

Double Ewe Yarn Shop

Subject: News from Double Ewe - Issue 14

News from Double Ewe

May 2008

Spring has sprung,
The grass is riz,
I wonder where the flowers is?
--unknown

One quick reminder:

Our **Mother Bear Project** group is getting together tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 to work on these cute bears. We now have 20 of them adorning the shop...a kind of "bear-garland". Join us if you can! For more information, keep reading.

~~~~~

In this issue:

- \*New Stuff
- \*May & June Classes
- \*Upcoming Fibery Events in the Twin Cities: WWKIPDay, Shepherd's Harvest
- \*Guest Columnist – Miz T
- \*Events, Knit Alongs, and Other Stuff to do with Ewe: Mother Bear, GAAKAL
- \*May & June Class Details

~~~~~

New Stuff

Noro Kureyon Sock Yarn

I have a small supply of this sock yarn, so you'd better stop in soon! Now you can knit socks with gradually shifting colors just like the very popular worsted weight Kureyon. They're striking.

Jelli Beenz from Plymouth Yarn

I've added another player to my line up of kid-friendly yarns. Very similar to Plymouth Encore, this yarn has a wrap added to it that gives it some fun color interest. Very easy care, and economically priced at \$3.99/skein.

While not really new yarns, I just wanted to mention here that I've added colors to my selection of Ty-Dy, Bamboozle, and Cotton Rich DK. More colors = more fun.

~~~~~

### May - June Classes

I'm trying a new format this month. You can **scroll down to the end of this newsletter for more detailed descriptions**, or visit our website at: [www.double-ewe-yarn.com/Classes.htm](http://www.double-ewe-yarn.com/Classes.htm) and scroll down a bit for the details, or stop in the shop for a schedule. To register you can stop in the shop, send an email to [kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com](mailto:kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com), or call 763-780-2465.

Here's what's going on in May & June at the Ewe:

- Knitter's Choice
- Summer Sweater Workshop
- Continental Knitting
- Combination knitting

- Knitting Refresher
- Baby Surprise Jacket
- Beaded Amulet Bag
- Malabrigo Loafer KAL
- Bobble Sheep Dishcloth
- Learn to Knit Felted Bag

~~~~~

Upcoming Fibery Events in the Twin Cities

Shepherd's Harvest Sheep & Wool Festival

When: Mother's Day Weekend, May 10th & 11th

Where: Washington County Fairgrounds, Lake Elmo, MN

Cost: Free admission, free parking

What: Minnesota's Premier Fiber Festival: There are lots of great vendors, some really interesting classes, fun activities for the whole family, and (...this is my favorite part) there are the animals! Sheep, llamas, sheep dogs, etc.

More information: www.shepherdsharvestfestival.org

~~~~~

## Guest Columnist

*This month's guest columnist is none other than Miz T. You can read her blog here:*

[http://mysteryhouse.typepad.com/miss\\_ts\\_mystery\\_house\\_of\\_/](http://mysteryhouse.typepad.com/miss_ts_mystery_house_of_/)

*A note about the links: as of sending this email, the first two links in the article didn't seem to be working, but I decided to leave them in just in case it's a temporary problem. The rest of the links seem to be working just fine.*

### Fear Not the Lace!

by Miss T

Addiction experts say that heroin is so dangerous that it's addictive the very first time someone tries it.

Heroin's got nothing on lace.

Lace can addict a knitter *before* she tries it. Simply watching another knitter work on a gorgeous piece of lace is enough to set the hook. Like Alice's plunge down the rabbit hole, a first lace project seems innocuous -- just one more technique to try, a little something different to break up the routine of stockinette, garter and cables. Most knitters quickly discover, however, that once you get started with lace, you can't turn back. Lace has become tremendously popular lately. The Ravelry group (<http://www.ravelry.com/groups/lace-knitters>) devoted to lace knitting boasts over 4000 members, and more knitters are becoming interested all the time. Why?

*"When we first learn to knit, the discipline of lace usually stands apart and is looked at with awe. But once launched into, we see that even though it has a totally different feel from 'regular' knitting, the basic moves are surprisingly elemental -- but, like knitting itself, the variables of these few simple moves can occupy a lifetime or two to explore thoroughly." -- Meg Swanson, in A Gathering of Lace*

Lace is mysterious, alluring and timeless. It seems fragile and impractical, yet can be some of the most wearable, enduring knitting imaginable. Click through the textiles collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum online (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/index.html>), and you'll see examples of knitted lace from the 18th century, still as gorgeous today as they were when first made. Unlike sweaters, which tend to follow fashion's trends (All those shrugs and boleros which are so hot right now? Wait ten years.), a beautifully crafted lace shawl never becomes dated or goes out of style. For example, check out this incredible Shetland cape from the 1700's:

[http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/features/knitting/objects/object.php?action=next&id=34&id2=0&hits=66&page=2&pages=6&object\\_type=&country=&start\\_year=&end\\_year=&object=&artist=&maker=](http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections/fashion/features/knitting/objects/object.php?action=next&id=34&id2=0&hits=66&page=2&pages=6&object_type=&country=&start_year=&end_year=&object=&artist=&maker=) Currently, one of the most popular lace knitting books is *Victorian Lace Today*, by Jane Sowerby. The patterns are exactly what knitters made in Queen Victoria's time, simply rewritten and recharted so that they're understandable now. Creating lace opens the knitter up to possibilities from the past as well as the present, and is a lovely, tangible reminder of the long and wonderful history shared by knitters worldwide.

Lace is earthly magic. With sweaters or socks you have a good idea what the piece looks like while you work on it, but the true beauty of lace isn't revealed until the final touch: blocking. There's nothing like that moment when you block your first piece of lace and watch a wad of knitting which looks like a crumpled-up egg carton turn into a beautiful, intricate piece of architecture, and realize that *you made it*.

*"We liken lace knitting to making a souffle: To the uninitiated, it exudes an aura of mystery and difficulty; but when the work is done, you realize it is mostly air and no trick at all." -- Elizabeth Zimmermann and Meg Swansen, Vogue Knitting, Winter 92-93*

Many knitters worry that lace will be too hard, and truthfully, some lace is hard. (Google the name "Herbert Niebling" if you want to see what the tough stuff looks like.) But there are so many wonderful, easy lace patterns in our world that there's something for everyone, including beginners. Lace is nothing more than a trick. Really. You can try it right now.

Pick up your knitting. Make a yarnover (bring the yarn from the back to the front). Knit the next stitch. Voila -- you've got a hole. Make more holes, and you've got lace. Then make the holes move in different directions by placing right-leaning or left-leaning decreases next to them and changing the number of plain stitches in between. That's all lace is, artfully arranged holes. What's scary about that?

*"It is difficult to see why lace should be so expensive; it is mostly holes." -- Mary Wilson Little*

Lace knitting is relaxing and fun, soothing without being boring, and absolutely seductive. Best of all, lace allows you to amaze yourself with what you can do. It's simultaneously a high-wire act and a magic trick that quickly unfolds before your eyes. There are a few things you can do to make lace knitting easier to master.

First and foremost, learn to read charts. Charts are your friends! They're nothing to fear, and once you master using them you'll find that they're much better to work with than long, densely-worded lines of text. The chart is a visual representation of your knitting and it allows you to see exactly what the finished piece should look like. That means it's easier to figure out when you've made a mistake and how to correct it. Sure, you can get by without a chart for many patterns, but the more intricate the lace, the less likely it is that you'll find line by line written instructions. If you want to go beyond the basics, it's best to make peace with charts.

*"I find your lack of faith in charts...disturbing." -- Darth Vader*

A complete chart-reading tutorial is beyond the scope of this article, but in general, you read a chart the same way you knit. Remember, it's a visual representation of your knitting. That means you read it in precisely the same way that you knit: from right to left on the right-side rows, from left to right on the wrong-side rows, and from the bottom to the top. Still afraid? Take a deep breath, muster your courage and try it. With a little practice, you'll see what a powerful tool a well-drawn chart is.

*"My ally is the Chart, and a powerful ally it is." -- Yoda*

*"The Chart is what gives a Knitter her power. Use the Chart." -- Obi Wan Kenobi*

After that, it's all about having a little patience, basic knitting skills and the right tools.

You'll want access to a copy machine, to enlarge printed charts. (If you've bought the pattern, or are using a free pattern, making a working copy is generally considered fair use under copyright laws.) Some knitters like to color code certain chart symbols with colored pencils when working on a particularly complex pattern. The most essential tool for chart reading is a magnet board, which helps keep track of which row you're on. You can place the magnetic bar either below the row you're working, or right above it. If it's above your working row, you can more easily see where the stitches you're creating fall in relation to what came before.

Markers and row counters are indispensable. Don't be stingy with yourself. Buy more than you think you need, because you'll always discover you need one or two more than you have. It can be helpful to mark each pattern repeat, particularly with your first project.

Good needles for lace are a bit different than others. They can be made of any material you enjoy working with -- metal, wood, plastic, bamboo -- but the tips should be very pointy. As pointy as possible. *Dangerous* pointy. It's not easy to execute a K3tog with blunt needles.

Many lace knitters like to use a lifeline. Lace can be tricky to rip or tink back, because of all the yarnovers. One slip and panic -- and possible disaster -- sets in quickly. A lifeline is a long piece of smooth thread (unwaxed dental floss is popular) that is periodically threaded through a row of stitches. If ripping is necessary, the lifeline holds a perfect row of stitches, safe and sound, so that you can pick them up again without drama.

Good light isn't always thought of as a tool, but it should be. The tinier the stitches, the more it helps to be able to see what you're doing. Specialty work lights are quite expensive, but very bright compact fluorescent bulbs can be had for ten dollars. That sounds expensive until you've knit an intricate piece of lace with black laceweight yarn -- you'll quickly realize that the fancy lightbulb is a bargain.

When you've finished your first piece and are ready to block, you'll appreciate two more good tools: blocking wires, and a set of foam mats or a blocking board to work on. Pinning out a large lace project takes time, and it's fussy work. Blocking wires aren't absolutely necessary, but they speed up the process enormously and make it easier to come up with a perfectly blocked, even finished product. Once again, lace is all about the blocking. You can get away with skipping this step with socks or the occasional scarf, but never with lace.

How hard is it to work with laceweight yarns? It's a bit of an adjustment at first if you're used to worsted and heavier weight yarns, but if you discover that you don't like laceweight, get creative. Lace can be knit at any gauge, and there are lovely examples made with worsted weight and heavier yarns. Gauge is not critical to most lace patterns, unless a fitted garment is the intended goal. (Do remember, however, that gauge relates to yardage, so if you're following a pattern and aren't working at the suggested gauge, you're likely to need more yarn.) A pattern for a doily or curtain can often be transformed into a shawl simply by knitting it with a heavier yarn.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that not all fibers are suitable. In order to block lace properly, it must be stretched. Quite a bit. Fibers which aren't naturally elastic -- acrylic and cotton, to name two -- simply don't work well for most projects. Wool or alpaca? Perfect. Keep "animal fibers" in mind when shopping for lace yarn. And don't forget that when buying laceweight yarns, you get a lot of bang for your buck. One skein might cost \$30 or more, but the yardage is tremendous. If you tally up the entertainment value in hours, the cost is pennies per yard.

*"...for even some of the most prized of old laces can be successfully copied by all who have patience, leisure, and eyesight." --S. F. A. Caulfeild, in A Dictionary of Needlework, 1882*

What's a good starting point for a lace novice? Scarves or small shawls are a perfect choice, and there are so many which are suitable for beginners that it's hard to list only a few. But here goes. Some are free, some are not, all are wonderful projects which are easy to master:

- Hypoteneuse, by Knitspot <http://knitspot.com/?p=287>
- Cozy, by Danielle Schoonover <http://knitty.com/ISSUEfall04/PATTcozy.html>
- Flower Basket Shawl, by Evelyn Clark <http://www.fibertrends.com/viewer/patterns/S2014.htm>
- Scarf with Striped Border, by Jane Sowerby <http://www.amazon.com/o/ASIN/1933064072/002-0280745-7210466?SubscriptionId=1YZR91QYB6WCG3PM78G2>
- Forest Canopy Shawl, by Susan Lawrence <http://knittingasfastasican.com/forest-canopy-shoulder-shawl/>
- Dayflower Scarf by Toni M. Maddox <http://www.tmooka.net/blogs/stitchinggirl/index.php?p=328>
- Branching Out Scarf, by Susan Lawrence <http://www.knitty.com/issuespring05/PATTbranchingout.html>

A lightweight piece of lace is the perfect spring and summer project. Even knit with wool, it feels good in the hands and won't overheat the knitter. So why not try it? There's a world of beautiful possibilities at your fingertips and, in the end, you'll find yourself to be a more powerful knitter than you ever imagined. There's strength in lace.

*"Knit on, with confidence and hope, through all crises." -- Elizabeth Zimmerman*

*\*\*Each month, I feature a guest columnist. Maybe you like to write, but don't have the time to commit to a knitting blog. I'd love to see personal essays, technique articles, and book reviews. Tell us about your visit to a woolen mill or to an alpaca farm. Share your personal knitting trials and successes. If you're interested in contributing, just email me at [kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com](mailto:kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com). Don't be shy!*

~~~~~

Events, Knit Alongs, & other stuff to do with Ewe

Mother Bear Project

SCHEDULE CHANGE: We're having so much fun working on our bears, we've decided to start meeting twice monthly: on the first and third Thursdays each month, from 2:30 - 5:00.

Next meetings: Thursday, April 3rd and April 17th

Why: Join us as we knit bears for Mother Bear Project to bring comfort & hope to children in Africa affected by HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit www.motherbearproject.org.

What you will need to bring: Size 7 needles. I have some yarn available to use, but if you have yarn you'd like to use or share, you're welcome to bring it as well. Each bear takes a "fist size" ball each of three colors: one "bear colored", one for his pants, and one for his shirt. The yarn needs to be either acrylic or machine washable wool.

Cost: Coming to our group is free. I have patterns available for a \$5 donation.

Great American Afghan Knit Along (a.k.a. GAA KAL)

Meets Saturday mornings from 9:00 - 10:30. Don't worry if you haven't started yet - you can join us any time!

The Scoop: This is going to be fun! In making this afghan, we'll explore a broad range of knitting techniques one square at a time: Entrelac, cables, lace; the list goes on. We'll be doing two blocks a month, but they're interchangeable, so feel free to repeat or omit blocks. Knit all 25 blocks for a full-size or make as many as you like to make a smaller throw. Each square is unique and uses different techniques. Each block was designed by a well-known knitting designer, such as Meg Swanson, Melissa Leapman, Sally Melville, Lily Chin, etc.

Cost: Free

What you'll need: The Great American Afghan (\$12.95)

Suggested yarns: Plymouth Encore, Cleckheaton Country 8-Ply (Because the afghan is knit a square at a time using different colors, you can feel free to purchase the yarn as you go rather than all at once.)

~~~~~

Again, I want to thank y'all for your support!

Kelly Judson  
Double Ewe Yarn Shop  
9201 Lexington Ave N #5B  
Circle Pines, MN 55014  
763.780.2465  
[www.double-ewe-yarn.com](http://www.double-ewe-yarn.com)

**Hours:**

Tues 10:00 - 9:00  
Weds - Thurs 10:00 - 8:00  
Fri - Sat 10:00 - 5:00  
Sun - Mon Closed

*If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please send an email to [kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com](mailto:kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com) and I'll remove you immediately.*

~~~~~

May – June Class Details

Summer Sweater Workshop

4 sessions, Wednesdays May 7th – May 28th, 6:30 – 8:30

Price \$43.00 (plus materials)

Instructor: Ann

Description: Knitting's not just for winter! Ann will guide you along the way in this workshop. We have a lot of choices for warm weather sweaters, and there's still time to knit up a cute summer top to wear this year. If you're a beginner, we'd like to suggest Knitting Pure & Simple pattern - there are a lot to choose from; for more experienced knitters, there are...well...more choices. Your choice of a pattern is included in class fee.

Continental Knitting

1 session, Saturday May 10th, 1:00 – 3:00

Price: \$10.00

Instructor: Kelly

Description: Continental knitting ("picking") uses less movement than English ("throwing") knitting, so for many people it's a lot faster. If you'd like to pick up the pace a bit, give it a try! It does take some practice, but soon you'll feel like you're flying through your projects. It seems to be easier on the hands and arms, too.

Combination Knitting

1 session, Saturday May 17th, 1:00 – 3:00

Price: \$10.00

Instructor: Kelly

Description: Have you heard the term "Combination Knitting"? A bit similar to Continental, but I find I get more even stitches when I knit combination, and I can knit faster, too. The trick is in the purl stitch. We'll talk about how this method impacts your increases & decreases - and we'll practice. If you have tension issues, "rowing out" problems, you'll want to try this method. Oh, and it seems to be easier on your hands too - so you can knit more!

Knitting Refresher

1 Session, Saturday May 31st, 1:00 – 3:00

Price: \$10.00

Instructor: Kelly

Description: If you know how to knit, but you're not sure about the next steps, this is the class for you! Or maybe you knit years ago, but are itching to pick up the needles again, we'll refresh your memory. In this class, we'll review how to knit, purl, increase & decrease. We'll practice joining new yarns, changing colors, and weaving in ends. You'll learn about different stitch patterns, like ribbing, stockinette, and reverse stockinette. We'll even talk about all those abbreviations. During this one-session class, we'll be practicing the techniques on swatches, but at the end of the class, you'll probably be ready to start a project!

Knitter's Choice

Ongoing: Tuesday mornings 10:30 – 12:30 **-or-** Thursday evenings 6:30 – 8:30

Price: Pay as you go for \$10.00 per class session, or \$48/6 session punchcard

Instructor: Kelly

Description: I call this class Knitter's Choice with a nod to Elizabeth Zimmerman, my knitting hero. Knitter's choice is just that - YOUR choice: you pick the project, we provide the support. Knit what YOU want, but if you get stuck, don't worry, we can guide you along the way. This is a great option if you want to take a class with a friend, but you knit at different levels. Come to just one or all of the classes – knitter's choice.

Baby Surprise Jacket

3 sessions, Mondays June 2 – 16th, 6:30 – 8:30

Price: \$34.00

Instructor: Kerri

Description: Knit the classic! Designed by Elizabeth Zimmerman in 1968, this cleverly constructed sweater is still very popular today. Knit in a single piece, just two seams turn it into a cute sweater: that's the surprise part! Cute in a solid or self striping yarn, or try good, old-fashioned "manual" stripes. Ingenious.

Knitted Beaded Amulet Bag

2 sessions, Wednesdays June 4 – 11th, 6:30 – 8:30

Price: \$20.00 plus \$12 materials fee

Instructor: Ann

Description: Looking for something different to knit? Are you in a spring/summer knitting slump? Try this one! Ann will guide you in knitting a cute little beaded amulet bag. Using size 11 seed beads, pearl cotton, and size two 0000 needles, you'll knit a small bag that can be worn as a necklace. While this isn't a beginner project, don't let the small needles intimidate you - stretch yourself!

Malabrigo Loafer KAL

1 Session, Saturday June 7th, 1:00 – close

Price: \$15.00

Instructor: Kelly

Description: Knit with mmmmmMalabrigo merino yarn, these loafers aren't only cute, they're so soft on your feet! Another excuse to knit with a super-yummy yarn. They're an awesome Christmas gift idea, too. Because they knit up fairly quickly, we're offering this as a one session knit along style class - feel free to stay as long as you'd like, (but we'll have to kick you out at 5:00 ;-)) Pattern is included in the class fee, but if you already have the pattern, class fee is \$9.00.

Bobble Sheep Dishcloth

1 Session, Wednesday June 18th, 6:30 – 8:30

Price: \$10.00

Instructor: Ann

Description: Ann brings us another dishcloth to practice yet another technique. Knit a cute dishcloth with a fluffy sheep on it, while perfecting your bobbles. Don't be a bobble-hater...embrace the bobble!

Learn to Knit Felted Bag

2 Sessions, Saturdays June 21 – 28th, 1:00 – 3:00

Price: \$20.00

Instructor: Kelly

Description: Learn to knit or practice our knitting skills while making a simple felted bag. You'll learn to cast on, knit, purl, increase, decrease, and bind off.

If you would like to be removed from this mailing list, please send an email to kelly@double-ewe-yarn.com and I'll remove you immediately.