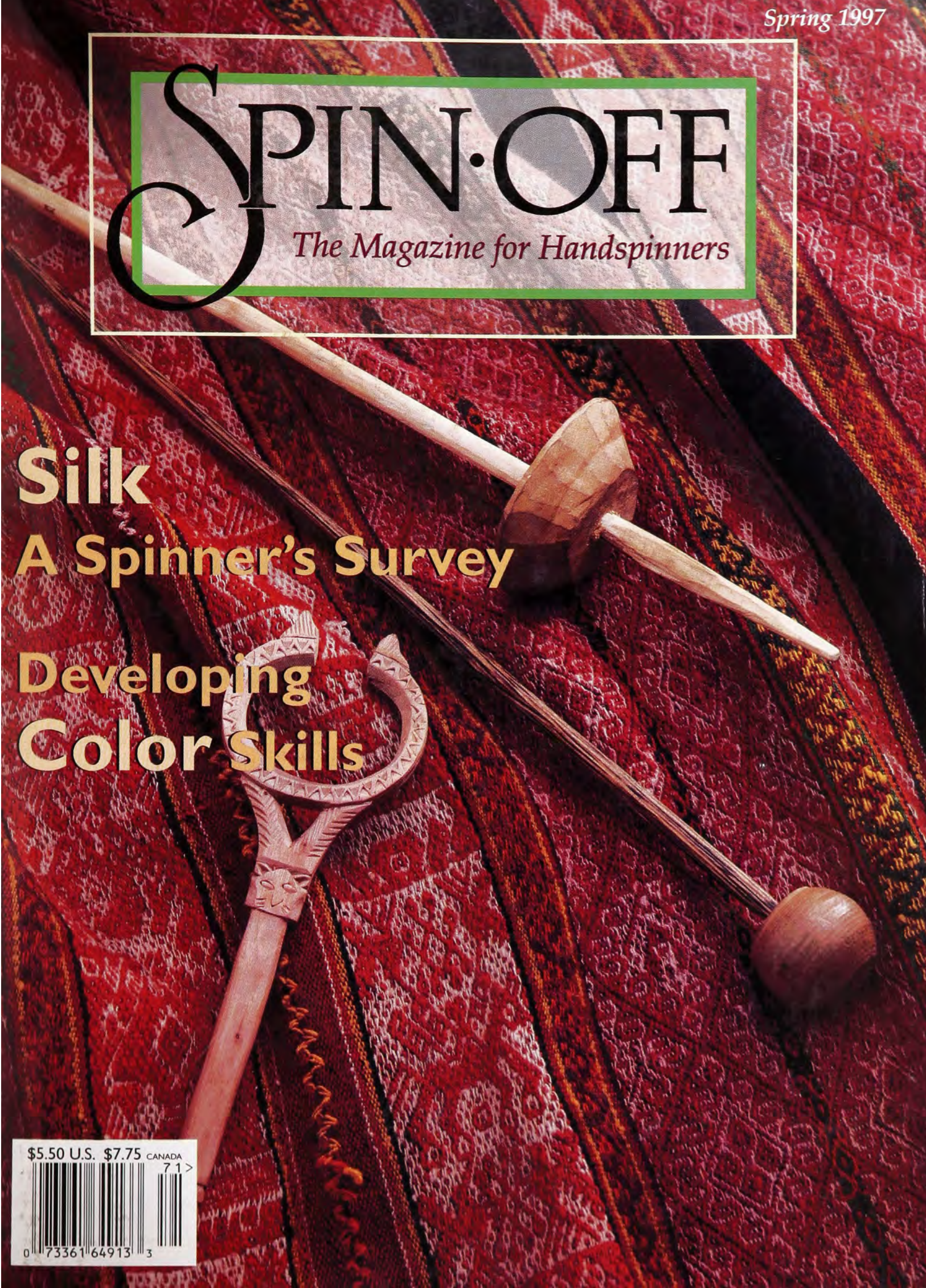
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SPIN-OFF

The Magazine for Handspinners

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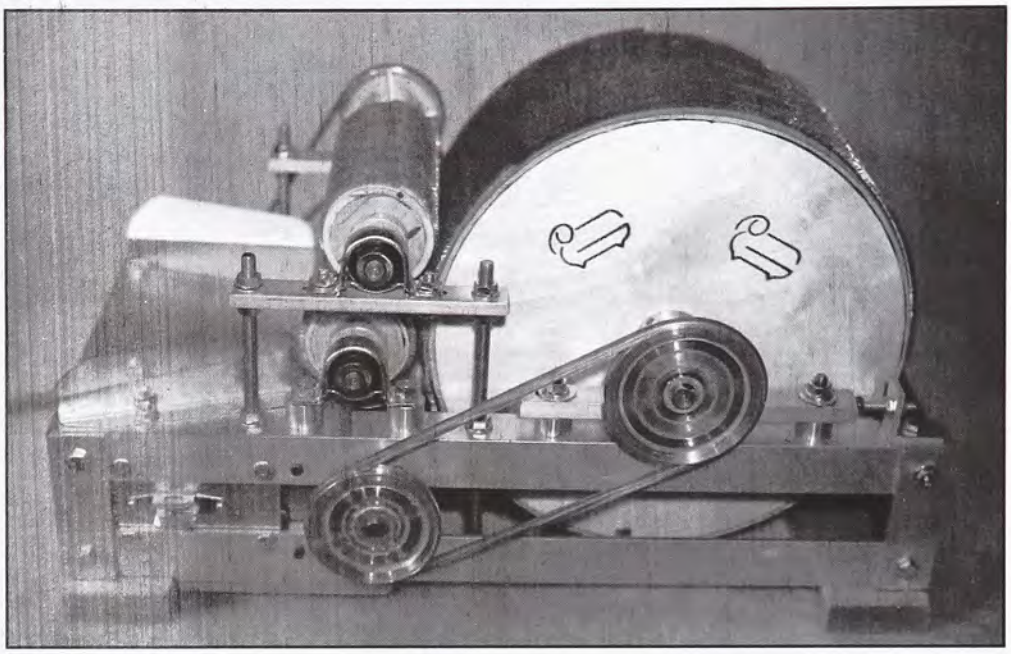
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Editor's Page

On cover and below
Top, on cover, and item 1, below: *Yauri/southern Peru/hand-carved spindle and whorl. Early 1980s.*
Middle, on cover, and item 2, below: *Huancavelica/south central Peru/hand-carved spindle with turned, removable whorl. Mid 1970s. (Same as item 4 on page 44.)*
Bottom, on cover: *Huancavelica/south central Peru/wooden distaff. Mid 1970s. (Same as item 5 on page 44.)*
3, below: *Chivay/southern Peru/hand-carved spindle with turned conical whorl. 1980.*
Background fabric, both photos: *Handspun, hand-dyed alpaca woven into a manta, or carrying blanket. From the village of Calca, outside Cuzco. Late nineteenth century.*

Heirloom: "a valued possession passed down in a family through succeeding generations," but more often this word is assumed to carry its secondary meaning, "an article of personal property included in an inherited estate." The first is a spiritual definition, the second legal.

Is the funky but functional spindle at number 1 in the photo below an heirloom? What about the more refined spindles at numbers 2 and 3? How about the fabric behind them? What about the wire distaff on page 45, or the imaginatively carved ones that flank it?

If, like the families from around the globe in the books called *Material World* and *Women in the Material World*, you were asked to display your possessions and to tell which were most important to you, what would you say?[1] When fire or flood removes all possessions, what happens to the heirlooms?

So much of what we own—regardless of where we live—is interchangeable with that owned by others. Useful, impersonal. A television is not an heirloom—unless it was made by someone you care about.

When life's currents sweep everything else away, the true *heirloom* may lie within the skills needed to fashion useful tools and graceful objects to enhance our lives—and in our ability and willingness to share our knowledge, so that others may bring forth new treasured possessions to replace those which, sooner or later, vanish. With an heirloom, perhaps we weave the future.



SOAR Scholarships

Scholarships for the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat are available for full-time fiber students. To receive guidelines, write to SOAR Scholarship Fund, Interweave Press, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537-5655, or call Nancy Disney at 800-272-2193.

Young knitters

Interweave Press is planning to publish a book of knitting patterns by and for young knitters. Do you know a knitter age 15 or younger who would like to participate? Send an SASE to IW Knits/Kids, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, CO 80537-5655. It would be great to see some young spinner/knitters in this collection. . . . There's also a contest involved, so winners will receive prizes and a chance to be in the book.

International Wool Challenge

Here's an international sheep-to-sweater competition, to be held June 14, 1997, in which spinners everywhere are invited to participate. Contest information is available from: *Spin·Off*, 201 East Fourth Street, Loveland, Colorado 80537; Wendy Dennis, Tarndwarncoort, Warncoort, Victoria 3243, Australia, phone 61 352 336 241, fax 61 352 336 338; The Scottish Wool Centre, Aberfoyle, Stirling, FK8 3UQ, Scotland, United Kingdom, phone 44 1877 382 850, fax 44 1877 382 854. See page 2 in the Winter 1995 issue of *Spin·Off* for a description of the contest. ❖

[1] Peter Menzel, *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994; Faith D'Aluisio and Peter Menzel, *Women in the Material World* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996).

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Letters

Dear *Spin·Off*,

SOAR [the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat] was absolutely incredible! I learned so much (and I've been spinning about twelve years) and met so many great people. The only thing that could top that was your Winter issue. The sheep from Utah State University spent the summer of '95 on the San Juan experimental station, which adjoins our ranch. We spent lots of time with Dr. McNeal and his staff and were lucky enough to have Lena Benally and her family over for supper. We developed a real appreciation for the tough little Churro sheep and for the overwhelming task of trying to maintain the breed.

—Pam Ramsey, Hesperus, Colorado

Dear *Spin·Off*,

Last week this was going to be a chiding admonishment for your duplication of material (Marcy Petrini, "A Knitted Felt Hat"). Three hats later, I'm quickly filling my Christmas list and smiling as my baskets of "whatever" yarn (as in, "whatever-am-I-going-to-do-with-this") melt into soft and squishy wearables. These hats are great projects for instant gratification as I can cast on in the morning and have a finished hat drying before dinnertime. Now I'm thinking of embellishments, baby sizes, slippers, and house socks. Hmmm. What happens when your "whatever" stash disappears? Oh: then you can spin the "someday" fleece. If that's used up, you get to buy *more*. Oh happy day! April is going to come and there will be new fleeces and lambs. That is a *great* thought in the dark and drear of November, but right now it means dyepots and colors and play. This is why I spin—for pure tactile satisfaction.

Marcy's article reminded me of the winter several years ago when our spinning group was churning out felted mohair/wool-blend hats, and I found the issue with Shirley Browsky's article and pattern for her felted, knitted hats. (If you didn't look before, please refer back and notice how similar these two patterns really are.) I do wish Marcy had credited Shirley's earlier efforts, and wish also that you had editorially done so, but there really is a very big bonus here. For those of us who were not listening, or were too busy with another project, or simply lost track of the idea, a second chance has presented itself. Just goes to show that the wheels keep turning, and we are all connected by the threads of ideas through time.

Thanks to all of you at *Spin·Off* for sharing, caring, and passing ideas around. The years have been kind—my subscription to *Spin·Off* is eleven years old, and that's just about the longest continuous thread under my roof (I do have one cat who has been with me longer). Maybe there is a good side to quarterly publication: my pile of *Spin·Off*s would be really unmanageable if they came more often!

—Sue Burnham, Bethel, Maine

Editor's Note: *You're right. Marcy's hats are variations on those which Shirley Browsky wrote about in "Wool/Mohair Felt" (Summer 1992, pages 87–89). We do try to keep all our loose ends tied, but sometimes they ravel. Sorry we neglected the cross-reference. And we also sometimes forget the "lost in translation to print" factor. At the tactile level, Marcy's and Shirley's hats inhabit different realms. Photos don't show that, as hard as they try. If you want to know what we're talking about, try Shirley's mohair/wool blend (70/30) in one hat and Marcy's wool in another. Fascinating. . . .*

Dear *Spin·Off*,

As always, I enjoyed the Winter 1996 issue. I was interested in seeing the article on the knitted, felted hats. I have been making these hats using a pattern produced by Fiber Trends (Beverly Galeskas, 304 36th Street #173, Bellingham, Washington 98225). In addition to the hat pattern, there are patterns for knitted, felted purses, slippers, mittens, teddy bears, rabbits, and so forth. The hat pattern has several different brim options and includes directions on how to incorporate a hat band. The hats I make use two strands of commercial yarn for the body of the hat, usually a Brown Sheep mohair/wool blend. Following the pattern directions, I then use one strand of the commercial yarn and one strand of two-ply, handspun llama for approximately 2½ inches (6.5 cm) at the beginning of the crown. When the hat is complete, this creates a hatband effect. I then tie a bow of three strands of llama yarn in this area for decoration. Why the handspun llama yarn? My husband and I raise llamas and alpacas in central Arizona. They are what entice me into spinning.

On a second note, has Interweave ever considered the idea of producing a

—continued on page 9

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more Letters . . . *(continued from page 7)*

fiber arts calendar? Every year I look for something special for my office; it would be really neat to have a fiber arts calendar. It could highlight outstanding items from the previous year's publications or could feature additional items. This could even become a contest. It could provide an outlet for the guild information. Dates could include fiber events around the country.

—Nancy Wilson, Camp Verde, Arizona

Editor's note: *Thanks for the suggestion. We did publish* Handwoven *calendars in 1984, '85, and '87, but the economics of the project did not warrant continuing. We'll pass the idea to our publisher for reconsideration.*

Dear *Spin·Off*,

The winter issue arrived in today's mail, and, as my husband says, I immediately submerged behind its cover. I can't resist surfacing to comment on the charkha articles. In the discussion of drive bands, I wonder why you didn't reference the June 1984 articles concerning charkhas authored by Mark Shepard. He described the technique used by Indian spinners to make replacement drive cords for their charkhas. I use this system to fashion new drive cords for my charkha with great success. The cords I make are much better than the cords which came with the spinning wheel. Granted, Mark Shepard used thread he spun, which you might not have when you're just building a charkha, but I'm sure grocery twine could be used until you're able to spin some of your own.

Spin·Off, and *Handwoven*, too, are my favorite magazines. As the time for the arrival of *Spin·Off* approaches, I suffer many disappointed days when it is not yet in the mailbox. Finally it appears. The rest of the mail remains unopened and lunch is delayed. First I read the entire table of contents to pick out the article which interests me most; then I go through the whole magazine from front to back, next I savor the editorial, then enjoy the letters to the editor, and finally settle down to my chosen article. Before the day is out the whole magazine has been devoured. Thank you much for a delightful experience.

—Alice Johnstone, Sitka, Alaska

Editor's note: *Ah, the frustration. Do we keep sending people back to articles in magazines that are out of print, or do we forge on, hoping some day to issue compilations of reprints that will put all this terrific information in one place? If you've got an archival collection of* Spin·Offs, *you can check out Mark Shepard's "More on . . . Charkha Techniques,"* Spin·Off *8, no. 2 (Summer 1984):36–39.*

Dear *Spin·Off*,

After learning to spin wool with a drop spindle while living in Indiana, I moved to the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Wool sweaters aren't needed much in the tropics—even the sheep have hair, not wool, here! However, cotton and indigo *(Indigofera suffruticosa)* used to be grown on plantations and are now found as weeds, so I learned to spin cotton with a takli.

Besides using cotton, Arawak and Carib Indians made hammocks and cloth out of the native agave (century plant) and yucca. Seaside mahoe bark *(Hibiscus tiliaceus)* was used for

—continued on page 95

SPIN·OFF
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- ❑ SPRING 1997 $5.50 *A Handspinner's Survey of Silk*
- ❑ WINTER 1996 $5.50 *Building a Charkha, Navajo Lifeway*
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Calendar

TO ENTER

✓ **California**/regional. Fleece contest at Monterey County Fair Wool Show, Aug. 19–24. California residents only; deadline prior to wool judging Aug. 10. Contact Monterey County Fair, 2004 Fairgrounds Rd., Monterey, CA 93940. (408) 372-5863.

✓ **California**/open. Wearable Expressions '98, international juried exhibition, Mar. 14–Apr. 25, 1998, at Palos Verdes Art Center, 5504 W. Crestridge Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes. Wearable art in all media, including jewelry and accessories. Slide deadline Oct. 1. Prospectus: SASE to Judith Solomon, 29 Misty Acres Rd., Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274.

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

✓ **Colorado**/open. Fiber Celebration '97, juried national exhibit at One West Art Center, Fort Collins, July 18–Aug. 23. Entry deadline May 15. Prospectus: send 32-cent stamp to Kathy Abnet, 1424 Del Sol Dr., Loveland, CO 80537.

✓ **Illinois**/open. Uncommon Threads '97, juried runway fashion show, all fiber media, Oct. 19. Prospectus: LSASE to Denise Kavanagh, The Fine Line Creative Arts Center, 6N158 Crane Rd., St. Charles, IL 60175. (630) 584-9443; fax (630) 584-9490.

✓ **Minnesota**/open. Fiber/Metal Arts Show, juried show/sale, Sept. 27–28 at Fine Arts Center, Minnesota State Fairgrounds, St. Paul. Slide postmark deadline Apr. 17. Entry form: SASE to Fiber/Metal Arts, Minnesota Crafts Council, Hennepin Center for the Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Ste. 216, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 333-7789; fax (612) 332-8131; e-mail mncraft@mtn.org; WEB address http://www.mtn.org/mncraft.

✓ **New Hampshire**/regional. Sheep to Garment contest in conjunction with New Hampshire Sheep and Wool Festival, May 10–11 at Hillsborough County 4-H Youth Center, New Boston. Deadline not stated. Contact Donna Carlstrom, 9 Cemetery Hill Rd., New Boston, NH 03070.

✓ **New Mexico**/regional. Fiber Art Fiesta Exhibit, Mar. 22–24 in Albuquerque. New Mexico spinners and weavers; entry deadline Mar. 1. Prospectus: LSASE (55 cents postage) to Fiber Art Fiesta, 12500 Montgomery NE, #119-002, Albuquerque, NM 87111, Attn: Patti Zigler.

✓ **New York**/open. The American Concern for Artistry and Craftsmanship sponsors American Crafts Festivals in New York City, June 14–15, June 21–22, Sept. 6–7, and Sept. 13–14, and in Roslyn Harbor, Sept. 26–28. Application deadlines were Jan. 3, but applications are reviewed until the shows fill. SASE (64 cents postage) to Sara Cogswell Wells, ACAC, PO Box 650, Montclair, NJ 07042. (201) 746-0091; fax (201) 509-7739.

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

✓ **Pennsylvania**/open. Mid-Atlantic Fiber Association Conference Fashion Show in Lewisburg, in conjunction with MAFA conference June 23–29. Entry deadline Apr. 15. Contact Renata Boetler, 4907 Powder Mill Rd., Beltsville, MD 20705. (301) 937-1575.

✓ **Tennessee**/open. Artist-in-residence positions, Sept. 1997–Aug. 1998. Application deadline Apr. 30. Arrowmont School, PO Box 567, Gatlinburg, TN 37738. (423) 436-5860; fax (423) 430-4101.

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

✓ **Wisconsin**/open. A Celebration of Creativity, fiber and textile exhibit in Whitewater, July 14–Aug. 1. Entry deadline June 9. Contact Alice K. Iverson, N8823 Nelson Rd., East Troy, WI 53120.

✓ **British Columbia**/regional. Those attending the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds Conference in Victoria, June 26–29, may enter an unjuried exhibit of fiber art, a swatch swap, and/or an informal fashion show. Exhibit deadline Mar. 31; contact Pat Dietrich, PO Box 2264, Sidney, BC, Canada V8L 3S8; (250) 656-4864. Swatch swap deadline May 26; contact Florence Craig, 423 Curtis Rd., Comox, BC, Canada V9M 3W1; (250) 339-5653. Informal fashion show deadline June 1; contact Laura Fry, PO Box 4, Prince George, BC, Canada V2L 4R9; e-mail ad161@freenet.unbc.edu.

✓ **British Columbia**/regional. Spinning competition and exhibit in conjunction with the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds Conference in Victoria, June 26–29. Entries due June 22. Send to Kathy Fimrite, 1910 Barrett Dr., Sidney, BC, Canada V8L 1A3; (250) 655-3918. Information: Rosemary Wallbank, 208 Sunset Dr., Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada V8K 1L4; phone/fax (250) 537-4398 (phone between 6–8 p.m. Pacific time).

✓ **British Columbia**/open. Fashion show in conjunction with the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds Conference in Victoria, June 26–29. Entry deadline Apr. 1. Contact Marilyn Perks, 4505 Durling Pl., Victoria, BC, Canada V8N 4Y9. (250) 477-8535 or (250) 658-8506.

✓ **British Columbia**/open. Memorial juried exhibit in honor of Christine Neil, organized by TAPIS in conjunction with the Association of Northwest Weavers' Guilds Conference in Victoria, June 26–29. Open to tapestry weavers whose work or lives have been influenced by Christine Neil; work created after January 1994. Entry deadline Apr. 11. Contact Yolanda Olivotto, 1790 Broadmead Ave., Victoria, BC, Canada V8P 2W1. (250) 721-4302; e-mail yobob@octonet.com.

FESTIVALS AND GATHERINGS

✓ **California,** Apr. 12, Oct. 18. Llama Private Treaty Sale and Bazaar and Fall Fiberfest at Gold Country Fairgrounds, Auburn. Call (916) 273-2998 or (916) 273-2568.

✓ **California,** May 18. Anderson Valley Wool and Fiber Show. Wool, fiber, animals, and finished items for sale. Music, spinning circle, sheep shearing, demonstrations, and family fun. In the Redwood Grove at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds in Boonville. (707) 895-3249.

✓ **California,** May 10. Fluff and Stuff at Alameda County Fairgrounds, Pleasanton. Contests, sales, spin-in. Contact Sandy Kelly, Northern California Angora Guild, 25275 La Loma Dr., Los Altos Hills, CA 94022. (415) 941-7551.

✓ **Colorado,** June 5–8. Estes Park Wool Market and Fiber Show at the fairgrounds in Estes Park. Workshops, demonstrations, sales, exhibits. Contact Estes Park Wool Market, Fairgrounds, PO Box 1967, Estes Park, CO 80517. (970) 586-6104.

✓ **Colorado,** June 6–8. Alpaca Breeders of the Rockies Rocky Mountain Alpaca Roundup in conjunction with Estes Park Wool Market, at the fairgrounds in Estes Park. Seminars, demonstrations, contests, exhibits. Contact ABR, 9349 N. Tammy Ln., Parker, CO 80134, or Marie Hinds, (303) 841-4889.

✓ **Idaho,** Mar. 15. Spring Fever Spin-In sponsored by Log Cabin Spinners and Fiber Arts Guild at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 1700 Pennsylvania Ave., Coeur d'Alene. Spinning, potluck lunch, sales. Call Marge Powers, (208) 664-6093, or Shirley Marson, (208) 664-6307.

✓ **Idaho,** May 17. Snake River Fiber Fantasy at Bonneville County Fairgrounds, Idaho Falls. Sales, demonstrations, workshops, sheep to shawl. Contact Kate Robertson, 1372 W. 81 N., Idaho Falls, ID 83402. (208) 525-8089.

✓ **Indiana,** Apr. 12. Fourth Annual Fleece Fair at Putnam County Fairgrounds, Greencastle. Competitions, workshops, petting zoo, camel rides, bunny-to-hat demo, and more.

Call Barb Huntsman, (317) 653-4649 or (812) 829-4501.

✓ **Maryland,** May 3–4. Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival at Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship. Preconference workshops May 1–3. Exhibits, contests, sales, demonstrations, auction. Contact Leslie Bauer, PO Box 99, Glenwood, MD 21738. (410) 531-3647.

✓ **Massachusetts,** May 17–18. New England Alpaca Fest at Lookout Farm, South Natick. Seminars, demonstrations, exhibits, sales. Contact Cindy and Tim Lavan, Chase Tavern Farm, RR2, Box 3220, Bowdoinham, ME 04008. (207) 268-2257; fax (207) 268-2577; e-mail ctalpacas@maine.com.

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

✓ **Michigan,** Aug. 14–17. Michigan Fiber Festival at Allegan County Fairgrounds, Allegan. Contact Michigan Fiber Festival, 142 E. State St., PO Box 501, Hastings, MI 49058. (616) 948-9644; fax (616) 948-9825.

✓ **Missouri,** Apr. 26. All Missouri Spin-In at Faust Park, St. Louis County. Contact Dale Goad, 123 Grandview Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. (314) 343-5041.

✓ **Missouri,** May 17. Third annual Fiber Fair, Webster County Fairgrounds, Marshfield, MO. Contact Gladys Gaeke, Small Farm Family Program, (417) 859-2914.

✓ **Nevada,** July 17–20. Llama Association of North America Expo '97 at Fuji Park, Carson City. Seminars, demonstrations, show clinic, llama olympics. Contact Nelson Leonard, (541) 830-5262, or Virginia Christensen, (702) 265-3177.

✓ **New Hampshire,** May 10–11. New Hampshire Sheep and Wool Festival at Hillsborough County 4-H Youth Center, New Boston. Sheep-to-garment contest, sheep and fleece shows, demonstrations, auction, fashion show, sales. Contact Bruce Clement, 33 West St., Keene, NH 03431. (603) 352-4550.

✓ **New York,** Apr. 26–27. Washington County Sheep and Fiber Farm Tour. Workshops, sales, demonstrations, exhibits. For a map, contact Debra St. Jacques, Spring Meadow Farm, Bain Rd., Argyle, NY 12809, (518) 638-6453; or Mary Pratt, Eluhu Farm, RD 1, Box 185, Valley Falls, NY 12185; (518) 753-7838.

✓ **New York,** Sept. 13–14. Finger Lakes Fiber Arts and Crafts Festival at Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock. Exhibits, sales, contests, demonstrations. LSASE to Pat Gesler, 5005 Canadice Lake Rd., Hemlock, NY 14466. (716) 367-2276.

✓ **Ohio,** Apr. 5. Market Day and Fiber Fair, sponsored by The Black Swamp Spinners Guild at Center Township Fire Station, Bowling Green.

✓ **Ohio,** May 24–25. Great Lakes Fiber Show in conjunction with Great Lakes Sheep and Wool Show and Sale at Wayne County Fairgrounds, Wooster. Sales, workshops, demonstrations. Contact Linda Reichert, 2474 N. Firestone Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. (330) 264-9665.

✓ **Ohio,** June 25–28. Fiberfest '97. Forum and Festival, including intensive workshops on all aspects of the natural fiber industry, vendors, animal displays, fiber art competitions, food and entertainment. Lake Farmpark, Kirtland, OH. Contact Fiberfest '97, PO Box 508, Novelty, OH 44072. (216) 256-3828.

✓ **Oregon,** May 10. Sheep to Shawl Festival at Mission Mill Village, Salem. Demonstrations, children's activities. Mission Mill Village, 1313 Mill St. SE, Salem, OR 97301. (503) 585-7012.

✓ **Oregon,** June 13–15. Jacob Sheep and Wool Show. Workshops, fiber show, exhibits, sales, demonstrations. Morrow County Fairgrounds, Heppner, OR. Contact Sandra Van Liew, Rte. 1, Box 3388, Heppner, OR 97836. (541) 676-5050.

✓ **Utah,** Sept. 13. Western Fiber Exchange Gathering in Helper. Exhibits, sales, sharing sessions. Contact Bobbie Irwin, 1245 W. Gordon Cr. Rd., Price, UT 84501. (801) 637-8476, e-mail michelle.goldsmith@m.k12.ut.us.

✓ **Virginia,** through Mar. 2. Mid-Atlantic Quilt Festival at Williamsburg Marriott Hotel, Kingsmill Rd.; Mid-Atlantic Wearable Art Festival at Williamsburg Lodge, Historic District; Vintage Fashion and Accessories Show at Patrick Henry Inn, Rte. 60; Mid-Atlantic Fiber Arts Fair at Fort MacGruder Inn, Rte. 60. All events in Williamsburg. Contact David M. and Peter J. Mancuso, PO Box 667, New Hope, PA 18938. (215) 862-5828; fax (215) 862-9753.

✓ **Washington,** April 18–20. Shepherds' Extravaganza, the western Washington Spring Fair in Puyallup. Sheep show, exhibits, demonstrations, vendors, and fleece sale. Contact Lin Schwider, (206) 432-3455.

✓ **Wisconsin,** May 17. Fiber Thing: A Wool Market Day at Dank Farm, Bonduel. Demonstrations, sales, exhibits, silent auction, beginning weaving class (includes children). SASE to Kitty Brady, W2298 Beech Rd., Bonduel, WI 54107. (715) 758-6984.

✓ **Wisconsin,** May 17–18. Door County Shepherds' Market at Whitefish Bay Farm, 3831 Clark Lake Rd. (County WD), Sturgeon Bay. Indoor event includes sales, demonstrations, door prizes, raffle. Call Gretchen Regnery, (414) 743-1560.

✓ **Wisconsin,** May 8–11. Natural Fiber Forum and Llama Market in Madison. Workshops, demonstrations, sales, exhibits. Contact Jayne Wick, 364 N. Shore, Grafton, WI 53024. Fax (414) 377-8450.

✓ **Ontario, Canada,** May 23–25. Sheep Focus '97, celebrating its twentieth year with exhibits, competitions, demonstrations, and sales. Markham, Ontario Fairgrounds. Contact Jean Bond, (519) 836-0043.

CONFERENCES

✓ **Alabama,** Apr. 3–6. Southern Alternatives, Southeast Fiber Forum hosted by Greater Birmingham Fiber Guild. Workshops, seminars, demonstrations, sales. Contact Jonnie Venglik, 2531 Rocky Ridge Rd., Ste. 101, Birmingham, AL 35242. (205) 822-5855.

✓ **California,** Apr. 25–30. Weave Me a Fantasy, Spin Me a Tale, Conference of Northern California Handweavers at Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo. Lectures, workshops. CNCH '97, PO Box 3005, Livermore, CA 94551; e-mail scgardner@aol.com.

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

✓ **Colorado,** Aug. 9–12. Intermountain Weavers Conference at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. Workshops, symposia, fashion show. Contact Lynette Silberschlag, 6481 Avenida De Posada, Tucson, AZ 85718. (520) 299-1418; e-mail ruslyn@aol.com.

✓ **Kansas,** Apr. 5–6. Fabric by Design, KAWS Conference, sponsored by Cottonwood Fiber Guild at Heartland Center, Great Bend. Contact Pete Soeken, PO Box 372, Claflin, KS 67525. (316) 587-3412.

✓ **Michigan,** June 13–15. Tomorrow's Heirlooms, Michigan League of Handweavers Biennial Conference at Alma College. Seminars, lectures, exhibits, sales. Workshops, June 16–18. Registration deadline Apr. 15. Registration packet: $2 to Karn Strunk, 7000 Smith Rd., Grass Lake, MI 49240.

✓ **Missouri,** May 16–18. A Trip in Time, annual Missouri Fiber Artists' State Conference at Drury College, Springfield. Lectures, workshops, exhibits, fashion show. Contact D.K. Taliaferro, 3354 Independence, Springfield, MO 65804.

✓ **New York,** July 18–20. Rainbows Over Niagara, Eastern Great Lakes Fiber Conference in Lewiston. Contact Pattie Lamb, Registrar, 9627 Cobblestone Dr., Clarence, NY 14031. (716) 759-0628.

✓ **Ohio,** July 7–13. Fiber Touchdown, Midwest Weavers Conference in Canton. Workshops, seminars, exhibits, lectures, sales, fashion shows. Registration booklet: $2 to Lynne Carnes, PO Box 214, Dellroy, OH 44620; e-mail 74041.2513@compuserve.com.

✓ **Oklahoma,** June 11–14. Joint conference of Ars Textrina and Southwest Regional Costume Society of America at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater. Early registration deadline Apr. 14; regular registration deadline May 25. Preconference class in silk dyeing and fabric book binding. Exhibits, workshops, lectures, research sessions. Contact Ars Textrina, Dept. of Design, Housing and Marketing, Oklahoma State University, 431 Human Environmental Sciences, Stillwater, OK 74078. (405) 744-5035; fax (405) 744-6910; e-mail sas3279@okway.okstate.edu.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** June 23–29. MAFA '97, Mid-Atlantic Fiber Association conference at Bucknell University, Lewisburg. Brochure: Ann Schaeffer, 716 W. Padonia Rd., Cock-

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eysville, MD 21030. (410) 560-1148; fax (410) 560-1092; e-mail mafa97@aol.com; WEB site http://www.mafafiber.org.

✓ **Rhode Island,** July 25–27. New England Weavers Seminar at Bryant College, Smithfield. Contact Marie Litterer, 34 Pearl St., Camden, ME 04843. (207) 236-6477.

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

✓ **New South Wales, Australia,** Sept. 28–Oct. 3. Loomcraft '97, conference of Hand Weavers and Spinners Guild of NSW in Sydney. Contact the guild at PO Box 578, Burwood, NSW 2134, Australia. Phone: +61 2 9745 1603; e-mail denises2@mail.kids.usyd.edu.au.

✓ **British Columbia, Canada,** June 26–29. Straits and Strands, biennial conference of The Association of Northwest Weavers Guilds in Victoria. Preconference workshops June 23–25, mini-workshops June 26. Exhibits, seminars, lectures, sales, fashion shows, tours. Contact Kathy Fimrite, 1910 Barrett Dr., Sidney, BC, Canada V8L 1A3. (250) 655-3918; fax (250) 655-3218.

✓ **Nova Scotia, Canada,** October 15–22. Fibres East '97 Conference, with seminars, displays, workshops, fashion show, and more at the Gaelic College of Arts and Crafts at St. Anns, Cape Breton Island. Contact Alicia Marr, 8a Chadwick St., Dartmouth, NS, Canada B2Y 2M3. (902) 469-8126.

✓ **Ontario, Canada,** May 8–11. Thread Benders '97, biennial conference of Ontario Handweavers and Spinners at the Holiday Inn, Burlington. Preconference workshops start May 5. Registration deadline Apr. 28. Contact Thread Benders '97 Registrar, 20 Airedale Ct., Georgetown, ON, Canada L7G 1G2. (905) 877-3532; e-mail 74273.504@compuserve.com.

✓ **Quebec, Canada,** June 6–8. Annual conference of l'Association des Tisserands du Québec (Quebec Weavers' Association) in Lachine. Contest, exhibit, lectures, tour, workshop. Call Denise Favreau, (819) 243-0040.

✓ **Manchester, England,** Apr. 4–10. International Feltmakers Association workshops and tours at Hartley Hall, Manchester. Contact Convenor Joan Braganza, PO Box 121, Reigate, Surrey, England RH2 9YU. Phone/fax 44+ 1737 245587.

EXHIBITS, SHOWS & SALES

✓ **Alabama,** Mar. 2–27. Huntsville Fiber Guild Annual Juried Exhibit, Burritt Museum and Park, Monte Sano Mountain, Huntsville. Contact Lisa Albea, (205) 461-7758.

✓ **Arizona,** Mar. 25–Apr. 29: Pulp Friction, paper exhibit. Apr. 29–May 31: Vaguely Familiar, national juried show. June 10–July 12: Global Warning, national juried exhibit of artists' responses to environmental issues. All exhibits at Galeria Mesa, 155 N. Center, PO Box 1466, Mesa, AZ 85211. (602) 644-2056; fax (602) 644-2901. WEB site http://www.ftgi.com/iar/12.html.

✓ **California,** Apr. 12–13. Llama Private Treaty Sale and Bazaar with Fiberfest (Apr. 12) and ALSA show (Apr. 13). Llama and alpaca sales, demonstrations, displays at Gold Country Fairgrounds, Auburn. (916) 273-2998 or (916) 273-2568.

✓ **California,** May 23. A Celebration of Fiber, Redwood Empire Handweavers and Spinners biennial display, fundraising sale, and dinner in Sebastopol, CA. Call (707) 823-8365.

✓ **California,** May 31–June 23: Master of Fine Arts Exhibition of textile art by Wendy Haworth, Gail Katz, and Mary Yaeger, at Design Gallery, Dept. of Environmental Design, Walker Hall, (916) 752-4139. May 31–June 30: Master of Fine Arts Exhibition of textile art and costume design by J. R. Campbell, Susan Taber Avila, and Soon Jung Yim, at Buehler Alumni Center, SW corner of Old Davis Rd. and Mrak Hall Dr., (916) 752-0539. Both exhibits at the University of California-Davis, Davis, CA 95616; opening receptions May 31, 5–7 p.m.

✓ **California,** Aug. 19–24. Monterey County Fair Wool Show. Contests, demonstrations, exhibits; wool judging Aug. 10, fleece auction Aug. 24. At Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Rd., Monterey, CA 93940. (408) 372-5863.

✓ **Iowa,** Mar. 9–Apr. 20. Clay, Fiber, Paper, Glass, Metal, and Wood Exhibition at The Octagon Center for the Arts, 427 Douglas Ave., Ames, IA 50010. (515) 232-5331; fax (515) 232-5088.

✓ **Massachusetts,** May 10–11: Sheep and Wool Weekend, demonstrations and exhibits. July 12–13: American Artisans Crafts Show and sale. Both events at Hancock Shaker Village, PO Box 927, Pittsfield, MA 01202. (413) 443-0188; fax (413) 447-9357.

✓ **Minnesota,** Apr. 10–13. American Craft Council Craft Fair at St. Paul Civic Center, St. Paul. Juried sales. Call (612) 491-2099.

✓ **Missouri,** Apr. 4–5. Wool Days '97, Humble Hills Sheep and Wool Sale. Contact Andy and Desirée McMurry, 1110 County Rd. 319, Franklin, MO 65250. (816) 848-3197.

✓ **New Mexico,** May 22–24. Fiber Art Fiesta, exhibits, demonstrations, sales, fashion show, sponsored by seven fiber guilds at the State Fair Grounds, Albuquerque. LSASE (55 cents postage) to Fiber Art Fiesta, 12500 Montgomery NE, #119-002, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

✓ **New York,** June 14–15, June 21–22: American Crafts Festival. Sept. 6–7, Sept. 13–14: Autumn Crafts Festival. Both at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York City. Sept. 26–28: The Art of Craft Festival at Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor. SASE (64 cents postage) to Sara Cogswell Wells, ACAC, PO Box 650, Montclair, NJ 07042. (201) 746-0091; fax (201) 509-7739.

✓ **North Carolina,** Apr. 18–July 5. Exhibition spotlighting the craft heritage of the Asheville area at Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, 38 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801. (704) 251-0202; fax (704) 251-0884.

✓ **Oregon,** Mar. 15. Spring Fiber Show and Sale at the Harding Grange, Oregon City. Call (503) 630-4583 or (206) 265-6651.

✓ **Pennsylvania,** July 11–Aug. 24. Fiberart International '97, exhibition at The Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and The Society for Contemporary Crafts, Pittsburgh. SASE to Catherine McConnell, 6426 Jackson St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

✓ **Wisconsin,** Apr. 19–20. Shepherds Harvest, annual sale by Spindrifters of Mt. Horeb. Sales, demonstrations, classes. Contact Carol Watkins, 1152 Hwy. H, Mt. Horeb, WI 53572. (608) 437-5086.

✓ **Wisconsin,** July 14–Aug. 1. A Celebration of Creativity, annual fiber and textile exhibit, sponsored by Whitewater Spinners and Weavers Guild in the Crossman Gallery, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater. Contact Alice K. Iverson, N8823 Nelson Rd., East Troy, WI 53120.

✓ **New South Wales, Australia,** July 17–20. Fibre to Fabric, exhibition celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Hand Weavers & Spinners Guild of NSW at Sydney Convention Center, Darling Harbour, Sydney. Contact the guild at PO Box 578, Burwood, NSW 2134, Australia. +61 2 9745 1603; e-mail denises2@mail.kids.usyd.edu.au.

✓ **Suffolk, England,** May 3–5. Four Seasons of Suffolk, exhibition by Lavenham Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers at The Guildhall, Hadleigh, Suffolk. Demonstrations and sales. Contact Alison B. Swann, Porthwen, Church Rd., Wrabness, Manningtree, Essex, England, CO11 2TQ. +44 1255 886333.

INSTRUCTION

✓ **California,** Mar. 15–16. Archaic Weaving, class at Studio Gaustad, 11178 Upper Previtali Rd., Jackson, CA 95642. Information: (209) 223-4132 (no phone reservations).

✓ **Colorado,** Mar. 1–2: Beginning Tapestry with Shanne Hilleman; Felt a Vest with Anne Sneary. Mar. 1, 8: Architectural Knitting with Stetson Weddle. Mar 1, 8, 15: Learn to Knit; Entrelac Knitting; Miniature Tapestry with Shanne Hilleman; Weaving Novelties with Torri Hanna. Mar. 4, 18, Apr. 1: Learn to Spin. Mar. 8: Felted Bags with Anne Sneary. Mar. 9: Felt For Your Feet with Anne Sneary. Mar. 16: Felted Beads with Jo Veal. Lambspun of Colorado, 1101 E. Lincoln Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80524. (970) 484-1998 or (800) 558-5262.

✓ **Colorado,** June 5–6. Workshops on weaving, spinning, knitting, dyeing, felting, and fiber animals in conjunction with Estes Park Wool Market, PO Box 1967, Estes Park, CO 80517.

✓ **Maine,** Aug. 31–Sept. 6. Purple lichen dye workshop with Karen Diadick Casselman at Eagle Hill Field Research Station, Dyer Bay Rd., PO Box 9, Steuben, ME 04680. (207) 546-2821; fax (207) 546-3024; e-mail eaglehill

@maine.maine.edu.

✓ **Maryland,** May 1: Sock Knitting with Margaret Fisher. May 1–2: Dyeing, Blending and Spinning with Deb Menz. May 2–3: Tapestry Weaving with Nancy Harvey. Workshops in conjunction with Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival at Howard County Fairgrounds, West Friendship. Registration limited, opens Apr. 21. Call (410) 531-3647.

✓ **Massachusetts,** Apr. 26–28: Handpainted Fabrics with Erica Licea-Kane. May 10–12: The Art Quilt with Jane Skafte, Sculptural Baskets with Elizabeth Whyte Schulze, Paper with Jan Owen. Workshops at Horizons, 108 N. Main St., Sunderland, MA 01375. (413) 665-0300; fax (413) 665-4141.

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

✓ **Massachusetts,** Mar. 1: Shaker Black Ash Pincushion Basket with Gerrie Kennedy. Mar. 3–7: Beginning Weaving with several teachers. Classes at Hancock Shaker Village, PO Box 927, Pittsfield, MA 01202. (413) 443-0188; fax (413) 447-9357; WEB site http://www.hancockshakervillage.org. Registration: Berkshire Community College, Office of Community Services and External Affairs, (413) 499-4660, ext. 374.

✓ **North Carolina,** May 2–4: Spinning and Dyeing with Martha Owen. July 6–12: Focus on Silk with Mary Stock, Indigo with Jim Liles. July 25–27: Spin or Dye with Martha Owen. July 27–Aug. 2: Scintillating Color with Ann L. Kreckel. Aug. 17–23: Spinning Cotton with Eileen Hallman. Sept. 7–13: Rainbow Dyeing and Spinning with Nancy Morey. Sept. 21–27: Spinning and Natural Dyeing with Carla Owen. Nov. 2–8: Spinning Yarn and Spinning Yarns with Martha Owen. All classes at John C. Campbell Folk School, Rt. 1, Box 14A, Brasstown, NC 28902. (704) 837-2775; fax (704) 837-8637.

✓ **North Carolina,** May 16–18. Crochet certification workshop at Borders, Books and Music, Cary. Contact Carolyn Furkey, Triangle Crocheters Guild, 117 Rockspray Ct., Cary, NC 27513. (919) 467-1452.

✓ **Washington,** Mar. 13–16: Needleworks classes. Third week in September: Fiber Forum. Coupeville Arts Center, 15 NW Birch, PO Box 171, Coupeville, WA 98239. (360) 678-3396; fax (360) 678-7420; e-mail cac@whidbey.net.

✓ **England,** ongoing. Correspondence course in embroidery and design, sponsored by the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology. Contact Sara Rawlins, GLOSCAT, Christchurch Annexe, Gloucester Rd., Cheltenham, Glos. GL51 8P England. +44 (0) 1242 532138; fax +44 (0) 1242 532096; e-mail postman@gloscat.demon.co.uk.

✓ **Ireland,** Aug. 23–30, Oct. 24–27. Classes in natural dyes, carding, spinning and tapestry weaving by local weavers at the Ulster Cultural Institute. Contact Oideas Gael, Gleann Cholm Cille, Co. Dhun na nGall, Eire (Ireland). Phone. + 353-73-30248; fax (073) 30348; e-mail oidsgael@iol.ie; WEB site http://www.xs4all.nl/~conaill/Oideas_Gael/oideas.html.

TRAVEL

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

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

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

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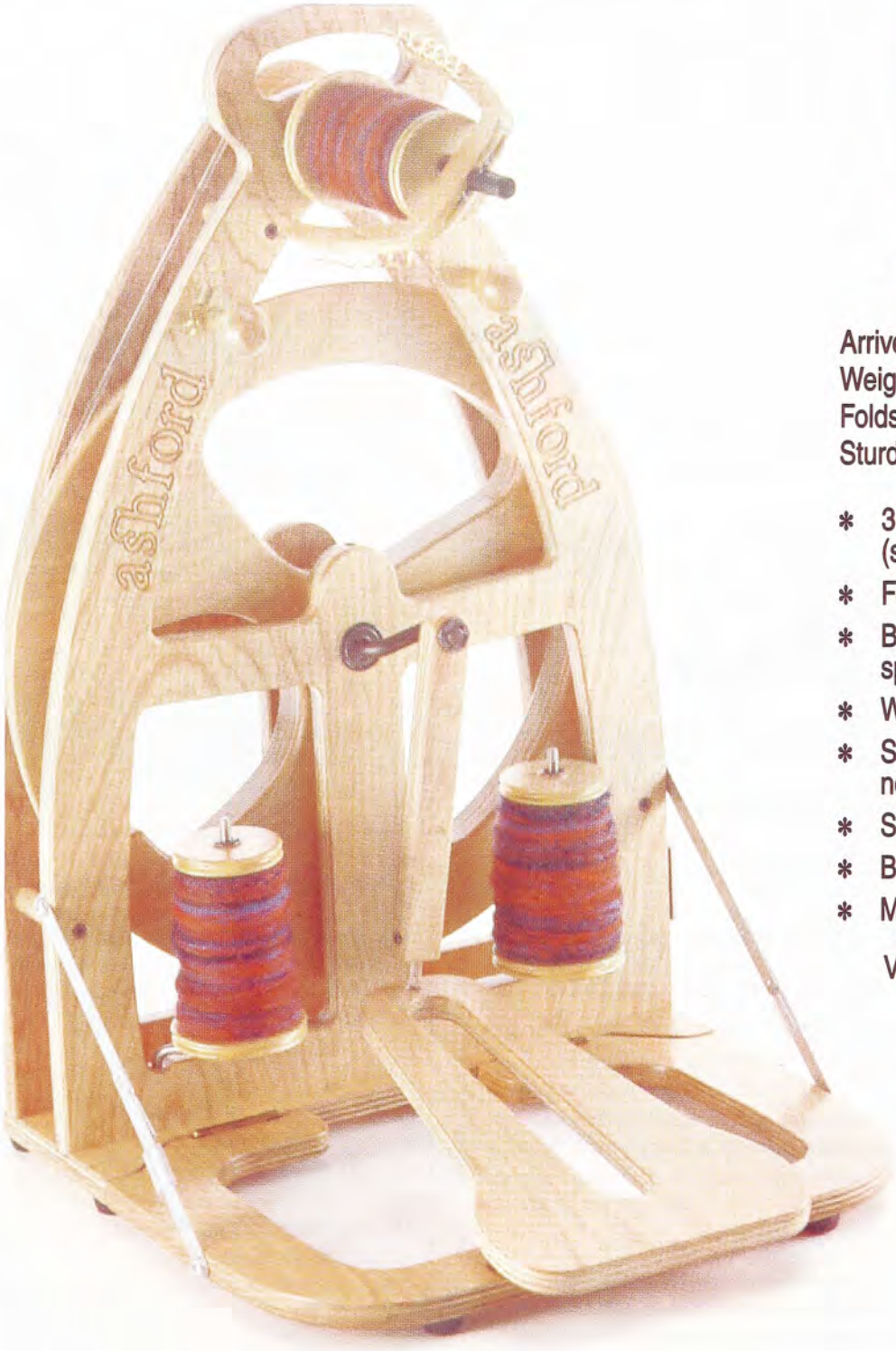
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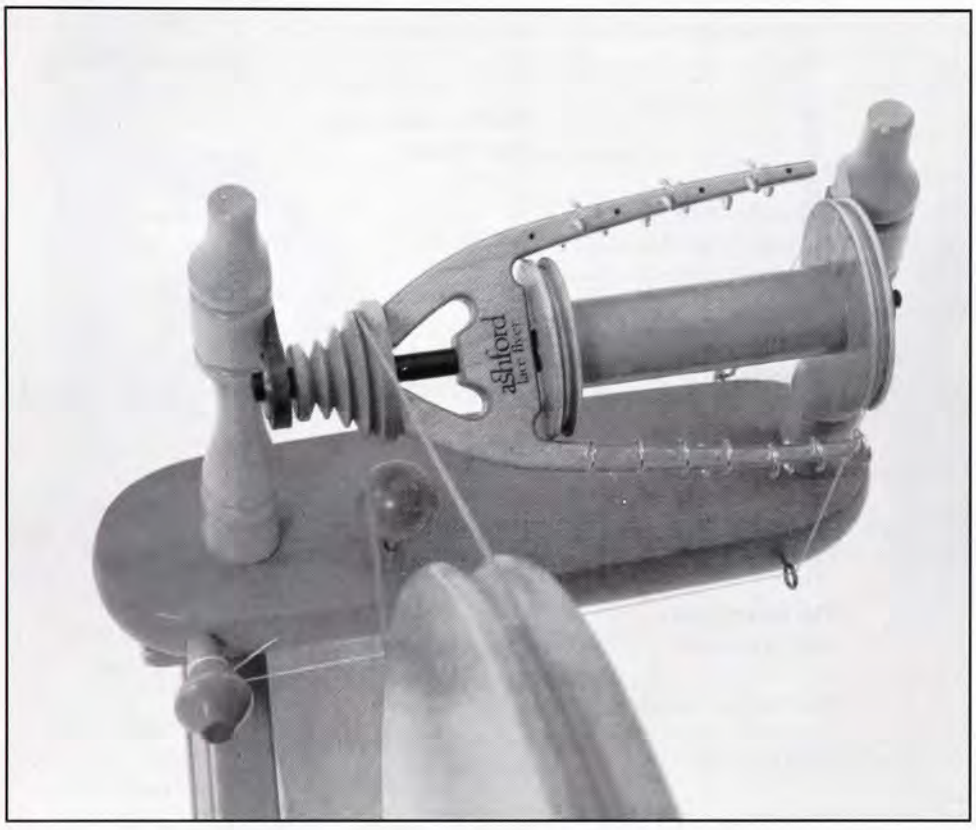
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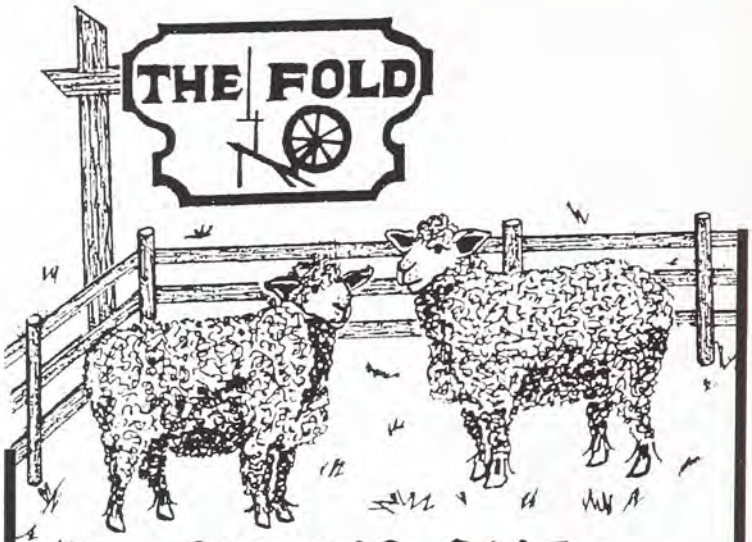
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Spinner's Question

Blocking Yarn

Q: *I moved to a new state last year, and one of the hardest parts of moving was leaving my old spinning guild. I have found a new guild and feel welcome, but am surprised and puzzled by so many different ideas and attitudes. For example, in my old guild nobody ever talked about blocking their yarn, but everyone here says you must block your yarn, and the more the better. Now I don't know what to do.*

A: First off, whenever you hear a spinner saying you must *always* do this or *never* do that, as if there's only one right way to proceed, the best thing to do is smile sweetly and walk away quickly. Rigid guidelines may apply to specific situations, but they aren't appropriate for spinning in general. Blocking is a good example to discuss.

What is blocking?

Blocking means washing or wetting a skein, then positioning it so that the yarn is held straight as it dries. The traditional way to do this is to put the wet skein on a swift, then rewind the yarn onto a yarn blocker (you can buy a blocker or make one yourself from wood or plastic pipe). Wind slowly and carefully so all the strands are straight and even, but don't pull the yarn too tight. Then let it dry and remove the skein.

A shortcut is to hang up the wet skein, attach a weight to the bottom, and leave the weight in place until the skein is dry. Weighting skeins is easier than winding yarn onto a blocker but doesn't work as evenly, because some strands of the skein are always pulled tighter than others.

Blocking to set the twist

Traditionally, spinners used blocking as a way to prepare singles yarn for weaving. Blocking sets the twist, which means the yarn doesn't kink or snarl so much and is easier to handle as you thread the warp or throw the shuttle. Many contemporary spinners have adopted blocking as a way to handle singles in general, but this can lead to trouble. Setting twist doesn't make it go away; the yarn only seems calm until you wash it. Then it kinks again. This isn't a problem for weavers. If you block singles yarn, weave with it, then wash the cloth, the cloth may end up with a crinkled texture but it stays square. Knitters, however, may get an unwelcome surprise. If you block singles yarn, knit with it, then wash the finished item, the stitches may slant and the whole project may pull out of shape. Whether this happens will depend on how much twist is in the yarn and on how you handle the yarn on its way to becoming a finished project.

Be careful not to stretch the yarn

The idea in blocking is to hold the yarn in a straightened position as it dries, but spinners sometimes exaggerate and wind the yarn too tightly on the blocker or attach too heavy a weight to the skein. This doesn't just *straighten* the yarn, it *stretches* it. What happens the next time you wash that yarn and let it dry without blocking? It gets shorter—it "un"stretches. Again, this isn't a problem for weavers, who expect their fabric to shrink when they take it off the loom and wash and dry it. If you're going to make a garment from handwoven cloth, you always preshrink the fabric before you start to cut and sew.

By contrast, knitters typically don't plan for shrinkage. If you accidentally or intentionally stretch yarn as you block it and then knit with that yarn, when you wash the finished project, you may end up with something that's a few sizes too small. For knitting—especially with wool!—it's a good idea to "preshrink" the yarn before you use it. Wash the skeins and lay them on a towel or rack to dry, so the yarn is relaxed, not stretched.

Three alternatives to blocking

1. **Untwist the yarn.** If you've spun a singles with so much twist that it acts kinky and feels hard and wiry, blocking may help you use the yarn, but it won't solve the basic problem. A more spinnerly solution is to make the yarn into a ball, tie one end onto the leader, and quickly spin that yarn onto the bobbin again, turning your wheel in the opposite direction to remove some of the original twist. Don't be ashamed to do this; it's much better to fix a problem than to pretend it doesn't exist.

2. **Ply your yarn.** If you ply a yarn to balance the twist in the singles, the washed skein will naturally be calm and easy to handle, and there will be no reason to bother blocking it. (For step-by-step advice on how to make a balanced plied yarn, see the Summer 1995 issue of *Spin·Off*, page 128.)

3. **Steam your yarn.** Steaming yarn is like ironing clothes—it makes the wrinkles go away. Simply pass the skein back and forth through the steam coming out of a teakettle, or use a garment steamer or steam iron to steam a skein that's still



on a niddy-noddy or skein reel. It only takes a few seconds for the steam to do its job. Steaming makes neat, smooth skeins. Like blocking, steaming sets the twist, but unlike blocking, there's no risk of stretching the yarn. You can steam a skein before you wash it, after you wash it, or both. (Steaming complements, but doesn't substitute for, washing.)

It's your decision

So, should you block or not? Your choice depends on the kind of yarn and how you're going to use it. Now that you understand the choices, you're ready to proceed with confidence. And at the next guild meeting, you can smile more sweetly than ever. Listen to what other spinners have to say, but make your own decisions. It's your yarn. ❖

Double Treadle Wheels.....the ups and downs!

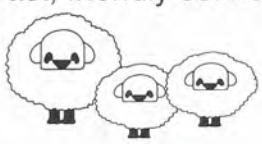
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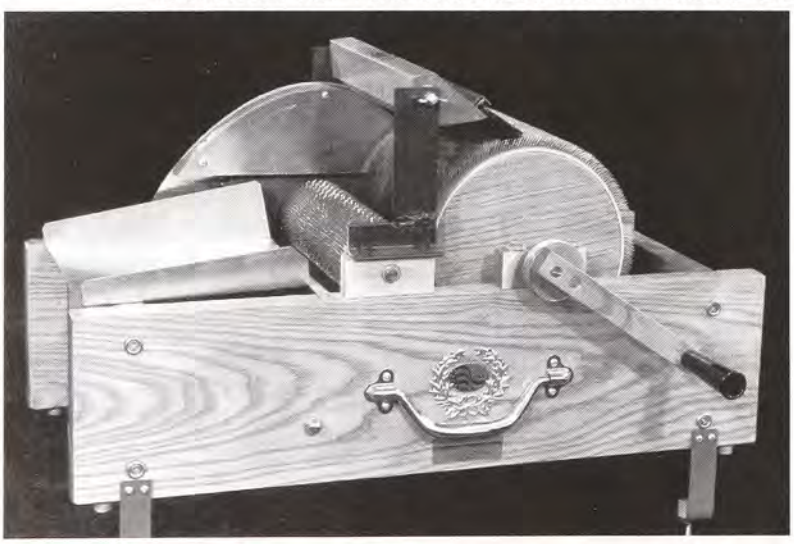

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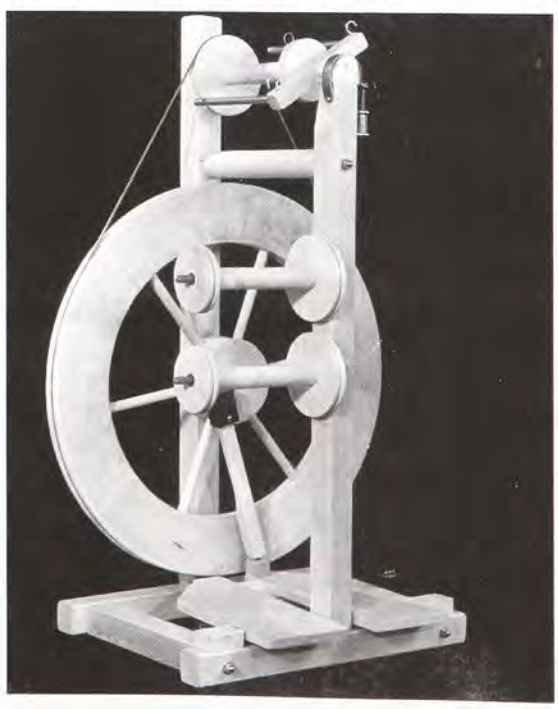
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Friends, Spun Together

by Jill Turner

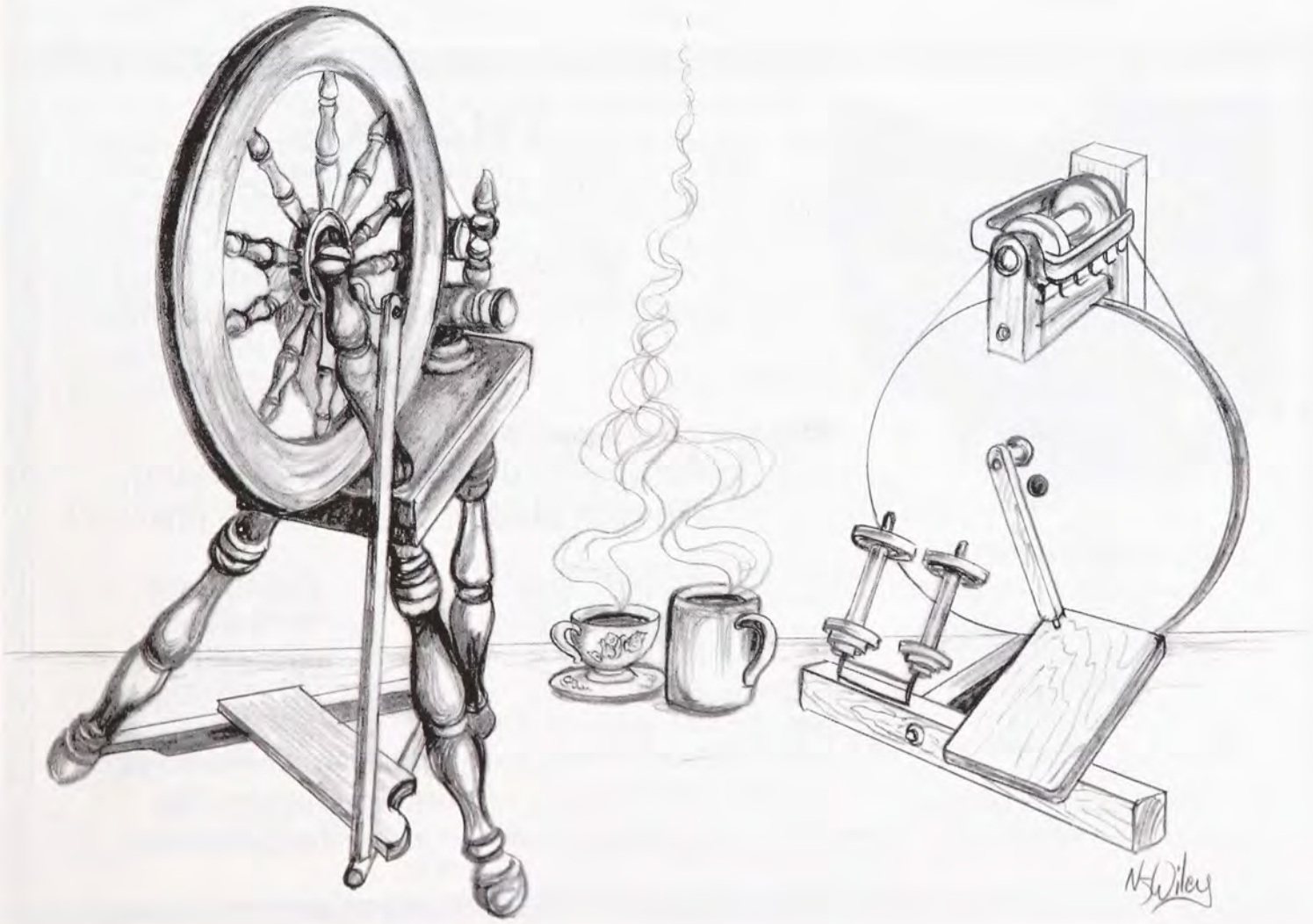
I HAVE CONCLUDED that friendship and spinning have far more in common than is reasonable. What is the goal of a friendship? Perhaps to bring people together who share something? To establish a common goal, or, in spite of differences, to create a common interest?

But wouldn't life be boring if everyone around you felt the same way about everything? Wouldn't we become stale and uninteresting without the challenge of different opinions, or of other ways of doing things?

In spinning, the goal is to bring together loose fibers, which may be relatively similar or completely different. The spinner's aim is to combine them in a way that appeals to sight and touch. Taking a look at how lasting friendship evolves, I think the goal is to bring people together in the same way, and to create a lasting bond that will grow into a strong union which, in turn, will nourish both parties and enhance their growth.

When you think about combining fibers in a yarn, there are several questions you should ask yourself. How will the fibers interact? Will they hold together as one, or will they pull apart, unable to hold within

As the wheel turns. . . .



the twist? Will they shrink at the same rate, or do you care if one shrinks more than the other—in some cases, could that benefit the finished yarn? What texture are you trying to create? Should it be smooth, rough, slubby, coarse, fine?

Then you look at the fibers that are available to you. What kinds do you want to use in this project? What colors? You're approaching the stage where you must commit yourself to the final project, choosing the fibers, colors, and textures for real. Maybe looking at people with the same eye, we might make better choices in our friends.

A common bond or interest brings people together, but if we all think alike, then who do we have to talk with—and convert to our point of view? Isn't that part of the fun? I don't know about you, but I want people to try to bring me around to their way of thinking. Sometimes, even when I agree I'll argue the other side. Maybe I want to see if I can change their minds, or maybe I'm just obstinate. I can be that way once in a while—it's my dad in me! He loved to do just that. He seldom accepted what I said at face value. He always wanted me to explain, and often took the opposing view. At the time, I thought he was just trying to drive me crazy. Now I understand he was helping me develop the skill to see all sides and the ability to be sure of my convictions.

Friends take you as you are, good or bad, and do the best with you. Just like fibers, we're not always at our best. We work with what we have. Sometimes it's smooth, combed silk, and sometimes it's noil, bugs and all!

No matter how many spinners I meet, talk to, and share spinning with, every one does something different. I think that's part of what I enjoy. When you share your ideas, you get some in return. Not every idea will suit you, but that's okay.

Good friends should be like a good yarn: strong when needed, but with enough diversity to keep life interesting. ❖

Jill Turner teaches fiber arts in adult education programs around Michigan and enjoys teaching at fiber conferences around the country. She'd also working hard this year on the new Michigan Fiber Festival, August 14–17, 1997, in Allegan.

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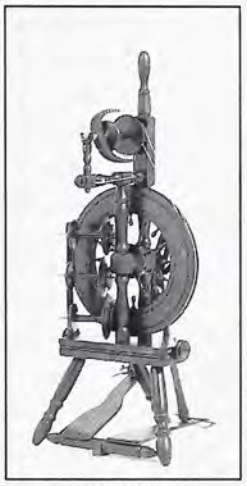
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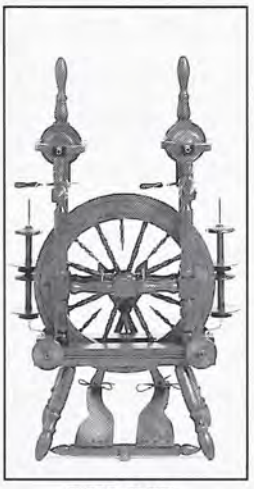
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Books

Pingouin Classic Knits for All the Family

Sally Harding

North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square Publishing, 1994. Hardbound, 144 pages, $29.95. ISBN 1-57076-000-4.

Chosen from among the more than ten thousand patterns in Pingouin's files, this book contains thirty-plus sweater designs which include the classics, more modern designs, and country styles. They range from the softly feminine through baby items, patterns for children, and men's styles to suit a wide variety of tastes. Pingouin is known for their outstanding photography. A full-page photograph accompanies each pattern, illustrating perfectly the texture as well as how each specific sweater will look when finished.

The patterns are graded according to difficulty, appealing to knitters from the beginner level to those who enjoy more complexity. The written directions are clearly presented in a logical order, beginning with sizes, materials, tension, and stitches used, followed by complete instructions. Charts with accompanying key measurements are used where applicable.

Patterns used for these sweaters would appeal to a number of knitters from the novice to the experienced knitter. Some are in simple stockinette stitch, while others are done in multiple all-over cables for more intricate work offering more challenge. All of the designs are timeless, in that with only minor adjustments or knitted in a different color, they will remain appealing for many years to come.

Although written specifically for Pingouin yarns, an extensive listing of yarn information at the back of the book provides enough information, including weight, fiber content, and ball size, to enable an experienced spinner to duplicate the fiber blends and sizes of the yarns called for. The stitch gauge and needle-size charts provide additional help in substituting yarns. Known for their soft mohair blends and finer yarns, Pingouin's designs for these garments include cotton and wool mixtures as well.

Of near coffee-table–book quality, *Pingouin Classic Knits for All the Family* would be a wonderful reference for any knitter's library.

—Gloria Hall

Knitting In America: Patterns, Profiles, and Stories of America's Leading Artisans

Melanie D. Falick

New York: Artisan, 1996. Hardbound, 224 pages, $35. ISBN 1-885183-27-5.

If Melanie Falick wrote *Knitting In America* to compete with the beautiful coffee-table knitting books by British knitters, she has definitely won. *Knitting In America* is so much more than a beautiful pattern book. For me the patterns are secondary—a nice bonus. The thirty-eight articles featuring knitters from twenty-one states are inspiring and heart-warming.

Knitting In America encompasses four regions of the United States: East, Southwest, West, and Midwest. The featured knitters are professional designers, accomplished nonprofessionals, spinners, dyers, workshop leaders, artists, shop owners, icons, and unknowns. Melanie Falick writes of them and their work with respect and fondness.

Chris Hartlove's photography of the knitters and their knitting is lovely. He makes the knitters' friends and relatives (who modeled the patterned garments) look beautiful. Many knitting books and magazines show models in poses where a clear view of the knitting is sacrificed to interesting composition or the beauty of the model. Hartlove's pictures of the knitting are clear and helpful as well as beautiful.

Each article gives the reader a trip through the knitter's personal and professional past, a visit in the knitter's home and favorite knitting places, and a view of some sources of inspiration. Seven of these knitters discuss the role that handspinning plays in their knitting. If you've ever looked at a beautiful sweater or a humorous pair of socks and wondered how the knitter thought of that, but found only a pattern, this book will finally answer your questions. In the process, your own creative juices will be stirred.

The sixty pages of patterns include adults' and children's sweaters, hats, wimples, vests, shawls, socks, and mittens. The patterns are rated for difficulty. Except for one "easy" pattern and one "expert" pattern, the rest of the designs fall into the "experienced" and "intermediate" categories.

The final two pages are devoted to pictures and knitters' credits for all of the hats donated to the *Knitting In America* Hat Project.

If I have a complaint about *Knitting In America*, it is that it is too short. Not only do I want more articles, but I want to read about knitters from places that weren't represented, like the South and Canada. There is one other complaint that was voiced by my friend, Laura. Every time she settles down to read more of this wonderful book, what she reads makes her want to put the book down and knit.

Actually, that may be the best compliment a knitting book can receive.

—Mary Spanos

Lace Knitting: A Selection of 26 Patterns

Sarie van Schalkwyk

Cape Town, South Africa: Delos, 1991. Out of print. Paperbound, 48 pages, $10.95. ISBN 1-86826-180-8.

This is one book that I want to have in my knitting library when the urge strikes to create elegant handspun lace for my home. Van Schalkwyk's selection of twenty-six patterns includes both simple and complex knitted lace accessories for every room of the house: soap sachets, lace-edged guest towels, saucer doilies, a tea cozy, place mats, coasters,

pillow covers, tablecloths, curtains, a bedspread, and more. Each pattern is presented with line-by-line written instructions (no charts) and a full-color photograph to inspire the novice and expert lace knitter alike.

This is not a "how-to" book; it is a book of patterns, and the author assumes knowledge of the fundamentals of knitting and crochet. A brief introduction provides basic information about general technique, casting on and off, using abbreviations and notation for pattern repeats, and washing and stretching the finished piece. Knitting abbreviations are standard except for a few, like yfd, yon, yrn, and others which are specific to individual patterns; all are clearly explained by the author. Yarn requirements, needle sizes, and all measurements are given in metric only. Among the book's nice surprises are the two alternative methods of casting on for circular pieces. This bit of technical information alone is worth the price of the book.

Approximately half the patterns are in the tradition of Marianne Kinzel's "Round Art Knitting"—amazing circular designs that begin with 8 to 12 stitches in the center and gradually increase to hundreds of stitches with stars, flowers, leaves, and other pleasing shapes emerging along the way. The other designs, including a stunning lace border for an oval (or round) mirror frame, begin with a more manageable number of stitches, typically in the 40 to 160 range.

With few exceptions, the instructions call for crochet cotton no. 5 or no. 8 and size 2.5 mm (U.S. 2) double-pointed and circular needles, but handspinners know that these specifications are only a guideline. I sampled several patterns using size 0 (2 mm) needles and very fine two-ply yarn in three different fibers: Merino, Merino/bombyx silk blend, and tussah silk. The saucer doily that I knitted in space-dyed Merino looked like a delicate flower with a peach-colored center and purple petals blending into a pink border. I also completed a 13-inch (33-cm) circular doily and began one of the tablecloths, whose center portion was not visible in the photograph. I like to compare my knitting to a photograph to make sure I'm on track and so I was disappointed that the centers of two tablecloths appeared washed out in the accompanying photographs—a small technical flaw in an otherwise beautifully produced book.

I used the author's alternative methods of casting on, and found that I could begin the circular pieces without distorting the pattern, dropping stitches, or getting tangled up in needles going in every direction. The instructions are clear and precise and the patterns are definitely suitable for a variety of handspun projects—from delicate silk doilies to cuddly, soft christening shawls, and maybe even a lacy afghan. True, the more intricate pieces demand considerable skill and concentration, but the heirloom quality of these patterns certainly makes them worthy of our time and effort.

—Janice Keller

Classic Knits for Kids

Debbie Bliss

North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 1994. Softbound, 80 pages, $11.95. ISBN 1-57076-026-8.

Bright Knits for Kids

Debbie Bliss

North Pomfret, Vermont: Trafalgar Square, 1996. Hardbound, 80 pages, $19.95. ISBN 1-57076-025-X.

The subtitle of *Classic Knits for Kids* is "30 Traditional Aran and Guernsey Designs for 0–6 Years." There is a marvelous range of styles in these thirty designs and I found myself wishing over and over that the sweaters had been sized up to at least a women's medium. It's been a long while since I've taken time to knit anything besides the essentials of socks and gloves for my children, but the designs in this book have just about guaranteed that my two youngest boys will get new sweaters this winter. I promised myself years ago that I wouldn't knit anything for which I hadn't spun the yarn, and these sweaters will fit in well with my new attempts to spin nice, fat yarns that will knit up quickly and be snugly and warm.

In addition to sweaters, there are coats, jackets, and several hats. While the styles and textures seem at first glance to be quite traditional, a closer look reveals modern touches that mark these sweaters as new classics. There are lovely and unexpected details such as lace borders on an Aran cardigan; hoods; shawl and sailor collars; and pocket flaps. Most designs are worked in a single color, as was true of the originals from which the author takes her inspiration.

While I liked the textures and subtle colors in *Classic Knits for Kids*, my children preferred the cheerful and brilliant colors and patterning used in *Bright Knits for Kids*. Here again you'll find over twenty-five designs for children, including cardigans, pullovers, hats, and vests. Most of the patterns are knitted using the Fair Isle technique that requires no more than two colors in a row, with the color not in use stranded across the back of the garment. About a third of the garments are worked in a single color and rely on texture for their interest, but these colors are not the conventional ones of Aran white or gansey blue. Instead Debbie Bliss has chosen the gay blues, greens, reds, and yellows sure to delight most children.

In both books the yarn sizes are mainly in the medium to heavy range, and the majority of patterns call for needle sizes from American 5 to 7 (4 to 5 mm) and gauges of 5 to 6 stitches per inch (2.5 cm). There is a good representation of degrees of difficulty in each book. *Classic Knits* has simple striped tunics and fisherman ganseys as well as Arans with complex bobbles and cables. *Bright Knits* ranges from textural one-color patterns to multi-color patterning that requires Fair Isle technique or intarsia. Each garment piece is shown in a diagram that gives dimensions in both inches and centimeters. All sweater/jacket designs are worked in pieces and sewn together. Although the sizes only range up to 6, the measurements given are very generous (for instance, chest size of 36"/91 cm on size 6) and by simply lengthening body and sleeves many of these sweaters could be made to fit older children.

The stitch patterns in *Classic Knits* are written out, as opposed to being in chart form. Because of the complexity of some of the patterns, particularly the Arans, this makes for full pages of

closely-spaced small type. In *Bright Knits* the color patterns are shown in black-and-white charts that use symbols to represent the colors. As all of the color photos are at the beginning, this leaves most of the books with nothing to break up the long pages of words. Also, the directions for finishing the garments—for example, "sew in zip"—are brief and without much detail. If you are not proficient in this area, you will need to have another source of finishing information. Finally, having worked with a large number of beginning knitters, I have found that having some type of "degree of difficulty" rating system for each design is a great asset in helping these knitters determine which sweaters to attempt, and these books don't have that. These points are minor and don't detract much from the overall excellence of these books.

Finally, as spinners I think you will find that the yarns called for in these patterns are easily duplicated. The yarn sizes are well within the range that most spinners are spinning already and you will only need to match the gauge swatches. The sweaters have been done in both wools and cottons and should spin and knit up quickly. Cotton yarns will take more time in spinning, as you will need to spin a fine singles yarn and then ply up to reach the required weight of yarn. If spinning wool, consider some of the excellent superwash wools that are on the market and you'll still be able to throw the sweater in the washing machine and dryer, a distinct advantage in sweaters for children.

—Patricia Emerick

Australian Locker Hooking

Signe Nickerson

Sandpoint, Idaho: Selkirk Press, 1996. Paperback, spiral bound, 46 pages. Available from The Crafty Ewe, PO Box 1803, Bonner's Ferry, Idaho 83805. $11.45 postage paid. No ISBN.

While judging a fleece show several years ago, I was constantly interrupted by spinners wanting to know what fleeces were for sale, and shepherds who wanted to know what they'd won. Fielding questions and keeping people from pulling out samples probably took as much time as the judging. One interruption I welcomed, because a spinner ended up by giving me an impromptu demonstration of locker hooking. He said he hadn't been doing it long, but he seemed quite proficient. It looked simple but effective. That's pretty much the extent of my knowledge of the craft.

Signe Nickerson has taken what amounts to an in-depth magazine article and fleshed it out into a small book that covers the technique fairly completely. Since this technique always seems to be called Australian locker hooking, I was surprised to read that it actually originated in England in the late nineteenth century, using heavy yarn tied down with finer yarns. An Australian woman, Patricia Benson, is credited with adapting it to carded, unspun fleece.

A locker hook looks like a heavy crochet hook with an eye at the top of the handle (or, conversely, it looks like a giant darning needle with a crochet hook instead of a point). Briefly, fleece (or heavy yarn) is pulled up through squares in canvas, and the loops are left on the hook. (In this sense, it reminds me a bit of crocheted afghan stitch.) When the hook is full of loops, the hook (threaded with yarn) is pulled through the loops, anchoring them down to the canvas (I guess that's the "locker" part). As with other rug hooking techniques, each square of the canvas is filled by one loop.

This technique is explained clearly and completely, accompanied by clear illustrations. In addition, Nickerson covers such basics as choosing, washing, and carding fleece, so the book would be useful even for a real beginner.

One section of the book is taken up with projects to hook: a horse blanket, handbags, seatcovers, a hanging. While not absolutely necessary for anyone with experience in planning such projects, these suggestions do offer information on how much fleece is needed for various-sized projects. They also serve as a reminder of what the author points out in the introduction: locker hooking can be used for far more than just rugs. The bulk of the book is filled with graphs of motifs to use (many of them sheep-oriented), and an alphabet. Again, not really necessary.

A complete source list will tell you where to find a locker hook. Finding the tool may well be the most difficult part of the project! Suppliers for kits, canvas, and roving, as well as addresses for woolen mills are also included.

—Deborah Pulliam

Masterpiece Sweaters: 12 Dramatic New Designs

Janice Wright

Camden, Maine: Down East Books, 1994. Paperbound, 120 pages, $24.95. ISBN 0-89272-334-3.

While the sweater designs in this book may seem intimidating because of the author's use of color and pattern, they are not difficult if you are experienced in using multiple colors in knitting, either Fair Isle or intarsia. The basic sweater shapes are traditional, with decorative borders substituting for the ribbing used normally. Janice Wright uses color, and lots of it! Her method of blending color and her placement of design are inspiring enough to knit as-is from the excellent charts and instructions, or to use as inspiration for your own creativity.

The detailed information in the instructions and charts lists wraps-per-inch, yards-per-pound, and yardage, making it relatively easy to substitute handspun yarns or alternate commercial yarns for the materials specified. Directions and charts for all but two of the sweaters are written for both hand and machine knitters; the exceptions are for hand knitters only. The written instructions are clear and easily understood for both methods of knitting.

The author's extensive advice on the use of color and design inspire one's own creativity. The method she uses to blend colors is explained thoroughly, with yarn lists at the back of the book giving the specific yarns used in the sweaters. Manufacturers' names and addresses are given, along with the manufacturers' color designation (name or number). When a specific yarn is no longer available, a descriptive color name is used, making it easier to substitute another yarn.

The photograph for each sweater is nicely done and is presented with a paragraph or two giving the author's inspi-

ration for its particular design and color combination. Suggestions are given for different body shapes, color changes, or yarn options.

Although some of the charts are available elsewhere, there is so much information packed into this book (in addition to the instructions for each sweater) that I would recommend *Masterpiece Sweaters* to anyone from an intermediate novice to an experienced knitter as a very useful library addition.

—Gloria Hall

Publication Mention

Woolgatherings/The Spinster's Almanac

Dee Duke and Rowena Edlin-White

Nottingham, England: Self-published series of biannual booklets and quarterly magazine. Woolgatherings: England £2.30 each; £3.50 each to U.S. and Canadian customers. The Spinster's Almanac: England £7.50/year; £8.50 surface, £10.50 airmail/year to U.S. and Canada. Checks must be in Sterling; equivalent in U.S. dollar bills plus $3 for exchange may be sent at own risk. Available from Woolgatherings, "The Grebes," 89, Morley Ave., Mapperley, Nottingham NG3 5FZ England.

Both the magazine and the booklets contain projects, information on sheep breeds, and talk about alternative fibers. They also abound with bits of fascinating lore relevant to spinning, weaving, and shepherding. The format is simple, black and white, with the *Almanac* being similar in appearance to a newsletter. However, they offer abundant information, variety, clear and detailed instructions, and a good bit of whimsy. The *Woolgatherings* are booklets, each with a specific focus. Nine have been published to date, with topics such as dyeing, beginning spinning, a primer on fibers, spinners' rhymes, and shepherding "miscellany." The *Almanac* includes a little bit of everything already mentioned, plus letters, reviews, and news of the spinning world. These stalwart contributors to spinners' culture warrant your attention and support. ❖

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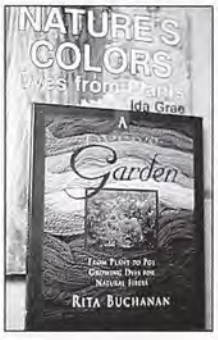


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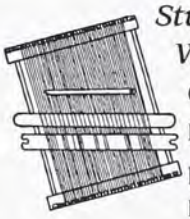
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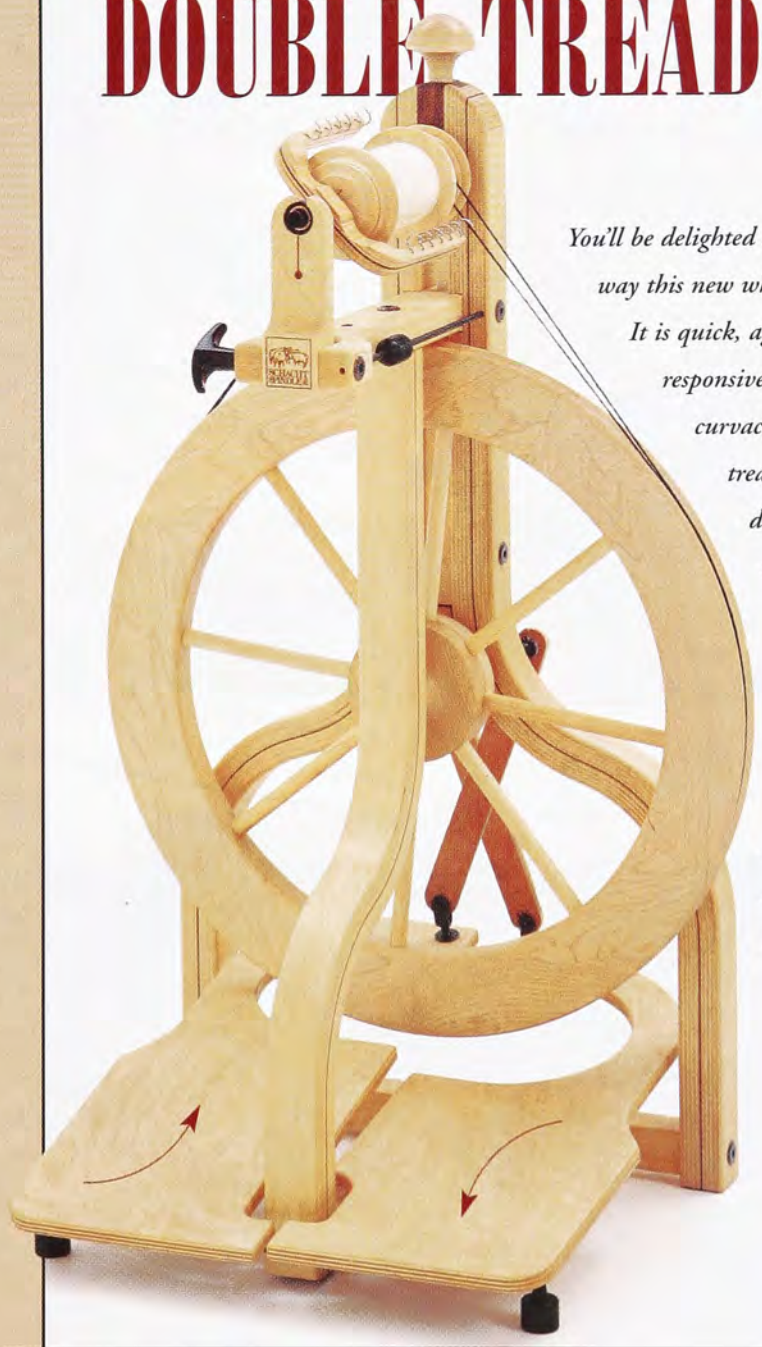
Here at Schacht we know that the smallest detail can make a big difference--and that's exactly what we had in mind when we designed our new Double Treadle Spinning Wheel. Built to be a high performance machine, we've taken great care to maintain the same handsome style of our single treadle wheel.

MATCHLESS VERSATILITY

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

BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED

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



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

Whorl Chart

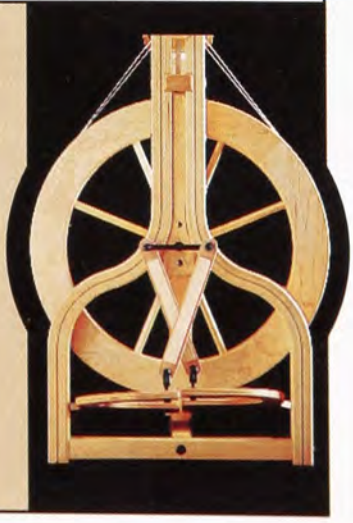
Extra Slow Speed 4:1 & 4½:1	**High Speed 17½:1 & 19½:1
Slow Speed 6:1 & 7½:1	**Super High Speed 18½:1 & 22:1
* Medium Speed 9:1 & 11:1	**Exceptionally High Speed 23½:1 & 27½:1
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Available for both single and double treadle spinning wheels
**Comes with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

GIVE THIS WHEEL A SPIN

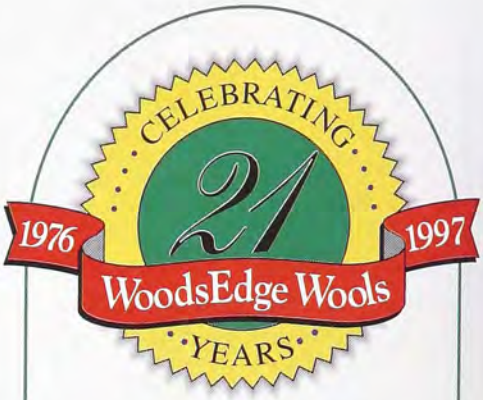
One thing is for sure, reading about our new double treadle spinning wheel is not enough. This is a wheel which you'll want to try to truly appreciate. You'll discover that the details do make the difference.

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Novelty Act

by Stephenie Gaustad

YARN serves many purposes. It is likely that the earliest yarns were cords for bundling, netting, or bowstrings intended to bring the bounty home. Yarns made from wool, silk, or hair keep us warm, whereas cotton, flax, hemp, and ramie yarns are cool and soothing. All provide protection from the extremes of temperature, wind, water, and sunshine.

Beyond these basic needs of food and protection, yarn and textiles function in other, no less significant ways. They mark the wealthy from the poor, the idle classes from the productive, the sacred world from the secular. One tribe recognizes another by yarns and cloth worn.

"Novelty" yarn falls within this second category. It fulfills the human need to distinguish *remarkable* from *ordinary*, to use superlatives and to succumb to bouts of pronounced silliness. Novelty yarns proclaim their uniqueness, the effort that went into their production. Their goal is to provoke, embellish, enchant . . . sometimes at the cost of durability. But not always so.

Central to novelty-yarn design is the clever use of elements of contrast: light/dark, smooth/fuzzy, shiny/matte, large/small, slubby/consistent. These contrasts often compromise the structure of sound yarn, making the "flashy" yarn also a funky yarn. The trick is in getting the look without the letdown. Here is one way to do that.

Flash and function

A reasonably durable type of novelty yarn is the beaded variety. Beaded yarns are of at least two plies, with one ply having a sequence of beads, sequins, or stones threaded onto it. During the conventional plying operation, each bead in sequence is brought forward into the working zone, then is allowed to nestle into the plied yarn. The plying twist locks the bead into place within the yarn. Assuming that the yarn carrying the beads has sufficient twist and consistency, and that there's enough plying twist to lock the bead in place, this yarn can be a good performer, as novelty yarns go.

The elements

Let us take a closer look at the elements in this yarn and how they are assembled.

First, the "beads" themselves. Really, anything with a hole in it can be used, but here are some important considerations: washability, weight, size, and condition of the hole itself.

Will the beads be able to stand reasonable hand laundry? Will they tolerate the process required to set the twist after plying?[1] Large, heavy beads can cause a loosely affiliated structure to droop, gape, and be prone to snagging. Will the beads be able to pass easily through the orifice of the wheel and to negotiate the flyer hooks? (Alternatives to the flyer/ bobbin wheel, which may sidestep this constraint, are considered later.) Will you be able to knit, weave, crochet, or net what you want with this yarn if you hang all these doodads on the outside of the object? And finally—is the hole itself smooth, or will it snag, tear, or rend the yarn which carries it?

The yarn onto which you thread the beads before plying can be handspun, or it can be commercial sewing thread, silk buttonhole twist, quilting thread, or the costumer's friend—dental floss. Mill-made threads add to the overall strength of novelty yarns. Handspun yarn can add to the strength as well, of course, but think about it. The handspun has to be fine enough to go through the beads, and consistent enough to go through *all* of them.

[1] Setting the twist in protein fibers means steaming the yarns. For cellulosic fibers, it means boiling for twenty minutes.

Opposite: *The sequins are ready to be threaded onto silk sewing thread, and the stars are ready to be spun. For the baby watch cap, Stephenie used the fancy yarn only as an accent on the crown. The cap as a whole was knitted from a two-ply yarn, where one ply was natural brown wool at 2200 yards per pound and the other was black silk thread, bearing sequins. The snood above it was worked in a similar yarn, based on charcoal wool. Its body is sprang, with a crocheted edging in commercial green perle cotton.*



The pink and gray star yarn follows the construction technique Stephenie outlines here: one ply of the basic fiber and one ply of beaded silk thread. The scarf, worked in k2, p2 rib, is finished with more beads. The cotton child's beret incorporates two plies of white cotton (14,000 yards per pound) and one of blue cotton beaded thread.

It should also contain a generous amount of twist. Spinning your own carrying strand is not beyond possibility, but requires a lot of treadling.

Store-bought sewing thread is a reasonable compromise. Combine cotton thread with cellulosic handspun strands: flax, cotton, ramie, hemp, and rayon. Use silk thread with the protein-based handspun strands: wool, angora, silk, cashmere.

Beyond the carrying thread, the other ply or plies can be whatever suits your fancy. Make sure that the texture of the plied yarn is in proportion to the size of your beads. Hairy yarns can obliterate small beads. Large or dense beads will pull apart soft, low-twist yarns. Soft yarns also permit beads to migrate north and south along the yarn. Firmer, high-twist yarns do a better job of holding beads in place.

Putting things together

If the beads will fit through the orifice of the spinning wheel and will pass freely across the hooks of the flyer and then wind smoothly onto the bobbin, well, hooray, you can use your wheel. If any of the above

is not possible on your beloved wheel, you can ply your beaded yarn on either a hand spindle or a great wheel.

You will need a lazy kate which can be placed at table height behind you as you work. The lazy kate must be placed *above* your working hands. Place the bobbins and the thread spool (with goodies already threaded onto the carrying ply) on the lazy kate.

Attach the plied yarns to the flyer and ply in a normal manner until you are ready to position a bead. By normal plying, I mean that the group of beads on the carrying thread is pushed backward along the thread as you work, allowing only the thread itself to be incorporated into the yarn.

When you want to put a bead in the yarn, bring one forward and ply it along with the yarns. The rest of the beads stay behind, between the hands and the lazy kate. It soon becomes apparent why the kate needs to be higher than your hands. In this position, the beads slide forward, ready to be included in the yarn, but can be kept away from the action relatively easily.

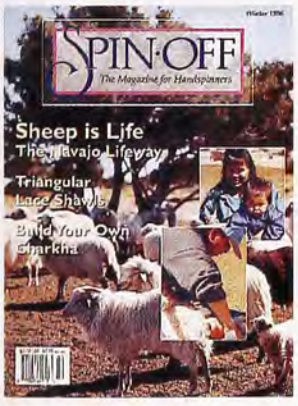
Put plenty of plying twist into the yarn; it holds each bead in place. Set the twist in your yarn before you make it into a finished item.

Using the yarn

This brings us to the proper challenge of how to use these yarns to best advantage. They will not take high abrasion or vigorous laundry. They can add weight to the finished fabric, which can improve the drape of the cloth. They can also cause socks to slump sullenly, because of a lovely, beaded-yarn top edge.

Consider the traditional uses of beads and sequins: edgings, hats, evening wear, belts, bags, and collars. ❖

Stephenie Gaustad can often be found in the hills near Jackson, California. However, when recently sighted she had built a simple, elegant sprang frame and was experimenting with this technique, using combinations of beaded and "regular" handspun yarns.



Whether you're a beginner or advanced spinner, use a hand spindle or spinning wheel, *Spin Off* nurtures your success and encourages you to continue discovering the bountiful joys of this timeless craft.

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Peruvian Spinning Tools and Techniques

by Carol Rasmussen Noble



1 *Puquio / south central Peru / hand-carved spindle with turned whorl; for cotton. Late 1970s.*

2 *Cuzco / south central Peru / hand-carved spindle with turned whorl; probably rosewood. Early 1980s.*

3 *Arcata / southern Peru / hand-carved spindle with turned conical whorl. Early 1980s.*

4 *Huancavelica / south central Peru / hand-carved spindle with turned, removable whorl; of Chonta. Mid 1970s.*

5 *Huancavelica / south central Peru / wooden distaff. Mid 1970s.*

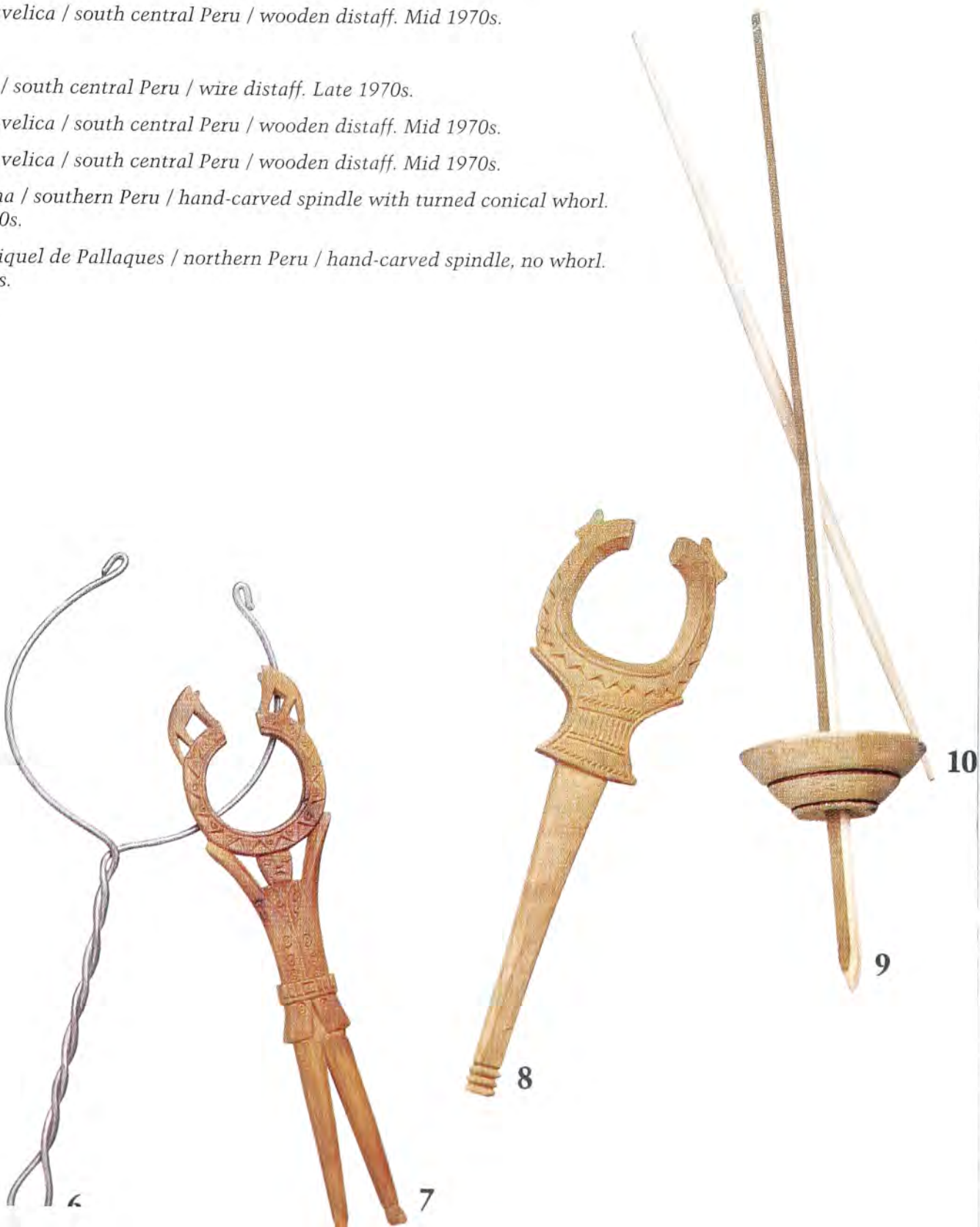
6 *Puquio / south central Peru / wire distaff. Late 1970s.*

7 *Huancavelica / south central Peru / wooden distaff. Mid 1970s.*

8 *Huancavelica / south central Peru / wooden distaff. Mid 1970s.*

9 *Cailloma / southern Peru / hand-carved spindle with turned conical whorl. Early 1980s.*

10 *San Miquel de Pallaques / northern Peru / hand-carved spindle, no whorl. Mid 1980s.*



SPINNING TOOLS and techniques vary widely in the Andes of Peru, especially from north to south. The picture of a shepherdess spinning with a drop spindle as she walks along, although typical, is certainly not ubiquitous.

First, some terminology. Quechua words pertaining to the spinning process are commonly used by Spanish and bilingual (Quechua/Spanish) speakers in the Andes, instead of the equivalent Spanish words. A spindle is usually called a *pucchca* and a whorl is a *piruru* (both Quechua). The Spanish terms are, respectively, *huso* and *rueca*. In the Andes, especially among bilingual speakers, it is common for the Quechua word for spindle to be used as if it were a Spanish verb, thus blending the two languages—for example, *estoy pucchcando*, I am spinning. In areas where distaffs are used, they are always referred to by the Quechua term, *callapa*.

Drop spindles used in central and southern Peru are generally much lighter in weight than those made in the United States.[1] Spindle shafts are usually hand-carved, with roundness being preferred, whereas whorls are typically turned on a lathe, although there are exceptions. If they are available, jungle woods are preferred over eucalyptus. In the Huancavelica area of south-central Peru, *pucchcas* made of Chonta, an extremely hard, black wood, are highly prized. In Cuzco, rosewood and mahogany are sought after, although they are expensive.

At present, whorls are constructed of wood in all areas, although crude, unglazed clay whorls used to be made in some remote areas. The wooden whorls are either balanced top-to-bottom or are conical.

In Huancavelica, the size and weight of the spindle/whorl combination varies, depending on the fiber being spun and the type of yarn desired. Of course, the spindle assembly is longer and heavier when the goal is a thicker yarn. It is interesting to note that Huancavelica may be the only region in the Andes where the spindle shaft does not penetrate the whorl completely, thus making *pirurus* interchangeable. In Puquio, in south-central Peru, the spindles also vary in length and weight, but are of a more typical construction. Cotton spindles from Puquio are quite small, and are spun supported in a bowl or on the ground.

Mismiy is the Quechua name for a two-handed twisting process used to make cording for slings and ropes.[2] For the tool used to facilitate this technique, the *mismiy* stick, bamboo is the preferred material. The technique is also known as *Guayaquil* spinning in some areas, because bamboo is sometimes called *caña de Guayaquil* instead of *bambu*.

The spindles of Huaráz in the Callejón de Huaylas in northern Peru—a beautiful valley below the sublime, snow-covered peak, Huascarán, and the other nevadoes of the Cordillera Blanca—are very long, straight pieces of cane, in some cases with a potato stuck on the upper end as a counterbalance. They are carried over the shoulder, and used in a two-handed twist like a *mismiy* stick. The spindles of San Miguel de Pallaques in northern Peru are simply small, delicate sticks, pointed at both ends and slightly rounded in the middle. They do not have whorls and are turned on the ground.

Distaffs, called *callapas*, are used in the areas of Huancavelica and Puquio. Roving is wound around the arms of the distaff in a figure-eight pattern. In other places, roving is wrapped around the wrist or carried in a basket. The Y-shaped wooden *callapas* of Huancavelica are often fancifully carved and charming. Those of Puquio are more functional, with no decoration—sometimes even improvised from coat hangers or other wire.

All spinning of alpaca and llama fiber in central and southern Peru is done by the standard, suspended drop-spindle technique, with the spinner standing. The spindle is twisted and then released to twirl, and the spinner drafts out the roving as the twist runs up. The yarn is never hooked around the bottom of the spindle, but rather secured to its upper end with a half-hitch. There is, however, no notch in the spindle to facilitate this knotting.

Z twist is preferred. S twist is looked upon with suspicion, although it is not uncommon in nineteenth-century textiles for S- and Z-twist yarns of the same color to

[1] By drop spindle, I am referring to the combination of spindle shaft and whorl.

[2] With the exception of *mismiy*, spinning is still considered women's work. *Mismiy*, however, is done only by men, just as slings and ropes are braided only by men. Most men who spin by techniques other than *mismiy* have been in prison, where they spin and weave to earn spending money.

be used on a warp for a subtle, striped effect.[3]

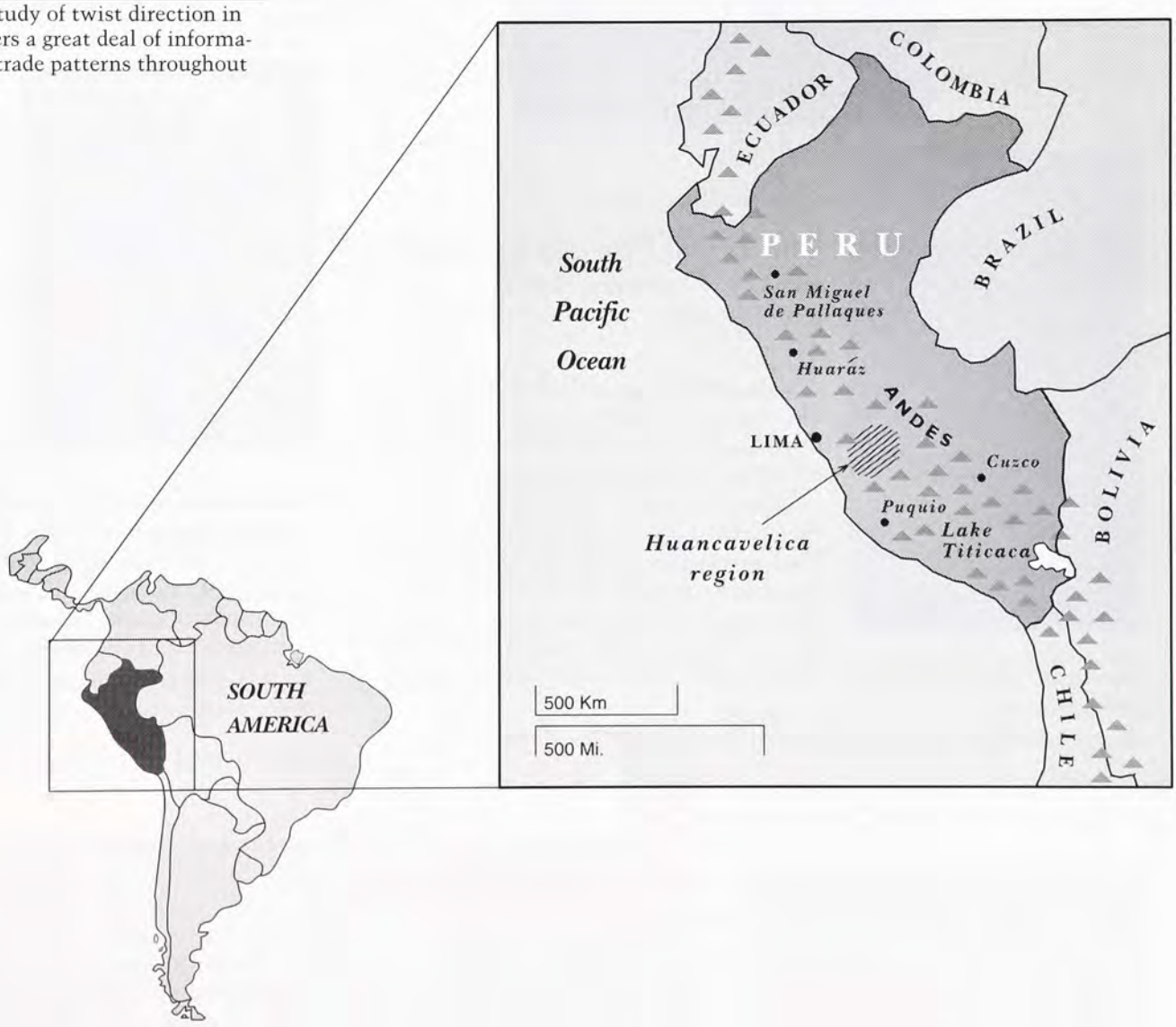
Yarns are typically overtwisted for use on backstrap looms. Sometimes spinners will overtwist commercially spun yarns by hand, specifically for use in backstrap weaving. Even handspun knitting yarns tend to be somewhat overtwisted by prevalent North American contemporary standards.

Yarns still range from extremely fine, even, and well-spun to lumpy, coarse, and uneven. Fine yarns are found, for example, around Lake Titicaca on the border between Peru and Bolivia and in parts of the Cuzco Department. The bulkier yarns are more characteristic of northern Peru.

To some extent, this is a function of the source of the wool—alpacas in the south, sheep in the north, along with an increasing proportion of sheep in central and south-central Peru. The sheep in question are mixed breed, with a medium staple length and little crimp, and are typically very dirty—not well-suited to the preparation and spinning methods devised for alpaca. Unfortunately, the increasing prevalence of cruder yarns also results from the loss of traditional skills within a rapidly changing, indigenous society. ❖

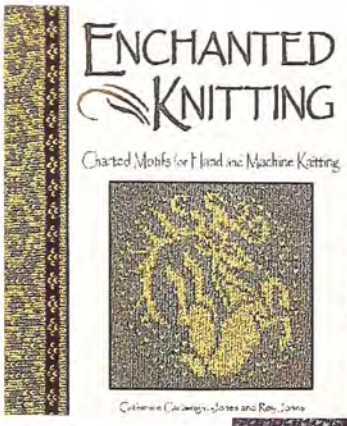
Carol Rasmussen Noble is a long-time textile collector, student, and writer who has published numerous articles on Andean weaving, braiding, and knitting. She has recently contributed an article on Icelandic knitted lace to PieceWork *magazine and she is working on books on Orenburg lace and on historical quilts in Nevada.*

[3] *Editor's note:* The study of twist direction in Peruvian textiles offers a great deal of information on cultural and trade patterns throughout the area's history.



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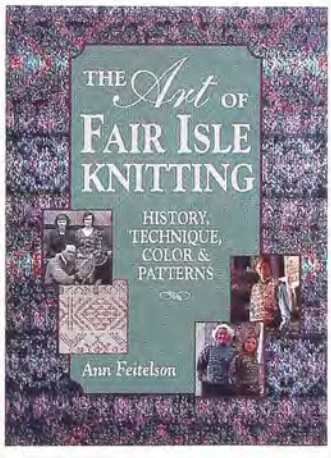
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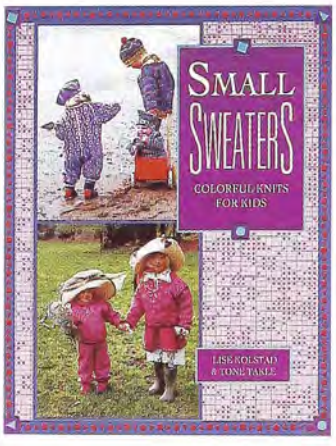


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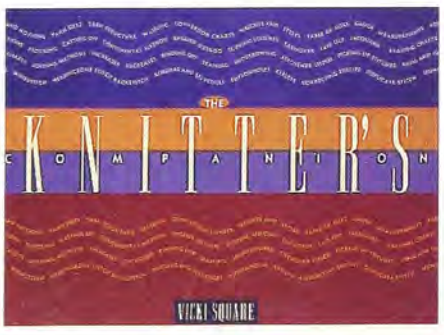
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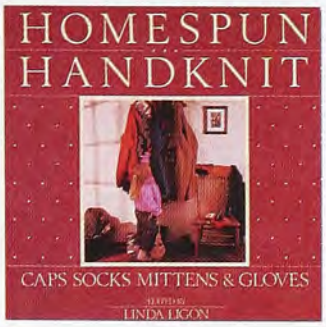
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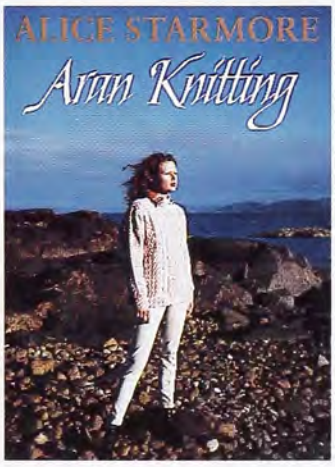


Linda Ligon, editor

More than a pattern book, *Homespun, Handknit* includes favorite designs, hints, and techniques from 50 experienced spinners and knitters. Here you'll find Jackie Fee's mushroom cap, Elizabeth Zimmermann's sideways mystery mittens, and many more. Projects range in difficulty from easy beginner pieces to advanced brainteasers; all pieces are shown in full color accompanied by how-to line drawings in black and white.

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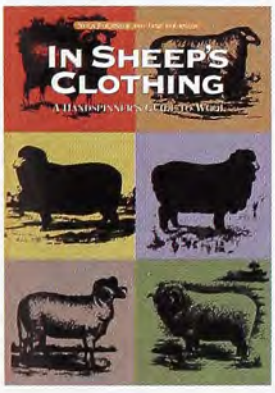
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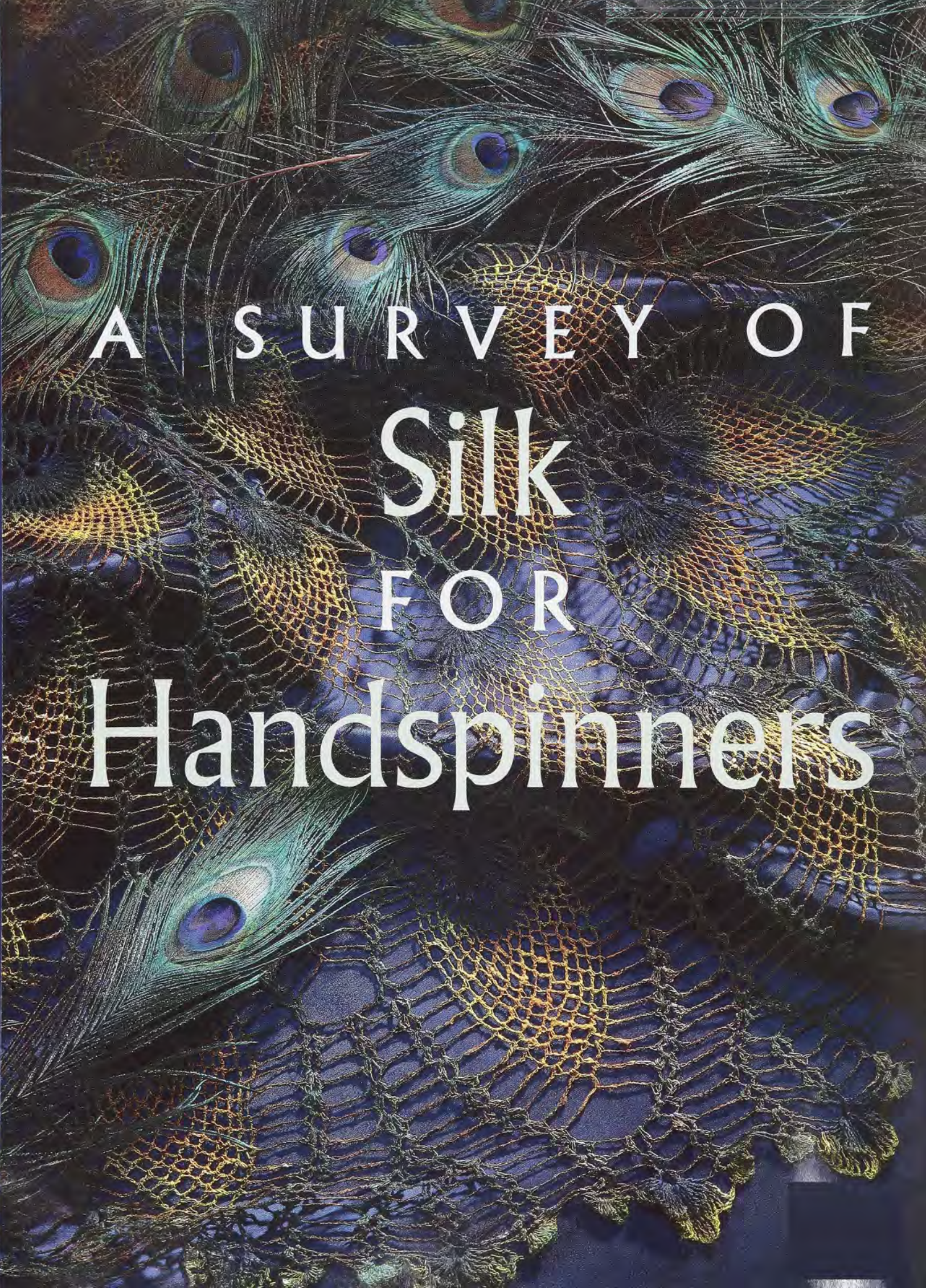
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Gunilla Paetau Sjöberg; Patricia Spark, translator

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A SURVEY OF
Silk
FOR
Handspinners

WHENEVER you start thinking about silk, ask yourself, "What kind of silk?" The question is important, because there's silk, and there's *silk*. Spinners usually think that "silky" means long, strong, fine, smooth, slippery, and lustrous, and indeed, some silk is exactly that. But silk can also be short, weak, fluffy, snarly, or dull. Learning about the different faces of silk will help you shop for preparations that you'll enjoy spinning, and will guide you in choosing the best form of silk for any particular project, or in deciding how to work with silk that you already have on hand.

Let's start by looking at where silk comes from, geographically and biologically. Geographically, most of the silk imported into the United States as spinning fiber, yarn, fabrics, or garments comes from China. Only a fraction comes from Japan, India, or other countries. Increased trade with China in recent years has already stocked our malls with racks of inexpensive silk garments. Now spinners are waiting to see how China's trade policies will affect the cost, supply, and quality of silk fiber preparations.

Biologically, almost all of the silk used in the world today comes from *Bombyx mori*, the mulberry silk moth. Fine, white **bombyx** silk is available to handspinners in many forms. **Tussah** silk, a honey-colored silk that's not quite as fine as bombyx silk, comes from *Antheraea pernyi*, the Chinese oak silk moth.

Tussah silk is a lovely fiber, but it's produced in much smaller quantities than bombyx silk. You won't find many tussah products in fabric stores or clothing shops, but several tussah preparations are available for handspinners.

The real luxury is reeled silk

The mile or so of silk in a typical cocoon consists of two parallel filaments or fibers that are joined and coated by a substance called **sericin.** Both the filaments and the sericin are forms of protein. The best quality silk is in the middle layers of the cocoon. It's stronger and more uniform than silk from the outside (where the worm started spinning) or the inside (where it finished) of the cocoon.

If the pupa is stifled by heat or steam so that it cannot emerge and damage the cocoon, the best part of the silk can be unwound as a more or less continuous strand, by a process called **reeling.** The cocoons are simmered in water first, to soften (but not remove) the sericin, then the ends of

This article resulted in large part from a collaboration among Rita Buchanan, Nancy Morey, and Celia Quinn, all of whom generously supplied ideas and information.

All spinning techniques demonstrated by Celia Quinn, except worsted-style spinning, by Steve Buchanan. Technique photos by Rita Buchanan.

Peacock's Tail Shawl

Ann Welch
Kitchener, Ontario

This project was designed for entry in the Ontario Handweavers and Spinners 1991 competition, "From the Source." For this competition, your source of inspiration had to be included with the finished article. The competition was open to handweavers, basketmakers, papermakers, felters, and handspinners. Normally I would not have entered such a competition, but spinner Ted Carson was to be one of the three judges, and I knew he would appreciate handspinning.

My inspiration for the shawl was my friend Evelyn Hopping's peacock. Although I am afraid of the bird, I am always overwhelmed by its beauty. I told Evelyn what I wanted to do and she gave me one of the molted tail feathers. When I took it home and laid it on the dining room table, I was surprised to see that the eye pattern of the feather exactly matched the stitch pattern in a doily that I had crocheted. It's called a pineapple pattern.

After a great deal of experimenting, I decided to use silk caps, because the long fiber in caps makes a strong yarn. I opened each cap by putting my hands and forearms into it and snapping it apart. Then I arranged the open cap over my swift, which I had covered with a cotton cloth. By doing this I was able to spin effortlessly and draw off the cap in a circular motion as the swift turned. I spun a very fine thread with a Z twist. I tried plying and crocheting a sample, but the result was too heavy for what I wanted, so I used the yarn as a singles. I wetted the skeins with warm water and dried them under tension to set the twist.

I did most of the crocheting during my lunch hours. I carried the project back and

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Opposite: *Ann Welch started with silk caps, for strength, and knitted her entire shawl with undyed singles before painting the colors precisely where she wanted them.*

four or more cocoons are drawn off simultaneously and wound onto a reel. Strands of reeled silk can be used alone, or plied together to make **thrown** silk yarns. Reeled and thrown silk yarns are fine, strong, and smooth, and make sumptuous fabrics.

Most spinners will never work with reeled or thrown silk yarns, but sometimes you can buy bags of **thrown silk waste**—pieces of reeled silk that were discarded in the throwing process. This is usually a mix of long and short pieces, and may be dirty and tangled, but this is good strong silk that dyes beautifully and makes a wonderful, loopy novelty yarn.

What *kind* of silk?

Degumming

Reeled and thrown silks are sometimes called **raw silk**,[1] because the fibers still have the stiff coating of sericin. The process of removing the sericin is called **degumming,** and involves simmering the silk in soapy water for an hour or more, repeating if needed. Degumming can be done at any stage—cocoons, fiber, reeled or spun yarn, or fabric.

Except for thrown silk waste, essentially all of the silk available to handspinners is already degummed. As spinners, we mostly work with what the silk industry calls **spun silk** (even though it isn't spun yet when we get it). Spun silk is the alternative to reeled silk. It makes use of the shorter, weaker, or broken fibers from parts of the cocoon that are rejected in the reeling process, or fibers from unstifled cocoons pierced by the emerging moths. These fibers have to be degummed at the mill before they can be combed or carded into bricks, tops, rovings, noil, or other preparations. Silk caps are also degummed.

Bricks

The silk in a **brick** has been through the first step in the carding process. Normally most of the fibers are separated from each other and straightened into alignment, but there may be dense clumps of short fibers here and there. Although some bricks are more uniform than others, many include fibers ranging from about 2 to 8 inches (5 to 20 cm) long. Spinning silk from a brick

[1] In the fashion industry, raw silk means textured fabric woven from bombyx silk noil. This fabric has been degummed.

(continued from previous page)

forth to work in a bag so small that sometimes it got put in the refrigerator by mistake. The finished shawl is so delicate that I can hold it cupped in my two hands.

It took a while to figure out how to reproduce the color effects of the peacock feather. At first I wondered if I could dye the yarn in the colors I wanted so the pattern would line up, but I finally concluded that it would be impossible to do that. Looking for other options, I consulted a dye supplier who suggested ways of spraying dye onto the shawl after I finished it. Then I overheard a conversation on warp painting at a guild meeting, and decided to adapt that technique.

I covered my dining room table with a big sheet of plastic and shut my puppy out of the room, then spent a weekend painting my shawl. It was too big to fit on the table all at once, so I did one section at a time. I mixed Procion dyes with a thickener and used a glue brush to push the dye down into the yarn. Sometimes the dye didn't penetrate completely, so I had to turn the shawl over and dye the other side, too. After 24 hours, I washed the shawl and watched as all the turquoise went down the drain. For some reason, the turquoise dye doesn't behave like the other colors. I tried reapplying it, but it washed out again. Finally I gave up and used blue in those areas.

This project took six months from start to finish. It was a real challenge, because it came from my imagination and there were no instructions to consult. It's the most rewarding project I have made, and I'm proud to say that it placed second best of more than two hundred entries in the competition, and was chosen to go on a two-year tour. Now that it's home again, I display it on a wall where I can enjoy looking at it.

can be a joy or a headache, and you won't know which you're in for until you get started. At best, if the fiber is long and loose, you can pull off a strip and easily spin it into a nice smooth yarn. At worst, if the fiber is short and clumpy, you may have to card it and spin from rolags, or use it for blending with other fibers.

A brick usually weighs a little over 5 ounces (142 g), and is cunningly folded into a neat, compact parcel. Admire it a while before you start to undo it, because once you unfold a brick, you'll never get it back together. An unfolded brick expands into a shimmering sheet of fiber, thick and puffy, a foot or more wide, and several feet long. Frankly, it's almost too pretty to spin, and you might want to get a brick just to look at. Bombyx silk bricks are readily available. Tussah silk bricks have been imported in the past, but are rare now.

Made from silk brick

Tunisian Crochet Blouse

Juliet Papadakos
Port Jefferson, New York

This blouse was a summer project. Summer is the right time to unfold a brick of tussah silk, bend its smooth and glistening fibers over your fingers, and watch as wisps of sunshine wind into firm yarn. Even in summer heat, silk is comfortable to spin and crochet: wool can wait until fall! I used a high-speed bobbin with a fat core to spin singles on a Louët S-10 wheel, and made a two-ply yarn that measures about 22 wraps per inch (2.5 cm) and 2500 yards per pound.

I wanted to make a blouse, simple but elegant, suitable for a reception or dinner out. I also wanted a design that would require the minimum of fuss when making up. To complement this simple style, I wanted an interesting stitch pattern. I decided to use one that combines one Tunisian simple stitch and one Tunisian purl stitch, reversing the order in each cast-on row.[1] This stitch pattern, worked in a thick-and-thin yarn, produces a fabric which is ordered yet has the interest of some irregularity of texture and sheen.

I worked the blouse without side seams, starting with a rectangle as wide as my bust measurement plus 2 inches (5 cm) for ease. When I reached the underarm, I divided the stitches and worked one-quarter for each side of the front and one-half for the back. I shaped a fairly open neckline. The straight edges on the sides form cap sleeves. After seaming the shoulders, I crocheted around the neck, armholes, and bottom edge.

The antler buttons I chose were small enough to accent the garment without

—continues on page 56



Both Juliet Papadakos and Eleonore Brandau started with silk brick—tussah and bombyx, respectively.

Juliet's blouse provides a delightful summer garment, but moves smoothly into winter as well. Silk offers cool, body-skimming, warm-weather cloth, then transitions to an insulating, still glamorous, winter layer.

Eleonore's stole contrasts the silk with a darker kid mohair.

[1] Tunisian crochet is done with an afghan hook, which looks like a knitting needle with a knob at one end and a hook at the other. You work back and forth, first picking up a whole row's worth of loops, then working them off one at a time.

Spinning from a brick

PREPARATION, METHOD 1



1 A brick contains a lot of silk, and you need to divide it into smaller portions that you can hold while you spin. Unfold the brick and spread it out on a table, the floor, or your lap.



2 One way to approach a brick is to pinch a tuft of fibers off its end. Hold that, and spin the fibers from their ends.



3 Of course, you can hold the fiber with whichever hand feels more comfortable. Here Celia is using her left hand; she has taught herself to use both hands interchangeably.

PREPARATION, METHOD 2

1 Another way to handle this form of silk is to split the brick lengthwise, by peeling strips off the edge.



2 Split the strips lengthwise into thinner, more manageable strands.



3 Loosen the fibers by pulling a strip lengthwise between your hands. Work from one end of the strip to the other, drafting as you go. When you're done, the strip of fibers will be two or three times as long and much fluffier than before. Now it's ready to spin.



4 Spin from the end of the strip. Watch the drafting triangle and try to keep it spread open.



5 If a thick clump of fibers tries to pull into the yarn, clamp down on it and pull until you have thinned it out.



(text continued from page 53)

being obtrusive, but they were too light in color. The microwave oven provided a remedy: I filled a plastic dish with freshly brewed coffee and "nuked" the buttons for five minutes on medium power. They turned out just right.

Knitted Lacy Stole

Eleonore Brandau
Southgate, Michigan

For this stole, I spun fine singles yarns from bombyx silk brick and "stained" kid mohair. I then made a two-ply yarn that measures about 30 wraps per inch (2.5 cm). I spent last summer on my back porch, knitting the stole on size 1 (2.5 mm) needles. It's about 17 inches wide and 70 inches long (43 × 178 cm), and weighs 6½ ounces (184 g). I like the way the shiny silk shows against the darker mohair, and enjoy wearing the stole.

I don't know where the knitting pattern came from; it was given to me by a neighbor when we lived in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1972. I find it easy to knit, since there are only three pattern rows and mistakes are easy to spot once the pattern is established. It's worked on a multiple of 10 plus 7 sts.

Row 1: K 4, * yo, k 3, sl 1, k 2 tog, psso, k 3, yo, k 1,* repeat from * to * across; end k 3.

Rows 2, 4, 6: K 2, p across row, ending k 2. [Editor's note: Or knit all the way across, for a garter-stitch effect.]

Row 3: K 5, * yo, k 2, sl 1, k 2 tog, psso, k 2, yo, k 3,* repeat from * to * across; end k 2.

Row 5: K 3, k 2 tog, * yo, k 1, yo, k 1, sl 1, k 2 tog, psso, k 1, yo, k 1, yo, sl 1, k 2 tog, psso,* repeat from * to * across to last 7 sts; k 1, yo, k 1, yo, sl 1, k 1, psso, k3.

Top and not-top

Silk and silk blends are often sold as ropelike preparations of mostly parallel fibers. These are usually called *tops* or *rovings*, or sometimes *slivers*. Spinners and suppliers are often confused about which term to use, but whatever you call them, you need to be aware that there are two different categories in this group. We'll call them *top* and *not-top*.

Most people agree that a **top** is a preparation that has been combed to straighten the fibers and eliminate short fibers and noils. The fibers are fairly uniform in length, sometimes 3 to 4 inches (7.5 to 10 cm) long, and sometimes 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm) or more. **Not-top** looks like top, until you pull it apart. Then you see that the fibers have been carded, but not combed. There's usually a mix of fiber lengths, and there even may be some noils or debris. Many a spinner has been disappointed by purchasing a bag of silk that looked like top, and discovering later that it was not-top.

The difference matters when you spin. Get top if you want to spin elegant glossy yarns. The inconsistencies in not-top make it harder to draft, and usually put texture in the yarn, whether you want it or not.

There are many different tops and not-tops on the market today—made of bombyx or tussah silk, in natural colors or dyed. Some of these are excellent quality. Others are disappointing. You can't tell what you're getting by looking at it through a plastic bag, and you can't tell by price—some disappointments are expensive.

If you're shopping by mail, order a small sample before you buy a big supply. If you're at a conference or in a fiber shop, ask if you can open a bag to examine the silk in a preparation before you buy it. Find the end and pull out a few fibers to check their length. Fan the end open and hold it up to a light or against a contrasting background to see if there are noils. If you like what you see, buy it. If you don't, explain your decision, thank the supplier for the opportunity to take a look, and keep shopping.

Dyed tops are usually tussah silk, because it's a little coarser and easier for the dyer to handle than bombyx silk, and it absorbs water and dye more readily. For some reason, these dyed tops are often easier to spin than undyed tops of similar silk—the fiber drafts more freely and doesn't clump as much.

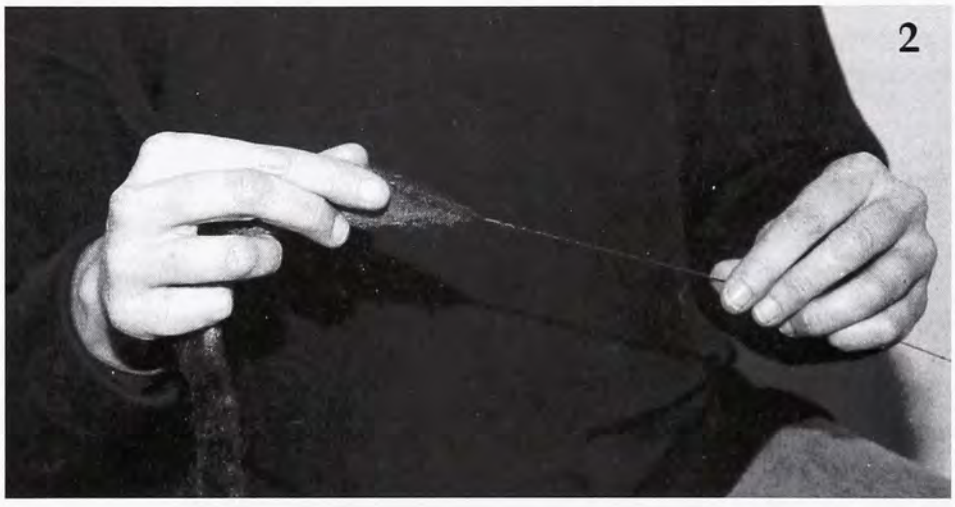
Working with top or sliver



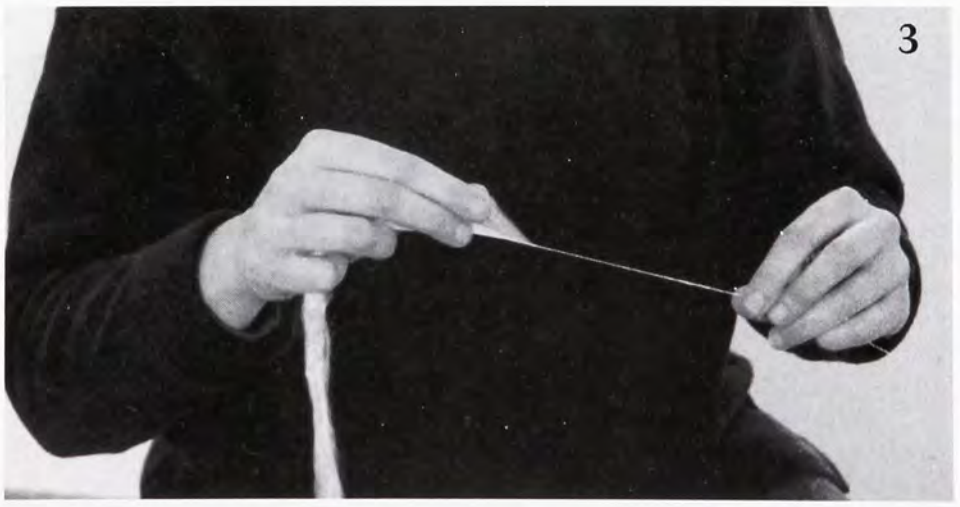
1 With any top, sliver, or roving, try the easiest thing first: spinning from the end. If this works, you're on your way. *Note:* If the fiber doesn't draft freely, break off the sliver from your starter yarn, turn it around, and try spinning from the other end. Sometimes a preparation drafts more easily from one end than the other.

If you don't want to hold a lot of fiber at once, just pull off a shorter section. Or, split the preparation lengthwise into two or more pieces.

2 When spinning from the end, remember to keep fanning out the drafting zone, and to keep it in proportion to the fiber length. This tussah silk has an average fiber length of 4 to 5 inches (10 to 12 cm), so the drafting zone is 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7.5 cm) long.



3 This bombyx silk has an average fiber length of about 3 inches (7.5 cm), so the drafting zone is less than 1½ inches long (3.75 cm).



If the preparation is dense and compact and doesn't draft freely, try loosening it by pulling it between your two hands. Pull about half the average fiber length, then let go, move your hands, and repeat. This pulling, sometimes called *attenuating* or *predrafting*, helps put some vitality back into compressed fibers.

Spinning from the fold

Spinning from the fold is an alternative to spinning from the end of the fibers. It's a comfortable way to hold the fibers and makes it easier to regulate the drafting, so that you can make yarns of even thickness. This technique is especially helpful with silk tops and other preparations that tend to clump together—if you spin them from the end, you get a lumpy yarn.

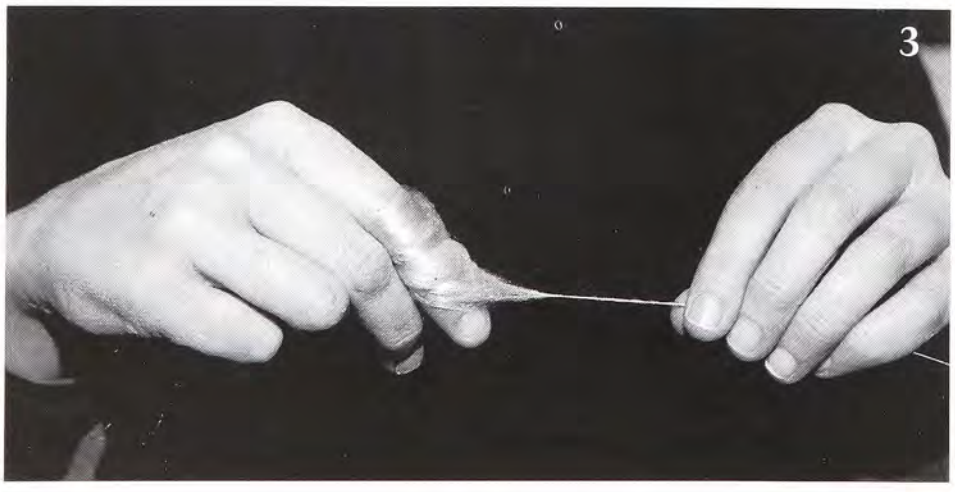
Some spinners raise various objections to spinning from the fold: it essentially halves the fiber length, it may make a fuzzier yarn, it requires making frequent joins, and so forth. Yes, these are all true; but so what? Working from the fold helps you spin fiber that would otherwise languish in the closet, and lets you make a nice even yarn. Why not give it a try?



1 Check the fiber length first. This method works best if the fibers are at least 4 inches (10 cm) long. Then pull off a piece of the preparation, equal to the average fiber length, and fold it in half over your index finger.



2 The fibers draft from the center of the fold. In this case, the fold extends off the end of the index finger. Note how the little finger holds the back ends of the fibers. The middle and ring fingers work with the thumb to regulate the flow of fibers—these fingers will stay busy if the preparation is clumpy and doesn't draft freely.



3 Try different positions to see which gives you the most control and comfort. Sometimes having the fiber coming off your knuckle, as shown here, works best. The thumb and middle finger press against both sides of the index finger to regulate the fiber flow.

continues opposite →

Worsted-style spinning



1 Some spinners prefer a worsted-style draw. It's easy on your back and eyes. You can sit back in a comfortable chair, rest one elbow against the chair arm, and position your hands so the drafting zone is right where you would hold a book for reading. The wheel in this photo is a Timbertops "Beaver."



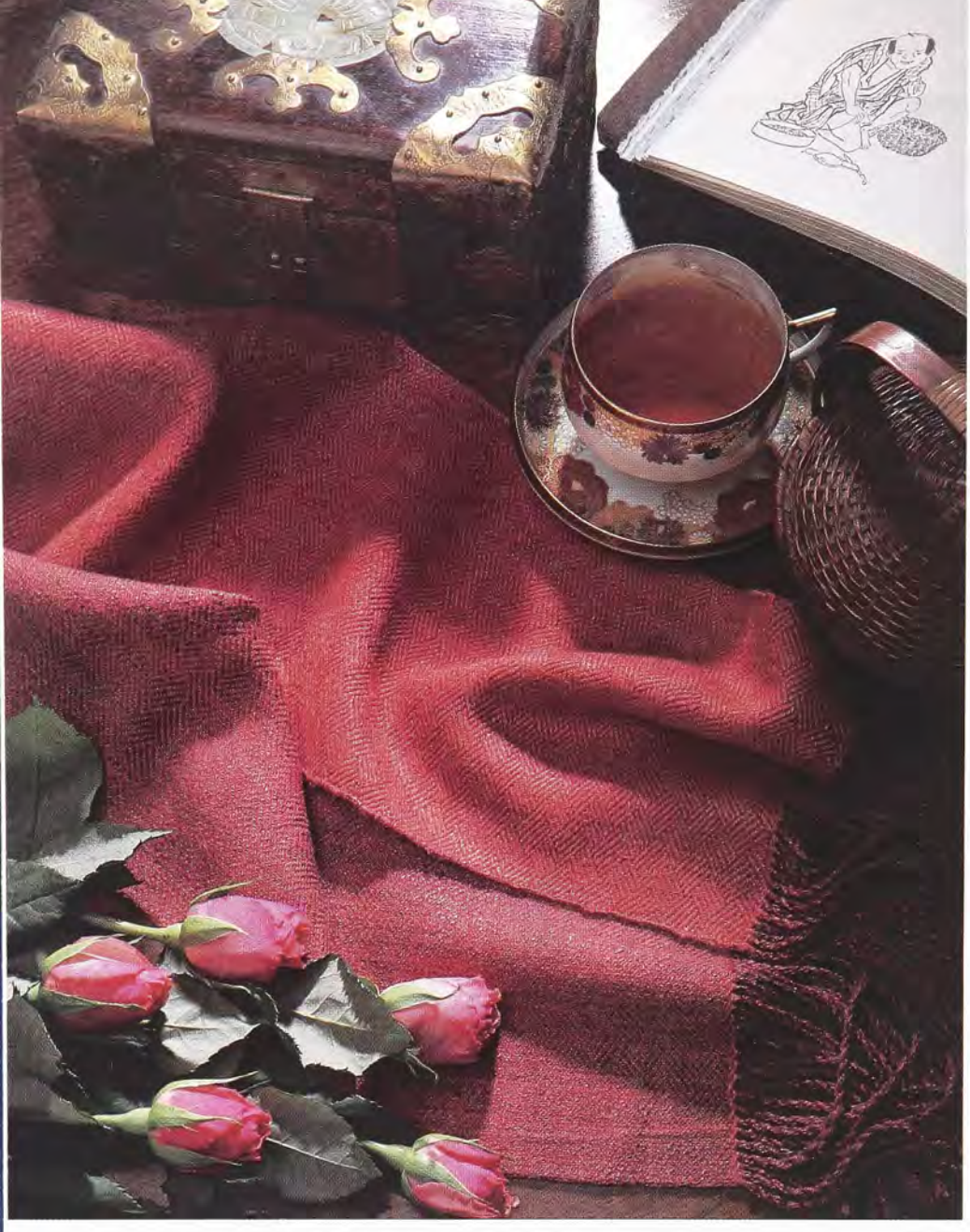
2 For worsted spinning, you need to keep the fiber length in mind. In this tussah top, the average fiber length is 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm). The front hand pinches the yarn and pulls it forward, toward the orifice, about 4 inches (10 cm)—about 1/2 to 2/3 of the fiber length—then slides back, guiding in the twist. The other hand uses the ring and little fingers to *hold* the fibers, and uses the thumb and first finger to *arrange* the fibers, spreading them into a thin layer. Normally the thumb and first finger are relaxed, but they can clamp down on the fibers if you need to draft out a thick spot by pulling on both ends of the clump.



4 If the fibers are too short to fold over your finger, try pinching them between your thumb and fingers. When joining on, overlap the folded fibers around the leader and carefully guide the twist across the join, as shown here.

5 The hand holding the folded fiber drafts back as far as is comfortable, and then winds on. The front hand hovers near the yarn, ready to hold back the twist or to pinch down if you need to pull between your hands to draft out a slub.





Silk top gives you a head start toward smooth yarn. Cheryl Reynolds chose two colors of combed tussah to spin the yarn for her scarf.

Made from silk top

Red Scarf

Cheryl Reynolds
Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

Cheryl Reynolds was still a new spinner when she took a silk workshop from Celia Quinn at the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat in 1991. She came home inspired, and has focused on silk ever since. For this scarf, she chose two types of combed tussah top from Lambspun of Colorado (the red weft is "Crimson Glow" and the variegated warp is "Handpainted Aurora"). She spun both colors into two-ply yarns.

The structure of her fabric is an eight-shaft braided twill. Cheryl was careful to sett the warp closely and to beat the weft well, to make a stable fabric, and she finished the cloth with a good steam pressing.

Cheryl says, "Silk has become my favorite fiber to spin. I did find that unless you want to spin for weeks, like I did for this piece, it is worthwhile to have a proficient wheel. I've graduated to a 30-inch (76-cm) double-treadle Jensen wheel (from The Spinning Wheel Shop) with a speed-spinning kit."

Noil

If you like textured yarns, silk noil is for you. **Noils** are short fibers, snarled bits, and little pieces of broken-up cocoon, all discarded from the reeling or combing operations. You can get bombyx noil or tussah noil in various forms—chunky or fine-textured, in loose wads or batts, or carded into roving.

The best noil preparations are clean and fluffy, easy to pull apart and use. Watch out for chunky stuff with big pieces of cocoon—you might as well tear up a cereal box and try to card it. Also, watch out for noil with lots of dark flaky bits that look like coarsely ground pepper. Those are pieces of broken chrysalis. They're hard and scratchy and give off a foul smell when wet—every time you wash the yarn, steam the fabric, or wear the garment on a humid day.

By itself, noil can be carded and spun into a rough-textured, dull-surfaced yarn that contrasts strongly with the smoothness and luster of yarn spun from top. Noil is also popular for blending. Try carding tussah noil with brown cotton, for example; the fiber lengths are similar, and they blend and spin easily into a pretty yarn. Or card bits of brightly dyed noils with solid-color wool to make an attractive tweedy yarn that's structurally sound—the noils don't pull loose.

Noil or noil-blend yarns, handspun or millspun, are often described as interesting but weak—fine for knitting, but better for warp than weft in weaving. Because the fibers are short, noil yarns need plenty of twist.

Using silk noil

CARDED NOIL



1 Noil can be used alone, without blending. You may need to card it first, to loosen clumps and make a fluffy batt.

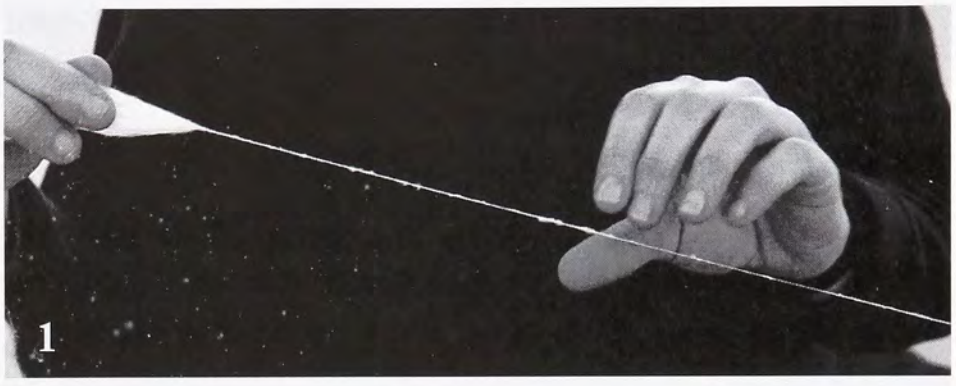


2 Spinning carded noil makes a textured yarn—you can see the bumps.

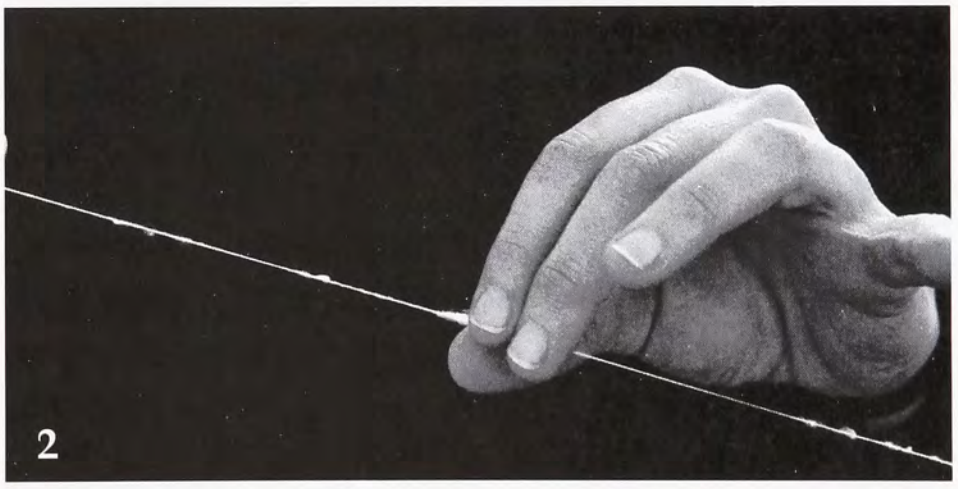
SECURING SLUBS

This noil was sold as a roving or sliver. It spins fine from the end, with no further preparation, but there are occasional slubs of loose, short fibers.

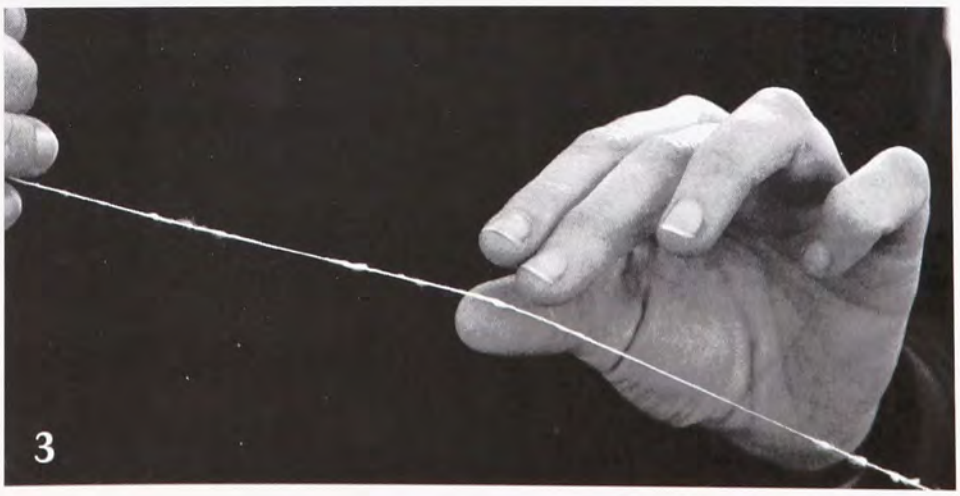
1 Here's a way to catch them more securely in the yarn. First, put your thumb underneath the slub.



2 Press down firmly with your fingers and roll with the twist, pulling those fibers tight around the yarn.



3 Done! That spot is now secure. A quick firm roll is all it takes.







1 Carding in some silk noil is a good way to add bits of color and texture to another fiber (dark brown yak down, in this case). Load the main fiber on the card first, then add a few dots of silk noil.

2 Card until the fibers are blended as much as you want.



3 Roll the carded fibers into a rolag, or simply lift them off as a batt.

4 The carded blend spins into a "knickerbocker" yarn that makes a wonderful tweedy fabric.



Made from silk noil

Peruvian Hat

Diane Varney
Albany, California

Diane Varney has experimented extensively with silk noil, which she initially thought was only good for one's budget. She has spun a multitude of textured yarns, and suggests sampling blends that begin with about 30 percent noil. Base fibers in the skeins shown in the photo include wool, kid mohair, silk top, flax, cotton, tussah, Samoyed, and Norwegian elkhound, separately and (more often) in combination.[2]

Tussah Vest

Paula Shull
Silverton, Oregon

Making the singles warp yarn for this vest was a simple matter of spinning commercially prepared tussah top from the end with a worsted draw. The singles tussah noil weft was a different matter entirely.

Because noil is the leftovers from the combing process, it consists of tangles and combed-out chrysalis bits, with lots of short pieces, disorganized long pieces, small trash, and sometimes large bits of unexpected foreign matter. You need to check any supply of noil carefully and remove any hard pieces before processing it, whether you plan to use hand cards or a drum carder.

The fiber for the weft in this vest was prepared on a drum carder with regular wool-carding cloth. I teased apart the fiber and added it to the revolving drum in thin layers. As I added each layer I used a flicker as well, dragging it heavily over the fiber on the drum as it turned to open the tangles as much as possible. Even though this is called noil, it contained a lot of relatively long fibers. Consequently, a rough carding drags it open and makes it a pleasure to spin. At first, the word *silk* made me treat the stuff cautiously, but tussah is very tough and can easily withstand the processing I ultimately gave it. After the batts were finished, I doffed them, tore them into strips lengthwise, and spun them into a highly textured yarn using a woolen draw.

Skeins for both warp and weft were finished the same way. I washed them gently by hand in hot water with Orvus paste, rinsed well, squeezed out the excess water between towels, snapped the skeins open, and hung them to dry unweighted.

I sett the worsted-spun yarn at 36 ends per inch (2.5 cm) and crossed it with the noil in a tabby structure. After weaving, I removed the web from the loom and washed it in warm water and Orvus, using the regular cycle of the washing machine. The fabric hung for a short while, but I pressed it while still damp, using a fairly hot iron (cotton setting) in order to bring up the luster as much as possible.





A more comprehensive photo of, and article about, Diane's hat appeared in the Winter 1990 issue (pages 60, 63). Paula's vest was shown in the Fall 1993 issue (page 103), with information on its worsted-spun singles warp—but without details on the noil weft, which are provided here.

[2] For more information, see "Spinning with Silk Noil," by Diane Varney, in *Spin·Off* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 60-63; and *Spinning Designer Yarns*, by Diane Varney (Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1987).

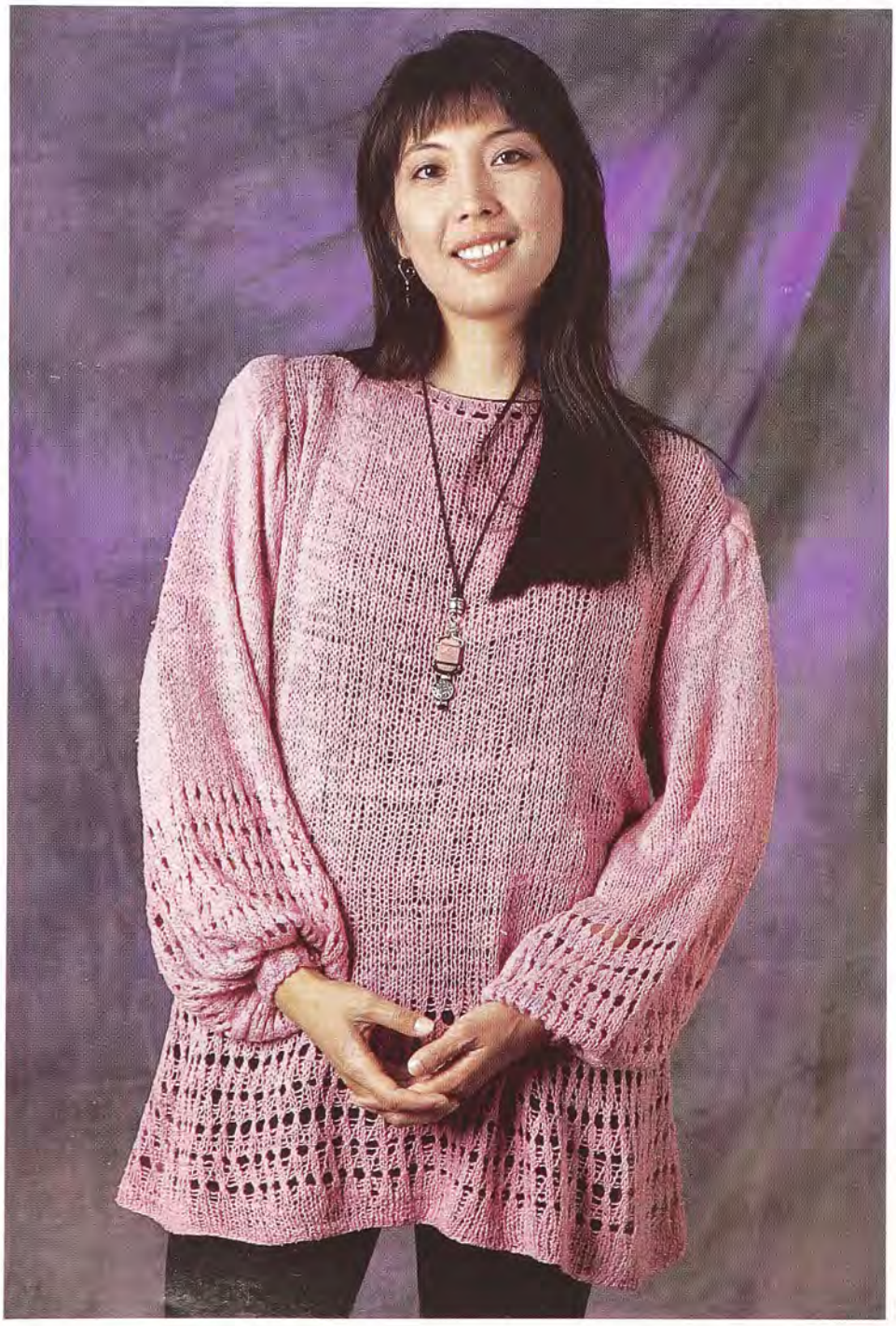
Throw it in the washing machine? Cram it in a drawer? Pat Maley dries her sweater flat and lets any later wrinkles hang out. Silk is a luxury fiber, but it's durable and practical, especially when handspun.

Caps or mawata

Mawata is the Japanese term for *expanded cocoon*, and means silk fiber that has been expanded from a compact cocoon into a wide thin layer. Mawata preparations were traditionally used for kimono padding. They are very soft and lightweight and provide excellent insulation.

American spinners are most likely to see mawata **caps**, sometimes called simply *silk caps*, made from bombyx cocoons. A mawata cap is made by stretching about 25 to 30 cocoons over a ceramic mold. One cap usually weighs between 1/2 ounce and 1 ounce (14 to 28 g). A **bell** is a group of about 25 caps, packaged together into one neat unit. A mawata **hankie** or **square** is made by stretching cocoons over a bamboo frame. Mawata hankies are still being made in Japan, but they are not commonly available in the United States—nor will you find caps made from tussah silk.

Mawata caps vary in quality, depending on the cocoons that were used and the methods of processing. In the best caps, the fiber has a soft, buttery texture. It feels strong and elastic as you draft it, and you end up with more long sections of continuous fiber and fewer snarly noils. In low-quality caps, the fiber has a rougher texture. It may rip or tear easily, making snapping noises as you draft it, and you end up with more short fibers and lots of noils.



Made from silk caps

Knitted Silk Sweater

Pat Maley
Cincinnati, Ohio

This sweater started with some mawata silk squares that I bought about twenty years ago. I couldn't decide what to do with that silk, but I finally started working with it anyway. I put some of the squares in a metal box that I carried around, and whenever I had time I drafted squares into roving. I would peel off a thin layer, open it into a loop, pull it out into a long circle, then fold it into a butterfly. When I got a box full of butterflies, I sat down and spun them into yarn, drafting out any thick spots as I went along and treadling just enough to give the yarn a very soft twist. The drafting was hard work and it seemed to take forever to do all the squares, but I liked the yarn I was making.

I kept looking for ideas for something to make with the yarn, either knitted or woven, and one day at church I saw someone in a long, loose, lacy sweater with full sleeves and puffed shoulders. I decided to make a sweater like that, came home and studied the *The Knitter's Guide to Sweater Design* (by Carmen Michelson and Mary-Ann Davis; Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1989), and drafted my own pattern. I'm not a very experienced knitter, so I designed most of the sweater in stockinette stitch and used the simplest of lace stitches—k 2 tog, yo—to make rows of lacy holes around the hem, sleeves, and neckline.

I worked the sweater on size 4 (3.5 mm)

needles at a gauge of 5 stitches and 6 rows per inch (2.5 cm). I knitted fairly loosely, and the finished sweater has stretched a little in length. That's okay, but if I had it to do over again I would knit more tightly.

I enjoyed knitting with this silk yarn. I used it as a singles, but the knitting didn't slant because the yarn had such a low angle of twist. My only problem was that I ran out of yarn before I finished the sweater. I couldn't get any more of the mawata squares, but I got some silk caps and drafted and spun them in the same way. They were a slightly different color of white, but dyeing covered that.

I dyed the finished sweater with Lanaset dyes. I waited until then because I wanted to dye some handwoven silk skirt fabric at the same time and have the colors match. I made a big batch of dye, divided it into two large pots, and did the sweater in one pot and the fabric in the other. Actually, I had trouble dyeing the fabric—it came out blotchy and I had to treat it with leveling agents to salvage it. But the sweater dyed beautifully—the knitted fabric is quite open, the sweater was completely wet when I put it in the dyepot, I used the biggest pot I had, and I kept repositioning the sweater in the dyebath.

The finished sweater weighs only 7.8 ounces (220 g). I wash it on the gentle cycle in the washing machine, and lay it flat to dry. It can wrinkle in a drawer or suitcase, but the wrinkles hang out, and I don't need to press it. It's wonderful to wear. It's cool enough for summer evenings and warm enough for winter. Usually I wear it with a skirt, but it's long enough that sometimes I wear it as a dress over tights.

A Fine Silk Blouse

Celia Quinn
Homer, Alaska

I worked on this blouse almost full time for about three months. I spun about 20,000 yards of singles yarn, and plied it for both warp and weft into a two-ply yarn that measured about 11,000 yards per pound. I spun the warp first, using bombyx silk caps that I had dyed in a range of pastel and dark colors with Lanaset dyes. I sett the warp at 40 ends per inch (2.5 cm) for the plain weave stripes, and at 60 ends per inch for the 3/1 twill stripes. Even with



There's more information on Celia's blouse in the Summer 1994 issue (pages 73–75). But we thought you should see what she can do with silk caps. . . .

the plying, I was worried about this warp, and decided to treat it with sizing. I used a recipe by Mary Dusenberry, published in the 1990 issue of *Color Trends* (see the box). I put the sizing in a bowl and treated one skein at a time, kneading in the sizing until the yarn was well saturated. Then I squeezed out the excess sizing and snapped the skein to straighten it. I rotated the skeins often as they dried, and kept working them over to make sure none of the strands stuck together.

Silk from caps is just incredibly prone to snagging. While weaving, I had to clear the shed for each pick and there were 35 picks per inch (2.5 cm).

It took two trips through the washing machine to wash out all the sizing, but the cloth didn't shrink to speak of. I dried it and ironed it. It had taken me about five hundred hours to spin the thread and weave the fabric.

This project was more difficult than I expected, but I learned a lot, and I love the blouse. It only weighs 6.5 ounces (185 g), so it's very light and comfortable. The cloth feels wonderful, especially right after I wash and press it. I'll never forget the satisfaction of weaving fabric from such fine thread. As I sat there at the loom, I kept telling myself, "This is it! At last I'm making real cloth!"

A COOKED FLOUR SIZING FOR SILK WARPS

For 2 to 3 ounces (60 to 85 g) of silk, add a few drops of olive oil to 1/2 cup of white flour, then slowly add 3 cups of water. Cook this mixture like gravy, stirring over low heat for 10 to 15 minutes until it thickens.

Spinning silk caps

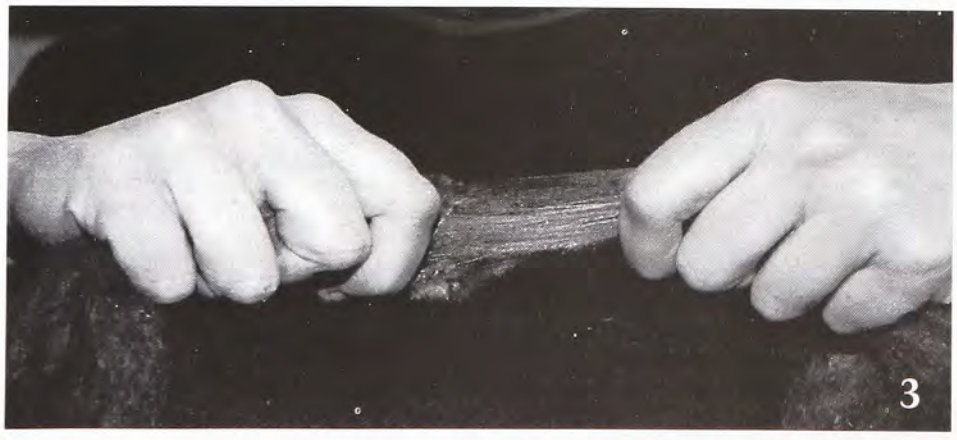
SEPARATING LAYERS, METHOD 1

1 A cap is made by stretching several cocoons over a mold, so it contains many layers of fibers. There's too much fiber to spin all at once; you need to peel the layers apart. You can start at the edge, as shown here, and peel across to the other side.





2 Keep pulling until you have pulled the layer almost completely away from the rest of the cap.



3 Make the final separation by putting your hands close together and snapping sharply. This makes a distinct break. If your hands are too far apart and you pull slowly, you'll get long tails of fibers trailing off both pieces.

SEPARATING LAYERS, METHOD 2

1 Here's another way to peel a layer off a cap. Use one hand to pinch right in the center and pull up. Reach inside the cap with your other hand and pull down.



2 Now pull the layers apart, turning the cap inside out. To make the final break, put your hands close together and snap sharply.

Take the layer you have peeled off and stretch it as far as your arms can reach. Look it over, and if you spot any clumps of short fibers, pick them out and discard them. Now choose a starting point, fan it open, and draft out a few fibers. Tie these onto the leader, and you're ready to spin.



USING AN IMPROVISED DISTAFF



1 Here's another way to spin from caps, using an umbrella swift as a distaff. Partially open the swift and cover it with a piece of cloth. Peel a thin layer off a cap, tug it between your hands to stretch it even thinner, then pull it down over the cloth-covered swift. Adjust the swift as needed to hold out the cap.



2 Position your chair and wheel near the swift, so you can reach the fiber easily for drafting. Keep your hands at the front of the drafting triangle, and pull toward the orifice. Watch what you're doing.



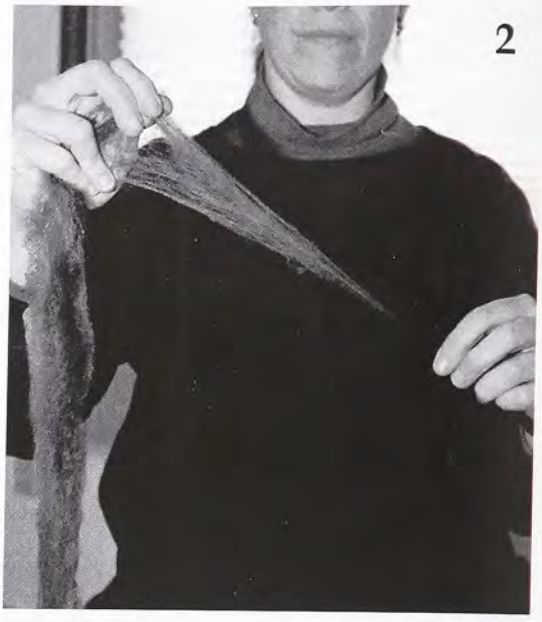
3 You can spin a fine yarn this way, with plenty of control. Use both hands, as needed, to regulate the flow of fibers, draft out thick spots, and catch noils. The swift will turn as you work your way around the cap, but you may need to stop and readjust the remaining fiber from time to time.

1 To spin from the cap, keep your hands well apart and make a long drafting triangle. Remember, there are long pieces of unbroken silk filament in a cap.

How much should you draft the layer of fibers before you start spinning? It depends on what size of yarn you want to make. If you want to make a fine yarn, like this, start with a fairly thick supply of fibers. That way the twist won't run up into the fiber supply; it will stop at the drafting triangle, and you'll have plenty of time to draft as fine as you want without fighting the twist.

If you want to spin a thicker yarn, start by drafting the fiber close to the desired yarn size. When you sit down at the wheel, it's all you can do to draft out remaining slubs before the yarn is twisted enough to wind on. Spinning thick yarn goes so fast that you don't have time to do much drafting.

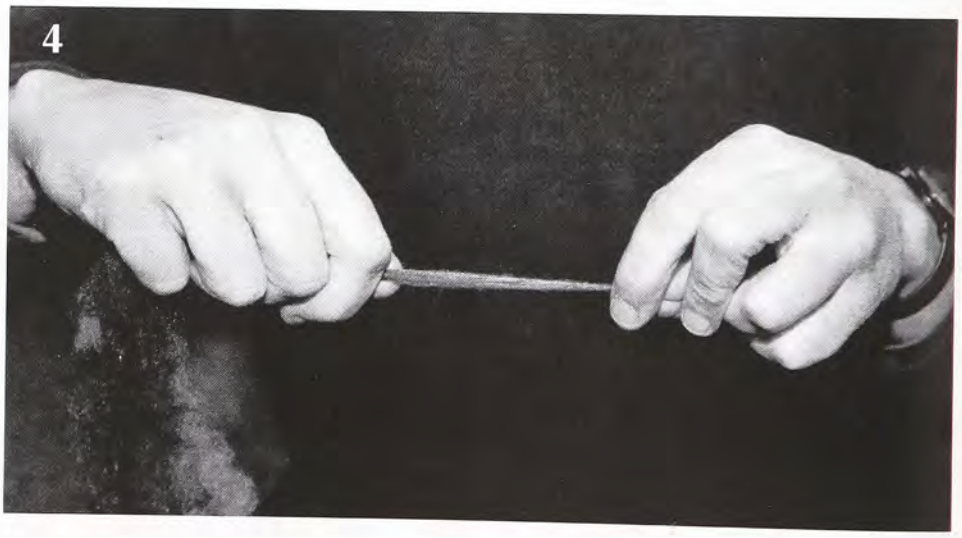




2 Use all the fingers of your fiber-holding hand to control the silk. This is an active process. Don't let that hand be lazy.



3 Don't hang on too close to the front of the fibers. Doing that interferes with drafting, and the fibers snarl up in your hand.



4 If they do snarl, stop spinning and straighten things out.



5 When you start spinning again, keep your hand farther back on the fiber supply.

Made from silk caps

Crocheted Vest

Selma Miriam

Westport, Connecticut

For this vest I dyed silk caps in two colors, bright turquoise and a darker blue-green. I spun the singles separately, then made a two-ply yarn. Most of the yarn has the two colors plied together, but I made some with both strands the same color, for variety. The yarn has some irregularity, because I wasn't very experienced yet at working with caps, but I think the texture adds interest.

I found the pattern stitch in *Glorious Crocheted Sweaters,* by Nola Theiss (New York: Sterling, 1989). It has an eight-row repeat: six rows of single crochet, then two pattern rows that make the arrowhead motifs. For dimensions, I chose a favorite old vest and matched its size and shape. I worked the rows vertically, starting at the center front and going all the way around with no side seams. Then I added a band around the bottom.

I thought it was easy and fun to work with the silk yarn, and I encourage other spinners to try crocheting with silk. I like how the texture of the yarn complements the sculptural quality of this stitch. The vest stretched a little when I blocked it, but didn't get too loose or too big. At just over 7 ounces (200 g), it's lightweight and comfortable to wear.



Selma Miriam starts with a fiber and invents from there. She dyed her silk caps in two colors, spun them, and then plied them in different combinations. She liked the interaction between the textures of the crochet stitch and the yarn.

Silk batting

Various forms of silk were traditionally used to pad quilts and clothing in China and Japan. This **batting** or stuffing can be made from expanded cocoons or carded fibers. You can buy pieces of ready-made silk batting. It's very light and warm, and worth considering for a special quilting project.

Sometimes a spinner discovers an old comforter or garment that was originally stuffed with silk, and optimistically decides to retrieve the batting and card and spin it. These projects usually end up in the closet, because spinning old batting is about as much fun as eating yesterday's oatmeal.

Silk blends

Silk is blended with other fibers for many reasons. For example, shiny silk adds luster to fine wool or cotton. Wool adds loft to silk. Silk and kid mohair make a sparkling blend that dyes to vibrant colors. Flax or ramie adds crispness to silk. Silk and baby alpaca are luxuriously soft together. Blends can be wonderful stuff, and they often cost less than pure silk.

Blends are made by carding, and are usually available as puffy batts or ropelike strands called *rovings* or *tops* (again, these terms are used inconsistently and interchangeably). They vary widely in the quality and compatibility of the constituent fibers, the thoroughness of the blending, and the spinnability. Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind as you shop.

- A preparation that's only partially blended will have a marbled or streaky look—you can see distinct areas of silk and the other fiber. If spun with no further preparation, this will make a variegated yarn with alternating sections of one fiber, then the other. That may look wonderful, or it may look funny. Try some and see. You can always recard to

complete the blending, or look for a more fully blended preparation in the first place.

- ✦ It's easiest to blend and spin two fibers that have similar fiber lengths. Ideally, the silk has been chosen or cut to closely match the length of the other fiber. These similar-length blends cooperate and draft into a homogeneous yarn. Blends where one fiber is much longer than the other, such as long silk and short camel down, are harder to spin. The fibers tend to separate as you draft—the long fibers pull out first, and you're left with a tuft of short fibers, so you spin that, and end up with a patchy yarn. Even experienced spinners have trouble spinning mixed-length blends into uniform yarns. If you're a beginner, you may find the attempt frustrating. Investigate a sample and compare the fiber lengths in a blended preparation before you buy it.
- ✦ Fiber diameter should be similar, too. Silk combines best with other fine fibers. Sometimes spinners hope that adding some silk will soften a coarse wool, mohair, alpaca, or llama. It won't. Even a little bit of coarse fiber in a blend is enough to make the yarn look and feel itchy.
- ✦ Silk is very compatible with angora rabbit and kid mohair, but because of their tendency to fluff out, these other fibers will visually dominate the yarn. The silk is more subtle, but you'll see it when you look closely.
- ✦ If the fibers are well blended, you don't have worry about how you're going to care for the yarn or project—just wash it in warm water with your favorite detergent or soap, then rinse, allow to dry, and gently steam-press if desired. Thorough blending prevents the problems that occur if you combine fibers by plying them together, or by making stripes in a project. Then different rates of shrinkage often cause puckering when you wash and dry the yarn or fabric. ❖

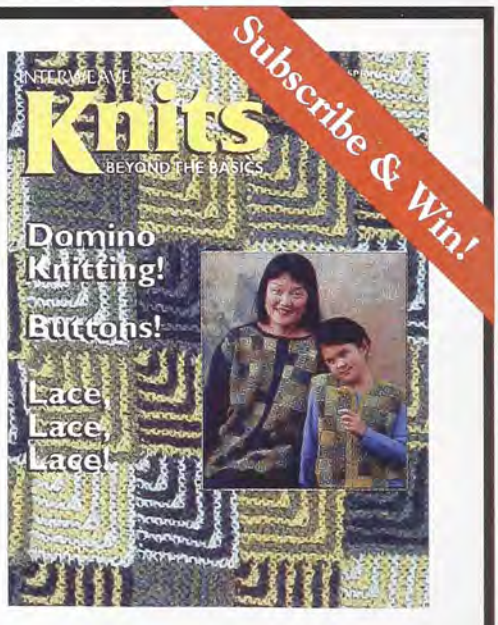
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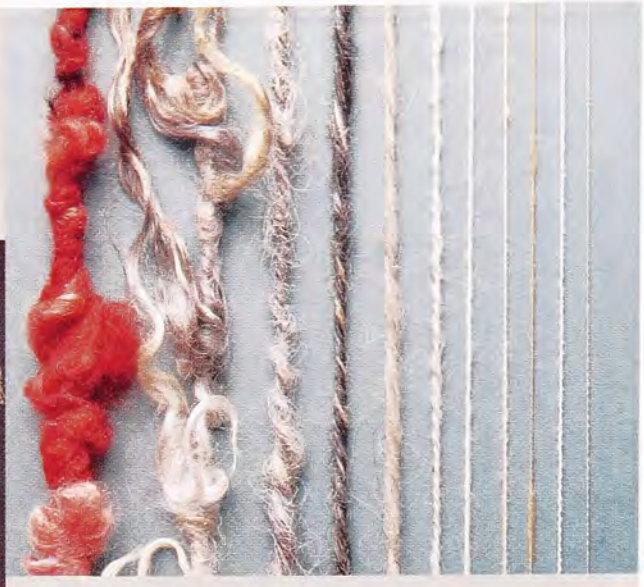
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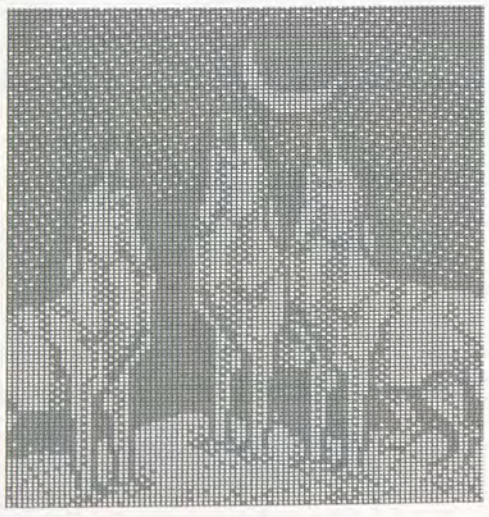
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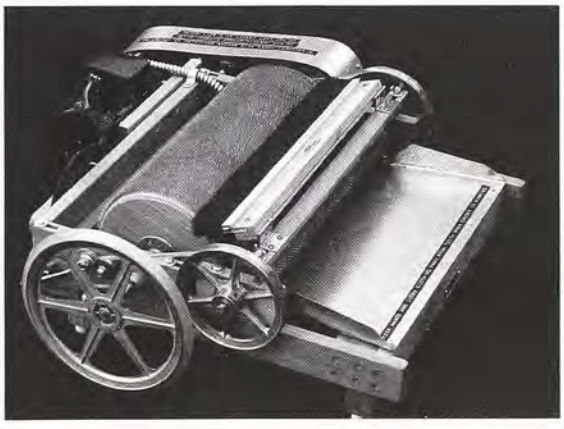
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Fair Isle Favorite

by Darryl A. Russell



AS I STARTED to think about a new project, I went through my stash of yarn and dye experiments—those 1- and 2-ounce skeins spun for previous projects that may or may not have worked out. I discovered I had baskets full. There were even more baskets full of leftover yarns. In the midst of this bounty, I decided to make a "leftover sweater," using as many of these yarns as I could.

I started by separating all the colors, then thought I would stick with the reds, greens, dark blues, browns, and tans. The yarns were of different weights, so I doubled the thinner ones. Most of the fiber was wool, although I found some wool/mohair and wool/silk blends, along with a bit of alpaca.

Next, I needed a pattern. Inspired by Deb Menz's vest in an issue of *Spin·Off* (Winter 1990, pages 42–45), I thought that an easy sequence of Fair Isle repeats would suit my plan. Instead of drafting the pattern ahead of time, as I normally would, I decided it might be fun to make things up as I went.

Using Priscilla Gibson-Roberts' *Knitting in the Old Way* for techniques, I cast on the appropriate number of stitches for the size I wanted and worked completely in the round. I tried not to repeat any pattern or color sequences in the body of the sweater, although I did repeat the body designs on the sleeves, for continuity.

The finished sweater looks bulky, but it is very comfortable to wear—not at all heavy, and with a very good drape. My different weights of yarns worked very well together, in large part because the variations were scattered throughout the garment.

I can honestly say I was surprised by the outcome. This may be my favorite sweater ever. My thirteen-year-old daughter and her sister began immediately to fight over who gets the sweater when Mom tires of it; but they have a very long wait. ❖

Jocelyn Russell hopes her mother gets tired of this sweater soon. So does her sister.

When Darryl Russell moved to Gurnee, Illinois, she found no local yarn shop. As a weaver, this mattered to her, so she taught herself to spin to feed her loom. Then she taught herself to knit. Now she finds much delight in teaching these skills to others.

Reflections of a Wheel:

A "left-handed" Ashford

by Alden Amos

SPINNERS have recently demonstrated interest in "left-handed" spinning wheels. About twenty years ago there was also a sudden and remarkable preoccupation with "left-handed" wheels, even by people who were not of the southpaw persuasion.

Right? left? center?

Before going further in this discussion, we need to define a "left-handed" wheel. In general, if you sit in spinning position with the drive wheel to your right and the flyer/bobbin array to your left, the wheel is a "right-handed" wheel. This is the typical arrangement of the classical Saxon or Norsk wheel. Great wheels (and derivatives) are traditionally arranged with the drive wheel to the spinner's right and the spindle mechanism to the far left. Where symmetrical and semi-symmetrical treadled uprights are concerned (Clemes kit wheel, Thumbelina, Schacht, Columbine, Fricke, Lendrum, Louët, Dundas, Ashford Joy, and so forth), there is no significant "right"- or "left"-handedness involved.



Standard-issue (right-handed) Ashford Traditional

It should be noted that almost all control adjustments (drive-cord tensioning, scotch tension) tend to favor the right-hander. Treadle placements and shapes follow suit; they are most often right-handed (Haldane "Orkney," single-treadle Lendrum, single-treadle Schacht, and others), although many makers now offer a double-crank, double-treadle arrangement.

Obviously, some wheel designs will confound all casual attempts to categorize them as right- or left-handed. If it is important to do so (because you wish to win an argument or wager), then proceed as follows. Suspend a plumb bob from a convenient ceiling hook, then center the wheel below it. Stand or seat yourself in the appropriate spinning position for that particular wheel. Observe the plumb line. If the plumb line bisects the flyer/spindle shaft and the wheel axle, then the wheel is neither right- nor left-handed. If the plumb line falls between the center of the wheel and the center of the flyer/spindle array, then the wheel is right- or left-handed. If the flyer/spindle array is to the left of the plumb line, the wheel is right-handed, and vice versa.

Back to real life. If a wheel requires plumb lines to determine handedness, the degree of right-ness or left-ness is not significant from the spinning point of view. Agreed, it may be a moral issue.

Okay. Simply stated, a left-handed wheel is one that is the opposite of the right-handed wheel; that is, a mirror image. The drive wheel is to your left, and the flyer/bobbin array is to your right.

So much for trivia. Our real purpose here is to address several aspects of handspinning in *la mode sinistre.*

1. Are left-handed wheels worthwhile?
2. Where can a handspinner snag a suitable wheel?

Worthwhile idea?

Item Number One has been investigated for a number of years. During '76 and '77 we set up some treadled wheels as left-handers, and scattered them in strategic locations, such as at the College Avenue (Oakland, California) Straw-into-Gold store. We lured customers into trying these wheels out by saying they had been fitted with a new "speed-kit," or that we needed input concerning some outrageous fiber preparation (there were plenty of those), or some other pretext. We got no earth-shaking reactions to our ploy: about 1 out of 3 users (including several southpaws) didn't notice the "left-handedness" until it was pointed out to them.

We carried our inquiry a step further, and tried stuff out on spinning classes. Then we went afield and had Important Personages give us their opinions on the matter.

Results? Inconclusive. Southpaws state: "Yes, it makes a difference." "No, not much of a difference." "I don't notice much difference." And, "Wow, it really makes a big difference."

Northpaws state: "Yes, it makes a difference." "No, not much of a difference." "I don't notice much difference." And, "Wow, it really makes a big difference."

No significant information was gained as a result of the left-handed treadle wheel experiments, unless the lack of strong sentiment was or is significant. No one seemed to care much, one way or the other, after using a left-handed wheel. This non-excitement continued until the concept lost its novelty status completely.

Then we set up a great wheel (wool wheel) as a left-hander, fitted out volunteers with pedometers, and had them spin miles and miles of yarn.[1] The great wheel experiments were another matter—a real eye-opener.

Most people who tried a left-handed great wheel, including the several obligatory southpaws, commented that it "felt" or "seemed" better when set up in right-handed mode (about forty-four out of sixty).

You would imagine that the left-handed person should prefer the right-handed great wheel, which allows them to draft with their "master" hand, while using the off-paw to turn the wheel.

The results are doubly interesting when you consider that a right-handed person who normally drafts with the right hand has to draft left-handed when operating a right-handed ("normal") great wheel. So what about the right-handers? Why do the right-handers prefer a set-up that forces them to draft with their off-paw? That makes them use their master hand to turn the wheel?

(As an aside, the same sort of question is asked by aspiring stringed instrument players.)

Perhaps the answer lies in nothing more than tradition, or mind-set. Rather like countries where you drive on the right side of the road as opposed to those where you drive on the left side. Both seem to work. Still, more study on the matter seems in order.

Now, there is no doubt that left-handers have to put up with a lot of casual, gratuitous abuse from the callous, right-handed majority. Symmetrical uprights aside, there is no particular reason why a manufacturer doesn't offer a true left-handed wheel, other than standardization, fear of change, cost accounting, or the fact that his hole-boring jig cannot bear the excitement. If you are a lefty, and having a lefty wheel makes you happy, then that is reason enough to have left-handed wheels.



Modified (left-handed) Ashford Traditional

[1] FYI: Distance walked per yard of yarn produced depends almost entirely on operator procedure, and it varies wildly. A fast (productive) and experienced spinner hits a ratio of 2-to-1, or better. That is, 2 length units (inches, yards, furlongs, miles) of yarn for each length unit (inch, yard, furlong, mile) of foot-travel.

Obtaining the item

So, what about Item Number Two? What to do? Simple. Convert an existing wheel. And if you do it yourself, there is no reason why you should have to settle for anything less than the genuine article—a true-blue, left-handed spinning wheel.

It's not as hard as you think. Without further ado, here's how to make over a proven performer: the world's most ubiquitous wheel. We're talking about the Ashburton Adventure, the South Isle Wonder Wheel, the Kiwi-land Kitset, the Dodoburg Doodlebug, the one, the only, the world-famous Ashford Traditional.

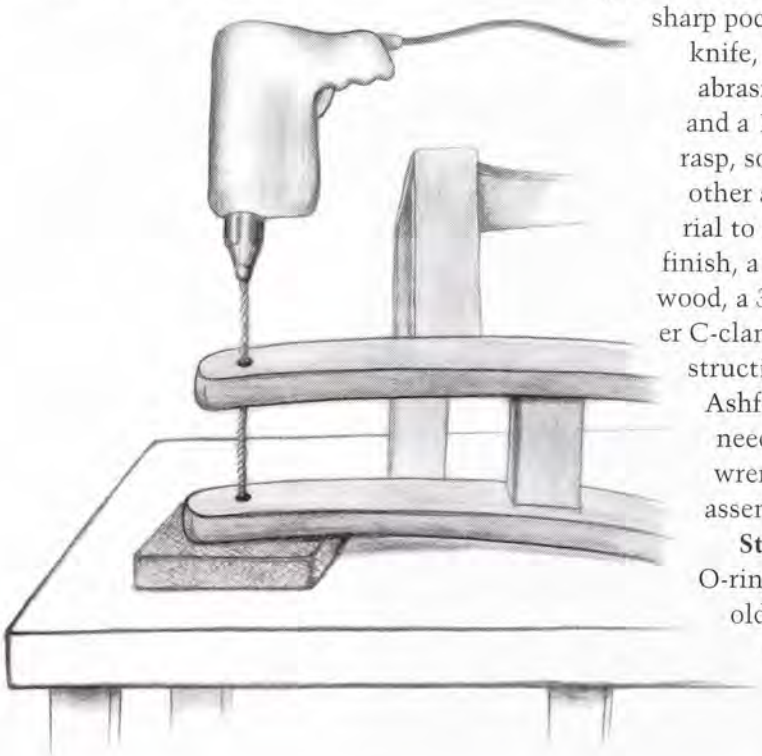
We selected the Ashford Traditional for various reasons:

1. There are plenty of them around.
2. They are cheap, both used and new.
3. Spare parts are readily available.
4. They work—no ifs, ands, or buts.
5. They are easy to convert.
6. They are easy to unconvert.
7. If you mess one up, who cares?

The job

Step 1. Score an Ashford Traditional wheel, in good working order, the single-drive, flyer-lead configuration.

Step 2. Line up the tools and stuff. You need an electric or hand drill, three drill bits (a long 3/8", a 1/4" and a 3/32"), a medium-sized plain (flat) screwdriver, a small or medium Phillips screwdriver, a pair of needle-nose pliers, a sharp pocketknife or craft knife, a little bit of abrasive paper, a 3/8" and a 1/4" round file or rasp, some Danish oil or other appropriate material to match the wheel finish, a block of scrap wood, a 3" (7.5 cm) or larger C-clamp, and these instructions. For newer Ashfords, you will need the Allen (hex) wrench that fits the assembly bolts.



Step 4: Drill through blank side of wheel support.

Step 3. Remove the O-ring retainer (on older wheels, the cotter key) from the crank. Remove the footman from the treadle plate and the crank. Unship the wheel. To do this, you will have to remove the hub pin. It will either punch out (newer styles) or pull out (older style). Back, wiggle, and curse the crank out, and set the wheel and crank aside.

Step 4. Using the long 3/8" bit, carefully slide it through the wheel post bearings, and bore the blank side clear through. Back up the boring job with a scrap block. Remove the drill, and clean out all the chips, dust, and debris. Smooth up the exit hole, and touch up the finish as required. Try the crank from the new side. Touch up the fit with the round file.

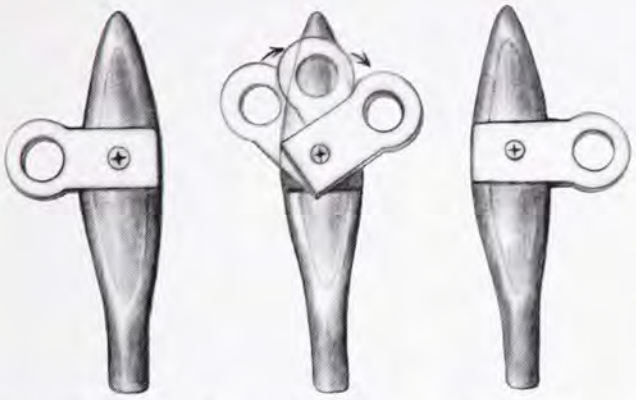
Note: an alternate method of working Step 4 is to remove both of the wheel post bearings, and drill through the post with a long 5/8" bit. Be sure and back up the bore hole with a scrap block. Clean out the chips, re-install the bearings, check crank fit, and press on to Step 5.

Step 5. Remove the mother-of-all and lay it aside. Loosen the front leg slightly, and remove the treadle. Tighten the front leg. Remove the treadle plate (most are held by four little screws; newer ones are stapled). Turn the treadle bars over, as a unit. Reposition the treadle plate, at the same place as before, except now on the other side of the bars. Fasten in place. You will need to come up with your own fasteners if you pulled out staples (#6 × 3/4 flathead wood screws are about right).

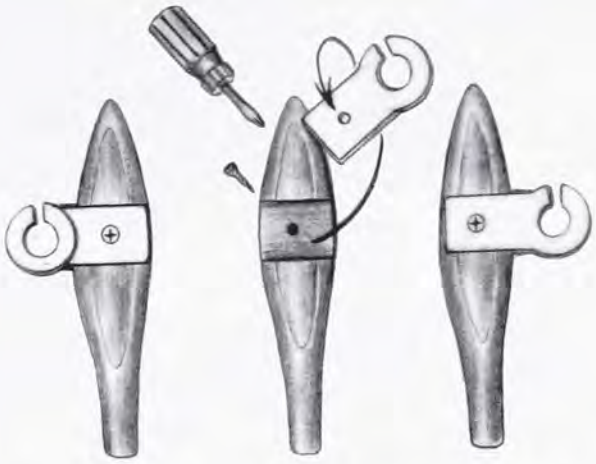
Step 6. Now we get to the only tricky parts, and they're not big deals. Turn the entire mainframe around, so that you are facing it in the new and glorious left-handed mode. That is, the old axle hole and wheel posts are to your left, and the single front leg is to your right. Lay the converted treadle assembly more or less in position, with the open end of its V to your left, and the point of its V to your right.

Step 7. Using the 1/4" drill bit, carefully bore the new treadle-pin holes at the same elevation as the old ones, but with the new angle—that is, parallel to the correctly positioned treadle bar and pins. There will now be two holes in the "front" leg, and one hole in each of the "rear" legs.

Step 8. Loosen the front leg again and re-install the treadle assembly, this time in the left-hand position. Tighten the front leg, and check to see that the treadle moves without binding or interference. Adjust clearances as required with the 1/4"



Step 10: Loosen the screw and rotate the bearing on the front maiden so it faces the other direction.



Step 10, note: If the bearing on the rear maiden is slotted, reposition it so the bearing faces the opposite direction but the slot still opens upward.

drill and/or the file. Put a little grease on the pivot pins before final assembly.

Step 9. Re-install the wheel in the new left-handed position. Oil the axle, slide it into place, and install the hub pin. Connect the footman to treadle and crank. Give it a test treadle session. Adjust the various fits if and as required.

Now you need to re-work the mother-of-all (MOA). Bear in mind that what follows applies *only* to the standard single-drive, flyer-lead system. You don't have to do a thing to the flyer or the bobbins, but you do have to "mirrorize" the flyer support bearings and the maidens, and you will have to re-position the hinge plate and bar assembly.

Step 10. Start with the flyer support bearings and maidens. Remove the maidens from the MOA bar. Select the "front" maiden and bearing; this is the larger of the two bearings. Unscrew the bearing screw (newer ones may be stapled), remove the bearing, and re-install it pointing the opposite way. An exact fit is not necessary; a close approximation is fine. Repeat the process with the rear (smaller) bearing and its maiden.

Note: Current Ashford practice is to furnish slotted bearings for the rear. You cannot turn them over, because the flyer will drop out of place. So turn them around. This results in less "float," or end-to-end clearance of the bobbin, but to date has not posed a functional problem.

Another Note: If staples were used to hold the bearings in place, discard the staples. Replace them with #6 × 1/2 flat-head wood screws, one per bearing. Drill pilot holes and countersink gently.

Step 11. Remove the screws holding the hinge plates to the MOA bar. Set the hinge plates aside, still attached to the plywood positioning plate. Remove the drive-cord tension screw (bolt and knob) and the scotch-tension knob. Now turn the MOA bar over, upside-down and end-for-end, as it were. Screw the drive-cord tension bolt into the nut, and pry the nut out of place. Remove the nut, put the bolt through the MOA bar, and install the nut on the other side of the bar. Using the tension bolt as a centering device, mash or press the nut down into the MOA bar's surface. Install the front (orifice-bearing) maiden in its original hole, only now on the "wrong" (mirror-image) side. Re-install the rear maiden and the flyer/bobbin array.

Step 12. Using your calibrated eyeballs, line up the flyer whorl grooves with the drive wheel. Establish a new location for the hinges and positioning plate. Re-install them. Realign everything, tighten everything up, install a new drive cord, turn the scotch-tension screws over, touch up the finish.

Congratulations! You now have a left-handed wheel. Put it through its paces, and please forward your observations, suggestions, comments and critique to the *Spin·Off* editorial staff.[2] ❖

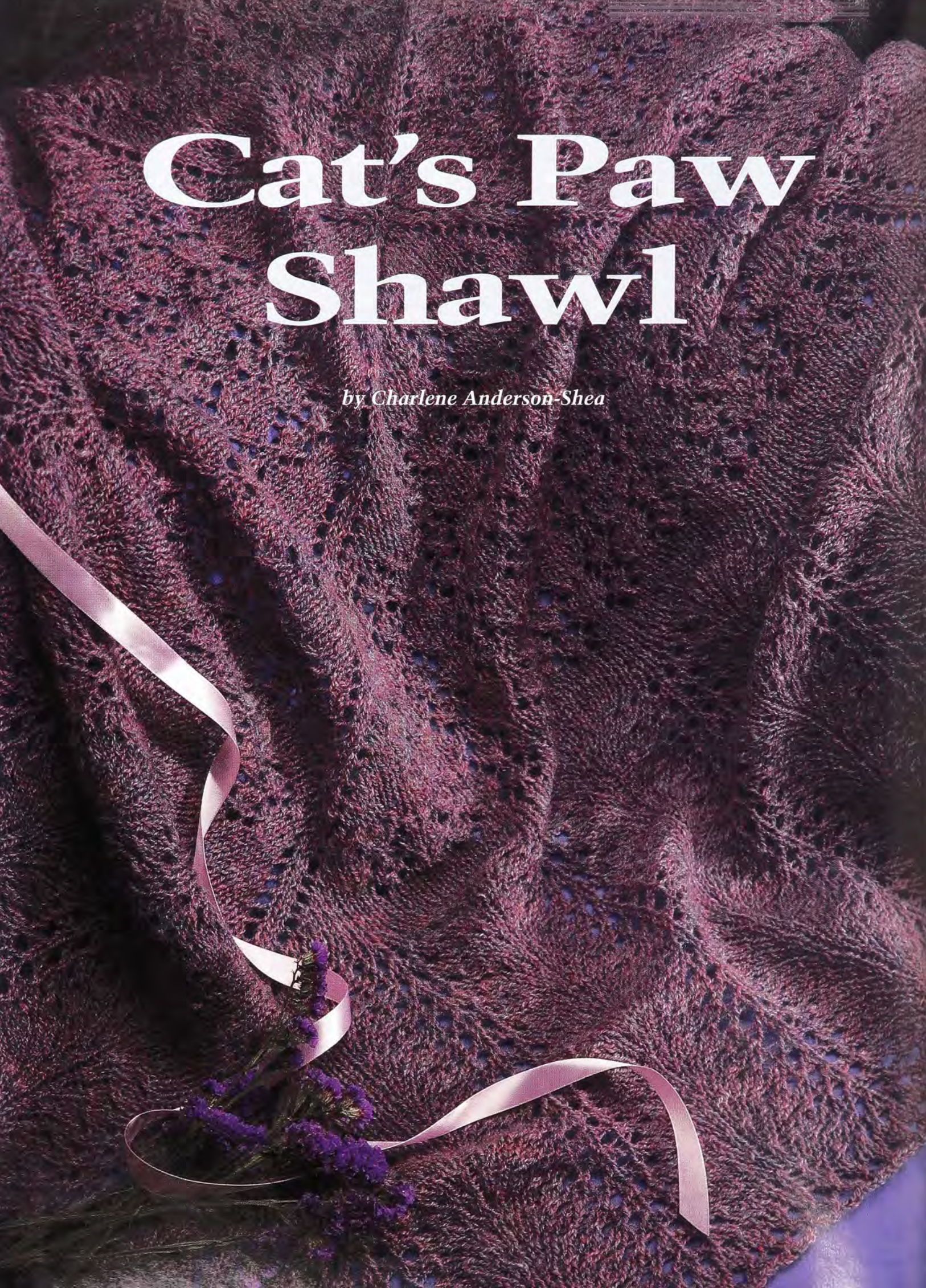
When he's not bashing around with old Ashfords, Alden Amos makes custom wheels and other essential but generally unfindable spinning equipment from a base of operations in Jackson, California. If you ask him a question, he will have an opinion and the data to back it up.

[2] Who will not be able to answer your questions, but will forward them to The Source.

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Cat's Paw Shawl

by Charlene Anderson-Shea



THIS SHAWL began life as two pounds of beautiful roving from Aussie Yarns in a color called "Fire Opal," which I purchased without a specific project in mind—just an admonition to myself to spin enough to make something major. I had been spinning for about four months, and all of my previous projects had been small items like scarves and socks. I wanted to challenge myself and to make something really exciting. (Not that you can't do exciting things with small projects; I just wanted to avoid that "knit faster so I don't run out of yarn" feeling in the pit of my stomach.)

The roving arrived in two large bumps. I pulled off one-foot sections of roving, attenuated it to loosen it up and make it easier to draft, and took the opportunity to remove the few bits of straw and chaff that remained, along with any small blobs of unevenly blended color. I took sections alternately from the two bumps, so any slight color variations would be evenly blended throughout the yarn.

I wanted to make spinning as easy as possible and am glad I spent this time preparing the roving. I alternated preparing a basket of roving with spinning so I could have regular breaks from the wheel—very welcome, because I was working in the middle of a record-setting heat wave!

When I began, I wasn't sure what I wanted to make, so I let the yarn tell me how it should be spun. I got comfortable at the wheel, spun for about ten minutes, and then wrapped a small card with a few rounds of the singles. I kept this sample by my wheel for regular reference, but noticed that as I became more adept at spinning my yarn became increasingly finer. In the end, it was a challenge to match the grist I had begun with, but the reference card made it easy to check.

After spinning all but a few ounces of the fiber, I plied it into a balanced yarn and finished it by soaking it in warm water with Orvus paste, rinsing it, and hanging it to dry.

About then, I ran across a copy of Martha Waterman's *Traditional Knitted and Lace Shawls*, and decided to knit a shawl with all that lovely handspun yarn. Surely with almost two pounds I could knit a huge shawl that would be great to snuggle under on the sofa, as well as to wear on chilly evenings. I chose the Cat's Paw pattern, and began knitting while on a trip.

As any lace knitter knows, while you are working the project looks like nothing so much as a balled-up wad of yarn, and this shawl was no exception. While struggling through several errors in the pattern (a missing yarn-over; an inaccurate number of stitches), I kept knitting.[1] I finished the shawl and gleefully cast off, only to discover that my shawl was not square, and no amount of blocking would remedy the problem.

I cast on again, thinking I had misread the pattern, and began knitting very carefully. I counted every stitch, marked off rounds on an index card, and in general became compulsive. Dozens of markers delineated pattern areas. I kept knitting at SOAR (the *Spin·Off* Autumn Retreat) in North Carolina, and on the long flight home. I had been knitting on the shawl for seven weeks when I arrived home to find an errata sheet from the book's publisher. No amount of my fussing could have produced a square shawl.

For the third time, I took it off the needles. I began knitting on my own, charting out each round so it was perfect. I worked on size 9 (5.25–5.5 mm) needles. I found it helpful to use bamboo needles for the center section, so the 8 stitches have less tendency to slide around. Once a few rounds have been knitted, the process becomes much more manageable. Hang in there; the worst is over quickly. After casting off, I soaked the fabric in warm water, spun out the excess moisture in my washer, and blocked the shawl on a king-sized bed, holding it in shape with rustproof pins. ❖



Getting a square to come out balanced presents a worthwhile knitting challenge. Here's Charlene Anderson-Shea's version of Martha Waterman's "Cat's Paw Square," modeled by Kate Martin, who's helped with a lot of Spin·Off*'s photostyling.*

[1] A corrected version of these instructions appears on pages 80–83.

Cat's Paw Square

by Martha Waterman

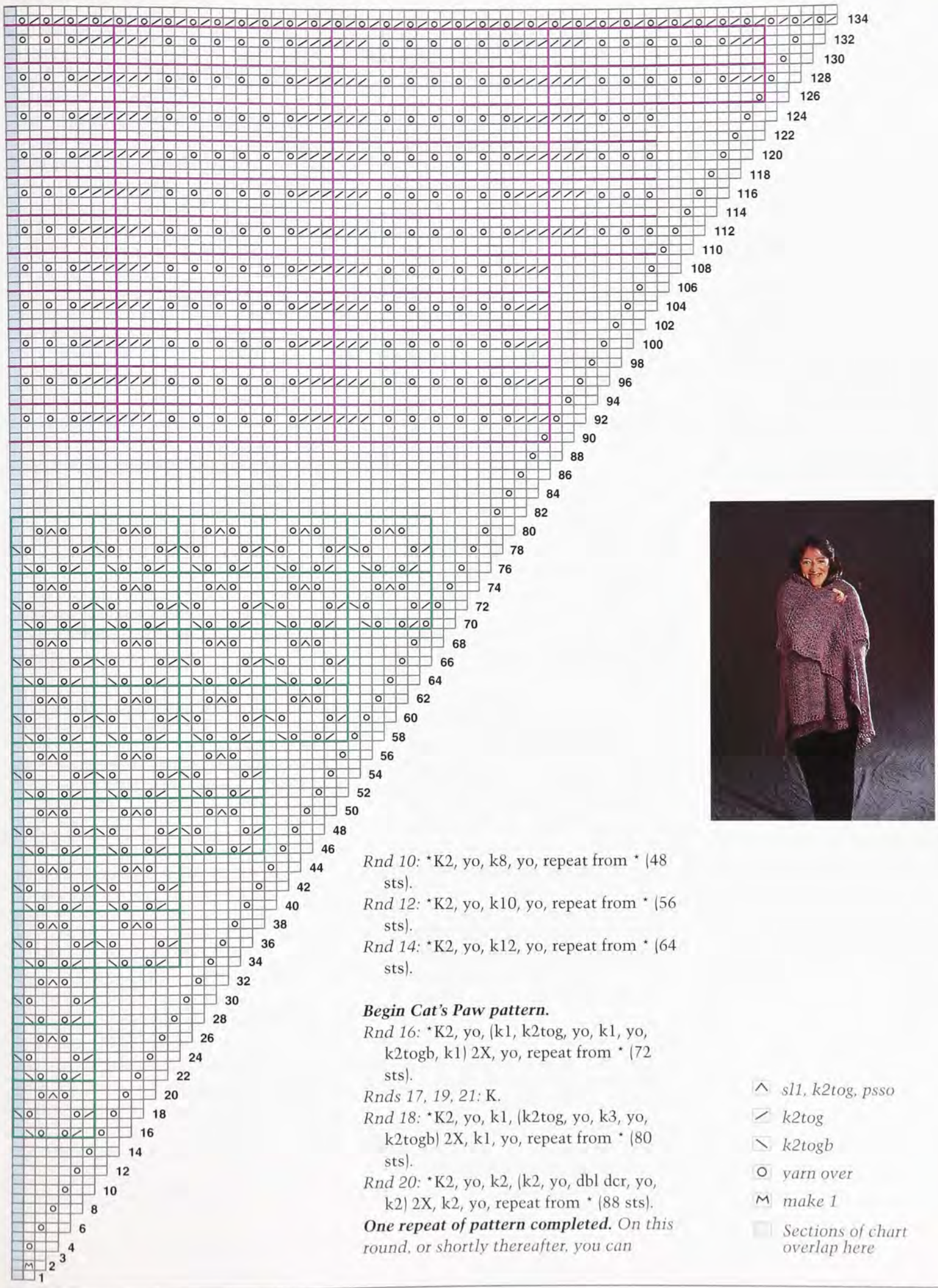
The "Cat's Paw Square" instructions accompanying this article result from a combination of Martha Waterman's original concept, Charlene Anderson-Shea's tip-of-the-needles clarifications, and the Interweave staff's editorial review (which also resulted in the chart). The Summer issue of Spin·Off *will contain a thorough guide to analyzing lace patterns* before *they cause problems.*

From Martha Waterman, Traditional Knitted and Lace Shawls, *Saint Paul, Minnesota: Dos Tejedoras, 1993. Revised instructions © 1997 Interweave Press.*

Knitted in the round. *Reminders:* m1 = add a stitch by making a backward loop over right needle; dbl dec = sl1, k2tog, psso. For abbreviations, see page 82. Gauge: Variable; approximately 5 sts/inch (2.5/cm).

Rnd 1: Cast 2 sts onto each of 4 dpns; knit with 5th needle. K around (8 sts).
Rnd 2: *K1, m1, repeat from * (16 sts).
Rnd 3: K.
Rnd 4: *K2, yo, repeat from * (24 sts).
Rnd 5: K. Mark the beginning and end of round with a safety pin.
Rnd 6: *K2, yo, k4, yo, repeat from * (32 sts).
Rnds 7, 9, 11, 13, 15: K.
Rnd 8: *K2, yo, k6, yo, repeat from * (40 sts).

Chart shows one quarter of shawl.



Rnd 10: *K2, yo, k8, yo, repeat from * (48 sts).

Rnd 12: *K2, yo, k10, yo, repeat from * (56 sts).

Rnd 14: *K2, yo, k12, yo, repeat from * (64 sts).

Begin Cat's Paw pattern.

Rnd 16: *K2, yo, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 2X, yo, repeat from * (72 sts).

Rnds 17, 19, 21: K.

Rnd 18: *K2, yo, k1, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 2X, k1, yo, repeat from * (80 sts).

Rnd 20: *K2, yo, k2, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 2X, k2, yo, repeat from * (88 sts).

One repeat of pattern completed. *On this round, or shortly thereafter, you can*

^ *sl1, k2tog, psso*

/ *k2tog*

\ *k2togb*

O *yarn over*

M *make 1*

Sections of chart overlap here

probably transfer the shawl to a 24" (60-cm) circular needle. Be sure to add a ring marker or yarn loop between the first and last sts of the rnd.

Rnd 22: *K2, yo, k3, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 2X, k3, yo, repeat from * (96 sts).

Rnds 23, 25, 27: K.

Rnd 24: *K2, yo, k4, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 2X, k4, yo, repeat from * (104 sts).

Rnd 26: *K2, yo, k5, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 2X, k5, yo, repeat from * (112 sts).

Two repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 28: *K2, yo, k6, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 2X, k6, yo, repeat from * (120 sts).

Rnds 29, 31, 33: K.

Rnd 30: *K2, yo, k7, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 2X, k7, yo, repeat from * (128 sts).

Rnd 32: *K2, yo, k8, (k2, yo, dbl dec, yo, k2) 2X, k8, yo, repeat from * (136 sts).

Three repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 34: *K2, yo, k2, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 4X, k2, yo, repeat from * (144 sts).

Rnds 35, 37, 39: K.

Rnd 36: *K2, yo, k3, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 4X, k3, yo, repeat from * (152 sts).

Rnd 38: *K2, yo, k4, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 4X, k4, yo, repeat from * (160 sts).

Four repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 40: *K2, yo, k5, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 4X, k5, yo, repeat from * (168 sts).

Rnds 41, 43, 45: K.

Rnd 42: *K2, yo, k6, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 4X, k6, yo, repeat from * (176 sts).

Rnd 44: *K2, yo, k7, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 4X, k7, yo, repeat from * (184 sts).

Five repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 46: *K2, yo, k1, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 6X, k1, yo, repeat from * (192 sts).

Rnds 47, 49, 51: K.

Rnd 48: *K2, yo, k2, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 6X, k2, yo, repeat from * (200 sts).

Rnd 50: *K2, yo, k3, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 6X, k3, yo, repeat from * (208 sts).

Six repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 52: *K2, yo, k4, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 6X, k4, yo, repeat from * (216 sts).

Rnds 53, 55, 57: K.

Rnd 54: *K2, yo, k5, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 6X, k5, yo, repeat from * (224 sts).

Rnd 56: *K2, yo, k6, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 6X, k6, yo, repeat from * (232 sts).

Seven repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 58: *K2, yo, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 8X, yo, repeat from * (240 sts).

Rnds 59, 61, 63: K.

Rnd 60: *K2, yo, k1, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 8X, k1, yo, repeat from * (248 sts).

Rnd 62: *K2, yo, k2, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 8X, k2, yo, repeat from * (256 sts).

Eight repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 64: *K2, yo, k3, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 8X, k3, yo, repeat from * (264 sts).

Rnds 65, 67, 69: K.

Rnd 66: *K2, yo, k4, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 8X, k4, yo, repeat from * (272 sts).

Rnd 68: *K2, yo, k5, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 8X, k5, yo, repeat from * (280 sts).

Nine repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 70: *K2, yo, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 8X, k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, yo, repeat from * (288 sts).

Rnds 71, 73, 75: K.

Rnd 72: *K2, yo, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 10X, yo, repeat from * (296 sts).

Rnd 74: *K2, yo, k1, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 10X, k1, yo, repeat from * (304 sts).

Ten repeats of pattern completed.

Rnd 76: *K2, yo, k2, (k1, k2tog, yo, k1, yo, k2togb, k1) 10X, k2, yo, repeat from * (312 sts).

Rnds 77, 79, 81: K.

Rnd 78: *K2, yo, k3, (k2tog, yo, k3, yo, k2togb) 10X, k3, yo, repeat from * (320 sts).

Rnd 80: *K2, yo, k4, (k2, yo, dbl dcr, yo, k2) 10X, k4, yo, repeat from * (328 sts).

Eleven repeats of pattern completed. Cat's Paw section completed. *The transition between stitch-pattern sections consists of 8 rnds, with increases as established.*

Rnd 82: *K2, yo, k80, yo, repeat from * (336 sts).

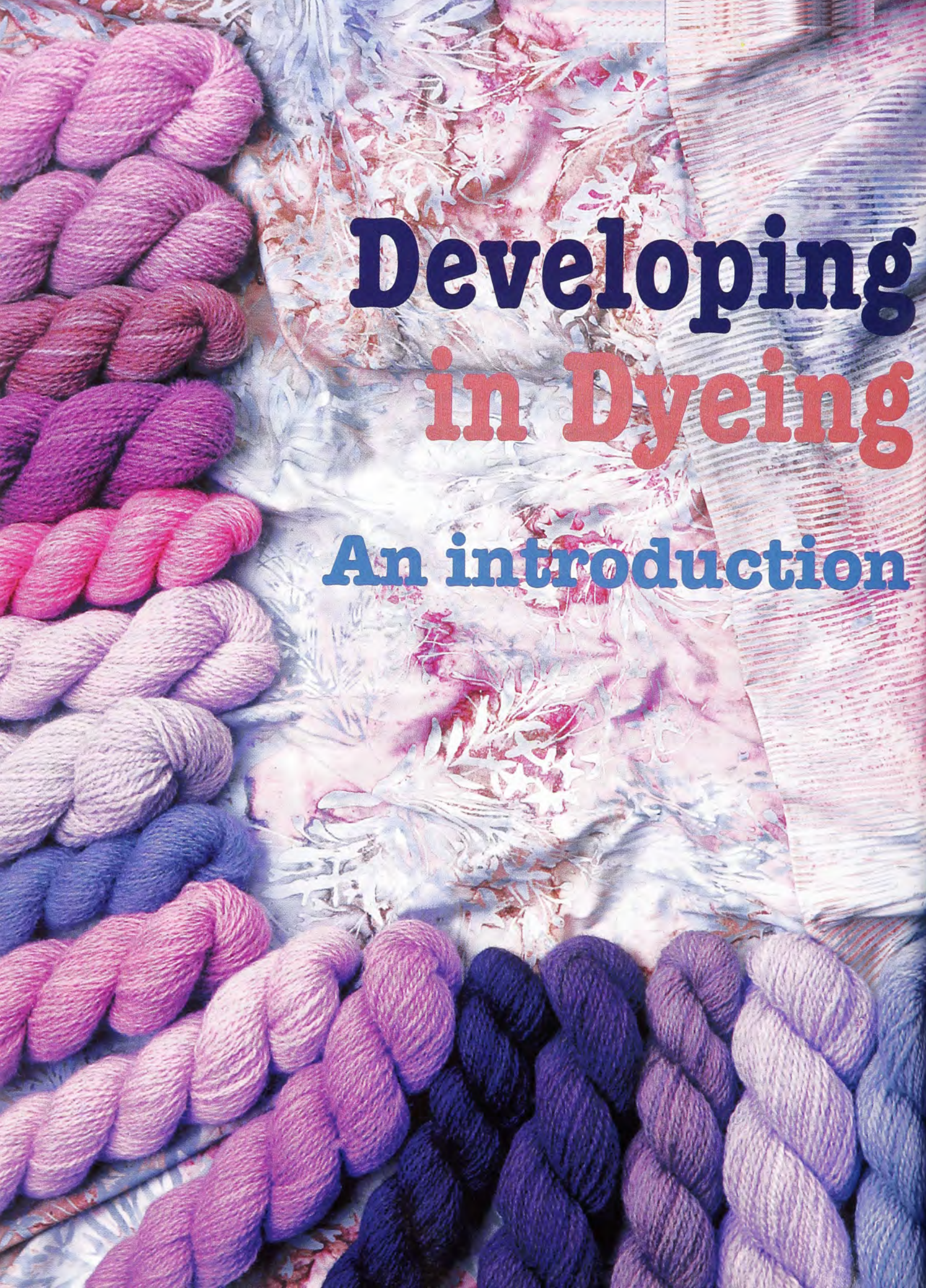
Rnds 83, 85, 87, 89: K.

Rnd 84: *K2, yo, k82, yo, repeat from * (344 sts).
Rnd 86: *K2, yo, k84, yo, repeat from * (352 sts).
Rnd 88: *K2, yo, k86, yo, repeat from * (360 sts).
Begin Old Shale pattern. *The first two rows of this pattern are plain knit, with increases as established. If you decide while working through the Old Shale repeats that your shawl is becoming large enough, after any plain-knit rnd you can skip to rnds 134 and 135 and finish the shawl.*
Rnd 90: *K2, yo, k88, yo, repeat from * (368 sts).
Rnds 91, 93: K.
Rnd 92: *K2, yo, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, yo, repeat from * (376 sts).
One repeat of pattern completed.
Rnd 94: *K2, yo, k92, yo, repeat from * (384 sts).
Rnds 95, 97: K.
Rnd 96: *K2, yo, k2, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, k2, yo, repeat from * (392 sts).
Two repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 98: *K2, yo, k96, yo, repeat from * (400 sts).
Rnds 99, 101: K.
Rnd 100: *K2, yo, k4, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, k4, yo, repeat from * (408 sts).
Three repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 102: *K2, yo, k100, yo, repeat from * (416 sts).
Rnds 103, 105: K.
Rnd 104: *K2, yo, k6, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, k6, yo, repeat from * (424 sts).
Four repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 106: *K2, yo, k104, yo, repeat from * (432 sts).
Rnds 107, 109: K.
Rnd 108: *K2, yo, k8, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, k8, yo, repeat from * (440 sts).
Five repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 110: *K2, yo, k108, yo, repeat from * (448 sts).
Rnds 111, 113: K.
Rnd 112: *K2, yo, k1, (yo, k1) 3X, (k2tog) 3X, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, (k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 3X, k1, yo, repeat from * (456 sts).
Six repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 114: *K2, yo, k112, yo, repeat from * (464 sts).
Rnds 115, 117: K.
Rnd 116: *K2, yo, k3, (yo, k1) 3X, (k2tog) 3X, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, (k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 3X, k3, yo, repeat from * (472 sts).
Seven repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 118: *K2, yo, k116, yo, repeat from * (480 sts).
Rnds 119, 121: K.
Rnd 120: *K2, yo, k5, (yo, k1) 3X, (k2tog) 3X, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, (k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 3X, k5, yo, repeat from * (488 sts).
Eight repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 122: *K2, yo, k120, yo, repeat from * (496 sts).
Rnds 123, 125: K.
Rnd 124: *K2, yo, k7, (yo, k1) 3X, (k2tog) 3X, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 5X, (k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 3X, k7, yo, repeat from * (504 sts).
Nine repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 126: *K2, yo, k124, yo, repeat from * (512 sts).
Rnds 127, 129: K.
Rnd 128: *K2, yo, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 7X, yo, repeat from * (520 sts).
Ten repeats of pattern completed.
Rnd 130: *K2, yo, k128, yo, repeat from * (528 sts).
Rnds 131, 133: K.
Rnd 132: *K2, yo, k2, [(k2tog) 3X, (yo, k1) 6X, (k2tog) 3X] 7X, k2, yo, repeat from * (536 sts).
Eleven repeats of pattern completed. *If shawl is large enough now, finish as follows. If not, proceed with Old Shale pattern, adding repeats as necessary. To end, work rnds 134 and 135 after any plain knit rnd.*
Rnd 134: *K2tog, yo, repeat from *.
Rnd 135 (last rnd): K.

Crochet-off edge: With supply yarn and crochet hook, pull up a loop between first and last sts of final round. *Ch 5, sc into first 2 sts on left needle, lifting them off; repeat from * until all sts are secured; then ch 5 and sl st into first sc. Weave in all loose ends, and block finished shawl. ❖

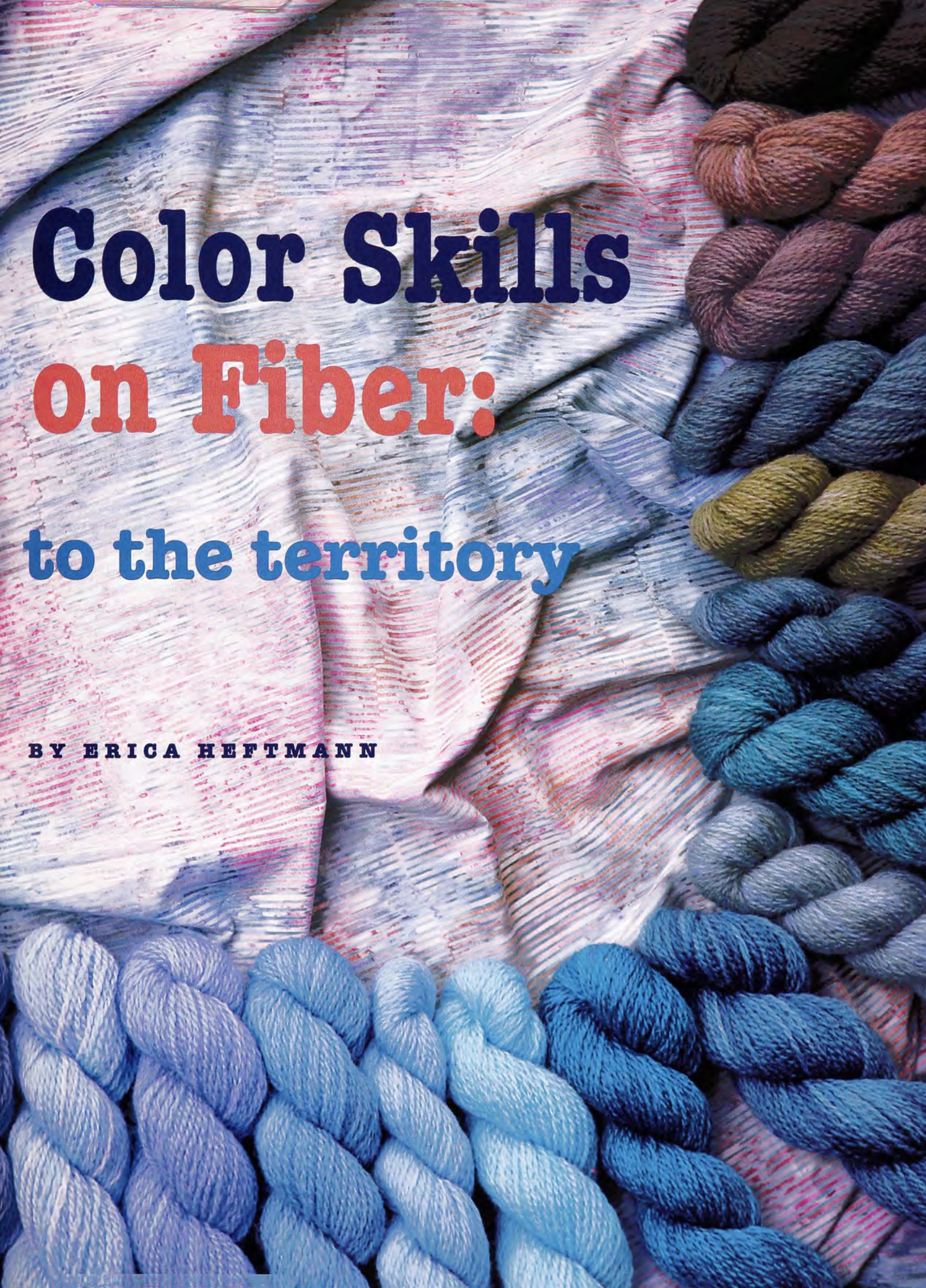
ABBREVIATIONS

ch	chain
dbl dec	sl1, k2tog, psso
dpn(s)	double-pointed needles
k	knit
k2tog	knit 2 together
m	make
p	purl
psso	pass slip stitch over
rnd(s)	round(s)
sc	single crochet
sl	slip
sl st	slip stitch
st(s)	stitch(es)
X	times (2X = 2 times)
yo	yarn over



Developing in Dyeing

An introduction



Color Skills on Fiber:

to the territory

BY ERICA HEFTMANN

COLOR is one of the most important visual elements in art, yet for fiber artists it is often one of the least exploited and most poorly mastered factors in their craft.

As handspinners, we are enviable among fiber artists for the control we have over the types of yarn we have available for projects. With patience and diligence, we breed and cultivate our fiber sources. We collect, even build, special equipment. We research and train. We engineer precise yarn structures. We sort, clean, pick, tease, comb, card, spin, ply, skein, and block. From inception to completion, our projects typically take months of preparation and meticulous handwork. Yet, after carefully coaxing so many elements to yield to our will, we often relinquish creative control at the threshold of one of the most vital and enjoyable expressions of the completed project: color.

To develop color skills beyond an understanding of theory, one needs to have experience *using* colors. My starting point to gaining this experience was an idea borrowed from gourmet cooking. Having an excellent choice of high-quality ingredients can make a talented chef out of nearly anyone. However, if the ingredients are inferior or any of them are missing, no amount of skilled preparation can make a fine meal.

Imagine that you have the skeins of yarn in the picture on pages 84-85. You couldn't fail to create something that would rank with the designs of the great color masters. But if you don't have the time, space, and resources of a professional designer, some of whom have their yarns specially milled for them, how can you acquire such a palette?

If you dye several different fibers with a single color mix, you will get a different color outcome on each fiber.

While I was contemplating writing this article, my husband bought me the hand-painted fabrics shown in the background of the photo. We decided to use them for sheets; I would also knit a blanket to match. The colors would have to be custom dyed. I could never find an appropriate commercially dyed array, all in the same weight and fiber.

I picked out thirty-one of the fabric's colors to reproduce. In two hours total—from setting up to cleaning up—I can simultaneously dye twenty-four different colors by using the "double-boiler" method of placing yarn or fiber in glass bottles, in turn nestled in roasting pans of water on the stovetop. Within four hours, I had dyed precisely—and all of—the colors I wanted, plus the colors that match the lacquered egg on page 88. The yarn dried overnight and I could start swatching for knitting the day after my husband gave me the fabric.

The Dark Ages

It used to be that I liked the projects I saw in books and magazines more than I liked anything I could make or imagine making. I did a lot of spinning and knitting over the years, but my color skills remained undeveloped. I felt limited by the choice of packaged, premixed dye colors, and mixing my own colors was usually a costly disappointment. I produced lots of maroon, no matter what I aimed for. Occasionally I got colors I liked, but I could never make them again.

Like many handspinners, I ended up in a color rut, using my favorite, tried-and-true premixed dyes and commercially dyed top. I space-dyed and hand-painted to get a range of colors, and I tried blending tricks to alter dye disappointments. I "reverse-planned" my projects around what the dye gods did to my fiber, instead of creating the colors I had in mind. To supplement what I could dye and blend, I collected sample cards from commercial yarn companies. It was frustrating for me, a handspinner, to buy commercially spun yarns just for their colors.

Even choosing among several hundred colors turned out to be a restriction when I was designing. That sounds like a lot of colors, but it doesn't include much of a range in any single family of hues, even if you ignore the vexing differences of yarn gauges and fiber content. A wide selection of yellows, for example, is impossible to find. When, in my own dyeing, I began to explore the potential of yellow, I realized that the probable reason most pale-skinned people claim they look ugly in this color is

because they haven't seen the fabulous yellows industry doesn't offer. As for the hues industry does offer in greater variety, those were the ones I'd tired of in my color rut, colors like dusty pink and mauve.

I needed to be able to create—predictably, quickly, easily, safely, and economically—the precise *color* I needed in the exact *quantity* I wanted on the *fiber* I had in mind.

For most artists, mixing color according to theory is straightforward. Painters combine paints from tubes with confidence about the outcome; the color of paint does not change when the brush applies it to the canvas.

But fiber artists soon discover that what we see in the dye plant, dye powder, or dyepot is *not* what we get on the fiber.

Color recipes for paints and inks are easy to find, but they do not translate into dye colors. Color recipes for one type of dye do not work with other classes of dyes—or even other brands of dyes of the same class. A single dye will not produce the same color on two different wools in the same pot, much less on two different types of fiber. Seemingly identical dye runs with the same fiber and dye, even under strict laboratory controls, do not yield the same color. We face a series of roadblocks. *Serious* roadblocks.

But I have a handspinner's approach to difficult long-term projects. I researched, planned, bought supplies, and then paced myself for however long it would take to make my own library of dye recipes and color samples. No more wool sacrifices to the dye gods!

I discovered in dyeing an art so rewarding that it now often serves as an end in itself. As in handspinning, each step of the process is exciting. Now when I design, I understand the relationships among colors on a more intimate level because I understand more about the derivation of those colors.

What began as a task to acquire colored wool (to use in design experiments to teach myself about color) became a great tutorial in itself.

Getting started

I began my experiments with one class of dyes on one type of fiber. In each test, I used exactly the same procedures along with strict measurements of all non-dye ingredients, varying only the dye proportions. By doing this, I was able to isolate observations about dye behavior. Once I gained insight into color outcome with these dyes, I had a standard of expectations against which to evaluate the effects I could produce by altering chemicals, processes, classes of dyes, and fibers.

Color outcomes can only be roughly predicted. I made a testing plan according to these predictions using the triads described below. The only way I could get precise knowledge of color results was by running dyebaths.

When I was selecting my basic mixing colors, I tested for undertones.

When mixing dye colors, what you see in powder or dilution is not what you get on the fiber. As the fiber goes through the dye cycle, it typically changes color at various points, as the component colors of the mix strike (bond with the fiber) in succession. Colors not only strike successively as fiber is processed, their behavior differs depending on which other colors they are sharing the pot with.

If you dye several different fibers with a single color mix, you will get a different color outcome on each fiber, because the component colors have varying affinities for different substrates. Process two different fibers in the same dyepot and you will achieve different colors on each fiber than would be produced if the fibers were run separately: component colors that affix more easily to one fiber are robbed from the other fiber when they share a dyepot.

As dyed fiber dries, it goes through a final color transformation, lightening in its apparent value.

When you mix colors, don't assume that just because they all belong to the same class of dyes they will all behave the same way chemically. Perhaps without realizing it, you have already observed the different behaviors of dyes of the same class when you have seen dyed goods or hair color fade to a different hue or chroma, rather than to a lighter tint of the original color. This differential fading results



As a bonus from her dyeing session to match the fabric on pages 84–85, Erica filled the extra jars with dye combinations to produce the palette found on this hand-painted, wooden, egg-shaped box.

from the difference in the chemical natures of the component colorants.

I kept thorough and consistent records of everything so that I could determine the behavior tendencies of each dye. No dye run is a failure if you keep records, because the information provides a valuable puzzle piece for the future. The more information you collect, the more comfortable you will be in predicting color outcome.

I made my dye selection by first deciding *what fiber* I would be dyeing. I chose wool, partly because I had a good uniform stock of it, partly because I knew that what worked on wool would work—albeit with color variations—on other fibers I enjoy, like angora, silk, and nylon.

Next, I did background reading on the appropriate *classes of dyes* for wool.

I ruled out plant and other natural dyes. Natural dyeing has its own niche and is a companion rather than a competitor in my studio. Natural dyestuffs can contribute luster, softer hand, fragrance (I have lichen-dyed wool that I use for bewitching sachets), sentimental associations, and other things that synthetic dyes cannot offer.

However, natural dyestuffs do not offer the predictable, repeatable, colorfast results I was after, and I did not want to use the highly toxic assists necessary to manipulate the spectrum of colors. Moreover, no matter what assists one uses, the spectrum produced by natural dyes can never be as wide as that offered by synthetic dyes. As for the mystique of natural dyes, I find synthetic dyes even more fascinating. I marvel at the way human civilization has progressed to the point where we can extract colors from ancient, buried organic material.

The two top contenders in synthetic dye types were *acid* and *reactive*. I chose acid dyes, primarily because they store almost indefinitely when mixed with water. For precise measurement of color in small amounts, you cannot use weight, because the measurements are too small to be done accurately. You must measure by volume, which requires that you enlarge the quantity of the substance to be measured by mixing the dye with water.[1]

Reactive dyes *hydrolyze* within a matter of hours or days. This means that the dye chemically bonds with the water and is unavailable to bond with the fiber. Although the dye liquor appears vividly colored, its potency rapidly diminishes until the dye becomes useless.

By contrast, acid dyes have a stated shelf life of about six months, though they can usually be used successfully even after years of storage. I also found acid dyes to be safe, environmentally friendly (if you steer clear of the few that contain heavy metals), easy to use, great for intermixing, inexpensive, and available in a wide selection of basic colors.

Subclasses of acid dyes are manufactured for various applications. I chose a hybrid stock of those created to retain color under the harsh conditions of milling and those created to distribute level, even color.

Next I evaluated brands. By using the C.I. (Colour Index) names, which identify dye colors independently of brands, I was able to compare identical colors of dye produced by different manufacturers. I found that some of these "identical" colors behaved differently in mixes due to different potencies. By *potent* I'm not referring to the concentration.

[1] I found the syringes sold by craft dye suppliers to be useless for precise measuring because the plungers do not slide freely enough. The units of measurement are too large, and they are too crudely marked. Syringes made for use in electronics manufacturing are fabulous. They dispense evenly, so you get exactly as much as you intend without a spurt from a sticky plunger. More importantly, they are accurate to 1/100 of a milliliter. To make pale colors in small amounts, say, for no more than an ounce (28.5 g) of fiber, you must have this precision.

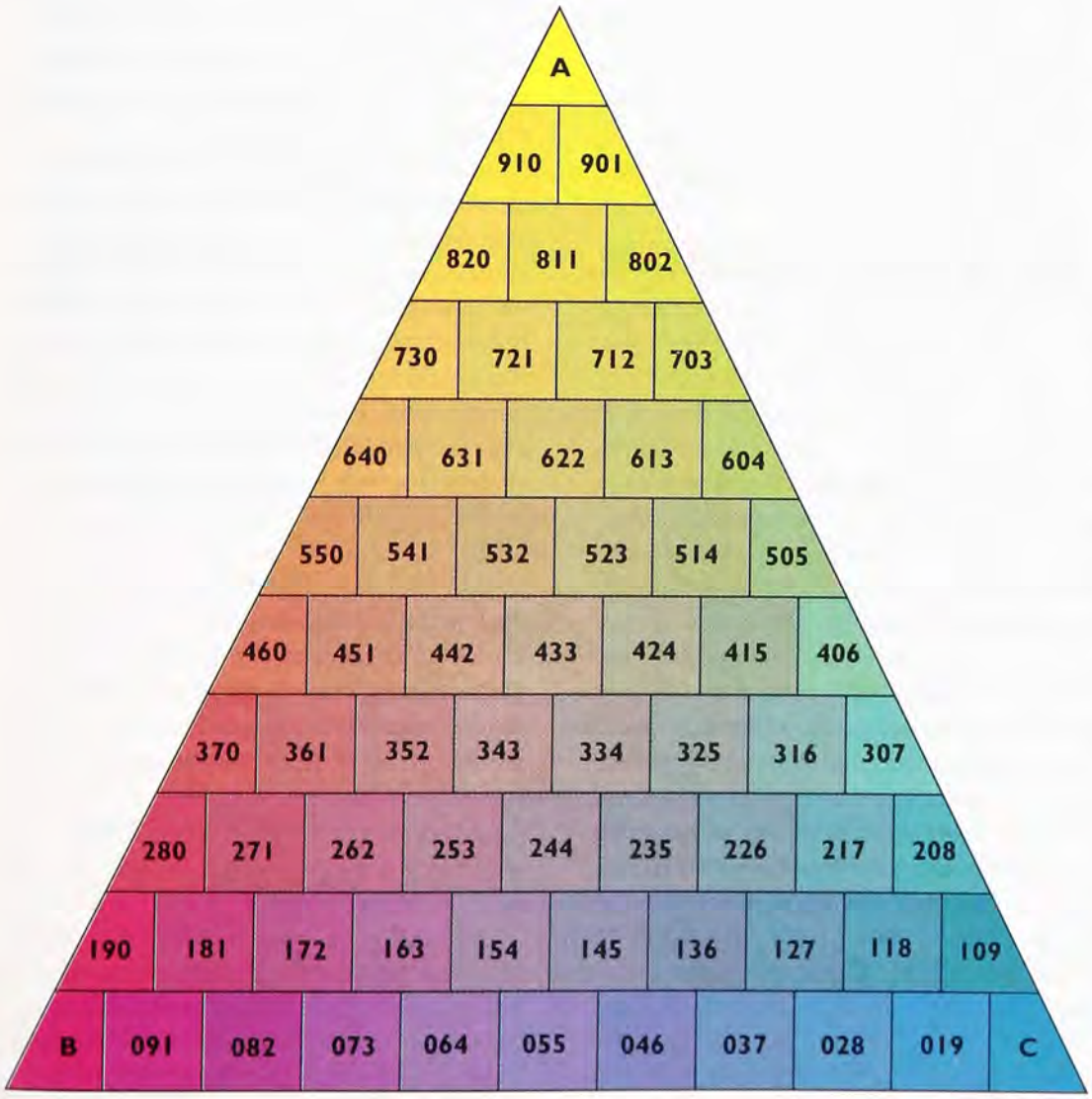
Dyes are sold in different concentrations to allow for economical shipping and storage. Check when you buy to make sure you understand the concentration, and dilute accordingly. My first two months of testing work had to be redone because some of the dye I bought from a popular fiber-art dye supplier was not disclosed as being concentrated. Ever afterward I have always tested every new shipment of reordered dye stock to make sure it performs like previous batches. Manufacturers and suppliers are not always consistent. When you compare dyes of equal concentration, you will occasionally find that some are still more potent than others. This is like comparing ready-to-serve orange juice with a concentrate that has been diluted to the same strength as the ready-to-serve juice but does not have as much flavor.

Potency, on the other hand, refers to the dye's ability to hold its own when combined with other colors. Weak performers allowed other colors to dominate in mixes. I chose the most potent options.

When I was selecting my basic mixing colors, I tested for undertones. Two reds, for example, that looked identical to the naked eye at full-strength became very different when diluted. As one of the reds became paler, it dyed a rosy pink. The other paled to salmon. The yellow undertone which produced the salmon was undetectable in the full-strength red, but became a critical component when the red was used in combinations.

I selected the following base colors: *red, fuchsia, magenta, royal blue, turquoise, lemon yellow, yellow gold,* and *neon yellow.* From these I made a number of color triads. The most important ones were:

- **traditional triad:** red, blue, yellow gold
- **tropical triad:** magenta, turquoise, lemon yellow
- **bright triad:** fuchsia, turquoise, neon yellow
- **earth triad:** magenta, royal blue, yellow gold



Sample of a range of colors: Tropical triad. *The numbers within the sections of this chart are color recipes. Each digit represents the number of units of a base color needed for each mixed color's recipe. The first digit refers to color A, the second to color B, the third to color C.*

The numbers always add up to 10. The base colors, located at each apex, are not mixed with anything else and require 10 units.

If my chosen unit is milliliters (mls), the recipe for color 325 is: 3 mls yellow + 2 mls magenta + 5 mls turquoise. Knutson's book explains how to convert these units to full-strength colors or to tints for any given amount of fiber.

The triad shown here was mixed with printer's inks, so it needs far less adjusting than one made from dyes. When using dye, it is usually necessary to tinker with the ratios to get an even range of colors.

I found a superb explanation of trichromatic color mixing, as well as of other essential dye basics, in Linda Knutson's expertly researched, well-written *Synthetic Dyes for Natural Fibers*. Although I found it necessary to tinker with the ten-part mixing system she recommended, it gave me a firm foundation to begin from.

The heart of the project

By altering the percentages in Knutson's recipes, I created more visually balanced triads. I adjusted the color ratios to close the range where there was little visual variation and to expand the range where the color jumps were too wide.

The reason that an evenly graded change in ratios of color ingredients can result in uneven transitions in the color gradients of the triangle is that some colors are stronger than others. If you add 1 ml of royal blue to 200 mls of yellow dye, you will get green. However, if you add 1 ml of yellow to 200 mls of royal blue, you won't be able to detect a change in the blue. You would need to add a lot of yellow dye before the blue would shift. So, from A to C on a dyers' triad you are likely to get green from recipe 901 right next to the yellow apex—a large transition compared to the one between 109 and its neighbor, the blue apex, which are likely to look nearly or completely identical.

There is no such thing as a black dye.

This is primarily due to value, but color strength can also be be caused by dye chemistry. Turquoise, for example, appears vivid but is not very potent because of the characteristics of its dye molecule.

If you don't want to dye an entire triad and then adjust for even gradations, try dyeing the apex colors first, then two colors on each side and a few colors in the interior. This will give you enough of a feel for color transitions to enable you to manipulate the percentages to even out the gradients before completing the tests of the entire triad.

After completing a number of triads of all significantly different combinations of my base colors, I created some graduated series of colors that were not in these triads, using special manufactured colors (like fluorescent violet) combined with various base colors. For every color that I got full strength, I made a series of five tints (clear instructions for this appear in *Hands On Dyeing*). As with hue and chroma gradations, the visual transition in values may not be as smooth as the math. A 20% dilution may look like 5%. I adjusted accordingly.

Putting it all together

When I was satisfied that I had explored the breadth of the color spectrum, I took all the yarn from all the tests and assembled it into one giant color arrangement.

Intermixing the yarns from different triads and noticing the intricate relationships among the recipes was the most instructive part of this entire project. Scanning the arrangement, which filled my entire studio floor, I again made subjective adjustments for gaps in the color gradients. By interpolating from the color recipes, I formulated dye mixes for the missing colors.

My final task was to wind the skeins into center-pull balls and assemble the adjusted color scheme. After much oohing and aahing at my room-sized color wheel, I took samples of all the colors and mounted them on recipe cards. I shelved the rest of the yarn in an enormous wall unit, covered in front with removable masonite pegboards. I threaded the end of each ball through its own hole in the pegboard, and labeled each hole with the color's recipe number.

If I'm swatching in the studio, I work directly from this "dispenser" and make note of the numbers on my design sheet. If I'm designing outside the studio, like stuck on the freeway or snuggled in bed, I use my recipe cards and jot down the appropriate numbers on my design notes.

Lessons learned

Looking back over my months of effort, I learned a lot of lessons. You can always make substitutions for base colors if you are having problems with color outcomes. For example, in dyeing nylon a pale laven-

der I first tried fuchsia and violet as the parent colors. I got a perfect match to the sample swatch I was copying, but realized that because of the chemical composition of the nylon, the fuchsia bonded in one orientation and the violet in another, so that the nylon changed color depending on how it was held to the light. (There are no mistakes in the grand scheme, remember? Though I couldn't use the formula for this project, I later referred to these notes when the shimmering effect was exactly what I was after.) I successfully reformulated the color using blue and red. If I had needed to change yet again, I could have used a mix of fuchsia and neon yellow to make a substitute for manufactured red. Violet and turquoise are parent colors for a substitute for manufactured blue.

Special-case colors

Black. There actually is no such color of dye. Blacks are usually very, very dark purples or greens. This accounts for the fashion disaster you may have experienced when putting on two different black garments and discovering that they clashed under sunlight, when one was revealed to be a warmer color than the other. You can mix black, but you can save yourself a lot of trouble by buying a manufactured black. Because purples are often not lightfast, check for this in your blacks.

Also, because you will have to use a lot of dye to get good cover, you may end up with a lot of loose dye to wash out. Make sure you allow the dyebath and fiber to cool before rinsing so that as much dye as possible will attach to available dye sites. As long as the bath is hot, dye will continue to unattach, migrate elsewhere, and reattach. A proper cooldown is like turning off the music in musical chairs. Also, to guard against crocking (the rubbing-off of dye from dried fiber), rinse until the water is clear, no matter how many rinses that involves. Using vinegar in the rinse water, contrary to popular belief, will not set any of the loose dye.

Diluted black as a gray toner. In color theory, you learn that tones are made by graying colors. Some dyers use a gray toner to achieve this. Beware. If you dilute your black and get a decent gray, this does not mean you can use that gray as a toner to moderate the chroma of other colors. The undertone of the black may wreak havoc with color mixes.

The acid black I use yields a neutral silver gray when diluted, but when mixed it imparts a purple quality to the combination. I do not use this black as a toner,[2] but I exploit its undertone in mixing unusual colors. It makes fabulous olives when mixed with yellows (purple + yellow = olive).

Turquoise will throw off your intuition.

Yellow. Because yellow is easily compromised, add minute amounts of other colors when mixing for yellow variations. Seeing how little of another color you can add before you alter the hue of a yellow is a great way to explore a luscious range of colors. Add turquoise to your yellow, 1/100 of a milliliter at a time, until you see the hue change. Don't ruin the results by adding another drop of turquoise. You'll get a luminous chartreuse. With the barest addition of both turquoise and fuchsia, you'll get burnt yellow. Turquoise and magenta in yellow make a handsome, raw, green gold. A tinge of fuchsia alone deepens the yellow enough to make it glow. On sparkling trilobal nylon these yellows mimic metallic gold, copper, and brass.

Brown. Browns dominate the interiors of color triads. They are difficult to dye evenly, because they have the greatest competition going on in the dyepot—browns contain all three base colors in roughly equal proportions. The component colors often settle out on different parts of the fiber, causing bright blotches of red and blue. If you are working on fiber that felts easily, if you are dyeing a large quantity of brown, or if you simply can't endure babysitting the dyepot, you can resort to using a manufactured brown and tinkering with the color. But mixing your own browns will give you the greatest degree of control.

[2] I find premixed toners too limiting, anyway, even if they are good.

If you have problems getting even color, try the following techniques.

- Make sure the fiber is clean and has been presoaked with detergent or a commercial surfactant in the water.
- Buffer the acid with salt or a commercial leveling agent.

Ammonium sulfate, available at garden supply shops, is a good acid to use in this case, because it will lower the pH of the dyebath automatically as the heat rises. If using a different acid, you may want to wait and add it after the fiber accepts all the dye it can without an exhausting agent. Then add the acid gradually, *removing the fiber for each addition.* Mix well before returning the fiber to the pot.

- Keep the fiber from touching the bottom of the pot, where the heat is concentrated, and increase the heat very slowly.
- You need to keep the dye circulating through the fiber; agitate the fiber as much as you can without tempting it to felt, or put it in a net bag and circulate the dye by dunking. This "teabag" method allows gravity to mix the dye around, with the least amount of disturbance to the fiber.
- If uneven color is due to degraded wool tips, there is nothing you can do.

Turquoise. In color mixes, you will find this color difficult or impossible to exhaust completely. It requires a lot of rinsing. You are not losing dye from the fiber. What is rinsing out is loose dye which was not attached during dyeing. This is called *bleeding.* It is different from losing dye through *fading,* caused by washing, light, perspiration, and other conditions affecting colorfastness.

Turquoise is one color that will throw off your intuition if you try to anticipate what color you'll get on your fiber from looking at the dye liquor. Turquoise was the culprit in creating all that maroon I got when I thought I was mixing other colors.

Fuchsia. This color can often be successfully dyed without heat. I use it on angora and on wools that felt easily. I just dunk them for a quick, cool soak. The color strikes quickly and strongly, so check often if you want a pale pink.

Looking ahead

Many goals of dyeing are beyond the scope of this article—including colorfastness, preservation of fiber integrity, and level distribution of color. There are books and articles written for craft dyeing that cover these topics.

To add to these explanations of getting dye on fiber, you now have this handspinner's approach to controlling color outcome. I began with one class of dyes and one type of fiber and built gradually to a wide range of dyes and fibers. All of this preparation allowed me to create predictable, uniform colors on fiber.

Uniform color is not always desirable. I still use space dyeing, cross-dyeing, and other tricks to produce special effects. But there is a huge difference between my controlled "accidents" of today and the chaos of the past. My understanding of dyes lets me control color outcome to any chosen point before I allow random effects to add visual interest.

Fiber artists have more color challenges than most other artists, but we also have more options. The next stage of developing color skills involves blending color in carding, combing, spinning, plying, and fabric making. Once the color is on the fiber, color blending becomes more similar to mixing paints than to mixing dyes—because it involves optics rather than chemistry—but there are still a few rules that defy intuition. In the next article in this series, we'll finally get our hands on fiber and start spinning. ❖

Erica Heftmann loves learning about and sharing anything related to dyeing or color design. The first part of this series, "Developing Color Skills," appeared in the Fall 1996 issue and presented some ideas about color theory. If you have questions, comments, or corrections, send them to Erica c/o Spin-Off, *201 E. 4th Street, Loveland, Colorado 80537, and we'll forward them to her.*

Resources

Knutson, Linda. *Synthetic Dyes for Natural Fibers.* Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1986.

Blumenthal, Betsy, and Kathryn Kreider. *Hands On Dyeing.* Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1988.

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Designer/Owner
Nancy Ballesteros
6 Benwee Road
Floreat, 6014
Western Australia
Tel: (09) 387-3007
treetops@perth.dialix.oz.au

USA Representative
Connie Mosher
203 East Burgess
Mt. Vernon, OH.
43050, U.S.A.
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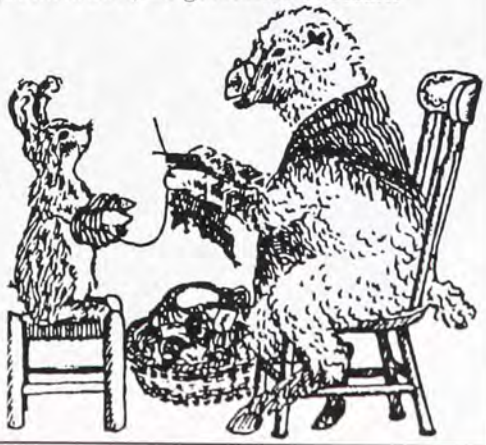
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The Spinning Dress

by
Martha Bright Banks

I AM WEARING a dress designed to replicate the garments worn by my father's two aunts in a photo from 1863. In a few minutes, I will go to demonstrate spinning at the annual Indiana Township Heritage Festival at Emmerling Park. I am strangely happy.

It was the older aunt—Aunt Kate—who inspired me to spin, and her oak Saxony wheel, repaired but not in use, occupies a corner of our living room. Aunt Kate's mother inherited this wheel from *her* grandfather in 1843. Aunt Kate, who was born in 1847, used it until the death of her mother in 1881. Aunt Kate herself has been gone since 1936, and I am near seventy and still spinning.

The dress I am wearing isn't much to look at, because I'm not much of a seamstress. But the sleeves gently hug my narrow shoulders, and the long skirt modestly hides my legs. The dress is plain blue, with long sleeves that start low on the shoulders and a narrow white collar and cuffs. It closes at the front with hidden hooks and eyes, and over the skirt I wear an ample blue-checked gingham apron like those I remember Aunt Kate wearing. When I made the apron, I gauged the size of the pockets by imagining what it would take to hold three fragrant apples on a trip back from her hilltop orchard . . . now a housing development. The dress covers me from the middle of my throat to the tops of my black Selby pumps (I wish they were hightop shoes, like Aunt Kate used to wear), and my arms are covered to the wrists. I wonder just how high the temperatures will go on this day in mid-July.



The only parts of me that are open to the world are my head, a tiny bit of my throat, and my wrinkled hands. The rest of me is hiding in yards and yards of cotton/poly fabric—yes, I know it should be pure cotton, but Aunt Kate would have approved of the frugality I demonstrated at the remnant counter.

This is the first time I've worn the dress, and I'm surprised at the depth of my emotional reaction. I feel hidden and safe, as if I were peeking out from a little house. No one could see, nor do I feel self-conscious about, the aging of my body (can it really be more than thirty years since my little one said, "Mama, I wike to sit on your wap 'cause you're so pillowy!"?).

This feeling of security goes beyond the expected. I feel transported away from the sorrowful facts of life in these closing years of the second millennium A.D. It's as though I were lifted above time, and am looking down on the world from the vast expanse of some eternal ceiling. I feel protected from the assaults of the evening newscast and the morning headlines. Sheltered within the gentle confines of this dress, I realize that all things are transitory, and today's horrors will slip into oblivion as surely as new horrors will rise to meet them. The year 1863 held its own dangers, and so did the 1930s.

Wearing a dress like the one Aunt Kate wore in 1863 reminds me of how short life can be. When Aunt Kate and her little sister, Sarah Ann, posed proudly for that photo, they never guessed that the younger of them would die a few months later, at the age of 14. Aunt Kate, slim and young and almost pretty, could not have guessed that she would fall in love just once in her life, then have her wedding plans smashed when "somebody meddled."

Neither of these young women could have imagined that more than a hundred years later, their great-niece would

Past and present, stitched together

painstakingly work to copy their matching dresses, even to the "grow hems." They might have been puzzled if someone had told them I would wear a dress patterned on theirs while I sat in an old house in a park, spinning for hours, just as they did.

Who will spin when I am gone? And when will I be leaving? I am going on seventy—which, of course, isn't old at all when you're 69! But it's sobering to realize that thirty years from now I won't be here to see the lilacs bloom, or to count the returning robins in the spring. I might be gone in twenty years, and oh, twenty years' time is nothing at all!

The sweet touch of the dress on my fading flesh reminds me of the sweetness of life and of the need to cherish each loving moment, because in the end, nothing is left but "faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."

I'll be leaving for the park in ten minutes. The day will be hot and muggy, and sweat will trickle down my back. My black nylon stockings will stick to my legs. But inside this dress I will enjoy a strange solitude, and a sweet separateness that ties me to the distant past, eases the pains of the present age, and reminds me that my future is bright.

And I'll remember to pat Aunt Kate's spinning wheel on my way out the door. ❖

Martha Bright Banks is a spinner from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



more letters . . . *(continued from page 9)*

fiber and for a red dye. Is there any information available for how to process and spin these fibers? Agave fiber was pictured on a Mexican spindle in your Spring 1995 issue. I know one issue of *Spin·Off* dealt with spinning hemp and kenaf; how about covering a few more fiber plants? I would love to be able to swing in my own handspun hammock some day.

Another one of my goals is to try out the many dye plants found here and make a fiber and dye display for the local St. George Botanical Garden. Many tourists visit the garden from all over the world, so this would be an excellent place for such a display. Among some of the most well-known native dye plants are annatto *(Bixa orellana)*, logwood *(Haematoxylum campechianum)*, and fustic *(Chlorophora tinctoria)*. There are a host of other native and introduced plants that have also been used for dyes in the past.

St. Croix is a small island in the Caribbean. It's nice to get "connected" to other spinners by reading *Spin·Off*. Keep up the interesting articles.

—Esther Peregrine, Kingshill, U.S. Virgin Islands

Editor's note: *Rita Buchanan's* A Weaver's Garden *(Loveland, Colorado: Interweave Press, 1987) is the best single source we know of for spinning information on a variety of fiber plants. If you have back issues of* Spin·Off *in your personal or guild library, check out Rita's "Using the Fibers of Native Plants" (Winter 1985, pages 29–34) or "A Survey of Leaf and Stem Fibers" (Fall 1986, pages 24–31). We're also working on future articles relating to your interests. . . .*

IN MEMORIAM

Edna Blackburn
Mentor, guide, and trailblazer
October 3, 1911–December 1996

Scholarship

Several of Edna Blackburn's friends, colleagues, and students have started a scholarship fund in her name, with the hope that an award can be made to a fiber craftsperson for innovation and originality. The award will be presented to "a person pushing new ideas or methods with creative thought in any of the spinning, weaving, or dyeing mediums." The fund will be managed by the Ontario Handweavers and Spinners and contributions can be acknowledged with charitable donation receipts. For further information, call (705) 457-2704.

Getting to know you . . .

The Fiber Exchange

by Bobbie Irwin



A selection of items produced by participants in the Utah/Regional Fiber Exchange.

IN MY PART of the country, guilds tend to be small, there are few of them, and there is little contact between them. Many spinners do not belong to guilds and may not know other spinners in their areas. When I lived in Ogden, Utah, members of the Northern Utah Fiber Artisans (NUFA) talked about the need for a project that would improve communication with other spinners in the state. I carried that idea with me when I moved to Price, Utah, and in 1996 our small guild here (Castle Country Fiber Guild) coordinated our fourth annual Utah/Regional Fiber Exchange.

Starting: sort of successful

The first year (1993), we envisioned the Exchange as a cooperative project between existing guilds in the state. One guild would send fiber to a second guild for spinning, which would send the yarn to a third guild to make squares (by any interlacement technique) to be returned to the fiber donors. Guild members would make something from the squares and share the results.

We had an exchange in 1993, but it didn't work the way we planned. The idea of making squares didn't appeal much, and only one other guild (NUFA) agreed to participate. We spun each other's fiber, but NUFA decided to finish projects from their own yarn rather than make squares, so they created a variety of interesting items from the yarn we had spun, ranging from socks to hand-card protectors. Our guild members divided our yarn into equal amounts and challenged each other to create hats (knitted, crocheted, and/or woven) using some of each yarn; for one of us, the hat was a first knitting project.

Despite the change of plans, the first Exchange was a moderate success. NUFA members used it as an incentive to learn fiber blending and spent one guild meeting preparing fiber for us to spin. We enjoyed the hat challenge and were encouraged enough to try an exchange again the next year, although we decided we needed to reach spinners who did not belong to guilds, as well as those within guilds who wanted to participate on an individual basis. We also wanted to include people who were not spinners.

Toward a more workable plan . . .

By the next season, we had worked out the general format which we use today. Our guild took registrations and formed groups of three people, from different communities. Each group included a fiber donor, a spinner, and a finisher. Participants could sign up for one, two, or all three tasks (those who signed up for all three ended up in three different groups, connecting with six other people). We stipulated that the fiber should be soft, finished items should be clothing accessories, and the yarn should be plied and no larger than a standard knitting yarn. Finished items were to be returned to the fiber donors.

There were a few glitches in 1994. Everyone wanted to donate fiber—because they'd get a finished item—but not everyone wanted to do the work of spinning or (especially) finishing. Several of us had to double up on these tasks. The knitter who signed up only to finish had never worked with handspun yarn and didn't feel confident enough to complete her project (at least she returned the yarn to the donor). And because we didn't get the exchange started until spring, it was late summer by the time most items were returned (some came back even later).

Despite our guidelines, not all the fiber was soft, and some finishers ended up with fat singles yarn to deal with. A few beginning spinners felt intimidated by their fiber (some of which appeared to be from the backs of closets). Still, the exchange generated a lot of enthusiasm from the sixteen participants, who shared the results with their friends and were excited about the new friendships they'd formed. Our attempt to host a gathering of exchangers was snowed out, so we shared many of the finished items through a traveling trunk show.

I think we've got it!

The 1995 Exchange followed a similar format, with almost forty participants. This time we also invited people in the areas immediately bordering Utah and ended up with donors, spinners, and finishers from five states: Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Arizona. We sent out tips for beginners and set fewer restrictions—any fiber and any finished item (appropriate to the fiber) were acceptable. A new rule proved successful: anyone who wanted to donate fiber also had to sign up as a spinner and/or finisher! We shared some of the spectacular results in our first successful Fiber Exchange Gathering in September, which drew about thirty participants from around the state (some of whom had not taken part in the exchange, and almost all of whom signed up for the next one).

In 1996 we expanded the Exchange to include the entire bordering states (although so far we haven't coaxed any Nevada fiber folks to join us). We sent out invitations to every guild (in seven states) listed in the annual *Spin-Off* directory—at a cost which just about depleted our tiny guild treasury! However, this time we asked each participant for $1 to help cover our costs, and many donated additional funds and stamps. Each participant was responsible for his or her own postage and other expenses.

We got a good response wherever the invitation appeared in newsletters. The 1996 Exchange included eighty-eight participants from nine states, including alumni who had moved, members of regional guilds living in other states, and an enthusiastic group of Californians who wanted to be part of the fun. Already we've made plans for another Fiber Exchange Gathering and our 1997 Exchange.

This time we've decided to include all the western states, but to limit the exchange to the first 150 people who sign up. That should encourage earlier registration and keep the organization and paperwork manageable. We hate to turn anyone away, so if interest exceeds our limit, perhaps other guilds in our region will volunteer to start their own exchanges to include smaller geographical areas, such as just the West Coast or Rocky Mountain states. That way we can direct any "overflow" to the appropriate coordinators.

The Fiber Exchange works—we've proved it (as we've *im*proved it)—and we encourage other regions and groups to adapt our ideas for themselves. Here are some guidelines we follow.

★ *Timing is important.* Spinners and finishers have a month and a half to finish each step. The exchange is most successful during the winter months; fiber



Another exchange project: wadmal slippers, of Karakul, woven and fulled.

★ ***Be specific***

★ ***Be flexible***

is due in mid-January (which gives donors ample time after the holidays to prepare it), and finished items are due back to the donors by mid-April.

★ Be as *specific* as necessary when setting guidelines, but keep the instructions as *concise* as possible.

★ *Be flexible.* Some people won't follow all the directions anyway. Our requests for self-addressed, stamped envelopes have often been ignored, but many people have enclosed an extra dollar to compensate! Everyone, however, sent the $1 registration fee; many people have said they'd be willing to pay more.

Some people will call or write after the registration deadline and want to participate. You either have to figure this into your schedule or be strict about not accepting late entries (but do keep these people on your mailing list for the next exchange).

★ *Send out the information* well in advance of your registration deadline, but no more than three months ahead. Otherwise, registration forms get lost and the exchange gets forgotten. Request that the information be included in guild and shop newsletters and announced at meetings. Encourage registrants to copy and distribute the forms. Mail group assignments and detailed instructions at least a month before the deadline for sending fiber.

★ To reduce beginners' fears and better match donors, spinners, and finishers, our *registration form* now asks donors what sort of fiber they plan to send; spinners to indicate their experience level (and the fibers they are most and least comfortable with); and finishers to state the most likely method they will use. This way, for example, we can be careful to avoid putting the donor with dog hair in the group with the woman who is allergic to it! Beginning spinners are more likely to receive fiber they can handle confidently. Spinners will have an idea of how their yarn may be used, so they can prepare it appropriately.

★ As well as possible, we try to *match up participants* from different communities who are not likely to know each other and have not worked with each other in previous exchanges.

★ Fiber, yarn, and finished items are to be *sent directly* to the people in the assigned groups; our guild does not act as a clearinghouse to redistribute the material.

★ The Exchange works on the *honor system.* We emphasize that all materials are sent at the participants' own risk and expense. Yarn and projects may not turn out the way the donors would have made them. Exchangers should be understanding if someone's puppy chews up an almost-finished project.

We ask that participants first try to solve problems (usually late deliveries) within their own groups, and to contact our guild for help only if there is no satisfactory response. (In the past, a few people have been so reluctant to ask our help that problems have gone on for months without our knowledge—and usually a note or phone call solves the problem.)

★ *Beginners are welcome.* We stress that the Exchange is a *learning* and *sharing* experience, and that the quality of the yarn and finished items are not important (although we encourage everyone to do the best they can). Our primary goals are to get to know other fiber folks and to challenge ourselves to work with someone else's materials.

★ State *how much fiber* to send. It should be enough to finish something without being so much that the exchange would be too time-consuming or expensive. For many projects, six ounces of fiber is ample. (Since cotton can take more time to spin than other fibers, four ounces of yarn may be adequate; we ask donors to send six ounces, and the spinner can decide how much is enough.) We recommend that a donor err on the generous side and use as accurate a scale as possible. Any leftover fiber or yarn should be returned to the donor, unless (as some have) the donor specifically includes extra fiber for the spinner's personal use.

★ Participants are encouraged to *share information about themselves,* their experience, and their fiber interests. If they have fiber-related businesses, they are welcome to advertise. Most write letters to the others in their groups as they pass along the fiber, yarn, and finished products (and this time we will encourage finishers to also contact the spinners, and donors to acknowledge re-

ceipt of finished items). Many have included photos of themselves, their fiber critters, and their projects, as well as information on patterns they've used.

★ *Donors are required to also spin and/or finish.* In 1996 we offered a bonus gift to those who finished more than one item, since finishers have been in shortest supply in past years. Many volunteered, and only a few had to do double duty.

★ Fiber should be *ready to spin.* We ask that wool be washed and carded or combed, even if the donor normally spins in the grease or from locks. We ask that donors send *quality* fiber, something they would enjoy spinning themselves. They may send any type or combination of fibers and colors.

★ We set a *maximum size for the yarn* (equivalent to a worsted-weight knitting yarn), to assure that there will be enough to complete an item. We ask that it be plied, to reduce potential problems for knitters and weavers. Novelty yarns are fine, but they should not include any other materials. Spinners may blend or ply together different fibers or may spin them separately.

★ *Finished items should be appropriate to the fiber.* Finishers are not to add additional yarn unless absolutely necessary to finish a project. The challenge is to complete a product using only what's available. Weavers are expected to use the exchange yarn as both warp and weft. Even though donors tend to like surprises, the finisher should contact the donor about sizes, if necessary.

★ *Finished items are the property of the fiber donors,* who may keep or give them away as desired (preferably after sharing the results with the rest of us, at least by photo). Although some people have suggested donating all the items to charity, there are many other programs which can accomplish that goal more efficiently, and most participants prefer to keep the items themselves. ❖

Bobbie Irwin, of Price, Utah, contributes a great deal, constantly, to Spin·Off. *Much of what she does is invisible. Her spinning is very fine, too.*

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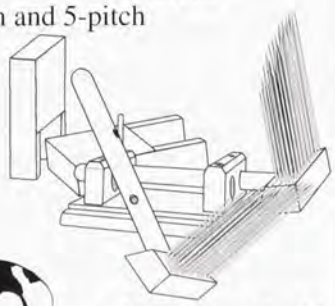
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Spinners' Connection

by Ann Klinect



I don't know if age has anything to do with it, but having just celebrated another birthday I seem to be in a more reflective state of mind than usual. Deborah Pulliam's excellent article about the first twenty years of *Spin·Off* in the last issue brought back lots of treasured memories.

As I read the newsletters which spinners' groups so generously send me to be shared through this column and through SASEs from readers, I am constantly awed by a universal caring, sharing attitude . . . the eagerness to share knowledge, techniques, friendship with novice spinners, each other, and the general public. Many of you are involved in making caps for kids, hats/mittens/scarves for the homeless, caps/booties for preemies . . . the list goes on.

Many of you manage full-time jobs and a busy family life. Spinning becomes almost therapeutic in your hectic schedule, yet you still find the time to share your craft with others. Some of you are so incredibly creative, the rest of us can only say, "Wow!" Yet you are quick to encourage spinners to stretch beyond their perceived limitations as you share the next step with them.

The following quote from **Country Heritage Spinning and Weaving Guild** (Missouri) sums it up for me: "Diversity is so evident in the Guild. We are like the autumn leaves. How rich and glorious the woods are because each kind of tree was given its own colors to flaunt. We have brought forth our creativity, our gift to Life, to be used in THE GREAT TAPESTRY. Let us be who and what we are . . . BEAUTIFUL."

Please send all newsletters and mail for this column to Ann W. Klinect, PO Box 8505, Everett, WA 98201. To receive sample newsletters from the files, send me a business-letter–sized SASE with two ounces' worth of postage and I will return it with as many newsletters as I can fit in.

Countryside Spinners and Weavers (Indiana) are undertaking an ambitious project . . . knitting beaded bags using size 000 or 0000 (1.5 or 1.25 mm) needles. A challenge worth meeting.

Tulsa Handspinners (Oklahoma) used a unique version of the popular fiber exchange as part of their Rock Day Celebration last January. Well before Rock Day, each participant packaged fiber of her/his choice along with beads, ribbons, other findings, and a *rock*. Each member took home a package, created something through spinning, felting, dyeing, weaving, fluffing, or whatever the imagination dictated, and then presented the results to the original donor on Rock Day.

Here's an idea from the **Huronia Spinners Guild** (Ontario, Canada): To spur creative ideas, invite several friends over for an informal craft night. See what they are up to and see what ideas of your own grow from theirs. Or collaborate with a close friend on a challenge project. Another tip is to keep an extra bobbin at your spinning wheel and fill it with leftover bits of fiber. When the bobbin is full, Navajo-ply the singles to make "wacky wool."

The Pinellas Weavers Guild (Florida) have "assisting angels" members can call on for fiber advice and assistance. At a recent gathering, a member told of meeting a woman intrigued by the fluid drape of clothes on ancient Greek statues. After researching, teaching herself to weave, and much trial and error, she decided that the fabric had been woven with a silk warp and a wool weft.

To help us get organized, here are some thoughts from **East Penn Fiber Guild** (Pennsylvania). Samples and notes from classes go into ziplock bags, to be filed with other reference material. Reference materials from fiber shows get stored in tote bags, one for each show; include catalogs, samples, handouts, and so forth. Make notes about items of interest directly on the show program or on business cards from vendors (then stapled to the program) and store the annotated program in a plastic page-protector in a notebook. This serves as an easy reference when you want that special fiber you saw at such and such a show. Simply flip to the appropriate page in the notebook and contact the vendor. Your samples and the catalog can be pulled from the tote bag as you need them.

Williams Lake Spinners and Weavers (British Columbia, Canada) offer a way to play with color. Take your camera with you and try to capture different color combinations from nature. Then package your dyed fiber in color combinations corresponding to a photo that you include for future reference.

Mesa Fiber Arts Guild (Colorado) relied on the expertise of a thrifty member for a "Thrums As Mulch?" program. The program's organizer shared practical and not-so-practical ways to use thrums, odd ends of yarn, and bits of leftover fabric and invited other members to bring examples of what they have done with tidbits, as well.

A group project of the **Central Ohio Weaver's Guild** involved spinning superwash wool, dyeing a myriad of col-

ors, and weaving a blanket for a member expecting a new baby boy. Result: a gorgeous rich plaid, if the photograph (color-photocopied for their newsletter) is any indication!

The **Genesee Valley Handspinners Guild** (New York) had a "From Rags to Riches" challenge. Each participant brought eight ounces of clean, washed wool, cotton, or linen (thrums or spinnable fibers) from sample cards, fiber stash, or wherever. The whole collection was sent to a carding mill for blending and upon return was divided among the participants to see what treasures could be created.

More and more spinners are using the Internet. A member of **Spindrifters** (Washington) recently searched AOL for felting and gathered lots of excellent information for their newsletter.

If you know how to use them, dyes can give you unusual, easy effects. A report from **Tall Pines Weavers and Spinners** (Texas) tells how they broke the dye-use "rules" and put chemistry to work in an interplay of structure, texture, and color. Four different white yarns—handspun silk, handspun mohair, commercial cotton bouclé, and commercial synthetic—were plied and cabled. The skein was tossed into a pot with an aggressive shade of green Ciba Kiton dye, an acid dye intended for protein fibers. As expected, the cotton and the synthetic remained white but the silk took up more of the blue end of the dye spectrum while the mohair took most of the green.

Spinners wanting to try various textile tools without having to purchase them might consider what a member of **Spindles and Flyers** (California) did. She placed a small ad in their newsletter asking to trade or loan textile tools for things she hasn't tried.

"Fiber Travels" was a program topic for **Northwest Pennsylvania Spinners and Weavers Guild.** Everyone was asked to bring a show-and-tell related to a workshop or conference they had attended, or a fiber shop or farm they had visited. Each person spoke for a few minutes on her/his experiences.

Because the **Wool and Wheel Handspinners Guild** (Arkansas) meets at the Shiloh Museum General Store, the group decided to make small spindle and wool kits for the museum gift shop to sell, with all proceeds going to the museum.

Sunrise Spinning Guild (Michigan) expanded their spinning techniques and fiber skills at a recent, fun meeting. Members warmed up by wearing rubber gloves while spinning; they had a bit of difficulty spinning Easter grass and then adding machine tape, but did quite well with cotton balls and with netting. The milkweed wasn't quite ready, so that fiber will have to wait until another time.

The **Bayou Yarn Benders** (Louisiana) had a timely program by Beverly Duhan on "Medicinal Uses of Herbs." She learned many herbal remedies from her grandmother and incorporates several in her soaps and lotions.

A couple of hints from **Columbia Fibres Guild** (Oregon): Liquid fabric softener, diluted and sprayed lightly on scoured wool, makes combing or carding a pleasure. Fabric softener sheets placed in batts of carded wool, yarn, and other storage areas, deter moths.

And a tip from the **Skagit Valley Weavers Guild** (Washington): To harmlessly remove odors from fabric, seal items in a plastic bag along with an open bag of old-fashioned, clay-type kitty litter. Leave in bag for two or more days, then wash.

Shore Fiber Arts Guild (New Jersey) plans a project management program for fiber people. "Eating Elephants and Dealing with UFOs" will be a forum-type program for sharing techniques in planning successfully completed projects as well as completing all the UnFinished Objects we all have stashed away.

The Greater Vancouver Weavers and Spinners Guild (British Columbia, Canada) tried something a bit different for their Christmas Social. To support each other's work, they held a "by members, for members only" sale of their own weaving, spinning, felting, and basketry.

When the **Williamsburg Spinners and Weavers Guild** (Virginia) finished the year with surplus money in the treasury, a recommendation was made to *give the newsletter editor(s) free membership.* Editing a newsletter is the single largest task in a guild, and often the effort is taken for granted. What a terrific way to show appreciation for those willing to tackle it! *(Editor's note: Other guilds might want to seriously consider adopting this expression of appreciation for their editors.)*

For guilds with just the opposite situation—a shortage of funds—**Spinners' Web** (Pennsylvania) has some ideas about allocating resources to the basics. One-third of the dues goes toward a donation to the church where meetings are held. Another portion pays for copying and mailing the newsletter. Newsletters are brought to the meeting and given to everyone present; only absent members receive a newsletter by mail, which cuts postage considerably. Remaining dues have been used over the years to purchase two used spinning wheels and a drum carder for members' use.

Several groups have written for suggestions on dealing with dwindling membership. Never give up! **Down Home Spinners** (Colorado) originally organized in 1987. All but one member moved away, and she drove to other counties to attend fiber meetings. Now, because of increased interest, she and a friend have brought back the Down Home Spinners.

Tartans are not part of our usual mental picture when we think of Hawaii. Yet the **Hawaii Handweavers Hui** plans to participate in a Hawaiian Tartan Design Contest, in conjunction with the Hawaiian Scottish Festival. The festival will recognize the cultural influence of people of Scottish ancestry. Members of the Hui will also demonstrate spinning and weaving.

Members of the **Weavers and Spinners Guild of Idaho Falls** (Idaho) rang in the New Year with an overnight spin-in. The group, including husbands and children, gathered for a potluck dinner, then a night of spinning, followed by breakfast, more spinning, and a turkey dinner. Everyone brought sleeping bags and pillows. A separate room was set up for football junkies to do their thing in.

Heritage Village Spinners and Weavers Group (Texas) is part of a living village that shows the day-to-day activities of a small East Texas town one hundred years ago. Members demonstrate spinning and weaving to tour groups and on weekends.

NEW LISTINGS

Note: Information as of December 15, 1996; changes received after that date will be included in the Summer issue.

California. *Riverside County.* Tri-Valley Fiber Guild, Sylvia Miller, 30595 Todd Drive, Homeland 92548.
Colorado. *Colorado Springs.* Pikes Peak Weavers Guild, PO Box 8104, 80933.
Colorado. *Elbert County.* Down Home Spinners, PO Box 355, Kiowa 80117.
Connecticut. *New Hartford.* Angora Artisans, Marjorie Sporie, 215 East Cotton Hill Road, 06057.
Indiana. *Greencastle.* Fleece and Fiber Guild, Barbara Huntsman, 3254 East US Highway 40, 56135.
Indiana. *Middlebury.* Homespun Fiber Guild, Kathleen Backel, 15515 CR 20, 46540.
Massachusetts. *Halifax.* Harlow House Heritage Crafters, Kathy Bowden, 80 Thompson Street, 02338.
New Mexico. *Albuquerque.* Las Aranas Spinners and Weavers Guild, Inc., PO Box 91225, 87199.
North Carolina. *Asheville.* Spinners, Shepherds, and Wannabees. Lorri Helms, 2 Lynwood Road, 28804.
Pennsylvania. *Pittsburgh.* Washington Spinners and Weavers, Judy Harrison, 317 Case Drive, 15241.
Texas. *Tyler County.* Heritage Village Spinners and Weavers Guild, Georgia A. Collins, 201 West Bluff, Woodville 75979.
Utah. *Southern Utah.* "Second Saturday" Spinners/Weavers, Lin Spangler, 1776 South 3000 East, New Harmony 84757.

CANADA

Ontario. *Simcoe County.* Huronia Spinners Guild, Simcoe County Museum, RR No. 2, Minesing L0L 1Y0.

CHANGES

New contact person and/or address, unless otherwise noted.
California. *San Jose.* Serendipity Spinners. Lisa Freise, 956 San Tomas Aquino Road, Campbell 95008.
Indiana. *Brown County.* Countryside Spinners and Weavers, Jan Halladay, 448 Freeman Ridge Road, Nashville 47448.
Indiana. *LaFontaine.* PawPaw Spinners; group disbanded.
Indiana. *Goshen.* Heritage Spinners and Weavers, Vicky Gibson, 58329 City Road 29, Goshen 46526. Change area served, contact, and address; formerly Middlebury.
Louisiana. *New Orleans.* New Orleans Weavers Guild, Brenda Harms, 105 West Claiborne Square, Chalmette 70043.
Massachusetts. *Hingham.* South Shore Spinners Guild, Sigrid Carey, PO Box 923, Humarock 02047.
Minnesota. *Minneapolis/St. Paul.* Northern Lights Handspinners Guild, Pauline Bold, 10552 Thomas Avenue South, Bloomington 55431.
Oklahoma. *Tulsa.* Tulsa Handspinners Guild, Diana Hartzmann, 1203 South 110 East Avenue, 74128.
South Dakota. *Sioux Falls.* Cross Threads Fiberworks Guild, Cheryl Schwarz, 28779 473rd Avenue, Beresford 57004.
Texas. *Fredericksburg.* The Spinning Guild, PO Box 8, Stonewall 78671.
Texas. *Lancaster.* Over The Wheel Gang, Eunice Sandling McMillan, 1412 Wilson Road, 75146.
Wisconsin. *Fond du Lac.* Serendipity Spinners, Dyers and Weavers, Ruth Magyar, W7609 Ct H T, 54937.
Wyoming. *Riverton.* Fremont Fiber Arts Guild, Bobbie Burk, 8 Dalley Road, 82501.
England. *Lancashire.* Fylde Heddles, Treadles, Pauline Mason, 43 Greenacres Ave, Kirkham, Preston, Lancashire PR4 2TX, England.

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Vol. XIX, 1996

compiled by Bobbie Irwin

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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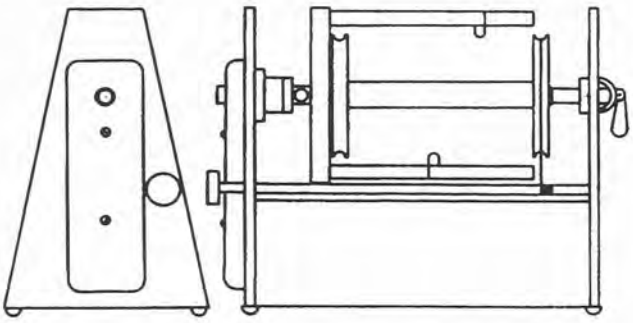
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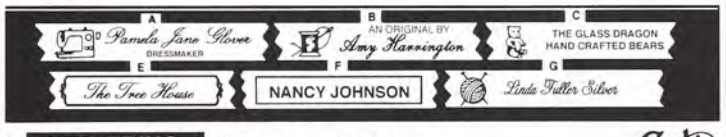
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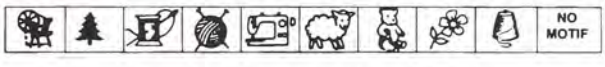
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Coverlet lace pattern. K (Hutchison). Su:72
Dean's coat [and hat] of colored thrums. Tw, K (Rosa). Sp:46–47, 48
Early mitteyns: Two bags. Sp:16–18
Entrelac vest. K (Conner). Su:56–57, 59
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Fiber basics: Texel. K, C (N. Fournier). F:10–14
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Gloves from handspun: Totally tubular. K (Daurelle). W:54–62
Hampshire vest. K (Pulliam). Su:58, 59, 61, 66
Hanger cover and sachet bag. K (Kershner-Veal). F:69–70
Headbands. K (Moroney). Sp:58
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A knitted, felted hat. K, felting (Petrini). W:64–65
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Knitted triangular lace shawls. K (Powell). F:30–37
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Natural green sweater. K (Vaughan). F:74–75
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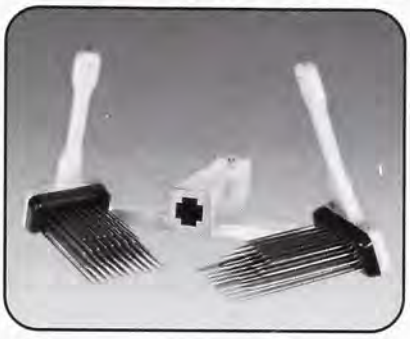
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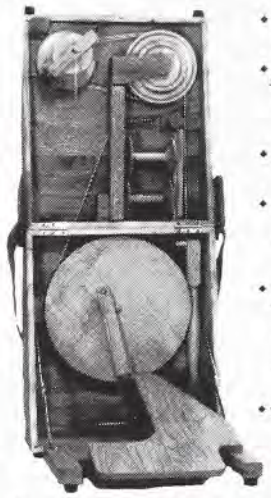
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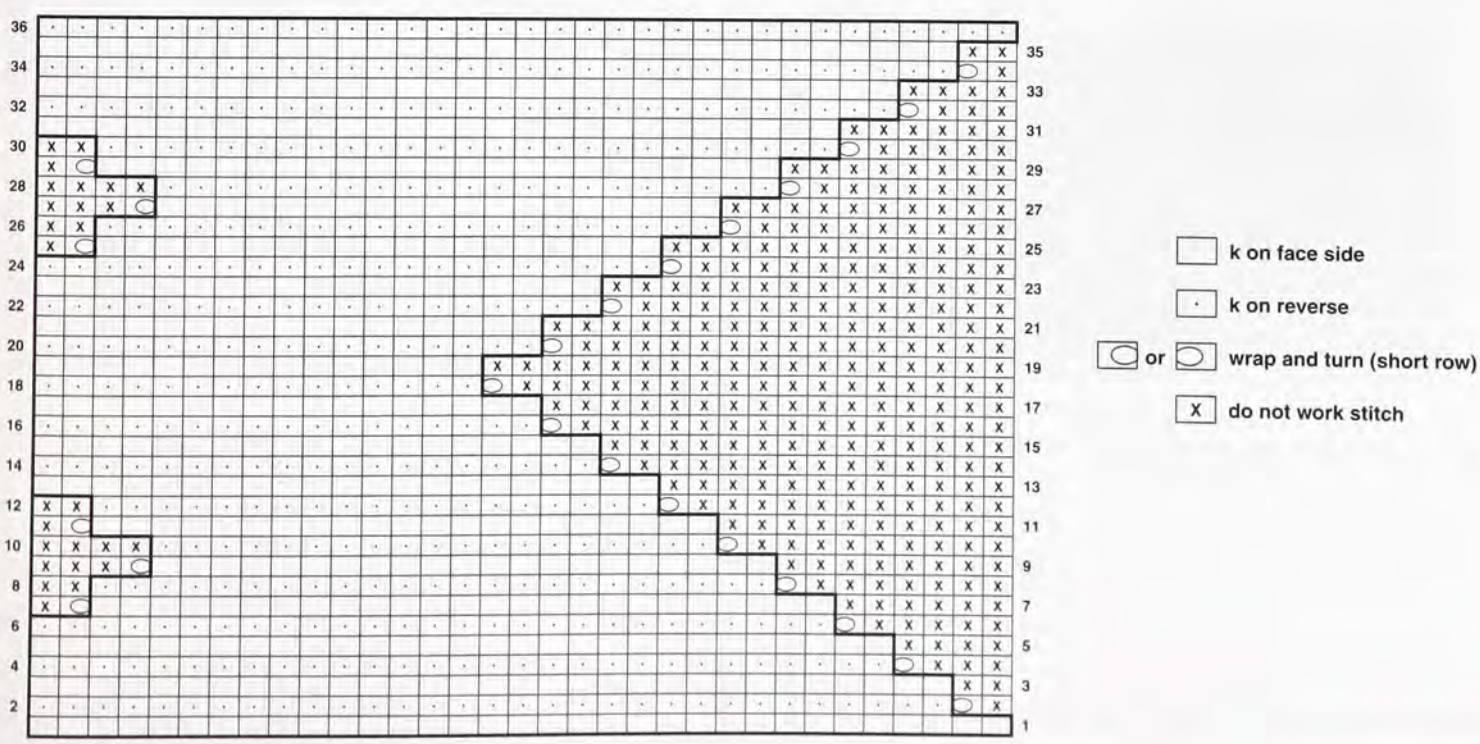
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A D D I T I O N

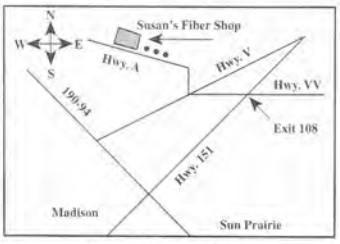
Susan Z. Douglas's "Week-and-a-Day Beret" pattern (Winter 1996, pages 52–53) has correctly written instructions, but some folks have a hard time believing they work. Here's a picture, which helps us:



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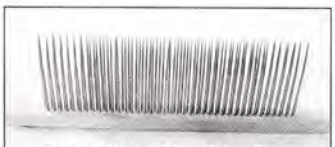


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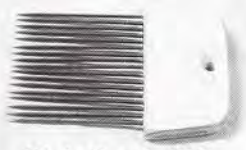


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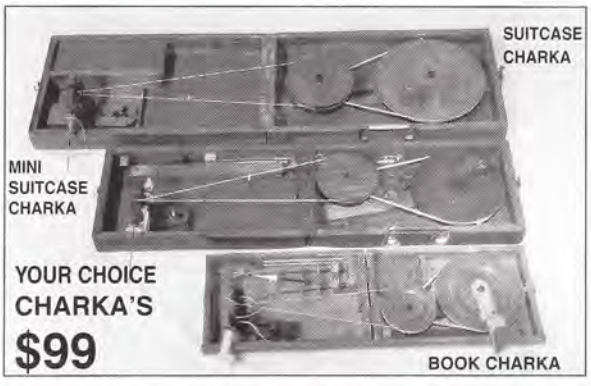


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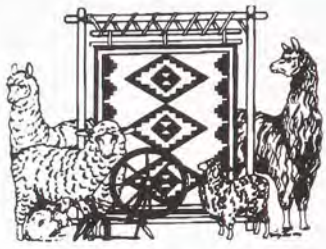
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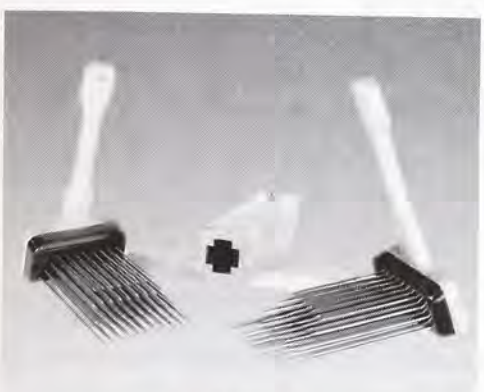
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Product News

by Sharon Altergott

English-style, four-pitch wool combs are now available from **LaniCombs.** These lightweight combs (20 oz./327 g) are made with stainless steel tines and select hardwoods. The handle shape is designed to be used by either a right- or left-handed person with ease. Special orders can also be accommodated. Each set of combs includes a holder and two clamps; cost is $269.95 a pair. Write or call for more information to 5835 W. 6th Ave. Unit 4D, Lakewood, CO 80214. (303) 231-0902; (800) 873-1721 (orders only please); fax (303) 237-8301.



LaniCombs

Joseph and Cindy Franzek of **The Country Craftsman** are celebrating their 25th year in business in 1997. They want to let their dealers and customers know that Joseph had to have back surgery on January 14, 1997, and is recovering well. Spinning wheel production has had to stop temporarily, although they expect to be able to resume in early summer. The Franzeks would like to thank everyone for their patience this spring while Joseph is healing.

Another business celebrating its 25th anniversary in 1997 is **Timbertops Spinning Wheels** in England. Owners Anne and James Williamson produce a wide variety of wheels that can be built with either left- or right-side flyers and your choice of standard-size or larger flyer and bobbins. Among their twelve models are three double-treadle designs. Send $2 cash (postage) for a color brochure to Wheel Lodge, 159 Main St., Asfordby, Melton Mowbray, Leicester, LE14 3TS, U.K.

Ashland Bay Trading Co. has just introduced sixteen shades of multicolored Merino top, eight in regular wool and eight in superwash, plus an undyed superwash top. Their large selection of spinning fibers includes angora, alpaca, mohair, Merino, Merino blends, silk, and silk blends. Look for their fibers and yarns in your local spinning shop. For *wholesale inquiries only, please* write to PO Box 2613, Gig Harbor, WA 98335. (206) 265-6100; fax (206) 265-3422.

Shadeyside Farm in upstate New York *specializes in silk.* Owner Nancy Morey seeks out first-quality fibers and has silk batting and cocoons, silk and silk-blend tops, caps and bells, exotic fiber tops, and domestic 70s wool top. Send $15 for a complete set of samples or send an SASE ($.55 stamp) for a current price list to PO Box 48, Chenango Bridge, NY 13745. (607) 656-4737. E-mail: shadeyside@juno.com

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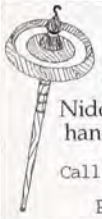
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