



## FRIDAY – Pre-Conference Clinics & Tours

**9:00-11:30 AM**

### **Three Sheeps to the Wind Tour: JG Switzer Fiber Workshop and Spirit Works Distillery**

Jessica Switzer Green, JG Switzer Fiber Design Workshop, Sebastopol, CA  
Timo and Ashby Marshall, Spirit Works Distillery, Sebastopol, CA

Tour JG Switzer's fiber design workshop, founded by Jessica Switzer Green in 2018. Jessica wanted to bring a sense of art and fashion to a timeless standby – heirloom blankets and throws. The design workshop sources wool from small mills and fiber farms and tailors each piece with care, following designs inspired by older European prints. A self-described “wool nerd,” Jessica is devoted to cultivating artisan pieces featuring heritage breed wool.

Then, walk next door to visit Spirit Works Distillery. Learn about their “grain to glass” philosophy where each batch begins with grain milled, mashed, fermented, distilled, and bottled entirely on-site. This hands-on approach allows for control over each aspect of the production process and creates a premium product whose quality has been strictly monitored each step of the way “Batch by Batch, from Grain to Glass.” Note: **Must be 21 to enter the distillery.**

Location (park here): Spirit Works Distillery, 6790 McKinley Street #100, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Park at the distillery, walk to front of the building. The design workshop is in the middle. There's also a coffee shop on the right corner of the building (distillery is on the left corner). Make sure to leave time to explore the Barlow Historical District before or after the tour for lunch and shopping.

#### **Bios:**

*Jessica Switzer Green has enjoyed every minute (almost) of a 30-year career in sustainability and technology marketing as VP, Marketing Tesla Motors, Partner, Switzer Communications, and Blue Practice, Inc. a sustainability marketing/PR firm in based in Sausalito CA and recent Trustee for The Switzer Foundation, a 30-year, 600+ Fellow community of environmental leaders.*

*Timo Marshall hails from Thurlstone, a small village in Southwest England, where his family has been refining their sloe gin recipe for generations. Ashby is West Coast bred and has a deep passion and impressive palate for whiskey. Ashby is the only distiller in her family.*

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**9:00-11:30 AM**

### **Targeted Grazing – an Ecological Tool to Manage Range and Pasture Lands**

Stephanie Larson, UC Cooperative Extension Sonoma County

Grazing is a cost-effective vegetation management alternative where other options are ineffective, and targeted grazing can be more cost effective on landscapes that are too steep, rocky or remote for conventional vegetation management (mowing or chemical treatment), or in the urban-wildland interface where burning is not an option. Targeted grazing, a concept that has been around for decades and is sometimes called prescribed grazing and managed herbivory, is the application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or landscape goals. Learn how to implement a grazing program on your own to manage lands, or, if you decide not to own animals, how to use this knowledge when hiring a targeted grazer. Location: Santa Rosa Junior College, Shone Farm, 7450 Steve Olson Lane, Forestville, CA 95436

#### **Bio:**

***Stephanie Larson** is Director of University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), Sonoma County, and the Livestock and Range Management Advisor, conducting education and research to integrate livestock production with rangeland management and helping local producers to improve production and marketing. Her program seeks to enhance the ecosystem services provided by working landscapes, and highlights the benefits of using grazing animals as tools to manage them. Stephanie's research focuses on the effects of climate change, and the results have assisted land managers to make sound ecologic decisions to manage working landscapes, to the benefit of all users. She is also on the Board of Director for the Redwood Empire Food Bank (REFB) and co-founded its Range-to-Table program where local beef producers donate beef to the Food Bank to provide local protein to those in need.*

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**1:00-5:00 PM**

**Natural Wool Dyeing Clinic**

Brooke Sinnes, Sincere Sheep

Looking for an alternative to synthetic dyes? Learn how to use natural materials. A mordant, or dye fixative, is a substance that is used for dyeing fabrics or intensifying stains. Mordanting will be covered and dyeing with raw dyestuffs and extracts. Learn about other materials and techniques to further enhance your colors. Fiber selection and prep as well as how to maximize your efforts for deep rich colors will be covered. Cotati Room, 216 East School Street, Cotati, CA 94931

*\*Includes materials fee; each student will receive 6 one-ounce skeins of Cormo wool yarn and handouts.*

**Bio:**

***Brooke Sinnes** founded Sincere Sheep in 2003 based on principles she translated from the slow food movement. Applying the ideas of traditional and regionally sourced ingredients to textiles, her early products were made from wool from bay area family farms and processed at a local mill into carded roving and yarn. Sincere Sheep continues to be inspired and guided by the concept of terroir (the set of all environmental factors that affect a crop's phenotype, including unique environment contexts, farming practices and a crop's specific growth habitat) and the primary focus remains single-source, breed-specific and custom-made yarns and fibers. They offer a diversified selection of custom made products from partnerships with California and US wool growers, and small businesses. Brooke strongly believes in "voting with your dollars" and uses that as a philosophy to make business decisions. She sources products from producers and companies who follow high standards and work in a sustainable way to support the local economy.*

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**1:30-4:00 PM**

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----- 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM -----

RECEPTION/SILENT AUCTION  
Bar sponsored by SVF Foundation

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## SATURDAY - Conference

----- 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM -----

### **Session 1: The Biological Challenges of Farming with Rare Breeds**

Panelists:

Brian Larson, Lincoln Longwool sheep breeder  
Oogie McGuire, Shepherd of Black Welsh Mountain Sheep  
Phil Sponenberg, Livestock Conservancy Technical Advisor  
John Wilkes, former Clun Forest and Kerry Hill sheep breeder

Hear our panel of experts discuss the major obstacles facing breeds in the biological realm: managing diversity in small populations, popular sire syndrome, importing new genetics from other countries, and conservation breeding strategies that go beyond individual farm needs to support the breed population as a whole.

#### **Bios:**

**Brian Larson** has owned sheep since he was nine years old and spent nearly 40 years breeding traditional Lincoln Longwools. He has brought in semen from three rams from the United Kingdom and is planning on bringing the genetics of four more rams later this year. Jennifer and Brian both obtained their PhD degrees in Animal Science Nutrition and now work as private consultants globally. Brian and Jennifer have been members of the Livestock Conservancy for about 20 years and he currently serves on the Livestock Conservancy board of directors, serving as chairman.

**Oogie McGuire** and her husband raise registered, performance recorded Black Welsh Mountain sheep. Oogie serves as the registrar for the American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association which registers all BWMS in North America. The association provides sheep, labor and data collection for the USDA NAGP for their projects in semen freezing and artificial insemination. She is also the only inspector approved by the UK Black Welsh Sheep Breeders' Association to evaluate Black Welsh Mountain sheep flocks in North America.

**D. Phillip Sponenberg**, DVM, Ph.D. has served as Technical Advisor to the Livestock Conservancy since 1978, providing counsel and mentoring to Conservancy staff, breeders, breed associations, scholars, and NGO partners. He was the moving force for establishing the Conservation Priority List and the standards for rare breed inclusion on that list. Because of the quality and originality of his approach to conservation, Dr. Sponenberg's expertise is internationally renowned. He is the author of several books on color genetics and conservation, and is a sought after speaker domestically and abroad. Phil is Professor of pathology and genetics at Virginia Tech. On his own farm, he is a conservation breeder of Tennessee Fainting goats, and enjoys playing with color genetics in his Brahma chickens.

**John Wilkes** spent the first half of his life raising cattle and sheep on the family farm in the English county of Shropshire, near the Welsh border. Initially John continued to raise the farm's traditional livestock – Clun Forest and Kerry Hill Sheep, Welsh Black and South Devon beef cattle, Large Black pigs and Brecon Buff geese. John now consults and writes about

commercial US livestock production. John enjoys a small role with UK Rare Breeds Survival Trust as their North America Ambassador. He feels this genuine and warm spirit of cooperation between with The Livestock Conservancy and RBST holds benefit and value for both organizations.

----- 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM -----

## **Session 2: Beyond Fiber, Getting the Most Out of Your Animals**

Panelists:

Zefren Anderson, Weaver

Brittany Cole Bush, Shepherd, Holistic Hides

Lisa Leonard, Navajo Churro meat provider

Deborah Neimann, Author

Rian Rinn, Sonoma County Meat, Butcher and Processor

Speakers will talk about value-added marketing of sheep products beyond lamb including hides, mutton, hogget, and services like holistic grazing.

### **Bios:**

**Zefren Anderson** grew up in *Tó'koí (Rattlesnake)*, NM and currently lives in Shiprock, NM. Zefren is Navajo belonging to the Mud clan, and born for the Many houses. He has been around weaving all his life and was told of the blankets and rugs that used to be woven on both side of his family. Recently after a few years of recreating older styles of Navajo Clothing, he wanted to learn what Navajos wore before Contact. This curiosity led him to an apprenticeship with Master Weaver Roy Kady, and Dine College's Navajo Cultural Arts program. The experiences led him to reconnect with weaving from both sides of his family, from the Mesas of Two Grey Hills, to the stories of his origins in the Mesa Verde group on his father's side of the family. Using the family oral stories, museums, weavings and tools left by his grandmothers, he has started weaving and using older ways to create fiber related utility items. Some were thought to have long been forgotten and he seeks to reestablish Navajo weaving and wool not as a recent aberration, but as a long tradition within all related tribes and techniques. *Yá'át'ééh!*

**Brittany Cole Bush** considers herself a “shepherdess of animals, people, and projects”. Through development of *The Grazing School of the West*—a vocational training program focusing on prescriptive grazing for public safety and land stewardship—she educates, supports and advocates for the next generation of animal agrarians. She is also the co-owner and operator of *Shepherdess Holistic Hides*, which purveys hides from sheep “raised and grazed” in the West. Her business works to divert the waste stream of hides as byproducts of the meat industry by tanning and bringing them to the urban market. Her hides are additionally sourced directly from sheep and fiber producers, a practice that promotes traceable, conscious consumerism. Bridging the rural and urban worlds is her passion, and she's optimistic that within this framework those working in animal agriculture will be able to thrive.

**Lisa Leonard** owns and runs *Wind Dancer Ranch* in Brooks, California, where she and her partner raise heritage breeds of sheep, goats, and hogs for breeding stock and direct farm-to-table meat for the San Francisco, Peninsula and East Bay markets. Inspired by a desire to only eat humanely raised and environmentally sustainable meat, she chose heritage breeds that would thrive in the local environment, outdoors in pastures, with only natural feed to produce flavorful meat and milk for her family. Now her farm provides meat to local families through farmer's markets and whole animal sales. The farm is home to Conservation Priority Listed San Clemente Island goats, Tamworth hogs, Spanish Black turkeys and one of the largest flocks of Navajo-Churro sheep outside of the Navajo Nation. Joining these are old style Berkshire hogs, Boer goats, and a couple very spoiled Jersey dairy cows. Ms. Leonard currently serves on the Board of the Navajo-Churro Sheep Association.

**Deborah Niemann** and her family moved to the country in 2002 to grow their own food organically, and heritage animals played the starring role in their journey from city slickers to farmers. Through the years they've raised Irish dexter cattle, Nigerian dwarf goats, American guinea hogs, Tamworth hogs, Katahdin sheep, Shetland sheep, and several breeds of poultry, all of which are on the Conservation Priority List or have graduated from it. She is the author of five books, including *Homegrown and Handmade* and *Raising Goats Naturally*, and is also the administrator of the *Shave 'Em to Save 'Em* initiative.

**Rian Rinn** raised animals in 4-H as a boy and sold them at the Healdsburg Future Farmers Country Fair. He attended culinary school and worked at a few notable restaurants, including the highly acclaimed Fifth Floor restaurant in San Francisco. Yet Rinn said he always wanted to do what the butchers were doing. He worked as the head butcher at Willowside Meats in Santa Rosa, and he did custom slaughter and taught classes on the side. Rian Rinn and his partner Jenine Alexander opened Sonoma County Meats in March of 2014 offering curing, smoking, sausage making, and cut and wrap services. Sonoma County Meat Co. is now a small USDA and state approved processor, butcher shop, and meat CSA.

----- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM -----

### **Session 3: Recreating a National Fiber System**

Panelists:

Rebecca Burgess, Director of Fibershed (an organization that develops regional, regenerative fiber systems.)

Emily Chamelin, Internationally recognized professional shearer

Marie Minnich, Marushka Farm, Shepherdess & Fiber Artist

Toia Rivera-Strohm & Brad Strohm, Von Strohm Fiber Processing Mill

Stephany Wilkes, Shearer, Leader of Fibershed Cooperative, and author

The once thriving national fiber system has all but collapsed; processors and mills have closed. With a resurgence of interest in animal fiber, how do we go about recreating this system for a new generation of fiber artists? Our panel will discuss how to create a new system and provide a market to support it.

#### **Bios:**

*In 2010 **Rebecca Burgess** made a personal commitment to develop and wear a prototype wardrobe whose dyes, fibers and labor were sourced from a region no larger than 150 miles from the project's headquarters. Burgess had no expected outcomes from the personal challenge other than to reduce her own ecological footprint and maybe inspire a few others. The resulting project became known as Fibershed. Burgess teamed up with a talented group of farmers and artisans to build the wardrobe by hand, as manufacturing equipment had all been lost from the landscape more than 20 years ago. The goal was to show that there was enough regionally-grown fiber, natural dyes, and local talent to provide this most basic human necessity—our clothes. Within months, the project became a movement, and the word Fibershed and the working concept behind it spread to regions across the globe. Burgess founded Fibershed's 501c3 to address and educate the public on the environmental, economic and social benefits of de-centralizing the textile supply chain.*

*Since 2001 **Emily Chamelin** has been working hard to excel at the craft of shearing sheep. In 2008 she decided to go into sheep shearing as a full time job and has never looked back. She brings 15 years of on-the-job experience handling sheep, skirting fleeces, sharing ideas and connecting with shepherds all over the mid-Atlantic region and around the world.*

***Marie Minnich** grew up on a diversified family farm in northeastern Pennsylvania and became interested in fiber arts at a very early age. While learning to spin in 2007, Marie was introduced to the wonderful wool produced by the heritage CVM Romeldale sheep. This ultimately led to her decision to return to her farming roots. After acquiring their farm in early 2008, Marie started with a small flock of 15 sheep in December of that year and currently has the largest flock of CVM Romeldales in the country. She has served as the Treasurer of the National CVM Conservancy, Inc. since 2010. She is a physician, practicing in the field of Anesthesiology for almost 30 years. Marie currently resides in Danville, PA with her husband, 3 dogs, and 300+ sheep.*

***Toia Rivera-Strohm** and her husband **Brad Strohm** own and operate VonStrohm Woolen Mill. The mill offers full service fiber processing South Bloomfield, OH and sources 80% of its wool and fibers from local farmers, typically within a 30 mile radius of the mill. Toia received the title Master Ashante Kente Weaver from Adamwomase, Ghana, West Africa in 2009 making her the only female, American weaver to achieve the title at the time. She also studied Taaniko weaving methods in New Zealand with native Maori masters. It is her goal to help preserve the indigenous structures through video and woven cloth. She is an Adjunct Professor of Knitwear and Accessory Design at Columbus College of Art & Design. At home, Toia and Brad grow a small herd of llamas, alpacas, and angora rabbits which they use to contribute to the offerings for sale in the mill's design studio.*

**Stephany Wilkes** is the author of *“Raw Material: Working Wool in the West”* (Oregon State University Press). She is a sheep shearer certified by the University of California Agricultural and Natural Extension Center, a wool classer certified by the American Sheep Industry Association, and the president of the Northern California Fibershed Cooperative. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications, and she speaks about sheep and wool terroir at yarn shops, fiber festivals, schools, and events. When she's not living on I-80, she lives in San Francisco with her husband, Ian, and her failed livestock guardian dog, Dude.

----- 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM -----

LUNCH

----- 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM - BREAKOUT SESSIONS -----

### **Marketing Your Wool and Sheep Products in the 21st Century**

Deborah Neimann, Author

You will find today's customers from coast to coast, but relationship marketing is more important than ever, so how do you get those customers to know, love, and trust you so that they buy from you again and again? Without spending a dime, you can use social media to get to know your customers, what they love and what they hate. Learn which social media channels work best for your particular products and how you can maximize returns without spending okg hours on your computer.

#### **Bio:**

**Deborah Niemann** and her family moved to the country in 2002 to grow their own food organically, and heritage animals played the starring role in their journey from city slickers to farmers. Through the years they've raised Irish dexter cattle, Nigerian dwarf goats, American guinea hogs, Tamworth hogs, Katahdin sheep, Shetland sheep, and several breeds of poultry, all of which are on the Conservation Priority List or have graduated from it. She is the author of five books, including *Homegrown and Handmade* and *Raising Goats Naturally*, and is also the administrator of the Shave 'Em to Save 'Em initiative.

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### **Keeping an Eye on the Long Game – Balancing Improvement and Biodiversity**

Oogie McGuire, Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Shepherd

You're an experienced farmer looking for easy-care sheep that perform on forages alone? You want to preserve and use heritage breeds because you value genetic diversity but you don't want to sacrifice performance and marketability? In this talk we will discuss using the National Sheep Improvement Program's estimated breeding values (EBV's) for improving meat production in Black Welsh Mountain sheep. Because of the rarity of the breed it is absolutely necessary to take this approach hand in hand with also managing biodiversity; there are challenges but the rewards can be great!

#### **Bio:**

**Oogie McGuire** and her husband raise registered, performance recorded Black Welsh Mountain sheep. Oogie serves as the registrar for the American Black Welsh Mountain Sheep Association which registers all BWMS in North America. The association provides sheep, labor and data collection for the USDA NAGP for their projects in semen freezing and artificial insemination. She is also the only inspector approved by the UK Black Welsh Sheep Breeders' Association to evaluate Black Welsh Mountain sheep flocks in North America.

----- 2:45 PM – 3:45 PM -----

### **Fiber Production: What Artists Want & What Breeders Need**

Toia Rivera-Strohm and Brad Strohm, Von Strohm Fiber Processing Mill

New fiber artists or breeders are often lost when determining what a “quality fleece” is. See examples that illustrate how to select a fleece appropriate for your project. Learn how to get top dollar for your fleeces. Hear about some “best

practices” the presenters have extracted from solving real world problems like pricing, finding a market, cleaning and skirting, and developing social networks between breeders and artists.

**Bios: Toia Rivera-Strohm** and her husband **Brad Strohm** own and operate VonStrohm Woolen Mill. The mill offers full service fiber processing South Bloomfield, OH and sources 80% of its wool and fibers from local farmers, typically within a 30 mile radius of the mill. Toia received the title Master Ashante Kente Weaver from Adamwomase, Ghana, West Africa in 2009 making her the only female, American weaver to achieve the title at the time. She also studied Taaniko weaving methods in New Zealand with native Maori masters. It is her goal to help preserve the indigenous structures through video and woven cloth. She is an Adjunct Professor of Knitwear and Accessory Design at Columbus College of Art & Design. At home, Toia and Brad grow a small herd of llamas, alpacas, and angora rabbits which they use to contribute to the offerings for sale in the mill's design studio.

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### **Counting Sheep - Finding Rare Bloodlines and Hidden Pockets of Diversity**

Deborah Hunter, Karakul Shepherds Alliance

Between her 80s-90s shepherding experiences and finishing graduate school, Deborah became aware of the negative effects of Karakul flock book closure on both sheep and shepherds. Karakuls are easy care, fat-tailed sheep that thrive in tough conditions. The network of collaborative breeders disappeared when the flock book closed, but isolated sheep flocks remained and were bred pure for decades. Genetics became concentrated, but the breeders did not know who or where the breeders were. During this workshop Deborah will outline the methods used to collect census data, the perfect time of year to conduct a shepherd survey, and questions that gave highest value in the final report. She will talk about historic Karakul bloodlines, the new landrace bloodlines, the “hidden” flocks located, and how our shepherd demographic has changed.

**Bio: Deborah Hunter** is the Karakul Shepherds Alliance Registrar, [karakulshepherds.org](http://karakulshepherds.org) manager. She was raised in Saratoga Springs, New York, home of the 4th oldest Thoroughbred racetrack (1863). Deborah served in the Army; then graduated with a Biology major-Chemistry minor and worked in medical and veterinary medical research for 17 years. Settling in south-central Michigan, she developed a farm with Karakul and Tunis sheep for 12 years. Early on Deborah was fascinated with the US history of Karakul sheep. She applied at the local public library and was selected as a reference librarian, which allowed during slow times, database searches for Karakul history. With her combination of scientific research and information retrieval skills, Deborah was recruited for a Regulatory Compliance Manager position. She sold the farm, moved to Seattle, and then pursued a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Washington. More articles on Karakul sheep accumulated. Now a retired librarian in northeast Washington her plans are to provide support services to breeders, register and count Karakuls, write stories of pioneer breeders and bloodlines, accumulate articles written by Karakul breeders, and edit a new 21st century Karakul Handbook.

----- **4:00 PM – 5:00 PM** -----

### **The Secret Lives of Livestock Guardian Dogs**

Dan Macon, Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor

Do these big white dogs actually earn their keep? Are they an effective tool for protecting livestock from predators? Cooperative Extension agent and sheep producer Dan Macon will discuss the use and management of livestock guardian dogs in a variety of small-scale and commercial ranch settings. In addition to information about breeds, dog selection, and dog management, Dan will discuss his research into interactions between livestock guardian dogs and predators using affordable remote sensing and GPS technology.

**Bio: Dan Macon** is the livestock and natural resources advisor for Placer, Nevada, Sutter and Yuba Counties. Prior to becoming an advisor, he was an associate specialist in rangeland science and management at UC Davis, with research and extension activities focused on drought management, predator-livestock coexistence, and water quality. Dan is also a partner in Flying Mule Farm, a small-scale commercial sheep operation in Auburn, California. He holds a master's degree in

*integrated resource management from Colorado State University and a bachelor's degree in agricultural and managerial economics from UC Davis. He currently serves as vice president of the California Wool Growers Association and is a past president of the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management.*

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## **Making the Leap to Longwools**

Brian Larson

Have you been considering raising one of the Longwool sheep breeds? Did you know that these breeds have common ancestry, but distinct breeds diverged based on geography, climate and intended use? That their wool has historically been a highly valued commodity and each breed has its own distinct fleece characteristics which dictate their management and potential market? That their various body types have evolved and diverged based on location and their master breeders' best instincts? That Longwool breeds were developed for temperate climates with ample rainfall and thrive with abundant and quality grazing - they are not necessarily adapted to steep terrain, hot or dry climates or sparse grazing conditions? Attend this presentation to learn about the different breeds with view of their management, nutrition and fleece characteristics from a Master Longwool breeder!

**Bio:** ***Brian Larson** has owned sheep since he was nine years old and spent nearly 40 years breeding traditional Lincoln Longwools. He has brought in semen from three rams from the United Kingdom and is planning on bringing the genetics of four more rams later this year. Jennifer and Brian both obtained their PhD degrees in Animal Science Nutrition and now work as private consultants globally. Brian and Jennifer have been members of the Livestock Conservancy for about 20 years and he currently serves on the Livestock Conservancy board of directors, serving as chairman.*