

Loose Threads

Winter/Spring 2008

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Notes from Field Hill

I'm not quite sure where the time has gone. It seems like we just issued the summer newsletter, and now it's time for the Winter/Spring newsletter. I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season. Up here in Vermont the month of December was a huge difference from December 2006. Snow, snow, and more snow this year. Everyone seems to be skiing and not visiting the shop!

Fall 2007 saw a number of new and exciting classes at Six Loose Ladies. We learned how to knit moebius designs, knitted/felted clogs and baseball caps, how to rug hook using the locker hooking technique, how to spin with a drop spindle, and how to knit two socks on one circular needle. Fate drove me to take spinning classes from Piper Leo, and I've joined the ranks of the fleece junkies. We're starting the new year with a class on finishing techniques - how to make perfect seams and put the classy touches on knitted projects. This class is being taught by the knitting guru from the Green Mountain Spinnery and should be well worth attending if you plan to knit more than just hats and scarves. We also will offer again the class on knitting two socks on one circular needle. And, just in time for Valentine's day you can learn how to make a quilted postcard or valentine using fabric collage, fusible web, and nifty tricks taught by Lynne Croswell.

So come on down to Six Loose Ladies and start the year off learning something new!

Inspirations

The topic this month is inspirational fiber artists. I have a few who I fully intend to embarrass. I'll start with Margaret Gates. Back in August or September Margaret called the store. She claimed to be 80 years old and determined that she had more rug braiding and hooking wool than she thought she could use in her remaining years. Would we like to buy some from her? How could I (aka Helga Rugenmaker) resist? I drove down to Margaret's house to check things out. I could not believe my eyes. Despite her claimed age and plethora of replacement parts, Margaret looked like she could outlive her stash. She had more wool than the Door Mill store!! And, she had rugs she braided in every room of her house and a photo album of rugs she has braided for others. Her rugs were phenomenal - true works of art and beautifully crafted. Two of her rugs are in the Inn in Grafton. Margaret confided that she did not advertise - but true works of art are in demand and those who appreciate her craft can find her. As I drove off with a few boxes of fabric, I thought that it is wonderful that people like Margaret can be so humble about their talent and can be found in surprising nooks and crannies.

My next inspiration (or she would say, victim) is Piper Leo. I tell people that if I grow old, but not terribly classy, I want to be like Piper. Again, another incredible talent, humble to the core, quietly sharing her craft. Piper is a gifted spinning teacher and weaver and knitter and kayaker and.... anything else she wants to be. Her knit hats at the Silver Spoon on Depot Street in Ludlow are of a quality not found in regular stores. She is a repository of fiber-related knowledge and is happy to share her knowledge with those of us who want to expand our horizons. And she's just a fun person to be around.

My next inspiration is Phyllis Bont. I tell people that if I grow old, and classy, I want to be like Phyllis. Once more, humble, remarkably talented, soft-spoken, and truly a gifted weaver. I look at her scarves in the store and can't believe that human hands made them. One of my favorite mental images which I recall from time to time is Phyllis weaving at the Cavendish Old Home day last year, with Jen Leak's felted loom lady sitting atop the loom. Phyllis patiently and cheerfully chatted with all visitors who expressed an interest in weaving. Society could use more Phyllises (and her husband Gene).

Finally, sadly my last inspiration is no longer with us. Jean Brinegar, who provided the store with delightful hooked and felted whimsies and vinegar grained items,

passed away this Fall. I didn't get to know Jean well. She was not well enough to hang around the store or attend events. Nevertheless, she kept busy making felted santas, hooked snowmen, cone elves, flowers, and other items which flew out the door. Jean's treasures will be missed!

Nancy (aka the Hooker on the Hill)

Anne's Corner

When Nancy suggested the theme, "people who have influenced us in the fiber arts" as the topic for our newsletter this month, I immediately thought of my grandmother and my mother. They were very influential in my early interest in fiber arts. I think from the very beginning years of my life, I was surrounded by creative fiber projects and just thought they were a way of life for everyone.

My Grandmother was a many faceted artist, and fiber arts were among her fortes. A fond memory I have is when she knit me a green sweater and my older sister a red one. We were very young - preschool aged. The day I put the green sweater on I declared my favorite color was green, and still is. Grandmother made such an impression on me with all her fiber projects, her ability to improvise and create beauty. She could and did do just about every fiber art, and she did them all very well. Ladies of her era did a lot of handwork which she excelled in. My sisters and I have some very beautiful items passed down from her and some of her talent as well. We are lucky to have vintage appliquéd, embroidered and cut work linens, crochet and embroidered doilies, a crochet wool "granny square" throw, pillow cases and hankies. My Grandmother left a legacy in textiles, and passed on her many skills that my sisters and I use today.

My mother made a lot of our clothes for many years. I have fond memories of the black Singer sewing machine that she used. It ran on peddle power. Eventually it was replaced by an electric machine, but our early wardrobe was made with foot power. We did have some garments from the department stores, but our good clothes, and holiday attire were often made by Mum. These dresses had ruffles and puffy sleeves, full skirts, and were really quite nice. My 3 sisters and I wore matched dresses, from toddler to tween! Sadly our clothes changed along with teenage peer pressure and babysitting money, and my mother getting a job in an office. The black singer retired, and was not replaced till many years later when my parents retired. One of the projects my mother did in early retirement was to

make each daughter a quilt. Now we can wrap up in a treasure made by her again, and enjoy her creative talents.

I learned to knit, sew, embroider, appliqué and quilt at a young age. My dolls wore clothes I made, and their coverlets were embroidered and appliquéd, their blankets and hats were knitted by me. I still have a baby quilt I started with the help of my mother and grandmother that I made for my trousseau. It was a kit, that I embroidered then appliquéd pink and blue outfits on boy and girl teddy bears. I worked on it for years, but never finished it until 36 years ago. I got it done just in time to bring my newborn son home from the hospital all wrapped up in it. Some day I hope to pass it on to a grandchild and perhaps some fiber arts skills that I acquired from my family and friends.

I would love to share with you my adventure reading Barbara Kingsolver's book "Animal Vegetable Miracle", but this is a Fiber Arts newsletter not a book club. I will point out what I gleaned from her book about supporting our local community businesses. Kingsolver spent a year feeding her family on what they grew themselves or what they could buy locally. I have decided to consume locally as much as I can because of this book. This holiday season I bought locally crafted or produced items where possible, rather than shop in stores that are filled with products from a country that is hostile to my country and is producing questionable and even dangerous items. The Ludlow area has wonderful talented artisans and crafts people, and I like supporting them. Gift Certificates to area shops and restaurants, or honey & maple products, local wine and micro brews make nice useful gifts. The local shops are filled with many unique items. It is more interesting and fun to see the beautiful work local Vermonters are creating as opposed to the mass production items in the big box stores. Buying right here in town helps to support our economy and our small local stores like Six Loose Ladies.

In our small shop we have:

- Sweet sheepskin lined booties, for the newborn, or toddler on your list. They are made in Chester.
- Whimsical needle felted ornaments and pins made in Cavendish and Mount Holly, to decorate your home or lapel, or give as a nice gift.
- Framed quilted "out of the box" landscapes crafted in Ludlow.
- Marvelous bound weave baskets woven from hand dyed wool by local artist.
- Knit scarves, mittens and hats made right here in Proctorsville.
- Cold press all natural soap made in Ludlow.

- Fleece - grown, shorn and carded, right here in town.
- For the knitter, we have several local shepherds' wool, and Alpaca, hand spun and hand dyed artisan wool, and many glorious commercial yarns and supplies.
- Pot holder looms with wonderful wool loops, for kids to learn the concept of weaving or adults to reminisce, and use in their kitchens or for gifts.
- Many fiber arts kits, and craft supplies.

These locally made items make wonderful gifts for your shopping list. We also have more surprises coming in daily. We have something for every budget. You can buy small gifts or you can splurge on a higher priced item. Come play in your back yard, and get your goodies locally.

I just wanted to let you know about an adventure Sandy and I had yesterday. Sandy called me to see if I wanted to go on a "road trip" which always means fun to me. When a loose lady presents an adventure, I'm game. Needless to say I said yes, and off we went to Grafton Fibers.

On arrival we announced "Loose ladies on the premises" and entered Linda and Tom Diak's fascinating workshop and fiber shop. Tom greeted us over a delicious array of beautifully dyed round rods of wood laminate laid out on the floor and ready to be made into unbelievably gorgeous knitting needles, and crochet hooks. Well that was just the beginning of our tour of how Tom makes these beautiful works of art that we will be carrying in our shop. I cannot explain his process but it was certainly multi-faceted, very interesting, and very time consuming. The end result is the prettiest knitting needles, and fanciest crochet hooks I have ever seen. After talking a bit, we put in an order for some sock needles that are 5 inches of the sweetest darn needles that I have to have in my knitting bag. I hope you will think so too. Our order will be delivered the beginning of next week. We also put in an order for the fanciest crochet hooks in beautiful colors and designs. It was just so much fun, and very difficult to leave without more than what we purchased, and that is not the end of it.....

We were initially just going to pick up some of Linda's luscious dyed roving, and perhaps a few knitting needles. Well, we did not leave until packing some beautiful walnut and ash hand looms for our weavers, some needle felting beginner kits, marvelous Corriedale, and Wenslydale roving in the most scrumptious colors you can imagine.

Sandy and I were admiring Linda's life size needle felted mermaid. She is just so beautiful, and was sitting in a corner looking like she should be in a display somewhere. Maybe she might make it into our window sometime soon. Her little mini duplicate was on a shelf near the looms. She is only about 18 inches of yummy needle felted art. Sandy thought out loud "oh what a perfect class" that would be. We needed to check to see if Linda was available sometime in the New Year when our class room is ready. Well she is, and we will have the class. Linda is just working out her schedule and then we will announce the dates. Get ready, it should be awesome. Linda is an acclaimed fiber artist, and will teach us many things while we make our own mermaid. Sandy and I are taking the class and there will be room for 6 other people. I hope you're as excited about it as we are.

Road trips are fun, and we try to have events that people in the area want to do with fiber arts. If you know of someplace we should go, or an artist we should know about, please tell us. It could be our next road trip, and you're always welcome to join us.

Thursday sit and knit has been my favorite event in our shop. We get to meet new people and catch up with friends who come on a regular basis. It is so much fun to see the progress on all the projects, or to get someone started on a new one (or a ufo revisited). We have had quite a run on socks recently and I think we have some of the fanciest feet in the area. When the new Schaefer sock yarn came in I think it had wings. We had wool, silk and mohair in luscious colors just flying out the door.

The sock saga continues with Jean Hunter's class. Her class socks are soaring on very long 47 inch needles, so the two socks get knit simultaneously, and when you're done, you're done. It was a bit of a challenge getting the yarn strands to behave, and the needles in the right position, but with "2 @ once on one" directions, and Jean's patience, the sock class triumphed and graduated to Thursday sit and knit. We also moved into heavier footwear with the knitted felted clog class, and now have some of the warmest feet around town.

Along with sitting and knitting we also delve into other fiber arts areas. We had a joint consensus on the colors for Maras' next quilt which we picked from all the yummy fabric she brought. Now we need to wait for the finished item to see if we

picked the right colors. Paulette's crochet purse was a big hit, and Janice still has us mystified with her sweater a week, (I think she knits in her sleep). Now we will have some drop spindle spinners as well as spinning wheels since Suzanne's class was such a success. Join us on Thursday and enjoy a night of creative fun, some giggling and maybe even finish a project. We will heat the tea pot for you.

Hot items

As Anne hinted above, Sandy and the yarn mavens have outdone themselves with the winter yarn offerings. I honestly must say I haven't seen such colors and variety in any yarn shop of our size. We have wonderful wool, llama, and wool blend yarns of every type from fingering weight to bulky. We discovered Schaeffer yarns which come to us from New York State. These yarns are beautifully dyed there and have neat names (Anne, Kathleen, Heather, Elaine). We have a few different types of yarn from Ironstone, including mohairs. New England shetland yarn from Harrisville designs are a classic. Silky wool, Silky flamme, and Baby llama yarns are so soft you almost can't feel them! Bergere yarns are likewise irresistible. And the Andes yarns, and Talinay, and Kathmandu, Cherry Tree Hill, Underandover, Mt. Nickwauket, Mt. Ascutney, Rio de la Plata, Himalaya and Himalayas, Mission Falls cotton and wool, bamboo, corn, soysilk, and fun accent yarns . . . I could go on forever. We also re-stocked with Nature Spun yarns and Online sock yarns. We're absolutely bursting at the seams!!!

And Anne told you about our loss of self-control at Grafton Fibers, which resulted in lots of fun fibers for needle felters and spinners. Now that I've joined the world of fleece junkies we are beefing up our fiber collection. We have always carried Moonlit Meadows' beautiful Icelandic rovings and they are hard to beat. We added alpaca fiber from Parris Hill and Happy Hills (and I can't wait to get good enough to play with that too), and Lincoln long roving from Kokovo Farm in Colorado. Soon to come will be some border leicester roving from fleeces obtained from Pam Sheperd of WinterFound Farm in Barnard. Pam told us she had fleeces unclaimed, so Piper and Nancy rescued them, provided good homes for some, and the best of the rest have been sent to Zeilingers for processing into roving. If you spin, or know a spinner, please remember that we can help satisfy that addiction! Pam Sheperd will be shearing in February - contact her at Pamsheperd@aol.com if you'd like a fleece!

Store Happenings

If you've dropped by Six Loose Ladies lately, you know that our building has been undergoing renovation. We've stayed open during construction (and endured the annoyance of workmen using our bathroom - you know what I mean!). It is soon to end, and with any luck the back room will be able to be used for classes and additional store area. And not a moment too soon!

Not all of Pam Shepherd's fleeces were in prime condition to be processed into roving. Sheep get wet and matted, and some of the fleeces had sections which simply weren't worth the effort to spin into yarn. So, we've decided to challenge the imaginations of our friends to make something from these fibers. That's right - a fleece challenge. On February 2 and 9 we will have available over two bags of unwashed, matted fleece at the store. Come in, pay us \$5, grab a bunch and make something creative with it, with a springtime theme. Bring or send in the finished creation on or by March 15. All entries will be displayed in the store. The winner gets a Six Loose Ladies gift certificate in the amount collected from the entrants.

Upcoming Fiber Events

The website www.spinweave.org/news/festivals.html lists sheep and wool and knitting events nationwide. Among its entries are the following:

May 2-6 - sheep and wool festival in West Friendship, Maryland. This is an awesome event with fiber for every need!

May 10-11 - the New Hampshire sheep and wool festival in Contoocook, New Hampshire.

May 17-18 - sheep and wool festival in Waynesburg, PA.

May 24-25 - sheep and wool event in Cummington, MA.

Memorial Day weekend - Open Studio weekend in Vermont! Come spend a day with the Loose Ladies!

June 7-8 - sheep and wool festival in Windsor, ME.

Jamaica fiber festival - date coming soon - go to www.jamaicafiberfestival.org for details

Vermont sheep and wool festival - don't know the date yet, but we'll be there!!!

October 18-19 - sheep and wool festival at Rhinebeck, NY

Other Fiber Resources and Organizations

The Northeast Handspinners Association (NHA) is a pan-New England organization (serving Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and New York) for the promotion and education of the art and craft of handspinning. NHA provides a communications network for individuals and groups, and gives handspinners the opportunity to share, learn, educate, compete, and cooperate on a regional basis. NHA sponsors and supports events to bring spinners from the Northeastern states together, including workshops, open houses, skein contests, grants to guilds and fairs, and scholarships. Their quarterly newsletter, *Spindles & Rovings*, is our members' source of information on upcoming events, spinning tips, articles and reports on what the NHA, guilds, and groups are doing throughout the Northeast. The *Gathering*, a biennial weekend spinning retreat that features the best in spinning classes with respected teachers from all over the US and Canada, is held in even years. A biennial, one-day spinning Open House is held in odd years. Venues for both events move around the Northeast. Contact Linda Diak, Grafton Fibers at tidiak@aol.com, or Farilyn Van Cleef at farilyn@aol.com.

The Fiber Studio in Henniker, New Hampshire offers classes in various fiber arts. See www.fiberstudio.com.

The Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild is one of the largest rug hooking guilds in the country. It sponsors an annual show at the Shelburne Museum, has guild-wide hook-ins and provides a wealth of information about local hooking groups. Please refer to their web page at www.GreenMountainRugHookingGuild.org.

The Association of Traditional Hooking Artists is dedicated to the art of rug hooking. Visit them at www.atharugs.com.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We have over 400 people on our email list right now. We know you aren't all reading our emails, and we don't want to pester people with unwanted email. Therefore, we are going to purge our list. **If you want to stay on the list, please email us at favtinfo@tds.net and let us know. We will not keep you on the list if we do not hear from you!!!! We're serious!!** Once the list is purged of those who don't really want to hear from us, we plan to use the list to notify you of upcoming classes and news in between newsletters. So, please - let us know if you want to keep hearing from us!!

FAVT Mission

Fiber Arts in Vermont is a non-profit membership organization that supports and encourages all creative fiber arts, provides a wide range of educational opportunities within this venue, coordinates resources, and fosters an atmosphere of communication within the fiber arts.

FAVT Board of Directors

Nancy Kelley	President, Membership Newsletter, Website	Ann Dortch	Events
Sandy Gregg	Vice President and Store Madam	Lynne Croswell	
Anne Gottier	Treasurer, Classes, Jury	Becky Pyke	
LouAnn Duffy	Secretary		
Suzanne Lawler	Window Display & R&D		

Classifieds

Package Deal, For Sale:

S75 Louet Spinning Wheel
S75 Louet SkeinWinder
5205 Louet Carding Machine
Louet Carding Paddles
Extra Spools
Assortment of Spinning Books

Estimated cost new \$ 1,300.00
Asking price for entire package: \$650.00

Lisa Sicotte & Kenneth Alberti
Blue Gentian Lodge
289 Magic Mountain Road
Londonderry, VT 05148
(802) 824-5908
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www.isellvermontrealestate.com

Fiber Arts in Vermont Membership Application

Name_____ Phone_____

Mailing Address_____

Email:_____

(email address required in order to receive e-newsletter)

Membership year is on a calendar year basis. Current membership year ends December 31, 2008.

_____ \$15 Student (under 18)/Senior (Over 55): discounts on FAVT classes, e-newsletter, and invitations to special events

_____ \$35 Supporting member: all the above benefits, plus 5% discount on non-consignment items at Six Loose Ladies store

_____ \$50-\$999 Benefactor: all the above, acknowledgment in FAVT publications, our gratitude

_____ \$1,000 + Guardian Angel: all the above, plus lifetime membership in FAVT and our endless appreciation

_____ TOTAL

Mail, with check payable to Fiber Arts in Vermont, to Fiber Arts in Vermont, P.O. Box 166, Proctorsville, VT 05153, or hand deliver to Six Loose Ladies store.