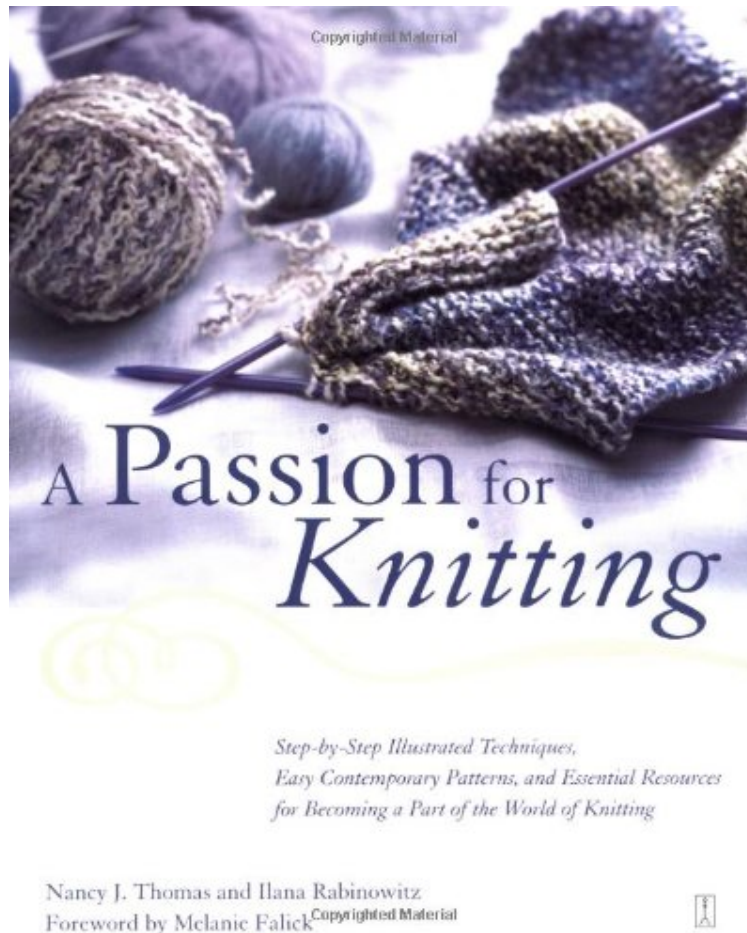


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A Passion for Knitting : Step-by-Step Illustrated Techniques, Easy Contemporary Patterns, and Essential Resources for Becoming Part of the World of Knitting

Nancy Thomas, Ilana Rabinowitz, Melanie Falick
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Nancy Thomas, Ilana Rabinowitz, Melanie Falick : A Passion for Knitting : Step-by-Step Illustrated Techniques, Easy Contemporary Patterns, and Essential Resources for Becoming Part of the World of Knitting before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Passion for Knitting : Step-by-Step Illustrated Techniques, Easy Contemporary Patterns, and Essential Resources for Becoming Part of the World of Knitting:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. One of the best I have seenBy mngrammyThis book is great for newbies to knitting as well as seasoned knitters. The presentations are over a wide range of topics and are well written and enjoyable. I have been knitting for years and found several tips that were new to me. I ordered several copies to be sent to friends who are wishing to learn knitting skills and have recommended it to skilled knitters, for their sheer enjoyment.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must readBy Connie NooneyI read a variety of books on knitting from my library and decided to buy this one. It expressed my feelings about knitting better than any other.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Bunny CrossonPerfect

The World of Knitting Right at Your Fingertips More than a how-to book, *A Passion for Knitting* goes beyond teaching the craft and introduces readers to the culture of knitting. In Part I, you'll find fully illustrated instructions for learning stitches and mastering technique, presented with unprecedented clarity. They're so simple that you really can learn without a teacher. With this book in hand -- and no prior experience -- you will be able to knit a gorgeous sweater, scarf, or throw. Next, Part II welcomes new knitters to the worldwide knitting community, exploring the myriad benefits this popular craft has to offer. This section, unique among all other guides, invites readers to Tap into the power of knitting as a means of reducing stress and expressing creativity Meet the design "gurus" and other stars of the knitting world Discover opportunities for fellowship and networking with other knitters in clubs, conventions, and unique cultural fiber tours to countries ranging from England to Peru Use their knitting skills to meaningfully support charities Learn about the fashion trends in knitting from Trisha Malcolm, editor in chief of *Vogue Knitting*

From Publishers WeeklyGoing beyond the standard how-to, this two-part book authoritatively covers both the basics and the culture of knitting, appealing to novices and experts alike. The book is well organized and thorough, generally fulfilling the authors' mission to help people learn the craft without a teacher. After explaining the knit, purl and rib stitches, the text offers patterns for a variety of scarves, sweaters, socks, strip throws, baby blankets-and even a cell phone holder. The instructions, while clear and explicit, betray a commercial tie-in: one of the authors is marketing director of the company that makes the recommended brand of yarn. Knitting has obvious artistic and social appeal, note the authors in the collection of essays that constitute Part II. In fact, they claim, there's psychological evidence that casting on and cabling contributes to the knitter's overall well-being by helping to reduce stress. This section also brims with such useful information as sizing guidelines, suggested reading lists, Web sites, and fairs and festivals. 16 pages of color photos, 50 line drawings. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.About the AuthorNancy J. Thomas is editorial director at Lion Brand Yarn Company, the former editor of *Vogue Knitting* and *Knitter's Magazine*, the founding editor of *Family Circle Knitting*, and author of a nationally syndicated column called "The NeedleWorks." Nancy also coauthored *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book*. She has appeared on television, including the Today show, to promote knitting and has hosted hand-knitting fashion shows around the country.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 13: Knitting for Charity As you navigate the world of knitting, from the Internet to the knitting guilds, from retreats to societies of friends and neighbors who frequent yarn shops, you are likely to encounter knitting for charity. Over the years, knitters have embraced the causes of knitting for the troops (in every war from the Revolutionary War to the war in Bosnia), for hospital patients, for those experiencing a crisis (victims of floods and earthquakes), and for the underprivileged and homeless. When you make donations through an established charity, you play a part in providing a consistent flow of items to a chosen cause. Knitting charities are usually run entirely by volunteers. From the organizers to those who knit and distribute the hand-knits, these groups tend to be composed of knitters who have been moved to address a cause and have created an organization the same way they knit -- one step at a time, with the work of their own hands. A hand-knitted donation has unique qualities. First, there is the warmth provided by knits, both practically, in keeping out the cold, and in the emotional association of comfort, closeness, and love. Unlike donations of used clothing, or even money, something that was hand-knitted for a hospital or homeless shelter expresses the idea of "giving of oneself" in a way that only volunteer work can do. Hand-knits carry with them the character and efforts of the giver. From selecting the type and color of yarn and the pattern, to spending time creating a one-of-a-kind blanket or hat, a personal touch permeates every aspect of a hand-knit gift. As anyone who has inherited a hand-knitted or crocheted piece from a family member can attest, there is a sense that something of the knitter remains with the garment. The evenness of the stitches as well as the imperfections in the fabric speak to the human hand behind the effort. When we realize that a throw or sweater was made over a period of days, weeks, or months, we can visualize the maker spending time with it as it moved from her home to her tote bag and traveled with her on the train to a doctor's appointment or a business meeting. The generosity of a hand-made gift is not lost on the recipients. One woman, whose baby might otherwise have gone home from the hospital in only a diaper, received a set of booties, a blanket, a sweater, and a hat. "I look at the beautiful work that someone poured her heart into and it touches me to think someone did this for me," she said. Joan Hamer, the unofficial archivist of knitting charities, puts it this way: "Many people who are poor, alone, or suffering a loss may not feel good about themselves at the time that they receive a donation." Receiving something that was handmade by another person has a special power, according to Hamer. "They think, someone out there gave their

time to make this, and it helps their self-esteem." Joan created the special role for herself of communicating about knitting charities in April 1993, when she received a notice that the Spring Valley Knitting Club, a newsletter about charity knitting, was going to stop publishing. She wrote to the publisher, Lois Greene, asking if there was anything she could do to help. Lois, unable to continue because of other commitments, gave Joan the 200-name mailing list and the suggestion that she "make it her own." Joan asked her mentor, author Meg Swansen, for advice about taking on the project and Meg counseled her to do it. In 1993 Joan launched the newsletter with only 28 subscriptions. Today, with about 1000 subscriptions and a Web site, Joan puts scores of hours a month into the Pine Meadow Knitting News, a project she describes as continually evolving. Every issue features a story on at least one charity. Her Web site, www.fibergypsy.com/pmkn, has free patterns for charity knitting and highlights of back issues. Joan has also compiled a list of charities collected on the Internet at www.woolworks.org, a site that offers a state-by-state listing of knitting charities including contact information and a description of their missions. Joan works for her church three days a week, as well as designing knitwear for yarn companies and magazines, when she is not donating her time communicating with knitters across the country about knitting charities. "I have been dealing with charity knitting for almost ten years now and it is a very rewarding experience, not only for the person who receives a gift, but for the knitter," she says. "Like many people, I just want to give something back to others." Joan has seen the ways in which people who knit for charities can become frustrated. "Many charitable organizations are run by volunteers, or by one person with a limited amount of time to devote to this work." She says that when the amount of donations is substantial, it takes a good chunk of time and money to respond to each giver individually. "Sometimes this is simply not possible. This doesn't mean that the gifts were not appreciated." To ensure that the experience of knitting for charity is satisfying to both the giver and receiver, Joan offers this list of tips for charity knitters.

1. Contact the charity before you begin to work. Make sure that it is still in existence, that the address is current. Find out about the organization's needs. Some charities, like Children in Common and Caps for Nepal, prefer garments made with wool. Others, like Christmas-at-Sea, prefer acrylics or washable blends that can survive industrial washing machines. Be careful to knit for the charity in mind by using appropriate fibers and colors. For example, bright or pastel colors are perfect for babies and children; dark colors may be more suitable for those in the military or homeless people trying not to draw attention to themselves. In addition, by contacting the organization, you will find out if their needs have changed or whether those needs fluctuate with the season. You can also get specific deadlines for items. This is especially important for holiday-driven charities.
2. Look in your own community for ways to help. Because knitted throws and garments are bulky and expensive to ship, many people donate their work at the local level to nearby charities. Contact hospitals, battered women's shelters, and organizations dealing with the homeless to see if you can donate directly to local groups. Donating directly to a local center in need also has its benefits: you can help your own community. Many charities, like Warm Up America!, encourage people to make donations in their own communities because it saves shipping and distribution costs. The charity itself offers project guidelines, patterns, and information about what volunteers are doing.
3. Provide a way for the organization to acknowledge your donation. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard that the charity's organizer can just drop in the mail. Even if you aren't waiting for a pat on the back, you'll know the package reached its destination. You might also put a hang-tag on the item with your name and address so that recipients can write to you if they choose.
4. If you are personally delivering a donation, find out who at the organization should receive it. Get in touch with the director or find the appropriate contact person at the charity and deliver your goods directly to him or her.

Joan tells of a time when hand-knitted baby items were delivered to the information desk of the hospital without instructions and the mystified employee handed them over to the gift shop for resale. There are hundreds of organizations that collect and distribute hand-knitted and crocheted gifts. Most of the charities were started when one individual, moved by the needs of a group of people, organized fellow crafters to work on projects that could be distributed to those who could use them. Here are the stories of a few of those organizations and the individuals who run them. Care Wear Every day, in hospitals throughout the country, babies are born whose weight is more likely to be measured in ounces than pounds. Approximately half a million babies are born at 24-36 weeks of gestation or earlier each year. These premature babies, or "preemies," require special medical care and equipment, but one challenge -- that of finding clothing small enough for these tiny babies -- is met by volunteer knitters. It's nearly impossible to find clothing in stores that fits these babies, whose heads can be as small as a lemon and arms so thin that they fit through their father's wedding band (pattern page 149). Care Wear, a charity that donates clothing for premature babies, was started by Bonnie Hagerman, a professor of home economics at Hood College in Maryland. She was inspired by a magazine article she read in 1991 about a group of women in Ohio who provided preemie clothing for a local hospital. Contacting hospitals in the Washington-Baltimore area where she lived, she discovered a pressing need for such garments. Before Care Wear, makeshift hats were made from cut-up socks, and the sleeves of ill-fitting garments had to be rolled up several times. As a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology, Bonnie was able to design clothing and write patterns for hats that could fit babies too tiny for standard newborn sizes. Volunteers added special touches like pompoms to the hats and blankets designed with the colors of the local football team. The caps and booties not only provide the important health benefit of keeping the delicate babies warm, but they give the worried parents a lift by adding a whimsical and warm touch in an otherwise

frightening environment of tubes and machines. In response to the need for a garment that could accommodate the tubes that are attached to so many preemies, Bonnie designed a kimono that closes and adjusts with a Velcro tab. Volunteers also make tiny mittens that help keep infants from pulling out stitches. One particularly poignant need is burial gowns for premature babies. "In the past," Bonnie points out, "parents had to go to a local toy store to b...