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THE KNIT STITCH

Minnesota Machine Knitter's Collaborative

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello All,

Well, we made it through a CoVid year. Amazingly enough the year has been a pretty successful one. We have set up an online connection that allows us to meet without thought of weather, parking, or distance. This has allowed us to gather more frequently for Knit-Ins, workshops, and general camaraderie. We can expect this to expand this coming year.

Some of us have been "attending" a virtual workshop on Traveling Stitches by Susan Guagliumi. For me, this has proved to be both fun and frustrating as I've worked to keep eyelets lined up and cables crossed – while not dropping stitches. One particularly intense day I was struggling to recall something helpful that a group member had reported about repositioning stitches. My tired brain got the giggles and I concocted this riddle:

"Where do machine knitters go to learn how to manipulate stitches?"

Answer: **Re-Form School!**

Spring is almost here. Keep your spirits up and keep knitting.

--Karen

How I Got Hooked

"Two roads diverged in a yellow wood....." Do you recognize this line from Robert Frost's poem, 'The Road Not Taken'? It speaks of those choices in life we make, planned or not, to do something. Whether or not we diverge from a particular path we've gained knowledge and experience. Hopefully we've had help along the way, especially for those times it's difficult or lost our motivation. For this article (which we hope becomes a regular feature) we'll hear about how one of our members got into this endlessly intriguing and sometimes frustrating world of machine knitting. Gail B. generously volunteered this idea and to start us out – here's her story:

"My history with machine knitting started when I heard about the circular sock machine on a knitting podcast. I was intrigued, so I asked others in my knitting group and found that 3 of them were already knitting socks on machines.

.....continued on page 2

"How I Got Hooked" Continued from page 1

I looked at podcasts and anything online that I could find and decided to get a machine for expediting my sock knitting experience. Iris helped me decide what to purchase with her brand recommendations and which size cylinder would be most useful. None of them had been very successful with the ribber, but I love ribbing on my socks, so I got a couple ribber attachments anyway. Meanwhile, I was becoming aware of the flat knitting machines that Alice was using and teaching at Yarn Harbor. I listened closely when she was coaching other machine knitters and attended when she offered demonstration sessions. It wasn't long before I was asking her for information often enough that she let me know when she heard of a deal on an LK150. She was instrumental in helping me get the machine and in getting me started. After I got my "feet wet" with the LK150, I started asking questions about the standard and the bulky machines that were at Yarn Harbor. Alice taught me how to get started with each of them and demonstrated how to do socks with ribbing on the flatbed machine. She showed me how to use the variegated yarn to get argyle pattern on the machine (a bit over my head still).

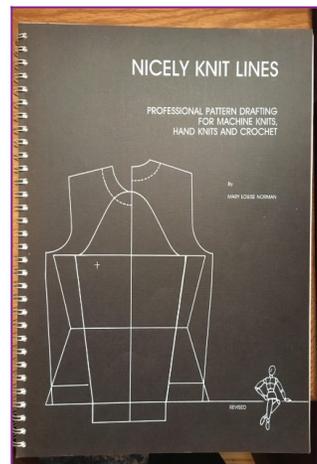
Alice Adams is my generous mentor in the machine knitting world. Thank you, Alice!"

Note from Editor: Would you like to honor your mentor(s) or entertain us with your "beginnings" story? Send it to me!

Book Review by Cynthia E.

Nicely Knit Lines, Professional Pattern Drafting for Machine Knitters, written by Mary Louise Norman (Copyright 1983) is a pattern drafting and design book available in the Textile Center Library. This is a step by step guide to the basics of pattern drafting knit garments for women.

Mary Louise Norman has written multiple pattern drafting and design books. In this book she explains the fundamentals of pattern drafting, the tools needed, the importance of measurement and how to take accurate measurements for an accurate fit.



The reader is shown how to draft the basic shapes in a garment; front, back and sleeve. From these shapes, you are shown how to make additions and modifications for a custom fit. Emphasis is made on the design of the armhole, common modifications needed at the bust and hip and for very rounded backs. Using the drafted pieces, she shows how to shift, lengthen, shorten, expand, add and subtract detail to create unique and personal designs. The second half of her book is comprehensive instruction on creating popular and classically styled necklines, collars, sleeves and bodices used with her basic pattern drafts. Want to understand how to knit a shawl collar v-neck sweater? Or set a dart in knitwear? It's in the book.

The final chapters are devoted to making vests, skirts, slacks and outerwear using her techniques. In this section, she has created garment draft patterns with step by step instruction to success. There is a well designed round yoke sweater instruction in this section well worth reading. Also a Chanel style jacket and coat patterns which are on my list of "make me's".

This is a great reference book to consult before starting a project for great fit, or if you need inspiration.

My Favorite Tool by Jane N.

As many of you know, the LK 150 Mid-Gauge machine is my favorite, hands down. The **seed stitcher** is great for picking up dropped stitches, making sure the purls are still purls, as well as the obvious name sake use. Of course add moss stitch to that as well as garter stitch! I have yet to try the Fisherman's Rib. For those of you who have standard Brother machines with a Garter Carriage, a mini version of this tool should have been included to use for repairs/dropped stitches to maintain the knit purl configuration of the stitch pattern.

Seed Stitcher

Try different combinations of knit and purl to make seed stitch, moss stitch, and fishermans rib!
Fix knit and purl mistakes!
Approximate 4 inch measuring tool!

Step 1: Knit several rows.
Step 2: Insert tool into first stitch, drop stitch off needle and let unladder. Position stitch so it is behind the open latch on the tool.
Step 3: ****Catch** rung in the hook and pull back bringing the rung through the existing stitch so it forms a new stitch. Catching from the front results in a knit stitch facing.
Step 4: Push tool through knitting to back of work.
Step 5: Latch the next rung once working from back making a purl stitch.
Step 6: Push tool through knitting to front of work.
Step 7: Repeat from ****** to top row of knitting. Transfer stitch back to needle.
Step 8: Continue across the row alternating knit and purl stitches.

*Hand-Manufactured by: Knitting Today
8040 E 500 S, Wolcottville, IN 46795
260-351-2260/800-426-5098*



Visit the FAQ at <http://www.knittingtoday.com> for step-by-step photos.

Yarn Review by Cynthia E.

At our February 20th Knit In, I was working on creating my swatch for the VIP Traveling Stitches class to be held in March. With Rebecca's help and Gretchen's enthusiastic thumbs up, I selected Holst Garn's Coast yarn. As I worked with it, I found it a very nice selection.

Coast is a wool/cotton blend. It is a 2 ply yarn made from 55% Merino Lambswool and 45% Cotton. Wound in 50 gram cakes or 500 gram cones. The cakes have approximately 350 meters/383 yards per cake. Coast comes in 88 colors and is machine washable in cold water on delicate cycle per the manufacturer. The manufacturer's website is Holtzgarndk.com for their full line of yarns. Coast is also available at local retailers. I am using a double strand to knit on my mid gauge at tension 5-1/2 and I'm creating a soft light fabric. The manufacturer even recommends Coast when knitting for newborns. Stitch transfers work well and a 3x3 cable cross is a bit snug, but doable. I'm excited to see the finished sweater!



Jane found this inspiring cardigan on Knitting Paradise a few weeks ago. It is knit sideways using slip stitch.

Knitting Paradise is an online free knitting/crochet etc. forum. It is easy to access and you can sign up on a link that comes to your email every day. There's a specific machine knitting section. Many very smart people are active on it for people to ask questions and get lots of answers. Like Ravelry it is international.

Find it at: www.knittingparadise.com/



At a recent online meeting Gail B. gave us a virtual tour of her studio and we saw some items she's creatively reused and repurposed. For lots of reasons (reducing landfill waste, creativity, saving \$\$, etc.) many of us love to find new life in our possessions. These are pictures of some of Gail's great ideas.

Send me some photos of your ideas for the next issue!

- Cammy



The following scanned image is reprinted courtesy of Jason from *Rocking Horse Farm*. Our last issue mentioned historical wartime knitting in Minnesota and he thought members would like to see this connection. It was originally published in: *September Seminar at Rocking Horse Farm 2011 Book, page 78*

SOCK KNITTING MACHINES IN HISTORY



Circular Sock Knitting Machines came to prominence in North America in the late 1800's.

They played an important part in the war effort during World War I. These archival pictures show Red Cross nurses teaching wounded soldiers to use Round Sock Knitting Machines.

After World War I they exploded in popularity. In the 1920's, several hundred thousand machines are reported to have been in use.

An extensive history of Circular Sock Machines (by Richard M. Candee) is available from Rocking Horse Farm, 270 pages, fully illustrated: \$75.00 +s/h.



This picture was shared by a customer, Rosanna Wood of Colorado and reprinted with her permission. Rosanna says, "The picture was taken in Okabena, MN about 1917. The little girl is Bernice Ada Schumacher (mother of my sister-in-law) the older gentleman is Will Schumacher, the lady Bessie Schumacher and the young boy is Clayton Schumacher."

Vogue Knitting Live Class Review by Gretchen F. and Linda M.

- Well, what do you know? "Vogue Knitting Live" is for Machine Knitters too! -

Through all of 2020-21's canceled events, we have seen such ingenuity in how knitters meet. MMKC should be particularly proud of how successful and inspiring our meetings and knit along events have been.

There are other meetings out there too, and in February fellow member Linda McShannock and I attended a machine knitting class through the "Virtual Knitting Live" event. The class is "Creative Starts for Your Machine Knitted Sweater: Alternative to Ribs" with the knitwear designer and teacher Olgalyn Jolly. Olgalyn Jolly has been working in the field of machine knitting and design since the early 1980s, running a successful design business called "O! Jolly!" and is on the adjunct faculty at the Fashion Institute of Technology, as well as the Textile Arts Center, both in New York. Her work and future classes can be found at www.ojolly.net, and her corresponding blog at www.craftingfashion.com.

Needless to say, I was excited to take a class from such an accomplished teacher!

Sign up was easy and straightforward. The only issue I have with the event format would be their insistence on having multiple "packages" of sign-up options with silly names, it is slightly confusing. I used the "individual class or lecture" option which cost \$39.99 and includes access to the virtual marketplace, which I honestly didn't even look at. Luckily, they sent a reminder email the day before, which informed me the classes were all Eastern Standard Time! I hadn't noticed this signing up and would have missed half the class! Whew!

The 2-hour virtual class itself is described as an "exploration of the principles of creating a great starting edge on a machine knitted sweater". The instructor informed us we would be looking at "a couple of plain and fancy beginnings suitable for the front, back, or sleeves of a full fashioned or cut-and-sew sweater.". We were asked to have available to us a knitting machine (any gauge, no ribber needed), basic machine tools, 3 or 4 ounces of yarn and a corresponding color, and a place to take notes. We were also informed what basic familiarity of the machine we would need.

In the morning I set up my machine, materials, computer, and coffee; locked the children out of my office and got ready for class. Unfortunately, a technological problem prevented downloading the materials for the class beforehand (they were available soon after). Not the instructor's fault, but it hampered following along a little. Ms. Jolly set about explaining the techniques to us right away, with her camera well focused on her work. She employed the "watch one, do one" technique of teaching and her instructions were clear and easy to follow. We made two different edgings, the first was "Jersey Roll with pointelle embellishment", followed by a "Scalloped Hem" and "Hem at the Top" neckline demo to watch. The 2 hours went quickly and were filled with good information and ideas. Questions could be asked through the chat, and an event coordinator verbally repeated them to the instructor while she worked, which was a good idea. I was able to keep up with the exercises and at the end of the class had three labeled swatches and a worksheet I can refer to in the future.

Continued on page 7...

Vogue Knitting Live continue from page 6

I would take classes with Ms. Jolly again and look forward to it, she is a great teacher! The Virtual Knitting Live event had minor bugs which were ultimately fixed and forgivable, and I have already signed up for a few of Bill King's classes March 18th-21st.

Linda adds, Ms. Jolly specializes in texture. That appeals to me. I appreciated her pacing, allowing the participants to knit along with her as she explained the technique. It definitely worked as a hands on class. I was able to produce additional samples a few days later by following my notes and the hand out provided after the class. She demonstrated the "Hem at the Top" neckline, but didn't include the technique in her handout, so though interesting, it was only useful to me if I could rely on my memory or if I tried it immediately after the class or took decent notes. She is definitely an instructor I would look for again. I signed up for emails from both her websites, and included a note about my positive experience in the comment field. I had a return email from her the same afternoon with a personal note (or at least it didn't sound like a canned response).

Virtual Knitting Live classes are offered much as classes you might take in person. They are not recorded, so I recommend taking good notes, making lots of samples and tag team with a fellow member.

If this class seems intriguing to you, Olgalyn Jolly has her "Classic Hems for Your Machine Knitted Sweater" class coming up online through the MidAtlantic Fiber Association 2021online event June 27th, details on her class page at <https://www.ojolly.net/classes>