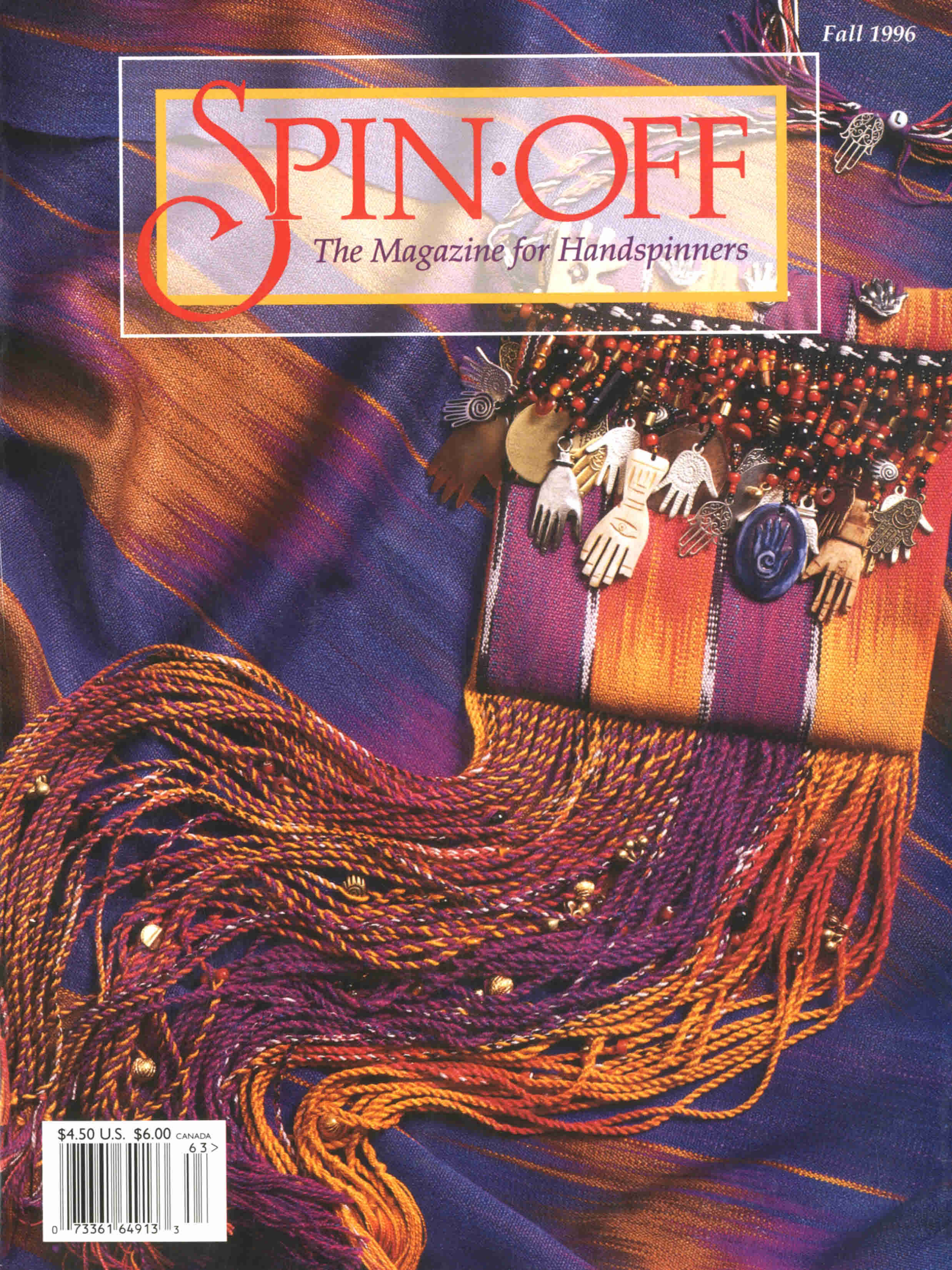
Fall 1996

SPIN·OFF

The Magazine for Handspinners



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SPIN-OFF

The Magazine for Handspinners

Volume XX
Number 3
Fall 1996

Projects

Departments

Cover: *Put in the practice, and the results arrive one after another. Sara Lamb's "Handbag" is shown against a background of one of her scarves, both made of hand-dyed, handspun (of course) silk, assembled with exquisite care. An exuberance of color and meticulous attention to details* *. . . see more starting on page 20.*

Color

Cotton

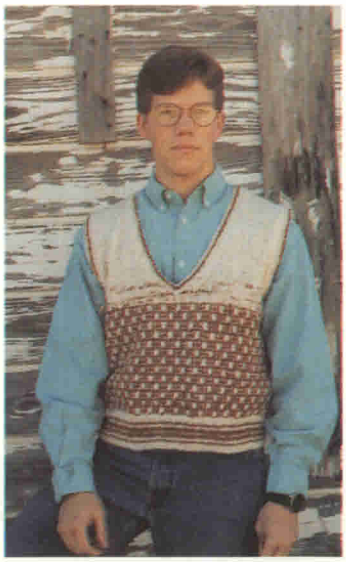
Handspun Gallery of Cotton

Editor's Page

1

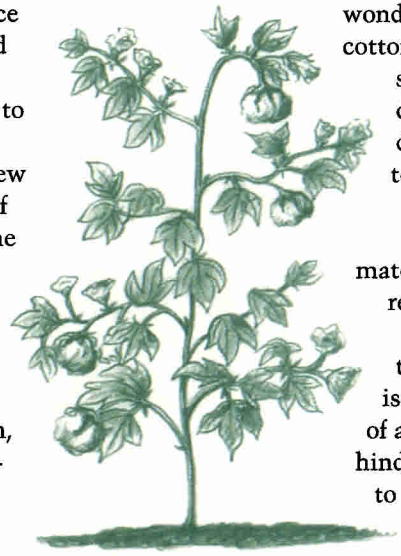
Across miles, languages, and generations: ***1*** *Margaret Stove, from New Zealand, watches Gladys Clark card cotton in Louisiana. Margaret shared her knitted lace with Gladys, who in turn explained to her husband in French.* ***2*** *Charles Sides' son, Ashley, wears Charles' hand-spun cotton vest (page 86).* ***3*** *Gladys Clark adds another perfect hand-carded brown cotton rolag to her basket (page 38).*

2



"So." The familiar voice growled across a thousand miles of phone line. "Are you finally going to learn to spin cotton?"

A number of images flew through my mind, none of which was pertinent to the root question: my successful spinning of cotton on great wheel, charkha, takli, and flyer-and-bobbin wheels over the years, in white, brown, and colors. At the foundation of these experiences lies the fact that I had never reached the point where I could spin cotton in quantity and with ease. The knowledge of "how to spin cotton" had not become part of the sinew of my being.



"Yeah, I think it's about time," I answered, and began the latest leg of this journey.

Am I there yet? No, but the scenery's been great, and the destination beckons ever more intensely. My favorite fabric to wear is pure cotton (followed closely by several other natural-fiber pleasures), and the difficulty of finding *really good* yardage makes the prospect of spinning my own cotton yarn appealing. Although the largest portion of my days is spent at a computer, I have suddenly been surrounded by inspiring handspun cottons, the stories of the people who made them ("this was my first yarn," "it took a while, but I'm really glad I did it"), and the names of spinners who have specialized in cotton (along with pictures of their communities and families and friends, because handspun cotton affects their lives, too).

It's a whole new world—again. That's what I love about spinning. And with the help of fellow spinners, mostly folks I see less than once a year, before long I'll be spinning cotton as comfortably as I spin other fibers. I've already progressed. But I wonder if I'll ever be able to spin cotton as "auto-yarn" while doing something else. I have doubts. I think cotton has a different set of lessons to teach me.

Meanwhile, we had lots of material in response to our request for cotton ideas, and one big chunk didn't fit in this issue. So in the Winter issue, look forward to a series of articles on the principles behind charkha design and on how to build your own charkha. It's a bit tricky (it will give you a deeper appreciation for the wheel maker's craft) and it takes a chunk of time you might rather spend spinning, but what a sense of accomplishment! We think even the vicarious thrill of the story and the pictures will offer a nice winter interlude.

The photos that appear on this page didn't fit elsewhere in this issue, and they say a lot for me about the world of spinning.

Enjoy!

3

Letters

Dear *Spin·Off*,

I am writing in hopes that some of your readers might be interested in participating in a research project. I am an archaeologist working on prehistoric yarns and cordage as part of my dissertation research. In order to better understand prehistoric materials, archaeologists often turn to modern people and materials for information. I am looking for thigh and spindle spinners who would be willing to be interviewed about how they learned to spin, how difficult it would be to change their normal direction of spinning, whether or not handedness makes a difference, etc.

Spinners who are interested in participating in the research project can reach me via e-mail at *cjminar@ix.netcom.com*, call me at (714) 545-7628, or write to me at the address noted below. I am currently on a research trip but I call in to get my messages regularly.

I would be happy to provide you with more details about the research project, a letter of reference from the chairman of my dissertation committee, etc. Thanks so much!

—Jill Minar, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside, California 92521

Dear *Spin·Off*,

I last wrote to you to advise you that as a retiree I could no longer afford *Spin·Off* and *Handwoven*.

As it turns out, however, I simply cannot do without *Spin·Off*.

This week, while spinning some batts I'd prepared from a nice Coopworth fleece I purchased in New Zealand (in those long ago days when I could still afford travel), I decided to try overdyeing a few skeins. I recalled several articles on dyeing, so went to my wonderful *Spin·Off* "library," and there they were. Incidentally, contents printed on the spine sure are nice when you are looking for a specific article.

How can I possibly do without such a wonderful resource? What might I miss if I allow my subscription to lapse? Clearly it is one of the necessities of my life. At 70 I mustn't waste any time if I want to complete all the projects I had planned for my retirement (did I think I'd last until 2026 or something?), so I need all my important resources. Thanks for your wonderful publications; none compare.

—Betty Richardson, Eatonville, Washington

Dear *Spin·Off*,

I would like to correct some inaccuracies about AOL's online fiber guild ["On-Line Resources for Spinners, Knitters, and Weavers, Summer 1996, page 87].

AOL has an online weaving and spinning guild called CyberFyber. We are listed with HGA. I am the president of the guild and my e-mail address is redhairgal@aol.com.

Next at Keyword: SPINNING or WEAVING, you will find message boards for spinning and weaving. However, the Guild message boards are in a different place at: People Connection> PC Studio> What's Happening This Week> Fiber and Needle Art. This is also where you will find the guild's library and forum area.

There is no Fiber and Needle Artists chat room; our chat room is called Fiber and Needle Art. It is located at People Connection> List Rooms> Fiber and Needle Art. I would be happy to forward a list of all our chats upon request.

—Jo Anna Bradfield

Dear *Spin·Off*,

I just received my new [Summer] issue. I love that sweater by Mary Spanos. Can she be persuaded to part with the pattern? Or will it be in the premier issue of *Interweave Knits*, which I have already ordered? I just have to somehow get that pattern love that neckline.

—Nancy Murakami, Gresham, Oregon

Editor's Note: *Isn't it a great sweater? Because spinners work on extremely personalized garments,* Spin·Off *often presents work with an outline of the creative process, rather than specific instructions. One of our goals as a magazine is to help empower spinners to break through their personal barriers and make exactly the piece they see in their minds' eye. How do we get there? By watching each other succeed, and hearing about the detours and changes of plans.*

Best resource we know for drafting a garment pattern that's in your mind: A Knitter's Guide to Sweater Design, *by Carmen Michelson and Mary-Ann Davis (Loveland: Interweave Press, 1989). Yes, it's a book we published. We wanted it ourselves, and that was the only way we could get it! Check your library or interlibrary loan, take*

—continued on page 90

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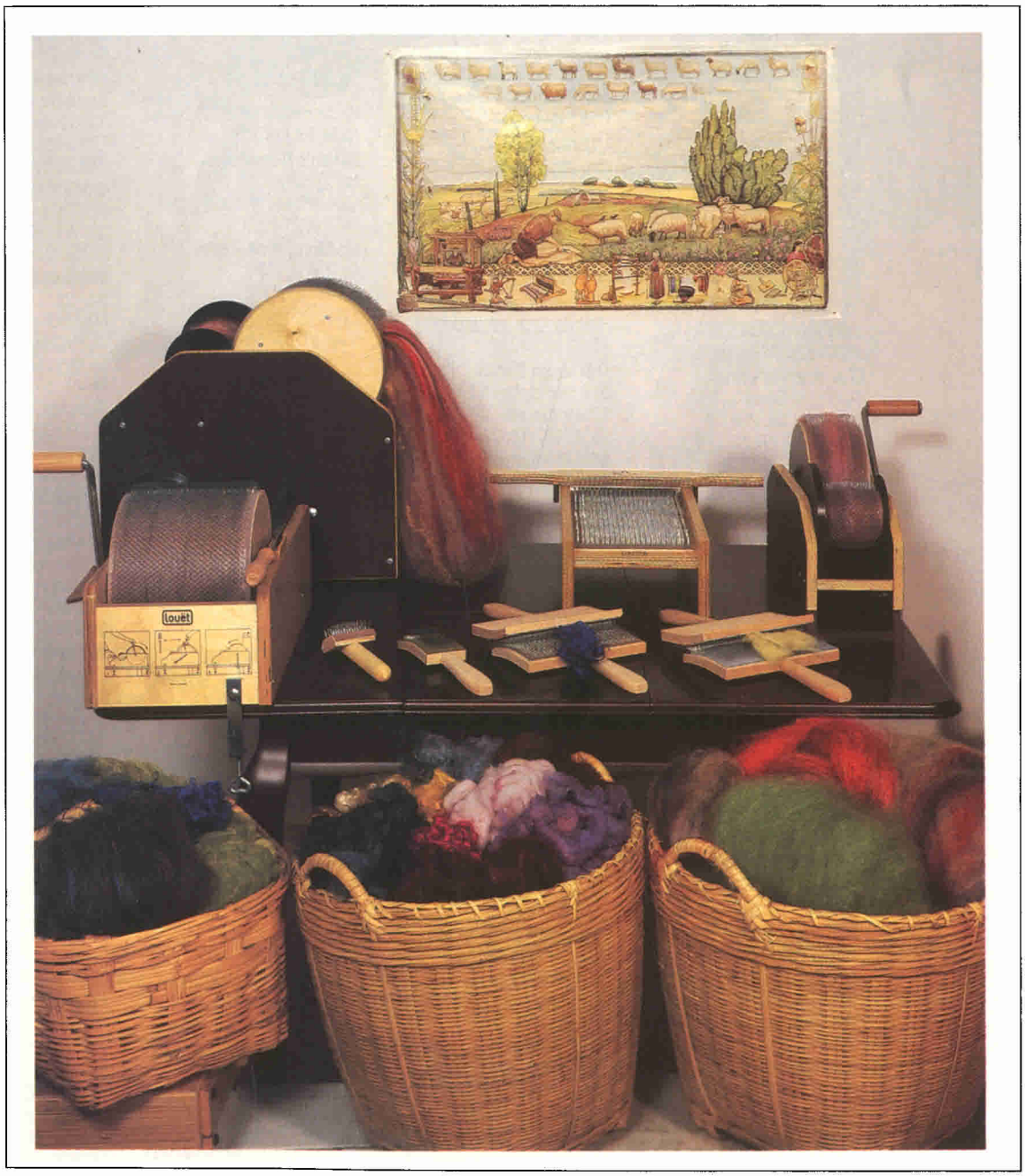

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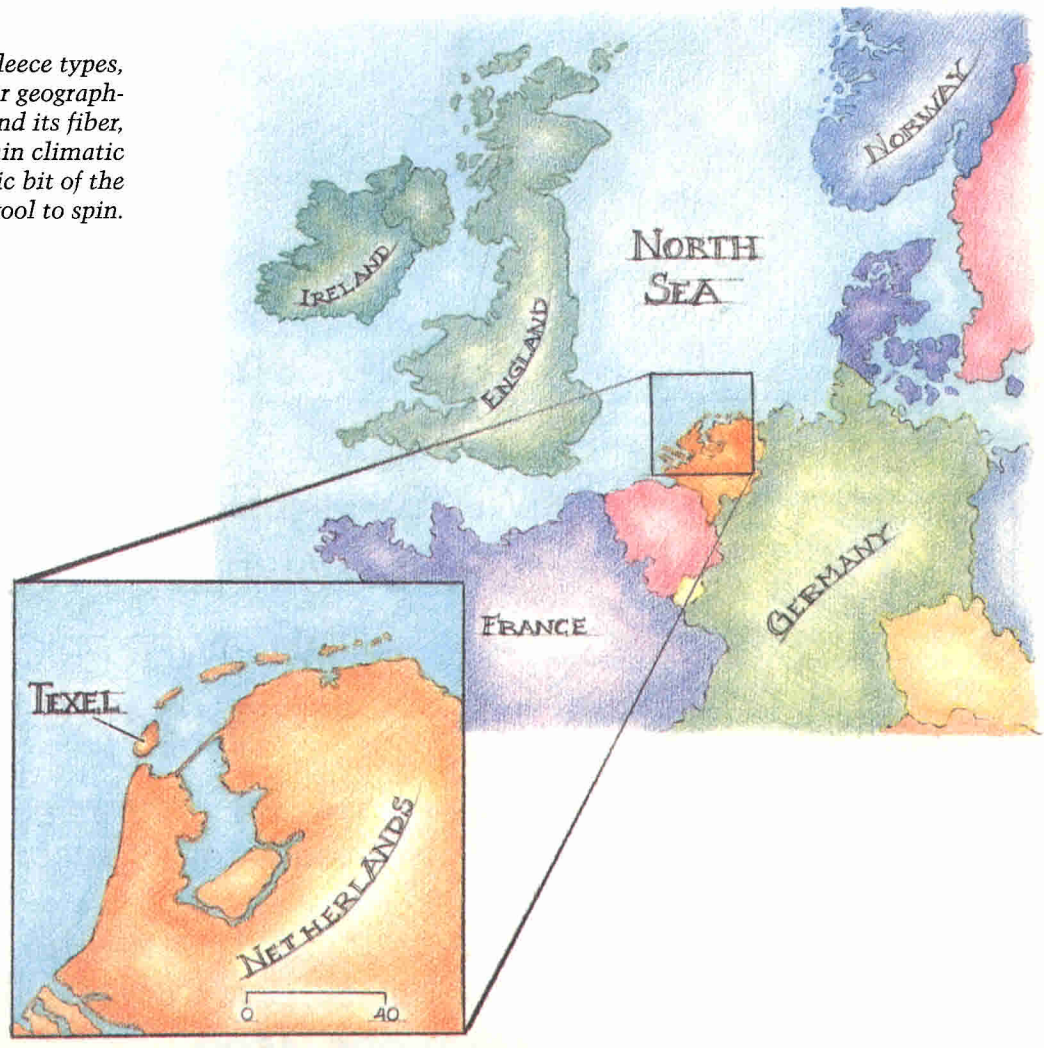
Texel *A PERSONAL* EXPERIENCE

by Nola Fournier

SHAPED BY RESPONSE to harsh climates and more recently the European lamb markets, the modern Texel is a hardy, all-purpose sheep breed. The original ancestors of Texel came from a group of white-faced, short-tailed sheep that populated the coast of western Europe, from northern France to Denmark. On the island of Texel, from which the breed takes its name, sandy soil, sparse vegetation, and an inhospitable climate created a sturdy, rugged local sheep.

By the early nineteenth century, the British lamb market was searching for improved market lambs. Texel sheep growers, wanting to compete in this market, employed a breed inspector to assist in maintaining the breed's purity and to foster the breeding of animals with the desired meat characteristics. Texels were crossed with British longwool breeds to improve their productivity; then these crosses were interbred to establish the modern Texel breed. Selection has been aimed primarily at improving



Like most sheep breeds and fleece types, Texel originated in a particular geographic location and the animal, and its fiber, are uniquely suited to certain climatic conditions. Here's the specific bit of the world that gave us Texel wool to spin.

For sample 1, Nola prepared locks on Viking combs and spun a smooth, balanced two-ply. With the intention of maximizing loft and warmth, she next flick-carded locks and spun soft, smooth singles for sample 2. Still intrigued by the fiber's potential for lightweight warmth, she tried hand-carding to incorporate more air but found the fibers too long for easy carding. Shifting back to flick-carding, she kept her hands very relaxed during spinning to preserve as much loft as possible. Then she modified her construction technique—using an unusual crochet stitch—to produce the results she wanted in her completed swatch for sample 3.

the meat characteristics of the sheep, but wool quality has also been taken into account.

In Holland, Texel sheep make up the greater part of the Dutch flock. At first exported to France, Belgium, and Luxembourg, Texels have been established throughout Europe and Scandinavia, some of the former-Soviet countries, Turkey, South America, and most recently in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

These white-faced sheep have faces and legs that are free of wool and both sexes are hornless. A number of studies have shown Texel-cross lamb meat to be very lean, which is a benefit in today's market. Although principally a meat sheep, Texel wool should not be overlooked by spinners in search of bulky, resilient, hard-wearing yarns.

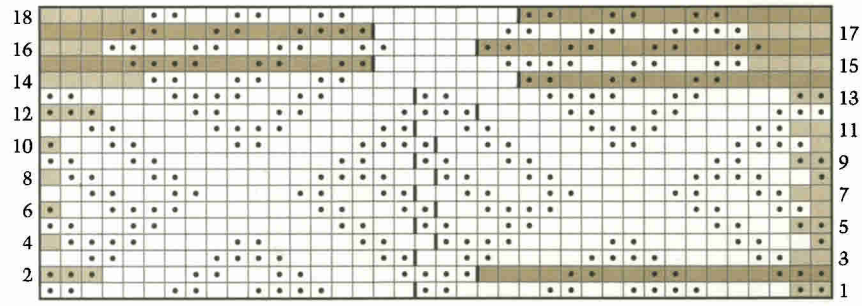
Breed Association: North American Texel Sheep Association, Route 1, Box 927, Laurel, Mississippi 39440.

ABBREVIATIONS
b—in the back of the stitch
ch—chain
dc—double crochet
inc—increase
k—knit
p—purl
st(s)—stitch(es)
tr—treble crochet
tog—together

FANCY LOZENGE PATTERN

Used for sample 2; multiple of 18 sts plus 2.

Row 1 (Right Side) P2, *k4, p4, k2, p2, k4, p2; repeat from * across.
Row 2: K3, *p4, k2, p2, k2, p4, k4; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k3.
Row 3: K2, *p2, k4, p4, k4, p2, k2; repeat from * across.
Row 4: P1, *k4, (p4, k2) twice, p2; repeat from * across, ending k1
Row 5. P2, *k2, p2, k8, p2, k2, p2; repeat from * across.
Row 6: K1, *p2, k4, p6, k2, p2, k2; repeat from * across, ending p1
Row 7· K2, *p2, k2, p2, k4, (p2, k2) twice; repeat from * across.
Row 8: P1, *k2, p2, k2, p6, k4, p2; repeat from * across, ending k1
Rows 9, 11, and 12: Repeat rows 5, 3, and 2.
Row 10: K1, *p2, (k2, p4) twice, k4; repeat from * across, ending p1.
Row 13: P2, *k4, p2, k2, p4, k4, p2; repeat from * across.
Row 14: P5, * (k2, p2) twice, k2, p8: repeat from * across, ending last repeat p5.
Row 15: K4, *(p2, k2) twice, p4, k6; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k4.
Row 16: P3, *(k2, p2) 3 times, k2, p4; repeat from * across, ending last repeat p3.
Row 17· K4, *p4, (k2, p2) twice, k6; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k4.
Row 18: Repeat row 14.
Repeat rows 1 to 18.



Texel Fleece

Fleece weights usually range from 8 to 12 pounds (3.5 to 5.5 kg). The fiber diameter is 46s to 56s (34 to 26 microns), and staple length varies between 3½ and 6 inches (8 and 15 cm). The wool is bulkier than that of most longwool breeds—that is, it has more resilience and loft—and this characteristic can be used to advantage. Texel does not felt readily.

The wool I purchased was at the finer end of the breed's normal range. It had a lively bounce and a staple length of just over 5 inches (13 cm). The staple had a well-defined five crimps to the inch (2.5 cm), and because of the pronounced crimp the fully extended fiber was much longer than the 5-inch 13-cm) staple length. Although Texel is not generally considered a lustrous fleece, this example was bright when compared to the chalky appearance of down-type breeds, such as Suffolk or Cheviot.

It is with some shame that I mention that some of the wool had a break approximately 3/4 inch (1.8 cm) from the butt end. I had purchased about 4½ pounds (2 kg), rather than a whole fleece, and had completely ignored the advice I always freely dispense regarding selecting wool: *always tip a fleece out of the bag and examine carefully before you make your final decision to purchase!* Well, I purchased in haste and repented at leisure—that is, if you can describe having to remove the short section at the break as "leisure." The good news was that I still had a very usable length remaining after the broken portion had been eliminated. There were a number of fine, short, kemp fibers throughout the fleece, but these were not a problem and did not adversely affect the yarns. However, when selecting a Texel fleece, you should be alert for unacceptable quantities of kemp.

Irish Knot

Used for sample 1; multiple of 14 sts plus 5.

Row 1. (Wrong side) K6, *p2, k1, p1, k1, p2, k7; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k6.

Row 2: P4, *p2 tog, k2, inc purlwise (by purling into the front and back of the next st), k1b, inc purlwise, k2, p2 tog, p3; repeat from * across, ending p1

Row 3: K5, *p2, k2, p1, k2, p2, k5; repeat from * across.

Row 4: P3, *p2 tog, k2, inc purlwise, p1, k1b, p1, inc purlwise, k2, p2 tog, p1; repeat from *, ending p2.

Row 5. K4, *p2, k3, p1, k3, p2, k3; repeat from * across, ending k1.

Row 6: P2, k1b, *p1, k2, p3, make knot (MK) as follows: (k1, p1, k1, p1, k1 loosely in next st, then with point of lefthand needle pass the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th sts on right-hand needle separately over the last st made, completing knot; p3, k2, p1, k1b; repeat from * across, ending p2.

Row 7· K2, p1, *k1, p2, k7, p2, k1, p1; repeat from * across, ending k2.

Row 8: P2, k1b, *inc purlwise, k2, p2 tog, p3, p2 tog, k2, inc purlwise, k1b; repeat from * across, ending p2.

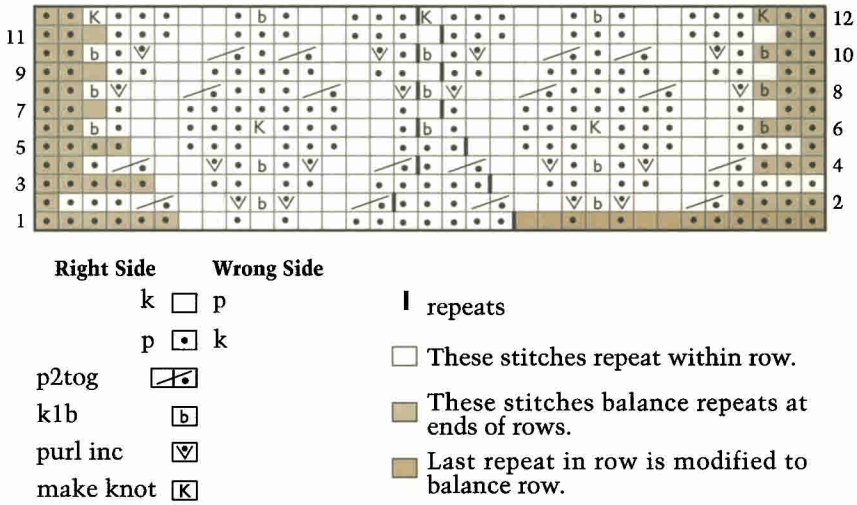
Row 9: K2, p1, *k2, p2, k5, p2, k2, p1; repeat from * across, ending k2.

Row 10: P2, k1b, *p1, inc purlwise, k2, p2 tog, p1, p2 tog, k2, inc purlwise, p1, k1b; repeat from * across, ending p2.

Row 11. K2, p1, *(k3, p2) twice, k3, p1; repeat from * across, ending k2.

Row 12: P2, MK, *p3, k2, p1, k1b, p1, k2, p3, MK; repeat from * across, ending p2.

Repeat rows 1 to 12.



Aircell Blanket Stitch

Used for sample 3. (American stitch conventions)

Crochet a length of chain loosely, to desired length.

Row 1. Dc into each ch, turn with ch-3.

Row 2: *1 dc into first dc of previous row then 1 dc putting hook horizontally behind the next dc. Repeat from * to end of row. Turn with ch-3.

Row 3: Dc horizontally into alternate sts which stand forward, making a normal dc st into those which are recessed.

Continue as in row 3.

Aircell Blanket Stitch

(European stitch conventions, as written by author)

Crochet a length of chain loosely, to desired length.

Row 1. Tr into each chain, turn with ch-3.

Row 2: *1 tr into first tr of previous row, then 1 tr putting hook horizontally behind the next tr. Repeat from * to end of row. Turn with ch-3.

Row 3: Tr horizontally into alternate stitches which stand forward, making a normal tr st into those which are recessed.

Continue as in row 3.

Open faces, bouncy wool, blue skies, and billowing clouds: can anything but fine days lie ahead? These Texel ewes, shorn in March, show five months' fleece growth. The photo, from M.A.R.C. in Clay Center, Nebraska, was taken by and is used courtesy of Greg Wichman, Hilger, Montana.

New Zealander Nola Fournier recently wrote In Sheep's Clothing *(Loveland. Interweave Press, 1996) with her daughter, Jane Fournier, of Wyoming, who has been our mainstay of "Fiber Basics" and is now coordinating the contributions of other spinners to this ongoing project.*

With a moderate staple length and an open fleece structure, Texel is suitable for any preparation method, although longer examples may not be good candidates for hand carding, as I discovered when preparing sample 3. Clean fleeces can be easily and quickly flick carded. When well prepared, my fleece was easy to draft and flowed freely.

At first impression, the fleece I was working with presented a rather crisp, slightly harsh handle. This influenced my decision to make the first sample a two-ply, firmly spun yarn suited to outerwear—in this case, a knitted jacket. When I had completed the sample yarn, I was surprised that its hand was much softer than I had expected.

This led me to plan a sweater yarn, which I sampled as a three-ply and spun more softly than the jacket yarn. For the third sample, I decided to make use of the fleece's excellent loft in a yarn for a blanket, to be crocheted in a cellular stitch to trap air and warmth while keeping the weight to a minimum.

Other uses that came to mind included yarn for socks and singles yarns for lofty and lively woven fabric. Stronger fleeces could be used for hard-wearing floor coverings or upholstery fabrics.

Yarn and Swatch Details

Sample 1

With the intention of making a hard-wearing but comfortable jacket, I decided to comb the well-washed fleece with a pair of two-row Viking wool combs. I spun the top on a wheel using a short to medium backward draw, smoothing the fibers in the yarn as I spun. The balanced two-ply yarn was skeined and washed. It measured approximately 12 wraps per inch (2.5 cm), with a twist angle of 35°, and 800 yards per pound 1610 m per kg). The completed swatch was washed and lightly blocked.

The swatch is knitted on size 6 (4 mm) needles, in the Irish Knot pattern from *A Second Treasury of Knitting Patterns* by Barbara G. Walker (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1970).

Sample 2

I flick-carded locks of thoroughly washed fleece and spun the locks on a wheel into an even singles yarn, aiming to keep the yarn light and soft, but smooth. I was aiming for a soft yarn that would feel warm and snug. As a three-ply, the yarn measured approximately 10½ wraps per inch (2.5 cm), with a twist angle of 27°, and weighed in at 900 yards per pound 1815 m per kg). I knitted the swatch on size 7 (4.5 mm) needles in Fancy Lozenge pattern, another of Barbara Walker's patterns from *A Second Treasury of Knitting Patterns.* The finished swatch was washed, patted into shape, and left to dry flat.

Sample 3

The excellent loft of the fleece and its surprising softness suggested a blanket yarn. As always, the wool was well washed before preparation and spinning. I initially tried hand-carding rolags, in order to preserve as much loft as possible, but found the staples long enough to tangle in the rolag instead of drafting easily into the light yarn I was aiming for. Instead, I flick-carded locks and spun them into a softly twisted yarn using a medium to long backward draw, taking care not to smooth or pinch the yarn as I spun. The finished yarn is a balanced two-ply and measures approximately 13 wraps per inch (2.5 cm), has a twist angle of 25°, and weighs in at 1350 yards per pound (2720 m per kg).

The swatch was crocheted with a size H (5 mm) hook in a wonderfully simple Aircell Blanket pattern that creates a three-dimensional cellular structure which traps air and is perfect for a lightweight, warm blanket. This pattern was sent by K. Dennis to *The Web* (previously the journal of the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving and Woolcraft Society) and was published in its June 1984 edition. The completed swatch was washed, patted into shape, and left to dry flat. ❖

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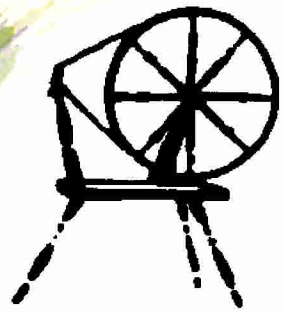

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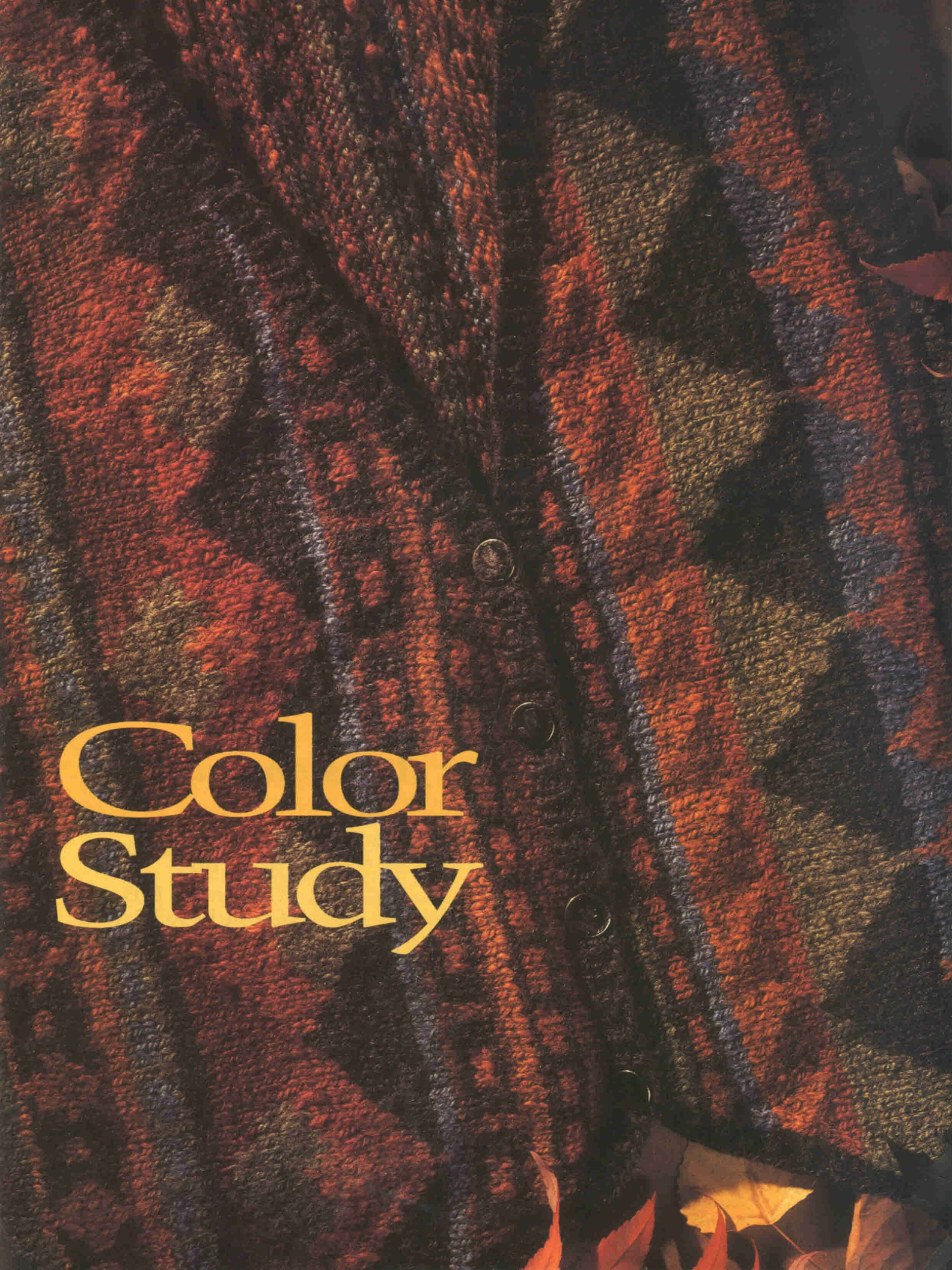
Color
Study

BY KERRI KEELER PIETTE

Modeling the vest is Karen Evanson, who maintains sanity in the world around her at Interweave.

Sometimes I lose sight of the beauty of New England. This usually happens in late August, when mosquitoes seem the size of birds and the weeds in the garden grow faster than I can pull them. But just when I can't stand the sticky weather any longer, a miracle happens. Ever so slowly the landscape changes. Ironically, I notice this when I do the most mundane things, like driving to the supermarket. One day I'll look up and see the most beautiful colors on earth and I again remember how much I love this region.

Being a novice spinner, I've been thinking how I might improve my work and bring it to a slightly higher level. Having two young sons gives me little time to do things for myself. So I try to use each project as a means to learn something new.

Color sense has always escaped me. No repetition of color theory workshops or turning of color wheels seemed to help. So I began to pay attention to what artists have always said and tried to take inspiration from the world around me.

I decided that autumn's colors were not those I would ordinarily choose for myself. Yet in looking at the hillsides—bursting in shades of yellow, orange, and red—I realized nature had chosen a striking combination that is universally pleasing.

So on each of my drives, I observed closely and thought about what made the color combinations work. On one particularly clear day, the blue sky provided a dramatic, contrasting backdrop for the reds and yellows. Once I'd decided that blue was an important element, I realized that black, too, helped bring out individual colors. The dark shadows of empty space between the trees provided depth. This was the first time I gave thought to something that *wasn't there,* but was important.

The other color choices turned out to be less precise. I simply picked out a tree that pleased me and went home and tried to duplicate its color in my dyepot. With a new baby in the house and precious little time, I used Gaywool dyes on a beautiful Romney fleece grown by a fellow guild member, Debbie Watson, which I had sent out to be washed and carded.

My greatest lesson in the exercise of creating my colors was learning when to accept serendipity. My first attempt was a "failure." In trying to reproduce a beautiful burgundy, I got an auburn brown. My attempt at yellow turned out so awful (even my neighbor took one look and said, "Yuck!") that I learned the saving grace of overdyeing.

Again short of time, I decided a vest would knit up relatively quickly and give more immediate satisfaction than a larger project. With no leisure for designing, I chose a Manos del Uruguay pattern. The spinning and dyeing took about two weeks, but as the baby grew more demanding, the knitting went more and more slowly until I finished ten months later. I learned much from this effort, and although it's not my best knitting, it has given me many ideas for my next project and I think I'm over my fear of color! ❖

Now that she's grown up, Kerri Keeler Piette likes trying out all the things she's ever wanted to do. She doesn't recall how she got started in fibers, but her current passion is dyeing—which means spinning white wool like mad as she plans her next dyepot. In between keeping bees and boys, Kerri finds that the Boston Area Spinners and Dyers provides her with more opportunities to indulge in her craft than she has time for.

Left: *Kerri Piette took the color inspiration for her vest from the world around her.*

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Silk & Color

BY SARA LAMB

THE BLUE SCARF shown here began with the purchase of some dyed silk top from Woodland Woolworks at the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR) in 1994. Melda Montgomery had used three analogous colors—blue, navy, and purple—to dye a 5½-ounce length of bombyx with Lanaset dyes. I had no project in mind when I purchased the top (sound familiar?), but I knew that it would show its colors and texture to best advantage in a fine, tightly twisted yarn. I began to spin as soon as I got home, and as I did so, the rest of the project came into focus.

Since 1987, I have had on hand some beautiful bombyx top that I had won in *Handwoven*'s "Design's On You" contest 1987). I had been reluctant to spin it for fear of ruining it, but as I spun the blue mix, I knew I could do justice to the fine top. I used a Canadian Saxony wheel which Alden Amos made at my request specifically for silk.

I chose to weave a scarf because the finished project did not need to have specific dimensions; I could simply spin what I had and make a scarf. I divided the blue top roughly in half, spun each section onto a separate bobbin, and plied the two strands together. Both the spinning and plying were "unconscious," done in front of the evening news and while talking on the phone, and so forth; I credit the wheel with making the yarn all look so even.

I measured a three-yard warp directly from the bobbins, winding warp ends until the yarn ran out. With the white silk, which I planned to warp-paint, I made two separate chains, one with very few threads (48) for the small stripes that would outline each larger painted area. Then I washed the warp chains in hot, soapy water, rinsed them, and hung them on the line to dry.

I determined the sett by wrapping the yarn around a ruler, not under tension; it measured 40 wraps per inch (2.5 cm). I knew I wanted a warp-dominant fabric, so I decided to sett the threads at 48 ends per inch 192/10 cm). Since there was no sampling for this project (probably a crime I should not admit to), I had to trust that experience would substitute. I also knew that any fabric would be beautiful with these yarns.

The painting process went smoothly; the yarns were steamed, washed, dried, and ready to put on the loom. Warping went well: it's often surprising to me how quickly precious handspun becomes simply *yarn* as a project progresses. While I do not treat handspun in a cavalier way, it does have to be cut, stretched, threaded, tied, and beamed, then tied on again for the weaving to begin.

The scarf is threaded in a straight draw for plain weave. Weaving went along fine; the weft is 40/3 cotton in purple. I did move a light closer to the web so I could catch any errors before they got too far down the fabric: it is my habit to try to correct as many mistakes as I can during the weaving, rather than after. After I finished the scarf and removed it from the loom, I twisted the fringes to protect the ends, then machine washed it, put it through a short cycle in the dryer (20 minutes), pressed it, and laid it flat to dry.

I admit that at this point I knew that I had made an exceptional piece, and I was as surprised as the next person at how it all simply fell into place. This project was not especially difficult, nor did I take any special care or treat the process differently than other projects I work on. It all simply went well. Curious. I decided that I needed to make another scarf to see if this was a fluke, or if I really did finally know what I was doing.

I started to spin the second scarf with dyed top purchased at SOAR '92. There were two 2-ounce bags of similar colors: one was purple and fuchsia, the other purple, fuchsia, and turquoise. I spun them on

Opposite: *We're sure you noticed Sara's work on the cover. Here's another scarf—part of a series which she thinks may become a lifetime project—and a pair of silk mittens: soft, strong, colorful, and not your average winter wear.*

In the background is another of Sara's scarves, and on top is "Coin Purse," a relative of "Handbag," shown on the cover. These bags use all kinds of weaving, dyeing, and braiding techniques, along with the perfect findings: an exquisite blend of "favorite things."

separate bobbins and plied them together. There was more color variation in this yarn than in the blue top used for the previous scarf, but not enough to make dull or muddy colors.

The white I chose for the painted area was of decidedly poorer quality than the beautiful top for the first scarf. Packaged in a brick, it was shorter, "fuzzier," had lots of unspinnable stuff to pull out as I was spinning, and generally was more trouble. I spun along valiantly, though: I divided the brick in half and spun between two bobbins. Again, after weeks of the evening news, the yarns were ready.

The process was much the same; just the colors were different. The second scarf is narrower; I started with a smaller amount of dyed top.

The big surprise came at the very end. Of course, the yarns had all been washed prior to warping, and the painted yarns had been washed, dyed, steamed, washed, rinsed, and dried before weaving. After weaving, as usual, I twisted the fringe and trimmed the ends evenly. Then as always, I washed the piece for its final time.

At this point, the less expensive silk shrunk again! Or maybe it was stretched in the weaving process and it relaxed. At any rate, the fringes are no longer trimmed evenly, and when the scarf hangs free, there is a slight seersucker effect between the pre-dyed and warp-painted areas. I don't know why this happened, but it does not detract from the beauty of the finished piece (and it makes a great show-and-tell).

So, what did I buy at SOAR '95? Yep, dyed silk top! Will report back.

Update May 1996: Scarf 3 is now done—beautiful fuchsia, reds, and purple; and scarf 4 is under way—teal and blues. This may be a lifetime occupation! ❖

Sara Lamb began her fiber experiences as a weaver. Sudden access to sheep pelts looked like an economical way to get yarn to feed a hungry loom, so she bought an Ashford wheel kit. Small children and lots of yarn encouraged her to explore crochet and knitting. For the past five years, she's returned to weaving, inspired by beautiful plain weave fabrics enhanced by vivid dye techniques. In "real life," Sara is an architectural drafter.

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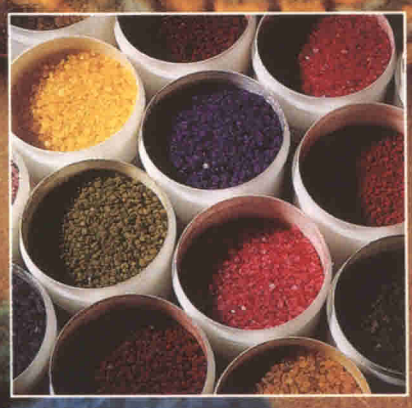

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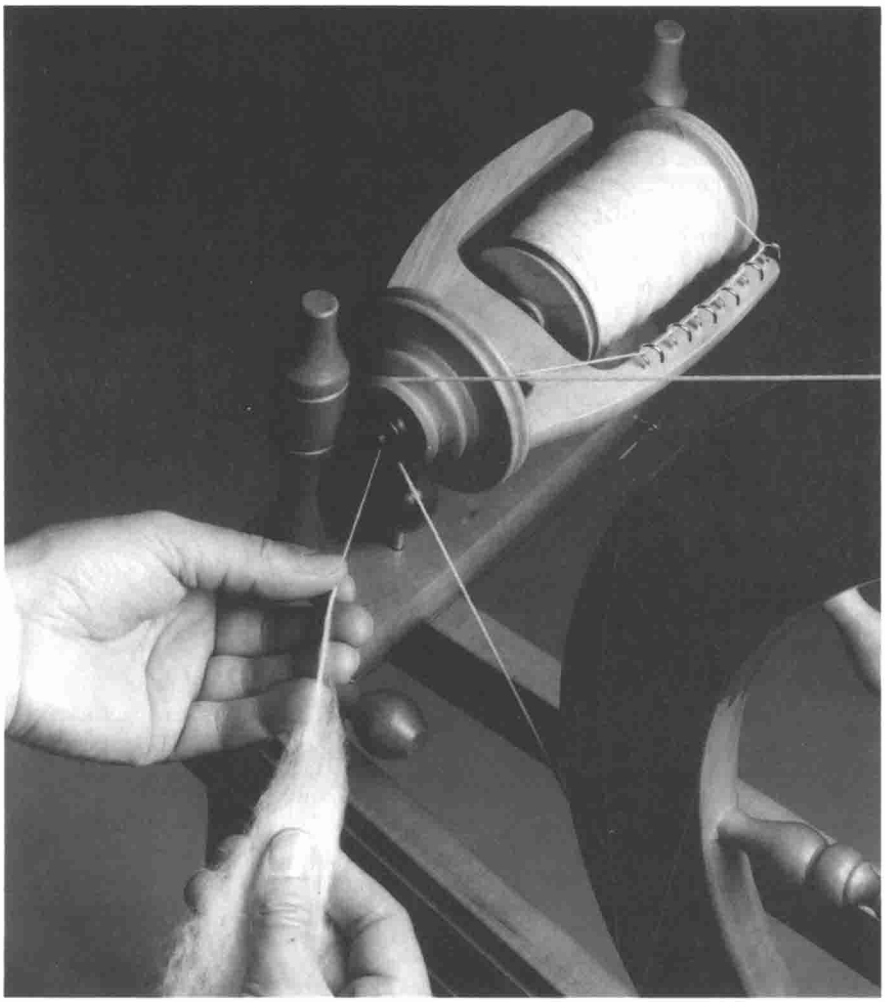
ASHFORD



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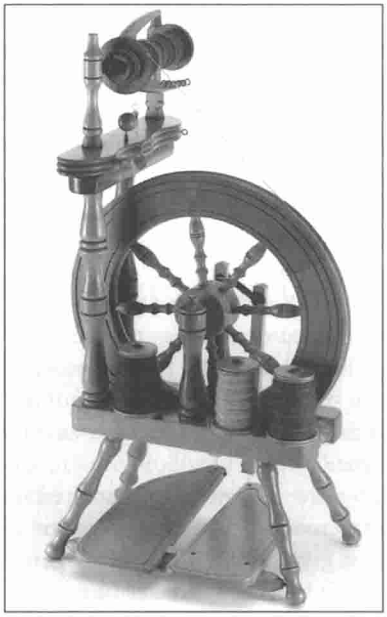
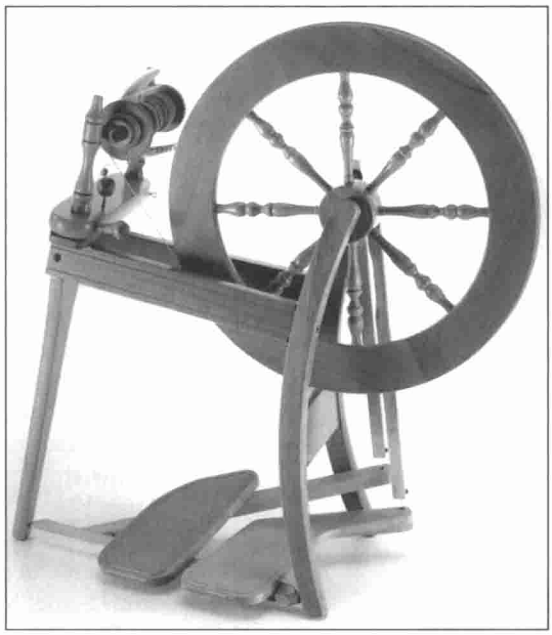


Double Treadle Kits are now available to convert either the Traditional or the Traveller Spinning Wheel. Either single drive or double drive style can be converted.



Joy

Portable Spinning Wheel

Joy Ashford has been spinning on Ashford Spinning Wheels for over 60 years since her husband Walter started making them. Here she is shown spinning on the portable spinning wheel that her son Richard developed and named after her.

Wholesale Distributor:
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Adventures in Growing Cotton

by Harold L. Sumption

I LOVE MANY THINGS about spinning: the feel of the fibers and yarns in my hands, the steady rhythm of treadling my wheel, the ability to produce something both beautiful and functional. I also like being able to make things I need rather than relying on a trip to the mall.

I wish I could produce all the fibers that I use, but for various reasons I cannot. I am on active duty in the U.S. Navy, which requires me to spend considerable time away from home. My half-acre of suburbia is too small for sheep, and my wife hates the smell of raw wool. I could grow flax—I tried it once—but processing it is too time-consuming and retting smells bad. What I can do, and greatly enjoy, is grow my own cotton.

My first experience with growing cotton, in the spring of 1992, was feeble at best. While driving through rural southeast Georgia, where I am stationed, I noticed small lumps of cotton lying alongside the road, remnants of the crop harvested from the adjacent fields. The fiber was too full of dirt and other garbage to be useful, but the seeds appeared intact. I sowed some in my garden and was both surprised and pleased to see them sprout and start to grow. Unfortunately, so was my daughter's cat, who dug them up. By then it was too late in the season to start again and I had to spend the summer at sea, so I was done for that year.

The growing season in 1993 started more auspiciously. I was transferred to shore duty, giving me more time to garden. To celebrate, I ordered Pima cotton seeds from Arizona, instead of scavenging for seeds along the highway. Also during that spring I took my family to Disney World, and while touring EPCOT's experimental farm obtained a single seed of the cotton they grow hydroponically.

I planted that one seed in a special spot all its own, and it grew into a beautiful plant about 18 inches (45 cm) tall with purple/magenta foliage, pink-fringed ivory flowers, and firm-but-fluffy white cotton. The Pima was given the richest soil in the yard. That year my garden held a total of sixty-eight cotton plants—unmolested by the cat—and produced more than enough lint to keep me busy, since I'm not exactly a fast spinner.

In 1994, I planted all the seeds the single, purplish plant had produced (about 35), the last remaining "roadside" seeds, and enough seeds from my 1993 Pima crop to total 167 plants. I moved my cotton patch to a spot that receives full sun all day, which greatly increased my yields.

The Pima surprised me a bit. In 1993, it produced off-white to very light tan fibers. I expected the 1994 crop to be the same,

but it turned out a much darker tan, with some rich browns thrown in; some bolls had a decidedly greenish color. I don't know if the color variations were caused by inadvertent cross-breeding because I grow several varieties in close quarters, or by some other factor, but it was fun to find colors when I expected only white.

In 1995, I planted seeds from the green bolls, to see if I could deepen the color and produce it consistently, and enough from the purplish plants to ensure an ample supply of fresh seeds for 1996. By now I have enough colored stuff and want more white.

Tips on growing cotton

My advice for spinners wanting to grow cotton would be, first and foremost, to get good fresh seeds. My "roadside" cotton had very poor germination (about 50 to 60 percent) and produced poorly. I think its parent plants may have been a hybrid that did not breed true and therefore produced inferior offspring. By contrast, the seeds I bought, and seeds saved from those plants, had almost 100 percent germination and produced very well.

Good soil preparation is vital. Cotton has a reputation for being a heavy feeder. As with most plants, rich, healthy soil will grow strong, healthy plants that resist disease and insects and produce a good crop. I use lots of organic matter, both as compost mixed deeply in the soil and as a heavy mulch. Once or twice in the growing season I add a sprinkling of 10-10-10 garden fertilizer. To keep my garden soil from being depleted, I relocate the cotton patch so it doesn't grow in the same spot two years in a row.

I prefer to start my cotton seeds in flats. When the seedlings are a few inches tall, I transplant them into the garden rows. I've read that cotton doesn't transplant well, but I haven't had any problems. Starting the plants indoors gives me an early start, and I think it increases my yields.

I have had few difficulties with insects. Only occasionally will I find small, red, soft-bodied bugs inside a recently opened boll. These "squish" easily, and if there are more than a few they can easily be controlled by pyrethrum (an insecticide derived from plants that's much safer than, and just as effective as, synthetic pesticides). Occasionally a plant will be attacked by aphids, but it's easy to control them by putting a jet sprayer on my hose and washing the plants down several days in a row.

I was surprised to find that my local libraries have little information on cotton and cotton growing, especially since the state of Georgia grows a lot of it—over 13 million pounds in 1994. I was able to find only one book, a brief Boy Scout publication on cotton farming which was slanted more toward commercial production than backyard gardening. It did contain one gem of information: close spacing encourages higher production (I allow one foot, or about 30 cm, between plants).

If you're like me, you'll get over-eager and harvest the lint before it is completely ready. It takes willpower to wait, but the quality of the fiber improves and the bolls are prettier if you leave them on the plant until the cotton is fully fluffed out and dried. After harvesting, I lay the bolls out in a single layer in the house for a few days to dry further and to ensure that I haven't brought in any bugs.

In my experience, the plants produce an initial crop, setting a large number of bolls at once, and then continue to flower and produce bolls at a slower rate until they are killed by frost. After the first crop, the quality of the lint drops off somewhat.

Commercial non-organic growers defoliate their plants chemically, then harvest mechanically, and don't concern themselves with a continuing crop. This year I'm going to experiment with ways to improve the quality of the follow-up crop, including possibly defoliating the plants (by hand, not with chemicals) to force the plants to mature the remaining bolls.

After the harvest comes ginning—the most tedious and time-consuming part of cotton production. Since I grow at most only a couple of pounds of fibers at a time, the only affordable ginning method I know is to laboriously pick out each seed by hand. I would love to find a small, relatively inexpensive, hand-powered gin to speed up this process and leave me more time for spinning and weaving. I carefully dry and save my seeds in sealed containers for next year.

It's important to remove all the dead stalks, fallen leaves, old bolls, and other debris before winter, so pests like the dreaded boll weevil will have no shelter and won't be around to bother next year's crop. California controls its weevil populations by requiring, by law, a ninety-day period during which no cotton material remains on the field. I pull up all my plants after the first frost, rake all the leaves and other trash out of the cotton patch, and burn the whole mess.

I plan to continue growing my own cotton for as long as I have soil to grow it in and a wheel on which to spin my harvests. I want to keep experimenting with colors, and to find varieties with shorter growing season requirements, since I'm planning to move North in a few years. I would love to swap seeds with other readers. If anyone has seeds for any special varieties, colors, or types of cotton, please drop me a line. Let's trade. ❖

Harold L. Sumption, currently of the USS Grayling (a submarine), spends his land time enthusiastically growing and breeding colored cottons in Kingsland, Georgia. He hopes to be among the first to raise a true blue cotton. When he goes to sea, he carefully plans his limited personal space to include a charkha, a takli, and tools for his other passion, watercolors. You can write to him in care of Spin·Off.

LOOKING FOR Cotton

by Melinda Abrazado

COTTON SLIVER is wonderful stuff: the perfectly prepared fiber of spinners' dreams. I bought a bag full and watched it spin into a fine, smooth thread at my fingertips. But I wanted more

I wanted the whole cotton experience. In years of spinning wool, I had raised my own sheep, sheared, scoured, and carded the colored fleeces, and gained great satisfaction from the "sheep-to-shawl" process. Even after moving to New York City, I had a wealth of fleeces to dip into. But cotton?

My mind filled with ideas: shirts and blouses, tablecloths, towels, curtains. I would furnish my apartment with lovely, handspun cotton. But not at sliver prices; I needed a cheap source of bulk cotton. When I wanted wool, I bought a sheep, but I can't grow cotton here in New York City. I figured if I drove south, sooner or later I'd find cotton growing in fields, and I was right.

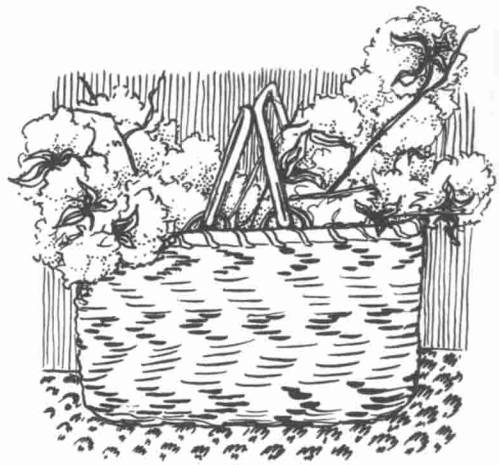
When I reached Virginia, I followed a trail of cotton bolls by the side of the road until I found Southside Cotton Gin, located near Emporia and one of only two gins in the state. The charming people at the gin showed me around and explained the ginning process. There had been a bumper crop that year 1994) and the gin was working at full capacity.

My request for ginned cotton was a problem, however. Seed cotton from the field is trucked into one end of the building, where it is sucked into the machinery. The fibers are separated from the seeds, then the seeds come out one chute and 500-pound bales of fiber come out another. The process is continuous, and you can't grab a handful of clean cotton midway through. I left the gin with a small bag of clean fiber scraps, some seeds, and a rumor of colored cotton growing further south.

From what I'd read, I knew that natural green, tan, and reddish-brown cotton is grown commercially in the southwestern United States. Sally Fox is a legend in her own time for her patient work developing natural-colored cottons with fibers long enough to be of commercial interest. I hadn't expected to find colored cotton on this trip down the Atlantic coast, but near Gaston, North Carolina, I found ten acres each of tan, green, and red-brown cotton, the first fields of any size to be sown in natural colors in the southeast. They couldn't have chosen a better year for the experiment. The fields had produced well.

Again I followed the trail of bolls to the nearest gin. This one also was running full tilt. Because of the noise, I never heard a word the people there said, but I was shown around and given a big bag of clean white cotton, then bags of clean green and red-brown cotton. I doubt that anyone heard my profuse thanks. As I walked to my car, one of the men ran after me with another bag of white cotton. I still wonder what they thought I said to them.

I returned from my journey with more than I expected. As soon as I got home, I started spinning right from the bags. First I tried spinning the ginned cotton without carding it, and was pleased with my thin, nubby yarn. By spinning the fibers directly off the seeds, using the bolls just as they come from the plant, I found I could get a fine, even thread. Now I'm ready to begin all those projects I imagined before I went on my trip, and I have lots of cotton to play with.



Melinda Abrazado lives in a lot of different places, and writes us with interesting stories from all of them.

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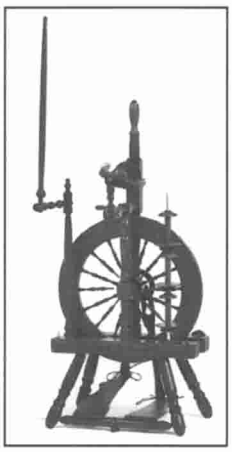

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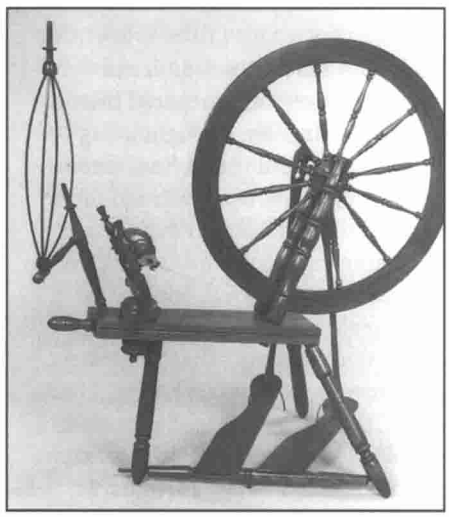

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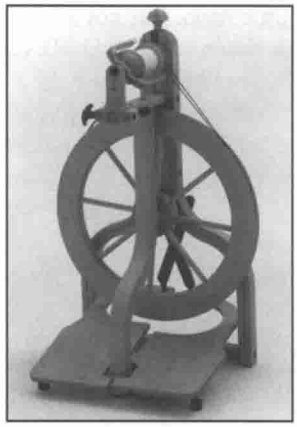

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Paula's Carding Tip

Does your carder have dental problems?

Since carder teeth have a "knee", they will bend back and rise above the normal tooth surface if damaged by matted bunny fur, burrs, or badly tangled (unpicked) fibers. For realigning bent teeth, try using a draftsman's propelling pencil, with its lead removed. Slip the pencil end over any tooth to be straightened, and move the tooth gently into place. Fixing one tooth at a time, this method could even repair a large area of damage, such as caused by a heavy object falling onto your carder.

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THE SCHACHT DOUBLE TREADLE

Here at Schacht we know that the smallest detail can make a big difference--and that's exactly what we had in mind when we designed our new Double Treadle Spinning Wheel. Built to be a high performance machine, we've taken great care to maintain the same handsome style of our single treadle wheel.

MATCHLESS VERSATILITY

In designing this wheel, we wanted to make it as versatile and efficient as possible. That's why each wheel can be used in three spinning modes: double drive, Scotch tension, and bobbin lead (great for plying). Each wheel comes with an un-lazy Kate, 4 bobbins, and medium speed and fast speed flyer whorls. To expand the range of spinning possibilities even more, five other flyer whorls and a high speed bobbin are available.

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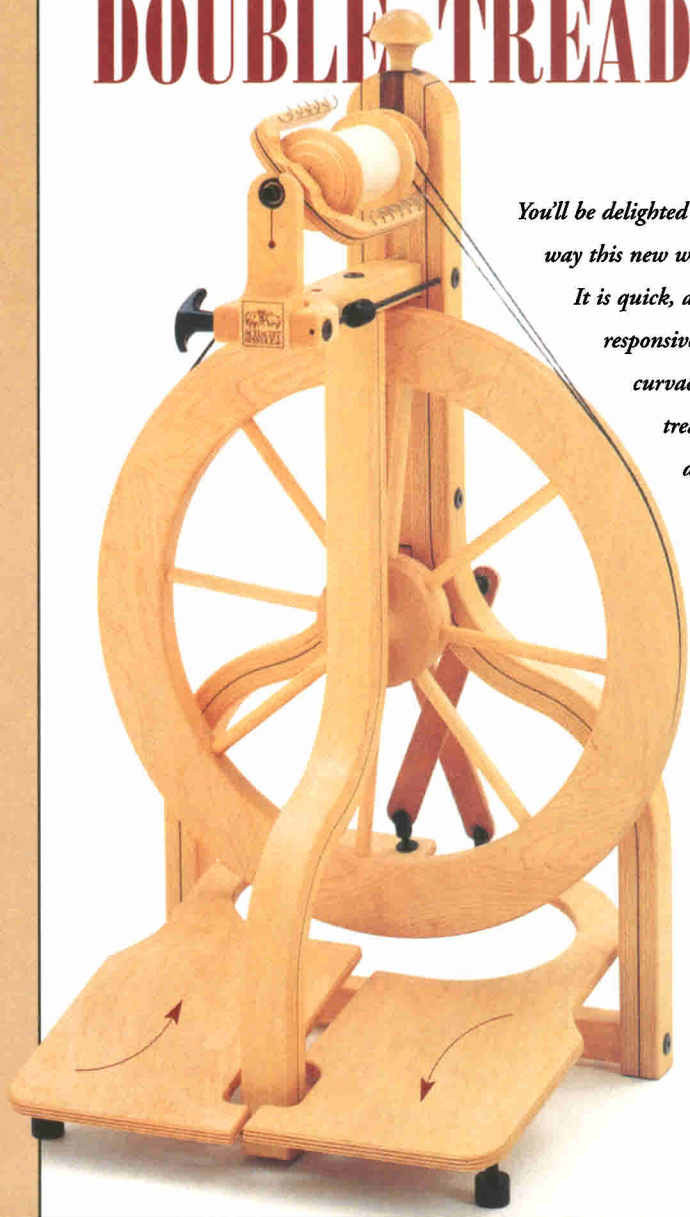
The double treadle wheel is made of hard maple with walnut accents. Many aspects of our contemporary styling blend design with function. For example, the 19½" drive wheel and flyer shaft are supported by self-aligning bronze bearings for precise action. Each flyer is balanced and the bobbins and flyer whorls are trued on center for long and superior service. The double treadle spinning wheel is very stable. The rear legs have skid resistant rubber feet and the front legs are adjustable to accommodate uneven floors. The compact shape and the adjustable carrying strap that is included with the wheel make it easy to transport.



You'll be delighted with the way this new wheel spins. It is quick, agile, and responsive. The curvaceous split treadle offers double duty rhythmic treadling with exceptionally smooth spinning and consistent RPM.

Whorl Chart

Extra Slow Speed 4:1 & 4½:1	**High Speed 17½:1 & 19½:1
Slow Speed 6:1 & 7½:1	**Super High Speed 18½:1 & 22:1
* Medium Speed 9:1 & 11:1	**Exceptionally High Speed 23½:1 & 27½:1
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Available for both single and double treadle spinning wheels
**Comes with wheel. **We recommend using our high speed bobbin with these whorls.*

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Our color catalog is available for $2.50.
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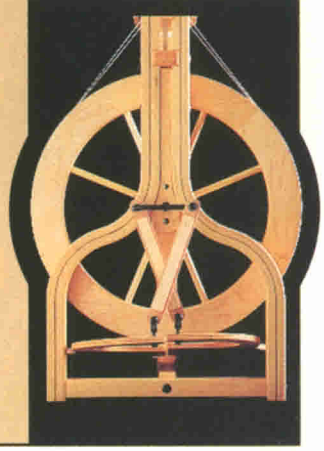


GLADYS CLARK: *Acadian Spinner*

by Gika Rector

DEEP IN THE HEART of Louisiana's Cajun Country, you can drive for miles along Interstate 10 and never experience a rise in the road, except to cross a body of water. One of those bodies of water is the Atchafalaya spillway, spanned by a twenty-mile bridge. There's something mysterious about this bayou country. As you cross that long bridge, you see acres of trees and tree stumps rising out of the water. In the more open spaces, you might find an oil platform or a ribbon of railroad bridge. And here in the "sportsman's paradise" you can also expect plenty of boats: fishing boats, ski boats, tour boats, and—of course—a few bateaux. As the scenery draws you into another world, the signs and billboards draw you farther in. Names like *Beaux Bridge, Lafayette, Landry's Seafood,* and *Duson* tune your ear to the possibility of another culture to be found only a short distance from the highway.

Along a little side road, I stopped to ask directions and could barely understand the English words within the thick French accent. In this area, many families speak Acadian French, and English is their second language. Down a few more rural roads I came to the modest home of Mrs. Gladys LeBlanc Clark.

Gladys Clark is one of the few Acadian women who still practice the traditional method of spinning cotton. When she was nine, her mother taught her to card and spin and weave, as she had learned in turn from her mother. Gladys was the second of three girls; there were also six boys in the family. The girls all learned to card in order to help their mother, but Gladys was the only one who learned much about spinning. The family grew brown cotton, or *coton jaune,* for their own use.

Route I-10 between Baton Rouge and Lafayette.

Coton jaune, also called *nankin cotton,* offered a natural, soft yellow or brown color, a distinct advantage when dye technology was limited and color variations hard to come by. The disadvantages of *coton jaune* were its short fiber length and its high seed-to-lint ratio. In addition, the local gin didn't want the odd-colored fibers

—text continues on page 42

Above: *This photo, taken in about 1940, shows a carding bee including Gladys as a young woman, along with her mother, father, and uncle. Note the pile of rolags in the center, the woman on the left bowing cotton to prepare it for carding, and the tray full of cups of strong coffee, back center right. I-10 photo by Gika Rector; Clark home and photo-of-photo by Margaret Stove.*

Left: *The Clarks' home.*

Opposite: *Gladys Clark's homegrown, handspun, handwoven cotton carries forward the tradition of generations of Acadian self-sufficiency. The colors come from native white and brown strains. Where the colors show striations in the cloth, Gladys has spun holding two rolags together, in a technique called* doublé. ***Opposite, inset:*** *Gladys treadles while her great-granddaughter drafts cotton. Photo courtesy of Aggie Hurdle.*

Traditional Acadian spinning technique for weft yarns

1 Equipment and position

Gladys uses a traditional modified wheel, on which the flyer-and-bobbin assembly has been replaced with a spindle and pulley. She sits with her body parallel to the wheel's table. Instead of placing her foot on the treadle from the front, as is usual with a flyer-and-bobbin wheel, she tucks her leg into the corner between the driving wheel and the wheel's right front leg, placing her right foot at a right angle to the treadle.

Treadling and drafting: Note that Gladys' whole foot is up in the air and she has drawn her hand back nearly in line with her shoulder. The untwisted portion of the rolag hangs below her thumb and forefinger, within the cupped portion of her drafting hand. She uses her right hand to stop and start the wheel.

2 Getting started

There's no leader yarn. Gladys moistens the first cotton fibers with a bit of saliva and places them next to the spindle. She turns the wheel clockwise by hand, and the combination of damp fiber and initial twist starts the yarn.

Note: One thing that's impossible to convey in the photographs is the delightful sound Gladys' wheel made as she treadled. It reminds me of the sound kids make when they're playing with cars and trucks: rhmm, rrhmm, rrrhmmm

Treadling the wheel clockwise, she draws the rolag back with her left hand. Her thumb and first two fingers keep the twist from going too far into the rolag. It usually takes 5 to 6 treadles for one length of yarn. The first length of yarn is now evenly spun. Gladys takes her foot off the treadle and stops the wheel.

She uses a tube of plain brown paper as a bobbin.

With the first length of yarn completed, she takes it off the tip of the spindle, slips the paper tube onto the spindle, and turns the wheel clockwise to wind the new yarn onto the bobbin. As she reaches the end of that length, she lets the yarn wind over to the tip.

Photos this page by Gika Rector.

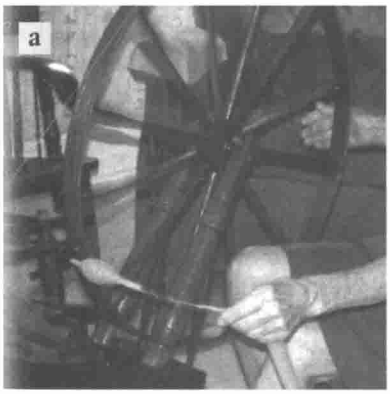
3 Continuing

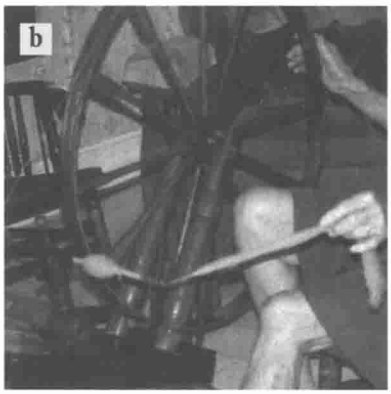
a *Gladys begins again to turn the wheel clockwise and the twist enters a new section of the rolag. Note the lump near the center of the yarn; this is the initial twist stage.*

b *Again she draws back with her left hand and treadles 5 or 6 times until the length of yarn is smooth and even. The yarn is now evenly spun. She reaches up to stop the wheel, and turns it back (counterclockwise) just enough to release it from the spindle tip.*

c *She then positions the completed yarn over the bobbin and turns the wheel by hand clockwise as she guides the yarn onto the paper bobbin. Again, as she nears the end of that length she lets it wind over to the tip, ready to begin with the next section of rolag.*
Photos by Gika Rector.

4 Getting the rhythm





To join on a new rolag, Gladys touches the tip of the new rolag to the end of the old one, and turns the wheel clockwise. Twist enters both sections and before you know it, you can't tell which is which.

Quick as you please, the bobbin fills. The process is much faster than the description makes it sound. Cotton's short fiber length requires a lot of twist to hold it together, but the large size of the drive wheel relative to the small diameter of the spindle means that you can add many, many twists to the fiber each time the wheel is turned. The Acadians used their handspun for all their household textiles; the techniques they developed were of necessity fast and efficient.

a *Beginning to draft the next section of rolag.*

b *Pulling out a length.*

c *Evening out twist in the yarn. About 5 or 6 treadles produces a lofty, loosely twisted cotton weft yarn.*

d *Winding on.*

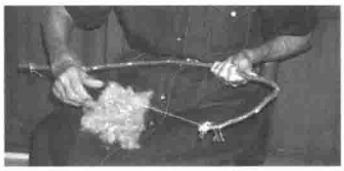
Photos by Margaret Stove.

Preparing home-grown cotton

Ginning

Hand-ginning cotton consists of pulling the fibers away from each seed.

Bowing



This fluffs the fibers, making them easier to card.

to mix with the white cotton. The ginning equipment was used for the brown cotton, but only after the year's white cotton had been finished. As dye technology advanced and commercial textile production became more widespread, the use of *coton jaune* and the handspinning techniques began to disappear.

Gladys' grandmother spun cotton and wove sheets, made in two pieces sewn down the center. Gladys' mother was born on Christmas Day in 1893 as Colastie Hebert, and she married Ambroise LeBlanc around 1908. Colastie Hebert LeBlanc learned Acadian textile skills as a young girl. One of her special skills was the technique called *doublage,* or doubling. Holding one rolag of brown cotton and one of white, she would spin them simultaneously, producing a yarn with a brown-and-white barber-pole stripe.

Colastie LeBlanc used two distinct spinning styles, one for warp yarn and the other for a thicker yarn to be used as weft. The warp yarn was a fine but strong singles spun on a traditional flyer-and-bobbin wheel. The weft yarn was spun with a uniquely Acadian technique, using a modified spinning wheel on which the flyer and bobbin have been replaced by a pulley and spindle. The pulley might be a piece of turned or hand-carved wood, or a corncob with a bored hole to bear the shaft of the spindle. The ten- to fifteen-inch (25- to 38-cm) metal spindle was also hand-shaped.

Most of Gladys' yarn is soft, brown, weft yarn, which she uses to weave hand towels, placemats, napkins, and table runners. She also makes some of the *doublé* yarn, spun from brown and white rolags held lightly together, which adds interest and variety to her woven fabrics. Gladys sells her handwoven items, including some rag rugs, at festivals and fairs, as well as to area guild members who know a good thing when they see it.

As in other spindle-spinning techniques, this style involves separate steps for spinning the yarn and for winding it onto the spindle. Using her right hand to start, stop, and change directions of the wheel, the spinner holds the fiber in her left hand and spins it off the tip of the spindle. To make this more convenient, she sits parallel to the table of the wheel (almost behind the wheel) and treadles with her foot at a right angle to the treadle.

The first step is to touch the end of the rolag to the tip of the spindle and begin to turn the wheel clockwise. As the turning wheel inserts twist into the fiber, the spinner draws the rolag back until she has the thickness of fiber desired for the yarn. She then treadles until sufficient twist has built up in the yarn. (Cotton requires more twist than you might expect.) Next she stops the wheel, turns it briefly counterclockwise, positions the yarn on the spindle a bit closer to the pulley, and winds on the length just spun. The end of this yarn is allowed to wind out to the tip of the spindle, with the loose fiber extending beyond the tip. To join a new rolag, the spinner holds it near the unspun fiber of the previous rolag. As she begins to turn the wheel clockwise, twist enters the old rolag, jumps to the new one, and quick as you please, you can't tell which was which. The process begins again. This may sound tedious and disruptive, but it's actually a beautiful and rhythmic process. (My husband was quick to notice how much faster Gladys cards and spins than I do.)

Gladys still spins her cotton with this traditional technique, using an Acadian wheel from the Clark family. She said, "I've been having that wheel for thirty, thirty-five years." Before she retrieved it from a hayloft, the wheel had not been used for over fifty years.

To spin off the spindle, Gladys says, "I hold cotton at the end of the spindle. As it flips, it twists. I draw it out to the size of thread I need, build up twist, put it in reverse and wind on, add new rolag." She makes it sound easy as pie, and makes it look even easier. Come to think of it, I'm not sure pie has ever been that easy for me.

Preparing the cotton is another magic trick. Gladys begins by hand-ginning the cotton, because all the old gins are gone. Her husband used to grow cotton to sell, but now he usually plants just a few rows in the garden: about a hundred pounds of cotton, with the seeds. They get about one pound of lint to three pounds of seeds. Most of the cotton they grow is the brown cotton from when her family grew it years ago. She rarely spins white cotton, but they do grow a bit of green cotton from seeds a friend gave her a few years ago—about thirty-five to forty pounds. Gladys' sister usually helps her with the ginning and sometimes with the carding. Each boll is individually ginned. Holding the seed firmly between her left thumb and forefin-

ger, the spinner uses her right thumb and forefinger to gently pull the lint away from the seed. This is done in a circular movement around the seed, so all the lint from a single seed hangs together like a miniature false mustache.

Sometimes before carding, Gladys fluffs the fiber using *arcs-de-coton.* These bows are handmade, with a piece of string and a flexible stick perhaps half an inch 1.25 cm) in diameter. They resemble children's handmade imitations of archers' bows. Gladys holds the center of the stick in her left hand and lets the string lightly rest on the pile of cotton. Then she uses her right thumb to pluck the string repeatedly. This vibrates the lint up into the air and allows dirt and heavier vegetable matter to fall back down, leaving a fluffy cloud of fiber. This process is especially important with machine-ginned fiber, which is much "dirtier" than hand-ginned cotton.

Carding is done on traditional cotton hand cards. These are similar to wool cards, but have finer teeth placed closer together on the pads. Gladys loads a bit of cotton onto one card with a gentle brushing motion. The second card is then used to begin carding the fiber with quick, light motions. The teeth from one card do not mesh with the teeth from the other. Gladys keeps the carding motion over the center of the card holding the fiber, not going too far back. After what seem to be a few magic strokes, Gladys produces a perfect *roulée,* or rolag. Then, even more astonishing, she produces at least two more from the same load of fiber. Pure magic!

It was a privilege for me to spend time with this gracious, unassuming woman. She readily and generously shares her treasure trove of heritage and knowledge. How delightful and gratifying it is to know that Gladys has preserved this specialized skill and is passing it on. Right now she is proud to say that her four-year-old great-granddaughter can draw out the rolags as Gladys treadles the wheel. And there are adult spinners who have learned something from that four-year-old.

One final word: look around you. Be aware of spinners and weavers and knitters who learned their skills at the knees of their mothers or grandmothers or grandfathers. Often they have wonderful knowledge that's hard to find in books. And often that knowledge is there for the asking, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. And no matter where you learned your skills, be ready to pass them on to others as well. Chances are that you are much more of an expert than you realize. ❖

Coton jaune—*natural brown Acadian cotton. gorgeous!*

Resources

L'Amour de Maman. Musée du Nouveau Monde. New Orleans: Louisiana State Museum, 1983. Louisiana State Museum, 751 Chartres, New Orleans, Louisiana 70116, (504) 568-6968.

Burnham, Harold B. and Dorothy K. *Keep Me Warm One Night.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972. Some of the Louisiana Acadians came from this section of Canada and there are examples of Acadian-style weaving in the book.

Gika Rector has been weaving for about ten years, and spinning almost as long. In her "spare time," she is a workshop junkie: she plans and organizes them, and travels near and far to attend them. She met Gladys Clark through Norman Kennedy, when she was giving him a ride from Baton Rouge to Houston—between workshops, of course. Gika, her husband, Glen, and their three children live in a nearly finished timber-frame house which they designed and built in The Woodlands, Texas (yes, Texas does have woods).

Spinning doublé *yarn. Gladys holds rolags of white and brown side by side, producing a barberpole effect that looks especially fine when woven, as in the towels on page 38. Photo by Margaret Stove.*

Carding

1 Loading the first card

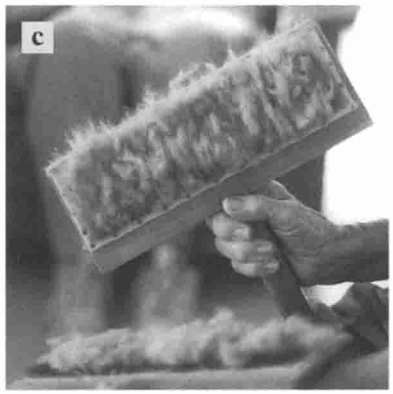
a. Loading fiber onto right card.

b. The first stroke transfers some fiber onto left card; carding begins.

c & d. Note how much fiber is on the cards. Gladys gets several rolags from each batch of fiber.

Photos by Gika Rector and Margaret Stove.

2 Beginning to card



3 Transfer from left card to right card

e. After carding a bit,she transfers the bulk of the fiber back to the right card

4 Carding: less fiber moves to left card after each transfer

f & g. After transferring (step 3), Gladys continues to card. But following each transfer, she allows a little bit less of the fiber from the right card back onto the left card.

h. Finally, the fiber on the left card is just the right amount of fiber for one rolag, and it's smooth and straight.

i. Sometimes Gladys moves the top card at an angle and slightly over the edge of the bottom card, to catch the fibers on the edge of the bottom card and keep them under control.

5 Moving the rolag from left card to right card

Gladys delicately transfers the carded rolag fiber back to the right card. She grabs enough of the fiber to transfer it, but not enough to mesh with the extra fiber that's already on the right card.

6 Laying on

"Laying on" of the rolag fiber: with a rocking, wrist action, the rolag fiber is placed back onto the left card, beginning near the center of the card, and gently rocking and moving the right card back toward the tip of the left card. When she reaches the tip, Gladys lets the teeth grab a "bite" of the other card. This creates an edge that looks like a short fringe at the tip of the left card.

7 Forming the rolag

Both cards are held with the tip away from her body. Gladys changes her grip on the right card and begins the short backward and slightly upward movements that form the rolag. The first couple of strokes are a bit deeper to grab that fringe.

8 Lifting the rolag

When the heel of the right card reaches the heel of the left card, she lifts the rolag with the teeth of the right card and sets it gently at the tip of the left card.

9 Smoothing the rolag

Gladys turns the right card teeth up and uses the back of the right card to smooth and round out the rolag. This is done by dragging the tip of the right card gently across the teeth of the left card, moving the rolag along, between the cards.

Finished rolag—ready to place in basket.

Flax and Silk Noil

by Jill Turner

As the wheel turns. . . .

THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG! Curiosity has struck again. Do you have days when you have to know the answers, and if you don't, you can't let go of the questions? This seems to happen to me all the time. It's probably a childhood thing I never outgrew.

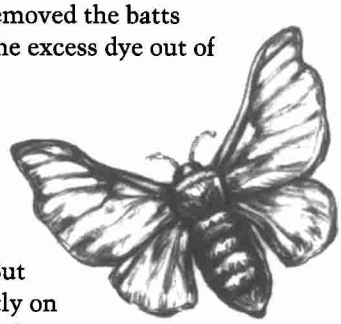
Flax is interesting to work with. When you first spin it, you wonder, why bother. It seems coarse, unattractive, and not at all appealing to the senses. But flax is one of those strange fibers that gets softer the more you handle and work with it. It begins to capture your imagination and inspire the search for answers.

Silk noil also grows on you with time and work. I have blended it many times with other fibers, and it seems to add the right texture to almost any combination, giving the finished yarn more character. Silk noil takes dye like lightning, and the color jumps out at you even in a blend.

When I decided to begin blending experiments with flax, I started with silk noil, of course. For my first blend, I aimed for a 50/50 combination. I put four ounces 114 g) each of natural flax and unrefined silk noil through my drum carder. The texture was interesting, but didn't look very good. The color was bland, too (I've been doing a lot with color). So I decided to dye the mixture before I spun it.

Flax in the works

I used Gaywool dyes and the kitchen-sink method. I wanted a decorous mix of color, so I chose indigo, cornflower, raspberry, plum, lucerne, and hibiscus. I soaked the flax/silk blend in hot water until it was drenched, then squeezed out the excess water and put the first batt in the sink. I had already mixed up the dyes in separate containers, and I poured a little of each color over the first batt. I set the second batt on top and added more dye, then repeated until all ten batts were in the sink, speckled with dye. I let the stuff sit in the sink for only about five minutes, then removed the batts and rinsed the excess dye out of each.



Silk escaping

The batts had become very dense after this treatment. But I pulled gently on all sides and they opened for me with little trouble. Like flax, the mixture spins best when it's wet, so I skipped the "dry on a rack" stage and went straight to the wheel.

Of course, I couldn't get it all spun before evaporation took over. I spread some out to dry, and found it very hard to spin without the moisture. I couldn't keep a consistent twist in the yarn, which kept breaking. After about thirty minutes, I could not stand the frustration. I got a cup of water and pretended the fiber was straight flax, wetting it as I spun. The difference was like between spinning one-inch generic goat hair and spinning kid mohair.

Sometimes I get so involved with what I am doing that I forget other people are around, even when the company is near and dear. My silk noil was not of the finest caliber, so it contained some trash. My spinning slows down because I pick out the worst of this stuff as I go. As I was working with this blend in the company of my fellow spinners, I noticed a migration away from my area. This sort of thing makes me a little self-conscious, and I begin to wonder if my all-day deodorant's

battery ran down. Looking around, I discovered I had become so absorbed that I had been flinging junk and water all over.

Now, before choosing their seats, the other spinners ask what I will be spinning. Thank heaven good friends overlook our little (or big) flaws.

I decided to weave the yarn into a scarf, so I took half the blend and made a two-ply for the warp. I kept the rest as singles for the weft. The finished yarn was still very coarse.

I made skeins and put them in a pot of simmering water for twenty minutes, because simmering softens flax. I had some concerns about the silk's reaction to this treatment. Fortunately, the simmering seemed to bring out the sheen of the silk, and made the yarn itself stronger and more unified in texture. When the yarn was dry, the fiber blend was softer and richer-looking.

The finished yarn came out looking just as I had imagined it would. It had great texture from the slubs in the silk noil, accented by the rainbow colors of dyeing. Because the flax and silk took the color differently, the finished yarn varies in a subtle and complex way.

Weaving went more smoothly than I thought it would. I didn't know how well the blend would hold together as a warp, although flax and silk alone tend to be good warps. They are fine but strong. In the blend, I had lots of different fiber lengths and extremely different surface textures which might affect the cohesion. No problems! I used a plain weave for an open, softly beaten fabric, to show off the texture and give me an airy-looking scarf.

I'll probably spin this blend again, because I was pleased with the finished garment. It will never be one of my favorite blends, because it was a challenge to make into a yarn. But a little goes a long way, so I won't have to confront the spinning of pounds of the stuff for any project I have in mind. ❖

Jill Turner combines spinning and antiques in Hastings, Michigan. Sounds good to us.

Silk, quiet phase

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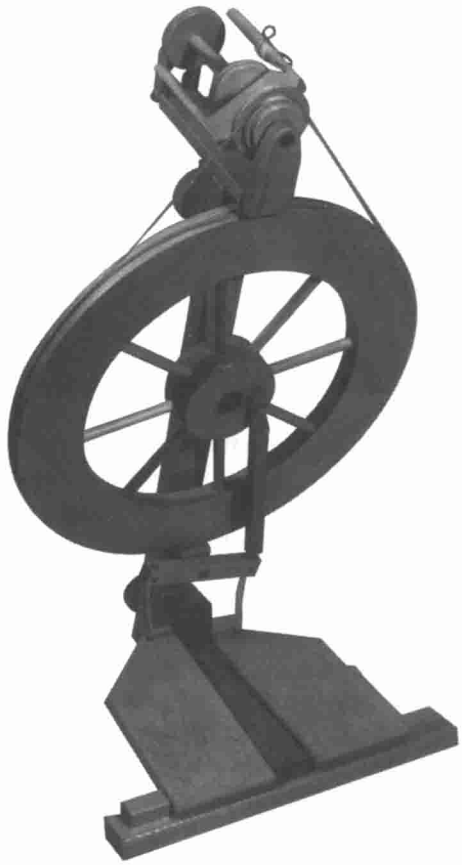

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All from One Plant

by Mary Frances Eves

Mary Frances Eves grows cotton in her back yard in Buena Park, California. Some of her plants are a few years old now and have grown into little trees, so she has to climb a ladder to pick the bolls.

MY INTRODUCTION to cotton raising began around 1988 when friends moved to Safford, Arizona, and sent back a shoebox of brown and white cotton that their neighbors had grown. Being a spinner and a gardener, the brown bolls intrigued me and no one else I knew was growing cotton. The next year I planted my first small plot of cotton in my backyard. I wound up with a jungle, because the plants were too close together. The next year I planted them farther apart, used fertilizer from my rabbits, and harvested a deep-brown–colored cotton.

I decided to make a blouse: my goal was to be able to say, "This blouse came from cotton that I planted in my yard, and I did every step in making it." At that point I wasn't a very good cotton spinner, so my first yarn was lumpy, and even though I used my whole crop I didn't have enough for a blouse.

Mary Frances used the cotton from just one tree to work this picture of a cotton plant in filet crochet. The words at the bottom say, "Handspun Cotton All From One Plant."

The next year I grew more cotton and took lessons in how to card cotton and how to spin a thin, even thread. Since cotton is known for shrinkage and I didn't want the blouse to end up too small, I boiled the yarn for about thirty minutes after spinning it. Then I wove the fabric, with my smoother yarn for warp and stripes of the lumpy "character" yarn in the weft. I entered the blouse in the Orange County Fair, along with photographs of the processes the cotton had gone through, and won a blue ribbon.

By this time some of my cotton plants had turned into trees, and I had to harvest with a ladder. One two-year-old tree was so prolific that I decided to show how much cotton one plant could produce. After spinning all the cotton from that plant, I crocheted it into a picture of a cotton plant. I crocheted with the singles, straight off the bobbin. The cotton was not carded, so there are some natural color streaks in the finished work. At the bottom, I crocheted an explanation, my name, and the date. Then I had the piece framed, entered it at the fair and won another blue ribbon![1]

Since then I've made more projects and shared lots of cotton seeds with other spinners. My crop is still growing. I had always thought that spinning cotton was beyond me, but with helpful encouragement and lessons, it seems far easier to handle. I'm far from an expert spinner, but working with cotton has been fun and rewarding. ❖

[1] Many framing services do not understand textiles, as I learned the hard way before re-framing this piece myself. I recommend a book by Kay Small, *Professional Needlepoint Finishing, or, How It's Done in a Workroom* (from Webworks Studio, 1370-K Logan Avenue, Costa Mesa, California 92626, (714) 556-1671).

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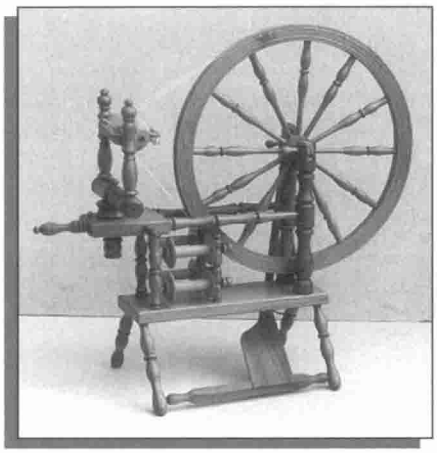

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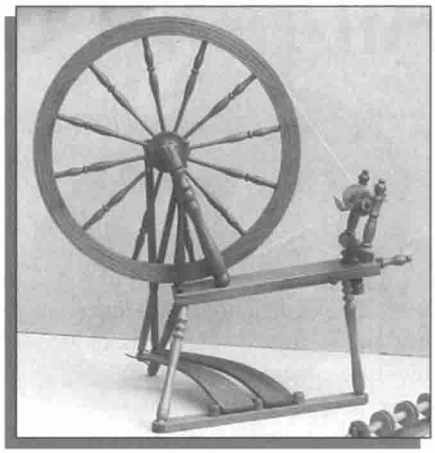

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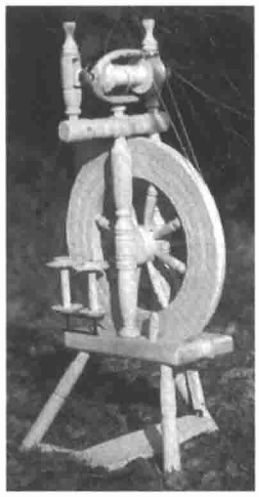

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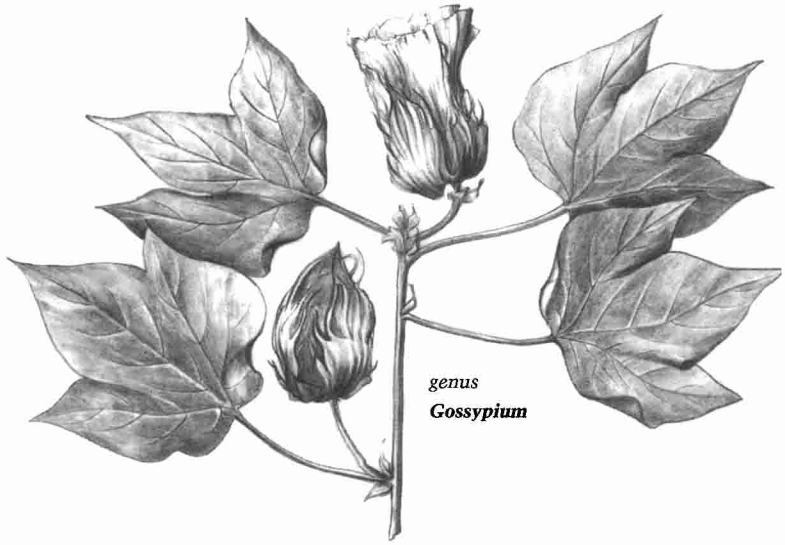
AN Overview OF YOUR Cotton Options

by Stephenie Gaustad



genus
Gossypium

Common Cotton Varieties

	hirsutum	***barbadensae***	***arboreum***	***herbaceum***
some commercial names	upland acala nuns	sea island "egyptian" pima supima	dacca garo hill	bengals surats
common lint colors	white brown green red	white brown red tawny	white buff yellow	white red green
growth habit	3 feet (.9 m)	6–15 feet (1.8–4.6 m)	10–15 feet (3–4.6 m)	3–9 feet (.9–2.7 m)
average staple length	13/16 to 1 1/4" (20–32 mm)	1 7/16–2 1/2" (36–64 mm)	3/8–3/4" (9–19 mm)	3/8–1 1/4" (9–32 mm)
seeds	gray; rusty or green linters	black; free of linters	green; brown or white linters	yellow; linters
flower colors	creamy rose pale yellow	yellow	purple yellow white red	yellow

Forms of Cotton for Spinners

seed cotton	Cotton directly from the field: lint, seeds, and all. About 25% of the field weight is fiber.
lint	Cotton fiber after the seeds are removed. Most lint is baled and compressed.
laps	Large carded cotton batts. They can be used for quilting, or can be spun.
punis	Cotton rolags, intentionally compressed to make a more durable package. Punis use the inherent limpness of cotton to regulate fiber flow in the drafting zone.
sliver	Carded or combed, a soft, no-twist rope of fiber.
roving	A finer version of sliver, also either carded or combed.

Stephenie Gaustad, of Jackson, California, has been spinning cotton long enough to have tried almost everything you could think of to do with it. Although Stephenie herself is proficient at making ingenious spinning tools, her husband, Alden Amos, is the only person we know of who makes charkhas and handspinner-oriented ginning equipment in the United States. He believes in cotton enough to build seven charkha variations, in a variety of woods, as well as three types of ginning equipment, ranging from the primitive, effective, and inexpensive tools used for millenia to a portable and efficient single-crank roller gin. They know what to do with this stuff and they give classes, too. You can reach them at Studio Gaustad, 11178 Upper Previtali Road, Jackson, California 95642, (209) 223-4132.

I REMEMBER SEEING a cartoon entitled "How to Draw a Cat." The first of four frames held a circle. In the next frame, a smaller circle perched on the first one. In the third frame a line was added for the tail. In the final frame was a minutely detailed, anatomically precise, exquisitely artistic rendering of a cat.

When I decided to research color to develop my skills as a fiber artist, the explanations I found in craft books reminded me of the cat-drawing lesson. If there was any explanation of how to get good at using color, it went by while I blinked. I usually found a historical prologue about Newton and the physics of light, a discussion of the derivation of colors, and then a leap to patterns or finished garments.

DEVELOPING Color Skills

by Erica Heftmann

Books on color for fine artists offer more detail than craft books do, but they deal with the use of color for visual effects fiber artists rarely employ, like describing depth and shape or leading the eye through a landscape or portrait. It is difficult to apply these color rules to fiber blending or repetitive two-dimensional design.

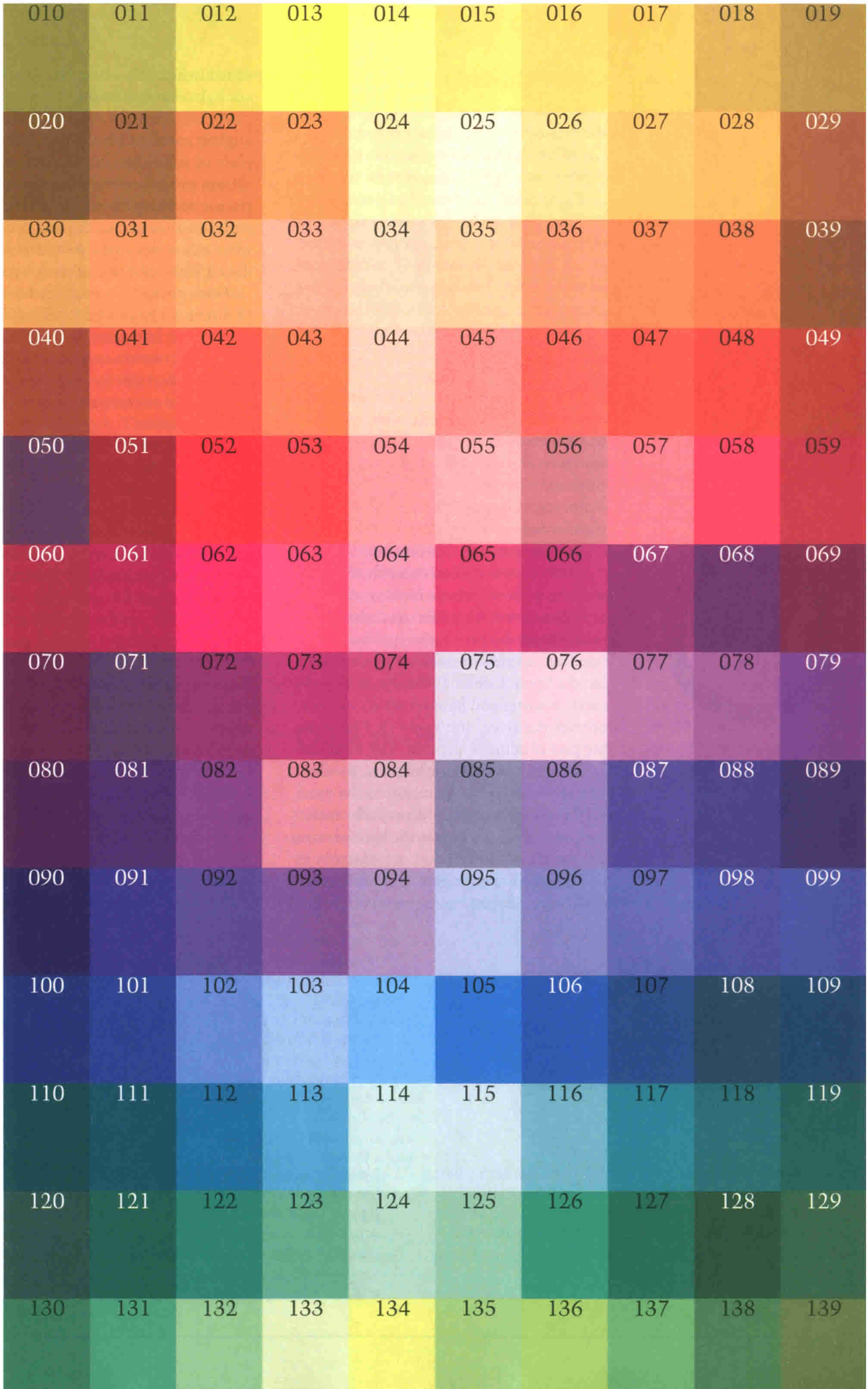
I refuse to resign myself to the belief that color mastery is a talent you have to be born with. If I couldn't learn by studying, I decided to develop my color skills through practice and experimentation. For fine artists, graphic artists, and many in the decorative arts, self-guided learning through color experiments poses no problem. You can easily mix paint, try something, stand back, analyze your errors, and paint over your colors to try something new.

In the fiber arts, however, we invest a lot of time and money in obtaining color results. Even carefully planned projects hold many surprises—from dyeing to blending to spinning to plying to the surface design of the finished fabric. So we tend to be fatalistic about color. We love some of our accidents, and fill our closets with those we love less. If we lived long enough, we could learn a lot by this hit-and-miss approach. But how can we experiment from a foundation of theory?

As a start toward that goal, I'll describe here the way I have come to understand the basics of color theory, and explain some exercises I've used to increase my awareness of color, to improve my color memory, to sharpen my color analysis skills, and to learn to combine colors successfully. In future issues, I'll look at how to obtain predictable and repeatable colors in home and studio dyeing, at how to achieve particular color effects in fiber preparation and spinning, and at how to use color in surface design (the exquisitely drawn cat).

If you do not have the inclination or the luxury of time to be able to do the exercises included below, you might try to do them quickly in your mind as you read, to help you clarify and personalize the concepts presented.

The numbered color chips on the opposite page are for permanent reference. The set on pages 57–58 is to be cut out and used in the exercises. For future use, you may want to put the cut chips in a small envelope and attach it inside one of the magazine's covers.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Color theory

There are many ways of examining color: through *optics,* the physics of light and vision; through the *physiology* of color perception; through systems for the *measurement and classification* of colors; through the obtaining and use of *colorants;* and by exploring the *aesthetic and psychological effects* of color. We'll take ideas from various sources that seem particularly appropriate to the use of color in fiber work.

Color and light

Optics, the first category, offers us a most useful topic: *metamerism,* which is the phenomenon that makes color look different under different lights. It is not just the surrounding context of colors that affects our perception of a given color. The spectrum of light available for viewing profoundly determines what we see.

The colors we perceive result from the way the material we are looking at reflects or transmits certain colors and absorbs others from the part of the spectrum offered by the viewing light. If you've ever liked a lipstick color at the dimly lit cosmetic counter and hated it when you got outside the store, you know that light is a big part of color perception. The light outside the store is not just brighter. It offers a different part of the spectrum to the eye.

Natural and artificial light differ from each other, of course, but the *type* of natural or artificial light also affects the part of the spectrum we see. Sunlight at dawn and dusk, for example, has a greater proportion of red light to blue or green light than does sunlight at other hours.

A painter's ideal light comes from a slightly overcast sky, which reduces the glare of wet paint on a white surface. In addition, painters often prefer light coming from a northern direction, which is more constant throughout the day than is light from other exposures. Reds are also reduced with light from this direction.

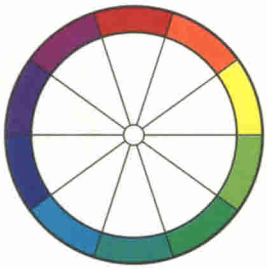
Fiber media, however, are best viewed in direct noonday sun. Fiber not only reflects light, like paint, but can also transmit light in a variety of other ways. Use your best daylight to evaluate color combinations and to compare or match temperatures or shades.

You will want to finalize your color selection for a project in the light in which you intend the fiber to be seen. Are you making a felt jacket to be worn on the bright ski slopes, an evening sweater for dim artificial light, or an afghan for a couch that receives light filtered through colored drapes?

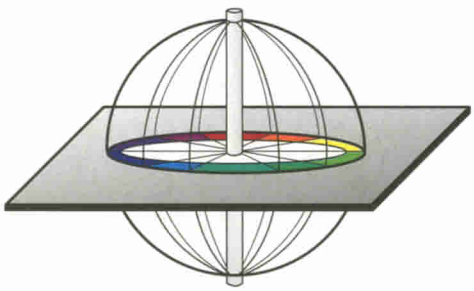
Color and the mind

From the study of the physiology of color perception comes a gold mine of information for fiber artists about how the mind *subjectively* interprets the *objective* color information it receives from the eye and brain. We'll touch on just a few topics to get a sense of what this field has to offer.

One idea of use in final design is that a bright area of color will appear larger than it actually is when compared to a duller or darker area of equal size. Colors are per-



Most of what we learned in school about the color wheel is of limited use here. The wheel is a two-dimensional representation of properties which need a three-dimensional model.



To explore Munsell's three-dimensional model, let's picture a globe. If we slice out a cross-section at the equator, we will find the traditional color wheel. Between the primary colors along the equator are ***intermediaries.*** *Munsell describes all longitudinal points at the equator (or any other latitude) as* ***hues.***

*Now, let's consider the axis of the globe, the rod connecting the north and south poles. Along this orientation, colors get lighter toward the north pole (****tints****) and darker toward the south pole (****shades****), a property of color called* ***value.*** *Pink is closer in value to yellow than it is to red. Illustrate this mentally by imagining these three colors —pink, yellow, and red—in a black-and-white photo.*

ceived as having kinetic qualities—a bright area can appear to expand, advance, or retreat, depending on its context. (Cold colors generally retreat behind warm ones, unless the warm colors are darker.)

Yellow is seen more easily than any other color. It is perceived three times more easily than violet. Physiologists have also discovered that older adults typically need three or four times as much light to distinguish among certain colors than do young adults. Even for young eyes, as light dims (whether artificial or natural) warm colors look cooler. At a certain point, when the light becomes quite dim, the cone cells in the retina no longer see color; only the rod cells work. These cells can only detect blues, greens, and violets.

We react to perceived colors by "seeing" a contrasting effect of colors or brightness. When we stare at a field of color long enough and then look at white, we see a field of the same shape as the original, but filled with the original color's complement.

Not only do we see contrast in a *successive* fashion (the aftereffect); there is also a phenomenon of *simultaneous* contrast. This alters our perception of juxtaposed colors. So we need to stop thinking about isolated color properties and to start thinking of colors in the company of other colors. Even if you are using a single color for a garment, you must consider the color of the skin, hair, and eyes of the wearer. In multi-color designs, colors can so dramatically alter our perception of neighboring colors that a geometric design in two different colorways can look like two entirely different geometric designs.

Organizing color

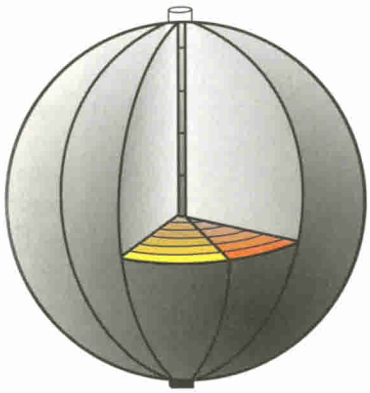
The history of classification theories reveals that there are many more color theories than basic art education led us to believe. When you read about color theory in art and craft books, you get the several-blind-men-describing-the-elephant effect: each description tells part of the story, but none of them is complete. Printers, artists, and dyers all have different approaches to discussing color, depending on how they use it. There's no *single* color theory.

Painters begin with the primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, from which they can mix the other colors. Printers start with primaries of cyan, magenta, and yellow, and have means of combining these to produce the blue and red that fine artists describe as primary colors that cannot be created by color mixing.

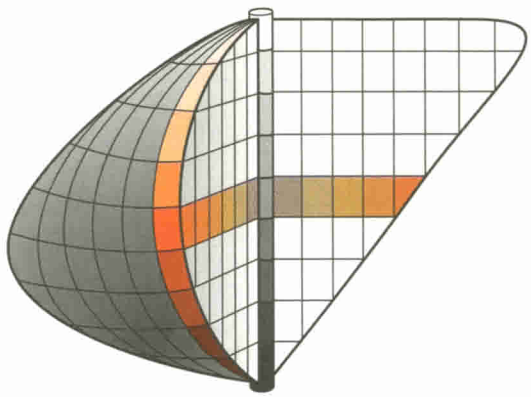
Historically, many theories have been presented—some elaborate and bizarre, some elegant and intuitively sensible. While there is no single "true" theory, one which is very useful for our purposes was developed in the early part of the twentieth century by Albert Henry Munsell, an American painter.

Color awareness

Without an understanding of the components of color—like Munsell's—we tend to judge color purely by a mysterious, subjective reaction. Some people have an intuitive knack for selecting colors that please them. Others rely on designers to do the selecting, because they feel that their own



*The final dimension, **chroma,** moves inward from the surface of the globe. We say that colors lose their **intensity, purity,** or **saturation** (interchangeable terms) when they are mixed with more than one primary. Going back to our traditional color wheel, that slice taken out at the equator, we see that all of these colors are at full intensity because they are either a primary or contain some mixture of two primaries. None of them contains three primaries. Colors like olive, navy, and rust—more complex mixtures—are not on the perimeter, but somewhere inside. These muted colors, containing some of each of the three primaries, are called **tertiaries** or **tones**.*



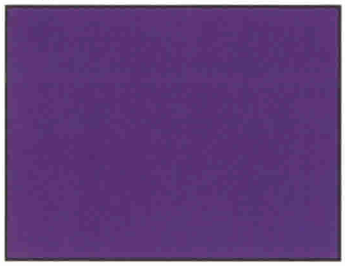
The Munsell model is not a perfect sphere, because different colors reach their full intensity at different levels of value. Think of yellow at its most yellow—that is, not dulled or compromised in purity. Then think of red at its most red. If you imagine a black-and-white picture of these two colors next to each other, the red appears "darker" in the photograph than the yellow. Colors at different latitudes are unequal in value, though all are in their highest chroma at the surface of the globe.

color combinations aren't very exciting or don't "work."

When you objectively evaluate the components of color, you heighten your awareness of why certain colors and color combinations please or displease you.

Exercise 1: Look at one of your favorite color schemes from a magazine or coffee table book and, without making a detailed analysis, evaluate what the designer has done in terms of the three dimensions of the Munsell color model. Are the colors all of the same *value*? If they are of different value, is the range great? How has the designer varied and restricted selections of *chroma* and *hue*? If you do this quickly and impressionistically, you'll probably discover one main color theme or strategy.

Purple 087



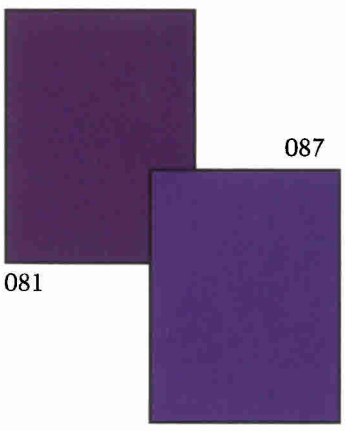
Exercise 2: When you are out and about, entertain yourself by analyzing color schemes you see. When I first did this, I was comforted by the discovery that most people's color combining skills were far more primitive than mine. Even nature didn't impress me all the time.

Exercise 3: Next time you shop or dye or design, work on your color awareness by de-emphasizing *hue,* which we usually think of first—or as our only concern. We might think, "Oh, I love purple. I'll get this purple wool and find some colors to go with it."

Try instead to concentrate first on *value.* Do you want to work with pale, pastel tints or dark, rich shades?

Now, what about *chroma*? Do you want muted tones or fully saturated colors?

When the hue is left as the final selection of a color's property, you may find, as many fine artists do, that the hue is already suggested by the selection of value and chroma.



Exercise 4: Try combining colors by allowing yourself to play with only one of the three elements: hue, value, or chroma. There is no variation in the other elements.

a. First, experiment with **hue**, keeping value and chroma constant. Cut apart the color chips on pages 57–58 and select a rainbow of pastels, what we think of as baby colors.

In this selection, you are varying hue by using pink, blue, yellow, purple, but you are not varying the value. All the colors are toward Munsell's north pole: all pale, all tints.

You are also not varying the chroma: no pale olives, no pale ochres, no dulled intensity. You can pick as many hues as you want and the bouquet of colors will only become more charming; you will never risk discord.

b. Now use **value** as your wild card; the other two elements (hue and chroma) remain constant. Select purple number 087 from the color chips and collect all of its tints and shades.

To keep the hue consistent, make sure that the purples in your scheme don't get warmer (toward magenta) or cooler (toward violet)—no wavering toward another longitudinal position on the globe.

Also keep yourself from getting deeper into or farther out from that spot in Munsell's globe where your original purple occurs—no variation in chroma. The purple does not get more or less muted.

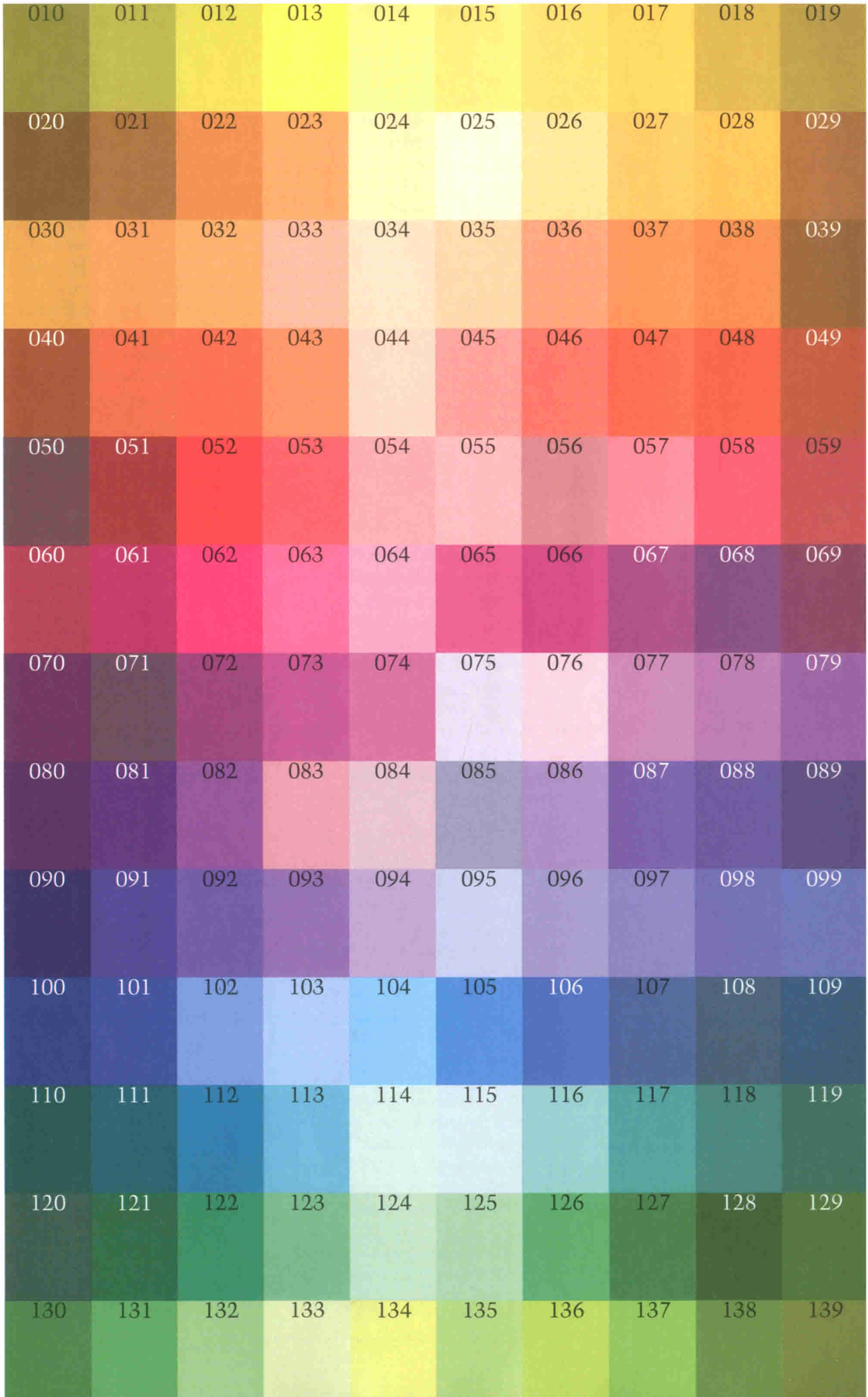
This scheme, monochromatic, derives its name from the Greek word for color, **chroma**. Do not confuse this with Munsell's meaning for **chroma**, which is purity or intensity of color.

Once you know this method of controlling the three elements of color, you must immediately, of course, break the rules. Kaffe Fassett has a lovely design of pastel squares in his *Family Album.* He varies both hue and chroma. His drab tints combined with robust, floral pastels set up a dynamic that is the hallmark of his work. Jinny Beyer, who created a color system for quilters, suggests starting with a range of related hues and then adding one color which violates the value rule (what she calls a "deep, dark" color) and one which violates the chroma rule (a bright color).

Exercise 5: Let's break a rule the wrong way.

Select five colors you like in combination, then select a color that looks dreadful with them. What color properties does this sixth color have that makes it inharmonious with the rest?

Now take a great color combination and decide to violate it by deciding which rule(s) you want to break. Select one more color according to this violation. For example, throw in a high-chroma color with five low-chroma colors. Does your addition look dreadful or does it add drama to the overall selection? Why?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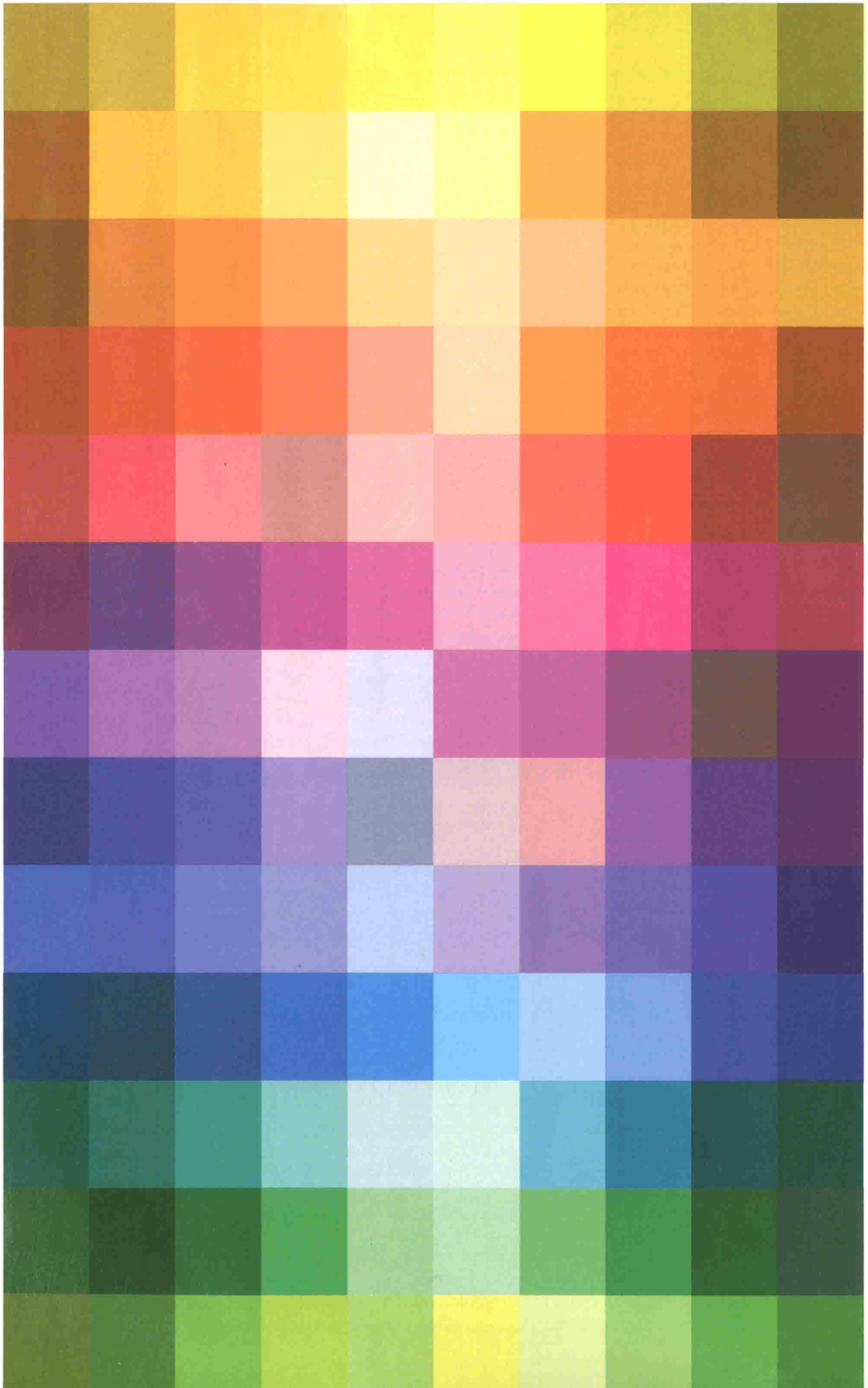


Color memory

As you develop your awareness skills, you will want to train your color memory. You may be one of those enviable people who can go shopping for a blouse to go with a skirt and not have to bring the skirt or a fabric swatch with you. I was not, although I could remember colors I'd been exposed to repeatedly, like the yellow of Post-It Notes or the green of Prell shampoo. I found that the more I worked with color mixing and understood the derivation of color, the better I was at remembering colors. I even began to solve color design problems in my dreams.

Exercise 6: Here's an exercise for which you need at least one assistant, although you might also try it at a guild meeting, where you'll have lots of extra hands and the opportunity to discover a range of abilities in color memory.

Assemble your color chips, number side down, and turn to page 17 Pull out from the pile all the color chips that match—as nearly as possible—the colors in the vest. Have someone else jot down the color numbers for you. Close your *Spin-Off* and mix the color chips back into the main pile.

Now, relying only on your memory, see if you can pull out the same colors. When you check your success, were your incorrect selections due to color memory weakness in recognizing hue, value, or chroma? Your color awareness exercises will benefit you most if you emphasize self-training in this aspect.

Exercise 7: Take your color chips with you to practice matching colors to scenery, clothing in shops, or any color arrangements you find. Consider yourself to be in training, like a musician or an athlete. Your color memory will improve, and you will use all your color sensitivities the next time you dye or design.

Color analysis

To use color skillfully, we need more facility with it than just awareness and memory. We need to analyze color comparatively. Let's start with value.

Values are measured on what is called a *gray scale.* Hue often distracts us when we try to compare values. One way to overcome this is to view the colors you are analyzing through a piece of colored plastic or a glass of water colored by a drop of dye. The colors you look at will be seen as value variations of the same hue. You can experiment with this and your color chips; first, however, you'll need to make a standard, black-and-white photocopy of page 53, which is your reference copy of the color-chip sheet. This photocopy will present the color chips as different values of gray.

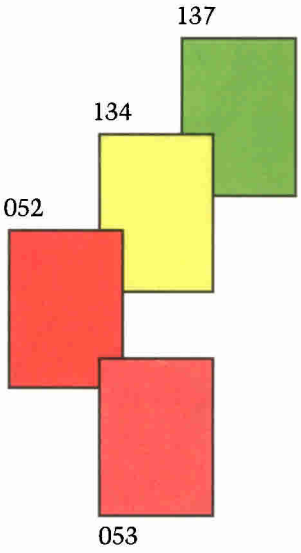
Exercise 8: With the number side down, arrange your color chips according to value, from darkest to lightest. Then create your own *gray scale,* the standard you will use to judge the values of the color chips. Now cut apart the *photocopy* and arrange its chips from darkest to lightest. Turn your colored chips up to show the numbers and see if you have arranged them in the same order as your photocopies.

Another property of color that lends itself well to comparative analysis is *temperature.* Although we tend to think of yellows and reds as "warm" and of blues and greens as "cool," actually every hue has cool and warm relatives. Find chips 081 and 087 081 is said to be the warmer of the two, because it is closer to red on the color wheel. 087 is the cooler of the two, because it is closer to blue.

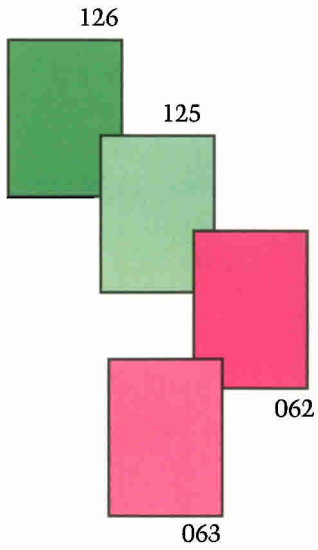
Exercise 9: You are going to depict a watermelon. Select two sets of chips for this job, one warm (chips 137, 134, 052, and 053) and one cool (chips 126, 125, 062, and 063). You have two fruit colors and two rind colors in each set. Exchange the pale rind colors of the two sets and see how the change in temperature affects both color combinations. Simple shifts like this can kill a color scheme—or, conversely, bring it to life.

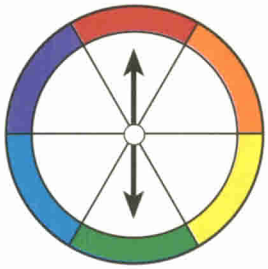
Finally, let's do a comparative analysis with chroma. During the 1960s, high-chroma colors were in fashion. Then came neons. Then came color fatigue! Muted colors like rust and maroon became popular. Eventually, tastes changed to earth colors, the pale-valued versions. If a combination of earth colors seems boring and washed out, adding value accents can rescue it. So can increasing the chroma of one or two of the colors.

Watermelon #1

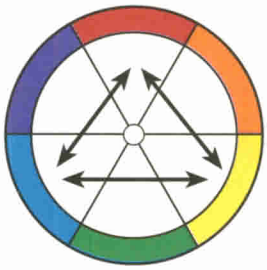


Watermelon #2

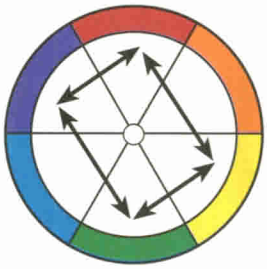




Dyadic



Triadic



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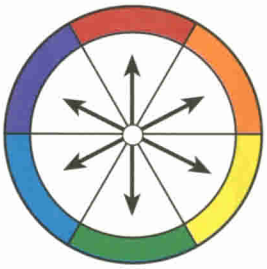

Hexadic

Exercise 10: Select five low-chroma colors you might find in desert scenery. Add a slightly higher-chroma version of two of these colors, as you might find in the rose or purple of seashells.

Exercise 11. Take a successful color combination—one of your own that you are crazy about or one from a design book. Using your color chips, try to pick a color that would kill the color scheme by being the wrong chroma. Revive the color scheme by replacing that color with one of similar hue and the correct chroma.

Color combinations

When you use a "color grammar" like Munsell's, you have more precise tools than emotional reaction with which to evaluate the color schemes you come across. Yet, before I could feel confident about combining color, I had to unlearn a few things.

I stopped thinking of finding the "ultimate" color combination, as if there were some internal truth to color that I could discern and process. I realized that I like different colors and combinations at different times in my life (influenced by, or in rebellion against, the reigning fashion colors), during different seasons (spring pastels make me forgive winter's darks and drabs; vivid autumn colors give me relief from the pastels), and at different points in my artistic development (when I redecorate, my previous color choices seem naive and primitive). I give in to different tastes during the same time period. If I am working in riots of gaudy neon colors, trying to break every rule I can think of, I might keep a project of ivory-on-ecru handy to clear my palate—and my palette, I suppose. Each extreme refreshes me for the other.

In combining colors, I think of colors as adjectives, instead of nouns. Colors are modified by surrounding colors. A major consideration here is the relative size of their areas. A dot of yellow in a field of green gives a totally different effect from a dot of that green in a field of that yellow. Later in this series, we'll look at ways to anticipate color effects when designing.

Exercise 12: To start breaking old color habits, select a chip of color that you don't like. Find a group of colors that you *do* like which will successfully integrate this color.

Now evaluate the first color and see if you can gain more precise insight into why you disliked it. Do you like it any more now?

When I got over my prejudice against certain colors, I discovered that any color may have properties that can be useful in a design. Let's take some of the standard ways designers select a basic scheme, then tweak the scheme, heat it up, take some of the saccharin out, give it punch, or mellow it by changing the temperature, value, or chroma of a hue, as we have been practicing.

Exercise 13: Divide your color chips into two or three piles according to value. Arrange each pile into a color wheel, with the highest chroma at the perimeter and the lower chromas to the inside. Select a basic scheme by one of the following systems:

Dyadic: a straight line across the wheel links a pair of complementary colors;

Triadic: mentally overlay your color circle with an equilateral triangle whose points touch three equally distant colors—or use an isosceles triangle, whose base corners point to analogous colors complementary to the apex (split complementary scheme);

Tetradic: double or double split complementary as above, but use a square or rectangle as your overlay, as you did with the triangle in the triadic scheme;

Hexadic: as above, but use a hexagon to select three complementary pairs.

Color is one of the things that draws us to working with fiber. Like the feel of fiber, it immediately and deeply satisfies us; it stimulates us to create. In order to continue developing color expertise, we need to create colors in our medium. We do not create with paper chips, but with fiber. In the next article, we'll learn to obtain the colors we need for the designs we visualize in our minds. ❖

Erica Heftmann lives in Virginia. She combines an analytical and open mind with the ability to explain complex subjects to the rest of us.

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The Wisdom of Ruth Swanson

BY JUDE DAURELLE

THIS IS WHAT I LEARNED from Ruth Swanson. Using her special formula, our Ruthie recently claimed to be in her mid-sixties. Mostly she has acted about 35. She has lived her life wisely.

The Idaho Falls Guild

Ruthie has many accomplishments to her credit, but her gifts to spinners and weavers deserve special recognition. In 1977, after learning to spin (and being a woman with many friends), she took a group to a spinning class at Idaho State University at Pocatello. They borrowed a wheel from the university and brought it home for a "test run." Ruth and her friends then held what is considered to be the first meeting of the Idaho Falls Spinners' and Weavers' Guild. She later visited Salt Lake City to learn how the Atwater Weavers' Guild was organized, and used it as a model for the new guild in Idaho.

Ruth's commitment to and support of this guild has been personal, financial,

This is the secret to a long, happy life:

- *Spin a little every day for close to twenty years—or maybe more years if you are lucky enough to get to have them.*
- *Spin your happy days into clouds of soft, fluffy yarns so a child somewhere can have a warm hat to wear.*
- *Spin your unhappy days into sturdy, warm brown and dark gray yarns. Make sweaters for other children.*
- *Give away what you spin; this makes even more people happy.*
- *And when you've spun your way to 75 years, have a special party and declare that henceforth on each anniversary of your birth you will deduct, not add, one year of age.*

moral, and total. For several years she kept scrapbooks chronicling every gathering, show, and party. She and her friends provided hundreds of demonstrations at fairs, pioneer days, and shopping malls.

Putting on the dog

Temple View Elementary School has asked Ruth to demonstrate for their children every year since 1977, and we believe she has spun at least one day in every school in the vicinity of Idaho Falls. Over several years, she spun and knitted caps featuring many kinds of dog hair. She took them with her for demonstrations, and the children would wear the hats while she showed them how to spin. At the end of the lesson, the children would describe how it felt to wear handspun dog hair. Ruth called this "Putting on the Dog!" It was a great hit with children and adults.

Ruth always wore a special costume for her demonstrations. A friend made her an authentic blue "spinster's" dress, to which Ruth added a matching apron. Then she topped her head with a Shaker work bonnet made of linen batiste. A favorite picture shows her in her home, all dressed up, spinning flax from a formal distaff.

The wheel kit caper

Perhaps the most touching incident of Ruth's "spinner's life" was her Great Ashford Wheel Kit Caper. Over a period of several years, she directed a project to group-order, import, and finish 250 Ashford wheel kits for members and friends of the Idaho Falls Guild. She supervised the wood finishing, or did it herself, for lucky people who subsequently learned to spin due to Ruth's efforts.

A legacy

In August 1994, Ruth and I judged the Southeast Idaho Fair fiber exhibits. She was so proud of every piece. Each entry was like the work of her treasured children or grandchildren. Ruth was delighted all that long and arduous day of judging, demonstrating that all spinners and weavers are her very special friends.

Traveling with friends to regional fiber arts gatherings, Ruth became a familiar, friendly face at Northwest Regional Spinners Association and Northwest Weavers' Guild programs. She attended the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR) in its early years. She supported many teachers' careers, and offered generous contributions and door prizes at every gathering. Once in a while, a lucky spinner returned home from a conference or spin-in with a hand-finished and hand-caned stool, lovingly made by Ruth's hands—given with joy by this woman of grace, wisdom, and strength. She has been a role model for all spinners everywhere. ❖

Jude Daurelle recently relocated to western Washington state. Shortly before press time, we learned that Ruth Swanson passed away on June 7 1996.

How to tune up your Indian charkha

BY MARIE GETTMANN

THE CHARKHAS that come from India are good tools, but they typically need some adjustment before you can start spinning with them, and they need regular maintenance afterwards. You don't have to be a mechanic to do this. Whenever you're having trouble, slow down, pay attention, watch what's going on, and you'll probably be able to identify and solve the problem.

If you have one of these charkhas, here are some tips on how to improve its performance.

• Get some fine sandpaper and smooth all the wooden parts. Use emery cloth to sand the posts of the drive wheel and accelerating wheel.

• Look to see if the drive wheel and accelerating wheel are aligned. Sometimes the drive wheel is too low. If so, put a washer underneath it to shim it up.

• Before putting the drive bands in place, give each of the wheels a whirl to make sure that they turn freely. Sand, smooth, and oil as necessary.

• To make or replace the shorter, thicker drive band that connects the drive wheel and the accelerating wheel, use some of the braided cotton cord that comes with these charkhas. Loosen the tension adjustment so the two wheels are as close together as possible (the band will stretch with use, so give yourself room to tighten it). Cut a band that's the right length to fit, and make a few stitches with needle and thread to join the ends together. This won't be a strong join, and you'll have to replace or redo it from time to time, but knotted or spliced joins don't work well in this situation, because they're so bulky that they get hung up in that little pulley on the accelerator wheel.

An alternative solution is to make a sturdy, stretch drive band by cutting off a piece of the material used in Louët drive bands and heat-sealing its ends together. Or you can have a machine shop or repair shop make a custom band from O-ring stock, cut to length and joined together. Either way, make sure the join is smooth. Shave or sand it if necessary.

With this shorter drive band in place, try turning the drive wheel. Tighten the tension until the band turns the accelerator wheel with no dragging, slipping, or jerking. Then leave that band and adjustment alone.

• For the longer, thinner band that connects the accelerator wheel and the spindle, I like the braided nylon thread that machine knitters call ravel cord. This comes in two sizes; get the finer size. You can join it with a square knot. If you can't find ravel cord, try a hard-twist crochet-cotton thread (size 30 or 50). Use the crochet cotton doubled—cut a piece twice as long as you need and wrap it around the wheel and spindle twice, then tie the ends together. For spinning the finest yarns, change to a thinner material for this drive band. A high-twist linen yarn, like the kind used for bobbin lace, is one possibility. Again, you can join the ends with a square knot. Pull the knot tight to make it as small as possible.

• Getting the tension on charkha bands just right is a tricky process, because the adjustments are minute. Don't get frustrated. Take it easy and be patient.

• To replace the bearings that hold the spindle, make new ones from braided corn husks. Save husks from sweet corn, let them dry, split them into narrow strips, dampen them just enough so you can work with them, and make flat three-strand braids the same size and thickness as the original bearings.

• Oil the wheel posts and spindle bearings often—about once an hour. Use 3-in-1 oil, sewing machine oil, Teflon oil, motor oil, or whatever you prefer. Frequent, generous lubrication is absolutely essential for smooth spinning on a charkha. ❖

Marie Gettmann's exquisite handspun cotton creations take our breath away. She lives in Oregon.

Pill-bottle Cotton Shirt

by Beatrice Bannerman

Persistence, and her fingers' ability to tell the difference between cotton and its imitators, brought Beatrice Bannerman to recycling triumph.

RECYCLING HAS BEEN part of my life for many years. One thing I have saved is the cotton from pill (mainly vitamin) bottles. I knew I would find a use for it some day.

During more than thirty years of spinning, I have spun dog hair, milkweed silk, flax, ramie, wool, cotton, silk, camel hair, human hair, and anything else that looked like it might have possibilities. While at Convergence in Pittsburgh, I purchased an Indian charkha wheel. A woodworking friend saw it at the Mountain State Art and Craft Fair in Ripley, West Virginia, and said he could make one. His version, made of cherry, is much sturdier than the original and is a joy to use.

My cherry charkha was just the thing to start spinning the pill-bottle cotton. Because I didn't have very much, I asked our local pharmacist what he did with the cotton he got with the bulk packaging. He was throwing it away! Within a few weeks, I had two bags full. It had to be sorted, as some was unusable and some was not cotton.

Spinning the cotton on the charkha wheel made a good demonstration at local fairs and created a lot of interest. At a Southern Highland Handicraft Guild Fair, I commented that I would like to tell someone from a pharmaceutical company to use a better grade of cotton. A man watching said to complain to him, because he purchased the cotton for a large company!

After spinning, I plied the yarn on the charkha. I had more than a dozen skeins, which I dyed in an indigo pot during a demonstration. I dipped some skeins longer, to get darker shades, and the batches of cotton took the dye differently, so I had a variety of shades.

I used commercial 8/2 cotton to make a warp 5 yards (4.6 m) long and 30 inches (76 cm) wide, and used my handspun cotton for weft. After weaving, I washed and ironed the cloth before cutting and sewing it. I recycled that pill-bottle cotton into a handspun, indigo-dyed, handwoven shirt. ❖

Handspun Gallery *of Cotton*

Knitted Lace Doilies

Alissa Barton
Grand Prairie, Texas

I learned to spin about five years ago. Since I'm allergic to wool, I've focused on cotton. Pima roving is my favorite preparation, and I like to spin it into fine, smooth, even yarn using my Rick Reeves frame wheel. It would take forever to knit a sweater with yarn like this, so I decided to learn how to knit doilies. (Because so much of knitted lace consists of holes, lace works up faster than stockinette or similar stitches.)

I had *crocheted* doilies from commercial yarn, but hadn't knitted any until I started making them from handspun. It requires less yarn to knit a doily than to crochet one, and it's easier to correct mistakes in knitting than in crochet. I like using a two-ply yarn that has enough twist to be stable, but no extra. If it's twisted too tightly, a cotton yarn feels unpleasantly wiry, instead of nice and soft, and it's liable to be brittle and snap apart when you block the lace.

I've knitted several doilies so far, including some large enough to cover a table. The patterns for the two here came from very different sources. The one on the left-hand page was a German pattern from *Kunst-stricken*, a Burda Special[1], E 198, pages 10–11, and the one on the right came from *McCall's Needlework Treasury* (New York: Random House, 1964; pages 239–41).

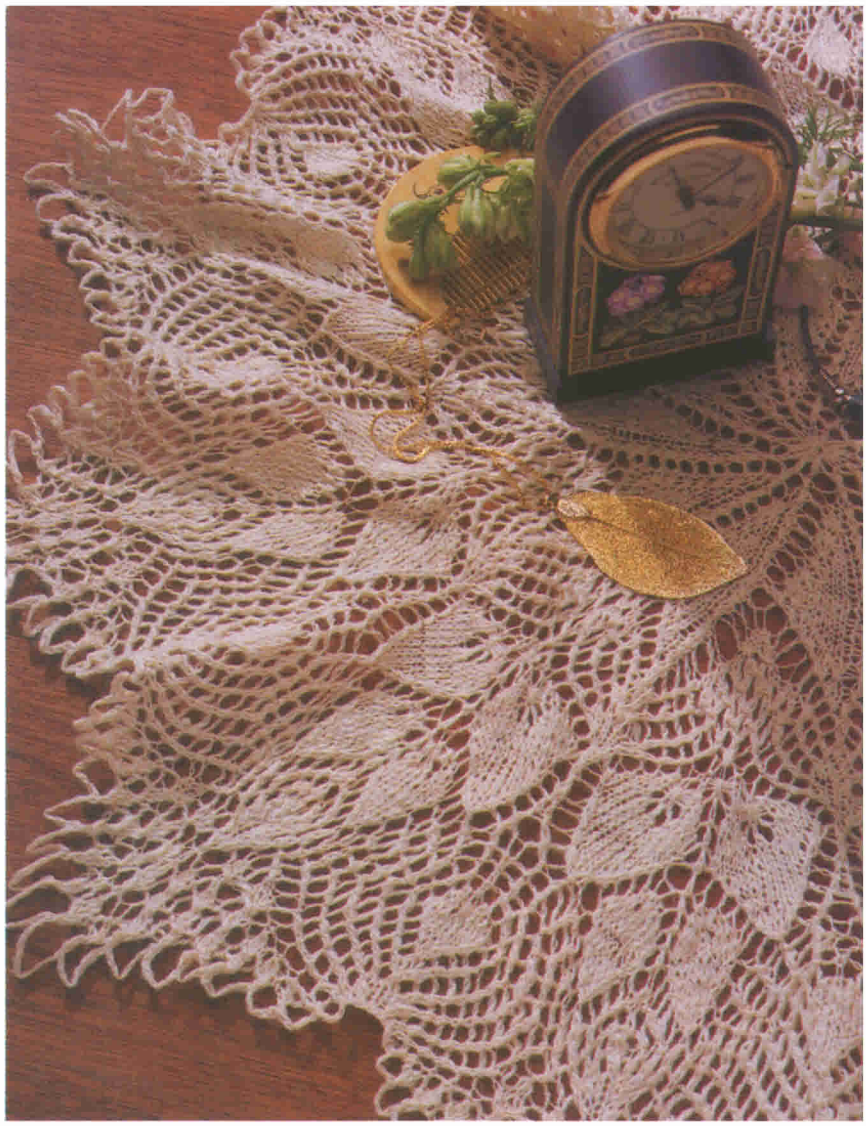
[1] This issue is out of print but might be found in a knitting shop's inventory. For information on other Burda "Specials" (newer issues come in German only) contact GLP Inc., 153 South Dean Street, Englewood, NJ 07631. (800) 457-4443. *Anna*, the Burda knitting and needlecrafts magazine (available in English), has some similar patterns in the August 1996 issue (E 1900), pages 10–11.

Natural-colored Cotton Wallhanging

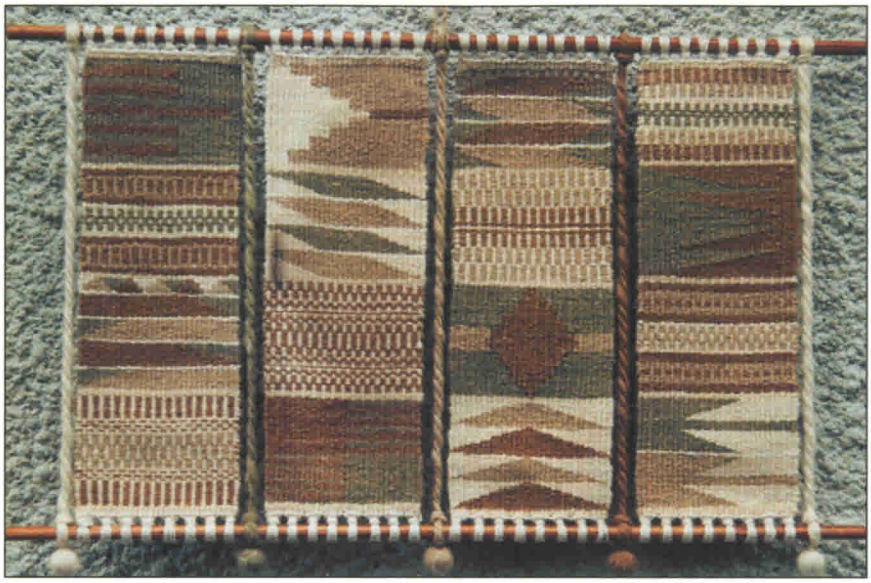
Anne-Marie Moroney
Co. Louth, Ireland

The inspiration for this wallhanging came from West African strip weaving, mostly from the Ewe tribe. I wove it on a rigid-heddle weaving frame with a commercial cotton warp. For the handspun three-ply weft, I chose natural colors of Fox Fibre cotton, a little ecru cotton from Sudan, and a bit of silk. The small amount of silk conforms to the Islamic way of thinking, where silk is considered a luxury and used only sparingly. In my weaving, it mostly separates different patterns.

The hanging includes four strips, each 2¾ inches (7 cm) wide by 8½ inches (22 cm) long. The warps were sett at 40 ends/10 cm (about 10 ends/inch). I mount-



Left: *Start to finish, this knitted doily took Alissa Barton five months to make. She knitted it on size 2 (2.5–2.75 mm) needles from a Burda pattern.* ***Right:*** *The smaller doily was three months in the making, knitted on size 0 (2 mm) needles from a McCall's pattern. Both came from two-ply Pima cotton, and Alissa says, "I have many others, but I feel these are my best." Photostyling by Rebekah Robson-May.*



Above: *Anne-Marie Moroney spun singles on her charkha and plied on her Schacht to make this wallhanging from Fox Fibre cottons, Sudanese cotton (the écru), and a little silk. Inspiration for her designs came from West African strip weaving, mostly from the Ewe tribe.* ***Below*** *are segments of original Ewe cloth, shown as a much larger piece in Christopher Spring's* African Textiles.

ed the strips between two dowels by tying the warp ends around the dowels, and used more of the same cotton to spin the rope trim and to cover the fishing-weight balls, which make the whole thing hang straight and taut.

Resource

Spring, Christopher. *African Textiles.* New York: Crescent Books, 1989. Excellent photos of a variety of African fabrics.

Crocheted Placemats

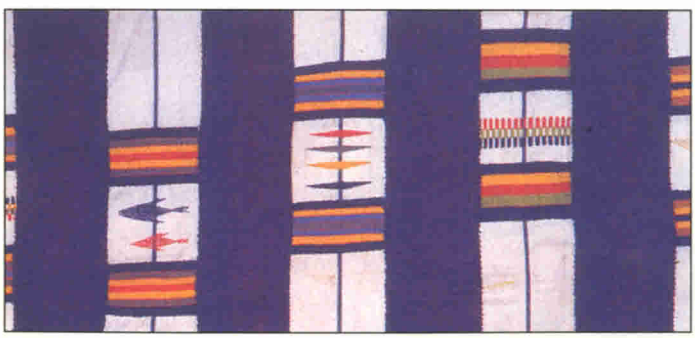
Martha Laster
Stoneville, Mississippi

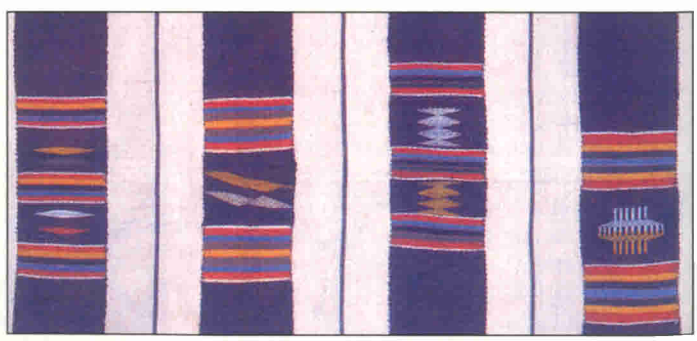
On Christmas Eve 1992, my husband presented me with a large brown box which contained a spinning wheel kit. He had ordered this collection of legs, wheel, and other parts not easily identified from a farm supply company. I was stunned and less than excited, but we sorted, sanded, and assembled a gorgeous Jacob Plum maple Saxony spinning wheel which operated perfectly.

Next, what to do with it. I had no information or personal contacts for instruction and no fiber. One friend suggested that I subscribe to *Spin·Off.* Another friend supplied some Mississippi Delta short-staple cotton, recently and locally ginned. I pulled apart the cotton by hand and thus began the magical process of learning to draft the soft fiber. After much frustration, a knobby yarn miraculously appeared and began to wind onto the bobbin. I practiced for weeks, and eventually began to spin a fine yarn with a few flecks in it to remind me of its humble origin.

My first projects were crocheted sets of coasters and placemats. I made round coasters about 5 inches (12.5 cm) in diameter and oval placemats about 12 by 18 inches (30 by 45 cm). Now my relatives and friends are well supplied with coasters, and I have crocheted three sets of six placemats each for my daughter, my daughter-in-law, and myself. For all of these, I used two-ply yarn and crocheted directly from the bobbin. The flecks give the cotton a slight tweedy effect. As I had no guidance, I was unaware of things some spinners take for granted, like setting the twist, counting yards per pound, and so forth, but everything fell into place and I am proud to have made these lovely and useful items.

In retrospect, I'd say that learning to spin as I did, starting with cotton directly from the gin, was an excellent experience. Thanks to *Spin·Off* and books, I have progressed and learned to spin other short and long fibers. But I wouldn't recommend purchasing a spinning wheel as we did, knowing nothing about the different types of wheels and their capabilities. We were fortunate to get an excellent wheel, but I'm





sure that's not always the case. I would encourage other potential spinners to seek advice before buying.

Hanger Cover and Sachet Bag

Josephine Kershner-Veal
Wheat Ridge, Colorado

Last year a friend traded me a basketful of cotton for a skein of my handspun yarn. I looked at the mounds of fluff and wondered what to make. At first, I thought about a woven shirt or a baby layette or baby blanket. I decided to spin the cotton on my takli spindle. I had spun wool on a drop spindle for years before I had a wheel, so I thought, "How hard could it be to spin a pound of cotton?" Well, after it took several weeks to spin a few ounces, I contemplated smaller projects, such as a doll shawl or baby booties and cap.

One day as I was doing the laundry I saw an old wooden hanger on the rack and knew what I wanted to make: a hanger cover. I experimented with several lace patterns before choosing a pretty but simple pattern called "Smallest Points" from *Traditional Knitted and Lace Shawls,* by Martha Waterman.[1] I knitted the hanger cover and lace edging in one piece, and modified the lace pattern slightly to make a row of slipstitches where the edging joins the body fabric. Later, I laced ribbon through this row of stitches.

Using leftover yarn and the same pattern, I knitted a matching sachet bag. I filled the sachet with a potpourri of rosebuds, lavender, lemon verbena leaves, and a few drops of rose oil.

Materials

Yarn: 2 ounces of cotton yarn that measures about 22 wraps per inch (2.5 cm).
Equipment: Knitting needles, size 1 (2.25 mm), either straight or circular; two double-pointed needles, size 1 (2.25 mm).
Supplies: Wooden hanger, quilt batting, about 4 feet 1.2 m) of narrow ribbon, potpourri (for sachet).

Hanger cover

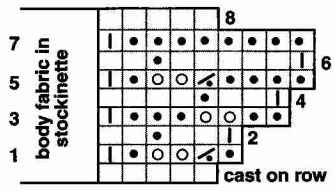
The part that wraps around the wooden hanger is worked in stockinette, and the number of stitches will depend on your gauge. Cut two narrow strips of quilt batting, one for each side of the hanger, and whipstitch them together around the edges of the wooden part of the hanger. Measure the circumference of the padded hanger arm and determine the number of stitches you'll need to make stockinette fabric that wide. This is the body, and the lace edging is worked onto one side of it. I used a marker to show me the transition point between body and edging.

Cast on required stitches for body, plus 5 for the edging (35 stitches for mine). Knit across one row, then begin patterning. My cover required 30 stitches for the body;

Handspun Gallery

Determination can compensate for experience. These crocheted placemats by Martha Laster represent the eighteen mats she spun from her first yarns, which were two-ply cotton. Josephine Kershner-Veal invented her hanger cover and then made a sachet to match. Covered hangers offer practical, as well as aesthetic, benefits. The padding keeps creases out of special garments, and the cloth surface prevents the stored item from sliding off onto the floor.

Handspun Gallery



Right side		Wrong side
k		p
p	•	k
yo	○	yo
p2tog	⟋	k2tog
sl 1	|	sl 1

change this number in the instructions below (shown in italic) if your gauge is different.

Row 1. P30 (place marker), yarn back, sl 1, k1, yo twice, k2tog, k1.

Row 2: Sl 1, k2, p1, k2, *k30.*

Row 3: P30, yarn back, sl 1, k3, yo twice, k2.

Row 4: Sl 1, k2, p1, k4, *k30.*

Row 5. P30, yarn back, sl 1, k1, yo twice, k2tog, k4.

Row 6: Sl 1, k5, p1, k2, *k30.*

Row 7· P30, yarn back, sl 1, k8.

Row 8: Bind off 4; 1 st is on left needle; k4 more, *k30.*

Repeat these 8 rows until the piece is as long as the hanger you wish to cover. Bind off. Lay the knitting upside down on a towel and block it by pressing with a steam iron.

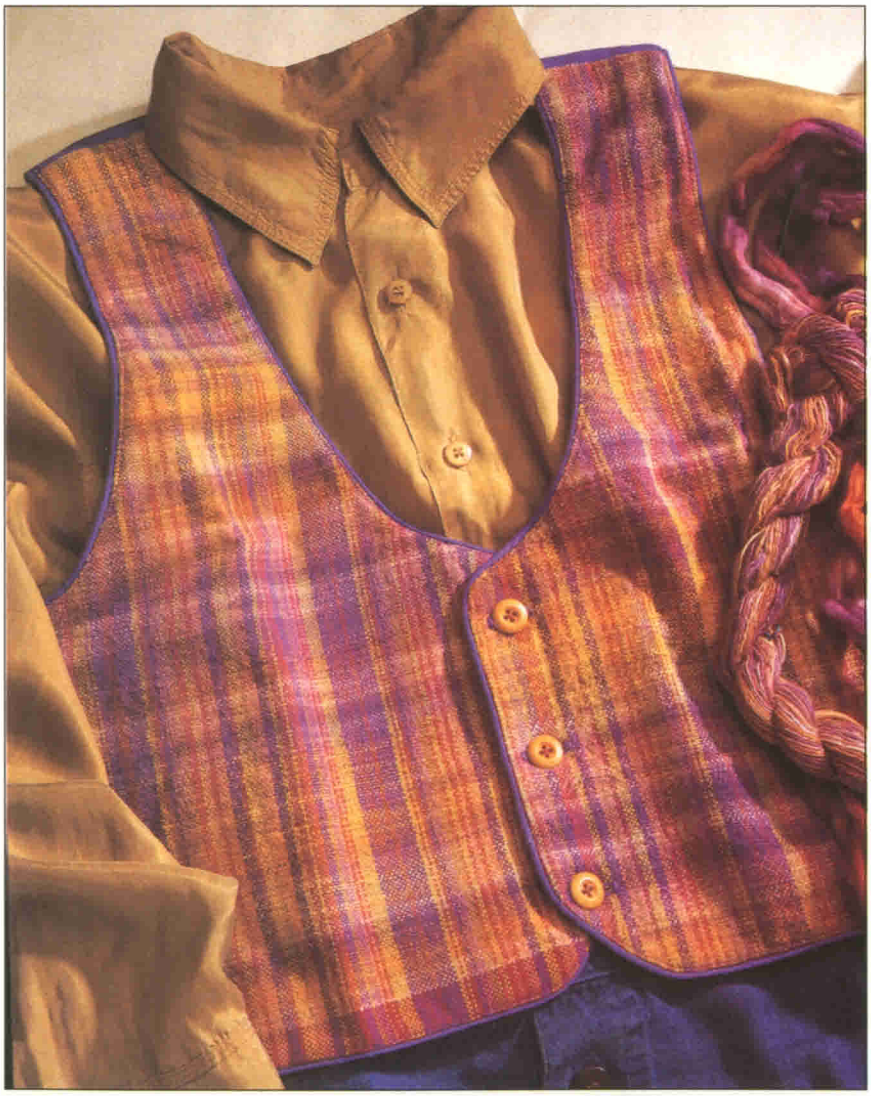
To make I-cord to cover the metal hanger wire, cast on 5 sts on double-pointed needles. Knit across. Push sts back to right end of needle, bring yarn around the back, and knit across again. Repeat, pulling cord into a tube, until it is long enough to cover the wire. Slip it onto the wire, break off the yarn, draw the tail through the 5 sts and pull them tight, then hide the tail inside the cord.

Fold the knitted hanger cover in half and determine the center (lengthwise and widthwise, not counting the edging). Use a larger knitting needle, chopstick, or other blunt tool to gently open an area between stitches to accommodate the hanger wire. Slide the cover over the I-cord–covered wire, and position it around the batting. Stitch the cover together on both ends and along the bottom edge. Cut two pieces of ribbon, each about 18 inches (46 cm) long. Starting at the ends and working to the center, secure the ribbons in the batting, then thread them through the column of slip-stitches with a blunt needle. Tie the ribbons into a bow at the center.

Sachet bag

Cast on 25 sts (20 for body of bag plus 5 for edging). Work in pattern, same as for hanger cover, for 48 rows. Bind off, leaving a long tail. Fold piece in half and stitch up the back, centering the seam. Stitch the bottom shut. Cut ribbon 12 inches (30 cm) long, and thread it through the column of slip-stitches. Stuff the sachet with potpourri, pull the ribbon tight, and tie a bow.

Variegated cotton entrances the spinner with constantly changing hues. But the woven results can be streaky. Connie Elliott achieved a complex plaid effect instead.



[1] Waterman, Martha. *Traditional Knitted and Lace Shawls.* Saint Paul, Minnesota: Dos Tejedoras Press, 1993. Page 98.

"Plaid" Vest

Connie Elliott

Houston, Texas

I've been spinning for twenty years, most of that time in warm climates, so I drifted away from wool and into cotton and flax early on. I enjoy dyeing fibers, especially messing around with space-dyeing. I like the playfulness and the mad-scientist aspect of painting roving, and enjoy

spinning a constantly changing rainbow of colors. But I have never been happy with the streakiness of finished projects woven or knitted from those rovings. Thinking it over, I decided I would be more pleased if streaks of color crossed each other at right angles, in a semi-plaid pattern.

For this vest, I dyed an anonymous bag of roving from the bottom of a friend's closet with Cushing dyes. To do this kind of dyeing, I skein the roving, wet it, and lay it on plastic wrap. Then I mix dye powder with boiling water in a large measuring cup. When you pour nearly boiling dye solution onto cotton, the color sets almost instantly and you can avoid ending up with a mud-colored puddle on the bottom side. I wrap the plastic wrap around the roving and steam it a while, to be sure the dye is fully set.

I used four colors—aubergine, yam, pumpkin, and pomegranate. This made a beautiful roving, which I spun into a medium-weight singles yarn (25–30 wraps per inch [2.5 cm]) to serve as weft. Because I used the yarn as a singles, the colors remained distinct. I dyed commercial 10/2 cotton yarn in the same colors, arranged it in random stripes to make a warp 14 inches (35.5 cm) wide, and wove the fabric in plain weave. I like how the weft colors grade back and forth into each other against the random warp stripes. The effect is an anastomosing pseudo-plaid.[1] The pattern could be changed by making the warp stripes wider or narrower, or by weaving a fabric of a different width, which would change the width of the weft stripes.

I can't sew my way out of a paper bag, so I imposed on my good friend Cathy Williamson, who helped me design the vest and then sewed it. The best part of this project? It left me with more ideas than when I started.

[1] *Editor's note*: She is not making this up.

Handspun Gallery

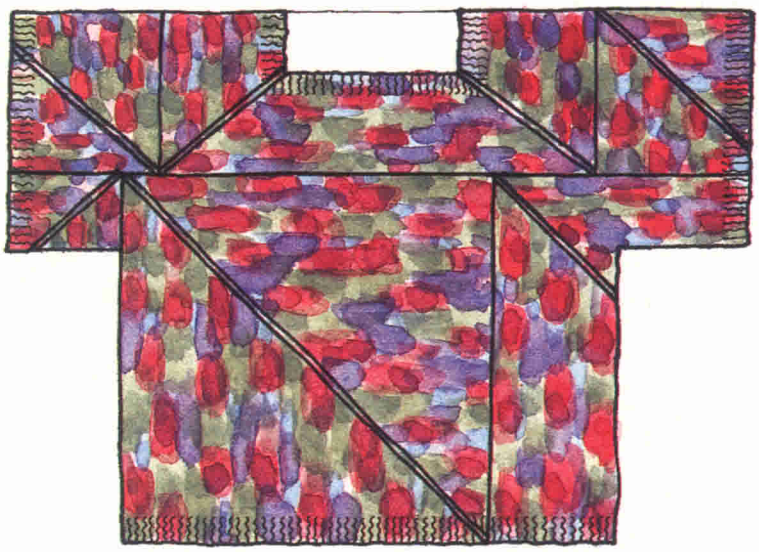
Kay Van Ord's niece developed environmental allergies, which made it difficult for her to find a blanket that didn't cause problems. Esther Howard's handspun Arizona cotton proved safe, and Kay turned it into a double-bed–sized blanket. Handspinners are uniquely situated to make textiles which don't provoke allergic reactions, especially now that organic cottons and wools are readily available. Above right, the blanket is shown on the loom.

Pure Cotton Blanket

Kay Van Ord
Russell, Pennsylvania

This double-bed–sized blanket has quite a story. It started in spring 1994 when my sister's daughter developed environmental allergies. The only blanket she could use was the handspun wool afghan I had made for a wedding present, but she lives in California and it was getting too warm for wool. She tried to buy a 100-percent cotton blanket, but it had been treated with a fire retardant and she was allergic to that. This prompted my sister to ask if I could weave a handspun cotton blanket.

I realized it would take me too long to spin the cotton myself, but I thought that Esther Howard, a former member of my guild who had moved from the area, might be able to do it. Esther spins for a living. Upon tracking her to Tucson, I talked to her on June 1 and she agreed to help. She spun all summer, using hand-carded Arizona-grown cotton. At the end of October, I received the yarn: 1608 yards of three-ply warp (Navajo-plied) and 1686 yards of two-ply weft. I immediately made the warp and threaded my loom for plain weave. Because my loom is only 45 inches 115 cm) wide, I



Well, yes, it is a tee shirt. It's T-shaped, cotton, soft, and comfortable. But Charlene Abrams' mitered-square construction, her playful juxtaposition of stockinette, reverse stockinette, and garter stitches, and the wonderful color variations move the tee-shirt concept into an entirely new realm. Above you can see the shirt as a whole; at left, its structural plan; opposite, a close-up of the fabric.

used double weave to make the blanket, the weaving of which took most of my spare time for the next month. Just before Christmas, I finished and photographed it and then mailed it to my sister, who admired it and passed it along to her daughter. Finally, my niece has a blanket she is not allergic to.

Mother/daughter Tee Shirts

Charlene Abrams
Saint Louis, Missouri

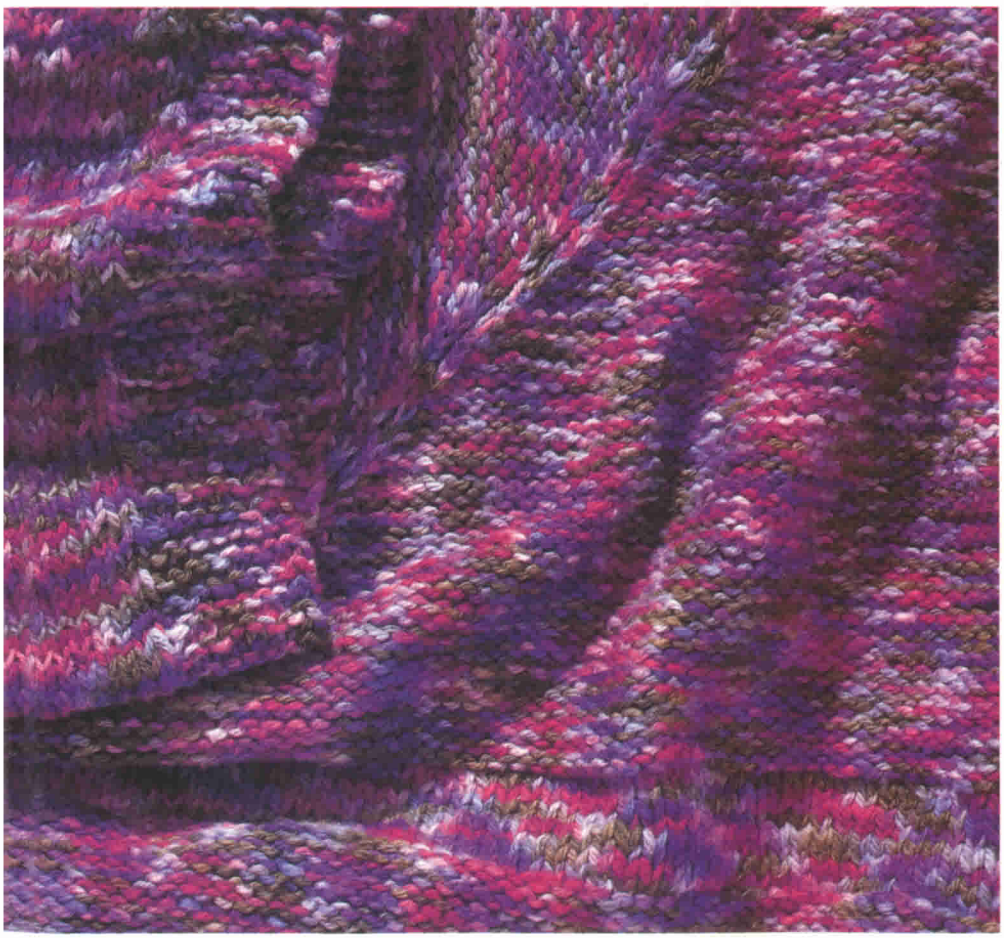
After learning to spin three years ago and trying other fibers, I was curious about cotton. I spun a half-pound of ginned cotton, and enjoyed it so much that I bought a pound of cotton roving and started on that. I wanted a three-ply, knitting-worsted–weight yarn, so I had to spin the singles fine and it took a while to get through that pound.

Plying was fun, too, but I couldn't decide what to do to set the twist (which, as far as I could tell, was already set). I tried boiling a little skein, but that was horrible! My fluffy, soft, lofty yarn turned into compact string. Then I decided to put the yarn through the washer and dryer; so what if it shrank. After my first (failed) dyeing experiment, that's what I did, and that's what *it* did, but at least I still had a soft yarn.

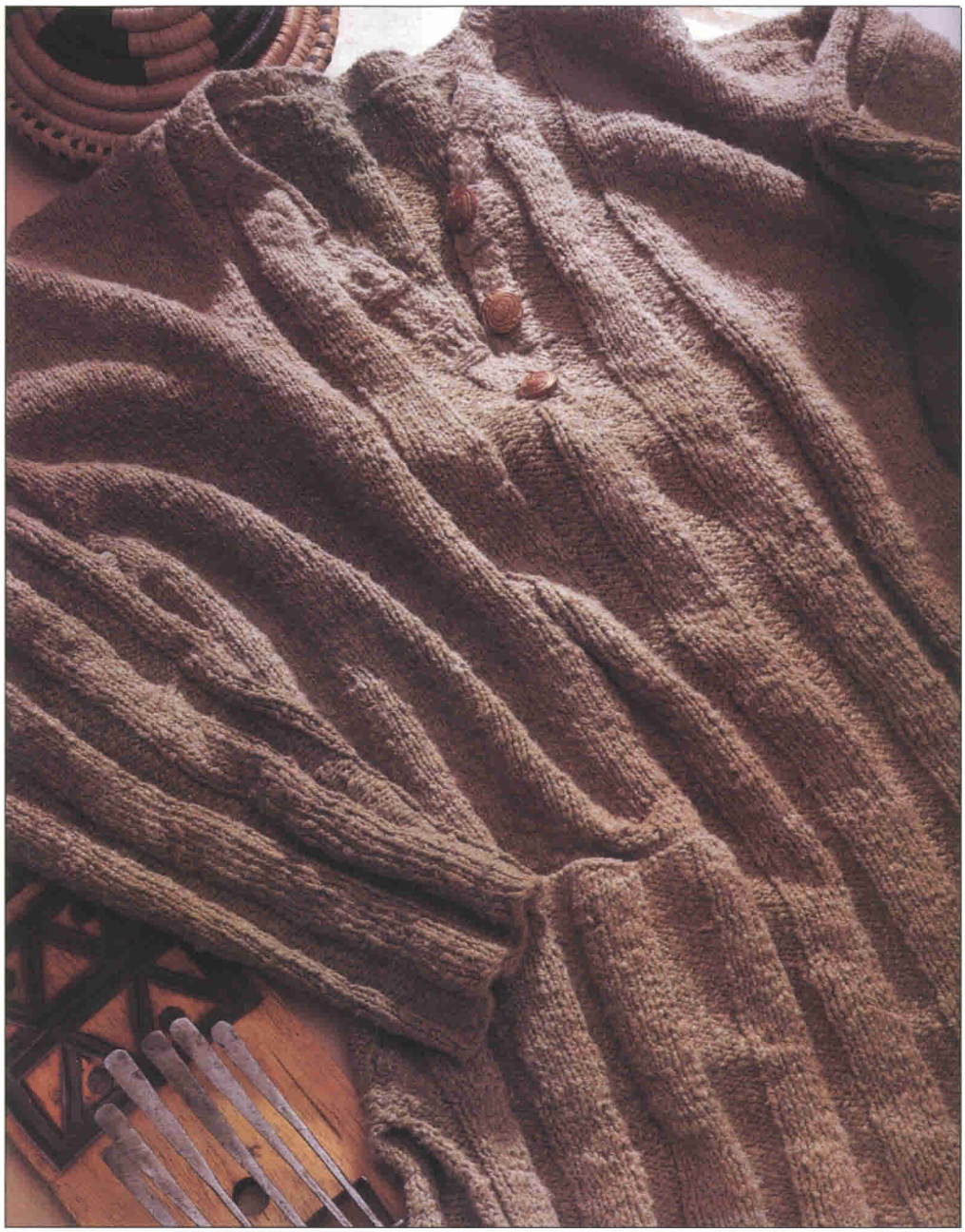
I had bought three colors of Procion dyes and tried to rainbow-dye my skeins. Before dyeing the skeins, I soaked them in washing soda and detergent. I also added soda ash to the dyepot. After dyeing, I rinsed and rinsed, and my beautiful jewel-toned yarn ended up pastel-colored. It was pretty, but not what I wanted. After many months and a conversation with a craft-market tie-dyer, I tried again. This time I soaked the skeins in soda ash and water for about an hour and then dyed them. You can see the results—just what I wanted!

The tee-shirt design evolves like a crazy-quilt, because I add squares as I feel like it, according to the desired finished dimensions of the garment. All squares are mitered, which gives a lovely effect with the variegated yarn. After finishing my own shirt, I used the leftover yarn to make one for my four-year-old daughter.

How to knit a mitered square. Measure your gauge, decide on the desired size of



Handspun Gallery



Below: *Jacquie Vaughan's green-cotton sweater suits a lot of the Chicago area's weather. The detail at* ***right*** *shows the yarn's subtle variations in color and texture, as well as the perfect buttons Jacquie found to complement the fabric.*

the square, and calculate how many stitches you will need for *one* side. Cast on *twice* that number, plus two for the diagonal. For example, if your stitch gauge is 20 stitches/4 inches 10 cm) and you want an 8-inch (20-cm) square, each side needs 40 stitches, so you cast on twice 40 plus 2, or 82 stitches. *Rows 1 and 2:* Work all 82 sts in stockinette. *Row 3:* K39, k2tog, ssk, k39. *Row 4:* P38, ssp, p2tog, p38. *Row 5:* K37, k2tog, ssk, k37 *Row 6:* Purl.

Continue decreasing in three out of every four rows until all your stitches are used up. Fasten off.

If you want to make a garter-stitch square, decrease only on every other row. For a multicolored yarn like the one I used, try reverse stockinette, but keep the two center stitches in stockinette.

Natural Green Sweater

Jacquie Vaughan
Oak Park, Illinois

For my fortieth birthday, my husband gave me a Rick Reeves 30-inch Saxony wheel. I decided to use it for a special cotton project. I had been saving up green cotton, but because I had gotten it from various sources the color was not uniform. So I rotated among the different shades to get a

soft striped effect. I spun the singles slightly slubby and plied them with a tight twist, making a sturdy, textured yarn. Before knitting, I boiled the skeins in a soapy soda-ash solution to darken and set the color.

The extra twist in the yarn gave it a little bounce, and it was a delight to knit. I kept the pattern and shaping of the sweater simple, to emphasize the color changes and texture of the yarn, and made up a design that combines stockinette stitch with panels of ribbing. The finished sweater feels great. My teenage daughter wants to claim it, but this one's mine.

lengths of each color. If I tried to be exact, every error would stand out like a sore thumb. Instead, the slight random variation from one arm's length to the next gives a pleasing effect.

I like to alternate between spinning and weaving, so I designed a special shuttle that holds my charkha spindle. Terry Lavallee, of Bluster Bay Woodworks in Sitka, Alaska, refined my design, added some elegance, and is making them for me.

To keep things simple, I always start and stop both the spinning and weaving on the same color. That way I never get out of sequence. ❖

Handspun Gallery

Arm's-length Spinning, or Single-shuttle Plaid

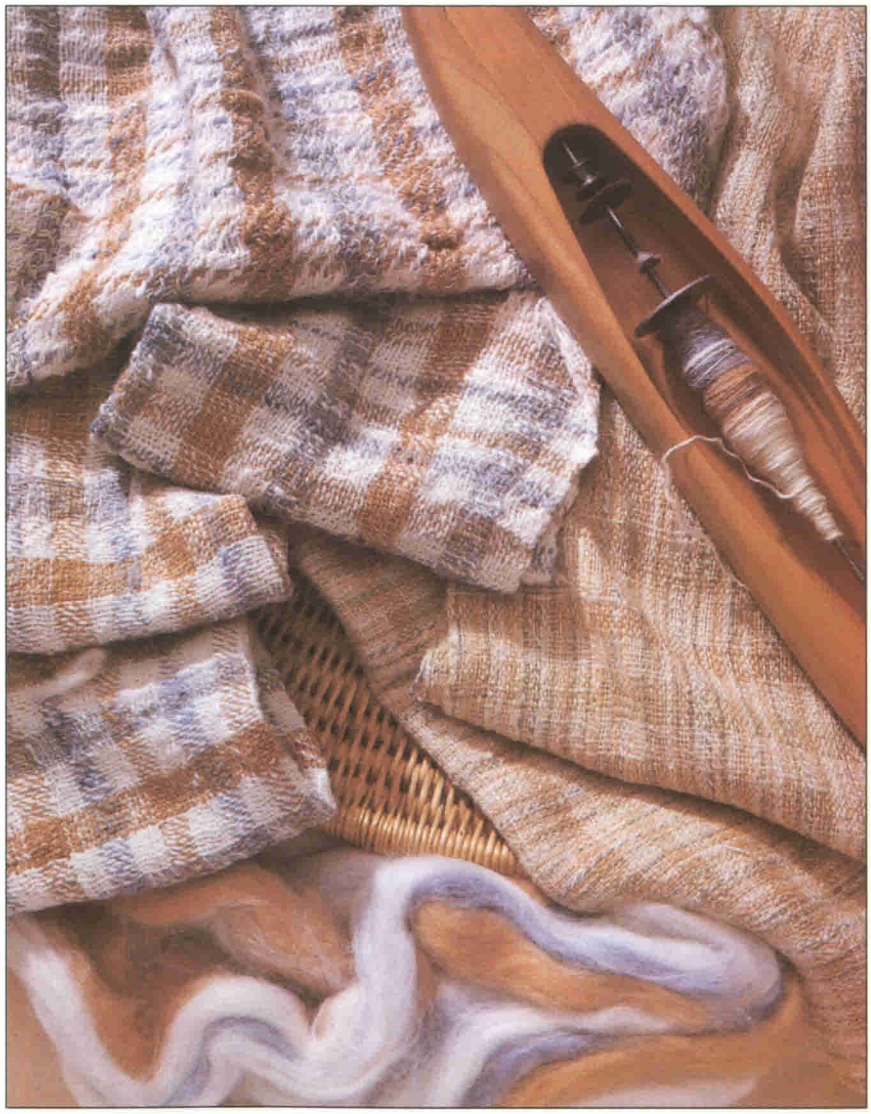
Eileen Hallman
Black Mountain, North Carolina

Have you gotten your hands on natural-colored cotton yet? How about the roving prepared in whole or part from recycled blue jeans? Eileen Hallman spins singles of variegated fibers—some of which she prepares herself—and weaves fabrics you'd want to surround yourself with day and night.

As a spinner and weaver who loves cotton, I enjoy designing checked and plaid fabrics from natural-colored cottons. My technique is simple but versatile. First I make a striped warp from commercially spun, natural-colored, 10/2 cotton from Fox Fibre (Colorganic).

For weft, I use handspun singles. I need only one shuttle because I put color changes into the yarn by spinning from a striped sliver which is prepared and held so that the colors remain separate but parallel. Several striped slivers are available commercially, but you can make your own. To prepare a striped sliver, first choose two or more colors of prepared sliver. Determine which end drafts more easily on each of them, then align them parallel to one another. I do a little hand drafting to thin out the composite sliver and also to make it hold together a little better. Then I start spinning.

I spin on a charkha, but you could use this same idea on a flyer wheel. As I spin, I move my wrist to control which color is presented to the drafting triangle. I draft an arm's length (for me, that's about 30 inches or 75 cm) of one color and wind it on, then repeat or change to a different color. For example, for one piece I used random sequences of one, two, or three arm's lengths. Another time I used one arm's length of each color. I do maintain a color sequence, such as white/green/white/brown, but I don't try to measure precise



Common Questions about Spinning Cotton

by Patsy Sue Zawistoski

COTTON, it seems, inspires mysteries. Even in the Middle Ages, Europeans wondered about the legendary lambs that grew on bushes and died when they had eaten all the leaves in their reach, leaving wool and bones behind. As I teach cotton spinning workshops across the country, I hear several recurring questions. I'd like to share the answers with you.

Isn't cotton the hardest fiber to spin?

Cotton has a mixed reputation among today's handspinners, but in reality, cotton fibers are very predictable and easy to spin. Cotton was the first fiber to be spun on machinery during the industrial revolution. The spinning jenny, the spinning mule, and many other tools were all designed for short cotton and later adapted for longer wool fibers.

Traditionally, cotton was spun on spindle-type wheels, instead of today's popular flyer-type wheels which often have a strong take-up pull. Since most American spinners use flyer wheels, this may help explain cotton's poor reputation today.

Born to wear handspun cotton. the cutie in the snapshot at bottom center of this photo is May Elizabeth Ransom MacFarlane, show at about six weeks in a sweater made by her grandmother, Betty Ransom (see opposite). Betty dyed the brilliant colors with Dylon (turquoise, poppy red—full and half-strength, and royal blue) and the subtle rose with alum-mordanted brazilwood.

Spinning cotton on a flyer wheel requires adapting the take-up to the short fibers.

Can my wheel spin cotton?

Cotton can be spun on most modern wheels, with some adjustments. Short fibers like cotton are best spun into fine yarns with plenty of twist. However, excess take-up can easily tug a fine yarn apart before the fibers are sufficiently twisted.

Reducing the take-up is the critical factor on most wheels. On a double-drive wheel, choose a drive whorl that is nearly the same size as the bobbin whorl. This will give a high number of twists per treadle stroke, and will turn the bobbin almost as fast as the flyer, producing minimal take-up pull. Adjust the drive-belt tension just enough to turn the flyer.

On a single-drive, Scotch-tension wheel, first loosen the Scotch tension completely, then turn its adjustment knob until you feel just enough take-up to pull the yarn into the orifice. Many experienced spinners recommend replacing a nylon fish line brake band with a soft, thin, cotton cord. If you try this, first check to see that the groove on your bobbin is smooth; sand it if it isn't. A nylon brake band will slide over irregularities, but a cotton brake band will catch if the groove is rough. Some bobbins have large and small ends. If yours do, putting the Scotch-tension band on the smaller end often gives you a lighter take-up.

The single-drive, bobbin-lead (Louët-style) wheel is a bit more challenging to adapt for cotton. On older Louëts, the drive ratios were low and the flyer was heavy. Louët's newer flyer is lighter in weight and the new bobbins offer much faster ratios. Getting these new parts can help you adapt an older wheel. Also, try the following hints:

- Use a long, thin, cotton leader with a simple loop tied at the end. To join on, slip some fibers through the loop and begin to spin.
- Completely release the brake band from the flyer; the friction of the central shaft on its support will provide enough take-up by itself.
- Increase the size of the bobbin's core. This also helps reduce take-up. You can do this by starting to spin cotton on an almost-full bobbin, or by fitting a length of pipe insulation to the bobbin's core to in-

crease its diameter (cut a length of insulation to match the length of the bobbin core, slit an opening down one side of the insulation, and slip the insulation over the core).

- Zigzag the yarn from one arm of the flyer to the other, crossing two or three times before taking the yarn through the orifice. This also helps reduce the take-up.

How should I draft short cotton fibers?

Most spinners find the *point of twist* drafting style useful with cotton. In this technique, the point of twist—the place where the drafted fibers first become twisted—is visible between your hands and moves with your encouragement but is *not controlled under your thumb.*

Start by pinching off the twist with your forward hand and holding the fiber gently with your back hand. Draft by pulling forward on the yarn or pulling back on the fiber. Either way causes the fibers caught in the point of twist to draw out of the fiber mass. Because cotton fibers are so short, draft just a short distance. Then pinch the fiber firmly for a moment with your back hand as you release the twist

Spinning Cotton in New Zealand

by Betty Ransom

AFTER SPINNING WOOL and other fibers for ten years, I learned to spin cotton in Wellington in 1991 at a thirty-five–hour comprehensive course in spinning, design, color, fibers, and blending. I caught onto the knack of spinning cotton with a drive ratio of about 10:1, fast treadling, loose Scotch tension, and the long draw. I had been given part of a bale of raw cotton and wondered if I could make it spinnable. I did so, more or less, by carding it several times on my fine-toothed Ashford drum carder and taking it off into rolags. I spun, plied, and washed it. Then I knitted my first cotton top. Soon word got around my guild that I had mastered cotton spinning, and friends started giving me bags of cotton sliver that they had acquired as impulse purchases.

The next problem was learning to dye my yarn. On my first try, I tied the skeins too tightly and ended up with white specks in the yarn, which actually gave an interesting effect in the finished garment. But I soon perfected my technique and my collection of dyed skeins began to grow. Since then I've knitted tops, sweaters, and dresses for myself, my daughters, and my granddaughters, and have really enjoyed my adventures with cotton. ❖

Betty Ransom, of Wellington, New Zealand, wears one of the tops she has knitted from handspun cotton. She's using the long draw on an Easycraft wheel made by M. D. Johnson in Christchurch, New Zealand.

with your forward hand and let it run into the newly drafted yarn

In actual practice, these steps of pinching, drafting, and releasing the twist run together into a nearly continuous process. Since you have reduced the take-up of your wheel, you must consciously allow the yarn to feed in when it has enough twist.

Don't wind on the yarn until it has enough twist to be strong. Check by giving it a quick tug between your hands before you let it wind onto the bobbin. If it's not twisted enough, it will feel as if it is stretching. To increase the twist, hold the yarn out longer while you treadle or keep your hand movements the same but speed up your treadling.

If you use a long, sweeping, extended draw, don't wind the yarn all the way onto the bobbin. Stop about 8 inches (20 cm) from the orifice, then start drafting back again. This helps to even out the twist from one length of yarn to the next.

Can you use cotton as singles yarn? Isn't it too weak?

If you unravel a thread from almost anything in your closet made of machine-spun cotton—such as jeans, sheets, or towels—you will find simple singles yarn. Almost all of these items are woven from singles. A fine, well-spun, singles cotton yarn is structurally sound. However, a thick, loosely spun, singles cotton yarn is weak, because there aren't enough twists per inch to hold the short fibers together. A yarn isn't strong unless each fiber is included in several twists. A sound cotton singles is usually spun thinner than you or I care to weave or knit with, so we need to ply our cotton yarns.

Don't you have to wind cotton yarns on a boilable bobbin and simmer them for an hour?

In the 1970s—when handspinners began to rediscover cotton—it was recommended that cotton yarns be wound onto a plastic pipe with holes drilled in it, and then boiled to set the twist. This method was successful, but was an exceedingly cautious recommendation to keep the fibers from drifting apart during the washing—a legitimate concern, with more than one possible solution.

The risk of drifting apart results from cotton's short fiber length. When a skein of yarn is relaxed before the twist is set, the fibers try to untwist. When you're working with long fibers, like wool, it's okay if they kink and ply backward on themselves until they are straightened out after being washed. Despite the minor and temporary untwisting that occurs, the long fibers remain caught in at least some of the twist throughout the process. Short fibers, however, may be pulled apart if subjected to this slight untwisting.

Here's how I avoid this problem. After making a skein of newly spun yarn, I twist and fold it, then tie the two ends together with a loose loop of scrap yarn. This folded skein can be squeezed, wrung out, and handled quite roughly without any fear of causing weak spots or tangles.

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Isn't it hard to scour cotton?

Cotton is fairly clean as it comes to us from the fields. It is not greasy like wool or pre-rotted like flax, but it might be a bit dusty. Your cotton yarns can be washed in the sink with dish detergent or a pH-neutral shampoo. Use hot water and rinse well. You don't need to worry about agitation felting the fibers together. Avoid acids like vinegar, which can damage cellulose fibers. You can even put cotton yarns into the dryer to tumble until dry.

What about boiling to remove the oils and waxes?

Cotton fibers and yarns tend to float on top of water, creating the image of being waxy or oily. A bit of dish detergent will allow the water to penetrate and wet the fibers. I only simmer natural-colored brown, green, or tan cotton, to intensify their colors. Otherwise, cotton yarns can simply be washed in the sink. When you plan to dye cotton with fiber-reactive dyes, pre-wet the fiber or yarn in the sink, using a bit of dish detergent to help the water penetrate.

Isn't shrinkage a big problem with cotton yarns?

Like most other yarns, cotton yarn is likely to shrink the first time it is washed. Shrinkage which occurs after the yarn is knitted or woven can be a problem. But if you preshrink the yarn by washing the skein and letting it dry without tension, there will be minimal shrinkage later.

Cotton is an exciting fiber to work with, although very different from wool. Give yourself time to become aware of its special needs. Give your hands time to become accustomed to the different feel. Then you will be free to enjoy hours of cotton spinning. ❖

Patsy Sue Zawistoski lives in Elletsville, Indiana. Earning her Certificate of Excellence in Handspinning from the Handweavers Guild of America is just one of her many creative accomplishments. You can watch her spin cotton on Spinning Cotton, Silk and Flax, *a video from Victorian Video Productions (Colfax, California).*

Knitting Handspun Cotton Sweaters

by Beverly Nissen

ALTHOUGH I know that wool makes wonderful sweaters, I love cotton just as well because it is so comfortable and easy to care for. In the mild climate where I live, I can use a cotton sweater for much more of the year than I can a wool one. And I don't necessarily have to hand wash the cotton garment.

Anyone who has spun and knitted both wool and cotton will know what I mean when I say that—although they share some characteristics—these fibers are as different as night and day. Wool is a protein fiber, while cotton is about 95 percent cellulose—basically, the same stuff that wood is made of. The contrast between protein and cellulose leads to important differences in the ways these two fibers act in yarns and textiles.

Wet wool, when relieved of some of the weight of the water, will fluff and bounce up at the first nudge. Cotton in a similar condition will lie there in a dense, miserable, sodden wad. Even when dry, cotton can remain compacted. A wool knitted fabric will flex, stretch, and bounce back. A comparable cotton fabric just stretches; it doesn't recover. Contrasted with a wool sweater, a cotton sweater does not retain its shape well.

What I am driving at is not that cotton is inferior—far from it!—but that methods suitable for making wool sweaters may not apply to cotton. To knit a satisfactory cotton garment, you need to do what you do with wool—consider the fiber's characteristics and knit accordingly. Unless the pattern states otherwise, you should assume that sweater instructions are written for wool, and expect to make some adjustments for cotton. Even when the pattern suggests cotton, you should be wary, because not all designers wear-test the garments they make for publication, and many knitters' and designers' assumptions about the behavior of fibers are based on years of experience with wool and its cousins.

It has been nearly twenty years since I made my first cotton sweater. Since then I have made several others, and I have learned something from each one.

Testing a yarn's durability

We are told that because cotton is a short, relatively smooth fiber, it should be spun fine with quite a bit of twist so that it will wear well and keep its appearance. I agree with this advice, but there is leeway. Keeping within the limits of yarn integrity (the yarn's ability to hold together under reasonable strain), you can spin a soft cotton yarn that looks and feels like sweater yarn, as opposed to crochet thread. This yarn can "fill" a stitch like a soft wool yarn does, yet can maintain its appearance after much wash-and-wear. Spinning a softer yarn increases the possibility of pilling; however, eliminating extra fuzziness and little shags of free fibers as you spin goes far in preventing that.

If you wonder how any given yarn will perform, first try to break it. If it does not withstand a firm pull and make a little noise when it breaks (it just pulls apart, with perhaps a light whisper), more twist is needed. As with wool, the longer the fiber, the less twist is needed to secure it; you can use somewhat less twist with pima cotton, for instance, than you can with upland cotton. But in every case, a yarn must be reasonably strong to wear well.

Another important test, especially if the yarn is in doubt or you have never spun cotton for a sweater, starts with the spinning of a sample skein. Knit a swatch, and launder it as you plan to launder the garment. If you plan to wash the sweater in the washing machine and dry it in a hot dryer, do that with the swatch and see how the fabric looks afterward. Look for

Opposite: *Most of Bev's cotton sweaters receive the washer/dryer treatment on a regular basis. This lace one doesn't go in the dryer "because the lace closes up and looks like an accordion," and she blocks it to open the lace. It's made of Texas pima cotton and the pattern she used was one she picked up in England.*

pills, shags, fraying, and other kinds of surface degeneration, as well as for losses of volume, sheen, or yarn distinctness. In very, very soft yarns which are questionable, try to determine if there has been an appreciable loss of fiber, which might result in a fast thinning of the fabric after a few washings.

A yarn that is too soft will not hold up well, but the *breakage test* and the *wash test*, just described, should identify potential problems.

Preparing handspun cotton yarns for knitting

We all know that wool right off the sheep is protected by lanolin, and we have various opinions on when we want to remove it and how much to remove. Cotton, too, has a coating, a waxy, resinous layer which resists wetting to the point that unstripped yarn will float—for hours. As might be expected, there is a difference of opinion on what to do about this material.

Some insist that this coating should be cooked off. To do this, the skeins are weighted down in a kettle of water, so that they can become saturated. The water is heated to the point of simmering or just below it, and held there for between a half-hour and a full hour. Detergent and washing soda in the water aid in the stripping process. (Unlike wool, cotton is not likely to be damaged by the alkalinity of the soda, although it can be harmed by acids like vinegar.) During the cooking, the water becomes discolored not by dirt but by the dissolved resin. Afterwards, an ordinary washing and good rinse should finish removing most, if not all, of the coating. Expect white cotton to be a whole shade or so whiter after stripping.

"Because I keep hearing about setting twist, I would like to put in my two cents' worth."

However, because I have seen yarn become noticeably harsher after cooking and believe that there may be fiber damage, I usually don't simmer my yarn. I prefer to let the resin come off during laundering. An overnight soak in sudsy water and some sloshing around remove a great deal of the resin. After three or four ordinary machine washings, or just a few more by hand, the resin will be virtually gone. In the meantime, the resin will cause no problems unless you want to mordant and dye the yarn, or to darken and stabilize the color of natural-colored cotton.

Even though I'm not concerned with removing the resin, I do recommend washing cotton yarn with a few drops of detergent (as a wetting agent) before knitting, to preshrink it. Because the cotton is not very absorbent at this time, let it soak, weighted down, for an hour or more, so it gets wet to the core. Squeezing the yarn a few times to aid the saturation is a good idea. Remember, the thicker and more tightly twisted the yarn, the longer it will take for water to penetrate it. After washing and rinsing the yarn, spread or hang the skeins to dry.

Because I keep reading and hearing about setting the twist and blocking yarn, I would like to put in my two cents' worth. Setting the twist should be a matter of concern only with unplied yarns or badly unbalanced plied ones. It's unnecessary to set twist in an ordinary plied yarn. Normal plying, properly done, balances the twist and makes the yarn quite manageable, while preventing the fabric and stitch distortion caused by active twist.

Choosing appropriate sizes of needles

The relationship between the size of the needles and the grist of the yarn is important. A loosely knitted fabric will not keep its shape as well as a firmly knitted one. The looser the stitches, the stretchier and saggier the garment. A limp, droopy sweater does not look good. On the other hand, if the stitches are too tight, the sweater may be stiff, unattractive, and uncomfortable. If you want your handspun yarn to look its best and perform well, try knitting it with several sizes of needles, remembering a change of just one size up or down can be significant. Feel the fabric. Choose the sample that shows off your

yarn best, makes the chosen stitch look good, and has a stable feel.

Determining gauge

Hand-knitted sweaters often get a little wider and shorter after they are finished. This tendency is much more pronounced with cotton than with wool, so you need to go to some extremes to find the point at which a cotton knitted fabric is stable. *Stable* means the fabric has expanded to the maximum size it will reach under normal stresses of body movement; it will usually stay at this size during ordinary wear. Unlike wool, cotton yarns do not bounce the fabric back to its original shape. Usually, a cotton knitted fabric when stretched sideways will stay just about the way it has been stretched.

This means that you can't measure the gauge of a cotton fabric on the needles. It isn't stable yet. To determine what the gauge will be when the fabric is stable, knit a fairly large swatch and bind it off. Tug it firmly in all directions, but especially sideways. Then wash and dry the swatch as the sweater will be washed—in the washer and dryer, for instance. Stretch it again. Now you can count both the stitches per inch and the rows per inch to determine your working gauge.[1]

Using this gauge means that you will be knitting the garment quite a bit narrower and a little bit longer than it will be when you wear it. The garment will look like a disaster in the making, but carry on.

When you wash the finished sweater, you should expect it to expand a lot. A wet cotton sweater can stretch out by a third or so. If you hand wash it—even when you take care not to pull on it or let it sag—it will need to be patted and pushed into shape. When it dries, it will bring itself back to the proper tension. On the other hand, if you dry it in the dryer, it will shrink down to what looks like a size or two smaller. Not to worry. When it is dry or nearly dry, you can pull it out to where you want it, and it will not draw back as wool would. In either case, remember that the dry, stretched size is the true size. That is the size the sweater will assume when you wear it.

The moral is that you need to be hard-headed and brave about that sample swatch. Find out what it wants to do when tugged on or washed, *then* determine your gauge. Be sure to calculate both the vertical and horizontal gauges carefully. Then, no matter what your sweater looks like on the needles or when wet, have faith. You can outsmart it in the end and get it to do what you want.

"The moral is that you need to be hard-headed and brave."

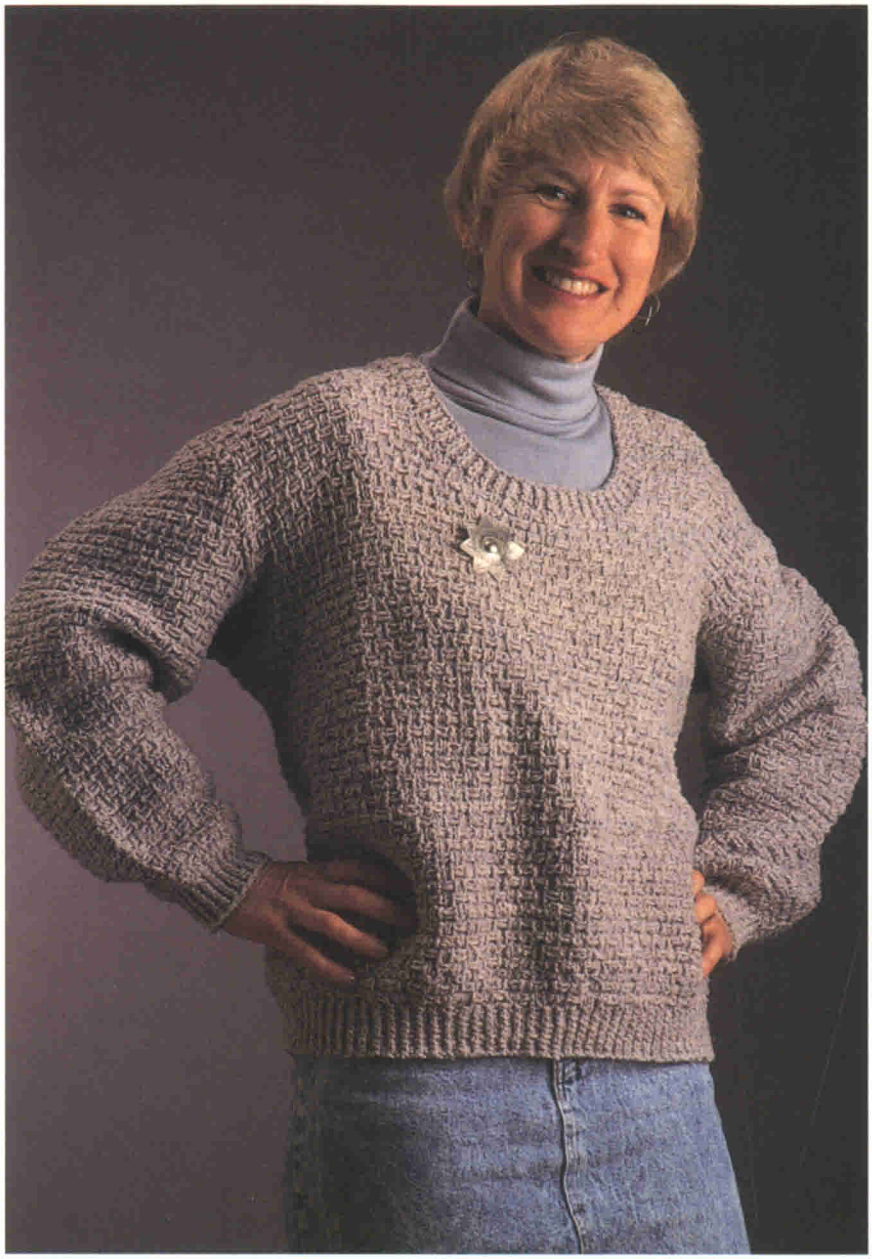
Knitting cotton ribbing

Having given stern warning about gauge and the stretchiness of cotton, I now need to backpedal. An edging which is firmer than the main fabric can do much to contain a sweater which has too much sideways stretch. Also, in order to look right a pattern stitch needs to stay somewhat closed—not stretched into oblivion. With cotton, stretch is inevitable, but overstretch is avoidable. That is one of the reasons we knit edgings in a tighter stitch, so that they keep the body from belling out into a shapeless, unbecoming sack.

Ribbing is the usual way to stabilize the edges of knitted sweaters, although laces and hems can serve a similar function. Ordinary (read: "wool") knitting instructions usually have you use needles for edgings which are one or two sizes smaller than the main needles. This will not do for cotton!

Regardless of whether you are knitting from a published pattern or making up your own, you need to establish a separate, proper gauge for your ribbing or other edge treatment. With cotton, you'll often end up with needles five or six sizes smaller than the main needles. If you are using needles in size 1 or 0 (2.25 or 2 mm) and cannot conveniently go much smaller, you will need to work the ribbing on fewer

[1]Stockinette and many other stitches will get much wider and a little shorter during wear. Stitches which have horizontal floats or various kinds of cross-binding tend to be more stable laterally, and so you may want to design your sweater around such stitches to minimize the sideways stretching.



Made from "ordinary" upland cotton from the University of Arkansas Experimental Farm, this sweater has seen lots of use and many trips through the washer and dryer. Bev likes to spin local cotton like this. She blended a saturated mauve dyelot with white on her drum carder, then hand carded once to further even out the color. She likes the very muted result, but is disappointed that at night people think the sweater is gray. It challenged the sensitivity of our film, too. If we had a sweater like this, we'd wear it all the time. The model is Dale Pettigrew, who helps keep us on track.

stitches and then increase for the body.

Choose the needles you will use and knit a good-sized sample (about 8 inches wide by 2–3 inches high, or 20 cm by 5–7.5 cm). Then stretch it very hard—about as far as you can make it go—measure it, and figure the number of stitches per inch at that stretched length. That is your gauge. Take my word for it. Unless you wear the sweater tucked in, that is how far the ribbing will stretch within the first hour you wear it. There is no getting around it; cotton has the resiliency of a wet noodle.

Let me tell you what happened with my first cotton sweater. It fit fine when I put it on the first time. I went shopping in it, but when I got out of the car at the grocery store, it had gotten about four inches wider on each side! By the time I had bought the groceries, it was about eight inches bigger. It was getting wider and wider, as well as saggier and saggier. To my chagrin I saw also that the neckline was getting plungier and plungier. I had knitted dozens of sweaters and had never had anything like this happen!

I learned then what was meant about cotton not having the resilience of wool or even some synthetics. It stretched out and out, but didn't return to its original size. Back to the knitting needles.

Being too lazy to reknit the whole sweater, I opened the seams a little and pulled out the single strand of yarn knitted in just above the bottom ribbing, so that the ribbing dropped off. I raveled out the ribbing yarn. Then I slipped the stitches from the sweater onto knitting needles which were at least five or six sizes smaller than the main needles. I had knitted the sweater on about size 10 (6 mm) needles; the ones I used now for the ribbing were about size 4 or 5 (3.5 or 3.75 mm). That made really tight ribbing—so tight, in fact, that when stretched really hard it was about as wide as it needed to be to go around me. But it worked. The tight

"Cotton suffers from being expected to act like wool; if the tables were turned, wool would be the loser."

ribbing drew the sweater in and kept it from turning into a tent.

This is what I mean about the edging stabilizing the fabric. By absorbing much of the sideways tension, the edging allows the overall fabric to retain more of its vertical shape. Because you do not want your knitted fabric to have a stretched-out look, you can give it a reasonable pull to find out what it will do, and then use the ribbing or another edge stitch to help it keep its shape. However, if you rely entirely on the edging to keep the sweater from stretching sideways and have not knitted to a proper gauge for the main part of the fabric, you can get a balloon: tight on the bottom and blousy above.

If you do not want to have such tight ribbing, you can try basting elastic thread on the inside. Some people actually knit in an elastic thread with the regular yarn and claim that it does not show. If you use enough of it, knitted-in elastic does do a nice job of keeping the ribbing closed. On the other hand, I have not been satisfied with the elastic's durability as compared to the sweater's. Basted-in elastic is easier to replace when it loses its resilience.

Washing cotton sweaters

Since cotton does not shrink and felt as wool does, I cross my fingers the first time and then send my sweaters through the washer and dryer. So far I have not had problems, but I'll never forget my first sweater. It did not fall apart in the washer as I thought it might, but, as I indicated, it did come out big, droopy, and shapeless! I had seen better looking mops. A hot dryer returned it to its original shape and it was fine. That was the first of a hundred and fifty or so washings by now for that sweater. I do not have to be careful of it. I can knock around in it, get it really dirty, then treat it like a tee shirt.

Drying cotton

Here's a problem I did not have at first, mostly through innocent ignorance. It showed up one time when I brought the sweater back dry from the laundromat, slipped it into a plastic bag right away, and put it in a drawer. When I took it out a few days later, it stank with mildew. Although the sweater felt dry when I put it away, it had been damp inside. The hot air of the dryer had not penetrated all the way to the core of the compacted yarn.

Because the yarn in this sweater was heavy, it was more vulnerable to retained moisture than a finer yarn would be. For all but the finest yarn, you should assume there's inner dampness after washing even though the outside feels dry—the thicker and tighter the yarn, the more dampness. Think of how hard it is to get blue jeans and sweatshirts dry, for instance. Now I leave my sweaters out for a couple of days after washing, before I put them away.

The finished product

Among spinners, cotton suffers from being expected to act like wool, but if the tables were turned, wool would be the loser. Each fiber has its own behavior pattern, its own strengths, and its own beauty. Your cotton sweater will have an appeal all its own. Properly constructed, it can keep its shape and general appearance as well as or even better than a wool sweater. After all, you can throw a cotton garment into the washing machine and dryer without worrying about felting. And I won't be surprised if you wear it more, because it will be so comfortable. ❖

Beverly Nissen, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, has been helping us all out recently with articles on cotton, hand carding, and drum carding.

"Sanquar Check Devolved" Vest

by Charles R. Sides

IN 1993, I demonstrated wool spinning at the First Annual Hermit Ridge Harvest Festival, north of Drumright, Oklahoma. Many people came by, watched, and asked questions, and one elderly gentleman told me that he had raised some brown cotton that summer. He offered to drive home and to bring some back if I wanted it. I had heard of colored cotton and was tickled at the idea of obtaining a locally grown sample. Just before closing time, this man and his wife returned and handed me a stalk with eight bolls of ripe brown cotton.

At home, I immediately removed the seeds from one boll, spun a thin yarn, plied two strands together, and made a tiny skein. From the other bolls, I made enough to knit a swatch about 1 by 3 inches (2.5 by 7.5 cm). The next week, I showed the items to my biology classes at school while I demonstrated spinning and discussed the merits of various fibers. Then I gave the items to the couple's grandson to take to his grandparents. Later that month, they brought me a large grocery sack of brown cotton minus the hulls. It was basketball season, and during games I picked seeds out of the cotton, at times engaging youthful student hands in the process. My thumbs became plenty sore, but I ended up with a fair amount of fluffy brown cotton and seeds to plant for myself and for friends.

During the winter, I spun what I had picked out. I knew that my supply wouldn't go far by itself, so in my mind I played with the idea of a pattern which would combine the brown cotton with white cotton. My white cotton was buried under my wool bumps and batts. I could never find it when I looked for it; on those occasions when it did surface, I didn't have the time to work with it. Finally I found the white cotton, the time, and the drive, and I started spinning.

All the while I tried to think of a pattern which would show off the brown.

I searched through Alice Starmore's book on Fair Isle knitting, my favorite source of inspiration, but nothing seemed right. I found my old book on mosaic knitting, tried a couple of samples with wools, and thought, "Maybe." Then I found the Sanquar check pattern in Barbara Walker's *A Treasury of Knitting Patterns.* I was off and knitting on a vest, using the Sanquar check plan to determine my color placement.

Since this was my first full-scale mosaic-knitting project, I didn't know that it would require more yarn than usual. I soon realized that I would run out of brown cotton about underarm level. Then I got creative. I found a little unspun brown cotton, tossed it with white cotton in a large mixing bowl, then picked out handfuls of the combination and spun a mottled yarn.

Reserving a small amount of brown to use in stripes within the neck and armhole ribbing, I knitted until I ran out of brown. I continued the Sanquar check pattern by substituting the mottled yarn for the brown until it, too, was gone. With only white cotton remaining, I shifted the Sanquar check to a knit/purl pattern, purling where I would have used a brown stitch. After a couple of inches, I became purposely erratic in the pattern, gradually evolving into smooth stockinette stitch toward the top of the vest.

Hence the name for my creation, "Sanquar Check Devolved." In light of the above, I am thankful for First Annual Harvest Festivals, pattern books, and serendipity. ❖

Charles Sides, of Drumright, Oklahoma, finds that spinning is a good antidote for teaching high school biology. He likes to make fine yarns, and doesn't think he could spin "fat yarns" even if he wanted to. His textile career began with crochet, then he learned to knit in Iceland. He also enjoys science, German, speech and drama, and being a member of the Naval Reserve.

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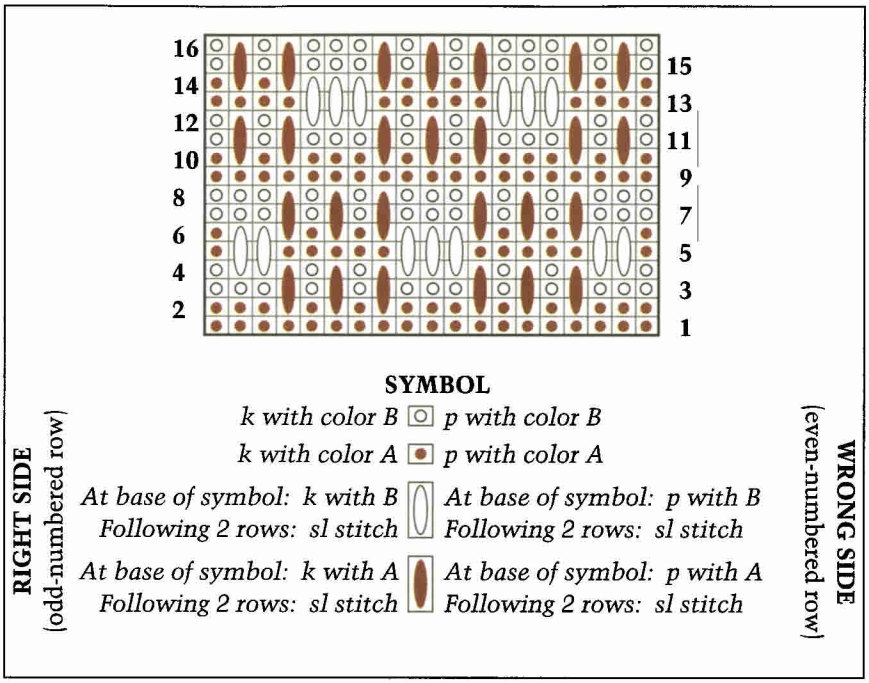


Charles' mosaic variation

Multiple of 8 sts plus 3. Two colors, A and B. Slip all stitches purlwise.

Row 1 (right side): With A, knit.

Row 2: With A, purl.

Row 3: With B, k3, *(sl 1 wyib, k1 twice, sl 1 wyib, k3; repeat from * across.

Row 4: With B, p3, *(sl 1 wyif, p1 twice, sl 1 wyif, p3; repeat from * across.

Row 5. With A, k1, sl 2 wyib, *k5, sl 3 wyib; repeat from * to last 8 sts, ending k5, sl 2 wyib, k1

Row 6: With A, p1, sl 2 wyif, *p5, sl 3 wyif; repeat from * to last 8 sts, ending p5, sl 2 wyif, p1

Rows 7 and 8: With B, repeat rows 3 and 4.

Rows 9 and 10: With A, repeat rows 1 and 2.

Row 11. With B, (k1, sl 1 wyib) twice, *k3, (sl 1 wyib, k1 twice, sl 1 wyib; repeat from * to last 7 sts, ending k3 (sl 1 wyib, k1 twice.

Row 12: With B, (p1, sl 1 wyif) twice, *p3, (sl 1 wyif, p1 twice, sl 1 wyif; repeat from * to last 7 sts, ending p3, (sl 1 wyif, p1 twice.

Row 13: With A, k4, *sl 3 wyib, k5; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k4.

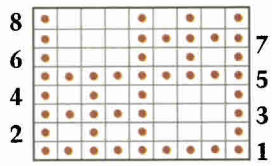
Row 14: With A, p4, *sl 3 wyif, p5; repeat from * across, ending last repeat p4.

Rows 15 and 16: With B, repeat rows 11 and 12.

Repeat rows 1 to 16. For balance of final repeat, end with rows 1 and 2.

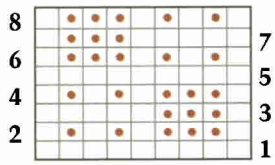
Charles' first version of the Sanquar check works with color only, on a stockinette base. Only one color is worked on each row; slip-stitches produce the color patterning.

Texture A



Later in the vest, Charles worked the Sanquar check in texture only, using one color and a combination of knitted and purl stitches to produce the effect. Texture A is above and texture B is below.

Texture B



KEY

WRONG SIDE RIGHT SIDE

Knit ⊡ *Purl*

Purl □ *Knit*

Charles' texture-only variation A

Multiple of 8 sts plus 1. One color.

Row 1 (right side). P

Row 2: *(K1, p1 twice, k1, p3; repeat from * across, end k1

Row 3: P1, *k3, (p1, k1 twice, p1; repeat from * across.

Row 4: Repeat row 2.

Row 5. P

Row 6: *K1, p3, (k1, p1 twice; repeat from * across, end k1

Row 7: P1, *p4, k3, p1; repeat from * across.

Row 8: Repeat row 6.

Repeat rows 1 to 8. For balance of final repeat, end with row 1.

Charles' texture-only variation B

Multiple of 8 sts plus 1 One color.

Row 1 (right side): K.

Row 2: *(P1, k1 twice, p1, k3; repeat from * across, end p1

Row 3: K1, *p3, k5; repeat from * across.

Row 4: Repeat row 2.

Row 5. K.

Row 6: *P1, k3, (p1, k1 twice; repeat from * across, end p1.

Row 7: K1, *k4, p3, k1; repeat from * across.

Row 8: Repeat row 6.

Repeat rows 1 to 8. For balance of final repeat, end with row 1.

Sanquar check

From Barbara Walker's *A Treasury of Knitting Patterns*, page 89.

This is the original, combining color and texture.

Multiple of 8 sts plus 3. Two colors, A and B.

Slip all stitches purlwise.

Row 1 (right side). With A, knit.

Row 2: With A, knit.

Row 3: With B, k3, *(sl 1 wyib, k1 twice, sl 1 wyib, k3; repeat from * across.

Row 4: With B, p3, *(sl 1 wyif, k1 twice, sl 1 wyif, p3; repeat from * across.

Row 5: With A, k1, sl 2 wyib, *k5, sl 3 wyib; repeat from * to last 8 sts, ending k5, sl 2 wyib, k1.

Row 6: With A, k1, sl 2 wyif, *k5, sl 3 wyif; repeat from * to last 8 sts, ending k5, sl 2 wyif, k1

Rows 7 and 8: With B, repeat rows 3 and 4.

Rows 9 and 10: With A, repeat rows 1 and 2.

Row 11. With B, (k1, sl 1 wyib) twice, *k3, (sl 1 wyib, k1 twice, sl 1 wyib; repeat from * to last 7 sts, ending k3 (sl 1 wyib, k1 twice.

Row 12: With B, (k1, sl 1 wyif) twice, *p3, (sl 1 wyif, k1 twice, sl 1 wyif; repeat from * to last 7 sts, ending p 3, (sl 1 wyif, k1 twice.

Row 13. With A, k4, *sl 3 wyib, k5; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k4.

Row 14: With A, k4, *sl 3 wyif, k5; repeat from * across, ending last repeat k4.

Rows 15 and 16: With B, repeat rows 11 and 12.

Repeat rows 1 to 16. For balance of final repeat, end with rows 1 and 2.

more Letters . . .

(continued from page 3)

measurements, choose your design elements, and go for it. It works.

Dear *Spin·Off*,

I've received a tremendous response to my letter about spindles [*Spin·Off* Spring 1996]. A lot of spinners told me that the rim-heavy whorl was going to be the only one for them, because it spun longer than the other whorl shapes. I would like to point out that all whorl shapes have their advantages and disadvantages, and take a moment to sing the praises of whorls that are thicker in the middle than the rim. The shapes commonly used include spheres, hemispheres, and shallow cones.

A whorl that is thicker in the middle than the rim, like a bead whorl, will spin much faster than a whorl that is thicker toward the rim. This is a great advantage for light support spindles (about one ounce/28.5 g) that spin fine yarn. You definitely need the extra speed of the twist to keep up with your drafting.

Also, a heavy spindle (more than two ounces/57 g) will spin slower than a light spindle. So you might want a heavy spindle to have a whorl that is shaped like a hemisphere or shallow cone. This will make the heavy spindle spin a little faster than a spindle with a disk-shaped or a rim-heavy whorl. If a heavy spindle spins too slow, you will have to draft very slowly or your yarn will fall apart and the spindle will drop on the floor.

My recommendation is to "test drive" the spindle you would like to buy. If you mail order your spindle and it doesn't work comfortably for you, most vendors are kind enough to let you return the spindle within the first couple of weeks after purchase.

The main thing to remember is that people have been spinning for thousands of years. And after thousands of years of trial and error, the classic whorl shapes still work best for the types of yarn that are traditionally spun on them.

—Berna Lowenstein, Orlando, Florida

Dear *Spin·Off*,

As spinners we usually think of blends as being purposely combined fibers for specific reasons. As a spinner, I am here to tell you that if you have critters in your life, you always spin blends.

This process became clear as I was spinning dummy yarn. For those of you unfamiliar with this term, this is prepared fiber that you turn your brain off to spin; the stuff that your hands turn out for you while you're watching a movie. Anyway, as I was spinning some lovely purple dummy yarn, it was decided that I needed some Satin in the yarn. No, not the fabric, the black cat. This in turn caused the end of the roving to hit the floor, as there was not enough room on my lap for the cat and the fiber. The cat pushed the fiber to the floor.

Coincidentally, the dogs were shedding. Of course, this occurs 11¾ months of the year. And they alternate, so I will always have some reason to vacuum the carpet. Wouldn't want Mom to feel unwanted. As I picked up the roving, Kuvasz and Belgian Sheepdog were added to the blend. Satin slipped and caught herself using her claws, adding human flesh to the blend. Is blood a fiber? OOPS! Caught her tail in the yarn. More black.

She left; her replacement was Albert. He added gray to the mix as he played with the end of the roving that fell off my lap when Satin disembarked. Is this trash that came in the fiber, or was it added at home???

Quick trip to the barn, as it was raining. After bringing the critters in, added bull hair, cashmere, a few stray mohair fibers, and big puffs of angora. The bunnies can contribute to a blend from yards away. The house creatures added more cat hair as I got up to get coffee and leg rubbing was necessary.

If I try to weave or knit this stuff, the complexity of fibers increases. There was the alpaca on the jeans that was picked up as I gathered the fiber the cats decided to roll in. We will not discuss the time I had five pounds of kid mohair in a bag; covers about 1000 square feet to a good depth. Fortunately, I was at SOAR and hubby was babysitting the critters and found this out at 1 a.m. when he came home from work. Yes, I counted cats when I got home. He was too tired to find them, so he just picked up as much mohair as was in his way to get to bed. The stray fiber from that time is *still* finding its way into my yarn. Mohair can hide in your furniture for months.

So here I sit, not able to make up my mind as to what fiber to blend with this wool. By the way, Whiteface Woodland sheep wool is indistinguishable from Kuvasz if blended on the counter by cats and spun into yarn. I always wondered what would be the best wool to add to make the Kuvasz go farther. Also, is dog saliva a fiber, since Joeybaddog was sliming the roving? I think anything that

—continued on page 92

Spinner's Question

Avoiding color streaks

Q: *Last year I bought a lovely silver-gray Romney fleece, washed and carded it, and spun enough yarn to knit a fisherman-type sweater for my husband. He's really pleased with it and wears it all the time, but I'm a little disappointed myself, because there are irregular stripes where the yarn is lighter or darker gray. I think these streaks detract from the textured stitch patterns. How can I prevent such color variation in future projects?*

A: Color variation in the yarn is a common result when you start with a natural-colored fleece, but it can happen with a white fleece, too, or with fleece that you've dyed in the wool. It's a tricky problem, because color differences that are almost invisible in unspun wool become much more conspicuous after you've spun and used the yarn. Fortunately, there are a few steps that a spinner can take to prevent color streaks.

1 *Sort before you start.* Before you wash the fleece, spread it out in the bright daylight where you can examine it. Check both the butts and the tips of the locks. Divide the wool into different-colored portions and wash and store them separately. You may have as few as two or three or as many as six or more color categories, depending on the fleece.

2. *Estimate the total weight of fiber you need* for a project by weighing similar items and/or referring to information in magazines and books. For example, you could weigh your husband's sweater and estimate how much less or more wool you'd need to make a similar sweater for yourself, check a few of your own sweaters to see how much they weigh, or consult pattern books to see that a medium-size adult sweater typically weighs between 20 and 30 ounces (570 and 860 grams).

3. To simplify the task of color-blending, *subdivide the total amount of fiber* into smaller batches. For example, you might need 12 ounces of wool for a girl's vest. If you planned to spin a two-ply yarn, you could prepare 6 ounces for each ply; for a three-ply yarn, you'd only need 4 ounces per ply. It's faster and easier to blend two or three smaller batches than one larger batch, and it doesn't matter if the *plies* aren't exactly the same color. The finished *yarn* will be.

Sort, subdivide, blend, and re-blend: preparing uniform batches of fiber seems like a lot of work, but the results warrant the effort. You can do it yourself, or delegate to a custom-carding service.
Photo by Rita Buchanan.

Along with plying, there are other ways to subdivide the total amount of fiber for a project. You could divide it in halves for a pair of mittens or socks, for the front and back of a vest, or the warp and weft of a woven fabric.

In any case, decide how you want to divide your fiber and weigh out the amounts you need. Use an accurate scale or balance. Check the different portions of your fleece to see if any single portion is large enough for the whole project. If so, great (but you'll still need to blend it because there's always *some* variation). If not, use different portions of the fleece for the different plies or different parts of the project.

4. To blend each batch of wool, first *card it all into batts, then split each batt* into a few strips, card strips from different batts together, pull the new batts apart, then recombine and recard them, repeating this process over and over. As a rule of thumb, let the number of cardings equal the number of batts; for six batts, recombine and recard six times; for ten batts, ten times; and so forth.

Blending a batch of wool goes faster with a drum carder than with hand cards, because you can make bigger batts, but it's still a time-consuming process. It takes a lot more carding to even out color variation than it does to simply prepare the wool for spinning. You'll be re-carding wool that's already spinnable, but don't give up. Keep recombining and recarding it anyway.

5. If this much carding is an unthinkable task, check the ads in *Spin·Off* and *send the wool to a custom-carding service.* Call or correspond first to explain what kind of wool you have, how much there is, and what you want done with it. There are several services that do an excellent job of carding small amounts of wool; the batts or sliver they send back to you will be thoroughly blended and will make a uniform-colored yarn. It's not quite as satisfying as doing the job yourself, but the price is a bargain, the results are reliable, and you can be spinning uniform yarn sooner than you think. ❖

more Letters . . .

(continued from page 90)

washes out should be ignored.

Oh, well, I better get back to the wheel. The Critters may come up with other suggestions for this fiber while I'm gone. Happy spinning!

—Mary Margaret Hancock,
Toano, Virginia

Dear *Spin·Off*,

Thanks for the article on Weave-its and Mary [Skoy]'s lovely sweater [Spring 1996]. Weave-it brings back childhood memories. I must have been about six when I got my Weave-it, and as soon as there was news of a new cousin on the way, I began making squares with baby yarn which my mother assembled into pram blankets. In truth, I haven't looked at my little loom in years, but it did accompany me when I moved from New York to Israel.

I am enclosing all the information that came with my Weave-it. Should anyone else send in other warping and weaving instructions, I would like to have a copy. I would also be interested in acquiring the 2-inch (5 cm) and 5-inch 12.5 cm) Weave-its, and in finding a source for longer needles. The one with my loom is 6 inches 15 cm) long, but I see that 8-inch (20-cm) needles were once available.

I would love to hear from any spinners that would like to correspond with me (a spin-pal) and will answer all letters.

Thanks for the memories.

—Marcia Ben-Menachem,
PO Box 590, Arad 89104, Israel

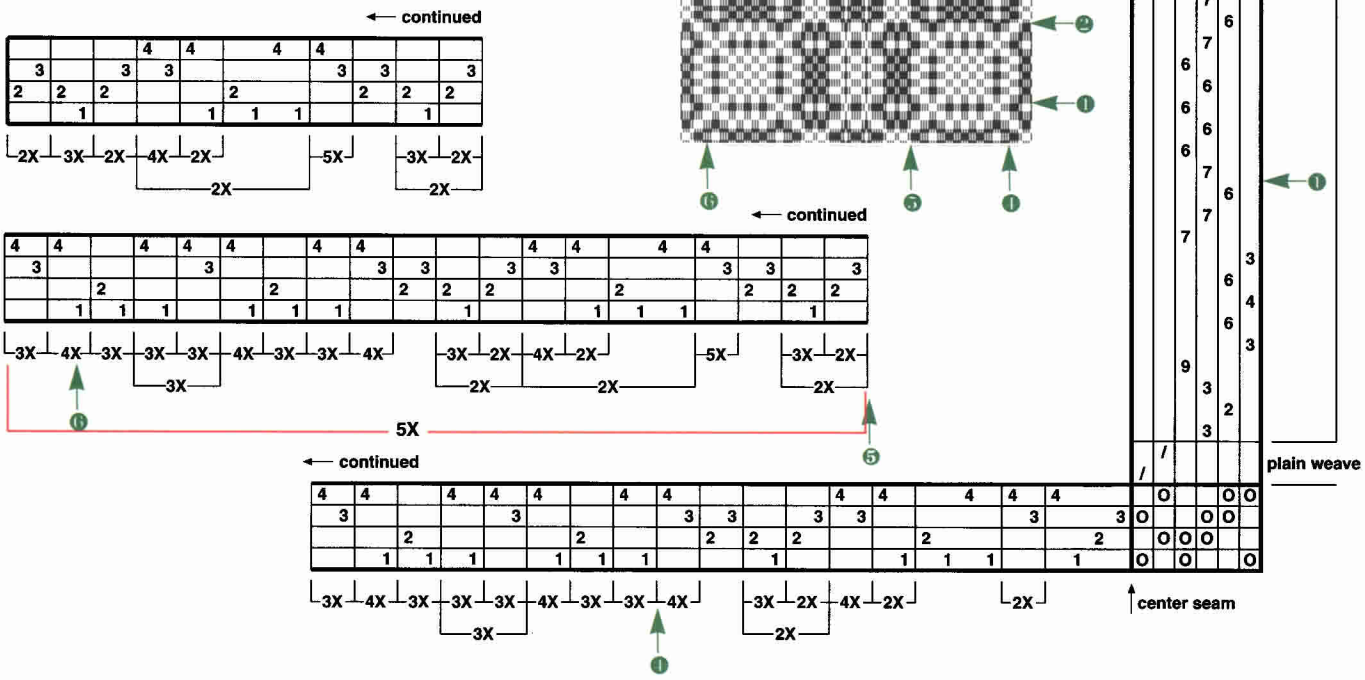
Dear *Spin·Off*,

I am writing in response to Susan Dawson's letter [Summer 1996], which criticized the projects for small amounts of handspun yarn [Spring 1996]. As an historian, I believe that we must remember fiber artists of a century ago, many of whom were very busy women whose creations were small and often utilitarian. Each new potholder or dishcloth symbolized hard work and patience, and also the artistic urge to create something original. Nineteenth-century women manufactured many of the family's textiles,

—continued on page 101

Oops

The draft for Jean Hutchison's coverlet on page 69 of the Summer 1996 issue lacked one of the repeat notations, marked in red here. While we were fixing things, we added the green markers, which show the portions of the drawdown as they correspond to the threading and treadling plans. Warps are dark.



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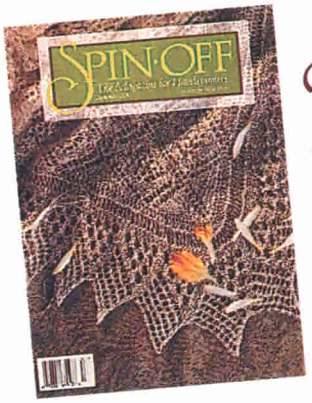

For those of you familiar with Interweave's *Spin·Off*, we like to follow up our magazine articles with the kind of books featured here, ones that take you even farther into the challenges and delights of our craft. Those who appreciate the in-depth quality of Interweave's books will want to check out every issue of *Spin·Off* for the very latest news about spinning projects, techniques, equipment, and supplies, plus special columns and features. It's like having a support group in your spinning basket.

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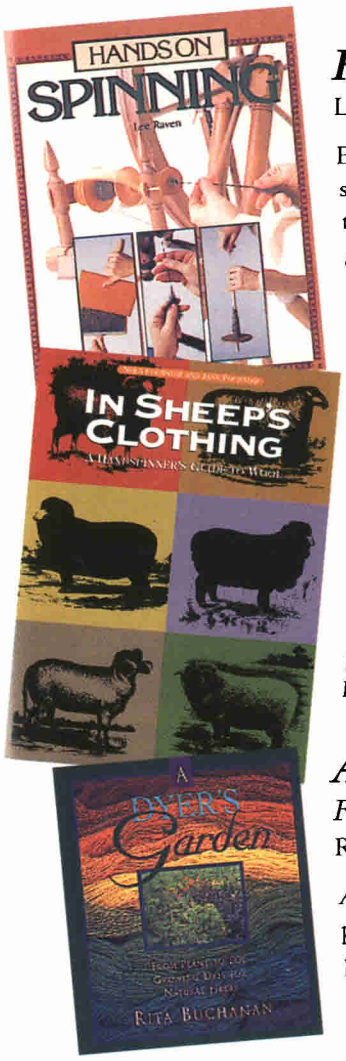

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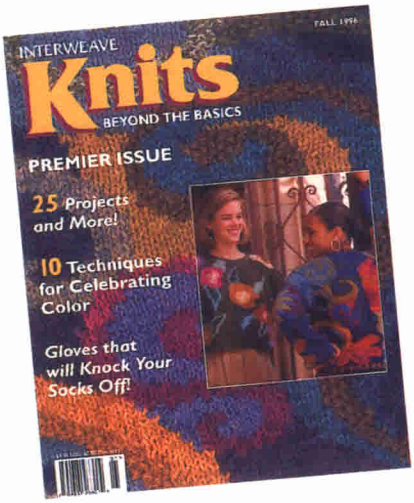

INTERWEAVE Knits BEYOND THE BASICS

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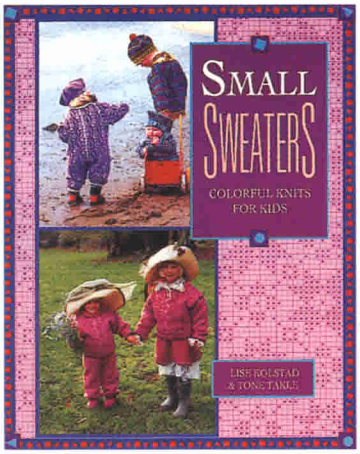

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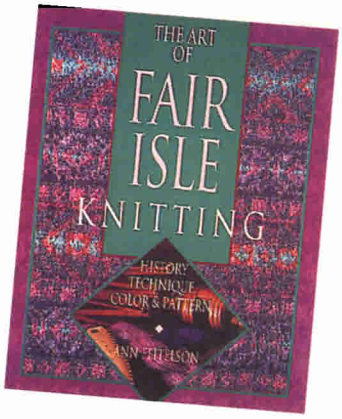

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Ann Feitelson

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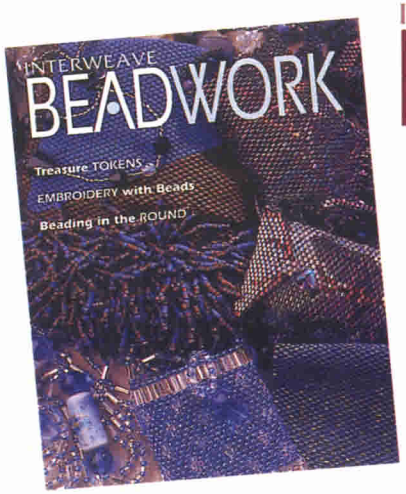

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Jean Scorgie, Editor

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Jean

Jean Scorgie, Editor

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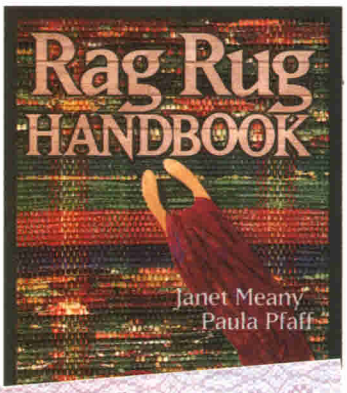

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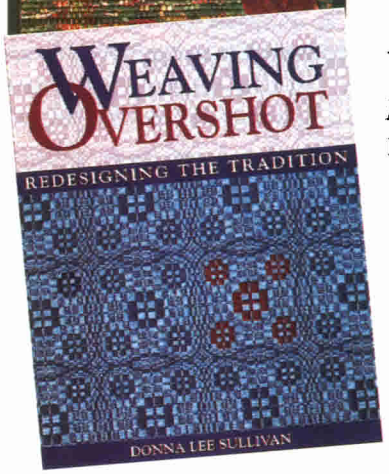

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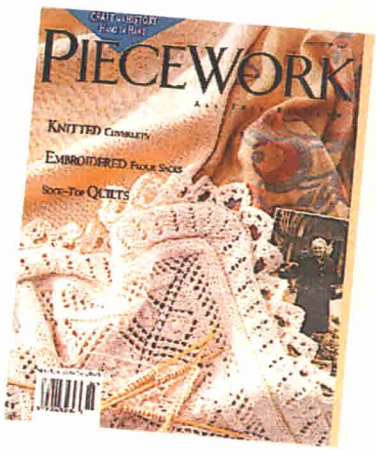
Bon appetit!

Veronica

Veronica Patterson, Editor



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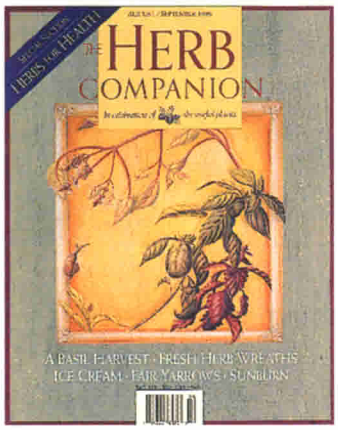

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Kathleen

Kathleen Halloran, Editor

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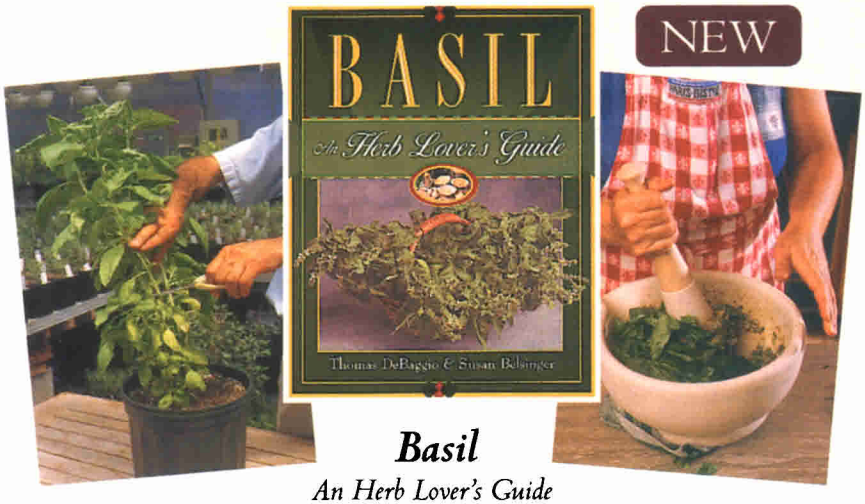

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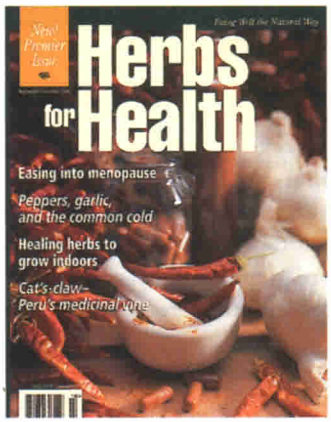

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Jan

Jan Knight, Editor

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COMING SOON

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Steven Foster

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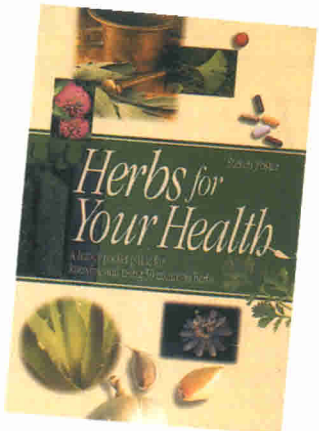

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Books & Videos

Unraveling Fibers

Patricia A. Keeler and Francis X. McCall, Jr.

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers (Simon & Schuster), 1995. Hardbound, 36 pages, $16.00. ISBN 0-689-31777-8.

Did you know that there is more jute produced in the world than any other natural fiber except cotton? Or that cotton accounts for 45 percent of total world fiber production, including synthetics? These are some of the interesting statistics included in *Unraveling Fibers*. A basic introduction to fibers, both natural and synthetic, this short book describes the sources, qualities, processing, and uses of many common fibers. Although it was written for youngsters ages 8 to 12, adults will also find it informative.

Starting with a simple definition of fiber, the authors briefly describe the production of yarn and cloth by both manual and industrial methods. Short sections are devoted to natural fibers (flax, cotton, jute, wool, llama and alpaca, angora, mohair, cashmere, and silk) and synthetic fibers (rayon, polyester, and kevlar). The book ends with a brief survey of world fiber production and a look toward the future.

Unraveling Fibers is beautifully laid out and lavishly illustrated, with color photos on every page. The authors have taken care to include photos of children; for example, a boy spins angora directly from a rabbit, using an Ashford wheel. This approach might encourage young readers to become involved with fibers, even though this is not a "how-to" book.

The information is quite up-to-date; the chapter on cotton illustrates (but does not credit) Sally Fox's colored cotton and fabric made from it. The book even discusses the potential of genetic engineering to induce plants to grow biodegradable polymers which can be processed like polyester.

Mostly because there is not space to elaborate, some of the content is a bit oversimplified or misleading. The metal tube on a flyer which forms the orifice is called a *spindle*, for example, and the authors imply that cloth is made only by weaving or knitting and that all mohair is white. These shortcomings do not detract from the overall value of the book, however. The authors have done a commendable job presenting a complex subject in just a few pages, in a manner that will appeal to young readers.

—Bobbie Irwin

The Children's Book of Knitting

Jan Messent

London. B. T Batsford, 1990. Hardbound, 64 pages, $24.95. ISBN 0-7134-6330-9. Distributed by Trafalgar Square/David & Charles, North Pomfret, Vermont 05053.

This *Children's Book of Knitting* is not just for children. It is suitable for all people who want to learn how to knit. It is also appropriate for those of us who have moved very far from learning how to knit and need to get back to the basics in order to teach someone else.

Jan Messent's approach is simple, yet inclusive. The concepts the author addresses directly, with no worries about making mistakes, include how to *think* about knitting and how to increase or decrease the size of a piece.

A child and a non-knitting adult could easily work through the book and its projects, and would finish with enough knowledge and confidence to take on a large project. The adult is important, to translate a few British terms. A child is important, to be able to create objects from the suggested shapes. Both ages can easily benefit from the large, clear illustrations.

The author sticks to simple concepts. A section on shaping illustrates the difference between two triangles: one knitted with garter stitch and one with stockinette stitch. The section continues with a reminder list of how to make knitting wider or narrower—by changing the way stitches are worked, the number of stitches, or the size of needle. We don't often think about these concepts in their most basic forms.

She offers small suggestions for ways to create shapes that have considerable appeal, including combining shapes, wrapping shapes with yarn, or taking occasional tuck stitches. The book shows how to make figures in this way—three shopkeepers, a fish vendor, a butcher, and a flower-seller appear, with wonderful accessories of knitted fish, sausages, and flowers in containers.

Nowhere is there a suggestion of *who* should knit—man, woman, boy, or girl. The projects are appropriate for all children, starting with a knitted facsimile of a duck that is used in a game played on water Perhaps a boy would not choose to dress a doll, but he might make a sweater for his bear. And Christmas ornaments are fun for all—as are clowns and snowmen. Decorative techniques, including pompoms, simple embroidery, and a bit of two-color knitting, are also included.

It is refreshing to read such a charming knitting book. Even if your shelves are filled with the wonderful, designer, fancy knitting books, take time out to explore this small addition. This is where it starts. And I wonder how many new knitters this book will launch.

—Rachael H. Emmons

Navajo and Hopi Dyes

Nonabah G. Bryan and Mary-Russell Ferrell Colton.

Salt Lake City· Historic Indian Publishers, 1994 (Box 16074, Salt Lake City 84116-0074). Paper, 169 pages, $17.95. ISBN 1-883736-08-0.

It's been wonderful in the past few years to see older, valuable books being made available to a whole new audience. This little volume is actually two out-of-print books given new life. Both are published in facsimile.

Navajo Native Dyes, Their Preparation and Use was originally published in 1940 by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. The recipes were formulated by Bryan, a Navajo who taught weaving in

the home economics department of a vocational high school in New Mexico. In 1934, the school began a program to revive interest in native dyeing as it was used in rugs. The book was the result of Bryan's research into traditional dyes.

It begins with a narrative of how Bryan planned her dyeing for a traditional Navajo rug, gathered her materials, and worked through the dyeing process. There's also a brief description of the traditional way of cleaning wool—both dry cleaning (with white clay or gypsum) and washing (using two native yucca soapweeds).

There are nearly three dozen individual dye recipes, all illustrated by Charles Keetsie Shirley, another Navajo. All are for wool, mordanted with alum or ashes of juniper, both locally available. I found it fascinating to see, in addition to the common and Latin plant names, the Navajo names for each plant. I have *azee'diilch'iliih* growing in my front yard! And Bryan was right; lupines with alum produce a nice light green. But what we call Indian paintbrush here in Maine has nothing to do with the Indian paintbrush in New Mexico.

Hopi Dyes, by Mary-Russell Ferrell Colton, was originally published by the Museum of Northern Arizona Press in Flagstaff in 1965. Like the Navajo book, it was the result of years of research, from 1930 to 1945; it was written for the Hopi in an effort to preserve their traditions and discoveries. Colton, a founder of the museum and for many years its curator, spent years traveling the desert, living with or camping near Hopi villages, recording what older Hopi craftsmen knew of their traditional methods and recipes.

The techniques and recipes are for basketry material as well as both wool and cotton, and are divided up according to colors produced. Once again, there are three names given: common, Latin, and Hopi. It appears many of the common names were added later.

Colton points out that despite the fact that the Hopi and the Navajo live in similar environments, their dyes are substantially different. Three plants are used by the Hopi and not by the Navajo, but Bryan mentions twenty-four plants that Colton never encountered in her research. The Hopi derive many colors from relatively few plants; rabbitbrush *(siva'pi)* is used for four stock solutions that, in turn, produce nine different dyes.

Although Bryan doesn't mention indigo, the Hopi used it in a cold vat. Grown in Central America, it was a valuable trade item throughout the pueblos until early in this century, when synthetic indigo put an end to its cultivation and much of its value.

—Deborah Pulliam

MinnowKnits

Jil Eaton

Asheville, North Carolina. Lark Books, 1996. Hardbound, 128 pages, $24.95. ISBN 0-937274-96-8.

If you get tired of knitting with delicate pastels for small children, and you avoid "babyweight" yarns that need tiny needles for garments that will be outgrown in less time than it took you to knit them, you'll love Jil Eaton's approach.

Like many of us, Eaton couldn't find patterns for her small son to suit her tastes, and so began designing her own about ten years ago. When strangers on the street began asking where her patterns came from (and one person tried to buy the sweater off her son's back), she thought it might be worthwhile to sell her patterns. She began in 1990 with a single cap pattern, photocopied and sold through area yarn stores. "It sold like hotcakes," she says. "I mistakenly thought 'this is easy' !"

From there she turned MinnowKnits into a successful small company that produces two four-pattern collections each year, popular for their bold colors and designs and for their larger gauges that are quick to knit. Unlike most pattern companies, she has no connections with any particular yarn company, and so is free to choose any yarns she likes. She chooses good yarns, too; Rowan, Crystal Palace, and Classic Elite are a few of her favorites.

This winter, Lark Books took twenty-four of the patterns and combined them in an appropriately bright book of caps, rompers, sweaters, and party dresses. The cheerful colors and bold designs Eaton attributes to her background in art.

For knitters, Eaton's book brings together the skills of an experienced knitter with those of a good graphic designer. Too often it seems that knitting collections are designed by non-knitters who don't understand the limitations and advantages of a knitted structure.

MinnowKnits combines the best of a knitter and designer, along with striking color combination. In addition, yarn for each pattern is identified by its characteristics rather than brand name, making the descriptions ideal for spinners. However, information is given on yarns for each sample as photographed, so you can match it exactly if you wish.

"The whole idea is to be generic," Eaton says. "One thing bothered me when I was using patterns; if I wanted to use something else, yardage was usually not given, and I had no idea what or how much to substitute."

Many of the patterns use cotton yarns, but would be equally successful in wool. I personally plan to make myself "Firecrackers," a sort of electrified-rainbow Fair Isle cap with earflaps. I was disappointed, though, not to find a graph for the geometric color changes, which would greatly simplify making the cap.

The book is beautifully designed, with some of the most appealing children I've seen doing the modeling. And realistic! You can even see some drool on a sweatshirt, and there are bite marks in the apples. These are *real* kids, wearing *real* clothes! And they look cheerful, comfortable, and rather chic in them.

—Deborah Pulliam

VIDEO

A Beginner's Guide to Traditional Nantucket Rug Hooking

Judy Taylor

Auburn, Washington. Edeldal Farm, 1996. 28 minutes, $19.95 plus $3 postage. Video plus traditional hook, $24.95 plus postage. Available from Edeldal Farm, 15429 S.E. Green Valley Road, Auburn, WA 98092. (206) 939-1350.

Starting with a delightful introduction to Judy Taylor's own sheep and

goats, and covering the entire process of rug hooking, this video conveys a strong sense of tradition while suggesting unusual modern applications for an old craft. The narration is pleasant and effective, and Judy Taylor makes hooking look easy and appealing.

Taylor, a handspinner, starts with a brief history of rug hooking, explaining its popularity and versatility Using her own animals, she presents an overview of wool processing, from the fleece on the animal through shearing, picking, carding, spinning, and skeining. While not intended exclusively for spinners, this tape emphasizes handspun yarns and discusses appropriate fleeces for rug yarn. Taylor uses her own yarns for most projects; she also mentions the use of commercial yarn as well as fabric strips and unspun fleece.

Taylor introduces hooking using one of her own kits, for a small wallhanging. She anticipates the viewer's questions and generally offers clear, concise explanations. Other sections of the film cover blocking and finishing techniques, care and cleaning, designing your own projects, and choosing appropriate backing fabrics and other materials. A display of finished items, from stuffed animals to Christmas stockings, gives the viewer inspiration for a wide range of projects using the same simple technique. Textile historians will appreciate Taylor's admonition to add dates and initials to rug hooking projects.

Taylor encourages her viewers to share with her their finished projects and to contact her for further information. She mentions, but does not dwell on, the kits and supplies she sells, and includes her catalog with the tape. (Her brochure would benefit from more professional production, to match the quality of the video.)

For the most part, the photography is very good. Unfortunately, a few of the close-up shots, important to show details of the process, are out of focus (repeated viewing helps). After seeing the tape twice, I still had minor questions: Do you work with the yarn from a ball? Do you sew on the piping binding before you overcast it? However, this video made me feel I *could* do rug hooking,

—continues on page 114

more Letters . . .

(continued from page 92)

including small items like lace collars and trims to embellish their everyday dresses. Exquisite handspun, hand-knitted socks have recently become popular in *Spin·Off* and other publications. These are definitely small, but beautifully crafted, and like the work of nineteenth-century spinners, weavers, and knitters, made to be admired and used.

—Patricia Bowley, Guelph, Ontario

Dear *Spin·Off*

Please write an article on spinning chenille. I want to learn how to spin cottons and make my own chenille. Thanks for your help.

—Roberta Mauch, Harwich, Massachusetts

Editor's note: *Chenille results from a combination of fiber skills, including weaving. Make a warp with groups of tightly sett warp ends spaced across the web: alternating, say, 1/8–1/4" (4–8 mm) of packed warps with 3/8–1/2" (12–16 mm) spaces. Warps can be commercial (strong and fine). Make a tightly beaten plain-weave fabric using your handspun for weft. Either wash the fabric or not at this stage, depending on your combination of fibers—tightening the weave is okay; obscuring the spaces is not. Then cut through the wefts down the middle of each of the space areas. Chenille!*

Dear *Spin·Off*,

Well, okay, everyone is entitled to his/her own opinion. But the more I thought about it, I had to make a response to Susan Dawson's letter on page 6 of the Summer 1996 issue.

Kudos are in order for your "hair bungees and potholders" articles. Rather than target for just a "first-time-spinner audience," these articles provide a good change of pace for all spinners. I've been spinning for many years, but sometimes I like to enjoy something simple. For many beginners, the lovely intricate works (e.g., Joan Cummer's shawl, page 76) not only inspire, but also intimidate sometimes even terrify. After all, the front cover states "*Spin·Off*—The Magazine for Handspinners"—it doesn't say "advanced spinners"—no level of expertise, just handspinners.

Please just follow your instincts and keep up the good work!

—Donna Collins, Canaan, Vermont

Editors' note: *We like variety, and while we're advanced spinners in some ways, we're total beginners in others (see the editorial this issue for an example). And we think that spinning is such a diverse craft that other spinners aren't expert in everything, either, and that sometimes we all want a project that can be finished in fifteen minutes, while other times we want to work on a major effort lovingly for years. So we value both Susan Dawson's opinion and those on the other side of the fence which are expressed here.*

Calendar

TO ENTER

✓ **Arizona**/open. 19th Annual Vahki exhibit, national juried show of American crafts Jan. 14–Feb. 8, 1997 in Mesa. Slide deadline Oct. 8. Galeria Mesa, 155 N. Center, PO Box 1466, Mesa, AZ 85211. (602) 644-2056; fax (602) 644-2901 Internet: http://www.ftgi.com/iar/12.html.

✓ **Arizona**/open. Pulp Friction, national juried exhibit of art on or made of paper, Mar. 25–Apr. 19, 1997 in Mesa. Slide deadline Dec. 17 Galeria Mesa, *see previous listing for contact information.*

✓ **Arizona**/open. Vaguely Familiar, national juried show Apr. 29–May 31, 1997 in Mesa. Slide deadline Jan. 21, 1997 Galeria Mesa, *see first listing for contact information.*

✓ **Arizona**/open. Global Warning, national juried exhibit of artists' responses to environmental issues, June 10–July 12, 1997 in Mesa. Slide deadline Feb. 11, 1997 Galeria Mesa, *see first listing for contact information.*

✓ **Colorado**/open. Fiber Celebrated '97 juried exhibit July 29–Sept. 6, 1997 at the Lincoln Center, Fort Collins, in conjunction with Intermountain Weavers Conference. Slide deadline Mar. 1, 1997 Prospectus: LSASE to Jeanne Steiner, 718 E. Columbia, Colorado Springs, CO 80907

✓ **Kentucky**/open. Mitten Contest, sponsored by Crafter's Cottage and Operation Care. Any hand-knitted pair of mittens. Prizes, several categories. All entries become property of Operation Care, Shelbyville, Kentucky, to be distributed at no charge to people who need them. Deadline: October 15, 1996. Mitten Contest, c/o Betsy Packard-Davidson, PO Box 410, Simpsonville, KY 40067 (502) 649-1811.

✓ **Maryland**/open. Exhibit proposals sought. Contact Mary Theresa Klotz, Forestheart Studio, 200 S. Main St., Box 112, Woodsboro, MD 21798. (301) 845-4447

✓ **New York**/open. Vanessa Lynn Prize Competition, critical writing (3,000-word essays) on contemporary American craft. Cash and publication award. Postmark deadline Oct. 1. Information: American Craft, 1996 Vanessa Lynn Prize, 72 Spring St., New York, NY 10012. (212) 274-0630; fax (212) 274-0650.

✓ **New York**/regional. Northeast Regional Natural Color Sheep Show Oct. 20 in Rhinebeck. Entry deadline Oct. 1 Applications: Janet Chianese, 162 Swan Ln., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. (914) 452-5050.

✓ **North Dakota**/open. Juried fiber art display and competition at North Country Fiber Fair Sept. 28–29 in Valley City. Weaving, knitting, crochet, felt; minimum 50% natural fibers. Fleece competitions: wool, mohair, cashmere, llama. Deadline not listed. North Country Fiber Fair, PO Box 343, Valley City, ND 58072. (701 845-2544.

✓ **Ohio**/open (restricted). Midwest Weavers Conference juried members' exhibit, May 19–July 13, 1997 at Canton Museum of Art, Canton. Midwest Weavers Association members only; entry deadline Feb. 10, 1997 SASE to Kathy Fleeher, Canton Museum of Art, 1001 Market Ave. N., Canton, OH 44702.

✓ **Ohio**/open. Midwest Weavers Conference juried fashion show July 11, 1997 in Canton. Entry deadline Mar. 1, 1997 SASE to Stefanie Bauer, 10726 Johnsford Rd., SW, Beach City, OH 44608.

✓ **Rhode Island**/regional. Woven Visions '96, juried exhibit of all media with warp & weft, Oct. 5–Dec. 1 at Newport Art Museum, Newport. Residents of RI, RI students, those who work or teach in RI, and members of RI weaving guilds; deadline not stated. Contact Jan Doyle, 46 Firelane #1, Jerry Brown Farm Rd., Wakefield, RI 02879, (401) 789-1798; or Victoria DiMartino, 101 Juniper Dr., North Kingstown, RI 02852, (401) 294-2047

✓ **Texas**/regional. Contemporary Handweavers of Texas members' exhibit, fashion show, hat contest, and guild exhibit in connection with the biennial conference, May 30–June 1, 1997 at Bryan/College Station. Deadline not listed. LSASE to Gika Rector, 8 E. Wedgewood Glen, The Woodlands, TX 77381. (713) 364-8910.

✓ **Utah**/regional. Western Fiber Exchange, Jan. 15–Apr. 15, 1997 connecting fiber donors, spinners, and finishers in UT, AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV OR, WA, WY Registration limited, postmark deadline Nov. 1. Application form: LSASE to Bobbie Irwin, 1245 W. Gordon Creek Rd., Price, UT 84501. (801) 637-8476; e-mail: irwin@sltrib.com.

✓ **Virginia**/open. Focus on Fibers and Clay, juried show, Oct. 5–20 in Alexandria. Entries must be hand-delivered Oct. 2–3. Entry brochure: SASE to Cindy Lowther, Springwater Fiber Workshop, 820 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-3634.

✓ **Various locations**/open. The American Craft Council is accepting applications for 1997 wholesale/retail ACC Craft Fairs in Baltimore, Atlanta, St. Paul, West Springfield, San Francisco, Tampa Bay, and Charlotte. Contact ACC, 21 S. Eltings Corner Rd., Highland, NY 12528. (800) 836-3470 or phone/fax (914) 883-6130.

✓ **Victoria, British Columbia**/open. Memorial juried exhibit in honor of Christine Neil, organized by TAPIS in conjunction with Straits & Strands, the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds Conference, June 26–29, 1997 Tapestry weavers whose work or lives have been affected by Christine Neil are invited to submit woven tapestry pieces created after January 1994. Contact Yolanda Olivotto, 1790 Broadmead Avenue, Victoria, BC V8P 2W1, Canada. (604) 721-4302.

FESTIVALS AND GATHERINGS

✓ **Arizona,** Sept. 12–15. High Country Fiber Arts Retreat at Montlure Camp, Greer. Registration deadline Aug. 15. Brochure: SASE to PO Box 40, Taylor, AZ 85939, or call Barbara Engle, (520) 536-2796.

✓ **Arizona,** Nov. 9. A Celebration of Lace, sponsored by Lacey Ladies of Arizona, at Southeast Valley Regional Association of Realtors Conference Center, 1363 S. Vineyard, Mesa. Exhibits, lessons, demonstrations, sales. Call Jean Doig, (602) 396-3132, or Mary Solano, (602) 932-2475.

✓ **California,** Oct. 19–20. Fall Colors Fashion, Fiber, Fabric and Fun, exhibits, sales, seminars, fashion shows, demonstrations at the Marin Center, San Rafael. Call Basha Quilici, (415) 331-5324.

✓ **California,** Oct. 12–13 (rain date: Oct. 19–20). Sixth Annual Wool Gathering and Arts and Crafts Fair. Demonstrations, fiber sales, music, food. Andersen's Hidden Valley Farm, 2088 Hidden Valley Lane, Camino, CA 95709. (916) 622-8458.

✓ **Florida,** Sept. 7–8. Riverside Arts and Music Festival, juried craft and antique show in Riverside Park, Park and King Sts., Jacksonville. Riverside Avondale Preservation, 2623 Herschel St., Jacksonville, FL 32204. (904) 389-2449; fax (904) 389-0431.

✓ **Illinois,** Sept. 14–15. Lace Days, demonstrations, sales, and exhibits of lace, spinning, weaving, and "lost arts" at 55 E. Richmond St., Westmont. Contact Kendra Goodnow, 22 N. Washington St., Westmont, IL 60559. (630) 963-7169.

✓ **Illinois,** Oct. 19. Bishop Hill Fiber Guild Spin-In at Black Hawk East College, Kewanee. Spinning, exhibits, workshops, sales. Contact Clara Mount, 508 SW 2nd Ave., Galva, IL 61434. (309) 932-3669.

✓ **Massachusetts,** May 24–25, 1997 Massachusetts Sheep and Woolcraft Fair at the fairgrounds in Cummington. Workshops, contests, exhibits, sales, demonstrations, fleece auction. Contact Jody McKenzie, New Hope Farm, Tatro Road, Ashfield, MA 01330. (413) 625-0203.

✓ **Michigan,** Sept. 28–29. Sheep and Wool Festival at Mt. Bruce Station, Romeo. Demonstrations, workshops, animal exhibits. Write to Mt. Bruce Station, 6440 Bordman Rd., Romeo, MI 48065. Yvonne Uhlianuk, (810) 798-2660 or (810) 798-2568.

✓ **Minnesota,** Sept. 20–22. Headwaters Spinning Rendezvous at Ruttgers Birchmont Lodge, Bemidji. Classes with Carol Huebscher Rhoades, Patsy Zawistoski, others. Contact Linda Simonson, RR 2, Box 194, Cass Lake, MN 56633. (218) 335-6432.

✓ **Missouri,** Aug. 31–Sept. 2. Natural Fiber Fair in Bethel. Felting, spinning, weaving, shearing, flax processing. Contact Clyde

more Calendar . . .

Burch, Box 207 Bethel, MO 63434. (816) 263-0340.

✓ **New Hampshire,** Oct. 12–13. 13th Annual Wool Arts Tour. Self-guided tour of New Hampshire sheep farms and wool studios. Demonstrations, hand-crafted items and supplies for sale, fiber animals. For tour map, SASE to Anne Hennessy, The Wool Room, PO Box 324, Antrim, NH 03440.

✓ **New Jersey,** Sept. 28–29. Harvest Sheep and Wool Festival sponsored by New Jersey Sheep/Wool Breeders Assoc., at Salem County Fairgrounds, Woodstown. Sheep-to-shawl, spinning, contests, exhibits, demonstrations, vendors, fleece auction. Wool Grading and Judging workshops Sept. 26 and 27 (609) 478-2933.

✓ **New Mexico,** Sept. 28–29. Wool Festival at Taos, exhibits, demonstrations, sales at Kit Carson Park, Taos. Write Wool Festival, PO Box 2754, Taos, NM 87571, or Mountain & Valley Wool Assoc., PO Box 23, Alamosa, CO 81101.

✓ **New York,** Sept. 7–8. Central New York Sheep and Fiber Festival at Otsego County Fairgrounds, Morris. Exhibits, sales, demonstrations, contests. Contact Rita Sellers, 367 Hemlock Hill Rd., Whitney Point, NY 13862, (607) 692-4872, or call Don Millers, (607) 263-5582.

✓ **New York,** Sept. 21–22. Fingerlakes Fiber Arts and Crafts Festival in Hemlock. Animal exhibits, sales, demonstrations, contests. Pat Gesler, (716) 367-2276.

✓ **New York,** Oct. 19–20. New York State Sheep and Wool Festival at Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck. Sales, shows, demonstrations, animals. (914) 758-8100.

✓ **Ohio,** Sept. 28. Country Living Field Day at farm sites on Andora Road, Augusta. Demos, wagon tours, displays, commercial exhibits. Sponsored by Ohio State University Extension and the Small Scale Agriculture Committee. (330) 627-4310.

✓ **Oregon,** Sept. 21–22. Swap meet for spinners and weavers in Lorane, sponsored by Winding River Spinners. Bev, (541) 942-3812.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Oct. 5-6. Fall Festival at The Weaver. Demonstrations, entertainment. The Deemer House, Box 80 Clarion St., Smicksburg, PA 16256-0800, (814) 257-8150.

✓ **Utah,** Sept. 14. Fiber Exchange Gathering at the Civic Auditorium, 19 S. Main St., Helper. Displays, sales, demonstrations, sharing sessions. LSASE to Bobbie Irwin, 1245 W. Gordon Creek Rd., Price, UT 84501 (801 637-8476; e-mail: irwin@sltrib.com.

✓ **Vermont,** Oct. 5–6. Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival; location not listed. Exhibits, sales. Dianne Stott, (802) 457-2049.

✓ **Vermont,** Nov. 1–3. Northeast Handspinners' Association Gathering, spinning retreat at Sheraton Hotel, Burlington. LSASE to NHA Gathering, c/o S. Wiltshire, 400 Beech St., Bennington, VT 05201; e-mail. wiltshir@sover.net.

✓ **Washington,** Sept. 13–15. AlpacaFest '96 at Interstate Fairgrounds, Spokane. Seminars, exhibits, demonstrations, silent auction. Kelly Armstrong, (509) 443-0285 (leave message).

✓ **Wisconsin,** Sept. 14. Mohair Shear Day, demonstrations and sales at Wernridge Farm, Sullivan. Mary Werning, (414) 593-8063.

CONFERENCES

✓ **California,** June 24–29, 1997. 50 Years of Fibers, Association of Southern California Handweavers Conference, Burbank Hilton, Burbank. Contact Edeltraut G. Theissen, 5724 Tenneyson Dr., Agoura Hills, CA 91301-4408, (818) 991-0302, or Therese Griffen, 520 E. Carson St., #30, Carson, CA 90745, (310) 830-0669.

✓ **Colorado,** Aug. 9–12, 1997 Intermountain Weavers Conference at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. Workshops, symposia, fashion show. Contact Lynette Silberschlag, 6481 Avenida De Posada, Tucson, AZ 85718.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** June 23–29, 1997 MAFA '97 Mid-Atlantic Fiber Association conference at Bucknell University, Lewisburg. Brochure (after Nov. 1): Ann Schaeffer, 716 W. Padonia Rd., Cockeysville, MD 21030. (410) 560-1148; fax (410) 560-1092.

✓ **Texas,** May 30–June 1, 1997 Weaving a Life Texas Style, biennial conference of Contemporary Handweavers of Texas at Bryan/College Station. Workshops, seminars, fashion show, exhibits, sales. LSASE to Gika Rector, 8 E. Wedgewood Glen, The Woodlands, TX 77381. (713) 364-8910.

✓ **Utah,** Nov. 3–10. SOAR, Spin-Off Autumn Retreat at Snowbird Resort, Snowbird. Registration materials: send name, address, and 55 cents postage (no SASE) to Interweave Press, 201 E. 4th St., Loveland, CO 80537 (970) 669-7672; fax (970) 667-8317

✓ **Washington,** Sept. 26–29: Fiber Forum, workshops, lectures, exhibits. Mar. 13–16: Needlework classes. Sept. 1997 (third week): Fiber Forum. Coupeville Arts Center, 15 NW Birch, PO Box 171, Coupeville, WA 98239. (360) 678-3396; fax (360) 678-7420; e-mail: cac@whidbey.net.

✓ **Wisconsin,** Oct. 4–6. Wisconsin Spin-In/Sievers Gathering at Regency Suites Hotel and Conference Center, Green Bay. Workshops, demonstrations, tours, fashion show, exhibits, competitions. Contact Ann Young, PO Box 106, Washington Island, WI 54246. (414) 847-2264; fax (414) 847-2676.

EXHIBITS, SHOWS & SALES

✓ **Arizona,** Sept. 3–Oct. 5: Double Vision, invitational exhibit by Arizona artists. Oct. 15–Nov. 23: Inside Story, national juried

exhibit of vessels. Dec. 3, 1996–Jan. 4, 1997· From Every Angle, sculpture in varied media. Jan. 14–Feb. 8, 1997· 19th Annual Vahki, national juried exhibit of contemporary American crafts. All exhibits at Galeria Mesa, 155 N. Center, PO Box 1466, Mesa, AZ 85211 (602) 644-2056; fax (602) 644-290. Internet: http://www.ftgi.com/iar/12.html.

✓ **California,** through Feb. 27 1997 Southwest Weaving: A Continuum, exhibit of Pueblo, Navajo, and Hispanic handwoven textiles at San Diego Museum of Man, 1350 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92101 (619) 239-2001.

✓ **California,** Nov. 3. Annual show and sale by Southern California Handweavers' Guild at Torrance Civic Complex, Recreation Center, 3341 Torrance Blvd., Torrance. Exhibit, demonstrations, sales. Sue, (805) 766-0119.

✓ **Colorado,** Oct. 1996–Jan. 1997 Vision/Revision, juried fiber exhibit in Loveland. LSASE to Lynn Vershoor, Loveland Museum/Gallery, 5th & Lincoln, Loveland, CO 80537

✓ **Florida,** Dec. 6–8. American Craft Council craft fair in Tampa Bay. American Craft Council, 21 S. Eltings Corner Rd., Highland, NY 12528. (800) 836-3470; fax (914) 883-6130.

✓ **Illinois,** Sept. 14. Westmont Needlework Contest in Westmont. Knitting, crochet, lace, and quilting. Contact Kendra Goodnow, 22 N Washington St., Westmont, IL 60559 (630) 963-7169.

✓ **Illinois,** Oct. 1–Nov. 17 American Tapestry Biennial I, juried tapestry show at Southern Illinois University Museum, Carbondale. Contact Kathy Spoering, 2306 Dogwood Ct., Grand Junction, CO 81506. (970) 242-9081

✓ **Illinois,** October. Uncommon Threads '96, juried runway fashion show in St. Charles. LSASE to Denise Kavanagh, The Fine Line Creative Arts Center, 6N158 Crane Rd., St. Charles, IL 60175. (708) 584-9443.

✓ **Illinois,** Oct. 26. Weavings & Diversities, show, sale, and demonstrations by Weavers' Guild South at Matteson Holiday Inn, Rt. 30, Lincoln Hwy., just east of I-57 Betty Kirk, (708) 257-6505.

✓ **Indiana,** Oct. 11–13. Agri-Fair Weekend, including textile exhibits, lectures, silk demonstrations, and textile assessment at Conner Prairie, 13400 Allisonville Rd., Fishers, IN 46038. (317) 776-6000; fax (317) 776-6014.

✓ **Indiana,** Oct. 19–20. Interwoven Expressions, annual show/sale by Duneland Weavers' Guild of Northwest Indiana at Marc T. Nielsen Interiors, 734 N. Old Suman Rd., Valparaiso. Contact Sally Reithel, 5058 Roosevelt Pl., Gary, IN 46408. (219) 887-0562.

✓ **Michigan,** Nov. 22–23. Annual exhibit/sale by Weavers Guild of Kalamazoo at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, 6167 W. O Ave., Kalamazoo. Contact Weavers & Fiber Artists of Kalamazoo, PO Box 2795, Kalamazoo, MI 49003.

✓ **Minnesota,** Sept. 28–29. Fiber/Metal Arts, juried show/sale at Fine Arts Center, Minnesota State Fairgrounds, St. Paul. Contact Minnesota Crafts Council, Hennepin Center for the Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 216, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 333-7789; e-mail: mncraft@mtn.org.

✓ **Missouri,** Nov. 8–10. Annual sale by Weavers' Guild of St. Louis at Des Peres City Hall, Manchester Rd. at Ballas Rd., Des Peres. Jane Olson Glidden, (314) 343-5643.

✓ **New Hampshire,** Sept. 14–Oct. 5: Simple Things silent auction of traditional crafts including textiles and baskets. Oct. 5: Shaker Harvest Festival including sheep herding and other demonstrations. Nov. 30: Holiday Gift Extravaganza, craft sales. The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Rte. 4A, Enfield, NH 03748. (603) 632-4346.

✓ **New Jersey,** Sept. 27–29. Sugarloaf Art Fair at Garden State Exhibit Center, Somerset. Demonstrations, sales. (800) 210-9900.

✓ **New Jersey,** Nov. 1–3. Annual show/sale by South Jersey Guild of Spinners and Handweavers at Barclay Farmstead, Cherry Hill. Dana Zeck, (609) 296-5518, or Barclay Farmstead, (609) 795-6225.

✓ **New York,** Oct. 20. Northeast Regional Natural Color Sheep Show at Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck. Contact Janet Chianese, 162 Swan Ln., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. (914) 452-5050.

✓ **North Carolina,** Dec. 13–15. American Craft Council craft fair in Charlotte. American Craft Council, 21 S. Eltings Corner Rd., Highland, NY 12528. (800) 836-3470; fax (914) 883-6130.

✓ **North Dakota,** Sept. 28–29. North Country Fiber Fair at North Dakota Winter Show Building in Valley City. Exhibits, workshops, demonstrations, sales, animal shows. Contact NCFF '96, PO Box 343L, Valley City, ND 58072. (701) 845-2544.

✓ **Oregon,** through Sept. 1. Connected, exhibit including sewing-thread tapestries by Kathe Todd-Hooker and felt by Patricia Spark at the Memorial Union Concourse, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97339. Kathe Todd-Hooker, (503) 585-3853; fax (503) 364-4717

✓ **Oregon,** through Sept. 30. Strings Attached!: A Celebration of Fiber Arts of the North Coast, exhibit at Clatsop County Historical Society, 1618 Exchange St., Astoria, OR 97103. (503) 325-2203.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Nov. 1–3. Sugarloaf Art Fair, craft sales and demonstrations at Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington. (800) 210-9900.

✓ **Virginia,** Sept. 1-Oct. 13. Kaffe Fassett's World Touring Exhibition at Woodlawn Plantation, Alexandria. Susan Olsen, director, (703) 780-4000.

✓ **Virginia,** Oct. 5–20. Focus on Fibers and Clay '96, juried exhibit. Opening reception Oct. 5. Springwater Fiber Workshop, 820 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-3634.

✓ **Washington,** through Sept. 8. Beyond the Rock Garden: Craft Forms for a New World, Asian/Pacific American contemporary craft exhibition at Wing Luke Asian Museum, 407 7th Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98104. (206) 623-5124.

✓ **West Virginia,** Aug. 30–Sept. 2. Stonewall Jackson Heritage Arts & Crafts Jubilee, craft sales and demonstrations at Jackson's Mill State 4-H Conference Center, Weston. Contact Julia Spelsberg, PO Box 956, Weston, WV 26452. (800) 296-1863 or (304) 269-1863.

✓ **Canada,** Alberta, Nov. 2. Edmonton Weavers Guild sale at the guild headquarters, 10440 108 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5H 3Z9. Call Jean, (403) 487-2745.

✓ **Canada,** Ottawa, Nov. 1–3. Ottawa Valley Weavers' and Spinners' Guild Annual Sale and Exhibition. Glebe Community Centre, 690 Lyon St.

✓ **England,** through Sept. 4. Joining Forces, exhibit of textiles by Janet Bolton along with woodwork by other artists. Oxford Gallery, 23 High St., Oxford OX1 4AH, England. 44 865 242731.

INSTRUCTION

✓ **California,** Sept. 7 Willow Basket Weaving with Stephenie Gaustad at Studio Gaustad, 11178 Upper Previtali Rd., Jackson, CA 95642.

✓ **Maine,** Sept. 8–14. Natural plant and lichen dyes with Karen Diadick Casselman. Contact Jeorg Henner Lotze, Eagle Hill Research Station, PO Box 9, Steuben, ME 04680. (207) 546-2821; fax (207) 546-3042; e-mail: eaglhill@maine.maine.edu.

✓ **Maryland,** Oct. 6: Beadwork: Right Angle Weave. Oct. 12–13: Three-dimensional Beaded Forms. Classes with NanC Meinhart. Other classes in spinning, felting, weaving, fiber, dyeing, and beadwork by appointment at Forestheart Studio, 200 S. Main St., Box 112, Woodsboro, MD 21798. (301) 845-4447

✓ **Massachusetts,** Oct. 12–14: Felted hats with Beth Beede, From Rags to Riches with Johanna Erickson. Horizons, 108 N. Main St., Sunderland, MA 01375. (413) 665-0300; fax (413) 665-4141.

✓ **Massachusetts,** May 24–25, 1997 Workshops and seminars at the Massachusetts Sheep and Woolcraft Fair include lichen dyeing with Karen Casselman, color and silk blending with Nancy Morey, great wheel spinning with Loranne Carey Block, and Fimo buttons with Luanne Udell. Contact Jody McKenzie, New Hope Farm, Tatro Road, Ashfield, MA 01330. (413) 625-0203.

✓ **New Hampshire,** Sept. 12–14: Design, Drafting, Fabric with Rabbit Goody. Sept. 16–20: Learning to Weave with Rachael Emmons. Sept. 27–29: Color Theory with Nell Znamierowski. Oct. 8–10: Celebration: A Coat with Anita Mayer. Oct. 11–12: Kumihimo Braiding with Rodrick Owen. Harrisville Designs, The Weaving Center, PO Box 806, Harrisville, NH 03450. (603) 827-3996.

✓ **New Jersey,** Sept. 26: Wool Grading and Judging. Sept. 27· Judging Wool Sheep. Workshops with Glen Eidman at the Salem County Fairgrounds, Woodstown. Wayne or Edie

VanValkenberg, (609) 769-1526.

✓ **North Carolina,** Sept. 10–13. Dyeing and Finishing Fundamentals. North Carolina State University College of Textiles, Raleigh, (919) 515-3149.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Tuesdays, Sept. 10–Oct. 8: Introduction to Hand Spinning. Wednesdays, Sept. 18–Oct. 16: Introduction to Hand Weaving. Evening classes at the Hanover Area Arts Guild, 32 Carlisle St., Hanover, PA 17331. (717) 632-2521.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Sept. 21. Tatting with Sue Reed. Sept. 27· Glorious Yarns with Nancy Myal Griffin. Send two 32-cent stamps to Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts, PO Box 180, Cooksburg, PA 16217

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Mondays, Sept. 23–Oct. 28: Introduction to Hand Weaving. Tuesdays, Oct. 15–Nov. 12: Introduction to Hand Spinning. Evening classes at The York Towne Chapter, Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen, Friendship Crafts Center, 639 Franklin St., York, PA 17403. (717) 845-8301.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** Sept. through Nov. Weaving, spinning, knitting classes. Instructors: Madelyn van der Hoogt, Sharon Alderman, Virginia West, Kathy Schweitz, Anita Mayer, Celia Quinn, Deb Meteney. The Weaver, Box 80 Clarion St., Smicksburg, PA 16256-0080. (814) 257-8891.

✓ **Virginia,** Sept. 14 and 21. Lesser Known Weaves (backed fabrics) with Yvonne Turner. Oct. 4–5: Dyed Warp, lecture and workshop with Bonnie Inouye. Springwater Fiber Workshop, 820 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 549-3634.

✓ **Wisconsin,** Sept. 6–8: Felt hats with Chad Alice Hagen. Sept. 8–13: Beginning spinning and rainbow dyeing with Franie Philps. Sept. 13–15: Intermediate spinning with Franie Philps. Sievers School of Fiber Arts, Spring Rd., Washington Island, WI 54246. (414) 847-2264; fax (414) 847-2676.

✓ **Wyoming,** weekends through October. Spinning, weaving, and natural dye workshops at The Sheep Shed, Academy of Spinsters, 421 Lomax, PO Box 731, Encampment, WY 82325. (307) 327-5568.

✓ **England.** Correspondence course in embroidery and design sponsored by the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology. Contact Sara Rawlins, GLOSCAT, Christchurch Annexe, Gloucester Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL51 8P England. 44 1242 532138; fax 44 1242 532096; e-mail: postman@gloscat.demon.co.uk.

✓ **Italy,** Oct. 5–12. Book and paper arts, workshop with Paola Princivalli Conti in Tuscany sponsored by Horizons, 108 N. Main St., Sunderland, MA 01375. (413) 665-0300; fax (413) 665-4141.

✓ **Mexico,** Oct. 27–Nov. 4. Baskets and paper arts, workshop with Sue Stover in Oaxaca sponsored by Horizons, 108 N. Main St., Sunderland, MA 01375. (413) 665-0300; fax (413) 665-4141.

TRAVEL

✓ **Ecuador,** Nov. 3–14. Textile and craft tour sponsored by The Museum for Textiles. Contact Judith Crosbie, Infinity Travel, 944 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario M4W 2J2 Canada. (416) 922-3897; fax (416) 922-7368.

✓ **Peru.** Weaving, cultural, and hiking tours. Write Weavers Trek, Betty Davenport, 1922 Mahan, Richland, WA 99352. (509) 946-4409.

✓ **New Zealand,** varied dates. Five-day fibercraft tours with Margaret Stove, sponsored by Ashford Tours, PO Box 474, Ashburton, NZ. (64-3) 308-9087; fax (64-3) 308-8664.

Calendar events of special interest to spinners are printed free of charge as a service to our readers. Please send your event information at least ***10 weeks*** *prior to the* ***month of publication*** *to "SPIN·OFF Calendar," 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537 5655. Listings are made on a space-available basis. While we try to include as many events as possible, we cannot guarantee that your listing will be included.*

Spinners' Connection

by Ann Klinect

With the familiar, crisp smell of fall in the air, even though the days still are those of summer, many of you are looking forward to spinning all the newly washed and dyed fibers processed during the warm summer months.

Because of all the conferences, fairs, exhibitions, and festivals, many of us have added treasures to an already overflowing fiber stash. That well-known idiosyncrasy of fiber freaks (like me!) makes the following excerpt from **Dutchess County's** newsletter (New York) very appropriate.

"We did lots of looking and chatting. Elaine told us about a recent trip home to Minnesota where she delighted in telling her hairdresser that she had taken up the craft of handspinning. That philistine's response was, 'Where's the money in that?*' The response is obvious, of course. The money in spinning can be found in our wheels, in our bags of fleece stuffed under the beds, in the baskets filled with wee bits of luxury fibers we'll experiment with one day, in our subscriptions to* Spin·Off *and* sheep!*, in the transportation and accommodation expenses to go to conferences and wool festivals, in the hungry appetites of the angora bunnies filling our backyards and garages, in our spinner's flocks of ewes and lambs (dear to our veterinarians' hearts), in our collection of nifty little drop spindles, in our dyepots, drum carders, books, swifts and ball winders, in all the gadgets and fibers that deplete our bank accounts, help us build our skills, and bring the thrill of discovery and the joy of creation to our days. Oh yes, there's* lots *of money in handspinning. And it's worth every penny!"*

Recent mail has brought several new Registry listings, but unfortunately I also received an envelope full of "addressee unknown" and "forwarding address expired" listings. Since participation in the Registry is voluntary, I must depend on *your* information to keep it current. I suggest listing a contact person whose address will probably not change frequently When an address change does occur, drop me a postcard with the new information as soon as possible.

Also, my ESP isn't the greatest. You editors and members know the name of your group, but it may not be clear to others reading your newsletters. Some wonderful projects and

—continued on page 110

A letter from Ashford Handicrafts makes a generous offer to readers of *Spin·Off*· a free issue of their newsletter, "The Wheel," will be sent upon request. Write Ashford Handicrafts, PO Box 474, Ashburton, New Zealand.

A member of the **Blacksheep Handweavers Guild** California), described as a computer whiz, did a Web site that is on the Yahoo database. She anticipates increased membership as people cruising the net discover their organization. *http://users.aimnet.com/~lbrock/BlackSheep/BlackSheep.html).*

The **Pinellas Weavers Guild** (Florida) held a program called "Dogs On The Loom." Although intended primarily for weavers, it brought forth an idea applicable to almost any fiber activity· *pay attention to your beat.* A member shared a mohair scarf with a most uneven beat. When someone asked what music she had listened to, insight dawned. During the weaving, she had listened to Irish jigs one day, classical music the next, folk still another time. Music, your mood, and energy levels affect the beat (the twist, the tension, the stitch gauge, and so forth).

Spinergy! (South Carolina) is a fairly new group. In addition to social activities, they have been working on a wool study project. Each member obtained a wool type and distributed at least one ounce to every member. Each month, at least two samples were to be spun and knitted into a swatch. One member even dyed snippets of all samples into thirty-two different colors to show how the different wool types take dye.

What an opportunity! **Bayou Yarn Benders** (Louisiana) were asked to teach two special fiber-training sessions for people working at state commemorative areas. The guild was paid for teaching park workers basic spinning, weaving, and dyeing techniques and terminology, and for providing hands-on activities.

The First Annual Retreat for the **Over The Wheel Gang** (Texas) had the rare opportunity to spend the weekend at a 150-year-old farmhouse, the Captain R. A. Rawlins House, which is the oldest house in Dallas County with continuous family ownership.

Members of the **Weavers and Spinners Society of Austin** (Texas) were invited to take part in a summer camp for children sponsored by the French Legation Museum. Members specifically demonstrated spinning and weaving, but also included introductions to fiber preparation, knitting, crochet, and braiding.

A "Shear Madness at the Zoo" event found six members of the **Staten Island Handspinners and Weavers Guild** (New York) demonstrating spinning and weaving during the annual shearing of the Shetland sheep at the Staten Island Zoo. This year the zoo arranged for hairdressers to be present, giving human

—continues on page 110

continued from page 109

ideas could not be included this time because I didn't have a clue which group within a particular state had sent me its newsletters. Envelopes and newsletters often get separated, so please use a couple of lines on your newsletter to identify the group and its location.

Reminder: The complete Guild Registry will be printed in the Winter issue. If changes in contact person and/or address have been made since October 1995 and that information has not been sent to *Spin·Off* and published, please send it immediately and directly to Ann Klinect. All mail and information for this column should be sent to: Ann W Klinect, PO Box 8505, Everett, WA 98201

You can also send a business-sized SASE with two ounces' worth of postage to receive newsletters from my files. This is a great way to get a sense of other groups' activities.

We will also be glad to include e-mail addresses in Registry listings. Please see the additional call for such addresses below Be sure that your e-mail address is in upper- and/or lowercase letters as required for that address (it ***does*** make a difference, and we don't have time to do test mailings to check syntax). We also need a statement of permission to print that address, either e-mailed to *so@iwp.ccmail.compuserve.com* or snail-mailed to Guild Registry, *Spin·Off*, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80536.

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continued from page 109

haircuts to benefit the zoo. This made it easier for onlookers to understand that shearing sheep is like giving a haircut.

The **North Shropshire Guild of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers** (England) came up with a great idea for an informal spinning workshop. An area wool/fiber supplier, Wingham Wools, brought over a hundred different kinds and colors of fibers and spread them on tables around the perimeter of the room. Workshop participants brought their spinning wheels and sampled as many fibers as they wanted, then purchased their favorites. Wow!

For those knitters who believe they can't design their way out of a paper bag, here's a trick. A member of the **Northern California Angora Guild** used the weather as inspiration for a hat. The 1 75" reading on the rain gauge struck her as a reasonable width for hat ribbing. Fibers included Jacob fleece, black angora, and white angora. "Overcast days with scattered sprinkles" became two rows of stockinette with random purl stitches. A "downpour" produced rows of variegated Jacob in a moss stitch. "Foggy and cold, dark days" became pure white angora trailing off into a black Jacob/black angora blend.

Members of the **New Orleans Weaving Guild** are making potpourri pouches to exchange. Participants will weave, knit, crochet, or felt a 4–5" 10–12.5 cm) pouch and stuff it with their choice of potpourri.

I suspect that many of us have fiber friends who are unable to attend meetings or workshops because of temporary or long-term health challenges. The **Bradford District Guild of Spinners, Weavers, and Dyers** (England) suggests videotaping meetings with especially interesting programs to share with these friends.

> Calling all guilds! I am collecting e-mail/computer contacts for fiber guilds, U.S. and international. These will eventually be posted on the World Wide Web with individual links to the e-mail addresses on the list so that computer-able fiber folks and interested parties can easily find each other on the Internet. As this comes about, I will post the WWW site address in a future *Spin·Off*. Please send your e-mail address (using upper- and/or lowercase letters as necessary for your address), your guild affiliation, guild meeting times, office (if any) you hold, and a statement of permission to post your e-mail address in print or on a web page to: Sadelle Wiltshire, *74771.350@compuserve.com* or *wiltshir@ sover.net*.

Michigan Handspinners Guild members are working on dolls for a guild display at the Michigan League of Handweavers. Each member will create a doll in her own image, using at least 25 percent handspun fiber. In keeping with the overall theme of "Tomorrow's Heirlooms," each doll will hold a small heirloom.

Here is a puzzle for all the natural dye experts out there. A member of the **Hawaii Handweavers Hui** brought blue-dyed fabric to a meeting along with a packet of unidentified dried flowers said to be used for the dye. The flower looked similar to a hibiscus or cotton flower, with very deep-blue, almost-purple petals and was about one inch (2.5 cm) long. The stamen had tiny pollen dots, like hibiscus. Since flowers typically give fugitive colors, does anyone have any idea what the flower could be?

The **St. Croix Valley Spinners and Fiber Arts Guild** (Minnesota) demonstrated at Willowbrook Farms during Ameny Farm Days. The farm raises sheep for milk and also makes sheep-milk cheese. A small shop at the farm sells many products related to sheep.

At a recent color-blending workshop for **Clothos Children** (Virginia), Judith Towers spread fibers around a color wheel and instructed members to select fiber from each group. Colors were combed to make separate bits of roving and then spun in any sequence the participant found pleasing to make yarn brilliant as a rainbow The singles were Navajo-plied to preserve the color sequence, and everyone was challenged to bring a finished item to the September meeting.

Here's a tip from **U Spin Fibres** (Oregon). If your lazy kate consists of vertical posts mounted on the base of your wheel, slip a tail-docking band onto the post on top of each bobbin, to keep it in place and to add a slight tension for plying.

—continues on page 112

Choctawhatchee Bay Spinners Guild (Florida) came up with two new challenges. Project 1 was to select a fiber the member had never spun before and explore variations in preparation, spinning, plying, and so forth. Project 2 involved selecting one fiber and one color family and then using different dyes and dyeing techniques to produce as wide a color range as possible.

Spinning and weaving stories were taped for the archives of the Dayton Stories Project during a meeting of the **Weavers Guild of Miami Valley** (Ohio) this past spring. A play based on all the stories collected by the project was presented at the National Folk Festival this past summer.

Are your spinning samples disorganized again? Several members of the **Central Ohio Weaver's Guild** recommend using file cards or mat board scraps to wind spinning samples on and filing them in plastic, loose-leaf, sports-card or photograph sleeves. You can also tuck in a bit of the fiber and some extra, pertinent information.

Several staff members in a four-town school district in Maine discovered a mutual interest in fiber arts. This led to the **S.A.D. #6 Fiber Artists,** a group which meets once a month and during school vacations. Five members even ventured to Guatemala during spring break to study weaving.

For all newsletter editors seeking inspiration, the editor of the **Dutchess County Wool Guild** (New York) offers a tip. When newsletter time rolls around, she randomly chooses five or six textile-production books from her collection. She spreads them out on a bed and, with eyes closed, opens each and points. Amazing tidbits result! She got this from a book on Indonesian Textiles: "The Makasarese and Bukinese traditionally believed that if a man picked up a weaving shuttle, he would be rendered impotent."

NEW LISTINGS

Florida. *Orlando.* Weavers of Orlando Spinning Group, Berna Lowenstein, 3640 Bocage Drive #1106, 32812.

Idaho. *Clearwater Valley.* Clearwater Valley Fiber Arts Guild, Tracy K. Williams, HC75 Box 139, Kooskia 83539.

Maine. *Standish.* S.A.D. #6 Fiber Arts, Karen Smith, Shearbrooke Farm, 400 Saco Road, Standish 04084.
Minnesota. *Rochester.* Moonbeam Spinners, Peg Mathews, 4949 22nd Avenue NW 55901.
South Carolina. *Edgefield.* Spinergy!, Micki Getson, 678 Old Stage Road, 29824.
Utah. *Price.* Castle Country Fiber Guild, Bobbie Irwin, 1245 W Gordon Creek Road, 84501.
Washington. *Seattle.* Seattle Spinning Sisters, Wendy Tinker, 15563 12th Avenue NE, 98155.

CANADA

British Columbia. *Victoria.* Victoria Handweavers and Spinners Guild, 1272 Queensbury Avenue, V8P 2E2.
Ontario. *Kitchener.* K-W Weavers and Spinners Guild, 609A Lancaster Street, N2K 1M5.

INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS

Israel. *Arad.* Marcia Ben-Menachem, PO Box 590, 89104.

CHANGES

New contact person and/or address, unless otherwise noted.
Arizona. *Navajo and Apache Counties.* White Mountain Spinning and Weaving Guild. Karen Bessinger, PO Box 40, Taylor 85939.
California. *Victor Valley.* Fantastic Fiber Folk. Ellen Kindsvater, 18527 Damon Drive, Hesperia 92345.
Idaho. *Idaho Falls.* Weavers and Spinners of Idaho Falls, Kate Robertson, 1372 W 81 N., 83402.
Illinois. *Aurora.* Shear Fun Fiber Guild, Carol Hanson, 1465 Riverview Road, Amboy 61310. (Shorten name, change contact and address.)
Indiana. *Brown County.* Countryside Spinners and Weavers, Mary Alice Birkla, 1862 Archies Ct., Franklin 46131.
Maryland. *Baltimore.* Cloverhill Spinners, Judy Keyser, Broadmead H-10, 13801 York Road, Hunt Valley 21030.
Nevada. *Las Vegas.* Fiber Arts Guild, Jan Flores, PO Box 27501, 89126.
Vermont. *Northwest Area.* Fifth Wheel Handspinners, Christopher French, 101 Northshore Drive, Burlington 05401.
Washington. *Kent/Maple Valley.* Spinsters Craft Guild, disbanded.
Washington. *North Seattle.* Little Flock Handspinners, disbanded.
Washington. *Skamania County.* Skamania Fleecers and Fibrecators. Mary Davis, 451 NW Gropper Road, Stevenson 98648.
Europe. Euro Spinners and Weavers. Pat Ciesla, 2248 Shawnee Court, Fort Collins, CO 80525. E-mail: *pmciesla@aol.com*

—continues on page 114

more Books . . .

continued from page 100

and also made me want to try Spinners who view this video will certainly be tempted to add rug hooking to their repertoire of fiber techniques.

—Bobbie Irwin

MENTIONS

Spinning Wool: Beyond the Basics, by Anne Field. Christchurch, New Zealand: Shoal Bay Press, 1995. Paperbound, 152 pages, ISBN 0-908704-27-5. Reviewed in *Spin·Off*, Spring 1996, page 35. Available from Unicorn Books, 1338 Ross Street, Petaluma, CA 94954-6502. (707) 762-3362.

How to Spin a Rabbit

Helen von Ammon

San Francisco, California: Doodlebug Books, 1995. Available from Doodlebug Books, 48 San Antonio Place, San Francisco, CA 94133-4054. (415) 397 7799. Softbound, 28 pages, $14.95 postpaid. ISBN 0-9647756-3-8.

If you need help in a classroom of children or at a spinning demonstration convincing onlookers that you don't kill Angora rabbits to harvest their fur, Helen von Ammon's book will be a wonderful aid. The book is written from a rabbit's point of view and provides basic information about how rabbits who are companions as well as fiber producers are kept in the house, what they eat, some of their habits such as playing and grooming, how their fur is gently combed from them and then spun into yarn and made into warm, luxurious garments.

The story is illustrated by Erin Mauterer, who gives the rabbits so much visual personality that I wanted to have a real one of my own.

—Dale Pettigrew

more Spinner's Connection . . .

continued from page 112

Mail returned.
Current information requested.

California. *Riverside.* The Home Spinners Guild.
Colorado. *Douglas County.* Smokey Hill Spinners and Weavers Guild.
Iowa. *Ames.* Ames Area Spinners and Weavers.
Kansas. *Parsons.* Serendipity Spinners and Weavers.
Michigan. *Farmington.* Town and Country Spinners.
New Mexico. *Albuquerque.* Las Aranas Spinners and Weavers Guild.
Oregon. *Tillamook Area.* Oregon Coast Fiberartisans.
Virginia. *Christianburg.* The New Spinsters.
Washington. *Marysville.* Snohomish Weavers and Fibercrafters Guild.
Wisconsin. *Fond du Lac.* Serendipity Spinners, Dyers, and Weavers.
Wyoming. *Evanston.* Warped and Twisted Fiber Guild.

An Australian Connection

You and your readers may be interested in a letter from our Australian spinning group and how we came to have a subscription to your magazine, which we all enjoy.

It's just two years since our Newstead Spinning Group farewelled an American family who were wonderful ambassadors for their country. Kate Friesen, her husband, and their children took the opportunity to do a year's exchange with a family from Victoria, exchanging their homes and teaching positions in Colorado for a year with us.

Maryborough is a fairly large country town and Kate, always interested in wool crafts, had found a spinning group. But she still had time on her hands. Then she met Ethel, founding member of our Newstead group. Newstead is very small, but our members come together from long distances every fortnight. Ethel invited Kate to visit.

Our group was going through one of those "boom times," with lots of energy following a felt-hat–making workshop, and Kate was a catalyst for the extension of this activity. Kate and the rest of us made hats, then got more ambitious. Kate could see a way of using up her fleeces and began carding wool to all hours every night. She ended up with a lovely blanket with a pattern on each side; we were all really pleased.

As a farewell, we held a real Aussie barbecue picnic for them up in our bit of bush. Kate and Peter took home a painting of this area, and Kate gave our group a subscription to *Spin·Off*.

One of our members and her husband later visited Kate's family in Colorado, and were able to attend the Estes Park Wool Festival. We share our letters from Kate at spinning gatherings, and hope they return one day to visit us.

—submitted by Beth Higgins, for the Newstead Spinning Group

The photo shows the Newstead Spinning Group in some of their felted hats. Kate Friesen is in the back row, third from the left, in the Robin Hood–style version. Also in the photo (left to right): middle—Adèle Young; back—Mary White, Margaret Darby, (Kate), Libby Cay, Hazel Edwards, Ann Thoroughgood, Joan Mann, Suzan Redlande; front—Diane Corney, Win Chaplin, Keva Binnion, Beth Higgins, Barbara Finlayson, Leslay Sluce.

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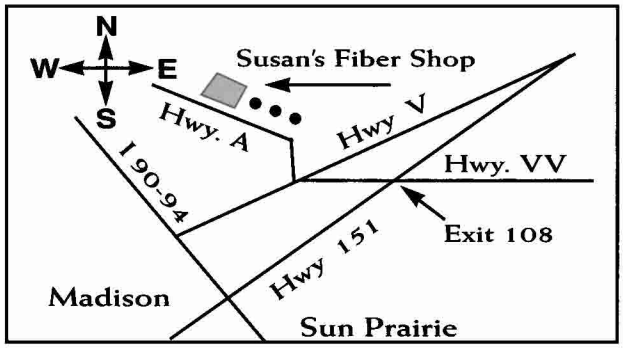

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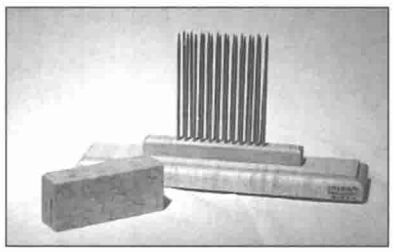

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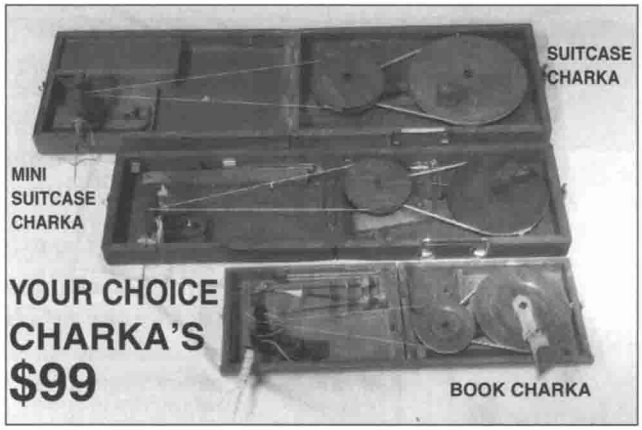

DEER WIDOW SALE—Sat. & Sun., November 23 & 24, 1996. 10-5p.m.

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Join Susan's in the 90's for your "Fiber Extravaganza"

Tips & Techniques

Ashford Scholar gets revamped

I recently acquired an Ashford Scholar. I had been wanting a low-cost, reliable wheel for travel. I saw a Scholar for sale on a computer bulletin board, and when I heard there was a high-speed whorl available for it, I took the plunge. I'm very happy I did, although when I first got the wheel, I was disappointed.

The previous owner had never finished the wheel, which was badly stained in places by oiling and treadling wear. Since I had a big finishing job ahead of me, I decided to make some alterations in the wheel as well.

I sanded until the stains were gone, then stained the wood with Watco Danish oil. The finish didn't bring the kind of depth to the wood that I had hoped for. I did a little research and added three coats of Varathane semigloss, which added the "glow" I wanted.

I'm a tinkerer at heart, so I wasn't satisfied with calling it quits with a nice finish. I added a brass, L-shaped hook to the front maiden, between the screws but below the Ashford logo, both to hold a threading hook and to give me a place to attach my yarn when I left the wheel. I then made a threading hook, using a large wooden bead and clothes-hanger wire. I shaped the hook with a pair of needlenose pliers.

When I gave the wheel a workout, however, I realized I had been spoiled by my double-treadle Majacraft. Using a single-foot treadle make me feel as if I didn't have enough control. I decided a wider treadle that would allow me to use both feet would be better. I took measurements and had a friend make a new treadle. I finished the treadle to match the wheel.

I wasn't finished yet, though! I have seen several wheels recently with a carry strap attached to the back post. I took the metal D-rings and adjustable strap off an old tote bag, then cut leather scraps into two rectangles about 1½ by 2½ inches (3.75 by 6.25 cm). I folded a leather piece over the straight part of each D-ring and drilled two holes into the doubled leather. After marking where I wanted the leather-and-D-ring anchors to go (one where the flyer assembly attaches to the back post, and one in the base plate below the back post), I drilled pilot holes and attached the anchors with 2¼-inch (55 mm) drywall screws. With the adjustable strap, I can fold up the treadle and sling the wheel on my back, leaving my hands free.

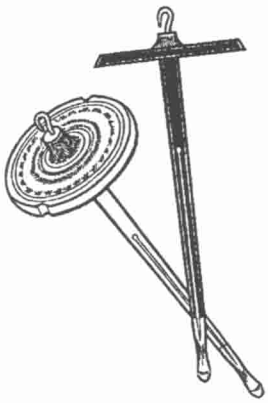
So I snapped on the shoulder strap and took my "new" wheel to the next guild meeting. No one recognized it! Thanks to its finish, larger (and more comfortable) treadle, new high-speed whorl, and carry strap, my Scholar is pretty, functional, versatile, lightweight, sturdy, and easy to transport.

—Lynn Barrett-Gonzalaz,
San Leandro, California

Product News

by Sharon Altergott

Dan Mongold, Bozeman, Montana, offers top-whorl drop spindles featuring unique design and etching details. These hand-crafted spindles are handturned to provide balance, with whorl notches, an elongated hook design, and fluted shafts with knobbed finials for non-slip rolling. The spindles are made of a wood/resin material which is strong, durable, and impact-resistant. Available in black with white etching or ivory with black etching; overall length, 12" (30.5 cm); weight, approximately 70 grams (2½ ounces). Price: $38.50 postpaid. Dealer inquiries invited. Contact Dan Mongold, 327 S. Bozeman Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715. (406) 586-3794.



Sketch of Dan Mongold's wood/resin, handturned drop spindles

A fold-up spinning wheel which packs away in a shoulder bag is the latest product from **Ashford Handicrafts**. The Joy, named after Walter's wife and Richard's mother, is light (5 kg/11 lb.) and compact, with the flyer and bobbins fitting into the frame and the treadleboard folding flat. It is constructed from laminated plywood with a lacquer finish, and is factory-assembled and tested. Standard Ashford bobbins are used, with ratios of 6, 8, 12, and 15:1 for spinning fine to chunky or novelty yarns. A green cotton canvas shoulder bag with handhold and pockets is available as an accessory. For information on The Joy and other Ashford products, contact the USA wholesale distributor, Crystal Palace Yarns, 3006 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702. (510) 548-9988, fax (510) 548-3453.

Ashford Handicrafts' ninth issue of *The Wheel* is also available. It includes short articles on knitting, spinning, weaving, and dyeing, along with information on Ashford's new products and promotions. For a free copy, write to Ashford Handicrafts, 415 West St., PO Box 474, Ashburton, New Zealand.

Gaywool Dyes has introduced eight intense new colors to their range of dyes: daisy, azalea, orchid, iris, lily, cedar, mulberry, and musk. They are compatible with other Gaywool shades and are available in one kilo (2.2 pound) bags for production dyers. Available from Louët Sales, Ogdensberg, NY, (613 925-4502, fax (613 925-1405, or Access International, Shiloh, OH, (419) 896-3531, fax (419) 896-3541

For holiday gift giving, **Little Barn** offers "The Barn Basket," filled with fiber, topped with a sprinkle of spinning accessories, gift wrapped and including a tag. Choice of two sizes: the standard, $19.95, and the deluxe, $35.95. Guaranteed shipment by Dec. 15, 1996.

Little Barn has also recently introduced two new fibers: a 50/50 wool and recycled denim roving, very soft with a texture similar to chenille, and a 50/50 wool/hemp roving, combining a soft natural gray wool with the luster of hemp—fun to overdye. Contact Little Barn, 173 McKee Road, Harvest, AL 35749 (800) 542-32775 or (205 852-3366, fax (205 859-9791

Tom and Sunny Bixby of **Liberty Ridge Farm** have expanded their line of dyed mohair/wool blends. Old favorites such as City Lights and Aztec are joined by Blueberry Buckle and Exotic Twilight. You can also order a new fiber sample pack of over 40 colors of their Romney fleece and carded fibers. For an updated catalog write Liberty Ridge, 6175 Greenway-Lowell Road, Verona, NY 13478. (315) 337 7217

The beautiful Norwegian wedding buttons featured on Mary Spanos' "Shy Norwegian Cardigan" in the Summer 1996 *Spin Off* are now available from **Norsk Fjord Fiber.** Each hand-stamped pewter button depicts a wedding scene from the Telemark region of Norway. A card with all eight buttons is $23.50 ppd. Please send check, money order, VISA, or MC to Norsk Fjord Fiber, PO Box 271, Lexington, GA 30648. (706) 743-5120.

Southwest Corner has purchased a bale of Sea Island cotton lint, and Joan Ruane will send you one ounce to try! Send her your name, address, and $1 to cover packaging and postage. A copy of her cotton catalog and latest "Cotton Newsletter" will be included. Send your request to Southwest Corner, PO Box 418, Bisbee, AZ 85603.

Ever dream of personalized notes with detailed pen-and-ink drawings of your favorite fiber animal or even your own farm or home? Award-winning artist **Vicki Botta,** who also spins and weaves, will create them for you. Vicki initially produced these cards for friends, who encouraged her to make them available to others. Sheep, alpacas, angora bunnies, or whatever, you can get them on 3½"× 4½" (9 × 11 cm) note cards, printed on recycled paper, 20 in a box with envelopes. Contact Victoria Botta, RD #3 498A Goshen Trail, Goshen, NY 10924. (914) 294-8293.

Ashford's new folding wheel, The Joy.

Classifieds

Notices

TO PLACE A CLASSIFIED AD for the next issue, send your ad along with payment ten weeks prior to the month of publication. Only $1.50/word ($30 minimum) or $70/col. inch (camera ready) for classified display ads. **Payment must accompany ad.** VISA, MC AMEX, Discover accepted with account number and expiration date. Send to **Interweave Press,** *Spin·Off* Classified Ads, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537-2566, or fax (970) 667-8317

CUSTOM FIBER PROCESSING. We do soft fluffy batts and roving. Call or send a SASE to **Winding River Fibre,** 25710 Siuslaw Rd., Lorane, OR 97451. (541) 942-3812.

FIBER FORUM WORKSHOPS, September 26–29, 1996. John Marshall, Kay Sekimachi, Rodrick Owen, Lia Cook, Sande Ely, Judith MacKenzie, more! New 1997 City & Guilds of London Embroidery course. Susie Hodges Knitting Retreat. April 17–20, 1997 **Coupeville Arts Center,** Box 171 SO, Coupeville, WA 98239. (360) 678-3396.

TUTORIALS. WORKSHOPS. GUILDS. Schools. Dates open in 1997 Scheduling 1998. **Constance Bufkin Rizner,** 3669 Ivy Way, Sevierville, TN 37876-9033.

WERNRIDGE FARM home of Shear Heaven Luxury Fiber, invites you to our annual Shearday Gathering. September 14, 1996, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Mohair, wool, raw washed, rovings, handspun designer yarns, mill spun yarns, natural, dyed! Spinning, weaving, shearing demonstrations throughout the day. Sullivan, Wisconsin. (414) 593-8063.

Equipment

ADJUSTABLE TRIANGULAR SHAWL/Blanket looms. Be creative! Weave triangle shawls, or two or more triangles together for ponchos, blankets, ruanas, wall pieces. Loom adjusts to six sizes. Unique. Simple. The only loom that dresses itself! Warp and weft one continuous yarn. No loom waste. Easy tartans. Complete instructions. Transports/stores easily. Walnut, cherry, oak, or maple. Only $195. Stand/accessories available. **Carol Leigh's Specialties,** 7001 Hillcreek Rd. (SO), Columbia, MO 65203. (800) TRI-WEAV (874-9328).

AKHA HANDSPINDLES. $15 plus $5 shipping and handling. SASE for information. **LDRM,** 2805 SE 34th, Portland, OR 97202.

ANTIQUE GREAT WHEELS & FLAX (Saxony) wheels, excellent condition and working order. Shipping available. **Willow Brook Farm,** PO Box 1568, Fort Washington, PA 19034. (215) 643-4499.

ARAÑA'S LITTLE WHEEL—High-whorl drop-spindle learn-to-spin kit. $15 postpaid. Donna Collins, **Araña's Web,** PO Box 323, Canaan, VT 05903-0323.

AUTHENTIC HAND WOOL CARDERS. The original wooden E.B. Frye Cards with rubberized cotton foundation for excellent resiliency! Curry $14 each, #5 Sheep $19.75 each, #8 Wool $40/pr. SASE to **E.B. Frye & Son,** 12 Frye Mill Rd., Wilton, NH 03086. (603) 654-6581.

BIG SALE ON SPINNING WHEELS AND drum carders. Everything for the spinner. See our full page ad, page 34. *Call us for your best deal!* **Bountiful,** (970) 586-9332.

BUY/SELL USED SPINNING EQUIPMENT. Newsletter $1 and SASE, classified ad 50¢ per word. **Textile Trader,** Rt. 1 Box 2910, Lakemont, GA 30552.

CARDING MACHINE FOR SALE. 60" rebuilt—updating our own—great condition. Call **Zeilinger Wool Co.** Ask for Gary. (517) 652-2920.

CARDING VERSATILITY with our interchangeable drums for all wools and exotics. *Motorizing Unit* available. *New Triple Picker* for fantastic opening of wool, mohair, and specialty fibers.Ask Paula about our new hand-held Supercard Burnishing Tool for better batts and brighter carding teeth. We pay duty and freight. Phone for details or write for free brochure. **Patrick Green Carders, Ltd.,** 48793 Chilliwack Lake Rd., Chilliwack, BC, Canada V4Z 1A6. (604) 858-6020.

CHARKA, SKEINWINDER, 3 SPINDLES, pencil roving, instructions: $99 postpaid. Beautiful finish. W/cotton punis, add $7 **Woolery,** RD 1, Genoa, NY 13071. (800) 441-9665.

Fibers

ALPACA—A HEAVENLY SPINNING FIBER. Grown in U.S.A., superior quality and processed for best spinning experience. LSASE for samples/price list. **Alpacas of Napa Valley,** 3255 Dry Creek Rd. #2, Napa, CA 94558.

ALPACA FELTING FIBERS too short to spin, ideal to felt, many colors. $1.25/oz. **Lanark Llamas and Alpacas, Inc.,** Rt. 6, Box 60, Charlottesville, VA 22902. (804) 296-8709.

ALPACA FIBER: a spinning delight! Color samples $3. 2 oz/$5 or 8 oz/$20 plus $2.50 postage; 1 lb/$38 plus $3 postage. Alpacas for sale; Alpaca sweaters made to order. Bud and Gail Stewart, **Rocky Run Alpacas,** RD 5, Box 260, Malvern, PA 19355. (610) 644-8077

ALPACA FIBER—raw fleece and roving, clean. Send LSASE for samples and prices. **LaPlata Alpacas,** 2886 CR 308, Durango, CO 81301. (970) 247-1720.

ALPACA FIBER—ready-to-spin. Many colors to choose from. Send LSASE for samples and prices. Alpacas for sale. **Rejniak's Alpacas,** 1187 Logan Rd., Gibsonia, PA 15044. (412) 265-2607

ALPACA FIBER—washed before shearing. $3 color samples. 1 to 8 oz, $2.45/oz; more than 8 oz, $2/oz. **Alpacas of Colorado,** 6011 Alpaca Tr., Bellvue, CO 80512. (970) 493-5732.

ALPACA WOOL produced in **Virginia.** 17 colors available! Roving prices $2.50/oz plus postage. Fiber color card $4; 4 oz sample pack of 4 colors, $10 plus postage. Highest quality breeding stock and wool animals always available. *Come Visit!* **Lanark Llamas and Alpacas, Inc.,** Rt. 6, Box 60, Charlottesville, VA 22902. (804) 296-8709.

ANCIENT DYES on lustrous Lincoln Longwool. Naturally dyed batts and locks for wool combing. Premordanted wool for your own natural dyeing, fleece rug kits. Information $1. Complete samples $4. **Rolling Thunder Mt.,** RR 1, Box 128, Vermontville, NY 12989.

ANGORA ROVING BLENDS—dye-painted or white. Samples and price list $3/SASE. **Jean Womack/Wild Meadow Fibers,** 5615 Crandall-Lanesville NE, Georgetown, IN 47122.

ANGORA WOOL SALE. White Giant Angora wool. Carded, long, clean fiber. 4 oz/$10. Giant Angoras, Colored Giants, French, from national show winners. Discount wheels, **Starwist Angoras,** 762 Tranquil Ln., Simi Valley, CA 93065. (805) 583-8044.

ARIZONA'S FINEST: Moorit Merino and Romeldale fleeces sold out until January 1997!! Black or gray fleeces, roving from covered Rambouillets available. **Susan Frazier,** 26718 S. Sossaman Rd., Queen Creek, AZ 85242.

ATTENTION SPINNERS, WEAVERS, Knitters! Karakul fleeces, roving, handspun yarns. Sample kit $5. **Coyóte Pines Rare Breed Conservancy,** PO Box 487, Balgonie, SK., Canada S0G 0E0. (306) 771-2797

AUSTRALIAN MOORIT MERINO. Beautiful champion fleeces. Full range natural colors. Send SASE to **Australian Originals,** Lynn Robinson, Skidmore Fountain Bldg., 28 SW First #103, Portland, OR 97204. (503) 228-4484.

BEAUTIFUL, CLEAN FLEECES FROM happy sheep. Coated white and natural colored Corriedale, Romney, Border Leceister, and crosses. White and natural-colored wool rovings, felting batts, quilting batts. Kid mohair rovings, dyed yearling mohair rovings. 40-plus samples/information: $2 and SASE to **Moonsshadow Farm,** 11252 Kekke Rd., Chisholm, MN 55719.

BEAUTIFUL ROVING $7/LB. White and natural colors. Romney, mohair, Lincoln. Also Merino, natural and dyed, and Merino/silk roving. LSASE. **Pintler Sheepcamp,** 530 Faucher, Moxee, WA 98936. (509) 453-0183.

BLACK WELSH MOUNTAIN X SHEEP: rare lambs for sale. Jet-black for life, weigh 80 lb as adults. Nice wool! 47993 Floras Lake Loop, Langlois, OR 97450. (541) 348-2550.

BONKERS FIBER CLUB! Receive quarterly samples of beautiful hand-dyed spinning fibers. Send 4 long SASE. **Bonkers,** PO Box 442099, Lawrence, KS 66044. (800) 447-5600; e-mail 76725.1343@compuserve.com

CASCADE SHEEP & WOOL CO. has clean, coated, and skirted fleeces for handspinning in a wide range of natural colors and grades. Samples $2. Also natural-colored lamb pelts. RR 1, Box 60-SO, Rochester, IL 62563. (217) 498-7522.

CLEAN COVERED WYOMING FLEECES. Corriedale, Cotswold, Rambouillet, and crosses. White and colored. Coarse to fine. Samples $3. **Wyoming Equality Fiber Works,** Box 373, Upton, WY 82730. (307) 468-2702.

CLEAN ROMNEY FLEECES. White and silver, shades of gray, black. In the grease or carded. Carded Romney top. Mohair and mohair/lamb's-wool roving. Sheepskins, LSASE for information. **Spring Hill Farm,** 3723 Beaver Valley Rd., Port Ludlow, WA 98365. (360) 732-4856.

COLORED WOOL NATURALLY! Colored and rare-breed fleeces and rovings. Jacobs our specialty! Sample set $2. **Kimberly Johnson,** 7854 Six Mile Rd., Battle Creek, MI 49017 (616) 979-2087

COLORFUL COOPWORTH FLEECES and roving. Long, lustrous silver, pewter, charcoal, black, and white. Bulk discounts. $2 samples. **Katka Coopworths,** 2644 Old Hwy. 2 N, Troy, MT 59935. (406) 295-5263.

COOPWORTH AND ROMNEY premium lustrous fleeces, white and colored from covered, imported sheep. Also select breeding stock for sale. Samples/info: $1/SASE to **Silver Creek Lambscapes,** 6731 Torvend Rd. NE, Silverton, OR 97381. (503) 873-6447

COOPWORTH FLEECES. Clean, covered, skirted, handspinning fleeces. Lustrous white and colored, including blue. $2 for samples/prices. **Ewelings Farm,** Rt. 3, Box 456, Conrad, MT 59425.

CORMO FLEECES—covered, white, long staple, $4/lb plus shipping. SASE free samples. **Rick Lemmel,** HC 79 Box 27, Mud Butte, SD 57758. (605) 748-2266.

CORRIEDALE FLEECES AND ROVING, white/natural colored. Skirted fleece, wool, wool/mohair roving samples: $2. SASE to the handspinning shepherds at **CLK Corriedales,** 2170 W. Munger Rd., Tecumseh, MI 49286. (517) 431-2390.

CORRIEDALE FLEECES—white, well-skirted, beautiful for handspinning or felting. $3–$4/lb. plus shipping. Whole fleeces. **Windy Crest Farm,** 3575 Fannie Thompson Rd., Monroe, GA 30656. (770) 267-7102.

CORRIEDALE, MERINO, AND LLAMA roving; also mohair roving and 70/30 wool/mohair blends. Available in white and brown. For samples, send $2 to **Sheegora Acres,** 3506 Baldwin St., Hudsonville, MI 49426.

COVERED ROMNEY FLEECES, white and natural color. Whole or by the pound. Lamb and adult roving. Samples $2. **Sue's Sheep,** 11320 S. 866 E., Fairmount, IN 46928. (317) 998-2295.

FINE & MEDIUM COVERED FLEECES & roving: Columbia, Rambouillet, Corriedale, and cross-breeds, white and colors. Send $2 for samples to **Baynham Rambouillets,** PO Box 172, Philo, CA 95466.

FINN & FINN CROSS SPINNING WOOL, white and colored. Samples $2. Breeding stock also available. **Diana Griffith,** 1702 10 Rd., Mack, CO 81525. (970) 858-1011; e-mail 103376.675@compuserve.com

FLEECE: LOVELY NATURAL-COLORED fleeces from spinner's flock, $3/lb. Whites, grays, blacks, and browns. Send SASE for samples. **Georgia Wolterbeek,** Fairmount Farm, Rindge, NH 03461.

FOR SALE: Camel down, llama; all colors, and mohair fiber. Cleaned, carded and ready for spinning. Samples available. Call (913) 543-2598.

FREE SHIPPING, FREE CATALOG. Award-winning fleeces. Everything for the handspinner. **La Plata Farms,** 1281 CR 123, Hesperus, CO 81326. (303) 385-4375.

GIANT ANGORA STOCK. Dense white woolers. **Daniels Angoras.** N4213 Lake Dr., Brodhead, WI 53520. (608) 862-3664; e-mail brodheed@llwisc.wecb.state.wi.us

GRANITE CREEK FARM—fine to medium Rambouillet/Corriedale fleeces by the pound, white or colored. Wool and mohair-blend batts and rovings, natural or dyed. Spinning and knitting supplies. Yarn or fleece samples and price list $2. **Marta Ljungkull,** 642 27th Ave., Cumberland, WI 54829. (715) 822-8766.

GREASE MOHAIR, ALL TYPES. We guarantee satisfaction. Ask about our club, quantity discounts. **Middlebrook Natural Fibers,** Maynard, AR. (501) 647-3136.

HAND-PICKED FLEECES FROM FLUME FARM. Natural colors. Karakul, Navajo Churro, Scottish Blackface, colored mohair. Roving available in Karakul, mohair. Please send $2 for samples, prices. **Ann and Bill Chambers,** 18101 NO. U.S. Hwy. 666, Cortez, CO 81321. (303) 882-4443.

HANDSPINNING FLEECE—enjoy the long, lustrous staple of covered, premium quality Coopworth. Raw, heavily skirted, washed/carded. White, gray, brown. Samples with SASE. **Paix Farm Woolies,** Left Fork of Hollywood, Newton, WV 25266.

ICELANDIC FLEECES and roving, $10/lb and up. Handspinners flock. Registered Icelandic lambs. Fiber samples, SASE. **Solidago Farm,** PO Box 38, Nottingham, NH 03290. (603) 679-2081.

IMMACULATE BLUE-RIBBON Romney fleeces in all natural colors. Luxuriously soft, lustrous, resilient. Samples $2/pg. **Kings Valley** since 1976. 39968 Ward, Monmouth, OR 97361. (541) 929-2100.

JACOB FLEECES, JSBA registered, spinner/weaver's flock—top-quality, guaranteed fleeces for handspinning. Send $2 for sample and price list. **Craft's at Bluffton,** 2572 Village Rd., Decorah, IA 52101. (319) 735-5533.

KARAKUL FLEECES, mohair, very nice. Samples $1 each or $2 for both. **High Plains Sheep & Wool,** PO Box 402, Simla, CO 80835.

KEEP YOUR WOOL CLEAN with SHEEP COVERS from **I've Got Ewe Covered,** 2732 Westlake Ct., Longmont, CO 80503. (303 651-6041.

KRAUSE SHOW LINCOLNS. Clean, lustrous, white and colored, spinner-skirted fleeces. $4/lb (plus shipping). Samples $2. **Jeanette Krause,** 3266 Klam, Columbiaville, MI 48421. (810) 793-7472.

LLAMA FIBER: grown and organically processed in the Pacific Northwest. Seven natural colors in easy-to-spin roving $2/oz, and soft, fine 2-ply yarns $4/oz. A few select 1995 fleeces from $1.50/oz. Free shipping and handling. Friendly, personal service. Kay Patterson, **Hinterland Ranch,** PO Box 1839, Sisters, OR 97759. (541) 549-1215.

LOVELY FLEECES—Finn/Rambouillet, Romney, Romney crosses. White and natural colored. Send SASE for samples. **Herbal Ewe Farm,** Diane Sparks, 7278 Norton Rd., Hollandale, WI 53544.

LUSTROUS, FINE, WELL-SKIRTED, raw mohair. Kid, yearling, and adult from registered goats. SASE for sample and price. **Collier Registered Angoras,** 101 S. Red Bridge Rd., Roswell, NM 88201. (505) 623-8004.

LUSTROUS LINCOLN LONGWOOL. Covered, silver/gray 6-8 inches. $1 sample. Incredibly clean. **Bittersweet Farm,** 1483 N 2100 Rd., Lawrence, KS 66044. (913) 842-8347

LUXURIOUS BACTRIAN CAMEL fiber. Now taking orders for 1996. Send $3 and LSASE for brochure and samples. **dana's designs-SO,** Dana Locken, 13755 396th Ave., Bath, SD 57427

MERINO OR MOHAIR ROVING. Exquisite and very clean. White and dyed colors. Samples $1. **Promenade,** 1850 Knepp Rd., Fairview, MI 48621.

MOHAIR! MOHAIR! MOHAIR! 15 different colors packaged in 8 oz bags or 8 "combo color" choices with 2 oz of four colors in each bag. $11/8 oz bag. Call or drop us a line for free samples/color cards. **Dos Hermanas Fiberworks,** 4504 Amistad Dr., Midland TX 79707 (915) 697-8869.

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NATURAL DYES. Canadian Master dyer Karen Diadick Casselman *Craft Of The Dyer,* Dover 1993; can schedule two or more workshops in Chicago/Peoria/Madison area between October 14–20, 1997 Contact **Studio Vista,** Cheverie, Nova Scotia, Canada B0N 1G0, before November 1, 1996.

NOW AVAILABLE FROM AUTHOR. *Dyepot.* For all natural dyers. Send $7 post paid. Wholesale available, write: **Mary Frances Davidson,** 2304 Mayford Way, Gatlinburg, TN 37738.

VIDEO KITS make learning even easier. They include everything you need. *Knitting Unspun Silk* includes enough dyed silk hankies to knit a 6" × 48" scarf, a pair of knitting needles, a pattern and a 26-minute instructional video with Sammy Eber. *Drop Spindle Spinning* includes 4 oz of dyed wool, 1 oz dyed locks, a drop spindle, leader and 32-minute instructional video with Melda Montgomery. **Victorian Video Productions,** PO Box 1540, Colfax, CA 95713. Free catalog. (800) 848-0284.

Literature

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BLACK SHEEP NEWSLETTER, published quarterly for growers, spinners, and textile artists interested in colored sheep, wool, and other animal fibers. Subscriptions are $14 per year in U.S., sample copy $3. 25455 NW Dixie Mtn. Rd., Scappoose, OR 97056.

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NORTHWEST REGIONAL SPINNER'S Association, Inc., invites you to become a vital link in a spinners' communication network to promote awareness of the art and craft of handspinning and to give spinners the opportunity to share, learn, educate, study, compete, cooperate. Ten newsletters a year. For more information, send SASE to **NWRSA,** PO Box 2755, Redmond, WA 98075-2755.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOGGE, quarterly journal of the Border Collie, culture and lore, historic and contemporary, published and edited by a fiber enthusiast. Our 9th year. $18/year. Sample $4.50. **Woolgather,** Dept. SO, Box 843, Ithaca, NY 14851. (607) 659-5868; e-mail woolgather@clarityconnect.com

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