

valley VOICE owichan



OCTOBER 2016 ISSUE 95

THANKSGIVING RECIPES | LOCAL ARTS | MUSIC | SPECIAL EVENTS



Fleece and Fibre Festival

Roots of the Cowichan Valley Fleece and Fibre Festival extend back over twenty years to an annual event called "Producer's Day." Held in the spring by the Inter Island Sheep Breeders Association (IISBA), farmers could sell their lambs, have wool baled, and network with other sheep people. This festival precursor was a pick-up point for wool headed for processing, and the event included a fibre side as well: displays and demonstrations by the Tzouhalem Spinners and Weavers Guild, a fleece judging competition plus a fashion show with accompanying animals showing the type of animal the fibre came from. There were lamb barbecues, and one year a vet brought a dead sheep and performed an autopsy as an educational tool for farmers.

While the sheep sale side of things eased off for the IISBA, the fibre side of the event kept growing to include demonstrations of felting, weaving rugs with fleece, rug hooking, spinning woolen and worsted, and sales of handmade fibre goods. The two sides of Producer's Day separated and in 2002 the fibre faction held a huge expo in the

community centre selling handmade yarn, hand-dyed yarn, handmade clothing – the event burst with colours like those from Catherine Friend's book *Sheepish* - Purple Rain, Autumn Leaves, My Blue Jeans, Rhubarb Sauce: we fibre lovers get giddy on this stuff. Spinning, carding and dyeing of the fibre source was shown, with sheep, alpaca, llama, goat, rabbit and dog fibre clothing displayed.

The name Fleece and Fibre Festival was adopted the following year and has stuck. It is housed annually in the Cobble Hill Community Hall and is still bursting (at the seams!) with vibrant colours and handmade fibre goods, all by local artisans: raw fleeces; dyed rovings, batts and yarns; buttons; speciality fibres; felted hats, bags, mitts and clothing; spinning wheels; hand spindles; hand knit socks, toques and sweaters; hooked rugs; paraphernalia and stash (fibre people, these last two are for you); books and knitting kits; you get the idea...

Fleece and fibre fairs help keep the Valley living its sheep heritage; we're coming full circle with more and more family farms. The Island has meat processing facilities, fibre mills and shearing so if you're thinking of raising sheep, how about choosing breeds that are good for both meat and fibre?



Catherine J. Johnson, local writer, weaver and lover of sheep.



Weekly blog for insights and personal transformation

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Mind, Body and Spirit*

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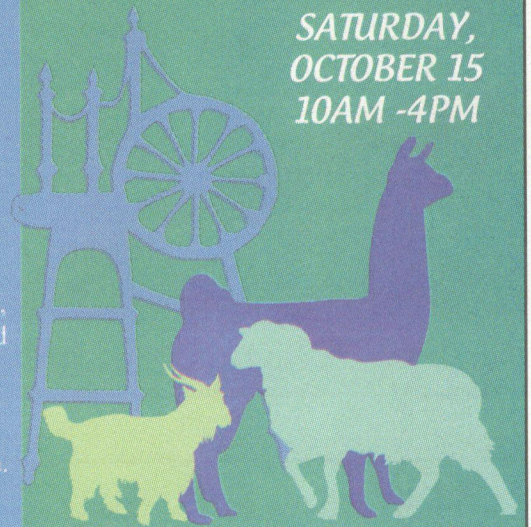
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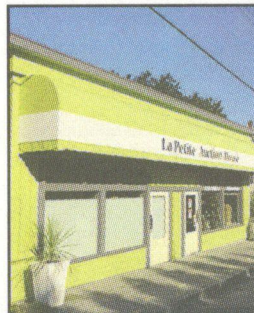
Annual Cowichan Valley FLEECE & FIBRE FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 15
10AM -4PM**

Join us for a glorious gathering of all things fibre: hand-dyed yarn, hand-spun yarn, rovings, woven goods, fleece, knitted fashion and oodles of fibre-lover's paraphernalia.



Cobble Hill Community Hall & Fair Grounds
3550 Watson Avenue, Cobble Hill, BC
(right behind the beautiful downtown core)
www.cowichanfleeceandfibrefestival.com



La Petite Auction House

AUCTION SUNDAY OCTOBER 2, 16 & 30

Early viewings Wed-Fri 11am- 5pm
Plus viewings on Sat pre auction 1-5pm
SAME DAY viewing 10am-1pm



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