



May
2015

ROVING

A Message from the President

Greetings all! I've been thinking about the many and various fiber events available to us this season, from Maryland this week to Rhinebeck in October. This led me to thoughts of the NY state fair and its competitions related to fiber. As related to you last summer, a bad case of procrastination meant that last-year's entries were not submitted, which means that they were set aside uncompleted, which means that I have 3 entries almost ready for this year, to include a sweater missing just a sleeve. Talk about a silver lining! One project was set aside with a question regarding seaming, another for a beading question, which led to thoughts of unfinished projects in general, and the suspicion that I am not alone in possessing several. Perhaps we can devote a meeting to our UFOs, pairing those with questions with those with solutions, or pairing those needing a kick in the pants with encouragement. Let me know what you think.

—Sharon

Navajo Plying with Alison

At the May meeting Alison will attempt to teach this old dog a new trick--Navajo plying--so that I can proceed with a spinning UFO. Feel free to join us!

—Sharon

May 9

An ice cream social! Bring a favorite topping (ice cream provided), your projects and ideas for show and tell, and ideas for nominees for guild offices. We will be electing our new officers.

President [Sharon Gombas](#)
 Vice President [Sue Quick](#)
 Secretary [Lynne Anguish](#)
 Treasurer [Vickie Marsted](#)
 Newsletter [Wayne Harbert](#)
 Membership [Marjorie Inana](#)
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 Webmaster [Rosane Mordt](#)

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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.

Your Guild Needs You! Call for Nominations (including Self-nominations)

We will be voting on our slate of officers at this month's meeting. Officers customarily serve for two years. **All of the following positions are now open for nominations, and self-nominations are encouraged.**

President

Vice President

Secretary/ archivist

Newsletter editor

Some candidates have already expressed an interest in some of these positions, but that shouldn't deter you from throwing your hat into the ring. We are particularly interested in new candidates for **President**. If interested in standing for office (no running required), contact Wayne or Sharon.

Summer Activities

The **Ithaca Celtic Festival** will be a one-day event this year, Saturday, June 13, in Stewart Park. This is, unfortunately, the date of our June Guild meeting. The Black Sheep will have a tent there nonetheless, and I am hoping that some of you will be able to join in (after the meeting, perhaps). Demonstrators get in free. We will be doing our **traditional waulking of the tweed** there too, while singing waulking songs in Gaelic under the direction of Kate Cushing and waulking a huge piece of tweed woven on a barn loom by Bill Cournoyer. Bill will not be able to shear sheep this time, by the way, so **the organizers are looking for a volunteer to demonstrate shearing.** (Sheep will be provided). If interested, or if you know someone who might be, contact Wayne.

We also still have to decide which meeting in the summer to devote to our **field trip to the Home Textile Tool Museum** in Orwell PA. The candidates are:

July 11 – Sock Knitting Machines with Louise Neu. Claire Moore demonstrates weaving on the Triangle Loom.

August 8 – Small Looms Saturday.

The Ithaca Waulking Group will be giving a demonstration at the HTTM museum on August 29.

—Wayne

Fibery Events

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. Contact Carol Wood
woodrose46@yahoo.com

The Ithaca Celtic Festival will be on Saturday, June 13, in Stewart Park and as usual they are looking for spinners. Contact [Wayne](#).

Finger Lakes Fiber Festival Sept 19 & 20. Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock NY. 10-5. Adults \$7.00/ day.
www.gvgh.org/fiber-fest



Tammy showing off her new wool picker

Pictures from the April meeting



Teresa showing off the results of applying mathematical calculations to the problem of even-width rows.



Tammy would be glad to share this murine scarf pattern. A great hit with grandkids.

Anne and Jean in the spinning circle. Victoria in the background, with one of her beautiful felted pictures.

Shawl Competition for Roc Day

Dear Spinners/Weavers and Knitters! We are expanding our Roc Day yarn competition. This year it will include a project competition. You have a choice of making a shawl using one of the two provided patterns as a beginning template. The yarn used for this project must be handspun. Any questions or additional suggestions regarding this project are welcome—Alison and Sharon

Pattern 1: Eight Triangles Shawl

Spinner's Geometry: knit with basic right-angled triangles shaped using short rows. Because I am not an excellent knitter, and due to my own perceptual shortcomings, I require a pattern that tells me what I am doing and why. You will be making 8 triangles, each successive one offset from the previous by 15 stitches. Decide in advance on a cast-on that you can easily repeat at the beginning of each new triangle; the long-tail I chose for my first attempt is not a good one. A cable cast-on would do. Working with a multiple of 3 stitches works well for the pattern since every other row decreases by 3 stitches (short rows do not require wrapping; just turn). Edge stitches are slipped purlwise; others are slipped knitwise. There is one traveling marker. Other, stationary markers will be placed as triangles are added. Instructions are given using sock-weight yarn and size 4 circular needle. The model started with 78 stitches. Everything is up for experimentation, of course!

Cast on 78 stitches.

Row 1: Knit (front)

Row 2: Sl1p, knit 2, place traveling marker (this moves 3 stitches each even row), knit to end

Row 3: Sl1p, knit to marker, turn

Row 4: Remove marker, Sl1, knit 2, place traveling marker, knit to end

Repeat rows 3 and 4. The traveling marker will eventually reach the end of the row, at which time another triangle is begun:

Triangle 2 etc:

Row 1: Sl1p, knit until 15 stitches remain on left needle, turn.

Row 2: Place stationary marker (PM). Sl1, K2, place traveling marker (PTM), knit to end, CO 15 stitches

Row 3: Sl1p, K to traveling marker, turn

Row 4: Remove traveling marker, Sl1, K2, PTM, knit to end

Repeat Rows 3 and 4 until traveling marker reaches end of row.

To end: When you have knit the desired number of triangles, you will have on your needle your original 78 stitches plus 15 for each additional triangle knit.

Next row: Sl1p, knit all stitches, removing markers

Knit 4 rows. Bind off.

Pattern 2: Holey Shawl

This shawl is an alternation of stockinette rows and yarnover rows. This is a top-down triangular shawl: work a two-stitch garter stitch edging, a triangular panel, a 2nd yarnover, a **Middle stitch**, a 3rd yarnover, another triangular panel, a 4th yarnover, and finally a two-stitch garter stitch edging. On every right side row, you'll be adding 4 yarnovers. On every wrong side row, you'll be purling them. I usually have one marker next to the **Middle stitch**, so I don't forget to add yarnovers around it.

Stockinette design: RS: k2(edge), yo, k to marker, yo, sm, **M**, yo, k to last 2 sts, yo, k2(edge)
WS: k2(edge), p to last 2 sts, k2(edge)

Yarnover design: RS: k2(edge), yo, k1, yo, *k2tog, yo* to marker, sm, **M**, yo, *k2tog, yo* to last 3 sts, k1, yo, k2(edge)
WS: k2(edge), p to last 2 sts, k2(edge)

Cast on 2 stitches. Knit 7 rows. Rotate work 90 degrees clockwise. Pick up and knit 3 sts, one in each garter ridge. Rotate another 90 degrees clockwise, pick up and knit 2 cast on stitches. Total of 7 stitches.

Row 1 (RS): k2(edge), yo, k1, yo, pm, **M**, yo, k1, yo, k2 (edge)

Row 2 and all wrong side rows: k2(edge), p to middle st, **M**, sm, p to last 2 sts, k2(edge)

Row 3 (RS): k2(edge), yo, k to marker, yo, sm, **M**, yo, k to last 2 sts, yo, k2(edge)

Row 4 – same as row 2

Row 5 - same as row 3

Work at least 8 stockinette designs before start yarnover design. The more yarnover rows you have, the airier your shawl will be.

Example 1. *8 stockinette designs, 1 yarnover design*, repeat until ready for edging, 5 yarnover designs, bind off loosely.

Example 2. *8 stockinette designs, 1 yarnover design, 2 stockinette designs, 1 yarnover design*, repeat until edging, 6 yo designs, bind off loosely.

k – knit **p** – purl **M** – **Middle stitch** **k2tog** – knit 2 stitches together

yo – yarnover **pm** – place marker **sm** – slip marker **RS** – right side

WS – wrong side **st(s)** – stitch(es)



Editor's Corner: Whatsa Madder?

The first signs of spring are making their way to our hilltop after a winter that's best forgotten—snowdrop, crocus and bloodroot blooms, yummy wild leeks, and here and there a purplish spike poking up in the asparagus patch. Those hopeful signs prompted me to take my broadfork out and start turning over beds in the dyers' garden. I started with the madder bed, intending to loosen up the soil around the roots that were left there after last fall's harvest and give them a fresh start. I had harvested the madder patch in the fall, after having waited the three years that they say is the minimum. (Five years is even better, and if you have the patience to wait, the roots are supposed to be an inch thick after fifteen years.) As I turned the bed this week, though, I found very few roots, and was thinking that perhaps I'd been too efficient in harvesting them, and that I might have to replant. Growing madder in these climes may be a stretch anyway. Depending on what you read, it's a Zone 5 plant, or even Zone 6...or even Zone 7! I needn't have worried, though. Moving on to the neighboring patch, where I usually plant the Japanese indigo, I found it to be chock full of madder roots that had made their way under the barriers between the beds in search of greener pastures. Taking these strays into custody, I repatriated them to the madder patch. I'm posting a mugshot of one of the little delinquents here. (The same Japanese indigo patch yielded a bonus harvest of horseradish roots, too, which had similarly gone AWOL from their home base next door.)



The madder I harvested last year is still sitting in my studio, waiting to be used. I'm thinking that I'll bring a vat of it to a Black Sheep meeting sometime this summer, so that we can all give it a try. That will take some advance planning, though; Rita Buchanan says that you're supposed to grind up the dry roots and then brew them in a tea for a month or more in preparation for dyeing.

Madder is one of the oldest dyestuffs, having been in use in Egypt 5000 years ago, famous for its brightness and lightfastness, and it is the only one you can grow in your backyard that will yield brilliant reds. Its only competitors--cochineal, kermes (the source of *crimson*) and Indian lac--are all made of bug juice. Bloodroot, a stunning, prolific and very early wildflower in these parts, shares with madder the property of having a temptingly bright red root, and in fact Jim Liles mentions it as a possible red dyestuff, but I was talked out of even thinking of giving it a try by a wonderful book (Rita Buchanan, 1987, *Growing Plants for Natural Dyes and Fibers*) that I happened to get from Kathy Halton at last month's garage sale. The author provides a cautionary personal anecdote (page 64) about what might lie in wait. It seems that the powerful irritants in bloodroot can continue to lurk in the fiber after dyeing (and even washing), with potentially drastic effects on any spinner adventurous enough to experiment with it. Don't try it at home—or anywhere else, for that matter. Bloodroot is best just admired for its lovely, early blooms. To make things redder, madder's better. —Wayne

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FOR SALE: 1810 Great Wheel purchased from Bill Ralph. Miner's head, spins beautifully. For further info and/or to give it a spin, please contact shelly@chezmyers.com

In an effort to reduce my personal stash, I'd like to sell cotton warp, loop mohair, rug wools, fine wools, rayon and rayon chenille and other interesting stuff at prices ranging from low to ridiculous. I also have a Hansen e-spinner with woolee winder, two bobbins and kate for sale. Contact Karey Solomon at threads@empacc.net.

For sale from my own happy sheep and rabbits in Trumansburg: Navajo-Churro roving in a variety of natural colors

Angora rabbit wool in white
Contact Sharon Berger
@607-592-4649 or
saberger@twcnny.rr.com



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