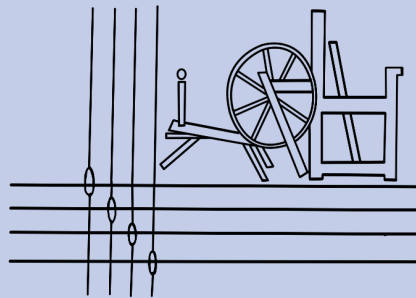


Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild March 2024 Newsletter



Hello Spinners and Weavers and happy March! The groundhog may have seen his shadow on February 2nd, but winter is still in full force here in Fairbanks. While the cold temperatures have been keeping many of us indoors, they haven't kept us from crafting. Guild members have been showing off their creativity through open studios and pop up events, and all that community energy has kept us busy even while Ice Alaska occupies our usual space at Davis Hall. Read on for more information about upcoming talks, studio nights, and classes, as well as articles about weaving in the wilderness, Suint fermentation updates, and Alaska Native dyes using local plants.

Upcoming Events

Davis Hall is Closed until April 10

Open Studio at Jodi Gouwen's
Wednesday March 6th, Time TBA
Details coming via email

**Craft Night with English Language
Learners at CTC**

Monday March 11th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
CTC Room 203, 604 Barnette St
Meet and craft with people in the Literacy
Council ELL program.
Contact: [Amy Barnes](#)

**Open Studio at Ag Museum
(Fairgrounds)**

Wednesday March 13th, 2:00 - 8:00 pm

**Raising Rabbits and Starting a Fiber Mill
Talk with Emily Ashton at North Pole
Library**

Monday March 18th, Time TBA
Details coming via email

**Open Studio at Ag Museum
(Fairgrounds)**

Wednesday March 20th, 2:00 - 8:00 pm

Weaving Class at The Folk School

March 30th, 31st & April 6th
Class full, but people interested in
teaching in the future, contact [Kim](#)

Open Studio at Davis Hall

Wednesday April 10th, 2:00 - 8:00 pm

Annual Meeting at Davis Hall

Wednesday April 17th, 2:00 - 8:00 pm
Elections start 6:00 pm



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 made by Elizabeth Irving at the January Blending and Tea Party.

Letter from the Presidents

Hi Everyone,

The guild has been surprisingly busy lately. We thought this would be a quiet month while on hiatus at Davis Hall for the duration of Ice Alaska but we were so wrong. Guild members have really stepped up and arranged multiple pop-up locations and alternative Open Studio venues and it has been a blast. While we look forward to getting back to our regular Davis Hall schedule, these alternative event spaces have provided us with more options on weekends and really help to get the word out about the guild. Plus, it's just been so fun.

Thanks to the generosity of guild members, we have visited studios, coffee houses, homes, and have access to alternative spaces at the fairgrounds. The schedule changes weekly, so please look for the Facebook posts and guild emails. We will be back to regular operations starting April 10 at Davis Hall, 2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Tanana Valley Fairgrounds.

We will have our annual meeting and election of board and officers on April 17 at Davis Hall. Thanks again to all who have given their time and expertise to the guild. If you are interested in a board role, please let a current board member know. We have a great slate of folks willing to serve another year and we always welcome new voices. The strength of this guild is so dependent on our wonderful combination of new ideas and established culture. It is an inspiring and energetic guild and we are lucky to have it. We do want to hear your voice!

We are working hard to bring some outside instruction to the guild later this year and are planning more Saturday afternoon

events since sometimes a Wednesday night is just not enough time! So stay tuned!

Kim and Becky



Open Studio Gallery





Weavers in the Wild: Tapestry Hiking Trail

By Kim Kortenhof

There's still time to check out the beautiful tapestry display that Bonni Brooks has installed along a local mushing/hiking trail. Kim and Alice and dogs checked out the trail a few weeks ago and took photos of the tapestries along the way. It's a unique and spectacular venue to view these works of art.

Access the trail off Merlin Court in the Taiga Woodlands subdivision. There's a parking area just before the trail access point. Walk a little way down the trail and you'll see the first guidepost (tapestry).



Alaska Native Plant Dyes

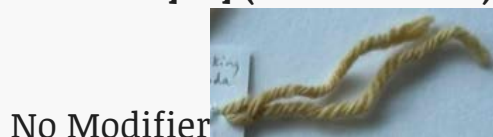
by Caitlynn Hanna

Summer of 2023 I learned how to spin yarn from Clara and it opened up a whole new world of fiber arts. I had known that traditional use of alder for dyeing and tanning fish leather, a practice that adds vibrant red hues to garments. My curiosity about natural dye plants in Alaska directed me to a valuable resource co-produced by the Alaska Native Heritage Center and the Smithsonian. I discovered an elder-led workshop titled *Batuk'enelyashi: Natural Dyes from the Dena'ina Lands*, documented by the Smithsonian and available [online](#). The project, whose name translates to "making colors" in the Dena'ina language, is an endeavor to reconnect the community with their ancestral heritage through the exploration of colors derived from local plants, minerals, and other natural sources found within

their traditional territories.

Inspired by the Batuk'enelyashi project, I decided to use the material provided as a guide to experiment with plants from the tundra. My experiments not only involved dyeing roving with these natural colors but also exploring different preparations for spinning, including making rolags and using a hackle. I am excited to expand my experiments by incorporating different plants and performing light fastness tests.

Tilaaqiaq (Labrador Tea)



Strawflower (Uncertain?)



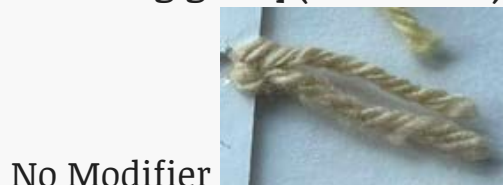
Dried Aqpik Leaves (Cloudberry)



Quagaq (Sourdock)



Sargigruaq (Stinkweed)



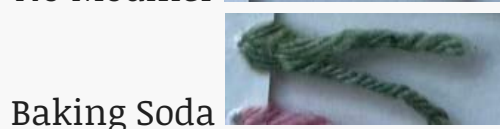
Asiavik (Blueberry)



Paungaq (Crowberry)



Kavlaq (Lowbush Cranberry)





Suint Fermentation Pt.2

Part two: Finally some Stink!

By Lynn DeFilippo

I'm not sure that fiber people would use the term "stuck fermentation" to describe what was happening to my two fleeces, but brewers of wine and beer certainly would.

A brief recap to Part One: my raw fleeces were submerged in totes of rainwater on a sunny patch of lawn. Location, the Goldstream Valley, probably on permafrost ground which is still cold in June, despite the green grass and warm sun, which doesn't reach this section of yard till the afternoon. The water under the fleeces at the bottom of the tote was downright cold, though the very top layer of water was warm. Remember, Suint Method is an anaerobic process, so it will be happening under the surface of the water, not on top where it's exposed to the air. There were a few bubbles and a slight odor in the tub with the gray fleece, a mostly lanolin smell and no bubbles in the white fleece. If you check in the morning, nothing. Late afternoon, a bubble or two and faint odor.

How to get it going?

1. I brought both totes up to the cabin porch in the afternoon (lots of hot direct sun), and moved them to the back house porch for the hot morning sun. It was heavy moving twice a day, but now they were off the ground and much warmer. Effective.

2. Put plexiglass on top of one tote, and clear plastic wrap on the other to create a greenhouse effect. Effective. I may even have laid the wrap directly on top of the fleece, eliminating air space, but my notes don't mention it.

3. Wrapped each tote in black plastic bags to increase the sun's heat. Effective. (Thanks to whoever suggested this at Open Craft Night!)

4. Very gently stirred up the cool water from the bottom. Effective? Not sure.

5. Heat tape (some old coated-wire stuff my hubby scored at the transfer site) put in a pillow case to prevent tangling. Not Effective, so I removed it.

6. Immersion heater was ruled out (too hot and require

monitoring?)

A spate of cool weather didn't help my cause, but hot sunny days returned and the action picked up. Bubbles, brown water, and finally, the stink! The tote with the gray fleece was decidedly more active and smelly than the white fleece, as had been the case from the very beginning. Truth be told, I was a bit disappointed. Maybe it's the wine maker in me, but I wanted active bubbling and the promised horrid smell. Yeah, it smelled bad, but certainly tolerable. I mean, I wasn't gagging. (Then I made the mistake of spinning out one of the rinsed fleeces in my small house. Don't do it unless you have house guests to drive out!)

On July 3, almost two weeks after I had first submerged the fleeces, I declared the process done. Water was a dark brown and I just couldn't babysit these totes anymore. Hauling them onto two different decks each day, poking, smelling, feeling the water temperature with my hand. Enough was enough.

I rinsed them in rain water (I've got several collection barrels on my property), and set them to dry on racks in the sun. Squirrel hijinks made me transfer them indoor at night, and I had to watch out for rainy days, but the pretty gray and white fleeces, fluffy and clean, dried nicely. And voila, no smell!

I even saved one tote's worth of skanky brown water to do it again, because supposedly you can re-use it. The microbes are still in there, awaiting your shorn and raw wool. From what I understand, the bath gets stronger too. I held on to that hard-won, dirty, stinky, opaque brown water till the end of the summer when I finally dumped it. I think two factors influenced this process: Cool nights meant it didn't get hot enough for long enough to be super active, and thus it took more than 5 days; the fleeces were relatively clean to start with. Either my threshold for stinky messes is a lot higher than most people's, or my Suint baths weren't that vigorous. Both may be true.

Final takeaways: This is a great method if you need to conserve water. Your bath needs be to warm enough for the temperature to get up to 80° F, preferably for extended periods of time. The Suint bath will definitely clean the fleece and remove dirt and debris, but you still have to wash out the lanolin. The sulfury stink isn't that bad, but keep it outside.

Would I do it again? Not sure. I still have two bags of raw fleece from that trip with Moxie, around three pounds worth that need to be processed. I'm waiting for summer to roll around because my indoor cabin/studio space is limited. If we get some hot days...maybe!

Interested in writing for us?

The FSWG comms team is currently looking for more contributors to our newsletter. Stories should be 300-700 words long and can feature any fiber related topic, such as a recent project, tales of fiber travel, a deep dive into a certain process or methodology, or anything else of interest to our community of fiber artists.

TO SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE:

Please email your text to comms@fairbanksweaver.s.org along with any accompanying photographs and attributions. The deadline for articles to be included in our April newsletter is **April 26st, 2024.**

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.

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