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# This and That



## on our cover

### GO FISH!

Trendsetter Yarns' Segue is a wide tape/ribbon of 100 percent nylon that is great for garments (as well as in a sea-worthy diorama). It comes in an array of colors. [trendsetteryarns.com](http://trendsetteryarns.com). Photograph by Marcus Tullis

### ATOP OUR SMART COLUMNS

Pagewood Farm is always innovating new yarns. Plumes is needle-felted to incorporate natural and dyed feathers. [pagewoodfarm.com](http://pagewoodfarm.com)

Don't call it a Super Bowl sale. Change the Ravelympics to the Ravellennic Games. Considering music in your store? Don't even think about connecting your iPod to speakers. Customer asking for a copy of a pattern from a book? Not so fast.

Trademark and copyright issues have been around since words first made their way into print, but lately they seem to be at the forefront of our crafting lives. At a recent legal workshop for media, the lawyers who spoke posited that the law will continue to evolve and change as more nuanced cases come to light, but until then, how can you ensure you won't be on the receiving end of a cease-and-desist letter—or, worse, a fine?

Exactly five years ago—in the August 2007 issue—*Yarn Market News* tackled the subject of copyright for the first time. Back then, the Internet was still burgeoning, so while there's mention of the medium in the article, there isn't much meat on the subject. Oh, how times have changed! Read Cheryl Krementz's informative feature on page 40 to be sure you're in compliance with laws that affect your business.

Speaking of advancements, more and more of you lately have been asking me on Twitter, Facebook and in person if and when we'll be offering a digital edition of *YMN*. I'm excited to announce that as of this issue, the magazine is available in digital format as a pdf download. You'll be able to access it only if you're registered with us, so go to [yarnmarketnews.com/register](http://yarnmarketnews.com/register) to open a free account on our site. Each issue going forward will live in the "Current Issue" drop-down menu, and it will only be visible when you're logged in. (We hope to make our archives available as well.)

To further our green efforts, we're once again asking those who still want to receive a paper copy of *YMN* to resubscribe through our website ([yarnmarketnews.com/subscribe](http://yarnmarketnews.com/subscribe)). This will help us clear the list of out-of-date addresses and anyone who is simply no longer interested in a subscription, thus saving on paper, printing and postage costs associated with producing a hard-copy magazine. We're happy to continue mailing the magazine to you if that is your preference—one subscription per person, please—but do consider the digital option as an alternative.

No matter the format, we'll continue to bring you articles that are relevant to the industry and your business, and we welcome ideas for topics you'd like to read about. Never hesitate to e-mail me personally: [erin@yarnmarketnews.com](mailto:erin@yarnmarketnews.com). I always look forward to hearing from you.

Erin Slonaker,  
Editor in Chief



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Magazine Publishers of America  
 Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

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The next issue of YMN will mail on September 27, 2012



**VOGUEknitting**  
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# Vogue Knitting LIVE

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**Debbie Macomber**  
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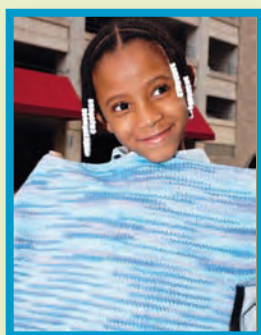


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## Meet Debbie at **Vogue Knitting LIVE Chicago!**

- Knit for Kids is a nationwide family of 28,000 volunteer knitters who fight poverty with their knitting needles. You can help too by making a cap or scarf to give warmth to children in need around the world.
- Join Debbie in the Knit for Kids Knitter's Lounge. Take a break and knit a cap or scarf to donate.
- Debbie will be launching her brand-new novel *Angels at the Table* at the Cocktail Reception & Book Launch and will be the keynote speaker at our Gala Dinner. To attend, purchase the Magnificent Miler or Windy City Weekender package.

**For information on how YOU can join Debbie Macomber and World Vision's Knit for Kids, visit [www.vogueknittinglive.com](http://www.vogueknittinglive.com).**





## POTUS on Knotice

Need a break from the heated rhetoric of a fraught campaign? Feast your eyes on a little presidential positivity: the knitted Presidents, a collection of superbly stitched replicas of all 44 American Commanders-in-Chief, plus one contender (just in case), infused with historical and, in many instances, humorous features. The collection's campaign manager, if you will, is **Linda Pietz**, a popular knitting instructor at the Placer School for Adults in Auburn, California, known locally for her creative group art projects (one-of-a-kind knitted bras and all 50 state flowers mounted on bed-spring stems, for starters). Last fall, she presented her students with the 10-month presidential challenge to mark this election year. Twenty-four politically minded pupils joined Pietz, and everyone chose which chief (or chiefs) she would hail.

A descendant of both James Madison and Zachary Taylor, Pietz chose to stitch her own very literal forefathers; another student, kin to Martin Van Buren, was also able to pay personal purly homage.

"A lot of us freely admitted we didn't know much about the Presidents, and I encouraged the students to find some interesting facts about them, so we didn't just present a bunch of men in dark suits." (The figures are all knit from the same basic figure pattern.) "After a lot of research, we all ended up learning a lot of presidential trivia."

Take James Buchanan. "I thought he was a dud," Pietz says, but his intrepid knitter learned that not only did the 15th president own a pet eagle; the King of Siam gave him elephants, which Buchanan let graze on the White House lawn. Thus, the knitted Buchanan is accompanied by a needle-felted ele-

phant, with an eagle perched on his arm.

Howard Taft, so portly he got stuck in a White House bathtub, wears a suit jacket up top, but he's got a towel around his waist.

Miniature poker cards poke out of the pocket of Warren G. Harding, who gambled away the White House

china. FDR sits in his natty wheelchair, signature cigarette holder between his teeth, while his older cousin Theodore's in full Rough Rider regalia. Dick Nixon raises V-for-victory fingers. And George Bush the elder, who famously jumped out of an airplane on his 85th birthday, is depicted in active sky-diving mode.

George Washington is presented as the classic Father of Our Country, wearing a tricorner hat and brandishing a Betsy Ross flag. Pietz put Madison in patriot garb, clutching a Constitution bearing the words "To all: Leave us alone." Time-traveling 200-plus years to our current commander, Barack Obama is shown wearing a bright Hawaiian-print shirt, a nod to his home state. And should Obama fail to secure a second term, knit Mitt Romney's waiting in the wings, Etch-a-Sketch tucked under his arm.

Pietz is reaching out to presidential libraries and museums like the Smithsonian and Vermont's Shelburne to see if there's exhibitory interest in what she calls "a wonderful example of folk art." The knitted Presidents, which have already made an appearance at the California State Fair, are slated to be displayed at Vogue Knitting LIVE in Chicago in October.



## A Purl of a Proclamation

Georgia proved itself to be a real peach to crafty folk on April 14, the day Governor Nathan Deal officially proclaimed to be **Knit and Crochet Day** stateside.

This exceptional proclamation, believed to be the first of its kind by a standing governor, was the result of a collaborative four-year letter-writing campaign by Miriam Rose of the **Atlanta Knitting Guild**, Jolie Elder of the **North Georgia Knitting Guild** and Benjamin Levisay of **XXR**, who works closely with the two guilds when promoting Stitches South.

After learning that the day would be officially dedicated to the fiber arts, the triumphant trio, along with AKG founder Whit Robbins, received an invitation to meet with Governor Deal on April 12 as he signed the proclamation. "Governor Deal is the most gracious, charming man,"

Levisay says. "As he filled out the proclamation and we took photos, Jolie asked, 'Is there a reason, besides the fact that we've been pestering you, that this is happening now?'"

The answer? The governor's mother had been an avid crocheter, and his daughter took up the hook before his grandchild was born. "He said, 'This seemed sort of natural, once I read about what you [the guilds] have done,'" recalls Levisay.

With the formalities out of the way, all that was left was the celebrating. That started on April 13, at a festive AKG meeting where Levisay congratulated the members for their dogged commitment to doing good through yarn. "This is really about the members," Levisay says. "It was their public service that got the governor's notice. They were all bursting with pride." The next noon, to fete the dawning of statewide Knit and Crochet Day, an energetic crowd of knitters rallied on the Capitol's steps, sitting and stitching everywhere.

Levisay believes the success achieved by the Georgia guilds is within the grasp of knitters nationwide. "I hope this gets to be a commonplace thing, that every guild all over the country starts banging on drums, saying 'Look at us.' Write the letters and keep writing them."







## Saratoga Springs

**Tahki-Stacy Charles** is in a New York State state of mind. TSC's new yarn venture, the Saratoga Collection, is a study in cultivating the knit-local movement: Cora, a 3-ply, Aran-weight Corriedale wool and alpaca yarn in three varieties, comes from fiber raised, shorn, spun and dyed in the Empire State—specifically, originating from the **Battenkill Fibers** mill in Greenwich, New York. Cora comes in four natural shades “straight off the animal’s back”; Cora Color, in seven botanical-dyed hues; and Cora Handpaint, in four seasonal variegated colorways created by well-regarded hand-dyer **Jill Draper**.

By introducing a homegrown yarn to the TSC portfolio, the company is exploring new paths from its headquarters in the New York City metro area.



“We didn’t have anything like this in our brand,” says TSC co-owner **Diane Friedman**. “And we’re just getting to know Washington County, where Battenkill is located. The area is very beautiful, very rural, and there’s a ton of stuff going on—wonderful farmers doing wonderful things.” Friedman worked with Battenkill owner **Mary Jeanne Packer** (left) to select a product com-

mensurate with TSC quality. As Packer also owns two yarn shops—Finger Lakes Fiber Yarns in Watkins Glen, New York, and Green Mountain Fibers in Rutland, Vermont—her input resonated from the retailer’s perspective as well; she knows the consumer appeal of her rustic yet soft, wearable output. Enlisting the artistic eye of Draper further solidified the New York pedigree; the hand-dyer conjures her colors from her home in the Hudson Valley.

And the name itself, Saratoga, sets a knitter in no other place. It’s fitting, then, that TSC is a sponsor of the **Fiber Tour and Knitter’s Retreat** that Battenkill is holding the weekend of the Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival, September 20 to 23. The fiber-intensive experience includes an entrelac class led by Rosemary Drysdale, fiber farm tours, hand-spinning and needle-felting demos, and an introduction to the Saratoga Collection, whose pattern book includes designs by Drysdale and Teresa Chorzepa.

“I like the fact that the yarn is made in New York State and that everyone involved is a woman,” says Friedman. “We’re infusing something into the local economy and supporting one another in a really exciting way.” Visit [tahkistacycharles.com](http://tahkistacycharles.com) for more info.



## Ravelympics

Read our copyright story on page 40 and you’ll know that the U.S. Olympic Committee was within its legal rights when it sent Ravelry a cease-and-desist letter demanding that the third-annual “Ravelympics” be redubbed so as not to infringe on the trademarked term “Olympics.” But Rav members were particularly insulted by the letter’s insinuation that the Ravelympics would “denigrate or disrespect the Olympic movement.” So many Ravelers tweeted, posted, e-mailed and called out the committee on its heavy-handedness that USOC spokesperson Patrick Sandusky apologized—twice. The upshot: “Medal” not with knitters en masse.

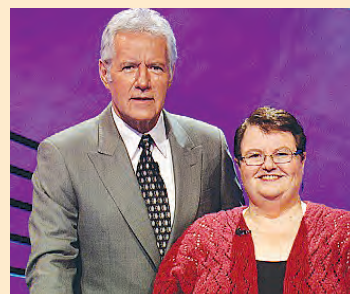


## I’ll Take “Intarsia” for \$600, Alex

“Knitting” wasn’t a *Jeopardy* category on April 17, but if it had been, contestant **Mary Harris** would have run the column. As it happened, the owner of Seattle’s **Fiber Gallery** did just fine with the questions presented to her, winning the game and going on to compete for a second day.

After persistently trying for 15 years to get on the popular game show, taking the online screening test and showing up for at least three in-studio contestant searches, Harris finally got the call to appear last fall,

traveling to Culver City, California, for the taping the week before Christmas—“the worst possible time to leave the shop,” she says, laughing. But her staff happily manned the busy store, knowing that when Harris



returned she wouldn’t be able to discuss the outcome until the show aired in April (after the May issue of *YMN* had gone to press).

“It was really hard to keep quiet” for nearly four months, Harris says. But on the night the show aired, her colleagues held a viewing party at a nearby pub, presenting her with a cake and a medal as the world watched Harris navigate tricky categories such as “What Makes It Go,” “Cowboy Talk” and “Pig Latin Latin,” promoting knitting in the process. She wore a hand-knit sweater (Bonne Marie Burns’s Vonica, from Chic Knits, previously a Fiber Gallery KAL), subsequently receiving e-mails from knitting viewers across the country wanting to know what the garment was.

And after host Alex Trebek introduced her as a yarn shop owner, he steered Harris away from the prepared anecdotes she was expecting to tell by positing whether knitting was “still” popular; Harris assured him that indeed it is, especially with the younger generation, though Trebek “didn’t look terribly convinced—a typical non-knitter,” she notes. Harris then went on to win the day, and \$5,800, by strategically wagering no money on the Final Jeopardy question, which all three competitors got wrong. (The clue, for the record: Which U.S. museum had the most visitors last year? The correct response: What is the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum?)

Harris came in second place on her return engagement, earning \$2,000 for her runner-up status, and enjoyed every minute on the sound stage. “It was totally exciting,” she says. “The studio is beautiful, and everybody was really nice.” As someone who stands about 5 feet tall, she got a kick out of the hydraulic pillars behind each podium, which raise or lower the contestants to equal height—“I was cranked a foot off the floor,” she says.

Months after her game appearance, the excitement hasn’t worn off, Harris says. “People keep coming into the store, saying, ‘I saw you on *Jeopardy*.’ It was the most fun I’ve ever had.” At press time, Harris was awaiting her victor’s check (winings are sent three months after air date) and will be using the prize money to travel to London for the Summer Olympics. “I’m really happy,” Harris says. “I’m a *Jeopardy* champion, and no one can ever take that away from me.”



# Fantastic Footprints: Three novel blueprints for the bricks-and-mortar LYS

## Hot on the Trailer

Dottie doesn't announce her arrival by broadcasting a tinkly version of "The Entertainer" as she wheels around Albuquerque, but area knitters flock to her the way kids swarm a Good Humor truck. Dottie, you see, is a 1955 Terry Travel Trailer painted a Tiffany-box turquoise and retrofitted as an RYS—a "roving yarn shop." She's the movable home base of **Ramona Chesley** and **Chris Appleton**, together known as the **Sweater Girls**.

For the past two years, Chesley and Appleton have been traveling and tandem-teaching knitting al fresco wherever they park their "little canned ham." They also host regular knit-ins at the Downtown Grower's Market and the Los Pablonos Inn, for which they charge a minimal

fee, as well as private parties. Originally intending to open a more traditional yarn studio, the friends changed the blueprint after reading about Sisters on the Fly, a women-owned nomadic fly-fishing company run out of a trailer. "With the economic downturn, it didn't make sense to open shop in a building," Appleton says.

Space constraints have concentrated their stock: The Girls trade in small vendors like Chameleon Colorworks, Three Irish Girls and Stonehedge Fibers, their "basic yarn" and the one packed into most of their popular tool and project kits. "People seem to be attracted to the idea of kits, and we wanted to bring something new to it," says Appleton.

The unorthodox traveling setup allows the Girls to take advantage of New Mexico's fortu-



itous weather. "We have 300 days of sunshine a year," says Appleton. "This type of business wouldn't work somewhere like Minnesota or New Jersey." Their busiest season is summer, an atypical scenario for many an LYS. In November, they schedule one weekend for their busy pre-Christmas rush. Then during New Mexico's short winter, Dottie hibernates and the Girls rely on their online shop to move their kits and wares. Keep up with the Girls at [www.SweaterGirlsKnit.com](http://www.SweaterGirlsKnit.com).

## Balls to the Mall

The mall, that cultural touchstone of American retail, has lately become a den of exorbitant rents and a glut of chain stores, effectively keeping indie businesses like the LYS off many a color-coded floor plan. Until now: **Rumpelstiltskin Yarns** recently set up a temporary mini-shop in a kiosk at the Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove, New York. The two-month stint was so successful, the LYS will be back during the high-traffic holiday-shopping season.

The mall kiosk counts as the rapidly expanding Rumpelstiltskin's third Long Island location in just seven years, joining a flagship in Sayville and a newer sister shop in Stony Brook. The aim, says **Angela**

**D'Agunno**, who owns the shops with her husband Vincent, was to "do something different by putting the down-home feeling of a yarn shop into a mall setting."

She signed Rumpelstiltskin on, then worked with Smith Haven's marketing team to ensure that the kiosk conformed to mall standards while conveying a sense of Rumpelstiltskin's other shops. "We tried to make it look like home," she says.

To wit, sample garments sat



on either end of the two-sided case. Grab-and-go kits and "the biggest, brightest, fanciest" fibers were chosen to fill the diamond-shaped cubbies. "We got a lot of double-takes," Angela continues. "Yarn isn't something you're used to seeing in a mall."

Given its positioning in the walkway, teaching on-site was out of the question. But Rumpelstiltskin staffers, who worked in one-person shifts, pointed those who expressed interest in signing up for a class to the nearby shops. The tactic worked: Traffic and class enrollment increased at both branches after the mall debut. Find out when Rumpelstiltskin returns to the mall at [www.RumpelstiltskinYarns.com](http://www.RumpelstiltskinYarns.com). Interested in your own outpost? Call your local mall's leasing office for parameters in your area.

## The Container Store

Last May, facing a steep rent increase at its Park Slope bricks-and-mortar location, **Stitch Therapy** shaped up by shipping out, relocating to Brooklyn's



DeKalb Market, an eclectic community of "creative entrepreneurs" that incorporates a working farm, an outdoor performance center and an open-air marketplace nestled within salvaged, free-standing shipping containers that double as "work-sell spaces." Stitch Therapy's new digs measure 10 feet by 8 feet, and owner

**Maxcine DeGouttas** can extend operations outside into a front courtyard area. The container is fully electrified, air-conditioned and bright. She's decked the place out in intimate sitting-room fashion, so she can comfortably welcome both loyal clients who've followed her to the East River waterfront and passersby exploring the market.

"Moving here was a viable way to keep the doors open, but I've had to change the [business] model to fit the setting," DeGouttas says. To wit, she custom-fit the container with pegs and cubbies to display carefully curated samples and stock; she's pruned her merchandise mix to include only yarns she'd personally recommend. "My customers trust me to vet the quality of the yarns I carry," she says. She continues to teach Stitch Therapy's full complement of classes—from Beginners' Continental Knitting to Magic Loop—to students on an "à la carte" basis, meaning classes suit the students' schedules, not the other way around.

"I love the fresh air and sunlight; everybody says I look happier" since the move, DeGouttas says. "I'm much more productive here." So much so that she's had time to start shopping around a book proposal as well as plan the inaugural **King's County Fiber Festival**, which she'll host on October 6 on the grounds of Brooklyn's Old Stone House, a 1699 landmark estate. Keep up with the shop at [www.StitchTherapyBrooklyn.com](http://www.StitchTherapyBrooklyn.com); learn more about the King's County Fiber Festival on the event's Facebook page.





## Ranching Out

The knitting frontier is represented both figuratively and literally at the historic **Imperial Stock Ranch**, provenance of its luscious, homegrown namesake yarn line. Where better then to hold the

premiere **Vogue Knitting LIVE Destination Experience** last May than on the vast Shamiko, Oregon, spread?

Twenty-five pioneering participants joined ISR owners Jeanne and Dan Carver, Imperial Yarn creative director Anna Cohen, *Vogue Knitting's* Doreen Connors (above), Lantern Moon's Sharon and Joel Woodcock and guest instructor Nicky Epstein (below, right) for an immersive weekend affording everyone a taste of genuine ranch life. "Most yarn companies don't own the landscape and the scenery," says Jeanne Carver, who's well aware of the unique niche her home has carved in the yarn industry over a short period of time. "We tried to give everyone a sense of our entire ranch family while they were here."

Mission accomplished. Upon checking into the Imperial River Company Lodge—located on ranch property, on the banks of the Deschutes River—each attendee found a cowboy hat waiting in his or her room. Over the jam-packed weekend, they soaked up ranch history at the Museum Room, where moonshine was brewed in the early 1900s; watched a herding-dog demo, rode horses and bottle-fed lambs; attended a riverside presentation about water and fish conservation by a representative of Trout Unlimited, the nonprofit organization that generously provided the fine Oregonian wine poured at meals; enjoyed an "over-the-top" five-course gourmet dinner featuring ISR-raised beef and prepared by local gastronomic legend Mark Hosack, executive chef of Gracie's at Portland's Hotel DeLuxe; enjoyed the cowboy picking and song stylings of musician Bob Connolly at a down-home hoedown, where they reached into saddlebags to secure door prizes both knit- and ranch-centric, and even got to dance with real-life ranch hands described by Carver as, well, "hunky." And that's all without mentioning Epstein's block-by-block and embellishment classes.



Participants came from all over the country and formed, Carver says, their own culture, self-dubbed the "Imperial Destination Crew." Among their number was a yarn rep and two West Coast LYSOs who invested in the trip to get a better feel for the Imperial Yarn line. From feedback Carver received once the crew dispersed to their own corners of the country, the consensus was that the event was a smashing success.

"You have no idea what it meant to us, as an isolated, rural, agricultural business, to have an organization with the visibility and expertise of *Vogue Knitting* partner with us," Carver explains. "It was wonderful to have the opportunity to take a break and lift a glass with the women who shared this experience."

They're doing it again at the ranch May 31–June 3, 2013. For information about this and other Destination Experiences, e-mail [vkdestinations@vogueknitting.com](mailto:vkdestinations@vogueknitting.com).



## Smart Move! Real-Life Results from YMN's Smart Business Conference

Nothing makes us happier than hearing that advice gleaned at a YMN Smart Business Conference has improved a retailer's bottom line in dramatic, tangible ways. So we're particularly pleased to highlight the story from **Laura Rasmussen**, co-owner of **3 Kittens Needle Arts** in Mendota Heights, Minnesota, who successfully followed through on a tactic speaker Laura Posey of Dancing Elephants Achievement Group advocated in her presentation on Hiring, Managing and Firing Salespeople:

"Right after I returned from the conference, I implemented a Team Challenge, as Laura Posey suggested, to try to boost sales for the month of March. At the time, we were not going to make our sales goal for the month, so I challenged my employees to:

- Reach our sales goal: If they did that, we would give employees gift cards to the store totaling \$250 (each employee received a percentage based on the number of hours worked).
- Exceed our sales goal by \$2,500: Split \$500 in gift cards.
- Exceed our sales goal by \$5,000: Split \$1,000 in gift cards.

"At first, my employees were a little wary, asking questions like, 'How can we sell something if people aren't coming into the store?' My response was, 'Think of ways to get them in the store.' And they rose to the challenge, with ideas like calling people who had taken classes before to tell them about upcoming classes, calling customers we hadn't seen in a while and sending out some 'March Madness' coupons. We ended up more than \$3,000 over our sales goal! The price of giving out gift cards totaling \$500 was well worth it. I'm sure we will do this type of incentive program again."

Have you adopted a strategy that you learned at a Smart Business Conference? Let us know at [ymninfo@yarnmarketnews.com](mailto:ymninfo@yarnmarketnews.com), and we may use your story in a future issue. Information on the 2013 conference is forthcoming. Keep an eye on YMN's website, Twitter feed and Facebook page and be among the first to learn the details.



## Bye, Girl

Hey, girl. We hate to say it, but Handmade Ryan Gosling has broken up with all of us. The reason: "All good memes come to an end." It was fun while it lasted. Moving on, how does Handmade Michael Fassbender grab you?





## The Sock Report

A sole-stirring new digital magazine is tickling the discriminating fancy of sock-stitching fans. **The Sock Report**, a biannual publication launched in June by designer **Janel Laidman's** Oregon-based **Rustling Leaves Press**, focuses exclusively on designs made with sock yarns like Socktopus, Pagewood Farms, String Theory and Lorna's Laces. There are socks, naturally, but also shawls, mitts and tiny stuffed animals, plus short knit-lit stories by the likes of Rachael Herron. In a few months a companion e-mag called **Skein Theory**, integrating heavier weights of yarn and dealing with "the science of knitting happiness," will debut. Patterns for both can be purchased individually (\$6.50 per pattern) or in *toto* (\$16 for all 16 patterns), with designers receiving a cut of every sale. Along with the digital editions, a printed book of each collection will be distributed to LYSes by Unicorn Books. Laidman recently filled *YMN* in about her ambitious new publishing venture.

• **On selecting designs:** "We choose three themes each issue—one a little more sophisticated, one a little more cozy and one that's just plain fun. We find that a lot of yarn shops stock indie dyers in the sock yarn department, so we plan to have approximately 40 to 50 percent indie-dye yarn and the rest standard yarns."

• **On balancing the ratio between socks and other items knit with sock yarns:** "Of all the patterns in the magazine, no more than 50 percent will be socks. We feel strongly that the publication is about the love of sock yarn and not just socks."

• **On the pay format:** "When we decided to launch as a digital magazine with pay patterns, we felt that the price should be affordable if you wanted to purchase the entire collection—otherwise, it's not really a collection but a pattern store dressed up as a magazine. At the same time, we know that some people want only one pattern, so we made that option available as well. That's in addition to the printed booklet version. We are also committed to fair compensation for designers, so every single sale—whether it's an individual pattern, an online version of the collection or the print booklet—generates royalties for the designer."

• **On deciding to offer a print version:** "The print booklet differs a bit from the online magazine; it's more like a pattern booklet (96 pages, 8" x 10", with a printed spine), no advertising, no articles. This allows us to print it at an affordable price and gives it greater shelf life in yarn shops, because it's less of a magazine and more of a book."

• **On involving the LYS:** "We would love it if yarn shops decided to put together KALs or classes with students purchasing *The Sock Report*. The yarns are all approximately the same gauge, so it's easy for a yarn shop to substitute yarns that they carry without having to rework the patterns. We're putting together a shop newsletter for *The Sock Report* and *Skein Theory* that will have preview information about upcoming issues so that shops can work on getting samples knit and stock up on yarns." (Learn more at [www.sockreport.businesscatalyst.com/shops.html](http://www.sockreport.businesscatalyst.com/shops.html).)

• **On what to expect from *Skein Theory*:** "We're currently in production with our first issue, which focuses less on indie dyers, perhaps 20 percent, and much more on readily available yarns. We've got a great mix of sweaters, vests and accessories and some unisex items."

• **On how the two magazines will complement each other:** "*Skein Theory* and *The Sock Report* are truly sister publications. Our publication schedule is *The Sock Report* in summer and late autumn and *Skein Theory* in early autumn and mid-winter." Learn more at [www.TheSockReport.com](http://www.TheSockReport.com) or [www.JanelLaidman.com](http://www.JanelLaidman.com).

## Soccer Stitcher

We caught up with Olympic-bound knitter Kelley O'Hara, 24, U.S. Women's National Soccer Team member and a former star scorer for Stanford University who now plays for the Atlanta Beat. She shared her personal knitting history with *YMN* in the midst of training for the London Games.

### How long have you been knitting, and how did you learn?

I learned from my teammate Tobin Heath (*below, left, with O'Hara*) last January, so I am a novice knitter. We were on a flight to China for the Four Nations tournament; I knit the entire way there.

### How do you work knitting into your life and training regimen?

The lifestyle of a pro soccer player or a player on the National Team involves a lot of travel and a lot of downtime, so knitting's great for passing the time.

### Do you knit around teammates and competitors, and if so, how do they respond?

My teammates made fun of me because my first hat turned out so ridiculous-looking. But when they all get red, white

and blue scarves in their stockings this year, they will all be thanking me.

### How does knitting fit in with your competitive personality?

It fits into my obsessive personality because I can literally do the same thing for hours.



## A Capitol Achievement

Designer **Tanis Gray** had a monumental week in May when she learned within days that her two books to date, *Capitol Knits* and *Knit Local*, had both won prestigious awards. *Capitol*

*Knits*, which Gray describes as "a history book designed as a knitting book," received the Daughters of the American Revolution's American Heritage Award in the eastern region. A paean to Washington, D.C., where Gray and her family live, the title pairs knits with the monuments that inspired their design, a confluence of "heritage and craft." The unique honor places Gray—a member of the DAR's first and oldest chapter, the Martha Washington chapter, with a genealogical lineage that stretches back to the *Mayflower*—into contention for the national American Heritage Award.

Meanwhile, *Knit Local*, published by Sixth&Spring Books, tied for the Gold IPPY Award in the How-To category. (Its medal-mate: Heather Thomas's *A Fiber Artist's Guide to Color & Design* from Landauer Publishing). The IPPY, which frequently singles out stellar fiber-arts volumes, is the nickname for the Independent Publishers' Book Award. Says a modest Gray of the embarrassment of riches, "It's always nice to be recognized."



## It's a Madtosh World

J-Lo, A-Rod, Madtosh—some names are just as powerful truncated as they are spelled out. Since 2006, the name **Madelinetosh** has been attracting knitters like a magnet. Now the abbreviated form of the popular hand-dye's name is doing the same thing down in Fort Worth, Texas, where the handle **Madtosh Crafts** is affixed to the signage of the city's latest, greatest textile-arts shop. Such is the brand's power that on the morning of the late-April opening, a queue of anticipatory knitters was waiting out front.

Owned by Madelinetosh founder/color master **Amy Hendrix**, Madtosh Crafts was launched to "fill the void" left when a beloved knitting shop shuttered two and a half years ago. With her yarn company based mere miles away in Benbrook, Hendrix had noted that local knitters were pining for a place that carried artisanal and high-end fibers. Seeing an opportunity to create a hot spot not only for stitchers but also for spinners and sewers, she opened shop, offering yarn as well as fabric, dyes, handmade soaps and lotions, textile books and supplies for a wide range of crafts.

The yarn reflects the breadth of the best stuff out there. Madtosh Crafts does stock Madelinetosh skeins, but Hendrix stresses that the store and the yarn company are completely separate entities, with separate employees and separate inventories that "don't tap into each other at all." To receive Madelinetosh yarn, Madtosh Crafts must place an order like any other LYS and wait its turn to receive shipment. For retailers concerned that the birth of Madtosh Crafts will add time to their own wait, Hendrix has encouraging words: "The store will not interfere with order fulfillment," she says. "And our next big project is building a new facility for the wholesale business that will double our size and put production into one huge building instead of being broken up like it is now, which will increase production."

"The concept wasn't for Madtosh Crafts to be a flagship for our yarns but to be a local store for crafters, very similar to Classic Elite's Hub Mill Store," continues Hendrix. "It's been very cool to call other yarn companies and order from them. No one has said, 'You can't order from me; I'm your competition.' It's been a really positive experience." Among the brands found at Madtosh Crafts: Rowan, Shibui, Noro, Swan's Island, Blue Sky Alpacos, Habu, Juniper Moon, Spud & Chloe and Jade Sapphire.



The shop itself is located in a "real homey" 1920s building that has a creative pedigree: Once a paint store, it's on a historic street where the Fort Worth barracks used to be. "We imagine that nurses knitted socks at night here during the war, and now it's been reincarnated as a modern-day crafts store," Hendrix says. "We get the full spectrum. We see people picking up knitting supplies, then buying a pattern to sew a project bag for their knitting. We don't shun anyone who isn't a knitter."

That's been obvious from the stream of crafters signing up for classes, kids' summer camps and storming the place on Thursday knit nights to such an extent that the shop almost runs out of seats, despite being well fitted with a long vintage couch and fluffy chairs in its knitting room. The shop's staffed by a manager and four full-timers, plus a roster of teachers, including Hendrix, who drops by from time to time to shop and teach her color theory class. "The shop is its own vehicle, and it's developing its own community," she says. "It's fun to be a source of major inspiration. We get 'thank-yous' and 'I'm so glad you opened here' all the time." See what's going on at the shop at [www.Madtosh.com](http://www.Madtosh.com).



## He's a TEN!

Congratulations to **Stacy Charles**, 2012 recipient of TNNA's Tribute to Excellence in Needlework (TEN) Award. In its 26th year, the TEN Award recognizes members of the industry who represent "the finest in the needleart industry and who personify and uphold TNNA's mission statement." Charles, a past TNNA president, vice-president and board of directors member, is being honored for 34 peerless years in the yarn biz.

The announcement of the award allows us to reflect on the highlights of Charles's charmed vita: entering the industry in 1978 through his family yarn and button wholesale business; succeeding as a sales rep before becoming the exclusive U.S. distributor for high-end Italian yarn spinners Filatura Di Crosa and Filpucci; the 2000 merger with Diane Friedman's Tahki Yarns that formed Tahki•Stacy Charles, which continues to be a leading force in the industry [see page 9 for news about TSC's latest venture].

"It's a great honor to be recognized," Charles tells *YMN*. "My heart and soul are devoted to the hand-knitting community, and I am very grateful to all the people who have touched my life, past and present."

## Transitions in Title

- DRG Publishing has changed its name. The company's entire publishing division is now known as Annie's in an effort to "simplify and strengthen brand identity." Among the titles this change impacts are *Creative Knitting*, *Crochet!*, *Crochet World* and *Quilter's World* magazines as well as the entire Annie's Attic catalog.

- All Craft Media, the U.K.-based publisher of a raft of crafting magazines, has gone into liquidation. Three of its titles—*Yarnwise* (originally known as *Yarn Forward*, then renamed *Knit*), *Handmade Living* and *Inside Crochet*—have been taken over by Tailor Made Publications. *Sew Hip*, *Modern Quilting*, *Handmade Fashion* and *Simply Beautiful* are for sale. ACM is the latest incarnation of the company originally known as KAL Media, founded by Kerrie Allman and also in liquidation.



# Video Stars

In our May issue, we devoted a Smart Online column to the importance of incorporating video into your website. (The boost to your search-engine rankings alone makes the effort worth your while.) Two ventures are utilizing the medium to educate about fashion in entertaining fashion.

## Madame Ambassador: Very Pink

"I made up a career—and it's working." That's how **Staci Perry** of **Very Pink Knits** describes her full-time job creating, starring in and uploading to the Web instructional knitting videos, both technique- and pattern-based, many of which are pay-to-play. And viewers are paying—so much so that the Internet's leading video site has taken notice. In April Perry was named a YouTube Ambassador, one of just nine entrepreneurs singled out for achieving tangible business success utilizing the platform.

The numbers bear out YouTube's confidence in Perry. At press time, Very Pink Knits' YouTube channel had logged just shy of 10,000 subscribers, with nearly 200 video tutorials that have been viewed more than three million times. Perry, a former marketing professional and lifelong knitter based in Austin, Texas, began making the videos in 2009, inspired by her friend Parker Severson, a film-production specialist at Yawp Media. "He had an idea to give videos away and get my name out, then start selling and see how we do," she explains.



That mix of complimentary and commercial still stands: Perry releases new videos weekly (YouTube subscribers are automatically notified of fresh content); one week she'll post something like the four-part "Learn to Knit Your First Cap" for a fee (\$6 for the video and an e-book download; \$8 for the video and a printable pdf), the next will bring "Knitting Inside Out on DPNs" totally gratis. "It's like a weekly TV show for knitters," Perry explains. "I help a lot of people for free, and enough people buy

patterns that I do well enough to do this for a living." No matter how much profit a given video nets, the clockwork release of video content consistently puts Perry at the top of YouTube's search ranks. Her status as an elite YouTube partner means that she's now also earning revenue from ads placed on her site, which affords her the opportunity to offer more free videos than she could have when she was relying only on pay-per-views.

Yawp Media produces all of Perry's videos, shot with two cameras and professionally lit. For specific patterns—for example, the one in "Learn to Knit a Women's Sweater"—she designs and knits the garment in her size, then works up "piece-outs," incremental segments (think sleeve) she can display as she walks through the step-by-step of the sweater's construction. Her presentations (which include info about the yarn and needles she uses) are unscripted, which helps foster a camaraderie between Perry and her viewers. "I get very chummy e-mails," Perry says. "I spend half of my day responding to e-mail comments and answering questions."

She also transcribes every word she utters on film, for both closed-captioning and translation purposes. The transcription makes the text available in any language through Google Translate, from Spanish and German to Afrikaans. "It really broadens my audience," Perry says. This extra work demonstrates the type of personal attention befitting a YouTube ambassador. As part of her six-month tenure, Perry will be answering questions from other entrepreneurial YouTubers and mentoring a non-profit organization in how best to exploit the channel to boost business. "If you give more than you take," she says, "eventually the take becomes substantial." Visit Perry at [www.VeryPink.com](http://www.VeryPink.com).



PHOTOGRAPH © BRYAN DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

## Professorial Garb: University of Fashion

What happens in mainstream fashion matters to our niche market—broad-based trends and color stories inform what we do knit-wise, in ways both blatant and subtle. With a relative dearth of design-degree programs across the country, there's a void in formal fashion education in the United States. It's a void **Francesca Sterlacci** hopes to fill with her new online video-education site, the **University of Fashion**.

Sterlacci, the former chair of the fashion design department at New York's vaunted Fashion Institute of Technology, is drawing on her 30 years' teaching and real-world Seventh Avenue experience to shape the site's curriculum. Launching in late summer with 150 videos, the runway-readying learning site will eventually deliver hundreds of live-streamed how-to tutorials concentrating on five fashion disciplines—draping, pattern making, sewing, fashion illustration and product development, the last two being particularly pertinent to the hand-knitting industry. Taught by current fashion professionals, the how-tos allow the viewer to progress in three skill tracks.

The lessons, which range in duration from three minutes to an hour, are tightly scripted, professionally shot and seamlessly edited. Voice-overs and

on-screen motion graphics clarify measurements and techniques. Lessons are formatted as user-friendly modules that are easy to pause, fast-forward or rewind. The syllabus is rounded out by lectures from fashion professionals and behind-the-scenes location visits. "I remember when I was a fashion student, I couldn't wait to see a designer showroom, a fabric manufacturer. We're going to be all about that," Sterlacci explains. Among her many

upcoming plans is to film lessons on hand knitting and crocheting and to discuss genre-spanning trends like sustainable fashion.

Sterlacci's mission is spurred by a desire to perpetuate the American fashion industry. "Traditions of the craft are dying; tailors I've known for years are retiring," she says. "Students today are used to visual presentation. Even at the Master's degree level, they don't want to get out a book and turn to page 248 to learn how to set that fly-front zipper. They want to see it in a video." So she formulated the concept behind University of Fashion and modeled a pricing structure on that of Lynda.com, a popular video-



based software-education site. Viewers can subscribe to live-stream as many videos as they want in all three skill tracks for \$19.99 a month or choose an annual membership at \$199. There will also be an à la carte option, for those who want to watch just one or two specific videos. Find out more at [www.UniversityOfFashion.com](http://www.UniversityOfFashion.com).



## YMN CALENDAR

Events to keep you in stitches this fall.  
(For more, visit [www.yarnmarketnews.com](http://www.yarnmarketnews.com).)

### August 15-19

#### Michigan Fiber Festival & Workshop

Allegan County Fairgrounds  
Allegan, Michigan  
[www.MichiganFiberFestival.info](http://www.MichiganFiberFestival.info)

### August 18-19

#### Mid-Ohio Fiber Fair

Reece Center  
Newark, Ohio  
[www.MidOhioFiberFair.com](http://www.MidOhioFiberFair.com)

### August 25-26

#### Great Basin Fiber Arts Fair

Salt Lake County Equestrian Park  
South Jordan, Utah  
[www.GreatBasinFiberArtsFair.org](http://www.GreatBasinFiberArtsFair.org)

### August 29-September 3

#### Monterey County Fair Wool Show

Monterey County Fairgrounds  
[www.MontereyCountyFair.com](http://www.MontereyCountyFair.com)

### September 2-3

#### World Sheep and Fiber Arts Festival

Bethel, Missouri  
[www.WorldSheepFest.com](http://www.WorldSheepFest.com)

### September 6-9

#### Fiber College on Penobscot Bay

Searsport Shores Ocean Camping  
Searsport, Maine  
[www.FiberCollege.org](http://www.FiberCollege.org)

### September 7-9

#### Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival

Jeffersonville County Fair Park  
Jeffersonville, Wisconsin  
[www.WisconsinSheepAndWoolFestival.com](http://www.WisconsinSheepAndWoolFestival.com)

### September 8-9

#### New Jersey Sheep & Fiber Festival

Hunterdon County Fairgrounds  
Lambertville, New Jersey  
[www.NJSheep.org](http://www.NJSheep.org)

### September 8-9

#### Pennsylvania Endless Mountain Fiber Festival

Harford Fairgrounds  
Harford, Pennsylvania  
[www.PAFiberFestival.com](http://www.PAFiberFestival.com)

### September 12-16

#### Fall Knit & Crochet Show

Grand Sierra Resort  
Reno, Nevada  
[www.KnitAndCrochetShow.com](http://www.KnitAndCrochetShow.com)

### September 14-16

#### Georgia Alpaca Fiber Fest

Callaway Gardens  
Pine Mountain, Georgia  
[www.GAFiberFest.com](http://www.GAFiberFest.com)

### September 14-16

#### California Wool & Fiber Festival

Mendocino County Fairgrounds  
Boonville, California  
[www.FiberFestival.com](http://www.FiberFestival.com)

### September 22-23

#### Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival

Clackamas County Fairgrounds  
Canby, Oregon  
[www.FlockAndFiberFestival.com](http://www.FlockAndFiberFestival.com)

### September 29-30

#### Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival

Clarke County Puritan Fairgrounds  
Berryville, Pennsylvania  
[www.ShenandoahValleyFiberFestival.com](http://www.ShenandoahValleyFiberFestival.com)

### September 29-30

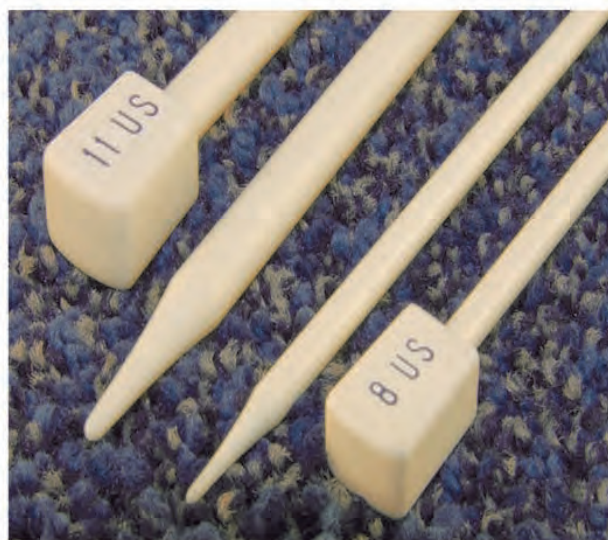
#### Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival

Turnbridge Fairgrounds  
Turnbridge, Vermont  
[www.VTSheepAndWoolFest.org](http://www.VTSheepAndWoolFest.org)



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# Book Reviews

BY CHERYL KREMENTZ

## Short Story

By Cathy Carron

Sixth&Spring Books; \$19.95

ISBN: 1936096455



Like icing on a cake, a stylish top layer can sweeten a bland outfit. After cooking up hot sellers featuring hats

and cowls, Carron turns her attention to shrugs, wraps, boleros, cropped tops, ponchos and cardis—a versatile, figure-flattering garment category. The 36 designs will warm cold shoulders and polish an ensemble with color and texture. Luxury fibers—angora, mohair, beaded silk, ribbon yarn—and hand-paints are used liberally, in eminently sellable quantities, so cast on those store samples. The sheer variety of design virtuosity on display is impressive: Grecian Turn is a slinky lace wrap gathered in front with a removable cuff that resembles a toga knot. Miss Match carries sailor stripes on the front and feathered fagoting on the back. Bohemian Wrapsody's an acid-green hooded poncho with fringe (what else?); Belle Curve's a cardi that arches and undulates prettily around the body. And how has the name Coco Chenille not been used before? This cheekily dubbed bit of chicness uses tweedy plushness to call to mind the classic Chanel box jacket.



## Knitting the Perfect Fit

By Melissa Leapman  
Potter Craft;  
\$22.99

ISBN:  
0307586642

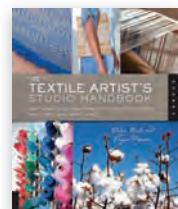
In mainstream fashion, full-fashioned shaping can spell the difference between a mass-market sweater and a private-label offering. In knitwear, it turns a pedestrian boxy sweater into something body-conscious and bespoke. Leapman demonstrates exactly how it all works with examples—in the form of tutorials and swatches—of the myriad decorative directional

increases and decreases that carve curves into the fabric of a knit garment. Patterns that bear out Leapman's lessons come not only with skill ratings but also with shape icons that indicate which body types (top-heavy, hippy, round, square or hourglass) are best suited to a garment; nearly every pattern flatters more than one silhouette. The clever “diversionary tactics” used include angled rib panels and chevron stripes that draw the eye to the right spots and braided cables along the raglan sleeves and down the side seams that create a slimming effect. Pullover Marie boasts lace columns that diverge on the front and meet in a racer-back formation in the back. Even classic patterns—a sporty striped tee and steeked Fair Isle pullover—are elevated by full-fashioned shaping. And if you can't remember which way a k2tog or ssk slants, Leapman's got a mnemonic to help.

## The Textile Artist's Studio Handbook

By Owyn Ruck and Visnja Popovic  
Quarry Book; \$24.99  
ISBN: 1592537774

What knitter doesn't dream of having an in-home oasis capable of



catering to her every stitching whim? The perfect personal crafting studio isn't a pipe dream if you follow the lead

of authors Ruck and Popovic. Having created the Textile Arts Center, an inspiring fiber-arts education space in Brooklyn, the pair know the best ways to outfit a room to maximize crafty output. Readers learn how to build a home studio from square one, taking into account such aspects as layout, furnishings, lighting, storage and equipment. (LYSOs, take note: Much of this advice can be easily adapted to a retail environment.) No stone is left unturned, as evidenced by discussions about cleanable surfaces, natural light, access to electrical and water sources, and temperature considerations as they apply to textile conservation.

Following the studio scenarios, there are overviews of a variety of textile arts, including felting (wet, dry and nuno), spinning, knitting, crochet and weaving, complete with how-tos on spinning a skein of yarn

and patterns like a crocheted ottoman. Other disciplines covered include screen and block printing on fabric, dyeing textiles and space-dyeing yarns, sewing, quilting, crewel-work, appliqué, embroidery, cross

## Crochet Cachet

A new trio of crochet titles look at looping through different lenses.



**Unexpected Afghans**, by Robyn Chachula  
Interweave Press; \$22.95  
ISBN: 159668299X

Chachula and her cohort of A-list designers make a blanket statement by covering plenty of home-décor ground in this book. There are 29 afghans in all, ranging from a cheeky take on the '70s granny-square sofa staple to an artistic reimagining of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Carol Ventura contributes a cheery Desert Sunrise, composed of diamond motifs; Kristin Omdahl joins coin medallions with swirling waves; Doris Chan explodes a traditional pineapple motif. As in all of Chachula's books, *Afghans* includes symbol crochet charts; it also features plenty of LYS staple yarns from the likes of Blue Sky Alpacas, Tahki•Stacy Charles, Classic Elite and Bijou Basin.

## Simple Crocheting

by Erika Knight  
St. Martin's Griffin; \$24.99; ISBN: 1250016215

Creamy pages, striking matte photography, stylish entry-level projects—Knight's latest book carries all the hallmarks of her previous work. Writing for beginners, the designer integrates 20 graded workshop projects into her how-to progression. *Simple Crocheting* delves into the craft's basics with stitch instructions and a swatch directory as well as technique tutorials. The projects, rendered in Knight's own earth-toned yarns, increase in complexity from a dishcloth to an asymmetrical cardi. In between you'll find striped pillows and a laptop cover, fingerless mitts, a lace shawl, slipper boots with suede grips, bejeweled brooches, a round rug and rag pet bed looped from fabric strips, place mats and a daisy-chain necklace.



## Crochet Boutique

By Rachael Oglesby  
Lark Crafts; \$17.95; ISBN: 1600599265

Utilizing fundamental stitches, Oglesby curates a collection of crocheted accessories—hats, bags, scarves and cowls—that are timeless yet right on trend. For heads, find an openwork beanie with a crisscross lattice crown, a sunburst beret based on a wagon-

wheel design, a floppy sun hat and a bobbed mohair beret. There's also a lace shell wrap, a hippie-chic fringed triangle scarf and another made of nothing but swifty individual chains linked together (a great beginner project). Extras include a striped tank and tote, bamboo leg warmers, a bowed head wrap, a sweetheart garland with dangling stuffed hearts, and a cotton lampshade that resembles woven raffia.



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# Book Reviews

stitch and drawn thread work. A photo gallery of textile art and an expansive resource list close things out. It's one to keep in every home crafting studio.



**Juju's Loops**  
By Juju Vail  
and Susan  
Cropper  
\$26.99  
ISBN:  
0957012802

Want a peek at what's being knit at one of the best-regarded yarn shops across the Pond? *Juju's Loops* transports readers to Loop, the London LYS owned by author Cropper and graced by the presence of her co-scribe, designer/in-house instructor Vail. (Both women, interestingly, are North American expats—Cropper from the States and Vail from Canada.) Though the sumptuous, expertly styled photos are shot not at the shop but at a nearby café, there's obviously an LYSO's hand in the proceedings: Each garment is shown in at least two different yarns, demonstrating how a pattern can be reimagined based on the string that's chosen. And that string is nothing but the best: Artisanal brands prized stateside—Malabrigo, Madelinetosh, Koigu, Handmaiden, The Fibre Company, Quince & Co.—are joined by U.K. counterparts like Dye for Yarn, Viola and Old Maiden Aunt. The duality doesn't stop there. Many patterns include instructions for knitting both flat and in the round. The projects themselves have a classicist's touch and a modern European feel, with lots of lace (one iteration with nupps), texture and colorwork. One crescent shawl has petal pleats at the bottom while another morphs into a sweater. A chevron baby blanket can be scaled down into a woman's scarf. And you'll meet Bertie, a knitted English folk doll done up with stitched scarf and hat, his hands insouciantly tucked into his pockets. As far as cross-cultural exchanges go, this self-published effort's a keeper.

## **Lovely Knits for Little Girls**

By Vibe Ulrik Sondergaard  
Taunton Press; \$22.95  
ISBN: 1600855032

Who says fashionistas have to wear adult sizes? The youngest of young ladies are avidly attuned to the latest clothing trends, as anyone who's entered a Justice or Abercrombie lately can attest. Problem is, moms may not be happy about letting their daughters wear the often suggestive garb found on the racks these days. Bridge the generation gap by knitting them modest yet fashion-forward pieces that appeal to both parties, in a size range (3 to 8) that's not as saturated as the baby-pattern category. The Clara Butterfly sweater, for example, uses luxury yarns fit for an adult and tulip-shaped puffed sleeves full of sugar and spice. There's a daisy-stitch pullover with a ribbon-adorned stand-up collar, an asymmetrically tied fan-stitch jacket, a raglan



Aran with A-line flare shaping, and a kid-sized circle wrap-cardi of the sort so in vogue with grown-up knitters. A loop-stitch vest has a fabulous field of furry fiber, a layered skirt ruffles with leafy tiers and the cabled Grandpa cardi carries a vintage look. Dress-length items turn to tunics as the wearer sprouts up and will no doubt become favorites she won't want to outgrow. In one case, she might not have to: The cropped Elf cardigan has a fabric skirt that attaches with buttons, so you can always cut a new section to fit and swap out the print at will.

## **Super-Scary Mochimochi**

By Anna Hrachovec  
Potter Craft; \$19.99  
ISBN: 0307965767

You know Halloween's going to loom large in a time when the CDC is giving real-world zombie-apocalypse advisories. (The official word: Don't worry.) Horror staples have infiltrated pop culture to such a degree, it's only fitting that fiends make an appearance in

Mochimochi Land, too. Hrachovec stitches up her sweetly sour creatures with the gusto of a mad scientist, featuring a crypt's worth of backyard beasties, old-school ghouls, creepy new species and mix-and-match monsters. Meet her vampire brats, fanged babies in onesies clutching bottles of blood.



Sarcophocat's a feline mummy wrapped in white yarn bandages. Bitty Witches ride three to a broom, while a tame teen transforms into a werewolf with a flip of a hairy hood and mitts. She plays Dr. Frankenstein by cooking up fluorescent eels, conjoined lab rats and killer bees. Squeeze Hurly Burly and watch as he regurgitates mothballs. And there's a whole chapter on monster mash-ups with details on how to customize your own DIY mutants. Pick two heads, a forked tongue, horns—any variety of other-worldly bits.

## **The Sock Knitter's Handbook**

By Charlene Schurch and  
Beth Parrott  
Martingale & Co.; \$26.99  
ISBN: 1604680466

Let's hear it for the sock specialists,

who continue to mine a still-growing, seemingly inexhaustible sub-specialty of knitting. The latest reference from



well-heeled sole mates Schurch and Parrott gives readers the wherewithal they need to come up with their own DIY

pairs, whether their preference is toe-up or cuff-down. Offering dozens of cast-ons and bind-offs, plus heel and toe options for either construction, this navigable spiral-bound volume also features swatches for more than 30 different leg patterns. Hand-paint color-pooling, gusset gaps, stripe jogs and other potential pitfalls are analyzed. Advice ranges from changing gauge by changing needle size to tweaking stitch counts to deal with tricky pattern repeats. Special fit issues such as high insteps, thin or thick ankles and wide heels are also addressed, as are enforcing spots vulnerable to wear and tear. Foot measurement and size charts for both men and women are among the helpful stats that accompany the clear-cut text and photos that toe every line and stitch. There are no patterns, but with the confidence this source instills, readers will be motivated to foot their own bill of fare.

## Bestseller Box



As the summer season started in earnest, craft-book sales were more about Father's Day DIYs, BBQ cookouts and brew-your-own beer than knitting. Stitching did carve out four spots in the top 20 of Amazon's extended Crafts & Hobbies list, though. Here's what was happening stitch-wise on the online book-sales charts the first week of June 2012.

### **Amazon Knitting & Crochet List**

1. *Essentially Feminine Knits*, by Lene Samsoe (Interweave Press)
2. *Cast-On, Bind-Off*, by Leslie Ann Bestor (Storey)
9. *Circular Knitting Workshop*, by Margaret Radcliffe (Storey)
13. *Knit Red*, by Laura Zander (Sixth&Spring Books)

### **Barnes & Noble.com Knitting List**

1. *The Principles of Knitting*, by June Hemmons Hiatt (Touchstone)
2. *Finishing School*, by Deborah Newton (Sixth&Spring Books)
3. *One + One*, by Iris Schreier (Lark Books)



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# Taste the Rainbow

Hand-dyed  
yarns' colorful  
offerings



By Leslie Petrovski  
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCUS TULLIS

Knitters and crocheters have been known to storm booths at fiber festivals for the stuff. Yarn crawlers collect it. Bloggers extol it. Whether color is brushed on, squirted or dipped, natural or acid, variegated, tonal or self-striping, hand-dyed yarns help put the itch in stitch. With indie and mainstream vendors producing miles of yarns to dye for, we decided to sample a few to see what the hue and cry is all about.

**Sweet Georgia Superwash DK (#1)** (60-plus colors; 100% superwash merino; 256yds/115g) in the semi-solid colorway China Doll is a brilliant, round 3-ply bursting with vitality. From Vancouver-based indie designer Felicia Lo, this bouncy yarn—in a pedicure-perfect red whose color variations impart a lively vibrancy—not only seems to glow; it also skips from one needle to the next like it wants to knit itself. Give it a twirl in service of a lace stole or shawl and watch those yarn overs fly.

**Lorna's Laces Shepherd Sport (#2)** (200-plus colors; 100% superwash merino wool; 20yds/57g) in the newly released color Cumberbund is a searing orange-red in the company's popular merino superwash. A "nearly solid" in LL's lexicon, this go-go-girl of a color has a strong Sixties vibe; add it to a groovy colorblock tank top or shift. Now where did you put those white patent-leather boots?

**Artyarns Ultramerino 4 (#3)** (hundreds of colors, dyed to order; 100% merino wool; 191yds/50g) in color 2278 flaunts a tonal primary yellow that puts the similarly hued Crayola to shame. The dye job on this fingering weight striates nicely without being too distracting. Cable-plied and tightly wound for strength (and delightful, split-free knitting!), this merino doesn't have the kind of softness that will make you weak in the knees; rather, you'll covet it for its ability to stand up to a stroll while tucked neatly into a pair of comfortable oxfords.

With wilder swings of color ranging from leather to buttercup, **Dream in Color Everlasting DK (#4)** (48 colors; 100% superwash merino; 275yds/100g) in Gilt feels like it's from another time. Antiqued and browned down, this intriguing colorway





suggests the variations of color lurking in the corners of a baroque carved, gilded frame. Everlasting is a softly spun yarn of many plies with its own idiosyncrasies: It boasts what the company calls its exclusive intense color variation and shadow-effect technique, yet it seems a bit scrawny for a true DK and is prone to splitting as you knit.

**Fleece Artist Blue Face Leicester 2/8 (#5)** (Moss (approx. 80 colors; 100% Bluefaced Leicester; 246yds/125g) is part of the company's "Subtle Series," and in BFL, the barely variegated lichen and earth colors emanate in glowing lengths. Softly plied and imbued with all of the wonderful characteristics of this longwool breed—gorgeous luster, sumptuous hand and drape—this pretty yarn flashes its good looks shamelessly.

**Claudia Hand Painted Yarns Sport (#6)** (152 colors; 100% merino; 112yds/50g) in Celadon Dream is another softie likely to generate a few oohs and ahhs. First, the color: an irresistible semisolid lime with hints of vanilla and new grass. Then, the build: three plies tightly spun into a bouncy, perfect round. Finally, the knit: exuberant, springy and comfortable (and so alluring in that new-leaf color of summer). Knit some stockinette in the round, encase an elastic and pull up a tube top.

**Koigu Wool Designs' Kersti Merino Crepe (#7)** (180 solid/semi-solid colors; 100% merino; 114yds/50g) in 2130 is a blueberry-punch colorway that oscillates between shades of aqua, everything from sea glass to bright turquoise. Koigu's DK-weight crepe merino, with its matte, pebbled surface, doesn't have the blingy luster of its fingering weight but offers up the company's dazzling pigments in a less-daunting gauge and resilient construction. Lofty and skin-friendly, it'll tempt you to buy a sweater's worth.

How could we not include a sock yarn in this mix? **Mountain Colors**

is based in Montana's Bitterroot Valley; thus dyes Diana McKay and Leslie Taylor take their inspiration from living close to nature in the Rocky Mountain West.

**Crazyfoot (#8)** (60-plus colors; 90% superwash merino/10% nylon; 425yds/100g) in Winter Sky is a case in point. Subtly variegated rather than tonal, this cable-plied sock yarn displays the clear deep blues, violets and dark turquoise characteristics of a fading sunset on a cold night, when you want your socks to be warm and soft.

**Madelinetosh Tosh DK (#9)** (170 colors; 100% superwash merino wool; 225yds) in Magenta—one of the company's glazed solid colorways—has the look of a good amethyst: a stone on fire with the color purple. Springy and round, it's easy to see why this yarn has logged almost 10,000 Ravelry projects and dropped into a similar number of stashes. Tosh DK's soft hand, generous put-up and general sumptuousness are completely beguiling. But get yourself a pair of curved craft scissors: This beauty will pill.

**The Unique Sheep Super Wool (#10)** ("hundreds of colorways"; 100% superwash merino; 235yds/100g) in Cranraspberry undulates from cotton-candy pink to wine-dark purple. The colors in this semi-solid swing more dramatically than some, adding interest to simple stitches and drama to fancy stitchwork. Taking a pretty-is-as-pretty-does approach, the company donates at least 5 percent of its net profits to charities including Doctors Without Borders and the Amani Children's Foundation.





## The 2012 BIAs: Innovators Awarded

**F**our needlearts businesses won top honors at the 2012 Business Innovation Awards presentation held at the TNNA needlearts trade show in Columbus, Ohio, in June. Thirty-one businesses in all product segments vied for cash, gift certificates, tickets and advertising worth more than \$13,000 from Bryson Distributing, Colonial Needle, Cooperative Press, Interweave, Kreinik Manufacturing, Lantern Moon, *Needlework Retailer* magazine, Plymouth Yarn, TNNA, Trendsetter Yarns and *Yarn Market News*. Desk and Acorn Street Designs won the needlework category prizes. Here are the impressive yarn category results.

Kirkwood Knittery, a "Remark(et)able LYS" in St. Louis, Missouri, won the Yarn Retailer Award. Kirkwood has long been a star player in the LYS field; open since 2006, the shop, co-owned by Robyn Schrager and Brooke Nico, serves a savvy clientele in the heart of the country. The Kirkwood team—the owners, as well as Nadine Sokol, Franni Goette, Rachel Bowler and Catherine Collett—orchestrated a total store makeover in response to the difficult economic times.

Pricing was their first obstacle, tackled by adding new high-quality, lower-cost yarns to their previously luxury-heavy inventory and continuing their cost-respectful selling style. They now always ask, "Do you have a budget in mind?" before recommending yarns. They also show sensitivity to customers' budgets with a layaway program, a well-thought-out Groupon offer and continued free project assistance. Along with a new store layout, gift registry, social media outreach and monthly knitting and networking events, the store serves its customers' every need. The result? More customer purchases per month, continued profitability and deeper customer affinity, despite St. Louis's economic woes.

The Yarn Wholesaler Winner, Shibui Knits of Portland, Oregon, won for its "Mix Concept" program. The team of Darcy Cameron, Jenny Trygg, Kristin Ford and Nicole Adsit dreamed up a new packaging and promotional program for their yarns that introduced customers to multistrand knitting and encouraged them to use Shibui yarns for Shibui patterns. Customers can now create unique projects by picking custom combinations

of Shibui yarns using an attractive and engaging point-of-sale LYS display: Shibui Mix Box. The box includes a season-specific Look Book and accompanying patterns, color cards, knitted swatches of each yarn and flash cards for calculating multi-strand gauges and needle sizes. The result was magnificent increases in both the number of orders and order sizes since the launch.

Certificates were presented to each company that entered the award competition. Judges for the competition remarked on how impressed they were with the number of competitors and the creativity of the entries. Says India Hart Wood of Hart Business Research, co-sponsor of the Awards program, "It is a pleasure and privilege to be a part of this program and to work with the needlearts industry. These are the kinds of innovative ideas that keep the industry strong, and I can't wait to see future entries."

TNNA, founded in 1974, is a professional organization representing wholesalers, manufacturers, distributors, designers, publishers and other companies supporting the needlearts industry. For more information, visit [tnna.org](http://tnna.org) or call (800) 889-8662.



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## Mark Your Calendars

**T**he second Friday in October is I Love Yarn Day, which this year falls on the 12th. Last year, our inaugural I Love Yarn Day netted amazing results. Yarn enthusiasts—crocheters, knitters, crafters and weavers—posted and tweeted about their passion. More than 51,000 stories were generated on Facebook alone, and close to 600,000 people viewed content associated with the I Love Yarn Day page.

This year we're planning even more: In addition to working closely with Council members, TNNA's Yarn Group, industry publishers, bloggers, TKGA and the CGOA, CYC will be expanding the ILoveYarnDay.org website to include more fun projects and more artwork downloads.

Among those who shared what they did to celebrate ILYD were individuals and groups who focused on charitable works. For instance, members of Girl Scout Cadet Troop #6141 in La Mesa, California, made and donated "teenie beanie" premie hats to their local hospital. A

Panama City Beach, Florida, resident organized local volunteers to knit and crochet hats and scarves for residents of the Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans Nursing Home. Posts such as these inspired us to add a charitable component to ILYD. Among the project ideas, we are encouraging yarn lovers to complete afghans and accessories for their neighbors through Warm Up America.

This year we are also offering merchandise—hats, T-shirts, mugs and bags—imprinted with the I Love Yarn Day logo so that you can proclaim your crafty affinities to the world. This a charitable effort, not a profit-making one: All proceeds from sales of the gear, made for us through CafePress and priced just \$1 above cost, will go to the Warm Up America Foundation, a 501C3 charity.

We love to hear the ways shops organized celebratory ILYD events. Last year, Sip & Knit, Inc., in Maitland, Florida, hosted a "Knit in Public" evening. The street in front of the shop was lined with luminaria and lawn chairs for

stitchers, and yarn lovers who participated received special savings in the store. Meanwhile, Knit & Quilt in Barrie, Ontario, held a 25-percent-off-everything sale from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Those who brought non-perishable food items for charity were entered in a drawing to win a \$25 gift card.

That evening, Ben Franklin Crafts and Frames in Redmond, Washington, hosted an I Love Yarn Night from 7 'til midnight, complete with pizza for attendees. The owners invited local knitting and crochet groups to sit and stitch or complete "make and take" yarn projects. The revelers ended the evening by yarn bombing one of the structure poles in the store's yarn department.

What are you planning for October 12? Let us know at [www.ILoveYarnDay.org](http://www.ILoveYarnDay.org).

The Craft Yarn Council was formed in 1981 to raise awareness about fibers. Visit [www.craftyarncouncil.com](http://www.craftyarncouncil.com) or [www.knitandcrochet.com](http://www.knitandcrochet.com) for more information.

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# Radio Days

The halcyon days of radio may be in the past, but don't tune out the medium as a marketing tool.

BY CLAIRE LUI

**D**igital, digital, digital: It's all you hear these days. But what about more traditional forms of advertising? Consider the radio: It's one of the oldest of media outlets, yet for some modern yarn stores, it remains a very effective way to spread the word about their businesses.

Gaby Peterson, co-owner of Yarnology in Winona, Minnesota, started advertising on the radio last year. A longtime fan of Minnesota Public Radio, Peterson decided to do her part to support the local station. She chose to underwrite (that is, to purchase one of the short ads that run at the end of a public radio program), which is the standard method for business support of Minnesota Public Radio. As the owner of a new yarn store, Peterson is pleasantly surprised by the traffic her ad drives to the shop.

"We've been quite bowled over by the response," she says. "At least once a week someone tells us, 'I heard your ad on the radio.' We have knitters from all over Minnesota come to visit, including visitors to the [nearby] Mayo Clinic who heard the ad." Her 15-second ad runs on both the news and the classical music stations of Minnesota Public Radio several times a day; placement is luck of the draw, though she has heard her ad during *Car Talk* and *Prairie Home Companion*.

In Northampton, Massachusetts, Kathy Elkins, co-owner of Webs, also started radio advertising because of her interest in a local station. In 2006, ad reps from WRNX, then an adult alternative-rock station (it switched to country in late 2011), called the store to inquire about advertising. Elkins and her husband Steve decided to give radio spots a try; they found that the ads gave them a very successful return on their investment, and they've been experimenting with different stations and formats ever since.

The Elkinses had been advertising on four different radio stations when they were approached about doing a knitting talk show (which they also offer as a free podcast) on WHMP. They are not paid for the show, nor do they pay to run it, though they do buy ads on the station; the radio show is another way of

emphasizing their visibility and participation in the community.

## On-Air Supply

Unlike print ads, which a business is responsible for designing and producing, radio ads are a collaborative effort. Generally, an ad rep from a station will write a script and send it to the business owner for approval. There's usually some back-and-forth until the script satisfies both parties, and then the radio station records the ad and plays it as contracted. For Yarnology, the underwriting spot is quite simple: "Today's programming is underwritten in part by Yarnology in Winona. Yarnology is a yarn shop where people can gather, learn, share ideas and find local and international yarns. More information at [yarnologyMN.com](http://yarnologyMN.com)." (Phone numbers are difficult to remember, so stick to a web address or the store's physical address.)

Advertising on the radio can be surprisingly affordable. In western Massachusetts, Elkins pays \$300 a month for her ad on AM radio, which runs about 30 times per week, and anywhere from \$25 to \$70 per ad for FM radio stations, depending on when and for how long it runs (generally 30 or 60 seconds). In Minnesota, Gaby Peterson pays about \$12 per ad (the price is dependent on when the ad runs and on which station, with local public radio's news station being more expensive than the classical music station), with each underwriting spot running about 15 seconds.

When she opened Ladybug Knitting Shop in Dennis, Massachusetts, in 1982, Barbara Prue started advertising with WFCC, a then-new classical music station. She stayed with the station for 25 years, consistently changing the time that the ad ran to reach a broad group of listeners—everyone from commuters and locals to summer tourists on Cape Cod. The ads brought in a "tremendous mix of customers," even becoming well known among locals, since she always used the same background music to introduce her ad.

Unlike those who read print publications or watch television, radio listeners are often a captive audience—people most often listen in their cars. The radio offers indie retailers an easy new route to promote their shops to an untapped demographic.

## Tuning In

Here are a few key points to keep in mind before you mic up.

- 1. Know your customers.** Use your knowledge of your customers as a guide to choosing a station. Yarnology, in a vibrant community of public radio boosters, found public radio to be an extremely successful outlet. Ladybug Knitting Shop looked to demographics: With an older and more affluent customer base on Cape Cod, the classical music station was Barbara Prue's best choice.
- 2. Track your response rate.** There's an ephemeral quality to radio advertising that makes it difficult to know exactly how well your ad is working. Elkins looks at how many new visitors to her site are being sent from the ads that run on the stations' websites (the ads are included in her radio ad packages) to gauge the radio ads' viability. Peterson and Prue both simply ask new customers how they heard about the store and judge success based on how often the radio ads are mentioned.
- 3. Give it time.** "Three months is an absolute minimum" for running a particular ad, says Elkins, pointing out that it can be hard to tell whether an ad is working if a contract is for too short a time period.
- 4. Ask for additional promotion from the station.** Elkins suggests asking the radio station what other promotional opportunities are available to advertisers—perhaps yarn store owners can be guests on local programs or sponsor a booth or chat with hosts at local radio events.
- 5. Develop a relationship with your ad rep.** Your ad rep can be your best ally in the radio game. Talk to him or her to find out what time slots are working, as well as for feedback on developing scripts that properly match the "voice" of your store. A good ad rep will help you focus on what you should be saying in your ad based on the station's knowledge of its own demographics.

Claire Lui blogs at [newyorkminknit.com](http://newyorkminknit.com) and enjoys listening to *Car Talk* even though she doesn't own a car.



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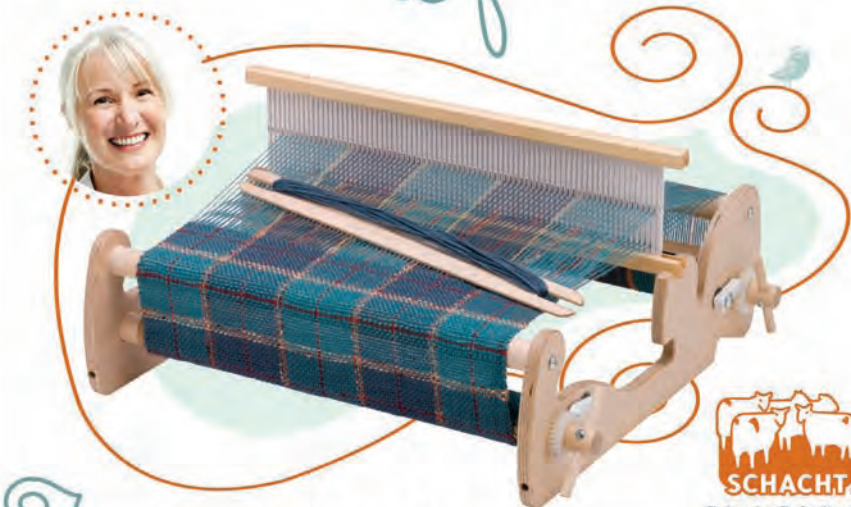
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# Friends With Benefits?

A close-knit relationship with customers is one of the joys of yarn shop ownership. But when customers want favors, just how friendly should you be?

BY DARYL BROWER

“Fiber art and friends” is the shop tagline at Wynona Studios in Oregon City, Oregon. J.J. Foster, who owns the LYS with her mother, Linda Bell, takes that phrase literally. “I moved [to Oregon] to open the store, and other than my mother, I didn’t know a soul,” Foster says. “All the friends I have here, I made through the store.”

Foster isn’t alone in her circumstances. Part of the beauty of owning a yarn shop is the connections fostered within the store walls; friendship is just part of the whole warm and fuzzy package. But being best buds with those who supply your bread and butter can lead to sticky situations—especially when “friends” try to take advantage of the relationship, asking you to bend the rules on returns or slip them a free skein.

To avoid such awkwardness, Foster decided early on that she had to find a balance between the personal and the professional. “I may have met my friends through the store, and it’s a wonderful, social place to be, but we all understand that the shop is a business, not a philanthropy,” she says. So no matter how many heart-to-hearts she’s had with a shop supporter, she doesn’t offer special treatment or discounts—nor, she says, do friends on the other side of the cash wrap expect her to. Foster says that’s because they’re interested in the store’s success. “They want us to be here,” she says of her customers-turned-friends. “And I think they realize that if they constantly ask us for discounts or other favors, we’re not going to be in business for long.”

David Gage, a mediator and clinical psychologist at BMC Associates in Arlington, Virginia, and author of *The Partnership Charter*, says Foster’s boundary-setting is a healthy approach. “There’s a difference between friendship and being friendly,” he says. “In a business situation, it’s important to set the two apart.” At Bliss Yarns in Brentwood, Tennessee, owner Dana Nelms has done just that, making it a policy to not get too involved in the personal lives of customers. “I enjoy being with them, but I try to keep myself a little bit removed,” she says. “I think things

run smoother that way, and it’s easier to make decisions about policy.” It also helps keep everyone who enters the shop on an even keel.

“There will always be a few customers you like better than others,” Nelms admits, “but I don’t want anyone to see a difference in the way they are treated. If the Wednesday-afternoon knitting group wants to buy a cake for someone’s birthday or throw a baby shower, great. I’m happy for them to do that. But I’m not going to instigate or organize it, because I don’t want other customers to feel slighted.”

## Quid Pro Pros

At Through the Moongate and Over the Moon Toys in Highland Park, New Jersey, sisters and store owners Jenni Chapman and Becca Chapman-Smith are a little closer to their customers. (Though they sell some hand-knit items, theirs is a specialty gift and toy store, not a yarn shop.) Living in the same small town where their shop is located and with children in the local school system, they’re likely to have had dinner with or hosted a playdate for a good percentage of their clients. “It’s great, because we get to interact with our customers in a social setting,” says Chapman. “But it can also be awkward. Should we treat them differently because we’re good friends?”

Noting that many of those friends helped get the seven-year-old business off the ground, they decided that some special treatment was in order. “We have so many people who support us by buying here, helping out when we do street fairs or other events, that we wanted to thank them. But we also knew we’d have to set ground rules or it would get out of control.” They settled on a 30 percent discount for immediate family members, close family friends and those who frequent the shop on a regular basis—at their discretion. “We do it because it’s a nice thing to do,” says Chapman. “It’s set up in QuickBooks, and Becca and I are the only ones who can authorize it. That takes the pressure off the employees.”

At Bliss, employees get a discount that extends to immediate family members, but that’s where Nelms draws the line. “I take a very

business-minded approach to it,” she says. “I want customers to shop here because we have something of value to them. If you give away the store, you won’t have a store. I think loyalty or reward cards are better, more even-handed ways to show appreciation for customers.” J.J. Foster, too, avoids special treatment. “Honestly, it hasn’t come up,” she admits. “In fact, we find that the opposite is true. My friends don’t want to use the discounts we offer to all customers—they say it makes them feel guilty.”

Of course, not everyone is so considerate. How do you handle saying no to a pushy request, especially one from someone with whom you have a relationship outside of store hours? “It can be very hard to separate what’s good for the business from what’s good for the friendship,” David Gage says. “But you need to get those straight. Decide where you are and aren’t willing to compromise, and make those lines clear to your customers.”

Nelms handles these situations with grace. “I try to spin things in a positive way,” she says. “When someone asks for something I think is unreasonable or against policy, I say, ‘I wish I could’ or ‘Wouldn’t that be nice, but unfortunately it’s not something we can do.’” Gage says that’s the right approach. “Being pleasant goes a long way toward soothing ruffled feathers,” he says. “Stress that your relationship means a lot, and then calmly and clearly state that you have to draw a line between the personal and professional. ‘We’re great friends, and I wish I could do this for you, but it’s not fair to my other customers and not something I can afford to do right now.’”

And for the diva who demands special treatment and makes you feel bad about not providing it? “Friends who demand special treatment aren’t friends,” says Foster. “They’re acquaintances trying to get an edge through their association with you. And that’s not good for you or your business.”

Daryl Brower is a freelance writer and editor and a regular contributor to *Yarn Market News*. She’s also a frequent customer of Through the Moongate, where Jenni and Becca make everyone feel special.



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# OK Computer

Don't leave customers to their own devices. A dedicated shop computer gets them surfing the Web on your turf and terms.

BY PAULA HENDRICKSON

About three years ago, Frankie West began noticing that more and more customers were walking into her shop, By Hand Yarn in Sonora, California, with laptops or smartphones at the ready, searching for an Internet connection so they could access patterns. "We decided to get WiFi to make it a little easier for them," West says. She set up a secure network, meaning that customers have to ask for a password to access the Internet, but West doesn't mind. In fact, adding WiFi led to an unexpected perk. "It's turned out to be a nice benefit for significant others who come in with our customers," she says. "They can sit in our living room area, go online and be easily entertained." Last December, By Hand Yarns added a dedicated iMac for customers to use as well.

Nina Haldeman, owner of Juniper Place Yarns in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, noticed a similar trend at roughly the same time. She tried to accommodate customers by allowing them access to the shop's lone computer, which happened to serve as the store's cash register. "Allowing customers to come behind my desk to look at the screen made me a little uncomfortable," Haldeman explains. "I wouldn't let them use the computer by themselves—what if they saw a bank statement or an invoice? So I brought in a laptop from home that I wasn't using." She placed it on a table with a sign reading "Ravelry here." "Now people jump online to view their Ravelry pages or go to whichever site has the pattern they're interested in, get their yarn requirements and walk out with their purchases," Haldeman says.

Robyn Schrager, co-owner of Kirkwood Knittery in St. Louis, Missouri, added a computer for customer use three years ago and bought an iPad last year; now two customers can search the Web at the same time. Schrager estimates that 90 percent of her customers access Ravelry via the shop laptop—kept near the work-and-lounge table in the middle of the store—and the tablet, which resides at the checkout counter when not in use. She says offering Internet access helps drive sales. "When someone comes

in with a pattern in mind but has forgotten the details, we can look it up. So many patterns give you the name of the yarn and that's about it. We can help them determine yarn amounts or make knowledgeable yarn substitutions if that's what they want," Schrager says.

## On-Site Specifics

In-store computers also make it easier for knitters to narrow down pattern options. "Sometimes customers come in with a clear picture of what they want, but it's hard for us to go through our enormous library of books and patterns to pinpoint exactly what that is," Frankie West says. "They can go online and find exactly what they want and then we can tell them whether we have that book or pattern for sale."

None of these shop owners permits customers to copy patterns from books or websites, of course (see "Copyright for Retailers 2.0," page 40), but they will allow customers to print patterns that have been downloaded legally. As participants in the Ravelry In-Store Pattern Sales program, By Hand Yarns and Kirkwood Knittery can easily download patterns straight to their store computers and print out copies for customers who don't have a computer or access to a printer or aren't tech-savvy.

Easily doesn't mean cavalierly, however. Think twice before giving shoppers free rein to print patterns; paper and toner costs can mount quickly if you're not careful. West—who considers free printouts to be a matter of good customer service—keeps By Hand's printer in the back room, so customers have to ask before hitting Control-P. At Kirkwood Knittery, Schrager charges a nominal fee to print out a pattern that's really long or includes a lot of color images.

LYS owners say novice knitters and crocheters often use in-store computers to watch online tutorials, while more advanced clients might use special design software to customize or create patterns. You might assume that free WiFi and in-store computers are a lure for the younger crowd, but many times the opposite is true. "A good 40 to 60 percent of our customers are of an age

where they don't really know how to utilize the Internet, or only use it for e-mail," Schrager says. "If we can help them find a pattern more easily, they really appreciate that." West has noticed that customers roaming the shop searching for patterns on their smartphones also take advantage of the store's iMac, so they can see details on a larger screen with better resolution.

Offering free WiFi and Internet access is a smart form of customer service in the digital age. And Haldeman focuses on customer service. "I need to use every tool in my arsenal to sell yarn, because that's what I'm here for," she says. "If allowing customers to access the Internet while in my shop helps me sell yarn, I consider it a good move."

## An Online Outline

Creating a dedicated in-shop Internet station can be easier than you think.

- Don't fret if you can't afford a new computer for the shop. As long as it can access the Internet, a low-end desktop or a used computer will suffice.
- Find a quiet place in the store for your computer station and provide a comfy chair.
- Connect with your ISP of choice; leave the computer's browser open at all times to make it easy for customers.
- Display a sign letting customers know they can use the station for free. If you charge for printing, indicate those fees on the sign.
- Designate your most computer-savvy employee as the go-to person for troubleshooting any technical issues that arise, but make sure you and your entire staff know enough about the Internet to access popular knitting sites, download patterns legally and answer simple user questions.

Paula Hendrickson is a yarn-obsessed writer whose project queue on Ravelry might just last a lifetime.





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# Give a Little...

Freebies for customers can be a powerful marketing tool that taps into the principle of reciprocity.

BY KAREN SWIM

Everyone loves receiving a gift, whether a small token or a big shiny package wrapped in a bow. In turn, gifts ignite a natural compulsion in us to reciprocate. As young children, we are taught the social contract of returning favors, and those lessons stick with us whether we realize it or not. Small business owners can take advantage of this “principle of reciprocity” to build stronger, more lasting relationships with customers.

The principle of reciprocity has been studied and defined by psychologists, religious leaders, philosophers and great thinkers for centuries. In *The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement*, sociologist Alvin W. Gouldner writes, “Among the most prevalent of the social rules governing our daily interactions is the tendency to reciprocate acts of kindness; that is, the norm of reciprocity.” George C. Homans, widely regarded as the father of social exchange theory, argued that all human relationships involve a principle of exchange, and when a favor is given, it creates a temporary inequity. The receiver will seek to balance that inequity by returning the favor or kindness. This constant need to balance the scales is why many customers will respond to receiving something for free by making a purchase.

## Gift Return

Of course, many LYS owners who are closely watching the bottom line may question the wisdom of giving anything away. But giving is more than a feel-good strategy; it can help LYS owners bring in more business. Dr. Robert B. Cialdini, a noted expert on the science of influence, provides an example of the return on giving in his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*: “According to the American Disabled Veterans organization, mailing out a simple appeal for donations produces an 18 percent success rate, but enclosing a small gift—personalized address labels—boosts the success rate to 35 percent.”

Nancy Hamilton of Black Sheep Yarns in Kent, Connecticut, has knit giving into the fiber of her company. Hamilton gives knitting lessons for free in the shop, and she offers help on any project, no matter where the yarn or pattern was bought. Hamilton says the investment of her time and expertise is well worth it, as 80 percent of those

she helps buy something during the same visit. “The long-term goal outweighs short-term issues,” says Hamilton. “I think you have to look at the bigger picture, and that’s bringing in repeat customers over a period of time.”

## No Strings Attached

To invoke the reciprocal reflex, the gift truly must be free. A popular technique used by cable-TV companies is to offer free or discounted service to new customers for a limited amount of time. It’s far from free: The potential customer is paying for the “gift,” obliging herself to pay for service in the future. In reciprocity, the obligation is not overt but subtle. Your offer of a gift with no strings attached is what triggers the desire to return the favor.

Whether the item has a high perceived value or is of great usefulness to a customer, ideally it should cost you little or nothing. For an LYS owner, this could be a free pattern, a guide to knitting terms for the new knitter or the regular offer to come in and knit.

Saloni Howard-Sarin, owner of Nine Rubies in San Mateo, California, advises LYS owners not to overlook the no-obligation gift of staff time. “In general, we will help customers—it’s one thing we can give away that has real value.” Other things that Nine Rubies gives away are less valuable but no less useful—tape measures or stitch gauges with her logo on them, for instance.

At the heart of the principle of reciprocity is intention. A gift that is given in obligation or resentfully will not trigger a positive response—so be careful not to offer something to a problematic customer in an attempt to appease him or her. The purpose of giving gifts is to build relationships. You may not make an immediate sale, but you can earn the gift of a prospective customer’s attention.

## A Pattern of Giving

Nancy Hamilton has found that the giving spirit has truly tangible benefits: A customer taught a six-week learn-to-knit class for free. Her students ended up spending a combined \$1,000 each week in the store. “I think store owners have to start thinking about that—there are some days you feel very taken advantage of and you’re exhausted, but the rewards come back later,” she says. Based on such success, Hamilton reciprocated in kind, giving the

instructor a \$200 gift certificate to the shop for her time.

Never forget to share the principle of reciprocity with existing customers, too, not just those who sign up for their first class or come in for the first time. If Churchmouse Yarns & Teas on Bainbridge Island, Washington, offers a gift, bonus or giveaway, owners John Koval and Kit Hutchin are sure to offer it to everyone. “We are very careful not to offer things to a new customer that we have not offered to our existing customers,” Koval says.

Using the principle of reciprocity in your business will help you to build relationships and create loyalty. It can truly be the gift that keeps on giving.

## Compliments of the House

- **Change it up.** Handing out the same freebie will start to get old over time—regular customers will end up with many of the same item. “We have different things we hand out to customers—little magnifying glasses or nail files,” says Saloni Howard-Sarin, who changes her giveaways on a regular basis.
- **Spread the word.** Tell others about your gift giving. Nancy Hamilton of Black Sheep Yarns says, “I put it in my advertisements that people can come in and learn to cast on and knit for free. I talk about it and tell everyone who comes through the door.”
- **Share your knowledge.** Don’t overlook the value of information. Insider tips, tutorials and advanced techniques cost you little but are of high value to your customers. You can give away information on your website, Facebook page or even on the back of your business card.
- **Use social media.** Incorporate generosity into your marketing using social media. Share tips and answer questions in knitting forums or comment on a local knitter’s blog.

Karen Swim is a public relations and marketing communications specialist and owner of Words for Hire ([www.wordsforhirellc.com](http://www.wordsforhirellc.com)).



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# Getting Them Hooked

It's never too late to start catering to crocheters.

BY LINDA PERMANN

**T**he longstanding perception that crocheters are, well, cheap is looking more and more like a myth. According to a recent survey by the Craft and Hobby Association, crochet topped knitting both in sales and in household participation in 2010, when, according to the poll, crocheters spent a whopping \$1.062 billion on their hobby versus knitters' \$761 million. Getting a share of that money into your shop should be your next goal—and speaking directly to crocheters is the way to do it.

Tammy Barker did just that when she purchased her Scottsdale, Arizona, shop in 2011. The store had been called Jessica Knits for seven years, but she immediately added "... and Crochets" to the name. Barker wanted her hook-wielding customers to know that they no longer had to come to the store "incognito." A crocheter herself, Barker feels that being crochet-friendly gives her a market share that other area shops are ignoring. "We're finding that crocheters are not the minority that many people think they are," she explains. "They enjoy fine fibers, luxury yarns and beautiful things, especially now that crochet is so fashionable and current."

Being crochet-friendly can be as easy as greeting your customers by asking, "What are you making?" rather than "What are you knitting?" (Imagine how you would feel if you went to a pet store to buy your dog a toy and were asked, "How's your cat doing?") Staffers at The Purple Purl in Ontario always welcome crocheters warmly. "So often people ask me, tentatively, if we carry crochet hooks," says owner Jennifer Campbell. "They instantly relax when I answer with an enthusiastic 'absolutely!'"

## Talk the Talk

The best way to reach crocheters is to hire one who's trained and ready to help on the floor, not only with technical questions but with yarn-selection queries as well. You'll get the best results by bringing in someone who's as enthusiastic about crochet as you are about knitting. When searching for your crocheting staffer, use yourself as a test: If the candidate makes you feel excited about crochet, he or she is sure to

be an asset to your store. Soon enough, you may find yourself itching to learn (if you aren't already hooked, that is).

Stacy Klaus, owner of the Knitting Nest in Austin, Texas, had always hired local teachers to cater to crocheters, but when she caught the bug and educated herself about the craft, the store "got serious." Every other week she hosts "Amigurumi Thursday" with local designer Allison Hoffman, and the newly formed Austin Crochet Guild meets there once a month. "A lot of people who crochet believe no one cares about them," says Klaus. Accustomed to the slim selection of fiber types available at big box stores, crocheters in Klaus's shop often need help navigating luxury yarns. But once they gain the confidence to work with new yarns, "It's just as easy to sell to them as it is to knitters," says Klaus. She uses social-networking sites like Pinterest and Ravelry to keep on top of crochet trends, and she is currently working on a granny-square installation for her shop.

## Walk the Walk

Having a crochet work-in-progress on hand allows Klaus to easily demonstrate a technique or give a little help when needed. Like knitters, crocheters often want to try what they can see. "And once they ask you [about a technique]," Jennifer Campbell says, "they'll usually leave with a starter project." Have a good variety of clearly written crochet patterns on hand: "It saves so many questions and emergency problem-solving sessions in the shop if we can be sure that the patterns we suggest are well written, or if we have a comparable pattern to suggest when a problem pattern is brought in," Campbell says.

It goes without saying that a large selection of hooks, books and patterns will help you sell to crocheters, but the thing you really need to stock up on? Inspiring crocheted samples. Show your customers something new—a delicate shawl, shrug, hat or scarf. Many crocheters feel forced to knit if they want to make something other than blankets and scarves, but a well-crafted, well-fitting store sample will illustrate how far crochet can go with the types of high-end yarns so often deemed the sole domain of knitters.

Finally, don't expect instant results. It took you a long time to build up your knitting clientele, and it will take just as much effort to reach out to the crocheting niche. True inclusiveness can't be faked, but serving this market will make your store a destination, and hopefully earn you a piece of that billion-dollar pie.

## No Money? No Problem!

If you'd like to appeal to crocheters but don't have a lot of money to invest, here are a few low-cost approaches.

- Feature pictures of crochet patterns in your store newsletter—many are readily available through in-store sales on Ravelry. Write a quick description of what you like about the pattern and suggest a yarn you sell in-store.
- Populate your store with crochet swatches alongside your knitted ones. Take the opportunity to show how variegated yarns work so differently when crocheted.
- If you can't afford to hire a staffer who crochets, reach out to your customer base to find one who happens to teach the craft. Offer your store as the location for her private classes, requesting no money for the privilege. Your shop will benefit not only from the sale of materials but also from the influx of so many new faces.
- Contact your favorite crochet designers and the publishers of crochet books to see if a trunk show can be arranged. Many designers have extra samples and would be happy to have them displayed for a few weeks or a month at your shop.
- If you have the space, host local guild meetings. Not only will this get crocheters through your doors, but your regular customers will be excited by the guild's monthly projects. Find your local guild through the Crochet Guild of America ([www.cgoa.org](http://www.cgoa.org)).

Linda Permann is the author of *Little Crochet* and *Crochet Adorned*.





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# London

Let the woolly Olympics commence.

BY LAUREN O'FARRELL

The physical torch may have arrived on British shores in mid-May, but the spirit of the thirtieth Olympiad has been burning in the United Kingdom for years. In 2005, London was officially selected to host the 2012 athletic extravaganza, and the city has been hard at work preparing ever since. Though London has played host to the Summer Games twice before (in 1908 and 1948), new stadiums were built for the latest competition. While heavy construction was taking place at the aquatics center and an arena for BMX (bicycle motocross), many crafty Londoners were busy building softer items with sticks and string—or hooks and string—marking the occasion in their own fiber-filled way.

Fiber artist Shauna Richardson's Lionheart project was one of 12 U.K. art installations chosen as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, a celebration of London culture that exists parallel to the athletic competition and also includes a life-size Lady Godiva puppet, a boat made of donated wooden toys and an island relocated from the Arctic. Richardson, whose work has been featured in London's Victoria & Albert Museum, won a commission to construct three larger-than-life hand-crocheted lions. The beasts were made using the high-quality fiber produced in the East Midlands area, where she creates her art.

Richardson claims that her work has gone a long way toward changing the country's perception of craft as art. "When asked what I do for a living, to state simply that I crochet animals tends to be a bit of a conversation stopper," she says. "I came up with the term *crochet-dermy* to better describe what I do—crochet realistic life-size animals, akin to taxidermy."

Each lion is a staggering 25 feet long and 13 feet tall and took 18 months and the wool of 150 sheep to make. They are the largest crocheted structures in the world. The Leicester-based artist usually works with coarser fiber than the Swalesdale wool she used for the Lionheart project, but there was a good reason for this departure from the norm: "I chose to work with mohair mixes because I'm playing with realism, and I think that gives [the lions] a realistic feel. I'm trying to keep away from the 'cuddly toy' side of things," she explains. "But Lionheart was different. It was important that I used locally sourced wool." Before the Opening Ceremonies, the three handmade British beasts traveled on the back of a lorry in a 52-foot-long glass case on a journey that mimicked the Olympic torch's, taking a tour of the country before arriving at London's Natural History Museum to meet the public. Starting in September, they move to the Twycross Zoo, where they'll reside until the end of the year.

Less forbidding than lions crafted out of wool are the cushions made for Woolsack, a London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Inspire Project [introduced to *YMN* readers in the March issue]. This knitting initiative, supported by the Campaign for Wool and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, involved one simple but ambitious plan: to knit 14,000 cushions from British wool to give to competitors. It brought together crafters from all walks of life—schoolchildren and university students, community groups and individual stitchers—with British wool-industry players, from farmers to yarn pro-



cessors and producers.

The cushions, once knit and stuffed with the homegrown fiber, were handed out to all Olympic and Paralympic athletes who wished to have one. Organizers Jane Cooper, based in Newcastle, and Sue Blacker of Blacker Yarns in Devon see the cushions as more than just keepsakes; they are meant as "a little bit of Britain for the athletes to take home with them, reflecting the importance of wool in England's history."

Stuffing and stitching events took place across the country to get the cushions ready in time. Though the group was not given access to the Olympic Village for delivery of the cushions, any athlete, from any country, who requested a Woolsack piece was sure to get one. Fran Leighton, from Great Britain's Olympic water polo team, sent a message of thanks via Twitter after receiving hers: "Massive thank you for our gorgeous cushions from all the GB water polo girls. Loving your work!" Other athletes expressed their enthusiasm via Twitter as well, including Paralympic and Olympic sailors, who received 469 cushions all told. Richard Alexander, a Team Great Britain field hockey player, told Woolsack, "Your cushions are amazing! Great idea. This is what a home Olympics is all about!"

Looking past the Olympic Village, there has been a wave of Olympics-inspired knitting throughout the scepter'd isle. In March, a 50-meter yarn-storm graffiti wall featuring dozens of hand-knitted athletes was put up by a mystery crafter in the sleepy seaside town of Saltburn. Birmingham's pop-up knitting shop, Knit 2 Together, organized knitters from around the country to knit squares that were wrapped around the columns on the city's Museum and Art Gallery to welcome visiting Jamaican and American Olympians. Down in Dover, local knitters joined fiber-flinging friends in Maidstone, Slough, Milton Keynes and as far away as Beijing and Brisbane to knit enough bunting for a woolly welcome that lined the meandering Olympic Torch route. And in London, my own Stitch London community hosted races to find the city's fastest knitter while sporty visitors swamped the town's streets.

As 1956 British Olympic gold medalist Chris Brasher once said, "There is something in the Olympics—indefinable, springing from the soul—that must be preserved." Craft, art, history, heritage, culture and community are springing up in the craft world, too. It appears that Britain will have far more knitters, crocheters and crafters when the Olympic flame goes out than we did when it arrived, and that is an Olympic legacy worth proudly preserving.

Lauren O'Farrell is the organizer of Stitch London.





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The Woodland sweater - pictured here - was featured at the The National Needlearts Association show in Columbus Ohio from June 23-25. This beautiful sweater pattern along with Yahoko's Treasure afghan and Mega Herringbone mittens are all available for download at [patternfish.com](http://patternfish.com).

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# Eat, Sleep, Knit

## Smyrna, Georgia

BY DARYL BROWER

**E**at, Sleep, Knit sums up the daily existence of many knitters, including Erin Walker, owner of the Smyrna, Georgia, yarn shop of the same name. Founded as an e-tail shop, Eat, Sleep, Knit began by supplying hand-dye junkies with 24/7 access to the indie yarns that fed their habits and in a year had expanded to a full-service bricks-and-mortar yarn shop. It's the go-to source for one-of-a-kind fibers from dyers like Madelinetosh, Dream in Color, Handmaiden, Sweet Georgia and many more, including local artisans.

Walker jokes that she didn't set out to "run a yarn empire"; she just wanted to be able to "buy a lot of yarn without feeling guilty about it." Like so many store owners, Walker started the business to fill a void in her own yarn forages. "I loved to knit, and I really loved to knit with hand-dyes," she says. "But at the time, they were really hard to find."

Frustrated by her inability to easily locate the fibers and all the colors she wanted in sweater quantities, and figuring that there had to be other equally dissatisfied knitters, Walker decided to create her own supply source. "I was working in marketing, telling other people how to im-

prove their websites to attract more users and sell more product," she explains. "And I started thinking, 'I should take my own advice and sell something myself.'"

Deciding that a site dedicated to hand-dyed

yarns had plenty of potential, she launched Eat, Sleep, Knit in 2007, working from her living room and slowly building a viable online business.

It took two years before Eat, Sleep, Knit was solvent enough for Walker to quit her day job, but 12 months into the venture the business had grown enough to warrant a few employees and its own space. In 2008, Walker signed a lease on a 1,400-square-foot warehouse and decided

that it would make sense to open it up to the public for limited hours during the week. "We were there working anyway, so I figured, why not?" she says. She announced the opening on her blog, posted store hours on the website and soon had an eager audience of local knitters dropping into the shop, stitch and socialize in the dedicated "store" area. As news spread about the shop's fabulous selection (Walker did a little bit of local advertising, but word of mouth brought in most of the newcomers), more customers found their way to Walker's door. By 2011, Eat, Sleep, Knit was once again bursting at the seams and made the move to a 3,600-square-foot space in a nearby office/warehouse complex.

Opened in January of 2012, the new location offers a larger area dedicated to bricks-and-mortar retail, along with a bigger warehouse for the Internet orders, which still make up about 90 percent of the business. The location isn't one likely to attract foot traffic—"You're never going to find us here by accident," admits Walker—but it is easily accessible from the highway and much more affordable than a similarly sized space in a typical retail location would have been. "We need a large warehouse for the online part of the business, and finding that in a shopping center or other high-traffic location wouldn't have been financially feasible," Walker explains.

Despite the expanded real estate, Walker has kept true to her hand-dye-centric vision. She stocks her hand-dyes deep (130 colorways in Malabrigo Worsted alone) and intends to keep it that way. "It's what sets us apart," she says of the shop's inventory. "Yes, there are more stores carrying hand-dyes now, but they tend to stock just a few colors and small quantities," she says. "It's rare to find enough skeins for a sweater." Walker's only exception to the hand-dyed-only rule: skeins from Blue Sky Alpacas. "Customers kept asking for it, so I decided we ought to carry it," she says, noting that the brand "fit" with the luxury leanings of Eat, Sleep, Knit's inventory. Still, she has no plans to branch out into other commercially dyed skeins. "I'd rather offer more colors and styles in the brands we do stock," in keeping with the growth pattern she's fostered since

Day One. "Keeping focused works for us. And if it ain't broke..."

What Walker does plan to expand is the service and sense of community in the shop. Currently the store doesn't host classes, but that's something Walker is eager to change.



The new space accommodates both the shop and the warehouse.

"Customers ask for [classes] constantly," she says. "And now that we have the space to offer them—we set a room aside for just this purpose—we're working to develop a course list." A summer knitting night is in the works, as are plans to host local knitting guilds and groups. Walker is also ramping up advertising (both local and on Ravelry) and getting involved in community events to boost awareness about the shop—and about the one-of-a-kind beauty of hand-dyes. "I really want this to be a place where people can come in and feel comfortable," she says. "I love connecting with customers and sharing what we love. This is so much more fun than working in marketing."

### Snapshot

#### Eat, Sleep, Knit

1600 Wilson Way SE, Suite 9  
Smyrna, GA 30082-7215  
(770) 432-9277

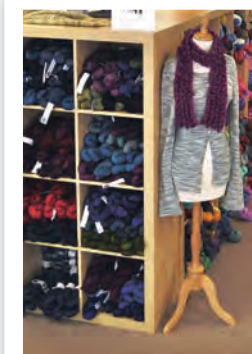
www.eatsleepknit.com

**Years in business:** 5

**Hours:** Tuesday–Saturday, 10–4

**Square footage:** 3,600

**Staff:** 5





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# Copyright for Retailers

LYSOs are on the front lines of copyright protection. Learn how to defend your ground.

BY CHERYL KREMENTZ

It's been half a decade since *YMN* last delved into the intricacies of enforcing copyright in the LYS. In that time, the rise of social media and e-commerce has added layers of complexity to this already challenging legal issue. In order to stay in the right and influence a customer base ever more habituated to accessing free patterns in ways both honest and less so, retailers must be vigilant. They must aim to protect the intellectual property of the designers whose work they promote and sell—ideally doing so as rigorously as they guard their own brand and proprietary shop content. It matters not whether that promotion and protection occur physically in-store or virtually via a shop blog, a Facebook wall, a Pinterest board or a customer e-blast. The platform parameters have exploded, but the principles of copyright enforcement remain the same.

Copyright affords legal protection to creative output the United States Copyright Office deems “original works of authorship, including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and certain other intellectual works.” Knitting patterns fall under the category of “two-dimensional works of applied art, which includes technical drawings.” To be eligible for copyright, a work must meet three standards: 1) The work must be original.

In the realm of knitting patterns, wherein numerous items springboard off similar bases, this means that the designer must have contributed something uniquely creative to the piece; to the consternation of many pros, that margin of change can be razor-thin. Common knitting techniques, methods and processes, however, are not copyrightable. 2) The work must be expressive. That is, it must be a viable manifestation of a creative idea, not merely a statement of the intention to use, say, a color or a shape. And 3) the work must be fixed in some tangible form of expression—publication, both in traditional print form and online, achieves this last standard. The term of protection for copyrighted works published since 2002 is 70 years after the author's death; for “corporate works”—in which the copyright is owned by an entity like a yarn or publishing company—that term extends 95 years from the original publication date.

If this explanation sounds identical to the one given in our August 2007 article “The Copyright Crusade,” that's because it is. The fashion industry—the mainstream industry investing clout and resources into accelerating the type of changes in copyright law that would most impact our niche market—has twice tried to pass legislation that would extend a more robust copyright to garments, apparel and accessories; its most recent attempt, a 2011 bill known as the Innovative Design Protection and Piracy Prevention Act, appears to be stuck in committee.



Consequently, the onus of defending copyright from those poised to abuse it, knowingly or not, continues to rest with those in the field—the designers and retailers whose livelihood is affected by their ability to dissuade pirating and generate sales of copyrighted patterns. This is a two-track prospect: “Designers themselves must be concerned about protecting what they have come up with from illegal use. Store owners must be concerned that they are not illegally exploiting works that belong to others; they should look to work as partners with the designers, rather than setting up” a relationship that without care could turn adversarial, says Susan Freya Olive, managing partner of the Durham, North Carolina, intellectual-property law firm Olive & Olive. As a “major supporter” of Southern Yarns, a nascent store owned by her daughter and colleague, paralegal Erin A. Rall, Olive has kept close tabs on the way copyright issues resonate within the hand-knitting sphere.

In formulating a comprehensive shop approach to defending intellectual property, retailers should be prepared to deal with incidents that spring up both in-store and via online channels. Let’s start by looking at a few scenarios.

## Copyright in the Material World

**Copy wrongs.** It’s the number one copyright quandary LYSOs face within their shops: Customers interested in just a single pattern from a collection, book or magazine request that a retailer photocopy that pattern. Granting this request is a blatant infringement of a designer’s or publisher’s copyright and opens the door to legal action and penalties. Therefore, the answer to this request must always be an unwavering “No, that’s illegal.”

Beyond your own personal refusal to physically copy patterns, you must ensure that copyright infringement does not occur at all in your store. In researching the topic as a soon-to-be LYSO, Rall was surprised to note that in Ravelry’s numerous copyright threads, some retailers openly discussed the way they “hold their hands over their ears” while violations occur within their walls. “I’ve read about shop owners who buy books wholesale and let customers borrow them, then post online what they’re doing,” says Rall. In cases like this, as well as in instances in which an employee facilitates a customer’s copyright infringement, retailers, Olive says, can be “liable for direct and indirect [contributory] infringement and inducing others to infringe—you become liable for what your customers are doing with your active or passive assistance.”

The right call: Should a thwarted would-be infringer pull out a smartphone to snap a picture of a denied pattern or a pen and notepad to copy it down, “A retailer is well within her rights to ask the customer to stop,” says Jason M. Krellenstein, the South Salem, New York, attorney who practices in the area of intellectual property and who gave *YMN* readers a crash course in copyright law five years ago. “If anything is protected in the world of fashion and apparel, it is... the pattern itself. Second time should result in a polite request to leave the premises.”

**Kits and classes.** Kits are catnip to retailers looking to attractively package a popular project. Before you photocopy or print dozens of patterns and toss them in a box, though, make sure you have express permission to do so from the copyright holder—be it an independent designer or a yarn or publishing company—and, if applicable, that you’ve figured the price of the pattern into the cost of every kit, so that the designer profits from the sale. Ditto when you’re scheduling a class around a specific pattern; the copyright holder must grant the store permission to conduct the class, and the price of the pattern should be incorporated into the class fee. Crediting the designer without having received permission does not give you clearance, so don’t think that will suffice. Before you cry “fair use” to get around asking a designer or publisher’s approval to use a pattern in an educational class, read on.

“I think designers realize that knitted samples, kits and classes add up to sales they might not otherwise make,” says Rall. “My understanding is that a lot of them are flattered by and responsive to” requests for inclusion in kits and classes. Just make sure you don’t use the name of the designer as the name of a kit without specific permission, says

Olive, otherwise you’re treading in the tangential area of trademark infringement.

**Not all’s fair use.** Retailers often bring up the fair use clause in regard to a copyrighted pattern they’d like to use for educational or charitable purposes. “A lot of people read one or two lines from a court case,” then justify the leeway to utilize a pattern without permission by claiming fair use, says Olive. “But you can pick and pull all you want from the information out there and still end up as a defendant.”

“‘Fair use’ is constantly being tested in the courts, [but] a key consideration is whether the use in question is simultaneously commercial and educational,” explains Krellenstein. “For example, a retailer who uses a copyrighted pattern in a for-profit course taught at the store is going to invite more scrutiny than a retailer who knits up garments to be sold in a hospital gift shop.

“A better way to view this is that a limited use of a pattern for charity is likely to receive a favorable response on two key inquiries for fair use analysis: the nature of the use and effect of the use on the market for the works,” he continues. “If the use is not intended to usurp the copyright holder’s exclusive right to economic exploitation, and as a practical matter does not do so (for example, one copy of the pattern), I think the user has a good case for fair use.”

**Sample sales.** Here’s an interesting question for shop owners who sell not only yarn and patterns but also hand-knit garments: Is a retailer who is not the copyright holder of a pattern barred from knitting that pattern, displaying the garment in the shop, then selling that garment?

“Generally not,” says Krellenstein. “The copyright exists in the pattern itself—if at all—and not the finished garment. There are key exceptions if the garment contains trademarked material or material protected under some other intellectual property regime, but the general rule is that the garments themselves are utilitarian items whose design features are not often separable from the useful aspects of the work. And the utilitarian elements of a work will not be protected by copyright.”

Proceed cautiously, however, before you stitch up a slew of popular patterns for dedicated garment sales. “Not be ignored here are the bigger-picture implications for the retailer,” Krellenstein continues. “For one thing, if the garment itself contains elements associated with one

## YMN SAYS

Interested in printing up a store sign regarding your stance on upholding intellectual-property laws? Feel free to use the following copy to explain copyright rights and wrongs. If you get push-back, tell your customers *YMN* says it’s so:

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It is illegal to copy knitting and crochet patterns from books and leaflets without express permission from the copyright holder or publisher.



particular designer, it may be entitled to trademark protection. Certainly, the retailer should never claim, or even imply, that the work is the retailer's original work, or otherwise seek to conceal or alter proper attribution. My view is that the prudent retailer will consider carefully the terms under which the underlying pattern is acquired and adhere to those terms, regardless of whether the penalty for breach is real or illusory."

**TM Info.** In light of the trademark brouhaha that so recently forced the Ravelympics to turn into the Ravellenic Games (page 9), not to mention the propensity of too many LYSes to hold so-called Super Bowl sales despite courting a cease-and-desist from the NFL, it's prudent to take a quick look at this copyright-related law.

Trademarked terms like the Olympics and the Super Bowl "are zealously guarded by their owners, and the U.S. Olympic Committee and the NFL are well funded and well motivated in terms of intellectual property protection," says Krellenstein. "The same with movie studios and sports teams. These entities are constantly battling infringement.

"Trademark law is different than copyright law—the trademark holder has the right to ensure that its goods and services are not likely to be confused with the goods and services of a competitor and the right to prevent its mark from dilution as a result of association with shoddier or inferior good or services. For these reasons, use of well-known, iconic marks is not something I would advise."

**Caveat owner.** When it comes to selling proprietary shop content, "The first step is to write out what rights you expect [as the copyright holder] on the pattern," says attorney and jewelry designer Sarah Feingold, who spoke to *YMN* not as a representative for Etsy.com, for which she serves as in-house counsel, but as an independent resource and author of the e-book *Copyright for Artists*. "People don't know [the limits to intellectual property]. They buy a pattern and think they're buying all copyright to that pattern."

Whether selling a pattern in-store or online, "the technical means of expressing the license terms may vary, but the principles are identical," says Krellenstein. "The retailer should take steps to ensure that the terms of use are plainly stated and available to the purchaser prior to the moment of purchase. In other words, the retailer should seek to make sure that the purchaser knows what the limitations of use are before the sale is made, and that such limitations are a condition to purchase. Online, that could mean a click-through license indicating, in plain terms, that the pattern is not intended for commercial use. In the shop, that could mean a clear, prominent disclaimer on the outside of the pattern envelope or bag."

## Untangling the World Wide Web of Intellectual Property

"The Internet is fast and the law is slow." Feingold's succinct words call to mind the fact that the most recent major law concerning copyright and the Internet, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, was passed in 1998 during the Clinton Administration. Despite the safeguards afforded by the DMCA (which protects copyrighted Internet-based content from being digitally disseminated without the author's permission), the rapid growth of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Ravelry offer increased opportunities to showcase and share copyrighted patterns—and thus increased opportunities to infringe on intellectual property.

"Copyright law has not been able to keep pace with the speed and penetration of online dissemination," Krellenstein agrees.

"Under a traditional, protectionist view of copyright—the view of many who are invested in design and retail—there is no panacea

for electronically facilitated infringement. This is because enforcement is expensive, cumbersome and slow; dissemination is nimble, cheap and instantaneous. The good will of retailers, online hosts, content aggregators and other active participants remains the most effective practical means of preventing abuse."

A busy retailer scarcely has time to police the Internet to ensure that her intellectual property—and that of the designers whose patterns she sells—is being utilized properly. And, as Rall asserts, "the community is good about policing itself," alerting fellow designers when instances of pirated photos or patterns are found. Yet an LYSO, says Krellenstein, "should always be watchful for infringement. The practical problem is not spotting or locating infringement, but enforcement, particularly given the proliferation of remote sites, the fact that one jurisdiction's piracy is another's commerce, and the enormous costs of litigation.

"Here again, there are no perfect answers," he continues. "A retailer should send DMCA 'take-down' letters [templates are available online] where applicable and should seek technical solutions to rendering electronic transfer of their patterns more difficult, where feasible. But we also have to recognize the realities involved: Copyright in patterns is a tenuous thing, both because the pattern itself may be difficult to copy-right or may be composed of too many uncopyrightable elements, and because a pattern is particularly vulnerable to online reproduction."

And, as members of the community have noted and pointed out in public forums, that reproduction sometimes happens on LYS websites

and in shop e-blasts. As a yarn shop owner, you must be especially careful that you're not the one doing the infringing. When you post a pattern on a shop blog or in a newsletter as a value-add without gaining express permission from the copyright holder, you are doing the exact same thing as a customer who photocopies, transcribes or snaps a photo of a physical pattern from a book or magazine. Fudging the matter by changing a pattern's name or neglecting to credit the designer does not clear you from liability. Designers are typically thrilled to partner in shops' viral marketing, so a quick e-mail asking for their blessing and a bit of proper crediting and web-linking can go a long way toward keeping things legal.

"I became an attorney because I'm an artist myself and was concerned about these issues,"

Feingold explains. Though she's sent her share of take-down letters, she believes that copyright holders on the short end of infringement "need to think about the big picture" before deciding how to assert their rights. She prefers to "balance the pros and cons" of possibly creating "bad publicity by going after someone—who may be a fan—with a heavy fist and coming out looking like a bully. Cease-and-desist letters can go viral—"What kind of jerky company is this?" You can do more harm than good sometimes," she says.

Feingold does advise crafters to put watermarks on their photos and to post an angel license policy letting users know their copyright parameters. (An angel policy spells out in a sentence or two a copyright holder's expectations on how a pattern is to be used.) "It's a fine line to uphold your brand values but not discourage fair use or discourage people from talking about your brand," she says.

At a minimum, every copyright holder should "label every page with a copyright notice, a C in a circle, their name and year of publication, or with a watermark for an electronic pattern," advises Susan Olive. Copyright automatically attaches to a work upon publication—notice isn't a formal requirement—but officially registering it with the U.S. Copyright office at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov) before infringement occurs is an inexpensive way to afford the author more robust support. Concludes Erin Rall, "Registering 15 sweater patterns as a group for \$35 buys a lot of protection."

**The rapid growth of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Ravelry offer increased opportunities to showcase and share copyrighted patterns—and thus increased opportunities to infringe on intellectual property.**



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# Learning to Crawl

Like a rising tide and those proverbial boats, regional yarn crawls lift all LYSes. Here's how to band together to move stitchers—and sales.

BY LESLIE PETROVSKI

For three years, Colorado-based designer Cheryl Oberle has been nudging Denver-area yarn shop owners to organize a yarn crawl. Every time she'd pop into a shop for new lace needles or to teach, she'd suggest how great it would be for local retailers—and needleworkers—to collaborate on a Mile High tour de yarn.

A few months ago, Oberle found a taker. Gerri Bragdon, owner of Knit Nack in Arvada, offered to get the ball rolling with fellow LYSOs. A few e-mails, calls and a meeting later, 22 yarn shops, stretching nearly 100 miles from Colorado Springs to Boulder, had signed up for the inaugural Yarn Along the Rockies, September 8–16.

"I see it as really good for business," says Oberle, author most recently of *Knitted Jackets*. "The more people who know about the shops, the more community you have. The more shops there are, the more teaching I do. I love the industry and love to see shops prosper and grow."

That Denver is finally gearing up for a yarn crawl is less surprising than the fact that it's taken so long to organize. Since the 2007 debut of the Puget Sound LYS Tour—the arguable grandmother of yarn crawls—shop hops have rolled out on both coasts (Yarn Crawl L.A. County just finished its first year; the New York City Yarn Crawl is entering its fourth) and points in between (Chicago Yarn Crawl launched in 2010; Hill Country Yarn Crawl, a.k.a. the "best little yarn crawl in Texas," is in its sixth season).

Based on the concept of informal bar hopping, wherein drinkers lurch from establishment to establishment over the course of a night's imbibing, the yarn crawl formalizes the fiber-enhancement experience, substituting dye lots for drinks. It has become a proven mainstay in the retail yarn world for sparking excitement among stitchers and generating revenue during traditionally slow seasons.

In planning the April 12–15 premiere L.A. County Yarn Crawl, Stephanie Steinhaus, owner of Unwind in Burbank, hoped simply for a fun weekend. She orchestrated the crawl of 28 shops along with Cindy Loeffler of

ILLUSTRATION BY LISA HENDERLING





Alamitos Bay Yarn Company and Debbie Cooper-Jaffe and Sylvia Cooper of A Major Knitwork in Van Nuys. “[The crawl] was intended to be a celebration of yarn and knitting and crochet in L.A. County, not a money maker,” Steinhaus says. “We assumed that people would go to as many shops as they could and spend some money, and that everyone would have a nice weekend.

“What happened? More than 700 people participated, and we had a 75 percent bump in sales over the same weekend the year before. This was tax weekend, but people weren’t watching their money. Every shop we spoke to had crazy, crazy sales.”

Chris Krauss of Fuzzy Wuzzy Yarns in Arlington Heights, Illinois, reports similar results from the first Chicago crawl, in 2010, which was held to coincide with Stitches Midwest. “My best day ever was the Saturday of the first year of the crawl,” she says, “and it was in August!”

Beyond promoting strong sales, however, crawls tend to be strong promoters. Vicki Sayre of Loopy Yarns in Chicago observes that for her shop, the yarn crawl has not only been a good money maker; it’s also exposed her downtown store to a broader Windy City clientele. “They’ll say, ‘I’m loving this, and I’ll come back to this store,’” she says. “You’ll always get a few new repeat customers.”

“They definitely come back,” Krauss adds. “They return to shop or take classes. Or they stop in when they’re in the area for other reasons.”

#### **Hop to it: Organizing a shop tour**

An organized shop hop with “passports,” maps, shop patterns, prizes, advertising and vendor sponsors is a massive logistical undertaking that requires weeks of effort to pull off. Collaboration among retail competitors is key to successfully managing the details.

In the case of the Denver yarn crawl, the initial meeting at a Panera Bread shop was actually the first time many LYSOs had ever met face to face. Things must have gone well; the next meeting was scheduled at a local bar. “It’d be nice to make it more of a sisterhood of shop owners,” says Gerri Bragdon. “Competition is a good thing, but it’s nice to be able to call and say, ‘Can I send my customer over for those needles?’ In doing so, we’re helping each other.”

In planning the L.A. event, which involved 28 shops across 60-plus miles, Steinhaus found most shop owners eager to sign on. The ones who didn’t, she says, demurred because of time constraints, not competitive concerns. The sprawling nature of these events—with potential radii of 70 or more miles, hundreds of participants (a yarn crawl in a major metro area can pull more than 1,000 crawlers) and as many as two-dozen-plus yarn shops—requires much up-front planning. To handle the logistics, Los Angeles shop owners did most of the organizational heavy lifting (contacting fellow yarn shops, cultivating vendor participation and developing passports and tote bags), then asked each yarn shop to contribute \$150 to help pay for a website, a marketing and social media consultant (Barbara Pushies of Knitting Together Media), printing and other costs. Vendors kicked

in prizes and, in some cases, dollars for the targeted exposure.

When Vicki Sayre of Loopy Yarns was trying to knit up enthusiasm for a crawl in Chicago, yarn rep Joan Looi offered to help. As someone who already knew many of the shop owners and vendors, Looi served as a sweater-wearing Switzerland, a neutral ambassador who could work with all the LYSOs and easily get the sponsorships that Sayre didn’t have time for. “Besides selling yarn to them,” Looi says of her involvement, “I’m providing a service. This is a partnership: I want them to stay in business

**Beyond promoting strong sales, crawls tend to be strong promoters. You’ll always get a few new repeat customers.**



so I stay in business.”

In the late aughts, marketing consultant Phyllis Howe was working with Pearl Chin, owner of Knitty City in Manhattan, when the latter suggested that the former produce an event that would bring together yarn shops in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Familiar with the yarn crawl concept, Howe, principal of the consultancy Knitting and Howe, began contacting LYSOs to gauge interest. “I asked, ‘Would you be willing to involve yourself in a promo that would allow people to sample the different stores in the area?’” she explains. “And they almost all said yes right away. They were all open to it.”

Since then, Howe has launched crawls in Portland, Oregon [see the Market Report feature “Portlandia” in the May issue about the now locally run event], Northern New Jersey (the Garden State Yarn Crawl) and the one-day Hampton Yarn Hop, while also continuing to run New York City’s. For a set fee charged to each participating LYS, Howe works with all the stores, organizes the raffle baskets for each shop, the scavenger hunt and provides a website and social media.

“It’s an idea whose time has come,” Howe explains of the shop-hop phenomenon (shop hops have also proliferated in the quilting world). “We don’t live by the same competitive rules. We live in a more community-oriented society, and there’s room for everyone to play cooperatively.”

To maximize attendance, yarn crawl organizers need to give stitchers a reason to take to the road. A grand-prize gift certificate or basket brimming with sponsor-provided yarn, accessories, books and tools is the classic lure and is typically offered in a drawing, available to crawlers who get their passports—a souvenir document or booklet that lists all participating shops and their locations—stamped at every shop.

Other crawls use a different model. In Chicago, the crawl offers chances for three grand prizes: one for visiting 26 out of 27 stores, one for visiting just 15 stores, and one for visiting a store in four of the five crawl regions. The Rose City Yarn Crawl in Portland, Oregon, not only provided a grand prize but 19 additional sponsor baskets customized with goods from each participating location for more chances to win among passport completers. In addition to the big-ticket items (the L.A. grand prize basket was valued at \$1,500), yarn crawls have offered printed tote bags, crawl-wide discounts and custom patterns available free with purchase at every stop.

“One of the things I’ve learned,” Knit Neck’s Gerri Bragdon says, “is that knitters and crocheters are travelers who like to see what else is out there. Most people, however, don’t have an opportunity to make a day of it. A yarn crawl gives them the incentive.”

## Road Trip: Making the most of your local yarn crawl

### **Mobilize your marketing machine.**

Chances are the collective shop-hop team in your town will have its own marketing initiatives to get stitchers on the crawl route. Nonetheless, be sure to deploy your own resources: Post signs in your store. Bleat about the event in your newsletter and social media. And let people know how to handle complicated logistics, such as where to park if spaces are scarce and how to find your shop if you’re off the beaten track.

**Differentiate yourself.** With hundreds or more yarnies trolling the streets during a crawl, seize the opportunity and establish your shop identity with special events and original patterns that cater to your clientele. Are you the hip and funky store catering to urban stitchers? Give visitors a special deal on yarn-themed henna tattoos. If you specialize in local yarns and fibers, stock up and feature a pattern from a regional designer as your giveaway—or take a page from Wool ‘n Wares, whose guest lamb, Cinderella, made appearances avec tiara during the Rose City Yarn Crawl in February.

**Promote your hood.** To make it easier for crawlers to plan meals and other fun stops, the Rose City Yarn Crawl posted LYS-recommended eateries, non-knitting shopping destinations and local hangouts on each participating yarn shop’s “crawl” web page. Some restaurants and boutiques even offered discounts to RCYCers.

**Make friends.** Whether it’s the bead shop next door that can supply seed beads for your free crawl pattern or the ice cream



**“A yarn crawl is  
a commercial for your store—  
make it great.”**

emporium down the street (ice cream social, anyone?), cultivate neighboring merchants interested in win-win co-promotions.

**Bump it up a notch.** Shelves a little dusty? Merchandise kind of stale? A regional yarn crawl is not the time to let things slide. Staff up as if you were planning for a big sale and extend your hours to match crawl hours, even if you don’t typically work on Sundays. “Step up your game,” advises Stephanie Steinhaus of Unwind in Burbank, California. “Show off your store. A yarn crawl is a commercial for your store. Make it great.”

**Play nice.** Put your best “sock” forward, but also recognize that the ultimate goal is to promote the yarn arts—and your region as a needlework Mecca. If your crawl establishes certain guidelines, such as the cost of a tote bag, abide by them. “Make sure that everybody is on an equal playing field,” Phyllis Howe advises. “Knitting is all about community. People should feel the importance of community and not the individual store.”

## Upcoming Yarn Crawls

**July 26–29, 2012**

**Summer’s Last Blast Yarn Crawl**

St. Louis, Missouri, area  
[www.ravelry.com/groups/summers-last-blast-yarn-crawl](http://www.ravelry.com/groups/summers-last-blast-yarn-crawl)

**August 4–11, 2012**

**Chicago Yarn Crawl**

[www.chicagoyarncrawl.com](http://www.chicagoyarncrawl.com)

**August 11–26, 2012**

**Hot August Knits Yarn Crawl**

Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming  
[www.ravelry.com/groups/hot-august-knits-shop-crawl](http://www.ravelry.com/groups/hot-august-knits-shop-crawl)

**September 8–16, 2012**

**Yarn Along the Rockies**

[www.Yarnalongtherockies.com](http://www.Yarnalongtherockies.com)

**September 28–October 7, 2012**

**Charlotte Yarn Crawl**

[www.charlottelyarncrawl.com](http://www.charlottelyarncrawl.com)

**October 5–8, 2012**

**Hill Country Yarn Crawl**

[www.hcyc2011.mybigcommerce.com](http://www.hcyc2011.mybigcommerce.com)

**October 6–7, 2012**

**The New York City Yarn Crawl**

[www.nycyarncrawl.com](http://www.nycyarncrawl.com)



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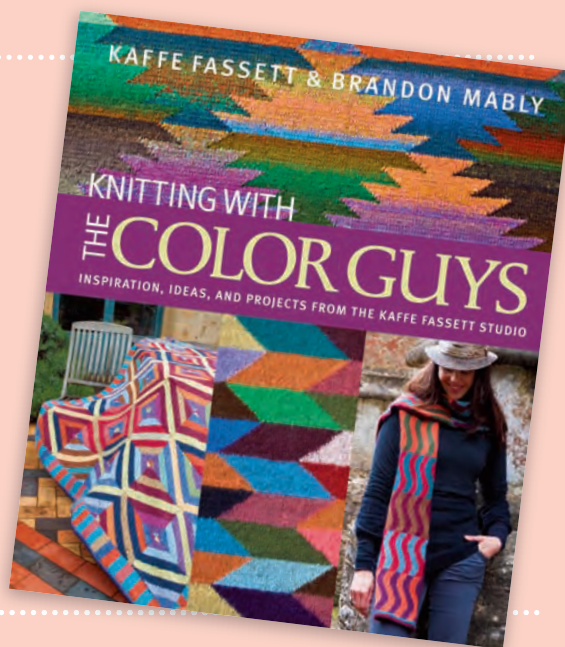
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# Knitting Nancy

YMN's Erin Slonaker and venerable industry pro Nancy Thomas first crossed paths in 2007, when Slonaker worked on Thomas's book *Tweed* for Potter Craft. They crossed paths professionally a few times after that, as so often happens in this industry. But those sorts of collaborations are about to come to an end, because Thomas has announced her retirement from her current role as creative director at Coats & Clark. Slonaker caught up with Thomas recently to talk about her illustrious career and find out what's next.



**ES: Let's start at the beginning. Who taught you to knit?**

**NT:** My wonderful Canadian grandmother taught me. I remember sitting in her kitchen, painfully knitting a multicolored strip. I couldn't even call it a scarf. I knit so tightly that she would have to knit a row once in a while to loosen it up. My grandmother also sewed, crocheted (mainly thread crochet), quilted, embroidered and knit pairs and pairs of wool socks and mittens. How could I not have been a needlecrafter with such great genes?

**ES: English or Continental? Straights or circulars? Double-points or another circular technique?**

**NT:** Definitely English, but I also learned the Continental method. I'm not that fast at it, though. I like both straights (short ones) and circulars. I'm a double-point fan for sure. By the way, I'm left-handed and happy that I learned to knit as a right-hander. Sadly, I learned to crochet with my left hand and find it hard to teach others.

**ES: You started out at Butterick in the accounting department. How long were you at it before you defected to the patterns department?**

**NT:** I moved to New York in 1977 when I got married—my husband was working for General Electric. I worked at Butterick for a year or so and then became a financial assistant for *Vogue Patterns*. Managing Editor Kathy Marrone was my boss. She was a fabulous leader of the department and was responsible for putting the first knitting patterns—my designs—into *Vogue Patterns* magazine. Believe it or not, that started me on the road to *Vogue Knitting*.

**ES: Tell me what it was like to be at *Vogue Knitting* at the time of its inception.**

**NT:** At the beginning, we were all so naive about putting together a knitting magazine, but thankfully the first issue came out well. My first title was knitting editor. I was really the only one who knew knitting. I remember the art department would get upset whenever I had to make text changes, because all type was done out of house and we had to pay for every correction. Knowing what I do now about how many changes there are in patterns, it's

really funny, but at the time, not so much! After knitting editor I became managing editor. In 1992, the magazine's tenth anniversary, I became editor in chief. I used to know which issue every design came from—I had them all etched in my brain.

**ES: How has the industry changed over the years?**

**NT:** When I first started in the yarn industry, yarn and designs were simple and basic and a bit "old school." Yarns have changed so much over the years, especially in the novelty area. Designs have also developed—*Vogue Knitting* started this wave. I think the most exciting development has been how knitters think and what they like to do. I love that younger knitters don't follow the rules, but explore and experiment. At the same time, people love and admire the old techniques and simple yarns that are part of needlecraft history. Crochet has definitely taken a new path—designs are so much more contemporary and interesting.

**ES: Do you do much on the Internet? How do you see it changing the way we knit?**

**NT:** OMG, I'm such a big Internet fan. The speed at which we now communicate is absolutely incredible. I was a huge proponent of the Shopatron concept and helped Tahki+Stacy Charles get that rolling. The Internet has changed our industry so much. We now have a way to connect with the consumer who uses our products and designs. It's an instant way to know what works and what doesn't.

**ES: I'm sure you know everyone in the industry, past and present. Do you have any fun stories of time spent with people who work in yarn?**

**NT:** Wow! I know so many people. I don't even know where to start. I want to name names, but I'm so afraid of leaving someone out. Oh, the stories I could tell. I'll have to write a memoir!

Many of my stories are from my days with the XRX gang [*Knitter's* magazine, where Thomas was editor in chief]. We took some great trips and had some funny experiences—ones that weren't so funny as they were happening. Like the time we were shooting a kid's special issue in San Diego with a ton of child models and it rained for days. I

mean El Niño rain. Or when I was in St. Thomas on a photo shoot for *Vogue Knitting* and art director Joe Vior and I went swimming on the day we were heading home. He lost the keys to the rental van in the ocean—and we were not close to our hotel!

**ES: What are you knitting right now?**

**NT:** Actually I've been crocheting a lot more these days. I just made my sister and her husband a beautiful crocheted throw. I've been knitting Elizabeth Zimmermann's Baby Surprise jackets because I want to teach a class on this project. I want a bunch so I can show how different they can look. When I finish, I may take them to children who live in the mountains of Peru. It's so cold there, and they need warm sweaters.

**ES: Do you have a favorite kind of yarn?**

**NT:** At the end of the day, I love a basic worsted wool or blend. I'm a big fan of cool wools that are a little more silky. Now that I've spent time working in the South, I so appreciate cotton. I haven't been able to wear many of my warmer sweaters for the past few years.

**ES: You've said that you hope to travel in your retirement. Are these trips related to knitting or just for adventure?**

**NT:** Travel will surely be a combo of both types. Even though I've been to some amazing places, I have a long bucket list of places I'd like to go. In November, I'm going on a Craft Cruise trip to South America, from Chile around the bottom of South America and up to Argentina and Uruguay. There will be yarn involved, and I can't wait. My good friend Cynthia LeCount is teaching on that trip. I hope to do more trips with Cynthia as part of her Behind the Scenes Adventures.

**ES: What's next for you? Will you explore entirely new ventures or actually take a rest after a life of work?**

**NT:** Rest—who, me? I'm such a doer. Sometimes I look in the mirror and think "who is that old gal—yesterday she was 32, or 42." I certainly don't feel ready for full-time retirement and I hope to stay in the industry. It's what I know and love.



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