

The holidays are over, a new month has started, a new year is underway. Given the chaos that has dominated this past year in this country, it is not good to speculate on what kind of misbehavior our leaders are going to engage in as 2018 begins. Our only hope is that our justice system is strong enough and determined enough to finally deal with the Criminal in Chief and his associates.

So, as we worry about the larger picture, we confront 2018 at the very local level. And, having that in mind, I have to say that January is often my favorite month of the year.

For me, the “clean” feeling of a new month on a brand new calendar is what seems to drive any creativity I possess—and, I think, we are all creative beings in one way or another. So, January is the time for me to start—and, often finish—new projects.

I like working with fiber in the winter, and I have an old pillowcase filled with washed wool from last winter’s shearing. I tried a bit of that fleece one day and found that it makes acceptable felt, so as the month progresses, I will weigh out small bags of the wool, card it on my electric drum carder, and then felt it in flat pieces. I have three pairs of women’s mittens to make for gifts this spring, and I will probably make a couple of pairs more to have “in reserve.”

Then, too, there is the 20 inch loom to warp up. I have materials enough in a linen/cotton blend that I should use up before I buy more, and I could put warp on the loom for table runner yardage. It is always a pleasure to sit and figure out what can be done with the colors that are remaining in the bottom drawer of the “fiber chest.” It involves a bit of calculation to make sure I don’t run out before the loom is completely warped.

There will be knitting projects to work on, too, and I received a new challenge in the form of a skein of lovely, bulky alpaca yarn—my goal is to come up with something a bit unique using just that one skein of yarn. That will be a January pleasure.

The last week or so of 2017 was a hard one for some people to enjoy. But, for us, the below zero temperatures that dominated that time took the “blah” out of late December. We had snow enough for a brilliantly white Christmas, and nearly every day has added some to the total. We are going into a new year with something like “normal” winter weather, a strange feeling these days in the era of climate change when we don’t really know what “normal” is anymore.

All that most of us can do in this strange culture we have in our country right now is to honestly express our opinions when we have the opportunity. At the same time, we can practice conscious kindness to our fellow human beings, and try to continue to believe in the concept of “good.” Having some satisfying projects right here at home to occupy our minds and our hands has a way of quieting our minds as well, giving us a kernel of serenity in the midst of these unsettled and unsettling times.