



Message from the President

Greetings, all,

I made my list, and checked it twice, and I know you have all been very nice, so I look forward to some holiday fun on the 10th, to include our gift exchange of course. If you wish to participate, bring along a wrapped item in the \$5-\$10 range for our drawing. Bring a favorite holiday goody as well if you wish (optional), and any project you would like to show off. This is a good excuse for putting on that light-up sweater that someone dear presented you with, the one that you cannot bring yourself to dispose of. You might need it on the 10th!

See you there...

Sharon

December 2016

Next meeting is on December 10th
from 11am-3pm , we'll

Spin and Celebrate

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

- p.1 Pres. Message**
- p. 2 Guild News**
- p.2 Sheep Rehome Request**
- P.3 Luna Fiber Studio**
- p.4 Sarah Anderson Workshop**
- p.6-7 Weaving in the Shadows of Volcanoes II**
- p.8 Membership Form**
- p. 9-10 Ads**

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!

Guild News:

December Meeting:

At the December meeting we'll have our traditional gift exchange. To participate, bring a wrapped fiber-related gift of about \$10 value. If you don't like to participate, you are welcome to just join the circle and spin like usual.

Roc Day:

Chinese Auction: The Chinese Auction needs more donations! The Chinese Auction at Roc-Day is the one event that pays the rent for our monthly get-togethers. So, please, make something nice and bring it to the December Meeting.

Tammy is asking for donations of old adult sized T-shirts she can rip into stripes for a rug-weaving project on Roc-Day. If you have T-shirts to donate, please, bring them along at the December meeting, so Tammy has time to prepare them.

Roc Day Competition news: Alison and Anne have started distributing the fiber to be spun for Roc Day at the November meeting. If you would like to enter, but don't have fiber yet, please, contact Alison atreaster9600@gmail.com, Anne Furman ahfurman@yahoo.com, or Sharon sg39@cornell.edu.

Finn Sheep in Need of New Home:

Erika Medina, shepherdess in Caroline (Tompkins County), asks for help to rehome part of her Finn Sheep flock:

We have a flock of 100% pure Finn Sheep (some registered). Our original breeding stock was 3 pregnant ewes (with unrelated lambs) purchased from Point Of View Farm (finnsheep.net)-with a very nice fleece flock.

We currently have proven and unproven ewes (browns,whites,greys) and wethers (various colors)-sweet sheep, good ram companions and nice fleece.

Healthy sheep-very worm resistant

Due to illness in family and a need to move in the near future, we have to shrink our flock.

We would like \$200 for the proven ewes,\$150 for the unproven ewes, and \$75 for the wethers. Willing to accept fair offers and better pricing available when purchasing more than one. We can transport within a reasonable distance. Please contact Erika-(email is best)- emmedina@frontier.com

thanks for helping us find good homes for our sheep-they really are sweet flock with very good fleece. Brian Magee has been our shearer for years and he has commented on the quality of the fleeces too :)

Fiber News

Upcoming BSHG Meetings:

December 10th from 11am - 3pm
at the All Saints Church Parish
Hall, Route 34B, in Lansing,
NY.

Lansing Artisan Fair

Friday, December 2nd, 3-6 pm
Saturday, December 4th, 10am-
5pm

At the Lansing Community Li-
brary, 27 Auburn Road (Route
34B), Lansing, NY

The Temple Beth-El Crafts Fair

Sunday, December 11th, 9am-
3pm

At Temple Beth-El, 402N Tioga
Street, Ithaca, NY

Roc-Day

January 14th , 10am-4pm

at the All Saints Church Parish
Hall, Route 34B, Lansing, NY.

A new Fiber Studio in Trumansburg

Luna Fiber Studio was founded in Trumansburg NY by Sarah Gotowka, owner and director of Earth Grown Shades, a business rooted in sustainable color. Luna is a fully equipped weaving studio, with the intention of becoming an all inclusive textile studio. We are nestled amongst the quaint Second Floor Studios on Main St. located above Gimme Coffee, Good-to-Go, and The Center for Pain Relief. We are conveniently located on the TCAT 21 bus route, a few feet away from the Main Street bus stop!

Sarah Gotowka is a practicing textile artist and instructor. She has been weaving since 2005, and has been growing natural dyes since 2010. Since moving to the Ithaca area she has taught workshops at Cornell University, Ithaca College, The Johnson Museum of Art, Wells College, New Roots Charter School, The Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, The Craftstitute, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Trumansburg Middle School.

The studio offers a couple of introductory weaving courses. Schedules can be found on the studio's website <http://www.lunafiberstudio.com>

For more information on Sarah Gotowka please visit her website: www.saagoto.com

Luna has only been made possible by the generosity and hard work of Laura Ballard, June Szabo, Synnove Heggoy, Ben Guthrie & Hilary Gifford, Matthew Tsipouraglou (#uhaul), Eluz Infante, Rose Fleurant, Anna Gardner, Kaide Peck, Frank Dallaire, and most importantly, the extraordinary Al & Jane Gotowka.

SARAH ANDERSON WORKSHOP

Sponsored by the Black Sheep Handspinners' Guild

When: May 13 and May 14

Where: Lansing Community Center, 29 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY 14882

Time: 9 am to 4 pm

Fee: 1 Day \$100 2 days \$200

May 13 DRAFTING:

Drafting refers to the way the spinner manipulates or draws out the fiber so twist enters it to create yarn. Different drafting methods produce very different yarns even from the same fiber and different fibers may require different techniques. In this class we will work on drafting techniques that spinners of all skill levels will appreciate including diameter control, understanding twist, drafting for different types of yarn, producing yarn compatible to an existing yarn and finishing techniques

May 14 PLYING:

This class follows and builds on the drafting class. Students learn to use different types of singles in plied yarns. The class begins with basic plying and then moves into more complex types of plying such as spiral, chain, cable, crepe, boucle and core yarns. We do as many as time permits

Bring To Class: A wheel in working order, lazy kate, and 3 bobbins. If you have a flick or hand carders bring them too.

REGISTRATION

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

MAY 13 _____ \$100

MAY 14 _____ \$100

Make out check to Black Sheep Hand Spinners' Guild

Mail check and form to Marjorie Inana 41 W. Court Street, Cortland, NY 13045

Registration is non refundable and is due by Roc Day at which time registration is open to anyone

Weaving, Tradition and Transformation in the Shadow of Volcanoes, part II: Whistle Trees

by Wayne Harbert

The lore of plants—their traditional uses in medicine, cuisine, dyeing, and ritual—has been passed down for centuries in the highlands of Guatemala, and is still a jewel among the cultural treasures of that region. Maize, of course, is the king of plants, its status reflected, for example, in fact that the Mayan name for Guatemala, Iximulew, means ‘Land of Maize’. Towering next in rank, though, might be the Whistle Tree, known in the highland Mayan languages as tz’ite. Maize and tz’ite were esteemed from the very beginning of things. In the ancient Popol Vuh chronicle, which recounts the Mayan myth of creation, we read that Xpiacoc and Xmucane, the grandfather and grandmother of all the gods, decided to fashion human beings from wood, and began by consulting grains of maize and bright red tz’ite seeds for guidance.

“Cast grains of maize and tz’ite to divine how what we shall make will come out when we grind and chisel out its mouth and face in wood.”

(The wood from which they carved the first man was, specifically, the wood of the tz’ite tree—a seemingly appropriate choice, since to this day tz’ite is considered to have remarkable powers, including the power to speak, and carving effigies from tz’ite wood is still a part of Mayan religious practice in the highlands. The woman, though, was fashioned from reeds. The experiment didn’t work out well. As had happened with earlier attempts to create people, first from animals and then from mud, the resultant beings didn’t live up to expectations. The wood-people looked like humans, but they lacked heart and spirit and purpose and understanding. It was only in the fourth creation attempt that the divine grandfather and grandmother finally succeeded in shaping proper human beings—out of dough made from maize flour, of course.)

Whistle Tree, the English name for tz’ite, is a translation of the Spanish Palo de Pito or Árbol de Pito, so called because children make whistles from its striking long red-orange blossoms. The genus name *Erythrina* points to the redness of its flowers and seeds. *Erythrina* species are widespread around the world, and are referred to collectively in English as ‘coral trees’. Tz’ite is generally identified as *E. berteroana*, though other names appear in the literature.



The trees themselves are grown as living fences, as supports for vining plants like sweet potatoes, and as shade trees (‘mother trees’) for cocoa plants. The red seeds are still used in divination by Mayan priest. Though they are sometimes consumed as a medicine, they are poisonous, and have caused death. The flowers, besides being good for whistles, are edible, and appear as an ingredient in Guatemalan black bean dishes.

Photo: Whistle Tree seeds. A photo of the flowers is on the seed packaging.



Cecilia holding whistle tree leaf dyed cotton yarn.

My own interest in the tz'ite', though, was in its role as a dye plant. As I learned on our dyeing and weaving tour in San Juan la Laguna, in the shadow of the volcanoes, the bark and leaves of the tree yield a yellow dye whose color is perhaps purer and more vivid than any other natural dye I know of. One of the pictures shows Cecilia, our host and docent on the tour, with cotton she'd just dyed for us in tz'ite'. The mordant was sap from the trunk (more precisely, the pseudo-stem) of a banana plant, which grows abundantly in the highlands. According to Reiche, it is the most satisfactory natural mordant, high in tannins and with the added virtue of not adding any color of its own.

They say that tz'ite' does not propagate easily from seed, but the trees are supposed to do well as greenhouse plants, so I've planted a handful of those magic beans in a pot in my laundry room. I'll let you know if they ever sprout. In the meantime, some varieties of coral tree are indigenous to various of the warmer areas in the US. I can't find any record of their being used as dye plants. Still, one wonders...



Whistle tree branch with brightly yellow dyed cotton.

Reiche, Olga. 2014. Plantas Tintóreas de Guatemala. Antigua, Guatemala: Ediciones del Pensativo.



Membership Form

Please type or print

Date: _____

DUES Record:

2016	2019
2017	2020
2018	2021

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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Majacraft Wild Flyer kit. New \$163. asking \$90 and second jumbo bobbin \$30

Majacraft bobbins new \$20 asking \$10 each. I have 7.

Valkyrie wool combs and holder/mount. New \$140 asking \$90

Knitty Knotty adjustable size and carrying bag \$15.

Tentioned Lazy kate with travel bag. \$35

Contact Jessica Rollins at 607-382-8022

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 happy sheep and rabbits in Trumansburg: Navajo Churro roving in a variety of colors and white Angora Rabbit wool.



Contact Sharon Berger 607- 592-4649

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To place an ad

The cost for ads is \$5.00 per month for non-members. Current members may submit one business-card sized classified ad per month for free. Send a check made out 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 & white business cards are published free for current members.



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