

# Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter

June 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.

June 14 from 11 AM to 3 PM

## Spin-In

At Sharon Gombas' House 11 to 3  
Bring something yummy to share

From Ithaca on route 13 going towards Cortland and Triphammer Mall, go north on route 34. Eventually (maybe 5-6 miles) you come to a T and a light at Rogue's Harbour Inn. Turn left (towards the lake) onto Rt. 34B. Go all the way to the bottom of the hill (about 1-2 miles), just past the Lansing school complex. Turn right onto Ludlowville Road. Follow it into the village. Where the road ends, turn left and then quickly right. Now you're on Salmon Creek Road. Sharon lives a mile or so out of the village. Her house is on the right, just after the greenhouse.

July 14<sup>th</sup> will be at Wayne Harbert's house in Newfield

Find more information on the New York State Fair Competition in the May newsletter and at:

[www.nysfair.org/docs/entry/Arts-Crafts-Rules-Classes.pdf](http://www.nysfair.org/docs/entry/Arts-Crafts-Rules-Classes.pdf)

JULY 14	ENTRY FORM DEADLINE (Monday)
AUGUST 7, 8 & 9	RECEIVING DAYS - (9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) (Thursday, Friday & Saturday)
AUGUST 8	MAIL IN ARTICLES ARE DUE (Friday)

On May 12 Sue Quick, Celia Radke, and Anne Furman made a field trip to Lisa Merian's farm to look over and buy fiber for the 2009 raffle event. We found a beautiful green which had been carded with just the right amount of purples to make a lovely yarn. Celia spun up some and has begun the knitting on the shawl. She will bring it to the next meeting for us to see.

From Blessing Whitmore's Blog

May 1, 2008 **Hog Island Sheep**

As I leaned over the fence, two fluffy little Hog Island ewes bounded over to me. I instantly fell in love with these adorable sheep. I was at the Finger Lakes Fiber Mill on a home-school field trip. Our guide told us the history of their Heritage breed. The sheep lived on the barrier island, Hog Island, during the time George Washington was trying to establish a settlement there. The island had terrible weather, hurricanes, tornados and rain storms battled the land. The settlers did not really feel like staying on the island any longer, so they left. They also left all the sheep, cows, and other farm animals. The sheep, which were all different breeds for all different purposes, interbred. Later, a conservation agency undertook to return the island to the animals that

were indigenous. So they sold all of the livestock that was running wild on the island. Hog Island sheep were almost lost, but Mount Vernon bought many of the remaining Hog Island sheep.

May 12, 2008     **Hoping**

Ever since the day we had the field trip, the sheep had never been far from my mind. I looked up more information about Hog Islands. The more I learned about them, the more convinced I was that I wanted one. We already had many kinds of sheep, Jacobs, Shetlands, and Montidals could we get one? I started looking for an opportunity to get a Hog Island. It came sooner than I expected. We are a 4-H family, and in our 4-H news letter there was an article about the Youth Conservationists Program. The article said if you sent in an essay, two pages, talking about yourself and your experience with sheep, and a letter of recommendation, you could win a heritage breed of sheep. It also said it could be a breed of your choice, from what they had available. I wrote my essay like three times before I was satisfied with it. Our good friend, and vet, Sarah Ober wrote the letter of recommendation. I called the woman who was in charge of the program to find out what breeds they had. I prayed silently "please let one be Hog Island" Shetland... Finn...Jacob... Hog Island. I almost screamed with joy. I sent the essay, the letter, and my preference, Hog Island. Now all I had to do was wait.

May 19, 2008     **Wonderful News!**

I almost gave up any hope of winning when I did not hear anything back for three weeks. I started thinking things like: I can try again next year, maybe my essay was not good enough, maybe it got lost. Finally, I got the call that I had been waiting for. I had won a ewe! I was so excited, a Hog Island ewe of my very own. I ran up stairs were my momma was. "We are going to the Maryland Wool Festival to pick up my ewe," I cried. I told momma that I was one of 14 that had won a ewe, 25 had sent in essays. Momma and I celebrated by eating tarts and drinking our favorite tea.

May 19, 2008     **On our way!**

Momma, Daddy, baby Chloe, and I are on our way to the Maryland Wool Festival! All of the other kids are being watched by Grandma at home. We are all crammed into daddy's work truck. This is not the most comfortable ride. We left at 3:30 and it takes six hours to get to Maryland. We should be there at 9:30. Once there, we are going to spend the night at Momma's cousin Suzan's and her husband's house. Then on Sunday morning we go to the festival. We will meet Elian Ashcraft and I will get my ewe!



Blessing with her ewe



Yes, that is a finger! Yes, those are 6 “bug” sweaters on that finger. See more amazing knitting at: [www.bugknits.com/Show.htm](http://www.bugknits.com/Show.htm)

## Rhode Island Wool and Fiber Festival by Susan Sarabasha

As you know it has been a rather wet, damp and cool spring. Great for the water table but for anything else, a hindrance. Flowers were kind of standing still and the trees took their time leafing out. The pansies seem to be thriving but when I went to get some hanging fuchsia plants they were not even in stock yet.

The week before the Rhode Island Wool and Fiber Festival I went to CT to be with my mom for Mother’s Day and then further east to visit with my sister, Ellen, in Newport. This was the Festival’s second year, sponsored by the Coggeshall Farm Museum, way out on a peninsula in Bristol, RI

So the week before the Festival we were watching the weather reports for Saturday with hopeful trepidation. I saw a 30% chance of rain change to 50, then to 70 and then back to 50, downgrading to 40, 30, none and back up to 30% by Friday evening. The only consistency was the wind predictions -- 15-20 mph hour winds with gusts of 30mph. I paid more attention to the rain though as I did not want to be vending in windy rain. No way. No how.

My sister and I needed to be at the Farm by 6:45, at the latest, to get ourselves set up and the car off the field by 8:30. The Festival was opening at 9 so we knew we were in for a very early start. However at 5am, when we pushed the coffee maker button, it was raining steadily. My sister lives in only a few miles away from Bristol; therefore the weather was going to be about the same in both places. Darn! At 6 it was still raining so we decided to wait a bit as putting up the canopy in rain and wind seemed foolish. By 6:45 the rain seemed to be tapering off. The predictions now were for sunshine by late morning. YES! We put coffee into traveling mugs and set off. As we neared the farm I was nervous about setting up in a wetland but thankfully the field was on a hillside above the water.

I was also nervous from so many people warning me about canopies turning into kites. My sister had never set one up and I had only tried twice, with Jim, in calm conditions. We had Jim’s extra instructions plus rope and extra stakes. The wind did make for a very difficult time in the set up. It must have taken us almost half an hour to get the canopy up and that was with help from 2 other people. Notice in the picture above that we were situated in a section of the field with no windbreak at all. Arghhh. I brought heavy shower curtains, which Ellen valiantly tried to hang up. We finally managed to get one and only one up and attached it with duck tape to the legs of a very heavy table. The next gust blew the table over so we made some holes in the shower curtain to cut down the sail effect. This little bit of work took another half hour. By now I was a nervous wreck. I am always hyper until the booth is set up and then great

calm overcomes me and I am super laid back, but until then watch out. I knew the time was flying away but kept working putting things down that would hold the tablecloths in place and other items too. My sister was an enormous help getting the yarn triangle all set up while I worked on setting out the fiber and accessories. Then Linda, the Festival coordinator, said it was 9 and the car must go off the field. Arghhhh well she did give us an extra half hour. We quickly emptied the SUV and I drove it to an adjoining lot. At least very few people had arrived so far as it was still rather nasty and cold. I think we were not really set up for another 30-40 minutes but by then the coffee tent was ready too. Did I mention that the wind-chill had us thinking of winter?

By 11, people were starting to arrive but the wind kept 'acomin'. Right about then, as the clouds were almost gone, the wind picked up so enormously that Ellen and I were holding onto the canopy to keep it from collapsing. I was holding the table down with one hand, as it wanted to tip over, and with the other and all my strength, pushed up on one of the canopy legs. Ellen meanwhile was hanging onto the canopy with both hands leaning out over a rock wall on the windward side. Even with both of us the structure began to bend inward as the wind increased even more and the gusts became more frequent. While we were acting as supports we saw a coyote running across the flat by the water. In RI they are now as common as deer are up here. I even saw them dead by the roadside. If I had a choice I'd definitely choose the vegetarian deer. Finally one of the Museum staff came over, took a good look and came back with some line, which he tied to some rocks down below the field. With 5 guy lines the canopy steadied enough for us to let go and start greeting customers.

By afternoon the weather had indeed turned into a breezy but sunny day. My sister, who does not knit, crochet or spin, did one fantastic job as the check out person. Her people skills are so spectacular that many she met never knew she had little clue as to what we were all talking about. However she does love what we mean to each other and appreciates the camaraderie of knitters and spinners.

Other vendors sold alpaca wool, sheep wool, hand dyed yarn, fabric items, goat milk soap, felted animals, lots of angora bunnies and angora wool, felted wool sheets and hand knit items. I bought my sister an adorable little felted lamb wearing a flower collar and she surprised me with teeny tiny hand knit sock earrings. The only food vendor was fantastic -- the best Italian sausage with onions and peppers on Italian bread. Ellen and I shared one, as they were so large.

Coggeshall Farm Museum (<http://www.coggeshallfarm.org/>) has its own sheep. They sheared a few as a demo that day plus demonstrating spinning and other farm arts by people in appropriate costumes. They also had some Barred Phymouth Rock hens and roosters pecking around but no Rhode Island Reds that I could see.



A couple of relatively nearby Internet customers introduced themselves as well. I got to speak fiber and yarn with

other fiberholics almost all day. Heaven! After packing up we took ourselves over to our favorite restaurant, the Lobster Pot, for steamers, lobster stew and lobster salad. Visiting with my sister and meeting such wonderful people has me wanting to come back again. Hopefully next year I will sign up early enough to get under the big tent.

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## Upcoming - June 2008

### **Guild meeting**

June 14<sup>th</sup> at Sharon Gombas' house

### **Ontario Handspinning Seminar**

Beyond Wool.....there are other fibers

June 6-8, 2008

Georgian College, Barrie, Ontario

<http://www.ontariohandspinningseminar.ca/>

### **Spin In and Fiber Festival**

Chenango Region Handspinners

June 14 from noon to 6 PM

Black Bear Winery, Greene, NY

### **Cayuga County Fair**

July 6, 2008

Weedsport, NY

### **Troy Fair**

July 21-26

Troy, PA

<http://www.troyfair.com>

### **New York State Fair**

August 21 to September 1, 2008

Syracuse, NY

<http://www.nysfair.org/fair>

### **Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival**

September 6 & 7, 2008

Champlain Valley Expo, Essex Jct., VT

<http://www.vermontsheep.org/festival.html> Finger Lakes

Fiber Arts Festival

### **Finger Lakes Fiber Arts and Crafts Festival**

September 20 & 21

Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock, NY

<http://www.gvhg.org/fest.html>

### **Fiber Fallout**

Johsonburg, NJ

September 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

<http://www.northcountryspinners.org/retreat.html>

Thanks to Blessing Whitmore for the article on her eve and how she won it, Charlotte Sharkey for the information on "bug sweaters", and Susan Sarabasha for the article and pictures on the Rhode Island Fiber Festival. If you have something for the newsletter please send it to Anne Furman at [ahf@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:ahf@zoom-dsl.com)

# Susan's Spinning Bunny

**OPEN HOUSE**



Sat, June 21 from 12-5

Sun, June 22 from 11-3

**Learn to knit or spin.**

**Refreshments and Music**

**Discounts and Door Prizes**

**Spin-In and Knit-In under the canopy**



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& Niddy Noddy's by Jim

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[www.spinningbunny.com](http://www.spinningbunny.com)    [susan@spinningbunny.com](mailto:susan@spinningbunny.com)

## 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](mailto: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.



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Yarn Store

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