

Six Loose Ladies...and friends

Semi-Regular Newsletter; Fall 2009

Welcome to the Six Loose Ladies' semi-regular newsletter. Following you will find class information, helpful tips, and intriguing articles. Enjoy, and don't forget to join us for knit and spin nights every Thursday.

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Kool Dyeing Technique

By Céleste Walker, Reindeer Station Farm

The great thing about dyeing with Kool-Aid is that you don't have to worry about the dye being toxic. You don't have to worry about polluting the environment. You don't even have to keep separate utensils for your dyeing operation. (Nor will you ever be horrified to find out that your husband just cooked the corn for dinner in your dye pot: the one the instructions on your dye packets said to never, ever cook food in after you use it for dyeing.) And, well, it just plain smells good during the dyeing process.

There are down sides of course. The biggest is that once your family smells the Kool-Aid cooking they'll want to drink your dye pot contents. And the color choices are limited. However, there is room for playing and mixing. And unlike regular dye you can tell within minutes what your color is going to look like. The dye is usually absorbed within the first few minutes. In fact, I rarely have to leave mine in beyond 5-10 minutes. (You can tell the dye is all absorbed because the water is perfectly clear. Voila; you're done. In the time it takes to boil water. How much easier can dyeing get?)

The directions I read said to use one packet of Kool-Aid per quart of water. But since I'm the type of person who can't leave well enough alone I doubled that. I got vibrant colors. So then I started to play with mixing colors and I got some really luscious stuff. Then I thought, well, if the dye takes up so quickly what would happen if you added the fiber slowly, in layers? Turns out it's about what you'd expect. The bottom of the dye pot is the darkest and goes up in degrees depending on how fast you add the fiber. If you're slow the last amount of fiber barely has any color at all, just a slight tint. Another technique you can try is to add some fiber, sprinkle on some dry Kool-Aid, and add more fiber. You get bursts of intense colors where the undiluted dye is.

To keep track of color combinations I started to keep a dye journal. I just staple the tops of the packets where the flavors are listed and note how many of each I used. Then I attach a lock of the fiber. This way you will be able to remember if that red you liked was cherry or strawberry or watermelon or some other flavor. And if you mix flavors you'll have a record of what produced results you liked.

To start playing just purchase lots of Kool-Aid. I found the best thing is to go to a variety of stores because it seems like everyone has different colors. My favorites are lime, grape, orange, and the reds, though yellow is nice too. The only blue I could find was whitish and I didn't care for it, but there may be a better flavor out there that produces a nice blue. Once you've got your Kool-Aid you need water and a pot large enough to put fiber (or yarn or fabric, etc.) in. I should mention that you need to use a protein fiber like wool, alpaca, or silk. Kool-Aid won't bind to cellulose fibers like cotton. Measure out your water; how much Kool-Aid you add is really up to you. You can start with one packet per quart as a baseline and experiment from there.

Mix the Kool-Aid into your water, boil the water, remove the pot from the stove and add your fiber, all at once or a little at a time. Wait about 5-10 minutes, until the water is clear and the fiber has absorbed all the color. Rinse in cold water, drain, and dry. That's it. Oh, and you *can* still smell some of the flavors afterwards on the wool, but it's a pleasant smell and it's certainly not overpowering.

I was worried that the color might not be colorfast, but when I soaked it the color stayed put which is more than I can say for the colors in the real dye I use. Now I wonder if we could figure out some way to dye the sheep on the hoof . . .

Reindeer Station Farm, where the fiber is fancy and the sheep wear jingle bells.

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A Quick Knit Tip

For my knitting adventures this week I learned about "knitting in the stitch below" to make an increase or end a bind-off. I had a pattern that used a left or right lifted increase. Well, I have always increased by

making a stitch from the horizontal bar between two stitches, so this was new for me. This lifting the stitch from the row below the one you are working on makes a very nice increase that does not have a hole and blends beautifully with the pattern I was knitting. I went to my *Knitters Companion* (my favorite go-to book) and it was explained more elaborately, and I really like the look. Also "Sweater-a-Week" Janice showed me how she does the lifted increase, so I am pretty happy with it now. Then... coincidentally the knitting daily newsletter had a tip in it for ending the bind off with knitting a stitch from below with the last loop. This keeps the stitch nice and even like the rest of the stitches, and not a big funny loop that I have to figure out how to hide. So, I learned several tips this week for making my knitting have a better finished look and thought I would pass on to you all while the newsletter is being compiled. Enjoy and knit on!

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A Day in the Life of a Store Volunteer

By Nancy Kelley

Yawn. 5:30 a.m. Brody's nose is in my face. Means he has to go out. Time to get up anyway. What day of the week is it? Right - Saturday. Store day.

Make the coffee, check emails, wake the husband, feed and walk husband and dog, take that weekly shower, make lunch, figure out what project to bring to work on, and it's time to get to the store. Stop at Crow's Bakery for my coffee cake store treat and bottle of tea. Unlock the front door, then madly dash around the desk to disengage the intruder detection system, dropping bag, project basket, and keys on the desk along the way. Made it yet again before the alarm sounded. Success!!!

Turn on all the lights. Check the change drawer to make sure everything is in order. Check the bathroom to make sure it is presentable (a formidable task for me because cleaning the bathroom was my chore growing up and I grew to hate it). Get out the broom and chase the dust bunnies out of the store. Throw out the trash. Put out the skein winder - Oh my, there's a car parked across from the store with women in it. Are they waiting for us to open? Maybe if I just lock the door they'll go away. No, can't do that. Go back in, get the flag, put that out. Yep, the car is emptying. It's show time!

Well, the carload was really a lot of fun. They all knew what they wanted or didn't want, what they were looking for or not looking for, and a couple of them even bought something. Good start to the day. I wander around the store. What new things do we have? Sometimes, with all the yarn all over the place

it is hard to tell. Oh well, I'll just settle down and work on my project. Wait. Someone else is coming in. It's Irene. Haven't seen her in a while! She comes to say hi. We chat for a while and catch up on news. A couple more customers come in and browse. Looking for bulky yarn? Well, we have some Mt. Ascutney here, Ironstone Sherpa here, Schaeffer and Eco wool over there, and Mt. Nickwauket too. Not what you're looking for? Okay. Thanks for coming in. Irene says she has to go too. See ya. It is getting close to lunch time. I'm starting to get hungry.

A customer is walking in with a project bag. Horrors!!! I think she's going to ask for knitting help! She obviously doesn't know that the Anti-Knitter is on duty. What does this line in the pattern mean? Fortunately I am able to figure it out and she walks away happy. One lady comes in and doesn't know what she wants to knit and wants me to help her pick out a yarn. I try to explain that it helps to first know what she wants to make. She still won't commit. I show her some yarns, but she's not sure which she likes best. I show her some patterns, but she doesn't see anything that excites her. After an hour she finally leaves without buying anything. I really just want to lock the door and play by myself. And I'm really getting hungry. And I have to go to the bathroom.

But not yet, the phone rings. What are our hours? 10-6 today. Oh no, here comes Cheryl. Lock the door!!! Drat, she made it through before I could lock it. Time to do some training (Cheryl is learning how to work here). Customers dribble in now and then. I finally get a potty break, but am getting famished. Cheryl and I giggle, tell stories, and don't even try to solve world hunger. She finally has to leave. Then the phone rings again. The caller has a broken leg and wants me to find an easy hat pattern, some off-white yarn, and needles for the pattern. She'll send her husband to get them. Oh boy - there are a few different yarns which can fit the bill. Found a pattern which isn't too hard. But, drat. Don't have the needles for the pattern. Look for another pattern. Finally find one that is easy but has color changes. She can just ignore the color changes. Her husband shows up at 5:30. I show him the yarn options. Like a good husband he's reluctant to commit without calling her first. That done, we pack up the yarn, pattern, and needles and he's off. Finally, I can grab a few mouthfuls!

It's 5:50 already. Haven't even had a chance to work on my project and just finished lunch. I don't know why I bring lunch or a project one along. Time to check to make sure the back room is locked and the bathroom is okay. Close and lock the door to the back room. Tally up the sales for the day. Close out the

credit card machine. Bring in the skein winder and flag. Gather my belongings and put them on the desk. Put the key in the front door lock. Turn off all the lights except the front window lights. Activate the intruder detection system and make the mad dash to the door, grabbing my stuff as I fly by. Quickly close and lock the door. Success!!! Another store day done. And I don't get paid a penny for all that. I just love my fellow loose ladies and friends!

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Colors of the Season at Six Loose Ladies

The recent nip in the air has brought on thoughts of fall and one can't think of fall in Vermont without thinking: **color!** This season we're displaying a wonderful array of new yarns -- enough color to rival our beloved maples!

We have added a full spectrum of Cascade 220 and EcoWool and Pastaza, a 50/50 llama/wool blend to our selection; as well as the entire range of Mission Falls DK weight yarns -- all tried and true classics.

For something a little different, Crystal Palace's Mochi Plus and Mochi Mini are very fun, very soft multi-color singles that are also superwash so they're great for babies and kids.

We are also very excited about a new line of hand-dyes by RiverStone that are wool/mohair singles and brushed mohair yarns dyed to mix and match in gelateria hues.

When you're out cruising about, enjoying the foliage, stop in at the shop and take in some local color. Your eyes (and needles) will thank you!

1. By way of a "footnote" -- we also have three new sock yarns on the shelves. There's a stretchy cotton from Crystal Palace, a silk/wool from On-line and from Kristin Nichols.

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Scenes from the Six Loose Ladies Life:
At the Coolidge Homestead.

Lucas Fletcher and "Piper Leo"



Anne Gottier and Bonnie MacPhearson are demonstrating Knitting and Spinning



Perry Hudkins preparing fleece to be spun.



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Gracious Sakes! Six Loose Ladies is another year older and having more fun than ever. With our local newspaper closed, and construction on our street, our birthday celebration was a lot quieter this year. Hopefully our emails about our birthday sales, and our construction coupon spurred everyone on so you could come save while seeing all our exciting new yarns, patterns, knitting equipment, and local crafts. We still have boxes arriving weekly with yummy new yarns, and some in the back being priced today, so please come see them.

As fall approaches we are getting ready for many events that we will sponsor, participate in, or at least try and visit. The first event will enhance our fall wardrobe, and help restore some of the languishing cloths in our closet. You know, those ones that have not been worn much, and you kind of wonder why you bought them... At our "Lyric Couture" refurbishing session, Alice Fogel will show us many tricks. She has learned to make useful clothing from pieces of other garments, and tricks to update what we have in our stash. Bring two bags of lightly used clothing to share with other participants, and learn to make some new fancy duds from the master. The class fee is only \$20 for members, \$25 for non members (plus the two bags of clothing).

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Up-coming Classes:

The next event is The Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival. It has moved from Essex Junction to Tunbridge this year. This more rural setting will be new and exciting for us, and we are looking forward to being vendors there October 3 & 4. Many of our local yarn consigners will be there with their sheep, alpaca, goats, or the yarn and fleeces from them. It is really so fun and interesting to see all the demonstrations, animals, and of course the vendors with all the products we fiber fanatics need. I hope you will put it on your fall agenda, and join us. I think the foliage that weekend will be spectacular, so that is an added plus.

We also hope to take a day trip to Rhinebeck and attend the New York Sheep and Wool Festival the 17th and 18th of October. There will be different attractions and lots of goodies that we couldn't find at Tunbridge. Maybe we will see you there.

This falls *piece de resistance* will be the Stitches event in Hartford on October 22, 23, 24th. This is the closest Stitches has been held since Six Loose Ladies has been open, and we are hoping to car pool to this event. It should be a real learning experience for us, and I hope we can bring back all the new ideas that we will find there. I am anxious to see some of the famous people whose books we all use and love. Unfortunately all the classes are full, so we will not get any hands on with the master knitters.

We also have the Columbus weekend and foliage events in and around town, so it is a very exciting and busy time for us. It also is chilly so I have my needles clicking away to make warm mittens and socks and maybe even a hat and scarf in some of our fabulous new yarns. My list is endless... so much yarn, so little time.

Our lovely sales rep Marinna, and her husband Warren, are coming to our shop for a yarn tasting. November 5th. This is our sit and knit night and it will be open to all. Please come "test" the Cascade yarns they are bringing and let us know what you want us to carry in the future. We are thrilled to have Cascade 220, Eco Wool, Venezia (silk & wool) Kid Seta Mohair and Silk in our shop now. At the yarn tasting we also will have wine, non-alcoholic mulled cider and snacks so it should be a fun event. Please join us.

We are having many sales to introduce our new products, so check the *Outlook* for special events and sales. Our classes are fun and informative so come learn some fiber arts with us. We hope to have a beginner weaving class as soon as we have looms. We shall keep you posted. If there is a class you would like to have us run, let us know and we will do our best.

Happy knitting!

Anne Gottier, President

November 1st: Friday morning is always Charity Knit with AD from 10:30AM-12:30PM.

Nov. 1st: SLL Ladies Make your Wish (all month)

Nov. 6th: Charity Knitting

Nov. 15th: Ladies Wish List & Shopping - 1:00PM - 4:00PM. With Beverages!

Nov 22nd: Felted Clogs, 1-4PM

December 6th: Santa Shopping from SLL Wish Lists

Dec. 12th: Coolidge Open House

Dec. 20th: Christmas Shopping Open House, with Punch!

Dec. 27th: December Moebius, 1-3PM, \$20 per session

Dec 30th: December Moebius, 10:30-12PM, \$20 per session

