

BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD
Ithaca, New York

NEWSLETTER #31 -- January, 1980
Edited by Jean Warholc

What a strange, snowless winter this has been! Not even a shovelful to speak of... While many of us haven't missed the shoveling (with a respectful nod in the direction of the skiers among us), we are wondering what the next month or two will bring.

DUES REALLY ARE DUE... That RED DOT on your mailing label means that we have not heard from you as of January 15th, and that you are now receiving your last Newsletter from us unless we receive a check by the February 11 meeting. While we are pleased with the number of members who've sent in their renewals, we are sorry to lose some of you along the way... Do take this opportunity to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back us (along with a renewal check?) so that we can have your input in planning this coming year's activities...

JANUARY 31 is the last day to file your wool incentive payment, for those of you who have sheep. Call the ASCS Office in your area (Ithaca, 257-2737) if you have questions or need forms. Gretchen Sachse says you are welcome to call her, also (347-4396) if you have any questions. Note: for those of us buying fleeces this year, the shorn wool documents will be mailed out with the next newsletter, for use everytime you purchase a fleece from a shepherd.

FEBRUARY 11 MEETING. 10 a.m. Tin Can (Youth Bureau, across from Stewart Park, Ithaca). Susan Andrews will talk about "The Tompkins County Textile Heritage Program." She has a N.Y.S. Council on the Arts Grant for this project and will talk about its purposes, possibilities, etc. Bring fabric pieces, or a quilt, coverlet, needlework, etc. (preferably that you know the history of) and we will be talking about them also. This project is intergenerational in nature, and should be of considerable interest for us...

Make good use of the time that day and bring your spinning wheel. We'll also be talking about plans for the year ahead -- programs, workshops, etc. -- as well as Wool Day, the Flax Project (described further along in this newsletter) and more. And Jean Warholc optimistically will have a valentine surprise for the knitters -- after all, her New Year's resolution was that this would be The Year of The Finished Project!!

No refreshment sign-ups were made at Rock Day (we forgot!), so we will see what appears. Bring your mug to cut down on the styrofoam use...

MARCH 10 MEETING. A visit to the Cornell Sheep Barns, near Hartford, with Brian McGee (who took Larry Hunt's job after he retired) showing us his slides of the sheep project he was responsible for when in the Peace Corps several years ago as well as talking about some of the research Cornell is doing with sheep. More details in the next newsletter. And we will need to plan for some car-pooling... This should be FUN!

IN CASE OF SHOW -- it almost isn't worth mentioning this winter -- listen to the radio or call your nearest officer in the Guild. If truly awful out, meetings are usually postponed to the next Monday.

THE SATURDAY GROUP. January 26 -- Northeast School, 12 noon to 4 p.m. Bring your spinning wheel or spindle and an unusual fiber to share. We'll be trying a number of things, and this should be FUN and good experience! February 23 -- same place, same time. Nothing in particular planned yet, but the Saturday Group meetings are always a wonderful chance to come spin with friends and share ideas... As with the regular group meetings, anyone is welcome to come, member or not!

To double-check on meetings, or if you have questions, call Eleanor May (272-8224, evenings) or Ernestine Wright (257-0027).

ROCK DAY. The weather held (despite horrible warnings) and it was a WONDERFUL day, with lots of good food, good friends. We missed a few old-faithfuls this year, though... And we were sorry that members of the other guilds never made it. Hope some of our members got to theirs!

WORKSHOP WITH PAULA SIMMONS AND LINDA BERRY WALKER -- YES, you heard right!! Exact confirmation has yet to be received, but we have them for a two-day workshop one of the last two weekends in May. Start saving your \$\$ and we will keep you posted on further details as they are worked out... BSHG members will be given preference in signing up (up to a certain date, then we open it to anyone else who is interested). We will make a genuine effort to keep the costs down. They can handle a maximum of about 40 people per day each and want to be flexible. We will also need to think about which topics we want them to cover (bearing in mind that they can be a bit flexible about that too). Paula Simmons will talk about the uses of handspun (knitting, crochet, weaving) or production spinning (in a way that helps anyone improve what they do). Linda Berry Walker will talk about wool selection (breeds, fleeces for different projects) or spinning for design (plys, designer yarns, etc.). Think about what you, as a workshop participant, would like...

And THANK YOU to Gretchen Sachse for pursuing this and helping to make this possible!

MARCH 17 WORKSHOP. RCHA (Regional Conference of Historical Agencies) and the 1890 House of Cortland are having a MUCH-needed workshop on "Textile Exhibit Techniques" with one who should know: Karyn Jean Harris, Curator of Textiles & Costumes at the National Museum of History and Technology of the Smithsonian Institution. Jean Warholic has supplied RCHA with the membership lists for Cherry Valley, Thistledown, Lamb-to-Loom and BSHG -- you should receive your announcement and registration form within a week or two of this newsletter. Many of us have fervently wished for ideas and how-to-do-its about displaying fiber work effectively -- NOW IS YOUR CHANCE!! Textile display at conferences, shows, and museums has been, more often than not, badly done. This promises to help us out in many ways... Early registration is encouraged! (And if you do not receive a flyer for any reason, we will have extras -- call Jean Warholic, 607/539-7643, or the RCHA Office at 315/682-7088. The workshop is one day, and a fee is charged...

THE FLAX PROJECT. We have a special opportunity to take advantage of, and although we are still working out details, be thinking of where you would like to fit in. The DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, in cleaning out the old Frear house, found about three dozen stricks of flax wrapped in 1830's newspapers. They are wondering if we (BSHG) would like to work out a joint project, utilizing the flax, as a money-making event. We could do a textile display in combination with the spinning (on their nice Farnham wheel) and weaving of it, then raffle off the finished project(s). Jean Warholic and Gretchen Sachse have taken a deep breath and said a tentative YES. In talking about it at the December meeting and at Rock Day, it sounds as though several others in the Guild would be interested too. How about YOU? We will map out plans in the next month or two... Several givens: the flax, for the most part, is in good shape. Some of it may need additional hatching. Spinning/weaving would be done at the historical society in Ithaca. The project(s) decided upon would be historically accurate for the period (17th Century) -- and we talked about doing yardage, placemats, table runners, hand towels, etc. Spinning would have to be to a particular gauge, weaving would have to be well done -- in short there is a lot of PLANNING to be done before we begin. And we have talked about photographing it from beginning to end, too. This could be a TERRIFIC experience for those interested in doing it. It also means a long-term commitment to the project. CAN WE COUNT ON YOU? ARE YOU INTERESTED???

THISTLEDOWN SEMINAR. Plans will begin to be made shortly. The Guild has voted to keep the seminar in the Norwich area. Where do we fit? Would you like to help? Let's talk about it and communicate our thoughts to them...

FOR SALE: Antique Oak Barn Loom - 6'1/2x6'Hx6.5'D, with vertical warp reel, from New York or No. Penna. area. Pegged, demountable. Antique, handmade accessories included (real reed reeds, rug shuttles, tension bar, rake spools. Two harnesses, two treadles, more can be added. Price: \$500.00. Hammett 32" Counter-balance, four-harness, floor loom with bench and accessories, \$250.00. Contact Claire Benedict at 607/962-5918, or at 224 Cedar Street, Corning, N.Y. 14830. (Jean Warholio has xerox copies of photographs of these if you wish to see them.) 1/3

SILK FOR YOUR VALENTINE --- Beautiful white and tussah in combed and carded rovings. Send a SASE for free samples and price list. Cocoons, waste silk, silk hankies, spindles, and Flicker-combs also. FALLBROOK HOUSE, RD #2 - Box 17, Troy, PA 16947. (717/297-2498)*9/9*

UPHOLSTERING --- experienced, reasonable rates. Free estimates. Large book of samples to choose from or can use your handwoven yardage. Call Lou Church, (607/844-9344.) 1/3

SPIN SOMETHING DIFFERENT --- Angora Rabbit Wool! Lovely stuff, white. \$1.00 per package postpaid. Write: Kit Rowan, 604 S. 3rd Street, Montrose, CO 81401. 2/3

IT IS TIME TO THINK VALENTINE'S DAY --- start weaving a special something for a weaver friend or give a tool she needs or wants. THE TABBY SHOP can help with cotton and linen yarns, shuttles, tapestry tools, and looms. Harrisville Designs 4-Harness Kits on hand. Come and see their new 8-harness loom, too. Mildred Scudder, 273-3308. 3/3

PUT MORE SPEED IN YOUR SPINNING --- Electric bulk spinners, \$175.00 postpaid. Yarn blockers \$55.00 postpaid. Send \$1.00 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope (SASE) for photo and information. C. LeMar, 4409 - 13th Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53140. (414/652-5609) 2/3

THE GUILD CARDING MACHINE is available to members at \$5.00/month (washed fibers only). Now is a good time to sign up. THE GUILD SPINNING WHEEL (Ashford) is also available to members, at \$8/month. Call Marion Mikoff (607/387-5410) to sign up for either of these or see her at the regular Monday Guild meetings. (BSHG ad)

TERMS FOR SALE OR SWAP related to the fiber arts can reach over 130 spinners in the Central New York area through this Newsletter. Ads are cheap (50¢ each or 3/\$1.00 for a four-typewritten line ad) and the Newsletter goes out about eight times per year. Deadline: second Monday of each month. For more information, a sample Newsletter, or to place your ad, write or call: Jean Warholio, 280 Ringwood Road, Freeville, N.Y. 13068. (607/539-7648, evenings) (BSHG ad)

FLEECE SURVEY. Let's get those index cards to Linda MacRae (RD #1, DeR yter, N.Y. 13052). Again, she needs to know what fibers you have for sale to handspinners, price per pound or ounce (all types, not just wool), any animals for sale or loan, and when available. The list is to be published in the guilds newsletters. If you are a supplier and want to be listed, DO IT NOW, before you forget... We will all benefit from this project!

A QUESTIONNAIRE to help us plan programs and workshops in the next year or so is on the last page of this newsletter. Fill it out, include your BSHG membership renewal if you haven't gotten it in yet, and send it in (or bring it to the next meeting). We want to have programs that YOU will get a lot out of, give you fresh ideas, improve your spinning and related techniques... We have made the questionnaire as short and easy to answer as possible, but additional comments and suggestions are WELCOMED and WANTED!!! SPEAK UP and let us know...

THE GUILD LIBRARY has had an active year in 1979, and our new librarian, Judi Becker-Greenfield, has efficiently given us a list of the new additions! We have many interesting and practical books, periodicals, etc -- DO make use of them. Our applause to Paula Curtin and Judi for the good job they've done with this "heavy" task!!

NEW BOOKS, 1979: The Handspinner's Guide to Selling by Paula Simmons (1979).
Knitting Without Tears by Elizabeth Zimmerman (1971).
Kumi-Himo: Techniques of Japanese Plaiting by Jules and Kaethe Klot (1977)
Steps to a Tailored Jacket: an Illustrated Workbook by G. Oakley (1979)
The Story of Wool by the Wool Bureau of Canada, Ltd.

NEW PERIODICALS AND NEWSLETTERS, 1979.

Interweave - Summer 1979; Fall 1979, Winter 1979-80.
Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot - through Fall 1979.
Spin Off - 1978, 1979.
The Mannings - courses and shows.
Artletters (Tomp. Co. Arts Council) - 1979.
Guildview, from Handweavers Guild of America - from 2/79
Weaving and Fiber Crafts (formerly Weavers' Newsletter) for 1979.
Weaver's Journal - January, April, July, October, 1979.

MISSING FROM THE LIBRARY - please check your heaps and piles, and return as soon as humanly possible: Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot for Spring 1977 and Fall 1978. Investigative Method of Natural Dyeing by Fred Gerber.

HELP! from Judi -- we have decided to purchase The Handspun Project Book edited by Deborah Kahn, but can't locate a copy in Ithaca. Any suggestions or have you seen it somewhere?

Also, we are open to new book suggestions that would benefit members of the Guild -- if you have suggestions for the library committee to consider, please get them to Judi...

SEE YOU AT THE LIBRARY TABLE at the next meeting!!!

NO FURTHER WORD about the premium checks from the Tompkins County Fair Association. So far as we know, they are still sitting in Albany and waiting for a means to distribute them. The Fair Association has declared bankruptcy, and the grounds are up for sale. Jean Warholic suggests that you pass the word on to anyone you know who is waiting for their checks. It is very sad to see any county fair go under. (Note: if anyone in the spinning guild knows who to contact at the Trumansburg Fair Association, would you let Jean know? If it can be worked out, we might try to get the handspun yarn competitions for this area moved to their Fair if you are still interested in having the opportunity to show. They give ribbons but no premiums.)

SPRING CLASS SCHEDULES are out now for the Women's Community Building, Homespun Boutique, Heritage Craft Shop, TC3, and BOCES. Stop by or call for your copy. And as usual, the public library also has a supply of most of these on hand.

HANDWOVEN -- an interesting new magazine, put out by the Interweave folks. Cost is \$5/yr. Copies are available at the Heritage Craft Shop, too. There are corrections to several of the patterns -- consult Kay or Linda at the Shop, or the last Thistledown Guild newsletter (in our library).

MARJORIE ROSS still has some yarns for sale at very reasonable prices -- do call her before coming, however. (272-2525)

COLOR WHEELS from the Gerber workshop yarns. Sallie Sanderson, Suzie Hokanson, and Jean Warholic will be getting together during February to make them up. If you want to be

included in the work session, let Jean Warholic know... The plan so far is to make up a number of wheels, some for Guild display purposes and some for sale.

SPEAKING OF SALES... We made \$33.25 at the Craft Sale at the Trumansburg red barn before Christmas! (One skein of yarn, the rest were packets of the Gerber workshop yarns.) We sold a packet of yarn at the Ananda Marga Preschool Craft Fair -- \$3.40. No word as to how sales are going at the Cornell Craft Shop in Willard Straight, but we shall see. Our next possible sales possibility (unless you've heard of opportunities and haven't mentioned them to Jean Warholic) is our Wool Day. Again, Jean has the sales table items and they are ready to go...

MEMBERS OLD AND NEW! Welcome to our new members -- always glad to have you join us! And please note the corrections on your membership list...

Active Members

Merle Glad Deer, P.O. Box 104, West Danby, N.Y. 14896. (Messages may be left at 272-5024.) (Crocheter)

Chris (Mrs. Robert) Matijas, RD #2, Moravia, N.Y. 13118. (315/496-2243) (Weaver; dyer; knitter; crocheter; Rambouillet sheep; spinnable dogs, cat.)

Loretta Pompilio, 31 Pease Street, Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886. (No telephone) (Dollmaker; knitter; crocheter)

Inactive Members

Reed Martin, 6431 - 79th Street, Cabin John, Md. 20731. (Banjo player; jack of all trades)

Madeleine Mau, Rt. 2 - Box 476, Floral City, FL 32636. (After April 1: RD #2, Moravia, N.Y. 13118. (315/496-2092) (Weaver; knitter; crocheter; Rambouillet/Corriedale sheep.)

Student Members

Janice Logan, Apt. 3, 17 Tompkins Street, Cortland, N.Y. 13045.

Helene M. B. Maxwell, 10 William Street, Cortland, N.Y. 13045. (753-7232) (Weaver; knitter/crocheter; knows spinnable Old English Sheepdogs.)

Newsletter Exchange

Handweavers' Guild of Connecticut, c/o Jo Parsons (President), 34 Forest Hill Drive, Simsbury, CT 06070.

The Weaver's Studio, c/o Scott Severance, 519 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville, N.Y. 13066. (315/637-6016)

Corrections

Libby Llop has moved, we are sorry to note: Box 312, Avon, N.Y. 14414. (716/226-2370) (Have you had your child yet, Libby? Hope everything is fine.)

Joyce Scott's correct telephone number: 716/394-8964.

Marion Boratynski is at 403 Perry City Road, Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886. (387-5524)

Laurel Scheeler has moved: THE SHEEPISH GRIN, 11 Taylor Road - RD #4, Princeton, N.J. 08540. (We miss you, Laurel.)

BOONS AND SHIVES from old friends... Colleen Stone writes from Colorado that their new daughter, Jennifer Louise, was born back in April. Benji (whom we will remember) is now 8 years old and in 2nd grade. Colleen is the proud owner of an Ultex 4-harness, 29" portable floor loom. They are all fine and busy. Colleen and Linda Rowan are in proximity, and their Guild had its first Rock Day this January. (How did it go? Tell us!!) It was good to hear from you, Colleen! // Kay Goodman writes from Bath, N.Y., that while she has been battling the flu, she is getting on her feet again. She has a silver black ram that is a Finn/Corriedale/Suffolk cross, as well as his twin sister, and both have long fleeces. She is interested in breeding the sister (and mother) if someone

would like to exchange breeding. Transportation would have to be worked out. Thank you, Kay, for your letter! Hope the flu is all over by now. // Christine LeMar write a nice note at Christmas -- her father is making her a wool picker. Tell us how it is working out, Chris! The electric spinning machine that her father designed and builds is advertised in the Ad Section, we might mention... Talented man! // And last, but certainly not least (although we'd sure like to see you at some meetings!), Doris Wolf writes that she has Morlam wool available in carded quilt batts (made at St. Peter's Woolen Mill in Minnesota). She likes their work very much and highly recommends them. (Jean Warholc just received their price list and will bring it to the meetings for you to see.) Doris also says that her next-door neighbor, Frances Ingalls, is a professional knitter of amazing speed -- just completed 20 dozen baby booties on size 1 needles for a mail order catalog. Doris reports that she could not spin fast enough to keep up with her when she had Mrs. Ingalls knit her two sweaters for Christmas. If anyone needs a sweater, hat, coat, afghan, etc. FAST, Doris wholeheartedly recommends calling her and making the arrangements -- 315/539-2503. Her rates are very reasonable and Doris has been very pleased with her work. Doris has washable tanned sheepskins available, variety of colors (\$35 each). Contact her if interested. // We hope that Ed and Dora Swart have licked those flu and cold bugs and are feeling better these days... We've missed you!

BRIAN MAGEE at the Cornell Sheep Barns knows of black sheep for sale, as well as people interested in buying white ewes. If you and your flock are a possibility, give him a call at 607/844-8367, or ask when we come out in March for our meeting...

FEBRUARY 3 is the Wool Combers' Holiday! Saint Blaise is the patron saint of wild animals, wool combers, wax chandlers, and people with diseases of the throat. (Interesting combination!) This date used to be a traditional holiday for women, and their distaffs taken and burned if caught spinning. A widespread cult in the Middle Ages in Europe followed Saint Blaise and there were festivals with parades where people dressed as Jason and the Golden Fleece, etc., and St. Blaise rode with bookain one hand, wool combs in the other. This holiday marked the beginning of the wool trade, and was celebrated in England into the early 19th Century. St. Blaise died ca. 316 AD., and earned his sainthood (remember, saints do earn it, after all!) because he was tortured by having his flesh torn by long combs like wool combs. (Thank you, Gretchen Sachse, for this choice bit of information!) Gretchen has more of these up her sleeve, and we will try to mention them in the newsletters in time for you to celebrate them in your own way...

THE 7TH ANNUAL SHEEP AND WOOL FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Maryland Sheep Breeders Assoc., will be May 2-3 at the Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md. (just off I-70). They've planned quite a festival this year -- get to it if you can! They do plan to have a natural colored sheep show, in addition to many other activities... There are regulations and forms to sign if you wish to participate in any other way than as an onlooker, with deadlines beginning Feb. 15. Write or call: Jean Woodward, 28405 Honeysuckle Drive, Damascus, MD 20750. (301/253-6367).

DEADLINE for next newsletter: February 11. See you at the January 26 and/or February 11 meetings!!! Get those dues in -- and the questionnaire! Your ideas and wishes for the year to come are very important!! A new membership list will be coming out with the next newsletter...

GOOD SPINNING!

Dues to: Linda Dickinson
Box 179A
Spencer, N.Y. 14833

Jean

Dear Spinners:

Please fill out the questionnaire below so that we may plan our programs and workshops this year to reflect the needs and interests of us all... We have tried to design this so that you can fill it out quickly, yet enter your comments and thoughts as well, if you so choose. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! We have tried to list programs we have not had in quite awhile as well as some we haven't had at all. If you would give them a preference rating (1 for most interested, 4 for least interested, for example), that will help enormously. Again, add ideas you might have...

THANK YOU and please return by February 11 to: Jean Warholic
230 Ringwood Road
Freeville, N.Y. 13068

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PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES ("Hands on" and check if you can help with the program.)

"NEW" FIBERS

pref. help

___ Mohair - ___

___ Rayon - ___

___ Ramie - ___

___ Polyester ___

___ Other: ___

DYEING

pref.

Help

___ Dyeing with woods (logwood, brazilwood, etc.) ___

___ Mordant and afterbath review ___

___ Chemical dyes and dye methods ___

___ Dyeing with lichens and mosses ___

___ Methods of indigo dyeing (à la Gerber) ___

___ Dyeing "in wool" vs. spun methods ___

___ Other: ___

FLEECE PREPARATION

pref. help

___ Washing or scouring by diff. methods ___

___ Sorting a fleece ___

___ Sheep breeds and wool counts ___

___ Other: ___

FIBER TECHNIQUES

pref.

help

___ Spinning to a gauge ___

___ Novelty yarn production ___

___ Blending fibers/colors ___

___ "Speed" spinning tech. ___

___ Carding review: by hand, by machine; wool combing ___

___ Felting, felted fabrics ___

___ Other: ___

SPINNING WHEELS

___ Types and their uses (review and using them)

In general, which do you prefer for one- or two-day workshops:

___ Weekdays ___ Saturdays ___ Sundays (daytime ___ nighttime ___)

Names of persons with whom you would like to have spinning-related workshops and the topics which they could cover: (If you have taken a workshop with them, it would help to know what you thought.)