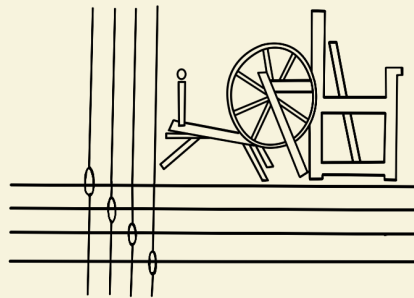


Fairbanks Weavers' and Spinners' Guild July 2024 Newsletter



Hello Everyone!

It's that time of year where it feels like there are a million-and-one things to do, so thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter! In this issue we've got info about the upcoming Tanana Valley State Fair, Tour de Fleece, fun times with long-dead bugs and their beautiful cocoons, Lois's luminous towel project, and the history of a very fluffy dog breed you may have never heard of.

Upcoming Events

We will be out of Davis Hall from July 13 -
August 14th for the Fair

Open Studio
at Davis Hall
July 3 & 10, 2:00-8:00 pm
Restarting August 14

Bundle Dyeing Mulberry Silk Scarves

at The Folk School
Thursday July 11, 6:00 - 8:30 pm
[Registration Link](#)

Silk Saturday & Tea Party

at Davis Hall
Saturday July 13, 12:00 - 5:00 pm

Indigo Dyeing Organic Cotton Tote Bags

at The Folk School
Thursday July 18, 6:00 - 9:00 pm
[Registration Link](#)

Fair Entry Drop-Off

Friday July 19, 4:00 - 7:00 pm
Saturday July 20, 1:00 - 6:00 pm

Fair Judging Day

Sunday July 21, 2:00 pm until done

Fair Booth Set Up

Wednesday July 24, 3:00 pm

FWSG Booth-Sitting

Friday July 26 - August 4

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

We Need You.... For the Fair!



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 is a weaving project by Kim Korten Hof.

Sign up to help at:

<https://fwsg.ivolunteer.com/>

Volunteers are needed starting July 19th for managing exhibit entry, judging and booth set-up. Booth-sitting shifts run Friday, July 26th - Sunday, August 4th in ~3-hour blocks from 12pm-10pm.

It's a lot of hours (there are 60 volunteer slots for just booth-sitting!), and any time you can offer is much appreciated!

The booth is in George Gasser Hall (the big teal building formerly known as Badger Hall.) Your job is to chat with folks, sell raffle tickets to support the guild, and answer questions about the weaving and spinning scene in Fairbanks. Bring a project to pass the time, and maybe a cushion, if three hours on a metal folding chair sounds like a rough time.

Note: Volunteers under the age of 18 will need to share the time slot with an adult, as they are legally not allowed to sell raffle tickets.

If you have questions about the entering or volunteering at the fair, contact Kate Hedstrom (yngvild210@gmail.com), Rob Cermak (rob.cermak@gmail.com), or Moxie Pender (moxie@mosquionet.com), our department Superintendents.

Bonus Fair Note from the Newsletter Editor (Clara)

If you've never entered anything in the fair before, I encourage you to give it a try! I was a bit apprehensive when I entered things for the first time last year, but it was honestly very cool to see my stuff on display among everything else. It's a mix of kid and adult crafts, made by beginners and experts and everyone in between.

I went home with a blue ribbon even (as I had the only entry in the category...) and it hangs above my craft table and brings me joy!



Letter from the Presidents

Hello FWSG Fiber Friends!

It's been a great spring for us, despite the wildfire smoke. Several members participated in Calypso's Sheep and Wool Day, we hosted a first ever Spinning Wheel Roulette, Silk Saturday was so good we're doing a second workshop, and Fairbanks Fiber Fest planning is well underway.

I'm constantly impressed by the incredible breadth of knowledge and skills in this Guild group. Not only is there a free and fun sharing of knowledge, but also a wonderfully supportive and encouraging club!

I extend a warm welcome to our new members—I'm so glad you've found us. As FWSG continues its growth, look forward to more fun and educational events.

Cheers, all! Until the smoke clears out of town, enjoy those fiber-fun indoor crafts.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

Pay your 2024-2025 Membership Dues

For the first time in guild history, you can pay your dues
ONLINE!

<https://fairbanksweavers.org/membership-2024/>

You can also mail in your form ([download form here](#)) or stop by Open Studio and pay our Treasurer, Claire Spann, directly via cash, check, or card.

Members receive the newsletter, get discounts on classes, and can advertise equipment they are selling. If you choose not to renew your membership, this will be the last FWSG Newsletter you will receive.



Open Studio Gallery





Tour De Fleece 2024

Join the Fairbanks spinning fun with Team Borealis!

The annual Tour de Fleece has officially started as of Saturday, June 29th, and will continue until Sunday, July 21, followed by the Tour de Fleece Femmes on Sunday, August 12th-18th. Rest days are Monday, July 8th and Monday, July 15th. Get answers to all your spinning questions here!

- **What is it?** The Tour De Fleece is a low-key chance to focus on spinning for a month, as cyclists spin their wheels in the Tour de France. Set yourself a challenge

and work on it over the course of the month! All are welcome, the goal is to spin except on rest days, but turning around once in place counts if you don't have time for your wheel or spindles.

- ***Can I spin anything I want?*** Absolutely! Any spinning is good spinning, but participants who want an extra challenge can spin something more difficult on the challenge days. These are usually the toughest high mountain stage: this year, the first one is Stage 9, on Sunday July 7, when a demanding week comes to an end with the first authentic mountain test. The second is stage 15, on Sunday, July 14.
- ***How can I get involved?*** You can always spin solo, but if you want to participate in our spinning community feel free to drop into our thread on Ravelry by following this link: [Team Borealis](#). Show us your spinning projects, ask for help, share your favorite fibers, techniques, and resources for spinning or even learn to spin.
- ***Do I get to dress up?*** Of course! Wear yellow on Sunday July 21st to announce victory. Why not wear yellow on any day you feel particularly successful? (Yellow is the color of the race leader in the Tour - but here we are all 'race leaders') Other colors if desired: Green (sprinter - think FAST), Polka-dot (climber - as in uphill), and white (rookie).

Good luck on the tour and happy spinning!

Silk from the Source

By Clara Noomah

Folks gathered in the hot sun a few weeks ago and stared into a big pot of boiling water. The soup that was cooking was silkworms - white, oblong pods, each about an inch long. The dry ones rattled when you shook them due to the long-dead silkworm pupa inside, but in the hot water they slowly softened. Not a particularly appetizing soup, but a fascinating one!



The next step was to tear them open, remove the pupae, and carefully pull them apart to cover a 10x10" wooden stretcher frame. Stack up 10 or so cocoons and it becomes a "hanky," which can then be used for spinning or blending, or it can be knit or woven with directly.

This event was so fun that it'll be happening again on Saturday, July 13th from 12:00 - 5:00 pm at Davis Hall on the Fairgrounds. There's a small suggested donation to cover supplies, and please bring some food to share!

Here's a link to the method that Kate used as reference: <http://wormspit.com/mawatas.htm>



Towel Triumph: A Colorful Weaving Adventure

By Lois Henderson

I recently saw Turkish towels for sale somewhere on the internet. I was tempted to buy one but then recalled my Lifetime Supply of various cotton yarns. I got permission to use one of the guild's looms in the guild space since my home loom at the time was a 16 inch rigid heddle, too narrow for what I wanted to make.

I call the color combination "End of Winter in Fairbanks" or "Color Thirsty Towel" because we have not seen colors for a long time. My eyes get so hungry for bright colors after so much gray and white through the winter. It is certainly a bright towel!

The loom is a 4 harness floor loom and the pattern is from Marguerite Porter Davison's "A Handweaver's Pattern Book" aka "The Green Book." The pattern is on page 19 and is called Finnish Bird's-Eye. There are various patterns that can be woven on this pattern's threading so a weaver could combine them in one

piece or make a set of related items (dish cloths, napkins, placemats, etc.) using the same warp and weft yarns in each one but a different treadling. The warp was three yards long and 38 inches wide on the loom. It was threaded with 5/2 cotton yarn at 16 epi.

When I started weaving I remembered that it really does feel different to weave on a wider warp than a narrower one. Getting the shuttle across a wider warp is more laborious. It didn't take long to adjust but it was an adjustment. The towel wove up faster than I had dared to hope. There are a number of treadling errors and I am reminded that errors in weaving are common and not necessarily a problem. In this towel's case mistakes in the treadling pattern lead into the variant patterns available on this threading. The errors actually looked pretty good!

I had invaluable help from Claire with winding the warp and dressing the loom. She prefers that to the actual weaving - the exact opposite of me. Moxie helped me with the interminable threading and much encouragement. A great big THANK-YOU to both of them and for all the fun and encouraging comments from people coming by.

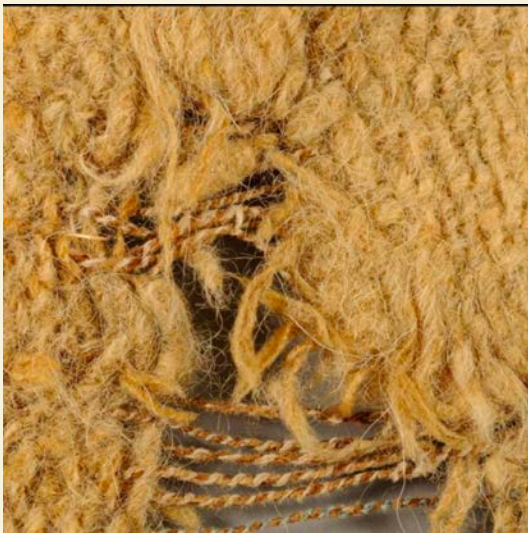


The Wonderful History of

Wool Dogs

By Annika Mayer

If you've ever gathered your dog's spring shedding and spun a yarn, or blended it into your favorite fibers, you're following in the footsteps of the Coast Salish and Makah people who raised wool dogs for thousands of years in the Pacific Northwest. These extraordinary animals were similar to small spitz dogs, carefully bred and isolated from other canine populations to maintain their voluminous coats and white color. Oral histories recount feeding the dogs on diets rich in fatty salmon to maintain their glossy fur, and early ethnographers who came across the breed described seeing packs of them shorn like sheep. But why did people start breeding the dogs? And what explains the disappearance of the dogs and their stories?



Left: [Salish Coast weaving](#) featuring dog hair along with sinew and cedar, from the University of Washington Burke Museum Collection.

Right: [Whale bone spindle whorl](#) from Cadboro Bay

Weaving has a long history and deep cultural significance in the Puget Sound region, with woven blankets essential to social rituals such as potlatches, weddings, and funerals. Materials such as cedar, fireweed fluff, sinew, and stinging nettle were all used in weaving but animal fibers were hard to come by. Fine, soft mountain goat hair could only be obtained from hunting the animals or laboriously gathering

shed fluff in spring. It is unknown who first decided to start using dogs for their wool, but genetic evidence suggests the line started to diverge around 5,000 years ago. They eventually became a significant component of the Coast Salish textile industry. Blankets made from dog wool even have their own name in the Nisqually language: Ko-matl'-ked.

Wool dogs went extinct around the 1860s, due to the influx of cheap wool from the Hudson Bay Company, interbreeding with other populations, and the hardship inflicted by colonial pressures on indigenous communities. Their stories, too, faded into history: by the late 20th century, academics such as Gustafson claimed that the wool dogs had been a myth and extant blankets labeled as Ko-matl'-ked were misidentified.

However, in recent years modern science has decisively vindicated the importance of wool dogs as remembered by the Coast Salish people. Analysis of dog skeletons in archaeological sites of the region has revealed a distinct small breed of canid, likely the remains of wool dogs. These have been found in sites dating back at least 1,500 years, indicating a significant textile industry at a very early date. One 18th century blanket from British Columbia has been examined using stable isotope analysis, a technique which can reveal the diet of an animal by chemically analyzing its remains. Results suggested that the hair in the blanket came from an animal with a heavily marine diet, most likely a dog fed on similar foods to the humans that raised it. A 2011 study of proteins in blanket fibers also returned good evidence for the use of dog fibers.

The moral of the story? Next time you're vacuuming dog hair off the couch, save a few fibers for your next project. Take the advice of Squamish weaver, Chief Janice George: "The weaver should feel confident she is doing the right thing on all levels, that she is following the teachings. Then the weaving will contain good feelings, love, prayers, and protection."

For a deeper dive into this subject, check out Hakai Magazine's [feature on Wool dogs](#). Find out more about the last wool dog, Mutton, [here](#), or follow these links for the archaeological science behind it all: [The Hair of the Dog / Thread, Twist, and Fiber](#).



Two First Nations girls with what is most likely a wool dog, late 19th century;
photo via the [Chilliwack Museum and Archives](#)

Spinning Workshops with Jillian Moreno: September 2024

The prices and times of workshops in Fairbanks are still being finalized. The next newsletter will feature more in-depth information the workshops we will be hosting:

- All the Singles Ladies: Spin and Knit Sensational Singles

(3 hours)

- Match Game: Spinning for Knitting (3 hours)
- Spinning Braids: All the Fun, None of the Stress (6 hours)

Contact [Kate Hedstrom](#) if you are interested signing up for any of these classes (and have not put your name on the interest form at Open Studio). Getting an estimate of participants helps us price the classes.

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 September newsletter is **September 4th, 2024.**

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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.

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