

Schoolhousepress.com Newsletter #21, Early Spring 2013

“Much of my knitting is given over to techniques to foil friends. ... One ruse which I have yet to employ – although I mull it over slyly – is to take out the casting-on and deliberately put in old-fashioned casting-off. Perhaps I will never do this; it is unethical to deceive deliberately and gratuitously. When deceit, however, leads to a better looking result, let the devil take the hindmost.” - Elizabeth Zimmermann, *Knitter's Almanac*



Dear Knitter,

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<http://www.schoolhousepress.com/newsletterarchive.htm>

In this document, ***bold italicized words*** and most photos are links that, if clicked upon, will take you directly to the product pages on our website. You may also see our new and featured products on the final page of each newsletter.

Note: If you have questions about the products, patterns, or information in this newsletter, please contact us at info@schoolhousepress.com (replying to the newsletter email serves only to unsubscribe from the list).



My mother's iconic *Baby Surprise Jacket* (the BSJ) may be the design for which she is most well known. She came up with the concept while knitting a Garter stitch cap for her soon-to-be-born grandson. The peak of the cap somehow resembled a sleeve and (as she said later), “for some occult reason, I translated that peak into a surprising little one-piece jacket.” The BSJ shown here was the first one she knitted for baby Cully.

How fitting it is therefore, that the very same Cully has just adapted his grandmother's BSJ and engineered it into something that heretofore was thought impossible: A Circular Stranded Surprise Jacket (CSSJ) knitted entirely in the round

in Stocking stitch, while retaining the Surprising bits of the original BSJ.

If you wish to rise to a Knitting Challenge and take the BSJ to the next level, here is *SPP#41, Circular Stranded Surprise Jacket*. The project consumed Cully for months and I signed on to become one of his knitters (he was the other knitter). So, having knitted several baby (CSBSJ) and one adult (CSASJ) version, I am in a position to testify to the ingeniousness of Cully's idea. He has created a chart for multiple



sizes of Surprise Jackets. Also included in the SPP are blank templates for knitters to utilize their imagination and chart their own motifs for the jacket. As Cully notes; "Using the chart templates provided, you can be as creative with color patterns in the circular jacket as you were with stripes in the original." We cannot wait to see what knitters come up with. The CSSJ knits up more quickly (there are fewer sts required) than the Garter stitch version and uses less wool.

Wool. Can you see Joyce's 3-color Latvian Braid? This design originally appeared in the special 2002 Land's End booklet, *Art of the Sweater*.

In response to your requests, a new pattern is available: **SPP#42, Elizabeth Zimmermann's Ribwarmer**. Variations include a seamless back, collar, shaped armholes, sleeves, and my knee-length version (the "Bea Arthur") which seems to suit all who try it on; here Lloie and Eleanor are modelling it, Michelle likes to wear it around the office, and Amy wears it at Camp.



We just took delivery on **Wool Gathering #88**, a bevy of Celtic Pillows, utilizing 6 Celtic charts. These pillows are shown on Ravelry (having first appeared in a 1995 issue of Knitter's magazine) and several of them are shown in the book, *Knitting with Two Colors*. Enough of you asked for the charts, which encouraged us to feature them in the current WG. The pillows themselves have been on the back of my sofa, lo these 18+ years.



We continue to miss Joyce Williams badly (Joyce and Cully had worked as co-editors on a number of projects). So it has been our pleasure to work on and publish her lovely *Acorns & Tumbling Boxes* design. Joyce wrote instructions only for the size she knitted, but Cully has added 3 more sizes to make the pattern accessible to more knitters who love working all-over color patterns in Spindrift Shetland



Those who have copies of *Sweaters From Camp* will recognize this beautiful Dragonfly River Vest by Janine Bajus. The V-neck vest is knitted in the round from the lower edge; it has a shallow shawl collar and a hemmed lower edge.

Instructions are written for sizes 34" (39", 44", 46", 48"), in 6 shades of **Shetland Spindrift** wool.

It has just gone to the printer and will be our

Schoolhouse Press Pattern #43 (SPP#43). Available next week.

Questions & Answers

The first two questions are related, and the photo of Cully in EZ's Prime Rib/Brioche sweater applies to them both.

Q. Is Two End Knitting the same as Brioche Knitting?

A. Dear Joan, Those two techniques are quite different from each other.

Two-End Knitting is a very old Swedish technique where you knit from both ends of the same ball of wool, making a double thick fabric. You also have the option of bringing one of the strands to the front of the work to purl beautiful texture motifs. I have read that this method pre-dates color-pattern knitting as a means to make a warmer garment.



We published a book on this subject, *Two-End Knitting by Anne-Maj Ling*, translated into English -- and now we import a new DVD from Sweden (also in English) showing the technique: *Two End Knitting with Carin Appelqvist*.

Brioche is a deep, thick rib and there are several ways to achieve it. The method used on the sweater shown here is as follows:

Brioche Pattern Stitch (worked flat on an even # of sts)

1. *K1, wool fwd, slip 1 p'wise. Rep from * to end of row. (*The 'wool-fwd' goes over the right needle like a yarn-over, so, along with the slipped-stitch, there will be 2 strands together on the needle, which will be worked as one stitch.*)

2. K1, *wool fwd, slip 1 p'wise, k2tog (*the wool fwd, slip 1 p'-wise from the previous round*). Rep from *.

Repeat rounds 1 and 2.

In our *SPP#11, 7 Hats From 4 Designers*, we give instructions for a seamless Brioche hat (worked in the round) with stripes going either vertically or horizontally.

Q. I am following the "recipe" for the Prime Rib sweater in *The Opinionated Knitter*. The instructions say to knit the front/back panel to the desired total length from lower edge to shoulder and then bind off both sides for shoulders and to continue on the center stitches for the modified turtle neck

However, the photo on page 32 seems to have a more conventional type of neckline. Was there a modification made that has never been written down?

A. Well observed, Donna. When I was putting the book together, I could not find the prototype sweater to photograph for *The Opinionated Knitter*. The one shown in the book was knitted by my ma for my brother and, contrary to her own instructions, she shaped the neck.

It looks as if 18 sts were put on a thread at the center front, and sts decreased on each side every other round (but, I think, only a total of 2 on each side). Then each side was knitted to shoulder height, neck sts picked up/knitted up, and onward to wanted neck height.

Q. I'd like to try chart #30 as well as #53 from Lizbeth Uptis' book, *Latvian Mittens*. I need to knit them into a small women's mitten. These motif-repeats do not seem to fit?

A. Dear Laura, Each of the 126 beautiful charts in Lizbeth's book gives at least one full repeat of the motif -- but, because of the wide range of possible gauges and finished sizes, the author could not give charts representing exact mitten sizes for every design...each knitter must determine the proper number of stitches and pattern repeats for their size, at their gauge.

Both charts #30 (25 sts across) and #53 (50 sts across) will fit into a 100 stitch mitten; 4 repeats of #30 and 2 repeats of #50. If you knit to gauge



Chart #53 from *Latvian Mittens* by Lizbeth Uptis

on #0000 needles (12-1/2 sts to 1"), you will get a woman's small size of about 7-1/4" around your palm.

I recommend that you chart the pattern on a computer, or by hand on graph paper, and make any slight adjustment necessary, based upon your gauge.

Yes, this will be time consuming, but you are knitting a work of art and will have nearly as many stitches in your pair of mittens as you would have in an adult size sweater at a gauge of 5 or 5-1/2 sts to 1".



Q. I'm reading EZ's book *Knitting Workshop*. On page 69 there is an Norwegian neck and I can't understand how it works. Is it just a square (without corners) standing up or shall it be folded to the inside? Do you have any pictures or can you tell me how it shall look? I also wonder how the front side shall be done? I have not seen anything similar.



A. Dear Maria, Yes, it is simply a rectangle of Garter stitch, knitted up from across the back edge of a boat-neck opening. At wanted height, fold the two top corners to the FRONT neck edge and tack down (in fig 47 on pg 69, you fold B to C - C is on the front edge of the boat-neck opening).

The taller you knit the rectangle, the more of the front edge that you will cover. Allow for that horizontal loss as you plan the original width of the neck opening.

It is a wonderful and snug neck.

Q. Hi Meg Swansen: Could you please tell me how to block corrugated rib on a fair Isle vest; it is curling badly. Do you

use cool water and do you block the rib on right or wrong side. The rib on sleeves and neck are curling. Should you steam the rib?



A. Dear Elizabeth, This difficulty is not uncommon, and there are several causes: Long-Tail cast-on used for corrugated rib tends to curl (and this is the most common cast-on method used in this country). In future, try German Twisted cast on, or Knitted On cast on, both of which have less of a tendency to curl.

If the cast on itself is too loose, and you then begin a Corrugated Rib, the edge may curl.

I would steam the ribbing sections from the inside. Or use a dry iron and a damp cloth - again, from the inside of the fabric. Once you know you can make the edge lie flat, then you can block the whole garment to size.

If that doesn't work, you may have to - laboriously - unpick the cast on and use a sewn cast-off.

Q. I'd like to ask you about your pattern which is in the book, *The Opinionated Knitter*. I tried to make a baby bonnet of P108, but I stuck on after the row 11. I'd be pleased if you'd give me any instruction. And one more thing... Do you have a DVD about this book (pattern)? If you have, it could be helpful to understand for me this pattern.

EZ's Baby Surprise Bonnet from The Opinionated Knitter



A. Thank you for your enquiry, dear Hiroko. Indeed, we show this bonnet being knitted on the *Baby Surprise Jacket DVD*.

The cast on sts go along the horizontal edge (from neck-back to chin), around the face, and from chin to neck-back. Work back and forth, with a double-dec e.o.r. at the "corners" (where the bonnet goes from horizontal to vertical; originally sts #26 and #97).

After 10 rows, increase (this makes the edge of the bonnet snug to keep out the bitter winds of Winter). Continue to dbl-dec at corners until the horizontal bit has been decreased away; 26 sts remain.

The marked stitch is in the middle of the double-decrease, which eats up a stitch to the left and a stitch to the right of the marked stitch. The dbl-dec turns 3 sts into 1 stitch, and that remaining one is the marked stitch. It will probably make more sense as you knit and see what is happening. Also, I recommend putting markers INTO the stitch (rather than a ring over the needle); it is easier to keep an eye on the marked stitch that way.

Q: I have been working on the Brimmed Hat - Horizontal from EZ's *Knit One Knit All*, using 100% Merino. My brim does not flare or roll as nicely as the one in the picture. (I ripped back several times.) Brim: K1, m1 across 120 sts (this I did with a backward loop m1) then the pattern instructs work back and forth for 8 R. After the increase to 120 sts, I worked the circular piece as one purl row, one knit row for 16 rows (8 R) to get garter stitch pattern and there are no additional increases required. Could the I cord bind off be too tight?



A: Dear Denise, I think you have done everything the correct way - it is a little unusual to knit the garter stitch in the round, but there should be nothing wrong with that. I believe your issue relates to the wool you are using. Merino is very soft, and therefore results in a rather flexible fabric, and this particular design relies on the relative

stiffness of the fabric to create the flare or roll.

However, there are a couple things I could recommend. One, I'm not sure what gauge you are getting, but you could try knitting the brim VERY tightly to increase its stiffness. If you do this, then you will probably have to increase the number of sts you are working with, so after working the k1, m1 row, you might work a second row of k2, m1 (or whatever ratio you need to get the appropriate number of sts). I would swatch at the very tight gauge, then figure wanted sts by measuring the hat circumference and multiplying by your new gauge.

Another possibility might be to knit the brim with a different yarn. If there is a stiffer wool you have (or could get) that would be complimentary from a color standpoint, you could try knitting the brim with that.

Good knitting, Cully Swansen.

Q. I sure enjoy the newsletters. I like the baby blanket but I dont understand how to do it!

A. Dear Edna-May, Decide how wide you want the finished blanket (as it might be, 36"). Find out your gauge (I'll use 3 sts to 1"). Multiply your gauge times HALF the wanted width (3 sts x 18") and Provisionally cast on (54 sts).

*K53, turn, k back. (Just leave the 54th st on the needle.)

K52, turn, k back. (Now 2 sts are abandoned.)

K51, " " (Now 3 sts are abandoned.)

K50, " ", etc - until you are down to:

K3, turn, k back.

All the abandoned sts are still on the needle. Now you will begin to bring them - one at a time - back to their brothers and sisters:

K4, turn k back.

K5, " "

K6, " "

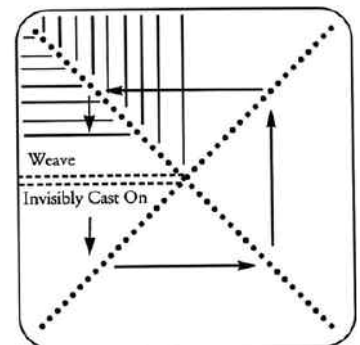
K7 - etc - back up to K54,

turn, k back.

One full corner turned.

Repeat from * 3 times more and weave the end to the beginning.

Work EZ's Applied I-Cord round the periphery.



Q. I'm still happily working on my *Eggplant Icelandic Rib Warmer* and it WILL be ready by the first frost. I need to know how to join the i cord border to itself after I get all the way around to where I began it. Can't wait to hear how.

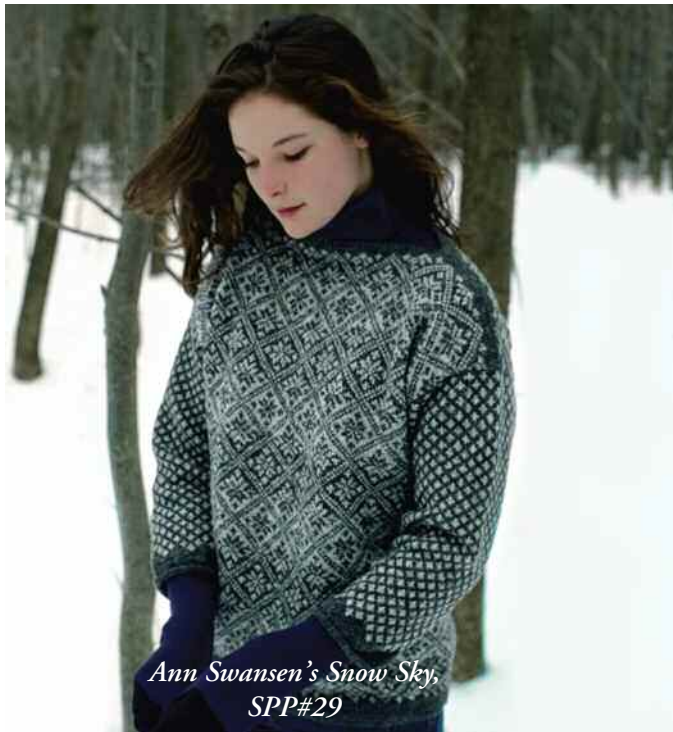
A. There are several choices, dear Martha. The tidiest way is to cast on the Cord sts with Provisional Cast on - then weave the raw sts of the end to the raw sts of the beginning.

Or, use regular cast on and un-pick the beginning to weave it to the end.

Or, use regular cast on and half-weave raw sts of the end to the selvedge of the beginning.

In any case, grafting 3 to 3 is a bit finicky. I begin the weave with the standard method to align the top and bottom sts to each other - then weave the second stitch and only the first half of each 3rd stitch. Use the tail to work a duplicate stitch for the second half - and it can be neigh unto invisible.

Q. In *Sweaters from Camp*, Ann Swanson's 'Snow Sky' is written for one size, which is too small for me and too big for my daughter. Is the pattern you offer for this sweater refigured for multiple sizes? (And, yes, I know, I could try to figure it out for myself but the concept intimidates the heck out of me and wouldn't get accomplished in this century.) Thanks for your time,



*Ann Swansen's Snow Sky,
SPP#29*

A. Dear Nancy, The SPP#29 for Ann Swanson's 'Snow Sky' does not have resizing; it is a straight reprint from 'Sweaters from Camp', but I am pleased to offer my help.

The pattern repeat is 22 sts. The size given in the pattern calls for 308 sts (after increasing above a narrower hem), which is 14 repeats of the pattern. Just find the number of even repeats (so you have the same on front and back) closest to your wanted stitch count. For example, if you wanted a circumference of 36" for your daughter, at 7.5 sts/inch, that would be 270 sts. Twelve repeats of the pattern is 264 sts, so that is what you would use.

As for sizing the height, you can put the sleeve steeks in whenever you want (for the depth of sleeve you desire), and work to the total sweater length you want (the pattern is not affected, just work it as many times as you need to).

The back of neck shaping would be the same (just worked on fewer sts). Then just 3-needle bind off the number of sts you want for the shoulder (leave the stitch count you want for your neck opening).

The sleeves are simply worked on however many sts you have around the armhole (the pattern converges at the underarm, so you don't have to worry about fitting it into your stitch count).

One note about the number of pattern repeats on the body: You don't necessarily need an even number of repeats. What an even number does is give the same number of repeats on front and back, so that the patterns align at the shoulder. There is quite a bit of background color worked at the shoulder, which separates the front and back, so if your stitch count allowed for an odd number of pattern repeats, and the patterns were offset by 1/2 at the shoulder, I do not think it would be that big a deal (that is up to you, of course). Good knitting, Cully Swansen.

Q. Dear Meg, I started a Baby Surprise Jacket. I was slipping the first stitch of each row to make the nice edge. My question is, when doing this, what is the best way to start a new color? Should I just NOT slip when I am starting a new color, making a little bump there? Or is there a better way?

A. Dear Eva, My fave method (especially if it will be an exposed edge, with no I-Cord border) is to knit the LAST stitch of the previous row in the new color. Turn and slip the first stitch as usual.

Q. In Elizabeth Zimmermann's *Knitting Workshop* book, p 50, she cautions to "RESIST the temptation to use the threads already hanging from sleeve or body (to weave the body and sleeves together at the underarms)." Please tell me which of her books I should consult to understand her reasoning on this. I have some of the other books and am willing to purchase a title I don't have if it has an explanation.

A. Dear Liz, In my youth, I always used those hanging strands to weave with; why take a fresh strand and make more ends-to-be-darned-in?

But, over the years, I became more and more particular about my knitting and could see that the first stitch of the weave was distorted - because the weaving thread was part of that stitch. I'm not sure my mother ever explained that thoroughly in any of her books.

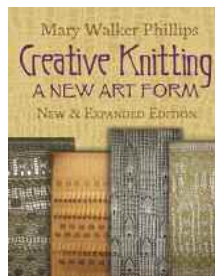
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