



Cablegram



Tina Newton

*The Creative Color Genius Behind
Blue Moon Fiber Arts and Sock Summit*

Tina Newton is into socks. Way into socks. So much so that she has built a successful business, Blue Moon Fiber Arts, based on sock yarn - from the milling of the fibers to the chemistry of the dyeing. Tina is a self taught artist with a great love of color and fiber and she translates this into a custom line of hand painted yarns. And, with her Knot Hysteria business partner Stephanie Pearl McPhee, she runs fabulous fiber events including the wildly successful Sock Summit.

More than just a color genius, Tina brings to the yarn world a wealth of fiber knowledge and experience and an extraordinary artistic flair. The love affair started with spinning. Soon after, she began dyeing her own roving and discovered not only a talent but a passion. She then began translating her color theory from her own handspun onto millspun yarns and Blue Moon was born. Tina has a fertile imagination and the practical creativity to support it. This energy is contagious and inspiring. She loves sharing her vision and working with others. This is the spirit of Blue Moon. Tina is the mother of Narayan, Rabia, and Sophie. A vegetarian, homeschooler, therapist, aging hippie chick, and just a blast to be around. Besides chickens, she has a thing for firetrucks.

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Looking Ahead:
 March 2, Tina Newton of Blue Moon Fiber Arts
 April 6, Rebecca Danger of Dangerfieldcrafts
 May 4, Fiber Frenzy
 See back cover for more info

Margaret Radcliffe

Knitting Luxury Yarns

Our guest this month was the very charming Margaret Radcliffe. She joined us on her way down to the Madrona Fiber Arts Retreat where she spent Saturday and Sunday teaching an assortment of classes. Margaret has been knitting for over forty years, and watching her knit while she waited to speak was humbling. Without ever looking at what she was doing, she knit faster than my eyes could follow.

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Board Members

Thanks goes to following members who volunteer their time:

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Notes from the Board

I don't know how many of you got the opportunity to visit the Madrona Fiber Arts Festival, but if you did you couldn't help but notice the amazing array of talented spinners, dyers and designers. From the classic to the innovative, if you're part of the yarn community and its adjuncts, you found something to admire. There was the woolly gentleman from Ontario with his beautiful stranded pattern kits, paper yarn at the Habu booth and displays of lace and patterns and kits. It was an almost overwhelming display of beauty and ingenuity. We're part of an awesome (and I never use that word loosely) community. It was so inspiring. My friend Julie said it was like when she visits a bookstore: she's reminded she'd rather be home actually reading. At our next meeting we're going to meet one of those innovators from our own backyard. Bring your knitting and your questions. We'll see you there.

— Kristine Jackson, President



Kristine Jackson

Notices

University of Washington Research Study - Men Who Knit

Two graduate students are looking for participants for a research study at the University of Washington, Information School. Participants must be men, 18 or above, who knit. The study activity involves an interview (approx. 30 minutes) which will be scheduled at a place/time that is convenient for the participant.

[Note: Interviews are planned to be completed by March 1, 2011, so if you plan to participate, contact them immediately.]

If you are interested in participating, please contact:

Casey Hickerson at crhxn@uw.edu or Jill Woelfer at woelfj@uw.edu

Custom knitting opportunity:

Looking for someone to knit a simple, plain shrug for a wedding scheduled for July. An opportunity to make a little money and knit on someone else's dime. If you're interested, contact the President at Seattleknittersguild.org and she'll put you in touch with the requester.

Membership Notes

Welcome to new members:

Deborah Ford of Seattle (Ravelry: trikmit)

Anna Horn of Seattle (ravelry: kittycent)

Sue Hopkins of Renton (ravelry: SeattleSuze)

— Kathy Hightower, Membership

Off to a Fast Start

SKG 2011 KAL Project Report

With my husband in snowy cold, read -20 degree weather in Montana I was motivated to knit something warm for him in short order. This cowl took under two weeks of knitting to completed; fastest piece I've completed in a long time. I found the pattern and knitted samples, Rocket Boy Knits's Queen Anne Cowl, at our January meeting; and decide to buy DK weight. Preferring the heavier hand of the fabric with that weight. The pattern also has instructions for Hazel Knits Artisan Sock, if you prefer. The cable with beaded rib background once established was a easy repeat and wow did this go quickly on size 5 needles. Whoo Hoo my first KAL completed and my husband put it to use right away! I also purchase HK's sock weight in the cashmere blend, so you'll be seeing that project later. I'm still musing over which pattern to do; a capelet pattern featured on Acorn Street or a Rowan lace shawl or maybe one of Cookie A's socks. Oh the choices. What have you chosen? — *Margarite Hargrave*



Knitter's Calendar

- ☞ March 5-7, 2011 - Portland Yarn Crawl, <http://www.portlandyarncrawl.com/>
- ☞ March 5-14, 2011 - Alaska Fiber Festival, <http://www.alaskafiberfestival.org/>
- ☞ April 8-11, 2011 - Weekend Workshop with Karen Alfke, <http://www.grandfirlodge.com/html/retreats-110408-acorn.html>
- ☞ July 28-31, 2011 - Sock Summit, <http://www.socksummit.com/>

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Margaret's Luxury Yarn Tips

The topic was a condensed version of a three hour class that she regularly teaches titled Getting the Best from Luxury Yarn Before it Gets the Best of You. She joked that the more tongue and cheek title of the class was Dealing with Difficult Yarns. We use the same tools, knit with the same techniques, and use the same patterns, but we can come up with very different results with any of these different types of yarns.

Using luxury yarns can result in problems, and Margaret had us list as many as we could think of including stretch, shrinkage, uneven plying, differing surface textures and difficulties with seams. With Margaret's help, we came up with a lengthy list of problems that can arise when knitting with luxury yarns.

Margaret worked her way through our list offering tips and solutions. She explained how some wool has more crimp than others, how many other fibers are mostly straight, and that looking at a ball band won't tell you how the yarn will perform. Knitting up a swatch and performing a stretch test by pulling on opposite corners, dropping it on the table and seeing if it returns to its normal shape, will give you an idea how it will perform. Margaret brought along several examples to illustrate and she also used examples that members had brought. She did mention that she had left some of her more dramatic examples, like the one-and-a-half pound knitted sweatshirt, at home.

Bias problems are easily dealt with by including seams or structural elements. Cables, diagonal patterns, strong horizontal patterns, or using pattern stitches like linen stitch will prevent bias problems. Choosing an appropriate yarn will make a difference since heavier yarns will weigh down fabric, creating stretch. The trick, according to Margaret, is to find the tipping point between adding elements, using weighty yarns and keeping the fabric consistent with the pattern.

Margaret offered a long list of ideas for keeping luxury yarns from getting the better of us. Combining wool, even a small thread of it, with a luxury yarn can help to keep the fiber in line. Necklines are generally the root of all problems, and using borders are key to adding structural integrity. Ribbing tends to stretch out with non-wool yarns. Using a much smaller needle, at least four sizes smaller, and using about fifteen percent fewer stitches will help keep necklines in line. If a ribbed neckline is the goal, using twisted stitches will help them bounce back to their original shape.

She had so many great ideas. Like her books, Margaret was overflowing with helpful ideas and solutions. She offered so much advice and did it in such a clear and concise manner that knitters of all skill levels enjoyed what she had to share.

The author of *The Knitting Answer Book* and *The Essential Guide to Color Knitting Techniques*, Margaret also teaches and, in the fall, will be leading a six day knitting cruise off the coast of Maine. More information about the cruise, her books, or her schedule can be found on her website: www.maggiesrags.com

— Tracey Delamarter



Sample Sweaters



Margaret Knitting Prior to the Program

January's Show 'n Tell — What are you working on?



Zina Reh's Snow People



Lizbeth Davern



Marilyn Tschetter



Anu Slorah



Gabrielle Green



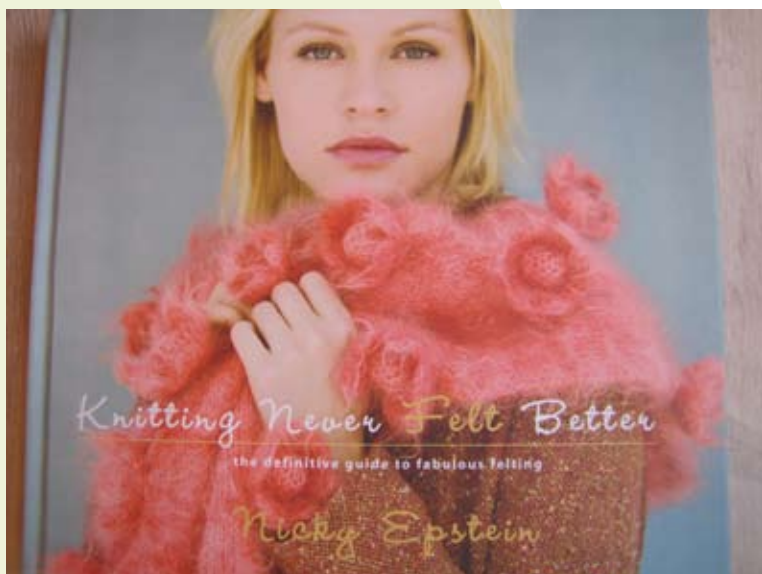
Carol Sherman



Nancy Boddy



Susan Parke



Book Review

Knitting Never Felt Better

Nicky Epstein, Sixth&Spring Books, 2007

A certain family member of mine recently put a lovely lamb's wool sweater into the washing machine, added detergent, hit the hot water setting, and walked off. Three chapters of his book later, he returned to discover that his once perfectly fitting sweater was not going to fit so nicely anymore. That sweater got passed down to our oldest son, who a few days later tossed that same sweater into the wash and did the same thing. That sweater then perfectly fit my younger son. Or at least it did until he threw it into the laundry pile. Now that tiny little sweater is on its way to become a new bag, or maybe some felted jewelry.

I decided to try felting this winter in an attempt to create some fast, homemade Christmas gifts. I found a pattern for felted slippers that was essentially a long rectangle stitched together and felted. It sounded so simple, and even I can whip a rectangle the length of my foot in a fairly short period of time. Perfect!

The knitting of the rectangle went uneventfully, and the anticipation built. Could it really be that easy? Well, yes and no. Felting is really very simple. Getting things to turn out exactly how you want them to – not so simple. When I finished knitting and sewing up the slippers, they looked like giant clown slippers. Three cycles through the wash later, they looked like something a child would wear. A very tiny-footed child... I succeeded in felting, but failed at the end result.

After seeing countless wool garments shrink down to an unwearable state, and then seeing the results of my

“simple Christmas gift project,” I decided that I needed some help. I found a nice, big book on the felting process: *Knitting Never Felt Better: the definitive guide to fabulous felting* by Nicky Epstein.

Felting is a fascinating process, and in order to get really good at it, you need to understand how it works. According to Nicky Epstein's book,

Wool fiber is made up of tiny scales. When exposed to hot water, these scales open up and expand, and with the agitation in a washing machine, the fibers rub together and become tightly and irreversibly entangled. The addition of soap helps swell the scales and lubricate the fibers. When the scales are exposed to cold water, they close down in a tight mesh.

As a side note, some people also refer to this process as “fulling.” The difference between the two depends on when the felting happens. Felting happens to natural fibers, fulling happens to fabric that has been knit.

This hard backed book looks like a coffee table book. It is large, and the cover is eye catching with a beautiful pink 3-dimensional floral scarf shown around a model's neck. It is more than just a show-piece, however. This book really is a definitive guide, just as the cover states.

Epstein really delves into the process of felting with this book. There are pages of swatches showing the before and after. In the first section, Epstein explains the felting and fulling process in detail and answers some of the most common questions. She demonstrates the results of felting several different types of yarn, showing before and after



samples of wool, wool blends, and varying gauges.

Section Two of the book, dimensional felting, explains the Japanese technique shibori, where objects like nuts or marbles are tied into knitted fabric and then felted to create bubbles in the felt. Epstein shows swatches using all sorts of non-shrinkable items, from wooden beads to all sorts of nuts to wooden dowels. She even uses metal binder clips to create an interesting ripple effect. In addition to shibori, Epstein uses bobbles,



textural stitch patterns, cables and lace to create dimensional fabric.

A section of the book is dedicated to seeing the effects of fulling color work, as well as a section for lace patterns. Direction for knitting up each of the swatches are included, along with large before and after photos. Epstein gives numerous suggestions for getting the best results, and she includes very thorough explanations about all aspects of felting with more than one color, gauge, or yarn composition. Like the other sections, there are patterns for projects that illustrate the different techniques.

Epstein covers almost every type of color work technique in this book: intarsia, duplicate stitch, embroidery. She also demonstrates

what happens when you felt with synthetic novelty yarns, add beads to your knitting, or felt decorative edgings.

Knitting Never Felt Better has a chapter on appliqué, cords, and bag handles. It includes quite a few patterns and nice photos to illustrate each. The last thirteen pages of the book, behind the techniques section, are templates for creating decorative pieces and embellishments out of felted fabric that didn't quite make the cut. There are lovely photos of Christmas stockings, baby booties, bags, stuffed animals, and a "5-in-1" project that creates five items out of one recycled sweater.

The final chapter of Epstein's book is a set of patterns for creating a basket full of felted vegetables or a bowl of fruit and a beautiful Sherwood Forest Bowl. There are thirteen fruits and veggies represented, and they look to be fun, quick knits.

Throughout the entire book, Epstein talks about all the variables that will affect the felting process, and offers tip and tricks, as well as tips and ideas from readers. The tips and advice, combined with almost thirty project patterns and the numerous swatch patterns, make this a very useful book to have. None of the patterns are particularly difficult, or even very long, the point being the felting, not the knitting. There are a couple of more challenging patterns, especially the impressive floral coat. Epstein includes a "Do not make this coat as your first felting project!" warning with that one.

Most of the projects are entirely beginner friendly, and for those looking for a challenge there are plenty of ideas, as well. This is a great book for knitters of all skill



levels, and I look forward to felting my way through it.

There are only a couple of errata, and they are easily found on the publisher's website: http://www.sixthandspringbooks.com/errata_neverfeltbetter.php

— Tracey Delamarter



This Month's Knitting Tip

Successful Felting Tips

- Felting can be done by hand, but using a washing machine is faster and easier on your arms. Use a laundry bag or pillowcase to prevent fiber from clogging up the machine.
- To keep the insides of a project from felting together, rub a small amount of soap on each interior side to start the felting process and encourage the sides to start matting up, preventing the sides from sticking together.
- Adding something to the load (like a pair of jeans) can speed up the felting process. Be careful that whatever you add won't bleed or get lint on your felting.



Seattle Knitters Guild

(Est. 1985)

Meetings every first Wednesday
of the month 7pm

Wedgwood Presbyterian Church
8008 – 35th Ave. NE, Seattle
(NE corner of 35th and 80th)

Visitors always welcome. Parking
available in the lot behind the
church or across from the south
side of the church on 80th.

Dues: \$22 per year,
\$11 after July 1

Library cart open 6:30 to 7pm
(Only members may check out
books.)

Cablegram is published monthly.
Submit stories and photos to
editor@seattleknittersguild.org
by the 2nd Saturday following
the meeting.

www.seattleknittersguild.org

- Be prepared to spend some time running the washing machine. Some items can take up to three cycles or more to felt the desired amount.
- Stockinette and Garter stitch are most often used for felting, but any patterns or stitch technique will work. Experiment and see what happens.
- All yarn is different and will therefore felt differently. The rule of thumb however, is that wool will shrink about one-third of its original size. It can shrink even more, though, so watch carefully and stop the process when you reach the desired size.
- Adding ½ cup of vinegar to each wash cycle will help keep the colors from fading.
- Pour a teakettle of boiling water into the washing machine to get the water extra hot.
- Watch out when felting light and dark yarns together. Fibers from the darker colors will end up all over the lighter ones.
- Felting is a wool activity, but try felting with wool blends for a variety of results.
- You can create 3-dimensional felt by wrapping items in the fabric, securing them with rubber bands and then felting. This is a Japanese technique called shibori, and it creates fascinating results.
- There is NO GOING BACK! Once something has felted, there is no undoing it. Keep a close eye on your project and stop the felting as soon as you have what you want.

Member Meeting	Topic
March 2	Tina Newton of Blue Moon Fiber Arts
April 6	Rebecca Danger of Dangerfieldcrafts
May 4	Fiber Frenzy
June 1	Mary Scott Huff