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knitting Yarns



FEBRUARY 15: SKILLS EXCHANGE MINI-WORKSHOPS

February brings the return of our ever-popular Skills Exchange Mini-Workshops. You'll have the opportunity to learn a number of useful new skills in short 15 minute sessions. It's a fun evening out, with many valuable skills being shared by our generous volunteer teachers.

The following topics will be offered. To get the most out of each workshop, we recommend that you bring the items suggested:

► One Row Buttonhole

Instructor: Diane Martin

Participants should bring a prepared swatch (15 stitches, and approx 1 inch of stocking stitch) on the needles.

► Surprisingly Stretchy Bind-Off

Instructor: Trish Denhoed

Using pale solid-coloured, flat, medium weight yarn and appropriate needles, cast on at least 20 and up to 30 stitches. Work at least 6 rows of ribbing in the following manner: Knit 1, purl 1, repeat for half of the stitches; Knit 2, purl 2 for the remaining stitches. Leave live stitches on the needles and bring to the meeting.

► Knitting Bobbles—Without Turning the Work

Instructor: Robin Hunter

Cast on a small swatch of about 15 stitches, leaving live stitches available to practice the techniques.

► Tubular Cast-On

Instructor: Judi Hanninen

To learn this method, knitters need to provisionally cast on 20 stitches, then knit 1 row, purl 1 row and knit 1 row. Work is now ready to start on purl side. The provisional cast-on method recommended is with stitches cast on to a crochet chain.

► Crochet Techniques for Knitters

Instructor: Catherine Osborne

Knitters should bring yarn and a crochet hook of

suitable size. Ideally (but not essential) they could bring a knitted sample to practice putting crochet borders directly on the sample.

► Short Rows—Set-In Sleeves

Instructor: Judy Ponsford

Using size 5 mm needles and appropriate yarn, cast on 50 stitches for the demo and knit two rows in stockinette stitch.

► A Meeting-Long Dr. Knit Session

Instructor: Denise Powell

Bring all your complicated knitting problems and questions, and Denise will be there to help you solve them.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Confirmed speakers for future meetings include Carla Calico, editor of *A Needle Pulling Thread* in April, and Stephanie Pearl-McPhee in May.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Location

Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave.

NW corner of St. George St. and Sussex Ave.
on the University of Toronto campus.

TTC Access

Five-minute walk south from St. George subway station.

Parking available at several nearby locations.

Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.

Doors Open: 6:45 p.m.

Admission

\$6.00 for guests and Newsletter Only Subscribers

Free to Full Members (please show card at door)

All Downtown Knit Collective meetings, functions and events are governed by the Rules of Conduct as determined by the Executive.

To read a copy of the Rules, please visit
www.downtownknitcollective.ca/dkc_conduct.html

Approximately 130 members and four guests attended our January meeting.

Announcements

Can you believe the DKC is 15 years old? Members and the executive took some time to reminisce about a snowy January night in 1997 when the first meeting was held in a church basement next to the boiler room. About 15 people were expected (especially with a snowstorm raging outside) but the turnout was closer to 40. Robin Hunter recalled having to stand out in the hall to hear speaker Sally Melville. Carole asked how many in the audience were at that first meeting, and about 11 put up their hands. We've come a long way!

The nametag system was introduced at the January meeting, and they were well-received. Everyone received a pre-printed, re-useable tag and returned them at the end of the meeting.

June 9-17 has been designated World Wide Knit In Public Day. Yes, it's a whole week now. We're looking for a good public venue to sit and knit. City Hall? Yonge-Dundas Square? Should we knit a tent? Let's make some plans (more info on the back page).

Denise Powell was away, but we had a sneak preview of her winning Marlies scarf design. Considering that the scarf is 10 feet long, Denise is, needless to say, still working on it. The finished scarf will be unveiled at Pucks n' Purls on February 11 and presented to Duke the Dog.

The DKC has taken the plunge into social media. We have set up a Facebook page (DKCtoronto) and a Twitter account (@DKCtoronto). So by all means, follow, friend and retweet us!

Show & Tell

Mairi showed three inspiring Icelandic shawls. She picked up a book during a nordic knitting cruise, and used all natural colours and shades of brown. She knit the first one with cobweb weight yarn, the second with coarser Icelandic yarn, and had to cast on 1000 stitches for the third. All three of them were beyond belief. Trish showed Fair Isle legwarmers and a matching hat. She used sock yarn for the

Fair Isle to great effect. She had also made a glittering linen stitch scarf. All projects were laid out on a table to be admired after the meeting.

Janet and Deborah had matching red shawls and sweaters they wore at the Vogue conference in New York City. They were informed to bring their finest red accessory, in support of The Heart Truth, but were only given a week and a half notice. They knit them up in a hurry.

Karen showed a pair of mittens, two sweaters and a red cabled coat. The mittens were the result of a two-day Lettuce Knit mitten workshop which featured "mitten day" and then "thumb day".

Elena is a new member, and show-and-telling right off the bat. She modeled a mohair wrap that she described as "a rectangle with sleeves". It fit beautifully with absolutely no shaping.

Carol Thomas showed a scarf featuring her own lace patterns. Using stretchy sock yarn, she came up with her own pattern through experimentation with knits and yarnovers. This provided a great lead-in to our guest speaker.

Raffle

A skein of Katia Ondas Lux and accompanying pattern was won by Susanne Tabur. *The Knitter's Book of Socks* and a ball of OnLine sock yarn was won by Karen Wold. Two balls of Patons Lace and *Breathtaking* pattern booklet was won by Janet Hilson.

Guest Speaker

Our January guest speaker, Carol Tomany, gave us a presentation entitled "Lace in the Forest." Carol said she is often asked where she gets her ideas, and prepared this presentation as a response. In her opinion, so many knitters are "this close" to becoming knitwear designers, and she wants to help them make that stretch.

Her first stop on the designer's journey is always the stitch dictionary. It's there she gets the first kernel of inspiration. Why reinvent the wheel? Thousands of stitch patterns are already out there. Where has Carol found inspiration? Her

beautiful slide show was filled with elements found in nature. Her Tree Scarf was inspired by bark on a tree outside her window, and she says this is a great place to start. You'll soon notice that the bark of every type of tree is completely different.

She went back to the tree for her second scarf in the series, Branches. This innovative design features a delicate branching pattern of yarn-overs framed by ruffles at the top and bottom reminiscent of the roots of a tree.

Of course at the top of the tree is another world of possibilities—leaves, buds, blossoms, even fruit. Carol's Leaf Scarf captures the essence of tiny spring leaves. She notes there are lots of colour choices, too. She has been trying to capture the exact gold of the tiny maple blossoms that come out before the leaves.

In her Pine Scarf, the lace pattern echoes the shape of a pine tree, with picot edging. She notes that you should always go back to your inspiration point when designing embellishments. What's at the bottom of the tree? In this case, needles and pine cones. In the case of the Fern Scarf, she used maidenhead fern as the central motif, then used the shape of the arrowhead fern in the borders to great effect.

What's next? Carol says there are infinite possibilities in nature. She's tackling starlight, moonlight, the atmosphere, the elements, the seasons, and even a Zodiac series. As a retired English teacher, she often looks to poetry for inspiration as well.

An audience member wanted to know what her design process involves, and if she uses paper when visualizing her patterns. Carol replied that she goes to bed with stitch dictionaries and leafs through them. After a while, when you look at things they will remind you of stitch patterns you see, and you can take it from there. You'll see knitting everywhere you look! She does occasionally use graph paper for charting.

We'd like to thank Carol for her inspiring presentation. DKC members are no doubt already starting to see knitting in nature, and nature in knitting.

As previously reported in the December 2011 newsletter, a Downtown Knit Collective(DKC) Focus Group met in late October to create a Customer Value Proposition and to consider how the guild could appeal to more members, particularly young people. The Customer Value Proposition the focus group suggested was 'Advancing the art and community of knitting'.

The focus group thought that the DKC is a great guild that is much more to its members than just meetings. While some refinements could polish its image and make it appeal to more members, the core of the guild is sound. The reasons people belong to the DKC and attend its meetings fell into several themes, the most prominent of which were socialization and networking with other knitters; thus there were suggestions to enhance the social experience.

Name Tags

It was suggested that members wear name tags at meetings. These would be available at the door for each meeting and returned at the end of the meeting for recycling. This would help everyone remember each others names, encouraging conversation and also identify non-members and people attending for the first time. A group of volunteers could then ensure that new folks are given a warm welcome and introduced to others. Disposable name tags were used at the December meeting, with reuseable nametags introduced at the January meeting.

Meeting Space

The feeling was that the meeting space is adequate with good parking and TTC access. However, there are drawbacks. The space is awkward, dark and poorly lit. Access is by stairs, and wheelchair access is difficult. The space is not conducive to socialization, a primary reason for attendance. If a better, well-lit venue could be acquired within our budget and other requirements, it would be beneficial. In the current space, it is important to do everything possible to make it more welcoming. Finding meeting space to meet all the needs of the DKC within our financial budget is a big project. The contract for the 2012/13 DKC fiscal year will be signed in early 2012, so no change is possible for next year. The DKC executive suggested that a volunteer committee be formed from the DKC membership to manage this project. The committee's terms of reference would include developing the criteria for DKC meeting space and bringing forward to the executive well-researched proposals for alternative space by November 2012.

Volunteers

The DKC needs to engage more of its members in volunteer activities. Volunteering should be an expectation of membership. Many members would welcome an opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways that matches their talents and time availability to the needs of the guild. There is presently no mechanism for engaging volunteers. It was suggested that data such as demographics, skills and volunteer preferences be collected each year via membership forms. There is a questionnaire in development that could provide the baseline data. A DKC member who has had experience with a web-based guild volunteer organization and management system is willing to set up a similar

system for the DKC, but would need to be paired with a volunteer with skills in web design.

Vendor Participation at Meetings

Many people enjoy having vendors at meetings, and miss having Marsha bringing her books to meetings. The executive has been unsuccessful in enticing Marsha back since she moved, however, we are actively seeking vendors willing to display and sell at our meetings. In addition, we have a call out for craftspeople and members to sell their wares, too.

Focus Groups

This ad hoc focus group recommended that focus groups be held regularly 1-2 times per year. The executive will be organizing these for the spring and fall for volunteer participants. The topics will be announced with the call for volunteers.

Ideas for DKC Meetings and Activities

These ideas for meetings and other activities will be included in the upcoming member survey to gain broader opinion before we move forward with them:

- **Annual General Meeting (AGM).** Currently the membership receives a statement of income and expenses in the June newsletter and ad hoc motions may be brought forward to the membership. The idea was to distribute a more fulsome financial report and motions in advance of a meeting with a short AGM. Members would have the information to actively participate in guild business and make suggestions. The executive noted that since the DKC fiscal year is September to June, the first opportunity for this type of meeting would be September when the financial year is complete.
- **Exhibit of "Then and Now" knitting.** Participants at this meeting would display paired knit pieces; their first attempt and a current example. Another guild found this inspired new or less experienced knitters and demonstrated that they too could master a new technique.
- **Guild knitting contest.** For the contest, guild members enter garments and accessories into sub-categories. There are two prize levels; one decided by judges and the other by members. The group wondered if this could be part of a meeting or perhaps part of the Knitter's Frolic.
- **More high-profile speakers.** While everyone wanted more high profile speakers, the cost is high since it includes travel, maintenance and fees. Sometimes the DKC is fortunate enough to engage a speaker who lives locally or is in Toronto for another purpose, thereby avoiding travel and hotel costs. Suggestions to defray costs were the use of Skype technology and leveraging DKC member "connections" with potential speakers.
- **Knitting workshops with high-profile instructors.** The group wondered if the DKC should consider organizing an event similar to the Knit East, three days of workshop classes with a marketplace, held in St. Andrews NB in the fall of 2011. There were many high-profile instructors such as Cat Bordhi, Jane Thornley, Lucy Neatby, Veronik Avery and the Yarn Harlot, Stephanie Pearl-McPhee. There seemed to be an appetite among knitters to attend expensive courses as most were sold out. Since this type of event requires considerable planning and financial commitment, it also would require careful consideration.

The DKC Executive is exploring whether we should organize an event to participate in World Wide Knit in Public Day (WWKIP). According to the WWKIP website (www.wwkipday.com) it is "the largest knitter-run event in the world. Each local event is put together by a volunteer or a group of knitters." There was enthusiastic response from DKC members when Carole Adams mentioned WWKIP at the January meeting. She has been looking into some space possibilities, Metro Hall Square, St. James Park and Speakers Corner at City Hall.

This year, WWKIP will be held June 9-17, 2012 (2nd Saturday to 3rd Sunday). Since the Relay for Life event is on Friday June 8, ending on Saturday morning, a DKC organized WWKIP event could be held on the third weekend in June. The sooner we commit

to WWKIP, the sooner we can officially register our event.

To pull off a WWKIP event, we would need not only a suitable public space, but also an enthusiastic working group to organize and promote it. We will need everyone's ideas and help, but are particularly looking for creative people with contacts and/or skills in media, marketing and public venues as well as event planning.

We will be looking for more input at the February meeting. We welcome all your suggestions, including those about other potential spaces and event organization, e.g. possible displays, learn-to-knit workshops, etc. For those that cannot attend this meeting, please send your suggestions or offers to join the working group: edna@zuber.net.

Fashion Show 2011



A NOTE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media now plays an important part in many of our lives. The DKC is exploring how we can use it to promote the guild, to better communicate with you, and for you to communicate with us and other members.

We have in the past used our website (www.downtownknitcollective.ca), our forum on Ravelry and blast and individual e-mails. For Pucks N' Purls we experimented with an event blog, pucksnpurls.tumblr.com. We are now going to try using Twitter (@DKC Toronto) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/DKCToronto) to

communicate with you and other knitters about events such as Pucks N' Purls, Knitter's Frolic and perhaps World Wide Knit in Public Day. In the meantime, we are developing a proposal for wider use of social media for the DKC. We want to understand better the implications, including resources required, and want to ensure that we have supportive policies in place before we begin.

Your comments on how you believe the DKC should use (or should not use!) social media are welcome. Please direct them to Edna Zuber (edna@zuber.net), who is developing this proposal.

UPCOMING EVENTS

15th Annual Knitter's Frolic
Plans are well underway for the biggest Frolic ever! Mark your calendars for April 28-29, 2012. As always, the event will feature workshops, food, fibre and fun.

Marketplace: Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Workshops: Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Japanese Cultural Centre
6 Garamond Court, Toronto



All proceeds from the raffle at our meetings are donated to the Canadian Cancer Society. So far this year we have raised \$926, with an end-of-season goal of \$1500. Don't forget to buy your raffle tickets at the start of each meeting!

DKC Executive

President: Carole Adams
416-621-9820

president@downtownknitcollective.ca

V.P. Programme: Cristina Simionovici
programme@downtownknitcollective.ca

V.P. Promotions: Edna Zuber
promotion@downtownknitcollective.ca

Treasurer: Wendy Mauzeroll
treasurer@downtownknitcollective.ca

Secretary: Wendy Eng
secretary@downtownknitcollective.ca

Special Events Coordinator: Joan Kass
events@downtownknitcollective.ca

www.downtownknitcollective.ca

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