



a newsletter from
Meg Swansen

Dear Knitters,



In May/June, my sister, Lloie and I travelled to Wales to spend some time in the land of our grandfather's birth and to see our cousin who lives up in the pig's ear. With Lloie driving brilliantly on the left, we oozed slowly along the magnificent west and north coasts; what an altogether splendid country. We were dazzled by its beauty: sheep in all directions, wild Foxgloves in the hedgerows, unintelligible road signs, rocky cliffs covered with pink Thrift, and 10 consistent days of blue sky and high 70-degree temperatures (apparently unheard of in the history of Wales).



Then we headed to Coventry to participate in Jo Watson's wonderfully organized, [UK Ravelry](#). In spite of the drizzle, knitters were plentiful and enthusiastic. There was an extensive market plus spinning demonstrations, classes, a fashion show and actual Alpacas. In one of the booths I found pure, soft Shetland Combed Tops for spinners, which we now stock.

Shortly after our return, I plunged (along with Amy Detjen and Joyce Williams) into 4 weeks of Knitting Camp, beautifully prepared in my absence by Michelle, Eleanor, Tami and Cully. After 35 years, Camps tend to run together in my memory like Christmases, but I am not alone in thinking this was a particularly memorable year. It was joyous; we were so glad to be together - but it was also poignant; the losses were palpable.

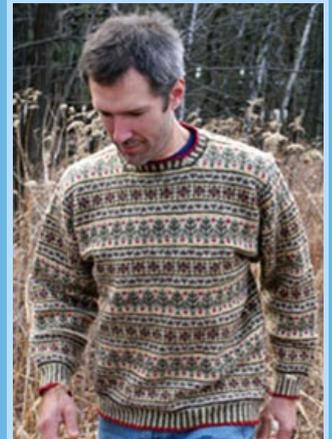
Straight after Camps, Amy and I hopped on a plane to Portland for the mighty Sock Summit. Ouf! The organizers (Stephanie McPhee and Tina Newton plus their amazing gang-of-four) did a magnificent job. There were (we think) about 5,000 sock knitters - all grinning. The 4 days were likened to Woodstock and Barbara Walker noted, "In 20 years, millions of knitters will claim to have been there".

On the Web Site

[Schoolhouse Press Patterns](#)

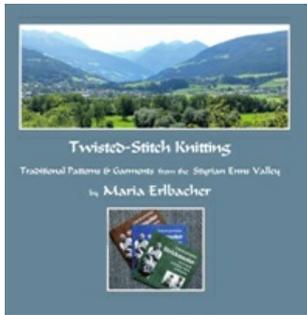
[Dale Long's](#)

[Christmas Past](#)



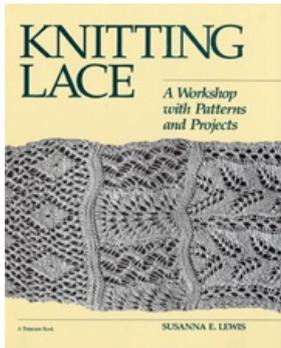
[Eli's Christmas Stocking](#)





Upon our return from Portland, Michelle had arranged a still- life on my sofa: copies of [Wool Gathering #81](#)* and copies of Maria Erlbacher's, [Twisted-Stitch Knitting](#) (originally called, **Überlieferte Strickmuster**; Char Dichte translated it into English and we merged the three books into one). Lovely.

*We have an addendum to the charts in WG#81, so if you decide to knit the Swedish Delsbo Jacket, please ask us for a copy.



Now, we await Susanna Lewis', [Knitting Lace](#), to return from the printer. This most excellent and long out-of-print book is finally available again, through Schoolhouse Press.

We now have a total of eleven SPPs ([Schoolhouse Press Patterns](#)), with #11: 7 Hats from 4 Designers (Eleanor Haase, Cully Swansen, me and ma), #10: Eli's Christmas Stocking (from our very first Knit Along), and #9: Bridget Rorem's Lace Alphabet Scarf

Did you read about EZ's Green Sweater on [Twist Collective](#)? What a lovely story. The 'Sherlock Holmes' person, Sunday Holm (really), did a splendid job of dissecting the EZ-Green-Mystery-Sweater and we have arranged to have it available as a pattern in the near

future. And - I think I can break this news now: The mill who had spun and dyed the actual Green Sweater wool used by my mother just happens to have a batch of it lying around. It will not be re-dyed in future (unless someone orders a ton of it), so I have to say, 'limited supply.' But I think only 3 to 4 skeins are required, so we will have enough wool for many dozens of authentic sweaters. We will send an announcement to newsletter subscribers when the pattern and wool are available.

More new stuff: After over a year of searching and testing many products, we found [Charlie's Liquid Soap](#). 'Great Stuff, Maynard' (as Eleanor says).



Plus, I have always had to make a special order to get half-size



binders and sheet protectors to house back-issues of WG. I finally figured it out: we should Stock [WG Binders](#)--and now we do.

Also, we are stocking many new colors of [Ultra Alpaca](#) (to replace shades abandoned by the mill) and LOTS of gorgeous colors of [Sheepsdown](#) will be here by the end of Oct. At present, we have **Mountain Green, Scotia, and Peacock** in stock. Do you have Cheryl Oberle's new book, [Jackets](#)? The first design in that book is knitted with 'our' Sheepsdown.

And Just In From Jamieson and Smith: 100% pure Shetland [Combed Tops](#)- selected from the finest wool in the Shetland clip by Oliver Henry himself. We melted when we saw this lovely roving at Jo Watson's UK Ravelry event in Coventry; carded, drawn out, and ready to spin. There are 5 undyed shades from which to choose.

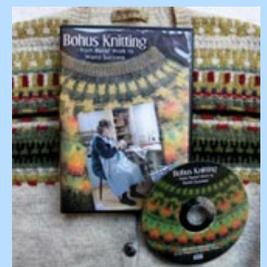
Bridget Rorem's Lace Alphabet Scarf



7 Hats



Featured DVD





OK, enough blather ... here is a current crop of Q & A

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

Q&A

Q: I have been knitting scarves for a long while now, and I would like to start knitting my first sweater; an Elizabeth Zimmermann circular sweater. 1) As I knit round and round, how should I treat the yarn tails when I run out of yarn and add a new ball? Won't the tails pop out and show on the right side? At my local yarn shop, I see ladies wearing their finished sweaters with ends popping out on the right side. What can I do? 2) Which wool do you recommend for my first sweater? What would EZ recommend?

A: Dear Damainne, Thank you for your enquiry...

1) There are several methods -- neither of which allow the tails to pop out!

A. You can leave 3 to 4" of the old tail and 3 to 4" of the new tail and keep knitting. A few inches later, pull gently on each tail so that the stitch on the front matches its sisters and, with a sharp sewing-up needle, darn in the end on a diagonal by skimming it through the inside surface of the knitted fabric. If you are using wool, that end will stay put; if you are using synthetic, you may want to leave a longer tail and return along the same diagonal path -- skimming through the tail and the fabric to lock it in.

B. My preferred method: spit-splicing; only guaranteed when using 100% wool. (Photo at right.)

Be sure to break the ends and have tufts (as opposed to blunt, cut ends). On old end, if 2-ply, untwist the last 3-4" and break off one ply... repeat on new end. Overlap the 2 single strands in one palm, "moisten" the other palm and rub your hands back and forth rapidly ... until you can feel heat; the friction will fuse the two ends with no noticeable thickness. (You may have to spit-and-rub twice; once on each end). Then - for safe keeping - twiddle the strand a bunch of times to make sure it is spun. For 3 or 4-ply, break off one strand of each ply at a staggered distance from the end. Make sure the ends are long enough for you to knit 3 or 4 stitches with the spliced wool.



2) Recommended wool -- a medium weight is a good place to start. Either Canadian Regal at about 5 sts to 1", or 2-ply Sheepswool or Rangeley at about 4-1/2 sts to 1". The latter will knit up more quickly - but will be heavier and warmer -- so decide which weight will be most useful.



Ultra Alpaca



Sheepdown

Special Offer



Visit [Schoolhouse Press](#)

10% discount off orders \$75 and over, through October 31st, 2009.

Paste in code NL10%F09 in the comments section of your order.

(For newsletter subscribers only.)

General Statement from Cully (via direct experience): NEVER KNIT THROUGH A KNOT. Always untie it and splice the ends together (see above).



*Q: Hi all. Do you have any suggestions about how to make a more "manly" cuff/sleeve ending for the [Around the Bend Jacket](#) from Meg's book, **Handknitting**? I'd love to make a cardigan jacket for my husband and I'd appreciate your thoughts.*

A: Indeed, Julia; a number of these jackets have been knitted for men. Simply change the cuff to a wider band of garter-stitch, and eliminate the I-Cord around the top of the cuff (thus eliminating the gathers). Or make a straight sleeve, just slightly tapered at the bottom. For the lower edge, you may choose a rolled stocking-stitch edge, or a band of garter-stitch, or a hem, or ribbing.

Q: I have a question about the [Round the Bend Jacket](#): What is meant by the reverse "no sew for the shoulder seam"? What would that look like in words? I have tried

everything and ripping out 8 times. I'm so close to being done and feel defeated because I can't get this shoulder like the other one.

A: Dear Dolly, Remember when you worked Sew As You Go along each side seam? You had to do a slightly different method on each side in order to have the single stocking-stitch appear on the outside of the garment.

The two shoulders are worked in the same manner: a different method for each shoulder. So - whichever of the 2 methods you used for the first shoulder - work the other method for the second shoulder. Do you have the [DVD](#)? It might be helpful to see it being worked.

In words: If the join takes place on the top (right) side: work to last stitch, ssk (last stitch plus one shoulder stitch). Turn. Wool fwd, slip first-stitch purlwise. If the join takes place on the inside ("wrong" side): work to last stitch. Wool forward, slip 2 sts purlwise (last stitch plus one shoulder stitch). Turn. K2tog. See how the knit appears on the outside? Please let me know if you still have any difficulty.

Q: 1) When you do a braided selvedge, do you slip the first stitch knitwise or purlwise and then purl the last stitch? and 2) How do you complete the last round on the body of a seamless yoke sweater, the round in which you place the pieces of yarn on 8 - 10% of K at the underarm seams? Do you complete the round and then put the stitches on the pieces of yarn? And, do you break the yarn at the end of the round?

A: Dear Jean,

1) To get a braided selvedge you may either - slip the first stitch purlwise with wool in front and knit the last stitch *OR* knit the first stitch and slip the last stitch purlwise with wool in front.

2) Yoke sweater: I put the body-underarm-sts on pieces of wool as follows: knit past the 8-10% underarm-sts, then slide them onto a piece of wool; knit around to the other side and repeat. I have each sleeve on its own 16" (or a pair of 24") circulars. On the sleeves, I knit up to the 8-10% u.arm sts, then put those sts on their thread-holders. Knit across the body to the underarm; line up the body and sleeve sts-on-threads and continue knitting around one sleeve with the body wool. Now both sleeve and body wools are at the same end of the underarm; toss a coin to decide which wool to continue knitting with (body or sleeve wool) and break off the other strand; repeat at other underarm. That may sound garbled - but I think it will make sense when you are there.

Q: I bought a [gang of Unspun Icelandic rolls](#) from you late last year and knitted EZ's Bog Jacket from it. I am at the weaving part and I find it incredibly frustrating

Knit Along

October 2009



3 Designs from Marilyn VanKeppel

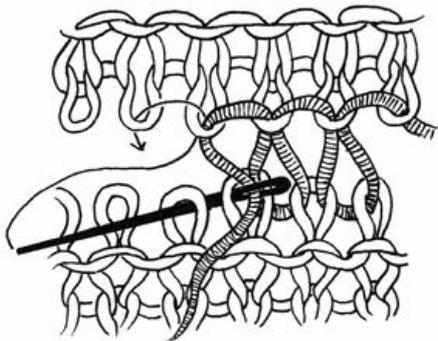
Lace Neck Scarf or Shawl, plus two versions of Scandinavian Footlets

The Scarf/Shawl KAL has begun, but instructions will remain posted. The Footlets Knit Along begins October 21st.

if not impossible to weave using the double strand of [Unspun](#). I have torn a good deal of to pieces. What alternative do you suggest? By the way I am weaving by the kitchener stitch, the only weaving technique I know.

A: Dear Madeleine, (I love the mental image of a "gang" of Icelandic rolls.) You may weave successfully with Unspun Icelandic -- but you must spin the wool first to provide sufficient strength - as follows:

- Thread a reasonable length of unspun wool through the sewing- up needle.
- Skim through the inside of the fabric, popping out where you want to begin weaving.
- Now, with the tail secured, you may twiddle the sewing up needle (in either direction) and, literally, spin the wool right there.
- As you weave - depending upon which way you twiddled - the wool will accumulate more spin, or will begin to lose part of its twist.
- Add or subtract spin as necessary.



P.S. It will make the Bog Jacket seamless if you weave that long underarm/chest seam in garter-stitch instead of stocking-stitch. Practice garter-stitch weaving on a swatch; look closely and see that your objective is to weave a ridge above the valley, and a valley above the ridge. Then you may gloat at your success.

Q: I am looking in the *Knitters Handbook* on page 81. I need to graft in garter stitch with the stitches on the needles. According to these directions it is the same for the front and back needles. Knit take off, Purl leave on. Is this correct or can you please tell me what is right?

A: Indeed, dear Sharon, the moves on each needle are identical.

HOWEVER, if you proceed when there is a valley up against each needle -- or a ridge against each needle, you will not achieve the magical, invisible result. (you will get 2 rows of stocking-stitch on one side and 2 rows of reverse-socking-stitch on the other)

To succeed, you must have a ridge against one needle and a valley against the other. You will weave a ridge into the valley -- and a valley into the ridge. If you do it incorrectly as many times as I have done in my past knitting life -- and get annoyed enough, you will spend time to study the actual stitches in order to completely understand what you are doing - and not be fooled again! (I went so far as to knit a pair of weaving-swatches to practice on.)

Q: I purchased your new [A-B-C-S J pattern \(Adult, Baby, Child Surprise Jacket\)](#). It's a wonderful pattern and I am on my second baby sweater. ...Now that am making the second sweater I have realized that on page 2, Row 74, the stitch count should be "146", not "145". Is this right?

A: Dear Mary, That question came up last week - and here is Cully's answer:

"The issue with rows 73 and 74 have to do with the # of stitches that are consumed while casting off. After casting off and increasing in row 73, you do, indeed, end up with 151 stitches. The reason Row 74 tells you to cast off 5, then knit 145 (instead of 146) is that 6 stitches are used to cast off 5. After you have cast off 5, you already have one of the remaining 146 sts on the right hand needle, only 145 remain on the left needle to be knitted. So upon the completion of Row 74, you do have 146 total stitches (not 145 as seems to be indicated).

This is a tricky thing to follow if you are just reading the row by row instructions and doing the math - it becomes clear when you are actually knitting along with the instructions."

Q: Hi, fellow-knitters, I would love some replies to these questions about the [BSJ](#):

1. The buttonhole row seems like it is maybe 2-3 rows too far inward and should be closer to the edge of the sweater. Has anyone ever moved this row?

2. *Does anyone have a really great sewing up technique for the shoulder seam? My seam always looks a little wonky.*
3. *Do most BSJ knitters actually do Applied I-Cord Bind Off and do I-Cord around the neck? Do you do any type of finishing treatment around the neck edge or just leave it plain?*

I love this little sweater and would love to get an idea of what most folks do.

A: Dear Mary, Here are some ideas:

1. If the buttonholes are too close to the selvedge, the buttonhole-border quickly becomes wavy. The further the holes are from the actual edge, the less distortion with wear. BUT, there is nothing to stop you from putting the buttonholes on any of the final rows that you choose.
2. My sewn seams are also wonky, so I usually work 3-Needle Cast Off (and sometimes, 3-Needle 2-Stitch I-Cord Cast Off), with the raw sts (from Provisional Cast On) on one needle and picked-up sts on the other.
3. EZ's Applied I-Cord can be a great game: work it up one sleeve (in the 3-Needle mode; uniting front to back and I-Cording all at the same time), continue across the neck-back in single Applied I-Cord, and back to 3-Needle down the other sleeve - all in one. Then, beginning at neck side (where it joins the back), begin Applied I-Cord (single) around neck, down the front, around the body, up the other front and along the other side of the neck -- in one continuous piece.

Q: I am working on my first project out of Victorian Lace Today and have hit a bit of stumbling block. I have completed the center panel for "Miss Lambert's Shetland Pattern for a shawl" (p50) and need to start the knitted-on border. There are written instructions in the back but I can't quite get the hang of how it should go. I am a mostly self-taught knitter and usually have no problem learning new techniques but this just has me stumped.

A: Dear Lori,

What follows is my way of knitting on a sideways lace border and may not exactly be that of the author of your lace book. You did Provisional Cast On - worked the lace oblong - and have raw sts at the end of this lovely shawl. Choose your lace edging and cast on (Provisionally) the required number of sts for the edging. Work back and forth, perpendicular to the finished shawl, attaching every second row of lace edging to the shawl (either to a raw stitch along each short end, or to a picked-up-stitch along the selvedges).

There are 3 different ways to attach the border to the shawl:

1. ssk (the last border stitch plus one of the shawl sts)
2. k2tog (" " ")
3. k2tog tbl (through back loops) (" ").

When turning to work the next border row, I always slip the first stitch - either k'wise or p'wise. Method 3 is by far the fastest for me - but it matters not which method you use, as long as you are consistent.

Corners: you will need a bit of extra fabric to swing around the 90-degree corners; the deeper the lace edging, the more additional rows you will need. For a border about 3 inches deep, I usually work to within 2 stitches of the actual corner stitch. Then, attach border as usual, knit back. K forward but do not attach, knit back. Repeat the above again. Now attach the corner stitch, then mirror- image the attached/unattached alternate rows.

Outward,
