



"I have a knitting creed slowly developing, roughly as follows: There is enormous potential for genuine creative knitting on the level of any other honest craft."

— Elizabeth Zimmermann, in *The Opinionated Knitter*



a newsletter from
Meg Swansen

Dear Knitters,

Guernseys seem to be sweeping across the knitting landscape again. What a treat for those who have never knitted one of these fascinating and historic garments. When I see someone stepping—with a bit of trepidation and excitement—into their first Guernsey, or Aran, or Fair Isle, I get a flicker of envy—as I do when someone is reading one of my favorite books for their first time.

Several knitters requested that I 'do' a Guernsey for the next *Wool Gathering* ([WG #76](#)); it did not take too much persuasion. I have knitted about 8 or 9 of these in the past and as I plotted the new one (in our thickish [Rangeley wool](#)), I was reminded of the child's version I had knitted during one of the *Knitting Vacations* Chris and I took to Oregon in 1992. We would pack up wool and needles, camera and tripod, paints and canvasses and head out to one of our favorite spots to document the knitting of a new design and to paint. Chris and I produced a number of *Knitting Vacation* videos, but the Guernsey one became becalmed (for some reason which escapes me now) and I had thought the tapes lost-and-gone-forever. Lo! (as my ma used to say), Cully FOUND the 'missing' tapes and has edited them into a DVD in time to accompany the new Guernsey WG. Timing is everything.

Cully also converted the [Fair Isle Vest](#) video to DVD. That was the last Knitting Vacation Chris and I had together—and it is my favorite. We were quite well honed in the video mode by then, and the taping flowed smoothly. Chris died just before he had completed the final edit—but Cully finished it up and added some heart-breakingly beautiful music.

And Cully and I taped a brand-new DVD, documenting the knitting of my mother's [Baby Surprise Jacket](#). Plus, we reprinted [Lady Veronica Gainford's Designs for Knitting Kilt Hose & Knickerbocker Stockings](#), and produced our own [Knitter's Journal](#), in which you can scribble and chart your various knitting adventures.



And, speaking of books, Joyce Williams and I are wobbling closer and closer to having a finished 'slim volume' of *Armenian Knitting* designs ready for the printer.

Ouf. We've been a hive of activity around here lately. And now, questions (and answers) about your knitting:

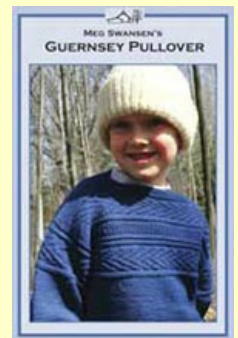
Q: Good Morning Meg and gang! I have a question about EZ's Set-in Sleeves sweater. My son designed a sweater and wanted the sleeves set-in. Being that I am more like you all, I didn't want to sew them in. My question is: do I knit the body and sleeves to 1-1/2" shy of desired length, put them together, and knit around all for 1"-1 1/2" BEFORE

decreases begin? It is not stated in the DVD Knitting Workshop or the Spun-out pattern. I am at a standstill and await your answer.

A: Dear Maria, Measure to find out how wide the recipient is from shoulder-point to shoulder-point (I usually measure across the back). Knit body and sleeves to wanted length to underarm - then unite the three units. Now work 1 to 1-1/2" plain; then begin a single decrease at each raglan point Every round - with the decreases heading toward each other at front and back (i.e. beginning at wearer's Right-front:

On the Website

[Guernsey Pullover DVD](#)



Kits for the [WG #76 Guernsey](#) available

[Baby Surprise Jacket DVD with Meg Swansen](#)



*k2tog, knit sleeve, ssk, knit across back to third-raglan point, k2tog, knit second sleeve, ssk. Repeat from * until distance between decreases equals wanted shoulder width. knit a few rounds plain. Then reverse matters... where you have been k2togging: ssk – and where you have been ssking: k2tog, and switch to Every Other Round. Check your row gauge (the finished body is a giant swatch) to get an idea of how many more rounds you need to achieve the yoke-height to top of shoulders. It is here - between the change in decrease-direction - that you are able to insert up to another inch in vertical height, if needed. Continue until you have about 10% of [K] sts remaining on each sleeve; work sleeve-cap shaping plus back-of-neck shaping. Weave shoulders. One of EZ's coolest concepts. The design may be found (rather sketchily) in EZ's book, [Knitting Workshop](#), and as an Aran cardigan with the set-in section oozing into a Saddle Shoulder in *Wool Gathering #63*, now the single-sheet [Spun Out #49](#)

Q: My question concerns Short Rows "as needed". How do I know how many, if any, pairs of short rows are needed?

A: Dear Sheba, Think in terms of how much added length you want for the given situation, (for the back of a sweater, usually about 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch). That measurement may be translated into rows, which will tell you how many Short-Row-pairs you need. Short Rows also may be used to shape shoulders, raise the neck-back, insert bust darts, or to accommodate a paunch.



Q: Dear Schoolhouse, Several months ago I bought un-spun icelandic wool wheels and I've been scared to even open it. Well I finally did and tried very carefully to knit it. Tell me how do you handle the yarn as it keeps breaking off. There must be a trick to using it.

A: Dear Carmen, At first, pull the wool from the center very gently. Soon the center-hole will become larger (like a doughnut) and the wool will flow out more easily. If you are working 2-ply, find the strand on the outside of the wheel and work the inside and outside strands together. For a single strand, I usually work with the one that comes from the center. I do not

do anything very special except try not to yank when I need more wool—and keep kittens and puppies away. If it does break (or drift apart), overlap the two ends in one palm, lick the other palm and rub your hands together briskly for about 5-10 seconds (until you can feel heat). That 'spit-splice' will fuse the ends to each other and you can keep on knitting.

Q: I would like to know if you carry a blocking circle for tams? I can't seem to find one anywhere. Thanks, Ellen Norman

A: Dear Ellen, I was not aware there was such a thing as a "blocking circle". I use a dinner-plate or, for a specific diameter which does not match any of my plates, I cut a cardboard circle.

Q: I understand that Schoolhouse Press has reprinted/published some of Barbara Walker's works. I wondered if there was any way to work toward reprinting her "The Craft Of Multicolor Knitting"? I have checked it out from the library - and loved it - then was disappointed to discover that I can't find it anywhere. I did find one copy through amazon.com - but the price was a whopping \$120. Just curious if anything was underway to bring this book back into print along with all the others.

A: Dear Cari, Worry not... after the big Treasuries were printed, many knitters wanted only cables—or lace—or color patterns, and were loathe to buy the whole tome for one topic. So Scribner's printed three slim paperbacks: excerpting patterns from Treasury and Second Treasury in each of those topics. All the patterns in Multicolor Knitting may be found in the first two Treasuries; the blue and red ones.



Q: I have done a few raglans and there is one area that I really don't like, its the few sts on either side of the underarm sts... they are loose & when I touch them they feel weak, I'm afraid they will wear faster if left.... so when I sewed up the underarm sts, I tried to sew them up too, to take care of the holes that's there & I sewed up the loose sts too...but don't like the way it looks...any tips on making tighter sts on either side of the underarm sts?

A: Dear Mary, That is a tricky spot, as the fabric converges from three different directions. As I prepare to weave the raw, underarm stitches, I slide all lower sts onto one dp needle and all upper sts onto another. Then I *pick up one of those loose, sloppy strands at the end, twist it and add it to the needle as an additional stitch. Repeat from * at each end of each needle. So, if you had picked up 15 sts onto each needle, you will now have 17 on each. That usually takes care of the sloppy part ... but if, after weaving, there is still a small hole: thread a sewing-up needle and go around the hole, following the existing threads. Pull snugly and darn in.

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Those who have been with us for a few decades know how conservative we have been about adding new wools; once added, we have remained with our selection until the wool ceased to be produced. I became smitten with some samples of the new [Ultra Alpaca](#)—half wool, half alpaca, so we tested it last Summer. The Campers snapped it up, and I used it to knit the Baby Surprise Jacket in the new [Baby Surprise Jacket DVD](#). Lovely colors ([see them here](#)), in a soft and seductive fiber. I am now knitting a cabled vest for my son-in-law, Lalo; it is denser than 100% wool and I'm anxious to see how it wears.

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SPECIALS for Newsletter Subscribers only: a 20 percent discount on [ANY TWO DVDs](#) you choose from the website. Since this offer is limited only to you-all, please make a note in the "comment" section on the order form of coupon code **NLDVD307** for the DVD special. The cart will not show your discount, but as long as you include the coupon code, we'll deduct it in the office; offer expires May 1, 2007.

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Fair Isle Vest DVD



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Outward,
HJ

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