



March
2021



NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

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Message from the President

Dear Fellow Spinners,

Spring is around the corner, but not quite here, yet. I'm still enjoying spinning by the warm woodstove and wearing warm, handspun hats and mittens each time I go outside. Even my newly finished hooded scarf is getting a few outings, before it gets too warm to wear it.

(Message from the editor: at least, this was true when I got this letter! Spring came in the time it took me to send this out to you)

Also, just around the corner are in person gatherings again. Unfortunately, the promised pre-spring warmth is not predicted to last till the weekend. And it doesn't seem quite safe yet, to meet indoors. So we will hold another virtual meeting on Saturday, March 13th, from 12pm-2pm.

I'm looking forward to seeing you on Saturday,

Angelika

Meeting ID: 848 4009 2628

Passcode: 351332

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84840092628?pwd=NzRkNEI5aDZJY3VzcEdOdERvZkJoQT09>

Guild News

The next meeting will be on February 13th, over Zoom.

Old News

Guild Meeting Location

All members are asked to be on the lookout for an alternative potential meeting location in a reasonable price range. It must have adequate parking.



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New Members

If you know of folks who would like to join, please have them contact Louise Henrie and pay dues at: henrielm6@aol.com.

Address List

We put together a list of names, email addresses, and telephone numbers for guild members. This list is available in printed form at guild meetings or by request to Secretary, Wayne Harbert at weh2@cornell.edu or phone [607-564-9328](tel:607-564-9328) .

Guild Officers

President	Angelika St.Laurent
Vice President	Sue Quick
Secretary	Wayne Harbert
Treasurer	Louise Henrie
Newsletter	Rachael Skye
Workshops	Position Open
Webmaster	Rosane Mordt
Roc-Day Coordinator	Yvonne LaMontagne

General Announcements

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, Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850. Send the ad in digital form to the newsletter editor, rachael.siems.skye@gmail.com.



Wheels for Sale

I was put in touch with Joanna Crawford, who has wheels for sale. Contact her with questions or interest at:

Email: cornelljoanna68@gmail.com

Phone: +16075923922



1) Ashford wheel, \$500



2) \$250



3) \$65



4) \$65



5) \$5 each



6) \$15



Stories From The Guild

While we're scattered, I've been collecting stories from our members. You can send stories to the email chat threads being sent around, post them to our Ravelry group, and check out the Facebook page. If you want help finding these groups or if you have a story to feature, email me at rachael.siems.skye@gmail.com

Best,
Rachael

Susan Verberg

An Icelandic Saddle for my Icelandic Horse

In large part, my interest in felt is how I found out about the Black Sheep Spinners Guild. I always make sure to visit the annual yard sale in search of bulk roving. And my son and I participated in an inspirational Roc-day workshop on decorative felting. Since I've learned to felt soap and dryer balls which I now sell at the downtown Ithaca Farmers Market. But I've always been fascinated with felting fabric, like the thick sheet felt used in shoes. A good friend of mine makes beautiful leather turn shoes and has poked me a few times already to make some sheet felt to use as insoles. But I did not feel confident in being able to do a good job. And I especially could not quite wrap my head around the amount of roving needed: especially the making of the dryer balls indicated how much bulk wool goes into a relatively small, but heavy, ball of dense felt.

Finding enough affordable roving to keep up with demand for Market proved challenging. Then I realized I did not have to use roving for the core of the dryer balls: as long as the wool was clean and fluffy it worked fine. Luckily, I had watched fellow Guild member Angelika St. Laurent clean wool many times over the years, and last summer I attempted my first suinting experiments. Since then, I use suinted wool for the insides of my dryer balls, which took significant pressure off my treasured stash of roving. Unfortunately, I never quite got the knack for carding the wool to make roving from scratch myself. I can hand-card, but not for very long, and the drum carder I loaned did not seem to be all that more effective for me.

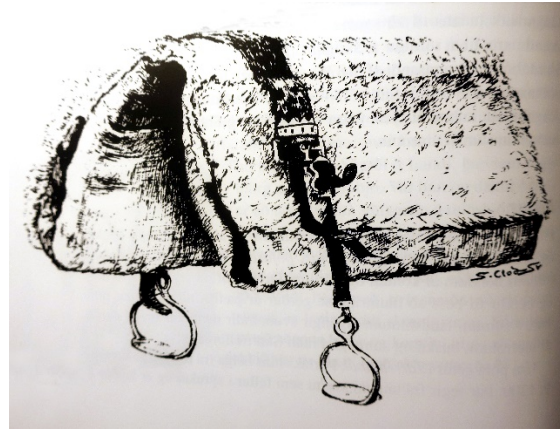


As all I did last summer was work the weekends and entertain the kid during the week, I had to come up with ways to keep us all entertained. We gardened (sooo many tomatoes and marigolds...), we fermented (home-made soda rocks!), we played with clay (baked crusty bread, fired mugs to drink our soda...).

Normally, this time of year our family joins many others from around the country to play being medieval at weekend events and during a two-week long camping event. But not so in the Year of the Plague.

Instead, I decided to focus on something I never had, or made, time for that would entertain us all, and introduced mounted equestrian games. Whacking dummy heads with foam swords and catching rings with a converted pool-table lance sure did interest the kid, and had the ponies thinking too. At the end of summer our medieval group was adapting to virtual get-togethers too, and held a video-submission-only Equestrian Games challenge both my kid and I participated in.

Which made me realize, we humans had great outfits, but our ponies were sorely lacking in appropriate attire. My alternate persona is Viking, a time when heraldry and colorful horse barding were not yet quite a thing (like, at all). I could somewhat envision a style of bridle I could make for him to give him a more historic look, but making a saddle? For the sake of both of us I decided not to meddle with that (saddles do have to fit, hence the mundane existence of the job of saddle fitter). Then my interest in felt and my Icelandic Horse's heritage joined. Low and behold, the old Icelanders had a padded seat riding contraption with stirrups which was completely made from felt – no saddle fitting required. And even better, for 'carpet'-like felted sheets like this pad the wool did not even need to be roving!



Guided by a several videos showcasing Mongolian felting techniques used to make felt carpets and felt yurt walls, my son and I set out to experiment with the different suggestions. I will share with you what worked, what did not, and what I intend to try differently next time. While my felt pad is finished, I am still sewing on the leather reinforcement pads and thus have not tried it out with my horse yet... but will soon!

What did we do:

1: Collecting the wool.

With a project like this in mind I had collected not-so-good quality fleeces over a couple of years. Some of the dirtier ones I had already suinted last summer to help soften and clean extra dirty tips. I started with about 5 fleeces of various colors (making one large tub of variegated fluffed wool) but worried this would not be enough for this specific project. Luckily, Angelika has a stash and she gave me two more large garbage bags of fleeces to play with. Some of these were short but fluffy without much crimp and I was able to use these upside-down, as is, without the need for fluffing, and they ended up felting into a practical sturdy outer surface for the inside of the pad.



2: Processing the wool.

The Mongolian videos instructed to use fluffed wool for the outsides, with the nicest first to create the face of the fabric. The raw fleece is fluffed by laying it out on a tarp and beating it with sticks. This opens the fibers as well as helping it release dirt and hay etc. Willow sticks of around half an inch are preferred, and we found the length of 3 to 4 feet to work well. It was surprising how effective this beating method is, and how much dirt was beaten out of the wool! We were also picking up bits of hay and fluffs of wool for days afterwards.



3: Construction.

Traditionally, Mongolian felt is made on top of an already made 'mother' felt, which is then rolled up as a whole. Since I was doing this indoors, I chose to use plastic shower curtains. For extra agitation, I rolled a bamboo window shade in with it, but as my window shade was twice as wide as my felt, this did not work very well and I only used it once. The fluffed wool was grabbed by the handful in one hand, pushed in place and pulled out of the handful to create a somewhat scale-like overlapping collection of wool tufts. The center of the felt 'sandwich' could



be clean but untreated raw wool, fluffed, topped with another layer of fluffed wool. The better the tufts are interlaced top to bottom, the better the layers of wool will be felted together. The wool would be wetted with hot water while the different layers were constructed, enough to make it damp but not so much it was dropping wet. The target height looked to be about six to eight inches tall.



Felt shrinks. I was going for a felted pad of about 30 inches wide by 80 inches long and eyeballed a starting dimension of 40 inches by 115 inches, as the Mongolian videos seemed to suggest more shrinkage lengthwise than in width. This seems to be correct for their method, but not when using a machine, we learned.



Angelika

As winter is mostly brown and white, with a touch of blue, I was craving color this February. Our Roc-Day competition inspired me to do some more color blending. So, I dyed up some fleece in primal colors and had a lot of fun with the drum carder.





Shelly Marino

Shell has a story to share about dog wool:

<https://www.hakaimagazine.com/features/the-dogs-that-grew-wool-and-the-people-who-love-them/>

Also, some updates:

Finished the sweater! And a pair of Tough and Toasty fingerless mitts, cleverly designed by Martina Behm, and knitted from about 70 yds of handspun Bambino (85% Merino, 15% Bamboo).





Susan Sarabasha

The Iknitarod which is the knitting/crocheting/weaving/spinning portion of Alaska's Great Race - The Iditarod starts this coming Sunday, March 7 and runs until the last musher returns to the start. Usually 9-14 days, but this year it might be less.

We have a fun time with it on Ravelry and even have prizes to give out. Categories are Start to Finish, Work in Progress and Spinning. Participants are from all over the US, Canada and Europe.

Please go to <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/iknitarod> to read all about it and the rules for joining in on the contests. No charges and lots of fun for all. We even have special ravatars you can personalize.

Also, some news of interest! Our new VP crochets and visited Fibre Space in Alexandria, Virginia. She was speaking to Danielle about small businesses struggling through the pandemic. She also bought yarn for her Step-Daughter.





ROVINGS

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Vendors

TRINITY FARM
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www.trinityfarm.net
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New Member's Form

Name _____

Address _____

Email (Print Neatly) _____

Phone # _____

This information will be shared with registered guild members. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let Louise Henrie 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 our president, Angelika St. Laurent know.

Roc Day Programming Newsletter

Membership Website

Outreach Treasurer

Our newsletter is distributed electronically. If this is a problem, please contact Rachael Skye (734) 476-0634. Please fill this out and either bring it to a meeting or mail it with your check for \$25 to: Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850



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Zoom Details

Angelika St.Laurent is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Angelika St.Laurent's Zoom Meeting

Time: Mar 13, 2021 12:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84840092628?pwd=NzRkNEI5aDZlY3VzcEdOdERvZkJoQT09>

Meeting ID: 848 4009 2628

Passcode: 351332

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Meeting ID: 848 4009 2628

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84840092628?pwd=NzRkNEI5aDZlY3VzcEdOdERvZkJoQT09>