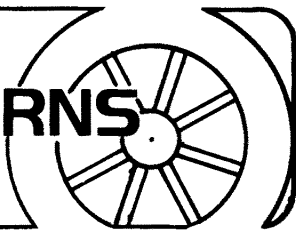


AS THE WHEEL TURNS



I've asked sue john, spinner from Wausaw, Wisc., to share some of her spinning experiences with us. Don't let this month's "spinning lessons" fool you, sue has had some great successes among her "learning experiences". Next month we'll show you some photos of her projects along with descriptions of the spinning processes involved.

Pat

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

I never make mistakes, nor do you. Life is too short to deal with problems in any way but philosophically. You and I have learning experiences. We encounter lessons through the experiences we dare to have. I am proud of my lessons and I want to share them.

Lesson #1.....My first fleece was a Columbia from a western range sheep. It was so filthy that out of a 6 pound fleece I was only able to salvage 1½ pounds of wool. I spent hour upon hour hand carding this dirty stuff in penance for being a lowly beginner. The Lesson: Never, never buy a poor quality fleece *because* you are a beginner. You deserve the best because you are just learning. Your time, like anyone else's is quite valuable.

Lesson #2.....The pattern I knit using my first handspun had contrasting stripes, so I dyed part of my handspun with black walnut hulls. I did not rinse the dyed yarn thoroughly enough, so when I blocked my sweater the colored stripes bled into the white yarn making it look dirty. The Lesson: When using hand-dyed yarns of different colors rinse, rinse, rinse and then rinse some more before using them in any project. Make sure the colors don't bleed.

Lesson #3.....In my enthusiasm to work with a colored fleece, I overlooked some very basic steps in selecting a fleece, such as, staple, grade and crimp. The color was lovely and the yarn when knitted into a vest made an itchy garment, suitable to wear only over knitted pullovers. Worn with anything else the coarse hairs work their way into the skin! The Lesson: A colored fleece isn't everything. Check and double check for other spinning qualities for your yarn.

Lesson #4.....I received a beautiful apricot, brown and white fleece as a gift. I was unable to spin it right away, so to insure a safer moth-free storage I had it cleaned and carded at our local wool carding company....what I got back was a uniform beige-colored carded fleece. Lost were all those three lovely colors for, blended by the machine, they lost their uniqueness. The Lesson: If you have a special fleece, take the time to give it special treatment. Hand washing by the handful of locks would have diminished the chance of collecting moths and preserved the beauty of that special fleece.

Lesson #5.....In my eagerness to try spinning rug yarn I purchased a Lincoln fleece through another country. I ordered 8 pounds of fleece in the grease. Half of the

weight was dirt and grease, so for approximately 4 pounds of rug yarn I spent \$32.00 (the cost of the wool, shipping and customs). That comes to \$8.00 a pound of wool and it isn't even spun yet! The Lesson: Check around for that fleece before buying. In a recent *Interweave* magazine is the address of the National Lincoln Sheep Breeders Association. I would have paid a lot less buying closer to home and I would have been encouraging our American sheep breeders to grow quality wool by my patronage.

Lesson #6.....As a gift to myself I purchased 1 pound of alpaca (the store owner advised a pound would be enough wool for a sweater). She didn't know that with me one must qualify such statements with all kinds of data. I spun that alpaca and I spun, oh, so fast....just like those illusive a-pound-in-an-hour-spinners....only it took me a full 8 hours, but that is going great guns for me. It did not dawn on me until I was done that I only had 600 yards of handspun 2-ply alpaca. Sweater?....I'll be lucky if I get a hat out of my \$16 venture. The Lesson: Speed isn't everything. Had I taken time out of my head-long dash to make a world record, I would have done samples of the handspun alpaca, measuring and weighting to find just what was suitable for what. A finer yarn would have given me my alpaca sweater. And I am going to think of that as I wear my One Pound Hat. It bears remembering.

sue john

SHOWS & EXHIBITS



FOOT IN THE DOOR SHOW AT MIA

An Minnesota Artists Invitational exhibit will be on view April 4 - May 25 in the Minnesota gallery of MIA. Works include all media and are limited to one cubic foot in size.

TO ENTER:

1980 Minnesota Crafts Festival

St. Catherine's College will again be the location of the annual Minnesota Crafts Festival, to be held June 21 and 22. Slides for jurying must be sent by April 21 to: *Minnesota Craft Council, Hennepin Center for the Arts, Room 210, 528 Hennepin Avenue, Mpls. 55403*. For registration information, phone the MCC office, 333-7789.

SOUTH DAKOTA EXHIBIT, WORKSHOPS

South Dakota Weavers exhibit, Robinson Museum, Pierre, South Dakota, May 26 - June 30, 1980. Weaving festival and workshops, May 30 - 31. For more information, contact John Rychtarik, Robinson Museum, Memorial Building, Pierre, SD 57501.

This project is co-sponsored by the South Dakota Arts Council through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.