

JUNE 2013

ROVINOS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings! The season for gardening, vacationing, and going to fiber festivals is here. While gardening began for me in March, I look forward to the others, as well as to taking a greater interest in our guild as its new president.

A big "thank you" to Jim for the leadership and organization he provided over the last four years. It appears that it IS possible to herd cats; I will, with your help, attempt to follow his example.

The group has seen a number of new faces lately. Please tell us what you need in the way of instruction, and what we can do to help you on your fiber journey. Several of us are available for one on one spinning at your convenience. Time not spent chasing sheep, weeding or watering is very appealing to me, so please ask.

Thank you to Terry Winer for the inspiring and informative tutorial on designing triangular shawls at the May meeting. Did you get a chance to examine all the incredible shawls she brought? I am trying to work design time around the above-mentioned chores.

It is time to start thinking about the New York State Fair, scheduled for August 22 through September 2. BSHG members have been part of

the fair for many years, volunteering in the wool booth, submitting entries to the competitions, or demonstrating in the Ag museum. We have, though not in recent years, entered teams in the sheep to shawl competition, back when shearing was part of the event. For the last several years a group of us has chosen a day to demonstrate at the wool booth, half taking the 10-2 shift and the other half the 2-5:30 shift. We will again choose a day to go, and can talk about this as a group. Committing to one shift leaves the remainder of the day open to view competition entries, the butter sculpture, and the animals, and to eat of course. I encourage all to enter their spinning, knitting etc, to keep our craft in the public eye.

It is my hope that you will communicate to me, and each other, your thoughts on the direction you would like to see the guild take, techniques you would like to learn, and any concerns you may have. In an effort to increase and improve our fiber skills, we would love to hear from you re any fiber skill that you are interested in sharing with the group.

Spin on, and I hope to see you in June.
---Sharon

June 8

Ellie May will provide information on what makes a good fair entry, and why. Bring any items you have questions about, etc. We will have a fun contest. Please bring your wheel and a set or two of knitting needles size 10 or similar. Other materials will be provided.

President [Sharon Gombas](#)
Vice President [Sue Quick](#)
Secretary [Lynne Anguish](#)
Treasurer [Vickie Marsted](#)
Newsletter [Wayne Harbert](#)
Membership [Marjorie Inana](#)
Programming [Audrey Lowes & Marjorie Inana](#)
Web Mistress [Teresa Porri](#)
Roc Day [Teresa Porri](#)

In this Issue

- P. 2 NEW OFFICERS, A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR, IDEA OF THE MONTH, EVENTS CALENDAR**
- P. 3 A WAULK IN THE PARK**
- P. 4 PICTURES**
- P. 6 RUSSO WORKSHOP**
- P. 7 MEMBERSHIP FORM**
- P. 8 & 9 ADVERTISEMENTS**

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.

Officers for 2013-2014

The following officers were elected by acclamation at our May meeting:

President: Sharon Gombas
Vice President: Sue Quick
Treasurer: Vickie Marsted
Secretary: Lynne Anguish

The following volunteers have stepped forward for the various volunteer positions in the Guild:

Webmistress: Teresa Porri
Newsletter: Wayne Harbert
Membership: Marjorie Inana
Program Coordinators:
 Monthly: Audrey Lowes
 Special: Marjorie Inana
Roc Day: Teresa Porri

The membership expressed its gratitude to our outgoing president, Jim Johnson, and our outgoing newsletter editor, Susan Sarabasha, for sterling service in particularly demanding roles.

Idea of the Month

Alison Treaster, though a spinner only since December, has jumped into the craft with both feet and both hands, not to mention extraordinary ingenuity. She assembled her own spinning wheel and decorated it with wood-burned sheep, made her own wool combs out of iron rods purchased at Lowes, and assembled a niddy-noddy from parts of a broken spindle chair.

A note from the editor

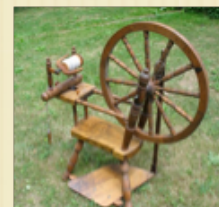
It is with not a little trepidation that I take over as newsletter editor from Susan, who has produced such striking issues for us for the past few years. The encouragement, hands-on instruction and templates she has provided me with have persuaded me that I really can do this, though. Time will tell. The format of the newsletter will remain largely the same, but, unable to resist a platform for spouting off, I will be adding an "Editor's Corner," on page three, in which I will ramble on a bit about some little matter relating to our crafts that happened to have caught my interest, and that I hope will interest you as well. This month's EC talks about a special event planned for the Ithaca Scottish Games to be held at the end of June.

For the rest of the content, I am hoping that I can rely on you, Dear Readers. Please, if you have attended an event, or know of one upcoming, or if you have developed a technique, or made a discovery, send me pictures and write-ups about it, so that we can share it with others. This is your newsletter, after all. The deadline for inclusion in the newsletter is the 24th of the preceding month.



Alison with her wool combs and niddy-noddy

Fibery Events



CNY Fiber Festival
Bouckville, NY
June 8 & 9

Black Sheep tent at the Ithaca Scottish Games
Stewart Park, June 29-30.
Contact [Wayne](#) for information

Waulking the tweed at the Scottish Games, Saturday and Sunday 1:00.

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

Finger Lakes FF
Hemlock, NY
Sept 21 & 22

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

Homestead Harvest Festival, Southworth Homestead, Dryden, Oct 5, is seeking spinners. If interested, contact [Wayne](#)

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

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

Editor's Corner: A Waulk in the Park

There will of course be a Black Sheep tent at the Ithaca Scottish Games and Celtic Festival, June 29-30. We've become a fixture there by now. This summer's Games, however, will include another fiber-related event which may be of interest to some of our members—a chance to participate in a traditional Gaelic tweed-waulking, and to learn to sing a Gaelic waulking song or two in the process. The demonstration is being organized by Kate Cushing, an emerita member of our Guild.

So what exactly IS waulking? When newly woven wool cloth was taken from the loom it was stiff and thin, and something needed to be done to shrink, soften and full it. In the Gaelic areas of Scotland, this was, until recent times, accomplished by 'waulking' it. An even number of women sat facing each other around a long table, half on one side, half on the other. The ends of the cloth were sewn together to make a circle, and then it was soaked in hot urine. [Yes they really did that! Water will suffice for this summer's demonstration—there's such a thing as carrying authenticity too far!] The cloth was then passed sunwise, from right hand to left, around the table. Each participant grabbed a part of it, gathered it in with a kneading motion, twisted it, passed it to the left, and then grasped again to the right, until at length

it was supple and full. (As a linguistic note, *waulking* is a Scottish English variant of *walking*; they both come from Old English *wealcian* 'to roll up', which was originally used only in connection with the fulling of cloth. The modern meaning of *walking*, 'getting from one place to another by foot,' arose only later, perhaps in the same sort of way that "Let's roll" has come to mean "Let's move" in modern colloquial English.) Waulking cloth was very tedious, unpleasant work, and to keep up both rhythm and spirits, there arose a special kind of working song, unknown elsewhere in Western Europe, called a waulking song (in Gaelic, *òran luadhaidh*), in which the song leader chants an opening line, and the rest respond with a chorus, often consisting of nonsense syllables, or vocables. Thereafter, the leader sings the lines of the song that tell the tale, one at a time, with the others singing the refrain after each one. The lines of the verses are usually each repeated, to stretch the song out a bit. As they grasp the cloth, the participants pound it on the table in time with the tune. Two hundred or so waulking songs are known from the islands of the Outer Hebrides. Some are perhaps 400 years old. Many have complex rhythms and melodies. Most are love songs,

some wistful, some mournful, some playful and risqué ("Beloved Calum is my sweetheart. He did not lie under my bedclothes last night. He will not lie there tonight if stone and lime will keep him out. Beloved Calum is my sweetheart.")

I sat at a waulking table once before, at a Celtic language teachers' conference in Cape Breton Island, over a decade or so ago, together with some of the last generation of speakers of Scottish Gaelic in those parts. That event was all about the music, though, and we were only pretending to waulk the cloth, which was already well-used and perfectly dry. And most of the people sitting around the table were men, which would have been unheard of in the olden days; it seems that as long as real work was involved, waulking was purely a woman's activity, but after it came to be practiced just for the music, and the passing of the cloth from hand to hand only symbolic, men were happy to get in on the action. Bill Cournoyer, the sheep shearer who has been our neighbor at the games for several years, has made a real handwoven cloth to work with at the Scottish Games. The tweed will be waulked both Saturday and Sunday at 1:00. We encourage you to come and give it a try.

--Wayne



Wolf in sheep's clothing? (from Susan)

Oops!

My editorial omissions began even before I became editor. The piece on guild history that I wrote for the May newsletter made reference to a picture from the 1975 Ithaca Journal, in which Guild members were spinning in costume with school kids. But I neglected to submit the picture along with the article, so, here it is. --Wayne



Shawl by Becky Terwilliger



Scarf and mittens by
Kelli Terwilliger



ROBIN RUSSO WORKSHOP SPONSORED BY BLACK SHEEP HANDSPINNERS

NOV 2 AND NOV 3 9:00 to 4:00

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 Rhinebeck. 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.

TIMES: 9-4 each day with an hour for lunch

COST (materials fee is included)

One day \$75 Members

Both days \$140 Members

Non Members \$85 per workshop

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

MAKE CHECK OUT TO BLACK SHEEP 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 mail it with your check for \$20, made out to Black Sheep Handspinners Guild, to: Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln St, Cortland, NY 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

The cost for ads is \$5.00 for three months for members, \$5.00 per month for non-members. Send a check made out to BHSG to our treasurer, Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln Ave, Cortland, NY 13045. Send the ad to the newsletter editor, newsletter@blacksheephandspinnersguild.com. Black & white business cards are published free for current members.



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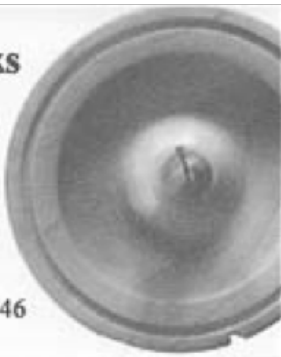
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