

More Learning (at SOAR)

A week ago I was able to attend the SOAR (Spin-Off Autumn Retreat) up in the Lake Tahoe area. Actually, it turned into the Spin-Off **Winter** Retreat as a couple of feet of snow fell just as the week began. Fortunately for me, I wasn't due to come in until Wednesday afternoon, and my trip, other than good car prep - oil change, lights fixed, tire pressure adjusted, new wipers - was uneventful - I didn't even need to put on chains over Donner Pass (yes, named for [that Donner Party](#)).

One of my classroom views was this - very inspiring!



This was my first time to hang at a spinning event - with spinning wheels and spindles everywhere, and where the weavers pretty much equaled the knitters in numbers.

First up was my one-day workshop with Maggie Casey on beginning spinning on a wheel. I used my friend Judy's Louet S-10, which is slightly different than almost all other wheels in the

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US, but worked just fine. I learned how to adjust the wheel and cleaned it up, and learned to do three different draws - (short forward and back, and long draw), and even made real yarn - this looks wonky because I was doing a lot of different things in various parts of the yarn)

Before finishing:



After finishing:



Then it was onto the retreat portion, which was a series of 3-hour workshops. I learned out to do Andean spinning from a lovely woman Nilda, who told us folk stories and gave us whiny 1st

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worlders a reality check on our issues with the snow and weather. She told us, with gentle clarity, that she was impressed by how cold it was outside and warm inside the lodge. And that if as much snow that we had gotten had fallen in her community in the Andes, all the livestock would have died for lack of cover. It made me realize my position as a privileged 1st-world person.

She was a true and lovely woman, and I also learned to spin a bit Andean style from her.

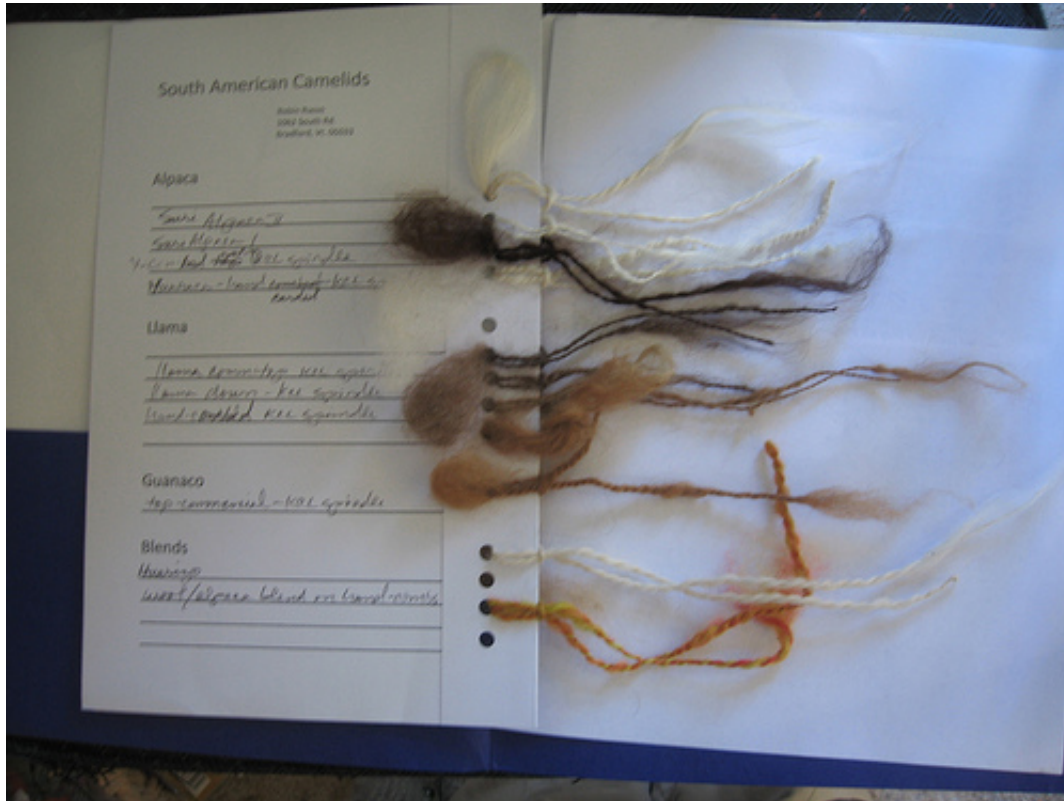


Then it was on to camelids (basically all the animals that come from the camel family, including Llama and Alpaca). Our instructor, Robin Russo, was very affirming, and I learned a couple of basics on how to card and comb fibers in addition to spinning them. We came away with a lovely sampler card:

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And finally I ventured off into the cotton world - one that I had not had any experience in before. Apparently, knitters tend not to spin cotton, as I found myself in with a bunch of weavers. Oops! But our teacher was absolutely fabulous, and I learned how to spin on a Takhli spindle almost in spite of myself.

As with all such events, the marketplace is a dangerous place - so I managed to buy some fiber that has slow gradient changes in color in a merino/silk blend (swoon!), some alpaca and other stuff. Hey, while I spent some money, I hold that I totally was good because I didn't throw down over \$800 for the spinning wheel I am lusting over.

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So much fiber to play with - good thing that I finally spun the fiber I bought last year at Rhinebeck!



The singles are spun, it's time to ply~