

BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD  
Ithaca, New York

NEWSLETTER #3 - July 1976  
Edited by Jean Warholio

With such a busy summer still ahead of us, and some unfinished Guild business yet to be taken care of, it was decided there was a real need for another Newsletter before the end of the summer. Please read carefully - there is a lot of information here. *AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE AUGUST 9th MEETING AND DYE SESSION!*

BEGINNING SPINNERS WORKSHOP. Open to anyone interested; enrollment is limited to a maximum of 12 people. (To register: call Kay Ross after 7:30 p.m., 844-8050.) It will be Tuesday, July 27, at Kay Ross's home, 469 Irish Settlement Road, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is a \$10 fee that includes a drop spindle and fleece, as well as the 5-hour session. Carders will be available at \$12.50/pair for those who do not have them and wish to purchase them. The workshop will begin with sorting a fleece, characteristics of wool from various parts of a fleece, uses of these different parts, sheep breeds, etc.; then spinning wool in general, other fibers briefly; carding and combing; spinning on a drop spindle; and spinning on a wheel. Kay Ross will lead the workshop, with several BSHG Members assisting. Bring your own lunch, coffee and tea will be provided. New spinners: bring whatever you might already have to spin with (even that old wheel you can't get going). Members helping: please bring your wheel to spin on and perhaps loan, and anything else you might need to help instruct. *Directions to Kay's:* Take Rt. 13 from Dryden or Ithaca to Irish Settlement Road. (The sign may be a little hard to spot, but it is near the farmhouse with the fancy old barn -- and from the Ithaca direction, it is just past Cycle City and you can't miss that.) Go south (uphill) and go over the big hill about 2½ miles. The Ross house is past the farm with the red barn on the left and is a lovely restored old home on the left (white exterior, black shutters), with a new garage in progress.

MORDANTING SESSION (for us timid beginners). Doris Brown has generously offered to have any of us rank beginning dyers come for a mordanting session at her house on Saturday afternoon, August 7, from 1:00 to about 3:00 p.m. (8 Oak Crest Road, Ithaca). Bring the wool you will be dyeing on the 9th, plus pieces of Chlorox bottle or bread wrapper clips and indelible marking pens for identifying your wool. The BSHG mordants will be available at Doris's for a very nominal fee (see below). Doris Brown's house is the first (white) house on the left up (East) off Cayuga Heights Road, not very far off Route 13.

MORDANTS: Joan Johnston has the Guild mordants. Contact her (272-2697, mornings after 9:00 is the best time, but keep trying) if you need to replenish your supplies or get them at Doris Brown's on Aug. 7. Joan says the supply is a little low on Alum (\$1.50/lb. or 40¢/4 oz.), but has ample amounts of the others: Tin (70¢/oz.), Cream of Tartar (55¢/4 oz.), Iron (15¢/oz.), and Chrome (15¢/oz.).

Laurel Scheeler (387-5452) in Jacksonville also has mordants in quantity for sale.

DYE WORKSHOP (August 9 Guild Meeting). This will be a "Pot-to-Pass" event -- bring at least one enamel pot with dyestuff(s) ready to go. We will also need camp stoves (Coleman preferred) or small grills (with wood or charcoal) to keep as many pots going as possible. Please bring what you have. And let's make this an unusual dye session -- no onionskins or the like, PLEASE! Just to give you a few ideas as to some of the things being brought: nettle, weld, coreopsis, plum or cherry tree bark,

barberry, pecan flowers, milkweed -- use your imagination, look what's around you! Last year's dye session was a HUGE success, with 20 pots of dyes and no duplicates!! WHAT FUN! Let's do it again this year, and better... A few more ground rules: no loose fleece, all wools should be mordanted (your choice or mordants), and please no big skeins of wool -- there will be lots of dyepots and people with wool to dye. Suggested amount of wool: about 8-10 feet per card. Alixe Andrews's method last year was a huge success and well worth repeating: she punched a number of holes in a piece of Chlorox bottle and looped the mordanted wool through the holes (like fringe) so that she had a "card" with one swatch from each mordant she used to put into each dyepot. Thus, a good range of colors, depending on the mordants used, can be seen coming from each dyepot. That should spark your imagination! So come well prepared for a wonderful day -- the dyepots will be kept going, one after the other (again, depending on how many stoves, burners, etc. we have to use), until all are exhausted. People and dyepots. Don't forget the possibilities of afterbath materials either -- bring what you have: white vinegar or acetic acid, soda, or ammonia (non-sudsing), or whatever.

*Directions to Marion Wikoff's:* The Wikoffs are at 485 Iradell Road (387-5410), at the corner of Iradell and Podunk Roads. Take Rt. 96 (North) from Ithaca (4 miles above the Octopus), take the 2nd left beyond the Hospital (there is a green sign on the right, welcoming you to Ulyses Township), and turn left on Iradell Road. It is 4.9 miles to Podunk and is the 5th crossroad you will come to. Bring your lunch. Bring a friend if you wish. And when you are loading your car, you might be smart to toss in a roll of paper towels, an apron, maybe a pair of gloves for your dainty hands, an old towel or two, some plastic bags, and perhaps even a folding chair for resting your tiny body on -- along with ALL the other things to remember...

ASHFORD WHEELS and JUMBO FLYERS. Everyone who had ordered Ashford wheels in February or March should have received them by now -- they came in about mid-June. If you are one of those who ordered then (and we are not talking about the May order) and you have not received your wheel, SPEAK UP -- call Jean Nowack (564-9241) and let her know. The prices of Ashford wheels went up as of June 1st, from \$46 to \$50 for Guild orders of 15 or more wheels. They have also now established another price break at 30 or more wheels. We are tentatively setting the August 9 meeting as another wheel ordering date. If you want to order, see or call Jean Nowack between now and then. (We might add here that Lee Howard, who had ordered 13 extra wheels, reports that all are now spoken for.) If we do not have orders for at least 15 wheels by the August 9th meeting, we will order promptly when we reach that number. **ORDER NOW!**

JUMBO FLYERS. Hoorah! Ashford has announced the availability of whopping big Jumbo flyers and bobbins for their wheels. You get the entire unit from the table where the maidens screw in and UP (the whole assembly) and four bobbins. (You cannot use your Lazy Kate with the bobbins, though.) To whet your appetite, the orifice is 5/8" -- which is practically large enough to spin a pillow or rope at the very least! For those of us who have been frustrated by plying with the small bobbins and having to break our yarn at least twice, or who have wanted to spin thicker yarns than we could on the small flyer (3/8" orifice), this is an especially welcome announcement! (By the way, those who have compared find it varies, but according to Ashford, their small bobbin holds about 3 ozs. of wool while the Jumbo holds about 8 ozs.) The cost is surprisingly nominal: \$19 (plus customs) for a single order, but a mere \$14 for five (5) or more. With customs, etc., Jean Nowack asks that we pay her \$15 per flyer and the difference (± \$1.00) may be made up when the whole order comes in. (Incidentally, if it helps you to decide, the price being charged currently by most supply studios/shops for an American-made jumbo flyer is about \$45+.) About 19 of us ordered the flyers at the July 12 meeting. If you did not get in on that order and still wish to order a Jumbo unit, Jean Nowack will be taking orders at the August 9th meeting and the order will go off to New Zealand promptly after that...

We should also mention here that there are a few extra bobbins left from the last order from Ashford -- see Jean Nowack or Jean Warholic. They are about 80¢ per bobbin.

WELCOME to more new members! (Please add them to your list.)

Joan Luyben, 55 Hamilton Street, Cortland, N.Y. 13048

Robert Hoyte, 392 Asbury Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068. (257-1887) (*Has spinnable Huskie dogs*)

Maria V. Steve, Lansing West -- Apt. 1-C, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. (257-2242)

Donna Nielsen, 629 Midline Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068. (539-6175)

**THE FLEECE DEPARTMENT** (and other things). Dora Swart has several very fine, very strong Corriedale fleeces from Dr. Bryce for sale -- \$1.00/lb. and they are BIG (14-16 pounds each). She has 3½ left as of July 21 -- call her if you are interested. (And if you feel guilty about buying a whole fleece, or your husband's glare is too much for you, why just buy a half fleece or split one with a friend!)

Jean Warholic has one left of the last four fleeces from the late William Close, King Ferry. If you are interested in buying it, call her. (Mrs. Close asked \$1.50 per pound and that is what Jean is asking -- and it is a 9-lb. fleece.)

Karey Solomon has two Union harness rug looms, 36" wide, for sale. Call her (387-6952) for more information if you are interested. She also has a nice 10-lb. Tunis fleece for sale at \$1.00/lb.

**OVER THE BACKYARD FENCE.** We are very sad to report the death of two special people who have touched the lives of many of us in a number of ways. Ann Jansen's husband died very unexpectedly in early July. It may be awhile before some of us see her again -- she would appreciate hearing from her friends. And Mr. William Close, of King Ferry, died in early June. (If you recall, his fleeces placed 1st and 2nd in our Wool Day's Golden Fleece Contest.) It was so nice that he could be recognized in that way before his death. The Close sheep are descendants of the fine wool sheep that his great-great-Grandfather Benjamin had brought with him when he settled in that area in 1798; sheep having been kept continuously on the farm since then. We all send our deepest sympathy to both their families. \*\* Dora Swart is still having problems with a leg and has had to curtail her many activities. Several of us suspect that the pain of cutting back on her many doings is far worse at times than the pain in the leg... \*\* Meredith Wood is getting more and more of her head of steam back. She plans another buying trip soon. \*\* Ellen Harrison had two hefty spinners on June 26 -- Rebecca and Melissa -- one was 5 lbs at birth, the other 7 lbs. \*\* We find that Mary Braaton will be leaving this fall. She will be (happily!) teaching movement for actors at the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem. We will miss her. \*\* Has anyone heard from Colleen Stone yet, speaking of people leaving this area? \*\* Gesine Meeker is back for the summer (861 White Church Road, Brooktondale, 539-6139) and will be heading for Paris (not the one in Kentucky) in late August. Gesine has made some lovely things in the year that she has been gone from this area -- ask to see them at the August 9 meeting. \*\* Joan Johnston has inadvertently found another way to keep the moths out of fleece. She recently found the pail of wool she had set to soaking around Christmastime and had gotten sidetracked from finishing. She says that it is in remarkably good shape and that the strange red things washed right out... \*\* And a BIG THANKS to Jean Frink and Jean Steiber from Norwich for their most helpful and inspiring session of spinning flax at the last meeting. It was extremely interesting and encouraging, not to mention FUN!!! We are sorry that more Guild members did not get in on it (and they probably are by now too!). But we were glad to see the two Wayne County Spinners who came!

THE GUILD BANNER IS TRULY BEAUTIFUL!!! Somehow it did not get shown off at the July 12 meeting but you'll see it for sure at the August meeting. A lot of work went into it -- with a deep bow in the direction of Alese Sheffy, Sharon Moen, Barbara White, and Marion Wikoff. It was a big effort, but the banner was finished in time to display it at the Bicentennial Day at Little York. It has a handspun/handwoven background of tan linen (thanks to Theodora Meller's generosity), a black lamb in baaa-relief (hooked black fleece from Kay Ross, Jean Warholic, in burlap and appliquéd to the linen), with a deep purple border and the Guild name in black lettering. Really HANDSOME! And eye-catching. A big thanks to those who put so much time into it!!!

THE SHEEPISH GRIN. Laurel Scheeler is excited by the prospect of opening up her shop for fleeces, fibers, looms, yarns, books, carders, dyestuffs, mordants, spinning wheels, and the like. The shop, soon to be opened in Jacksonville, is dubbed The Sheepish Grin. Please stop by her booth at Craft Fair Ithaca (August 6-12). She would like to offer your cherished handspuns (natural or dyed) to the public if you can part with them. (20% of the sale will be taken for the responsibility of caring for them.) If you would like an outlet for your products -- i.e., Gretchen Ham's spinning wheel stationery, and/or your handspuns -- you can reach her at 387-5452.

HAVE YOU SEEN the two articles in the latest issue of *Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot* for more effective demonstrating? (They were: "A Short History of the Spinning Wheel" by Astrid Swenson and "Demonstration Do's and Don'ts" by Margaret Dokka.) With a few exceptions, the information is good and well organized. We will have a copy of *SS&D* at the August meeting for you to look through. If you feel that either of them will help you as a beginning demonstrator, let Jean Warholic or Karey Solomon know and we'll get them duplicated for you.

SPINNERS ARE STILL NEEDED for several events coming up. Check with the person listed as a contact -- these are worthwhile events and we urge you to participate...

*The Caravan Museum* - a variety of dates and places, with hours generally from 9:30-11:30 a.m. For specific dates, places, and times, etc., call Amie Brill at 273-5245.

*Master/Apprentice Field Day*, sponsored by the LEARNING WEB - August 21st, Stewart Park, Ithaca, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. They need spinners and dyers (only two of us have signed up so far, COME ON!). Call Jean Nowack, 564-9241.

And a few more important dates to note...

Through August 22 - "The Handwrought Object: 1776-1976," Johnson Museum, Cornell University, open Tuesday through Sunday. Excellent slide shows from Colonial Williamsburg. Many good displays and great objects, plus one real shocker for spinners (no hints or clues, you will KNOW it when you see it!).

July 28 - Sheep and Fiber Day, Troy, Pa. (9:00-5:00). Fairgrounds.

July 30 & 31 - Fillmore Days, Moravia (N.Y.) Congregational Church, 10 a.m. on.

July 31 - "Olde Tyme Day," Romulus (N.Y.) High School grounds, 9:00-5:00.

OCTOBER 8 & 9 - What we have been waiting to hear: the Thistledown Handspinners' Fall Seminar. Definitely make note of this on your calendar. It is truly something you should not miss...

SPINNING SUPPLIES IN THE ITHACA AREA. Jean Warholic is in the process of putting together a listing of people in the general Ithaca area who have spinning-related supplies. This will go out to Guild Members and a few others. It will be a brief list, but should greatly aid all of us needing to know where to go to see who has what. If you wish to be listed -- and I am thinking of Meredith Wood, Laurel Scheeler, Norman Hall, Mildred Scudder, and Jean Frink to name a few -- let me know. I hope to have the list out in September.

TO REFRESH YOUR MEMORIES... The following people have signed up to actively participate in the Guild's forthcoming programs. (Yes, we have your name in your very own handwriting!) So be thinking about and preparing for your program. You might want to get together with the others who have signed up, do a bit of organizing, decide who will be doing what, and plan ahead for it.

September - *Preparation of Fleece* (sorting, carding) - Billie Hall, Helen Grace Lindsay, and Marge Ehly. Also, *Spinning Different Animal Fibers* - Maureen Huebsch, Theodora Meller.

October - *Spinning, Dyeing, Beginning Weaving: A Review of the Literature* - Dcris Brown, Dora Swart, Joan Johnston, Katie Elliot.

November - *Spinning on a Drop Spindle* and *Spinning on Different Types of Wheels* - Alese Sheffy signed up, but will not be here. Would anyone like to volunteer?

December - *Spinning Different Non-Animal Fibers* - Sharon Moen.

January - *Chemical Dyeing* and/or *Ikat Dyeing* - Donna Nielsen, Marion Wikoff.

If you wish to sign up for any of these, please see Jean Warholic at any of the meetings, preferably in advance. Remember that there are many resources to draw on for these programs. Talk around. Put together some ideas. Pull in a friend or expert to help you. This should be a learning process for everyone concerned...

REFRESHMENTS and good things to eat... Marion Wikoff reminds us that she needs more volunteers to help woman the refreshments table at our meetings. With two or three people taking the time to help out each meeting, it does not burden anyone much. Please sign up with Marion at the next meeting.

PRICES FOR HANDSPUN YARN. It was suggested that we reiterate the prices that the Guild Members voted on at an earlier meeting to charge for handspun, handdyed yarn. The final price is up to you, of course, but the following are the general guidelines the Guild Members decided: \$1.50 per ounce for 2-ply, \$2.00 per ounce for dyed or 3-ply. This is for wool only. You go from there. Do you feel a need for establishing prices for other fibers and/or plys (flax, dog, cat, goat, black vs. white, 4 or more ply)? If so, let's discuss this during the September meeting...

How long does it take you to spin enough for a sweater? That is almost like asking the quilter how many hours it took her to finish the quilt. But there the question is and it is asked fairly often. It depends, of course, on a number of variables -- thread diameter, cleanliness of the fleece, type of fleece, number of plys, the size and type of the sweater to be knitted, and so on. How do you figure it? Do you aim for a yardage and be generous? Do you aim for a certain number of ounces? Do you accept back your "overrun" if the person buying finds she has too much and does not want to use it in another project? You might want to think about some of these questions if you anticipate working on a comparatively large project. And other aspects of spinning for something taking considerable yardage. Shall we develop this into a program for fall or spring? Who is interested in picking up on this? (SPEAK!) Be thinking of questions and problems that have arisen through this summer, with program possibilities in mind for this spring.

Kay Ross has suggested the idea of having a year's end meeting where everyone is required to bring a finished object, or skeins, or something DONE, a project, for exhibit. This could be judged by someone, such as Deloria Chapin, and/or it could be put on exhibit somewhere (library? bank?). What do you think? FUN? Shall we discuss this matter in August or September and gear for something? It would be good for all of us, there is no denying that! Let's make a decision about it soon...

This is really the last page of the Newsletter. Stick with it a little longer, even though it is such a mixed bag...

Susan Andrews's exhibit at Bosworth's is now over and it is too bad if you missed it. It was well received, and a pleasure, and the Bosworth's anticipate having more shows in the future. We will try to keep track of them and pass the information along in the Newsletter...

Jean Nowack would still like to hear from people concerning the availability of carding machines -- can you get them with different types of "cloth?" Prices? Where can you order carding machines? Etc. If you have catalogs describing them, or whatever, please pass them along to Jean. There has been enough interest shown in acquiring a carding machine for the Guild to warrant its purchase, but some shopping around needs to be done first.

For September, and meetings at the Tin Can henceforth, we have been asked to park to the side (near the Information Booth) or the back of the Tin Can. It got pretty congested on July 12 and apparently we took up some much-needed staff parking places...

ON THE NEXT BUSINESS AGENDA (some old, cold leftovers)

An increase in Membership dues?

A regular Guild Newsletter? (Hopefully not as FAT as this one...) Should we have one every month? every two months? or as needed? What do YOU think? With the election of officers coming up in the late fall, we could appoint an editor to get one out at specified times.

And a number of other things, stemming from ideas and questions posed in this issue.

*DEADLINE for the next Newsletter: August 23 as before. (But if you don't have much to put in it, we may wait until mid-September. It depends on YOU -- and I have appreciated the number of people who responded and helped get me information for this issue in all sorts of ways... sometimes unintentionally!)*

Jean Warholic

A Raging, Roaring Lion, of a Lamb-devouring kind,  
Reformed and led a sweet submissive life.  
For with face all steeped in smiles  
He propelled a Lamb for miles,  
And he wed a woolly Spinster for a wife.

The Book of Cheerful Cats  
Joseph Green Francis, 1849-1930