

Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter

November 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.

November 8 meeting at Varna Community Center on route 366 in Varna, from 11 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, or whenever you show up. Show and tell begins at 12 followed by a business meeting. Practice on spinning to achieve a particular gauge for those spinning for the 2010 afghan and any others interested. Roving to go out to spinners. A group for the 2011 afghan is already forming, get in line to participate.

Roc Day Committee Meeting

10/18/08 2pm at Wegman's
attending: Sarah Mehta, Jim Johnson (chair), Ruth Allen, Carol LaBorie, Susan Sarabasha (recorder), Vickie Marsted, and Wayne Harbert

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, Sarah for snail mail

Kitchen Manager: Vickie

Set-up and Clean-up: Jim

Volunteer Coordinator: Audrey and Sharon

Raffles: Ellie

Games: Anne and Jane

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

Carol: **Vendor Letters** went out to those who participated last year. Once they have responded we will know how many spaces are still available. Carol is keeping the waiting list.

Susan showed us samples of the wet and needle felted work of Diane Christian (<http://www.feltedinspirations.etsy.com>). They were oohed and ahed over. Diane has agreed to doing a **Trunk Show** of her work plus 1 or 2 1.5 hour wet **felting workshops** on Rock Day AND a special session on Sunday. Those members who worked Roc Day will have first dibs at the 8 slots. More info to come.

Spindle Workshops- Jim has volunteered to make very simple small head spindles for this program. We still need volunteers to teach beginning spindling. Both top and bottom whorl. tentative **Classroom** (there are 2) **Schedule for Roc Day**

10 am Open

11 am Kid's Spinning – Kid's corner + Trunk Show

12noon Ancient Spinning demo + Wet Felting Workshop 1

1pm Spindle Spinning Workshop

2pm Kid's Corner reprise + Wet Felting Workshop 2

3pm Raffle

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

10-11 Wayne with his Great Wheel

11-12 Jim with his teeny Wendy

12-1

1-2

2-3

Volunteers will be needed for Kitchen duty, set up, clean up, door and raffle tickets on the day.

Ads Carole passed THE folder to Wayne.

Susan reported we will be listed in the calendars of Spin-Off, Handwoven and Shuttle, Spindle & Dyepot.

Vickie will be posting notices in Cortland and on a TV station there.

Poster: Once Susan has the new one done it will be posted on our website and made into copies for distribution.

Guild Announcements: Ruth will be sending out a Head's Up letter soon

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 5 at 5pm, upstairs at Wegmans. All members are welcome to participate.

Taking Eleanor to see Eleanor including Rheinbeck by Ellie May, photos by Jean Currie

Most spinners who go to Rhinebeck NY in October go to the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Festival. It is a visual and tactile feast of fibers and sheep. Jean Currie, Anne Furman and I spent 3 days in Rhinebeck. The first day we arrived, got settled into our motel, saw part of the Roosevelt Presidential Library, and ate dinner at the Culinary Institute of America. The next day we spent at the festival. The final day, we visited the homes of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt, the rest of the Presidential Library, and the Vanderbilt Mansion. I was alive when Roosevelt was president and had

recently read No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II by Doris Kearns Goodwin. The tour guides were excellent, and the home tours gave us real insight into their private lives. Eleanor was a woman before her time and during her lifetime was not given credit for her accomplishments. Most interesting was her early interest in Civil Rights. She would not endorse John Kennedy until he promised to include Civil Rights in his platform. I strongly suggest other spinners consider this exploration of American history on their next trip to the Sheep and Wool Festival.



One of the first prizes at Rheinbeck



Anne, FDR, and Ellie

A very nice thing happened to me at the show. Last year I bought a sweater kit from Philosophers Wool. When I got home I realized I could not knit a dark color against another dark color, even in the best of light. I took it back, and he offered: to give me my money back, to find someone to knit it for me, or to trade it. I chose another kit with lighter colors. He then returned thirty dollars to me since my new choice was a less expensive kit. I was very impressed. Many vendors might have said, "You had our pattern for a year and could have copied it." I did not and it was not even a consideration for him. I plan to knit it as soon as I finish my UFO socks-yes, plural.

Carol and Susan's Wonderful Adventure at Rhinebeck 2008 from Carol LaBorie and Susan Sarabasha

Our day began at Wegmans before dawn, even before the bagels were ready. Actually our day almost began in Watkins Glen, 40 minutes west of us, but thanks to the Ithacans Ravelry group, we were the majority so the bus was making one of its stops in Ithaca. As bleary eyed women lined up for coffee, we immediately recognized them as other knitters, and one from her Ravelry photo. We all gathered in the café with our coffees and food, keeping an eye out for the bus. Most of us that is.

Susan went into the rest room for one last stop before getting on the bus, and set her full cup of coffee on the toilet paper dispenser, just as the Yarn Harlot did a few days earlier. And like the Yarn Harlot, Susan left her coffee in the bathroom...but also on her clothes, on her undies, on her shoes, on her jacket....never getting to drink a drop. Fortunately she had a dog towel and dry jacket in the car, so she made it to the bus on time, a bit wet, but ready to knit.

As the day dawned and all through the morning, until we arrived at Rhinebeck, all of us spent our time

busily knitting and chatting. From where we sat we could see more or less the entire bus of women repeating similar hand motions. That's almost enough to mesmerize a person. We kept knitting despite the bumps, jerks, and roller coaster motion that, we decided, must be normal at the rear of a bus. However, we don't recommend knitting at under 55 mph, unless you like nausea nor snapping photos at 55 mph.

Growing up Susan always surmised that the Hudson River marked the NYS border (another little NYC centrist assumption). Of course it doesn't but it does cut a large spectacular swath through beautiful hilly countryside. Flashes of green and clear blue sky set off one of the last days of majestic gold, red, and orange leaf display.

Moving along at a steady pace for over 4 hours once we got within maybe 4 miles of Rhinebeck, our bus became one with a sea of slow moving vehicles. We decided to blame it on Ravelry. With close to 200,000 members, more and more knitters, spinners and crocheters are able to spread the word and converge during a two day festival of wool fume overload. Finally though, we made it to the billboard.



The billboard



Susan and the Whoopee Goldberg of the Restroom

A few minutes later, at about 11:30, the bus dropped us at the Main Gate. With instructions to be back by 4 pm.

Susan and Carol had an agenda. We headed right for the Harlot. NO bathroom. NO food. NO bunnies. Just the Harlot. Most of us Ithacans picked up her new book of essays and had them signed. Susan told the Yarn Harlot the morning's coffee story whereupon Stephanie sympathized appropriately saying, "The worst part is you had NO COFFEE."

That "must do" out of the way, finally we could go relieve our bladders and listen to the rap poetry of **The Whoopee Goldberg of the Restroom** (minus the braids this year).

"If you don't see feet, take a seat." "The lady in green flushed it down clean."

She is amazing. We felt privileged to use her spotless rest room, where she provided free hairspray, hand lotion, aspirin, Tylenol, and other amenities, along with her good humor and upbeat disposition. We think she earns more tips in a day than most people earn in a week. She is a shining example of how you can take any work and make it into something enjoyable and positive.

Continuing with our agenda, we went shopping! Building A is always our first stop. Usually we have something on our list that we search for fruitlessly all day, like last year's nonexistent hunter green yarn. This year it was CVM fiber. Susan went off to deliver a prize to a customer, while I started the search for CVM, which I immediately located. Amazing! SCORE!!!

You don't know what CVM is? It's California Variegated Mutant. Still don't know? It seems that a sheep farmer who was improving the Romeldale breed kept culling out what he considered mutants. However, culling to him meant killing, so somebody slipped some live ones out and began to breed them, hence CVM. At Mountain Spirit Susan, the micron snob, chose a lovely golden shade of dyed CVM and some undyed CVM/alpaca. Carol found some very nice alpaca/merino/silk/mohair in shades of olive green. The men in our lives will be pleasantly surprised with their presents.

Then we proceeded to go round and round Building A looking for [Fenwick Alpacas](#), sellers of the nicest alpaca sweaters and jackets that we've ever worn. After we had gone around the building at least twice, we finally looked up their booth number and went circling one more time looking for and asking other vendors about them, only to finally find they had to cancel at the last minute. Major darn! Susan was really looking forward to a new jacket.

Next on our agenda was the herding demo, where some very intense Border Collies showed off their work. Susan thought the dogs were upset and fearful because they were hunkered down and their tails were low, but we were told it really meant that they were working intently. By just using a whistle the handlers were able to direct the dog's actions, and soon the sheep were around the field and into the pen.



Sheep Trials



Next year's featured breed, Longwool Leicester

We enjoyed showing a newbie, Ellen, around the fairgrounds, as she exclaimed in awe about the yarn that was everywhere. Despite having 4.5 hours, we barely had a chance to see half of the vendors. We never did catch up with guild member Lisa Merian. But we did get to see the sheep this year, since we weren't looking for green yarn.

Susan got stopped by angora everywhere we went (while Carol kept saying, "Come on. Hurry up. We're missing something.").

And the food...Cajun, burgers, Italian, Mexican, macaroni and cheese, apple dumplings and pie a la mode, decadent desserts, wonderful coffee. Not your typical fairgrounds food. Right next to the food court, a group of Andean musicians played hauntingly beautiful and calming music, using modern and traditional instruments.

3:45 came all too soon. Just one last trip to the restroom to say goodbye to **The Whoopie Goldberg of the Rest Room**, with hugs and "see you next years." With only 2 minutes to spare we dragged our tired bodies and loot to the main gate to wait for the bus. And wait...since 2 of our group were MIA. Just before we sent out a search party, Kate appeared. She had gotten lost. The bus was more than ready to leave, yet still one was missing. While we waited, we amused ourselves with a delightful Show and Tell. It turns out our missing person just couldn't tear herself away from a barn. With fiber and yarn filling much of the available space, we joined the long line of departing vehicles, knitting our way home.

Anne and Jean's Mongolian Adventure, Part II by Jean Currie, photos -Jean and Anne

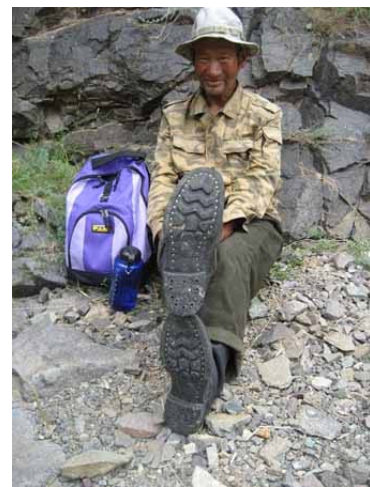
Our trip to Mongolia was organized through the Snow Leopard Trust located in Seattle : www.snowleopardtrust.org . They sponsor research on snow leopards in countries where these endangered cats are found: China, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan. In Mongolia, the research is in the Gobi Desert in the Tost Range, about 50 very rough kilometers from the nearest town Gurvantes. A small ger camp houses the researchers, a couple who provide security and support, and the equipment. Our first interesting activity at the research camp was to walk over the parking lot which felt like small pebbles but turned out to be the totally dry manure balls of the sheep and goats from a previous winter camp – no smell and no mess! Even in very remote areas, vehicles are always parked in an assigned parking lot that keeps them away from the living areas.

The camp had small solar panels for the power needed to run the satellite telephone used for internet access and a couple of lights, but the water and gas needed for cooking and washing was all brought in from elsewhere. There were two biologists in residence for the summer working on a site occupancy survey – identifying the habitat, and mapping the scrapes and other evidence of snow leopards. They had established 29 camera traps which were set off by motion. The data and photos are entered in mapping software and uploaded via satellite. Pujee and Purce, the biologists, do a lot of rugged hiking every day to check the cameras and scrapes, but they have quite sophisticated equipment with GPS systems, Dell computers, the satellite phone etc. As we were leaving Mongolia in early August, we met the team going to the research center to begin a collaring project. So far, they have collared two snow leopards which will give them accurate data on where the leopards travel – they apparently go great distances, but it is not thought that this travel is related to finding food. One of this team will stay over the winter which will be really hard duty as it is very cold (-40°) for a long period of time and he will likely be there by himself. Remember the lack of water and the need to find wood for heat!

The biologists were gracious enough to have us all tag along on one of their daily trips to check cameras. Jean was an honorary research assistant and learned how to identify scrapes and their age, where snow leopards slept, and where they had killed and eaten their main prey, ibex. We were thrilled to find a fresh scrape with a paw print on the top of a ridge (at about 7,000 feet) and then to see on the camera chip the snow leopard making that scrape about 12 hours before we got there. We also saw several ibex way up on the rocky mountain sides. The key research outcomes are to measure the progress of conservation efforts, to discover more about the habits of snow leopards, to obtain more accurate measures of snow leopards and their behavior, to involve local people in conservation and development efforts, to understand the relationship of home ranges and prey, and to gather samples for DNA analysis.



Jean recording fresh traces of a snow leopard



Dorj with boots on display

With us was a 70 year old man named Dorj who could out-walk and out-climb us all! We were told that Dorj had been a hunter and may have killed several snow leopards back when it was still legal. He is now an ardent conservationist. As a thank you gift from a Japanese photographer Dorj guided for a month in a successful quest to find a snow leopard, Dorj received an excellent camera and has himself become an excellent photographer. We were intrigued by his boots – very solid leather with replacement tire soles nailed on. He thought we were nuts wanting to photograph the soles of his Russian boots!

Although some of the flora and fauna were quite different, Jean thought that much of the terrain in this area looked very much like the high country in New Zealand. We were always surprised at the wide variety of plants, and particularly flowers, that we saw both in the flat parts of the Gobi and in the mountains.

Third and final episode in December, Nomadic families and their animals.

2009 Afghan is finished

Two photos show that the shawl is beautiful, but in person it is gorgeous, feels heavenly and is large enough to use as an afghan. Currently the idea is to raffle off during Roc Day with the winner not needing to be present.



Guild Business

The treasurer, Ellie May, reports that the rent is paid until December 2009. We currently have a balance of \$2330.00 Ellie is looking into the possibility of renting the larger room of the Community Center as we seem to be growing and also renting a 3rd space next to the library spaces in order to store the guild machines. Here is the information on the machines to date. The newsletter will carry this information each month . Please email the newsletter editor to post your request for a machine, so the person who has it will be motivated to return it

The Raffle Queen is on the hunt for more items for the Roc Day Raffle.

Dues are still being collected, the membership list will go out in December.

Guild machines – schedule, rates, and conditions

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 to have your name put on the list as the next in line to borrow a piece of equipment.

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 after the initial rush to try out our new purchase we may want to change the time period

Charlotte Sharkey until November 15
Sharon Gombas is next

The following are **\$5 a month for a maximum of 2 months.**

Table Loom - Ruth Allen
Carder
Carder – under repair
Wool Combs

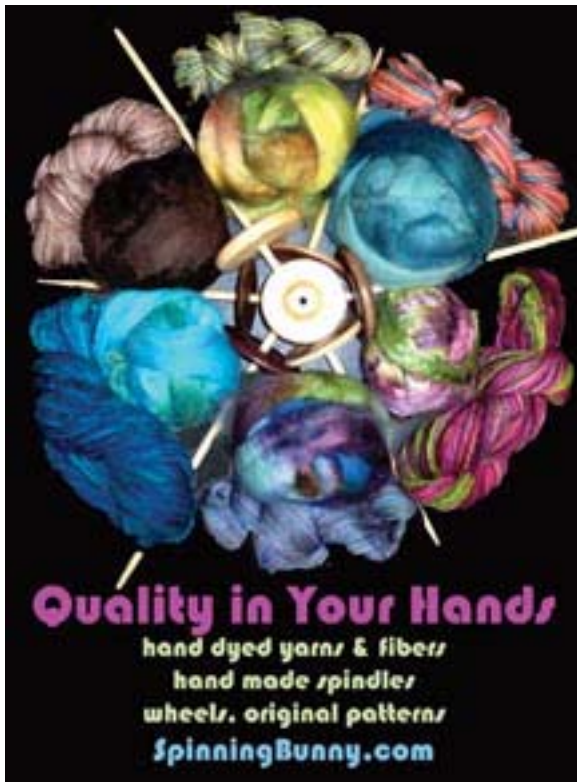
Upcoming

Guild meetings:

November 8, 2008
Spinning for a specific gauge
Varna Community Center, Route 366

January 10, 2009
Roc Day

December 13, 2008
Winter Party at someone's house



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.

The newsletter editor is indebted to the Roc Day Committee for their work and their notes, Carol LaBorie, Susan Sarabasha, Jean Currie, Ellie May, Sharon Gombas. And a big, big thank you to Susan Sarabasha for handholding the editor through part of Adobe Photoshop. Any glitches are the result of the editor's refusal to take notes.



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Yarn Store

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