



BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD NEWSLETTER

Number 117 - March 1989

Editor: Deb Serviente, 63 Neimi Rd, Freeville, NY 13068. 347-6631.

MARCH 18th MEETING ***** Saturday at Noon at the Varna Community Building/Fire Station on Rte 366. Natural Dyeing, Hands-On is the program for this month. Marie will be setting up dye pots of logwood, sandalwood, brazilwood, fustic, and some unidentified "woody something." She'll also bring some mordanted yarn in for sampling. Or bring your own small mordanted sample swatches. To mordant: Add 1 TBsp alum per ¼ pound (4 ounces) wool to water. Dump in prewetted wool. Simmer for 1 hour. Cool. Rinse. Store in plastic bag in cool area to prevent mildewing (refrigerator is good- or mordant the morning of the meeting.) Other mordants are fine, but Marie recommends alum (cream of Tarter) because it is nontoxic. Label your samples in some dyepot proof way (an unusual button attached works well.) Also, bring in a dyepot if you can so we can get several pots going at once and get ready for some fascinating results! We'll also be spending some time talking about Market Day, with only a few meetings between now and the event!

SPINNERS MARKET DAY IS SET FOR JUNE 25 AT THE 4-H ACRES. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!!! The Portable Feast has agreed to provide food for the day again. Yvonne "Dillon" LaMontagne will coordinate everyone's efforts this year and Debbie Miller will be doing advertising again!! Yeah! Be thinking about where you may fit in to the day's activities.

Next meeting: April 8 (back to 2nd Saturday of the month)

BEGINNERS SPINNING WORKSHOP SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 10 AM - 3 PM

The workshop will cover skirting a fleece, washing, spinning, carding. Bring a wheel if you have one. This will also be an opportunity to try several kinds of wheels. Bring a bag lunch. Fee \$8.00 To be held at Carol Wanagel's, 266 Sheldon Rd, Freeville (347-4756) Guild members to teach are needed as well. This is always a fun, informative, and informal day for everyone. Last year there was a one-to-one ratio which was ideal. Contact Amy Cook (656-8626) to sign-up as a student or helper. If you get the machine, please leave a real message and not just blank tape.

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ASHFORD SPINNING WHEEL FOR SALE ***** It was agreed at the last meeting to sell the guild wheel. It has just been refurbished. It has a dark stain. Asking \$100. Contact Eleanor May 272-8224.

WORKSHOPS ***** Nancy Morey is working on setting up three workshops for 1989 based on the greatest interest from the sheet passed around at the last meeting of approximately 9 possibilities. Tentatively Spinning Luxury Fibers with Erica Lynn and Finishing Techniques for Knitters with Arlene Mintzer in the fall and Flax with Ed and Dora Swart in the summer. Celia Quinn will be giving three days of workshops at The Wool Room in Mt Kisco (Westchester County) June 9,10,11 on Fiber blending and color blending, Great wheel, charka & spindle spinning and Clinic & spinning to specifications. 914/241-1910 to register.

MARY MCFADDEN ***** Volunteers are wanted to be supervisors for a special garment exhibit called "Mary McFadden, Apparel Design Work." Her visit to Cornell University is part of a university-wide theme "A Festival of Women and Arts." McFadden will be giving a lecture on "Symbols of Design; Symbols of the Ancient World" open to the public on April 3, 7:30 PM at the Martha Van Rensselaer Auditorium. The exhibit will run from April 3-22, M-F 1-7 and Sat 1-5. Supervisor shifts are 2 hours long. Contact Bea Ziegert at 255-1929 (office) or 272-3226 (home) to sign up for a shift.

LETTER FROM JEAN WARHOLIC *****

I was glad to read in the February guild newsletter that Rock Day went so well. I wanted very much to be there, but I was not able to take the time off from work after all.

Just a reminder that while I did not "push" for an article in the Journal, the publicity I did for Rock Day was very much the same as in past years. I did not curtail it, as Debbie instructed me. I did send postcards to former members, as in the past, but since the vote was not to pay for it, I absorbed the cost myself. You must make the effort to be known and remind former members they are welcome. And I spoke with several members who, because there was no newsletter beforehand, completely forgot about the event.

So, next year, if you are as pleased with the turnout as you seemed to be, plan to follow through on the publicity and send some postcards (It's only \$5!)....It is a KIND gesture and a warm one the former members deserve -- so YOU could be a member now... And I would suggest planning the newsletter so that an edition -- or a postcard -- would go out to members prior to Rock Day

This former member still cares very much about the guild and its members, despite my inability to get to meetings. There are others like me. Don't forget us. --Jean

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 1988 (made at the 2/11/89 meeting) *****

1988

	<u>Debits</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Newsletter ads		26.00
Newsletter costs	430.93	
Magazine subscriptions	71.40	
Arts Council membership	15.00	
Book purchases	60.76	
Workshop programs at meetings	124.67	
Hall rental	250.00	
Post box rental	22.00	
State Fair award	25.00	
Membership dues		696.00
Beginners workshop	113.06	37.00
Guild spinning wheel rental		20.00
wheel repair	12.50	
Drum carder rental		30.00
Insurance	127.00	
Rock Day 1988	45.14	
Misc expenses	23.63	
Market Day 1988	420.77	675.42
Bank service charge	25.17	
	<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>\$1767.03 1484.42</u>

The balance as of this writing is \$426.22. Our rent is paid up through May 1989. We have not yet paid the insurance premium for this year. That and the remaining 1989 rent and newsletter costs are the major expenses remaining. Market Day more than paid for itself last year.

At the last meeting we talked about raising the dues for 1990. Apparently it's been quite a while since we've had a dues increase. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter has increased over the years so maybe our dues should increase accordingly. Please be thinking about what an appropriate increase would be.

We also discussed the pro-rating of dues for new members who join in the middle of the year. The consensus of the members at the meeting is to pro-rate it by the half year. So if a new member joined anywhere from June on through December, they would pay half of the normal yearly rate. Be thinking of how we might best do this and maybe next fall in our organizational meeting for 1990 we can make the changes.

I am checking into changing our checking account to another bank. Last year we paid \$25.00 in service charges at Norstar. The only way for us to be able to bank at the Cornell Credit Union is if we were all members of it. I'm checking into the Alternatives Credit Union and I should know by next meeting if that's a possibility. -Nancy Wilson

DEMONSTRATING SPINNING *****Outreach through demonstrating is one of the responsibilities of membership in the guild AND it's a lot of fun! Several members wrote about their experiences demonstrating:

It's difficult to know where to begin describing experiences with spinning demonstrations. As you know, a spinner can be asked to demonstrate in many settings, from a school room to a tent.

I think my favorite place is at the Bement-Billings Homestead in Newark Valley, NY where I demonstrate to school classes and the general public. Picture whitewashed walls, beamed ceiling, candles lit on the walls, a warm fire on the cooking hearth where cookies are baking in a reflector oven - An ideal setting in which to mesmerize your audience with nimble fingers and a whirring spinning wheel.

My 5½ year old daughter, Amanda, and I usually wear our 1840's costumes for demonstrating. This includes a dress, apron, petticoats, pantaloons and moccassins. We have found that people will approach us more readily with questions than if we are dressed in jeans and a shirt. We must look authentic because we are often asked by school children if we live at the Homestead. I'm glad we don't; there is no central heating!

The other advantage to wearing a costume is that I can point out various pieces of clothing and tell what fibers they would have been made of and how long it would take to make a shirt, for instance. I feel it helps the children and adults appreciate how nice it is to go to the store and buy clothing and have 5-6 pairs of pants or dresses versus 2 dresses or pants that a child might have had 150 years ago.

I enjoy having Amanda with me because she is such a good helper. While I demonstrate carding, she passes out cards and wool and helps the other children to try it. The children all seem to enjoy handling the wool with the exception of the unscoured wool, for which I get yucks!! and wrinkled noses!

After carding the wool, Amanda hands out pencil roving pieces or fleece samples as souvenirs and the children enjoy trying to twist, squish, and pull the samples apart.

Working with some disturbed teens I found that they enjoyed handling the wool and were thrilled to go home with a piece of yarn spun from the fleece they had carded.

The funniest part about demonstrating are the answers to questions like:

Name farm animals or pets with fur you can spin? Answer Cow? Chicken?

What clothing that you are wearing would have been handmade 100 years ago? Answer Jeans? T-shirts?

What plants would you use to dye wool that can be found in the woods or in your yard? Answer Grass? Rocks?

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When you are demonstrating, you never know whether your audience is absorbing your excitement for this wonderful craft until someone returns to ask more questions or try their hand at this ancient craft. That makes it all worthwhile!! --Alison Lovejoy

Recently I gave a spinning demonstration for a couple of seventh grade classes at the Dewitt Middle School. It was an interesting experience because I've only been spinning for less than a year and I'm only in eighth grade myself! I prepared a short talk to give while showing them the various steps in getting wool ready to spin, different methods of spinning, some finished yarns, and a few examples of completed products. I also gave them each a hunk of wool and some cotton to mess with for themselves. After the talk I invited them up to try some of the things I'd shown them. Many of them were too shy to try it, but they were all very glad to have the fibers to play with, and almost everybody tried a little lap spinning.

I had a great time, and they all acted interested even though they didn't ask many questions. I found the hardest part for me was deciding what order to put things in. Should I show them spinning and then carding, or carding and then spinning? In the end I decided to go in the order of "sheep to shawl," the raw fleece to the finished product.

It all went really well, and I was especially pleased when Andrea (the teacher) complemented me and asked if I demonstrated a lot because I did it so well! I encourage anyone who hasn't demonstrated before to try it. It really is fun for both the demonstrator and the people watching. Spinning seems to fascinate everyone and you don't have to be a pro to please your audience. -- Joanna Wanagel

Just a year ago my mother-in-law asked me to demonstrate spinning and weaving for her nursery school students. I was quite apprehensive, especially because I had only just learned to spin. I was also afraid that the 4-5 year olds would be too young to understand.

I was very pleasantly surprised. Both the children and I had a wonderful time. Besides my wheel and the table top loom, I took dirty wool, clean wool, carded wool, and angora and several finished projects. I also had pictures of the shearing process so the children could see where

the wool came from. In groups of 5-6 students I described shearing, cleaning, carding and spinning. I then took the yarn over to the loom and let the students help weave a small mat.

In another room one of the teachers was reading a story called *Pelle* (*Charlie Gets a New Cloak* is another good book showing the process of shearing through tailoring.) I think the children learned a great deal. They certainly seemed to enjoy treading the wheel, looking at the pictures and feeling the wool and angora.

I have demonstrated at Green Elementary School (5th and 6th) and at my grandmother's Golden Age group. Each time has been a rewarding experience that I would recommend to anyone who has the time to do it. It helps keep alive a tradition from our history and can give people an appreciation of clothing and textiles. And it's a wonderful way to introduce people to fiber arts and color and texture design.

-- Amy Cook

The junior high school on Warren Road (I can never remember if it's Boynton or Dewitt) is a maze of corridors. This is the third year I've threaded the maze to find Andrea Thomas' classroom to demonstrate hand-spinning for 7th grade social studies classes as part of their Homespun Days program in February. Each class was 20 minutes long (half a period,) and by the fifth one my mind was beginning to spin faster than my wheel. The students were attentive during a capsule version of spinning history, but were clearly more interested in feeling the fibers and giving cards and wheel a try. Working with these kids is always a lot of fun, and everybody benefits: they learn a little about fibers and spinning, and I have a chance to share my fiber madness/enthusiasm with a series of captive audiences!

-- Shelly Reif

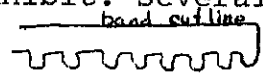
NRAP (Natural Resources Appreciation Program,) sponsored by Coop. Ext., is looking for participants this spring. Volunteers can offer demonstrations to 4th and 5th graders in any one of a number of lovely local outdoor settings. Subject matter and manner of presentation are at the volunteer's discretion, but Coop. Ext. offers helpful guidelines. Anyone interested should contact Shelly ASAP. (home:387-6760, work: 254-4834)

TEXTILE MANIA IN NYC *****

This past Fri-Mon was spent in NYC visiting a friend and scouting out stores for Lamb O Lakes. On Saturday we went to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and the Museum of Natural History (MNH.) Either place could take literally years of your life to explore. Here is a little of what little we saw.

In the MOMA incredibly huge tapestries from 15th - 17th Centuries (that is 1400 - 1600,) 10 feet square or more - all handspun and dyed wool, silk, silver, and gold threads over woolen warps. Incredibly fine threads - usually 2-ply, too! (that I could see) used to create pictures of unbelievable complexity. I will describe only one. It was probably 12'x12', made in 16th C in Belgium. The piece depicted a lady sitting on her bed (nude) on her wedding night with Mercury rushing to her. Cherrubs are pulling open the bed curtains. The whole room is very ornately furnished and appointed. Oriental carpets, tapestries, brocade bed linens, stools, tables, clothing..a riot of designs and colors. There are the shadows of the legs of the bed stool, the shadows of the muscles in Mercury's legs, the creases in the lady's ankle and belly. Her demure look, his face of longing. All woven!! Imagine the production of the cartoon for such an amazingly complex piece. Imagine the skill of the spinners to get yarns the same diameter of fine 2-ply in wool, silk, and metal, and the amount needed for such a feat. All the yarns would have to be dyed before work started, all amounts calculated so shading would be consistent. How did they dye all those colors both subtle and bold? The shadows in the piece would not be there if dye shading were off by even a bit! Unbelievable! And - on top of all this- the place was not only just tapestry work, certain parts had woven textures in to simulate basketry or a textured wall paper - repetitive twill type designs interspersed with the tapestry work (and done in real gold!) But you get the point. I know of nothing and no one doing work like this today.

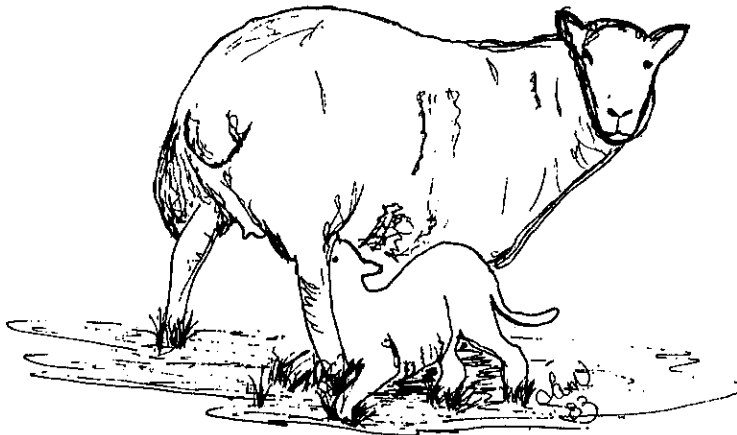
At 5 PM the MOMA closed so we went to the MNH, a short walk through Central Park. There we wound our way to the new South American People's (SAP) wing, a newly finished permanent exhibit. On the way we saw dresses out of fish skins made in Siberia, dolls which were duck bills dressed in miniture skin and fur embroidered clothes. (also Asia)....and on and on. As we entered the SAP exhibit I though I had been transported to textile heaven. Here are articles from ethnic historical groups too numerous to comprehend, starting with scraps of hand twined baste fibers (various

fibers) woven or knotted or knitted (?) and dyed form 3000-6000 years B.C. One whole small knotted bag still existed. (These were found in high desert regions in caves.) Just one more example from this exhibit: several rolls of decorative bands partly unrolled to show the design  the bands were many yards long. They were about an inch wide with the lobed projections of 3/4" long and 1/2" wide on the bottom to represent beans, a food staple. On the band proper were intricate multicolored hummingbirds, one on either side of a multicolored flower, set after set, all different. These bands were made of cotton, spun 2-ply the size of sewing thread! The basic color was usually a dark, bright red. Designs (worked in, not applied on) all colors (including the bean projections which were in 3-5 colors) were done in the thread which had been worked into a band using a needle-loop stitch. The fabric was two-layered with contiguous front and back - no seams.

The people who made these incredible works lived around 600 AD. How did they dye all those colors? How did they spin the rough, short staple cotton to such fine thread? How did they come up with such a beautifully neat stitch that produces unbelievably lovely, professional looking ornamental bands?

We got sated and overstimulated and couldn't even finish the wing. It was too much to comprehend and take in all at once. I want to go back.....

-- Debbie Miller



SPINNING SPECIAL

Louet Spinning Wheels

S10	\$185.00	S15 Kit	\$145.00
S70	\$265.00	S71	\$285.00
S71	\$185.00		

Schacht Wheel \$165.00

Shipping included on all wheels.

2 lbs of wool superwash roving free with the purchase of any wheel.

The Spinner's Hill Shop

Lisa Ann Merian

RD #1 Box 118

Bainbridge, NY 13733

607/843-6267

LeClerc 36" counterblance floor loom, steel heddles, maple frame. \$675.00 (slightly negotiable) includes loom bench, misc shuttles, yarns, etc. Marie 844-8783

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CUSTOM CARDING ***** Last month I listed several of the custom carders in our local area, inadvertently leaving out several others. Here is a more complete list:

The Woolery, Marianne Horchler, Genoa, NY 315/497-1542.
Liberty Ridge Farms, Sunny Bixby, Verona, NY 315/337-7217.
Wool O' the Wisp, Joan Johnston, Ithaca, NY 607/272-2697.
Spinner's Hill Shop, Lisa Merian, Bainbridge, NY 607/843-6267.
Chris Matijas, Moravia, NY 315/496-2243
Madeline Atkins, Oswego, NY

Thank you for the corrections/additions.

Thanks also to the several people who volunteered to type the mailing labels.

UPCOMING EVENTS *****

May 6&7 Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival., Howard 6Fairgrounds,
West Frinedship, MD

June 9-11 Ontario Handspinning Seminar. Ron Abbott Box 400 Verona
Ontario KOH 2WO *

June 9-11 Celia Quinn Workshops in Mt Kisco. See article.

June 15-18 Eastern Great Lakes Fiber Conference. Registrar, 906 DeWitt
Rd, Webster, NY 14580

June 16-18 Michigan League of Handweavers "Connections '89", Hope
College, Holland, MI

June 21-25 Mid-Atlantic Fiber Conf, Brandywine Inn, Dainington, PA

June 23 Sawmill Center for the Arts Sue Beever Workshop, Blending Fibers
and Colors for Novelty Yarns

June 24 Forest Spin-In at the Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the
Arts, Cooksburg, PA

June 25 BSHG SPINNERS MARKET DAY AT 4H ACRES

July 6-9 Midwest Weavers Conf. "Fibers Fireworks '89, Convention
Center, Cinn, Ohio

July 14-16 New Endgland WQeavers' Seminar, Univ of Mass, Amherst, MA

Aug 18 & 19 Fiberfest '89, Barry County Fairgrounds, MI

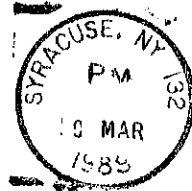
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Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome - letters, pictures, cartoons, ideas.....Deadline for next newsletter is March 28.

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

Current membership list will be included in the April newsletter. Sorry for the delay.

BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD
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