

Northcoast Knitting Guild officially began ten years ago this month after an organizational get together was held in August, 1989. This chronicle covers 1995 through 1999.

Our membership has grown to sixty, including several from the West Side-one-third more than during the first five years. In the summer of 1996, when the Euclid Library closed their meeting rooms for remodeling, we moved to the Ross C. De John Community Center, 6306 Marsol Road, Mayfield Heights and have made this our home.

We still are involved in many activities in addition to our monthly meetings. Rock Days and Fiber Fests have evolved to Saturday pot-luck get togethers about three times a year at the home of Maureen Doerner. Monthly daytime Knit-Ins are hosted by Jan Stephens and weekly Thursday night Knit-Ins take place at Susan Yarns.

The retreats with Western Reserve Spinners and Weavers at Cedar Hill Camp in Painesville still take place in early spring. We have had annual picnics in late summer at Mayfield Heights parks and a trip to an alpaca farm in fall of 1998.

The Knitting Guild of America (TKGA) has added regional conferences in addition to the annual national conventions. This has enabled more of our members to attend the classes and yarn markets. We have had good representation at Chicago, Washington, Columbus and Niagara Falls. In fact, twenty-two members were at Columbus in 1998. Members also attend Stitches conventions, Knitters Day Out and other seminars.

Knitters Fantasy began in April, 1996. It is a Saturday program of classes, lunch and market alternately sponsored by the Witty Knitters of Warren, Western Reserve Knitting Guild of Youngstown and us. Our first turn was in 1998 and a hard working committee headed by Mary Davis and Shirley Nurmi and including Diana Young, Judy Riga, John and Margare Martin, Donna Baioni, Bonnie Kovit, Chris Shockley, Sharyn Lowenkamp and Thelma Imm did a wonderful job! Attendance and profits were good! Bonnie designed a logo that was imprinted on knitting bags. Teachers included Bonnie, Thelma, Sandy Hardy, Marie Marics, Maureen Doerner and Jan Stephens from our guild plus those from other guilds and feature guests, Roy and Catherine Cartright Jones. The Warren guild was in charge in 1999. Lorraine Ehrlinger and several above members taught there.

In April, 1996, Marge Beebe arranged for the Craft Yarn Council to offer their Knitting Teacher Program. The classes were held at Lake Farmpark and were taught by nationally known teacher, Dixie Berryman. The following members and former members took the classes and were certified by volunteering as teachers: Donna Baioni, Shirley Nurmi, Frances Cersig, Maureen Doerner, Sandy Hardy, Bonnie Kovit, Karen Campbell, Betty Fitzgerald, Thelma Imm, Cassandra Davis, Marie Marics, Arlene Mann, Ann Egan, Denise Yancey, Leslie Oliver, Lynne Killgore, Marge Beebe and Marianne Coccia. Jan Stephens had formerly taught for this program in the 1980's. Sadly, this was the last program Marge was involved with for the guild. She was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in July, 1998. We miss her. At her funeral mass, the priest said she was probably starting a guild in Heaven!

Many members are participating in the Master Knitters Program sponsored by TKGA. Those who have passed Level I are Shirley Nurmi, Judy Riga, Maureen Doerner, Jean Nicholls, Bonnie Kovit, Abby Smith and Paula Rand. Lorraine Ehrlinger has passed Level II and Elaine McRee has completed Level III. Lorraine and Elaine had MKP designs published in "Cas On", Fall 1999. Diana Young also has passed Level I of MKP.

With so many classes available at our meetings and conventions, plus certification programs, the skill level of our membership has greatly increased. This is evident in the quality of items entered in our competitions. Ribbon winners these past five years in the general and toy competitions include: Thelma Imm, Judy Riga, Sue Crowe, Maria Marics, Paula Rand, Jan Stephens, Deb Azlein, Arlene Mann, Shirley Nurmi, Betty Fitzgerald, Eleanor Crippen, Donna Baioni, Fern Braverman, Marianne Coccia, Maureen Doerner, Lorraine Ehrlinger, Bonnie Kovit, Christine Jordan, Susan Langell, Alicia Orel, Diana Young, Mary Davis, Sandy Hardy, John Martin, Carol Murdoch-Miller, Lynne Killgore, Marthajoy Waite, Miriam Rosenblatt, Jean Nicholls, Donna Kaminsky, Kathy Nehrenz, Rita Rzepka, Louise Vouk, Carina Gunnerson and Kathryn Mates.

Past and present members have been very generous in sharing their knowledge at programs at monthly meetings. We have also had excellent programs by outside teachers and area shop owners. Our member presenters have included Mari Jane Bartley, Ann Egan, Jan Stephens, Maria Marics, Thelma Imm, Alicia Orel, Judy Riga, Marianne Coccia, Sandy Hardy, Jean Nicholls, Elaine McRee, Christine Jordan, Lorraine Ehrlinger, Diana Young, Mary Davis, John Martin and Bonnie Kovit. Other presenters include Rit Haby, Liz Tekus from Fine Points, Jo Ann Norigan from the Ewe Tree and Kathy Di Santis and Dianne Rodenbough from Stitch, Piece 'n Purl.

John and Margaret Martin bought Susan Yarns in Cleveland Heights from Alice Lipczenko in 1996. Alice is enjoying her new life in Florida and we are enjoying the new Susan Yarns!

The national Fiber Fest, now held annually at Lake Farmpark is chaired by Lynne Killgore. Members have staffed tables, taught knitting with supplies donated by Susan Yarns and have volunteered in other capacities.

In October 1998, the main White House Christmas tree featured knitted hat and mitten sets. Our guild sent one. Carina Gunnerson designed and knit a set from yarn she and John Martin had spun. She and her husband attended a reception for the artists who had participated.

The requests for service project knitting keeps growing. We still are providing preemie sets, caps for kids, WarmUp America afghans, dresses, stuffed toys and have recently added hats for chemo patients, slippers and preemie blankets. Our mission statement of a balance of education, service and fun is constantly being met!

Future plans could include a TKG regional conference or national convention in this area. Donna Kaminsky is working on that with TKG.

Members who have served as officers and committee chairs in the last five years are: Presidents; Sue Crowe, Bonnie Kovit, Christine Jordan. Vice Presidents; Judy Riga, Ann Egan, Marianne Coccia, Maria Marics, Sandy Hardy, Bonnie Kovit. Secretary; Pat Tuckerman. Treasurer; Cassandra Davis, Thelma Imm, Paula Rand. Service Chair; Donna Baioni. Membership Chair; Marianne Coccia, Judy Riga. Newsletter Editor/Historian; Jan Stephens.

We have several albums of photos and notebooks of all the newsletter class handouts and guild information as part of our history.

It is doubtful that ten years ago, anyone would have expected us to grow like we have. Sally Keith is working hard to start a TKG chapter on the west side of Cleveland. There are more knitters now, especially younger people. Being part of a national knitting family has been exciting. We have many active, hard working members and we appreciate participation from everyone. Let the officers know what you want and what you want to do so we can continue to grow in the next ten years! Please let me know if I have left anyone out of the lists-if so, here's an apology in advance!