

# Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter

December 2008

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<http://www.blacksheephandspinnersguild.org>

The Black Sheep meet from 11am-3pm on the second Saturday of the month at the Varna Community Center Route 366 in Varna, New York. Exceptions are the months of December, June, July, and August when we meet in member's homes.

**The next meeting, held Saturday, December 13 at Ellie May's house will be a social event.  
1360 Slaterville Road, phone number is 272-8224  
Invitation and directions from Ellie May**

If you are coming east we are one mile from the Commons. Coming west Honness is the next road after Hillside Alliance Church. It is a big, white Victorian house with a barn and garage. Car pool if you can. Come in the side door, there is a closet for your coat. If we have lots of snow call-we can pick you up at the P&C parking lot to make parking easier. WHAT TO BRING: dish to pass and your own table service, gift for exchange if you wish-about a ten dollar limit, many people make something-most things are fiber related. Bring your donation to the Roc Day raffle if you have one. Your spinning wheel or knitting or whatever, a small card table, chair if you have one. I can seat about 24 or so.

This will be a fun, social day, I hope you can come. Ellie May

## **Roc Day Committee Meeting**

11/5/08 5pm at Wegman's

Attending: Anne Furman, Sarah Mehta, Ruth Allen, Carol LaBorie, Susan Sarabasha, Wayne Harbert, Sharon Gombas

Recorder: Susan

Chair: Jim in absentia

If you are interested in a job that already has a chair, please contact that person to offer your assistance. We still need someone to coordinate the Workshop/Program category.

**Vendors:** Carol

**Ad/Media:** Wayne

**Event Contacts:** Ruth for email - [ruthmumsie@wildblue.net](mailto:ruthmumsie@wildblue.net), Sarah for snail mail

**Kitchen Manager:** Vickie

**Set-up and Clean-up:** Jim

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Audrey and Sharon

**Raffles:** Ellie?

**Games:** Anne and Jane's Pedantic Contest (a display of fibers and their ashes). Prizes needed

**Workshops/Programs:** We have 2 classrooms for our use. **We need someone to oversee and coordinate this area.**

Origins of Spinning (debuted at Hemlock) - Ruth

Kid's Corner – Ruth

Beginning Spindling - ????

Technique Demos—Diane Christian – Wet and needle felting

Wheel Spinning- see below

Wet Felting Workshop – Diane Christian

**Artwork/Posters/Brochures:** Susan will have the final one ready the end of Nov/beginning of Dec. once the details are worked out.

**Ruth** will be sending out a head's up email to guilds.

Sarah will be sent a hard copy to snail mail.

**Carol:** 13 **Vendor Letters** went out to those who participated last year. Nov 15 is the deadline and then we will work from our short list. Spaces are 10x12, 4 taken and no more available and 6x8, 1 so far.

**Volunteer Sign-ups**—we wrote some descriptions of jobs. Anne will pass the sign-up sheet around the Nov meeting.

**Raffle** – shawl photos needed. Will sell the tickets only on Roc Day at the door table.

**Door Prizes** – 1 every hour. Sarah and Anne will get them. Anne will call them out.

**We still need people** who are willing to demo and talk about wheel spinning throughout the day.

**Ads** -Wayne. Are in order. Anne will send Wayne a folder of pics.

**Next meetings:** Wednesday, November 19 at 5pm, upstairs at Wegmans. All members are welcome to participate. December meeting, Wednesday, December 3 at 5 PM, upstairs at Wegmans.

**Still needed for Roc Day:** We have most of the needed volunteers except for:

1. 4 Volunteers for half hour shifts at the front door - easy job: welcome all comers, hand out events map for Roc Day, hand out tickets for door prizes, sell raffle tickets for the shawl. Only 4 openings left – 11, 12, 2, and 2:30

2. 3 Volunteers for half hours shifts of spinning demos. Bring your wheel or spindle and spend a half hour spinning and answering questions. 3 slots available 11:30, 1:30, and 2:30

## Knitters' Group in Ithaca from Mary Miller

There is a small, but loyal, group of knitters that meets every Saturday morning from 10-12 at the Owl Cafe above Autumn Leaves Bookstore on the Ithaca Commons. The cafe offers coffee (necessary) and food (optional). Our conversations touch on yarn, patterns and knitting techniques interspersed with discussions of family, work, politics and anything else that comes to mind. There's always time to admire each other's projects and plans.

We have been meeting for almost a year and I believe this is an offshoot from one of the incarnations of the Ithaca Stitch 'n Bitch group. This is a very informal group with a diverse membership. We offer encouragement and advice to new knitters and each other and are happy to welcome anyone who wishes to join in.



The raffle shawl is currently at Mary Jeanne Packers store, Finger Lakes Fibers, in Watkins Glen. In Ithaca Mid-December

## Guild Machines – Renters, Schedules, and Rates

Rentals should be returned to the guild library in the same condition as when borrowed. Cleaning the carder is the borrower's responsibility. A fine of \$15 for carder returned needing to be cleaned. Email [ahf@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:ahf@zoom-dsl.com) to have your name put on the list as the next in line to borrow a piece of equipment. If no one is next the current renter may keep it.

Felting Machine – 2 weeks and renter responsible for connecting with the nextEmail [ahf@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:ahf@zoom-dsl.com) to have your name put on the list as the next in line to borrow a piece of equipment. If no one is next the current renter may keep it.

Felting Machine – 2 weeks and renter responsible for connecting with the next person for exchange if there is a member anxious to use it or return to guild, renter is responsible for replacing needles  
**\$5 for 2 weeks.**

Sharon Gombas due November 22,2008

The following are **\$5 a month for a maximum of 2 months**, unless it is a month we are not in Varna.

Table Loom - Ruth Allen

Carder – Mary Miller – due February 09

Carder – under repair

Wool Combs

The newsletter editor thanks the Roc Day Committee for their work, Jean Currie for her photos and articles, and Mary Miller for sharing.

### Anne and Jean's Excellent Adventure, Part III

The day we arrived at our first ger (Mongolian word for the yurt like nomadic home) camp our guide, Asem, had arranged for us to meet with a nomadic herding family to see goats being milked. We walked for about an hour on the gravelly surface of the Gobi with flocks of sheep and goats in the distance. These were not, however, the flock we would see milked, and as it turned out this was our first lesson in understanding the distribution of people and animals in this nomadic area. We thought these were the goats we would see milked, but the ger that went with these sheep and goats was the one to the southeast. The ger we were walking to was to the east! Nomadic herders generally move their gers 3-4 times a year. They do not own the land, but there is a lot of communication between families in a given area. So when they move, it is done as part of a general understanding with their 'neighbors' about who is moving where. Depending on the amount of vegetation and the rain that season, the number of families/gers/animals in any area could be relatively close together (within 1-5k) or very far apart (you might only see one ger as you search the horizon). Each family knows where their animals are grazing even though they can move long distances in a day, but they also mark their animals – blue paint on the horns for example. Generally there is no one with the animals as they graze though they all hang together during the day.

We finally arrived and were treated to some milky tea and hard candy – you always socialize for a little while before getting down to business. The tea is made with milk, not water, and – even for a non-tea drinker like Jean – is quite tasty. You must enter a ger with your left foot first and leave with your right foot, never stand on the threshold, and go in clockwise. They threw the cat out (the only one we saw at a ger) and discovered later it had been tied up outside.

Two girls were sent out on the horses to bring in the flock and when the grandmother came home on the back of a motorbike, it was time to milk. First the sheep had to be separated from the goats (that biblical event still happens!), then the milking goats separated from the rest. The sheep (some fat tailed and others not) were various colors from white through brown with just a few a beautiful blue/grey. The goats are cashmere in a variety of browns and greys. Some of the goats went into a pen, but about 40 of them were tied up in two lines with alternating heads so that members of the family could just go along their back ends with the bucket and milk them very quickly.



Milking



Shearing a tied sheep



Cashmere molting off a goat

Four people organized and milked about 60 goats in 30 minutes. The rams and billy goats run with the flocks and wear an apron to prevent them from breeding the ewes, except when they wanted them to breed and then they wear a tugging chalk just like here. The milk is used to make butter that is stored in a stomach and kept for the winter. It is also made into a kind of yogurt that is then air dried to make a very light but nutritious curd. If the herders have lots of horses and camels, they are also milked. Their babies will be tied up, the animals milked, then the babies allowed to drink. During the day, young are again tied up while their mothers are sent out to graze.

Milk and various milk products is the main source of food year round; herders eat almost no meat and few vegetables or fruit. However there is a cash economy and they do “go to town” to purchase clothing, food etc. We went to one small store that sold everything from vast amounts of hard candies to potatoes to washing machines. In the towns, local herders will take their milk to a local factory for processing but we could not find out what they made – cheese maybe? The milk cans were then washed at a communal well.

The sheep apparently molt in the spring and if they don't then they will be shorn – well, the wool is cut off with big scissors; it is not long blow shearing as we know it. In the case of cashmere from the goats, it is taken off with wire combs in the spring and sometimes in the fall. Agents will buy the wool and cashmere to be taken to the capital, Ulaanbaatur, for processing. The herders do some felting for tourist items but generally use horse and camel hair for their own purposes (usually ropes). Nowadays, their clothing is purchased as are the large felt sheets for the gers. As we returned to the capital for our final day before leaving, we saw trucks heading for the felting factory with so much sheep wool heaped onto them that it had to be held on with colorful tarps.



Truck packed with wool



Lama temple



Swallowtails puddling

Mongolia was an exciting mix of the familiar – handspinners and swallowtails – and the exotic, boys in the lama temple chanting while hidden from the eyes of the monks they text messaged on cell phones concealed in their robes. We think it is a county that is embracing change at such a rapid pace that in a few years the country will change enormously. Go now!

**Wow! Check out the Tompkins County Public Library this month.**



***Blocks, Strips, Strings, and Half Squares:  
Quilted Art at the Library***

**An exhibit presenting an exploration of shape in art quilts will be on display at Tompkins County Public Library  
October 4 through December 30, 2008.**

Featured artists include:

- **Mary Beilby**
- **Maureen Berneir Jakubson**
- **Barbara Caldwell**
- **Kathy C. Carman**
- **Sally Dutko**
- **Melissa Craven Fowler**
- **Sherry Haeefe**
- **Beth Killheffer**
- **Kathel Miller-Smith**
- **Pat Pauly**
- **Marcy Rosenkrantz**
- **Ellen Ross**
- **Angie Rou**
- **June Silberman**
- **Aafke Swart Steenhuis**
- **Kristin Thompson**
- **Joanne Wietgrafe**
- **Ruth White**

**Upcoming**

**Guild meetings:**

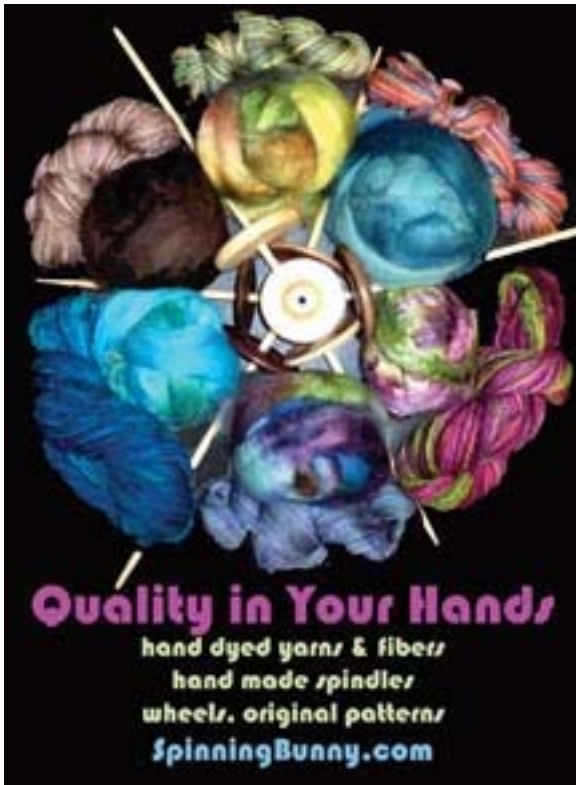
December 13, 2008  
Winter Party at Ellie May's house

January 10, 2009  
Roc Day

February 1, 2009  
Fiber Bowl Sunday  
Shadeyside Farm  
shadeyside@citlink.net

### To place an ad

A check for \$5.00 made to BSHG for an ad to run three times (a year is \$15) should be sent to the current treasurer, Eleanor May, 1360 Slaterville Road, Ithaca, NY. 14850. Send the ad to the newsletter editor, Anne Furman at: ahf@fltg.net. If you have a question for her or others, you can email us through the links at the top of the newsletter.



**Fiber Bowl Sunday**  
**Sunday, February 1, 2009**  
**Noon to 5 pm**

It's time for our annual Fiber Bowl Sunday -  
Great snacks to nibble on, fibers to try out,  
and lots of specials to purchase.

**Shadeyside Farm**  
**109 Brown Road**  
**Oxford, New York 13830**  
**607-843-8243**  
**shadeyside@citlink.net**

The newsletter editor is indebted to the Roc Day Committee for their work and their notes, Jean Currie for her articles and photos on exotic travels, and Mary Miller.



**Finger Lakes Fibers**  
Yarn Store

#### **Finger Lakes Fibers Yarn Store**

Specializing in luxurious yarns, natural fibers, and quality hand knitting supplies.  
Featuring locally spun and dyed yarns; and unique fibers from around the world.

**Receive 20% your first yarn purchase of \$50 or more with this ad!**

See a class schedule; or get store hours and directions on our website: [www.fingerlakes.com](http://www.fingerlakes.com)  
129 E. 4th St. (NYS Rte 414 No. - one block off Franklin St.)  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891 Phone number - 607 535 0710





