

February  
2015

ROVING

## A Message from the President

Greetings friends!

And to all those whose efforts went toward making Roc Day the successful and fun day it was, my sincere thanks. Judging by the comments received, and what I observed, a good time was had by all, so give yourself a pat on the back and come to the February meeting with your ideas on how we can possibly improve on that. I do expect to see some new faces as well, so bring your ideas and show-and-tell items for a good visit at circle time.

The absence of our friend Robin Nistock (and her lovely fleeces) was lamented by several attendees, but take heart, as she will be joining us in March to talk to us about her flock, and about fleeces. If you have not spun Cotswold or the other breeds she raises (more on that at her website nistockfarms), be prepared for some wool lust.

April brings us the ever-popular garage sale/member-made event, so be thinking of that as you start your spring cleaning. I do not suggest that one should do more than think about cleaning of course; that in itself is tiring, I find. Lots to look forward to!

See you there,  
Sharon

## Mittens for Koalas, Pouches for Kangaroos

The [International Fund for Animal Welfare](#) (IFAW) is asking the public to help rehabilitate rescued koala bears after they were burned in recent wildfires, by donating or creating mittens for their burnt paws. (They are also seeking knit pouches for orphaned kangaroos.)

February 14

February: Roc Day  
debriefing (and Valentine's  
Day!)

March: Robin Nistock,  
Cotswold Sheep

April: Garage Sale

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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, NY.

## Love and the Spindle Whorl in Ancient Gaul—by Wayne

The last time our monthly meeting fell on Valentine's Day was in 2009. Since that convergence has rolled around again, I thought I'd reprint this little piece, which I wrote for the newsletter back then:

The Gauls lived in what is now France, back in the days of the Roman Empire. Their descendants still live there, for that matter, but in ancient times they had their own language (related to Welsh and Gaelic). After they were conquered by Julius Caesar they adopted Latin, too, and eventually Gaulish died out. We now know it only from inscriptions carved on stones, coins, lead tablets, bracelets, and--would you believe it--ceramic hand spindle whorls. Most of the inscriptions are very boring, but I've recently discovered that the ones on spindle whorls are considerably more interesting than the rest. It seems that back in those days (2000 years ago or so) they were usually inscribed with little love notes, in Gaulish or Latin or sometimes a mixture of the two, and apparently boys gave them to their sweeties as gifts. The messages were affectionate, sometimes teasing, and occasionally very risqué. They remind me of those little candy hearts with messages that show up around Valentine's Day. Here are some examples.

"Greetings to you, girl"  
 "Hello. Goodbye. You are pretty"  
 "Good day, madam. I'm thirsty"  
 "Pretty girl, let us drink!"  
 "Come, o elegant one!"  
 "Greetings, sister!"  
 "Pretty girl, give me beer!"  
 "My girl, take my little whorl!"  
 "I am a good and pretty girl"



Now there's an ancient custom worth reviving! So, if you're still wondering what to give your sweetheart,...

Suzanne spinning for the first time with a supported spindle, under Rosane's tutelage



## Fibery Events

For those who have registered, the 2015 retreat scheduled for the last weekend in February will be held at the Watson Homestead in Painted Post. The venue can be seen at [www.watsonhomestead.com](http://www.watsonhomestead.com)

Arrive Friday, February 27th and leave March 1st.

Contact [ahfurman@yahoo.com](mailto:ahfurman@yahoo.com) for

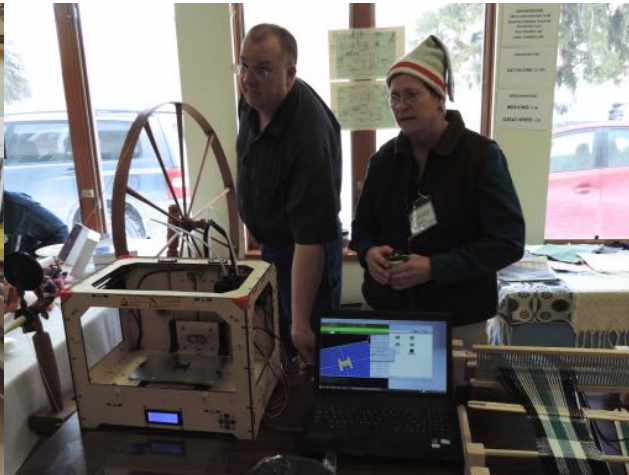
Patsy Zawistoski Spinning Workshop!

The Southern Tier Fiberarts Guild, with the support of the Mid Atlantic Fiber Association (MAFA), is offering a two-day spinning workshop in June, with Patsy Zawistoski.

Registration is now open! Contact Carol Wood [woodrose46@yahoo.com](mailto:woodrose46@yahoo.com)



## Roc Day Pictures



On this page are pictures of some of our Roc Day demonstrators. Where else but at a Black Sheep Roc Day celebration could you ever hope to get a great wheel and a 3D printer in the same frame? (The heddle, ratchets, etc., of the table loom in the top left picture were printed on the 3D printer.)







Sharon, Ellie  
and the  
auction  
display



The shawl

The  
spinning  
circle



A gallery of  
prizewinners in  
the skein  
competition



**960 Reasons to Give—by Audrey Lowes**

As most of you know, I collect yarn to make hats and mittens for the Newark Valley Head Start Program. They usually have 20 active Headstart 4 year olds and 20 pre-Head Start (at home) youngsters each year.

I had heard a rumor last winter that the program might be disbanded in Newark Valley but forged ahead collecting yarns, hats and mittens (as well as making many)—hoping it wasn't so. Much to my surprise (after finishing the hats) I learned that the program had lost its sponsor in Owego and would not be in operation this year. What to do with all these hats and mittens? I hemmed and hawed and after asking Ellie, Sharon and a few others, finally decided that they weren't helping anyone sitting in my spare bedroom and called the Newark Valley Elementary School nurse. My one hope was that they would be used in this area as folks here are really feeling the financial crunch.

Made an appointment with the school nurse (a substitute - never did learn that story) and proceeded there the following day. Newark Valley Elementary School grounds are quite large. My instructions were to not go in the main building, but another one nearby. Imagine juggling a "super stuffed" shopping bag brimming with hats and mittens (individually put into SLIPPERY plastic bags) and not being able to open a locked door. There were a series of buses lined up outside - which to me seemed strange for 10 in the morning. But the last driver in the line watched me struggling and tooted the horn indicating the main door (the only door I was instructed not to go into since it was so far from the nurse's office - wherever that was.) I shook my head, No, at the driver, and he opened his door asking where I wanted to go. He gave me convoluted instructions, saw the vacant look in my eye and said, "Get on the bus, I'll take you." I did—and he did.

"Well what to my wondering eyes should appear" (as I got on the bus) but six LITTLE kids and two teachers. They asked what was in the jumbo bag and I explained it was hats and mittens that had been for Head Start but now was going to the school nurse instead. They replied, "We are Head Start, the program started up again last week!"

Now I was in a pickle - the school nurse was waiting to meet me. So I let the driver take me to the right building and show me the inverted entrance (I never would have found it). Waved goodbye to the LITTLE kids and their teachers and proceeded to the office which was located just inside the door of the other building. There the administrative staff politely asked my business and called the school nurse to verify my appointment and had her come to locked entrance area to meet me. I explained what had just happened with the Head Start meeting on the bus, and after she oohed and ahed over the bagful, we both agreed that they belonged with the Head Start Program. Though, she did say that hats for the older kids are needed too, the teachers usually put in requests to the school nurse's office - so some food for thought there and the right connection.



So off I toddled to my car which seemed miles away (okay so it wasn't - but I did have a precarious load which I was dead set on not dumping). Took my car across the road and down a few buildings to the Head Start building. They were tickled with the windfall and had me fill out the usual New York State matching gift form (in other words, if you donate something of worth, a matching amount is paid to the organization by New York State.)

Those little odds and ends of yarn that you have so generously donated amounted to \$960 to Project Head Start as well as assuring warm heads and hands!

A few things I learned from this experience:

School Bus drivers are WONDERFUL!

Schools are extremely SECURE!

Giving always FEELS GOOD!

Get a bigger bag next year!

-Audrey

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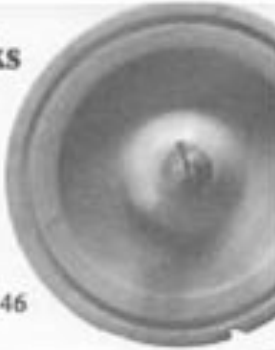
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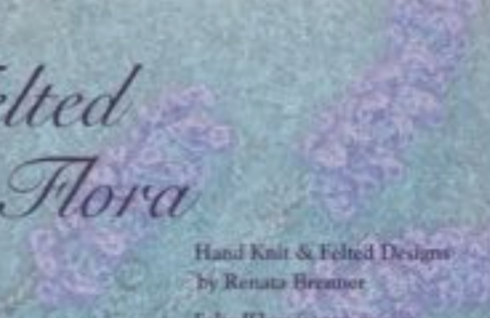
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