

Fiber Gals Keep Spinning and Knitting

Vernonia group meets socially to practice an age-old craft

By Scott Laird

A group of ladies from around Vernonia have been meeting once a month to share their skills and knowledge about the fine art of spinning fibers into yarn and turning that yarn into beautiful handmade items.

The Fiber Gals, as they call themselves, meet once a month on Sunday afternoons at the home of Caroline Anderson. The group is varied and is made up of both beginners and veterans. Anderson has been sharing her passion for the art of spinning for several years – she has done demonstrations and sold her products at Vernonia First Friday, the Open Air Market, and Christmas in the Country Bazaar over the years. This past year the Fiber Gals had their own booth at the Vernonia Friendship Jamboree where they showed off their skills and sold some of their wares.

“Some of us spin, others just knit, and some crochet,” says Anderson. “We all just do our own things and share our knowledge with each other.”

The art of hand spinning animal fibers into yarns dates to the beginning of recorded history and across multiple cultures. The introduction of the spinning wheel into medieval Europe allowed the output of individual spinners to increase dramatically and an industry was born.

Today knitting and hand spinning are more of a hobby, a creative

pastime and a social activity.

The Fiber Gals use a variety of fibers and techniques to create yarns and fabrics that can then be turned into beautiful handmade gloves, hats, shawls, scarves, socks, sweaters and more.

Some of the ladies have preferences as to what kind of fiber they

substance that makes the wool sticky, while an alpaca or llama fleece is much finer, and cleaner from the start, with no lanolin. One of the group even uses the fiber from yaks they raise and several of the group also enjoy working with cashmere; Anderson raises her own goats for their cashmere wool.

After washing and cleaning the fiber, it can be dyed to specific colors and is then pulled onto cards to form a felt, which can be spun into yarn, or made into something as a felted fabric. The Fiber Gals use several different methods and tools for carding to create the felt, including a drum carding machine and hand carders. One member, Ann Potter, uses a different process with viking combs, which

have longer tines and are used for tighter weaves and longer haired fibers.

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Caroline Anderson and Melissa Verheul formed The Fiber Gals in order to share knowledge about spinning and knitting.

like to work with.

Fiber taken directly from the animal needs to be washed with soap and water because it often has debris in it. Sheep's wool can be coarse and often has a lot of lanolin in it, a waxy



Anne Potter (left) uses viking combs to card wool after it has been dyed. Melissa Verheul (right) uses a pedal operated spinning wheel.



Ways to Help the Barbee Family

Tigard Police Officer Matthew Barbee, an 11 year veteran with the Tigard Police Department, was seriously injured on December 14 when the vehicle he was seated in was rear-ended at approximately 1:30 am on Hwy 26, near the Cornelius Pass exit. The Barbees are a local family with three school age children that live between Vernonia and Mist.



Officer Barbee was heading home after finishing his patrol shift when he had vehicle issues and pulled off onto the shoulder. After calling for assistance and awaiting help, Barbee's vehicle was struck from behind by an SUV. As a result of the high speed impact, Officer Barbee sustained serious injuries to his head, neck and back, and was transported by helicopter to a Portland trauma center. Officer Barbee remains hospitalized in serious condition.

The Vernonia community is being encouraged to help the Barbee family with meals through an online scheduling service. Co-workers of Sherrie Utley Barbee, Matthew's wife, have established a webpage and are requesting help from the local community to support this family during their serious time of need. To schedule to deliver a meal for the Barbee family, go to the Meal Train website: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/98ro4l>.

The Tigard Police Officers Association has set up a fundraising account to assist the family. To make a donation go to: <https://tigardpoarelieffirstresponderprocessing.com>.

West Oregon Electric Cooperative is also currently accepting donations to help the family with their electric bills. Call the WOEC office at (503) 429-3021 if you would like to help.

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Oregon's "Move Over" Law Expanded

Beginning January 1, 2018, an amendment to Oregon's "Move Over" law went into effect. According to the new rules drivers must move over or slow down when approaching ANY vehicle on the side of the highway that is displaying hazard lights, emergency flares or any warning lights.

"I think the main thing is for people to recognize that if you can't get over, you need to slow down, and that really helps a lot," says Lt. Jeffrey Lewis with Oregon State Police's Coos Bay Command. "Now that it's applicable to any vehicle, it's going to be crucial that people understand that,

because you could be pulled over for not moving over or slowing down."

Oregon's "Move Over" law (ORS 811.147) was originally passed in January 2010. That original "Move Over" law requires that anyone driving on a public road within the boundaries of the state of Oregon with two lanes or more in a single direction must change lanes if they are coming upon a stopped emergency vehicle, roadside assistance vehicle, tow truck or ambulance. If a driver is not able to safely change lanes due to heavy traffic, then the driver in the lane next to the emergency vehicle, roadside assistance vehicle,

tow vehicle or ambulance must reduce their speed by at least five miles per hour under the posted or designated speed limit. If you are traveling on a two-lane highway with one lane in each direction, you must also reduce your speed by five miles per hour under the posted or designated speed limit for any emergency or roadside assistance vehicle displaying the required flashing warning lights.

The amendment now adds ANY vehicle displaying hazard lights or flares, not just emergency vehicles. Failure to obey this rule could result in a fine of \$260 - \$400.