



"Have you realized how most men yearn for proper socks? Men I hardly know are constantly and wistfully and broadly hinting that I make them a pair."

— Elizabeth Zimmermann, in *Knitting Without Tears*



a newsletter from
Meg Swansen

Dear Knitters,

We are celebrating our 50th anniversary all over the place. An article in the Spring issue of *Knit 'n Style* by Michael DeIveccio*; the Summer *Interweave Knits* by Franklin Habit**; and an article by Shirley Scott*** coming up in the Fall issue of *Vogue Knitting*.



For our own celebration, each of the two anniversary issues of our [Wool Gathering](#) feature designs by Elizabeth Zimmermann.

In March, we gave you instructions for *EZ's Butterfly Vest*, which appeared in 1956 *McCall's Needlework*.

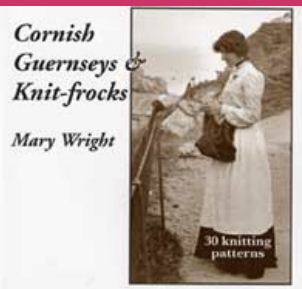
Sept 2008 *Wool Gathering* will feature two heretofore unpublished yoke designs—in keeping with the design in Newsletter #1, Sept 1958. If you subscribe now you'll receive the current issue (the butterfly) right away. Due to overwhelming demand, WG78 is out of stock. Subscribers will receive the Butterfly pattern, the first of our new Schoolhouse Press Patterns in place of the WG.

Cully's and my newest DVD features both [EZ's Ribwarmer and the Butterfly Vest](#). Plus, newly converted from video—my [Round-the-Bend Jacket and Puzzle-Pillow Blanket](#)—both designs merged onto one DVD, with charts and instructions on the insert.

On the Web Site

[Cornish Guernseys & Knit-frocks](#)

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Cornish Guernseys \$19.95

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[Round the Bend/Puzzle Pillow DVD](#)



Round the Bend DVD, \$25

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M'lou Baber, Amy Detjen, Joyce Williams and I are working feverishly on M'lou's book, [Double Knitting, Reversible Two-Color Designs](#). Superstitiously, I will not call a pub-date—but certainly in time for Fall/Winter knitting. We are trying to hurry—but not RUSH—in order to do proper justice to M'lou's spectacular designs.

Michelle's idea for a [Knit-Along](#) has proven most popular.

- First was a [Christmas Stocking](#) last November,
- 2: [EZ's Snail/Spiral Hat](#) and 3: [EZ's Kliban Hat](#),
- 4: Debbie New's [Kline Bottle Hat](#) (with a one- or three-handle-option),
- 5: Lizbeth Uptis' elegant [Latvian Mittens](#) with fringed cast-on and we are gearing up for a September series of
- 6: [Joyce Williams' toe-up-socks, featuring Joyce's Heel](#). Instructions will be for knitting socks on circulars (one at a time), as well as knitting both socks at the same time on two, 24" circular needles. Come join us in September.

[EZ's Baby Surprise Jacket](#) has become trilingual: Liesl did a splendid job of translating the instructions into Spanish —and a team of French and American knitters (Christine Kurk, Manuèle Ducret, Connie Burmeister, Jane Lippmann and Christine Daveau) have collaborated to produce a French edition.

Shetland Wool News: When our J&S mill discontinued 78 shades of Shetland Jumper Weight, we sought to replace the missing colors and signed on to carry 150 shades of Spindrift Jumper Weight from a new mill in the Shetland Islands (100% Shetland Wool). The Spindrift price is \$5.60 per ball. We are excited by the new color palette offered and hope to have all shades (some of them the old Alice Starmore colors) available in fall.

[View Jamieson's Shetland 2-ply Spin Drift.](#)

At present, our Jamieson & Smith palette is complete, but some colors are disappearing quickly. We will continue to stock a core group of colors from J&S, with the rest of the colors on sale at \$5.40 as stock remains (the new J&S price is \$6.50; colors we continue to stock are already listed at that price).

[View Jamieson & Smith Shetland Jumper Weight.](#) Newsletter subscribers may take advantage of a discount on J&S Jumper Weight @ \$5.00 per skein/ball for subscribers--see special at right--until June 30, 2008.

*Author, *Knitting with Balls*.

** Author of the soon-to-be-published, *It Itches*

*** Author, *Canada Knits*

The steady stream of queries I receive feed this electronic Newsletter beautifully; thank you—and keep 'em coming.

Q&A

Q: *This weekend a lady from Scotland posted that she had her grandmother's*

[Knit Along September 2008](#)



Knitting toe-up socks on circular needles with Joyce Williams starts in mid-September

4 spaces remain in the

Two Color Knitting Workshop October 2008

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New Authentic Shetland

[Jamieson Shetland Wool](#)

Subscriber Specials

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handwritten knitting patterns. She was trying what she thought was the Indian Corn stitch, but wasn't sure and couldn't find the stitch pictured, so wanted to know if anyone knew the stitch. When googling Indian Corn stitch, your name comes up from the Guernsey DVD!

A: Dear Nancy, I LOVE Indian Corn Stitch—and am surprised it has not caught on more (also, our reverse-stocking-stitch-gussets). I originally found the stitch in Rae Compton's *Complete Book of Traditional Knitting* and put it in nearly all my Ganseys: *yo, k2, pass yo over (pyoo). Repeat from *. Knit 2 or 3 rounds plain and repeat.



Q: I have one larger pattern repeating as my first row above the ribbing. A later row repeats in 6 stitches, and winds up being a stitch off at the end of the row when compared to the larger pattern below it. I was not planning on making a cardigan with a steek, so it looks as though for at least this one pattern I will be a bit off where it meets up with itself. I thought I could just join the round on one side or the other (under an arm) so that it would be less noticeable. Is this sort of a standard problem? Or should I figure out all the multiples of my pattern repeats, then find one number they all divide evenly into, and figure out what size needle I need to work on to get a gauge that will allow that many stitches? I appreciate any help you may be able to provide.

A: Dear Erica, When it is only a matter of a stitch or two —I do not hesitate to inc or dec a few stitches on the first round (more-or-less evenly spaced around the circle) to make the repeat fit in perfectly. You may use varying multiples of patt-repeats above each other and—unless you are fussy about them lining up with each other vertically—MAKE them fit, as long as the number of stitches increased or decreased is not too gross.

An alternative method is to center each motif front-and back and establish a side "seam" of one or more stitches, forming a mirror-image when incomplete motifs bump into it and bounce off the other side. My fave.

Q: Please explain why and when Provisional cast on is used?

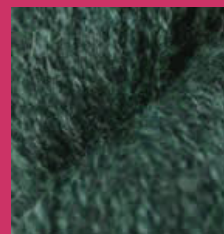
A: Dear Teri, Provisional Cast On is ideal if you will need those stitches later on:

- for a perpendicular border around the periphery of an item so you can invisibly weave the end to the beginning
- to test a new yoke design; then knit the body and sleeves down from the Provisional Cast On
- for shoulder stitches so you can weave the front to the back
- when you are not sure what lower edge treatment you want for the body; provisionally Cast On, then choose an edge after the sweater is finished
- and plenty of other situations...

Q: I am struggling to knit the baby booties from [The Opinionated Knitter](#). There are three stitches on my left needle. At this point, the instructions tell me to "Knit Up" 12 stitches on each side (27 stitches). Does knit up mean I cast on to the stitches or pick up and knit stitches on the edge of the rectangle? I can write a mean grant proposal, but am not as skilled reading knitting patterns.

A: Dear Colleen, Elizabeth was not one to hold your hand; some of her 'instructions' are a bit enigmatic. There are 12 Ridges on either side of the

Special Offer for NL subscribers



[Jamleson & Smith Shetland](#)

Discounted fr. \$5.40

\$5.00 per ball

until June 30, 2008

(To take advantage of the sale price you must copy and paste this code (SJWNL10%) into the comment section of your order. Sale price is for newsletter subscribers only, until June 30, 2008; sale does not include the colors we will continue to stock—about 13 or 14 colors clearly marked on the Jumperweight page. As always, while stock remains.)



Ribwarmer Vest DVD includes EZ's Butterfly, Ribwarmer and Knee-Length Ribwarmer

20 % Discount until June 30, 2008

\$20

qty:

1

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center 3 stitches. If you knit-up (choose which section of the selvedge you will work into: insert needle through chosen section and hook the working wool through) 1 strand for each ridge (along the selvedge) to the L and R of the center 3, you will have 27 sts altogether. Since the working wool is in the middle -- and since it is my main game to never break the wool unless I must, I would knit the center 3 stitches, then continue to knit-up the first 12 stitches; turn; knit the 15 sts now on the needle, then knit-up 12 on the other side; no wool broken. Does that make sense?

Q: I have just received my [Ribwarmer Kit](#) with the beautiful [Unspun Icelandic wool](#). This is the first time I've used this wool and I am unfamiliar with its peculiarities. I decided to knit a swatch for gauge and found I was having trouble using the wool as it thinned out and came apart on me. I presumed I was holding it too tightly or pulling it as I knit. I desperately want to have success with this project but fear I will be unable to keep it together while knitting (and the subsequent un-knitting to fix mistakes.) I was also wondering what would happen to the garment as it is being worn, and if the wool thins and separates there as well. Do you have any tips for knitting it up?

A. Thank you for your enquiry, dear Becky. You may fall into a tiny category of people (I know of only 3 in the past 35 years) who absolutely cannot work with Unspun Icelandic wool. I think I even say in our blurb that, "this wool is not for everyone"...

Do you hold your wool-finger high above your knitting?
Do you gently pull out a length of wool before knitting it up? Is the break occurring between your finger and the knitting—or from the wheel to your hand?

Our Tami is a very firm knitter, but is able to work with the Unspun, so I'm trying to envision what technique you may be employing that pulls the strand apart. This is such beautiful wool, I hate to think that you may be deprived of it—but, if it remains untenable for you to work with, please send it all back and we will give you a full refund or credit. (P.S. I am pleased to tell you that we received a follow-up note: Becky persevered and is now happily knitting with Unspun Icelandic wool.)

Q: Elizabeth often used a twisted cord, but also said that one could use I-cord if that was preferred?

A: Dear Marilyn, I can see her now: standing in the kitchen holding her electric mixer (with only one of the two beaters inserted). One end of the wool was tied to the single beater; the other end she tied to a drawer-knob and went "Whirrr Whirrr Whirrr" as she pressed the starter. intermittently—making herself laugh—and kept testing to get just the right amount of twist for the strand to double back upon itself. **Alert**, using an electric mixer, it is easy to over-twist!

Q: May I ask one question on the guernsey? I've watched the dvd multiple times and just got the [Wool Gathering](#) (No. 76) where you recommend knitting in the round all the way to the top. In the dvd you divide at the underarm for front and back. I've made Norwegian sweaters in the round and have not divided a sweater before. Would it be more expeditious to continue it in the round? The one I'm making is for my 37" chested son.

A: That is a great question, Lynn. There are pros and cons for each method. I mostly love circular knitting because it eliminates purling back, however a Gansey is fraught with purls when you get to the stitch-pattern section—so why not put the gusset stitches on a thread and go back and forth from the underarms to shoulder? That way you will not have to cut the armholes and can eliminate the rather thickish facings around the armholes and neck.

On the other hand ... establishing steeks above the gussets and continuing in the round is more soothing for me. Plus, one of my aims is to find the hidden 'song' in each motif and knitting the whole circumference is more rhythmical—plus F & B are knitted in one fell swoop. It is totally your call. Sometimes I flip a coin...

Q: A recurring problem I have is with weaving. In several of the EZ designs there are live stitches that need to be woven together. Well, I can do the actual weaving, but then there are two holes on either side of the weaving. I try making stabs at the holes to close them up, but it looks bad.

A: Dear Claire, If you mean weaving the raw underarm stitches on a seamless yoke or raglan sweater, that IS a tricky business, as there is fabric coming from 3 different directions.

I have best luck by putting the body u.arm sts on one dp needle; the sleeve sts

on another... then pick a sloppy strand at EACH end of EACH dp needle; twist that thread and add it to the needle.

So, if you had 15 sts-on-a-thread at each underarm, you will now have 17 to be woven to each other. AND, resist the temptation to use the wool hanging there to do the weaving ... take a fresh piece of wool to weave. Yes, that means an extra end to darn in, but it will prevent a gross distortion of the first bit of weaving.

When you darn in the final end, you can do a kind of duplicate-stitch to close up any small hole that may remain.

Q: I am having trouble knitting the tomten sweater. Specifically, I am trying to pick up the stitches for the sleeves. The directions say to pick up 23 stitches (for each ridge) on each side. What do I do with the underarm? Do I add those stitches too? How many stitches are in total around the sleeve?

A: Thank you for your enquiry, dear Janet. The number of stitches you pick up along each side of the armhole is not too critical—as long as you have the same number on each side and one at the shoulder-top. As you work back and forth on the sleeve, nibble off an underarm stitch at the end of each row (this is why I do not cast-off the u.arm sts; I like to have raw sts available for a nice elastic u.arm). So have u.arm stitches on a needle (either raw sts, or picked-up sts from the selvedge).

*Work across on 'right' side, to the last sleeve stitch: ssk (being the last sleeve stitch and a picked-up u.arm stitch. Turn. Slip 1st stitch p'wise with wool in front. Knit to last sleeve stitch on 'wrong' side: wool fwd, slip 2 p'wise—being last sleeve stitch and an u'arm stitch. Turn. k2tog. Repeat from * until all u.arm stitches are gone. Work to wanted length, decreasing down top of sleeve as directed by instructions.

The above will give you a clean, single stocking-stitch along each underarm selvedge. Nice.

Do you have a question you would like to have answered in another newsletter? [Write to me.](#)

Outward,
