

Yarngirl



She was known as Yarngirl, and she was the featured performer of the Fliederer Family Circus's Sideshow of Abnormalation from 1956 to 1979. Yarngirl – real name, Zelda Mae Fossick, of Flotsam, Mo. – really didn't have to do much. She just sat in a chair and her body did the rest: it grew yarn. Had been growing it ever since she was a teenager. The doctors diagnosed the disorder as a rare type of hirsutism that was caused by a combination of polycystic ovarian syndrome, a high level of androgen in her body, and Zelda Mae's predilection to consume wool with every meal. Her doctor put her on a diet of the hirsutism-inhibiting steroids dexamethasone and prednisone. To no avail. A herbologist brewed her a never-fail elixir of absinthe, cowbane, sneezewort and puréed newt. Which failed. A dermatologist liberally slathered the experimental depilating agent Yarnbegone on her body and forbade her to shower. That worked for a while, but then Zelda Mae began to smell like, as she termed it, "the worst parts of a crow," and, after a week, she had to bathe. No matter. Her body had begun to develop a tolerance for the cream, anyway, and the yarn came back lusher than ever. Electrolysis and laser therapy followed, with equally unimpressive results. A dream councilor – and by then Zelda Mae had been having doozies – finally convinced her to make the best of her situation. So she ran away to join the circus. I said she only had to sit in a chair and her body did the rest. Actually, twice a month, she also had to stand motionless in an indoor paddock while the circus sheepshearer trimmed her mane. Charybdis and Scylla, the Fliederer's identical twin sewing sisters, then wove the shorn yarn into Yarngirl Sweaters, which cardigan cognoscenti the world over eagerly snapped up. But all good things must end someday, and Yarngirl's career was no exception. As the years passed, the level of androgen in Zelda Mae's body increased, causing systemic virulism. One morning in the spring of 1979, the erstwhile gay and carefree young woman transmogrified into a gigantic beard! She could still walk – which was great for ticket sales – but she could no longer eat. Gradually, she began to starve. Worse, her yarn fell out, causing a fickle public to lose interest in her, which in turn prompted the callous circus accountant to sack her. Zelda Mae's gone now, but her name lives on in the form of hundreds of pleasantly odoriferous Yarngirl sweaters. Don't wait. Order yours today!