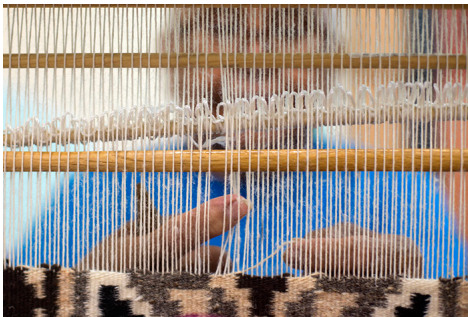
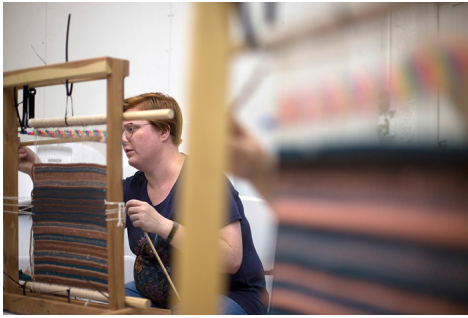


Weaving classes offer students a chance to engage with the community

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 03 August 2018 03:17



When Mary Walker started teaching other people about weaving in 2006, she did not suspect her experience and lessons would lead her to establish a shop close to the Navajo Nation.

But exactly that happened in September 2017, when she opened Weaving in Beauty at 233 W. Coal Ave. The shop is dedicated to expanding the appreciation and knowledge of the textiles present in the southwestern United States, and offers cleaning, repair and appraisal of flat-woven textiles.

Weaving in Beauty also offers classes in fiber techniques to help others learn how to weave. The shop currently holds bi-weekly courses in Gallup, in Window Rock at the Quality Inn, and various other sites, including an upcoming weaving boot camp at Lake Tahoe August 26.

“We were offered a chance to teach [others about weaving]” Walker said in an interview. “People wanted to learn [weaving] from someone Navajo.”

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The shop offers courses for beginners as well as intermediate techniques. Their website states beginner courses offers students a chance to learn beginning Navajo weaving and warping techniques while the intermediate course lets students explore the creative world of patterns, colors and textures.

Walker originally began her work in Tempe, Ariz. out of her house. She offered lessons up to four times a month that she taught with her long-time friend Jennie Slick, from Querino Canyon near Sanders, Ariz. They started out teaching classes about weaving, in addition to offering rug repairs.

Working with a variety of participants at the Gallup shop has been an enjoyable experience, Slick said during an interview. The shorter bi-weekly courses offer a better opportunity for students to enlist and attend.

“The shorter classes are different [than what we used to have],” Slick said. “The participants enjoy them.”

At the beginning technique lesson on July 28, eight students were present to learn from Slick and another instructor, Gloria Begay of Navajo, N.M. Over the past several weeks, the two women worked hands-on with the students, teaching them how to weave a rug from scratch, from warping the wood for the stand to preparing the loom.

The students have progressed well and are learning on their own, Begay said. Each of the instructors also said that the weekend classes have seen a pretty good turnout.

“There are a lot of interested people,” Begay said. “The weekend classes work well [for their schedules].”

Walker said that many people have asked about the classes and the materials available at the shop, and that the community reception since opening in September 2017 has been wonderful.

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This has allowed the shop to expand its product and service lines.

“We can bring in new materials, [and then] bring in knitters,” Walker said. “[People want] high-quality yarns and fibers.”

The shop also receives customers beyond the Navajo Nation. Walker said that tourists traveling through Gallup from all over the world hear about what is being done at the shop and want to learn more.

Most of the weaving classes have filled up, and they are designed with students of diverse age groups and interests, and multiple skill levels in mind, Walker said.

“A lot of them are professionals, but not in weaving,” she said. “They want to learn Navajo techniques.”

Begay said that she has noticed a lot of younger students are returning from the cities they live in to attend school or have employment in to participate in the weaving classes. It is encouraging to see students interested in preserving their culture by learning these Navajo weaving techniques, she said.

“I feel good about [everything we have done],” Slick said.

For more information about the weaving courses, including how to enroll, visit: weavinginbeauty.com

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