

MAY 2013

ROVINOS

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wayne Harbert sent me the following slate of candidates from the nominating committee:

President, Sharon Gombas;  
Vice president, Sue Quick;  
Treasurer, Vickie Marsted;  
Secretary, Lynn Anguish.

This does not mean that you can not still volunteer to run for one of these positions as there will be an election held if there is more than one candidate for any office. The important voluntary positions have some new names as well:

Newsletter editor, Wayne Harbert;  
Web mistress, Teresa Porri;  
Roc Day Chair, Teresa Porri,  
Keeper of the key, Sharon Gombas;  
Special programs, Marjorie Inana; and Monthly programs, Audrey Lowes.

Good luck to the incoming officers and volunteers. Remember it is our guild and we all need to be active if it is to succeed.

*Jim*

**May 11**

## Spin - In

President- [Jim Johnson](#)  
Vice President - [Sue Quick](#)  
Secretary - [Audrey Lowes](#)  
Treasurer - [Vickie Marsted](#)  
Newsletter Editor - [Susan Sarabasha](#)  
Membership - [Wayne Harbert](#)  
Programming - [Sharon G](#) & [Marjorie I](#)  
Web Mistress - [Teresa Porri](#)  
Roc Day - [Teresa Porri](#)

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The Black Sheep meet from 11am - 3pm on the 2nd Saturday of each month at All Saints Church Parish Hall, Route 34B, in Lansing, New York

<-- [the Knitted Boyfriend](#)



# This 'n That

**The Charka Workshop** with Glenna Chumbly was attended by 5 participants. We all learned a lot about



charkas. Glenna gave us an amazing collection of materials to experiment with. Included in our bags were at least 15 fiber samples ranging from various cotton preparations, to wool top and

keep in our spinning bags and a plastic container which should come in handy when we ply the yarn we spin.

Some of us perfected our long draw technique, some of us practiced spinning from the fold. Two participants had charkas from India which often



need some tweeking to work correctly. Glenna was able to make these work fine. Two of us had Bosworth charkas to work on. Ellie May got to try a variety of them since she doesn't currently have one.

Glenna also brought several upright charka for us to try. Although I own a charka and have spun a bit on it, I got lots of useful hints for



roving, to silk. we also received a booklet written by Glenna which give a lot of the info she covered during the day, plus a handy multitool to

preparing the roving for spinning to positioning the charka in order to get a longer yarn before I wound onto the spindle.

## Fibery Events



**MD Sheep & Wool Fest**  
W. Friendship, MD  
May 4 & 5

**MA Sheep & Woolcraft Fair**  
May 25 & 25  
Cummington, MA

**CNY Fiber Festival**  
Bouckville, NY  
June 8 & 9

**Wool Day at the Troy Fair**  
July 24th  
Troy, Bradford Cty, PA

**Finger Lakes FF**  
Hemlock, NY  
Sept 21 & 22

**VT Sheep & Wool Fest**  
Turnbridge, VT  
Sept 28 & 29

**S Adirondack Fiber Fest**  
East Greenwich, NY  
Oct 5 & 6

**NYS Sheep & Wool Fest**  
Rhinebeck, NY  
Oct 19 & 20



## More Guild History by Wayne

### The Spinner as Missionary: Teaching and reaching out.

I seldom leave a meeting of our Guild without some new, eye-opening (if not jaw dropping) piece of wisdom to ponder and delight in, gleaned from one of my fellow spinners--whether it is Lois explaining the function of a rare antique Swedish band loom, or Lindsay showing how you can use an angel food cake cutter to clean a drum carder, or Alison showing how to turn a broken spindle chair into a niddy-noddy, or Susan showing us her article in *Knitter's Magazine* on using internal I-cords in knitting, or Teresa simplifying for us the complexities of knitting calculations for repeating patterns, or Tammy telling us how to turn a discarded CD case into a yarn caddy, or Rosane demonstrating her deft and elegant technique of spinning on a supported spindle, just to cite a few recent examples. Two conclusions are inescapable. The first is that we are a singularly ingenious lot. The second is that we are, above all, a circle of teachers. We come to our monthly meetings chomping at the bit to share ideas, histories, inventions, techniques,

innovations, brainstorm and discoveries with others who we know will receive them enthusiastically. We also seldom pass up an opportunity to show off our various crafts to those outside our circle, whether in the heat of the Ithaca Scottish



Games or the wet and chill of the Eight Square Schoolhouse dedication, whether for our elders at Oak Hill nursing home or for the kids at Judy's Day in the Cornell Plantations.

For all of that, we would be hard pressed to equal the zeal with which our founders approached their outreach tasks in the heady, early days of the movement; they were not just teachers but evangelists and missionaries,

who, sworn "to promote interest in spinning by educating the public through displays, workshops and lectures," set out to start the world spinning.

The efforts began at home; guild meetings in the early days were ever so much like classrooms, complete with lectures and slide shows, and the marathon dyeing sessions bore a striking resemblance to chemistry or home economics labs. The summer/ fall 1976 schedule featured back-to-back workshops on spinning for beginners, mordanting, dyeing, preparation of fleece, spinning different animal fibers, spindle spinning, spinning different non-animal fibers, and Ikat dyeing. Jean Nowack gave presentations on designing sweaters and on knitting with handspun. In addition to her lecture notes, our digital archives include a poster she created, in the best spirit of experimental science, featuring blocks of the same fiber spun and knit in the grease, spun in the grease and then washed and knit, and, finally, both spun and knit after washing. Gretchen Sachse gave lectures on wool

## More History cont'd from Wayne

grading, and put together a slideshow on spinning which she intended not only for her fellow spinners but for the general public. "It will be geared for schools and other



groups, and for use with or without an accompanying demonstrator." Kay Ross lectured the guild on wool and wool products, on natural dyeing, and preparing fleece. Her multipage typescripts for these presentations are also preserved in the Guild's archives. There were other slide shows, too, and field trips to sheep barns and wool mills for good measure.

And they took the show on the road as well. You could find Blacksheep spinning with senior citizens, with

children in Newfield, Enfield, Fall Creek, West Hill schools, with Girl Scouts and 4Hers, in Stewart Park, in the Ithaca Library, on the Commons, at the Fall-In Festivals at Cornell Plantations, the Cayuga Nature Center, the History Center, the Farmers' Market, and the North Campus Union, at the Marathon Maple Festival, at Master/Apprentice Field Days, Ithaca Festivals, and Heritage Days. (Jean Nowack recalls the events at schools as not so successful as some of the other venues—something having to do with the average attention span of the audience, one imagines.) They almost always demonstrated in costume of another age. A few of us still demonstrate in old-timey clothes sometimes, so our outfits fit in, but in those early days, in a movement borne along by Bicentennial Fever, period-appropriate attire was *de rigueur*, as can be seen in the accompanying picture from the Ithaca Journal in 1975. The announcement for the second Wool Day included the request that participants "wear your Bicentennial costume if you have one."

Wool Day was the Guild's major outreach event in the early days. The first of them, held in a pavilion in Stewart Park on a Saturday in May 1976, drew a crowd of 300, who came to see spinning, natural dyeing, and weaving demonstrations, exhibits on shearing, knitting, and crocheting, and a sheep-to-shawl event. The dyers (Doris Brown and Ann Jansen) used nettles, walnut hulls, grape skins, cochineal, bedstraw and onionskins. The Blacksheep and numerous other guilds and shops sold fleece, yarn and other items there, too. And there was a Golden Fleece competition, with fifteen fleeces entered. Bill Close of King Ferry took first and second places, and the top fleeces were auctioned off for \$1.50 a pound. The judges were given handspun caps knit by Jean Warholc and Suzie Hokanson. Though fleeces were sold and there was a table for member-made items, the emphasis was decidedly on the crafty rather than the commercial. It was a good thing, too; the total expenditures for that first Wool Day were \$57.26 and the revenues were \$50.22, for a net loss of \$7.04. The

## And more interesting history cont'd.

second Wool Day featured demonstrations of walking wheels, castle wheels, Saxony wheels, spindles, carding machines, rainbow dyeing, natural dyeing, fleece sorting, a children's corner and Ellie May's sheep. That year the event made a profit of \$1.76, though the Best All-Around fleece sold for a disappointing \$0.75 a pound. Wool Day continued as the Guild's big annual public event for several more years, though each of them prompted a flurry of after the fact soul-searching, which invariably included laments about the weather (May being a risky month for outdoor activities, then as now), discussions about whether the demands of mounting a program of such magnitude could be sustained, issues with park policies and the like. In time, Roc Day came to incorporate some of the public demonstrations and instruction that had characterized Wool Day, though on a much reduced scale. In the beginning, though Roc Day was not a public event, as it has become, but a modest in-house celebration for Guild

members and a few of their guests.

One of the more sustained and formal outreaches by Guild members were fiber-related craft classes taught on North Campus at Cornell starting in the mid 70's and continuing on into the early 80s'. Kay Ross taught classes on drop spindle spinning and wheel spinning, Masa Kinoshita taught beginning weaving (three levels), tapestry, T-spoon chemistry dyeing and Japanese braiding, Nancy Morey-Brower taught crochet and knitting, and Jean Nowack taught chair caning there—also in costume.

These outreaches could not help but turn spectators into acolytes, because watching spinning is magic, after all, as Karey Solomon notes. Karey, remembering demonstrations at 4H Acres where "Jean Warholc created a seemingly bottomless indigo pot and someone else brought llamas" observes, "I think the magic of our demonstrations, the animals and the indigo brought a lot of new spinners into the fold." Sally Marx found her

way into one of the first of Kay Ross' spinning classes on North Campus, and from there into the Guild. She had already acquired a spinning wheel back in Massachusetts, and signed up for the class shortly after moving to Ithaca. She characterizes that decision as life changing, and she continues to pay it forward. Although no longer an active spinner, every Memorial Day she spins at the Freese Farm Museum in Spencer with third-graders who have earned the treat of hands-on instruction by completing a unit on wheels and other basic machines (See? Spinning really IS science!). We honor our teachers by teaching others.



## ROBIN RUSSO WORKSHOP SPONSORED BY BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS

NOV 2 AND NOV 3

COUNTRY INN AND SUITES, 3707 STATE ROUTE 281, CORTLAND NEW YORK

Robin Russo is an accomplished spinner and popular workshop teacher. She regularly teaches at SOAR and at Rheinbeck. She has had numerous articles in Spin Off. These should be informative, fun and productive days.

Sat. Nov. 2 we will be spinning and learning about silk. Robin says we will cover everything about silk from raising silkworms to spinning every form of silk available. The class involves a little science, geography, history and lots of spinning. We examine silk fabrics, threads and fibers with magnification devices, reel cocoons, make our own hankies and blend silk with other fibers.

Sunday Nov. 3 we will be learning about exotic fibers. This class will cover cashmere, yak, camel, qiviut, llama, alpaca, mohair, pygora and angora. Each animal's geography, history, and fiber properties will be discussed. We also will spin from raw fiber, commercially prepared fiber and our own fiber preparations. Wheel adjustments, spinning techniques and fiber preparation will be highlighted.

COST (materials fee is included)

One day \$75 Members

Both days \$140 Members

Non Members \$85 per workshop

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Send check to Marjorie Inana, 41 W. Court St., Cortland, New York, 13045

MAKE CHECK OUT TO BLACKSHEEP HANDSPINNERS

Silk Workshop Nov 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Exotic Workshop Nov 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Both days \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ and Email \_\_\_\_\_



Please fill this out  
and either bring it  
to a meeting or  
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13045



## Membership Form

*Please type or print*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **DUES Record:**

2011 2014

2012 2015

2013 2016

Joined guild in \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

preferred email: PRINT NEATLY please \_\_\_\_\_

preferred phone # \_\_\_\_\_ birthday month (*opt*) \_\_\_\_\_

This info will be made available to the guild membership. If you wish to remain anonymous please let Char know.

Please list your wheel(s)

We welcome spinners of all skill levels. How long have you been spinning? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you: Knit? Weave? Crochet? Dye - (*Natural or chemical*) ?

Which of your skills might you be willing to share with a member or the group?

ie: teach beginning spindling or spinning or dyeing; teach a spinning / knitting / crocheting skill, etc

If you raise any fiber animals, please list them here \_\_\_\_\_

Which committee(s) are you interested in joining?

- Roc Day
- Membership
- Programming
- Charity Works
- Outreach including Events & Activities Schedule for non guild members
- Newsletter - advisory & review
- None
- Library
- Education
- Website
- Nominating Committee (*occasional*)

Would you be interested in chairing or co-chairing one of these groups? If yes, which one(s)?

*Newsletters are sent via email. If you would prefer to get yours via snail mail please give 12 SASE envelopes to Sharon Gombas. Postage should be \$2 per envelope.*



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### *To place an ad*


A check for \$5.00 made to BSHG for an ad to run  
 three times for members; \$5/month for non  
 members should be sent to our treasurer: Vickie  
 Marsted, 29 Lincoln Ave. Cortland, NY 13045.

Send the ad to the newsletter editor, [Susan S. sarabasha@earthlink.net](mailto:Susan S. sarabasha@earthlink.net)


If you have a question for her or others, you can  
 email us through the links on page 1.

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