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## **FVKG'S PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Hello Fellow Knitters,

As I sit down to write this month's article, it is starting to get colder outside and the trees are turning those wonderful Fall colors. Time to get all the knitted hats, mittens, winter socks, scarves and sweaters out and start wearing them again. With more time spent inside with the colder weather, I am pulling out some yarn from the stash to start a new sweater to add to the rotation. So many projects, so little time.

It was great to see all the members who are taking part in the hat exchange. I have already started my exchange hat and cannot wait to see how the yarn I put in a brown bag will look when done. Thank you also to all the members who demonstrated sock techniques at the October meeting. I know that the members appreciated all your hard work in preparing your demonstrations.

What a wonderful Retreat the Guild had this past month. Thank you to Gretl Kramer, Eileen Hoesly and Susan Plaster for all their hard work in planning the Retreat. As always, there were plenty of snacks and the meals at the Stronghold were wonderful. I know that all the members who attended this year's Retreat are already looking forward to next year.

On behalf of the FVKG Board, we wish all our members a Happy Thanksgiving.

*Sincerely,*

*Sandy Andrews*



## **PROGRAM NOTES FOR NOVEMBER**

We are very excited to have Stefania Isaacson of Handspun by Stefania as our November speaker and vendor. Stefania will talk to us about the history and techniques of natural dyeing and the color possibilities offered by natural dyes. She will bring lots of examples for us to see. In addition, before and after her talk, she will have handspun yarns, handmade buttons, and other goodies for us to buy.

This will be an inspirational presentation, and all who are moved to try her techniques are encouraged to sign up for her 6 hour hands-on workshop on natural dyeing to be held on December 11, 2010, at the Fine Line Dye Studio for a fee of \$70 if we have 15 participants. Please let Gretl know if you want to get your hands deep into the dyes and color your own yarns.

## **BROWN BAG MYSTERY HAT EXCHANGE**

Mystery hat knitters, don't forget that you will bring your finished hat, in a brown bag, to the **December** Guild meeting. You have about 6 weeks, so knit on! If you are having any trouble and need some help, see Gretl at the November meeting. Thanks!

## **LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER**

Hint: Think Chocolate. Chocolate to taste, chocolate-colored yarns for chocolate knitting, "chocolate" DIY projects...

---Gretl Kramer

## **FOX VALLEY KNITTING GUILD HAS A NEW WEBSITE...**

Go to [www.fvkg.com](http://www.fvkg.com) to check out our new, user-friendly website. Some of the highlights of the new site are:

- Photos on the homepage showing a sampling of our members' work. These photos will change monthly.
- Photo Gallery page showing pictures of Guild events such as our knitting retreat and our monthly show and tell.
- Past newsletters from the last year are easy to access now
- Calendar of Guild events and a calendar of other fiber events
- Listing of useful online knitting sites
- Member's only pages which are password protected (your current password will still work here)
  - Member's directory
  - Current newsletter
  - Gallery Show information
  - Bylaws
  - Video library

I encourage all of the Guild members to look at the new website. Feel free to give me any suggestions or comments.

---Lorraine Tompkins

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### **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

Hello Fellow Knitters,

We now have 88 members.

Here are the new members from September and October:

- |                  |                  |                 |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| • Marcella Bell  | • Jessica DeRosa | • Shirley Remes |
| • Jeanette Berow | • Joan Mahoney   | • Tami Stencil  |
| • Michelle Brown | • Roz Marcotte   | • Barbara Ober  |

Welcome to our Guild!

The updated member list is online at our website: <http://www.fvkg.net> . To access it, you must use the password (which is printed on the back of your membership card). This list now contains Ravelry ids for those of you that supplied that information. Please check to see that this information is correct. If you want to add/update your Ravelry id to the list, please email me at [judy.jasper@comcast.net](mailto:judy.jasper@comcast.net).

---Judy Jasper, Membership

### **FVKG MEETING DATES**

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| • November 10 | • February 9 |
| • December 8  | • March 9    |
| • January 12  | • April 13   |
|               | • May 11     |

We meet the second Wednesday of each month in the Fellowship Hall of the St. Charles Episcopal Church at 994 North Fifth Ave. in St. Charles and start at 6:30pm

## **RETREAT THANKS**

The 2010 Fox Valley Knitters' Guild retreat is over, and I had a great time. Before it has faded too much from my memory I want to tell you that it would not have been possible without the help of many Guild members.

First of all, huge thanks to Eileen Hoesly and Sue Garchie-Plaster for doing a magnificent job of collecting door prizes from so many sources. There were all sorts of accessories and beautiful bags, lots of yarn and knitting kits, books, jewelry, knick-knacks, hand and foot creams, and even toothpaste. Between them, Eileen and Sue wrote well over 100 letters asking vendors, distributors, artisans and other individuals to donate gifts, and the donators came through with flying colors. If you were a lucky recipient, be sure to write the donor a thank you letter so they will be likely to donate again next year!

Next, I want to thank Diane Evinger for making sense of the money collected in numerous batches for the retreat. Diane's meticulous lists and spreadsheets kept me calm and on track. Diane sent checks to the Stronghold Retreat Center as needed, and we stayed current with Stronghold throughout the entire year of planning.

Thank you also to those of you who helped haul things into the retreat center, the bags and boxes and goodies as they arrived. You helped make quick work of settling in. Thanks to you who kept me on schedule, reminded me to bring prizes to the meals, remembered to bring the prize box back to our building, reminded each other to bring your prize tickets to the meals, helped me pack up on Sunday, check the rooms, and generally made things run smoothly with your constant willingness to pitch in.

So many of you were so helpful, and I would especially like to single out Beth Ann Hudson, Stephanie Lofland, and Linda McEwan. You must have carried a million loads.

And finally, thanks to all the retreat participants for being there, for your inspiration as you created lovely projects and showed them to the rest of us, for our fun conversations and lots of laughs. It was a good time!

-- Gretl Kramer

## **A FIRSTTIMER'S RETREAT EXPERIENCE**

There are certain places that always evoke powerful images and feelings. As someone in the financial services industry in 2001, New York City will be forever burned into my mind as the image of a plane exploding into a tall, black building. Two days before the Fox Valley Knitting Guild's Fall Retreat, I was in a sterile, grey hotel that abutted two deep black diamonds in the heart of NYC's financial district. Wednesday night in the hotel, after a 3:30 am start and a work dinner that ended at 10 pm, I was wiped out. None of us slept well in that hotel next to The Big Hole in the Ground, and we speculated that too many had died, too tragically, too nearby, for any living soul to rest easy. On Thursday, the weather was grey and raw, and I could hardly wait for my flight home. My one ray of sunshine while in New York was the knitting retreat in beautiful Oregon, Illinois at the Stronghold Retreat Center.

We arrived around 7 pm Friday evening, and the knitting and socializing was in full swing. The evening was spent chatting about W.I.P.s, U.F.O.s, and enjoying homemade goodies brought to share. The rooms at Stronghold are simple: no TVs; one towel set per guest; and plain, utilitarian furniture. Each room had its own heating unit and bathroom, unlike the bunk beds and shared bathrooms in the rest of Stronghold's accommodations. That night, as we settled into our beds, we joked that these were "Protestant beds:" just barely comfortable enough to sleep in, but only if you are thoroughly exhausted. Waking up in time for breakfast in the morning was no problem either, as the beds did not encourage lingering! Saturday, we walked over to the cafeteria for our first taste of Stronghold fare. While the dining room was brown and humble, the food was delicious and varied: the best institutional eggs I've ever had; pancakes and steaming oatmeal; fresh pineapple, cantaloupe, honeydew and grapes alongside the more traditional apples and oranges; juices, milk, flavored coffees; yogurt, cereal, and breads. The larger noontime meal was spaghetti with meat or marinara sauce and the salad bar; the soup was chili and there was piping hot cornbread. Supper

was corn dogs or Italian beef, with soup and salad bar. I heard the desserts were great, but I saved all my room for the treats back in our meeting room. Sunday morning was eggs, sausage, and potatoes and the same variety of the previous morning. Every meal had vegetarian and even vegan options, and all of the food was not only fresh, but also freshly prepared right before the meal.

Another big surprise was the generosity of our sponsors! As newbies to both the guild and the retreat, we were greeted with a full goody bag packed with generous donations from our sponsors, including Udderly Smooth travel packs, needle gauges and rulers, a free Knitters Universe magazine, pencils, and a pencil case. But this was only the beginning! At every meal, someone won a door prize: perhaps a bright, cheery knitting bag or needle case from Mind Your Knitting, or a hank of yarn with a shawl pattern from Pioneer Fiber Mill, or enough lotion from Udderly Smooth to last until the next retreat. Then, there was the Saturday night big goody bag: most people got either a sweater's worth of yarn and patterns, or a couple of hanks of really nice yarn, a pattern, and a pretty bag or a book. I won a notebook and a set of DPNs for having the oldest on-site U.F.O. (at only 5 years old!) Then on Sunday, a final round of goody bags for those who stayed until noon - mostly a couple hanks of yarn or a book.

Overall, the weekend was relaxing beyond belief. After watching the Bohus Stickning video on Saturday afternoon, several gals tried their hand at making wrist warmers using Bohus techniques. I can't count how many times I heard "What yarn is that?" I wrote down five new patterns to try, as well as several email addresses and Ravelry names. A new friend showed me how to "knit one below" and make a beautiful reversible scarf. Best of all, I had excellent conversations and learned a great deal about how these wise, creative women contribute to the community with their volunteer work, their careers, and their knitting. As I walked along the edge of the bluff at Stronghold, taking pictures of Rock River and the gently rolling hills dressed in the full glory of their autumn beauty, I felt the last of the gloom from New York City fall away under the gentle insistence of a weekend spent knitting and relaxing with new friends.

---Roz Marcotte

## CHOCOLATE SALT CARAMELS

Lorraine Tompkins' recipe for the treat she brought the Guild's Retreat

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups heavy cream
  - 10 1/2 oz fine-quality bittersweet chocolate (no more than 60% cacao if marked), finely chopped
  - 1 3/4 cups sugar (350 grams)
  - 1/2 cup light corn syrup
  - 1/4 cup water
  - 1/4 teaspoon salt
  - 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon pieces
  - 2 teaspoons flaky sea salt such as Maldon
  - Vegetable oil for greasing
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- Special equipment: parchment paper; a candy thermometer (make sure it is calibrated!!)

### PREPARATION

Line bottom and sides of an 8-inch straight-sided square metal baking pan with 2 long sheets of crisscrossed parchment.

Bring cream just to a boil in a 1- to 1 1/2-quart heavy saucepan over moderately high heat, then pour immediately over chocolate. Let stand 1 minute, then stir until chocolate is completely melted.

Bring sugar, corn syrup, water, and salt to a boil in a 5- to 6-quart heavy pot over moderate heat, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Once sugar is dissolved, wash down sides of pot with a brush dipped

in hot water. You want to make sure there are no sugar crystals sticking to the side of the pot. Also clean your wisk. Boil, uncovered, without stirring but gently swirling pan occasionally, until sugar is deep golden, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and carefully pour in chocolate/cream mixture which still should be warm (mixture will bubble and steam vigorously). Return to moderate heat and continue to boil, stirring frequently, until mixture registers 255° F on thermometer, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and add butter, stirring until completely melted, then immediately pour into lined baking pan (do not scrape any caramel clinging to bottom or side of saucepan). Let caramel stand 10 minutes, then sprinkle evenly with sea salt. Cool completely in pan on a rack, about 2 hours.

Carefully lift caramel onto a clean, dry cutting board, then peel off parchment. Lightly oil blade of a large heavy knife and cut into 1-inch squares.

### **THANK YOU LEE OLSON!**

Guild members would like to thank you for inviting them to your sale.

### **HOSPITALITY REPORT**

Thank you to everyone who brought refreshments for our October meeting. The German treats were delicious. Thank you to Mary Stowe for sharing her German Potato Salad recipe. For November, we will be dying frosting for cupcakes and cookies. If you would like to add to the fun, please contact me at 617-308-6461 or [lof314@yahoo.com](mailto:lof314@yahoo.com).

Thanks,

---Stephanie Lofland

### **MARY STOWE'S WARM GERMAN POTATO SALAD**

Boil several potatoes, peel and slice  
Fry bacon as desired  
Add chopped onion and fry  
Mix together 1/2 cup of each: sugar, vinegar, and water  
Add to bacon and onions  
Stir in the potato slices.

Serve warm, it can be reheated.  
The trick is to keep the ingredients fairly equal.

### **SHOW AND TELL**

Every Guild meeting we have Show and Tell as an opportunity for our members to show projects they have completed. Frequently members want to know what pattern or yarn was used for your project. We would like to start including that information in either our newly enhanced website or the newsletter. To help gather this information a new form for Show and Tell is attached to this newsletter. Please complete the form for any item(s) you wish to show at the Guild meeting. Extra forms will be available at the welcome table.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

The following Guild members are celebrating birthdays in November

- Denise Cavallaro
- Ruth Dykstra
- Barb Harris
- Barb Vlack
- Rita Zalud



## UPCOMING FIBER EVENTS

Nov. 5-7	<p><b>Fine Art of Fiber - Showcase of Fiber Arts</b>, Chicago Botanic Garden - Regenstein Center, Nov. 4, 6:30-9 pm, Friday-Sunday, Nov. 5-7, 10 am-5pm.  <a href="http://www.chicagobotanic.org/fiber/index.php">http://www.chicagobotanic.org/fiber/index.php</a>            Enjoy an exhibition of more than 150 pieces including quilts, various types of needle arts, knitting, weaving, wearable art, dolls, and jewelry. Sales boutiques offer a similarly wide variety of items for sale.</p>
Nov. 7	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gene Ann's Yarns</b>  <b>Invites all of our friends to</b>  <b>Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Christmas Party,</b>            Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.            Bring knitting needles and crochet hooks of various sizes. Yarn and patterns will be provided to knit or crochet Christmas tree ornaments.            Refreshments will also be served. 117 E. Station St. Barrington, IL 60010</p>
Nov. 13	<p><b>Come join us at Esther's Place for a great holiday kick-off</b> on Sat. Nov. 13th from 10-4 pm. We'll have cheery music, lights and decorations to help you welcome the holiday season, cookie decorating for the kids, felted ornament make and take, along with all our new holiday gifts, kits, yarns and fibers. The event is free and you are invited to bring family, friends and neighbors.</p> <p>The fresh country air and sights and sounds of the holidays will certainly get you ready to celebrate. Visit our website at <a href="http://www.esthersplacefibers.com/">http://www.esthersplacefibers.com/</a> or call Natasha at 630-556-9665 for directions!</p>
Nov. 13	<p><b>Dream in Color Sale:</b>            Join Dream in Color during their Fall Seconds Sale! Saturday, November 13th. From 9 AM (come early for a good spot in line) and close at 1 PM. Prices will be at about half of retail, with further reductions between noon and one. Yarn is mostly first quality with "off" colors or experimental colorways. There's lots of Classy, Smooshy, Baby Lace, Groovy, and the new base, Everlasting sock. Cash and check only, and please bring bags to help haul away your loot.            907 Atlantic Drive, West Chicago, IL 60185</p>
Nov. 20	<p>Snug Hugs for Kids. 9am - 3pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in St. Charles.</p>
Nov. 20-21	<p><b>Holiday Open House at the Mill</b> at Blackberry Ridge Woolen Mill, Mt Horeb, WI  <a href="http://www.blackberry-ridge.com">www.blackberry-ridge.com</a></p>
Feb. 25-27, 2011	<p><b>Sheep in the City Getaway</b> - Milwaukee, WI            February 25, 26, &amp; 27th 2011  <a href="http://web.mac.com/jmassie1/Sheep_in_the_City/Welcome.html">http://web.mac.com/jmassie1/Sheep_in_the_City/Welcome.html</a></p>
Feb. 25-27, 2011	<p><b>Arnchild's Knitting Studio's Knitting Retreat</b> - Ames, Iowa            February 25-27, 2011. <a href="http://arnchild.com/Camps.htm">http://arnchild.com/Camps.htm</a></p>
April 7-9, 2011	<p><b>Wisconsin Spin-In 2011</b> - Country Springs Resort, Pewaukee, WI  <a href="http://www.wispinin.org/">http://www.wispinin.org/</a></p>
April 9, 2011	<p><b>Stephenson County Fiber Art Fair</b> - Jane Addams Community Center, Cedarville, IL  <a href="http://www.suzybeggin.com/FAF.htm">http://www.suzybeggin.com/FAF.htm</a></p>

## Special Yarn Shops

- **Esther's Place** 201 W. Galena St. (Route 30), Big Rock  
Phone: (630) 556-WOOL (9665) - Web: <http://www.esthersplacefibers.com/>
- **Fine Line** 6N158 Crane Road, St. Charles Phone: (630) 584-9443 - Web:  
<http://www.finelineca.org/>
- **Fishbed Knitting Emporium, Inc.** 320 N. River Street, East Dundee  
Phone: (847) 844-YARN (9276)
- **The Fold** 3316 Millstream Road, Marengo  
Phone: (815) 568-5320
- **Gene Ann's Shop**  
117 East Station St., Barrington  
Phone: (847) 842-9321 - Web: <http://www.geneannsyarns.com/TheShop.htm>
- **Gifted Purl** 120 West Main St., West Dundee  
Phone: (847) 783-4650 - Web: <http://www.giftedpurl.com>
- **Knitche** 5150-B Main Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515  
Phone: (630) 852-5648 - Web: <http://knitche.com/>
- **Loopy Yarns.** 47 West Polk St. Chicago  
Phone: (312) 583-9276 - Web: <http://www.loopyyarns.com>
- **Needle Things** 426 South Third Street, Geneva  
Phone: (630) 232-9915
- **Never Enough Knitting** 119-121 North Main, Wheaton  
Phone: (630) 221-1007
- **Stitches in Time** 300 W. Washington, Oregon, IL  
Phone: (815) 732-4599
- **Wool and Company** 107A West Main Street, St. Charles, IL  
Phone: 630 444-0480 - Web: <http://www.woolandcompany.net/>

\*These shops are special because they offer discounts to FVKG members.

### FVKG Board

- President: Sandy Andrews
- Vice President/Programs: Gretl Kramer
- Treasurer: Diane Evinger
- Secretary: Kathy Schooley
- Hospitality: Stephanie Lofland
- Membership: Judy Jasper
- Newsletter: Linda McEwan
- Website: Lorraine Tompkins
- Gallery Show: Natasha Lehrer

### The Agenda for Each Guild Meeting

- 6pm—set up
- 6:30pm—gather to knit
- 7pm—Meeting begins:  
Introductions of new members/guests  
Announcements/reports  
Show and Tell and Door Prizes
- 7:30pm—Break
- 7:45pm -Program
- 9pm—Lights out

### 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.

### Newsletter comments, suggestions or article ideas?

Please contact me at [lmcewan@foxvalley.net](mailto:lmcewan@foxvalley.net) or at (847) 697-1513. Thanks! ---Linda McEwan

