



# FIBER TO FINISH GUILD NEWSLETTER

September 2015



## From the weaver's bench:

"I saw red!" read the sticker at the Museum of International Folk Art. It marked the beginning of the exhibit on cochineal dye in Santa Fe. The exhibit sought to show the extensive use of cochineal dyes through time and across many art forms. Although cochineal was used to highlight santos and other religious objects, dye basketry materials, yarns, fabrics, stain wood and many others it failed to give the viewer real information and facts about cochineal. There were many modern and historic textiles that had been dyed with cochineal. But little information was given about the actual scale insect, *Dactylopius coccus*, from which a natural dye carmine is derived. This insect is a sessile parasite that lives on cacti in tropical and subtropical South America, Mexico and Arizona. The insect feeds on the plant moisture and nutrients of the cacti in the genus *Opuntia*.



The insects produce a carminic acid that deters other predatory insects. Approximately 17 to 24% of the dried insects' weight (from its body and eggs) is extracted and mixed with aluminum or calcium salts to make carmine dye or cochineal. It is used as a colorant in food and in cosmetics.

One interesting part of the exhibit was a film clip showing how the colors of cochineal can be altered. The colors of cochineal can be altered by adding an acid to the dye bath, such as citrus juice or by adding baking soda which acts as base. By manipulating the pH of the dye bath, many more variations of cochineal are possible. Thus you can obtain an incredible range of colors from one dye source! What fun!

Earlier in the summer, the same museum sponsored a "hands on" session of cochineal dyeing at the Espanola Fiber Arts Center. Under the direction of Glenna Dean, we created 6 different shades of cochineal using different mordants. Later with Ric Rao, we altered colors of cochineal by altering the pH of the dye bath. It was a great extension of the museum exhibit. I was greatly pleased to have been invited!

So again, much of my thoughts and time are spent on dyeing. I continue on my quest to find more pleasing combinations. I recently re-dyed some yarn with a dye named "logwood." It was not a natural dye. The logwood made my streaky wool yarn look very rich and saturated with a dark cocoa brown! I also over dyed some gold yarn with a fabulous "scarlet" dye made by Jacquard Dyes. This time I tied it in places to preserve some of the gold in spots and got

## Next Meeting

Our next meeting: **September 26** (note change in date) at Barbara Bogle's home at 1336 Don Pasqual Rd. NW in Los Lunas.



*Program:* e-Textiles with Alice Shriver, president of 505 Access. This will be a hands on project decorating textiles with electronic lights. There is some hand sewing involved so bring needles, thread and reading glasses (if needed). All materials will be paid for by the guild. This is an excellent program for children. We encourage you to bring a child, grandchild or friend to the meeting!

## Things to Celebrate in September –

- September is Chicken Month, and National Blueberry Popsicle Month
- Sept 9 – Teddy Bear Day
- Sept 14 – National Cream-filled Donut Day
- Sept 20 – National Women's Friendship Day
- Sept 22 – Elephant Appreciation Day
- Sept 26 – International Rabbit Day

mostly shades of red. It is quite handsome yarn. I have had so much fun. I hope you will join us when we dye again!

At our last meeting Mary Curik received a hand made copper bracelet made by the Dows as a thank you gift for her many years of creative service. Mary's house sold and she is moving to Arizona. She graciously brought a ton of equipment, materials and tools to share with her Fiber to Finish friends. We will miss Mary's warm smile and generosity. We all wish her the best and extend an invitation to come and visit whenever she is in the area.

Keeping your hands in fiber,  
Myra

## Questions?

Ask your officers or any member. If we don't know—we'll find out.

### Officers for 2015:

President	Myra Chang Thompson	<a href="mailto:mchangt@yahoo.com">mchangt@yahoo.com</a>
Vice President	Terri L. Greenlee	<a href="mailto:tlgreenlee@earthlink.net">tlgreenlee@earthlink.net</a>
Secretary	Sally Nittler	<a href="mailto:nittlers2@gmail.com">nittlers2@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Annmarie Pearson	<a href="mailto:altbalance@q.com">altbalance@q.com</a>
Member at Large	Diana Dow	<a href="mailto:rockingbd@earthlink.net">rockingbd@earthlink.net</a>
Website	Chip Kimball	<a href="mailto:chipkimball@gmail.com">chipkimball@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter	Mary Curik	<a href="mailto:mary@fourpinesalpacas.com">mary@fourpinesalpacas.com</a>



Send all correspondence to :

**Valencia County Fiber to Finish Guild**  
**P. O. Box 1613 Belen, NM 87002-1613**

**FIBER TO FINISH IS ON THE WEB** Check out the guild's home on the web at [www.fibertofinish.org](http://www.fibertofinish.org) . You'll be able to see the newsletters on line – the minutes from each month's meeting are in the newsletter as well. There's also lots of photos posted from meetings and members' work.

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### Upcoming Meetings



**October meeting:** Demonstration and Sale at the Gutierrez-Hubbell House on Isleta Boulevard in the South Valley. **October 11 (note the change in date and day!!)** Join the annual Food Festival at the historic house for a lively time of demonstrations and sales.

There is no charge but you must sign up ahead of time. Please contact Myra at [mchangt@yahoo.com](mailto:mchangt@yahoo.com) or 864-0876 to participate.

**November 21 meeting:** Nominations are due for our annual elections. Program to be announced. We will return to the First Baptist Church in Belen.

### EVENTS:

New Mexico State Fair September 10 to 20<sup>th</sup> at New Mexico Expo in Albuquerque  
Saturday, September 26, 2015 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Arts and Crafts Fair at Jubilee Club House in Los Lunas (west of Wal-Mart on State Highway 6)

Sunday, October 11, 2015 Annual Food Festival at Gutierrez-Hubbell House on Isleta Blvd. In the South Valley. See October meeting above.

### **Classified Ads:**

**Free** - Handwoven, Fiber Arts and other magazines at the September meeting

**For Sale:** Loomcraft 8H 10T jack loom. Beautiful cherry wood. Removable back beam for easy front-to-back threading. Texsolve tie-ups. All 8 harnesses are loaded with plenty of flat steel heddles. One 10 dent reed and a shuttle included. Excellent condition. \$950 OBO. Gilmore bench with slide out drawer \$230 (retail \$365). Contact Terri at 505-681-7421 or [tlgreenlee@earthlink.net](mailto:tlgreenlee@earthlink.net)

## ***Meet One of Our Members***

This month's guild member is our president, Myra Chang Thompson. Myra was born and raised in New Mexico. Her early schooling took place in California and New Mexico. She earned a B. A. in Special Education and an M.A. In Special Education from the University of Northern Colorado. She went on to earn another two Masters degrees from the University of California, Davis and Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Myra says that she was always surrounded by fiber. Growing up with a busy mother who crocheted, sewed, embroidered and made quilts. It was easy to get interested in fiber. A pivotal moment came when Myra realized that her mother could card and spin wool—having been raised on a sheep ranch in Northern New Mexico! She learned to embroider at an early age and then went on to sewing and crochet. Eventually she received a loom and joined a guild in California. The path was set.

Although weaving is Myra's favorite kind of project, projects of a wide range appeal to her. She likes to embroider, quilt, sew, felt, dye yarn and fleece, spin, knit (especially lace knitting) and “just make things.” She likes projects that have an ending. She does not like projects that linger for 14 years on a loom! This summer she obtained some very good advice from a fellow weaver, Heather Winslow. Heather said, “Don't rush into a project. Write it down and let it settle. The worst thing is to act on it immediately.” It is good advice because a sudden flash of inspiration can be fraught with many obstacles and problems. Sometimes thinking about the inspiration can help one overcome the problems and excitement of the original idea.

Myra's favorite activities range from emassing a huge stash, teaching weaving, writing about weaving, teaching children to weave and playing with colors both in dyeing and in spinning. One favorite is very hard to pin down!

Inspiration, claims Myra, is everywhere. It is difficult not to be inspired by our magnificent surroundings! She relies on nature, seasonal changes, colors and the materials themselves for inspiration. She is also greatly inspired by her friends who love to experiment with yarn/fiber/stuff to “see what will happen.” Experimenting is also an inspiration.

Myra's list of things to accomplish is usually long and detailed. This year she is excited about teaching at the Interweave Yarn Fest in Colorado. She always desires to learn more about lots of things. She'd like to weave the perfect piece of cloth and make the perfect garment. She'd also like to drag the Doc off on a well earned vacation to someplace new. Myra also has big plans for the guild and its members! She thinks we need to have much more fun doing what we do—in our own studios and at our meetings.

When asked what non-fiber interests she has, Myra has always wants to travel more. She'd like to see the sights she's read about and sample the local food. While traveling, she'd also like to investigate the local or regional textiles. China is on her “must see list.”

Gardening, reading, exercising, cooking, visiting with friends, trying new things and hanging out “on the farm” are a few of her favorite non-fiber interests. Helping new weavers get off to a good start with appropriate equipment and skills is a passion of Myra's.

August Meeting Pictures



*Ann & Myra*



*Cat in hat*



*Deby's shawl*



*Dows, Carla, Rowena*



*Myra likes it*



*Carla's handspun sox*



*Jolene*



*Terri's blanket*



*Rowena*