

What's Spinning? Spinsters' 5-card Draw

Judy Preckshot

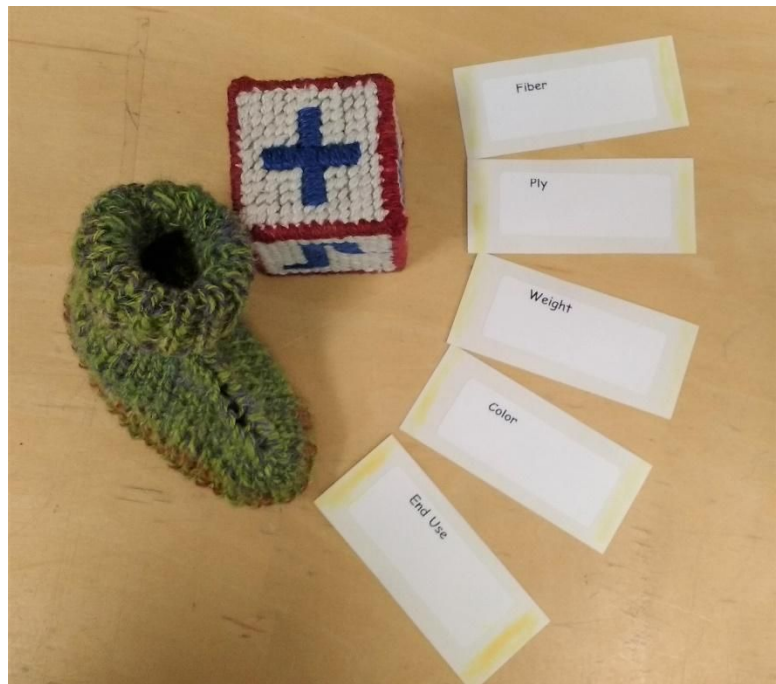
In case you didn't already know, the Whorling Spinsters are a group of spinners who love to get together on the first Tuesday evening of the month to spin, learn new skills, and exchange fiber tips. In that spirit, in 2015 Chillon Leach, Virginia Parent, and Maryann Olme devised a game designed to challenge spinners to explore possibilities beyond customary fiber use and spinning guidelines. It was first implemented in February 2016, so this the third annual 5-card draw.

To play the game, participants draw one card from each of 5 categories:

1. Fiber (type of fiber specified on back of card)
2. Ply (number of plies is specified)
3. Weight (e.g., sport weight, lace weight, bulky, etc.)
4. Color (main and/or secondary colors indicated)
5. End use

We then have two months in which to imagine a project that fits the given constraints, spin the fiber, and complete an item for show and tell. The rules of the game allow us to reject one of the requirements if it is incompatible with the others. Categories are intentionally broad to allow for individual interpretation—but we have to defend our interpretation and execution of the final product.

For example, in the photo to the right, both Nancy Preckshot and Brittany Pentek drew “baby item” as end use cards, but Brittany's baby bootie had to be made of linen spun into a 3-ply lace weight yarn in two colors, and Nancy's Einstein baby block (with mathematical symbols) was to be made from silk spun in a 2-ply fingering weight in two to three colors of her choice. Given seemingly unlikely fiber choices for baby goods, Nancy and Brittany artfully imagined perfectly wonderful items.



Charlotte Forste drew wool, bulky weight, single-ply, red/yellow/blue for color and art



project for the end use. She produced wearable art in the form of a tam knit from bulky white wool singles. She space-dyed the knitted tam with red, yellow, and blue. Because she couldn't decide which side she liked the best, she made it reversible. The photo to the right shows the knit side, topped with a wooden button, and below you can see the "inside" purl side, neatly finished with a blue knitted pouf.



Three spinsters drew a jewelry card, and all three made necklaces, albeit all quite different from each other. Maryann Olme spun a bulky linen thread plied with a commercial thread in light and dark fibers, adding beads for a little sparkle (left). Neal Goman drew cards for a single-ply, lace weight silk thread. His colors were also "light and dark," but he chose to thread his dark silk single through translucent glass beads to fulfill the light requirement (middle).



Judy Preckshot drew the following cards: cotton, bulky weight, 2-ply, and secondary color: purple, green, orange. The "bulk" came from spinning cotton directly from the seeds (and spinning the seeds into the thread), and the 2-ply requirement was met by plying the cotton singles with 2-ply spun silk threads in purple, orange and green, thus stretching the interpretation of "2-ply" thread.

Two Spinsters came up with novel interpretations of their draws. Cecily Beierle drew hair as her fiber (she chose alpaca), plied with a different weight thread to create an overall worsted weight yarn, two or three colors, and end use of flowers. Cecily's flowers are



two-dimensional: she used the bicolored thread of uneven ply to weave a flowered runner with a tulip motif.

Naomi Binsfeld's cards were cotton, worsted (she rejected this requirement), 2-ply, in a natural color, and for end use, a bag. So, she spun undyed cotton, and knit this mini-tote for a 50 ml airline bottle, which is perfect for a surreptitious nip in the park!



Life really does get in the way, so there were three entries of skeins that haven't yet been put to their end use. On the left is Beth Friedman's ultra-finely-spun



skein (silk, singles, fingering weight [rejected in favor of lace weight], secondary colors, end use: scarf), 480 yards long, weighing two ounces. She intends to knit it into an intricate rectangular lace "Sofia" scarf. In the middle is Candice Mangum's luscious skein (silk, lace weight, ply with a different weight singles [rejected in favor of a balanced ply], light and dark colors, and end use: baby item) which is waiting to be knit or woven into a special baby covering, perhaps a baptismal blanket. And on the right is Chillon Leach's scrumptious ball of yarn (silk, sport weight, plies of three different weights, natural color [green, lilac, cream], end use: clothing that is not a scarf)

that she intends to knit into cuffs for some thick, warm slippers.

Wouldn't you like to play the game? The Whorling Spinsters welcome interested spinners of all levels. Our meetings are from 6:30–8:30 pm on the first Tuesday of most months (but a week later in July). Hope to see you there!