

Knitting comes full circle at the library

By Michaela Kennedy

In a modern age where many traditions have faded away, knitting has grown from a granny's pastime to a global passion. From online knitters' blogs to fashion fiber hunts, worldwide zeal has been sparked for this centuries-old textile art. Locals can find the same excitement for the hands-on technique at the library on select Sunday afternoons from now through the winter.

The Sunday Knitting Circle gathered Sunday at the Jamestown library. Veteran and beginner hand-knitters of all ages and genders met to share a couple of hours of looping, chatting, and honing their craft.

"It relaxes you over all," said Julia Montminy of Green Lane, organizer of the knitting circle. Montminy noted that the circle was in its fourth year.

"I've taught all my patients how to knit," said Montminy, a psychotherapist who incorporates knitting with a treatment called eye movement desensitization and reprocessing or EMDR. She explained that knitting has been scientifically shown to increase left and right brain interaction.

"There's a little bit of math involved, but it's not that hard," said Trish Van Cleef of Frigate Street, as she used a ruler to measure her stitches per inch. She added that it is so much fun it can "become an obsession."

Linda Brazil of Intrepid Lane joined the Sunday gathering for the first time last weekend. She manipulated thick needles with a goal of weaving a rope-like blue yarn into a hat. Brazil has been knitting since she was a child, when her family would take long vacations. "We drove from Maryland to Wyoming," she remembered. In the days before portable DVDs, Brazil was happy to have something to do in the car.

The women compared ideas on what type of needles, thickness, and straight or circular, with which to knit. Van Cleef, who has taught knitting, said in some classes children learn first how to make their own needles by sharpening dowels and then smoothing them with sandpaper.

A handful of children, girls and boys, ran into the room and over

to Montminy, who sat beside a bag full of yarn. One girl shuffled through the bag and pulled out a ball of lavender yarn and began working it with her needles.

Helen Frances Richter, a seventh-grader, walked in looking for some needles. Montminy suggested using a couple of pencils. Richter said she enjoyed knitting because "you can focus on something and still talk to other people."

Richter's cousins Sophie Richter, in fifth grade, and her brother George Richter, a kindergarten, held up their handiwork. Sophie showed two completed panels that would eventually grow into a backpack, and George was concentrating on a multi-colored design of knit-purl.

"George will have the best hand co-ordination in first grade

next year!" said Sophie about her brother. She confided that all students at her school, Meadowbrook Waldorf in West Greenwich, learned to knit.

Montminy pulled out a set of bowls with tops that were hand knitted and "felted." Felting is a process of boiling the knitted product to lock the wool into a strong, durable material. She noted that the felt (matted wool) bowls would be items included in the silent auction of bowl-related art for Empty Bowls 2006, a fundraiser to support local food banks on Friday, Nov. 3, at the Melrose school.

The after-school knitting program for grades 4 through 8 is scheduled for Nov. 8 and 15. The next Sunday Knitting Circle will meet on Nov. 19. Both groups will meet at the library.



Winter storage for campers discussed by council

By Dotti Farrington

The town administration is continuing to study environmental and liability factors of providing winter storage for camper vehicles at Fort Getty because the private Clarke storage operation on Southwest Avenue has been discontinued and the property is currently for sale.

When the topic was first considered by the Town Council in late September, town officials thought as many as 20 campers might want such an option. However, before data was collected, all of the approximately 100 campers that seasonally use Fort Getty were gone for this year.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser told the council that the going rate for winter storage is about \$400 per camper. He said he would determine insurance and liability factors, and review esthet-

ic aspects as well as zoning and environmental ramifications.

The town was viewing the best storage location over the next year or so as the concrete pads on the east side of Fort Getty Park, used during the season for boat and trailer parking. In future years, the town expects it could designate a five-acre area for the camper storage to be developed for long-term parking in season as part of a major development of Fort Getty.



A sign of fall

Dockwise, full of yachts, prepared to take them south for the winter last week. Photo by Kate Petrie

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