

Hello, Volunteer!

Welcome to the Minnesota State Fair 2019! The State Fair is the Weavers Guild of Minnesota's largest outreach event each year, reaching thousands of fair attendees and bringing weaving and spinning to new audiences. Demonstrating at the Fair means sharing your love of making things--and possibly changing a life! We are so grateful to have you represent WGM.

In advance of your shift, please read the information below. **Please note: This year's emphasis is on ENGAGEMENT. By request of the State Fair, volunteers need to actively engage with the public during their demonstration.** We'll list some ways you can do that, and what this means for you, in the following paragraphs.

Volunteer Schedule:

WGM has three people demonstrating at all times: someone working on the floor loom, someone spinning, and someone demonstrating off-loom techniques. Each shift lasts four hours and gets you into the fair for free. Shifts are still available; sign up online, [here: https://volunteersignup.org/PRHJA](https://volunteersignup.org/PRHJA)

By signing up for a shift, you are agreeing to:

1. Be present for the time allotted,
2. Bring the necessary materials (fiber or weft or other supplies) to demonstrate with,
3. Engage with the public: be friendly, answer questions, and give basic information about WGM.

Tickets:

Demonstrators receive a complimentary ticket into the State Fair for the day of their shift. (One ticket per person, per day.) Tickets are mailed in mid-August, along with a sample of the floor loom warp (for those demonstrating on the floor loom), and a copy of the current volunteer schedule with contact information for the other volunteers. If you are unable to complete your shift and cannot find a replacement, please notify WGM as soon as possible and return your ticket(s) to us so we can re-distribute them as necessary.

Building:

WGM demonstrates in the **Creative Activities Building** on the corner of Dan Patch Ave and Cosgrove Street, near Gate 5. At 9am, the building side door is usually up with a screen gate in front; if this is the case, you may let yourself into the building. If the building is locked, there is a doorbell at the front door (the one facing the intersection).

At 9pm, the lights will be turned down in the building to remind the public of closing time. (The lights will be turned back up, so you need not hurry to get out of the building.) Please pick up your demonstration area and take your articles with you as you exit.

Getting to the State Fair:

Enter at **Gate 5**, which is closest to the Creative Activities and Annex building.

Map of fairgrounds and surrounding area: <https://www.mnstatefair.org/general-info/maps/>

Park and rides, Metro Transit: <https://www.mnstatefair.org/transportation/>

Parking: <https://www.mnstatefair.org/parking/>

Note, if you plan on parking in the neighborhood surrounding the fair, you will need ample time to find a spot. Please plan ahead.

Demonstration Guidelines:

Making things from fiber is a human activity. The Weavers Guild of Minnesota demonstrates at the State Fair to show fair goers that spinning and weaving is alive and well in Minnesota. This is your chance to interact with someone who perhaps has no idea how yarn or cloth is made. Our role is to promote spinning and weaving as

vibrant, life-long activities that anyone can participate in, and to give anyone who is interested a taste of what WGM has to offer.

SPINNING:

WGM provides an Ashford traditional spinning wheel and a Louet wheel for your use on-site. If you use guild bobbins, please remove your yarn before the end of your shift. A niddy noddy and one set of hand cards are under the counter in front of the wheels. You may bring your own wheel or drop spindles if you prefer. **You will need to provide your own fiber.**

Engagement: If you feel comfortable letting someone else use your equipment, please actively engage with the public and offer interested parties the chance to try it out. (Maybe they will use their hands and you will turn the wheel.) You can always pull off the section they have spun and give it to them.

WGM will provide some drop spindles and easy to spin fiber (kept near the counter). Feel free to use these items to help a fairgoer work a drop spindle. Please use the WGM fiber for this purpose, as we have limited amounts.

WEAVING, Floor Loom:

The floor loom will be warped with 8/4 cotton in a four shaft straight draw with direct tie up. If you have signed up for a floor loom shift, a sample of the warp is included in the mailing. The colors for 2019 are: black, parakeet, red, and lime. **Please provide your own weft and shuttles.** There will be additional yarn in an outreach box provided by WGM. If you have unique yarn or fun yarn to demonstrate with that you would like to donate, please leave it in the box for other volunteers to use.

At the end of your shift, you may either cut off your piece and retie for the next weaver OR you may leave your work on the loom and weave in a spacer. If you choose to cut off, either take your project with you or leave it on the counter for display. Leave enough warp in front of the reed to avoid unthreading accidents and to make it easy for you to tie on for the next person. If you choose to leave your work on the loom, but would like to collect it after the fair, please attach a tag with your name so we may contact you for pickup. Unlabeled and uncollected items will be recycled.

Loom notes: The State Fair loom may be different from other looms you have used. **Remember to release the tension on the front before advancing the warp and never force any part.** If you are uncertain or have not used this loom before, arrive a few minutes early to ask the volunteer before you for a quick overview.

Engagement: Please actively encourage fairgoers to try their hand and weave on the floor loom for a few moments. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, **WGM will provide 2 warped cricket looms (near the counter) and a box of donated yarn for weft.** Please use these items to offer fairgoers a chance to weave. Use the WGM weft for this purpose and **put out one cricket loom at a time. Do not leave the looms sitting out unless you are actively demonstrating with them.**

Off-loom or Portable Weaving:

Please bring your own fiber project to work on. This can include any hand or portable technique, such as frame or tapestry weaving, rigid heddle weaving, fingerweaving, inkle or card weaving, pin loom weaving, beading, kumihimo or other braiding, basket weaving, and felting. You may also choose to demonstrate finishing techniques, plying, or any other fiber technique using small equipment.

Engagement: If you feel comfortable, please actively encourage fairgoers to try their hand at what you are doing. **WGM will also provide 2 warped cricket looms (near the counter) and some extra weft.** Please use these items to offer fairgoers a chance to try weaving. Use the WGM weft for this purpose and put out one cricket loom at a time. Do not leave the looms sitting out unless you are actively demonstrating with them.

WGM will also provide a Touch and Try sampler box of multiple types of fiber, woven and spun samples, shuttles, etc. If you are bring it out, please make sure it is put away at the end of your shift.

WGM Materials:

WGM will provide small HANDOUTS to leave on the counter which highlight WGM and our classes. These are for any interested fairgoer to pick up. Please let Gayle, the State Fair coordinator, know when these run low.

We will also provide copies of the complete FALL CLASS CATALOG. To save on printing costs, these are in limited number. Please hand out to those who are interested in classes, lessons, membership or WGM events.

End of demonstration:

At the end of your demonstration, please clean up your work area and take your items with you.

General Guidelines:

Be friendly: Many State Fair attendees may be reluctant to "interrupt" you, not realizing that you are there to answer their questions. Please look up from your work. Ask if they have questions.

Let's Try This Together: Fairgoers are drawn to fiber—we are too! One way to encourage participation is to suggest that you try the activity together. This is an opportunity to spread the word about how cool it is to make something with your hands.

Show off a little: Feel free to bring or wear samples of your work to talk about. Be prepared to answer the age-old question: How long did it take to make that?

Work on something low-key: The fair is not the time to work on a special project. Bring something you can easily stop and start and not worry about mistakes or errors.

Promote your love of fiber arts: Please refrain from promoting your individual business. In promoting WGM and weaving/spinning in general, we believe all fiber artists will benefit.

Be courteous of your fellow demonstrators: Be prompt to your shift. Demonstrate for your allotted time, and enjoy the fair before or after your demonstration. **Please alert your fellow demonstrators (using the volunteer schedule, included in the mailer) if you will be late.**

Enjoy yourself: We make things with our hands because it brings us joy. The best way to demonstrate weaving and spinning is to express your joy while doing it!

WGM is proud to have you as an ambassador for the guild. **Thank you for demonstrating at the Minnesota State Fair.**

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