February 14, 2009 from 11 to 3.

We will discuss Roc Day, the expenses, the purpose and next year. Please come with your felt from the workshop, questions, and comments. If you want to have a copy of expenses in advance of the meeting, please email Anne Furman.

Roc Day January 2009
from Anne Furman

Yesterday I ran into Kathy Halton who said she had a great time teaching drop spindling at Roc Day. She remarked that there were a lot of people there whom she didn’t recognize. A good sign as we intended Roc Day to be a day to give the public a chance to learn about spinning and have fun. There were some past members I was delighted to see, Doris Brown and Joan Johnson, and as I am a newer member (25 years) there may have been some there from before I was a member. Doris was a founding member along with Karey Solomon who came as a vendor. Here are a few pictures from Roc Day. To get a vendor’s perspective go to Susan Sarabasha’s blog at thebunnyspins.blogspot.com to her blog of January 24, 2009 where she used Wayne Harbert’s photos of the day.

Kathy Halton teaching drop spindling in one of the classrooms

Three members from Genesee Valley Handspinners’ Guild who won the Fiber Forensics contest.

Looking out at everyone very busy knitting, talking, and shopping

The Raffle which had lots of choices
Love and the Spindle Whorl in Ancient Gaul by Wayne Harbert

The Gauls lived in what is now France, back in the days of the Roman Empire. Their descendants still live there, for that matter, but in ancient times they had their own language (related to Welsh and Gaelic). After they were conquered by Julius Caesar they adopted Latin, too, and eventually Gaulish died out. We now know it only from inscriptions carved on stones, coins, lead tablets, bracelets, and--would you believe it--ceramic handspindle whorls. Most of the inscriptions are very boring, but I’ve recently discovered that the ones on spindle whorls are considerably more interesting than the rest. It seems that back in those days (2000 years ago or so) they were usually inscribed with little love notes, in Gaulish or Latin or sometimes a mixture of the two, and apparently boys gave them to their sweeties as gifts. The messages were affectionate, sometimes teasing, and occasionally very risqué. They remind me of those little candy hearts with messages that show up around Valentine’s Day. Here are some examples.

“Greetings to you, girl”
“Hello. Goodbye. You are pretty”
“Good day, madam. I’m thirsty”
“Pretty girl, let us drink!”
“Come, o elegant one!”
“Greetings, sister!”
“Pretty girl, give me beer!”
“My girl, take my little whorl!”
“I am a good and pretty girl”

Now there’s an ancient custom worth reviving! So, if you’re still wondering what to give your sweetheart,…

“Why Do You Spin and Knit?”: One spinner/knitter’s projects
By Sarah Mehta

I suppose the first seeds for these projects were sown about three years ago when I read a book titled, “As Long as the Waters Flow”, by Frye Gaillard. The title comes from the Penabscot Indian treaty of 1818 deeding the land and rights to fish in the Penabscot Rover to the Penabscot tribes, ”as long as the waters continued to flow”. The Indians kept the treaty, but by 1820 nearly all their land had been taken over by whites. Variations of this story repeat in the history of white and Indian relations all over the country throughout our history.

I don’t recall hearing it quite this way when I studied American History in school, and I was saddened and dismayed by the true extent of the Indians losses.
The next book which affected my thinking was “Women and Warriors of the Plains”. It is a collection of previously unpublished photographs taken by Julia E. Tuell in the early twentieth century. Accompanying text is by Dan Aadland. Mrs. Tuell, wife of a reservation school teacher, captured many poignant scenes of the Northern Cheyenne in Lame Deer, Montana and the Lakota Sioux on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota as they made the difficult transition to reservation life. Pictures such as: the Cheyenne boy learning that his braids will be cut before entering school, the young mother standing beside tree where the bundle holding her dead baby was placed, a group of Cheyenne waiting for their government rations which often didn’t arrive, Sioux women preparing dog for a feast as no other meat was available, photos of older warriors as well as a young warrior destined to die in France in World War 1.

About a year ago I received another of the many mail solicitations that I seem prey to. This one was from the Native American Heritage Association. As I tossed it aside my eye caught the name Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservation. A closer look revealed a request of “gently used clothing” with a photo of several Indians walking among boxes of donated items. The thought stuck me that here were people once totally self-sufficient, able to live off the land in harmony with their environment, now rummaging through the cast-offs of a culture that tried to obliterate theirs. So I packed up a box of things left over from the days when I was expected to “look decent” and sent it on its way.

A few weeks later I got a thank you. I thought that maybe those Sioux children would like something new to wear, so I made several pairs of mittens from a very easy pattern and mailed them off.

It was about this time that I decided to do something that I had been promising myself for years and years. Learn to spin. I bought my beloved Baynes spinning wheel. And Baynes and I began to produce yarn. And yarn. And more yarn. Soon there was yarn draped over the towel rack, yarn hanging from door-knobs, yarn piled up on my desk. No place to set in the living room except the floor. Yarn on a folding drying rack in the bathtub, yarn occupying the window seat. And so the ideas began to come. Mostly they come in the wee hours of the morning when my little cat returns from her nightly prowls and jumps onto the bed, then sits down on my sleeping form and begins her routine of lick-lick, scratch-scratch, twist-turn. I am no longer asleep. As I lie there, pinned underneath a squirmy feline, my mind begins to chug along…hmmm… I could put a 9 stitch braid in the center flanked by twist stick ropes.

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I cannot return the Sioux to their lands nor bring back the buffalo herds. But maybe through my spinning and knitting, I can bring a small measure of warmth, beauty, and comfort to make it a little easier to get through the long brutal winters of the Northern Plains.

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**2 Workshops from Genesee Valley Handspinners’ Guild from Alanna Wilcox**

The first is a workshop that perhaps other guild members that are spinners might enjoy. We invited Pluckfluff (Lexi Boeger) to come do a novelty yarn workshop on March 28th & 29th.

The second is a dyeing workshop with Susan Rex on April 25th and 26th. This class will cover color theory and how to get colors you want, and then there will be an actual hands on dyeing portion. Both workshops are 125$ for two days including materials and lunch.

If someone is interested in taking them our membership is 15$ for the year, not a bad deal considering! If anyone is interested I will need a check made out to the guild (GVHG) and if they are not a member, I will need an additional check made out for 15$. If the classes don’t run (we need 20 for the novelty yarn class and I am pretty sure the dyeing workshop will run) then I will inform the people. I will not cash the checks until I know the workshop will be running, which will be a month prior to the date of the workshop and will email/inform people.

**Novelty yarn on March 28th and 29th.** Check to GVHG due by February 28 for $125, and a check for their guild dues if you are not a member. Note which workshop on your check and include a way to contact you if workshop is canceled.

**Dyeing on April 24th and 26th.** Check to GVHG due by March 25 for $125, and a check for their guild dues if you are not a member. Note which workshop on your check and include a way to contact you if workshop is canceled. For more information contact: alanna7181@hotmail.com

Send checks made out to GVHG and notation of which workshop or for dues to:

Alanna Wilcox
31 Aspen Drive
Rochester, NY 14625
Upcoming this year

Black Sheep Handspinners’ Guild

February 14, 2009
Guild Meeting in Varna

February 1, 2009
Fiber Bowl Sunday at Shadeyside Farm
Ad below

March 28th and 29th
Novelty Yarn Workshop through GVHG
See above information or contact

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.

Thank you to Wayne Harbert, Sarah Mehta, and Susan Sarabasha for their contributions to the newsletter.

Fiber Bowl Sunday, February 1 from Noon to 5 PM
Great snacks to nibble on, fibers to try out, and great specials to purchase.

Shadeyside Farm
109 Brown Road
Oxford, New York. 13830
607 853-8243