

The Conscientious Knitter

February 2007

Exploring Community, Social Justice, Environmental Respect and Spirituality through Knitting.
"We Get the Point"

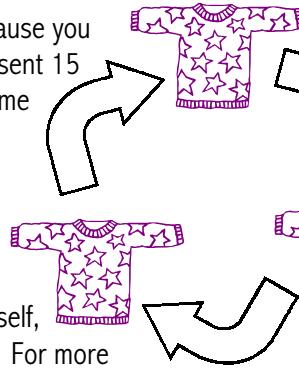
Purling for Puraing



Our second "shipment" of sweaters will be winging it's way to the Khasi Hills of India in less than a week, and we can be very proud. We have 14 sweaters to be delivered by our courier, Dee Idnani. A selection of those made this fall are pictured above, and we would like to thank Mary Binderman, Laureen Branting, Linda Weaver, Laura Miller, Shirley Olson, Ann Richards, Joanna Walker, and Susan White for their contributions.

The sweaters will be hand delivered by Dee, who is visiting our partner church village in Puriang, India. Because Puriang is in the mountains, it gets colder there than in other parts of India. In fact, the public school run by Unitarians in the village closes in the winter due to lack of heat. Our long term (very long term) goal is to make sweaters for each of the 300 students in the school, so that they may keep warm during the winter break.

If you're feeling Unitarian guilt because you intended to contribute, no worries! Having sent 15 in our last batch in addition to the 14 this time around, we still have 271 sweaters left to make. PLENTY of knitting left to go around, and plenty of time left to do it. We're not expecting to send another group of sweaters over for several months. If you don't think you'll have time to knit one yourself, check out the adjoining article, *In the Loop*. For more information or to get yarn, patterns or equipment, contact Ann Richards at 703-476-5810.



ISO:Puriang Coordinator

Job Description:

Keeps track of yarn and knitting equipment, collects sweaters to be sent to India, provides names of sweater donors to the UUCF office

Commitment: Average 30 min. a month.

Benefits: Oh come on! Do we need to even say it? OK then: An opportunity to volunteer at UUCF with relatively little time commitment while making a real contribution, the feeling of satisfaction that you've helped a child stay warm, and the knowledge that you've assisted both the Conscientious Knitters and the Partner Church Circle.

For More Info: Contact Ann Richards at 703-476-5810 or Ann@BassetLane.com

In the Loop

Announcing a new component to our Purling for Puriang

program! Many of you are familiar with the handicraft program run by Rosalie Clavez for the Partner Church Circle (check out the article about it in the November 2005 Conscientious Knitter Newsletter at

www.conscientiousknitter.com) This program provides crafters from Szentgerice, UUCF's partner church village in Transylvania, with an opportunity to sell their beautiful creations in the US. The proceeds of these sales go to both the crafter involved, and to a fund the crafters have set up to benefit their community.

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Among the many beautiful items the Romanians have made are a small number of children's sweaters. Rosalie has offered to make these available to our Puriang effort, thereby closing the loop between all three partner churches! We would like to see the women who knitted these sweaters benefit as well, so we are offering them as a contribution opportunity.

At the moment there are at least three sweaters available for purchase and donation to Puriang. They include two beautiful cabled sweaters made from handspun, and a lively red vest made of washable synthetic. Prices range from \$20 to \$50 each. As with other Purling for Puriang donations, the purchaser will receive a letter on UUCF stationary useful during tax preparation.

Please pass the word to others (non-knitters in particular!) who might want to participate in the Purling for Puriang project. Those who wish to buy one of these sweaters for donation may simply contact Rosalie at RClavez@Netscape.net.

We are so excited about this program, because it addresses three of the Conscientious Knitters tenets: it builds community among the partner churches, it contributes to social justice through the reapportionment of resources, and it promotes spirituality by making the world a better place through knitting.

Don't Forget!

Learn to Knit Workshop

Wednesday, February 28,
7-9 p.m. Program Building
(and regular Conscientious
Knitter Drop In Meeting.)

For more information, contact
Ann Richards at 703-476-5810

Bring a Friend!

My Masterpiece

At the January meeting of Conscientious Knitters, Laura Miller bowed to our wishes, and brought in a beautiful Aran afghan she had made. It was a gorgeous work of art, and we all spent several minutes looking at each square and each design in it. Somewhere in the midst of this, the afghan (quite rightly) was referred to as a masterpiece.



This got me to thinking, and I asked the knitters there to describe their own masterpieces. What resulted was a very diverse list of projects. Joanna Walker described a Fair Isle sweater she made. It featured a red bow on the front, and was created for her daughter. For her son, she knitted a sweater with color blocks, and a matching patterned hat.

Wini Atlas said she remembered with pride the outfit she made for her new baby. It had a hat and a jumper with feet, and it fit perfectly when she was born (a feat that all knitters can appreciate!) That outfit was then passed on to Wini's niece.

Like Joanna, Mary described her own masterpiece as a "venture into color work." She first saw it hanging in Aylan's Woolgatherer yarn shop in Falls Church. It was a sweater with a diamond pattern done in autumn colors using an intarsia technique. "I just loved it when I saw it, and when I made it myself for my son, it looked just great."

Linda confessed that she didn't have a masterpiece to point to yet, she was still working toward that. I must note however, that Linda came into the room with three sweaters, one she had altered the pattern to make a gansey out of a pullover, one was a cute red stockinette/garter creation, and the third a rolled-edge pullover in the colors of Monet's Water Lilies.

I think my own masterpiece I describe as such not because it was the most difficult thing I've ever done, but because it was so appreciated by the recipient. About 15 or 20 years ago I made a counterpane in stockinette stitch for my grandmother. It was made of cream colored squares that were worked together with knitted lace. Each one had a different flower embroidered in duplicate stitch on it. My grandmother has since passed away, and I have no idea what happened to the counterpane. Maybe it's just as well. I'm sure the real thing couldn't match what she saw in it.

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St. John Neuman Church in Reston, VA.

It seems impossible that we would be well into our second year of The Conscientious Knitter and never have featured the **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. The Prayer Shawl Ministry addresses three of our tenets: community, spirituality and social justice through knitting, making them an obvious choice for our consideration. Perhaps it is just as well however, because we have an excellent opportunity to discuss their work, as they are in the process of producing a book, and have invited knitters to make contributions.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry began 1998 with Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo. After graduating from the 1997 Women's Leadership Institute at The Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut they began the ministry as a result of their experience in a program of applied Feminist Spirituality.

The web site explains, "Whether they are called Prayer Shawls, Comfort Shawls, Peace Shawls, or Mantles, etc., the shawl maker begins with prayers and blessings for the recipient. The intentions are continued throughout the creation of the shawl. Upon completion, a final blessing is offered before the shawl is sent on its way. Some recipients have continued the kindness by making a shawl and passing it onto someone in need. Thus, the blessing ripples from person-to-person, with both the giver and receiver feeling the unconditional embrace of a sheltering, mothering God!"

The Prayer Shawl Ministry now includes workshops, suggested patterns, suggested prayers and blessings, opportunities to begin prayer shawl chapters, suggested uses for the shawls, stories of shawls given and received, and much more. Much of the work is done through their very active web site, at www.shawlministry.com.

The uses for these shawls are many. They have been

given to those receiving medical treatment, weddings, birthdays, after bereavement, to new mothers, and on and on. Many touching stories are featured on the Prayer Shawl Ministry web site, and will be included in their forthcoming book.

Janet Bristow and Vicki Galo described the genesis of the book: "A few months ago, out of the blue, the publishing company, Taunton Press located in Newtown, CT, invited us to write a book about the Prayer Shawl Ministry. To say that we were a bit surprised is an understatement! After much prayer and discernment, we have decided to go for it. We'd be silly not to. This presents us with an opportunity to tell our story, offer new shawl patterns and prayers, and share more wonderful shawl stories. Proceeds from the sale of this book will go into the care and keeping of the Prayer Shawl Ministry."

For the book, the Ministry is looking for original patterns that fall into the following categories:

Basic (for comfort and prayer), Personal (for self), Man's, Bridal, Wedding, Pregnancy/Nursing, Child/baby, Christening/Baptismal, First Communion, Confirmation, Ordination/Final Vows, Commitment Ceremony, Friendship, Life Transitions (graduation, retirement, moving, entering nursing home, etc.), Rites of Passage (first menses, menopause, etc.), Special Milestone Celebrations (birthday, anniversary, etc.), Simplicity (for those w/special needs i.e. wheelchair or bed bound, etc.), and Other (your choice).

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is also collecting stories about prayer shawls that have been created and given, and blessings for use with the shawls. Submissions must be post marked by March 15, 2007. Questions about this project may be directed to shawlministry@yahoo.com.

Shawls at the fall 2006 Annual Shawl Ministry Gathering



Conscientious Calendar

 Wednesday, February 28 Learn to Knit Workshop and Regular Conscientious Knitter drop in meeting. 7 p.m. UUCF Program Building. For more information contact Ann Richards at Ann@BassetLane.com.

 Saturday, February 24 Charity Project gathering, 1-4 p.m. Regular meeting for anyone interested in knitting a social justice project held the last Saturday of the month at Uniquities yarn store in Vienna, VA. For more information contact Uniquities at 703-242-0520.

 Thursday, March 15 Deadline for submissions to the Prayer Shawl Ministry's call for patterns, stories and blessings. Selected submissions will be included in their forthcoming book. For more information check out their web site at www.shawlministry.com.

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Knitter's Knotes

- For more information about Conscientious Knitting programs, contact Ann Richards at Ann@BassetLane.com
- For more information about UUCF Adult Religious Exploration, check out the web site at www.uucf.org.
- Want to register for Conscientious Knitters '06-'07? Dues are \$10 for drop-in sessions, workshops and social justice knitting opportunities. Call treasurer Wini Atlas at 703-938-5640, or come by a drop in meeting on the fourth Wednesday of the month.
- For back issues of The Conscientious Knitter and an article index, check out www.conscientiousknitters.com.

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