

# THE KNIT STITCH

## Minnesota Machine Knitter's Collaborative

### FROM OUR PRESIDENT

#### Inside this Issue:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| President's Message | 1   |
| Tool/Technique      | 2-3 |
| Meet the Member     | 4-6 |
| Knit-A-Long         | 7-8 |

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With my summer knitting I have been adjusting fit and gone down a rabbit hole with sleeve caps. This isn't just my dilemma; I am convinced that is why drop shoulder and/or modified drop shoulder sweaters became the go to method. So, my two most recent knits have left me still dissatisfied. Consulting this book, *'Knitwear Design Workshop'* by Shirley Paden, I am once again re-figuring what to do. The section of measuring has a few measurements that I have never taken before and a couple that are done a bit differently than what I have done in the past. Though I have not read the entirety, I will definitely be taking a deeper dive into fit and construction with an emphasis on sleeves and sleeve caps!

The Outerwear KAL has begun and I am still in decision mode! I think that I have the yarn decided upon and perhaps the stitch pattern.

The MN State Fair Creative Activities Premium Book is online:

<http://www.mnstatefair.org/competitions/creative-activities/needlecraft/>

It is important to read the first 4 pages for the rules and dates for drop off and pick up and then scroll to pages 15 and 16 for the lot numbers of the categories to enter. Also note that the Senior division is listed separately:

<http://assets.mnstatefair.org/pdf/competition/22-creative-acts-seniors-pb.pdf> - with the beginning pages as above, just scroll to page 5 to see the machine knit lot number.

- Jane



## *A Versatile, Favorite Tool by Cynthia E.*

One of my favorite tools used in my knitting room was purchased in the mid 1990's at Sears. Value priced at \$8.95! The same tool can be purchased today at Walmart, Home Depot and Amazon, but the price has risen through the years to \$11. My tool is called Mini Attachments for All Vacuums. This is a set of miniature vacuum cleaning tools that are attached to a standard vacuum cleaner, giving you the right sized tool to keep your machines clean by targeted vacuuming.

The set includes five miniature heads that fit into a 3/4 inch hose. This hose is then attached to a standard vacuum cleaner hose by a coupler. By using a standard vacuum, you have power to pull out all the gunky fibers and fluff that can cause so many problems. It really gets in there and does a great job! I've tried a few mini vacs but their power was lackluster. Using a full size vacuum gets the job done in a fraction of the time.

**One note before using a vacuum on your machine, be sure any loose parts are removed before use, so they do not get damaged.**

My set included five unique heads.

- A six inch straight extension wand - a straight pipe used for precise vacuuming.
- A six inch bent extension wand - a pipe with a 45 degree bend at the end, allowing precise vacuuming when the straight wand will not fit.
- A two inch oval brush - a mini dusting brush with a short body and a 3/4 inch brush head which allows you to vacuum a wider area in one swipe.
- A five inch extension wand with a brush head - a five inch straight pipe with a 3/4 inch brush at the head. Allows for deep cleaning when stuck fluff and fibers need more than just a vacuum out.
- A four inch crevice tool - identical to a standard vacuum sized tool, this is tapered to get into very narrow spaces. It's shorter length gives a lot of control.
- Also included is a 24 inch hose.
- A coupler for converting from the standard vacuum hose to a 3/4 inch hose.
- An adapter is included for non standard vacuum hoses.

I use my set regularly not only on my knitting machines, but my sewing and embroidery machines. It's also used on my computer equipment with great success.



## *A Long Tail Cast On for the Machine by Maria Ann*

Recently I watched a YouTube video showing how to cast on using the long tail method. I was intrigued and did a sample. Here is a picture and what I observed.

### *Left side - double wrap:*

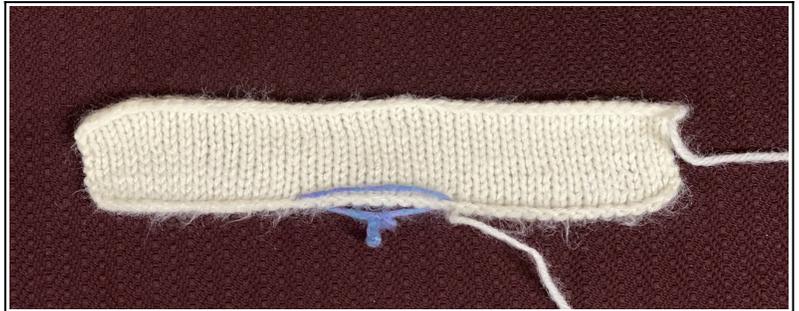
tighter  
"hard" edge

### *Middle - wrap (wrapped in the blue yarn):*

chains are not as clear

### *Right - long tail:*

very similar to wrap  
1 row is knit as you are casting on  
"soft" edge  
chains are more defined



I was pleased with the result and will use this on a future project.

The first YouTube I watched is at [https://youtu.be/2sLZ\\_Ng6DEk](https://youtu.be/2sLZ_Ng6DEk). It is in a foreign language, but there are subtitles.

I found another one (The Answer Lady) at <https://youtu.be/Jk7qgauk2m8> while searching for the other. They are the same technique.

## *Meet the Member*

This is a new feature and as editor I'm excited to include the wonderful info you've shared so far. A few days ago I asked folks to answer a set of questions and each quarter I'll randomly select one or two to publish (if possible, a newer member and a "seasoned" one). I'll make as few edits as possible to retain your voice. We certainly attract generous, creative, and brilliant folks – every one of you. If you haven't replied to the request yet you can do so anytime. Enjoy!

### Lala

My real name is Marie-Therese (Mom was French) but when she took me home to meet my brothers they called me Lala (Dolly in Polish; Papa was Polish). When I went to first grade (French based school) half the class was Marie and the other half was Therese! The teacher ask what they called me at home and thusly the name stuck forever!

### *How many years have you been machine knitting, and what brought you to this?*

Mom and I were in France visiting her sister (I was 18) and she had commissioned an outfit from a lady that made her a fabulous machine knit outfit. I was enrolled to start "Fashion Design and Technique" at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. They were looking for students to sign up for machine knitting as it was the first year they added it to the curriculum. I was lucky ... the teacher was Regina Faust. Little did I know I was in the hands of a master! I was early years for the program so we were Guinea Pigs but it worked out. We did test knitting for her books, experimented a lot with gadgets that Singer sent to the school in 2nd year. The course was too short! We never got the chance to conquer the Ribber. Upon

graduating I ended back home (Winnipeg) and worked in the jeans manufacturing industry. Remember the first designer jean? That was so much fun. Consequently MK took a backseat for 40 years! OMG it took me a year just to remember (partially) what I learned those many years ago!

*How many days/month do you knit?*

I'm semi retired but "life" still gets in the way. I'm lucky if I get 4-5 knit days a month.

*Who do you knit for?*

Myself, family. Like most of us I dream knitting. I mostly start from scratch and hammer at a prototype until I get it right. That can take 2-3 tries and then I move on to my next idea.

*What do you most like to knit on machines?*

Fair isle.

*What is your favorite machine knit item, and/or the thing you're most proud of?*

I look at the sweaters I made 3 years ago and I have to say... they're terrible! I was proud of them at the time (even made a few as gifts). I need to do a recall!

*What is your favorite fiber/color/weight to use, and why?*

Natural fibre makes up so beautifully and they are my preferred and reserved yarns for the "final". I have however accumulated about 100 lbs of acrylic so I knit with that mostly....

*Tell us about your biggest machine knitting disaster(s):*

I ran my carriage over a transfer tool and ruined my favourite machine! Happily I just replaced it.

*Do you have a particular goal or aspiration to achieve in machine knitting? Something to overcome or learn more about?*

I have a "new" Brother electronic/ Ribber and garter carriage. I need to clean the garter carriage (I'm not too enchanted by the idea) and learn how to use it all. I'm a Singer girl.. Brothers are foreign to me.

*Any advice for newbies to machine knitting or to MMKC?*

Start at the beginning of the instructions book and just go page by page and redo the exercise until you understand it. Find a MK group for support. There's a lot of knowledge in those groups. Thankfully MKnitters are generous people. Stay off YouTube! It's easy to get excited but you need the fundamentals. I will be practicing my discipline with my Brother this winter!!

*Is there anything else you'd love to tell us about yourself?*

I sure hope I can get down there in the next while to meet all the members in person. Your meetings are so well executed! Love them and thank you for including me!

## Cindy Erickson

### *How many years have you been machine knitting, and what brought you to this craft?*

40+ years. My first introduction to machine knitting was when I was about ten or eleven. Dad worked for Sears. He loved finding bargains in the returns room. He brought home a returned Empisal (owned by Singer) knitting machine. He gave it to my grandma, who couldn't figure out how to use it. My sisters and I inherited it and got some decent stockinette fabric out of it, but couldn't really figure it out either.

I saw my first Passap machine at a Home show in Boston when I was about sixteen. There I saw what a knitting machine could really do. I wanted one and made a promise to myself that I would get one when I had finished college and could afford one. That took a decade.

I knit a lot through the 80's, 90's and the 2000's, but after that, work kept me too busy, except for small projects. I needed to retire to get back into it. Jane, Maria Ann and Dee were holding a seminar about a year before I retired and Jane convinced me to attend. Just being around the MMKC knitters gave me the push to find my tools and dust off the patterns and get back into machine knitting.

### *How many days/month do you knit?*

About ten days on average. I generally attend our Knit In days which we do monthly and have participated in the group knitting projects we've done during the pandemic. Once the first days of autumn hit, I start holiday projects as well.

### *Who do you knit for?*

Me. The ability to escape into my knitting brings me joy.

### *What do you most like to knit on machines?*

Sweaters!

I make baby items for gifts and charity as well.

### *What is your favorite machine knit item, and/or the thing you're most proud of?*

My Traveling Stitches sweater.

### *What is your favorite fiber/color/weight to use, and why?*

Jaager Spun's Mousam Falls Sock yarn, a superwash Merino yarn, that is machine washable and can be tumble dried. A 4/14 fingering weight yarn. It Knits beautifully on my Passap. It's unlike any wool yarn I've used before, knitting into this wonderful fabric. The color pallet is extensive. It's available in skeins or cones. Jaager Spun also makes Mousam Falls yarn in a 4/6 Aran weight.

Bramwell's Duomagic acrylic yarn is still one of my favorites. It was great for projects for infants and toddlers. Soft and snuggly. It was easy to work with and many patterns were published with it as the recommended yarn. Sadly, Bramwell is no longer in business. It knit beautiful projects.

*Tell us about your biggest machine knitting disaster(s):*

Way too many weights have dropped on my toes through the years.

Miscalculations and transposing numbers causing sleeve lengths that were good for a belly laugh.

The one that stung, however, was a two-piece sweater dress that I made for my Mom for Mother's day. It was beautiful, done in teal and cream acrylic/wool blend. It fit her beautifully and I was proud of it.

She wore it to church and started to itch. By the time the pastor got to the sermon, she was squirming in the pew. By the time we made it home, she was broken out in a rash. She couldn't get it off fast enough. I felt awful. She felt worse. She promised she'd wear it again, because I made it for her and she picked out the yarn. I told her "No way, you're allergic to it". Reluctantly, but with my approval, the outfit was passed on to charity. Hopefully someone got a lot of wear out of a very nice outfit that was made with a lot of love.

*Do you have a particular goal or aspiration to achieve in machine knitting? Something to overcome or learn more about?*

I love learning new techniques and patterns. I'm really working on knitting to fit. Designing my projects with customized measurements that are a perfect fit is my goal.

*Any advice for newbies to machine knitting or to MMKC?*

The members of MMKC are a wonderfully supportive group. We have knitters with all levels of experience. Do not hesitate to ask for help. Your question may solve someone else's challenge as well.

Participate in the Knit Ins! You'll dedicate time to knit and have expert help as easy as calling out over Zoom.

Prioritize knitting in your week, so you get a break from work and household chores. Setting aside 10 - 15 minutes a day/week can build skills and bring you joy.

Find a simple pattern and go for it. Success builds more success.

Remember to check out the Available Tools, and more in the Members Only section of our website: <https://www.midwestmachineknitters.org/available-tools-accessories-yarn-etc>

Saddle Shoulder Finale! Here are the sweaters that were completed in our recent knit along.



