

The Conscientious Knitter

February 2008

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

Snips and Scraps: Strip Knitting

When I first told my husband that my knitting group was strip knitting, he looked at me with a funny face. "You mean you put on the sweater dress, and just let it unravel?"

No, that's not what strip knitting is (although it's awfully fun to contemplate, isn't it?)

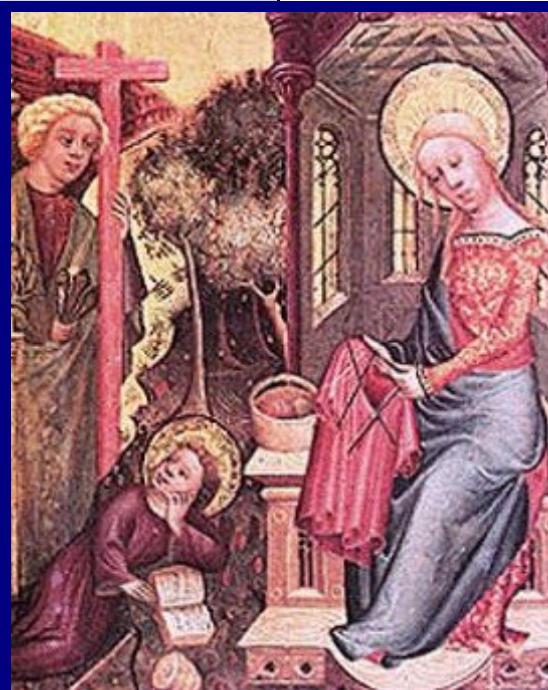
Strip knitting simply means creating strips of knitting, then assembling them to make a garment or knitted item. Championed by Anna Zilbourg, strip knitting has several advantages:

- Strips can be made of scrap or single skeins of yarn
- Strip knitting is a convenient way for multiple knitters to collaborate on a project
- Because each strip is discrete before it is attached to the others, it can be made of any stitch pattern, at any gauge, and with any color.

Often, the question with strip knitting is how the strips will be attached. This is a subjective decision, and the knitter has several choices. They include crocheting the pieces together, sewing them together on a sewing machine, sewing them together with a yarn needle, or knitting them together. In every situation but using the sewing machine, the knitter also has the opportunity to choose the pattern stitch used to join the strips.

My own preference is to knit the pieces together. To do this, there are a few techniques that can ease the process. First, it is helpful to slip stitch or chain stitch the edges of your strips as they are created. This means that that knitter will slip the first stitch of every row, leaving an extra large smooth stitch there, looking something like a chain running along the edge of the work. This is helpful both aesthetically, and in that

Art Wall



The Madonna Knitting Christ's Seamless Garment

Meister Bertram von Minden
(1345~1415), the earliest known
illustration of a double point knitted garment
(Kunsthalle Museum)

We've mentioned it before in *The Conscientious Knitter*, and now the tension is building! Next month the Conscientious Knitters will be featured as the artists on the wall in the sanctuary. We will be primarily featuring garments made through the Purling for Puriang program, which supplies sweaters to school children in our partner church community of Puriang in the Khasi Hills of India. The goal here is three fold:

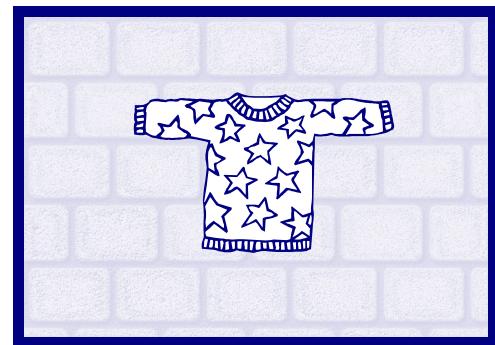
- to bring attention to the Partner Church Circle's activities
- to help viewers see the art in the craft of knitting, and
- to let the congregation know what the Conscientious Knitters have been working on.

To further these goals, the exhibit will feature four things:

- sweaters destined for Puriang
- sweater(s) knit by Unitarians in our partner church of Szentgerice, Romania,
- photos of children in India wearing

- sweaters made by knitters in the US and,
- Information about PCC, the Conscientious Knitters, and the In the Loop program, which provides congregants the opportunity to buy sweaters made through the Szentgerice Handcraft program and donate them to the children of Puriang.

If you have a sweater you'd like to donate or you have time to help hang the exhibit, please contact our project coordinator Laureen Branting at lbrantin@hotmail.com.



Strip Knitting, con't

it makes stitches that are easy to pick up when you are ready to connect the edges of the strips.

A second technique that many people already use in other circumstances is to pick up stitches. With right side facing, insert your right needle tip knitwise under both strands of the first stitch. Next, using the yarn you've selected to connect the strips, wrap around your right needle and bring the new stitch through. Continue to pick up stitches along the entire length of the strip. (It may be necessary to use a circular needle to accommodate all the stitches.) Once this is completed you may clip the yarn.

Before repeating this step on the other strip, think about how wide you want your joining strip to be. Will it be a design accent, and be only a few stitches wide, or do you want it to be equal in width to the pieces it's connecting? Once that's decided, cast on the number of stitches desired plus 2 selvedge stitches, then begin picking up stitches on the second strip. Cut off the yarn, and lay the two strips parallel to one another, with the bottom of the strips nearest you. (photo 1)

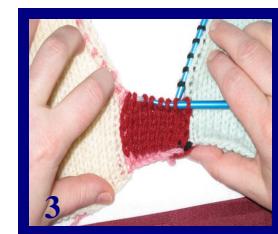
The third technique many knitters find helpful when strip knitting is purling "backwards." Knitting back and forth across five stitches and turning the work around after each very short row can be tiresome. Instead, many people prefer to purl from the front of the work. If this seems complicated however, it's not necessary to avoid strip knitting. Simply turn the pieces around as you work, much like you do when knitting entrelac or baubles.

However, mastering backward purling can definitely have its rewards. To work this way, knit a row, but before taking the right needle out of the last stitch, pause. Instead

The auction blanket from 2005 may look like squares joined together, but it is actually strip knit, and joined in burgundy color using the knitting technique described here.



of moving the stitches from the left needle to the right, we are going to pass all the stitches from the full right needle to the empty left one. With the tip of the needle still in the last stitch, wrap the yarn around the left



needle, and pull the stitch through. Continue working in this way, working the stitches from the right needle onto the left one. (photo 2).

Note as you work, that the yarn will be coming from the left needle, unlike your knit row, or any conventional knitting when the yarn coming from your skein is connected to your right needle. Many knitters who purl this way find that if they pick knit with their right hand, they throw purl with their left hand, and conversely, those who have been pick knitting may find themselves throw purling. If this seems confusing to you however, do not run screaming just yet. Don't think about what hand is where doing whichever, just work the stitches from the right needle to the left, and assess how you did it after the row is complete. (Too much thinking can make things worse sometimes!)

Once you are comfortable with this backwards purl technique, you can begin working across your bridge joining your two strips. Slip the first stitch, knit to the second-to-last stitch, ssk working the last bridge stitch together with the edge stitch on the strip. On the purl row, slip the first stitch, purl to second-to-last stitch, and purl the last stitch together with the stitch on that edge of the strip. Continue to work this way back and forth across the bridge, until the two pieces are joined. (photo 3) The bridge may then be cast off in the conventional manner.

Occasionally, whether you are crocheting, knitting or sewing the strips together, you may realize that one strip is significantly longer than the other. This can easily be remedied by simply unraveling the bound off end of the longer strip before you work them together. Occasionally, the strips may be the same length, but have a different number of rows. When either knitting or crocheting the pieces together, the knitter may have to "make up the extra rows" by skipping one here or there. When knitting, just count the number of stitches picked up on each needle, and find the difference in order to establish the number of rows that will need to be skipped at even intervals while making the bridge. It may seem that this will somehow be obvious, but if the strips are about the same length (regardless of the row number) no one will be able to tell which rows you've skipped.

jUustice kNEEDles

Conscientious Knitters may want to check out this recent listing from Craig's List:

Reply to: ClaireLeah@yahoo.com
Date: 2008-02-08, 10:54AM EST

Meet Great People While We Knit and Crochet for Charity

Knitters and Crocheters Care (knitters-and-crocheters-care.blogspot.com) invites you to join us as we knit and crochet for charity. You can work on a project for one of your favorite charities - or you can work on a project for one of the many charities we support (currently we're making children's and baby's clothing items for Alternative House (<http://www.thealternativehouse.org>) and Memory Pillows for TAPS (<http://www.taps.org>) We meet from 6:30 - 8:30 on the 3rd Thursday of every month (our next meeting is Thursday, February 21) at:

Aylin's Woolgatherer
7245 Arlington Blvd.
Suite 318
Falls Church, VA 22042
703-573-1900



Were you able to attend the last few Conscientious Knitter meetings?

Us neither. We want to try something new to see if more people can attend. Starting this month February, we want to try meeting on the 4th **Monday** of the month:

Monday, February 25

Monday, March 24

Monday, April 28

May- TBD (Monday is Memorial Day)

Monday, June 23

Do you have any comments, suggestions or ideas? Please let us know! Send Ann an E-mail at www.ann@bassetlane.com.

Interweave Knits Going Green



Interweave Knits goes organic with their Fall 2007 issue. The magazine includes all of their regular columns, but the slant of each one is toward organic yarn.

Amy Singer's column, Web Watch, discusses sites that explain what organic standards are, and sites that offer organic yarn. The magazine's News and Views column that highlights popular themes in the knitting world

offers an essay by Linda Cortright, editor of *Wool Fibers Magazine*. Judith Mackenzie McCuin's Yarn Review: Nurture and Nature discusses yarns such as O-Wool Classic, Green Mountain Spinnery Maine Organic White, Beaverslide Dry Goods Organic 3-Ply, Marr Haven Fine Wool Worsted, and Nature's Palette Organic Worsted-Weight Columbia.

The fall book reviews done by Clara Parkes are all on "Natural Knitting": *The Natural Knitter* by Barbara Albrith, *Beyond Wool: 25 Knitted Projects Using Natural Fibers* by Candace Eisner Strick, *Nature Babies: Natural Knits and Organic Crafts for Moms, Babies and a Better World* by Tara Jon Manning, *Knitting Nature: 39 Designs Inspired by Patterns 'in Nature* by Norah Gaughan, *Inspired Cables Knits* by Fiona Ellis, and *The Art of Knitting : Inspirational Stitches, Textures and Surfaces* by Françoise Tellier-Loumagne.

Continuing in the theme of organic yarn, the Fall *Interweave* issue includes an excerpt from *No Sheep for You: Knit Happy with Cotton, Silk, Linen, Hemp, Bamboo and other Delights*, a book by Amy R. Singer. The excerpt includes a men's vest designed by Jillian Moreno to be knit from silk/cotton blend yarn. The whole issue concludes with an essay, *Ravelings: Green Knitting* by Joanne Seiff. In it, the author muses about many subjects covered in *The Conscientious Knitter*, including locally sourced yarns, yarn exchanges, recycled yarn from previous projects, and yarns made from seconds such as recycled sari silk.

In addition to the organic oriented articles, the issue has some other interesting content, such as a profile on knitting artist Althea Merback. Merback creates fascinating miniature knits, like gloves and socks smaller than a quarter. There is also a brief article on Knitting and Fine Art, that features a modernist painting by the Australian artist Grace Crossington Smith. The painting features Crossington Smith's sister knitting for the Australian war effort circa 1915.

Conscientious Calendar

 Thursday, February 21 Knit and Crochet for Charity at Aylin's Wool Gatherer. 6:30-8:30. For more information, check Craig's List at <http://washingtondc.craigslist.org/nva/com> in the general category, or call Aylin's at 703-573-1900.

 Monday, February 25 Regular Conscientious Knitter drop-in meeting. 7:30 p.m. UUCF Program Building. For more information contact Ann Richards at Ann@BassetLane.com.

 March through mid-April Purling for Puriang sweaters featured on the Art Wall in the UUCF sanctuary. For more information, check with Laureen Branting at brantinl@hotmail.com

 Monday, March 24 Regular Conscientious Knitter drop-in meeting. 7:30 p.m. UUCF Program Building. For more information contact Ann Richards at Ann@BassetLane.com.

Knitter's Knots

- 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 '07-'08? 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 Monday of the month.
- For back issues of The Conscientious Knitter and an article index, check out www.conscientiousknitters.com.

Conscientious Knitters
c/o
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