
BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD
Ithaca, New York

NEWSLETTER #15 -- March, 1978
Edited by Jean Warholic

This may be your last communication from the Guild! Yes, if your address label has a green dot on it, we have not received your Guild membership renewal (DUES) for this year as of March 4 (at this writing). Please do get your dues in to us NOW, as of the March 13 meeting, or else... And if you've decided not to renew, we are sorry, but it has been nice having you as a member, even if only on a mailing list basis, to know of your interests and spinning inclinations. Our meetings are open to anyone interested and we hope that you will still come see us now and then!

MARCH 13 meeting. Please note that the actual meeting of the Guild will not be at the Presbyterian Church as previously announced -- but at 12:30 (approx.) at Barbara White's home. Barb lives at 6 Monroe Street, which is just off Rt. 13, in Dryden. If you are coming from Dryden (and the sheep barns), it is after the railroad tracks; if you are coming from Ithaca, it is the second street after the city limits (and if you get to the r.r. tracks, you've missed it). Street has sign up, too, in case you are reading street signs. TO THE SHEEP BARNS: Turn right at the Dryden stoplight onto Rt. 38 (south). You will have a few miles to drive. Keep going after the big sign pointing out the SUNY/Cornell cattle/dairy barns, for a few more yards, and there is a small road going up the hill to the right. That is to the sheep barns. We will try to have a sign stuck in the snow for you. See you there at 10:00... Dress warmly! We'll head for Barbara's after the session at the barns. Sheep shearing, tour of the barns, LOTS of lambs!!

APRIL 10 meeting. Wheel mechanisms and how your wheel works, with Normal Hall. Bring your wheel, especially if it is an unusual one. At the Tin Can.

(And for those of you who didn't get to the February meeting, you missed some beautiful slides and examples of weaving from South/Central America, Africa, and Mexico -- a real thank you to the Feldmans for their efforts, and to the others who brought woven articles. To those who did come, GLAD you braved the barriers and weather!)

SATURDAY GROUP. We had a good session with Dora Swart on sorting a fleece last weekend and picked up many pointers. (Somehow, you just can't have too many basic how-to kinds of sessions like that. There is always something new to be learned and old information reiterated so it'll stick with you.) We greatly appreciated Dora's efforts that day, as well as the opportunity one example of a Morlam fleece. Eleanor May also gave us a stint on the carding machine so that we could see what was involved using it. We had a good crowd that day, and some new faces! And more interesting projects to hear about.

For the March 25 meeting: SILK. Work-session, so clean up your spinning wheel flyers, bobbins and sand those corroded hooks. (Even if you don't come, now's a good time to do it anyway, if you've been neglecting your wheel.) And, if possible, wear non-synthetic clothing. Wonder why? Come to the meeting and find out! For April 29 meeting: SPINNING ON A GREAT WHEEL. And we will do it. Bring some of your best carded rolags, or roving, preferably carded woolen, not worsted. Need not be washed wool. And if you feel the need to practice something before the meeting, spin on your drop spindle... See you at West Hill School, 1-5:00 p.m. -- please call Eleanor May (272-8224) if you plan to come so we know how many to expect.

TO HAVE OR HAVE NOT... Wool Day. Yes, we plan to have it. The committee is working out the details, so please call or write them if you have definite ideas and preferences about this event -- Kay Ross (844-8050), Linda Olds (844-9672), or Jane Steigerwald (315/253-6880). We are gearing for May, as before. More information at the March meeting and in the next newsletter...

...Which also brings us to the next matter at hand: we are requesting the donation of one

skein of handspun, 2- to 4-oz. in weight, from each Guild member, to sell at our sales table at Wool Day (and subsequent events). Any fiber, natural or dyed, singles or plied, washed and ready for use. Toby Chambliss will receive the skeins for labeling (labels provided), and she will need to know: fiber(s), yardage (even if you have to measure it off with a tape measure), and your name. (We'll also take care of the weighing. All skeins are due in by May 1st. The old spinners won't be phased by all this, but if you are new at spinning and this throws you, call Toby (273-7004) and talk with her about it. We've really needed yarns to sell (or even display) in the past, and your cooperation with this will be MUCH appreciated! NOTE WELL pages 3-4 -- food for thought for all of us!!

DEMONSTRATORS are still needed for Marathon Maple Festival, April 1-2. We still need spinners for Sunday, as well as someone to demonstrate dyeing that day. Please speak up at the March meeting, or let Suzie Hokanson know...

The following people have volunteered to take care of various Guild items. They are your contacts for borrowing these things when you need them for demonstrations or whatever. (We will list them again on the membership list, but take note of them now!) When you borrow those items, get them back to that person (or let her know who has them next). These are mostly Ithaca people, so pick-up and leave-off problems should be minimized.

Children's drop spindles, fleece, etc. - Karen Smith (539-6270). [We also hope to have some commercial roving soon for kids to spin; also some flickers.]

Guild scrapbook - Suzie Hokanson (849-3345). [Please get her any contributions you might still have for this project. Newspaper clippings, whatever. Suzie is esp. good at this kind of thing so it should be quite a scrapbook!]

Guild sales table items, Guild banner - Jean Warholic (539-7648). [Sales items include a few sweatshirts, M. Straight mittens, yarns, A. Bell's "Creative Play" wools, fleece dusters, etc. Postcards.]

Mordants, dyes -- Linda Dickinson (564-7597). [Guild mordants, dyes for sale and for demonstrations if you'd prefer not to use your own.]

Source materials, information - Kay Ross (844-8050), Linda Olds (844-9672). [Ordering, pricing information; sources for spinning-related items from all kinds of places. Info. as current as possible.]

Guild carders, wheels - Marion Wikoff (5410). [Don't have them yet, but she will have a supply of carders for sale, extra Ashford wheels for sale through Guild. Guild's Ashford wheel to rent.]

Coffeepot, tea, coffee, etc. - Linda Olds (844-9672), Patty Mutkowski (277-3112). [These items are used at meetings, Wool Day, Rock Day, workshops, etc. Last, but definitely not least!]

ASHFORD WHEELS. We should be able to proceed with an order soon after the March meeting with Fibercrafts in Ohio. If you are ordering a wheel, break your bank and count your pennies. The price through the Guild, as decided at the last meeting, will be \$65 plus shipping through UPS (about \$3-4 we estimate). *We will let you individually know*, for those who've previously ordered wheels. We must establish our dealership with Fibercrafts before placing the order and we are in the process of doing just that.

The Jumbo bobbins are all in and delivered to their purchasers now. The Guild has six left at \$1.05 each. See Jean Warholic at the March meeting or let her know if you want one. The Guild is also planning to purchase an Ashford wheel to rent out (\$2.00/week). Anyone interested in refinishing it when it comes in?

The following article appeared in the January 1978 issue of The Shepard magazine. It is reproduced here enthusiastically, if not (unabashedly) without permission...

Measuring up for Homeknits

Many fooled by wide differences in yarn density

DOROTHEA TURNER

(Condensed from N.Z. Farmer, June 9, 1977)

When you buy an ounce of four ply mill-spun knitting wool you count on it to be of a certain thickness. You probably know from experience which size of needles are likely to be best and how many balls of yarn you will need for a basic jersey. You can often use one brand of four ply for a pattern designed for another brand.

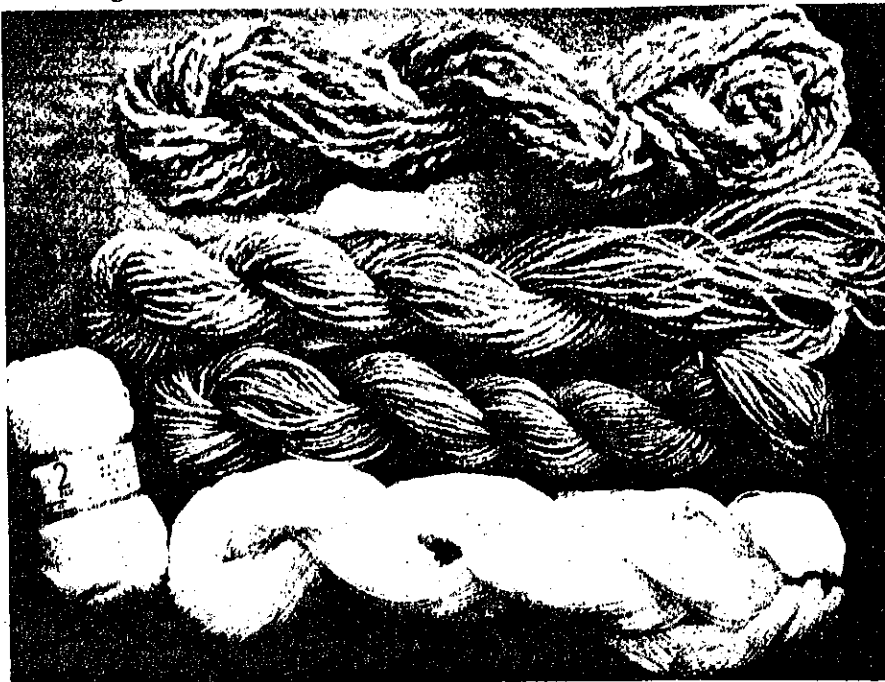
In fact, four ply knitting wool has been so stable a product that when a crepe knitting yarn is sold with the description "Knits as four ply," you know what to expect of that, too.

But when you move to handspinning, these ways of describing and measuring yarns will not do at all. You are unlikely to meet four ply handspun or even hear it talked about. Most spinners produce a two ply which is a little thicker than shop four ply and makes up more like double knitting yarn. Yet other spinners make a three ply yarn which may be finer still than your own finest two ply. How then does one measure yarn?

Wide differences

Take as an instance the skeins in the photo. Each one contains an ounce of two ply. The bulky, roughly spun skein is only 20 yards long. Next it is yarn

How long is an ounce?



N.Z. Farmer

In handspuns, a request for "An ounce of two-ply" could bring you any one of five different versions of the same.

What measurement means

The word "ply" is only a description, not a measurement at all. It tells you only how many threads of single spinning have been plied to make the yarn. The vital statistic is the thickness of these singles, which is expressed as their weight in relation to a given length. Proper definition of plied yarn requires two figures therefore, and within the trade a yarn will be known chattily as 2-16s or R110 TEX-2.

Only the wools sold for domestic knitting present themselves on ply numbers alone, and they do it only for our convenience as customers. Because the weight-length ratio of the standard brands has been kept stable, we millions of domestic knitters have not had to think further than so many ounces of four ply. But the unstated lengthwise measurement of the main types of knitting wool is useful knowledge for the handspinner.

Using a skeiner

Extra bulky and fancy yarns make their own rules, as every knitter discovers, but an ordinary double knitting yarn has 60 yards to the ounce or thereabouts; the standard four ply yarns are mostly just over 100 yards, the three plies are 150 yards and the two plies 250 yards to the ounce. Knowing this will help you assess your handspun.

First of all, let your skeiner (known as a niddy-noddy) be your friend and consultant in all calculations. If you haven't yet a skeiner, buy one or have one made. They can be very beautiful objects if made by someone who understands their function and also has a talent with wood.

The one in the photo is of a batch very simply and cheaply made for a spinning group 15 years ago; it's durable, accurate and easy to use. The shoulders slope just enough to allow the finished skein to be slipped off easily, and the skein's circumference is two yards.

A skeiner made now should be two metres in circuit of course. I've left metrics out of this discussion so far, because in talking of ingrained habits it's logical to use the language they are linked with. The principles of yarn measurement are the same in both systems.

As you skein your wool, count the rounds and put a marker, a long thread of another colour, to separate lightly each bundle of 50 rounds, or 100 rounds if the yarn is very fine. Weigh the finished skein, washing it first if you want precision, and you'll have a very good idea of the style of bought wool it will resemble in knitting—four ply, double knitting or extra bulky.

(over)

If you have your eye on a particular printed pattern, this brings you much closer to calculating reliably for it in your spinning. It can be worth buying a ball of the special wool that a pattern is linked with, so that you can measure its yardage, and tension. Remember to note and allow for any shrinkage your skeins undergo in washing.

Matter of length

The main point is, however, that your spinning project has now become a matter of length, not of bulk. For standard jerseys the weight of your spinning might vary greatly from one fleece to the next, according to the fleece used and the weight aimed at, but the total length of spun wool required varies very little.

If you make a proper calculation lengthwise, you can know when to stop spinning for one job and move on to the next. There's nothing worse in spinning than being caught short for the last two inches of a jersey, and having to turn from the spinning on hand to try to find, and if possible recapture, the blend and weight of the former batch. And if the request for a bit more comes from someone to whom you have given or sold a batch of jersey wool a year ago, it's embarrassing.

The late Enid Smith, of Bayswater, told me that she always supplied people with 1200 yards and nobody had ever come back for more. She had a steady output throughout the 1950s of excellent basic handspun. I took this figure as my guide; and since then, whenever a batch of jersey wool, or my husband's

spinning or mine, has been done before the needles are ready, it's stopped at the 1200-yard mark and put into storage.

In the buying and selling of handspun, this essential measurement of length is rarely given, yet it's only on the length basis that the prospective knitter can make an estimate. Moreover, it's the length of yarn produced that is related to the spinner's time, much more closely than the bulk is.

Heavier yarn means a bit more fleece preparation for the spinner, certainly, and slightly more cost in fleece itself. But the real work in spinning is putting the yarn through the wheel—three times altogether, once for each strand and again for the plying, none of which can be pushed beyond a certain speed, even by experts.

Special class

One sad consequence of the current practice of paying for a spinner's bulk output rather than her time is that we scarcely ever see on the market any handspun knitting wool or handspun herseys which are less than bulky. The really labour intensive work remains private.

To encourage and to bring to public view some of the slowly-made light-weight articles of daily wear, the NZ Spinning, Weaving & Woolcrafts Society set up a special class in its national festival at Whangarei in 1975. This was for a woman's long-sleeved sweater in stocking stitch; the handspun was to be three ply and the total

weight not more than one pound. The response was impressive.

The QEII Arts Council managed to acquire the two most notable jerseys in this class for its national collection of spinning and weaving. When this exhibition comes your way, note these two, the black one by Marjorie Fox and the fawn one by Dezzy Allen, bearing in mind that though they are three-strand handspun, they are much finer than most two-strand handspun you see.

Dezzy Allen's sweater also won the Wool Board's trophy, awarded for the best article made of wool in any section of the exhibition. Spinners so appreciated the recognition of a finer approach to everyday knitwear, that the class was repeated the next year, at the festival in Hamilton.

Again the handspun was to be three ply, but this time the total weight was to be only 12 ounces. Again the results were delicious.

Once a spinner thinks of lengthwise measurement, she is in line with everyone else in the world who uses spun yarn—the mills, the cloth and knitting factories, and the handweavers.

Weaving calculations quite obviously rest on length. You have in any piece of cloth so many lengthwise threads (the warp) and so many crosswise threads (the weft). If you make a sample, just as you do in knitting, you can discover how many threads per inch you'll need each way, and from that find the quantity of thread you'll need for the total area woven.

WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING... Thistledowners at Norwich will have the "Other Sides of Ourselves" program at their March 18 (Sat.) meeting. Postponed previously because of snow. Fanny Porteus will demonstrate Flax Spinning at their April 15 (Sat.) meeting, and they will also have election of officers. The Ithaca Textile Guild will meet on March 8 at the home of Inger Jorgensen (257-1264), 8:00 p.m., for a program on appliqué. Joan Segal-Brandford will show slides of netting techniques. On April 20, the Textile Guild will meet at the home of Mary Ann Treble in Interlaken, 8:00 p.m., for a program by Susan Andrews on off-loom weaving techniques. The Rochester Folk Art Guild sends us word that their spring exhibition and sale will be March 13-15 at Temple B'rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester. (Mon. is preview, 6-9 p.m.; Tues., 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Wed., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.) A group is getting together another Celebration Ithaca sort of gathering --- only better! June 1-2, on the Commons. (Black Sheeppers will be demonstrating, we hope.) Linda Dickinson will be getting us more information on this at a later date. Don't forget the Allen Fannin spinning workshop, sponsored by the Thistledowners at Norwich. From the BSHG, Kay Ross and Jean Warholc are going. We have room for one more rider --- call one of us if you are interested. (Five consecutive Tuesdays, beg. March 28, fee is \$25 --- write Helen Grace Lindsay, P.O. Box 648, Norwich, N.Y. 13815.)

HEALTH AND HISTORY DEPT. Eleanor May (our own public health nurse!) passes along this tidbit from the column, "Health Issues," in Craft Horizons, Oct. 1977. The two doctors who write the column have been looking at historical documents relating to the crafts, and discuss passages from the 1700 book, *De Morbis Artificum* (Diseases of Tradesmen), by Bernardino Ramazzini, who is generally regarded as the father of occupational medicine. The authors note that it is worth remembering that at the time this book was written, artisans usually were working at least 12 hours a day, six days a week, and had their initial exposures as young apprentices. The authors quote passages from the book dealing with hazards for jewelers, potters, stonecutters, glassmakers, blacksmiths, etc. (sorry, none for spinners), including WEAVERS: "Nowadays women sit to weave, but in such a posture that they somehow look as though they were standing. This kind of work is certainly very fatiguing, for the whole body is tasked, both hands, arms, feet, and back, so that every part of the body at once shares in the work... Now an occupation so fatiguing naturally has drawbacks, especially for women, for if pregnant they easily miscarry and expel the fetus prematurely and in consequence incur many ailments later on. It follows that women weavers, I mean those who are engaged wholly in this occupation, ought to be particularly healthy and robust, otherwise they break down from overwork and as they get on in years are compelled to abandon this trade." When it came to prevention and protection in the trades, the methods were inadequate by our standards today -- cleanliness and only moderate hours of exposure. (And one wonders what Ramazzini must have said about dyers!) However, "in work so taxing moderation would be the best safeguard against these maladies... To relieve intense fatigue, gentle rubbing of the arms, thighs, and legs with oil of sweet almonds will be beneficial. Cloth weavers ought to keep their bodies as clean as possible by putting on clean clothes, on holy days at any rate, after washing the hands, arms, and legs by bathing them in aromatic wine." (Take note of THAT!) Ramazzini also recognized the thoughtless practice of direct ingestion, which still exists today, when he described a painter with intestinal and neurologic problems who "was in the habit of squeezing the color from his brush with his fingers and worse still was imprudent and rash enough to suck it." (Jean Nowack, make sure you read this to your husband!)

Finally, for those of us whose craft is writing, the authors quote Ramazzini, "tis certain that in each city and town, vast numbers of persons still earn their bread by writing. Diseases of persons incident to this class arise from three causes: first, constant sittings; secondly, the perpetual motion of the hand in the same manner; and thirdly, the attention and application of the mind." And one of the hazards resulting from constant sitting is constipation, which "produces universal confusion, a sordid state of the vessels, and the consumption of the brain." For writers, he suggested a good laxative...

It's a good thing that nobody told MARJORIE RUTH ROSS, one of Ithaca's best weaving teachers, about abandoning the trade (above). She will be 83 years old in March and is still going strong!! A big HAPPY BIRTHDAY, Miss Ross!!! (March 8th!)

While we're on the history of things... We mentioned a book in the public library awhile ago, titled "Mountain Homespun" by Frances Louisa Goodrich (Yale University Press, 1931) and Jean Nowack has pointed out an interesting passage well worth noting in this newsletter. Keep an eye out for the book on the crafts shelf (call no. 745.52G) the next time you're in the library. There are some wonderful old photos (circa. 1920's) taken of spinning and weaving processes (taken in the Southern Appalachian Mountains) as well as some of equipment and people using it. A passage in the beginning of the book talks about spinning and weaving in the American colonies. The quote we are giving here is a description given in a letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams on Jan. 21, 1812, of the home industry in Virginia: ("Mountain Homespun," p. 4)

"Every family in the country is a manufactory within itself and is very generally able to make within itself all the stout and middling stuffs for

its own clothing and household use. We consider a sheep for every person in the family as sufficient to clothe it, in addition to the cotton, hemp and flax which we raise ourselves. We use little machinery. The spinning jenny and loom with the flying shuttle can be managed in a family; but nothing more complicated. The economy and thriftiness resulting from our household manufactures are such that *they will never agin be laid aside* (author's emphasis, ed.); and nothing more salutary for us has ever happened than the British obstructions to our demands for their manufactures. Restore free intercourse when they will, their commerce with us will have totally changed its form, and the articles we shall in future want from them will not exceed their own consumption of our produce."

While the book is written in a sentimental fashion (not always unpleasantly), it contains a number of observations and descriptions (and stories) well worth reading as comments on life in general. There follows the passage above, a discussion of the crafts and processes using terms and expressions we seldom here now; a discourse on dyeing (pp. 13-16), giving some general recipes. Don't skip her descriptions, either, of the All-stand Cottage industries, the Biltmore Estate Industries (of Vanderbilt fame), the Tryon (North Carolina) Toy Makers and Wood Carvers. (You must remember that there was a distinct revival of weaving and spinning [more of the former than the latter] in the 1920's and 1930's in this country.) And the last half of the book is a treasure -- stories of Aunt Liza, the Weaving Woman, the linsey-woolsey dress, the three weaving sisters and the threading of their loom, Granny Jude (weaver), Ursula's grandmother and the dye pots, and the Duncan family coverlets. For the dyers reading this, there is a list of dye plants used in the mountains of North Carolina (Appendix II, pp. 84-88), identified in 1901, at the Bureau of Plant Industry in Washington, D.C. This book is certainly a gem to be snowed in with on a fiercesome night!!! (Yes, we will still have more of those!)

Speaking of cottage kinds of industries, WE ARE STUNNED to learn that the Shelburne Spinners of Burlington, Vermont, are closing their school. The communiqué received recently from them does not go into great detail, but they have certainly had some problems in the last year or so. They say that as of March 1st they will be turning over their cash assets to another non-profit organization as required by law. We won't go into a description of the Shelburne Spinners here -- surely we have all, by now, read about them in the various magazines these past six years -- but it is a genuinely sad note for those of us who've followed their hopes and efforts, and who've always hoped that somehow a spinning group of this size and accomplishment would survive and be a success... If anyone hears more about the Shelburne Spinners, please pass the word along to the Guild, c/o Jean Warholic.

The BOSTON AREA SPINNERS AND DYERS (BASD) are gathering information on moths and moth-proofing of wool. We will try to relay their information/article when it comes out.

The latest issue of INTERWEAVE magazine is out and it is fantastic -- borrow one if you can! Jean Warholic will have hers at the March meeting and the Guild Library has a copy you can borrow. And the next issue of the mag. will be on color and dyeing -- with spring and summer fast approaching (WE HOPE!), we'd better not miss it!!!

MORE NEW MEMBERS -- because of space, however, we'll wait to list them on the new membership list coming out in March... (We love you just the same!)

CARDING MACHINE sign-ups list is pretty full now, but don't let it keep you from washing fleece! There has also been the suggestion from Eleanor May that the Guild invest in a carding machine for greasy fleece. Would you use it? Should we get one? Who will take care of it?

REFRESHMENTS for March meeting: Kay Ross, Linda Olds. April: Maria Steve, J. Warholic.

The Yarn Barn's Close-out Sale, of unusual yarns (not normally used for instructional purposes), is still in progress. Greek yarns, Berrocco yarns, loopy stuff, etc. -- you may measure off what you want from the cones, too, if you don't want the whole thing -- very reasonable prices. The Yarn Barn is at the North Campus Union, Cornell University, and is open 2-10 p.m. on TWTh and 12-8 p.m. on Sat/Sun. Further information: Annie Gordon (256-6238).

Thistledown Guild has extra copies of SPINOFF '77 if you want a copy for yourself or a friend -- \$2.40@, plus shipping. Write Helen Grace Lindsay (address on p. 4).

BARTLETTYARNS - do take special note of the new prices and shipping information. This is the last year they'll be doing blankets, incidently.

Extra prints and copies of slides are available of the Wool Day held at Lorenzo last May. Call Jean Warholic (539-7648) if you are interested. It was a very nice Wool Day in terms of the activities (despite the cold, cold weather) and a number of the photographs are especially good. The Cherry Valley Spinners are selling the prints/copies.

The "Arts in the Park" juried show will be held at Elmira on May 20-21. The deadline for entries is April 20. For further information: Mark Twain Festival, Arts in the Park, P.O. Box 641, Elmira, N.Y. 14902. Booths are 8x8', no commission is charged, fee is \$8.00.

The NATURAL COLORED WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION is now official! In a news release from the Maryland Sheep News: "This association has come about, after several years of correspondence and meetings, primarily to fulfill the needs of sheep breeders developing the colored wools for spinners and weavers. These craft people are constantly searching for natural wool colors of black, reds, browns, yellows, and variegated shades such as gray, silver, blue, and spotted... At the outset, only qualified flocks will be registered. Later, superior individual sheep may be registered. A sheep breeder must be a member of the association before the flock can be inspected and registered... The country has been divided into regions and directors have been appointed to handle flock registrations and promotion. By-laws are being written. Also being set up are judging criteria with the expectation that colored sheep soon will be shown at fairs... The association suggests that the sheep be judged on a basis of 60-percent for wool quality and 40-percent for conformation. California has already adopted the standards and included them in the master premium list."

Unfortunately, Md. Sheep News is geared for Region 5 (Va., W. Va., Md., Del., No. and So. Carolina), so that we can't list our Region's director here. Perhaps if you write the Region 5 director, she can forward the letter or tell you whom to write: Mrs. Florence Hall, Rt. 2 - Box 262, Keymar, MD. 21757. Sounds interesting, doesn't it?? About time, the Australians and New Zealanders will say...

Md. Sheep News also reported the sheep population increases/decreases for 1977 in the Northeast/Atlantic states. New York's reported population went down from 70,000 in 1976 to 69,000 in 1977.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Harris Tweed. (Eleanor May found this article in Craft Horizons, a recent issue.) "Off Scotland's short lies the island of Lewis-with-Harris, a desolate land of tiny tenant farms in the Outer Hebrides. The meager harvest of turnips, potatoes, and barley that the crofter reaps from his few stony acres is never enough to provide a living, so he sits at a floor loom in a shed next to his cottage each day, weaving tweed. For this is the land of Harris Tweed, that fashionable, durable woolen cloth exported throughout the world. The people of Lewis-with-Harris have been weaving tweed for nearly four centuries, but this famous fabric (as well as the crofter's way of life) now faces extinction.

The Harris Tweed industry is in trouble. Production has dropped from 7.6 to 2.6 million yards in the last 10 years. James Shaw Grant, chairman of the Harris Tweed

Association (which has stamped the cloth with its trademark since 1911, guaranteeing that the product is entirely island made), attributes this decline to the single (29") width of the cloth. The textile industry claims it can only use double-width fabric with its modern machinery, while the crofters who have tried weaving it say the large loom is too cumbersome to operate alone and in their sheds. Power looms are the answer, say the island's mill owners, who now spin the yarn in their factories. Yet this would turn weavers into factory hands and Harris Tweed into a machine-made look-alike. (It would also put 300 weavers out of work.) The 500 crofters agree. In a recent poll conducted by HTA, they voted unanimously to remain at their hand looms. Coming under scrutiny, according to Grant, are two other factors endangering the production of Harris Tweed: (1) fewer young people choose to remain on the island to become weavers; (2) the cloth is not marketed as a craft, but competes with commercially produced goods." (end) [It all has a father familiar ring, doesn't it...]

A few more tidbits... Ernestine Wright has offered to knit some small lambs for people providing the wool. // Maria Steve returns from Argentina just before the March meeting. They will have been gone a month. Maria was armed with several addresses for spinners, thanks to Doloria Chapin's International Spinning Directory. // Carolyn Cook (and Tom) are expecting their first child about April 5. Carolyn looks it! It was good to see her at the Sat. Group meeting last week -- we hadn't seen her in ages... // You might ask Eleanor May how her trip to Boston went. // Jean Warholic's loom (her first -- hope it isn't a disease like spinning wheels!) is due in anytime now -- a 45" Herald, 8-harness floor loom. There is a growing list of warps to be made...

TAKE A LOOK at our ad section -- always an interesting assortment of things for sale!

We had hoped to not have another Newsletter go out until just before Wool Day, but it will depend on where we are with plans. If you have items for the Newsletter, an ad, or whatever, please go ahead and send it in to Jean Warholic. We will run it as soon as we can...

SEE YOU AT THE SHEEP BARNs on the 13th! With Spring springing before long, we hopefully won't have to worry much longer about snow cancellations. Of course, with the high school/Fall Creek water problems, maybe it will be high water cancellations! Again, if in doubt listen to the radio and/or call your nearest officer (their telephone numbers are sprinkled liberally throughout this newsletter)...

Wear those woolens a little longer --

Jean Warholic

AD SECTION

SPINNERS! Greenspring, Indian Valley, Newbury, and Country Craftsman Wheels! One Lincoln Fleece left. Orders taken on certain types of fleeces for this Spring's shearing. Name your wool and I'll dig for it! Alpaca top, Mohair top. Weavers' wools also. Try rug hooking with your handspun! MERRYWOOD, 2509 Slaterville Road, open 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues-Sat. (539-7436). 1/3

BARTLETTYARNS--Natural 3-ply fisherman, \$7/lb. 3-ply Sheeps Grey, \$8/lb. Bulky--natural light grey, medium grey, black - \$9/lb. Shearing done. FOR SALE: Black pure-bred Finn ram lambs, 1/2 Finn white ewe lambs with a black father. Gjeter Wool Company - Libby Martin, RD #2, Locke, N.Y. 13092. (315/497-9545) *3/3*

FOR SALE: Union Rug Loom (used). Two-harness, counter-balanced, 45" wide. In working condition. New heddles and reed. \$100.00. Call: 607/936-4448, 1-5 p.m., Mon-Fri. Or write: Claire Benedict, 171 Cedar Art Center, 171 Cedar St., Corning, N.Y. 14830. 2/3

SPINNERS, do you need a solidly constructed, portable wheel to teach on, to learn on, to take to seminars? I have available the Green Spring Wheel, constructed of oak, cherry, walnut, and birch plywood with 7/16" machined metal orifice, double-action treadle, built-in lazy kate, and life-time guarantee. Price: \$65.00 plus shipping. THIS IS NOT A KIT. For additional information, contact: Nancy L. Breckenridge, 2209 Richland Place, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. 2/5

SILK FIBERS - Beautiful white and tussah in combed and carded rovings. Send SASE for free samples. Cocoons, waste silk, spindles, and flicker-combs. FALLBROOK HOUSE, RD #2 - Box 17, Troy, PA 16947. (717/297-2498) 2/9

SMILING LAMB T-SHIRTS. There are some left. Photo of lamb silk-screened on 100% cotton T-shirts in sizes M, L, XL (adult sizes) in yellow or white. \$6.00 includes shipping, add 7% NYS residents Sales Tax. Send check and order to: Jean Martin, 280 Ringwood Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068. (607/539-7648, evenings.) 1/3

DOING SOME SPRING HOUSECLEANING SOON? If it relates to the fibers arts, put an ad in the Newsletter and sell it or swap it. Rates are 50¢ per ad or 3 ads/\$1.00 (max. of four typewritten lines). Asterisks (* *) around your ad indicates its last run. Send payment with ad copy (checks payable to Guild) to Jean Warholic, 280 Ringwood Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068. Deadline is second Monday of each month.

HARRISVILLE DESIGN Loom Kits, always on hand - price will be going up later in 1978, so buy NOW! Also on hand are cotton and linen yarns, shuttles, reeds, heddles, winders, etc. Or rent a loom for \$25 a month. THE TABBY SHOP, 49 German Crossroad, Ithaca. (607/273-3308) 1/3

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