

Are you interested in attending the **Explore 4**
Spring Fiber Retreat with Deb Robson, March
11–16, 2012, in Friday Harbor, Washington?



Here are the details!

Oh, we'll have a good time! As much as I love teaching in other environments, this retreat will be special in so many ways. I used to live in the Pacific Northwest and it still feels like home, although it was only a couple of years ago that Cat Bordhi introduced me to her home territory around Friday Harbor and to Lakedale Resort when I attended one of her Visionary Retreats. Then she suggested that I find a week when she's not teaching at Lakedale and offer a workshop myself. Wow, what a great idea! (For Cat's knitting and publishing workshops, see www.catbordhi.com.)

The San Juan Islands (San Juan itself is the biggest of the group) are about 100 miles north of Seattle, and the delightful—relaxation-inducing—ferry ride from Anacortes lasts about an hour and a half. When I ride the ferry, I love watching the islands, large and small, and seeing if I can spot whales, seals, and eagles. The salt air refreshes me. I find myself centering on that ferry trip, coming into a space where everything seems possible.

And when I reach the island, I feel like I'm in a little bit of heaven on earth. It's a nature-lover's paradise, with more than the comforts of home (mine, anyway!).

Most of the workshops I am asked to teach are surveys, either of rare-breed wools or of types of wool or of varieties of animal fibers. These fast-paced experiences, mostly in the context of larger conferences, are great fun. We cover between six and eight fibers in a full day, just hinting at their possibilities.

Those are great overviews, and I get a huge kick out of facilitating them. If you'd like information on where I'm doing these classes, you can find it on my website, www.drobson.info.

Yet when I considered Cat's suggestion of running a *retreat* at Lakedale, I contemplated what would best fit the place and the people who might come there. Before long, the idea of Explore 4 arose. This could be an opportunity to take four ideas that relate to each other and spend a day on each, both deepening and broadening the learning experience and having it take place in an atmosphere of playful restoration for everyone who gathers there.

For 2012, the focus of the spring retreat will be on four breeds of wool, one per day. I'm not certain yet which breeds they will be, although I have already gathered enough of three breeds to share with you—except that I want to stay open to choose the absolutely best possibilities as the gathering approaches. I can tell you that the breeds in the final selection will be quite different from each other. They will offer you lots of opportunities for learning. You will have time and encouragement and support to truly explore their potential.

And now to answer your questions. . . .

*Explore four diverse
breed-specific wools.
If you can spin singles
and 2-ply on spindle or
wheel, you're ready.*



What do I need to know to participate?

Basic spinning skills are essential, but you need not be a master spinner, or even more than a beginning one. If you can spin singles and make a two-ply yarn, from a center-pull ball or by Andean plying or any other technique you choose, you are ready for this workshop. In order to get the full benefit, you'll want to be at least a confident beginner in some method of making fabric out of yarn—knitting, crochet, weaving, or whatever pleases you.

More advanced fiber artists and artisans will find lots of ways to bring their additional interests and experience into play.

What will I experience?

I think you'll have fun, learn a lot, and relax! I've been spinning (and knitting and weaving and crocheting, and so on) for more than thirty years. I edited *Spin-Off* magazine from 1988 through early 2000, and also edited books for

Interweave Press as well as *Shuttle Spindle & Dye-pot* magazine for the Handweavers Guild of America. Recently I spent four years spinning every animal-source fiber that co-author Carol Ekarius and I could get our hands on as we wrote *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook: More than 200 Fibers from Animal to Spun Yarn* (Storey Publishing 2011).

While I know all the technical approaches to spinning and making cloth, and I do use them in my teaching, my approach to fiber is more intuitive and experiential than mathematical. In addition to learning a lot about specific wools, I think you will find that this week nurtures your love of fiber and supports and strengthens your existing ability to explore and create textiles.

What will the days be like?

Everyone will arrive Sunday night and get oriented, and will leave Friday morning. Sunday night dinner is either on your own in Friday Harbor or the group may organize a potluck in one of the cabins, to be shared as people arrive.

On Monday morning, after breakfast provided by the lodge, we will have four full days together, one for each breed. Ah!

I will teach every morning, giving you background on the breed we'll be focusing on, providing ideas about processing and using



its fleece, and more. This will be both talking and hands-on time: the breed of the day will be your companion, as much as I will.

In the afternoons, after we've visited over our fine lunch, you are free to continue your explorations of the morning's fiber (not required, but you might be inspired), to explore the island, or to rest. Cat tells me that sometimes the interisland ferry schedule cooperates and workshop participants may choose to spend an afternoon floating among islands, enjoying spectacular scenery while spinning, knitting, and visiting. There's hiking, shopping (yarn and bead stores in Friday Harbor, I'm told), and The Whale Museum (www.whalemuseum.org). Or you can check out Krystal Acres Alpaca Farm (www.krystalacres.com), relax in the lodge with your fiber or yarn and some fellow adventurers, or . . . take a nap!

One afternoon a fiber purveyor from Lopez Island has offered to set up shop in the lobby for us. This may be the start of spring shearing, and there are a number of interesting wools grown locally (some of which may be part of our program).

Each evening, after we gather again to share a delicious dinner, I'll review what we covered in the morning, we'll discover what sorts of insights the afternoon has offered (about fiber or about other activities), I'll offer lots of one-on-one help, and we'll share stories from the fiber world.

What equipment will I need?

Spinning wheel or spindle, and whatever simple kit of accessories you like to use. You will also want to bring something with which you can make fabric, to try out the yarns you will



be making: knitting needles, crochet hooks, a portable loom (even a Weave-It or Weavette or similar), or whatever you enjoy using—something that's quick to set up and use that will get you right into the middle of the yarn experience.

Where is it being held?

Lakedale Resort, located a few miles outside of the town of Friday Harbor, is beautiful outside and in. Set on a lake (naturally), in the off-season it consists of a main lodge, with a welcoming gathering area and dining room in addition to some lodging rooms, and several cabins, each of which has its own equipped kitchen (although our meals will be prepared for us). You can step outside and take a hike through the woods and by the water. In the high season, there are camping facilities in addition to the sections we'll be using. Visit www.lakedale.com for an idea of the place. It's even better in real life than it looks on a computer screen!

What will we eat?

Lakedale provides a diverse breakfast buffet, and lunch and dinner will be delightfully prepared from fresh, local ingredients by the super person who takes care of Cat's retreat participants. In my opinion, it's worth the trip for the food. (Okay, so am I really putting all this together just so I can have those memorable meals? Not quite. . . .)

What should I budget?

Retreat: The retreat fee is \$385, not including lodging and meals—it does include fibers!

Lodging: I've negotiated great off-season rates at Lakedale. For us, the comfortable lodge rooms, with free wifi, gas fireplaces, Jacuzzi tubs, and balconies or decks overlooking the lake are currently \$127 per night. Cabins with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a kitchen are \$170 for two people. There is also a Lakehouse, right on the water, that is \$255 for

three people. In the cabins or the Lakehouse, an extra person is \$35/night; capacities vary. These other buildings are a short walk (two minutes or less, over level ground) from the lodge, which is where we gather for classes and meals.

Food: Breakfast is included in the lodging cost. For our gathered lunches and dinners you will pay our kitchen magician directly; she will also collect information about special needs and accommodate them as much as possible. Those catered lunches and dinners Monday through Thursday will total approximately \$200 (to be confirmed before the retreat) plus *optional* tip. The food is legendary among Cat's workshop participants (including me!).

Note: Friends and family capable of entertaining themselves while you're engaged with fiber are welcome to stay with you at Lakedale and to participate in the meal option.

How do I get there?

There are lots of options; see the next page for details. Participants in Cat's workshops often coordinate their travel to share parts of the trip, and that's a possibility here, too.

I hope to see you at the Explore 4 Spring 2012 retreat, and to enjoy our time together as we spin, knit, relax, and share a special four days.

—Deb



Special note: I'm allergic to tobacco smoke. If you do smoke, you may attend the retreat, but I need to know in advance and I apologize now for not being able to sit near you at meals or gatherings. Even residual smoke on clothing can put me in bed—i.e., out of teaching mode! We can talk and spin and relax together, just not side-by-side. Lakedale is smoke-free on all its inside spaces, so you will need to smoke outside and at some distance from the buildings.

Traveling to Friday Harbor, San Juan Island

Thanks to Cat Bordhi for all the details!

Washington State Ferries

Current schedule for Anacortes-San Juan ferry: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/>

A few notes about the ferries: Fares are collected only on the way to the island. Coming back, no money is required. Fares are significantly lower off-season, and the retreat will be in the off-season window. Some ferry runs take longer than others, because they stop at more islands on the way from Anacortes to Friday Harbor. If people want to spend an afternoon on the interisland ferry, for passengers only (no vehicle) that ferry is free!

Island Airporter

A Friday Harbor-based shuttle runs directly between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and Friday Harbor once daily (except Sundays). If your schedule can match it, you won't need to carry your luggage on the ferry (it will be in the van). For an extra fee, owner John Nash will deliver you right to Lakedale. Current schedules and rates can be found at www.islandairporter.com or by calling (360) 378-7438.

Bellair Charters Airporter Shuttle

This service offers 12 round-trips daily between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and the Anacortes Ferry Terminal. The trip is lengthened by additional stops en route. Current schedules and rates are available at www.airporter.com/shuttle. Make sure to allow at least 45 minutes between the scheduled arrival time of the shuttle at Anacortes and the ferry's departure, in case the shuttle runs into traffic.

Rental Cars

SeaTac Airport has many rental car services. If you drive to the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, it is a good idea to arrive at least 1 hour before your scheduled sailing, since ferries sometimes run out of room for vehicles. This isn't common in the off-season, but it does happen. (There is always room for walk-on passengers, but then you have to leave the car on the Anacortes side.) It takes about 2 hours to drive directly from the airport to Anacortes. Cat tells me that if you are using a GPS, you need to type in Anacortes (Ferry Terminal Road), not Friday Harbor, or the GPS will send you on an insane route via Whidbey Island and a second ferry.

Kenmore Air

For those who prefer to fly (and to see beautiful sights!), Kenmore Air offers both land and sea plane services. Those traveling by land plane are shuttled between SeaTac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and Boeing Field. Those traveling by sea plane are shuttled from SeaTac to Lake Union and land in the Friday Harbor Marina. Current schedules as well as reservation information can be found at www.kenmoreair.com. Before making reservations, make sure to coordinate your arrival and departure from SeaTac with Kenmore's schedule, allowing enough time to collect your baggage.

Explore 4 Spring 2012 Registration
March 11–16, 2012, Friday Harbor, Washington

Name: _____

Street: _____

City or town: _____

State and zip code: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Retreat fee: \$385, includes all classes and their associated fibers.

Lodging: Includes breakfast. To contact Lakedale and receive our special rates, phone 800-617-2267 or 360-378-2350 and mention that you are with the Explore 4 Spring Retreat.

Lunches and dinners: You will pay our provider before the retreat; about a month in advance she will have firm amounts, and will request information on special food needs.

To hold a space, you may mail a check or money order for \$125, made out to Deborah Robson, or, if you would like to pay with a credit card, my daughter can set up a PayPal page with a payment option (just ask). In addition, send or e-mail this filled out form to:

deb@drobson.info *or*

Deborah Robson, 418 Goldeneye Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80526

The \$125 is nonrefundable but you may transfer it to another attendee. The balance of \$260 is due by February 1, 2012, in order to hold your space, and is also nonrefundable but is transferrable. If there is someone on my waiting list and I can fill your spot, I will give you a full refund less the \$125 initial payment. If I must cancel a retreat for any reason, I will refund your payment(s) in full within 30 days or you may ask to apply the amount(s) to another retreat date.

You will be immediately notified by e-mail or snail mail of your confirmed space, and as we proceed I will send you more details about travel, what to bring, and so on.

If the retreat fills, I will keep a wait list (cancellations do come in, often within a month or two of the event, so if you have a flexible schedule you are most likely to get in).

I look forward to sharing this time with you!

Personal Liability and Indemnification Agreement: I take your safety and the security of your belongings very seriously, but I cannot be liable for any personal injury, loss/theft or damage any time during the retreat. Your attendance constitutes your agreement to indemnify Deborah Robson and Callosamia, LLC, from any claim for injury, loss, or damage for any reason. You are responsible for any damage to retreat property, facilities, or equipment caused by you through negligence or willful intent. *Please initial here* _____