

Fox Valley Knitters' Guild *NEWS*

A newsletter by and for FVKG members

January 2012

President's Letter Fiber Adventures in the Big Apple

If this newsletter gets to you late, it is my fault. Sorry. I just got back from New York City. I was visiting my sister, also a knitter. We did some fun, knitterly things I would like to share.

We visited the Lion Brand shop, and this was the window display:

All fiber crafted, mostly knitted. Just stunning. (Continued on p. 2)



Fox Valley Knitters' Guild Mission Statement

The purpose of the Fox Valley Knitters' Guild is to promote and foster an interest in knitting, to provide the opportunity for study and sharing to broaden one's skills, and to encourage high standards of design and technique in various forms of knitting.

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2011-2012 Meeting Dates

September 14, 2011
October 12, 2011
November 9, 2011
December 14, 2011
January 11, 2012
February 8, 2012
March 14, 2012
April 11, 2012
May 9, 2012

St. Charles Episcopal Church
994 N 5th Ave.
St. Charles, IL

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

FVKG meets the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, in the Fellowship Hall of the St. Charles Episcopal Church in St. Charles, Ill. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.



President's Letter (continued)

We called and asked very nicely for Dylan at Flying Fingers yarn shop to pick us up in Manhattan, and he did.

This is the yarn bus we rode (Dylan is in the blue scarf):



And we knitted on the New York subway:

In fact, I spent the week with knitting in my coat pocket, and pulled it out whenever I had a moment to work on it. One young man on the subway just couldn't get over it: "My mother knits, but I never heard of anyone knitting on the subway!"

After we got off the train, my sister and I kept talking about how strange it was that he thought we were so strange. "It's not like we opened up a Foreman grill and started making burgers!"

Now that may have gotten New Yorkers' attention.



Hope you also had a lovely holiday with family, friends and yarn!

~ Kathy Schooley

Charity Spotlight

Dozens and dozens of 7" X 9" knitted and crocheted blocks were collected at the December meeting. The sheer number and creativity were truly astounding, thanks to all who contributed their time and talent (a special thank you to Sadie, Barb Harris' sister-in-law who lives in Michigan). Again this month, we'll continue this Warm Up America project. Michael's will assemble these blocks into afghans to care for the needy among us. Can't wait to see what's produced this month!

~ Linda Jones

Program Notes for January

Hi Knitters! Happy New Year.
Ready to learn something new?

Learn the tubular cast-on and bind-off at
FVKG's first meeting of 2012 on Jan. 11.

At the January meeting, there will be a demonstration of the tubular cast-on and bind-off. You are welcome to just watch, but if you would like to give it a try, bring some yarn and a pair of appropriately sized knitting needles so you can follow along. A light-colored worsted weight would probably be best so you can see your stitches easily. We'll do the cast on, then knit a bit before binding off.

Tubular cast-on and bind-off experts are welcome to chime in with their own hints, tips and success stories. If you have knitted items for which you have used either of these tubular techniques, please bring them to show.

Thanks. See you in January!

~ Gretl Kramer

Local Fiber Display

One of our members, Emily Parson (who also is the owner of "Sophie's Toes" sock yarn), is currently displaying her 82" x 82" hand-dyed fabric quilt in the Fermilab Art Gallery until Jan. 20, 2012.

Her piece is one of many original art quilts by Midwestern artists in the STITCHED TOGETHER, Art and Science Show on display now at the Fermilab Gallery.

The entire show is a must-see for knitters and quilters alike. Congrats, Emily!!! And thanks for the inspiration.

~ Claudia Frost



Tulip: Queen of Night

hand dyed fabric, fused, quilted

Emily Parson

I first saw the tulip "Queen of Night" during a trip to Amsterdam in 1998. It is the most mysterious of all tulips, and very beautiful. I spent almost 3 years with this tulip simmering in the back of my brain, dyeing and collecting dark purple and burgundy colored fabrics, photographing tulips, and sketching. I am inspired by things near and dear to me, my family and pets, my collection of oddball household objects.

Announcement:

Come to Judy Jasper's and Phyllis Deerinck's Fair Isle knit-along, January 19, 7:00 p.m. at the Arcadium in St. Charles.

On the Fine Art of Traditional Fair Isle: Slow Knitting for the 21st Century

Having learned to knit in ancient times when size 3 needles were normal and 8's seemed freakishly gigantic, I am always surprised when a fellow knitter compliments a Fair Isle sweater and looks at me as if I've done something miraculous. But there is really nothing that amazing about Fair Isle done on size 2 needles except that there are more stitches that will take more time to knit than our new, instant-gratification novelty yarns. This venerable style of knitting is well within the range of an intermediate knitter. If you've done the simplest lace pattern, you can do this, probably with more ease.

Here are some reasons you might want to try it:

- 1) Patterns in Fair Isle can be intricate and delicate. It is more possible to create the illusion of curved lines when the stitches are small. As a beading teacher once expressed it when asked if her designs, rendered in very tiny size 14 beads, could be translated into size 11's, "But 11's are so barbaric!" Larger stitches produce a coarser fabric, in which patterns in color are somewhat gross and clumsy. Tiny stitches almost disappear, letting the pattern come forward as a whole.
- 2) Creating these complex patterns is much simpler than it appears to the uninitiated. Typically, you only work with two colors at a time, carrying one in each hand. Like all knitting, Fair Isle proceeds one line at a time. That means you will only have to remember one line of pattern at a time, and these usually resolve into something like 3 reds, 2 blues, 5 reds. Once your pattern is established, your own eye will help you see what to do next.
- 3) If you knit a Fair Isle cardigan, you will not have many ends to deal with even though you may use as many as 15 colors. (Don't be frightened; remember, you only use them two at a time.) Fair Isles employ a technique called a "steek," a narrow strip between right and left side of a sweater knitted as a tube in the round. When you are finished, you cut the steek and encase the ends inside a button band facing. Granted, cutting a steek for the first time takes some chutzpa, but just think of all those generations of confident and competent knitters standing behind you. If that doesn't empower you, invite over some friends to hold your hand and plan on having some wine after the deed is done.
- 4) The fabric of a traditional Fair Isle sweater is unique: flexible, yet stable; light, but warm enough to take you through most of the winter in Chicago with the right layers underneath. Compact enough to fit in a suitcase, a Fair Isle cardigan would be my first choice as an outer garment on almost any trip, in any season to a temperate climate with chilly nights. It can be sporty, but is classic enough to wear to the theater or a fine restaurant. It will even keep you dry in a light drizzle, though I wouldn't try singing and dancing in the rain.
- 5) Perhaps the most compelling reason for completing a Fair Isle is what it can do for your own sense of confidence as a knitter. The non-knitters in your life probably won't even recognize it as hand-made until you tell them. When you do so, they will look at you as if you are not of their species, and indeed you aren't: you are a Fair Isle knitter; you have chosen to spend months making one timeless classic garment that will last you a lifetime and will never go out of style; you have worked with 15 colors and cut a steek. You are a master of the universe.

~ Phyllis Deerinck

Inquiring Minds Would Like to Know ... Where to Knit

Do you host an open-to-members knitting group that meets regularly outside of meetings? If so, please provide the date(s), time(s) and location your group meets so that the info can be published in the newsletter. Guild members not in the know who would like to attend are asking where and when. Info can be sent to fvkgnews@gmail.com. Thanks!

~ Lisa Schroeder

Unraveling Ravelry – Helpful Hints

When you are working on a project or while considering a pattern or while pondering what you would like to knit with some yarn in your stash, have you checked out projects on Ravelry? And, have you noticed that at the bottom of the notes for each project, there is the question, WERE THESE NOTES HELPFUL TO YOU?

Do you know what happens if you click YES?

1. If you look on your project on your own project page, there is your own box of related bookmarks showing all the folks whose projects you have either faved or marked as having helpful notes. This is very useful when you know you read something that you cannot quite remember when you get to that part of the pattern... and there it is right on your own project page. And, to the delight of all your friends and visitors, they can see who had ideas that helped you, too.
2. If you are browsing through hundreds or even thousands of projects for a particular pattern, you can edit it down to just those projects that folks have found to be helpful! Simply go to the pull-down arrow in the box at the upper left that currently will say SHOW ALL PROJECTS and choose HELPFUL NOTES. Checking out the stripe study shawl will edit down from 1705 projects to 294. (Perhaps you are looking for help on a specific part of the project. Here is where you can then use the search box. For example, you can search those 294 helpful projects for:
 - a. Cast on and edit down to 23 helpful notes
 - b. Stripes would find you 178 on various thoughts about the stripes
 - c. Bind off will show you 37 projects

Of course, you can also just look at the projects your FRIENDS have done. Or check out what Fox Valley Knitting Guild members have helpful notes! Stripe Study showed me one friend and guild member with helpful notes by changing the pull down arrow that default shows PROJECTS FROM ALL USERS to FRIENDS PROJECTS and by choosing FOX VALLEY KNITTERS GUILD, a group I am very happy to belong to.

Another project to try this on is the LINEN STITCH SCARF or the KAREN SHAWL.

For the linen stitch scarf, you can learn all about working only on the right side of the scarf, eliminating the slower purl rows. Or, you could learn about how you could do it in the round by utilizing a steek.

Try all the steps above, checking out my links to helpful notes on my MUTED LINEN STITCH SCARF... Or trying all the different project filters by going to the pattern for KOIGU LINEN STITCH SCARF.

And, for the KAREN shawl, you'll find 13 FVKG member projects, three with Helpful Notes.

Please let me or our newsletter editor know if you have a specific Ravelry question you would like addressed in a future newsletter!

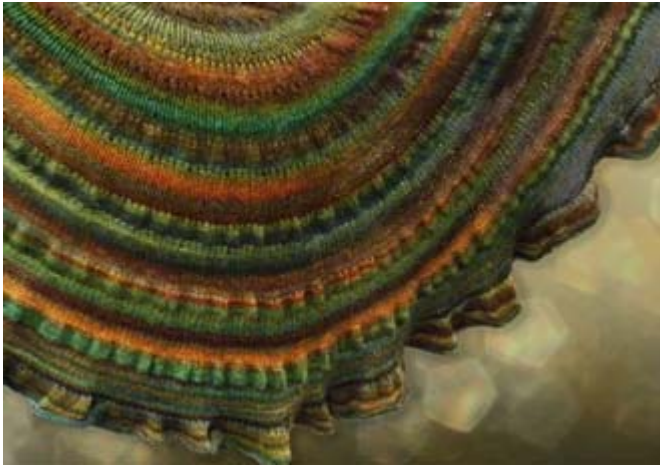
Happy Knitting!

~ Christy Becker



If you haven't joined Ravelry yet, check out www.ravelry.com – you'll be glad you did.

Show and Tell – December 2011 Meeting



Every guild meeting, we have Show and Tell as an opportunity for our members to display and discuss projects they have completed. Here is a selection of items featured at the December meeting.

Mad props to Claudia Frost for taking all the photos!

Show and Tell – December 2011 Meeting



Knitting Helpers Found on the Internet

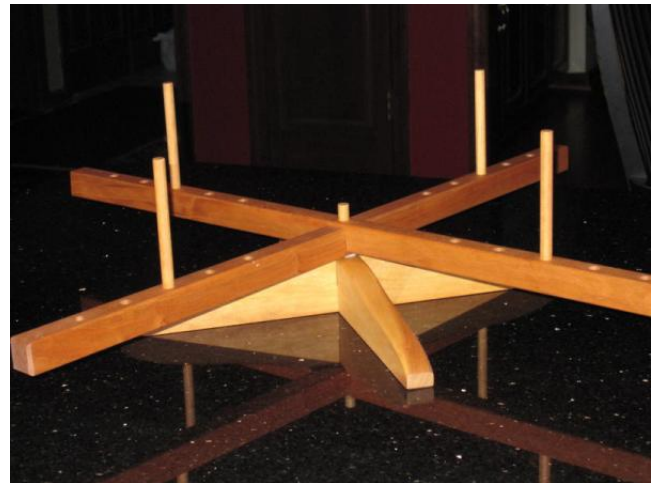
I'm back this month to tempt you with a few more Internet finds, some that I have purchased personally, and some that have just kept me at the computer, entranced for hours.

Having taken up knitting somewhat recently, I discovered rather quickly that after that beautiful yarn comes home with you from the LYS, or arrives on your doorstep from afar, if you actually want to knit a project with it, you must first wind it into a ball. After spending many (and I do mean many) hours putting a skein of yarn over the back of one of my kitchen chairs and then walking around and around and around said chair, finally ending up with a somewhat lopsided ball and a need to sit down to dispel the dizziness, I decided that I needed to purchase a yarn swift and a ball winder.

My personal winder was purchased on the recommendation of Christy Becker, who directed me to www.knitpicks.com, a website that many of you are probably already acquainted with, where I found a perfectly fine ball-winder for the bargain price of \$19.99! No more dizziness for me, and I now have lovely 'cakes' of yarn with which to knit my projects. It is so much fun to see the ball on the winder becoming larger and larger! The winder I purchased can be held in the hand via a small handle, or attached to a table. I personally prefer to just hold it in my hand, as then I can wind my yarn wherever in the house I may please, although I confess I usually wind it in the kitchen. I just checked the website again, and the ball-winder I purchased is still available. I confess to getting a bit too excited a few times, and winding perhaps a tad too enthusiastically, and having the winder fly off the handle that I was holding, but more sedate winding causes no such problems!



While I had admired the yarn swifts that I encountered in various knitting shops, they always looked very large and bulky to me, and I knew that my husband would not want to gaze upon a swift attached to the dining room table for very long, so I opted for a very wonderful, very beautiful swift that sits horizontally upon a table or counter, is easily and quickly assembled and dismantled, and stores very compactly in its own little cotton bag. I purchased mine at Stitches Midwest last August, but you could find the same one via www.knittingnotionsonline.com, out of Tennessee. They come in a choice of walnut, cherry, or oak, and are \$55, a small investment for a lifetime of yarn winding. Knittingnotions Online also carries some other interesting items, handcrafted of wood, including nostepinnes (don't ask me how to pronounce this!), in the event you would like to hand wind a center-pull ball of yarn, for \$18, made of oak, maple, or poplar.



Another discovery was www.knitting-warehouse.com, where I found discount prices for items such as cute little heart-shaped stitch markers by Susan Bates – \$2.29 for 24 pieces, Clover triangle-shaped stitch markers (I personally love this shape, especially on smaller needle sizes) that were \$4.99 for a set of 16, and a great buy on Boye Crochet Master crochet hook sets for \$22.49. This set contained 16 steel hooks in sizes 00 – 14, and eight aluminum hooks in sizes D through K. Every knitter needs a good crochet hook selection once in a while, and this set would be great for someone who was building a crochet hook collection.

If you are looking to add to your collection of stitch markers, look no further than www.etsy.com, whereupon typing in “knit stitch markers” in the search box, you will be met with an overwhelming selection of vendors. I checked out a few, and one of the most amazing of these was the “sunneshine” shop, tempting me with all manner of beautiful, whimsical, and just plain strange stitch markers. A few choices from this vendor, who had thousands of satisfied customers, were sterling silver and Swarovski crystal stitch markers (set of four for \$6), as well as markers featuring such dangles as gargoyles, snowflakes, socks, football helmets, ceramic fortune cookies, and everything in between.

For those adventurous souls who would like to create their own stitch markers, take a look at <http://www.wormspit.com/stitchmarkers.htm> to see the steps one knitter took to make his beautiful creations! *(Continued on p.11)*

February's Program – Feb. 8, 2012

In February, we will be having a Techniques Fair at the monthly meeting. Several generous and talented members of our guild have offered to teach an interesting embellishment technique.

Listed below are the classes that will be offered. At our January meeting, there will be sign-up lists for each of the classes. Each member of our guild can sign up for one class on a first-come, first-serve basis.

In addition to the type of embellishment you will be learning, the teacher has also listed any homework that needs to be done for that technique prior to February's meeting and any special equipment that the student will need to bring with them. In one case, there is a small fee to cover the cost of materials that the teacher will be providing. Be sure and read the information pertaining to the class that you sign up for so that you do the appropriate homework or bring the right equipment.

Please read the listing of classes and decide on which one you want to take (also please have a second choice in mind just in case your first choice is full).

Technique:	<i>Adding Beads to Lace Using a Crochet Hook</i>
Teacher:	Gretl Kramer
Maximum Students:	5 students per class (there will be 3 classes available)
Length of Class:	20 minutes
Homework:	Knit a little swatch with any yarn from lace weight to sport weight. Cast on about 25 stitches and knit about an inch of stockinette stitch (knit 1 row, purl 2 row, repeat...). Bring the knitting still on your needles.
Equipment Needed:	Small crochet hook that will fit through size 4 or 6 beads (Gretl will have a few to borrow)
Class Fee	None

Technique:	<i>Easy and Fast Crocheted Flowers</i>
Teacher:	Ruth Anderson
Maximum Students:	10 students per class (there will be only 1 class)
Length of Class:	60 minutes
Homework:	To prepare, a student should know how to chain, slip stitch, single crochet and double crochet. At the Jan. meeting, I will have a handout showing how to do these basic crochet stitches and list a few websites as well that would accomplish the same thing.
Equipment Needed:	None (teacher will provide crochet hooks and yarn)
Class Fee	None

Technique:	<i>Making Clay Buttons</i>
Teacher:	Jenny Bezingue
Maximum Students:	4 students per class (there will be 3 classes)
Length of Class:	20 minutes (you'll be taking the button home to bake it)
Homework:	None
Equipment Needed:	None
Class Fee	None

Technique:	<i>Creating Ruffle/Frill Edging/Bind Offs</i>
Teacher:	Lesley Edmondson
Maximum Students:	8 students per class (there will be 2 classes)
Length of Class:	30 minutes
Homework:	Bring a knitted 4x4 swatch of anything on the needle
Equipment Needed:	Crochet hook appropriate for the yarn you are using
Class Fee	None

(Continued on p.10)

February's Program (Continued)

Technique:	<i>Nicky Epstein's "Ruffle Rose"</i>
Teacher:	Phyllis Deerinck
Maximum Students	8 students per class (there will only be 1 class)
Length of Class:	60 minutes
Homework:	Students should cast on 37 stitches in a rose color, leaving a long tail for stitching up the rose
Equipment Needed:	Students should bring 150 yards of various flower-colored yarns and smaller amounts of green for leaves with needles sized appropriately for the yarn, and a large-eyed tapestry needle. (Scraps of novelty yarns can work for these flowers as well as wool.) If they wish to felt the flower, they should bring needles a size or two larger than is recommended.
Class Fee	None

Technique:	<i>Needle Felting "I love to knit" Sheep</i>
Teacher:	Natasha Lehrer
Maximum Students	15 students per class (there will only be 1 class)
Length of Class:	60 minutes
Homework:	None
Equipment Needed:	Needles for needle-felting if you have them
Class Fee	\$5.00 per student

Technique:	<i>Making Nupps with a Crochet Hook</i>
Teacher:	Janet Smith
Maximum Students	5 students per class (there will 3 classes)
Length of Class:	20 minutes
Homework:	cast on 40 stitches of laceweight or fingering weight yarn on needles anywhere from size 2 to 7 - smaller needles for the laceweight and the larger range of size needles for the fingering weight yarn - and knit two rows of garter and then one row of K1, yo, K2tog, followed by a row of purl, then another row of the K1, yo, K2tog, and another row of purl, for four rows of "lace" total. The next row would be our nupp demo row.
Equipment Needed:	2mm crochet hook
Class Fee	None

~ Lorraine Tompkins

Save the Date!

FVKG will be taking a field trip to the Argyle Fiber Mill in Argyle, Wis. We're going to visit on Saturday, May 20, 2012. More details to follow.

2011-2012 FVKG Board Members

President: Kathy Schooley
VP and Website: Lorraine Tompkins
Secretary: Jennifer Duncan
Treasurer: Deanne Karamanian
Hospitality: Tammy Caltagirone; Linda Jones
Membership: Marge Clark
Newsletter Editor: Lisa Schroeder
Gallery Show: Claudia Frost
Library: Barbara Palmer

Guild Meeting Agenda

6:00 p.m. Set up
 6:30 p.m. Gather to knit
 7:00 p.m. Meeting begins:
 Introduce new members/guests
 Announcements/reports
 Show and Tell
 Door prizes

7:30 p.m. Break
 7:45 p.m. Program
 9:00 p.m. Lights out

Special Yarn Shops

These shops are special because they offer discounts to FVKG members

Esther's Place

201 W. Galena St. (Route 30), Big Rock
630-556-WOOL (9665)
www.estersplacefibers.com

Fine Line

6N158 Crane Road, St. Charles
630-584-9443
www.finelineca.org

Fishbed Knitting Emporium, Inc.

320 N. River Street, East Dundee
847-844-YARN (9276)

The Fold

3316 Millstream Road, Marengo
815-568-5320

Gene Ann's Shop

117 East Station St., Barrington
847-842-9321
www.geneannsyarns.com

Knitche

5150-B Main Street, Downers Grove
630-852-5648
<http://knitche.com/>

Loopy Yarns

47 West Polk St., Chicago
312-583-9276
www.loopyyarns.com

Needle Things

426 South Third Street, Geneva
630-232-9915

Never Enough Knitting

119-121 North Main, Wheaton
630-221-1007

Stitches in Time

300 W. Washington, Oregon
815-732-4599

*Wool and Company

107A West Main Street, St. Charles
630-444-0480
www.woolandcompany.net

*Wool and Company has switched to a Stash Cash card program instead of a traditional discount.

2012 Fox Valley Knitting Guild Retreat

October 26-28, 2012

As of this writing, we still have nine openings for the October Guild Retreat at the Stronghold in Oregon, Ill. We need a minimum of 23 members attending so that the guild does not get charged for rooms that are not reserved.

For those members who signed up in December, but did not submit their deposits, I will need your deposit of \$50 this month to hold your reservation. Total cost for the weekend is \$205 for a single room and \$125 for a double. This includes four meals – three on Saturday and one on Sunday. Once all rooms have been reserved, we will determine the cost for members to attend on Saturday only. If you are unable to attend the meeting this month but would like to reserve a room, you can mail your deposit to me. My address is listed in the membership directory on the guild website.

Also, we are looking into having vendors again on Saturday as well as massages on Friday night (there are currently two openings left).

So please join us for two and a half days of fun, food and shopping.

~ Sandy Andrews

Knitting Helpers (continued from p. 8)

Finally, for all of the shawl knitters out there, I discovered a few interesting sources of shawl pins for you to check out! Some very unusual pins can be found by a Colorado designer at www.shawl-pins.com! Here you can choose from pins in nickel silver, brass, and copper, all in the \$45 price range. But for a true smorgasbord of shawl pins, visit the Iowa-based www.theshawlpinstore.com and be prepared to spend quite some time perusing the many, many, MANY pages of shawl pins there. I can't imagine not finding something for just about any taste on this website – choices include a sterling silver kokopelli brooch (\$44.59) for the Southwest lover, a pin of green-colored wood for the bargain price of \$7.29, a dragonfly brooch for \$68.59, a 10th century design featuring pewter and garnets, and my favorites, the Victorian Brass shawl pins. This website also features beautiful buttons in metals, shell, horn, glass, resin and wood.

So, difficult as it is to put down those knitting needles and yarn, take just a few minutes, and check out the wonders that await you via the amazing Worldwide Web. I am pretty sure you won't be sorry.

~ Janet Goier

Knitting for Those You Love

For those of you who don't know, my father moved in with me last February. He was a very social person, living alone and unable to drive anymore.

He always loved to drive and still made the drive from Baltimore to St. Charles alone when he was 82. He just took two days to make the trip. The next winter, I started a sweater for him. I wasn't dawdling, but you know how those projects can go into the knitting bag and not come out for weeks. At the end of March, he was in the hospital and given a 50/50 chance of making it. I sat by his hospital bed, knitting a sleeve and wondering if he would live to wear it. He did, and he wore it proudly. He almost wore it out. I loved that he asked me what size it was, and couldn't believe that I could make it fit him so well.

September of 2010, I finally convinced him that he should come to live with me. "Really, Dad, there's Tuesday Night Supper Club, Cheerful Hours Garden Group in the summer, and we can go out for coffee or dinner whenever you want," was the line that finally worked. I started a sweater for him for Christmas. I didn't finish it until March. Once again, he loved it and wore it all the time.

I started another sweater for him this summer – double brioche rib, so that it would be really warm; mostly yarn from my stash. I loved how the stitch pattern looked and even took advice from my husband on the colorway. Unfortunately, Dad passed away the day after Thanksgiving. The kindest gift that I've been given is the offer to "unknit" the unfinished sweater. One of my regrets is that I didn't want to spoil the surprise by showing it to Dad. I'll never know if he liked the idea.

~ Christie Cunningham

Looking Back

A few scenes from the December 2011 meeting

