

Schoolhousepress.com   
**Newsletter #23, winter 2014**  
*Coats & Collars*



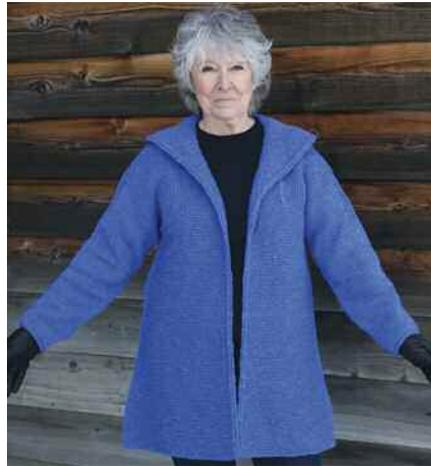
*"The holidays are done with, and Twelfth Night will be any day now; what better time to embark on a long and lovely project?"* -Elizabeth Zimmermann,  
*Knitter's Almanac*

Dear Knitter,

The wild birds are on their 4th 40lb bag of black sunflower seeds. That will give you an idea of the temperatures we've been having. The Winter Finches come in great herds of 50 - 60 at once, then hang out at the feeders, spitting out 3 to 5 seeds for every 1 they deign to eat. But it is easy to rationalize because of all the ground-feeding cardinals, doves and juncos. And, a Pileated Woodpecker (the size of a Pterodactyl) has been spotted on the suet outside Eleanor's packing window!

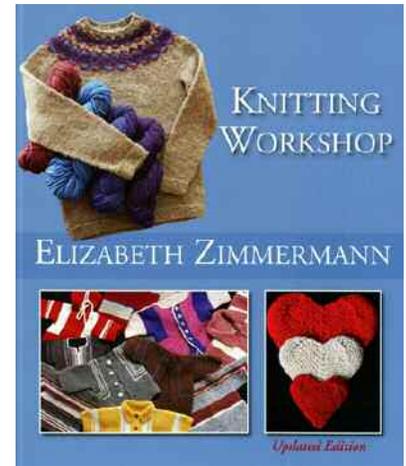
*Questions and Answers with Meg, starting on page 4*

*New!*

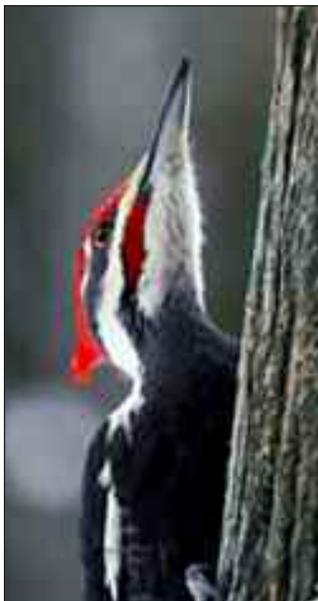


• *Schoolhouse Press Pattern #51:*  
 The Elizabeth Zimmermann Coat  
 (see p3 for details).

*New!*



• EZKW now in full color!  
 Newly expanded and updated  
 (see p2 for details).

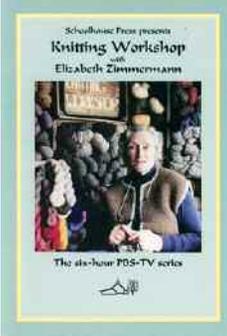


photographs by Meg Swansen



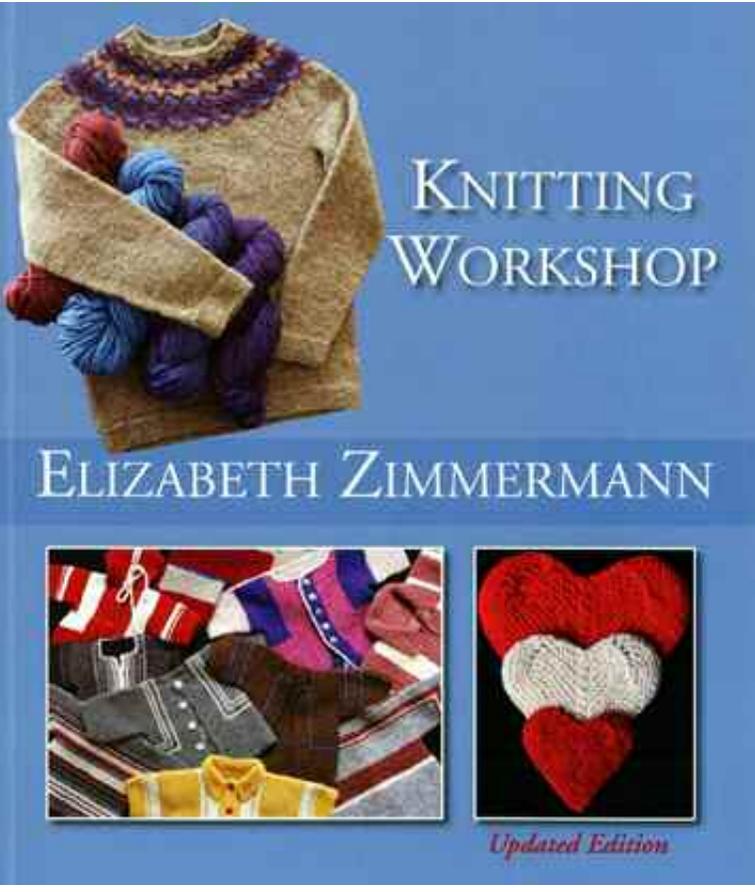
## Updated and Expanded Edition of a Classic!

- Some time ago, Michelle and Cully had the idea to update *Elizabeth Zimmermann's Knitting Workshop* - and that is what we have done. Elizabeth's original text remains intact, and all the techniques are expanded and brought up to date. Instructions have been augmented and sized and we added a few previously unpublished passages from ma's journals. I'm particularly pleased that Cully broke through EZ's amazing heart-pattern (knitted *in* from the periphery) and wrote out instructions for 6 different sets of numbers.



*EZKW* was originally published in 1981 as an accompaniment to the 13-week television series of the same name (now available as a *DVD*). Chris and I bapped it out on a typewriter and had it printed in black & white.

The updated edition is in full color throughout. We managed to find and re-photograph all but one of the sweaters shown in the original book. It is back from the printer and safely esconced in our warehouse. Cully (mostly) and I (assistant) worked on it so long and so steadily that it is strange to think of it as Done. We trust that EZ would be pleased.



### Schoolhouse Press Patterns

SPP stands for *Schoolhouse Press Pattern*. These are patterns of mine and my mother's as well as from a group of talented designers: *Janine Bajus, Amy Detjen, Ann Feitelson, Sven Gyllenman, Eleanor Haase, Sunday Holm, Dale Long, Bridget Rorem, Beverly Royce, Ron Schweitzer, Ann Swanson, Cully Swansen, Lizbeth Uptis, Marilyn van Keppel, Joyce Williams.*

- SPP #51 is our latest (at the printer as I type): *The Elizabeth Zimmermann Coat*. We re-discovered a jacket EZ had knitted in 1970, in 3-ply Sheepswool. It had an extraordinarily beautiful collar knitted-in (as opposed to knitted-on). Cully set to work figuring size-choices and presented me with a set of instructions to knit the coat with slightly lighter *Rangeley wool* (see p6). Included in the SPP are 6 sizes for 2 weights of wool, plus variations in length and styling.



*Hot off the needles; ends not yet darned in. Notice the decrease lines, highlighted with EZ's Phoney Seams.*



*Eli in his great-grandmother's original jacket, and me; collars up against the wind.*

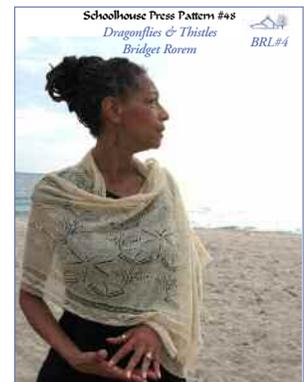
- SPP#50 *Saddle-shoulder Aran Cardigan* by Meg Swansen. The circular body is knitted from lower edge to underarm, circular sleeves are worked from cuff to underarm, body and sleeves are united in the classic EPS mode.

The yoke shaping begins with Elizabeth's set-in sleeve, but ends with a saddle worked perpendicularly to the body, knitted back and forth, uniting front to back. The center front steek is secured, cut and the garter stitch border is knitted on in a single piece.



- SPP#49 *Elizabeth Zimmermann's Shirt Yoke Pullover or Cardigan* A seamless sweater knitted entirely in the round, with woven underarms. It is worked from the lower edge of the body to wanted length to underarm. Sleeves are worked from cuff to underarm (cardigan has 3/4-length sleeves) and the 3 pieces are united to begin the yoke shaping. To get the look of a man's shirt yoke across the back, the saddle is quite deep.

- SPP#48, *Dragonflies & Thistles* is a most beautiful gossamer lace stole. Bridget is a true lace designer, in that she literally invents her own lace motifs -- and frequently must invent new knitting techniques in order to realize her ideas.



## Q and A subjects: Coats & Collars

**Q1:** Good morning Meg! I have a quick question: I knitted up 4 hanks worth of Sheepdown for the Aran Coat (from EZ's *Knitting Around* and *The Opinionated Knitter*). I slid it over my hips and I didn't like the fit! So I decided to do another swatch. Do I wash/ wet the swatch before I measure it or just measure it and divide numbers of stitches? I want a roomy coat. I am 43.5" circumference and I want about a 46" circumference. I am using a #11 needle.



**A:** Dear Dolly, Indeed, I agree that coats should be nice and roomy. When knitting an Aran I like to block the swatch (which utilizes one of each Aran pattern in the garment) to the final appearance I want - then take a gauge reading. Aran knitting can be blocked nearly flat - or very hills-and-valleys and, as you can imagine, there will be a great gauge difference between the two. Block the swatch the way you like it and figure your gauge x circumference from that. Keep the blocked swatch in your knitting bag to reassure yourself - because your knitting-in-progress will look much narrower.

ALSO, since you are using very thick Sheepdown (about 2.5 sts to 1"), the outside measurement is misleading; there is less room inside. So be overly generous in the number of sts. Most likely there is a mathematical formula for this somewhere...

**Q2:** I am confused about how to work the color pattern "quadrants" on your Turkish Coat.

**A:** Dear Lynn, Turkish Coat quadrants: After the center front steek, establish 3 more 'marked stitches': Two diametrically opposed side stitches plus the center back stitch.

The chart represents 1/4 of the circumference. Beginning at

the center front, read the chart from R to L to the first side 'seam' marked stitch (or the Pivot Stitch). Knit it as the next



sequential stitch, then work the same row from L to R until you hit the center back 'seam'. Pivot, and knit the same row forward (R to L) to the second side seam. Pivot and knit that same line from L to R back to the center front. Move your marker up one row and repeat.

So, it zigs to the side, zags to center back, zigs to other side and zags to center front.

I trust that you will soon find the songs hidden in each row of pattern which, once established in the first 5-6 sts of each round, will free you from

having to look at the chart. I find this wonderfully soothing knitting. (*We anticipate a future Turkish Coat SPP?*)

**Q3:** Here I will amalgamate three separate questions -- all asking about the optional stand-up collar on Elizabeth Zimmermann's Ribwarmer, *SPP#42*.

**A:** Dear Kristin, Karen and Melissa, Knit the collar (10 sts for X ridges), cast on the shoulder sts (let's say 19 sts) and knit back. Mark the *first* cast-on-shoulder stitch.

K10 collar sts, m1, k1, m1, k18. Turn and knit back, (purling the marked st for a nice demarcation).

Continue to increase on each side of the marker every other row until you have increased about 18-20 sts.

Cast Off the original collar sts plus half of the increased sts (from collar-selvedge to marked stitch; about 19-20 sts).

Does this photo help?



**Q4:** Hi Meg, If I were to knit the Tomten Jacket (pattern in EZ's *Knitting Without Tears*) in a man's size, do you think I would have a problem with it stretching and becoming a huge jacket after use? What type and weight yarn would work best?

**A:** Good question, dear Christine. Garter stitch in particular tends to want to stretch in both directions. To counteract that tendency, knit quite firmly. In my experience, worsted spun tends to be more elastic than woollen spun, but how firmly you knit is the biggest factor in future stretching.

If you block the fabric to the size you want during the knitting, it can help to reduce unanticipated stretching later in its life (pre-stretched, so to speak). Block to wanted size just before you get to the underarms (put the sts on a thread, wet and block), and again at the top of the armhole (just wet the upper body; you've already blocked the lower portion). You can do the same thing on the sleeves - block after knitting about 3/4 of wanted sleeve length, then knit any remaining length you might need. These steps will give you the 'blocked measurements' as you knit, and help to eliminate future stretch.



*Cecelia modeling a Tomten that Meg knitted. This version was inspired by a coat from the movie 'The Golden Compass'. See page 6 for our Unspun Icelandic color pallet.*

**Q5:** My all over patterned Fair Isle jacket is too short. Do you feel that removing the rib would be the answer, either lengthening it or the pattern part and then adding on the rib?

**A:** Yes, dear Dorothy. I would snip half a stitch in the plain round above the ribbing (make sure there are no increases in that round). Un-pick the round, stitch by stitch and let the ribbing drop off.

Pick up the body stitches; add a Peerie or an OXO and weave the ribbing back on.

Waitaminnit! you knitted the body up from the lower edge, so the add-on motif should be worked in the same direction

or the stitches will be on their heads (not a prob in plain stocking stitch).

So - pick up sts from the top of the ribbing, add a Peerie or an OXO and weave it back onto the body forming the plain round. Once completed, you have permission to feel Very Smug.

**Q6:** What is the correct rate of decrease for the sleeves of the Tomten Jacket? I have found three different versions. *Knitting Without Tears* says to decrease every 4th ridge. *Knitting Workshop* says to decrease every 3rd ridge, and *The Opinionated Knitter* says to knit for 14 ridges, then start decreasing every 3rd ridge.

**A:** Dear Mary, That is so confusing, for which I apologize. It shows what a seat-of-the-pants knitter my mother was! Your decrease rate really just depends on the sleeve width you want combined with the sleeve length.

After knitting-up around the armhole, work back and forth without shaping (attaching to the sts-on-a-thread at the underarm) until you reach the edge of the armholes... that could be anywhere from 8 to 16 ridges (this is the 14 ridges mentioned in *Opinionated Knitter*).

And, recently I began to decrease an inch **before** reaching the outer edge of the armhole.

Once you start knitting down the sleeve, the rate of decrease is not too critical, and is rather dependant upon the gauge/wool thickness you are using. When knitting in medium weight wool (about 4 sts to 1"), I like to decrease every 4th ridge. Then - around elbow-length - take a good look at the sleeve circumference and adjust the rate of decrease accordingly: Speed it up; slow it down, or stop altogether and work straight to wanted length to cuff.

*SPP#19* gives instructions for EZ's Tomten Jacket at 3 sts to 1" for sizes: 30 (34, 38, 42, 46)".

4 sts to 1" for sizes: 28 (32, 36, 40, 44, 48)" and

5 sts to 1" for sizes: 22 (26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 46, 50)".



### Schoolhouse Press Wools

• A bit of sad news: The mill in Finland has discontinued spinning our lovely *Satakieli wool*. A favorite for Latvian mittens and sweaters, we still have a generous supply in some colors. First come, first served. (Our *Spindrift Shetland* is the same weight as *Satakieli*, and can be used as a replacement.)



*Latvian Mittens SPP#12* by Lizbeth Upitis and *Swedish Delsbo Sweater SPP#14* by Meg Swansen, plus Meg's *Norwegian Rose SPP#35* are all knitted in *Satakieli wool* (*Spindrift* is the same weight, yields the same gauge and can be used as a substitute).



• A great new array of colors in the *Unspun Icelandic*. Perfect for jackets, hats and coats, the Icelandic is lightweight and warm, and can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled to achieve the fabric you want. Ceci's Tomten (p5) was knitted by mixing different shades within the 3 plys.



• Meg's version of *SPP#51, The Elizabeth Zimmermann Coat* was knitted with our *Rangeley Wool*. Choose from 13 colors.

