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Summer 2012

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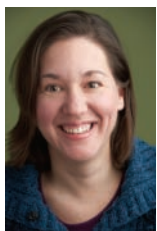
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A few years ago, Linda Ligon (Interweave's founder and *Spin-Off's* editorial director), in celebration of National Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Front Porch Day, put together a YouTube video\* about making a Turkish spindle out of a knitting needle and a couple zucchinis. It was not the most effective spinning tool, but it was pretty hilarious. I go watch it whenever I need a chuckle or a bit of inspiration. Really, you can find just about anything on YouTube (including spinning videos, see page 46).

Just this morning I saw a post on Ravelry.com from a spinner in Germany who was in need of a niddy-noddy quickly and so bored holes into two wooden double-pointed needles and pierced them with a third, stabilizing them with a bit of superglue. It mostly worked.

In our Letters department, you'll find two photos of old bikes that have been converted into spinning wheels—inspired by an article in the Summer 2000 issue of *Spin-Off*. It reminded me that I've been meaning to suggest to my friend Bekah, who teaches fiber arts to junior high kids, that the fiber-arts occupation and the biking occupation at the school should collaborate on making spinning wheels out of old bike parts. Bekah and I have been brainstorming ways that spinning could be used to teach math and other fundamentals in the kids' education. I actually start to enjoy math when I can apply it to my yarn (which is not something I would have uttered while I was in junior high!).

It makes me think about the first person to



pick a bit of fleece caught on a bush from a passing bison (did you hear about the 6-foot-wide prehistoric bison skull found in the Colorado mountains two years

ago? Imagine the down on that guy!) and twirl it between her fingers; perhaps that early hominid wound it on a stick to store it. And maybe she stuck that stick into the earth while she wound the yarn off, and when it came out of the ground, it had a bit of dirt that later dried into clay and formed the first whorl. Or maybe she just stuck it into a zucchini.

Happy spinning!

*Amy*

Amy Clarke Moore  
Editor

aclarkemoore@interweave.com

\*Want to see Linda's YouTube video? Find it here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANi1RAB5W5o>

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### Model

Liz Good, managing editor extraordinaire, is modeling the cowl and mitts on page 91.

### Props

The inch gauges featured throughout the magazine and on page 43 were made by the retired Rod Stevens of Woodchuck Woodworks, Taos, New Mexico.



### Call for entries

Please visit our website, [spinningdaily.com](http://spinningdaily.com), and click on the "Calls for Entries" link included on the menu bar under the "Free Resources" tab to find our recent calls for entries for Your Yarn challenges, galleries, and special issues.

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### Oops!

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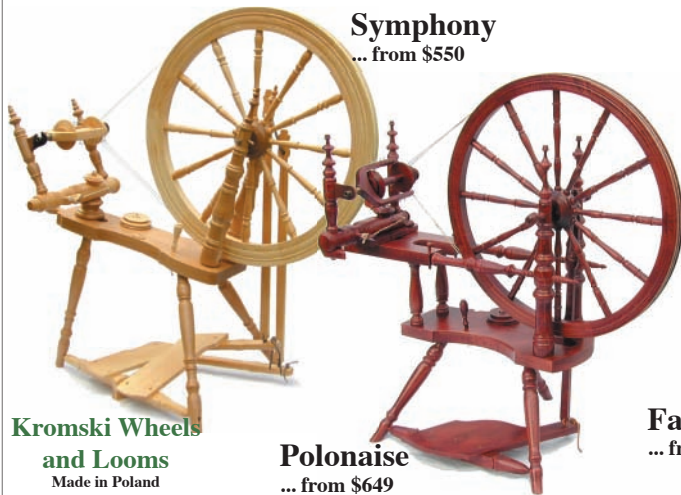
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## A BIKE BUILT FOR SPINNING

At Griffin Dyeworks and Fiber Arts Retreat in Castaic, California, I had the chance to spin on an antique great wheel. I had avoided it before because I thought the one-handed long draw would be just too hard. But what a revelation! I just loved it. When I got home from the retreat, I looked for a great wheel. But I live on the west coast, where people don't just find antique wheels in their attics! All the wheels on eBay were pick-up only, thousands of miles away.

I remembered reading a *Spin-Off* article about a home-built great wheel from bicycle parts and searched my stash of back issues. Alas, I couldn't find it [Summer 2000]. But, really, isn't a spinning wheel a very simple machine? I decided to invest a little money and take the chance that I could build one myself. At the local self-help bike shop (the Bike Oven), I bought two front forks and a wheel hub. I got the wheel for free because it had been in an accident and was no longer round. All this for \$14! A piece of wood from the garage, 3 yards of bungee cord, and a knitting needle spindle were all the parts I needed to get the wheel running. Many tweaks later and with a few more parts for legs, I have a spinning wheel I love named Mrs. Amelia Underwood.

Unfortunately, in spite of the wheels, Mrs. Underwood is not very mobile, and I wanted a traveling wheel. When I spotted a tiny bike at a flea market, I bought it. It was in terrible shape, all

rusty with broken plastic parts, but that bike became my new wheel, Rusty. Another trip to Bike Oven yielded two more front forks, another wheel hub, a length of frame, and a wheel. Rusty has a much smaller footprint and is definitely portable. The pieces fit in a big IKEA bag for carrying. Rusty went with me to the LA County Fair spinning contest, my first one. I won my division!

Lauri Mraz  
Los Angeles, California

## FIRST CRACK

I thought you would like to see how much pleasure my cat, Bella, derives from *Spin-Off*. I also enjoy the magazine when I get to read it. Thank you for your hard work putting together this excellent magazine.

Sue Meissner  
Bloomington, Indiana



Mrs. Amelia Underwood



Rusty

## A KINDRED SPIRIT

The article "Spinning with Children: Creating Connection, Igniting the Spark" by Ercil Howard-Wroth in your Spring 2012 issue was particularly good. I am amazed that two people who live so far apart have happened upon a surprisingly similar way to engage young people. For eight years, I went into my local primary school and showed the children how to make a thread. This evolved into going into every class in the school from reception through to the top class, doing class projects, individual weaving projects, felting, and dyeing with natural dyes.

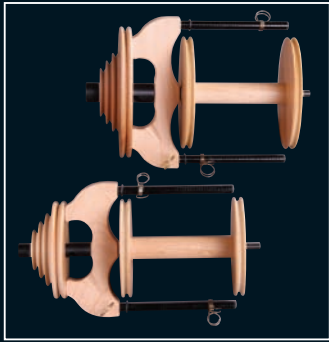
I was particularly surprised to find that Ercil also showed the children how to put the spin into the leader of a drop spindle and then "park" it to do the drafting. I taught younger ones to use what I called a "Twiddle-um" (which I adapted for little ones' hands from a *Spin-Off* article sometime in the

—continued on page 11

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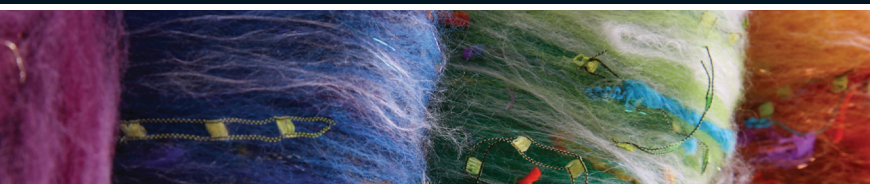
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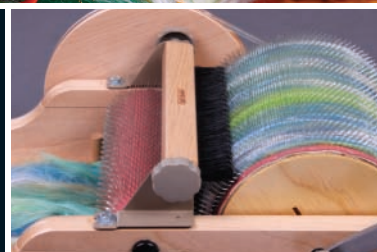
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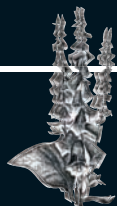
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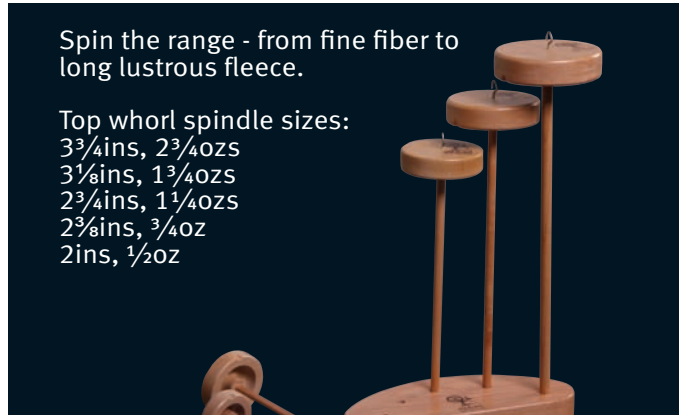
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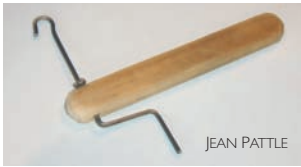
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Jean's Twiddle-um.

mid-1990s). It never failed to excite the children when we found the middle of a length of thread and bent it back on itself before we let go

of the tension. I can't wait to try the crochet-hook method.

Jean Pattle  
Hope Cottage, the Street Holbrook,  
near Ipswich, Suffolk, England

### DON'T FORGET US

On a break at work, I tried to participate in your latest spinning survey, but I couldn't because I don't have a personal email address! I'm so sick of computers when I leave work that I prefer not to deal with them at home. Please keep people like me in mind and put a mailing address near the survey and Letters department.

Now for that survey question, "How interested are you in spinning history?" Very. I am a volunteer spinster at two reasonably local colonial sites. I even use wool from my five pet sheep (varied breeds), some of which I dye with "natural stuff" (goldenrod, jewelweed, etc.). I'm hoping to have my four-year-old granddaughter help out at one site by summer's end. She's learning to use handcards (and was given a colonial costume!).

I also find it interesting that I meet one or two other spinners most days I volunteer.

I thoroughly enjoy your magazine and the variety of articles. Keep up the good work but—please—don't forget us.

Charlotte Puff  
Boyertown, Pennsylvania

*Editor's note: Thank you, Charlotte, for bringing the oversight of our address in this department to our attention. Please note that it has been added to the box at right.*

### UPDATE FROM THE MOLO WOOL PROJECT

We just spent three days with the Karunga women, who were thrilled with the article about the Molo Wool Project in the Winter 2011 issue. I showed it to them as a group, and then as we were meeting, they passed it from one to the other. I want you to know that it was quite exciting for them, and they felt so proud of their group!

Also, as a result of the article, a woman from Virginia sent me an email asking if she could visit



JOHN NEUMEISTER

the group. She and her son, who's an attorney with the Kenya Peace and Reconciliation Committee, came for a visit, and we had a great time! The woman is also a sheep farmer, spinner, and knitter and brought knitting needles and drop spindles for the women. I think they really enjoyed themselves.

We've also had quite a few other inquiries from readers about purchasing animals and wanting to find out more about the project. Thanks again for bringing the women this great exposure!

Gwen Meyer  
Junction City, Oregon

*If you have comments you'd like to share with Spin-Off, please write to us at 201 E. 4th St., Loveland, CO 80537-5655, or email [spinoff@interweave.com](mailto:spinoff@interweave.com). Be sure to include your full name and your city and state (and country if outside the United States), and let us know whether or not we may consider your comments for publication in future Letters departments.*

### And our survey says . . .

What is your favorite type of spindle?

- akha
- bottom-whorl
- bead-whorl
- mid-whorl
- Navajo
- Russian
- tahkli
- top-whorl
- Turkish
- other

Go to the "Announcements" section of [spinningdaily.com](http://spinningdaily.com) forums to share your answers and see answers from other readers.

In the Spring 2012 issue, we asked how interested you are in spinning history. Here are the results.

**0%** Not much.

**32.1%** I read an article here or there but don't go out of my way.

**50%** I am constantly looking for more information about the history of spinning.

**17.9%** I don't just study spinning history, I live it in reenactments (both public and private).



## Handmade Home: Living with Art and Craft

by Mark and Sally Bailey

Imagine a world where paintings are seen as craft objects and blankets as art. In Mark and Sally Bailey's third book, *Handmade Home: Living with Art and Craft*, yarn is celebrated right alongside pottery, hand-hewn furniture, book arts, sculpture, curtains, and strings of beads.

This book takes a giant step past the dyad of art vs craft to celebrate each object's meaning to its owner and its ability to generate conversation.

The authors set out to explore the world of those that live with handcrafted objects. It celebrates the imperfect, perfectly placed. Following chapters on color, texture, textiles, what it means to be handmade, and collecting is a showcase of twelve homes in which the owners live with objects—useful and otherwise—that are mostly handmade. Most of the owners are also artisans themselves, and those that are not have been lifelong collectors. This is a book that encourages us to seek out objects that speak to us; whether they are old toy cars, silverware made into flowers, or piles of vintage linen.

It is a book about not shopping at a big-box store, but reclaiming objects and buying from the makers themselves.

Included is a house in the Netherlands, where the owner, artist Claudy Jongstra, fills her home with textiles made from her flock of Drenthe Heath sheep. (Drenthe is the oldest breed in continental western Europe, and the breed is struggling to find its way back from obscurity with the support of shepherds such as Jongstra and the Dutch Rare Breeds Survival Trust.)

This is a fantasy book. And as far as architectural fantasy books go, we don't see that many that include our medium. It is validating to see an art and architecture book giving credence to our love of yarn made by hand. While the book is not filled with pages and pages of handspun, the inclusion of handspun yarns is notable. Now this all may sound a little overblown or pretentious, but this book validates my feelings when I put a hank of handspun on my coffee table and stare at it thinking, "Is that not incredible?" I am not alone.

—Liz Gipson

London: Ryland Peters & Small, 2011. Hardcover, 159 pages, \$29.95. ISBN 978-1-84975-155-1. [www.rylandpeters.com](http://www.rylandpeters.com).



## The Nervous New Owner's Guide to Angora Rabbits

by Suzie Sugrue

Suzie Sugrue's book opens with how she "accidentally" acquired her first Angora rabbit. Actually, that happens more often than one would imagine. She tells of the realization that she didn't know what she was doing and found there was no book out there to help her. Those are common experiences for new Angora rabbit owners. Many years and much

Angora experience later, Sugrue has written *The Nervous New Owner's Guide to Angora Rabbits* to fill the void.

Proper Angora rabbit care differs from that for all other rabbit breeds. They are not difficult to care for, but the differences are important. The book is filled with useful information for the new Angora owner. Housing, feeding, grooming, and health issues are well addressed. Sugrue's kind conversational style is positively nurturing, and her drawn illustrations are adorable. Once over the initial rabbit-care hurdle, the reader is treated to a detailed tutorial on harvesting and preparing the fiber for spinning. Various preparations, as well as tips for dyeing, spinning, and working with angora yarn, are included. Unanswered questions are not a problem with

Sugrue's Resource Guide of additional books, websites, and online Angora chat groups.

The picture reproduction quality is less than ideal, but there is no doubt about what is being pictured. There are a few inconsequential factual errors and some procedures presented as fact that are actually just one of many ways of accomplishing the desired end result. However, all the important things are right and anyone in possession of this book can go from accidentally owning an Angora rabbit to feeling confident in its care in about two hours' time. And when said rabbit then produces copious amount of luscious fiber, the reader is fully prepared to produce stunning yarn. Anyone interested in owning an Angora rabbit or spinning angora fiber will want this book on her shelf.

Sugrue says she wrote the book she wished she had when she got her first rabbit. She certainly wrote the book I wish I had when I (accidentally) got my first Angora rabbit as well.

—Bobbi Daniels

Santa Fe, New Mexico: Hare & There Productions, 2011. Paperback, 128 pages, \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-57807-177-0. [www.hareandthereproductions.com](http://www.hareandthereproductions.com).

# Julia

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## Ultimate Mittens: 28 Classic Patterns to Keep You Warm

by Robin Hansen

Robin Hansen specializes in mittens traditional to New England and Atlantic Canada. She researches the history of each mitten and compares motifs, techniques, and styles with other mittens she knows. Each type of mitten has its individual quality as well as some characteristics connecting it to wider and more distant traditions.

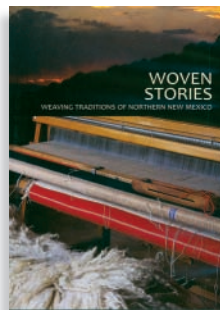
The book begins with the basics, so you'll know how to proportion your mittens to fit. The patterns help considerably with the numbers, offering sizing from children's small to men's large. The sections at the back of the book tell you how to reinforce mittens and repair your mittens and provide well-illustrated terms and techniques for successful mitten knitting among other things. Throughout you'll find variations of cuff patterns, thumb gussets, and top shaping.

In between the technical sections are mittens, wonderful mittens. There are instructions for easy, plain, striped, and ribby mittens, several versions of stuffed and lined mittens, two-strand techniques for color patterns, single color "double knit," and two-end (twined) mittens. You can even learn how to sew mittens from felted fabric or weave a pair of mittens. If you work your way through the book, you'll be confident enough by the end to try the gloves knitted from the fingertips and the fingerless gloves. Any of these designs would be lovely in handspun.

Each time I delve into the book, I find myself saying, "I hadn't thought of that—what a great idea!" We are lucky that Hansen has so generously shared her knowledge.

—Carol Huebscher Rhoades

Rockport, Maine: Down East Books, 2011. Hardcover, 222 pages, \$35. ISBN 978-089272975-3. [www.downeast.com](http://www.downeast.com).



## Woven Stories: Weaving Traditions of Northern New Mexico

There is something enchanting about handspinning and weaving that causes people walking by a spinning wheel or loom to pause even if they are not active participants in these crafts. Similarly, Andrea Heckman's documentary *Woven Stories* has an appeal beyond artisans. It is a film about the textile traditions of northern New Mexico; it tells the story of several small communities that are connected through long histories of spinning and weaving traditions. The film features notable weavers including Kristina Wilson, the late Rachel Brown (Weaving Southwest), and Irvin and Lisa Trujillo as well as other remarkable fiber artists, and there is plenty to hold the interest of handspinners, too.

We get a fascinating visual of the industrial process of yarn production at Tapetes de Lana/Mora Valley Spinning Mill. The mill labels its yarns with the sheep breed and facts pertinent to the animals, working to help preserve heritage sheep breeds and the history of both the people and animals involved in the making of the yarn. At Tierra Wools, we see Teresa Aguilar spinning on a Rio Grande wheel, and Nancy Sullivan demonstrates plying on a castle-style spinning wheel as she explains some of the differences between these wheels and spinning styles. We then meet Patricia Quintana of Rancho La Fina in Taos, New Mexico, with a flock of Navajo Churro sheep that she supports on her grandmother's farm in hopes of helping to preserve the breed.

At the end of the film, young fiber artists Mae Colburn and Rachel Hollister talk about their involvement in textile traditions. Mae states that each individual has to have her own reason for wanting to learn these crafts.

For inspiration and to learn more about the textile traditions of northern New Mexico, consider adding this DVD to your personal or guild library. Throughout the film, there are beautiful images of hands at work. If you have never been to northern New Mexico, chances are that viewing *Woven Stories* will cause you to add visiting the locale to your personal bucket list.

—Pattie Graver

Taos Ski Valley, New Mexico: Stone Corral Media, 2011. DVD, 40 minutes, \$20. (575) 758-7482; [www.stonecorralmedia.com](http://www.stonecorralmedia.com).



Angela Villanueva models her handknitted sweater from a Bluefaced Leicester fleece.

## WOOL ON THE RUNWAY

BY KATHY AUGUSTINE

Although it is not necessary to create your own fabric for the National Make It With Wool (MIWW) contest, some participants choose this path as part of their unique designs. This year, at the final competition held January 26–28 at the Scottsdale Plaza Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, two state finalists modeled garments that demonstrated their proficiency with the spinning wheel and weaving loom. In a survey conducted of the national contestants, almost a dozen participants responded that they were skilled in spinning and weaving even though their current MIWW entry did not include this aspect.

Angela Villanueva, a junior competitor from Pennsylvania, has four years of spinning experience. She created the yarn for her handknitted sweater from a Bluefaced Leicester fleece. Her handcarded rolags were spun mostly on her Ashford Traditional wheel, but she also used several drop spindles during the project. Navy blue wool pants completed Angela's entry.

Emilee Koss, the senior competitor from New York, is currently studying at the Fashion Institute of Technology with a major in textile and surface design. Her stunning top was handwoven with commercial mohair yarn and then was cut and sewn on the bias for a flattering fit and soft drape. Additional pieces of her ensemble included cropped slim-fitting pants and a coat featuring the mohair yarn couched in a free-motion embroidery design.

## THE YARNIVAL

BY MARGARET TROUSDALE (THE YARN MARM)

I attended the first Yarnival hosted by Lexi Boeger of Pluckyfluff Studios in July 2011. The crowning piece to the celebration was the opening of the new Pluckyfluff spinning studio at Boeger Winery in Placerville, California. The studio is a reconverted one-room historic barn loft with a view of the pear orchard and vineyard. It provides a work space for accomplished spinners and students alike. There is drop-in time for individuals to come work on their own, and Boeger also offers classes and workshops.

The Pluckyfluff spinning studio at Boeger Winery in Placerville, California.

MARGARET TROUSDALE  
(THE YARN MARM)

At the Yarnival, Boeger held classes for two days on making artisan yarns. Attendees celebrated with a live band and party Friday night and enjoyed Boeger wines and brick-oven pizza. On Sunday, we participated in the ritual of adding to the Giant Skein. (The Giant Skein consists of unique yarns spun by spinners from across the globe and is meant to be a physical representation of the global handspinning community.) We visited the booths of artisans and vendors from across the country and bought an entire truckload of raw fleece from Tim Ohman, a local sheepshearer. And we, of course, socialized like crazy over fiber interests!



And we, of course, socialized like crazy over fiber interests!

The 2012 Yarnival will be held at the winery July 13–15. There will be spinning, vendors' booths, children's activities, and a petting zoo, and participants are invited to dress in carnival costume. The Giant Skein will be on display, and all spinners are welcome to bring a skein of their own handspun to add to it. This year, however, marks a shift as the Yarnival seeks to become a world-renowned showcase for the most innovative and inspiring artists and artisans in the field of handspinning. This year and going forward, the organizers are seeking to spotlight eight of the best and up-and-coming in spinning-related fields. The eight will consist of five spinners, two fiber producers, and one designer. Their work will be included in an exhibit, and they will have a central booth during the Yarnival. Profiles, bios, and statements from the eight will be published alongside their work in a yearbook.

[www.pluckyfluff.com](http://www.pluckyfluff.com).

Both Angela and Emilee placed among the top thirteen finalists of their separate divisions.

Garments entered in MIWW must be constructed by the entrant of at least 60 percent wool or related fiber such as mohair and alpaca. The contest is open to creative individuals of all ages. Categories include Pre-teens (up to age twelve), Juniors (thirteen to sixteen), Seniors (seventeen to twenty-four), and Adults (twenty-five and over). A myriad of prizes are available including college scholarships, savings bonds, sewing machines, wool fabric, yarn, books, and notions.

An important difference between MIWW and other sewing competitions is the necessary aspect of modeling the outfit for the judges. Garments are judged on creativity, style, fit, construction, and appropriateness of design. Although not required, using handwoven fabric or handspun yarn as part of an entry may help demonstrate an entrant's understanding of the versatility of wool. Sponsored by the American Sheep Industry Women, MIWW has been encouraging each participant's creative talents for over sixty years.

For complete rules, state competitions, dates, and contact information, please refer to [www.makeitwithwool.com](http://www.makeitwithwool.com).



Emilee Koss models her handwoven top.

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Formally released in October 2011, the **Revolution** is the new production spinning wheel from Paradise Fibers. Designed for the beginner as well as the advanced spinner, the wheel includes ratios of 14:1, 9:1, and 7:1, double drive and scotch tension, a bobbin-led jumbo mode, and a multispeed jumbo flyer with  $\frac{7}{8}$ " orifice. Each wheel comes with three standard bobbins, one jumbo bobbin, Paradise Fibers' "Best Lazy Kate," drive bands for single and double drive, orifice hook, and a setup DVD including a basic learn-to-spin video with tips and tricks from Rachel at Paradise Fibers. \$995.

Paradise Fibers, W 225 Indiana, Spokane, WA 99205; (509) 536-7746; [travis@paradisefibers.net](mailto:travis@paradisefibers.net); [www.paradisefibers.net](http://www.paradisefibers.net).



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Spunky Eclectic, 33 Webster Rd., Lisbon, ME 04250; (207) 353-9665; [info@spunkyeclectic.com](mailto:info@spunkyeclectic.com); [www.spunkyeclectic.com](http://www.spunkyeclectic.com).

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The **Needle** from Cascade Spindle Company, like all spindles in its line, represents a peak in the Cascade Mountains. In addition to the 8,152-foot prominent rock tower, it also represents the historic landmark in Seattle. The Needle is available with bling crystal or stone inset at the "restaurant level." The spindle's whorl is made of beautiful, iridescent koa with a birch shaft and comes in two sizes—mini and maxi. \$75 mini/\$85 maxi.

Cascade Spindle Company, (253) 639-2076; [www.cascadespindles.com](http://www.cascadespindles.com).

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# At KCL Woods

BY LESLIE ORDAL

Ken Ledbetter in his studio.

IMAGE COURTESY OF KCL WOODS

**S**even years ago, a small group of Tucson, Arizona, handspinners approached woodworker Ken Ledbetter and asked him if he could make drop spindles. Ken looked through the plain wooden spindles they had brought as examples and shook his head. “I can’t make these,” he told them. “I make fancy stuff.”

Previously a tool and die maker at Boeing, Ken turned to woodworking as a hobby in the 1980s. He started out making picture frames by hand and selling them to art galleries, eventually opening two galleries with his wife, Carol, that they ran for several years. After selling the galleries and moving from Washington State to Arizona, Ken added woodturning to his repertoire of skills. Under the name KCL Woods, he produced objects that were both functional and artistic—bowls, pepper mills, bottle stoppers, and delicate, hollow Christmas ornaments. Ken successfully exhibited and sold his work in juried art shows for a number of years, but after the challenge from the spinners in Tucson, he turned his focus to tools for fiber artists. Once he made his first balanced spindles, he began to design new versions that were not only effective spinning tools but satisfied his aesthetic sense as well. An avid rock hound for most of his life, Ken frequently incorporated stones into his earlier woodwork, a distinctive feature that has carried over to his line of spindles. Innovation and an appreciation for beauty are the driving forces behind Ken’s work, which is now entirely aimed at the fiber-arts community.

KCL Woods may not yet be a household name in the handspinning world, but Ken’s spindles have earned him a loyal—and growing—customer base. Perfectly balanced and usually inlaid with semi-precious stone, glass, and even Russian lacquered

brooches, KCL Woods spindles are both precise spinning tools and works of art. “It’s in my nature—I like pretty things. I like fancy things,” says Ken of his preference for highly patterned woods and unusual inlays. Distressed mesquite rescued from firewood, painted clay disks, and even beadwork make for especially eye-catching spindles that have been extremely popular at wool festivals and other fiber-arts events.

Ken spends about eight hours a day at his home in Arizona making spindles and other fiber-arts tools, which are sold through retail shops in the United States, England, and Australia as well as online. When not in his workshop, Ken is likely to be on the road with Carol as they travel to wool festivals across North America, averaging from six to eight per year. Ken aims to introduce at least one new spindle design at each event, and sometimes more—he premiered four new designs at STITCHES West in early 2012. Rather than settling on a few set designs and producing copies, Ken is constantly striving to make his spindles better. “I’ve never made the perfect spindle, and probably never will,” he says. At any one time he may be working on three or four prototypes, trying to come up with improvements on classic designs or creating something entirely new.

One of KCL Woods’s most successful products has been its modular spindle, which features a whorl with three identical interchangeable shafts. Made for the “spinner on the go,” the modular spindle allows for continuous spinning without having to stop and wind off the cop of spun yarn. The shafts can also be used for plying with a spindle kate; naturally, Ken produces his own kate, which can accommodate both his spindles and those made

by other makers, and can also be set up to ply from spinning-wheel bobbins. Another popular new spindle is Ken's take on the supported Russian spindle. He straightened the usually tapered shaft to keep the cop from flowing off too easily and added a brass tip for durability (now a feature on all supported spindles from KCL Woods). Not content with a strictly functional redesign, Ken turned the wood to resemble the towers of the famed St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, inlaying a striped marble to evoke the church's colorful onion domes.

Besides spindles, KCL Woods sells other fiber-arts tools such as shuttles, nøstepinnes, and yarn bowls. The shuttles feature a thumbprint on each side to help weavers throw the same way every time. This design has found popularity with novice and expert weavers alike, becoming a fixture in the classrooms at the renowned Mannings Handweaving School in East Berlin, Pennsylvania. As for the yarn bowls, "We can't keep them in stock," says Carol.

Ken often partners with other artists in the creation of his spindles, whether it be through painting whorls or creating polymer clay flowers for his experiments in three-dimensional finials as spindle toppers. He also takes on custom work, such as incorporating an heirloom button into a spindle at a customer's request. Whatever the design or the project, Ken is firmly committed to the quality and craftsmanship of his products. If a customer has a problem with an item from KCL Woods, Ken will repair it free of charge as long as the customer pays the cost of shipping. "I will fix anything that I make, forever," he says, adding that this also helps him improve on his designs for the future. "If anyone has a problem, I want to hear about it."



A KCL Woods modular spindle made from walnut and maple.

While Ken has found an outlet for his creative vision in KCL Woods, what ultimately drives his work are his interactions with those he describes as his "family of fiber people." He welcomes and actively seeks out suggestions and feedback from spinners and enjoys the challenge of seeing if he can turn their ideas into workable—and beautiful—products. "That's what makes it fun," he says. ☘

Currently working on a degree in genetics, **Leslie Ordal** still finds time to teach spinning near her home in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Her fiber-arts endeavors are documented on her blog at [www.leslieordal.com](http://www.leslieordal.com).

**KCL Woods**  
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[info@kclwoods.com](mailto:info@kclwoods.com)  
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KATHY CANUEL

A KCL Woods spindle topped with a polymer clay flower by Kathy Canuel, [www.papersensei.blogspot.com](http://www.papersensei.blogspot.com).



KCL Woods weaving shuttles.

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www.spinney.net

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sallyshop1@yahoo.com

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# New Zealand: North Island

JACEY BOGGS

**One of the largest** archipelagos in the world is New Zealand, the Long White Cloud. As an archipelago, it's comprised of a string or cluster of islands, but the two main islands go by the explanatory names the *North Island* and the *South Island*. These two islands, when taken together have a landmass similar to that of Colorado, a population half of New York City's, and an almost obsessive love of rugby. However, when taken separately, each island has its own distinct landscape, atmosphere, and energy. The North Island is more metropolitan, having both of New Zealand's biggest cities, Auckland and Wellington.

If you are lucky enough to spend time there, you might be tempted to revel in the beauty of a single location, but a little bit of movement can go a long way in a landscape so varied. In an hour, you can move from looming snow-capped mountains to sheep-dotted, languidly rolling hills to crashing waves on craggy rocks steeped in roaming seals, dolphins, and the occasional whale. My nine-year-old son and I had the good fortune to spend two weeks in this veritable paradise. We explored rain forests, rolling hills, old nunneries, museums, and the rich culture of New Zealand and its indigenous people, the Maori. Here are a few places we'd recommend you not miss on the North Island, but keep in mind that in a country where you can buy wool on the side of the road, this list is anything but exhaustive. We will take a closer look at the South Island in the Fall 2012 issue.

## 1. Majacraft

Majacraft wheels can be found and loved the world over, but the company boasts only seven employees, four of whom have the last name Poad. Housed on a beautiful piece of land, complete with a working waterwheel, the small workshop sits behind the house of the owners. Inside is a treasure trove of the Majacraft wheel models, but keep your eyes peeled; there are a lot of experimental things happening in that space, and you might get to see

something brand new, just as it's being thought, figured, and built. Don't miss having a cuppa with Glynis and Owen Poad, the owners; they are the type of people who will give you the last banana passion fruit off the tree in their front yard.

If you're a fan of *The Lord of the Rings*, don't miss stopping at Hobbiton as you travel South.



## 2. Te Puia

Te Puia is a fortified ancient village site that is not only a geological wonder and a font of indigenous history but also a teaching center for Maori wood-carving and textile techniques. The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute was established to not only promote awareness of Maori handcrafts but to foster the continuation of tradition by teaching it to Maori youth. Enjoy the geysers and bubbling mud pots, walk to Te Rito, the school of weaving, and

PHOTOS JACEY BOGGS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



### 1. Majacraft

586 Oropi Rd.  
RD3 Tauranga  
New Zealand  
+64 (7) 543 3618  
www.majacraft.co.nz  
Call for appointment.

### 2. Te Puia

Hemo Rd.  
Rotorua, Bay of Plenty  
New Zealand  
+64 (7) 348 9047  
www.tepuia.com

### 3. Kaimai Woolshed

1603 State Highway 29  
Tauranga, Bay of Plenty  
New Zealand  
+64 (7) 543 0750  
www.kaimaiwoolshed.co.nz

### 4. Stansborough Farm

22 Sydney St.  
Petone, Lower Hutt, Wellington  
New Zealand  
+64 (4) 566 5591  
www.stansborough.co.nz

marvel at the displays of handwoven ceremonial garments (*piupiu*), cloaks, baskets, and mats. Watch students as they learn to harvest, dye, and weave what is commonly called New Zealand flax (*harakeke*) but has no botanical relationship to the linen flax with which most spinners are more familiar. Make sure not to miss visiting the Marae, a sacred meeting place specific to each Maori tribe. It's worth the extra money to take part in the greeting ceremony where you'll be welcomed into the Marae by traditional posturing, song, and dance. You'll not only get to observe but actually take part in some fascinating and beautiful cultural activities. You'll also see the woven ceremonial garments in use on the walls and on the participating Maori.



### 3. Kaimai Woolshed

Right outside of bustling Tauranga nestled in the Kaimai ranges is this genuine 1940s woolshed remade into a charming shop featuring 100 percent New Zealand-made products: yarns, knits, housewares, arts, and gifts. There's also a delicious café next door, so bring the family, eat, and shop.

As you continue to travel south, that giant snow-capped

mountain to your left is one of the two mountains featured as Mount Doom in *The Lord of the Rings*. Also, keep an eye and ear out for wild goats and pigs darting across the road and up treacherous cliffsides. You won't need to strain to find sheep, though; numerous breeds pepper this green land.

At the south end of the North Island, you'll hit New Zealand's second biggest city, Wellington, a bustling metropolis with free Wi-Fi and views that will leave you amazed. For the price of a cuppa, you can take the trolley up the hill and get a magnificent view of the city and the ocean. Up top, there's also a botanical garden and observatory that won't disappoint.

**5. World of Wearable Art Awards (WOW)**  
TSB Bank Arena  
Queen's Wharf, Wellington  
New Zealand  
[www.worldofwearableart.com](http://www.worldofwearableart.com)



### 4. Stansborough Farm

If you found yourself ogling the woven cloaks in *The Lord of the Rings* movies, or if you just want to see a working sheep/spinning/weaving farm, don't skip a visit to Stansborough Farm. This beautiful three-thousand-acre farm, run by Barry and Cheryl Eldridge, with a passion for breeding, spinning, and weaving, can occupy your morning or your entire day. It is great sightseeing, but if you want to take your own Stansborough Grey product home, they can satisfy that need as well.



Stansborough Grey sheep.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHERYL ELDRIDGE OF STANSBOROUGH FARM

### 5. Brancott Estate World of WearableArt (WOW) Awards Show

If you happen to be in this part of the world in September or October, you don't want to miss WOW, a worldwide designing competition for the most beautiful and outlandish wearable art. The entire show is textile based, but a large proportion of the entries (and winners) are spun, knitted, woven, or felted. The show itself is a cross between a fashion show, performance art, and a rollicking circus. You will smile, laugh, and be amazed. Winner of the 2010 Montana Supreme World of WearableArt Award was a textured, handfelted full-body suit.



*Loops*, Yogesh Chaudhary and Manas Barve, India.

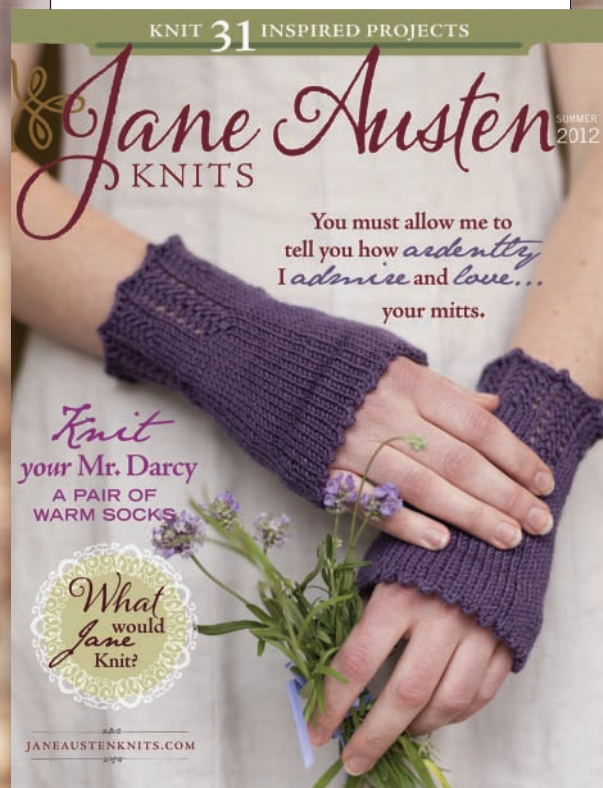
IMAGE COURTESY OF BRANCOTT ESTATE WOW AWARDS SHOW

Once you've walked around the beautiful city of Wellington, perused the wonderful museums, shopped at the interesting wharf shops, and eaten at a few of the many delicious restaurants, you can take a three-hour ferry ride from North Island to South Island for an entirely different New Zealand experience. Stay tuned for the next issue, and I'll tell you all about it!

**Jacey Boggs** knits like the dickens, spins like nobody's business, and eats avocados like they're going out of style.

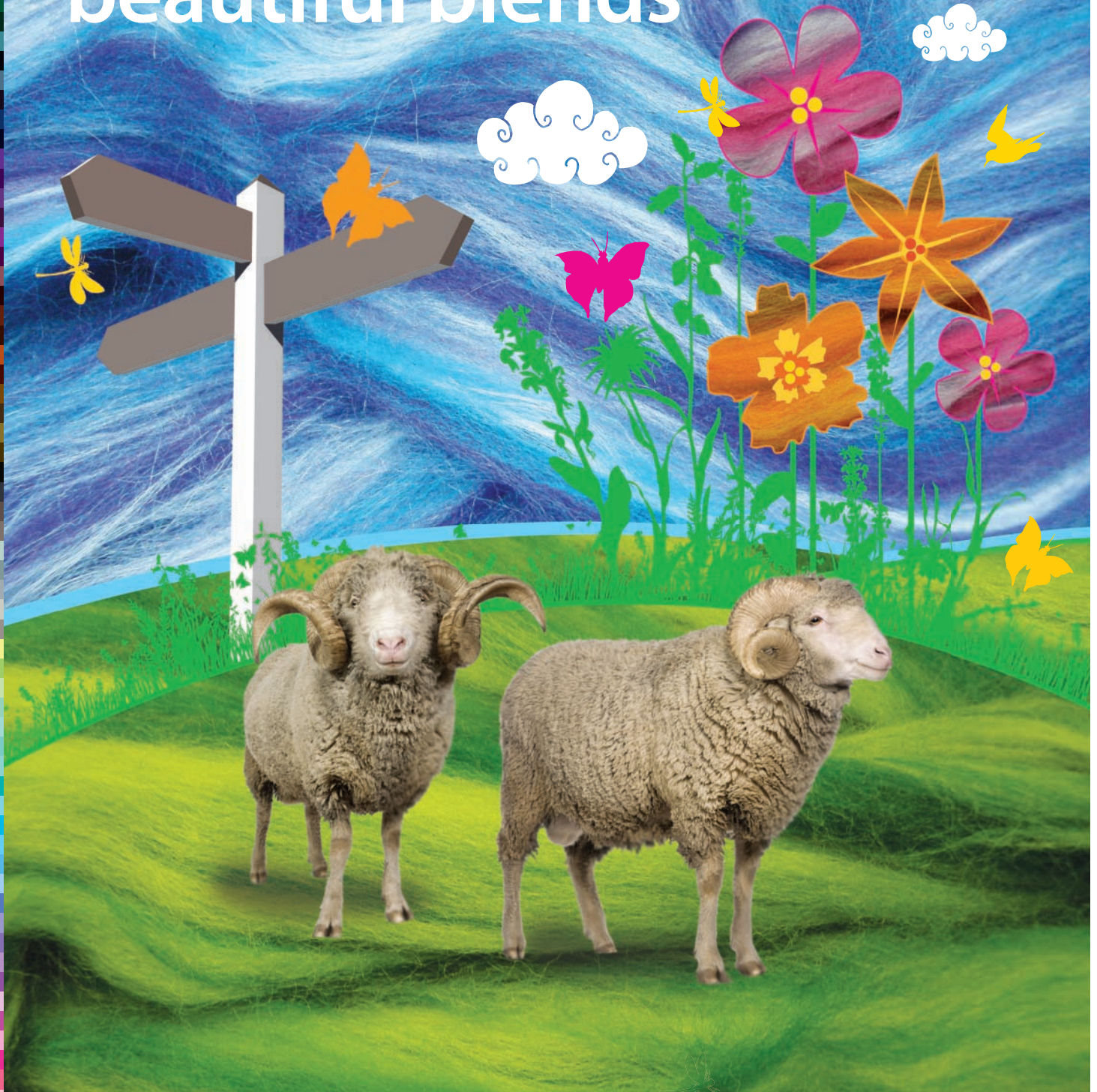


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# Overplying, That's the Point

BY AMELIA GARRIPOLI

**M**y favorite feature of overplying is that it adds durability to yarn. In an overplied yarn, the fibers in the singles are twisted beyond the parallel of a balanced ply and are held tightly in place by the extra ply twist. In a balanced plied yarn, the fibers lay relaxed and parallel to the length of the yarn, held together by the plying twist. By overplying, you add tension to the yarn's surface, which makes it more resistant to wear—more durable. This is perfect for socks and fingerless gloves and even reduces pilling on sweaters.

Consider what happens as you ply—the two singles twist around each other. As they ply, twist leaves each singles. The singles will puff out when, having reached a balanced ply, the fiber in them is relaxed. Keep plying until the yarn compresses a bit. As the singles compress, the yarn seems amazingly round for a two-ply. From that point on, it compresses more and more tightly. If you stop at the point of roundness, before further compression, you have a bouncy, interesting, and overplied yarn.

You may think overplied yarns are harsh, but you do have some control over this by how much

twist you put in the singles. The amount of twist in the singles drives how much plying twist is used to overply. A softly spun singles that is overplied is less durable than a highly twisted singles that is overplied. But starting with a softer singles will result in a softer overplied yarn. Look at your planned use for the yarn to decide on the amount of twist for the singles. For socks, high-twist singles are appropriate; for gloves, moderate-twist singles will be fine; and for a sweater, low-twist singles suffice.

Once you have spun an overplied yarn, your skein has active twist. If you plan to use the active twist as a design feature, then regular yarn finishing (a gentle wash and rinse) is sufficient. However, you can bring the active twist under control and add more durability to your yarn with a final step: rough-finishing.

## ROUGH-FINISHING

Rough-finishing fulls the yarn—in a process similar to felting. This locks the strands of fiber together, strengthening the yarn and stopping the biasing caused by the active twist in the knitted fabric.

Rough-finishing is a two-sink process. One sink has hot, soapy water in it, and one has cold water.



PHOTOS BY AMELIA GARRIPOLI

**Left:** Test the durability of your yarn by making a small skein and putting it on your key chain. A few weeks of use should show you how the yarn stands up to lots of handling. **Center:** Ahhh, socks. These are knitted from a superwash Merino 3-ply yarn, spun on a Betty Roberts wheel with double drive, set at a 20:1 ratio. Three-ply yarns can also be overplied; add more twist than is needed for the balanced 3-ply. **Right:** Best-in-show socks. These are knitted from a superwash Merino 2-ply yarn, spun on a Majacraft Suzie Alpaca wheel with an accelerator head and then rough-finished.

Make sure your skein has plenty of figure-eight ties throughout it since it will be getting agitated. Start with a 10-minute soak in the hot sink for an initial wash. Squeeze out the hot water and then transfer the skein to the cold sink. Agitate the skein in the cold sink, squeezing water through the skein and moving it around in the water for about 5 minutes. Squeeze out the cold water. Now do the same agitation in the hot sink and then squeeze out the hot water. Keep moving between the two sinks until you feel or see some fulling of the strands (they'll be a little fuzzier and firmer than before). Stop when the strands in the skein start grabbing each other a little bit.

Some wools won't felt—such as superwash, which has been chemically treated to prevent felting. For these, feel for a change in the skein: it might feel like it contracts when it enters the cold sink. If you don't feel a change, five times in each sink should be enough.

Once done with agitating the skein in the sinks, squeeze out the water and let the skein soak in a sink of warm water for 10 minutes to rinse. Squeeze it out and wrap the skein in a dry towel, then whack the skein (still inside the towel) on a counter to

shock the surface fibers. Hang the skein to dry; it should hang open, or have at most one to two twists in the skein. If the skein twists more than twice, repeat the rough-finishing to bring the active twist under control.

When the skein is dry, reskein it to separate the strands, so that the grabbiness of the strands doesn't annoy you when you use the yarn.

There you have it, the 1-2-3 of overplied yarn:

1. Determine the amount of twist for the singles yarn based on the planned use of the yarn.
2. Overply by adding more twist than for a balanced yarn. For a two-ply yarn, keep plying until the yarn starts getting round.
3. Rough-finish for more durability and to control the active twist.

You may find, as I have, that overplied yarns have a nice polished look that, coupled with their durability, makes a lovely yarn with an appeal that shines through in the finished items. ❧

**Amelia Garripoli** spins, knits, weaves, and dyes in her new home in Port Ludlow, Washington. She published *Productive Spindling* in 2009 and sells spinning e-tutorials at [www.askthebellwether.com](http://www.askthebellwether.com).



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 SpinOff Autumn Retreat - 26, 27, 28

\*for more information visit us at: [www.thefoldatmc.net](http://www.thefoldatmc.net)\*



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# A Handspindle Primer

COMPILED BY PATTIE GRAVER

**F**or thousands of years, handspinners have been using handspindles to twist fiber into yarn. There are many finely crafted spindles available to the contemporary handspinner, and although the technology is basically the same as the ancient tools, it can be confusing to know where to begin. The following guide will familiarize you with some of your options so you can make the right choice for your spindle projects.

**Rule of thumb:**  
Use lighter spindles for thin yarns,  
heavier spindles for thick yarns.

Images originally published in *Respect the Spindle* by Abby Franquemont (Interweave, 2009).

## SUSPENDED SPINDLES

### High-whorl (top-whorl) spindles:

- Whorl at the top of the shaft; meticulous craftsmanship required
- Usually have a hook or groove at the top for securing yarn
- Operate in midair
- Yarn bears the weight of the spindle; spinner's hand bears the weight of spindle and yarn
- Yarn winds on below the whorl
- Suited for fibers with long or variable staple length (although used for spinning cotton in Africa)
- Historically used for yarns requiring less twist
- Less yarn capacity than low-whorl spindles



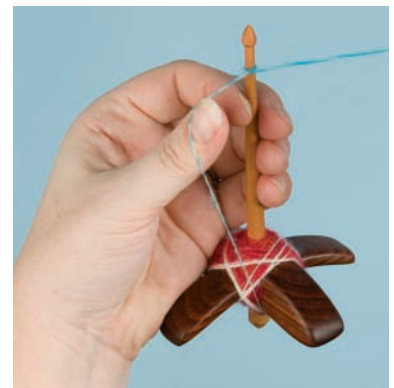
### Low-whorl spindles:

- Whorl at the bottom of the shaft; easier than high-whorl spindles to keep balanced; easy to make
- May have a hook or groove at the end farthest from the whorl for securing yarn
- Operate in midair
- Yarn bears the weight of the spindle; spinner's hand bears the weight of spindle and yarn
- Yarn winds on above the whorl
- Good for fibers with a short staple length but have been used for all types of fiber
- Historically used for yarns requiring high twist
- Capacity for lots of yarn



### Turkish spindles:

- Type of low-whorl spindle that consists of a shaft and two removable crossarms
- Often have a knob at the top of the shaft for securing the yarn
- Operate in midair
- Yarn bears the weight of the spindle; spinner's hand bears the weight of spindle and yarn
- A center-pull ball of yarn is created when the crossarms are removed



## SUPPORTED SPINDLES

*Small supported spindles (such as tahkli):*

- Sharp point at one end used to spin the spindle
- Supported by a bowl or other surface
- Yarn does not bear all of the weight of the spindle
- Can spin fast or slow
- Appropriate for fibers with short staple lengths such as cotton or cashmere
- Suited for laceweight yarn; not for thick yarn



*Supported spindles without separate whorl (Russian, French):*

- Supported by a bowl or other surface
- Yarn does not bear all of the weight of the spindle
- Usually constructed without a whorl; if the spindle does have a whorl, it is intended for collecting yarn
- Spin slower than tahkli spindles
- Good for spinning fine singles yarn from down fibers



*Navajo spindles:*

- Constructed from wood
- Long shaft and large whorl
- Supported by the spinner's body
- Capacity for lots of yarn
- Good for spinning thick, low-twist yarn



## RESOURCES

- Franquemont, Abby. "High Whorl, Low Whorl." *Spin-Off* 33, 1 (Spring 2009), 44–49.
- . *Respect the Spindle*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2009.
- Spin-Off* 19, 1 (Spring 1995). Commonly referred to as the "Spindle Issue"; several articles in this issue focus on spindles and spindle spinning.

*"Unicorn products save my sanity  
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*–Deb Robson*

# Fibre Wash, Fibre Rinse, Power Scour



*Deb Robson with  
Shay Pendray of  
Knitting Daily TV*



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and Fiber Sourcebook, I  
discovered Power Scour. It saved  
my sanity! The scoured fibers  
smell like wool at its best, and  
have not been turned even  
slightly harsh. I ended up  
re-washing fibers I'd  
already cleaned just for  
the pleasure of spinning  
and knitting with the  
fresher-feeling results.  
What a delight!"*

*–Deb Robson  
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# Spinning Singles Yarns for Knitting and Crochet

BY CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES AND ELIZABETH PROSE

**E**lizabeth has been knitting with millspun and handspun singles for a while. Carol has used singles more for crochet but has often knitted with unspun roving. Both of us have been wondering just what makes a good singles yarn. Most knitters shy away from handspun singles yarns because the twist accumulated in the yarn when knitted into a stockinette pattern can easily make the garment bias in the twist direction. Depending on your objective, that can be good or bad. Kathryn Alexander ([www.kathrynalexander.net](http://www.kathrynalexander.net)) uses the twist in energized singles yarns for wonderful design effects. Medium- to high-twist singles can also be employed effectively (especially if knitted in a spiral rib) to keep sock legs from slouching or booties from falling off baby feet. Once we started spinning and knitting our projects and samples, we wondered what the fuss was about. We also realized that there can be a lot of variables and possibilities for singles yarns.

Basically, the key is the amount of twist. The trick is getting enough twist to hold the yarn together while keeping the twist angle low enough so the yarn won't bias in the knitted fabric. If you examine some of the popular millspun singles

yarns, you'll find that they all have a low angle of twist. Most are wool or wool-blend yarns. Fibers that need more twist to hold together (primarily very short and slick fibers) won't make great singles yarns, but those fibers can be spun successfully for singles when blended with wool.

A surprising feature of some millspun singles is that they are actually composed of two strands side by side but not plied. It might be difficult to produce the same type of yarn with handspun, although using two singles held together for knitting is more common than plied yarns in some cultures. We didn't try such a yarn but wondered if mills can set the two yarns together in a way that holds them together well without fulling them.

Spinning low-twist yarns isn't hard but takes some concentration and wheel adjustments. Elizabeth used the bulky flyer on her Schacht Matchless for a very low ratio and so she could spin big yarn onto one bobbin. If you don't have a bulky flyer, try scotch tension or the lowest ratio on your wheel. Carol used a high take-up tension and heavier drive band so the yarn pulled in more quickly. The longer the yarn is between your

Carol's Merino/bamboo swatches in stockinette and horseshoe lace knitted on U.S. size 2 needles, spun Z at a 7.5:1 ratio on a Schacht Sidekick wheel with short backward draw, and measuring 2,900 yards per pound.



hands and the orifice, the more twist builds up. We both treadled as slowly as possible. With those wheel adjustments, we found that even worsted or semiworsted yarns could be low twist. Another option is spindle-spun singles. Lynne Vogel offers several ideas for spindle-spun sock singles (see Resources).

Before you start spinning, though, you need to think about your fibers. Longer and coarser fibers need less twist. Heavier yarns need less twist than finer ones but, for example, a fine wool blended with silk, mohair, or bamboo can be spun with remarkably low twist.

Good fiber preparation is vital to low-twist spinning. Use fiber that is clean (no stickiness, noils, or vegetable matter) and well aligned. You want the fibers to flow from your hands onto the bobbin. Predrafting the fiber and simply feeding it onto the wheel without further drafting as Elizabeth did for her Falkland yarn is a little time-consuming to begin with but makes it easy to keep the twist low. For her other yarns, Elizabeth used short forward (worsted) draw. She held her hands a bit farther apart than usual and pinched the fiber supply to keep any twist from moving into the undrafted fibers. As soon as the twist entered the drafting zone, the yarn went onto the bobbin. Carol prefers a backward draw (American or traditional long draw) but, for low-twist yarns, she drafts quickly, moving her arm back only a few inches and then forward so the yarn moves onto the bobbin immediately.

The direction of twist for singles is usually Z, but you might want to experiment to see if that works for your knitting or crochet style. Neither of us had

any problems with the Z singles becoming either more or less twisted as we knitted. Carol crochets with singles and has found that, especially when crocheting firmly, Z-twist yarn works up much more smoothly than S-twist yarn, which tends to become more tightly twisted.

Energized singles right off the bobbin can be either a challenge or fun and exciting. As you can see from the sample skein at right, even a low-twist yarn can be very crinkly. It doesn't take much, though, to have a very easy-to-knit-with yarn. We washed our skeins and hung them to dry without weights. Carefully steaming yarn still on the niddy-noddy also relaxes it considerably. Carol steamed her Shetland wool skein after it had been washed and dried and then it hung completely straight.

The final factor to consider is stitch pattern. Garter stitch and lace adapt very nicely to singles yarns as do most crochet patterns. Stockinette stitch will show the twist direction; the livelier the twist, the more the fabric biases in the twist direction. Finishing the yarns before knitting or crocheting with them really suppressed the tendency to bias as you can see in the alpaca and Merino/bamboo swatches. While Carol enjoyed the ease of knitting the mitts with the finished yarn, she couldn't resist the crinkly



Carol's Shetland swatches in stockinette and garter stitch knitted on U.S. size 4 needles, spun Z at a 9:1 ratio on a Schacht Matchless wheel with short backward draw, and measuring 1,600 yards per pound.



Elizabeth's alpaca roving from Argyle Fiber Mill and singles yarn. Two swatches in stockinette and horseshoe lace knitted on U.S. size 5 and 7 needles, spun Z at a 9:1 ratio on a Schacht Matchless wheel with short forward draw and measuring 1,097 yards per pound.

but soft and cushy unfinished yarn. The life in the unfinished yarn required knitting on larger needles, and the resulting garter-stitch fabric was worth the extra trouble of keeping the yarn under control to make the stitches.

Elizabeth and Carol feel that their experiments shown here are just the tip of the iceberg for singles yarns. Elizabeth envisions much more play with multicolor singles yarns, while Carol already has a little stockinette-stitch project in mind for her Shetland unfinished yarn.

## RESOURCES

Simmons, Paula. *Spinning for Softness & Speed*. Chilliwack, British Columbia: Sunrise Printing, 1982.

Vogel, Lynne. *The Twisted Sisters Sock Workbook*.

Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2002.

# Tenney Park Scarf

BY ELIZABETH PROSE

**A**n ice-skating rink down the street from my house inspired the colors in this scarf, while the pattern was inspired by Weldon's Cloud Scarf in "Weldon's Practical Knitter, Fourteenth Series" (*Weldon's Practical Needlework*, Volume 5. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2001).

## Project Notes

**Fibers:** 3.75 oz Yarn Hollow ([www.yarnhollow.com](http://www.yarnhollow.com)) hand-dyed 100% Falkland wool top in Winter Lake colorway; 3.75 oz Spunky Eclectic Club May 2011 ([www.spunkyeclectic.com](http://www.spunkyeclectic.com)) Norwegian Longwool top in Angkor Wat colorway.

**Preparation:** Separated top into strips then predrafted (Falkland); spun straight from top with no preparation (Norwegian Longwool).

**Drafting method:** No further drafting (Falkland); short forward draw (Norwegian Longwool).

**Wheel:** Schacht Matchless with bulky flyer (Falkland); Schacht Matchless

(Norwegian Longwool).

**Wheel system:** Scotch tension (both).

**Ratio:** 4:1 (Falkland); 9:1 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Singles direction spun:** Z (both).

**Singles twists per inch:** Varies (Falkland); 3 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Singles wraps per inch:** 5 (Falkland); 17 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Twist angle:** Varies (Falkland); 13° (Norwegian Longwool).

**Total yardage:** 72 (Falkland); 308 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Yards per pound:** 307 (Falkland); 1,314 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Yarn classification:** Superbulky thick and thin (Falkland); fingering-weight (Norwegian Longwool).

**Yardage used:** 71 (Falkland); 132 (Norwegian Longwool).

**Needles:** U.S. size 15 circular; 24".

**Crochet hook:** U.S. size H.

**Gauge:** 10 sts = 4".

**Finished size:** 8" x 72".

I pre-drafted for the superbulky singles and spun without further drafting. In contrast, I spun the fingering-weight singles directly from the top, moving back and forth across using a short forward draw.

With superbulky Falkland yarn, CO 20 sts and knit 3 rows. Join fingering-weight Norwegian Longwool yarn and knit 3 rows. Repeat knitting 3 rows superbulky and 3 rows fingering-weight yarn

21 more times, sliding work across needle when appropriate to pick up needed yarn and carrying yarns loosely up side of scarf. Knit 3 more rows with superbulky and bind off loosely. To make fringe, cut 140 strands (18" long) of fingering-weight yarn and divide into 20 groups of 7 strands each. Attach 10 groups evenly spaced on each end of scarf with a crochet hook. Wet-block and lay flat to dry (no pins).



Tenney Park scarf and 2 small skeins of each of the yarns spun.

# Ladies' Cycling Mitts

BY CAROL HUEBSCHER  
RHOADES

I had already been thinking about how to line some mittens with crochet when I came upon the Gentleman's Driving Mittens in *Weldon's Practical Needlework*. Those gloves weren't lined but were perfect for my concept. As it turns out, the gloves were rather small and just happened to fit me, so they morphed into bicycling mitts. The lining provides warmth and shock absorption for my hands.

The key to the singles wool knitting yarn is well-prepared fiber. I teased the wool and drumcarded it on my Pat Green Supercard. The wool was clean and orderly, so only one pass was needed.

The strips from the batts were very easy to spin with a short backward draw. I adjusted the pull-in tension to be fairly high and treadled slowly to avoid adding much twist. As soon as the fiber was drafted, it went onto the bobbin.

I was tempted to simply steam the yarn but decided that washing it would open the fibers more for a loftier knitted fabric. When I took the skein off the niddy-noddy, it curled up quite a bit but washing relaxed the yarn. I hung it to dry, letting the water at the bottom of the skein provide the weight. When the upper part of the skein started feeling dry as the water collected at the bottom, I turned the skein to balance the weight distribution. When dry, the skein hung

## Project Notes

**Fiber:** 1.75 oz Shetland wool purchased from Bramblewool ([www.sawmat.com](http://www.sawmat.com)); 1 oz 75% Bluefaced Leicester (BFL) wool, 25% silk (Peacock) from Abstract Fibers.

**Preparation:** Drumcarded rovings (1 pass), stripped into 6 lengths (Shetland); separated 36" length of top into 16 long strips (BFL/silk).

**Drafting method:** Short backward draw (Shetland); short forward draw (BFL/silk).

**Wheel:** Schacht Matchless (both).

**Wheel system:** Double drive (both).

**Ratio:** 9:1 (both).

**Singles direction spun:** Z (both).

**Singles twists per inch:** 4 (Shetland); 6 (BFL/silk).

**Singles wraps per inch:** 15 (Shetland); 21 (BFL/silk).

**Twist angle:** 10° (both).

**Total yardage:** 165 (Shetland); 210 (BFL/silk).

**Yards per pound:** 1,400 (Shetland); 1,300 (BFL/silk).

**Yarn classification:** Sportweight (both).

**Yardage used:** 135 (Shetland); 196 (BFL/silk).

**Needles:** U.S. size 1.5 (2.5 mm).

**Crochet hook:** U.S. size C (2.5 mm).

**Gauge:** 7 sts and 14 rows = 1" in garter st.

**Finished size:** Women's medium, 7" long and 7½" hand circumference just above thumb.

straight but had tiny crinkles throughout. I held the skein (my hands protected, of course) over water boiling in a teakettle, and the steam finished straightening the yarn.

The crochet yarn was spun from lengths of top, basically the same as for the Shetland wool but with short forward draw. I was careful not to let the yarn thin too much because twist accumulates in the thin areas and, if the crochet yarn is too thin, it will pull the knitting in. It is easiest to control the yarn diameter and amount of twist when working from thin lengths of top because I can minimize drafting; however, if the fiber has been space-dyed, that means only short bursts of color.

Adapted from Gentleman's Driving Mitts, "Weldon's Practical Knitter, Eighteenth Series" (*Weldon's Practical Needlework*, Volume 6. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2002).

*Note:* If you line the mitts with crochet, make sure the knitted cuffs fit with a little extra ease. The crochet slightly draws in the knitted fabric. I noted where I added rows to the original pattern.

With 2 needles held together, CO 48 sts. Carefully remove one needle and begin working back and forth.

Row 1: Sl 1 kwise wyb, k46, p1.

Row 2: Sl 1 kwise wyb, k2, pm, p15, pm, k29, p1.

Rows 3–4: Sl 1 kwise wyb, k46, p1.

Row 5: Sl 1 kwise wyb, k29, p15, k2, p1.

Row 6: Sl 1 kwise wyb, k46, p1.

Repeat Rows 1–6 eleven more times for a total of 72 rows. Work Rows 1–5; if necessary, continue in pattern until cuff fits comfortably around wrist, ending with Row 5 (I added 12 rows for my cuffs).

Begin shaping the thumb gusset

Row 78: Beginning at bottom of cuff, BO 20 sts; knit to last st and end p1.

Row 79: BO 8, knit to last st and end p1.

Row 80: K2tog, knit to end and use a knitted cast-on to cast on 5 sts for thumb.

Row 81: Knit.

Row 82: K2tog, knit to last st and end p1 (chain edge for top of thumb).

Row 83: Sl 1 kwise, knit to end.

Row 84: K2tog, knit to last st and end p1.

Row 85: Sl 1 kwise, knit until 2 sts rem and k2tog.

Row 86: K2tog, knit to last st and end p1.

Row 87: Sl 1 kwise, knit to end.

Rep Rows 84–87 five times. (I decreased only on Rows 84 and 86 until 11 sts remained and then decreased on Rows 84, 85, and 86 as in the original pattern.)

BO rem 5 sts.

Knit the other mitt the same way. When finishing (after working the crocheted lining), you will seam the mitts for the left and right hands.

## CROCHET LINING

The crochet lining is worked on every garter ridge on the inside of the glove from the top of the ribbing at wrist to top of mitt. With WS of right-hand mitt facing you and cast-on edge at right (thumb will be at the left side), \*attach yarn in loop (see fig. 1) and ch 1. Work 1 sc in each loop across (total of 29 sc including ch 1 at beginning of row) and end off, leaving 1½" tail. Work from \* across each ridge to thumb gusset and then adjust number of sc across as the rows shorten. I avoided half of the weaving in of ends by covering the beginning tail as I worked the first few sc of each row. The end tails can be threaded on a thin tapestry needle and woven through the "legs" of the last 6 sc of the row. After the first row, you can fold the knitting at the garter ridge and the loops will pop up, making them easier to see. Make sure you crochet along only one ridge at a time.

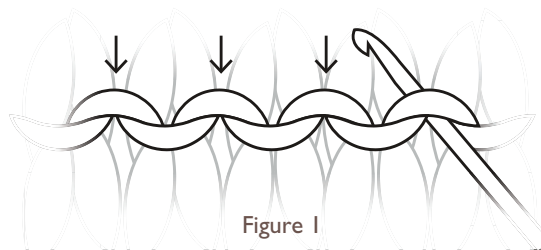


Figure 1

If you don't mind the crochet changing direction on alternate rows, you can simply work back and forth.

For the left-hand mitt, begin crochet at the top of mitt and work toward the ribbed cuff.

Weave in all ends and trim tails close to knitted fabric.

## SEAM MITTS

With mattress stitch and working on RS, sew the bound-off and cast-on rows for the thumb together. Now sew the side and cuff of mitt. The seam line will lie on the palm along the thumb gusset. ❧

**Elizabeth Prose** enjoys the color inspiration of all seasons in Madison, Wisconsin, while taking long walks and snapping photographs. **Carol Rhoades** could have used her singles-spun cycling mitts this winter when Madison had such a mild season that she enjoyed a number of bike rides. Normally winter is the time for staying indoors to spin, knit, and crochet.



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One of Ann's newest socks and the yarn she used to make it side by side with one of her first socks and a sampling of that yarn. The new sock and yarn is on the left, and her first sock is on the right.



# A Second Look: Handspun Socks

BY ANN BUDD

**M**y first pair of handspun socks appeared in *Interweave Knit&Spin* 2011. For those socks, I used a woolen drafting technique to spin a two-ply yarn that knitted up into a gauge of 6 stitches per inch. Since then, I took a *Spin-Off* Autumn Retreat (SOAR) workshop about spinning yarn for socks from Michelle Boyd, where I learned enough to know that I could do better. To begin, I learned that socks need strong round yarns that are best spun in the worsted technique and made up of three plies.

Fortunately, I had the foresight to buy two batches of Traci Bunker's superwash Merino hand-dyed combed top, so I had enough to try out my new-found knowledge with the same fiber.

### SPINNING

This time, I tried Michelle's recommendation of not splitting the top, but I did predraft it a bit to help the fibers slide against one another as I spun. I finally mastered worsted spinning and used the inch-worm technique of drafting just an inch or so of fleece at a time. I tried to spin as finely as I could so that the resulting three-ply yarn would approach fingering weight in size. I spun the singles with a Z-twist and plied them S on my Lendrum double-treadle wheel at an 8:1 ratio. The 4 ounces of top produced about 375 yards of three-ply yarn, which was much finer than the 282 yards of two-ply I got the first time around. Success.

### KNITTING

My relatively uneven plied yarn knitted up to between 7 and 8 stitches to the inch, so I decided to follow the general pattern for a 7½-inch foot circumference sock at 8 stitches per inch in my book *Getting Started Knitting Socks* (Interweave, 2007), knowing that the sock would end up larger than

7½ inches because I wouldn't always be knitting at 8 stitches to the inch. I decided to keep the leg a little short but work the more durable round heel and the wedge toe specified in the book.

This time, I decided to work a diagonal rib pattern that would be a little more interesting than the knit-3, purl-1 rib I used for the legs and insteps of the original socks. The knitting took very little time, and I thoroughly enjoyed the feel of my handspun in every stitch.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Although these socks are considerably better than the originals, there is still much room for improvement. For starters, I need to work on consistent spinning. Some areas of the yarn were quite a bit thicker than others, which resulted in slight variations in gauge and therefore socks of two slightly different sizes. I also want to explore Michelle's assertions that socks knitted with wool not treated for machine washability hold up better and stretch out less than those made with superwash wool. For strength, Michelle recommends using roving or top that contains about 15 percent nylon or silk. My next pair of socks will be three-ply worsted yarn, nonsuperwash hand-dyed top (80% Polwarth wool, 20% silk) that I purchased from Enchanted Knoll

Farm ([www.enchantedknoll.org](http://www.enchantedknoll.org)) at SOAR 2011. I'm already on it.

### FIRST SOCK

#### Leg

With U.S. size 4 needles and using the Old Norwegian method, cast on 60 sts—30 front-of-leg/instep sts and 30 back-of-leg/heel/sole sts. Divide sts on 3 needles and join for working in rnds, being careful not to twist the cast-on sts. Work diagonal rib pattern as follows:

*Rnds 1 and 2:* \*K3, p3; rep from \*.

*Rnds 3 and 4:* \*K2, p2, k1, p1; rep from \*.

*Rnds 5 and 6:* \*K1, p2, k2, p1; rep from \*.

*Rnds 7 and 8:* \*P2, k3, p1; rep from \*.

Rep Rnds 1–8 until piece measures about 6" from cast-on or desired length to start of heel, ending with Rnd 8 of pattern.

#### Heel

Turn work so WS is facing, p30—30 heel sts on 1 needle. Arrange rem 30 sts on 2 needles to work later for instep.

#### Heel flap

Work 30 heel sts back and forth in rows as follows:

*Row 1 (RS):* \*Sl 1 purlwise with yarn in back (wyb), k1; rep from \*.

*Row 2 (WS):* \*Sl 1 purlwise with yarn in



Ann Budd's first handspun socks were showcased in the 2011 issue of *Interweave Knit&Spin*.

## Project Notes

**Fiber:** 4 oz superwash Merino in the Burnt Amber colorway from Bonker's Handmade Originals ([www.tracibunkers.com](http://www.tracibunkers.com)).

**Preparation:** I predrafted the top slightly to allow the fibers to slide past one another smoothly.

**Drafting method:** Short inch-worm method for worsted spinning; I drafted no more than 2" at a time.

**Wheel:** Lendrum double treadle.

**Wheel system:** Scotch tension.

**Ratio (singles/plying):** 8:1 (both).

**Singles direction spun:** Z.

**Singles wraps per inch:** 32.

**Twist angle:** 45°.

**Number of plies:** 3.

**Plied direction spun:** S.

**Plied twists per inch:** 5.

**Plied wraps per inch:** 16.

**Total yardage:** 375.

**Yards per pound:** 1,500.

**Yarn classification:** Sportweight.

**Yardage used:** 308.

**Needles:** U.S. size 4 (3.5 mm), set of 4 double-pointed.

**Gauge:** 15 sts and 20 rounds in St st = 2".

**Notions:** Stitch marker; tapestry needle.

**Finished size:** 7 to 7¾" (will stretch to 9") foot circumference, 9¼" foot length from back of heel to tip of toe, and 8" leg length from top of cuff to base of heel.

After taking a class at SOAR 2011 about spinning for sock yarn, Ann decided to try out what she learned in class on a second pair of socks, spun from the same fiber.



front (wyf), purl to end.

Rep these 2 rows 14 more times—15 chain edge sts along each selvage.

### Turn heel

Work short-rows as follows:

Row 1 (RS): K17, ssk, k1, turn work.

Row 2 (WS): Sl 1 purlwise wyf, p5, p2tog, p1, turn work.

Row 3: Sl 1 purlwise wyb, knit to 1 st before gap formed on previous row, ssk (with 1 st each side of gap), k1, turn work.

Row 4: Sl 1 purlwise wyf, purl to 1 st before gap formed on previous row, p2tog (with 1 st each side of gap), p1, turn work.

Rep Rows 3 and 4 until all heel sts have been worked—18 sts rem.

### Shape gussets

**Notes:** Pick up and knit through the back loops of both legs of the selvage sts for a firm join between the heel flap and foot. The gusset decreases are worked so that there are 6 knit sts between the decreases and each side of the instep patt.

Rnd 1: With RS facing and an empty needle (Needle 1), k18 heel sts, then pick up and knit (see Notes) 15 sts along selvage edge of heel flap; with another needle (Needle 2), work 30 instep sts as follows: k5, p1, work Rnd 1 of diagonal rib patt to last 5 sts, k5; slip last st to needle 3 and with a third needle (Needle 3), pick up and knit 14 sts along other selvage edge of heel flap, then knit the first 9 sts from Needle 1 again—77 sts total: 24 sts on Needle 1, 29 sts on Needle 2, 24 sts on Needle 3.

Rnd begins at center of heel/sole.

Rnd 2: On Needle 1, knit to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1; on Needle 2, k5, p1, work in patt as established to last 5 sts, k5; on Needle 3, k1, ssk, knit to end—2 sts decreased. Rnd 3: On Needle 1, knit; on Needle 2, k5, p1, work in patt to last 5 sts, k5; on Needle 3, knit.

Rep Rnds 2 and 3 until 59 sts rem—15 sts on Needle 1, 29 sts on Needle 2, 15 sts on Needle 3.

## Old Norwegian Cast-On

**Leaving a long tail, make a slipknot, and hold yarn as shown (Figure 1). \*Bring needle in front of thumb, under both yarns around thumb, down into center of thumb loop, back forward, and over top of yarn around index finger (Figure 2), catch this yarn, and bring needle back down through thumb loop (Figure 3), turning thumb slightly to make room for needle to pass through. Drop loop off thumb and place thumb back in V configuration while tightening up resulting stitch on needle (Figure 4). Repeat from \*.**



Figure 1

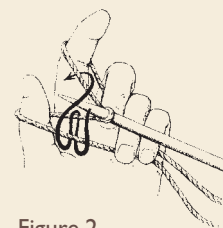


Figure 2

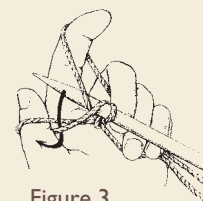


Figure 3

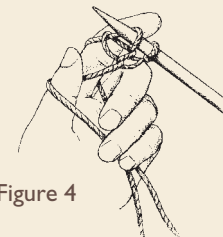


Figure 4

### Foot

Continue working diagonal rib pattern as established on instep while working sole sts in St st until piece measures about 7" from back of heel or about 2" less than desired finished length, ending with Rnd 8 of pattern.

Discontinue rib pattern on instep.

### Toe

Rnd 1: On Needle 1, knit to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1; on Needle 2, k1, ssk, work to last 3 sts, k2tog, k1; on Needle 3, k1, ssk, knit to end—4 sts decreased.

Rnd 2: Knit.

Rep Rnds 1 and 2 (i.e., decrease every other rnd) until 32 sts rem.

Rep just Rnd 1 (i.e., decrease every rnd) until 12 sts rem.

With Needle 3, knit sts from Needle 1—6 sts rem each on 2 needles.

### Finishing

Cut yarn, leaving a 12" tail. Thread tail on a tapestry needle and use the Kitchener st to graft the rem sts tog.

Weave in loose ends. Block lightly, if desired.

## SECOND SOCK

### Leg

With size 4 needles and using the Old Norwegian method, cast on 60

sts—30 front-of-leg/instep sts and 30 back-of-leg/heel/sole sts. Divide sts on 3 needles and join for working in rnds, being careful not to twist the cast-on sts. Work diagonal rib pattern as follows:

Rnds 1 and 2: \*P2, k3, p1; rep from \*.

Rnds 3 and 4: \*K1, p2, k2, p1; rep from \*.

Rnds 5 and 6: \*K2, p2, k1, p1; rep from \*.

Rnds 7 and 8: \*K3, p3; rep from \*.

Rep Rnds 1–8 until piece measures about 6" from cast-on or desired length to start of heel, ending with Rnd 8 of pattern.

Work heel, foot, toe, and finishing as for first sock. ❧

**Ann Budd** is the former senior editor of *Interweave Knits* and author of a number of knitting books (all published by Interweave) including *The Knitter's Handy Book* series, *Getting Started Knitting Socks*, *Simple Style*, *Knitted Gifts*, and *Knitting Green*, and she is coauthor of *Wrap Style*, *Lace Style*, *Bag Style*, and *Color Style*. Ann's latest book is *Sock Knitting Master Class*. Ann lives in Boulder, Colorado, where she's discovering a healthy population of spinners.

# Make Videos for YouTube

BY DENISE JACKSON

**YouTube.com** is an excellent learning zone. I use it all the time. When I teach classes, I include a list of YouTube video links that reinforce what I teach. For those of us who have some skills to share, YouTube provides a format for portable world access.

I often use Ruth MacGregor's videos ([www.youtube.com/user/ruthmacgregor](http://www.youtube.com/user/ruthmacgregor)) as a guide. They are simple and straightforward. She says her videos “. . . are made to feed the way I learn tactile things (and the way I suspect most people learn them): you need to see what's happening without thinking about it too much. If there are lots of words, the ‘chatty’ part of your brain takes over, and you miss things. If there's narration, you may be distracted by the voice or the



Ruth MacGregor has a few YouTube videos on making rolags, woolen long draw, and worsted short draw ([www.youtube.com/user/ruthmacgregor](http://www.youtube.com/user/ruthmacgregor)).

accent. . . . But music and demonstration, with just enough text to help you direct your attention—those go right to the target.”

### *Some questions you will need to answer before you get started:*

- What do you, as a viewer, like to see?
- What are your hands doing? Where are they positioned? How do you hold the fiber so the viewer can see it?
- Is the video quality good enough so viewers can clearly see details and subtle movements?
- Are you better in front of or behind the camera? Who do you want to help you film?

### *Supplies:*

- Digital camera (best), webcam, or cell phone with a camera
- YouTube account
- Ability to edit the movie, either on YouTube or with video-editing software such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker (teenagers can help here)

**Step 1:** Create the idea of what you are going to do and why. What is it you want to teach? Have a general (scripted) idea of what is going to happen.

**Step 2:** Film the video. You can take more than

one shot at this—editing is a wonderful tool. Some viewers (like me) get motion sickness so use a tripod.

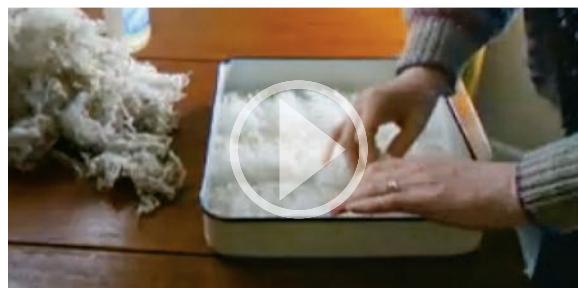
**Step 3:** Edit the video. Take the good parts and put them together. Keep the other parts for a laugh. You can import voice-overs and music. Watch some of your favorite videos to see how others do it.

**Step 4:** Resize the video so it fits on YouTube. The site accepts most file formats including 3GP, which allows videos to be uploaded from mobile phones. It accepts files up to 4,096 by 3,072 pixels in resolution. Files cannot be any larger than 2 gigabytes or longer than 15 minutes for a basic account.

**Step 5:** Upload the video. Enter a title, description, tags, and category. These help interested spinners find your video easier and faster.

### *A few hints:*

- Viewers do not need to see your face and would rather see your hands and spinning.
- Think about camera angles to highlight what you are doing.
- Wear dark colors so viewers can see you spin. White or light-colored clothing will wash out the fiber.
- Have good lighting so your hands can be seen.
- Often, sound quality isn't good. To get around this, import sound clips or place title cards to describe actions. ☞

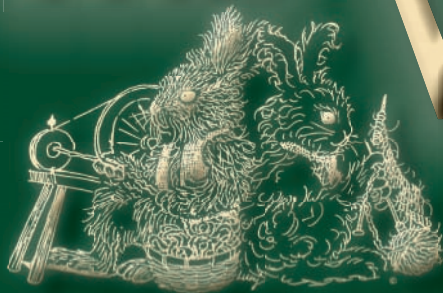


Amanda Hannaford of MandaCrafts ([www.mandacrafts.co.uk](http://www.mandacrafts.co.uk)) demonstrates English combs and planking of fibers ([www.youtube.com/user/ADHUK](http://www.youtube.com/user/ADHUK)).

**Denise Jackson** is a fourth generation spinner, weaver, and knitter having spun for over 20 years and knit for over 35. She lives, teaches, and learns in Montana from the excellent resources there.

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# The Sorcerer's Apprentice

BY JULIA FARWELL-CLAY

*Once Upon a Time . . .*

The careful hands of a new wheelmaker.  
PHOTOS BY J. J. JOHANSSON

**W**e're all familiar with this phrase that almost always signals the beginning of a fairy tale—a story that resembles reality until the magic starts. A wizard enchants a sword that can only be drawn from the stone by the unsuspecting rightful heir to the throne, a maiden is wakened from a long sleep by the kiss of her true love, or after a lifetime of searching, a pure-hearted knight finds his true destiny. None of us ever expect any such things to happen in our lives, but we enjoy the stories for their transformation, hope, and inevitable justice, where goodness is rewarded and uncertainty erased from the characters' lives.

Well, once upon a time . . . there was a wheel maker. This is the true story of a special spinning wheel, the maker, and a particular unsuspecting appren-

tice and heir.

To many of us, Magnus Drudik is a man of mystery, his name evoking the wizardry he seems to perform when it comes to conjuring a wheel that makes spinners gasp in admiration. A Romanian immigrant with a lifetime of working with wood, Magnus owned a commercial sawmill for many years and came by his knowledge of wood through decades of practical experience. Then he met Heidi, and she was a spinner—they were married.

The woodworker was determined to make his love a perfect spinning wheel. He spent years refining the design until it finally satisfied him. Other spinners heard about the mystical wheel, and the list of spinners waiting for their own Magnus Drudik wheels grew. But the woodworker's health declined, the long waiting list languished, and rumors began to circulate.

Far away at McTavish Farm in



Tom and Tracy Livernois of McTavish Farm.

another town southwest of Eugene, Oregon, lived Tom Livernois, his wife, Tracy (a knitter and a spinner), and a flock of Shetland sheep. Before Tom was a shepherd, he had been a contractor working with wood, but in a manner different from that of Magnus Drudik. Instead of handsaws and specialty woods, Tom used chop saws and two-by-fours. All was well in their lives, at least in non-fairy-tale terms.

A friend of Tracy's was downsizing her spinning equipment and offered her the Drudik wheel Tracy had long admired. The friend suggested that Tracy and Tom drive up to see Magnus with the wheel so he could tune it up. A phone call and short journey later, Tracy and Heidi were spinning together on the porch while Magnus invited Tom out to the workshop for a tour. Before they knew it, the visit was over and Magnus was bundling Tom off in the car with a box full of parts and instructions to make a spinning wheel.

It didn't take long after that for Tom and Tracy to decide to build a workshop

and start collecting the tools needed to build spinning wheels. Tom spent the next year hanging out when Magnus's health allowed, watching and learning from the master, improving his skills, and understanding the nuances in the engineering of the spinning wheel. This apprenticeship surprised them both. Magnus had worked with several people over the last ten years, but no one had ever really taken to building wheels the way Tom did. Tom wonders at his own enthusiasm. "I'm fifty-five. I'm just totally blown away at this point in my life. After everything else you do, to just start something completely brand-new—I just never expected that I could take this so dramatically seriously." And Tom didn't simply observe and absorb. He *transformed*.

"Magnus is a minimalist; there's no real sophistication to his shop, and most of his tools are pretty old and simple. How he managed to make these wheels is a testament to his skill. He has a rickety old band saw, and with that he makes this perfect line. I tried that, but

even with all my own experience I can't do it the same way he does. I have to find my own way. The guy has a lot of experience with wood. I watch his face and how he touches things. I try to read from that, so that sometimes I see that I have picked up some things that way. I thought I knew how to sand because I've been sanding all my life, but I wasn't feeling the wood in the right way for this. I was just sanding. That's the difference you pick up working with Magnus. It's not just wood; it's art.

"There was a day, we went out and sat in the sun and he said, moving his hands in the air, 'When it's spinning, it's supposed to be a Tibetan prayer wheel.' I thought I knew this person, and then he throws this at me and I thought, 'Oh, man! This guy's too much.' But then I started to comprehend what he meant, and that turned out to be a statement that was fundamental to my understanding who Magnus is."

Tom produces the travel version of Magnus's wheel, a design created for Heidi as her spinning began to take her



Tom Livernois spent many hours in Magnus Drudik's workshop.



A recent Drudik/Livernois wheel, in myrtlewood.

out of the house. It has a 20-inch drive wheel instead of the original 25-inch wheel, but it is the same in every other respect, including having the elegant sense of flow the spinner feels treading on it.

Under the umbrella of exhibiting for McTavish Farm, Tom and Tracy took the first finished wheel with them to the Blacksheep Gathering in Eugene, Oregon, in 2011. Tracy had spun on it in their booth for hardly a minute before the sight of the distinctive wheel stopped a passerby in her tracks. Her eyes popped, and she asked if it was a Drudik. As Tom tells it, when he told her the story, she started shouting, “Thank you! Thank you!” Soon his booth was overflowing with people wanting to see. In the fall of last year at the Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, Tom and Tracy took two wheels for delivery to Judy Jacobs’s Ball and Skein

booth. This time the crowd was silent, perhaps in awe, taking in the wheels as their happy owners spun on them for the first time. And Tom’s waiting list quickly grew.

Thanks to the Internet, the spinning world is really just a small village. As news of the new wheel’s arrival spread, it seemed to trigger a sense of relief. Someone had come to the rescue, there would be no flood, the dragon had been vanquished, and the fair wheel was saved! Something like hope came out of Tom’s seemingly magical appearance, and spirits rose not only for the future of Drudik wheels but for wheel making in general. Another wheel maker had been born, and the craft would survive.

Tom’s journey and success seem all the more remarkable given that there wasn’t a lot of time for trial and error. Inheriting a complete product like the Drudik wheel comes with an intense

pressure to get it right from the very start. His customers are not beginning spinners, so they know a lot about how a wheel should work, how it should feel. “I have a very educated clientele and one that’s going to communicate with others, so I have to get it right. I have to let the wheels go only when they are ready.”

It is easy to see that as he has internalized the art of crafting his wheels, Tom has developed a peaceful confidence that must have been obvious to his mentor from their first meeting.

“Magnus loves the new jigs I’ve made; he’s so happy with what I’m doing. He told me, ‘You’ll have no trouble, because you think about things, you figure them out.’ That gives him some peace—that he doesn’t have to worry if he didn’t tell me something—I’ll be okay. That gives him the most comfort. . . . It took him years to find me,



Tom in his own workshop, carving a drive wheel.

and I'm incredibly grateful that he did."

What is so wonderful is that they seemed fated to have found each other and were there a curtain to lower on our story, were it truly a fairy tale, the final scene would have to be Tom delivering a freshly made wheel to a delighted spinner with the wizard Magnus looking on at peace, knowing that his legacy will continue. Magnus has found his heir, and Tom has found a calling worthy of his obvious deep love and respect for the spinning craft and community. And in the spirit of such enchantment, we all live happily ever after. ☘

**Julia Farwell-Clay** gets to spin on her dream wheel and writes about wool and other things on her blog, [www.mothheaven.com](http://www.mothheaven.com).

#### RESOURCES


Tom and Tracy Livernois, <http://mctavishfarmshetlands.net/>.



The Livernoises also tend a flock of single and double-coated Shetlands.

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Two images of alpaca fiber. The left image shows Suri fiber, which is highly textured and curly. The right image shows Huacaya fiber, which is smoother and more uniform in texture.

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# Spin-Off's Guide to Festivals, Workshops, and More!

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## California

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September 14-16

Mendocino County Fair Grounds

Boonville, CA

(707) 459-8558

tallcharlie@hotmail.com; www.fiberfestival.com

A real old-time county fair and wool show.

Demos, vendors, spinning contest, much more.

Oakland Fiber and Textile Festival

July 8

Splash Pad Park by Grand Lake Theater  
Oakland, CA

(510) 595-9595

piedmont.yarn@att.net

www.oaklandfiberfest.com

Spinning, knitting, weaving, felting, crochet, quilting, hands-on, artists, supply vendors. Free admission.

Vista Fiber Arts Fiesta

October 13-14

Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum  
2040 N. Santa Fe; Vista, CA 92083

(760) 598-7240

fiberartsfiesta@gmail.com

www.VistaFiberArtsFiesta.com

Guilds, vendors, demonstrations: weavers, gourd artists, basket makers, spinners, felters, yarn merchants, spinning and weaving equipment, fiber, ethnic textiles.

## Colorado

Salida Fiber Festival

September 8-9

PO Box 442; Salida, CO 81201

(719) 539-5281

www.salidafiberfestival.org

Fiber vendors, animals, spin-in, and fun activities in this beautiful mountain art town.

## Illinois

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www.ilwoolfibermill.com

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## Maine

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September 6-9

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5052 M-66 North Charlevoix, Michigan

The poster features a large image of a stone castle with multiple towers and a central archway. Below the main text, there are four smaller inset photos: a close-up of a llama's face, a person spinning yarn, a group of people gathered around a table, and a group of people standing near a horse.



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The advertisement features a background image of a rocky coastline with a blue sky and a small globe icon. In the foreground, there are several skeins of yarn in various colors, including shades of green, yellow, and blue, along with a wooden spinning tool.

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lambandwool@gtlakes.com  
www.lambandwoolfestival.com

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liz@whirlwindranch.com; www.mopaca.org  
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Fascinator by Her Majesty Margo Duke

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# Spin-Off's Guide to Festivals, Workshops, and More!

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## Pennsylvania

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## Virginia

### Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival

September 29-30  
Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds;  
890 W. Main St.; Berryville, VA 22611  
www.Svfiberfest.com

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Robson photo ©Kristi Schueler@fiberfool



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Photos©Lynn Ruggles



**Ercil Howard-Wroth**, an avid spinner, who raised her own silk worms, leads several studio classes featuring working with silk and dyes.

Portrait ©Nathan Wroth, fiber photo©Ercil Wroth

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# Relating to comfort, fiber diameter, and crimp

a few woolly mysteries and guidelines

BY DEBORAH ROBSON



**W**hen my daughter was young and we would go to a yarn store, I would hand her skeins and ask, “Is this soft enough for you?” She would hold the fiber to her skin and pronounce, almost always, “No.” The exceptions? Baby alpaca and pure cashmere. Qiviut might have passed muster, if we’d had any to try.

So I knitted her two acrylic sweaters—from yarn she did not immediately condemn. Now grown, she knows that those sweaters demonstrate how much I love her.

A spinner and knitter herself, she’s using fibers she would have declined. She hasn’t developed a thicker skin. However, she has discovered a more nuanced understanding of how fibers and comfort intersect, and she can use former rejects in ways that make them comfortable for her.

For my part, I’ve been working on figuring out why and how things that formerly didn’t work for her might succeed.

An amazingly diverse array of fibers gathers under the name of wool. My research on the history, chemistry, and

Freshly shorn Saxon Merino wool (above) shows high-frequency crimp in both the locks and the individual fibers. The number of crimp waves per inch indicates a fine wool, but does not correlate to how fine the wool is.

Handwashed Lincoln Longwool (below) demonstrates low-frequency but very well-defined crimp in both the locks and the individual fibers.

PHOTOS BY DEBORAH ROBSON

physical characteristics of this nearly magical substance has only partially answered my questions. Over the millennia, humans have learned an enormous amount about wool, yet critical aspects of how it forms and functions remain mysterious.

I'd like to share some of what I have learned about comfort, especially as it relates to fiber diameter and crimp, from a blend of research and personal observation. As is true for many matters involving fiber qualities, individual spinners can exert more control throughout the process than industrial systems can and thus have more ability to produce successful textiles that violate the rules. I'll talk about that, too.

One basic thing that I won't do is fully define comfort. In most textile discussions today, comfort means softness. Other qualities involved in a full consideration include warmth, cuddly quality, resilience, smooth and sleek texture, drape, and elasticity. Because of the common view and limited space, I'll focus on softness and mention other aspects in passing.

### WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW: THE 30-MICRON THRESHOLD

We know that some people have sensitivities to fibers: as the lamb in Franklin Habit's book complains, "It itches." We also know there is a general correlation between sensitivity and fiber diameter. For the most part, thick fibers make more people itch than do slender fibers. (More on that perception later. As a rough guideline, it works. Applied indiscriminately, it's blindingly wrong.)

In industry, a 30-micron threshold is used to determine whether a batch of fibers can be used to make garments that will rub against bare skin. Even though sensitivity is individual, arbitrary and workable guidelines are essential when mass processing fiber for a crowd of undefined recipients. The 30-micron threshold is called the comfort factor or the coarse edge. Comfort factor doesn't refer to average fiber diameter. A bale with an average fiber diameter of 29 microns doesn't



Sheep grow wool in an astonishing range of types. Saxon Merino (above) has very fine, well-defined crimp. Rough Fell (below) . . . doesn't! Wool occurs in every possible variation in between these two extremes.

qualify. It refers to the percentage of fibers in the batch that are over 30 microns. A bale with a 23-micron average diameter that has 10 percent of its fibers larger than 30 microns would not pass; a bale with a 23-micron average diameter and only 3 percent of its mass larger than 30 microns would. As long as fewer than 5 percent of the fibers are over 30 microns, the prickle effect is usually not perceptible (except by those like my daughter and Franklin's lamb).

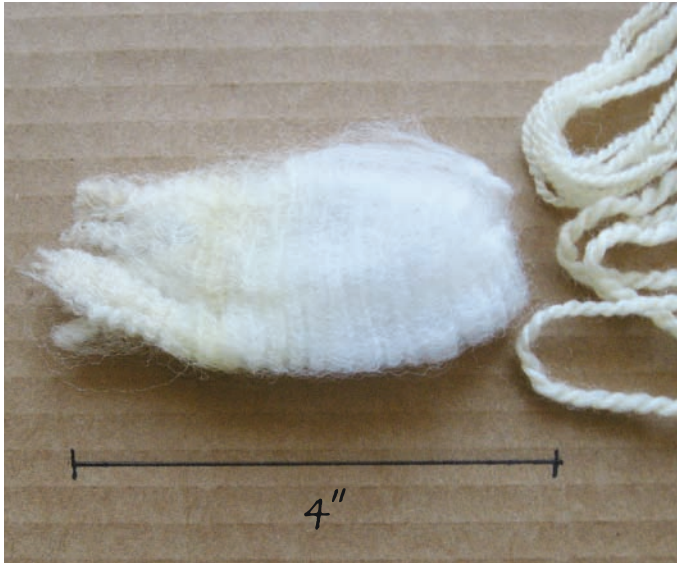
Some people get the itches from New Zealand opossum fibers, with tips as fine as 5 microns. That's about the size of a red blood cell and a long way from 30. There's more going on than meets

the eye or an arbitrary rule. But before we consider what that might be, we need to think about crimp.

### WHAT WE THINK WE KNOW: CRIMP AND FIBER DIAMETER

Crimp is important to comfort, although not in the ways we often think it is. Commonly we think that more crimp means finer fiber diameter, which in turn means softer fabrics. It's not that simple.

There are two types of crimp: staple crimp (the overall waviness in some locks) and fiber crimp (the waviness in individual fibers). Neither type is completely understood. Because the staples get disassembled as fleece is



This Corriedale has well-defined crimp of both types: staple crimp (in the lock) and fiber crimp (in each individual fiber). Researchers are still figuring out how both types of crimp form.

This Shropshire lock has plenty of fiber crimp, but not much in the way of staple crimp.

processed, fiber crimp is the sort that matters in yarn, and therefore fabric, construction. So that's what I'm talking about here.

There is a correlation between crimp frequency and fiber diameter, but it is not direct. You can't count the number of crimp waves in a fiber and tell its diameter. People have good reason to believe that you can do this. The idea has been around for a long time. Before the development of techniques for quickly and accurately measuring fiber diameter, scientists explored, and promoted, the alluring idea that there was a direct relationship between crimp and diameter. A few examples illustrate the concepts they were working on. These turned out to be stepping-stones along a path to understanding, not the last word on the topic.

In 1929, James Duerden, a South African professor who studied ostriches and wool (and, um, eugenics), developed a scale that showed a direct relationship between crimp frequencies and wool grades. This was turned into a printed card on which inch-long segments were marked with different frequencies of "teeth" that corresponded, in theory, to the waves

of crimp; each segment was labeled with a number of crimps per inch and a wool grade. The idea was that you could hold up a sample of wool to the scale and see where its crimp frequency matched the printed peaks. A copy of this scale is in Michael Ryder and Stuart Stephenson's *Wool Growth*—along with a critique of its application. I'm tempted to include the ruler as an illustration (it looks cool!), except that would give the impression that it works. Here are three of its problems: crimp is three-dimensional, not two-dimensional; as you align a fiber to the scale, the crimp flexes and the frequency changes; and as was later discovered, lots of wools don't match these profiles.

Around the same time, two researchers named Barker and Norris developed a theoretical model for how there might be a locked-in relationship between fiber diameter and crimp frequency. While their theory worked on the blackboard, it didn't in real life. It hinged on the idea of fibers that are perfectly cylindrical in cross-section. Wool fibers are elliptical.

In the 1940s, William Lang, who specialized in Australian wool, found that Duerden's relationships could be

expressed by a mathematical formula. However, Lang also later found that real wool didn't match the formula—most of the time! Scales similar to Duerden's were developed in Australia by the Gordon Institute of Technology, and for the United States standard grades of raw wool by textile chemist Werner von Bergen. Yet von Bergen himself remarked in his later comprehensive *The Wool Handbook* that "it should be stressed, however, that the crimp/diameter relationship is not a unique correlation; departures from the average are frequently observed."

Breeding for increased fleece weight has resulted in less crimp, especially in Merinos. In 1958, a study showed that control fleeces had mean fiber diameters of 22.4 microns and crimp frequencies of 10.5 crimps per inch. Later fleeces, averaging a pound heavier per animal, had mean fiber diameters of 21.6 microns and crimp frequencies of 8.9 crimps per inch: finer fiber with less crimp. For same-diameter fibers, crimp also varies depending on where the wool grows on the sheep (for Merinos, less crimp grows on wrinkled skin than on unwrinkled), staple length (less on longer staples), environmental factors



Early South African researcher James Duerden would have told you that counting the number of crimp waves in an inch of this Saxon Merino would tell you its fiber diameter. More recently developed measurement tools have proven him wrong.

Might this Wensleydale, one of the English luster longwools, be more flexible than its close relative the Lincoln Longwool?

(diameter is affected more than crimp), animal's age, and more.

As a result, classing wool by visual assessment of crimp is tempting, often done, and often inaccurate. If you want ultimate softness, crimp can't be your guide.

### WHAT WE DO KNOW: THE POWER OF TOUCH

The best resources for evaluating fibers are our personal tactile sensors—in other words, our sense of touch. Wool classers who trust touch more than sight turn out to do a more accurate job.

A term that comes up often in the description of fiber, yarn, or fabric is hand or handle, accompanied by adjectives such as soft, springy, dense, cushy, crisp, or draping. All of these seem to relate to the compressibility, or resistance to compression, or bounce-back (or lack thereof) that the fiber has. As I worked my way through the fibers in *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook*, both researching and experiencing them, I began to wonder about another quality, closely related to but not encompassed by my previous understanding of hand: flexibility.

While digging further into ideas about “itch,” I discovered a bit of intriguing research from the late 1980s. A team in the Monash University (Australia) physiology department determined that it is, indeed, the ends of fibers that cause the prickle effect. Projecting from the surface of a fabric by even a millimeter or two, the ends initially carry the full weight of the textile against the skin. These ends activate some very small nerves: a specific set of pain receptors. The reaction occurs only when the fiber ends require more than a defined, small amount of force to bend them (75 milligrams, which is just over 735 micronewtons): that is, fiber ends that have a certain amount of stiffness. Although the scientists began developing objective assessment techniques, they noted that evaluation was commonly “done at the level of an experienced person feeling the fabric and judging whether it is pleasant to touch or not.”

What if 5-micron opossum-fiber tips prickle some people because they're relatively rigid? What if 36-micron Wensleydale can more easily be spun into a non-itchy yarn than 36-micron

Lincoln because the Wensleydale is more flexible (albeit also less shiny and durable)? My reading in the technical books and journal articles tells me that the interior of a wool fiber contains several types of cells, which are arranged differently depending on breed. Differences in flexibility could come from unique construction of fibers at this microscopic level.

### WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?

Although crimp is not a good indicator of fiber diameter, it has a lot to do with how a fabric feels and behaves because it increases bulk, resistance to compression (squishiness), warmth, resilience, and elasticity. Researchers are still learning about crimp, both how it forms and how it functions in individual fibers, and while the new tools that have been invented to assess fiber qualities are leading us more deeply into the mysteries, they have not yet helped us resolve them all. Fiber flexibility may be a matter of great concern in comfort, especially softness, and it's an area that has only begun to be identified and studied.

For spinners, it can be helpful to know that the ends of fibers are

the parts most likely to irritate skin. There is more potential for irritation when there are more fiber ends in a given length of yarn, when those ends are stiff, and when the ends stick out. Worsted-spun yarns have fewer protruding ends than woolen-spun yarns of the same weight. Thin yarns have fewer protruding ends than thick yarns. Adequate twist levels will tuck the ends close to the axis of the yarn, preventing them from moving around and sticking out. Fibers in woven fabric protrude less than yarns in knitted or crocheted fabric, because they travel in straighter lines, as opposed to sharply curving ones that push the ends toward the surface; in knitted or crocheted fabrics, tighter gauges (that still produce supple fabric) can similarly stabilize yarns and produce a smoother-feeling finished textile.

The more I learn about wool, the more I discover how much there is to learn about it. I love that we can enjoy this fiber so much without having all the answers. And I think my daughter might yet be able to enjoy the deliciously lustrous and durable longwools, if the fibers she uses are carefully chosen, spun, and made into fabric. ☘

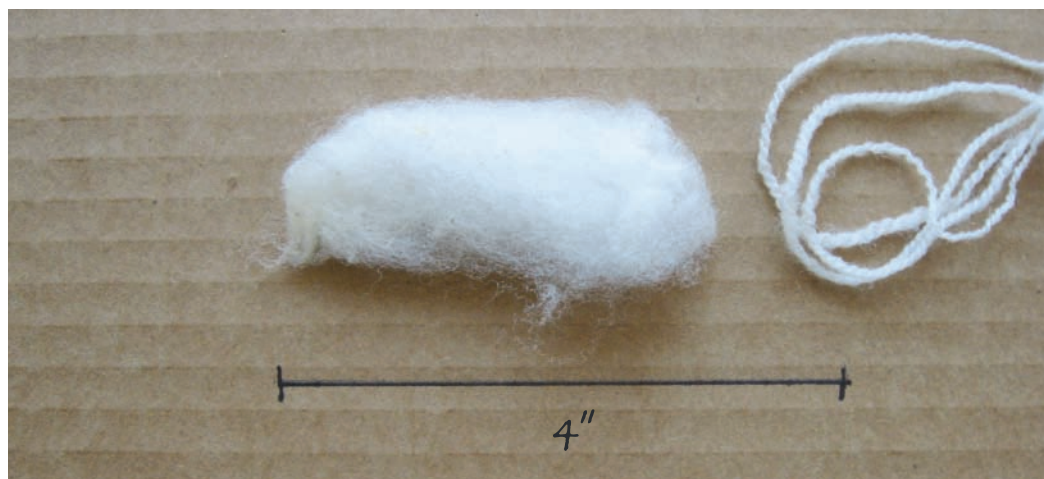
**Deborah Robson**, former editor of *Spin-Off* magazine and coauthor with Carol Ekarius of *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook: More Than 200 Fibers from Animal to Spun Yarn* (Storey, 2011), continues her explorations and study and writing about spinning and wool. She also teaches occasionally. More information can be found on her website, [www.drobson.info](http://www.drobson.info), and in her blog, <http://independentstitch.typepad.com>.

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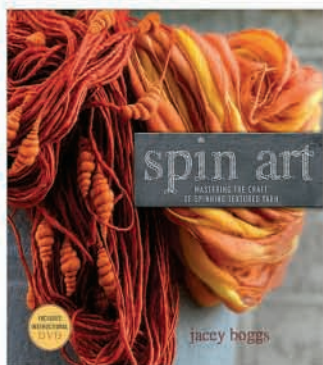
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**Spinner's Day at the Winery**  
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**Black Sheep Gathering**  
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# Navajo Ply on the Fly

BY ROSEMARY S. THOMAS

PHOTOS BY  
EMMA THOMAS



*Editor's note: We recommend familiarizing yourself with Navajo plying before you begin this process. A good place to start is Dodie Rush's article "Plying Chained Singles," from the Spring 2006 issue of *Spin-Off*, which is also included in the free eBook *An Introduction to Spinning Wheels: How to Use and How to Choose a Spinning Wheel* (available at [spinningdaily.com/spinning-wheels](http://spinningdaily.com/spinning-wheels)).*

**N**avajo plying on the fly is an ingenious technique that I learned from Tammy Rizzo for spinning a singles, then chain-plying it immediately into a three-ply yarn. From the moment that I tried her technique for Navajo plying on the fly, I was in love. No more spinning numerous spindles full to make a three-ply yarn. No more wrangling stale twist, trying to figure out the proper amount of plying twist to insert. No more plying, only to have to break the skein because I could no longer fit yarn onto my spindle. I was free of all the frustrations of plying.

Begin by spinning one arm's length of a singles (fig. 1). Make the first chain loop by catching the yarn over the middle finger on your fiber hand, then on the index finger on your spindle hand; place that second loop over the hook (figs. 2–3). Keep the end of the loop hooked over one of your fingers on your fiber hand. Reserve 6 to 8 inches of the singles for when you return to spinning the singles. Hold the loop between the thumb and forefinger of your fiber-controlling hand, and then insert plying twist (S-twist if your singles was spun Z).

## How it began

BY TAMMY RIZZO

Several years ago, some years after I had picked up spindling, I went with my husband to a fishing fly-tying class at a local outdoors gear store. The store was about an hour's drive away, so we

went together, had dinner there, and he attended the class while I looked around. The idea was that we would make a night of it. The store had a very interesting selection of fly-tying supplies that I was eager to examine, with an eye to including them in novelty yarns. There were such things as prestripped peacock feather strands, fine strands of Angelina-type glittery floss in several colors, a multitude of colors of carded Merino in tiny amounts, and other intriguing notions used for tying fishing flies.

The next time he went to the class, I took one of my high-whorl spindles and some fiber and started spinning. I didn't really have any particular project in mind; I was just futzing around, practicing with my spindle. I had recently learned how to Navajo-ply by unwinding the cop into a ball and plying from the ball, and I considered practicing that this time, but I realized that I didn't have any kind of bowl or cup or anything to keep the ball of singles from rolling all over the store.

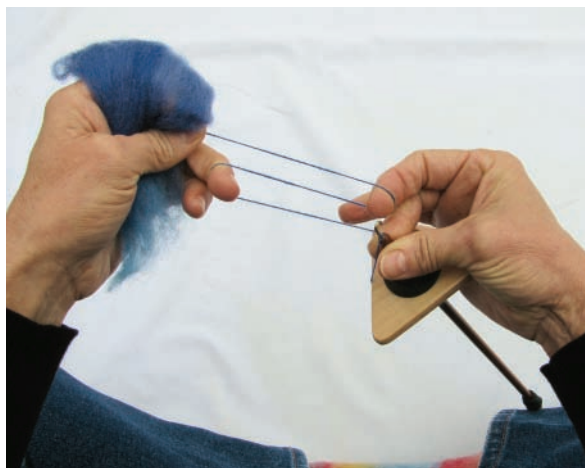
If only there were a way to make three-ply yarn without a bowl. That's when it struck me that it *could* be done—all I would need to do is figure out how to keep the looped part of the plying chain open and secure so that it wouldn't flap around and destroy the balance of the spindle, or worse yet, ply itself into a tangled tentacle that would flop around. If I could figure out a way to prevent that, I would be able to spin a length of singles and ply that length right away, thus giving me a finished, balanced three-ply yarn without having to go through the intermediate step of winding the cop into a ball so I could start plying.

I gave it a try, hooking onto the fiber with my empty high-whorl spindle and spinning up about an arm's length of yarn. I prefer to use the top hook to start my yarn, rather than using a tied-on leader. I looped part of the singles under the hook to start the plying chain and made another loop. As I only had an arm's length to begin with, the plying loop was fairly small, but that was okay. I gave the spindle a little plying spin and then stopped it, letting it hang free. It corrected itself, twirling only a little in the air. I had a balanced length of three-ply yarn, although I was holding one loop open over my thumb right next to my singles and handful of unspun fiber. I wound on the finished yarn and then had to figure out what to do with the open plying loop. If I let it go, it would be a disaster. But if I were to set the loop over the top of the spindle shaft while running the singles through the hook, I could keep that loop open while I spun up some more singles.

Well, it worked—sort of. The first few times I tried that, the loop laid over the spindle shaft was too loose, and it flopped around and got all tangled. I had to disentangle the loop a few times, and then I realized that I needed to snug the loop up against the shaft more. I could do that by either shortening the loop in the first place, making for uneven plying loops in the yarn, or by simply winding the yarn more onto the spindle, leaving only the top of the chain loop unplied, not the whole chain loop. After making those adjustments, the process just flew! I could spin the singles, loop it up and ply it, wind on the finished, balanced yarn (keeping the loop open on the finger in my fiber hand) until I was up to the end of the loop and just slip the loop over the hook and the singles into the hook and be off again. It was simple and much faster than winding into a ball first, and it soon got to be very easy. With only a little practice, I was able to hold the spindle in one hand or park it between my knees, hook my finger under the plying loop parked around the hook and flip it off the hook, reach through the small loop end for the singles and pull that through the loop and under the hook, and start plying again in mere seconds.



Figure 1. Start by using the hook to spin a 36-inch length of yarn.



Figures 2–3. Start forming the first chain loop. Note: My hands are really close together so that you can see all the parts, but normally the distance between them would be about 10 inches.

Figures 4–5. Anchor the loop to the spindle shaft by winding a round or two of singles on top of it. This makes it easier to open later.



Wind the plied yarn onto the spindle shaft, always winding in the spinning direction, and wind a round or two of singles on top of the last loop of the plying chain; this helps to keep the loop open (figs. 4–5). Resume spinning. When you're beginning, I'd recommend that you spin one arm's length, then chain it and insert the plying twist. Once you feel comfortable, you can spin longer lengths at a time (though I'd recommend no more

than nine to keep it manageable). Wind the length onto the cop, always winding in the *spinning* direction (normally clockwise, or Z-twist).

After you've spun your second arm's length, wind the singles off of the spindle and onto your fiber hand (keep the yarn organized in a butterfly configuration so that it doesn't get tangled when you are plying). As you wind the singles onto your hand, watch to see when the loop for plying



Figure 6. Thread about 2 inches of plied yarn under the hook.



Figure 7. Slowly turn the spindle in the spinning direction to open the loop.

is released from its wrappings. With your fiber-controlling hand, catch the loop between your thumb and forefinger and wind off a small amount of plied yarn so that you can wrap it under the hook (I like to wrap it twice), leaving a little plied yarn (about 1½ inches) above the hook. Turn the spindle gently in the spinning direction to open up this loop and then release the spindle, all the while holding onto the loop.

With your spindle hand, and with the spindle simply dangling in the air, fish the singles through the loop, and pull the chain through—whatever length you like (figs. 6–7).

Hold the spindle between your knees to control it while you prepare the yarn for plying. Pull one long chain loop or numerous smaller chain loops—you decide (figs. 8–11).

Once you have created the chain loops, make sure that you leave 6 to 8 inches of the singles in reserve and wound onto your hand. Insert the plying twist.

Wind the plied yarn onto the spindle, turning the spindle in the spinning (clockwise) direction, and winding on *tightly* and neatly. Because this method involves spinning the spindle first in one direction, and then in the other, a loosely wound cop will become even looser and more difficult to manage. When you're winding the cop, try to leave a bare area at the top of the shaft right under the whorl and lay the loop here, covering it with two rounds of singles. As you spin subsequent singles, wind the first lengths onto the shaft below the cop and then wind the rest onto the fat part of the cop (figs. 12–13). When it comes time to wind off onto your



hand in preparation for the plying step, the spindle turns slowly as the singles peels off of the fat cop, but suddenly turns quickly as the singles unwinds off the narrow shaft. Use this as your signal to watch for the loop for plying.

It is important to catch the loop quickly because you need to segregate the twist directions—on one side of the loop, the yarn is plied, and on the other, it is a singles, each with the twist going in opposite directions. If you release the loop, each side will lose twist.

Continue spinning a singles Z-twist, wind it off onto your hand to create the plying loops, and then spin the spindle counterclockwise (S-twist) to ply

Figures 10–11. You can make big loops or small loops in your chain for different effects: A) One loop and B) three loops pulled from the same length of singles. If you're working with a hand-dyed skein, you can coordinate the length of your loops to the colors in the yarn.



Figures 8–9. Fish the new loop through the old one.



Figures 12–13. I wrap the singles under the cop for two or three turns before winding around the fat part of the cop.

the yarn until your cop is full.

Something to keep in mind is that your three-ply skein will be one-third shorter in length than the singles would have been—in other words, you'll have short skeins. To cure the short-skein problem, simply splice two skeins together into one long skein. Spin a short length of singles to connect the loop at the end of one skein to the loop at the end of the second skein (figs. 14–15). With splicing, there is no limit to the length of this skein—you can just keep adding to it forever. You can splice a variety of yarns—imagine the possibilities. You could make one skein of yarn out of an entire fleece. It's okay if you swoon at the thought; we all understand. ☘

**Rosemary S. Thomas** knits, spins, weaves, and generally enjoys life in Pueblo, Colorado. You can follow her meanderings at <http://rosemaryknits.blogspot.com>.

#### RESOURCES

- Blue fiber—Bluefaced Leicester from The Wool Peddler, [www.etsy.com/shop/stefknits](http://www.etsy.com/shop/stefknits).
- Triangular spindle—courtesy of Susan Z. Douglas (see the Summer 2011 issue of *Spin-Off*).
- White fiber—from Turbo (a Corriedale ram), courtesy of Jean Kenney of Rye, Colorado.



Figure 14. When you begin your spinning with a hook and no leader, the end will have two small loops (above). The yarn end shown below results from starting with a leader as well as what you'll find at the end of a spindle full of yarn.

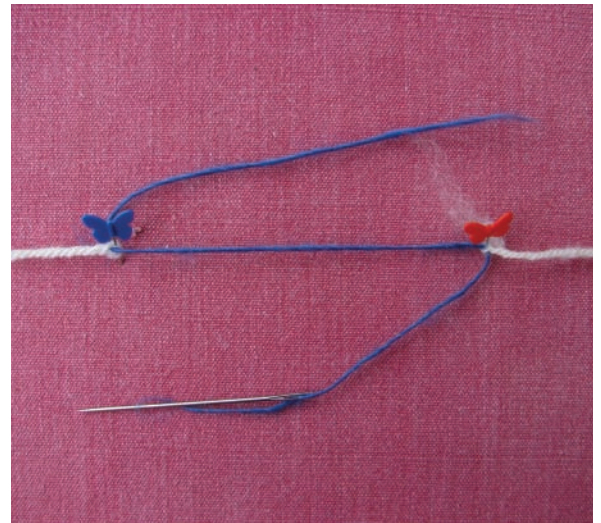


Figure 15. Pin your yarns onto a sofa cushion or bit of foam for splicing (note that I've used a contrasting color so it is easier to see) and thread a short length of a matching singles on a tapestry needle. Sew it through the loops at the end of each short skein as shown. Bury all the ends by sewing them into the yarn. Finish by adding plying twist to the spliced section.



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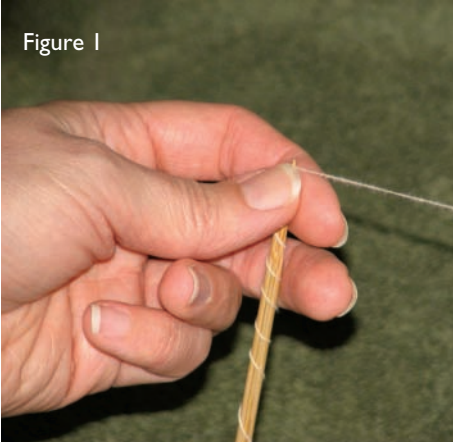
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# One-Minute Tahkli Tip

BY ANDREA MIELKE SCHROER

## Left

Figure 1



**I prefer to** use my dominant hand for operating my spindle. This means I hold my fiber supply in my left hand and the tahkli in my right hand. The flick I give the spindle tip naturally and comfortably spins the spindle in a clockwise direction (Z-twist).

I realized while teaching that, with support spindles, not everyone uses the dominant hand to manipulate the spindle. I learned to instruct these spinners that if they are going to spin the spindle with their left hand, it is more comfortable to spin it counterclockwise (S-twist). A flick to start the spindle in a counterclockwise spin will feel more comfortable and natural for the left hand. This will result in a yarn that is spun S and plied Z—the opposite of most yarns, but since the differences are subtle (and as long as you are consistent with the twist direction during spinning and plying), it shouldn't cause any problems.

Figure 2

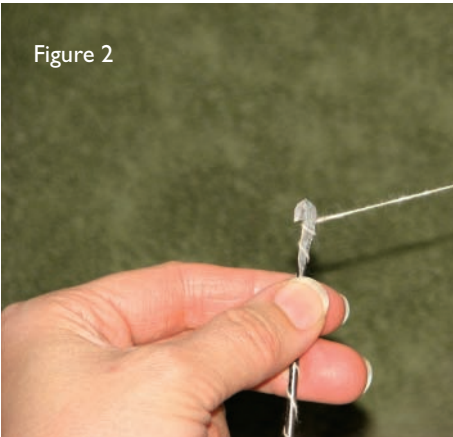


Figure 3

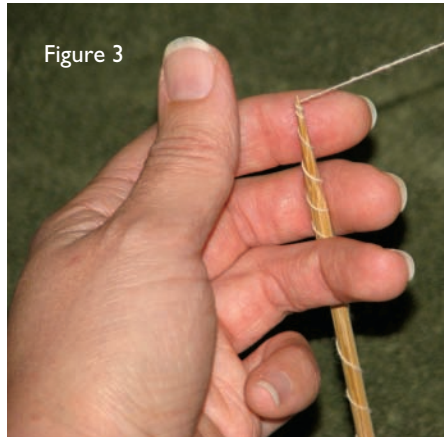


Figure 4



Figure 5

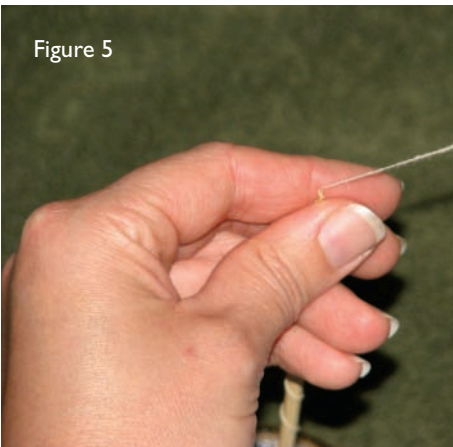


Figure 6

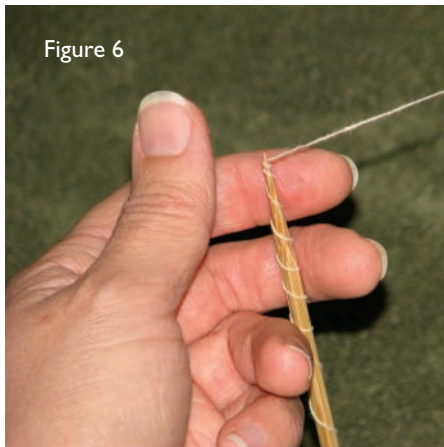
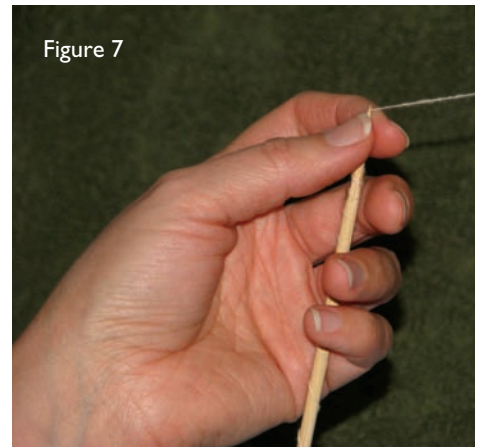


Figure 7



## Right

### SITTING

Hold the spindle on your lap, or beside your thigh, or in any manner that allows the tip of your spindle to be lower than the fiber supply, which is usually kept below shoulder level. For most spinners, this is the most comfortable position for the body, particularly your neck and the shoulder of your fiber-supply arm. Once you lean your spindle 60 to 70 degrees toward the fiber supply, the yarn comes off the tip of the spindle at a 35- to 40-degree angle, which is optimal for twist transfer. If the yarn comes off the tip at an angle that is less than 25 degrees or more than 50 degrees, it starts to behave in less-than-desirable ways.

### TWIRLING THE SPINDLE

For either hand, the motions are exactly the same—curl your ring and pinkie fingers against your palm as you pick up the tahkli and hold the shaft between

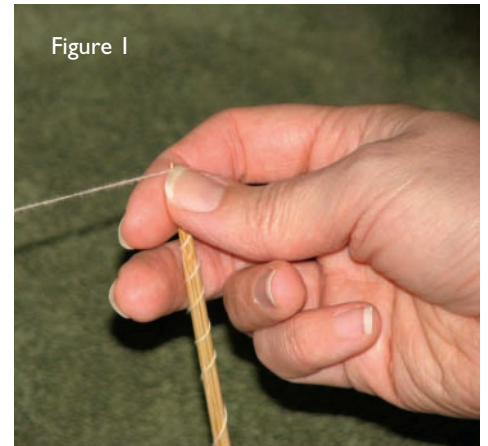


Figure 1

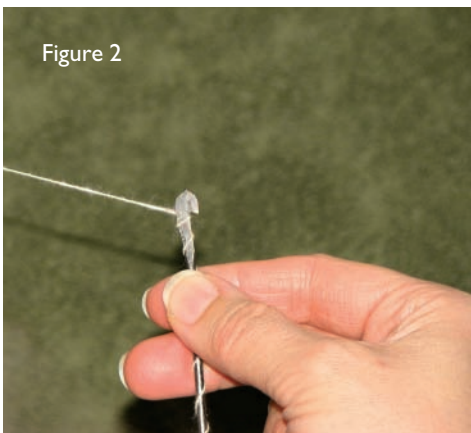


Figure 2

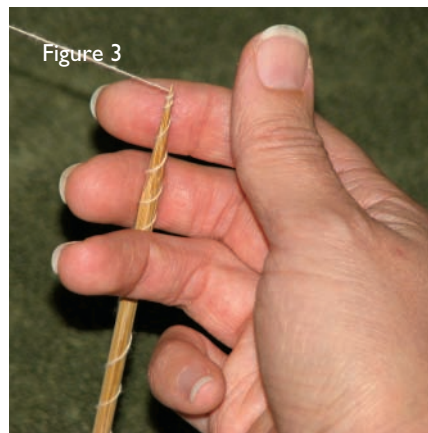


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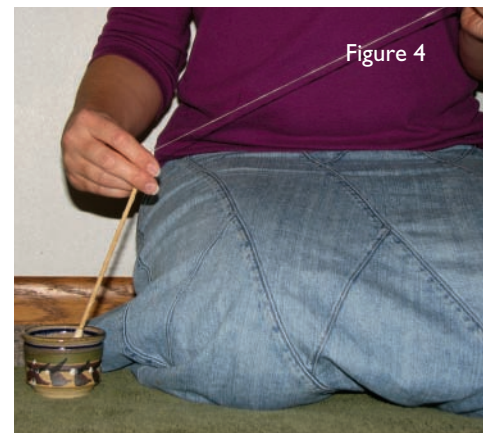


Figure 4

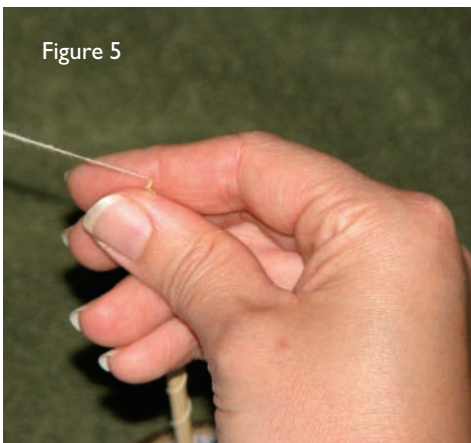


Figure 5

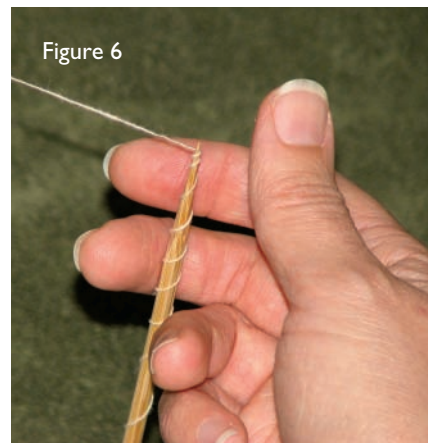


Figure 6

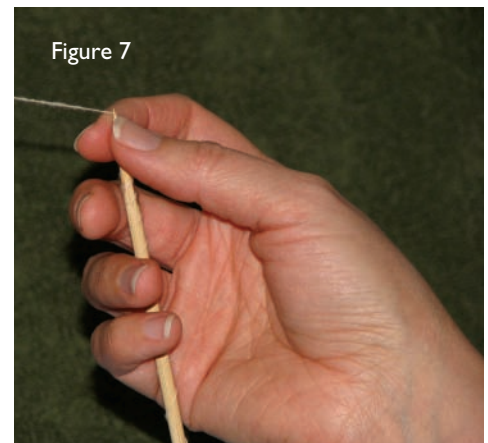


Figure 7

## Left

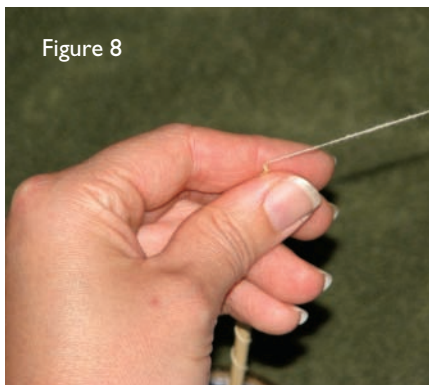


Figure 8

The beginning of the flick.

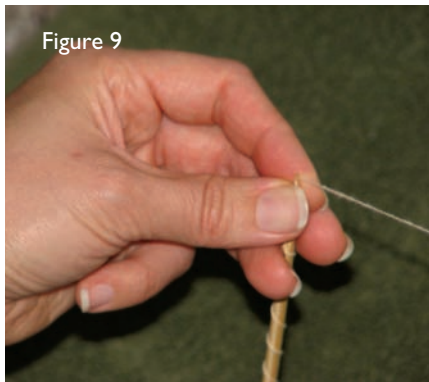


Figure 9

The shaft has reached the tip of the index finger.



Figure 10

The thumb and index fingers have completed the flick and cleared the spindle tip.

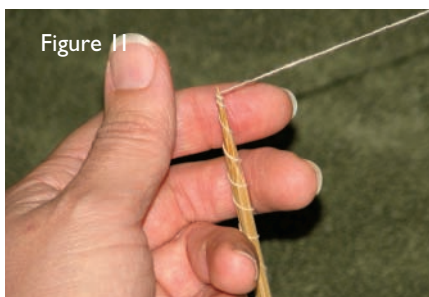


Figure 11

The spindle is allowed to spin while the fingers reposition for the next flick.

## Right

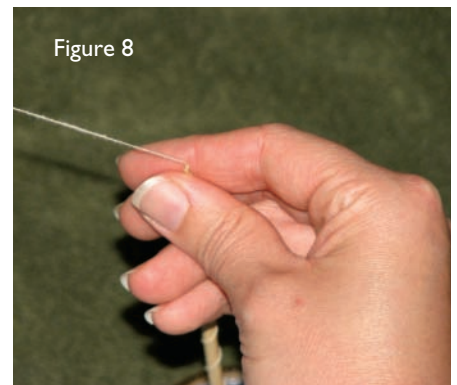


Figure 8

The beginning of the flick.

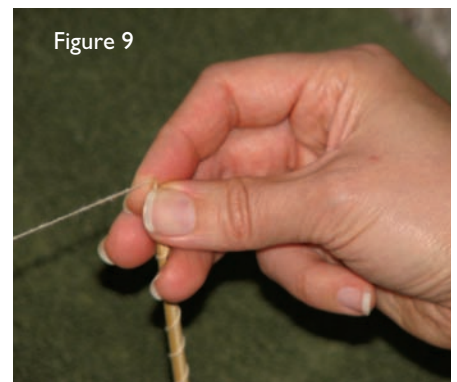


Figure 9

The shaft has reached the tip of the index finger.

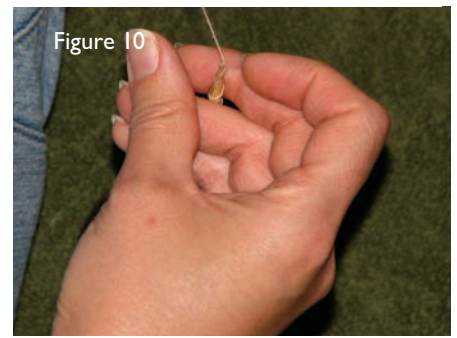


Figure 10

The thumb and index fingers have completed the flick and cleared the spindle tip.

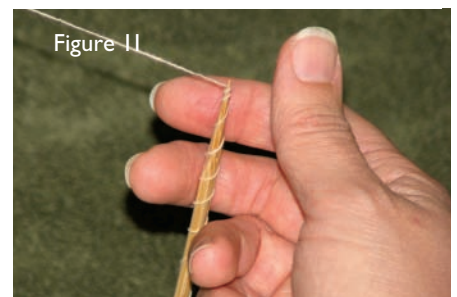


Figure 11

The spindle is allowed to spin while the fingers reposition for the next flick.

your thumb and first two fingers (fig. 1). Hold it at the tip or below the hook if it has one (fig. 2). Let the back of your ring finger rest against the spindle shaft (fig. 3). This creates a brake that you can use to stop the spindle and help create tension to draft against for any stubborn spots. Have the spindle stand at a 60- to 70-degree angle, leaning slightly toward your fiber supply (fig. 4). This ensures that the yarn will draft off the tip of the spindle at an angle that allows for the best transfer of twist to the yarn. Squeeze your index finger and thumb together as you roll the shaft forward toward the tip of your index finger (fig. 5). With practice, this becomes a flick of your finger and thumb: your thumb moving forward as your index finger moves backward. It doesn't have to be a superquick motion, per se; a smooth, even flick is more useful than a lightning-quick one that begins or ends with a jerk. The direction of spin (clockwise for the right hand, counterclockwise for the left) encourages the spindle shaft to rest in the space between your middle and ring fingers while it spins (fig. 6).

An alternate method of holding the spindle while it is spinning is to use the crook formed by your ring and pinkie fingers (fig. 7). To slow down the spindle, simply squeeze the shaft with your pinkie finger. I can use the alternate method if I am spinning with the spindle in my lap or on my thigh, but if I am holding the spindle beside me, it creates too much tension on my wrist. ❧

**Andrea Mielke Schroer** hails from central Wisconsin, where she lives with her husband, two toddlers, and too many spindles to count. Co-owner of Mielke's Fiber Arts LLC, with her sister, Amy, she has over twelve years of experience teaching fiber arts across the nation.

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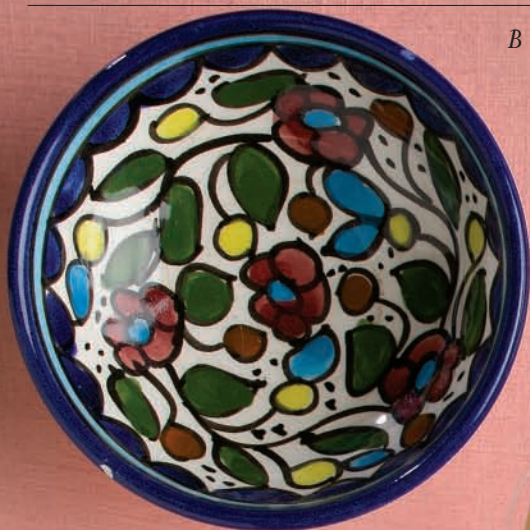
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# Supported Spinning on Russian-Type Spindles

BY ELISE COHEN



Russian-style supported spindles are distinctive in that they don't have a whorl or a hook—the yarn is spun off the tip of the spindle. Use a bowl to support your spindle—the smoother the bowl, the faster the spindle will spin.

## What you need to get started

- Russian spindle
- Bowl
- Very fine, short-stapled clean fiber
- About 18 inches of very fine wool yarn for a leader (optional but highly recommended)



**W**ith the resurgence of interest in spinning has come a new awareness of supported spindles, including Russian and Tibetan spindles. At first glance, these spindles don't look very different from standard spindles, but the techniques for spinning on them really are rather unique.

## THE SPINDLES

Russian-type spindles are traditionally turned from a single piece of wood. They may be simple teardrop shapes almost like a Ladakhi *phang* spindle, or they may feature intricate turned and cut designs on the wood. Some Tibetan spindles are also made this way; others have a separate attached bead, stone, or wood whorl outcropping at the bottom on which to build the cop.

The spindles are made for spinning gossamer Orenburg yarns from cashmere, which are then plied with silk. Usually no heavier than about 16 grams, the spindles are small and lightweight, and they are hard to find in the West. If you want to make yarns similar to those used for Orenburg shawls, search for a spindle weighing 12 to 16 grams. If you just want to be able to spin in this manner and make very fine singles, a spindle that weighs 16 to 30 grams will work fine. Also look for a very narrow shaft top; the sharper the point, the faster you will be able to spin the spindle. The finish should be smooth and completely nontacky.

It's very important to try out the spindle before you buy it. You don't have to have any experience in spinning with these techniques; just take the spindle you're considering, put it on a hard surface or in a spindle bowl, and give it a spin. If it wobbles or just won't spin, find another spindle. If there's no way for you to try it out first, take your chances with a reputed spindle maker.

## THE FIBERS

Small support spindles are designed for very short, very fine exotic fibers and wools. You can use cashmere, but you can also use camel or yak down, angora, or anything else similar. Even consider fine, short-stapled (1½-inch) sheep fleece.

Don't use your Russian spindle to make even medium-weight singles, though—it will spin a high-twist, fine yarn best. If you want your finished yarn to be heavier than cobweb-weight or laceweight, you'll have to ply multiple singles. If you want to spin 2 ounces of fine fiber into 1,500 yards of yarn, you've found your tool.

## THE BOWL

The bowl can be made of wood, ceramic, glass, or stoneware, as long as it is smooth. The very experienced Orenburg spinners have a strong

preference for ceramic over wood, as they say it allows the spindles to spin the fastest, but I find it doesn't make a difference in my spinning. Some people like angled, curved bowls, and some people prefer flatter ones. If you spin wearing a skirt and holding the bowl next to you as you sit, or if you sit on a soft cushioned chair, you may want a deeper, more curved bowl; if you hold the bowl between your legs or on a hard surface, a flatter bowl may be more your style. You can find bowls sold specifically for Russian spindles, but you can also find very suitable bowls in the housewares department of local stores, meant for dipping food into oils or sauces.

## SPINNING

First, a special note about hands—I'm right-handed. This spindle works best with a long-draw technique, which is very different from the short forward draw many spinners use with suspended spindles. While I use my right hand to control a suspended spindle and my left hand to control my fiber, when I use a Russian spindle, I am more comfortable with an orientation more similar to what I use when spinning long draw on my spinning wheels. I use my left hand to control my Russian spindle and draft out with my more coordinated, more experienced right hand. **Editor's note:** *In the photos we took in the studio, Amy used her left hand to control the fiber and the right hand to spin the spindle—the opposite of Elise, even though both are right-handed. Use whichever configuration feels right for you—experiment with different hand positions until you're comfortable.*

What I'm discussing in this article isn't the traditional technique handed down over several hundred years among Cossack women. This is a hybrid technique that I find works well for me and other spinners I've taught to spin on these spindles with the materials we typically use.

Knot your leader onto the shaft of the spindle above any thin neck or fancy turning. Wind it up the shaft turning the spindle clockwise (for Z-twist), spiraling it closer as it rises. Leave a few inches loose at the top to attach your spinning fiber. This loose leader can be a bit shorter than you would use for a suspended spindle, as you'll be spinning off the tip of the spindle.

Hold a bit of fiber in your drafting hand and lay



**Top left:** Attach your fiber to a leader near the base of the spindle to get started. **Top center:** Spin the spindle by the tip. Hold your fiber perpendicular to the tip and draft backward with a long-draw technique. **Top right:** Use the fingers on your spindle hand to hold the spinning spindle in position, building up twist. **Bottom left:** Walk your fingers up the yarn to control the twist as you draft using a long-draw technique.



**Bottom right:** As you spin more, store the yarn on the shaft of the spindle in a cop near the base of the spindle.

the last inch or so of the leader over it. Adjust your drafting hand to hold the leader with the fiber and use your spinning hand to spin the spindle from the tip, building up twist in the leader. Hold your drafting-and-fiber-control hand with the leader slightly above the spindle tip. Allow the built-up twist to enter the leader and through it, the fiber supply. If you hold the fiber supply to the side of the tip of the spindle instead of at the tip, then instead of adding twist to your fiber supply, the spinning spindle is just going to make the yarn wind onto the shaft. This may confuse you once or twice, but you'll quickly get the hang of spinning off the tip.

I've heard it is possible to draft at the same time the spindle spins, but no one I've met in person can do that. So spin the yarn in two steps: spin the spindle to build up twist, then draft the fiber using a long-draw technique, allowing the twist to move into the fiber. When you've spun a length, wind the finished yarn onto the shaft of the spindle to store it in an oblong egg shape.

When you have twist collected in the leader and your fiber supply, gently pull the fiber back

and allow the twist to run up the drafted fiber. Bit by bit, you'll become aware of a magic "sweet spot" degree of twist that has enough twist to give your drafted fiber integrity but not so much that it grabs too much fiber. With just a little experience, you'll start to feel the balance between amount of twist and drafting needed for the perfect yarn. For now, just try to use your visual judgment. When it feels as if you can't draft any farther or your drafted section is likely to drift apart because there isn't enough twist to hold it together, stop drafting and spin the spindle again. Continue alternating adding twist and drafting out the fiber, watching the twist work its way up the fiber to make yarn until you have spun a length of yarn that you can handle before winding on.

Wind the yarn onto the spindle shaft in a spiraling pattern. Create an oblong egg shape of yarn on the shaft by overlapping yarn as it spirals around the shaft. Leave enough length to spiral up again to the tip and spin more.

Soon you are going to find that your cop (the oblong egg shape of yarn wound onto the spindle)

is unwieldy. Either it makes the spindle so heavy it's hard to manipulate, or it comes so high up the shaft that your fingers touch it when you spin the spindle. This means it is time to wind off your yarn.

### WINDING OFF

If you have only one Russian-style spindle, you'll need to wind off your singles before you can spin the next amount of singles needed for plying. If your singles yarn is grabby or hairy (for example, alpaca and some wools), you'll need to keep it under tension to prevent tangles. Wind it onto a spare spindle, a weaving bobbin, the cardboard tube from a paper-towel or toilet-paper roll, a *nøstepinne*, or a felted ball.

With your spindle empty again, start the whole process over. Continue until your fiber supply (or patience) is exhausted.

### PLYING

You'll need to manage your singles yarns in some way. If you've wound off onto a spare spindle, weaving bobbin, or paper-towel roll, this is particularly easy. You can either keep it next to you or, better yet, fashion a lazy kate from a shoe box and long straight knitting needles to hold the tubes (with spindles, you don't need the knitting needles because the shaft of the spindle functions the same way). If you have multiple balls of singles, you can use an upside-down clean ceramic flowerpot with a drainage hole in the bottom to contain the balls while you ply (use a separate pot for each ball and thread the yarn up through the hole).

To ply, simply reverse your spinning direction. If you've been spinning clockwise for Z-twist singles, now you'll spin your spindle counterclockwise to ply with S-twist. The amount of plying twist is up to you and your fiber. Fiber with very little crimp (such as cashmere and silk typical in Orenburg lace) will need very little twist to create a yarn with incredible drape and halo. A fine, crimped wool will need considerably more twist to create a resilient, fine yarn. Remember that the initial drafting technique I used was long draw, which typically does require more plying twist than short-draw techniques for structural yarn integrity. When plying, I like to use a bigger Russian spindle so that I can make a much bigger cop than I do with the singles.

### FINISHING

These yarns can be fragile because they're very fine. I handle them gently until they're knitted up. I skein on a 60-inch niddy-noddy that's very comfortable for me to use and secure ties carefully in at least four spots before I remove the skein



Elise spun a fine Rambouillet singles yarn using her Russian spindle and then plied it with a 2/100 millspun silk thread. The plied yarn weighed 0.8 ounces and was 200 yards long (or about 4,000 yards per pound).

from the niddy-noddy. I gently soak the skein in a basin filled with room-temperature water with a couple of drops of wool-safe detergent to remove the oils from my hands that if left on could damage or discolor the yarn over time. After it has soaked, I carefully lift the yarn out of the basin and rinse it by placing the skein in a second basin of water of the same temperature for a minute or so. Then I lift the skein out, place it on a towel, wrap it up, and gently press out the excess water. To dry, I drape the skein over my drying rack. I don't recommend drying these superfine yarns under tension at all. I don't spin them in the washer, either, to remove excess water, even though I do that with almost all my other textiles at any point in processing. Because they're so fine, the yarns usually dry quickly, especially if you lay them out with plenty of air circulating around them. Once they are dry, I usually put the finest ones in an open plastic bag in my yarn cupboard. This allows air circulation but keeps them from being snagged if I'm riffling around among the yarns. Now all that's left to do is to pick a pattern and start knitting a treasure. ☘

**Elise Cohen** of Rockville, Maryland, blogs about family life and fiber arts at [www.leesyknits.blogspot.com](http://www.leesyknits.blogspot.com). She teaches spinning and knitting at The Yarn Spot in Wheaton, Maryland.

### RESOURCES

Franquemont, Abby. *Respect the Spindle: Spin Infinite Yarns with One Amazing Tool*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2009.  
Khmeleva, Galina. *The Gossamer Webs Design Collection: Three Orenburg Shawls to Knit*. Loveland, Colorado: Interweave, 2003.



Portland sheep (the two pale brown-faced sheep in front) with other breeds before winter lambing, Devon, United Kingdom.

PHOTO BY NIGEL CATTLIN/FLPA/  
MINDEN PICTURES

# Portland

BY CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES

**S**everal years ago, I was very kindly given a Portland fleece by Jaquie Teal. I knew it was special but, as I was preoccupied at the time, I stored the fleece and almost forgot about it. Margaret Russell's article about Portland sheep in *Wild Fibers* (see Resources) reminded me about the fleece. I was so glad it was still in good condition. Jaquie's note with the fleece indicated that she looked for a particularly soft one as she knows that I enjoy woolen spinning and garment knitting. I am ashamed that I didn't immediately recognize how rare and special this fleece was.

As with many breeds of sheep, the history of the Portland is not clear. We know that there have been tan-faced primitive sheep in southwest England for centuries, perhaps up to 3,000 years. The Romans brought in other types of sheep, and it is likely

that the native and imported sheep were crossbred. The Isle of Portland, located near Weymouth in Dorset County, is recorded to have had 900 sheep in 1299. By 1840, there were around 4,000 sheep on the island but less than a century later, the last of the sheep from Portland were being auctioned. Many primitive sheep have suffered the same fate. For centuries, they are prized because they are hardy, disease resistant, good mothers that usually produce one lamb, breed out of season, and produce good wool and meat. Eventually, those qualities are regarded as negative rather than positive, and the breed faces extinction. Luckily for the Portlands, a few small flocks remained beyond the island. Starting with fewer than 100 ewes left in the early 1970s, several breeders worked to increase the flocks. Even a prison farm contributed to the revival of the sheep on Portland. The breed is now considered rare but no longer threatened, with about

1,500 sheep surviving in 100 or so small flocks.

Portland sheep are small and retain many of their primitive features. The lambs are born with fox red wool that gradually fades out to a creamy tan or sometimes gray. Both rams and ewes have horns and are long tailed. Their faces and legs are tan to brown and free of wool. Rams average 110 to 145 pounds and ewes 75 to 100 pounds (each source I checked had a different average so these figures are approximate).

Portland wool is soft to medium grade (averaging 31 to 26 microns or 56s to 50s Bradford count) with staples 2 to 4½ inches long. The fleece might have red kemp in the britch area. Fleeces weigh 3 to 6½ pounds. The fleece that I was given had 4-inch staples with long, thin tips, although the wool is described as typically “blocky.” The crimp was very fine and lively; locks were rounded rather than flat. It is easy to see why the wool is particularly good for cozy garments and blankets.

## PREPARING THE WOOL

The easiest way to obtain Portland wool is in roving form so you can work with it directly. The roving I obtained from Spirit Trail Fiberworks was well prepared and easy to spin from. However, it was a wide roving. Rather than pre-drafting, which can make the fiber arrangement uneven, I prefer to strip the roving into long lengths. I take a piece about 2 yards long and, with my hands at the center of the width and the length, pull the roving apart lengthwise. I do the same with each resulting length until the strips are the desired width. Usually that means separating the roving into eight to twelve pieces.

If you have a Portland fleece, first wash it gently. I put ¾-pound sections into nylon net bags and washed a couple of bags at a time in hot water in a utility sink. I used about ¼ cup Orvus Paste and let the fiber soak for about 5 minutes. I rinsed the wool twice in the same temperature water, with about 2 tablespoons white vinegar in the first rinse to release the soap from the wool. To dry the wool, I removed it from the bags and spread it out on a rack topped with plastic screening.

Portland fleece is ideal for handcarding as its short and lively fibers hold the rolag shape very well. With a clean open fleece, you can card each rolag with just three to four strokes, transfer, three to four more strokes, transfer, and prepare to roll up. (For more on handcarding, see *Spin-Off*, Fall 2001, or the new DVD *How to Card Wool*.)

Spinning directly from the locks is another option. Depending on the condition of the fleece, you

may want to flick card the locks (be very careful not to nick your hands as the locks are a bit short for this technique) or simply open the locks by hand.

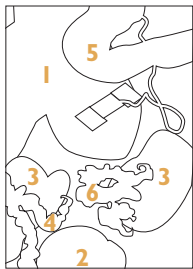
## SPINNING

Spinning Portland wool should be easy and quick. I tried forward and backward drafting from a variety of preparations and was pleased with the ease of spinning and the resulting yarn every time. I think the most important trick to remember is to let the fiber flow through your hands. Don't clutch the wool or try to make it absolutely smooth and flat. Even with worsted spinning, allow the wool its natural bounce and life. I suggest that you draft and immediately feed the new yarn onto the bobbin so that twist doesn't build up. If you spin worsted-style (short forward draw) with an open drafting triangle, you'll have a relatively smooth yarn with some nice loft (see “Spinning Basics,” *Spin-Off*, Summer 2010). For a very lofty yarn, spin rolags with traditional woolen drafting on a scotch-tension wheel.

Samples of  
1) raw and  
2) washed  
Portland fleece.



Sample 1: 1) Pair of mittens, 2) white yarn (1,083 ypp and 14 wpi), 3) wool lock, 4) white kid mohair, 5) green yarn (976 ypp and 13 wpi), and 6) dyed kid mohair.



### Sample 1

The Portland fleece I had on hand could be divided into at least two qualities of crimp style. I chose the bounciest and softest wool for mittens. Within that section, some had very little yellowing (near the tip ends) while most was more stained. Since I had already decided on a two-color pattern, I separated the wool by amount of staining so I could blend each with mohair. I used white kid mohair to brighten the creamy white for the main color and, for the pattern color, multicolored dyed kid to hide the yellowing. Each blend was fifty-fifty by weight. For the white yarn, I teased the wool and mohair, tossed them together a bit, and fed the mix onto my Pat Green Supercard drumcarder. The two batts were separated into three long strips each, for three batts

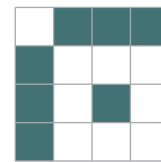
## Project Notes

**Needles:** U.S. size 4 and U.S. size 5.

on the second pass; I also mixed the fibers from the batts for a more even overall blend. The drumcarder adds loft to the fibers, and I find that second- and third-pass batts weigh less than the first set.

To make it easier to integrate the dyed mohair without totally muddying the colors, I drumcarded the wool first and then sandwiched the mohair for the second pass. I mixed the wool from the two batts and did one more pass for a heathery green-blue. The white yarn had 132 yards in 1.95 ounces (or about 1,083 yards per pound) and 14 wraps per inch; the green yarn had 128 yards in 2.10 ounces (976 yards per pound) and 13 wraps per inch.

I knitted 44 stitches in k3, p1 rib for the cuffs on U.S. size 4 needles and then changed to U.S. size 5 needles and 48 stitches for the hand. It actually took several attempts to get the right combination of needles and pattern. Using larger needles than originally planned made the mittens softer and the pattern more distinct. The pattern is a simple 4-stitch/4-row repeat: “Maggus” from *Føroysk bindingarmynstur (Faroe Knitting Patterns)* collected by Hans M. Debes (Tórshavn, Faroe Islands: Faroe Handcrafts, 1969).



Mitten chart

### Sample 2

Although the Portland is typically rather short for combing, I decided to try a bit anyway. I picked out some of the longer locks, which also had less crimp, and combed 1 ounce on my St. Blaise handheld combs with three passes before drawing off without a diz. Although the fiber had a few tiny neps, it spun up very smoothly and easily on the Schacht Matchless double drive at a ratio of 11:1 with a short forward draw but no smoothing. Because I wanted to crochet with this yarn, I spun the singles S and plied Z. The two-ply yarn (17 wraps per inch, 1,877 yards per pound, 10 twists per inch, and 25° plied angle) had a nice amount of elasticity and a plump feel. After some experimentation, I came up with this pattern for some easy wrist warmers.

The cluster lace pattern is a multiple of 4 sts.

*Cluster (3 joined dc worked into 1 st):* \*Yarn over hook (yoh), insert hook into st and bring yarn

through, yoh and through 1 loop on hook, yoh and through 2 loops; rep from \* 2 more times (all 3 sts worked in the same st from row below) and then yarn around hook and through all 4 loops on hook.

*Note:* In this pattern, the double crochet stitches are made with an extra step to add fullness (yarn goes around hook and through 1 loop, yoh and through 2 loops, and finally, yoh and through last 2 loops).

Begin with a chainless single crochet foundation (see Resources for link to a video how-to). Ch 2, insert hook into 2nd ch from hook going under 2 strands of chain st, \*bring loop through, yoh and through 1 loop, yoh and through 2 loops, insert hook into both strands of chain; rep from \* until you have 36 sc. Join with 1 sl st and work in the round.

**Rnds 1 and 2:** Ch 1, sc 35 (= 36 sc total), end with 1 sl st to first ch.

**Rnd 3:** Ch 3, 2 partial dc (see cluster instructions), yarn around hook and through 3 loops; \*ch 1, skip 1 st, 1 sc in next st, ch 1, skip 1 st, cluster; rep from \* and end with ch 1, skip 1 st, 1 sc in next st, ch 1, and join with 1 sl st to top of ch 3 at beg of rnd.

**Rnd 4:** \*1 sc in top of cluster, ch 1, cluster in next sc, ch 1\*; rep from \* around and end 1 sl st to first sc.

**Rnd 5:** Ch 3 and work 2 partial dc into sl st, yarn around hook and through 3 loops; \*ch 1, 1 sc in top of cluster, ch 1, cluster in next sc\*; rep from \* and end with ch 1, 1 sc into cluster, ch 1, and sl st to top of ch 3 at beg of rnd.

Repeat Rnds 4–5 to desired length for cuff, ending with Rnd 4.

**Last rnd:** Cut yarn, leaving 4½ yd tail. With beading needle, string 45 beads (or 5 beads per repeat).

*Note:* On each dc, before you begin the next dc, make sure bead is at front.

Begin with ch 3, bringing bead through last chain. In same st, work 4 dc, bringing bead through with yarn on last yoh and through 2 loops for each st, \*1 sc at top of next cluster, shell with beads in next sc (shell = 5 dc); rep from \* and end with sl st to top of ch 3 at beg of round. Cut yarn, bring end through last loop, and weave in tails on WS.

### Sample 3

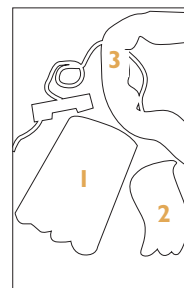
Inspired by my experiments with singles yarns (see page 36), I picked a motif in a book of granny squares I had just translated. Portland wool is just the right length and quality for handcarding. Not having time to dye, I simply blended the wool about



## Project Notes

**Hook:** U.S. size F.

**Notions:** Size 8° glass seed beads—45 for 9 pattern repeats or 5 per shell (there will be the same number of shells on the last round as clusters on previous rounds). Beading needle.



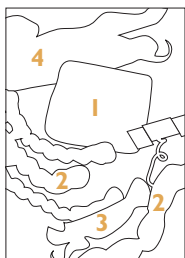
**Sample 2:**  
**1)** Wrist warmer,  
**2)** Portland fleece lock,  
**3)** 2-ply S/Z yarn (17 wpi, 1,877 ypp, 10 tpi, and 25° plied angle).

fifty-fifty with dyed silk for the color range needed. The rolags, particularly the silk-blend ones, were easy to spin woolen with traditional long draw on my Schacht Matchless at a 9:1 ratio. I wound the singles on a niddy-noddy and lightly steamed the skein. The singles yarn is 23 wraps per inch, with 15° angle of twist, and about 2,400 yards per pound. I crocheted the square with a U.S. size D hook. I think the pattern would make an easy and lovely baby blanket.



## Project Notes

**Hook:** U.S. size D.



Sample 3:  
**1)** Daisy granny square, **2)** 4 skeins of singles yarn (23 wpi, 15° angle of twist, and 2,400 ypp), **3)** white Portland fleece, **4)** dyed tussah silk from Lambspin of Colorado.

The daisy square is from *Granny Squares: Over 25 Creative Ways to Crochet the Classic Pattern* by Stephanie Göhr, Melanie Sturm, and Barbara Wilder (translation by Carol Huebscher Rhoades and C. Elizabeth Wellenstein) (North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 2012). Reprinted with permission from Trafalgar Square Books.

### Daisy

**Note:** Substitute ch 1 for sc and ch 3 for dc for first st of rnd; end each rnd with sl st to first st; join new yarn at appropriate place for pattern rather than slip-stitching into position; work into both loops.

With yellow, ch 5 and join into a ring with 1 sl st into the first ch.

**Rnd 1:** Work 8 sc in ring.

**Rnd 2:** With white, work \*2 dc, ch 1 in each sc of rnd below; rep from \* 7 more times.

**Rnd 3:** With blue, \*3 dc in ch loop of previous rnd, ch 1; rep from \* 7 more times.

**Rnd 4:** With white, work 1 sc each in the second and third dc of previous rnd, 4 dc in ch loop; rep from \* 7 more times.

**Rnd 5:** With green, \*1 sc between the center dc of previous rnd, ch 1, 3 dc between the sc of previous rnd, ch 1; rep from \* 7 more times.

**Rnd 6:** With white, \*1 dc each in the second and third dc of previous rnd, 3 dc in ch loop of previous rnd, skip the sc, 3 dc in the following ch loop; rep from \* 7 more times.

**Rnd 7:** 1 sc, 2 hdc, \*2 dc, (2 tr, ch 1, 2 tr) in 1 dc of previous rnd, 2 dc, 2 hdc, 7 sc, 2 hdc; rep from \* 2 more times and end with 2 dc, (2 tr, ch 1, 2 tr) in 1 dc of previous rnd, 2 dc, 2 hdc, 6 sc.

**Rnd 8:** 6 dc, \*(2 dc, ch 1, 2 dc) in ch loop of previous rnd, 18 dc; rep from \* 2 more times and end with (2 dc, ch 1, 2 dc) in ch loop of previous rnd, 12 dc.

I am so lucky to have obtained Portland wool in both fleece and roving forms. Sometimes we have the tendency to hoard a special fleece, but I suggest that once you get some Portland, try it out immediately and enjoy spinning the lovely wool. The more spinners try the less-known and rare wools, the more likely that the sheep will be preserved. ☞

**Carol Huebscher Rhoades** of Madison, Wisconsin, endures some ribbing from family and friends about her rather large stash of wool. Nonetheless, she is happy that, when it comes time to spin for a special project, she can almost always find the right wool in her collection.

## RESOURCES

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Dun, Kathryn. *Beautiful Sheep: Portraits of Champion Breeds*. New York: St. Martin's, 2008.

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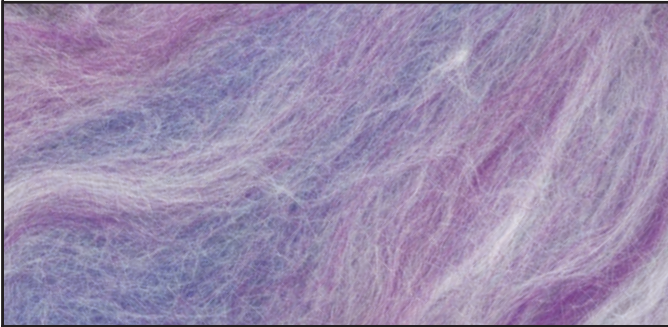
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Spirit Trail Fiberworks, [www.spirit-trail.net](http://www.spirit-trail.net).

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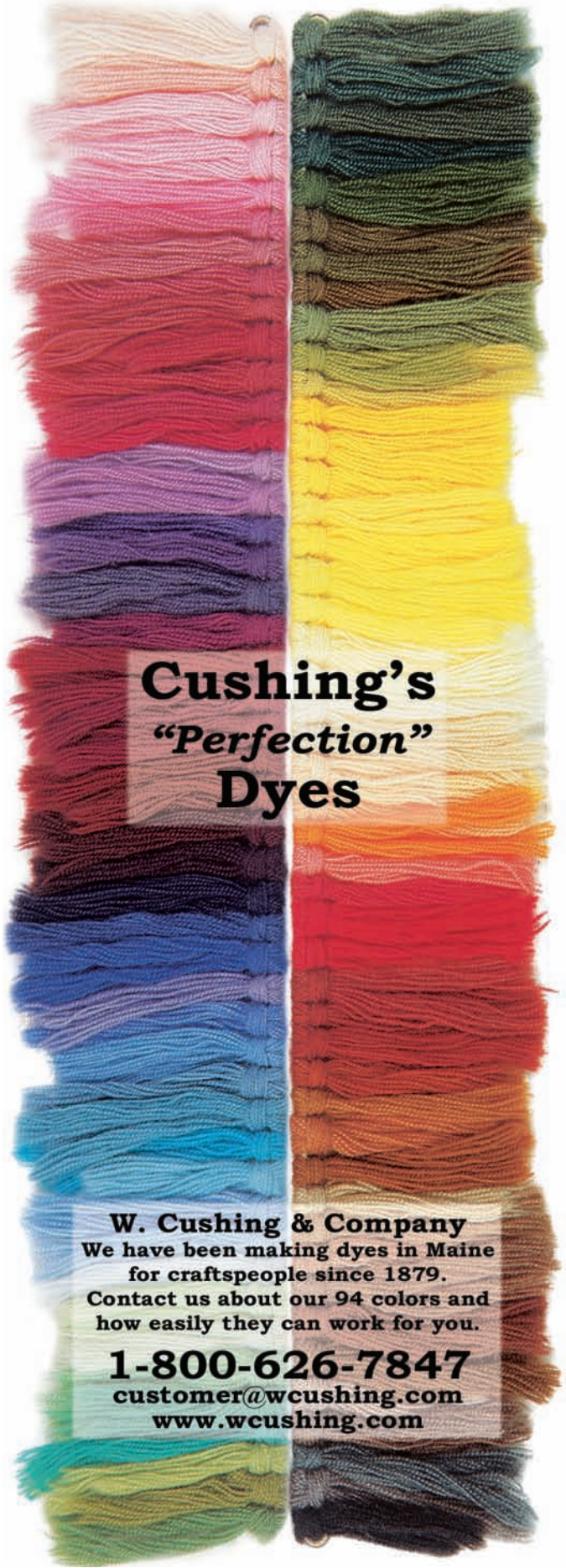
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# Portland Scarf

BY CAROL HUEBSCHER RHOADES AND STEVE RHOADES

**T**he design for this scarf evolved through several iterations in my mind before I settled down to the actual weaving. I was committed to a scarf woven on the Schacht Cricket rigid-heddle loom because I wanted to use it for trying out various weave structures and to avoid warping my floor loom just for one small item. The original idea was for a lace structure but, after knitting and crocheting the samples for the Fiber Basics article on Portland sheep (see page 76), I realized that the fleece was a bit too fuzzy and lofty, even when spun worsted, to show lace well. As I enjoyed spinning the lofty yarn, I remembered one of my favorite novelty yarns, the “cloud” (*Handspinner’s Workbook: Fancy Yarns* by Mabel Ross). Aha! Now I could try two rather different yarns from a single preparation—Portland roving (purchased from [www.spirit-trail.net](http://www.spirit-trail.net)).



## Project Notes

**Fiber:** 4.3 oz Portland roving from [www.spirit-trail.net](http://www.spirit-trail.net).

**Preparation:** Plain yarn, none; cloud yarn, stripped roving into narrow lengths.

**Drafting method:** Short backward draw (both).

**Wheels:** Plain yarn, Schacht Matchless; cloud yarn, Schacht Sidekick.

**Wheel systems:** Matchless, double drive; Sidekick, scotch tension.

**Ratio (singles/plying):** Plain yarn, 9:1 for both singles and plying; cloud yarn, 6.25:1 singles and 7.5:1 plying.

**Singles direction spun:** Z (both).

**Singles twists per inch:** Plain yarn, 12; cloud yarn, 10.

**Singles wraps per inch:** Plain yarn, 22; cloud yarn, 18.

**Twist angle:** Plain yarn, 15°; cloud yarn, 5°.

**Plied direction spun:** S (both).

**Plied twists per inch:** Plain yarn, 7; cloud yarn, 8.

**Plied wraps per inch:** 12 (both).

**Total yardage:** Plain yarn, 187 (2.75 oz); cloud yarn, 72 (1.10 oz).

**Yards per pound:** Plain yarn, 1,088; cloud yarn, 1,047.

**Yarn classification:** Worsted-weight (both).

**Yardage used:** Plain yarn, 153; cloud yarn, 70.

**Loom:** Schacht Cricket.

**Warp sett:** 8 ends per inch.

**Picks per inch:** 6.

**Warp length:** 90".

**Width in reed:** 7½".

**Weave structure:** Plain weave.

**Finished size:** 6¾" × 70".

I spun the two-ply Portland plain yarn from roving that was about 2½ inches wide. I didn’t split it lengthwise because I wanted to spin from the end for a worsted-style yarn while using a short backward draft without smoothing the yarn so there would be some loft. Spinning this fiber preparation on my Schacht Matchless at a 9:1 ratio was almost effortless.

For the cloud yarn, I used narrow lengths of the roving and spun a thin, loosely twisted singles yarn on my Schacht Sidekick (scotch tension) at a 6.25:1 ratio. To ply (at 7.5:1) for the “cloud,” I spun a balanced ply for 6 to 7 inches and then began wrapping the elongated knots. To make a “cloud,” I held the core at tension in my left hand and lightly wrapped the other strand up (toward the orifice), down, and up, down again on the core over about ½ inch. After each cloud, I spun 6 to 7 inches of balanced two-ply yarn. To even out the yarn use, I worked the next cloud holding the strand in my right hand at tension, wrapping with the yarn in the left hand, and continued to alternate the wrapping strand from the yarn in my left hand with the yarn in my right hand.

I didn’t determine the exact warp order until I knew how much yardage I had of each yarn. Since I spun more of the cloud yarn than planned (I didn’t want to run out!), I made it the pre-dominant warp yarn. I threaded



Carol spun two types of yarn for her woven scarf from a lovely Portland roving from Spirit Trail Fiberworks—a plain worsted-style yarn and a cloud yarn.

the yarns into the rigid heddle (8 ends per inch), beginning with 4 plain yarns, and then repeated 4 cloud ends, 4 plain ends 7 times.

Unfortunately, I was warping the day before a trip and, in my rush, didn't wind on evenly. My husband, Steve, very kindly offered to rewind the warp and weave the scarf. I had planned a turned hem, but he wasn't sure he knew how to do that, so we went for hem-stitching at each end and a short fringe.

When we were winding on the warp, it became clear that the cloud yarns might impede the weaving but, since all the ends did go through the heddles without too much coaxing, I didn't worry. I should know better. The next day, Steve sent a progress report. The

scarf was done, but it had been slow going. The combination of the slightly fuzzy Portland wool and the cloud yarn meant Steve had to check each shed to make sure it opened cleanly. He said that he was beginning to think I had put on a 10-yard warp because it seemed to go on forever. However, he persevered and wove a lovely balanced plain weave that was just the right length and width. He finished the scarf by lightly steaming it over a pan of boiling water (be sure to protect your hands if you use this method). Once the scarf dried (laid flat), he trimmed the fringe evenly.

After he finished the scarf, Steve asked why I hadn't used the cloud yarn for weft only. I might have if I had thought of it. If I were redesigning the

scarf, I would put on a plain warp and then divide the cloud yarn in half. It would be easy to begin the scarf with a header and enough plain weave for a hem and then weave half of the cloud yarn, perhaps alternating it with the plain yarn for the last few rows to phase it out. I would measure that length and then weave with the plain yarn until the same amount of warp is left as at the beginning for the cloud weft and plain hem. ☘

**Carol and Steve Rhoades** live in Madison, Wisconsin. Steve is making good use of his retirement time to weave, knit socks on the circular sock-knitting machine, and volunteer with tax assistance for those in need. Carol continues to write, edit, teach, translate, and knit plenty of socks by hand.



Carol spun a plain worsted-style yarn (singles on bottom card) and a cloud yarn (singles on top card) for her woven scarf.

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# Everyday Socks

RACHEL RODNUNSKY

I learned to knit and crochet in the early 1980s but have never been fond of knitting and stopped doing it some time ago. I was first inspired to crochet socks after seeing all the sock yarn in Germany while I was living there. I found a couple of crocheted sock patterns online, but most patterns were for thick yarn, which is not as common in Europe as in Canada. Sock yarn was everywhere, though, and eventually I devised a pattern I could use with any yarn. Later on, after I moved back to Canada, my grandmother came to visit me in the Yukon and saw my crocheted socks. She told me that when she was a girl in the 1920s and 1930s in Winnipeg, Canada, her aunt used to make her crocheted “bed socks.” She asked me to make her some, and I did for her eighty-fifth birthday. I was slightly disheartened to realize that I was not doing something new by crocheting socks, but then I realized that I had something even better: a sock crocheting heritage! I was just like my great-great-aunt. One of the problems I had crocheting socks was that the sock yarns were dyed for knitters, and many of the yarns did not look as nice crocheted because of how the colors of the yarn appeared when crocheted as opposed to knitted. I wanted to learn to spin so I could make my own yarn. I learned how to spin on a spindle when I was thirty-eight weeks pregnant with my youngest child and haven’t looked back. I do more wheel spinning now but still enjoy my spindles.

## Project Notes

**Fiber:** Six batts, each made up of white Finnsheep,  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz (20 g) from Flannelberry Fibre (<http://flannelberry.com>) blended with  $\frac{1}{3}$  oz (10 g) of an indigo overdyed 50/50 blend of bleached tussah silk and black alpaca from World of Wool ([www.worldofwool.co.uk](http://www.worldofwool.co.uk)). Socks weigh  $2\frac{1}{3}$  oz (66 g).

**Preparation:** Each batt was split lengthwise into three sections and drafted from one end.

**Drafting method:** Short forward draw.

**Wheel:** Mazurka.

**Wheel system:** Double drive.

**Ratio:** 12: 1 (singles); 10: 1 (plied).

**Singles direction spun:** Z.

**Singles wraps per inch:** 28–30.

**Twist angle:** 28°.

**Number of plies:** 3.

**Plied direction spun:** S.

**Plied twists per inch:** 9.

**Plied wraps per inch:** 18 (after setting the twist).

**Total yardage:** 208.

**Yards per pound:** 1,200.

**Yarn classification:** Fingering weight.

**Yardage used:** 185.

**Hook:** U.S. size D (3.25 mm).

**Gauge:** 6 sts and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  rows = 1" in single crochet.

**Notions:** 2 stitch markers for working the heels (or 4 if working both socks at the same time).

**Finished size:** Fits a child’s foot that is about 8" long with a foot circumference of  $6\frac{3}{4}$ " and a 4" cuff.

This yarn was a blend I came up with on my drumcarder. I had tried a number of blends, but this is the one that I liked the best. It is a blend of white Finnsheep top I had ordered from Flannelberry Fibre and some bleached tussah silk and black alpaca top I had ordered from World of Wool in the United Kingdom and overdyed with indigo. I used about  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce of the white Finnsheep and  $\frac{1}{3}$  ounce of the indigo-dyed silk/alpaca blend for each batt. I made six batts to make sure I had enough. I ran each batt through my drumcarder three times to get the nice blue color.

I spin my yarns Z and ply S because the spinning direction does not seem to make a difference when I am single crocheting in the round with a small hook. In my personal observations, I find that if I crochet with a round three-ply yarn, the direction of the twist doesn’t matter—so I spin singles Z and ply S in the classic style and not S/Z as is often rec-



Rachel Rodnunsky prefers crocheting to knitting and created this pattern for handspun crocheted socks. She later learned that her great-great-aunt also crocheted socks—so she’s continuing a family tradition.

ommended for crochet yarns. I almost never spin a two-ply yarn anymore, as I find a rounder yarn looks much better crocheted than a two-ply yarn.

## EVERYDAY SOCKS

I like to ply all the yarn onto one bobbin and then wind it into a center-pull ball; I make a sock from each end of the center-pull ball. The socks are made toe up, which means you can keep crocheting until you have a sock the height you want. I like alternating between the socks as I go along because, if I think I might not have enough yarn, I can switch to a different yarn for the heels and then switch back to the original yarn to finish the cuffs. Crocheting toe up also means you can try your socks on as you make them to ensure a correct fit.

**Toe** (work single crochet through both loops for toe)

Ch 11.

**Rnd 1:** Sc in second ch from the hook and then sc in next 9 sts up the one side of the ch; continue around with sc down the other side of the ch (20 sts).

**Rnd 2:** Sc twice into the first st (1 inc made) and sc in the next 10 sts, sc twice in next st, and work in sc to the end. *Note:* Do not mark the increases with a stitch marker. From now on, you will work the increases at the side and will not stack the increases directly above each other. This method avoids a noticeable increase line and, because you are working in a spiral, keeps the toe flat.

**Rnd 3:** 1 inc into the first stitch, sc across, and 1 inc at the other side where you made the last inc.

Cont working in this way, making 1 inc on each side of the toe until you have 40 sts around.

**Foot** (work single crochet through back loops only for foot)

**Rnd 1:** Starting at one of the sides, work 40 sc into back loops.

Cont working in a spiral with 40 sc on each round until the entire foot of the sock from toe to the last rnd worked

measures 6" (or 2" less than total foot length), ending at a side.

**Short-Row Heel** (work single crochet through both loops for heel)

**Row 1:** Sc (in both loops) across 20 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 2:** Sc across 19 sts (skip the last st), ch 1, turn.

**Row 3:** Sc across 18 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 4:** Sc across 17 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 5:** Sc across 16 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 6:** Sc across 15 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 7:** Sc across 14 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 8:** Sc across 13 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 9:** Sc across 12 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 10:** Sc across 11 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 11:** Sc across 10 sts, ch 1, turn.

**Row 12:** Sc across 10 sts. Working down the side of the sts, insert hook into the side of the st, yarn over (yo) and draw up a loop; sc into skipped st, drawing through all loops on the hook. Ch 1, turn.

**Row 13:** Sc into last st made and pm, work sc across 10 rem sts, insert hook into the side of the st, yo, draw up a loop; sc into skipped st, drawing through all loops on the hook. Ch 1, turn.

**Row 14:** Sc into last st made, pm, work across 12 sts (this includes the marked sts); insert hook into the side of the st from previous row, yo, and draw up a loop; insert hook onto the side of the st from the next row down, yo, draw up a loop; sc into

skipped st, drawing through all loops on hook. Ch 1, turn.

Cont working the heel in this way until all skipped sts have been picked up and you are back to the foot section of the sock—40 sts. Ensuring that you are working in the correct direction (outside of the sock facing you), work spirally around the 40 sts with 1 sc in the back loop of each st, until the cuff is 4" long or desired length, ending at the center back of the sock.

**Edging**

**Rnd 1:** \*Ch 3, sk 2 sts, 1 sc; rep from \* around the edge of the sock.

**Rnd 2:** \*Sc 3 into the ch 3 loop, 1 sl st into the sc of the previous rnd; rep from \* around the edge of the sock and sl st in last st to finish rnd. Cut yarn and bring end through last loop.

## FINISHING

Weave in the ends neatly on WS. I handwash my socks and usually shape them so they dry folded along the top and bottom of the foot. Crocheted socks need to be eased on over the heel a little like panty hose. ☘

**Rachel Rodnunsky** lives with her three children and ten pets in a semiremote community in central Yukon, Canada. She spins on her two wheels (one a lovely Canadian Production Wheel), a book charkha, and a collection of spindles. She loves crocheting in the round and likes spinning fibers to keep her warm during cold Yukon winters. Visit her blog at <http://tintinafibres.com>.

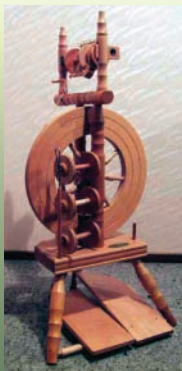
## More Crochet Socks

Our sister publication *Interweave Crochet* has included a great series on crocheting socks in the Winter 2011 and Spring 2012 issues. The articles include recipes for basic cuff-down and toe-up socks, as well as size charts, yarn tips, and the basics you need to crochet your own socks.



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## Project Notes

**Fiber:** Main color (MC): 4 oz Polwarth wool, Blooming Bougainvillea colorway from [www.etsy.com/shop/twoifbyhand](http://www.etsy.com/shop/twoifbyhand); contrasting color (CC): 4 oz 50/50 Merino wool/alpaca, Blithe Spirit colorway from [www.etsy.com/shop/pigeonroofstudios](http://www.etsy.com/shop/pigeonroofstudios).

**Preparation:** Hand-dyed combed top, lightly predrafted.

**Drafting method:** Supported short backward draw.

**Wheel:** Ashford Traveller.

**Wheel system:** Double drive.

**Ratio (singles/plying):** 8.5:1 (singles); 6.5:1 (plying).

**Singles direction spun:** Z.

**Singles wraps per inch:** MC, 15; CC, 14.

**Number of plies:** 2.

**Twist angle:** MC, 15°; CC, 15°.

**Plied direction spun:** S.

**Plied twists per inch:** MC, 4–5; CC, 4–5.

**Plied wraps per inch:** MC, 12; CC, 11.

**Total yardage:** MC, 280; CC, 266.

**Yards per pound:** MC, 1,120; CC, 1,064.

**Yarn classification:** Worsted-weight (both).

**Yardage used:** Cowl, 120 (MC) and 60 (CC); mitts, 90 (MC) and 55 (CC).

**Needles:** U.S. size 6 set of 5 double-pointed (dpm) for mitts and straight or 24" circular (circ) for cowl.

**Gauge:** 20 sts and 28 rows = 4".

**Notions:** Cable needle, markers (m), tapestry needle to weave in ends, scrap yarn to hold thumb stitches, and ten ¾-inch buttons (6 for the cowl, and 2 for each of the mitts).

**Finished sizes:** Cowl, 7½" wide x 33" long (after blocking); mitts, 7½" circumference x 6½" from cuff to hand opening (after blocking).

# Blenheim Roses Cowl and Mitts

BY ANNE PODLESKA

I wanted to design a cowl and mitts set that would appeal to new spinners. I often hear from new spinners that they are worried that their gauge will be off or that they won't have enough yarn to make something "real" because they only have a lot of small sample-sized skeins to work with. This set solves both of those problems. Each piece can be knitted with handspun yarn only or with a mix of millspun and handspun yarns to help even out gauge and stretch limited handspun yardage.

For my inspiration, I focused on the colors in two skeins of handspun. The deep rose red reminded me of lush British roses in the Blenheim Palace Gardens, interspersed with the more neutral pale pink-taupe color of the groomed pathways.

The cowl features bands of a lace pattern that create a lovely scalloped lower edge, alternating with bands of seed stitch for some texture. The cowl is knitted back and forth with a seed-stitch edge, allowing it to be worn around the neck loosely, like a scarf, or wrapped twice around the neck for a cowl styling once it is fastened with either a button-loop closure or a pretty pin. The mitts feature a band of the same lace pattern finished with a small button detail on the cuffs, and the remainder is knitted in narrow stripes, with a gusseted thumb.

## SPINNING

Both yarns were spun from hand-dyed combed top. I prepared both 4-ounce tops for spinning by splitting them in half to create two 2-ounce

sections. Each section was stripped into four mostly equal portions. I lightly predrafted and loosely coiled each strip into a small bird's nest to keep them organized before spinning. I used a supported short backward draft to spin the semiworsted yarns, but I also slightly smoothed the fibers down as they went into the singles. I spun 2 ounces of each of the 4-ounce colorways onto a bobbin for the singles and then plied each of those bobbins together. I just slightly underplied the yarns to give a nice, drapery hand to the yarn. Once each of the 4-ounce batches was plied, I wound the skeins off onto my skein winder and added three sets of choke ties. I soaked each skein in a lukewarm water bath with a small amount of Soak wool wash. I spun the extra water out in the delicate spin cycle of my washer, lightly snapped the skeins between my hands to even out the twist, and then hung the skeins unweighted to dry.

## COWL

With U.S. size 6 needles and MC, CO 141 sts. Knit 1 row (WS).

Row 1: K1, p1, k1, p1, place marker (pm). Work Row 3 of the Garden Path chart, pm, p1, k1, p1, k1. The first 4 and last 4 stitches of every row are worked in seed st.

Row 2: K1, p1, k1, p1, sl m, work Row 4 of the Garden Path chart, sl m, p1, k1, p1, k1.

Repeat Rows 1 and 2 one more time. Then work Rows 7–18 of chart, maintaining the first 4 and last 4 sts of every row in seed st. Switch to CC. Work Rows 1–7 of chart.

Switch back to MC and work Rows 8–18.



Inspired by the roses at Blenheim Palace Gardens in England, Anne set out to design a pair of mitts and cuffs to capture her memories.

Repeat Rows 1–18, working Rows 1–7 with CC and Rows 8–18 with MC. Work Rows 3 and 4 of chart twice with MC. BO loosely in St st.

## MITTS

For both mitts, with 2 U.S. size 6 dpn and MC, CO 36 sts. Do not join—the cuff is worked back and forth until Row 18 from CO, when you'll add

in the remaining dpn to work in the round.

Knit 1 row (WS).

Row 1: K1, p1, k1, p1, pm. Work Row 3 of chart, pm, p1, k1, p1, k1. The first 4 and last 4 sts of every row are worked in seed st.

Row 2: K1, p1, k1, p1, sl m, work Row 4 of chart, sl m, p1, k1, p1, k1.

Repeat Rows 1–2 once more. Work Rows 7–18 of chart, maintaining the

first 4 and last 4 sts of each row in seed st as established.

### Right cuff

On the next row of right mitt, arrange sts to work in the rnd, with 9 sts on each of 4 dpn. Sl the first 3 sts to a cable needle (cn) and hold at the front. Knit in the rnd to the final 3 sts. K3 from cn, and then k3. Pm for beg of rnd. *Next rnd:* Knit.

### Left cuff

On the next row of left mitt, arrange sts to work in the rnd, with 9 sts on each of 4 dpn. Sl 3 sts to cn and hold at the back. Knit in the rnd to the final 3 sts. K3 from cn, and then k3. Pm for beg of rnd.

*Next rnd:* Knit.

### Both left and right mitts

*Rnd 1:* Knit.

With CC, knit 2 rnds. With MC, knit 2 rnds.

Repeat these 4 rnds once more (for 2 stripes of each color).

### Right thumb gusset

With MC, knit.

*Next rnd (inc rnd):* With MC, k16, pm, M1R, k1, M1L, pm, and knit to end of rnd.

### Left thumb gusset

With MC, knit.

*Next rnd (inc rnd):* With MC, k20, pm, M1R, k1, M1L, pm, and knit to end of rnd.

### Both mitts

Rep the knit rnd and the inc rnd, working 2 rnds with CC and 2 rnds with MC until there are 9 sts between m (ending with MC rnd).

On the next rnd, with CC, work to first m, remove m, and sl 9 sts to waste yarn. CO 1 stitch over the gap using the backward-loop method, knit to end of rnd. Knit next rnd with CC.

Work 2 rnds with MC, then 2 rnds with CC. Rep these 4 rnds, ending with CC rnd. Work 3 rnds in seed stitch (Rnds 1 and 3: K1, p1 around; Rnd 2:



Anne Podlesak spun two worsted-weight yarns for her cuffs and cowl that measured 1,120 ypp (main color) and 1,064 ypp (contrast color).

P1, k1 around). BO loosely.

**Thumb**

Remove the 9 sts held on waste yarn and place onto 2 dpn. With CC, knit across 9 sts, and then with a 3rd dpn, pick up and k3 across the gap between the thumb and the hand—12 sts. Join into a round and knit 1 rnd.

With MC, knit 2 rnds.

With CC, knit 2 rnds.

With MC, knit 2 rnds.

With CC, knit 2 rnds in seed stitch.

BO loosely.

**Finishing**

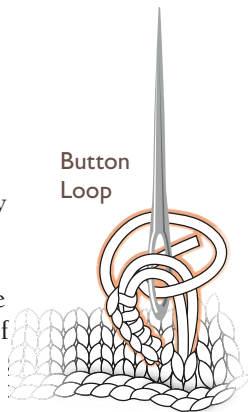
Weave in all ends on the WS. Allow pieces to soak for 15 to 20 minutes in lukewarm water with a mild wool-safe soap. Press or spin out excess water and then block to measurements, pulling the lower edge of the cowl and mitt cuffs into a slightly scalloped edge; allow to dry thoroughly.

**Button loops**

Each mitt has 2 sewn loop buttonholes at the cuff, and the cowl has 6.

Thread a tapestry needle with MC about 24" long. Firmly attach the yarn to the WS of the work. Along the edge where you wish to place the button loop, pull the yarn through to the RS and make a small loop over the tip of your index finger. Secure the working end of the yarn to the edge of the knitted piece, leaving the small fingertip-sized loop. Test the size of the loop to be sure your chosen button slides through it easily. Bring the working yarn back through the original hole, parallel to the first loop, and then create a second loop matching the size of the first one. This reinforces the button loops.

Holding the finished knitted piece in your left hand, work half-hitch knots



Button Loop



over the loops (see figure). Gently snug the knots to the base of the button loop, up against the knitted fabric.

Continue to work these half-hitch stitches around the entire half-circle shape of the button loop until you reach the opposite side of the loop. Attach the working yarn to the wrong side of the knitted fabric, securing the end and trimming it close to the finished fabric.






































































































































Attach the buttons on the opposite side of the opening of the cowl or mitts across from finished button loops. Work 2 button loops on the outside of each mitt cuff, and 6 along the opening of the cowl edge. ☞

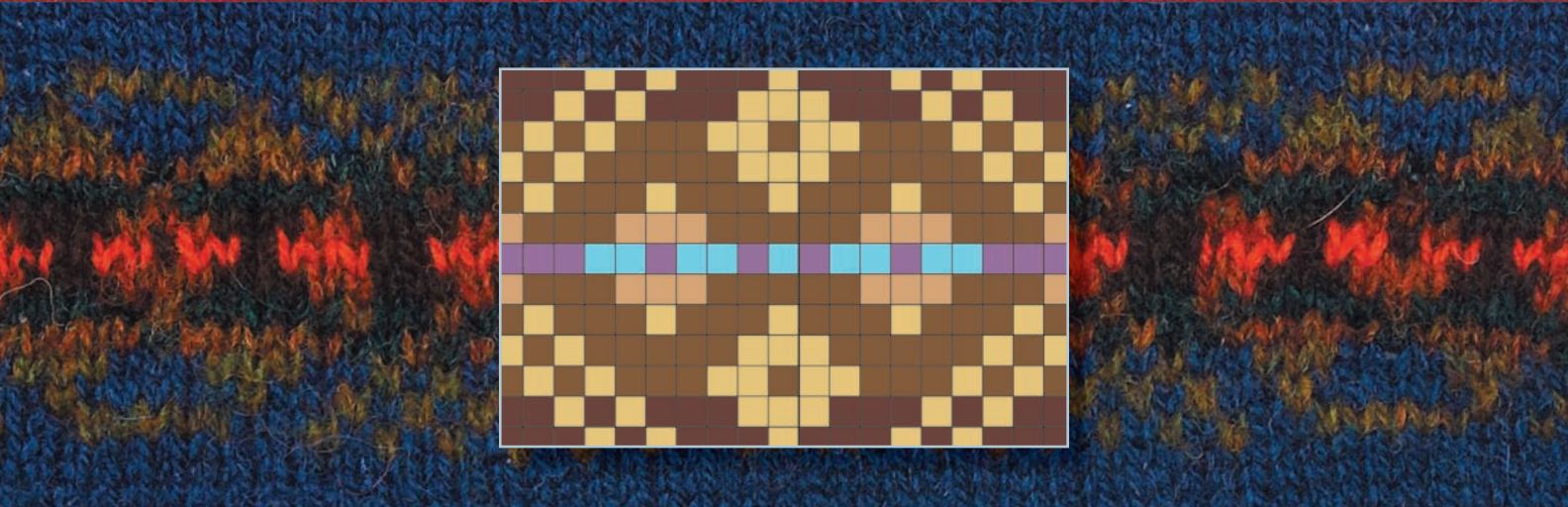
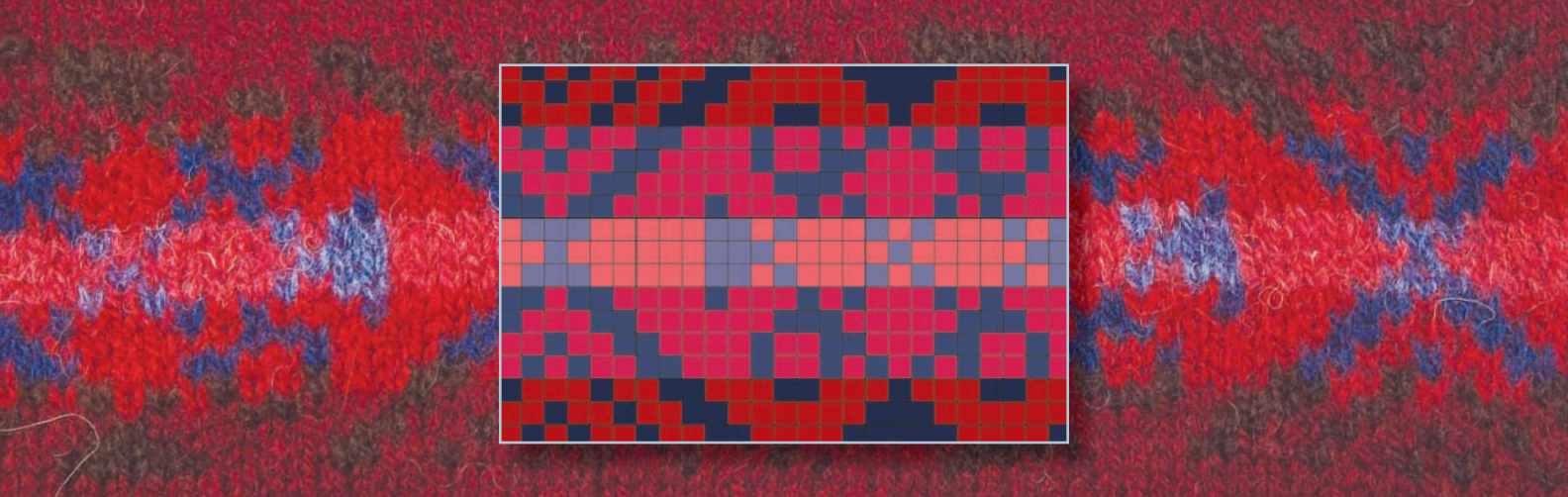
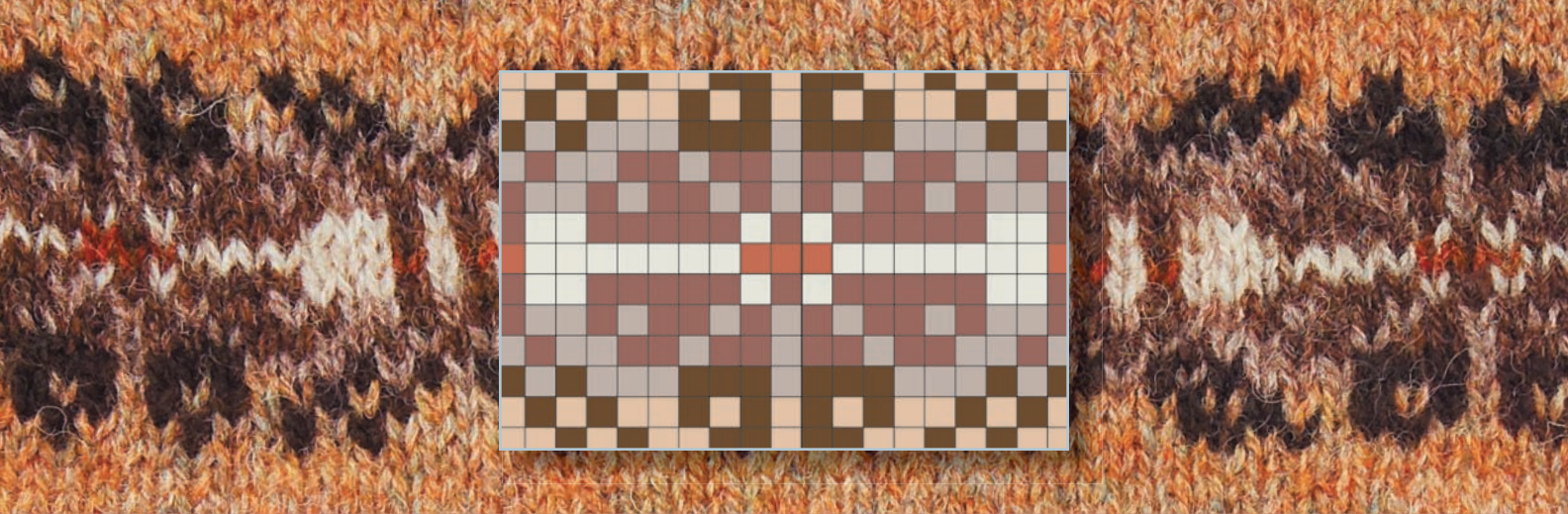
**Anne Podlesak** of White Rock, New Mexico, has been knitting since the squirmy age of six. She was taught to knit by her grandmother and great-aunt in an attempt to get her to sit still but didn't officially become an addict until she was in high school, at which point, there was no looking back. Having added spinning to her list of hobbies, she loves creating one-of-a-kind yarns and working with all sorts of fiber. She is the owner of Woolly Wonka Fibers, as well as the coeditor of the *Ennea Collective*, an online magazine for handspinnners and knitters.

**Key**

 k	 ssk
 p	 k3tog
 yo	 sssk
 k2tog	

Garden Path Chart (worked over a multiple of 15 + 13 sts)

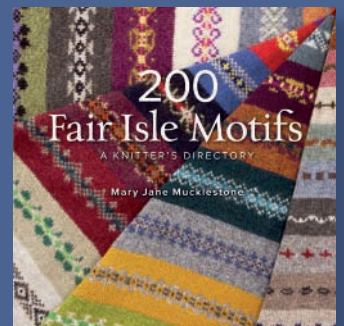
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# An Inspired Project

BY ELIZABETH HUBBARD

**W**inding through the displays at a small-town museum, you come to the window that allows you to peer into a warm, musty kitchen frozen in time . . . that was my first reaction to the Inspired Project photo published as a reader challenge in the Winter 2011 issue of *Spin-Off*. Almost simultaneously, I was registering color: earthy browns, a spot of peach, and yellow. These colors were very much like those in yarns I brought home from a natural-dye workshop at Warner Mountain Weavers near Cedarville, California. A madder-root yarn was similar to the peach-colored tin in the corner; an onion-skin yarn matched the color of the square tin toward the front of the photo. Most of the photo was soft brown which I found in a yarn dyed with walnut hulls. I then added to this monotone palette of naturally dyed yarn a darker brown alpaca for definition; I felt this would mimic the shadows in the corner and the lines on the table in the inspirational photo. I would take these colors from the old kitchen photo and weave them into a tapestry necklace.

I spun the onion-skin yarn and the madder yarn from Corriedale wool from my flock. White and brown fleeces were blended and carded into roving by Fantasy Fiber in Canby, Oregon; the roving looked like the swirled ice-cream cones I loved as a kid. I spun it with Z-twist into a bulky (9 wraps per inch) singles on my Louet S10 wheel using the larger

whorl. After years of repetitive motion, I find I need to protect my shoulders, so these days most of my spinning is done using short draw.

I always let my singles sit for a day on the bobbin, and then I wind them off and soak them in wool wash and hot water. After spinning the excess water out in the washing machine, I help set the yarn by slapping the skein on a tabletop twelve to twenty times per skein. The mostly stabilized skeins are hung to dry with occasional rotations as they dry. I don't block or weight my skeins; if the twist is right and the skein has been slightly full as singles, the yarn hangs fairly loosely and doesn't gnarl up. Letting it relax as it dries creates a yarn that will be truer to swatch than a heavily blocked yarn.

The soft brown was dyed with walnut hulls at the natural-dye workshop. It is a Corriedale/Merino fleece from our ranch also sent to Fantasy Fiber for processing into roving. The darker brown is alpaca, natural color, which I bought from a friend and carded on my Louet drumcarder into batts. I spun these two yarns with Z-twist and plied with S-twist on my Country Craftsman wheel. It is interesting that even though the walnut-hull yarn and the brown alpaca yarn were spun on the same wheel using the same whorl and drafting technique, they are very different yarns. Some of this is due to the difference in

the carding, but most is because of the fiber itself. The Corriedale/Merino has so much crimp and bounce that it always wants to become an airy elastic woolen yarn. This batch is 11 wraps per inch. The alpaca is a smooth and silky fiber that I spun into a slinky semiworsted yarn at 12 wraps per inch.

To create the weaving, I followed the directions in *Fiber and Bead Jewelry: Beautiful Designs to Make and Wear* by Helen Banes with Sally Banes (Sterling/Chapelle, 2000). I marked the outline of the desired finished shape on graph paper and taped the pattern to foam core using straight pins placed to hold a continuous warp of waxed linen, much like the warp on simple nail frames used for weaving. The actual weaving was done with a needle using tapestry weaving techniques. Once finished, I lightly pressed the little tapestry with a steam iron to full and block it.

I made a "chain" by braiding four strands of the walnut-dyed handspun. To bring it back to the Inspired Project photo, I noticed a packet of tea and a mention of coffee. I searched Etsy.com for teatime charms; cups with saucers, tiny brass teapots, and a darling vintage spoon make the work complete. ☘

**Elizabeth Hubbard** lives with her husband, Mike, on a cattle and sheep ranch in Oregon. She is passionate about all things wool: spinning, dyeing, felting, knitting, and tapestry weaving. You can see more of her work at [Etsy.com/shop/hubbardhandspun](http://Etsy.com/shop/hubbardhandspun).



The colors in the photo were very much like yarns Elizabeth had created in a natural-dye workshop. She added a darker brown alpaca to mimic the shadows and the lines on the table in the inspirational photo.



CHRISTA TIPPMANN

## Knitting Abbreviations

\* \*—repeat all instructions between \*

beg—begin(ning)

BO—bind off

cn—cable needle

CO—cast on

dec—decrease

dpn—double-pointed needle(s)

inc—increase

k—knit

kfbf—knit 1 into front and back and front of st

k1f&b—knit 1 into front and back of st

k1ww—k1 with wrap; when you knit a wrapped stitch, pick up the wrap that is around it and knit that stitch together with the wrap

k2tog—knit 2 together

k3tbl—knit 3 together through the back loops

kwise—knitwise

M1—make 1 by picking up loop between 2 sts front to back, place on left needle and k into back of loop

M1L—work same as M1

M1R—make 1 by picking up loop between 2 sts back to front, place on left needle and k into front of loop

p—purl

pm—place marker

psso—pass slipped stitch over

p2tog—purl 2 together

pwise—purlwise

rem—remain(ing)

rep—repeat

rnd(s)—round(s)

RS—right side

sl—slip

sl 1, k2tog, psso—slip 1 st, knit 2 together, pass slipped st over the knitted decrease still on right-hand needle

sl 2, p1, p2sso—with yarn in front, sl 2 sts purlwise through back loops (insert right needle into back of second and then first st on left needle and slip both sts together to right needle), purl 1 and then pass the 2 slipped sts over at the same time

s2kp—slip 2 sts as if to knit, k1, pass 2 slipped stitches over

sp—slip as if to purl

ssk—slip 1 kwise (twice), place on left needle and knit together through back loops

sssk—Sl 3 sts kwise, one at a time, and then knit slipped sts together

st(s)—stitch(es)

tbl—through the back loop

w&t—wrap and turn by slipping 1 st from left to right needle purlwise, yf, sl the st back to the left needle; turn work

WS—wrong side

wyb—with yarn in back

wyf—with yarn in front

yb or yf—move yarn behind or in front of needle without making a yarnover

yo—yarnover

## Crochet Abbreviations

ch—chain

dc—double crochet

hdc—half double crochet

sc—single crochet

yoh—yarn over hook

## Spinning Abbreviations

bpi—bumps per inch

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wpi—wraps per inch

ypp—yards per pound

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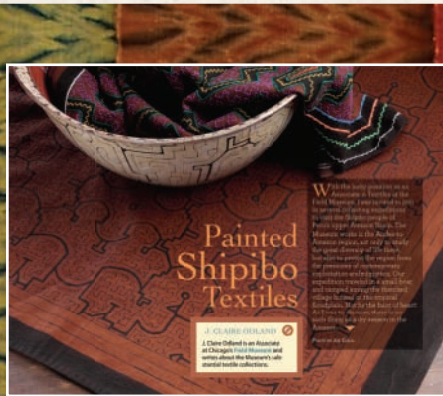
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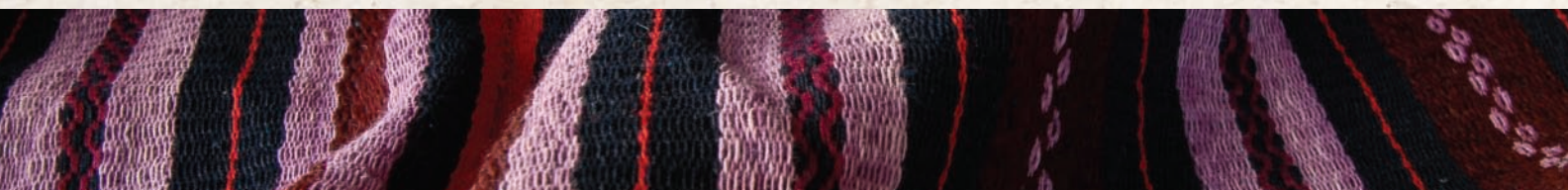
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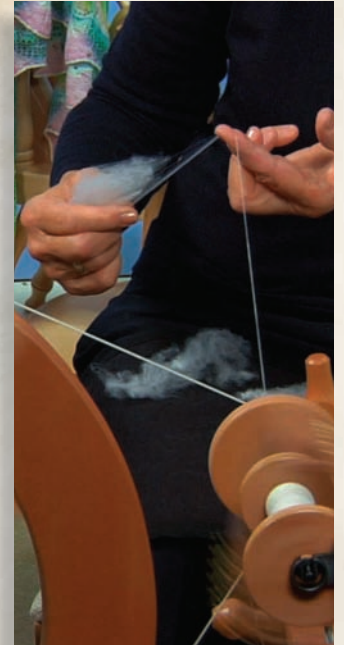
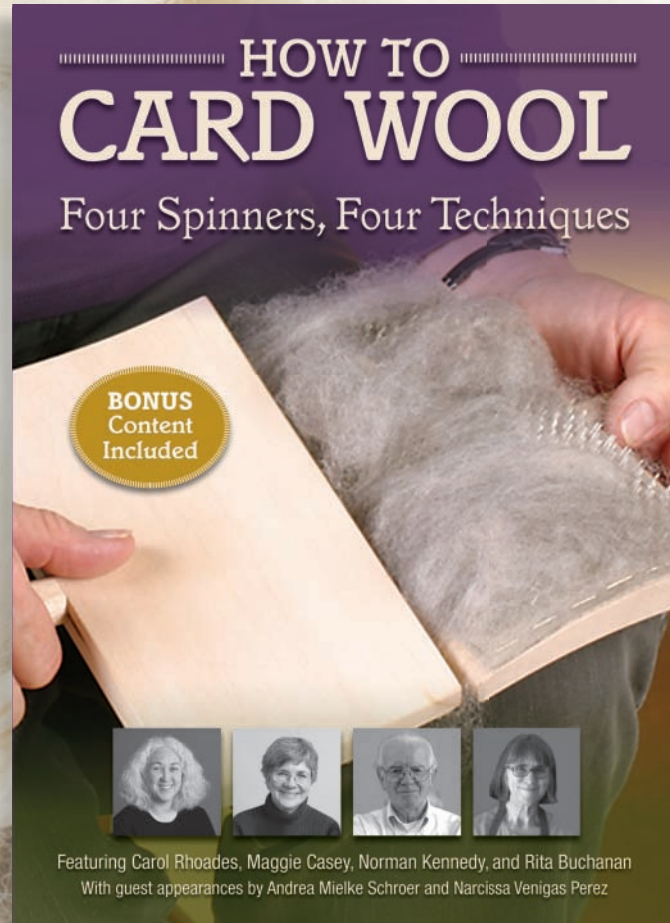
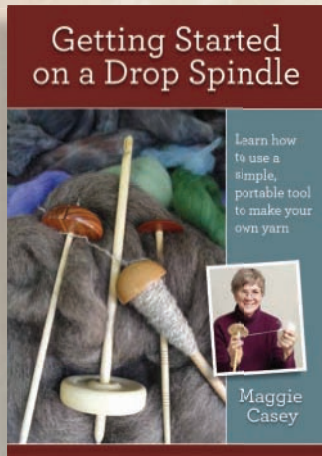
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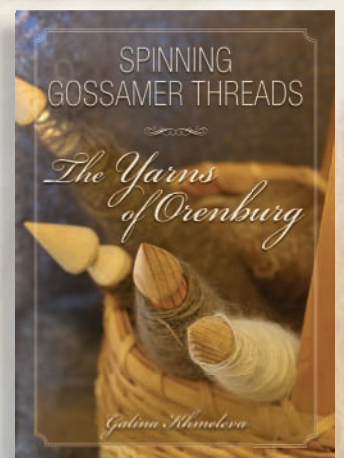
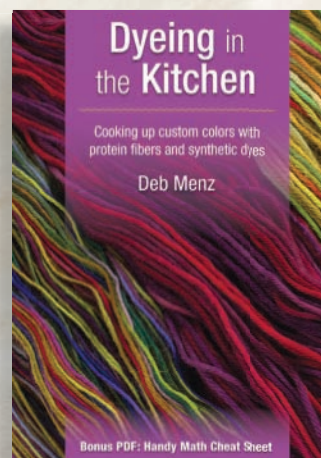
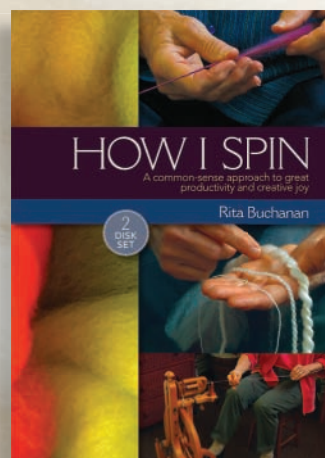
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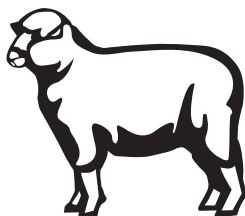


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*Events*

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**JOIN US FOR THE 7th ANNUAL** Great Basin Fiber Arts Fair August 25–26, at the SLCo Equestrian Park. Many fiber classes, demonstrations, and vendors. [www.GreatBasinFiberArtsFair.org](http://www.GreatBasinFiberArtsFair.org).

**NORTH CAROLINA.** July 13–15, 2012 Friends & Fiberworks Summer Retreat! Three Spectacular days of everything fiber! Classes and vendors will be posted on our website [www.friendsandfiberworks.com](http://www.friendsandfiberworks.com); (828) 633-2500.

**SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK FIBER FESTIVAL**, Greenwich, NY. September 22–23. 120 vendors, demos, classes and workshops, fleece show and sale, photo contest. (518) 692-2464; [www.adkfiber.com](http://www.adkfiber.com).

**WOOLFEST**—fibers, rugs, arts, and animals, Lake Metroparks Farmpark, Kirtland, OH; June 23–24. Vendors, festival, workshops, rug and fiber arts show. Cindy Bernardo (800) 366-3276, [www.lakemetroparks.com](http://www.lakemetroparks.com).

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# Little Cotton String Thing

BY DEBORAH BEHM

I began a little shawl this morning. It's nothing much—just a simple triangle pattern with a slight variation in the middle: garter stitch, four increases every other row. I will knit until I am sick of it and then do a fancy bind-off. Until that point, it's just row after increasing row of plain-old knitting. The yarn is spindle-spun cotton. Most of it is plied on spindles as well, although I cheated on the last bit of colored cotton and plied it up this morning on my Ashford Traveller. The yarn looks like the string it is—yards of natural white cotton, spun from roving, or bolls, or punis. There are literally decades worth of yarn here. Some of it was spun in the early 1990s, so technically, I'm knitting with fiber from the previous century. Early bits are spun better than the later bits because I'm out of practice and forget that plying with a spindle too heavy for the cotton will snap even a strong thread. Back I go, repairing and splicing, making amends for my haste and forgetfulness.

There's also a skein of two-ply yarn, dyed unevenly in a lovely soft pink. I'll throw that in once in a while, just to perk things up. Rummaging in my odd-ends bags, I discover an overplied miniskein spun from colored cotton balls. The balls were gifts from a spinning friend, purchased in the United States where, apparently, pastel-colored cotton balls are allowed, unlike here in Canada, where such beauty aids must be white. The balls were horrid to spin, sticky and dry simultaneously, fighting every effort to be drafted with any consistency. I plied them with a bit of ginned cotton carded with a hint of glitz. They are perfect for my purposes.

When I've finished the shawl, no one will notice this little string thing, except perhaps to wonder why I bother, to point out that I can buy perfectly good string, string that's consistent, evenly twisted and

less prone to splitting, string that has pizzazz to it, string in hundreds of colors and weights, string cheaply bought and sold, requiring nothing of the knitter but to cast on some stitches and proceed with as fancy a pattern as she desires. When her dishcloth, towel, sweater, shawl wears out, she can buy more string, begin again, repeat the process. Told this, I will nod and smile, say nothing, content in my own repetition and flow.

Cakes and cakes of string, spun on brass tahklis or bead spindles, plied on akhas, on top-whorl spindles expertly made by dedicated craftsmen, or on toy wheel spindles I glued and painted with a somewhat clumsy hand. As I spin, I'm connected to humans everywhere—to those who grew, processed, and made the yarns that became the clothing and necessities for life; to the men, women, and children who toiled in the fields to supply it; to those who suffered and died for it; to those who used the spinning of it as a symbol of freedom. As I knit my string, my appreciation for the work that yarn requires grows. Each step in the making of all that string was a small, simple one, but those steps combined led to things of comfort and beauty.

Simple as it is, my shawl will provide me with comfort and beauty. Each time I wrap myself in it, I will feel the pleasure of cloth made of string made by my own hands. I will appreciate the beauty of history that has given me the knowledge to make that string. Plain cotton string, with a bit of color, an occasional hint of glitz thrown in, combines with time and patience to produce a unique fabric. Just a little cotton string thing. Simple, flawed, perfect as it is. Like life, rather. ❧

**Deborah Behm** of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, practices, writes, and teaches about spinning, knitting, weaving, yoga, and meditation. Her blog, *Heart Like a Wheel*, combines her love of fiber with meditation practice. <http://www.heartlikeawheel.blogspot.com> or connect with her on Ravelry.com, dragondancer.

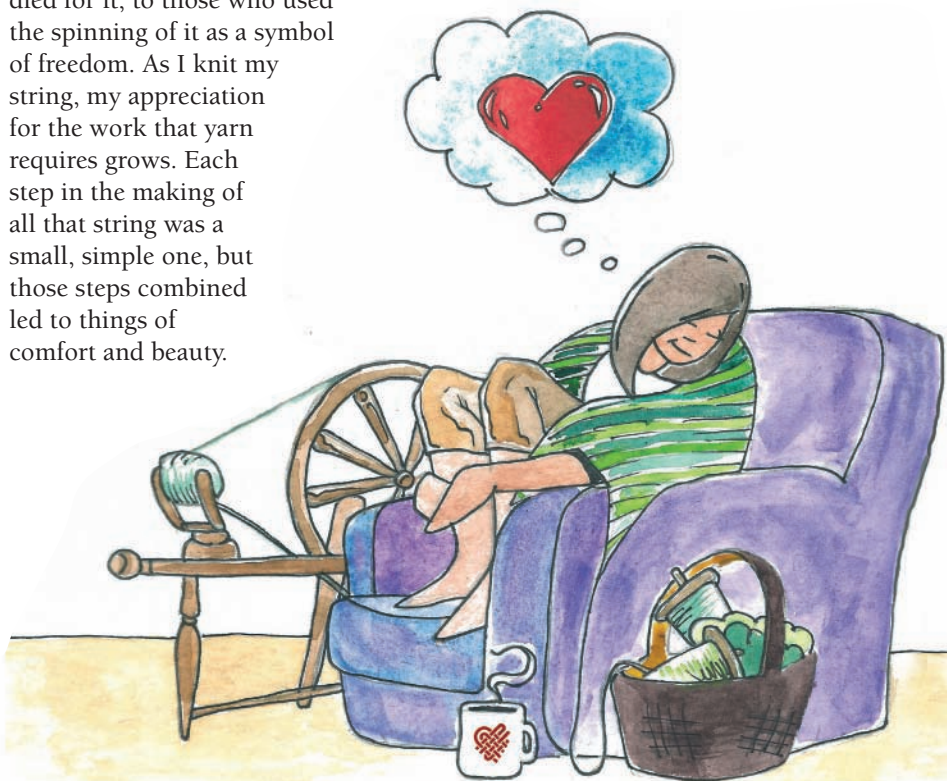


ILLUSTRATION BY BENJAMIN S. CLARKE



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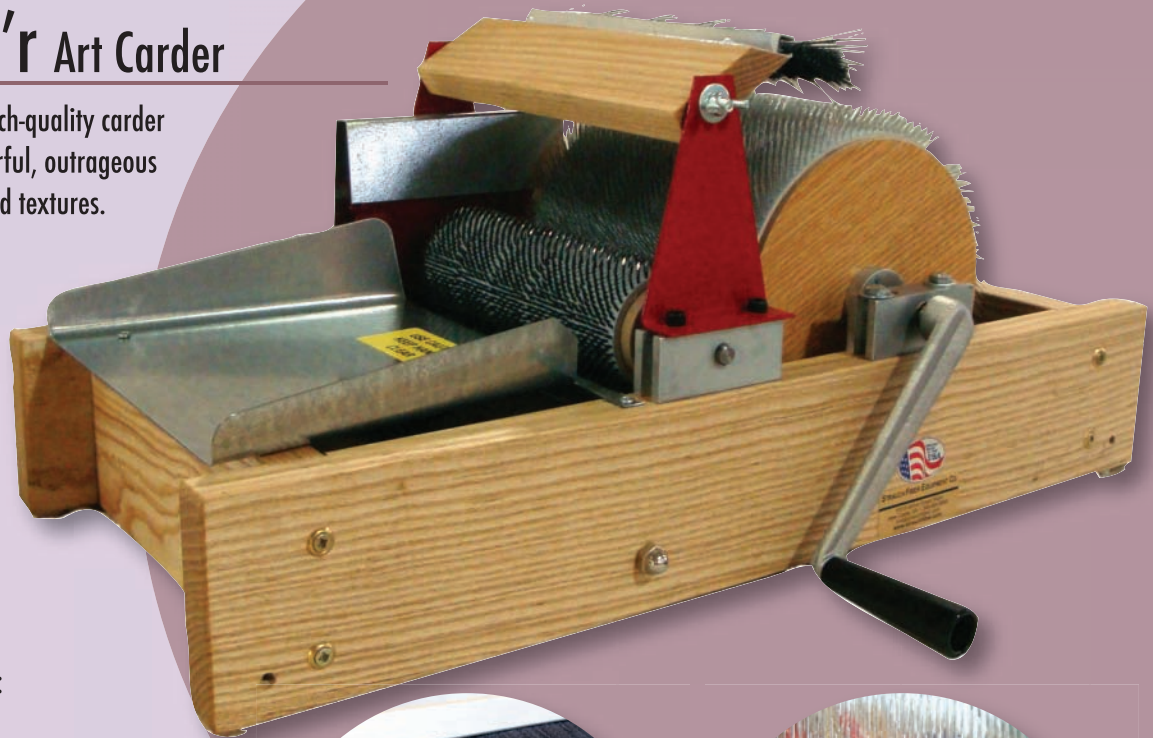
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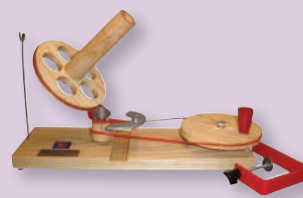
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