



In the Loop™

Knits for Vets Launched

The Knit With is sponsoring **Knits 4 Vets™** – a program to present, on Veteran’s Day, each of the 375 in-patient and rehabilitation veterans housed at the Philadelphia Veterans Hospital a hand-knit scarf. The program seeks to provide a tangible “thank you” to our own who have served in the military.

Sick and rehabilitating veterans are often forgotten. That’s why The Knit With is spearheading charitable knitting for Vets. The



goal: 375 scarves for presentation to each Vet hospitalized at Philadelphia Veteran’s Hospital on Veteran’s Day November 11 – each scarf tagged with a personal message from the knitter.

The goal of 375 scarves is achievable with help from *you* – the community of knitters.

The requirements are simple: each scarf is knitted 10 inches wide by 60 inches long of worsted-weight (US size needle 9) machine-wash wool in

the knitter’s chosen color; no fringe needed. Be as creative as you want, and garter stitch is fine!

Knitters participating in the program purchase the yarn for the scarf they will knit and receive a **Knits 4 Vets™** pattern. The Knit With stocks a large selection of machine washable wool in a wide variety of shades in the **Cascade 220, Extra and Extra Stampato** and **Knitaly** ranges. Upon completion of the scarf, participating knitters receive a discount card for 20% off their next purchase. Participants can knit more than one scarf!

Sit’n Stitch Returns Monday Nites

Sit ’n Stitch returns to the shop on Monday nights at 8 PM – an open, free two-hour forum for knitting and socializing for knitters; no sign up required although seating is limited to 12. Bring whatever item you are working on (and a past masterpiece to show off!).

Winter Classes Begin January 20

The Winter series of knitting classes and workshops begins January 20 (a complete class schedule is inserted in this issue, after page 3).

Among the highlights: two workshops exploring the knitting of socks in new directions and the **Kids Knit Too** class – perfect as an after-school activity.

Superbowl Sunday Sale February 3

The annual SuperBowl Sunday Sale is Sunday, February 3. With the Eagles out of contention, make your own excitement by knitting.

From the opening of The Knit With’s door at 8 AM through 9 AM, all in-store yarns are available for purchase at up to 25% off the regular retail price with an hourly sliding discount for the remainder of the day. Join the excitement, shop the Superbowl sale.

Editors’ Note:

Is Every Knitter an Author Too?

Knitters following the numerous releases of new books often pose this question. During the last couple of years, the numbers of new books and leaflet lines – and, more specifically, the numbers of new authors – has been explosive.

In a sense, every knitter is an author – of stitches wrought if not words written. Even when “following” another’s pattern, the knitter contributes her own talent and skill to the finished piece much like the individual musicians performing a symphony.

Thankfully, the explosive number of newly published authors has brought new knitting personalities to the attention of all: Debbie Stoller, Teva Durham and Norah Gaughan to name just three book authors and Lisa Carnahan and Dawn Brocco among the many knitting designers with their own pattern imprints. This infusion of new talent has brought new perspectives to an age-old craft thereby ensuring its continuation.

There are not enough hours in the day, nor days in the week, for every knitter to read the quantity of written knitting, much more sample each author’s knitting designs. It is difficult to keep track of just who the authors are and still have some time for our old friends: wool, needles and stitches.

For this reason, each issue of **In the Loop** includes reviews of newly released tradebooks – allowing you to scan over our shoulder, as it were – our selective reading of new books. Titles we think worthwhile receive short reviews (especially worthwhile titles are brought to your attention as occasional Staff Picks) where you can benefit from our reading before deciding to purchase a title for your own library.

Dawn and Jim

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Val Love of



Val Love lives in Manhattan surrounded by innovative and unusual fashions and was taught to knit as a child while growing up in London, England, by her dress-designer mother and her artist grandmother from Scotland. Last Spring, In the Loop interviewed Val; highlights from that interview follow.

Q: How does living where you live influence your knitting designs?

A: A lot. Living in Manhattan, I'm surrounded by innovative and unusual fashion.

Q: What is your most reliable source of inspiration?

A: On the street, in the stores, catalogues, newspapers. Ideas are the easy part! When I see something I like, I go to work on it, thinking about how I could make it better, simpler, more stylish, easier to wear and of course easy to make. I do quite a bit of knitting for my work on the New York City busses; at the end of the day, I look forward to my pleasure knitting.



Val Love of Dovetail Designs

Q: How did you come to be a pattern writer?

A: After working my way around the world and a design career in branding, my interest in knitting and crochet morphed into a small business in the 80's when I designed Christmas tree decorations which were made up by craftspeople in Norfolk, England and sold at Harrod's. When I returned to the US, I designed several more decorations and published my first book of illustrated knitting instructions (for Christmas tree decorations). Since, 1998, I've focused on my line of single sheet patterns for knitting and crochet.

Q: Obviously, your knitting patterns are intended to meet a need not being addressed by other designers. Do you have a favorite designer whose patterns, when you see them, inspire you to want to knit?

A: Yes. Hannah Falconberg – her colors and shapes are magnificent. I am working on one of her designs right now.

Q: When designing a knitting pattern, what gets you going the most: it is the knitting techniques, the stitchwork, the math for different sizings?

A: The part I enjoy the most is the challenge of finding the simplest solution to the three-dimensional shape of the garment I am working on.

Q: Do you have a favorite yarn to design with?

A: I have no favorite as I like variety. I usually prefer to work with all natural fibres. Most of my designs are inspired by seeing the yarn first, swatching it and working out what kind of garment would suit the yarn best. I get inspired by color, or the combination of colors within a skein or hank of hand-dyed yarn.

Shop Talk:

Why Buy The Insurance Ball

It happens: a project is nearly done but the available yarn is insufficient to complete the last stitch – much more allow for assembly and finishing. It is a knitter's nightmare (and a shop's too, when inventory of a dyelot has been sold through or a color is discontinued.).

Because all knitters' gauges vary, if ever so slightly, it is not uncommon for a knitter to buy the exact quantity of yarn specified in a pattern and still need more. For this reason, The Knit With recommends purchasing 10% extra or "an insurance ball" – and gladly accepts the return of the extra within 90 days of purchase. Even when not returned and not immediately needed, saving an unused insurance ball for a multi-color project is better than wasting the knitting (and all the yarn purchased) of an uncomplete-able project.

Another avenue, of last resort, is a search order. The Knit With cooperates with approximately 500 yarn stores across the country to perform search orders – tapping into the stocks of other shops. Often, but not always, a ball or two of the same yarn is found to ensure completion; when the stars are all aligned, and all is right with the world, even matching dyelots have been found (however, past performance is no guarantee of future results.).

Performing a search order is a complimentary service. To initiate a search order, the brand and yarn names, the color and dyelot numbers and the quantity required are needed. Before the yarn is bought from the fulfilling shop, a deposit of \$25 from the knitter is required; the knitter pays the retail price for the yarn as charged by the shop fulfilling the search plus any associated shipping charges. Funds in excess of the deposit amount are returned to the knitter as a shop credit minus \$1 – to cover associated transaction fees if the deposit is paid by credit or debit card.

Search orders are final sales and can not be performed in the absence of an advance deposit; in the event a knitter changes her mind about the yarn received as a search order, the yarn is not returnable to the fulfilling shop.

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Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 AM to 6 PM ■ Wednesdays to 8 PM
Sundays 11 AM to 5 PM
Events Schedule
Sunday, January 20 – Winter Class Series Begins
Sunday, February 3 (Superbow1 Sale) – Shop Opens at 8 AM
Sunday, March 9 – Spring Class Series Begins
Friday, March 21 – Closed at 3 PM
Sunday, March 23 (Easter Sunday) – Closed all Day

In the Loop™
A newsletter published electronically six times annually to the family of knitters and crocheters of
the knit with
Delighting Knitters (And Crocheters Too) Since 1970 !
8226 Germantown Avenue ■ Chestnut Hill, PA ■ (215) 247 - YARN (9276)
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FIBRE FACTS

BISON (AMERICAN BUFFALO)

What Is Bison Fibre

Bison fibre, in a natural shade of deep chocolate brown, is the fleece of soft down grown for winter protection by the Great North American Buffalo. The down grows underneath the long coarse hair and is naturally sloughed in the Spring.

The Buffalo – perhaps the quintessential North American animal – is a huge, shaggy, herding animal which once freely grazed the North American Great Plains from Canada to Mexico, and was central to the life of the Plains tribes for food, clothing, and shelter. Bison down was not used by the native North American because, despite being nomadic, they did not have a native tradition of knitting. After the arrival of Europeans – who hunted the estimated 60 million Buffalo first for their hides and later for their tongues, bones, and meat – and by 1893, only about 300 Buffalo remained; through conservation, their number has gradually rebounded but remain a mere shadow of what once was.

Bison down is very insulating and when worn is warmer than wool. With a hand similar to that of cashmere, bison down is thicker, loftier and stronger than cashmere and is capable of retaining much more moisture without feeling wet than either cashmere and wool – characteristics which make Buffalo down ideal for knitting cold weather outerwear. Also, and unlike wool, bison fibre is free of lanolin to which some people are allergic.

Like cashmere, qiviut and other down fibres, bison fibre must be de-haired. Bison down is an unmedullated and “crimpy” fibre with a diameter between 12 to 22 microns – comparable to the micron count for fine sheep’s wool. The fibre has very fine scales and, unlike sheep’s wool, lacks barbs – making even the relatively coarse down feel soft. The crimps give the fibre its wonderful insulating properties and its strength; fabric knit of bison down will “bloom” when washed but will neither shrink nor felt like wool. Garments knitted of bison fibre are generally machine washable on a gentle cycle.

Zoologically and Geographically Where Do Bison Live

The North American Buffalo, *Bison bison*, is not a true buffalo at all but rather a member of the bovine family of animals and is related to domestic cattle. The Buffalo is the largest of the herbivores native to the Americas.

Production

Buffalo is the “newest” animal fibre available to knitters. Until just a few short years ago, the down was discarded as waste by the buffalo meat industry. Preparing bison fibre for spinning into yarn is a more complicated process than spinning cashmere; a few, very select specialty mills in the United States have undertaken the experimental research necessary to bring this “new” natural fibre to handknitters; world production, while growing, remains more limited than the annual production of qiviut. Buffalo fibre is available through The Knit With on a special order basis.

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Winter, 2008 Class Schedule

Classes begin the week of January 20, 2008

Register Early, Register With a Friend!

Materials List Provided Upon Registration

Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course

Short on time but want to give “ this knitting thing ” a try ? Try **Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course**. Learn the essentials – how to: cast on, knit, purl, join yarns, measure for gauge, four pattern stitches and bind off. After this workshop, you’ll be able to hold your own with your needles !

Pre-requisites:	A desire to knit.	Instructor:	Dawn Casale
Duration:	Four sessions of one hour.	Tuition:	\$ 95. 00
Sessions:	Sun 2 PM; Tue 8 PM; Wed 3 PM; Thu 6 PM	Registration Limits:	Six participants each class.

Kids Knit TOO!

Knitting is a timeless hand craft that isn’t reserved just for adults! Knitters who learn the craft as children possess a handcraft to be enjoyed for a lifetime. And, knitting isn’t just for girls either ... boys knit too. This class teaches the “basics” of knitting: how to cast on, knit, join new yarn, and bind off. ****Yarn supplied for this class.**

Pre-requisites:	A desire to knit.	Instructor:	Dawn Casale
Duration:	Three sessions of one hour.	Tuition:	\$ 65. 00
Sessions:	Sun 1 PM; Mon 4 PM; Thu 4 PM.	Registration Limits:	Four participants each class.

Super Shrug

Knowing the basics just doesn’t satisfy the beginning knitter! Ideal for the beginning knitter who not yet ready to take on **Introduction to Accomplished Knitting**, this class hones basic skills and introduces increasing and decreasing while experiencing the wide world of color in a pattern which is tailored for you. Have a garment with an extra touch of you!

Pre-requisites:	Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course, or equivalent knowledge.	Instructor:	Dawn Casale
Duration:	Four sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 145. 00
Sessions:	Sun 3 PM; Tue 2 PM; Wed 4 PM, Thu 11 AM.	Registration Limits:	Four participants.

Introduction to Accomplished Knitting (Part One)

This class teaches you all the skills used by accomplished knitters: increases, decreases, yarn-overs, following pattern stitches, reading both printed and knitted knitting while making a classic English waistcoat. Ideal next class for graduates of **Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course**.

Pre-requisites:	Beginning Knitting: A Crash Course, or equivalent knowledge.	Instructor:	Various
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 225. 00
Sessions:	Sun 11 AM; Wed 1 PM; Thu 8 PM.	Registration Limits:	Eight participants each class.

Introduction to Accomplished Knitting (Part Two)

Accomplished knitters are introduced to the specialized techniques of assembling and finishing garments. Using the pieces of the vest knitted in Part One, participants are guided through joining vertical and horizontal seams using both open and closed stitches, how to flawlessly pick up stitches (without holes) and more!

Pre-requisites:	Accomplished Knitting (Part One).	Instructor:	Jim Casale
Duration:	Six weekly sessions of two hours.	Tuition:	\$ 275. 00
Sessions:	Tue 6 PM.	Registration Limits:	Ten participants each class.

Toe-Up Socks From the Figure 8 (New Directions in Sock Knitting)

Using a Figure 8 cast-on, explore a different way of knitting socks from the toe up and a turned heel. Even great-grandmother would give these socks a try ! The toe-up sock feels different from its cuff down counterpart; the turned heel is worked by creating the heel gussets before the heel flap.

Pre-requisites: Accomplished knitting ability.
Duration: Three sessions of two hours.
Sessions: Wed 8 PM; meets weekly beginning 1/ 23.

Instructor: Jim Casale
Tuition: \$ 115.00
Registration Limits: Six participants.

Knitting Socks With Two Circulars

Cat Bordhi revolutionized sock knitting – especially for knitters who dislike doublepoints. The Magic Loop method uses one really long, or two, circular needles and can be used for any small circumference knitting: sleeves, hats – without the loose joints or the fumbling with doublepoints. Knitting socks by the Magic Loop method can be faster and more efficient than using multiple sticks.

Pre-requisites: An accomplished knitting ability.
Duration: Three sessions of two hours.
Sessions: Wed 8 PM; meets weekly beginning 2/ 13.

Instructor: Jim Casale
Tuition: \$ 175.00
Registration Limits: Six participants.

Versatile Knitting

This Class is geared to transforming introductory knitters into fully independent and versatile knitters – those who are adept in using the variety of needles available to handknitters and creating the myriad of shapes handknitters use to fashion sophisticated, or funky, pieces of wearable art.

Pre-requisites: Accomplished knitting ability.
Duration: Six weekly sessions of two hours.
Sessions: Tue 12 NOON.

Instructor: Jim Casale
Tuition: \$ 175.00
Registration Limits: Eight participants each class.

Intarsia (Intermediate Knitting - Part One)

The project oriented Intermediate Knitting class concentrates on intarsia, combining different yarns of multiple colors or textures in either geometric (but not stripes!), abstract or pictorial patterns.

Pre-requisites: Accomplished knitting ability.
Duration: Six weekly sessions of two hours.
Sessions: Wed 6 PM.

Instructor: Jim Casale
Tuition: \$ 225.00
Registration Limits: Eight participants each class.

Cables (Intermediate Knitting - Part Two)

Knitting the amazing array of cable stitches marks the adventuresome knitter. Avoid getting lost in the maze of twists, crosses and turns which distinguish cable knitting by learning line - by - line and charted reading while becoming facile having the yarn make bobbles, braids and bows in your knitting.

Pre-requisites: Accomplished knitting ability.
Duration: Six weekly sessions of two hours.
Sessions: Thu 1 PM.

Instructor: Jim Casale
Tuition: \$ 225.00
Registration Limits: Eight participants each class.

We'll Keep You In Stitches!

New Tradebooks Reviewed

Scottish Highland Knits, by Sarah Dallas, published 2007 by Trafalgar Square Books, ISBN: 1-57076-377-9, softbound at \$ 22.95. Affiliated with the Royal College of Art since 1989, and since 1992 senior tutor, the author collaborates with two of her art fashion and textiles students in creating an introduction to Highland knitting techniques using garment styles to withstand the tests of time and trend. Written for Rowan's Scottish Tweed (Rowan sponsors the College's Design Award given annually following a student competition for garments with a high-fashion twist) the 18 patterns heavily represent Sarah's own work (with one exception, the four exceptional designs all come from Sarah's pencil). Among the best: the wrap cardigan and lace top – both very knittable and wonderfully wearable.



New Pathways For Sock Knitters, by Cat Bordhi, published 2007 by Passing Paws Press, Inc., ISBN: 0-9708869-6-5, softbound at \$ 28.95. In the first of a promised series of three volumes exploring varying methods for knitting socks – in the author's word, sockitecture – Cat is at it again: demonstrating the seemingly endless opportunities which the knitting of socks can present. The major innovation presented here is various styles for



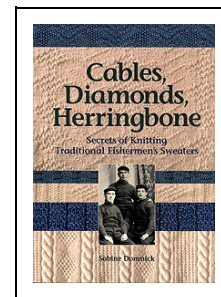
handling the increases or decreases which normally form the heel gussets – transforming those necessary stitches into what the author describes as eight different sock architectures but which she admits are really just what they are, variations on a theme (among the most creative: coriolos which gathers the increases into a banded arch expansion which can spiral around the leg of the sock – especially conducive to knitting with handpainted yarns). A very intriguing book (if not over-worked with too much self-created gizmo and gadget nomenclature and typographical signals – meant to be helpful but somewhat distracting and bothersome).

Button Up Your Top Down, by Deb Gemmill, published 2007 by Cabin Fever, ISBN: 0-973567-1-3; softbound at \$ 25.95. The Gemmill sisters have answered the top-down knitter's desire for patterns for adult cardigans for knitting according to their basic philosophy: no assembly and minimal finishing. The design philosophy has clear merits and the added benefit that both size and fit can be tested and adjusted during the knitting instead of merely accepted or raveled after completion. Presented are patterns using three basic neck styles: the high round neck, the square neck and an extremely shallow v; the patterns employing each neckline are written for both DK (5.5 stitches to the inch) and Aran (4.5 stitches to the inch). All of the patterns offered are variations on the three neckline shapes with the Lakeside, Casual and Sarah designs perhaps the most appropriate. A basic and introductory book for the exploration of top-down knitting for adults.



Staff Pick:

Cables, Diamonds, Herringbone: Secrets of Traditional Fishermen's Sweaters, by Sabine Domnick, published 2007 by Down East Books; ISBN: 0-89272-688-2, softbound at \$ 19.95 The second book by this German author explores the origins of the guernsey and jersey – named for Channel islands and in the British tradition, the forebears of the traditional fisherman working sweaters – distinguishable by the weight of yarn used, with ganseys knit of a worsted weight. Those who have Gladys Thompson's book will find this title expands her index of pattern stitches; knitters interested in the cultural origins of garment styles and pattern stitches will find this a useful read.



The Readers Write

An interesting and informative read – thanks! **Carolyn Cavicchio**, Long Island City, NY

Love the newsletter. **Phoebe Shagan**, Jackson NJ

When Did Knitting Begin?

The mists of time do not allow a true answer as to the when, where, why, who and how of the origins of knitting. Certainty and credibility are just not mutually associated with this often-asked question.

Richard Rutt, author of *The History of Knitting*, identifies knitting as beginning in the Medieval period based upon the earliest piece of found knitting – a pillow from a royal tomb in Spain. Because no knitting artifact has been found with an earlier provenance, the Anglican Archbishop of York academically states with certainty that knitting began as an innovation of the Medieval period. Textiles discovered in the tombs of Egypt are classed as nalbinding (a form of textile construction producing similar results but using different more basic techniques).

The academic approach dismisses, without any satisfactory explanation, much evidence of an earlier origin of knitting. Unlike bone, metals and in some instances, wood, Earth's environment simply does not generally preserve knitted animal or vegetable fibres; too, the earliest civilizations arose close to rivers – areas more damp than the Spanish cemetery where the Archbishop's pillow was consciously preserved. Finally, knitted garments are usually worn until worn-out and most are not consciously conserved for later generations to find.

Knitting's lore includes references by the ancient Hebrews and Greeks to knitting.

Glad You Asked

Sporadic answers to queer queries