



BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD NEWSLETTER

Number 96 - February 1987

Editor: Deborah Serviente
63 Neimi Road
Freeville, NY 13068
607/347-6631

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February 7, Noon... Business meeting will start promptly at noon. Bring a few samples of handspun fibers worked into a woven or knitted swatch. The yarns can be either dyed, natural or a combination of both with emphasis on design and combination of colors. We will share samples and ideas and discuss possible projects which could evolve from swatches. This is a good way to see individual work and learn new ways of perceiving color and design. BEGINNERS... Bring your wheels, cards, drop spindles or whatever you'd like to work on. As a part of this and subsequent meetings, beginners will have a chance to go off to the side and work with a more experienced spinner.

***Note: 1st Sat.
of month

March 14, Noon.....Gearing up for Shearing. The program will focus on the different sheep breeds and how to choose a fleece for the qualities wanted in a specific project. Pat will be bringing in many samples of unusual and more common fibers as well as photos and literature. Bring in any samples that illustrate the qualities of specific breeds.

April 4, Noon.....Possibly a field trip to a local farm. Will be discussed and decided at the Feb. meeting.

DUES DUES DUES

Last call for 1987 dues. A new mailing list will be drawn up this month. If your dues haven't been recieved, this will be your last newsletter. Dues should be sent in with a membership form to the Guild PO Box 6701, Ithaca, NY 14850 or directly to the treasurer, Kathy Halton, RD1, 2505 Danby Rd, Willseyville, NY 13864.

MEETING DATES

Several meetings this year will not be held on the second Saturday of the month because of booking problems at the Varna Community Building. Please note the year's dates: Feb 7; March 14; April 4; May 9; June 6; July 11 (at a member's home); Aug 8 (at a member's home); Sept 12; Oct 3; Nov 14 (in firemen's room); Dec 12. Meetings are held at the Varna Community Building, attached to the Varna Firehouse, Rte 366, Varna, NY.

GUILD RESOURCES

The guild has several items for rent to members:

Drum carder	\$5/month	Contact JoAnn Schaff	347-4817
Cotton carders		Contact JoAnn	
Ashford Spinning Wheel	\$5/month	Contact Joan Johnston	272-2697

Threads magazine issues were donated to the library. Thanks Dikkie!
Shuttle, Spindle, and Dye-pot and Spin-Off magazines have been renewed for the year.
Sheep magazine issues were donated to the library. Thanks Mary Ann!

NOTES ON JANUARY MEETING

Show and Tell was very exciting this meeting. Most everybody had something to pass around and talk about. These winter months sure are a time for spinning, knitting, dyeing, and weaving! Nancy Morey had a magic bag which kept her hands full. Two sweaters made from a pattern which is elsewhere in this newsletter excited many with its simple and unusual construction. She also brought in the things she'd entered at the state fair last year--dyed yarn and a child's sweater made from homespun. If you enter any homespun in the fair this year, be sure to attach a note to the object "Handspun" as all the handspun and commercially spun articles are displayed together. There was an extraordinary example of how bright colors become muted when used. This was evident in some waist silk Nancy had drum carded and dyed very bright. The plied yarn was softly colored. At a workshop at SOAR with Arlene Mintzer, Nancy learned to make "jeweled yarns". Every so many inches objects were tied into the yarn--seashells, corals, beads. The yarn is spun thick and thin from a blend of angora, alpaca, mohair or silk, dyed and plied with a commercial binder. (Did I get that right?) Arlene sells her jewelled yarns for accenting for the amazing price of \$50/7 yard skein! We also got to see a shawl from the sheep-to-shawl contest at the fair. The one Nancy purchased was unusual with pockets incorporated into the weaving. Nancy will have an article published in the Feb issue of Color Trends magazine and has a book coming out this year on Rainbow Dyeing. Helen Kiker brought in two lovely shawls made at The Tabby Shop. One was woven from a Shetland wool. The other used a singles yarn which she said didn't fluff out nearly so beautifully as the other. Elly May passed around some yarn spun on an 1870's spinning ginny at the upper Canada Village Restoration. The variations in the yarn are similar to that in handspun. If you visit the village, "ask lots of questions and they'll be at your beck and call" with all sorts of information. We also got to see some "disasters" from a dyeing day. Jean Currie and Elly came up with some wow-bright rainbow dyed roving. Some suggestions to tone down a dyed color--redye with the complementary color; ply with grey or black; blend with other wool if not in roving form. They also dyed two rovings, one black and one white, with the same dye and got some wonderful yarns to use together. Elly mentioned her favorite, basic book--Reader's Digest's Complete Guide to Needlework. Mary Ann Sumner has also been experimenting with dyeing different yarns the same colors. She took two blends--a creamy wool, silk, angora and a grey angora, black wool, tussah silk blend--and rainbow dyed them for some interesting variations in the yarns. The complementing skeins could be used with one as an accent to the main body of a sweater or a hat. Tina Fenn had some Jacob wool and a Fair Isle sweater she was knitting. If this has been exhausting to read, imagine seeing it all. Lisa Ann Merian left some Finn wool for anyone to try. So far I've washed my sample. And there was some fiber for sale as well, Lincoln, Lincoln lambswool, and Tussah silk rainbow dyed and ready to spin which Nancy brought to the meeting.

A FEW NOTES ON MOTHS

Don't buy any! If you find moths in some wool you've brought home, isolate quickly by sealing it in a closed bag with a piece of no-pest strip. The strip can be put in a coffee can with holes in it to keep it from actually touching the wool. Leave it for 6 weeks. Moth balls and freezing will not kill moth eggs. They are repellents.

Preventative Measures: Moths are attracted to wool by the smell. It is better to store fleeces clean since the lanolin and dirt attract the moths with their odor. Also the grease will eventually make a disaster of your fleece if left to sit and congeal for too long. Adding other odors is a good way to confuse wool moths. Eucalyptus oil or other essential oils (available at natural

foods stores such as Somadhara, Greenstar, Living Light) rubbed into the wood in your storage area is helpful and smells pleasant. You can also get cedar chips(sold for animals in the pet section at Woolworth's) to keep in a basket near your wools. Some companies such as Prochemical sell a liquid permanent mothproofing solution.

BOOK REVIEW

Knitting in the Old Way Priscilla A. Gibson-Roberts(Interweave Press 1985)

This has become one of my favorite books. This is an empowering book for anyone nervous about treading off of line-by-line patterns. Priscilla gives basic sweater plans for 16 sweater types. The plans consist of little more than a paragraph to a page of writing and wonderful, clear diagrams. The diagrams are coded to show increases, decreases, etc, plus percentages of chest measurement for other measurements in the sweaters. This is the system Elizabeth Zimmerman popularized, adapted to many sweater types. She also has a detailed description of knitting with steeks that are later cut open for cardigan fronts, sleeve openings, and button neck closures. Other chapters include basic knitting techniques, choosing yarns, color-stranding with photos and charted drawings & textured sweaters also with photos and drawings. In the latter two chapters, Gibson-Roberts gives historical background to sweater designs from many lands. The last chapter, unusual for a knitting book, is titled Spinning Techniques. In it she describes fleece selection, fiber preparation(washing), Woolen preparation(carding--with photos), Worsted preparation (combing, again with clear photos), and some basic information on twist, yarn types, breeds of sheep and plying. This is a book well worth looking through if you aspire to designing your own knitted garments from handspun.

PULLOVER SWEATER NOTES

Nancy Morey sent the directions for her pullover sweaters. The pattern came from Edith Cook of the Cherry Valley Country Spinners. That Guild made many sweaters from the pattern. Some of the sweaters were shown at the Central N.Y. Handspinner's Seminar last October.

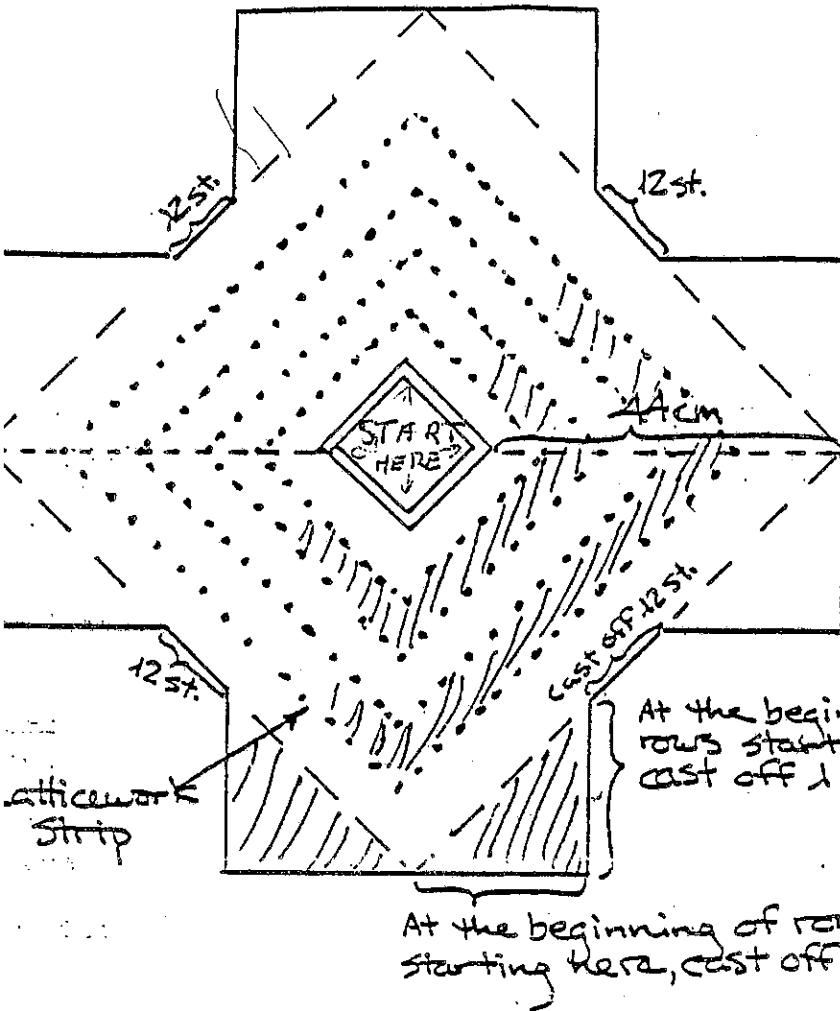
There are so many variations which can be made of this sweater! Originally it was in the yarns given on the pattern, but at CNYHS all the yarns used were handspun.

For people who have trouble with these directions (on the next page) basically cast on 108 sts (more for lightweight yarns, less for heavier yarns, but always in increments of 4 sts), work the ribbing, and go for it! To increase or decrease size, knit the body of the sweater longer or shorter than the 44 cm given. I found that the directions are good for a size 12-14.

When I "worked off" the corners, instead of binding off 1 st on the sides, I decreased 1 st. I never had 90 sts at the bottom to pick up for ribbing either!! (that's more of a sports yarn) If someone is unsure about how many sts for the ribbing, an easy way to figure out the number would be: determine the gauge and multiply that by $\frac{1}{2}$ the body width at the bottom of the sweater (ex: gauge=4 st/in; body width=36"x $\frac{1}{2}$ =18; 18x4=72 sts) I also used needles 2 sizes smaller for the ribbing.

The sleeves are $\frac{3}{4}$ length. To lengthen just them or the body length, continue in the pattern after binding off the 12 sts for the armhole.(To do this, on every center or point increase row, decrease a st on each side seam; continue until as long as it needs to be minus approx. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches for ribbing.

Hope these directions help someone!

MOHAIR, RIBBON, AND LUREX PULLOVER, SIZE 38-42

Yarn: 200 g beige mohair
 100 g brown mohair
 100 g ribbon
 50 g Lurex

Needles: 3½ mm circular needles,
 50 and 80 cm long

Latticework Strip:

Row 1: K all st
 " 2: P all st
 " 3: K all st
 " 4: *K2 tog, 1 yarn over. Repeat
 from * for 1 row
 " 5: K all st
 " 6: K all st
 " 7: P all st

Rows 1, 2, 6, & 7 are done in ribbon.
 Rows 3-5 are done in Lurex

Cast on 108 st with short circular needle in beige. K1, P1 for 6 rows. Mark each 27th st with a small piece of string. Continue to work in the round. Increase 1 st on either side of the marked st in every second row. Knit until the piece measures 44 cm at the tip, following the order of the stripes (see below).

In the next row, cast off 12 st in the middle of each side. Finish the 8 corners, following the decreases as shown in the sketch, working each corner separately.

Order of Stripes: After ribbing, 10 rows of beige, first strip of latticework, 16 rows brown, second strip of latticework, 16 rows beige, third strip of latticework, 16 rows brown, fourth strip of latticework. End sweater in beige.

To finish: Pick up 90 st in beige on the bottom edge of the front and knit 6 cm in K1, P1 ribbing. Do the same for the back. For the sleeves, pick up 80 st. In the first row, K2 tog all the way across so you end up with 40 st then K1, P1 for 6 cm. Sew seams to finish.

Note: 1 in = 2.54 cm Be sure to knit a gauge with the needles and yarn you will be using. The number of stitches cast on to begin must allow you to pull the sweater over your head! Too many stitches will make a low neckline.

CONFESSIONS OF A BEGINNER SPINNER

Jeanne Lawless

Sitting in my room at home, all set to go, is my brand new spinning wheel. It took me around 2 months to assemble and stain it; but I must confess that most of that 2 months was spent thinking about how I was going to do it, and the actual doing it only took a couple of days.

There is a phobia I have about doing anything new; I call it beginner's phobia. Before I stained my wheel I wanted to find out as much as possible about finishing wood so that I did it right. I figure this is a lifetime investment and I'd like it to last at least that long. So I took out several books from the library on wood-finishing and began reading. The terminology was the first obstacle to surmount but I persevered and called several antique shops around town. The people at one shop, Skytop Antiques and Auction Service, LTD, were very helpful, suggesting that I bring a sample of the wood for them to examine.

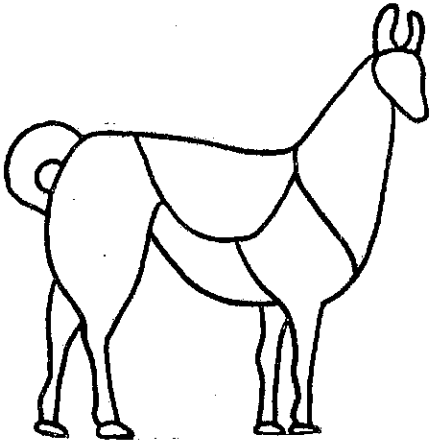
So on a sunny autumn day I stuffed a bobbin and flier into my backpack and I biked (let's be honest, I half-walked up) Mecklenburg Rd to what is surely the sky's top! There I met with Mike Carroll in his woodwork shop. He carefully looked at the pieces I had brought with me, marvelled at the woodworking, and proceeded to discuss all my options. Here my homework paid off!

There were several steps to consider: sanding, staining, filling, sealing, and a final finishing with shellac or varnish. Each step varies or can be eliminated, depending upon the type of wood and its final use. And then there are aesthetic considerations: do you want to stain the wood a darker color; do you prefer the natural color? So many possibilities!! After much deliberation, Mike and I decided that for my purposes all's my wheel needed was several applications of tung oil. Since the wheel would not be used outdoors very often, a shellac or varnish finish seemed unnecessary. And with no final finish, the need for filler was eliminated. Suddenly the task seemed very simple! Tung oil is a natural oil derived from the seeds of a Chinese tree (Aleurites fordii), in Chinese, "Yu t'ung;" tung tree. It is considered the best natural oil for protecting wood from moisture. It penetrates deeply into wood, drying hard and casting a yellowish tint. It slightly darkened the light oak of my wheel after just one application.

I liked the fact that tung oil is a natural product, coming from another tree. It was also easy to apply. For best results, you rub it into the unfinished wood (or wood which has the old finish removed) with your bare hands. The warmth from your hands helps the oil penetrate into the wood. Before applying, I warmed the oil by placing it in front of the radiator. After applying, it is best to let it dry at least 24 hours before applying a second coat. You may apply as many coats as the wood will absorb, gently buffing with fine steel wool between coats.

One thing that concerned me was the treadle which will get some heavy use. Mike recommended Carnuba wax. Any other recommendations from spinners with well-worn treadles would be most welcome. Which brings me back to confessions...

...
Tung oil was recommended to me by a Guild member prior to all of my research efforts. But I still went through an enormous amount of work learning about wood finishing. I did it partly because it is fascinating in and of itself. And while I do not regret my efforts, it did delay my getting my wheel in gear. So now the question remains: how is the spinning going for this beginner? Well, there is a phobia I have about doing anything new; perhaps you remember it. I call it beginner's phobia. Now that I have my wheel all set to go I have a new fear--the fear of taking some beautiful soft fleece, spinning it up and ruining it. It's just a matter of starting that wheel going 'round and 'round, I know. And I look forward to bringing my wheel to the next meeting and seeking advice from experienced spinners. Hopefully I'll get over this beginner's phobia for good!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 29-31, Feb 2 Yarn overstock sale at Laurie Hahn's studio, 120 W State St, Ithaca. 273-7590, even
- Feb 19 Guild member Lisa Merian's workshop on fiber blending at Thistledown Handspinners Guild, c/o Historical Society, 15 Raxford St, Norwich NY 13815. Learn which fibers are best to use in your project. Working with cotton and other fibers. Bring carders, ball winder or niddy noddy, spinning wheel, pencil, paper, and be prepared to label your samples. \$3 charge for samples.
- Jan 31- April 15 Weekend Workshops at the Farmers' Museum; Lake Rd, PO Box 800 Cooperstown, NY 13326; 607/547-2593 or 607/547-2533
 Spinning for beginners..Jan 31-Feb 1
 Beginning Weaving....Feb 7-8
 Drafting and Designing for Weavers.... Feb 21-22
 Tweeds, Woolens, and WorstedsMarch 7-8
 Color and Weaving....April 4-5
- March 5-8 Knitting Guild of America National Convention in New Orleans
 For info. call 617/524-2401 or write the Guild, Box 1606; Nashville, Tn 37901
- May 27-29 Precious Fibers 3-Days Congress at Berea College, Kentucky. Theme: Cottage Industry. 16 instructors incl. Paula Simmons, Allen Fannin, Linda Berry Walker. 26 courses. For info, Precious Fibers Foundation; PO Box 511-S; Berea, Ky 40403. 606/986-1495.
 Michelle Kurz is looking for folks to car pool.
- June 13-14 Ontario Handspinners Seminar, Program theme: Angora and Camel. Lots of exhibits. To get on mailing list: Ontario Handspinning Seminar Inc; Ron Abbott; PO Box 400; Verona, Ontario KOH2WO
- June 21 Black Sheep Handspinners Market Day confirmed date at 4-H acres. Food by Portable Feast
- May 2-3 14th Annual Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival at the Harvard 6 Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Md.
- June 5-7 Midwest Weavers Conference in Lawrence, Kansas. Featured speakers: Albertje Koopman and Lois Ericson
- May 11 Eastern Great Lakes Fiber Conf. in Bellinger Hall; Chautauqua Institution; Chautauqua, NY
- August 1 Deadline for submissions to the State Fair. Booklets for entries available 6/87 NY State Fair Grounds; Syracuse NY 13209.
- October Central NY Handspinners Seminar
- June 20-28, 1989 The World Congress on Colored Sheep. Papers and project proposals due 6/88. For info write the 1989 World Congress on Colored Sheep Inc; PO Box 93; Curtin, Oregon 97428.



ADVERTISEMENTS

Two 3/4 Angora rabbits, nice wool; 1 black doe, \$20 and 1 blue buck, \$15. Black Leicester ewes, white Finn ewes and some crosses, reasonable. Also 2 blk Finn wethers. Marianne Horchler, Woolery Farm, Genoa NY 315/497-1542. 3/3

For sale: LeClerc 22", 4 harness table loom, in good condition--\$160. Also 3 "bunny condo" cages--cage plus pan & legs with feeder--\$15 each. Lincoln fleece clearance sale--silvers, greys, some blacks \$2.25-2.75/ lb All clean fleeces with little or no chaff/debris. CIBA Kiten Acid dyes & Cushing dyes--Pro-Chem liquid moth-proofing, can be added during dyeing. And always lots of rainbow-dyed fibers. Nancy Morey, Shadeyside Farm, PO Box 48, Chenango Bridge, NY 13745 607/656-4737. 1/1

We have everything for your spinning, weaving, and knitting needs. Come look through our new books; mention this ad and get 10% off Malin Selander's new "Weave a Weave". You'll want to take one of our fleeces home: a lustrous white or black Border Leicester, or a gorgeous silver grey Finn-Lincoln, all freshly shorn and skirted. We have wheels and looms on display and sell all the major brands. Would you like to spin something new? We have fibers galore: alpaca, silk, mohair, ramie, flax, angora, cotton & wool in regular and pencil roving. We also have knitting machines, natural fiber yarns (wool, angora, cotton, linen), natural and synthetic (Kiten CIBA) dyes and lots of gift items. We're only 18 miles North of Ithaca: The Woolery, RD #1, Genoa, NY 13071. 315/497-1542. 1/1

For Sale: Loom- LeClerc, Minerva. 22", 8 harness floor loom. Excellent condition (no wear) A \$654.00 value for \$500.00. Gadget tray on top. Grace Lindblom, Box 215, Smithville Flats, NY 13841. 607/656-9241 after 6 PM 1/1

For sale: Camelot spinning chair. Retail \$89.00. Will sell at cost--\$50.00. Grace Lindblom, Box 215, Smithville Flats, NY 13841 607/ 656-9240 after 6PM 1/1

Advertising Rates: 1-3 lines, \$1 for one time, \$2 for three times
4-12 lines, \$5 for one time
13 lines--1/2 page, \$10 for one time

VOCABULARY

Every craft and art has its own terminology. Some of these are from a Glossary in Spin-Off 1977!!

Bast--fiber obtained from food distributing cells in plants.

Batt--a flat carded quantity of fiber, usually wool or cotton.

Cable-- a type of yarn in which singles are spun together in the same direction in which they were spun.

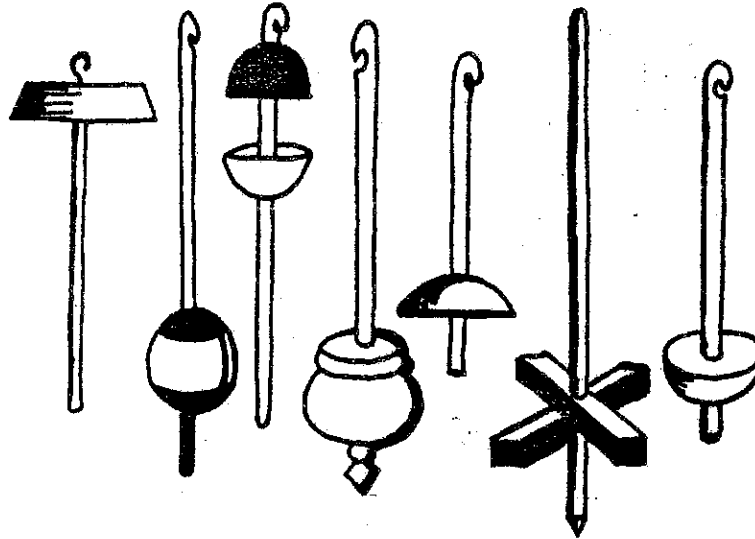
Hand/Handle-- the feel of a finished yarn or fabric; included is malleability, resiliency, texture.

Saponification--the conversion of grease to a water soluble solution; takes place during scouring of wool with washing soda.

Strick-- a hank; a measured length of yarn usually tied in a circular arrangement.

Top--sliver; may also be combed, continuous length of fiber; the shoulder area fleece on a sheep which produces usually the longest staple.

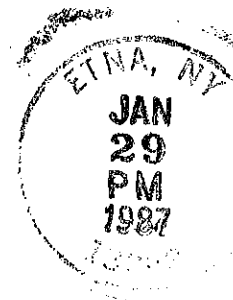
The Wool Carder Bee is a solitary bee. It nests in plant stalks making it difficult to find. This clever insect lands on fuzzy plant surfaces and collects fuzz that it uses to line its nest before laying eggs. The Wool carder bee thrives in our area and can be enticed into your own back yard with the proper plantings.



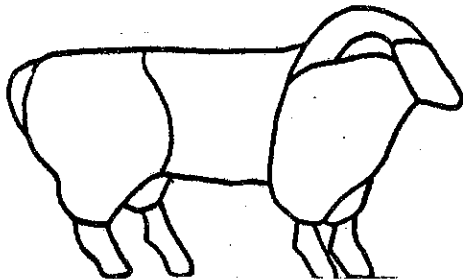
BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD

PO Box 6701

Ithaca, NY 14851



FIRST CLASS



*Kay Riddell Stickane
 486 Hayts Rd
 Ithaca NY 14850*

STI 06 6R315T91 01/31/87
 NOTIFY SENDER OF NEW ADDRESS
 STICKANE
 64 WILLOW CREEK RD
 ITHACA NY 14850-9517