Happy Birthday, Cranbrook Loom!

The Cranbrook Loom takes its name from the Cranbrook Community in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Founded as an idealistic community by George Booth, a wealthy newspaper baron and arts advocate. Booth aspired to shape a community along the principles of William Morris' arts and crafts movement. For help in realizing his vision, Booth invited Eliel Saarinen, a renowned Finnish architect, to design the buildings at Cranbrook and help shape its philosophy.

Loja Saarinen, Eliel's wife, a trained sculptress, photographer, and model builder, was asked by Booth to design the textiles for the school which led to the creation of Studio Loja Saarinen. Established in 1928, the studio employed a number of weavers including, Marie Bexell, a recent Swedish immigrant with weaving experience. Soon, Marie's work in the studio led to a commission for her husband, John, to build a loom according to Mrs. Saarinen's specifications. The loom would later be named the Cranbrook Loom, now in its 85th year.

At the time, John Bexell was working for General Motors Truck Company and started building looms on the side. A commission from the Farm Security Administration in the late 1930s, as part of a recovery program for poor Southern sharecroppers, propelled him into full-time loom building.

John's son, Bert, joined the company after returning from serving in WWII. During this time, the business grew to also encompass custom cabinets and architectural millwork. John retired in 1964 and Bert decided to focus solely on loom building.

During the rise in popularity of hand weaving in the 1970's, Bert collaborated with Robert Kidd, a graduate of Cranbrook Art Academy, who owned a production weaving business. Robert suggested that Bert change the traditional rope tie-ups to a more efficient chain system. At this time the straight treadles were changed to tapered ones, an ingenious way to achieve an even shed without tie-up adjustments. The two men also developed another Cranbrook hallmark, the locking treadle, which allows a treadle to be depressed and locked into place without holding it down with a foot.

After many satisfying years making looms, Bert sold the company to Jim Hudson of Heritage Woodcrafts who owned it for only a few years before he passed it on to Ted and Dave Johnson of Norwood Looms. During this period, a few changes were made to the loom, including an improved brake release system. In the mid-1990s Dave Johnson was ready for a change and looked for a company to purchase the loom.

Over the years, Barry Schacht, founder, along with his brother Dan, of Schacht Spindle Co, had expressed interest in the Cranbrook Loom. In 1996, Schacht acquired the loom and introduced it at Convergence in Portland, Oregon. Here, important feedback was received that led to the first extensive re-design since the Bexell-Kidd collaboration of the 1970s.

To make the shed larger and the treadling easier, the lamms were lengthened and the distance...
from the front beam to back beam increased by 18". This also made the loom roomier inside for threading, traditionally a very tight squeeze. For additional leg room during treadling, as well as to make the loom more comfortable to weave standing up, the overall height of the front and back beams was raised 2". To streamline the tie-up, Texsolv cords were introduced. These are permanently installed on the treadles making it easy to tie the treadles to the upper and lower lamms. Another enhancement to the overall performance of the loom was the addition of a worm gear braking system for high tension control.

A sliding threading bench was designed to make threading the heddles more comfortable. Additionally, the loom bench was re-designed to be adjustable in height, to be assembled flat or sloped, as well as sporting a foot rest on one side. The suspended tool shelf provides a convenient place to store weaving tools.

The Cranbrook Loom is available in three sizes: 48", 60", and 72", with 4 shafts or 8. Double back beams, sectional beams, tension box rails, and raddles can be ordered for all Schacht Cranbrook Looms.

### Spin Better with DVDs

Spinning can be a challenge to learn from a book because it is such a tactile craft. A DVD lets you watch over and over until it makes sense. Here are some of our favorite spinning DVDs from the craft’s seasoned teachers.

Maggie Casey is the master of teaching beginners to spin. Her calm teaching style is easy to understand and a joy to experience. *Getting Started on a Drop Spindle* is excellent for beginning drop-spindlers. In *Start Spinning*, Maggie teaches Eunny Jang on our Schacht Ladybug spinning wheel.

Other helpful beginning videos include *A Spinner's Tool Box* by Judith MacKenzie. She presents basic techniques that every spinner should know in a gentle and flowing manner. After spinning singles, *The Gentle Art of Plying*, also with Judith MacKenzie, can shed light on the intricacies of plying. *Building Blocks of Spinning* with Sarah Anderson highlights basic and specialty yarn structures. She really covers it all!

Rita Buchanan’s *How I Spin* is a wonderful, light-hearted take on Rita’s spinning style showing how she evaluates and works with her yarn.

Specialty videos keep the proficient spinner learning new skills: *Big and Lofty Yarns*, another great video by Maggie Casey, can help your lace-weight blossom into fluffy, soft yarn. Sara Lamb takes us through the ins and outs of silk in *Spinning Silk*. In *Spin to Weave*, Sara blends spinning and weaving.

These are just a sampling of the many spinning DVDs available. Some of them have companion books with step-by-step pictures and in-depth explanations to fill out the spinner’s library.

—Denise Renee Grace

### Attention: Norwood and Bexell Cranbrook Loom Owners

We do not make parts or accessories for Cranbrook Looms not made by us. Over the years there have been many variations and models. Though there are serial numbers for these old looms, no corresponding information exists. Therefore, we cannot provide specific information about these looms nor their ages. For more information about what parts are available and how to order heddles, please visit: [schachtspindle.com/cranbrook/bexell-norwood.php](http://schachtspindle.com/cranbrook/bexell-norwood.php)
Tip: Spreading the warp
When you begin to weave, you need to spread the warp to make a good base to begin your weaving. Here's our preferred method: use the same yarn (or same size yarn) you'll be using for weft. Weave back and forth three times but don't beat. Press these three rows down and repeat. Generally at this point, the warp should be spread evenly and you can begin weaving. If not, repeat again.

Rigid Heddle How-to
Which method: Direct, peg warping or warping board?
There are two warping methods that you can use to warp your rigid heddle loom. The first method, the direct peg warping method, is ideally suited to the rigid heddle loom. With this method you thread the heddle and measure the warp at the same time. It makes warping extremely fast and easy.

Briefly, you clamp the back of the loom to a table and place your warping peg as far away from the back of the loom as your warp is long. You then thread the warp through the slots (there will be two warps in each slot), wind the warp onto the back beam, and then tie onto the front. This method is not as quick or simple as the direct peg warping method, but there are reasons you might want to use it.

Direct peg warping method advantages:
- Fast and easy
- Direct, fewer steps
- Good for warps four yards and shorter
- Perfect for an even number of warp threads or stripes of even numbers
- Quick to learn

Indirect or measuring the warp on the warping board advantages:
- Good for longer warps
- Excellent for designing the warp color order in the reed
- Helpful for warp stripes of odd numbers
- Preferred method for winding a warp for two-heddle weaving

The second method is to first measure the warp yarns on a warping board and then take the measured warp to the loom. You thread the slots and holes, wind the warp onto the back beam, and then tie onto the front. This method is not as quick or simple as the direct peg warping method, but there are reasons you might want to use it.

Get Connected
E-News is published a few times a year, sending you the inside scoop on all things Schacht. You'll find new product announcements, answers to your weaving and spinning questions, along with how-to's and a weaving project with instructions. Just visit schachtspindle.com and click on Newsletter on the left hand side of the home page.

Ravelry groups. Join the Zoom Loom Club and Cricket Club on Ravelry (ravelry.com) to share your projects and see others’ inspired designs. It’s a great place to chat with other weavers and spinners. Also on Ravelry: Schacht Spinners and Wolf Pack groups.

Schacht Blog. You’ll see some changes to our Schacht blog. Formerly known as “Violet Rose”, it’s now renamed and reimagined as the Schacht Blog. You’ll find Jane and Benjamin posting project ideas, patterns, and Schacht news.

Pinterest. We have many boards for your enjoyment, filled with project ideas, tips and tricks at pinterest.com/schachtspindle

Facebook. You can now visit us on Facebook for all our breaking news and current events. Become a friend! facebook.com/SchachtSpindleCompany

Youtube. You’ll find a variety of helpful videos. Learn how to assemble a Baby Wolf loom or knit an edging on a Zoom Loom square. youtube.com/schachtspindle
Petal Pink Shawl
This project first appeared in the May/June 2011 issue of Handwoven.

I wanted to weave a warp with large holes in it—mega lace, so to speak. Since I have an affinity for hand-controlled techniques I decided that I’d try to figure out a way to make what I had in my mind. After some playing around, I found that Spanish lace, when taken to the extreme, gave me the look I was after.

Spanish lace is made by weaving plain weave back and forth across a small group of threads and then moving onto the next group of threads and weaving back and forth in this section, and so on, across the warp. To create the holes, I pulled each section severely. You’ll see one diagonal thread in the open space where the weft travels from the top of one section to the bottom of the next. Because you are building up little sections, you’ll find a hand beater helpful to beat in the weft.

For this piece, the lacy openings are offset from one another, with eight openings beginning 3" from the selvedges for one row of Spanish lace and seven openings, beginning 4" from the selvedges for the alternate row.

I used two fine, luxury knitting yarns: a smooth alpaca-silk yarn for the warp, and a fluffy mohair-silk for the weft. I suggest avoiding using brushed yarns like mohair in the warp, because the fuzzy fibers catch on one another, impacting the shed.

During weaving, the fabric is quite open on the loom. It’s the heavy fulling in the washer that transforms the fabric in to this lusciously soft and fuzzy shawl.

Weave this scrumptious shawl on either a 20" Flip rigid heddle loom or a Baby, Mighty, or Standard Floor Loom.

Weave Structure: Plain weave and Spanish lace
Equipment: A loom with a 20" weaving width, either rigid heddle, table, or floor loom; 12-dent reed or heddle; 1 shuttle (slim boat or stick); hand tapestry beater; straight pins for marking the Spanish lace placement.

Yarn:
Warp—Silky Alpaca Lace from Classic Elite (440 yd/50 gr balls) in #2471 Pixie Pink. You’ll need 720 yards or 2 balls.
Weft—Kid Seta from Cascade Yarns (230 yd/25 gr balls) in #463 pale pink. You’ll need 550 yards or 3 balls.

Designed and woven by Jane Patrick

Find out more at schachtspindle.com
Schacht Spindle Co., Inc. 6101 Ben Place Boulder, CO 80301 p. 303.442.3212 f. 303.447.9273

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Step 1: Weave 4" plain weave across the width of the warp.

Step 2: Weave Spanish lace, pattern 1 (see set up above). After marking the weaving, open the next shed and insert the shuttle up to the 1st pin. Take the shuttle out of the shed. Beat gently (use a hand beater). Change sheds and return the shuttle to the selvedge. Pull the weft tight to pull the warp threads into the section. Beat, change sheds, repeat. At this point, you will have woven a total of five picks. On the fifth pick, weave across to the next section, always pulling the weft to draw in the warps to make the holes (an exception is the selvedge edge which should be left straight, or un-pulled). The weft will dip down to begin weaving the next section (this is how the diagonal line is formed).

Step 3: Weave this section and the remaining 7 sections until you reach the other selvedge.

Step 4: Weave 2 ½" of plain weave, ending on the same side you started pattern 1. Repeat as you did for pattern 1, beginning 48 threads from the selvedge. Weave 2 ½" of plain weave.

Step 5: Repeat steps 2-4, ending with pattern 1 until 11 repeats are woven.

Step 6: End with 4" of plain weave and allow 8" for fringe at the end of the warp.

**Finishing:** Remove the fabric from the loom and tie overhand knots in the ends to secure the weft. I used groups of 6 warp threads.

**Washing:** Roll up the fabric in dish towels. Tie the bundle securely in at least 3 places. Insert the bundle into a pillow case and tie it shut. Machine wash on hot water on gentle for 10 minutes. I have a front-loading washer, so you have top loading machine, you might want to check your fabric every 5 minutes. When the fabric is sufficiently fulled, rinse by hand in lukewarm water and lay flat to dry. Trim the fringe to 6" and steam press on medium.

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Get Inspired with *Woven Scarves*

Our very own Jane Patrick and Stephanie Flynn Sokolov, a Schacht alum, have teamed up to create 26 scarves that are imaginative and teach a variety of weaving techniques and fabric finishes. They created this book specifically with the rigid heddle loom in mind (all were woven on either a 10" or 15" Cricket Loom), but you could weave these on a floor loom as well. Other good news: all of the scarves use knitting yarns. Yarn wrappings are included for every project which will help you make yarn substitutions.