create. I enjoy combining the old craft and handmade nature with modern design and colors. I believe that people enjoy doing and learning, so I have a strong passion for sharing and teaching others the art of weaving. I am very invested in the weaving community, and believe we can continue to grow and expand as the years go on. I would love to be more involved with the Weavers Guild as a board member as a way to connect, share, and grow with the community. I believe as a social worker and someone relatively new to weaving, I bring a unique perspective that focuses on inclusion, growth, diversity, and community.

## **Elizabeth Schutz, nominee for Member at Large**

Elizabeth is a new-to-the-textile-arts enthusiast who is passionate about ecologically responsible living. She was originally drawn to the beauty and utility of rag rug weaving on a floor loom but, due in part to the smallish size of her apartment, has been exploring her craft using a rigid heddle. She loves seeing new life breathed into old, worn, or scrapped fabrics and is interested in learning more about local fiber processing. Elizabeth is interested in serving on the board because she has loved being a member of the guild and is interested in giving back to the community. She hopes that her professional and volunteer experience will be useful to the board as they navigate potential/upcoming changes and plan for their events throughout the year. She serves on the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries newsletter committee and is also on the planning committee for the 2019 Legal Research Institute, a month long educational conference focused on providing legal research education to librarians, lawyers, and the public. When she's served on professional organization committees/boards in the past, her roles were largely focused on conference/event planning and marketing (ask her for tips on calculating per person party snack consumption). Her professional skill set includes conducting legal and business research, teaching/providing reference services, and managing commercial and residential property. She has master's degrees in Library & Information Studies and Technical Communication from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. Elizabeth has lived in Minneapolis with her husband, dog, and two cats since 2016. If elected as member at large, she will bring her can-do spirit, an open mind, and plenty of plant-based snacks.

## **Barbara Skoglund, nominee for Member at Large**

While I learned to crochet young, I really only started exploring the world of fiber crafts for the last twenty years. I've made hundreds of baby items for Bundles of Love and winter items for my daughter's classmates and school fundraisers. I craft for fun and relaxation, work is stressful, and fiber is an escape. I discovered Saori and Sami style jewelry at Shepherds Harvest and joined WGM over two years ago. I enjoy taking classes and I and share my love of little looms at the State Fair.

Why am I such a little loom enthusiast? Frankly, I've avoided floor loom classes because I'm unable to meet the prerequisite of warping independently. Hidden disabilities prevent me from floor crawling. However, that shouldn't people from participating. I'm an enthusiastic promoter of equity, diversity and accessibility and want to help WGM better reflect the diversity in our community. I also want to help improve our accessibility for people with disabilities.

I grew up on military bases and moved quite a bit until I came to the Twin Cities in 1995. I worked in student leadership development and events planning at universities for 15 years and now work for the State of Minnesota. Some of my favorite higher education memories come from advising international students and planning large intercultural festivals. A decade as a public information officer helped build my strong writing, editing and plain language skills. A health care policy consultant since 2007, I worked with services for people with disabilities for five years, and in health care eligibility policy for the past seven. A BA in secondary education and graduate studies in communications and adult education support my skills in adapting instructional design, training and printed materials to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.

## **Beth Varro, nominee for Member at Large**

I started my fiber life at the age of 8, when my grandmother taught me to crochet. Decades later, I happened to see a drop spindle demonstration and dragged myself away, telling myself that I didn't need yet another hobby. But when one of my colleagues brought her drop spindle to the office years later, I immediately fell back in love, and knew where the extra income from my recent promotion would be spent!

That was back in 2013. I spun exclusively on drop spindles for about 2 years. Once it was clear that this hobby wasn't a flash in the pan, I added a Kromski Minstrel spinning wheel, an upright or "castle" model in a beautiful mahogany finish. I love the tactile experience of spinning. The textures, colors, and the process of feeling the twist are meditative for me, and producing a physical object is a relief after staring at screens all day at work. My other primary fiber activities are crocheting and knitting, and doing spinning demonstrations is one of my absolute favorite things.

My career has been spent in nonprofits, in roles varying from secretary/receptionist, to basic customer service, to managing staff and directing programs. I worked at the Science Museum of Minnesota in the Membership department for nearly 14 years, serving as Membership Director for the last four of those. My projects at the museum included customer service, membership strategy and marketing, and database implementation and usage. I believe my nonprofit management, database, and membership experience would be helpful to the Guild. I am eager to contribute to this unique organization, and to learn more about nonprofit management at a different level.