

Ten years and two days ago, on January the fifteenth 1997, the Downtown Knit Collective held its first meeting.

It was held at St Paul's Anglican Church on Bloor St West, in a small room on the lower level. The organizers, Katherine Matthews, Arlene Williams, and Cherilyn Roosen-Runge hoped optimistically for a turn out of about thirty people. It was, after all, January in Toronto. The evenings were dark, the weather was cold, and we were in the post-holiday slump when people often just want to stay home. The temperature, which had started the day at about -10, was rising and at about the freezing point. There was snow, and ice pellets.

But knitters are a hardy lot and tend to have warm sweaters, mittens, socks and hats to protect them from nasty weather. More than sixty people crammed themselves into that room to listen to Sally's first talk.

Our launch was so successful that the DKC had to immediately move to a new venue for the next meeting. This began our relationship with the Bloor St United Church. We held meetings there until March of 2003, when we moved to our current venue here at the Central Y. Our first meeting here had about 115 attendees.

The Bloor St United Church was also the venue for our first Knitters Frolic, held in June of 1998, when we were only a year and a half old. The marketplace was open from 1 to 5, and had less than a dozen vendors. There were two workshops offered. Since then the Frolic has moved three times, has more than forty vendors and a huge slate of workshops.

From 1997 to 2002 Sally spoke at our January meeting, in 2003 Sally requested a change to November, with the hope of better weather for her trip home to KW. Since this meeting is our 10th anniversary, Sally graciously agreed to return for this January meeting.

Other people involved in the beginning include (and I apologize for any names I've missed here) Sharon Airhart (KnitNet), Marsha White (NeedleArts), Joan Kass, Angela Best, Marlana DeLeskie, Shirley Scott, Annabelle Dawson and Denise Powell.

And speaking of volunteers, any guild or organization cannot continue to grow and prosper without a continuing input of new volunteers. I'd like our newer members especially to consider signing on for something. Another 10 years down the road on our 20th anniversary I want to be sitting in the bleachers watching a lot of new faces running this guild.

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Each year for the past ten years Sally Melville has entertained, enlightened, and informed us about all aspects of knitting. When Sally spoke at that first meeting she had

one book in preparation, "Sally Melville Styles". Since then, she has also written the first three books of the enormously popular "Knitting Experience" series and has a fourth book in the series in preparation.

Over the years Sally has spoken about creativity, on getting published in magazines, about each book in the Knitting Experience, about learning, remembering and time management, and about life lessons learned through knitting. We have been privileged to see many of the garments from her books up close and personal. We're not sure what Sally will be speaking about this evening, but we are absolutely certain that it will be interesting.