Greetings to all,

As occurs every month, I sit here trying to compose some insightful and witty missive, but wander instead. This has always been the case, and the cause of some distress, until I recently read an article in the Wall Street Journal (November 26) on this very subject. Studies show that our brains profit from our wandering thoughts, that our "control center" in the brain--the pre-frontal cortex--"holds a particular problem in mind but permits the brain to wander enough to put together old ideas in new ways and find creative solutions." So although it may appear that I am goofing off, I am most certainly not.

Our Roc Day Celebration is just around the corner, and promises to be a good one. You will find a copy of the schedule in this issue, along with a vendor listing, and a poster that you may print to display to let others know of the event. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Now back to my woolgathering....

Sharon
**Guild News:**

**Roc Day:**

Roc Day, also known as Saint Distaff’s Day, was traditionally the 7th of January, when after the twelve days of Christmas the women folk would resume their spinning work again. Males would return to work on Plough Monday, the first Monday after Epiphany (January 6th), which more often than not did not fall on the same day. Which meant there were plenty of idle hands around for pranking and merry making as work resumed.

We will celebrate Roc-Day on January 14th, from 10am to 4pm, with lots of merry making, good food, our trusty wheels, spindles, and distaffs. Please bring a dish to pass for our lunch.

Like every year, there will be a spinning circle set up, for us to spin and catch up with old friends and meet a few new ones.

All our wonderful vendors from last year will return this roc day. See the vendor list next page.

We will have a pendulum wheel for people try it out.

**Schedule for January 14, 2017:**

10:00-4:00 Spinning circle, shopping opportunities

11:00 Demonstration: Adam, Eve and the Great Big Distaff with Lois Swales

Entries to skein competition are due

11:30 Demonstration: Traditional Weaving from Oaxaca, Mexico with José Buenaventura Gonzalez Gutierrez

11:30-1:30 Dish-to-pass luncheon

12:30 Demonstration: Combing Wool with Marjorie Inana

1:00 Demonstration: Spinning Cotton with Kathy Halton

Sale of raffle tickets ends

1:30 Presentation of raffle items to winners

2:00 Demonstration: Spinning Flax with Susan Quick

3:00 Prizes awarded to winners of the skein competition

4:00 Celebration ends for this year--we hope to see you next year!

Please keep in mind that your membership fees are due in January.
Roc Day Vendor List:

Jim Johnson, Hilltop Woodworking—Hand-turned spindles, folding stools, Spin'n Rides, and other spinning accessories.

Mary Miller, Dear Mary Handspun and Handwoven—Hand-woven and hand-spun towels, scarves, and placemats as well as hand-knit socks from my hand-spun yarns. Hand-spun skeins, from cobweb to chunky weight, from dyers such as Hello Yarn, Southern Cross, and Spunky Eclectic.

Karey Solomon, Graceful Arts Fiber Studio—Dyed roving, hand-dyed sock yarns, knitting, crocheting, and tatting supplies.


Holly Partridge, Peartree Farm—Teesdale fleeces and locks, other breeds to include Wensleydale.

Lisa Merian, Spinner’s Hill—Hand-dyed roving, fiber blends, batts, and yarns. Also fiber arts supplies.

Laurie Ament, Isinglass Design—Handmade drop spindles with glass whorls, shawl pins, buttons, and glass beads.

Elizabeth Kinner Gossner, Stillmeadow Finn Sheep—Finnsheep roving and washed locks, felted bags, stoneware pottery including yarn bowls.

Susan Sarabasha, Susan’s Spinning Bunny—Hand-dyed fibers and yarns, wheels, patterns, kits, accessories, and felting supplies.

Margaret Flowers, Trinity Farm—Icelandic and Shetland fleece, rovings, and hand-spun yarns, hand-made sheep milk soaps, original needle-felted creations.
SARAH ANDERSON WORKSHOP
Sponsored by the Black Sheep Handspinners’ Guild

When: May 13 and May 14
Where: Lansing Community Center, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY 14882
Time: 9 am to 4 pm
Fee: 1 Day $100  2 days $200

May 13 DRAFTING:
Drafting refers to the way the spinner manipulates or draws out the fiber so twist enters it to create yarn. Different drafting methods produce very different yarns even from the same fiber and different fibers may require different techniques. In this class we will work on drafting techniques that spinners of all skill levels will appreciate including diameter control, understanding twist, drafting for different types of yarn, producing yarn compatible to an existing yarn and finishing techniques.

May 14 PLYING:
This class follows and builds on the drafting class. Students learn to use different types of singles in plied yarns. The class begins with basic plying and then moves into more complex types of plying such as spiral, chain, cable, crepe, boucle and core yarns. We do as many as time permits.

Bring To Class: A wheel in working order, lazy kate, and 3 bobbins. If you have a flick or hand carders bring them too.

REGISTRATION
NAME_____________________________________________________
EMAIL_____________________________________________________
MAY 13________$100
MAY 14 ________ $100

Make out check to Black Sheep Hand Spinners’ Guild
Mail check and form to  Marjorie Inana  41 W. Court Street, Cortland, NY 13045

Registration is non refundable and is due by Roc Day at which time registration is open to anyone.
Cloth Moths

Nature’s Clean-Up Crew and How to Deal With Them

by Angelika St.Laurent

The common clothes moth, known to the scientific community as *Tineola bisselliella* (and their less common relatives the casemaking clothes moths, *Tinea pellionella*) derive their nourishment from animal fiber. They mostly eat wool or hair, but they also eat feathers, silk and even dead insect bodies. They are small, whitish or buff-colored moths, barely 1/2 inch long. In nature, clothes moths seek out the fiber that mammals shed in spring, empty cocoons of larger insect larvae, and similar waste in order to lay their eggs on it. Each female clothes moth can lay up to 200 eggs. If temperatures are warm enough, the larvae hatch after 4 to 10 days and set out to devour the fibery mess left behind by larger animals. If you like spelunking without having to shovel your way through centuries worth of discarded bear fur, or enjoy a stroll through the woods without getting entangled in old spider webs at every step, thank a clothes moth!

On the left is a Common Clothes Moth (Photo by Olaf Leillinger licensed under Creative Commons). On the right is a Flour Moth (Photo from Wikipedia, Creative Commons) Clothes moths are smaller than flour moths. Their wings are of uniform color, whereas flour moths wings are patterned. Most moths seen flying during the day or resting in bright places are flour moths, which do not pose any danger to clothing or spinning fibers.

In optimal conditions, at temperatures around 75F and air moisture around 70-75%, a clothes moth larva will spend about a month eating its way through fiber. Then it goes into a pupal stage that takes at minimum 10 days. After that, as an adult clothes moth it will no longer eat, instead searching out a mate to produce more eggs. Under less than ideal conditions the journey from egg to adult moth can take up to two years. Outside, there are usually two generations of clothes moths a year. Heated indoor spaces can allow for several more generations to develop in a year.

Clothes moths fill an important niche in their natural habitat. However they have not yet caught up to human’s strange notion of wanting to use this year’s winter coat again the next winter, rather than simply growing a new one. When clothes moths enter human habitations, their zeal to clean up unused animal fiber is frequently at odds with our human interests in keeping our wooly goods for another year.
Clothes moths can invade our houses easily. All it takes is a female adult clothes moth in search of a good place to lay her eggs who flutters through an open window or door, or a few clothes moths eggs riding along with some yummy new fiber purchase. More often than not, such an invasion goes unnoticed: clothes moths are not only small, but also rather secretive animals who favor dark places over well lit locations. Once inside the house, populations can thrive unnoticed in fiber fluff that has drifted behind a dresser, clothing items that hang forgotten in the darkest reaches of the closet, or a ball of yarn that patiently awaits its use in a dark drawer. An unsuspecting dust bunny can become a perfect host. As they are small and defenseless, clothes moths are rather unenthusiastic about the prospect of crossing paths with a hungry bird. Thus they mostly prefer not to fly at all, and when they do fly, they mostly fly at night. If one happens to see a clothes moth flying during daytime, it is usually an indicator of a massive clothes moth population. A good way to detect the presence of clothes moths in the household, before a population becomes massive, is with the use of clothes moth specific pheromone traps. Pheromone traps use female clothes moths’ scents to attract and catch male clothes moths. These traps are available for a few dollars at Agway, Target, and other shopping locations.

So if there clothes moths in the household, what can we do to protect our woolen goodies?

First off, clothes moths are not secret agents of a nudist animal conspiracy. They generally do not lay eggs or thrive on moving fiber. The fiber we happen to spin at the moment and the woolen clothing we regularly use normally stay free of clothes moth damage. If there is any need for another good reason to spend more time on the fiber arts: playing with fiber and wearing our handmade clothing frequently is a good way to protect them from moths damage.

However, many spinners feel the need to have a little bit (and occasionally more than just a bit) more fiber at hand than can be spun in a month or two. Stash fiber often does not get moved frequently enough to fool clothes moths into believing that it is still attached to an animal. Therefore it needs some additional protection. The simplest way is to keep clothes moths from finding the fiber. Clothes moths detect fibers through their highly sensitive sense of smell. Clothes moth are attracted by scents that linger on shed animal fiber like sweat, musk, urine, feces, and food residues. Fiber, yarn, and clothing made from animal fibers should be cleaned before they are stashed away. Unwashed fleeces are much more attractive to clothes moths than washed and processed fiber and are better stored in separate location from the rest of the stash. Covering the scent of fleeces and clothing with another strong smell, like cedar oil or lavender oil, can be helpful to hide fiber from wandering moths.

Unfortunately for us, clothes moths are not picky eaters. They might not be attracted to clean fiber lacking the preferred bouquet reminiscent of a bear cave at the end of winter, but if they chance upon it they will still eat it. A mechanical barrier is much more secure than a scent barrier: storing fiber in tightly locking containers or well-closed heavy duty plastic bags keeps clothes moths reliably out, and is the best approach to long-term fiber storage.

Also, and this is the most tedious part of stash protection, the fewer little bits of fiber that hide behind dressers and under sofas, the fewer secret clothes moths populations stay in the house, and the fewer unwanted colonizers can find their way into the stash. Sweeping and vacuuming regularly, especially in the darker corners of the house, is essential to keep our stashes safe.
But what if the stash has already been invaded?

Clothes moths can be removed from fiber and clothing in many ways without harming the fiber. However, none of these, with the exception of chemically moth-proofed yarns, will protect the fiber from being colonized by new clothes moths after the treatment.

**Heat:** All stages of clothes moths die if exposed to temperatures of 120°F or higher for more than 30 minutes. Scouring a fleece usually ensures that all insect life on the wool dies. For already clean fiber, the stash can be loaded into a car and parked on one of the hot, sunny summer days we enjoy in Ithaca, with closed windows on a shade-free parking lot. The car is likely to heat up beyond 120°F. On the other 364 days of the year, an oven can heat fiber. Natural fibers, like wool or silk, can withstand heat up to 180°F for half an hour without damage. Fiber blends containing man-made fibers might need to be treated with more caution. Ironing or a run through the washing machine at a hot setting can also eliminate all stages of moths from clothing.

**Freezing:** Adult clothes moths and larvae die if subjected to sudden freezes. Dropping fiber from room temperature to freezing conditions, with a chest freezer or outdoors on a cold winter day, will kill all larvae and adults. Eggs, however, survive freezing. To eliminate all moths from the fiber, the fiber needs to be brought back to room temperature and kept there for about 10 days to 2 weeks to give the eggs time to hatch. A second freezing treatment can then kill the newly hatched larvae.

**Dry-Cleaning:** Dry-cleaning will kill all stages of clothes moths and leave the treated fabrics blissfully clean and unattractive to new colonization.

**Suffocation:** All stages of clothes moth need oxygen to survive. Dry ice can drive out all air from a container that is subsequently closed airtight. After three or four days of oxygen exclusion all moths, larvae, and eggs are dead.

**Poison:** Mothballs contain insecticides that can kill all stages of clothes moths. The insecticides evaporate and fumigate the airspace around it. To work properly, mothballs need to be used in confined spaces, like a tightly closed wardrobe or, even better, a closed contractor’s garbage bag. Mothballs become ineffective if the poison is diluted by too much air: for example, if used in a closet that is left open, or sprinkled through the attic. Remember that the insecticides used in mothballs are harmful to humans, too. As we should not join our fiber in the oven (or broiling car) for a heat treatment, we should not join the moths inhaling or ingesting the insecticides from the mothballs.

Modern moth-proofed yarns, like yarn produced by the Brown Sheep Company, usually chemically bind insecticides to the fiber. The insecticide is released when moth larvae ingest the fiber. Little is known about how these insecticides affect humans, as it is assumed that humans won’t ingest the fiber. Whoever assumed this probably never spent much time with young children.

**Parasitic Wasps:** Tiny Trichogramma parasitoid wasps place their own eggs inside those of the moths. Their larvae eat the moth eggs. These wasps are harmless to humans. Once the moth eggs are eaten, the wasps vanish within 2–4 weeks. The wasps can be ordered over the internet (www.planetnatural.com) and released into closets or wool storage places. Keep in mind that biological control agents rarely eliminate *all* of the target population.
Name__________________________________________________________________________

Address:____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

Preferred email:  PRINT NEATLY ___________________________________________________

Phone # ____________________________________________________

This information will be shared with registered guild members. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let Vicki Marsted know.

Please list your wheel(s) __________________________________________________________

Do you spindle spin?  Yes  or No (circle)

Do you Knit? Weave? Crochet? Dye? (Natural or Chemical?):

Would you be willing to share your skills with other members (ie: teach beginners, present a meeting topic, demo to the public, etc?)

If you raise fiber animals, please list them here__________________________________________

We need your help on committee(s). If you would like to volunteer, let Sharon Gombas, our president, know!!!

Roc Day
Programming
Newsletter
Membership
Website
Outreach
Treasurer

Our newsletter is distributed electronically. If this is a problem, please contact Sharon Gombas. 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
Fancy Kitty, Little Tom Drum carder. Manual power. New $660. Asking $500 Cleaning brush new $27 included. Fancy Kitty Picker with Tung oil finish, leg assembly, top and end caps. New $520 asking $450 Contact Jessica Rollins at 607-382-8022 or jrrollins11@gmail.com.

In an effort to reduce my personal stash, I’d like to sell cotton warp, loop mohair, rug wools, fine wools, rayon and rayon chenille and other interesting stuff at prices ranging from low to ridiculous. I also have a Hansen e-spinner with woolee winder, two bobbins and kate for sale. Contact Karey Solomon at threads@empacc.net.

For Sale from my happy sheep and rabbits in Trumansburg: Navajo Churro roving in a variety of colors and white Angora Rabbit wool.

Contact Sharon Berger 607-592-4649

The cost for ads is $5.00 per month for non-members. Current members may submit one business-card sized classified ad per month for free. Send a check made out to BSHG to our treasurer, Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln Ave, Cortland, NY 13045. Send the ad in digital form to the newsletter editor, angelika@simonstl.com. Black & white business cards are published free for current members.