



## November-December 2019 Newsletter

The current password for members-only content on our website is  
**LoveYarn!**

**Regular meetings are held the second TUESDAY of each month (except December) at 7:00 PM** at the [Ross C. De John Community Center, 6306 Marsol Rd.](#) in Mayfield Heights (behind Golden Gate Plaza, just west of the I-271 Mayfield Road Exit).



**Looking for somewhere to sit and knit?**  
Find a [list of member-sponsored knit-ins](#) on our website!

## Upcoming Meeting Programs

**November 12, 2019:** Holiday Potluck and Optional Gift Exchange

Spread the cheer! The guild will provide dessert, plates, cups, etc. please bring a main or side. Bring a beverage of your choice. You may also participate in a gift exchange. Bring something knitting related with a value of \$10 or less. Holiday and gift items are encouraged for our Show and Share.

**What to bring:** a side or main dish, a personal beverage, a gift if you want to exchange, and up to 3 Show and Share items especially a holiday or gift item.

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## **No December Meeting**

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## **January 14, 2020: New Year, New Resolutions**

Do you have any unfinished projects? Bring two to show that you'd like to finish in 2020. You may also take a count of how many you have so we might compare! We'd also like to know any knitting related resolutions you're making and also how your handmade holiday gifts were received.

**What to bring:** UFOs, your resolutions and Show and Share items

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## **February 11, 2020: Get Ready for the County Fair**

Thinking about entering the fair competition? You'll learn all you need to know from guild ribbon winners and judges. Finished UFOs encouraged for Show and Share.

**What to bring:** Questions for the panel and Show and Share item, especially FOs

*For more information on upcoming programs, see our [Programs page!](#)*

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## **Letter from the Editor**

Submitted by **Bess Antol**

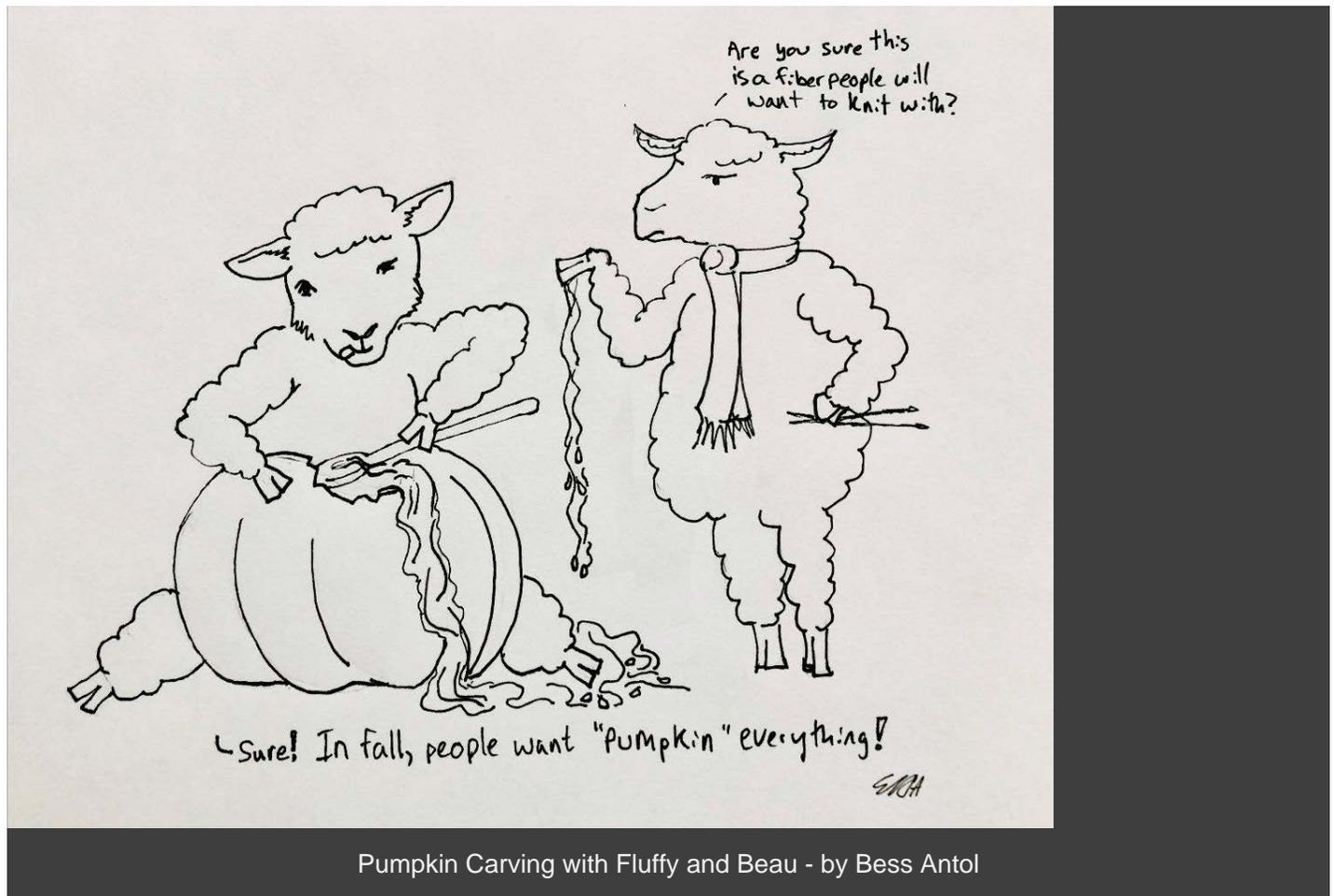
I have lately been obsessed with a farm dream. I imagine the sort of place where I have room for a flock of chickens, a much larger garden, a small orchard, maybe some goats, and perhaps something of the shearable persuasion once the food-producing routine is solid. This is not the first time I have been caught up by this longing. And I'll bet I'm not the only person in the guild to have contemplated owning enough



space for a few sheep or an alpaca. A few of you probably already own some fiber-bearing creatures. What is it about us makers and artisans that get us thinking about owning the process from start to finish?

My economic and commuting reality might not allow for my full-scale dream farm any time soon, but in the spirit of long and cozy late-fall nights, when the garden work is coming to a natural close, it's a good time for dreaming. And while we knit and dream of capering sheep, let us contemplate what it takes to produce our wools. Check out my article below on what owning some sheep might entail. Even if you are not afflicted with agricultural aspirations, it might give you a new perspective on some of the small farm booths that you see at fiber shows. What does it take to produce that skein of yarn?

Questions or comments about this issue? Email the Editor!



Results of the Annual Competition Held During the

# October Meeting

## Congratulations to the winners!

11 categories were condensed to 7.

Winners were:

Member Design 1) Jean Nichols, 2) Peg Mayor. 3). Kathy Mates

Service 1) Ginny Thomas 2). Kathy Mates.

Miscellaneous. 1) Ginny Thomas 2) Paula Rand

Sweaters 1) Peg Mayor 2) Lorraine Ehrlinger

Slippers/socks 1). Ginny Thomas 2). Lorraine Ehrlinger

Accessories. 1) Terrilee Petrey. 2). Vicki Birchenough. 3) Kathy Mates

People's Choice. Jean Nichols

Additionally, door prizes for Ravelry patterns were won by Julie Golub, Chris Ignasick and Vicki Birchenough

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Guild member Elaine May won the 2019 Yarn Discovery Tour store prize basket from River Colors Studio.

RIVER COLORS STUDIO

[rivercolors.com](http://rivercolors.com)

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## TKGA Professional Knitting Certificate:

The Knitting Guild Association (TKGA) has announced a new certificate program to test the skills of skilled knitters that don't want to write reports or patterns - the Professional Knitting Certificate.

This new program is different from TKGA's Master Hand Knitting Program. It is designed to demonstrate knitting skills as a

credential that speaks to the knitter's ability to do sample and test knitting. Or it could just be for the satisfaction of proving your knitting skills! Unlike the Master Hand Knitting program, there is no designing, researching, or report writing. Instead, the focus is on the ability to get gauge and to read and follow pattern instructions. The last component is a test where the instructor takes on the role of a designer or yarn company requesting a knitted sample within certain project guidelines and time frames.

For more information on the program and also a guide to the differences between the Master and Professional programs, please check out the TKG [website](#).

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## NCKG Knitting Socials

Mo Doerner's next knit-in is in November on the 19th.

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The NCKG's annual Roc Day will be held at Mo Doerner's [house, 15850 Arbor Trail](#), Newbury 44065 on Saturday, January 11th from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM. It is a pot luck lunch and Mo will provide tea, coffee and a cold beverage. Mo has 2 cats and a dog. Please RSVP to Mo at 216-561-2578 or [mcknits@suddenlink.net](mailto:mcknits@suddenlink.net). Roc Day/St. Distaff's Day marked the time when women would return to work after the December holidays, resuming their household duties including spinning. The name of this day isn't after an actual Saint but rather after the distaff : a tool used to wrap fiber around to keep it out of the way while spinning. This handy tool became the symbol of the importance of spinning during Medieval times when women of all classes even upper class took part.

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For more knitting socials, please check out the member-hosted knit-ins on our website:  
<http://www.northcoastknitting.org/members-knit-ins.html>

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**Celebrating 30 years of our  
Northcoast Knitting Guild!**



Founding NCKG members: Shirley Nurmi, Donna Baioni and Rose Schnatz

## NCKG Book Club January 2020 Meeting



The NCKG Book Club will meet January 19th at 2pm.

[4301 Richmond Road](#)

Warrensville Heights.

Please check out the Northcoast Knitting Guild group on Ravelry for book selections and voting.

All are welcome, bring your knitting and join the discussion.

Do your textile interests expand to quilts?

A Showcase of Historic Quilts

November 8-9

at the Old Church of the Commons in Bedford

[For more details click here.](#)

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## Upcoming SIGs (Special Interest Groups)

### Knitting Service Projects SIG

#### November 2019 Knitting Service Projects SIG Date:

The November SIG will be on Monday, November 18, 2019 at the Orange Library, 31975 Chagrin Boulevard, Pepper Pike 44124, in the Hope Room (A). We have the room from 5:30 PM - 8:45 PM.



#### December 2019 Knitting Service Projects SIG Date:

The December SIG will be on Monday, December 9, 2019 at the Orange Library, 31975 Chagrin Boulevard, Pepper Pike 44124, in the Hope Room (A). We have the room from 5:30 PM - 8:45 PM.

Contact Mo Doerner at [madknits669@gmail.com](mailto:madknits669@gmail.com) if you have any questions. Everyone is invited to join this SIG.

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### NCKG Welcome Booklet is Handy Even for Long-Standing Members

Have you looked through the guild's welcome booklet lately? If not, consider checking it out! It's full of basic information about who we are, what we do, and who does what. Designed for new members, chances are that a quick scan will provide even a long-standing member with a new tidbit of information.

Find the Welcome Booklet on the New Members page of the guild's website: [www.northcoastknitting.org/new-member-page](http://www.northcoastknitting.org/new-member-page).

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## Charity Knitting



Nearly 300 items were delivered to Partners in Health Lead Screening Program just in time for frosty mornings. Thank you for donating. We will be collecting donations until May. Requested items are scarves/cowls, mitts, small blankets, ponchos, socks/slippers, sweaters and vests for children ages 3-7. 200 beautiful hats were collected and we can still use more. However, please consider the items listed above as things to make.

We have plenty of free yarn at our meetings for these projects.



## Education

### Save the Dates:

Franklin Habit will be teaching the below classes for the Northcoast Knitting Guild in May 2020. Note that the start date for the Sunday class is 1/2 hour earlier than usual. It was very difficult to find a weekend which worked for both Franklin and Lake Farmpark. This weekend is also the Sheep Shearing and Fiber Arts weekend at Lake Farmpark and the classroom is needed in the late afternoon Sunday for the tear down of the Western Reserve Spinners and Weavers Guild's fiber arts exhibit.

Mo will start to take reservations at the February guild meeting. Initially you may only sign up for 6 hours of class. More information will follow and also be posted in the "For Members Only" tab on the guild's website once I return from traveling at the beginning of November.

The classes which the guild chose are each 3 hours.

**Saturday, May 9, 2020:**

9:00 am to noon: History, Methods, and Styles of Lace Knitting

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm: Snip and Zip: Steeks and Zippers

**Sunday , May 10, 2020:**

8:30 am to 11:30 am: Embroider Your Knitting

12:30 pm to 3:30 pm: Artfully Agitated Stripes: An Introduction to Mosaic Knitting

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## Sheep Farming

Report by [Bess Antol](#)

*First, please let me acknowledge that I am not a sheep farmer, and don't know the day-to-day realities of sheep farming. This is meant as an overview for people who enjoy sheep products and want to know more about wool production fundamentals. If I missed something in this rough survey, please forgive my error and feel free to send a correction, update, or additional information for the next Newsletter issue.*

### **Wool Production Industry:**

China, Australia, and New Zealand are the world's largest producers of wool (1). While China produces a bunch of wool, they also import a lot of wool, accounting for just over half of the US wool exports in 2017 (2). That's an export of 4.39 million pounds of clean US wool (2) which is presumably destined for China's very large textile manufacturing industry.

There may be as many as 500 breeds of sheep in the world (1), but since many are best suited to a particular place or a niche market, only about 47 are recognized by the American Sheep Industry Association (3). Merino and Rambouillet are popular industry standards for producing fine (as in thin or low micron) wools. If you were going to do farming as a large scale ranch in Texas or Wyoming,

which are some of the top wool producing states in the US (4), you would probably go with one of these breeds. I'm sure there are some large Ohio sheep farms as well. Those are the big players, but if you are thinking more of a small hobby farm, or in the current lingo, a "side hustle", to supply and subsidize your own fiber pursuits, you may want to look at some specialized breeds.



Jacob Sheep on a farm in New York State. Photo 2008 by Bess Antol.

### Special Breeds:

Lincoln, Romney, Border Leicester and Lincoln Longwool are better known among hand spinners and fiber show shoppers for their luxuriously longer fibers that may not be as fine in diameter, but can feel as soft if spun in a way that suits their texture. Huge industrial mills are most efficient if they only spin specific wools into specific yarns, but a hand-spinner has more ability to produce the best from a fiber's unique characteristics. You probably know that some breeds of sheep are raised for meat and have a poorer quality fleece, but there are also dual purpose breeds that produce good fleeces and also have a bulky frame that provides good meat. Corriedale is a dual purpose breed whose wool or yarn you may have also seen at a fiber show (5).

In addition to the commonly known sheep, there are many other wonderful rare and heritage breeds of sheep that can give a small farmer joy and wool. One of my favorites is the Jacob sheep, for their delightfully quirky appearance being splotched with dark and light wool, and 2 to 6 horns that wave outward at odd angles making them look a little like they have *avant garde* hats. Some heritage and rare breeds were bred for thriving in niche environments including deserts or semi-tropical Florida -

check out the [Florida Cracker](#) (6). While some of these breeds might not make a farmer rich in coin, preserving some of these sheep traits may help future farmers and agricultural scientists breed resilient sheep for future environmental challenges.

If you get excited about the artistic potential of creating with rare wools, check out the Livestock Conservancy's "[Shave 'Em to Save 'Em](#)" program where fiber artists are encouraged to try many different types of fiber and earn prizes. No sheep ownership required!



Jacob Sheep with 4 asymmetrical horns (totally normal for Jacob Sheep) on a farm in New York State. Photo 2008 by Bess Antol.

## Raising Sheep:

To take the dream to a natural conclusion, you'd need some resources. First, you'd need some land. They say 2 sheep on an acre depending on how well your pasture grows (7), and you may want enough room for pasture rotation. Sheep are herd creatures, and will be less stressed when they can live in a group - some sources say at least 5 sheep will be needed to show normal flock behaviors (8). For predator protection, you probably need either a barn, a herding dog, a donkey, or a llama. Fencing is required to keep sheep in, and some fences can also keep predators out. Sheep are pretty woolly, so you don't necessarily need a barn for warmth if you have predator-detering guard animals. Three-sided shelters are fairly common weather protection, so that the sheep have somewhere to hide from excessive rain, wind, or sun and also to keep their hay dry (8).

For our mental sheep picture so far, we've covered pasture, protection, and shelter. The other big

question is food. Pasture might be fairly lean in an Ohio winter because most plants and grasses stop growing. Hay can be purchased (7) to get through the lean months and to save the pasture from being eaten to death. Commercial sheep feed, a salt lick, or a mineral supplement might also be helpful in the winter (8).

If you want to own some sheep, you'll probably need a basic veterinary kit and a little training (8). Some vaccines can be administered by the owner, and some must be given by a farm animal veterinarian. Hoof trimming and deworming medications are often handled by the sheep owner. There are additional considerations if you want to milk your sheep or raise lambs. Managing a ram is considered an advanced topic, but you can arrange for time with someone else's ram if you are interested in breeding.



Jacob Sheep on a farm in New York State. Photo 2008 by Bess Antol.

### **Ok, my dream farm now has lots of frolicking sheep! When do I get the yarn?**

How often you shear depends on the breed of sheep, but most need to be sheared at least once a year in the spring so that they aren't too hot in summer. There are professional shearers who can be hired, but some small farmers prefer to learn to do it themselves. A freshly shorn fleece needs to be picked over in a process called "skirting" to remove badly stained or dung-encrusted parts of the wool (9). Some handspinners will then take their fleece and "scour" or wash it themselves to prepare it for spinning. You can also ship boxes of fleeces to the nearest small spinning mill. These mills have a menu of services ranging from simply scouring and combing, to spinning to your

specification, dyeing, and one will even [make socks from your sheep's wool](#) for you - which is probably of less interest to a knitting guild member, but maybe you want a product that you can resale quickly out of surplus wool.

Since I lack in both land and farm-animal experience, perhaps I should start with something a little simpler, like chickens. I hear my inner ring suburb now allows them, though I don't know if I can talk my husband into it. But nevertheless, it is good to have dreams of wool to keep us warm on long winter evenings.

## Sources:

1. **International Wool Textile Organization's Wool Production page:** <https://www.iwto.org/wool-production>
2. **American Sheep Industry Association's December 8, 2017 Newsletter:** <https://sheepusa.org/newsletter/newsmedia-weeklynewsletter-2017-december-december82017-americanwoolexportsincrease24percentinmarketyear2017>
3. **South Dakota State Extension article on Sheep Breeds:** <https://extension.sdstate.edu/sheep-breeds>
4. **Agricultural Marketing Resource Center: Wool Profile:** <https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/lamb/wool-profile>
5. **Sheep 101: Breed Selection:** <http://www.sheep101.info/201/breedselection.htm>
6. **Livestock Conservancy: Conservation Priority List #Sheep:** <https://livestockconservancy.org/index.php/heritage/internal/conservation-priority-list#Sheep>
7. **Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Small Farms "How to Get Started with Sheep":** <https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2010/07/how-to-get-started-with-sheep/>
8. **Sheep 101: Sheep as Pets:** <http://www.sheep101.info/201/pets2.html>
9. **Hobby Farms: "Spinning a Wool of your Own":** <https://www.hobbyfarms.com/spinning-a-yarn-of-your-own-2/>