

41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL  
**MOUNTAIN &  
VALLEY WOOL  
FESTIVAL**



**OCTOBER 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> 2024**  
**SANTA FE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO**





# SANTA FE'S FIBER ARTS STORE

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malabrigo



**NORO**



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Visit us at festival booth C-30



# FESTIVAL INFO

1

## 2024 Hours of Operation

Saturday Oct 5th 9:00am-5:00pm - Sunday Oct 6th 9:00am-4:00pm

### Where Is?.....

Vendor List & Map - pages 8-9

About MAVWA and becoming a Member - page 2

Main Schedule - page 3

Demonstrations Schedule - pages 4 & 5

2024 Sponsors & Sponsoring the MAVWA Wool Festival- page 6

Music Schedule - page 11

A Tale of Reinvention - The Brief History of Phoenix Fiber Mill - page 13

Nålbinding - The Ancient Art of Fiber Looping - page 15

MAVWA Member Directory - pages 12-16

## The 41st Annual Mountain and Valley Wool Festival is

Family friendly activities, educational opportunities, contests and competitions in the various fiber fields. A Fiber Market featuring a variety of fiber, yarn, equipment, finished items and much more! Fiber animals, silent auction, fiber arts and sheep shearing demonstrations, food vendors, regional musicians.

**We're glad you are here!**





# M A V W A

The Mountain and Valley Wool Association

**MAVWA** is a membership organization open to all. Its mission is to promote fiber products from all fiber bearing animals and those that produce those products, —especially those in Colorado, New Mexico and Texas— To also pass on the rich history of the fiber-related crafts to the next group of fiber enthusiasts. MAVWA produces the Mountain and Valley Wool Festival - celebrating its 41st year, as well as other activities that promote fiber production and fiber products in Colorado, New Mexico and Texas.

## Become a MAVWA Member

Help support the MAVWA Wool Festival and MAVWA by becoming a member.

MAVWA offers two types of memberships:

Individual/Family/Business \$35.00

Organization/Association \$60.00

More information and online and downloadable forms are available on our website:

<https://mavwawoolfest.org/>  
under the Membership drop-down





# FESTIVAL HAPPENINGS

3

## Throughout Both Days of the Festival

### Fiberarts Marketplace

Sat 9:00 - 5:00 Sun 9:00 - 4:00

Map and Vendor List on pages 8 & 9

### Information & Merchandise Booth

Sat 8:00 - 5:30 Sun 8:00 - 4:30

### Demonstrations - Exhibit - Hall Demo Area

Schedule on pages 4 & 5

Live Music - Schedule on page 11

### Fiber Animals

Sheep, Alpacas, Llamas...

Animal Pavilion - Animal Pens Area

### Sheep Shearing Demonstrations

Animal Pavilion - Animal Demos Area

Throughout the day - will be announced

**Sat 1:00 - Sun 11:00** Animal Pavilion - Animal Demos Area

### Llama Show & Demonstration - Jill Knuckles - Tall Tail Llama Ranch & Fiber Arts

Experience the versatility of llamas by learning about their extraordinary fiber as well as their agility and gentleness. You will learn the difference between double coat, single coat and suri fiber and have the opportunity to walk a llama.

## Saturday October 5th

### Silent Auction

Exhibit Hall - Silent Auction Area

Donations Accepted 8:00-8:45

Bidding 11:00-3:30

Pick Up Winning Bids 4:00-4:45

### Hand Spun Yarn Show/Competition

Exhibit Hall - Yarn Competition Area

Registration at Info Booth 8:00-8:45

Drop off Entries Accepted 8:00-9:00

Closed for Judging 10:00-12:00

Awards presentation 12:30-12:45

Open for Viewing 12:00-5:00

Skein Pickup 4:00-5:00

Judge: Marianne Hurley - Judge's Scribe: Carole Morain

### Millspun Yarn Show/Competition

Exhibit Hall - Yarn Competition Area

Registration at the Info Booth 8:00-8:45

Drop off entries 8:00-9:00

People's Choice Voting 10:00-3:45

People's Choice Results 3:45

Pick up Entries 4:00-5:00

### Fleece Show & Sale

Animal Pavilion - Fleece Show Area

Registration at the Info Booth 8:00-8:45

Drop off Entries Accepted 8:00-9:30

Fleece Judging 10:00-12:00 - open to public

Fleece Sale 2:00-4:00

Judge: Jay Begay

Judge's Scribe: Rebecca Orum

### Registration for Spinning, Knitting

& Crochet Contests - Booth B-01

Ellen's Woolly Wonders 9:00-5:00



Wendy Jenner's 2023 entry  
Grand Champion awardee

## Sunday October 6th

### Garment & Home Accessories

#### Show/Competition

Exhibit Hall - GHA Competition Area

Registration at the Info Booth 8:00-8:45

Drop off entries 8:00-9:00

Closed for Judging 10:30-12:00

Awards presentation 12:15-12:30

Open for viewing 12:00-3:30

Pick up Entries 3:00-4:00

Judge - Svea Peterson

Judge's Scribe - Nancy Magyar

### Dyed Yarn Show/Competition

Exhibit Hall - Yarn Competition Area

Registration at the Info Booth 8:00-8:45

Drop off entries 8:00-9:00

Closed for Judging 10:00-11:45

Awards presentation 12:00-12:15

Open for Viewing 12:00-3:30

Pick up Entries 3:00-4:00

Judge: Ric Rao

### Registration for Spinning, Knitting

& Crochet Contests - Booth B-01

Ellen's Woolly Wonders 9:00-11:00

Contests under the Guild Tent 12:00-1:00

Please bring your own spinning wheel, Navajo spindle,

knitting needles, crochet hooks & yarn.

Roving will be provided for spinning contests.

Spinning- Speed, Blindfolded, Two Person

Navajo and Spindle Spinning

Knitting - Speed and Blindfolded

Crochet - Speed and Blindfolded





# DEMONSTRATIONS

All Demonstrations are held in Exhibit Hall Demonstrations Area unless noted

**Saturday October 5th**

## 11:00 Locker Hooking

**Kathy Schneider** - This simple technique has transpired into a fun way to use your stash of yarn, roving, top, locks of mohair, fabric strips or even plastic bags to create something useful. The technique will be demonstrated, and several samples of possible projects will be displayed.

## 12:00 Spinning Anything with Nothing

**Glenna Dean - Art through the Loom Guild Member**

See how a variety of tools (or no tool at all) can produce the same yarn, given an understanding of how to generate twist energy and introduce fiber to it.

## 1:00 Buying and Preparing a Raw Fleece

**Rhonda Amen - IT= RAW FLEECE - No, IT'S not a secret, and The Fleece Factory can help!**

This demo will help you with all the questions about buying and preparing a raw fleece.

What is IT? How do I sort IT? How do I grade IT?

What product will I make with IT that will made me happy?

## 2:00 Blending Fiber and Colors

**Kathy Schneider** - Hackles and combs will be used to blend colors and different types of fibers to produce roving and or top. Hackles are a nice alternative to only using combs.

## 3:00 Needle Felting

**Judy Chapman – Art through the Loom Guild Member**

Needle Felting with a touch of Wet Felting

Description: Attendees will learn how to make wool locks to needle felt onto a needle felted sheep.

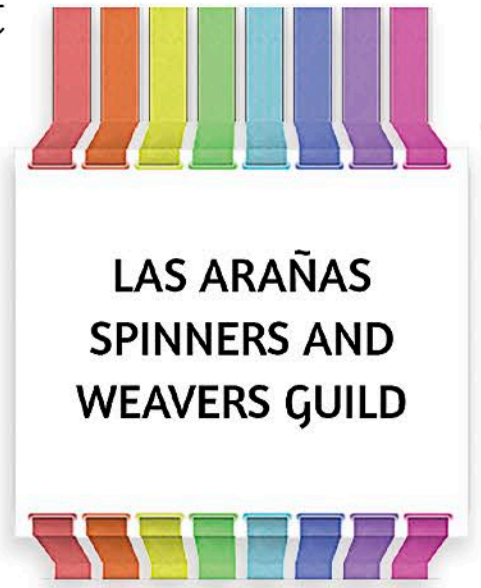
## 4:00 Carding and Spinning Alpaca Fiber

**Rene Zender** - Rene will demonstrate how to card and spin alpaca fiber with no washing of the fiber.

## Fiber Arts Demonstrations.

### Las Arañas Fiber Arts Guild

**Las Arañas** will be demonstrating a variety of fiber arts including spinning on a wheel and drop spindle, weaving, and needle felting. In the Exhibit Hall Main Area.



### Las Arañas Spinners and

### Weavers Guild

was formed in 1970 by a group of local spinners and weavers to provide education and learning experiences for its members. It also increased the awareness and appreciation of fiber arts to the general public through community outreach programs.

**11:00 - 4:00** - In the Exhibit Hall main area

## Kid's Activities Table - Art Making Fun!

Sponsored by the Covington Family  
Free! (Donations gladly accepted)

Supplies underwritten by

Oil and Cotton Art Classes and Supply - Dallas, Texas

### Artists little and big can learn to:

Make a yarn cordage bracelet

Paint a scenic postcard with watercolors

Tell a story by wrapping a stick with colorful yarn  
(An easy wool craft for the littlest fiber artist)

Plus - Time to draw and color in response to the festival.

**Sunday October 6th**

## 11:00 Botanical Printing

**Carol Ganand - Carol SILKS**

Do you love nature? Learn to print using leaves, flowers, seed pods, and other natural materials to create patterns on fabric such as silk, wool or cotton. This eco-printing evokes the Colorado outdoors.

## 12:00 Felting a Hat with a Brim

**Alicia Marshall - Moondance Alpacas**

Alicia demonstrates the process of felting a Hat with a brim. She will start with carded alpaca fiber and end up with a felted 3D hat.

## 1:00 Yarn Dyeing Demonstration

**Joy Getha** - Join fiber artist and instructor Joy Getha as she demonstrates how she dyes a skein of sock yarn. She will describe the process from start to finish, but due to time and equipment constraints, she can only demonstrate applying the dye – but that's the fun part!

## 2:00 Spindle Spinning With (& without) a Distaff

**June Covington** - Textiles Coordinator at Oil & Cotton Art and Supply in Dallas, TX

Sometimes, the old ways are the most efficient. Learn how to prepare long-lock wool with combs, mount it on a distaff then spin that roving into yarn on a supported spindle. Whorls and shafts of various styles will be discussed.

## 3:00 Spinning on a Spindle and Wheel

**Joy Getha** – Join fiber artist and instructor Joy Getha as she demonstrates how to spin on both a drop spindle and a spinning wheel. She will describe the process of going from sheep to garment, and will answer questions from the audience.

**Demonstrations Schedule  
continued on page 5**



# DEMONSTRATIONS

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## Throughout Both Days of the Festival

### Las Tejedoras Fiber Arts Guild

Las Tejedoras Fiber Arts Guild has a demonstration area in the Main Exhibit Hall. Guild members are available all day Saturday and Sunday to demonstrate and assist visitors who want to try a wide variety of fiber-related activities. Children's activities will also be available. Scheduled demonstration topics are also available as follows:

#### Saturday

9:00 – 10:00 - Ellen Higgins: the use of different plying techniques to make novelty and art yarns.

10:30 – 11:30 - Patty Coughlin: the use of wool yarns in various embroidery and needlepoint techniques.

Noon – 1:00 - Christy Reveles: weaving fabric on a floor loom with many colorful examples from her handweaving journey.

1:30 – 2:30 - Annie MacHale: band weaving on an inkle loom and the use of color to create patterns.

3:00 – 4:00 - Dana Kull: weaving on small pin looms, joining methods, and uses of the resulting fabrics.

#### Sunday

9:00 – 10:00 - Sue Mills: Kumihimo, the art of Japanese braiding, with samples of different patterns and uses.

10:30 – 11:30 - Joy Getha: spinning wool yarn using a simple, portable tool: a drop spindle. She will have several types of drop spindles to demonstrate.

Noon – 1:00 - Julie Filatoff: weaving on a rigid heddle loom, which is affordable and simple enough for beginners but can be complex enough to create advanced patterns.

1:30 – 2:30 - Rae Dollard: freeform weaving on a Saori loom.

### Beginner Spinning Lesson with Enchanted Spinners

- in the Animal Pavillion

Enchanted Spinners truly believes the axiom, Each One, Teach One. We're a group of passionate spinners in Al-



buquerque, NM who welcome all who spin fiber or are interested in learning to spin. Do you have a wheel but just can't find your groove, we've got you! You dream of spinning your own yarn but don't know where to start? We're here to get you up and spinning with a quick lesson.

EnchantedSpinners.com

**Nålbinding Basics** - Laura Ninemann will demonstrate the basics of nålbinding upon request in booth B13,15.

Las T, a 501c3 non-profit organization, meets monthly from September through May, and offers a wide variety of programming in a hybrid format, from local, national and international experts. Membership also includes a mentoring program, monthly small group learning opportunities, and special workshops, local fiber arts tours, as well as outreach activities to the local community.



*Las Tejedoras demonstrating at the 2023 Wool Festival*



*Kathy Schneider demonstrating Picking and Drumming Raw Fiber*



# 6 2024 SPONSORS & THANKS

## Thanks to Our Sponsors

### Platinum

Ruth Baldwin - The Natural Twist  
<https://thenaturaltwist.com/>

Don Quintana – Looking Glass Yarn & Gifts  
<https://lookingglassyarn.com/>

### Gold

Laura Martin Baseman – Hacer Santa Fe  
[HacerSantaFe.com](http://HacerSantaFe.com)

Norm & Sandra Johnson – Chimera Ranch  
[EnchantedFibers.com](http://EnchantedFibers.com)

Lise Poulsen – Gaucho Blue Gallery  
[GauchoBlue.com](http://GauchoBlue.com)

### Silver

Rick and Teri Inman – Bristol Yarnworks Studio  
[bristolyarnworks.com](http://bristolyarnworks.com)

Jill and Robert Knuckles – Tall Tail Llama Ranch & Fiber Arts  
[TallTailLamas-at-gmail-dot-com](mailto:TallTailLamas-at-gmail-dot-com)

### Bronze

Melissa Barton – Enchanted Spinners  
[enchantedspinners-at-gmail-dot-com](mailto:enchantedspinners-at-gmail-dot-com)

Bonnie & Dale Naumann – Naumann Angoras  
[naumannangoras-at-hotmail-dot-com](mailto:naumannangoras-at-hotmail-dot-com)

Ellen Sibelius – Ellen's Wool Wonders  
[ellenswoolywonders.com](http://ellenswoolywonders.com)

Bonnie Thomas – Yank Your Yarn Stitch Markers  
[YankYourYarn.Etsy.com](http://YankYourYarn.Etsy.com)

## Sponsor the MAVWA Wool Festival!

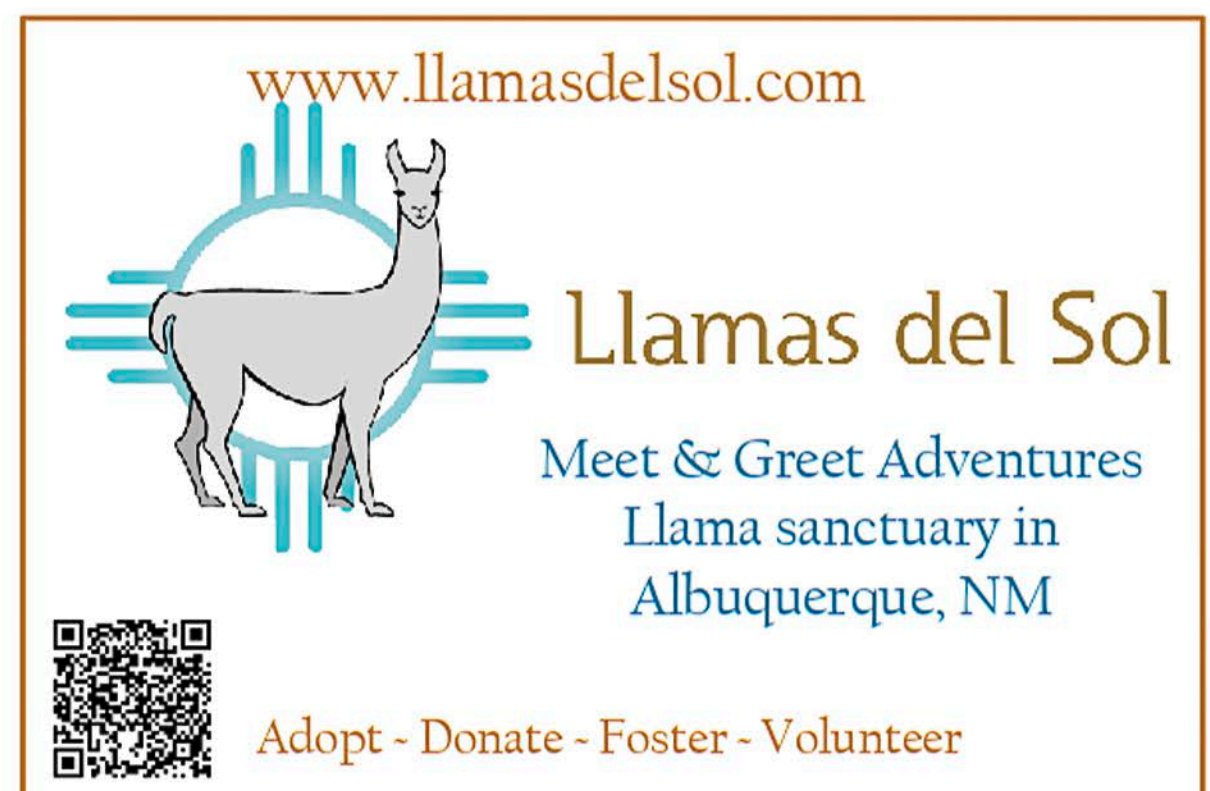
Your name / company will be listed on the website as well as in the Annual Program/Directory. Your Support is Greatly Appreciated!

Visit our web site for more info.  
[mavwawoolfest.org/sponsor-donate/](http://mavwawoolfest.org/sponsor-donate/)



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## MAVWA would like to Thank

Mike Clifford - Festival Announcer

Peggy Doney - Dyed Yarn Show & Competition Manager

Carol Garnand - GHA Show & Competition Manager

Janina Carlona - Hand & Mill Spun Yarn Show & Competition Manager

Ric Rao - Fleece Competition, Show & Sale Manager

Alex Dietrich - Silent Auction Manager

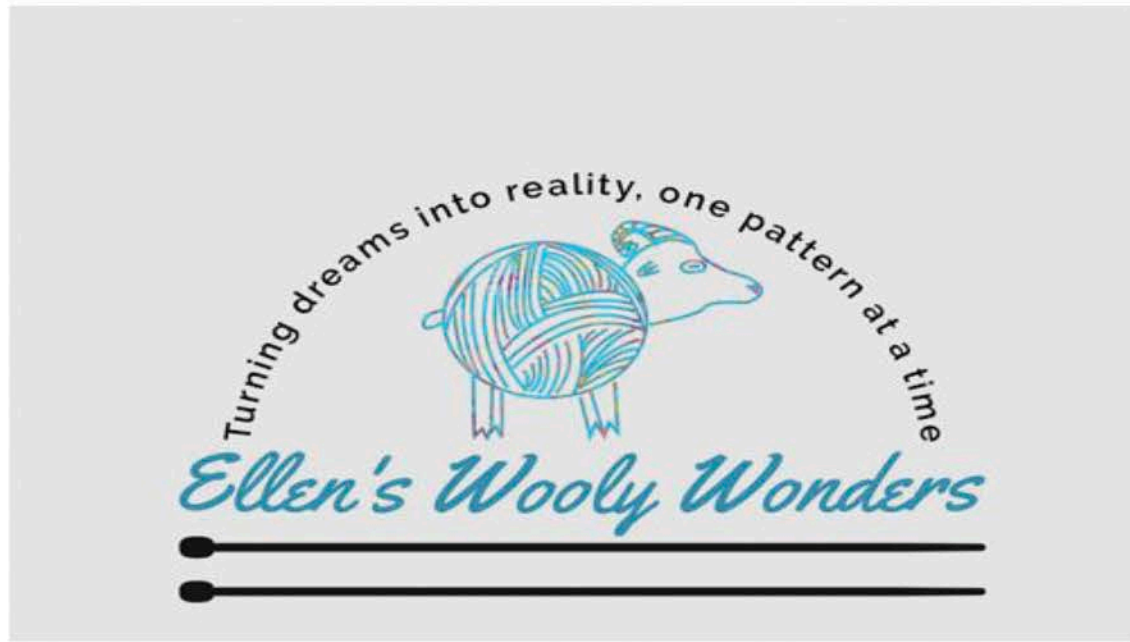
Alex Dietrich & Laura Ninnemann - writing

and a Big Thanks to all of our demonstrators and volunteers!



**Special Thanks to the county of Santa Fe  
Lodgers' Tax for their sponsorship of the  
MAVWA Wool Festival.**





**Come Visit Ellen  
Booth B1**

**[Ellenswoolywonders.com](http://Ellenswoolywonders.com)**



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# FAIRGROUNDS AND VENDO

## Vendors by Booth Number

A-01 Rene Zender - Casa Alpaca and Fiberworks

A-02 Fred Black - Big Sage Artisans

A-03,05 Anne Stallcup - Que Sera Alpacas

A-07,09 Bonnie and Dale Naumann

Naumann Angoras

A-11,13 Anne Vickrey Evans - FeltCrafts LLC

A-12,14 Shery Cook - Noti Yarns, LLC

B-01 Ellen and Eric Sibelius and Robin Cannon

Ellen's Woolly Wonders

B-02 Carol Garnand - Carol SILKS

B-03 Alicia Marshall - Moondance Alpaca Ranch

B-04 DJ Lynch - Rocky Mountain Natural Colored  
Sheep Breeders Assn

B-06,08 Lisa Prive - The Bee Skep

B-07 Alice Watterson - Flying High Studio

B-09-11 Christin Santos - Desert Panda Fiber Arts

B-10 Natalie Thompson - The Knitten Cat

B-12,14 Anna Marie (Mari) Quillman

Rockin Q Ranch LLC

B-12,14 Barbara and Raymond Roybal

Rancho de Los Suenos Alpacas

B-13,15 Laura L Ninnemann - Lone Raven Studio™

B-17 Art Through The Loom Weavers Guild, Inc.

B-19 Deborah Tewell - The Felting Source

B-20,22 Ruth Baldwin

The Natural Twist LLC

B-21,23 Kelsey Reeder & Pam Dyer

Dyers Wool

B-24,26 Jill Fielder

Colorado Wool Company

B-25,27 Merce Mitchell - Vortex Yarns

B-28,30 Theresa Fenn - Akua's Boutique

B-29 Nancy Totten - Front Range Bags

C-01 Bonnie Thomas - Yank Your Yarn Stitch Markers

C-02 Cody & Kim Burns - 2 B Ewe

C-05 Jeannine Willett - Prairie Falcon Fibers

C-07 Christy O'Riordan - Bristlecone Artisan Heirlooms

C-10 Kimberly Perkins - Cat Mountain Fiber Arts

C-11 Bar91 LLC, Bar91.com, Romowool91,

Romowool.com - 211 Ribak

C-12 Guenevere Van Der Aa Keeffe - ZYarns

C-13 Daniel Mize - Knitty Gritty Fiber Arts

C-14 Elena Miller-ter Kuile - Cactus Hill Farm

C-17 Monica Kortsha - Gothfarm Yarn

C-18 Donna Foley - Four Directions Weaving

C-20 Lisa Sobieniak - Good Medicine Sheep Ranch

C-21 Kim Zitzow - Espanola Valley Fiber Art Center

C-22 Nancy Lee Kaufman - woven2wear

C-23 Kathleen Conway - Alpacalypse Ranch

C-24,25 Melody Martinez - Haute Boheme Fibers, LLC

C-28 Victoria Collins - The Wool Shed @ Maple Winds Farm

C-30 Don and Kay Quintana - Looking Glass Yarn & Gifts

C-31 Sandra and Norm Johnson - Enchanted Fibers, LLC

C-32 Rhonda Amen - The Fleece Factory of the Rockies LLC

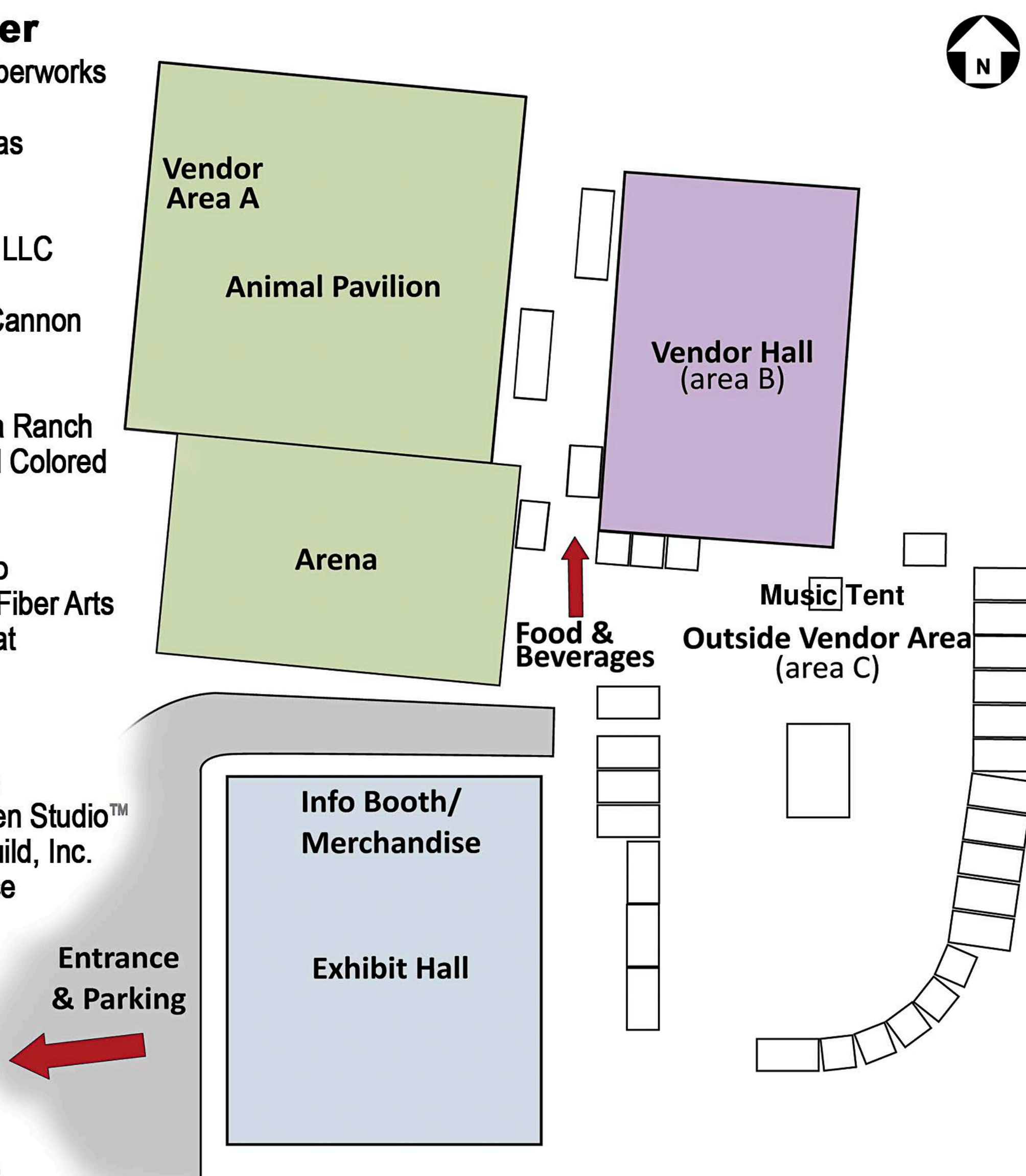
C-33 Jeff and Peggy Doney - The 100th Sheep

C-34 Lalynn Nock and Joshua Cravens - Woollywhotknots

C-35 Karen Dietrich - Phoenix Fiber Mill LLC

C-36 Jill and Robert Knuckles

Tall Tail Llama Ranch and Fiber Arts, LLC



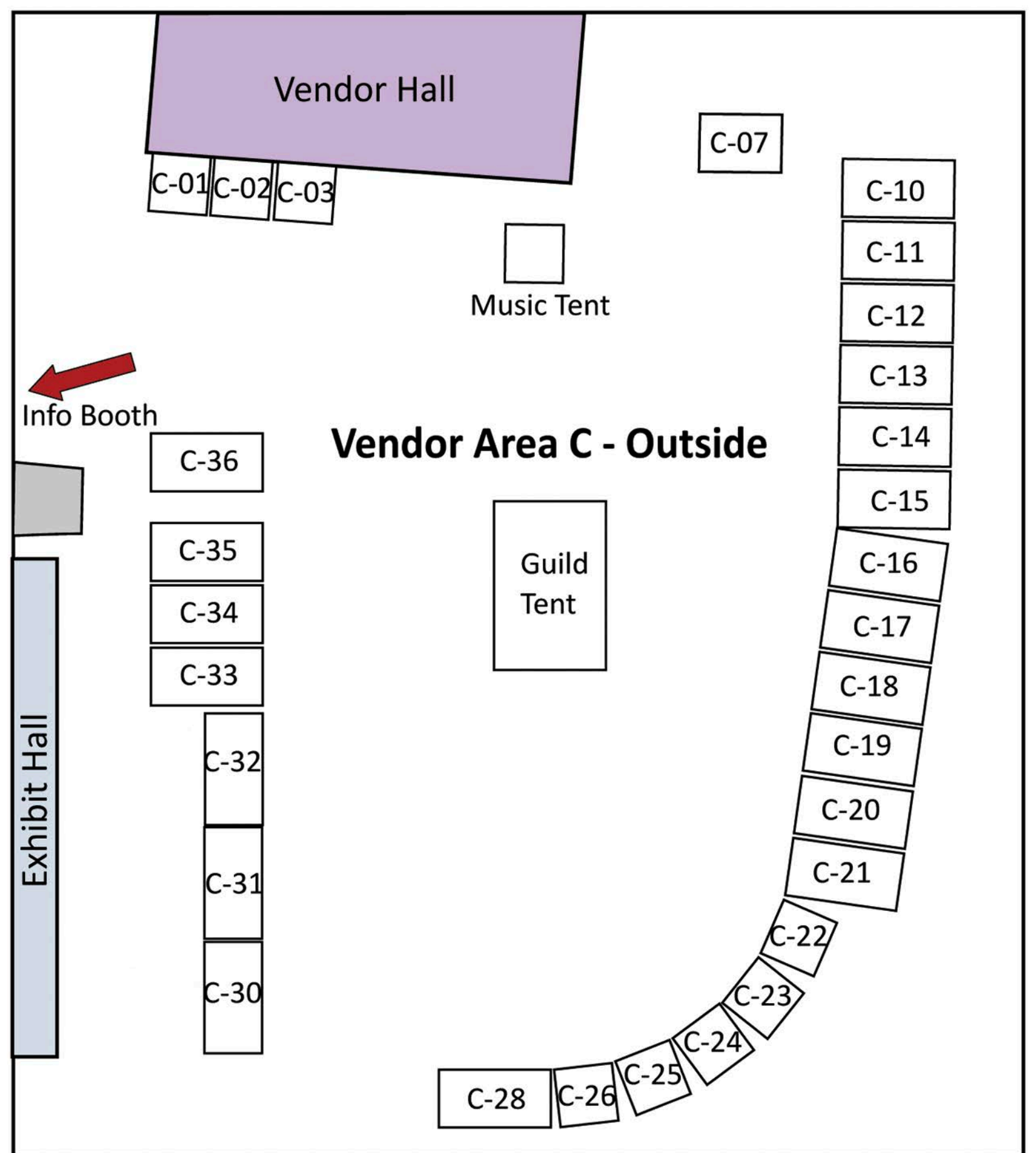
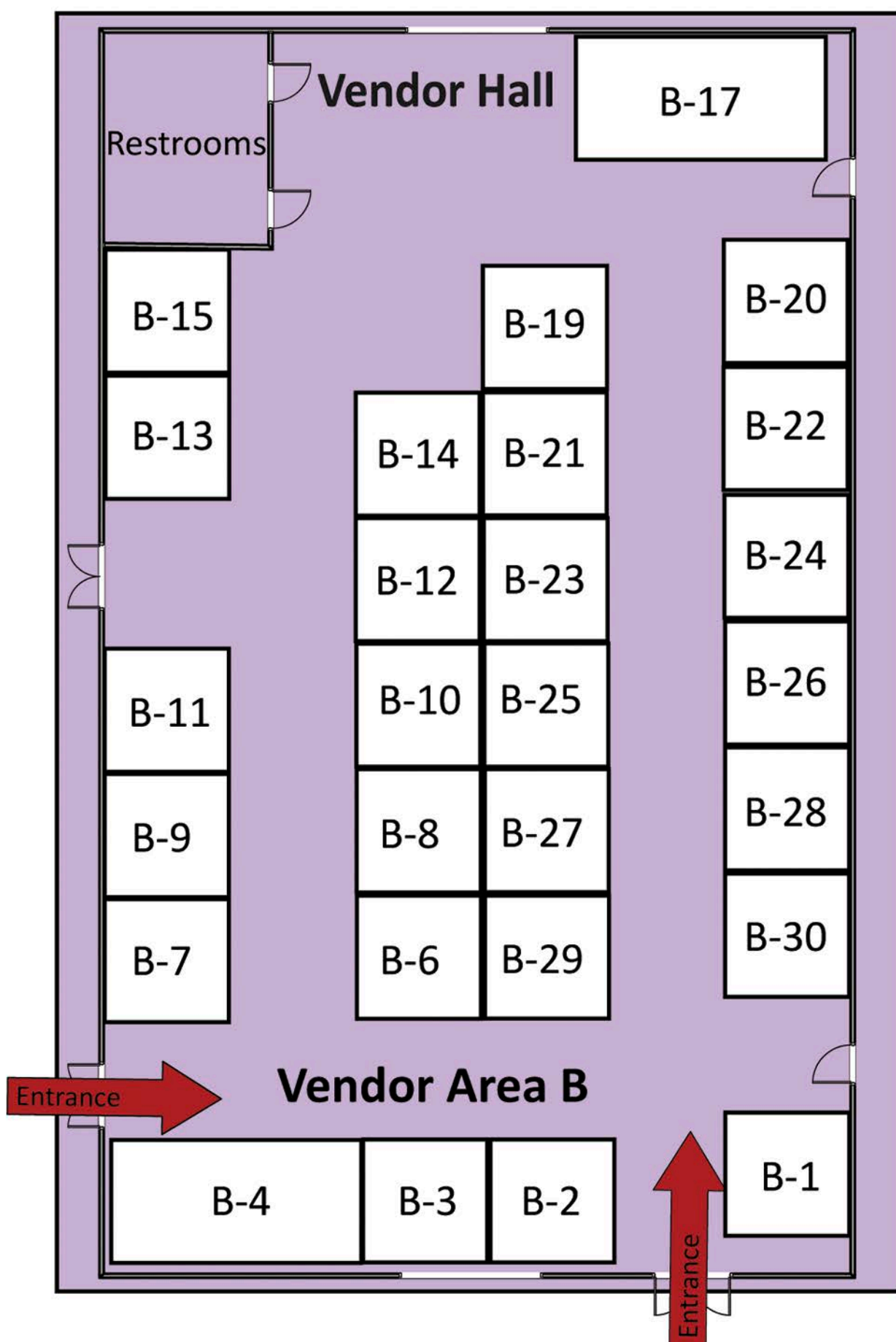
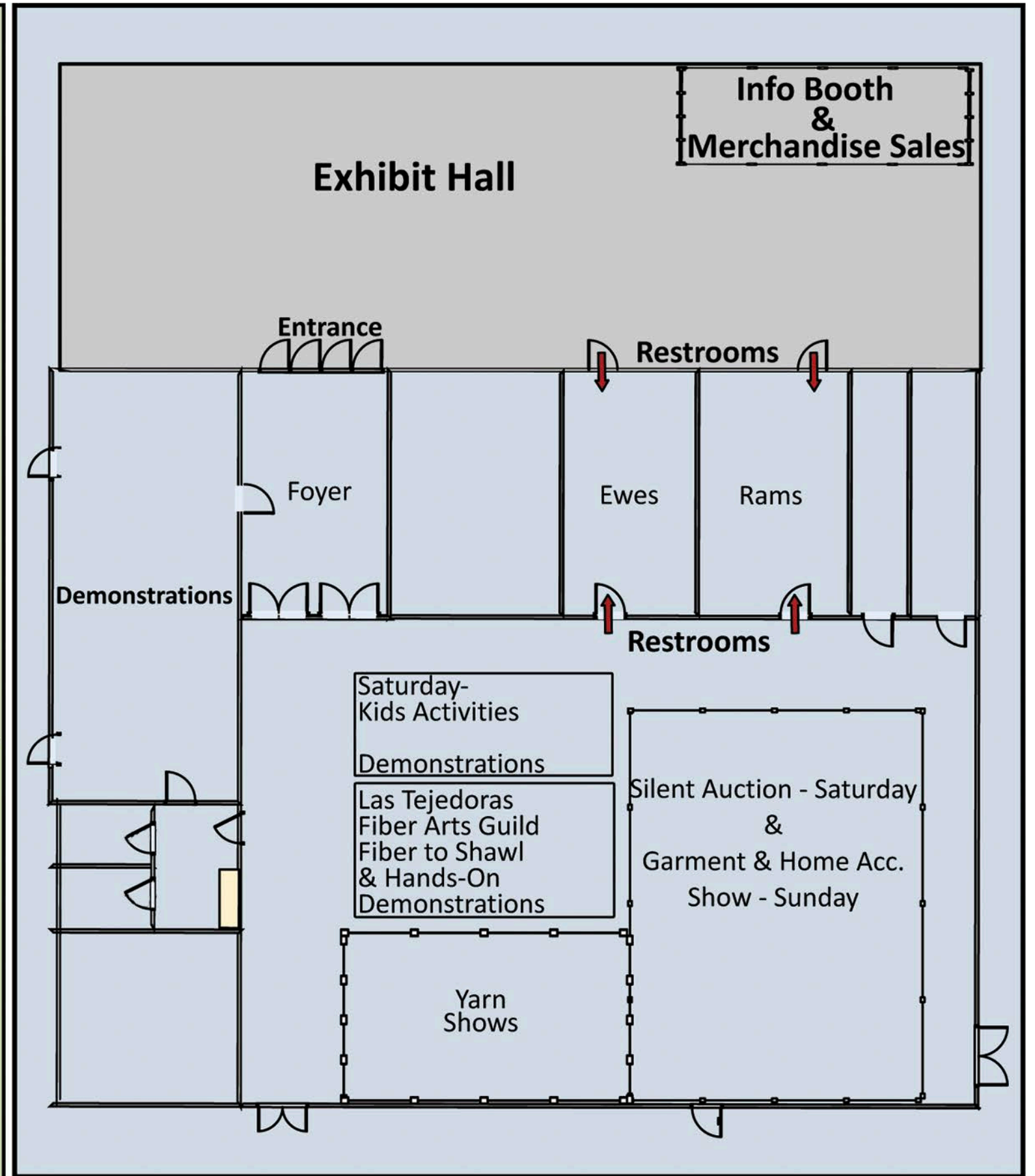
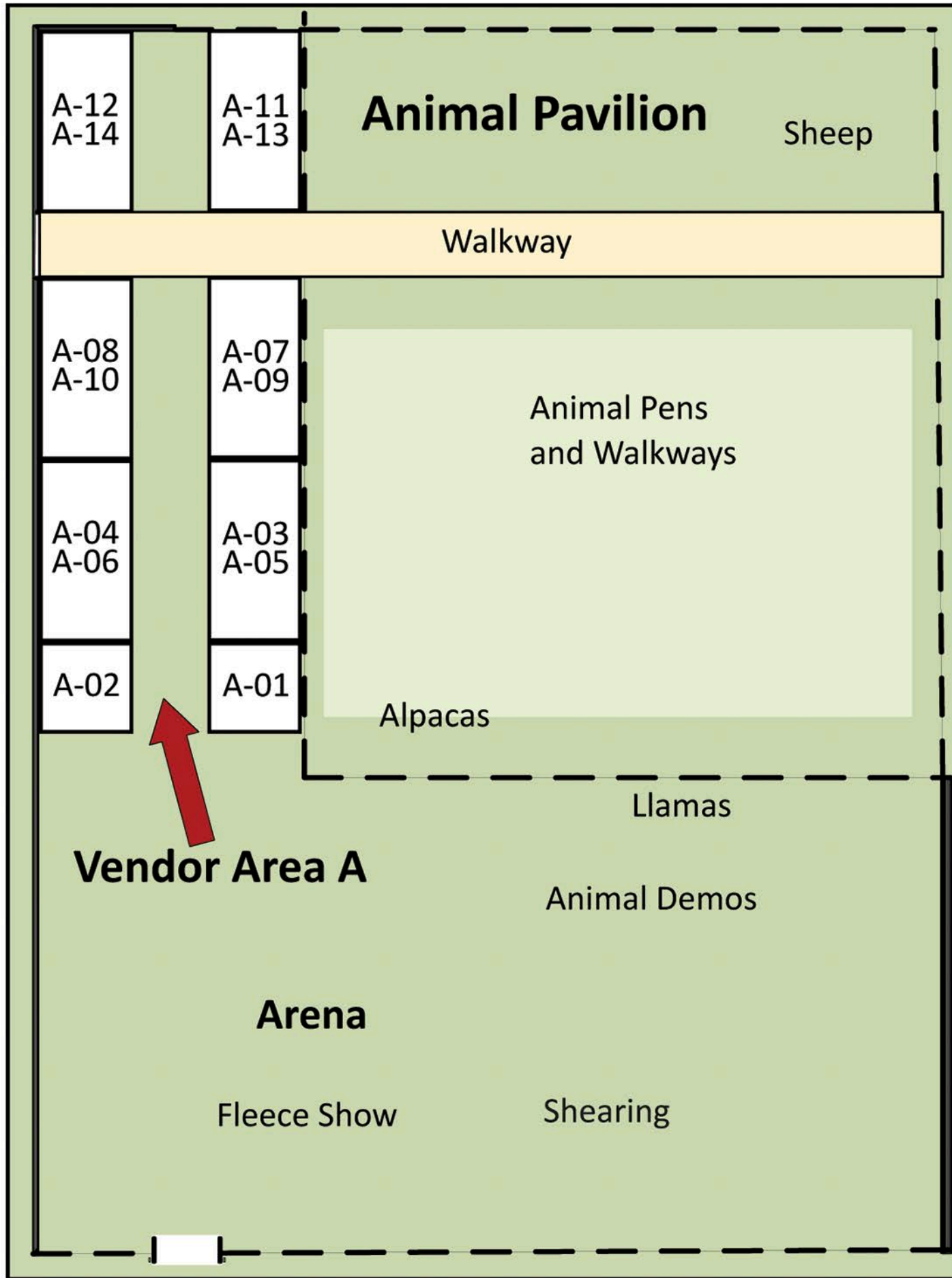
## Food Vendors

**Craft Q** - Craft Barbecue - Brisket, Ribs, Sausage

**Fuel by Blessed** - Espresso Drinks, Coffee, Pastries, Snacks **Uncle Cletus Sodas** - Old-Fashioned Sodas



# OR LOCATION MAPS

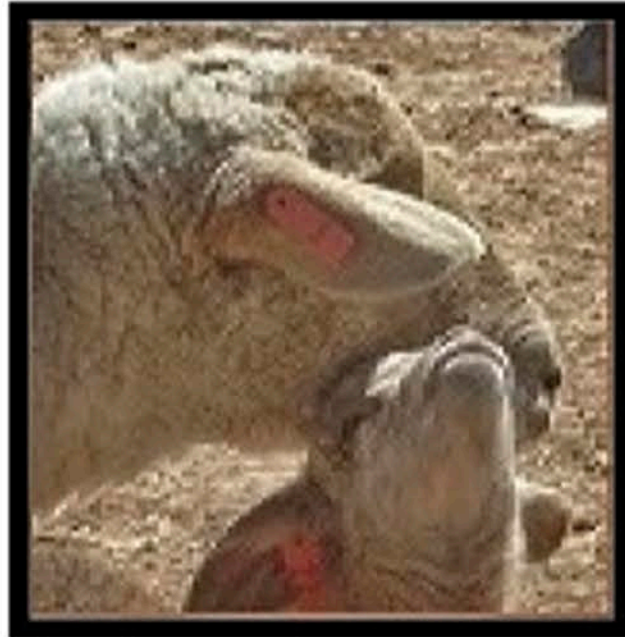




Wool Fest  
Booth  
C28

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### Lone Raven Studio™

LoneRavenStudio@gmail.com | LoneRavenStudio.com

Laura L Ninnemann | Booth B13/B15



# 2024 FESTIVAL MUSIC

17

A VARIETY OF REGIONAL TALENT

Saturday, Oct 5th

- 10:00 **Serena Serenity**  
Celtic Harp
- 11:00 **Arcane Ramblers**  
Celtic, Bluegrass & Swing
- 12:00 **Gerry Carthy Duo**  
Traditional Irish Folk Music
- 1:00 **Arcane Ramblers**  
Celtic, Bluegrass & Swing
- 2:00 **GT Springer**  
Folk & Contemporary Singer, Songwriter
- 3:00 **High Lonesome Highway**  
Lively Five Piece Bluegrass Band

Sunday, October 6th

- 10:00 **GT Springer**  
Folk & Contemporary Singer, Songwriter
- 11:00 **Turquoise Tuners**  
Multi-Generational String Band
- 12:00 **Eagle Star**  
Father Daughter Duo
- 1:00 **Kate Mann**  
Singer, Songwriter & Addicted Knitter  
living in the Mountains N. of Taos
- 2:00 **MC Trio**  
Traditional, International Acoustic



## NAUMANN ANGORAS



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or Dyed, We have it ALL!

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Booth A-07,09

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# 12 2024 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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<http://bigsageartisans.ccom>

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Bristlecone Booth:C-09

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Alpocalypse Ranch.com

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8885 County Road B.5  
Olney Springs, CO 81062  
(719)323-4452  
phoenixfibermill@yahoo.com  
Phoenix Fiber Mill llc Booth:C-35  
<http://www.phoenixfibermill.com>

Robert Donnelly - lifetime member,  
Festival Manager in the early 90s  
101 North Pinos Altos St.  
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rd895670@gmail.com

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Colorado Springs, CO 80918  
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<http://the100thsheep.com>

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# A TALE OF REINVENTION

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The brief history of Phoenix Fiber Mill by Alex Dietrich

In a time of strong disagreements, there is one thing we all might agree on: life can be hard. It tests you, torments you, and periodically denies you coffee. Sometimes it forces you to stop, assess, and change directions.

Phoenix Fiber Mill is owned and operated by my family. We make all sorts of fun things from purses, to shawls, to rugs. Mostly, we make socks, lots and lots of socks. But, we didn't start off that way. So, let's start with our name.

Fifteen years ago we found ourselves at a cross road. We wanted to start our own business again, reinvent ourselves, again. We gathered around and brainstormed what we wanted to call our business. It's always struck me how meaningful the ability to reinvent yourself is; so, thinking of the phoenix rising from the ashes, I suggested something with that in it. Reinventing ourselves is exactly what we were doing, and so we settled on Phoenix Fiber Mill. My brother, who is our sock machine operator, designed the logo.

Getting the sock mill up and running was, in a word, hard.

We faced setback after setback. We dealt with frauds, shoddy machines, a learning curve like a cliff face, people unwilling to help, and immense frustration. As I said, life can be hard, but you don't name your company after a phoenix and die in the ashes. No. You rise, again and again. Eventually, we got training, machines that worked, and some help. Then, we started making socks. Well-made socks. Not just for ourselves, but for other people, too. This year we began working with marketers to find and produce for domestic and international retailers. Come Christmas time, look for us in places like Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom, or perhaps even your favorite outdoor outfitter.



*Phoenix Fiber Mill Special Edition Rockies*

In case you're curious, our sock machines are basically big light turquoise boxes that are a cross between a knitter, a pressurized air hose, and a vacuum. They live in what used to be our garage. Creels stand behind and over them like webs of metal, tubes, and yarns. The technology is on one hand ancient, and blissfully disconnected from the internet on the other. They click, clack, suck, and whir at

varying speeds and volumes until it completes the selected program, and quite literally spits out a sock. The socks don't come out complete, though. That's where I come in.

The socks come out of the machine with an open toe. I'm the toe closer. If you wanted, you could make a puppet. I take the socks over to the linking machine, which is basically a specialized surging machine with a pair of tiny, upside down skis on one end.

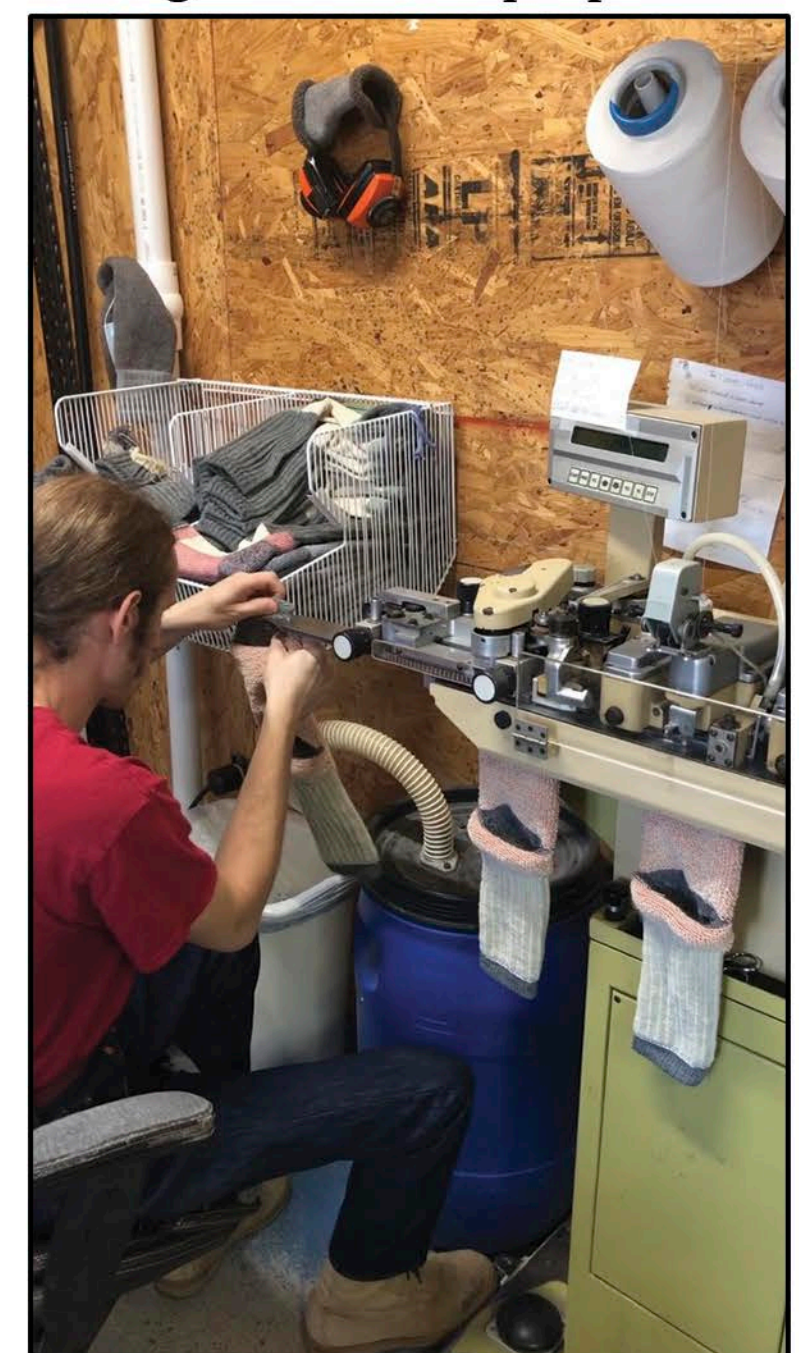
After the socks are closed, they are then washed and dried for shrinking, and pressed. They are then shipped out if it's a manufacturing order, or labeled if they are ours. Finally, our socks are sold at fiber shows or on our website to customers all over the world.

It's been quite the journey, and I'm grateful to the people who tell us we make the best quality socks they have ever owned. We most certainly try. Let me weave everything together, or if you've died of boredom, raise you from the ashes. Life can indeed be hard, but it also has an uncanny sense of humor. In addition to the phoenix being the most fitting symbol of my family's journey, it also has an inspiring definition: a thing of unsurpassed beauty and excellence. This is our motto. It is our standard. It is who we are.

To learn more about Phoenix Fiber Mill visit them at festival booth C-35 or at: [phoenixfibermill.com](http://phoenixfibermill.com)  
All photos: Phoenix Fiber Mill



*One of PFM's workhorses*



*Alex, operating the linking machine*



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# N Å L B I N D I N G

## The Ancient Art of Fiber Looping - by Laura Ninneman

### HISTORY

Nålbinding is a fiber looping technique that is commonly seen globally, across multiple centuries, and in all periods of technological development. The earliest nålbinding piece discovered thus far was found in Israel and dates from 10,000 years ago making it older than the Egyptian Pharaohs, and predating knitting and crocheting by 7,000 years. It was found with several other textile remnants and was made from plant fiber and human hair.

Several excellent nålbound clothing remnants dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages have been excavated, and Roman era examples originate from Egypt, Greece, and Syria. One item worked in what is known as Coptic stitch strongly resembles knitted stockinette stitch and was, therefore, misidentified by researchers until

a formal standardized analysis system was established. Pictured here, the Coppergate sock was found in the backyard of a wattle and daub structure in



Coppergate, York, UK, and is the only nålbound artifact ever excavated in the UK. It is believed to have arrived there on the foot of a Scandinavian settler in the 10th century. The medieval period gave us many fine examples created throughout Scandinavia as well as Germany and Poland. In fact, nålbound artifacts have been discovered throughout the Middle East, the whole of Europe, the Americas, and well beyond to the Pacific Islands and the Far East.

Perhaps there was no more prolific a nålbinding culture than that of the Vikings. The technique was widely used during that era to create dense garments and accessories that would provide warmth when wet and withstand hard, prolonged use on the open seas and during harsh Scandinavian winters, as well as to create more delicate wearables such as shawls. Nålbound items were often made from heavy greased roving then felted making the items virtually waterproof. Many fine examples of Viking era nålbound creations are on display in museums in Stockholm and throughout Scandinavia.

Not surprisingly, there is strong evidence that nålbinding was carried to the United States by Scandinavian immigrants. In the twentieth century, a nålbound design, known as the "toothbrush rug," gained popularity nationwide for its use of odds and ends of scrap fabrics. It was named such because its designer used an old-fashioned discarded toothbrush designed with a hole in one end for hanging. She cut off the brush end, then shaped it to a point thus creating a rather hefty needle with an eye that would accommodate fabric strips. These rugs are still a popular heritage crafter's project today.

### TECHNIQUE AND THE FUTURE OF NÅLBINDING.

Unlike knitting or crocheting, nålbinding uses a finite length of fiber. The best choice is single ply, heavy-weight, 100% wool since 1-3 yard lengths of fiber are continuously joined using wet splices. Actually, any fiber can be used but non-felting fibers will require knotted or woven-in joins. Nålbinding cannot be unraveled like knitting and crocheting, but it can be undone by retracing the path of the loops back through the worked piece. Needles, measuring 3.5-4" and smooth as glass, were traditionally carved of bone or wood and still are today. They can be either blunt or sharp based on personal preference and purpose with sharp points facilitating more complex stitch manipulation.

There are around 200 documented variations of the nålbinding stitch but mathematically there exists the possibility of 1,024 variations. These variations are created by manipulating front and back loops, by picking up varying numbers of loops front and back, and by executing other types of manipulations of loop structures.

Nålbinding starts with a chain of stitches that is then joined into a loop similar to circular crocheting. A second row is created by picking up the top edge of the chain stitches and working a new stitch into each chain stitch. This circular design becomes the body of the piece and is worked to the desired height. This approach can be used to create bags and other bottom-up items. To create a top-down design such as a cap, a



5-stitch spiral forms the starting point and increases out from there until the appropriate point where sides extend straight down to the desired height.

Awareness and interest in nålbinding has recently enjoyed a resurgence. It is alive and well in Scandinavia and northern Europe today thanks, in part, to historical re-enactment enthusiasts worldwide who are passionate about preserving this ancient technique. And it is steadily gaining in popularity in the United States among fiber artists with an interest in preserving heritage techniques.

If you would like to learn more about this fascinating fiber art, visit Laura at her at 2024 wool festival booth B-13,15 Lone Raven Studio or Google HISTORY OF NÅLBINDING.



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