



## SCREEN TIME

Making social media part of your everyday business life.

## HEALTH ALERT

The science behind knitting and well-being.

## GOING TO PRESS

A look at self-publishing in the fiber world.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015

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## techno



ROSE CALLAHAN

The other day I was in a store that had no traditional registers. Employees wielding devices milled around what was once the cash wrap, and when I walked up with an impulse purchase, they were happy to help me. But then the device didn't work. So the "cashier" went into the back to get a new one. I waited patiently. That one didn't work either. I offered cash, but she couldn't take it. And in that moment my desire to impulsively make this purchase disappeared. The employee tried to convince me that it would be just "one moment more" as I watched the device slowly boot up. In the end I walked out empty-handed.

Technology is great. It's necessary. It's crucial for small businesses. But we can't be completely reliant on it. We must learn how to be flexible, use the technology to *augment* our ways of doing business, not *rule* it. I recently listened to a podcast about automated, driverless vehicles. The theory is that someday we will not own cars; instead the streets will be filled with driverless cars that we can get in and out of like ongoing taxis. It's appealing, of course, but it's also a little daunting. I'm not sure the world is ready to make that shift.

And that is, I think, where yarn comes in. People embrace knitting and crocheting so they can do things for themselves, with their own hands. Yet yarn lovers have always been early adapters of technology—among the first to embrace blogging and to find ways to use the Internet to enhance the wider yarn community rather than fragment it.

This issue, we look at how working with your hands has benefits beyond those we know—that it fights depression, improves your mental health. It can have a real effect on, ironically, the math aptitude of children (the ones who will be creating our robot overlords?). We look at the ways technology has allowed for more autonomy when publishing your own books—but at what cost?

I'd love to hear how you're using technology in new ways while still maintaining the same personal touch that is the hallmark of a successful business. Don't ever hesitate to email me at [erin@yarnmarketnews.com](mailto:erin@yarnmarketnews.com).

Erin Slonaker, Editor in Chief



### on the cover

#### BULL'S-EYE!

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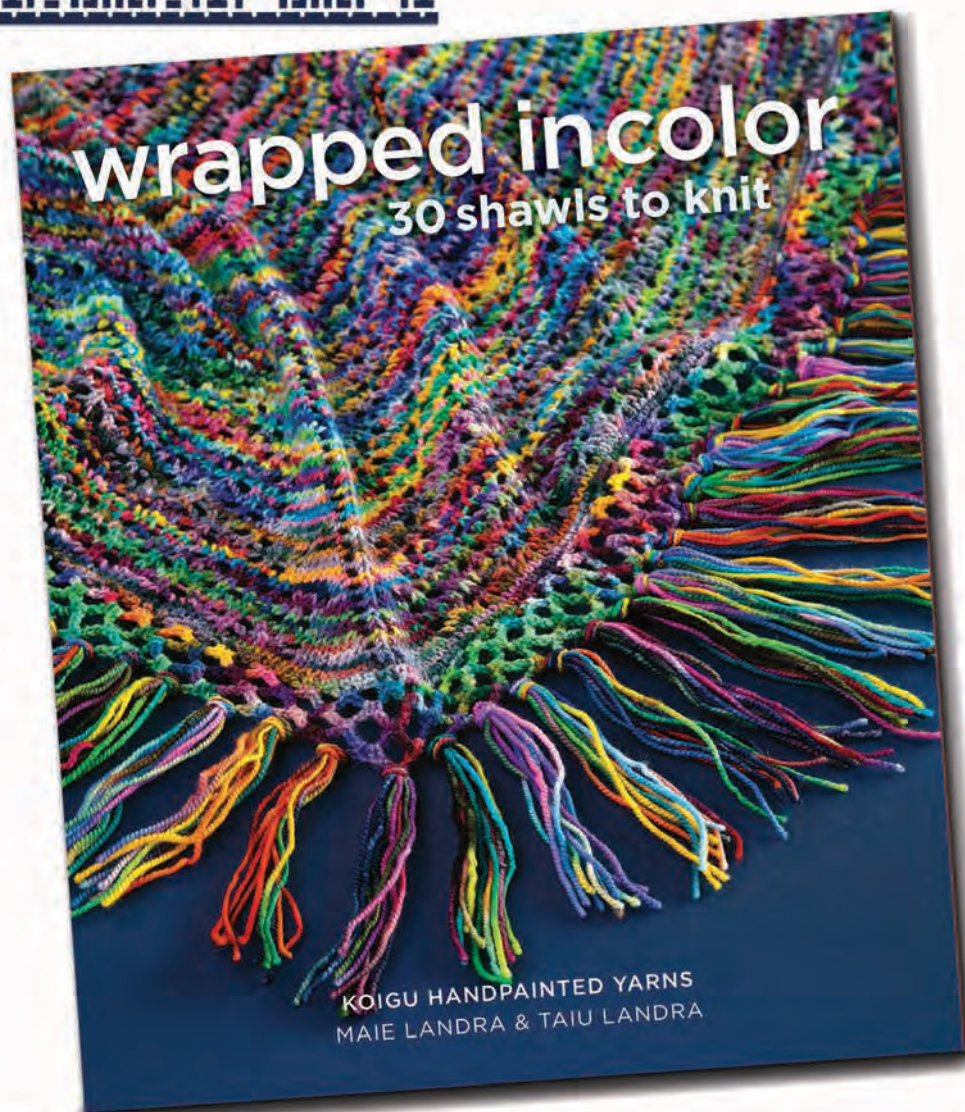


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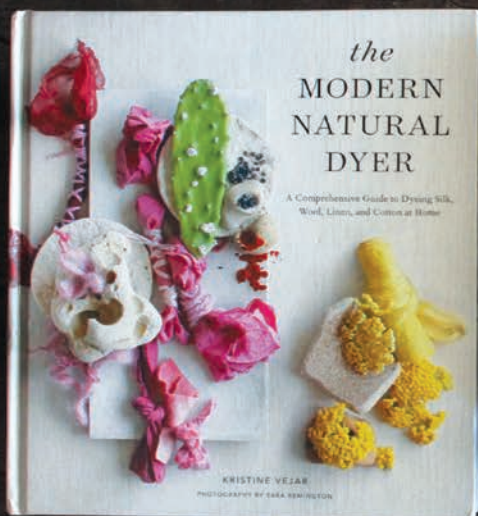


make it koigu!



### features

- 36 I KNIT, THEREFORE I CAN  
The link between handcrafts and emotional well-being. By Carrie Barron, M.D.
- 40 GOING TO PRESS  
A look at self-publishing in the fiber world. By Carol J. Sulcoski



Kristine Vejar is celebrating the release of her new book with a selection of special hand-dyeing kits.

MARCUS TULLIS



**44** Developing yarns gives Berroco's Warren Wheelock the freedom to create.



**18** Yarns that glimmer and shimmer are hot this holiday season.



**32** "Knitting keeps me sane," says the owner of Loops, which is celebrating its 10th year.



**40** To self-publish or not to self-publish? That is the question.

### in every issue

- 2 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 8 MARKET REPORT
- 16 BOOK REVIEWS
- 18 YARN FORWARD
- 20 TNNA UPDATE
- 22 YARN GROUP UPDATE
- 23 SPINNING & WEAVING GROUP
- 24 CYC UPDATE
- 25 RAVELRY
- 26 SMART ONLINE
- 28 SMART MERCHANDISING
- 30 SMART LEGAL
- 32 RETAIL PROFILE  
Loops, Tulsa, Oklahoma
- 34 COMPANY PROFILE  
ChiaoGoo
- 44 CELEBRITY INTERVIEW  
Berroco's Warren Wheelock





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The next issue of YMN will mail on December 7.





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## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

**B**est wishes to author, teacher, fiber consultant and television personality **Brett Bara**, who recently announced her departure from the public television show *Knit and Crochet Now!* after an amazing eight-year run as host. “It has been so much fun to be part of [the show],” says Bara. “I’ll miss the entire *KCN* family. I look forward to following the show.” Bara will turn her full-time attention to Brooklyn Craft Company, her craft and DIY studio offering classes, studio space and special events.

**Deborah Norville** (above),

award-winning author, journalist and television host, has replaced Bara as the show’s new host. Norville is a lifelong knitter and crocheter; her eponymous yarn collection was launched by Premier Yarns in 2008 and now features more than 20 individual yarns.

Fans of *KCN* can binge-watch all eight seasons of the show via an All-Access Membership, which enables subscribers to watch shows on demand, download all projects featured in the shows, plus other benefits, for an annual fee of \$24.95. Learn more at [www.anniescatalog.com/knitandcrochetnow](http://www.anniescatalog.com/knitandcrochetnow).

## CREATING YOUR SHINE

▼ **Rowan** announced an exciting new collaboration with Austrian crystal company **Swarovski** to premier in its fall 2015 collection. Part of Rowan’s Create Your Style initiative, the collaboration will “celebrate the brilliance their crystals can bring to knitted garments while creating a unique, personal effect,” says Linda Pratt, consumer marketing manager of Westminister Fibers.

The Create Your Shine program features crystals in several key colors and sizes, along with curated collections of Swarovski beads and crystals in designer packages. Beads and crystals can be knitted into the work or used as embellishments sewn onto a finished design. To spotlight this versatility, Rowan designer Jennie Atkinson collaborated with Swarovski designer Marlene Kohlhoffer on two

collections, Daytime and Evening, with Atkinson knitting in beads and Kohlhoffer sewing them on. (Atkinson’s exquisite beaded wedding gown created much buzz at TNNA’s trade show in Columbus.)

Each collection has its own pattern brochure; accessory patterns from both collections will also be available as paid downloads via Ravelry.com. Also available is an accent yarn called Kidsilk Haze Shine, consisting of three plies of Rowan’s best-selling Kidsilk Haze twisted with a ply of cotton strung with approximately 100 3mm Swarovski crystals. These 10-meter balls will be used as accents on free patterns that will debut on Rowan’s website later this year. Shipping begins October 1, with a spring collection to follow in early 2016. [www.knitrowan.com](http://www.knitrowan.com)

## HOW SWEET IT IS

▼ Artisan dyer SweetGeorgia Yarns announced that **Tabetha Hedrick** will join the company as its new design director for knitwear. Hedrick, a con-



tributing editor at *Creative Knitting* magazine, will be responsible for managing the patterns and collections

that SweetGeorgia releases and will design patterns herself.

“I’m excited to welcome Tabetha to the SweetGeorgia family,” said Felicia Lo, founder and creative director of SweetGeorgia. “Her eye for design, combined with her experience in building collections from start to finish, makes her the perfect representative for our brand.” [www.sweetgeorgiayarns.com](http://www.sweetgeorgiayarns.com)

## GOODWILL HUNTING

▼ **Shira Blumenthal** (left) was recently named Brand Ambassador for **Lion Brand Yarn Co.** Blumenthal, daughter of Lion Brand’s President and CEO David Blumenthal, first starting working at Lion Brand when she was a mere 5 years old. “On days I didn’t have school, I would be my father’s assistant’s assistant. Officially I started working for Lion Brand, at the Lion Brand Studio, in February 2013.” In addition to refining her knitting and crochet skills, Blumenthal teaches



classes, visits guilds and schools, films educational videos for YouTube, and represents the company at trade shows and other events. She’s especially excited about her new YouTube series “Tea with Shira,” in which she invites viewers to share a virtual cup of tea with her and a guest. “I’m a fifth-generation family member of this

company. I’ve dreamed of working for Lion Brand for as long as I can remember.” [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2VjAZ-N13BCG1\\_0ts6m8qVJGz5NCnjz](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2VjAZ-N13BCG1_0ts6m8qVJGz5NCnjz)

Designer, teacher and podcaster **Marly Bird** was named brand representative for **Red Heart** in the spring. It’s a perfect fit for Bird, a longtime fan of Red Heart yarns. “I started crocheting with Red Heart, and it’s the only yarn I used for a long time,” she explains. Bird credits the brand with fostering a closer relationship with her grandmother, an avid crocheter: “It allowed me to connect with my grandmother, because Red Heart is the yarn she always used.” Bird will continue creating YouTube videos sponsored by the brand, contributing patterns to the Red Heart website, representing the company at various fiber-related events, and expanding her involvement, perhaps doing crochet- and knit-alongs. “I am very excited,” she says. “I love the customers I get to meet in person and online.” Get to know Bird in her introductory Red Heart video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hn6VUj1BxE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hn6VUj1BxE).



## JOB WELL DONE

▼ Designer, author and yarn maven **Debbie Bliss** (right) was recently honored as a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for her distinguished service to the hand-knitting and crafts industry. Bliss, who says she is “overwhelmed” by the honor, cites the influence of her late mother, who taught her to knit and always offered her steadfast support. “I am accepting this award on behalf of all the fantastic knitters and knitting teachers everywhere who spread the word and encourage new generations with their love of the craft.” [www.debbieblissonline.com](http://www.debbieblissonline.com)

**Kathy and Steve Elkins**, owners of Webs—America’s Yarn Store, were honored with the Human Service Forum 2015 Business Award for their longtime support of Safe Passage, a nonprofit organization working to end domestic violence and oppression in women’s lives. Kathy, Steve and the entire Webs team actively participate in the Hot Chocolate Run for Safe Passage, the nonprofit’s biggest fundraiser, both by fielding a team of runners and walkers who fundraise for the event and by matching every dollar that their team raises. Members of Team Webs have



also designed exclusive patterns, with all proceeds going to Safe Passage. “Our roots as a yarn shop are here in the Pioneer Valley, and we are extremely blessed to have a wonderful local community of customers,” Kathy Elkins explains. “We have a responsibility to give back to our community.” [www.yarn.com](http://www.yarn.com)

Best wishes to **Lisa Shroyer**, who announced in June that she was stepping down as editor of *Interweave Knits* to take on a new position as content strategist for Interweave’s Knitting Group. Said Shroyer, “I’m sad to leave the editorship of *Knits*, but this is the right challenge and the right time for me to step up as a leader.” At press time, Shroyer’s successor as editor-in-chief had yet to be named.



## BRIT KNITS

▼ Knitters and crocheters counting the weeks until *Downton Abbey*’s new season begins can indulge their yearning for Grantham style with **Premier Yarns**’ new collection of yarns and patterns—a collection officially licensed by the makers of the PBS series. In October, Premier will introduce four yarns, each inspired by a beloved Downton character: Matthew is a classic worsted-weight wool/acrylic blend with tweed flecks;

Lady Mary is a glittering DK-weight chainette yarn; Lady Sybil is a sport-weight blend of mohair, acrylic and nylon; and Branson is a chunky heathered wool/acrylic. Each yarn comes in a palette of eight colors inspired by the vintage style of the series, with a MSRP of \$5.99 per skein. Pattern support will be provided in the form of free tear-off sheets and free online patterns. Learn more at [premier yarns.com](http://premier yarns.com).

## SWEET-HEART DEAL

▼ **Nadine Curtis** of **Be Sweet** and **Laurie Cook** of **Mango Moon** recently announced that Mango Moon has acquired the entire Be Sweet yarn line; distribution of Be Sweet yarns was transitioned to Mango Moon’s Michigan headquarters in the spring. Mango Moon will continue to offer the unique yarns Be Sweet is known for, including South African mohair, hand-dyed bamboo and the Simply Sweet collection, and plans to source yarns as Be Sweet has done, working with job-creation programs in South Africa.

Says Cook, “This is an excellent fit for Mango Moon, since we work with spinners in Nepal and Indonesia who rely on their handcrafts to support themselves and their children.” Curtis, Be Sweet’s founder, will serve as creative consultant for the transitional period; she’ll then turn her full attention to her retail shop, 7 On Locust, located in Mill Valley, California. [www.mangomoon yarn.com](http://www.mangomoon yarn.com); [www.7onlocust.com](http://www.7onlocust.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

*Trudy van Stralen (1942–2015)*



▼ The fiber world mourns the loss of **Trudy van Stralen**, founder of Louet North America and an influential hand dyer, weaver and designer. Van Stralen was born in Utrecht, Netherlands; she and her husband Jan emigrated to Canada in 1967. She was devoted to her family and raised her children—Claudia, David, Julie and the late Wouter—on a farm near Prescott, Ontario. When her children were school age, she started a small business called Hilltop Wools. Later, she founded Louet North America in the same

location that Hilltop Wools operated from; the company is still located there today.

Van Stralen’s talents were legion: She learned to knit as a girl in Holland; in the late 1990s, she returned to hand knitting with a passion, creating hand-knit designs and developing new yarns for Louet. She was especially renowned for her hand-dyeing skills, specializing in the use of natural dyestuffs, and her book *Indigo Madder Marigold* remains a classic reference on natural dyeing. She was also a skilled weaver and avid spinner, contributing designs to magazines including *Handwoven* and *Spin-Off*.

## CLOSING CHAPTER

▼ **Melanie Falick** surprised the publishing world last spring when she announced she was leaving Abrams/STC Books. Falick started her own imprint, Melanie Falick Books, twelve years ago, publishing such blockbuster titles as *Weekend Knitting*, *Handknit Holidays*, *Knitting in America* and *Knit Wear Love*. Falick explains, “I want to take time to rest/wander/breathe/explore and to think about the things I’ve always wanted to do, and see if I can make some of them happen: spend more time in the garden,

learn Adobe Illustrator, take a surface design class, travel to India and Japan, learn how to change a tire and put up a tent, and on and on.”

Falick has not ruled out a future in publishing, but she is seeking, as she puts it, “some distance from the everyday grind of it so I can figure out how to innovate successfully and contribute in more of a multi-media nature moving forward.” The STC Craft imprint will continue; at press time, there was no word on Falick’s successor. [www.abrams books.com/imprints/stccraft](http://www.abrams books.com/imprints/stccraft)



## THE WHOLE KIT AND CABOODLE



▼ Kits are it this fall—perfect impulse purchases to keep by the register or to make gift giving easy for the craft-challenged.

Fans of Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* novels, and the popular Showtime series inspired by them, will want to check out **Lion Brand's** licensed *Outlander* kits, releasing this fall. Kits include Lion Brand yarn and accompanying patterns, photographed and styled with full-on Gaelic flair.

**Kristine Vejar**, of the hand-dyeing company and Oakland, California, yarn shop A Verb for Keeping Warm, is celebrating the release of her new book, *The Modern Natural Dyer* (Abrams/STC Craft), with a selection of special kits. Vejar explains, "While natural dyeing is becoming increasingly popular, it can be a challenge to source the materials needed. We wanted to make it easy for shop owners to take part in the fun and fascinating practice of natural dyeing." Kits are packaged in durable, kraft-paper-covered boxes and include everything—yarn or fabric or other item to be dyed, embellishment, plus all dyes and other agents required for natural dyeing—needed to complete the project. Four kits will be offered with a MSRP of \$30; Vejar plans to add more kits in the future. For wholesale information, visit [www.averbforkeepingwarm.com](http://www.averbforkeepingwarm.com).

**Cocoknits** premiered a new Sweater Care Kit, designed with one-piece sweater construction in mind. **Julie Weisenberger** explains, "As the trend for seamless sweater construction continues, blocking is often the same as hand-washing. This kit allows you to gently wash your garment [a bottle of Eucalan and two fine-mesh zippered bags are included], roll it in a huge, absorbent towel, then lay it out on an absorbent grid (in either inches or centimeters)." Kits also include a pop-up dryer that allows air to circulate around the garment, reducing drying time, and a jute storage bag. MSRP is \$75; kits are available on a wholesale basis. [www.cocoknits.com](http://www.cocoknits.com)



## DIY KNIT-CESSORIES



pieces—can now make their very own wearable art. Lewis collaborated with **Skacel Collection** and **Addi** to create two necklace bases with strong magnetized closures that allow easy fastening and removal. The necklace bases are available in two sizes, in Addi Natura or Addi Turbo needle styles. Simple garter stitch is all it takes to make a unique piece of knitted art.

▼ Knitters who have admired the beautiful knitted jewelry of **Pavia Lewis**—who uses decorative miniature knitting needles and yarn to make her striking

To encourage knitters to experiment with creating their own unique knitted jewelry, **Skacel** is sponsoring a contest. Says Chuck Wilmesher, director of new product research and development, "Knit up something gorgeous and unique on the necklace, and then email us one clear, well-photographed picture showing it off." Skacel will select 10 favorite necklaces and give each of the selectees an Addi Click set of their choice; one grand prize winner will also receive \$500 worth of HiKoo yarn. Entries must be received by November 13. Top 10 winners will be notified by November 20; the Grand Prize winner will be announced December 4. Read contest rules at [www.skacelknitting.com/diy-knitcessories](http://www.skacelknitting.com/diy-knitcessories).

## IN MEMORIAM

*Lisa Grossman, Tsarina of Socks (1957–2015)*

▼ The fiber industry lost a bright light when designer Lisa Grossman, better known as the Tsarina of Socks, passed away peacefully at home. Grossman was a talented fiber artist, specializing in what she termed "Art for the Feet," creative and often challenging sock designs inspired by literature, history, folklore or whatever took her fancy. Among her most popular designs were Shark Week, cleverly crafted socks that look uncannily like twin sharks devouring the wearer's feet (one from the top, one from the bottom); Firebird, with a vivid phoenix design; and Willow Ware, featuring a delicate blue and white pattern reminiscent of pottery. Grossman was a talented knitter who took a lengthy hiatus from the craft, founding her own computer business and exploring the worlds of dance, food scholarship and writing, to name a few. She returned to knitting with a vengeance, adopting the moniker "Tsarina of Socks" in homage to the great Russian novelists. Longtime friend Barbara Bonn describes Grossman as "engaged with the world and everything in it, curious and knowledgeable about everything from sheep breeds to Bollywood movies. Since I've known her, I always wanted to be Lisa when I grew up.... I wanted *that* varied a collection of talents, *that* kind of independence and vision, and *that* much courage to see visions become reality."



## TNNA TEN AWARD WINNER: FREDERIKKA PAYNE

▼ Congratulations to **Frederikka Payne**, winner of the 2015 TNNA Tribute to Excellence in Needlearts (TEN) Award. The TEN Award recognizes individuals who represent the finest in the needlearts industry and who personify and uphold the TNNA mission statement. Payne owns **Aurora Yarns**, a wholesale distributor of yarns, patterns, buttons and swifts that has been in business for 32 years.

Payne first dipped a toe into the world of needlework when she was 8, when she taught herself how to embroider; she next explored crochet, needlepoint and knitting. Payne opened a yarn store when she was 22. She recalls, "I had a great time and learned a lot but had to close four years later due to illness." She decided to continue in the industry as an importer, eventually founding Aurora Yarns. Aurora currently distributes yarn lines by King Cole

and Steinbach Wolle, along with patterns (including the Effectiveness by Design line by Michelle Wyman), buttons and more.

Payne also hand-dyes yarn under the name Ogier Trading; at first, she focused on dyeing yarn used for doll hair and embellishment but is now expanding into the knitting and crochet market. Payne has been instrumental in creating a TNNA presence (called "the NeedleArts Zone") at the national Maker Faire festivals, two-day family-friendly events that take place throughout the U.S. "We estimate that we've taught more than 15,000 men, women and children how to knit, crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch and spin," says Payne, who chairs TNNA's Maker Faire committee. "And at least 850,000 people have been exposed to the needlearts by our being at Maker Faire." [www.aurorayarns.com](http://www.aurorayarns.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

*Grace Cooper (1945–2015)*

▼ Knitters and crocheters across the country were saddened to hear of the passing of **Grace Cooper**, founder of Atelier Yarns in San Francisco. Cooper taught knitting and crochet in the Bay Area for many years before opening her own shop in 1991. Amanda Madlener, Cooper's niece, recalls how her aunt sought a fresh start in California following a divorce: "She took everything she had in the world and put it into her own yarn shop. Everyone told her she was crazy, but she ended up building a successful store." Although Cooper had had a successful career in advertising, crafting and, in particular, textile art were longstanding loves. "She learned needlepoint, weaving, beading—she did it all," Madlener says. But Cooper's skills as a businessperson were just as important. "So often it's hard for people to wear both hats, but Grace was very savvy." Cooper's impact on the fiber world is long-lasting; some of her former students have gone on to their own careers in the industry. "She was the personification of her name," says Madlener. "She was funny and sweet, and she made other people feel good. I only started to understand her legacy when I heard from people how Grace had changed their lives." Atelier Yarns and Atelier Marin will continue Cooper's legacy, helmed by her daughter and niece, respectively. [www.atelieryarns.com](http://www.atelieryarns.com)

## MAKING HIS PITCH

▼ **Eisaku Noro**, founder of Noro Yarns, and his son **Takuo** were honored guests at the 11th Annual Stitch-n-Pitch at Safeco Field in Seattle in July. The senior Mr. Noro threw out the game's first pitch, then signed books courtesy of Knitting Fever and event sponsor Pacific Fabrics. Approximately 30 local shops sold yarn, fabric and other stitch-related goodies at a special market-place at the stadium. Attendees received a tote bag along with their ticket purchase. Although the Mariners lost to the Arizona Diamondbacks, stitchers relished the opportunity to enjoy baseball and their favorite crafts, meeting other local knitters, crocheters and quilters, and of course getting in a little shopping during the seventh-inning stretch.

## STAR-POWERED SHOPS



▼ **Jaala Spiro** began her foray into the knitting world as editor and publisher of the e-zine *KnitCircus*. She then turned her attention to hand-dyeing, specializing in hand-painted gradient and self-striping yarns produced under the KnitCircus name. Now Spiro has opened a bricks-and-mortar location in Madison, Wisconsin, allowing KnitCircus fans to purchase her unique striping yarns—along with a carefully curated selection of other products—in person. Why opt for a retail location? One reason was space—Spiro's hand-dye business was bursting at the seams. Spiro also is looking forward to more customer contact: "The piece missing for me was getting to see

people's reactions to the yarn: What do they like about the different fibers, and which colors attract them most? A bricks-and-mortar store lets us interact directly with our customers, and I can take their feedback directly into the new products we design." Noted knitting instructor **Amy Detjen** is a staff member and will be teaching classes at the KnitCircus Studio. Spiro will also offer felting and hand-dyeing classes, retreats, book signings, classes from other well-known fiber teachers, and pop-up stores from other indie fiber businesses. [www.knitcircus.com](http://www.knitcircus.com)

If you, too, are never not knitting and find yourself in the central coastal California area, stop by **Alana Dakos's** new shop. Dakos, author of *Botanical Knits* and individual patterns under the brand Never Not Knitting, recently took the plunge, moving her wholesale business to dedicated space and opening up a small storefront. "Owning a retail shop has been a fantasy of mine since I learned to knit," explains Dakos. "My goal is to support and showcase the work of independent artists. We currently don't have the room to function as a full-service yarn shop, but I am hoping that it will still be a fun stop for knitters—a place for them to find some uncommon specialty items." Dakos also hopes that dipping a toe into the retail waters will give her a better understanding of what her own wholesale customers are looking for. Currently, Never Not Knitting is open from 1 to 3 P.M. on weekdays and by appointment. Dakos is hoping to add special events, designer visits and book signings. [www.nevernotknitting.com](http://www.nevernotknitting.com)



## POWER TO THE PODCAST



▼ Want to hear more about the inner workings of the fiber industry? Tune in to *Power Purls*, a new podcast hosted by *Creative Knitting* Editor **Kara Gott Warner**. The podcast premieres October 1, with subsequent episodes appearing biweekly, available via iTunes and Stitcher Radio. Warner hopes her own knitting experience and her position as an industry insider will bring a fresh take to the knitting podcast, which will feature candid conversations with knitwear designers and yarn company reps as well as everyday knitters who have compelling personal stories. “This podcast is not about just another knitting pattern. I want to go deep and find out what really makes each guest tick,” says Warner. Topics will include strategies for starting a career as a designer; an Ask the Editor Q&A segment; yarn company spotlights; and conversations with designers and authors. Visit [www.powerpurlspodcast.com](http://www.powerpurlspodcast.com) for more info.

## SCORE BIG WITH SCOREBOARD

▼ Football fans and those who knit for them, mark this on your calendar: **Skacel Collection** is teaming up with designer **Michelle “Knit Purl” Hunter** for the 2015 Scoreboard Knit-along. Participants will create a hand-knit cowl in HiKoo Simplicity yarn, in their favorite team colors, with rows inspired by the score of each game. (Participants can add an optional third color to contrast with the stripes representing each game.) Participating knitters will be

eligible to win prizes including KAL yarn, needles and customized tote bags; participating retailers will receive marketing support from Skacel, as well as the chance to win in-store prizes for customers and employees. “Few things in life bring a group together and kindle excitement quite like a football game,” says Skacel’s marketing director, Rob Delmont. “And when you add knitting to the mix, it only gets better.” [www.scoreboardkal.com](http://www.scoreboardkal.com)

## SQUARED AWAY

▼ Crochet maven **Jenny King** wants to get you squared away—into a stylish, well-fitting garment that you’ve hooked up yourself. King’s new *Get Squared* series of videos explains the method, which uses the ubiquitous granny square as its starting point but requires no complex schematics. By combining the method with just two easy-to-take measurements—bust and arm circumference—crocheters can create garments that fit beautifully, using any weight of yarn. Explains King, “This technique is foolproof—there is no gauging the pattern and no sewing, which most crocheters hate.” *Get Squared* introductory classes are available online or stored on a USB stick that actually looks like a crochet hook and include instructions for five garments, including



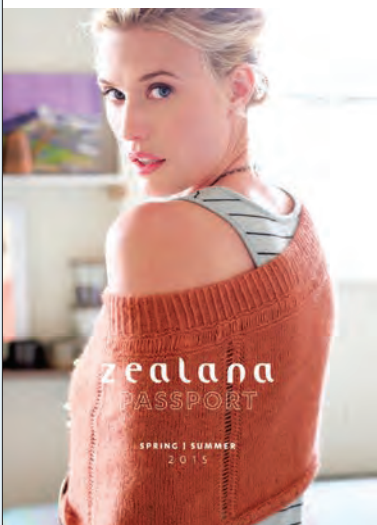
a pullover, cardigans and a shrug. “My technique allows for an infinite number of garment designs that will fit you perfectly to be created,” King declares. “One *Get Squared* convert has already made 10 different garments just from the introductory patterns.” [www.jennykingdesigns.com](http://www.jennykingdesigns.com)

## IN MEMORIAM

*Marinke “Wink” Slump (1984–2015)*

▼ The fiber world mourns the death of popular crochet author and designer **Marinke Slump**, known to her legions of fans as “Wink.” Slump took her own life after a battle with severe depression, said her sister, writing on the designer’s blog, *A Creative Being*. Based in the Netherlands, Wink learned to crochet from a book and developed a winning combination of bright colors, geometric designs and a fresh sensibility—a style she described as “hippie boho chic.” Her first book, *Boho Crochet*, was published by Martingale in February; her second book, *Crochet Mandalas*, published by Dover, is scheduled for release this fall. Visit the memorial website to share memories at [wink.muchloved.com](http://wink.muchloved.com).

## PASSPORT TO ZEALANA



▼ **Zealana** has a story to tell—about preservation and protection and its unique line of yarns created in New Zealand. Enter *Passport*, a new magazine that provides patterns and yarn information, along with a healthy dose of inspiration. **Cirilia Rose**, Zealana’s brand ambassador, explains the purpose of the magazine: “We make highly unique yarns, and they do take a bit of explaining. The conservation story is included in every issue, alongside trend pieces, interviews, yarn and book reviews, and whatever catches our eye that particular season.” The free magazine also includes a tear-off strip featuring yarn samples that readers can detach and take to their local yarn shops. Each issue focuses on three Zealana yarns, with patterns for a larger and smaller item made from each, allowing the reader to opt for a project that suits her budget and time constraints. Says Rose, “Zealana fans are far-flung and so is the team, so we chose the name *Passport* to reflect the wanderlust that can inspire.” *Passport* is available at Zealana stockists or via digital download at [www.zealana.com](http://www.zealana.com).



September 25–27

## 15th Annual Northern Michigan Lamb and Wool Festival

Ogemaw County Fairgrounds  
Lower Peninsula, West Branch,  
Michigan  
[lambandwoolfestival.com](http://lambandwoolfestival.com)

September 25–27

## New York City Yarn Crawl

Manhattan to Brooklyn  
[yarncrawl.nyc.com](http://yarncrawl.nyc.com)

September 26–27

## Oregon Flock & Fiber Festival

Clackamas County Event Center  
Canby, Oregon  
[flockandfiberfestival.com](http://flockandfiberfestival.com)

September 26–27

## Southern Adirondack Fiber Festival

Washington County Fairgrounds  
Greenwich, New York  
[adkfiber.com](http://adkfiber.com)

September 26–27

## Masham Sheep Fair

Masham, Ripon  
North Yorkshire, U.K.  
[mashamsheepfair.com](http://mashamsheepfair.com)

September 26–October 4

## Shetland Wool Week

Shetland Islands  
[shetlandwoolweek.com](http://shetlandwoolweek.com)

October 1–4

## The Harveyville Project

Fall Yarn School  
Harveyville, Kansas  
[harveyvilleproject.com](http://harveyvilleproject.com)

October 2–3

## Manitoba Fibre Festival

Red River Exhibition Park  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
[manitobafibrefestival.com](http://manitobafibrefestival.com)

October 2–4

## Vogue Knitting LIVE Chicago

Palmer House Hilton Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois  
[vogueknittinglive.com](http://vogueknittinglive.com)

October 2–4

## Kentucky Wool Festival

48 Concord Caddo Road  
Falmouth, Kentucky  
[kywoolfest.org](http://kywoolfest.org)

October 3–4

## Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival

Tunbridge Fairgrounds  
Tunbridge, Vermont  
[vtsheepandwoolfest.com](http://vtsheepandwoolfest.com)

October 3–4

## Wool Festival at Taos

Kit Carson Park  
Taos, New Mexico  
[taoswoolfestival.org](http://taoswoolfestival.org)

October 3–4

## Fall Fiber Festival & Montpelier Sheepdog Trials

James Madison's Montpelier  
Montpelier Station, Virginia  
[www.fallfiberfestival.org](http://www.fallfiberfestival.org)

October 3–4

## Michigan International AlpacaFest

Summit Sports & Ice Complex  
Dimondale, Michigan  
[alpacaFest.org](http://alpacaFest.org)

October 5–11

## Spinzilla

various locations  
[spinzilla.org](http://spinzilla.org)

October 7–11

## The Knitting & Stitching Show

Alexandra Palace  
London, U.K.  
[theknittingandstitchingshow.com/london](http://theknittingandstitchingshow.com/london)

October 15–17

## Creativ Festival

Metro Toronto Convention Centre  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[csnf.com](http://csnf.com)

October 17–18

## New York Sheep & Wool Festival

Dutchess County Fairgrounds  
Rhinebeck, New York  
[sheepandwool.com](http://sheepandwool.com)

October 17–18

## Fiber Fusion Northwest

Evergreen State Fairgrounds  
Monroe, Washington  
[fiberfusion.net](http://fiberfusion.net)

October 23–25

## KnitEast 2015

The Algonquin Resort  
St. Andrews By-the-Sea,  
New Brunswick, Canada  
[kniteast.com](http://kniteast.com)

October 29–November 1

## Geeky Puffin Knit Palooza

The Gillis Centre  
Edinburgh, Scotland  
[geekypuffinknitpalooza.blogspot.co.uk](http://geekypuffinknitpalooza.blogspot.co.uk)

October 30–November 1

## Annie's Craft Festival

Grand Wayne Convention Center  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
[anniescraftfestival.com](http://anniescraftfestival.com)

October 30–November 1

## Southeastern Animal Fiber Fair

Western NC Agricultural Center  
Fletcher, North Carolina  
[saffsite.org](http://saffsite.org)

November 5–6

## Men's Midwest Knitting Retreat

Circle Pines Center  
Delton, Michigan  
[mensknittingretreat.com/scheduled-events.html](http://mensknittingretreat.com/scheduled-events.html)

November 5–9

## Camp Stitches

Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort  
and Spa  
Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico  
[knittinguniverse.com/Camp](http://knittinguniverse.com/Camp)

November 6–7

## Ozark Fiber Fling

The Conference Center  
Steelville, Missouri  
[ozarkfiberfling.com](http://ozarkfiberfling.com)

November 6–8

## Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival

Fort Dalles Readiness Center  
The Dalles, Oregon  
[columbiagorgefiberfestival.com](http://columbiagorgefiberfestival.com)

November 6–8

## KnitXperience, A Knitters Retreat

Graves Mountain Lodge  
Syria, Virginia  
[carodanfarm.com](http://carodanfarm.com)

November 7

## East Texas Fiber Festival

Pickers Pavilion  
Lindale, Texas  
[easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com](http://easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com)

November 7–8

## FiberMania

Josephine County Fairgrounds  
Grants Pass, Oregon  
[sojaa.com/page/4109/fibermania](http://sojaa.com/page/4109/fibermania)

November 7–8

## The Fiber Festival of New England

Mallory Complex at Eastern States  
Exposition  
West Springfield, Massachusetts  
[thebig.com](http://thebig.com)

November 7–8

## The Royal Alpaca Challenge

Georgia National Fairgrounds  
& Agricenter  
Perry, Georgia  
[georgia-alpaca.com](http://georgia-alpaca.com)

November 13–15

## Knit Fit!

Ballard Community Center  
Seattle, Washington  
[knitfitseattle.com](http://knitfitseattle.com)

November 13–15

## Carolina Fiber Frolic

Community Center  
Sapphire, North Carolina  
[carolinafiberfrolic.com](http://carolinafiberfrolic.com)

November 14–15

## Maryland Alpaca and Fleece Festival

Howard County Fairgrounds  
West Friendship, Maryland  
[marylandalpacas.org](http://marylandalpacas.org)

November 26–29

## The Knitting & Stitching Show

Harrogate International Centre  
Harrogate, U.K.  
[theknittingandstitchingshow.com/harrogate](http://theknittingandstitchingshow.com/harrogate)

November 27–28

## Delmarva Wool and Fiber Expo

Northside Park  
Ocean City, Maryland  
[woolandfiber.com](http://woolandfiber.com)



## ▼ Big Knits

By Martin Storey

St. Martin's Press; \$26.99

ISBN: 978-1250061911

Martin Storey's exquisitely crafted designs are among the most popular patterns published by Rowan, the venerable British yarn company. In this collection, the designer turns his



attention to plus-size knitwear, and the designs reflect his very elegant, very appealing sensibility. Storey

wisely observes that not all plus-size women have the same body type, meaning that not every garment will flatter every woman. He includes an introductory section dividing designs into categories, giving suggestions as to specific body shapes suited to particular styles. Patterns include flowing wraps with lace or cable designs, cropped garments like boleros and shrugs, tunic-length styles and mid-length designs, along with some boxier hip-length sweaters; a few accessories round out the collection. Knitters who love classic British knitwear but need a more expansive size range will certainly want to check out this book.

## ▼ Color Wheel Knits

By Veera Välimäki

Cooperative Press; \$26.95

(print + pdf)

ISBN: 978-1937513672

Designer of the wildly popular Color Affection shawl, Välimäki draws inspiration for her first book from all the shades of the rainbow—or, as she prefers to look at it, the spokes of the



color wheel. Patterns are organized into chapters based on the color of the yarn used—

blues and greens, reds and pinks, gray and brown, and yellow—and Välimäki has sourced some gorgeous hand-painted yarns for her sample garments. After some helpful background information

on working with hand-painted yarns, knitters will find a mix of designs for the whole family, including unisex accessories, charming kids' cardis and adult sweaters. Silhouettes are loose and comfortable, with interesting details like pleated button bands, oversized cable edgings and broken-up stripe patterns enlivening the designs. Plenty of garter and stockinette make these garments accessible even to less-experienced knitters.

## ▼ Wrapped in Color

By Maie and Taiu Landra

Sixth&Spring Books; \$17.95

ISBN: 978-1936096848

The Landras' yarn company, Koigu Wool Designs, has a rabid following among yarn aficionados, and with good reason: Their exquisite yarns set the bar for quality and beauty in a market saturated with artisanal hand-dyes. This collection of 30 shawls made exclusively in Koigu yarns gives



the Koigu collector fresh inspiration to pull skeins from stash and cast on. Maie Landra takes the

laboring oar with design, crafting stoles, wraps and shrugs using lace motifs, dropped stitches, eyelets and mesh that show off her yarn's glorious hues. She is ably assisted by other designers, including her daughter Taiu and granddaughter Kersti. Yarn weights include the ever-popular fingering-weight KPPM and DK-weight Kersti, as well as designs in Koigu's newer lace and chunky weights.

## ▼ Happy-Gurumi

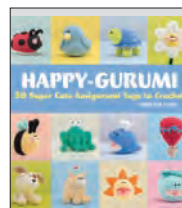
By Vanessa Chan

Martingale & Co.; \$22.99

ISBN: 978-1604684810

Amigurumi's appeal is easy to understand: Its single-crochet stitch is simple to do, projects require small amounts of yarn, and the end result is utterly adorable. Chan's collection of 20 toys is divided into three chapters: the great outdoors (patterns include a bumblebee, daisy, sun and hot-air balloon), animal friends (frog, turtle and ostrich) and party time (no celebration is complete without a

cupcake, root beer float and party hat). Worsted-weight yarn and felt



embellishments ramp up the cute factor without adding fiddliness. Lots of photographs, including closeups and inset photos demonstrating special skills (making a pom-pom, attaching a balloon stem) help guide the reader along. A brief skills section includes instructions on embroidering embellishments and assembly tips.

## ▼ Crocheted Mitts and Mittens

By Amy Gunderson

Stackpole Books; \$21.95

ISBN: 978-0811714105

Gunderson, creative lead at Universal Yarn, follows up her book of knitted mitts and mittens with a handy sequel of crocheted designs. Twenty-five patterns give crocheters a wealth of techniques to try: tapestry crochet, a touch of hairpin lace, shells, bobbles, lace—it's all here. Many of the designs are aimed at women, but several options, including a pair of robot-themed mitts and tweedy



Underpass mittens, would please men, too. Closeup photos of back and palm of each pattern are a thoughtful (and helpful) detail; large charts minimize eye strain; and 30 pages of technical information give hookers all the info they'll need to create a wardrobe of stylish, cozy-warm hand gear.

## ▼ Woolly Woofers

By Debbie Bliss

Lark Crafts; \$17.95

ISBN: 978-1454709121

Debbie Bliss adores dogs—her two (beagle and Parson Russell terrier) and everyone else's. So how does a designing legend express that doggy love? With a book of adorable, stylish sweater patterns for contemporary canines of all shapes and sizes, of course. Patterns riff on Bliss's favorite classic sweater styles—cabled Aran, Fair Isle, argyle, guernsey, nau-

tical stripe—then branch out into the whimsical. Cow-pattern sweater? Sherlock Holmes-inspired deer-stalker? Pierrot-style cowl and hat? Check, check and check. But just because the patterns are doggone adorable doesn't mean they aren't



thoughtfully designed. Bliss shows how specific styles suit differently shaped dogs, and she sizes many patterns

rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Of course, the canine models steal the show, their sweet furry faces made even cuter by Jo Clark's wry illustrations.

## ▼ Splendid Apparel

By Anna Zilboorg

XXR Books; \$28.95

ISBN: 978-1933064307

Anna Zilboorg observes that while knitting is "devoted to making useful things," embroidery is "devoted to making useful things beautiful." Her latest book focuses on mixing the two, with splendid results. The author believes that embroidery should enhance the beauty of knitted fabric rather than dominate it. She eschews



obvious types of brightly colored embellishment (lazy daisy flowers, say) for subtler

stitches, finding just the right place in the center of a cable or along the edge of a lace pattern for a delicate knot or columns of embroidered stitches. The book begins with embroidery basics, including diagrams and tips on yarn and thread selection. The remainder of the book explores five types of embroidered knitting: adding stitches to ribbing, cables, all-over patterning, lace and traveling stitches. Each section includes multiple swatches exploring how embroidery can add to a stitch pattern, along with garment patterns that illustrate the possibilities. The book succeeds at educating and inspiring and is sure to lead to a creative renaissance in embellished knitwear design.



### ▼ Knit the Sky

By Lea Redmond

Storey Publishing; \$19.95

ISBN: 978-1612123332

Lea Redmond wants to change the way knitters think about patterns—or at least the way they approach their knitting projects. She hopes that they will pay less attention to paper and more to their own lives and the world around them, then record that new awareness in their knitting. Her book is as much a meditation on mindfulness as it is a pattern book, although you'll find a handful of basic patterns in the back. Eschewing the traditional "technique plus pattern chapters" model, Redmond focuses on inspiring readers to record the passage of time in their knitting (she



suggests knitting a scarf segment each time your child grows an inch, for a portable "height chart"), memorialize

special places (work postcard-sized swatches while on vacation, then join them for a memory-triggering scarf or throw), and tune in to nature (select a yarn color that matches each day's sky and knit a row a day to create the Sky scarf). The whimsical illustrations add extra charm to Redmond's message that we should strive to add meaning and emotion into every knit and purl stitch.

### ▼ Perfectly Feminine Knits

By Lene Holme Samsøe

Interweave/F+W; \$26.99

ISBN: 978-1632500830

Danish designer Samsøe has a knack for balancing delicate, graceful touches—a gossamer drape of mohair, a swirl of lace—and classic design. The third book in her *Feminine Knits* series, Samsøe's latest features a collection of women's sweaters and accessories. The designer has a lovely sensibility, pairing natural-fiber yarns in complex, muted colors with clean lines and interesting details. The 25 patterns are mainly sweaters and wraps, but you'll also find smaller projects including mittens and hats. Techniques include basic knits and purls, lace, bobbles, cables and garter

stitch, with both easy and more challenging knits. Size ranges run



from S to XL for sweaters; accessories are mostly one size fits all. Many of the yarns will be unfamiliar to an

American knitter, so familiarity with yarn substitution or advice from a savvy shop owner is a must.

### ▼ Handknits From Norway

By Karen Marie Vinje

Trafalgar Square Books; \$24.95

ISBN: 978-1570766879

Love Scandinavian style? Interested in stranded knitting? If so, check out Vinje's collection of designs, chock-full of folk-inspired sweaters using classic Norwegian motifs. Vinje's mission is to preserve Norwegian knitting techniques for future generations, and she begins with patterns for favorites like the Setesdal sweater and a distinctive red-and-white Fana cardigan. Stars, yokes, lice patterns—they're all here, some used in very traditional ways, others incorporated into more trend-conscious styles. A Lopli-style yoke adorns a short dress (which can also be worn as a tunic), stranded motifs are used along



with beads for a sassy poncho with matching mitts and hat, a vest takes Setesdal patterning and up-

dates it in pink and purple. Most garments are designed with women in mind (although some size ranges will seem limited to a U.S. audience), while a few designs include men's versions.

### ▼ Geek Knits

By Joan of Dark

St. Martin's Griffin; \$21.99

ISBN: 978-1250051387

After exploring the knitted potential of the roller derby and nerd cultures, Toni Carr turns to the world of fan-

tasy and science fiction for stitching inspiration. And what fertile territory it is for the designer who calls herself "Joan of Dark." Whether your tastes run to Dr. Who, Harry Potter, Sherlock Holmes or *Game of Thrones*, Carr's book has cleverly designed patterns to keep a geeky knitter's needles clacking for light years. A fez and bow tie à la the Eleventh Doctor, a stuffed direwolf from Winterfell, multisided dice for gamers, Chthulu fingerless gloves—Carr and her contributors have mined all sorts of pop-culture sources to create an outstanding collection of geek chic. Patterns range in difficulty from



easy to advanced; color charts, ample photographs and detailed directions make re-

creating these distinctive patterns eminently doable. Better yet: Carr rounded up all-star models to delight her audience, including Joel Hodgson of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, René Auberjonois of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, and sci-fi/fantasy luminaries Neil Gaiman and George R.R. Martin.

### ▼ Handknits by Machine

By Susan Guagliumi

Self-published; \$38

ISBN: 978-1503065758



Guagliumi's manual on machine knitting is perfectly timed: There just aren't many resources for those interested in all

the places a good knitting machine can take them. And she is up for the challenge, instructing readers in need-to-know skills like casting on and shaping and specific techniques like lace, mosaic knitting and entrelac. While she notes the difficulty of appealing to her two distinct audiences—machine knitters who know very little about hand knitting and hand knitters who know very little about machine knitting—Guagliumi masterfully bridges the divide. Especially helpful are photos comparing techniques done by hand and by machine and placing a machine-knit swatch and a hand-knit one side by side. If you've ever wondered how to expand your machine-knitting skills or been tempted to cross over from hand to machine knitting, pick up a copy of this book before you even take your machine out of the box.

## ■ BESTSELLER WATCH

Here's what topped the bestseller lists the first week of July 2015:

### Amazon Knitting List

1. *A Good Yarn*, by Debbie Macomber (Harlequin/MIRA)
2. *Curls: Versatile, Wearable Wraps to Knit at Any Gauge*, by Hunter Hammersen (Pantsville Press)
3. *Cast On, Bind Off*, by Leslie Ann Bestor (Storey Publishing)

### Amazon Crochet List

1. *A to Z Crochet: The Ultimate Guide* (Martingale)
2. *The Granny Square Book*, by Margaret Huber (Creative Publishing Int'l)

### Barnes & Noble Needlework & Fiber Arts List

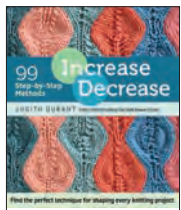
1. *Crochet One-Skein Wonders*, by Judith Durant & Edie Eckman (Storey)
2. *The Knitting Answer Book (2nd ed.)*, by Margaret Radcliffe (Storey)
3. *Cast On, Bind Off*, by Leslie Ann Bestor (Storey Publishing)
4. *Circular Knitting Workshop*, by Margaret Radcliffe (Storey)
5. *The Crochet Answer Book (2nd edition)*, by Edie Eckman (Storey)



# BOOK REVIEWS

## ▼ Increase Decrease: 99 Step-by-Step Methods

By Judith Durant  
Storey Publishing; \$16.95  
ISBN: 978-1612123318



Knitters who rely on one tried-and-true method of increasing and decreasing can break out of their shaping rut

by perusing the plethora of choices presented in this handy spiral-bound book. Durant, author of the best-selling *One-Skein Wonders* series, ably demonstrates myriad ways to widen or narrow knitted fabric, pointing out distinctive features of each and recommending potential uses. The book is sensibly organized, breaking down increases, for example, into neutral increases (ones that don't lean in a particular direction), right- and left-leaning increases, multi-stitch increases, and centered double increases, while decreases are organized by the number of stitches they do away with—one, two or multiple. Separate chapters address decorative increases and decreases as well as special shaping techniques. Closeup photos of stitches on the needles and finished swatches help it all make sense. A terrific skill-builder for rookie knitters, Durant's guide is likely to teach even experienced knitters a few new tricks.

## ▼ Finger Knitting Fun

By Vickie Howell  
Quarry Books; \$19.99  
ISBN: 978-1631590702



Knitters and crocheters who spend time with children know that the desire to learn how to create

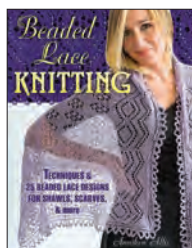
things out of yarn starts young. But it can be frustrating when children who are intrigued by knitting don't have the developmental patience or necessary motor skills to handle both sticks and string. Enter Vickie Howell's latest book, devoted to finger knitting, the craft of using yarn wrapped around fingers to create knitted I-cords. Howell

comes up with all sorts of cute and clever projects using simple knitted cords, from accessories (necklaces) and room décor (mobiles) to wearables (hats). Adorable models, clear directions and tips for freecycling add to the charm. Bring this one out on a rainy day and get those kids hooked on knitting.

## ▼ Beaded Lace Knitting

By Anniken Allis  
Stackpole Books; \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-0811714570

Knitters who haven't yet explored the way that beads can beautifully complement their lace projects will surely be tempted by this collection of elegant wearables by Norway native Allis. Lace-knitting newbies can get up to speed on basic techniques, then explore patterns that



are helpfully graded by difficulty. As one might expect, shawls, cowls and stoles take center stage, but

Allis adds variety by including options like fingerless gloves, a poncho, a bolero and a vest. Lace- and finger-knitting-weight yarns predominate, understandably, given the small diameter of most beads, and Allis uses lush handprints as well as a striper or two. Her enthusiasm for adding sparkle and shimmer to shawls, scarves and other lacy projects shines through on every page.

## ▼ Crochet Lace: Techniques, Patterns and Projects

By Pauline Turner  
Dover Publications; \$19.95  
ISBN: 978-0486794570

It's always a pleasure to see an information-packed reference book back in print, like Pauline Turner's guide to crocheted lace, first published in 2003. Turner starts with the fundamentals, laying out historical and contemporary approaches to crochet, along with ways in which to hold the hook, yarn selection and basic stitches. Next is an exploration of filet crochet; crocheted motifs (squares, circles, pineapple and more); joining motifs; Irish crochet; crochet techniques



aimed at imitating other types of lace; edgings; and finishing. While a few project patterns are included—notably the lovely gloves

that appear on the cover—the book is more of a technical manual than a pattern collection.

## ▼ Solveig Larsson's Knitted Mittens

By Solveig Larsson  
Trafalgar Square Books; \$22.95  
ISBN: 978-1570767029

Larsson draws on the landscape, folklore and, of course, knitting traditions of northern Sweden to create this collection of 40-plus mittens.

The author assumes that the reader has a basic knowledge of mitten making, providing a single prototype pattern in the beginning, then giving cast-on stitch numbers and charts for the individual designs. Nature-themed



patterns predominate in the form of flowers, feathers and leaves—plus a reindeer, frog and hedgehog for good

measure—but geometric motifs, crosses and stars round out the designs. Photographs of the Swedish countryside, vignettes about local history and notes on design inspiration make leafing through the book a pleasure. The beautiful, often intricate colorwork and lovely cuff variations should inspire mitten lovers to create pair after gorgeous pair to keep fingers toasty warm.

## ▼ Knitted Beanies & Slouchy Hats

By Diane Serviss  
Stackpole Books; \$19.95  
ISBN: 978-0811713788

Etsy superstar Serviss, better known to craftheads by her brand name Pixiedust, has racked up more than 25,000 sales of her charming hand-knit hats. Now Pixiedust's fans have the means to make their own. Serviss gives the hat-hungry a smorgasbord of 31 designs to pick from, basics like a slouchy stockinette number with garter ridges and more

advanced offerings featuring stranded colorwork, smocked brims, cables and textured stitchwork. Although the title focuses on beanies and looser-fitting numbers, you'll also find other shapes, including a



stocking cap, earflap hat and turban. Hats are shown on models of all ages, making this a great source for gift

knitting or for charity-oriented stitchers always in need of warm headwear. Yarn gauges tend toward the worsted and thicker categories, meaning these tantalizing toppers can be finished in just a few hours.

## ▼ Modular Crochet

By Judith Copeland  
Dover Publications; \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-0486796871

In keeping with its mission to keep good books in print, Dover has reissued this fascinating 1978 title exploring the possibilities of modular crochet. Copeland views each garment as a series of rectangles that can be joined in a simple way to make construction easy and efficient: Garments are started with a length of chains that run vertically down the center of the body. Rectangles are added to either side of the chain to build the sweater, adding each piece modularly. By sticking to this



simple structure, and emphasizing the try-on-as-you-go nature of the process, Copeland promises cus-

tom fit without the need for a traditional written pattern. Inexperienced crocheters will love her easy-to-follow directions, which break down the process into discrete steps, and large accompanying photographs. The remainder of the book explores the potential of Copeland's approach, giving diagrams for different neck shapes, hoods and sleeve lengths, then presenting options for mixing up yarn and stitch patterns to create different looks.



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## YARN FORWARD

### SweetGeorgia Yarns CashLuxe Spark

**Specs:** Dozens of colorways; 80% superwash merino/10% cashmere/10% Spark; 420yds/115g

**Gauge:** Approx 30 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 1 (2.25mm) needles

**Distinctions:** CashLuxe Spark is a glittery new addition to SweetGeorgia's popular CashLuxe line. Soft and plush with a hint of sparkle, it's special enough for night-on-the-town garments and comfy enough for everyday wear.

**Projects:** The soft drape, rich colors and threads of glitter make this yarn ideal for a shawl or wrap.

### Prism Yarn Radiant Petite Madison Layers

**Specs:** More than a dozen colorways; 73% merino/7% cashmere/10% silk/10% Spk; 372yds/100g

**Gauge:** Approx 26 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 3 (3.25mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Radiant Petite Madison, a single-ply stunner, is the sparkly baby sister in Prism's popular Madison line. Prism's unique "layers" dyeing technique means that color is dyed over color so skeins have subtle variegation that doesn't pool or stripe.

**Projects:** Choose multiple colors and show them off in a patterned or striped shawl.

# All that Glitters

By Holly Ruck

To celebrate fall's impending holiday season, we look at yarns that offer shimmer and sparkle.

### Crystal Palace Yarns Gold Rush

**Specs:** 7 colorways; 59% cotton/20% wool/13% nylon/8% metallic; 85yds/50g

**Gauge:** Approx 14 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 10 (6mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Gold Rush's bulky strands combine a cotton core and wool overlay. As you knit, the soft black or white core lets strands of gold peek through the self-striping color. The outcome is vibrant color that catches the light.

**Projects:** Hats, shawls, fingerless mitts and cowls will showcase the sparkle and variegated colors of Gold Rush, but why not consider a lustrous sweater as well?

### Trendsetter Yarns Firefly

**Specs:** 9 colors; 38% polyamide/21% acrylic/19% alpaca/14% polyester/8% merino; 165yds/50g

**Gauge:** Approx 14 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 9 (5.5mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Sturdy and bouncy, Firefly feels built to last. The rich hues in this line pair well together, so consider it for colorwork.

**Projects:** At 165 yards per skein, Firefly is just right for one-skein knit or crochet projects.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS





### Knit Collage Cast Away

**Specs:** 6 sparkle and 12 regular colorways; 68% wool/19% mohair/10% silk/3% polyester; 68yds/100g

**Gauge:** Approx 8 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 11 (8mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Each skein of Cast Away, woven together by artisans in India, can have as many as 10 colors. The fibers create a yarn that's alternately thick and thin—and incredibly soft. The variegated thickness is the perfect showcase for the array of colors in each skein.

**Projects:** Just right for keeping away the winter chill, Cast Away is perfect for hats, cowls, scarves, wraps and even mittens.



### Artyarns Silk Mohair Glitter

**Specs:** Dozens of colorways; 60% super-kid mohair/40% silk with Lurex; 312yds/25g

**Gauge:** Varies; suggested needle sizes of 3 (3.25mm) through 5 (3.75mm)

**Distinctions:** Light and feathery with a well-blended sparkle, Silk Mohair Glitter feels plush and opulent. The mohair gives it just enough fuzzy texture to make it warm and inviting, while the silk adds a gentle luster.

**Projects:** Use this for drapery lace tops and shawls.



### HiKoo by Skacel Simplicity Metallic

**Specs:** 6 colors; 53% super-wash merino/27% acrylic/17% nylon/3% metallic; 117yds/50g

**Gauge:** Approx 20 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 5 (3.75mm) needles

**Distinctions:** HiKoo has the softness and depth of your favorite well-loved sweater. The loose twist creates an easy drape that's evenly shot through with bright silver. The fact that it's machine-washable is a bonus for this fun, affordable yarn.

**Projects:** The soft texture is just asking to be stitched into slouchy hats, comfy scarves and projects for little ones.



### Cascade Yarns Venezia Glamour

**Specs:** 6 colors; 65% merino wool/30% mulberry silk/5% polyester; 96yds/100g

**Gauge:** Approx 13 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 10 (6mm) or 11 (8mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Venezia Glamour, a shimmering bulky, knits up quickly on the recommended size 10 or 11 needles (6 or 8 mm), making it perfect for weekend projects. The silver strands offer a bit of extra texture and mesh well with shiny mulberry silk.

**Projects:** Thick hats, fingerless mitts, and long, wrapping cowls will be on-trend with Venezia's sparkle.

### Universal Yarn Universe

**Specs:** 10 colorways; 42% linen/41% combed cotton/9% glitter/8% polyamide; 246yds/50g

**Gauge:** Approx 28 sts = 4" (10cm) on size 2 (2.75mm) needles

**Distinctions:** Universal Yarn celebrates 10 years with this new yarn, which feels like a party and looks like a glittery night sky. The thread-like quality of Universe is both delicate and sturdy. Be sure to firmly block your finished piece to showcase the loveliness of this unique yarn.

**Projects:** Use Universe for lacy pullovers, shawls, cowls or even as a carry-along yarn. Crocheters will love its firm twist.







## Fresh, Fabulous and Forty!

**T**NNA celebrated a major milestone at the summer show in Columbus in May: Our needlearts trade organization turned 40. As I walked the convention center hall and showroom, I began to list in my head all of the amazing shows, events and consumer programs TNNA has been a part of in that time. I quickly lost count. I am so proud of what the members and this organization have been able to accomplish over the years.

Our TNNA board, retail council, product segment groups and member sections are staffed entirely with volunteers who make things happen not only at the shows but during the months in between. It is incredible what can happen when an organization of dedicated people with a passion for what they do are put to task.

The evolution of TNNA is impressive—everything from consumer-outreach programs like Stitch to Win, Stitch N' Pitch, The Needlearts Zone and Maker Faire to show initiatives like Building Better Business, Sample IT! and

the Quest. All of these programs are huge benefits to our members and our organization.

At our summer show, we always host an awards presentation for The Excellence in Needlearts (TEN) and the Business Innovations Award. The TEN Award is given to a person who has been an active member of TNNA. This year's recipient, Frederikka Payne, owner of Aurora Yarns, was honored especially for her work with Maker Faire. She has volunteered as the coordinator of our successful consumer outreach program at these events, which has taught more than 20,000 people how to knit, crochet, cross-stitch, needlepoint, spin and weave. This year's yarn Business Innovation Awards winners were TNNA wholesale member Soak and TNNA retailer member Hank & Purl's Creative Nook and Knittery. [Their winning company profiles, with details about their award-winning programs, will be featured in the January 2016 issue of *Yarn Market News*.]

A new twist to the show, which has grown

exponentially over the past two events, is our Immediate Delivery option, similar to "cash and carry." Exhibitors are allowed to sell products at wholesale directly to retailers at our shows. Currently, 51 percent of exhibitors are selling product at our show, which is a 27 percent increase since we started the program at our Phoenix show in January. Exhibitors are able to get their new products in the hands of retailers immediately—a huge benefit to both retailers and exhibitors.

Thank you to our members who have supported TNNA through the years. I'd like to encourage those who are a part of this wonderful needlearts community but not a TNNA member to join our organization. Membership affords you the chance to participate in our amazing shows. Join our organization and enjoy the next 40 years with us. Show date reminder: Winter show, January 9–11, 2016, San Diego. Summer show, June 11–13, 2016, Washington, D.C.

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 [www.tnna.org](http://www.tnna.org) or call (800) 889-8662.

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### SAN DIEGO, CA

**TNNA Winter Trade Show • January 9-11, 2016**  
Education Begins January 7

San Diego, California offers many things to see and do. With blue skies and over 70 miles of majestic coastline, San Diego has near-perfect weather year-round. Minutes from the airport, this safe walkable city is a fun, inexpensive getaway. TNNA hotel prices range from \$149-\$189/night.

Photo by: Destination DC



### WASHINGTON, DC

**The NeedleArts Trade Show • June 11-13, 2016**  
Education Begins June 9

Washington, DC is a living history book full of powerful moments and memorable experiences. The city features museums, memorials and many other attractions. TNNA hotel price range from \$149-\$196/night.

Join The National NeedleArts Association today and benefit by participating in the two largest trade shows in the needlearts industry!

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## Continuing to Build

**T**NNA's Yarn Group has accomplished a lot in the past year. We made it our mission to build on the success of TNNA President Beth Casey's tenure and bring ideas from the strategic plan to life. We've increased membership, developed strategic programs to make TNNA trade shows a more meaningful experience for both buyers and exhibitors, and brought new leadership to the Yarn Group executive committee and TNNA board.

The highly regarded Building Better Business Seminar was the direct result of the Yarn Group Strategic Planning process: Members expressed a desire for business-enhancing classes, so a committee of powerhouse educators was formed to bring the program to life. Also, nearly 200 people participated in the Quest at the Columbus trade show, and those who visited all the Quest exhibitor booths received more than \$800 in treasures, from skeins of yarn to project kits.

Now we must move on to marketing yarn to consumers. It's time to create and implement a strategy to bring more consumers to Yarn Group member products. As a retailer myself, I know

that our supply chain includes consumers; without them, revenue doesn't flow through our businesses. Retailers can't grow and benefit from TNNA if they don't have the revenue to get to the show. Exhibitors can't bring more exciting products to market without revenue from retailers. Our industry's cycle travels from consumer to retailer to designers and educators through to exhibitors. To leave one group out of our thinking is to weaken the entire chain.

As Yarn Group continues its work, we will be looking for bright, serious volunteers to help with some of the tough and rewarding work to follow. We're looking for volunteers to work with our cochairpersons to:

- **Grow Yarn Group membership** and grow show attendance as part of the Membership Committee.
- **Create and staff show initiatives** like the Lounge, Café, Quest and Fashion Show as part of the Trade Show Initiatives Committee.
- **Create social media campaigns** and a website as part of the Marketing Committee.
- **Serve as much-needed worker bees** on

the show floor.

- **Help create webinars** and other virtual education opportunities.

I often hear, "Why should I join Yarn Group?" I will admit that in my first five years in this industry, I wondered as well. But then it occurred to me: Yarn Group is not AAA. I shouldn't be expecting 24-hour roadside assistance for my \$50 membership fee. Yarn Group membership is an investment in the successful growth of the industry in which I make my living. Our increasing Yarn Group membership allows us to build a better show, make better businesspeople of our colleagues, create more consumers for our products. And there's the \$800 in products that retailers can gather from the Quest and the potential 200 new business contacts exhibitors can meet along the way. Those are some pretty tangible benefits—though not the only ones.

Yarn Group will never be "done." We have so much we can accomplish together. If you'd like to be involved, send me an email at [yargrouptnna@gmail.com](mailto:yargrouptnna@gmail.com). I'm looking forward to working with you.

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# SPINNING & WEAVING GROUP

BY CHERYL NACHTRIEB, CHAIR



## Joy Is What We Do

**S**haring joy is written right into the mission of The Spinning and Weaving Group. We believe that if we share our passion for the crafts, others will grab onto that joy, and our marketplace will thrive. SWG is a product segment group of The National NeedleArts Association. We advocate for the crafts of spinning and weaving within the larger yarn market. Formed in 2002 as the Spinning and Weaving Association, the group merged with TNNA four years ago under the leadership of Dave van Stralen of Louet. Since that time, the organization has realized two long-term goals.

The first was to create a consumer event that would bring more people to the craft. Spinzilla was born in 2013 as a fresh consumer event whose goal is to drive traffic to member businesses. It allows spinners of any level, from anywhere in the world, to participate in a friendly competition to see who can spin the most yarn in a week. Since its inception, spinners have spun more than five million yards of yarn

and donated nearly \$20,000 to TNNA's NeedleArts Mentoring Program, a program that also supports SWG's educational goals. Spinzilla would not be possible without the dedication of the Spinzilla committee: Liz Gipson (Yarnworker), Liz Good (Spinner-at-Large), Constance Hall (Dyeology), Andrea Marquis (Yarn Superhero) and Rita Petteys (Yarn Hollow). To learn more about this event and to keep up with the 2015 happenings, visit [www.spinzilla.org](http://www.spinzilla.org).

The second initiative—to establish a Spinning and Weaving Teachers Directory that elevates the visibility of teachers within these crafts—was realized under the guidance of Jane Patrick of Schacht Spindle Company. The biggest barrier shops face in bringing in or expanding their offerings of spinning and weaving products is finding qualified teachers or promoting the teachers they already have. Many conferences want to add spinning and weaving to their lineups but don't know where to begin. This registry is open to all qualified spinning and

weaving teachers for free until December 2017, at which point you must be a TNNA member and a member of SWG to maintain your listing. If you are interested in being added to the list, visit [www.spinweave.org/teachers-directory](http://www.spinweave.org/teachers-directory); click on "submit a listing," fill out the form, include two references, and submit your listing for review. SWG is actively promoting this list and working with the larger TNNA organization to elevate the profile of educators and other service providers in the industry.

I urge you to become a member of SWG. The more members we have, the stronger our collective voice. SWG provides a forum for those who want to learn more about spinning and weaving products and services or those who have a newly formed business and want to connect with wholesalers, retailers and service providers who specialize in this area. Together we can grow. To learn more about the Spinning and Weaving Group's Mission, the Teachers Directory or Spinzilla, visit [www.spinweave.org](http://www.spinweave.org).

The goal of the Spinning & Weaving Group is to ensure a vibrant marketplace by promoting the joys of handspinning and weaving. Learn more at [www.tnna.org/page/SWGHHome](http://www.tnna.org/page/SWGHHome).

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## When Life Gives You Lemons...

I've written before about Craft Yarn Council's Changing Global Health One Stitch at a Time initiative, which we started in 2013 to educate the world about the health benefits of knitting and crochet.

We began by aggregating existing research and compiling interviews with hundreds of needleworkers. We published articles, press releases and a video. As a result, we've counted more than 200 placements in mainstream media about the benefits of these crafts and more than 70 placements among industry publishers and bloggers. Conservatively, our message has reached more than three million consumers.

Because so much of our research shows that participating in knitting and crocheting is a stress-relieving endeavor, we introduced the second phase of our initiative, #StitchAwayStress, via social media in April, which is National Stress Awareness Month. Throughout the month on our Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter pages, we posted fun and unique ways to use these crafts to unwind and to

learn more about their stress-reducing and mood-boosting effects. We also sponsored several giveaways.

Our posts shared data from CYC's consumer research, including the fact that of the 3,100-plus crocheters and knitters who participated, 85 percent reported that these crafts reduced stress and 68 percent said they improved their mood. We also created images suggesting ideal times to pick up these crafts, such as when you are with friends, home watching TV or on your lunch hour at work. With every post, we engaged our audience in comments and with calls to action. We made a special video about the de-stressing benefits of knitting, interviewing avid knitters who have felt the benefits firsthand. But the most fun component was the Lemon Stress Ball designed by Twinkie Chan.

As you may know, Chan is a master at translating food items into crochet. (Her whimsical designs include ice pops, carrot sticks, cupcakes, pizza and more.) But she hit on a bit of genius by combining the idea of stress balls with lemons.

When we asked for her help, she came back to us with the phrase "When life gives you lemons..." The many layers of the reference were a perfect fit. Squeeze a stress ball to reduce stress, squeeze a lemon to yield lemonade—so why not stitch that lemon to begin with? Chan contributed patterns for lemons in both knit and crochet, and she also completed a how-to-crochet video to go with the lemon.

The posts, the project, the images and a video netted big returns for our initiative. Our Facebook "likes" jumped 12 percent, to 12,704; Instagram followers grew from 40 to 770; and YouTube subscribers to CYC's channel increased 27 percent, with more than 4,300 views of the stress video alone. Twitter and Pinterest followers also increased. CYC plans to continue its health/wellness campaign to broaden the reach of the industry and engage new consumers. Find out more about our ongoing efforts at [craftyarncouncil.com/health](http://craftyarncouncil.com/health) and join the conversation on our Facebook page, [facebook/craftyarn council](https://facebook.com/craftyarncouncil).

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

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## Bundled Up

**R**avelry's new Bundles feature offers a new way for our users to organize their Ravelry pages. It allows you to create organized groupings of anything you can add to your favorites on Ravelry: patterns, projects, yarns, stashed items, forum posts, ads and more. You can create bundles for your personal Ravelry notebook, your Ravelry group or (if you are a designer) on your designer page. We are developing ways to discover and highlight Bundles created by users throughout the site.

As with all Ravelry features, yarn store owners are using Bundles to share what is happening in their shops with the communities they've cultivated online. You can set up a Bundle for your shop in your shop's group (just click on the "create bundles" button on the Bundles tab on your main group page) or on your shop's Ravelry profile by adding an item to your Ravelry favorites and then clicking on the option to create a Bundle from there. You can also select or update Bundles later and change the cover image by editing them inside your favorites or

from your group's Bundles tab. Ravelers are making Bundles to organize patterns and projects in their favorites by category or theme, create groupings of pure inspiration and even as wish lists. Shop owners can do all that and more. A few shop-specific ideas for Ravelry Bundles include:

**Customer Project Gallery:** Create an online showcase to highlight your customers' Ravelry projects and show off the beautiful things being made in your shop.

**Showcase Shop Exclusives:** Use Bundles as an online catalog, grouping together patterns or yarn colorways that were designed exclusively for your store.

**Highlight Shop Samples:** Virtually share your shop's samples with a Bundle that includes the pattern and yarn you used for the sample together with the Ravelry project for the finished object.

**Trunk Shows, Events and Sales:** If you'll be hosting a trunk show or special sales event, bundle the patterns as well as the yarns fea-

tured to build excitement.

**Promote Your Classes:** Bundle together projects and patterns for an upcoming class, along with the recommended yarns for students to purchase.

**Knit- or Crochet-Alongs:** Since you can add projects, yarns and patterns to the same Bundle, the feature can be a great way to show off customer creations made during a shop knit- or crochet-along. Group the featured patterns together with the yarns they purchased from you and the finished participant projects.

All of these shop-centric Bundle options work equally well created through the Bundles tab of your Ravelry group or as a personal Bundle in the favorites section of your shop account, so feel free to set them up using whichever option works best for your shop. We hope you love using the Bundles feature to organize and showcase all kind of special groupings of yarny goodness. If you have questions or suggestions, please let us know in the For the Love of Ravelry forum.

For more information about In-Store Pattern Sales and other Ravelry services for local yarn shops, please visit [ravelry.com/yarnshops](http://ravelry.com/yarnshops).

# Clover

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# Screen Time

BY TARA SWIGER

## Ways to incorporate social media into your days.

Connecting with clients on social media strengthens the loyalty of current customers and introduces your shop to new ones, and doing so can be easy, fast and fun. According to the Pew Research Center, 76 percent of women use social media regularly and 52 percent of adults use more than one social media tool. So your customers are out there, waiting to hear from you. But how do you find the time for it?

The solution is to keep it simple: Make a plan for how and when you'll use social media, schedule it into your workday, and make sharing a part of your normal workflow.

### Make a Plan

First of all, determine which social media tools you'll use, how often you'll use them, and the kind of content you'll be sharing. Barbra Pushies of the Yarnover Truck in southern California decided to schedule posts because "having things pre-scheduled saves me a ton of time and lets me focus on other things." Making these decisions ahead of

best for his shop: "We definitely hear from our regulars about Facebook, and we get messages at least once a month asking questions. Tourists also tell us they saw us on Facebook, so we know it's a useful tool." Choose the tools that highlight what your business does best. If you've got gorgeous new products coming in, show them off with Instagram. If you host weekly events, advertise them on your Facebook page, which will allow your customers to RSVP (and invite their friends). Consider using Twitter for interactions with customers.

Next, plan for how often you'll use each tool. Will you post a new picture to Instagram once a day and share something on your Facebook wall twice a day? When will you add upcoming events? How often will you share a new blog post or newsletter? Create a schedule for yourself.

Now that you've decided which tools to use and how many posts you'll make in a week, think through what you'll share. Always keep your customers in mind. What do they want to see? What kinds of stories, pictures and links will interest them? You don't have to generate all of the content out of your own head. Share your customers' pictures and projects, link to stories you've found

your posts. For Barbra Pushies, "Social media is important to our business, so I make it the first thing I do every day." You can use software to schedule your posts throughout the week [see sidebar], so you only need to spend time thinking of new content once or twice a week. I like to do this Monday morning, after I make my plan for the week, but you can plan to do it during any traditionally slow time. You can also schedule messages as soon as you plan an event. When you finalize your class calendar for the month, load tweets and Facebook posts to roll out from now until the class takes place. The important thing is to give this a place on your calendar, so it's sure to get done and you're not rushing around at the last minute.

Remember to schedule time for replying to any comments your followers leave. You may not have time for every reply, especially as your audience grows, but you should answer every relevant question about your shop. If someone wants to know when you're open or if you carry a specific yarn, your social media tool is serving as customer support. You wouldn't leave someone hanging on the phone for an hour, so don't make them wait too long to get a response on social media. Schedule a few times throughout the day to check for questions and answer them.

## Tools to help you schedule your social media posts

**Buffer:** An app and a browser plug-in, this tool lets you compose a quick social media message from any page you want to share, quickly. It integrates with iPhones and iPads, so you can send to Buffer as easily as you send a page to email.

**CoSchedule:** A Wordpress plug-in that shows up at the bottom of your blog post editing screen, so that you schedule social media posts about your blog post. Be sure to schedule more than one.

**Edgar:** A tool that lets you schedule posts more than once. You can create a queue that will re-share content at different times—allowing those who may have missed it earlier in the day to still see it. Barbra Pushies recommends this tool: "Edgar has been a lifesaver for scheduling out posts."

**Latergram.me:** An app that sets reminders to post Instagram posts you've already created. (It will not post them for you.)

**ScheduGram:** A web-based service that allows you to upload pictures, filter them, create posts and then schedule those posts.

**ViralTag:** A service that integrates with many storage solutions (Dropbox, Google Drive) to schedule Pinterest post.

### Make It Part of Your Flow

One easy way to make time for social media is to use the tools as you're going about your daily work. When you get a new shipment of yarn, snap a picture and post it immediately. When a customer comes in with a newly finished project, ask her if you can take a picture to share (include her username as well). When a class begins (and ends), take a photo of the students and ask them to share their own pictures as well. These off-the-cuff posts can fit around your scheduled, pre-planned content. By combining the two, you'll know your pre-scheduled content still has you covered if you get very busy, but you get the benefit of sharing things in real time—and perhaps pull in a few customers who want to check out that just-opened shipment of yarn.

With a schedule and a plan for incorporating social media into your daily workflow, connecting with your customers online will become one of the best parts of your day.

**Tara Swiger** is the author of *Market Yourself*, a system for creating a marketing plan for your creative business. Get a free Resource Guide with more great scheduling tools plus tips when you sign up at [TaraSwiger.com](http://TaraSwiger.com).

time will save you the stress of not knowing what to do and will ensure that you stay consistent.

You don't need to use every social media tool currently available. Instead, choose one or two that your customers are using the most. Not sure? Ask them. Rik Schell of Purl's Yarn Emporium in Asheville, North Carolina, discovered Facebook works

online, and post news from your suppliers or other local businesses. Remember that your role on social media isn't just to post stuff; it's also to connect with your customers. Re-share their posts, leave comments and introduce them to each other. And don't forget to reply to their questions.

The final step is to schedule a time for writing





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# Curate, Don't Overstimulate

BY HEATHER GOOCH

**T**ake a hard look at your aisles, end caps and display tables. Have you crammed in too much stock? Does the store look messy on days that see heavy traffic? Or does the opposite end of the spectrum apply? Are vignettes so artfully (and perhaps sparsely) displayed that customers are afraid to touch anything?

Yarn shop customers are creative, visual and tactile. As The National NeedleArts Association's most recent industry survey advises, it's important to "prepare a feast for their eyes" when merchandising your shop.

## Know Thy Customer

Pat Kirtland, owner of the Yarn Barn in Andersonville, Virginia, has been a yarn-shop owner for more than 45 years. An Ohio native whose original store was located in a tight-knit rural community, she built a reputation for running a place that was likely to have everything her customers wanted and little that they didn't. "In Ohio, I knew all of my customers and their knitting styles," she says.

In fact, Kirtland says, any underperforming Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) in her first shop was likely the result of purchasing a product she liked personally, without taking the tastes of her core customers into account. "I didn't care whether it sold, as it was mine, *all mine*," she quips. "And if it didn't sell, I made a sample from it to boost yarn sales."

Kirtland relocated to Virginia in 1997, where she's found bricks-and-mortar yarn-shop ownership to be an altogether different experience. Her main competition here is Wal-Mart, whose yarn offerings are displayed on one side of one aisle. Kirtland gets a kick out of seeing the looks on the faces of first-time customers, many of whom are not used to seeing so much fiber in one place. A feast for their eyes, indeed.

"I don't think I'll ever have a completely clutter-free store, because my brain just doesn't work that way," she admits. "But on the other hand, I personally think I've survived this long because we are *not* a pristine store. People tell me all the time about being in stores where they're afraid someone will smack their hands if they touch anything."

In Cary, North Carolina, Rebecca Hart, owner of Warm 'n Fuzzy yarn shop, has gotten quite a different response to her shop, in which she aims to accumulate as little clutter as possible: "Customers regularly say to me, 'Wow, you've gotten so much more stock in, but the space

is still clear to walk through.'"

"One thing I notice," Hart says, "is that if yarn starts to look disheveled—a hank of yarn becomes untwisted or a ball has become a sloppy mess—it is much less likely to sell. Even if I were to take that ball and rewind it, and even if it were on clearance, it will not sell unless someone needs that last ball to match her project. Customers like their yarn to be new, even at a bargain price."

Kirtland ensures her shop is always clean, but she admits that on any given weekday, there might be a box or two of new yarn on the floor waiting to be unpacked. "The comments I get from my in-person customers are that they feel more at home," she says. "I even encourage children to handle

shop reorganizations since I've opened, but each time it feels as though I'm improving the space."

## An Ongoing Process

Pat Kirtland teases that the local fire department has a way of keeping the store layout on the straight and narrow, what with their habit of making impromptu inspections and requiring 30-inch-wide aisles. To maximize the space of shop, housed in a 225-year-old building, she goes vertical with her displays. "I have tall ceilings, and I place the models around the top of the shelving," she says. "I took out the top row of the original shelving so that neither I nor a customer has to climb to get to the yarn."

## Five Steps to Paring Down SKUs

On his blog, Bob "The Retail Doctor" Phipps details a five-step process for streamlining your Stock Keeping Unit inventory and thus adding profitability back into your shop:

1. Look at your inventory categories' sales figures, by month and by year-to-date.
2. Within each category, look at the bottom 20 percent.
3. Cancel all orders to replenish the bottom 20 percent.
4. Come up with a sale (or perhaps a kit, workshop, sample or class) to clear them out.
5. Use the money saved on not reordering to add to your Top 2 categories of merchandise.

Source: [RetailDoc.com/blog/skus](http://RetailDoc.com/blog/skus)

the yarn, as they are our future customers." And when Kirtland feels a tug of guilt over the clutter, she says it's important to remind herself that every box eventually will be put away.

## Review and Rework

Every time she's expanded the space in the two-and-a-half years she's owned Warm 'n Fuzzy, Rebecca Hart has taken the opportunity to tidy up, rearrange and review her shop layout. "I absolutely love doing this," she says. "I've added bookcases, rearranged them, squished or condensed yarn to make more space, and used baskets, pegboards, wall space, etc., to find more and more room—all while trying to keep clutter to a minimum."

Every time Hart gets a new order in, she rearranges the cubbies so that all of the yarn can be attractively displayed together. "Sometimes it feels like Tetris," she jokes. "I've done a few major

Hart notes that at her shop, the checkout counter can quickly become a catchall if it's not kept after on a regular basis. "It's like coming home at the end of the day and throwing your mail on the counter—the space just asks for clutter," she says.

In addition to daily tidying, Hart says keeping the store looking fresh is key: "Has that mannequin or that shelving unit been in the same place for years? Are you running out of space in one section of the shop but have empty shelves in another? Does your shop have an overall organization?"

Kirtland agrees, noting that each store needs to define its own personality: "We are all different, and it's rather boring to go into stores that are all laid out the same way. Isn't it more fun to discover something new when you turn the corner?"

Heather Gooch is a Cleveland-based writer. She focuses on the needlearts industry at her site, [PositiveYarn.com](http://PositiveYarn.com).



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# Don't Borrow Trouble

A primer on commercial lending. BY TOM SPERANZA

**M**ost businesses need to borrow money from a commercial lender from time to time. It may be tempting to whip out a credit card to meet your need for capital, but before you do, consider the pros and cons of bank financing.

## Go With the Flow

While certain operating expenses like rent, payroll and utilities come due every month, cash flow, particularly in the yarn industry, is highly variable—most of the yarn for cold-weather knitting must be ordered in summer, when customer traffic is generally lowest. A bank-issued line of credit can enable you to more easily manage the seasonality of sales by letting you borrow funds when sales are slow and repay the outstanding balance using the cash generated from the periods when yarn is flying out the door.

A typical line of credit is a revolving loan, similar in structure to a credit card: The borrower is given a maximum amount that can be borrowed, repaid and then reborrowed. Bank lines of credit are typically for an initial term of one year and will be renewed annually by your bank, assuming your business continues to thrive. Often a commercial line of credit will be required to be fully repaid (“zeroed-out” in banker speak) for at least a brief period of time during each annual term.

Lines of credit usually have a floating interest rate that’s tied to some external benchmark rate—for example, the prime rate plus 3 percent. The exact rate will depend on the bank’s assessment of risk, determined by the financial condition of your business and the quality of the collateral.

## Coming to Terms

Significant one-time purchases, or capital expenditures—acquiring a POS system, updating computers, renovating your sales floor, expanding your space to increase overall sales—are usually difficult to finance from normal cash flow. An otherwise healthy business that wants to kick-start its growth may turn to a bank for what is called a “capex loan.” Unlike lines of credit, which are usually granted and renewed on an annual basis and require only monthly payments of interest before they expire, loans for capital expenditures are typically structured more traditionally, as a term loan (over, say, three to seven years) with a fixed, not floating, interest rate and required monthly payments of principal. The theory behind capex

loans is that use of the loan proceeds (new equipment, store or plant upgrades) will benefit the borrower for a longer period of time, so it makes sense to spread out the repayment period over a longer period.

## Collateral Damage

The main difference between a credit card and a bank loan is collateral. You grant the lender a security interest in an asset (the collateral) that the bank can foreclose on and then sell if you fail to repay the loan. Outside a business setting, the collateral usually is part of the overall transaction—a car loan is secured by the car itself, for example. In theory, a commercial loan or line of credit can be secured exclusively by your business assets (store fixtures, plant equipment, inventory, accounts receivable), but banks will often find such assets insufficient.

Instead, banks will typically ask a small business owner to personally guarantee repayment of the loan and to provide security for the guarantee in another form—usually a mortgage on the owner’s house. For a bank to approve a commercial loan with a personal residence as collateral, you’ll need sufficient equity in your house. It’s possible to use other assets that you own as collateral for a bank loan, like a 401K account, a brokerage account that includes stock investments, or a life insurance policy with significant current cash value.

## Loan Document Pitfalls

Once you reach a deal with your banker on the basic terms, the bank will produce a commitment letter or term sheet outlining those terms and the various closing conditions. Common closing conditions include a list of specific loan documents, title and lien searches confirming that you actually own the collateral being offered, title insurance if a mortgage is involved, and business and/or personal financial statements.

For a small business loan, banks often use pre-printed forms. Make sure to read these documents carefully before you sign them. Commercial loan documents are not written in plain English, the way a standard car loan is, and the consumer protections created by state and federal laws for house and car loans do not apply. Your banker may suggest that you don’t really need a lawyer because the documents are “standard” or that the bank will refuse to negotiate their provisions in any significant way. Although all commercial loan documents have certain common elements, their terms can vary

wildly from bank to bank, and without studying them carefully (or engaging a lawyer) you may be overlooking unfavorable terms or passing by the chance to get a better deal. Even if the bank refuses to change its terms, you should only sign loan documents if you fully understand what’s included in them and make sure you comply with all the terms during the course of the loan.

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**Keep an eye out for the common traps contained in “standard” bank loan documents, such as:**

### No right to notice of default or cure periods.

**If you commit a default under your loan documents, you will want a requirement that the bank give you notice and an opportunity to cure the default. Many form loan documents omit these provisions.**

### Unreasonable reporting requirements.

**Most loan documents require periodic production of business and personal financial statements to keep the bank informed, but an obligation that financial statements be audited by an accounting firm may be overkill for a small business.**

### Vague events of default and/or unfair rights to terminate (and call) the loan.

**Beware of banks reserving the right to declare a default or call the loan if “the bank deems itself insecure” or “changes in law or federal reserve regulations” increase the cost of the loan to the bank.**

### Broad rights of the bank to interfere with the operations of the business even without an event of default.

**Loan documents provide that the bank has the right to step in to make certain decisions about the borrower’s business if the loan is in default (e.g., collect and negotiate accounts receivable; determine how proceeds of an insurance claim are to be used). Beware of provisions that permit the bank to get involved even prior to an event of default.**

---

Tom Speranza practices corporate and intellectual property law in Philadelphia.



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# RETAIL PROFILE

BY DARYL BROWER

Celebrating  
**10**  
Years

## LOOPS

Shelly Brander believes that the busier you are, the more you should knit. And Brander knows busy. For the past 10 years, she's been at the helm of Loops, a fabulously fashion-forward yarn shop in Tulsa, Oklahoma, while simultaneously juggling three kids (all of whom were under the age of 5 when she started the shop), two dogs and a successful ad agency, Branders, Inc. "Knitting is what keeps me sane," she says.

Brander picked up her first pair of needles at 16 and fell totally and instantly in love with the knitting process. The patterns and yarn selections at the shops, however, left her uninspired. "They were just kind of meh—itchy wools and acrylic baby blankets," she says. Still, she kept it up, knitting away as she launched a career in advertising, learning the ropes of copywriting, marketing, producing and branding, eventually opening Branders with her husband. She was still knitting and still having trouble finding something she really wanted to make when she got what she calls a "crazy hair." "I decided to open a yarn shop," she says.

So Brander wrote a business plan and set out to find a space. She found one, in a high-end shopping center. She thought Loops would be a perfect fit; the shopping center's owner did not. "He kept saying no," Brander recalls. So she made him a cashmere scarf, delivering it to his townhouse on Christmas Eve. "The day after New Year's, I had a lease," she says, laughing. But getting a storefront wasn't her biggest problem. "I didn't know anything about running a store," she admits. "I learned on the fly."

What she did know was branding. "That's something we did well from the beginning," she says. The store has a sleek, sophisticated and

instantly recognizable look, from the exterior signage and the streamlined displays of fiber and patterns to the website and the shop's car, a Mini Cooper completely covered in a stockinette-stitch decal. Obviously she learned the rest of the business well: Six years into the venture she opened a second shop, hoping to entice knitters from the other side of town. "At the time, the city was split in two by construction," she says. But running two stores was challenging—even for someone as driven as Brander. Last September she consolidated the dual shops into one, opening in a bigger, better space. "We're in our forever home now," she says.

Inside, it's easy to see why Brander wants to stay put. The space is stunning: open and airy, with inviting seating and artfully arranged collections of yarn and sample garments. A huge chandelier adds an upscale note, and the Hot Loops wall—a row of yarn-filled cubbies topped with photos and sample garments—puts the on-trend, effortless projects Loops customers crave front and center. "The pattern and all you need to make it are in one spot, so you can walk in and find your project quickly," Brander explains.

Looks aren't everything, of course. Brander believes that walking into the store should be the best part of her customers' day, and she works hard to facilitate that. "I tell customers, 'It's your awesome time,'" she says. And awesome it is. There's the yarn, "delicious" fibers from Blue Heron, Mrs. Crosby, Mirasol and more; original designs created by her staff of 18, skilled and personable professionals whom Brander refers to as her Loops Troops; and a healthy roster of classes. The latter is extensive, and Brander revamps the offerings monthly. She's also lowered the class fee and made the structure more free-form, selling punch cards so customers can drop in when the urge hits them. "It's not a moneymaker," she says of the instruction, "but it keeps the energy level up, keeps customers excited about making things and keeps them coming to the store."

Loops Scoop, the store's e-newsletter, also

keeps them coming in. It has a healthy list and a high open rate, which Brander attributes to careful curation of hot projects and yarns, tie-ins to store trends and runway looks, and interviews with designers. The style is light and engaging, and, like the shop's blog, visually appealing. "It makes readers feel a part of something," she says of the newsletter. She's equally committed to giving knitters who can't make it to the shop the same personalized experience. The Loops Club, a monthly knit-along, mails members an original knitting kit each month and gives them access to Loops instructors and in-store support by way of email, Instagram, a private Ravelry page and more. Five hundred knitters signed up for the first club; a second is now in the works.

Other yarn shops have come and gone since Loops first opened in 2005. It's not something Brander worries about. "I used to watch what other shops were doing, but now I think collaboration is better. Stores need to support each other," she says. "Whether it's [happening] across town or across the country, teaching new people to knit is good for me. Those new knitters are eventually going to find us."

And, thanks to Loops, Brander has finally found those knitwear designs she craved as a teen. "Our customers, our staff—we all inspire each other," she says. "It's so affirming."

### Loops

6034 South Yale Avenue  
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[www.loopsknitting.com](http://www.loopsknitting.com)

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**Square footage:** 3,000

**Staff:** 18

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The background of the Knitter's Pride advertisement features a clear glass bowl filled with several colorful, marbled knitting needles. The needles have various patterns and colors, including green, red, blue, and purple. The bowl is set against a soft, out-of-focus background.

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# COMPANY PROFILE

## ChiaoGoo

Needles for the “highly skillful and crafty.” By MARYAM SIDDIQI

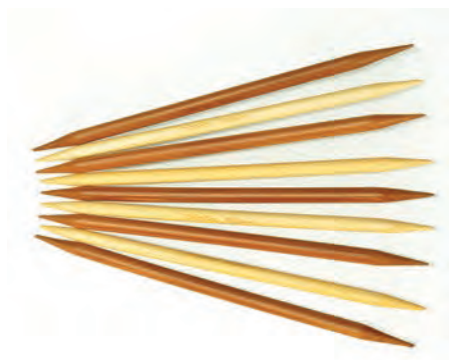


It comes as no surprise to ChiaoGoo that there's some confusion about the pronunciation of the company's name. For the record, say “chow-goo” and you've essentially got it right. “People murder the name all the time, but the more we teach them how to say it, the more it will catch on,” says Juliana Mulcahy, ChiaoGoo's sales manager. “It means ‘highly skillful and crafty lady’ in Chinese,” she explains—an homage to founder Leon Zheng's mother, the inspiration for this premium knitting and crochet tools company. “She was a knitter and gave him guidance about what the products should be like. She was the needle tester,” Mulcahy says.

Zheng grew up in China, attended college at West Virginia University and completed a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, then went on to get a job at General Motors. In other words, not a knitter. It was only when he and his wife, Wendy Zhang, decided to launch a side business that ChiaoGoo was born. “He talked with his brothers, who are still in China, and they realized they had a natural resource in their backyard,” Mulcahy says. The Zheng family is based in Lin'an, the bamboo capital of China. They researched what they could do with the valuable resource so close at hand and, making the most of the Zheng matriarch's knowledge, started to manufacture and sell bamboo needles.

At the time of the company's launch, in May 2005, two other major brands were selling bam-

boo needles in the United States. “But,” Mulcahy says, “there were *only* two. And so the Zhengs felt they had a chance to break into the market.”



boo needles in the United States. “But,” Mulcahy says, “there were *only* two. And so the Zhengs felt they had a chance to break into the market.”

With Leon's brothers overseeing manufacturing in China, and Leon and Wendy taking on a sales role from their base in Troy, Michigan, the

company launched its products. Aside from the environmental features—bamboo is a hardy, renewable natural resource—the needles appeal particularly to novice knitters because, as Mulcahy explains, “they're not as slippery, so you don't have stitches dropping off the needles. And some people enjoy knitting with bamboo more because they're not as cold as metal.” Plus, she adds, “They don't make that metal noise, that click-clack, which can annoy people.”

Two years in, the company expanded its offerings to include those noisy stainless-steel needles, though not without some trial and error. “I'll be honest,” Mulcahy admits. “Our first line of stainless-steel circulars [didn't meet our specs] in terms of quality. But we have greatly improved them, and our Red Lace circular line is currently our bestseller.”

Sales of ChiaoGoo needles are now split evenly between bamboo and steel. “We sell directly to both distributors and retailers around the world”—everywhere from Canada to Japan, Australia to Amsterdam, Israel to Brazil.

ChiaoGoo remains a lean operation: Aside from the two founders and Mulcahy, the company has only one other employee, so it often relies on customer inquiries to spur product development: When someone asks if they have a particular needle or if they've ever thought about carrying a model, the creative process begins.

“We rely a lot on our knitting friends and our representatives. They're our source of knowledge in terms of product development,” Mulcahy says. Once a decision is made, product evolution is an efficient process. “It's easy for us to introduce a new product because we are in touch with our manufacturing manager, Leon's brother, often,” Mulcahy says. “It's easy to communicate with them. They know what we need, what we want. So we can add a new product fairly quickly—I think quicker than most.”

In her eight years as sales manager, Mulcahy has seen certain trends go out of favor, only to cycle around again. Large single points are one such example. “Eight or so years ago, chunky yarns were very popular, and needle manufacturers were having a hard time keeping up with demand. Leon saw this as an opportunity,” she says, making a variety of large-size single points available. Mulcahy notes that particular interest in those sizes is once again increasing. “It all

**Address:** 2160 Orpington Drive, Troy, Michigan 48083

**Employees:** 4

**Fun Fact:** When Leon Zheng and Wendy Zhang founded the company in 2005, they were working out of the basement of their house. “They had boxes full of knitting needles; their warehouse was their garage,” Juliana Mulcahy explains. Eventually, the business took over the house, and the Zhengs bought another house to live in. It was only in June 2013 that the company moved into an official commercial space.

depends on the yarn that's popular at any given time,” she says.

The company also offers a small line of specialty needles with designs that are heat-transferred onto the bamboo so they won't come off on yarn or clothing. “Those are just a few of the fun things we wanted to bring in, something to catch people's eye,” Mulcahy explains. The “I Love Knitting!” model—needles with cats motifs and painted beads—is meant to inspire children to knit. “We thought, Who wouldn't want to knit with needles with polka-dot cats on them? But we've found that a lot of adults love knitting with them as well,” Mulcahy says.

And six years ago, ChiaoGoo created their Find the Cure single-point needles. “We were trying to think of something different to do with a needle, and it happened to be October—Breast Cancer Awareness month. We wanted something that was geared toward finding a cure, because unfortunately everybody knows someone who has or has dealt with breast cancer,” Mulcahy says. The needles have a pink miracle bead on the cap; the company donates a percentage of those sales to the organization Living Beyond Breast Cancer.

ChiaoGoo celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, and to commemorate the event, the company is hosting several giveaways on its Facebook and Ravelry pages. It's been a busy 10 years—so much so that Zheng has taken a leave of absence from GM and is working for ChiaoGoo full-time now. “We have grown that much,” Mulcahy says.



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# I knit, therefore I can

## The science behind knitting and psychological health.

By Carrie Barron, M.D.



"And now, when with each piece  
of handwork I do, I connect with the  
centuries of women who cultivated  
their inner lives and expressed them  
through the humble works of their  
hands."

—Susan Gordon Lydon, in  
*The Knitting Sutra: Craft as a  
Spiritual Practice*



## Years ago,

I came upon the book *Poems of Color: Knitting in the Bohus Tradition and the Women Who Drove This Swedish Cottage Industry*, by Wendy Keele. At age 17, as an exchange student in Sweden and a novice knitter, I was entranced by the array of hand-knit sweaters. As I thumbed through the book, the patterns stirred, but the story of Emma Jacobsson, creator of a knitting company, was the true lure. This woman, who lived from 1883–1977, achieved greatness as an artist, knitter, entrepreneur and social servant after being treated by Sigmund Freud.

Emma's outcome is one we therapists hope for—the emergence of an authentic, empowered, creative self. Born in Austria to an established glovemaking and his wife, Emma wanted to study botany at the university, much to her father's displeasure; he believed it was best that she continue in a "feminine" field. Emma did not see the arts as an adequate means of self-support.

Their conflict led her father to call his friend Freud for a consultation. Emma—smart, tempestuous, perfectionistic and volatile—was an apparent interpersonal challenge. Freud said, "She is a very strong personality that is not easily influenced, and she should be allowed to follow the course of her choice."

That course led her to work at a botanical institute in Germany, where she met and married a Swedish philosophy student named Malte Jacobsson. In 1912 they married and relocated to Bohuslan, Sweden, so Malte could take a position as a professor. In a few years he became governor. Tradition dictated that Emma accept wifely duties, so she relinquished her academic work. Ironically, it was because of this role that she found a source of self-support through the arts, via her company, Bohus Stickning (Bohus Knitting).

How did it begin? In 1937, a group of stonecutter wives came to her because work for their husbands was scarce. Their suffering families needed income. Emma decided to start a knitting company that would supply socks, gloves and ornaments created by the women for the locals. Because the products were useful and finely rendered, they sold well.

These innovative, able and artistic women moved on to high-end sweaters with original patterns, and the company flourished. Emma's art training helped her critique the work, and her perfectionism demanded quality in design, execution and materials. She insisted that the women leave their homes for a week to attend retreats, where they would undergo training and hone their technique—rare for women at the time. The highly successful

Bohus Stickning company operated from 1939–1969.

It would be interesting to know when Emma first learned to knit. Research suggests that kids who master hand-based skills have a better chance at developing self-esteem and finding success—practically, emotionally and intellectually. Emma turned her limitations (volatility) to strengths (intense drive) and streamlined her artistry, practicality and compassion into a tour-de-force knitting company.

Handmade pieces conjure a rich inner feeling. Colors, texture, imperfections, the wool scent, clicking needles and rhythmic hand movements stimulate the senses. Whether you create or just behold it, the homespun piece catalyzes mind, imagination and mood. Let's talk about the psychological, physical, practical and intellectual benefits of knitting and crocheting.

### Psychological Health

Scientific studies show that knitting and crocheting have real psychological benefits.

## Repetitive motor activity boosts serotonin, a neurotransmitter that mitigates against depression and anxiety.

Researchers including Harvard cardiologist Dr. Herbert Benson, author of *The Relaxation Response*, found that knitting lowers pulse, blood pressure and stress. Knitting can keep the muscles and ligaments of the hands in shape according Dr. Alton Barron, a hand surgeon and coauthor of my book *The Creativity Cure*. (He's also my husband.) Neuroscientist Dr. Kelly Lambert demonstrates in her book *Lifting Depression* that meaningful hand use elevates mood. "Meaningful" can mean anything from tending to one's home to knitting a sweater.

Recent research also suggests that knitting may even be used as a treatment for the anxiety that surrounds eating disorders [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19367130], and Princeton University psychologist and researcher Dr. Barry Jacobs found that repetitive motor activity boosts serotonin, a neurotransmitter that

mitigates against depression and anxiety [psych.princeton.edu/psychology/research/jacobs/publications.php]. Those studies were not done on humans, but one might extrapolate.

There are additional advantages to knitting as far as mental health is concerned, when viewed through the six "mature defenses," or qualities of mental health, as described in the classic Kaplan & Sadock text *Synopsis of Psychiatry*. I find that three of these healthy modes of living in particular manifest in knitting: altruism, anticipation and sublimation.

When we knit, the item we're making is often intended as a gift for a loved one or a person in need—this is *altruism*. I myself received thoughtful hand-knit gifts in honor of my mother's love of wool hats after she died, and charity organizations that accept handmade items are thriving on knitters' and crocheters' generosity.

Knitting involves selecting, planning, preparing, managing time and organizing a process for a desired outcome. This is *anticipation*. Anticipation implies self-mastery, discipline, focus and a proactive mind. If one is too reactive—pulled hither and yon, yarns slipping and balls rolling—stress ensues and one can feel frayed. Anticipation is a healthy form of taking control.

The third quality is *sublimation*, which is about turning raw to refined, primitive to product, instinct to realization, or, as knitters and crocheters do, strands to a sweater. Channeling agita, focusing energy, winding skeins, purling mittens and binding final rows leads to pride, satisfaction and a sense of empowerment. As psychologist Sonya Lyubormirsky said in her book *The How of Happiness*, "Find a happy person and you will find a project." Finished projects are a form of sublimation, but sometimes sublimation is just about transforming raw talent to real skill. In that sense it is about owning a personal quality rather than producing a product.

### Positive Mind States and Flow

Psychologists talk about positive mind states, and many of them are conjured by the kind of handwork that knitters and crocheters take part in—things like daydreaming, spontaneous thought, quiet mind, being in the present, sense of purpose, distraction, goal-oriented process, feeling of effectiveness, sense of control, creativity, and immersion and flow. Daydreaming elevates mood and boosts brain capacity. University of New Mexico researcher Dr. Rex Jung discovered that when the mind wanders along deviant paths, new neural circuitry arises. When we knit and the movement becomes second nature, the mind slips into pleasing, unplanned (continued on page 38)



places. Similarly, scientist and surgeon Dr. Charles Limb demonstrated that improvisational thought stimulates brain pleasure centers. Spontaneous ideation for adults provides joys that are reminiscent of spontaneous play for children.

The crafter's "quiet mind" conjures calm inner states and creative thought. In her book *Quiet*, Susan Cain shows the value of the quiet mind for productivity, innovation and peace. Peace is also brought on by the state of "being in the present," a tenet of Eastern philosophy and a requisite of knitting and crocheting. Yoga and meditation require a present focus that abates anxiety and depression, and those practices are considered valid treatments for these ailments. One can deduce that knitting delivers a similar mind-set and result. But even as knitting can bring on peace with being in the present, it can also offer distraction from troubling circumstances or offer a sense of control that combats helplessness. Studies have shown that routine is psychologically protective in trying times. My former psychoanalytic professor Dr. Richard Druss, who specialized in treatment of medically ill patients, shared this with me when I had a client who was dealing with a debilitating illness.

Knitting provides a goal or a sense of purpose because it is a project with a beginning, middle and end. The poet Goethe wrote, "Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic to it. Begin it now." When you begin your task, the pulse quickens and your mind gets organized. And of course, one of the results of that is the feeling of effectiveness—its step-by-step nature feeds into that feeling.

Once the technique is mastered, knitting allows for immersion and flow. During flow, a peak human experience, time falls away and euphoric moments emerge. Flow follows from absorption in a desired task. This mind-state was first described by psychologist, researcher and writer Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi [[www.ted.com/talks/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_on\\_flow?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow?language=en)].

Finding the personal habit or hobby that creates flow can be the secret to a satisfying life. Creative action elicits flow. As pediatrician and psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott said, "It is creative appreciation more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living."

## Education and Intellectual Prowess

There are myriad benefits to knitting as far as psychological health for adults is concerned, but there is another, more nuanced, advantage to knitting, especially in children: Knitting and crocheting actually foster cognitive development and can be the basis of a solid education.

Swiss psychologist Dr. Jean Piaget outlined the stages of cognitive development. Optimal intellectual capacity depends on successful management of each phase. We will focus on the phase of Concrete Operations as it applies to knitting and crocheting. Concrete Operations occurs at ages 7 through 11, and it involves learning in concrete rather than abstract ways—handling objects and mastering basic skills rather than playing with ideas.

When concrete thinking is the biological dictate, it is best to honor a concrete learning method for optimal intellectual results. Children in this stage only solve problems that apply to actual (concrete) objects or events, and not abstract concepts or hypothetical tasks. In our current academic climate, many kids are pushed to abstract or deductive thought before they are biologically able, and this can defeat the intellectual purpose. Grappling with problems for which you are not organically

positioned can foster a feeling of defeat and subsequent avoidance or inhibition—it can shut a child/mind down.

Mastering one phase prepares you for the next, more advanced, one. Cementing hand-based skills primes the mind for future cerebral challenges, as well as for building character traits. Learning to tolerate a prolonged process via making things teaches delayed gratification, which is also a predictor of life success. Delayed gratification was explored in the now-infamous Stanford Marshmallow Test, in which children were given the option of eating one marshmallow now or two marshmallows if they waited up to 20 minutes.

It may seem paradoxical that making things at age 8 leads to greater cerebral faculty at 18, but psychology researchers Robert and Michele Root Bernstein studied award-winning scientists and found that the common thread was childhood hobbies that involved tinkering. Though per-

haps parents may feel anxious if their child is knitting rather than solving math problems, it turns out that knitting might just be the best basis for a career in mathematics.

Other thought leaders have studied how manual action breeds cognitive prowess. In his book *Frames of Mind*, Harvard Education professor Howard Gardner outlined nine different forms of intelligence: musical, verbal, logical, visual, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential and bodily kinesthetic.

Knitting, of course, falls into the bodily kinesthetic category. We all possess each form of intelligence to greater or lesser degrees; identifying the best form for a given person can determine whether they flourish or fail. Some people use the body to move through, understand and solve a problem. They think best with the body.

A study by an education research company concurs that hands-on projects influence cognitive capacity. When physical learning was integrated into lessons, children were more curious and engaged. Here are the findings: 90% of teachers said that hands-on projects help students understand basic ideas as well as broader concepts; 85% of the teachers said that students work cooperatively on hand-

crafted projects; 82% of teachers said that handcraft projects help their students apply information in new or different situations; 54% of teachers said this approach is particularly well suited for students who learned more effectively in nontraditional approaches—visual or kinesthetic learners, slow readers or writers and non-native English speakers, for instance. [[www.craftyarncouncil.com/classbenefits.html](http://www.craftyarncouncil.com/classbenefits.html)]

## Knitting and Self-Esteem

Erik Erikson, psychoanalytic researcher, clinician and Harvard professor, outlined eight stages of the life cycle. Of particular interest to those discussing knitting is the "industry versus inferiority" phase, which occurs between ages 5 through 12. Like Piaget, Erikson found that kids who master concrete skills in this phase are set for a robust future. They are less likely to feel inferior and more likely to feel competent. He wrote, "Children are at the stage (aged 5 to 12 yrs) where they make things on their own. The child's peer group will become a major source of the child's self-esteem. The child now feels the need to win approval by demonstrating specific competencies that are valued by society, and begins to develop a sense of pride in his accomplishments. If children

**Though perhaps parents feel anxious if their child is knitting rather than solving math problems, it turns out that knitting might just be the best basis for a career in mathematics.**





are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel industrious and confident in their ability to achieve goals. If this initiative is not encouraged—if it is restricted—then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his potential. Some failure may be necessary so that the child can develop some modesty. Yet again, a balance between competence and modesty is necessary. Success in this stage will lead to the virtue of competence.”

My friend and colleague Lynn Lutomski, director of the Irvington, New York, Children’s Center for school-aged children, is concerned about how play has become a “four-letter word” and how there is too much emphasis on perfect performance rather than a learning process. “Our program runs a knitting club,” she says, “where boys and girls ages 5 to 13 have the opportunity to knit while sitting around a table, chatting about anything that comes to mind. Each child works on a blanket, a sweater or a personal masterpiece. Each creation is loaded with holes, dropped stitches, repairs and imperfections—a glorious reminder of childhood. Each stitch represents personal style, accomplishment and growth.”

### Crafting as a Human Need

Just as the Arts and Crafts movement followed the Industrial Revolution, the Do-It-Yourself movement surged after the technical revolution. Why pay \$120 to make a sweater when you can buy one for \$20? Because meaningful hand use, deep process and concrete outcome, five-sense experience, and “Look Ma, I did it myself” are high points of the human condition. They offer the unique and precious pleasure of an autonomous act. We used to need to make for practical reasons. Now we need to for psychological reasons.

As much as we love tech for connecting, researching and quick results, the pace is fast, the messages mount and the stress rises. Keeping up can feel like an inhumane demand, yet not keeping up is risky for many people. Speed can be a form of oppression. Some people spend all waking and sleeping hours with a device in hand. We can become physiologically addicted to the ping. We cannot let go, yet interrupted sleep and overstimulation can cause anxiety, depression and stress. Perhaps relinquishing devices and picking up needles for a time each day can enhance health. So much of well-being is about balance. So much emerges from stillness, quiet and moving hands.

*Carrie Barron, M.D., is a board-certified psychiatrist/psychoanalyst on the faculty of New York’s Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. She blogs at PsychologyToday.com and is co-author of The Creativity Cure: How to Build Happiness with Your Own Two Hands.*

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# Going to Press:

## A Look at Self-Publishing in the Fiber World

By Carol J. Sulcoski

**Ben Franklin did it; so did Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Walt Whitman. If you're considering joining the ranks of the self-published, read on for a look at today's indie book market.**



In 2001, a knitwear designer named Cat Bordhi self-published a booklet called *Socks Soar on Circular Needles*. From an outsider's standpoint, it appeared a long shot for the bestseller list: A mere 44 pages, the booklet was devoted to a seemingly arcane topic, a specific method for knitting small circumferences in the round. But the slim volume struck a chord, and *Socks Soar* went on to sell more than 100,000 copies and triggered a revolution in the knitting industry, demonstrating that not only was self-publishing a knitting-themed book possible; it could also be extremely profitable.

## Putting a Contract Out

When Julie Turjoman had an idea that she believed would make a fantastic knitting book, she took the traditional route: She prepared a book proposal and circulated it among several literary agents. "I soon got a call from one who found the topic exciting," Turjoman recalls. "She found me a publisher, and about a year later, *Brave New Knits* was born." Turjoman's approach was the standard one for many years: A designer with a good idea for a book could either contact a publisher directly by sending a query letter or written proposal or could approach a literary agent to see if the agent was willing to work on the designer's behalf to solicit offers from publishers.

Competition for landing a book deal was steep, and most ideas didn't make it past the original query. If a publisher seemed interested, however, or a literary agent agreed to take the proposal on, the designer next had to create an extensive written outline, providing representative patterns and sample text along with marketing and biographical information. Only then would the proposal end up in front of an actual acquisitions

tional publisher, describing her designs for hand-knit letters with faces, names and backstories. "They really liked my alphabet plushies," recalls Church, "and loved the idea of the stories I'd written about them. They also were pleased that I had a knitting blog, but they were looking for someone with an established following. They urged me to work on increasing my online presence and said they'd like to discuss publishing the book once I reached the numbers they were looking for." Church was heartened that the publisher liked her concept, but she was unwilling to put her idea on hold. "I saw this as a positive response," she reasoned. "So I went ahead and did it myself."

## Process and Product

Even authors who have no trouble securing a publishing contract sometimes turn to self-publishing. Julie Turjoman, for example, very happily accepted a contract with Rodale, a niche publisher seeking to expand its presence into hand-knitting titles, and describes her editor as "thorough, patient and really great about explaining unfamiliar publishing details to me." After *Brave New*

## Ka-ching (Getting Your Digits?)

It's tempting to look at extremely successful self-published authors—think Ysolda Teague and Cat Bordhi—and assume that one of the advantages of self-publishing is financial. Make sure you completely understand the costs and benefits of self-publishing compared with a traditional publishing contract. Things to keep in mind:

- Royalty rates vary among authors and publishers. A traditional publisher may offer between 6 and 12 percent of sales, subject to various exceptions and conditions, and the author does not have to pay any production costs; self-published authors keep whatever profit they make but are responsible for all costs.
- Most traditional publishing contracts offer an advance—a projected amount paid against future royalty earnings—before the book is published. Some contracts require the author to pay certain costs out of the advance—say, fees to contributing

designers, or the cost of tech editing—while others do not. Advance money helps compensate an author for any income foregone while working on the book. Self-published authors do not get any money until they start selling the actual book, and any income will have to offset any initial expenses.

- If you hire a literary agent to represent you, you'll be obliged to pay the agent a percentage of any royalties you receive in exchange for access to traditional publishers. Self-published authors, of course, need not worry about agency fees.
- A self-published author must front the entire cost of producing a book, including, at a minimum, photography, model fees, supplies, fees for tech editing and other professionals, design work and, if a print run is produced, printing costs. Hunter Hammersen estimates a budget of \$10,000 to \$15,000 is necessary for each book she self-publishes, whereas traditional publishers do not require their authors to pay production costs.

Self-publishing has come a long way since then. In the early days of the new millennium, when Bordhi was writing her booklet, self-publishing as it exists today simply wasn't possible. "The tools for doing it yourself didn't exist. You couldn't even use the Internet to Google 'self-publishing,'" Bordhi says, "because the Internet as we know it now didn't exist." Traditional publishers and readers were only vaguely familiar with the concept of vanity publishing—companies that would print a customer's book for a fee but provided little in the way of support or marketing—and looked down on books that weren't produced by traditional publishing houses.

The parties still had to hammer out numerous details like publication date, advance and royalty figures, and style issues. Should an agreement be reached, the author would turn to the work of actually writing the book, then wait months before holding the final product in her hands.

The appeal of self-publishing—getting right to work on a book and avoiding protracted negotiations, uncertainty and the passage of time—seems obvious. For designer Dani Church, who self-published *The Secret Lives of Letters*, the desire to strike while an idea was hot was the primary incentive for self-publishing. Church contacted a tradi-

*Knits* came out, however, Turjoman realized that although she was proud of the finished book, it wasn't exactly the one she'd set out to write. For her next book, she decided, she would contribute more of her own designs and maintain greater control over the finished product—everything from the choice of photographs to the weight of the paper used.

After attending a retreat for self-publishing authors sponsored by Cat Bordhi, Turjoman began working on *Knits That Breathe*, a collection of breezy women's garments designed for hot climates and wearers who always run warm. "I designed all the projects myself, chose all the yarns, decided



the book's color palette and wrote all the pattern drafts," Turjoman explains. "The whole look and feel of *KTB* was my vision, and it was important to me that the photo shoot location and styling convey the 'cool and breezy' sensibility of the projects. Knitter comments and reviews made it clear that this effort really resonated." Turjoman went on to self-publish another book, *A Head for Trouble*, confident that she "didn't need a mainstream publisher to interpret and package my work for the knitting public."

### Caveat Publisher

While the benefits of self-publishing are easy to appreciate, prospective authors do need to keep in mind the many traps that exist for the unwary. Hunter Hammersen, whose seventh self-published book, *Fine Things for Plain Occasions*, arrives this fall, jokes, "The best thing about self-publishing is that you get to make all the decisions, but oddly enough, the worst thing about self-publishing is also that you get to make all the decisions."

In addition to writing patterns and producing samples, a self-published author is responsible for producing high-quality photos; ensuring that patterns are tech-edited and clear; writing and proofreading copy and instructions; creating the book's layout; selecting a printer; planning and managing distribution; and marketing the book. Each of those tasks involves many layers of decisions amid a constantly changing—and expensive—landscape. To end up with usable, attractive photographs, for example, a self-published author must either have the technical knowledge to take her own photos or hire a photographer; select and hire models (or work with the photographer to do so); decide how to style each design, including the models' makeup, clothing and hairstyles; scout locations for photography shoots and obtain necessary permissions; do any retouching or reshooting; and provide the appropriate technical files to the printer or book designer. And each of those decisions impacts the final look and feel of the book in ways both subtle and obvious.

When faced with such a daunting to-do list, prospective authors need to be realistic about their strengths, as well as areas in which they might need help. Dani Church cautions, "All your hard work will do you no good if you don't generate a professional-looking, eye-catching book that has really good content. You have to recognize your limitations and get folks on board to help you achieve this." Church, who worked for many years as a video and film producer, had a cadre of friends to consult. She hired a graphic-designer friend to do the layout for the book and used professional tech editing as well as a content editor to minimize the chance of errors and create the most professional book possible.

Hunter Hammersen also relies on professionals to supplement her own talents, but exactly whom she hires varies by book. (She hired a graphic designer to lay out her earlier books, for instance, but has since learned how to do it herself.) Hammersen's advice: "Your books must be able to hold their own on the shelf next to the books published by the big guys, and the way you do that is to hire help when you need it. If in doubt, go with the more polished choice, even if it's more expensive. Don't do something yourself unless you are absolutely sure you can do it at a professional level."

### To Market, to Market

You've designed the patterns and hired the sample knitters; your professional photographer is done and the layout is letter-perfect. Now it's time to sit back and rake in the money, right? Not exactly. One of the most difficult aspects of self-publishing is the harsh realization that you as the author are entirely responsible for the marketing and distribution of your book. Traditional publishers have a vast network of resources for getting books onto retailers' shelves—sales reps, marketing teams and relationships with large book distributors, to name but a few. But self-published authors have to do everything themselves.

For some, the practical realities of book distribution are sobering. Take the distribution of print books, for example. Apart from their cost, which is substantial—Hammersen estimates that about half her total budget

for producing a book goes toward printing costs—you'll need to store all those books, then somehow get them into the hands of potential purchasers, including retailers, and access to traditional outlets for selling books can be blocked for those who self-publish. Even if your garage is big enough to hold a good-sized print run, you'll have to fulfill orders and ship out those books, which are heavy and thus expensive to mail. To avoid the practical difficulties of storing and shipping print copies, Dani Church opted for a print-on-demand publisher—Amazon.com's CreateSpace platform. Church sells a pdf version of her book via her own website and Ravelry.com, with print copies printed by CreateSpace as they are ordered through Amazon and shipped directly to the purchaser. Hammersen and Turjoman both opted to do print runs, working with well-known distributors to reach more buyers, including local yarn shops and larger book retailers.

Once you've solved the distribution question, you'll have to turn your attention to marketing, a huge and crucial part of a successful book. Shannon Okey, owner of Cooperative Press, notes, "Independent designers who have the most success with [self-publishing] share a few common traits: They don't release a book and just

expect it to sell itself. They have multiple activity streams to promote it, such as classes, stand-alone patterns, trunk shows, guild presentations, technique videos and social media activity, including blog or social media tours. They also reach out to other designers, knitting publications (from print to podcasts to online only) and previous customers. They make promoting their project a priority."

Not all designers have the industry connections to get their books into large-circulation magazines for review, teach classes nationwide or produce expert-quality videos to help reach potential buyers. Even those who do sometimes balk at the enormity of getting a self-published book on the shelves of an LYS, let alone a bookstore. Designer Brooke Nico reflects, "When I started thinking about doing a book, I knew that traditional publishing was the best choice for me. I wanted to concentrate my energies on those things I do best, which is design clothes and write good patterns, and let the experts focus on layout, marketing and sales. One of the reasons I chose this career path is the fact that I really love my work, and I want to enjoy every day of it, focusing on my own particular skills."

### E-book vs. Print?

One of the many decisions a self-published author must make is whether to produce an e-book only, print book only or both. For most self-published authors, a print run is the single biggest expense; by releasing a pdf version only, an author can cut costs in half or more. Many self-published authors report robust sales of e-books; Julie Turjoman estimates that e-books outsell her print books by a factor of at least two to one, but this is not the case for everyone. Other reasons in favor of going e-only: the cost of shipping books, particularly abroad; avoiding the need to store books and ship them to distributors or retailers; and eliminating the risk of being stuck with unsold print books.

That being said, many authors and publishers firmly believe that print books are necessary. Without a print book, certain promotional events—book signings, for instance—are impossible, and retailers who do not have the capacity to sell pdfs simply cannot sell the book to their customers. As Hunter Hammersen, who offers both print and electronic options, observes, "Many people really love paper books and want to have a physical object to hold."





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## WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Those of us who work with and love yarn often say that fiber is in our blood, but Warren Wheelock of Berroco may have more of a claim than others. His family has been in the industry since 1809; these days, he and his wife Caroline lead the yarn-focused business from its headquarters in Rhode Island. YMN's Erin Slonaker sat down with the Wheelocks to find out more.

**YMN: You are the sixth generation of Wheelocks to work in the textile industry. What's it like to be the guardian of such an august tradition?**

**WW:** It really makes the work experience more enriching. There's a certain comfort working in the same industry as my ancestors. One could argue that it's all the Wheelocks know how to do. Ironically, having family and legacy in a certain line of trade is now the exception, when it used to be the norm. I had the privilege of working with my parents, uncles and a first cousin—I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Now, though, there's just Caroline and me.

**YMN: Is there a plan in place for the next generation of Wheelocks to join the company?**

**WW:** The jury is out on that question. At the moment, our son is a math teacher for Teach for America and our daughter just graduated from college. Caroline and I run the business for ourselves, and I guess one could say that we would be open to the idea if either child expressed an interest. However, it's not an expectation.

**YMN: Why did you and Caroline reincorporate as Berroco to focus only on yarn? Was there something about that time or the public's interest in 1987 that spurred that decision?**

**WW:** No, we did not have any inside track or strategic reasons to focus on yarn. Truth be told, it's what we knew best, especially since Berroco had established itself as far back as 1979, the year I joined the company after college. We already understood that the

business can be cyclical, and we knew there would be both good times and hard times ahead—something that is true for most businesses.

**YMN: How big is the company today? What about the size feels "right" to you?**

**WW:** Our principal markets are the U.S. and Canada, though we have established a number of retail accounts in Europe as well. Our feeling is that one doesn't have to be the largest to enjoy and excel in this industry. We and our 20 employees have a hands-on work style. We don't want to drift from that work ethos, and so a small business approach is a good fit for us.

**YMN: I hear you enjoy developing new yarns. Why does that appeal to you?**

**WW:** Since I don't have a creative bone in my body with regards to fashion and design, the challenge of developing yarns from the technical side provides me a certain creative freedom. We develop many more yarns than we could ever purchase. Most just don't come out as expected. But once in a while, a few make it into the collections.

**YMN: Where do you seek inspiration for the yarns and their colors?**

**WW:** Now you should be talking with Caroline. She works with our in-house design team and creates color palettes that suit the market. Inspiration is looking both forward and backward. We have color services from Europe that tell us what's coming down the pike. But we also look back historically at what our retailers and their consumers have purchased.

**YMN: How have you seen the industry change over the years?**

**WW:** The market has become much more segmented over the years, both in terms of the suppliers and the customers. So it requires a company such as our own to have a much greater breadth and variety of brands and yarns within our collection to satisfy everyone's needs. However, that means that we have to carry more lines and more colors and develop more patterns—all of which require more investment. We think of ourselves as a kind of Ben and Jerry's of yarn. Whether you're looking for plain vanilla or rocky road, we've got a yarn to suit.

**YMN: What do you think is the most important factor for the industry's future viability? Are there ways you are positioning Berroco for continued longevity?**

**WW:** We have to help our bricks-and-mortar retailers be successful. They represent the front line to our



end consumer, and so we have to support them as best we can. Unlike 30 years ago, we now have the ability to communicate directly with the consumer via our website, e-newsletters and social media platforms. With the inspiration of our great design team, we hope we can help drive the consumers into the shops. The shop owners are our ambassadors, and we have to partner with them for our mutual success.

“ DEVELOPING NEW YARNS FASCINATES ME. ”

**YMN: Your design department is renowned. When did you start to focus your attention there—or has it always been a primary focus?**

**WW:** We've always had a focus on design within Berroco. I would say to everyone that we are a design company that happens to sell yarn. We've been very lucky over the years to employ talented design directors including Margery Winter and Norah Gaughan. And now we are very fortunate to have Amy Christoffers leading our design team.

**YMN: When you're not in the office, what do you like to do?**

**WW:** Both Caroline and I like to keep physically active. And so whether we're road bike riding, hiking, running or skiing, we seem to always find something that makes our muscles ache. We do escape many weekends throughout the year to the White Mountain National Forest, where we have a get-away and get to play.

**YMN: Do you knit English or Continental?**

**WW:** I can knit and purl. Caroline is an excellent knitter and knits mostly for herself and for gifts. Being natively French, she has a preference to knit Continental.



We want to let the needlearts community know  
that our company, Frog Tree Yarns,  
is closing its doors.

*We send our heartfelt thanks to:*

*... our son Jim for getting us involved with projects to support  
worthy artisans. This led to our becoming a yarn wholesaler.*

*... to the knitting community in general for all of your warm  
love, helpful guidance and kind support these many years.*

*... to all of our wonderful friends ... The shop owners and their  
staffs and the knitters who purchased our products.*

*... to the organizers of the trade shows and markets that bring  
our knitting community together in many parts of the country.*

*... to all of our wonderful, dedicated sales reps.*

*We wish all of you the very best as you continue to share  
the creativity, nurturing and togetherness  
of the needlearts community.*

*Tricia and Chet*

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