



Laura at work at the loom as Richard watches.

## Sow's Ear Weaves Unique Designs

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Bedford Co. Correspondent  
TIRE HILL (Cambria County)

— With green thumbs for raising their own produce and nimble fingers that weave wool into masterpieces of art, Laura and Richard Hardin are a middle-aged, self-sufficient couple who enjoy the fruits of their labors.

In addition to selling some of their excellent, artistic wool-woven creations, Laura and Richard teach those with a yen to learn the art of weaving at their home and business location known as, "The Sow's Ear".

They also sell a complete line of very fine natural yarns, crochet hooks, needles, and looms. All yarns are either cotton, wool, or linen. The couple prefers a blend of linen and wool for their own work.

Marketing is done mostly by word of mouth, by their displays at arts centers, and an occasional craft show. Laura plans to do the Fall Foliage Festival in Bedford this October. "I said 'yes,' during



Richard shows one of the reproductive patterns produced by Laura.

a weak moment," she admits. "But, I know I will enjoy it."

Laura refers to, "The Sow's Ear," as a natural extension of their efforts toward a self-sufficient lifestyle.

When one questions the connection of a sow's ear and fine weaving, Laura quickly explains. "I wanted to try weaving and began with silk. It just didn't work and I laughed to myself as I suddenly realized I was trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear!"

Neither Richard nor Laura have had any professional training in weaving, yet they both produce unique creations which have passed jury for the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen. Their work is presently on display at the Phillip Dressler Center for the Arts in Somerset and at the Dana Gallery at Franklin and Marshall College in Somerset.

The discovery of their talents

came about following Richard's thrifty savings plan to purchase a stereo. Visiting their son in New York City, the couple walked downtown to shop for their long awaited entertainment center.

Window shopping as they walked, they saw a weaving demonstration and decided to take a closer look. Within minutes, Laura has convinced Richard that a loom would be a superior purchase to the stereo and the business transaction was completed.

At first, they bought all of their own wool but eventually added several sheep and rabbits to the lawn of their forest surrounded home.

Abigail and Naomi are crossed Karabul and Rambolait and produce wool, Laura says, that is ideal for weaving. Weather can actually affect these sheep to change color from year to year, a very desirable trait. Last year, Abigail

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And they said he couldn't weave a tree.

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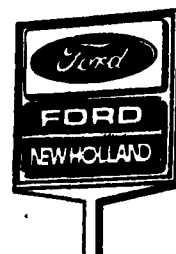
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