

Sharing the Dream: Fair trade, indigenous cultures

By Norma C. Wilson

(Part one of a five-part series)

In January I explored the Guatemalan highlands with my husband and STDG Board member Jerry Wilson, filmmaker Charles Nauman, weaver Grete Bodogaard, environmentalist Dana Loseke and information technologist Ronda Harrity.

Traveling with interpreter Miguel Nesselhuf we visited seven artisan groups whose work is marketed by Sharing the Dream, a rural school built with STDG help, the Elder Center and elders' homes, students assisted with STDG scholarships, numerous villages tucked among the volcanoes surrounding Lake Atitlán, the central plaza of Guatemala City, the ancient capital of Antigua and more.

The creative arts of America's indigenous people are nowhere more visible than in beautiful Guatemala, and the need for Fair Trade opportunities is nowhere more obvious. We met Mayan artisans face to face, watched them work and bought their products. Despite an economy broken by centuries of colonization, corruption, natural disasters, violence, poverty and lawlessness, we found hope among the artisans, teachers and others working to achieve sustainability for those who are most in need.

We were impressed with the conscientious energy – not to mention the great cooking – of STDG's indigenous Guatemalan staff – Director Diana Ramirez, Elder Center Director Bernavele Sapalú, former STDG scholarship recipient and now Artisan Development Director Isabel Quisquina and others.

Isabel's story was especially moving. After her father's death, Isabel's family faced wrenching poverty. But with help from STDG Isabel was able to go to get an education. After high school, she assisted the former artisan development director, and now directs the program, working with groups in remote villages, communicating with them in the indigenous language, and helping



Clemencia of Corazon de Mujer and her daughter Guadalupe thread a warp.

(Courtesy photo)

them design and produce new products in order for them to achieve sustainability.

On our first day we met with Justina, Clemencia and Dora, three Kachiquel women from one of the weaving cooperatives with which Isabel works, Corazon de Mujer (Heart of Women).

The group was founded in 1980 by Justina and other women who fled army attacks in their village to the city of Chimaltenango. Sisters Clemencia and Dora arrived a decade later after

their mother died. There was no one to take care for them, and they were starving.

Justina learned from her mother to sew when she was seven, and then to weave.

"When you want to get married you have to know how to make your corté, belt and huipil; and if you don't know how no one will want you," she explained. "All the men know is working in the fields. The women have to learn to weave to make our clothes because the men can't afford to buy them."

Justina said the army thought some of her fellow villagers were guerilla fighters, so women who left the village to market their products avoided wearing their distinct weaving pattern for fear the soldiers would target them.

By marketing weavings through Corazon de Mujer, Justina was able to support and educate her children and improve her home.

Dora was the eldest of five starving sisters who arrived in Chimaltenango in 1991. Clemencia said that Dora worked long days for the bread she would bring home for her siblings late each night. Dora wouldn't eat until everyone else had been fed.

Though she desired schooling, she worked and waited until her younger sisters finished school. By then, Dora tearfully told us, she was so much older than other students it was hard to feel accepted, but Justina and another older female student encouraged her to continue.

Three years ago, at age 37, she graduated from high school. Dora said she is happy now, because she understands that, "God's work is in the form of people helping one another."

After the weavers demonstrated their skills, they offered us a chance at the loom. Grete, who seldom works with a back strap loom, but had learned the skill in her native Norway, was up to the task, impressing us with her work.

Like most indigenous women, the women of Corazon de Mujer wear traditional Mayan clothing, but they have adopted some modern technologies, such as cell phones. They said that sweethearts in their community stay in touch by texting.

Hearing that they are always looking for new items to market, Dana suggested cell phone cases. Ronda loaned hers to Isabel, who drew a template for the weavers.

Clemencia's two-year-old daughter Guadalupe gave us each a hug and kiss before they left for home.

OBITUARIES

Beverly Lowther

Beverly Ann Lowther, 81, of Vermillion, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 9, 2013, at Sanford Vermillion Care Center.

Bev was born in Wessington Springs on Dec. 12, 1931 to Carl and Floustine (Potts) Taylor.

Bev was united in marriage to Gaylord Lowther on March 20, 1954. They had seven children, Daron, David, Daniel and Dean Lowther all of Vermillion, Doug and (Laurie) Lowther of Cheyenne, WY, Regina Myhre, of St Cloud, MN, and Don Lowther of Sioux Falls. She was very proud of her grandchildren, Peggy Lowther of Saint Cloud, MN, Anna and (Ryan) Beasley of Brookings, Douglas and (Heather), Lowther, US Navy Yokosuka'shi, kanadawa, Japan, Chris Myhre and Craig Myhre both of Saint Cloud, MN,



LOWTHER

Muecke, and Monique Button, both of Vermillion, Stormy Eckhoff of Britton, and Stephanie Lowther of Tea. Bev had eight great-grandchildren, Hailee, Cameron, Ashton, Paige, Blake, Makinzie, Kylie and Carter.

In her free time she loved to visit friends, go for walks, collect elephants and spend time with her family.

Patricia Lowther and (Darren Wyrer) of Cheyenne, WY, Jessica and (Phil) Pascoe of Tea, Josh Lowther of Newark, DE, Chanelle

She was preceded in death by her parents, Carl and Floustine Taylor; her sisters, Betty Pagent and Dorothy Voecks; her brother, Arthur Taylor; her husband, Gaylord Lowther; and her sister-in-law, Phyllis Johnson.

Memorial services for Bev were held at 3 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013 at Iverson-Siecke-Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion. Visitation was held one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

People gathered to honor Bev at the Eagles Club in Vermillion following the memorial service.

Condolences may be posted online to www.koberfuneralhome.com.

Iverson-Siecke-Kober Funeral Home, Vermillion, is in charge of arrangements.

Brigette Fisher

Brigette Maree Fisher, 27, passed away Feb. 9, 2013, at Mercy Medical Center in Sioux City, IA, after suffering a massive heart attack.

A visitation was held from 5 to 6 p.m. with a prayer service beginning at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013, at Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion.

A memorial service was held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14, 2013, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermillion, with Rev. William Johnson officiating.

Brigette's memory will live on long after her passing as she chose to give the ultimate gift of organ donation to people in need.

Brigette was born to Kavin Fisher and Cindy (Larson) Carrington. She went to her Savior on Feb. 9, 2013. Brigette attended Vermillion High School. She was involved in dance classes



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and especially loved to tap dance. One of her other passions was as a soccer player in her younger years. She always had a smile on her face and a good-natured attitude, which helped as she sold Girl Scout cookies. It also helped her later in life as she worked as an operator for Ansir-4-U.

Brigette lived for her three beautiful girls. They were her rock in life. She did a wonderful job with her girls. She will be dearly missed by her entire family.

Brigette is survived by her children, Destiny, Arianna, and

Navaya; her mother, Cynthia (Larson) Carrington; her step-father, John Wayne Carrington; her father, Kavin Fisher; her step-mother, Julie Berry; her brother, Justin Fisher; her sister, Alicia Fisher and her fiancé, Brian Kimball and his children; her nieces and nephews, Aribella, Alena, Shelby, Layne, and Ryker; her special grandparents, Darrel and Barb Larson; her aunts, Joan Downey, and Gail Feidler; her uncle, Tim (Marie) Larson; and her first cousins, Mandy, Meggan, Shelly, Elisa, and Shannon.

She was preceded in death by her grandparents, Henrietta and Joe Fisher; and her aunt, Linda Buckner.

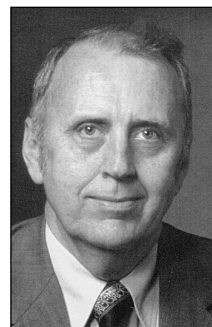
Services have been entrusted to Kober Funeral Home of Vermillion, South Dakota.

Condolences may be posted online at www.koberfuneralhome.com.

Dr. Inman Hesla

Dr. Inman Adolph Hesla, age 90 of Austin, MN, died Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2013 at Mayo Clinic Health System – Austin surrounded by his family. Son of Inman Albert and Agnes B. (Brendsel) Hesla, Inman was born on June 2, 1922 on the family farm in Clay County, South Dakota, near Vermillion, and was baptized and confirmed at Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church. He attended high school at Augustana Academy in Canton, graduating in 1940.

After attending Augustana College in Sioux Falls for two years, Inman enlisted in the US Navy, where he served for three-and-a-half years. Ensign Hesla was involved in the Battle of Iwo Jima. After his discharge from the Navy, Inman returned to college at Augustana,



HESLA

before transferring to Southwestern Medical School/University of Texas in Dallas where he graduated in 1951 with a Doctor of Medicine Degree. In the meantime, Inman married Lois B. Larson on July 24, 1949 in Sisseton. Moving to Minnesota, Dr. Hesla served an internship at Charles Miller Hospital in St. Paul. The couple moved to Austin in July

of 1952. Dr. Hesla delivered 2,996 babies during his 34 years at the Austin Medical Center. In the spring of 1970 he served as a volunteer doctor during the Viet Nam war in Quang Tri. A respected member of the Austin community, Dr. Hesla was active at St. Olaf Lutheran Church. He enjoyed woodworking, gardening, camping, singing and bird watching. He was greatly loved and will be dearly missed by his family, friends and the Austin community.

Survivors include his wife, Lois Hesla of Austin; three sons, Todd (Karen Johnshoy) Hesla, Joseph (Bonnie Beckel) Hesla and Bret (Jaimie Bennett) Hesla, all of Minneapolis, MN; one daughter, Beth (Gregory Scholtz) Hesla of Waverly, IA; seven grandchildren, Peter Scholtz, Rebecca Scholtz, Anna (Audun) Hepso, Paul

Scholtz, Samuel Hesla, Rosina Hesla and Jeremy Kleider; a sister, Joyce Lee of Albuquerque, NM; a brother, Loren (Iris) Hesla of Dallas, TX; many nieces, nephews, patients, other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Inman Albert and Agnes B. (Brendsel) Hesla as well as two sisters, Arlene Hamilton and Helen Heihn.

Funeral services were held on Monday, Feb. 11, 2013 at St. Olaf Lutheran Church with A.I.M. Todd Portinga officiating. Interment took place in Oakwood Cemetery, with a flag presentation by the American Legion Post 91.

The family prefers that memorials be directed to the St. Olaf Church Endowment Fund or to Augustana College in Sioux Falls. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.worlein.com.

Julie Smith

Julie C. Wince Haarsager Smith, born Jan. 7, 1947 in Peoria, IL, to Carl and Norma (Nielsen) Wince, died Feb. 7, 2013, in hospice care, succumbing to complications of renal cancer in Fort Collins, CO.

Our beloved wife, mother and grandmother was raised in Vermillion, where she also worked for and attended USD. She married Dennis Haarsager in 1966 and they had one daughter, Jennie.

Julie was awarded a bachelor's degree in social work and master's degree in public administration from Boise State University and worked

professionally in elder services in Boise and affordable housing services in Fort Collins.

She is survived by Greg Smith of Fort Collins, her husband of 33 years, and, in Queensland, Australia, her daughter Jennie Haarsager-Lieske, son-in-law Scott Lieske, and grandchildren Sam and Nora Lieske. Julie loved quilting, baking, and had a special place in her heart for rescued animals. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, gifts be made to Larimer Humane Society, 5137 S. College Ave., Ft. Collins, CO 80525. At Julie's request, no memorial service is planned.

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Thanks to everyone who remembered us with calls, cards, flowers, memorial donations, kind words & prayers at the time of Maxine's passing.

Memorials were given to Evergreen Cemetery, ROCS, Trinity Lutheran Church and The Senior Center.

Maxine's Family
Junior Iverson
Bruce & Lee Iverson
& Grandchildren

At a time of sorrow and uncertainty, you can count on us for the support you need.

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Lori Kober, Funeral Director, and Tom Kober, Co-Owners
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Eleanor Eagle Bear, Personal Assistant
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