



*Grateful Thread – November 2025*

<https://www.facebook.com/FromtheHeartStitchers>  
<https://fromtheheartstitchers.org>

## **Donation Daze Is Here!**

**When: Sunday, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm**

**Where: In the alley behind the RIC Workshop**

**Cash and Checks Only – Credit Cards Not Accepted**

**Looking for gorgeous yarn at a bargain?** Donation Daze is your chance to scoop up premium, luxury yarn for your own projects — all for a fair and generous donation! Many of these yarns come straight from our generous local yarn shop (LYS) partners and others who've shared their beautiful excess with us.



**Why do we offer them?** These high-end yarns are often not practical for our donation projects because they can't be machine washed or dried. So we're making them available to you for a suggested donation of 50% to 75% of the retail price per skein. Your generous donations then allow us to purchase shop supplies and **durable yarns and materials needed for our comfort projects.**

**Getting here:** You may park in the lot in front of our workshop. To reach the alley, go through the white gate to the left of Empanadas Market — it will be open and clearly marked.

**Come for the yarn, stay for the fun — and know that your donations help us continue our mission of bringing comfort and warmth to so many!**

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## **Men: Putting a Finer Point on Things**

**By Tricia Ennis**

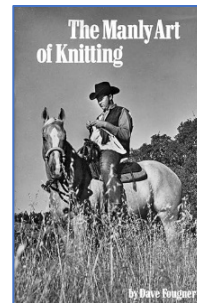
Stephen West is arguably the best-known male designer of knitting and crochet patterns today. He is internationally recognized for his innovative and colorful designs and has possibly overtaken Kaffe Fassett at this point. What is “odd” to many people about both Stephen and Kaffe is that they are male, but the real oddity is that they are considered “odd” simply because they are male. The fact is that men have knit and crocheted throughout history, and at one time, the crafts were far from considered the domain of women.

At one time knitting was something that everyone learned, either at home or school. It was considered an essential life skill. Everyone needed socks, hats, and sweaters, so anyone with free hands was expected to be working on something. Professional knitting guilds had many male members, as did many other textile professions.

Knitting was considered a necessary skill for sailors (and pirates) as well. Many sailors wore heavily lanolined sweaters to keep them dry and warm. These included the well-known Aran, Guernsey, and Jersey sweaters, each named for the islands the styles originated in. These were sometimes knit by the women in the fishing village but the men needed to know how to do their own repair work and many men did knit their own sweaters and socks.

It is interesting to note that these types of sweaters feature heavily textured stitching in many different patterns, often associated with a particular clan (family) and could even be used to identify the wearer if they drowned on a fishing trip. Many of the stitches also have specific meanings. The moss stitch, for example, symbolizes nature and the basket stitch stands for the fisherman and his hope to catch many fish.

Knitting and crocheting have also been regularly used as forms of occupational therapy and were both utilized in hospitals during WW1 and WW2. In addition, soldiers and firemen have been known to craft in between shifts, while waiting for a call, or during other “down” times. *The Manly Art of Knitting* is a fun knitting book, with projects such as a horse blanket and a hammock. It probably also came in handy for a cowboy or two in its time.



Knitting is a skill and hobby that anyone can enjoy, regardless of gender. Many men knit, and there is a growing community that celebrates male knitters. Let’s encourage that trend whenever we have the opportunity.



## FtH is Crafting New Beginnings for Our Heroes

We’re excited to announce a new partnership with [Vets on Track](#), an organization dedicated to helping veterans rebuild their lives after homelessness. From the Heart is proud to contribute by providing red, white, and blue blankets to welcome each veteran as they move into their new home.



The mission of Vets on Track is powerful — to end veteran homelessness and reduce the number of suicides among veterans by helping them rediscover self-worth, dignity, pride, and purpose. These qualities are essential for making a successful transition back into civilian life. Through their program, veterans receive not only housing but also furniture, household essentials, and ongoing support — removing a significant financial burden and giving our heroes a true hand up as they restart their lives.

Many veterans, both men and women, are also turning to **knitting and crocheting** as part of their therapy for PTSD. These creative, mindful activities can be incredibly healing, offering calm, focus, and connection. We warmly welcome veterans to join **From the Heart** and become part of our caring community of fiber artists, where they can experience friendship, creativity, and the joy of giving back. Through this partnership, we hope even more veterans will discover the comfort and fulfillment that crafting can bring.



## Join Us for Backpack Packing!

Following **Barbara Rutherford’s** wonderful presentation at the retreat, many of you asked about helping with *Backpacks for the Homeless / RVA’ Packing Days*. There are two ways to get involved:

- **Load-In Day:** Wed., Nov. 26, 10 am – Meet at Chesterfield Mini Storage (11320 Iron Bridge Rd) to move supplies to the Perkinson Center (11810 Centre St).
- **Packing Day:** Sat., Nov. 29, 10 am – Perkinson Center. Help pack 600 backpacks with scarves, soap sacks, food, and hygiene items. Stay for an hour or two—many hands make light work!

**Sign-up deadline:** There is no sign up. All you have to do is show up.

**More info:** [Backpacks for the Homeless / RVA Facebook page](#). It’s updated with the latest information.

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# What Is a Vicuña, and What Is the Most Expensive Yarn in the World?

By Tricia Ennis

I loved shopping for sales and discounts at Joann Fabric and Craft store whether in person or online. It was fun. So, Joann's filing for bankruptcy in January of this year caused a little pang to me as all that fun would have to come to an end. But you know how the mind works and in no time, mine was taking a whimsical path down the rabbit hole of wondering what type of yarns I might buy if I had enough money to indulge myself with whatever yarn I wanted. What, I wondered was—what is the most expensive yarn in the world?

The first yarns that popped into my mind were the beautiful hand-dyed, one-of-a-kind skeins you can find in any good yarn store. A skein of this type of yarn can retail for about \$25 to as much as \$45 for 100 grams (3.5 oz.). Most of us have probably indulged in one or two of these special skeins—or perhaps received them as a gift.

Baby camel yarn, combed from the soft underbelly of young camels, costs a bit more, starting at around \$45 per skein. Linens, silks, and cashmere also come to mind, with a luxurious 100-gram skein of pure cashmere selling for as much as \$70.

Then there's qiviut, the soft underwool from musk oxen, harvested during their natural shedding season in the spring. Unlike sheep's wool, it isn't sheared but rather combed from the animals or collected from the tundra where it's been shed. Qiviut is highly prized for its exceptional warmth, incredible softness—often said to be softer than cashmere—and its resistance to shrinking and felting.

A few years ago, a friend found a small skein of Qiviut on her travels, and it was incredible, both in terms of the quality and the price. To the best of my recollection, the skein weighed 28 grams, which is a little less than one ounce and cost \$80 and that was some years ago! Today, that would likely be \$125 or more. That would amount to \$437.50 per skein if you could buy qiviut in what we regard as a standard skein size of 100gr.



I did some searching online and it seems that the most expensive yarn comes from the vicuña, a small llama-like animal native to the Andes Mountains in Peru. Vicunas, although a “cousin” to the llama, are not domesticated and are very reluctant to become domesticated. They are very territorial, skittish, and require a diet consisting of grass and grains which are not at all easy to grow at lower elevations. If all that is not enough to make their wool difficult to obtain, they are also endangered animals. Their wool is harvested through a process called “chaku,” a traditional communal hunting and shearing practice used for vicuñas in the Andean regions of South America, dating back to the Inca Empire. The animals are sheared using a sustainable collection method that ensures the well-being of the vicuña and the entire process is controlled by the Indigenous communities in the Andes, working with governments and conservation organizations. Vicuña wool is known for its extreme softness, and it's considered the most refined and luxurious fiber globally. The price of vicuña wool, depending on the quality, ranges from \$850 to \$1,000 for our “standard” 3.5 oz skein. That would amount to upwards of \$20,000 to make myself a sweater.

Honestly, though, with the reality of finding a 3.5 oz skein of vicuña at my local yarn store feeling like a distant dream, and my purse strings being a little tighter than that, it's off to Michaels to buy some acrylic for those hats I've been promising my grandchildren. After all, there is a special kind of satisfaction in creating something cozy and handmade for loved ones, and it doesn't come from the fiber, does it?



## From the Heart at the Pink Chair Project's Bowling for Chairs By Heidi R.



On Oct. 1, I had the pleasure of attending the Pink Chair Project's *Bowling for Chairs* fundraiser and was immediately touched by the warmth and energy in the room. **Bonnie S.**, creative director, graciously provided us a prime spot for our display. Founder **Linda Cauthers** gave a truly inspiring talk that reminded everyone why this cause matters so deeply.

Fellow FtH Board Members and volunteers **Lydia B.** (photo left) and **Debbie M.** joined me at the FtH table, connecting with many cancer survivors, patients, and their families. Lydia shared, *“It was inspiring to hear about the direct impact they’re making, recently donating their 100<sup>th</sup> chair to post-surgical patients so they can heal with comfort. We are proud to support their efforts.”*

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## The “Three Musketeers” of Fredericksburg

By Tricia Ennis

In Fredericksburg, a quiet revolution of kindness unfolds daily—one stitch at a time. The leadership trio of the Fredericksburg chapter of From the Heart—**Sally M., Peggy L., and Karen O.**—known affectionately as “The Three Musketeers,” dedicate themselves to crafting comfort for those in need.

For all three women, their love of crafting is rooted in family. Sally, from Independence, Missouri, inherited her skill from grandmothers - one a crochet master, the other a professional seamstress (although she admits that sewing “is not my friend”) - leading to her lifelong love of creating amigurumi toys and cozy afghans. As her roots are in Independence, MO, Sally has an interesting connection to the Truman family: Her grandmother played with Bess as a child.

Peggy, born in Scranton, PA and raised outside of Philadelphia, was taught the continental style of knitting by her German grandfather at age eight. A former educator, taught to sew by her grandmother on a treadle sewing machine, Peggy enjoys making projects like totes and fidget mats. Peggy taught herself to crochet as an adult.

Karen’s family moved to the New York City suburbs when she was five, but the legacy of sewing, knitting, and quilting began in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with her. This legacy provided the solace and joy she found in the rhythm of needles and thread. She works on knitted creations and often takes on projects like blankets, hats, and sweaters. She has carried this tradition through career changes and raising her family while also pursuing a college degree and a business career.

Each woman’s path to From the Heart was a story of serendipity. Sally discovered the group in 2011 at a From the Heart event. Intrigued, she reached out to FtH Founder Lois Moore, who helped her lay the foundation for the Fredericksburg chapter. She also championed the Fredericksburg “show-and-tell” tradition to celebrate donations. Peggy found the group by chance when a salesperson mentioned it while she was buying yarn at Joann’s, giving her a new home for her skills in crafting items like totes and fidget mats. Karen found her calling after reading a newspaper article. She now serves as the group’s liaison, ensuring their creations reach those in need and bridging the gap between craft and compassion.

What makes Sally, Peggy, and Karen’s partnership so extraordinary is their ability to blend individual strengths into a unified force for good. Sally’s organizational prowess and enthusiasm for showcasing the group’s work inspire everyone to take pride in their contributions. Peggy’s quiet dedication and mastery of rare techniques bring depth and diversity to their projects. Karen’s knack for connecting with agencies and delivering comfort items ensures their efforts have a tangible, far-reaching impact. Their leadership style is collaborative, inclusive, and deeply personal. They’ve transformed From the Heart’s Fredericksburg chapter from a small gathering in grocery stores and churches into a vibrant community where every member feels valued and every creation is a gift of hope.

From the Heart is more than a volunteer group — it’s a way of life. Sally speaks of the organization holding “a piece of my heart,” a sentiment echoed by Peggy, who notes that “hardly a day goes by that From the Heart doesn’t impact my life in some way.” Karen finds joy in “The feedback from all the grateful recipients of our work,” a reminder of how FtH touches lives in ways both seen and unseen. The stories of the “Three Musketeers” of Fredericksburg are a testament to the power of creativity, community, and compassion. They remind us that leadership isn’t about titles or accolades, but about showing up, day after day, with open hands and open hearts. They invite you to pick up your needles, thread, or yarn and join them in their mission. Whether you’re a seasoned crafter or a beginner, there’s a place for you in the From the Heart circle. Together, we can continue to weave a tapestry of kindness, one stitch at a time.



L-R Sally, Peggy, Karen

## And Speaking of the Fredericksburg Chapter— They Have a New Home! Eastland United Methodist Church – 10718 Courthouse Road - Fredericksburg



*Photo by Dorothy B.*

L–R: FtH Board Members **Debbie M.**, **Heidi R.**, and (third from right) FtH Fredericksburg Coordinators **Peggy L.**, **Karen O.**, and **Sally M.**, with FtH volunteer and Eastland United Methodist Church member **Francis V.** Everyone was excited to see the spacious storage and the wonderful accommodations the church has so generously provided. We can't thank the church enough for their kindness!



**Peggy L.** shows us some of the well-organized storage areas they now enjoy.

Even when faced with setbacks, Sally, Peggy, and Karen's leadership and teamwork continued to shine. After their previous rent-free space was rented out from under them, the Fredericksburg team faced the challenge of finding a new home. Fortunately, thanks to FtH member **Frances V.**, who is also a member of **Eastland United Methodist Church**, a free and spacious location was found right there at her church. Frances was instrumental in facilitating the

church's approval and assisting the Fredericksburg chapter with every aspect of the move.

FtH Fredericksburg Coordinator **Karen O.** shared, "We are happy to report that the move to our new location went extremely well, thanks to **Peggy L.**'s hard work in coordinating the truck, volunteers, and a detailed layout of where everything would fit in our new space. Plus, the rain held off until we were all unpacked!"

Sally, Karen, and Peggy would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to those who helped make the move a success: **Bill Moulds** with Smooth Transitions; **Tom and Monica Spellman**; **Cindy Jones**; and **Bob O.** (a.k.a. "The Hat Man"—and Karen's husband).

A special thank-you also to **Logan M.**, son of board member **Debbie M.**, for helping pack up and bring items back to the Richmond workshop, where they can be better utilized.



(L-R) **Phyllis J.**, **Linda W.**, **Mary S.**, **Carol B.**, and **Karen O.** attended the first meeting in the new location on October 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone enjoyed the comfortable space where they could sit, relax and visit with friends!

The group is now happily settled into their new home and looking forward to continuing their mission of crafting comfort for those in need—one stitch at a time.

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### Richmond Workshop Happenings!

Quilting has become very popular again thanks to **Sheddy's** quilting lessons. Cathy took a class and has been quilting and donating some awesome quilts! (photo right) Who doesn't enjoy cuddling up in a nice quilt? I know everyone appreciates **Cathy** and all the quilters' efforts. Thank you so much!♥



*Photo by Karen P.*

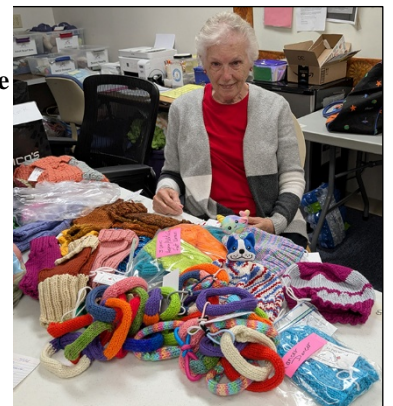


**Jane A.**, FtH board member, yarn purchaser, and yarn sorter extraordinaire, recently made her first fiddle mat (photo left) and shared that it was a lot of fun to create. She said that once you get started, the ideas just keep coming! Who's ready to give it a try?

**Mary Jo F.** was busy on Oct. 11 helping folks, taking the photos below and stated, "There were a lot of people popping in!

People bringing by donations, picking up donations, getting yarn and

(R) FtH Founder **Lois Moore** brought in dialysis mitts, foot warmers, fidget scarves, hats, and yarn!



material for projects, and just hanging around and enjoying the community of knitters and crocheters! Just look at all the beautiful items we received!”



(L) **Marge P.** picked up three bags for *Goochland Cares*, assisted by **Karen P.**, one of the elves on duty that day.



Several people from the Fredericksburg group came by the workshop, including (photo left) **Willow R.**, who brought **45 finger puppets**, a cocoon, and blankets!



(Above) **Marie L.** brought in an amazing stash of dialysis mitts and blankets.



(L) **Shirley J.** brought in a beautiful blanket and yarn. She was accompanied by her friend, **Bonnie I.**, who will start making items for FtH. Welcome, Bonnie!



(L) **Addie R.** donated a multitude of scarves.

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## Our Sincerest Thanks to...

**Grace Episcopal Church** in Yorktown, Va., for mailing us five scarves, two pairs of fingerless gloves and six hats in several sizes.(photo right) These are all beautifully made and will bring warmth and comfort to someone this fall/winter!



**Suzanne S.**, from Dillwyn, Va., for mailing us these four beautifully packaged scarves (photo left). Your work is really lovely and will be so appreciated by someone in need this fall and winter.



**Claire H.** for the 12-pack of gloves and two sweatshirts from the FtH [Amazon Wish List](#). Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

**Elizabeth G.** for the quilt batting, and Red Heart Bitty Stripes yarn from the [FtH Amazon Wish List](#).

**Randy S.** for generously donating two wonderful chests for the Richmond workshop! They look great and are more functional for our needs!

### A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Monetary Donors:

We are sincerely thankful for your kindness, generosity, and support. Your contributions make it possible for us to provide comfort and care to so many throughout our community and beyond.

**Lois P.**

**Wayne S.** in memory of his wife, **Nancy S.**

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**amazonwishlist**

Please consider donating items from the [FtH Amazon Wishlist](#).

← **Additional Ways to Help From the Heart!** →

**Kroger**

FtH members who link their [Kroger Reward Card](#) to FtH can support our organization just by shopping there.

 **Messages That Made Our Day!** 

**Email Sept. 29 from Peggy M., English language teacher at Quioccasin Middle School**

Peggy contacted FtH through our website and requested any extra yarn we could donate so her students could make a craft for Hispanic Heritage Month, with plans to build on the project from there.

*I can't thank you enough for your incredible generosity. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect we'd receive that much yarn! When the kids saw the bag, their eyes lit up like it was Christmas morning — it was truly a joy to witness.*

*Our kids don't often receive gifts like this, so your donation made a big impact. You've not only supported our project but also brought a lot of joy and excitement to a group of children who will never forget it. They were coming up with some very creative ideas already... With heartfelt thanks, **Peggy***

Thank you for providing such a wonderful opportunity to allow us to serve our community. It is our heartfelt hope that these handmade baby hats bring warmth and comfort to newborn and premature babies as they begin their journey home. We deeply appreciate all that you do for these little ones and their families. — **Jaelyn and the Navy Federal Team at Montclair**



The Elf of the Month for October is **Laura M.!**

Laura, please select some of the nicer yarn that is set aside for this purpose.

**Thank you to all our elves for generously volunteering your time!**

**Workshop Scheduler for November**

The RIC workshop scheduler for Nov. is **Ellen D.** Please contact Ellen at [jbluvr57@yahoo.com](mailto:jbluvr57@yahoo.com) to volunteer. In Fredericksburg, please contact **Nancy P.** at [phillips5831@gmail.com](mailto:phillips5831@gmail.com).

**If you would like to become a workshop elf or a scheduler, please email [fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com](mailto:fromtheheartstitchers@gmail.com). It's fun, and you'll get to know many fellow volunteers!**



**October Distribution & Current Needs  
Thanks to Our Volunteers!**



**Let's Make this Fidget Mat, Mitts and Muffs November!**

Join us in creating our most requested items this month...

**FIDGET (aka BUSY) MATS, MITTS, and MUFFS.**

Our recipients of all ages are requesting mats and sleeves with fidget items attached, it helps to keep fidget items from being misplaced and provides lots of fidget opportunities in one place.

**Donation Inventory Numbers  
as of  
October 27, 2025**

Previous Total	
Mid 2002 - 2024.....	597,362
In 2025:	
Jan.- Aug.....	33,027
Oct.....	3,946
Year to date total.....	36,946
<b>Grand Total .....</b>	<b>634,335</b>

Our website has great directions for [Fidget Mats, Mitts, and Muffs](#). Our workshop has shelves dedicated to items to attach to your mats/mitts/muffs.

We continue to get LOTS of requests for blankets of **all sizes**, especially for dialysis and hospice patients. Please keep those blankets and quilts coming! No deadlines have been set.

**Thank you for all your donations, the Distribution Team and our recipients are so grateful!!!**

### **NEW Richmond Area Recipients this fall!**

[Caring Closet](#), [Vets on Track Foundation](#), [PRC Metro Richmond](#), [CornerStone Community Development Center](#), [VCU Home Hospice](#), 4 new [Davita Centers](#), and [Gentiva Hospice](#).

### **FtH Fredericksburg**

Everyone is welcome on the **2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon**, Location: **10718 Courthouse Road, Fredericksburg, VA**

**Fredericksburg Needs:** Ladies Totes, Lap and Large Blankets, and Shawls

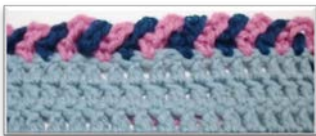


Have you ever made a blanket and decided it needed a burst of color to brighten it up? Or maybe you want to experiment with colors. I found some fun ways to finish off your next blankets. There's a pattern for every level of crocheter. Enjoy!

**Beginner-** [Granny Square Border](#), by Bunny Mummy. Alternate a few of the colors you used in your blanket, or choose something totally different to really make it pop! 3dc in each space around. In corners 3dc, ch3, 3 dc. Or you can try an upgrade, the [Granny Patches Border](#), by Cherry Heart. Row 1- sc, ch3, skip 3sts. In corners, sc, ch 2, sc in the same space. Row 2- 3sc in each space around. In corners, sc, ch2, sc. Row 3- sc around. In corners, sc, ch2, sc. Row 4- attach new color in a stitch that lines up with a sc from row 1. (Sc, ch2) around, making sure the stitches line up with those from row 1. In corners, sc, ch2, sc. Row 5- attach new color, ch3 (treat as dc), 2dc in same ch3 space, 3dc in next space. In corners, 3dc, ch2, 3dc. Repeat rows 4 and 5 until you are satisfied with the look.



**Intermediate-** [Striped Border](#), by Maria's Blue Crayon. This one twists two different colors as you work the border, great for a college colors blanket, USO blanket, or candy cane border for Christmas! A couple of notes before you begin: (1) sc around your blanket first for a neat edge, (2) be sure your chain sts aren't loose, try going down a needle size (3) untangle your yarn occasionally. Attach color A and ch4. In the next st, attach color B and ch4. In color A, sc in next st, ch4. In color B, sc in front of B in next sp, ch4. Repeat alternating colors around the blanket to the beginning, repeating the step once more for the corners. Slip stitch color A into the first ch4 of the same color. Do the same with color B.



**Advanced-** [Rose Border](#), by Dedri Uys. A lovely row of tulips to brighten up anyone's day. You will need a **multiple of 8 + 6 stitches** (*not including corner space/stitch*) to start this border.



**Expert-** [Cluster Lace Edging](#), by Kim Guzman. A gorgeous pattern that will make your blanket into a work of art. This border can be used for any square or rectangle. It requires a multiple of 10, plus 7, on the sides, with ch-2 spaces at the corners.

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**For a list of From the Heart group meetings, please click [HERE](#).**