

Fox Valley Knitters' Guild *NEWS*

A newsletter by and for FVKG members

April 2013

President's Letter -- The Challenge of Design

I have been excited about the wrap design challenge since I first heard about it. I have been tossing around an idea for a lacy, sea-themed shawl out of lace weight with beads...for a while now. And how hard can designing be? I have altered patterns for ages now—change gauges, change necklines, change number of button holes, change into seamless knitting from pieced. But when faced with yarn and needles in my hand and only a picture in my head...I felt stuck.

I cast on some stitches for a rectangle, then thought maybe it would be better triangular, but how do I make the edge shape I want as a knitted-on edge? I'd have to look that up...I wanted to chart my sea creatures, so I printed knitting graph paper. Lace was the look I wanted, but how to balance my yo with decreases that leaned the right way to make a good-looking creature? I found some pictures online of sea creatures, but they were either too complicated for me to reproduce or too cartoonish. I was getting frustrated. Why should this be so hard? I had inspiration. I had tools. I had knitting experience. I have even listened to designers talking about the design process. It seemed easy enough.

I believe the issue is that what I count as experience: Everything is about changing something that is already at least conceptually there. Imagine knitting a pattern is like following a road map. My design experience had been taking side trips off of a known route—I knew where I was leaving the planned route and where I would rejoin it (after my side trip to the yarn store). If knitting from a pattern is like following a map, then designing is like planning a vacation. Say I want to go to the mountains. I know that there are mountains east and west of here. Which ones do I want to go to? What route is a good one to take? What do I need to be prepared for along the way? What opportunities and challenges are along the different routes? (I hate those roads with the sheer drop off the side.) There were so many questions to ask that I just became overwhelmed. Every answer opened up another set of options and questions, just as every road offers another set of sites to visit and other roads to explore. I suppose that is what makes designing so exciting. Just as travel is exciting.

In the end, I simplified my design. I will revisit my beaded, lace-weight, lacy, sea creature shawl when I have more experience with the landscape of Designland.

~ Kathy Schooley

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2012-2013 Meeting Dates

September 12, 2012
October 10, 2012
November 14, 2012
December 12, 2012
January 9, 2013
February 13, 2013
March 13, 2013
April 10, 2013
May 8, 2013

St. Charles Episcopal Church
994 N 5th Ave.
St. Charles, IL

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

FVKG currently meets the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, in the Fellowship Hall of the St. Charles Episcopal Church in St. Charles. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.*



Gallery Show

FVKG GALLERY SHOW OPENS FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 5; RUNS THROUGH APRIL 27

The opening reception begins at 5:30 p.m. and lasts until 8 p.m. at the Fine Line. Share the accomplishments of our knitters! There will be door prizes and good eats, too.

~ Claudia Frost

Fine Line Creative Arts Center
6N158 Crane Rd.
St Charles, IL 60175
630-584-9443
www.finefine.org

Program for April

Today in knitting, the number of inspiring designers is almost beyond count, and it seems as if a spectacular new knitting book is published at least once a quarter. An astonishing array of hand-painted yarns delights us every time we step into our local. But how did we get from the estimable Elizabeth Zimmerman to where we are now?

Jo Fritter and Phyllis Deerinck will reminisce about their post-Elizabeth inspirations focusing on four British knit designers of the 1980s and 90s: Kaffe Fasset, Susan Duckworth, Sasha Kagan and Alice Starmore. Expect lots of slides and many examples from our personal collections.

If you'd like to learn more before the meeting, check out KaffeFasset.com, SashaKagan.co.uk.com, and virtualyarns.com (current home of Alice Starmore). I could not locate a website for Susan Duckworth, but her books are readily available from many sources.

~ Phyllis Deerinck

Vendor for April

Our vendor in April will be our own Emily Parson with her fabulous Sophie's Toes Yarn. Emily dyes her own yarn and is truly an artist. She accepts credit cards, cash or checks.

~ Judy Jasper
Co-Vice President (Programs)

Knitting with a Capital K

I am a Knitter. With a capital K. Heck, I'd say with all caps – KNITTER. That's me.

I have some close friends who, every time I show them my latest knitted item, say, "It's too bad you can't make any money knitting."

Now I know this statement was made with the best of intentions. I believe it is in their minds some sort of compliment. At this point I try to change the subject, otherwise we'll go into this dialogue:

Me: Well, you couldn't make any money at it. The yarn alone for this sweater cost [insert price here, probably between \$100 - \$500].

Friend: Hmmm. Unless it was a designer piece you couldn't expect to get that.

Me: And that doesn't count all the time I spent on it.

Friend: It's really too bad you can't make money off your knitting.

Me: [Quiet and hopefully not too audible SIGH.]

After the most recent version of the above conversation, I was trying to analyze why this irritates me so much. I'm not mad at the person who said it, but there seems to be some sort of stigma associated with knitting.

I have other interests. For example, I do all my gardening and yard work myself, and have a fairly large amount of gardens for the small property that I have. I am very anal about my lawn. I mow the lawn every three days during spring, summer and fall. I like to have every blade of grass exactly 3.5 inches tall. (Just kidding, sort of.) I feel very strongly that as a single woman, I have to have the best lawn on the block. I spend countless hours gardening and doing yard work. My friends know this about me, too, but I don't hear the following:

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your gardening [or mowing your lawn]."

Insert other hobbies into that sentence:

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your reading."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your golfing."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your scuba diving."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off watching Dr. Who."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your rock collecting."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your stamp collecting."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your tweeting."

"It's too bad you can't make any money off your jogging."

I go to the dog park several times a week, weather permitting – "It's too bad you can't make any money off going to the dog park."

See? It's only knitting about which you hear this kind of statement. Why is that? Why can't I JUST knit because I enjoy it? I enjoy everything about it. I enjoy shopping for yarns. I enjoy having a delightful and way too huge stash of yarns. I enjoy searching and finding patterns to knit. I enjoy occasionally designing something to knit. I enjoy the actual process of knitting. I enjoy easy knitting. I enjoy challenging knitting. I enjoy (well, maybe not as much) finishing the object (seaming, etc). I enjoy wearing the object. I especially enjoy all the social aspects of knitting – including my fabulous knitting friends, all the knitting groups I am in, and the knitting retreats and conferences.

So why exactly – do I need to make money off of that?

~ Judy Jasper
Co-Vice President (Programs)

October 2013 FVKG Retreat

Place: Stronghold Retreat Center
1922 Illinois Route 2 North
Oregon, Illinois 61061
815-732-6111

Dates: *October 25-26-27, 2013*

Deposit: \$50.00 per person

Arrival Time: October 25, 4:00 P.M.

Room Rate:

\$125/person for double occupancy/4 meals included

Departure Time: October 27, 2:00 P.M.

\$205/person for a single occupancy/4 meals included

We are again having Betsy Pool come on Friday night for massages. If you are interested, please let me know, as space is limited. The price is \$18 for 15 minutes and \$25 for 20 minutes. Also, on Friday night, we are planning on having pizza and salad for dinner (price not included in room rate), or you can have dinner at one of the local restaurants.

Just to let Guild members know, if we do not have at least 13 members sign up for the retreat by the May meeting, the reservation will be canceled at the Stronghold. We are also in need of a volunteers, to write to local shops and yarn companies for donations to the retreat. If you are willing to help, please let me know.

Thank you,
Sandy Andrews

Upcoming Regional Fiber Events

This year, there are a number of different local events where you can get your yarn on. Fiber festivities begin this weekend with *YarnCon*, April 6-7, Chicago Journeymen Plumbers' Union Hall, Chicago.

Hours: Saturday 11-7, Sunday 11-4; www.yarncon.com. See the list of other shows below, and be sure to mark your calendars.

~ Lisa Roberts

2013 Wisconsin Spring Spin-In, April 20-21, at the Waukesha County Expo Center, Waukesha, WI.

More info at www.wispinin.org.

Midwest Fiber & Folk Art Fair, June 21-23, at The Expo Center at Lake County Fairground, Grayslake, IL. More info at www.fiberandfolk.com.

Knit & Crochet Show, July 17-21, Indianapolis. Sponsored by TKG. More info at www.knitandcrochetshow.com.

Chaplin Creek Fiber Festival, August 3-4, Franklin Grove, IL. More info at www.chaplincreek.com.

Stitches Midwest, August 8-11, Schaumburg, IL. More info at www.knittinguniverse.com/stitches.

Vogue Knitting Chicago, November 1-3, Palmer House, Chicago. Sponsored by publishers of *Knit Simple* and *Vogue Knitting* magazines. More info at www.VogueKnittingLive.com.

~ Barb Palmer and Claudia Frost

Special Yarn Shops

These shops are special because they offer discounts to FVKG members

Elgin Knits Works

8 Douglas Ave., Elgin
847-627-4700
<http://elginknitworks.com>

Esther's Place

201 W. Galena St. (Route 30), Big Rock
630-556-WOOL (9665)
www.esthersplacefibers.com

Fine Line

6N158 Crane Road, St. Charles
630-584-9443
www.finelineca.org

The Fold

3316 Millstream Road, Marengo
815-568-5320

Gene Ann's Shop

117 East Station St., Barrington
847-842-9321
www.geneannsyarns.com

Knitche

5150-B Main Street, Downers Grove
630-852-5648
<http://knitche.com/>

Loopy Yarns

47 West Polk St., Chicago
312-583-9276
www.loopyyarns.com

Needle Things

426 South Third Street, Geneva
630-232-9915

Never Enough Knitting

119-121 North Main, Wheaton
630-221-1007

Stitches in Time

300 W. Washington, Oregon
815-732-4599

*Wool and Company

107A West Main Street, St. Charles
630-444-0480
www.woolandcompany.com

*Wool and Company has switched to a Stash Cash card program instead of a traditional discount.

2012-2013 FVKG Board Members

President: Kathy Schooley

Vice-Presidents: Judy Jasper; Phyllis Deernick

Secretary: Jennifer Duncan

Treasurer: Deanne Karamanian

Gallery Show: Claudia Frost

Hospitality: Tammy Caltagirone

Library: Barbara Palmer; Marianne Moye

Membership: Marge Clark

Newsletter Editor: Lisa Roberts

Website: Lorraine Tompkins

If you need to contact a board member outside of a meeting, visit the members' section of www.fvkg.com for individual contact information. The password is printed on the back of your guild membership card; it remains the same as last year.

To notify the guild at large, simply email fvkgnews@gmail.com to have your note distributed. Be sure to allow at least 48 hours' advance notice.

Fox Valley Knitters' Guild Mission Statement

The purpose of the Fox Valley Knitters' Guild is to promote and foster an interest in knitting, to provide the opportunity for study and sharing to broaden one's skills, and to encourage high standards of design and technique in various forms of knitting.

Guild Meeting Agenda

6:00 p.m. Set up

6:30 p.m. Gather to knit

7:00 p.m. Meeting begins:

Introduce new members/guests

Announcements/reports

Show and Tell

Door prizes

7:30 p.m. Break

7:45 p.m. Program

9:00 p.m. Lights out

Procrastination

“I wasted time, and now doth time waste me.” William Shakespeare – Richard II, Act 5, Scene 5.

That statement describes how I feel about the Design Contest right about now. I am seriously behind on my knitting, and starting to get fairly nervous about it. As of this writing, there are exactly 6 weeks until the big Fashion Show for the Wrap Design Contest. It seems like a cruel joke that in May the second Wednesday of the month is the EARLIEST it could possibly be – May 8.

I’m an excellent procrastinator. I’m very deadline-oriented. Now I’ve known the deadline for the design contest for months now. Why didn’t I start working on this sooner? I think I just really underestimated the serious amount of knitting required for my design. If only I could figure out a way to knit in my sleep! If anyone has figured this out, please let me know.

I could keep procrastinating, hoping that Dr. Who will whisk me off on a time travelling adventure to help him save the universe. I could knit the project there, and be back here the same afternoon with a finished project. I don’t see why I couldn’t knit while battling the Daleks.

Or, I could walk down the aisle during our fashion show with a half-finished wrap. I could pin it instead of seaming it, and the audience could use their imaginations regarding what the front would look like based on how the back is designed.

The other trouble is that I just hate being monogamous with a project. I rarely am, but I will have to be to get this thing done. Sigh, I guess I will have to add a rule that only FINISHED projects are eligible. Excuse me while I go to knit my fingers to the bone.

Reminder of rules for the design contest:

- It has to be a wrap. What does this mean? Well, you decide. Some ideas are: shawls, capes, scarves, fichu, cowl.
- You have to design it. You can’t use a pattern.
- You can certainly be INSPIRED by other designs, and use some of those aspects to design yours. But it should be YOUR original design.
- It can be ANY kind of yarn. It can be one yarn, or many yarns. YOU decide. It probably should be yarn. But if you design something fabulous with recycled Jewel plastic bags, that’s up to you.
- Stitch patterns- can be one or many. No restriction. Feel free to use stitch patterns from stitch dictionaries or other patterns.
- It should be primarily knitted. I thought about allowing crocheted items, but we are a knitting guild. You can use crochet as an edging, but the bulk of the garment should be knitted.
- Only FINISHED projects are eligible.
- The most important rule is to have fun with it.

There will be five categories that will win a prize:

- Most Creative
- Best Use of Color
- Best Lace
- When can I get the pattern for this?
- Best Use of interesting stitch patterns

You have until the May FVKG meeting to design and knit your wrap. At the May meeting, we will have a Fashion Show for all the entries. You will have to fill out a short questionnaire about your garment. You will model it at the show. We will then take a break and everyone will vote for one garment for each of the five categories. The results will be tallied up, and the prizes awarded that night. If you made something for the Design Wrap Challenge we had a year or so ago, those items are definitely eligible as entries to this contest.

Feel free to contact Judy Jasper if you have any questions about the contest. judy.jasper@comcast.net is her email address.

~ Judy Jasper
Co-Vice President (Programs)

Book Review -- Correction

60 Quick Baby Knits

By Cascade and various designers

When I recommended "60 Quick Baby Knits," I hadn't used any of the patterns. I've been knitting the Garter Stitch Cardigan and the directions for finishing the neckline are obviously wrong. In trying to find out if there were printed corrections, I found that there are many for the book. The good news is that you can copy and paste them into "Word" and keep going. The bad news is, I don't think that everything is covered. There aren't any corrections for the neckline of the sweater that I'm making. If you have a problem, first I would assume that it is the pattern. Corrections can be found at: sixthandspringbooks.com, scroll to the bottom of the webpage and there is a corrections link under customer service. You can, of course, use your call-a-friend option as well.

Sorry for the poorly edited patterns, but I still think they're adorable.

~Christie Cunningham

Spruced-up Cheese Spread

(from *Taste of Home*)

Makes 4 cups

Several people asked for the cheese spread recipe that I took to the [March] meeting. Here is the recipe:

4 oz. diced pimientos, drained, divided
1 small onion, grated (or use chopped fresh chives)
1 cup mayonnaise
2 Tablespoons prepared mustard—I used Dijon
1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon celery seed
½ teaspoon paprika
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder (or ¼ t. garlic salt)
12 oz. finely shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 Tablespoons finely chopped pecans (I used more)
Parsley and more pecans for topping

Set aside 2 T. of pimientos for topping. In a large bowl, combine the remaining pimientos and the next seven ingredients. Stir in cheese.

Transfer to a serving bowl, sprinkle with pecans, parsley and reserved pimientos.
Serve with crackers and veggies.

~ Dorothy Gaines

Spotlight on ... Cables

This month's SPOTLIGHT is on cables.

Cables are one of the most fabulous things you can do as a knitter. And they aren't difficult. I learned how to do cables in my very first Knitting 101 class at Wool & Co.

It's amazing what you can do with cables, sometimes called crossover stitches in stitch dictionaries.

LONG before I became a knitter, I was an avid crocheter. I crocheted lace and even an Aran (or Fisherman) Afghan. This crocheted afghan had faux cables on it. They were SUPER hard to do. But doing cables with knitting is not hard at all. The very first scarf I knitted in Knitting 101 at Wool & Co. had cables in it.

Bring your favorite cable knitted object, and share a written tip about it to be eligible to win a special door prize.

- Judy Jasper

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TIP FORM

TECHNIQUE: _____

TIP:

SUBMITTED BY: _____



FOX VALLEY KNITTERS' GUILD

Gallery Show

*"Knits Inspired by the Masters of
Color, Form and Light,
Claude Monet and Mary Cassatt"*

Fine Line Creative Arts Center
St. Charles, Illinois

April 5 through April 27, 2013

Hours: 10 am to 5 pm Mon. - Sat.

Reception: Friday, April 5, 5:30 - 8 pm