

LOCO News

'TIS THE SEASON

Christmas party

Bring a plate of Christmas cookies and your holiday 'show and tell' and come share the season's abundance with us.

Our annual Christmas party meeting will be Tuesday, Dec. at 7:30 p.m. at the LaPorte Methodist Church on Grafton Road at the corner of Rt. 10.

This meeting winds up our year's labors and pleasures.

Come and share the annual fun. Bring a cup and help save a tree.

Shearing day

Beth Hines will hold shearing this week on Saturday and Sunday Dec. 7-8 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily at the barn behind Fox Veterinary Clinic..

There will be many fleeces to chose from, all clean top-quality Columbias, for \$20 each.

For more information call Beth at 458-4049.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL



Calendar

Dec. 3: Knitting at Pat Geisler's. 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 7: Malabar Farm felted handbag workshop by Margaret Halas. \$20. Information: Carol Rahall (419) 756-2344

Dec. 7-9: Cuyahoga Weavers Guild workshop on Handwoven Clothing.

Dec. 10: LOCO meeting. 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 25: No Spinning at Beth Hines' home.

Dec. 30: Spinning at Beth Hines at 6 p.m. Potluck dinner.

Jan. 4: Medina Guild Rock Day at the Medina Presbyterian Church, Burgundy Bay Blvd., at Rt. 18. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Feb. 22: Black Swamp Spinners Guild workshop for beginning spinners, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bowling Green. \$20. Sack lunch. Information: 419-352-0211 or t.k.clark@juno.com

March 1: Medina Guild Rena Dennison workshop on finishing techniques. \$50. Information: Becky Monegan (330) 920-1448 or summitbluebird@aol.com

March 14-16: Western Reserve Spinners and Weavers guild will hold a retreat for spinners, weavers and knitters at the Cedar Hills Lodge. Information: Sandy Hardy, (216) 433-2278. \$115 for weekend, includes Sunday brunch. Registration deadline is Dec. 10.

March 14-18: Knitting Guild of America National Convention, Hilton Burbank Airport Hotel and Convention Center, Burbank, CA. Information: TKGA@TKGA.com

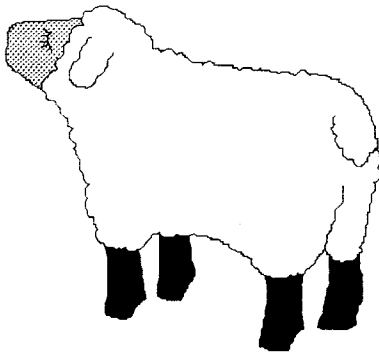
March 29, 2003: Black Swamp Spinners' Guild Market Day and Fiber Fair, St. Mark's Lutheran Family Center, S. College St., Bowling Green. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Information: *Susan* at caytonsj@juno.com or Margaret Bouyack at 800-554-7931.

April 26: Mid-Ohio Fiber Gathering, DeGraf, OH. Information: Susie Smithers 937-585-5161 or Lee Ann King, 419-682-1427 or Leellarna@bright.net

May 24-25: Great Lakes Fiber Show, Wooster. Information: Linda Reichert, 330-264-9665 or don47linda@valkyrie.net

June 22-29: 2003: Midwest Weavers Conference, "Fiber Fantasia" at Southern Illinois University. Edwardsville, Ill. Information: Amy Norris, 8742 Teasdale Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63124-1926 or email at midwest2003@aol.com. The web site is www.siu.edu/wgsl/html/MWC2003.htm To receive a copy of the registration booklet, send your name, address, phone, email address, and \$3 to: Midwest 2003, c/o Amy Norris, 8742 Teasdale Ave., St. Louis MO 63124-1926.

July 9-13: Augusta Marketing Fiber Arts conference, Bucknell University, Lewisville, Pa. Information: www.creativestrands.com



Know your sheep

Navajo-churro

Animal size: Ewes 85 - 120 pounds; rams 120 - 175 pounds

Fleece weight: 2 to 4 pounds.

Wool type: Carpet wool.

Micron count: outer coat 35 + as high as 100 microns. Inner coat 10 to 35 microns; kemp 65 = microns

Staple length: 4-6 inch outer coat and a 3-inch undercoat.

Breed Origins: The history of the Old Type Navajo sheep is an old one but well documented. Descended from an ancient Iberian breed called "Churra" by the Spanish (corrupted into "Churro by the Americans), the breed was secondary to the aristocratic Merino owned by the Spanish nobility. Coarse-wooled and hardy, largely the property of the Spanish peasantry, the Churro once grazed nearly every province of Spain and was used for its meat as well as its wool.

Prized by the conquistadors for its adaptability and fecundity, the Churro was chosen to feed and clothe the overseas armies in the New World. Spanish explorer Coronado brought hardy, coarse-wooled Churro sheep from Spain to Compostela, Mexico in 1520, and then into New Mexico in August 1540 as a food and wool source.

The Churro was thus the very first breed of domesticated sheep on the American continent.

A century later colonizers imported additional sheep and the indispensable Churro had become the mainstay of the Spanish ranches along the upper Rio Grande valley of present-day New Mexico. By the end of the 18th century the Churro was sustaining the Spanish ranches in California as well, and in the last half of the 19th century, following the American hegemony in the area, the Churro became the foundation of the Anglo herds sheep industry in all parts of the west. The Churro is part and parcel of the history of the American West.

One source credits the Spanish with introducing the Native Americans to mutton, crude fiber processing tools and wool spinning and weaving. The teaching process resulted in one of the few occasions in the southwest when people from different ethnicities cooperated. Another source simply states that the Navajos obtained their sheep in raids against the Spanish ranches to the east. They are now called Navajo-churro.

Two events led to the demise of the Churro, the first a gradual process where improved British and French breeds, already well established in the East, began to replace most of the "native" sheep that had originated in New Mexico. By the turn of the century, in fact, most western sheepmen had long since changed over to the European breeds, a move made necessary by an increasing demand for finer wool and better meat conformations.

Meanwhile, for the Navajo Indians, much of their culture centered on sheep raising, an industry that continues to permeate their lives to this day. As early as the 18th century herding, trading, and weaving within the Navajo domains themselves had become a major economic asset. It was recognition of this vital asset that led Col. Kit Carson, acting under federal orders, to decimate the Navajo flocks in 1863 as retribution for continued Navajo depredations,

this time against the newly established American ranches in the area. With their flocks exterminated and their orchards burned, the Navajo Indians had little recourse but to surrender, and some 8,000 of them suffering the added indignity of being exiled for four years to the Bosque Redondo, a desert camp set up some two hundred miles south of Santa Fe. As for the poor Churro, it was the beginning of the end.

The Churro enjoyed something of a reprieve when the Navajo Indians, released from their exile, were provided with a few thousand "native" sheep from nearby Mexican ranches. A few of the Indians and their flocks managed to escape the federal troops, and for the next three-quarters of a century the Churro came to be known among Southwestern sheepmen as simply "Navajo" sheep.

But in the 1930s, disaster struck the Navajo Indians and their flocks once again. Accused of overgrazing the delicate desert terrain, the Navajos saw their flocks cut by government order. Although the charge of overgrazing was true, the slaughter was indiscriminate. Tens of thousands of Navajo sheep and other livestock, were shot on sight and the carcasses were openly left to rot. A new generation of Navajos was left destitute, and the slaughter purged the Reservation of most of the remaining traces of the ancient Churro.

Not all, or even most of the slaughtered sheep were of pure Churro stock. As early as 1882, a succession of Indian agents tried to improve the Navajo flocks by introducing rams of other breeds, an effort that was often supplemented by white traders interested in better prices for their Navajo wool. Each tried sincerely to refine the Navajo flocks but without a real regard for the Navajo economics and the fundamentals of animal breeding. The Merino ram, as an example, yielded a crop of

crossbreeds with a fleece that was unsuitable for the handspinning and weaving of the Navajo cottage industries. The Shropshires made it lose its flocking instinct, a characteristic necessary to Indian herding practices. By the mid 30's it was obvious that much of the original Churro blood had been diluted, with little actual improvement in the quality or quantity of the wool.

In 1935 the federal government established a sheep lab in New Mexico to help the Navajos and their sheep but it was closed in 1966 leaving a conglomeration of crossbreeds. On the other hand the scientists left us with volumes of irreplaceable technical papers, including details on the Churro itself - literature that serves us well. The term "Old Type Navajo" was used to describe its original control flock, a collection of the best specimens of the original Churro that could be found on the Reservation at that time.

Sheep Characteristics: The "old-type" Navajo-Churro sheep is long-legged, narrow-bodied, and fine-boned-unlike most breeds cultivated for the contemporary economy. Their ears are medium sized, not excessively large or droopy. Ear-less and small -eared sheep have been known in this breed. The eyes should be clear and bright with no evidence of corneal ulceration due to split upper eyelid condition. They are also open-faced and clean-legged, with little or no wool on the belly, characteristics that have served the animals well in foraging for food over the sparse desert terrain, but contribute to a relatively light fleece at shearing time.

The rams are extremely fearless, virile and known to be extremely aggressive breeders. The ewes have a high fecundity with remarkably few losses during lambing. The maternal instinct is especially noticeable and it is not uncommon for older ewes to claim other lambs before

giving birth. They are among the highest milk producers of any sheep; their udders are large and well developed with teats small enough to be grasped easily. They are more resistant to disease, especially foot rot. The strength of these traits is attributed to the "survival of the fittest" way that they have been kept.

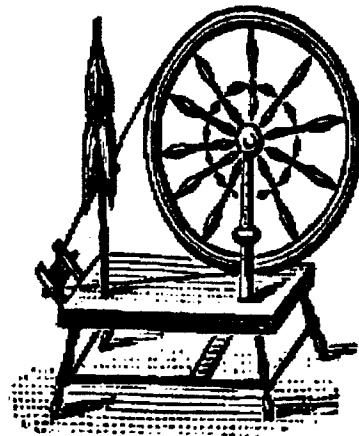
Although most are solid white, they occur in a variety of color patterns, for example, with brown and black spots on the ears and face, and around the eyes. Colored feet and legs are also common, and there are all-brown and all-black sheep.

Their most arresting feature, at least that of some of the rams and on rare occasions some of the ewes, is their four fully developed horns, a trait they share with Icelandic as well as the Hebridean, Jacob and Manx-Loughan sheep of the British Isles. Another engaging feature of the Old Type Navajo sheep is its multiplicity of solid colors, ranging from coal black through the various shades of brown to pure white, plus occasional blue-grays and silver grays. The blacks sometimes sport a white patch on the forehead (known, for some obscure reason, as the "bishop" hand" to some traders) together with a white tipped tail.

The meat has an excellent flavor and the cholesterol is of a minimum amount.

Preservation of the Navajo sheep may in the future be important to all of us for its primitive genes.

Dr. Lyle McNeal at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, along with a dedicated staff of graduate and under-graduate students and livestock breeders are working to revive this unique breed thought to have vanished from America. There is much documentation of this effort that was begun in the early 1980's.



Fleece characteristics: As with most primitive sheep, the Old Type Navajo possess a fleece made up of a protective outer coat and a soft undercoat. The undercoat is made up of relatively short wool fibers while the outer coat is composed of long, coarse, hair-like fibers, the latter often used by Navajo weavers to give strength to the warp.

The inner coat is 80 % of the entire fleece. The outer coat is from 10 to 20 % of the entire fleece and kemp (short opaque fibers) should not exceed 5% of the entire fleece. A special quality of the Old Type Navajo wool is its luster, and shrinkage and grease content is considerably lower than for most improved breeds.

Variation is clearly the most outstanding feature of Old Type Navajo wool - great diversity in staple length, fiber diameter and type is often found within the fleece of an individual animal as well as between animals.

Spinning pointers: Since little grease (lanolin) is produced, the fleece stays relatively clean, and spinning often can be done directly from the fleece. Spun together, the two coats produce strong yarn that is sturdy enough for use in the famous Navajo rugs and blankets.

Breeders' Association: Navajo Churro Sheep Association, O.O. Box 94, Ojo Caliente, NM 87549 Phone 505-986-2952.

Sources: Spin-Off magazine Summer 1993, Churro Sheep: A Southwest Legacy by Susan Deaver Olberding.

The Old Type Navajo Sheep: The "All American" Breed, Part one and Part two, Chris Christiansen, Precious Fibers, October, November, 1985; The Navajo Sheep Project, Dr. Lyle McNeal, The Black Sheep Newsletter, Summer, 1990.

Roni Rospert

Ohio Want Ads

For sale: Newcomb 4-harness flying shuttle loom with all parts like new, including cams. Information: Ed Boyer, 419-281-5233 or enboyer@bright.net

For sale: 4-harness, commercial loom, 45", disassembled. \$100. Durenda Webendorfer, 1237 Ridge Rd., NW Canton, OH 44704 or DWebendorfer@neo.rr.com

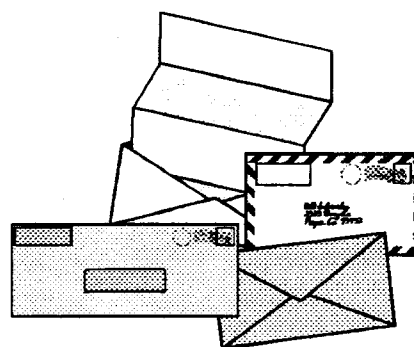
For sale: Schacht 15" 4-harness table loom with 6-treadle stand. Has a warp on it. \$190. Diane Geiger, 3630 Martrindale Rd., NE, Canton, OH 44714 or dggeiger@new.rr.com

Woven "mock picot" for hems

At the hemline use a pick of decorative yarn or thread.

With the shed still open, pick up loops at even intervals and place them over a knitting needle. Slide out the needle and beat the loops firmly into place.

Western Reserve Spinners & Knitters



From the mailbox

Black Swamp Spinners' Guild of Northwest Ohio will hold a beginner's spinning workshop to celebrate its 25th anniversary Saturday, Feb. 22. The program from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. will be held at Center Township Fire Hall, 9986 Bowling Green Road East (I-75 to Exit 181, east one mile to Carter Road), Bowling Green. There will be spinning with a drop spindle and various kinds of wheels. Bring a sack lunch, beverage will be provided. \$20.

Mail your check to register before Feb. 15 to Treasurer, BSSG, 9145 Scotch Ridge Rd., Bowling Green, OH 43402

For more information: 419-352-0211 or t.k.clark@juno.com

Black Swamp Spinners Guild will hold its annual Market Day and Fiber Fair Saturday, March 29, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Marks Lutheran Church Family Life Center, 315 S. College Dr., (off Wooster) in Bowling Green. (Take I-75 to Exit 181, go west to College or Crim). There will be demonstrations, life animals, exotic fibers and door prizes. Admission is free. Spinning and weaving equipment and supplies, handwoven and handknit items will be for sale. Information: Margaret, 1-800-554-7973 or Susan at caytonsf@juno.com

The Handweaving and Spinning Guild of Wooster has voted to change its name to the

Fiber Arts Guild of Wayne and Holmes Counties.

Toledo Area Weavers Guild workshops for the coming year will be held at the Toledo Botanical Garden, 5403 Elmer Dr., Toledo. They include a workshop for the beginning weaver, Saturday, Feb. 22, and one on batik for Saturday, May 10. More information will be released later.

A resource for those interested in spinning silk is **Treenway Silks** which offers a newsletter and products from the far East. They are at 501 Musgrave Rd., Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada, V8K 1V5 or call 1-888-383-SILK or email silk@treenwaysilks.com Their web site is www.treenwaysilks.com

Cleveland Museum of Natural History is showing an exhibit of Navaho rugs, called "Dine" From now through January.

The Kent State University Museum of fiber arts, currently closed for renovation, will reopen April 25. An exhibit Of Men and Their Elegance, 4 centuries of men's style, will run through Nov. 23. The Artistry of Adrian, Hollywood's Celebrated Design Innovator, will run through Aug. 31 and Designing Domesticity, Decorating the American Home since 1876, will run through Nov. 17. It showcases four time periods—1870s, 1920s, 1950s and present day with actual room settings. The Hours of the Woman of Leisure, on how elite ladies dressed in the 19th century, runs through Nov. 17.

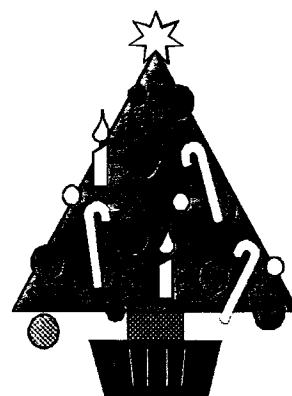
How much handspun to use?

Pull-over or cardigan: Woman, 24-36 oz. Man, 24-40 oz.

Vest for woman, 16 oz., for man, 24 oz.

Socks, 4 oz. Scarf, 4-8 oz.

Sample before knitting to insure sufficient yarn.



Remember your dues

2003 dues for the guild are payable Jan. 1. Your guild membership is one of the biggest bargains around. \$15 per year.

LOCO Officers

President: Karen Morgan, (440) 236-8025
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Vice president/programs: Elizabeth Yasaki
(440) 458-8767

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Historian: Jo Babcock (440) 647-3968

Sunshine: Carrie Gladyszewski

Public relations: Elsie Wise (330) 625-2992

Refreshments: Chris Bruce

Samples: Beth Hines (440) 458-4049,
hinessheep@aol.com

Workshops: Jill Cooley