ROC DAY IS COMING! ROC DAY IS COMING!

What is the next holiday to celebrate? ROC DAY of course, a one day event that is our guilds gift to the public. Make sure we all pitch in to help make this the best ROC DAY ever.

Also, if any of you have a connection with the weatherman put in an order for no more four letter word days on that Saturday. Sun is a three letter word and that would be a good one to ask for.

Spinning weather is definitely here as is snow shoveling. Let's try to forget about the latter and concentrate on the former.

I hope many of you will have skeins to enter into the competition. That is new this year for ROC DAY and it would be wonderful if we could get it started off on a good note. I have seen some of the prizes and they are neat.

See you there, Jim

The organizers for the Roc Day raffle/Chinese auction (that's Ellie and I) want to remind you that we are accepting additional donations to round out the wonderful items already received. We have some tools, lovely hand spun and hand knit items, hand spun yarn, etc. We welcome your well-made hand-made objects, and other fiber-related items. Please get them to us by 10am on the day of the event, or make arrangements with us to get them prior to January 12. You can find me at sg39@cornell.edu, and Ellie at mmay1@twcny.rr.com.

Speaking of donations, Flashlight Press has offered us 3 children’s books related to knitting to include in our raffle: Pobble’s Way, Silly Frilly Grandma Tillie, and The Busy Life of Ernestine Buckmeister. You can look at them at the link www.FlashlightPress.com.

See you there! Sharon

Future Programs
Jan - Roc Day
Feb - Spinning with beads
March - Spin in
Winter Retreat at Stella Maris in Skaneateles, NY on February 22nd and 23rd. The retreat at Stella Maris is for the nights of Friday and Saturday, February 22nd & 23rd.

This will miss Valentine's Day and the guild meeting time in February. And if we are really lucky it will be the first, but not only, blizzard free winter retreat.

Please email me if you want to reserve a spot at ahfurman@yahoo.com

**********************************************************

Two of our members are in Cayuga Medical Center

Ruth Allen (rm 247) is in the Rehabilitation Center regaining use of her left side and Carol Franco (rm 445) is being relieved of a blood clot in her lungs.

Ruth would prefer to be contacted by email as visiting hours are limited. Please call the main hospital # to be connected to Carol.

White sheep, White sheep on a blue hill,

When the wind stops, You all stand still.

When the wind blows...

White sheep, White sheep, where do you go?

It has stayed in my heart for so many years and always reminds me of her youthful innocence & the joy we shared. I do not know where the verse came from.

These are Heather & Rose, the first twins born to Eliz’ farm in 1995. Their dam, Lilah, a quad ewe, helped establish the genetic excellence in all her white Finn Sheep.

from Elizabeth K_G

When my grown daughter, Laura Maroney, was learning cursive writing at her school in South Windsor, CT in the late 1970's she brought home her schoolwork which she was quite proud of. We had our first small flock of sheep then and she loved them well. Her practice writing came home in the form of this lovely verse.......
In 2014 the Blacksheep Handpinners Guild will turn two score years old. Forty years is a proverbially long time, of course, but it is an especially venerable age for an informal organization like this one, carried forward over the years only by the shared love and excitement of its members for their common craft. I think it’s safe to say that not too many similar organizations last that long. The former Thistledown Handspinners’ Guild of Norwich, for example, which was godmother to our own, is no longer around. Over that long span, moreover, the Blacksheep guild has become far more than merely a monthly gathering of like-minded craftsmen. Sally Marx, one of our early members, described her participation in it as like the base of a fan—the starting point of a quest that ended up carrying her along a multitude of paths in search of an understanding of the ways in which women and children have lived, and coped, through history. In the course of interviewing a few other early participants, I have come to appreciate how generally this metaphor applies; our spinning circle has been the starting point of many diverse and sometimes unexpected adventures for those who have been a part of it over the years. Sally’s fan is equally apt as a description of the way in which the guild has affected the larger community in which it is nestled. The effect of myriad demonstrations and other outreach efforts over the years, as well as the numerous fiber-related businesses started by its members, has radiated beneficially for the past four decades through the economic and cultural life of a region that stretches well beyond Tompkins County. All of this is well worth commemorating, and so over the next few newsletters I will offer a series of little reflections on that multifaceted and significant history, in anticipation of the impending chronological milestone.

In preparing for these reports, I have had the pleasure of listening to some of the early members of the guild as they shared their recollections with fondness and enthusiasm. This won’t be an exhaustive or authoritative history, of course, for one thing, because I was unable to talk to many of those centrally involved in the guild back then, and, for another, because there can never any such thing as a true, definitive history of an organization like this. It is always nothing more, and nothing less, than a collage or potpourri of the experiences and activities and recollections of all the people who have contributed to and benefited from it over the decades.

The forty-year history of the guild has been long enough to encompass almost the whole of the modern handspinning revival. We are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as heirs to a tradition of craft that stretches back continuously for millennia, but what we are doing is in fact something quite modern, in its way; by 1974, the old tradition of handspinning driven by domestic necessity had been dead for the better part of two centuries. Laurel Ulrich tells us that even by 1850, the “Age of Homespun” was unfurled by orators as quaint, nostalgic image of the good old days. A century before the founding of our guild, spinning wheels had largely been relegated to the attic, tossed into gullies, smashed or disassembled, consigned to local antique stores, kept around as occasional photographic props, or turned into (sigh) planters. Surpassingly few of those involved in the spinning revival had the chance to learn it at the knees of grandmothers who still remembered how. The intrepid spinners who gathered in Dryden in the early 1970’s pioneers of a new movement, whose efforts involved rediscovery and reinvention as much as revival of tradition, and their efforts transformed an ages old, long abandoned domestic craft into something robust, living, and modern. We can be sure that spinning means something very different to us than it did to all of those generations of earlier spinners, stretching back to Neolithic times.

Nor were there many written resources to which aspiring spinners could turn. Shuttle, Spindle and Dyepot made its first appearance in 1969, and two
detailed (and still useful) how-to-do it books appeared in the early ‘70’s—
*Handspinning* by an upstate New Yorker, Alan Fannin, and Marilyn Kluger’s *Joy of Spinning* (whose author actually had learned from her grandmother). But the magazine *Spin-Off*, as well as all of the other books that we have come to regard as the classics of the field—by Katy Turner, Peter Teal, Candace Crocker, Paula Simmons, Rachel Brown, Bud Kronenberg, and Patricia Baines—still lay in the future.

Organized groups of handspinners were also few and far between back in the early ‘70’s when Kay Ross, the first president of our guild, found herself in possession of 75 sheep and decided she should learn to spin their wool. She called up the Farmers Museum in Cooperstown, where spinning was still demonstrated as a nineteenth century craft, to find out where she might turn for instruction. They referred her to a relatively new group, the Thistledown Handspinners Guild in Norwich, over in Chenango County. Among the prime movers of the Thistledown group was Doloria Chapin (see photo), whose self-published book from 1971, *Let’s Go Spinning: the International Handspinning Directory*, gives a very interesting picture of the state of modern handspinning in those early days. Doloria had owned a spinning wheel for 25 years before she started spinning at 40, and went on to become a spinning teacher and author, as well as the holder of a couple of patents for spinning wheel design. To develop a picture of the state of handspinning in America, she sent out a questionnaire to the journals *Handweaver and Craftsman*, and *Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot*, as well as to various museums and other places where lone handspinners might be expected to hang out, and asked people to write in and tell her what parts of the craft they were involved in, what sorts of equipment and fibers, they used, and the nature of their involvement (whether they taught classes, built or restored wheels, sold their handspun yarn, and so on). Half the book is a directory of respondents from 45 of the US states, which, together with responses from Canada and one lone response from Holland, justified the “International” in the title. The remainder of the book consists of a gallery of pictures of spinners and wheels, a couple of spinning songs, an article on spinning dog hair, a word search puzzle, and, most interestingly, profiles of some spinners across the country.

Though very modest (90 typewritten, double-spaced pages, of which 45 are taken up by the directory, and another thirteen by the pictures), the work manages to convey the energy and excitement attendant on being in on the beginning of something brand new and growing. Doloria remarks, “a few years ago, there were only scattered spinners few that were native born.” The
numbers had grown somewhat by 1971, but they were still small; the directory’s listing for New York State (by far the most copious) contains only 89 names—and six of those are Doloria’s children! In the Ithaca area, only Dora Swart and Marcia Meigs are listed, both of whom reported themselves as spinning teachers.

The spinners listed in the directory were still working in relative isolation. Some were employed, or volunteered, as re-enactors for living history museums and elsewhere. A few were loosely affiliated with weaving guilds. Guilds and groups devoted to spinning were still notably uncommon. Doloria mentions only the Hiawatha Spinners of Ontario, and the Gravander Spinners of California, to whom she accords a particularly important role in the modern revival. (Valborg (‘Mama’) Gravender had been teaching spinning in the San Francisco Bay area for over forty years in 1970, and her influence, through her students, had been carried across many states.) The Thistledown guild itself seems not to have existed in 1971; at least Doloria makes no mention of it.

In any case, the Thistledown Handspinners Guild had come into being in Norwich at least by 1973, in time for Kay Ross to be referred to it. (It is hard to avoid the surmise that there was some connection between the name of the guild and the name of Doloria’s farm, “Thys’ll Do”.) Kay joined the Thistledowners, as did a few others from the Ithaca/Dryden area, and attended the spinning seminars they held every October starting in the early 70’s, with workshops offered by such notables as Doloria Chapin, Edna Blackburn of Ontario, and Allan Fannin of Westdale.

Other future members of the Blacksheep guild were, in the meantime, happening onto spinning in their own ways. Spinning demonstrations at historical houses and living history museums were often the only chance that people had to see spinning wheels in action, and some found life-changing inspiration in them. Joan Johnston, for example, another of our early members, while walking with her husband near the Scottish border, had picked up tufts of wool that had snagged in the heather, and stuffed them in her suitcase. Joan’s mother-in-law, Margaret Johnston, just happened to have started a Colonial Living Experience at a reclaimed historical cabin, the Lawrence Cabin, on Caracon Creek near Philadelphia. The students who came there had the opportunity to fetch water, make candy, and watch spinning. When Joan showed Margaret the wool she’d gathered from the heather, Margaret said “I can show you how to spin that.” And so she did. Jean Nowack, who would become the Blacksheep’s first treasurer, also discovered spinning by watching a historical recreationist at work. She and her husband had moved from Iowa to Connecticut, whose ever-present colonial history proved both a novelty and a revelation to these transplants from the Midwest. There was, in particular, a 17th century stone house called the Whitfield House, whose docent, dressed in the fashion of bygone times, demonstrated spinning on a flax wheel. As Jean tells it, it was love at first sight, and she found herself “desperate to learn how.”

Sally Marx, too, was swept up in the colonial history of New England, with which the air of Boston and vicinity was particularly charged in the buildup to the Bicentennial, when she and her husband were living as students in nearby Cambridge. Under its spell, she took to wearing sunbonnets, and it wasn’t long before a great wheel had come to grace their small apartment. Actually learning to spin, though, would have to wait until she made her way to Ithaca and encountered the Blacksheep a few years later.

To Follow:
How It All Began
Teaching and Reaching Out
Business and Pleasure
The Animals
Now and Then
2013 Roc Day Workshops – Saturday - January 12, 2013
All Saints Church in Lansing- 347 Ridge Rd. (Rte 34B) Lansing NY.
See registration form for location directions

MORNING - 10:30 - 12 NOON

ROOM A – Marianne Pelletier- Spindle Spinning Technique workshop
BEGINNERS’ SPINDLE SPINNING WORKSHOP

10:30 - 12 NOON - $25.00 INCLUDES MATERIALS
CLASS SIZE - 8 MAX
This is the class for people to test their interest in spindle spinning. Beginners welcome!
Students will learn how to spindle spin using spindles and fiber owned and provided by the guild. You will learn what fibers work best for beginning spindlers and why; what happens when you put twist into fiber and how to manage the spindle and fiber to produce a pleasing usable yarn. This is a skill that develops with practice. Test out your interest in the class before investing in your own spindle and fiber.
NO MATERIAL LIST - Students will borrow equipment and fiber for class use only.
Spindles and fiber will be for sale at various Roc Day Vendor booths after the class.

ROOM B - MARJORIE INANA - Fiber Processing workshop
CARDING AND FLICKING
10:30 - 12 Noon - $25.00 INCLUDES FIBER
CLASS SIZE - 10 MAX
Not a beginner spinning class. Students must be comfortable spinning and plying yarn from various fibers.
This workshop will give you an opportunity to learn how to use your carders and flicker to prepare fibers in a variety of ways.
There will be loaner hand carders and flickers available if you don’t have your own and are thinking about buying them.
There will not be enough for each student, so if you have your own, please bring them or plan to share the loaners with other students.
Materials: Bring your carders and flicker if you have them and a spindle or wheel to try spinning the different preparations that you will learn to prepare in the class.

ROOM C – Kiko Nobusawa from Knitting Etc. – Lace Knitting
“Intro to Lace Knitting, Eyelet by Eyelet”
10:30 – 12 Noon - $25
CLASS SIZE– 4 minimum/ 8 maximum
Many often assume that the complex-looking texture of knitted lace involves equally difficult techniques. But most classic lace motifs are just made up of eyelets (yo, k2tog) in an otherwise straight stockinette fabric, so anyone comfortable with cast-on and basic knit & purl stitches can easily knit beautiful lace. We'll knit a small swatch of lace in this workshop, starting with single eyelets then working up to a short pattern repeat (which also introduces chart-reading).
Materials: Please bring some leftover sock/dk/light-worsted yarn and needles that produce a relaxed stockinette stitch for you.

AFTERNOON - 1-2:30 PM

ROOM B – TERRY WINER – Top-Down Shawl Design
DESIGN YOUR OWN TRIANGULAR SHawl
1:00 - 2:30 PM - $25.00
CLASS SIZE - 10 MAX
Learn how to design a top-down triangle-shaped shawl using your one-of-kind hand-spun or hand-dyed single skein of yarn. We will cover various triangle shapes, how to pick a lace pattern and fit it into the working area, how to incorporate color into your design and how to anticipate when you will run out of yarn.
This workshop is best for skeins that have at least 300 to 400 yards.
Materials: Bring a sample of the yarn you will be using along with the estimated yardage. Highly recommended is that you work a swatch at different needle sizes to choose which one to use. Do not cut your yarn, though, as you will want to use every inch of your handiwork.

More workshops and regis form on next page.
ROOM C – Hickory Lee of Knitting Etc. - Fair Isle Knitting
Intro to Fair Isle Knitting
1:00 – 2:30 PM - $25.00
CLASS SIZE – 4 minimum/ 8 maximum
Have you admired complicated looking Fair Isle knits? This technique looks harder than it is. Really! Hickory Lee of
Knitting Etc. will teach this class, an introduction to stranded (aka: Fair Isle) knitting. We’ll try a variety of ways to hold and
knit with two colors in a round. English, pickers, throwers, continental knitters are all welcome.
Materials: Please bring 2 balls of worsted weight yarn in a light and medium color and 16" or 24" circular needles size 7
or 8.

For more information on these workshops - go to:
http://blacksheephandspinnersguild.org
To check out our ROC DAY 2013 updates.
You can also contact – Becki Terwilliger- rterwill@aol.com

Registration started December 8, 2012 and ends January 5, 2013 or until full.
There will only be registration on ROC DAY if there are workshop openings not filled or cancelled
prior to the big day.
This is a 1st come - 1st served experience so if you are interested, don’t delay!

Roc Day 2013 Registration Form

Name ________________________________________________________
Address ______________________________________________________
Phone _________________________Email ___________________________
Please fill in the blanks for each workshop you are registering yourself or others.

AM – 10:30 TO 12 NOON
Carding and Flicking # of registrants _________ @ $ 25 = $ __________
Beginners’ Spindle Spinning # of registrants__________ @ $ 25 = $ __________
Into to Lace Knitting # of registrants___________ @ $ 25 = $ __________

PM – 1:00 TO 2:30 PM
Design Your Own Triangular Shawl # of registrants __________ @ $ 25 = $ __________
Fair Isle Knitting # of registrants ____________ @ $ 25 = $ __________
Total Enclosed = $ __________

If you are registering for more than one person on this form, please send a list with the name and contact
information for each person attending each workshop.

Please send check or Postal/Bank Money Order and this form to:
Becki Terwilliger
72 Old Payne Road
Newfield, New York 14867
Please email me to let me know that this information is in the mail. I will reply when I receive the envelope.
rterwill@aol.com
Please check our website – www.blacksheephandspinners.org – for workshop openings and updates.
Registration forms and payment must be received by January 5, 2013 to hold reservation.
Roc Day 2013 Skein Competition

We are looking forward to receiving your entries for this event.

You may submit up to 5 entries, for a total charge of $2. All entries should be received by 11 o’clock on the day of the event. Awards will be presented at 3 o’clock. Participants may pick up their entries at this time, or - make arrangements for their return.

Please attach an envelope to each entry. The outside of the envelope should show the class, and information on the fiber, preparation, and intended use. Your name and guild affiliation go on the reverse side please.

There are no restrictions on the number of entries in any class.

Classes are as follows:

1) **Proficiency of spin**: a 2 ounce skein 100% wool
2) **Proficiency of spin**: a 2 ounce skein wool blend or any other fiber
3) **Novelty yarn**: a 2 ounce skein, spun using any technique or fiber
4) **Novice yarn**: a 2 ounce skein spun by a person new to spinning in the last year
5) **Project basket**: In a basket or other container, artfully presented, provide the following:
   - The pattern for which the fiber is intended
   - At least 4 ounces of fiber spun for the project
   - A sample of the fiber unspun
   - A knitted/crocheted/woven sample demonstrating the pattern

We will be asking all Roc Day attendees to participate in our viewer’s choice selection. Vote on the submission you most like, for whatever reason. The entry with the most votes will be awarded a prize.

Results of the judging will be announced and awards presented following the drawing for the auction. There will be one prize per class, and one for viewer’s choice.

We hope to see your entries!
Please fill this out and either bring it to a meeting or mail it with your check for $20 to: Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln St, Cortland, NY 13045

**Membership Form**

*Please type or print*

**Date:** __________

**Name:** __________________________________________

**Address:** __________________________________________

preferred email: PRINT NEATLY please __________________________________________

preferred phone # ____________________________ birthday month (opt) ________

This info will be made available to the guild membership. If you wish to remain anonymous please let Char know.

Please list your wheel(s)

________________________________________________________

We welcome spinners of all skill levels. How long have you been spinning? ______

Do you: Knit? Weave? Crochet? Dye - *(Natural or chemical)* ?

Which of your skills might you be willing to share with a member or the group?

ie: teach beginning spindling or spinning or dyeing; teach a spinning / knitting / crocheting skill, etc

If you raise any fiber animals, please list them here________________________________________________________

Which committee(s) are you interested in joining?

- Roe Day
- Membership
- Programming
- Charity Works
- Outreach including Events & Activities Schedule for non guild members
- Newsletter - advisory & review
- None

Would you be interested in chairing or co-chairing one of these groups? If yes, which one(s)?

*Newsletters are sent via email. If you would prefer to get yours via snail mail please give 12 SASE envelopes to Sharon Gombas. Postage should be $2 per envelope.*
Convert your Baynes hook flyer to a SLIDING PINCH HOOK FLYER for $32.00 including rebalancing. See Jim Johnson at a meeting or call 607-564-7178 or email hilltoppaddles@earthlink.net.

**Johanneshof Romneys**
Registered White and Natural Colored Sheep

Yarn, Combed Top, Roving, Fleeces
Occasional breeding stock

2011 Natural Colored Fleece Reserve Champion
N.Y.S. Sheep and Wool Festival
Rhinebeck, N.Y.

2011 Champion Natural Colored Covered Fleece
Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival
Greenwich, N.Y.

Christine Johnson
johnson.chris123@yahoo.com

**Hand Dyed Fibers & Yarns**
Kits, Patterns, Needles
Baynes & Jim’s Wheels
Jim’s Spindles

www.SpinningBunny.com
607-564-7178
susan@spinningbunny.com
311B Tupper Road
West Danby, NY
Sat/Sun 11-3 or by appt.

**Spinning Great Wheels**
- hand crafted solid oak

R Collins
197 Walsh Rd
Wellsburg, NY 14894
607-733-9880

---

**For Sale - Double wide Strauch Hand Crank Drum Carder.** Great Condition. Purchased 2 yrs ago but barely used.

Originally $1050. Asking $800.
Located in Horseheads.
Contact Jennifer Ostrander 607-279-6617

---

To place an ad

A check for $5.00 made to BSHG for an ad to run three times for members; $5/month for non members should be sent to our treasurer: Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln Ave. Cortland, NY 13045. Send the ad to the newsletter editor, Susan S. sarabasha@earthlink.net

If you have a question for her or others, you can email us through the links on page 1. B&W Business card ads are free for Current members.