



AMERICAN TAPESTRY ALLIANCE

H: a Journey in Tapestry

Christine Rivers

Brilliant! That is what this project is! It is simple, yet it is complex. That is one of the teachings, or messages, of this project. This article describes the project.

The project. Weave a word or phrase starting with the letter “H.” Start by weaving the “H.” You don’t have to decide what word or phrase until you are weaving. Weave at 8 epi. Use 12 warp threads to weave 1 ½” wide. Decide what you want to weave as you weave. Tapestry is a journey.



*HI THERE BEET FIELDS OF IDAHO. Pam Patrie, Portland, Oregon, USA
USA*

The idea for the project is Archie Brennan’s. Susan Martin Maffei and Archie Brennan were facilitating a tapestry retreat at Pam Patrie’s Oregon ocean-side cabin. By giving us this seemingly simple project, Archie was getting us ready to learn more and remember what we had already learned from Archie and Susan.

I volunteered to coordinate the project and to find some way of showing the tapestries to everyone. Lots of people were interested. Photos of finished “H” words started to come in. I shared them with everyone who signed up on the “H” email list. I shared the “H” words on our Facebook group page, “H”, a Journey in Tapestry. ATA agreed to include the project in the Educational Articles. More people asked to join in!



HUY CHEXWA. Christine Rivers. Parksville, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

I started weaving my word and the brilliance of this simple tapestry task made itself known! I could hear Archie and Susan. I took a two-week workshop with them in Parksville, BC, early in my tapestry weaving career. Their lessons came back to me as I started weaving my word – all the lessons they have taught me over many years in several workshops!

“H” is a non-threatening letter. All straight lines. An easy start. No curves or angles. Many words start with “H.” In English, there is always a vowel after the “H.” If you haven’t decided on your word, no worry. Just weave an “H”, then pick a vowel – a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y. Some people chose words from languages other than English.



HYDRANGEA. Janet Austin. East Greenwich, Rhode Island, USA

Starting to weave. Setting up the warp, spacing correctly, heading done, double half hitches, hem or no hem. Lots of decisions. Be aware of negative and positive spaces. This is very important in all tapestry design. You have to weave all of the spaces. Letters really make you look closely at the relationship between positive and negative space.

Building shapes. Letters are really just shapes. Look at the value of the yarns. You want the letter to show up against the background that you choose. What style of letters do you want to weave? Curvy or blocky. Slanted or straight. Upper or lower case. There are so many fonts to choose from. But, I can hear one of Archie’s tapestry design rules. “Simplify, simplify, simplify!” Always be aware of your tension and control how your weft goes through the warp. Now you have a slit – are you sewing as you go? Or are you using single weft interlock? You have design and technical decisions to make along your tapestry journey. “H” is done. All straight. Now do you want to weave something else that is straight, with no angles? “I” could be next and you could be finished with your “H” word. “Hi.” Maybe you choose a different vowel and now you have to weave angles. What works? Over 1 and up 1, or over 2 and up 2. Try it out and decide. Always making decisions in this journey of tapestry weaving. What about your background? Did you make it plain for the first letter? Do you want it to change or stay the same? If you are changing the background, there are more things to think about at the same time. Keep it plain and simple? Or, make changes and remember what you are doing while you weave the letter

as well. You have no cartoon so memory is important. Susan likes to work without a cartoon. It makes you think of everything at once, being aware of the positive, negative, colour changes, angles. Keep your letters consistent or decide to make them all different. As the word tapestries were shared, some were very inventive. That made us all think, "What can I do to make my word more interesting, more inventive, more fun?"

Lots of choices to make.



HEARTH. Donna Millen. Denman Island, off Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Most people followed all of the rules. A few didn't. They used extra warp threads. One person who doesn't weave tapestry used her floor loom because she wanted in on the fun too. One person wove some words with "A" instead of "H." Read her explanation to understand why. Everyone who wanted to come on this "H" word tapestry journey has been included. We all enjoyed the journey together. Always remembering that tapestry is an open journey.

Thank you, Archie.



ARCHIE. Leola Witt-McNie. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Archie Brennan: A Conversation

April 4, 2016, on a snowy day in April where Susan and Archie live, New Baltimore, New York.

Archie has been weaving. He just cut a tapestry off the loom today. It is the third version of a drawing. He wove it before, almost life size. This version is about 15" x 10" at 9 epi. Archie says

that his fingers don't move as well and are not as efficient as they were. His speed of weaving has slowed down, but he still weaves.

What Archie wants us to learn from *H: a Journey in Tapestry*, is that tapestry does not have to be planned completely ahead of time. It is an open journey. The idea is important – not a complete cartoon. Creating tapestry is a way of thinking. You do not have to follow the design/drawing exactly. Archie likes the creative journey, rather than an imitative process.

Archie and Susan were in Oaxaca recently. The Textile Museum and the Postage Museum in Oaxaca initiated a project in which people would weave tapestry postcards and mail them to the Textile Museum for a show. This was inspired by one of Archie's projects. Years ago, Archie wove a map of the world in 72 postcard sized pieces. After seeing a Japanese Airlines map of the world with Tokyo as the center of the world, Archie thought that he could choose anywhere as the center of the world. He took the North Pole as the center of the world and drew his map. He wove the map in 5" x 7" postcards, gave the postcards to people from around the world and had them mail the postcards back to him. The postcards were all mounted between plexiglass so that they could be seen on both sides and displayed at the Chicago Post Office Museum. As part of the Oaxaca postcard project Susan and Archie taught a workshop at the Textile Museum in Oaxaca, so that weavers local to the area would be excited about participating.

Archie was intrigued by the architecture at the Textile Museum in Oaxaca and did some drawings there. Archie has always drawn. It is one of the things he does. He has drawn since he was 16 years old in Scotland and has kept it up his entire life. He does weekly figure drawing. The drawings are not for tapestries. They are just for drawing. Sometimes his drawings make their way into his tapestries.

Archie would like tapestry weavers to remember that tapestry is an open journey. You have an idea, you do some drawings, you might make a cartoon as a guide, and then you weave, being open to ideas as they arise while you are weaving. Tapestry is exciting as a creative journey, open to ideas and interpretations as you weave. Tapestry is an open journey.

Christine Rivers lives and weaves on Vancouver Island, BC, Canada. She volunteered to coordinate the "H" word tapestry project because Archie Brennan suggested it. Christine explained that because Archie Brennan and Susan Martin Maffei have given so much to the tapestry community, "It was an honour to carry out Archie's idea with so many tapestry weavers."

Christine concludes with and celebrates the H Project with a poem (loosely based on one she used to encourage her children to write poetry when they were in grade school).

Words

Lots of "H" words

Words in different languages

Words that go uphill

A word with a hole in it

A hammock hanging from trees

A hurricane word blowing away

A word in half and half

A word hanging by a thread

Words about health and help

Words that question life

Words of fun

Words about life's adventures

Words of greeting

Words of home and hearth

Words of humour, hilarity and fun

Words about places and things we do

Words that tell stories

Words about things we do

Words that can fly away

Lots of "H" words

Lots of fun weaving "H" words

Thank you, Archie, for our fun with weaving "H" words

Tapestry Weaver Christine Rivers coordinated the "H Project" after Archie Brennan presented the idea at a workshop in 2015. In the images below, see how each project member was inspired.



HYDRANGEA. Janet Austin. East Greenwich, Rhode Island, USA



HYDROGEN. Janet Austin. East Greenwich, Rhode Island, USA

Both of my H-words come from the Greek for “water,” my favorite place to be. I love swimming laps, doing water aerobics, floating on my back, or playing in the water like an otter.

Hydrogen – from the Greek for “water-former,” is the most abundant element in the universe. Its atomic number is 1. The sun is mostly hydrogen, and water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen.

Hydrangea – from the Greek for “water” and “vessel,” is one of my favorite plants, and one that loves water.



*HABEAS CORPUS. Virginia Baldwin. West Vancouver,
British Columbia, Canada*

Sometimes my occupation BT (Before Textiles) serves as an inspiration for a piece. Since I was a pathologist who did some forensic work, keeping track of bodies was important, so the

H was immediately completed in my mind with “Habeas Corpus.” The added colour just seemed an important part of the idea. It seems you can take the person out of Pathology, but you can’t take the interest out of the person.



HAERE MAI. Marguerite Band. Cedar, British Columbia, Canada

HAERE MAI is the Maori word for welcome. Red, black and natural are the colours most often used in Maori Taniko weaving and I have hinted at one type of their designs at either end.



TRUTH ART HAPPINESS, for Lynn Heglar. Jeanne Bates. Woodinville, Washington, USA

This tapestry was started by my friend Lynn Heglar. She wove truth and art. Lynn passed away a while ago from MS and brain cancer. She was one of the happiest souls I ever have known. I went to my first Archie and Susan workshop with Lynn. It just feels right to include her words with our H words and I hope you all don't mind. She started weaving words after a workshop with Archie and Susan, so I know she would have done an H word if she were still here. I chose happiness in her honor.



HUBBUB. Caryl Bregman. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

My woven word 'hubbub' was a good lesson for me as I am new to tapestry and the round letters were a bit of a challenge, more so than the straight edges. I enjoyed this challenge very much and look forward to others in the future.



HICCUP. Sharon Cameron. Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada

There are always so many unexpected surprises when it comes to weaving a tapestry so this word seemed appropriate.”



HUDDLE. Anne Clark. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

So much can be said in a narrow band of weaving. As the woven images from other weavers arrived by e-mail, I was reminded of the magnetic words you can place on your fridge door to create a clever phrase or poetry. Just imagine all those words done in tapestry. This has certainly been a fun project.



HHHHH. Jeansen Co. West Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

When I wove this, I really had nothing to say. But now I can say that 'there are many ways to do a single thing, as shown by the different ways of 'writing' the letter H.'



HOLA LA! Elaine Duncan. Lo de Marcos, Nayarit, Mexico

I am currently living in Mexico and thought immediately of the Spanish greeting...and added an extra twist to the word!



HOLE. Alex Friedman. Sausalito, California, USA

I like to do something a little different and a HOLE seemed like a challenging idea. Making a good circle in 10 ends (at 8 epi) is tricky. Making the hole within is even trickier. It was appealing because of the small scale of the project. I think it took about a day to make it including time to reweave the "O" several times!!



HIGH ROAD. Terry Gerrard. Duncan, British Columbia, Canada

"If you go into the woods today". The many paths I've wandered.



HILLSIDE. Terry Gerrard, Duncan, British Columbia, Canada



HUSH. Terry Gerrard, Duncan, British Columbia, Canada

A warm black as black night sky with twinkling stars and a sliver of a moon, and the only sound is the wake of the boat.



HABITAT. Cynara de Goutiere. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

I like the word "habitat". It's about the personal and community niche. This is my first tapestry.



HAMMOCK. Diane Hall. Richland , Washington, USA.

I'm dreaming of a lazy summer day.



HOW MUCH DOES YOUR SOUL WEIGH? Jenny Heard. Everett, Washington, USA

On the way home from the retreat with Archie and Susan at Pam's, I listened to a radio feature about a doctor who tried to weigh bodies to determine how much the soul weighs. So, that was the catalyst for my H project. A lot of fun.



HYPER. Barbara Heller. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



HALF HALF. Barbara Heller. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

When I heard about this project I immediately wanted to participate, having been a former student of Archie and having done similar projects. So as soon as a large project was cut off the loom I tied back on some of the remaining warp ... but then there were so many choices of words to weave. I tried "half and half" because I wanted to experiment with a new join. I chose "hyper" because I was hyper in my frustration at not having another large project ready to go. I LOVE the weaving but sometimes have trouble with the designing. These words gave me time and space to meditate and let my mind wander.



HELP. Andrea Kennedy. Qualicum Beach, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

When I first started on my tapestry journey, I met Archie and Susan. I said, “HELP.”



HELICAL. Patti Kirch. Kennewick, Washington, USA

Definitely a tough challenge, sans cartoon. I chose a simple lettering in sepia, got comfortable, then chose colour that would allow me to wriggle and weave a simple journey. Too much pressure to weave Heroine.



HILL. Karen Leitch, Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

HILL is an attempt to make the letters appear to climb uphill.



HURRICANE. Karen Leitch. Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Here I enjoyed seeing how wind-blown the letters could look and still be legible.



HUGS, HANDWOVEN, and HAPPINESS. Myrna Lindstrom. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

I started with Hugs. It was the first word that popped into my mind when I heard about the project. That felt like not enough when I finished because I have been interested in text in tapestry weaving for some time. HANDWOVEN & HAPPINESS developed from there.



HAVE YOU? Ruth Manning. Madison, Wisconsin, USA

I began with a preconceived idea, then heard Archie's voice in my head and wiped the slate clean. I chose the dark purple for letters, the rest of the wefts were pulled from what I call my sourdough starter (the leftovers).



HEROINE. Joyce Marlowe. White Salmon, Washington, USA

When thinking about an "H" word, my mind traveled through memories, themes, and places, eventually connecting with the women I call friends. Each has a different story, but in their lives, at some time, each has been a hero — thus the word "heroine."



HEARTFELT. Luanne McCollum. Gabriola Island, British Columbia, WA



HE WHO HESITATES. Luanne McCollum. Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada

I was in the middle of felting when I first received your challenge so thought of heartfelt. While I was weaving it the whole issue of cursive writing reared its head and so I wanted to weave something in cursive, and the “quick brown fox” phrase does not have a word beginning with an h, hence the phrase he who hesitates.



HEARTH. Donna Millen. Denman Island, off Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

I started this little weaving because a friend suggested it to me knowing that I am such a “homebody.” It wasn’t until I started drawing the letters that I realized that that one word contained six other words! I then tried to choose colours to emphasize certain words. It was a lot of fun.



HI-HO. Bonnie (Kathleen) Nicholls. Parksville, British Columbia, Canada

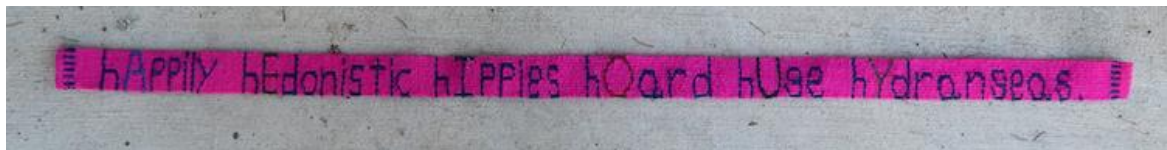
I chose to enter the “H” word challenge just to honour Archie.



HAWAII. Terry Olson, Oregon City, Oregon, USA



HAPPY HELP HIRES HO HUM HYPNOTIST. Terry Olson. Oregon City, Oregon, USA



HAPPILY HEDONISTIC HIPPIES HOARD HUGE HYDRANGEAS. Terry Olson. Oregon City, Oregon, USA

My first word was Hawaii, a place I like to visit as often as possible. I also thought if we were to do a word that started with H, then went to a vowel, why not do all of the vowels. In the US we are taught, A, E, I, O, U, and sometimes Y. My first sentence was going to be longer, but the length of my warp dictated that I shrink the sentence. I wasn't totally happy with the sentence, "Happy Help Hires Ho Hum Hypnotist." I got a longer loom and a longer warp, nice bright colors and made my second sentence, "hAppily hEdonistic hIppies hOard hUge hYdrangeas."



HAVIN' A BALL Y'ALL. Laurie Parham O'Neill. Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

For Archie Brennan's "H" Tapestry project, I had other intentions in the beginning, but then had an earworm from a 70s disco song, so I went with it.



HARRISON. Jessica Ostrow. Sunset, Texas, USA

This is my middle son's name, Harrison. I started it with pink because one of his shiny button down shirts is that color. He also has a shirt in the teal or/and green color as well! His prom shirt is the same color as the letter "I". I started it on his 18th birthday last October, thinking I could get it done in one day, but Tapestry doesn't work that way! :)



HI THERE BEET FIELDS OF IDAHO. Pam Patrie, Portland, Oregon, USA

I was inspired by a new experience of working during the Sugar beet harvest in Southern Idaho in 2015. What a fabulous landscape! Adventures in the Little Red Truck!



HIBERNAL. Janet Pearce. Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

Initially had a phrase in mind until the loom was warped so began without a word in mind. The 'b' presented itself as the 'i' was completed, limiting the options. This journey prompted the weaving of a second word and inspired two additional weavings – the original phrase and another 'hib' word.



HAVEN. Janet Pearce. Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

Curious to weave more words, this is my impression of Pam's retreat cabin.



HIKER. Linda Porte. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

The 'H' challenge marked my return to tapestry weaving after many years away from it. I thank this doable challenge and my friend for the gentle encouragement.

Why "Hiker"? Our daughters went on a "sisters hike" in Manning Park for three days this summer. One lives in Australia and one in Vancouver. Hiking is a love they have shared since they were little. Their pictures showed many views of the mountains they traveled on, and I put behind the letters.



HYDROZOAN — VALELLA. Christine Rivers. Parksville, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

I was at the retreat at Pam Patrie's in Oregon in April/May 2015. When I went to the beach, I saw billions of blue/purple jellyfish like things all over the beach! They were beautiful and fascinating! They have a beautiful, translucent sail and live on the ocean surface. They were Valella of the genus of free-floating Hydrozoans.



HUY CHEXW A. Christine Rivers. Parksville, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

HUY CHEXW A is the Skwxwu7mesh Snichim (Squamish Language) word for thank-you. It was the first word that I thought of when Archie suggested weaving a word that begins with "H."



HUMMINGBIRD. Ann Robertson. Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

I love the birds in my Kitchener garden and in Qualicum, so ended up with this Hummingbird that has an Anna's head (only out West), hard to see, and difficult to do in the small space of an 8 EPI count. The letters would have been easier if they had been an odd number in height. I learned a great deal and things seem to hum along.



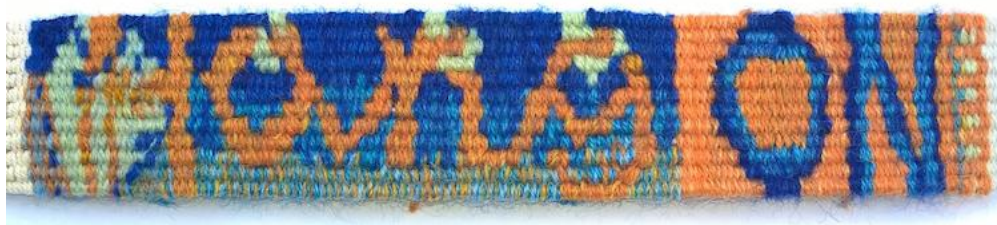
HEALTH. Audrie Sands. Deep Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

Because I have been experiencing a number of frustrating health problems, this word started out to be HEAL. It looked too small, a bit of a cop-out, so it became HEALTH. It did not heal my health problems, but the colour made me feel better!



HO, HO, HO. Carol Seeds. Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

The “H” journey was a fun learning experience. The idea of “Ho, Ho, Ho” came from a conversation about the project with my son-in-law, David. As we talked, the conversation became about life, then laughter and finally the holidays. “Ho, Ho, Ho” could symbolize each of these. I think of it as being fun and happy.



HANG ON. Tamur Shadur. Florence, Massachusetts, USA

A hand is grasping part of the H, and the a, n, g are hanging on hooks, while the ON is staying put.



HEATHER. Heather Sinclair. Protection Island, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada

My H word is Heather, a plant as well as my name. I tried to put different shades of purple into the letters but they are too subtle and are lost. This was a great learning experience and I would next time use lighter colour for the letters and darker green for the background. It was fun.



HAORI. Victoria Stone. Healdsburg, California, USA

My "H" word is Haori. The Haori is a traditional Japanese short Kimono. It is worn open like a jacket. My "H" word came to me as I was weaving and thinking about my new fondness for Japan and Japanese textiles. My interest in Kimono and Haori has definitely influenced my

weaving. This weaving project inspired me to try letters, which has been a great learning experience.



HILARITY. Jenny Tindall. Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada



HAPPILY EVER AFTER. Jenny Tindall. Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada



HUMOUR. Jenny Tindall. Nanoose Bay, British Columbia, Vancouver Island, Canada

I chose H words related to happiness and happy thoughts and then I tried to choose colours that related to that happiness. I found weaving these small tapestries was fun and gave great satisfaction.



HELLIGDAG. April Trafford. Gabriola Island, off Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

“Helligdag” means holiday in Norwegian. The colours and the word in this tapestry tell the story of my vacation to Iceland and Norway. First there were volcanoes (red), earth (brown), and beautiful sunrises (yellow) in Iceland. Then the mosses (light green), trees (medium green), fjords (dark blue), glaciers (light blue), clouds (white) and dark scary tunnels (black) of Norway. This is my first-time weaving letters and I enjoyed the challenge.



HANG BY A THREAD. Marg Trono. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

I googled phrases beginning with H. There seemed to be hundreds, I thought this very appropriate.



For my H tapestry, I decided to weave the easiest possible word in the hardest possible way. This is a four selvedge, two-sided Navajo style weaving in wool weft dyed with indigo and brown onionskin.



HIS LEATHERED HANDS. Eileen Van Bronkhorst

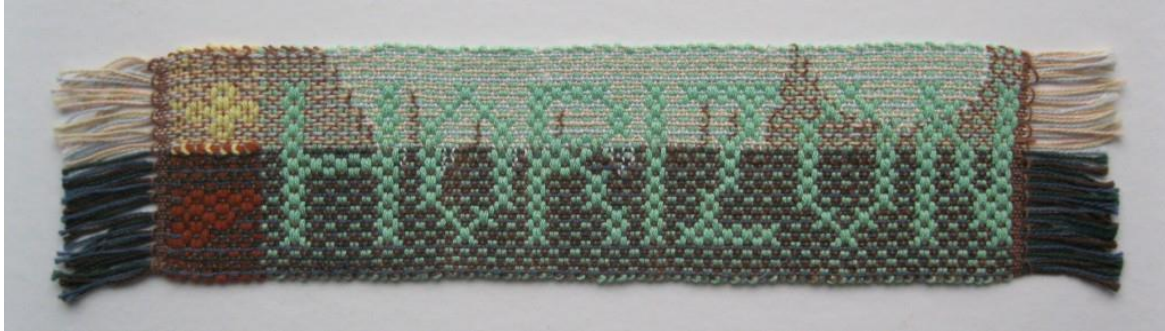
I was also at the weekend with Archie when he said 'aitch' and we couldn't understand what he was saying until he wrote the letter down. I was fascinated by his hands and how they so deftly floated through the warps. I was going to write a sentence, but then felt I needed to finish it sooner than later. So this is inspired by Archie's hands dancing in the warp.



"Heuristic" was chosen as it defined my journey of investigation. The word allowed me to discover how difficult letters are for me to weave and by experimenting I received a degree of understanding of the project. All aspects of the meaning of heuristic.



HEURISTIC. Sharon Van de Velde. Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.



HORIZON. Jennifer Verrall. Victoria British Columbia, Canada

When I heard about the “H” project, I thought it might be interesting to try a weaving on my 12-harness loom. I used a Summer and Winter design with an 8/2 cotton warp in six colours. The tabby weft has two colours of 16/2 cotton and the pattern weft has 8/4 cotton. This is not tapestry but the weaving makes an interesting version of an “H” word.



HIERARCHY. Linda Wallace. Nanoose Bay, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

I became a bit obsessed with “H” words: something easy? Something humorous? In the end: something that has meaning. Humanity’s apparent need to establish assess and find hierarchical placement for the natural world, for culture, for other humans is likely an underlying fault in our ability to truly comprehend the way our world really ‘is’. IMHO.



HUY CHQ'U. Leola Witt-McNie. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada



AITCH. Leola Witt-McNie. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada



ARCHIE. Leola Witt-McNie. Duncan, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

First, I would like to say how grateful I am to Archie for the motivation given to we weavers, and secondly, a thank you to Christine for coordinating this project. In our valley, the Cowichan

Valley, the First Nation people's language is Hul'q'umi'num,' and the word for thank you is Huy ch q'u (singular-to one person) and Huy ch q'u siem for more than one (I ran out of room on my little warp!) I used local wool for the letters – The Cowichan knitters are famous for their sweaters!

I got to thinking about Archie and why he chose H...I pondered at some length and knowing that Archie has a bit of a cheeky nature, I wondered if he had something up his sleeve. Not once did I hear him say letter (or I missed that somehow), just that it should begin with H — or was it to begin with 'aitch,' which is how 'h' is spelled! I wove AITCH in case and wove ARCHIE for good measure, which also begins with A, which Aitch does too, and both words have an H to boot, etc., etc.

No one said that this project would become so obsessive!!!! Only one more word in the English language begins with aitch. *aitchbone* 'āCH,bōn/ noun. *the buttock or rump bone of cattle. a cut of beef lying over this.* Goodness knows why this makes me chuckle but I'm sure there is a joke somewhere. Why? Y begins with W and W begins with D!!!! And on and on it goes.