



EVENTS

July 6, 13, & 20

Beginning Crochet, 5:30 - 7 pm

Learn the basics of crochet in 3 fun-filled sessions with Barbara Gustafson. \$45 + supplies.

July 10

Top-Down Socks Workshop, 9:30am - 4:30 pm

Learn the basics for knitting socks top-down with Julie Conway. \$65 + supplies.

July 11 & 12

Sweater Basics & Finishing Workshop, 10am - 5pm

Learn to finish a perfectly seamed sweater with author and designer, Ann Budd. \$130 + supplies.

July 14, 21, 28 & Aug 11

Shi Bui Baby Dress, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Jenny Hubbard takes this adorable pattern and shows how to knit it in the round, no seaming. \$65 + supplies.

July 17 & 24

Advent Mitten Calendar, 9-11 am (17th) and 9-10 am (24th)

Knit your own Advent calendar out of tiny mittens with Robin Stitzel. \$35 + supplies.

July 27 & Aug 3

Beginning Knitting for Kids, 5-6:30pm

Start your children learning the joys of knitting with Liz Luckasen. \$30 + supplies.

Full details are in the class schedule!

I cannot believe it is July already! I hope everyone had a fun filled holiday weekend despite the rain. I like to hole up and work on unfinished projects in that weather.

Currently I am knitting with Meriboo and absolutely love it. At the Columbus Market, Frog Tree introduced this yarn, a fair trade washable bamboo and merino blend. We started out with seven colors which I'm using to make a Log Cabin Blanket. This is the second time I have knit this blanket and I just love the simplicity of it, allowing me to get into a smooth rhythm.

Coming in August is the Hot August Knits Shop Crawl, August 18th through September 1st. Nine shops in Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming are participating with discounts, drawings for prizes and giveaways. Passport booklets will be available in the coming week. We will be making some deep cuts in current stock to get ready for new fall arrivals. Look for great sales on Brown Sheep, Manos Del Uruguay, Noro, Tahki Cotton Classic, novelty yarns, books and more.

During the shop crawl, on August 28th My Sister Knits will celebrate 6 years in business, thanks to all of you! Come help us celebrate! We will provide the treats while you shop some great deals.

This past month I had a little scare with my youngest daughter having a 24 hour hospital stay. She is fine and back to her normal self. What did come from this experience is that she received a Linus Blanket on admission to her room. It was comforting to see a brightly colored blanket at the foot of the hospital bed as we entered the room and now we are enjoying it at home. I knew this was a great project, but experiencing the benefits firsthand has inspired me. I'm making the pledge to donate one blanket a month to this cause. If interested in donating, My Sister Knits will collect these blankets and see that Poudre Valley receives each one.

Escape the heat and come in an knit with us and share what you are working on.

KEEP CALM, CARRY YARN!

Julie



ARRIVALS

We ordered a small shipment of *Knit Collage* yarns from Hong Kong. They are thick and thin handspun yarns with inclusions like flowers and sparkly fibers. They really shine in stockinette stitch. Several of us are knitting simple hats for the young girls in our lives with it. Stop in soon to get the best selection.

Swatching Basics



Swatching is an important part of the knitting process, especially when knitting any garments or accessories that must be sized to fit. Swatching does require extra yarn and time and effort, but in relation to how much yarn, time and effort goes into knitting a sweater the swatch is but a drop in the bucket. Think of swatching as holding an audition for all the players in your production of a sweater - the yarn, the needles and the stitch pattern. All three working in harmony makes for a much more enjoyable process and end product.

It is good practice to buy a ball of yarn strictly for swatching. The leftovers from swatching can always be used if the yardage estimates on the pattern are off slightly or you find yourself needing to alter the pattern for a better fit. In extreme cases you can even unravel and reclaim the yarn from the swatch if needed as long as the dyes match.

If you are in the "swatches lie" camp, there are many possible reasons you are finding that so. The larger your sample (aka swatch) size the more accurate your gauge measurements are likely to be, so always be sure to knit a swatch of at least 4" square, or in the case of a larger stitch pattern 2 repeats wide and 2 repeats tall. You also want some borders to stop curling so it is easier to measure the swatch without distortion, so add an extra 4 stitches on each edge and 4 rows of garter stitch on the top and bottom. If the project is mostly knit in the round, swatch in the round, omitting the side border stitches.

You also need to treat your swatch to the same care the finishing project will be treated to. The process of washing and drying and blocking can alter the gauge from a little bit to a lot. I personally like to measure and jot down the gauge before



Swatching Tips

- The larger the swatch the better; knit at least 2 pattern repeats in each direction or 4" square, whichever is greater, plus garter stitch edges to control curl.
- If project is primarily knit in the round, swatch in the round.
- Swatch with the exact needles that will be used for the majority of the project.
- Wash and block the swatch as the final item will be cared for, noting measurements before and after.
- Measure with a ruler, not a tape measure.
- Mark your measuring starting and end point with straight pins.
- Measure over 2" or more, staying away from edges which may distort stitches.
- Measure in at least 3 places and average the results.
- Do not stretch the knitting, or round the numbers; fractions add up over the circumference of a sweater.
- If you have too few stitches per inch, try smaller needles; if you have too many stitches per inch, try larger needles.
- If stitch gauge matches and row gauge does not try needles of a the same size, but a different material.

and after washing and blocking so I can note any changes. Then I have concrete numbers to compare to so I don't freak out when the knitting on my needles appears to be 2" narrower than my target, for example. Also, if you are knitting with a yarn that is primarily made up of inelastic fibers it is a good idea to hang the swatch freely with a slight weight on the end to see if it will grow vertically or not. If it does, you will want to take that into account or alternately choose a different yarn. This is especially important for designs that don't lie against the body at the bottom hem such as an A-line tunic or a girl's dress.

Swatches may also be lying because your measuring device is no longer accurate. Did you know that tape measures can stretch over time giving you false measurements? Always measure swatches with a metal ruler and if at all possible when blocking to given dimensions as well. I keep a metal yardstick with my blocking pins and wires and a metal 6" sewing gauge in my knitting accessories pouch.

I won't promise you that if you follow all these suggestions that your swatches will never lie to you. Following these suggestions should minimize any surprises you may encounter, however. Sometimes even a generous sized swatch is not enough knitting for you to settle into a stitch pattern and relax as much as you will once working on the actual project for a while. This is also part of the reason I suggest noting before and after washing and block gauges on your swatch. You can then double check your numbers throughout the knitting process to make sure you are on target.

Do you have swatching tips to share? Join us on Ravelry or Facebook to share!

Firecracker Gloves



BY AMANDA BERKA | PHOTO BY KRISTI SCHUELER



Make something fiery hot this Fourth of July and you'll be able to cross one more holiday gift off your list ahead of time this year. The cast on edge adds a special touch, just don't tell the recipient how easy the braid is to create. Take time to select your own special color combination or use leftovers as shown here. Only a relatively small amount of each color is needed.

Yarn

Louet Gems Fingering; 100% merino wool; 185 yds per 50 g; 1 skein each. Shown in colors 10 (MC) and 80 (CC1). Approx 75 yds each for body.

Pagewood Farm Chugiak Hand Dyed Sock Yarn; 100% merino wool; 450 yds per 113 g; 1 skein. Shown in colors Really Red (CC2). Approx 25 yds for fingers and thumbs.

Needles & Notions

- US 2 / 2.75mm, set of dpns or size needed to obtain gauge
- Waste Yarn
- Stitch markers (optional)
- Tapestry needle

Gauge & Size

36 sts per 4" / 10 cm for a 7" glove body circumference. Additional sizes may be achieved by adjusting gauge slightly in either direction.

Special Instructions

Abbreviations used follow the standards at <http://www.craftyarn-council.com/knit.html>.

If you are unfamiliar with the braided edging on these gloves, check out Knitwitt's YouTube video tutorial at <http://bit.ly/9wLsrL>

Firecracker

	4	3	2	1	
6	■	■	■	◇	
5	◇	■	◇	◇	
4	■	■	■	◇	
3	■	◇	■	■	
2	◇	◇	◇	■	
1	■	◇	■	■	

Legend:

- CC1
- ◇ MC
- Patt Rep

Braid Edging

Make a slip knot with MC and CC1 leaving a 6" tail. This does not count in st count.

Cast on 64 sts using a modified long tail cast on method: MC (red) over thumb and CC1 (blue) over index finger. This should create a red chain along the bottom of your needles and live sts in blue. Now, remove the initial loop made of both colors. Join for working in the round.

Rnd 1: *K1 MC, k1 CC1; rep from * to end of rnd. Carry each yarn in back (WS) as you would typically for Fair Isle work.

On the following two rnds yarns will be carried in front.

Rnd 2: Bring both colors to the front of work. *P1 MC, p1 CC1; rep from * to end of rnd, carrying each yarn to be used over the top of the previous yarn used.

Rnd 3: *P1 MC, p1 CC1; rep from * to end of rnd, carrying each yarn to be used under the strand of the previous yarn used. Bring both colors to the back of work to continue with the body.

Body

Set-up rnd: Using CC1, knit.

Work in Firecracker patt until piece measures 4 1/2" from cast on edge.

Place Thumb

For right glove: In est patt, k2, k10 with waste yarn, k to end of rnd.

For left glove: In est patt, k to last 12 sts, k10 with waste yarn, k to end of rnd.

Upper Hand

Continue in est patt for an additional 1 1/4" beyond the thumb placement.

Little Finger Placement

Continue as follows in patt:

Work 26, work 12 sts and hold on waste yarn, work to end of rnd. Work 52 live sts for 1/4" Cut MC and CC1, leaving tails to weave in later.

Fingers & Thumb

All fingers and thumb are worked with CC2.

Index Finger: **Rnd1:** K10 sts, CO 1 st using backwards loop method, k last 10 sts of the previous upper hand rnd. Continue knitting these 21 sts in the rnd until finger measures 3" or desired length. **Final Rnd:** *K2tog; rep from * to last 3 sts, k3tog, cut yarn leaving 6" tail. Pull tail through live sts and fasten off.

Middle Finger: Attach yarn at base of Index Finger picking up 1 st where a st was cast on for the Index Finger, k9 live sts, CO 1 st using backwards loop method, k9 sts from the other side of the hand. Continue knitting these 19 sts in the rnd until finger measures 3.5" or desired length. **Final Rnd:** *K2tog; rep from * to last 3 sts, k3tog, cut yarn leaving 6" tail. Pull tail through live sts and fasten off.

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Project Linus

Project Linus mission is to “provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer ‘blanketeers.’” Since they were formed that have distributed over three million blankets to children in need!

Project Linus was begun in Denver when Karen Lockus read an article in the December 24th, 1995 issue of Parade Magazine that featured a young girl who was undergoing extensive chemotherapy and said her security blanket got her through her treatments. This spurred Karen to donate blankets to Denver’s Rocky Mountain Children’s Hospital. Today, the national headquarters are in Bloomington, Illinois, headed by president, Carol Babbit and vice president, Mary Balagna. Their local central Illinois chapter distributes roughly 350 blankets each month!

There are local and regional Project Linus chapters in all 50 states and the number

continues to grow. Blankets are distributed not only to hospitals, but shelters and social service centers as well -- anywhere children may be in need of a hug.

Project Linus distributes all types of handmade blankets - quilts, fleece, knit and crocheted afghans. The blankets, in addition to being handmade, must be washable and made in kid-friendly colors. A variety of sizes are welcome from 36” square for infants and toddlers to twin size for teens. Blankets must be in excellent quality, clean and free from scents (such as detergents and fabric softeners). Also, they ask you to be sure to remove any pins or embellishments such as buttons that could be swallowed.

If you do not have time to make a blanket Project Linus is often accepting materials used to make blankets as well as monetary donations. We at My Sister Knits are of course partial to knit or crocheted blankets, but we will gladly collect all types of handmade blankets to pass along to our local Project Linus chapter.



Project Linus Website:
<http://www.projectlinus.org/>

Project Linus on Facebook:
<http://www.facebook.com/projectlinus>

Project Linus on Twitter:
<http://twitter.com/ProjectLinus>

Project Linus Blanket Blog:
<http://www.projectlinus.org/blog/>

Project Linus Patterns & Links to Patterns:
<http://www.projectlinus.org/links.html>

Free Blanket Patterns

Knitting

- A Recipe for Fish - <http://bit.ly/bRJelu>
- Basketweave Blanket - <http://bit.ly/cel9AG>
- Zig and Zag Sock Yarn Pram Blanket - <http://bit.ly/bsmzNK>
- Totally Autumn - <http://bit.ly/chFrtg>
- Pinkie Blankie - <http://bit.ly/cwCkOq>

Crochet

- Easy Ripple Blanket - <http://bit.ly/dtFccH>
- Hexagon How-to (detailed) - <http://bit.ly/cbYfrs>
- Wool Eater Blanket - <http://bit.ly/9f9lwn>
- Round Ripple Afghan - <http://bit.ly/9RmTVP>
- Little V-Stitch Blanket - <http://bit.ly/a6wKOE>

FIRECRACKER CON'T

Ring Finger: Attach yarn at base of Middle Finger, picking up 2 sts where a st was cast on for the Middle Finger, k7 live sts, CO 2 sts using backwards loop method, k7 sts from the other side of the hand. Continue knitting these 18 sts in the rnd until finger measures 2.75” or desired length. **Final Rnd:** *K2tog; rep from * to EOR, cut yarn leaving 6” tail. Pull tail through live sts and fasten off.

Little Finger: Attach yarn at base of Ring Finger, picking up 4 sts where 2 sts were cast on for the Little Finger, k12 live sts. Continue knitting these 16 sts in the rnd until finger measures 2.25” or desired length. **Final Rnd:** *K2tog; rep from * to EOR, cut yarn

leaving 6” tail. Pull tail through live sts and fasten off.

Thumb: Remove waste yarn carefully picking up the 10 sts held on each side. Pick up and knit 1 st in one corner, k10 live sts, pick up and knit 1 st in the second corner, k10 live sts. Continue knitting these 22 sts in the rnd until thumb measures 2.5” or desired length. **Final Rnd:** *K2tog; rep from * to EOR, cut yarn leaving 6” tail. Pull tail through live sts and fasten off.

Finishing

Weave in all ends and block.

Make 2.