Hi, All:

As I write this we’re sweltering under near record heat, but the morning fog in the valleys and the flares of color bespangling the woods assure us that fall is afoot. The change of seasons was also reflected in the large turnout at the last meeting, after the usual summer lull. Our main order of business at that meeting, of course, was reconciling ourselves to the fact that Sharon is retiring from the presidency after many years of sage and stalwart leadership. I find myself stepping into that role with more than a little trepidation, not the least because of the dauntingly high standard she has set. I thought I should give it a try, though: the upcoming October meeting will mark exactly ten years since I discovered the BSHG, after buying an early 19th century great wheel on a whim with not an inkling about how to use it, and my life has been deeply enriched over the past decade by my involvement with this remarkable, creative and supportive community.

I want to express my personal gratitude to Sharon for all that she has given to us over the years, and for the exemplary model of her leadership. Congratulations are also in order for her successes at the recent New York State Fair, where, fittingly, she won a prize donated by the BSHG in honor of Celia Radke, a valued former member and president of our guild.

Sharon is also stepping down as Roc Day coordinator. Her efforts in that role carried us from success to success over the past few years, and we are grateful for that too. Yvonne LaMontagne will be taking over that important task, with our thanks. (Thanks also to Vickie Marsted, who after many years of faithful service has turned the office of treasurer over to Louise Henrie, and thanks to Louise for taking it on. And, of course, to Sue, who continues as VP, to Angelika for continuing in her dual role secretary and newsletter editor, and to Rosane, who continues as our webmistress). I look forward to working with all of you. See you at the October meeting.

Wayne Harbert
Guild News:

Roc Day volunteers needed!
--by Wayne

Even though Fall has barely begun, it’s high time for all of us to start thinking about how we can contribute to the continued success of Roc Day, our big public celebration of spinning and allied crafts. (Roc Day, as always, will be held on the second Saturday of January). All of you have an opportunity to take part by doing one or more of the following things, and we hope you’ll do so.

• Volunteering for some of the Roc Day chores, which range from set-up/ clean-up to working in the kitchen to staffing the reception table. A sign-up sheet will be available at our meetings.

• Letting your friends, in town and elsewhere, know about the event. (We will have a flier at some point that you can help to distribute)

• Making/ donating something for the Chinese Auction. The proceeds from this perennially successful event pay our rent for the year.

• Participating in the spinning competition. This year’s competition will involve creating an adult hat, using the craft of your choosing, from handspun yarn. The winner will be decided by popular vote. Details and requirements will be posted in the newsletters.

• Demonstrating a special craft or technique as part of our program of Roc Day demos. I’m organizing these, and am very interested in hearing about your ideas.

Homestead Heritage Day

The Dryden Historical Society puts on an annual Homestead Heritage Day at the Southworth Homestead on 14 North Street in Dryden. This year, the celebration falls on October 7th. Spinners demonstrating their skill are welcome. If interested in demonstrating, or just to hang out and spin in nice company, contact Wayne.

Sad News from Central New York Fiber Artists and Producers, inc. and Call for Volunteers

Viv Fulton, the co-organizer for CNY Fiber Festival passed away unexpectedly this summer. The CNY Fiber Festival is looking for volunteers to help keep the festival running. If interested contact the groups president Pamela Haendle (315-899-7792).
Minutes from Saturday, September 9th 2017

Guild Officers: At the November Guild Meeting, we voted to invest our new treasurer, Louise Henry, with the right to sign checks on behalf of the Black Sheep Handspinners Guild.

Wayne Harbert volunteered to be Guild President. He was voted into office. There were no other candidates. We are grateful for Wayne to step up to the responsibility. Wayne expressed hopes, that next year, somebody else might volunteer to be president.

Sue Quick remains our vice-president. She has the keys to the All Saints’ Parish Hall.

Roc-Day: Our annual Roc-Day celebration will take place on January 13th 2017. The new Roc-Day coordinator is Yvonne LaMontage. Anne Furman volunteered again to serve as kitchen coordinator.

Allison suggested a competition theme: An adult sized hat made from handspun yarn. Any craft (knitting, crochet, etc.) might be used to create the hat. A hat entered into the competition will also be entered into the Chinese Auction. The winner will be found by public vote, which will be collected separately from the tickets for the Chinese Auction. The idea was received with great enthusiasm. Potential prizes were discussed, ideas included Chinese Auction tickets or half of the fee for a spinner to participate in our annual retreat. No decision have yet been made concerning the prizes. It was noted that in order to participate in the competition, competitors have to arrive early, so the hat can be part of the Chinese Auction.

Angelika suggested to have a fiber tasting table at Roc Day. The table is meant to offer small samples of different spinning fibers for spinners to try. A few cheap home made spindles will be provided for new spinners to take home and get their first taste of spinning. Angelika plans to donate some samples from her own stash and hopes others will join (and maybe also some of the vendors, if they are interested could donate samples of their fiber.) This idea met with approval. It was also suggested to add a fiber guessing game.

Sharon had brought a couple of skeins from Guild stash, most likely spun by Celia Radke. Rosane graciously accepted the challenge to knit something out of these for our Chinese Auction.

Last Roc Day, we had nine vendors, since one of the vendors had to cancel on short notice. The extra space turned out convenient for demonstrations and impromptu spinning classes. There was a sentiment voiced by various members, that it would be nice to have a few new vendors coming in. In the same time, it was expressed that the vendors from the last few years were very much appreciated. The group was a bit divided whether having a new vendor lottery for Roc Day 2017 was too short notice for vendors, or if we could try mixing things up this Roc Day already. As one of the vendors, Laurie ensured us, that all of the vendor stall locations in the room were good.

A more general discussion ensued on how we see the function of Roc Day and the function of the Black Sheep Handspinners’ Guild (BSHG) in general. Sharon shared that once upon a time, the BSHG hosted two annual events. A kind of fiber fair at the 4H land on Lower Creek Road designed to bring shepherds and hand spinners into contact, and the annual Roc Day celebration. The fiber fair was then the main event. However today, with so many options for spinners to buy fiber and fleece, the focus of the BSHG has shifted. In many ways, our annual Roc Day celebration is more of a social event. Than a vending event Especially the spinning circle and the socializing and the potluck meal is attractive to many spinners from surrounding guilds who join us for the day.
Minutes continued:

Several members shared their personal history with the BSHG as a welcoming and non-judgemental group, dedicated to spread the love of spinning.

Wayne remembered hand outs for new spinners the BSHG used to have. He suggested to have hand outs for new spinners at Roc Day.

Two new spinners had come in at the begin of the meeting. Lois kindly gave them some instructions on how to use a spindle borrowed form a member who had brought a few spare ones. Both left with able to make some yarn with good advice, on where to get spindles.

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Angelika St.Laurent

Vision and Mission Statements from the 1997 BSHG-Constitution

Vision: To spread the joys of handspinning.

Mission: The mission of the Guild is to enthusiastically preserve and promote handspinning and to provide instruction and social life in spinning.

Article about Sea Silk Seamstress

Marilee Williams recommends this article about the last Sea Silk Seamstress:


Request to Take a 10 Minute Survey for Fiber-Related Business Research

Hi folks,

My name is Dana and I am part of a team doing feasibility research for a local fiber mill and fiber retail/community space. We are in the early stages of our business plan, and as you can guess it requires quite a bit of research, including surveying our potential patrons.

If you have a moment I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to answer the survey linked below. You can plan on the survey taking 7-10 minutes to answer. The more responses we are able to get the better a business and fiber community we can build.

I do hope to hear what you have to say!

Link to Survey

Thank you for your time and all the best,

Dana M. Havas (dmhavas@gmail.com)
IN-Voluntary Reflex

by Marilee Williams

Most of us enjoy the opportunity to spin in public, demonstrating and sharing the joys of our craft. We are fortunate to have a number of venues to practice our art, whether at festivals, fairs or spin-ins. It’s a chance to bring new spinners into the fold or to possibly learn something new from the folks who come to watch. The State Fair Wool Center is one such place and considering the sheer number of fairgoers, it may be the greatest opportunity we have to interact with the public.

I have enjoyed several years of volunteering at the Wool Center and there always seems to be an interesting person or two to brighten and enlighten my day. I particularly like to share the process of making yarn with youngsters and watch their eyes light up when they experience the cloud-soft touch of fluffy carded wool and then to watch as it turns into yarn so strong they can’t break a strand. One little fellow stands out in my memory because my “message” really seemed to strike home. He was perhaps 6 or 7 years old, just tall enough to see over the picket fence separating demonstrators from on-lookers. Since we are right across the way from the sheep barn, I usually end my spiel by asking if the child has been to the barn to see the sheep yet. If not, I ask them to please say “thank-you” to the sheep for me because without their wonderful wool, I wouldn’t be able to make my yarn.

Well this particular young fellow must have taken my suggestion to heart because when my volunteer shift was over and I was carting my stuff to the parking lot, he ran up to me from out of the crowd and proudly announced “I said thank-you to the sheep!” with a huge grin on his face! I still get the warm fuzzies and tears in my eyes when I retell that story! A future shepherd perhaps? At the least he may now connect those wonderful animals with his favorite mittens or sweater.

This year was no different for meeting interesting folks at the Wool Center. I was sitting with my friend Janet, up close to the picket fence so that visitors could see the rug hooking Janet was creating and the Zoom Loom weaving I worked on. Two ladies from Kingston Ontario, who were visiting the fair with their three teenage daughters, watched us for a bit and we quickly struck up a conversation.

I asked if they came to the fair every year. They said no, they had never been there before but they had just toured Old Forge with their daughters and asked the kids where else they wanted to visit. When the girls announced that they’d like to see New York City, their moms nixed that idea and offered a trip to Syracuse instead. Come to find out, these ladies are partners in a craft business teaching various fiber arts in Kingston, so of course they were knowledgeable about what we were demonstrating. Then one of the women, Rhonda, asked Janet if she had ever suffered breathing difficulties as a result of her rug hooking. When Janet said she hadn’t, Rhonda warned her of the dangers of cutting the wool strips, and related the story that she and her partner had been cutting a large amount of fabric for classes when Rhonda suddenly couldn’t catch her breath. She ended up in the hospital and required steroids to help her breathe again. The tiny wool fibers from the cut strips had lodged in her lungs and will remain there forever. Janet and I had never heard of this issue, but apparently it is a common health risk for textile workers. It then occurred to Janet that occasionally she would feel like she was catching a cold after cutting strips, but she had never really connected the two things. From now on though, Janet will be sure to cut wool strips only in a well-ventilated space and will even wear a dust mask for good measure.
As we continued to chat, I asked Rhonda if she had sheep. She said no, that she and her husband raise cattle, but the largest sheepdog herding event in Canada is held near her farm. As a member of the Northeast Border Collie Association, I don’t participate in trials, but I am aware of them through the NEBCA newsletter. I asked if that was the trial at Amanda Milliken’s farm, Amanda being one of the pre-eminent handlers in the sheepdog trialing world. Surprised, Rhonda answered “yes, Amanda’s farm backs up to ours”. The world shrinks once again.

Another visitor that same day at the fair was watching my weaving for a while before we starting chatting. Neither a spinner nor a knitter, she said she desperately wants to get sheep and she is trying to convince her reluctant dairy farmer husband of the joys of shepherding. She doesn’t want just any old breed of sheep though; she wants a very specific breed which I had never heard of. It took her a minute or two on her smartphone to come up with the picture of her heart’s desire: Valais Blacknose Sheep, or in German, Walliser Schwarznasenschaf. They originated in the Valais region of Switzerland and their heritage may be traced to the 15th Century, but it was only in 1962 that they were recognized as a distinct breed. Raised both for their meat and their curly long locks of “coarse” wool, they are considered a dual-purpose breed. I would prefer to call them “triple-purpose sheep” and add “pasture-candy” to their attributes, since they are among the absolute cutest creatures ever created! It appears they are currently only found in Switzerland and the U.K., but it sure would be grand to have some imported to the U.S. Anyone interested in the opportunity for a starter flock?
This is a copy of a three page info we used to give out to new spinners:

**Some Handspinning Questions and Answers**

**The Blacksheep Handspinners Guild**

**What is the Blacksheep Handspinners Guild?**

We are a group of people excited about handspinning and allied crafts, and interested in sharing and promoting them. The Blacksheep Handspinners Guild has met continuously since 1974. We get together once a month, from 11 to 3 on the second Saturday of the month, to spin, talk about spinning, show off our projects, and plan special events. Our meetings are at All Saints Catholic Church in Lansing. Every year in January we organize a Roc Day* Celebration and Fiber Fair, with classes, workshops, exhibits, demonstrations, vendors, contests, prizes, and children’s activities. Some of us also take part in spinning demonstrations at various other events during the year. We encourage everyone, and most especially, beginning spinners, to join us at our monthly meetings. You don’t need to be a member to spin with us, you don’t need to know how to spin, and you don’t need to own a spinning wheel. If you wish to join the guild, there is an annual membership fee of $20.

We have a monthly newsletter, available at

[http://www.blacksheephandspinnersguild.org](http://www.blacksheephandspinnersguild.org)

which contains announcements of upcoming events, articles on spinning and related matters, and ads for fiber and equipment. Back issues of the newsletter, as well as announcements of upcoming meetings and events can also be found at that site.

The Guild maintains a Facebook page, where you can interact with other spinners, find interesting links to fiber-related sites, and learn about upcoming events. Search for Black Sheep Handspinners Guild and like us.

We have some equipment (including a table loom, a drum carder and a felting machine) that can be rented to members on a monthly basis for a small fee.

Most of us have other fiber-related interests, ranging from knitting, crocheting, weaving, and felting, to natural dyeing, animal husbandry, shearing and wool processing, spinning wheel repair and restoration, bow-string construction and more. If you are interested in one of these areas, please ask, and we will point you in the right direction.

**What is handspinning?**

Handspinning is the creation of yarn from fibers by traditional methods. This can be done on various types of equipment, ranging from the bare hands to handspindles to spinning wheels. Spinning wheels can be simple and basic or very elaborate and expensive. They
come in a variety of types. You will find in our guild people who are adept at using all sorts of spinning techniques and equipment, and glad to teach you about them.

**What kind of fibers are used?**

Fibers for spinning fall into three main categories—animal fibers, such as wool and silk, vegetable fibers such as cotton, flax, hemp and ramie, and synthetic fibers. The first of these categories includes a number of fibers from exotic animals like alpaca, camels, golden retrievers and musk oxen. Sheep’s wool is by far the most commonly used, though, and the easiest to start with. It comes in a variety of different types, varying in fineness, staple (fiber length), crimp (waviness), color, and luster. Spinners at the meetings will be glad to tell you which fiber they are spinning, and what its characteristics are.

**How do I get started?**

Spinning is an easy craft to master. The two fundamental skills—controlling the thickness of the drafted fibers and controlling the twist—take some practice to develop the required coordination, but you should be off and spinning within a day or two.

If you have no equipment, the easiest, cheapest and often most satisfying way to start is with a hand spindle. The hand spindle is much like a top. It consists of a vertical spindle that adds the twist to the yarn (and also stores the finished yarn) and a horizontal whorl which functions as a flywheel to keep the spindle spinning. You can fashion one yourself, using very basic materials. For example, a CD or a tinker-toy wheel can serve as the whorl and a piece of dowel or even a willow twig as the spindle. There are members who can show you how to make and spin on them. If you don’t want to build your own, beautiful, handcrafted, exquisitely balanced hand spindles made of exotic woods can be bought relatively inexpensively from a number of craftspeople, including some who belong to our guild. The hand spindle gives you good practice at two-handed manipulation of the fiber—pinching off a bit of fiber, drafting it to the desired thickness, and then releasing it so that the spin of the hand spindle can twist it together. This method is the most common one used on spinning wheels, so what you learn on a hand spindle transfers readily to the spinning wheel.

If you do not yet have a spinning wheel, you should try out a number of different configurations and brands before investing in one, and talk to experienced spinners about their respective differences, advantages and disadvantages. Most modern spinning wheels are ‘flyer’ wheels—one of the two main types. On flyer wheels, the two basic processes of spinning—twisting the yarn and winding it up on a bobbin—are continuous. The flyer assembly consists of a rotating flyer, which puts in the twist, and a rotating bobbin, which gathers the twisted yarn in. The two move at different rates, and the rate at which they rotate relative to each other determines how much the yarn is twisted before it is wound onto the bobbin. The bobbin and the flyer are made to rotate by a drive wheel, which is set in motion by foot treadles. Modern flyer wheels come in great variety of designs, and can
differ considerably in the details of their operation. Spinners in the guild will be happy to explain how their wheels work, and to let you try your hand at them. (Some may even let you borrow a spare wheel to practice on.)

Less common than flyer wheels are spindle wheels. They differ in two major ways from flyer wheels. First, twisting the yarn on the tip of the spindle and winding it on to the spindle shaft are separate operations, as with the hand spindle; the operator must pause periodically to wind the twisted yarn onto the spindle shaft. Second, on most spindle wheels, the drive wheel is turned by hand, rather than with a treadle, so only one hand is left free to control the fiber. This category includes wheels ranging from tiny Indian box charka wheels that you can tuck under your arm to five foot tall ‘walking wheels’. Some of us enjoy spinning on these, and would be happy to talk about them if you are interested.

Once you have decided which type of wheel you want, you can often find used ones in good condition on eBay, in local barter lists, or even at the spinning guild’s periodic garage sales. Spinning wheels in antique stores should be approached with caution. They are often missing parts, and antique store owners almost never know much about them. The information they have to offer about the age and the origin of the wheel may be inaccurate. Some wheels have maker’s marks that can help you determine where they were made, but many do not. Spinning requirements were different in the nineteenth century than they are now, so antique wheels are often not set up to meet the demands of modern spinners. However, if you do know what you are looking for, antique wheels in good condition can provide a rich and interesting introduction to the history of our craft. If you are a beginning spinner thinking of buying a used spinning wheel—antique or modern—you should ask an experienced spinner to check it out. If you have inherited an old wheel, there are guild members who can tell you what it will take to get it into spinning shape, and who can help you to do so. Bring your wheel to a meeting, and we will be happy to talk with you about it.

Some good resources for beginning spinners:

There are many good books on how to start spinning. Guild members can recommend some for you (and may even be willing to lend you some from their collections). Much good information can be found online, too. There are, for example, invaluable U-Tube videos on various sorts of spinning. A particularly good source for free pamphlets on spinning techniques is [http://www.spinningdaily.com/](http://www.spinningdaily.com/). If you go to that site (you will need to log in) and click “How-to” under the “Free Resources” menu, you will find instructions on everything from using a drop-spindle to making your own spinning wheel. Some of these are back articles from Spin-Off Magazine.
**Membership Form**

*Please type or print*

Date: ____________________________

Name__________________________________________________________________________

Address:____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Preferred email: PRINT NEATLY ______________________________________________________

Phone # ____________________________________________________

This information will be shared with registered guild members. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let Louise Henrie 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 our president, Wayne Harbert, know!!!

Roc Day
Programming
Newsletter
Membership
Website
Outreach
Treasurer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUES Record:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our newsletter is distributed electronically. If this is a problem, please contact Angelika St.Laurent. Please fill this out and either bring it to a meeting or mail it with your check for $20 to: Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
To place an ad

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, Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. Send the ad in digital form to the newsletter editor, angelika@simonstl.com. Black & white business cards are published free for current members.