

MAWS Newsletter: Summer 2025



President's Message

It's Spring!

Spring has been a traditional time to think about cleaning and purging. We fiber artists can do that by using our stash.... and of course, I was out acquiring more fiber last weekend at the Great Basin Fiber Festival in Utah! I bought a lovely hand dyed braid of Merino/Tencel mix roving and 5 (expensive) skeins of a Merino, Yak and Silk blend. Does any of this sound familiar? I think I'll use my spring energy to organize, seeing purging doesn't seem to be working for me.

There is a great opportunity this summer to use your stash at the Association of Northwest Weavers Guild (ANWG) Conference. MAWS is an affiliate guild of ANWG. The dates are June 16 -21, 2025 and will be held in Yakima, Washington. There are still openings in some workshops and seminars so it's not too late to register on their website.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and it inspires you to keep creating!

Dawn Ahlert

"Everything has its beauty, but not everyone sees it." – Andy Warhol

Montana Association of Weavers and Spinners
<https://www.montanaweavespin.org/>

MAWS Board Meeting and Updates

The MAWS Board met April 26, 2025 in Montana City.

Click the link to read the [Board Meeting Minutes](#)
Click these links to view the Treasurer's Reports:
[Balance Sheet](#) and [Income/Expenses](#)

Upcoming MAWS Newsletter Deadlines

August 1 - deadline for submissions
August 15 - issue released

November 1 - deadline for submissions
November 15 issue released

Send articles to Allison Grove, MAWS Newsletter editor at

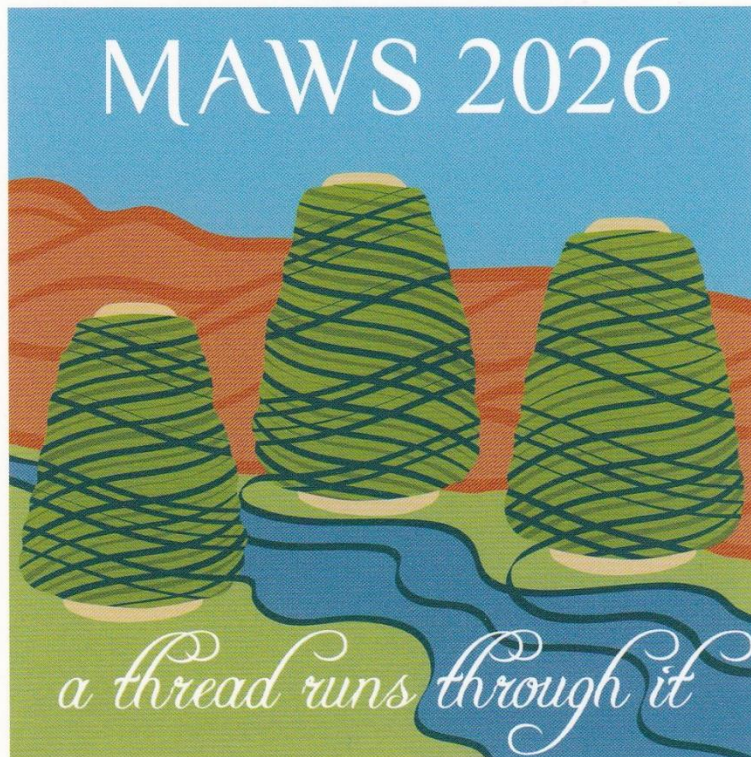
Cabin Fever Classes

The last Cabin Fever Class for 2025 was held on April 12 and featured Debra Silver. Total registration for the 3 classes was 100 and this year some classes were recorded. The committee of Nancy Kaumeyer, Pam Refling, Sylvia Smith, and Linda Shelhamer have been doing a fantastic job! Nancy and Sylvia are stepping off the committee in order to devote more time to planning the MAWS 2028 Conference. They will be replaced by Susan Lohmuller and Bridget Hanebury.

Click this link for a full report of the [Cabin Fever Classes](#).



MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF WEAVERS & SPINNERS
CONFERENCE



**Missoula, Montana on the University of MT Campus
JUNE 16 - 21, 2026**

PreConference & Conference Instructors Include:

Tom Knisely, teaching three Weaving classes

Keynote: "Notes from the Fell" with audience questions

Cindy Knisely, Weaving

Annetta Kraayeveld, Basketry

Heavenly Bresser, Spinning

Suzi Ballenger, Weaving

Joanne Hall, Swedish Art Weaves

Bateman Exhibition - Montana Museum of Art & Culture

Fashion Show - Vendor Hall

Monitor updates at: missoulaweaversguild.org & bigskyfiberartsguild.org

Hosted by: Missoula Weavers Guild & Big Sky Fiber Arts Guild

2026 MAWS Conference Colors

Click here to view a [PDF](#) with the conference colors matched to some of your favorite yarn companies.

2026 MAWS Conference Open Show Categories

Click here to view a [PDF](#) with the class categories and start planning your Open Show creations with the conference colors!

Upcoming Workshops - Mark your Calendars!

Robyn Spady: Lace Weaves and the Rainbow Connection

October 17-19, 2025

9:30 am - 4:30 pm

This workshop is hosted by the Billings Weavers Guild. Robyn will also give an evening program on October 18, 2025 that will be open to the public at no charge. [Click here](#) for more information about the class and a registration form. Registration opens June 6.

Liz Moncrief: Warp Painting and Dyeing

October 18, 2025

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

This workshop is hosted by the Helena Spinners and Weavers Guild and will be held at the Montana City School. [Click here](#) for more information about the class. Registration starts May 19.

Guess the Fiber Contest - MAWS 2024 Conference



Remember the "Guess the Fiber" contest at the MAWS 2024 Conference? 53 jars held various types of unlabeled spinning fibers. Sylvia Smith identified the most number of fibers and Laura Brewer won the drawing for the fiber basket. Since then Laura has been busy! She spun a small sample of each fiber and attached them to a display board along with the paperwork description. This display was used at the Fremont Fiber Guild's Fiber Fest in Wyoming.

Montana Circle of American Masters Induction Ceremony

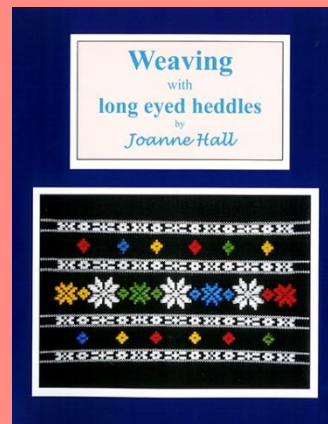


The Montana Arts Council will induct seven folk and traditional artists into the [Montana Circle of American Masters](#) at the State Capitol on Friday, May 16, at 2:00 pm. Inductees include: blacksmith Jeffrey Funk, weaver Joanne Hall, poet Henry Real Bird, Indigenous culture bearer Tim Ryan, beader Ramey Growing Thunder, bootmaker Mike Ryan, and jewelry maker Olivia Rose Williamson.

Book Review

Heather Torgenrud has written a review of:
“Weaving with long eyed heddles”
by Joanne Hall

Click here to [read the review](#)
and click here to [buy the book!](#)



2025 Montana Lamb Jam

The Lamb Jam is a “Made in Montana” culinary competition that will be held in East Helena on August 9, 2025. This year they’ve expanded the event to include vendors showcasing Montana-grown or processed wool and sheep products. Click this link for more information and the [vendor application form](#). You can also learn more about the event on their website:

<https://mtsheap.org/news-events/montana-lamb-jam/>

In Memory: Rolann Armstrong



The Prairie Handspinners Mourn loss of long-time member Rolann Armstrong who passed away surrounded by family on March 16, 2025 after a hospital stay. Rolann instituted a love of spinning and raising fiber animals in her daughter Robin and granddaughter Clara who carry on her legacy as active spinners, PHS members, and fiber artists. Rolann, her sister Renee, daughter Robin, and granddaughter Clara, all attended the MAWS 2024 conference.

Rolann was born in 1952 in Ohio and moved to Oregon in 1970. In 1986, Rolann and her husband, Bob, moved to Billings when Bob took a job at the Yellowstone Boys Ranch. Rolann worked in the math department at Montana State University-Billings, all while raising their three children. She was active in 4-H and became deeply involved in her community. While her children were at home, Rolann ran a clinical library at the Boys and Girls Ranch, worked on her Master's degree in math at Eastern Montana College, led a 4-H club, ran Bible Quizzing teams, and attended her children's events all over the state of Montana.

Along with raising many fiber animals, Rolann took up spinning in about 1990 and joined Prairie Handspinners where she was very active for many years. Just some of the memories members shared were Rolann raising indigo from seeds and leading an indigo and natural dyeing workshop. Rolann could get a lot of things done in a no-nonsense and efficient way. In 1998 when the Billings MAWS conference had an unexpectedly large turnout, she jumped in sewed about 30 goody bags at the last minute. She also volunteered on the bag committee again in 2024.

After her children graduated from college, Rolann returned to work in the medical field where she continued until her retirement in 2019. Retirement brought with it the joy of some of her favorite activities, spending time with her grandchildren, traveling with family, continuing to support 4-H, and participating in the fiber world with spinning. She was president of the Yellowstone County 4-H Foundation, a position that she held near and dear to her heart. Rolann is survived by her loving husband of 51 years, her three children, and seven grandchildren.

In the Prairie Handspinners tradition, the guild has purchased a book for its library in Rolann's memory. Since Rolann was all about raising sheep, goats, or rabbits and processing the fiber, the guild purchased a book on washing and processing fiber. MAWS has received memorial gifts supporting MAWS education programs in Rolann's honor. To make memorial gifts either mail checks made out to MAWS to Tabriz Drive Billings, MT 59105 or go on our website <https://www.montanaweavespin.org/in-memoriam-1>

The Alpine Weavers and Spinners Guild

The Guild is continuing to explore this year's theme of "Start to Finish". In February, we learned about processing fiber for spinning or felting using tools including hand carders, drum carder and wool combs. Member Sarah Waldrip gave an excellent program about raising angora bunnies for fiber in March. In April, Judie Overbeek gave a great mini-workshop on color blending to create custom colors from the primaries.

The Guild has two business meeting per year in March and September. At our March meeting, we voted to support the Adopt-a-Native-Elder program by donating money to be used for yarn bundles. These yarns will be used by Dine' weavers to weave rugs. The weavers reap 100% of the proceeds from sales of the rugs. Between the Guild's donation and additional donations from Guild members, we raised \$900 to support this group of native fiber artists. <https://anelder.org/>

The Guild also formed a 2028 MAWS Conference planning committee at the March business meeting. We took Missoula's advice seriously and have started our search for a conference venue.

We don't have any workshops planned this year, so several members have taken advantage of workshops hosted by other Guilds. Three members attended the John Mullarkey cardweaving classes in Helena in March, and two members attended Connie Lippert's Wedge-Weave workshop down in the Boise area in April.

The Guild's private Facebook group is: www.facebook.com/groups/AWSGuild/. Answer the three membership questions to join the group and see what the Guild and group members are doing.

Submitted by Sylvia Smith.



Big Sky Fiber Arts Guild

<https://bigskyfiberartsguild.org/>

Big Sky Fiber Arts Guild is an enthusiastic group of spinners, weavers, knitters, and other fiber artists who meet monthly at the Main Fellowship Hall at the Carlton Community Church in Florence. Each meeting is preceded by a workshop or presentation, then we have the meeting, which is followed by either a potluck or brown bag lunch and then show and tell. Recent presentations have included yarn dying, drop spindle use, and rope making. All fiber enthusiasts are welcome to attend. Please visit the Big Sky Fiber Arts Guild website at <https://bigskyfiberartsguild.org/> for more details.

Submitted by, Larie Smoyer



Billings Weavers Guild

Members of the Billings Weavers Guild have been busy this winter. Every meeting there are lots of beautiful woven pieces we get to ooh and aah over. We have had presentations at each meeting covering basic information we all use when planning our projects, reading patterns, choosing color combinations, warping our looms and lots of tips and advice on fixing errors and weaving without fatiguing. It's been a fun and informational few months.

Our May meeting will be a planning meeting for projects, work study groups, and presentations we want to participate in next fall. We hope to have a few field trips to visit members' studios this summer and stay connected.

Robyn Spady will be coming to Billings this fall October 17-19. The topic chosen for this workshop will be Lace Weaves and the Rainbow Connection. She will be discussing how applying color in different ways can transform simple lace threading into a warp that can be manipulated in different ways with additional colors to create amazing fabrics. Different lace weaves will be discussed including huck, Atwater-Bronson and Swedish lace. More information on this workshop can be found on our Facebook page. There may also be an evening lecture during this workshop concerning weave structures for color and texture using novelty yarns. This has yet to be confirmed.

Submitted by Suzanne Erpenbach



Bozeman Weavers Guild

The Bozeman Weavers Guild held a Beginner Weaving class on April 4-5, our second beginner class of this '24-'25 weaving year. Seven students were taught and assisted by four of our guild members. The students learned how to wind a warp, dress a loom, tension the warp, and place the weft. Our guild's looms were available to loan to any student who wished to continue weaving at home. We are pleased to welcome these seven new weavers to this historic craft, and appreciative of our guild's diligent volunteer instructors.

Following the business portion of our April guild meeting, Jo Ann Setzer taught a half-day workshop on the making of transparencies. Members brought their small looms warped per Jo Ann's instructions, and yarns for inlay. She taught us how to make a cartoon of our designs, how to attach the cartoon to the warp, and the weaving process unique to transparencies. We are always grateful for Jo Ann's willingness to teach us something that is new to us.

Submitted by Wendy Fedock, editor of BWG's newsletter - The Backbeam



Helena Spinners' and Weavers' Guild

<https://helenaspinnerandsweavers.org/home/>

In February, Helena weavers participated in a 2-day tapestry workshop taught by Joanne Hall "Selfie: A Face in Tapestry." Morning of day 1 was spent translating a favorite photo into a workable cartoon for use as a template. Then everyone selected the colors they wanted to work with and got started on their smiling faces. We look forward to seeing the finished artworks. This was a fun class and we hope to have another tapestry workshop next year.



Missoula Weavers Guild

<https://missoulaweaversguild.org/>

At our April meeting, Bonnie Tarsus introduced Grace Brogan, a Missoula artist. Grace has explored the world of broom-making for a number of years and this is her primary endeavor. She studied with masters of the craft in the mid-west, Japan and Appalachia. Broom production was very important in US economy until plastic replaced natural materials. Every culture has a history of brooms employing techniques and designs which are unique to their resources and traditions. Grace uses 'broom corn' fiber for the working end of the broom and hardwood tree trimmings or ceramic pieces for the handles. Broom corn grows as a tall fiber and can be grown in our climate. The Takeaway? Fiber arts broadly considered inform each other. As weavers and spinners, there is much to be learned from and shared with folks working in the connected niches. Members expressed an interest in having a workshop with Grace, down the road.

from "Tromp as Writ" newsletter, April 2025



Prairie Handspinners Guild

Prairie Handspinners Guild joined the International Spin Together again this year. We had 15 spinners who made up this year's team. For the Spin Together event week, we had a great time meeting out in public at coffee shops, Billings Public Library, and other places to share our love for spinning. This year our team leaders made it possible for a Zoom meeting option as needed and for the team members (3) that lived outside the local area. We kicked off our week of spinning at the Billings Public Library at 12:00pm on February 22nd. We all had different personal goals for the week, and ended the event at the Yellowstone Art Museum, Saturday, March 1st at 12:00pm. There were prizes for different achievements that were awarded and the team total yardage was 31,717 which equals about 18 miles! We are all looking to next years Spin Together!

Prairie Handspinners Guild has several demonstrations planned for this summer. They include, Springfest on June 7th, the Renaissance Festival in Red Lodge on

June 7th and 8th, Summerfair on June 28th & 29th, Montana Fair August 9th- 16th, Huntley Threshing Bee August 16th and Reedpoint's Running of Sheep September 1st!

Submitted by Karen Korenko

PHS Spin Together



Yellowstone Valley Yarn Arts Happenings Guild

The guild meets at Wise Wonders Museum at 3024 2nd Avenue North in Downtown Billings on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6 pm.

Teach it Forward

MAWS has many talented instructors that travel all over the USA sharing their knowledge (a few are featured below). Looking for someone to teach at your guild. Check out the [MAWS Teacher Database](#). Would you like to be featured on this list? Email the MAWS Newsletter Editor

- Dawn Ahlert <https://www.dawnahlert.com/new-page>
- Tammy Jordan <https://goldieknotsmt.com/upcoming-classes-events/>
- Joanne Hall <https://www.cnch.org/conferences/cnch-2025-welcome/cnch-2025-workshops/cnch-2025-jhall/>

Summer Events

Summers in Montana are jam-packed with outdoor activities. Looking for some creative inspiration? Check out these Montana festivals. You'll run into other MAWS members enjoying, vending, and teaching at these events. If you miss one, be sure to mark in on your calendar for next year. Don't see your favorite? Send an email to the Newsletter Editor

- Annual Weaverbird Studio Show, Mother's Day weekend, Wilsall <https://www.bevpolkhandweaver.com/>
- Crazy Mountain Fiber Fest, May 30-31, Big Timber <https://bigtimber.com/chamber-information/fiber-fest/>
- Old Salt Festival, June 20-22, Helmville <https://www.oldsaltco-op.com/blogs/all/meet-your-makers-this-year-s-general-store-is-bigger-better-than-ever>
- Montana Folk Festival, July 11-13, Butte <https://montanafolkfestival.com/>
- Copper K Fiber Festival, July 19-20, Whitehall <https://www.copperkfiberfestival.com/>
- Fiberfest Eureka, August 2-3, Eureka <https://www.facebook.com/fiberfesteureka/>
- Montana Lamb Jam, August 9, East Helena <https://mtsheep.org/news-events/montana-lamb-jam/>

Classified Ads



Lone Pine Wool Emporium

We have raw fleeces, roving, yarn, handmade gifts, and offer classes.

Come see us at:

805 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT

10 am to 6 pm Tues-Sat

<https://lonepinewoolemporium.com/>

Do you have a fiber-related item to sell? As a member of MAWS you are able to post your items for sale. (Non-members will be required to pay a fee of \$10 per classified ad along with one photo). Please send the information, along with any photos to Lisa Brown (lisa.brown@montana.edu). Items will be posted for 60 days. Also, please let Lisa know if your items sell so we can keep the website and newsletter content page current. We appreciate your cooperation!

Montana Association of Weavers & Spinners (MAWS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The annual membership fee is \$10 and is due by October 31st. The membership year is January through December. You can join through your local guild or as an individual if you do not belong to a member guild. Dues include your newsletter subscription. To join MAWS, please send dues to MAWS c/o Linda Shelhamer. You can also pay dues via PayPal at <https://www.montanaweavespin.org/join-us-membership>

MAWS accepts memorials and other donations for our educational programs.

They can be mailed to Linda or made online using this link <https://www.montanaweavespin.org/donation>

Meet Your Board (2024-2026)

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Vice President

Nancy Kaumeyer

Treasurer

Linda Shelhamer

Secretary

Susan Lohmuller

Newsletter Editor

Allison Grove

Internet Coordinator

Lisa Brown

2026 Conference Chair

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Heather Johnson - Billings

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Sylvia Smith - Alpine

Teema Loeffelholz – Bozeman

Gwen Haferkamp – Eastern Montana

Marian Stratton – Great Falls

Melanie Dayton – Helena

Jackie Boshka – Western Montana