



FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM



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*First Lady
Wendy de
Berger
with
Pro-Teje
weavers,
Ramona
Morales
from
Rabinal
and
Toribia
Morales
from San
Miguel
Chicaj.*



THE FIRST LADY VISITS PRO-TEJE

It seems incredible that what is today a flourishing textile program was just ten years ago the barely possible dream of Thelma Willemsen and other members of the Ixchel Museum.

To encourage traditional back strap weaving of the highest quality, they came up with the notion of weaving textiles of natural (rather than dyed) cotton. If the market accepted such products--ones that emphasized skillfulness rather than familiar bright colors--the weavers would be assured of a decent income while being able to work in their own homes with their children at their side.

Pro-Teje started very small. Its only two weavers--María Cristina Sincal and Albertina Patunayche from Patzún--followed the designs of their village in making placemats and napkins. The results, in a soft brown hue, caught on.

Now 225 women from 24 different communities are weaving traditional patterns in natural brown, white, and green cotton. They make floppy hats, pillows, bags of various sizes, backpacks, tablecloths, coverings for trays, and boxes as well as the good old staples of placemats and napkins. The program employs a carpenter (to make boxes and trays) and two leather designers (for leather-trimmed handbags). There is a separate Pro-Teje store with three employees and a website: www.textilesproteje.com.

Every Tuesday morning a group of weavers comes to the Ixchel Museum to market their output of the previous month. They are paid on the spot. "In calculating their payments," says project director Carlos Tista, "we take into consideration the expense of their bus trip. Some come from very far away!" The products have won rave reviews and sell briskly. They have

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IN THE MUSEUM

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THE 2005 IXCHEL MUSEUM CALENDAR will feature interpretive textile photographs by Guatemalan artist Alan Benchoam. Order yours now.

INFORMATION SHEETS on 100 weaving villages are being prepared by anthropologist Barbara de Arathoon and museum photographer Anne de Marroquin. The single sheets include research, photographs and detailed descriptions of the local costumes. The first 16 are being funded by Friends of the Ixchel Museum.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY was celebrated with seminars and a luncheon for the Pro-Teje weavers. Workshops were given on nutrition and breast feeding; Fabiana de Sáenz spoke on textile symbols. Please see the main article.

THREE WEAVING REVITALIZATION PROJECTS by Fundación Guacamaya, a Dutch non-profit represented by Michael de Groot, are underway. Sumpango, a kaqchikel village in Sacatepéquez where weaving is rapidly disappearing, was the Fundación's first project. Now, children from the 5th and 6th grades will be taught to weave in San Lucas Tolimán, Santo Domingo Xenacoj, and Chinautla.

NEW IXCHEL MUSEUM BOARD DIRECTORS were elected: Lily Rivera de Portocarrero, Susan Moore de Riojas and Sofía Plocharski.

TEXTILE SYMBOLS is the new exhibit being researched and will open in August.



Ceremonial huipil from Sacapulas. 1940. Plocharski Collection of the Ixchel Museum.



Women from Sacapulas wearing their traditional headdresses with new huipiles of commercial cloth. Photo Anne Girard de Marroquin. 2004.



Ceremonial huipil from Chichicastenango. 1950. Plocharski Collection of the Ixchel Museum.



The Ixchel Board at the opening of the jaspé exhibit. Lucía Olivero, President, is fifth from the left.

FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

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THE ANNUAL MEETING of Friends of the Ixchel Museum was held in Philadelphia, May 1st and 2nd. Funding was approved for an English translation of the *jaspe* catalogue, a second set of information sheets, acid-free material for the photographic archive, and more photographic field trips. Field research on Mayan textile symbols will be funded by Friends as will research for a 2005 embroidery exhibit. This work will enrich the photo archive which is one of our major objectives.

A PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIP to Nebaj, Sacapulas, Chichicastenango, and Solola was funded by Friends to record the weavings that are so rapidly changing and vanishing. See the photographs on these pages.

AN EASTER TRIP TO GUATEMALA, the first of a new series of trips, sponsored by Friends and led by Vivian Harvey, had 22 participants and was a great success. The Ixchel Museum arranged visits to weaving villages and organized a tour of the museum and collection room.

MAYA WEEKEND in April at the University of Pennsylvania invited Fabiana de Sáenz, director of the Ixchel Museum education program, to give a workshop on Mayan village textiles. Her trip, funded by Friends, included visits with the education departments of The Mummies and Maritime Museums in Philadelphia and The Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C.

Three examples of Chichicastenango huipiles used today. Photos Anne Girard de Marroquin 2004.



DONATIONS TO FRIENDS OF THE IXCHEL MUSEUM

Please help Friends of the Ixchel Museum sponsor weaving projects, fund traveling textile exhibits, translate textile research, and support projects to enrich the Ixchel Museum.

Friends of the Ixchel Museum is an American foundation and donations are deductible by the donor for U.S. general income tax purposes. Checks drawn to the name of Friends of the Ixchel Museum, Inc., may be mailed to:

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*Pro-Teje
products.
Note the
scale
used to
weigh the
thread. It is
wearing
the newest
creation:
a Pro-Teje
hat !*



been exhibited in Mexico, Canada, and France. There is even talk of exporting the textiles--an almost inconceivable prospect in 1994.

For that matter, no one would have thought ten years ago that Pro-Teje would be recognized by the top level of Guatemala officialdom. But on March 10th of this year Wendy de Berger, wife of President Oscar Berger, came to the International Women's Day party thrown by the Ixchel Museum for the weavers. It was a special occasion and the weavers came by bus, rising before dawn and traveling for hours from their distant villages. They were delighted and very proud the first lady had come.

Sra. de Berger congratulated the women for their accomplishments and exhorted them to keep alive their valuable textile traditions: "*En sus manos hábiles está el mantener, fomentar y heredar nuestras costumbres y tradiciones.*"

