

KNITTERS' DELIGHT! The following poem, titled "A Stocking in Rhyme," comes from Jean Nowack and one of her grandmother's housekeeping books (c. late 1800's). It will knit you up a pair of socks very nicely -- get your needles and yarn and start reading...

To knit a stocking, needles four,
Cast on three needles and no more;
Each needle stitches eight and twenty,
Then one for seam stitch will be plenty.
For twenty rounds your stitch must be
Two plain, to purl alternately,
Except the seam stitch which you do
Once purl, once plain, the whole way through.
A finger plain you next must knit,
Ere you begin to narrow it;
But if you like the stocking long,
Two fingers' length will not be wrong.
And then the narrowings to make,
Two stitches you together take
Each side the seam; then eight rounds plain,
Before you narrow it again.
Ten narrowings you'll surely find
Will shape the stocking to your mind;
Then twenty rounds knit plain must be,
And stitches sixty-five you'll see.
These just in half you must divide,
With thirty-two on either side;
But on one needle there must be
Seam stitch in middle, thirty-three.
One half on needles two you place,
And leave alone a little space;
The other with the seam in middle,
To manage right is now my riddle.
Backward and forward you must knit,
And always purl the backward bit;
But seam stitch, purl and plain you know,
And slip the first stitch every row.
When thirty rows you thus have done,
Each side the seam knit two in one
Each third row, until sure you feel
That forty rows are in your heel.
You then begin the heel to close;
For this, choose one of the plain rows;
Knit plain to seam, then two in one,
One plain stitch more must still be done.
Then turn your work, purl as before
The seam stitch—two in one, one more;
Then turn again, knit till you see
Where first you turned, a gap will be.
Across it knit together two,
And don't forget one plain to do;
Then turn again, purl as before,
And sew till there's a gap no more.

The seam stitch you no longer mind,
That, with the heel, is left behind.
When all the heel is quite closed in,
To knit a plain row you begin,
And at the end you turn no more,
But round and round knit as before.
For this, on a side needle take
The loops the first slip-stitches make;
With your heel needle—knit them plain,
To meet the old front half again.
This on one needle knit should be,
And then you'll have a needle free
To take up loops the other side,
And knit round plain, and to divide
The back parts evenly in two;
Off the heel needle some are due;
Be careful that you count the same.
On each back needle, knit round plain;
But as the foot is much too wide,
Take two together at each side,
On the back needle where they meet
The front to make a seam quite neat.
Each time between knit one plain round,
Till stitches sixty-four are found;
And the front needle does not lack
As many as on both the back.
You next knit fifty-six rounds plain,
But do not narrow it again;
'Twill then be long enough, and so
Begin to narrow for the toe.
Your long front row knit plainly through,
But at its end knit stitches two
Together, and together catch
Two first in the next row to match;
Then to the other side knit plain
Half round, and do the same again;
That is, two last together catch,
Two first in the front row to match.
At first knit four plain rounds between,
Then two, then one, until 'tis seen
You've knit enough to close the toe;
And then decrease in every row,
Until to stitches eight you're brought,
Then break the thread off—not too short—
And as these stitches eight you do,
Each time your end of thread pull through;
Then draw up all to close it tight,
And with a darning needle bright,
Your end of thread securely run,
And then, hurrah! the stocking's done!

As long as we are on the subject of knitting (especially if knitting the above would seem to be a record of sorts for you), this is a perfect time to mention several items from the 1977 *Guinness Book of World Records*... The longest recorded non-stop knitting marathon is one of 100 hours (with 5-minute time-out allowances per hour) by Mrs. Ann Whitbrown of Market Drayton, Salop, England, on April 11-15, 1976. The most prolific hand-knitter of all time is Mrs. Gwen Matthewman (b. 1927) of Featherstone, Yorkshire, England, who in 1975 knitted 885 garments involving 10,530 oz. of wool (equivalent to the fleece of 85 sheep). She had been timed to average 108 stitches per minute in a 30-minute test. Her technique has been filmed by the world's only Professor of Knitting -- a Japanese.

LAUREL SCHEELER'S FAMOUS CROSS-WORD PUZZLE. Here, at last, are the answers for those of you who struggled in vain. Laurel managed to move to her new home in New Jersey before we could get the list of winners, so I am afraid that we only have one name to list: Mildred Scudder. (Mildred was nice enough to do the puzzle again so that we could pass along the answers to you.) ENJOY! And thank you, Laurel, for giving us this good excuse to stretch our woolly brains for a bit and give the puzzle a try. (We might add that other creative souls are welcome to send along their contributions of this nature, too, for possible inclusion in future Newsletters!)



A LAST NOD TOWARD THE KNITTERS (for the moment)... Mrs. Margaret Collins of Bourne-mouth, England, knitted 139 rows (3,336 stitches) in 45 minutes, in 1976, to set a speed record. (And if you hope to complete your project for the State Fair, you'll almost need to do that too!)

WOOL DAY. Reports for Wool Day from Laurel Scheeler and Gretchen Sachse still have yet to be turned in, so we still do not have a full report for you. The Guild still needs to discuss that event, with thoughts for next year. C'mon, Laurel and Gretchen!

"Did anyone get to?" Dept... The 10th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair at the Watkins Glen High School, July 15-17? The Crafts Fair at Norwich (July 9)? The "Making Hands with Fiber Show" sponsored by the Cherry Valley Country Spinners, Cazenovia (thru July 31)? That marvelous Troy Fair? (See, we told you that you'd have a good time at that one!!!) Do share your experiences with us at meetings about events past -- did you demonstrate, did you like one event better than another (and maybe for what reasons), would you recommend not missing it next year??? It is fun to hear about all kinds of things going on -- and gives us all something to earmark for next time around!

PLANS ARE WELL UNDERWAY for the Thistledown Annual Spinning Seminar at Norwich. More ideas are always welcome -- contact Jean Travers soon (P.O. Box 648, Norwich, NY 13815) if you want to share your thoughts and brainstorm. There will be mini-sessions again this year, one on silk and one on uses of handspun, in addition to the "something for everyone" (programs for beginners, dyers, sheep owners, games and contests, and those great SURPRISES that they always come up with!!!) Jean Travers is Chairman and Jean Steiber is Registrar (address above is general Guild box). Thistledown can always use help, whether you participate directly in a program or not, so keep that date (October 8-9) open... Jean Steiber forwarded a request to Black Sheep: has anyone done any experimenting with using handspun in crewel embroidery -- she will be done a workshop at the seminar and needs samples, hints, whatever you can pass along (Box 219B, Rt. #1, Norwich, NY 13815).

NOTE THE BUTTON THAT CAROLYN COOK HAS BEEN SPORTING: "Spinners do it in the grease."
 (No comment needed -- except, where can we get one???)