

Westchester Knitting Guild Newsletter[©]

This newsletter is for the exclusive use of members of the WKG.



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ALPACATRAX

at the Mt. Pleasant Library

September 24th

7:00 p.m.

Elyse Arnow of Alpacatrax Farm will speak to us about the high quality alpaca fleece and yarns from the alpacas raised on her farm in Columbia County, NY and tell us stories about the fiber community and agriculture in the Hudson Valley. She will bring yarn and knitted items for sale.

NEW MEETING LOCATION!



This September the Chappaqua Library will be starting a renovation and addition to its Children's Library. During this time the Knitting Guild will be moving our meetings to

new quarters at the Mt. Pleasant Library - 350 Bedford Road, Pleasantville. The parking and entrance to the library is around the corner on Romer Avenue. We will be using the downstairs which also has an elevator access for those who require it.

From the President

As I was busy knitting and spinning (yarn) this summer, I started to think about how the knitting world has changed since I started seriously knitting in high school. In those days, most patterns were generated by the yarn companies. In the 60's, I was able to buy *Vogue Knitting*; that upped the fashion quotient quite a bit. As memory serves me, in those days you went to a yarn store or, low and behold, a department store and you selected your yarn. No one focused on type of yarn, we focused on color and gauge. Wool was wool; everyone knew it had to be hand washed; acrylic was machine washable. Knitters probably also knew of cashmere but this was always pricey.

Today there is an ongoing discussion of breed type and its characteristics. I will look at some of the breeds most commonly available. Yarn companies, especially smaller independent dyers and smaller ranches raising specific breeds, put the breed front and center in the discussion of the yarn you are about to buy. Check out the labels of the yarn you are about to purchase, chances are that the breed, or breeds is on the *front* of the label.

Merino: Most knitters consider this the ultimate wool fiber, often referred to as the royalty of the wool world. Originally it was raised in Spain and was very much protected by the Spanish government. The term Merino sheep references the shepherds who originally raised these sheep, the Beni-Merines who were members of a Berber tribe from North Africa. The rams from this breed were imported into Spain. Today this breed is raised around the world and have been crossed with other breeds.

BFL (Blue Faced Leicester): This breed produces a fine, silky, and lustrous fiber. Before processing, this fiber looks very springy and curly. Spinners and knitters like it for its properties: fine not scratchy, durable for a long life, with enough sheen to take dyes well. Most BFL and their cousins come from Northern England.

Romney: These sheep produce a high-quality fleece. This fiber is a good all-purpose fiber. This fleece has a fine crimp, and is a good candidate for worsted type yarns. This breed originally found in southeastern England is now raised in other parts of the world.

Alpaca: It has been said that if you are allergic to wool, wear Alpaca! A member of the camelid family primarily from Peru, many knitters see it as soft as, and less expensive than, cashmere. Personally, this is the fleece I love to spin, when combined with angora it is like dying and going to heaven! Aside from being, adorable, and social, alpacas produce a fleece that is good for items requiring "drape". As such, it would not be good for items that require a more defined, stiffer shape, unless it is knitted tightly. The Huacaya and Suri breeds is what knitters commonly find available to them. Most alpaca is of the Huacaya type.

Mohair: Often mixed with silk, making it perfect for lace knitting, these goats (and rabbits) originated in what is now Turkey from a city in Anatolia called Angora. It makes for a very light and airy fabric. Some people find working with the silk/mohair combination difficult to handle especially if you have to rip out a section of knitting. Patience is the key here; it is doable.

How a particular fleece is spun can also affect the final product; a yarn that is springy and "stretchable" like Zara is not good for intarsia. I discovered this the hard way. The length of my sweater also seemed to increase, and no, I never hang my sweaters. Clearly, when knitting a garment that is worn against the skin, softness is of tantamount importance. Crispness of the stitch pattern is another key factor: some yarns work well in stockinette, others are better used with a stitch pattern. Other fibers often have a haze like appearance when knitted, neither good or bad It depends on the item being knitted.

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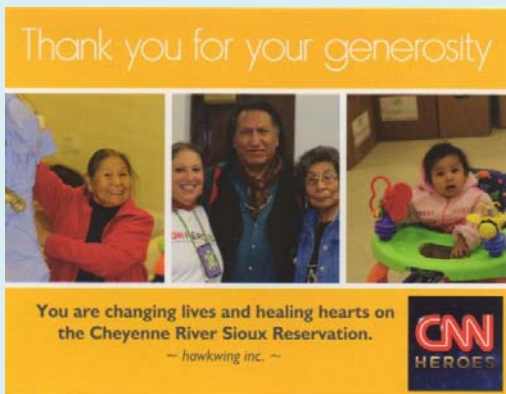
From the President, continued.

Today, there are numerous books on yarn available to the knitter. Clara Parkes wrote two such books: *The Knitters Book of Yarn*, and *The Knitters Book of Wool*. If you are a spinner, or just want an in-depth look at all the breeds and varieties of fiber; *The Fleece and Fiber Sourcebook* by Deborah Robson and Carol Ekarius is a good place to start. (This is the book I referenced for this column). These days, knitting magazines also focus on fiber types. All of this information makes for a knitter who will create an item that is just right.

As many of you already know the Chappaqua Library is in renovation mode, they are adding a bigger children's room. Therefore, until the construction is complete, we will be meeting at the Mt. Pleasant library in Pleasantville. Specifics about our new temporary home can be found on page one of this newsletter. Hopefully, we will see all of our guild members at our new location.

As always, happy knitting *J. Evelyn Liebmann*

Charity Knitting

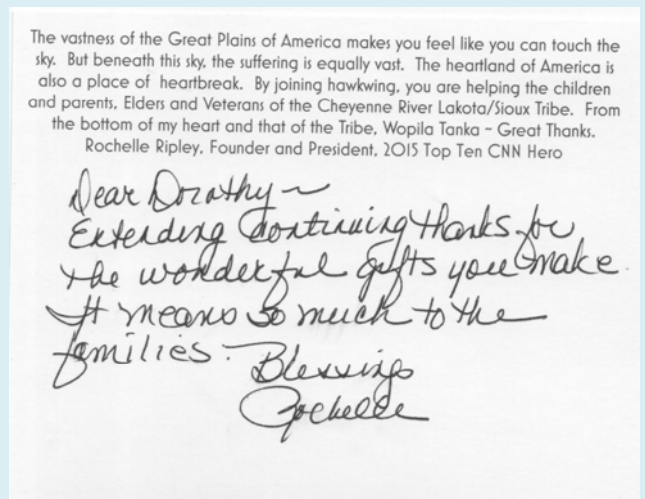


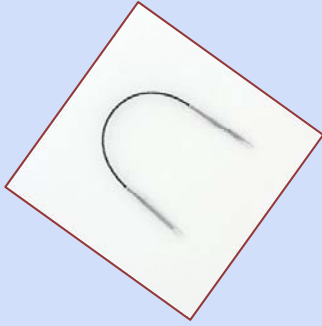
As you probably realize, Hawkwing is one of our favorite charities. The reservation is certainly a worthwhile cause plus the distribution of items is very personal. Rochelle, the founder and president, knows everyone living on the reservation and distributes each donated item to a specific person. For example, when I send a sweater for an eight year old boy, she knows which family to send it to. We don't have to worry that our knitwear is laying in a corner somewhere because no one knew to whom they could give it.

Rochelle's reputation has been recognized nationwide; in 2015 she was one of the Top Ten CNN Heroes. If you go to their website, you can learn about all the programs they are involved in and how they are expanding to meet the needs of everyone living on the reservation. One of the programs focuses on new mothers; teaching them parenting skills as well providing clothing for their babies. For this reason, we've also requested baby clothing over the past couple of years. You can use wool or wool-acrylic yarn which is nicer to work with when knitting for Hawkwing,

Recently I received a very nice card (see below) from Rochelle, thanking us and providing more information about them. Such a message makes us feel so good and we wanted to share it with you.

*Dorothy Freeman and
Linda Cramer*





SHORT CIRCULAR NEEDLES

by Lis High

I love circular needles! I use them whenever I can - hats, sweaters and shawls are all especially easy on circular knitting needles. Straight needles and dpns, although I learned to knit on them, are uncomfortable to me as a rule.

I am fairly new to sock knitting, having only completed a few pairs and with a few on the go. When we did the Pomatomus KAL with Suzanne, I started on dpns, but I had problems with my gauge and, by the time I was ready to actually knit my socks, I had just discovered the nine inch circular needles. I love the feel of them in my small hands and short fingers.

Pros:

- They are easy to manipulate.
- It easier to follow the pattern as I'm not always switching from one needle to the next.
- My WIP projects are much easier to store as I move about and they travel better (less lost stitches).
- I can see the pattern and spot my mistakes much easier.
- I don't keep losing a needle.
- I don't have stitches falling off a floating needle.
- I don't have to keep watching out for laddering up between my dpns.
- I don't struggle with up down over under placement of my fingers on the dpns as I switch between needles.
- I can knit small circumference items faster on these than dpns.

Cons:

- The first few rows are difficult, they are with dpns too.
- Most people with longer fingers find them very awkward.
- Some people find their fingers cramp when using these ultra short circs.
- Some people complain they can not get up to speed with these.

Suzanne always advocates trying different methods and tools for knitting to find what works best for you. I have found for me that these nine inch circulars are my go to sock knitting needles. But, I have also found that I knit most of my hats on these babies too. I recently tried using a pair of 12 inch short circulars for sock and hat knitting and am loving that as well. I am uncomfortable with all the excess needle flapping around, so for me, shorter is better.

If you want to experiment I'll be glad to let you try mine before you make an investment.





FALL KAL



Welcome to our Fall 2018 KAL. Inspired by Kaye Gardner of Mason-Dixon Knitting, the Mitered Crosses Blanket combines two techniques—mitering and log cabin—to make a knitted interpretation of a log cabin quilt variation.

We'd like to encourage anybody who would like to help knit a blanket for our charities - Jansen Hospice, Hawkwing or someone going through a personal tragedy. Knitting squares for a group-knit blanket is one of the greatest joys of knitting. We want you to have this experience.

For this project you will need two skeins of washable DK yarn for each square measuring 13.5 x 13.5 inches: a solid for the background and a solid/variegated color for the center; US 6 straight and US 6 circular needles (to hold 162 stitches) for a gauge of 20 st x 40 rows; a tapestry needle for weaving in ends and stitch markers.

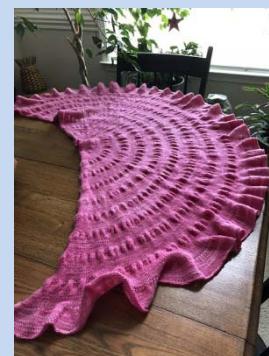


Olive McNeil



RAVELRY PATTERN OF THE MONTH!!

This month's free **Ravelry** pattern is the Citron shawl. It is a lovely lace weight shawl with a shimmery effect created by ruching. There are so many wonderful patterns available free on Ravelry! Just go to their pattern browser and click on 'free'!



<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/citron>

https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/search#view=captioned_thumbs&availability=free&sort=best

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership dues are \$15.00 for the remainder of the year. Please make your check payable to the Westchester Knitting Guild or WKG. You may give the check (or cash) directly to me at the next meeting or you may mail it to me at:

Westchester Knitting Guild
Attn: Jeanne Scofidio
P. O. Box 141
Chappaqua, NY 10514

Please include your current address, telephone number and current email address. I will give you (or mail to you) a 2018 WKG membership card and add you to our membership list. I look forward to your continued participation in our guild activities!

Thank you, Jeanne

UPCOMING TEXTILE ART EVENTS

Oct. 21-22, **New York Sheep & Wool Festival**, Rhinebeck, NY,
<https://www.sheepandwool.com/>

Nov. 3-4, **The Fiber Festival of New England**, West Springfield, MA
<https://www.easternstatesexposition.com/p/fiberfestival>

Through Jan. 13, 2019, **Color Decoded: The Textiles of Richard Landis**, Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York, NY <https://www.cooperhewitt.org/channel/color-decoded/>

Through Dec. 23, **Andy Warhol, Subject & Seriality**, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY
<https://www.neuberger.org/exhibitions/current/view1/425.html?width=660&height=500>



Knitting News
Joan Ratner

Calendar

- Sept. 24 – Alpacatraz Farm
- Nov. 5 – Member led workshops
- Nov. 26 – Vogue Knitting

MEETING SCHEDULE

6:00 Knit Along
7:00 Announcements &
Show and Tell
7:15 Program

Meetings are held on the 4th
Monday of the month at the
Mount Pleasant Library
350 Bedford Road
Pleasantville, NY 10570
(914) 769-0548

<https://www.mountpleasantlibrary.org/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Dues for the remainder of the year are \$15. Jeanne will accept payment at the next meeting.
- Please bring finished items for charity to the monthly meetings.
- Please bring donations of yarn and plastic knitting needles for the prison knitting program at Taconic to monthly meetings.
- Guests are welcome. There is a \$10 fee for guests.

MEETING ETIQUETTE REMINDER

We are fortunate to have high quality presenters during our monthly meetings. Even if you are not interested in the presentation or mini-workshop, please be respectful of others and remember:

- No talking during presentation
- Wait until Q&A period to ask questions
- Wait for the presentation to end before trying on, or looking at samples

Thank you for your cooperation.

westchesterknittingguild.com

Don't forget to check our website
and like us on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/WestchesterKnittingGuild>

