

# Piedmont Fiber Guild News

Volume 9, Number 9

May 2009

## BOARD MEMBERS

2008-2009

**President** - Shirley Young

**Past President** - Kathryn White

**Membership** - Jim Burke

**Programs** - Tanya Ortiz-Gansley

**Service Projects** - Lisa

Matthews

**Hospitality** - Sallie Olson

**Secretary** - Ryan Matthews

**Publicity** - Dot Burns

**Workshops** - Sara Munday

**Treasurer** - Susan Proctor

**Librarian** - Lynn Eskridge

**Newsletter** - Alice Harrill

**Website** - Maurice Blackburn

2009-10

## Board Positions Open

The position of newsletter editor is open for next year, as Alice Harrill will be taking the Membership job. Anyone interested?? Job details are listed on the yahoo group page on the left side under files, then click job descriptions.

## Calendar

**Saturday, May 9, 10:00 a.m.** – PFG Workshop: Basketry with Lynn Eskridge at Burgl Pruetts house.

**Monday, May 11, 7:00 p.m.** – PFG Weaving Study Group meets at Maurice Blackburn's house together with the Shelby group.

**Sunday, May 17, 11:00 – 2:00** – Close Knits at 208 S. Oakland Street, Gastonia, will open especially for the Piedmont Fiber Guild with a 10% discount for guild members.

**Sunday, May 17, 2:00 – 4:00** – PFG May Meeting. Lynn Eskridge will present the program on the history of basketry.

**Sunday, May 17, 4:00** – PFG Board Meeting following the general meeting.

**Saturday, May 30, 10:00 – 4:00** – May Handwork Meeting at Sharon Collins' house. Directions available at [www.collinsbrook.com](http://www.collinsbrook.com)

**Saturday, June 6** – PFG Workshop: Perennial Indigo Dye Bath and Shibori Techniques with Eileen Hallman

**Saturday, June ?** June Handwork Meeting at Lisa and Ryan Matthews' house. More info later

## **Notes from the April Guild Meeting**

by Shirley Young

The business meeting at the museum on April 19th was curtailed, as we wanted to take in the displays. We had the whole museum to ourselves. We had lovely food and drink brought by those who were supposed to in a room where we left our stuff in safety while we went to explore the museum with Jeff Pruett. There is a special exhibit of decorated eggs, on the 2nd floor in 3 rooms. Not your regular chicken orbs: Mrs. Edith Poston, a resident of Gastonia, collected these over 35 years. There are eggs from 17 countries displayed in dioramas featuring 14 fairy stories. While this collection was donated to the museum, this display is only there until May 30th. After we spent some time ohhing and ahhing we went on to the Carolinas Textile Exhibit, where more of the same was heard. There are things there which caused some discussion, such as a machine which makes ring spun thread, a machine gun and a cotton ball gown worn at the White House. I am not sure why the ball gown may have caused more discussion than the gun. Things that make you go Hummmm.

## **Alpaca Fleeces to Share at the May Handwork Meeting**

By Sharon Collins

Sure hope you can all come to my rescue - I have just been given 21 beautiful alpaca fleeces, a veritable mountain of professionally shorn, huacaya loveliness in whites, rosy beiges and browns. They all seem reasonably clean of VM and are individually bagged. The adult fleeces each fill a black trash bag, and there are some smaller cria fleeces, too.

I'd like to host a spinning/handwork day on Saturday, May 30, and hope you will all come and take away alpaca fiber - yes, free! I don't plan to keep any of it. Well, maybe a wee bit. You can bring things from your stash to sell or trade, and maybe Susan and/or Becky can bring their fleeces to sell and everyone can go home with their stashes fine-tuned plumped up. And their tummies full of a delicious potluck lunch.

Saturday, May 30

10 AM - 4:00 or so

Bring a dish for the potluck lunch

I have plenty of chairs

directions are at [www.collinsbrook.com](http://www.collinsbrook.com)

PLEASE let me know if you are coming - hope you can! Sharon Collins

## **Fleece and Rovings Available from Susan and Becky**

It is shearing time again on the sheep farms. Becky Petrick has fresh Romney and maybe some Cotswold fleeces, both colored and white with many of them coated, I have both white and colored Montadale, 1 Cotswold, crossbred fleeces of Ramboulett and California Varigated Mutant breeding as well as a couple of Suffolk/Hampshire fleeces that will probably be really nice felting fleeces. All of mine were coated except the Suffolk/Hampshire ewes. If any one is interested in a fresh fleece, or rovings either natural colored or dyed, give us a call.

Susan Proctor

Saintsandstars

<http://saintsandstars.powweb.com>

## **Notes from Southeast Fiber Forum 2009 at Lake Junaluska**

by Alice Harrill

The Southeast Fiber Forum 2009 offered two days of fantastic fiber classes, vendors with luscious fibers and tools, great camaraderie, and a fashion show of knit, woven, crocheted, and felted clothing. Genie Greenlaw, Sallie Olson, Jan Smiley, and Alice Harrill represented the Piedmont Fiber Guild at Lake Junaluska.

Jan took a spinning workshop; Genie a weaving as expression of nature workshop, and Sallie and Alice took a weaving class on designing with space-dyed warps. Here's a short report on their experiences:

Kathrin Weber Scott instructed the Space-Dyed Warp workshop. We began by looking closely at her weavings and discussing techniques of rep weave and log cabin. Then each participant picked out hand-dyed multi-colored warps. Most of us chose two or three pre-measured warps mixing colors and textures, and we tied the ends onto a dummy warp in two layers. Working with color was so much fun. Everyone in the class came up with a different combination and pattern, all with color. I dreamed the first night about my lovely aquas, purples, and blues. It is so much fun to work on a very simple plain-weave pattern and get the richness and variations with color. Kathrin said she would be available to come to our guilds to do a workshop on Weaving Tips and Techniques, a Dyeing Weekend or Warping in Layers. Her website is: [www.BlazingShuttles.com](http://www.BlazingShuttles.com)

## **Weaving as an Expression in Nature**

by Genie Greenlaw

Kathy Roig, an accomplished fiber artist in her own right, led our class in "Weaving as an Expression in Nature". Using the wool yarns and small wooden looms she

provided, and any natural materials and beads we brought to embellish our creation with, we took our individual inspiration from a picture or photograph to create a small weaving on a frame loom. This was not so much a tapestry class, but an exercise in using colors and textures of yarn that work with each other, making weaving and nature merge to suggest an idea or image. (The last sentence paraphrased Kathy's own description of what we were to do.) It took me a bit longer than the rest of the class (about 12) to really understand what we were doing, since I had gotten so much into the habit of weaving to depict definite images. But catch on I did. I'm glad I took this class. It has jogged my one-tracked brain into learning to see things differently.

## **Weaving Projects: How to make a Yurt Band on a Nomadic Ground Loom, Part One**

by Lisa Matthews (from her blog: <http://ladyvirag.wordpress.com> )

Yurts have a long history of use in Central Asia and are comprised of a circular lattice wall, roof poles, and a roof ring. Straps are woven and wrapped around the lattice and the roof poles to help tighten and strengthen the structure. In keeping with the nomadic lifestyle the traditional loom used is a ground loom. The ground loom is traditionally staked out beside the yurt and can feature either a continuous warp or have the warp stretched the entire length of the piece. This loom can be used to weave the straps and bands used for yurts as well as pile, soumak, and kilim technique carpets. In creating a yurt band one source cites that it can take between 1 and 3 years to complete the band.

The band we bought at Pennsic this past summer measures 48 feet long and appears to be made of hand dyed and hand spun wool or wool/goat mix fiber. The fiber itself is coarse and strong. The wool yarn is formed of a tightly twisted 2 ply yarn. The band is 48 feet long, 16 inches wide, and has a weaving sett of 16 ends per inch. The weft is brown and in areas where a lot of picking up of the design has occurred the brown weft shows through in between alternating rows of dark and light warp. Verla Birrell lists a two pick up stick method to achieve this which appears very labor intensive. The main theme of the band remains fairly constant but has a few variations which may have been mistakes, learning opportunities, or simply stem from a

desire to do something slightly different. These instances could also mark a place where a different weaver began working the design although there doesn't appear to be any distinguishable difference in how tightly the weft has been beaten in those areas from the rest of the piece. The colors are lovely though a bit faded, attesting to the age of the piece and it's use outdoors as a band. I believe the original colors may have been traditional pairings of red and blue, blue and white, and brown and white. Interestingly the band fits our 16 foot diameter, amateur built yurt perfectly and ties on at the doors exactly.

The design starts with a solid reddish row which is the background row. The next row is red with blue pebbles ie. two red picks, 2 blue picks, 2 red, 2 blue, etc. When the pattern is on the solid background row it has pebbles of background within the design every pair...RRRRbbRRbbRRRR...but when the pattern is picked in a speckled or pebbled row the pattern is solid with no pebbles/speckles. The piece is warped so that all the patterning on it is done in pairs causing two of each color to be picked up to achieve each part of the design if you were to graph it out on paper. Bands of plainweave stripes separate the central design on either side then a smaller framing design is used followed by a wide band of plainweave on both sides of the main design. There are no more than 3 row floats used in the design which is very important with this method for durability.

The method of weaving used to make the band is called the Warp Substitution Method. With this type of weaving a loom with 2 sheds using 2 pickup sticks or 4 to 6 heddles can be used. The simple 2 shed ground loom is used traditionally in Central Asia and fits the need for sparseness of equipment and ease of transport. Yurt bands are a traditional item to weave and are, according to traveler Karen Page who is a noted felter and teacher, easy to find right now in town markets in Kyrgyzstan although her pictures were of very brightly, probably aniline or acid dyed pieces. One photo on the website Flickr actually showed a non-traditional hybrid style of rigid heddle loom at use in a business to produce yurt bands. Unfortunately the photo was oddly labeled and I have yet to be able to relocate it.

If you go to

<http://www.karakalpak.com/yurts.html>

about halfway down the page there is a picture of a young Karakalpak woman using a ground loom to create a yurt band. It appears to be a continuous warp. The person has a padded seat which rests with one layer on top of the warp just woven and the rest underneath it. From the tripod hangs only one heddle and behind it a shed stick is placed to create a second shed. Variations of this basic loom appear to be fairly universal in the Yurt dwelling nomad cultures who are still practicing traditional weaving and can also be found in the Middle East among nomadic, rug weaving groups. The simplicity of this loom seems to suggest that the method of warping it would be the pairings of light and dark warp threads which would initially create a solid light shed then a solid dark shed when the sheds are changed.

The use of Pickup weaving forms the basis of the warp substitution method or pebbleweave method. According to Birrell (p. 121) it's been used since "remote" times in Africa, Syria, Norway, and Sweden. In North America,

Mexico, Central America, and South America it is woven by indigenous populations.

"Warpfaced belt weaves containing pickup patterns which resemble some of the work of the Peruvian Indians of today, have been found in ancient Peruvian sites which may date back from 2500 to 1200 B. C." (Birrell, p. 121). The conditions in these areas was favorable for the preservation of textiles in graves just as in the Tarim River Basin finds along the Silk Road sites in Central Asia. Unfortunately I have not been able to find records of extant pieces of this technique yet for Central Asia although there are other examples of advanced techniques such as tapestry, soumak, kilim, and brocade. There are two items to consider for this technique: first is that warp faced patterns are best created when the pattern yarns contrast starkly in color and value from the yarns used for the background hence traditional pairings such as black and white, red and blue, yellow and green, and so on. The second is that the yarns used to form the pattern can be heavier than those of the background to give more visual weight to the design thereby causing it to pop out at the eye of the viewer. This is not true, however, for the yurt band from Central Asia that we purchased on consignment from a merchant at Pennsic. In the actual weaving of this type of piece knitting needles or pickup sticks can be used for picking the pattern and speeding the design work although a skilled weaver could easily use their fingers on smaller width pieces. The "sheds found beneath the picked up yarns are held open with shed swords turned sideways in the warp". (Birrell, p. 123)

Interestingly the Central Asia yurt bands which use the warp substitution method share many similarities with pebbleweave bands from Central and South America in terms of both design and technique. These bands are also known as Peruvian Pebbleweave. Marla Mallett's article <http://www.marlamallett.com/archetyp.htm> discusses technique generated designs and may be applicable to this situation.