



Photo courtesy of Laurie Carlson

Laurie Carlson sorts through a pile of fiber from her goats. Before raising goats for wool, Carlson created award-winning goat cheeses at Fairview Farms.

## DOING IT RIGHT

*Carlson goes from dairy to fiber goat farmer to writer on the Oregon Coast*

**By Jennifer Halley**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — “If you’re gonna do something, do it right.” Words that Laurie Carlson lives by.

And if it that isn’t evident in the pages of her newly published children’s book, “Knit, Hook and Spin: A Kid’s Activity Guide to Fiber Arts and Crafts,” then it speaks loudly throughout her daily life.

With a degree in anthropology, and a PhD in history, Carlson’s thirst for knowledge is vast.

“I love to learn new things,” Carlson said. “That’s what it’s all about. It’s fun to learn all there is about a new topic.”

On top of being a doll artist, a self-taught wool spinner, and a goat dairy farmer, Carlson has also had a career as a history teacher, both at Washington State University, and Western Oregon University, as well as time spent teaching kindergarten and elementary school.

If that isn’t enough, she has also published 21 books, most of them children’s activities books, some of which outline historical figures such as Harry Houdini and Thomas Edison, using crafts and magic tricks to help children have fun while learning new skills.

She began her writing career as a freelance writer, interviewing doll artists for different magazines.

When she decided to actually sit down and write a



Photo courtesy of Laurie Carlson

Laurie Carlson turned her garage from a creamery into a yarn shop. Because of family events, Carlson and her husband sold the Dallas goat farm and moved to the coast.

book, Carlson said she didn’t know anyone in the publishing field, nor did she have any sort of writing training.

“I just sat down and figured out what publishers want,” she said.

That, she says, is the key to success.

And successful she was, as her first book, titled, “Kids Create,” sold more than 1 million copies.

“It was a good way to get started,” she added.

Carlson’s writing career helped finance her and her husband’s dream of owning a farm.

After a harsh winter

killed off many of their 300 laying hens they used for selling eggs, Carlson and Terry moved from Spokane down to the Willamette Valley, settling in Dallas, both favoring the warmer weather.

A berry farm was what Carlson and Terry were after originally, she said, but eventually, “we got goats and fell in love with them. You get one and you just want more.”

It took two years to get the farm built up and licensed, and they ran it together for six years.

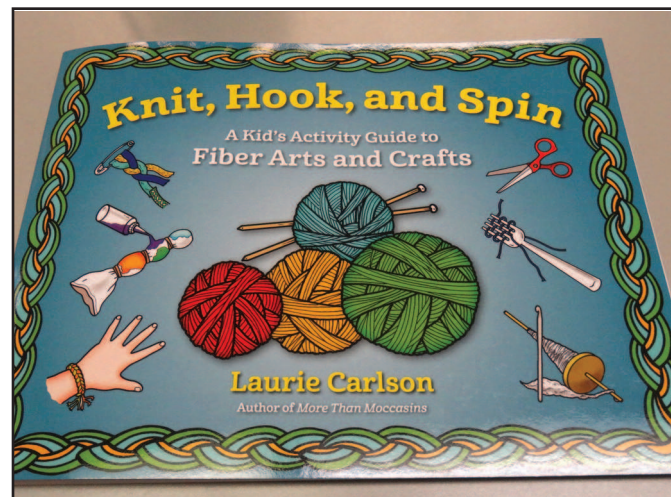
This was another area Carlson was successful in.

According to her, they had prize-winning stock, prize-winning cheeses, and delivered their animal products, such as wool, anywhere between Portland and Eugene.

As someone with a self-proclaimed short attention span, Carlson said she decided the farm was not enough.

Their garage on the farm, which had previously been a creamery where they sold ice cream and cheese, eventually became a yarn shop, called Fairview Farm Yarn Shop.

Carlson ran the shop on top of managing the farm,



Laurie Carlson’s latest book, “Knit, Hook, and Spin,” leads readers through crafts involving fiber.

writing her books, and ever-pursuing various topics of knowledge.

“We like to stay busy,” she said with a laugh.

They have since converted the store back into their garage.

But despite their happy, busy life, she and Terry are no strangers to adversity.

They have two sons, one of whom lives in Spokane and is doing well, according to Carlson.

Their other son, however, became mentally ill while in the military and is currently living in Portland in a shelter.

Carlson says he calls her often, but dealing with a son who is sick has been a huge strain on their lives.

Carlson and Terry took in their grandson and raised him; he is 18 now and will graduate high school in June.

“Our life was like a bal-

loon,” Carlson said, “and all the air went out of it when he got sick. But, everyone has hardships.”

Though it is clear those hardships do not stop her.

After selling the farm in the spring — it became too much work for her and her husband to handle — they moved to Lincoln City, where they bought a fixer-upper house and have been there ever since, working on their home and staying as busy as can be.

“It’s fun to be near the ocean. Life’s never been such a great adventure; how do you top it?” she asked.

“With the Pacific Ocean.”

What’s next on the list for Laurie Carlson?

Writing a book on kites or rocks, she said, smiling. Whatever it is Carlson decides to do, it will not be without fervor or passion, just like with everything else she has done.



Photo courtesy of Laurie Carlson

Laurie Carlson raised goats in Dallas for dairy and wool. She has worked as a teacher and writes books aimed at children. Now she lives on the coast.



Photo courtesy of Laurie Carlson

The yarn shop at Fairview Farms offered an array of colors for crafting enthusiasts, as well as some finished products and other tools to help with sorting fibers.