



NEWSLETTER

October 2023

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*New members from the September meeting!
Pictured: Hannah, Zoe, and Ruby*



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Message from the President

Dear Fellow Spinners,

Fall is here and it is getting too cold for outdoors meetings. So, our October meeting will be held indoors in the Parish Hall of the All Saints Catholic Church in Lansing (347 Ridge Road) from 11am-3pm. The congregation is a bit worried about risen energy costs. Please, do not prop doors open during our meeting.

There is a couple of exciting pieces of news. One of our members is downsizing and hoping to sell some of their yarn and spinning fiber. I invited her to bring goods on the October meeting. Everyone else, who feels they have more fiber laying around than they are comfortable, is invited to bring it as well. Let's have a small guild garage sale

Marcia Weinert offered a workshop on Spinning for Fineness and Consistency. At the moment the workshop is full, but it might still be worth to contact Marianne Pelletier to get in on the wait list. The workshop will be held October 27th, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, in the south room of the Old Firehall at Brooktondale Community Center (524 Valley Road, Brooktondale). The same location, where we held our April and May meetings. We'll have a Pot-luck before the workshop. You are welcome to arrive anytime past 5pm.

Roc-Day is coming back. We will celebrate on January 13th in the Parish Hall of the All Saints Catholic Church. Yvonne LaMontagne is our Roc-Day coordinator. Please, contact her to volunteer. There is no way that Roc-Day can happen without a lot of helpers.

Hope to see you all this Saturday,
Angelika



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Guild News

Guild Meeting

The next Guild meeting will be Saturday, September 7, 11-3 PM. We will meet outside the Brooktondale Community Center. We are under an awning in back of the building; not the pavillion where we met last year.

Address: 524 Valley Rd., Brooktondale

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, Roberta Sibley at robertainez@yahoo.com.

Guild Officers

President	Angelika St. Laurent
Vice President	Sue Quick
Secretary	Roberta Sibley
Treasurer	Louise Henrie
Newsletter	Rachael Skye
Workshops	Marianne Pelletier
Webmaster	Rosane Mordt
Roc Day Coordinator	Yvonne LaMontagne



Guild Dues

For all members who have not yet paid dues, they are \$25 for the year of 2023. Please pay at a meeting, send your check for \$25 to: Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850, or now you may send money via Venmo to Black-Sheep-NY

Guild Meeting Location

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

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.

2024 Retreat Announcement

Summer is here! As we enjoy the warm weather and all that it brings, we also need to start thinking about the 2024 Black Sheep Annual Retreat. The retreat will be the weekend of February 23 through 25 at Casowasco Retreat Center. Those who have gone in past years can tell you what a great time this is. With a minimum of 18 people registered, it will cost \$159 per person. This fee includes lodging (the entire Galilee Lodge for our group) and meals Saturday and breakfast Sunday.

If you are planning on attending, please get us your deposit of \$100 by November 15th. You can: mail a check written out to Black Sheep spinning guild to: Sarah Davis 26 Curtis Road, Ithaca NY 14850, or you can Venmo to "Black-Sheep-NY". If you Venmo, please put "retreat" in the comment.

We will accept payments toward the retreat at any time if you want to spread it out. Final payment is due to Casowasco on February 5th. Please contact Kylie Spooner, Sarah Davis or Anna Murray-Bartels with any questions.



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2024 Roc Day Planning

After the past few years of making do because of the pandemic, we are putting plans in place to offer our traditional ROC Day celebration on January 12, 2024. Plans include, as in the past, vendors, the spinning circle, dish to pass lunch, the raffle, a competition, demonstrations, and workshops. Two new possible additions are a vendor table for BSHG members and a "room of wheels" to sample and try out. There are still many slots for volunteering, and the kitchen area and the spinning circle need someone to plan and provide oversight to that area. Likewise the possible new areas (member vendor table and room of wheels) will need a planning and/or oversight person as well. The sign up sheet is attached with this newsletter so you can see what slots are available, and you can sign up at the meeting (or contact Yvonne LaMontagne with your preference).

Please bring your ideas for demonstrations and workshops, as well as contact information for any vendors you would like contacted, to our meeting October 14. Does anyone know a spindle maker/vendor? Information about the competition is in this newsletter and information on donations for the raffle will be supplied soon. Do you have something that would be a good item for our raffle?

Looking forward to a great day and keeping fingers crossed for good weather!
Yvonne LaMontagne, ROC Day Coordinator



2024 Roc Day Challenge

Our 2024 Roc Day Challenge goes from raw fleece to finished objects. Participants will receive eight ounces of raw Lincoln wool, four ounces white, four ounces brown. The challenge is to make a bag out of this wool – and only out of this wool. The finished bag needs to be sturdy and tight enough to hold a cup of marbles. Participants may use any fiber art to create and adorn their bag. Felting, knitting, crocheting, weaving, nalbinding, embroidery and any combination of these are all allowed (so are fiber arts not on the list). Participants are free to dye the wool. However, dyeing is not required. No other fiber, thread, fabric, or notions (buttons, zippers etc.) may be used in the making of the bag. E.g., if the bag is constructed sewing together woven fabric, the sewing thread also has to be spun from the wool provided.



Carolann Darling of Darling Woolens in Groton provided the fleeces for this year's challenge. Here is Carolann with her four Lincoln ewes.

Finished bags should be submitted latest on Roc Day 1-13-24 by 10 am. We ask participants to add an index card listing the crafts used for their project. Judging will be by public vote. The categories will be 'Most Beautiful', 'Most Creative', and 'Most Practical'.

Ziploc bags with the wool will be available at the next guild meetings and at our workshop October 27th. If you'd like to participate, but can't make it to a meeting, please contact Angelika angelika@simonstl.com.

There will be a guide to washing wool at the end of this newsletter, if you are new to the process.

October: Pygora Goats Visit

Unfortunately, this event did not work out, so there will be no visits from Pygora goats. For October events, check out Marcia's "Spinning for Fineness and Consistency" workshop.



Workshop: Spinning for Fineness and Consistency

This class is currently full

The newsletter announcement sadly comes a little too late, but just in case: Marcia Weinert will be offering her “spinning for fineness and consistency workshop for free in October. If you are interested but missed the first announcement, email Marianne at mpellet771@htva.net to be on the waiting list.

The workshop will be held October 27th, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, in the south room of the Old Firehall at Brooktondale Community Center (524 Valley Road, Brooktondale), where the May and April meetings were held. There will be a potluck before the workshop to thank Marcia and to greet each other.

Class description: After mastering the basics of handspinning, many spinners struggle to spin yarn that is truly consistent in grist (diameter), or they wish they could spin a truly laceweight yarn. Bring your favorite (or most frustrating!) wheel and come learn several easy methods to improve your confidence and skills, so that you can create the yarn of your dreams!

Schlact Ladybug to try?

A new member, Mykala, is eager to try out a Schlact Ladybug but is unable to make it to our coming meeting, She says “It would be really nice if I could practice soon (I've caught the wheel spinning bug!). My spindle just isn't able to handle the quantity of fiber I would like to be spinning.”

If anyone would like to do a spin-in or lend a wheel, please contact Mykala at mykalar-obertson@gmail.com or call her at 806-477-9565.



2023 State Fair

Marilee Williams has written in about her experience at the NY State Fair.

I hope that my fellow guild members had a chance to demonstrate at the New York State Fair this year. I once heard a visitor to the Wool Center comment that he sought our building each year because “it is an oasis of calm in a sea of chaos”. I think we would all agree.

Both adults and children seem so grateful for the information we can share about the crafts we hold dear. Learning about the processes which transform animal fiber to useful fabric can be eye-opening to young and old alike. I hope that seeing what can be accomplished with muscle power alone, not requiring electricity or batteries --though they may speed up the process, they certainly aren't necessary—folks may be inspired to turn away from their electronic devices and relax into the meditative process of working with wool.

My enjoyment of the fair began before I even entered the fairgrounds this year. I was following two young women and their children as we all trekked toward the entry gate from our parking spaces. One little guy, maybe 4 years old, said aloud “Are we really here or is it just a dream?” The moms exchanged loving chuckles before he added “I think it's really a dream!” I carried that childlike joy in my heart for the rest of the day!

I no longer haul my spinning wheel to the fair, instead using a Wool Center wheel to spin a bit from the batts provided, or working on a knitting or Zoom Loom project, or demonstrating on the drum carder. The carding process seems magical to folks, especially the kids that I ask to choose the colors to blend together. Their eyes widen as they watch the transfer of fiber from the infeed drum to the take-up drum, changing the perceived colors in the blending process. I offer them some of that carded fiber with instructions to roll the fibers between their palms to change that fluff into a little felt ball they can keep as a souvenir of their fair visit. The parents also seem pleased that will keep little hands busy, at least for a while.



Stories from the Guild

Marilee Williams: Bundle-Dyed Scarf

The MidAtlantic Fiber Association (<https://mafafiber.org>) monthly movie nights have been inspiring for me, especially the recent one featuring India Flint, author of ECO COLOUR botanical dyes for beautiful textiles. With the blooms of summer on full display, I decided to try my hand at the technique of direct application of plant material to a silk scarf. This also gave me the opportunity to feel productive in the shade of my porch as the July sun beat down on my garden.

On July 18th, I gathered the dyestuff: red, peach and yellow daylily bloom; sumac leaf and berry; purple monarda flower and leaf; purple oxalis leaf and stem; grape leaf and stem; oak leaf; oregano leaf and flower; catnip leaf and flower; woolly apple mint leaf; rusty metal spikes, can opener and pulley.



I arranged the items randomly, following no particular pattern, just letting the colors tell me where they wanted to be. I had already soaked the silk in a solution of water and white vinegar and I sprayed the dye material with plain water as I placed it, both to keep the silk damp and to try to keep the lighter plant material from blowing off the scarf in the soft breeze.



When the scarf was fully covered with dye stuff, I rolled it lengthwise as tightly as I could, which was a challenge considering the rusty chunks of metal I had spaced intermittently. I was also careful not to push too hard on the metal which could damage the thin silk fabric. Then I wound white twine multiple times around the bundle and set it aside to “cure”.

On July 21st, the scarf felt dry and deepening colors appearing on the outside of the bundle made me impatient to see what surprises lay inside. I carefully unwound the string and opened the bundle flat. The outside had been dry but inside the bundle was still quite damp.

Removing the metal from the scarf was simple but the plant material was seriously adhered in many places. Peeling off the leaves and blossoms revealed sometimes dramatic outlines, other times subtle and soft images. I probably should have made more careful notes about which things transferred deeper colors and more distinct shapes, but in the excitement of the unveiling I just cleaned off as much as I could then hung the scarf in the shade on my clothesline, hoping that as it dried more, the debris would fall off.





After the scarf was fully dry, I continued to pick off the plant debris but soon realized some of it would not loosen without a little assistance from water. I gently sloshed it in a basin of tepid water, careful not to soak it too long for fear of losing any fugitive color, then hung it again in the shade to dry.

The rusty metal really took over the design, with the dark streaks of iron penetrating all the layers in spite of spacing the metal quite far apart. The daylily blooms didn't seem to offer as dramatic results as I had hoped, even though harvesting the red blossoms turned my hands maroon. Oxalis lent a nice purple touch; perhaps that is because it contains oxalic acid, which can be used as a mordant. And if I had been more patient and waited a few days longer for the unveiling or placed the bundle in a dark container in the sun to achieve a passive solar heating effect, or steamed the whole thing in a pan, the colors might have been more intense. Those are all experiments for another time.

I'm pleased with the results of my first attempt at bundle dyeing a scarf, which is now in the Netherlands, a gift to my niece when she visited recently. But next time, I vow to take more careful notes and will try a more precise placement to achieve a pattern with the colors. It's nice to be able to have some predictable results, but the serendipity of letting Nature have her say is part of the fun of natural dyeing.





A Quick Guide to Washing Wool

Written by Angelika

The idea of washing wool can be intimidating. Wool can felt and no spinner wants that to happen to their precious spinning fiber. Luckily, wool needs a combination of heat and agitation to felt. Heat alone, without agitation, will not result into felting. When washing wool keep two rules in mind:

- (1) Never move wool from hot or warm water into cold water. The fiber contracting in the newly colder environment can provide the agitation necessary to felt. Taking wool out of a hot bath and letting it cool off in the air, does not result into felting, because air is a so much worse heat conductor than water.
- (2) Always fill the washing container first with water and heat the water to the desired temperature, before adding the wool. Running water or bubbles forming from heating the water can agitate the wool into felting.

Here is a quick recipe that I use to wash raw wool:

- 1) Cold soak. I fill a container with cold water and submerge the wool in it and let it sit for an hour or two, or even overnight. Wool tends to contain a lot of easily water-soluble dirt, like the sheep's sweat or plain old dust that can easily rinsed out that way. The first rinsing water often becomes reddish brown and almost opaque. It makes for excellent plant watering. I tend to give two or three cold rinses, until the rinsing water looks reasonably clear.
- 2) Scouring. This step is to remove the lanoline and waxes from the wool fiber. I bring a pot of water with about a cup of dish detergent to at least 180F. I then submerge my wool and let it sit for 20 min. I pour out the scouring water and let the hot water drip off of the wool.
- 3) Second scouring. I repeat step #2.
- 4) Hot rinse. I bring detergent free water to 160-180F and submerge the wool again. This step mostly serves to remove the left-over detergent from the wool.
- 5) Drip off and drying. I let the wet wool drip off for a while, then I gently roll it in a towel to extract some of the moisture (be careful not to agitate the wool too much while rolling it up) Then I lay it out on a fresh dry towel to dry.

Things that make washing wool easier: Putting wool into a lingerie bag for washing, makes it much easier to move it in and out of the baths. Sturdy rubber or nitril gloves can protect the hands while handling hot liquids. An old salad spinner can be useful to spin water out of the washed wool and facilitate faster drying.

How much time does washing raw wool add to a project compared to starting from washed wool? Two to five days. Washing the wool with all the cold soaks takes about one day. How long it takes to dry the wool after the wash depends a bit on the weather. In dry early spring outdoors or once indoors heating has substantially reduced the air humidity, drying takes a full day. Under more humid conditions it might take up to three days. As a rule of thumb, when the cat elects to sleep in the wool, it's dry.



Current Roc Day Volunteer Schedule

+ Volunteer Schedule for 11 January, 2020

<p>Set-up Friday 4:30 - 6pm - Yvonne L.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yvonne LaMontagne 2. Louise Henrie 3. Angelika St.Laurent 4. Deb Benzer 5. Kay Stickene 6. 7. 8. 	<p>Welcome Table - Kathy Halton</p> <p>9:45-10:45 Kathy Halton</p> <p>10:45-11:45</p> <p>11:45-12:45</p> <p>12:45-1:45</p> <p>1:45-2:45</p> <p>2:45-3:45</p>
<p>Spinning Circle - (Need Point Person)</p> <p>10-11 Zoe Gras</p> <p>11-12 Mary White</p> <p>12-1 Suzanne Schwartz</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>2-3</p>	<p>Raffle 10am – 1pm - Deb Benzer Roberta Sibley</p> <p>10-11 Beth Varieur</p> <p>10-11</p> <p>11-12</p> <p>11-12</p> <p>12-1</p> <p>12-1</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>1-2</p>
<p>Kitchen - (Need Point Person)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ruby Schnirman 2. Jean Currie 3. 4. 5. 6. 	<p>Floater - Yvonne LaMontagne</p> <p>10-11</p> <p>11-12</p> <p>12-1</p> <p>1-2</p> <p>2-3</p> <p>3-4</p>
<p>Competition - Angelika St. Laurent</p> <p>Competition Table</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	<p>Clean-Up 4 - 6:30 pm - Yvonne LaMontagne</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yvonne LaMontagne 2. Angelika St.Laurent 3. Jean Currie 4. 5. 6.



Vendors

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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, mail it with your check for \$25 to: Louise Henrie, 417 2nd Street, Ithaca, NY 14850, or send via Venmo to Black-Sheep-NY.

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