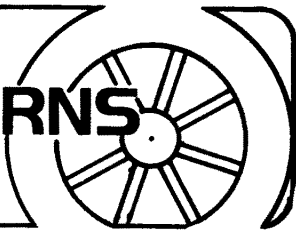


# AS THE WHEEL TURNS



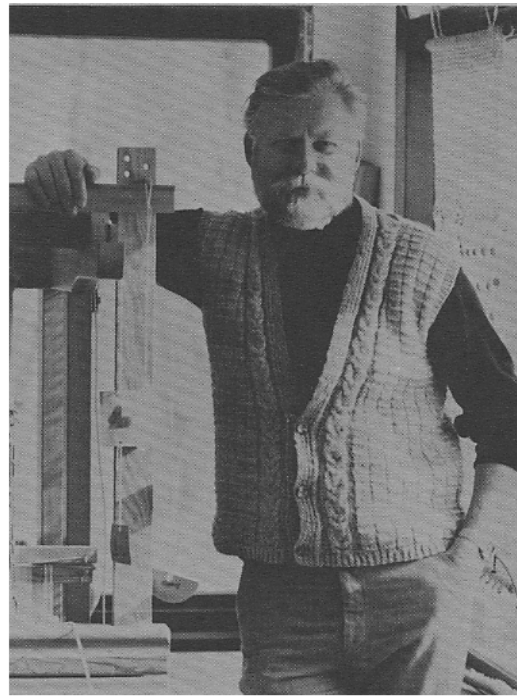
## SPINNING FOR PROJECTS

Spinning can be so satisfying you can forget handspun yarn is not the end product. The yarn is going to be used for something....unless you are into stockpiling handspun yarns. The time spent involved in spinning is valuable and deserves the merits of forethought. Take yourself seriously. Be concerned about what that handspun is suitable for. Whether a fleece suggests a project or a project suggests a fleece isn't important...but that thought is given to what the yarn is for, *that* is important. For me, a beginning spinner, fleeces have suggested projects, though pride would like me to think differently. I do try to exercise more control now when I purchase a fleece.

My first fleece was a Columbia. When I plied my first inconsistent handspun yarn I found the Columbia yarn was quite elastic and lofty...fine qualities for a knitting yarn. The yarn suggested a sweater project. I chose an easy sweater pattern because I was just learning to knit. I knit ted a hooded cardigan with large brown stripes. I must confess I had to knit something big to wear so people could not overlook my new interest...spinning. There is a fantastic pride that goes into the words, "I made it myself."



My second fleece was a light brown lamb's wool. I spun and double plied enough lambs wool to knit a man's vest. I had enough wool left over to try spinning something similar to Bernat's blarney-spun yarns. I bought a ball of the blarney-spun in order to analyze it. Taking it apart I found it was a 3-ply yarn (2 strands of white yarn and 1 strand of naturally colored wool which had pieces of colorful yarn garnetted in it). I spun Columbia wool for the white yarn because it made such an excellent knitting yarn. Then I cut up bits of blue, brown and black yarn adding the bits in as I carded the brown lamb's wool to spin the third yarn to ply. When finished this yarn looked very much like the blarney-spun. With this fun yarn I knitted a sleeveless jacket.



My third fleece was quite special. My aunt and uncle sent me a Romney fleece from New Zealand. Since I love to weave rya rugs, I thought I would try spinning a rya yarn. I tore apart some CUM rya yarn to see what kind of fiber was used. The fiber had a beautiful lustre and very little crimp...Romney looked similar. I double-plied my handspun Romney tightly to add strength. I put it up in 4oz. skeins and premordanted it using 4 different mordants putting 1 pound of yarn in each mordant. Then using 4 different dye baths (black walnut hulls, butternut hulls, onion skins, and marigolds) I put 1 skein of each different mordanted yarn into each different dye bath...thus obtaining 16 different colors of rich browns and golds. This was perfect for a rya rug. It was a 2½ month project, but I was delighted with the results. Every time I sat at my loom weaving with my handspun naturally dyed yarn I felt like a child would on Christmas morning...jubilant and excited.

I just finished knitting a cardigan sweater using my handspun version of blarney-spun, but instead of using Columbia with lamb's wool I used Columbia with a fine grey wool which had a lot of crimp. I had read somewhere that these qualities help produce a yarn that is less likely to irritate the skin. And indeed it did produce a very soft yarn...just what I wanted.

My next project is a handspun rya naturally dyed from indigo and logwood. I purchased a Lincoln fleece because of its lustre and strength. From the sample I spun, it seems to produce a better quality rug yarn than Romney. The Romney made a softer yarn than the CUM rya yarn.

The challenge of spinning by itself is not quite enough. May I suggest to you the greater challenge and greater satisfaction is in using that handspun. After all, you are very special and so is what you do.

*sue john*

