



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

## SHOW AND TELL

Clear employee guidelines put everyone on the same page.

## TRADE WARS

How tariffs affect the imported goods you carry.

## BOOK SMART

Stocking books and magazines can help shore up your bottom line.

JANUARY 2019

# WEATHERING ALL STORMS



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## Intention

### *I talk a lot about New Year's resolutions*

in the January issue, don't I? I never thought of myself as a real "resolutions" kind of person, and yet, the end of one year and the beginning of the next does bring up thoughts about intentions.

On social media these days you see a lot of people picking a word for the coming year. Things like "time," or "nourish"—one person I saw chose "deliberate," without, I think, considering the word's double meaning! I invite you to think about a word for your business, whether it's as simple as "profit" or as complex as "community." Think about all the meanings of the word, and decide how you will embrace it. Because keeping that word front of mind throughout the year will affect the decisions you make and the future of your business. At the end of the year, let's revisit those words. Have you fulfilled your intention?

In this issue we tackle a few very pragmatic issues regarding business as we enter 2019, particularly with regards to the tariff issue that faces our whole economy, not just our little slice of it. We also look at some good ol' worsted-weight yarns—workhorses for your shop, and just the thing to get into the hands of those whose word for the year might have been "create." We talk about actual tools to use to create video content, and give you metaphorical tools for giving feedback to and reviews of your employees.

Here's to a happy, healthy and profitable 2019!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin".

**Erin Slonaker, Editor in Chief**



### on the cover

Kelbourne Woolens' varied yarns, available here in many shades of blue, can weather any storm.  
[kelbournewoolens.com](http://kelbournewoolens.com)

Photograph by Marcus Tullis



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JANUARY 2019

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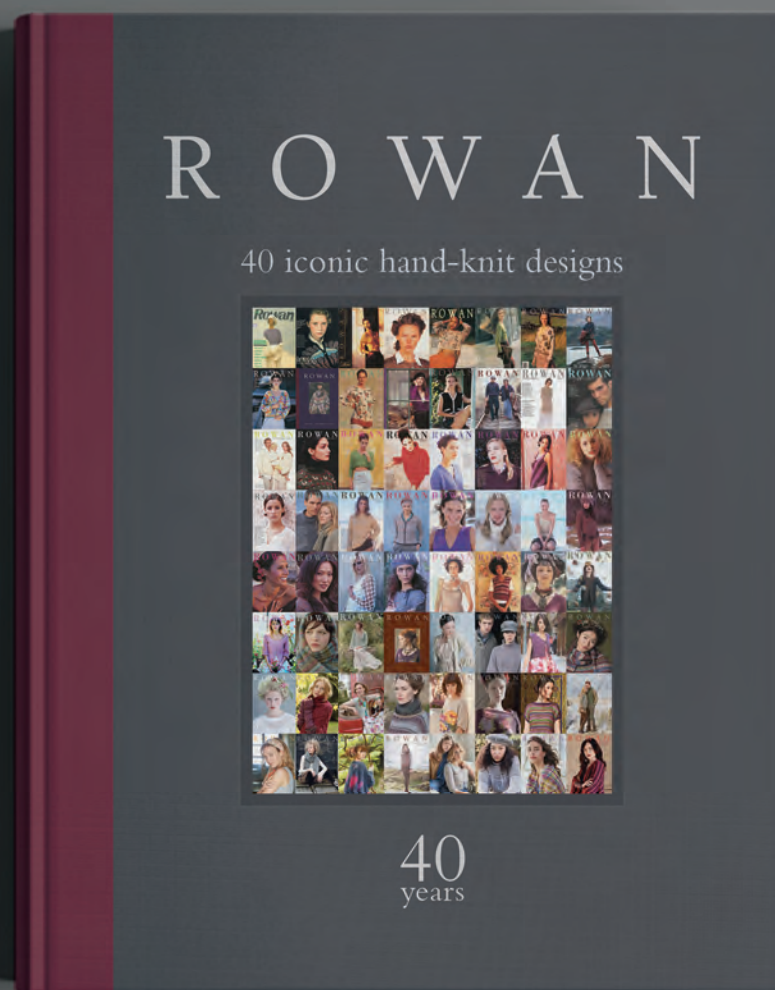


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years

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— Martin Storey  
Rowan Designer

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If the Big Apple is in your travel plans, be sure to pop in to “Mickey: The True Original,” a pop-up exhibit celebrating the 90th birthday of the world’s most famous mouse. Held in Lower Manhattan through February 10, the immersive show features the work of nearly

two dozen artists and honors Mickey’s influence on animation, pop culture and stuff (hello, Mickey Mouse ears!). Curated by Los Angeles-based streetwear designer and creative director Darren Romanelli, the 16,000-square-foot interactive exhibit is a mash-up of Disney

archival material and works from past and present by artists including Kenny Scharf, Keith Haring, Amanda Ross-Ho and even crochet artist **London Kaye**.

Kaye’s piece, *Supersonic Skein*, is an homage to Mickey’s first color cartoon, “The Band Concert,” from 1935. Using more than 500 skeins of Lion Brand yarn, including her own branded super-bulky London Kaye® LKYC, and Lion Brand ergonomic hooks she helped design—London Kaye® Hooks with a Twist—the professional fiber artist spent more than three months stitching the 10-by-20-foot installation. To add even more magic, Kaye hooked the background blindfolded, selecting from a predetermined palette of yarns stashed in a bag.

“I crocheted the whole backdrop blindfolded because I love the abstract designs and unexpected color combinations that are created,” she says. “Sometimes the most beautiful things happen naturally.” To learn more about the exhibit and the nonagenarian mouse, visit [partners.disney.com/mickey-the-true-original-exhibition](https://partners.disney.com/mickey-the-true-original-exhibition).

## IMMIGRANT YARN PROJECT

Cindy Weil came up with the idea for the country’s largest crowd-sourced work of art while on a run in San Francisco. Spying Angel Island through a fringe of palm trees—Angel Island was where the U.S. government processed and detained Asian immigrants from 1910 to 1940—she thought about the countless immigrants and refugees today who are struggling as a result of U.S. immigration policies.

Securing permission from nearby Fort Point to hold an exhibit, Weil built a website for the **Immigrant Yarn Project** and started asking for yarn-crafted submissions and stories to honor the country’s immigrant history. California’s U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris lent their names to the project, and soon Weil was inundated with knitted, crocheted, woven and embroidered submissions. The SF Men Knit group created a totem of the San Francisco skyline. Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and her sister Anna Katherine Silva, both immigrants from the former Czechoslovakia, sent Weil a hand-knit American flag (shown above). Japanese women at an assisted-living community, many of whom were interned during World War II,

submitted pieces. African American women, whose ancestors came to this country involuntarily, have also provided work. Weil says that

about 600 people from almost every state have contributed, representing dozens of countries of origin.

“I’ve had so many conversations with people about their immigrant stories,” Weil says. “These stories matter to people and they want to have them recognized. I thought we were building this cool public art project, but it’s turned out to be an opportunity to come together to talk about our immigrant stories, and that’s not nothing.”

To display the pieces, Weil and teams of volunteers have been sewing the submissions around a series of 4- to 6-foot cylinders, which Weil has curated around various themes or aesthetic considerations. “Maybe there’s a narrative story to it, or it just looks good, but [either way], each totem [has undergone an] editorial process,” says Weil.

The first exhibit opens in the spring at Fort Point. The show will feature some 100 totems and a wall naming all contributors. Portions of the exhibit will later travel to venues across the country. All exhibits of the Immigrant Yarn Project are free. To keep up with the project, visit [enactivist.org](https://enactivist.org).





# FIFTY YEARS OF **MANOS**

This past year marked the 50th anniversary of **Manos del Uruguay**, the artisan cooperative that dyes and hand-spins yarn and makes clothing loved by people the world over. Started by five friends to create economic opportunities for rural Uruguayan women, Manos del Uruguay began by selling local crafts, wool throws and horse blankets, and eventually expanded to offer goods that involved spinning, dyeing, weaving and knitting.

Today Manos is a World Fair Trade Organization certified nonprofit; it's organized around 12 cooperatives, located in villages throughout Uruguay, that employ some 300 artisans. Currently, 300 or so yarn shops carry Manos yarns in the United States, with many more selling the yarns in Europe, Asia and Australia.

Manos is not focused solely on the economic betterment of its members; it also stresses personal growth and empowerment. "Its impact on individual women's lives has been huge," explains Lisa Myers of Fairmount Fibers, which distributes Manos yarns in the U.S. "Besides improving women's economic situations, it helps women with their sense of their own abilities and potential. At Manos you could start off spinning



wool and wind up treasurer of the whole organization, with a dozen separate cooperatives and a multimillion-dollar business."

Over the years, Manos has created products for companies including Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan, Nordstrom and Saks. Last fall, they collaborated with Madewell on a micro collection of three hand-knit slouchy sweaters and a pompom beanie. "Madewell has a broad audience and the kind of aesthetic that interests Manos," Myers says. "It's been very reinforcing. The Madewell design sense appeals to a lot of the same customers that Manos yarns appeal to."

To celebrate its golden anniversary, Manos had Uruguayan artists customize a series of their iconic ruanas and debuted a new colorway, Cincuenta (below), a dazzling celebratory mix of orange, purple, green and yellow. Manos's products, Myers says, continue to resonate with U.S. customers because they can be traced back to the women who make them.

"Within the landscape of increasing transparency in the supply chain and the market, knitters are people who care about things that are handmade," Myers says. "Why shouldn't the materials with which they create also be handmade?"

## EXCUSE **ME!**

In an effort to make wool and lamb even more sustainable, researchers in New Zealand have been working to breed sheep that burp less and pass less gas. The New Zealand company AgResearch has successfully bred sheep that emit 10 percent less methane than average. Ruminants like cows, bison and sheep account for between 14.5 and 18 percent of mammal-related greenhouse gases. Other scientists have found that changing the diets of farm animals can also affect emissions. Early results from researchers at the University of California Davis indicate that feeding cows seaweed reduces emissions by as much as 99 percent. To date, Norway, China and Ireland have all expressed interest in less gassy sheep.





## AFTER THE FIRE



Located in Chico, California, **HeartStrings Yarn Studio** was the yarn shop closest to Paradise, the town decimated by the Camp Fire, the worst wild-fire in California's history. The fire was responsible for at least 86 deaths and the destruction of nearly 14,000 homes. Tens of thousands of people were displaced by the conflagration.

During the early days of the fire, HeartStrings' owner, Joanne Wilson, offered the shop as a haven for customers who had been evacuated. For people who needed to busy their hands while waiting for news or a place to stay, Wilson gave them yarn and supplies—gratis. "People came in shaken, not knowing whether their homes were still there," Wilson explains. "We weren't going to charge them."

As the fire continued to rage, Wilson and her staff realized that if they were going to supply evacuees with yarn, they would need help. Through

email and social media, Wilson reached out, asking initially for gifts of money (through an account on PayPal) so they could continue to supply knitters, crocheters and weavers who had lost their stashes and tools to the blaze. A few days later, HeartStrings began requesting tools, books and yarn—new or like new ("because they need something lovely," Wilson explains)—and established an alternate store in

their classroom, calling the initiative #illemptyhands.

Yarn and other supplies flooded in. Nearby yarn shops and knitting guilds rallied to the cause with gifts of money, bags, yarn or project kits. Vendors including Berroco, Brown Sheep, Sirdar, Rowan and Bryson contributed product and in some cases cash. Customers and fans from around the country gave money and treasures from their stashes. "We have gotten beautiful yarns, \$30 and \$50 hanks, bags, gradient yarn packs," she says. "People are not just getting rid of stash. We keep opening boxes and asking, 'Why would anybody get rid of this?'"

Wilson estimates that to date the shop has received about \$7,000 in cash and \$20,000 to \$30,000 worth of products, with more coming in every day. For the shop, it's been a challenge managing the donations as well as bearing witness to the trauma experienced by so many.

"After the first three weeks," Wilson says, "I joked with the girls that I hadn't cried yet that day. We have been holding these people and listening to their stories and hearing their gratitude. When we tell customers that their purchase has been taken care of, they break down and then we break down."

People have come into the store, fresh from having driven through the fire, desperately in need of busying their hands, she says. "Going through this with people has been an emotional journey. You're feeling their emotions and sharing their grief. What must it be like for first responders?" Wilson plans to continue the effort through January.

## A LEG UP

When it came time for Sandi Schneider to order a new prosthetic leg last year, the longtime knitter discovered that it was possible to personalize her prosthesis. "Many soldiers coming home [from battle] don't want the cover on their prostheses to look like skin," she explains. "They want a camo print or something indicative of their unit or favorite sports team." So, she thought, if a guy can have a Chicago Cubs leg, why shouldn't she have one featuring her own knitting?

Working with her prosthetist, Schneider, who lost her leg in 2000 to a rare form of cancer, knit a 20-by-13-inch striped rectangle with some of her favorite fingering-weight yarns from companies including Anzula, Trendsetter, Turtlepurl Yarns, Alexandra's Crafts and the Alaskan Yarn Co. Because the leg is laminated, Schneider



had to keep it simple, so no raised stitches or even k2togs, but she incorporated glitter yarns and sequins to add bling to her new limb. To make her leg, her prosthetist had to cut Schneider's knitted piece to make it fit. At one of her local yarn shops, Schneider and her knitting compatriots marveled at the technician's masterful steeking and seaming job. "He had to cut it and join it in the back," Schneider explains. "We still don't know how he did the seaming."

Schneider has wanted to get the word out about personalized prosthetics because of how meaningful it's been for her to create a piece of art she wears every day. "I'm proud of my work," she says. "I'm hoping it will

open doors for other creative people to use their needle-point or crochet or wood-shaving art or whatever, so they can be more of who they are. To me that's very important."



# BLANKETS FOR THE BEREFT

Last November, **Yarns by Design**, a yarn shop in Oakmont, Pennsylvania, posted a photo on Facebook of two healthy stacks of knitted squares, all blocked and ready to become afghans for the Tree of Life Synagogue, the Pittsburgh shul where a shooter opened fire on October 27, 2018, killing eleven people.

The afghan-athon was inspired by 9-year-old Eliana Wellman, who wanted grieving family members and congregants to receive the same kind of comfort she got from her security blanket. Knowing how deeply her daughter was affected by the shooting, Vanessa Picard, Wellman's mother, told her daughter, "We can make them a blanket."



Picard spent a good part of that night knitting a square featuring the entwined trees from Nicky Epstein's Tree of Life Afghan design and posted it on her Facebook page, hoping friends might contribute to a blanket for the synagogue. Natalie Belmont, who manages Yarns by Design, where Picard teaches sock knitting, reposted the Tree of Life square on the yarn shop's page and soon was deluged with requests for Epstein's motif from people interested in making squares.

With Epstein's permission, the shop posted a pattern based on her design, as well as a plain square

pattern and one featuring the star of David on the shop's Ravelry group page. Since then, squares have been pouring in from all over the country, depicting trees, hearts, leaves, Hebrew letters, menorahs, six-pointed stars and other motifs. Some knitting groups have even sent completed afghans. As of early December, the yarn shop had received more than 1,000 squares—enough to make about 40 afghans—with more coming in daily.

"Our knitting community has responded beautifully to this project," Belmont says. "Our regular customers, knitters and club members have all volunteered in some way, whether that involves taking photos of each square to make a mosaic or taking the squares home to wash and block."

In January, stitchers will gather to begin seaming the squares into afghans. "This has been a very emotional thing for us as a business," Belmont explains. "Letters are coming in with the blankets, some talking about family members who were Holocaust survivors and some just thanking us for letting them have this outlet to help heal."

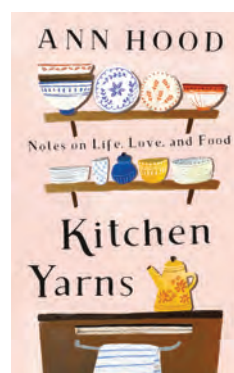
## PRETTY IN PINKISH

Years from now, will we be saying, "Oh, that's so 2019" when we pull out the coral-colored cardigan we made this year? In December, the Pantone Color Institute announced Living Coral as the nothing-subtle-about-it Pantone Color of the Year. Straddling the territory between pink and orange, the hue, according to Pantone, is "sociable and spirited," "welcomes and encourages lighthearted activity" and symbolizes "our innate need for optimism and joyful pursuits."

Since 2000, the Pantone Color Institute has gathered international experts who analyze color trends and select a color that reflects the spirit of the times. The color influences designers and creatives across industries, including media, home design, fashion and, yes, knitwear.

"Color is an equalizing lens through which we experience our natural and digital realities, and this is especially true of Living Coral," explains Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute. "With consumers craving human interaction and social connection, the humanizing and heartening qualities displayed by the convivial Pantone Living Coral hit a responsive chord." For the designers among you, the official color is Living Coral 16-1546.

## ANOTHER YARN



**Ann Hood**, author of *The Knitting Circle*, has a new book out that's more about food than yarn. The newly released *Kitchen Yarns: Notes on Life, Love and Food* is a collection of essays—and recipes—about how food has threaded its way through the fabric of her life.



## PRINT PASSING

More lousy news for craft magazines. F+W has shut down four titles, *Modern Patchwork*, *Cloth Paper Scissors*, *Quilty* and *Knit.Wear* (shown is the cover of *Knit.Wear*'s final issue). "These magazines were considered to be not necessarily core to what we feel our strategy is going forward long-term," explained Interweave General Manager David Pyle in an article on the Craft Industry Alliance website. "They were not performing and delivering in a way that was sustainable."



## WOOL POOR

**Woolrich, Inc.** announced in November that it would cease operations of its Woolrich, Pennsylvania, woolen mill at the end of 2018. The mill, which dates back to 1845, produced blankets, throws and fabric. It was Woolrich's last remaining plant on American soil and the country's oldest continuously operating mill.

"The decision to close the mill was made following a comprehensive review of our overall woven fabric business and the considerable capital improvements needed to modernize and maintain viable operations," Nick Brayton, president of Woolrich, said in a statement. "Unfortunately, due to higher manufacturing costs, eroding margins and continued unprofitability within the mill, it is no longer economically feasible to continue our Pennsylvania-based woolen mill operation."

The closure affects 40 employees and leaves only two industrial wool fabric mills in the United States, Pendleton Woolen Mill in Portland, Oregon, and the Faribault Woolen Mill in Faribault, Minnesota.

## SILVER LINING

Remember that silver-enhanced yarn you could knit into gloves, which warmed your hands—and allowed you to text? It's back! After a year's hiatus, Laurie Gonyea, partnering with Michelle Makowiecki (formerly of Peace Fleece), is reinvigorating **Feel Good Yarn Company**, home of SilverSpun, a yarn spun with real silver. Developed at North Carolina State University, the yarn is constructed from American-grown cotton, a touch of spandex and a nylon thread coated with 99.9 percent pure U.S. silver.

Why silver? Gonyea was interested in the metal's therapeutic benefits. Considered antibacterial and antimicrobial, silver also has great thermal properties and conducts electricity—so you can use your smart phone as you keep your hands warm.

SilverSpun debuted in 2013 and quickly developed passionate fans. In a testimonial posted on the Feel Good Yarn Company website, one customer says, "I bought two skeins of the SilverSpun yarn to make some fingerless mitts for my mom. She is 91 and suffers from arthritis in both of her hands, making it harder and harder for her to knit—a lifelong passion. Anyway, she has had the mitts now for a few days and she says her hands feel so much better and that she can knit with them on!"

Gonyea reports that her mother, a fine artist, has also found that her fingers feel better when she wears her SilverSpun fingerless gloves, because they warm her knuckles. "A lot of customers knit socks for

diabetics, because the silver kills germs, and people with diabetes have to be careful about their feet," Gonyea says. "The yarn works wonderfully for people with arthritis or carpal tunnel, because it warms when you put it on."

SilverSpun is currently available in SilverSpun Sock (87% combed cotton/5% silver/5% nylon/3% spandex) in natural, gray and indigo (it's naturally dyed by Green Matters Natural Dye Company in Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

and SilverSpun Silk (70% combed cotton/17% Tussah silk/6% silver/7% nylon), a laceweight offered in six colors, which is put up in skeins as well as cones for weavers.

In early 2019, the Feel Good Yarn Company will launch a wholesale and professional program

as a way to get their alchemical yarn into more hands. The yarn—primarily sourced and made in the United States and imbued with actual silver—isn't cheap. The retail price on the sock yarn is \$42 for 335 yards and \$68 for 800 yards of the silk blend.

"It's so much better to feel it than to just look at it on the website," explains Makowiecki. "Our minimums will be fairly low for people who'd like to start carrying it in stores. We're doing what we can to give people as much of a break as possible." For more information, visit [feel-good-yarn-company.myshopify.com](http://feel-good-yarn-company.myshopify.com).





## January 24–27

**Oxford Fiber Arts Festival**  
Powerhouse Community Arts  
Center and Pavilion  
Oxford, Mississippi  
[oxfordarts.com/events/fiberfest](http://oxfordarts.com/events/fiberfest)

## January 25–27

**Vogue Knitting LIVE!**  
New York Marriott Marquis  
New York, New York  
[vogueknittinglive.com/newyork19](http://vogueknittinglive.com/newyork19)

## January 27

**Farm Fiber Days**  
Wayland Winter Farmers' Market  
Wayland, Massachusetts  
[farmfresh.org/food/farmersmarkets\\_details.php?market=387](http://farmfresh.org/food/farmersmarkets_details.php?market=387)

## January 31–February 3

**TNNA Winter Trade Show**  
Embassy Suites by Hilton  
Portland, Oregon  
[tnna.org](http://tnna.org)

## February 3

**Indie Goes West Pop-Up**  
Taborspace  
Portland, Oregon  
[indieuntangled.com/indie-goes-west](http://indieuntangled.com/indie-goes-west)

## February 8–10

**Midwest Fiber Frolic**  
Crown Plaza Milwaukee Airport  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
[midwestfiberfrolic.com](http://midwestfiberfrolic.com)

## February 10

**Boston Farm & Fiber Festival**  
Boston Public Market  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[newenglandfarmtofiber.com/events-1/boston-farm-fiber-festival](http://newenglandfarmtofiber.com/events-1/boston-farm-fiber-festival)

## February 14–17

**Madrona Fiber Arts Winter Retreat**  
Hotel Murano  
Tacoma, Washington  
[madronafiberarts.com](http://madronafiberarts.com)

## February 21–24

**Stitches West**  
Santa Clara Convention Center  
Santa Clara, California  
[knittinguniverse.com/west](http://knittinguniverse.com/west)

## February 28–March 3

**Spring Knitting & Stitching Show**  
Olympia London  
Hammersmith Road  
London, England  
[theknittingandstitchingshow.com/spring](http://theknittingandstitchingshow.com/spring)

## March 1–10

**Roving Indiana Yarn Crawl**  
Central Indiana  
[rovingindiana.com](http://rovingindiana.com)

## March 7–10

**Rose City Yarn Crawl**  
Portland, Oregon  
[rosecityyarncrawl.com](http://rosecityyarncrawl.com)

## March 8–9

**Jay County Fiber Arts Festival**  
Jay Community Center  
Portland, Indiana  
[fiberarts.visitjaycounty.com](http://fiberarts.visitjaycounty.com)

## March 8–10

**Delmarva Wool and Fiber Expo**  
Ocean City Convention Center  
Ocean City, Maryland  
[woolandfiber.com](http://woolandfiber.com)

## March 14–17

**Knit North Yarn Crawl**  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[knitnorthyarncrawl.com](http://knitnorthyarncrawl.com)

## March 15–16

**Cedarburg Spur Fiber Arts Tour**  
Cedarburg, Grafton, Thiensville,  
Wisconsin  
[midwestfiberartstrails.org/cedarburg-spur-2019](http://midwestfiberartstrails.org/cedarburg-spur-2019)

## March 15–17

**Pittsburgh Creative Arts Festival: Knit, Crochet, Quilt, Create!**  
Doubletree by Hilton  
Green Tree, Pennsylvania  
[pghknitandcrochet.com](http://pghknitandcrochet.com)

## March 15–17

**Fiber Forward: A Juried Exhibition**  
Celebrating Knit and Crochet  
Doubletree by Hilton  
Green Tree, Pennsylvania  
[fiberforwardpgh.com](http://fiberforwardpgh.com)

## March 16

**Heartland Fiberpalooza**  
Winterset Elementary School  
Winterset, Iowa  
[heartlandfiber.net/about-fiberpalooza.htm](http://heartlandfiber.net/about-fiberpalooza.htm)

## March 20–24

**Edinburgh Yarn Festival**  
Edinburgh Corn Exchange  
Edinburgh, Scotland  
[edinyarnfest.com](http://edinyarnfest.com)

## March 21–24

**Vogue Knitting Destination**  
Boston Park Plaza  
Boston, Massachusetts  
[vogueknittinglive.com/boston](http://vogueknittinglive.com/boston)

## March 22–23

**Fibres West**  
Cloverdale Exhibition Park Fairgrounds  
Cloverdale, British Columbia  
[fibreswest.com](http://fibreswest.com)

## March 22–23

**Carolina Fiber Fest**  
North Carolina State Fairgrounds  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
[carolinafiberfest.org](http://carolinafiberfest.org)

## March 23

**Black Swamp Spinners Guild Market Day and Fiber Fair**  
Junior Fair Building

Wood County Fairgrounds  
Bowling Green, Ohio  
[blackswampspinnerguild.org](http://blackswampspinnerguild.org)

## March 27–31

**Interweave Yarn Fest**  
Embassy Suites Loveland Hotel  
Loveland, Colorado  
[interweaveyarnfest.com](http://interweaveyarnfest.com)

## March 30–31

**Buckeye Alpaca Show**  
Arena Complex Summit County  
Fairgrounds  
Tallmadge, Ohio  
[buckeyealpacashow.com](http://buckeyealpacashow.com)

## March 30–31

**Midwest Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association International Alpaca Show**  
American Royal Hale Arena  
Kansas City, Missouri  
[mopaca.org/MOPACA-Alpaca-Show](http://mopaca.org/MOPACA-Alpaca-Show)

## April 4–7

**Dallas–Fort Worth Fiber Fest**  
Irving Convention Center  
Irving, Texas  
[dfwfiberfest.org](http://dfwfiberfest.org)

## April 4–7

**Long Island Yarn Crawl**  
Long Island, New York  
[longislandyarncrawl.com](http://longislandyarncrawl.com)

## April 4–7

**Minnesota Yarn Shop Hop**  
Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota  
[minnesotayarnshophop.com](http://minnesotayarnshophop.com)

## April 4–13

**LA County Yarn Crawl**  
Los Angeles County, California  
[layarncrawl.org](http://layarncrawl.org)

## April 6–7

**YarnCon**  
Chicago Journeymen Plumbers  
Union Hall  
Chicago, Illinois  
[yarncon.com](http://yarncon.com)

## April 6–7

**Alpacapalooza**  
Clark County Event Center  
Ridgefield, Washington  
[alpacawa.org](http://alpacawa.org)

## April 8–11 and 11–14

**Vogue Knitting Destinations**  
Portland, Maine  
[vogueknittinglive.com/yarn-portland2](http://vogueknittinglive.com/yarn-portland2)

## April 12–13

**World's Largest Textile Garage Sale**  
University of Minnesota ReUse  
Warehouse  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
[textilecentermn.org/garagesale](http://textilecentermn.org/garagesale)

## April 12–14

**Smoky Mountain Fiber Arts Festival**  
Great Smoky Mt. Heritage Center  
Townsend, Tennessee  
[smokymountainfiberartsfestival.org](http://smokymountainfiberartsfestival.org)

## April 13–14

**CNY Fiber Frolic**  
Beaver Lake Nature Center  
Baldwinsville, New York  
[goldenfleeceknitterssociety.org](http://goldenfleeceknitterssociety.org)

## April 13–14

**Spring Fiber Expo**  
Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
[fiberepo.com](http://fiberepo.com)

## April 26–28

**Okfiberfest**  
Okanogan County Fairgrounds  
Okanogan, Washington  
[okfiberfest.org](http://okfiberfest.org)

## April 26–28

**Woolith Fair: A Greater Vancouver Yarn Crawl**  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
[woolithfair.ca](http://woolithfair.ca)

## April 27

**Connecticut Sheep, Wool and Fiber Festival**  
Tolland County Agricultural Center  
Vernon, Connecticut  
[ctsheep.com](http://ctsheep.com)

## April 27

**Powhatan's Festival of Fiber**  
Village of Powhatan  
Powhatan, Virginia  
[powhatansfestivaloffiber.com](http://powhatansfestivaloffiber.com)

## April 27

**Toronto Knitters Frolic**  
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre  
Toronto, Canada  
[frolic.torontoknittersguild.ca](http://frolic.torontoknittersguild.ca)

## April 27–28

**New York's Washington County Fiber Tour**  
Washington County, New York  
[washingtoncountyfibertour.org](http://washingtoncountyfibertour.org)

## May 4

**New Jersey Needle Festival**  
The Imperia  
Somerset, New Jersey  
[needlefest.com](http://needlefest.com)

## May 4–5

**Maryland Sheep & Wool Festival**  
Howard County Fairgrounds  
West Friendship, Maryland  
[sheepandwool.org](http://sheepandwool.org)



# SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

# NEW PRODUCTS



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North America

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The Alpaca Yarn Company

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Some things were just made to go together, like the two sumptuous yarns in **Kindred Spirits**. Two sublime textures: cloudlike **Halo** (514 yards) and shimmering **Mariquita** (400 yards)—914 yards of fingering-weight yarn perfect for any two-color project. Available in 16 gorgeous hand-dyed combinations. [www.thealpacayarnco.com/product/kindred-spirits](http://www.thealpacayarnco.com/product/kindred-spirits)



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Blow your customers away with our new **giant gradient yarn balls**, just shy of half a mile of custom-spun, super-soft, single-ply, low-pilling, cruelty-free U.S. merino. 860 yards makes a large shawl. Mix-and-match with our semisolds and Shawl Balls for greater flexibility and even larger projects. Smooth gradations and rich saturation: Yarn has never looked so good! Choose from 52 wearable gradients. [www.freiafibers.com](http://www.freiafibers.com)

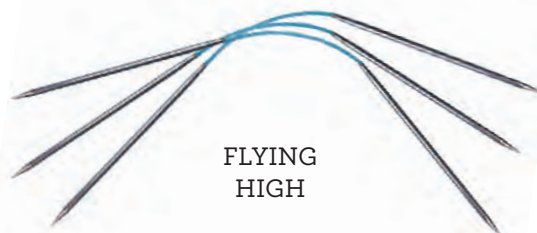
**FREIA**  
Fine Handpaint Yarns

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Premium Knitting and Crochet Tools



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 interchangeable set, including 4" stainless-steel tips (sizes 000-1.5), three cable lengths, a Tiny Tools case, tip sleeve, mesh pouch and 5" needle gauge.

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

**A YARN FOR ALL SEASONS**

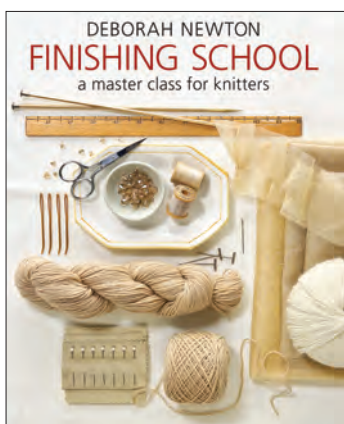
**Kiawah**, a year-round DK-weight yarn in 17 heathered colors. 55% lambswool/45% cotton; 1.75oz/50g ball; 128yds/117m. Gauge: 22 sts and 30 rows = 4". Needles: 4-7 (3.5mm-4.5mm); Crochet Hook: F-5 (3.75mm).  
[www.tahkistacycharles.com](http://www.tahkistacycharles.com)



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**NEW IN BAMBOO**



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[www.skacelknitting.com/flexiflips-bamboo](http://www.skacelknitting.com/flexiflips-bamboo)

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The **della Q Boutique Collection** offers something unique for the LYS. The first Boutique Collection includes denim fabric with printed label sizes. For sale in stores only; no online sales permitted.  
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**della Q**  
 Knitting Essentials

## ▼ Knitting Ganseys: Techniques and Patterns for Traditional Sweaters

By Beth Brown-Reinsel  
Interweave/F+W; \$29.99  
ISBN: 978-1632506160

In this revised and updated version of her 25-year-old classic on the history and the making of the gansey sweater, Brown-Reinsel dissects every element of the style to lead knitters, ultimately, to designing



their own gansey. Her method for creating updated versions of the classic nineteenth-century

British fishermen's garment begins with knitting a sampler—a small-scale model—to familiarize knitters with various cast-ons, knit/purl patterns, underarm and neckline gussets, and the other details that define the style. A template for creating your own gansey design is included, with a worksheet that helps you track stitch-pattern changes as you work the pieces to your specific measurements. Even if you never design your own or knit one of the nine included patterns, Brown-Reinsel's many tips—from reinforcing ribbings to preventing cable splay—make this a useful addition to every knitter's reference library.

## ▼ The Big 3 Knitting Techniques

By Ann-Mari Nilsson  
Trafalgar Square Books; \$22.95  
ISBN: 978-1570769036



New knitters who are ready to venture out from stockinette will find easy ways to work in color

and texture with these 80 charted stitch patterns. One of Nilsson's "big 3" techniques is basic two-color stranded knitting, but for knitters whose fingers want to fly, the slip-stitch designs add color without carrying yarn across the back of the row. Those who prefer to knit with one color aren't stuck with a solid ground of

stockinette, as Nilsson's third section offers knit-and-purl stitch patterns that add surface texture. Each stitch pattern is accompanied by a full-color swatch. Patterns for five basic garments are included, serving mainly as a canvas to try out one of the techniques. This book is a compact reference for all knitters, especially if there are no stitch dictionaries on the bookshelf yet.

## ▼ The Knitter's Dictionary: Knitting Know-How From A-Z

By Kate Atherley  
Interweave/F+W; \$19.99  
ISBN: 978-1632506382



Part A-to-Z dictionary, part encyclopedia, Atherley's book decodes everything a knitter needs to

know about how to use various tools, decipher the language of patterns and assess the attributes of various fibers. She also covers age-old basics, such as determining how much yarn to buy (reminding readers to calculate skeins by length, not weight) to defining that newer phenomenon called "yarn barf" ("the tangle of yarn that sometimes emerges when you pull out the end of a center-pull ball"). New knitters in particular will appreciate the information that delineates style differences that affect not only fit but construction—such as raglan versus set-in versus saddle sleeves—that can aid in choosing a pattern.

## ▼ Alpaca Knit Sweaters

By Dorte Skappel  
Stackpole Books; \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-0811718417



A knitwear designer and TV personality in Norway, Skappel has created 28 patterns (27 comfy sweaters and one hat) that

make the most of the warmth and delicate halo of alpaca yarns in

contemporary Nordic styles. Most of the sweaters are loose-fitting pullovers, some with turtlenecks, some with asymmetrical hems. The colorwork—mostly stripes and geometrics—is charted; there are two colorblocked designs. Some of the patterns have illustrations that highlight how certain details, such as a back pleat, are constructed, but there are no overall schematics or notes on construction, so knitters should have a working knowledge of how to read a pattern before casting on. And though there is no how-to information, in her introduction Skappel reminds knitters of all the resources available to help with techniques they don't know, noting too that "yarn is so beautiful that it deserves a second chance."

## ▼ Animal Friends of Pica Pau

By Yan Schenkel  
Meteeor Books; \$21.95  
ISBN: 978-9491643194

Swiping onto an Instagram post of a cute amigurumi can send even a non-crocheter running to pick up a hook and yarn. And Schenkel's 20 colorful animal characters in this book, along with 40 pages of photo-illustrated techniques, will likely do the same. The Argentinian crochet-toy designer provides how-tos—



everything from the anatomy of the crochet hook and ways to hold it comfortably to

changing colors within a project and the various abbreviations and punctuations of crochet patterns that not only get novice stitchers started but help them out of any sticking point along the way. The patterns are written round by round for each body part of each pattern, which offers easy accessibility to those who have never crocheted before.

## ▼ Martin Storey's Easy Cable and Aran Knits

Trafalgar Books; \$22.95  
ISBN: 978-1570768972

Knitwear designer Martin Storey made his reputation as a king of textured and cable knitting (and color-



work, too), but that's not to imply that this book is for experts only. In fact, both the cable and Aran sections

of this book begin with single-cable projects including hats, cowls and mitts to help beginning cablers get the hang of crossing stitches on a small scale. After that, they're all set for more complicated cable and stitch combinations in projects with no shaping (the Woodland Cable Blanket or Long Aran Scarf). Storey includes patterns for loose-fitting jackets and cardigans and a slipover cabled vest that keep the emphasis on working the stitches and not shaping the garment. Personal touch: The author models a few of his designs and looks particularly happy to don the scarf entitled "Cable Project #2."

## ▼ Raw Material: Working Wool in the West

By Stephany Wilkes  
Oregon State University Press; \$18.95  
ISBN: 978-0870719516



It began somewhat simply: Wilkes was a knitter on the hunt for local yarn, and along the way she read Clara

Parkes's *The Knitter's Book of Wool*. Talk about inspiration: By the time Wilkes hit the last page, she had become so curious about the state of wool production that she set out on a quite unlikely journey, leaving her job in the world of high-tech to become a certified sheep shearer. This book is her good-with-the-bad nonfiction account of what she discovered while following fleece from farm to factory. There are no patterns or stitch motifs here, but rather stories of the ranchers, sheep, small-batch yarn makers and fellow shearers on the frontlines of trying to bring eco-conscious product to market.



## ▼ Knit Your Story in Yarn

By Dee Hardwicke

Stackpole Books; \$24.95

ISBN: 978-0811736503

Hardwicke's cover quilt is her own heirloom "story in yarn," comprised of 32 hexagons with intarsia floral motifs—including seasonal favorite

crocuses, sunflowers, hydrangeas, holly and snowdrops. The pattern for her quilt is given, but she also walks knitters through the steps of creating their own heirlooms with motifs that carry personal meaning for them. Hardwicke provides a blank hexagon template, a brief primer on knitting with intarsia, and making butterflies (mini center-pull skeins) for the various colors in the design, as well as instructions for joining the finished quilt pieces. Smaller intarsia projects include a handbag, buttons, wristlets and home-decor items like a pillow and bunting.

## ▼ Firmament: Stellar Stitches for Your Next Adventure

By Hunter Hammersen

Pantsville Press; \$19.95

ISBN: 978-0984998296

Though Hammersen has published



more than 200 accessories patterns, *Firmament* was a bit of an accidental col-

lection: She says she was merely "playing around" with stitches for a singular hat design but was having so much fun she ended up with four beanie-style hat patterns. Each hat features a dip stitch, which, Hammersen explains, is simply made by picking a spot on your knitted fabric and pulling a new yarn loop through it. The stitch patterns for each of the four hats are charted but include written instructions to explain the symbols used. Bonus feature: Each pattern is calculated for

multiple gauges for whatever yarn you choose and a range of head sizes for a custom fit.

## ▼ 100 Knits: Interweave's Ultimate Pattern Collection

Interweave/F+W; \$45

ISBN: 978-3962740009

Glance at the table of contents and you'll find a few designs that have achieved name-recognition status in the knitting world, such as the Koolhaus Hat, the Central Park Hoodie (more than 9,000 and 5,000 projects



on Ravelry, respectively) and the Dahlia Cardigan (more than 17,000 Rav hearts). Given the popularity

of just those three, the remaining 97 patterns seem like a bonus. Because all of the designs are from Interweave's previously published inventory, the yarn for the original sample may no longer be available, but the "materials" section of each pattern recommends an appropriate yarn weight to make substitutions easy. Just for fun: Do the math on this book's price per pattern.

## ▼ Oversize Fashion Knits: 26 Cardigans and Pullovers Designed to Maximize Style and Ease

Stackpole Books; \$22.95

ISBN: 978-0811718394

Who doesn't love a cast-on with bulky yarn and large needles, especially if you've just bound off a long-on-the-needles project? If a quick knit is what you're after, this pattern collection has it—26 of them, in fact, to choose from. There are



easygoing boyfriend-style cardis as well as loose-fit textured-knit pullovers, all designed to pair with trending-again slim jeans and leggings. Patterns are rated from beginner to expert, but there is no how-to-knit information included, so new knitters

should have a project or two on the FO shelf before casting on.

## ▼ Wild Mittens, Unruly Sock: 22 Outrageously Unique Knitting Patterns

By Lumi Karmitsa

Trafalgar Square Books; \$22.95

ISBN: 978-1570768996

If you're a knitter who fears the fiddly that can come with some stranded knitting projects, Karmitsa's backstory may inspire you to cast on colorwork as much as her 22 stylishly whimsical designs will. Karmitsa had been knitting for about five



years when she decided to knit a pair of colorwork mittens for a friend—and the success of that first stranded

project encouraged her to start designing her own patterns. She's proof positive that if you want it, you can do it. From a smiley skull and a happy Buddha to delicate lupines and roses, Karmitsa's detailed, artistic

motifs are fit for all ages. The patterns here are exclusively for socks and mittens, but why not go rogue and knit her peonies or kittens on the yoke of a sweater or the ends of a scarf?

## ▼ Wool Studio: The Knit.Wear Capsule Collection

By Meghan Babin

Interweave/F+W; \$27.99

ISBN: 978-1632506412

A hard-copy combination of Interweave's digital lookbook series (Wool Studio Vols 1 and 2), *Wool Studio* features 21 patterns with a minimalist aesthetic, from designers



Susanna IC, Kate Gagnon Osborn, Norah Gaughan and Linda Marveng, among others.

If you're always on the lookout for designs with interesting construction and judicious placement of textured stitch patterns, this collection serves that up in pullovers, cardigans and wraps destined to become long-serving wardrobe staples.

## ■ TREND WATCH

Here's what was selling the first week of January 2019:

### Amazon Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book* (revised edition), by the editors of *Vogue Knitting* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Faerie Knitting*, by Alice Hoffman and Lisa Hoffman (Adams Media)
- *Knit Mitts: Your Handy Guide to Knitting Mittens and Gloves*, by Kate Atherley (Interweave/F+W)
- *Noro Kureyon: The 30th Anniversary Collection* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Easy Lace Knits*, by Anniken Allis (Stackpole Books)
- *Amy Herzog's Ultimate Sweater Book* (Abrams)
- *Knitting Fresh Brioche*, by Nancy Marchant (Sixth&Spring Books)

### Amazon Crochet List (print publications)

- *Creepy Cute Crochet*, by Christen Haden (Quirk Books)
- *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 (Abrams)



# WORSTED WONDERS

Medium-weight yarns are a knitter's mainstay. Old favorites and new options go the distance.

By Renee Lorian

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS



**Freia Fine Handpaints Ombre Worsted**

**Specs:** 48 colors; 100% U.S. wool; 127yds/75g

**Gauge:** 12–18 sts = 4" on U.S. 8–10 needles

**Distinctions:** Few yarns have more skein appeal than Ombre Worsted, a single-ply handpaint. Each skein is a journey through a landscape of shifting color.

**Projects:** Play the colors off one another with stitch patterns like brioche and entrelac, or get extra creative with ombré colorwork.



**Cascade Yarns Cantata**

**Specs:** 14 colors; 70% cotton, 30% superwash merino wool; 218yds/100g

**Gauge:** 18 sts = 4" on U.S. 9 needles

**Distinctions:** This unique worsted-weight yarn features a cotton tube filled with merino fibers, a great option for lighter-weight garments.

**Projects:** The Fairytale Cowl from Cascade's website uses a long-loop texture stitch to showcase Cantata's distinctive look.





#### HiKoo/Skacel Collection Simplinatural

**Specs:** 21 colors; 40% baby alpaca, 40% fine merino wool, 20% mulberry silk; 183yds/100g

**Gauge:** 16–18 sts = 4" on U.S. 8–9 needles

**Distinctions:** A touch of silk takes this alpaca/wool/silk blend to a luxurious place. With rounded 6-ply construction and a soft sheen, this versatile yarn gives garments and accessories a little extra polish.

**Projects:** The wide-ranging palette is inviting for colorwork and eclectic stripes.



#### Kelbourne Woolens Germantown

**Specs:** 18 colors; 100% North American wool; 220yds/100g

**Gauge:** 16–20 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–9 needles

**Distinctions:** Germantown carries something special within its tidy center-pull skeins—the long heritage of hand-knitting in America. Sourced and spun domestically, this 4-ply yarn represents a tradition of textile manufacturing that dates back to Colonial times.

**Projects:** Kelbourne's collection of Building Blocks patterns, focused on accessories, are perfect for beginners looking to expand their skills.



#### Berroco Vintage

**Specs:** 87 colors; 52% acrylic, 40% wool, 8% nylon; 218yds/100g

**Gauge:** 18–20 sts = 4" on U.S. 7–8 needles

**Distinctions:** Vintage, a washable blend in lovely, consistent colors, is a modern classic. This yarn knits up with beautiful stitch definition and stands up to repeated washings.

**Projects:** Use the updated pastels for heirloom-quality baby blankets worked in textured patterns or traditional cables.



# WORSTED WONDERS



**Rowan Pure Wool Superwash Worsted**

**Specs:** 22 colors; 100% wool; 219yds/100g

**Gauge:** 20 sts = 4" on U.S. 7 needles

**Distinctions:** This classic 4-ply is ready for all of your worsted-weight adventures. A center-pull skein and superwash wool make this yarn a stash favorite.

**Projects:** Use a rainbow of colors to create one of Kaffe Fassett's signature afghans, like the Upscale Tumbling Blocks Throw.



**Plymouth Yarn Co. Galway Worsted**

**Specs:** 88 colors; 100% wool;

210yds/100g

**Gauge:** 20 sts = 4" on U.S. 8 needles

**Distinctions:** A go-to worsted, Galway has stood the test of time. Easy to work in knitting and crocheting projects, this versatile yarn can also be felted or woven.

**Projects:** Look to pieced afghans and log-cabin-style blankets in contrasting colors or tonal shifts.





#### **Knit One, Crochet Too Allagash** (top)

**Specs:** 9 colors; 60% wool, 20% viscose, 20% nylon; 219yds/100g

**Gauge:** 17–18 sts = 4" on U.S. 7–8 needles

**Distinctions:** A woolen-spun blend, this super-soft yarn is extra lofty. Subtle flecks of color give the tweed a rustic look.

**Projects:** Former company owner Hélène Rush's Gray Matter cardigan contrasts two colors of Allagash in a striped mosaic pattern.

#### **Lorna's Laces Shepherd Worsted**

(bottom left)

**Specs:** Hundreds of nearly solids and multis; 100% superwash merino wool; 225yds/113g

**Gauge:** 18 sts = 4" on U.S. 7 needles

**Distinctions:** A longtime favorite, Shepherd Worsted continues to delight with its beautifully saturated nearly solid shades and unique hand-dyed multis. The fun Splatter-shot colors offer another way to explore this dependable yarn.

**Projects:** Extra soft and machine washable, this is an easy choice for kids' knits and larger projects like afghans.

#### **Blue Sky Fibers Extra**

**Specs:** 20 colors; 55% baby alpaca/ 45% fine merino; 218yds/150g

**Gauge:** 16–20 sts = 4" on U.S. 7–9 needles

**Distinctions:** Baby alpaca and merino wool do the twist in this squishy 2-ply yarn that represents the best of both worlds. The springy construction gives it great stitch definition in cables and textured patterns.

**Projects:** Use the neutrals, like the new Chestnut, to whip up myriad winter accessories.



# WORSTED WONDERS



## Universal Yarn Deluxe Worsted

**Specs:** 147 colors; 100% wool; 220yds/100g

**Gauge:** 18 sts = 4" on U.S. 7 needles

**Distinctions:** This reliable 4-ply offers an incredible color range, including heathers, undyed natural colors and marled shades called Rustics.

**Projects:** It's hard not to think of colorwork with a palette this extensive. Go traditional with the muted neutrals or experiment with pop-of-color motifs.



## Koigu Wool Designs Chelsea

**Specs:** 20 colors; 100% superwash merino wool; 125yds/100g

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

**Distinctions:** Koigu, known more for skinny yarns, recently added an Aran weight with the same bouncy, soft qualities we've come to know in KPPPM—only at a larger gauge.

**Projects:** This yarn begs to be knit or crocheted into a cozy oversized sweater. Great stitch definition makes it a natural for cables.



## Malabrigo Rios

**Specs:** 81 colors; 100% merino superwash; 210yds/100g

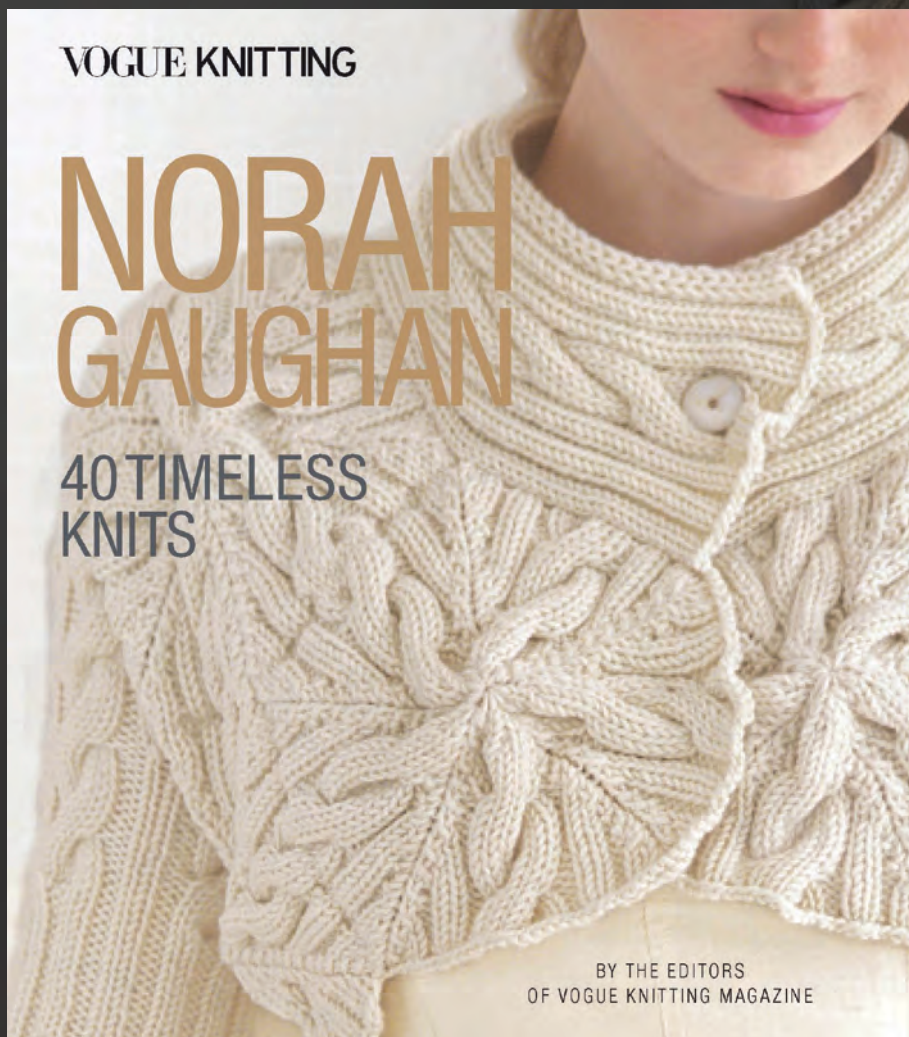
**Gauge:** 18–22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–8 needles

**Distinctions:** Malabrigo's gorgeous colors sing in this squishy 4-ply yarn, named for the four major rivers of Uruguay. Choose from kettle-dyed semisolid shades or watercolor multis.

**Projects:** A great all-around choice for accessories and garments, Rios looks especially cozy in a kid's pullover like the Chuck sweater by Lisa Chemery.



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## Bigger and Better

**H**appy New Year! As we ring in 2019, we look forward to making everything bigger and better than ever. Our website has gotten a facelift, we are headed to a new city for Winter Market, and we are exhilarated about our second Local Yarn Store Day.

**A New Look:** TNNA has a new face on the Internet. Last year, in late October, we launched the new TNNA website, [tnna.org/home](http://tnna.org/home). In addition to having a brand-new look, this modernized site offers a responsive mobile experience, improved navigation, an online community and an updated member directory. If you haven't already, please take a moment to log in and update your member profile. This will allow you to connect with thousands of industry professionals and to participate in our growing online community. New member features are being added, including community groups, a resource hub and video content.

**Local Yarn Store Day:** Yarn Group is busy gearing up for Local Yarn Store Day 2019. Save

the date: April 27, 2019. LYS Day celebrates the bricks-and-mortar yarn shop. Think about ways to collaborate with industry professionals and to create a sensational gathering in celebration of your store. Wholesalers and designers are eager to create unique kits and exclusive products to feature in your shop for this momentous day. Be sure to promote the day to your customers, and find ways to draw walk-in customers on the day of.

Last year's inaugural LYS Day was a huge success, with more than 400 retailers and nearly 50 wholesalers participating. A number of retailers told us it was their best sales day of the year. We are eager to make this year bigger and better than ever.

The LYS Day page ([tnna.org/events/local-yarn-store-day](http://tnna.org/events/local-yarn-store-day)) is going to be a powerful resource for companies to network, connect with collaborators and ultimately bring in new customers. Be sure to register on the site to be listed as a participant so you can be found by potential collaborators and customers.

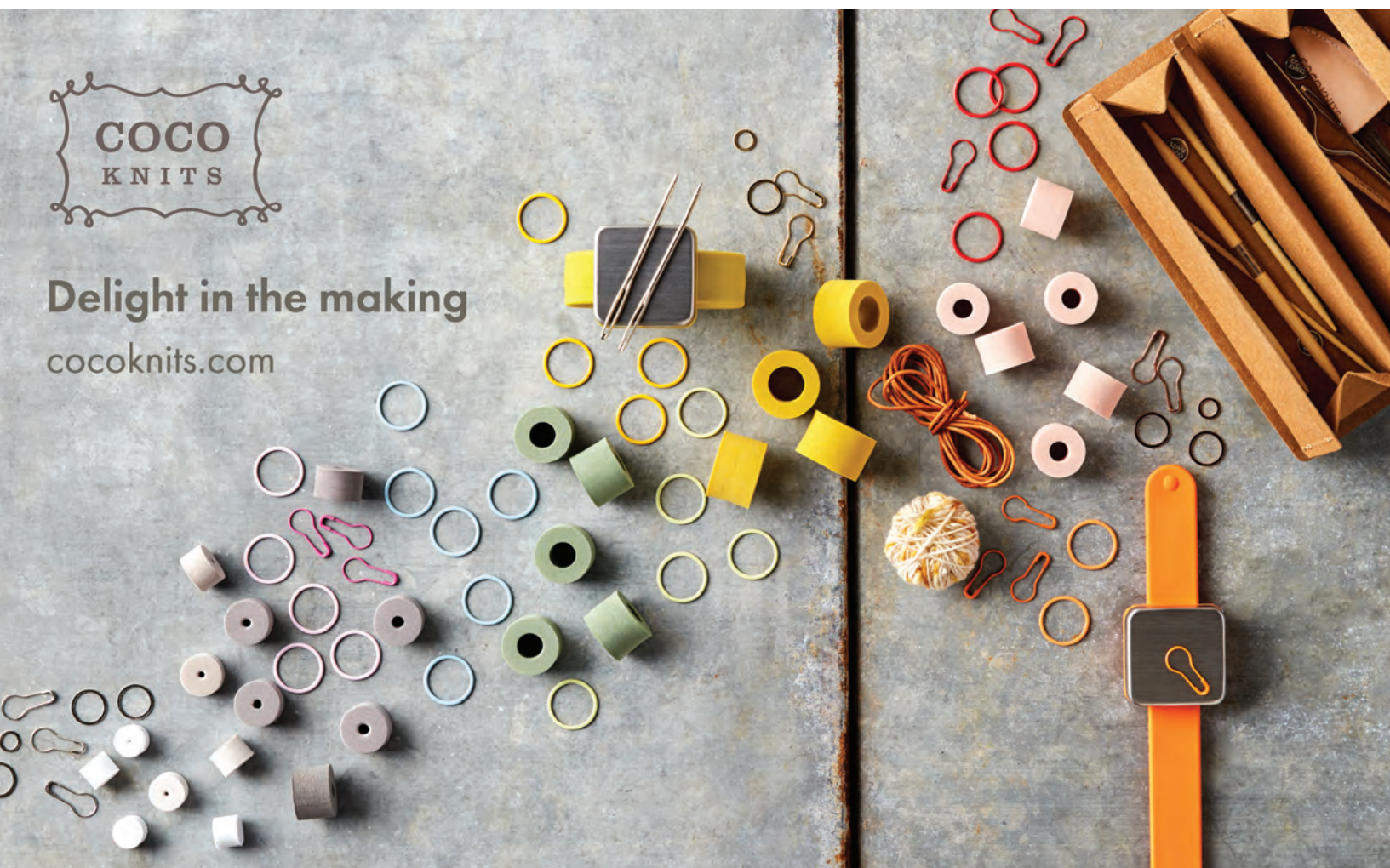
**TNNA Winter Market:** Many of the suppliers who can create kits and products will be available at TNNA's Winter Market. They will bring with them ready-to-order items as well as their best ideas for exploring partnerships with stores. What better way to discuss, network and collaborate than in face-to-face meetings? TNNA's Winter Market is the place to gather with industry leaders and to plan for the future success of your business.

This year the Winter Market will take place in Portland, Oregon. In addition to LYS Day planning, the Winter Market is the place to be for spring and summer buying. Learn about upcoming trends, take classes from top educators, network with your peers and so much more. This show, like the one last year in Las Vegas, is a mixed-format hotel suite and ballroom show, which offers a more relaxed and personal shopping experience. Check out all the details at [www.tnna.org/events/winter-needlearts-market](http://www.tnna.org/events/winter-needlearts-market). We look forward to seeing you in Portland.

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.



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## Still Warming Up America

In the early 1990s, when the problem of homelessness in America was making headlines across the country, Evie Rosen—a Wisconsin yarn shop owner and a knitting instructor of national renown—came up with the idea of having volunteers knit or crochet 7x9-inch swatches and then join them together to make afghans. Rosen said, “I’ve been donating knitted afghans to a local shelter, but I can’t knit them fast enough to fill the need. What if we break down the task of making these afghans into manageable parts so we can involve a lot more people?”

Rosen began promoting her idea among other retailers in the midwest and in the National NeedleArts Association’s associate member program. With support from TNNA and the Craft Yarn Council, Rosen’s program—called Warm Up America!—quickly gained traction and became a national success.

The Craft Yarn Council has supported the Warm Up America! Foundation since the beginning, providing office space and personnel,

among other resources, to keep the organization thriving and growing. We have worked to promote, train and encourage individual volunteers and groups to adopt the WUA program as a local activity; support and assist these volunteers by providing information and instructional materials through the website and newsletters; act as a collection point for knit/crochet items; oversee assembly of blankets; and ship items to various charitable organizations and agencies for distribution to persons in need. To date, more than 20,000 volunteers working for Warm Up America! have made more than one million blankets, hats, scarves and other items for tens of thousands of people.

Warm Up America! continues to be an ideal charity for needlearts retailers to sponsor. CYC and the foundation would welcome your support in helping to spread the word by sponsoring a WUA program in your store. You can set one up in a variety of ways. One way is to designate your store as a drop-off location for knitted or crochet “sections,” blankets and other items.

By doing so, you can encourage your own customers to contribute and also provide a venue at which current WUA! volunteers can drop off their donations.

Donations could also be assembled at a joining party in your shop and donated locally or shipped to WUA’s home office. Hosting a joining party for an evening would be a time of fellowship with your customers. Engaging your customers to help select the local charity makes another important community connection. Working with WUA is a wonderful way to give back to your community and has the added benefit of bringing current and new customers into your store.

Lastly, WUA is always in need of monetary donations to help with shipping costs. Information on making a donation and other details can be found by visiting the new Warm Up America! website, [www.warmupamerica.org](http://www.warmupamerica.org). If you’d like to work with Warm Up America!, please contact [info@warmupamerica.org](mailto:info@warmupamerica.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

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



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## Celebrating National Craft Month

**R**unning annually during the month of March, National Craft Month was started in 1994 by the Association for Creative Industries (formerly the Craft & Hobby Association) as a way for individuals to participate in hands-on activities, try a new skill and discover the benefits of crafting. National Craft Month has grown into an international celebration of inspiration, innovation and creativity, with millions of participants underscoring the familiar and near-universal experience of making.

During National Craft Month, retailers across the country offer product discounts, special classes and demonstrations, as well as tips and projects to help customers try and discover crafts. With 62 percent of all U.S. households crafting in some form last year, you can use this opportunity to drive incremental sales by helping consumers rediscover all that creating has to offer.

Incorporating National Craft Month into your promotional calendar is simple.

- Brainstorm ideas. Examine marketing strategies

from businesses in other industries that have captured your attention. Evaluate past promotional ideas to determine what drove traffic and what fell short. Do you have products on your shelves that might appeal to crafters who are not your usual customer?

- Develop your plan. March will be here before you know it. Start getting your customers excited to visit your shop and buy your products.
- Involve your team. Hold a staff meeting to share ideas and set goals. Invite your employees to contribute ways to celebrate the month.
- Promote the event. Once that you have all the details in place, plan your marketing strategy.

Here are four easy ways to promote National Craft Month:

- Utilize social media. Organize a competition on your social network platforms. It's a great way to acquire new customers and maintain your existing relationships.
- Join online communities. Find a community and/or blog that best fits your niche customer.

Actively contribute without blatantly promoting your business. (Mention your business or provide a link to your website only when appropriate.)

- Partner with others. Your best promotions can happen when you collaborate. Join forces to host a local National Craft Month event or set up a pop-up shop in a neighborhood store or location that receives large volumes of foot traffic.
- Contact the press. Press releases are a powerful media tool to generate publicity and traffic. PRLog and 24/7 Press Releases are good vehicles for distribution. You can also subscribe to Help a Reporter Out (HARO) to find reporters looking for story ideas and resources.

National Craft Month is also a great time for manufacturers to get involved by providing retail customers with ideas for simple projects that they can pass along to their shoppers online, in classes or as free takeaway materials. By supplying the sales support materials along with unique and traffic-stopping merchandising ideas, everyone benefits.

The AFCI 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 AFCI, membership or the annual Creativation trade event, visit [afci.global](http://afci.global).

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# Pushing Paper

Make books and magazines a viable sales tool.

**K**it Hutchin of Churchmouse Yarns & Teas on Bainbridge Island, Washington, has a continuing love affair with paper. “We still send sixteen-page paper newsletters by mail four to five times a year,” says her husband and business partner, John Koval. “It’s a significant expense, with printing and postage, but we feel it’s a good investment.”

The newsletters, which supply news about the shop, new products, programs and project ideas and advice, are sent to an ever-growing mailing list and handed out to customers as they browse the store. Sure, email blasts would reach just as many—if not more—knitters, but Koval says they wouldn’t have the same impact. “It’s another in-store selling tool,” he says. Having a piece of paper in your hand creates a connection that a screen does not.

Of course, not every shop has the resources, both time and money, to write, design and mail out printed matter each month. But the books and magazines that your shop already stocks can be

things to help you sell other things, you can unlock their full potential.

## Book (and Magazine) Smarts

At Churchmouse, Hutchin and Koval keep the shelves well stocked with reading material. What Koval describes as a “hefty bookcase” is filled with reference and designer books (*Vogue Knitting’s Ultimate Knitting Book*, June Hemmons Hiatt’s *Principles of Knitting* and many more). Patterns, including more than 125 custom shop designs printed on 110-pound cardstock, are stored in file cabinets. Magazines are also key players and include all the long-running staples, along with a new breed of serial publications including *By Hand*, *Pom Pom* and *Koel*. “They are marvelous,” says Koval. “We stock them all.”

At Wool & Honey in Cedar, Michigan, owners Liz Neddo and Melissa Kelensko favor smaller publications over big-name publishers: “We stock a decent number [of books and magazines],” says Kelensko, “but not as a primary focus. We

BY DARYL BROWER

crochet classes using the store’s *Churchmouse Classroom Collection*, an illustrated how-to guide with accompanying printed patterns that teach the basics. “Some knitters still relate better to paper than to YouTube,” John Koval explains. Those who don’t have house how-to patterns can use books the same way—pick a title (magazine or book) with simple projects and base a course around it. Offer a discount on the book if it’s purchased in conjunction with the class to sweeten the deal.

At Wool & Honey, print projects form the base for kits. “We typically build kits around a particular pattern or yarn,” explains Kelensko. “The greatest success we have—in selling books, magazines or yarn—is samples. Even more than patterns, when a customer can see a sample on display, see how a yarn behaves, talk with one of us who’s knit the pattern—that’s when they’re the most likely to make a purchase.”

## Spread the Love

While a library-like shelf might seem the ideal (and obvious) spot to showcase books and magazines, it’s better to avoid burying everything in one location. “We place patterns in stands around the store,” explains Koval. “We find that they serve as ‘self-shoppers,’ something that’s very helpful when you’re busy with other customers.”

Wool & Honey, too, avoids the library look. “We merchandise the books and magazines strategically around the store—the newest issues tend to be up front near the counter so customers can flip through them while they’re checking out. Occasionally, we create a nook for reading, but we’ve learned that customers will gloss over that. We find that books and magazines make more of an impact individually than when they’re [all combined].” Getting books out of the corner and into the mix is easy enough. Use stands to display them on tables or atop your yarn bins. Endcaps are also great for building book and magazine displays.

Think outside the shop, too. Your newsletter, print or electronic, makes a great (and far-reaching) display source for new titles. Add a book review section that tells customers why they should buy the latest book to arrive in your collection and the old favorites you’ve had for years. Spread the word and sales will follow.

Daryl Brower, a regular contributor to this magazine, is a New Jersey-based freelance writer.

## Display Type

**Not sure how to get your books off the shelves and into a stylish display? Below are a few suggestions to get you started. Find more by browsing Bookstagram, Pinterest boards and the like for book-display ideas.**

- **Pick a show-stopper pattern from a book or magazine and get a sample made up pronto. Set a mannequin wearing the design next to a table stacked with the book or near an endcap displaying multiples of the magazine in which it appeared. No time to knit samples? Attach a poster-sized blow-up of a favorite photo from your book and magazine collection to foam core. Use fishing line and T-pins to suspend the image from the ceiling over a display that includes copies of the books, the yarns used to create the pattern in the photo and a swatch of the design.**
- **Got a spare chair? Set a table next to it and create a cozy vignette. Put an in-progress work on the chair, a basket of yarn at the foot, and arrange select knitting titles on the table.**
- **See a theme emerging? Curate a collection of books around specific projects (baby knits, socks, hats), a technique (lace, entrelac, colorwork), or thing (animals, flowers).**

used to similar effect. According to a Craft Yarn Council report, knitters and crocheters get more than 60 percent of their ideas for projects from books and magazines. Of course, they also get ideas from the Internet, and that shift has led a number of retailers to treat books and magazines as an afterthought. But merchandised with a eye toward inspiring and informing, printed pieces offer a tactile way to expand your customers’ creativity and get them excited about what your store has to offer. Once you stop thinking of printed pieces just as things to sell and start thinking of them as

know so many customers who subscribe to the major publications, and we just can’t touch their subscriber prices. So we focus on indie publications that customers may not have seen, like *Taproot* and *Making Stories*. We like the idea of introducing them to something new.”

## Each One, Teach One

Rather than set books on a shelf and wait for them to sell themselves, both shops incorporate them into other aspects of the store. At Churchmouse, instructors teach beginning knitting and



# Action!

BY MARY MCGURN

The talk of social media engagement is video. Here's how to make it yourself.

**S**ocial media is, increasingly, the place to watch video posted by friends and family or businesses. The quality of these videos ranges from raw, spontaneous captures to slick, professionally created stories. The question for all businesses is not "Why create videos?" but "How quickly can we create them?" Coming to the rescue of small businesses are a plethora of free or low-cost desktop and mobile apps capable of creating eye-catching, engaging videos—little expertise required.

The cloud-based apps described here are my core video builders. With each, videos can be shared directly on social platforms or downloaded. You can also copy a URL to share your video on a website, blog or in an e-newsletter. User interfaces are intuitive but, should you get stuck or find yourself in need of inspiration, their blogs and tutorials deliver.

## Adobe Spark ([spark.adobe.com](http://spark.adobe.com))

Created by the leader of visual apps for professionals, Adobe Spark is a suite of three apps—Page, Post and Video—created for the novice. A key advantage is their ability to sync your work seamlessly across all of your devices. Start a project on your desktop, then continue it on your tablet or phone using their mobile apps, available for both iOS & Android.

Relevant are Spark Post, to create graphics as an element for your video, and Spark Video, for combining photos, video clips and icons into a video. (Spark Page, not relevant here, creates micro-websites hosted free by Adobe.) Adobe Spark is free, but if you buy their paid yearly plan at \$99.99, you can replace their logo with yours and add brand colors and fonts to all you create.

## Spark Post

Post overlays text on an image, making it and the image pop. I use it to animate either the text or image for a four-second video clip to be used alone or as part of a longer video. Alone, it works well as an auto-play looping video on either Facebook or Instagram; as part of a longer video, it's another video clip contributing to the storyline. Make the image zoom, pan, gray out to full color, blur to focus and reveal from a solid color. Use the clip alone or as one element in a longer video. The possibilities are infinite.

Post makes it easy to get started. Open the app and you're greeted with hundreds of professionally designed templates. Select one and remix it with new text, a different font, a new text size, shape and orientation, other colors or additional text effects. If you're still not sure you've gotten it right, use the app's style wheel. As you move around the circle, the app suggests myriad graphic treatments. You can open the app and upload your own image or search through millions of free and priced stock photos and illustrations.

You'll find two other helpful features: the resize tool and layouts. Post lets you resize your image with one touch for major social platforms, print and oft-used ratios. With layouts, you create grids of images and text. You can customize the grid's border and cell spacing and colors and resize its cells.

## Spark Video

Create square or widescreen videos with this app. Using the app's templates, decide on your preferred visual style and, following the template's story prompts, upload your own photos and video clips. Each template brings in its unique transitions and motion. Alternatively, you can start from scratch and build your own in this easy-to-use app.

Want to add icons or use other media? A keyword search of Adobe Stock or the freebies from Unsplash and Pixabay gives you plenty of options. Change each frame's layout from full screen to split screen to screen with caption or screen with title and subtitle. You can also add text to any frame, size it and then drag-and-drop it anywhere. Trim seconds off your clips and photos. Zoom or minimize photos. Add audio from the app's licensed soundtracks (you can preview each), upload your own licensed track or do a voice-over. You can adjust volume frame by frame. If you upload a video clip with audio, you can mute it.

One cool feature that sets Spark Video apart is its ability to continue a video clip over more than one frame. The app remembers where the clip ended and picks up the clip in the right spot in the next frame. This helps when you want to use different captions as the clip plays.

## Animoto ([animoto.com](http://animoto.com))

According to Animoto, this video-building platform is "fast and shockingly simple." And it's

true—it's even easier to use than Spark Video. After a free trial, you'll pay an annual fee of \$264 for the pro plan.

Animoto presents you with two paths, Memories and Marketing Video Builder. I use the latter for its high degree of customization and ability to render a video as either square or wide-screen. Memories is not customizable, but with more than 100 video templates into which you can drag-and-drop your photos and video clips, you'll have a polished wide-screen video in minutes—complete with soundtrack.

Instead of templates, the Marketing Video Builder offers you nine video styles. Transitions and text effects differentiate each style. You create your video by stringing together content blocks containing photos, video clips, text, collage, quotes or logos. To fill them, drag and drop your media (whether it's your own that you've uploaded or found from among the app's one million free stock content). Set the timing of your blocks and add customizable captions. Grab and move blocks to reorder them. Each style comes with a licensed soundtrack, but you can swap it for one of the app's many other tracks or upload your own. Voice-over is an option. What's cool with Animoto is that one click can change your video's ratio and style.

Animoto is primarily a desktop video builder, but it does offer a mobile app (for both iOS and Android) that lets you access your videos and share them to Instagram. Animoto recently released a mobile app (iOS only) to create Instagram Stories using templates.

## Best Practices

**Create square or vertically formatted videos; catch people's attention within the first 3 seconds; add captions; focus on one key point; add a call to action and upload directly to the client: Using these tools and following these guidelines will make you a master of social media video and get your content in front of more customers.**

Mary McGurn of McGurn Media creates, manages and strategizes social media accounts for small businesses and nonprofits.



# Glow and Grow

Providing employees with feedback—both positive and not—is a surefire way to keep everyone on the right track.

BY CLAIRE LUI

One of the hardest skills for a business owner to master is managing a group of employees. For some yarn shops, the question may be moot: The store may have only one or two employees, or even none, with the owner doing all of the work. But as a business starts to expand, hiring staff will be a given. What's the best way to ensure new employees understand and adapt to the company's culture?

## Begin as You Mean to Go On

Be up-front from the get-go about your expectations. As the owner, of course, you know what kind of yarn store you wanted to create, but don't assume your employees can read your mind.

Many yarn stores have a formal employee handbook and orientation to help new employees get with the program. Ailene Long, assistant general manager at Jimmy Beans Wool in Reno, Nevada, describes their handbook as a "living document" that changes as the store grows, but says "the mission statement of the company never changes. We don't necessarily want to be the biggest yarn store, but we do want to be among the best by providing good customer service and creating lasting relationships."

## Meet Regularly

As a business evolves, it is important to check in with employees to make sure they understand your expectations. Sheri Berger, owner of The Loopy Ewe in Fort Collins, Colorado, says, "I do a formal check-in after an employee has been with us for a month or so, and then as needed for part-timers. We review full-timers more regularly." Berger also holds quarterly staff meetings with customer service training, as well as informal weekly meetings to discuss new inventory or programs.

Ailene Long also emphasizes a check-in with new employees: "These employees are evaluated for both performance and fit within our company culture. We've learned the hard way that as much as we would like to keep everybody who is nice or works well, the team dynamic is very important."

## Always Be Giving Feedback

It is a truth universally acknowledged that everyone loves sharing positive feedback but dislikes having to give negative feedback. But for yarn

stores with a significant number of employees, evaluations with "glows and grows" are unavoidable for a smoothly running operation.

"The human aspect of hurting somebody will always be hard for me, and negative feedback always has that potential," says Long. "I once had to write up an employee—an efficient hard worker with a positive attitude—for lack of follow-through, after a customer order snafu. This write-up was given after multiple warnings that follow-through is key." Long says that even though the employee was considered a valued team member, a formal

Ailene Long points out that evaluations go both ways, saying the process "gives our employees an avenue to also give us feedback that is recorded and taken very seriously."

## Draw the Line Between Friend and Boss

Long worked her way up at Jimmy Beans, from a college kid working part-time to her current role as a full-time manager. "A lot of friendships have been formed during my time here, and I sometimes find it very hard to draw the line between

## Feedback Fundamentals

- **Be clear and consistent about expectations. Create an employee handbook and have regular meetings to lay out company culture and expectations.**
- **Feedback is a two-way street: Give employees a chance to ask questions and to offer suggestions on a regular basis, both informally and formally. Make sure that employees also understand their rights and importance as part of the company.**
- **Keep written records: Whether it's a casual update about a change in customer service or a more formal evaluation, make sure employees initial or sign off on written updates as an acknowledgment of receipt. Follow up conversations with a quick email so that there is a record of the change.**
- **Emphasize the positives to all and the negatives to individuals. Consistently call out great employee work as frequently and publicly as possible. Whether it's a shout-out during a company meeting or posting a complimentary customer email on the bulletin board, creating a culture of positive validation benefits every employee. On the other hand, if an employee has to be given negative feedback, keep it private. If it's a larger issue that is worth mentioning to the store at large, keep the situation as anonymous as possible.**

negative consequence was necessary, saying, "I had to push through [my discomfort] in order to emphasize that certain behaviors needed to be adjusted, and it wouldn't be fair to everybody else if the problem wasn't addressed."

Sheri Berger agrees that giving negative feedback, though difficult, is actually beneficial to both employer and employee, as it helps the employee become more successful at his or her job. Berger adds, "It's also easier to give negative feedback when you have been able to give them plenty of positive feedback over time."

Berger does a formal yearly evaluation, both written and oral, for her full-time employees. They are asked to sign and date the evaluation. Jimmy Beans Wool also gives formal yearly evaluations.

friendship and the needs of the business."

For Berger, the hierarchy is a bit different, since she is the owner and founder of the company. "Once in a while, someone will get frustrated or offended over something another employee did, said, didn't do or didn't say," says Berger. "When they can't work the problem out themselves, they bring it to me." But she has found that over time, her role as arbiter in these disagreements has become less frequent. "Because we've done training on different personalities and different perspectives, our employees are able to figure out these things on their own and be more patient with the differences."

Claire Lui writes and knits in Forest Hills, Queens.



## RETAIL PROFILE

# A Verb for Keeping Warm

Oakland, California

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

Tucked between a cupcake shop and a café, near a gift store and a church, sits a garden, two dyeing studios and two classrooms—all part of a yarn shop in Oakland, California, called A Verb for Keeping Warm.

**T**he shop—which opened in its current location, on the border of Oakland and Berkeley, in 2011—was always meant to be a multifaceted space, says owner Kristine Vejar. In fact, the brand itself has many facets, starting as a knitting-bag company in 2004.

“I was designing and sewing bags for knitters and thought I would like to make yarn. It wasn’t until I left my full-time job in 2007, though, that I began my line of naturally dyed yarn and fiber,” Vejar says. “I began in my kitchen and [soon after] earned enough money at Stitches

West in Santa Clara to rent a studio.”

A Verb for Keeping Warm is a community hub. The garden is an educational space in which schoolchildren, fiber fans and aspiring gardeners can learn about plants from which dye can be made. The outdoor classroom, in the garden, hosts natural dyeing classes, while the indoor classroom is where courses on knitting, spinning, quilting and weaving are taught.

“Our goal is to connect people with textiles and natural dyeing on every level possible,” Vejar says.

Vejar first learned about the merits and art of natural dyeing during a visit to India. She began practicing it herself in her home, where she created a small line of naturally dyed yarns. The store’s dye studio now produces upward of 300 pounds per month of naturally dyed yarns, fiber and fabric. She stocks the shop with a vast array of items for craftspeople, everything from fabric and trims to spinning supplies, natural dyes and patterns, as well as her own

branded yarn and several other lines.

“When I opened our current space, I did so because I wanted to support and offer yarns from other like-minded companies,” particularly “other women-owned businesses that are working with domestic wool, including Jill Draper Makes Stuff, Magpie, Spincycle and Twirl. We are also very fond of Rosa Pomar, Daughter of a Shepherd, Isager and Biches and Bûches for their work with local wool.”

The store’s eponymous yarn brand, naturally dyed in the adjacent studio, includes yarns made of imported materials and made in Canada and





## RETAIL PROFILE

Peru (Reliquary II, ETA, Floating, Annapurna), and those made of domestic materials and made in U.S. mills: Flock, Gather, Pioneer, Range [now discontinued], and Dawn, a blend of 75 percent California organic merino and 25 percent organic cotton, which Vejar calls “farm yarns.”

“The wool in all of these [farm] yarns is grown in California. All are either organic and/or climate-beneficial, a certification indicating that the rancher is farming carbon [which, according to the website Fibershed, “has the potential to restore balance within the carbon cycle in a way that will ameliorate climate change, build resilience to drought and increase agricultural productivity naturally”]. We have close relationships with our ranchers/farmers and the mills,” she explains.

“Because our climate is warming, more people are looking to work with cellulose and cellulose blends, which is what led us to make our yarn Dawn,” she adds. “From April through September, we tend to carry more cellulose. But really, in the Bay Area it is possible to wear a sweater nearly every evening throughout the year.”

Vejar has a team of nine employees at the store who work with her clientele, which she describes as diverse: “a diverse age range, from a multitude of backgrounds, who come from a wide economic spectrum. And they value carefully sourced materials,” she says.



Vejar fosters customer relationships through a variety of means. Her first book, *The Modern Natural Dyer*, published in 2015, teaches readers the ins and outs of natural dyeing. The store is home to classes and events, and she writes a monthly newsletter, “The Verbivore,” and blog to keep knitters and other makers informed about stock, initiatives and events.

Last year, A Verb for Keeping Warm organized a Dye Day in which participants could purchase dye kits from the shop to use at home. Vejar offers three dye kits, one for knitters, one for sewists, and an indigo and shibori package; each comes with concepts for three projects and all the supplies (materials, scours, mordants, tools) needed to complete them. To toast the

occasion, she asked knitwear designer Thea Colman to create a recipe for a “Dye Day Cocktail.” Pomegranate was used as the starting point for the drink—as Vejar wrote on her blog, “it’s a natural dye as well as a delicious fruit!”—and Colman then paired it with tea-infused bourbon. “Since black tea is a dye as well, it’s a perfect pairing.”

Her newest project is a podcast called Reverberate. “It’s a new form of communication to share the projects we do at Verb,” Vejar says. “We will discuss our favorite topics: creating clothing from materials with a story. We plan to interview many different types of people and to really give a sense of what it is like to make yarn.”

“From April through September, we tend to carry more cellulose. But really, in the Bay Area it is possible to wear a sweater nearly every evening throughout the year.”



### A Verb for Keeping Warm

6328 San Pablo Avenue,  
Oakland, CA 94608; (510) 595-8372;  
[www.averbforkeepingwarm.com](http://www.averbforkeepingwarm.com)

**Years in business:** 8

**Staff:** 9

**Square footage:** 1,700

**Hours:** Sun., Mon., Fri.: 11am–6pm; Tues.:  
closed; Wed., Thu.: 11am–7pm; Sat.: 10am–6pm

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GLANCE**



## COMPANY PROFILE

# Freia Fine Handpaints

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

**E**ven bigger balls” proclaims the home page of Freia Fine Handpaints, a nod to an economical product offering for those working on larger-scale projects (customers can purchase yarn in 50-gram or 100-gram balls), but also to the sass, creativity and energy of founder Tina Whitmore.

“I’m juggling a dozen new ideas in my head at any given moment,” says Whitmore. “Like so many others in this incredible industry, I wish there were more hours in the day so that I could knit more, design more, dye more.”

Whitmore founded Freia, named in honor of a dog she once had, in the fall of 2010 after exploring the many facets of dyeing yarn. “The yarn first went on sale in early fall that year, about eight weeks after I decided to try my hand at dyeing. I took what little yarn I had dyed—about eighty balls of self-striping yarn—to sell alongside Knitwhits [pattern and knitting] kits at a Stitches Midwest show and sold out, even selling the swatch I had on my needles. I knew then I was on to something,” she says.

Since that unexpectedly successful introduction, she has steadily grown the company, launching two collections a year, each featuring new gradient colors, and debuting them at TNNA trade shows. All yarns produced by the company are hand-dyed—“currently it’s all tabletop dyeing and very labor intensive,” Whitmore says—and include ombré, self-

striping and semisolid gradients.

And all Freia yarns are exclusively U.S. merino/wool blends, some 100 percent U.S. merino (her best-selling yarn type), some U.S. merino blended with silk. “All of the wool comes from the Rockies. My motivation for using American wool is not so much about protectionism; rather, it’s about keeping a smaller footprint and valuing the animal husbandry procedures here in the U.S. that preclude mulesing,” Whitmore explains. “It is also nice to know that in my own small way, I’m helping out a few growers in the States.”

This year, Whitmore took on a major project, relocating her company from California’s Bay Area to the Berkshires in western Massachusetts. “Moving had been on my mind for a number of years. “[Northern California] has seen huge population growth, with the accompanying negatives of homelessness, wage pressure, high rents, high taxes, high costs of doing business, with, in my opinion, less return on that investment.”

On a visit to the Berkshires, she immediately felt at home. “I found a place of great beauty and history, sparse population, lower taxes and lower cost of living, four well-defined seasons and an overall better quality of life,” Whitmore says. It was almost simply a bonus that the area has historical ties to the textile and wool industries. “The people I met did not look at me sideways when I said I owned a yarn company. Everyone here knew what that meant,” she says. “There is a big farm-to-table and creative community working in traditional arts and crafts, and [the Berkshires are] the home of MASS MoCA and other amazing art, theatrical and music establishments. The area really checked off all the things I felt I needed.”

Whitmore did not make the cross-country move on her own, though. One of her studio assistants decided to head east with



“There is a big farm-to-table and creative community working in traditional arts and crafts, and [the Berkshires are] the home of MASS MoCA and other amazing art, theatrical and music establishments.”





## COMPANY PROFILE

"The new framework will allow me to create a yarn shop portal for quick and easy reorders with current in-stock data and rapid delivery."



her. "It's really been great having her here. She's been very helpful in keeping things running smoothly," Whitmore says. Since opening the doors at her new location, she's hired three additional staff, and she aims to build the team back up to 10 employees. "There are some challenges to moving to a somewhat economically depressed area—mainly just finding the right people—but the staff I've hired have all been great. Every job counts in these small towns, so it's nice to see that coming here has contributed to the overall well-being of the area," she explains.

While production and manufacturing very much have a local focus, Freia yarns are sold around the world, which she has achieved for the company via attendance at TNNA, Vogue Knitting LIVE! and other shows and through a healthy social media presence. For Whitmore, the TNNA shows have "always been a nice way to say hello to shop owners and hear from them what's working best. Though it's work and I'm very focused, it is also a bit of a breather; it's enjoyable to be able to talk more casually and see what's happening in the industry in general," she says.

And Instagram is what she turns to for direct feedback and community building with the end user: "I love seeing what knitters make in Freia yarns and enjoy re-sharing those images so that the knitters can get greater acknowledgment for their work than they might otherwise," Whitmore says.

Though her desire to slow down in the short term as she settles into her new home base and staffs up is understandable, Whitmore has a growing list of plans and aspirations. She's curious to try other fiber types; for instance, "Cormo comes to mind," she says. Pattern development has taken a back seat recently, and she sends out yarn to a handful of reliable designers who she knows will "make something amazing that really shows off the gradient," but she's hoping to get back to work on this herself in the coming year: "I have ideas of my own stashed away." And with the expanded space at Freia's new headquarters, she hopes to open up a corner of the studio to the public for a few hours a month. "We've had a lot of requests from people in the area to come by, and I've always wanted to have an atelier of sorts," she explains.

Before that, though, she's focused on the company's most recent initiatives. She rebuilt the brand's website last year—"The new framework will allow me to create a yarn shop portal for quick and easy reorders with current in-stock data and rapid delivery," she says—and last fall launched "yarn bombs," giant gradient balls of fingering-weight merino. "There's close to a half-mile of yarn per ball," Whitmore says. "I'm really excited about these and the design possibilities within."

**Address:** 60 Roberts Drive, Suite 204, North Adams, MA 01247; [freiafibers.com](http://freiafibers.com)  
**Employees:** 5

**Fun fact:** Tina Whitmore's hand-dyed yarn was only meant to be a fun project. "It was supposed to be just something I'd play around with on the side and see if I could make some money, but it took off and took over from the [Knitwhits] kit business entirely."





## HOW THEY MIGHT AFFECT THE IMPORTS ON YOUR SHELVES.

By Leslie Petrovski

The Wool Act of 1699 forbade the American Colonies from exporting wool and wool products and restricted wool imports into North America to British wool only. This draconian law required colonists to pay taxes on every wool purchase. Given the importance of wool to both economies,

it's not much of a stretch to say that wool helped spark the American Revolution. Three hundred-plus years later, tariffs, and the threat of same, can still be fighting words, which is why the United States and China are currently at odds—over wool, bamboo and thousands of other goods.

### **U.S.-CHINA TRADE WAR**

Last year, the United States and China began volleying onerous tariffs back and forth in a game that will have huge consequences for the global economy. The United States started it, in the spring of 2018, with fees on steel and aluminum from several countries. President Donald Trump then announced punitive tariffs on Chinese products

based on concerns that China was violating intellectual property rights and engaging in other unfair trade practices. Imposed during two phases, these initial salvos inflicted 25 percent tariffs on \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports, which involve more than 1,100 goods including farm equipment, LEDs, chemicals used in plastic manufacturing, some medical and scientific equipment, and items re-

lated to the transportation industry. China immediately retaliated with tariffs on \$50 million of U.S. exports, including soy beans and four-wheel-drive cars, accusing the U.S. of starting the biggest trade war in economic history.

When the U.S. levied a 10 percent duty on an additional \$200 billion of Chinese goods, with those tariffs slated to escalate to 25 percent, China fired



back with tariffs on \$60 billion worth of American products—all of this on top of any duties that already existed between the two countries.

At this writing, the threat of escalating duties on that \$200 billion package of imports is on hold, part of a 90-day “cease-fire” agreement Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping reached during the G20 Summit at the beginning of December, so the two superpowers can try to hash things out. In the meantime, the U.S. stock market has slumped, the pressure on prices is building and prices are rising as the results of the trade war trickle through the global economy.

### WHY DOES THE CRAFT INDUSTRY CARE?

What does this have to do with the craft industry? Quite a lot, if you’re importing raw materials or finished goods from China or purchasing from companies that do. These are some of the products that could cause U.S. craft manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers concern: raw silk, silk yarn, raw wool, value-added wool in various forms including superwash, all kinds of yarn and fabrics, even baskets.

After the United States announced the \$200 billion batch of tariffs, Jo-Ann Stores, the Ohio-based fabric and craft retailer, came out with a statement protesting the fees, calling the move a “made in America” tax for the chilling effect it could have on U.S. crafterpreneurs and charity-minded makers who use the imported materials Jo-Ann sells to make stuff. The company went on to create an online petition urging customers to take a stand against the tariffs, collecting nearly 100,000 signatures, as well as backlash from customers incensed over Jo-Ann’s foray into what some perceived as politics.

Jill Soltau, then CEO of Jo-Ann Stores, testified before the Office of the United States Trade Representative, asking for an exemption for 30 product categories, but managing concessions only on fleece and woven fabric. In her testimony, Soltau decried the tariffs, saying, “Our customers, many of whom are nonprofit organizations and small businesses that operate on tight budgets, could not tolerate the increased pricing resulting from the tariff cost.”

The National Retail Federation has also taken a stand against the U.S.’s trade war with China, warning that small businesses and consumers both will feel the impact. A study by the NRF and the Consumer Technology Association showed that the effect of the early rounds of tariffs affecting \$50 billion of imports could reduce gross domestic product by \$3 billion and kill four jobs for every one that’s created.

“As thousands of businesses have testified and explained in comments to the administration, tariffs are a tax on American families,” said NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay in a statement. “It’s disappointing that, despite the voices of those

impacted, the administration continues to advance harmful tariff policies that threaten to weaken the U.S. economy.

“Every time this trade war escalates, the risk to U.S. consumers grows,” he continued. “With these latest tariffs, many hardworking Americans will soon wonder why their shopping bills are higher and their budgets feel stretched.”

### WHAT ARE TARIFFS?

So where do we stand now? All the tariffs mentioned above are currently in effect. But what are they and who do they impact, really? The answer is: It’s complicated.

Essentially, tariffs are taxes on imported goods. Countries impose tariffs for various reasons. In the case of the United States and China trade imbroglio, the U.S. rationale for the tariffs is China’s troublesome trade practices and, arguably, the

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massive deficit that exists between both countries. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative, in 2017 the United States imported \$505.5 billion of goods from China, whereas we exported only \$129.9 billion worth.

In theory, by slapping tariffs on about half of what we import from China, we’ll level the playing field by making U.S. products and imports from other countries more attractive to domestic buyers. Should China really feel the pinch, perhaps it would negotiate to end the trade practices the United States finds objectionable, and we would enter into a new, more equitable era of U.S.–Chinese commerce. That’s the basic idea, anyway.

The problem is, China is hitting the U.S. with

tariffs too, on items including computers, meat, wine and textiles. Plus, there are other forces at work that affect the price of goods, including fluctuating currency values, the commodity market and all the things that make up the complicated ecosystem of the global economy.

So who pays all these tit-for-tat charges on goods as they travel between countries? Again, the answer is complicated. Take wool, for example. Right now, the United States exports about 50 percent of its clip to China. Since China has imposed tariffs on U.S. wool coming in, Chinese buyers will either pay those taxes or forgo purchasing the American fiber, which will require American wool sellers to seek other markets. Those Chinese mills and textile manufacturers that do purchase U.S. wool will likely offer less money to American growers or raise prices to make up the difference on the value-added yarn, clothing or other products they sell back to the United States and other countries.

Julie Stepanek Shiflett, an economist and sheep-industry consultant to the American Sheep Industry Association, explains that because the trade narrative continues to shift, it’s creating jitters for the industry. “It’s the uncertainty that’s the real killer,” she says. “When you’re investing in something, if you have uncertainty, you’re going to reduce that investment. The industry is looking for other buyers, perhaps in India and Eastern Europe. Depending on what happens, it could be a tough spring.”

Once U.S. wool gets transformed into a ball of yarn, skirt or sweater on Chinese soil, it’s no longer an American product and is subject to the 10 percent duties the U.S. government levied on that giant \$200 billion package of goods. Should things not go well during trade talks, that percentage could escalate to 25 percent on both U.S. wool exports and Chinese imports made of U.S. wool.

Diego Paullier, president and general manager of Chargeurs Wool USA, the South Carolina-based company where much of the country’s wool top is produced, says they sell 60 to 70 percent of the wool they export to spinners in China. The wool they process that stays in the U.S. is purchased by the military, hosiery manufacturers, sporting goods and craft yarn companies.

“The tariffs are pretty new,” he says, referring to the tariffs on wool exports went into effect in late September. “Most of our wool was sold in spring and summer, so we have not seen the impact yet. It *will* have an impact, of course. Duties are like taxes, so we’ll get 10 percent less price at the end of the day.”

Though Chargeurs’ Chinese export business might suffer, there’s the possibility that demand will increase domestically for U.S. wool, assuming textile enterprises and consumers aren’t suffering from the tariffs in other ways. “Yes, we export, but domestically speaking we are more protected,” he says. “But our customers could be hurt in other



# The Trouble with TARIFFS

ways. The markets are so globalized that it's difficult to know what the final result will be."

## WHO PAYS?

When it comes to Chinese imports into the United States, China doesn't bear the actual cost of these tariffs—U.S. businesses do. Say, for example, a yarn company ordered a silk-blend yarn from China. When the yarn arrives in a U.S. harbor, the duty is paid by the company's customs broker to the U.S. Border Protection Service. The yarn company can then decide to raise the price on that silk-blend yarn to cover the import duties, or it can absorb them as part of the cost of doing business.

"Whether it's yarn or some totally different product, the concern is how this actually affects a business," explains Amanda Peaker, customs commercial account manager for Gallagher Transport. "There's definitely a lot of concern across the board about what's going to happen, what [companies] will have to pay and how it will affect their businesses."

Jimmy Beans Wool, which purchased the Namaste bags brand, debuted the new range of Namaste bags late last year. The stitcher-friendly bags, which are made in China, were subject to



U.S. import tariffs. "Luckily, we found out about the tariffs before we finalized our prices," explains Jimmy Beans' Laura Zander, "so we were able to incorporate the tariffs into our pricing strategy."

ChiaoGoo, a family-owned business based in Michigan, manufactures its knitting needles in Hangzhou, China, and distributes them all over the world. They've been hit with 25 percent duties on their products coming into the United States. To cover rising raw-material costs and the tariffs, the company is planning a 10 percent whole price increase to go into effect January 1. "Our last price increase was in September 2017," explains Juliana Mulcahy, office sales manager for ChiaoGoo. "We were due for a price increase anyway."

ChiaoGoo is also working with an import-export attorney to see whether some of their goods can be reclassified in such a way that they might be

subject to lesser duties. "We also need to work a little smarter," Mulcahy explains. "Right now all of our products are shipped from China to Michigan. It would help to keep costs down if we could ship directly to our global distributors. But we don't have the capability to do that."

## DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR TARIFFS ARE?

What do you do if you are manufacturing goods in China or importing yarns and other products? If you haven't looked into what the trade war means to you, now is the time. If you are seeing fees on invoices you don't understand, contact your customs broker. Given the complexity of the trade conflict with China, you will want to make sure that your invoices don't contain mistaken charges.

Juliana Mulcahy advises companies with operations in China to engage the help of a lawyer to ensure that everything is being done to comply with the new laws. "We are working with an import-export lawyer, which also costs money," she says. "But if you are importing from China, how you import is under a microscope. You don't want to incur extra fines by customs and border patrol because you are doing something incorrectly."

## The Rising Price of Wool

Tariffs aren't the only factor affecting yarn prices. Have you checked the price of wool lately? After years of low prices, fine wool is having a moment. The price of fine wool hit an all-time high on the global market last fall, fueled by the drought in Australia (resulting in smaller herds, so less wool) and rising demand, mainly in activewear (hello SmartWool and Allbirds merino shoes, among others).

"People are rediscovering wool through next-to-skin products," explains Stanley Strode, wool manager for Midstates Wool Growers Cooperative. "There is strong demand and tight supply. It's good for the sheep growers."

But for U.S. yarn companies looking to purchase domestic—or foreign—wool, it can run into real money. Nick Colony, director of marketing operations for Harrisville Designs, encountered this reality as the company was launching its American-grown Cormo-blend yarn Nightshades, a DK-weight black yarn dusted in ten colors. Released last fall, the new line sold out at Rhinebeck. Anticipating the demand, Colony went back to his yarn broker with an order, only to discover that in the year since the yarn had gone into development, the wool price had increased by \$2 a pound, which adds up quickly when you're purchasing a few thousand pounds of wool.

Because of how Harrisville had originally priced the yarn, it was able to absorb the extra cost of the fiber without raising the retail price of their 250-yard skeins. "If they raise the price more," Colony says, "who knows what will happen?"

Stacie Chavez of Imperial Yarn has managed to absorb the \$3.50 per pound increases she's seen since 2015 by changing some

processes and boosting prices on new yarn releases. Because wool jumped precipitously in 2018, she anticipates having to add 20 cents or so to her wool skeins once that wool is processed. "This makes me so happy," she says, "because ranchers will make more money."

Jesse Molzan, who owns Knit One Crochet Too, has seen prices rise not only in wool but also cotton, silk and linen, in addition to milling costs. At this point, she's only had to raise the price on two yarns. "My customers haven't batted an eye when I say I've had to do an increase," she says. "They say, 'That's fine based on the quality.'"

Yarn shops, too, are seeing increases from vendors. At Wool & Honey in Cedar, Michigan, yarn shop owners Liz Neddo and Melissa Kelenske have experienced some price hikes. "Brooklyn Tweed increased their prices," explains Neddo, "but they hadn't changed their prices in a long time. We're able to communicate that with our customers, and they are willing to pay for a really good product. If it's \$10 more for a sweater, it still seems like it's worth it."

Danielle Romanetti, owner of Fibre Space in Alexandria, Virginia, says most of her vendors have increased prices in the last three months, which she's passed along to her retail customers. She's also slightly reduced the number of yarns she carries. "I haven't heard a word from customers," she says, "and haven't seen it reflected in sales. But talk to me in April."

What will the future bring? Stanley Strode, wool manager for Midstates Wool Growers Cooperative, thinks that in the near term, prices will remain high. "Australian production is lower, and their sheep numbers are down. Fine wool sheep market is down here, too. When you look at world numbers of sheep, fine wool sheep numbers are down everywhere. It goes back to supply and demand."





When Hélène Rush of Knit One, Crochet Too was looking to retire three years ago, she decided to seek a buyer rather than shutter the company's doors. She found Jesse Molzan, who moved the company from chilly New England to sunny Florida. YMN's Erin Slonaker spoke with Molzan about what it's like to take over an established brand.

**ES: You're a relatively new yarn company owner. Tell us what led you here?**

**JM:** I was born and raised in Fort Myers, Florida. I was an international studies major in college, and I lived in China (trying to learn Chinese) for a year. After graduation, a friend and I moved to Melbourne, Australia, where I worked for a vintage clothing company. That's where I was introduced to the wholesale industry, and I realized I love helping create collections and products to be sold in shops. After a year, my visa ran out and I headed home to the States. My neighbor growing up owned the yarn company The Sassy Skein. When I got home I contacted her to see if she needed any help around the office while I looked for something permanent. Over time, I took on more and more responsibilities around the office. And once I realized I really liked to knit and could create fun and wearable art, I was hooked. It was a wonderful company to work for, and I was able to learn and really grow into the

knitter and businesswoman I am now. After working for The Sassy Skein for six years, I decided to try something new, and I was hired as the manager of a local yarn shop. I am really happy I got a chance to learn what works and doesn't work in an LYS. This knowledge has really helped me—I understand what shops need to move the yarn they order.

**ES: What made you decide to buy an existing company rather than start your own?**

**JM:** I had an opportunity to buy the yarn shop I managed. I thought hard about it, and planned, with time, to create my own yarn line to help support the shop. But then I got an email from Hélène Rush, Knit One, Crochet Too's previous owner, saying she was about to sell her company. I had always been a huge fan of TY-DY Cotton and Batiste, and I didn't want to see them go away. I knew that Knit One, Crochet Too had really amazing fibers; the company just needed some new life. So instead of building a brand from scratch, I chose this route. This way I had a good support system to start with, and I had cash coming in from the first day. It's because of this that I am able now to bring in new yarns that I have been dreaming of bringing to life.

**ES: What changes have you made since taking the reins?**

**JM:** We've come out with a brand-new logo, website and Instagram. Our yarns and designs have been given new life with fun and bright photography. We are slowly rebranding the yarns that might need a little extra TLC on the labels; we want each fiber to tell its own story. The first yarn we rebranded is Nautika, a worsted-weight microfiber/nylon blend. I had a graphic artist design the cutest knitting octopus to put on the new band. I'm also trying to bring fun and modern designs to our seasonal collections.

**ES: What's it like being a knitter who lives in Florida? How does that affect how you drive your company forward?**

**JM:** I love how people are so shocked and surprised I could have a Florida-based yarn company. We have such large knitting and crochet communities here. I do tend to knit more lightweight projects, like fingering-weight pullovers and tanks. But we live in air conditioning almost half the year, and it gets chilly inside, so we like to bundle up in chunky cotton sweaters. I don't think living in Florida affects the way I drive my company. I take

inspiration for our designs from the runways and whatever location we choose for our photo shoots.

**ES: What's the response been from customers?**

**JM:** It's been great! They are so happy someone kept the yarns alive. They are also happy we are giving new life to some of their favorite yarns and patterns.

**ES: How did you learn to knit and crochet?**

**JM:** My grandmother Go-Go taught me to knit, twice—first was when I was 10, when I had absolutely no interest in it. Fast-forward fourteen years. I had just moved home from Australia and was helping out at The Sassy Skein. I thought that since I was working there I should at least know how to knit so I wouldn't feel hopeless if someone asked me a question. Go-Go was so excited to teach me; she was such an avid knitter. From the moment she taught me to knit and purl the second time, I have not dropped my needles. From that moment, I knew I'd found my thing.

**ES: What will Knit One, Crochet Too be focusing on in the coming years?**

**JM:** We plan to focus on yarn lines that will stand the test of time. I want to create yarns that will be staples in yarn shops. The first yarn that I came out with as the new owner was Daisy, a gorgeous blend of linen, silk and hemp. I can't wait for people to see the seven new colors for spring. Our next new yarn will be coming out this summer for Fall 2019, and I hope it will make an even bigger splash than Daisy. It is going to be called Snowdrops, and it is a stunner.

**ES: What do you see for the future of the yarn industry?**

**JM:** Because of social media and the Internet, more and more people are being exposed to so many choices in yarns and in designs. I think this a great thing, and I think that we will be seeing a lot more boutique yarn companies like mine in the coming years.

**ES: What do you like to do in your free time?**

**JM:** Free time? What's that? When I do have time, my husband and I like to travel. We make mini trips out of our photo shoots for work. I am the model in all of our photos, and my husband is the photographer. For our upcoming season we went to Corfu, a gorgeous island that has inspired an exciting collection of timeless designs in our amazing yarns. We look forward to continuing to travel and letting the world inspire many more collections.



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