



A Message from the President

Greetings, all,

My well of witty and thought-provoking repartee, never very deep, is now dry, as is every plant in my too-large garden. I alternate between begging the heavens to open up over Lansing and hurling choice insults regarding their ability to provide even a meager sprinkle. (I did leave three loads of laundry on the line and the car windows open on Monday, so you can thank me for the rain we received). Time not wasted in that manner is spent pumping water from the very low creek, to then be distributed to plants. And deciding which will be chosen to receive water, and which will be allowed to join the lawn in disappearing.

Such is life. On a cheerier note, our August meeting is a no-frills, friendly spin-in. See the notes on Roc Day enclosed in this issue in order to be informed for the September meeting.

Sharon

August 2016

Our August 13th meeting will be in Lansing at All Saints.

We will enjoy A Friendly Spin-In

President	Sharon Gombas
Vice President	Sue Quick
Secretary	Angelika St. Laurent
Treasurer	Vickie Marsted
Newsletter	Angelika St. Laurent
Membership	Marjorie Inana
Programming	Audrey Lowes*
	Audrey phone only 607-657-8242
	Marjorie Inana
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. Exceptions are possible-see location changes in the latest newsletter!

Spinning at the State Fair:

THE WOOL BOOTH at the NY State Fair is looking for spinners and weavers to demonstrate. The guild usually sends a group on the Tuesday or Wednesday in the middle of its run, which this year would be the 30th or 31st, but go any time you want. They have shifts from 10-2, 2-5, and 5-9. Also, Linda will be at the booth most Sundays from noon until 4 preparing fiber for the event, carding, dyeing, setting up the booth. If you are interested you may contact Linda Miller directly at 315-440-6049, or Sharon at sg39@cornell.edu. Entry and parking passes are provided, and it is fun!

La Triennale Internationale des Arts Textiles en Outaouais

La Triennale Internationale des Arts Textiles en Outaouais 2016 is an international fiber focused cultural event. It is held from August 25th to September 16th in several towns in the Outaouais region (Gatineau, Saint-André-Avellin, Plaisance, Portage-du-Fort, Chelsea, Wakefield, Val-des-Monts).

The event features several exhibitions presenting contemporary and traditional fiber arts. Several documentary films will be shown in the context of the event.

For more information see the website: www.triennale-outaouais.com

The Movie 'Yarn'

Anne Furman recommends the movie Yarn by Una Lorenzen. The trailer can be found following this link: <http://www.yarnfilm.com>

Wild Fiber Article on Cashmere Center

An article in Wild Fiber Magazine (www.wildfibermagazine.com) features an article on the trip to the Cashmere Center in the Indish Himalayas. Jean Curry took part in the trip and shared: 'Wangail was a wonderful guy to work with and we had lots of fun with the knitting ladies.'

Upcoming BSHG Meetings:

August 13th, from 11am - 3pm at the All Saints Church Parish Hall, Route 34B, in Lansing, NY.

Waulking

Sat. August 13th
Home Textile Tool Museum,
Orwell Road, Wysox, PA 18854

Triennale Outaouais

August 18th to September 16th
Québec, Canada
www.triennale-outaouais.com

NY State Fair

August 25th to September 5th
581 State Fair Blvd, Syracuse, NY
13209

The Finger Lakes Fiber Festival

Sat./Sun. September 17th/18th
Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock
NY

Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival

Sat./Sun September 24th/25th
392 Old Schuylerville Road,
Greenwich, NY 12834

Homestead Heritage Day

Sat. September 24th, 10am-3pm
14 North Street, Dryden NY
13053

Celtic Festival

Sat. October 8th
Stewart Park, Ithaca NY 14850

New York State Sheep and Wool Festival

Sat/Sun October 15th/16th
Dutchess County Fairgrounds
6550 Spring Brook Avenue
Rhinebeck, NY, 12572

Roc Day 2017:

ROC DAY 2017 is just around the corner, and the time is upon us to get our ducks in a row. The following are the positions that need to be filled for a festival similar to last year's:

PUBLICATIONS: Get information concerning the event to local newspapers and radio stations.

PRINTINGS: to include posters to hang at the event re demos, schedule, vendors, Black Sheep info sheet. Handout for the event to include same info as on posters.

VOLUNTEER Coordinator: Maintains volunteer sign-up sheet. Also means keeping an eye on schedule during the event and finding substitutes as needed to cover missing workers.

VENDOR Coordinator: Contacts interested vendors. May include holding a lottery if more than 9 vendors are interested in participating. Send out letters re who will participate, rules etc.

KITCHEN Coordinator: Start the coffee by 10. Have lunch items ready to eat, dishes out etc. Some supplies will be purchased in advance (Anne Furman has thorough notes on duties etc.). Clean up after lunch. This position comes with helpers.

SET-UP Coordinator: To set up the hall the evening before the event, to include marking floor plan with tape to show demo and vendor sites, set up spinning circle and entry greeting table, also the auction table. Hang posters etc.

COMPETITION Coordinator: Get info to newsletter and guild meetings re competition rules. Set up and watch competition entries at the event, secure prizes. Find volunteers to judge.

ROC DAY Coordinator: Sees that all these jobs are covered. Keeps an eye on the event to ensure that things move smoothly, covers jobs as necessary.

I am sure that I missed something, but the basics are here. Think about helping by covering one of these areas. Think about how we can streamline the work. Bring your thoughts and suggestions to the September meeting for discussion--it is time to begin work on Roc Day 2017 if we are to hold one!

Angora Rabbits

By Angelika St.Laurent

Angora rabbits are a popular pet choice for fiber enthusiasts, who want a fiber animal of their own, but don't have the acreage or energy required to keep larger animals. Angora rabbits, who range in size between just above 4 pounds to whooping 22 pounds, are small enough to be easily kept in a garden, on a porch, or even indoors in an apartment. Some people of course just want a fluffy pet and find themselves purchasing spindles and spinning wheels a few months after they have brought home their rabbit. Gardening spinners appreciate Angora rabbits not just for their fiber, but also for their enthusiasm for all the weeds pulled from the garden and the excellent fertilizer that can be applied directly without any need for composting.



French and Satin Angoras enjoying brussel sprouts.

Angora rabbits have a double coat, consisting out of slightly coarser and stiffer guard hairs and a very fine undercoat. The undercoat fibers measure about 11 microns, making Angora one of the softest fibers available to spinners. Angora is also one of the warmest spinning fibers. It is reported to be six times more insulating than sheep wool. Thus given shelter, some bedding, and a heated water bottle Angora rabbits have no difficulties withstanding our Ithaca winters outdoors. The undercoat fiber tangles and felts readily, which means a rabbit should be regularly groomed to avoid felting on the animal. The more guard hair a rabbit has, the less likely the undercoat is to tangle and the less frequent the grooming has to happen.

The fiber can be harvested in three different ways: Rabbits can be shorn, which is the fastest way, but also results in the shortest staple length. Secondly, the fiber can simply be plucked from the rabbit. Angora rabbits molt frequently, about every four months and the released fiber can be plucked off without causing the rabbit any harm or pain. Plucking rabbit fur keeps the locks straight and organized, ideal for spinning without any further preparation. Thirdly, the undercoat can be collected by simply combing the rabbit with a dog comb and collect the fiber each time the rabbit is groomed. Combing results in spinning fiber that has the least amount of guard hairs in it.

Angora guard hairs are a good deal finer and delicate than guard hair of larger fiber animals. In most cases the presence of guard hairs in the finished yarn/garment will not be noticeable. However, occasionally a rabbit has stronger guard hair, which might be experienced as uncomfortably prickly or



Angora lock with very little guard hair.

tickling. It is always a good idea to make a little sample and wear it against a sensitive skin area, before committing to a large spinning project.

So how to spin that fiber? The short answer is 'slowly'. The longer is: Angora fiber is much more slippery and finer than even the finest merino. Thus angora fiber needs a lot of twist to hold it securely in the yarn. When spinning on a wheel, choose a fast whorl and keep the take up as low as possible. When spindling a very fast, lightweight drop spindle or a supported spindle would be the tool of choice. Plucked or shorn angora can be spun just as it comes from the rabbit. Fiber harvested by combing or brushing often has kinks in it where it wound around the tines of the comb and does better when gently straightened out on cotton carders. Carding angora into rolags also works very well. The spinning approach is pretty much a woolen spinning approach: allow some twist to enter the not yet drafted fiber in your hand then gently pull out and add a lot more twist. A single spun from straight angora or an angora blend should not feel soft and fluffy, when wound on to the cob or bobbin. It is very hard to overspin angora. If in doubt, err to the side of more twist. Singles, that seem almost harsh, will relax beautifully when plied and even more after the finishing bath. The freshly finished yarn will not yet have the typical angora halo. The halo will develop as the yarn is knitted or crocheted up and grow with use. In fact, if a freshly finished yarn already has a halo, there is likely not quite enough twist in it.

Thinner yarn generally holds more twist, thus spinning fine is a good approach to angora fiber. The fiber lends itself beautifully to spin three or four ply lace weight yarn. However not everyone enjoys spinning frog hair, so how fine is fine enough? Compared to other luxury fibers, plugged or combed out angora wool has a relatively long staple length, about three, occasionally even four inches. Thus angora fiber can be spun a bit thicker without losing too much structural integrity. A single that wraps around 15 times an inch is likely to still hold in the fiber well enough. Beyond that, worsted weight or bulky singles from angora are bound to shed over time.

Angora fiber can be blended well with other fiber. Adding fine wool or silk top can make the resulting spinning fiber much less slippery and easier to spin. Reasonably fine drum carders, cotton cards or fine combs work very well as blending tools. As a rule of thumb, the scratchiness of the final yarn will be determined by the coarsest fiber in the mix, the amount of twist needed to hold it all together by the finest fiber.

Angora is very delicate, very warm, and does not have 'memory'. Angora yarn is great for items that are warm, drapey and will not suffer much abrasion like scarves, shawls, or hats. Angora yarn lends itself particularly well to lace projects, which give the yarn room to bloom.



Angora three-ply yarn used as inner layer for mittens.



Young rabbit enjoying golden rod.



Membership Form

Please type or print

Date: _____

DUES Record:

2015	2018
2016	2019
2017	2020

Name _____

Address: _____

Preferred email: PRINT NEATLY _____

Phone # _____

This information will be shared with registered guild members. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let Vicki Marsted know.

Please list your wheel(s) _____

Do you spindle spin? Yes or No (circle)

Do you Knit? Weave? Crochet? Dye? (Natural or Chemical?):

Would you be willing to share your skills with other members (ie: teach beginners, present a meeting topic, demo to the public, etc?)

If you raise fiber animals, please list them here _____

We need your help on committee(s). If you would like to volunteer, let Sharon Gombas, our president, know!!!

- Roc Day
- Programming
- Newsletter
- Membership
- Website
- Outreach
- Treasurer

Our newsletter is distributed electronically. If this is a problem, please contact Sharon Gombas.

Please fill this out and either bring it to a meeting or mail it with your check for \$20 to: Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln St, Cortland, NY 13045

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at threads@empacc.net.

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to BSHG to our treasurer, Vickie Marsted, 29 Lincoln
Ave, Cortland, NY 13045. Send the ad in digital form to
the newsletter editor, angelika@simonstl.com. Black &
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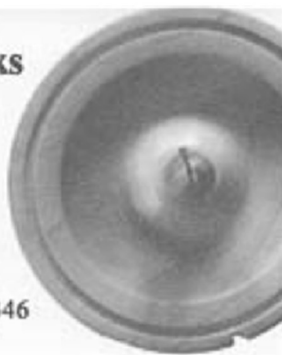
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