

# Black Sheep Handspinners Guild Newsletter

September 2010

President: [Jim Johnson](#), 607-564-7178

Vice President: [Carol LaBorie](#), 607- 277-9108

Treasurer: [Sharon Gombas](#), 607-280-8726

Librarian: [Ruth Allen](#), 607-227-8467

Newsletter Editor: [Marianne Pelletier](#), 607-277-1758

<http://www.blacksheephandspinnersguild.org>

The Black Sheep meet from 11am-3pm on the second Saturday of the month at the All Saints Church, Route 34b in Lansing.

We are meeting at the All Saint's Church in Lansing, across from the Lansing Schools, from 11AM to 3PM, September 11, 2010.

## President's Message

*Jim Johnson*

Notes from the August meeting:

- We need committee members for Roc Day. Jim said he'd be delighted to release the committee chairmanship to another volunteer.

## Fall Guild Retreat at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles

*Carol Laborie*

Friday late afternoon through Sunday noon, October 1-3, 2010

The cost is \$150 per person, and includes overnight accommodations and meals from Friday night dinner through Sunday breakfast. The food is very good, and the location right on the lake is beautiful, especially in the fall.

Space is limited to 10-12 people, and we have 5 registered at this time. Please contact Carol LaBorie at [tusweca\\_winan@yahoo.com](mailto:tusweca_winan@yahoo.com) or 277-9108 to reserve your spot. THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS SEPTEMBER 9th.

## Bus for the New York State Wool Fair at Rhinebeck

*Jim Johnson*

Fall is coming closer every day. Up here in the Newfield hills some of the maples and sumac are turning and dropping lovely orange and red leaves. We have reserved a bus to the NYS Sheep and Wool Festival for the 3rd Sunday in October 10/17. Even though it was cold we had a great

time on the bus and at the fair last year. Seeing so many people knitting and spinning early in the morning is delightful. The bus leaves the Wegmans parking lot at 6:00 am and returns there around 9:00 pm on Sunday, October 17.

We need 25-30 signups by 9/10 or we will have to cancel the bus: \$60 for guild members, \$75 for non members, includes bus and entry to the fair.

Please spread the word to all your knitting, crocheting, weaving and spinning friends.

Send checks, made out to Black Sheep Handspinners, to:  
Susan Sarabasha  
311 Tupper Road  
West Danby, NY 14883-9650

## **SPINNING POSSUM, or, WANTED, DEAD OR...DEAD!**

*Ruth Allen*

We spin sheep, goat, llama, alpaca, and rabbit. But I never thought I'd be spinning a marsupial.

In a recent fiber trade with a lovely gal from Canada, I received some New Zealand Possum.

Knowing nothing whatsoever about it, I did a quick search, and discovered that the Possum in New Zealand was introduced there from Australia in the 1830s, as a boost to the fur trade. This type of possum is not like our American Opossum, with its naked, prehensile tail. NZ possum have fur that is hollow and traps air, which makes it quite warm, also it is very soft, a bit like rabbit. Their tails are bushy. It was hoped they would become as popular as, say, mink. Alas, what they became was - numerous. The New Zealand government claims that currently there are around 8 million of the little critters, eating tens of thousands of *tons* of foliage nightly. Thus far, all attempts to control the possum population have been ineffective. They have classified it as a serious pest, because so much damage is being done to crops. Also, the extensive damage to other plant life is ruining the habitat for a number of native species of birds. Because of this, the government has promoted the use of the possum's fiber for fur hats, coats, boots and so forth, and also has encouraged the marketing of possum yarn and fiber (usually blended with merino wool, or wool and silk). They are trying to turn a problem into a lucrative market, to make it worth people's time and effort to help bring this overpopulation problem under control.

Personally, I'm not sure whether I'd purchase possum, knowing that an animal was killed to bring me that fiber. But this 80% merino wool and 20% possum was an unexpected gift, and it turned out to be delightful to spin, and soft and lovely once it was spun up.

[www.backpack-newzealand.com/articles/topic69.php](http://www.backpack-newzealand.com/articles/topic69.php) This link shows a picture of a live possum.

## State Fair: We're Represented

Seven Guild members demonstrated at the state fair on August 31. The fiber this year is Cotswold. The Guild also received 2 free passes to thank us for our prize contribution; Marianne received them since she's going but not demonstrating. We also congratulate those Guild members we've heard of who won prizes: Sharon Gombas and Audrey Lowes. I'll be happy to share news of other winners.

**Notes for next year:** if you demonstrate, you don't have to buy a ticket. If you want to try for a prize, get advice from Ellie Mae, who has judged events like this. She gave a fabulous talk on winning fairs at our August meeting.

## Appreciation from the Scottish Games Committee

*Wayne Harbert*

Thank-you card contents: "Dear members of the Black Sheep Handspinners Guild, Thank you for lending your time, energy, hands, wool and smiles to the festival again this year -- you guys are such a huge hit! I [heard?] that kids and adults got to learn a thing or two about where their sweaters came from.

"That to me is the essence of this family festival. If everyone learned something new I would hit my goal.

"Thank you! Or as Wayne might say, 'Tapadh Leibh!'"

Signed by Mary, who sent us an XO as well.

## Here are some photos!



We were visited by a lot of kids, some whom had to say, "Good afternoon," in Gaelic so they could get our envelope for their scavenger hunt. Some kids and a few grownups tried out spinning.



Wayne and his great wheel and his language posters. He had Marianne teach kids how to say, "Good afternoon!" in Gaelic, which is "Fesker Math!"



We had some terrific Scottish music in the tent!





Ruth demonstrated spinning on a spindle wheel.



Because, you know: every Scottish tartan has to have some screaming pink in it.

## Requests for Spinning Demonstrators

From Jean Currie: September 18 the Dundee Scottish Festival will be held at the Black Rock Speedway, Dundee, NY. [www.dundeescottishfestival.com](http://www.dundeescottishfestival.com) or call 315-729-2124

## Editor's Notes

*Marianne Pelletier*

### *Minutes from the August Meeting:*

- Wayne Harbert's family visited from Colorado and Pennsylvania the Guild's August meeting to see his hobby. Members enjoyed showing them the craft.
- State Fair prize winners!
  - Sharon Gombas
  - Audrey Lowes
- Send Wayne Harbert and e-mail at [weh2@cornell.edu](mailto:weh2@cornell.edu) if you want him to bring you an envelope of some of his leftover Japanese indigo leaves. You'll need to use them right away, so buy your other supplies before you get to the next meeting.
- The group discussed making a team for a sheep to shawl competition. Ellie Mae offered to play team coach and to provide her loom. I would like to do this. If you're interested, too, let me know at Marianne's e-mail. If we can build a team and pick an event, I think it would be fun.

## Upcoming Events

*Marianne thanks Knitter's Review for most of these listings. Oh, and for including Roc Day in their listings. Please forward events you know of to Marianne at [fudger28@yahoo.com](mailto:fudger28@yahoo.com) for inclusion on this list.*

## From Interweave Press

Dear Guild Members,

We are pleased to announce that it's time for the Interweave Annual Guild Subscription Program! If you act NOW, you can get a full year of any of our 15 magazines for \*only \$19.95 each!\* We have extended this offer to include the entire Interweave family of magazines. Click here to download the order form

<http://e3.interweave.com/t?r=1893&c=2220043&l=171033&ctl=324E19B:2777FD566A15EDB047AF99A0D261B6D8A8A08A1C4125C7AD&>

## Wine Trail Handspinners

Wine Trail Handspinners meet one Sunday a month 1:30 to 4:30 pm at Graceful Arts Fiber Studio, 4760 State Route 414, Burdett 14818. This is an informal group with no dues, membership or leadership. Meeting dates vary – anyone who wishes to be notified of meeting times (generally decided at the previous meeting) should send their email address to Karey Solomon at [threads@empacc.net](mailto:threads@empacc.net).

### **I Knit Weekend**

September 10-11, Royal Horticultural Halls & Conference Centre, 80 Vincent Square, London, UK. My birthday! I wanna' go! <http://www.iknit.org.uk/iknitweekender2010.html>

### **North Country Spinners**

September 24-26, 2010

Johnsonburg Presbyterian Center, Johnsonburg, NJ, Warren County.

<http://www.northcountryspinners.org/retreat.htm>

### **Interlaken Historical Society Country Fair and Plowing Day**

The Interlaken Historical Society will again hold their Country Fair and Plowing Day at Brook Farm on **Saturday, September 25th, 2010, 10am - 4pm**. They invite the BSHG to bring your spinning wheels and provide spinning demonstrations during the day. The barn at Brook Farm (right on Rt89 in Interlaken) is a 1903 Wells post and beam barn, quite astonishing in its size and great condition. There will be other old fashioned crafts, animals etc. and the vintage plowing demos are interesting and fun. You will be inside the barn so weather is no problem. Contact Jean at [ejeancurrie@gmail.com](mailto:ejeancurrie@gmail.com) or one of the organizers, Allan and Ann Buddle at [orchardland@zoom-dsl.com](mailto:orchardland@zoom-dsl.com) if you can come.

### **Northeast Handspinners Conference**

November 5 to 7 at the Grand Summit

Resort, Mt. Snow, VT. Submitted by Nancy

Morey -- thanks!

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*Johanneshof Romneys*  
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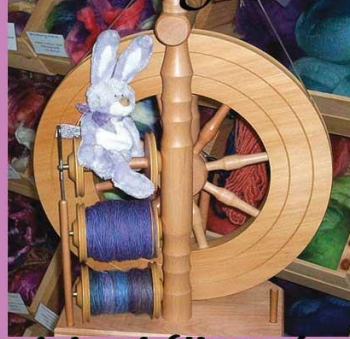
2009: "Best In Show" Natural Colored Fleece  
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Rhinebeck, N.Y.  
2009: "Reserve Grand Champion" Natural Colored Fleece  
Finger Lakes Fiber Arts Festival  
Hemlock, N.Y.

**Christine Johnson**  
[johnson.chris123@yahoo.com](mailto:johnson.chris123@yahoo.com)

### 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, Sharon Gombas, 177 Salmon Creek Rd. Lansing, NY 14882. Send the ad to the newsletter editor, Marianne Pelletier, at: [fudger28@yahoo.com](mailto:fudger28@yahoo.com). If you have a question for her or others, you can email us through the links at the top of the newsletter.

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