

The Conscientious Knitter

October 2007

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

Think Globally, Knit Locally

They're alluring, in their lush and vivid colors. They seduce you with the soft and fuzzy textures. Those beautiful handspun hanks of yarn, made locally and sold in such stores as Springwater Fiber in Alexandria and Uniquities in Vienna—I really want some, don't you? The only thing between me and those beautiful fiber sirens is money. After all, I'd just be buying them for selfish reasons, right?

Well, maybe not. The popular movement toward locally sourced foods has translated itself to yarn. Many knitters are realizing that buying yarn made locally makes sense for the same reasons that buying food grown locally is recommended.

And what are those reasons?

- Buying fiber from sheep raised near by supports the local economy. Sheep farmers, shearers, spinners, veterinarians, shop keepers, and anyone else involved in the process of raising the sheep and making the yarn benefit from your purchase. This can also be applied to plant fibers grown locally, and the economic impact is even greater.
- Because the yarn does not travel as far from the sheep to the knitter, less petroleum fuel (gasoline and oil) is needed to get the products to the user. This means that the knitter benefits from leaving a smaller carbon footprint. (For that matter, so does the knitter's child and grandchild, and great-grandchild...)
- Locally created yarns support sustainable agriculture. Sustainable yarns come from renewable resources such



'Jealousy and Flirtation',
by Haynes King (1831-1904)
The Victoria and Albert Museum, where this painting is found, comments on the scene: "One of the women flirts openly with [a visiting man] and has let her knitting drop onto the floor, symbolizing the neglect of her household duties for this more frivolous pastime."

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Yarn Exchange

Our first workshop of the year gives you a way to clean out your closet, prepare for holiday gift giving, do your part for the recycling movement, and get that monkey off your back. It's the Conscientious Knitters Yarn Exchange! We're holding it on Sunday, November 18, from 10:30 (after first service) until 4:00 in the Program Building.

Yes! It will be concurrent with the Annual Bazaar, so you can do your holiday shopping, and stop by the Yarn Exchange at the same time. (The Bazaar is a great chance to see Conscientious Knitter Su Davis's booth and

swing by the Transylvanian Handcraft table to see what beautiful knits Rosalie is offering.)

While at the Yarn Exchange you can:

- Drop off yarn you don't need or want
- Donate patterns, books, needles and other equipment you no longer use
- Visit the Knitting Doctor to get help on that project that has slowed or stalled
- Pick up yarn that strikes your fancy
- Look through the patterns and knitting equipment for items perfect for your use
- Check out information about knitting for Social Justice locally
- Get more information about the Conscientious Knitters
- Bring your knitting, and relax while working on your project with other knitters.

You may just drop by, or if you're able to watch the table, please let us know. To volunteer or for more information, you can phone Ann Richards at 703-476-5810, or e-mail her at Ann@BassetLane.com. Tell your friends, pack your knitting bag, and see you on November 18!

Thinking Globally, Knitting Locally Con't

as sheep, cotton, soy beans, silk, alpaca, llama, etc.

This is in contrast to man-made fibers created from petroleum products that are finite in amount.

Locally sourced yarns support rare breeds of both animals and plants. Larger producers who sell on a national and international scale must, of necessity, use commercial breeds that will consistently meet their production needs. There is no room for rare plants and animals that may have a wider variety of characteristics and provide for a wider range of textures, colors, fiber lengths, and other qualities.

Even if the worth of locally sourced fiber products is not in doubt, the definition of it is. There is no standard for what may be termed "locally sourced" so the onus is on the knitter to find out the origin of the yarn, and decide for him or herself if it's a worthy purchase.

So where can we get locally sourced yarn in the Northern Virginia area? Here are four suggestions:

The Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival
Annually, the first full weekend in May
Howard County Fair Grounds
www.sheepandwool.org



Dancing Leaf Farm
Dalis Davidson
PO Box 355
21920 Beallsville Road
Barnesville, Maryland 20838
301-972-8089

Springwater Fiber Workshop
808 North Fairfax Street,
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703.549.3634
info@springwaterfiber.org

Kiparoo Farm

Annie Kelley

2110D Pleasant View Rd.

Adamstown, Maryland

(301) 874-6348

www.kiparоofarmstudio.com

See? Being an eco-friendly knitter is a great rationalization for buying that fabulous hand-spun, hand-dyed yarn you've been eyeing. Now where's my wallet?

Auction Action

Checking in with our Auction Coordinator Laureen Branting, we find this year's project well underway, and looking spectacular. The detailed lace on the sweaters she made is exquisite, the poncho Connie



Lehman is making is adorable, and the little blocks Mary Tripp made are really cute. As this correspondent hasn't seen all the booties, bonnets, sweaters and other items that have been donated so far, she cannot give you true descriptions, but word has it they're great.

It's not over yet though! We have some garter squares on the needles, with the intention that they will be pieced together to make a blanket. If you're willing to help out with that, or have some other ideas for a project that can be completed by Halloween, let Laureen know by calling her at 703-707-9832 or e-mailing her at brantinl@hotmail.com. And then, of course, plan on coming to the Auction the evening of Saturday, November 17 at 7:00 to see our masterpieces sold to the highest bidder!

ISO: A Conscientious Knitter

UUCF member and beginning knitter Beverly Bugos is offering a Conscientious Knitter a wonderful opportunity! Beverly has some lovely camel-colored wool she would like to use up, and would like to have a warm shawl made from it. Beverly is willing to pay the knitter a small fee (perhaps a donation to the church?) in exchange for making the shawl. If you're able to help out, please call Beverly at 703-264-8910. It's a great way to earn some money for yourself or the congregation doing what you love to do!

jUustice NEEDles: Dudza Dolls

My knitting friend Irene Lague brought a project called Dudza Dolls to my attention, and gave me the web site where she found them: www.chabha.org. I eagerly looked up the site, and it brought me to tears. CHABHA is an organization dedicated to assisting service organizations in Africa working with those affected by HIV/Aids. After much on-site research, CHABHA chose to help four organizations based in Rwanda, Namibia and South Africa. They provide services such as health care, education, insurance, career and technical training, mosquito net distribution, providing food to the most vulnerable, life skills workshops, HIV testing, needs assessment, micro loans, and other advocacy projects.

Each of these four programs are run by local administrators who are from the communities they serve. CHABHA provides money and support for the projects, sending money and aid from the US, and staying with the programs until they no longer have a need.

The idea for the dolls came from CINDI, another organization dedicated to addressing those in Africa affected by AIDS (www.cindi.org.za) CINDI had adapted the idea from a

similar group in Canada who were sending medical equipment using the dolls rather than polystyrene as packing material.

In December, CHABHA representative Suzanna brought 250 dolls to a group of 1000 children in Rwanda. Boys and girls alike, regardless of age, wanted a doll, making it clear that they were a popular item.

The dolls are very simple to make (there is an even simpler version for children who knit on the web site) and can be made with scraps and yarn leftovers. For those who are interested in making them, the pattern appears below. Completed dolls should be sent to:

CHABHA
2766 Windham Hill Road, West Windham, VT 05359



DUDZA DOLL PATTERN

- CAST on 32 sts on size 3 (or 4) needles. Knit 4 rows in stocking stitch, leaving about 8 inch "Tail" to gather for feet when completing doll.
- Change color for trousers or skirt. Knit 16 rows. Change color for belt, if desired. Knit two rows plain.
- Change color for sweater. Knit 14 rows, leaving an 8 inch "Tail" to gather for neck, and decreasing 4 sts evenly across the last row.
- Change color for face (preferably a shade of brown), change to size 2 (or 3) needles. Stocking stitch 10 rows.
- Change color for cap (or hair). Knit two rows in garter stitch (plain) for border.
- Next, decrease as follows:
 - Row 1: (Knit 4, k 2 tog) x 4 (24 sts). Alternate rows, purl.
 - Row 3: (Knit 3, K 2 tog) x 4, knit 4 (20 sts).
 - Row 5: (Knit 2, k 2 tog) x 4, knit 4 (16 sts).
 - Row 7: (Knit 1, k 2 tog) x 4, Knit 4 (12 sts).
 - Row 8: (Purl 2 tog) across row.
- (I embroider or sew face before beginning the next steps. Others do as last step.)
- Thread remaining sts onto needle and sew up cap. Sew up face. Run the gathering thread through the last row of sweater stitches and, after stuffing head, pull up tightly for neck, finishing off securely. (When stuffing, be sure not to put in too much to make doll stiff.)
- Sew up center back. Run the gathering thread through the first row of feet. Stuff body and pull up gathering thread tightly, finishing off well.
- Complete feet by sewing up center seam through both thicknesses of knitting, i.e. dividing feed, which are stuffed individually. Fold foot across cast on edge at right angles to body and sew up.
- Finish off other foot in same way.
- If making a doll with trousers, define legs by sewing through all thicknesses from feet towards belt, finishing off 2 rows from belt. If skirt leave as is.
- To define arms, start 2 rows from neck and sew to belt, as in picture, or below if not belt and you wish.
- To make face, embroider as you wish. Add to cap or hair to give doll unique appearance.



Conscientious Calendar



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



Wednesday, October 31 Due date for UUCF Auction Baby Trousseau donations. For more information check with Laureen Branting at brantinl@hotmail.com



Saturday, November 17 UUCF Auction. Come watch our Baby Trousseau be auctioned off for a good cause! For more information check the web site at www.uucf.org



Sunday, November 18 Yarn Exchange! While you're at the Holiday Bazaar, stop in the Yarn Exchange to trade in materials you're not using and pick up some great balls and skeins to take home. Your trash is someone else's treasure!



Wednesday, November 28 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 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 '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 Wednesday of the month.
- For back issues of The Conscientious Knitter and an article index, check out www.conscientiousknitters.com.
- There will be no Conscientious Knitters drop-in meeting in December.

Conscientious Knitters

c/o

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