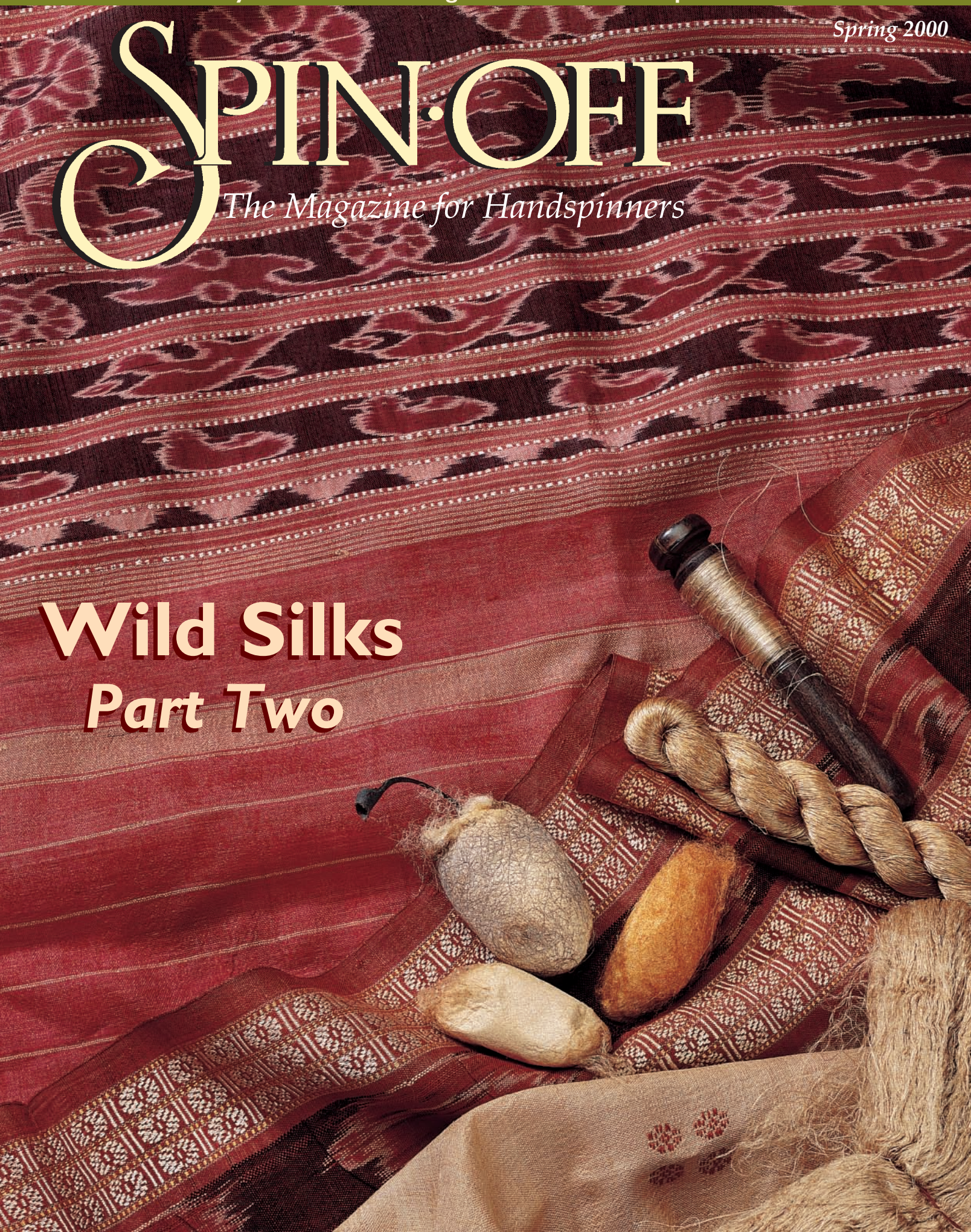
1999 Index • Gallery of Blankets and Afghans • Save the Sheep

Spring 2000

SPIN-OFF

The Magazine for Handspinners



Wild Silks
Part Two

The Little Wheel

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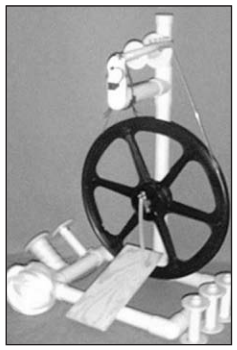
fiber starter

That Could!



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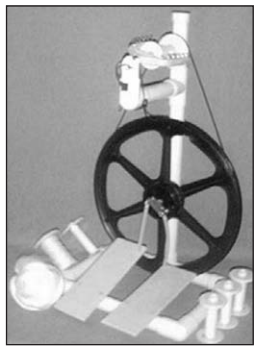

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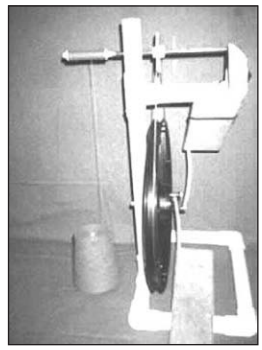

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Ask about Dealer & Teacher Program.

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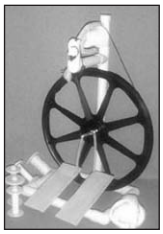

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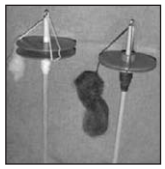
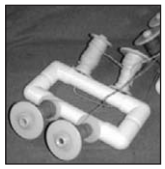
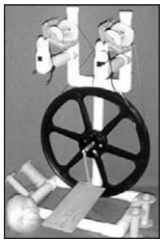


Babe's Top Whorf Hand Spindle



4 Ply Lazy Kate - New

Brown Sheep Roving SpeciaL



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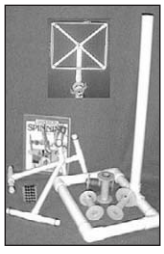
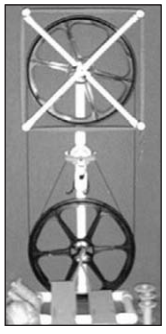


Options: Babe aids, Skein Winder, Portable Stand, Niddy Noddy, Bobbins, Hands on Spinning by Lee Raven and ask for what you want.



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SPIN·OFF

The Magazine for Handspinners

Volume XXIV
Number 1
Spring 2000

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On the cover: *Wild silk! In the background is a sari from India woven from thigh-reeled tasar silk, like the yarn in the flat skein. The cocoons, from top to bottom, are tasar, eri, and muga silks. The bobbin and small twisted skein show muga silk yarn. For lots more information (fix yourself a cup of tea first), see the article that starts on page 56.*

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Editor's Page

Biggest surprise participant in the Save the Sheep project: *Pitt Island Merinos. The wool is fine, and so thoroughly crimped it extends to almost twice its length. Elastic? We've never seen anything like it. Brought to the South Pacific in the middle of the nineteenth century, abandoned, survived in the wild (became feral), and now being conserved. We need this sheep! See pages 40–43 for more Save the Sheep info.*

It's four in the morning. It's early in the cycle of making the magazine (I usually write this piece as we are about to go to press and all the "more important" elements have been completed). I have just awakened from a dream upstairs with a clear overview in my head of what this issue is likely to contain, and I am struck by how wide-ranging it is becoming: information on natural dye experiments in northern Canada, Save the Sheep entries from around the world, indigo from Japan and from the Yoruba, wild silks from the jungles of India.

For spinners, information like this is difficult to get. Somebody has to go to a place, a museum, a book—and it can't be just anyone. This person has to notice the funny carved boards in the glass-covered case, the tiny spindle in the hand, the "thread-winder" that isn't one, and the silkworms in the tray. The person has to understand that these are the foundations of civilizations throughout the world, the core of survival, of art, and of personal satisfaction. This observer must see with eyes to the practical—How is this item or knowledge used? What can I learn from it?—and the visionary—What does it tell me about the other things I know? What can I create with this information?

Most people would walk right by. If they do see the spinner or the spindle, they consider it a bit of quaint local color, something to be taken for granted, if not completely ignored. The Navajo spinner in the diorama at the Smithsonian is holding her spindle wrong. Who cares?

The skills and materials of our craft, though much more widely known than they were even ten years ago, are still too close to being completely lost. We need to honor and preserve them in ourselves and in each other.

This has become even clearer to me recently. Two visionaries ended long lives and, in the process, left our community—Elizabeth Zimmermann and Harry Linder. And just as we were going to press we learned that another treasure, Sophi Dorfi, has passed on. Throughout their decades of productive inquiry, these people blessed us with their insight and discoveries. The way we can honor them is to keep exploring, and to continue passing along what we learn, as well as the questions we see rising before us.

I have come downstairs (I work from my home) and turned on the computer. Its screen glows flat and mostly white in the pre-dawn dark. Its electronic gleam outlines the fur on the back of the black cat, who sits, as usual, on the desk between keyboard and monitor. I am typing in the dark, with the cat's tail flapping softly between my fingers and the keys. But I can see the colors of the leaf-filled indigo pot, of the fabric that comes out of it, of the golden silks being reeled by people who don't work in cubicles, of the bobbin my own child has filled with her favorite fibers, silks again. Of musk oxen and North Ronaldsay sheep and flax.

These are the real dreams. And we need to stay awake to them.

Deborah Robson, editor

P.S. For the next issue cycle, I will be working full-time on the book/catalog which will accompany the Save the Sheep exhibition—it has turned into a far bigger project than we envisioned. Amy Clarke, *Spin·Off*'s assistant editor, and Rita Buchanan, who has served as the magazine's associate editor and a regular contributor, are preparing the summer issue. I'm looking forward to seeing what we all come up with!

Oops

In the article "Wild Silks of the World," by Richard Peigler, in the Winter 1999 issue of *Spin·Off* (page 62), we failed to correct the maps to reflect the current political situation in Tibet. These maps were prepared several years ago, before the Tibetan Independence Movement was as "above ground" as it is now. We apologize deeply for this error.

We apologize for misprinting the website address for *The Cotswold Sheep*, a book mentioned on page 128 of the Winter 1999 issue of *Spin·Off*. It should be www.charitynet.org/~cotswoldsheep.

Letters

Dear *Spin·Off,*

I am embarrassed. In my book, *High Whorling: A Spinner's Guide to an Old World Skill,* the wrong illustration is shown for rolling a rolag on page 49. This same illustration was reprinted in an excerpt from the book that appeared in *Spin·Off* earlier this year. Rest assured, I do prepare a rolag in the traditional manner, rolling the fibers **up** the face of the carder, not across. The correct illustration was deleted during layout for the book—it was my responsibility to check for accuracy, and this one got by me. I humbly apologize.

To anyone interested, Nomad Press has prepared a sturdy book marker with the correct illustration on one side and an update on using the nøstepinne on the other—you can even have this autographed, if you'd like. Send a SASE to Nomad Press, 1815 2335 Rd., Cedaredge, CO 81413.

—Pricilla A. Gibson-Roberts
Cedaredge, Colorado

Dear *Spin·Off,*

Your magazine has been a lifeline for me! Three of our children are young adults, two of them overseas and the third about to take her family, including our only two baby grandchildren, to Australia. Our fourth and youngest child, in grade 9, is at boarding school, a long way away. Talk about empty-nest syndrome! Also our farm is an hour's drive, one way, on a dirt road (rock and stones is an apter description) to the nearest village, and you could talk about *isolation!*

I've had my spinning wheel for years, but—due to the calls made on my time as a farmer's wife and homemaker and mother on a tight budget (as well as the fact that there are no like-minded crafty people in our district)—I've neither applied myself to perfecting the craft of spinning, nor found inspiration to do so.

I no longer have any excuses! More time I now have, and inspiration arrives every three months by post! I savor every page of *Spin·Off,* even the advertisements—I just wish it was published more frequently! Thank you for your magazine. When I've completed the first project of my *new spinning era* (the thick, heavy sweaters of my lumpy handspun from our own Merino sheep now belonging, hopefully, to the previous era), I'll write you again!

—Vivienne Cawood
Tarkastad, South Africa

Editor's note: *We'll look forward to hearing what happens!*

Dear *Spin·Off,*

I love *Spin·Off*—it is my favorite magazine-type read of all time and I look forward to every issue. I am really looking forward to seeing what happened with the rare breed challenge. I know a number of people who were going to participate from the Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, area. Unfortunately, I was moving and decided I had better give it a miss, even though I have some rare breed fleeces in my "stash."

I don't know if *Spin·Off* staff is aware of it, but in Toronto there is an accountant who is a historian by hobby and he gave a CBC radio lecture on Odysseus for a program called "Ideas." This was quite a few years ago and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

His research and thinking turned up the idea that Odysseus traveled to Britain looking for tin. This makes sense to me, as when humans go to war they tend to uncover new technology—and I know from reading children's books by Rosemary Sutcliffe that the Irish had learned to make very hot forges and were producing weapons of a stronger metal than iron. If Odysseus had experienced any of this technology during battle, he may well have headed off to find out how it was done.

Anyway, Edward Furlough was able to chart a journey for Odysseus that took him through the waters to the north of Scotland, past Shetland, and on to Norway, after which the Vikings of that day helped him return to Greece.

When I read the article on the Soay sheep being related to some Bronze Age sheep from Eastern Europe, I immediately thought of this and put the two ideas together. I'm still wondering. I thought that other spinners might also be interested in pondering this idea as

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you are clicking away with your needles and whirring away with your spinning devices.

—Gillian Rambold
Kamuela, Hawaii

Dear *Spin·Off*,

Your article on Walter Ashford in the Winter 1999 issue got me all stirred up and I just have to tell you why. I began spinning in my early twenties (I am now 28) on a used Louet I bought from my spinning teacher in New Brunswick. I still have that wheel and it's just fine, but I had to leave it behind (although I brought my Turkish spindle . . .) when my partner, Mathew, and I moved to Australia for school in 1997. While we were there, my mom kindly forwarded *Spin·Off* and I saw the promotion for the Wool and Fibre Festival in New Zealand, to be held in the town of Kaitaia in April 1998.

Mathew and I considered our next move—were we going to Asia to teach English?—to Europe or South America to travel and study?—back to Canada to settle? Well, that little ad seemed to confirm it—we were going to New Zealand! Mathew got a teaching job in Auckland, and I got a job at an engineering company doing marketing, but I was really planning my strategy to get to Kaitaia. Happily, the festival coincided with the school holidays. I don't think I entertained other options for even a second—we might have been in the most scenic country in the world with many facets to explore, but I'll be darned if we weren't getting ourselves up the North Island to Kaitaia!

At the festival, I saw the Ashford clan in the flesh—all of them spinning and seeming even more dreamy than all the ads I'd seen in *Spin·Off*. I looked at a few of their wheels and marveled. I picked up about a million brochures and wafted through the festival in a daze while Mathew read the Kaitaia newspaper in a corner somewhere.

Back in Auckland, I dug out a brochure, tracked down an Ashford distributor in Auckland, and (with about a millisecond's hesitation) bought an Elizabeth wheel. On a future road trip, this time to the South Island (agreeing to snowboard, hike, and tour about if we could spend an afternoon at the Ashford Village in Ashburton), I loaded up on incredible spinnables. My most notable project from this foray is one of several works in progress—a Toronto Maple Leafs hockey jersey for Mathew.

All this takes me back to Walter Ashford, and to your story about his talents as a designer of these wonderful wheels. Mathew and I finally moved back to Toronto, and here I had this lovely wheel to bring with me (not to mention a flock's worth of fleece)—what to do? I had bought the wheel assembled, but now had to disassemble it and pack it lovingly into a box, convincing myself that I would remember how to put it back together. In Toronto, I did just that over one long afternoon. Not only did I have the pleasure of watching my treasured Ashford wheel take shape like an apparition before my eyes, I was filled with respect for the engineering that went into this beautiful wheel. It's my favorite piece of New Zealand. Thank you, Ashfords!

—Lorraine Smith
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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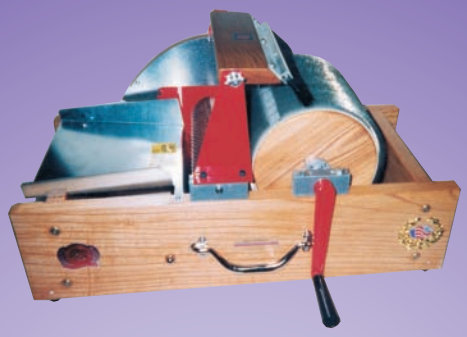

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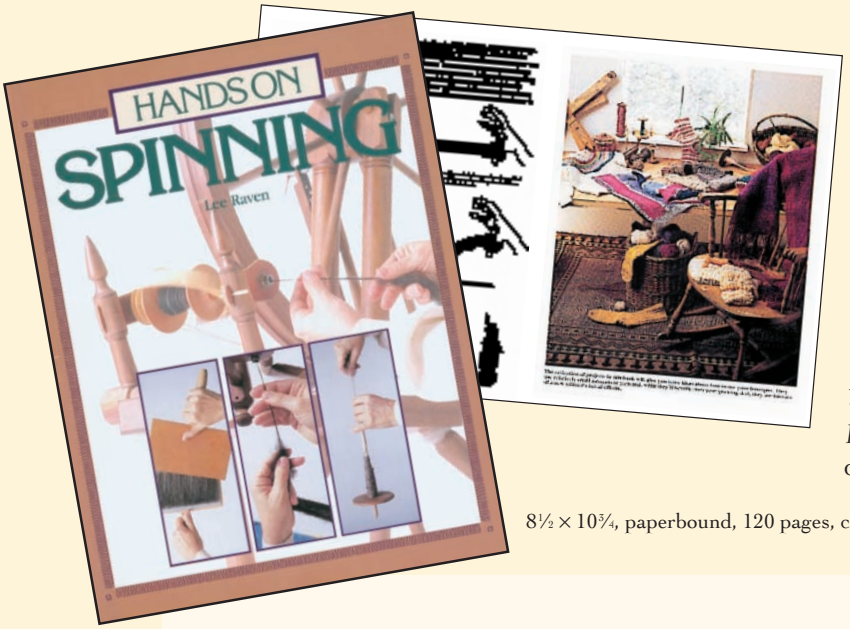

Hands On Spinning

Lee Raven

Whether you're teaching yourself to spin or filling in knowledge gaps, *Hands On Spinning* answers all your questions. How do you get that first yarn to hang together? What's the difference between woolen and worsted, combing and carding, line and tow flax, camel down and qiviut? What's a charka? A footman? How do you change bobbins?

Hands On Spinning was written by Lee Raven, former editor of *Spin·Off*. You won't want to spin without it!

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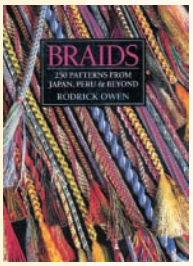

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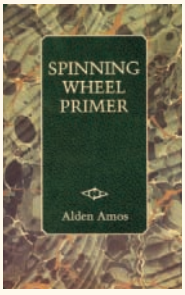

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Reviews

Uncut Cloth: Saris, Shawls, and Sashes

Nasreen Askari and Liz Arthur

London: Merrell Holberton, 1999. Distributed in the U.S. by St. Martin's. Softbound, 128 pages, $29.95. ISBN 1-85894-083-4.

This colorful book was published to accompany an exhibition of saris, shawls, and other textiles that was on display last summer at the Paisley Museum and Art Galleries in Paisley, Scotland. Through photos and words, it covers two related but quite different topics.

The second, shorter part of the book briefly reviews an intriguing and complex story that could easily fill a book of its own. In the 1600s and 1700s, huge quantities of Indian muslin and chintz (these terms encompassed a variety of handspun, handwoven cotton fabrics, both white and printed with madder and other natural dyes) were imported into Europe, England, and Scotland, and also shipped on to the United States and other markets. Then things turned around. From the late 1700s through the late 1800s, a relatively small number of firms around Glasgow, Scotland, produced even larger quantities of millspun and millwoven cotton fabrics, dyed and printed them to mimic the traditional Indian fabrics, and exported them back to India! Meanwhile, mills in Paisley copied the legendary Kashmir shawls and sold them around the world. Although it isn't developed here, this story is really about the upheaval caused when cheap foreign imports enter a market, and how trade and industrialization have affected the history of textiles.

The first topic, which fills most of the book, is the prevalence and significance of lengths of uncut fabric in the wardrobes and traditions of South Asia, primarily India and Pakistan, where "[c]loth is often imbued with a sanctity of its own. In the unsewn form, especially, it is considered holy or sacred. . . ." There are discussions and photos of saris, generally woven from cotton or silk and worn by women; shawls and head coverings, woven from cashmere, wool, cotton, or silk and worn by both women and men; men's turban cloths, usually made from cotton or silk; and various waistcloths, loincloths, and skirts worn by men and women; plus sashes, other costume accessories, and bed coverings, canopies, wall coverings, and screens.

This part of the book includes portraits of men, women, and children wearing simple wrapped, tied, and tucked garments, scenes of village life, and many close-ups of fabrics. My favorite photos show weavers sitting at rustic looms made from poles, sticks, string, and rope, with yards of warp stretched on the ground and weighted

—continued on page 10

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more Reviews . . .

(continued from page 7)

with a rock, producing fabrics much finer than anything I've ever tried. Such simple tools, such holy cloth.

The fabrics shown all date to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All are handwoven, and many use handspun yarns. Most are colored with natural dyes in vivid shades of red and gold along with black, navy blue, and white. Few are plain. Most are richly patterned with geometric or figurative motifs created by weave structure, embroidery, tie-dyeing, and block-printing.

As a dyer, spinner, and weaver, my first reaction to these textiles is awe and amazement. The colors are so intense, the threads so fine, and the patterns so complex. I can hardly imagine having the time, patience, or skill to produce yards of such cloth. But it would be quite feasible to excerpt ideas from these cloths and apply them to smaller projects, such as scarves or bags. You might copy the proportions of a set of stripes, stitch a single repeat of an embroidered motif instead of covering the entire fabric with embroidery, or work a row of inlays along one edge or end of a woven piece.

This is a beautiful book, and it's inspiring and thought-provoking. Even if you never use an idea from it, it's worth having on your shelf as a reminder of what spinners can achieve and how remarkable handmade fabrics can be.

—Rita Buchanan

How to Knit: The Definitive Knitting Course Complete with Step-by-Step Techniques, Stitch Library, and Projects for Your Home and Family

Debbie Bliss

North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 1999. Hardbound, 160 pages, $29.95. ISBN 1-57076-145-0.

This is another excellent knitting book by knitting designer Debbie Bliss. Intended for beginners, it would be a valuable home library acquisition for all but the most accomplished knitters. Debbie Bliss is an English designer, and thus *How to Knit* offers the English system of rudimentary knitting instructions.

The book is set up on a workshop basis, including sections on Beginning Knitting, Simple Stitches, Color, Aran Design, Lace, Entrelac, Decorative Details, Original Designing, and valuable finishing tips. It also contains fifteen attractive projects, designed for Rowan Yarns. The basic information at the end of the book contains a yarn weight section, which would help spinners match the specified yarns with handspun.

The sections I found to be particularly strong for spinning knitters included stitch libraries in each workshop, the Design Workshop, the Stitch Workshop, which includes instructions for designing your own sweaters (with calculations tables in both imperial and metric systems), and the Finishing Workshop.

This is a good selection for beginning to intermediate knitters who are interested in creating their own designs. It is especially good for those unable to attend live workshops.

—Jude Daurelle

Working with Wool: Spinning

Delia Burge

Austin, Manitoba, Canada: Rural Route Videos, 1999. 120 minutes, $29.95. Available from Rural Route Videos, P.O. Box 359, Austin, Manitoba, Canada P0H 0C0, (800) 823-7703; www.ruralroutevideos.com.

Working with Wool: Spinning takes the viewer through the entire process of spinning, including visits to natural and chemical dyeing, fleece selection, and quality. The instructor, Delia Burge, is well-paced in the way she shows the techniques involved, and gives good reasons for the way things are done. Her selection of dyed fibers, glimpsed briefly during the video, is incredible!

—Kris Paige

The Three and Me Club: A Novel Way to Learn to Spin! Woolgatherings for Dyers & Spinsters, No. 12

Dee Duke

Carlton, Nottingham, England: Woolgatherings, 1999. Softbound, 60 pages, $8 US, dollar bills, or draft for £5 Sterling. ISBN 1-900074-12-5. Willow House, 11 Frederick Avenue, Carlton, Nottingham, England NG4 1HP.

This delightful book sneaks the basics of spinning into the adventures of four friends—one of whom knows how to spin. If Agatha Christie had ever decided Miss Marple needed spinning as a disguise, she might have written this! There's a mild mystery, although no murder.

In the short space of sixty pages, the book covers fleece selection, preparation, plying, and finishing; it touches on dyeing, silk, Wensleydale and Merino; and it finishes with yummy recipes. Patterns for some of the items mentioned in the story are given in the text, with some of them thoughtfully repeated in

—continued on page 22

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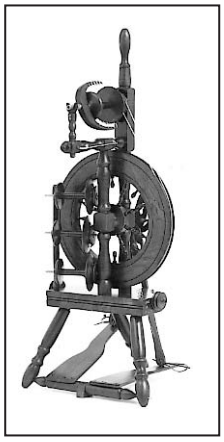

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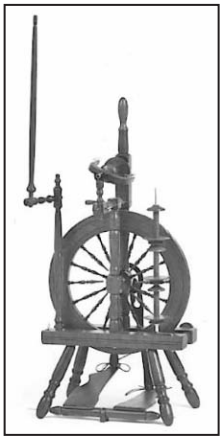

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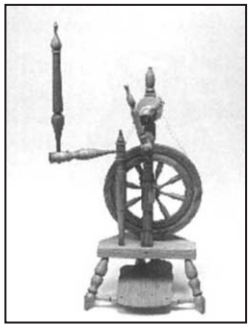

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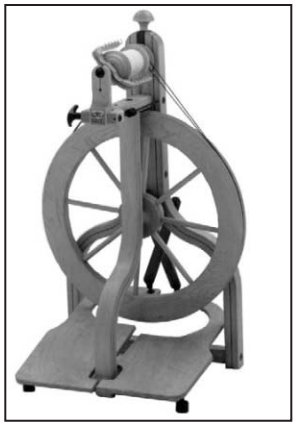

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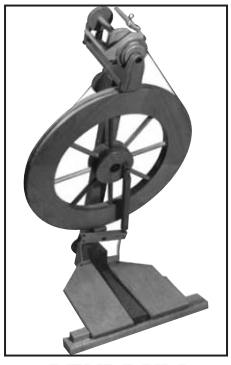

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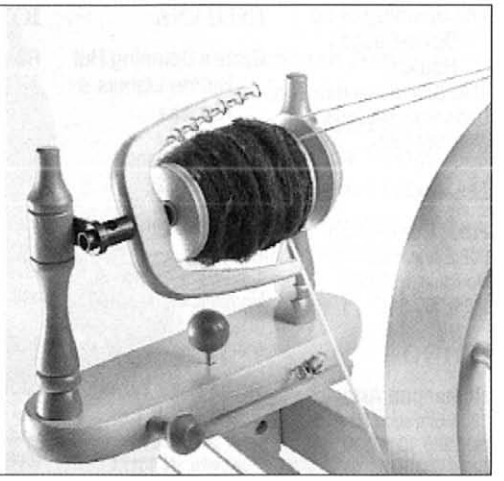

Here is the double drive flyer mounted on a Traditional Spinning Wheel. You can either buy a Traditional as a double drive wheel or convert a single drive (Scottish tension) to a double drive.

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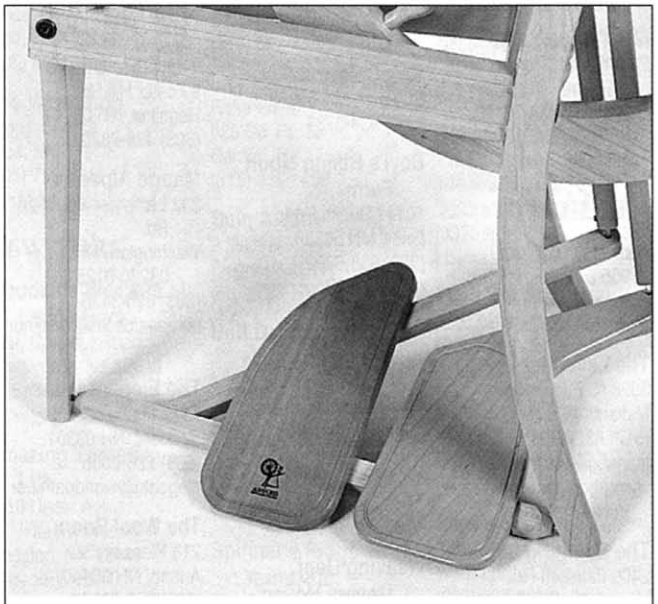

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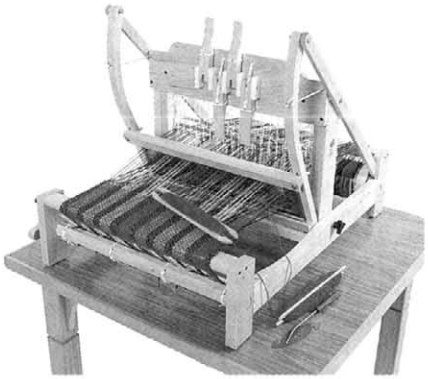
ASHFORD



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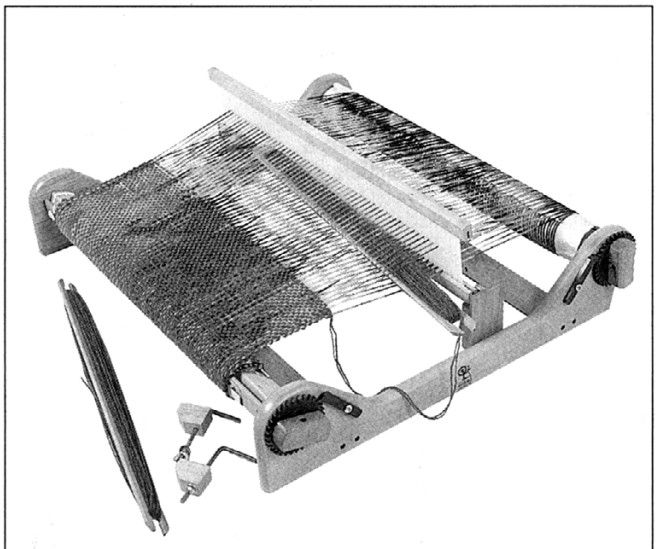

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Beginners Start Here

Essentials

Basic ideas, tools, and terms

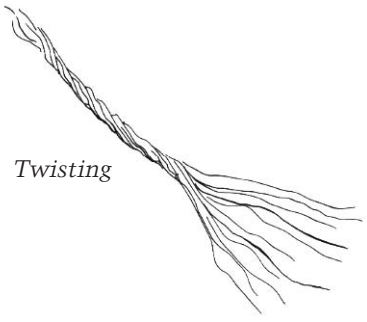
Part of a series on the basics for handspinners

This information has been drawn from a variety of sources, including two introductory brochures on spinning which are available on request from Spin·Off *for use by individuals or groups who do demonstrations or teaching. They are free of charge and are provided for the general advancement of the spinning community. One brochure covers basic terms and processes; the other describes how to start spinning with minimal equipment.*

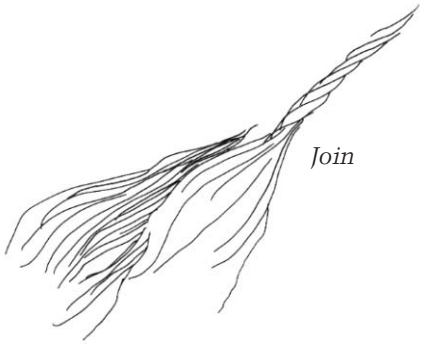
MAKING YARN

Many kinds of spinning tools are available today—everything from simple wooden handspindles to high-tech electric spinners, from antique wool and flax wheels to modern wheels. The diversity of spinning tools is a wonderful story in itself, but it's important to remember that in **handspinning,** it's the skill and sensitivity of the spinner's hands that shape the yarn. The spinner is in control; the tool is just an assistant.

No matter which tool you use, the process of spinning is basically the same. The first step is **drafting** or pulling fibers out of the prepared lock, top, batt, or roving. Drafting just a few fibers at a time makes a very thin yarn; drafting many fibers makes a thicker yarn. **Twisting** the drafted fibers makes yarn. Twist holds the fibers together so they don't slip apart or rub loose; one of the spinner's skills is determining the appropriate amount of twist for a given yarn. At the start, you want enough twist that the yarn is strong . . . and not so much that the strand you are spinning makes itself into independent corkscrews. After drafting and twisting a length of yarn, you can let it **wind onto** the bobbin of the spinning wheel or wind it onto a spindle by hand, then start drafting and twisting more yarn. When you finish spinning one batch of fiber, you make a **join** by splicing on a new supply. A careful join is invisible in the finished yarn.



Twisting



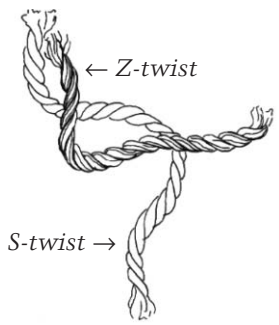
Join

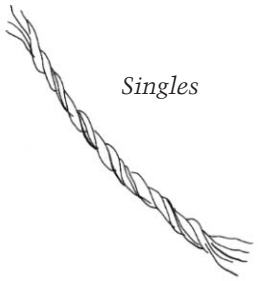
Turn the wheel (or spindle) one way and you get **Z-twist** yarn. Turn it the other way and you'll have **S-twist** yarn. By convention, most spinners turn the wheel clockwise (Z) to make yarn from loose fiber, but the only rule is that if you *start* spinning in a given direction you need to keep going that way until you've finished with that bobbin- or spindle-full of yarn (reversing directions untwists your work).

Depending on what type of fiber you're spinning and how you use your hands, the steps of drafting and twisting may be done separately and in sequence, or they can flow together into a continuous process. Spinners working with combed, long-staple wool often draft by moving their hands just a few inches—about half the length of the fibers—in a gesture called a **short draw.** Then they deliberately guide the twist into the drafted fibers, making a smooth, dense **worsted** yarn. Spinners using short-staple wool that has been carded and rolled into rolags may use a **long draw,** moving one hand back and forth with a full swing of the arm, simultaneously drafting and twisting up to three feet of fuzzy, puffy, **woolen** yarn before winding it on. You'll see many variations and combinations of these techniques if you watch different people spin; as with most decisions in spinning, what's "right" is whatever works best for the individual spinner and the fiber. Because they can be so unique, there is no precise, consistent way of describing drafting methods.

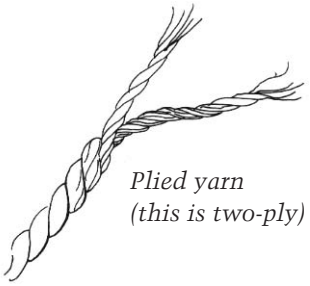
When you turn loose fiber into yarn, you make a **singles** yarn (a single strand), with the fibers all twisted in the same direction. Singles yarn can be finished and used as is, but spinners often take an extra step, twisting two or more strands of singles together to make **plied** yarn, which is usually stronger, more uniform, and easier to handle. The simplest plied yarn twists two singles together in the opposite direction to their original spinning (Z singles, S plied). A **balanced** yarn is a special type of plied yarn, where the twist used in plying exactly balances the twist used in spinning and straightens out the fibers. A balanced yarn is very calm and doesn't kink at all.

Basic spinning and plying techniques produce "plain-vanilla" yarn, lovely in itself and useful for all kinds of knitting, weaving, and other projects. A plain-vanilla spinner can achieve plenty of variety simply by using different types of wool (in natural or dyed colors), by varying the thickness and twist of the singles, and by choosing whether or not to ply the yarn. For even more variety, there are advanced techniques

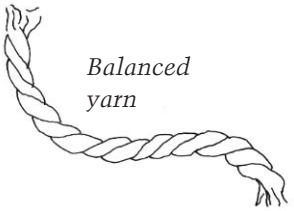




Singles



Plied yarn (this is two-ply)



Balanced yarn

for making fancy **designer** yarns, with unique texture and color effects.

FINISHING WOOL YARN

After plying—or after spinning, if the yarn will be used as singles—make the yarn into a skein by winding it onto a **niddy-noddy** or **skein winder.** Tie the skein in at least three places before you remove it from the niddy-noddy. Wool yarn usually gets softer and puffier when you wash and dry it, and it also **shrinks** in length—usually 10 to 25 percent, but sometimes even more. It's a good idea to wash yarn and let it shrink before you knit, weave, or do something else with it.

To **wash** the skein, fill your sink with comfortably warm water and add a squirt or two of dishwashing liquid or shampoo; set the skein on top of the water and press it down gently to get it wet. Let it soak for a few minutes. Lift the skein out of the water, drain the basin, and run in rinse water of the same temperature. Set the skein in the water and press down gently again. Remove the skein, drain the water, and repeat the rinse. Squeeze the skein (don't wring it) to remove excess water, and then let the skein dry on a towel or rack.[1]

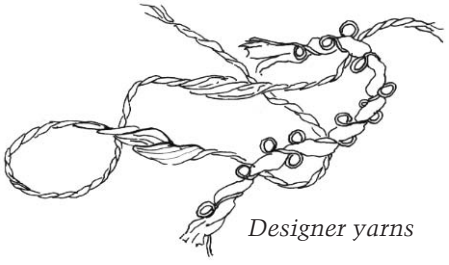
Felting happens when you agitate or rub wet wool fleece, yarn, or fabric. It's wonderful to make felt on purpose, but to avoid accidental felting when you're washing any wool product, be careful to handle it as little and as gently as possible.

If the yarn looks wrinkly or kinky after you wash it, you can smooth it out by **steaming** it, like you would steam wrinkles out of a garment. Use a travel steamer or steam iron, or pass the skein over the spout of a steaming teakettle; five to ten seconds of steaming is enough to smooth most yarns.

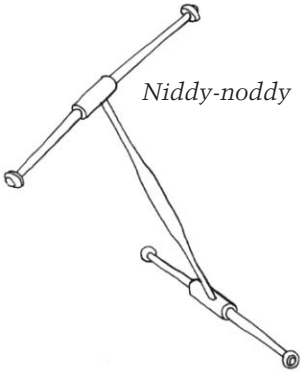
Admire your skein. It's some of the best yarn in the world! ❖

Text by Rita Buchanan and Deborah Robson. Illustrations by Ann Sabin Swanson.

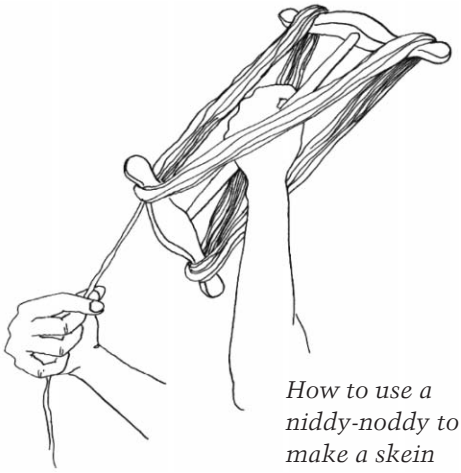
[1] The same process works for washing raw wool. Wash in batches that fit your sink or basin, and gently lift the wool mass as you would a skein.



Designer yarns



Niddy-noddy



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more Reviews . . .

(continued from page 10)

the appendix. The pattern for the silk garter looked intricate until I sat down and tried it. It worked up beautifully!

This is not a technical book, going in depth into each area addressed, but rather an invitation to join along, like a polite mouse in the corner, while Madge, Jen, and Betty learn to make glorious yarn and encounter mild adventures along the way. The instruction is within the story, making it easy to assimilate. I only wish there weren't an ocean between us—an afternoon tea with these spinners would be fun!

—Kris Paige

Festive Feltings

Maddy Cranley

Pointe Claire, Québec: Penguin Lane Press, 1999. Softbound, 9 pages, $6.95. ISBN 0-9681448-3-7. Penguin Lane Press, 18 Salisbury Rd., Pointe Claire, Québec, Canada H9S 3Z3, fax (514) 636-3729, felting@compuserve.com, ourworld.compuserve.com/ homepages/felting. Publication no. 4837, distributed in the U.S. by Unicorn Books and Crafts, 1338 Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954, (707) 762-3362, fax (707) 762-0335, unicorn@unicornbooks.com.

Here are a number of ideas for using leftover yarn. The yarn is wrapped around fiberfill, so you don't use much fiber and felting proceeds quickly. Follow the simple knitting directions, felt as instructed, and you've got decorations for tree, centerpiece, or wreath. The diagrams are clear, and children's groups could produce objects during a meeting and take them home for felting.

—Kris Paige

Note: Review copies of *The Harmony Guides,* volumes 4, 5, 6, and 7, were provided by Unicorn Books and Crafts, 1338 Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954, (707) 762-3362, fax (707) 762-0335, unicorn@unicornbooks.com. Other volumes in this series, not reviewed here, include: *The Harmony Guides: Volume 1, Knitting Techniques,* ISBN 1-85585-631-X; *The Harmony Guides: Volume 2, 450 Knitting Stitches,* ISBN 1-85585-629-8; and *The Harmony Guides: Volume 3, 440 More Knitting Stitches,* ISBN 1-85585-630-1. All are being made available in the United States by Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT 05053, at $15.95/volume.

The Harmony Guides: Volume 4, 250 Creative Knitting Stitches

London: Collins and Brown Limited, 1998. Softbound, 96 pages, $15.95. ISBN 1-85585-632-8. This volume was first published in 1990 as the Harmony Guide to Knitting Stitches, Volume III.

For several years, the *Harmony Guide to Knitting* has been one of my favorite knitting resource books. This new book, volume 4, a re-publication, includes introductory chapters on Equipment, Basic Techniques, Charts, Abbreviations, and symbols. The main portion offers 250 stitch combinations

—continued on page 116

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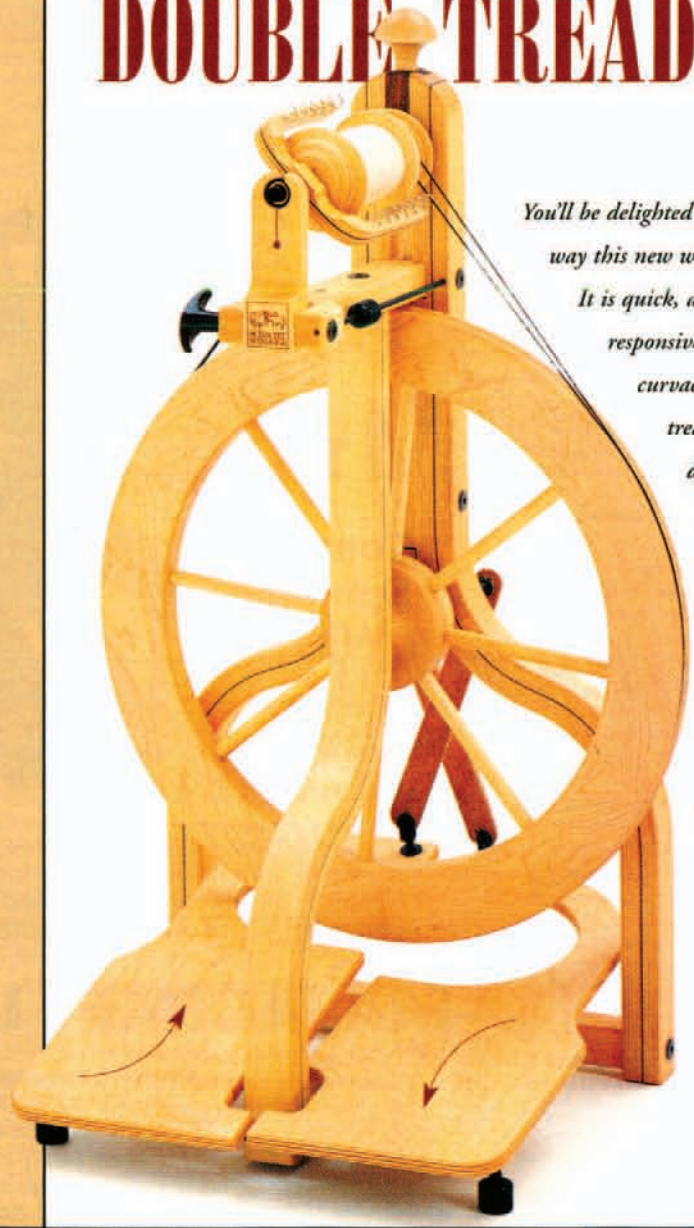

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A Tribute to Elizabeth Zimmermann

by Mary Kaiser

ELIZABETH ZIMMERMANN, who died November 30, 1999, at age 89, was, in her own words, opinionated. Her opinions—amusing, creative, and liberating—revolutionized the craft of knitting. For at least forty years, the initials *EZ* have stood for the highest standards of textile design and technique.

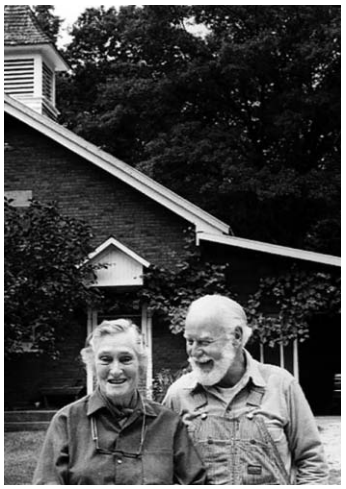
Elizabeth was born in London, England, in 1910, and learned to knit as a child. As a young woman, she attended art school in Munich, where she said she "really learned how to paint and draw," and where she met her future husband, Arnold Zimmermann. Afraid that his opposition to Hitler would end in his arrest, Arnold left Germany. Elizabeth had already gone to Finland, and they met up in Switzerland before traveling to England, where they married. In 1937, Elizabeth and Arnold emigrated to the United States, and they lived in New York and Pennsylvania before settling in Wisconsin. Meanwhile, Elizabeth had been knitting steadily for each of her three children as they came along.

In the mid-1950s, Elizabeth began to publish her sweater designs in magazines. The first was a Norwegian drop-shoulder sweater in *Woman's Day,* which printed the instructions in Elizabeth's own words. In 1959, *Vogue Pattern Book* sent her an Aran sweater from Ireland and asked her to write the first Aran-style sweater pattern to be printed in the United States.

Although she was successful as a sweater designer, Elizabeth grew frustrated with the way her designs were most often edited beyond recognition. For example, directions for a sweater with a yoke, featured on the cover of a pattern leaflet in 1958, told readers to knit it flat, with separate pieces to be sewn together, and not in the round, as Elizabeth had designed it. Determined to make her real work

*Elizabeth Zimmermann articulated an approach to knitting which empowered all knitters, but was critical to the development of contemporary handspinners. The photos on this page were taken at an early SOAR (*Spin·Off *Autumn Retreat).*

Elizabeth also moved knitting out of the rocking chair. She explored both internal and external landscapes, knitting all the way. Elizabeth and her husband, Arnold, are shown above on a motorcycle and below in front of the Schoolhouse, which became the home of the Zimmermanns and of Schoolhouse Press.



public, Elizabeth started to publish her own newsletters—the first one gave the correct instructions for that sweater. A few years later, encouraged by Barbara Walker's success in publishing her first collection of stitch patterns, Elizabeth decided to write a book. The now-classic *Knitting Without Tears* appeared in 1971.

Elizabeth's original choice for that book's title, *The Opinionated Knitter,* would have been more accurate. *KWT,* as it is known by its many fans, is written for the brave and the free in the knitting community, not for the tearful. One of very few how-to books that has never been out of print, *Knitting Without Tears* has taught untold thousands of people how to knit, but its lessons go far beyond an introduction to the basics. First, the book breaks down a whole system of dependency on knitting patterns. Then it introduces a flexible system that allows knitters to design for themselves.

Like all revolutionaries, EZ began by tearing down obsolete monuments. With aplomb, edged in crisp British tones, she led knitters into forbidden territory. She told them to cut into their knitted fabric to make a cardigan opening, a buttonhole, a pocket, or a sock heel. She argued for dropping all the stitches off the needles before sewing a hem in a sweater, and added, "take out the knitting needle, without screaming, please. The stitches can't go anywhere." She even suggested beginning to knit a sweater before you know exactly what it's going to look like.

The famous Elizabeth's Percentage System (EPS), toward which she was moving in *Knitting Without Tears* and which she finalized in *Knitting Workshop,* was not a substitute set of rules to replace the old ones. It was a creative device that empowered knitters. With only two pieces of information—the knitter's personal gauge for the chosen yarn and the desired circumference of the finished sweater at the chest—anyone could use simple calculations and knit a garment. No more searching for patterns, no more struggling to force one's gauge to match the instructions in a book or magazine. The EPS system went through many variations, guided by Elizabeth and by her knitting daughter, Meg Swansen. As it evolved, many knitters embraced it and moved beyond its original simplicity. Behind this elaborate legacy still lies the concept of adapting a garment's design to the yarn. It was a key breakthrough, especially for knitters who spin.

The EPS system allows spinners to design garments based on the unique qualities of their yarn, regardless of its weight or texture. In addition, Elizabeth's system, which encourages knitting in the round, brings a knitterly perspective to garment construction. In all of her publications, Elizabeth featured designs that exploit the elastic, cohesive qualities of knitted fabric, and of knitted wool in particular. Instead of using a dressmaking approach, Elizabeth "unvented," or rediscovered, traditional knitting techniques that envision garments as being composed of tubes, not flat pieces. She saw knitting as an organic process.

Elizabeth's outspoken allegiance to wool as the perfect fiber for knitting encouraged others to learn about wool and to begin spinning for themselves. She founded Schoolhouse Press, currently growing under the firm hand of her daughter and partner, Meg, to give other knitters access to hitherto-unavailable wool yarns that she imported from Europe, like Shetland laceweight, Icelandic, and Finnish yarns. Seeing and working with these yarns made spinners more aware of the myriad possibilities of wool for knitting.

After *Knitting Without Tears,* Elizabeth wrote three more books: *Knitter's Almanac* (1981), with projects for every month of the year; *Knitting Workshop* (1981), based on her popular video series for PBS; and *Knitting Around* (1989), which contains her delightful memoirs, along with knitting patterns.

By this time, Elizabeth and Meg were

"Now comes what I perhaps inflatedly call my philosophy of knitting. Like many philosophies, it is hard to express in a few words. Its main tenets are enjoyment and satisfaction, accompanied by thrift, inventiveness, an appearance of industry, and, above all, resourcefulness."

Knitting Without Tears, page 44

running Schoolhouse Press as a team. The press publishes books and videos by Elizabeth and Meg, and reissues knitting books which have been published in other languages or have been forgotten by mainstream publishers. The press continues Elizabeth's mission by supplying hard-to-get wool yarns and knitting tools, keeping invaluable print resources available, and encouraging a global interest in knitting. Schoolhouse Press has introduced American knitters to the original forms of Fair Isle knitting, Shetland and Faroese shawls, Bavarian twisted-stitch patterns, and many other traditions. Elizabeth and Meg also teamed up to run their successful knitting camps in Marshfield, Wisconsin, a tradition that is stronger today than ever.

It's been said that Elizabeth Zimmermann's greatness came through in her engineering of knitting, but it is important to remember that she was an artist first. Every Zimmermann sweater has a recognizable style, its elegance the result of a perfect fit between its look and its feeling to the wearer. Perhaps she was influenced by the form-follows-function philosophy of the Bauhaus during her days in Germany, or maybe her personal aesthetic evolved independently through "unvention," but the beauty of EZ's knitting comes from its purpose: to make the wearer comfortable. To this end, Elizabeth experimented endlessly with shoulder shapings and neck shapings; with the shaping of socks at the calf and the instep; with the structure of scarves. As she explains in *Knitting Without Tears:* "since [scarves] are constantly being pulled lengthwise, make them wider than you deem necessary. . . . Then, of course, the ends flare out. This offends me, personally, and I like to combat it by casting on fewer stitches . . . and increasing up to par after two or three inches."

All of Elizabeth's garment designs were made for real people, many of them her own husband, children, and grandchildren. Readers of the *Woolgathering* newsletter series, which recently celebrated its fortieth birthday under Meg's guidance, watched as Elizabeth's granddaughter, Liesl, and grandson, Cully, grew to adulthood, modeling sweaters at every stage.

Knitters everywhere will miss Elizabeth Zimmermann because she didn't just share her techniques. She invited us into her life, filled to the brim with humor, intelligence, and opinions about knitting and everything else. As she concluded her memoir in *Knitting Around,* Elizabeth bid farewell to her devoted readers by making a connection, as she often did, between knitting and life: "I've had good innings, and may I hope to have more. If you drop a stitch, pick it up immediately!" ❖

Mary Kaiser spins and knits in Alabama. You can see some of her work in the Winter 1999 issue of Spin·Off, *on page 82.*

Editor's note from Deb: *As news that Elizabeth Zimmermann had passed on made its way through the community, many of her admirers mentioned that their response was to pick up yarn and needles and cast on. My tribute is a tunic-length seamless saddle-shouldered sweater (*KWT, *page 75) of heathered Merino two-ply handspun. It will keep me warm through many winters.*

Resources

Zimmermann, Elizabeth. *Elizabeth Zimmermann's Knitter's Almanac: Projects for Each Month of the Year.* New York: Dover, 1985.

———. *Elizabeth Zimmermann's Knitting Workshop.* Pittsville, Wisconsin: Schoolhouse Press, 1981.

———. *Knitting Around, or Knitting Without a License.* Pittsville, Wisconsin: Schoolhouse Press, 1989.

———. *Knitting Without Tears: Basic Techniques and Easy-to-Follow Directions for Garments to Fit All Sizes.* New York: Simon and Shuster, 1973.

Of course, all of Elizabeth's books are available from Schoolhouse Press, 6899 Cary Bluff, Pittsville, WI 54466, (715) 884-2799.

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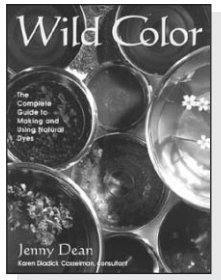

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A Spinner's Notebook

by Cynthia F. Bush

MANY TIMES, I find that circumstances lead me in unexpected directions. In 1991, our eighteen-month-old son discovered how to unlatch every door and window to escape to the great outdoors. We lived on a busy street, so his cry of "Go out!" meant "Drop everything and run!" One sunny afternoon, while watching him play in the yard, I pulled my Peacock spinning wheel from its corner to see if I remembered how to spin. Soon I was hanging skeins of yarn in the trees to dry while my toddler played nearby. People noticed my strange, lumpy yarn and were treated to our son's explanation of how a "go-go" (my wheel) worked.

I discovered that our baby-sitter's daughter was a spinner and belonged to the Lorain County Spinners and Weavers Guild. She offered to take me to a meeting. The word *guild* conjured up thoughts of the Renaissance, when guild members were master craftsmen who had passed through the phases of apprentice and journeyman. Perhaps, I thought, the local guild would let me attend meetings if I could show some of the yarns and things I had made.

I pulled together my yarns, patterns, fibers, and unfinished projects and set about labeling, finishing, and organizing. I began a notebook with a section called *Finished Projects*, listing by year all the projects I had completed. Wherever possible, I included a description or pattern, a yarn sample, a picture, and the name of the recipient. I used photo pages with pockets to hold the pictures and yarn samples.

Next I moved on to my skeins of yarns, stuffed in bags and on shelves in the family room. I washed and dried the yarn, made neat skeins, and tagged them. Each tag recorded the source of the fiber, how I washed it, how I prepared it, which wheel I used, and anything I noticed or had questions about as I was spinning. I took the yarns to the grocery deli counter and had them weighed so I could include that information.[1]

[1]I now also note the number of twists per inch or treadles per 6-inch (15-cm) draw, and the number of wraps per inch of both the singles and the plied yarn. This information is helpful when a project gets interrupted for a long time.

The best part of all this organization is the lasting and continuous record of my work.

I copied the label information into a notebook section called *Yarns I Made.* I placed the skeins in a large covered plastic box, to keep out moths and sunlight, and I put a list of the boxed yarns in the notebook. Underneath each entry I left space to make notes when the yarn was used. Following my inventory list, I added photo pages with pockets to hold fiber samples and 12-inch (30-cm) cuttings of the yarns, numbered to correspond to the inventory list.[2]

When the big night arrived when I would visit the guild, I was nervous! To my surprise and delight, I found a wonderful group of people—with skill levels from novice to expert—who welcomed me and kindly shared knowledge, projects, and friendship! Wow!

Inspired and hungry for knowledge, I embarked on a wonderful journey. I have delved into magazines and books, studied videos, attended workshops led by top people in the fiber world, participated in demonstrations, competed in sheep-to-shawl contests, and attended festivals. I have met incredible people and seen amazing creations.

And then there is the fiber! Fiber has a magical quality that you yearn to "see" with your hands. Once you touch it, however, you own it. . . .

The third section in my notebook began after the birth of our daughter and a move to a larger home. We now have a deep closet under the steps, perfect for storing spinning equipment, baskets, and plastic tubs full of fiber. I hate pulling everything out to look for something specific, so I made a tub for silks, several for wool, one for other fibers (such as angora, mohair, and cotton). I tagged and numbered each item, stuck the number on the outside of the tub, and added a section to my notebook called *Fibers to Spin.* When I want that bit of mohair, I look up its number, locate the tub, and a few minutes later I have it in hand.

The final two sections in my notebook began with a LOCO guild project. Every month our newsletter contains information about a breed of sheep or about another fiber animal. I file this information in a section called *Breeds*.

The guild also uses part of the money earned by demonstrating to purchase a different fleece each month. The fleece is divided into small bags and members may take home several ounces to try. My final notebook section lists the samples I have spun as a result of this project and in workshops—108 samples at last count. There are wool and silks, cottons, angoras, mohairs, and dog hair. About 10 percent of my wool samples come from rare breeds.

Each sample is tagged with the source, washing and preparation notes, wheel notes, spinning method, number of wraps per inch for singles and two-ply (singles plied back on itself), and finishing technique. I also describe the fiber, comment on how it handled, and record the type of project that would best suit the yarn. I attach a bit of the original fiber to the tag.

Moving beyond the notebook, I make each finished yarn sample into a small skein. Grouped according to fiber type and then alphabetized, I hang these on dowels which I store along the slanted ceiling of my closet. This serves as a ready reference for future purchases, guild demonstrations, and school projects.

The best part of all this organization is that I can add to my notebook as I finish projects and acquire new fiber, giving me a lasting and continuous record of my work. I can also see at a glance if I have enough yarn or fiber to do a project I have in mind.

I have learned so much! I can now spin from a dozen different preparations in six different ways. The antique great wheel and antique Saxony wheels that once graced my mother's house now sit proudly beside my Schacht and Peacock in the kitchen, where they still yield fine, smooth yarns. Now maybe it's time to expand my horizons from spinning, knitting, and crocheting to weaving.

Where did I put the phone number of the woman who has an antique loom for sale?! ❖

[2]This section of my notebook now also includes yarns dyed in guild workshops, with specific instructions, lists of dyestuffs, and mordanting notes.

Cynthia Bush teaches instrumental music at Lake Ridge Academy in Cleveland, Ohio. She is a violinist with the Canton Symphony Orchestra and teaches violin and viola. She belongs to the Lorain County Spinners and Weavers Guild and was part of the LOCO teams that won first place at the Ohio State Fair Sheep-to-Shawl Competitions in 1997 and 1998.

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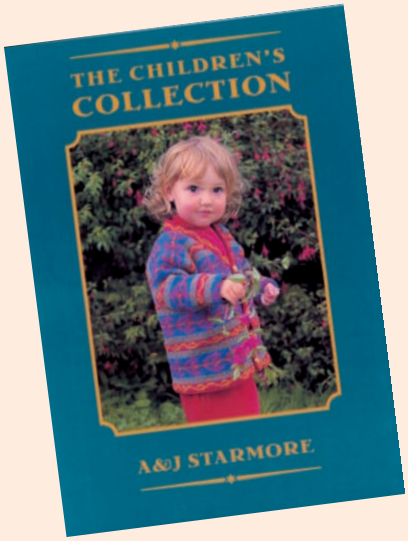

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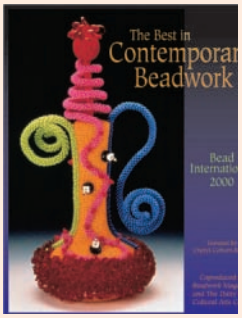

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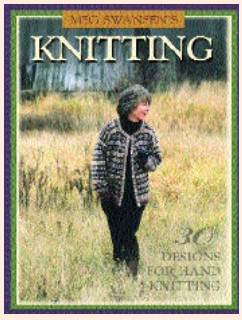

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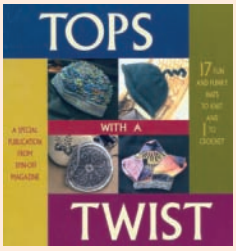

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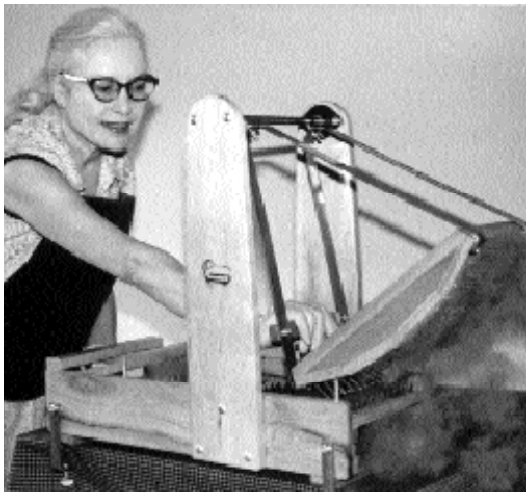

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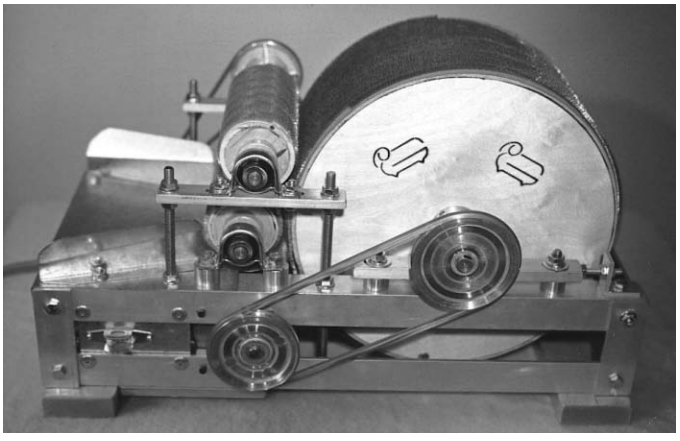

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Spinner's Question

Crochet with handspun

by Rita Buchanan

Q: *I'm learning to spin, but I don't knit very much. Mostly, I crochet. Is there anything special that I should do when spinning for crochet?*

A: In a word, no, and here's how you can prove it to yourself. Take some of your handspun yarn and try a crocheting test with it. Choose a hook size that seems appropriate, start with a chain of twenty or so loops, then work a few rows in a simple stitch, such as single or double crochet. Switch to a larger or smaller hook and see how that affects the fabric. Continue until the swatch is a few inches square. Now, what do you think? Nice, isn't it?

Yarn and the crochet process

There are two issues that come up in discussions about the use of handspun yarn in crochet. The first concerns *crocheting as a way of using yarn.* Is there anything special about the crochet technique that you have to plan for and take into account?

The only way to predict how any yarn will behave, regardless of construction technique, is by making a swatch. If the yarn pleases you in a swatch, it will please you in a project. It's as simple as that. (Likewise, if a yarn is disappointing for some reason or difficult to handle, you'll realize right away and can decide what to do about it.)

By making swatches, you soon discover that virtually any yarn can be crocheted. Any fiber, singles or plied, smooth or lumpy, thick or thin, soft or firm twist, S or Z twist*—if you can spin it, you can probably crochet with it.

Certainly any yarn that's good for knitting can be crocheted instead. In addition, some yarns that *aren't* fun for knitting are fine for crochet. Knitters often shun yarns spun from inelastic fibers (shorthand for "anything other than wool") because they feel limp or stringy, but such inelastic yarns are fine for crochet. Also, high-twist yarns that feel unpleasantly tight or firm as you're knitting may be gratifying to crochet.

Look past the process and consider the project

The second and more important issue is *what do you want to make?* When you're spinning for a project, keep the end result in mind. In the long run, the difference between knitting and crocheting is trivial compared to the differences between making a cotton tablecloth, a dressy silk top, or a thick, cuddly, wool/mohair–blend outdoor sweater. The technique you use to make a fabric is only part of the big picture. Fiber, color(s), texture, weight, size, fit, style, and finishing all matter more than technique.

So as you're spinning a yarn, think about what you might want to make with it and how you want that project to feel. In particular, decide whether you want the fabric to be light or heavy, thin or bulky, firm or squishy, sleek or fuzzy. Keep these goals in mind as you choose fiber and design a yarn. Don't wait too long before you check yourself. Spend half an hour spinning and plying a sample skein, then go right ahead and crochet it into a swatch. To see if you're headed in the right direction, react to the swatch, not just to yarn on a bobbin or in a skein. Then you can resume spinning with confidence, or make changes until you're satisfied.

More thoughts on knitting vs. crochet

It's interesting to take a ball of yarn and make several swatches from it in various knitted and crocheted stitches. Typically the crocheted swatches will feel thicker or bulkier than a swatch knitted in stockinette stitch, but if you knit in garter stitch, ribbing, or cables, the knitted and crocheted swatches will have about the same bulk. It's often said that crochet uses yarn faster than knitting does, or that you need more yarn to crochet a sweater than to knit one of the same size, but that's not necessarily true. How bulky the fabrics are, and how much yarn you use, varies from stitch to stitch. If you want to minimize bulk in crochet, use thin yarn and choose a simple stitch that lies flat, not a heavily textured, three-dimensional stitch.

You'll also often hear that crocheted fabrics are less elastic than knitted ones, and don't drape as well. Again, it depends. In both crochet and knitting, some stitches have more elasticity than others. I don't think there's a crocheted equivalent to knitted ribbing, and I usually knit the ribbing on crocheted sweaters or choose a different edge fin-

This cardigan sweater was crocheted in a simple shell stitch, using a two-ply handspun yarn made from a blend of Polwarth wool, kid mohair, and alpaca, and dyed with cochineal.

*One particular bit of spinning folklore should be laid to rest. That's the notion that for crochet, you should spin S and ply Z, the opposite way from how we usually spin. Indeed, S-spun, Z-plied yarn works fine for crochet, but so does ordinary Z-spun, S-plied yarn. Direction of twist doesn't matter. Don't worry about it. Both ways work.

ish. Drapiness is affected by tension and needle or hook size; in both crochet and knitting, loosely worked fabrics drape more freely than tightly made cloth (loose fabrics may also sag out of shape). Fiber and yarn matter, too. With so many factors at play, you really can't generalize or predict what will happen. You have to make swatches and judge from the actual fabrics.

Recommended references

There are a number of books and patterns that explain how to crochet doilies, afghans, household accessories, and toys, but very few emphasize the making of crocheted garments. My favorite reference is *Glorious Crocheted Sweaters,* edited by Nola Theiss. It has great photos and more than sixty patterns in a wide range of classic and contemporary styles that would work up beautifully in handspun yarns. The *Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework* has good advice on shaping crocheted garments, although it hasn't been revised since it was originally published and the pictures look dated.

If you want to design your own projects, you'll want stitch references. I like the *Vogue Dictionary of Crochet Stitches,* edited by Anne Matthews. It seems to be out of print, but some vendors still have copies. Otherwise, you may want to investigate *The Harmony Guides,* which have been newly reissued. Volumes 6 and 7 cover crochet stitches.

The Crochet Workbook, by Sylvia Cosh and James Walters, and *The Crochet Sweater Book,* by Sylvia Cosh, are currently out of print, but it's worth seeking them out at libraries or used book stores. Sylvia has a creative approach to freeform design and her work is exciting, stimulating, and appealing to spinners.

Rita Buchanan is the associate editor of Spin·Off.

Resources

Colton, Virginia, ed. *Reader's Digest Complete Guide to Needlework.* Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest Association, 1979. Currently out of print, but available in many libraries.

Cosh, Sylvia. *The Crochet Sweater Book.* New York: Crown, 1987. Currently out of print.

Cosh, Sylvia, and James Walters. *The Crochet Workbook.* New York: St. Martin's, 1990. Appears to be between printings; on back order.

Harmony Guides, The: Volume 6, 300 Crochet Stitches. North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 1998. Volume 6 includes basic stitches, lace patterns, motifs, filet, clusters, shells, bobbles, and loops.

Harmony Guides, The: Volume 7, 220 More Crochet Stitches. North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 1998. Volume 7 includes all-over patterns, edgings and trimmings, motifs, and Irish-style crochet.

Matthews, Anne, ed. *Vogue Dictionary of Crochet Stitches.* London: David & Charles, 1989. Distributed in the United States by Sterling, New York. Currently out of print.

Theiss, Nola, ed. *Glorious Crocheted Sweaters.* Asheville, North Carolina: Lark Books, 1990.

us

Woodland Woolworks

them

New Books

Folk Knitting in Estonia, *Nancy Bush* $21.95
Explores knitting, history and culture. Instructions for 26 traditional gloves, mittens and socks.

Doubleweave $40
Ursula Arn-Griscot Make textiles unlike commercial, many on a 4H loom. Vast variations in yarns, colors, warp setts and ratios.

Spinning Fibers

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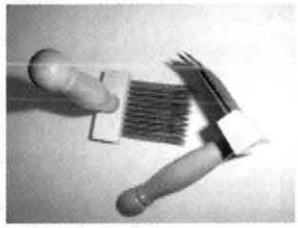
White Merino:			
63s Superwash.....	$6.40	12.00	33.60
70s Fine	$5.60	11.20	28.80

Combs & Hackles

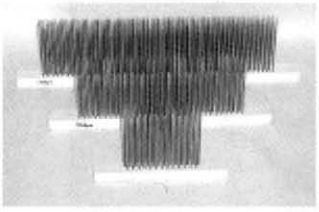
Mini-Combs by Forsyth

Sturdy and comfortable little combs for all fibers. Double rows, storage bag included.



$79.95

Blending Hackles by Valkyrie



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18 inch $126

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Spinning Tip

Combing and carding can be made easier with the addition of a little oil to the fiber. Use an oil that will wash out easily such as olive oil or our **Obadiah Tharp's Carding and Spinning Oil,** $5. An emulsion with water will reduce the effect of static electricity in dry weather.

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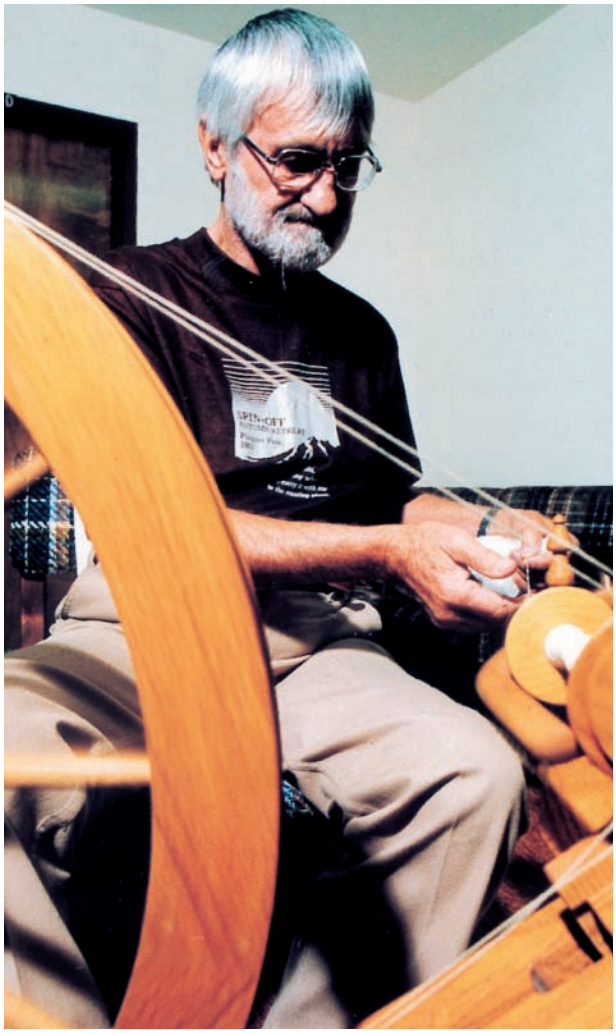

Harry Linder spinning at the Spin·Off *Autumn Retreat (SOAR).*

Harry Linder,

pioneer of contemporary handspinning

HARRY PAUL LINDER, who was born in Taylor, Mississippi, in 1914, died on December 19, 1999, in Sun City, Arizona.

Harry moved to Arizona with his mother in 1934. He retired from a career in the National Parks Service after serving as an administrator at national parks in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. In addition, he was a craftsman, an inventor, and a woodworker.

He had a life-long artistic career in the field of fiber, beginning with fine crochet when he was a boy. With his wife, Olive, he was the co-author of four classic books about weaving and spinning. He wrote articles about textile arts for all of the major U.S. fiber arts magazines, including *Spin·Off; Handwoven; Interweave; Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot;* and *Weaver's Journal.* He was working on a fifth book, about growing up in the rural South.

Harry exhibited his handspinning, weaving, and dyeing in juried shows at the Heard Museum, Arizona State University, Pima College in Tucson, the Arizona Federation of Weavers conference, and the Arizona State Fair. Harry and Olive traveled the world to study textile arts, taught handspinning and weaving, and judged shows all over the United States. The Arizona Federation of Weavers endowed an arts scholarship at Arizona State University in honor of Harry and Olive Linder. Harry was involved in judging and creating criteria for the Handweavers Guild of America's Certificates of Excellence. He contributed to these programs in both weaving and handspinning. ❖

Resources

Linder, Harry P. *Hints from Harry.* Tempe, Arizona: Sun City Handweavers and Spinners Guild, 1991.

———. *Techniques of Code Drafting: The Lively Art of Personal Weaving Drafts.* Phoenix, Arizona: Bizarre Butterfly, 1983.

Linder, Olive, and Harry Linder. *Hand Spinning Cotton.* Phoenix, Arizona: The Cotton Squares, 1977. Now in its fourth printing.

———. *Handspinning Flax.* Phoenix, Arizona: Bizarre Butterfly, 1986.

Thanks to the Linder family for providing information on Harry's life. Harry Linder is survived by his wife of twenty-seven years, Olive Linder, of Sun City, Arizona; daughter Judy Green-Davis, daughter Cynthia Cielle, and Cynthia's husband Robert Andrews, all of Phoenix; daughter and son-in-law Verda Ruth Patterson and John Patterson, of Grand Junction, Colorado; sisters Kate Karr and Grace Tatum, of Mississippi, and Ann Solnit, of Tennessee; and brother Max Linder, of Tennessee.

If you haven't yet encountered the work of this gentle, wise man, we recommend that you start with the books he left as a legacy—especially Handspinning Cotton *and* Handspinning Flax*—and any of his magazine articles on spinning.*

Above right: *Harry Linder.*

Above left: *Harry, fourth from right, with mentors at the* Spin·Off *Autumn Retreat (SOAR) in 1983. From left to right, Brucie Connell (then Adams), Doris D'Avila, Romedy Murrow, Anne Bliss, Beverly Royce, Celia Quinn, Louise Bradley, Harry Linder, Olive Linder, Lee Raven, and Linda Berry Walker.*

Save *the* Sheep

Project Results

by Amy C. Clarke

What is the Save the Sheep project?

Sponsored by *Spin·Off* magazine and the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, the Save the Sheep project was created to promote understanding about rare sheep breeds within and beyond the spinning community. This project was motivated by a belief that diversity of fiber types is essential to preserving the full range of skills and cultural values embodied by the craft.[1]

1 *Teeswater sheep.*

2 *Bonnie Hoover all covered up by the entries to the Save the Sheep contest.*

3 *Stacia Ray organizes the entries.*

IMAGINE that it is November 17, 1999, and your desk is completely covered with boxes—ranging from tiny envelopes to human-size cartons. You are Bonnie Hoover—and you have less than three days to open, record, tag, and repackage 207 entries for the Save the Sheep contest! The great thing about your job is that you get to touch each piece—marvel at how it was made, and be enchanted by the story it tells. Each box contains the essence of a person or maybe a group of people, spun up into a lovely garment, household object, or artistic expression. Each box also holds the story of one or more endangered sheep breeds these spinners are passionate about. Maybe the fleece was grown by a sheep the spinner raised from a lamb, or maybe a group traveled to a local farm to choose a fleece, or maybe the fleece came from overseas by special order. Whatever the case, this is more than yarn: it is a connection—to a community of spinners and sheep breeders, to a way of life, and to the diverse ecosystem that we live within.

The spinners who entered the Save the Sheep contest ranged from beginners (even children working with their first handspun!) to professionals who make their living from handmade products. Sometimes this was the first time a spinner had used unprocessed fleece—and was learning not just how to spin the wool, but how to clean and comb the fibers. These 207 entries contained so many compelling stories, just as opening the packages revealed so many beautiful pieces. Some packages arrived from as far away as New Zealand, and some were hand-delivered by folks in the neighborhood.

Once they were logged in and tagged, we transported the pieces to Loveland's McKee Conference and Wellness Center. The center is part of the local hospital, and the folks there offered space when we ran out of room in the office. They set up eighteen large tables, ready to receive the work. Deb Robson, Robin Troxell, Lynda McCullough, and I laid out the pieces. We worked late into the night getting the room ready for the next day's jurying.

[1] If you'd like more information on the background of this endeavor, Deborah Robson elaborates on the Save the Sheep project in her article "Rare Wools from Rare Sheep—Part Two: Why endangered sheep matter to spinners," *Spin·Off* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1999), pages 90–93.

4 *Stacia Ray, editorial intern, sorts the entries.*

5 *Deb Robson,* Spin·Off*'s editor, and Robin Troxell, editorial assistant, set up the pieces for jurying.*

Save the Sheep exhibit selections

We are very pleased to announce the twenty-seven individuals or teams (and their twenty-nine pieces) whose work will travel with the Save the Sheep exhibit.

Jeannine Bakriges, Brattleboro, Vermont. *Bobble-cuffed Socks.* Wensleydale.
Lena Benally, Keams Canyon, Arizona. *Dibé b'iiná' (Sheep is Life).* Navajo Churro.
Johanna Bolton, Brooksville, Florida. *One Fleece = One Sheep = Tunis!* Tunis.
Margaret Boos, Montague, California. *Gray Hat.* Cotswold.
Laurie Boyer, Orangeville, Illinois. *Churro Hat* and *Cotswold Lock Jacket.* Navajo Churro and Cotswold.
Brenda Bryon, East Sussex, United Kingdom. *Scarf.* Wensleydale.
Kaye Collins, Fort Collins, Colorado. *"Coming Home" Shawl.* California Variegated Mutant.
Mary Ellen (Melon) Corsini and Diane Ballerino-Regan, Supply, North Carolina. *Round Mat* and *Macramé Change Purse.* Navajo Churro.
Jackie Erickson-Schweitzer, Destrehan, Louisianna. *Lace Blanket.* Cotswold.
Teresa Gardner, Adrian, Missouri. *Flock.* Shetland.
Priscilla Gibson-Roberts, Cedaredge, Colorado. *Window to the Past . . . View of the Future?* Navajo Churro, Spelsau, Karakul, and Gotland.
Suzi Gough, APO/United Kingdom. *Scarf.* Wensleydale.
Greater Birmingham Fiber Guild, Birmingham, Alabama. *Swedish Sweater.* Shetland.
Rita Padilla Haufmann, Tesuque, New Mexico. *Ojas del Otoño.* Navajo Churro.
Betty Kelly, Dunedin, New Zealand. *A Shawl for Great-Grandmother.* Pitt Island Merino.
Sara Lamb, Colfax, California. *Sunset Kimono.* Shetland.
Catherine Lampman, Hendersonville, Tennessee. *Ragg Socks.* Shetland.
Joanne Littler, Fairfax, Vermont. *Scarf.* Shetland.
Heather Maxey, Mayne, British Columbia, Canada. *Scarf and Cap.* Manx Loghtan.
Robin Metzger, Corvallis, Oregon. *Sheep Vest.* Cotswold.
Shetland Guild of Spinners, Weavers, and Dyers, Weisdale, Shetland Islands, Scotland. *Fair Isle Patchwork Coat.* Shetland.
Anne Silk, Prince Edward Island, Canada. *Lace Shoulder Scarf.* Shetland.
Barbara Kent Stafford, Napa, California. *Red Karakul Rug.* Karakul.
Ellen Sullivan, Valley Center, California. *Turtledove in Red.* Navajo Churro.
Sarah Swett, Moscow, Idaho. *Byzantine Vest.* California Variegated Mutant.
Mary Underwood and Rebecca Lambers, Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Colleen's Coat.* Jacob.
Jan Viren, Hastings, Minnesota. *Socks.* California Variegated Mutant.

Deb models Sarah Swett's vest. The jury found that most of the garments had to be modeled to really strut their stuff. All identifying marks were removed before jurying—we didn't know the makers until we were done.

7 *Jurors Deb Robson, Marty Hibberd, Terry McGrath-Craig, and Jane Fournier look at a piece. Judy Fort Brenneman, who masterminded jury hospitality and took on the responsibility of booking venues, sorts pieces in the background. You can almost see her.*

8 *Terry, Marty, Jane, and Deb examine a piece. Amy peeks as she walks by. Amy, who wrote this article, has, "after stumbling over the exhibit title a gazillion times, given up and now calls it Shave the Sheep." Which, after all, is kind of the point in the first place. . . .*

The Jurying

The jurors arrived early the next day.

Jane Fournier traveled from Montana. She is a frequent *Spin·Off* contributor and SOAR mentor, and the co-author (with her mother, Nola Fournier) of *In Sheep's Clothing: A Handspinner's Guide to Wool* (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1995).

Marty Hibberd and Terry McGrath-Craig drove down from the mountains. They own Hibberd McGrath Gallery in Breckenridge, Colorado, a fine art gallery that specializes in fiber.

Deb Robson is the editor of *Spin·Off* magazine.

For eight hours, the jurors worked hard to select between twenty-five and thirty pieces, the number that would fit a traveling exhibit. Working as a cohesive group—separating to study the pieces, jotting notes, and reconvening to discuss their thoughts—the jurors marveled at the breadth and depth of the work. Quiet conversations covered quality of spinning, appropriate use of the fiber for garment or object, use of color, overall visual impact, and whether or not an item would travel well or communicate its message to a general audience.

After a lot of talk, debate, and trying on of garments, the jurors unanimously agreed on twenty-nine pieces that would travel to museums for two years—bringing the cause of endangered breeds to the attention of spinners and of the public. These fine objects, made by spinners from all over the world, will demonstrate the importance of diversity in sheep.

Then the jurors discussed ways of celebrating the craftsmanship and exquisite use of fiber in some of the pieces that were not selected to travel with the exhibit.

Once all these decisions were made, work could begin on the presentation of the exhibit itself, as well as on the slide show, book, and swatch collection that are also being developed to promote the cause of endangered breeds of sheep.

Gratitude

Special thanks to these people for helping underwrite the jurying:
Solveig Lark, Gallery East, Loveland, CO
Shirley Ellsworth, Lambspun of Colorado, Fort Collins, CO
Karen Kinyon, Double K Diamond Llamas, Fort Collins, CO

Thanks to these people for great photos:
1 *David W. Ward and the Teeswater Sheep Breeder's Association in North Yorkshire, United Kingdom.*
4, 6, 7, 8, 12 *Susan Strawn Bailey.*
9 *The Dorset Down Sheep Breeder's Association, Somerset, England.*
10, 11 *Nancy Van Tassel.*

Saved Sheep on the road!

Come see the Save the Sheep exhibit at these confirmed locations!

February 1–29, 2000. Gustafson Gallery in the Gifford Building at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Contact Linda Carlson, (970) 491-1983.

March 15–June 11, 2000. Southern Highlands Craft Guild and Folk Art Center, Asheville, North Carolina. Contact (828) 298-7928.

July 1–October 31, 2000. Conner Prairie, Fishers, Indiana. Contact (317) 776-6000.

April 1–May 31, 2001 Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Contact (508) 746-1622.

Flock of Dorset Down sheep.

Check our website frequently for additional confirmed venues. Go to www.interweave.com.

10 *Elsa (a Santa Cruz Island lamb), two weeks old—before she was rescued.*

11 *Elsa all grown up!*

12 *Stacia and Amy take a break after packing up the remaining 178 pieces.*

13 *Some of the Save the Sheep team: Susan Strawn Bailey (about to accelerate to warp speed as exhibit designer), jurors Terry McGrath-Craig, Jane Fournier, Deb Robson, and Marty Hibberd, and assistant editor/box mover Amy Clarke.*

Spread the word!

Spread the word about endangered breeds of sheep!

- Wear your Save the Sheep T-shirt often! Give these great shirts as gifts to all your friends and family! Only $15!
- We're working on a book that will provide beautiful images of all the work featured in the exhibit, plus a bunch *more* great pieces, as well as important information about the endangered breeds. A percentage of the profits from this book will be donated to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. Available in the fall—reserve your copy now! (800) 272-2193.
- Rent the Save the Sheep Slide Show for your guild, local spinning shop, or museum. It features the twenty-nine pieces from the exhibit, plus sixty-one additional pieces that we couldn't pass up, and great photos of endangered breeds of sheep. Call Holly at (800) 272-2193 ext. 658 to schedule your rental time.
- Borrow the traveling Save the Sheep Swatch Collection. Touch sample swatches from endangered breeds created by individuals and guilds from all over the world. Call Holly at (800) 272-2193 ext. 658 to book the swatch collection.
- Check out our website at www.interweave.com. We'll update the information about the traveling exhibit frequently.

T-shirt!


GIFT FRO
THE SE

Handspun Gallery *of Blankets*

Rhythm and Blues Afghan

Charlene Anderson-Shea
Jackson, Wyoming

This afghan began life as two pounds (4.4 kg) of Rhythm and Blues Merino roving from Treetops Colour Harmonies, purchased at the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR) in North Carolina in 1993. I planned to make a sweater for my husband, but he deemed the blues in the roving too soft and feminine for him to wear. So plan two went into effect: make a snuggly afghan for us to share.

I wanted to avoid the stripes and blotches that often appear when knitting a variegated yarn. I was aiming for a muted fabric. I thought about drum carding the roving to blend the shades, but decided that I could achieve a similar effect by spinning a four-ply cable yarn.

I separated the roving into 6-foot (1.8-m) lengths. I divided each length into ten segments, and made ten piles of fiber. When I was finished, each pile contained one segment of roving from each of the lengths. I placed each pile in a separate zip-top plastic bag, so the groups wouldn't get mixed up. I stored these bags in our bedroom closet.

I began spinning just after Christmas in 1993. I spun and spun and spun; it seemed like the blue roving would never end. I didn't keep track of the bags I finished. When I finished one bag, I pulled another from the closet and kept spinning. After what seemed like seven or eight bags, I knew I should be nearing the end, but every time I thought I was done another bag of blue roving would appear behind some T-shirts or would fall off the closet shelf.

Finally, I reached the last bag and plying began. I like plying. This is a good thing, because it takes a lot of plying to make a cable yarn—two complete plying passes. For the first, I plied together two Z-twist strands with S twist. For the second, I combined two of those two-ply yarns with Z twist. The finished cable yarn thus contained four plies.

Using a size 10 (6–6.5 mm) knitting needle, I invisibly cast on 120 stitches and then worked in garter stitch to the desired length. I did not slip the first stitch of every row, as is sometimes done routinely in garter stitch, because I wanted to use a special selvedge treatment. I bound off the blanket using an adaptation of the twisted I-cord developed by Joyce Williams. By using the invisible cast-on, I was able to unravel the waste yarn and produce nice loops to pick up for the I-cord border.

If I had the project to do over, I would have doubled the twist in the first plying, in order to make the yarn more cable-like. In her seminar at SOAR in 1995, Patsy Zawistoski explained that the secret to a good cabled yarn is to use lots of twist during the first plying—about three to four times as much as would be normal.

Details

Invisible cast-on. There are several ways to work an invisible cast-on. The method I chose requires a crochet chain with slightly more chains than the number of stitches you plan to cast on. Use a firm, smooth yarn for this foundation chain. Perle cotton works well. Turn the chain so the heart-shaped part of the chain faces down. Pick up one stitch in each of the bumps that now faces up until you have picked up the necessary number of stitches. Begin knitting as usual. When it's time to remove the waste yarn, just "unzip" the crocheted cord and you are set to pick up the now liberated loops. I usually unzip the row, and then stitch-by-stitch rip out the first row of knitting while placing the loops on a needle. This ensures that my first row of knitting is not distorted by the unzipping process. You may not find this necessary, but it doesn't take much time and assures a tidy project.

Twisted I-cord bind-off. I used an adaptation of the method Joyce Williams developed and explains in her booklet, *Twisted and Braided Applied I-cord,* which presents the technique and a lot of variations. The twisted cord requires that you knit two cords while applying them to the edge of the blanket. I love the look of this braid on afghans, sweater edges, and the tops of slippers. I'm sure you'll find other uses for this beautiful, versatile edging.

Because I used the invisible cast-on, I was able to use the I-cord as a bind-off on both ends of the afghan. I worked the entire bind-off in one piece. I began at one corner, bound off across the end in the twisted I-cord, picked up one bump of the garter stitch for each row of the I-cord

Handspun Gallery *of Blankets*

along the selvedge, bound off in I-cord along the "unzipped" invisible cast-on, and then picked up again along the final selvedge. When I came to the final corner (also the beginning corner), I knitted about 12 extra inches (30 cm) of I-cord on one needle and about 10 extra inches (25 cm) on the other. After hiding the tail ends of the completed I-cord, I tied an overhand knot in the free I-cord and snugged the knot against the corner of the afghan. Besides adding visual interest, this flirty little touch covered the slight "messiness" where the two I-cords began.

Resources

Varney, Diane. *Spinning Designer Yarns.* Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1987.

Williams, Joyce. *Twisted and Braided Applied I-cord.* Sparta, Wisconsin: Joyce Williams, 1990. Available from the author ($3 plus postage) at 18194 County Highway AA, Sparta, WI 54656; (608) 269-3824.

Filet Crochet Bedspread

Roxanne Foote and Lyda Foster
Arroyo Grande, California

Below and opposite: *Roxanne Foote (right, below) spun singles at 20 wraps per inch (2.5 cm) from combed Upland cotton, which her mother, Lyda Foster (left, below), crocheted on a size-7 hook using patterns adapted from several filet crochet books. The bedspread took five years to complete.*

Roxanne: There is wonderful continuity of life that is passed on when mothers and daughters sit and knit together. When I was eight, I would go to my grandmother's house after school and she would have me embroider dishcloths while she tatted or crocheted. We didn't talk much, but I loved being with her. Her mother was the dressmaker in a small Wisconsin town and my grandmother would tell me stories about how everyone confided in her mother as she sewed for them. As a small girl, my grandmother accompanied her mother to the people's houses and listened in, and she told me how much this shaped her views of people and of life.

Sometimes my grandmother went to Minneapolis with her mother to look at new fashions from Paris in the store windows. They would then go home and make similar dresses, without using patterns. This ability to take inspiration from styles and then create our own designs has filtered down to my mother and to me.

As I grew older, my mom taught me to knit and crochet. We both carry our projects with us wherever we go. Although my mother prefers crocheting, I enjoy knitting more. I can knit without having to think much. I knit sweaters, scarves, and socks for her, and she crochets tablecloths and afghans for my family.

Mom was wanting a new and innovative project and I was wanting a crocheted bedspread, so we collaborated. I didn't want a typical spread from a magazine and she wanted to try filet crochet. When we went shopping for patterns, we found some old-fashioned designs that my mother thought she could incorporate into a bedspread. We both loved two particular images: one, representing spring, showed a mother holding flowers out to her child, and its companion, representing autumn, depicted the mother offering her child bundles of wheat. These remind us of the many things we have shared, especially as we sit and sew, as my mother did with her mother, and as her mother did with *her* mother.

I wanted to try spinning my own cotton for the bedspread. I love the texture of handspun yarns and had taken a class from Celia Quinn, in which she introduced us to the luxury of combed cotton top and to the long-draw technique, which works especially well for cotton. I bought ten pounds of combed Upland cotton roving, which proved to be more than ample! I spun the yarn, intending it to be used as singles, and was happy with the results. My first skein was quite slubby and my mother found it hard to crochet, especially since she was accustomed to fine commercial yarns. I was more careful on the next skein, but it was a different thickness and didn't match the first! The third time,

Handspun Gallery *of Blankets*

I got out Mabel Ross's *The Essentials of Yarn Design for Handspinners* and used its guides to yarn weights and twist amounts.[1] I also attached a piece of reference yarn to my wheel. From then on, I spun a fairly consistent thread with a little texture that I like.

I am sorry that I didn't keep better track of my yardage, which at times seemed endless. I would finish a skein and think, "This ought to be enough to finish it!" I did that several times before we actually had enough. After spinning each skein, I hand-washed the yarn and put it in the dryer. This preshrunk the cotton and gave it a very nice softness. I also feel confident to wash and dry the finished bedspread.

After the large mother-and-child sections were completed, we spread them out on the bed and figured out how much more fabric we would need to fit a California-king–sized bed. We added two cherubs on the top, one playing a harp and the other a triangle. Then came flowered borders between the patterns, and a zigzag border around the edges. When the spread was complete, it fit the bed perfectly. I try not to worry when people sit on the spread, but I do feel very protective of it.

People tell me they haven't the patience to learn knitting or that they wish their mother had spent time teaching them, saying that society nowadays is too fast-paced for restful creativity. In her younger years, my daughter accompanied me when I attended knitting classes and she knitted a treasured sweater for her grandmother. Over the ten years that our class has met, the other women have followed my daughter's life and kept an interest in her pursuits. We gather not just to share patterns and help with dropped stitches, but also to share life's joys and trials.

It took my mother and me five years to complete this project, mostly due to my slowness in spinning. I got very tired of spinning cotton. I prefer wool and I spin slubby yarn on purpose. I found it tedious to spin hundreds of yards of fairly even yarn. But the project was also most rewarding, and I get great joy from showing people the treasure that my mother and I created. My mother will be eighty this year and has slowed down a bit as her fingers have begun to stiffen, so I am thankful that we took the opportunity to create our family heirloom.

[1]Mabel Ross, *The Essentials of Yarn Design for Handspinners* (Kinross, Scotland: Mabel Ross, 1983).

Cabin Fever Blanket

Nutmeg Spinners' Guild and Susan Funk
Mystic and other locations, Connecticut

Although Connecticut is not known for record-breaking snow, the vagaries of winter weather make our February spinners' guild meeting vulnerable to cancellation. Rather than schedule an out-of-town speaker, the Nutmeg Spinners' Guild has reserved this meeting for social, playful activities.

The day often begins with an auction of fleece, yarns, "sheepy" items, and baked goods, during which we raise money for future workshops and speakers. Then a potluck lunch fuels us for the afternoon's fun and games. Our program committee works hard to find or invent spinning contests that will involve everyone, from the newest to the most experienced spinner.

Left: *Mother and child in spring with flowers.* ***Center:*** *Mother and child in fall with wheat.* ***Right:*** *Overview of bedspread, showing framing panels.*

This ensures that competition remains lighthearted and encourages members to make new spinning friends.

One contest, designed by member Jim Martin, involved a mystery and was loosely fashioned after the game of Clue. Each participating guild member drew a card from a basket. Each card bore the name of a suspect and a location—such as, "Rita Buchanan in the Garden," or "Celia Quinn in the Kitchen." These cards divided the guild into teams—all the "Ritas" gathered in one corner, the "Celias" in another, and so on. Once the teams were established, every person wrote her name on the back of the card and returned it to the basket.

Each team was given a bag of fibers containing the same assortment of angora, wool, silk, and alpaca. The teams were instructed to spin many different kinds of yarn in an allotted time. Some teams went right to their wheels, with members working independently, while others plotted a combined approach. The resulting yarns were amazingly varied, ranging from fine singles to cord-like three-plies and fluffy novelty yarns. The teams shared their results and described their yarns to the program chairman, who promised that all the yarn would reappear at the next meeting as a finished product to be presented to one lucky member. The winner would be determined by drawing a name from the cards in the basket.

Before the meeting, I had agreed to take the yarns to my loom and return in two months with a finished item. As I watched the competition, I became concerned that I had taken on an impossible task and would need the help of a weaving Rumpelstiltskin! This feeling did not lessen when I laid the yarns out on the table at home. I resisted an urge to "misplace" a few difficult skeins and decided to tackle the project one step at a time, hoping inspiration would strike.

To set the twist, I wrapped each skein around a large, clean, empty juice can and steamed it for five or ten minutes in a canning kettle on the stove. When the yarn was dry, I wound it into skeins again and stared some more, wondering how to reasonably combine inky blue-black, white, gray, warm brown, and red-brown. The design needed to be simple to show off the variety without looking like a hodgepodge.

I decided that a lap robe or afghan would use the yarns well. A toasty blanket for the couch would be appreciated by any guild member and would accommodate the varied yarn weights. I had about 20 ounces (570 g) to work with, which I calculated would be about right for the weft. A commercial warp would provide consistency for the fabric.

Arranging the skeins in various ways helped me think about how to proceed. I originally thought of buying a tweedy neutral-colored yarn of medium value for the warp and weaving stripes in the weft. That would have been fine, but I wasn't excited about it. One day a friend arranged the skeins from darkest to lightest on the table. There was my answer! I have always liked the look of color gamps and of asymmetrical designs that are still balanced and orderly. The blanket could be based on this idea. Now I was excited!

I took out my Harrisville shade chart and chose six tweedy colors, ranging from "snowflake" to "black forest," for the

The Nutmeg Spinners' Guild confronted the February doldrums with a group project. Members spun all the yarn for this blanket in one meeting, and Susan Funk brought it to another meeting in blanket form.

Handspun Gallery *of Blankets*

warp. I sett the two-ply yarn at eight ends per inch (2.5 cm) in six stripes, each 7½ inches (19 cm) wide, arranged from dark to light.

When I wove with the handspun yarn, I packed the picks tighter than usual because I didn't plan to full the blanket to any extent. I was afraid that yarn made with such a variety of techniques and of such diverse fibers would shrink at different rates and make a ripply mess, so I beat to the finished density of picks. Reaching the end of the warp, I also finished my last ball of handspun—I had used every bit!

To wash the blanket, I partially filled the bathtub with warm water, added Ivory liquid, then placed the blanket in the water and gently agitated it. To my dismay, the blue-black color began to run.
I quickly replaced the soapy water with fresh water and rinsed the blanket twice. I rolled the blanket in towels and hung it to dry. Fortunately, the loose dye only lightly tinted the nearby yarns and the change wasn't noticeable when the fabric had dried. I steam-pressed the blanket lightly before packing it in a box for presentation.

We began the next meeting with the drawing from the basket; the blanket was won by a long-time guild member, Barbara Sulavik. I was delighted at how surprised the participants were to see what had become of their yarn! The variety of yarns makes the blanket beautifully textured. It looks attractive from a distance, yet is interesting to examine at close range.

Barbara uses it every day. She often has to convince her dogs to relinquish this favorite blanket when she wants to curl up with it for reading, napping, or simply relaxing. She says that it is wonderful to be warmed by the work of so many friends!

I certainly enjoyed this project. For a similar event in the future, I would recommend giving the spinners broad guidelines to work within to ensure more consistency in the yarns. For example, it might be suggested that all the yarns be worsted-weight, or all two-ply.

Handspun yarn is a joy to weave with, and well-made yarn is much stronger than many weavers realize. I would encourage weavers and spinners to undertake cooperative projects— it is rewarding for all involved.

Here are the yarns Betsy Neal mixed in her blanket.

April's Blanket

Betsy Neal
Schenectady, New York

I love weaving with handspun yarns and have made beautiful blankets in stripes and plaids, often spending more time counting yardage and figuring on the calculator than weaving. After taking a clothing class with Barbara Decker, I decided to warp with her method using mixed yarns for my handspun blankets. You can use different yarns in the warp, but one yarn should be the same all across the warp to give balance to the fabric.

In making the warp for the blankets, I placed a ball of yarn in each of four mixing bowls on the floor at the end of my kitchen table. On the table was a 2-by-2 (piece of wood about 5 cm square) about 28 inches (71 cm) long with four screw eyes evenly spaced along one side. The piece of wood was held in place by two kitchen canisters. I threaded one yarn through each screw eye and measured groups of four ends on a small, homemade warping board. My goal was 80 ends in each of four color blocks (320 ends in all, although I fudged and worked with 308). When a ball of yarn ran out, I tied in another of the same color at the top of the warp.

After making a blanket in a weekend for my son's dorm room, I decided to keep notes on the next blanket, which I made

for his girlfriend, April. It just seemed too easy. I wound the warp in less than an hour, from 5:30 to 6:20 PM on Friday evening. I beamed and threaded the warp through the heddles from 8:00 to 9:50 PM that same evening. My warps were in groups of four, and I threaded ends randomly from each set to achieve a variegated appearance. Saturday morning, I worked from 10:30 to 11:20 AM sleying the reed and from 12:00 to 12:30 PM tying the warp onto the front beam. I completed the weaving that afternoon in two sittings, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM and from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. I tied the fringe on Sunday afternoon. I soaked the blanket in the washer and then let it agitate for three minutes to full the fabric before I let it go through the rinse cycle. Soon the blanket was off to Vermont in the mail.

The only problem I experienced was trying to decide what the colors reminded me of as they grew in the blanket while weaving. Then I remembered my favorite slide from a trip to Scotland the previous summer. A photograph of wild foxgloves, it combined the same greens, grays, and pinks. I was heartbroken to think I had to give the blanket away because of this reminiscence (April had already seen the yarns).

So I decided to use the leftover yarn to make a relaxed jacket for myself, adding an angora blend that needed to be used. (There's a lot of yarn around my house.) I overdyed the angora blend with a leftover guild dyepot—elderberry, which added a lavender hue. Weaving the jacket was so easy that I made another one using Romney lambswool dyed with shades of indigo.

Meanwhile, the bunnies and sheep are growing more wool and I have another blanket to weave for a wedding gift. It will remind me of winter in the Northeast, captured in shades of gray, green, and tan.

Betsy Neal says of her blanket, which she wove in one weekend, "It seemed too easy!" She had collected the yarn a skein at a time, and weaving it went fast.

A Blanket in a Weekend

Sett: 8 ends per inch (32/10 cm).
Total warp ends: 308.
Width in reed: 38½" (98 cm).
Length of warp: 2¾ yd. or 97" (246 cm).
Finished length: 72" (183 cm) plus fringe.
Weft: Grays, green, and cochineal.
Warp yarns: (1) *Mohair blend*—White Romney wool carded with kid mohair and plied with rainbow-dyed kid mohair. (2) *Cochineal*—Light gray Romney overdyed with cochineal. (3) *Light cochineal*—Exhaust of previous bath. (4) *Gray*—Romney or Romney/alpaca blend. (5) *Green*—Romney or Romney/mohair blend, dyed with goldenrod and overdyed with Saxon-blue indigo. (6) *Light green*—Exhaust of previous bath.
Warp blocks: Ends wound 4 at a time, in the following combinations. *Block A:* mohair blend, cochineal, green, light green. *Block B:* mohair blend, green, cochineal, gray. *Block C:* mohair blend, cochineal, cochineal, green. *Block D:* mohair blend, gray, cochineal, light cochineal. ❖

The Wonders of Wild Silk

by Louise O'Donnell

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, while connecting with spinners on the Internet, I met CarolAnne Nuttall. CarolAnne fascinated me with her tales of raising wild silkworms. The care and the hours of work involved were more than I could imagine. I have always been interested in silk, but this was different. This was true, *wild* silk.

Over the next few years, CarolAnne sent me small packages of silk to try. It was love at first sight and feel. CarolAnne began by sending me fiber from Africa's 1992–'93 harvest. The roving, like silken honey, spun beautifully. After that she shared a wonderful, very old, cream-colored mawata that had been sent to her by a friend in Japan.

Opposite: *The sample at the top of the page is* Attacus atlas, *the atlas moth (Southeastern Asia), sewn with* Gonometa rufobrunnea *(African) silk. Another interpretation of this moth appears on page 55. At upper right are a sample card of silk singles (55 wraps/inch [2.5 cm]) and three small wooden spools of the type which Louise uses to store her fine threads. Both skeins are* Gonometa rufobrunnea *silk. Some of Louise's versions of this moth are shown at the top of page 54. The samplers were stitched with wild silk yarns.*

Right: *An orizaba silk moth* (Rothschildia orizaba; *South and Central America, Texas), sewn with undyed and natural-dyed silk. The skeins were dyed with the lichen* Parmelia sucata, *fermented. The brighter yarn is* Bombyx mori *(domesticated silk from Japan) and the darker yarn shows the same color overdyed on the natural soft brown of* Gonometa rufobrunnea.

Three interpretations of Gonometa rufobrunnea, *the African moth which produced the silk in the skeins just below. The top and bottom moths are female. The center moth is male.*

Both skeins are Gonometa rufobrunnea *(Africa).The lower skein has been dyed with the lichen* Lobaria pulmonaria.

Three interpretations of the cynthia moth, Samia cynthia *(China), sewn with natural-colored, lichen-dyed, and acid-dyed silks.*

In 1995, my friend Lillian Whipple told me about Nancy Simpson, who had been raising silk in Sacramento since 1972. Within a matter of months, Nancy arrived for a face-to-face visit. She has traveled extensively looking for wild silks and is extremely generous with her findings. Nancy gave me some fiber from *Gonometa rufobrunnea,* an African moth which lives in the vicinity of Botswana. The creamy, light brown silk was machine carded and then folded to make it easier to handle. The sheets are very thin, like *Bombyx mori* mawata, but are free of cocoon waste and sticky sericin residue. The silk appears finer than other wild silks that I am able to purchase, but does not have a high sheen. I dyed small batches with lichens, using both a simmering dyebath and the fermentation process, and produced soft purples, pinks, mauves, and a dark rust. I colored some of the silk with chemical dyes to broaden my range of options.

Over the years, I have done a great deal of project spinning. However, during the time I was discovering all of these unique silks I did not want to tackle a large project. I decided to make small cross-stitch images using all types of silk, and so far I have created more than three hundred samples.

My husband helped me learn a computer program called Cross Stitch Designer, made by Hobby Ware. It facilitates pattern design and correlates colors to the DMC palette. As guides for designing my moth samples, I used reference pictures which were not always clear or accurate in color. Thus the samples are playful representations of the moths, and sometimes I have made several versions of the same moth.

I used singles, spun at 46 to 55 wraps per inch (2.5 cm), for most of the stitching. The yarn has high twist, to stand up to the abrasion of the stiff cloth and the motions of sewing. I worked on 22-count Aida cloth; the materials and sample moths on pages 52–53 are approximately the size of the actual objects. The items shown on this page and opposite are slightly smaller than the real yarns and needlework. ❖

After completing her Certificate of Excellence in Handspinning through the program sponsored by the Handweavers Guild of America, Louise O'Donnell wanted to concentrate on small projects. Her cross-stitch moths have been serving that purpose. She notes that some of the moths she has studied—polyphemus, cecropia,

and a few others—are found in the United States and can be raised if they occur naturally in your area. Louise would like to thank her husband, James O'Donnell, for his drawings; CarolAnne Nuttall for inspiration and direction; Wendy Bateman and the World Spinners for several years' worth of information and support; Nancy Simpson for silk fibers and for help with identification; and Lillian Whipple for encouragement and empty wooden spools.

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———. "Searching for Wild Silk." *Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot* 26, no. 2 (issue 102, Spring 1995): 54–56.

Top: *The hercules moth,* Coscinocera hercules *(Indo-Australia); the colors are lichen-dyed.*

The atlas moth, Attacus atlas *(Southeast Asia), sewn with* Gonometa rufobrunnea *(Africa). The medium brown is natural-colored silk. The dark brown came from* Lobaria pulmonaria *lichens and the red from acid dyes. Another interpretation of the same moth is on page 52.*

The skein is Attacus atlas *silk from England, lichen-dyed using* Lobaria pulmonaria *in a simmering dyebath.*

Center pair: *Two versions of the cecropia moth,* Hyalophora cecropia *(North America).*

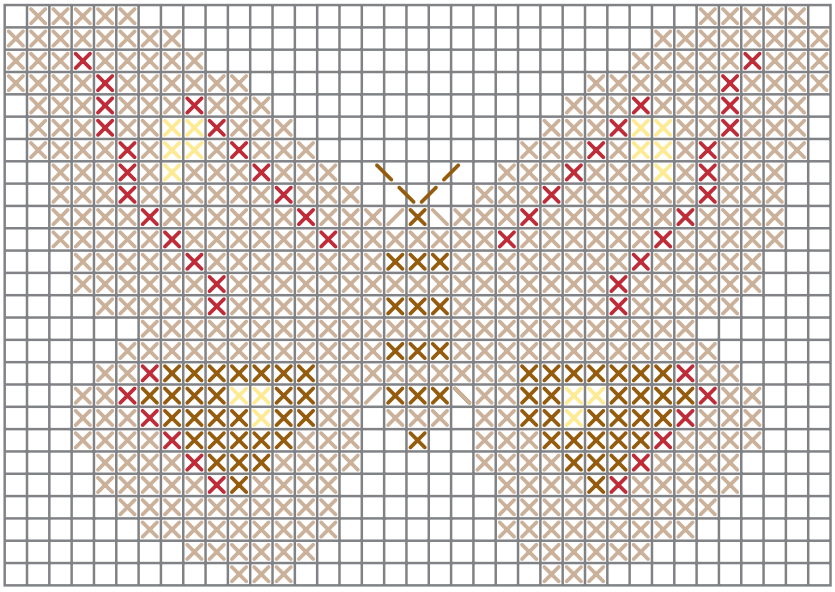
Bottom pair: *Two interpretations of the polyphemus moth,* Antheraea polyphemus *(North America). Louise's cross-stitch pattern for the polyphemus moth at the bottom of the column is given here.*

medium brown

light honey brown

cream

red




Muga
Tasar
Muga
Eri
Eri
Tasar

JOURNEYS IN THE *Wild Silk Jungles* OF INDIA

by Karen Selk

A yearning to learn how people in other parts of the globe work with cloth started a research odyssey about a decade ago. I knew that the words *tasar, muga,* and *eri* related to wild silk. After numerous trips by jeep, car, bus, and foot, these words—the names of three wild silkworms—have become friends. More importantly, the tribal people who rear these insects have profoundly affected my life. From a great deal of dedication, hardship, and labor, they receive uncertain returns. Nonetheless, their work contains dignity and joy.

Opposite: *In the background is an Indian sari woven from thigh-reeled tasar, similar to the fiber in the flat skein at the bottom of the photograph. The cocoons are tasar, muga, and eri, as noted, and the shiny silk on the bobbin and in the small, twisted skein is muga.*

Our travels were facilitated by a cast of wonderful people. Two dynamic women organized our trips with a fiery passion for their country and a perfect understanding of who and what we needed to see. Gulshan Nanda, then head of Central Cottage Industries, coordinated our trip with the state heads of two government ministries, The Weaver's Service Center and The Central Silk Board (CSB). Malathi Ramaswamy, a wizard travel agent, confirmed a complex, month-long itinerary in three hours without a computer. As we traveled, CSB members provided scientific information which deepened our understanding of the ancient customs that govern the raising of wild silkworms. The CSB carefully supports the people who rear tasar and muga silks in order to improve their earning power, arrest migration to urban areas, preserve skills and lifestyles, and promote forest conservation.

Each journey began with meetings and *chai* (tea) shared with CSB officials. Waiting in an office during our first trip, we noted a framed picture of Mahatma Gandhi adorned with a dusty garland of tasar cocoons and a yellowed piece of paper that read, "In God we have faith, in Silk we have trust."

MULBERRY SILK AND WILD SILK

Bombyx silk, also known as mulberry or cultivated silk, is the creamy white product of the *Bombyx mori* caterpillar. Almost all of the world's silk comes from this species, which refuses to eat anything but mulberry leaves. *Bombyx mori* has been domesticated for more than five thousand years, and carries out all phases of its life in captivity.

However, there are also hundreds of varieties of wild, silk-producing caterpillars throughout the world. Only a few produce fiber suitable for use in yarn. Unlike their domesticated cousins, these wild silkworms reject attempts at total domestication. They live in and eat in a variety of food trees in the forest, and the beige color of the cocoons spun by most wild caterpillars comes from the leaves they eat.

THE LIFE OF

All silkworms pass through the same four phases: egg, larva or caterpillar, pupa or chrysalis (the cocoon-forming stage when silk is produced), and moth.

Cultural requirements for the three silkworms discussed in this article differ significantly from each other. The phases are represented here by photographs of tasar silkworms, except the final egg-laying moth, which is eri.

Photos showing muga and eri culture are on pages 66–67 (muga) and 71–72 (eri).

Types of silkworms differ from each other in part according to the number of generations they produce in a year. This can vary between one generation (in silkworms called *monovoltine*) and five or six (called *multivoltine*).

Each individual silkworm goes through four phases in its life. The number of days it spends in each phase depends on its variety and on the season, and is also affected by temperature, humidity, sunlight, and rainfall. The four phases require different care, which the tribal peoples accommodate in a variety of ways.

1. Egg. Healthy eggs begin the process of successful silk-rearing. Managing the mating and egg-laying processes are labor-intensive activities for the rearers.

In traditional rearing, the female moths are controlled so they will lay their eggs in places where humans can tend them. Often the rearers use thread to tie the female moths onto bamboo poles or bundles of straw, a laborious job which must be completed in two or three days. The moths lay their eggs on these devices and the rearers are then able to move the eggs without touching them.

Disease can strike silkworm colonies like a plague. Few larvae survive an onslaught of disease. Wherever possible, the Central Silk Board (CSB) provides rearers with disease-free layings *(dfl)*—supplies of guaranteed healthy eggs—in an effort to reduce the devastating risk of disease. The CSB's systematic approach to the production of healthy eggs reduces mortality rates throughout the life cycle, improves the quality of progeny, saves labor, and yields increased income.

The CSB is respectful of tribal customs, which can limit the agency's ability to help. In some villages, traditional beliefs prevent the rearers from beginning a silk crop with eggs they raise themselves. People in these areas begin with seed cocoons, which puts them and their villages at risk of losing an entire crop because of undetected disease in the moths that emerge from the cocoons.

2. Larva or caterpillar. Silkworm larvae shed their skin four times. These molts are almost evenly spaced. Each non-molting period is called an *instar,* and there are five instars in one larval phase. The larvae grow enormously between the first and last instars, and food consumption varies dramatically at the different instars. The larvae extract amino acids from the leaves they consume and transform them into silk.


1


2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4

Tasar
(Antheraea paphia)

1 Eggs, *shown in protective cups made of folded leaves secured by toothpick-sized pieces of wood.*

2 Larvae, *newly hatched and tiny, crawling on the edges of a leaf cup.*

3 Larvae *eating leaves on a tree in the forest. Steady eating turns the tiny larvae of photo 2 into the substantial creatures shown in photo 4.*

4 Larva*, well fed and ready to make silk.*

A SILKWORM

3. Pupa or chrysalis. The larva or caterpillar spins the cocoon from which silk is derived. The extruded silk consists of two protein components, *fibroin* and a protective coating called *sericin.* Sericin composes between 20 and 25 percent of the fiber weight, hardens on contact with air, and must be removed when the silk is processed. Sericin can be removed from *Bombyx mori* fiber by simmering the cocoons in soapy water. Removing sericin from wild silk cocoons is more difficult.

Within its cocoon, the larva metamorphoses into a pupa. When it becomes a fully formed moth, with wings and antennae, it releases an enzyme-rich brown juice which dissolves a hole in the cocoon. Silk can only be reeled from undamaged cocoons. To obtain reelable cocoons, the pupae are stifled, or killed, by means of sun drying, steaming, or dry hot air. Pupae in cocoons which will be used for seed (to produce the next generation) are permitted to mature.

4. Moth. Male moths are attracted by pheromones (chemical substances) emitted by the females. After mating, the female lays between two hundred and five hundred eggs. The cycle begins again. Moths have no eating or digestive organs and they die shortly after the completion of mating and egg laying.


5


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BASIC TERMS

CSB: Central Silk Board
degum: remove the sericin coating from silk, so it is soft enough to reel or spin
instar: a stage in the life of an arthropod between two successive molts
molt: to shed an outer layer periodically
monovoltine: having one brood in a season
multivoltine: having several broods in a season
polyphagous: utilizing many types of food
sericin: the natural protective coating on silk fibers

5 Caterpillar *on right; on left, thin envelope of* ***cocoon*** *in the beginning of the transformation of a second caterpillar into a chrysalis.*

6 Cocoons *hanging from tree branches. The hanging position, and the attachment device called a* peduncle, *are unique to the tasar. Most silkworms form cocoons within the shelter of a basket or bunch of leaves.*

7 *Rope of* ***cocoons*** *hanging inside a mud hut, where they have been collected, with emerging* ***moths.***

8 Moths, *male and female.*

Eri
(Samia ricini)

9 *Female* ***moth,*** *laying eggs. The cycle starts again.*

TASAR SILKWORMS IN ORISSA

The indigenous tasar caterpillar *(Antheraea paphia)* is reared extensively in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa.[1] We traveled throughout Orissa, starting in its capital, Bhubaneshwar. On our eight-hour journey west to an outpost near Sonpur, we carried a letter of introduction from Mr. J. D. Pattanayak of the CSB.[2]

The tasar caterpillar and moth are semi-domesticated. Attempts at fully domesticating this lime-green creature have been thwarted by its refusal to carry out many activities indoors, even if refusal means extinction. Each of the many tribes who rear these silkworms has its own traditions. At the first tasar forest we entered near Sonpur, we were welcomed by seven aboriginal men holding spears and slingshots. I will never forget that sight. These men leave their families for between six and ten weeks at a time to perform age-old rituals.

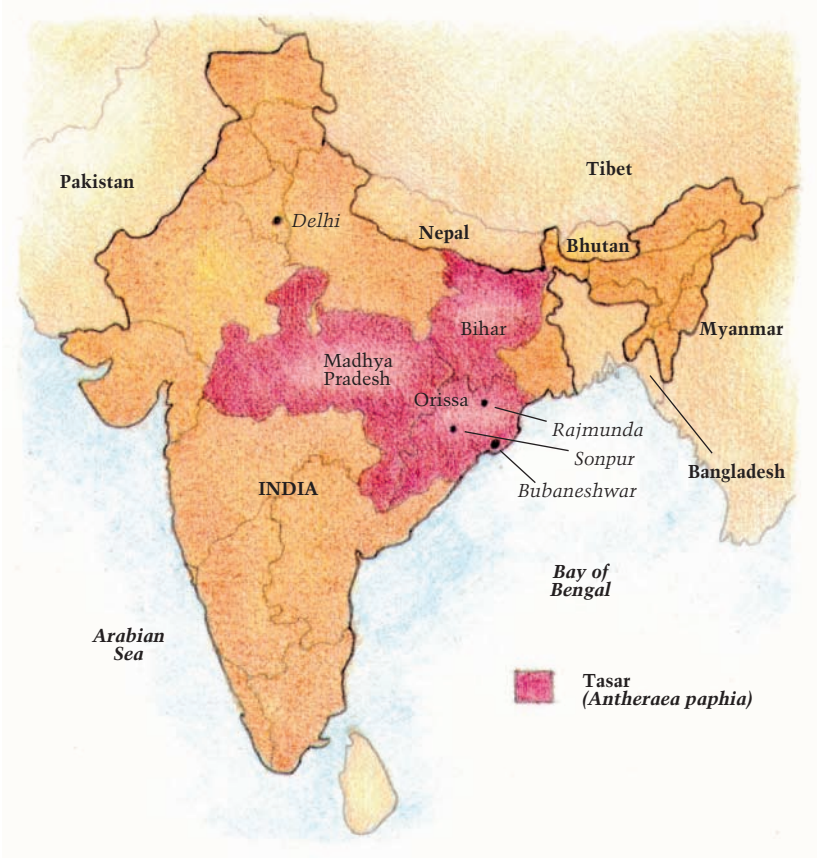

1


2

The proud men of the Sonpur forest led us to trees hanging full of completed cocoons and of caterpillars ready to spin. The younger men demonstrated their skill at using spears and slingshots to protect the larvae from predators. Carefully watching the amount of foliage on each tree, the men transfer the worms by hand to other trees when the food supply runs low. A medium-sized, three-year-old tree can feed between sixty and a hundred worms.

Another village we visited was not blessed with a good crop. Late in the day, we filed through the handsome, spotless village along raised bunds, or embankments, between rice paddies to a forest of asan trees. Disease had hit the caterpillars just days before they were to begin spinning and the ground was green with their bodies. The villagers told us there had been too many foggy days. We returned to the village in silence.

In Rajmunda, another village in Orissa, raising tasar silkworms has been part of



[1] In some references, this silkworm goes by the name *Antherea mylitta* (the spellings *Antheraea* and *Antherea* are both in common use).

[2] Sonpur also may be spelled *Sonepur* or *Sonapur*. India hosts a wide variety of languages. English-language maps and other references differ widely in the spellings they use for Indian names.

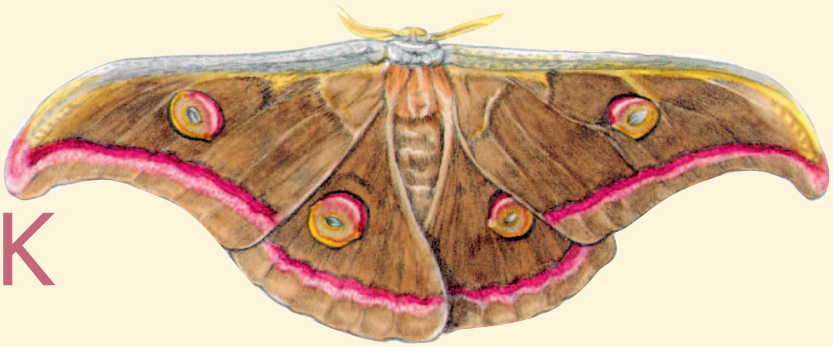
***1** Tribal rearers use slingshots, mud balls, and spears to protect the silkworms from predators.*

***2** Tribal rearer proudly shows his silkworms.*

***Map:** Tasar grows throughout the Indian states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Orissa.*

***Opposite:** The fabrics mix natural and bleached tasar silk. They have been woven with bobbins of bamboo and buffalo horn, like those shown. **Inset:** A boy winds bobbins of tasar which will be used in weaving shuttles.*


K.S.ராமமூர்த்தி
2-A, பச்சரிக்காரத் தோப்பு,
மதுரை-9



TASAR SILK

Antheraea paphia

There are three types of tasar silkworms, distinguished by the number of generations per year they produce (one, two, or three). The time required for metamorphosis from caterpillar to moth varies from between 30 and 35 days (in summer) to between 60 and 70 days (in winter).

Tasar caterpillars are reared outdoors in the forest, vulnerable to wind and rain, to attack by ants, wasps, birds, rats, lizards, and snakes, and to disease (most common in damp, low-lying areas). With all these hazards, only 10 to 20 percent of larvae survive long enough to make cocoons.

Tasar eggs are laid in traditional leaf cups (shown on page 58 and described further on page 63). When the leaf cups are exposed to unpredictable weather, new larvae experience a low hatch rate and high mortality—up to 35 percent are lost in the first three days. CSB experiments show that these losses can be reduced to between 5 and 6 percent if the new larvae are gently brushed onto food leaves tied into bouquets and are then moved to mud huts, where they are reared for their first week.

During the larval phase, the creatures grow from ⅜ inch (9.5 mm) to 4½ inches (11.5 cm). The tasar caterpillar consumes 80 percent of its food in the last instar, during which it grows relatively little but fills reservoirs from which it will form its cocoon. In other words, it turns 80 percent of its food into silk. Unlike *Bombyx mori* silkworms, which eat only mulberry leaves, tasar caterpillars have eight primary food sources and numerous secondary ones. Throughout India, three trees in particular are used to nourish these caterpillars: asan *(Terminalia tomentosa),* arjun *(Terminalia arjuna),* and sal *(Shorea robusta).* Leaf quality affects the caterpillars' health. Younger worms need new, juicy leaves, while older worms need medium to mature leaves.

Tribal rearers carefully select the food plants for their caterpillars and the locations in which they raise the worms. They sacrifice chickens to ensure a good crop and place cocoons marked with colored powder on trees to signify these offerings.

Tropical tasar cocoons measure about 1½ by 2 inches (3.8 by 5 cm) and can be light brown, dark brown, or silver gray. They are hard and compact. Removing the sericin requires that they be soaked for six to eight hours in soda ash and then steamed for six hours.

Only the best cocoons are selected for thigh reeling. Workers carefully peel off the outer layer, including the peduncle (the "stem" that attaches cocoon to branch), until the single continuous filament becomes evident. Five or six cocoons are drawn together and reeled into a twisted thread. It takes about 4,550 cocoons to produce a pound (454 g) of reeled tasar silk.

To produce the next generation, seed cocoons are tied on long ropes and stored in a cool, dark place. In the villages, these places are windowless mud huts about 7 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 5 feet high (2.1 by 1.5 by 1.5 m). We entered a hut quietly and slowly, waited for our eyes to adjust to the darkness, and then saw columns of cocoon-studded ropes covered with emerging moths.

Mating is most successful when it occurs outside. Female moths are tied onto bamboo poles with thread to keep them from flying away, and the poles are moved outside in the evening. The females' pheromones lure males from up to 2½ miles (4 km) away. In the morning, the males fly away and the females are taken back indoors, where they are placed in bamboo baskets for six or seven days of egg laying. An average laying consists of two hundred eggs. Of this amount, only the eggs from the first seventy-two hours are considered strong enough for rearing.

FOR A SARI 44 INCHES (112 CM) WIDE AND 5 YARDS (4.6 M) LONG MADE OF TASAR, YOU NEED:

- 1,200 cocoons
- 8,000 eggs (disease-free)
- between 12 and 14 trees, each between 10 and 15 feet (3 and 4.6 m) tall
- 14 ounces (379 g) of finished yarn, prepared over 112 hours (thigh-reeled, during fourteen 8-hour days)

the community as long as anyone can remember. Baby caterpillars began to hatch from their eggs the night before we arrived. In the freshly swept mud courtyard, we were introduced to the traditional methods of pampering the ripe eggs and the newly hatched larvae. Handling the larvae at this stage can kill them. The people of the village showed us woven bamboo trays, filled with curious containers made from large leaves that had been layered, folded, and secured with toothpick-sized pieces of wood. These containers held eggs and hairy black caterpillars.

The villagers use the leaf cups to transport the larvae to their food source, the tall asan trees *(Terminalia tomentosa)*. We trailed into the forest behind silkworm rearers, excited children, and beautiful goats with floppy ears, and watched as the men used long, hooked poles to hang the leaf baskets in the trees.

When ready to spin its cocoon, a caterpillar spends up to an hour and a half searching for the perfect spot. Then it spends six hours forming a hammock of silk between three or more leaves. The next process is unique to the tropical tasar caterpillar and takes ten hours. The caterpillar temporarily vacates the hammock while it forms the peduncle, or stem, which connects the cocoon to the hammock, and in turn to the tree.

Using its mandibles, the caterpillar rips off a narrow strip of bark and forms the strip into a circle around a twig. The peduncle, made of coarse silk, connects the twig circle to the hammock. Finally, the caterpillar begins its cocoon, usually during daylight. Within twenty-four hours the caterpillar is completely enclosed, although the cocoon requires two or three days to finish and consists of a single continuous strand between 750 and 1520 yards (685 and 1389 m) long.

Tropical tasar cocoons look like brown plums hanging from peduncles in the food trees. They are harvested five or six days after spinning begins. The villagers cut the branches and pull the cocoons off the twigs. They keep the best cocoons for seed purposes, allowing the pupae to mature into moths. They stifle the chrysalises inside the remaining cocoons and use the fiber to make yarn.

Some villages do not keep their own cocoons, either for yarn or for seed. They sell all their cocoons to a merchant who

1 *Tropical tasar cocoons, complete with the peduncles which attach them to the trees, lie on an assortment of fabrics woven from tasar yarn. The fine skeins are thigh-reeled tasar, and the coarse skeins were spun from tasar peduncles.*

2 *Swifts of tasar yarn.*

takes them to market. Cocoon merchants rarely give isolated tribal rearers a fair price for their product. The CSB is currently involved in providing an alternative market for cocoons.

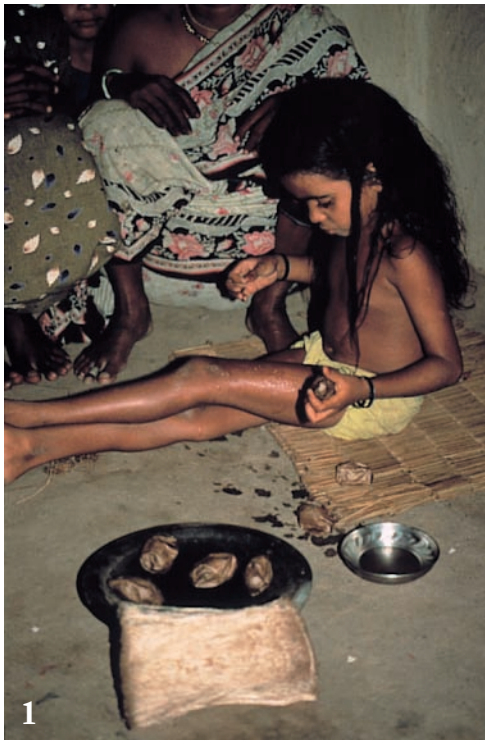
In our travels through the villages of tasar country, we noticed that thigh reeling was the method girls and women preferred for transforming cocoons to yarn. The spinner sits on the floor, legs straight out in front, with her sari pulled up to expose her left thigh. A metal dish of partially degummed cocoons rests on the floor at her left side. With her right hand, the spinner pulls filaments from the cocoons and rubs them across her thigh, adding a small amount of twist. With her left hand, the woman winds the newly formed yarn onto a *natwa,* a handheld spindle made of a wooden paddle on a bamboo stick. In eight hours, a worker can reel about eighty cocoons and produce about one ounce (28.5 g) of silk thread.

A drawback of the technique is that many women experience allergic skin reactions on their thighs. The government has introduced bowl reeling to help them avoid this problem. The girl squats on the floor in front of a round, overturned clay bowl, which is the size of a soccer ball. She rubs and twists the filaments over the bowl and piles the yarn on the floor, to be wound into a skein later. As soon as government officials are out of sight, the girls push the bowls aside and continue thigh reeling.

Tasar cocoons are also reeled in factories which use partially or fully automated machines like those used to reel commercial silk (mulberry or *Bombyx mori* silk). In eight hours, they process seven hundred cocoons and produce 8 ounces (228 g) of silk.[3]

Only 60 to 70 percent of a tasar cocoon is reelable. The remainder can be spun, along with imperfect cocoons that did not reel properly or that were pierced by emerging moths or by mice. In small cottage industries, these forms of silk waste are fully degummed, opened by carding and combing, then spun on large, mechanical devices or on smaller, foot-powered spinning wheels. In villages, much of the salvaged silk is drawn out by hand and barely twisted into a thick, uneven yarn called *ghicha,* used only for weft.

[3] From the same number of cocoons, hand reeling generates about 8¾ ounces (250 g).



1 *Girl thigh reeling tasar cocoons. There are cocoons in the bowl and a skein of reeled silk in the foreground.*

2 *Resting on the bowl containing cocoons is a* natwa, *a paddle-like spindle.*

3 *Because thigh reeling produces allergic reactions in the spinners, the government has introduced bowl reeling as an option. The girls prefer thigh reeling.*

4 *Close-up of bowl-reeling technique.*

Opposite: *The background is tasar cloth with a weft ikat border. On it are a brush, used to straighten warp threads, and a bamboo reel.*

MUGA SILK

Antheraea assamensis

Muga silkworms are multivoltine—they annually produce five or six generations. These continuous crops are mandatory to their survival, and yarn is made from the cocoons of only two of the six generations (October/ November and April/May). The other four generations are used as seed crops, keeping the species alive until environmental conditions favor the cocoon crops. Mortality during these interim generations is high. Each generation has its own rhythm of passing through the four phases of the life cycle. For example, larvae require three days to spin their cocoons in summer and seven days in winter.

Muga larvae change colors as they grow. At ⅜ inch (9.5 mm), they have yellow and black stripes. By the time they are 3¾ inches (9.5 cm) long, they are fluorescent green.

Spiritual traditions surround the raising of muga silk, which begins with the purchase or gathering of freshly generated seed cocoons, grown primarily in the foothills of lower Assam. A belief in "evil moths" prevents many growers from beginning the process with eggs, which would allow the tribal rearers to see more profit for their labor. A few growers are working with the CSB to change these traditions.

Most commercial growers live in upper Assam. They travel to the seed region to begin their search for good cocoons even before the caterpillars start making cocoons. The growers examine larvae for color, form, and absence of disease. Good seed cocoons usually fetch twice the price of silk cocoons. The CSB has learned that pupae inside seed cocoons can be held in a dormant state in cold storage for up to three months. By using this information, they are able to make available high-quality cocoons at reasonable prices.

Once the growers have selected their suppliers, they settle in lower Assam until four to six days after the caterpillars have completed their spinning. The seed cocoons are packed loosely and with extreme care into split bamboo baskets. They are moved at night, to avoid direct sunlight and to minimize fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Once in the growing area, the cocoons are stored in special thatched houses with mud walls. Within these buildings, the cocoons are placed in bamboo cages, which stand on legs about 8 inches (20 cm) above the floor. The cages prevent the moths from taking flight when they emerge.

Moths emerge at dusk two to four weeks after their cocoons have been completed. Each moth emits an alkaline solution which dissolves the end of its cocoon and then labors, alternately pushing and resting, until its whole body has emerged.

The female moths are tied to bundles of ulu-grass straw (from *Imperata cylindrica*) called *kharikas,* so they will deposit their delicate eggs in a safe place. The threads secure the females' bodies under their wings. The kharikas are hung in trees, where the male moths find the females.

After mating, the females lay eggs covered with a brown substance that helps them stick to the straw. Cloths are laid on the dirt floor under the kharikas to facilitate recovery of eggs that don't stick. Special small baskets with handles, called *cradles,* are made to collect

1 *Small muga larvae feeding in a soom tree.*

2 *Mature muga caterpillar.*

the fallen eggs. Each moth lays between 200 and 250 eggs over three or four days, and dies within seven or eight days.

The larvae begin to hatch at dawn about nine or ten days after the eggs were laid. As the larvae hatch, the vigilant rearers hang the kharikas and cradles in food trees, because the larvae set out in search of breakfast as soon as they're free.

Muga caterpillars thrive on various indigenous plants. Their primary food sources are soom trees *(Machilus bombycina)* and soalu trees *(Litsea monopetala).* Soom trees prevail in upper Assam, where the commercial cocoon crop is raised. These trees produce excellent cocoons, as determined by shell weight, silk ratio, and reelability. Soalu trees are more common in lower Assam, where seed cocoons are produced. They produce healthy moths which lay many eggs.

Finding food for muga larvae presents a problem for growers. Often these larvae are fed on scattered, tall trees. A rearer who does not own trees must rent them, often at a cost of 50 percent of the crop. To help with this problem, the CSB has established orchards which are rented out at a cost of 10 percent of the crop. The CSB also makes soom and soalu seedlings available for nominal prices, and provides instruction on growing trees to keep them healthy, short, and bushy, which facilitates care of the larvae.

Muga larvae spin their cocoons in bundles of leaves. Each bundle, called a *jali,* is made from jack-fruit or mango leaves which the rearers gather, bind together, and leave in the sun to partially dry. As they dry, the leaves curl. After nightfall, "ripe" larvae are collected and placed on a jali. When a caterpillar has found its spinning nook, it throws out attachment threads and makes a hammock. These loose filaments, called floss, become waste when the cocoon is reeled. The larva excretes its continuous filament at the rate of about an inch (2.5 cm) per minute, for a total of between 400 and 430 yards (366 and 393 m) of silk. As it spins, it moves its head in a figure eight and extrudes the liquid silk through an opening called a *spinneret,* near its head. As it forms the cocoon, the larva turns around several thousand times within a tiny space.

Finished, the golden-brown muga cocoon measures about 1 by 2½ inches (2.5 by 5.7 cm). Its precise color, shape, and size depend on the quality of the seed, as well as of the weather, the food leaves, and the care which it has received. About six to ten days after spinning, the cocoons are removed from the jalis and sorted for use as seed or silk.

Before muga cocoons can be reeled, the gummy sericin has to be removed. This requires that the cocoons be boiled for between fifteen and thirty minutes in water made alkaline by adding ashes from burned leaves, wood, or straw. Muga is more delicate than other silks and over-boiling weakens the silk, so this process is carefully monitored and the cocoons are removed when the filaments become loose enough to be reeled.

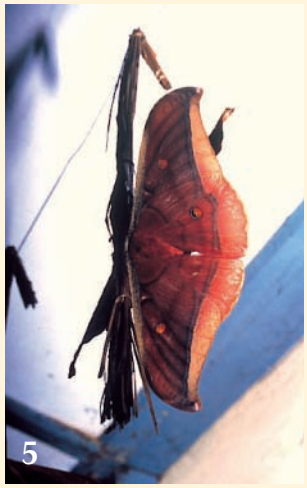
3 *Each muga caterpillar forms a cocoon like this in a bundle of jack-fruit or mango leaves, called a* jali. *The loose filaments around the cocoon become silk waste.*

4 *Eggs which don't stick to the kharikas are gathered in small baskets.*

5 *Female moths are tied to grass bundles called* kharikas, *where the males find them.*


3


4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FOR A SARI 44 INCHES (112 CM) WIDE AND 5 YARDS (4.6 M) LONG MADE OF MUGA, YOU NEED:

- 2,000 cocoons
- 4,000 eggs (disease-free)
- 4 trees, each 75 feet (23 m) tall
- 14 ounces (379 g) of finished yarn, prepared over 32 hours (forearm-reeled, during four 8-hour days)

MUGA SILKWORMS IN ASSAM

The fluorescent-green muga caterpillar *(Antheraea assamensis)* looks like it has "eyes" at its tail. Most muga caterpillars are in Assam, although muga is sparsely raised in the other northeastern states of India. These states are separated from the rest of India by the country of Bangladesh, and the area is politically unstable. After four years of persistent letter-writing, we finally received a visa allowing us to visit Assam.

The warmth and hospitality showered upon us during both our trips to this area are the kind one holds dear for the rest of one's life. We met with the perceptive and helpful Mr. N. K. Das, Director Northeast of the CSB, who "loaned" us Sarat Deori and Sri C. K. Dinghia, our constant guides and friends during our Assamese research.

The extraordinary ecosystem of the Brahmaputra River valley provides the exact temperature and humidity conditions required by the vulnerable muga silkworms. The muga caterpillar is considered semi-domestic, because it will perform much of its life cycle indoors. Cocoons form; moths emerge, mate, and lay eggs; new caterpillars hatch. However, the silkworms insist on eating outdoors, and they eat their way through life, taking breaks only during molting periods. Even though some parts of the life cycle take place in a partially controllable indoor environment, muga culture is risky. There is a high mortality rate among the silkworms due to temperature fluctuations, heavy rains, smoke, dust, predators, and disease.

I could hardly get out of the car fast enough on our first visit to a soom forest full of muga caterpillars.[4] The rearers giggled at my excitement over this sight, which is second nature in their lives. It

[4] Soom is *Machilus bombycina.*

Tasar and muga. *On the left are rough skeins of tasar and muga ghicha, lying on a fabric made of spun muga yarn. On the right are muga cocoons and skeins, on a golden cloth made of forearm reeled muga and a lighter cloth woven with a tasar warp and a reeled muga weft.*

was late afternoon and hot. Beautiful, yellowed bands made of banana leaves were tied around the trees about 3 feet (90 cm) from the ground. Above the bands, the tree trunks were thickly covered with green caterpillars with brown "eyes" in their tails. Muga caterpillars are very mobile. The caterpillars tend to travel during the hottest part of the day, and the bands keep them from moving too far. When they reach a band, they turn and crawl back up the tree.

This traveling nature makes it relatively easy for the rearers to collect the worms when a tree is becoming defoliated. The worms are gently picked up and placed on a triangular bamboo sieve, called a *chalani.* The chalani is placed on a long bamboo pole and lifted into a new tree. A medium-sized tree can feed about five hundred caterpillars, and a tree can support two rearings per year. Rearers maintain a twenty-four–hour watch in their gardens, using noisy bamboo clappers, bows, and mud balls to protect their charges from lizards, birds, snakes, and whatever else might like to dine on muga.

The day we visited, the worms were descending because they were ready to begin spinning. To prove this was so, a man held a worm close to my ear and rolled it in his fingers. It made a scrunching sound, like some silk yarns! This sound is produced because the caterpillar has eliminated all of its body waste in preparation for cocoon spinning.

We felt an awesome respect for the constant dedication, care, and worry that the rearers invest to get the eggs to maturity and obtain reelable cocoons. Our journey to the orchard ended with chai and the offer of betel nut, a palm product that acts as a stimulant in the mouth, much like chewing tobacco. It leaves the lips and teeth of frequent users stained red. The ritual involved in taking betel nut and powdered lime is similar to the tequila, lime, and salt routine. My husband, Terry, and I grinned at each other as we were gently cheered on by our guides and by the rearers. We only managed one chew before we spit out the betel nut and gulped down our chai, amid the laughter of everyone else at the gathering.

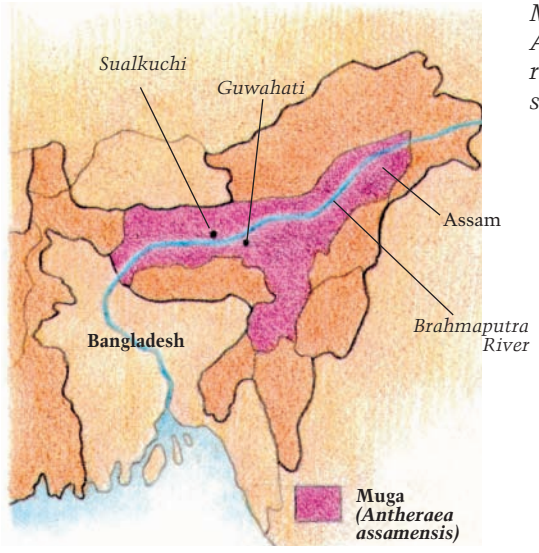
Eighty percent of the commercial muga crop is sold to traders, and twenty percent is retained as seed cocoons or for domestic use. Unique commercial circumstances surround all aspects of muga culture, from rearing to cloth weaving, because of the involvement of powerful businessmen, called *Mahajans,* who are based in Sualkuchi.

Sualkuchi is the only commercial muga production center in the northeast, and records indicate that Sualkuchi has served as a center for reeling and weaving muga cloth since at least 300 B.C. The village contains about five thousand families. The entire population of about twenty-three thousand—men, women, and children—is involved in the reeling and weaving industry. There doesn't seem to be a division of labor by gender. Both men and women reel and weave. As we roamed the narrow streets of Sualkuchi, the clacking sounds of fly-shuttle looms resounded from every courtyard and doorway. Rooftops and pathways glistened with reels and warping drums full of golden yarn.

The Mahajans employ most residents of Sualkuchi and are also involved in the other aspects of muga culture. As the major purchasers of cocoons needed to feed the hungry looms, they set the prices, which usually deprive the rearers of fair wages.

1 *Muga caterpillars move around a lot. Their rearers tie bands made of banana leaves around trees to keep them from moving too far.*

2 *Assamese villagers perform a welcoming dance.*



Most muga silk is grown in Assam. To locate Assam in relation to India as a whole, *see page 73.*

1 *Forearm reeling is a two-person job. The tool in the middle which holds the bobbin is called a* bhir.

2 *Only about half of each cocoon can be reeled. The remainder will be mill-spun into lower-quality, still beautiful, yarns.*

3 *The process is slow. In one day, two people can reel five hundred cocoons, yielding about 3½ ounces of yarn.*

4 *Reeled muga dries in the sun.*

Cocoons which will be used for silk are exposed to heat, to stifle the pupae inside. Roaming through the villages, we saw two common methods of doing this. Some households placed cocoons on a cloth in the sun. In other places, a large barrel with both ends removed was positioned over a pit containing a smoldering fire. On top of this lay a bamboo rack piled with cocoons, in turn covered with burlap.

Muga cocoons contain less sericin than either tasar or bombyx cocoons, so reeling muga is a delicate operation. The cocoons are boiled in water containing ashes from various woods, leaves, and straw. The solution must be alkaline enough to remove just the right amount of sericin to make reeling possible. If too much sericin is removed, the silk becomes weak.

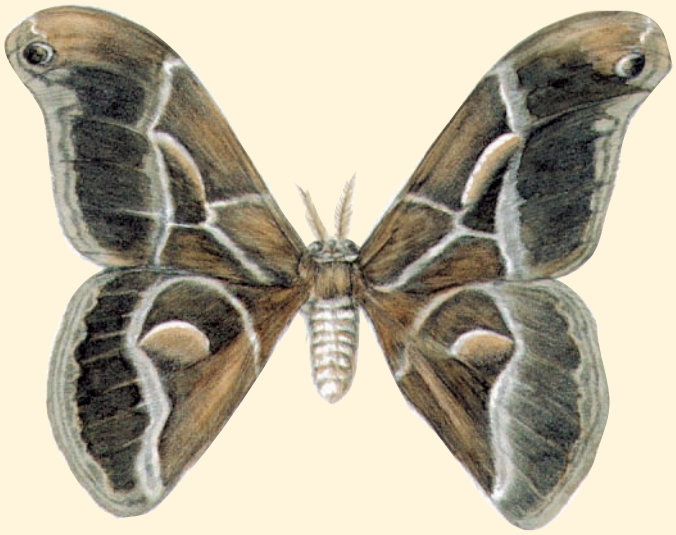
In the villages, the most common method of reeling muga cocoons is called *forearm reeling.* The technique requires two people and a simple mechanism called a *bhir.* A bhir is a wooden stand that supports a shaft with a large bamboo bobbin on one end and a wheel on the other end.

Softened and deflossed cocoons are placed in a basin over a fire on one side of the bhir. The fire keeps the cocoons warm, so the sericin remains soft. One person, the feeder, sits by the basin (on left, above). The second person, the reeler, sits facing the feeder on the other side of the bhir (on right, above). The feeder passes between seven and ten filaments from the cocoons to the reeler's right hand. With the right palm, the reeler rubs the strands down the left forearm, which twists them together and increases the cohesion of the yarn. At the same time, the reeler's left hand turns the wheel of the bhir and winds the yarn onto the bobbin.

This entire process is very slow, so the costs of reeling are high. Two people can reel an average of five hundred cocoons in an eight-hour day, yielding 110 grams (3.5 ounces) of yarn. To produce one kilo (2.2 pounds) of reeled muga yarn, two people labor for ten days each.

Only about half of each cocoon is reelable, because the inside layers of silk are weak. As soon as a filament breaks, the remainder of that cocoon is regarded as waste, along with the filament deflossed before the running end was located. Waste goes to spinning mills, where it is degummed, carded, and combed before being spun into beautiful yarn of lower quality than the reeled silk.

The government is increasingly involved with muga culture. As funds become available, cooperatives are established to provide freedom from the monopoly of the Mahajans. Government agencies have been experimenting with pedal-operated reeling machines, like those used to process tasar, which require only one person. The delicacy of muga fiber impedes progress on this front, which in turn limits the development of economic well-being for the highly skilled tribal Assamese who raise and process this silk.



ERI SILK

Samia ricini

Eri silkworms are multivoltine, going through six generations in a year. It takes about forty-four days to complete a generation in summer, as opposed to eighty-five days in winter.

Eggs are collected by gently brushing them onto cloths, which are formed into pouches and hung in cool places under shelter. The eggs are covered with fine, moist cloths that keep them from drying out. Depending on season, it takes from seven to twenty days before the eggs hatch, which they generally begin to do between 7 and 9 AM one morning. As hatching begins, each cloth pouch is opened and placed on a bamboo feeding tray, which is used for husbandry during the first two instars.

New larvae are about ⅜ inch (9.1 mm) long and are yellow with black, fleshy tubercles, or knobby protuberances. The tubercles remain black throughout the instars, although the body color changes. Tender, juicy, young food leaves are chopped and sprinkled over the new babies, who begin to eat immediately. The larvae need to be fed about five times a day. The tray is covered with a moist cloth that keeps parasitic flies away and helps keep the leaves fresh. At the final instar, the caterpillar is 3½ inches (8.9 cm) long and multicolored. Mature larvae get indigestion from young leaves and instead are fed older leaves, which are hung in bundles from the roof of the eri house. It's easier to keep the larvae healthy in the eri house than in the feeding trays.

Eri caterpillars spin their cocoons in spinning baskets or on bamboo *chandrikas* (see pages 73–74). The cocoons are either white or brick-red, have a pointed shape with an opening in one end, and measure about 1 by 2 inches (2.5 by 5 cm). The red color is only in the sericin, and all degummed eri silk is creamy white and less lustrous than other silks. Eri shrinks after washing and has a tendency to yellow.

Eri cocoons are sorted immediately after they have been formed, while they are still soft. The best cocoons, with a thick layer of silk, are kept for use as seed. On cocoons intended for use as silk, most eri rearers remove the pupa and egg case at this point, a job which is easier before the cocoon hardens. Otherwise the pupae are stifled, as with other silks.

Moths begin to emerge early in the morning about two weeks after the cocoons have been completed, and we arrived in the village of Borduar as this was happening. At the door of the mud hut, we were instructed to take off our shoes and then move slowly inside so as not to disturb the moths. We felt goosebumps as we stood amid the fluttering wings and our eyes slowly adjusted to the dark. Huge, beautiful moths hung on grass khari-

1 *Eri larvae feeding on bundles of castor bean leaves.*

2 *Eri caterpillar.*

kas, suspended in row after row from the ceiling.

The male moths follow the females' pheromones and mating is complete by the following morning. Then the females are tied to the kharikas so that most eggs will be safely deposited on these devices. The eggs are surrounded by a colorless substance which helps them adhere to the kharikas. Each moth lays a cluster of between three hundred and five hundred eggs in four to five days. Only the eggs laid in the first two days are kept for rearing.

To degum the cocoons before spinning, the rearers boil them for about an hour in water made alkaline by adding ashes produced by burning certain leaves or straw. After the cocoons have been rinsed in clear water, they are slightly stretched into thin sheets. Three or four sheets placed together make a *cake,* from which spinning proceeds on small drop spindles and charkhas.


1


2

1 *Woman handspinning eri on a drop spindle.*

2 *Moths on* kharikas*, hanging grass bundles.*

3 *Mating moths.*

4 *Woman spinning on a drop spindle from a cake of eri.*


3


4

FOR A SARI 44 INCHES (112 CM) WIDE AND 5 YARDS (4.6 M) LONG MADE OF ERI, YOU NEED:

- 1,200 cocoons
- 2,000 eggs (disease-free)
- an uncalculated number of trees
- 22 ounces (627 g) of finished yarn (spun on a hand spindle over 120 hours, during fifteen 8-hour days)

ERI SILKWORMS IN ASSAM

Strange as it may seem, we felt as excited as children on Christmas morning when we saw our first tray full of eri *(Samia ricini)* caterpillars. They have fleshy spikes and come in three colorways: creamy white with many black spots, greenish yellow with a few black spots, and blue with many black spots. Like muga caterpillars, eri are indigenous to Assam but have spread sparingly to other northeastern states.

Eri caterpillars are not as finicky as other types of silkworms, and they play an essential role in rural daily life. For village women, eri culture is like keeping chickens. The women carry out the associated tasks during their spare time, first to supply their own needs and then for a bit of extra income.

Eri is known as "poor man's silk," because it is not of the same quality as the other three silks—tasar, muga, and mulberry—and therefore not as costly. The tribal rearers do not waste anything from eri production. The fiber is used to make cloth. The transforming pupa is an edible delicacy, high in protein. Caterpillar waste fertilizes the vegetable garden. The pupae are also pressed for oil, used in soap-making, after which the dry residue is fed to fish, chicken, and pigs.

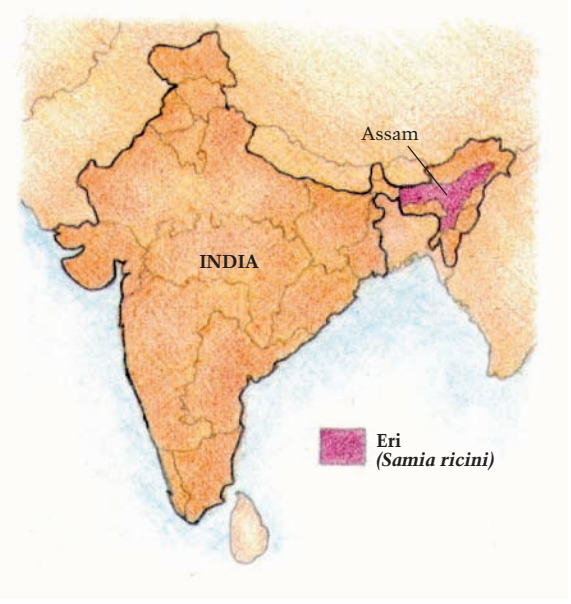
Rearing eri is similar to the cultivation of mulberry silk, because all stages are carried out indoors. Weather and predators do not wreak as much havoc as they do with tasar and muga, which are raised in the wild. From a given number of hatched eggs, eri rearers often achieve a 75-percent cocoon harvest. With tasar and muga, the yield is often less than 50 percent.

The name *eri* is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning *castor bean plant.* Eri silkworms can feed on many types of leaves, but castor bean leaves produce larger cocoons more quickly, and therefore more silk. There is no regular cultivation of castor or other food plants for the caterpillars. The food sources grow wild around the villages, so it is easy for rearers to pluck leaves throughout the day.

The narrow dusty roadways leading to rural villages are surrounded by fields of rice, acres of tea bushes, and just-harvested areas where cows graze. Many families have built a separate mud house with a thatched roof in which they rear eri silkworms. A rearer in Borduar village, near Sualkuchi, led us across a road to his eri house. At first, we only saw plentiful bundles of castor leaves hung upside down from a thatched roof that extended from the house. As we got closer, we could see that the bundles were crawling with spiky, multicolored eri silkworms. Fresh bundles of leaves are hung like saddles next to dried-out bunches, and the worms crawl onto the new leaves. A mat spread on the floor under the bundles catches any worms that fall off. It is easy to pick the worms from the mat and return them to the leaf bunches.

In one village, most of the rearers placed their caterpillars in spinning baskets filled with dry leaves of mango, plantain, or jack-fruit trees. The worms find nooks in the leaves and begin spinning cocoons. Another village provided *chandrikas,* which are also used in the mulberry industry. A chandrika consists of a bamboo mat that has had a bamboo braid 2 inches (5 cm) wide sewn onto it in a spiral fashion. The braid is attached on-edge, making walled

The guide called the eri silkworm "lazy," because it spins an open-ended cocoon that cannot be reeled. Cocoons are opened into cakes and then spun (see opposite page).



pathways within which caterpillars can find congenial spinning locations.

Sarat, our guide, called the eri silkworm "lazy," because it does not spin one continuous strand of silk, like the mulberry, tasar, and muga caterpillars do. An eri cocoon is formed over three to four days, with periodic rest stops. The cocoon therefore has numerous starts and stops and one open end. It can't be reeled.

To loosen the silk for spinning, the sericin must be removed. The cocoons are boiled in an alkaline solution until the degummed fibers come apart easily. After being rinsed in clear water, the cocoons are slightly stretched into thin patties. Three or four patties are layered to make a *cake,* which is dried and used for spinning.

Most eri is handspun on a drop spindle called a *takli.* Women carry out this chore as they walk through the village or rest in the shade of a thatched lean-to, where a spinner often visits with a weaver. (A few small cottage industries have begun to process eri using foot-powered charkha spinning wheels.)

The eri cakes are moistened to facilitate twisting and increase their sheen, then placed on a bamboo stick held in the left hand. This bamboo stick serves as a distaff, from which the right hand draws the silk. A spinner can produce fifty grams (1¾ ounces) of yarn in eight hours. Because the eri cocoon is spun instead of reeled, there is no waste. Between 75 and 80 percent of each cocoon's weight becomes yarn; the remainder is the weight of the pupa. Approximately fifteen hundred cocoons yield one pound (450 g) of silk. Spinning and weaving are not done on an hourly or continual basis. They fit in between other tasks.

A government operation called the Eri Society performs a great service as the local clearinghouse and marketing agent for cocoons, yarn, and cloth. The society purchases excess cocoons and distributes them to handspinners, cottage industries, or mills. Yarn is returned for payment and distributed to weavers. The cloth is marketed in larger cities for the villagers.

Eri culture is not surrounded by the same religious rituals as tasar and muga culture. This means the CSB can be more actively involved in assisting the rearers with cold storage of seed cocoons or supplying them with disease-free eggs. It is heart-warming to see the effects of the practical, non-invasive methods used by

Above: *Both the shuttle bobbin and the bamboo spool hold reeled muga silk. Female moths are tied onto bundles of grasses like this one, called a* kharika, *for egg laying. Both fabrics in the background combine muga and eri silk. The warp in the striped cloth consists of bands of muga (golden) and eri (white); the weft is eri. The plain cloth has a muga warp and an eri weft.*

Opposite: *Both white and red eri cocoons, shown here, turn into white silk—like that in the skeins—when they're degummed. The cloth was made from eri spun on small drop spindles.*

the CSB and other government agencies in providing scientific assistance that can help the tribal rearers maintain their traditional ways of life.

Learning about all these wild creatures firsthand in the forests and jungles of India was an exciting dream. I feel privileged to have shared the celebrations, laughter, respect, and pride of the people involved in this risky type of sericulture. I have been touched many times by their eager generosity and their reserved self-confidence.

One evening, as the light faded, the young people of a village danced and sang for us. When they finished, we reciprocated with "Kumbaya" and "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore." Our shared harmonies mingled in the quiet darkness and stay in my heart. ❖

Karen Selk knows more about the spinning of wild silks than most people can imagine. We put this article together between her ongoing explorations. She and her husband, Terry Nelson, share their knowledge in part through Treenway Silks, based in Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

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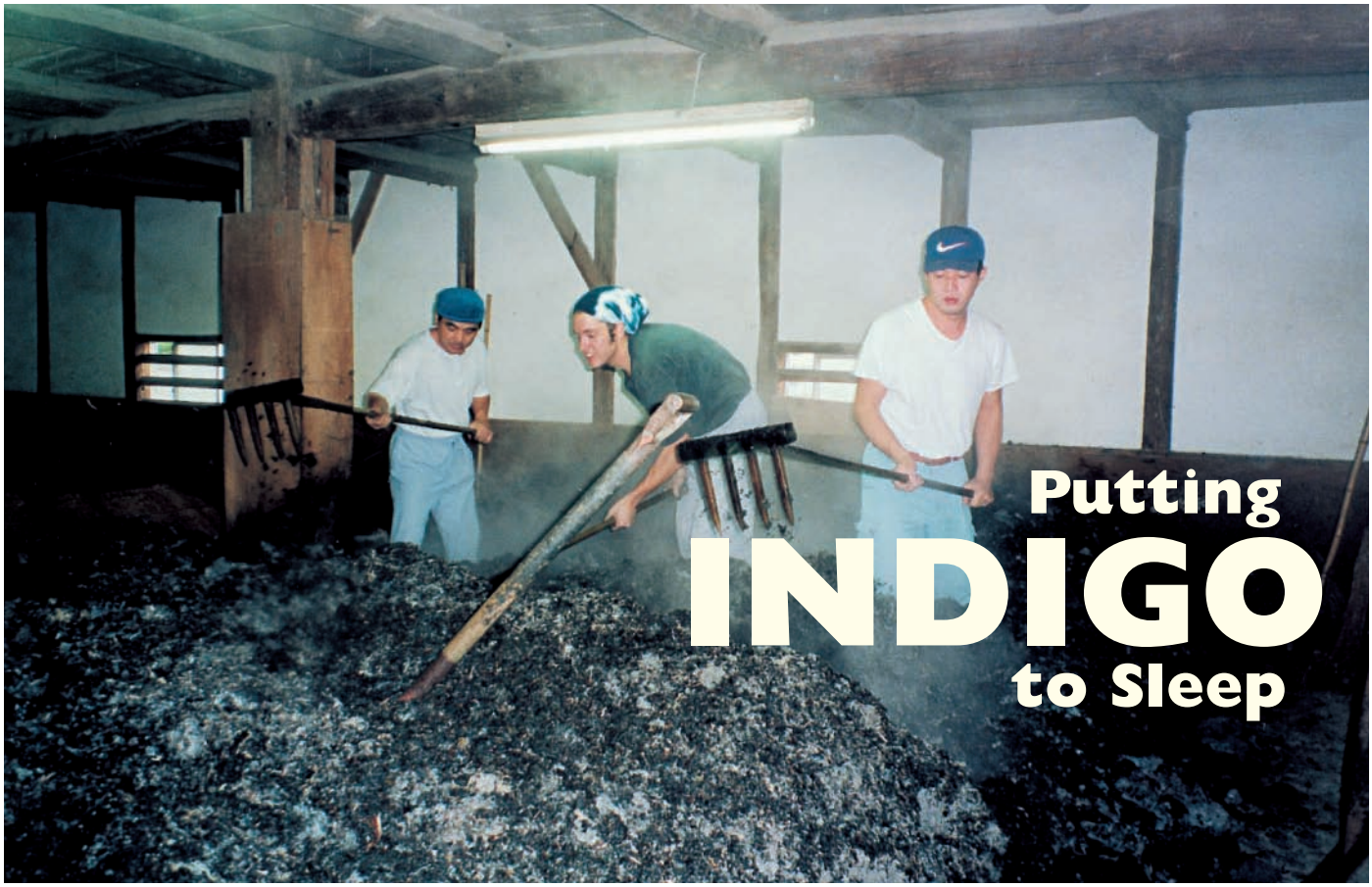
Want to look at more wonderful moths? Check out John Cody and Richard S. Peigler's *Wings of Paradise: The Great Saturniid Moths* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, ISBN 0-8078-2286-8). Ric Peigler wrote the article on wild silks in the Winter 1999 *Spin-Off.* His text, John Cody's fantastic paintings, and Richard Hendel's book design make the volume itself take flight. It's $65. Find a library copy and then see if you can resist getting your own.

Egg basket from muga culture.



Putting INDIGO to Sleep

by Dorothy Miller

I had the opportunity to visit Mr. Nii, an indigo farmer, in Tokushima on the island of Shikoku, in Japan. Generations of his family have grown, processed, and sold indigo to indigo dyers throughout Japan. When I visited, Mr. Nii was making *sukumo,* the indigo dyestuff, from the leaves he had harvested daily from late June through late September.

In one shed, the leaves were cut up in an electric chopper, then caught in the breezes of fans which had been set up to blow the leaf matter away from the stems. The leaves were placed in the sun and completely dried. Then they were stored in straw bags until it was time to bring them into sheds to be composted, a process also known as *fermenting.*

The bags were opened and the leaves were placed in huge piles on the floor of the sheds, where water was added. The top and sides of each pile were covered with rice-straw mats and the combination was left to compost. In one shed, two huge piles of leaves were decomposing. Each pile measured approximately 8 by 10 meters (26 by 33 feet).

Mr. Nii, his apprentice, and his son-in-law were preparing to turn over a steaming pile which already smelled like ammonia. They removed the mats and started shoveling leaf matter from the edges of the pile, throwing each shovelful onto the pile. As work progressed, they cut the pile crosswise into two sections and worked from the inside toward each end. They turned the leaves completely over, top to bottom, then made another division lengthwise along the pile and continued turning. Mr. Nii gathered water from a bucket—pure drinking water, as he indicated to me by tasting it—and threw it over the leaf matter.

After a rest, they continued until all the turning was done. Mr. Nii swept up

Above: *Turning over fermenting indigo leaves.*

Putting indigo to sleep.

all the stray leaves from the floor and restored them to the pile. He used a tamper to shape the sides of the pile and covered the mass again with straw mats.

The floors of the sheds had been specially prepared for composting indigo. *Nedoko* is the name for the building in which indigo is "put to sleep." The apprentice told me the two characters used to write this word mean *sleep* and *bed* or *floor*. He said the earthen floor is by far the most important part of the building, because it must be able to absorb any excess liquid.

The floor is about one meter (3¼ feet) deep. Its base is composed of medium-sized stones. Those are covered by smaller stones, which in turn are covered by sand. Above the sand is a layer of rice husks, and above that is a thick layer of clay. Mr. Nii uses clay that comes from Awaji Island in Hyogo prefecture. The clay is normally used for making roof tiles. Over time, the constant runoff from composting indigo

leaves weakens the clay, making the floor's surface brittle. Every two or three years, the clay must be replaced. It takes roughly 400 kg (880 pounds) of clay to finish the floor in one building.

The piles needed to be turned every six days, and each of the three sheds contained two piles. The workers had no days of rest. Their workspace was graced with a vase containing a bit of pine, an offering made to assure that good *sukumo,* the indigo dyestuff, would result from their labors. This intensive work continues until the New Year—in Mr. Nii's case, the old Japanese New Year, or February 1. Then the sukumo is tested and put into straw bags for sale.

The sukumo is highly prized by dyers throughout Japan, including those at Kurume, in Kyushu, who weave picture ikat *(e kasuri),* and those in Ehime prefecture in western Shikoku, where *Iyou gasure* is woven. Tremendous work is required to continue making this dyestuff—from seeding, planting, and harvesting through the processing of the plant material. But as long as there is a demand for natural indigo and as long as he is able to do so, Mr. Nii says he will continue to "put indigo to sleep" and make its color available. ❖

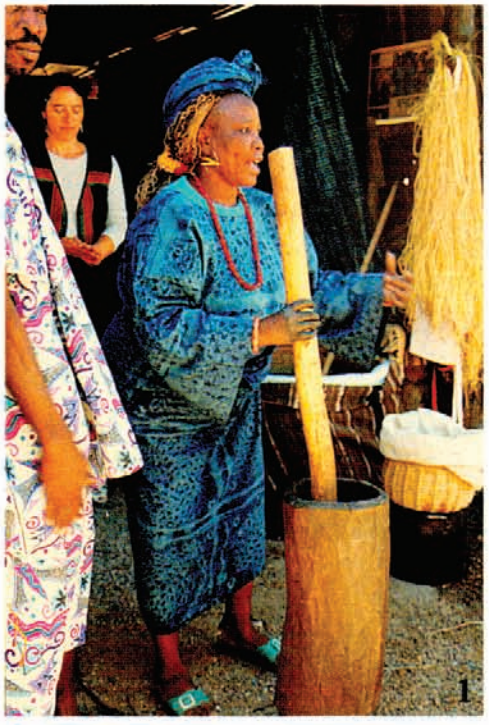
In 1963, Dorothy Miller learned to spin on a drop spindle. She has had several wheels. Her latest she calls "a small Bavarian gem." Recently she rediscovered her first thick, handspun, indigo-dyed yarn, from which she knitted and felted a hat. She says it was "such fun, and is so wonderful to wear." This article has been adapted from Dorothy's Indigo from Seed to Dye, *now in its fifth printing. Dorothy also makes sure there's a source for seeds of* Polygonum tinctorium, *an indigo-bearing plant which Rita Buchanan described to us as "productive, reliable, not a bit fussy, and pretty to look at in the garden." Request Dorothy's book ($12.95, postpaid in the United States) or the seeds ($5/packet) from Dorothy Miller, 3008 River 13 C, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-2757. The book is also available from Unicorn Books and Crafts, 1338 Ross St., Petaluma, CA 94954, (707) 762-3362, fax (707) 762-0335. Both photos in this article taken in Tokushima, Japan, by Dorothy Miller.*

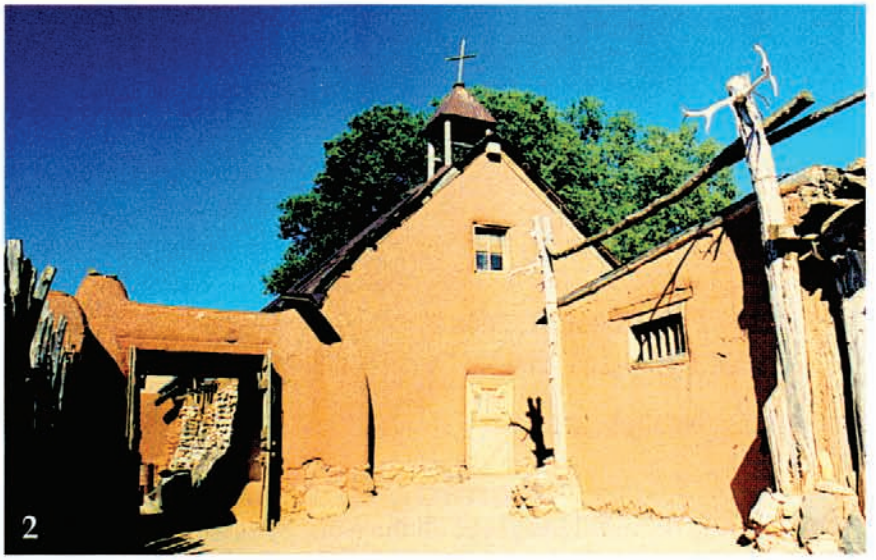
Indigo Dyeing:

Nigeria Meets New Mexico

by Glenna Dean

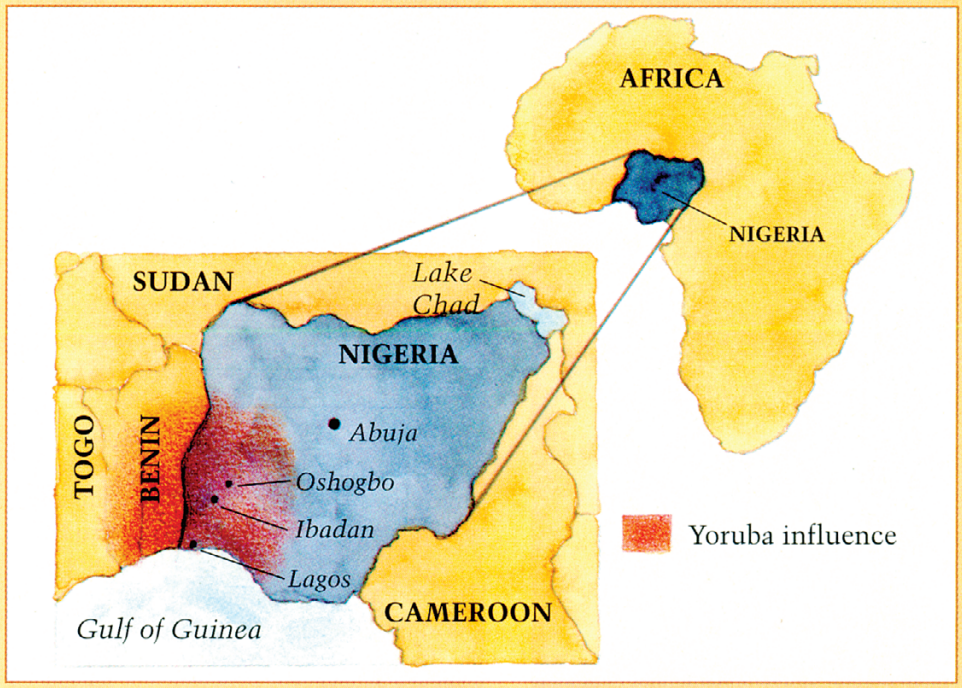
THE WARM SUN SPARKLES on a fall morning in northern New Mexico, and is reflected back obliquely from the shade of the dye shed by the iridescent blue-green essence of leaves in water filtered through ashes of chocolate . . . this is a Yoruba indigo vat, a living organism fed with ash water and lime juice and kept warm in the brisk Indian summer by an electric blanket, itself enveloped in a handwoven wool blanket. Seven students gather around Iyalaro Silifatu Adunni Suliman, who has come from Nigeria to teach us how she makes an indigo dye unlike any we have encountered and uses it to embellish cloth with designs induced by tying, sewing, and paste resist techniques.





1 *Iyalaro Silifatu Adunni Suliman with the mortar and pestle used to break down the leaves.*

2 *El Rancho de las Golondrinas: adobe structures in a crisp late-summer morning.*



Yoruba and Nigeria

The language and culture of the Yoruba people predate contemporary political boundaries by amounts of time measured in millennia. There are estimated to be more Yoruba people than the entire population of Australia, with a large concentration in southwestern Nigeria and in parts of neighboring Benin and Togo. Nigeria is home to several hundred ethnic groups, among which the Yoruba are one of the largest.

By the fifteenth century, the Yoruba had developed complex cities and artistic traditions, including mastery of techniques with textiles, bronze and other metals, leather, glass, ivory, and wood, as well as literature. Because of political and economic turbulence in the region over the last few hundred years, craft skills have been progressively neglected and nearly lost.

***3** The indigo dye vat in the shade of the dye shed. It's wrapped in an electric blanket, with a handwoven wool blanket over that.*

The workshop is being held at El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a living history museum just south of Santa Fe. The museum is always on the look-out for events to excite interest in New Mexico and its early history. A connection between traditional Nigerian textiles and New Mexico seems far-fetched, but the history of European interest in New Mexico started in 1539. That's when an African man named Estevan advanced ahead of Spanish explorer Fray Marcos de Miza to arrive at the Pueblo of Zuni in northwestern New Mexico.

The workshop site includes an outdoor dyeshed—three walls and a roof, with a dirt floor—which adds immeasurably to the dye experience. It's easy to imagine similar conditions in Nigeria, where the techniques we will study were perfected.

Iyalaro is the Yoruba title of respect for an accomplished master, and is the name we use to address our primary instructor. She is a Master Indigo Dyer in the Yoruba tradition of western Nigeria, in sub-Saharan Africa. Her assistant and translator is Mufu Ahmed, director of the Niké Center for Arts and Culture in Oshogbo,

4 Mufu and Iyalaro wearing traditional Yoruba garments, with extra layers underneath against the chill morning, work at pulverizing leaves.

Nigeria. Iyalaro is head teacher at the school, and is unique in her comprehensive proficiency with the techniques of both making and applying indigo dyes.

The Yoruba instructors are cold in the 70° F (21° C) cloudless day. Iyalaro is dressed head-to-foot in indigo-dyed garments: a *gele* (head wrap) over her blond-streaked corn-row wig, a *buba* (short top), and a wrapper skirt. Underneath her *buba* she has tucked a borrowed acrylic sweater. Mufu wears other traditional textiles: a bright yellow- and brown-striped hat with pointy "ears" (called a *fila* cap), a brightly colored *bubu* (long shirt), and *sokoto* (short trousers). He's wearing an additional long-sleeved shirt for warmth. Both smile easily and enjoy our exclamations over the intricate visual textures of the blue-on-blue and blue-on-white designs they show us on cotton clothing, pillow covers, and pieced quilts. We want to start dyeing immediately.

Instead, Iyalaro hands us moldering leaves and a heavy wooden pestle, made from a tree trunk.

The leaves come from a native Nigerian plant that she calls *elu*. Indigo is a complex dyestuff. Unlike many plant-dye materials, the dye must be manipulated after extraction before it can be used directly on fibers. An indigo-bearing plant provides the precursor, *indican*, a soluble, colorless glucoside which must be changed into indigo dye, *indigotin*, through a series of chemical manipulations. Indican is found in about a half-dozen genera of plants worldwide, and many methods for extracting and using the colorant have been devised.

The plant most often identified as "indigo," *Indigofera tinctoria*, is not the same as Iyalaro's elu.[1] A little research on my part reveals the Nigerian plant to be *Lonchocarpus cyanescens*. Although both *Indigofera tinctoria* and *Lonchocarpus cyanescens* belong to the legume family (Fabaceae, also known as Leguminosae), they have little else in common.

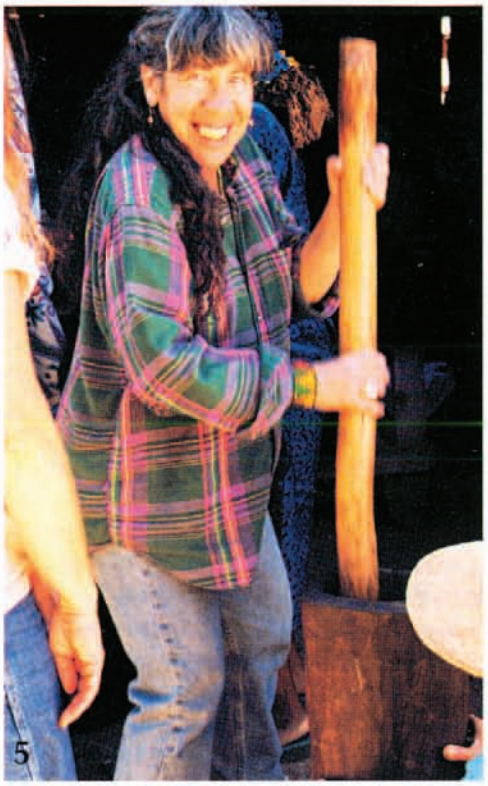
Mufu explains that elu is a perennial, begins life as a vine before becoming a tree, and produces no flowers or seeds. Instead, it is propagated by root cuttings, which explains why seeds are "not commercially available."[2] Each leaf, actually a leaflet of a compound leaf that must be close to two feet (60 cm) long, is the size of a beech, sycamore, mulberry, or even cottonwood leaf.

"Indigo," in contrast, is a tropical shrubby bush with leaflets an inch (2.5 cm) or so long combining to make leaves up to three inches (7.5 cm) long. Its small flowers produce tiny seeds. This plant can be grown indoors and will live for years in a pot but, tender to frost, it cannot survive winter outdoors in most of the United States.

The elu leaves for the workshop were shipped from Nigeria in plastic bags (just missing Hurricane Floyd) and refrigerated upon arrival, but nonetheless had begun to

[1] The indican-bearing genera are listed in J. N. Liles, *The Art and Craft of Natural Dyeing*, pages 54 and 98–99. When both the shipment of elu from Nigeria and the backup supply from North Carolina were threatened by Hurricane Floyd, an interesting set of phone calls traversed North America looking for substitutes. Other indigo-bearing plants were located, but none adequate to the job.

[2] Rita Buchanan, *A Weaver's Garden*, page 116.



decompose. Iyalaro says this is good, and sets us to work. We take pictures of each other wielding the heavy wooden pestle as we pound the leaves into mush in a mortar made from a hollowed tree stump. Iyalaro shows us how to press the leaf mush between our hands into balls about the size of tennis balls (like making mud pies). We make as many balls as there is leaf mush and Iyalaro puts the balls aside to dry slowly over the next week.

She then produces an apple-box full of leaf-mush balls that she prepared in Nigeria. The balls are not only dry, they are blue! Mufu breaks open two balls and shows us the fine white substance that forms inside the best balls. Mufu tells me that the white substance smells of mold. Gesturing to the dye vat, a huge, blanket-wrapped, ceramic crock at the entrance to the dyeshed, Mufu explains that the dye has been prepared with forty or fifty of these dried balls, crumbled between the hands.

The liquid into which the dye balls are immersed is water that has been dripped through ashes. In Nigeria, the ashes come from burned cocoa pods, left over from the harvest of cocoa nibs destined for processing into chocolate. Iyalaro had tested substitutes at the home of her Santa Fe hostess, Victoria Scott, who burns piñon and juniper wood in her fireplace. While these ashes were acceptable, Iyalaro pronounced

5 Plenty of leaf-pounding occurred. This is Luisa Gelenter, New Mexico indigo-maven, who tipped off Interweave Knits *(and by extension* Spin·Off*) about the workshop. We have her to thank for the genesis of this article.*

6 Iyalaro holds indigo leaves.

7 Mufu forms leaf-mush into balls.

8 Completed leaf-mush balls. They are green when newly prepared and turn blue when dry.

9 Even in the shade of the dye shed, Iyalaro's tongue turns an obvious indigo blue afer she tastes the dyebath to make sure it's right.

the residue in Victoria's backyard barbecue even better.

In preparation for the workshop, Iyalaro took a woven cane basket, which looked to me like an inexpensive wastebasket from Mexico, and lined it with a bag woven of thin plastic strips. She gathered a bucket of ashes from charcoal briquettes and spread them in the bottom of the porous, plastic-lined basket, which she set on top of a bucket. Then she filled the basket with water, which dripped through the ashes.

Now, gesturing to the class to join her, Iyalaro dips two fingers into the pale yellow ash-water and tastes it, pronouncing it good. It tastes both salty, like baking soda, and a little peppery. She pours the ash-water into the dye pot, which has already evolved under her care. We see four half-limes floating on the surface and ask Mufu why they are there. He tells us that Iyalaro added them when the dyebath tasted too alkaline, because it was "too cold for the dye to come out—limes control the weather."

"You *taste* the dye?" we exclaim, horrified, thinking of noxious chemicals and blue tongues. Smiling, Iyalaro gestures for us to join her in tasting the dye and poses for photographs with her blue tongue. The cool dye solution has a neutral flavor, not unpleasant, and feels a little granular in our mouths. The color on our tongues fades quickly.

As Iyalaro stirs the dyebath, she brings up from the bottom vegetal matter from the crumbled *elu* balls. Blue bubbles form around the edge of the dyebath. Mufu points and smiles, "See the bubbles? The dye is happy and is coming out." We notice the characteristic smell of indigo: pungent and a little fishy.

Several class members who have used indigo dyebaths where the dye is extracted through a different sort of chemical manipulation begin to mutter about stirring the pot and the blue color and the bubbles. "This is all wrong! You can't get blue from an indigo dyebath that is already blue!" The more familiar dye vat is a green-gold color, and the blue of indigo only appears when the fiber is withdrawn from the vat and the dye reacts with oxygen in the air. When you dye with these techniques, blue *in* the vat indicates that the dye has already been oxidized and won't bond to the fiber. Stirring and bubbles are counterproductive in vats of this type.

It takes a while to dawn on us. Iyalaro is working with a *living* indigo dye vat—knowledge essentially abandoned in Europe with the advent of less-temperamental chemical innovations such as the copperas vat in 1750 and the hydrosulfite vat around 1880.[3] The Yoruba indigo process is more closely related to the fabled urine dye vat that many dyers encounter while searching for indigo recipes based on spectralite and lye.

I discuss the class's wonderment with Mufu, who is shocked to hear that recipes we have read about call for human urine. He relays the information to Iyalaro who half-smiles, as if she knows we are pulling her leg. We explain that the stories go on to describe the urine of pre-pubescent boys as the best. Mufu laughs, now certain that we are making it all up. Thinking about the dye we have just tasted, we wonder, too. . . .

[3] J. N. Liles, *The Art and Craft of Natural Dyeing*, page 79.

10 *Iyalaro paints designs in starch. The painted areas resist the dye and remain white.*

11 *Another way to make designs on the cloth is to tie areas with raffia. Again, the tied sections stay white.*

12 *White, resist-prepared fabric goes into the dye vat.*

13 *It comes out blue, and excess dye drains back into the vat. Deep colors require numerous immersions.*

Iyalaro's living dye vat is a dynamic system that needs attention and nurturing. What ends up as a blue dye starts out as a colorless compound in the indigo plant's leaves. It goes through a series of molecular transformations in the carefully tended crock. As the bacteria and fungi decompose the indigo leaves and other vegetation, they also consume all the oxygen from the solution. Without oxygen (and with enough ash-water to maintain a suitably alkaline pH), the molecules remain in a form called *indigo-white*. The change to indigo-white can be seen with the naked eye: at this stage, the solution in the vat has an amber or yellowish green color and is ready to use for dyeing. When indigo-white reacts with oxygen, it quickly changes to the glorious blue pigment we call *indigo*.[4]

In Nigeria, Mufu explains, several dye vats are kept in various stages so that dyeing can be carried out in at least one vat every day. Stubborn dye vats get a banana, to feed and "jumpstart" the decay organisms. The vats can be refreshed by adding more ash-water, raising a head of foam by vigorously beating air into the water, and adding more dye balls. Iyalaro must keep her organisms happy by adding the right food (leaves and bananas), adjusting the pH (with ash water and lime juice), and controlling the temperature, but does not need to heat her dyebath.

The "dead" indigo dye vats that class members are thinking of use powdered natural or synthetic indigo as a source of color. They require chemicals to remove oxygen from the water (for example, spectralite) and to adjust the pH of the dye vat, which must be alkaline (often lye). In this technique of indigo dyeing, the basic trick is to establish the correct pH while keeping oxygen molecules out of the water. This often seems to come down to pouring one or another chemical into the dyebath and crossing fingers. The dye is concentrated, and yarn or cloth can be dyed with relatively few immersions into the dyebath, but the solution must be kept at a high, even temperature (around 140° F [60° C]).

Iyalaro's vat challenges our preconceptions while she and Mufu periodically stir it with a stick and taste it. The dyebath is indeed blue at the surface, where it comes into contact with the air and the indoxyl radicals re-combine with oxygen to produce blue indigotin. But the huge crock contains many gallons of ash water, and we cannot see into its depths. It only appears that the entire dyebath is blue.

The dye process required for this vat also differs from what we expect, as we discover when Iyalaro begins to teach us the traditional resist techniques with which Yoruba cloth is patterned. Mufu explains that each length of cloth will be dipped up to fourteen times in the weak indigo dyebath. After each immersion, the pieces will be fished out and placed on the dye vat's wooden lid, now leaning against the wall of the dyeshed, so that excess dye

Stubborn dye vat? Feed it a banana.

[4] Rita Buchanan, *A Weaver's Garden*, pages 102 and 104, and J. N. Liles, *The Art and Craft of Natural Dyeing*, pages 54–55.

14 *Newly dyed fabric, still wet. From left to right: Iyalaro, Kaylee Rose, Lauren Camp, and Alice Parrot.*

15 *Slightly out of focus (she was simultaneously taking notes, taking pictures, and workshopping for hours on end) is author Glenna Dean.*

will drain back into the dye vat. The large number of dippings reflects the diluted strength of the dyebath, but produces deep blues that are permanent.

Mufu covers the dye vat with its lid and we retire to tables set up in the shade of the porch of the historic Raton schoolhouse, close to the dyeshed. Iyalaro demonstrates several methods of pinching, folding, and sewing white cotton cloth into designs, using raffia brought from Nigeria as thread to secure the resist portions. The designs we are making are known to Iyalaro, but will be revealed to us only after the fabric has been dyed and the raffia ties are cut. We sew and pinch and gather cloth for the rest of the afternoon. Iyalaro corrects our work, repeating herself in Yoruba as if hearing loss were at the root of our lack of understanding. Mufu watches and laughs. Slowly, we release our preconceptions as we begin to trust our eyes and hands.

A breeze rises under the turquoise New Mexico sky and rustles the autumn-yellow cottonwoods. We dream of the blues to be drawn from the blanket-wrapped crockery pot, tended by the master's hand. As our fingers gather speed, we excitedly whisper plans for the ashes from our next backyard barbecue. ❖

Glenna Dean, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, is an archaeologist and spinner. She's written on Anasazi cottons for us, among other things, and recently made a handspun crown (Fall 1999, pages 74–75).

Resources

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Contact information

Because of the complications of getting Iyalaro and Mufu across the ocean with the correct visas and other papers, this workshop was planned for a long time and then came together very quickly. For information on possible future workshops, convey your name and contact data to Black Arts Studio, 1274 Calle de Comercio #4, Santa Fe, NM 87505, (505) 424-7317, vikki@blackartstudio.com,www.blackartstudio.com.

Colors FROM THE North Country:

Research in large-scale natural dyes

by Bobbie Irwin

Imagine a palette of fast, predictable colors from weeds, requiring no mordants and little water. What if these dyes also reduced pollution and dependence on tropical resources while providing new uses for agricultural waste and new crops for limited-income farmers? These are among the goals of an ongoing research project by Sheila Chmuhalek which may change the way we think about natural dyes.

An associate professor in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at the University of Manitoba, Sheila is a spinner and knitter who grew up on a farm in Canada and studied agricultural economics. After working in the fields of farm management and water use, she eventually obtained a master's degree in textiles and a doctorate in economics. For several years she taught at the University of North Carolina; living near textile mills made her aware of the serious pollution associated with industrial dye processes.

Sheila returned to Canada to teach for the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Human Ecology and bought a farm two hours east of Winnipeg, near the Ontario border. She became involved with CUSO, a Canadian organization similar to the Peace Corps sponsored by the United States government, helping to develop a sericulture and natural-dye project to employ young people in Thailand. This renewed her longtime interest in plant dyes, and she began investigating the dye potential of the plants around her in Manitoba.

The edge of the Canadian Shield where Sheila lives is a biologically diverse region, marginally suited for traditional agriculture but abounding in plant species (including, for example, two hundred varieties of goldenrod). Much of the territory is wetlands, overgrown with vegetation. Many people rely on the short summer growing season for their annual income; hot days and long periods of sunlight (up

1 *What it looks like up on the Canadian Shield.*

2 *Canada goldenrod, a promising dye source.*

3 *Northern bedstraw, another promising native plant.*

4 *All the colors in the dyed wool came from plants found in the field behind the fence.*

5 *Bog from which some test plants were gathered.*

6 *Volunteers in the bog. Not all collecting required this equipment!*

to nineteen hours a day) encourage a burst of growth and also intensify the plant oils that produce dyes.

Sheila wanted to determine if dyes could be obtained in commercial quantities from the abundant plants adapted to her region, with two primary purposes for her project: reducing pollution and industrial dependence on chemicals and nonrenewable resources, and providing alternative crops to improve the local economy. A seed grant in 1997 from the University of Manitoba provided funding for her first investigations, with promising results. A three-year grant from Earthwatch Institute supports her expanded research project, which is now underway.

Earthwatch is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainable conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Every year, four thousand volunteers join Earthwatch field teams worldwide, assisting with scientific research. In the summer of 1999, six teams of volunteers helped Sheila gather, cultivate, and test possible sources of natural dyes in southeastern Manitoba.

Sheila wanted to compare the results from plants harvested at different stages of growth, so she arranged for six-person teams to come throughout the summer for two-week periods. The response was greater than expected; thirty-eight participants with varied backgrounds and interests came from the United States and other countries to stay on her farm. They became "extended family," and some plan to return again.

Deborah McMurtrie, a spinner from Herriman, Utah, was one team member. The only person in her group with a background in textiles, she introduced the rest of the team to spinning.

"A typical day," she says, "consisted of collecting samples from selected sites, sample dyeing, and tending the test plots of dye plants. Most of the plants had been identified as having dye potential, and the task was to see whether the dye capabilities changed as the plants matured, and if the local growing conditions affected the color quality."

Identifying unknown plants took considerable time. Half of each sample went to the university lab for processing; leaves and stems, flowers, and roots were tested separately, and the teams simmered small amounts in water with wool to examine dye potential.

Plants which were grown in test plots without fertilizers or added water, and were weeded by hand, grew even better than those in the wild, suggesting that they may succeed as alternative crops. Sheila has also found potential in agricultural and logging byproducts, including canola straw, which farmers normally burn. Her experimentation has developed a way of processing dyeplants under pressure. The technique is much faster than traditional methods and uses very little water. She has also found a way of producing intense, fast colors without mordants or other chemicals. Both processes are being patented by the University of

Manitoba.[1] Sheila also wants to study the effect of dyebath acidity and alkalinity on colors and color retention.

So far, most of the effective dyes—in every color except true red—have proven suitable for wool. Sheila wants to expand the study to find cotton dyes; several companies, she says, are anxiously waiting for practical natural dyes that will work on cotton.

Elsewhere, she points out, other researchers are applying modern technology to natural dyeing. Natural food colorings are in demand, and a petrochemical industry is experimenting with dyer's woad as a source of ink for inkjet printers. Textile conservationists in Nebraska are adding ultraviolet light inhibitors (like sunscreens) to plant dyes to retard fading.

"The technology is available," she explains. "It just hasn't been applied to natural dyes before, because industry has favored chemical dyes. But we will all need to put more reliance on sustainable resources that don't harm the environment."

Spinner and team member Deborah McMurtrie sums up the situation well: "I was impressed with the larger scope of Sheila's research—to use to advantage that which grows well and naturally in a particular environment with as little harmful impact as possible. I thought how that concept could be used in so many struggling rural areas around the world. But, as Sheila is finding, the harder part is finding the people at so many levels of government and industry who are willing to think off the beaten track and support nontraditional (to their minds) approaches to solving problems." ❖

[1] For information, see the university's Industry Liaison Office website pages at www.umanitoba.ca/academic_support/industry_liaison/profiles/802308.html and at the same address with the ending /802309.html.

From a number of locations and for a number of years, Bobbie Irwin has contributed steadily (and often invisibly) to Spin-Off. *Most recently, she has moved from Utah to western Colorado. For information about Colors from the North Country and other Earthwatch programs, contact Earthwatch Institute, Box 9104, Watertown, MA 02272. (617) 926-8200; fax (617) 926-8532; www.earthwatch.org; info@earthwatch.org.*

Easter Eggs & Basket

by Roxana Baechle

WHILE COLORING Easter eggs, it struck me that the dye should also color wool. I stuffed each dye cup as full of fiber as possible and left the combination overnight. After the wool was dry, I had a pretty fistful of each color. I moved the bag around for a couple of years before it found its way to the spinning wheel. There were only a couple yards of each color, which almost became part of a striped sock. Then a lightbulb went on: I would use the fibers to create something closely related to the original use of the dye. Easter eggs! The sizes of my knitted eggs varied to accommodate my yarn supply, and I stuffed the eggs firmly with cotton—a good use for medicine-bottle packings. I used all my yarns to the very end; the last foot or so of each became an embroidered design on contrasting-colored egg.

Having made the eggs, I needed a container. My stash revealed mohair dyed with ragweed and with unknown berries from a backyard tree. Those turned into the basket (embellished with cables) and small flowers. Odd bits of brown became the chocolate kiss, the chocolate drop, and the chips in the chocolate-chip cookie. More mohair became "grass."

I lined the basket with plastic mesh. When the combination was fully assembled, it still seemed incomplete. A chocolate bunny! I had some natural dark-brown llama wool, and I think this is the first time a llama has given "birth" to a rabbit!

Hindsight being 20/20, I wish I had included aromatic herbs or dried flowers inside the eggs for a nice smell and to prevent moths. The eggs could also be decorated with beads, buttons, or small pieces of jewelry.

Even now, this project is growing. When I have an odd bit of yarn, I make a new and different egg to add to the collection. And somewhere I have a group of unmatched buttons. . . . ❖

Roxana Baechle and her husband, Ken, live on a farm where they raise llamas, Shetland sheep, colored angora goats, and Limousin cattle. The fibers produced on the farm are used in spinning, knitting, and weaving projects, as well as marketed on a small scale. Roxana also trains carting llamas and sells equipment for training and carting. She has used dog hair to make leashes, mittens, socks, hats, and a sweater. She's willing to talk about all of these activities. Roxana Baechle, 3360 W. Saginaw Rd., Coleman, MI 48618; baechler@mindnet.org; www.llamacarting3-2-1.com.

After dyeing Easter eggs, Roxana Baechle stuffed wool in each dye cup and left it overnight. Easter eggs and Kool-Aid get their color from acid dyes. It's not an economical way to obtain acid dyes for quantities of fiber, but hey, sometimes it's a free *source of dye, and it sure is easy to use! Roxana stayed in a springtime mood with her project.*

Spinners' Connection

by Peggy Coffey

Most of us depend on our spinning group's newsletter to fill in the blanks for all manner of information. What is happening at the next meeting, and who's bringing the goodies? How was that plying technique done, and where can we buy the pattern shown? Who was the new person, and why is the drum carder out of service?

Our editors faithfully seek out and record the details for us. Having been an editor several times, I know the satisfaction (and relief) when the copy comes together and goes out the door. I also know the curiosity about how our work is received. Will our readers encounter it with the same energy and thought we used to put it together? We often receive feedback about errors or omissions, but what about praise and help for handling this job?

Newsletter editors deserve perks and applause for writing, printing, and distributing their guilds' news. Whether the publication takes the form of a postcard or a treatise, its preparation requires time and effort.

Groups acknowledge their editors' commitment in different ways. The editor for the **Wasatch Woolpack Handspinners** (Utah) received a sack of special fiber as a thank-you for being composer, cajoler, announcer, collator, and expert typist. The editor for the **Willliamsburg Spinners and Weavers Guild** (Virginia) benefits from a waiver of annual dues. The **Silverado Handweavers and Spinners** (California) proclaimed an appreciation day for their editor-in-chief and publicly commended her for devoted service.

Does your group reward your editor in some way? Let me know at the address below and I'll share some of your methods in future columns.

Newsletters are important in ways you might not guess. Among the requests I have received are these: "We moved in the last few weeks. Everything is in storage, including my back issues of *Spin·Off*. I need a guild listing or con-tact person for where I am now." . . . "Do you have newsletters with ideas that could help me 'jump start' our guild?" . . . "I'm unable to get out to guild meetings any more, so would you send me a newsletter or two?" . . . "The newsletters you send are passed around for general reading. I am sending stamps for more." . . . "Having finished school and landed a job, I find myself 2000 miles from my spinning friends. I'd like to find a group soon and hope you can help." . . . "I have taken over our newsletter and am excited for new ideas, so please send me all that you can!" . . . "I would like to contact a local guild, but have no names or phone numbers. Could you enclose their newsletters if you have them? And any extra newsletters that will fit!"

Your newsletters answered these needs and more. They continue a useful journey long after I've compiled ideas for this column. Even the stamps used to mail the newsletters to me are clipped and given to a ministry serving the poor around the world.

I have recently noticed that several groups' newsletters no longer arrive in my mailbox. Please check your mailing list right now to verify that a copy is being sent to **Peggy Coffey, 7297 N. Range Road, LaPorte, IN 46350.** Also, if you mail me a large, self-addressed envelope with 55 cents (or more) in stamps, I will send you as many sample newsletters as the postage allows.

Thank you for sending your newsletters to us, and please give your editor a hug from me! Together, we all make this column an inspiring way to connect with other spinners.

What started as a service to small flock owners in Denmark, Maine, has grown to an all-day Sheepfest. Five years ago, two spinners who needed to have their sheep sheared made the occasion into a public educational event. This April, more than forty fiber-producing animals will receive "a shave and a haircut" at the Denmark Arts Center. Visiting sheep are shorn one at a time in an arena, where fleeces are skirted, sorted, and bagged for owners to pick up or sell. A veterinarian tends to yearly vaccines and hoof trimming. The **Downhome Spinners** demonstrate shearing, picking, carding, spinning, plying, dyeing, knitting, rug hooking, and felting. The **Shawnee Shepherds** 4-H Sheep Club hosts a hot lunch and raffles a market lamb to raise funds. In the background are photo and garment displays, books to browse, drop spindles and wheels to try, and, of course, the baaing of lambs along for the ride.

To locate potential spinners in the community, the **Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild** (Toronto, Canada) hosted an open house. Publicity flyers presented facts about spinning and how to use handspun, with an invitation to

learn more. They also set up a display of handspun skeins, fabrics, and garments to attract passersby.

For a program called "Skirting, the Issue" at the **Genessee Valley Handspinners Guild** (New York), a panel of shepherds discussed methods of fleece-handling from the moment the wool comes off the sheep until it is spun.

After seven years of "sheer stubbornness" and web-surfing, the **Calvert Spinners and Weavers** (Maryland) has become an established guild. Each year the "small group of diehards" met at the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival and Children's Day. This year they followed up with a "gig" at the Battle of St. Leonard's Creek Reenactment, met at the Maryland Archeological Conservation Lab, joined the **Chesapeake Spinners and Weavers** at the Sotterly Plantation, treadled to the beat of a "Jazz, Down By the Riverside" program, and visited the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. They welcome new members (see new listings).

As a thank-you to the church where they meet, the **Spinning on the River Guild** (Tennessee) wove a shawl for use in a raffle. Members spun five shades of natural-colored wool, then wove the project as a group.

The **Weavers Guild of Greater Cincinnati, Inc.,** joined other arts organizations in projects sponsored by Art Links, which funds art activities for under-served children. For a Montessori school, the guild provided six programs on spinning, paper weaving, mud-cloth dyeing, tapestry, and papermaking. In a project called Art Ability, the guild worked with hospitalized and handicapped children. The Otto Armleder Charity Trust awarded the guild a grant to buy child-sized equipment for use in these programs and elsewhere.

Members of the **Woolgathers** (Massachusetts) sheep-to-shawl team visited with the **Cork Spinners, Weavers & Dyers** on a trip to Ireland.

The **Florida Tropical Weavers' Guild** is exploring a cooperative relationship with a group of weavers in the village of La Estancia, Guatemala. Initiated with the assistance of Deborah Chandler of Weave a Real Peace (WARP), the groups will exchange weaving information and expand the Guatemalan weavers' market by bringing woven pieces from La Estancia to sell at the Florida guild's annual conference.

Dreading April 15th? A "non-taxing weekend retreat" is offered by the **Third Star Fiber Artists Guild** (New Jersey). Made possible through funding from several sources (like the MidAtlantic Fiber Association), workshops include weaving, basketmaking, spinning, polymer clay, beaded jewelry, knitting, henna body-painting, and storytelling.

The **Conference of Northern California Handweavers** promises a wide range of spinners' activities this year. A new spinning gallery invites tea-party accessories (made with at least 50 percent handspun in any fiber technique). There will also be spinning-wheel corral where you can try out wheels, a meet-the author table, a rare and endangered breeds display, and "make and take" demos. For information, check www.cnch.org.

Interest in the fiber called Tencel prompted the **Fort Wayne Weavers Guild** (Indiana) to form a study group which will explore the fiber's properties and potential, then report to the guild.

Christina Chesterfield of the **Cornwall Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers** (England) has been recording her experiments with safflower dyeing. To get at the plant's elusive red, she discovered that she needed to get rid of its yellow components. By tying flower petals in a muslin bag and squeezing them under cold running water until the water ran clear, she was able to obtain both colors. The strong pink was traditionally used to dye the cotton tape used to tie up legal documents, hence "red tape."

The **Tulsa Handspinners** (Oklahoma) presented a "living window display" at an antique shop during an open house, and found it a wonderful opportunity to be the center of attention and spin without having to answer a lot of questions.

A large, new tourist complex called The Woolshed tells the story of wool in Australia. Members of the **Woolshed Spinners** meet every day to demonstrate their craft with hands-on learning activities. Rural life and outback heritage from the late 1800s to the present day are depicted with interactive displays, rams "live" on stage, a petting area, and the Shearer's Kitchen Restaurant. Local and overseas visitors are welcome.

The **Washington Spinners and Weavers Guild** (Pennsylvania) assembled a time capsule of fiber-related items to be opened on their fiftieth anniversary. The February 2000 meeting marks their twenty-fifth year and they are eager to contact all past members. Write Kris Savage at Ksavage@timesnet.net or Historian Nancy Saxon at 603 Christy Rd., Eighty Four, PA 15330.

NEW LISTINGS

Information is current as of December 31, 1999; changes received after that date will be included in the next issue.

KANSAS

Bourbon County area. Jean Jack, 172 E. 610 Ave., Girard, KS 66743.

MARYLAND

Calvert County. Calvert Spinners and Weavers, Nancy Donley, 3031 New Enterprise Ct., Huntingtown, MD 20639.

MICHIGAN

Niles. Niles Handweavers Guild, Jamie Bridgham, 321 Edgewater Dr., Mishawaka, IN 46545

MINNESOTA

Rochester. Moonbeam Spinners, Peg Mathews, 4949 22nd Ave. NW, Rochester, MN 55901.

OHIO

Licking County. Fiber Frolics, Elaine Boaz, 1625 Hankinsen Rd., Granville, OH 43023, eboaz@infinet.com; or Nancy Fischer, 58 Columbia St., Newark, OH 43055-4528, nanny@gurulink.com.

Sunbury. Wheels of Fortune, Mary Havens, 62 E. Cherry St., Sunbury, OH 43074.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greer. Twisted Sisters, Linda Gysin; Lagysin@Spinxco.com.

VIRGINIA

South Central area. South Central Virginia Fiber Artists Guild, Patricia Ramsey, RR 2, Box 564-B, Appomattox, VA 24522, wool spin@aol.com.

WASHINGTON

Whidbey Island. Firehouse Spinners, Pat Oetken, 445 East Belvedere Pl., Coupeville, WA 98239.

Whidbey Island. South Whidbey Spinners, Shirley Owen, 1389 Everette Ln., Freeland, WA 98249.

WYOMING

Cheyenne. Cheyenne Fiber Guild, Margaret Bischof, 1782 Andover Dr., Cheyenne, WY 82001.

Laramie. Laramie Fiber Guild, Dorothy Tuthill, 355 N. Fifth St., Laramie, WY 82072.

CANADA

Ontario

Toronto. Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild, Elizabeth Evans, 50 Evelyn Cres., Toronto, Ontario M6P 3C9.

AUSTRALIA

Adelaide. The Woolshed Spinners, Kay

Walker, The Woolshed, West Beach, Adelaide, South Australia; cwalker@iweb.net.au.

CHANGES

New contact and/or address unless otherwise indicated.

CALIFORNIA
San Jose. Serendipity Spinners, Ginger Edighoffer, 4878 Dolores Dr., Pleasanton, CA 94566; serendipity@www.canitag.coma.
CONNECTICUT
Entire State. Nutmeg Spinners Guild, correct e-mail is suemacd@aol.com.
IDAHO
Sandpoint. Sandpoint Fiber Arts Guild, Emily Faulkner, 10483 Baldy Mountain Rd., Sandpoint, ID 83864.
IOWA
Cedar Rapids. Cedar Rapids Fiber Artists, Rebecca Roush, 3724 Second Ave., WS, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-1303; rrabbit@inav.net.
MICHIGAN
Alpena. Huron Shores Spinning Guild has disbanded.
Menominee. Sheep to Shawl Spinners no longer have a contact person.
MISSOURI
Festus. Ozark Foothill Spinners, Debbie Baker (correct last name), 12370 Highway TT, Festus, MO 63028.
NEW JERSEY
Woodstown. Third Star Fiber Artists Guild, Edie Van Valkenburg, 87 E. Lake Rd., Pilesgrove, NY 08098.
NEW MEXICO
Santa Fe/Los Alamos area. Los Tejedoras de Santa Fe y Los Alamos has changed its name to Las Tejedoras Fiber Arts Guild.
NORTH CAROLINA
Charlotte. Fiber Artists Guild of Charlotte, Ann Glacken, 480 Park Fields Rd., Kannapolis, NC 28081; glacken@juno.com.
OHIO
Central Ohio. Central Ohio Weavers Guild, Joy Cain, 3184 Wendover Ct., Columbus, OH 43232.
PENNSYLVANIA
Adams County. Twisted Sisters and Mister, Claire M. Moore, 4060 N. Sherman St., Mt. Wolf, PA 17347.
VIRGINIA
Charlottesville/Augusta County area. Spins and Kneedles, Janice (correct first name) Fischer, 581 Mountain Rd., Afton, VA 22920.
Blacksburg. New River Valley Spinsters, Carol Haskell, 503 Stonegate Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060-3245; phaskell@vt.edu.
WASHINGTON
Skamania County. Skamania Fleecers and Fibrecators, Mary Davis, 515 N. W. Cameron Ln., Stevenson, WA 98628-6248.
Whidbey Island. Whidbey Weavers Guild, Wendy Ferrier, 3583 Overlook Dr., Langley, WA 98260; thistle@whidbey.com.

CANADA
British Columbia
Powell River. Powell River Dogwood Tabbies, Shirley Lyster, 5435 Manson Ave., Powell River, B.C. V8A 3R1.
ENGLAND
Kennet Valley. Kennet Valley Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers, Yvonne Withers, 7 Fairfields, Whitechurch, Hants RG28 7ES.

UPDATED INFORMATION REQUESTED

Contact person and current address are needed for these groups.

Ann Arbor Fiber Arts Guild, Michigan
Ausable-Maistee Fiber Guild, Michigan
Berrien Springs Fiber Guild, Michigan
Bowen Island Guild, Canada
Chilliwack Spinners & Weavers, British Columbia, Canada
Clwyd Guild, Ruthin, England
Ewe Spinners, Madison area, Maine
Genesee Valley Fiber Guild, Flint, Michigan
Grist Mill Spinners and Weavers, New Jersey
Joseph's Coat Guild, Montana
Lakeshore Fiber Arts Guild, Holland, Michigan
Midland Fiber Guild, Michigan
Old Hatchie Fiber Friends, Tennessee
R & R Spinners, Maine
Tweed Guild, Kelso, England
Whonnock Weavers & Spinners, Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada

Calendar

TO ENTER

✓ **Colorado.** Open (U.S.). Fiber Celebration 2000, juried exhibit sponsored by the Northern Colorado Weavers Guild at the Art Center, Estes Park, May 12–June 18. Slide postmark deadline Mar. 1. LSASE to Helen Hart, 7132 Cordova Dr., Cheyenne, WY 82009. (307) 632-6114; HelzHart@aol.com.

✓ **Idaho.** Open. Spin a New Yarn, fiber arts show in conjunction with Snake River Fiber Fair, May 19–24. Entry deadline Apr. 15. Contact Kate Robertson, 1372 W. 81 N., Idaho Falls, ID 83402. (208) 525-8089; katespin@ srv.net.

✓ **Illinois.** Open. Chain Reaction, juried exhibit of crochet works that challenge traditional expectations, June 16–July 30, in Chicago. Entry deadline not stated. SASE to Textile Arts Centre, 916 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago, IL 60614. (773) 929-5655; fax (773) 929-9837; collaboratory.nunet.net/textilearts.

✓ **Massachusetts.** Open. Staff openings in the field of surface design, teaching high school students, June 22–Aug. 5. Send resume and slides to Horizons, 108 N. Main St., Sunderland, MA 01375. (413) 665-0300; fax (413) 665-4141; horizons@horizons-art.org.

✓ **North Carolina.** Open. Blue Ridge Handweaving Show, Oct. 5–31, at John M. Crawford Gallery, Asheville. For prospectus, contact Betty Carlson, PO Box 837, Enka, NC 28728. (828) 670-7809; bettycarlson@ earthlink.net.

✓ **Ohio.** Open. Fabric 2000 juried exhibition, encouraging the production of unusual fabrics specifically for quilting, June 11–22, at Ohio University, Athens. Entry deadline May 12. Send large SASE (55 cents postage) to Fabric 2000, 10545 Snyder Church Rd., Baltimore, OH 43105. Contact Nancy Crow, (740) 862-6554; www.qsds.com.

✓ **Ohio.** Open. Convergence 2000 exhibits in Cincinnati, June 22–25. Juried exhibits: dyeing, yardage, fashion, Small Expressions, liturgical, weaving, spinning, basketry. Nonjuried exhibits: fashion, small tapestry, passementeries, collaborations, fantasy- and myth-inspired. Send SASE for single prospectus or $5 for all to Convergence 2000, Call for Entries, 4870 Gray Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45232. Information from hgaconvergence@ compuserve.com; www.weavespindye.org.

✓ **Oklahoma.** Regional. Fiberworks 2000, annual fiber art show, Apr. 8–May 7, at Kirkpatrick Center, 2100 NE 52nd St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111. Presented by Handweavers League of Oklahoma. Oklahoma residents; entries accepted Apr. 1 and 3. Call Dustin Hamby, (405) 602-3717.

✓ **Oregon.** Open. Teachers may apply to offer 1-, 2-, 3-, or 5-day workshops and/or 2-hour seminars at the 2001 conference of the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds, 2001: A Weaving Odyssey, June 18–26, 2001, in Eugene. Send proposals to Terri Zensen, 15103 NE 27th Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686. Information from tzens1@aol.com.

✓ **Texas.** Open. Sheep to Shawl competition Apr. 15, in conjunction with Sam Houston Folk Life Festival, at the Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville. Some funding available for transportation and lodging. Contact Tamara Chasteen, 175 Scott Rd., Huntsville, TX 77320. (409) 294-9606; woollady@hotmail.com.

✓ **Virginia.** Open. Fiber arts exhibit in conjunction with Virginia Highlands Festival, July 29–Aug. 13, in Abingdon. Registration deadline July 1; entries received by July 15. Mail entries to Patricia Sheffey, 268 Henderson Ct., Abingdon, VA 24210. Virginia Highlands Festival, PO Box 801, Abingdon, VA 24212. (540) 623-5266; vhf@naxs.net; www. va-highlands-festival.org.

✓ **Wisconsin.** Open. A Celebration of Creativity, 24th annual fiber and textile exhibit sponsored by Whitewater Spinners and Weavers Guild, July 17–Aug. 4, in the Crossman Gallery, University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. Entry deadline June 12. Contact Alice K. Iverson, N8823 Nelson Rd., East Troy, WI 53120.

RESOURCES

✓ **New Jersey.** Guilds and other organizations may arrange to receive a television series of fiber art programs called Uncommon Threads. Contact Lasch Media, 50 Tindall Rd., Middletown, NJ 07748. (732) 671-3191.

FESTIVALS & GATHERINGS

✓ **California.** May 27–28. California Wool & Fiber Festival at Mendocino Fairgrounds, Boonville. Contact CWFF, PO Box 761, Boonville, CA 95415, or laurab@saber.net.

✓ **Colorado.** June 15–18. Estes Park Wool Market & Fiber Animal Show at Estes Park. Contact Estes Park Wool Market, PO Box 1967, Estes Park, CO 80517. (970) 586-6104; fax (970) 586-3661; events@estes.org.

✓ **Idaho.** May 19–24. Snake River Fiber Fair in Idaho Falls. Contact Kate Robertson, 1372 W. 81 N., Idaho Falls, ID 83402. (208) 525-8089; katespin@srv.net.

✓ **Illinois.** Apr. 29. Stephenson County Fibre Art Fair at Cedarville Community Center, Cedarville. Contact Charlene Foley, 7425 N. Unity Rd., Lena, IL 61048. (815) 369-5186.

✓ **Illinois.** May 20–21. Fiber Fair 2000 at Lincoln's New Salem in Petersburg. Contact Betty, (217) 632-4000; www.lincolnnew salem.com.

✓ **Indiana.** Apr. 8. Fleece Fair 2000 at the Putnam County Fairgrounds in Greencastle. Contact Pat Fender, (812) 829-4501; rpfender @bluemarble.net.

✓ **Iowa.** June 17. Fourth Annual Tipperary Farm Wool Gatherings. Contact Pat and Margie Meehan, 2857 St. Hwy 38, Hopkinton, IA 52237. (319) 926-2573.

✓ **Maryland.** May 6–7. Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival at the Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship, Maryland. Contact Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival, PO Box 99, Glenwood, MD 21738. (301) 894-3937; (410) 531-3647; tomdoi@prodigy.net; www. sheepandwool.org.

✓ **Massachusetts.** May 20–21. New England Alpaca Fest 2000 at Topsfield Fairgrounds in Topsfield. Contact the New England Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association, (860) 668-1762; (401) 624-4184.

✓ **Michigan.** Aug. 19–20. Michigan Fiber Festival at Allegan County Fairgrounds north of Kalamazoo (off Rte. 131). Contact Michigan Fiber Festival, PO Box 310, Hastings, MI 49058. (616) 948-2497; fax (616) 945-4883; mff@mvcc.com; www.mvcc.com/non/mff.

✓ **Minnesota.** May 6–7. Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival at Washington County Fairgrounds, Lake Elmo. Contact Pat Ryan, 9016 Kimbro Ave. S., Cottage Grove, MN 55016. (651) 459-8554; burroak.hypermart. net/festival.htm.

✓ **Missouri.** Apr. 28–30. Fiber Gathering MoFA 2000. Contact Jo Stealey, (573) 882-4439; stealeyj@missouri.edu.

✓ **Missouri.** Apr. 29–30. Alpaca Festival and Interactive Alpaca Fiber Display. Contact Liz Mitchko, 24649 Snowberry Dr., Lebanon, MO 65536. (417) 533-5280; lizm@webound.com.

✓ **Nebraska.** Apr. 7–9. Fiber Arts Festival 2000 at Adams County Fairgrounds, 947 S. Baltimore, Hastings, NE 68901. Call Marsha Shane, (402) 463-0808.

✓ **New Jersey.** Sept. 23–24. Harvest Sheep and Wool Festival at Salem County Fair Grounds, Rte. 40, Salem. Contact Nicky Wilson, 139 Compromise Rd., Salem, NJ 08079. (856) 769-1630.

✓ **Oregon.** May 5–7. Fiber in the Forest, retreat and workshops at Camp Myrtlewood (off Rte. 42). SASE to Suzie Liles, 3471 Reston Rd., Roseburg, OR 97470, or contact sliles@ wizzards.net.

✓ **Oregon.** June 23–25. The Black Sheep Gathering at Lane County Fairgrounds, Eugene. Black Sheep Gathering, Inc., 30781 Fox Hollow Rd., Eugene, OR 97405. (541) 343-6596.

✓ **Texas.** April 8–9. Barn to Yarn VIII at the Pioneer Museum Complex, 309 W. Main St., Fredericksburg, TX 78624-3711. (830) 990-4478.

✓ **Utah.** June 24–25. Back of the Wasatch Fiber Festival at Summit County Fairgrounds, Coalville. Contact Heidi Smith, (435) 649-3856; 3smiths@xmission.com; www.fly1.com /heidi/FiberFest/htm.

✓ **Virginia.** July 29–Aug. 13. Virginia Highlands Festival in Abingdon. Virginia High-

lands Festival, PO Box 801, Abingdon, VA 24212. (540) 623-5266; vhf@naxs.net; www.va-highlands-festival.org.

✓ **Washington.** Apr. 1–2. Whidbey Weavers' Guild 29th Annual Spin-In at Coupeville Elementary School in Coupeville. Contact Anita, Whidbey Weavers' Guild, 4878 S. Salish Way, Langley, WA 98260. (360) 321-4980; ajpirog@whidbey.com.

✓ **Washington.** Apr. 8–9. Alpacapalooza 2000: Two Days of Peace, Love and Livestock at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe. Contact Sue Henry, (360) 757-3577, or Ted Chepolis, (425) 392-1502; www.alpacalooza.com.

✓ **Washington.** Apr. 14–16. The Shepherd's Extravaganza at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in Puyallup. Call Lin Schwider, (425) 432-3455.

✓ **British Columbia, CANADA.** Aug. 14–20. Fibre Festival 2000 at Gibsons Landing, The Yacht Club, and Dougall Park, Gibsons. Call Noreen, (604) 886-0663; leh@dccnet.com or spinsters-loft@dccnet.com.

✓ **THE NETHERLANDS.** Mar. 15–20. Textile Festival in the Broerenkerk, Zwolle. Contact Stichting Beeldende Amateurkunst, PO Box 13103, 3107 LC Utrecht, The Netherlands. +31 (0)30 234 22 11; fax +31 (0)30 234 23 82; sba@sbakunst.nl; www.sbakunst.nl.

✓ **NEW ZEALAND.** Apr. 8–11. Creative Fibre Festival 2000, sponsored by the New Zealand Spinning, Weaving & Woolcrafts Society. Canterbury at St. Andrew's College, Christchurch. Contact Joan Taylor, PO Box 2074, Christchurch, New Zealand, or jjtaylor@clear.net.nz.

✓ **SOUTH AFRICA.** Sept. 24–29. Fibre Breakaway, 5-day fiber courses sponsored by Johannesburg Weavers and Spinners Guild. Contact Mary Binet, PO Box 7189, Krugersdorp North, 1741, South Africa. 2711-956-6543; knox@gnet.co.za.

CONFERENCES

✓ **Arizona.** Mar. 23–26. Fibers Through Time—In Pursuit of Excellence, state conference at Central Arizona College, Coolidge. Contact Lynn Silberschlag, 6481 Avenida de Posada, Tucson, AZ 85718. (520) 299-1418; ruslyn@aol.com; www.primenet.com/~thenest/2000.

✓ **California.** Apr. 14–16. Conference of Northern California Handweavers in Santa Clara. Contact CNCH, PO Box 6101, San Jose, CA 95150. 2000@CNCH.org; www.CNCH.org.

✓ **Florida.** Mar. 23–26. Florida Tropical Weavers Guild Conference in Eustis. Contact Janice Beckenbach, 390 NW 21st Dr., Gainesville, FL 32605. (352) 376-0554.

✓ **Indiana.** Aug. 6–12. International Old Lacers convention in Indianapolis. Contact Judy Sexton, 3344 W. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN 46222.

✓ **Kansas.** Apr. 7–8. Kansas Weavers and Spinners Conference in Lawrence. Contact Carol Bloom, 25139 Hemphill Rd., Lawrence, KS 66044. (785) 842-5981; wbloom@ukans.edu.

✓ **Maine.** Oct. 13–15. The Gathering: Northeast Handspinners Association biennial conference at Sugarloaf USA, Carrabassett Valley. Contact Diane Trussell, (207) 643-2540, frnchill@tdstelme.net; or Karen Hoedtke, (207) 763-3473; klhspin@mint.net; www.mainespinnersregistry.org.

✓ **Michigan.** Aug. 14–20. International Felter's Conference at Michigan Fiber Festival in Allegan. (616) 948-2497; fax (616) 945-4883; mff@mvcc.com; www.mvcc.com/non/mff.

✓ **Missouri.** June 10–17, 2001. 2001—A Fiber Odyssey, Midwest Weavers' Conference in St. Louis. Contact Tina Wilson, 13333 Windbrooke Ln., St. Louis, MO 63146. Midwst2001 @aol.com; home.fuse.net/weavers.

✓ **Montana.** July 7–9. MAWS 2000: Weaver's Garden. Contact Leslie Taylor, 419 Airport Rd., Stevensville, MT 59870. Redfox@bitterroot.net; anwg.org/conferences/regional/maws2000.html.

✓ **New Jersey.** Apr. 14–16. Fiber retreat at Appel Farm Arts & Music Center, Elmer. Contact Nicky Wilson, 139 Compromise Rd., Salem, NJ 08079. (856) 769-1631.

✓ **Ohio.** June 11–23. Quilt/Surface Design Symposium 2000 at Ohio University, Athens. Send $1 and large SASE (55 cents postage) to Linda Fowler, 464 Vermont Pl., Columbus, OH 43201. (614) 297-1585; www.qsds.com.

✓ **Ohio.** June 22–25. Convergence 2000, biennial conference of Handweavers Guild of America in Cincinnati. Contact Convergence 2000, 4870 Gray Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45232. Information from hgaconvergence@compuserve.com; www.weavespindye.org.

✓ **Ontario, CANADA.** June 2–4. Ontario Handspinning Seminar at Glendon College, York University, Toronto. Contact Ann Lambert, (416) 323-9256; collam@idirect.com.

✓ **Oxford, ENGLAND.** Oxford 2000 Past & Future, biennial conference of the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers at Westminster College, Oxford. For information, send 2 international reply coupons to Patricia Baines, 80 The Cloisters, Pegasus Grange, Whitehouse Rd., Oxford OX1 4QQ, England. Phone 01865 728900.

✓ **UNITED KINGDOM.** Apr. 27–29. International Feltmakers Association conference at Ambleside. Contact Gill Farlam, IFA, Jubilee House, The Street, Rickinghall, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1EG, UK. Information from mlbungalow@mcmail.com.

EXHIBITS, SHOWS & SALES

✓ **Alabama.** Oct. 7–8. Heart of Dixie Llama Show. Location not listed. Call Dena Thurmond, (256) 593-3324, or Nancy Miller, (205) 640-7675; alallama@aol.com.

✓ **California.** Apr. 29. Amigos de las Llamas private treaty llama and alpaca sale and show at Gold Country Fairgrounds, Auburn. Call Kriss, (530) 273-2998, or Joan, (530) 832-7383.

✓ **District of Columbia.** Apr. 27–30. Smithsonian Craft Show 2000, at the National Building Museum, 401 F. St., NW, Washington, DC. Contact Smithsonian Craft Show, Smithsonian Institution, Room 436, Washington, DC 20560. (202) 357-4000; craftshow@omd.si.edu; www.si.edu/craftshow.

✓ **Georgia.** Oct. 14–15. Georgia National llama show. Location not listed. Call Dena Thurmond, (256) 593-3324, or Nancy Miller, (205) 640-7675; alallama@aol.com.

✓ **Kentucky.** Mar. 10–Apr. 16: Basket Treasures of Kentucky, exhibit at Lexington Central Library Gallery, Lexington. Mar. 15–May 10: Kentucky Fiber Art/Present and Future, at the MetroLex Gallery, National City Bank Building, Lexington. Apr. 1: Spinning and weaving demonstrations at Lexington Art League, Lexington. Apr. 1–29: The Glenn Family Historic Coverlet Collection, exhibit at The Living Arts and Science Center, Lexington. Apr. 8: Basketmaking demonstrations at The Living Arts and Science Center, Lexington. All events are part of Fiber Focus: Kentucky 2000, 624 Dardanelles Dr., Lexington, KY 40503. (606) 278-2233; covertrp@worldnet.att.net.

✓ **Kentucky.** May 25–June 30. American Tapestry Biennial III, exhibit at Northern Kentucky University Gallery. Contact Kathy Spoering, 1050 Gunnison, Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970) 242-9081; taph2o@iti2.net.

✓ **Mississippi.** Apr. 22–23. Magnolia State Llama Show. Location not listed. Call Dena Thurmond, (256) 593-3324, or Nancy Miller, (205) 640-7675; alallama@aol.com.

✓ **New York.** June 10–11 and June 17–18: American Crafts Festival. Sept. 9–10, Sept. 16–17: Autumn Crafts Festival. Both at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York City. Oct. 6–8: Craft as Art Festival at Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor. Contact Raya Zafrina, ACAC, PO Box 650, Montclair, NJ 07042. (973) 746-0091; fax (973) 509-7739.

✓ **North Carolina.** Sept. 9–10. North Carolina Mountain State Fair Llama Show. Location not listed. Call Dena Thurmond, (256) 593-3324, or Nancy Miller, (205) 640-7675; alallama@aol.com.

✓ **Ohio.** Apr. 8. Market Day sponsored by Black Swamp Spinners Guild in Bowling Green. Call Susan, (419) 874-5633, or Pat, (419) 868-5240.

✓ **Ohio.** May 27–28. Great Lakes Fiber Show at Wayne County Fairgrounds, Wooster. Contact Linda Reichert, 2474 N. Firestone Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. (330) 264-9665; don47linda@valkyrie.net.

✓ **Ohio.** May 27–July 1. Small Works Invitational 2000, exhibit of small quilts at The Gallery at Studio B, 140 W. Main St., Lancaster, OH 43130. Call Patti Bell, (740) 653-8424; www.qsds.com.

✓ **Oregon.** Mar. 18. Thirteenth Annual Spring Fiber Show and Sale at the Estacada Senior Community Center, 200 SW Club House Dr., Estacada. Call Tami, (503) 630-4583, or Jill, (253) 853-6620.

✓ **Oregon.** Apr. 1. High Desert Wool Growers' Market Place at Deschutes County Fair Grounds, Redmond. Contact Suzanne Sears, brranch@bendnet.com.

✓ **Oregon.** May 6–7. Columbia Alpaca Breeders Millennium Expo at Washington County Fairgrounds, Hillsboro. Call Greg Mecklem, (503) 647-7770.

✓ **Tennessee.** Apr. 15–16: Middle Tennessee Llama and Alpaca Show. Sept. 23–24: Tennessee Fall (llama) Show. Locations not listed. Call Dena Thurmond, (256) 593-3324, or Nancy Miller, (205) 640-7675; alallama@ aol.com.

✓ **New South Wales, AUSTRALIA.** May 19–21. Central Coast Handweavers & Spinners Guild exhibition at The Cottage, Russell Drysdale St., East Gosford, NSW. (02) 4325 0433.

✓ **Tasmania, AUSTRALIA.** May 2–8. Exhibit by The Handweavers, Spinners & Dyers Guild of Tasmania in the Long Gallery, Salamanca Place, Hobart. Contact Doris Banks, madmax@netspace.net.au.

✓ **THE NETHERLANDS.** Mar. 15–20. Bye Bye, textile theme contest for amateurs, marking the millennium, in the Broerenkerk, Zwolle, and traveling through Holland afterward. Contact Stichting Beeldende Amateurkunst, PO Box 13103, 3107 LC Utrecht, The Netherlands. +31 (0)30 234 22 11; fax +31 (0)30 234 23 82; sba@sbakunst.nl; www.sbakunst.nl.

✓ **UNITED KINGDOM.** Mid-March–Apr. 30. New Directions—The Art of the Feltmaker, international exhibit in Kendal, the Lake District. Contact Gill Farlam, IFA, Jubilee House, The Street, Rickinghall, Diss, Norfolk IP22 1EG, UK. Information from mlbungalow@mcmail.com.

INSTRUCTION

✓ **New York.** Apr. 29–30: Felting Head to Toe with Sharon Costello. May 13: Felt Fantasies: Sculpting with a Felting Needle, with Sharon Costello. May 20–21: Nuno Felt Vests with Polly Stirling. May 27–29: Advanced Surface Design and Imagery (felt), with Sharon Costello and Linda VanAlstyne. All classes at Black Sheep Designs, PO Box 56, Rensselaerville, NY 12147. (518) 797-5191; fax (518) 797-5217; springhollow@earthlink.net; home.earthlink.net/~springhollow/.

✓ **Oklahoma.** Apr. 8–9. Cotton Dyeing the Natural Way with Michele Wipplinger. City Arts Center, Oklahoma City. Contact Sheryl Griffin, 2913 N. Harvard Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73127. (405) 917-5233.

✓ **Washington.** Coupeville Arts Center offers year-round workshops in fiber arts. Coupeville Arts Center, Box 171, Coupeville, WA 98239. (360) 678-3396; fax (360) 678-7420; cac@whidbey.net.

✓ **Wisconsin.** Classes in spinning, weaving, knitting, and other fiber arts, beginner to advanced. Mielke's Farm, 2550 Co. Rd. II, Rudolph, WI 54475. (715) 344-4104.

✓ **GUATEMALA.** Through May: Backstrap Weaving with indigenous weavers. Mar. 3–12: Backstrap Weaving, Natural Dye Techniques, and Spinning Sampler. Workshops in Antigua, sponsored by Art Workshops in Guatemala, 4758 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409. (612) 825-0747; fax (612) 825-6637; info@artguat.org; www.artguat.org/.

✓ **MEXICO.** June 5–9. Indigo and Cochineal Natural Dye Course with Dorothy Miller. Workshop at the Centro Tlapanochestli, Santa Maria Coyotopec, Oaxaca. Contact Manuel Loera, 52 (955) 10053; tlapanochestli @infosel.net.mx.

TRAVEL

✓ **AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND.** May 16–28. Fiber arts tour with emphasis on knitting. Contact Donna Barnako, Wooly Knits, 6728 Lowell Ave., McLean, VA 22101. (703) 448-9665; donna@woolyknits.com.

✓ **BRITAIN and IRELAND.** Mar. 25–Apr. 8. Crochet tour sponsored by The Crochet Guild of America. Contact Offinger Management Co., PO Box 3388, Zanesville, OH 43702. (888) 633-4643, ext. 3140; (740) 452-4541; fax (740) 452-2552; omcsales@offinger.com.

Calendar events of special interest to spinners are printed free of charge as a service to our readers. To maximize the possibility of your event's inclusion in the Summer 2000 issue, please send information by March 1, 2000, to "SPIN·OFF Calendar," 201 E. Fourth St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655. Listings are made on a space-available basis. While we include as many events as possible, we cannot guarantee that your listing will be included.

SPIN·OFF INDEX

Vol. XXIII, 1999

compiled by Bobbie Irwin

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Sp	spring
Su	summer
F	fall
W	winter
Pw	plain weave
Tw	twill
Dbw	double weave
2H	number of harnesses
K	knit
Cr	crochet

Editor's note: Sp:1–2 is an example of a continuous reference; Sp:1, 2 has intervening text.

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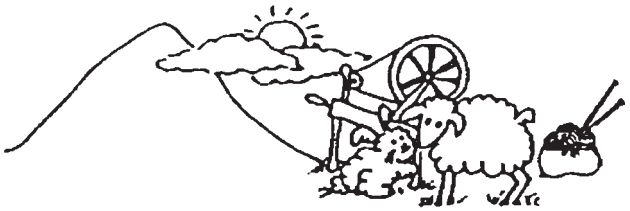

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in such areas as Knit and Purl Textures, Slip Stitch Mosaics, Cross Stitch Patterns, Cable Patterns, and Cable and Lace Patterns.

The Harmony Guides, published in England, offer the rudimentary knitting techniques in the English knitting format. It would please many international fiber artists if the instructions included continental and other knitting systems, along with descriptions of the advantages each offers.

The book contains charts and conversion tables to help in identifying yarns and needle sizes, given in the metric, U.S., and Canadian systems. The many clear diagrams, printed in two-color format, are easy to follow. Two pages of abbreviations and symbols assist the knitter in following the charts and directions.

This is a wonderful and basically complete resource for beginning knitters. Many of the patterns and stitches are unique to the Harmony Guides. Since most spinners also design their own works, this would be a valuable resource for the home library.

—Jude Daurelle

The Harmony Guides: Volume 5, 220 Aran Stitches and Patterns

London: Collins and Brown Limited, 1998. Softbound, 96 pages, $15.95. ISBN 1-85585-633-6.

This Harmony Guide features ethnic knitting techniques in unique Irish styles. It begins with a short history and description of Aran knitting. The concept of cable knitting is discussed with clarity, as are twist stitches, bobbles, and miscellaneous techniques. This volume contains extensive design and charting information, which will guide readers in a step-by-step process of creating their own Aran-style projects. Its format is similar to that of the other recently re-published Harmony Guides; it contains extensive instructions for reading the charts and symbols, and two-color printing makes the instructions easy to follow.

The stitches and patterns are organized in order of relative complexity. Many combinations appear to be unique to this stitch compendium. Even an inexperienced knitter would be able to produce an original Aran-style project with the use of this book.

The Harmony Guides: 220 Aran Stitches and Patterns would be an excellent gift for a new to intermediate spinning designer, and a welcome addition to the resource library of even the most advanced knitter.

—Jude Daurelle

The Harmony Guides: Volume 6, 300 Crochet Stitches

London: Collins and Brown Limited, 1998. Softbound, 96 pages, $15.95. ISBN 1-85585-638-7. This volume was first published in 1986 as the Harmony Guide to Crochet Stitches.

Volume 6 features a wealth of crochet basics and stitches which would be excellent for any spinner who likes personal and unique designs. It includes such things as basic stitches, lace patterns, motifs, filet, clusters, shells, bobbles, and loops. The introduction presents fifteen pages of rudimentary instruction in basic crochet, creating fabric of crochet stitches, yarn joins, stitch variations, following patterns, and charts. The body of the work explores a multitude of stitch variations and styles, including an introduction to textured stitches, relief patterns, spikes, puff stitches, filet crochet, openwork and lace (including Irish crochet), motifs of various sizes and shapes, and Tunisian crochet.

All instructions feature color printing, which makes the book very easy to understand. This is an excellent compendium of general crochet knowledge and technique.

Having no previous knowledge of the Harmony Guides for crochet, I was delighted with the presentation, scope, and completeness. I would happily buy this book for a spinning friend, and probably will buy it for myself very soon. This book will make a great gift and a wonderful tool for teaching crochet and personal design.

—Jude Daurelle

The Harmony Guides: Volume 7, 220 More Crochet Stitches

London: Collins and Brown Limited, 1998. Softbound, 96 pages, $15.95. ISBN 1-85585-639-5. This volume was first published in 1992 as the Harmony Guide to Crochet Stitches.

It was a stretch of imagination to perceive that a volume of crochet stitches could be more complete than volume 6 of this series. Volume 7 does push my imagination. With all of the excellent characteristics of the previous volumes in this set—including the color photos, clear instructions, and wealth of possible stitches and combinations—this book offers extensive tutorials in Filet Crochet, Irish Crochet, and Tunisian Crochet. The all-over stitches alone could keep a crocheter busy for a lifetime. The excellent crochet charts, paired with stitch-by-stitch instructions, make the often-complex patterns easy to follow. I was particularly impressed with the section on Irish Crochet, which offered many variations I had not seen elsewhere.

This excellent resource for designers will be equally satisfying for spinning crocheters. I will purchase this book for myself, and would love to give it to friends.

—Jude Daurelle

In Memoriam

SOPHI DORFI

passed on

January 31, 2000

at age 90

See *Spin·Off*, Spring 1992, pages 57–59

Product News

by Sharon Altergott

Norsk Fjord Fiber owner Noel Thurner has moved her business to the mountains of western North Carolina! To celebrate her new location, she is offering Gotland/Pelssau felting batts in eleven overdyed colors, plus natural-gray, in-the-grease Gotland batts. Free batt samples are available on request. Noel also has a new knitting book, *Dikt i Masker* by Solveig Hisdal, and selected sweater kits from the book, as featured in the Spring 2000 *Interweave Knits.* To order any of these items or for more information, contact Noel at her new address: PO Box 219, 49 Hwy 64W, Sapphire, NC 28774; phone (828) 884-2195. Or check out her website at www.norskfjordfiber.com.

Jonathan Bosworth, creator of the ***Journey Wheel,*** a portable spinning wheel, announces that he has returned to a full production schedule at his shop in Acton, Massachusetts. Following a twenty-five–year tradition, each wheel is handcrafted from solid cherry and maple. Wheels can be ordered direct from the manufacturer or, for the first time this spring, will be available in selected spinning retail outlets across the country. Updated features of the wheel include standard double-drive band plus optional scotch-tensioning; for more advanced spinners, a ratio of 15:1 in addition to the standard ratio of 7.5:1; and an optional horizontal distaff arm. All wheels include three bobbins, fitted and tested before shipping. For more information, contact Jonathan Bosworth at (978) 264-0584 or check the web at www.earlymusicboston.com/journey.

Kris Paige of **Moongate Farm** has developed a support spindle that makes sense! With a weighted, precision-machined and turned whorl, this takli is able to spin a long time without wobbling. Cost is $14 plus $2 shipping. Kris announces she also has handcrafted spindles with weighted top whorls, based on a design featured in Priscilla Gibson-Roberts' recent book, *High Whorling.* Each spindle is numbered and signed and made from recycled hardwoods with inlaid, polished brass rim weights. Cost is $40 plus $4 shipping. The spindles can be ordered from Kris at 1848 Maple Ridge Rd., Mosinee, WI 54455. For more information, you can e-mail her at moongate@dwave.net.

Mini-Mills Ltd. has established a unique *qiviut* processing mill, complete with dehairing and spinning. As far as they know, this is the only mill in the world dedicated to processing qiviut, the ultra-fine down fiber grown by musk oxen. The specialized machines were developed as part of a Joint Venture for Economic Development with the Inuit people of Nanavut in the Arctic. One of their most popular requests is for two-ply yarn, spun as fine as 5000 yards per pound. Roving and yarn are now available, and qiviut garments and fine shawls will be produced soon. Mini-Mills also manufactures complete cottage-industry mills in a variety of configurations that are compatible with other fiber-processing machinery. Contact owner Larry Sutherland at (800) 827-3397 or worldwide at (902) 659-2248; e-mail larry.sutherland@pei.sympatico.ca.

Heather's FleeceMagic™, a new company specializing in the manufacture of polymeric cleaners for the wool industry, announces a line of original products. FleeceMagic is the first polymeric formula designed specifically for the wool industry. The products are biodegradable, low-sudsing, fragrance-free, hypoallergenic, and pH-neutral. FleeceMagic products clean all types of wool—including mohair, alpaca, llama, and angora—in water of any temperature. The flagship product, *FleeceMagic Gold,* removes dirt, lanolin, and odors from raw fleece. For more information, visit the new *FleeceSite* at www.fleecemagic.com, or contact Heather toll-free at (877) FLEECES (353-3237) for co-op, volume, and dealer pricing. ❖

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Travel

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WWW.CHASETAVERNFARM.COM
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HTTP://HOMEPAGES.MSN.COM/HOBBYCT/WINTERFROST_2000/ERIN.HTML
Winterfrost Fiber Farm, coated raw fleeces, spring 2000. Debbie Anderson, 42378 County Highway 85, Dent, MN 56528. (218) 758-2766. winterfrost_2000@yahoo.com

HTTP://HORSEPASTURE.HOMESTEAD.COM
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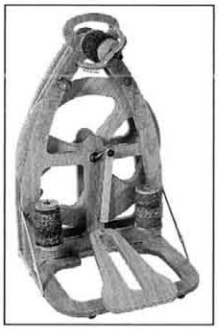

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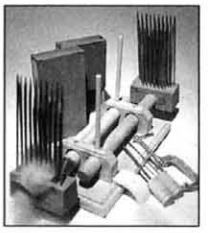

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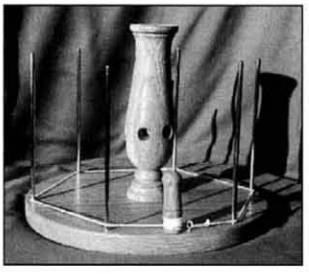

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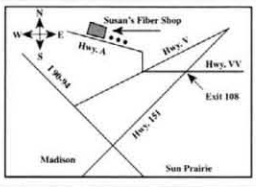

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Beth Beede Felting Cords
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Kaye Collins Yarn Design: Spinning for a Purpose
Stephenie Gaustad Spinning Cotton on a Handspindle
Gloria Hall It's Competition Time
Galina Khmeleva Spinning for Lace Knitting—Orenburg Style
Judith MacKenzie Boucles, Bangles, and Beads
Carol Rhoades Handcarding with Less Stress and More Fun
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Registration information will be available in March. Your registration can be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed but we will not accept any registrations earlier than May 17. Mail will be accepted by the postmark date of May 17. For more information and registration materials, send your name and address (no SASE) to:

SOAR 2000
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For registration information visit the Interweave website **at www.Interweave.com.**
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