

Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter



Volume 136 - February, 1991

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Upcoming Meetings

Note: All meetings are held on Saturdays at noon at the Varna Community Center.

*** We have a great fleece ***

*** We have a great plan ***

At the FEBRUARY 12 meeting we will give out portions of Border Leicester fleece purchased by Ann Furman from John & Pat Bloomer. We will then spin it to specifications (especially useful for those who missed Celia Quinn's workshop). Bring the following to the meeting:

- spinning wheel
- unsharpened pencil
- inch gauge or ruler
- hooked stick

At the MARCH 9 meeting we will bring our beautiful (and evenly) spun skeins to be dunked into an indigo dye pot. You are free to be creative at this point.

At the APRIL 13 meeting we will collect your 8x16 knitted contributions to this year's great indigo dyed market day afghan.

—Celia Radke

Let's Get Involved!

Caps for Kids and Knits for Kids, a companion program by the Knitting Machine Council of America, are programs that you might have heard about nationally, but did you know that both Ithaca and Endicott are actively involved? Knitting Machines, Etc., and Knit Works collect hats, mittens, scarves and even simple sweaters for local agencies (Head Start, the homeless shelter and Volunteers of America) for distribution to needy children.

How about the guild participating in the program in cooperation with the shops sponsoring them? What about having a "drop off" spot at Spinners' Market Day open to anyone in the community who wants to participate (not limited to handspun)? For those interested, the program is not limited to a particular time of year —Kay Stickane

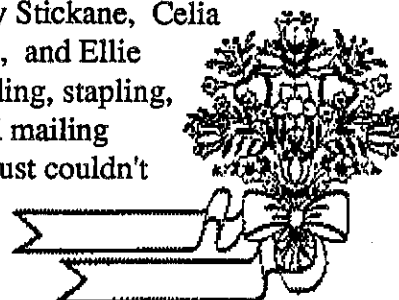
New from Leatherstocking: Admission charged for next meeting!

The Leatherstocking Spinners are asking for a yarn donation from each attendee at their next meeting. Their newsletter editor received a letter from Sarah Lefton of Brooklyn, NY about a group of eight "charitable women" who knit and crochet for homeless people, battered women and children and for wheelchair patients. These women need yarn, and could also use old needles, crochet hooks, small buttons for baby things, and easy patterns. Leatherstocking Spinners plan to send them the "admission charges" they receive. Anyone interested in helping these eight angels of mercy can send supplies to Mrs. Sarah R. Lefton, 2235 E. 24 St., Brooklyn, NY 11229.

Renew, Renew, Renew!

It's that time again! If you need another membership form, call Nancy Wilson at 533-7992.

Sincere thanks to Kay Stickane, Celia Radke, Nancy Morey, and Ellie May for writing, sending, stapling, licking, sticking, and mailing for me this issue! I just couldn't have done it without your help. Thanks so much!



This is an editorial, and I am an old-time peace-nik, but I'm not sure how much relevance the war has to spinning. Does our fate hang by a slender thread? Are world events reeling toward a terrible conclusion? Is the fabric of incipient peace being torn apart once again?

This current and awful burst of political testosterone has many of us frightened. My daughter, hearing the news of the first attack, fell to the floor in tears and would not be comforted. "Everything should feel different, even here," she cried. It took two days until she revealed a primary fear: that our home, "her world", could be attacked at any time.

Reassurance was difficult to convey.

Yet, in truth, like wool in a batt, we are all interconnected; what touches a soldier in Kuwait, touches us as well. Clearly there are no easy answers; as individuals we may feel powerless to effect events so large and distant from here. However, let me pass on the advice of our minister: whatever you believe in, be it immediate peace, the death of Saddam Hussein, restoration of Kuwait, an American victory, *whatever*, pray for it now. Hold it in your heart, spin it in your thread. Let the rhythm of the wheel remind you that it is inner peace that is the precursor for peace everywhere.

Nancy Morey sent in this article from the National Wool Grower Magazine, which is "the official publication of the American Sheep Industry Association ":

Woolamena Hits The Big Time In New York

It's not everyday that a giant sheep with bows and high heels sidles up to you for a big hug. But if you're around the New York State Fair at about 5 p.m., it just might happen to you.

It's Woolamena. And her mission is to get you interested in the wool industry. And maybe, just maybe, to woo you across the fair grounds to visit the Wool Center.

Who's under all that real wool in the 90-plus degree temperature? It's Millie Bankert, superintendent of the Wool Center, a sheep producer and an all-around promoter of wool. And right beside her you'll find Little Bo Peep, alias Nancy Morey of the Empire State Sheep Producers Association.

The two do the annual 10-day stint at the New York State Fair, living, eating and breathing fair to get the word out on sheep and wool.

And by all indications, it's working.

The Wool Center is crammed with people taking in the interesting displays and watching the spinners and weavers at their trade. Sheep producers and crafters all take turns volunteering their time to promote wool, most spinning charming stories right along with their yarn and captivating young and old alike.

The demonstrations vary from a vertical spinner that is a reproduction of the 150-year-old original to a more

modern knitting machine. And there's dyeing, carding, spinning and weaving.

Onlookers might go home with a lock of wool, a piece of newly-spun yarn or get to help with the Kool-Aid dyeing process right there in the center. Plus, they get a chance to look and touch the many fleeces that show the characteristics of different breeds. And they learn — about things like lanolin, wool fibers and sheep.

One thing they never leave without is a sense of the warmth and companionship Bankert has managed to capture inside the large booth. Some people even drag up chairs and stay half a day to watch and talk, the organizers say. Some older ladies talk about their memories of watching their mothers spinning when they were children. Other onlookers are children themselves, seeing this art for the first time.

It's "people power" at work promoting a product, Bankert and Morey say. And it's at its best in 1990 with the resurgence of interest in handicrafts and natural fibers.

The Wool Center has a pretty unique niche at the fair, taking up prime retail food space along a main fair route. It's a special building put up for the Wool Center about 16 years ago.

"Through the years, we have become more sophisticated in our displays," said coordinator Millie Bankert. Now, it takes about 50

volunteers to keep the center going for the entire fair.

Standing still isn't something either Bankert or Morey believe in, and during the fair they organize the fleece competition and show, sheep and wool festivals, constant demonstrations, sheep to shawl contest, spinning contest, sheep shearing demonstrations, a sheep lead contest, and of course, the daily jaunt of Woolamena and Bo Peep in the company of a couple of spinners.

Woolamena was Bankert's brainchild. Thinking it would add to the character of the parade and attract attention to the Wool Room, she borrowed a sheep costume last year to give it a try. That was a pretty formidable looking sheep, she remembers, but it was a popular addition. So she enlisted the talents of a friend who was instrumental in helping to design the Muppets and set out to create their own signature sheep.

Bankert provided photographs and worked with the artist to create the lifelike head. Locks of colored and white wool decorate the body of the costume, each hand hooked. And good old Woolamena even has hooves and a pink-ribboned bell.

But most important, she's a hit with young and old alike. And with 86,000 people a day attending the fair, the Empire State Sheep Producers think the effort is paying off. ♡

Rock Day!

This is one Rock Day that almost didn't happen. On Friday the weather gods conspired to produce such snowing and blowing, followed by raining and freezing, as cancels every event in the vicinity, no matter how sacred. By Saturday morning, however, the Big Melt had set in, and phone lines were a-buzzin' as members reached out to find out if the event was still on. And it was!

Though weather kept many people away, we still had a great, if quieter than usual, time. Food was, of course, central to the event (as with all guild functions) Both quality and quantity were wonderful, or almost too wonderful (I overate again).

Two vendors, Marianne Horchler of The Woolery and Mildred Scudder of The Tabby Shop, were there. Kay Stickane wore the gorgeous sweater made by Deb Miller and given to Kay for Christmas by her husband, Dave.

Truly the most amazing and impressive show-and-tell was brought by Debbie Benzer. She had just completed a lined jacket knit by machine using handspun wool and commercial Debbie-overdyed mohair. Words, for once, fail me. A *piece de resistance*; you'll have to see it for yourself.

Eleanor May had again done a great job with Special Events. (The bad news is that this was her last time hosting the events, but we can rest assured that Deb Miller will do a fine job next year.) Ellie had planned three contests and provided a tremendous variety of materials.

The first contest involved Finn wool and "anything else you could think of" to make a fancy yoke for a sweater. Debbie Miller took the prize as "spinners' choice" for her yoke yarn which had multi colored baubles. Hey, Deb, will you describe your technique at the next meeting so we can get it in the newsletter?

The second contest featured Ellie's famous forked sticks. This one was won by Valorie Rockney.

The third contest involved unusual drop spindles and was won by the only entry, Joan Johnston's wooden spoon with attached, uninflated balloons each containing a marble for weight. Pretty nifty idea, Joan, and it didn't look obscene to me.

MOTHS!

How do you protect your fibers from infestation and damage? The subject of the care and protection of fibers and fiber products took a serious turn when the German army needed protection for the underwear (angora and wool) of its soldiers.

Now the subject seems to be more taboo than the subject of safe sex, and yet ironically follows the same practical advice the surgeon general announced a few years ago. Safe and informed practices as prevention IS the best way to address the situation.

We live in a very mobile time where fiber-sand, in particular, raw fleeces are purchased from even across the world and brought into our homes, increasing the chances of unwanted moths or their undetected eggs.

The basic safeguard is prevention. Maintaining clean procedures in handling new, as well as, all of your fibers is essential. Natural oils in the raw fleeces send out a special invitation to those hungry little pests. And they are out there not to just come for a visit, but to settle in, dine on the most delectable fibers, and breed generations into even that one dark corner of your closet.

Store only clean fleeces, look through them on occasion for signs of infestation, and possibly use natural moth and insect repellents to prevent the chance of the moths even taking an interested glance towards your storage area. The greatest repellents seem to be aromatic substances that humans might find attractive. These are not limited to pennyroyal or cedar shavings, but include lavender, patchouli, eucalyptus, and even tansy. A product, more recent on the market for prevention is "Moth Proof EU" which can be added during the dye process or in a special laundry process using hot water and acetic acid. It is considered to be a permanent moth repellent with very little noticeable odor. Moth balls are also used as a moth repellent, though some actually do kill moths as well as their larvae and eggs.

Ahh, but what if you already have moths? Bring your advice and remedies to the next meeting for discussion and for the newsletter next month.

— Kay Stickane

What do ewe call a sheep that tells jokes?

A ewemorist, of course!

ADVERTISEMENTS * * *

Advertising rates:

3-6 lines: \$1 for one time, \$2 for 3 times.

7-24 lines: \$5 for one time

25 lines- 1/2 page: \$10 for one time

60" 4-harness Glimakra counterbalance loom for sale. Wonderful loom, overhead beater, string heddles, perfect for rugs and coverlets as well as small projects. A bargain at only \$1200. Eleanor May, 272-8224.(5)

I have a 25" 4-treadle table loom in new condition for sale for \$55. Irmgard Cate, 748-9441.

For Sale: Ashford traditional wheel. We put the kit together in 1976, but have never used it! Brand new, with lazy Kate. Asking \$150. Also, 45" Nilus LeClere loom, never used, asking \$850. Call Helen or Ken Greisen, 257-1650.(3/3)

The Louët S90 Ultimate is here! Special Guild price \$370.00, shipping included. Regular price is \$439.00. Louët Yarn Blocker and Warping Mill, \$100.00. Lisa Ann Merian, Spinner's Hill Shop, RD #1 Box 118, Brackett Lake Road, Bainbridge, N.Y. 13733, 843-6267. (3/15)

For Sale: Louët wheel in finished oak, plus Woolee Winder and three Woolee bobbins. Work with the ease of a Louët and the convenience of never having to change hooks! Asking \$390. Shelly Reif, 387-6760. (2/3)

Ewes and ewe lambs for sale: Colored and white; Border Leicester crosses; exposed to ram. Nancy Morey, Shadeyside Farm, PO Box 48, Chenango Bridge, NY 13745, 656-4737. (2/3)

For Sale: Singer knitting machine (SK120 Jumbo Genie) with intarsia carriage, used, \$150; 21 inch reed floor loom, used, \$275. Kay Stickane, 387-3687 (evenings).(1/3)

Calendar of Events

June 13-16, 1991: Eastern Great Lakes Fiber Conference. Topic: "Spectrum: Color and Design." Two speakers, many study sessions, fashion show, juried show, exhibits. To receive registration materials next March, send your name, address, phone # and preferred topics to EGLFC Registrar, 906 DeWitt Rd., Webster, NY 14580-1616.

June 29-30. The Gathering, Mid-Atlantic Fiber Assoc. conference at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA. Pre-conference workshops June 26-28. Contact Frances MacIndoe, 705 Millwood Dr., Fallston, MD 21047, (301) 877-3816.

Black Sheep Handspinners Guild

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Submissions for March newsletter are due by February 22.

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