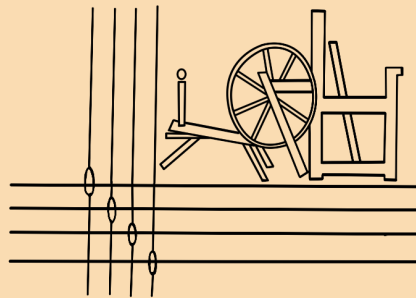


Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild October 2023 Newsletter



Settling into winter is a wonderful sensation for crafters. The at-times frenetic energy of late summer and fall gradually subsides into long evenings where the dark and cold make it so easy to stay home and work on projects.

This newsletter is a long one, with articles on lock-spinning, rabbit conventions, historical textiles of the Southwest United States, the 100th annual ARBA convention, and a new online spinner's guild. So, cozy up with a hot beverage and enjoy!

Upcoming Events

All events at Davis Hall unless otherwise
noted.

Weekly Open Studios

2:00-8:00 pm
Every Wednesday

Warping Seminar
Nov 4 & 5 (Sat & Sun)
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

[Register here](#)

Weekend Wool Scarf Class

Nov 11 & Nov 12 (Sat & Sun)
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

[Registration \(Full, waitlist only\)](#)

Holiday Marketplace

Carlson Center

Friday Nov 11 12:00-7:00 pm

Saturday Nov 12 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Monthly General Meeting

Nov 15 (Wed) 6:00-8:00 pm

Blending Party

Nov 29 (Wed) 5:00-8:00 pm

Bring fiber and carding equipment to share to make some collaborative batts and rolags!

[Follow our Facebook for info about upcoming events](#)



Send us a close-up picture of your project and we'll feature it in the header of a future newsletter.

[**Send us a Photo!**](#)

The header this month features rolags dyed with local berries and plants by Caitlynn Hanna.

Letter from the Presidents

Hello Guild Members,

It's been a busy fall filled with many fiber activities. It was fun to

see so many guild members at this year's Fiber Festival. Our Open Studios are going strong and continue to provide our fiber community with a family-friendly space to share skills and projects. We've got November weekend warping and scarf classes and the Holiday Marketplace coming soon. There's something for everyone — and that's just before Christmas!

We had a great time at a recent Open Studio with the knitting and crocheting community as we made up hat kits for the community. Look for another opportunity soon to make more kits. They went fast at the Fiber Fest and winter is just starting. It's a great way to make Fairbanks a better place for everyone. Thanks to all who support this endeavor.

We also want to thank all our guild members who donate their time, expertise, food, and dollars to keep our guild going. As we head into the winter months, the board will focus on long term planning and sustainability so we can secure our fiber future. We always welcome ideas and suggestions.

If you are working on a project that might be of interest to others, please consider writing a quick descriptive paragraph or two or taking a few photos to share. Our newsletter editors and website and Facebook folks would be happy to help you get the word (or picture) out to a wider audience.

I (Kim) am currently on the last week of my fall fiber travel so will be back soon with new fiber and as much new weaving information as my head can hold!

Kim and Becky



Pinch, Pull, Let Go: Lock Spinning Class with Becky Hammond

By Lynn DeFilippo

Becky Hammond makes lock spinning look easy. As her wheel whirs, tufts of silky, shimmering angora locks from her very own goats slip from her hand, twisting into an artful strand of thick, thin and curly yarn. Eight spinners snagged a seat in Becky's Lock Spinning class on Thursday 10/26, offered as part of the Fairbanks Fiber Festival. We spun in a circle in the Folk School cabin, chatting, laughing and learning.

The biggest trick for most of us was in "letting go" enough so as not to produce a smooth, uniform yarn. Spinners got to choose two ounces of gorgeous, local, farm raised and hand-dyed angora locks as part of their materials fee, which was enough fiber to produce one skein. Step one is to gently pull apart the locks in a very light pre-drafting. Not too much though, just loosen up tight spots. The more you pull it apart, the more uniform and thinner your yarn will be. Now to spin: holding just a handful at a time and drafting from the middle of the lock to start, the wheel spins and you pinch, holding back the twist while pulling a bit of the lock, then let go. "Pinch, pull, let go. Pinch, pull, let go," Becky instructed.

At other times though, you will allow the twist up between your

fingers, into a woolen draft, for some a supported long draw. The fiber in your hand tells you what to do! At no time are you smoothing the fibers as in worsted spinning. An artful lockspun skein will showcase the beauty of the raw mohair lock with an escaped curl twisting out here and there. Since it's thicker yarn, twist is light and the bobbin take up is relatively fast. You'll definitely want a jumbo flyer and bobbin, or at least a wheel with a large orifice. I found the small orifice of my old Ashford Joy a real challenge.

To ply, we all choose a complimentary sewing or embroidery weight thread from Becky's big stash. We practiced holding the thread in our hands while feeding the newly spun single, not unlike core spinning according to Becky. Biggest tip here: keep a short distance between the thread and the yarn, guiding the thread to wrap around thick and/or fluffy sections of the single when you come to them. Watch out for tangles!

Voila, everyone left with a unique and gorgeous lockspun skein! Washing and fulling the skeins with a whack is the final step in the lock spinning yarn process.



Rabbit report: Dispatches from

Kentucky

By Annika Mayer and Alicia Andres



Among all this fall's fiber excitement in Fairbanks, some guild members traveled to conventions, workshops, and more across the country. For the Alaska Angora community, Louisville Kentucky was the place to be this October as the [American Rabbit Breeders Association \(ARBA\)](#) hosted its 100th annual convention. We interviewed FSWG's Alicia to get the inside scoop on the convention.

The ARBA is focused on showing all kinds of rabbits, from the giant angoras guild members may be familiar with from Open Studio nights to tiny Jersey Woolies and even some guinea pigs. Among the wide range of breeds Alicia noted a strong angora fiber showing at the convention. The convention hosted a "Wool, Skein, and Garment" competition which gave angora breeders a chance to showcase their products from start to finish. Some of Alicia's favorite entries as she was writing for the competition's judges included a drop-spindle spun shawl from a single rabbit and a knit seed stitch scarf with "drape to die for"! In another win for angora enthusiasts, Chestnut Giant Angoras can now be shown at competitions. Alicia explained that only red eyed white angoras were shown previously since their fiber was more commercially viable, but growing interest in natural colors influenced the addition of the chestnut angora.

Making connections with other rabbit breeders was another highlight of the conference. Along with admiring other rabbits (and buying a few angoras and jersey woolies to bring home), attendees had discussions about interpreting standards on angora breeds and the best ways to get fleeces properly processed. “I was happy to share with other rabbit breeders about the community we have here in Fairbanks... a few people talked about wanting to visit!”, Alicia said.

2023 Fiber Festival

October 14th & 15th was a busy, bustling weekend at the Fairbanks Fiber Festival. This annual event is a collaboration between Calypso Farm and Ecology Center, the Fairbanks Weavers and Spinners Guild, the Interior Knit and Crochet Community, the Folk School, and the Fairbanks Children's Museum.

There were classes and demos and local vendors got a steady stream of visitors all weekend long. One big draw was the equipment sale; many people went home happy with a new wheel or loom - and others were happy to get some equipment off their hands!





Historical Textiles Corner

Early textiles in the Southwestern US by Annika Mayer



At first glance this scrap of fine cotton twill may appear quite ordinary, but its plain appearance hides hundreds of years of history and countless hours of labor from the craftspeople who first made it. The cloth was excavated from **Dyck cliff dwelling** in Arizona, preserved for somewhere between 700 and 1000 years by the dry desert climate. It is one of thousands of archaeological textiles discovered in the southwestern US which shed light on a distinctive and complex fiber tradition.

The earliest preserved textiles in this region date to 400 BC, but given how rare textile preservation is, it is likely that their origins here are much older. The earliest textiles were made from bast fibers, utilizing **hundreds of versatile native plants** such as yucca, agave, hemp, and willow. These techniques produced a wide array of finely detailed yet sturdy items such as baskets, sandals, and nets. People in the Four Corners region during this period are often referred to as the “Basketmaker people” by archaeologists, reflecting the importance of fiber in their material culture. There do not appear to be any animals domesticated specifically for fiber production in this region, but people did occasionally incorporate dog hair and bird feathers into garments.

Domesticated cotton was **introduced in the 8th century** from Central America and quickly became a staple of southwestern textiles. Spindle whorls and looms begin to appear in the archaeological record around this period, an adaptation of technology to the newly available soft, strong fibers. Weavers used **backstrap, horizontal, and vertical looms** and the designs

which survive indicate the truly remarkable skill and creativity of indigenous craftspeople. Textiles ranged from an 11th century plaid twill from Los Guacanos village to the lacy weft-wrapped open work characteristic of the Hohokam people. Despite the wonderful complexity of these pieces, there is something enchanting about the Dyck cliff dwelling twill. Slight variations can be seen in the thickness of the cotton thread and the fabric is worn and stained, showing the touch and care of human hands.

Thoughts on the new online PLY Spinners Guild

by Kate Hedstrom

Jacey Boggs Faulkner (behind Ply Magazine) is hosting a new thing, an online spinning guild. It was a Kickstarter effort in which they got enough support to move ahead. The web site is at: [https://](https://www.plyspinnersguild.com/)

www.plyspinnersguild.com/

It consists of a forum where you can read and leave messages and also a series of videos. The videos are by "season" and "episode", with the episode one series featuring Stephenie Gaustad talking about spinning wheels in very general terms. She introduces flyer-led, bobbin-led and double-drive mechanisms, describing their strengths and weaknesses.



Season one is out and contains the basics you want to have under your belt: 1. All about wheels, 2. All about spindles, and 3. Woolen and worsted demystified. I have so far only watched the series about wheels. No need to rush through them all, but if you join, you can of course watch them multiple times. I'm afraid I haven't explored the forums either, just having

When asked which is best, the answer is something like "well, you don't just have one screwdriver, do you?". Each episode will have a Make-a-Yarn in which you are encouraged to spin along with Jacey. I definitely need to watch that one again, on a day when I feel bold enough to try double-drive. Each season will also have a Tea with the Instructor where Jacey chats with the instructor about many things. I was struck by Stephenie saying that to make a thin, fine yarn, why not just go to an e-spinner?

gone into the "Introduce yourself" thread.

Do I need an online guild? Maybe not, but the price seemed reasonable and I wanted to support them through the Kickstarter campaign and the timing was right for replacing my Stitches at Home habit. I'm curious to see where it goes from here. Based on my Ravelry experience, I will probably be more of a lurker than a forum contributor, but I expect them to build up a supportive and welcoming community.

Volume 44 Issue 4

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The Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization founded in 1952. Our mission is to connect fiber artists across Interior Alaska and build community through practice, teaching and learning in the arts of weaving, hand spinning, and related textile arts.

The membership year goes from April 1st to March 30th of the following year. To become a member or renew your membership, please [download our membership form](#), print it out, and mail it to us.

Membership forms are also available at Guild events.

Mailing Address:

PO Box 73152

Fairbanks, AK 99707-3152

email: fairbanksweavers@gmail.com • web: <https://fairbanksweavers.org>



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