

THE

MOTHER OF ALL

Newsletter of the Arizona Desert Weavers & Spinners Guild, Inc.

APRIL 2025

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From the President Desk **Merlyn Heck**

adwsg.president@gmail.com

Howdy, fellow Guild members!

With so much talk recently about artificial intelligence (and the way it's popping up in just about every sector of technology these days), I was reminded about a blog post I read back in 2018. A machine learning researcher had given an AI algorithm a training data set of knitting patterns and told it to generate new patterns based on them. The algorithm—dubbed “SkyKnit” as a tongue-in-cheek reference to the homicidal Skynet AI from the Terminator movies—produced patterns that were barely knittable, with names such as “Lacy 2047,” “Paw Not Pointed 2 Stitch 2,” and my personal favorite “Pitsilised Koekirjad Cushion Sampler Poncho.” A community of online knitters took on



"Tiny Baby Whale Soto" pattern by SkyKnit, knitted by Gloria Hanlon

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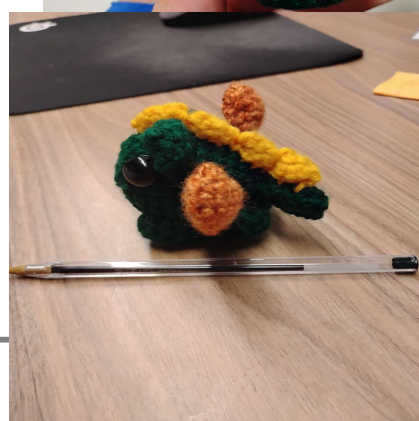
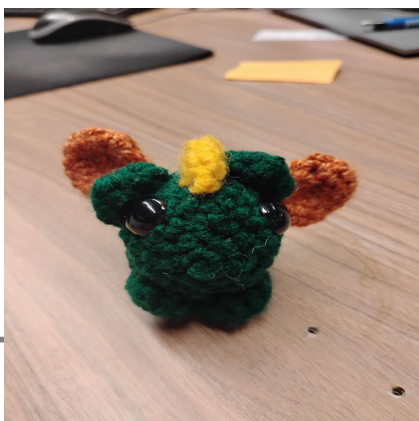
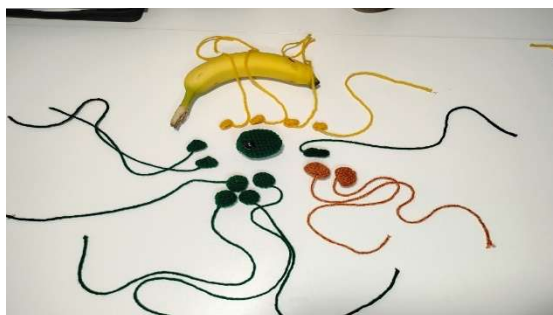
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the challenge of bringing some of these procedurally-generated patterns to life, and the results could largely be described as spectacularly mind-melting and sometimes a bit terrifying.

There have been some major leaps in AI technology in the past 7 years, so I decided to check in on its current pattern-generating capabilities. Of the many AI systems available, I chose ChatGPT for this experiment because it's well recognized and I could give it one free prompt to answer without giving it my email address. ChatGPT is a chat bot that people often use to generate code, write corporate middle-management emails, and sometimes look up information (never use ChatGPT to find information, it's not designed for that and will just make up convincing misinformation).

When I gave ChatGPT the prompt to "generate an amigurumi crochet pattern of a dragon," it responded with something that looked very much like any free crochet pattern on the internet. It included a list of materials, defined abbreviations used in the pattern, instructions for all the pieces needed (head and body, 4 legs, tail, 2 ears, 2 wings, and 4-6 spikes), and instructions for assembling it. Everything I read made sense and looked complete. I could see the pattern would make the kinds of simple shapes I would expect from an easy pattern for beginners. If I hadn't been the one who just told the computer to create it, it would have looked like any other free crochet pattern that human artists write up and post for fellow crocheters to enjoy.

It began to look suspicious as I finished each piece. The body and head, worked in one piece, were just an oval with no definition. The tail was long and slender, like a cat's instead of a dragon. The ears were pointy, also like a cat's. In fact, if not for the wings (simple half-circles) and spikes (also half-circles), the result was very much just a cat. While it is cute, and a complete project that makes visual sense (unlike the creations of SkyKnit), it's clear that ChatGPT does not understand what a dragon is.



From the President Desk
Merlyn Heck

adwsg.president@gmail.com

And of course it doesn't. A chatbot is software designed to analyze patterns in language and reproduce them, the computer doesn't comprehend what it writes. What it produces is essentially babble, based on what real humans have written and made available on the internet. I think the reason this pattern became a cat instead of a dragon is because there are so many free cat crochet patterns available for the algorithm to absorb and copy. It took the most common words and phrases associated with the words "crochet pattern" and "amigurumi," then tacked on some wings and spikes that are associated with the word "dragon." The fact that it produced something that resembles what a human would write is a testament to how much training data it can access and how far AI development has come in recent years.

There are much larger conversations around AI than what I can address here, but I do wonder what kind of impact it could have on fiber art communities as it becomes more entrenched in our everyday lives. There are already AI-generated books being advertised towards beginners, who don't know enough about weaving to tell that the instructions don't make any sense. The human artists whose patterns became training data were never asked permission for their work to be used this way. The computing power required to generate these prompted answers is a massive source of pollution and waste. And does AI even have a place in activities where the appeal is often in doing something manually that is typically done by machines? I personally have satisfied my curiosity; I don't feel like this particular tool adds anything to my own artistic process.

See you (and your human-generated art) at the meeting!

Merlyn, *President*

For further reading

Strategies to avoid AI fraud: <https://it.wisc.edu/news/ai-powered-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-2024/>

SkyKnit blog post: <https://www.aiweirdness.com/skyknit-when-knitters-teamed-up-with-18-04-19/>

A weaver's experience with an AI tapestry design: <https://www.ellenramseytapestry.art/blog/an-experiment-with-ai>

MIT paper on AI and lacemaking (heavily technical language): <https://mit-genai.pubpub.org/pub/nz0prx2u/release/2>

NOMINATING AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

adwsg.secretary@gmail.com

Slate of nominees for 2025-2026 election

President: Merlyn Heck

VP of Workshops: Roberta Perpich

VP of Programs: Carolyn Stang

Secretary: Velvet Dishon

Treasurer: Sue Carnel

Nominations from the floor for any additional candidates will be taken at the April 5th meeting.

The election for Board officers for the 2025-26 Guild year will be held electronically, using ElectionBuddy, which is the same platform as we used last year.

After the April 5th Guild meeting, you will get an email with details about how to vote and a link for casting your vote so be sure to check your email and spam folder. Please be sure to vote as soon as possible after you receive the email.

Presentation

Our April meeting

The History of Sakiori

Amanda Robinette

Sakiori (which simply means 'rag-weaving') was a technique practiced by the Japanese rural poor from approximately the mid-18th through the mid-20th centuries, who had, until then, relied on bast fibers alone. In this lecture, learn more about the fascinating history of sakiori in Japan, why its reliance on rag weaving is unique in world history, and why the principles of sakiori matter to us today.

MEMBERSHIP

Trish Boone

adwsg.membership@gmail.com

Welcome to our new member in March, Morgan Hunt. We are happy to welcome so many new members this year. This brings our registered members up to 108!

At the April meeting we will begin early dues renewal for the June 1, 2025-May 31, 2026 year. This happens every year before we break for the summer. Members have until the October meeting to renew, but your dues help pay ongoing Guild expenses over the summer.

There are 3 ways to renew: in person at meetings, by mail and online!

In-person: Attached is the Guild membership renewal form. Please bring the completed form to a Guild meeting, along with your cash or check payment.

By mail: Please complete the attached membership renewal form and mail to me, along with your payment at the address on the form.

ONLINE! You can complete the membership renewal form online and pay by PayPal! (there is a small processing fee to cover cc/PP charges) Go to <https://adwsg.org/guild-forms> , **complete the form and indicate your payment method**. The PayPal button for payment is right below the membership form entry boxes.

Whatever way you choose to renew, completing the membership dues renewal form is required to keep our member's information up to date.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if I can help you in any way with this process.

HOSPITALITY

Julie Cattaneo

adwsg.hospitality@gmail.com

Please make sure to add a notecard to your food contribution listing the major ingredients for our members that have food allergies. Also consider a beverage contribution is welcome as well.

WORKSHOPS

Roberta Perpich

adwsg.workshops@gmail.com

The Western Sakiori Scarf workshop is full! We are so thrilled to have Amanda Robinette come to Arizona and teach this workshop. Participants are busy gathering fabrics, mostly silk, for this rag style weaving workshop. I am sure they will be willing to share their completed projects at an upcoming meeting.

FEDERATION

Helene Hall

adwsg.federation@gmail.com



ARIZONA FIBER FESTIVAL

Sponsored by

Arizona Federation of Weavers and Spinners Guilds
and the Town of Camp Verde
April 10-12, 2026

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged.

Contact Kathleen

Kathleen Orloff

925-766-0966

Mountain Spinners and Weavers Guild

korloff@bkorloff.com

SPINNING/FIBER ZOOM

Paula Rudnick

adwsg.fibergroup@gmail.com

If someone who is interested, didn't get the email link they must email me at adwsg.fibergroup@gmail.com so I can add their name to the list.

Demonstrations

Jody Dozer

adwsg.demonstrations@gmail.com

Demonstrations -

It's Maricopa County Fair time. Looking for Demonstrators for Saturday April 12th. 11:00 am to 4:00pm at the state fair grounds. This is in the coliseum sharing our love of fibers with the public. If interested in demonstrating please contact Jody at adwsg.demonstrations@gmail.com

Shearing -

Shearing at Dozer Lane is happening Saturday April 26th at 9:00 am. Mick, our shearer, is very quick. He is used to shearing large herds so our small flock won't take long. We will be sorting fleeces as they come off the sheep. We are planning a morning filled in fiber fun so plan on hanging around. Bring your wheel, your needles, hooks or whatever fiber thing you want to share. We will learn some wool felting from Roxanne and have some tools and WOOL to felt. Come to explore or just hang out with other fiber crazy people. Bring a dish if you plan on staying for the pot luck. RSVP would be appreciated. jody@dozerlane.com. Thanks Jody and Cheryl

LIBRARY

Beki Welsch

adwsg.librarian@gmail.com

This month I am highlighting another four books that are available in our Guild library. The library is available for any Guild member to use. Check out books, magazines or DVDs for the month. Suggestions of new titles to add are always welcomed.

Weaving on Gourds by Marianne Barnes teaches you how to combine basket weaving and gourd art with instructions to make five different projects. The book covers preparing the gourd, weaving techniques, strengthening the rim and adding embellishments. Lots of photos of completed works offer inspiration for creating your own works.

Krokbragd: How to Design and Weave by Debby Greenlaw brings together traditional aspects of krokbragd with a fresh, contemporary approach. Explore the structure and design of krokbragd for the floor, table and rigid-heddle loom. In addition to traditional single krokbragd, exciting variations such as double point krokbragd and turned krokbragd are also covered.

Craft of the Dyer: Colour from Plants and Lichens by Karen Leigh Casselman is a complete guide to making and using dyes from a wide variety of plants – from acorn to zinnia. For each plant the book includes suitability for dyeing, parts to use, processing, availability, fastness of dye and more.

Boro and Sashiko, Harmonious Imperfection: the Art of Japanese Mending and Stitching by Shannon Mullett-Bowlsby shows you how to create dramatic, unique designs and embrace imperfection, admiring the utilitarian beauty of every stitch. The book includes more than 30 sashiko designs inspired by historical works by Japanese masters and gives tips on needle-threading and knotting.

Intermountain Weavers Conference

Beki Welsch

adwsg.librarian@gmail.com

Registration is open for Intermountain Weavers Conference to be held:

June 17 to 21 in Albuquerque. There are 3-day (WThF), 1-day Sat, and 1/2 day (Sat AM and Sat PM) classes offered. <https://www.intermountainweavers.org/> Sign up is first come first served.

I have registered for a 3 day and a Sat morning class and will be looking for someone to carpool with. I plan to drive as I will be taking a Baby Wolf loom. I MIGHT have room for another small loom or spinning wheel.



CRAFTING A CREATIVE MEMOIR

Anna Akridge

adwsg.webmaster@gmail.com

There is just one month left in our "Crafting a Creative Memoir" adventure! The last prompt will be going out after the April meetings, but past entries will remain available online for revisiting at <https://adwsgcreativememoir.substack.com/>

Thank you to everyone who has followed along this year. I hope you found something that interested you, sparked some new thoughts, and helped you think about your craft in a new way. If anyone would be interested in sharing their writing at the end-of-year May meeting, contact Anna at adwsg.webmaster@gmail.com and we'll coordinate.

OFFICERS FOR 2024-2025

President	Merlyn Heck	adwsg.president@gmail.com
Vice President Programs	Sue Garber	adwsg.programs@gmail.com
Vice President Workshops	Roberta Perpich	adwsg.workshops@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sue Carneal	adwsg.treasurer@gmail.com
Secretary	Velvet Dishon	adwsg.secretary@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR 2024-2025

Demonstrations/Publicity	Jody Dozer	adwsg.demonstrations@gmail.com
Federation Representative	Helene Hall	adwsg.federation@gmail.com
Historian	Vacant	adwsg.historian@gmail.com
Hospitality	Julie Cattaneo	adwsg.hospitality@gmail.com
Interest Groups		
Spinning/Fiber Group	Paula Rudnick	adwsg.fibergroup@gmail.com
Wonderful Weavers	Ann Ormiston	adwsg.weavinggroup@gmail.com
In Person Spinning Group	Sue Garber	adwsg.programs@gmail.com
Librarian	Beki Welsch	adwsg.librarian@gmail.com
Membership	Trish Boone	adwsg.membership@gmail.com
Membership Assistant	Elaine Rowles	
Newsletter Editor	Ann Ormiston	adwsg.editor@gmail.com
75 TH Anniversary	Sue Carneal	adwsg.anniversary@gmail.com
Ways & Means	Lauren Goldfish	adwsg.waysandmeans@gmail.com
Web Site	Anna Akridge	adwsg.webmaster@gmail.com

Next Meeting:

APRIL 5th will be in person and on Zoom

At

Northtown Community Center

Meeting starts at 10 am

MOA Submission

Deadline

**The 15th of each month
September through May**

adwsg.editor@gmail.com

INTEREST GROUPS

SPINNING/FIBER GROUP ZOOM MEETINGS

Meets the third Wednesday of the month (all year long). FOR THE PRESENT TIME WE ARE MEETING ON ZOOM-(please be sure you are on the group email list so you get the email invite) We love to chat, learn what events are happening online, see what everyone is working on, and exchange ideas and get help with questions or problems we might be having with our projects. Our Zoom starts at 9:30---so join us and start chatting. We love to talk and work while we are still at home so join us for the talk and fun. We also try to have field trips a few times a year.

The group chair is **Paula Rudnick** - adwsg.fibergroup@gmail.com

WONDERFUL WEAVERS STUDY GROUP

Currently Meeting as a ZOOM Group - Meets the Third Sunday of each month, all year long. Currently we are meeting from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm as a Zoom Group. We discuss Hand Weaving structures, ideas, problems, and solutions and enjoy our show and tell. Come and join our group. The group chair is **Ann Ormiston** adwsg.weavinggroup@gmail.com

THE DROP IN SPINNERS GROUP

The Drop In Spinners meet at the North Town Center 2202 E Waltann Ln, Phoenix on the 4th Thursday of each month from 10:00 to 2:00 pm. If you want an email reminder, contact me and I will add you to the email list. We always leave having fulfilled our laughter quota!! Join us.

From the front door, proceed to the library in the far back left corner. Everyone is welcome to attend. Anyone with an interest in spinning may join in, even if you are currently working on something else.

The group chair is Sue Garber adwsg.programs@gmail.com

ADWSG WEBSITE

<http://www.adwsg.org>

Follow us on

[FACEBOOK](#)

Join Us for Our Monthly Meetings:

10 am In Person

Northtown Community Center 2202 E.
Waltann Lane,

Phoenix, AZ

Doors Open at 9 am

Come Early and Mingle!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

APRIL 5, 2025

May 3, 2025

BRING YOUR OWN CUP

Thank you for bringing your reusable cups,
mugs, and utensils to the meetings.

Let us take care of Our Earth