



# Black Sheep Handspinners' Guild

## February 2009 Newsletter

President: [Celia Radke](#), 749-2711 Vice President: [Sharon Gombas](#), 533-7390  
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The Black Sheep meet from 11am-3pm on the second Saturday of the month at the Varna Community Center  
 Route 366 in Varna, New York. Exceptions are the months of December, June, July, and August when we meet in member's homes.

### February 14, 2009 from 11 to 3.

We will discuss Roc Day, the expenses, the purpose and next year. Please come with your felt from the workshop, questions, and comments. If you want to have a copy of expenses in advance of the meeting, please email Anne Furman.

### Roc Day January 2009

from Anne Furman

Yesterday I ran into Kathy Halton who said she had a great time teaching drop spindling at Roc Day. She remarked that there were a lot of people there whom she didn't recognize. A good sign as we intended Roc Day to be a day to give the public a chance to learn about spinning and have fun. There were some past members I was delighted to see, Doris Brown and Joan Johnson, and as I am a newer member (25 years) there may have been some there from before I was a member. Doris was a founding member along with Karey Solomon who came as a vendor. Here are a few pictures from Roc Day. To get a vendor's perspective go to Susan Sarabasha's blog as [thebunnyspins.blogspot.com](http://thebunnyspins.blogspot.com) to her blog of January 24, 2009 where she used Wayne Harbert's photos of the day.



Kathy Halton teaching drop spindling in one of the classrooms



Three members from Genesee Valley Handspinners' Guild who won the Fiber Forensics contest.



The Raffle which had lots of choices



Looking out at everyone very busy knitting, talking, and shopping

## February 14 is Valentine's Day

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

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 handspindle 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!"

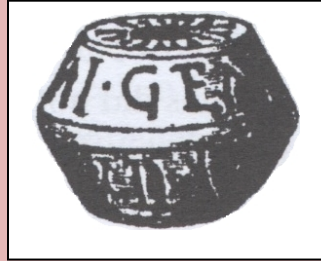
"Come, o elegant one!"

"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,...



### "Why Do You Spin and Knit?": One spinner/knitter's projects

By Sarah Mehta

I suppose the first seeds for these projects were sown about three years ago when I read a book titled, "As Long as the Waters Flow", by Frye Gaillard. The title comes from the Penabscoot Indian treaty of 1818 deeding the land and rights to fish in the Penabscoot River to the Penabscoot tribes, "as long as the waters continued to flow". The Indians kept the treaty, but by 1820 nearly all their land had been taken over by whites. Variations of this story repeat in the history of white and Indian relations all over the country throughout our history.

I don't recall hearing it quite this way when I studied American History in school, and I was saddened and dismayed by the true extent of the Indians losses.

The next book which affected my thinking was “Women and Warriors of the Plains”. It is a collection of previously unpublished photographs taken by Julia E. Tuell in the early twentieth century. Accompanying text is by Dan Aadland. Mrs. Tuel, wife of a reservation school teacher, captured many poignant scenes of the Northern Cheyenne in Lama Deer, Montana and the Lakota Sioux on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota as they made the difficult transition to reservation life. Pictures such as: the Cheyenne boy learning that his braids will be cut before entering school, the young mother standing beside tree where the bundle holding her dead baby was placed, a group of Cheyenne waiting for their government rations which often didn’t arrive, Sioux women preparing dog for a feast as no other meat was available, photos of older warriors as well as a young warrior destined to die in France in World War I.

About a year ago I received another of the many mail solicitations that I seem prey to. This one was from the Native American Heritage Association. As I tossed it aside my eye caught the name Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservation. A closer look revealed a request of “gently used clothing” with a photo of several Indians walking among boxes of donated items. The thought stuck me that here were people once totally self-sufficient, able to live off the land in harmony with their environment, now rummaging through the cast-offs of a culture that tried to obliterate theirs. So I packed up a box of things left over from the days when I was expected to “look decent” and sent it on its way.

A few weeks later I got a thank you. I thought that maybe those Sioux children would like something new to wear, so I made several pairs of mittens from a very easy pattern and mailed them off.

It was about this time that I decided to do something that I had been promising myself for years and years. Learn to spin. I bought my beloved Baynes spinning wheel. And Baynes and I began to produce yarn. And yarn. And more yarn. Soon there was yarn draped over the towel rack, yarn hanging from door-knobs, yarn piled up on my desk. No place to set in the living room except the floor. Yarn on a folding drying rack in the bathtub, yarn occupying the window seat. YEEGADS!!!! This was taking over my entire house! I do not have the usual assortment of relatives that most people knit for. What to do? Knit for the Sioux Reservations. I saw an opening for unbridled creativity!!

And so the ideas began to come. Mostly they come in the wee hours of the morning when my little cat returns from her nightly prowls to the bedroom, jumps onto the bed, then sits down on my sleeping form and begins her routine of lick-lick, scratch-scratch, twist-turn. I am no longer asleep. As I lie there, pinned underneath a squirmy feline, my mind begins to chug along...hmmm...I could put a 9 stitch braid in the center flanked by twist stick ropes.

I cannot return the Sioux to their lands nor bring back the buffalo herds. But maybe through my spinning and knitting, I can bring a small measure of warmth, beauty, and comfort to make it a little easier to get through the long brutal winters of the Northern Plains.

## **2 Workshops from Genesee Valley Handspinners’ Guild from Alanna Wilcox**

The first is a workshop that perhaps other guild members that are spinners might enjoy. We invited Pluckfluff (Lexi Boeger) to come do a novelty yarn workshop on March 28th & 29th.

The second is a dyeing workshop with Susan Rex on April 25th and 26th. This class will cover color theory and how to get colors you want, and then there will be an actual hands on dyeing portion. Both workshops are 125\$ for two days including materials and lunch.

If someone is interested in taking them our membership is 15\$ for the year, not a bad deal considering! If anyone is interested I will need a check made out to the guild (GVHG) and if they are not a member, I will need an additional check made out for 15\$. If the classes don't run (we need 20 for the novelty yarn class and I am pretty sure the dyeing workshop will run) then I will inform the people. I will not cash the checks until I know the workshop will be running, which will be a month prior to the date of the workshop and will email/inform people.

**Novelty yarn on March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**. Check to GVHG due by February 28 for \$125, and a check for their guild dues if you are not a member. Note which workshop on your check and include a way to contact you if workshop is canceled.

**Dyeing on April 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>**, Check to GVHG due by March 25 for \$125, and a check for their guild dues if you are not a member. Note which workshop on your check and include a way to contact you if workshop is canceled. For more information contact:

[alanna7181@hotmail.com](mailto:alanna7181@hotmail.com)

Send checks made out to GVHG and notation of which workshop or for dues to:

Alanna Wilcox

31 Aspen Drive

Rochester, NY 14625

## Upcoming this year

### Black Sheep Handspinners' Guild

February 14, 2009

Guild Meeting in Varna

February 1, 2009

Fiber Bowl Sunday at Shadeyside Farm

Ad below

March 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>

Novelty Yarn Workshop through GVHG

See above information or contact

#### Guild Machines Renters, Schedules, and Rates

Rentals should be returned to the guild library in the same condition as when borrowed. Cleaning the carder is the borrower's responsibility. A fine of \$15 for carder returned needing to be cleaned.

Email [ahf@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:ahf@zoom-dsl.com) to have your name put on the list as the next in line to borrow a piece of equipment. If no one is next the current renter may keep it.

Felting Machine – 2 weeks with the renter responsible for connecting with the next renter. Email [ahf@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:ahf@zoom-dsl.com) to have your name put on the list as the next in line to borrow a piece of equipment. If no one is next the current renter may keep it. The renter is responsible for replacing needles

**\$5 for 2 weeks.** Currently with Sharon Gombas

The following are **\$5 a month for a maximum of 2 months**, unless it is a month we are not in Varna.

Table Loom - Ruth Allen

Carder – Mary Miller – due February 09

Carder – under repair

Wool Combs



Fiber Bowl Sunday, February 1 from Noon to 5 PM  
Great snacks to nibble on, fibers to try out,  
and great specials to purchase.

**Shadeyside Farm**  
**109 Brown Road**  
**Oxford, New York. 13830**  
**607 853-8243**

#### To place an ad

A check for \$5.00 made to BSHG for an ad to run three times (a year is \$15) should be sent to the current treasurer, Eleanor May, 1360 Slaterville Road, Ithaca, NY. 14850. Send the ad to the newsletter editor, Anne Furman at: [ahf@fltg.net](mailto:ahf@fltg.net). If you have a question for her or others, you can email us through the links at the top of the newsletter.

Thank you to Wayne Harbert, Sarah Mehta, and Susan Sarabasha for their contributions to the newsletter.

