



Y A R N M A R K E T N E W S

## H+H COLOGNE

How (and why) the German trade show is luring North American companies

## CHAIN REACTION

Is crochet the best way to entice Millennial crafters?

## FULL STAFF

Can you afford to hire a new employee? Can you afford not to?

MAY 2018



I SKEIN,  
YOU SKEIN...

FREE COPY



# PLYMOUTH YARN DESIGN STUDIO

Presents Pattern #M106 Trickle Creek Pullover

## DK MERINO SUPERWASH COLLAGE

100% SUPERWASH FINE MERINO WOOL

Design by Meghan Jones



[WWW.PLYMOUTHYARN.COM](http://WWW.PLYMOUTHYARN.COM)







# eucalan<sup>®</sup>

DELICATE  
*wash*



lavender  
eucalyptus  
grapefruit  
unscented  
jasmine

*the spa treatment for your fine washables*

**eucalan.com**

## Changes



ROSE CALLAHAN

*As I write my editor's letter* this issue, Earth Day is approaching. I've been thinking a lot lately about my carbon footprint, and what I can do to reduce it. I cook a lot of my food from scratch; I live in Brooklyn, where I do not need or own a car; and, of course, I knit (and sew). As makers, I think we all understand this push to create instead of consume, and I'm thrilled at the effect this global movement is having at LYSes. It's serendipity that the first-ever Local Yarn Shop Day falls on the same weekend as Earth Day.

With that on my mind, I'm happy to tell you all of a significant change here at *Yarn Market News*. Going forward, the October and January issues will be digital only. The May/June issue, which we time to coincide with TNNA's summer show, will be our only print issue of the year. The magazine's format and style will stay exactly the same, except that you'll be reading the pages on the web, your phone or a tablet. We'll email you when an issue comes out, providing a link for you to access it (still for free).

In truth, the change to two digital issues a year is motivated by the bottom line: As advertising for our magazine shrinks, so too does our budget. But the greater benefits are ones that have me smiling, because it means less waste with all the same content. I hope that you'll find this change an easy one, and I invite feedback via email ([erin@yarnmarketnews.com](mailto:erin@yarnmarketnews.com)).

For now, enjoy this last mailing for the coming year. We've included features on the German handicraft and hobby trade show in Cologne, where more and more American companies are exhibiting, and crochet, the craft of choice for Millennials (and thus the future of the yarn business). We highlight Kelbourne Woolens, newly fully organic-certified, local yarn shop Westport Yarns in Connecticut, and Lisa Myers, former shop owner turned distributor of Manos yarns.



### on the cover

Ice cream on a hot summer day: What could be better? These fantastic multihued skeins of Knit One, Crochet Too's Ty-Dy, a 100% cotton worsted weight that comes in 19 colorways. [www.knitonecrochettoo.com](http://www.knitonecrochettoo.com)

Photograph by Marcus Tullis



Erin Slonaker, Editor in Chief



FOLLOW  
YARN MARKET NEWS  
ON FACEBOOK



# ROWAN



**Celebrating our  
40th anniversary  
with beautiful designs  
- from Rowan Yarns**

See us at TNNA  
Booths 342, 344,  
346, 348, 441

**Perinone**  
*by Zandra Rhodes*  
in Kidsilk Haze  
Knitting & Crochet  
Magazine 64

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





MAY 2018

## features

### 42 CHAIN REACTION

Unfazed by crochet's ugly-stepsister reputation among the unenlightened, Millennials are flocking to the craft in droves.  
By Daryl Brower

### 44 THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH?

Leslie Petrovski on the burgeoning appeal of H+H Cologne.



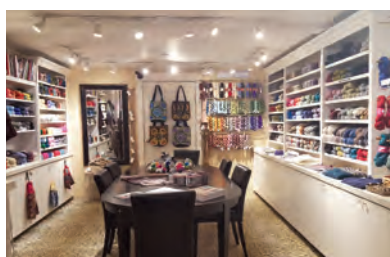
18

Smooth but hardy breed-specific wool yarns are enjoying their moment in the spotlight.



42

Local yarn stores are embracing Millennial crocheters, a boon to their bottom lines.



38

Staffers at Connecticut's Westport Yarns are integral to the growth and success of the shop.



8

An extra-long knitted scarf from the blockbuster movie *Black Panther* galvanizes the knitting community.



44

The H+H Cologne trade show is introducing North American companies to the European market.

## in every issue

- 2 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 8 MARKET REPORT
- 16 BOOK REVIEWS
- 18 YARN FORWARD
- 22 YARN GROUP
- 24 CRAFT YARN COUNCIL
- 25 SPINNING & WEAVING GROUP
- 26 ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
- 27 RAVELRY
- 28 KNITTING GUILD
- 29 CROCHET GUILD
- 30 SMART ONLINE
- 32 SMART MARKETING
- 34 SMART STAFFING
- 36 SMART EDUCATION
- 38 RETAIL PROFILE  
Westport Yarns
- 40 COMPANY PROFILE  
Kelbourne Woolens
- 48 CELEBRITY INTERVIEW  
Lisa Myers





# kelbourne woolens

---

*Yarns and patterns for those who love the craft as much as we do*

**Find us at TNNA in booth 1013!**



***New:* Kelbourne Woolens Scout**

100% wool in gorgeous heathered shades





Editorial Director  
TRISHA MALCOLM

Editor in Chief  
ERIN SLONAKER

Creative Director  
JOE VIOR

Managing Editor  
LESLIE A. BARBER

#### EDITORIAL

Contributing Editor LESLIE PETROVSKI

#### ART AND PRODUCTION

Graphic Designer DEBORAH GRISORIO

#### ADVERTISING

Director of Advertising Sales LORI HORAK  
(212) 937-2554; lori@sohopublishing.com

Advertising Associate KARIMA AMIR  
(212) 225-9011; karima@sohopublishing.com

#### EVENTS AND MARKETING

Events Director GABRIELLE ALD  
gabrielle@sohopublishing.com

Marketing Manager BETH RITTER  
beth@sohopublishing.com

Events Manager KARIMA AMIR  
karima@sohopublishing.com

#### SOHO PUBLISHING, LLC

President ART JOINNIDES  
Chief Operating Officer CARRIE KILMER  
Publisher DAVID JOINNIDES  
Controller ELAINE MOWBRAY

#### ADVISORY BOARD

HOLLY FLOYD, Bella Filati Luxury Yarns  
JANET AVILA, String Theory Yarn Company JOHN KOVAL, Churchmouse Yarns & Teas  
PEARL CHIN, Knitty City SUZANNE MIDDLEBROOKS, Hill Country Weavers  
KRISTINE PORRITT, LISA RUESCH, Cream City Yarn



Magazine Publishers of America

Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

Yarn Market News™ is a trademark of SoHo Publishing, LLC. YMN is published three times a year, in January, May and October, in the U.S. and Canada. Copyright © 2018 by SoHo Publishing, LLC, 104 West 27th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10001. No part of this book may be copied or reproduced by any means without written permission of the Publisher. Executive, publishing, editorial and advertising offices: 104 West 27th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10001.

#### HOW TO REACH US

TO SUBSCRIBE, CHANGE AN ADDRESS OR  
CANCEL A SUBSCRIPTION:  
visit [www.yarnmarketnews.com](http://www.yarnmarketnews.com)

EDITORIAL COMMENTS:  
e-mail [erin@yarnmarketnews.com](mailto:erin@yarnmarketnews.com)

Download the next issue of YMN in October.





**Uchi**



**Kaizen**



**Maki**

## *Papyrus: In the Conservatory*

An ebook featuring 6 garments to knit using silk and cotton blend, Papyrus



**UNIVERSAL YARN**  
[www.universalyarn.com](http://www.universalyarn.com)

Available exclusively in local yarn stores.



## The cover of Rowan magazine features a woman with long, dark, wavy hair and blue eyes, wearing a red and black striped cardigan. She is standing with her arms crossed, looking directly at the camera. The background is a light, textured wall. The title 'ROWAN' is at the top in large, red, serif capital letters. Below it, the text 'KNITTING &amp; CROCHET' and 'Magazine Number 64' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

In April, Rowan and its distributor, Sirdar USA, hosted three anniversary celebrations from coast to coast, treating retailers to overnight stays (the Endicott Estate in Dedham, Massachusetts; the Eaglewood Resort and Spa in Itasca, Illinois; and the Hotel Rose in Portland, Oregon), meals, goodie bags and presentations about the brand. "It was an opportunity for retailers to see the new line and preview [what we have in store for] the 40th anniversary," says Linda Pratt, Rowan's North American marketing consultant. "It's an investment, a way to reinforce the idea that Rowan is a vital brand for retail stores."

"For four decades, Rowan has been a yarn-industry leader, with beautiful natural-fiber yarns, timeless designs and inspiration," Pratt says. "As we start our 40th year in a changing marketplace, these core yarns and designs are as important to the hand-knitting market as they've ever been."

# THE GIFT OF KNITTING

"It was beyond horrible," Cheshire says. During that time, a friend dropped by with a bag with yarn, needles and a learn-to-knit book with the message, "You need something to keep your hands full until you can hold your baby." She was too ill to knit at the time, but the gesture touched Cheshire deeply, and six months later she reached into the bag and taught herself to knit.

The Tell Hands Story

You need something to keep your hands full until you can hold your baby

PLEASE LET ME BE THE FIRST TO PUNCH THE BEST PERSON WHO TELLS YOU EVERYTHING ABOUT THE PLEASANT

PEACE PLEASE

Knitting Instructions

Open Me

Cheshire, a campus minister, intentionally curated the boxes to be beautiful and inspirational. She chose Peace Fleece yarn and hand-painted needles in recognition of the brand's mission to foster peace through trade. (Peace Fleece currently combines wool purchased from Navajo growers with domestic fine wool to create its yarn, which is spun in Pennsylvania.) "I want every part to have meaning and heart, and every part to be

Cheshire offers the Full Hands boxes for \$35 retail through her Etsy shop, BFarmKnits (Bethany Farm Knits); she has created a wholesale program for retailers that includes special descriptive retail packaging and samples of each box project for display.

8 YMN



# WAKANDA FOREVER

▼ The now-famous shawl worn by Lupita Nyong'o in the film *Black Panther* owes its existence, in part, to Atlanta-area yarn shops.

Designed by **Jeff Gillies**, who works as a tailor and costume maker for the television and film industries, the multicolored wrap features four commercially available yarns: Noro's Silk Garden in colorway 430, Malabrigo Mechita in Hojas, Madelinetosh Dandelion in Shire, and Tosh Merino Light in Plaid Blanket. For guidance, Gillies received a color palette and inspirational photo from *Black Panther*'s costume designer, Ruth E. Carter, of a man standing next to his horse, his torso wrapped in a wide, long knitted scarf, randomly striped, each stripe a different yarn, color and stitch. The photo came with these instructions: "1) Don't copy it, use it for inspiration instead; 2) choose stitches that have a textural quality; and 3) keep the stitch size large."

Gillies, a machine knitter, started with stash yarns, but after fitting the piece and learning that the production team needed two or three finished shawls, shoppers were sent trolling Atlanta-area yarn shops for enough yarn in the right colors to finish the project. It turned out that the only yarns in town in the correct colorway were mostly fingering weight.



"We now needed double the amount originally thought," Gillies says. "As unmagical as it sounds, in the end the four yarns used for the scarf were chosen because they were the only ones available that met our required criteria. I usually don't tell people this part of the story because ever since the movie was released and the yarns were identified, they have achieved an almost mystical status, and who wants to stomp all over the mystical status of yarn?"

Based on requests Carter was fielding through her Twitter feed for information about the shawl, Gillies supplied a machine-knit pattern and posted it for free on Ravelry. He's since published a free hand-knitting pattern for it on Ravelry as well, calling it Nakia's Infinity Scarf.

"It wasn't until about an hour after I posted the pattern on Ravelry as a free download and my inbox started to fill up and overflow that I began to think this might be a little bigger than I realized," he confesses. "In fact, it took a few days of reading through the various forum posts to realize the excitement over the scarf had been building and gaining momentum ever since the release of the movie, and I'd been completely clueless about the whole thing."

## A WEBS/STRING PARTNERSHIP

The yarn retailer/maker **WEBS** of Northampton, Massachusetts, has acquired the New York-based yarn company **Tahki•Stacy Charles** and the Manhattan yarn shop **String**. The move gives **WEBS** three new yarn lines [which join its own **Valley Yarns**] and a retail outpost in New York City. "The yarn industry is changing rapidly, and the acquisition of **TSC** and **String** allows us to simultaneously be closer to our customers and our suppliers," explains **Steve Elkins**, who co-owns **WEBS** with his wife, **Kathy**.

**Stacy Charles**, who owned **TSC** and **String**, joins **WEBS** as brand

and creative manager for **Tahki Yarns**, **Stacy Charles Fine Yarns** and **String**. The sale will enable **Charles** to focus more on the **TSC** brands and the bricks-and-mortar store. "We will operate independently," he says, "but we will be part of a larger organization with infinitely more available resources."

"As we enter our 44th year at **WEBS**, **Tahki** enters its 50th," **Elkins** says. "We are so excited to add products like **Cotton Classic** and **Donegal Tweed** to our business. The possibilities with our collaborations are truly endless."



## SPONGE WORTHY

▼ You can wear it, sleep on it, and insulate your house with it. But have you ever thought about washing your dishes with wool? After working farmers' markets and on sheep ranches, **Marie Hoff** wanted to create a market for the coarse wool raised at California's **Stemple Creek Ranch**, one of the country's first farms with a carbon farm plan. Hoff had the Climate Beneficial wool processed into batts and comforters and sold them through her Etsy store, **Full Circle Wool**. Eventually, her attention

turned to sponges. "Everything about a sponge is gross," she declares. "I'm making all this effort by eating organic food from the farmers' market and then washing this disgusting synthetic material down the drain. It didn't make sense."

Inspired by a set of felt coasters, Hoff sent some of the **Stemple Creek Ranch** wool to a mill with a felting machine and then cut the resulting sheets into 5 x 5-inch squares. Her research and development efforts revealed that the "sponges" tighten up with use and shed a bit, but they do a fine job on dishes—even crusty lasagna pans. Because wool is anti-

microbial and antifungal, the wool sponges don't smell. Customers report the sponges last about one year, after which they can be composted. Hoff, who also runs the **Capella Grazing Project**—Hoff's herd of **Ouessant** sheep can be employed to graze vineyards and orchards—wholesales and retails her wool sponges, which are available at [www.etsy.com/shop/WoolGrown](http://www.etsy.com/shop/WoolGrown).





# MARKET REPORT

## ON POINT

▼ **Addi** has both broadened—and narrowed—the scope of knitting in the round with the introduction of FlexiFlips. Premiering in Germany as addi CraSyTrio to honor the inventor, German knitwear designer Sylvie Rasch, known as CraSy, the needles make it possible to knit small circumferences without having to use five double-points or employing other techniques. Each FlexiFlip set comes with three 7-inch dpns that bend in the middle, hinged by a 1-inch cord. Equipped with the same dual-tip design as the addi FlipStix, each FlexiFlip needle features one especially pointy tip (the addi Rocket tip) and one

that's blunter (the addi Turbo). Available in sizes 2 mm to 5 mm (roughly U.S. 0–8), the metal needles are packaged in handy storage tubes.

Skacel began distributing the needles last fall, and “they are taking the world by storm,” says Skacel’s publicity director, Katie Rempe, who says the needles regularly sell out. “We are getting product every two weeks, and stores want them as soon as we get them. Who would have guessed?” Rempe asks. “You never know what the next big thing will be.” To watch a video about how FlexiFlips work, visit [www.Skacelknitting.com/addi-Flexiflips](http://www.Skacelknitting.com/addi-Flexiflips).



## BEYOND BREED-SPECIFIC



Brooklyn Tweed, which has made a name for itself by putting American growers and manufacturers first in the creation of its yarns, is taking things to a new level with a series of not just breed-specific, but ranch-specific, single-clip yarns. Launched in April, the new yarn, Ranch 01, showcases Climate Beneficial Rambouillet from Bare Ranch in Surprise Valley, California. Climate Beneficial wool is grown on farms that draw down more carbon than they emit. Bare Ranch is implementing a long-range carbon plan with the potential over time to offset 6 to 9.3 times the ranch’s greenhouse gas emissions associated with wool production each year. The new yarn was dyed using plant dyes at Green Matters Natural Dye Company in Pennsylvania. Ranch 01 is the first of two new ranch-specific yarns Brooklyn Tweed plans to debut this spring. [www.brooklyntweed.com](http://www.brooklyntweed.com)



## KNIT-PURL CLOSURE

Knit-Purl, the Portland, Oregon, yarn shop and birthplace of Shibui Knits, closed in March after 13 years in business. Owner Darcy Cameron closed the shop to focus on the Shibui brand.



# MISSING YARN GALVANIZES COMMUNITY

On the morning of February 22, just a few hours before it was to pre-view at Stitches West, Lydia Christiansen and her husband discovered that the U-Haul filled with **Abundant Earth Fiber's** entire stock had been stolen. "The trailer was packed to the gills," Christiansen says. "It was like an entire yarn shop in the back of a trailer. We had no other inventory, and all the peripheral supplies for retailing were gone."

The couple had to show without a single skein of yarn to sell. At a coffee shop, they printed out photos that told the story of their small mill and their products, showing the connection between soil and sweaters. Though they didn't take orders or sell anything at the show, they signed people up for their newsletter and told their story, asking people to place orders online—and for patience. Pressed by well-wishers for other ways to give, the mill owners also posted a donation button on the company website. "The community has flooded us with support," she said. "It's been overwhelming."

Back home on March 19, a shop carrying locally made goods hosted a fundraiser for the Whidbey Island-based mill. Podcasters, bloggers and customers have also spread the word, and the Christiansens have seen waves of support spread across the United States, Europe and Australia. A few weeks after the incident, authorities recovered the missing trailer, but it was empty. Lydia posted on Instagram that her heart broke all over again after the U-Haul was discovered. "That people from all different points of view are reaching out to me, that we all care about something in common even though we're different, is an overwhelming feeling," she reflects. "That such a large number of people could be moved by a sense of loss and reach out with kind words and five bucks says incredible things about our community."

## SEASONAL STRING

BC Garn distributor **Kelbourne Woolens** is on pace to introduce four proprietary yarns (with pattern support), one at the beginning of each new season. Last winter, the company debuted Andorra (60% merino/20% highland wool/20% mohair). The spring 2018 equinox saw the premiere of Scout, a 100% worsted(ish) wool. The summer-solstice release will feature a yarn called Mojave, with a fourth scheduled for a fall rollout. For more details, visit [kelbournewoolens.com](http://kelbournewoolens.com).



## STAR POWER

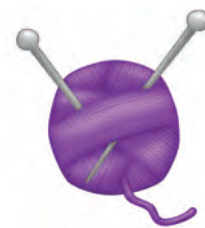


▼ **Krysten Ritter**, star of the Marvel Cinematic Universe series *Jessica Jones* and *The Defenders*, was on the talk show circuit in March, ostensibly promoting the second season of *Jessica Jones*. But she was also out there doing her bit to push her *Vogue Knitting* cover, her kit collab with We Are Knitters, and stitching in general. On *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, the silver-lurex-clad Ritter tried to teach the host to knit (he was not a natural) while also showing off her cover-girl status on VK. On the set of *Conan*, Ritter presented host Conan O'Brien with a bright orange hat she knit herself. "The show is really dark," she said to O'Brien, describing her Netflix series. "So to get out of the headspace, what's the opposite of *Jessica Jones*? Knitting!"

## BETTER THAN HEARTS AND SMILES

The digital world is readying itself for a seismic shift: A yarn ball emoji is rolling its way to devices later this year. Released as part of the 2018 Unicode Consortium's Emoji 11.0 list, the yarn ball is one of 157 new emojis that include more diversity all around, everything from male and female superheroes of different colors and new hair styles and colors (gray hair and bald!) to pluralistic supervillains. Sheep and goat emojis will be joined by llamas this year, and sewists will want to make note of the safety pin and thread inclusions. The addition of this fresh batch brings the total number of approved pictograms to 2,823.

Though many of us can



hardly wait to download the bagel, teddy bear and badger emojis heading our way, the new imagery won't show up on phones and other platforms until after the consortium releases its changes to the Unicode Standard in early June. Unicode is the computer industry standard to digitally represent written languages. The 2018 emojis will roll out once Apple, Google, et al. release their system updates. Look for that yarn ball later this summer or fall.



## MINTING NEW YARN

That patch of mint in your backyard? It's not just forage for summer beverages. It can also be yarn. Last year, **Bellatrista**, which creates nonwool luxury yarns, debuted Menta, a DK-weight viscose made from 100 percent peppermint. Available in six colors, the shiny 6-ply yarn behaves like bamboo on the needles, takes dye well and feels cool and soft in the hands.

"Everything we do has an environmental story," explains Bellatrista's founder, Dale Washburn. "Mint is almost organic by default. It's renewable, it's a fast-growing plant and the processing—the same lyocell process as for bamboo—is basically benign. It's closed-loop, so none of the solvents are discharged."

Targeting customers who are sensitive to traditional animal fibers or looking for alternatives to cotton or acrylic, Bellatrista currently sells Menta alongside soy yarn, a milk yarn available in three weights, and a bamboo/milk blend also offered in three weights. Bellatrista yarns are currently available in 100 yarn shops across the U.S.

"You can make yarn from just about anything that's cellulose or protein," Washburn explains. "We are looking into different cellulose products [to develop into new yarns] that are easy to grow." Watch Bellatrista for coming announcements about yarns made from popular beverages. For information, visit [bellatrista.com](http://bellatrista.com).



## WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS...

Need a knit- or crochet-along to go with those bags of yellow yarn you bought on a whim? The **Craft Yarn Council's** Stitch Away Stress campaign has just the project. Launched in April as part of National Stress Awareness Month and sponsored by the Health Resource Network, Stitch Away Stress capitalizes on the relaxation benefits of stitching as a gateway into needlework.

In March, CYC conducted an online survey of knitters and cro-

cheters, asking about their stitching lives. A whopping 94 percent say the crafts help them relax; 80 percent report that stitching helps reduce stress. In addition to releasing an infographic of the survey results, the council also introduced a squeezable lemon pillow pattern in keeping with the "when life gives you lemons" maxim. The idea is to have a huggable stress reliever when the citrus hits the fan. (It also makes a cute meditation cushion.)

The crochet pattern was created by Twinkie Chan, who three years ago designed the lemon stress ball as part of a similar campaign. The knitted lemon pillow pattern was designed by Lori Steinberg. The campaign took place throughout the month of April and featured posts on social media channels, a website with facts, figures and videos of interviews with stitching wellness pioneers including Betsan Corkhill, Carol Caparosa and Perri Klass, and links to articles. To start making some lemonade in your LYS, visit [craftyarncouncil.com/stitch-away-stress](http://craftyarncouncil.com/stitch-away-stress).







# KOIGU



*Paint with Koigu*

**Koigu Magazine 9**

Multi Colour Pullover

By Mary Stowe



New accounts welcome ~New minimums

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



## MOTHER OF INVENTION

The needle arts are steeped in antiquity, but that doesn't mean there isn't room for innovation. Enter **Alexis Mantione**, who, after being told she had no option other than circular needles for knitting an unwieldy king-sized blanket, walked over to the supply wall at Basic Stitches in Malverne, New York, grabbed some needles, and invented a new system right on the spot.

"I was knitting this big blanket and thought, 'There's got to be a better way. This is ridiculous. I don't like circular needles, and flipping it over is not fun anymore.' I made my prototype right there."

Mantione's needles caught on. As people watched her knit with her makeshift tools, they asked for their own sets. To make her initial needle batches, she had to purchase supplies at retail prices and thus charge accordingly, but her fellow knitters didn't balk. Mantione realized she might be on to something.

The needles themselves are a kind of circular/straight hybrid with rotating 20-inch cords attached to 7-inch straight needles. Each

elongated "straight" needle culminates in an end stopper and includes a spring-activated



slider, allowing knitters to keep stitches closer to their working tips without having to con-

stantly yank stitches to the top of the left-hand needle. People are drawn to the needles, Mantione says, because of their capacity to accommodate large numbers of stitches, increase efficiency and make stitching more comfortable.

Though the business learning curve has been steep for this mom from Long Island, Mantione has made some gutsy moves, including applying for U.S. and international patents and finding an exacting manufacturer—a family in India—that is making her needles out of Indian rosewood. She's even garnered a first-place win in the Capital One Bank Business Plan Competition.

The My Two Ladies Adjustable Straight Knitting Needles, whose name honors the owners of Mantione's LYS, are currently available in twelve sizes, from U.S. 4–19 (as of now there are no US 10.5s), wholesale and retail. "My mission was to create happiness through knitting," she says, "and that's exactly what I did." To learn more about the needles, visit [www.mytwoladiesknitting.com](http://www.mytwoladiesknitting.com).

## THAT WILL BE THE DAY WHEN I DYE

For those who would rather die than dye, **Abundant Earth Fiber**, a textile mill and yarn company on Whidbey Island, in Washington's Puget Sound, has created no-muss/no-fuss kits that take the guesswork out of dye work. Containing two pre-measured acid-dye and citric-acid teabags—enough to dye 200 grams of protein-fiber yarn,

roving or locks—the Wool Tinctures color packs make dyeing almost as easy as making a cup of tea. "Wool Tinctures are easier than Kool-Aid," says Lydia Christiansen, owner of Abundant Earth Fiber. "You put the kettle on, and you're done in 20 minutes."

Christiansen spent years developing Wool Tinctures to create an easy, efficient way to dye and optimize stash by turning that not-quite-right yarn you bought on sale into something usable. "They help us make use of what we have. I wanted [these kits] for myself. It's how I wanted to fit dyeing into my own project work and create less waste."

In addition to simply dyeing or overdyeing yarn, the tinctures also make it possible to create self-stripping and mottled yarns. "There are so many variations," Christiansen says. "The measuring and calculations are done, so you can play." Available in 20 colors and with more on the way, Wool Tinctures come as single color packs or full starter kits complete with two color packs, a four-liter tincture jar, cedar stir stick and two skeins of the company's U.S. merino yarn, Sacred Ground. Released in earnest last winter, Wool Tinctures made a splash at the Madrona Fiber Arts Winter Retreat. To watch a demo, visit [www.abundantearthfiber.com/collections/wool-tinctures](http://www.abundantearthfiber.com/collections/wool-tinctures).





**May 4–6**  
**Great Western Alpaca Show**  
National Western Stock Show Complex  
Denver, Colorado  
[greatwesternalpashow.com](http://greatwesternalpashow.com)

**May 5–6**  
**Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival**  
Howard County Fairgrounds  
West Friendship, Maryland  
[sheepandwool.org](http://sheepandwool.org)

**May 5–6**  
**Mid-Plains Fiber Fair**  
York County Fairgrounds  
York, Nebraska  
[midplainsfiberfair.com](http://midplainsfiberfair.com)

**May 10–13**  
**Alpacapalooza 2018**  
Portland Expo Center  
Portland, Oregon  
[alpaca.org/page/6013/alpacapalooza](http://alpaca.org/page/6013/alpacapalooza)

**May 11–12**  
**Great Basin Fiber Arts Fair**  
Legacy Events Center  
Farmington, Utah  
[greatbasinfiberartsfair.org](http://greatbasinfiberartsfair.org)

**May 11–13**  
**Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival**  
Washington County Fairgrounds  
Lake Elmo, Minnesota  
[shepherds-harvestfestival.org](http://shepherds-harvestfestival.org)

**May 12–13**  
**New Hampshire Sheep and Wool Festival**  
Deerfield Fairgrounds  
Deerfield, New Hampshire  
[nhswga.com](http://nhswga.com)

**May 19–20**  
**Central Pennsylvania Fiber Festival**  
Lycoming County Fairgrounds  
Hughesville, Pennsylvania  
[centralpennfiberfest.wordpress.com](http://centralpennfiberfest.wordpress.com)

**May 19–20**  
**Kentucky Sheep & Fiber Festival**  
Masterson State Park  
Lexington, Kentucky  
[kentuckysheepandfiber.com](http://kentuckysheepandfiber.com)

**May 19–20**  
**Long Island Fleece & Fiber Fair**  
Hallowville Museum Farm  
Riverhead, New York  
[hallowville.com/fleece-fiber-fair](http://hallowville.com/fleece-fiber-fair)

**May 19–20**  
**Tip of the Mitt Fiber Fair**  
Emmet County Fairgrounds  
Petoskey, Michigan  
[facebook.com/mittfiberfair](http://facebook.com/mittfiberfair)

**May 19–20**  
**Waynesburg Sheep & Fiber Festival**  
Green County Fairgrounds  
Waynesburg, Pennsylvania  
[waynesburgpa.org/events/sheep](http://waynesburgpa.org/events/sheep)

**May 20**  
**Rhode Island Wool and Fiber Festival**  
Coggshall Farm  
Bristol, Rhode Island  
[coggshallfarm.org/events-programs-and-workshops/fiber-festival](http://coggshallfarm.org/events-programs-and-workshops/fiber-festival)

**May 20**  
**So. Cal. Handweaver's Guild Annual Weaving and Fiber Festival**  
Torrance Cultural Arts Center

Torrance, California  
[schg.org/festival](http://schg.org/festival)

**May 24–28**  
**Sacramento County Fair Wool Show**  
Cal Expo  
Sacramento, California  
[sacfair.com](http://sacfair.com)

**May 25–26**  
**Middle Tennessee Fiber Festival**  
Dickson County Fairgrounds  
Dickson, Tennessee  
[tnfiberfestival.com](http://tnfiberfestival.com)

**May 25–27**  
**Great Lakes Fiber Show**  
Wayne County Fairgrounds  
Wooster, Ohio  
[greatlakesfibershow.com](http://greatlakesfibershow.com)

**May 26–27**  
**FiberTrain Wool Festival**  
Lloyd Square  
Nampa, Idaho  
[fibertrainfestival.com](http://fibertrainfestival.com)

**May 26–27**  
**Massachusetts Sheep and Woolcraft Fair**  
Cummington Fairgrounds  
Cummington, Massachusetts  
[mas-sheepwool.org](http://mas-sheepwool.org)

**May 31–June 3**  
**Vogue Knitting Destinations: Knitting Boot Camp**  
Honesdale, Pennsylvania  
[vogueknittinglive.com](http://vogueknittinglive.com)

**June 1–2**  
**Hoosier Hills Fiber Festival**  
Johnson County Fairgrounds  
Franklin, Indiana  
[hoosierhillsfiberfestival.com](http://hoosierhillsfiberfestival.com)

**June 2**  
**Spring and Fiber Fest**  
El Rancho de las Golondrinas  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
[golondrinas.org/festivals/spring-fiber-fest](http://golondrinas.org/festivals/spring-fiber-fest)

**June 2–3**  
**Blue Ridge Fiber Fest**  
Higgins Fairgrounds  
Sparta, North Carolina  
[blueridgefiberfest.com](http://blueridgefiberfest.com)

**June 2–3**  
**Maine Fiber Frolic**  
Windsor Fairgrounds  
Windsor, Maine  
[fiberfrolic.com](http://fiberfrolic.com)

**June 2–3**  
**Flag Wool and Fiber Festival**  
Pioneer Museum  
Flagstaff, Arizona  
[flagwool.com](http://flagwool.com)

**June 2–3**  
**Mid-Ohio Fiber Fair**  
The Shops at Worthington Place Mall  
Worthington, Ohio  
[midohiofiberfair.com](http://midohiofiberfair.com)

**June 7–10**  
**Estes Park Wool Market**  
Estes Park Events Complex  
Estes Park, Colorado  
[estesparkeventscomplex.com/wool-market](http://estesparkeventscomplex.com/wool-market)

**June 9**  
**Blue Hills Fibre Festival**  
Carberry Memorial Hall  
Carberry, Manitoba, Canada  
[bluehillsfibrefestival.wordpress.com](http://bluehillsfibrefestival.wordpress.com)

**June 9**  
**World Wide Knit in Public Day**  
[wwkipday.com](http://wwkipday.com)

**June 9–10**  
**Central New York Fiber Festival**  
Butternut Hill Campground  
Bouckville, New York  
[cnyfiber.org](http://cnyfiber.org)

**June 10–13**  
**Vogue Knitting Destinations: Block Island, Rhode Island**  
[vogueknittinglive.com](http://vogueknittinglive.com)

**June 13–17**  
**TNNA Summer Trade Show**  
Huntington Convention Center  
Cleveland, Ohio  
[tnna.org](http://tnna.org)

**June 15–16**  
**Sheep Is Life Celebration**  
Diné College, Tsailé Campus  
Navajo Nation  
[navajolifeway.org](http://navajolifeway.org)

**June 16–17**  
**Iowa Sheep and Wool Festival**  
Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center  
Ames, Iowa  
[iowasheepandwoolfestival.com](http://iowasheepandwoolfestival.com)

**June 22–24**  
**Houston Fiber Fest**  
Berry Center  
Cypress, Texas  
[houstonfiberfest.com](http://houstonfiberfest.com)

**June 29–July 1**  
**Black Sheep Fiber Gathering**  
Lane County Fairgrounds  
Eugene, Oregon  
[blacksheepgathering.org](http://blacksheepgathering.org)

**July 6–12**  
**Convergence: Handweavers Guild of America Biennial Conference**  
[weavespindye.org/convergence-2018](http://weavespindye.org/convergence-2018)

**July 13–22**  
**Great Northern Arts Festival**  
Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada  
[gnaf.org](http://gnaf.org)

**July 25–28**  
**Crochet Guild of America Conference**  
Portland, Oregon  
[crochet.site-ym.com/?page=Conference](http://crochet.site-ym.com/?page=Conference)

**July 30–August 12**  
**Schoodic Arts Festival: Fiber**  
Hammond Hall  
Winter Harbor, Maine  
[schoodicartsforall.org](http://schoodicartsforall.org)

**August 2–5**  
**Stitches Midwest**  
Schaumburg Renaissance and Convention Center  
Schaumburg, Illinois  
[knittinguniverse.com/midwest2018](http://knittinguniverse.com/midwest2018)

**August 4–5**  
**Fiber Arts Festival**  
Red River Valley Fairgrounds  
West Fargo, North Dakota  
[fiberartsfest.com](http://fiberartsfest.com)

**August 4–5**  
**Fiberfest Eureka!**  
Lincoln County Fairgrounds  
Eureka, Montana  
[eurekafiberfest.org](http://eurekafiberfest.org)

**August 16–19**  
**Twist Fibre Festival**  
Saint-Andre-Avellin, Quebec, Canada  
[festivaltwist.org](http://festivaltwist.org)

**August 17–19**  
**Michigan Fiber Festival**  
Allegan County Fairgrounds  
Allegan, Michigan  
[michiganfiberfestival.info](http://michiganfiberfestival.info)

**September 6–8**  
**Georgia FiberFest**  
Columbus Convention and Trade Center  
Columbus, Georgia  
[gafiberfest.com](http://gafiberfest.com)

**September 7–9**  
**Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Festival**  
Jefferson Fair Park  
Jefferson, Wisconsin  
[wisconsinsheepandwoolfestival.com](http://wisconsinsheepandwoolfestival.com)

**September 8–9**  
**Garden State Sheep and Fiber Festival**  
Hunterdon County Fairgrounds  
Ringoes, New Jersey  
[njsheep.net](http://njsheep.net)

**September 8–9**  
**PA Endless Mountains Fiber Festival**  
Harford Fairgrounds  
Harford, Pennsylvania  
[endlessmountainsfiberfest.com](http://endlessmountainsfiberfest.com)

**September 8–9**  
**Salida Fiber Festival**  
Riverside Park  
Salida, Colorado  
[salidafiberfestival.com](http://salidafiberfestival.com)

**September 15–16**  
**Finger Lakes Fiber Festival**  
Hemlock Fairgrounds  
Hemlock, New York  
[gvhg.org/fiber-fest](http://gvhg.org/fiber-fest)

**September 21–23**  
**Vogue Knitting LIVE San Francisco**  
Hilton Union Square  
San Francisco, California  
[Vogueknittinglive.com](http://Vogueknittinglive.com)

**September 23–24**  
**Oregon Flock and Fiber Festival**  
Clackamas County Event Center  
Canby, Oregon  
[flockandfiberfestival.com](http://flockandfiberfestival.com)

**September 29–October 1**  
**Sneffels Fiber Festival**  
4-H Events Center, Ouray Co. Fairgrounds  
Ridgway, Colorado  
[sneffelsfiberfest.com](http://sneffelsfiberfest.com)

**September 29–30**  
**Shenandoah Valley Fiber Festival**  
Clarke County Ruritan Fairgrounds  
Berryville, Virginia  
[shenandoahvalleyfiberfestival.com](http://shenandoahvalleyfiberfestival.com)

**September 29–30**  
**Northern Michigan Lamb and Wool Festival**  
Ogemaw County Fairgrounds,  
West Branch, Michigan  
[lambandwoolfestival.com](http://lambandwoolfestival.com)



## ▼ Add One Stitch Knitting: All the Stitches You Need in 15 Projects

By Alina Schneider  
Barron's; \$18.99  
ISBN: 978-1438010892

This is a true beginner book with a simple, encouraging premise: If you can make a knit stitch and a purl stitch, you already have the skills to go well beyond the ubiquitous first-project stockinette scarf. The 15 pat-



terns include a tank, mitts, cowls and home accessories, everything from pillows to pot-holders. Each project starts

with a Before You Begin section that lists the skills needed, and each uses a different combination of knits and purls to create seed, moss, waffle and broken rib stitches. The projects provide a good introduction to stitch multiples and row repeats and how they work to create textures—and later become the building blocks of more complicated lace and cables. One knitterly chuckle: Schneider doesn't use the term "gauge swatch" but rather "practice piece." With such a simple change in nomenclature, could a task many dread become something that new knitters actually look forward to?

## ▼ Design Your Own Crochet Projects

By Sara Delaney  
Storey; \$18.95  
ISBN: 978-1612126586



If you've crocheted for a while with others' patterns and are ready to create your own, Delaney's design templates will make the process easy. But there's a hidden benefit to all this how-to information: The glossary of basic crochet stitches, the basic structure of a pattern, the tips for yarn and hook pairings and calculating yardage also act as an easy-to-follow primer for beginning crocheters. Smaller projects like

scarves/cowls, socks and hats comprise the 18 design formulas, which are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. If you're at all math-averse, trust that the design templates require only the skill of filling in the blanks with your stitch and row values and executing the formula already provided.

## ▼ Visions: Knitting Meets Art/Visions Kids: Knitting Meets Art

By Jen Geigley  
Moon Phase Publications;  
\$27 each  
ISBN: 978-1981756261/  
ISBN: 978-1981757565



After hours spent stitching, most knitters go out of their way to keep their FOs away from yarn-unfriendly substances like bleach, and probably everything else that resides in the average laundry room. Not Jen Geigley. In fact, she designed these patterns specifically with bleach, dye and fabric paint



in mind. Her chunky, large-gauge sweaters, cowls and hats, worked mostly in black, gray and lime, are the backdrop for arty dip-dyeing, splatter-painting and messaging. Like its sister publication, the nine-pattern *Visions Kids* combines chunky knits with paint and dye techniques to create hipster-cool customizable styles for the pint-sized set. The patterns are beginner-friendly, and the embellishment techniques require only a willingness to dare.

## ▼ 60 Quick Knits for Beginners

Sixth&Spring Books; \$17.95  
ISBN: 978-1942021872  
This collection starts at the very beginning—with a section on basic techniques and step-by-step photos for those who have never picked up needles. The 60 patterns, all made in Cascade's 220 Superwash merino wool, range from easy stockinette, garter and ribbed hats, fingerless mitts, scarves and blankets to those



that incorporate shaping techniques—a shrug and socks. You'll also find cabled shawls and sweaters

for new knitters who are looking for more challenge. And if experienced knitters were to thumb through these pages without noticing the title, they'd find patterns that prove that just because a project works up easily doesn't mean it lacks style.

## ▼ Designer Knits: 22 Handknit Designs for Him and Her

By Sarah Hatton and Martin Storey  
Stackpole Books; \$21.95  
ISBN: 978-0811718431

Looking to knit some luxurious textured garments and accessories?



*Designer Knits* serves up 22 patterns (11 for women by Sarah Hatton, the other half for men by Martin Storey) loaded with

twisted-stitch cabling, herringbone stripes and slip-stitch colorwork for sweater-coats, vests, scarves and hats. The designs of Hatton and Storey, both of whom gained fame for their work with Rowan, are perfectly in sync, and more than a few of the patterns do double duty: We're itching to cast on at least three of Storey's men's sweaters for ourselves posthaste. The collection includes a few patterns—the women's slip-stitch-yoke pullover; the men's striped scarf—that a beginning knitter could easily work, but most of the designs create texture with more finger-challenging stitches, such as eight-stitch cables and multiple crossovers all worked along the same row, best for knitters with intermediate to experienced skills.

## ▼ Japanese Stitches Unraveled

By Wendy Bernard  
Abrams; \$29.99  
ISBN: 978-1419729065  
Wendy Bernard is back with a new book to add to her growing library of



stitch dictionaries. This time, Japanese stitches have been translated into standard U.S. nomenclature, and as in her

other books, the patterns have written directions and charts to work them flat, in the round and even top down or bottom up, depending on the stitch's versatility. The stitches are clustered together by type—knits & purls, ribs, cables, etc.—and each chapter includes one pattern for a finished object that shows the stitch to best effect.

## ▼ Patterns for North Ronaldsay and Other 4-Ply Fingering and Aran Yarn

By Elizabeth Lovick  
Northern Lace Press; \$20  
ISBN: 978-0993061486



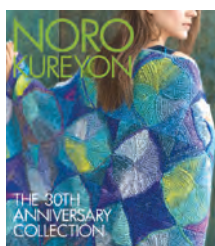
Bluefaced Leicester, Corriedale, Romney: Even those who don't spin their own yarn are familiar with these wools.

But what of North Ronaldsay? They're the seaweed-eating sheep breed that Elizabeth Lovick fell in love with two decades ago when she moved to Orkney, and she's been dyeing and designing with it ever since. Because of their rugged seaside habitat, these sheep produce an exceptionally soft—and limited supply of—wool. This book is an updated collection of some of Lovick's early patterns for highly textured, lacy and cabled pullovers, shawls, scarves, mittens and hats. Because North Ronaldsay is such a rare-breed wool, Lovick includes ample information on how to substitute with other 4-ply and Aran yarns.

## ▼ Noro Kureyon: The 30th Anniversary Collection

Sixth&Spring Books; \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-1942021889  
Japanese for "crayon," Kureyon is the roving-like workhorse yarn in





the colorful Noro stable. The 30 patterns here show off Kureyon's 30 years of shade-

shifting beauty in wearable (cardigans, cowls and hats), wrapable (shawls and capelets) and even totable (a felted yoga-mat bag) projects. Each pattern is skill-rated on a scale of one to four, and the designs range from a simple slip-stitch cowl that lets the yarn do all the detail work to an entrelac-lace pullover and a garter-stripe cardigan that add multi-directional randomness to Kureyon's inherent self-striping quality. Whether you've never worked with Noro before or you're a dyed-in-the-wool fan, this commemorative collection of stylish knits may have you destashing all your solids.

### ▼ Crochet Kaleidoscope: Shifting Shapes and Shades Across 100 Motifs

By Sandra Eng

Interweave/F+W; \$24.99

ISBN: 978-1632506139

From circles, hexagons and triangles to the classic granny square, Eng's



100 motifs stand alone as pretty crochet patterns, but each

motif also imparts a mini lesson in color theory. Eng boils down the color wheel to the most basic to help the individual crocheter create a successful personalized palette. She also provides many visuals of motifs with various effects, from contrasting and complementary to an overall gradient. There are solid-color swatches of the 38 shades of Cascade Ultra Pima cotton used throughout the book that act as an à la carte menu of color. While this book entices with modern shapes and shades, each motif pattern also offers tips that inexperienced crocheters might not know—such as

when a stitch shouldn't factor into overall count or, in the case of a circular shape, the loop that marks the end of a round—that in the past may have made for wonky work.

### ▼ Loomie Party

By Vilasinee Bunnag

Abrams; \$27.50

ISBN: 978-1419728983

Pick up this book and immediately flip to the back cover, where you'll find the actual Loomie tool that's used to make pompoms, tassels,



cords and tiny tapestries with the yarn leftovers hanging out in your stash. The 20 perfect-for-giving

projects are a back-to-the-future mix—from a pompom mobile and braided-cord friendship bracelets teens will love to throwback items like God's Eyes (remember those?) and tassel earrings. There's even a page devoted to personalizing your Loomie tool with paint—included, we think, to exercise yet another side of the maker brain.

### ▼ Marlisle:

A New Direction in Knitting

By Anna Maltz

Anna Maltz; \$28.50

ISBN 978-0995599413

Anna Maltz had to coin a new term to describe the technique she created for her latest book. Marlisle, a portmanteau of "marl" and "Fair Isle," is her term for her new method of colorwork. The "marl" part is created by carrying two



different colors at once; "isle" indicates the use of traditional stranded colorwork to make patterns. The result is incredibly

varied, and is put to great effect in the 11 patterns, including mitts, hats, sweaters and other accessories. The introduction walks knitters through choosing the best yarns—for color and texture—to get the best results, as well as a primer on Fair Isle; a troubleshooting section

at the back of the book will fix any issues.

### ▼ Crochet Loom Blooms

By Haafner Linssen

Interweave/F+W; \$23.99

ISBN: 978-1632506191

Linssen's obsession with loom



blooms started when she saw a singular image of a vintage flower-loom blanket. With

that as inspiration, she found a loom and made enough flowers to stitch together as a shawl. She posted a photo of that shawl on her blog, and it drew out so many like-minded flower-loom fans that she decided to keep at it. The result is this book, in which Linssen fast-forwards the reputation of loom-flower projects from the brown-and-orange hippie look of the '70s to modern geometric shapes and colors. The book's title is a slight misnomer, as the 30 bloom motifs themselves are not crocheted; crochet is used to join

the blooms into blankets, scarves and other projects. (Linssen encourages readers to knit, sew or even weave them together, too.) A cardboard circular starter loom is included, along with templates to make your own.

### ▼ Crafting a Patterned Home

By Kristin Nicholas

Roost Books; \$24.95

ISBN: 978-1611803495

No simple, neutral color palettes



here: Designer Kristin Nicholas lives her life in full Technicolor, and now you can too with

the 35 projects she includes in her latest DIY book. Shot entirely in her cozy and colorful farmhouse, each page is full of inspiration—even the endpapers are a bold pink-on-pink paisley. Projects are created using many different crafts, from embroidery to knitting, crochet and painting, allowing for full creative expression.

## ■ TREND WATCH

Here's what was selling the third week of April 2018:

### Amazon Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book (revised edition)*, by the editors of *Vogue Knitting* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Japanese Knitting Stitch Bible*, by Hitomi Shida and translated by Gayle Roehm (Tuttle Publishing)
- *Alterknit Stitch Dictionary*, by Andrea Rangel (Interweave/F+W)
- *Knit Like a Latvian*, by Leva Ozolina (SewandSo)
- *750 Knitting Stitches* (St. Martin's Griffin)
- *Noro Kureyon: The 30th Anniversary Collection* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *The Curse of the Boyfriend Sweater*, by Alanna Okun (Flatiron Books)

### Amazon Crochet List (print publications)

- *Edward's Crochet Doll Emporium*, by Kerry Lord (Pavilion)
- *A to Z Crochet* (Martingale & Co.)
- *Crochet One-Skein Wonders* (Storey)
- *The Complete Book of Crochet Stitch Designs*, by Linda P. Schapper (Lark Crafts)

### Barnes & Noble Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Japanese Knitting Stitch Bible*, by Hitomi Shida (Tuttle Publishing)
- *Slow Knitting*, by Hannah Thiessen (Harry N. Abrams)



By Christina Behnke  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS



#### Blue Sky Fibers Woolstok

**Specs:** 21 colors; 100% fine Highland wool; 123yds/50g

**Gauge:** 20–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–11 needles

**Distinctions:** Squishy, supple Woolstok gets its airy quality from the lofty 2-ply spin, which also shows the delicate mélanges to best effect. Sourcing fibers from the finest grade Peruvian Highland wool top lends luxurious smoothness to this otherwise sturdy yarn.

**Projects:** Highland wool's workhorse roots are evident in Woolstok's versatility; the pebbled texture and pearly patina give even simple stitches a rugged charm.



#### Cestari Mount Vernon Collection 2-Ply Worsted Weight

**Specs:** 36 colors; 100% fine merino wool; 170yds/100g

**Gauge:** 16 sts = 4" on U.S. 8 needles

**Distinctions:** A classic 2-ply farmhouse yarn, Mount Vernon Collection is woolen spun from high-quality U.S. merino that's untreated chemically. The process maintains the fiber's integrity to create a plush, robust yarn with a smooth, dry feel and sweet lanolin scent.

**Projects:** Buoyant stitch definition and a rustic, mossy finish make this versatile workhorse a delightful—and very wearable—choice for children's knits.



#### West Yorkshire Spinners Wensleydale Fleece Gems DK

**Specs:** 20 colors; 100% Wensleydale; 244yds/100g

**Gauge:** 22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6 needles

**Distinctions:** Wensleydale Fleece Gems' silky hand features a soft, hairy halo. Offering a surprising amount of crimp (read: stitch definition) along with tensile strength, this longwool is considered a rare breed in its native U.K. Naturally free of kemp (coarse, rough hairs), it accepts dye with vivid saturation and icy luminescence.

**Projects:** Save this "gem" for garments that strike the ideal balance between structure and drape.





#### North Light Fibers Atlantic

**Specs:** 17 colors; 100% Falkland Islands merino wool; 170yds/71g

**Gauge:** 16–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–8 needles

**Distinctions:** Free-range farmed on a Patagonian archipelago, Falklands merino is naturally brighter white in color than most wools, creating brighter, richer dyed shades. While that's certainly the case with Atlantic, the plush, buttery hand is the true star here.

**Projects:** Treat yourself to a pretty lace-and-cable cowl. The moderate 3-ply worsted spin yields soft-etched stitch patterns with a shimmery woolen finish.



#### Brooklyn Tweed Vale

**Specs:** 14 colors; 100% American Rambouillet wool; 450yds/50g

**Gauge:** 33–40 sts = 4" on U.S. 000–1 needles

**Distinctions:** Vale continues Brooklyn Tweed's theme of U.S. grown and manufactured breed-specific wools. Spun from Wyoming Rambouillet—a softer, springier cousin of merino—the whisper-light skein reveals surprising tensile strength in a cushiony 2-ply.

**Projects:** Vale lends an elegant sheen and crisp, even finish to traditional lace patterns. Though shawls are the obvious pairing, it's also a good choice for lacy garments.



#### Harrisville Designs Shetland Fingering

**Specs:** 64 colors, 100% pure wool; 217yds/50g

**Gauge:** 26 sts = 4" on U.S. 2–4 needles

**Distinctions:** True yarn nerds will appreciate Shetland, which softens with blocking from crisp and rugged to plump and woolly. Spun in New Hampshire with a high-octane twist for durability, exquisite heathers gleam in this tenacious 2-ply.

**Projects:** Shetland's toothy texture begs for a steeked colorwork cardigan. With 50-gram skeins in a bevy of colors, the only question is whether to go bright, neutral—or both.

*yarn reviews continue on page 20*





#### Cascade Yarns Boliviana Bulky

**Specs:** 20 colors; 100% merino wool; 175yds/200g

**Gauge:** 8–10 sts = 4" on U.S. 13–17 needles

**Distinctions:** Soft, smooth and oh-so-squeezable, Boliviana Bulky showcases merino in all its bouncy, shimmering glory. Spun into a thick, tubular 3-ply strand that augments the fiber's natural loft, it throws each stitch into high relief.

**Projects:** One skein will make a quick-to-finish knitted or crocheted cowl; a few more will give you a snuggly cardigan. Keep stitch patterns simple to best employ the blow-up effect.



#### The Fibre Company Cumbria Fingering

**Specs:** 19 colors; 60% merino wool/30% masham wool/10% mohair; 328yds/100g

**Gauge:** 26–30 sts = 4" on U.S. 1–3 needles

**Distinctions:** Merino's loft is present in the cushy skein, but Northern English Masham is Cumbria Fingering's true star. This hardy longwool announces itself in the sleek, lustrous strand. Mohair adds sparkle, augmenting the deeply saturated shades.

**Projects:** The silken gleam elevates simple stockinette and lace in draped garments and wraps, while the firm 4-ply spin is especially hook-friendly.



#### Woolfolk Tov DK

**Specs:** 13 colors; 100% Ovis 21 Ultimate Merino; 160yds/50g

**Gauge:** 20–21 sts = 4" on U.S. 5–6 needles

**Distinctions:** While Tov DK's cable-spun construction resembles Italian-milled superwash, its satin gleam and powder-soft hand result from the fiber itself. Developed with Patagonian ranchers, sustainable Ultimate Merino wool features naturally long, flat scales that form a sleek surface while maintaining bounce and loft.

**Projects:** Structure meets drape in lightweight sweaters and scarves. The firmly rounded strand creates keen stitch definition, so cable away.





#### **Brown Sheep Co. Prairie Spun DK**

**Specs:** 25 colors; 100% wool; 256 yds/100g

**Gauge:** 22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6 needles

**Distinctions:** One hundred percent grown, spun and dyed in the United States, Prairie Spun DK is satisfyingly woolly—soft yet nearly rugged—with spongy, resilient loft. Toothy wool affords this worsted-spun 3-ply a more relaxed twist, creating a smooth and versatile finish.

**Projects:** An economical choice for boldly patterned garments—especially considering the rich color selection—Prairie Spun DK also lends elasticity to woven fabrics.



#### **Swans Island All American Collection Sport Weight**

**Specs:** 32 colors; 100% USA Rambouillet wool; 185yds/40g

**Gauge:** 24 sts = 4" on U.S. 4–5 needles

**Distinctions:** 2-ply-spun in the Shetland tradition, All American Collection Sport is entirely U.S.-made—including Swans Island's celebrated dye kettles. The texture is extraordinary, blending a springy velvet hand with colorwork-friendly cling.

**Projects:** The 50g put-up and coordinated color palette were made for stranded colorwork. With nary a prickle, All American Collection Sport is soft enough for hats and neckwear.



#### **Mountain Meadow Wool Alpine**

**Specs:** 25 colors; 100% Mountain Merino Targhee; 255yds/99g

**Gauge:** 22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6 needles

**Distinctions:** A relatively new wool breed from the American West, Targhee—a cross of Rambouillet, Columbia and Corriedale—is known for smoothness and elasticity. U.S.-grown and -spun, Alpine is dense with sumptuous bounce and positively creamy to the touch.

**Projects:** Soft enough for the closest-wearing pieces—hats, cowls, even baby knits—the taut, rounded 3-ply structure works up with puffy, ply-etched texture.



## Viva Las Vegas

**T**NNA's Winter Market in Las Vegas was a rousing success. The Embassy Suites was transformed into a charming indoor mall where every room became a small boutique showcasing everything from yarn and accessories to needles and notions. Glittery window displays and colorful banners welcomed you to shop and enticed you to browse. It was an experience that most TNNA veterans had never before experienced. Most importantly, it worked.

Exhibitors and shoppers alike said that this more intimate venue allowed them to have in-depth conversations and get to know each other better. They talked over coffee, tea and snacks and made real connections. Without the usual distractions of a convention center show floor, they were able to do business and form stronger relationships. Most yarn vendors enjoyed the experience and said that with a few small tweaks to their setup, they would return to a hotel venue again.

Of course, the purpose of the winter mar-

ket is to buy for the spring and summer seasons, and several trends stood out as I walked the floors. Mini-skeins continue to make a huge splash. Many vendors offered them, and I think they will be flying off shop shelves this spring. Breezy silhouettes are the trend for garments. Big, comfortable ponchos, shawls and sweaters graced the mannequins; open and airy stitch patterns and large-form easy lace keep fabrics fresh for spring. When it comes to shawls and accessories, kits are where it's at. They make easy grab-and-go purchases for your customers and are a great way to entice them to buy. These small packages look pretty on shelves and are irresistible to shoppers searching for quick gifts for friends or fast-stitching projects for themselves.

At the show, TNNA officially announced Local Yarn Store Day with signs and flyers. Additionally, many exhibitors had special kits or packages available to order. The first annual LYS Day, April 21 this year, is a nationwide event designed to bring attention and appre-

ciation to the bricks-and mortar yarn store. Stores around the country signed on to host special events that day to entice current and new customers through their doors. If you did not participate this year, find more information and details on how to get involved in the future at [localyarnstoreday.com](http://localyarnstoreday.com). If you did participate, let us know how things went.

Initiatives like Local Yarn Store Day are created through the hard work of TNNA volunteer committees. Remember that TNNA is *our* organization, and it is what we make it. We are currently busy creating member-run committees, and we are asking for your help. Interested in getting involved? Want to see your ideas and dues make a difference? Are you a whiz at social media, a marketing guru or a financial savant? Share your expertise by volunteering for a committee. Read more about the current committees and apply for one (or more) today. Here's a link to our current recruiting efforts: [tnna.site-ym.com/page/Committees](http://tnna.site-ym.com/page/Committees).

TNNA's Yarn Group is an industry-encompassing group that promotes the growth of the yarn industry, creates awareness and appreciation of the craft, and encourages partnerships among members of the community.



Lumi  
Scarf

see you at tnna  
booth #524

KNIT ONE  
CROCHET TOO

## The wait is over.

Now available

### TWIST Short 2"/3" Interchangeable System

[chiaogoo.com](http://chiaogoo.com)  
[info@chiaogoo.com](mailto:info@chiaogoo.com)





# BACK IN STOCK!



**LOVED FOR A GENERATION, UPDATED FOR TODAY**

**COMPLETELY REVISED & UPDATED**

352 PAGES • OVER 1600 PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS

TO ORDER COPIES FOR YOUR STORE, CONTACT JAMIE LYNN ARMES AT (814) 942-3186 (DIRECT);  
(877) 860-6164 (TOLL-FREE); (814) 942-3252 (FAX) OR [JAMIE@SOHOPUBLISHING.COM](mailto:JAMIE@SOHOPUBLISHING.COM)

[VOGUEKNITTING.COM](http://VOGUEKNITTING.COM) \$39.95 US/ \$53.95 CAN



## Survey Says...

The Craft Yarn Council has been conducting consumer research every two years or so since 1994. As in the past, the 2017 survey was completed in October, and for the sixth time it was conducted online. An impressive 3,588 knitters and crocheters across the country participated.

CYC again commissioned Research Inc. of Atlanta to gather intelligence on yarn trends among those who have knit or crocheted a project and bought yarn during the past year. Many questions asked in previous surveys were included to establish trends, and for the first time we asked newcomers to the craft—those who learned to knit or crochet in the past twelve months—questions about where and how they learned the craft and their top sources of inspiration. Also new in 2017, CYC surveyed a separate online panel of non-knitters/crocheters to find out how they are using yarn.

The sheer number of respondents substantiates trends in consumers' perception of these crafts and their motivation to purchase yarn.

Despite having to complete a very long survey, needleworkers of all age groups are represented. Fifty-six percent are 55 and older; 30 percent are 35–54 and 14 percent are 18–34. While 20 percent of respondents prefer both knitting and crochet, more than half (51 percent) report they prefer crochet and 29 percent prefer to knit.

We asked the respondents who learned how to knit or crochet in the past year to name their top two sources of inspiration. "Friend or family member" was the biggest influence, with 41 percent; seeing a project on the Internet or social media was second, with 22 percent. Newcomers learn the craft through a variety of outlets. A whopping 70 percent learned on YouTube; 31 percent learned from a family member; 30 percent from a class; and 21 percent from a friend.

Almost all (98%) find inspiration for project ideas on the Internet. Eighty-nine percent of them are looking to social-networking sites—Ravelry (75%), Facebook (69%), Pinterest

(58%)—for inspiration. They are also using the Internet to find free patterns (85%), get new project ideas (73%) and watch knit/crochet videos (46%). Still, these enthusiasts overwhelmingly list bricks-and-mortar stores as their primary source for yarn, at 85+ percent. What draws them in? Yarn on sale tops the list, at 69 percent, but "like to touch and feel the yarn" follows closely with 65 percent.

CYC surveyed an online panel of 401 crafters ages 18–54 who do not know how to knit or crochet but who use yarn. Respondents were recruited by Online Survey Solution, a division of M/A/R/C. Forty-eight percent said they use yarn for general crafting purposes: holiday projects (72%), kid projects (56%) and wall hangings (42%). Sixty-six percent of non-knitters are interested in learning to knit and 65 percent of non-crocheters are interested in learning to crochet, which suggests opportunities to reach new consumers. In future columns, we'll report more findings, which we hope will be helpful to retailers in developing strategic marketing plans.

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.



introducing CABRITO  
80% kid mohair / 20% polyamide



MANOS DEL URUGUAY

TNNA Booths 836, 838, 935, 937

info@fairmountfibers.com - 888.566.9970 - www.fairmountfibers.com



TAMARACK BLANKET SCARF

DESIGN BY VIRGINIA SATTLER-REIMER

VISIT US AT TNNA BOOTH #1120

BLUE SKY.  
— FIBERS —

[BLUESKYFIBERS.COM](http://BLUESKYFIBERS.COM)



# SPINNING & WEAVING GROUP

BY ANGELA SMITH, CHAIRPERSON



## Changes at Spinning & Weaving

**T**NNA has gone through many changes over the past 18 months, changes that have impacted the Spinning and Weaving Group as well. The management-company change in 2016, as well as the growth of Spinzilla through the end of that year, stretched our volunteer resources beyond a sustainable level. As a result, a decision was made last year to hand over the running of Spinzilla to TNNA.

Funds raised by Spinzilla (which takes place this year from October 1-7) had been used to support The NeedleArts Mentoring Program, which reaches across all disciplines in the needlearts. NAMP, which had been a program of the Helping Hands Foundation, was recently absorbed by the TNNA Foundation to support all product segment groups and an expanded set of programs. With this change, TNNA decided to refocus and evaluate the role the TNNA Foundation plays in the industry. A board of directors is now in place to oversee the strategic direction and goals of the foundation

and its future as the charitable arm of TNNA.

NAMP, currently the sole program of the TNNA Foundation, was founded as a way to get young people involved in the needlearts by fostering curiosity, creativity and achievement. At the end of 2016, NAMP was put on hold for restructuring. As the reorganization finalizes in the coming months, the foundation plans to re-engage the NAMP program specifically for Spinning and Weaving education. The foundation is excited about the future and looks forward to sharing more about the progress of an organization whose mission is to support instructional programs that deliver meaningful value to our members and industry.

Interested in influencing other areas of TNNA? TNNA put out a call for volunteers in February. Consider volunteering for any of the following committees: Bylaw Committee, Collaboration Committee, Content Committee, Finance Committee, Marketing Committee, Membership Committee, Spinzilla Committee, Social Media

Committee. Each TNNA committee will be headed by a chairperson who will serve a two-year term. The primary role of the chair is to work with committee members to develop and implement an annual operating plan based on TNNA's strategic plan and working goals set forth by the board of directors for the coming year.

Additionally, each committee will be assigned a board member who will serve as a liaison and adviser to the chairs and members. The liaison communicates the directives and strategic thinking of the board on topics of interest to the committee, particularly the strategic thinking behind any assignments/charge. The liaison will also provide counsel to ensure the committee strategies and specific work plans align with the goals and objectives set forth by the board. The staff liaison will also ensure that the committee's work is effectively represented at board meetings. Volunteering on a committee provides an opportunity to take an active role in shaping the needlearts industry.

## Tell Your Customers No. No Harsh Chemicals. No Additives. No Rinsing.

Premium clean. Made in the USA.  
Now save with **FREE shipping**  
in the continental US!



Compare to  
other brands!



[allurewash.com/wholesale](http://allurewash.com/wholesale)

allure  
FINE FIBER AND FABRIC WASH



## One Knitter's Experience: Creativation 2018

**K**ari Capone, founder of Kari's Kits, led Knit and Sip/Crochet and Sip workshops at January's Creativation show in Phoenix. Kari's Kits take the guesswork out of picking projects by providing crafters with everything they need—yarn, needles, patterns and instructions—to create something beautiful. Each workshop student received a kit courtesy of kariskits.com. Fair Isle Yarn, which sponsored the classes, provided two coveted giveaway bags filled with products.

"[Beginners] were enthusiastic about the classes," says Capone. "Some of the more advanced beginners pitched in when I was working with students at other tables. They told me I was a patient and wonderful teacher. Little did they know how nervous I was."

This year's conference and trade show was Capone's first. "I was delighted to have ample one-on-one opportunities with sales reps, influencers and makers. There were dozens of make-and-takes to get your creative juices flowing.

Walking the show floor properly takes at least a few days, and you can see trends in home décor, fashion, jewelry and furniture in addition to the fiber arts. The Creativation app is the most organized and robust conference app I've ever used. It allowed me to contact any exhibitor, any teacher, and download their resources, even after the conference ended. Every AFCE member I met was generous, warm and very professional."

In addition to sharing her personal experiences, Capone called out a few new products from exhibiting brands. (For more new product releases, visit [CreativationShow.org](http://CreativationShow.org).) "Lion Brand Yarn released a new line of products by crochet artist London Kaye called Crocheting Outside the Lines." The line includes open-stock yarns, theme packs and Kaye's own unique iteration of crochet hooks intended to provide the consumer with a unique crafting experience. "Red Heart released a new Made in Italy line; designer Marly Bird was there to

show her lovely array of merino wools and knitted designs. Bernat's new Maker Home Dec yarn is available in a double thickness, with generous yardage. Fair Isle Yarns unveiled a new product for Fall 2018: 3 Sisters, a jumbo-weight wool blend. One skein makes a hat and a cowl."

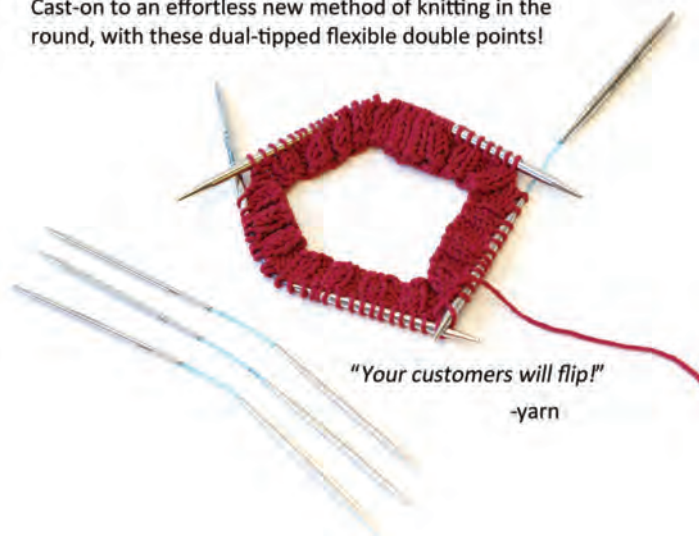
The outlook for knitting and crocheting in 2018 is positive. The Creative Products Size of the Industry Study Update, released in January, shows a slight uptick over the past year in participation by crafting consumers, with category sales accounting for \$2.3 billion in the United States. The research also identifies craft trends based on year-over-year data, including demographics, total household participation, participation by product category, and cross-participation. For more information about AFCE research, visit [research.afci.global](http://research.afci.global).

Creativation 2019 will take place January 17–21. Education begins on January 17; the trade show will be open January 19–21. For more information, visit [CreativationShow.org](http://CreativationShow.org).

The AFCE is the premier trade association for the global creative arts products industries. Our members include the manufacturers, retailers, distributors, designers, educators, digital content providers, professional makers and DIYers and other creative professionals who comprise the \$40 billion+ creative arts industries around the globe. For more information about AFCE, membership or the annual Creativation trade event, visit [afci.global](http://afci.global).

### addiFlexiFlips

Cast-on to an effortless new method of knitting in the round, with these dual-tipped flexible double points!



"Your customers will flip!"  
-yarn

- Increase sales with this revolutionary new product
- Features an addi Turbo® and addi® Rocket tip
- Reusable packaging doubles as needle storage
- Available exclusively through skacel



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



Ancient Arts  
YARNS

[ancientartsfibre.com](http://ancientartsfibre.com)



Come see us at TNNA Cleveland!  
Booth 1014

NATURE • INSPIRATION • GLORIOUS COLOURS!



## Connecting With Your Community

**R**avelry provides you with several ways to stay in touch with your customers and see what they are interested in. Do you have a Ravelry group for your shop? A group is a fantastic way to connect with your client base and share announcements about your business. It can take time and effort to gain regular posting activity when you start your group, but if you are consistent about reaching out to members, your group will gain momentum and quickly become a community.

If your group's members aren't actively posting, you can use the activity tab on your group's page to see what they are making, the patterns they are adding to their favorites and more. Be sure to reach out and fave or comment on their projects to share a little love with your customers.

To help users find your group, make sure you've set your group's categories so that users can find it when browsing the group search. To select the categories for your group, click on the yellow pencil at the top of its main page and then use the selector in the group categories

editing section. If you don't have a Ravelry group for your business yet, you can create one on the groups tab, which you'll find at the top of every Ravelry page.

Running a craft-along is a great way to keep your customers engaged, get to know them better, offer assistance and keep them thinking about your shop even when they are at home. As a Ravelry group gains activity, many shops and fiber businesses find it invaluable to have multiple moderators to help keep things focused, friendly and positive. Don't be afraid to reach out to staff members or active participants in the group to create a team that will be able to handle a variety of questions and foster the community you are building.

This year we introduced a new feature, the Project Challenge. This is a personal challenge, one that asks users to set a goal for the number of projects they would like to complete in a specific amount of time. To join, go to your Ravelry notebook, click on the Challenge tab, and enter your goal for the year. After you have set your goal, the Challenge tab becomes a

home for your challenge and will track the projects you have completed this year, as well as projects added to your queue that you hope to complete by year's end. You can change your goal at any time, and there is no deadline to sign up. Don't be shy about jumping in now!

We'll be improving and adding to the Project Challenge throughout the year, so keep checking your Challenge tab and the Ravelry blog on our home page for updates and announcements. If your customers and Ravelry friends are participating, be sure to cheer them on and encourage them to meet their goals.

If you have questions about any Ravelry feature or how to use the site more effectively, we are always happy to help. We have lots of help documentation linked from our Help tab, and you can also get help from Ravelry staff in our official help groups: For the Love of Ravelry (for general site questions and updates as well as sharing feature ideas), Ravelry Advertisers (for questions about advertising) and Ravelry Shopkeepers (for questions about pattern sales). We look forward to hearing from you.

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).



Delight in the making



## How Good Are You?

**Y**ou've been knitting for years and you've done every kind of project imaginable.

Charts, cables, intricate stitch patterns? No problem. But how do you know you're actually doing them correctly? TKGA's Master Hand Knitting certification program will let you know just how accomplished you really are.

As the premier educational organization for knitters, The Knitting Guild Association has high standards for Master Hand Knitter (MHK) certification. Candidates work through three levels of escalating difficulty, submitting swatches, patterns, reviews and projects that illustrate not only technical skills but the ability to understand and communicate the intricacies of the craft. Feedback is provided by a committee of volunteer reviewers selected from the ranks of certified Master Hand Knitters. It is a rigorous program, but the certification is a true accomplishment, one that fewer than 300 knitters internationally have achieved since the program began in 1988.

Interested? You're not alone. Masters Day

was always the most popular session at the annual TKGA conference. Unfortunately, with the 2016 transition of TKGA to a nonprofit organization, the annual conference was shelved. But now Masters Day is back. TKGA partnered with the Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) Fiber Festival in April to host Masters Day as part of the festival's class offerings. Students were able to take classes of any skill level regardless of where—or even if—they are in the MHK program. Because certification tends to be a solo process, the opportunity to interact with committee members and other knitters in the program was a huge part of the enjoyment.

A good foundation is the key to success in the MHK program, and classes associated with Level 1 cover important basics like blocking, gauge, selvage tension, yarn selection and the required mitten project. Level 2 builds on those basic skills, so students interested in this level take classes in picking up stitches, stranding techniques for Fair Isle, seaming and avoiding common mistakes. Students interested in

more advanced topics choose classes associated with Level 3: Austrian/Bavarian knitting, tubular cast-on and bind-off, duplicate stitch and designing patterns for hats and sweaters. Other advanced options include pattern sizing using spreadsheets, technical editing and tips for knitting instructors. Students also participate in discussions of shared experiences in the MHK program and the sharing of favorite tips and tricks. This year in Dallas, all the students came back together for an overview of other key information about the program and a discussion about what the reviewers are looking for in submissions.

There are so many accomplished knitters in the world. Are you one of them? Spending a day with like-minded knitters at Masters Day will tell you whether you have the right stuff to obtain MHK certification, which will prove your abilities to yourself and the rest of the world. And with the success of the reboot in April, you can count on Masters Day taking place as an annual event.

The Knitting Guild Association (TKGA) is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting knitting. Its official publication is *Cast On* magazine, published quarterly.

**NOTIONS MARKETING**  
Global Creative Arts Distributor

YOUR DISTRIBUTOR FOR ALL THINGS  
*Knit & Crochet*

- Yarn
- Needles & Hooks
- 1,000+ Books
- Crochet Thread
- Organizers
- Tools & Gifts

*Find it all here!*  
150,000+ Products • 1,200+ Brands  
notionsmarketing.com • 616.243.8424 • 800.748.0250

*From Flat to Fabulous!*

**NICKY EPSTEIN**  
**Knit a Square**  
*Create a Cuddly Creature*

FROM FLAT TO FABULOUS • A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Let **NICKY EPSTEIN** show you how to create more than 35 cuddly three-dimensional critters from a simple knitted square.



## Full Steam Ahead

**A**s the new president of the Crochet Guild of America, I can tell you that CGOA sees only great things ahead. Working with our new management company, Celtic, we have done some organizational restructuring, bringing more of our volunteers into the fold of operations, enhancing our general and business membership levels, and streamlining processes, all while engaging more crocheters in more places.

These volunteers are dedicated to specific areas: social media, marketing, membership benefits and conference planning. With these new areas of focus, CGOA has been able to find new opportunities to engage the public. For example, CGOA hosted four crochet-alongs in March to honor National Crochet Month; had an on-site presence at the DFW Fiber Fest, teaching a CGOA Masters Day in April; and helped organize local chapters to help cancer patients with the annual Chapter Challenge.

These committees have helped CGOA gain a broader focus. All of these events occurred

as we gear up for a successful Chainlink conference in Portland, Oregon, July 25–28. We are offering more classes, from more teachers, with more events than ever before, as we continue to provide education to industry professionals and striving crochet Masters. We will recognize the historic contributors to the development of crochet and highlight the unique artisans of the craft. With the success and growth of our conferences over the past five years, we are confident that this show will be a success.

We have also just released a new Masters program, Fundamentals of Crochet. This program is available in addition to the Advanced Stitches and Techniques program we have offered since 2010, but varies from it in a few unique ways. The Fundamentals program, for beginners and more seasoned crafters, is geared toward teaching and instruction, offering in-depth instruction in the basics: pattern reading, understanding gauge, knowing stitch locations, blocking, finishing techniques. Upon completion of the swatches and questions in both of these programs, the

candidate submits his or her portfolio to the CGOA Masters Review Committee for evaluation, where two experts review and critique the work. If all swatches and questions are executed correctly, the candidate is recognized as a Master by the CGOA.

Historically, the Advanced Stitches and Techniques program has given crocheters more confidence in their work, empowering them to take crochet to the next level. For some, it has meant becoming crochet instructors, crochet designers and even crochet bloggers; for others, it has simply made them more secure in their own abilities.

As 2018 progresses, expect to see CGOA in more places, more often. As our new structure continues to evolve and we work to engage with our membership, we continue to look to the future—a 2019 conference in the New England area, working up a new Masters program focused on thread, and continued membership growth. Please visit [crochet.org](http://crochet.org) to learn about all that CGOA has to offer.

The Crochet Guild of America promotes the education, art and heritage of crochet. For more information, visit [crochet.org](http://crochet.org).



zing  
ADD Color TO Life

*Gorgeous Light Metal Needles  
from*

**KNITTER'S<sup>TM</sup>**  
**P R I D E**

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



# Host With the Most

BY MARY MCGURN

Plan and create events on Facebook as a new way to reach customers.

**D**o you host events as a way to market your business? No, you say? You may not realize it, but you likely do—with a regular knit night, classes, field trips and more. The question is, are you using Facebook Events to promote your function, to invite guests, to share the action as it is happening and to capture engaging moments for posterity?

## What Is an Event on Facebook?

No, it's not a virtual sit-and-knit. Creating an event on Facebook is simply a way to publicly announce an in-person event, complete with descriptive details. You can invite guests to your event from among Facebook's users: your Facebook friends and, if you pay to advertise, a targeted audience of the platform's users.

Beyond this basic definition, Facebook Events is a way for invited guests to extend your invitation to others, upping your attendance figures, and to share it on their own timelines, where it can drive further awareness of your page and brand. You can use the Events page to stir up conversation ahead of an event through posts under the event's discussion tab; the posts to the discussion are shared with all guests who RSVP. And if you want, you can use the event to live-stream your gathering, earning you greater on-page engagement during and after.

Events are a popular feature. According to Facebook, 490 million people use Facebook Events each month; 41 percent of Facebook users in the United States engage with public events each month; and 35 million people view a public event each day. An independent study on social media usage found that 62 percent of respondents use Facebook to learn about a live event; among millennials, the number increases to 72 percent.

## Getting Set Up

First, think about the visuals. The best way to catch people's attention is with a good header video or photo that represents your event. Both video and photo should be at least 1920 x 1080 pixels (16:9 ratio). Visuals with a smaller ratio can appear cropped or incomplete. If you place text on your visual, make sure it is legible, but if you will be boosting your event with Facebook Ads, make sure the text does not cover more than 20 percent of the space. If

your text exceeds this amount, it will be shown to far less of your audience or may be refused outright. To check the percentage, use Facebook's text overlay tool ([facebook.com/ads/tools/text\\_overlay](https://facebook.com/ads/tools/text_overlay)).

Pick a clear, short and memorable name for your event. You are given 140 characters, but try not to use them all. Avoid using location information, as it's provided elsewhere. Make the name relevant to the event. Be grammatically correct. Set a location that corresponds to a Facebook page (yours or the venue's page) or a Facebook-suggested location, which will help people nearby discover your event. The address you provide also helps people who use Facebook's Local App (see sidebar) to discover your event. Be sure to tie your event to a specific date and time, which also aids in discovery.

Include a concise description with important information such as age requirement (if applicable) or, if it's a workshop, required materials. If your event features a special guest, tag them so people can learn more about them. Use keywords for tags. Adding tags allows Facebook to recommend your event to users based on their interests. Consider adding co-hosts, who can edit the event, add it to their calendars and promote it. (Co-hosts can be Facebook friends or other pages for which you are an Administrator.)

## Promote, Promote, Promote

On your shop's page, reorder your tabs to bring the Events tab higher, making it more visible to page visitors. On your Events tab, be sure you've checked the permissions to automate "Publish new events to timeline" and "Show official events on calendar." You'll find both under the gear icon. Invite any and all Facebook friends who may have an interest in your event. Ask them to invite similarly interested friends and to share your event on their timelines. Consider asking employees to do the same with their own Facebook friends, and remind the event's co-hosts and tagged special guests or speakers to do so as well.

Build excitement around your event by posting about it to the Events wall. You can choose to allow only hosts to post or let others post with a Page Administrator's approval. Spark conversation with a live broadcast teasing what will happen at the event. Use Facebook Live during the event and encourage attendees to broadcast too. (Note: Be sure attendees have access to

free WiFi in this case.)

Either boost your event right from the Events tab, or create an ad campaign through Ads Manager using the objective of "Get More Responses." Along with getting more attendees, you might also gain new page fans. And with new fans comes even more reach for your next event. With your event over, the opportunity still exists to promote it and your business. Spark conversation by sharing any media coverage that celebrates what was accomplished. Remember, half the effort associated with realizing a well-attended event is in marketing it. When it comes to marketing that creates the desired buzz and attendance, Facebook Events ranks at the top.

## Facebook's Local App

**Local is a free stand-alone app (iOS and Android) from Facebook that helps users discover what is happening soon and nearby. It offers information about places, provides recommendations from friends and lists happenings in your community or another community of your choosing.**

Open up the app and you're greeted with an icon menu for a quick search of places like restaurants, cafés and bars, plus a scrolling list of nearby events—the same events taken from Facebook pages and groups. Scroll further and you'll see the events your friends are interested in. Tabs let you focus your search for events by the day and by guides that explore events by interest categories.

Tap on a second section of the app and you'll see a map of your location populated with red bubbles, each denoting an event. There are filters to aid your geographic search. Select one of the bubbles, and the event pops up on the lower portion of your screen.

Lastly, the app gives you a personalized calendar populated by the Facebook events you've indicated you'll be attending or in which you have an interest.

Mary McGurn of McGurn Media creates, manages and strategizes social media accounts for small businesses and nonprofits and, as a photographer/videographer, creates visual stories for digital platforms.



# SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

# NEW PRODUCTS

## SCENTS AND SENSIBILITIES



Eucalan's Wrapture Delicate Wash is like a beauty treatment for your fibers and an aromatherapy treat for you. Fill your home with the exquisite aroma of night-blooming jasmine. Laundry has never been easier. Simply soak and squeeze, then lay garments flat to dry. [www.eucalan.com](http://www.eucalan.com)

**EUCALAN®**

## SOLO PROJECTS

A new approach to single-ply yarn. Solo is a soft and silky 100% merino wool with a specially designed single-ply twist for better knitting results. Artfil yarns come in an array of ecologically hand-dyed colorways. [www.artfil.ca](http://www.artfil.ca)



## LET'S TWIST AGAIN

The newest addition to ChiaoGoo's TWIST interchangeable system includes 2" and 3" shortie tips to make circulars from 9" to 14" long. The set includes tip sizes 0-3, three different-length mini cables, a tiny needle gauge, stoppers, connectors and tightening keys. [www.chiaogoo.com](http://www.chiaogoo.com)



**ChiaoGoo**  
Premium Knitting and Crochet Tools

## WRIST WATCHER

Cocoknits' Maker's Keep silicone slap bracelet sports a brushed-steel-plated magnet, has measuring lines for inches and centimeters on the underside, and fits any size wrist. Accessories (including the cable needle pictured) are available individually. [store.cocoknits.com/tools/makers-keep](http://store.cocoknits.com/tools/makers-keep)



## A CUT ABOVE

Nirvana Needle Arts presents four new scissors to show off your wild side. [www.KnittingZone.com](http://www.KnittingZone.com)



**Nirvana**  
Needle Arts

## WIND 'EM UP

Our Wool Winder is beautifully handcrafted to perfection using a combination of colorful laminated and natural birch wood. Finest quality bearings provide a super-smooth winding experience. [www.knitterspride.com](http://www.knitterspride.com)



**KNITTER'S™**  
P R I D E



# Give It Away Now

Using generosity marketing to build your brand.

BY MARI CHIBA LUKE

**Y**ou've most likely heard the phrase "generosity marketing" when referring to content marketing. But what does it actually mean? How do you attract customers if you don't sell to them?

Generosity marketing is based on the sociological exchange theory that posits that when someone gives you something, you feel inclined to reciprocate—a natural inclination for nearly all people. Regarding retail sales, the thinking goes that if you give away your best content for free, your customers will become open and accustomed to receiving your generous offerings. Eventually, when you offer a product for sale, they already like and trust you and your brand. This is the stage at which a sales conversion is most likely to happen.

Being generous with your knowledge, services or even products proves your value to customers, gains their trust and keeps them coming back for more, while constantly barraging them with messages to "buy, buy, buy" only serves to alienate them. According to the Content Marketing Institute, in 1984 a person saw an average of 2,000 ads per day; by 2014, that average had risen to 5,000. Given this onslaught, your customers may quickly tune out your message, along with the rest of the ads they've seen that day, and defect to a brand that provides them with the value they seek.

## Implementing Generosity Marketing

There are many ways to engage in generosity marketing, but be careful that these "gives" aren't solely about your company. A discount, sale or contest isn't a form of generosity; your customers will understand immediately that they are a grab for sales and email addresses. Below are a few examples of easily implemented generosity marketing:

**A show of social commitment.** A donation of a portion of sales to a cause or free product for every purchase (like donating shoes to children in need for every pair sold).

**A return on social engagement.** Many brands reward customers who share their products on social media. Similar to word-of-mouth recommendations, social media shares allow your valued customers to advocate for your brand to a much wider audience with just a few clicks. You can reward these customers with a personal

acknowledgement, a freebie or something else.

**A reward for loyalty.** Frequent-shopper rewards or points systems for your best customers can create goodwill. Exclusives—private events, VIP content, pre-sale invitations—are another way to reward loyalty.

**A sharing of knowledge.** Share free tutorials, valuable tips and tricks, ebooks and mini classes. Whatever your expertise is in spinning, weaving, knitting, crocheting or another fiber craft, share some of that knowledge for free with your target consumers.

**Give it away.** Free patterns or product samples or a free trial access to your services lets customers see the quality of your product firsthand.

## Tips for Increasing Results

As with any other marketing effort, you'll need to monitor the return on investment. Plan for and limit the amount of time you spend or the quantity of product you give away as part of your generosity marketing plan. If your plan is to pro-

increase the impact of your freebies by showing people how to share. Include a hashtag, ask people to tag your brand, then measure how many mentions you receive as a result of the free product giveaway. The good news is, according to an article in the *Journal of Marketing*, people who get a product for free talk about it 20 percent more than items they purchase.

When choosing which generosity marketing campaign might be the best fit for your company, first consider the goal. Are you trying to reengage existing customers, grow brand awareness, share your company ethos or build your contact list? Then consider the resources you have available and the possible long-term benefits. Although tutorials and free content are time-consuming to create, they are evergreen, meaning you can promote them in perpetuity.

Have I convinced you to give generosity marketing a try? This strategy may initially give you pause, but in an age of ever-increasing white noise, it's easy to understand that people more

## Calculating Your Cost Per Lead

**One way to calculate your return on investment is to look at your cost per lead for each generosity marketing campaign you run. The formula is: cost of content (time + hard costs) / number of leads. For example, you create a free pattern that requires an email signup to your newsletter. To calculate the cost per lead, add up the costs of creating/purchasing a pattern, plus any digital advertising you purchased to promote it, then divide that sum by the number of emails you captured. If your generosity campaign isn't gated—a YouTube tutorial, for instance—you'll have to think about how you'll quantify a lead. You could do this with links to an accompanying free download, or something else that will help you capture emails.**

vide free tutorials, limit them to once a month or once per quarter. Then track the amount of time you spend on creating the content, promoting the content, the number of leads you acquire and the number of sales you make. Also keep track of the comments and questions you get, as these are valuable insights into the interests and concerns of your customers. Collect testimonials from those you help for free just as you would from paying customers. Finally, make sure that your content is clearly and consistently branded so that it's easy for people to go from free content to contacting you and then to buying.

If you're giving away free product, limit the number of products you're going to distribute.

readily respond to brand messaging that benefits them personally.

Remember why you started your business. Like many in the fiber-arts industry, you have a passion for what you do, and your ideal customers do as well. Finding and connecting with these passionate crafters is key. Countless customers want and need your product, so how are you going to set yourself apart and convince them that your brand is different from the rest?

**Mari Chiba Luke** writes knitting patterns and works with crafty businesses to share their products with the world at [Stitchcraft Marketing](#).



# SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

# NEW PRODUCTS

## MADE IN THE USA

The Monticello Collection (75% cotton/25% imported French linen), available in 2-ply and 3-ply weights, is kettle-dyed by hand in Virginia. Our yarns are proudly made in the USA and are minimally processed.

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



## WASH & WEAR

Allure all-natural, no-rinse fine fiber and fabric wash is strong enough to remove soil and odors yet gentle enough to guard colors. It comes packaged in a 16-ounce bottle, a TSA-approved 3.4-ounce travel size, and a one-gallon jug.

perfect for those with lots of fiber to clean. Available in two fragrances, Woodland Mist and Prairie Breeze, as well as a fragrance-free option for the scent-sensitive.

[www.bijoubasinranch.com/allure-fiber-wash-1](http://www.bijoubasinranch.com/allure-fiber-wash-1)



## READY, SET, KNIT!

Bursting with value, *60 Quick Knits for Beginners*, the latest in the popular Quick Knits series, is the must-have reference for every new knitter. Includes fashionable skill-building patterns for men, women and children, all knit in durable, machine-washable 220 Superwash from Cascade Yarns.

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



## DYNAMIC DUO



For Trenzado yarn from HiKoo®, a single ply of merino wool is twisted with a single ply of superwash merino, creating a novel, visually complex fiber that appears as two separate shades when entwined. Take it one step further by felting your finished item for a fun textured piece. [www.skacelknitting.com/Trenzado](http://www.skacelknitting.com/Trenzado)



## ORGANICALLY RAISED



Unique and beautiful, Cestari Organic Cotton Wool Yarn, available in 2-ply natural white, is a blend of certified organic cotton and merino wool from flocks raised organically on small ranches in the American West. Supplies are limited. [www.cestarisheep.com](http://www.cestarisheep.com)



## ALL IN ONE

The newest addiClick set is the most comprehensive to date and perfect for the knitter on the go. Included are an entire set of addi® Standard Rocket tips, an addiClick Hook set and addi® accessories galore—all packed in a new purple case. Your customers will love the

flexibility of this all-in-one set.



[www.skacelknitting.com/addi-Click-Sets/addi-Click-Grab-n-Go-Set.html](http://www.skacelknitting.com/addi-Click-Sets/addi-Click-Grab-n-Go-Set.html)



# You're Hired!

BY KIMBERLY AGBAYANI

Staffing your store appropriately can mean good things for your bottom line.

Staffing can be one of the most stressful aspects of running a store. We put trust and faith, and invest time and money, in each person we hire. If we're fortunate, the new staffer will prove to be a good fit. Imagine now that you struck gold with your last hire: She's popular with fellow employees and has developed a following among customers. You've seen an uptick in foot traffic, sales are healthy, and you feel it's time to expand your employee roster again. But can you actually afford another staffer?

## Assess the Costs

Some stores set up shop with the help of investors, who may have laid out requirements in terms of labor budget and net profit. Having a clear grasp of these numbers will reassure investors and, should labor expenses exceed the numbers they anticipated, allow you to explain exactly why the costs are higher. If you are not answering to investors, you have more freedom in terms of where you direct your funds.

## Sales Projections Review

**Sales projections are an educated guess based on previous sales data. When creating a sales projection, more data means a more accurately predictive projection. Use at least three months of recent comparative sales to create a recent average.**

**Comparative sales are exactly that: comparing one sales period with another. When making a projection, you want recent comparative sales. How were July's sales in 2017 compared to July's sales in 2016? To make it simple: July 2016 = \$100; July 2017 = \$115. The equation for determining the comparative sales is:  $[(\text{recent sales}/\text{previous year's sales}) - 1] \times 100 = \text{comparative sales \%}$ . In this example  $[(115/100) - 1] \times 100 = 15\%$  positive sales increase. Comparative sales are not always positive, although we hope for them to be. Project as far out as you can to paint the largest picture possible. As you approach sales periods, you can adjust the projections based on recent sales.**

**Use these educated guesses to make decisions about the level of staffing you will need to support your sales.**

Staffing is costly, representing a significant percentage of where your gross profit is directed. Ultimately, how you manage your staffing expenses will impact your bottom line. A starting point for considering a healthy labor cost percentage is 20 percent or less of gross sales. For a smaller business, however, the number can be closer to 30 percent. The greater the gross sales, the lower one's labor percentage can be.

Median yarn store sales in 2016, based on a TNN survey, was \$125,000. A store earning \$125,000 in gross sales would necessarily need

greater than 20 percent in labor expense to provide regular retail hours.

## Crunch the Numbers

First things first: Determine your minimum staffing needs. Verify the exact number of hours you need coverage for and what those hours would cost in terms of labor. (If your employees are paid at different rates, keep that in mind.) For example, to be staffed with two employees, six days a week, from 10 A.M. to 6:30 P.M.—16 labor hours per day, and a half-hour for lunch—means 112 labor hours per week. If, as an example, the average hourly rate is \$10, your minimum weekly labor cost is \$1,120, plus employer payroll taxes. This is a perfectly acceptable number for a store earning \$300,000 in gross sales yearly, or an average of \$5,770 weekly.

Discovering the percentage of your sales that your minimum labor hours represent will help you determine your target labor percentage. It may be greater than the ballpark of 20 percent, but hope-

fully no greater than 30 percent. To determine your labor cost percentage, use this equation:  $\text{total labor cost}/\text{total sales} \times 100 = \%$ .

Next, look at comparative sales data, so that you can project or predict future sales (see above). Based on these anticipated future sales, you can make an educated guess regarding how much labor you will need to ensure the smooth running of your shop. Using both of these pieces of information can help you determine your labor budget.  $\text{Projected weekly sales} \times .20 \text{ (or } .30) = \text{labor budget}$ .

## Collect More Data

There are a few ways you can use this information to refine your staffing. Try to adhere to your staffing budget, but avoid understaffing. Insufficient staff can cause missed sales and bad feelings among customers. Plan ahead for busy times. Use your POS system to discover the busiest times of the day. Identifying these peak sales times can be a great way to maximize your labor budget so that you have sales associates on the floor when you need them and not there when you don't. For example, two employees, one working an eight-hour shift and another a four-hour shift, could provide you with all the coverage you need based on your peak sales times. Additionally, if you have a larger staff, say three or more, you can see if certain people or teams tend to sell more during their shifts.

Although this may seem overly calculating, it is truly to the benefit of your entire staff to maximize such teams. More sales mean more opportunities to increase wages for all staff members. Observe patterns over the course of the year. Keep a month-to-month record of observations. I keep a spreadsheet that includes all of the sales data that interests me, with an area for notes to understand variances, such as an event that skews the data. When recording these notes, keep track of local events that may impact your sales and thus your staffing needs.

Use this information to predict extra labor needs. Include notes on seasonal staffing requirements. Most stores need more staffing in late fall to early winter. Two more pieces of information can be useful for your recordkeeping and give you a check-in for how things are working: They are "sales per labor dollar"—total labor cost/total sales for any given time period—and "sales per labor hour"—total sales/total labor hours for any given time period. Collecting this information over time can provide you with touchstones for what works and what doesn't, and you will start to see averages.

Whatever the circumstances of the shop you are running, use this information to help you see the big picture of your shop's sales and your staffing needs. It can be very easy to get caught up in a slow day or an outrageously busy day and focus on how those things didn't work. Instead, concentrate on seeing the forest, and don't get lost in the trees.

Kimberly Agbayani is the operations and inventory manager at Tolt Yarn and Wool in Carnation, Washington.



SHEPHERD

# WORSTED



And so much more!



LORNA'S LACES  
HAND-DYED YARNS

*We make pretty string.*

[www.lornaslaces.net](http://www.lornaslaces.net)



**Neko Curved Needles**

## A Double Point REVOLUTION

Say Goodbye to Dropped Stitches



Check out the NekoKnit channel  
on Youtube to see all the  
techniques and tricks...  
Then say GOODBYE to your  
straight double points!!



**Bryson Distributing**  
800-544-8992  
[www.brysonknits.com](http://www.brysonknits.com)



neko

Real, Down-to-Earth  
Yarns Made in  
America's Heartland

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

**Brown Sheep  
Company, Inc.**  
MITCHELL, NEBRASKA



# Group Therapy

BY DARYL BROWER

In-store knitting groups are a great way to build community and boost sales.

Knitting groups are a wonderful thing," says Morgan Hicks of All Points Yarn in Des Moines, Washington. "They allow the free flowing of ideas and peer inspiration to further the skills and appreciations of participants. Shop owners can use the time to be with their customers and share their expertise." In the perfect yarn-shop world, these gatherings encourage customers to connect with staff and each other, building brand loyalty. Customers leave inspired and empowered to try more challenging projects—and buy more yarn. But there are downsides as well: Knitters arrive for the sessions with yarn purchased elsewhere or side-step technique classes in favor of free help; others may form cliques and shun newcomers. To create an atmosphere that fosters community and inclusiveness, consider the following.

## Shore Up Support

Knit and crochet sessions take two basic forms: open get-togethers during which customers work and chat among themselves with little or no support from store staff, and more structured sessions at which a staff member lends advice and instruction. Hicks is partial to the latter: "We've found that people are more respectful and more likely to adhere to the 'rules' of being a group member when staff are present to answer questions and offer guidance." At Ball & Skein & More in Cambria, California, things tend to be more informal. Says owner Oz Barron, "We don't charge a fee, and folks are encouraged to bring any project they're working on, regardless of where they bought the materials. We don't provide formal instruction, but someone is always around to help."

At Cream City Yarn in Brookfield, Wisconsin, owners Kris Porritt and Lisa Ruesch have split the difference: A staff member is on hand to help the group that meets on Tuesdays; Sunday sessions run without a facilitator. "The Sunday afternoon Open Knit was designed to establish a community within our store," explains Porritt. "We have a lot of classes during the week, and [Sunday] was an open time at the teaching table. Our Tuesday 'Knit with Sue' was established so we could offer free help to customers on an ongoing basis."

Staffed or not, groups do need some way to check members who get carried away with questions. "We're available to help [our knitting groups], time permitting, and are delighted to do so, but

we do have a business to run," says Oz Barron. "So we make that clear. Folks have been very understanding, by and large." Ruesch says that assigning a staffer to the sessions makes the balance easier. "Should the group get too big, run out of time or need more help, [a staff representative] will suggest that customers return the following week or schedule a private lesson," she says.

Morgan Hicks points out that no matter how a group is structured, shop owners need to be mindful of how people are interacting, both with each other and with would-be members. If a group becomes too insular, he says, "Newcomers find they can't join 'because the group is full,' or are isolated socially, either intentionally or unintentionally." Oz Barron believes it's the responsibility of the shop owner to nip problems in the bud. "We're adamant that there are no cliques or saved seats," he says.

## Charge Ahead?

Should a yarn shop charge a fee for sit-and-knit sessions? Customers are fans of "free," for obvious

## Finding Space

Where the sessions are held can be just as important as how they are structured. Some shops sequester groups in the store's classroom, giving participants space to focus solely on stitching and socializing and separating them from the sales floor staff. Other shops hold sessions on the sales floor, gathering customers around a table or in a circle of chairs.

At Ball & Skein & More, sessions take place at a worktable located near the windows at the front of the store, in full view of passersby. "Having some activity at the front of the shop adds a level of excitement," says Barron. "People walking by often pop in to find out what's going on. We've converted quite a few people that way, as they see how much fun it is and how easy it can be." Cream City also uses a teaching table, but it's off to the side in the shop's retail space, a location that Porritt and Ruesch believe helps build sales. "When customers are waiting to get their questions answered, they often wander around and

## Dos and Don'ts for Successful Sessions

- **Make sure everyone feels welcome.** Regular groups can get clique-y if you're not careful. **Don't allow customers to save seats and be sure to introduce newcomers to the regulars.**
- **Establish clear boundaries.** If you expect knitters to clear the table at a certain time, say so. **If staff help will be available only when time allows, state that from the start. Describe the sessions in your newsletter or class listing so everyone knows what to expect.**
- **Don't be afraid to say "no" to snacking.** If you don't want to worry about someone's latte landing on the carpet or cream cheese ending up in the cashmere, enforce a no-food-or-drinks rule or limit the kinds of snacks and beverages that can be brought in.
- **Find a balance between helping at the table and on the sales floor.** Finding everyone—storeowner included—grouped around a table can disconcert walk-in customers. Ideally you should be able to assign one staffer to the table and another to help on the sales floor.

reasons, but not charging could be beneficial for stores as well. "We don't charge, as our goal is to help new knitters get started without getting frustrated [and to keep people knitting]," says Oz Barron. Group members' VIPs often cause a flurry of excitement—and spending—among the rest of the group. Morgan Hicks, on the other hand, thinks that a small fee for sessions can help counter the cliques that can crop up in more loosely organized groups. A fee, he says, tends to encourage better behavior and acceptance of house rules. Charging a fee may also make it easier to justify assigning a staffer to guide the group.

get inspired by samples in the shop," says Porritt. More often than not, this leads to a sale and perhaps, more importantly, builds goodwill. "Customers coming in see people at the table and are impressed that we offer free help time and have such good attendance," she says. "It encourages them to come back."

Daryl Brower is a freelance editor and writer based in New Jersey. Currently, her knitting group consists of a puppy more interested in eating the yarn than learning stitches and a husband and two teenagers who aren't interested in it at all.





# VOGUE KNITTING

## EXPERIENCE KNITTING Like Never Before!

Only we bring you the BEST of the knitting world

### ATTEND VOGUE KNITTING LIVE

#### SAN FRANCISCO

Hilton San Francisco  
Union Square

September 21-23, 2018

#### MINNEAPOLIS

Minneapolis Convention Center

November 9-11, 2018

#### NEW YORK

New York Marriott Marquis

January 25-27, 2019

### VISIT UNIQUE DESTINATIONS

HONESDALE, PENNSYLVANIA • May 31-June 3, 2018

Knitting Skills Boot Camp: Patty Lyons, Amy Detjen, Nicky Epstein

BLOCK ISLAND, RHODE ISLAND • June 10-13, 2018

with Franklin Habit and North Light Fibers

ONTARIO, CANADA • October 11-14, 2018

Koigu Wool Designs with Taiu Landra

OGDEN, UTAH • October 25-28, 2018

Cook & Create with Norah Gaughan and Nancy Bush

PORTLAND, OREGON • November 1-4, 2018

Behind the yarns: Visit Brooklyn Tweed and Shibui Knits

PORTLAND, MAINE • April 4-7, 2019

with Joji Locatelli, Veera Välimäki, Bristol Ivy,  
Mary Jane Mucklestone, Clara Parkes and Tess' Designer Yarns

### JOIN OUR INTERNATIONAL TOURS

Argentina and Uruguay

October 20-30, 2018

Pack your yarn & needles and sign up now

[Vogueknittinglive.com](http://Vogueknittinglive.com)



# RETAIL PROFILE

BY DARYL BROWER

## Westport Yarns Westport, Connecticut



Beth Schaefer learned to knit at her local Fairfield County, Connecticut, yarn shop. Drawn in by the friendly service and wide selection of yarn, she frequented the place for years. When owner Cynthia Crescenzo announced that she was giving up the business and moving out of state, Schaefer wasn't concerned. "I figured someone would buy the shop and keep it going," she says.

**B**ut as closing day approached and a buyer had still not been found, Schaefer made an impulsive decision. "I agreed to buy the place literally one day before it was scheduled to close," she says.

That was in 2011. Seven years later, Schaefer has no regrets. "I was getting ready to retire when the yarn shop's owner decided to sell, and I thought that owning a yarn store would be an interesting retirement job," she says. "As it turns out, running a yarn store is just as absorbing and challenging as my former career." While she won't say the transition was simple, the path from Wall Street to wool was made easier by the store's employees, the same women who had taught Schaefer to knit. "All of the key people agreed to stay," Schaefer explains. "I couldn't have done it without them." Danni Conway, the store's first employee, is now Schaefer's busi-

ness partner. "She helps bring discipline to my ordering process," Schaefer says.

Schaefer encourages her staff to think and act like owner/operators. "We all develop our own set of customers and get to know their skill levels and what they like to knit," she says. "We try to have two or three of us in the shop at all times so we have time to pay attention to everyone." Each staff member has a business card to hand out and the autonomy to help out, a move that Schaefer says is a boon on both sides of the register. "Customers know who their 'person' is," she says. "It makes them feel special, and it builds loyalty to the shop." Staffers in turn know that they are seen as essential to the growth and success of the shop. Along with building customer relations, they determine what the store will stock. Schaefer sets the budget for yarn buying, and the staff weigh in. "A majority vote carries the decision," Schaefer explains. "I've found that this is a much better way to run the store, instead of me viewing it as my own stash that I choose to share with customers."

The yarns Westport stocks are medium to high end: Artyarns, Northlight Fibers, Anzula and the Fibre Company are perennial favorites. Workhorse yarns come from Brooklyn Tweed, Plymouth, Berroco and Knitting Fever. "Plymouth Merino Superwash is what keeps the lights on," she says, laughing. "We try to keep the store extremely orderly," Schaefer continues. "Yarns are arranged by gauge, and each shelf is marked with the yarn name, gauge, needle size, yardage and price. Being able to find what you need quickly increases the probability that a customer will make a purchase."

Model garments are plentiful—one for just about every yarn—and are, like the yarns, vetted by the staff. "We know the [ready-to-wear] stores our customers shop in and the particular look they're trying to achieve," Schaefer explains. "We scope out the local fashion stores and translate what we see into samples that are stylish and relatively easy to knit for an advanced-beginner to intermediate knitter, as those are the customers who make up about 80 percent of our business." For patterns, the store relies on Ravelry and the talented staff. "All of the samples are available either as a buy-in-store Ravelry pattern or a pattern that we've written ourselves," Schaefer

says. "It gives us the opportunity to spend more time with our customers, which is far more productive in terms of nailing the best choice of pattern for them."

Having great yarn and great pattern support is essential to sales, but Schaefer is adamant that it takes more than that to be successful. "We all sell nice yarn," she points out. "You need something that makes your store unique." So what sets Westport Yarns apart? "What makes us special is our deep sense of community," Schaefer says. "We never lose track of the fact that customers always have the choice of going to a big box craft store or shopping online. If we don't work hard at making their experience at the store one that they clearly see as fun, helpful and worth their time and money, they won't come back or recommend us to their friends and family, which is by far the easiest way to add new customers."

Support in the way of lessons and classes is plentiful, and the staff even take teaching on the road, hosting a weekly knitting session at the café in the local Whole Foods market. They host free technique workshops in the summer, a Sunday breakfast club, a Tuesday morning group, a Thursday sit-and-knit, and more. A yarn crawl with five other area shops and a yearly knitting retreat round out the offerings. It's all part of the store's effort to connect to customers and have them, in turn, connect to the store and staff.

"We engage each person who comes in," Schaefer says. "Some just want to browse, so we leave them to do so, but the overwhelming majority want to share their stories about why they are knitting. There are so many stories out there, and we are here to listen. My husband says we're like bartenders, and it's true. Knitting is comfort for many people, and coming to a place that reflects the reasons they're knitting is what it's all about."

### Westport Yarns

582 Post Road East, Westport, CT 06880;  
www.westportyarns.com

**Years in business:** 13 (7 under Schaefer)  
**Staff:** 6

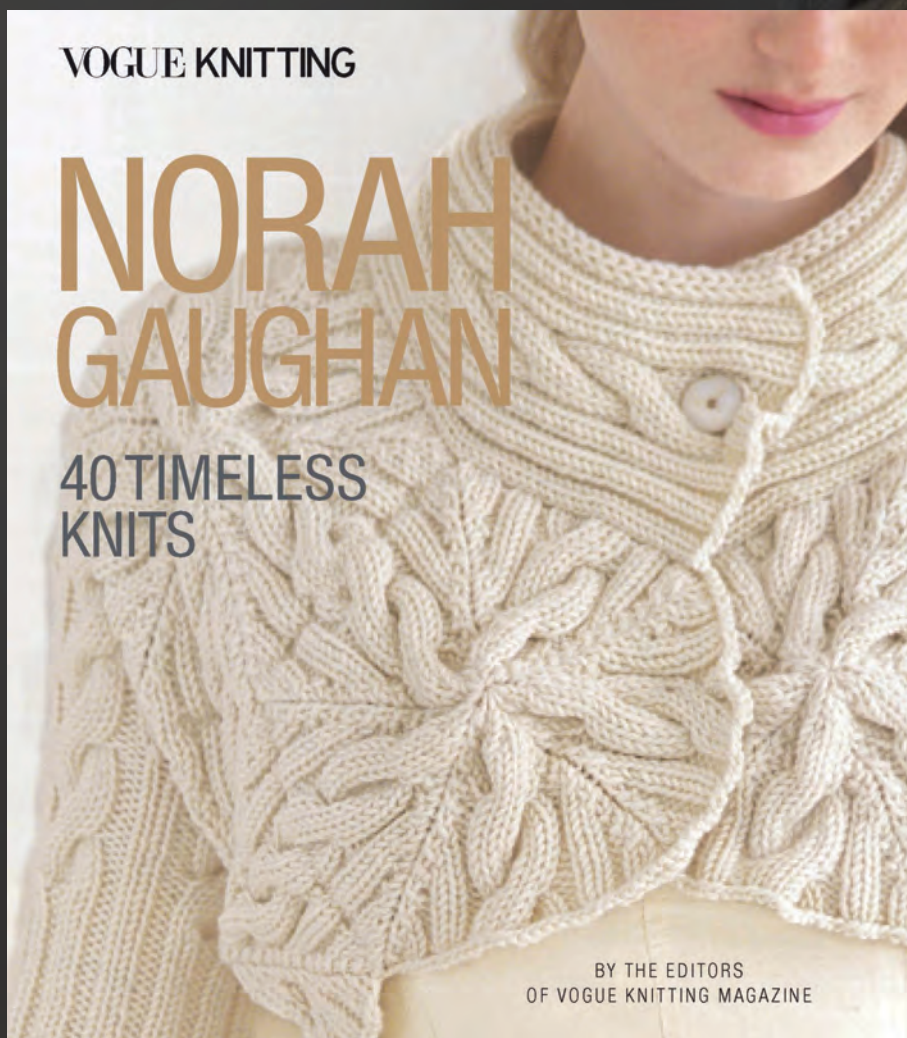
**Square footage:** 600 square feet

**Hours:** Monday: 11 a.m.–3 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 12 p.m.–4 p.m.

QUICK  
GLANCE



Celebrate **30 years** of stunning textures, mesmerizing cables and innovative constructions with 40 of **Norah Gaughan's** most memorable designs from **Vogue Knitting**.



ISBN 978-1-64021-027-1 • Hardcover • \$24.95 • 176 pages

"[This book] embodies the best of Norah Gaughan's brilliant career and is a must-have for every knitter's library, both for the creative patterns and the inspiration...." —Deborah Newton

"I have followed Norah's designing career from the very beginning.... [She] is indeed one of knitting's great treasures." —Meg Swansen

"Norah specs her proportions to fit and to flatter a variety of body types. Her muse seems to be the knitter herself." —Margery Winter

"[Norah's] avid curiosity and enduring commitment to our craft has enriched the world of knitting in ways rarely achieved by a single designer." —Jared Flood

On sale  
September 4



sixth&springbooks



# COMPANY PROFILE

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

## Kelbourne Woolens

"Kate [Gagnon Osborn] and I are both lifelong knitters and have never shied away from learning new things. If you're not constantly challenging yourself and trying and failing, you're not living your best life," says Courtney Kelley, co-founder of Kelbourne Woolens.

The Philadelphia-based yarn company (and BC Garn distributor) was founded in 2008 specifically to be the distributor of The Fibre Co. yarns, Kelley explains, and the women threw themselves into the challenge after signing a 10-year contract, being hands-on with everything from customer service and pattern support to website design and maintenance. That relationship ended this spring.

"[The partnership] was a great way to dive headfirst into the day-to-day running of a yarn company," Kelley says. "Working on the retail end in local yarn shops, as well as designing, gave us really great insight into all facets of the industry."

The mission of their company is to create yarns and patterns for people who love the craft as much as they do. "We would never make or carry anything we don't want to knit with ourselves, and it's important to us that we are knitters and crocheters. From the very beginning, Kate and I promised we would never dumb things down, that we would have faith in the ability and drive of our customers. I think both our yarns and our designs speak to that."

It's been a priority for Osborn and Kelley to be a source of information and inspiration for their customers. On their website, they offer a comprehensive selection of skill-building tutorials and patterns. "No one should feel excluded from knitting for lack of knowledge or resources," Kelley says. "We were all newbies at some point, and I

think it's important to keep that in mind."

When it comes to supporting yarn-shop sales, the duo offer a diverse selection of trunk shows. "Shops love trunk shows, and I don't blame them," Kelley says. "They're a great way to drive business into your store and get people to buy a projects' worth of yarn. I often get pictures back of the garments being beautifully displayed in the shops. Our only problem is that we often only have one or two sets of garments."

Kelley says the company's growth has intentionally been slow and steady. "We're pretty risk-averse," she says. Though Kelbourne Woolens runs its own online shop, most of its customers are North American yarn shops. "We'll be expanding the online shop in 2018, and including a wholesale back end for our retailers," Kelley says.

Still, the duo kicked off the year in a big way. Kelbourne Woolens was appointed the North American distributor for Denmark's BC Garn, carrying seven products from the luxury yarn company, including linen, tussah silk and organic wool. And to uphold BC Garn's Global Organic Textile Standard certification, Osborn and Kelley had their warehouse GOTS certified. "GOTS certification is not just about the wool; the manufacturing and social conditions of the manufacturing are considered, too. We're proud to be able to support that," Osborn told *YMN* in an earlier interview.

The company also launched its first proprietary yarn. Called Andorra, it's a 2-ply merino, Highland wool, mohair blend available in 12 colors. To complement the launch, the team designed six patterns that show off the yarn's range, from Evangelina, a lace shawl, to the textured Bernadette turtleneck.

"We have done a lot of soul searching about what we as consumers of knitting and craft products would buy, and we really wanted to create and align ourselves with something that felt

authentic—something that we would walk into an LYS and buy," says Kelley of the company's own yarn line. "Maybe it's because we're an office full of millennials and GenXers, but we really wanted to create yarns we wanted to knit with, that were marketed to us, with designs we'd want to make and wear for years to come. We figured that most of our crafting friends felt the same way, so these yarns are made with a lot of thought to both value and beauty."

Kelbourne Woolens' Andorra yarn will be joined by three others by year's end. "For our 10-year anniversary we are launching a new yarn for each of the four seasons, with Andorra for winter and Scout for spring. Each yarn will have its own dedicated collection and trunk show designed by us," Kelley says. "The yarns we're launching this year really speak to who Kelbourne is as a company. They are quintessentially us."

Despite their recent growth, Kelley says she and Osborn are taking things one day at a time and are particular about where they set their ambitions. "Being flexible to our own and the industry's needs is something that has served us well, and we're not the kind of people who would do a thing because it's how we've always done it," she says. "In 10 years I don't know what we'll be doing, but hopefully we'll still knitting and still be extremely happy doing it."

**Address:** 228 Krams Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19127

**Employees:** 4 full-time, 1 part-time

**Fun fact:** The "Kelbourne" in Kelbourne Woolens is a portmanteau of Courtney's last name, Kelley, and Kate's last name, Osborn. The "u" and "e" were added because they thought "ourne" looked fancier than "orn."

"Our customer accounts manager is named Meghan Kelly, but we promise your last name doesn't have to be Kelly (or Kelley) or Osborn (or Osbourne) for you to work here," says Kelley.



Courtney Kelley (left) and Kate Gagnon Osborn





Explore the  
creative  
possibilities of  
this timeless  
stitch

ROSEMARY DRYSDALE

# SEED STITCH

beyond knit 1, purl 1



ON SALE  
NOW

60 innovative swatches  
and more than 30 projects,  
including pillows, cowls,  
bags and sweaters.

Follow us  
[@sixthandspringbooks](#)



sixth&springbooks  
[sixthandspring.com](http://sixthandspring.com)



# CHAIN R•E•A•C•T•I•O•N



Is crochet the best way  
to reach younger customers?  
A number of stores  
are testing the theory.

By Daryl Brower

Many moons ago, back when I was on the staff of *Vogue Knitting*, we headed out to a TNNA show, excited to show off a special issue devoted entirely to crochet. The year was 1994. The fashion forecasts told us the craft was hot and getting hotter, and our issue was packed with runway-worthy designs. We had a big, beautiful blowup of the magazine's cover—the model was Sylvester Stallone's then-girlfriend, now wife, Jennifer Flavin—to hang from the rafters, and mannequins dressed in samples from the issue were artfully arranged in the booth. We walked onto the show floor on opening day enthusiastic about what our booth had to offer and eager to get feedback from shop owners.

And boy, did we get feedback. Some shop owners clearly thought a knitting magazine featuring crochet patterns was sacrilege and weren't shy about sharing that sentiment. "Why is this here?" was a common refrain. "You're a *knitting* magazine."

Not all of the feedback was negative, however; plenty of people were excited by the designs. But we were surprised by the vehemence of those who did not embrace the idea. Clearly, in the minds of some shop owners, there was a line separating those who knit and those who crochet (and the kinds of stores who cater

to each), and we had crossed it.

In the ensuing years, the us-against-them mentality of knitters versus crocheters has eased considerably. Issues of high-end knitting magazines now regularly devote pages to crochet designs; those clicking through patterns on Ravelry have their choice of stylish options in each medium; and countless books, blogs and YouTube videos demonstrate how crochet can be chic or cool or kitschy. Industry reports show that the number of crocheters is growing, but some stores still resist, saying crochet "isn't for their customers." The notion that knitting is somehow more upscale





or more worthy still prevails—and it's a notion that could be losing you sales.

"I think crochet is more popular than people realize," says Marnie MacLean, an independent designer based in Portland, Oregon. "The community may have been a little more reluctant—at first—to embrace online pattern sales, and that may have given the impression that there was a smaller market, but that's no longer the case." MacLean started selling crochet patterns in 2013 and has seen a steady uptick in sales. "Crochet patterns represent a small percentage of

### Millennial Magic

At Westport Yarns in Westport, Connecticut, owner Beth Schaefer has made a deliberate decision to become far more "crochet conscious." Beefing up her crochet offerings is a key aspect of her plans for the shop's future. "I believe that as a store, we have not paid anywhere near enough attention to crocheters," she explains. She's now doing so, with an eye toward the younger customers who currently frequent her shop and the countless additional clients she thinks crochet will lure in.

should make the effort," she says. "I think there's still the thinking that crochet is a lesser craft. We have some work ahead of us in that regard, but we look forward to it."

There's certainly a point to be made in favor of enticing younger customers with crochet. Millennials, as Schaefer points out, don't have the history that couples crochet solely with craft yarn. For them, crochet conjures up the stunning pieces made by Sophie Digard or the crazy cool of the colorful tunics and tops on display at Coachella, not scratchy granny-square afghans in shades of orange and

## Five Ideas for CROCHET CACHET

**Show it off.** As with knits, samples are key to selling your customers on the craft. Get yourself a good selection of model garments and keep them front and center with the knitwear. Crocheters will know you care about their craft, and your knits-only crowd will be inspired to try something new.

**Offer options.** Think beyond shawls and sweaters. Crochet lends itself to any number of interesting projects, from structured bags to baskets and jewelry. Branch out. Theme some special events—trunk shows, yarn tastings, workshops—around crochet to let customers know you value their interest in it. If you can work materials other than yarn into the mix—wire and thread, for example—so much the better.

**Help out.** Add crochet to your class list and give customers choices—and don't just stick to a basic beginner class. Branch out with project-based courses or specific stitches, and entice knitters with a class in different edges and finishes. If your shop offers sit-and-stitch or open-help hours, make it clear that crocheters are welcome and that there will be someone on hand who can offer advice.

**Staff up.** If crochet isn't your strong suit, bring in someone who knows it inside and out. Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm (which leads to sales), so it pays to have at least one staffer in-store who knows his or her stuff.

**Free your mind.** If you're one of those shop owners hanging on to preconceived notions about what crochet is and isn't, try letting go. You might find that both you and your customers are craving something new, and crochet is the way to get there.

the patterns I sell," she says, "but in general they sell better than their representation would suggest."

Many of those just as, or perhaps even more, eager to chain daisies as they are to tackle brioche stitch are part of that most coveted of consumer demographics: Millennials. Raised without being wrapped in bulletproof acrylic ponchos and likely never having seen a crocheted toilet paper cozy displayed without irony, they have no inborn disdain or preconceived notions about crochet; they just think it's cool to make things. And if you aren't showing them how to make things with hooks as well as needles, you are likely missing out.

"Millennials want to learn to crochet," she says. "They want instant gratification, and crochet provides that. It's easier to learn and works up faster, and there are so many fabulous things you can do with it. I think we need to factor this into how we run the store." And factor she has, starting with the decision to bring a young, talented crochet artist on board. "She's a teacher by profession, but she's coming in to help us teach, develop classes and incorporate a mindset to include crochet in the same sentence as knitting," she says.

That last part has taken some extra effort. Schaefer got a bit of blowback from staff when she started musing about plans to promote crochet. "Many of them didn't see why we

brown—not that they'd balk at making one of those if the colors and fiber were right. They've seen those designs updated in luxury yarns, and they want them for themselves. "Show them crochet in more expensive yarns, and you have them hooked," says Schaefer.

Marnie MacLean agrees, stressing that crochet needs to be crochet for it to have resonance, not simply a revamping of an existing knitwear pattern in chain stitches. "Trying to fit the crochet customer into the knitting mold may be short-sighted," she says. "Whether it's free-form lace, amigurumi, airy lace pieces or sturdy home décor, crochet can appeal to a wide variety of customers. Designers who want to reach those (continued on page 47)









With the yarn industry and retailing in a state of flux and yarn consumers avidly following Instagram feeds from all over the world, yarn shop owners and yarn companies are looking beyond the North American landmass for new markets and products.

Though the U.S. craft market is large—The National NeedleArts Association reports that total spending among U.S. needle artists, which includes spinners, embroiderers and needlepointers, amounts to between \$750 and \$850 million—research by the Handarbeit Initiative, a German trade association, indicates that Germany's total craft market is estimated at €1.22 billion (equivalent to \$1.4 billion), with sales of hand-knitting and crochet yarns totaling €375 million (\$460 million)—in Germany alone.

Because of its proximity to other major stitching meccas—the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and even Russia—H+H Cologne, the world's largest trade show for handicraft and hobby supplies, is becoming a magnet for North American yarn companies interested in expanding their global reach. H+H (the letters stand for "handicraft and hobby") is organized by Koelnmesse GmbH, which is both a trade fair venue and organizer of trade shows. H+H Cologne was founded by the trade association Initiative Handarbeit ("Handwork Initiative"), which serves the German, Swiss and Austrian handicraft industries and continues as the show's conceptual sponsor. Located in Cologne, Germany, the March show attracted more than 400 exhibitors and 16,000 visitors from 73 countries.

"The market potential in Germany alone is huge," explains Darrin Stern, director of new business development for Koelnmesse, Inc./Cologne International Trade Fairs, the North American subsidiary of the Koelnmesse Group, which organizes dozens of trade shows a year, including H+H Cologne. "Then there are more than 70 other countries on top of that for them."

At the 2018 show, 31 North American companies participated in the show, up from 25 in 2017. Among those in attendance were Cocoknits, Koigu Wool Designs, Blue Sky Fibers, SweetGeorgia, Artyarns, Habu Textiles, Lion Brand Yarn Co., della Q, MadelineTosh and Knitting Fever. Other North American companies and retailers attended as visitors.

"The center in which the show is held is amazingly large," observes Aaron Soule, director of operations for Blue Sky Fibers, who worked the show for the first time this year. "It's like TNNA on steroids. It's massive."

Koigu Wool Designs' Taiu Landra has been doing H+H Cologne for eight years. She started exhibiting at the German show to connect with European clients who were already carrying or interested in Koigu's yarns and to develop relationships with new stockists. "[We started going] at a time when we were hitting the downswing in the North American market, and we wanted to expand into Europe," she says.

North American exhibitorship has grown at H+H Cologne for a number of reasons, Darrin Stern says, among them the creation of the North American Expo at H+H Cologne. The special marketing area was created two years ago to help U.S., Canadian and Mexican vendors share expenses and to aggregate them in one area so they could make more of a splash at this 400,000-square-foot-show. Twenty-three of the 31 North American vendors set up shop in this 3,670-square-foot red-carpeted space, which also offers guests a refreshment area where they can connect—along with promotions. "If you are a company with an average-size presentation, you can get lost in a large show with massive showrooms," Stern says. "The North American Expo is a marketing co-op that allows companies to

make a larger presence in a show that expands over four exhibition halls."

The fact that German show runners established a marketing presence in Chicago three years ago has also boosted North American attendance at Koelnmesse Group shows. "We're talking about it more," Stern says about H+H Cologne. "We've been going to TNNA for three years, and we've seen a natural progression of groundwork sales. People come and walk the show and now they are exhibiting."

That was the case for Cascade Yarns. Last year, Cascade's co-owners, Rob and Shannon



# The Greatest SHOW on EARTH?

## What does it take to show your stuff—4,000 miles away?

By Leslie Petrovski

Dunbabin, walked the show with their toddler. (H+H Cologne is child-friendly, and the Dunbabin learned by dining at the restaurant in the mezzanine that their son loves wiener schnitzel.) Lacking any sales representation or distribution in Europe, the couple thought exhibiting at H+H Cologne might be a way to develop more business on the Continent. "We were starting to get more business in Europe," explains Rob Dunbabin, "so [Cologne] was a

Considering attending an international show? Some things to consider before you go:

- Attend your show of choice as a visitor first. Talk to other U.S. exhibitors and get a fix on who's buying what. Will your products play on the Continent?
- Get real with what's doable. Are you getting inquiries from stores in other countries? Are you looking to expand? Can you meet production? Does selling overseas meet your long-term strategic goals or is it just a distraction?
- Do your due diligence. Decide how you are going to charge for shipping to international customers. Shipping is a big concern, explains Taiu Landra of Koigu Wool Designs. Like every North American yarn shop,

## THE WORLD STAGE

international store owners want a seamless experience. "I created a European price that includes the shipping, the currency exchange and all those variables, so they know what they're dealing with. All they have to pay is the VAT when the shipment comes into the country."

- Ask questions. Pick the brain of Darrin Stern, director of new business development for Koelnmesse, Inc./Cologne International Trade Fairs, who markets the show stateside. He can refer you to government agencies, H+H Cologne resources and more. Also, connect with colleagues who have done the German show and seek their advice on everything from how to cut costs to the nuances of doing business across cultures.



# The Greatest SHOW on EARTH?

attending in 2017, the Dunbabins decided to take their New World yarns to the Old World this year. Because of their smaller footprint at this show (compared to previous TNNA shows, where they might have taken multiple booths requiring extra staff), the Dunbabins were able to staff their small H+H Cologne booth themselves (they also hired a translator) for much less money than they would typically spend at TNNA.

"For us, TNNA doesn't work," he says. "We already have a sales force that travels widely, and stores can meet with a rep easily. In Europe, we are in a different role. We don't have a sales force there, which is why [going to Germany] makes sense."

great place to meet them and connect with them socially." Impressed by the scope of the show and how organized it seemed after

assistance in the form of trade counseling and market information. They can even help you connect with potential buyers through a program called Gold Key. Some U.S. companies might even qualify for special funding under a program called the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) Grant Initiative, through which states compete for matching funds designed to encourage export.

There are also practical issues to taking your show on the road. Do you schlep your merchandise? Ship it? How do you create a booth that communicates who you are? European vendors often go to fantastic lengths

in an overwhelming way, which made it easy for attendees to walk up and for us talk to them about what they were seeing."

Taiu Landra of Koigu says that to save on shipping costs this year, they carried yarn and sample garments from Canada in two duffle bags and printed marketing materials when they arrived in Germany through their Vistaprint account. For fixtures, some years she rents them, other years she buys baskets, tables and other items once on the ground. "There are three IKEAs in Cologne," she says. "For about €100 (\$125) you can get all the display things you need."



## You're Not in Kansas Anymore

Participating in an international trade show is not without its challenges. You face a host of issues when you begin to think about doing business abroad, including what to display, currency exchanges, how best to ship and logistics for international customers. For wholesalers new to global trade, the logistics and red tape can be intimidating. Common barriers to attending H+H Cologne, Darrin Stern says, are cost and fear. "It is expensive," he explains. "If you do it and say, 'Hey, we'll go to Paris and have a vacation,' you can write it off, and that takes a little of the edge off. But then there's the fear associated with, 'I got the sales, but how do I ship? Do I need inventory there?' That's where U.S. Commercial Services come into play."

As part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Commercial Services office provides companies with international trade

to create visually—and gustatorily—arresting environments at the show. Some of the booths, Darrin Stern says, offer kitchens stocked with espresso, wine, beer and food. "Some of the vendors build a mini store right in the [booth] space," Blue Sky's Aaron Soule says. "The painters will be there as you are setting up, painting booths down the hall. There's no end to what you can put into it. There are mini bars in them; some serve food. It's pretty incredible. Some look like department stores."

To create their booth, the Blue Sky Fibers team chose to rent a few fixtures and take a minimalist approach. Specific things like wood are hard to ship, Soule explains, because it might be considered an invasive species. Even pens like highlighters are problematic because some chemicals aren't allowed.

"For us, having a beautiful booth is always important, and we went with simple beauty," he said. "We displayed our product, but not

## The Continental Customer

Doing a show like H+H Cologne might not net the results you want if you think of it as a one-and-done experience. Yarn shops in Europe tend to be smaller, with less storage space. So not only are buyers choosing smaller quantities, they tend choose very carefully. "People want to know who you are," Stern says. "I'd say it takes [attending] three times to really build relationships and trust."

Taiu Landra agrees. Whereas Americans will often make decisions on the spot, she says, a German customer will deliberate. "A European customer might think about it for two years, and then decide, Now is the time. The two years you invest will end up being worthwhile, so follow-up and continuing communication are really, really important."

For Ontario-based Koigu, the European show has become a very important part of their business plan. Landra calls TNNA in June "the" show but estimates that H+H Cologne represents about one third of the company's business and allows her face time with customers from all over the world. "You have [the American yarn shops] Webs and Jimmy Beans Wool attending this show, making connections, so they are seeing us for a third time," she explains, including the two annual TNNA shows in her count. "Those connections are important. You may not be selling anything right at that moment, but it can turn into an idea or a campaign later on. It's not always about the dollars and figures, but about the networking. Just remember, you don't want to lose your shirt."

## 2018 North American H+H Cologne Exhibitors

**ArtYarns**  
**Big Bad Wool**  
**Blue Sky Fibers**  
**Bosal Foam & Fiber**  
**ByAnnie.com**  
**Camelot Fabrics**  
**Cascade Yarns**  
**Checker Distributors**  
**ChiaoGoo/Westing Bridge**  
**Cocoknits**  
**della Q**  
**Dress It Up Buttons**  
**Fair Isle Yarn**  
**Gleener Marketing**  
**Grace Company**  
**Habu Textiles**

**Handi Quilter**  
**June Cashmere**  
**Kearing Industrial**  
**Knitting Fever**  
**Koigu Wool Designs**  
**Lion Brand Yarn Company**  
**The Loomie**  
**Madelinetosh Co.**  
**Mary Flanagan Woolens**  
**Notions Marketing Corp.**  
**Omega Distribuidora**  
**de Hilos**  
**Spinrite**  
**SweetGeorgia Yarns**  
**Urth Yarns**  
**Zen Yarn Garden**





## CHAIN REACTION

(continued from page 43)

"I find that crocheters have a harder time learning knitting, whereas knitters pick up crochet easily."

crafters have to know what those potential customers want in a pattern. It may take some trial and error, but crochet customers are just as excited to make great designs as knitters are."

### Learning Curves

At Cast Away Yarn Shop in Santa Rosa, California, owner Justine Malone offers crochet as a starter course. "We offer a beginning crochet series—in each class you learn a new skill and you make a project," she explains, noting that she finds that a project-based model works best for introducing the craft. Level 1, for example, is a super-chunky single-crochet cowl. "They learn how to chain and do the single-crochet stitch so they can make something really quickly," Malone says. Once that class is complete, customers can choose from a variety of Level 2 projects. "We offer a scarf, hat, granny square and shawl class," she says.

"Customers can take one or all of these next-level classes. We also offer a weekly help class for anyone who gets stuck or wants to learn a skill not covered in one of these classes." She sees little difference between the customers who take the crochet class versus the knitting class. "They're mixed ages, with a similar ratio to our knit classes," she says. Malone likes to start those new to needlework with knitting classes. "I find that crocheters have a harder time learning knitting, whereas knitters pick up crochet easily," she says. "And we actively encourage it."

Part of that encouragement comes from samples, and it's gotten a positive response from those new to crochet and those who've been doing it for years. "We're making up more crocheted samples, and that's brought in more crocheters to shop and take classes with us," she says. "I think [crocheters] have felt a bit left out in recent years since knitting has seen more popularity, and they are excited to

be represented more."

Most of Malone's samples are made with fine yarns and a loose gauge—part of an effort to dispel what she calls the "chunky, stiff crochet myth." Doing so, she says, hooks customers who may have once dismissed the craft. "Fine, luxurious shawls and scarves show crochet in a new light for many people," she says. Marnie MacLean says that that's a good approach. "Crochet is best when it isn't trying to emulate knitting," she says. "It's its own medium, and one that can do things knitted fabric can only dream of matching."

At Yarnia in Montclair, New Jersey, crocheted tanks, most of them made by the teenage daughter of one of the owners, are what's drawing crochet interest. "The texture is just so cool," says co-owner Jen Bonnell. "Younger customers love it. They see [the samples] and want to make them."

Back at Westport Yarns, Beth Schaefer is confident that there are plenty of potential customers out there who will want to pick up a hook and a hank to make something, too. And on the odd chance they don't, she's not worried—it's not like adding crochet is going to throw off the balance sheet if things don't take off. "I already have the yarn," she says. "What have I got to lose by trying?"

Helpful facts and amusing trivia every knitter needs to know and will love to share.

## Knitting Ephemera

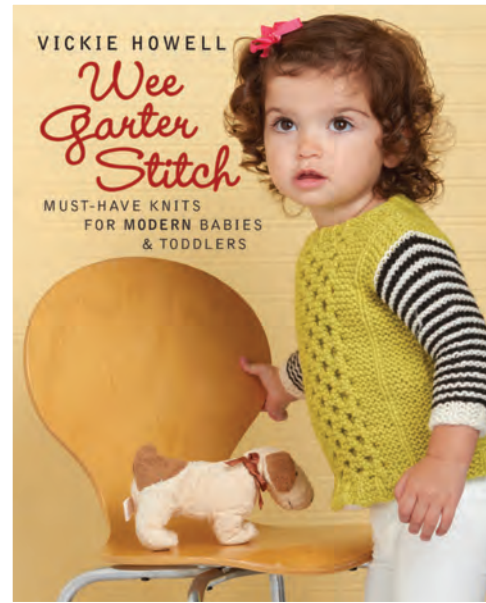
*A Compendium  
of ARTICLES,  
Useful and Otherwise,  
for the Edification and  
AMUSEMENT of the  
Handknitter*

Carol J. Sulcoski



With adorable hats, sweaters and more,  
**Vickie Howell** presents 25 projects to  
give your little ones big style.

VICKIE HOWELL  
*Wee  
Garter  
Stitch*  
MUST-HAVE KNITS  
FOR MODERN BABIES  
& TODDLERS



sixthandspring.com



sixthandspring.com



## LISA MYERS



YMN Editor in Chief Erin Slonaker learned to knit as a child, but she truly became a knitter while living in Philadelphia after college. Slonaker recently sat down with Lisa Myers, owner of her first LYS, to hear about Myers' journey from store owner to Manos del Uruguay distributor.

**ES: When I was living in Philly, you co-owned Sophie's Yarns and then later Rosie's Yarn Cellar. What set you on that career path?**

**LM:** I was a hobbyist knitter in college, but during grad school I discovered Kaffe Fassett's *Glorious Colour*. That book changed my life! Kaffe's work, which often combines close tones within simple geometric shapes, blew me away. I had never seen knitting that used color with such freedom.

I became a passionate knitter. I was pretty broke, but I'd collect a ball of this or that from sale bins until I had enough of the right colors to start my next sweater. By the mid-'90s, I was finishing my degree, but the academic job market was pretty tight. I wound up teaching part-time at Penn and I picked up a part-time job at a local yarn shop as well. The yarn-shop job kind of evaporated when the owner could no longer pay me. Then one night, my spouse and I saw a "For Rent" sign on a cute retail location on a quiet block here in Philly. I reached out to a former colleague at the previous shop, who was very interested in a partnership. I literally had nothing to lose: I was still teaching, we didn't own a house, we had no kids; our total

assets were a Honda Civic and significant student debt. Because the space was small and below street level, rent was low, \$500 a month. The sum total of our market research was the theory that a city as large as Philadelphia must be able to support at least one good yarn shop. Sophie's Yarns opened six weeks after that initial conversation.

**ES: In 2006 you started distributing Manos yarns through your distribution company, Fairmount Fibers. Why did you decide to take that on, along with running a store?**

**LM:** My shop—which was now called Rosie's Yarn Cellar, following a partnership split—had been open for more than 10 years, and I felt ready for a new challenge. I hadn't been particularly interested in the wholesale side of the business; in fact, Manos was the only line for which I would have considered it. We sold a *lot* of Manos at Rosie's, and I had come to believe passionately in the co-op's social mission of bringing economic opportunities to women in rural Uruguay. When Judith Shangold asked if I'd be interested in taking over, I said yes immediately, and worried about everything else afterward.

Juggling the shop, Fairmount Fibers and my family was pretty much insane. When it worked, it did because I had a fantastic staff who were knowledgeable, reliable and hardworking. But ultimately I think most small businesses stand or fall by their owner, and I was at the shop only two hours or so a week, which wasn't enough. The knitting world had also changed a lot, as did knitters' buying habits. There are certainly shops that continue to thrive, but keeping Rosie's viable would have been a full-time job. It was heartbreaking to close it down, but I had made a commitment to Manos that I would always put Manos first, and that's what I did.

**ES: What was it that drew you to Manos?**

**LM:** The colors! When I first "met" Manos, there was only one yarn, the one we now call Clasica Wool. As a retailer, I taught many, many people to knit, and Clasica is such a great yarn for beginners. I only found out about the co-op's history and mission later. At that point, I was completely sold. A self-governing organization of women working to support their families by pursuing traditional crafts? What's not to love?

**ES: How has your view of the industry changed as you've moved to a different area of the yarn supply chain?**

**LM:** Distribution is very lonely. I love my colleagues

here at the warehouse, but I miss meeting knitters and seeing their projects. And Ravelry and TNNA only tell me so much about what the real knitter in the street is interested in or working on. I visit yarn shops and teach and give presentations about Manos, which helps.

**ES: How often do you go to Uruguay?**

**LM:** I'm visiting Uruguay next month for the third time. The country is beautiful, with very liberal and progressive government policies. I love visiting the artisans who make the yarn; they're generally not knitters, but they love seeing what people do with their yarn.

**ES: What kind of influence do you have on the yarns Manos makes?**

**LM:** It's a collaborative process: the U.S. hand-knitting market is the largest for Manos yarns, so I work pretty closely with the people in the central office in Montevideo to come up with new ideas for yarns and colors. The staff are very in touch with design trends, but I'm their information source for questions about how much demand there is for super-bulky yarn, for instance. And we talk about how the yarns will be used, so we have to make sure that the yarn comes in colors that will show patterns clearly. Recently, Manos has been growing their European market; I've been fascinated to learn how colors that are not at all popular in the States can be very strong sellers in Europe.

**ES: What yarn trends should we be looking for?**

**LM:** I can usually only see the changes in my rear-view mirror. I'm still astonished at the demand for lighter-weight yarns and the willingness to knit sweaters at (relatively) fine gauges. I do think the interest in breed-specific yarn is a trend that's here to stay.

**ES: What is your crystal ball telling you?**

**LM:** Like many other consumer goods, I think we'll continue to see movement toward responsible consumption, with the accompanying increase in transparency all along the supply chain. And I think everyone is interested in making a human connection, rather than buying something mass-produced and anonymous, so successful companies will be the ones that can put a face on their product or organization.

**ES: English or Continental?**

**LM:** Continental all the way! My grandmothers, who taught me to knit, were born in Eastern Europe, so we all carry the yarn in our left hand and pick with the tip of the right needle. For Fair Isle or double knitting, though, I carry one strand in each hand.





# DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION OF TEXTURE



## DIMENSIONAL TUCK KNITTING

AN INNOVATIVE  
TECHNIQUE  
FOR CREATING  
SURFACE DESIGN

Tracy Purtscher

The perfect new technique for all yarn weights,  
all projects and every knitter who loves texture.

## ON SALE NOW



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



# Classic Elite Yarns

## Gigi

85% cotton, 10% silk, 5% polyester  
50 g = 142 yards

5 – 5½ sts per inch  
US 5-6 (3.75-4 mm) needle

This dk to light worsted weight combines cotton with a bit of silk to make this summer yarn a joy to knit. The nine plies create a round yarn with excellent stitch definition and the resulting knit fabric has bounce and spring, and a squishable hand. The clear colors, including three neutrals, stand on their own or combine well with each other.



### Graysby

and 5 additional designs in Gigi are available now as pdfs downloads or a printed book.

For more information visit the CEY Insider at [www.classicelityarns.com](http://www.classicelityarns.com), call 800-343-0308 or contact your sales rep.