

Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter

November, 1992

Minutes of October Meeting:

Margaret Dietert revealed!

Anyone who checked out the Art and Home Building at the NY State Fair this year noticed that several of the handspinning prizes were won by someone from Ithaca who wasn't a member of BSHG. Happily, Margaret came to the October meeting, and we're happy to welcome her as the newest member of the Guild.

Nancy Frank's Merinos

Nancy brought in several bags of clean, carded merino fleeces that she purchased while down below. Anne Furman is going to be spinning some of it for her. I believe Nancy is trying to sell some of it, so if you're interested, please contact her.

Business

We're facing a rent increase of \$5 to \$10 per month for the use of the Varna Community Center next year. We decided to check into other potential locations. Ellie May checked out the possibility of using one of the public schools, but that won't work out. Another possibility that was considered and set aside was the Women's Community Building: inadequate parking. Margaret Dietert and Shelly Marino will check out the Montessori and Waldorf Schools as alternatives, and report on these at the November meeting.

Discussion of a proposed associate membership was next on the agenda. Bill Ralph had requested consideration of a lower cost alternative membership for retired people and perhaps for others. The consensus was that BSHG should leave memberships as they currently stand (active and inactive, \$10 and \$15/year, respectively). Members

felt that the cost of membership was low enough as it is, and that in order for the guild to exist and operate, we need this income.

Beginners' Workshop

The November meeting will feature a beginners' workshop. Three people signed up at Market Day. Celia Radke 'volunteered' to organize the day and the signups. Sharon and Ellie will give a handcarding demonstration. Please bring wheels, fleece and carders to share.

Renting the Carders

Sharon and Ellie will develop some policies for the rental equipment. Just a note: if a renter doesn't plan or isn't able to return a carder by the next meeting, she should let Sharon know ahead of time.

What to Do About BSHG's Fleeces?

The Guild now owns two fleeces, and we tossed around different ideas for their use. Ellie suggested that everyone take some, make something, and give it to a person chosen in a name-drawing. She has no desire to work on another afghan, and would rather donate ten bucks to the guild.

Another option is that everyone kick in \$20 for a chance to win an afghan that we make, and then we draw for a winner within the group, rather than selling all those darn lottery tickets.

Celia suggested that everyone knit onto the afghan as one big project.

This is your chance to make your voice heard: What do you think should be done with these fleeces? Bring your ideas to the November meeting. Vernice and Celia may have more ideas to share.

Market Day Alternative?

Next year, word has it that instead of Market Day, we'll be meeting in Newark Valley as part of an existing event. (More about this elsewhere.) We will be permitted to sell things there, so perhaps an afghan or some alternative should be considered as a source of income. Voice your opinions!

Officers for 1993

The nominating committee (Celia Radke, Shelly Marino and Kathy Halton) will be coming up with a slate for next year's officers. Sharon Gombas has volunteered to take over as Treasurer. Please volunteer to the committee if you are interested in taking office or helping with an activity like the newsletter.

Shirley Browsky

Deb Miller suggests that we contact Shirley soon about rescheduling her workshop. Shirley teaches workshops on making felted fabric from knitted wool and mohair.

Retreat!!

The Second Annual BSHG Get-Out-of-the-Winter-Doldrums Retreat is scheduled for the weekend of March 5-7, 1993 at the Watson Homestead. Interested in attending? Please sign up via mail or phone to Shelly Marino or Ellie May, or come to the next meeting. A \$20 deposit is required to hold your place. We are limited to a maximum of 18 people, and active members will be given priority in signing up. Those who have signed up:

Active: Anne Furman, Celia Radke, Sharon Gombas, Kay Stickane, Deb Miller, Vernice Church, Ellie May, Shelly Marino.

Inactive: Jean Currie, Charlotte Altmann, Rickie McClure.

Department of Oops

Ellie May forgot to pick up the mail, and missed notice that our miniscule sales tax payment was due. We may again be subject to a \$50 fine, but Ellie is, I believe, negotiating by mail with the powers that be.

Rock Day

Charlotte Altmann has volunteered to coordinate BSHG's 1993 Rock Day. She's already asked a couple to talk about their llamas. Also, if you are the person who volunteered to organize the games, please let Charlotte know.

CONTROVERSY OVER MARKET DAY:

We had some response from some of the vendors over MARKET DAY'S proposed change to Newark Valley Historical Society at the Bement Billings Farmstead Museum near Vestal. Here are two letters we received recently:

"Please don't give up on our Market Day!

You see it's the only way the shopkeepers earn their pay.

You see its the only way...

The spinners, dyers and weavers can play.

Please don't give up on our Market Day. So many people look forward to it from year to year.

It's from word of mouth and ear to ear.

You all deserve a great big cheer for doing Market Day each year."

TO: Black Sheep Handspinners Guild,

Thanks so much for all your hard work. Moving Market Day from Ithaca next year will be greatly missed.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ann Merian

PS. Hope you enjoyed the sweater book.

Dear Ellie,

I'm writing because I'm away until mid-October and wanted to express my opinions about what was decided about Market Day at the last guild meeting. I see this decision having a future impact on the guild.

First and fore most, I feel it was a decision taken much too lightly, without taking many aspects into consideration. It was a decision that should have been made after long and careful discussion and research, checking with all involved; that way, an informed decision could be made one way or the other.

The negative comments I heard (through the "grapevine") mostly centered on how much

work people thought Market Day is. Quite frankly, it is not a lot of work. It is mostly phone calls, or letter writing, or organizing.

When Spinner's Market Day was conceived many years ago, it grew out of the old BSHG wool Day. Wool Day was primarily an educational event, with sales and or vendors playing a minor part of the day. When the guild decided on Marekt Day (if memory serves me right), it was a way to connect the spinners and vendors as well as continue an educational forum about spinning. 4-H Acres was chosen for its low price, its accessibility, and allowing BSHG flexibility in setting up.

The biggest question raised by moving Market Day from the immediate Ithaca area is: Is the BSHG to be based in Ithaca anymore? A look at what happened to the Thistledown Guild should make BSHG seriously think about what is happening within our guild.

Other questions raised by this change of venue:

1) What is the market to be served by Market Day? The intent was to be a day for and about spinners. I understand figures were quoted as to attendance at the museum; that doesn't mean these will be people interested in what we will be doing or in buying from our vendors.

2) What will the effect be on those who are familiar with Spinner's Market Day being in Ithaca? More intensive publicity will be necessary. Guild who have been very supportive (especially Rochester) may find it too far to travel. Local People who attend Market Day each year might not want to travel that far or spend that much time away.

3) How will this impact the vendors? This should be a major consideration. The vendors have always been the primary income source for BSHG and Market Day. This is true at any show. Since last Market Day, we have lost a couple vendors. Renting a tent is an option, but one which would be much too expensive for vendors. A 20' x 25' tent would cost about \$400. Our vendor spaces are always at least 10' x 10'. If it could be used for 6 8' x 10' spaces, \$400 divided by six is about \$67 per space!! Even at \$25 a space, we would only take in \$150 for the tent space. The tent rental would need to be self-supporting. This is a long way from that.

Also, if it is a hot day, tents are miserable to be in. Another factor for vendor consideration is that although the museum has a given number of visitors, this doesn't mean any of these visitors will buy anything. Vendors become tired of having to constantly explain their products. Our time is money for us. If we're not selling, then our time is wasted.

4) What are the demonstration facilities?

Would BSHG be able to demonstrate what we would like, or would we be expected to become unpaid docents for the day?

I recommend BSHG reconsider their decision at the next meeting. It would be good to get input from everyone who was working on Market Day, not just a disgruntled few. I urge the guild to reconsider their objectives for the guild also.

As someone who has been involved in both Wood Day and Spinners' Market Day, I recommend the following:

1) Hold Market Day in 1992 at 4-H acres. The costs are minimal. The facilities are good and it makes money for the guild. The organizational activities have already been established, making this easier on a coordinator.

2) Structure Marekt DAY to be a fun day for all. Games, contest, etc., as well as demonstrations could all be easily be planned.

3) Consider the vendors. Most really like the set-up at 4-H Acres, and this would mean most would continue to participate in Spinners' Market Day.

4) Encourage Lamb to Loom Guild members to start their own Market Day or Flax Day (or whatever they would like to call it). Moving BSHG Market Day outside of the Ithaca area removes BSHG from direct responsibility.

I know I'm not alone in my feelings, and that many others (despite feeling as I do) will remain silent and pitch in for what the guild sees fit to do. This is a serious decision to be made and the results may have many long term effects. I urge you not to go into this hastily or without more study.

Sincerely,
Nancy Morey



SATURDAY'S BARN TAKING IN HANDSPUN ITEMS TO SELL

Joan Buchanan of Saturday's Barn in Manlius, is accepting any handspun or other handmade crafts to sell in her shop from now till Christmas. She takes a 20% commission on all sales.

MARKET DAY SHAWL PROPOSAL FROM CELIA:

Celia Radke would like input from guild members on the two fleeces the guild now owns. Please let her know at the meeting or as soon as possible by mail. These are her two proposals:

- 1) Fleece would be parceled out the guild members and the spun yarn would be knitted in one piece. Then the shawl would be passed to guild members for them to knit a section onto the shawl. The shawl would be raffled off the guild members only. Proceeds would be towards the guild.
- 2) Fleece would be parceled out to guild members and the spun yarn would be oven b y Celia into a shawl and this would be raffled off to the public. Proceeds would again be towards the guild.

A LETTER FROM THE HANDSPINNER WHO WON BSHG'S SPECIAL PRIZE AT THE STATE FAIR:

Dear Handspinners,

I received your award check yesterday and wish to thank you for your generosity.

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At our winter home here in Western North Carolina, I belong to a small group of handspinners. We meet to spin twice monthly, have dye workshops and do quite a bit of demonstrating for local schools.

My craft has brought me contact with many wonderful and interesting people and is a large part of my life. I would love to visit one of your guild meetings sometime in the future.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,
Juan Dickinson

LETTER FROM CAYUGA NATURE CENTER:

Dear Eleanor May and members of the Black Sheep Handspinners Guild:

The rain stopped just in time to give us a beautiful day for our 10th Annual Fall Festival on September 19. On behalf of all the ataff and Board members of Cayuga Nature Center, I am enclosing a Certificate of Appreciation to thank you for your participation as an exhibitor.

Our goal for this Festival is to provide the public with an opportunity to have fun outdoors while lerning more about our relationship with our natural world. Thanks to you and all the other wonderful exhibitirs and volunteer who shared time and tatlents, over 1100 people of all ages enjoyed this fun and educational event. Many enthusiastic visitors let us know how much they appreciated the great variety of interesting "harvest-time" exhibits, demonstrations and activites.

Sincerely,
Julie Worth, Festival Coordinator

IN DEEPEST SYMPATHY:

Our thoughts and prayers are with Susanne Lorbeer in the loss of her mother.

Meridith Nelson Wood, 72, an early member of the Black Sheep Handspinners Guild, died October 2 at home after a lengthy illness. She will be long-remembered by old-timers in the guild for her warmth, sense of

humor and gif of gab. She spun at home for quite some time, despite her illness when she no longer got to spinning guild meetings -- and she always asked about who was doing what and where. We have lost a dear freind and a wealth of stories.

Jean Warholic

A BIG THANK YOU:

To Lisa Merian for donating to our library, SWEATERS BY HAND by Helene Rush and to Eleanor May for donating an autographed copy of ANGORA by Erica Lynn (Rowe).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

CELIA QUINN WORKSHOP:

COLOR BLENDING: A spinning workshop on March 20 and 21, 1993 at Meadville, PA. Cost is \$100 tuition plus a \$15 fiber fee. The Northwest Pennsylvania Spinners and Weavers Guild is hosting the workshop which will show how to create a heathery spectrum of colored yarns by blending together wools that have been dyed with primary and secondary colors. She will also expereiment with tints, tones, a nd shades byh blending various neurtrfals with the dyed wools.

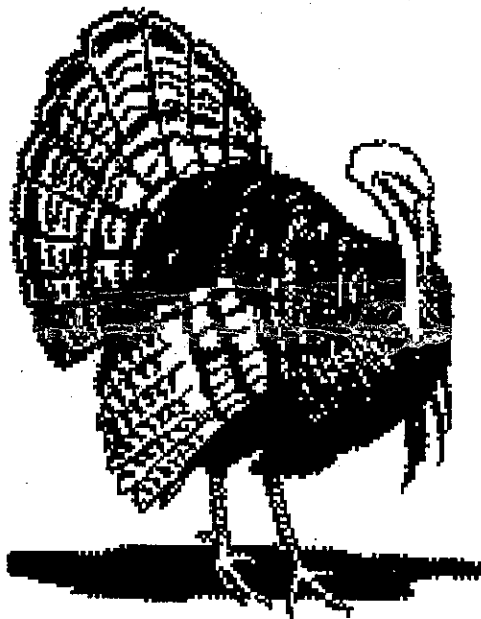
Registration for non-members begins November 7, 1992. Call Susan Fenton, 364 Henry St., Meadville PA 16335 (814-337-7447) about attending.

WANT ADS

Ad Rates: 3-67 lines ---\$2 one time for 20 words or less and \$1 for additional 10 words or less.

For Sale: White Angora bunnies, 7 weeks old \$17 each. Call Bill Ralph, 7170-247-7175.

For Sale: Well skirted, freshly shorn wool. Corriedale, Finn, Dorset and various crosses lambs' wool, white and black. Excellent for spinning, weaving and felting. \$1 to \$1.50 per lbs. or barded. Hidden Valley Farms, 607-589-6240.



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