
BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS GUILD
Ithaca, New York

NEWSLETTER #23 - February, 1979
Edited by Jean Warholio

What a miserable couple of weeks we had earlier this month! Hope you didn't have problems with frozen pipes and cars not starting with those bitterly cold below-zero temperatures! But now it is warming up -- bet you never thought before this that 20°F was warm -- and maybe Spring really is on the way!!!

MARCH 12 MEETING. "Japanese Braiding, or Kumihimo" with superlative craftsman Masa Kinoshita! Your information/worksheets are enclosed if you did not get to the Feb. meeting -- bring them with you, along with the materials, as we have no extras. This will be a GOOD workshop and a jam-packed busy day, so please be on time so we can begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. We hope you can get to this -- we will also be voting on the pricing of handspuns (see elsewhere in this newsletter for the info.)... See you at the Tin Can!

APRIL 9 MEETING. "Spinning to a Gauge" and review of the State Fair categories. Also, an evaluation of the Cherry Valley categories in the previous newsletter. These categories for the State Fair (below) have been set and let's get in gear for them. Many thanks to Madaline Adkins for passing these along to us. Read them and think about them, see what you think. Perhaps we can do a "dry run" of them in our county fair. Bring your wheels and fiber to spin.

General Instructions. Any fiber. Each entry must have a 3x5 card indicating the plan for usage. All skeins must be 2-oz. Previously entered yarn is not acceptable.

- Class 63: Proficiency of spin. 2-ply, any color; will be judged on evenness of spin and ply.
- Class 64: Yarns for clothing. 2 skeins suitable for use in weaving, knitting, crocheting, macramé, etc. (Blends, textures in this class.)
- Class 65: Heavy-duty. 2 skeins, for use in rugs, wall hangings, upholstery material.
- Class 66: Adult Garment made from handspun (knitting, crocheting, weaving, etc.).
- Class 67: Award (\$25 cash) given by the Empire State Shepards Association. Two 2-oz. skeins, 100% wool.

(Each of four classes [#64-66] has regular awards and ribbons.)

The State Fair in August may seem like a long time away, but let's get going! You know how busy life gets in Spring and Summer...

SILK WORKSHOP WITH JEAN CASE... Instructions and registration form are the last two pages of this newsletter. The entire registration form needs to be returned if you are taking the workshop, with your \$\$\$, of course! This, too, should be an excellent workshop and if you have never been interested in silk before, Jean Case will certainly get you interested! (Jean Case could make anything interesting!)

Don't forget, along with the workshop, the 7VWG is holding a sale to help defray the costs of the workshop -- March 17, Cortlandville Mall, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you would like to donate skeins for this cause (or split 50/50), contact Dora Swart. Your skein(s) should be tagged with your name, telephone no., fiber, yardage, weight, price, and whether or not you'll accept an order for more. Dora's phone is 272-3370 and you could get her your skain(s) at the March 12th meeting, if not before.

(A little space filler here... Check the new edition of Guildview that arrived this month [February 1979, Vo. I, No. 2, in our Guild Library]. Lots of ideas, information, and other worthwhile goodies...)

GOOD NEWS. Doloria Chapin will be director of the Thistledown Seminar (Oct. 20-21?) this fall. This news may seem a bit premature, but she is gathering ideas, etc. NOW. If you have had favorite programs, mini-workshops, or whatever through the seminar worth a repeat (or not worth a repeat!), if you would like to see particular kinds of programs presented, "staging" ideas, contests, etc., get them to Gretchen Sachse (347-4396, or to address on membership list) so that she has them for a March 3 meeting with Doloria. This might well be one of their best seminars EVER and your ideas and suggestions are wanted!!!

SATURDAY GROUP. There is no special program planned for the Feb. 24 meeting, nor (to date) for the March 31 meeting. However, bring your wheels and/or drop spindles and fiber to work with, particularly for the March meeting, for it will be a good time to think about spinning for the State Fair. If Eileen Oldham is also able to be with us for meetings this spring, we will have some sessions with her on flax, etc. (We've missed our Canandaigua area friends these past few Sat. meetings!) Again, the Sat. Group meetings are the last Saturday of the month, at the North East School on Winthrop Drive (which is just off Rt. 13, off Warren Road). If you are new and want to make sure of your directions to the meeting, or have a question about what is going on and when, call one of the following: Eleanor May (607/272-8224), Ernestine Wright (607/257-0027), or Jean Warholic (607/539-7648). Hours for the meetings are: 12 noon to 4 p.m. *Everyone welcome!!*

MARATHON MAPLE FESTIVAL. March 31-April 1, at Marathon, N.Y. Spinning and dyeing demonstrators needed! Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. -- you may sign up (with Suzie Hokanson or call her at 607/849-3345) for part of a day or a full day. We will be in the same place as previous years (Town Hall) and there will be the usual amenities (pancake lunch, free coke break, courtesy of Suzie!). We may also sell, with 10% going to the Festival. This is one of our more fun opportunities to demonstrate spinning/dyeing -- let's team up some new spinners with oldies and have a good time!!

HINCKLEY SHOW. Dates: main show, June 17-Sept. 3. This will be a cooperative show with the Tompkins County Quilters Guild, 7 Valley Weavers Guild, Ithaca Textile Arts Guild, and BSHG in conjunction with the Hinckley Foundation collection. The theme will deal with the change in attitude toward textile production as it shifted from necessity to embellishment. Quotations will be used together with examples of historic and modern work and tools. Each group will have a cameo exhibit in the main exhibit space for about two weeks, opening with a Saturday afternoon of demonstrations by the guild. The schedule is: June 16, quilters; July 7, textile guild; July 28, BSHG; and August 18, 7VWG. We are hoping that we can illustrate various fibers and the processes involved, as well as the finished products. We are asking each member to bring to the April meeting whatever they would be willing to lend, or drop a note to Gretchen Sachse or Suzie Hokanson, letting them know. Also, if you have favorite quotes or visual material, they will be appreciated and taken good care of. This is an important show for us and well worth the efforts expended. (And sales are a possibility to keep in mind.)

GERBER SKEINS. We took a deep breath at the February meeting, looking at the Maple Festival, Wool Day, and Hinckley Fdn plans ahead of us and decided that if we were going to come through, we'd had better get busy with the skeins. We went ahead, after heavy debate, and voted on the Gerber skein projects, as recommended by chairman Suzie Hokanson and discussed by the group. The uses are listed below, in order of priority (partly based on need, partly on time involved). Each use is basically a committee project, and we are passing sign-up sheets so that you may pick the committee you want to work with, or call Suzie (phone number above).

- (1) Woven blanket in graduated colors for exhibit. Suzie showed us one that had been done and it would be a wonderful way of showing the

- range of colors from the dyepots.
- (2) Kits for garments (mittens, caps, etc.)
- (3) Kits for needlepoint, needlework
- (4) Color wheels -- with one for Guild display purposes, and smaller ones for sale.

In hues and in multi-colored combinations. Kits and color wheels would be sales items.

All skeins will be utilized for these projects. Suzie announces that the first work session for the committees will be held on Saturday, March 10, from 1-5 p.m., at the Heritage Craft Shop in Dryden. Come prepared to work on these projects. If you have questions or want to get on any of the four committees and have not seen a sign-up sheet, call Linda Olds (to save you long distance phone \$\$) at the Heritage Craft Shop, 844-4381, between 10-5 daily. We really have some GORGEOUS colors to work with and look forward to seeing them all again!

GUILD SALES TABLE INVENTORY. Speaking of that, let's see what we've got. About 5-lbs of the black Bartlettyarns roving is out, being spun up, and that is the end of it. Nearly all roving spun to date is IN. Our one HOT sales item, that did extremely well in past years at Wool Day, is out-of-stock: the mini-dusters made from clean, fluffed-up locks of wool, tied with a pretty ribbon. (Might we make more? Is anyone interested?) Jean Warholic is in the process of making sure all skeins are completely labeled, cleaned (some have gotten rather "shopworn"), twist set, etc., so the items will be in good shape for the Maple Festival, our kick-off sales date. (And she wouldn't mind hearing from anyone interested in helping with that project - 539-7648, evenings.)

<u>Handouts</u> , information sheets for sale: † 2 doz. each	Approx. sales
of "Traditional Dyepots," "Dye Notes for Beginners,"	<u>value:</u>
"Natural Dyeing Bibliography," "Spinning Bibliography,"	
and "Knit-a-Name Cap Pattern"* (Prices of these	
range from 20-35¢ each.)	\$ 18.00
<u>Clothing</u> : 3 turtlenecks w/spinners, 1 T-shirt w/spinner,	
2 sweatshirts w/sheep* Small sizes, rather shopworn.	
Prices are \$2.50 each.	15.00
2 pairs of handspun/knitted mittens (\$10 + \$7), 1 pair	
of handspun/knitted socks (\$7)*	24.00
<u>Misc.</u> : 4 pkgs of Creative Wool Play (95¢ each)*	3.80
† 2 doz. each of silk-screened postal cards, a Saxony	
ram and Cheviot ewe, from old prints.* (10¢ each)	4.80
<u>Handspun skeins</u> : (approx. 1½ to 7½-oz. in weight) Sales value is	
a <u>very</u> rough estimate (see proposal for handspun pricing	
which follows)	450.00 est.

	singles	2-ply	3+ ply	<u>\$ 515.60 ±</u>
Bartlettyarns/black	5	11	0	(Plus about 1-lb. of of singles/plied hand- spun in small skeins for dyeing, don. by Alice Wood.)
(roving) white	5	28	1	
mixed	1	6	0	
Hand-prepared/black	0	1	0	
white	4	4	0	
mixed	0	0	0	
Handprep/Dyed colors	1	8	1 (4 ply)	
Exotic fibers	2	0	0	

(*don. by BSHG members) 18 58 2 = 78 skeins, total.

Frankly, that is a rather impressive number of items! More variety would be nice, but the Gerher skeins projects will add to this selection immensely!! This will obviously be our best sales table year!

PRICING OF HANDSPUN. The pricing system for wool was discussed at the Feb. meeting and arrived at as follows. Keep in mind that this is for Guild sales, meant to be competitive in the area marketplace. (A final vote will be taken at the March meeting.) Individuals may, of course, set their own prices...

singles	\$ 1.50/oz.	Purchased dyestuff, add 50¢/oz.
2 or 3-ply	2.00/oz.	Expensive or exotic fibers will be priced
4 ply	2.50/oz.	on a case-by-case basis.

Any strong objections should be voiced at the March meeting, before the vote is taken.

DEMONSTRATIONS GUIDELINES. With the events beginning to come up where we are often asked to demonstrate, Gretchen would like to see us develop a general policy or guidelines for those groups requesting demonstrators. The 7VWG divides requests as follows: Education (free); Program, Entertainment, Enrichment; Craft Fairs; Display only (free); and Fund Raising. Gretchen has a number of concerns, no matter where the demonstration is, as to:

Comfort - adequate heat, shelter, shade, drinks, breaks.

Reasonable facilities - includes parking.

Help in loading, unloading.

Reasonable security if things are left overnight or during a break.

Reasonable preparation and control of group (schools, etc.)

If the demonstration is distant, what about mileage? If lengthy, meals and child care? (Perhaps organizations unable to meet these expenses should be willing to find someone closer or without young children.) If a lecture, workshop, or program, an honorarium may be requested. (Many organizations have money for this or will be charging a fee. Exploitation should not be encouraged; education should. And for those of us who have been demonstrating spinning/dyeing for awhile now, we can certainly testify to finding ourselves in some pretty marvelous situations and some pretty ghastly ones too -- more of the latter, unfortunately. At any rate, anyone interested in helping to develop these guidelines, please contact Gretchen Sachse (347-4396).

FOR THOSE CONFUSED by the Gerher investigative method procedures, Gretchen has provided us with a one-page, super-easy summary (see page 5, following). Take out this sheet and keep it handy with your dyeing supplies. Once through this sequence, and you are all set. Again, it is not difficult, but have things ready to go and be organized about it...

Another article from INTERWEAVE is reproduced for your information on pp. 6a and c. Our thanks again for their letting us do this!

WOOL DAY --- see page 7...

NEW MEMBERS -- always a pleasure to have you join us! (A few good old members who've renewed are not listed here in the interests of space -- we'll catch you in the next newsletter!) These four are all Inactive Members (but hope we see you before long!).

Elisabeth Bachmann, 217 E. Lawrence Road, North Syracuse, N.Y. 13212. (315/455-1134) (*Dyer; knitter/crocheter*)

Sue Culkin, RD #3 - Box 332, Cogan Station, PA. 17728.

Darlene Jarvis, RD #7 - Box 31, Oswego, N.Y. 13126. (315/343-2895)

Kris Peters, RD #1 - Box 22, Trout Run, PA 17771. (717/998-2491) (*Weaver; dyer*)

(An up-date of membership will come out in April or so, listing all corrections and membership renewals, as well as the new members...)

THANK YOU for flurry of contributions to the Guild newsletter!! This will keep us busy for awhile -- we will run them as space and timeliness permit!!!

The purpose is to investigate the potential of a dyestuff as fully as possible and as scientifically as possible. The method is simple, but requires order and a systematic approach.

Step I. PREPARE WOOL. Pound lots are ideal. Divide wool into 8 skeins of 2-oz. each for each premordant pot. Tie loosely (not a butterfly tie), wash, and rinse well.

Step II. PREMORDANT. (1) Alum - for 1-lb. of dry wool: 4 gal. water and 3-oz. (84 g) alum for fine wool or 4-oz. (112 g) alum for coarse wool, and 1-1/2 oz. cream of tartar. Enter wet wool. Simmer one hour. (Note: enamel pots are preferred for the mordanting, dyeing operations.)

(2) Chrome - per 1-lb. of dry wool: 4 gal. water and 1/2-oz. (14 g) chrome. Enter wet wool, cover, simmer one hour.

Remove from mordant when cool enough to handle. Rinse. Enter into prepared dyebath.

Step III. PREPARE DYEBATH. Make a strong solution and enough to be divided between the alum and chrome. Strain, bring each pot up to 3-1/2 to 4-gal. by adding water. (If dyebath prepared in more than one pot, pour them back and forth to "even" dyebath.) Enter 8 alum skeins in one pot; 8 chrome skeins in the other. Simmer 45-minutes, lifting to air occasionally.

Step IV. MODIFICATION. First, the alum series.

- (a) Wash, rinse, hang to dry - one skein mordanted and dyed...
Label this: *alum only*.
- (b) Enter 1 skein in pan with enough dyebath to cover, and some ammonia (1 tablespoon). Simmer 10 minutes. Wash, rinse, hang to dry.
Label this: *alum ammonia*.
- (c) Enter 2 skeins in 1/3 remaining dyebath, with 3.5g tin dissolved in it. Simmer 15 minutes. Take out one skein, wash, rinse, hang to dry, and label it: *alum tin*.
- (d) To that afterbath with one skein remaining in (c), add 1-tablespoon of non-sudsing ammonia. Simmer for 10 minutes, wash, rinse, hang to dry, and label that skein: *alum tin ammonia*.
- (e) Enter 2 skeins in 1/2 the remaining dyebath in which 7g copper were dissolved. Simmer 15 minutes. Take out one skein, wash, rinse, hang to dry. Label this: *alum copper*.
- (f) To that afterbath with the one skein remaining in (e), add 1-tablespoon of ammonia. Simmer for 10 minutes, wash, rinse, hang to dry. Label this skein: *alum copper ammonia*.
- (g) Enter 2 skeins in the remaining dyebath in which 7g of iron have been dissolved. Simmer for 15 minutes. Take out one skein, wash, rinse, hang to dry, and label this skein: *alum iron*.
- (h) To that afterbath with the one skein remaining in (g), add 1-tablespoon of ammonia. Simmer for 10 minutes. Wash, rinse, and hang skein to dry, labeling this last skein: *alum iron ammonia*.

REPEAT this series for the chrome-mordanted 8 skeins. (In the chrome series, a, b, c, or d can be very similar and b, c, d, may be eliminated for all practical purposes.) These two series will give you, however, a range of 16 colors from one dyebath!

Step V. LABELING. It is best to do it as you go, or even beforehand. Use an indelible pen and Chlorox bottle tags. A convenient code is below:

2	7	9	-	1	2	-	1	a	↪	modification code
	year			date			no. of dyepot/mordant			
	month						(e.g., onionskins alum)			

which fiber?

by Barbara Liebler

Did you ever weave a beautiful piece of fabric, sew it painstakingly into a jacket, and then find that it looks better on the hanger than it does on you? If the fabric is too stiff to drape right or too floppy to hold its shape, too cold in spite of its thickness or too willing to attract dirt, it can be a big disappointment. Though the weave or the size of the yarn could be the culprit here, chances are good that these kinds of disappointments are due to a poor choice of fiber for the job.

Raw fibers, in spite of how they are spun, have certain inherent characteristics that affect how they perform in a finished product. Which particular qualities you want, of course, will depend on what product you wish to make. In making clothing the drape of the fabric will be important, either to make the fabric crisp enough to tailor or soft enough to make a flowing dress. Moisture absorption and heat conductivity will determine how comfortable it feels in the season you intend to wear it. The fabric's washability and tendency to absorb or repel dirt will be important. If it is a drapery fabric you wish to make, you'll want to consider the fiber's resistance to sunlight damage and its inherent fire retarding qualities. Woven sculpture usually requires control of the drape or stiffness of the fiber, some consideration of its tendency to stay clean looking, and some thought about its strength. Whatever your intended product, look at which qualities it demands and what qualities the various possible fiber choices offer. Each fiber has its own natural drape, moisture absorption, heat conductivity, washability, wrinkle resistance, sunlight resistance, and strength.

DRAPE

Drape is important to clothing and often to soft sculpture. In these photos, the same structure (part of a larger piece by the author) is made in crisp commercial nylon and in soft handwoven cotton. The cotton is too limp to hold the intended shape; the nylon is a better fiber for this purpose. These fibers are on opposite ends of the drape scale: nylon is quite stiff, cotton is quite limp. Good drape for clothing is between these two extremes. It should have body but not be too stiff.

Wool and silk are the most satisfying natural fibers to use where drape is important. Some rayons, generally the ones with long filaments, do a fine job of imitating silk in their draping qualities. Shorter filament rayons, or thick rayon yarns, are too stiff to drape well. Linen drapes less well because it is too stiff, even when finely spun. Cotton goes to the other extreme. It is so soft that handwoven cottons have little body. This makes them appropriate where soft folds are called for and a limp fabric is needed. Among the synthetic fibers, orlon, acetate, and some nylons have the best draping qualities. Handwoven polyester fabrics are not very satisfying in their drapability.

MOISTURE ABSORPTION AND HEAT CONDUCTIVITY

How well a fiber absorbs moisture and how it conducts heat both have a big influence on how it feels in a clothing fabric. Non-absorbing fabric feels clammy when the weather is a little too hot or a little too cold. That's why a raincoat is unbearable as soon as the rain stops and the sun comes out. It cannot let your body moisture out. Moisture absorbing fibers will feel more comfortable next to your

skin and will make more comfortable garments for circumstances where the temperature, humidity, or your level of activity is likely to change.

Heat conductivity is the other big consideration in choosing a fiber for clothing fabric. Wool is moisture absorbing but not heat conducting. This makes wool comfortable to wear in a wide range of conditions, but particularly suited to cold weather when it will keep your body heat in. The same qualities are present in the other mammal fibers such as alpaca, camel, and cashmere.

Silk is similar to wool in these two characteristics. Silk is often thought of as a summer fabric, but it is cool only when it is woven as a very thin fabric. In thicker yarns it makes good winter clothing.

Cotton is moisture absorbing and heat conducting, so it is comfortable to wear in a fairly wide range of conditions, but is especially suited to summer clothing since it lets your body heat escape. Linen is also very moisture absorbing and heat conducting.

Rayon is a good moisture absorber but it tends to feel wet and heavy in humid weather in contrast to wool, which absorbs a lot of moisture without feeling wet. Rayon is a good heat conductor, since it is a plant fiber like cotton and linen, so it is comfortable in summer weather.

Man-made fibers are quite non-moisture absorbing. Their heat conductivity depends largely on how they are made. They are not particularly good conductors to begin with but they can be made even warmer by crimping during manufacturing, so smooth synthetics are generally cooler than those made to imitate the look of wool.

CLEANLINESS AND WASHABILITY

How readily a fiber attracts and holds dirt and how easily it gives it up in cleaning are important for clothing, interior design fabrics, and for woven sculpture which will rarely if ever be washed or dry cleaned. Fibers with smooth surfaces as seen under the electron microscope are most dirt resistant since the dirt is not absorbed so it can be more easily removed from the surface by water, solvents, or vacuuming. A nappy surface attracts and holds dirt more, and also requires more care in laundering.

Glass fiber and all the synthetics resist dirt longer and clean more easily than natural fibers. Silk is the smoothest surfaced natural fiber. It sheds dust and gives up dirt easily in cleaning. Linen's hard, smooth surface also sheds dirt. Most of the rayons shed dirt reasonably well. Cotton has a fairly short fiber and a somewhat rough surface, so it holds dust and dirt more than the other fibers already mentioned. Wool, because of its scaly surface, attracts dirt and holds it.

WRINKLE RESISTANCE

In these days of wash and wear fabrics and the electric dryer, we all know the value of wrinkle resistance. Does anyone ever use an iron any more?

Wool and its kin mohair, camel, cashmere, and alpaca are excellent wrinkle resisters. Silk is also very wrinkle resistant. Cotton and linen wrinkle easily. Among the man-made fibers, rayon wrinkles most, dacron wrinkles least, while nylon and orlon fall in between.

FLAMMABILITY

Clothing and interior design fabrics, including fiber sculpture, need some resistance to fire to be reasonably

safe. There are laws about children's sleepwear and about fabrics for public buildings, and common sense tells us to take a cautious approach to most flammable fibers. All fabrics react to strong heat, but they react in different ways. Acetate, dacron, nylon, and orlon fuse and shrink away from the heat but do not flame. Wool and its related fibers and cotton, linen, and ramie all will burn. Cotton and linen burn with a bright flame and will continue to smolder after the flame is out, but wool burns with a small flickering flame and will not smolder, Rayon burns well, smelling like paper as it burns. Consult the relevant laws and do flame tests on any fabric to be placed in a public building.

SUNLIGHT RESISTANCE

Any fabric that will hang in direct sunlight, such as draperies, will need to resist sun rot. Those readers who live in Seattle may not need to worry about this, but we Coloradans certainly do! Ithaca

Unfortunately, my sources of information disagree on this subject. Among natural fibers, one source says that sunlight has no appreciable effect on the strength of wool while another source says wool loses strength in sunlight. They seem to agree that, other than wool, the natural fibers fall into this ranking, with rayon being the most resistant: rayon, linen, cotton, silk. Silk rates very low in its resistance to sun damage. Among the man-made fibers, glass, polyester, and orlon keep their strength well in sunlight, while nylon will deteriorate after long exposure. All the man-made fibers, however, are rated higher than silk in this regard.

STRENGTH

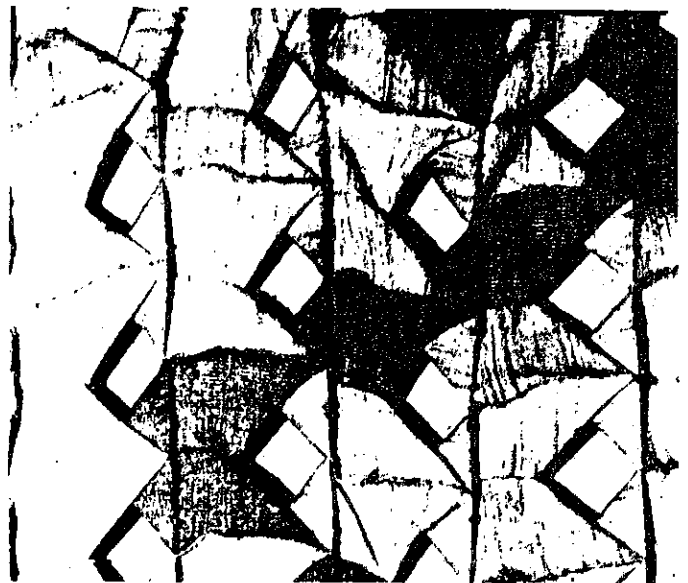
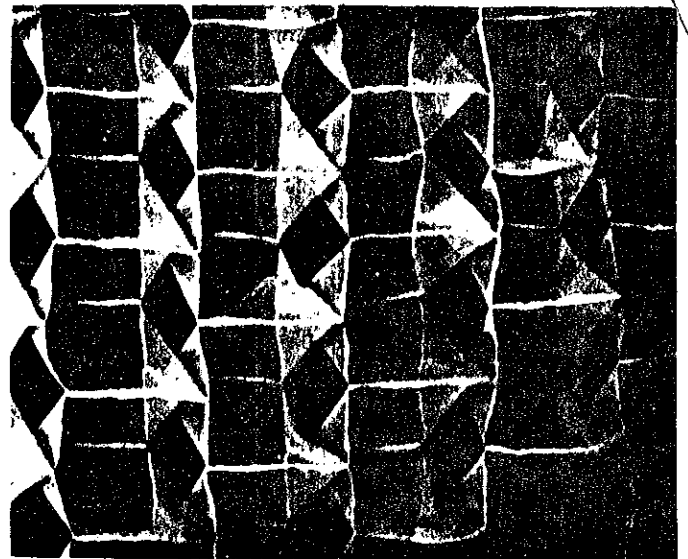
The strength of a fiber influences how long a fabric will wear, especially under heavy use. This is especially important for clothing and upholstery fabrics, for sling chair fabrics and various types of straps, and for large sculptural fiber pieces where the top must support the weight of the whole work.

Strength has two aspects: tensile strength, which keeps a fiber from tearing under stress, and abrasion resistance, which keeps it from wearing away by rubbing. A large fiber sculpture will need tensile strength; upholstery fabric will need abrasion resistance.

For tensile strength, fiberglass, nylon, and polyester rate very high. Silk is the strongest natural fiber, though it is weaker when it is wet. Linen is very strong, and gets stronger when it is wet. Cotton is quite strong and it too gets stronger when it is wet, an increase of as much as 30%. Mercerizing makes it even stronger, though still not as strong as silk or linen of the same size. Rayon is weaker than cotton when dry, and loses 40%-70% of its strength when wet. Wool has the lowest tensile strength of the natural fibers, and is even weaker when wet.

Nylon has great resistance to abrasion, which is probably why it is used so much in commercial upholstery fabrics and carpets. Dacron and ramie are strong against abrasion, while cotton, linen, silk, and wool are rated only fair. Resilience, however, helps a fiber to resist abrasion and wear longer; this helps wool, which is springy, resist abrasion better than linen, which has no stretch. It gets complex!

There is a lot to consider in choosing the right fiber for



The same structure (part of a larger piece by the author) is shown here in crisp commercial nylon, in soft handwoven cotton. The cotton is too limp to hold the intended shape; nylon is the better fiber for this purpose.

the job, and you may have to settle for the best of the possibilities when you find that no fiber is excellent in every quality you need. You may have to sacrifice wrinkle resistance in order to get the right amount of drape, for example, or decide whether heat conductivity or abrasion resistance is more important to your purpose. There is not always a perfect answer, but a careful choice of fiber will save many a disappointed moment.

REFERENCES

Cohen, Harry and Linton, George E., *Chemistry and Textiles for the Laundry Industry*, Textile Book Publishers, a Division of Interscience Publishers, New York, 1961.
Corbman, Bernard P., *Textiles: Fiber to Fabric*, McGraw Hill, New York, 1975.

WOOL DAY. Date has been set for Sunday, May 20th, at Stewart Park, the day after the N.Y.S. Sheep Improvement Sale at Cornell. (This will be our 4th Annual!) We need a coordinator -- offers are already in for several committee heads -- but if no one will step forward to coordinate Wool Day, there will be no Wool Day. C'mon spinners! This has developed into one of our biggest educational and FUN events of the year!! We will discuss it at the March meeting, reviewing last year's Wool Day for ideas and improvements... (Let's hear it from the Saturday Group, too, on this!)

Doloria Chapin has some American Traveler spinning wheels for immediate delivery. Also some registered Romney ram lambs (about 1+ years old) for sale. For those seriously interested: 315/677-3837 or 454-4144.

THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE. It was discussed that we revamp the committee, expanding it to three members (one of which is to be the Guild Librarian). The two current members have pleaded other obligations. The primary function of the committee is to judiciously select books and periodicals for our library. Are there any volunteers? Nominations will be accepted at the next Monday (March 12) meeting, or let Gretchen Sachse know.

PEWTER SHEEP PINS/PENDANTS. Still not enough for an order to be sent. Get your name to Jean Warholic or Linda Dickinson. Cost: \$14 each, plus 28¢ if we must mail it to you. Minimum order for this (discount) price: 8. Orders so far: 3.

WHAT OTHER GUILDS ARE DOING these days... In addition to the silk workshop, the 7VWG have alerted us to the fact that Nancy Belfer (head of the Fiber & Fabric Dept. at Buffalo State University) will be coming to TC3 (Dryden) on March 29, to give a slide presentation (2:00 p.m.) and stitchery/appliqué workshop (3:00 p.m.). We will have more information about this at the March meetings. And don't forget the 7VWG sale coming up! // Lamb-to-Loom Guild (2nd Tues., 7:30 p.m., large mtg room of Vestal Public Library) is picking up speed! Their March meeting will be a spinning workshop using Greek distaffs and drop spindles, and will be at Joan Koster's home in Whitney Point (692-4398). (Hey, Black Sheepers! That's not far away! Who is going?) Their April meeting will be a sprang workshop to be held at Sheril Green's home (Johnson City, 785-5509). And they are planning their annual weekend workshop which will essentially be their May meeting. What fun! // The Thistledown Handspinners (Norwich) are still in their winter Saturday meeting cycle. (Has anyone gone recently?) Sorry, don't have their schedule of programs handy. There is a weavers group forming in that area, though, and if you are interested, contact Helen Grace Lindsay (607/334-5677). // The Ithaca Textile Arts Guild (3rd Thurs., members' homes) will present slides from the American Crafts Council on March 15 ("Clothing to be Seen"), at 8 p.m., Unitarian Church, Ithaca. Their April 19 meeting will be at the home of Mary Ann Treble, East Covert Road, Interlaken (8 p.m.) and Loretta Pompilio will have a "Fabric Painting Workshop." May 17 is their annual organizational meeting (8 p.m., home of Kathleen Whyte, 1 Sundown Road, Ithaca). Members are always encouraged to bring current projects, and it is great fun to see the diverse things their members are working on!

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS will need to be postponed to the next newsletter...

REFRESHMENTS: March - C. Smith, B. White, J. Warholic. April - M. Steve, P. Mutkoski, D. Jacoby. Remember to bring your own cup!!

SALES DOCUMENT FOR SHORN WOOL is enclosed -- do your shepard(s) a favor and fill one out every time you buy fleeces from them...

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER: March 12 meeting.

Good spinning!!

Jean Warholic

The Seven Valley Weavers' Guild presents:

A SILK WORKSHOP

with Jean Case

The Seven Valley Weavers' Guild (7VWG) and the America the Beautiful Fund are pleased to co-sponsor a workshop featuring Jean Case in a lecture-demonstration on silk. This will be synonymous with her presentation at the 1978 Convergence workshop in Colorado last June.

It will be given April 6 and 7 (Friday and Saturday) at the 1890 House Museum, Tompkins Street, Cortland, N.Y. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., both days. An evening mini-presentation for those who cannot attend a daytime session is being contemplated, if your interest warrants. That will be Friday night, April 6, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

The Friday workshop will give a thorough working knowledge of silk fiber and uses. Reeling of silk from the cocoon (with many audience participants), dyeing of same, types of silk, adaptability of each to its specific use, industrial uses, charts, slides, fiber blends with other natural fibers (cotton, linen, and wool) as well as man-made fibers (polyester, acrylic, and nylon). This is just some of the knowledge to be gained in the all-day Friday workshop.

On both days, silk will be available for individual purchase.

Saturday's presentation will be a quick review of lecture highlights for background understanding to benefit those unable to be there on Friday. The bulk of the day will be spent spinning and trying the various types of silk. It is so easy and very easy to spin and ply, using various techniques. Drop spindles will be available for participants to use to spin, if they do not have their own wheels. These will be on loan, courtesy of the Black Sheep Handspinners Guild.

A partial grant from the America the Beautiful Fund, helping us sponsor this workshop, allows an individual charge of \$9.50 for one day's participation, or \$11.50 for both days. Of that amount, \$6.50 goes for a "platter" of generous silk samples. It is required that every participant have one and the individual samples will be adequate for both days' work. The Friday evening presentation will have a plate of wisps of silk for identification, and the two-hour workshop will be \$2.50.

NOTE: The Guilds are being given advance notice of the workshop, for they are the craftsmen who will go home and teach others. Sign-up should be *immediate*, for this will be opened to public participation on March 1st. Reservations will be on a first come, first served basis. This is the one and only time such a workshop will be presented.

REGISTRATION AND CANCELLATION. In the event of a late spring blizzard, the whole event will be postponed to the following weekend, automatically -- April 13-14.

Your payment must accompany your application. If you reserve a space, and have to cancel, only your \$3.00 for one day, or \$5.00 for both days, can be refunded. The reason is the personal preparation of these platters with the samples by the instructor. In this event, your platter for which you have paid will be held for you to pick up after the workshop. Or it can be mailed if you forward the postage.

Should the Friday evening lecture have to be cancelled or you need to cancel, \$1.00 of the \$2.50 payment is refundable. The platter of samples made for you may be picked up at the 1890 House or mailed if you forward the postage.

(See next page for registration form.)

KUMIHIMO (Japanese Bobbin Braid) WORKSHOP

with Masa Kinoshita

Bring the following things:

Scissors.

Braiding table -- see instruction sheet, Diagram 2..

Bobbins -- four (4) for the 4-strand, eight (8) for 8-strand braid.

Bobbins may be made of one of the following materials:

1. Cardboard tubes filled with sand or gravel -- see instruction sheet, first page, lines 23 to 25. Make them to weight approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ - to 3-oz.
2. J & P Coats sewing thread spools filled with B-B shots. B-B shots are about 1-lb. for \$1.79 at Jamesway.
3. Metal bolts and nuts and washers and brown paper. 2-3/8 size bolt and nut and two washers for $2\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. bobbin. (About 26¢.) $2\frac{3}{4}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ size bolt and nut and washers for 4-oz. bobbin. (About 43¢.)

Counter-weight. It should weight $1/3$ to $1/2$ of the total weight of the bobbins. It may be:

1. Extra bobbins. (Need two to four bobbins.)
2. Unopened cans of canned food.
(Canned mushrooms - 4-oz, 8-oz.)
(Tomato paste - 6-oz. etc.)
3. Rocks, nursing bottle filled with water, etc.

A paper clip.

Yarn. You will need 3-feet long scraps for practice; $2\frac{1}{2}$ -yards of each color if you want to make something. You may use any combination of fibers, sizes, colors of yarns.

Masa Kinoshita
5 Winthrop Place
Ithaca, New York 14850
257-0886

1. 4-strand round.
Yotsu.

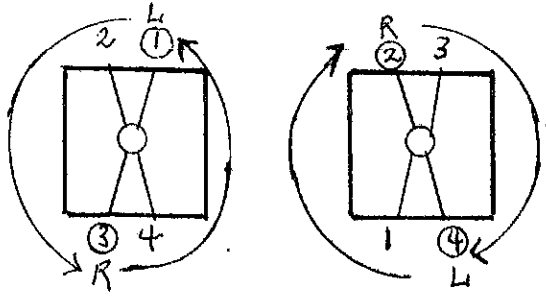


Diagram 5. Eight-strand Round Braiding.

2. 8-strand plain round.
Edo yatsu.

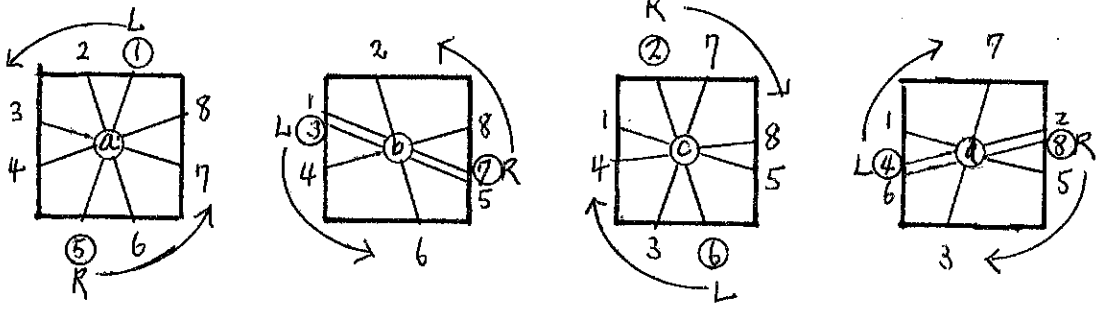
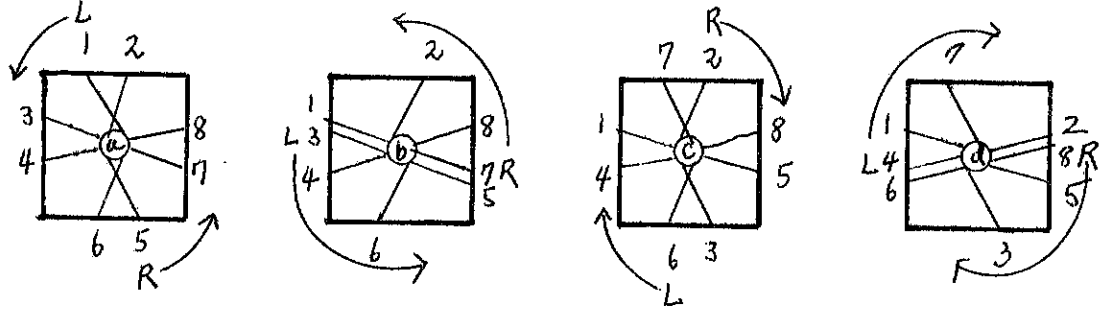
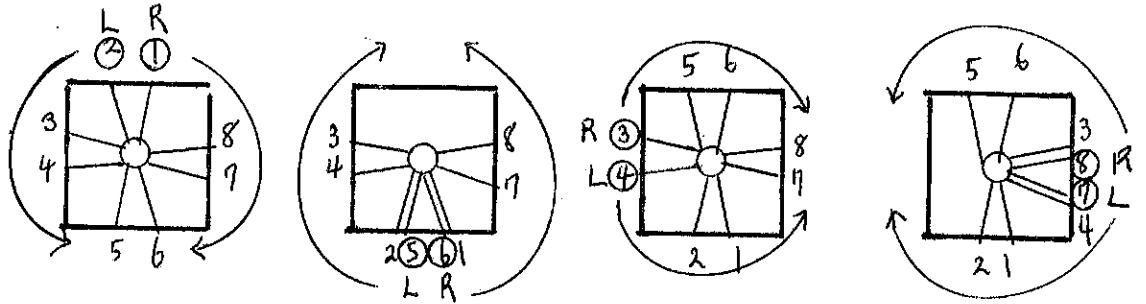


Diagram 6. Eight-Strand Square Braiding

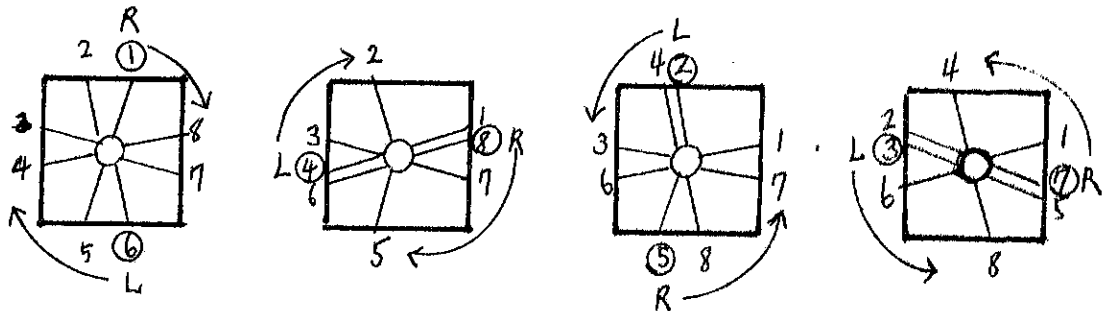
3. 8-strand square.
Kaku yatsu.



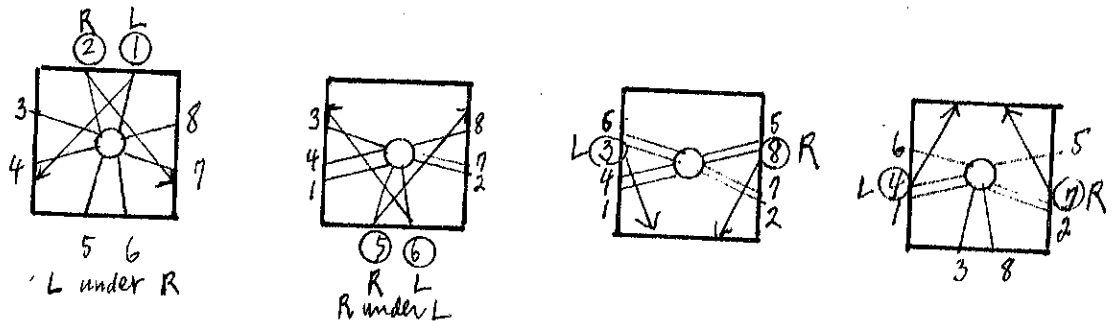
4. 8-strand parallel double twine square.
Narabi kaku yatsu.



5. 8-strand plaiting.
Andagumi.



6. 8-strand flat T'ang style.
Kara yatsu.



An Ancient Japanese Bobbin Braid

Kumihimo

Text by Masako Kinoshita

In the 1975 Winter issue of SS&D, Jackie Wollenberg reported on Danish four-strand bobbin braiding. Bobbin braiding is also a well-developed art in Japan. This ancient Japanese art, called *Kumihimo*, uses weighted bobbins and a small table (diagram 1 and photograph 1). Four- to forty-eight strand silk cords of infinite variety can be fashioned with these tools. Silk cords of this kind are found on armour and illuminated sutra scrolls dating back to the early Middle Ages. Today they are widely used as a functional as well as decorative element of the kimono, the Japanese traditional dress.

A typical four-strand silk cord requires one hundred and seventy ends of silk sewing thread for each strand. Each strand is wound on a twenty-eight ounce (800 gram) weighted bobbin. The bobbin weight controls the firmness of the band.

I have experimented with various bobbin weights using many types of yarns available in the United States. Wool yarns seem to give the most satisfactory results for braided cords made on a table. For the beginner, I have designed a simple table (diagram 2) which combines features found in the two before-mentioned tables. Heavy corrugated cardboard provides adequate strength. Bobbins can be made of cardboard paper towel tubes, cut into two-inch lengths and filled with sand or gravel to the desired weight. (Exact weight will be specified later.)

Four-strand Round Cord Braiding

You will need five bobbins for four-strand braiding. Prepare four strands of yarns you plan to use. Each strand should be cut one and two-thirds the length of the finished cord. Wind each strand onto one of the four bobbins, leaving fifteen inches free. Secure each strand on a bobbin with a half-hitch (diagram 3). The four free ends are then knotted together close to the end and pushed down through the hole of the table top. Tie a short string around the fifth bobbin and attach it to the knotted end as a weight.

Place bobbins 3 and 4 on the side of the table nearest you, with bobbins 1 and 2 on the side farthest from you (diagram 4). They should hang about eight inches down from the table top. Keep the height of the bobbins equal at all times to prevent the yarns from untwisting.

Hold bobbin 1 in your left hand with your arm around the left side of the table. Hold bobbin 3 with your right hand. Exchange the position of bobbins 1 and 3 moving your arms around the side of the table in a counterclockwise motion. Keeping the yarn ends taut but not pulling, raise the bobbins just high enough to clear the corners of the table.

Your right hand is now in position 1 with your arm around the right side of the table. Stretch the arm a little and pick up bobbin 2. Pick up bobbin 4 with your left hand. Exchange position of bobbins 2 and 4 moving your arms around the side of the table in a clockwise motion.

Repeat steps from the beginning. It is important to con-

trol the firmness of the band with the bobbin weight. Slacking or pulling the yarn ends while exchanging the bobbins will result in an irregular weave. Your task is simply to place the bobbins in the specified place. Once you master the movement of exchanging the bobbins, it will become a rhythmic and relaxing motion.

Example I. Cut twelve ends each of two-ply rug yarn of colors A and B in 100-inch (2.5 meter) lengths for a 60-inch (1.5 meter) belt. Use six ends for each strand. Wind color A strands on bobbins 1 and 3, color B strands on bobbins 2 and 4. A bobbin weighing two to four ounces gives a good firmness and flexibility.

Before starting to exchange bobbins, give a light S-twist to strands 1 and 3, and a Z-twist to strands 2 and 4. Try to retain the twist throughout your work. This is a key to uniform braiding. As the braid gets longer, move the weight up so that it does not touch the floor. It is also necessary to extend the yarn from bobbins when free ends become too short to work comfortably. Braiding with short free ends will result in an uneven weave.

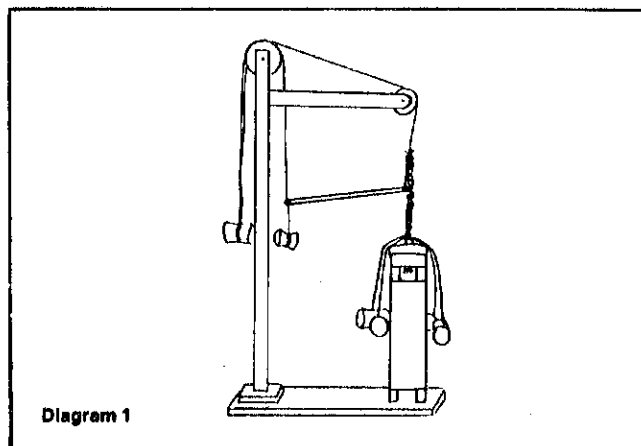


Diagram 1 Japanese braiding table for four- and eight-strand cords. The braided end is pulled up by a pulley system. Twelve- to twenty-four-strand cords can be made on the table if the top is replaced with a larger one.

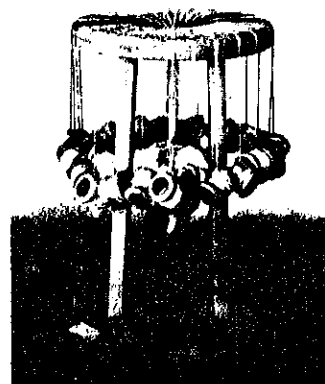


Photo 1. A circular topped table is used to construct braids of 16- to 60 strands. The strands hang over the sides of the table and the finished braid is pulled down through a hole in the center of the table.

Eight-strand Plain Round Cord Braiding

The preparation of yarn length is the same as for four-strand braiding. You need ten bobbins—eight for winding the yarn and two for weight. Diagram 5a illustrates the initial position of the bobbins around the braiding table.

Hold bobbin 1 with your left hand, bobbin 5 with your

right hand. Turn bobbin 1 (#5) 90 degrees *counterclockwise*, passing 2 (#6) and place it next to 3 (#7) (diagram 5b). Pick up bobbin 3 (#7) with the left (right) hand, pass 4 (#8) and place it where 5 (#1) was (diagram 5c).

Pick up bobbin 6 (#2) with your left (right) hand and turn 90 degrees clockwise, pass bobbin 3 (#7) and place it next to 4 (#8) (diagram 5d). Then pick up bobbin 4 (#8) and turn 90 degrees more, passing bobbin 1 (#5), and place it where bobbin 2 (#6) was (diagram 5e).

Renumber strands in diagram 5e according to diagram 5a. Start the new cycle.

Example II. Cut yarns as explained in Example I. Use three ends for each strand. Wind color A strands on bobbins 1, 2, 5 and 6, color B strands on bobbins 3, 4, 7 and 8. Use two- to four-ounce bobbins. Give a light S-twist to strands which turn counterclockwise, that is strands 1, 3, 5 and 7, and a light Z-twist to the rest of the strands.

This particular procedure produces a round cord which has a plain weave structure. The name *plain round* is my own way of specifying it according to its structure and not the literal translation from Japanese.

Eight-strand Square Cord Braiding

The cord fashioned by this procedure has a twill weave structure and a square cross section. You will get a slightly longer cord than a plain round cord for the same length of yarn.

Position bobbins as illustrated in diagram 5a. Exchange the places for bobbins 1 and 2 (#5 and #6), but in doing so strand 2 (#5) should cross *over* strand 1 (#6) (diagram 6a).

Hold bobbin 1 (#5) with your left (right) hand. Turn bobbin 1 (#5) *counterclockwise* and place it next to bobbin 3 (#7) (diagram 6b).

Pick up bobbin 3 (#7) with the left (right) hand, pass bobbin 4 and 6 (#8 and #2) and place it where 5 (#1) was (diagram 6c).

Pick up bobbin 6 (#2) with your left (right) hand and turn *clockwise*, placing it next to bobbin 4 (#8) (diagram 6d). Then pick up bobbin 4 (#8), pass bobbin 1 and 7 (#5 and #3), and place it where bobbin 2 (#6) was (diagram 6e).

Renumber strands in diagram 6e according to diagram 6a. Start the new cycle.

Example III. Prepare yarns as explained in Example II. Wind color A strand on bobbins 1, 2, 3 and 8, and color B strands on the remaining bobbins. Give a medium-tight S-twist to the odd-numbered bobbins, and a medium-tight Z-twist to the even-numbered bobbins.

When you are not sure which bobbins to pick up next, check the crossing at the center of the table top. The strands which cross *over* the others are the ones you have turned last.

Wool yarns require lighter bobbins than silk or cotton yarns as the braid should retain a soft texture after the braiding is completed. Experimenting with varying weights may produce the effects you want, but braiding with non-stretchable yarns such as silk or cotton requires heavier bobbins since it looks best when it is braided tightly. For these I recommend constructing a wooden table using semi-hard wood for the table top. All the corners on the table top should be rounded off and sanded smooth.

The three braids explained in this article are among the most basic and may also be made without special tools. However, the *Kumihimo* method works faster and has bet-

ter control of firmness and evenness of the weave. This technique also enables us to fashion a greater variety of braids almost impossible in free-hand work. ■

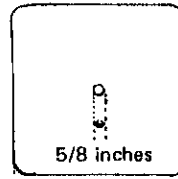


Diagram 2

Fold along dotted lines. Glue sides A and B together. Glue the top edge of the box to the underside of the table top.

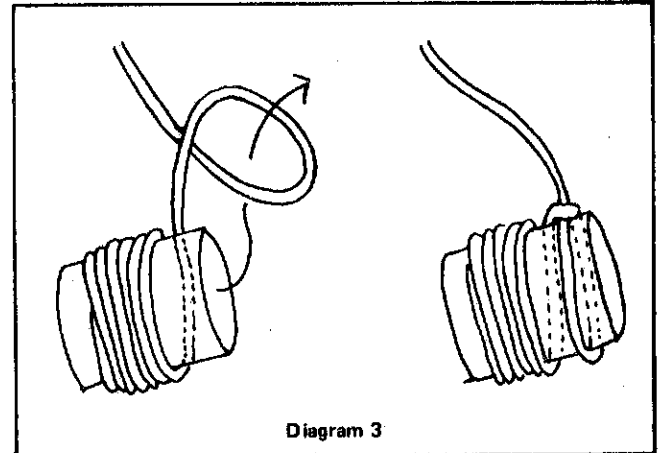
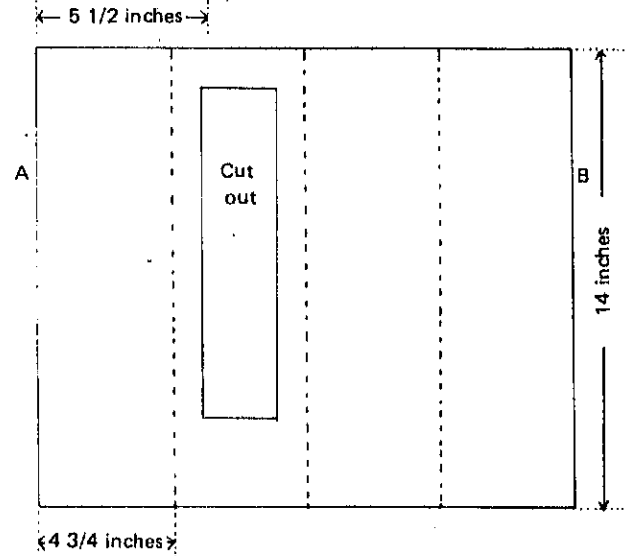


Diagram 3

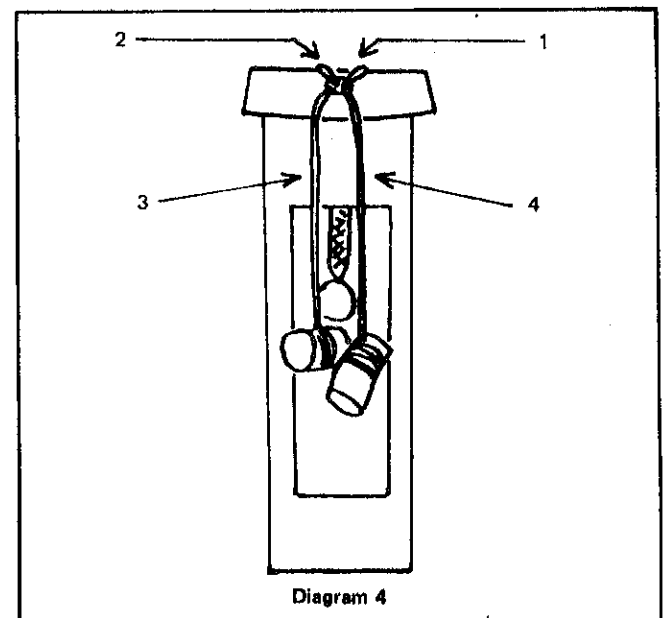


Diagram 4

SALES DOCUMENT FOR SHORN WOOL

Name and address of seller _____

Date _____

Pounds of Wool _____

TOTAL PRICE _____

Signature of Buyer _____

- - - - - cut here - - - - -

SALES DOCUMENT FOR SHORN WOOL

Name and address of seller _____

Date _____

Pounds of Wool _____

TOTAL PRICE _____

Signature of Buyer _____

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SALES DOCUMENT FOR SHORN WOOL

Name and address of seller _____

Date _____

Pounds of Wool _____

TOTAL PRICE _____

Signature of Buyer _____

REGISTRATION FORM

Seven Valley Weavers' Guild

JEAN CASE SILK WORKSHOP

April 6 and 7, 1979

April 6

I will attend the Friday daytime session.
Enclosed is my payment of _____

I will attend the Friday evening session.
Enclosed is my payment of _____

April 7

I will attend the Saturday daytime session.
Enclosed is my payment of _____

OR

April 6 and 7

I will attend both the Friday and Saturday
daytime sessions. Enclosed is my payment
of _____

Mail this entire page to: (Checks payable to Seven Valley Weavers' Guild)

Mrs. Dora Swart
1151 Ellis Hollow Road
Ithaca, New York 14850 (607/272-3370)

Below please list your name, address, and telephone number:

Tel. _____

Co-chairmen:

Mrs. Ruth Kerr
Mrs. Dora Swart